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Denver Regional Council of Governments
Mapleton Public Schools
Adams 12 Five Star Schools
Adams County
Tri-County Health Department
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
LiveWell Colorado / South Adams County
Adams County Housing Authority
Adams County Economic Development
Rangeview Library District

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RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE THORNTON URBAN CENTER STUDY.

WHEREAS, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) has identified more than 100 urban centers throughout the Denver metro area; and

WHEREAS, DRCOG's MetroVision 2035 Plan provides the vision, goals, and policies pertaining to urban centers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Thornton has taken an active role in determining how the vision, goals, and policies of the MetroVision 2035 Plan would best be applied within the Thornton Urban Center; and

WHEREAS, the TUC Study will provide guidance to the City in determining which public infrastructure improvements to make and how to regulate the nature and scope of future private developments within the study area; and

WHEREAS, the TUC Study will guide the South Thornton Redevelopment Implementation Study.

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

The Thornton Urban Center Study, attached as Exhibit “A” to this Resolution, is hereby accepted.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Thornton, Colorado, on August 27, 2013.

CITY OF THORNTON, COLORADO

Heidi K. Williams, Mayor

ATTEST:

Nancy A. Vincent, City Clerk
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THE PROJECT

The Thornton Urban Center (TUC) Study is a jointly funded effort by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and the City of Thornton. The City of Thornton undertook this Study to develop physical design recommendations and an implementation strategy to spur reinvestment in the area and create a viable Urban Center in south Thornton. This Study builds upon the South Thornton Revitalization Subarea (STaR) Plan, proposing mobility recommendations for the entire TUC Area, as well as high-level framework plans for five development nodes. Detailed development strategies in the TUC Area, and beyond, are anticipated to be included in the South Thornton Urban Renewal Implementation Plan, which started in the summer of 2013.

Located in south Thornton, the Study Area is bounded by Thornton Pkwy. on the north and the City boundary, which roughly parallels E. 83rd Dr., on the south. I-25 represents the western limits of the Study Area, while Washington, Clarkson and Corona streets represent the eastern limits. The Study Area is 0.5 miles wide and over 1.5 miles long. It includes 535 acres.

The process involved a Technical Advisory Committee representing various City of Thornton departments, as well as two community meetings, a visual preference exercise, and meetings with various local, county and state agencies as well as City of Thornton Boards and Commissions. The project began in August 2012 and finished July 2013.

This area of Thornton has significant potential. Substantial land areas are ripe for development / redevelopment, which, under the right leadership and regulatory framework, can provide a significant case study for regeneration of suburban environments.
The 535-acre Study Area, its context and market sub-areas were evaluated from existing regulatory, market, physical, and mobility perspectives, providing an in-depth understanding of existing conditions.

**Market**

Some of the key demographic indicators for the TUC Area include:

- The City's population in 2010 was estimated at 118,000 persons and is currently estimated (2012) at 121,211 persons. The TUC population (2012) is approximately 3,800 persons in 1,620 households.
- There are an estimated 6,920 jobs in the TUC Area. The current jobs for the City range from approximately 21,000 to 25,000 jobs.
- Between 2000 and 2010, the population per square mile has decreased in the areas surrounding the TUC. Parts of the TUC have seen a general increase in population per square mile.
- TUC median household incomes are an estimated $36,900 compared to the City of Thornton as a whole at $62,100.
- There is a predominance of rental housing in the TUC.
- TUC household sizes tend to be smaller at 2.7 persons per household versus the City at 2.9 persons because of the concentration of multifamily in the TUC.
- The TUC is more heavily Hispanic at 69% of the population vs. the City of Thornton as a whole at 34%.
- Top resident psychographics in the TUC Area (80229 zip code) are: Aspiring Young Families, Industrious Urban Fringe (suburban neighborhoods with good access to downtown employment and entertainment), and Crossroads (retirees who like a small town type of lifestyle). They are characterized by young starter households, retirees, single person households, and families. Psychographics are characteristics of people and neighborhoods reflecting attitudes, interests and lifestyles.
- Affordability is important.

The table below shows the overall planning recommendations for the project. The middle column shows market supportability through 2035 without any focused regeneration effort for this area of Thornton. Basically this represents ‘status quo.’ However, if the City focuses efforts to brand and promote this area as a key Urban Center and focused redevelopment area of the City in support of the recently established Urban Renewal Area and previous planning efforts’ established vision and goals, a much higher development program could be realized. The DRCOG TUC goal is potentially attainable with significant thought, investment and political will on the part of the City of Thornton.

The DRCOG TUC Goal identified in the table below simply represents equal allocation of future projected growth in Thornton across each of four identified Urban Centers in the City. As some Urban Centers may have higher or lower propensity for change, these numbers may need to be adjusted. For planning, equal allocation of the growth projections and goal capture of 50% new residences and 75% of new jobs was calculated.

In regenerating areas like the TUC, it is critical to realize that a market must be infused. This occurs through political will, clear direction and ‘due-diligence’ in making this a priority investment area through: updating zoning and other regulatory and policy frameworks, identifying a strong brand and providing focused marketing.

<table>
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<th>Existing</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>DRCOG TUC Goal [1]</th>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Units</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>400-600</td>
<td>1,900-2,000</td>
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<td>Office SF</td>
<td>1,029,786</td>
<td>50,000-170,000</td>
<td>500,000-600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail SF</td>
<td>796,092</td>
<td>10,000-20,000</td>
<td>90,000-100,000[2]</td>
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Source: ArLand

[1] assumes that 50% of new residences and 75% of new jobs in 4 Urban Centers in Thornton based on DRCOG growth numbers. TUC goals result of even allocation of residents/jobs in 4 urban centers.

[2] assumes 20 sf per capita

Overall Planning Recommendations for the Project
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conditions at a glance - the TUC Area has:

- Significant land areas that have never been developed, often clustered and many under City ownership.
- Two large (over 20 acres) significantly economically underperforming mall sites and other older, tired retail centers of varying sizes.
- Older housing stock, primarily rental.
- A superblock development pattern that precludes good urbanism and connectivity.
- A major RTD Park-n-Ride and transfer facility with planned expansion and planned new HOT lane along I-25 serving this station.
- Good service by local transit.
- Topography that is a tremendous asset, particularly Brittany Hill as a landmark for the community and utilizing topography as an asset to provide a critical concentration of residents and jobs.
- A north Denver metro area location that is well positioned, being a 15-minute drive or 15- to 23-minute express bus ride to / from the two downtown Denver transfer stations; relatively easy access to / from northern communities given adjacency to I-25, and a 30- to 45-minute travel time to / from Denver International Airport along 104th Ave. or 88th Ave. eventually connecting to C-470.
- A great opportunity to capture new north metro Denver growth, particularly in creating a substantial office cluster and substantial new housing that appeals to Gen Y and Empty Nester clusters.
- A unique opportunity to provide a regional example of a non-rail transit Urban Center transformation and reinvestment into a vibrant mixed use environment.

Physical

Much of this area of Thornton was developed between the mid 1950’s and the 2000’s. A significant amount of building stock is older, with over 70 buildings greater than 40 years old. This often results in obsolete environments for all uses - office, retail and residential - found in the TUC Area, as well as lower rents, higher vacancies, lower maintenance, and aging landscaping. Site development patterns preclude good urbanism and resulting connectivity. Larger institutional uses in campus settings such as Thornton High School and North Suburban Medical Center support the existing superblock environment with difficult localized connectivity and wayfinding.

Office, including medical office, and health care uses are found primarily along I-25 and the Grant St. corridor. These buildings are upwards of seven stories. Retail is generally bordered by Washington Ave., and housing, including primarily apartments and some townhomes, is located centrally in the TUC Area. These structures are typically two to four stories in height. Nearly every site is developed with surface parking between the street and building, again inhibiting good urbanism.
Mobility

Key mobility issues and opportunities identified include:

- Collector streets offer easy access to I-25 and the region.
- Proximity to regional transit routes and future commuter rail is a tremendous asset.
- Collector street volume could be accommodated by fewer travel lanes, based on rule-of-thumb lane capacity of 10,000 vehicles/lane.
- Extensive reservoirs of underutilized off-street parking can be converted to other uses relatively easily.
- Local street width within the Study Area is generous and could potentially accommodate on-street parking and/or bicycle and pedestrian facilities through road diets/restriping.
- Minimal on-street pedestrian amenities exist.
- Infrequent arterial crossings result in lack of connectivity.
- Superblocks with few local streets impede mobility.
- Almost no bicycle facilities exist.
- High traffic speeds and volumes in places discourages alternate modes.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to/from RTD Park-n-Ride should be maximized.
- Few passenger waiting area amenities exist at transit stops.

Areas of Stability & Areas for Change

When overlaying a series of approximately 15 categories of opportunities and constraints, two zones were identified within the 535 acres. An Area of Stability of approximately 185 acres was identified generally north of 88th Ave. in the central portion of the Study Area. Here the uses are relatively stable, and/or building infrastructure is newer. Conversely, approximately 350 acres or 65% of the Study Area was identified as the Area for Change. This Area for Change, which covers the remaining portion of the TUC Area, illustrates a land area where, for instance, low improvement to land values exist, buildings 40 years old or older exist, and current economic development tools such as being in an Urban Renewal or Enterprise Zone exist. These areas have the highest propensity for focused investment/reinvestment over the 20-year planning horizon, and therefore form the basis for more detailed recommendations in the private realm. Public realm recommendations address the entire TUC Area as this is critical for connectivity within an Urban Center.
RECOMMENDATIONS: MOBILITY

For the City of Thornton to achieve its revitalization goals for the TUC, and for this area to truly become the “Heart of Thornton” for local residents and an attractive regional destination that draws employers and visitors from throughout Denver metro, it will be necessary to completely rethink the transportation system for the area.

The current transportation infrastructure of the TUC Area is primarily auto-oriented. Going forward, the City must prioritize a broad array of multimodal improvements in the TUC.

Designated Urban Centers must help achieve DRCOG regional targets for reduced ‘vehicle miles traveled’ (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGe). As a result, the TUC’s transportation policies and investments should lead to a meaningful reduction in auto trips and associated greenhouse gas emission.

Pedestrians

Every trip—whether by transit, automobile, or by bike—begins and ends on foot. To begin reorienting the Study Area toward the pedestrian, several strategies create a more inviting pedestrian realm and bridge the superblocks. Pedestrian improvements include: providing / maintaining striped crosswalks at all intersections, providing ADA ramps at crosswalks, providing detached sidewalks with any new street reconstruction, providing pedestrian amenities along streetscapes, focus on improving key intersections and routes initially.

Bicycles

As almost no bicycle facilities exist, numerous facility improvements have been identified, including restriping existing wide streets with bike lanes (a road diet), adding sharrows and routes in key locations, and closing the Niver Creek Trail gap across the North Valley Tech Center property.

Transit

A significant transit ridership base already exists for trips to and from the TUC. Twenty-year strategies to improve transit service to and through the Study Area are modest and include modifying routes to support the Park-n-ride and future development, adding a new route along Thornton Pkwy, as development warrants, and considering a circulator for the area.

Vehicular

Improvements to the traffic, parking, and circulation issues include:

- Modify current parking standards to allow for reduction in requirements, allowances for shared parking, and facilitation of shared parking agreements.
- Look for opportunities to add on-street parking and provide for on-street parking in new development / new roadway standards.
- Road diets will help minimize excess speeds and reduce accidents on excessively wide streets.

One of three maps supporting the mobility recommendations
RECOMMENDATIONS: NODES

Through the course of the project, five development nodes were identified for further concentration that fit within the Areas For Change as identified in the analysis phase of the process. These five nodes were selected because they also fall within the current South Thornton Urban Renewal Boundary. Three of them are also located within the Enterprise Zone. Three of the nodes are on primarily vacant land that has never been built upon (the first three listed below), and two focus on redevelopment opportunities within south Thornton (the final two). Each of these nodes is referred to as a ‘Site,’ meaning the collective parcels that comprise the geographic outline of the node. The nodes range from under seven acres to over 37 acres in size and have anywhere from one to six owners.

The nodes include:

1. Grant St. / Thornton Pkwy. Vacant Land
2. Russell St. / I-25 Vacant Land
3. 86th Ave. Primarily Vacant Land
4. Thornton Shopping Center
5. North Valley Tech Center

Each node is described as follows:

- Basic Statistics: Acreage, location, current zoning and current number of owners.
- Overview of the node including unique features and general layout.
- Development Framework: Assets, potential development challenges, and overview of probable infrastructure to support development.
- Physical Framework: This category discusses both suggested mobility improvements and use, form and scale of development to support good urban development patterns, support DRCOG Urban Center goals, and to provide certainty for the City and potential developers in working with the nodes. Many of the improvements here speak to new streets with detached sidewalks and on-street parking, buildings that face the street with parking behind, and general range of heights of buildings envisioned for the area.
IMPLEMENTATION

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.

Ideally, 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.

Transformative strategies for neighborhoods and districts do not happen in one or even in five years. While the early phase actions are critical, a 20-year timeframe can establish a framework from which methodical and planned change is recommended over four phases. 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, 2015 and 2016 annual budgeting processes in order to keep the momentum moving and implement critical path actions.

The top seven items recommended for Phase I include:

1. Updating the regulatory framework: planned development plan requirements, zoning, parking, signage, street standards.
2. Completing a branding study.
3. Implementing ‘low hanging fruit’ or regulatory compliance mobility improvements: restriping streets with bike lanes, painting / maintaining key pedestrian crosswalk striping, providing ADA compliant crosswalks and ramps at key intersections.
4. Completing an updated and relevant Planned Development Plan for the Grant St. / Thornton Pkwy. node.
5. Completing the Urban Renewal Implementation Plan.
6. Completing Urban Center base growth assumptions for the four within Thornton.
7. Working with property owners / potential developers on the Thornton Shopping Center Site.

FISCALLY CONSTRAINED RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the TUC Study was to survey the project area and provide recommendations whereby this part of southern Thornton can grow and become an Urban Center. The recommendations provided in the previous chapter are not restricted by resource considerations. These recommendations outlined above and in Chapter 5 are useful in that they provide a list of desirable items that can be used if additional resources are available. An example of such funds would be a grant or a successful TIP funding application.

City staff has translated these fiscally unconstrained recommendations into items that can be accomplished using the resources the City currently has at its disposal. Also provided is a menu of strategies that can be used as a starting point for the Urban Renewal Implementation Plan. These are identified in Chapter 6 of this document and are summarized on the next page.
Short Term  1–2 Years  2013-2014

- Provide feedback to DRCOG regarding the ways that urban center qualities can most effectively be implemented in Thornton.
- Begin installing missing sidewalk links along undeveloped parcels.
- Begin providing additional bicycle lanes along key roadways such as Eppinger, Russell, Pearl, and Corona.

Medium Term - Up to 4 Years

- Designate the Thornton Urban Center area in the 2017 Thornton Comprehensive Plan update.
- Complete installing missing sidewalk links and additional bicycle lanes.
- Complete the construction of a curb extension on Pearl Street at 86th Avenue and a traffic circle at Eppinger and Pearl, if programmed.

Long Term  5+ Years

- Review/revise parking standards to reduce excessively large parking areas and increase walkability.
- Review/revise sign code regulations for the area to promote signage that supports a walkable development pattern.
- Work toward the completion of the Niver Creek Trail in the area of the North Valley Tech Center.

