

# CHAPTER 5: STRATEGY - IMPLEMENTATION

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*“Getting ahead of change means taking the lead to innovate and change course. It is time to accept greater accountability to address the challenges ahead by providing leadership to sustain thriving communities.”*

*Urban Land Institute, What’s Next? Getting Ahead of Change, 2012*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the implementation strategy for the Thornton Urban Center Study. The implementation strategy is a critical piece of an effective area plan or study. The planning process does not end with formal acknowledgement or adoption of the study, but must rely on both methodical and creative implementation to successfully move a study’s recommendations forward over a 20-year planning horizon.

Implementing holistic, long-term strategies for an area of a community that is within a state of transition is paramount. Project based development - or site-by-site development - can only take place after the vision and goals have been established; and specific policies and regulations in support of the desired future are updated. It is now time for the City to update various policies and the regulatory framework from which successful Urban Center development patterns can occur into the future. Thornton - the “City of Planned Progress” - has a significant opportunity here to establish a new legacy not only for the City, but for the larger Denver metropolitan region - a strategy for planned change for older areas of suburban communities, and for non rail transit Urban Centers. Updating regulations, branding the area, planning for enhancements, and systematically scheduling and constructing improvements will signal the commitment of the City to the development community of the importance of this area.

The TUC Study is one component of a series of planning and development strategies for the larger south Thornton area. Implementation of recommendations from both the STaR Plan and the Health Impact Assessment should continue. This implementation strategy reiterates those most pertinent actions identified in these two documents, however it is not intended to holistically encompass every recommendation from these previous efforts.

Further, a subsequent study that will also inform change in this area of the community is the South Thornton Urban Renewal Plan. This plan will provide implementation strategies for the 2012 approved South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.

Ongoing evaluation of the strategies and status of completing actions in all these regulating documents, including consistencies amongst recommendations, will be critical for long-term revitalization of this area of south Thornton.



## GENERAL STRATEGY

### The Key Parameters

The implementation strategy for the TUC Study involves:

- Identifying the champions.
- Creating a brand / identity for this area.
- Marketing and promoting the area.
- Updating / preparing the regulatory framework.
- Completing mobility improvements.
- Growing public / private partnerships to implement social, placemaking, mobility, and development change.

#### Identifying the Champions

The champions must begin within the City, whether elected or appointed leadership, or staff. Key property / business owners in the area, and / or community social agencies or institutions in the area may also be key champions of the effort. These entities must work together in a leadership format to assure momentum remains from plan completion for the duration of the 20-year implementation timeframe.

#### Creating a Brand / Identity

Chapters 3 and 4 address framework recommendations for development / redevelopment within five nodes, as well as touch upon physical improvements for the public realm, namely streetscape improvements and gateway treatments. Physical improvements to the public realm are critical to accompany private development. The design of the public realm must begin with establishing a strong brand for the TUC Area.

- Create a Brand - undertake a branding effort for the TUC Area. This is one of the most critical first steps actions that should be completed - ideally in 2014.
- Provide Great Streets - complete a master streetscape / landscape framework plan that supports the brand and provides a basis from which detailed streetscape improvements, signage, wayfinding, bus stops and other public realm visual cues are ultimately designed and implemented over time. Washington St. should be the first priority for implementation of holistic streetscape improvements.
- Enhance a Physical Identifier (Brittany Hill) - Brittany hill has been an identifier for Thornton and especially south Thornton for some time. The venue on top of the hill is one thing. The hill itself is another. This uniquely

Thornton geographic feature is something that should be exploited. Similar to how Castle Rock has 'the rock' and utilizes this as the Town's core brand, utilize the unique topography of the hill as a key identifier of the community as a whole, and particularly south Thornton. Consider renaming the hill as part of a new strong brand for the TUC Area. Utilize the areas of steep topography around the building parcel itself and abutting Grant and Eppinger streets and Thornton High School for urban agriculture, community gardens, and a key sculptural iconic landscape as a gateway for the community and district.

#### Marketing & Promoting the Area

Ongoing active marketing and promotion of the area is critical. Utilizing the new brand, formulate a marketing and promotion plan that has a prominent link to information on the City Economic Development department's web page. This information should include economic incentives, key parcels available for lease, sale or development, links to relevant regulations, and ideally a point person at the City to contact for information.

#### Updating / Preparing the Regulatory Framework

This is about providing certainty to developers and property owners. It is about providing the right Urban Center design standards that support a diverse, dense, mixed-use, multimodal environment. Zoning, parking, sign standards, and even the City's planned development plan process should be updated to support the vision, goals and objectives of the this area of the community and the TUC Study.

#### Completing Mobility Improvements

Complete the mobility improvements as identified in Chapter 3.

#### Growing Public / Private Partnerships

In any revitalization plan, public / private partnerships are paramount. The City must take the lead on showing that this area is a priority as an Urban Center - and in support of the Civic Arts and Health Service Placemaking Districts as identified in the Comprehensive Plan - through branding, marketing and promotion, and updating regulatory framework. However, partnerships with private developers and with other local and state agencies and advocacy groups are crucial.



## Ongoing Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of any study should consider:

- Change in community support and desires.
- Calibrating timing and partnership strategies.
- Changes in state or federal laws that may affect timing or availability of tools for plan implementation.

Thornton’s Policy Planning Division should review and update the implementation strategy, at the end of 2015 in preparation for Phase II, and at the end of each subsequent phase in preparation for the next. This will help in preparation of planning-level cost estimates for budgeting and soliciting grant funding. Policy Planning should also keep track of all implementation recommendations that have been completed on an annual basis, as well as any additional accomplishments.

