



Comprehensive Plan

Adopted October 2009

COMMUNITY



GROW



SUSTAINABLE



Acknowledgements

The City of Wheat Ridge would like to thank all the residents, property owners and business owners who participated in the development of Envision Wheat Ridge!

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1- Introduction

Comprehensive Plan Basics

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for the community's future. It provides guidance on where and how the community will invest and change over the next 20 years. It contains maps, vision and goals for the future, and policies to address topics ranging from land use and economics, transportation and community services.

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide long-range guidance to property owners, residents, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and others to inform decisions on land use issues, such as where and what type of future development should occur.

Why Update the Comprehensive Plan?

The Envision Wheat Ridge Plan is the City's long-term Comprehensive Plan that establishes vision and direction for the future (to the year 2035). Its objectives are to confirm the community's vision for the future, and to set the policy framework to help guide future decisions related to development and investment. It will help the City thoughtfully address future needs for economic development, transportation, commercial and retail development, housing, services and utilities, parks and open space, and other community benefits. It will also help to ensure a sustainable and fiscally responsible future, by setting the desired direction for future development regulations, policy decisions, and community programs.

The most recent Comprehensive Plan for Wheat Ridge was adopted in 2000. Since then, there have been changes in the community and region that affect the city's direction for the future. For example, the construction of the future FasTracks Gold Line Commuter Rail will begin in coming years, and the community must be ready to accommodate the new transit service and associated development.



Previous Planning Efforts in Wheat Ridge:

Comprehensive Plans

- 2000 Comprehensive Plan
- Repositioning Wheat Ridge: Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS, 2005)

Subarea Plans

- Northwest Subarea Plan (2006)
- Wadsworth Corridor Subarea Plan (2007)
- Fruitdale Subarea Plan (2007)

Urban Renewal Plans

- Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Redevelopment Plan (2001)
- West 44th Avenue Ward Road Redevelopment Plan (2001)
- 38th Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan (2001)
- I-70 / Kipling Corridor Urban Renewal Plan (2009)

Compliance with State and Local Requirements

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with state statutes and requirements. Colorado Revised Statutes § 31-23-201 through 31-23-213 state that “it is the duty of the commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality...the master plan of a municipality shall be an advisory document to guide land development decisions.”

Additionally, this Plan has been prepared in accordance with local regulations. Section 2-60 of the Wheat Ridge City Code says that the Planning Commission shall develop and prepare a Comprehensive Plan to include the following topics: established character, goals and objectives; population; land use; economic base; public facilities; parks and open space; transportation; prevention of pollution; and resource conservation. The Planning Commission, after a public hearing, shall make its recommendation to City Council. City Council, after a public hearing, shall adopt and approve the Comprehensive Plan.

Building on Previous Planning Efforts

Wheat Ridge has a solid record of community participation and planning for the future. The Envision Wheat Ridge Plan builds on these previous planning efforts, displayed at left.

The Plan update included review of these previous efforts and documents. Many of the goals, policies, and ideas for the future represented in the previous planning efforts are still relevant, and are carried forth in this plan. Some examples of overarching themes in this plan that are carried forth from previous planning efforts include:

- **Commit to quality development and redevelopment** (from the 2000 Comprehensive Plan);
- **Preserve and enhance Wheat Ridge’s Neighborhoods** (2000 Comprehensive Plan);
- **Continue to provide quality community services, parks, and open spaces** (2000 Comprehensive Plan);
- **Encourage alternative transportation opportunities and intergovernmental cooperation on regional issues** (2000 Comprehensive Plan);
- **Focus on increasing housing options to attract a range of household types** (Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy);
- **Prioritize the redevelopment of key commercial areas** (Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy);
- **Enhance community character and gateways** (Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy);



- ♦ **Promote transit-supportive development** (Northwest Subarea Plan); and
- ♦ **Develop a Town Center** (Wadsworth Subarea Plan);
- ♦ **Increase property maintenance and stability** (Fruitdale Subarea Plan).

While this Plan embodies many of the ideas, goals, and policies established in previous plans, there are some noteworthy new directions and slight changes in course presented in this plan. These new directions resulted from community feedback, reaction to current trends and conditions, and policy direction from elected and appointed officials. These new directions include:

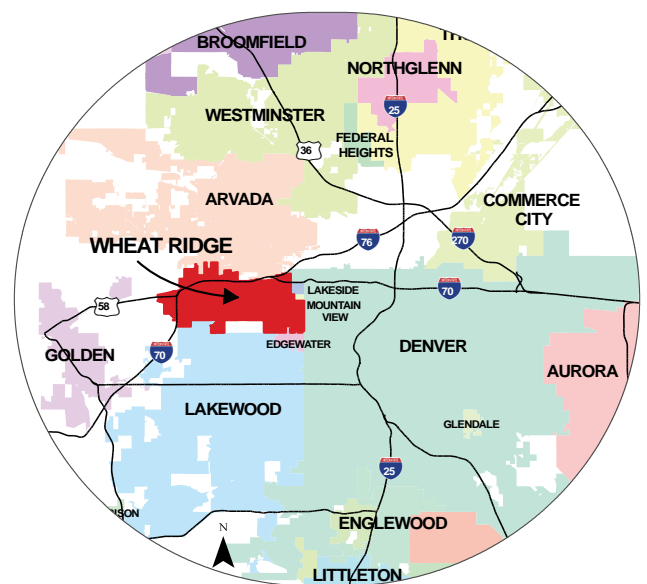
- ♦ **Emphasis on sustainability** (see Chapters 2 and 9);
- ♦ **Strategic, not parcel-specific future land use plan (Structure Plan)** (see Chapter 3);
- ♦ **Relationship between land use and economics, including the market realities of redevelopment** (see Chapter 4);
- ♦ **Focus on transportation network connections and increasing multi-modal options** (see Chapter 7).