Ideas for the South Thornton Redevelopment Implementation Plan:

- Consider new facilities in the area to encourage private investment and attract visitors.
- Encourage the development of Business Improvement Districts and other financing mechanisms.
- Use information about the nodes to help prioritize future redevelopment activities.
Vision: The Denver metro region will become an international model for healthy, livable communities by developing vibrant urban centers connected by a robust multi-modal network throughout the metro area. While each urban center will be unique, all urban centers will:
• be active, pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly places that are more dense and mixed in use than surrounding areas;
• allow people of all ages, incomes and abilities to access a range of housing, employment, and service opportunities without sole reliance on having to drive;
• promote regional sustainability by reducing per capita vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption; and
• respect and support existing neighborhoods.
Goal: Urban centers will accommodate 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new employment between 2005 and 2035.

Policies
1. Regional Advocacy and Investment. DRCOG will take a proactive role in identifying opportunities, providing resources and directing investment toward programs and infrastructure improvements that help local governments and the private sector develop successful urban centers.
2. Minimization of Harmful Competition. The region will advocate for changes to tax structure to minimize detrimental competition among local governments for revenues and support collaborative progress toward the urban center vision.
3. Location. Metro Vision encourages the development of urban centers at infill and redevelopment sites within the UGB/A throughout the metro area, while recognizing the unique significance of the Denver central business district. Metro Vision prioritizes urban centers around existing or proposed transit stations or with high-frequency bus service.
4. Multimodal Connectivity. Urban centers will have high levels of internal connectivity and will be well-connected to the region at large.
5. Housing Options. Urban centers will support housing suitable for a wide range of incomes and the full spectrum of life stages and physical abilities, providing good links to jobs, services and other opportunities and reducing the combined cost of housing and transportation.
6. Transportation Options. Modes such as walking, bicycling and transit will be equally competitive with driving within urban centers.
7. Design. Innovative planning, zoning and urban design strategies will promote higher-density, mixed-use development, pedestrian activity and accessible public space within urban centers. Parking management strategies, such as parking maximums and pricing strategies where appropriate, will minimize the potential negative effects of parking on urban center development and multimodal access.

PROJECT PURPOSE & PLANNING CONTEXT

The Thornton Urban Center (TUC) Study is jointly funded by the Federal Transportation Improvement Program and the City of Thornton.

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) fosters regional cooperation among county and municipal governments in the Denver metropolitan area and is the metro area’s federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which provides federal funds for regional transportation projects. To meet its mission of “enhancing and protecting the quality of life in our region,” DRCOG has designated dozens of Urban Centers throughout the metro area, including four in Thornton, as shown in Map 1-1.

• Thornton City Center / Thornton Urban Center
• Eastlake Urban Center (rail)
• North End Station Urban Center (rail)
• I-25 / Highway 7 Urban Center

As stated in DRCOG’s guiding policy document, Metro Vision 2035 Plan, “The Denver metro region will become an international model for healthy, livable communities by developing vibrant urban centers connected by a robust multimodal network throughout the metro area.”

The City of Thornton has embraced the DRCOG-designated TUC in several of its policy plans and undertook this Study to develop recommendations to spur reinvestment in the area and create a viable Urban Center in south
Thornton. This Study proposes mobility recommendations for the entire TUC Area, as well as high-level framework plans for five development nodes. Detailed development strategies in the TUC Area, and beyond, are anticipated to be included in the South Thornton Urban Renewal Implementation Plan, which started in the summer of 2013.

The TUC Study seeks to embody the following qualities of successful Urban Centers:

- Balanced transportation modes: walk, bike, transit, car, cab.
- Comfortable and safe for all ages.
- Contains a mix of uses.
- Location for community events.
- Location for cultural activities / venues.
- Contains civic offices.
- Appropriately sized blocks and streets.
- Buildings embrace the streets and public space they face.
- Includes high-quality streets, parks and plazas.
- Changes over time.

**Study Area**

Located in south Thornton, the Study Area, as shown in Map 1-2, is bounded by Thornton Pkwy. on the north and the City boundary, which roughly parallels E. 83rd Dr., on the south. I-25 represents the western limits of the Study Area, while Washington, Clarkson and Corona streets represent the eastern limits. The Study Area is 0.5 miles wide and over 1.5 miles long. It includes 535 acres, approximately 200 acres of which are occupied by commercial development, including two older mall sites, several strip malls, a newer Walmart Neighborhood Center, and several medical office buildings. Approximately 70 acres are vacant. Most of the remaining land includes apartment complexes and the Thornton High School campus.

An additional area of influence is located immediately to the west of the Study Area, opposite I-25. As the Study Area increases in density and other Urban Center characteristics, Urban Center development attributes may also be able to expand to newly developed/redeveloped residential and commercial areas west of I-25.

This area of influence has assets that include Niver Creek Open Space and North Creek Park. Formal action to expand the designated Urban Center area may be warranted in the future, subject to DRCOG’s criteria and approval process.

Development of the Study Area began in the 1950s with the Thornton Shopping Center built to serve Original Thornton, the City’s first residential neighborhood, located east of the Study Area. In recent decades, the Study Area has experienced significant disinvestment as the City has grown toward the north.
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

Regulating & Guiding Documents

The City of Thornton has completed several plans that address the Study Area, shown in Map 1-2, and the four most relevant are described below.

South Thornton Revitalization Subarea Plan (STaR) – August 2011

The STaR Plan is a policy document designed to inform future revitalization efforts in south Thornton, bounded by the City boundary to the west and south, Union Pacific Railroad on the east, and Thornton Parkway on the north.

STaR’s vision statement for south Thornton 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.”

The Plan defines five goals to achieve this vision:

• Goal A: Create more appropriate retail and reduce the number of vacant buildings.
• Goal B: Capitalize on the strengths and unique regional character of the area.
• Goal C: Improve physical conditions of the area.
• Goal D: Increase the buying power of the neighborhood by inspiring residents to improve their existing homes and neighborhoods.
• Goal E: Enhance access between and within the east and west sides of south Thornton.

Health Impact Assessment – April 2012

The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was specifically conducted to determine potential impacts of the STaR Plan on healthy eating and active living. The HIA findings show that, in general, STaR Plan revitalization strategies support positive health outcomes for south Thornton community members. The HIA report identifies 16 healthy eating and active living recommendations that augment the existing STaR Plan goals and strategies.

The Mayor’s Institute on City Design

The Mayor’s Institute on City Design is a program that conducts a series of intimate, closed-door two-day symposia that offers invited mayors insight into a design issue. The panel includes mayors, design experts and policy people. The panel reviewed the TUC area in October 2012 and resulted in recommendations consistent with this TUC Study.
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

2012 Comprehensive Plan – September 2012
The 2012 Comprehensive Plan establishes goals, major strategies and key policies for Thornton’s neighborhoods, future jobs, and potential amenities for City residents. The Comprehensive Plan designates six catalyst Placemaking Districts located throughout the City that will collectively serve the purpose of a downtown, including a health services district that covers the northern 2/3 of the Study Area and a civic arts district along Thornton Pkwy. / 92nd Ave. The map also identifies a placemaking culture trail along 88th Ave. and Washington St.; defines Washington St. as a primary corridor / parkway treatment; and slates the intersection of Washington St. and Thornton Pkwy. for major intersection treatment.

Thornton Transportation Plan – July 2009
The Transportation Plan is the City’s long-range plan for travel and mobility. The Plan identifies Washington St. as one of three major north-south regional corridors besides I-25, and 88th Ave. is an important east-west link. The Plan contains five goals including developing a multimodal transportation system and recognizing the important relationship between land use and transportation.

Process & Participants
The Project Team, consisting of City staff, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Consulting Team, was primarily responsible for development of the TUC Study. The TAC included 11 representatives from several City departments, including current planning, redevelopment, transportation, arts and culture, parks and open space, senior services, and public safety.

The yearlong TUC Study began in August 2012 and included a kick-off meeting with City staff, two meetings with the TAC, and a tour of the Study Area. In September, the Consulting Team gathered input from various stakeholders, including property owners, business owners and institutional uses, via approximately 20 one-on-one listening sessions, and met with several boards, commissions and agencies, such as the Thornton Senior Citizen Board and the Thornton Arts, Sciences and Humanities Council, as well as the Adams County Economic Development department and the Adams County Housing Authority.

Existing: City plans affecting the Thornton Urban Center
## Table 1-1: Summary of Project Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>analysis</td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee</td>
<td>8/23/12</td>
<td>Project kick-off/Site tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee</td>
<td>8/24/12</td>
<td>Background information shared w/ team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvest Fest</td>
<td>9/8/12</td>
<td>Project info/visual preference survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community meeting</td>
<td>9/24/12</td>
<td>Presentation of analysis/listening session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boards and Commissions</td>
<td>9/25/12</td>
<td>Analysis/listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agencies</td>
<td>9/28/12</td>
<td>Analysis/listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee</td>
<td>10/12/12</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council update</td>
<td>10/16/12</td>
<td>Project update/analysis summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draft strategies</td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee</td>
<td>11/30/12</td>
<td>Present/discuss draft strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council update</td>
<td>12/11/12</td>
<td>Project update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council update</td>
<td>2/19/13</td>
<td>Project update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final strategies /</td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee</td>
<td>4/5/13</td>
<td>Present/discuss final strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>documentation</td>
<td>Council update</td>
<td>4/16/13</td>
<td>Project update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agencies</td>
<td>4/17/13</td>
<td>Present/discuss final strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boards and Commissions</td>
<td>4/17/13</td>
<td>Present/discuss final strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community open house</td>
<td>4/24/13</td>
<td>Open house - final strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council update</td>
<td>7/30/13</td>
<td>Project update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council acceptance</td>
<td>8/27/13</td>
<td>Study acceptance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1-1: Summary of Project Meetings*
These meetings allowed the Consulting Team to understand previous and ongoing efforts in the TUC as well as area issues and opportunities.

Also in September, the Project Team held the first community meeting, which attracted approximately 30 participants. At this meeting, a representative from DRCOG provided information on Urban Centers, and meeting attendees participated in a visual preference survey as well as a break-out group exercise to envision a long-term future for the Study Area.

After this first round of meetings, the Consulting Team conducted market, transportation, and physical analyses. The Consulting Team then presented their findings to City staff, the TAC and City Council in October. The Project Team met again in November to talk about development opportunities in a few key locations within the Study Area. In December and February, the Consulting Team provided a project update to City Council regarding the progress of draft revitalization strategies.

Over the next two months, the Consulting Team prepared mobility recommendations for the entire Study Area and framework plans for five development nodes. In April 2013, the Consulting Team presented these plans to City staff, the TAC and City Council. A community open house in April was attended by approximately 40 individuals, including residents, developers, and representatives from City Council and RTD.

A final City Council update in July preceded formal acceptance of this TUC Study on August 27, 2013.
CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The 535-acre Study Area, its context and market sub-areas were evaluated from existing regulatory, market, physical, and mobility perspectives, providing an in depth understanding of existing conditions. A summary of the most pertinent information is included herein, culminating in an ‘Assets / Opportunities and Constraints / Liabilities’ synopsis that was utilized as a basis for further recommendations.

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

Several Study Area base maps and tables were compiled in the analysis phase to illustrate different baseline existing conditions, such as:

- Ownership - over 100 different owners in the Study Area, shown in Map 2-1.
- Current zoning - Map 2-2.
- Current land use - Map 2-3.
- Crime hotspots - illustrating key nodes of activity.
- Traffic accident hotspots - listing key nodes for incidents.
- Improvement to land value ratio - value of improvements on a parcel over the value of the land, shown in Map 2-16.

Not all maps are included herein.

Information for the analysis was provided via a variety of sources including:

- The City of Thornton
- Adams County
- Market information is also from: the U.S. Census, DRCOG, Co-Star for office and retail information, Claritas and ESRI, private demographic data sources.
- Consulting Team site analysis and observations

Map 2-1: Ownership in the TUC
Map 2-2: Current Zoning (source: City of Thornton)
Map 2-3: Current Land Use (source: City of Thornton)
MARKET

As the economics and market lead, ArLand Land Use Economics prepared a technical report summarizing the development conditions and market potential for the area (see Appendix A under separate cover for the full technical report). Data analysis was completed and interviews were conducted in the late summer and early fall of 2012. The report is intended to serve as a framework and guide for the development of the TUC Study.

Some of the key demographic indicators for the TUC Area are outlined below. The STaR Plan more extensively detailed the broad demographic, social, and physical changes occurring in the south Thornton community.

- The City’s population in 2010 was estimated at 118,000 persons and was estimated at the end of 2012 at 121,211 persons. The TUC population (2012) is approximately 3,800 persons in 1,620 households.
- Between 2000 and 2010, residential densities have decreased in the areas surrounding the TUC Area, as shown in Map 2-4.

Map 2-4: Change in Population per Square Mile, 2000-2010 (source: US Census, ArLand)
• There are an estimated 6,920 jobs in the TUC Area (2012). The jobs estimate for the City in 2012 was approximately 21,000-25,000 jobs.

• TUC median household incomes are an estimated $36,900 compared to the City of Thornton as a whole at $62,100, as shown in Map 2-5.

Map 2-5: Median Household Income (source: US Census, ArLand)
• There is a predominance of rental housing in the TUC Area, as shown in Map 2-6.
• TUC household sizes tend to be smaller at 2.7 persons per household versus 2.9 at the City level.

Map 2-6: Housing Tenure, 2010 (source: US Census, ArLand)
• The TUC is more heavily Hispanic at 69% of the population vs. the City of Thornton as a whole at 34%, as shown in Map 2-7.

• Top resident psychographics in the TUC Area (80229 zip code) are: Aspiring Young Families, Industrious Urban Fringe (suburban neighborhoods with good access to downtown employment and entertainment), and Crossroads (retirees who like a small town type of lifestyle). They are characterized by young starter households, retirees, single person households, and families. Psychographics are characteristics of people and neighborhoods reflecting attitudes, interests and lifestyles.

• Affordability is important.
The TUC Area is located within a highly competitive market area. Map 2-8 and Table 2-1, in tandem, show the large number of planned projects in the TUC and larger market area. The majority of the larger commercial projects, given their acreage and scale will take some years to materialize, but planning is underway on all of them.
## Table 2-1: Planned Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Residential</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HighPointe Park</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Landmark Towers</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quivas St. Townhomes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Welby Station</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sundance Condos</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thornton Valley</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Welby Station</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Villages North</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>River Valley Village</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cherrylane</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Registry</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cottonwood Village (Fairfield Homes)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Arbour Square</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Orchard Lakes Blocks 1 and 2</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Huntington Trails</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Country Club Highlands (Century Homes)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Cedar Bridge (Fatch)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>SF Attached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Commercial or Mixed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The Orchard (Forest City)</td>
<td>1.2 million sf of retail space on 105 acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Orchard Park Place</td>
<td>Medical / commercial /residential MU project on 126 acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Quail Crossing Commercial</td>
<td>Retail Commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>120th Avenue Mixed Use District</td>
<td>Retail Commercial redevelopment; may include redevelopment of entire Civic Center area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Larkridge Retail Commercial</td>
<td>Retail Commercial development part of H described below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Eastlake TOD - DRCOG Urban Center</td>
<td>Estimated 520 units and 15,000 sf of commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>North End Station TOD - DRCOG Urban Center</td>
<td>3,500 DUs, 750,000 sf of commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>State Highway 7 - DRCOG Urban Center</td>
<td>Estimated 1,800 DUs and 2 million sf of commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ArLand, Entelechy, Cities of Thornton, Northglenn, Broomfield, Westminster

Table 2-1: Planned Projects
Residential Market

- The larger residential market area, as shown in Map 2-10, is bordered by 112th Ave. to the north, Federal Blvd. to the west, Adams County to the south and Thornton’s developable area to the east. It includes projects that would be most competitive with TUC Area projects. It extends through the cities of Thornton, Northglenn, Westminster, and Federal Heights, and portions of unincorporated Adams County.