## Challenges

The challenges associated with regeneration of place and the creation of a vital Urban Center include:

- Garnering leadership - both early champions and long-term caretakers.
- Pro-actively updating the regulatory framework.
- Structuring appropriate public / private partnerships.
- Conceding to short-term development pressures inconsistent with area goals.
- Maintaining momentum.
- Having patience.





## PRIORITIZED ACTION LIST

The following prioritized action list is organized in three categories: Economic Vitality, Mobility and Placemaking. The prioritized action list for each category indicates: action, geographic area, implementation lead, and a timeframe for completion. The geographic area may include items that are broader than the Study Area, are Study Area-wide, or are specific to nodes or corridors.

The implementation lead indicates who is primarily responsible - the 'champion' - for seeing the action through. As this is a city-led study for a large geographic area, many of the actions identified herein are city focused, and hence primary responsibility is by a department within the City of Thornton. Those entities identified include:

- City of Thornton
- City ED (Economic Development)
- City CD (City Development)
- City CS (Community Services)
- City IN (Infrastructure)
- In a few cases some actions have been identified to be led by a private developer or RTD.

Even though a particular entity has been identified as a leader of an action, this does not mean that they are the sole implementer. As with any area plan / study completed by a community, collaboration amongst varying departments, along with partnerships with other public, quasi-public and private entities is paramount for long-term success.

The action list has been structured in four implementation phases over a 20-year implementation timeframe. Phase I is meant to be the 'immediate' timeframe, or that which critical staff resources and funding can be planned for and allocated in both the 2014 and 2015 annual budgeting processes in order keep the momentum moving and implement critical path actions. The phases include:

- Phase I: 2013-2015
- Phase II: 2016-2018
- Phase III: 2019-2023
- Phase IV: 2024-2033

The first phase timing is poignant as the City moves towards the following 60-year milestones:

- 2013 - first model homes open (e.g. TUC Study is completed, first actions budgeted for 2014).
- 2014 - first residents move in.
- 2015 - first retail / mall opening on Thornton Shopping Center site.
- 2016 - Anniversary of incorporation as a home rule City.

Several early implementation actions / projects should be accomplished in sync with these 60-year milestones to show a new era of progress - focused on revitalization, for south Thornton and specifically the TUC Area.

Transformative strategies for neighborhoods and districts do not happen in one or even in five years. While the Phase I actions are critical, the 20-year timeframe establishes a framework from which methodical and planned change occurs.



Economic Vitality							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
EV.1	Complete Urban Center baseline growth assumptions per Urban Center prior to completing any further planning for each Center. This should establish a small range of presumed new jobs and residents over a 20-year period for each Center that results in reaching DRCOG's desired goal of having 75% new jobs and 50% new housing located in Urban Centers.	4 Urban Centers / City-wide	City ED / City CD				
EV.2	Complete Urban Renewal Implementation Plan for the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area with financial goals and priorities.	South Thornton Urban Renewal Area	City ED / CD				
EV.3	Complete Branding Study for the TUC Area.	TUC Area	City ED / City CD				
EV.4	Actively work with the Senior Services group in Thornton to understand results from their Needs Assessment Study. Encourage any new Senior Center to locate in the TUC Area. Build and strengthen opportunities for seniors who want increased interaction with youth.	City-wide / TUC Area	City CD				
EV.5	Create clear message and brand that Grant / Thornton / Russell is a major office node near north metro Denver.	TUC Area	City ED / City CD				
EV.6	Determine most politically and financially feasible development structure for development on City owned land through the Urban Renewal Implementation Plan process.	Grant-Thornton Node / Russell Node	City ED / City CD				
EV.7	Complete Planned Development Plan for Grant / Thornton Node including financing plan.	Grant / Thornton Node	City CD / City IN / City ED				
EV.8	Complete development of Grant / Thornton Node.	Grant / Thornton Node	City CD / ED / CS / IN				
EV.9	Create infrastructure and financing plan for the Russell Node.	Russell Node	City CD / City IN / City ED				
EV.10	Complete development of Russell Node.	Russell Node	City CD / ED / CS / IN				



Economic Vitality							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
EV.11	Change Zoning on TSC Node to allow for a mix of uses.	TSC Node	City CD				
EV.12	Continue to assess and remediate environmental issues at TSC Node.	TSC Node	City CD / IN / ED				
EV.13	Work with property owners on overall master planning strategy for the TSC site including land uses, infrastructure, partnership structures, financing options.	TSC Node	City CD / IN / ED				
EV.14	Continue to redevelop and complete Thornton Shopping Center.	TSC Node	City CD / ED / CS / IN				
EV.15	Actively work with NVTC owner(s) and lease holders to explore redevelopment and ownership options for the Site.	NVTC Node	City ED				
EV.16	Complete redevelopment of NVTC.	NVTC Node	City CD / ED / CS / IN				
EV.17	Facilitate conversation among owners of 86th Node regarding development goals and scenarios and to help promote the Site's redevelopment.	86th Node	City ED				
EV.18	Facilitate conversation between 86th Node owners with area brokers and developers to either promote the site or prepare for redevelopment.	86th Node	City ED				
EV.19	Determine City's support and role in conjunction with 86th Node property owners.	86th Node	City ED / City CD				
EV.20	Complete development of 86th Node.	86th Node	City CD / ED / CS / IN				
EV.21	Encourage local businesses, property owners and developers to work together toward common objectives through a mechanism like a Business Improvement District (BID).	TUC Area	City ED / City CD				
EV.22	Complete a needs assessment for Arts and Culture facilities in Thornton. Encourage Arts and Culture facilities to locate in the TUC Area.	City-wide / TUC Area	City CS				