Planning Context

Planning Area

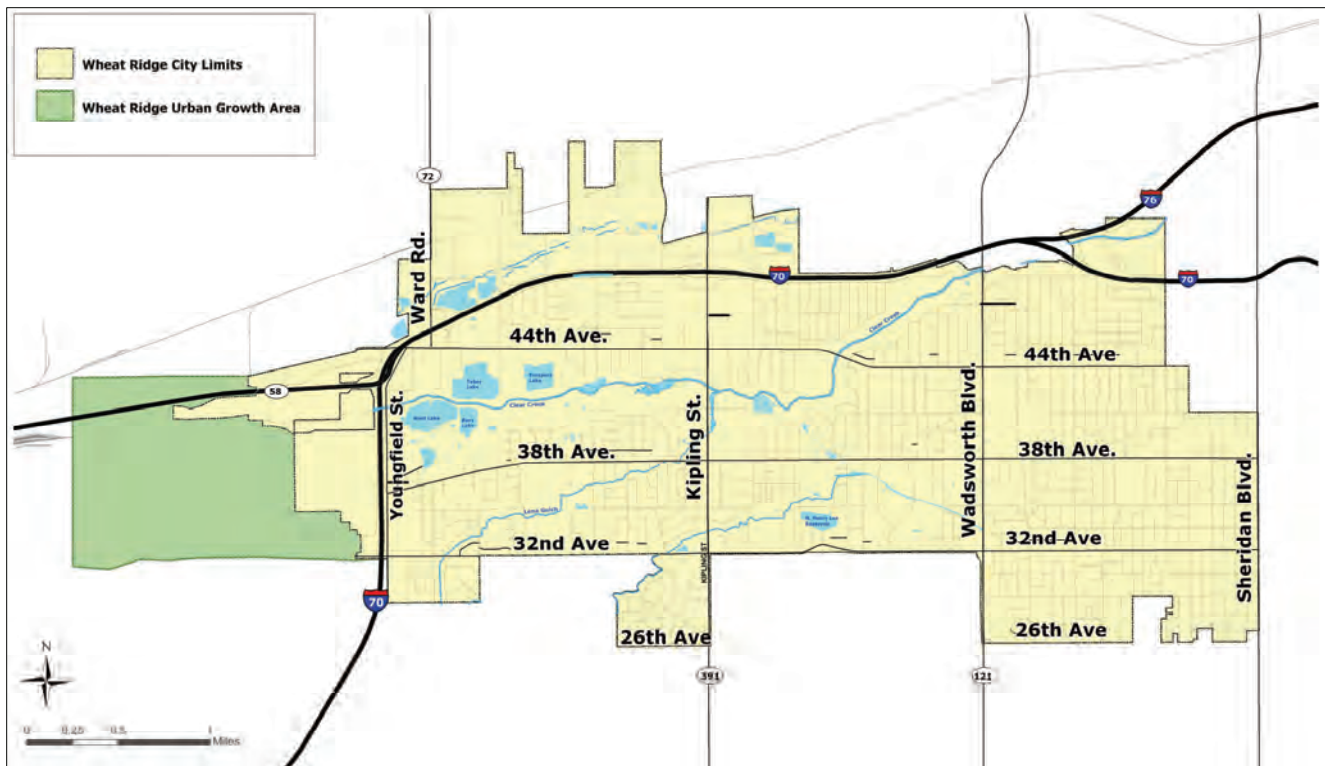
Wheat Ridge is an inner-ring suburb, west of Denver in Jefferson County, Colorado. Its City limits, shown in Figure 1 on the next page, encompass approximately 9.5 square miles. This Comprehensive Plan identifies the 2009 City limits as the Planning Area. This Plan does not include areas outside of the City's boundaries, nor does it discuss areas of potential annexation.

Although the Comprehensive Plan's Planning Area does not include the unincorporated areas to the west of Wheat Ridge, it is important to understand that those areas fall within the City's Urban Growth Area (UGA). In the mid-1990's, as part of the preparation of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) regional plan, known as metro Vision 2020, the City submitted its proposed urban growth boundary. The UGA, also shown in Figure 1, encompasses approximately 10.7 miles. While the unincorporated areas within the UGA are eligible for annexation, the City would seriously need to consider the benefits of annexation. Therefore, if annexation of these areas is desired and pursued in the future, an update to this Plan will be necessary.



Above: Wheat Ridge is located on the western side of the Denver metropolitan area.

*Figure 1: Wheat Ridge City Limits and Urban Growth Area
(Please see 2009 Three Mile Plan for proposed land uses within the Urban Growth Area.)*



Wheat Ridge Background

Although Wheat Ridge is a relatively young incorporated city, it has a rich history based on agriculture and the community's location along regional travel routes. It grew from a popular rest stop for travelers during the Gold Rush of the late 1850's to a thriving agricultural and suburban community known as the "Carnation City" in the mid 1900's. As the residential areas of unincorporated Jefferson County grew to provide housing to the Denver workforce during the 1950's, the major transportation corridors extending from Denver developed with commercial services. During that era, the formation of numerous utility and fire protection districts provided these unincorporated areas with urban services. Eventually, due to the increasing annexation pressure from nearby municipalities, Wheat Ridge incorporated in 1969.

