Section 9

Implementation and Use

9.0 Introduction

The implementation of this Comprehensive Plan will be achieved through adherence to the Future Land Use Map in Section 3 and the major strategies and key policies in Sections 5, 6, and 7. The Comprehensive Plan should be consulted by City Council and appointed City officials and staff when considering development proposals, updating land use regulations, working on intergovernmental issues, outlining work programs, preparing annual budgets, and reviewing progress toward achieving overall City goals. The plan should also be used to guide Thornton residents, area land owners, and project applicants concerning land planning and community development objectives.

As emphasized in Section 8, the Comprehensive Plan should be used by other public agencies, business interests, and the non-profit sector in partnership with the City to achieve Thornton’s overarching community vision. The Comprehensive Plan is an overall policy document that is linked to numerous other city planning tools such as intergovernmental agreements, development regulations, functional plans, and capital improvement programs. The document is also dependent upon the implementation of certain legislative, regulatory, technical, and financing mechanisms which require coordination and cooperation among many
community interests. A complete update to the Comprehensive Plan, including a review of the overall vision and its core goals should occur approximately every five years.

9.1 Evaluation and Progress on Implementation of 2007 Catalyst Actions

The 2007 update identified fourteen “catalyst actions” that implement the major strategies identified for each core plan goal. Catalyst actions are defined as those key policies and/or recommendations that, once initiated, will dictate the success of this plan more than any other program or activity. The major Comprehensive Plan update in 2017 will reevaluate these catalyst actions and revise the list according to the needs and desires of the community at that time. The 2012 update examined each of these 2007 catalysts and evaluated the progress of each as described below.

CATALYST ACTIONS FOR QUALITY AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS

1. **Assess creation of internal City organization to strengthen neighborhood planning and monitor neighborhood conditions**

   In 2008 the City created the Neighborhood Services Division within the City Development Department. This division works to preserve, stabilize, or revitalize neighborhoods through cooperation and collaboration with citizens, local resource organizations, and other City departments. There are four main areas of this division:
   
   - Code compliance
   - Balanced and affordable housing
   - Neighborhood resources and engagement
   - Community development

   In 2010 the City became an entitlement community and Neighborhood Services now administers the Community Development Block Grant program, a federally-funded...
program intended to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities principally for persons of low and moderate income. Neighborhood Services staff partner with housing developers, local non-profit organizations, and residents to maintain and improve neighborhoods.

2. **Assess creation of external organizations to take lead on neighborhood stabilization and revitalization**

Revitalization Task Force and Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board

City Council chose to establish a task force and subsequently a board to assist with stabilization and revitalization rather than an external organization as was indicated by the catalyst action.

In 2008, Thornton City Council created the Revitalization Task Force to recommend a structure and methodology for revitalization. The Task Force’s 2009 report “Revitalization: Creating an Engaging and Lasting Process for Success” identified characteristics that impact an area’s health, established criteria for when the community should engage in revitalization efforts, and developed strategies to revitalize areas where deterioration is present and preserve healthy areas. The report recommended the creation of a standing board to generate sustained focus and commitment to revitalization in Thornton.

To initiate the implementation of the Task Force recommendations, City Council created the Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board (TRAB) in August 2009 to provide the vision, leadership, and continuity necessary to produce the on-going revitalization of Thornton’s residential and business neighborhoods. TRAB members were selected to offer a community-wide perspective on revitalization and provide recommendations, alternatives, and advice to City Council and City staff on feasible revitalization strategies.
To date, TRAB has overseen the development of the South Thornton Revitalization Subarea Plan (STaR) which identifies implementation steps to revitalize the STaR planning area. Although the STaR Plan focuses on a specific part of Thornton, the same evaluation process could essentially be applied to different areas of the city. The STaR Plan also states that it is vital to engage external organizations to help in the task of rejuvenating the area.

Keep Thornton Beautiful
The City also helped Keep Thornton Beautiful (KTB) incorporate and become a tax exempt organization in 2009. KTB is an affiliate of the national organization Keep America Beautiful. KTB enhances community pride by promoting opportunities for community improvement, beautification, environmental stewardship, and litter and waste reduction in Thornton. The board consists of residents as well as representatives from the business community, faith-based community, schools, and civic organizations. The City is an active partner and has an ex-officio member on the Board. KTB hosts clean-up events and partners with local organizations on the Thornton community gardens and Thornton Paint-a-thon.