Economic Vitality							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
EV.23	Continuously work with area commercial brokers and developers on short- and long-term viability of significant office employment uses in area.	TUC Area / Grant-Thornton Node / Russell Node	City ED / City CD				
EV.24	Continue active conversations with North Suburban health care facilities to understand long-term needs for the campus including operational and development needs.	TUC Area / Grant-Thornton Node / Russell Node	City ED				
EV.25	Continue to implement Housing Master Plan Goals relevant to the TUC Area and specific nodes.	TUC Area	City CD				
EV.26	Work with area multi-family brokers and developers to encourage mixed use and multi-family development in TUC Area in accordance with goals of the Housing Master Plan.	City-wide / TUC Area	City ED / City CD				
EV.27	Continue to develop strategies and programs that encourage exterior home / yard improvements in the single family residential neighborhoods surrounding the TUC, as described in the STaR Plan. Their improvement helps the TUC commercial and mixed-use areas.	South Thornton Area / TUC Area	City CD				
EV.28	Continuously update and improve web page as link through City / ED's website to identify all development opportunities and available space for lease.	City-wide / TUC Area	City ED				
EV.29	Establish / continue contact list for all businesses in TUC Area to provide regular and updated information on improvements, programs available.	City-wide / TUC Area	City ED				
EV.30	Continue to 'right-size' retail in the TUC Area by: a) reducing unproductive space and redeveloping into other uses, b) ensuring that any new retail is supportable and in strategic locations.	TUC Area	City ED/City CD				



Economic Vitality							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
EV.31	Continue programs that increase neighborhood safety and awareness. (e.g. Neighborhood Watch, lwatch Speed Awareness Program, Graffiti removal, Directed patrols , community resource officers, etc.).	City wide / TUC Area	City CD				
EV.32	Continue to support and reach out to small businesses in the TUC Area.	TUC Area	City ED				
EV.33	Continue to inform key local business owners about programs such as the Business Beautification Improvement Grant (BBIG) to incentivize improvements and stimulate broader revitalization.	City wide / TUC Area	City ED				
EV.34	Continue to provide and expand financial assistance and other incentives to existing and desired businesses and commercial entities.	City wide / TUC Area	City ED				
EV.35	Continue active conversations with Adams County School District 12 regarding long-term plans for the Thornton High School Site.	TUC Area	City ED/ CD				
EV.36	Establish ongoing conversations with Regis University and other higher education providers on their needs for their Thornton Campus.	TUC Area	City ED/CD				
EV.37	Continue to support the recommendations of Thornton's Health Impact Assessment and HEAL (Healthy Eating, Active Living).	City wide TUC	City CD				
EV.38	Continue to develop programs supporting the recommendation of the HIA throughout the City - also make sure that program information is available in Spanish.	City wide / TUC Area	City CD				
EV.39	Continue working with LiveWell Adams County. Appoint a City representative to the LiveWell South Adams County Coalition.	City wide / TUC Area	City CD				



Mobility								
Sub-Category	Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
					Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
					2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
Ped	M.1	Develop an ADA Transition Plan to ensure conformity with federal requirements for fully accessible public rights-of-way and address gaps in the sidewalk network.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Ped	M.2	Improve intersections with high-visibility crosswalks and ADA accessible curb ramps.	Pearl St, Grant St	City IN				
Bicycle	M.3	Restripe ROW to provide 5'-wide bike lanes in both directions.	Eppinger Blvd, Russell Blvd, Pearl St	City IN				
Vehicular	M.4	Revise transportation performance measures for the Study Area to include multimodal Quality of Service / Level of Service considerations.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Transit	M.5	Expand the capacity and multimodal accessibility of the Park-n-Ride parking lot east of I-25.	I-25 Park-n-Ride	RTD				
Vehicular	M.6	Revise street design standards to allow greater flexibility in lane dimensions and right-of-way allocation.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Vehicular	M.7	Undertake comprehensive review and amendment of off-street parking requirements: consider reducing or eliminating parking minimums for low-traffic, transit-oriented development, institute parking maximums, allow shared parking arrangements.	TUC Area	City CD				
Vehicular	M.8	Revise on-street parking design standards to encourage on-street parking on roads with excess vehicle capacity (LOSC and above).	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Vehicular	M.9	Retrofit on-street parking where there is sufficient demand. Provide on-street parking for new streets developed in the TUC Area.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Vehicular	M.10	Implement road diets on low-volume streets to allow implementation of bike facilities and traffic calming pedestrian improvements in conjunction with short-term bike system improvements and / or longer-term streetscape improvements.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				



