PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
December 1, 2021
6:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Public Comment**
4. **Approve minutes of September 1, 2021**
5. **New Business**
    a. **Planning Commission Resolution #1 Series 2021, Idaho Springs Downtown Master Plan.**
6. **Community Development Monthly Report**
7. **Adjournment**

The Public will be able to view and hear this meeting remotely at the following address:
https://cityofidahosprings.colorado.gov/watch-meetings

The Planning Commission Meeting will be held remotely via Zoom. Comments can be given remotely through Zoom. **To provide public comment, please contact Community Development Planner Jerad Chipman at planning@idahospringsco.com no later than 4:00 P.M. the day of the meeting.** Please click the link below to join the webinar:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89265642366?pwd=ME4rYk1HeVBNNDNFZHFQTXI0Y1lHZz09

Passcode: 922427

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
September 01, 2021

ROLL CALL

Chairman Cindy Olson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Commissioners present were Cindy Olson, Kate Collier, Chuck Howard, Tracy Stokes, Don Reimer and Ursula Cruzalegui. Staff present are City Planner Jerad Chipman, City Clerk Diane Breece, City Administrator Andy Marsh, Assistant City Administrator Jon Cain and Joe Rivera from the City Attorney's office.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kate Collier moved to approve the minutes from August 4, 2021. Chuck Howard seconded and the motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing- Planned Development, Rezoning, Preliminary and Plan for a Mixed Use Development at Block 57/Former Gold Digger Field and Bus Barn

Chairman Olson opened the public hearing at 6:04 p.m.
Jerad Chipman presented the staff report outlining the request by the petitioner. Kelley Flenniken and Stephanie Copeland gave a description of the proposal and then turned it over to Carla Cole. She gave a presentation outlining the increase in retail, providing adequate safe housing and support a park with a variety of activities.
Public Comment-
Cameron Marlin General Manager of CCMRD
269 Zip Trail- Supports the project, benefits CCMRD in the way that adds more people, great for the community. Safe and accessible to young participants. Increases the tax base. More available housing.
Ross Brier and Jenna Billing
904 Colorado Blvd.-Major concerns are parking. One of the reasons they moved out of the downtown area was parking. How do we prevent the riff raff from coming in. Ross asked how much of space is being used.
Ann Bowler
1120 Colorado Blvd- Her main concern is safety. In the Comprehensive Plan it says that safety is the utmost concern. They need to increase parking and lower the number of units.

Craig MacPhee with CivTrans Engineering Inc. spoke about the traffic concerns and stated that the project does identify high areas of traffic/impact. The main concerns are pedestrians at 13th and Idaho. He is willing to work with the City to come up with some options.

Tracy Stokes wanted to address Ann Bowler's comments about bringing quality resident's to Idaho Springs and she is very aware of the safety concerns.

Ursula Cruzalegui stated that traffic will be the most challenging thing.

Don Reimer indicated that there will be ice build- up on Miner St.

Kate Collier said that she feels that the Commission has gotten off track and we're supposed to be voting on rezoning tonight. She moved to continue the meeting until the next month and there will be no motions to approve anything tonight. Don Reimer seconded and the motion failed by a 4-2 vote.

Ursula Cruzalegui moved to recommend approval of the proposed Planned Development, Rezoning and Preliminary Plat and Plan for the mixed-use development at Block 57/Former Gold Digger Field to include the following conditions:
1. The permitted uses set forth in the PD be amended per this staff report date August 26, 2021.
2. The minimum front yard setback be increased to five (5).
3. The minimum width of landscape areas are five (5) feet with the exception of the area south of Building 1 adjacent to Interstate 70, the primary entrance area north of Building 3 and the area to the east of Building 2
4. The net gain of newly created parking spaces on the south side of Miner Street and Idaho Street are allowed to be counted towards the parking requirement.
5. Addressing the traffic study issues.

Chuck Howard seconded and the motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Adjourn

Cindy Olson adjourned the meeting at 8:02 pm.

CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS
Planning Commission Communication

REPORT DATE: NOVEMBER 23, 2021

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 1, 2021

PRESENTED BY: JERAD CHIPMAN, AICP
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNER

ITEM: IDAHO SPRINGS DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN FINAL DRAFT REVIEW AND RESOLUTION ACTION

Background:

Beginning in May of 2021, the City of Idaho Springs has endeavored to develop a master plan for the downtown. This effort has received input and comments from many residents and stakeholders. Previously, the Planning Commission has reviewed a draft of the plan, which is now being presented in a finalized format. Studio Seed, leading a team of consultants, will provide a presentation to the Planning Commission discussing how the plan has been updated from the previously received draft.

Role of the Planning Commission:

It is the Planning Commission's role to review the attached final draft of the plan and recommend action to the City Council. A recommendation related to a plan that the City intends to adopt is formalized through a Planning Commission Resolution. Attached to this report is a resolution drafted by the City Attorney.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approving the resolution recommending the Downtown Master Plan to the City Council.

CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION
Clear Creek County, Colorado

Resolution No. PC 1, Series 2021

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2021 IDAHO SPRINGS DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN AND RECOMMENDING ITS ADOPTION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the City of Idaho Springs, Colorado ("City") is a Colorado statutory city, duly organized and existing under the laws of the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 31-23-206, it is the duty of each municipal planning commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, subject to the approval of the governmental body having jurisdiction thereof, which in the Commission's judgment bear relation to the planning of such municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Idaho Springs Planning Commission has been working in concert with City Staff, interested stakeholders and members of the community for the past several months to develop a visionary planning document for the historic downtown area of the City, such plan to be known as the Downtown Master Plan ("Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the Plan has been subject to several publicly noticed meetings and discussions and on December 1, 2021, the Planning Commission conducted a formal public hearing on the Plan after notice was duly published as required by C.R.S. § 31-23-208; and

WHEREAS, after said December 1st formal public hearing, the Planning Commission finds that the Plan is likely to guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the downtown area which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development of the area; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission therefore wishes to approve the Plan and to recommend its adoption by the City Council.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Idaho Springs, Colorado as follows:

Section 1. The above and foregoing recitals are adopted and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. The Planning Commission hereby approves the *2021 Idaho Springs Downtown Master Plan,* expressly including all maps and attachments thereto, attached to this Resolution and incorporated herein by reference. The Commission further recommends approval and adoption of the same by the Idaho Springs City Council.

RESOLVED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 1st day of December, 2021.

_____

Cynthia Olson, Chair

ATTEST:

_____

Wonder Martell, Deputy City Clerk



IDAHO SPRINGS DOWNTOWN PLAN

IDAHO SPRINGS, CO | NOVEMBER 2021

Acknowledgments

City Council Members:

Michael Hillman, Mayor
Robert Bowland, Mayor Pro-Tem
John Curtis
Scott Pennell
Charles Harmon
Jim Clark
Arthur Caccavele

City of Idaho Springs Contributing Staff:

Andrew Marsh, City Administrator
Jonathan Cain, Assistant City Administrator
John Bordoni, Public Works Supervisor
Diane Breece, City Clerk
Nathan Buseck, Chief of Police
Jerad Chipman, Community Development Planner

Consulting Team:

Studio Seed
HDR
Dig Studio
Leggitt Studio
Economic & Planning Systems

Planning Commission Members:

Cindy Olson, Chair
Chuck Howard
Don Reimer
Kate Collier
Ursula Cruzalegui
Jordan Hudson, Alternate
Tracy Stokes, Alternate

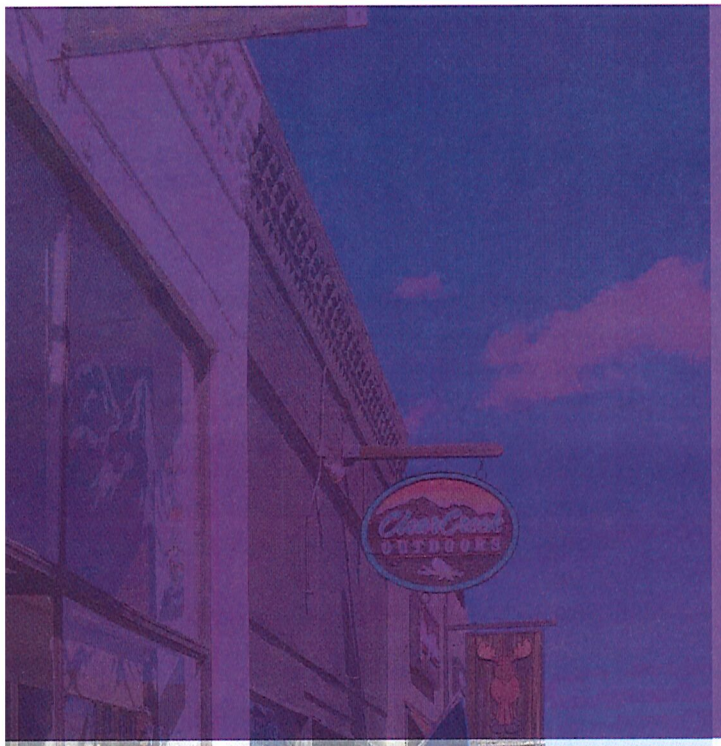
The Economic Recovery Task Force

The Downtown Improvements Work Group

Stakeholders and Public Participants

Table of Contents

1.	**Introduction & Context**	**5**
	Plan Purpose	5
	How To Use the Plan	6
	Past Studies	6
	Project Process and Timeline	6
	Downtown History and Identity	7
	Demographics and Trends	8
	Downtown Plan Project Influences	9
	Downtown Plan Study Area	10
2.	**Vision & Framework**	**11**
	Overview	11
	Community Survey	11
	Community Vision	13
	Business and Property Owner Feedback	14
	Downtown Charrette and Workshop	15
	Downtown Plan Vision and Framework	16
3.	**Mobility & Parking**	**19**
	Introduction	19
	Challenges and Opportunities	20
	Downtown Mobility & Parking Opportunities	21
	Recommendations and Priority Projects	22
4.	**Tourism & Recreation**	**29**
	Introduction	29
	Challenges and Opportunities	30
	Downtown Tourism & Recreation Opportunities	31
	Recommendations and Projects	32
5.	**Land Use & Vitality**	**37**
	Introduction	37
	Challenges and Opportunities	38
	Downtown Land Use & Vitality Opportunities	40
	Recommendations and Projects	41
6.	**Implementation**	**49**
	Introduction	49
	Funding Tools	50
	Organization and Management	53
	Implementation Matrix	54





1 Introduction & Context

PLAN PURPOSE

This plan is intended to serve as guide for downtown improvements for the next 15 to 20 years. The plan was initiated due to multiple factors:

- **A specific plan for downtown does not currently exist** - only the 2017 Comprehensive Plan exists as a policy guide and is very high-level and focuses citywide;
- **Two visioning and strategy studies exist that provide guidance for downtown**, but do not serve as official policy, as they were completed by outside organizations (Downtown Colorado, Inc. and Urban Land Institute);
- **Parking has become a growing concern for downtown** and a managed parking program was implemented in 2019. However, downtown still lacks appropriate parking capacity in busy months and needs a long-term solution;
- **CDOT has pledged $4 Million toward a parking structure and mobility hub** for downtown, but the City needs further guidance on circulation improvements and design/aesthetics;
- **CDOT awarded the City a "Revitalize Main Street" grant**, which was used to initiate some improvements, but more are needed; and
- **Covid-19 forced downtown to function in new ways**, such as instituting the Miner Street Marketplace, and necessitated a conversation about how downtown should look and function in the future. Two working groups of downtown stakeholders were created to continue this conversation and guide the Downtown Plan process.

The Downtown Plan was adopted by City Council with a recommendation from the Planning Commission in December 2021.

changed last paragraph to past tense for future readers to know when it was adopted.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The City will use the plan to prioritize resources for future public investments to improve downtown. The plan provides guidance on prioritization of projects based on funding options, and offers short as well as long-term options to explore.

The plan offers conceptual designs for public realm improvements that can serve as the basis for further design and construction.

The community (residents, property, and business owners) can also use the plan to contribute to recommendations when improvements are made on personal property. Financial resources, especially for historic properties, may also be available.

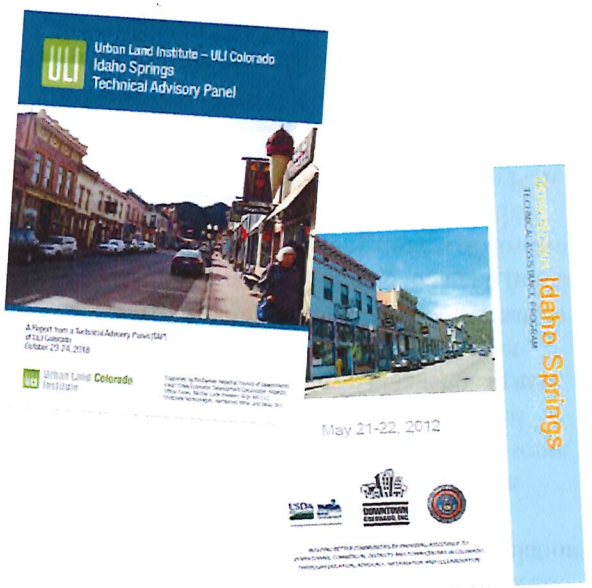
PAST STUDIES

The following plans provided a basis for the Downtown Plan:

2012 Downtown Assessment - this project was completed through a Technical Assistance program offered by the non-profit Downtown Colorado, Inc. It prompted and was successful at initiating the following listed studies, the exploration of an entity that can help fund downtown improvements, prompting the city to hire a full-time staff planner to manage ongoing efforts, and generally offered recommendations for overall economic development and parking and housing solutions citywide, many of which have been realized today.

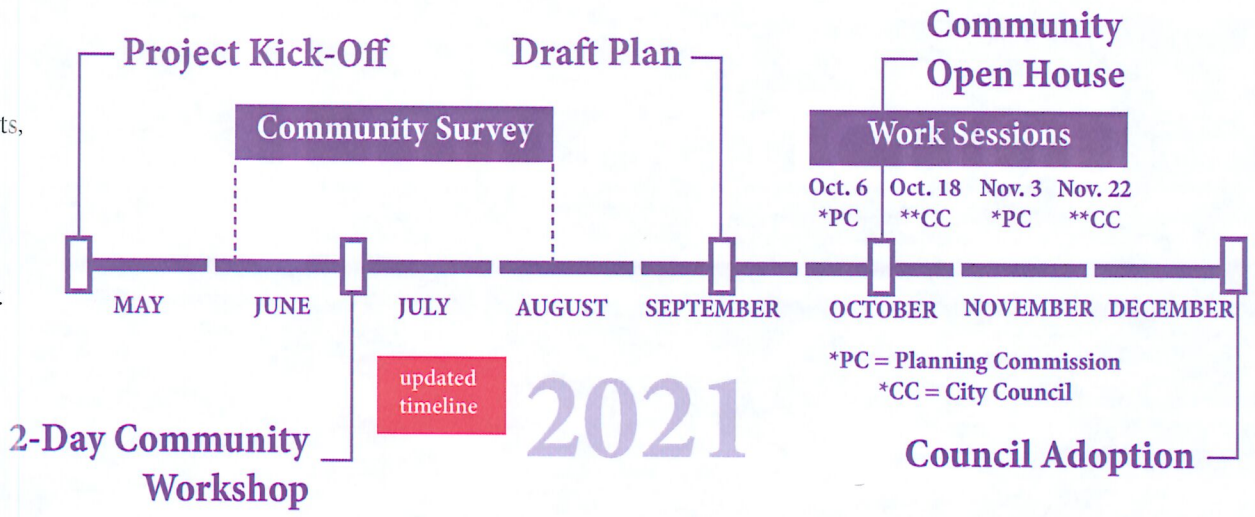
2017 Parking Study - this study explores options for a parking structure and parking management in downtown. A parking management program was implemented in 2019 and a parking structure is currently being further explored.

2018 ULI Technical Advisory Panel - this study provides guidance on parking and connectivity solutions throughout the city and initiated the current discussions with CDOT on building a transit/mobility hub combined with a parking structure to increase transit ridership to downtown and alleviate congestion and parking supply issues.



PROJECT PROCESS AND TIMELINE

This six-month downtown planning process began in May 2021. An efficient process was outlined to complete the plan on time and budget. The process included a community survey, a 2-day community workshop, multiple interviews and meetings with city and county staff, and monthly meetings with the Downtown Improvements Working Group (DIWG) and Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF). The project was funded by parking revenue.



DOWNTOWN HISTORY AND IDENTITY

Downtown Idaho Springs includes a nine acre area along Miner Street that was listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** in 1984. This collection of Victorian era buildings serves as the "postcard" image for Idaho Springs. Idaho Springs was founded and developed during the Gold Rush, which brought over 60,000 people to Clear Creek County in the late 1800s. The community is nestled within **Clear Creek Canyon** with Clear Creek running throughout the city. The steep topography creates a land-locked, long and narrow community with Downtown as the central core. Downtown, and most of the city, is located north of I-70, which provides **views of the community** by the millions of people who pass by. Idaho Springs remains known as a **working-class mining community**.



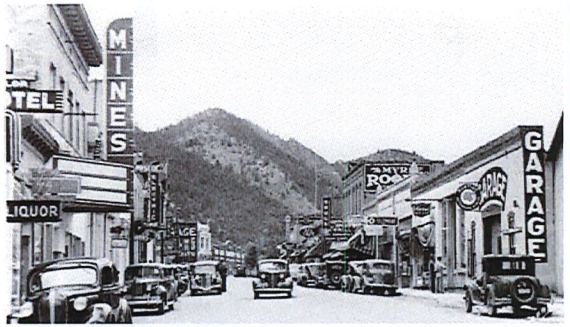
The historic gazebo sits at the corner of Miner and 14th Avenue.



Miner Street with immense activity and transportation via horse carriage, circa 1894.



The Stroehle parking garage in Idaho Springs, circa 1930s.



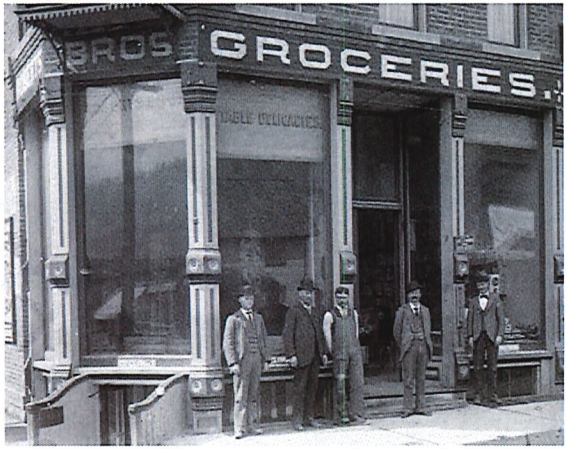
Miner Street as the automobile replaced horse and carriage travel, circa 1930s.



Historic Idaho Springs Train Depot.



A train arriving in Idaho Springs along what is now Idaho Street/Idahoe Mall.

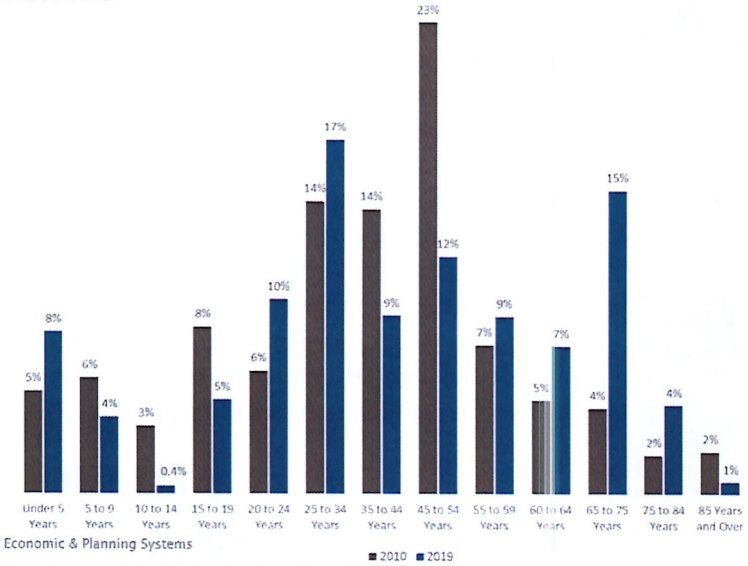


Roberts Brothers Grocery Store.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

POPULATION:	1,858
HOUSEHOLDS:	908
HOUSEHOLD SIZE:	2.14 (owner)
	1.94 (renter)
MEDIAN AGE:	43.4
MEDIAN INCOME:	$43,886
EMPLOYMENT:	800 jobs

Since 2010, Idaho Springs has had a slight decrease in population (8%), but comparatively has added more children and aging population while losing working-age citizens. **A growing population of children and the elderly demands more resources, like daycares and senior citizen activities and resources.**

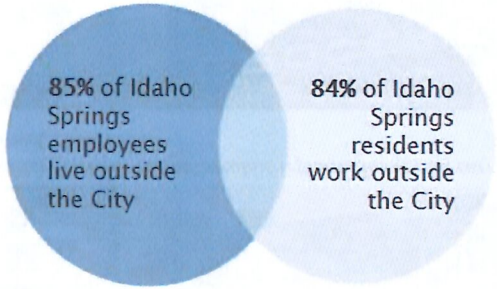


Income trends in Idaho Springs from 2010-2019.