- There are over 1,600 residential rental units in the TUC, as shown in Map 2-9. Vacancies are relatively low currently, as are vacancies in the entire metro area. Rents are approximately $1 per square-foot so a 600 square-foot apartment, for example, would rent for $600 per month. Rents in downtown Denver are currently twice the price. The only subsidized apartment project in the TUC is Renaissance 88.

- There are 7,999 rentals in the residential market area as shown in Map 2-10 and listed in Table 2-2.

- Within the south Thornton area and adjacent to the TUC are single-family dwellings, mostly built in the 1950s, single story, and smaller than 1,250 square feet. Residential home prices saw a steady decline through the 2000s despite increases in the rest of the metro area. According to the STaR Plan housing survey, the condition of the existing housing presents a dilemma. Many people who live in Thornton want to stay in the general area, but want a newer, larger house.

- Current residential demand is estimated at approximately 400-600 residential units for the next 25 years in the TUC Area.

- There are 954 detached single-family residential units and 1,464 attached or multifamily units in the planning pipeline in the larger residential market area. Although not all of these units will necessarily be developed, they do represent significant competition for TUC.

- Thornton is working through a significant number of foreclosures, although the trend numbers are improving. Recent City estimates indicate 546 foreclosure petitions in the City as of September 2012. There were 94 petitions in the TUC Area (80229 zip code in Ward 1, east of I-25).

- Currently less than 10% of the residents in the TUC are over 65 years, but through the analysis, a clear desire for new senior focused housing typologies in or near the TUC Area was expressed. Map 2-11 and Table 2-3 show senior services in the region.
Map 2-9: Residential Rentals in the TUC (source: ArLand)
Map 2-10: Rentals in the TUC Residential Market Area (source: City of Thornton, ArLand)
Table 2-2: Rentals in the TUC Residential Market Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key No.</th>
<th>Apartment Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>No. of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Park Place at 92nd</td>
<td>9081 Federal Blvd, Westminster, CO</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Legacy Heights</td>
<td>2700 W. 103rd Ave., Federal Heights, CO</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hunters Cove</td>
<td>10351 Zuni Street, Federal Heights, CO</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Village by the Park</td>
<td>10701 Pecos, Northglenn, CO</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Orchard Hill</td>
<td>1353 W. 88th Avenue</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Lodge on 84th Avenue</td>
<td>1327 W. 84th Avenue</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aztec Villa</td>
<td>8675 Mariposa Street Thornton, CO 80260</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Parkview Terrace</td>
<td>1300 Milky Way Thornton, CO 80260</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Creekside Place</td>
<td>9189 Gale Blvd., Thornton, CO 80260</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Riviera</td>
<td>950 W. 103rd Place, Thornton, CO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Beacon House</td>
<td>10738 Huron Street, Northglenn, CO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Carriage Hill</td>
<td>8901 Huron Street Thornton, CO 80260</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>North Creek</td>
<td>700 W 91st Ave, Thornton, CO 80260</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Overlook at Thornton</td>
<td>647 W. 91st Avenue, Thornton, CO 80260</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Summit at Thornton</td>
<td>101 East 88th Avenue Denver, CO 80229</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Pine View Village</td>
<td>300 Russell Boulevard Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Montair</td>
<td>8901 Grant Street, Thornton, CO</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Renaissance 88</td>
<td>388 East 88th Avenue, Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sunset Peak</td>
<td>475 Russell Boulevard Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Quail Ridge</td>
<td>501 East 102nd Avenue Thornton CO 80229</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Skyline</td>
<td>8849 Pearl Street Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>464</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lamplighter Village</td>
<td>10101 Washington Street Denver, CO 80229</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Lambertson Farms</td>
<td>10260 Washington Street Denver, CO 80229</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Huntington Square</td>
<td>735 E. 105th Place, Northglenn, CO</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sierra Vista</td>
<td>9440 Hoffman Way Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Corona Residential</td>
<td>8925 Corona Street, Thornton, CO</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Broadstone Avena</td>
<td>1882 East 104th Avenue Thornton, CO 8023</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Regatta Apartments</td>
<td>10500 Irma Drive, Northglenn, CO</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Village at Yorkshire</td>
<td>10370 Brendon Way Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Villa at Sunny Acres (Sr.)</td>
<td>2501 E. 104th Avenue, Denver</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Archstone Champions Park</td>
<td>2525 East 104th Avenue Thornton, CO 80233</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Indigo Creek</td>
<td>9451 Welby Rd Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Reserve at Thornton</td>
<td>9700 Welby Road Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Newport Village</td>
<td>8901 Colorado Boulevard Thornton, CO 80229</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Covington Ridge</td>
<td>10571 Colorado Boulevard Thornton, CO 80233</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
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</table>

TOTAL 7,999

Table 2-2: Rentals in the TUC Residential Market Area
Map 2-11: Senior Services (source: ArLand)
## Table 2-3: Senior Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Units / Beds</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orchard Hill Senior Apartments</td>
<td>88 Sr Apts</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Squire Village Apts</td>
<td>50 Sr Apts</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clare of Assissi Place</td>
<td>59 Sr Apts</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Crossroads Assisted Living</td>
<td>68 AL</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Northglenn Heights</td>
<td>144 122 AL, 22 ALZ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Angels Abode</td>
<td>8 AL</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Keystone Place at Legacy Ridge</td>
<td>237 66 AL, 160 IL, 11 ALZ</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Villas at Sunny Acres</td>
<td>335 299 IL, 35 AL</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Cottages at Panorama Pt</td>
<td>50 IL</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Kindred Transitional Care and Rehab</td>
<td>162 SNF</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Alpine Living Center</td>
<td>110 SNF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Elms Haven Care and Rehabilitation Center</td>
<td>242 SNF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Panorama Pointe</td>
<td>72 Sr Apts</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Vista View Care Center</td>
<td>25 SNF</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Park Regency Assisted Living (proposed)</td>
<td>114 AL</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Total Long Term Care (proposed)</td>
<td>72 Sr Apts</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Thornton Estates Manufactured Homes</td>
<td>208 Manufactured Homes</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Heritage Todd Creek</td>
<td>1,300 Active adult community</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Senior Hub Adult Day Care</td>
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<td>Blue Sky Adult Day Care</td>
<td>NA Adult Day Care</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>InnovAge - Total Longterm Care</td>
<td>NA Adult Day Care</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Thornton Senior Center</td>
<td>NA Adult Day Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gardens at St. Elizabeth (St. Anthony Senior Health Center)</td>
<td>NA Adult Day Care</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[1] AL is Assisted Living; IL is Independent Living; ALZ is Alzheimer’s Care; SNF is Skilled Nursing Facility
Retail Market

- There is approximately 800,000 square feet of leasable retail space in the TUC with vacancies of nearly 20%.
- The TUC contributes 9.5% to Thornton’s retail sales tax base – a significant amount relative to its size. Its strongest retail categories include: home furnishings, eating places, auto sales, parts, and service.
- There is a significant amount of regional-serving retail adjacent to I-25, as shown in Map 2-12. American Furniture Warehouse is within the TUC. Sportsman’s Warehouse is just west of I-25. Further, the larger retail market area in general is over saturated. Map 2-13 shows locations of existing and proposed retail.
- There appears to be a gradual shift of interest (not only by retailers but also by other users, i.e. hospitals and offices) to the 144th Avenue and I-25 intersections, home to the Orchard Town Center and a future Cabela’s. There are rumors surfacing of retailers currently in the south Thornton / Northglenn marketplace with strong interest in shifting store locations.
- Additional significant retail development is unwarranted currently. Even though the analysis shows a void or gap in certain segments, it would be very difficult to capture in the TUC Area under current conditions. There is a significant amount of vacant and underutilized retail space in the larger area, especially along the major corridors.
- In order to create enough demand to justify the addition or redevelopment of commercial space, it would be important to focus future new household and employment growth to the TUC Area to provide the population and jobs base to support commercial uses. This would require proactive economic development activities, incentives, and other tools to capture developer and new business interest, which would otherwise have a stronger market incentive to locate in other parts of the City.
Map 2-12: Regional Retail Locations (source: ArLand)
Office Market

- The market for office is a function of growth or change in jobs among those industry sectors that typically occupy office space.
- There are 21,000 to 25,000 jobs in the City of Thornton with the majority of jobs in retail trade, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. There are an estimated 6,920 jobs in the TUC Area.
- The regional office market is shown in Map 2-14. It extends up to 128th Avenue to the north, approximately Lowell Boulevard to the west, incorporates parts of Adams County north of Highway 36 to the south, and extends through Thornton’s developable area to the east.
- The regional office market has a 15% vacancy rate; the TUC, with over 1 million square feet in 14 office buildings, has a much higher 40% vacancy rate with 420,000 square feet of office space available. Most of the vacant space is in the North Valley Tech Center.
- Space in the North Valley Tech Center is appropriate for back office, data or call center uses. While office brokers continue to market the space, south Thornton is no longer as competitive for this use relative to other job areas like Aurora or south Denver due to the lack of nearby services. The Denver metro area’s competitiveness for back office, data center or call center uses is becoming more limited because average salaries are higher here than other parts of the country.
- The market demand number ranges up to 170,000 square feet if the office space at the North Valley Tech Center is not included in the calculation. The space available there is challenging for users other than back office or data center tenants.
- The market for future speculative office development (assuming that future jobs growth will absorb the 420,000 square feet) is relatively modest at approximately 50,000 square feet.
- There has been little office development in the north metro market because rents have not increased in the past decade so new construction has not been justified.
- The market demand calculation does not take into account a “one-off” build-to-suit primary employer which may be one of the few scenarios under which new office space development is likely to take place under current conditions.
- Medical office or tenants in the medical industry is a potential niche.
- South Thornton is well positioned and centrally located relative to downtown Denver and the northern Denver metro market.
Map 2-14: Office Supply in Regional Market Area (source: ArLand)
Other Market Considerations

- Urban Centers are generally distinguished by being centers of a community’s civic, cultural, commercial, educational and entertainment life.
- The TUC has continuing educational institutions and the North Suburban medical center. They help distinguish the area and benefit the community by bringing people into the TUC, however, people don’t otherwise linger or come to the TUC for recreational reasons with the exception of those frequenting the adventure uses in the Pinnacle Center.
- Community members have indicated that the malls used to attract them to the TUC Area. Young families now travel to the Orchards at 144th Ave. and I-25.
- Attracting / relocating civic / cultural institutions or adventure or entertainment attractions or other differentiators are needed to help bolster demand.
- With additional differentiators or demand “drivers” (i.e. they help bring people to the area), other supporting uses such as hotels become more viable (not just on I-25).
- A substantial or visible redevelopment project, along with branding and marketing, would help kick-start redevelopment in south Thornton and distinguish it from the rest of the market i.e. Belmar.
- Long-term political will and public investment by the City is needed to bolster demand and galvanize redevelopment. Downtown Arvada, for example, took decades of investment. Arvada’s Urban Renewal Authority leveraged funds from the City’s New Town (i.e. big box) development to invest in the City’s Old Town.

Summary Market Demand Ranges

DRCOG’s Metro Vision 2035 suggests that 50% of new residences and 75% of new jobs be concentrated in Urban Centers. DRCOG recently estimated 40,000 new residents and nearly 27,000 new jobs by 2035 in Thornton. For purposes of this Study, we are using the City’s forecast new jobs number of approximately 22,000 by 2035.

Table 2-4 shows planning recommendations for the TUC. The Market column shows market supportability through 2035 without any focused regeneration effort for this area of Thornton. Basically this represents ‘status quo’ based on existing market conditions. If historic development patterns continue, without any focused attention on regeneration of this area, very modest change will occur.

However, if the City focuses efforts to brand and promote this area as a key Urban Center in support of previous planning efforts’ established vision and goals, a much higher development program could be realized. The DRCOG TUC Goal is a goal that is potentially attainable with significant thought, investment and political will on the part of Thornton.

The DRCOG TUC Goal represents equal allocation of future projected growth in Thornton across the four Urban Centers in the City. As some Urban Centers may have higher or lower propensity for change, these numbers may be adjusted. For planning purposes, we have equally allocated the growth projections and goal capture.

In regenerating the TUC, it is critical to realize that a market must be infused through establishment of a clear direction and political will on the City’s part by making this a priority investment area through: updating zoning and other regulatory and policy framework, identifying a strong brand, providing focused marketing, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>DRCOG TUC Goal [1]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Units</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>400-600</td>
<td>1,900-2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office SF</td>
<td>1,029,786</td>
<td>50,000-170,000</td>
<td>500,000-600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail SF</td>
<td>796,092</td>
<td>10,000-20,000</td>
<td>90,000-100,000(2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ArLand

[1] assumes that 50% of new residences and 75% of new jobs in 4 Urban Centers in Thornton based on DRCOG growth numbers. TUC goals result of even allocation of residents/jobs in 4 urban centers.

[2] assumes 20 sf per capita

Table 2-4: Overall Planning Recommendations for the Project
PHYSICAL

The physical analysis completed included both a visual preference exercise completed by the general public during Harvest Fest and the first public meeting, as well as an analysis of what’s on-the-ground by the consultant team.

Visual Preference Exercise

Boards with images in four categories were created for voting:

1. Streets
2. Office
3. Retail
4. Residential

Each citizen was given 4 dots per category - 2 green (for good) and 2 red (for bad). Over 160 people voted, with the top voted two images per category provided herein. Generally, the ‘good’ photos selected illustrated great street environments with unique streetscapes, high levels of pedestrian amenities and active use. Retail preferences included provision of outdoor cafes, good storefront design, and adequate signage and wayfinding. Office buildings preferences included masonry and a detailed level of design finishes. Residential preferences included the use of masonry, provision of yard / gathering spaces, and generally lower intensity development patterns.

In contrast, the ‘bad’ photos generally depicted auto-oriented environments with a lack of landscaping and pedestrian amenities, and plainer architectural design.

The top-voted good and bad photos are shown on the following pages and can be compared to the existing visual character in the TUC Area, as shown in Map 2-15.
CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

Streets

One of the preferred street images

One of the preferred street images

One of the least preferred street images

Office

One of the preferred office images

One of the preferred office images

One of the least preferred office images
CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

One of the top-voted good retail images

One of the top-voted good residential images

One of the top-voted good retail images

One of the top-voted good residential images

One of the top-voted bad retail images

One of the top-voted bad residential images
Map 2-15: Visual Character in the TUC
Physical Observations

Much of this area of Thornton was developed anywhere from the mid 1950’s through the 2000’s. A significant amount of building stock is older, with over 70 buildings greater than 40 years old. This often results in obsolete environments for all uses - office, retail and residential - found in the TUC Area, as well as lower rents, higher vacancies, lower maintenance, and aging landscaping. Site development patterns preclude good urbanism and resulting connectivity. Larger institutional uses in campus settings such as Thornton High School and North Suburban Medical Center support the superblock environment with difficult localized connectivity and wayfinding.

Office, including medical office, and health care uses are found primarily along I-25 and the Grant St. corridor. These buildings are upwards of seven stories. Retail is generally bordered by Washington Ave., and housing, including primarily apartments and some townhomes, is located centrally in the TUC Area. These structures are typically two to four stories in height. Nearly every site is developed with surface parking between the street and building, again inhibiting good urbanism. Map 2-15 illustrates the type of development patterns seen in the TUC Area.