3. Develop and implement a periodic program for assessing the condition of neighborhoods

The City conducts ongoing routine neighborhood inspections by Code Compliance. Additional area-specific assessments were done as part of the Revitalization Task Force’s work in 2009 and for the 2011 STaR Plan and 2012 Health Impact Assessment (HIA). A rigorous, comprehensive assessment program has not been implemented because it is resource intensive. Therefore, it is recommended that comprehensive neighborhood assessments be conducted at the time of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan update or in conjunction with an update of the Housing Master Plan.
4. Update the Housing Master Plan including provisions for a diversity of housing choices

The Housing Master Plan underwent a major update in 2010 and included a chapter on housing diversity by income level and life-cycle. Background information for the Housing Master Plan update was obtained primarily from a housing needs assessment completed in 2009.

In 2011, City Council adopted an affordable housing policy statement outlining the City’s commitment to expanding the supply and distribution of safe and decent affordable housing throughout Thornton. This statement was incorporated as Appendix B in the Housing Master Plan.

5. Develop programs to ensure an adequate supply of quality community and neighborhood scale commercial centers and decrease underutilized retail space through redevelopment to other uses

The City completed a City-wide Retail Opportunities Assessment which helps identify near-term retail opportunities throughout the city. More broadly, the supply and demand of retail uses will need to be evaluated and if necessary, the Future Land Use Plan changed accordingly. It is anticipated that this will be done prior to the 2017 major update due to its potentially significant impact. The City is already planning on identifying retail land needs in south Thornton in the Washington Street/Pearl Street area as part of the Urban Center Plan being developed in 2012 - 2013.

CATALYST ACTIONS FOR PLENTIFUL QUALITY JOBS

1. Implement the North Washington Subarea Plan: Develop Zoning, Infrastructure, and Concept Plans for all Land Uses with an Emphasis on the Corporate Campus and Urban Village Areas
Implementation of the North Washington Subarea Plan has progressed considerably with the following accomplishments:

- Infrastructure improvements have been completed or are almost complete including widening of 128th Avenue from I-25 to Washington Street, Washington Street widening, Sack Creek drainage improvements, construction of Bull Canal bridge at 160th Avenue, updating the Flood Hazard Area Delineation and Major Drainage Way Plan for Big Dry Creek.

- The new zoning categories of Employment Center, Mixed Use, and Office/Institutional were approved in 2009 and the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District was approved in 2010. It should also be noted that the North Washington Subarea Overlay District was approved in 2006, just prior to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan update.

- The Economic Development Department has a new focus on attracting and retaining primary jobs. This includes the promotion of the Corporate Campus area for employment-related land uses.

The Urban Village concept as shown in the North Washington Subarea Plan needs reevaluation in terms of its suitability and viability. This reevaluation is recommended as part of the 2017 update.

2. **Fortify Business Development Activities; Include Initiatives in both Retail Recruitment and Attracting & Retaining High Quality Employers**

The Economic Development Department is focused on primary employment attraction, retention, and expansion as well as retail development. The Economic Development Strategic Plan includes action steps that support the attraction of high-quality employment and the retention of existing businesses. The Economic Development Department is presently pursuing those steps.
3. **Assure that there is Sufficient Land Available, Served, and Zoned for Retail and Related Commercial Use**

The Economic Development Department is conducting a number of studies to evaluate future employment opportunities for primary employment and retail. These efforts will help support the City in the identification of strategies necessary to achieve an appropriate balance of land uses.

In addition, an assessment is underway to establish suitable locations of industrially zoned land in the city. Results of this study may result in a future amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map.

4. **Plan and Zone the Appropriate Transit Station Areas for the Desired Uses and to Avoid Premature, Speculative Development**

Plans for all the FasTracks transit station areas are complete, or proposed for completion in the next few years. The Eastlake Station Transit Oriented Development Master Plan report was adopted by City Council in February 2009. The area is already zoned to accommodate TOD-type uses as a result of recommendations from the 2003 Eastlake Subarea Plan. A plan for the North End Station was approved as part of a development application. Master plans for the remaining station areas including 88th Avenue, 104th Avenue, and 144th Avenue are proposed for 2013 and 2014.

Upon completion of all of the station area plans, the City’s new Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning category can be applied, as needed, to land appropriate for TOD-related land uses.
CATALYST ACTIONS FOR A HEALTHY CITY WITH GREAT AMENITIES

1. **Prepare specific area or subarea plans for each of the six Placemaking Districts. Commit to the concept through ordinance development**

Plans for Placemaking Districts have not yet been done. It is recommended that the location and function of the Placemaking Districts be reassessed as part of the 2017 major update to better align with Thornton’s attributes and constraints.