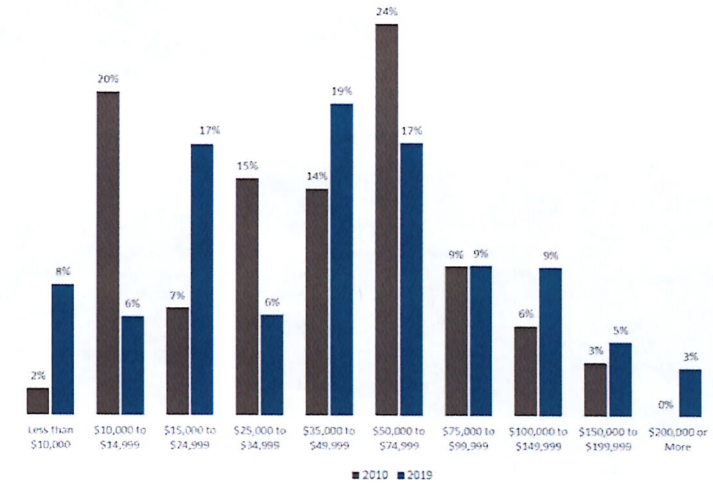
Idaho Springs is a working class community with incomes 39% lower than statewide averages and 56% of households earning less than $50,000 per year. **With National trends of increased work-from-home jobs, high quality of life communities like Idaho Springs are seeing growth and affordability pressures. This puts significant pressure on this community to maintain and build affordable housing options.**

69% of employment in Idaho Springs is in the service industries, such as food services and retail. **These tend to be lower paying jobs and with rising home prices, along with other national labor shortage issues, contributes to employees not being able to live where they work, adding unnecessary stress and commutes.**

Growth pressures, and the challenges that come with them, are present throughout the state. Finding manageable solutions for housing and infrastructure to maintain economically vibrant and sustainable communities are at the core of every discussion and debate. This plan considers these impacts, and solutions to address them, for downtown, but further action citywide is necessary and urgent.



The majority of Idaho Springs employees live outside the community and the majority of residents commute to their jobs.



Income trends in Idaho Springs from 2010-2019.

DOWNTOWN PLAN PROJECT INFLUENCES

As stated previously, a specific plan for downtown does not exist. The Comprehensive Plan establishes citywide policies and land use objectives, but does not outline specific projects for downtown to consider.

There are two primary influences that initiated the desire to complete a downtown plan: planning for a parking structure and Covid-19 impacts:

DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURE - a parking structure has long been discussed for downtown and many studies have recommended this as a solution to the lack of land available in downtown. The city has been working with CDOT as a primary financial partner for the structure. A ***transit and mobility hub at Exit 240*** is a priority for CDOT, so there is an opportunity to combine the two to solve multiple issues at once. Downtown Colorado, Inc. has also been working with the city to examine funding opportunities for the city's contribution to the project. The impact of such a new, large structure in downtown has demanded a deeper-dive look at the design and how it can fit into the historic context, as well as the circulation impacts to downtown overall.



A graduate student architectural rendering of a potential parking structure and streetscape improvements.

COVID-19 - Another primary driver for the plan was Covid-19 and its effects on downtown. The Downtown Improvements Working Group (DIWG) and Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) were groups started by Mayor Hillman during Covid-19 to initiate temporary improvements and set a path of economic recovery for the city. Many of these members are daily employees, managers, and business owners of downtown businesses. This group led the visioning and implementation of the temporary ***Miner Street Marketplace*** - a test project along Miner Street from 14th to 17th Streets that evaluated full closure to automobiles during the summer months to create a pedestrian mall with expanded outdoor dining areas with games and music, as well as partial closure to automobiles in the colder months while still maintaining expanded sidewalk dining areas.

Whereas many communities felt devastating loss during this time, Idaho Springs thrived. The Marketplace was a huge success and has demonstrated viability to study how it could be implemented in a more permanent way.

So, now is the time to strategically plan for the future of downtown, with two potentially game-changing projects envisioned. This plan provides further guidance for the parking structure and Marketplace in Chapters 3 and 5.



Miner Street Marketplace with partial closure to automobiles - one-way street with parking on south side.



Miner Street Marketplace with full closure to automobiles - a pedestrian mall.

OUTSIDE STUDY AREA INFLUENCES - Aside from the immediate downtown study area influences, there are a few other projects that will directly impact downtown.

- **Four Points** - the proposed development on the former Digger Field (as currently planned) would include more than 100 apartments, a new park, and some commercial development, such as a home improvement and hardware store, within walking distance of downtown.
- **Argo Mine** - a visionary plan also exists for the Argo Mine just east of downtown, including a new cable car that will include mountaintop plazas, viewing decks, food and beverage, amphitheater, an event venue, and nature trail. This is expected to grow tourism, for which downtown will benefit.
- **Virginia Canyon Mountain Park** - above the Argo Mine and Mill, this new 400-acre park will provide approximately 12 miles of trails - including hiking and biking trails.

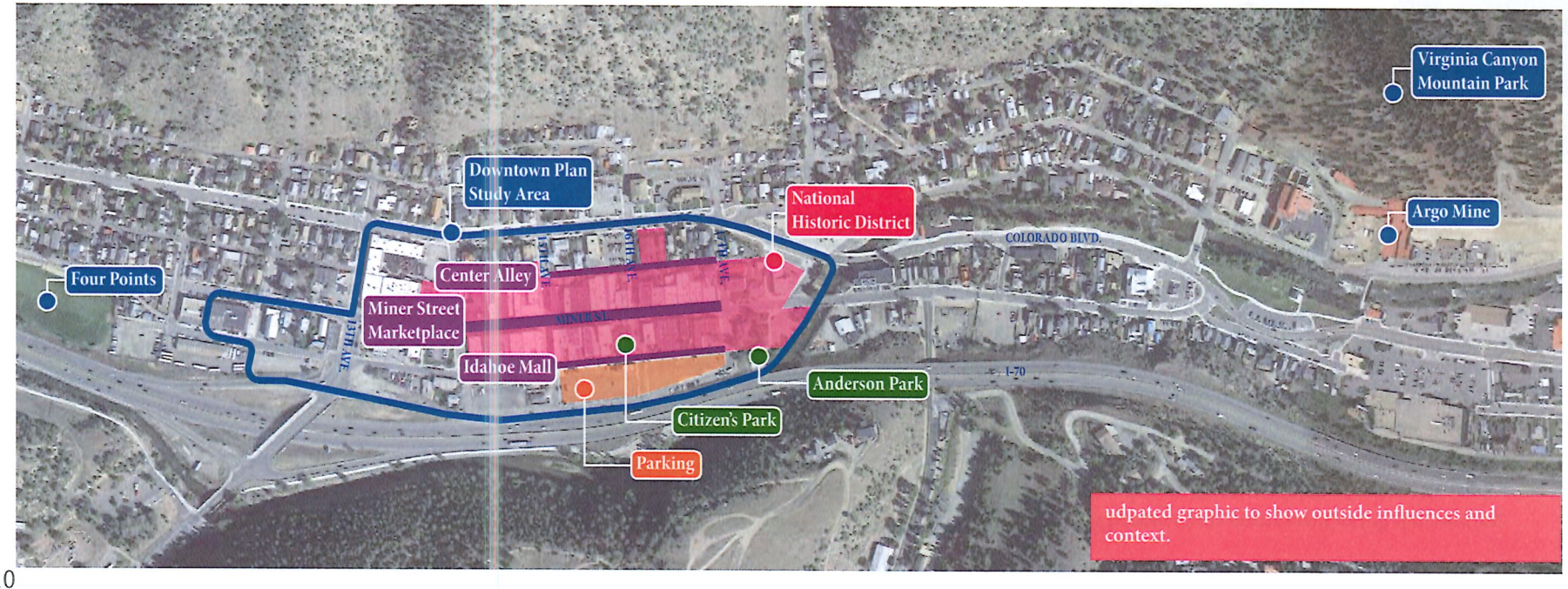
DOWNTOWN PLAN STUDY AREA

The Downtown Plan study area is bound by Colorado Boulevard to the north, I-70 to the south, Clear Creek to the east, and 13th Avenue along Miner Street to pick up the Recreation Center and Exit 240 parking lot to the west. The highlights of the plan are listed below, including:

- **The National Historic District**
- **Miner Street Marketplace**
- **Center and Idahoe Mall Alleys**
- **Citizens Park and Anderson Park**
- **Public Parking Lots and Land**

It is important to note that while the study area focuses on a specific boundary within "downtown", this plan effects the entire community of Idaho Springs. Recommendations herein focus on improving downtown, while also improving the effects downtown has on residents (e.g. improved parking and circulation.)

added language about how the plan focuses on downtown but effects the entire community.



udpated graphic to show outside influences and context.





2 Vision & Framework

OVERVIEW

The future vision for downtown was developed through feedback from the community survey and interviews with staff and stakeholders. The following pages provides a summary of this feedback and themes to consider as the city moves forward with implementation.

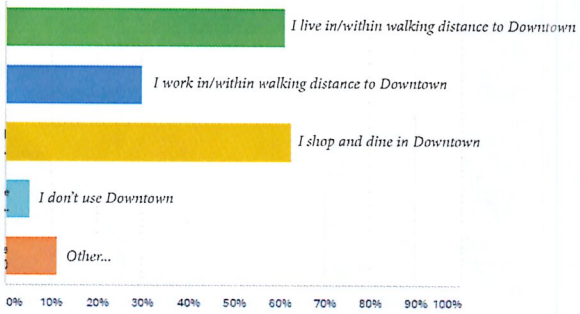
One **overarching theme** that is important to the community and should be considered in any future project is **environmental stewardship**. Realizing the environmental impact of decisions moving forward and how to design projects so they work in harmony with nature and can withstand and sustain future generations is key. Whenever feasible, source local materials, minimize construction waste, use and generate renewable energy, and utilize low impact development (LID) strategies.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

An community survey was sent to every resident in Idaho Springs and posted online via the city's e-newsletter and social media. There were a total of 135 responses to the survey, with 27 paper responses and 108 online responses. The survey was posted from June 9th to July 20th, 2021. The results of the survey are as follows:

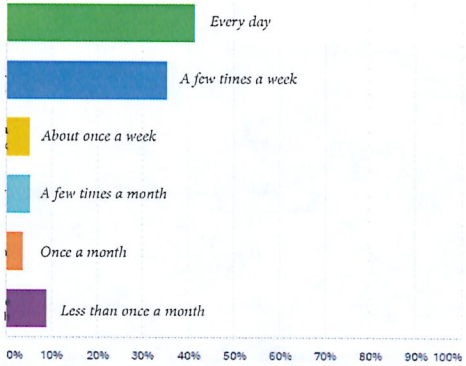
added overarching environmental stewardship theme

1 Describe your relationship to Downtown Idaho Springs (select as many as appropriate):



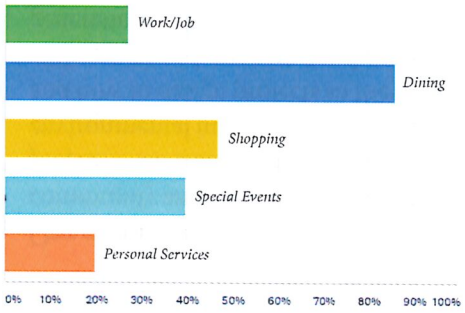
TAKEAWAY: Most respondents live, work, shop, and dine Downtown.

2 How often do you visit or pass through Downtown?



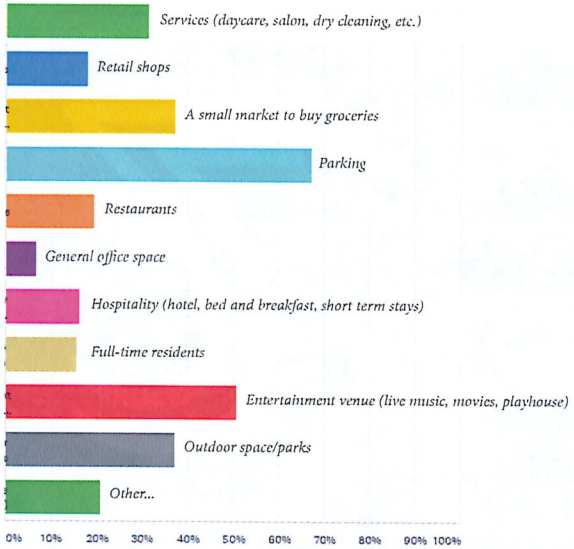
TAKEAWAY: Most respondents were locals and use visit Downtown daily or weekly.

3 What are the top activities that bring you Downtown (select up to two)?



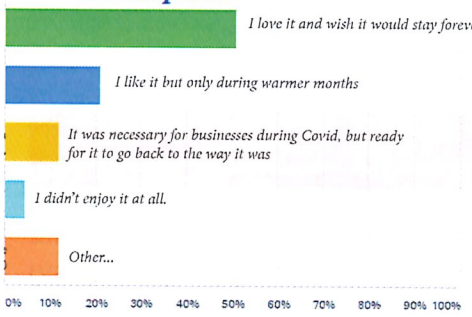
TAKEAWAY: Most people visit Downtown to dine. Shopping and special events also draw people downtown.

4 What do you think Downtown needs more of (select all that apply)?



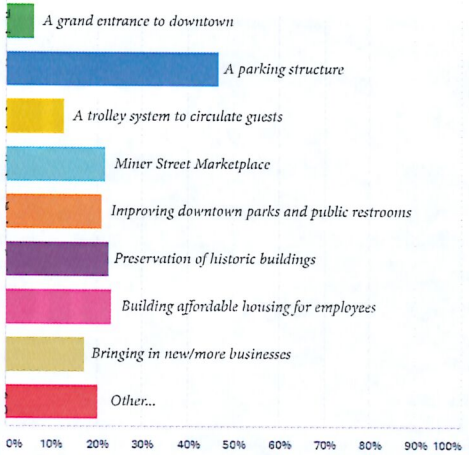
TAKEAWAY: Respondents thought parking, an entertainment venue, a small market, outdoor space/parks, and services are most needed.

5 Which statement most closely relates to your perception of Miner Street Marketplace?



TAKEAWAY: Most people enjoyed the Marketplace and want it to stay either year-round or seasonally.

6 If you had a million dollars to donate to the city, what would you spend it on (select up to two)?



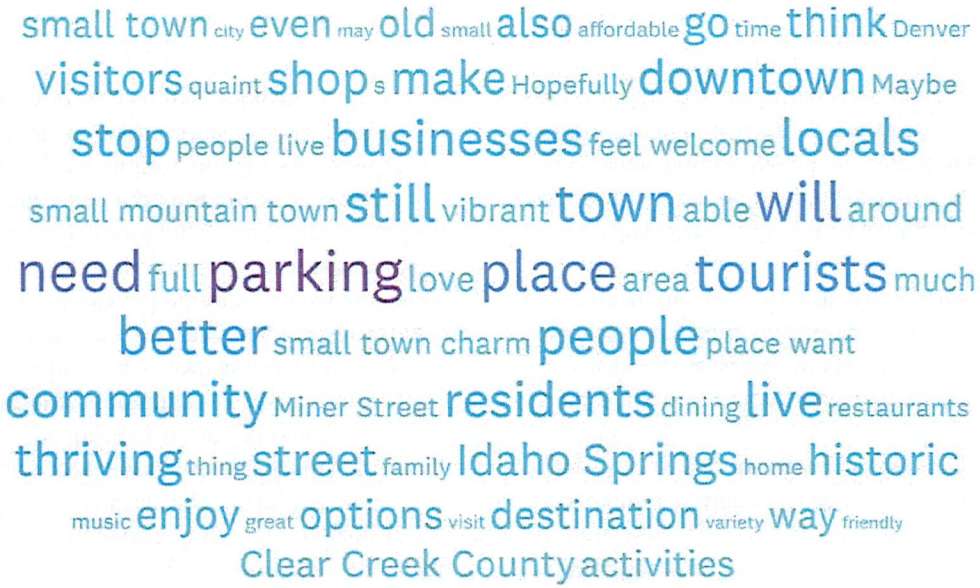
TAKEAWAY: By far, respondents would spend money on a parking structure, if they could.

In 2050, Downtown Idaho Springs IS...

COMMUNITY VISION

The last question to the survey was open-ended, asking people to fill in the blank to the sentence "**Downtown Idaho Springs IS...**" There were 108 responses to the visioning sentence. Common themes - both dreams and concerns - are summarized below:

- **Has Maintained the Small Town Charm** - it is important that Idaho Spring's small town vibe is not lost in the future. Many commented that they don't want Idaho Springs to turn into the Colorado ski towns.
- **Historically Preserved** - people are proud of the history and heritage of Idaho Springs and think it should be preserved and celebrated.
- **Thriving, Vibrant, and Inviting** - these were common words used to describe the future of downtown.
- **Not Just for Tourists** - many people fear that the city will focus improvements for just tourists, and ignore the needs of the community, making it more expensive to live here and not including the daily services that residents need.
- **Easy to Park and Navigate** - this was a primary theme. People feel that parking and traffic have gotten out of hand and some say it's a reason they don't come downtown anymore. Many mentioned a desire to keep parking free for residents of Idaho Springs.



- **A Unique Destination** - many mentioned the pedestrian mall as a way to achieve this, but in general, there is a sense that Idaho Springs is unique and has an opportunity to celebrate its uniqueness in the future.
- **Family-Friendly** - maintaining and growing amenities that makes Idaho Springs a great place to raise a family is important.
- **Not Too Crowded** - people realize that growth is inevitable, but they fear that it will change the small-town charm that is why they live here in the first place.
- **Affordable** - many expressed concerns of housing costs getting out of hand. Some rent when they would prefer to buy, but have no choice.
- **Clean and Well Maintained** - many expressed the need for property owners to keep up their properties so that they match the level of care and preservation that downtown deserves.
- **Open Past 5pm** - many mentioned that stores close too early and would love for them to stay open later.

BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNER FEEDBACK

The following is a summary of feedback from the Downtown Improvements Working Group (DIWG) and Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) with regards to downtown improvements:

- **Love the Marketplace, but Keep Miner Street Flexible** - there is general sentiment from business and property owners that Miner Street Marketplace, while successful and loved by most everyone who visits, may not be appropriate year-round. They would like to see permanent improvements made to the street that accommodates the pedestrian mall concept, but does not preclude auto travel, especially during winter months when they felt the marketplace would feel "dead" during the slower months and colder weather seasons.
- **Staffing is a Major Concern** - business owners are all struggling to reopen to "normal" operations because of staffing shortages. They fear this will only get worse if housing and gas prices escalate. Most staff are already commute in from other places, but it would be nice if they had the option to live closeby and would be more predictable for business owners.
- **An Entertainment District is Desired** - most stakeholders saw the concept of an Entertainment District being a perfect fit for the marketplace. Having the ability to order a drink and play a game of cornhole while you wait for your food, for example, is much desired. Dealing with the operations and maintenance will be a consideration moving forward.
- **A Moveable Stage is Desired** - currently for live music events, the city has to rent a stage from Gilpin County. Some mentioned the idea of purchasing/building a moveable stage, like the one in Grand Lake, could be beneficial and provide the city flexibility to use the stage in different locations for different events.
- **Supportive of Parking Structure** - business and property owners agree that the parking structure is necessary to sustain the future of downtown. However, they want it to be carefully designed to fit into the historic character and saving the Robert's Brothers Garage in some capacity (ideally all of it) is desired. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging was also important.
- **Transit and Trolley** - many would like to see more convenient options in terms of transit and moving people throughout downtown. Bustang has been a big benefit, but not as utilized as it could be - for example, by employees. A circulator trolley was also an idea that received positive feedback by the stakeholders.
- **Housing over Everything** - affordable and attainable housing is seen as a critical element to sustain downtown. Implementing housing on second floors of buildings where employees or business owners could live near where they work, as well as looking at the future of Carlson Elementary site and Four Points as major housing opportunities. But, if it's all built as market rate or luxury units, it will defeat the purpose and worsen the problem.
- **Railroad Theme** - there is a desire to rename Idahoe Mall to Railroad Alley and incorporate train tracks and theme into the alley design, with a terminus at the restored rail car at Anderson Park. A pavilion over the rail car is also desperately desired to maintain the restoration of the train. Stakeholders also dream about the ability to move the old train station back downtown in the future and use it for a community use.
- **Coordinate with Four Points** - the proposed development on Digger Field should be closely coordinated with any downtown improvements and vice versa.
- **Micro-retail on Alleys** - many saw opportunity for new, smaller start-up businesses to build up along the alleys. This could add to the vibrancy of the alleys and need to be encouraged by zoning.
- **Skate Park Location** - stakeholders weren't sure if downtown was the best location for the skate park to be moved, as it only serves a small percentage of the community. Some thought across from the Recreation Center made sense if Four Points includes a new park, but it shouldn't take up all the room for other necessary community needs.
- **Waterwheel Park** - this is such a huge amenity for the community, yet people don't even know it's there. Stakeholders talked about making it more of a destination and could imagine even winter activities there like holiday lights, an ice castle, or even a "Teenie Tiny Town" for children to enjoy.

DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE AND WORKSHOP

A two-day Design Charrette and Community Workshop was held on Wednesday, June 30th and Thursday, July 1st. These two days were designed to be interactive with the public and stakeholders, as well as provide an efficient process for the design team to work together on-site.

A mailer was sent to all residents of Idaho Springs with a "save the date" for the charrette/workshop. Flyers were also passed around and posted at downtown businesses that displayed opportunities for the public to interact with the design team and staff. They included the following:

- **Drop-in hours** for people to stop by on their own time and talk to designers/staff.
- **A Walking Tour** of downtown with designers/staff; and
- **A Downtown Celebration** with two stations set up at popular downtown businesses to engage with passersby and customers and display preliminary design concepts from the charrette to receive feedback.

Unfortunately, it rained the night of the Downtown Celebration, but there was still substantial interaction and feedback given to the team.

The interviews and interactions from the public, stakeholders, and city staff during the charrette and survey are the foundation for this plan.





Residents and business owners engage with designers to preview concepts for the Miner Street Marketplace.



Downtown stakeholders interact with the design team after a meeting.



HDR employees working on a concept for the south parking lot.



A downtown business owner presenting the concept for the parking structure and mobility hub.

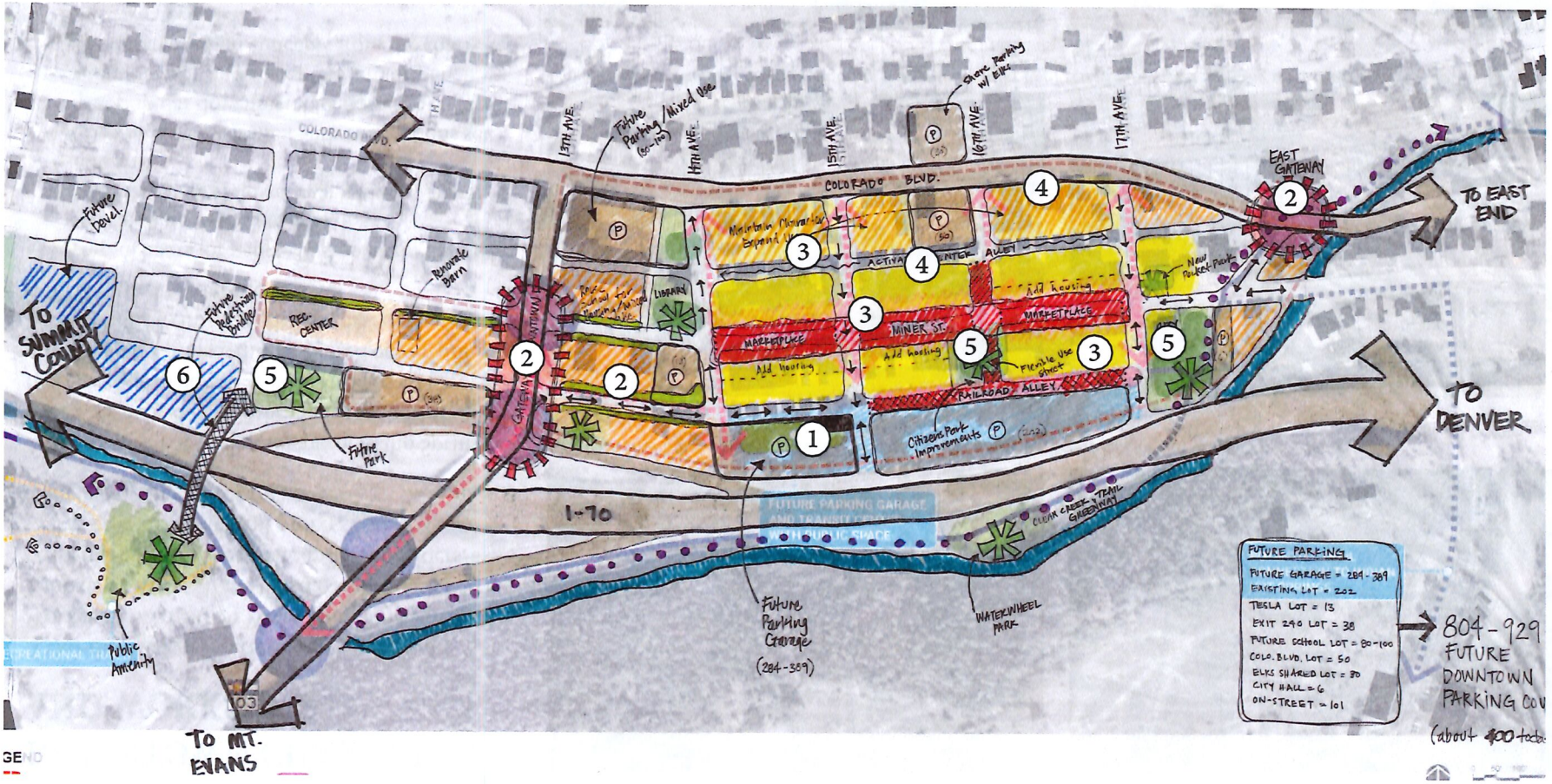


Jim Leggitt, FAIA, produces digitally hand-drawn renderings for key downtown projects during the charrette.

DOWNTOWN PLAN VISION AND FRAMEWORK

The following vision statement provides a summary for what the community and business owners envision for the future of downtown. A framework plan (below) provides a high-level overview and structure for downtown improvements, based on the vision. Descriptions are on the following page.

*"Downtown Idaho Springs is a **welcoming, vibrant, and unique place** in the state of Colorado that **makes locals proud** and **visitors wanting to come back.** It has kept its **authentic, historic, and small-town charm** while growing to meet the needs of the future. It provides a one-of-a-kind historic downtown experience with a **unique marketplace** that operates as a seasonal pedestrian mall. Business owners and employees can **walk to work** from nearby residences and businesses **help locals meet their needs** in addition to serving tourists. It is **easy to get to, park, and navigate through** and offers a **multitude of experiences** - from shopping and dining to festivals to outdoor adventures."*



The framework elements provide a path for downtown improvements and are generally prioritized, however some projects may happen simultaneously. They are described in more detail throughout the document, but this provides a high level overview of plan recommendations and projects to consider:

1. **Solve the Parking Problem** - First and foremost, it is essential that downtown **invest in a parking structure.** This was the #1 most needed element in downtown as well as the #1 investment people would make to downtown. The city is currently working with CDOT, downtown property owners, and the parking agency to secure financing for the structure. There are additional opportunities for parking throughout downtown as well, both on city properties and by partnering with private developments. See Chapter 3 for more information.

2. **Create a Welcoming Environment and Seamlessly Direct People to Parking and Destinations** - Next, it is important to create **attractive gateways** to downtown - identified at Exit 240 along 13th Avenue and at the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Riverside Drive. In addition to gateways, **enhanced streetscape design features** on key pedestrian streets like Idaho Street, Miner Street, and the numbered north-south streets will create a welcoming environment for walking. Finally, new **signage and wayfinding** will direct visitors around downtown in an effortless fashion and highlight Idaho Springs' attractions. See Chapter 3 for more information.

3. **Invest in Unique Placemaking Projects** - Downtown has opportunities to create one-of-a-kind experiences in public spaces like the **Miner Street Marketplace and downtown alleys.** This plan recommends a strategy for implementing a permanent version of the Marketplace with a design that creates a beautiful, pedestrian-first place while maintaining flexibility for future configurations. Improvements to Idahoe Mall and Center Alley are also envisioned. See Chapter 5 for more information.



A modest parking structure that fits into the historic character of downtown - like this one in Rapid City, SD - can help solve the parking problem while enhancing the downtown experience.



A wayfinding signage program to direct downtown users to parking and destinations is necessary to improve the downtown experience.



Enhancing the design of Idahoe Mall and Center Alley can bring new opportunities for open space and business in downtown.

④ **Maintain Historic Character and Increase Housing Choices Downtown** - the community values historic preservation and also fears the cost of housing will drive people out of town. This plan offers a win-win by **encouraging preservation of structures** throughout downtown and fully utilizing them by **adding housing options**. This includes activating upper floors of buildings on Miner Street as well as reusing, perhaps with context-sensitive additions, other buildings throughout downtown for housing residents at affordable prices. See Chapter 5 for more information.



Activating upper floors with apartments and lofts provide affordable options for employees to live near work.



Adapting single family homes to accommodate more than one unit can bring affordable options downtown.

⑤ **Enhance the Downtown Experience with Expanded and Improved Parks and Open Spaces** - many people expressed a desire for a more family-friendly downtown, including places to take kids and gather with neighbors. This plan offers recommendations for **improving downtown parks**, including a new downtown loop/walking path to connect them all! See Chapter 4 for more information.



Old Town Square in Fort Collins is designed as a flexible space to host events that accommodate hundreds of people as well as serve everyday needs with family-friendly amenities.



Denver's Union Station welcomes children and families with its pop-jet water fountain in the plaza.

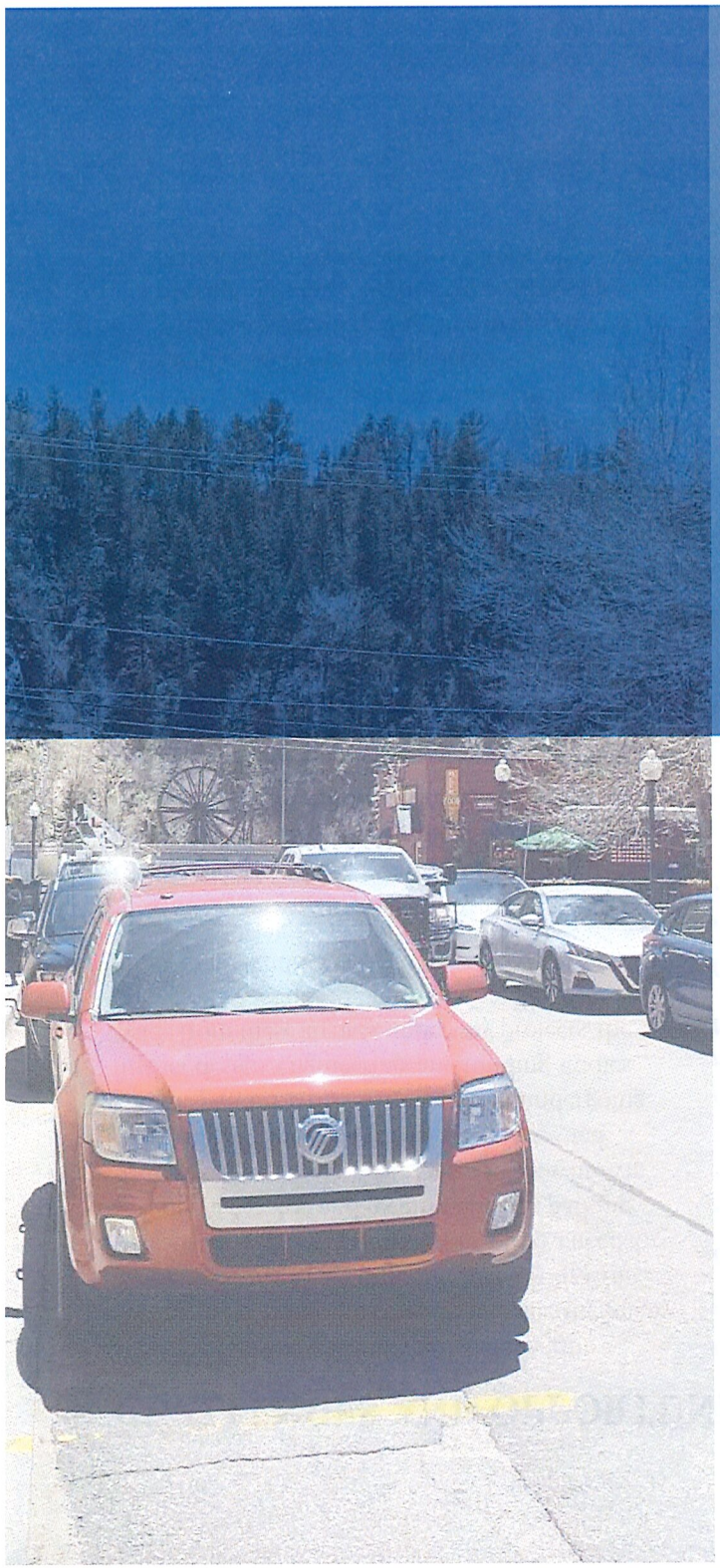
⑥ **Work with Partners to Help Implement the Vision for Downtown** - downtown is a limited environment to solve every issue and dream within. New developments, such as Four Points and the Argo and other future projects, present opportunities to work with developers to ensure this vision is reached. Opportunities include providing **additional housing** at attainable prices, incorporating **open space** that is welcoming for locals to enjoy as well as visitors, and providing **essential goods and businesses** like daycare, dry cleaning, home improvement, and groceries.



Look for opportunities to add housing options near downtown at attainable price points and styles that fit the character.



The Ivywild School in Colorado Springs was converted into a mixed use project. This could be appropriate for Carlson Elementary if and when it relocates.



mo·bil·i·ty *(noun)* - the ability to move or be moved freely and easily.

3 Mobility & Parking

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Idaho Springs is a vibrant and busy area and gathering place. Because of Idaho Spring's regional location and proximity to Interstate 70 (I-70), many visitors are traversing between destinations in the mountains and the Denver metro area. Idaho Springs wants to both capture more regional travelers, in addition to becoming more of a destination itself, with an added emphasis on the visitor experience. At the same time, it is important to mitigate the impacts additional visitation has on Idaho Springs' residents.

The downtown area is uniquely positioned within the City, located midway within the linear City of Idaho Springs and one block off of I-70. The area between I-70 and historic downtown and Miner Street is primarily parking today. In addition, on street parking throughout the community has been either permitted for local residential use only or has been converted to paid parking utilizing a vendor to administer collection and enforcement. The paid parking has been successful at better managing parking and increasing the turn-over rate, netting additional revenue to the City. Though the paid parking has influenced the visitor experience by creating opportunity, the fact that visitors must traverse through town and a maze of one-way streets to find parking diminishes the overall user experience at the onset of their visit and negatively impacts adjacent residential neighborhoods. The goal of this chapter is to find solutions that benefits both downtown businesses and residents by improving the experience of arriving and parking in downtown, getting visitors to the businesses faster and keeping them out of the neighborhoods.

added language re: goal of plan is to get visitors to businesses and keep them out of neighborhoods = win-win

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A primary concern for downtown lies within solving the parking and congestion issues that many have experienced on a busy summer day or winter weekend. The 2019 Parking Study found a need for additional parking and recommended a parking structure and paid parking system for downtown. The paid parking program has been instituted and the parking structure is currently undergoing further design, engineering, and funding studies. Aside from these already underway projects, the following pages outline additional challenges, opportunities and outcomes, recommendations and priority projects.

Challenge #1 - There is a lack of parking near destinations which results in circulation congestion, which in turn, results in reduced street capacity.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- **Construct more parking** in proposed parking structure to provide a known destination to find parking.
- **Reconfigure existing parking lots** along I-70 to improve circulation and gain spaces.
- Provide **wayfinding and technology** (parking app) to reduce time spent looking for parking.
- Consider adjusting **one-way operations** on 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th (however this would result in loss of parking spaces.)
- Work with school to **improve drop-off and pickup** - location, wayfinding and process instructions - to not add to visitor congestion.

Challenge #2 - Locals feel they cannot park downtown, and some avoid it due to this.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Same as #1.
- Continue to **waive parking payment** for locals to incentivize them to use downtown more.

Challenge #3 - It is difficult to hire and retain employees (as it relates to parking and transportation.)

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Same as #1.
- Add **"Downtown Employee" designated parking** areas in new structure or existing parking areas to provide a known destination for employees that does not compete for visitor parking.

Challenge #4 - There is a very high peak demand for parking (I-70 backups, holidays, summer.)

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Same as #1.
- Consider **additional parking** solutions for peak demand days such as **circulator vans** and additional parking on the far east end of town to increase capacity and decrease frustration of visitors and locals.

Challenge #6 - Pedestrian and bicycle conflicts and accessibility concerns.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Create a **permanent pedestrian mall** on Miner Street to avoid pedestrian and bicyle conflicts with motorists.
- **Improve ramps** to sidewalks and business entrances to provide equitable access.

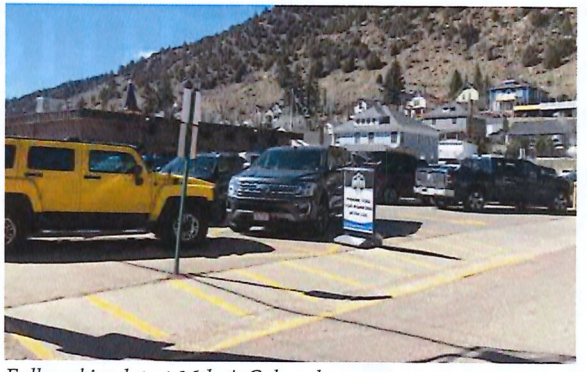
Challenge #7 - Old utilities need repair/ updating.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Consider **replacing utilities** in coordination with future construction and/or redevelopment to reduce rebuild and continued construction impacts and improve utility service within community.



Drivers stranded near Idaho Springs due to rockslide.

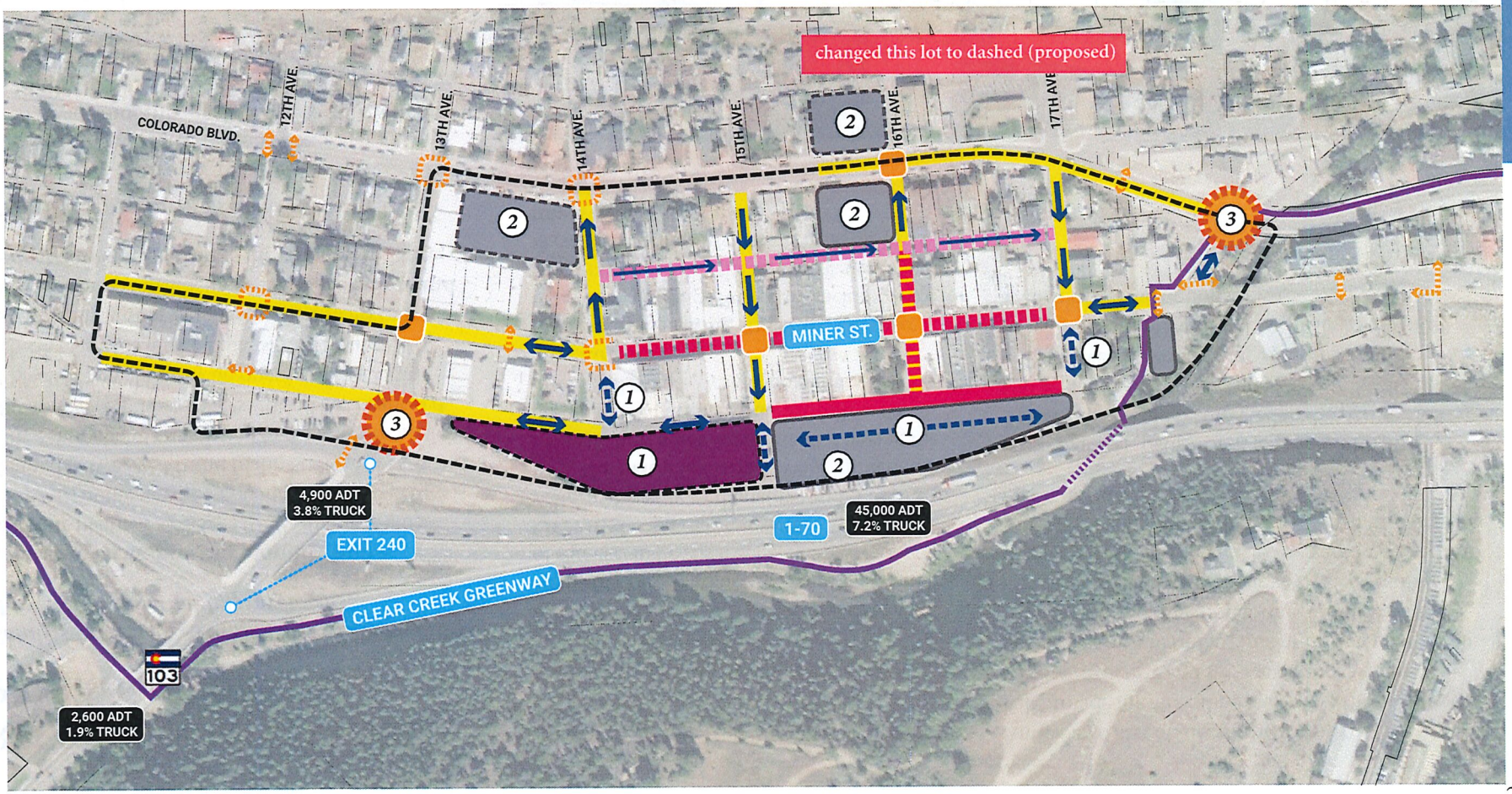


Full parking lot at 16th & Colorado.