Today Wheat Ridge is home to approximately 31,000 residents – making it one of the smallest cities in the Denver metropolitan area. Its location as an inner-ring suburb affords residents with many of the conveniences of urban living, though the community still retains its small town character with agricultural roots. Its slow growth, and even slight population decline since 2000, offer stark contrast to the region's significant population growth over recent years. Additionally, Wheat Ridge's older population and smaller average household size set it apart from neighboring communities.

From a land use perspective, the community's homes are generally single-family ranch-styles on generously-sized lots with mature landscaping and trees. Most of the city's residential and commercial areas developed and matured between the 1960's and 1980's. The city's primary transportation corridors are lined with various strip commercial developments, with several grocery-store anchored centers serving as the primary retail hubs of the city. Much of the development in Wheat Ridge still reflects its original nature. Some residential neighborhoods have experienced limited infill and redevelopment, though residents note that this trend is becoming increasingly common. Some commercial strips and centers have been updated with more modern architecture, enhanced landscaping, and improvements to transportation circulation, although many of these areas are beginning to show their age. In contrast, nearby communities such as Arvada and Lakewood have significantly invested in the development of new commercial areas and assorted housing types.

Community members are optimistic about Wheat Ridge's future. While the City's fiscal situation declines as the costs of providing services outpace revenues, residents note the influx of new families moving into the city's eastern neighborhoods and possibilities for the community's resurgence. They are aware of lost retail opportunities in years past, but focus on future employment and commercial opportunities that truly fit Wheat Ridge's vision and unique character. Finally, the Wheat Ridge community recognizes that change will inevitably occur, and that the role of a successful Comprehensive Plan is to guide such change so that it ultimately benefits the community's people, natural environment, infrastructure, and economic well-being.



The Wheat Ridge Historical Park showcases the community's heritage and culture.

Key Trends and Issues

Throughout the planning process a number of key trends and issues emerged as important topics for the Envision Wheat Ridge Plan to address. The list of key trends and issues are summarized below, and are also discussed in more detail in the Community Profile (in the Appendix) and in the following Key Values chapters.

Economic and Fiscal Issues

- ♦ Developing a clear economic strategy;
- ♦ Defining roles and responsibilities of partner organizations;
- ♦ Addressing opportunities for future employment and retail centers;
- ♦ Identifying prime areas for redevelopment and infill, and address barriers to development;
- ♦ Addressing the fiscal realities of the City and how to achieve sustainable revenue sources to maintain current levels of City services; and
- ♦ Investing in new technology to advance economic development.

Land Use, Housing, and Design Issues

- ♦ Recognizing the importance of the community's neighborhoods and addressing how to increase the variety of housing options (beyond the single-family ranch homes and older apartments);
- ♦ Addressing how to reinvest in existing neighborhoods to maintain their character but also make them more appealing to new residents;
- ♦ Achieving a sustainable balance of housing, retail, and employment land uses over time;
- ♦ Identifying appropriate density and design for different parts of the community; and
- ♦ Establishing areas for future activity centers such as a larger scale Town Center and smaller neighborhood centers.

Community Character and Livability Issues

- ♦ Addressing how to promote the community's assets to attract new residents, employees, and visitors.
- ♦ Accommodating the needs of different types of households;
- ♦ Coordinating with the school district to maintain quality schools;
- ♦ Identifying barriers for active lifestyles and promoting healthy lifestyles;
- ♦ Continuing parks, recreation, and open space investment and offerings;
- ♦ Engaging residents in crime prevention and code enforcement efforts; and
- ♦ Including sustainability as a key theme throughout the Plan.

Other Issues

- ♦ Incorporating previous planning efforts into the Comprehensive Plan; and
- ♦ Focusing on strategic implementation and priority actions to achieve the Plan's goals.

Planning Process and Community Involvement

The Envision Wheat Ridge Plan is built on community participation. The planning process revolved around providing diverse opportunities for involvement because the community's people ultimately have the biggest stake in its future. It sought the input of Wheat Ridge's engaged citizenry – drawing from their previous experiences and local knowledge. It also attracted many new participants to the planning process – offering new perspectives and ideas for the future.

The thoughtful feedback provided by engaged residents, business owners, community leaders, City staff members, and other key stakeholders directly shaped the components of this Plan. Hundreds of community members have contributed to this Plan, through numerous events and activities including:

- ♦ 5 Community Workshops held at the Recreation Center;
- ♦ 6 Citizen Advisory Committee meetings;
- ♦ 4 Technical Advisory Group meetings;
- ♦ Interviews with community leaders and key stakeholders;
- ♦ Joint study sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission
- ♦ Comment forms at the Carnation Festival booth;
- ♦ Informational meetings with neighborhood and business groups; and
- ♦ Online activity at the project website, www.EnvisionWheatRidge.com, which featured project information, online surveys, meeting summaries, and draft documents, and Twitter updates.

A more detailed summary of the public participation process and community events is included in the Appendix.



A wide range of community members participated during each stage of the planning process.