MOBILITY

The TUC Study builds on a strong, and rapidly growing, foundation of multimodal local and regional planning documents and City policies. In a distinct break from its predecessor, the City of Thornton 2009 Transportation Plan was the first plan establishing the City’s multimodal direction and priorities. In 2011, the STaR Plan focused on improving pedestrian and bicycle connections specifically within south Thornton (an area that includes the TUC). The 2012 Health Impact Assessment in south Thornton promoted the health benefits of a balanced transportation system and supported the STaR Plan recommendations. Building on this momentum and the mandate from DRCOG to target infill development in Urban Centers and to build a multimodal transportation system supporting this development, the City recently updated its Comprehensive Plan to incorporate many of these principles. Finally, the Complete Streets resolution passed by City Council in April of 2011 directs the City to take steps to eliminate gaps in the bicycle, sidewalk and trail networks and ensure roadways are designed to be safe, comfortable and convenient for all users.

Transportation infrastructure represents a huge, long-lasting investment. The existing transportation framework in the Study Area has not evolved into a fully multimodal network and currently heavily favors automobile traffic and access. A summary of the full Mobility Analysis Technical Report completed by Nelson Nygaard is provided in Appendix B.
Auto

The 535-acre Study Area is bound by the heaviest traffic volumes found in the Study Area. I-25 on the west handles over 150,000 vehicles daily on six travel lanes. The Study Area is bound on the other three sides by principal arterial streets, which are between five and seven lanes wide and carry between 22,000 and 37,000 average daily vehicles. In general, road width, traffic volume, and traffic speeds prioritize automobile traffic.

Local streets within the Study Area carry significantly less traffic on generous right-of-ways. These internal streets tend to offer few connections to or across the arterial streets at the edge of the Study Area. Large block sizes and plentiful off-street parking within the Study Area also make traveling by foot or by bike less convenient. Sidewalks in the Study Area are generally narrow and abut the travel way.

Key Issues and Opportunities

• Extensive reservoirs of underutilized off-street parking can be relatively easily converted to other uses.
• Large minimum off-street parking requirements and parking frontage can disrupt other access modes, detracting from the pedestrian environment and hindering non-motorized access.
• Local street width within the Study Area is generous and could potentially accommodate on-street parking and/or bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
• Collector streets offer easy access to I-25 and the region.
• Collector street volume could be accommodated by fewer travel lanes, based on rule-of-thumb lane capacity.

Pedestrian

On-street pedestrian amenities, including benches, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and wayfinding signage are lacking. However, the City’s robust off-street trail system skirts the Study Area and plans are in place to complete the Niver Creek Trail through the southern portion of the Study Area.

Key Issues and Opportunities

• Proximal trail network.
• Public support for and policy directives to improve pedestrian conditions.
• Minimal on-street pedestrian amenities.
• Traffic volumes and speeds on perimeter streets.
• Infrequent arterial crossings.
• Few streets connecting the interior of the Study Area to Washington St. and 84th Ave.

Existing: Reservoir of underutilized off-street parking

Existing: ADA ramps on a detached sidewalk

Existing: Pedestrian path through fence between apartments
Bicycle

The City’s bicycle network is growing, and in last year the City striped the first on-street bicycle lanes in the Study Area along 88th Avenue.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Few bicycle facilities.
- Steep topography could inhibit some cyclists from traveling north and south through the TUC.
- Support for off-street trails.
- Wide right-of-way which could potentially be converted to bicycle facilities.
- Traffic volumes and speeds.

Transit

The TUC Area is well served by transit. The Regional Transportation District (RTD) operates four routes in the Study Area and three express routes along I-25. The bulk of the local transit service in the TUC is located along 88th Ave., Grant St., and Washington Ave. The development of the TUC presents the opportunity to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections to transit nodes, increase regional transit ridership and reduce CO2 emissions. In addition, this Study aims to identify ways to better align the transportation network within the TUC with regional and local policies and plans and better meet the needs of existing and future users.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- FasTracks station could increase transit use along 88th Ave. and connect to the TUC.
- Thornton Pkwy. has capacity to provide a convenient link between civic uses and the TUC and Riverdale.
- Proximity to regional transit routes and future commuter rail.
- Few passenger waiting area amenities.
- Limited pedestrian and bicycle opportunities to access transit stops.
- Potential for transit along Thornton Pkwy.
2.29

CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

SUMMARY OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Map 2-16 and the following written summary of the analysis phase of the project provides a foundation for recommendations within the TUC Study.

Assets / Opportunities

Great Views to Mountains & Downtown Denver

Due to topography, the Study Area contains significant views along major thoroughfares west toward the Rocky Mountains and south toward downtown Denver. Unobstructed views are particularly striking south of Thornton Pkwy., Brittany Hill, and Thornton High School, and west of Grant St. near American Furniture Warehouse, the Renaissance and Summit apartments, and the vacant land southeast of I-25 and Thornton Pkwy., as well as all along the western portion of the Study Area bordering I-25. Along Washington St., southern views of downtown Denver are excellent, as are northeastern views north of Eppinger Blvd. toward the City's newly painted water towers.

Urban Renewal Area

The majority of the Study Area, excluding residential uses, the Park-n-Ride, and the Thornton High School campus, is located within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area. Administered by the Thornton Development Authority, this area was deemed blighted in June 2012 due to the deterioration of structures, inadequate street layout, and environmental contamination, among other factors. The urban renewal area is eligible for funds that will stimulate development and redevelopment, particularly in the form of public-private partnerships.

Enterprise Zone

Much of the Study Area, including everything east of Washington St. and south of 88th Ave., falls within the Adams County Enterprise Zone, designated by the State of Colorado as an economically distressed area. Colorado offers up to nine tax credits to businesses that create jobs and otherwise invest in enterprise zones. Two examples include a $500 tax credit for every new job created in a new business facility and a vacant building rehabilitation tax credit equal to 25% of rehabilitation expenditures.

Large Areas of Same Ownership

The Study Area includes several adjacent parcels that are owned by the same entity, thus making these areas more attractive for development / redevelopment as they don't necessarily require significant land acquisition/ assemblage. In addition, some of the large ownership patterns such as North Suburban Medical Center and American Furniture Warehouse illustrate a commitment to the area for the longer term.

- The Pinnacle shopping center covers 19.1 acres southwest of Washington St. and Thornton Pkwy.
- The Thornton High School campus covers 26.3 acres northwest of Washington St. and Eppinger Blvd.
- The North Suburban Medical Center covers 19.4 acres west of Grant St. and Russell Blvd.
- The Summit Apartments at 88th Ave. and Pearl St. occupy 14.0 acres.
- The Thornton Shopping Center at 88th Ave. and Washington St. occupies 20.8 acres.
- American Furniture Warehouse northeast of I-25 and 84th Ave. occupies 26.5 acres.
- The North Valley Technical Center southeast of I-25 and 84th Ave. occupies 35.5 acres.

Destinations

The Study Area and its adjacent uses include many regional destinations, which provide government, medical, educational, and recreational services.

- Civic Center
- Pinnacle Adventure Uses
- Five Star Stadium
- North Suburban Medical Center
- Clinica Family Health
- Harley / Sun
- American Furniture Warehouse
- Vibra Hospital
- Regis University
Map 2-16: Assets / Opportunities & Liabilities / Constraints
Transit Accessibility

The area is well served by transit. A major RTD Park-n-Ride facility is located south of 88th Ave. along I-25, with two existing and one planned express / HOV lane bus serving the area. In addition, there are four local routes that serve the Study Area, including the 12, 80, 88 and 92.

Nearly every parcel in the Study Area is within 5 minutes of an existing bus route.

In addition, a future RTD north metro commuter rail station is planned for one mile east of the Study Area along 88th Ave.

Low Improvement to Land Value Ratio

One gauge of the potential for new investment in an area is to look at the ratio of the value of improvements on a parcel to the value of the land. Typically parcels with an improvement to land value ratio of 0 to 1.00 indicates severely underutilized or vacant lands that are very ripe for focused investment.

\[
\text{Value of Improvements} \quad \frac{\text{Value of Land}}{\text{Value of Land}} = \text{Ratio}
\]

Severely underutilized and vacant parcels cover 204.0 acres, or 38.1% of the total Study Area, including:

- The area surrounding Pinnacle.
- The area west and south of Thornton High School, including Washington Plaza.
- The vacant land southeast of I-25 and Thornton Pkwy. and the vacant land between I-25 and Grant St. at Russell Blvd.
- American Furniture Warehouse and the vacant land east of Grant St. near 86th Ave.
- The Thornton Shopping Center and several properties along Washington and Pearl streets.

Parcels that have a value between 1.01 and 2.00 should also be considered for possible reinvestment focus, particularly if clustered near other like or severely underutilized parcels. Underutilized parcels cover 33.0 acres, or 6.2% of the total Study Area, including:

- The Summit Apartments at I-25 and 88th Ave.
- The Anythink Library and Clinica Family Health.
- Walgreens and McDonalds along Washington St.

Nearly all of the small parcels between Washington and Pearl streets and 84th Ave. and Russell Blvd. include both underutilized and severely underutilized lands.
Liabilities / Constraints

Potential Environmental Issues
Given the historic uses on some of the sites, such as gas stations and dry cleaners, there is known and potential environmental contamination on some parcels that will need to be verified and mitigated as appropriate before reinvestment occurs.

Small Parcels
Several small parcels of single ownership are concentrated along Washington St., primarily to the west. Many of the uses within these parcels are auto-oriented, including auto parts shops, repair services, and sales, as well as fast food restaurants and strip malls. Redevelopment of these parcels will be stagnant and very incremental unless land is acquired and assembled by a developer and / or the City.

Buildings Over 40 Years Old
There are 73 buildings in the Study Area that were developed between 1955 and 1973. A majority of these buildings are along Washington and Pearl streets, and include the Thornton Shopping Center, as well as several auto-oriented uses. Some of these buildings, including Village Center, house relatively healthy businesses, while others have been recently rehabilitated, including Clinica Family Health, Vibra Hospital, and the North Valley Technical Center. In addition, there are several apartment complexes built in Thornton’s early years, such as Summit, Renaissance and Pine View, that are poorly laid out in a super block fashion. Several of these older buildings are showing signs of deterioration and obsolescence and could possibly be demolished to make way for current building configurations and sound site planning that supports an Urban Center environment.

Crime Density
A crime density spot graphic illustrates where crime is clustered in the Study Area. Incidents were mapped along the nearest street to where the incident occurred, and not showing exact location, therefore resulting in incidents generally clustered around:

- North Suburban Hospital
- Along Russell Blvd.
- Along 88th Ave.
- Along Washington St. primarily between 84th Ave. and Russell Blvd.

- To a lesser degree along: 84th Ave., Pearl St. and other portions of Washington St.

Slopes Greater than 20%
Some level of topography is prevalent throughout the Study Area, affording the great views previously mentioned. There are areas with significant slope between 20% to 50%, and no land has greater than 50% slope in the Study Area. Steep natural slopes surround Brittany Hill and a portion of the Thornton High School campus. Other significant slopes have primarily been created as part of development and include detention and floodplain areas along I-25, the northern edge of the Park-n-Ride, the western edge of the North Valley Technical Center, as well as edges of a few other properties between 84th and 88th avenues.

Generally, natural topography in the TUC Area should be viewed as a great asset to work with, rather than a liability. The topography allows unique gateway / branding features for the community that differ from other north metro suburban communities along I-25 and provides for more efficient use of land in development by affording strategies such as tuck-under parking.

Floodplain
The Niver Creek Detention northwest of 88th Ave. and I-25, outside the TUC boundary, provides significant flood control for the Study Area. Inside the Study Area, the Niver Creek 100-year floodplain follows an open channel in open space to 84th Ct. and Grant St. From there to Washington St. and Coronado Pkwy., the creek is conveyed underground, but a 100-year flood is anticipated to inundate developed properties along Grant St. north of 84th Ave. and the northeastern portion of the North Valley Technical Center.

Lack of Green Space
There is a lack of green space within the Study Area. Although the open space southwest of American Furniture Warehouse connects to the Niver Creek Detention area to the northwest, this area is secluded between major thoroughfares and a big box store and is located in the floodplain. Besides a few detention areas along Washington St. and I-25, the only other green space includes the sports fields on the Thornton High School campus.
Lack of Connectivity

Historic development patterns in the Study Area inherently preclude a high level of connectivity. Many of the sites have been developed as superblocks, without adequate mobility infrastructure either internal to the site or connecting to the surrounding environment. Much of this has been discussed in the Mobility sub-section of this Chapter. Notably:

- The pedestrian environment is challenging due to missing sidewalk links, missing ADA ramp facilities, attached sidewalks of minimum width, and lack of clear crosswalks.
- The bicycle environment is practically non-existent in the Study Area. A portion of the Niver Creek multi-use trail comes into the Study Area but then is bifurcated through the area. No other bike infrastructure existed in the Study Area during the analysis phase except for a bike lane on 88th Ave. that was striped during the course of the Study.
- The superblock development pattern is a hindrance to mobility.

Areas of Stability & Areas for Change

When overlaying all of the previously discussed opportunities and constraints, two zones where identified within the 535 acres. An area of stability of approximately 185 acres was identified generally north of 88th Ave. in the central portion of the Study Area. Here the uses are relatively stable, and / or building infrastructure is newer. Conversely, approximately 350 acres or 65% of the Study Area was identified as the Area for Change. This zone which covers the remaining portion of the TUC Area, illustrates a land area where, for instance, low improvement to land values exist, buildings 40 years old or older exist, and current economic development tools such as being in an Urban Renewal or Enterprise Zone exist. These areas have the highest propensity for focused investment / reinvestment over the 20-25 year planning horizon, and therefore form the basis for more detailed recommendations in the private realm. Public realm recommendations address the entire TUC Area as this is critical for connectivity within an Urban Center.
Conditions at a glance - the TUC Area has:

- Significant land areas that have never been developed, often clustered and many under City ownership.
- Two large (over 20 acre) significantly economically underperforming mall sites and other older, tired retail centers of varying sizes.
- Older housing stock, primarily rental.
- A superblock development pattern that precludes good urbanism and connectivity.
- A major RTD Park-n-Ride and transfer facility with planned expansion and planned new HOT lane along I-25 serving this station.
- Good service by local transit.
- Topography that is a tremendous asset, particularly Brittany Hill as a landmark for the community and utilizing topography as an asset to provide a critical concentration of residents and jobs.
- A north Denver metro area location that is well positioned, being a 15-minute drive or 15- to 23-minute express bus ride to / from the two downtown Denver transfer stations; relatively easy access to / from northern communities given adjacency to I-25, and a 30- to 45-minute travel time to / from Denver International Airport along 104th Ave. or 88th Ave. eventually connecting to C-470.
- A great opportunity to capture new north metro Denver growth, particularly in creating a substantial office cluster and substantial new housing that appeals to Gen Y and Empty Nester clusters.
- A unique opportunity to provide a regional example of a non-rail transit Urban Center transformation and reinvestment into a vibrant mixed use environment.
INTRODUCTION

For the City of Thornton to achieve its revitalization goals for the Thornton Urban Center (TUC), and for this area to truly become the “Heart of Thornton” for local residents and an attractive regional destination that draws employers and visitors from throughout Denver metro, it will be necessary to completely rethink the transportation system for the area. This rethink will require a shift towards prioritized planning and funding transportation projects, as summarized below:

- **Emphasize multimodal improvements (transit, bicycling, and walking).** The current transportation infrastructure of the Thornton Urban Center is primarily auto-oriented. Going forward, the City must prioritize a broad array of multimodal improvements in the TUC, ranging from legally-required improvements that must be done immediately (e.g. making all intersections ADA compliant with curb ramps), to relatively low-cost “low-hanging fruit” improvements (e.g. closing gaps in the sidewalk network, crosswalk improvements), to longer-term “bigger picture” improvements that require planning and funding strategies to be developed now (e.g. improvements to transit service and curbside shelters).