Downtown Mobility & Parking Opportunities

LEGEND

- Project Boundary
- Existing One-Way Streets
- Existing One-Way Alley
- Existing Two-Way Streets
- Proposed Two-Way Streets/ Circulation Routes
- On-Street Parking Streets
- Pedestrian-Only Alley (Proposed Improvements)
- Proposed Seasonal Pedestrian-Only Streets
- Proposed Multimodal Alley (Pedestrian Improvements)
- Existing Crosswalks
- Proposed Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Gateway Improvements
- Existing Public Parking (Proposed Improvements)
- Proposed Public Parking (Dependent on Redevelopment)
- Proposed Parking Structure & Mobility Hub
- (X) Catalyst Project



RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITY PROJECTS

Catalyst Project #1 - Parking Structure, Mobility Hub, and Circulation Improvements.

A **parking structure and mobility hub** is currently planned at the SH103/I-70 Interchange (Exit 240) in the northeast quadrant. The structure is planned between I-70 and Idaho Street and 14th and 15th Avenues and anticipated to have approximately **280 spaces**. Of those spaces, 20 will be comprised of Electric Vehicle ready on opening day, Electric Vehicle ready for future expansion, and transit user parking. Other mobility hub elements may include transit stop amenities such as a **shelter and pedestrian connection** to the parking structure.

The purpose of the mobility hub is threefold:

- Create an **improved transit network** throughout the region and state;
- Provide **mobility options for local residents and workers** in the area; and
- Provide **mobility options for visitors** to the city.

The City of Idaho Springs is currently working with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and their Department of Transit and Rail (DTR) for funding for this project. The City is also working with local businesses to obtain additional funding to ensure the project is implemented to its full potential. The mobility hub may also include relocating businesses to a more complementary location to provide better land use options directly adjacent to the hub and the parking garage.

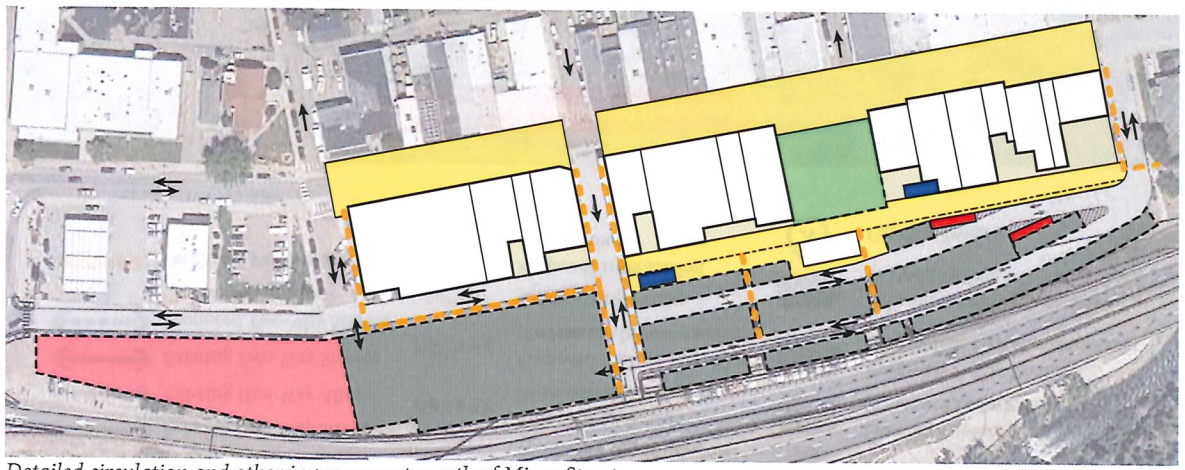
Design of the parking structure should consider the following:

- Keeping in place and incorporating the historic **Roberts Brothers garage** structure at 15th and Idaho Street.
- **Visibility of the structure from I-70** and use of signage and overall appeal to passersby.
- **Overall design** of the structure, including scale, materiality, and quality should **blend in with the historic district**. With limited time to create new guidelines, consider having the design of the parking structure follow Part Three of the city's Design Guidelines for Historic Structures.
- **Activate the parking structure** with uses other than parking. This could include space for vendors in and near the structure, use of upper deck for community events during off-peak times, public art, or more.

addressed design and activation of parking structure.

Anticipated **street circulation improvements** will provide for more direct access to the proposed parking structure and surface parking while decreasing overall traffic circulation and congestion from people looking for parking. From Exit 240 (SH103 and I-70 interchange), vehicles heading downtown will be directed to the parking **via Idaho Street** by using wayfinding and street improvements that more intuitively channelize drivers.

From Exit 241, people arriving **via Colorado Boulevard** would be directed to the parking lot and structure along Riverside Drive to Miner Street to 17th Avenue. Wayfinding signage would be provided to intuitively direct vehicles to the most available parking options.



Detailed circulation and other improvements south of Miner Street.

It is proposed that **15th and 17th Avenues**, south of Miner Street, would be **converted to two-way** streets to help assist with parking circulation so that these streets can be used both for arriving and leaving when Miner Street is closed to vehicular travel. Improved two-way circulation is also provided through the proposed improvements to the surface lot.

These improvements will reduce traffic circulation downtown by providing direct access to ample parking. In turn, overall safety is improved, as well as both the visitors' and local residents' experience of downtown. Reduced visitor traffic circulation will also result improved ease of school pick-up and drop-off at Carlson Elementary.

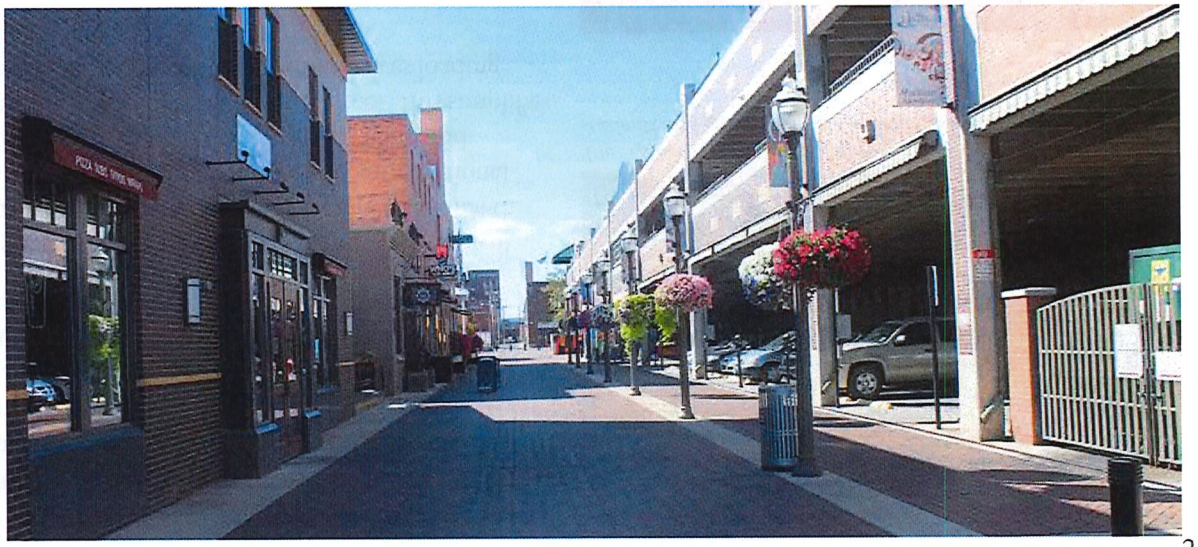
Convenient on-street parking will still be available on other downtown streets. Refer to page 21 for locations and more information.



A conceptual sketch of the proposed parking structure - looking east along Idaho Street at the entrance. The design emulates the historic parking facility that was downtown (see photo to the left). The Roberts Brothers Garage facade is seen in the distance and should be saved and incorporated into the design of the future structure.



Former parking structure in downtown (now demolished).



Right: a parking structure and improved alleyway in Rapid City, SD is similar to what is envisioned for Idaho Street.

Catalyst Project #2 - Circulator Transit

A method of circulating people from parking/dropoff areas and around the City is needed to both provide access to as well as take advantage of the centralized parking and Mobility Hub. Regional transit is provided by **CDOT's Bustang** and Clear Creek County's **RoundAbout** service, but a **local transit circulator should be considered** to complete connections within the City of Idaho Springs. This service would further the goal of having people park once and then have the ability to enjoy amenities across the city without having to drive, thus reducing circulating traffic.

A circulator route would be best served by two small 12- to 15- passenger van-type vehicles on a short loop as shown on the following page and offer pick-ups at each station location at least every 15 minutes. The quick time frame is needed for a service like this to be practical. Delays over 15 minutes will lead to underuse of the system in a location the size of Idaho Springs. The circulator should have stops approximately **every 2 to 4 blocks** depending on the location to provide access to all that Idaho Springs has to offer.

Trialing this system can be achieved within a limited budget. A trial would require rental of the vans, paid drivers, identification of the stops, magnetic branding applied to the vans, advance marketing and information campaigns. The City should consider trialing this service on moderately busy days prior to providing the service on very busy holidays. While the circulator may have the most use and impact on very busy days, routing specifics, driver breaks, the impact of heavy local traffic, and the required number of vehicles would be better understood on a less busy day. On very busy days like July 4th, the City may seek additional off-site parking locations, such as near the baseball fields on the east end of town and use the circulator to transport people between these locations. In this case, additional vehicles may need to be added to keep service times frequent.

Given that the parking in historic downtown will continue to be paid for, it is recommended that this service be **provided for free** and any additional costs to the City should come from increased parking fees or other funding sources. This simplifies payments and ticket-taking and reduces loading times.



The "Mines Rover", an autonomous electric vehicle, shuttles students and guests around Golden, Colorado.

added concept of circulator/trolley to be a catalyst project



A historic-looking, contemporary rubber wheel trolley takes guests around Staunton, Virginia.

Design of the program should consider the following:

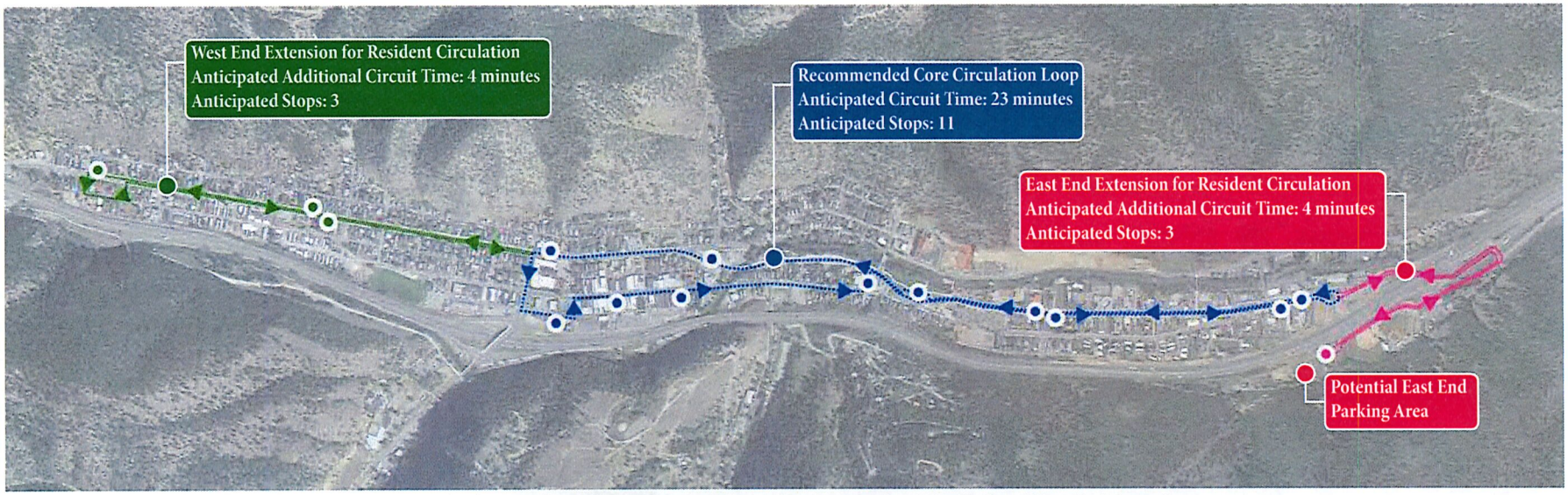
- How should the route **benefit both tourists and the local community?**
- The route should **avoid I-70** to avoid potential traffic delays in a highway setting.

Additional opportunities:

- **Continue the youth bike trolley program** to supplement the circulator, employ youth in the community, and offer a uniqu experience.
- **Offsite parking can also accommodate oversize vehicles** better than the downtown area, while still allowing easy access with the use of the circulators.
- Larger vehicles and/or accessible vehicles could be considered if the trials are successful.
- **Tour guides** could talk about the history of Idaho Springs during the trips.
- A circulator system may open the City up to additional parking that is further from Historic Downtown and accommodate additional visitors and work-force participants.



A standard passenger vehicle serves as a free circulator in Baltimore County, Maryland.



A conceptual recommended trolley route and estimated ride times for Idaho Springs includes a Core Loop with a West End and East End Extensions.

Catalyst Project #3 - Other Parking Improvements

In addition to adding a parking structure and mobility hub downtown, there are other opportunities to improve parking access and parking counts downtown, even with on-street parking spaces removed from Miner Street. Overall, the city could **gain approximately 225 spaces** overtime with these recommended improvemenets:

- **Reconfiguring the existing "South Surface Lot"** south of Miner Street - this is approximately a break-even on parking count, but would add 20 motorcycle spaces and expand public space for the pedestrian alley and accommodate consolidated trash areas.
- If/when **Carlson Elementary** relocates, this critical site should be used for mixed use development, including affordable housing and additional parking to serve downtown.
- When the clinic relocates to the new facility, the **"North Surface Lot"** at Colorado Blvd. and 16th Ave. could be expanded to accommodate more parking spaces.
- The city could create an agreement with the **Elks Lodge** to utilize their parking when they are not busy.

These combined improvements and estimated counts are provided on the table to the right.

Another parking improvement is to dedicate some parking near downtown for **oversized vehicles, RVs, and trailers.** There needs to be clear, concise **signage** directing these visitors directly to oversized parking locations so they do not clog the circulation system downtown. This concept could be combined with the trolley system to offer oversized parking further away.

addressed oversized vehicle parking



A conceptual sketch of parking that could be provided as part of a redevelopment of Carlson Elementary if/when the school relocates. Future parking could be at-grade or in a structure, depending on the redevelopment scenario.

LOCATION	EXISTING SPACES	EST. FUTURE SPACES	DESCRIPTION:
Surface Lot (14th/Idaho)	51	0	To be removed to build parking structure
New Parking Structure (14th/Idaho)	0	284	New parking structure (assume 2 levels)
South Surface Lot (15th/ Idaho)	187	186	Restripe builds on I-70 PPSL work and improves circulation and pedestrian connections
" " " (Motorcycle Parking)	0	20*	Formalized motorcycle parking (not counted in total)
Tesla Lot (14th/Miner)	13	13	To remain.
Exit 240 Lot (13th/Idaho)	38	0	To be removed when existing businesses relocate here.
Carlson Elementary (13th/ Colorado)	0	80	Future Mixed Use redevelopment to include parking component.
North Surface Lot (16th/ Colorado)	32	60	Future demo/restriping when clinic relocates.
Elks Lodge (16th/Colorado)	27	30	Resurface/formalize parking
City Hall (Riverside/Miner)	6	6	To remain.
On-Street Spaces	181	101	14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, Miner, Idaho
TOTAL	**535**	**760**	**+20 Motorcycle spaces**

This parking table estimates an additional 225 spaces that could be provided in the future (+ 20 motorcycle spaces).

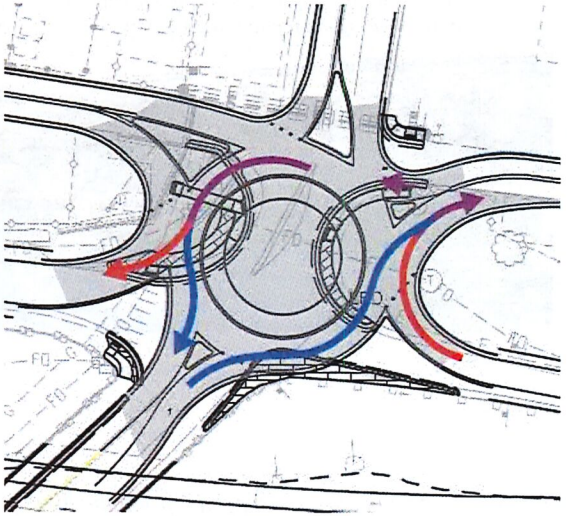
Catalyst Project #4 - Gateway Improvements

In time, two major gateways to downtown should be incorporated. They include the intersection of **Idaho Street and 13th Avenue (Exit 240)** and the intersection of **Riverside Drive and Colorado Boulevard.**

These two intersections are the primary decision points for drivers as they enter downtown. These locations should provide visible, intuitive and directional signage that **directs visitors to the parking structure and south surface lot**, which together will provide 470 spaces, the majority of downtown's supply.

These intersections are also important, as they **greet people** and provide an official arrival point to downtown from other neighborhoods and locations. They should include **enhanced landscaping, lighting, and pedestrian improvements**. Consider the following in future designs:

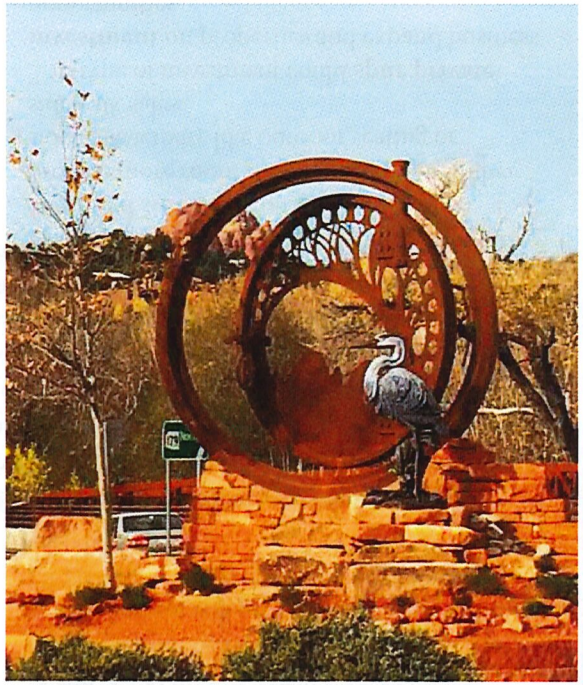
- **13th Avenue and Idaho Street** - a future **roundabout** would provide a sense of arrival from Exit 240 and intuitively direct drivers onto Idaho Street to the parking structure. The roundabout should include **landscaping, signage, and a major art/artifact** feature, like the one on Exit 241 has. If people miss the Idaho Street connection, a second opportunity would be provided at Miner Street via 15th Avenue.
- **Colorado Boulevard and Riverside Drive** - This intersection will be the primary arrival and decision point for motorists arriving via Exit 241 and Colorado Boulevard from the East End. This intersection should include lighting and banners incorporated into the bridge that crosses Clear Creek. Wayfinding signage should be provided on both sides of the bridge



Conceptual roundabout design for the intersection of Idaho Street and 13th Avenue



A "welcome" sign tells visitors they have arrived at a unique destination.



Public art can play a major role in elevating a sense of arrival at a gateway.



Signage and mining structure at the East End's gateway roundabout at Exit 241.



Enhanced landscaping adds a welcoming touch to this roundabout in Breckenridge, Co.