How to Use this Plan

Plan Organization

The Envision Wheat Ridge Plan is organized around six broad themes, or Key Values, which serve as a framework for the implementation of the Community Vision and the related goals, policies, and strategies contained in each chapter. In addition to this introductory chapter, the Plan is comprised of the following:

Chapter 2	Community Vision, Key Values, and Vision for a Sustainable Future
Chapter 3	Structure Plan
Chapters 4 to 9	Key Values with associated Goals, Policies, and Strategies
Chapter 10	Implementation Plan
Appendices	Community Profile and Inventory Maps, Public Participation Summary

A step-by-step guide to using the Structure Plan is provided on the back side of the Structure Plan Map, found within Chapter 3.

Plan Components

The Plan consists of the Community Vision, Key Values, Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies. Each of these components is defined below.

Community Vision:

The Community Vision describes the kind of place that residents, community leaders, and business owners want Wheat Ridge to become in the future.

Key Value

Key Values are the broad ideas behind the Community Vision. Each Key Value is detailed in a separate chapter with associated Goals, Policies, and Strategies.

Goal

As a subset to each Key Value, a series of measurable goals provide general direction to guide decisions in order to achieve the Community Vision and Key Values.

Policy

Detailed policies relate to each goal provide guidance for daily decisions about capital investment and development.

Strategy

Strategies, or actions, to accomplish each policy are listed after each goal. Specific strategies include regulation, programs, and policy direction, as described in Chapter 10 Implementation.



Figure 2: Plan Components

2 – Community Vision and Values

Vision

The Community Vision describes the kind of place that residents, community leaders, and business owners want Wheat Ridge to become in the future. The Community Vision, provided below, describes the shared values within the community and sets the desired direction for future changes and improvements. It is a culmination of the six Key Values on the following page – the community's core guiding principles for the future.



Wheat Ridge will be a prominent and sustainable city, with a prosperous future built upon the foundation of the community's major assets (comfortable neighborhoods, unique culture and history, abundant open space, terrific views, and proximity to Denver and the Rocky Mountains). The City will grow a broad and resilient local economy that provides family wage jobs and thriving business districts to balance with the community's friendly and established neighborhoods. In addition, Wheat Ridge will offer convenient transportation options, valuable services, and high quality of life for all residents. The City recognizes that attaining this vision will require an aggressive approach and willingness of the community to embrace change.



Key Values

The following six broad Key Values are the primary principles behind the Community Vision. They describe the community's aspirations and organize the more specific policies into the chapters of this Comprehensive Plan.

Create a Resilient Local Economy Based on a Balanced Mix of Land Uses

A diverse mix of land uses including residential neighborhoods, primary employment, and commercial goods and services will build and sustain a broad and resilient tax base.



See Chapter 4 –
Economy and Land
Use

Promote Vibrant Neighborhoods and an Array of Housing Options.

Maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods and establishing new housing options will retain and attract a range of household types.



See Chapter 5 –
Neighborhoods
and Housing

Enhance Community Character and Accentuate Quality Design.

Marketing Wheat Ridge's unique qualities and emphasizing quality design for new development and redevelopment will reposition Wheat Ridge as a unique community.



See Chapter 6 –
Community
Character

Increase Transportation Connections and Options.

Continued coordination and investment in transportation efficiency, travel options and connections will improve mobility for community residents, employees, and visitors.



See Chapter 7 –
Transportation

Provide Quality Community Amenities, Services, and Resources.

A commitment to providing exemplary community services will maintain the high quality of life for community residents, and will help attract future households and employers.



See Chapter 8 –
Community Services

Ensure a Sustainable Future.

Continued focus on the future implications of today's choices and their impacts on the community's residents, the natural environment, and community prosperity will ensure a prosperous future for future generations.



See Chapter 9 –
Sustainable Future

Vision for a Sustainable Future

What is a Sustainable Future?

A sustainable future is a continuous journey to balance social, environmental, and economic interests. It respects and provides stewardship of the natural environment, facilitates active lifestyles and civic engagement, and bestows economic prosperity to individuals and the community.

A community with a sustainable future focuses on its local progress while also considering the global impacts of its decisions. As further described in Chapter 9, a community with a sustainable future strives to balance the three core elements of sustainability:

- ♦ **People:** the community's current and future residents, workforce, and visitors.
- ♦ **Planet:** the natural environment, resources, and climate of the community, region, and earth.
- ♦ **Prosperity:** the community's local fiscal conditions and individual wealth and economic opportunities.

The Path to a Sustainable Future

Like many governmental entities throughout Colorado and the world, Wheat Ridge is committed to starting down the pathway to a more sustainable future. Wheat Ridge's long-term commitment to sustainability will benefit the City fiscally, it will also add to the betterment of the natural environment, and improve the community's livability and services.

The City understands the local, regional, and sometimes global affects resulting from its actions and decisions. It also understands the connected nature of its actions and decisions – such as the regional transportation and economic impacts resulting from establishing a new primary employment area.

As the elements of sustainability are interrelated, so are the Key Values established in this plan. For example, the City's provision of community services depends on the revenue generated through different land uses and the types of households requiring services. Focus on balance between the Key Values – like promoting redevelopment along primary corridors while also focusing on retaining the character of existing neighborhoods – will ensure that Wheat Ridge is on track to become a prominent and sustainable community.