2. **Complete a functional study of the Placemaking Cultural (Heritage) Trail and define design standards along with recommended locational placement of these standards**

A draft study has already been completed of the Placemaking Heritage Trail System and will be included as part of the 2012 Parks and Open Space Master Plan update. It should be noted that this trail has been renamed the “Heritage Trail” System to better align with the historical context and attributes of the Thornton area. Implementation of the Heritage Trail concept has begun with the creation of the Eastlake Heritage Trail on the existing trail segment on the Lee Lateral Trail between York Street and Colorado Boulevard.

3. **Identify various funding resources and partnerships to design and implement public realm improvements along key gateways and corridors**

The City has undertaken a number of public realm improvements at key gateways and along major corridors. These include the structural and aesthetic bridge improvements at key locations along I-25 at 84th, 120th, 136th, and 144th Avenues. The City partnered with the City of Westminster to construct the bridges at 136th and 144th Avenues. These bridges exhibit special design features which exemplify Thornton and help provide a sense of identity.
A city entry sign inventory has been completed and new signs have been installed at 128th, 136th, and 144th Avenues. Existing entry signs at 84th Avenue and I-25 will be upgraded and replaced. Neighborhood entry signs have also been erected at key entry points to Original Thornton while many of the newer neighborhoods have identification signs at key entrances.

For over twenty years the City has been systematically installing streetscape beautification projects in Original Thornton. This was done using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. This successful program has enhanced the streets and overall image of Original Thornton significantly.

In the last few years, sizable pieces of public art have been integrated into the public realm throughout Thornton. A large statue titled “Communis” has been placed at the entrance to the Civic Center. Many other smaller pieces of public art are located at City parks and other City-owned properties. The two new “Anythink” libraries recently built in Thornton by Rangeview Library District can be identified by the flags and public art surrounding their buildings. The private sector is incorporating art into new planned developments as exemplified by the obelisk in HighPointe Park located near Washington Street and 98th Avenue.

Public realm improvements still need to be addressed along key corridors in Thornton, particularly Washington Street in both the southern and northern sections.

4. **Identify various funding resources and partnerships to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas**

The City passed a Parks and Open Space Sales Tax in 1997 in order to fund acquisition of land and construction of facilities for parks and open space purposes. The City has also received County open space tax money and Great Outdoors Colorado grants for upgrades to
Thornton’s active park system and for the preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive areas. To date, the City has purchased approximately 689 acres of land for parks and open space using these funding sources. Adams County has also purchased land for preservation, particularly along the South Platte River to help fulfill the goals of the South Platte River Heritage Corridor Plan.

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan identifies areas in Thornton with “Special Ecological Opportunities”. This and other maps in the plan addressing topography, hydrology, vegetation, and habitat help identify environmentally sensitive areas that need protection.

5. **Review and update as necessary a specific “brand” for the City to highlight specific design elements including, but not limited to, the Placemaking Districts, public realm, and the Placemaking Cultural (Heritage) Trail**

In 2008, the City looked into branding options but concluded that updating the current City “brand” was not a priority due to resource constraints. The branding theme will need to be reassessed as part of the 2017 update. It should be noted that the Placemaking Heritage Trail and other areas with a special theme will still reflect the City’s current identification logo.

9.2 **Ongoing Actions Prior to 2017 Major Update**

The intent of the 2012 technical update was not to conduct a complete new evaluation of the long-term needs and desires of the Thornton community. This will be the objective of the 2017 update. However, there are a number of action steps that have been identified as on-going or needing implementation prior to 2017 and these are listed below.
QUALITY AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS

1. **Revitalization as identified by implementation steps in the South Thornton Revitalization Subarea (STaR) Plan and as prioritized and budgeted by City Council**

   The STaR Plan was adopted by City Council in August 2011 after extensive community outreach, research, expert input, and discussion overseen by the Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board (TRAB). The plan recommended a number of implementation steps that require action. City Council will prioritize and allocate funding to implementation steps they consider most significant.

2. **Complete the Thornton Urban Center Plan and other TOD plans**

   The City is creating an Urban Center Plan for the southern part of Thornton with the use of Federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) dollars. The Urban Center Plan will help implement one of the major strategies under the goal of Quality and Diverse neighborhoods, “Promote Neighborhood Retail Commercial Revitalization, Redevelopment as well as New Development.” This plan will also identify options for creating an attractive urban setting in southern Thornton.