- **Continue to transform TUC streets into authentic places where people want to be.** The design and function of TUC streets generally fails to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians elegantly. Investments in streetscapes that improve traffic circulation for all modes, reduce collisions and improve amenities (especially for pedestrians and bicyclists, the most vulnerable roadway users), and create great streets that function not as speedways that people use to drive through the TUC on their way to somewhere else, but as public spaces that are considered part of the City’s cherished open space system along with parks and trails. An example of this type of project would be to transform Washington St. into a true multi-way boulevard, as many other cities have done when there is no additional right-of- way available to widen their traffic-congested arterials. See images and an illustration of a multi-way boulevard on the following page.

- **Create a low-traffic, low-carbon, and financially sustainable transportation network.** Designated Urban Centers must help achieve DRCOG regional targets for reduced ‘vehicle miles traveled’ (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGe). As a result, the TUC’s transportation policies and investments should lead to a meaningful reduction in auto trips and associated greenhouse gas emissions. Examples include reforming off-street parking requirements to reduce barriers to redevelopment (e.g. eliminating minimums, creating maximums, encouraging shared parking) and creating a
Transportation Management Organization to focus on policies and programs that will provide alternatives to driving (e.g. a branded shuttle circulator, subsidized EcoPasses for RTD transit, etc). This will not only improve the environmental sustainability of the TUC’s transportation network, but also the financial sustainability as well: since spending money to reduce vehicle trips is more cost-effective than spending money for roadway expansions that attempt to accommodate those vehicle trips.

Fortunately, the aforementioned strategies are aligned with and fully supported by the City’s existing adopted transportation policies and plans, including the 2009 Transportation Plan and the 2011 Complete Streets Policy.

So the key next step for the City of Thornton is not how to create a supportive policy framework – such a framework already exists – but instead how to implement it and shift transportation planning and funding in the TUC to prioritize projects that align with those policies, in order to move from policymaking to actual implementation. To that end, this chapter describes the mobility recommendations for the TUC that will help implement the City’s existing multimodal policies, achieve the City’s goals for revitalization and redevelopment of the area, and achieve DRCOG’s regional goals for all designated Urban Centers to contribute to reduced VMT and GHGe.

**Example: Multi-way boulevard**

**Existing: Washington St. condition south of 95th Ave. (source: Gene Putman)**

**Conceptual: Potential base configuration of a multi-way boulevard on Washington St.**
Every trip—whether by transit, automobile or by bike—begins and ends as a pedestrian. To begin reorienting the Study Area toward the pedestrian, the strategies listed below create a more inviting pedestrian realm and bridge the super blocks in the interior of the Study Area and the perimeter arterial streets, like Washington St. and 88th Ave.

- Address gaps in the sidewalk network and develop an ADA Transition Plan to ensure conformity with federal requirements for fully accessible public rights-of-way.
- Pedestrian Improvements to complete the existing sidewalk / trail network:
  - New sidewalks:
    - South side of Thornton Parkway, between I-25 and Grant St.
    - South side of Russell Blvd., west of Pearl St.
    - North and south sides of 86th Ave., between Washington St. and Pearl St.
    - North side of 84th Ave., between I-25 and Grant St.
  - Connect segments of Niver Creek Trail through the North Valley Technical Center.
  - Promote walking within and to and from the Study Area with streetscape improvements, including street trees, a landscape buffer between the sidewalk and travel way, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, wayfinding signage, etc., along the following streets:
    - Grant St.
    - Pearl St. between Eppinger Blvd. and 86th Ave.
    - Washington St.
    - Eppinger Blvd. between Grant St. and Washington St.
    - Russell Blvd. between Grant St. and Corona St.
    - 88th Ave. between Grant St. and Corona St.
    - 86th Ave. between Grant St. and Pearl St.
    - 84th Ave. between I-25 and Washington St.
  - Install intersection improvements, including high-visibility crosswalks and ADA accessible curb ramps, at a minimum, to provide protected pedestrian crossings and alert motorists of the potential for pedestrian crossings at the following locations:
    - Grant St. and Russell Blvd.
    - Grant St. and 84th Ave.
    - Pearl St. and Eppinger Blvd.
    - Pearl St. and Russell Blvd.
    - Pearl St. and 88th Ave.
    - Pearl St. and 84th Ave., with a new intersection.
    - Washington St. and Eppinger Blvd.
    - Washington St. and 86th Ave.
• As the area develops and land use intensifies, work with developers to improve intersections along Washington St. and 88th Ave. (which historically experience the highest incidence of pedestrian and bicycle collisions) and at Grant St. and Eppinger Blvd.:
  • Consider curb extensions to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and increase visibility.
  • Consolidate striped buffer to build a raised median refuge on Washington St. to allow pedestrians to consider one direction of traffic at a time when crossing Washington St.
  • Install high visibility crosswalks and ADA accessible curb ramps.
  • Provide accessible pedestrian countdown signals.
  • Improve transit shelters and the sidewalk width around transit stops.
  • Increase sidewalk width at transit stops.

• Provide physical gateways identifying and branding the TUC Area, in addition to previously described intersection improvements, at the following locations:
  • I-25 and Thornton Pkwy.
  • Thornton Pkwy. and Grant St.
  • Thornton Pkwy. and Washington St.
  • 88th Ave. and Washington St. - this is a major intersection that provides a logical gateway location and transition from Original Thornton to the to-be-branded area to the west of Washington St.
  • 84th Ave. and Washington St.

• Establish a Safe Routes to School program focused within and near the Study Area to improve safety, access, and amenities for school-age children walking to school.

Examples: Curb extension with ADA ramps and on-street parking
Examples: Gateway / intersection improvements
Map 3-1: Proposed Pedestrian & Intersection Improvements
Bicycling is an underutilized mode in the TUC for a number of reasons, but primarily due to the lack of safe bicycling facilities. The strategies identified in this section build off of the City’s already robust multi-use trail network and planned bike network, including the recent striping of the first bike lanes in the TUC on 88th Ave.

- Restripe overly wide curb-to-curb dimensions on low-traffic, collector and local streets to include 5’-wide (minimum) bike lanes in both directions:
  - Eppinger Blvd.
  - Russell Blvd.
  - 86th Ave.
  - Pearl St.

Please see pages 3.8 and 3.9 for illustrations depicting the road diet / addition of bike lanes.

- Stripe 5’-wide bike lanes or shared lane markings (sharrows) on Corona St., as right-of-way allows.

- Identify Grant St. as a preferred bike route.
- Post a bicycle route east of the terminus of the bike lanes along 88th Ave. at Pearl St.
- Connect the Niver Creek Trail to 84th Ave., across 84th Ave., and through the North Valley Technical Center site. This may include a multi-use path paralleling a portion of 84th Ave.
- Build a multi-use trail connecting the proposed bike lanes on Pearl St. to the Niver Creek Trail.
- Utilize underdeveloped right-of-way along the east side of Washington St. between Thornton Pkwy. and Eppinger Blvd. for a multi-use trail.
- Consider private-public partnership to pilot a bike-sharing program with hubs at transit nodes and major employers.
- Provide ample, secure and well-placed bicycle parking facilities.
Map 3-2: Proposed Bike Improvements
The following graphics, created by Gene Putman, the City’s transportation and emergency management manager, show how existing streets could be reconfigured to include on-street bicycle lanes or off-street multi-use trails.

Example: Eppinger Blvd. west of Pearl St.

Example: Russell Blvd. west of Pearl
Example: Pearl St. south of Eppinger Blvd.

Example: Grant St. south of Eppinger Blvd.
A significant transit ridership base already exists for trips to and from the TUC. Strategies to improve transit service to and through the Study Area include:

- Provide a new east-west fixed-route transit service along Thornton Pkwy.
- Extend transit north of Eppinger Blvd. on Washington St.
- Move the existing route 80 from Washington St. to Grant St. between 88th Ave. and 84th Ave.
- Consider adding bus and carpool “kiss-n-ride” dropoffs along 88th Ave., or within the planned Park-n-Ride expansion, in a manner that minimizes walking distances, takes advantage of site lines, and keeps various modes in proximity to each other while preventing multimodal conflict. The current Park-n-Ride has 817 spaces, and a planned expansion to the existing lot east of I-25 would add 200 spaces, as well as a route 201x on I-25 HOV / HOT lanes (construction scheduled to begin Fall 2013 and be complete by Spring 2014).
- Consult with the CDOT and RTD to provide adequate transit lane widths and increase the width of transit boarding platforms. Provide attractive streetscaping for transit stops and lay-by locations to ensure the comfort of transit riders.

Consider a branded circulator shuttle serving the Park-n-Ride, North Valley Technical Center, Thornton Shopping Mall site, Grant St., and Washington St. The shuttle will help supplement existing fixed-route transit and dial-a-ride (or fixed area) services, create a “mobile billboard” to help create a unique identity for the district in support of initial redevelopment, and provide additional “eyes on the street” to address quality of life issues. The shuttle should be supported by existing and new development in the Study Area as well as the City and / or external funding sources such as regional, state, or federal grants.
Map 3-3: Proposed Transit Improvements

LEGEND
EXISTING / PREVIOUSLY PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE

- Bus Route
- Bus Stop
- Park and Ride (817 spaces)
- Previously Planned Park and Ride Expansion

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Transit
- Branded Circulator Shuttle (not dial-a-ride)

Geographic information sources include the City of Thornton and RIE.
The consultant team has made a reasonable effort to accurately display map data and assumes no liability for inaccurate information.

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGY - MOBILITY

3.11
AUTOMOBILE PARKING & CIRCULATION

Without improving automobile parking and traffic issues in the TUC, the City will not be able to achieve its revitalization goals for the area. The recommendations below summarize how those conditions can best be improved, while supporting all modes.

Parking

- Reform off-street parking requirements to remove barriers to new development and expansions / changes of use in existing development, including
  - Reduction or elimination of parking minimums for low-traffic, transit-oriented development.
  - Institution of parking maximums for stand-alone parking, with higher parking maximums for shared parking.
  - Allowing projects to meet parking demand in shared facilities and / or nearby off-site locations.
  - Facilitation of shared parking arrangements among owners of existing underutilized parking lots to support the creation of a “park once” district.

Circulation

Currently, the TUC faces a dilemma in managing its automobile circulation network. This is because some streets (e.g. Grant) have excessive right-of-way that contributes to speeding and collisions while other streets (e.g. Washington) have high traffic volumes but no additional right-of-way to expand. Exacerbating this dilemma, the City’s 2009 Transportation Plan identifies over $500 million of transportation capital expenditures citywide, primarily for roadway expansion projects, but with no real projected improvement to traffic congestion on streets in the TUC (comparing current and future peak-hour Level of Service).

Key circulation recommendations include:

- Implement road diets on low-volume streets to reduce speeding and collisions and allow for implementation of bike facilities and traffic calming pedestrian improvements. In general, north-south collectors and local streets with excess right-of-way (relative to current and future traffic volumes) are good candidates for reduction in the number of lanes and/or reduction in the width of existing lanes. Major arterials are generally not good candidates for reduction in the number of lanes, however reduction of lane widths on some of these arterials may be necessary to create adequate right-of-way for bike lanes and/or widened sidewalks and would assist in traffic calming by reducing vehicle speeds and collisions.
  - Bring consistency to 88th Ave. and Grant St. where, for example, the 10’ travel lanes funnel to 16.5’ and then back to 10.’
  - Revise street design standards for this area to allow for greater flexibility in lane dimensions and right-of-way allocation in accordance with regional and local best practices.

Washington St. forms the eastern boundary of the Study Area and represents a significant barrier between the Original Thornton neighborhood and the greater TUC Area. Washington St. carries a large number of vehicles including occasionally serving as an alternate route to I-25 when there are incidents or severe congestion on the I-25 corridor. In recent years, Washington St. has been among the streets in the Study Area with the highest concentration of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians. The potential for redevelopment, especially at the Thornton Shopping Mall site, provides a significant opportunity to reevaluate the way Washington St. serves Thornton. Potential improvements include:

Existing: Washington St. west of Thornton Shopping Mall
• Consider a multi-way boulevard on Washington St. or a portion of Washington St, as right-of-way allows, without necessarily reducing the number of through lanes or the throughput capacity for autos.

• Improve throughput and travel times from reduced turning movements between Washington St. and the mall site by building a multi-way boulevard to provide frontage roads with better local access.

• Consider providing additional parking on frontage lanes by changing parking configurations, e.g. converting parallel parking to angle parking.

• Increase the width of the amenity zone within the pedestrian realm and provide attractive streetscaping to enhance the aesthetic quality of the street.

• Per the Comprehensive Plan, create a culture trail along 88th Ave. and Washington St., establish a parkway treatment along Washington St., and improve the intersection of Washington St. and Thornton Pkwy.
Supportive Traffic Management Policies

In addition to the recommendations discussed previously, the following policies will help enable multimodal accessibility within the TUC:

- Consider revising on-street parking design standards to encourage on-street parking on roads with excess vehicle capacity (LOS C and above).
- Revise transportation performance measures for the Study Area to include multimodal Quality of Service / Level of Service considerations, rather than sole reliance on vehicle level of service.
- Work with the existing Smart Commute Metro North Transportation Management Organization to focus on policies and programs that will provide alternatives to driving, e.g. the branded shuttle circulator and subsidized EcoPass for RTD transit.
- Transportation Demand Management Improvements - Request that new developments initiate transportation management programs to mitigate their traffic impacts.
  - Parking pricing / user fees for new development (where feasible via a direct charge, unbundling or cash-out parking mechanisms).
  - Shared parking arrangements for existing and new development.
  - Subsidized transit passes for employees and residents of new developments (EcoPass program).
  - Provide financial incentives for employees of new developments to walk, bike, carpool, vanpool, or take transit to work.
INTRODUCTION

Through the course of the project, five development nodes were identified for further concentration that fit within the Areas For Change as identified in the analysis phase of the process. These five nodes were selected because they also fall within the current South Thornton Urban Renewal Boundary. Three of them are also located within the Enterprise Zone. Three of the nodes are on primarily vacant land that has never been built upon (the first three discussed), and two focus on redevelopment opportunities within south Thornton (the final two discussed). Each of these nodes is referred to as a ‘Site,’ meaning the collective parcels that comprise the geographic outline of the node.

Each node is described as follows:

1. Basic Statistics: Acreage, location, current zoning and current number of owners.
2. Overview of the node including unique features and general layout.
4. Physical Framework: This category discusses both suggested mobility improvements and use, form and scale of development to support good urban development patterns, support DRCOG Urban Center goals, and to provide certainty for the City and potential developers in working with the nodes. Two diagrams are included to illustrate the framework principles outlined herein.