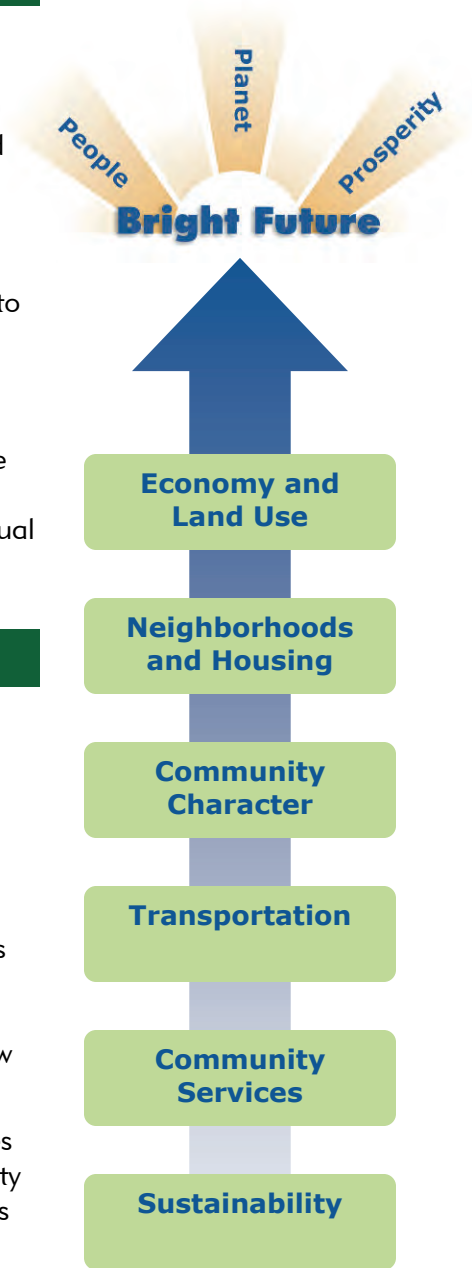


Figure 3: The Path to a Sustainable Future

3 – Structure Plan

Introduction

Overview

The Structure Plan map corresponds with the Key Values, goals, and policies in the following chapters. It draws on current conditions and previous Subarea Planning efforts, and also reflects the Community Vision and market forecasts and analysis.

The Structure Plan is intended to provide strategic guidance and general land uses for future redevelopment to aid the Wheat Ridge community in achieving its future vision. It provides high-level guidance for the community's areas and corridors - it is not intended to be parcel-based, nor is it a zoning map. The Structure Plan, in combination with goals and policies, will help the community determine appropriate locations and strategies for:

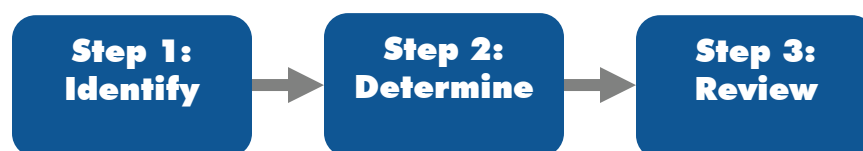
1. conservation of the community's assets and foundation;
2. areas in need of reinvestment and revitalization; and
3. targeted development and redevelopment to achieve vibrant commercial, mixed-use, and employment areas.



The Structure Plan is based, in part, on ideas and priority areas identified by community members as well as subarea plans, current conditions, zoning, and market forecasts.

How to Use the Structure Plan

The Structure Plan map graphically displays the city's future land use designations and development priorities. The following steps explain how to interpret the map using corresponding land use categories, and to link it to specific goals and policies related to each category.



*Figure 4: Using the Structure Plan
(See the back of the Structure Plan Map for a step-by-step guide to using the map.)*

Step 1: Identify

To use the Structure Plan, begin by locating your place of interest on the Structure Plan map. The Structure Plan map shows several kinds of places that layer upon each other to create the type of city described by the Community Vision. These places include Assets, Foundations, Corridors & Gateways, and Activity Centers.

at right shows how these places layer upon one another to shape the city's future.

Using the colors and symbols provided in the map legend, determine which Structure Plan color best coincides with your place of interest.



Figure 5: Types of Places on the Structure Plan

Step 2: Determine

Next, determine if your place of interest falls within a neighborhood area or another type of designation on the Structure Plan map. It is important to understand that although Neighborhoods are displayed with one color (yellow), Wheat Ridge has different types of neighborhoods, with some more established than others. (See the Established Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Revitalization criteria on pages 20 through 21 in the Structure Plan categories.) Also, the Implementation chapter contains specific procedures regarding how and when to apply the criteria to determine different neighborhood areas.

If your place of interest is not in a neighborhood, then determine whether your location is designated as a Corridor or Activity Center. In some instances your place of interest may be overlapped by both, which is not a problem since many of the Corridors and Activity Centers will ultimately blend together to create a vibrant future community anchor or destination.

The Structure Plan is not parcel-based and should not be used to determine the exact scale or boundary of corridors. It identifies general locations and intent. Current and future zoning must be used in concert with the Structure Plan to determine exact boundaries.

Step 3: Review

After you have determined the Structure Plan categories that correspond with your place of interest, look up each applicable category in the following section of this Plan (Structure Plan Categories begin on page 18). Within that section, the types of places (Assets, Foundations, Corridors & Gateways, and Activity Centers) are described in a general sense, followed by tables detailing the specific Structure Plan categories. In the tables, each category is divided into: (1) the identifying symbol from the Structure Plan map with a representative photo of the desired future character, (2) specific location(s) where this type of land use will occur in the community, (3) a detailed description of the desired future character and land uses, and (4) reference to related goals found in the following chapters of this Plan.