Other Mobility and Parking Improvements

Improved Intersections and Crosswalks - There are a number of intersection improvements the city could work on when funding is available, such as:

- **13th and Miner** - this intersection is critical to drawing people west along Miner Street. Today, this intersection is the primary auto entrance to downtown, which makes it unattractive to cross as a pedestrian. However, when future improvements are made to direct people to the new parking structure, traffic at this intersection should decrease. Improvements should include removing the dedicated right turn and creating a **four-way stop with crosswalks on all sides** and **bulbouts** to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance. This intersection should become a secondary gateway, including **signage** to key destinations and parking and **enhanced landscaping** at the corners and property lines.
- **15th, 16th, 17th Avenues and Miner Street** - today, these three intersections are unmarked, which can cause conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. The future design of Miner Street should incorporate seamless intersection designs that prioritize the pedestrian. Interim improvements could include **marking the crosswalks on all four sides** to delineate a safe space for pedestrians to cross. Alternatively, especially when the marketplace is active, **a mural that takes up the entire intersection** could provide visual interest and indicate to motorists that this is a pedestrian-friendly crossing space and to slow down.
- **16th and Colorado** - this intersection will be an important pedestrian connection from the neighborhood north of Colorado Boulevard to access downtown. Today it is unmarked, causing pedestrians to have to walk down two blocks in either direction to safely cross the street. **Adding a marked crosswalk and stop signs** at this location will provide comfortable choices for people to access downtown by foot/bike/wheelchair.

Miner Street improvements west of 13th Avenue - the city should work toward improving the streetscape and experience along Miner Street west of 13th Avenue to expand the downtown experience. This could open up new opportunity for business expansion in this area. As envisioned in the charrette, some conceptual improvements to this area could include:

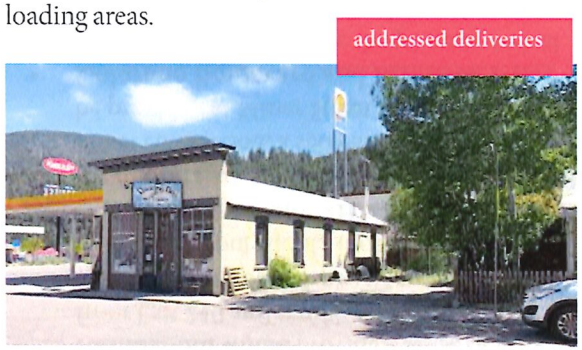
- **Widened sidewalks** on the south side to provide more room for pedestrians and other sidewalk activity like outdoor seating or sidewalk sales.
- This type of investment could **spur private investment** on properties and expand business opportunities.

Accommodating Deliveries - the city and businesses should work to implement a program for deliveries in downtown that is organized and efficient, but that does not clog up the circulation. Consider early morning hours and dedicated loading areas.



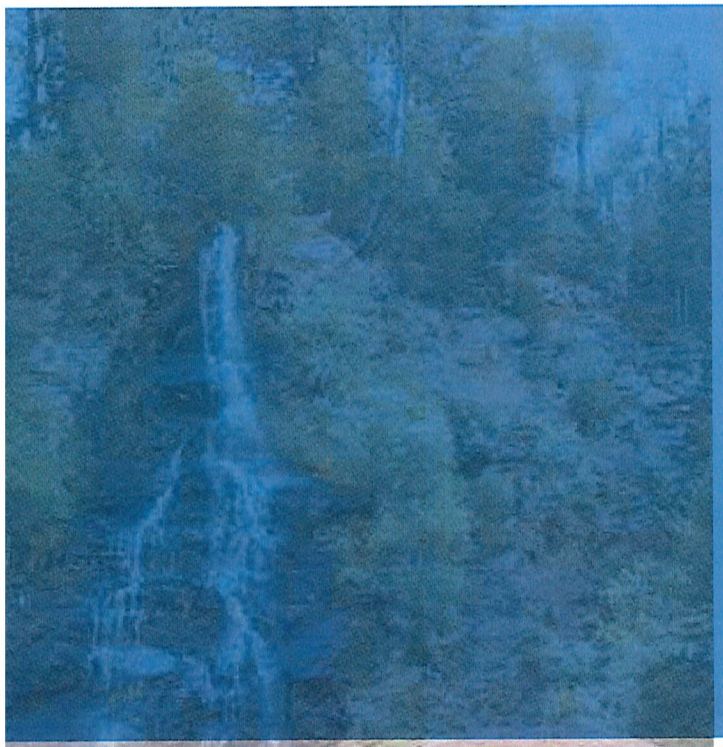


The storage building located at 12th Avenue and Miner Street across from the Rec Center is a dream to many to improve and activate. Streetscape improvements along Miner Street could help catalyze this building to be reactivated.





This conceptual before/after rendering of the Dancing Dog envisions a wide sidewalk to accommodate pedestrians and an activated vacant area that could be used as a doggie daycare so visitors and locals could leave their dog with friends while visiting downtown.





rec·re·a·tion *(noun)* - activity done for enjoyment when one is not working.

4 Tourism & Recreation

INTRODUCTION

Idaho Springs has multiple tourism and recreation draws that bring people downtown. A visit to the Argo Mine, rafting Clear Creek, ziplining along I-70, or hiking and mountain biking are all popular regional recreation and tourism draws. Within downtown, there is access to the Clear Creek Greenway, Clear Creek Recreation Center, and multiple small downtown parks for people to enjoy. However, the parks downtown lack contemporary usability and Clear Creek Greenway can be hard to find unless you know it's there.

In the community survey, the #3 thing people wanted more of downtown was outdoor space and parks. While it appears like downtown has a lot of recreation opportunity programmatically, there is opportunity to improve visibility and access to existing parks and open space, as well as modernize them so they are more useful to the community. There are also a few opportunities for new parks and open space.

This chapter sets the stage for downtown improvements for tourism and recreation, including some catalyst projects for the city to prioritize.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The primary issues for downtown recreation have to do with out-of-date spaces and lack of visibility and direction for visitors to find existing recreation assets. In addition, existing and future residents should not have to compete with visitors for use of public space, and therefore, opportunities to add more public space should be pursued. The following is a list of primary challenges and associated opportunities and outcomes for each:

Challenge #1 - Citizen's Park is downtown's premier park, but it is outdated and doesn't function well for community events.

The historic restrooms in the park are a useful amenity for Downtown and several mature trees provide much-needed shade, but the pattern of walls that line the pathways within the park make it **difficult to program** for both daily use and community events.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- **Remove landscape walls** and redesign the space to be more functional and accommodate events and gatherings to provide a true centerpiece to downtown.
- **Incorporate a stage** and design **16th Avenue** to be part of the park to expand the area and allow for larger gatherings, concerts, and events.

Challenge #2 - Anderson Park and Water Wheel Park are underutilized.

Anderson Park is situated behind City Hall at the terminus of Idahoe Mall. It features an historic railroad locomotive, which is loved by the community, but offers no other activity. It also includes a trail connection to the Clear Creek Greenway and Water Wheel Park, but again, this isn't apparent unless you know it exists.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- **Install signage** to direct users to this area.
- Incorporate **more programming**, such as picnic areas, historic kiosks, play equipment for children, festive seasonal decorations, etc. to draw more people to the area.

Challenge #3 - Clear Creek, and the Clear Creek Greenway are adjacent to downtown, but unknown to some visitors how close it is.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Explore opportunities to **bring the greenway through downtown**, or look for options to create off shoots of the path that navigate through downtown.
- Add **signage and wayfinding** both along the trail and in downtown to direct people to the trail and vice versa.

Challenge #4 - Downtown and adjacent areas lack activities for the community's youth.

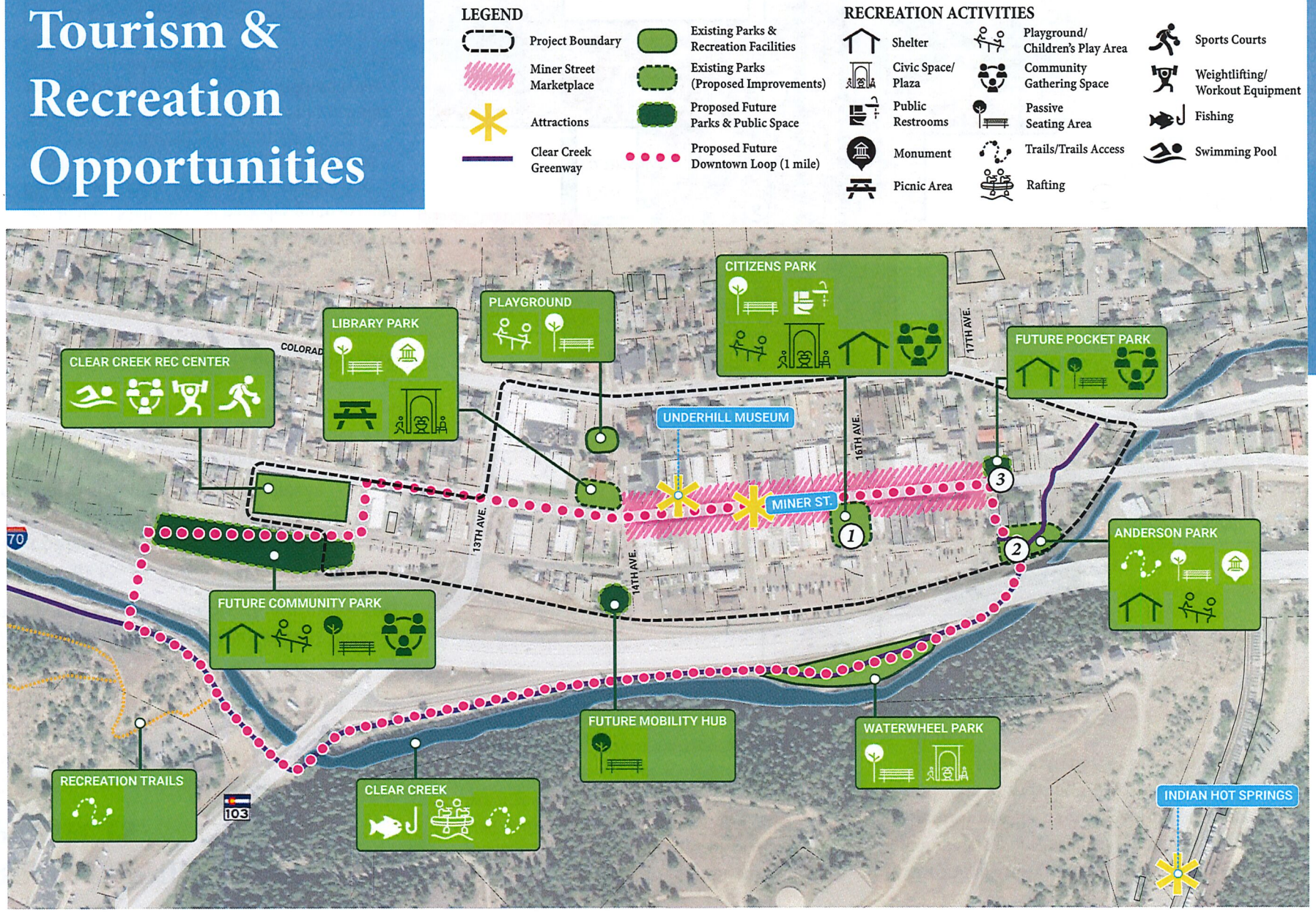
Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Partner with the Clear Creek Recreation Center and/or private companies to offer **summertime and after school programs** that involve youth in the many outdoor activities that Idaho Springs has to offer.
- Work with the community to identify the best place for placing a **skate park**.
- Find opportunities for new public space and add programming to existing public space that **prioritizes youth and families**.



The brick walls in Citizen's Park are a barrier to activating the park and using it for its intended purpose - as a gathering place in the center of downtown.

Downtown Tourism & Recreation Opportunities



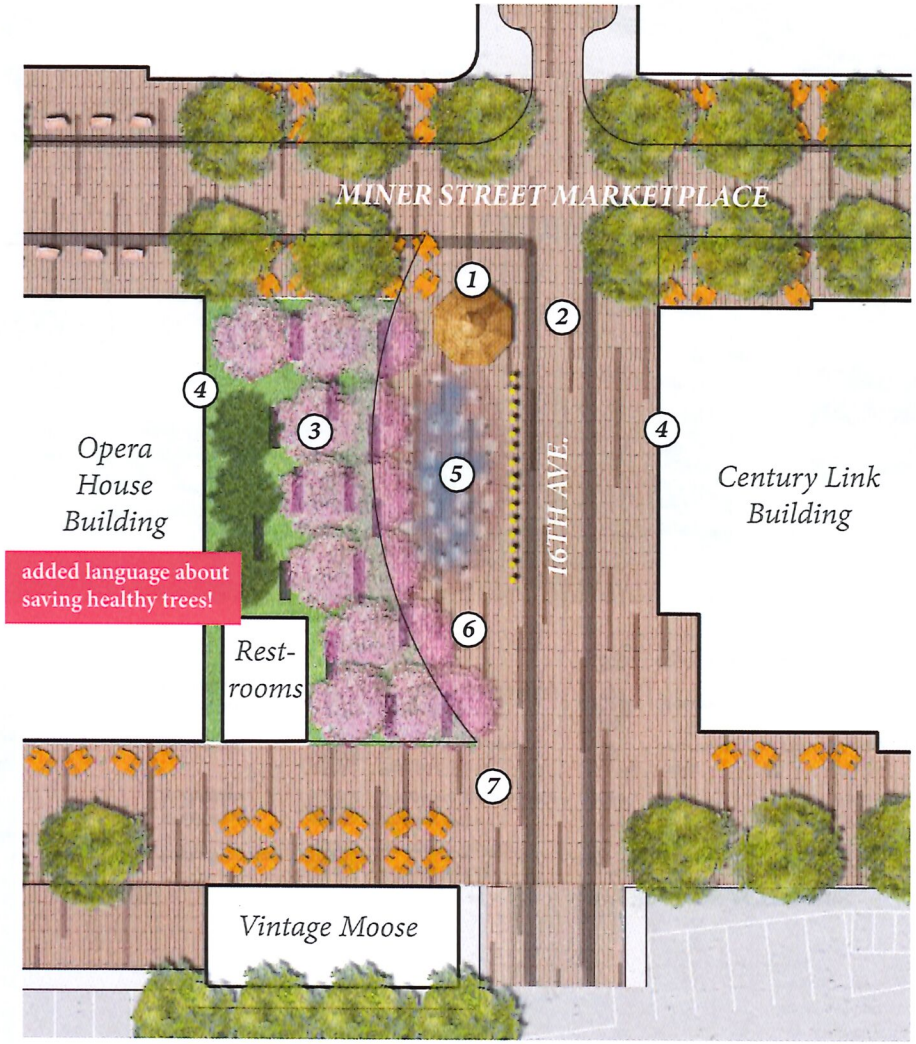
RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTS

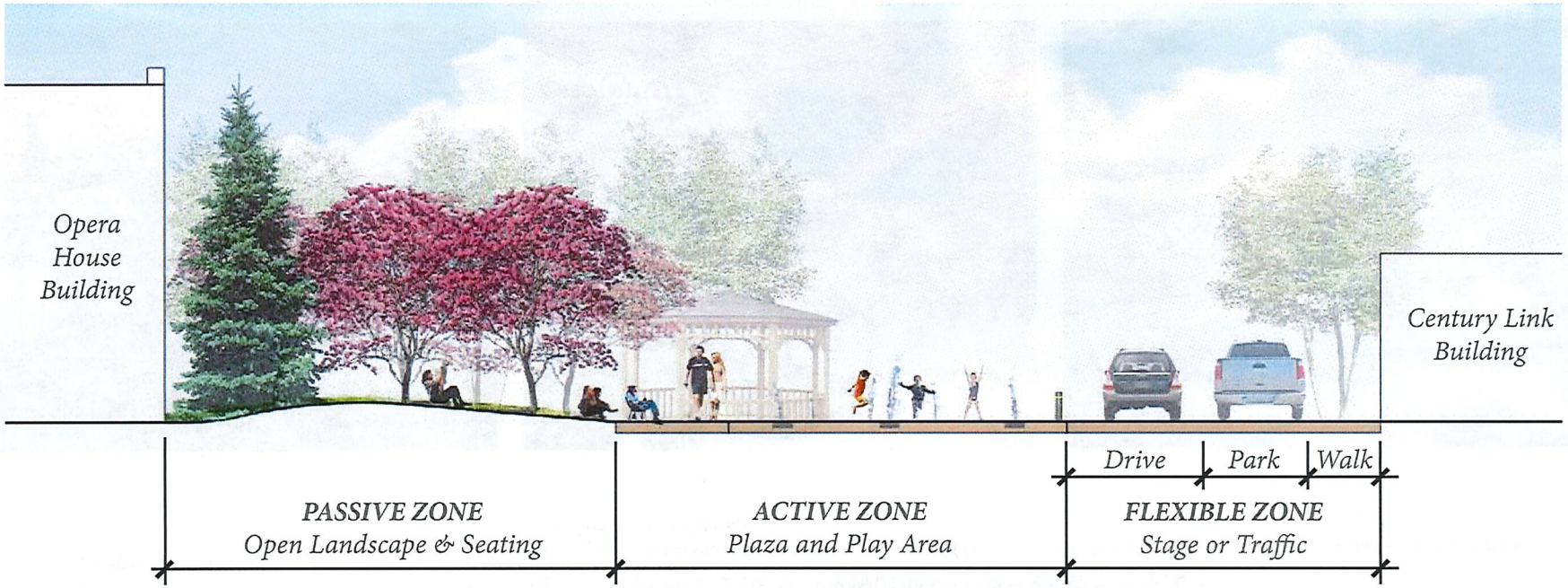
Figure X depicts graphically the potential projects for expanding recreation and tourism in downtown. The following includes a list and description of projects and recommendations, with catalyst projects described in more detail.

Catalyst Project #1 - Redesign Citizen's Park and incorporate it into Miner Street improvements.

Citizen's Park has the potential to become the **civic heart of Downtown** and a dynamic public space throughout the year. The following elements should be explored in future design development.

- **Remove low walls** that frame the pathways in the park to open up the space and allow for appropriate programming for both daily use and larger community events.
- **Remove unhealthy trees** to open up the space and create greater visibility between Miner Street and Idahoe Mall.
- **Save healthy trees,** wherever feasible, and incoporate into the future design.
- Incorporate **16th Avenue** between Miner Street and Idahoe Mall into the park design to expand the park and allow for greater flexibility. The street could still be utilized for deliveries and open to traffic during certain times/seasons.
- Add a **flexible plaza space** that could include a seasonal pop jet fountain as a children's play area. This could also be a location to put an ice rink in the winter.
- Provide space for a **stage** - either permanent or temporary, for summer concerts and events while keeping Miner Street open for circulation and access to businesses.
- Keep and **restore historic public restrooms.**
- Frame the new park with **murals** on the eastern wall of the Opera House building and the western wall of the Century Link building.
- Design the park to **flow seamlessly into Miner Street** without barriers and be designed with similar high-quality, durable materials that blend beautifully with the historic district architecture including stone, concrete pavers, brick and metal.
- Trees should have broad canopies for shade and all plantings should be hardy and well-adapted to the extremes of the **mountain climate.**







A town gathering for a concert and festival promotes a sense of community and history.



A flexible zone allows for a street to close to automobiles during a festival.



A water play children's zone offers a respite for families.

Catalyst Project #2 - Enhance and activate Anderson Park.

Anderson Park could become a destination within downtown. Consider the following improvements:

- Build a **permanent structure** to cover the historic locomotive. This will save money in the future by protecting the train and restoration that has already occurred.
- Activate the train with a **working headlight** to act as a beacon to the park and offer opportunities for children to look inside the train, blow the horn, etc.
- Add train and railroad-themed **play elements** in the surrounding area to activate the park and provide a place for families to gather.
- Surround the park with improved **landscaping, boulders, and pedestrian-scaled lighting.**
- Incorporate **kiosks** to tell the story of the park and restored locomotive.



A conceptual sketch shows how Anderson Park could be improved with a small playground, benches, landscaping, signage, and a pavilion to cover the train.







The Highline Railroad Park in Breckenridge, CO is an excellent precedent for Anderson Park improvements. The Highline Railroad Park includes a restored train with overhead pavilion and kiosk, railroad-themed playground equipment, and trail connections.

Catalyst Project #3 - Signage, Wayfinding, and Lighting Plan

A great way to enhance the user experience of downtown is to invest in a **comprehensive signage and wayfinding design master plan**. This is a low-cost, effective way to immediately improve the circulation and congestion problem by simply better directing people to destinations.

Many communities have also benefitted from a signage and wayfinding program by helping them **build their brand**. Incorporating the city logo, history, tag lines, etc. are a great way to enhance the signage package. The design of future signage should fit in with the character of the historic district. Continuing with the **railroad theme** highlighted in this plan, the signage could incorporate elements that celebrate Idaho Springs' history as a railroad community as well.