The nodes are organized as follows:

1. Grant St. / Thornton Pkwy. Vacant Land
2. Russell St. / I-25 Vacant Land
3. 86th Ave. Primarily Vacant Land
4. Thornton Shopping Center
5. North Valley Tech Center
**NODE 1. GRANT STREET/THORNTON PARKWAY VACANT LAND**

**Statistics:**

- **Location Boundaries:**
  - N - Thornton Pkwy.
  - S - Grant St.
  - E - Grant St.
  - W - Horizon Terrace office building / I-25

- **Acreage:** 21.93, consisting of 16.8 acres northwest of Grant St. plus 5.13 acres southeast of Grant St.
- **Current zoning:** Planned Development
- **Number of owners:** 2

**Overview:**

Approximately 18.53 acres of this Site is owned by the Thornton Development Authority. It has remained vacant since this area was platted in the mid 1980’s. Future development on the Site would have the advantage of visibility from I-25 depending on the positioning and height of buildings. Topography drops from north to south, with an approximate 35’ vertical difference across the Site from Thornton Pkwy. to Grant St. (general alignment with Civic Center Dr.), in a distance of approximately 350’. The only transport infrastructure currently on the portion of the Site northwest of Grant St. includes a 20’ access drive that provides secondary egress from the northeast side of the Horizon Terrace office building. The parcels located to the southeast of Grant St. have two access drives, one located at the southwest corner which provides access to the Brittany Hill property, and the other at the northernmost tip which provides access to the Adams 12 School District property. The Site has great views to the mountains and / or the downtown Denver skyline.

*Existing: Node 1, looking west from Grant St. with great views to the mountains*
Development Framework:

Assets:

- The Site is currently accessible via Grant St., a four lane with turn lane street that carries between 8,000 and 14,000 vehicles daily.
- The Site is served by two bus lines - the 88 that travels along Grant St., and the 12 that follows a Grant St. to Eppinger Blvd. alignment.
- RTD’s Thornton Park-n-Ride facility, located at 88th Ave. and I-25, serves local and express buses, provides 817 parking spaces, and is within a 15-minute walk south of the Site.
- The Site is primarily owned by the Thornton Development Authority.
- The Site, depending on how development is placed and the height of development, affords great views to the mountains and / or the downtown Denver skyline.
- The Site is currently within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.
- At this time the primary option for development includes:
  a) Significant office / employment center. This may include modest retail in support of the office development.

Potential Redevelopment Challenges:

- There is a lack of infrastructure - primarily mobility within and across the Site.
- The existing topography is a perceived barrier. However, the great access and visibility potential to / from I-25, in conjunction with the ability to provide structured parking under buildings that is tucked into the topography, provides for significant identity-building and for a concentration of walkable office space within south Thornton.

Overview of Probable New Infrastructure:

- Given this Site has never been developed, both streets and utility infrastructure would have to be constructed.
- As the Site is currently a super-block, any new development should include the construction of a new street network both northwest-southeast and southwest-northeast through the Site that provides adequate access and mobility for the urban development pattern desired for the Site.
- Storm water detention will need to be provided. This should be accommodated in urban detention strategies rather than large open fields, except at strategic locations.
Physical Framework:

**Mobility**

- The current assets of existing transit have been identified.
- Grant St. has attached sidewalks with four lanes of traffic and a center turn lane.
- Thornton Pkwy. at the north provides almost direct access to I-25.
- As the Site redevelops, it should include at least one new southwest-northeast street that connects with Grant St. at two points and a potential connection up to Thornton Pkwy.
- As the Site redevelops, a new northwest-southeast street should be created continuing the alignment of Civic Center Dr. into the Site, creating a “T” condition with a new southwest-northeast street.
- A new eastern edge street should be aligned north into the Site from Grant St. generally on the alignment of the current access drive and continue across Grant to the south into the southeastern portion of the Site as a street providing access to development here as well as to Brittany Hill.
- All new streets should be designed with detached sidewalks and on-street parking.

**Uses, Form & Scale of Development**

- Redevelopment of the Site, including a new street network, establishes three primary buildable zones.
  - One buildable zone is centrally located in the Site along the northwest edge of Grant St. This area should include primarily structured parking with access from both Grant St. and a new street between Grant St. and Thornton Pkwy. - providing split ingress/egress to parking facilities to take advantage of the existing grades.
• The other two zones include lands closest to the intersection of Thornton Pkwy and Grant St. and lands on the southeast side of Grant St.

• Zoning on the Site should allow for primarily office uses, high density residential and some very modest retail to serve the immediate office uses.

• A Planned Development Plan should be completed by the City to identify the public realm network and establish specific building height limitations for different buildable areas to best take advantage of the grade and views.

• Podium and tower buildings would be a logical building typology to utilize for many of the zones within this Site. This generally means a parking base of approximately 120’ in width tucked into the topography, with an approximate 90’ wide office tower above.

• Buildings should be a minimum of five stories and up to 12 stories depending on the zone, (including structured parking), and measured from a Grant St. elevation.

• Buildings along Grant St. should be set back enough to allow for detached sidewalks and a 10’ setback to a building face, to create a pedestrian friendly environment along Grant St.

• Parks and open space should be provided:
  a) Drainage should be provided as necessary, but surface ponds should be minimized, particularly along Grant St.
  b) A pedestrian and bicycle connection should be provided between Thornton Pkwy., the new Civic Center Dr. roadway into the Site, and down to Grant St. within a horizontal alignment of the street.
  c) Use Brittany Hill as a branded gateway feature with urban agriculture.

Framework: Uses, Form, and Scale

Example: 5-story office building with modest setback
NODE 2. RUSSELL STREET / I-25 VACANT LAND

Statistics:
- Location Boundaries:
  - N - Open Space / Drainage / North Suburban Medical Center
  - S - Summit Apartments
  - E - Spine Center
  - W - I-25
- Acreage: 6.43
- Current zoning: City Center
- Number of owners: 1

Overview:
This Site is currently owned by the Thornton Development Authority. It is a vacant site that has never been developed. The higher elevation provides good visibility from the interstate and desirable views to the mountains and the downtown Denver skyline. The Site is surrounded on the north and east by medical and institutional uses, and to the south by apartments.
Development Framework:

Assets:
- The Site is currently accessible via Russell Blvd. - with this Site currently being a terminus to the west end of that street.
- The Site is served by two bus lines - the 88 that travels along Grant St., a 5-minute walk, and the 12 that follows a Grant St. to Eppinger Blvd. alignment, a 10-minute walk.
- RTD’s Thornton Park-n-Ride facility, located at 88th Ave. and I-25, serves local and express buses, provides 817 parking spaces, and is within a 15-minute walk of the Site.
- The Site is owned by the Thornton Development Authority.
- The Site is currently within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.
- At this time the primary option for redevelopment includes:
  a) Office space
  b) Institutional facilities

Potential Redevelopment Challenges:
- As the Site only has one ingress / egress point at Russell Blvd., this may be perceived as having poor connectivity and inhibit interest in the Site. This limitation may also cause challenges in regard to fire access.

Overview of Probable New Infrastructure:
- Given this Site has never been developed, both street and utility infrastructure would have to be constructed.
Physical Framework:

Mobility

- The current assets of existing transit have been identified.
- The Site should be designed such that a public street extension of Russell Blvd. is accommodated through the Site and aligned with a future roadway connection to the south into the Summit Apartments site.
- All new drives / streets into the Site should be designed with detached sidewalks and on-street parking on at least one side of the street.

Example: 3-story office building
Uses, Form & Scale of Development

- Buildings should be positioned to the west and north areas of the Site to take advantage of visibility from I-25 and clear views across existing drainage / open space.
- The existing topography at the west edge of the Site is a perceived barrier. However, this affords the ability to provide podium/structured parking under buildings that is tucked into the topography.
- Development on this Site is envisioned to stay within a five-story height limitation given the existing high elevation base of the Site and to not stand out too much from existing or imagined surrounding development.
- A plaza area for employees should be provided.
NODE 3. 86TH AVENUE PRIMARILY VACANT SITE

Statistics:

- Location Boundaries:
  - N - Renaissance Apartments, Crossland Economy Studios hotel, office building
  - S - 86th Ave.
  - E - Pearl St.
  - W - Grant St.
- Acreage: 14.2
- Current zoning: Business Park, Regional Commercial
- Number of owners: 3

Overview:

Most of this Site is a vacant, never developed area of south Thornton. It is surrounded on the north primarily by residential uses, and to the east, south and, west by commercial uses and vacant property. This Site has great views to the mountains and to downtown Denver.
Development Framework:

Assets:

- The Site is currently accessible from Grant St., 86th Ave., and Pearl St.
- The Site is currently for sale.
- The Site is served by three bus lines, all having stops at the RTD Park-n-Ride facility. Two of the routes can also be accessed within a 10-minute walk to the north or a 5-minute walk to the east.
- RTD’s Thornton Park-n-Ride facility, located at 88th Ave. and I-25, serves local and express buses, provides 817 parking spaces, and is located immediately across the street from the west edge of the Site.
- This is one of the larger vacant development opportunities currently in south Thornton.
- The Site is within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.
- The Site is within an Enterprise Zone.
- At this time the primary options for redevelopment include:
  a) Residential development
  b) Mixed-use development

Potential Redevelopment Challenges:

- Agreement and coordination amongst three property owners, or acquisition and assemblage of the parcels by a single developer could be difficult.
- The Site isn’t viable for retail. As the TUC Study Area and the larger trade area is currently significantly over-retailed, and given the lack of visibility from I-25 or Washington St. - the major retail ‘visual access’ corridors in the Study Area, long term viability of retail will be a challenge.

Overview of Probable New Infrastructure:

- Both street and utility infrastructure would have to be constructed.
- As the Site is currently a super-block, any new development should include the construction of a new street network to provide adequate access and mobility for the urban development pattern desired for the Site.
- Storm water detention will need to be provided. This should be accommodated in urban detention strategies rather than large open fields.
Physical Framework:

Mobility

- The current assets of existing transit have been identified.
- As the Site redevelops, it should include at least one new east-west public street.
- As the Site redevelops, a new north-south street should be created connecting to 86th Ave. to the south and allowing for a future northern extension into the current Renaissance Apartment complex property.
- All new streets should be designed with detached sidewalks and on-street parking.
- A safe crossing of Grant St. from the Site to the Park-n-Ride should be provided.

Example: Multi-family with partial below-grade parking taking advantage of topography
Uses, Form & Scale of Development

- Buildings should face Grant St., 86th Ave. and, if feasible, Pearl St. to be consistent with urban development patterns. Surface parking should not be allowed between a building and an existing or future public street except for modest pockets.

- Development of building typologies for the western portion of the Site should take advantage of the topography by providing underground parking for buildings.

- Development up to five stories is probably the highest desired on this Site, if feasible from a financial standpoint.

- Parks and open space should be provided:
  a) A public park approximately .5 acre in size should be a focus for Site development.
  b) Additional parks / plazas should be considered to support the development.
  c) Any modest open retention areas should be restricted to the lower lands generally located at the intersection of Grant St. and 86th Ave. / along Grant St.
NODE 4. THORNTON SHOPPING CENTER SITE

Statistics:

- Location Boundaries:
  - N - Russell Blvd.
  - S - E 88th Ave.
  - E - Corona St.
  - W - Washington St.
- Acreage: 27.1
- Current zoning: Community Retail, Regional Commercial, Multifamily
- Number of owners: 6

Overview:

The Thornton Shopping Center Site (TSC / Site) is one of the oldest platted and developed areas in the City of Thornton. The Site historically was the first location for retail in Thornton as the community developed in the 1950’s. As it exists, the Site contains known conditions of blight. The majority of the Site includes an approximately 155,600 sf failing mall complex organized primarily in two larger structures, an empty grocery site, and a pad site built from 1966 to 1978. Smaller parcels line the west edge of the Site. There are 48 apartment units in four buildings built in 1972 on the east edge of the Site. North of this and abutting Russell Blvd., the newly renovated / expanded Clinica Family Health Services is located on a 2.3 acre parcel. A smaller, .52-acre retail parcel is located on the corner of Russell Blvd. and Washington St. currently occupied by a used car dealer. Immediately south and east of this is a .98-acre parcel that was recently vacated by the Rangeview Library District. This parcel previously held City offices. The Site is surrounded to the north and east by single family detached residential and to the south and west by retail uses. The majority of the Site more readily available for redevelopment, without additional assemblage, is nearly 21 acres in size.

Existing: Node 4, looking southwest w/ many vacant storefronts and parking spaces
Development Framework:

Assets:
- The Site is at a key intersection in south Thornton with great vehicular access from 88th Ave. and Washington St., both arterials carrying approximately 22,000 and 25,000-30,000 vehicles / day respectively.
- The Site is served by four bus lines - the 92 and 12 that pass along its western boundary on Washington St., the 88 along its southern boundary on 88th Ave., and the 80 that turns between Washington St. and 88th Ave.
- RTD’s Thornton Park-n-Ride facility, located at 88th Ave. and I-25, serves local and express buses, provides 817 parking spaces, and is within a 15-minute walk of the Site.
- The Site is 1.25 miles west of a planned RTD commuter rail station.
- The Site has great views to the Rocky Mountains and to the downtown Denver skyline.
- A significant portion of the Site is currently severely underutilized - having an improvements to land value ratio of <=1.0.
- This is one of the larger redevelopment opportunities currently in south Thornton.
- The Site is currently within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.
- The Site is currently within an Enterprise Zone.
- At this time the primary options for redevelopment deemed appropriate for further consideration for long term viability of the Site include:
  a) Total removal of the two primary existing mall structures and vacant grocer building for redevelopment into a mixed-use environment.
  b) Total removal of the two primary existing mall structures, vacant grocer building, apartments along Corona, vacant library building, and pad site at 88th Ave. and Washington St. and redevelopment into a mixed-use environment.

Potential Redevelopment Challenges:
- Given historic uses on the Site, environmental contamination exists. Some of this contamination has been verified and is in the remediation process.
- There may be additional off-site source points providing contamination on the Site.
- Assembling multiple parcels (under multiple ownership) to create a contiguous land area large enough to support a new urban block system could be difficult.

Overview of Probable New Infrastructure:
- Given the age and configuration of sewer, water, and electric services to the Site, there will be significant rebuilding of this infrastructure to support a mixed-use environment.
- As the Site is currently a super-block, any new development should include the construction of a new street network both north-south and east-west through the Site that provides adequate access and mobility for the urban development pattern desired for the Site.
- Storm water detention will need to be provided. This should be accommodated in urban detention strategies rather than large open fields.
Physical Framework:

Mobility

- The current assets of existing transit have been identified.
- As the Site redevelops, it should include at least one new east-west public street that generally aligns approximately 450’ north of the intersection of 88th Ave. along Washington St., and to the east with 89th Ave. as this has the most direct connection with Hoffmann Pkwy. and provides a terminus on the North Hills Church of God - an institutional use.
- The new connection into the Site along Washington St., if generally aligned approximately 450’ north of the intersection of 88th Ave., also provides an opportunity to continue a connection west through the super-block between Pearl and Washington streets. A new street connection through these current parking lots would bolster connectivity within the broader south Thornton area, and provide better access and use to any future commercial uses that may be developed on the Site from residential uses west of Pearl St.
- A new connection into the Site from the south should occur at the alignment with the current drive into the Walmart Neighborhood Store development. At least one new street should be constructed from the north, preferably at the alignment with the current access drive that is immediately west of Clinica Family Health Services.
- All new streets should be designed with detached sidewalks and on-street parking on at least one side of the street, two if fronted by ground floor retail.
- Consider constructing a multi-way boulevard section along at least a portion of the south and west edges of the Site to provide for better local access to the new development. Washington St. and 88th Ave. are...
very busy streets and most likely will be precluded from having on-street parking to serve adjacent uses, therefore, a multi-way boulevard section provides for this local access, safer travel for the local traffic, and can act as a gateway / branding feature for the Site and this Original Thornton area of the community. This multi-way section will also provide for a higher level of intensity of development on the Site.