The Future Character and Land Uses column describes the envisioned character and types of land uses that should occur in each area. The lists of related goals link each Structure Plan category to the pertinent goals identified in Chapters 4 through 9 of this Plan. Use the list provided to quickly reference specific goals related to reach Structure Plan category. The goals provide direction, specific policies, and strategies to guide future land use and investment decisions.

Finally, after reviewing the applicable Structure Plan categories descriptions and associated goals, be sure to review applicable zoning districts and City Code requirements if you are interested in specific development standards and other regulations.

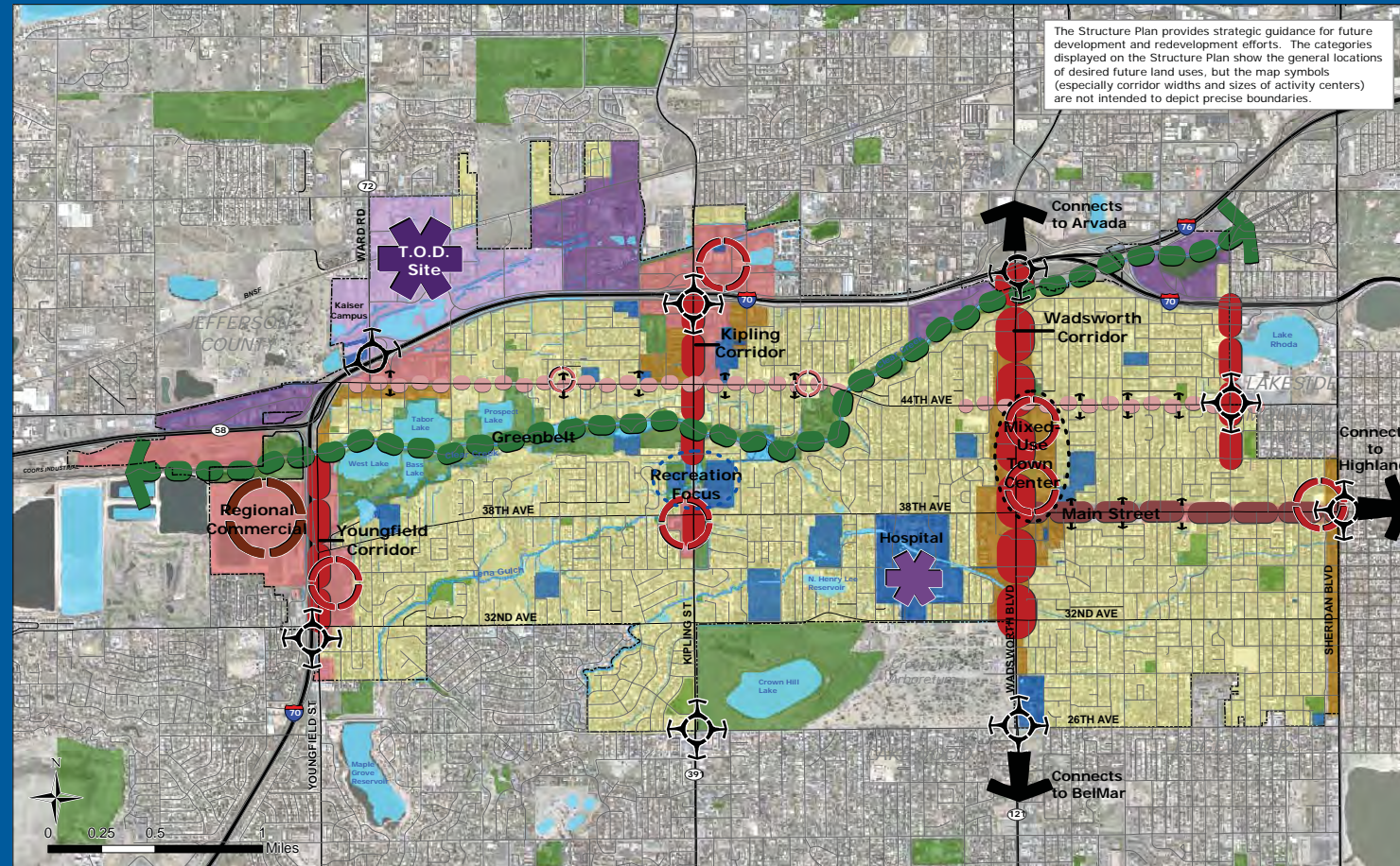
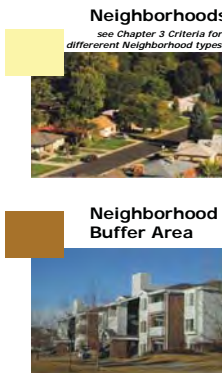
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WHEAT RIDGE STRUCTURE PLAN