   Other Transit Oriented Development (TOD) planning endeavors are proposed in 2013 and 2014 using TIP-allocated monies. These include TODs at three proposed transit stations on the North Metro Corridor at 88th Avenue, 104th Avenue, and 144th Avenue.

3. **Use Urban Renewal and other tools to revitalize blighted properties**

   The City is presently in the process of establishing a new Urban Renewal Area in the southern part of Thornton. The STaR Plan also identifies other measures aimed at revital-
ization which, as mentioned above, will be implemented according to City Council’s prioritization.

4. **Neighborhood revitalization efforts**

The City is undertaking a number of efforts that further the Core Plan Goal of Quality and Diverse Neighborhoods, specifically the strategies “Build community capacity through partnerships for undertaking neighborhood revitalization” and “Take a proactive leadership role in neighborhood stabilization and revitalization”. These efforts include the implementation of a home repair program for low-income residents, a graffiti removal program, and a “Meet the Neighbors” program.

5. **Conducting and implementing recommendations from the Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the STaR Plan was completed in 2012. The HIA is an assessment tool that used qualitative and quantitative methods to determine how the STaR Plan can improve access to Healthy Eating and Active Living in the revitalization area of southern Thornton. To further strengthen the positive health impacts of revitalization, the HIA report identifies 16 Healthy Eating, Active Living recommendations that augment the existing STaR Plan goals and strategies. The City is moving forward with implementation of select recommendations, such as the construction of bicycle lanes on 88th Avenue between Grant Street and Huron Street with resurfacing in 2012. As with the STaR plan, City Council will prioritize and allocate funding to the HIA recommendations considered to have the most impact.

6. **Manufactured home communities study**

Thornton has a number of manufactured home communities located within its boundaries. City Council has directed staff to develop strategies to promote revitalization and
enhance quality of life within these communities. These studies currently focus on manufactured home community standards, water issues, and resident tenant rights.

7. **Traffic calming**

City Council has approved a number of traffic calming strategies including iwatch neighborhood speed reduction programs, and a “Complete Streets” policy. In the next few years, upon direction by City Council, the Infrastructure Department will be reviewing street projects for incorporating, designing, and implementing the Complete Street program concepts.

### PLENTIFUL QUALITY JOBS

1. **Economic Development Strategic Plan**

As mentioned previously, the Economic Development Department is preparing an overall Economic Development Strategic Plan to guide the City’s approach to economic development. This strategy will focus on expansion of office and industrial employment as well as retail. The Economic Development Strategic Plan will also help identify strategies necessary to achieve the appropriate supply and balance of these different land uses.

2. **Focus study on possible locations for industrial land uses**

The city has a limited inventory of land suitably zoned for industrial uses. A study is underway to determine what lands are suitable for industrial uses in the short- or medium-term. The focus is on areas that would not require much property assemblage or expensive utility connections. Outcomes of this study may result in a future amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map.
3. **Improve public infrastructure to stimulate and leverage private investment in the North Washington Subarea**

Numerous infrastructure improvements are in the process of being completed in the North Washington Subarea. These include widening of Washington Street from 144th Avenue to 148th Avenue and completion of the Sack Creek flood mitigation improvements.

### HEALTHY CITY WITH GREAT AMENITIES

1. **Heritage Trail System**

The 2007 update identified the Placemaking Cultural Trail system as a way to help establish a special image for Thornton and provide unique amenities for the community. This concept, as described in Section 7, has been renamed the Heritage Trail System and adapted to be more suitable for local conditions. The City has already utilized Parks and Open Space Sales Tax dollars to initiate the implementation of this system. For further implementation, a more detailed plan is needed. This more detailed plan is currently being developed in conjunction with the 2012 update of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

2. **Adopt a Local Historic Landmark Ordinance**

Adoption of a Local Historic Landmark Ordinance will help identify iconic landmarks, create links to the past, and support one of the main objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, which is to create a special identity for Thornton. City staff, in collaboration with the Thornton Arts, Sciences and Humanities Council (TASHCO) and Building Code Advisory Board (BCAB), established the initial parameters for an Historic Landmark Ordinance. Drafting of the Landmark Ordinance is now in process.
3. **Preservation of Lambertson Lakes Homestead**

In 2000, Kelly and Bertha Lambertson and the City of Thornton entered a Life Estate Agreement for the Lambertson Lakes Homestead. A master plan for the site was completed in April 2010 and Bertha Lambertson transferred the deed to the City in December 2010. The City has begun implementing the master plan by cleaning and making repairs to the site, as well as securing funding to protect and stabilize existing structures.