Historic kiosks should be incorporated into the signage and wayfinding plan to bring awareness of the history of Idaho Springs. The kiosks should be designed in the same family as the rest of downtown's signage plan.

Updating the lighting in downtown at the same time as the signage and wayfinding would make a big impact in the overall aesthetics of downtown. Developing a lighting plan at the same time would ensure that the user experience is enhanced in the evening as well as the daytime.

Lighting fixtures should **fit in with the historic district** in materiality and style. The city should also consider the efficiency of fixtures as well as light direction to maintain dark night skies and limit light pollution.

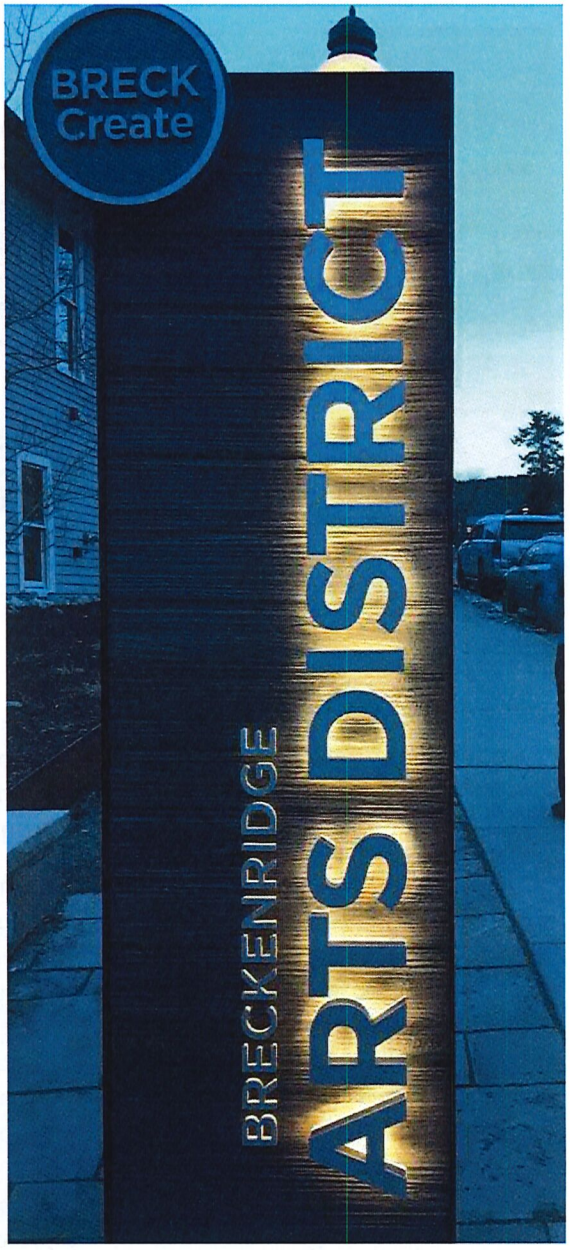
added language re: signage and lighting



The signage package should fit in with the historic charm of downtown, but be contemporary and timeless.



Signage should very clearly direct people to parking.



Lighting incorporated into signage design makes signage visible at night and promotes additional sense of safety.

Other Tourism and Recreation Projects.

Pocket Park at Miner Street and 17th Ave. - this unused, vacant lot provides an opportunity for a **small community park** opposite City Hall. The following elements should be explored in future design development. A conceptual sketch is shown to the right.

- Use the exterior wall of the building to the north for a **large public mural**.
- Add a **small pavilion or gazebo** structure with benches.
- Incorporate **passive seating areas and new trees and public art**.
- This space could be used by the city to host **outdoor events,** City Council and other board meetings, as well as be a passive park for daily use.

Library Park Improvements - Library Park is undergoing improvements that will include the following:

- A new **central plaza** area with **benches** centered on the park;
- An **expanded hardscaped plaza** at the corner of Miner and 14th;
- An updated **World War II Memorial** along Miner Street;
- **Picnic area** and improved **landscaping and pathways**.

Future Mobility Hub Public Space - some sort of public plaza space should be incorporated into the future mobility hub and parking structure. The design of this space will depend on the location and available space.

Future Community Park at Four Points - a community park is proposed to be included south of the Clear Creek Recreation Center as part of the Four Points development. This park is currently conceptual and will evolve through conversations with the public, but could include **community-serving elements** such as a playground, flexible lawn/gathering area, seating/picnic areas, a shelter, etc.

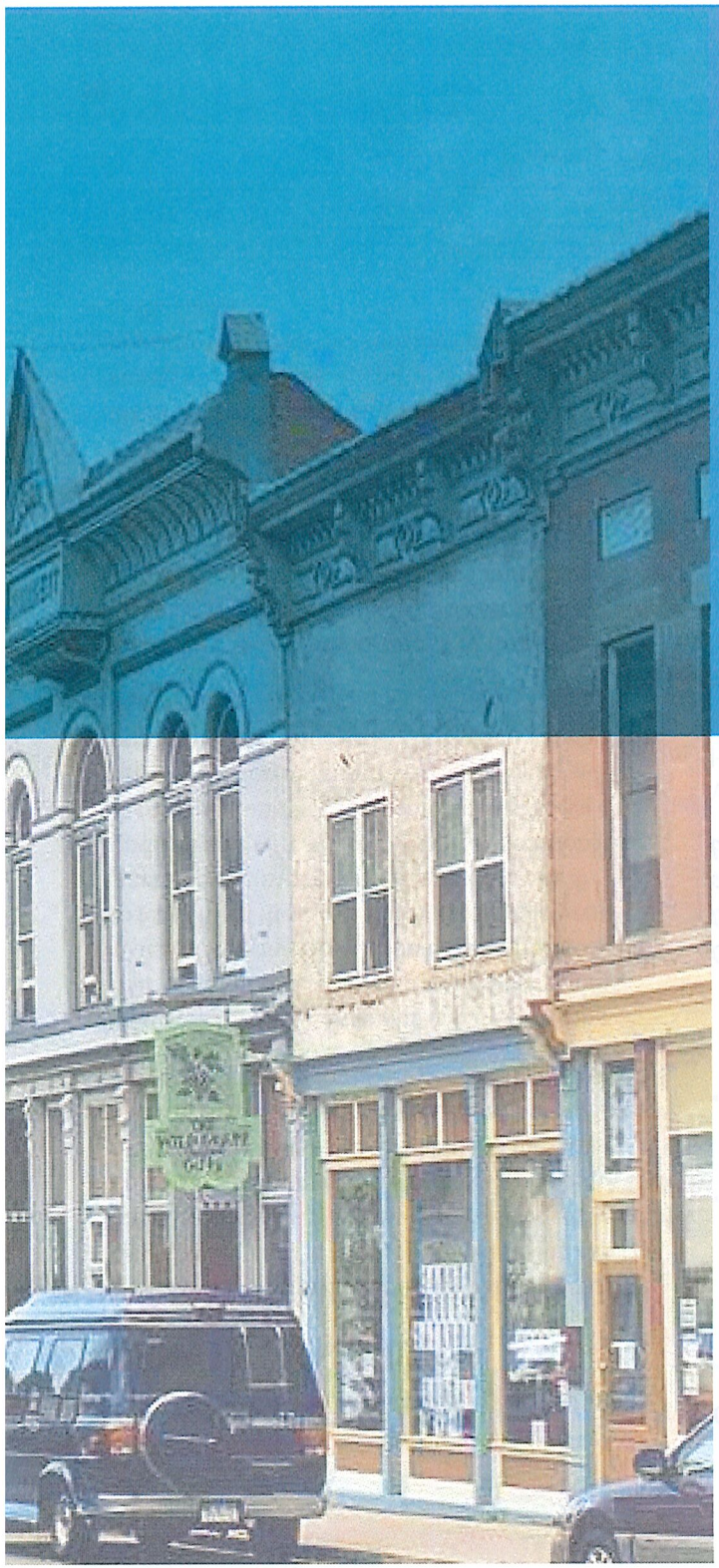
This park would bring much-needed open space to serve existing and future residents downtown and could serve to **draw people west of 13th** Avenue when downtown. Further, there is potential for a **future pedestrian bridge** across I-70 in this general vicinity, which would further open up recreation and connectivity opportunities.

Future Downtown Loop - a longer-term "big idea" is to create a **one-mile loop** through downtown and across I-70 to the Clear Creek Greenway. This would provide an active way to enjoy downtown, while visiting the multiple parks and businesses along the way. Residents and students could enjoy the path for regular outings and exercise. The pathway could be branded and include unique historic and educational stopping points along the way. This concept would be dependent on a crossing of I-70 west of downtown, but the rest would be rather simple to implement.

More Trails - the city should continue to explore opportunities to add trails near downtown where people could walk or bike from downtown to access them.



A conceptual sketch shows the potential for activating the northeast corner of 17th and Miner with a gazebo with benches and steps up to an elevated lawn including trees and landscaping. The space would be framed with a mural on the blank wall.



vi·tal·i·ty *(noun)* - the state of being strong and active; energy.

5 Land Use & Vitality

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Idaho Springs has a strong retail and restaurant economy with low commercial vacancy rates. While some communities, especially due to Covid-19 effects, are contracting, Idaho Springs could look to **expand commercial opportunities**. However, with limited building stock, most of which is historic, and no vacant land, there is a challenge to expanding the downtown business inventory to meet demand.

Most downtown businesses tend to cater to the tourists, which poses a challenge for locals. **Locals desire more daily uses** downtown that could benefit them as well - uses like a daycare, dry cleaning, small grocery store, hair salons, and nightlife - like a performance venue to see live music or movies.

There are a few housing units in the downtown study area, most of which are along Colorado Boulevard. The majority of these homes are single family units, which is illegal in the zoning, making them nonconforming and hard to make improvements to. Downtown could benefit from **more full-time residents** to add to the vitality and liveliness, especially in the shoulder seasons.

Lastly, there are **no hotels** downtown which make it hard to capture guests for more than a couple hours. Adding a boutique hotel in or near downtown could also benefit the vitality.

This chapter sets the stage for downtown improvements for land use and vitality, including some catalyst projects for the city to prioritize.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown is primarily commercial space that caters to the tourist, with minimal housing choices and local services. Business owners struggle to keep employees and some locals avoid downtown. A **true mixed use downtown** could blend these assets and improve the vitality and economic sustainability while maintaining the character that everyone loves.

Miner Street and Idahoe Mall are destinations that have blended the public and private realms, especially during Covid. There is an opportunity to learn from these experiments to implement **permanent improvements** that provide an updated and refreshed, 21st century solution for these spaces and how they interact with adjacent uses. The following summarizes challenges and opportunities, as voiced by the public, stakeholders, and the city:

Challenge #1 - There is a lack of housing downtown which limits daily, everyday use and activity primarily to guests and employees.

There is approximately 40,000 square feet of space on 2nd stories on the three blocks between 14th and 17th Avenues. This could easily provide **40-50 sizeable dwelling units** for employees, young professionals, or empty nesters. There is also opportunity to expand housing options downtown in the future.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- **Address regulations** that prevent using upper stories, like parking requirements or strict change of use triggers. Refer to Appendix X for more detailed information and recommendations.
- If and when the elementary school relocates, this site should be used for **mixed income housing with a public/shared parking** component.
- Work with the Four Points developer to ensure attainable housing is provided and consider **incentives for affordable** rental and/or for-sale units.

Challenge #2 - Even if more housing units were to come available, given current trends in the state and region, there is a risk that they will not be affordable to most.

With the acceleration of work from home options, high quality of life cities like Idaho Springs continue to be sought after for higher-income workers. There are new opportunities to regulate affordable housing that could curb this trend.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

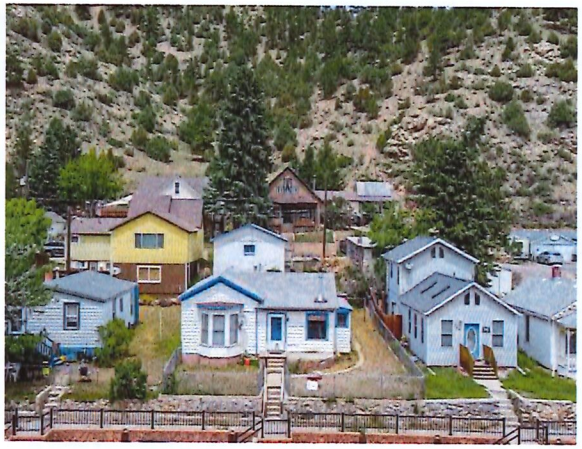
- As of September 2021, Colorado House Bill 21-1117 will allow local jurisdictions to enact **inclusionary zoning** and require options for contributing to affordable housing needs.
- Additionally, House Bill 21-1271 provides funding, offered in the form of **grants to local governments**, to assist with promoting affordable housing policies.
- The city should explore all options as soon as possible.

Challenge #3 - Single family homes along Colorado Boulevard are non-conforming and could be at risk for demolition.

There are multiple single family homes that are not allowed under current zoning. As land and housing costs rise, they could be at risk to demolition. The comprehensive plan calls for this area to **maintain its residential character**, while becoming more **mixed use.**

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Consider **zoning changes or an overlay** and **design guidelines** to match the vision in the comprehensive plan, such as allowing by-right single-family homes, duplexes, ADUs, home occupations, and childcare services, and offer incentives to increase affordable housing stock in this area.
- This area is also appropriate for **converting homes to commercial space**, if more housing is being built to accommodate residents first.



Downtown and nearby neighborhoods lack housing diversity which puts affordability even more at risk.

Challenge #4 - Downtown feels like it ends at 13th Avenue.

This is primarily due to the auto-oriented intersection and lack of commercial land uses to draw people further.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- Encourage **infill redevelopment and adaptive reuse** of vacant buildings. This could be a great area to add more local-oriented businesses and services.
- Expand **streetscape amenities** west of 13th Avenue and make intersection improvements to Miner and 13th to prioritize pedestrian movement. When the parking structure is built, vehicles will be encouraged to use Idaho Street, which will help with the impacts of this intersection.

Challenge #5 - Miner Street and Idahoe Mall experimented with new configurations and functioning of public space during the pandemic - to great success - but their designs did not easily accommodate innovation.

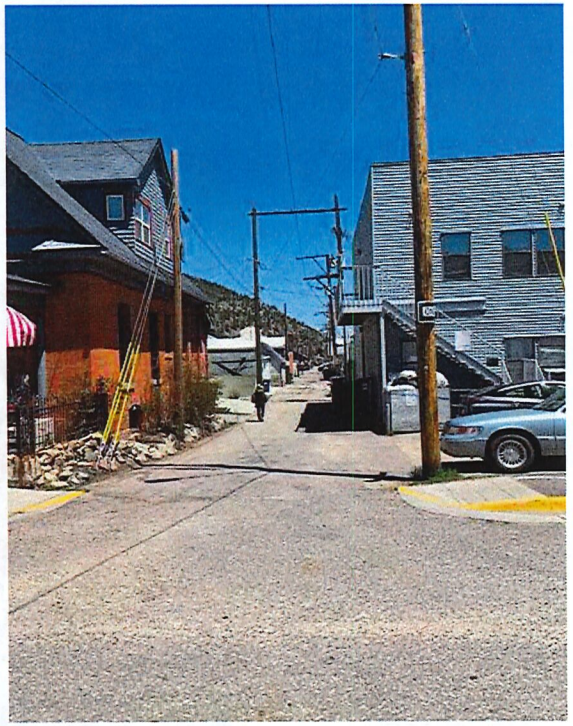
Covid-19 led many cities to experiment with open streets concepts, including Idaho Springs. Miner Street Marketplace was a hit, and faired well for downtown vitality from a tax income perspective, but the design was a mash up and free-for-all based on what the city and private business owners could pull together. Now is the time to rethink these important public spaces for the next evolution.

Opportunities and Outcomes:

- **Explore alternatives** for Miner Street that can better accommodate an "open street" concept that improves the functionality and aesthetic of the street.
- Consider **improvements to Idahoe Mall** to upgrade the experience, provide more space, consolidate utilities/back of house functions, and activate it with new uses.



Downtown feels like it ends at 13th Avenue with no signage and three gas stations.



Center Alley has potential to become a more welcoming pedestrian space and could be activated by new uses.



Miner Street experimented with new configurations during Covid-19 to allow for expanded areas for people to dine and gather.



Citizen's Park low walls provide a place to sit, but limit the amount of activities that can occur in the space.

Downtown Land Use & Vitality Opportunities



RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTS

The diagram on page 40 depicts graphically the potential projects for improving land use and vitality downtown. The following includes a list and description of projects and recommendations, with catalyst projects described in more detail.

Catalyst Project #1 - Provide short- and long-term solutions for redesigning Miner Street to accommodate an "open street" concept while not precluding auto travel during non-peak times.

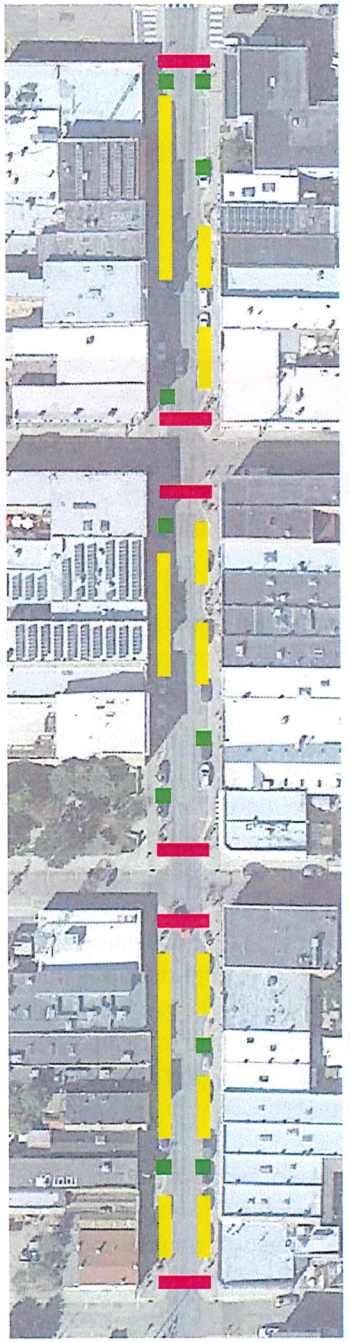
Right-of-way is limited in the historic district, with only 52-feet between buildings. Currently, the street caters to vehicles, including parking on both sides of the street and two lanes of travel. In turn, sidewalks are extremely narrow for the amount of pedestrians. During Covid, the city explored two scenarios - during the winter, Miner Street functioned as a one-way eastbound street with parking on the south side of the street and expanded outdoor dining on the north side; and in the summer, the street was completely closed to vehicles. Alternatives were explored for the future design of Miner Street and ultimately, this plan recommends a hybrid street where the future design functions like a 21st Century pedestrian mall during peak times while allowing auto access during non-peak times with no parking to expand sidewalks and cafe dining areas.

NEAR-TERM DESIGN TREATMENT

In the near-term, the city should focus on unifying design elements and testing the preferred alternative final design, including:

- Creating **custom dining parklets** that can be placed in front of restaurants where on-street parking used to be. These parklets should include a **raised deck** to meet the curb and provide ADA accessibility. If the city wants to explore off-peak auto access, a substantial **landscaped barrier/wall treatment** to define the space and protect diners should also be included. Within the raised deck areas, restaurants would be responsible for adding their own seating and decor.
- Other design treatment should include **large moveable planters** throughout that include small trees and flower beds to emulate future street trees and landscaping.
- Repurpose and expand on the 2021-initiated **barriers** that include flowers with **custom banner signage and lighting** as a gateway feature.
- Repurpose 2021-purchased public **picnic tables** to be placed in areas adjacent to the curb that are not dedicated for restaurants and add more, as needed.
- Allow retailers to utilize the curb space as well, for sidewalk sales or other use.
- Maintain a **clear central pathway** for pedestrians and district-wide activities and, if desired during off-peak seasons, introduce auto travel.

A diagram to the right identifies conceptual locations for the dining parklets, gateway intersection barriers, and large-scale planters. Precedent images are shown on the following page.





Alternative #1 shows a short-term configuration of Miner Street with consistent decking and large-scale planters.



Alternative #2 looked at the potential of Miner Street as a one-way street.



Alternative #3 envisioned a full-time pedestrian mall with no auro traffic allowed.

LONG-TERM DESIGN TREATMENT

In the long-term, a contemporary redesign of Miner Street from 14th to 17th Avenues should be explored, that also incorporates Citizen's Park, 16th Avenue, and Idahoe Mall and Center Alley. Of course, this will need to be phased and funding a project of this scale will take time and multiple sources and partners. However, it is worth it to "think big" about the future of downtown and how it's public spaces are used.