Mobility						
Sub-Category	Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe	
					Phase I	Phase II
					2013-2015	2016-2018
					2019-2023	2024-2033
Ped	M.11	In conjunction with placemaking recommendations, design and implement streetscape improvements, e.g street trees, a landscape buffer between the sidewalk and travel way, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, wayfinding signage, etc.	Washington St, Pearl St, 88th Ave, Grant St, 84th Ave, Eppinger St, Russell St and 86th Ave	City CD / City IN		
Ped	M.12	Improve intersections with high-visibility crosswalks and ADA accessible curb ramps.	TUC Study Area	City IN		
Ped	M.13	Install missing link sidewalks within TUC Area.	Russell Blvd, Thornton Pkwy, 84th Ave, and 86th Ave	City IN		
Ped	M.14	Establish a Safe Routes to School Program.	TUC Area	City IN		
Ped	M.15	Design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for the TUC Area -identity, Park -n-Ride, transit routes, bike routes, key destinations, etc.	TUC Area	City CS, City IN		
Bicycle	M.16	Stripe bike lane / sharrow as appropriate on Corona St from Eppinger to Niver Creek Trail.	Corona St.	City IN		
Bicycle	M.17	Build multi-use trail.	Washington St (Thornton to Eppinger)	City IN, City CS		
Bicycle	M.18	Post bicycle route.	Grant St, Washington St (south of Niver Creek Trail crossing)	City IN		
Bicycle	M.19	Connect the Niver Creek Trail through the NVTC site.	NVTC	City IN, City CS		
Transit	M.20	Provide modifications to the existing routes 80 and 12 to provide better service.	Grant St, Washington St	RTD		
Transit	M.21	Provide attractive transit stop environments to ensure the comfort of transit riders.	TUC Study Area	RTD / City IN		



Mobility								
	Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category					Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
					2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
Vehicular	M.22	Complete feasibility study of a multi-way boulevard along Washington St. Complete in conjunction with or prior to Conceptual Streetscape plan for Washington.	Washington St	City CD / City IN				
Bicycle	M.23	Restripe ROW to provide 5'-wide bike lanes in both directions in conjunction with development on vacant land.	86th Ave	City IN				
Vehicular	M.24	Implement frontage roads / quasi-multi-way environment where feasible along Washington in conjunction with new development or as retrofit.	Washington St	City CD / City IN				
Ped	M.25	Improve intersections with high-visibility crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, curb extensions, median refuges, pedestrian countdown signals, increased sidewalk width at transit stops, improved transit shelters, etc. in conjunction with Washington St Streetscape Design and Implementation.	Washington St	Developer led, City IN				
Ped	M.26	Improve intersections with high-visibility crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, curb extensions, median refuges, pedestrian countdown signals, increased sidewalk width at transit stops, improved transit shelters, etc.	88th St	Developer led, City IN				
Transit	M.27	Provide a new east-west fixed-route transit service.	Thornton Pkwy	RTD				
Vehicular	M.28	Create TUC-specific Transportation Management Organization.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Bicycle	M.29	Consider private-public partnership to pilot a bikesharing program with hubs at transit nodes and major employers.	TUC Area	City CD, City IN				
Transit	M.30	Consider a branded circulator shuttle serving the Park-and-Ride, North Valley Technical Center, Thornton Shopping Cener, Grant St, and Washington St.	TUC Study Area	City CD, City IN				
Vehicular	M.31	Consider subsidizing transit passes for employees and residents of new developments (EcoPass program).	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				
Vehicular	M.32	Provide financial incentives for employees of new developments to walk, bike, carpool, vanpool, or take transit to work.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				



Placemaking							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
P.1	Ensure the Comprehensive Plan Supports TUC Area as a DRCOG Urban Center.	TUC Area	City CD				
P.2	Update zoning language for “Planned Development District”, to truly allow ‘innovative projects,’ namely - remove restriction on 1.0 Maximum FAR.	Grant / Thornton Node	City CD / City IN				
P.3	Complete Planned Development Plan for Grant / Thornton Node.	Grant / Thornton Node	City CD / City IN				
P.4	Undertake comprehensive review and amendment of parking standards for the TUC Area / create specific language for Urban Centers to allow for urban development patterns.	TUC Area	City CD				
P.5	Update zoning for entire TUC Area to support urban development patterns. This may be accomplished through updates to existing zone district language (that would apply City-wide) or in creating mixed-use or Urban Center zone language.	TUC Area	City CD				
P.6	Undertake a comprehensive review and amendment of sign regulations to support urban, walkable development patterns such as allowing sandwich boards in sidewalks, setting maximum sizes and number of signs for building and monument signs, precluding pilon signs, etc.	TUC Area	City CD				
P.7	Establish Matching Fund Site Improvement Program for older buildings along Washington for façade improvement, to screen parking, etc.	TUC Area	City CD				
P.8	Complete Landscape / Streetscape Framework Plan for the entire TUC Area to be consistent with the identified Brand. To be completed after Branding Study complete.	TUC Area	City CD / City IN				



Placemaking							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
P.9	Complete Conceptual Design of Washington Street from 84th Ave to Thornton Pkwy after Branding Study complete. Could be completed in conjunction with Landscape / Streetscape Framework Plan.	Washington St	City CD / City IN				
P.10	Initiate small, low cost identity improvements utilizing the new brand (logo, color scheme, etc.) such as signage, banners, etc. to promote the new identity.	TUC Area	City CD				
P.11	Complete 100% design for and implement branding / gateway Improvements to: a) Washington / 84th Intersection, b) Washington / Thornton Pkwy Intersection. Complete in conjunction with Mobility Improvements for the intersections.	Washington St	City CD / City IN				
P.12	Acquire land / long-term easement for open space connection, design and implementation of the Niver Creek Trail connection.	NVTC	City CD / City IN				
P.13	Complete branding / gateway intersection improvements to: a) Washington / 88th Intersection - Complete in conjunction with Thornton Shopping Center redevelopment, or by 2017.	Washington St	City CD / City IN				
P.14	Complete south Thornton urban agriculture / branding / gateway strategic plan (who will lead, partners, etc.) and design for Brittany Hill area. Work with property owner of Brittany Hill parcel. Plan for second access road to south from Brittany Hill parcel in study, and any realignment of the existing north access road due to formal intersection being established with Thornton Pkwy.	Brittany Hill Area	City ED / City CS				



