



STaR

Approved
August 23, 2011

PREFACE

“Revitalization is an ongoing process that concentrates on specific areas within the community where the goal is to create a vibrant, lively, safe, well-kept, clean and inclusive environment that both commercial and residential neighbors take pride in being a part of. For revitalization efforts to be a success, the stakeholders of the community must be involved at every step of the way. Their input, feedback and participation is central to the process and their best interest must always be first priority.”

- Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board (TRAB)

Hoffman Homes model opening



North Valley Mall



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Revitalization is a challenging process. To achieve success, community involvement is essential.

This plan is testimony to all the community members who contributed to the revitalization vision for the south Thornton area. In particular, the Revitalization Task Force had a significant role in initiating and providing guidance on the plan's process. The residents, business owners, property owners and community organization representatives provided insight and inspiration to the Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board.

All plan participants endeavor to make the South Thornton Revitalization area a thriving and prosperous place for present and future generations.

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Ward 4

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Eric Tade

Former Mayor Erik Hansen

(November 20, 2007 - January 11, 2011)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THORNTON REVITALIZATION ADVISORY BOARD

Mark Borland
Dean Kallis
Michael Miller
Gina Salazar

Susan Sherman-Kessler
Robert Underwood
Anthony Unrein III
Heidi Williams

CITY OF THORNTON

Jack Ethredge	City Manager
Jeff Coder, AICP	Deputy City Manager of City Development
Chris Molison	Development Director
Mike Masciola	Economic Development Director
Glenda Lainis, AICP	Policy Planning Manager
Nicole Jeffers	Neighborhood Services Manager
Greg Thompson, AICP	Current Planning Manager
Martin Postma	Redevelopment Manager
Rob Larsen, AICP	Senior Planner
Robin Brown	Senior Policy Analyst
Karen Widomski	Policy Analyst II
Amy Schmaltz	Planner I
Aliina Fowler	Intern III
John Herman	GIS Services Manager
Valorie Plesha	GIS Analyst
Jaime Giesen	GIS Analyst
Liz Kienle	GIS Analyst
Jennie Slattengren	Neighborhood Resource Specialist
Debbie Hughes	Housing Coordinator
Pam Meis	Executive Assistant
Erika Barnard	Communications Technician

CONSULTANTS

Winston Associates, Inc.

Jeff Winston
Bob Perletz
Paul Glasgow, AICP
Jessica Lagoni

The Osprey Group

Dennis Donald
John Huyler

Centro, Inc.

Jamie Licko

czbLLC

Charles Buki

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE SOUTH THORNTON REVITALIZATION SUBAREA PLAN AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE 2007 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Thornton City Council ("Council") originally adopted the Thornton Comprehensive Plan on September 11, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan identified a need for revitalization in south Thornton; and

WHEREAS, Council created a Revitalization Task Force to recommend a structure and methodology for revitalization; and

WHEREAS, the Revitalization Task Force produced a report recommending the creation of a standing board to generate sustained focus and commitment to revitalization in Thornton; and

WHEREAS, Council created the Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board ("TRAB") to provide the vision, leadership and continuity necessary to produce the on-going revitalization of Thornton's residential and business neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, TRAB started work on the South Thornton Revitalization Subarea ("STaR") Plan in the spring of 2010 and met over twenty times to guide the creation of the plan with the help of a consulting team and City staff; and

WHEREAS, the STaR plan contains TRAB's vision, goals and strategies providing a long-term direction for revitalization of the planning area; and

WHEREAS, the plan also contains implementation recommendations that provide short-term actions for sustaining the direction provided by TRAB; and

WHEREAS, the City held a community meeting, residential and commercial focus group meetings, conducted three surveys and maintained a City webpage on the project to obtain community input into the plan; and

WHEREAS, the STaR Plan will be the guiding document for future land use development and revitalization of the STaR Plan area; and

WHEREAS, the STaR Plan will be used by City Council, City Boards, other City officials, citizens, developers and City staff to guide revitalization of the STaR Plan area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Subarea Plan is consistent with the community vision and the overall intent of the goals, policies and recommendations in the 2011 Thornton Comprehensive Plan.