**Uses, Form & Scale of Development**

- Redevelopment of the Site should encourage retail uses primarily along the 88th Ave. and Washington St. edges, and if development viability allows, the retail could continue east into the Site.
- Zoning on the Site should allow for a vertical mix of uses to occur.
- Primarily low to mid-intensity residential uses (such as townhomes) should be located on the east and north areas of the Site to transition to the existing adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- As Russell Blvd. may become a more prominent access route through redevelopment of the Site, larger setbacks or side facing attached housing could be considered here.

**Example: Walkable mixed-use development**

- Development should be limited to five stories, as feasible from a financial standpoint.
- Visibility of parking (surface and structured) from the street should be minimized. Structured parking wrapped with uses or as one story (with wrap facing a street) to a multi-story building is acceptable.
- A park space or plaza should be a focus for the redeveloped Site. This space should be no less than .5 acre in size (if a plaza) to approximately 1 acre.

**Framework: Uses, Form, and Scale**
NODE 5. NORTH VALLEY TECH CENTER

Statistics:

- Location Boundaries:
  - N - 84th Ave.
  - S - South City Boundary / Approximately E. 83rd Dr.
  - E - Washington St.
  - W - I-25
- Acreage: 37.4
- Current zoning: Regional Commercial
- Number of owners: 2

Overview:

The North Valley Tech Center (NVTC / Site) Site is an old mall development nestled at the south edge of the City of Thornton. The Site is surrounded to the north and east by commercial uses and to the south by primarily single family detached homes in Adams County. The east side of the Site borders I-25. The majority of the Site includes an approximately 477,225 sf failing mall complex built in 1968. A gas station pad site is located on the southwest corner of Washington St. and 84th Ave. and another pad site with a vacant building is located near Grant St. and 84th Ave. A majority of the land, nearly 37 acres, is under single ownership. Sungard, a data storage company, Regis University’s Dual Language Campus and an urgent care facility are primary current users of the mall building. In addition, the City of Thornton’s Arts and Culture Division utilizes some space for events. Nearly 450,000 sf of the mall space is available for lease. The Site historically held one of the earliest malls built north of Denver serving Thornton and the near north metro area. The Site as it exists contains known blight conditions.

Existing: Node 5, west end of NVTC with existing uses
Development Framework:

Assets:

- The Site has great vehicular access from I-25, the gateway interchange into Thornton; as well as from 84th Ave. and Washington St., both arterials carrying approximately 29,000-33,000 and 25,000-30,000 vehicles / day respectively.
- The Site is served by two bus lines - the 80 that travels along 84th Ave., and the 12 that passes along its eastern boundary on Washington St..
- RTD’s Thornton Park-n-Ride facility, located at 88th Ave. and I-25, serves local and express buses, provides 817 parking spaces, and is within a 20-minute walk of the Site.
- This is one of the larger redevelopment opportunities currently in south Thornton.
- The Site is within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area.
- The Site is within an Enterprise Zone.
- At this time, the primary options for redevelopment include:
  a) Partial removal of the existing mall structure and redevelopment into a mixed-use environment. This option would retain existing active uses on the Site, presume repositioning and lease of approximately 110,518 sf of space, and primarily include removing approximately 330,000 sf of the mall for redevelopment.
  b) Total removal of the existing mall structure and redevelopment into either a mixed-use environment or a major institutional use.

Potential Barriers to Redevelopment:

- Given historic uses on the Site, some environmental contamination may exist.
- The 100-year floodplain covers a portion of the northeast section of the Site.
- Separate long-term land and building leases exist.
- There is a lack of visibility from I-25 for low intensity commercial uses.

Overview of Probable New Infrastructure:

- Given the age and configuration of sewer, water, and electric services to the Site, there will be significant rebuilding of this infrastructure to support a mixed-use environment.
- As the Site is currently a super-block, any new development should include the construction of a new street network both north-south and east-west through the Site that provides adequate access and mobility for the urban development pattern desired for the Site.
- The missing Niver Creek Trail connection should be completed from north 84th Ave. and west of Grant St. across 84th Ave. through the Site to intersect with Washington St. and connect to the existing trail on the east side of Washington St. generally aligned with Coronado Pkwy. N.
- Storm water detention will need to be provided. This should be accommodated in urban detention strategies rather than large open fields, except for within the current floodplain area where it is recommended that open space here accommodate the floodway, additional detention warranted by redevelopment, and the missing Niver Creek Trail connection. Depending on topography and the ultimate redevelopment strategy, additional modest facilities could be provided generally along the southern edges of the property.

Existing: Node 5, looking west across NVTC
Physical Framework:

Mobility

- The current assets of existing transit have been identified.
- As the Site redevelops, it should include at least one new east-west street.
- As the Site redevelops, a new north-south street should be created continuing the alignment of Grant St. south into the Site.
- For areas of the mall that are removed and redeveloped, a connected additional street grid / block system should be introduced to provide mobility and organize development on the Site.
- A new eastern edge entrance with Coronado Pkwy. N. should replace the current two access points.
- The Niver Creek Trail missing link should be accommodated.
- Consider an additional ingress / egress point down to E. 83rd Dr. along the southeastern portion of the Site as needed depending on intensity of redevelopment. This access point would take advantage of the existing intersection with Washington St.
- All new streets should be designed with detached sidewalks and on-street parking.
Uses, Form & Scale of Development

- Zoning on the Site should allow for a vertical mix of uses.
- Development should be limited to five stories as feasible from a financial standpoint.
- As a new street network is built, new buildings should face these streets without parking between the street and the building.
- Parks and open space should be provided:
  a) A park or plaza should be a focus for the redeveloped Site.
  b) The passive / drainage / trail open space at the northeast portion of the Site should be included.

Example: Walkable mixed-use development

Framework: Uses, Form, and Scale - This diagram presumes partial retainage of existing mall.
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CHAPTER 5: STRATEGY - IMPLEMENTATION

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.
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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implen. No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EV.1</strong> 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.</td>
<td>4 Urban Centers / City-wide</td>
<td>City ED / City CD</td>
<td>2013-2015 2016-2018 2019-2023 2024-2033</td>
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<td><strong>EV.2</strong> Complete Urban Renewal Implementation Plan for the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area with financial goals and priorities.</td>
<td>South Thornton Urban Renewal Area</td>
<td>City ED / CD</td>
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<td><strong>EV.3</strong> Complete Branding Study for the TUC Area.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED / City CD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EV.4</strong> 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.</td>
<td>City-wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EV.5</strong> Create clear message and brand that Grant / Thornton / Russell is a major office node near north metro Denver.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED / City CD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EV.6</strong> Determine most politically and financially feasible development structure for development on City owned land through the Urban Renewal Implementation Plan process.</td>
<td>Grant-Thornton Node / Russell Node</td>
<td>City ED / City CD</td>
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<td><strong>EV.7</strong> Complete Planned Development Plan for Grant / Thornton Node including financing plan.</td>
<td>Grant / Thornton Node</td>
<td>City CD / City IN / City ED</td>
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<td><strong>EV.8</strong> Complete development of Grant / Thornton Node.</td>
<td>Grant / Thornton Node</td>
<td>City CD / ED / CS / IN</td>
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<td><strong>EV.9</strong> Create infrastructure and financing plan for the Russell Node.</td>
<td>Russell Node</td>
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<td><strong>EV.10</strong> Complete development of Russell Node.</td>
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## 5.6 Economic Vitality

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<td>EV.11</td>
<td>Change Zoning on TSC Node to allow for a mix of uses.</td>
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<td>City CD</td>
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<td>EV.12</td>
<td>Continue to assess and remediate environmental issues at TSC Node.</td>
<td>TSC Node</td>
<td>City CD / IN / ED</td>
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<td>EV.13</td>
<td>Work with property owners on overall master planning strategy for the TSC site including land uses, infrastructure, partnership structures, financing options.</td>
<td>TSC Node</td>
<td>City CD / IN / ED</td>
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<td>EV.14</td>
<td>Continue to redevelop and complete Thornton Shopping Center.</td>
<td>TSC Node</td>
<td>City CD / ED / CS / IN</td>
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<td>EV.15</td>
<td>Actively work with NVTC owner(s) and lease holders to explore redevelopment and ownership options for the Site.</td>
<td>NVTC Node</td>
<td>City ED</td>
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<td>EV.16</td>
<td>Complete redevelopment of NVTC.</td>
<td>NVTC Node</td>
<td>City CD / ED / CS / IN</td>
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<td>EV.17</td>
<td>Facilitate conversation among owners of 86th Node regarding development goals and scenarios and to help promote the Site’s redevelopment.</td>
<td>86th Node</td>
<td>City ED</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV.18</td>
<td>Facilitate conversation between 86th Node owners with area brokers and developers to either promote the site or prepare for redevelopment.</td>
<td>86th Node</td>
<td>City ED</td>
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<td>EV.19</td>
<td>Determine City’s support and role in conjunction with 86th Node property owners.</td>
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<td>EV.20</td>
<td>Complete development of 86th Node.</td>
<td>86th Node</td>
<td>City CD / ED / CS / IN</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV.21</td>
<td>Encourage local businesses, property owners and developers to work together toward common objectives through a mechanism like a Business Improvement District (BID).</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED / City CD</td>
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<td>EV.22</td>
<td>Complete a needs assessment for Arts and Culture facilities in Thornton. Encourage Arts and Culture facilities to locate in the TUC Area.</td>
<td>City-wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City CS</td>
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<td>Sub-Category</td>
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<td>EV.24</td>
<td>Continue active conversations with North Suburban health care facilities to understand long-term needs for the campus including operational and development needs.</td>
<td>TUC Area / Grant-Thornton Node / Russell Node</td>
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<td>EV.25</td>
<td>Continue to implement Housing Master Plan Goals relevant to the TUC Area and specific nodes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV.26</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>City-wide / TUC Area</td>
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<td>EV.27</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>South Thornton Area / TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV.28</td>
<td>Continuously update and improve web page as link through City / ED's website to identify all development opportunities and available space for lease.</td>
<td>City-wide / TUC Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV.29</td>
<td>Establish / continue contact list for all businesses in TUC Area to provide regular and updated information on improvements, programs available.</td>
<td>City-wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV.30</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED/City CD</td>
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### Economic Vitality

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<th>Phase IV</th>
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<tr>
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<td>EV.31</td>
<td>Continue programs that increase neighborhood safety and awareness. (e.g. Neighborhood Watch, Iwatch Speed Awareness Program, Graffiti removal, Directed patrols, community resource officers, etc.).</td>
<td>City wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
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<td>EV.32</td>
<td>Continue to support and reach out to small businesses in the TUC Area.</td>
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<td>EV.33</td>
<td>Continue to inform key local business owners about programs such as the Business Beautification Improvement Grant (BBIG) to incentivize improvements and stimulate broader revitalization.</td>
<td>City wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
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<td>EV.34</td>
<td>Continue to provide and expand financial assistance and other incentives to existing and desired businesses and commercial entities.</td>
<td>City wide / TUC Area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EV.35</td>
<td>Continue active conversations with Adams County School District 12 regarding long-term plans for the Thornton High School Site.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED/CD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV.36</td>
<td>Establish ongoing conversations with Regis University and other higher education providers on their needs for their Thornton Campus.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City ED/CD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV.37</td>
<td>Continue to support the recommendations of Thornton's Health Impact Assessment and HEAL (Healthy Eating, Active Living).</td>
<td>City wide TUC</td>
<td>City CD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV.38</td>
<td>Continue to develop programs supporting the recommendation of the HIA throughout the City - also make sure that program information is available in Spanish.</td>
<td>City wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV.39</td>
<td>Continue working with LiveWell Adams County. Appoint a City representative to the LiveWell South Adams County Coalition.</td>
<td>City wide / TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Category</th>
<th>Implem. No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.1</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.2</td>
<td>Improve intersections with high-visibility crosswalks and ADA accessible curb ramps.</td>
<td>Pearl St, Grant St</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.3</td>
<td>Restripe ROW to provide 5'-wide bike lanes in both directions.</td>
<td>Eppinger Blvd, Russell Blvd, Pearl St</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.4</td>
<td>Revise transportation performance measures for the Study Area to include multimodal Quality of Service / Level of Service considerations.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>M.5</td>
<td>Expand the capacity and multimodal accessibility of the Park-n-Ride parking lot east of I-25.</td>
<td>I-25 Park-n-Ride</td>
<td>RTD</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.6</td>
<td>Revise street design standards to allow greater flexibility in lane dimensions and right-of-way allocation.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.7</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.8</td>
<td>Revise on-street parking design standards to encourage on-street parking on roads with excess vehicle capacity (LOS and above).</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.9</td>
<td>Retrofit on-street parking where there is sufficient demand. Provide on-street parking for new streets developed in the TUC Area.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.10</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ped</th>
<th>M.11</th>
<th>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.</th>
<th>Washington St, Pearl St, 88th Ave, Grant St, 84th Ave, Eppinger St, Russell St and 86th Ave</th>
<th>City CD / City IN</th>
<th>2013-2015</th>
<th>2016-2018</th>
<th>2019-2023</th>
<th>2024-2033</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.12</td>
<td>Improve intersections with high-visibility crosswalks and ADA accessible curb ramps.</td>
<td>TUC Study Area</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.13</td>
<td>Install missing link sidewalks within TUC Area.</td>
<td>Russell Blvd, Thornton Pkwy, 84th Ave, and 86th Ave</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.14</td>
<td>Establish a Safe Routes to School Program.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City IN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.15</td>
<td>Design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for the TUC Area - identity, Park - n-Ride, transit routes, bike routes, key destinations, etc.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CS, City IN</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.16</td>
<td>Stripe bike lane / sharrow as appropriate on Corona St from Eppinger to Niver Creek Trail.</td>
<td>Corona St.</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.17</td>
<td>Build multi-use trail.</td>
<td>Washington St (Thornton to Eppinger)</td>
<td>City IN, City CS</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.18</td>
<td>Post bicycle route.</td>
<td>Grant St, Washington St (south of Niver Creek Trail crossing)</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.19</td>
<td>Connect the Niver Creek Trail through the NVTC site.</td>
<td>NVTC</td>
<td>City IN, City CS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>M.20</td>
<td>Provide modifications to the existing routes 80 and 12 to provide better service.</td>
<td>Grant St, Washington St</td>
<td>RTD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>M.21</td>
<td>Provide attractive transit stop environments to ensure the comfort of transit riders.</td>
<td>TUC Study Area</td>
<td>RTD / City IN</td>
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### Mobility