4. **Implementation of carbon footprint reduction strategies**

The City is continuing to implement programs focused on carbon footprint reduction at its facilities. Efforts include decreasing energy and water consumption at City buildings, increasing the efficiency of the City fleet, and implementing more energy efficient traffic signals and streetlights.

Community-wide carbon reduction steps are also being pursued. Specifically, the City is encouraging sustainable and green practices by:

- Implementing City Code changes such as encouraging and removing barriers to urban agriculture and community gardens.
- Conducting an inventory of community opportunities for sustainable and green practices.
- Maintaining a bilingual webpage with information about sustainability issues and resources.
- Providing bilingual publications and other methods to distribute information on sustainability.
- Participating in the Adams County Sustainability Roundtable.
• Investigating the feasibility of creating an internal City staff sustainability coordination team.

• Searching for funding for a sustainability plan for the city.

5. **Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan prior to 2015**

The Denver Regional Council of Governments has stated that they will not be updating or developing a new version of the 2010 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan that is now in place. Cities and other agencies which are covered by and have adopted the existing plan, including Thornton, will need to provide a new plan by the time the DRCOG plan expires in 2015. The City therefore needs to create a Thornton Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan or provide an alternative update to the DRCOG plan no later than 2015.

6. **Update Parks and Open Space Master Plan**

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan is scheduled to be updated in 2012 in compliance with the three year updating schedule required by the 1997 Parks and Open Space tax ballot measure. This plan identifies high priority open space projects which helps guide City Council’s decisions when purchasing open space and dealing with other parks and open space matters.

7. **Thornton Arts and Culture Center (TACC)**

The City recently purchased an old church and nearby residence in Original Thornton near the Senior Center on Dorothy Boulevard and converted these buildings to the Thornton Arts and Culture Center. The Center offers an active and growing schedule of events serving the needs of Thornton residents. These programs will expand Thornton’s existing arts and culture opportunities.
TRANSPORTATION

1. FasTracks

The original FasTracks funding estimates approved by voters in 2004 were insufficient to build out the entire transit system, including the North Metro Corridor. At this juncture, it is unclear whether the corridor will be fully financed and what timeline will be followed. The City is monitoring the situation carefully and playing a part in decision making where possible. Whatever the final outcome is, the City must ensure that the results are optimized for the benefit of Thornton’s residents.

ACTIVE AND ENGAGED PARTNERSHIPS

1. Continue ongoing partnerships

The City continues to partner with other public, private, and non-profit entities to help implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Section 8. Currently, the City’s partnerships include the following:

- Thornton Assistance Funds grants for non-profit organizations that serve the basic needs of Thornton residents in the areas of food, health, housing, and human services
- Allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to entities such as Clinica Family Health Services
- Joint-use agreements with the school districts for shared facilities
1. **Future Land Use Map Amendments**

Between major Comprehensive Plan updates, the Future Land Use Map is amended on a parcel by parcel basis as a result of approval of Comprehensive Plan amendment requests by property owners. These amendment requests are normally part of a development application and follow the amendment schedule included in Section 9 of this plan and the City Development Code.

Other amendments to the Future Land Use Map may occur in the future as a result of demand studies focusing on the need for more future employment land use designations and City Council priorities.

2. **Weld County**

Thornton’s future growth area includes over seven square miles located in Weld County. Before the city expands into Weld County, a cost benefit analysis of the water supply and many other factors is needed. The City is in the process of formulating development policies for this part of the City’s future growth area.

9.3 **2017 Major Update Foundation**

During the 2012 update process, the City identified a number of items needing closer attention. Some of these items require more intensive study, community outreach, and feedback than could be completed through this technical update. It was concluded that these matters should be considered at the time of the 2017 update. In addition, a number of new topics have arisen as a result of adjusting conditions and changing environment. These items are listed below:
Items Identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan

1. **Placemaking Districts**

   The 2007 Plan identified planning for Placemaking Districts as an important component of fulfilling the plan goals. It is recommended that the location and function of the Placemaking Districts be reassessed as part of the 2017 major update to better align with Thornton’s attributes and constraints.

2. **Branding**

   The 2007 Comprehensive Plan identified branding as an important way in which Thornton can be identified as a unique and active community. The City initiated discussion about this topic, but has not moved forward with branding because of higher priorities and the economic downturn. It is recommended that the City readdress this topic in the 2017 update.