RESOLUTION


C.D. No. 2011-102

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF THORNTON, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

The South Thornton Revitalization Subarea (STaR) Plan, attached as Exhibit "A", is hereby adopted as a supplement to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Thornton, Colorado, on August 23, 2011.

CITY OF THORNTON, COLORADO


Mack Goodman, Mayor pro tem

ATTEST:


Nancy A. Vincent, City Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.....	IV
RESOLUTION	VI
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	X
INTRODUCTION	
1.1 THE SETTING.....	1.1
1.2 STAR PLAN FOUNDATION	1.4
1.3 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	1.7
1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT	1.11
VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES	
2.1 BACKGROUND.....	2.1
2.2 VISION	2.2
2.3 GOALS.....	2.5
2.4 STRATEGY EVALUATION CRITERIA	2.5
2.5 STRATEGIES.....	2.9
2.6 IMPLEMENTATION.....	2.46
IMPLEMENTATION	
3.1 BACKGROUND.....	3.1
3.2 COMPARISON OF GOALS, STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3.1
3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STEPS.....	3.5
APPENDICES	
A. CONSULTANT'S ASSESSMENT: THE NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE.....	A.1
B. COMMUNITY MEETING SURVEY RESULTS	B.1
C. RESIDENTIAL SURVEY RESULTS	C.1
D. STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS.....	D.1

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: SOUTH THORNTON REVITALIZATION SUBAREA BOUNDARIES.....	1.2
FIGURE 2: STAR PLAN PROCESS	1.8
FIGURE 3: VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGY CHART	2.3
FIGURE 4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAB'S GOALS AND STRATEGIES AND STAFF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3.2
FIGURE 5: STAR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND STEPS.....	3.6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Thornton began as a post-World War II, master-planned community established amid farmland seven miles north of Denver. It has been more than fifty years since this area first developed and there is evidence of disinvestment and decline. As the nucleus of the city's historic origins, rejuvenation of the south Thornton area is an important focus for the City. The need for this rejuvenation was substantiated through the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as well as by City Council and community direction. The South Thornton Revitalization Subarea Plan (STaR) boundary encompasses the core of Thornton's initial development and surrounding area and is shown in Section 1, Figure 1.

In 2009, City Council created a Revitalization Task Force whose task was to recommend a structure and methodology for revitalization. One of the outcomes of this effort was the establishment of a standing board, the Thornton Revitalization Advisory Board (TRAB) whose task was to provide the vision, leadership and continuity necessary to produce on-going revitalization of Thornton's residential and business neighborhoods.

In August 2009, City Council appointed board members from Thornton's residential areas, the business community, and other relevant stakeholders to TRAB. 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. This Board was directed to create revitalization plans for priority revitalization areas. TRAB chose to commence with the development of a revitalization plan for the southern Thornton area. This resulting endeavor was titled the "**South Thornton Revitalization Subarea Plan**", or the "**STaR Plan**".

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In June 2010, City Council provided direction for the STaR Plan project to proceed and instructed TRAB and City Staff to prepare the plan. A consulting team was hired to conduct analysis and present background information to TRAB, a summary of which is contained in Appendix A of this document titled “The Nature of the Challenge”. Outreach included a community meeting, focus groups, interviews and surveys. The City also maintained a web site for the STaR Plan.

After the background analysis and community input, TRAB was ready to prepare a Vision Statement, Goals and Strategies. The Vision Statement is:

“South Thornton competes regionally for residential quality of life and commercial and employment opportunities. To do this, south Thornton's feel and image must be developed into a family-friendly community, where people can walk to places, socialize with others, and feel safe in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing.”

TRAB then came up with five goals to fulfill the vision and lead to effective and lasting revitalization of south Thornton. From these goals, strategies were generated and evaluated based on the nine criteria: potential cost, viable source of funds, timing, implementation entity, cost versus benefit, potential cumulative effect, potential to leverage resources, capacity building and concentration of resources. TRAB also assigned ranking as a priority or secondary strategy and recommended focusing on the priority strategies. An information and evaluation sheet for each strategy is included in Section 2. Listed below are the goals and strategies recommended by TRAB:

Goal A: Create more appropriate retail and reduce the number of vacant buildings.