To improve circulation through downtown, one-way operation on Miner Street was considered. This could provide add-on benefits in reduced traffic volumes and additional pedestrian space on Miner Street. However, due to the narrowness of the City of Idaho Springs and limited ability to create a one-way couplet (a set of two one-way streets complementing each other; one in each direction) and given that Miner Street, Colorado Blvd, and Virginia Street are the only east/west options for drivers, a one-way operation is not recommended due to anticipated travel delays and congestion on the other, limited east/west travel routes. Additional traffic study and analysis is suggested if broad support for a one-way operation of Miner Street persists.

The following describes conceptual design-level recommended improvements:

- First, Miner Street would be converted to a **curbless street** so that the entire street would be at the same level as storefronts (some ramps may be necessary due to elevations of historic buildings.) **Stormwater drains** would be placed at either side within the pedestrian/auto zone. Paving treatment should be **standard units** to be easily replaced while fitting the character of the historic district as well as the harsh mountain climate. Consider underground heat, perhaps using passive/recycled heat from underground utilities, to maintain snow removal.
- Outside of the clear area and stormwater drains, **street trees and boulders** would be placed in a consistent pattern to add greenery and a mountain-feel. These would be easy to maintain and **seasonal planters** could be added for additional color.
- When vehicular travel is allowed, the design allows for **loading/unloading zones and ADA parking** in dedicated zones per block.
- Finally, **lighting** would be upgraded that fits in with the historic character, but is modernized and efficient while maintaining dark skies.

Sections on the next page show the two different configurations of the street. A rendering and precedent images as well as an illustrative plan are provided on the following pages.

- addressed ramps to meet elevations of historic buildings
- addressed loading/unloading/ADA spaces when travel allowed.
- addressed consideration of one-way on Miner Street.



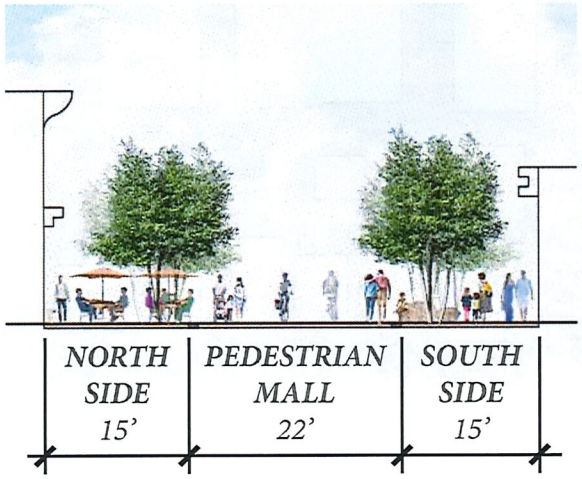
The recommended design for Miner Street includes a flexible street that can be closed to automobiles during peak seasons to expand areas for outdoor dining, shopping, gathering, live music, games, and more.

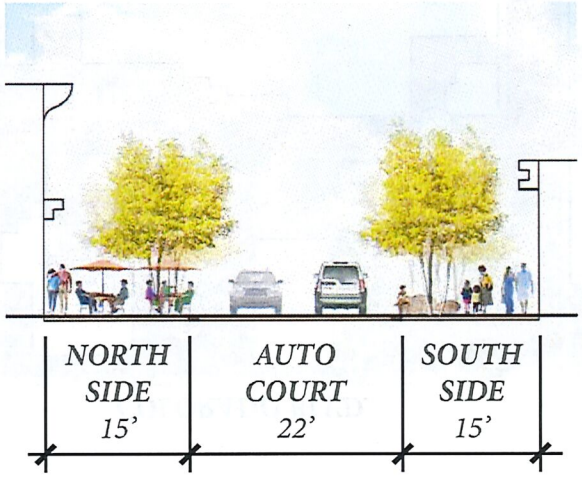


Alternative #4, a hybrid configuration that allows two-way traffic in off-peak seasons and a pedestrian mall during peak seasons is ultimately recommended.



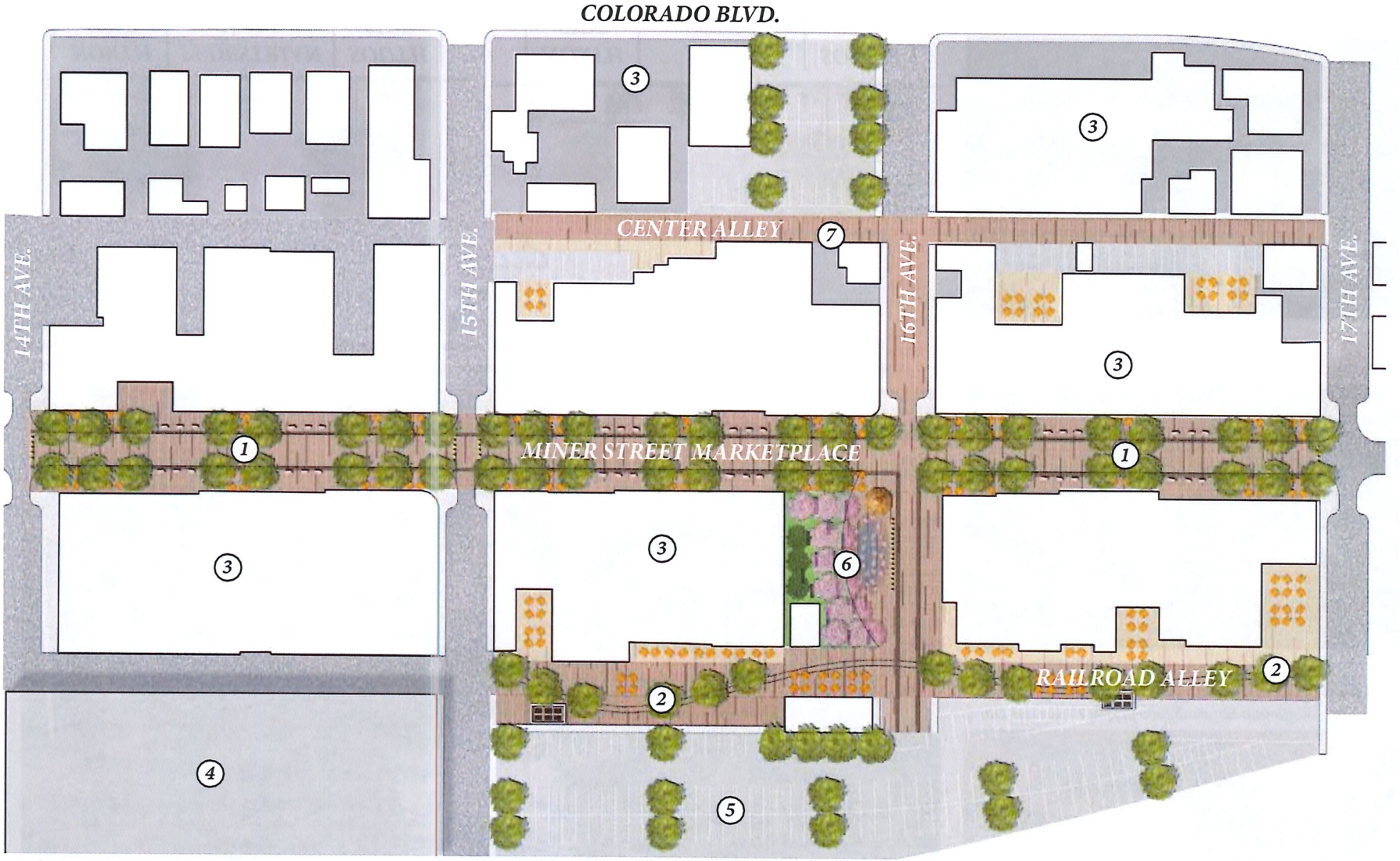
Diners sit under mature trees to dine on a flexible pedestrian street.







A contemporary design of a curbless, flexible street in a historic area - similar to the recommended design for Miner Street.



1. *Catalyst Project #1 - Miner Street Marketplace, a curbless street design from 14th to 17th - see pages 37-39.*
2. *Catalyst Project #2 - Railroad Alley (currently called Idahoe Mall) improvements - see page 41.*
3. *Catalyst Project #3 - Regulatory Changes and Incentives to Create a True Mixed Use, Vibrant Downtown.*
4. *Future public parking structure - see Chapter 3.*
5. *Reconfigured public parking lot - see Chapter 3.*
6. *Citizen's Park improvements - see Chapter 4.*
7. *Center Alley improvements - see page XX.*

update graphic to include dedicated loading/unloading/ ADA parking areas - one per block face. Idea: when it's a pedestrian mall, these could be used for buskers and small performances.

Catalyst Project #2 - Idahoe Mall (Railroad Alley) rebranding, enhanced design, and activation.

Idahoe Mall is a two-block long converted alley to pedestrian mall south of Miner Street between 15th and 17th Avenues. Historically, the Colorado & Southern Railroad ran along this right-of-way going from Union Station to Georgetown and Silver Plume - and beyond! There is a desire to bring back this historical significance through future design elements and rebranding. The redesign of **"Railroad Alley"** should take place when the parking lot is reconfigured to the south.

In recent years, businesses like Westbound and Down and the Vintage Moose have opened onto the pedestrian mall creating a more vibrant place. However, the majority of buildings still turn their back to the mall, creating a conflict for realizing the space's full potential. The following are a list of recommended improvements:

- The mall will gain approximately **20 feet of additional space** to the south between 15th and 16th Avenues. The extra space should be designed to include a **common trash enclosure** for the block to share, as well as **additional outdoor seating** for businesses and a **wide meandering pathway**.
- The **trash enclosure design** should fit in with the character of the mall design and historic district.
- The improved mall design should incorporate **rails embedded in the paving** that leads to the train at Anderson Park.
- The improved mall design should include **common unit pavers** that fit in with the historic brick buildings. This could be the same pavement used along Miner Street, but is not necessary.
- **Steel and wood** should also be incorporated to bring out the railroad theme. Consider **railroad tie bollards** (using square rough-sawn lumber) along the southern edge and **black steel pedestrian lighting fixtures, benches, and bike racks.**
- Other **historical elements** should be incorporated such as **"railroad crossing" signs** where pedestrians cross to and from the parking lot; **interpretive signage** telling the history and significance of the railroad in Idaho Springs; **historic artifacts** like a switchstand; and more.
- **Street trees and landscaping** should be added to buffer the area from parking. Visibility from the highway should also be considered when placing street trees to **avoid blocking key views**. Street trees should be placed in grates (black steel or paver grates) to maximize walking areas.
- **Dedicating space to vendors** along the alley is desired, and should prioritize locals and youth in the community.

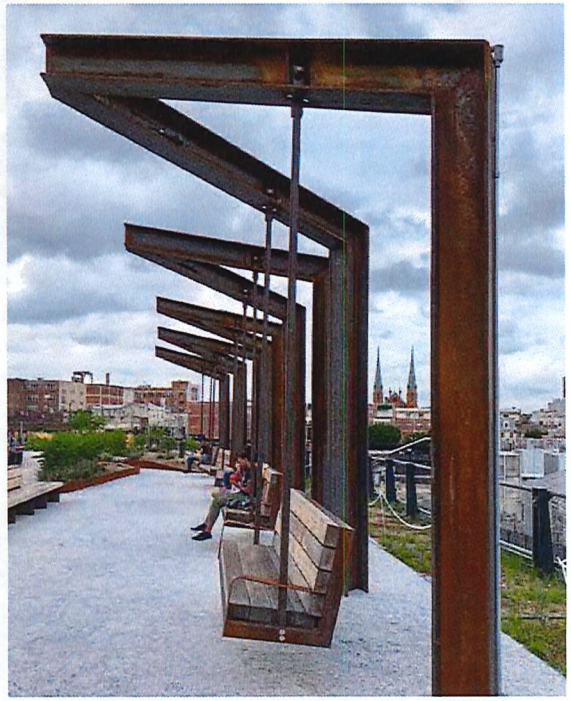
added language about vendors.



Interpretive signage using railroad elements elevates the significance of the railroad in the design and tells the story of a former place, such as this sign along the Santa Paula Branch Trail in Santa Paula, CA.



Union Station in Denver, CO incorporates stone kiosks and rails into pavers in the main plaza that adds history and whimsy to the experience.



Incorporate steel and wood into the design of the space, like the Rail Park in Philadelphia, PA did with swings (above).

Catalyst Project #3 - Regulatory Changes and Incentives to Create a True Mixed Use, Vibrant Downtown.

Downtown could benefit from simply eliminating barriers to allow the private sector to deliver improvements to downtown from a land use perspective. Simply, this includes the ability to add more housing units and business opportunities to downtown. As stated previously, in the historic district alone, more than 40 housing units could be added on upper floors of existing buildings. Further, new units could be incorporated or added onto existing properties.

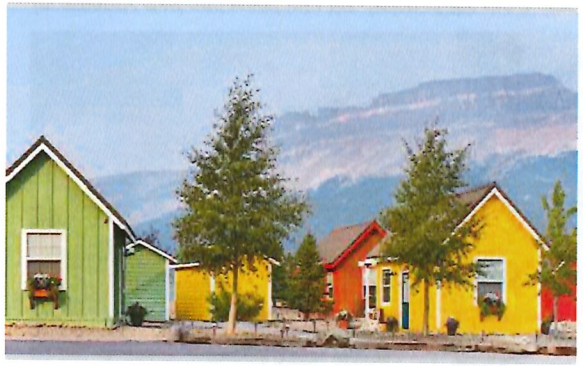
In terms of expanding business opportunities, activating vacant and underutilized buildings are an opportunity. There are some critical recommendations for each:

To create more housing downtown:

- **Remove parking requirements for the historic district, regardless of use.** These properties were built prior to zoning regulations and therefore are not designed to accommodate current parking requirements. This does not preclude someone from providing parking behind their building with access from the alley - but by not requiring it, can make redevelopment of these units more feasible and affordable.
- **Prioritize affordable housing on public and large redevelopment sites.** For example, if Carlson Elementary School relocates, this site should include an agreement that any redevelopment include a certain amount of affordable housing units. Other large development sites, such as Four Points, should also contribute to affordable housing needs.
- **Encourage existing property owners to add units,** such as accessory dwelling units or turning a single family home into a duplex. This is especially appropriate for houses along Colorado Boulevard and directly adjacent to the Downtown Plan study area boundary.
- **Provide incentives** for the private market to deliver units, such as reduced fees, expedited permitting, density bonuses, and parking reductions.

To create more business opportunities downtown:

- **Update allowable use table(s)** to ensure that a variety of uses are allowed.
- **Address change of use** triggers and building code requirements that could be a barrier to adaptively reusing existing buildings.
- Permit two (or more) businesses to **share a single space** to maximize efficiency and encourage low-risk entrepreneurship.
- **Encourage** landowners to activate vacant and underutilized space. If they are unwilling to make permanent improvements, consider the ability to create **"pop up" retail** where only temporary improvements are needed and address any barriers to temporary use permits.
- **Offer incentives** to property owners that activate alleys and offer opportunities for start-ups and micro retail.



Tiny Homes offer affordable options while fitting in with the quaint character.



A modular accessory dwelling unit could be used as housing or, if facing an alley, could be commercial/retail.



An arts and crafts festival allows small, local vendors to sell their goods.

Other Land Use & Vitality Projects

Downtown Mural Program - design and implement murals on key downtown buildings to help frame open space and enhance the downtown experience. Murals should fit in with the historic district, highlighting the history of important events and people of Idaho Springs. Specifically, the following buildings are priorities:

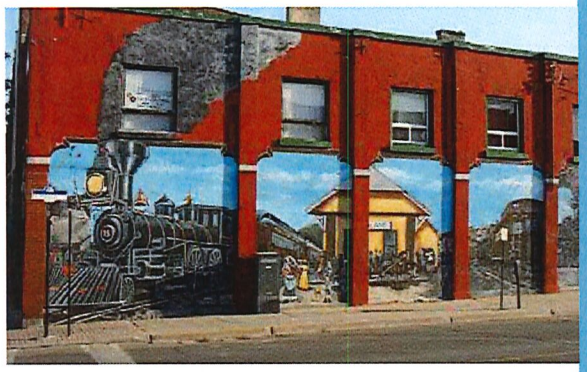
- East facade of the Opera House building facing Citizen's Park
- South facade of 210 17th Avenue facing the proposed pocket park across from City Hall.
- The Century Link building at 16th & Miner.
- Other opportunities, as property owners are willing and space is available.

Center Alley Redesign and Activation - redesign Center Alley from 14th to 17th to become a one-way, multimodal, pedestrian-friendly space. Infrastructure and stormwater issues should be addressed at time of redesign and reconstruction. Encourage existing buildings and uses to activate the alley with double-sided entrances, patio seating, accessory retail/micro-retail uses, etc.

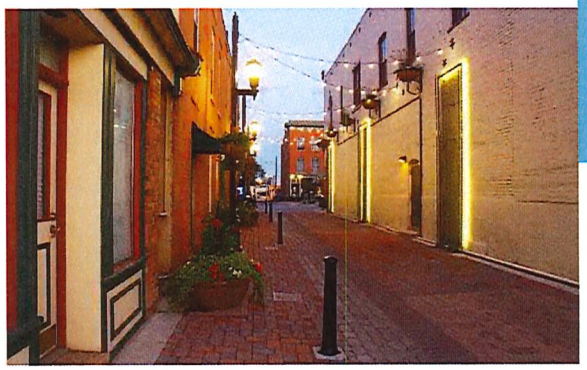
Redevelopment of Private Parcels and Public-Private Partnerships- the city should continue to find opportunities to work with the private sector in delivering downtown goals, such as increasing affordable housing supply, providing community amenities, and improving the overall aesthetic of downtown.

Camping, hostels, or other low-cost hospitality in or near downtown - downtown could benefit from more overnight accommodation opportunities. With limited available land, the city should support every opportunity to provide overnight stays, especially affordable ones. The city could consider a small campground within walking distance or trolley ride to downtown, such as at the old high school or ball fields. These affordable overnight stays that take advantage of the natural setting of Idaho Springs and offer a unique experience using a European model could make for a unique attraction, especially for the Front Rangers.

added concept of unique camping/glamping experience near downtown re: European model.



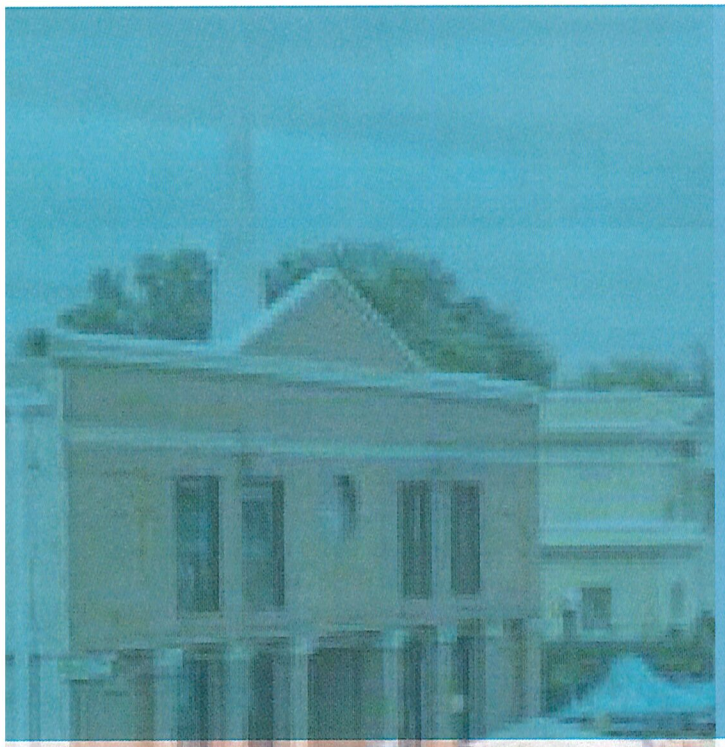
A mural celebrates the history of railroads.



Lighting in an alley provides a sense of safety, even when shops are closed.



Yurts or other affordable camping experience near downtown could offer benefits to downtown.





6 Implementation

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides detail on recommended capital improvements and other investments, as well as a review of funding sources and financing strategies that may be utilized to complete the recommended projects. This chapter also includes recommendations for strengthening downtown organization and management in order to implement the recommended projects as well as to coordinate downtown marketing and promotional activities.

This chapter should be used as a tool to implement the downtown plan recommendations. While it is desired that the recommended improvements be put in place as soon as possible, it is not feasible to think that everything in this plan will be able to happen in the next 5-10 years. Therefore, the city must remain flexible and prioritize the most important projects and work with the private sector to partner and assist in delivering some of the desired outcomes if and when redevelopment of private property takes place.