3. **Neighborhood assessments**

   The 2007 Plan recommends an ongoing assessment of neighborhood conditions. Since 2007, the City has been monitoring neighborhood conditions through Code Compliance and conducting some location-specific assessments. However, it is recommended that the City conduct a more comprehensive, rigorous assessment of neighborhood conditions as part of the 2017 update.

**Future Land Use**

1. **Review of Future Land Use Map**

   A complete review of the Future Land Use Map will be conducted as part of the 2017 update to make sure the depicted land uses reflect the existing conditions and needs of the community.
Emerging Issues

1. **Demographic trends**

The 2010 Census identified a number of demographic trends in the city. Two of these, the growth in the Hispanic/Latino population and seniors over 65, will have major significance and need to be addressed in the 2017 update.

The Hispanic or Latino population in Thornton grew from 21% in 2000 to 32% in 2010. In the STaR Plan area in southern Thornton it grew from 40% to 56%. By 2017, this and other minority ethnic groups will form an even greater proportion of the community of Thornton. The 2017 plan will need to consider the implications of this change. Outreach for the 2017 update needs to be inclusive of all demographic groups to ensure that a full spectrum of opinions and needs are identified and incorporated into formulated strategies.

Another demographic trend of major significance is the aging baby boomer cohort, also called the “Silver Tsunami”. The over-65 age group will increase significantly in the next few decades. The City will need to plan and budget for the additional housing and service needs of these seniors. The City should determine how DRCOG’s new “Boomer Bond” initiative could be utilized for Thornton seniors. This initiative aims to arm the region’s local governments with strategies and tools to support healthy, independent aging, allowing older adults to remain in their homes and communities as long as they wish.

2. **Sustainability**

The 2012 update of the Comprehensive Plan introduced sustainability as a base concept for the long-term viability of the city. In 2017 the Plan should explore this concept further specifically looking at local employment options, expanded housing choice, increased density and
infill development, greenhouse gas emission reduction, multi-modal transportation options including walkability and complete streets, community wellness, and resource conservation.

3. **Historic preservation**

Community recognition of Thornton’s history and heritage creates a sense of belonging, pride, and identity. Identification and preservation of buildings and structures from the city’s history help make a place special. The City is creating a Local Historic Landmark Ordinance to formalize a process for recognizing historically significant buildings and structures. The 2017 Comprehensive Plan update will need to identify Thornton’s future direction on historic preservation and provide guidance on how to reach identified goals.

4. **Aging infrastructure**

Construction of the city’s infrastructure started over 50 years ago. Although repairs have been made periodically, a major investment is needed to replace and maintain the existing infrastructure at a satisfactory standard. The 2017 Plan needs to address this emerging issue as the city gets older.

5. **Oil and gas extraction**

The Wattenberg Oil and Gas Field covers the northern part of Thornton’s Future Growth Area including areas already annexed into the city. The presence of this major oil and gas producing area has resulted in a number of wells being located within Thornton municipal boundaries and also within the Future Growth Area. The placement of wells has an impact on development in Thornton resulting in the need for setbacks and an evaluation of possible impacts from the wells on surrounding land uses. As development in Thornton moves more into the oil and gas producing areas, the impact of these extraction activities needs to be further evaluated.
Other Items

1. Sign code review

In July 2011 City Council adopted a resolution to review the sign code in conjunction with the five-year Comprehensive Plan update. City Council was concerned that as signage technology continues to evolve, the Sign Code could become out-of-date. Adopting a formal review at the same time the Comprehensive Plan is updated ensures that the City’s Sign Code is reviewed on a regularly scheduled basis.

9.4 Plan Amendment

To be successful, comprehensive planning must be an on-going activity. As such, modifications to major strategies, refinements to policies, acknowledgement of completed actions, and updates to technical data should be considered when appropriate. If progress toward the overarching core plan goals is not evident, the City should re-evaluate the policies within each major strategy and consider necessary amendments to more effectively accomplish the core plan goals.

This Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed at least bi-annually to evaluate the achievement of specific actions and the effectiveness of key policies. The Comprehensive Plan should also be reviewed periodically when new circumstances or changing conditions warrant reconsideration.

Plan amendments should be carefully evaluated to determine their overall impact on achieving core plan goals. In particular, pressure to amend the Future Land Use Map to accommodate current market conditions may occur. The approval of multiple plan amendments is an indicator of an incremental shift in policy direction. All plan amendments should be thoroughly reviewed in the context of the major strategies they may impact.