Placemaking							
Implem. No.	Action	Geographic Area	Lead	Timeframe			
Sub-Category				Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
				2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2023	2024-2033
P.15	Implement urban agriculture / branding / gateway for Brittany Hill area.	Brittany Hill Area	City ED / City CS				
P.16	Complete branding / gateway Improvements to I-25 / Thornton Pkwy Interchange.	I-25 / Thornton Pkwy	City CD / City IN				
P.17	Complete branding / gateway Improvements to new Thornton Pkwy / Civic Center Dr.	Thornton Pkwy	City CD / City IN				
P.18	Design / implement streetscape components for Washington St, outside of previously completed intersections.	Washington St	City CD / City IN				
P.19	Complete design / implement streetscape components for Pearl St.	Pearl St	City CD / City IN				
P.20	Complete design / implement streetscape components for 88th to provide better environment along this key access to the Park-n-Ride.	88th Ave	City CD / City IN				
P.21	Complete design / implement streetscape components for Eppinger, Russell and 86th, within the TUC Area.	Eppinger St, Russell St and 86th Ave	City CD / City IN				
P.22	Complete design / implement streetscape components for 84th. Complete in conjunction with redevelopment of NVTC, or by 2023.	84th Ave	City CD / City IN				
P.23	Design / implement streetscape components for Grant St.	Grant St	City CD / City IN				
P.24	Design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for the TUC Area - identity, Park-n-Ride, transit routes, bike routes, key destinations, etc.	TUC Area	City CS				



## FUNDING

The funding of capital improvements and the creation of mechanisms to raise money to support redevelopment pose the primary challenge to plan implementation in the TUC Area. The following describes several collaboration strategies, tools and funding mechanisms that are available.

### Special Authorities

**Urban Renewal Area (URA)** – Urban Renewal Areas are a commonly used tool to generate money for redevelopment. In Thornton, the Thornton Development Authority (TDA) is an Urban Renewal Authority established in 1981 by the City of Thornton for the purpose of undertaking urban renewal activities. The TDA is comprised of members of City Council. The authority has broad powers including the use of eminent domain and tax increment financing. The TDA also has the ability to issue tax exempt revenue bonds based upon the projected increment. The designation of a URA must be preceded by a hearing to determine whether blight exist within the urban renewal area.

The TDA was established in 1981. There are three urban renewal areas currently in the City:

- The North Washington Street Corridor was created in October 2003 and will remain in effect until 2028.
- The South Thornton Urban Renewal Area of which the TUC is a part was created in 2012. It will expire in 2037.
- The East 144th Avenue and I-25 Urban Renewal Area was also created in 2012 and will remain in effect until 2037.

In Thornton, TIF is raised from property and sales tax revenue generated from new development with the increment funneled toward various infrastructure, public and other costs. After 25 years, the incremental annual tax revenue is redirected back to the city.

## Improvement Districts

**Business Improvement District (BID)** – A Business Improvement District is a political subdivision designated and authorized, through resolution or ordinance, by the local legislative body and operated by a district board of directors. A BID can be initiated by a petition from a majority of property owners. BIDs can undertake a variety of activities including planning and managing development; maintaining improvements; promotion or marketing; business recruitment; management and development; snow removal, refuse collection; design assistance; acquiring construction financing; installing and operating improvements. BIDs cannot include residential properties. BIDs are often established to complement URAs and DDAs (Downtown Development Authorities) as these entities are not authorized to oversee marketing and promotion activities. BIDs may levy and collect property taxes on commercial property. Assessments may also be levied. BIDs can also issue bonds, including revenue, general obligation and special assessment bonds.

**General Improvement District (GID)** – A General Improvement District is a separate legal entity formed by a city for a specified set of public improvements such as water, wastewater, flood control, storm drainage, streets, roadways, alleys, medians, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks; street lights; landscaping; bicycle ways, and parking. A GID can be initiated by a petition of 30% of the property owners in an area followed by an election of the majority of district property owners. A GID can levy and collect ad valorem taxes on real and personal property, levy assessments which can allow for a varied fee structure to address benefits that vary, collect user fees and issue general obligation, revenue or special assessment bonds based on these revenues.

**Special Improvement District (SID)** – A Special Improvement District is an administrative subdivision of a municipality and is a tool that may be used to finance the construction of public infrastructure that benefits specific properties. It assesses all or part of the cost of the improvements against the properties that specifically benefit from them. Public improvements may be constructed, installed, reconstructed, renewed or replaced including improvements to systems for water, wastewater, flood control and storm drainage; streets, roadways, and alleys; medians, curbs, gutters and sidewalk; street lights; landscaping; bike ways; and parking. A SID can change the assessment against the properties which can be paid as a lump sum or over time. A SID may be initiated by the City or by the property owners.



## Special Districts

Special districts can be organized for a single purpose such as fire protection or sanitation or multiple purposes. They are autonomous units of local government and have an array of powers to finance improvements, perform services, and control their own budgets.