Priority Strategies:

- A1** Conduct a commercial demand study to identify neighborhood-serving retail and markets suitable for the area.

A2 Continue to provide financial assistance or other incentives to existing and desired businesses and commercial entities.

Secondary Strategies:

A3 Develop a commercial development concierge service to assist developers, property owners and business owners through the process of (re)development and (re)design.

Goal B: Capitalize on the strengths and unique regional character of the area.

Priority Strategies:

B1 Rezone and/or create overlay zoning districts in the area to spur revitalization, guide development and encourage desired uses.

B2 Continue to partner with other government entities and organizations to maximize revitalization efforts.

Secondary Strategies:

B3 Identify an area's unique character and utilize and interpret those qualities to create market material.

B4 Leverage funded expansion projects, such as Clinica Family Health Services, York International and Skyview Campus, to assist in redevelopment and revitalization of the area.

B5 Continue to design and install City signage at prominent gateways.

B6 Create a revitalization presentation for various City decision-making entities that will explain the rationale and provide data for supporting the revitalization efforts in south Thornton.

Goal C: Improve physical conditions of the area.

Priority Strategies:

C1 Use Urban Renewal to assist in redeveloping difficult properties in the south Thornton area including the Thornton Shopping Center.

C2 Encourage local businesses, property owners and developers to work together toward common objectives through a Business Improvement District (BID), Downtown Development Authority (DDA), or other mechanism for cooperative action.

- C3** Install streetscape and sidewalks to improve aesthetics, safety and walkability.

Secondary Strategies:

- C4** Develop design guidelines for the south Thornton commercial areas to encourage attractive and visually consistent development and redevelopment of commercial properties, including facades and signage.
- C5** Require owners of vacant, abandoned or rental homes and business properties to register with the City.

Goal D: Increase the buying power of the neighborhood by inspiring residents to improve their existing homes and neighborhoods.

Priority Strategies:

- D1** Engage stakeholders in a neighborhood enhancement campaign, future community planning and revitalization efforts.

Secondary Strategies:

- D2** Hold a design competition to create a single-family home renovation pattern book and provide workshops on home improvements and energy efficiency.
- D3** Explore amending the City Code to increase or decrease the required level of property maintenance, and/or set higher penalties for repeat offenders and non-compliant property owners, and/or increase the number of Code Compliance officers.
- D4** Hold a competition that recognizes homeowners, blocks, and neighborhoods that make significant improvements to the exterior of homes or yards.
- D5** Conduct a "parade of homes" - a public open house of select homes and properties exemplifying high quality interior, exterior or landscaping upgrades and improvements.
- D6** Create a program that increases the feeling of safety within the subarea.

Goal E: Enhance access between and within the east and west sides of south Thornton.

Priority Strategies:

- E1** Improve the pedestrian, bicycle, and bus circulation throughout the area.

Using TRAB's framework of the Vision, Goals and Strategies for the plan, City staff developed a set of implementation steps to enable the plan to take effect. TRAB's goals and strategies establish the long-term direction for revitalization of south Thornton, while the implementation steps are intended to provide short-term actions for sustaining this direction. These implementation steps are included in Figure 5 in Section 3.

In recognition of anticipated progress and changing needs, the STaR Plan is intended to be a living document. Therefore, the plan's goals and strategies should be re-evaluated approximately every five years in order to refine implementation steps. Implementation steps will take into account the current economic and decision-making environment and ensure that TRAB's revitalization vision prevails into the future. Approved recommendations and implementation steps can be incorporated annually into the City Council's future Workplan.

Much has been learned in this planning process and more will be learned in the future as the plan is implemented. These lessons can be used to help rejuvenate other parts of Thornton and support the goal of making Thornton a great place to live and thrive for all.



Thornton Festival Days