The implementation table at the end of this chapter should be a useful tool to stay on track and check progress over the next 10-15 years. Note that rough cost estimates are provided, as they will need to be more detailed at the time of implementation.

FUNDING TOOLS

Recommended funding strategies for the Master Plan aim to utilize existing City revenue and external funding – **no new taxes or revenue streams have been recommended**. Many of these funding sources – including the Capital Improvements Plan, the Sales Tax Improvement Fund, the Street Sales Tax, and the General Fund – would involve staff and/or Council directing existing revenue to projects outlined in this plan. **There have not been any new taxes or fees proposed for implementation to fund the proposed improvement projects.**

The Plan does **recommend the formation of an entity to manage downtown activities going forward and with the ability to raise additional funds through tax increment financing (TIF).** TIF would allow the property taxes generated by new development to be collected by the authority to apply to public improvement projects. A URA cannot issue new taxes. However, a DDA could potentially also levy a 5 mill property tax, but this would be subject to the approval of the property owners in the DDA boundary if this entity were formed. Lastly, all grants and other funding sources identified in the Plan are externally generated. While some may require matching local funds, these can often be dedicated from the General Fund (out of existing revenue).

Existing Local Sources

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): The City's CIP is not a funding source per se but rather a planning tool for prioritizing capital project based on available funding. The five-year CIP identifies planned capital improvement projects and their estimated costs, and provides a forecast of funds available for capital projects. For 2021, the Plan lists $4.1 million in projects including three projects included in the Master Plan; $65,000 to fund the plan itself, $500,000 for parking structure design, and $250,000 for Train Restoration in Anderson Park. For 2022, The CIP anticipates $7.3 million in projects including $5.0 million for Parking Garage construction (subject to further financing refinements). For 2023 to 2025 the CIP estimates $750,000 to $1.0 annually for street improvements and property acquisitiont.

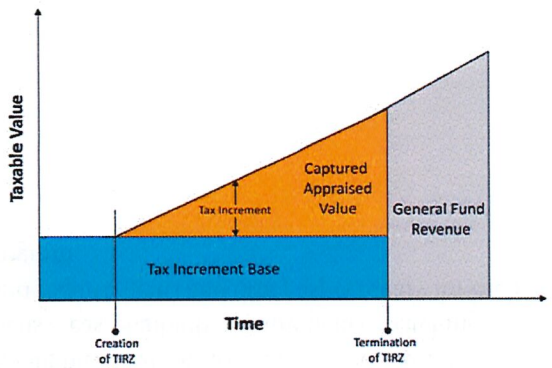
General Purpose Sales Tax: The City currently has a 3% general purpose sales and use tax of which the City allocates 2% to the general fund and 1% to the Sales Tax Improvement Fund dedicated to capital projects. The 1% sales tax generates approximately **$750,000 a year** in revenues. Other funding sources channeled to the Sales Tax Improvement Fund are grants which vary from year to year.

Street Sales Tax: There is also a 1% Street Sales Tax for street improvements. The tax paid for a $18.0 million bond issue of which $10.5 million was used for street improvements in 2020 including reconstruction of Colorado Boulevard. In the 2021 Budget, the Street Sales Tax Fund has beginning balance of $1.5 million with **$750,000** expected in new revenues and approximately $700,000 in bond payments.

General Fund: Although the City plans to fund most capital improvements through the Sales Tax Improvement Fund, there is also the ability to fund smaller projects and operating and administrative projects out of the annual general fund operating budget.

Tax Increment Financing: A potential funding and financing tool that could be utilized in downtown is tax increment financing (TIF). Tax increment financing is a tool used by cities to **finance public improvements and infrastructure within a defined area.** Future tax revenues from participating taxing entities can be used to pay for improvements. The additional tax revenue produced from new development within the plan area is referred to as the tax increment. For the area subject to TIF, the taxable increment base is set or "frozen" at a specified date, either when the plan area is created or at a later point in time. After this date, any new tax revenues generated as a result in an increase in assessed value due to new development would be redirected to the TIF zone to pay for eligible project expenses (Figure 10-1)

In Colorado, TIF can be implemented by Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs) or by Urban Renewal Authorities (URAs). DDAs allow for the use of property tax increment from all taxing units within the authority's boundary including the city, county, school district, and any applicable special taxing districts. However, URAs, due to recent legislative modifications and restrictions, participation by each taxing unit is now voluntary; each can choose to dedicate all, a portion, or to exclude its revenues from a TIF zone.



Tax Increment Financing establishes a base (blue) at a specified date where any new tax revenues generated as a result of incrased values (orange) are collected and used for improvements.

State and Federal Funding

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties for economic development, affordable housing, and public infrastructure for low and moderate income census tracts. Entitlement communities (greater than 50,000 population) receive a direct annual allocation from HUD. Smaller communities are eligible to apply for grants under an annual allocation from HUD to the state administered by DOLA in Colorado. In FY 2021, DOLA had $22.1 million in CDBG funds to distribute. Eligible public improvements include streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, parks, playgrounds, water and sewer lines, flood and drainage improvements, parking lots, utility lines, and aesthetic amenities on public property such as trees, sculptures, pools of water and fountains, and other works of art. This funding is available for capital costs only.

Revitalizing Main Streets: The Revitalizing Main Streets grant program is part of Colorado's COVID-19 Recovery Plan. The program is funded through a $30 million allocation from the state legislature, intended to help communities implement transportation-related projects that improve safety and provide long-term benefits to main streets. Idaho Springs has applied for a grant for Miner Street Marketplace through this program.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) allocates federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding through a competitive process. TAP funds transportation improvement projects that expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve quality of life, and protect the environment. Many TAP projects enhance non-motorized transportation, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, environmental mitigation, and recreational trail program projects.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP): The federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds safety improvement projects that aim to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. A variety of projects are eligible for funding, including sidewalks, medians and pedestrian crossing islands, and countermeasure signage. Funding is allocated throughout the state by CDOT. CDOT Region 1, which includes Clear Creek County, generally receives 15 to 20 percent of total funding (approximately $30 million each year for the state).

Historic Preservation Tax Credits: The state's Commercial Historic Preservation Tax Credit is intended to help rehabilitate historic, owner-occupied commercial properties. While not directly tied to a specific project within the plan, this is a generally useful funding tool for downtown improvements. The program can award up to $10 million per year, with half of funds dedicated to smaller projects (up to $2 million) and half to larger projects. In general, the maximum tax credit that can be reserved or issued for a property in any calendar year is $1 million.

Grant and Other Funding

Main Street Program: Idaho Springs is an "Affiliate Community" in the Main Street program.

GOCO Funds: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds in parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces throughout the state. Grants are competitively awarded, with three primary goals: protect more urban and rural land for people and wildlife, connect people to the outdoors by increasing bicycle and pedestrian access and filling gaps in trail systems, and inspire communities to explore and steward the outdoors through increasing youth access to nature. GOCO funds a variety of projects, including land acquisition for outdoor recreation facilities, master plans, physical parks infrastructure, and trails.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Colorado Parks and Wildlife offers several grant programs. The Recreation Trails Program offers annual grants for motorized and non-motorized trails. Local, county, and state governments, federal agencies, special recreation districts, and non-profit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands are eligible for grants for trail-related projects. Focus areas, eligibility requirements, matching fund requirements and other aspects vary for each program.

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS): The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) administers Colorado's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to make school routes safe for children while walking or cycling to school. The Colorado SRTS program funds both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Eligible projects may include capital improvements including sidewalks, stripping, crossing signals, and bike racks, as well as education, encouragement, and enforcement activities that inspire children to walk or cycle to school.

State Historical Fund: The State Historical Fund awards grants funded by limited stakes gaming in the towns of Black Hawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek for significant buildings, structures, objects, districts, or archaeology sites, or about preservation of historic resources in Colorado. Mini grants are awarded up to $50,000 and general grants range from $50,000 to $250,000, with a 25 percent cash match for nonprofit or government entities.

People for Bikes: The People For Bikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. Grant funds can be used for infrastructure projects as well as initiatives such as Open Streets Days. Funds are only available for specific projects or programs, not for operations costs. Grants are available for funding up to $10,000 and this funding cannot amount to more than 50 percent of project budget. While this is not a large pool of funding, it may be useful for smaller initiatives.

Other Organizations: There are many other organizations in Colorado offering grant funding that may be relevant to these projects, including the Colorado Health Foundation, various arts organizations, corporate philanthropy organizations, and other foundations and non-profits.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Full implementation of the Downtown Master Plan will require greater involvement by downtown property owners and businesses. The recommended projects will require additional financial participation, and programmatic changes are not likely to be implemented by the City without strong support from those affected. The Downtown Improvement Working Group (DIWG) has been focused on a funding plan for the parking garage. There have also been City discussions about a broader downtown management organization to implement the broader range of improvements contained in this master plan.

Going forward, a stronger management/ organization entity, with greater business and property owner participation and a dedicated funding source, will be crucial to successful implementation of this plan. The discussions to date have focused on a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or a Business Improvement District (BID). An Urban Renewal Authority (URA) may also be an option worthy of additional consideration.

Downtown Development Authority

Establishing a DDA, which can utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF), would be a significant component of generating funding for plan implementation. A DDA is quasi-municipal corporation created to assist municipalities in the development or redevelopment of central business districts (CBDs). DDAs are established to promote development and redevelopment, and to finance improvements. There are existing DDAs in large and small cities throughout Colorado, including in Colorado Springs, Glenwood Springs, Castle Rock, Sterling, Loveland, and Grand Junction.

Establishment – Initiated and designated by the City Council, a DDA requires approval by a majority of electors residing, owning, or leasing property within the district. An appointed board of directors manages the DDA; the board must have five members and no more than 11; a majority of the board must reside or own property within the DDA. One member of the city council must serve on the board. Unlike an URA, a DDA does not require a finding of blight, cannot condemn property, and must have bonds issued on its behalf by the governing body in which it resides.

Who Pays? – A DDA can collect and levy ad valorem tax on property (up to 5 mills) for the cost of operations. It can also impose fees or charges for services and special assessments. The City can issue revenue bonds on behalf of the DDA as well as utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) (both sales and property tax increment). TIF redirects the incremental property taxes from all taxing entities (including city, county, school district, and any special districts) from a new development within a DDA and can help build and pay for public infrastructure and other eligible expenditures and provide a catalyst for economic growth and higher long term assessed values in the county. Once the infrastructure has been paid for, the property taxes then go the property taxing entities affected by the development. Bonds may be subject to a TABOR election unless the DDA "De-Bruces" as part of its formation election.

Benefits – A DDA can generate funds for public improvements that would otherwise not be available. Bonds can be issued to cover costs related to infrastructure and community benefits. Bonds are serviced by each district's revenues streams. The proceeds, and corresponding improvements, catalyze development and in this case could contribute to the funding of a transit project.

Business Improvement District (BID)

A business improvement district (BID) is a quasi-public corporation that can be established to develop, maintain, and operate a broad range of public improvements including streets, sidewalks, pedestrian malls, landscaping and streetscape amenities, and parking facilities. BIDs are normally more operationally focused than other types of improvement districts, and act as a type of manager of a business district. BIDs have the power to assess costs of service to local commercial property owners through either an additional property tax or a special assessment charge. A BID is formed by petition and election by commercial property owners in either a contiguous or noncontiguous area to provide services. The structure of the state legislation prevents BIDS from taxing residential properties.

Establishment – Requires voter approval of commercial property owners within the proposed boundaries of the district.

Who Pays? – The commercial property owners in the district pay an annual property tax or assessment for designated services

Benefits – Boundary does not need to be contiguous. Is a flexible entity – can finance improvements, provide services, and issue bonds.

Limitations – A key disadvantage is a BID does not have the authority to use TIF for funding downtown projects.

Urban Renewal Authority

A URA is a municipal authority established to eliminate slum or blighted areas for development or redevelopment by purchasing, rehabilitating, and selling land for development for purposes of urban renewal or redevelopment. URAs are found in a variety of settings including downtowns, commercial revitalization corridors, and defunct retail centers including the former Cinderella City Mall (now Englewood City Center), and the former Villa Italia Mall (now Belmar).

Establishment – Initiated by the petition of 25 electors to the City to form a URA. Requires a blight study followed by completion of a URA Plan. Governed by city-appointed board with 9 to 13 members and including a representative of the County, school district, and a third representing other taxing districts.

Who Pays? – Does not have taxing powers. Primary source of funds is through TIF. Property tax TIF from the city and from other taxing entities including the city, county, and school district with their consent. Home rule cities can also include local sales tax increment. Tax increment financing (TIF) funds can be used on a pay-as-you-go basis or to support revenue bonds.

Benefits - A URA can establish multiple plan areas. If an authority exists, creation of a new urban renewal area can be initiated by a local agency or a petition from a majority of the impacted property owners. Creation of a new urban renewal area requires a blight designation and approval of a development plan by the governing municipal body. After authorization of the plan, the new area is operated by the existing authority board of directors.

Limitations – Requires a finding of blight. A URA has a 25-year life span unless renewed. TIF revenue bonds are limited to the life of the district which is a maximum of 25 years.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following pages provide a summary implementation matrix that identifies specific projects, which categories of the plan they meet, a short description (see chapters for more detail), a high level cost range to implement the project, as well as potential funding sources and partners.

SHORT-TERM PROJECTS (2022-2024)

PROJECT	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EST. COST RANGE	FUNDING SOURCES	PARTNERS
Parking Structure and Mobility Hub	Mobility & Parking (Catalyst Project #1) • ***see Chapter 3 for more info.***	• 284-space structure and mobility hub • includes working with CDOT on right-of-way	**$8-$10M** (est. $25,000 per space + mobility and circulation improvements)	• CDOT Grant - $4.3M • Downtown SID - $2M • Future Parking Revenues - remainder TBD	• CDOT • Miner Street property owners
Regulatory Changes and Incentives	Land Use & Vitality (Catalyst Project #3) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Amend zoning code to remove barriers for adding housing to existing two-story buildings, single family homes, and in redevelopment projects. • Amend zoning and building codes to remove barriers to adaptively reusing existing buildings. • Add design standards and guidelines for parking structure (if time allows)	**$0-$40,000**	• General Fund • DOLA - Innovative Affordable Housing Strategies Grant	• Department of Local Affairs
Miner Street Marketplace Interim Improvements	Land Use & Vitality (Catalyst Project #1) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Design/build custom parklets. • Add moveable planters with trees/flowers. • Add gateway signage and lighting to existing barriers. • Extend elements west of 13th Avenue.	**$200,000-$400,000**	• CIP/Capital Improvements Sales Tax • Placemaking Grants	• DIWG
Downtown Mural Program	Land Use & Vitality (Other Projects) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Murals highlighting historic events and people. • Local artists preferred. • See locations identified in Chapter 5.	**$30,000 - $60,000**	• Placemaking Grants	• Historical Society
Intersection and Crosswalk Improvements	Mobility & Parking (Other Projects) • ***see Chapter 3 for more info.***	• Miner Street and 13th, 15th, 16th, and 17th could benefit from pedestrian crossing markings. • A new crosswalk at 16th and Colorado.	**$25,000 - $50,000**	• CIP/Capital Improvements Sales Tax	
Anderson Park Improvements	Recreation & Tourism (Catalyst Project #2) • ***see Chapter 4 for more info.***	• Structure to cover locomotive. • New play equipment.	**$200,000-$400,000**	• Sales Tax Improvement Fund • GoCo Grant	• Historical Society

MID-TERM PROJECTS (2024-2027)

PROJECT	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EST. COST RANGE	FUNDING SOURCES	PARTNERS
Signage and Wayfinding Program	Recreation & Tourism (Catalyst Project #3) • ***see Chapter 4 for more info.***	• Design and implement new signage and wayfinding throughout downtown that fits in with historic character and clearly directs visitors to parking and destinations.	**$50,000 - $100,000**	• Grants • General Fund	• DIWG
Gateway Enhancements	Mobility & Parking (Catalyst Project #3) • ***see Chapter 3 for more info.***	• Roundabout and landscaping and wayfinding improvements at 13th & Idaho. • Improved intersection crossing and landscaping at 13th & Miner + streetscape improvements west of 13th on Miner. • Wayfinding + landscape improvements at Riverside & Colorado.	**$50,000 - $100,000**	• Grants • General Fund • CIP/Street Sales Tax	
Parking Lot Redesign	Mobility & Parking (Catalyst Project #2) • ***see Chapter 3 for more info.***	• Reconfigure surface parking lot to accommodate better auto and pedestrian circulation, landscaping, more efficient use of space, and expansion of Idahoe Mall.	**$1M - $2M**	• CIP/Street Sales Tax	
Idahoe Mall/Railroad Alley Improvements	Land Use & Vitality (Catalyst Project #2) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Repaving and extending pavers to expanded areas, including embedded railroad tracks. • Design should also include enhanced landscaping treatment, trees, benches, lighting, and historic kiosks/signage.	**$1M - $2M**	• CIP/Street Improvements Sales Tax • Grants	• DIWG
Miner Street Marketplace Permanent Reconstruction	Land Use & Vitality (Catalyst Project #1) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Redesign Miner Street from 14th to 17th to be a flexible curbless street with new street trees, lighting, benches, boulders, and expanded sidewalk/cafe seating areas. • Design to include flexible center space for allowing cars in winter months.	**$4M - $5M**	• CIP/Infrastructure Sales Tax • Grants	• Historical Society
Citizen's Park / 16th Avenue Plaza	Recreation & Tourism (Catalyst Project #1) • ***see Chapter 4 for more info.***	• Miner Street and 13th, 15th, 16th, and 17th could benefit from pedestrian crossing markings. • A new crosswalk at 16th and Colorado.	**$1M - $2M**	• GoCo Grant	

LONG-TERM PROJECTS (2027+)

PROJECT	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EST. COST RANGE	FUNDING SOURCES	PARTNERS
Center Alley Improvements	Land Use & Vitality (Other Projects) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Repave/concrete Center Alley into a one-way multimodal space that is pedestrian-friendly. • Address underground utilities and stormwater improvements. • Activate with existing and new uses.	**$500,000 - $1M**	• CIP/Street Improvements Sales Tax	• Business and Property Owners
Pocket Park at 17th & Miner	Recreation & Tourism (Other Projects) • ***see Chapter 4 for more info.***	• Improved landscaping and gazebo, benches, activation.	**$25,000 - $50,000**	• CIP • GoCo Grants • Other Placemaking Grants	• Property Owner
Other Parking Supply Improvements	Mobility & Parking (Catalyst Project #2) • ***see Chapter 3 for more info.***	• Reassess parkign supply in 10 years, post-parking structure. If demand is still present, look for other opportunities to expand, such as in public-private partnership redevelopments.	**Varies**	• Public-Private Partnerships	
Downtown Loop	Recreation & Tourism (Other Projects) • ***see Chapter 4 for more info.***	• Build a 1-mile loop through downtown and along Clear Creek with signage and wayfinding and branding. • Dependent on pedestrian bridge on west end.	**TBD**	• GoCo Grants	
Redevelopment/Public-Private Partnerships	Land Use & Vitality (Other Projects) • ***see Chapter 5 for more info.***	• Provide public investment in redevelopment projects with a public purpose or benefit that have a financing gap.	**Varies**	• Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	• Private Developers

CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS
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Community Development Planner Communication

Document Date:	November 23, 2021
Meeting Date:	December 1, 2021
To:	Planning Commission Members
Cc:	Andrew Marsh, City Administrator
From:	Jerad Chipman, AICP, Community Development Planner
RE:	**Community Development Monthly Report**

The Community Development Planner has been working on the following recent, current, and upcoming projects.

Development applications and pre-applications:

- **Downtown Master Plan.** The Planning Commission will review the final draft of the Downtown Master Plan at their December 1, 2021 meeting. The presentation will focus on the red highlighted changes to the plan.

- **Code Updates.** Staff intends to continue working with the Planning Commission on the previously discussed text amendments to the Municipal Code in February.

- **Soda Creek Highlands.** Staff is reviewing subdivision plans for compliance with current City Codes as a first step in the process to update the subdivision improvement agreement (SIA) for the construction of forty-five (45) single family homes.

- **Redevelopment of Block 57/Golddigger Field and the School Bus Maintenance Facility.** The City Council reviewed and approved the Planned Development (PD) Rezoning, with the conditions recommended by the Planning Commission, of the Block 57 development on September 27, 2021. The next step will be the review of the Final Development Plans (FDP) at a future Planning Commission meeting. The developer is drafting the FDP plans currently.

Other Activities:

- **Miner Street Marketplace.** Staff has been working with the downtown business community regarding winter operations. Miner Street will be altered into a one-way configuration heading eastbound. Businesses will be allowed to utilize outdoor spaces if they so choose.

- **Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC).** The HPRC approved a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for exterior renovations to the City Hall.

- **Inquiries.** Staff continues to respond to a variety of planning and zoning inquiries from the public.