**Title 32 Metropolitan Districts** - Title 32 Metropolitan Districts (Metro Districts) are the most widely used special district, seen particularly in large-scale, master-planned, new development and redevelopment projects. A Metro District is a quasi-governmental entity and political subdivision of the state formed to finance, construct, and maintain public facilities. A common use of Metro Districts is the financing of public infrastructure as part of new development or redevelopment. A wide array of public improvements can be provided including: street improvements, water, sewer, drainage, parks and recreation, fire protection, TV relay, mosquito control, public transportation systems, ambulance, solid waste, some transportation, limited security. Metro Districts cannot construct electric or gas systems or provide police protection. Metro Districts possess ad valorem taxing authority and can also establish fees for services. They do not levy assessments or sales taxes. Metro Districts have the ability to issue general obligation and revenue bonds and have limited condemnation powers.

## Municipal Tools

**Bonds** – Cities and counties can issue General Obligation (GO) Bonds to pay for public goods and services secured by a local municipalities’ pledge to use government resources, such as tax revenues, to pay bond holders. General obligation bonds give municipalities a tool to raise funds for projects that typically do not produce direct revenues, like parks, streets, and other infrastructure. GO bonds are often used to fund projects that will serve the entire community. Special districts, Urban Renewal Authorities and others can issue revenue bonds to fund projects that will serve specific populations who provide revenue to repay the debt through user fees and taxes.

**Capital Improvement Program** – A CIP, a commonly used tool, is a short range plan which identifies capital projects and priorities, provides an estimated schedule and identifies options for financing the project. The plan

is an important link between the annual budget and a comprehensive or long range strategic plan for an area. The prioritization of projects can incrementally assist in implementing a long range plan.

## Financing & Partnership Tools

**Traditional Public / Private Sector Partnerships** – Partnerships are increasingly used in revitalization and redevelopment efforts where the government party and a private sector developer work together to help redevelop an area. Typically the public sector provides the project the tools available to it including the ability to create an Urban Renewal Area with Tax Increment Financing, issue bonds, and garner political support. The private sector partner (developer) provides its expertise in planning, investing private equity into the project, arranging private financing, implementing and managing the development.

**Additional Partnership Strategies** – Partnerships envisioned consist of combinations of stakeholder organizations working cooperatively toward shared goals. Partnership strategies may include land owners, developers, business tenants, citizens’ groups, hospitals such as North Suburban Medical Center, non-profit organizations such as a chamber of commerce or local churches, government entities such as the City of Thornton the Thornton Development Authority or Adams County, or other publically-funded entities such as RTD or a local school district.

Examples of how such partnerships could enhance urban qualities in the area include, but are not limited to the following:

- The City partners with the school districts in the area to design and build pedestrian ways which enable students consistent access to safe routes between home and school.
- The City securing a grant from the State or Federal government or using CDBG funds to enhance mobility within the TUC area.
- Expand Thornton’s Business Improvement Grant (BIG) program to encourage private investment in pedestrian amenities within privately-owned, public access areas.



## Tax Credits

- Partnerships between RTD, private developers, and the City to improve the quality of bus stops with enhanced landscaping, shelters, and other amenities.
- A Business Improvement District or other special district, which could initiate projects within its boundaries and partner with RTD, the school district, the City, and others to enhance and maintain these improvements.
- Partnerships between developers and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to explore and implement ways of designing future developments in ways that minimize the cost of mitigating existing environmental contaminants.
- Partnerships between government and community-oriented, non-profit organizations that promote healthy diets, increased access to natural / organic food, exercise options, community gardens, and other beneficial lifestyle choices for residents in the area.

**6320 Corporation** – A 6320 Corporation is an entity created under the federal tax code that allows public and private investment and management to exist within the same non-profit structure. It is allowed to issue bonds and enter into agreements with the creating government to purchase, own and lease assets. This framework is appropriate when the private sector interests and beneficiaries require a voice in the project, but still want access to non-profit status and tax exempt financing.

## Private Financing Tools

**Public Improvement Fee** - A Public Improvement Fee (PIF) is a fee imposed by the developer on tenants; and of which the tenants typically pass on the fee to consumers. PIFs are used to finance public improvements and are collected as a fee charged on sales within a set of negotiated categories and a designated geographic boundary. General obligation or revenue bonds may be issued. Since PIFs are fees, they become a part of the cost of the sale or service and are subject to sales tax. They have been used to help finance the cost of public infrastructure improvements at major shopping centers in the region including Belmar and Park Meadows Mall.

**New Markets Tax Credits** – New Market Tax Credits are designed to help low income communities develop businesses that provide economic development and jobs, including areas with high levels of unemployment and poverty. The credit is taken over a 7-year period, 5% in each of the first 3 years and 6% in each of the final 4 years for a total of 39% of the original investment amount. Eligible activities include: 1) Loans or investments located in low-income census tracts; 2) Development of commercial, industrial and retail real estate projects (including community facilities) in low income census tracts; 3) Development of for-sale housing in low-income census tracts.

**Low income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)** – The LIHTC program has become an extremely effective tool for developing affordable rental housing throughout the country. The program is administered in Colorado by the Colorado Housing and Finance agency (CHFA) which receives a fixed allocation of credits annually. CHFA considers allocations under its Qualified Allocation Plan. Credits are awarded to projects in a few very competitive allocation rounds held each year. The LIHTC program provides income tax credits to developers of affordable housing. The developer must set aside and rent-restrict a number of units with the units remaining affordable for at least 30 years. LIHTC is a critical financing tool for the majority of all affordable rental housing units created in the United States today.