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.23</td>
<td>Restripe ROW to provide 5’-wide bike lanes in both directions in conjunction with development on vacant land.</td>
<td>86th Ave</td>
<td>City IN</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.24</td>
<td>Implement frontage roads / quasi-multi-way environment where feasible along Washington in conjunction with new development or as retrofit.</td>
<td>Washington St</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.25</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Washington St</td>
<td>Developer led, City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ped</td>
<td>M.26</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>88th St</td>
<td>Developer led, City IN</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>M.27</td>
<td>Provide a new east-west fixed-route transit service.</td>
<td>Thornton Pkwy</td>
<td>RTD</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.28</td>
<td>Create TUC-specific Transportation Management Organization.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>M.29</td>
<td>Consider private-public partnership to pilot a bikesharing program with hubs at transit nodes and major employers.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD, City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>M.30</td>
<td>Consider a branded circulator shuttle serving the Park-and-Ride, North Valley Technical Center, Thornton Shopping Center, Grant St, and Washington St.</td>
<td>TUC Study Area</td>
<td>City CD, City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.31</td>
<td>Consider subsidizing transit passes for employees and residents of new developments (EcoPass program).</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td>M.32</td>
<td>Provide financial incentives for employees of new developments to walk, bike, carpool, vanpool, or take transit to work.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
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## Placemaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implem. No.</th>
<th>Action Description</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.1</td>
<td>Ensure the Comprehensive Plan Supports TUC Area as a DRCOG Urban Center.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.2</td>
<td>Update zoning language for “Planned Development District”, to truly allow ‘innovative projects’, namely - remove restriction on 1.0 Maximum FAR.</td>
<td>Grant / Thornton Node</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.3</td>
<td>Complete Planned Development Plan for Grant / Thornton Node.</td>
<td>Grant / Thornton Node</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.4</td>
<td>Undertake comprehensive review and amendment of parking standards for the TUC Area / create specific language for Urban Centers to allow for urban development patterns.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2014-2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.5</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2020-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.6</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2021-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.7</td>
<td>Establish Matching Fund Site Improvement Program for older buildings along Washington for façade improvement, to screen parking, etc.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2022-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.8</td>
<td>Complete Landscape / Streetscape Framework Plan for the entire TUC Area to be consistent with the identified Brand. To be completed after Branding Study complete.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2023-2033</td>
</tr>
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<td>Implem. No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.10</td>
<td>Initiate small, low cost identity improvements utilizing the new brand (logo, color scheme, etc.) such as signage, banners, etc. to promote the new identity.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CD</td>
<td>2016-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.11</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Washington St</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.12</td>
<td>Acquire land / long-term easement for open space connection, design and implementation of the Niver Creek Trail connection.</td>
<td>NVTC</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.13</td>
<td>Complete branding / gateway intersection improvements to: a) Washington / 88th Intersection - Complete in conjunction with Thornton Shopping Center redevelopment, or by 2017.</td>
<td>Washington St</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.14</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Brittany Hill Area</td>
<td>City ED / City CS</td>
<td>2024-2033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Placemaking

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<tr>
<td>P.15</td>
<td>Implement urban agriculture / branding / gateway for Brittany Hill area.</td>
<td>Brittany Hill Area</td>
<td>City ED / City CS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.16</td>
<td>Complete branding / gateway Improvements to I-25 / Thornton Pkwy Interchange.</td>
<td>I-25 / Thornton Pkwy</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.17</td>
<td>Complete branding / gateway Improvements to new Thornton Pkwy / Civic Center Dr.</td>
<td>Thornton Pkwy</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.18</td>
<td>Design / implement streetscape components for Washington St, outside of previously completed intersections.</td>
<td>Washington St</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.19</td>
<td>Complete design / implement streetscape components for Pearl St.</td>
<td>Pearl St</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.20</td>
<td>Complete design / implement streetscape components for 88th to provide better environment along this key access to the Park-n-Ride.</td>
<td>88th Ave</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.21</td>
<td>Complete design / implement streetscape components for Eppinger, Russell and 86th, within the TUC Area.</td>
<td>Eppinger St, Russell St and 86th Ave</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.22</td>
<td>Complete design / implement streetscape components for 84th. Complete in conjunction with redevelopment of NVTC, or by 2023.</td>
<td>84th Ave</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.23</td>
<td>Design / implement streetscape components for Grant St.</td>
<td>Grant St</td>
<td>City CD / City IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.24</td>
<td>Design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for the TUC Area - identity, Park-n-Ride, transit routes, bike routes, key destinations, etc.</td>
<td>TUC Area</td>
<td>City CS</td>
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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.

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.
• 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.

**Tax Credits**

**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 located 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 must 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 business's committed creation of net new full-time permanent jobs compared to the county average wage rate. The TUC is within Thornton's Enterprise Zone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Average Wage Rate %</th>
<th>$ Incentive / Eligible Job</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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<td>110%</td>
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<td>120%</td>
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<td>130% or &gt;</td>
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<td>150% or &gt;</td>
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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

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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</td>
<td>Denver Regional Council of Govts (DRCOG)</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?Page=StationAreaUrbanCenterPlanningFunds">http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?Page=StationAreaUrbanCenterPlanningFunds</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe Routes to School (SRTS, State)</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/bikeped/safe-routes">http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/bikeped/safe-routes</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant Program</td>
<td>Recreational Trails Program (RTP, Federal); Colorado State Parks; partnered with other state organizations</td>
<td>Funds projects for large / small recreational trail grants, trail planning, and trail support grants.</td>
<td>Funds could be used for non-motorized state trails.</td>
<td><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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)</td>
<td>USDOT</td>
<td>$500 million allocated for FY 2012. Targets projects that are multimodal, multi-jurisdictional, and otherwise difficult to fund through other existing programs.</td>
<td>Funds could be used for a variety of improvements, but application would require significant justification.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dot.gov/tiger">http://www.dot.gov/tiger</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)</td>
<td>FHWA</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Funds could be used to fund a wide variety of improvements. TAP funds are targeted at local levels instead of state and MPO levels.</td>
<td><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></td>
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<tr>
<td>Surface Transportation Programs</td>
<td>FHWA</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.colorado.dot.info/programs/statewide-planning/documents/2013-stac/jan-2013/tap-stp-summary-1-8-2013">http://www.colorado.dot.info/programs/statewide-planning/documents/2013-stac/jan-2013/tap-stp-summary-1-8-2013</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)</td>
<td>FHWA</td>
<td>Program aims to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities / injuries on all public roads through infrastructure-related highway safety improvements.</td>
<td>Contains a new High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRRP) that specifically addresses construction and operational improvements on rural major / minor collectors and local roads.</td>
<td><a href="http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/">http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)</td>
<td>FHWA</td>
<td>Implemented to support surface transportation projects and other related efforts that contribute air quality improvements and provide congestion relief.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td><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></td>
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<td>Urbanized Area Formula Program (FTA 5307)</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Funds urbanized areas (pop &gt; 50,000) for transit capital and operating assistance as well as planning.</td>
<td>Funds can target bus transit facilities.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3561.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3561.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Good Repair Grant Program</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Provides funds to maintain transit systems in a state of good repair (infrastructure, operation and planning).</td>
<td>Funds can target local bus and other transit facilities.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/13248.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/13248.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus and Bus Facilities Program (FTA 5309, 5318)</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses, related equipment, and facilities in urbanized and rural areas.</td>
<td>Funds can target bus and bus-related equipment and facilities, including a bus testing facility.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094_3557.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094_3557.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (FTA 5316)</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Could have a variety of uses with proper justification.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3550.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3550.html</a></td>
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INTRODUCTION

The objective of the TUC Study was to survey the project area and provide recommendations whereby this part of southern Thornton can grow and become an Urban Center. The recommendations provided in the previous chapter are not restricted by resource considerations. These recommendations are useful in that they provide a list of desirable items that can be used if additional resources are available. An example of such funds would be a grant or a successful TIP funding application.

This Chapter, compiled by City staff, translates these fiscally unconstrained recommendations into items that can be accomplished using the resources the City currently has at its disposal. Also provided is a menu of strategies that can be used as a starting point for the Urban Renewal Implementation Plan. The timing of the fiscally constrained recommendations can be modified as additional resources become available or as the City’s priorities change over time.
ON-GOING STRATEGIES

F1. Continue ongoing support of businesses and property owners in area (including small businesses) to stimulate further revitalization.

a. Continue to update and improve web page on the City Economic Development’s web site to identify all development opportunities and available space for lease.

b. Continue to produce a monthly e-newsletter for all businesses in the area to provide regular and updated information on improvements and programs available.

c. Continue to provide services to businesses such as the concierge service, Sales & Use Tax Workshops, Watersense Commercial Rebates & free irrigation inspections.

d. Continue the Thornton Business Accelerator Program including the business improvement grants, commercial graffiti removal, small business development counseling and Shop Thornton First campaign.

e. Continue to provide and expand financial assistance and other incentives to existing and desired businesses and commercial entities.

Resource allocation: Economic Development staff, General Fund/TDA budget

F2. Continue to encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and primary employers and encourage new businesses and primary employment to locate in this area.

a. Actively work with North Valley tech center owners and lease holders to explore redevelopment and ownership options for the site.

b. Continue to work with area commercial brokers and developers on short and long term viability of significant office employment use in area.

c. Continue active conversations with Health Care facilities to understand long term needs for the campus including operational and development needs.

d. Establish on-going conversations with higher education providers on their needs in the project area.

Resource allocation: Economic Development staff, General Fund/TDA budget

F3. Continue to assess and remediate environmental issues at the Northland Redevelopment project site and other environmentally contaminated sites in the area.

Resource allocation: Economic Development, City Development staff, TDA budget

F4. Continue to work with multi-family brokers and developers to encourage mixed-use and multi-family development within appropriate areas in the Thornton Urban Center area in accordance with the goals of the Housing Master Plan.

Resource allocation: City Development staff, General Fund budget
F5. At the time of the next Transportation Master Plan update:
   a. Consider expanding multimodal transportation opportunities within the commercial area of south Thornton.
   b. Revise street design standards in accordance with the City’s Complete Streets Policy to allow greater flexibility in land dimensions and right-of-way allocation.
   c. Evaluate the merits and constraints of street parking.

   Resource allocation: Infrastructure, City Development staff, General Fund/CIP budget

F6. Work with RTD toward achieving the following:
   a. Expand the capacity and multi-modal accessibility of the Thornton “northbound” Park & Ride parking lot located east of I-25 and south of 88th Avenue (possibly 2014-2016).
   b. Provide modifications to the existing bus Route 80 and Route 12 to provide better bus service to the area.
   c. Introduce an east-west bus route service along Thornton Parkway.

   Resource allocation: Infrastructure, City Development staff

F7. Implement “road diets” or lane reductions on low volume streets where appropriate to allow implementation of bike facilities, traffic calming and pedestrian improvements.

   Resource allocation: Infrastructure, City Development staff, CIP budget

F8. Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program.

   Resource allocation: Infrastructure, City Development staff, CIP budget

F9. Continue to install bus station shelters and benches at bus stops in the area and enhance these bus stops further where possible.

   Resource allocation: Infrastructure

F10. Continue programs that increase neighborhood safety and awareness that are provided by the Neighborhood Services Division and other City Departments.

   Resource allocation: City Development, Police and other department staff, General Fund budget

F11. Where feasible, continue to lower parking requirements under appropriate circumstances to help reduce excessively large parking lots and increase walkability and vitality in the area, for example this could be accomplished through shared parking areas.

   Resource allocation: City Development staff

F12. Utilize Planned Development Zoning to allow for signage that is appropriate for a walkable scale of development, for example smaller pedestrian sized signs.

   Resource allocation: City Development staff
F13. Continue to actively participate and provide feedback during DRCOG’s Metro Vision update process, particularly on the topic of Urban Centers and their applicability to Thornton.

*Resource allocation: City Development staff*

F14. Review and revise restrictions on maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for Planned Development (PD) Zoning Districts to allow for more intense planned development in the Urban Center Area.

*Resource allocation: City Development staff*

F15. If required, develop an American’s for Disability Act (ADA) Transition Plan to ensure conformity with federal requirements for fully accessible public rights-of-way (in 2015/16 budget).

*Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016*

F16. Begin installing missing links in sidewalks in project area. For example, alongside vacant properties.

*Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016 or CDBG funding*

F17. Begin the installation of National Committee Uniform Traffic Control devices ADA “guidestrips” at crosswalks.

*Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016*

F18. Begin restriping right-of-ways to provide bike lanes along Eppinger Boulevard, Russell Boulevard, Pearl Street and Corona Street from Eppinger to Niver Creek Trail as part of resurfacing projects.

*Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016*

F19. Work toward the construction of a curb extension on Pearl at 86th and consider the construction of a Traffic circle at Eppinger and Pearl.

*Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016*

F20. Utilize the existing Smart Commute Transportation Management Organization to fund special services for this area. Consider the formation of a special TMO to be formed for this area in the long term.

*Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff*
F21. At the time of the next Comprehensive Plan update ensure that the Thornton Urban Center is designated in the Comprehensive Plan.

Resource allocation: City Development staff

F22. Implement recommendations made within the South Thornton Urban Renewal Implementation Plan.

Resource allocation: City Development staff, TDA budget

F23. Complete the installation of missing links in sidewalks in project area. For example, along vacant properties.

Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016 or CDBG funding

F24. Complete the installation of National Committee Uniform Traffic Control devices ADA “guidestrips” at crosswalks.

Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016

F25. Complete restriping right-of-ways to provide bike lanes along Eppinger Boulevard, Russell Boulevard, Pearl Street and Corona Street from Eppinger to Niver Creek Trail as part of resurfacing projects.

Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016

F26. Complete the construction of a curb extension on Pearl Street at 86th Avenue and a traffic circle at Eppinger Boulevard and Pearl, if programmed.

Resource allocation: Infrastructure staff, CIP budget 2015/2016

F27. Review and consider parking standards for zoning categories other than PD zones to find ways to reduce parking requirements under appropriate circumstances to help reduce excessively large parking lots and increase walkability and vitality in the area, For example, shared parking areas.

Resource allocation: City Development staff

F28. Review and consider the Sign code for zoning categories other than PD zones to allow for signage that supports a walkable development pattern.

Resource allocation: City Development staff

F29. Take appropriate actions to develop partnerships, plan for, fund and construct the missing portion of the Niver Creek Trail in the area of the North Valley Tech Center.

Resource allocation: Community Services, City Development staff, CIP budget
Strategies to be considered as part of the South Thornton Urban Renewal Implementation Plan:

**Node/Catalyst Initiation**

F30. Use node framework recommendations provided in the TUC Study to identify and prioritize nodes of activity in the South Urban Renewal Implementation Plan.

**Mobility Improvements**

F31. Consider the design and construction of roadway, traffic calming, medians, streetscape, lighting, increased sidewalk widths at transit stops and landscaping improvements for roads identified in the TUC Study e.g. Washington Street, 84th Avenue to Thornton Parkway, 88th Avenue Multi-way boulevard, in conjunction with development or as a retrofit.

F32. Consider providing Thornton Development Authority (TDA) funding to provide enhanced landscaping at bus stop areas with provision for long-term maintenance.

F33. Consider prioritizing the funding and installation of missing sidewalk links, in particular on or alongside undeveloped land.

F34. Consider providing a circulator shuttle serving the area with a unique identity consistent with the branding image of the area.

F35. Encourage the creation of Business Improvement District (BID) by businesses and property owners to help finance and coordinate improvements to the area. This organization can consider providing the following possible services:

a. Subsidization of transit passes for employees and residents of existing and new developments (eco-pass program).

b. Financial incentives for employees of existing and new developments to walk, bike, carpool, van pool or take transit to work.

c. Installation of a private-public bike sharing program with hubs at transit nodes and major employers.

d. Organization of joint events in the area.

e. Development, organization and promotion of a unique area identity.

**Other Opportunities**

F36. Consider the location of new civic facilities within the area to encourage additional private investment and attract visitors.

F37. As opportunities arise, collaborate with partners to introduce urban agricultural features into the area in a coordinated fashion. For example, smallscale community gardens.
Strategy Prioritization

The TUC Study identifies five distinct nodes and provides node development framework recommendations with the purpose of advancing the goals of urban centers. Some of these recommendations require higher levels of public and private investment than others, depending on the current status of the properties and the vision for how they may develop in the future. The recommendations also vary in their ability to impact desired urban center qualities and the timeframes of doing so. Several sites are positioned to be more readily available for development or redevelopment than others. Certain locations have a higher profile than others in the community but may not be the quickest to develop.

It is anticipated that the most viable and suitable locations for development and redevelopment will emerge as a result of the South Thornton Urban Renewal Plan planning process. This process will prioritize and list the implementation steps, including the identification of revenue sources and potential development partners that will enable these areas to be developed and/or redeveloped.
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