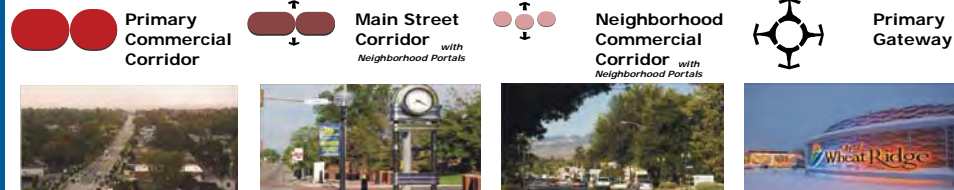
1. ASSETS



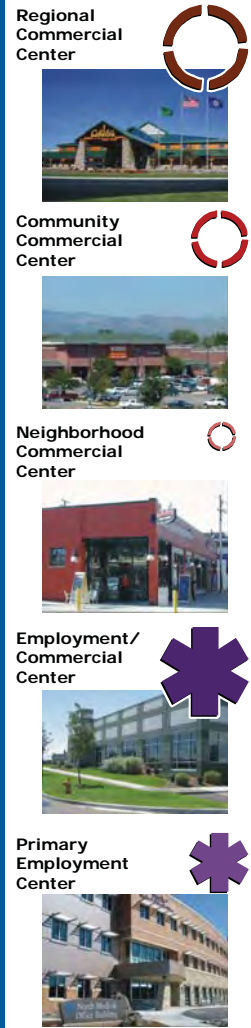
2. FOUNDATION



3. CORRIDORS, GATEWAYS



4. ACTIVITY CENTERS



HOW TO USE THE STRUCTURE PLAN

Step 1: Identify

Examine the map.
Which color is your area of interest?

Assets

Parks & Open Space

Public

Proceed to Step 3

Foundations

Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Buffer

Mixed-Use Commercial

Employment

Mixed-Use Employment

Step 2: Determine

What type of neighborhood, corridor or activity center?
Are there overlapping categories?

What Type of Neighborhood?

Established

Criteria to identify established neighborhoods include:

- Consistent character (e.g. Predominantly single-family with some high quality multi-family that fits the neighborhood)
- Mature landscaping
- High rates of reinvestment and home ownership, (property values have increased)
- Consistent maintenance
- High desirability (e.g., home sales)

Revitalization Area

Criteria to identify neighborhoods in need of revitalization include:

- Increasing incompatibility of uses
- Infrastructure needs (e.g., utilities in disrepair)
- Less stable than established neighborhoods (e.g. increasing maintenance problems, higher crime rates, lower rates of owner occupancy)

See the explanation in the Implementation Chapter, page 124, regarding rationale and method for designating a Neighborhood Revitalization Area.

Is there an overlapping Corridor or Activity Center designation?

 **Primary Commercial Corridor**

 **Main Street Corridor**

 **Neighborhood Commercial Corridor**

 **Regional Commercial Center**

 **Community Commercial Center**

 **Neighborhood Commercial Center**

 **Employment/Commercial Center**

 **Primary Employment Center**

 **Primary Gateway**

Step 3: Review

Applicable guidelines and standards.

See Corresponding Categories in the Structure Plan Table

(In Chapter 3 - Remember to Review all applicable categories)

Related Goals And Policies

(In Chapters 4 through 7)

Associated Zoning Districts and Regulations

(In City Code)

The Structure Plan is intended to be used as a generalized vision for the City's future. The Plan is not intended to depict parcel by parcel future land use.

Structure Plan Categories



1. Assets

Assets shown on the plan are the physical, natural, cultural, and social resources within Wheat Ridge, including:

- ♦ Parks and open spaces,
- ♦ Public facilities such as schools, the hospital, Senior/Community Center, and the Recreation Center,
- ♦ Grid street system and connections to the regional road and highway network.

Wheat Ridge has many other assets not shown on the plan, including its scenic views, proximity to the mountains, convenient location near Denver, and its role as an inner-ring suburb.

Table 1 : Structure Plan Categories – Assets


Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Assets			
Parks and Open Space 	Parks are located within neighborhoods or along corridors. Clear Creek Trail/Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Crown Hill Regional Open Space (located in unincorporated Jefferson County), and open spaces link the community together.	Parks and Open Spaces are important within neighborhoods and for stewardship of natural resources. The City will continue to acquire, establish, and manage parks, open space, and drainage ways for their recreational, aesthetic, and environmental values.	ELU 1, CS 1, CS 2, SF 2, SF 4
Public 	Public spaces are located throughout the community and within the neighborhoods.	The plan designates existing public and quasi-public facilities including schools, public buildings, hospitals, and other similar uses. They will remain as community and neighborhood anchors. The Structure Plan does not designate future public or semi-public uses.	ELU 2, ELU 3, CS 1, CS 4, CS 5, CS 6, CS 7, SF 3

2. Foundations



Foundations are neighborhoods and commercial areas with common characteristics, upon which the focus areas are layered. They include:



- ♦ Neighborhoods,
- ♦ Neighborhood Buffer Areas (mixed-use places between lower density neighborhoods and higher-intensity corridors),
- ♦ Mixed-Use Commercial Areas
- ♦ Mixed-Use Employment, and
- ♦ Employment Areas.