## Specific Public Programs

### State Of Colorado

**Colorado First (Job Training)** – In cooperation with the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System, the Colorado FIRST program provides financial assistance and helps individual businesses to design specialized training for new hires in cooperation with the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. The grant may provide for instructors’ wages, curriculum development and the purchase of consumable training supplies. The program is available to companies locating in or expanding in Colorado. The training programs received \$2.7 million in funding during FY 2011-2012.



**Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit** – The program provides a state income tax credit to businesses creating jobs in Colorado and is operated through the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and the Economic Development Commission (EDC). Businesses have to create at least 20 net new full time equivalent jobs in the state (60 consecutive months) with an average yearly wage of at least 110% of the county average wage based on where the business is located. All net new jobs must be maintained for at least one year after the positions are hired. The maximum tax credit the EDC can authorize is calculated by taking 50% of the FICA paid by the business on the net jobs growth for each year in the credit period (60 consecutive months).

**Strategic Fund** – Also operated through the OEDIT and the EDC, the program offers potential incentives based on the annual wage rate of a businesses’ committed creation of net new full-time permanent jobs compared to the county average wage rate. The TUC is within Thornton’s Enterprise Zone.

Enterprise Zone	
Annual Average Wage Rate %	\$ Incentive / Eligible Job
100%	\$2,000
110%	\$3,000
120%	\$4,000
130% or >	\$5,000
Non-Enterprise Zone	
Annual Average Wage Rate %	\$ Incentive / Eligible Job
110%	\$2,500
130%	\$3,500
150% or >	\$5,000

Businesses must meet other criteria including:

- Strong level of local matching commitments.
- Potential for economic “spinoff” benefits.
- Capital investment.
- Responds to a special local economic events, such as replacing recent layoffs.
- Inter-state competitive factors.
- Headquarters in Colorado.

This program cannot be combined with other state incentive programs.

**Infrastructure Assistance** – The program is designed to create new permanent jobs and retain existing jobs primarily for low and moderate income persons. This program encourages new business development, expansions and retention of businesses. The local administrator of the program is OEDIT, however the funds are from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development so federal requirements must be met.

Eligible public improvements are owned and / or maintained by a public or quasi-public entity. Improvements including water lines, wastewater facilities, sewer lines, sewage treatment facilities, roadways, sidewalks and other utilities are eligible. At least one full time equivalent job must be created and / or retained for every \$20,000 of assistance. Generally the minimum award is \$100,000 and the maximum is \$500,000.

**Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment** – The department’s mission in this program is to protect public health and the environment by cleaning up sites that are contaminated with hazardous substances in a cost-effective and timely manner. There are funds, grants and technical assistance available to communities through the department. Another resource is the Colorado Brownfields Foundation which works with communities and projects across the Rocky Mountain Region. Since 2003, the Colorado Brownfields Foundation has assisted local governments, private firms, and community groups with creating and implementing strategies to turn blighted sites into economically productive community assets; restoring business locations, filling main street vacancies, recovering natural amenities, and promoting economic vitality. The foundation provides grant funding and technical assistance.



**Adams County**

**Adams County Incentives Policy** – The Adams County Commissioners are pro-business and have been aggressive in offering incentives to companies offering high paying, quality jobs. State legislation allows cities and counties to negotiate corporate property tax rebates. Adams County’s policy for qualifying companies is to rebate up to 50% of property taxes for the first four years. If the company is located inside an enterprise zone, it may be eligible to receive tax rebates for both real and personal taxes. If the company is located outside an enterprise zone, it is only entitled to personal property tax rebates. Colorado statute prohibits a county from granting incentives to a landlord or developer. The TUC Area is located within Thornton’s Enterprise Zone.

Incentive proposals are evaluated by the total economic impact to Adams County, which includes capital investment, job growth and wage levels. To be considered for incentives, typically:

- The company’s average wage should meet or exceed the county’s average wage of \$44,730.
- Capital investment should be \$1 million or more.
- New jobs should be created, or significant numbers of existing jobs retained.
- A company must be a primary employer (export 50% or more of its goods / services outside of Adams County).
- County incentives usually are limited to a match of the amount of incentives offered by the city.

**City of Thornton**

**Business Assistance Incentives** - The City of Thornton has a business assistance package / agreement policy in which a business agrees to meet or exceed the City’s development standards in exchange for business assistance incentives which would reduce development costs associated with a new business or business expansion. The package is discretionary and is considered on a case-by-case basis with City Council. Packages may include:

- Rebate of development fees.
- Rebate or waiver of public land dedication fee.

- Rebate of a portion of the new sales taxes generated by the business.
- Rebate of a portion of use taxes generated by the business.
- Rebate of use taxes paid on construction of a new facility or expansion of an existing facility.
- Rebate of the City’s real property taxes paid on a new facility.
- Rebate of the City’s personal property taxes paid on a new facility.

Rebates of sales and use taxes are limited to 50%.

The City prefers performance based agreements whereby the business and / or developer must meet or exceed performance measures including:

- New revenues generated to equal or exceed the amount of the business assistance rendered.
- Requiring any rebate or refund to come from the revenues generated by that business.
- Requiring the completion of a significant development milestone prior to disbursing any monies.
- A provision encouraging businesses to use a good faith effort to hire Thornton residents and to advertise the location of the business in Thornton.