To reflect changing conditions in the community, the Comprehensive Plan may be amended from time to time in accor-
dance with the procedure set forth in this section. Modifications to the Comprehensive Plan can either be considered a major amendment or a minor amendment.

**Major Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

Substantial changes to the Comprehensive Plan, such as significant updates to information and/or adding elements to the text, shall be in the interest of promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the community. Such changes shall be consistent with any intergovernmental agreements in place at the time of the amendment process and in accordance with one of the following:

1. It corrects an error in the current Comprehensive Plan adoption; events, trends, or facts evident after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan have changed the City Council’s original findings made upon Plan adoption; or

2. Events, trends, or facts evident after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan have changed the character or condition of the community so as to make the proposed amendment necessary; or

3. Other changes to the Comprehensive Plan deemed necessary by the City, such as the need to integrate subarea plans, area plans, corridor plans, or other special studies.

A major Comprehensive Plan amendment may be initiated by the City or property owners. Upon submittal of an application to the City and the publication of notice, the City Council shall hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment. The City Council may approve, deny, or amend the proposal, based on the following criteria:

1. There has been a change in the area or in the conditions on which the current designation was based which warrants the amendment;

2. The density and intensity of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is sensitive to the existing land uses.
and is compatible with the existing adjacent land use designations;

3. The amendment will provide for orderly physical growth of the city, and foster safe, convenient, and walkable neighborhoods and shopping districts;

4. There are or are planned to be adequate transportation, recreation, utility and other facilities to accommodate the uses and densities permitted by the proposed Comprehensive Plan designation;

5. The proposed change is in substantial conformance with the core plan goals, major strategies or key policies;

6. Consideration of City subarea plans and master plans; or

7. The proposed amendment is consistent with current zoning of the site unless a zoning change request is under concurrent review.

Following City Council action on the proposed amendment, a Resolution shall be adopted accepting or denying the proposed amendment as an addition or change to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Minor Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

Minor amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to update statistical, quantitative, or mapping information, address previous errors or omissions, and correct narrative or graphic information may also be initiated by the City or by property owners and forwarded to the City Council for review and action.

**9.5 Plan Monitoring and Evaluation**

Plan monitoring and evaluation involves tracking progress and setbacks in accomplishing core plan goals, determining an appropriate response, and charting an effective course of action toward successful plan implementation. Two principle techniques are proposed for monitoring and evaluating the Comprehensive Plan:
1. Develop key performance “indicators” that monitor plan progress. Indicators are specific measures that bear a direct or indirect relationship to initiating a major strategy, implementing a key policy, or accomplishing a prioritized action. By tracking selected indicators consistently over a number of years, trends can be evaluated, benchmarks identified, targets set, accomplishments determined, policies refined, and actions adjusted as necessary to ensure that core plan goals are being achieved.

2. Use a progress matrix to identify responsibilities and timeframes for accomplishing plan actions. The progress matrix also serves as a checklist for monitoring progress toward accomplishing intangible or non-measurable objectives for which performance indicators cannot be established.

Figure 9-1 provides data for performance indicators identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Over time, these performance indicators should be reevaluated and linked to qualitative plan outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: QUALITY AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS</th>
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| Number of COs for New Dwelling Units | 2006 - 1200  
2007 - 749  
2008 - 647  
2009 - 414  
2010 - 275  
2011 - 271 |
| Number of Permits Issued for Residential Additions and Remodeling Projects | 2006 - 388  
2007 - 420  
2008 - 408  
2009 - 407  
2010 - 388  
2011 - 411 |
| Number of Additional Affordable Rental Units Needed | Per the 2009 Housing Needs Assessment, Thornton has a shortage of 2,100 rental units for households earning less than $25,000/year. |
| Number of Foreclosure Petitions/Year | 2006 - 499  
2007 - 1324  
2008 - 1333  
2009 - 1281  
2010 - 1200  
2011 - 939 |
### Average and Median Home Sales Price

| Year | Condominium Sales Prices |  |  
|------|--------------------------|---|---
|      | Average                  | Median | 
| 2007 | $130,190                 | $132,000 | 
| 2008 | $115,140                 | $114,900 | 
| 2009 | $112,134                 | $115,000 | 
| 2010 | $116,000                 | $119,975 | 
| 2011 | $102,636                 | $102,500 | 

| Year | Single-family Sales Prices |  |  
|------|-----------------------------|---|---
|      | Average                     | Median | 
| 2007 | $227,221                    | $215,000 | 
| 2008 | $199,353                    | $187,500 | 
| 2009 | $206,258                    | $194,000 | 
| 2010 | $214,605                    | $205,000 | 
| 2011 | $205,958                    | $194,000 | 

### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: PLENTIFUL QUALITY JOBS

| Category                  |  |  
|---------------------------|---|---
| Jobs per Household        | 2006 - 0.69 | 2009 - 0.63 |
| Estimated Value of New Commercial Space Constructed by Year (rounded) | 2006 - $39,600,000  | 2007 - $38,500,000  | 2008 - $37,300,000  | 2009 - $37,500,000  | 2010 - $27,800,000  | 2011 - $27,300,000  |

| Total Square Footage of Commercial Space by Category | Industrial SF Vacancy | Office SF Vacancy | Flex Space SF Vacancy | Retail SF Vacancy |  |  
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---|---
| 2006 - 1,980,981 10% | 1,411,038 23% | 705,566 17% | 3,671,456 14% |  |  |  
| 2007 - 1,980,981 9%  | 1,429,863 24% | 715,771 18% | 3,699,967 13% |  |  |  
| 2008 - 1,980,981 6%  | 1,429,863 24% | 715,771 25% | 3,775,301 11% |  |  |  
| 2009 - 1,980,981 7%  | 1,429,863 24% | 715,771 29% | 3,775,301 11% |  |  |  
| 2010 - 1,980,981 7%  | 1,429,863 24% | 715,771 30% | 3,791,197 11% |  |  |  
| 2011 - 2,013,108 6%  | 1,429,863 23% | 715,771 30% | 3,791,197 9% |  |  |  

9.26
### Year-end Vacancy Rate for Office and Industrial Lease Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annual Sales Tax Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$45,697,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$43,358,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$50,012,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$48,334,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$51,255,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$53,871,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Performance Indicators: Healthy Community with Great Amenities

#### Number of Miles of Trails (approximate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>50 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>50 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>70 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>111 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Number of Acres of Parks (approximate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,543 acres (58 ac Pocket, 165 ac Neighborhood, 119 ac Community Parks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1,325 acres (78 ac Pocket, 282 ac Neighborhood, 144 ac Community Parks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,282 acres (99 ac Pocket, 470 ac Neighborhood, 222 ac Community Parks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,448 acres (95 ac Pocket, 431 ac Neighborhood, 192 ac Community Parks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Number of Acres of Open Lands (approximate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,543 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1,325 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,282 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,448 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Performance Indicators**

The following steps for preparing performance indicators are recommended:

1. **Collect Data**
   
   Time-series data should be collected and entered into tables and graphs. Either a five-year data trend or point-in-time comparisons should be maintained. The trend that is established provides the basis for identifying benchmarks, setting targets, and evaluating results. All databases should be maintained and updated regularly as data becomes available.
2. Identify Benchmarks
The collected data provides a baseline from which to measure change. A benchmark is the baseline from which to evaluate either positive or negative change. A benchmark is determined by calculating the average of the data trend. Benchmarks should be established for each indicator and reviewed with the City Council.

3. Set Targets
In addition to benchmarks, targets for each indicator should be established and updated. A target can be a short-term, medium-term, or long-term objective toward the achievement of a core plan goal or major strategy. Targeting of an indicator is the determination of a milestone that represents significant accomplishment. Some targets can be based on established service standards, such as 2.5 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 persons. Other targets must be determined through research with City departments or other agencies. Targets should be initially researched and reviewed by City staff and ultimately established by the City Council. Prior to the 2017 update, the City intends to develop appropriate targets.

4. Evaluate Trends
Once tables and graphs are updated, benchmarks are identified, and targets are set, the trend for each indicator should be reviewed by City staff to determine either a positive or a negative movement relative to the achievement of a core plan goal or major strategy. A periodic report should be prepared to provide a summary of evaluated trends, specifying which actions or events have influenced change. The report also serves to inform the general public of the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan as a policy tool for guiding decisions. Prior to the 2017 update, the City intends to examine existing and emerging trends.
5. Update Indicators
   New indicators should be added and existing indicators revised or even deleted as targets for each performance indicator are monitored and evaluated.

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan in order to gauge its success. Developing performance indicators and prioritizing actions using a progress matrix are two useful tools for monitoring the progress of the Plan’s implementation.

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision is just passing time. Vision with action can change the world.”

- Joel Barker
  The Power of Vision