**Facilitated Development Review** - An application for a conceptual site plan, plat or development permit which is found by the City Council to create significant economic benefits or redevelopment benefits may be approved by City Council to follow an expedited administrative development review process. The development must be at least 50% nonresidential and will significantly increase sales, use or property taxes or other revenues to the City or significantly increase employment; advance the redevelopment of property; or provide other significant benefits.



## Local & Regional Funding Sources - Mobility Focus

Program	Agency	Description	Applicability	Further Information
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Denver Regional Council of Govts (DRCOG)	DRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the adopted list of public transit, roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, air quality projects, and studies that will receive federal transportation funds in the near future and is the means through which many eligible Denver metro projects are implemented. The TIP includes the projects in the DRCOG area that are intended to only use state funds and it implements the fiscally-constrained 20 year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). DRCOG's TIP covers a six year period. The current TIP covers fiscal years 2012-2017 and was adopted in March, 2011.	The FY2012-2017 TIP awarded funds to 13 studies in communities across the region, including this Study in Thornton. A competitive call for projects will be held in 2013 for the Station Area Master Plan / Urban Center study reserve funds.	<a href="http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=StationAreaUrbanCenterPlanningFunds">http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=StationAreaUrbanCenterPlanningFunds</a>



## State & Federal Funding Programs - Mobility Focus

Program	Agency	Description	Applicability	Further Information
Safe Routes to School (SRTS, State)	CDOT	The program aims to increase the number of children walking or bicycling to school by removing the barriers that currently prevent them from doing so.	Appropriate projects include adding infrastructure where it is currently missing or unsafe, or funding programs to educate and encourage children and the community at large. CDOT awarded \$2.5 million in funding to 26 projects in 2012.	<a href="http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/bikeped/safe-routes">http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/bikeped/safe-routes</a>
Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant Program	Recreational Trails Program (RTP, Federal); Colorado State Parks; partnered with other state organizations	Funds projects for large / small recreational trail grants, trail planning, and trail support grants.	Funds could be used for non-motorized state trails.	<a href="http://www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/Grants/Pages/Grants.aspx">http://www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/Grants/Pages/Grants.aspx</a>
Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)	USDOT	\$500 million allocated for FY 2012. Targets projects that are multimodal, multi-jurisdictional, and otherwise difficult to fund through other existing programs.	Funds could be used for a variety of improvements, but application would require significant justification.	<a href="http://www.dot.gov/tiger">http://www.dot.gov/tiger</a>
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	FHWA	TAP provides funding for projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road ped / bike facilities, non-driver access to public transportation enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for the planning, design or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate routes or other divided highways.	Funds could be used to fund a wide variety of improvements. TAP funds are targeted at local levels instead of state and MPO levels.	<a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm">http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm</a>  <a href="http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/statewide-planning/documents/2013-stac/jan-2013/tap-stp-summary-1-8-2013">http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/statewide-planning/documents/2013-stac/jan-2013/tap-stp-summary-1-8-2013</a>



## State & Federal Funding Programs - Mobility Focus

Program	Agency	Description	Applicability	Further Information
Surface Transportation Programs	FHWA	Provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals.	A wide variety of projects including projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance of any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals.	<a href="http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/statewide-planning/documents/2013-stac/jan-2013/tap-stp-summary-1-8-2013">http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/statewide-planning/documents/2013-stac/jan-2013/tap-stp-summary-1-8-2013</a>
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	FHWA	Program aims to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities / injuries on all public roads through infrastructure-related highway safety improvements.	Contains a new High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRRP) that specifically addresses construction and operational improvements on rural major / minor collectors and local roads.	<a href="http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/">http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/</a>
National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)	FHWA	Supports the condition and performance of the National Highway System (NHS).	Provisions allow for funding of bike / ped facilities if they are associated with an NHS facility.	<a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidenhpp.cfm">http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidenhpp.cfm</a>
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	FHWA	Implemented to support surface transportation projects and other related efforts that contribute air quality improvements and provide congestion relief.	Motorized and non-motorized improvements are eligible if they prove to reduce emissions. Requirements are mostly the same as before MAP-21, but with greater emphasis on reduction of diesel emission and particulates.	<a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/">http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/</a>  <a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/policy_and_guidance/cmaq08gd.pdf">http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/policy_and_guidance/cmaq08gd.pdf</a>



## State & Federal Funding Programs - Mobility Focus

Program	Agency	Description	Applicability	Further Information
Urbanized Area Formula Program (FTA 5307)	FTA	Funds urbanized areas (pop > 50,000) for transit capital and operating assistance as well as planning.	Funds can target bus transit facilities.	<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3561.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3561.html</a>
State of Good Repair Grant Program	FTA	Provides funds to maintain transit systems in a state of good repair (infrastructure, operation and planning).	Funds can target local bus and other transit facilities.	<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/13248.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/13248.html</a>
Bus and Bus Facilities Program (FTA 5309, 5318)	FTA	Provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses, related equipment, and facilities in urbanized and rural areas.	Funds can target bus and bus-related equipment and facilities, including a bus testing facility.	<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094_3557.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094_3557.html</a>
Rural Transit Assistance Program (FTA 5311)	FTA	Provides funds for operational activities of rural transit operators.	Could be useful for operational transit funding with proper justification.	<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3554.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3554.html</a>
Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (FTA 5316)	FTA	Provides funds for capital, planning, and operational expenses for projects that transport low-income individuals to and from jobs and other employment activities. Also used for reverse commute projects.	Could have a variety of uses with proper justification.	<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3550.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3550.html</a>