Table 2 : Structure Plan Categories – Foundations

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Foundations			
Neighborhood 	<p>Neighborhoods are located throughout the city, generally south of I-70, and can be further defined as two types:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Established Neighborhood; and 2. Revitalization Areas. 	<p>Character/Established Neighborhoods: Neighborhoods will be the places for people to own homes and thrive and where residents of all ages can live safely and comfortably. Most neighborhoods contain a school or park focus. Some have a semi-rural feel. Most are generally bounded by major arterial and collector streets. Planning and zoning will determine the appropriate mix of single family or multi-family uses within these places in the future.</p> <p>Established Neighborhoods: The City will continue to work with neighborhoods to focus on improving stability, home ownership, property values, protecting significant views, and provide high quality infill in established neighborhoods.</p> <p>Established neighborhoods can be defined with the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Consistent character (e.g. predominantly single-family with some high quality multi-family that fits the neighborhood), ♦ Mature landscaping, ♦ High rates of reinvestment and home ownership, (property values have increased), ♦ Consistent maintenance, and ♦ High desirability (e.g., home sales). 	NH 1, CS 3, CS 7, SF 4

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Neighborhood (Continued)		<p>Neighborhood Revitalization: Some residential areas have individual properties or general pockets that might benefit from reinvestment. These properties and areas often require special attention because they have issues related to dilapidated properties, code enforcement, crime and safety, lower rates of owner occupancy, and/or incompatible mix of uses. In order to revitalize these areas and improve neighborhood stability, the City will continue to work with residents on an individual basis to address property maintenance and safety concerns. Broader efforts to promote home ownership and spur reinvestment through infrastructure improvements and/or limited small-scale residential redevelopment will be encouraged in areas that exhibit several of the following characteristics of neighborhoods in need of revitalization.</p> <p>Criteria to distinguish Neighborhood Revitalization Areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Increasing incompatibility of uses, ♦ Infrastructure needs (e.g., utilities in disrepair), and ♦ Less stability than established neighborhoods (e.g. increasing maintenance problems, higher crime rates, and/or lower rates of owner occupancy). ♦ <p>See Implementation Chapter, page 124 for a description of why and how to designate a "Neighborhood Revitalization Area."</p>	NH 2, NH 3

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Neighborhood Buffer 	<p>The plan shows Neighborhood Buffer Areas in the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Along both sides of Kipling Street north of 44th Avenue ♦ Along 44th Avenue near Youngfield Street ♦ Along Wadsworth Boulevard. ♦ Along Sheridan Boulevard 	<p>Neighborhood Buffer Areas are generally located at the “edges” of neighborhoods, and generally function as buffers between low-intensity residential areas and higher intensity commercial corridors and uses. Because of their close proximity to the city’s primary commercial corridors, potential for assemblage, and underutilized nature of many of these properties, these areas will continue to transition from a mix of residential (both single and multi-family) and small-scale commercial uses traditional to areas with higher intensity residential, office, and commercial uses. Over time, the City aims to improve the appearance, mix of uses, property values, and overall vitality of these areas.</p> <p>Most Neighborhood Buffer Areas correspond with designated Urban Renewal areas, and will develop in accordance with adopted Urban Renewal plans as applicable.</p>	<p>NH 2, NH 4, CS 3, CS 7, SF 4</p>
Mixed-Use Commercial Area 	<p>Existing Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Kipling Street at I-70 ♦ Youngfield Street and 38th Avenue at I-70 ♦ 38th Avenue between Sheridan and Wadsworth Boulevards <p>Future Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Crossing at Clear Creek site (proposed location for future Cabela’s store) 	<p>The plan designates existing commercial areas mixed with office and employment as mixed-use commercial areas. Focus in these areas is on long-term infill and redevelopment, reinvestment, and high quality urban design and landscaping for vacant or underutilized properties, with “centers” being the primary emphasis.</p> <p>The future Crossing at Clear Creek development area (also designated as a Regional Retail Center) will develop with a mix of uses including large anchor retail, smaller complementary retail, and additional secondary uses (including employment). The Regional Activity Center is described in the Activity Centers section.</p>	<p>ELU 1, ELU 2, ELU 4, ELU 5, NH2, SF 1</p>

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Employment Area 	<p>Employment Areas generally build on existing industrial areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Southwest corner of I-70 at Wadsworth Boulevard ♦ Between I-70 and I-76 ♦ North of I-70 west of Kipling Street ♦ 44th Avenue industrial park 	<p>In general, these existing light manufacturing, storage, warehouse, and other industrial-related uses in the city will remain as they are today. As infill occurs, the City will promote efficient use of land and require adequate screening for residential neighbors.</p>	<p>ELU 3, SF 1</p>
Mixed-Use Employment Area 	<p>The Mixed-Use Employment Area encompasses the future Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) site at Ward Rd. (north of I-70).</p>	<p>The TOD site will include a mix of uses (see Northwest Subarea Plan), focused around the station, with employment being a major component. The “Activity Center” is described in the following section.</p>	<p>ELU 3, ELU 4, NH 2, CS 8, SF 1</p>

3. Corridors and Gateways

Corridors and Gateways are areas of future focus and emphasis layered on top of the foundations.


Corridors are the major thoroughfares through Wheat Ridge along which businesses are located. The intensities and land use characteristics of the city's corridors will vary from vehicular-oriented commercial districts to quaint and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood commercial areas. The corridors include:

- ♦ Primary Commercial Corridors,
- ♦ Main Street Corridor, and
- ♦ Neighborhood Commercial Corridors.



Neighborhood "portals" are identified along the main street and neighborhood commercial corridors. The Neighborhood Portals are places that correspond with transit stops and commercial activity along commercial corridors where pedestrian, bicycle, and cross-walk improvements should take place to provide access to and from neighborhoods.



Gateways are the main entrances into/out of the community.



Table 3: Structure Plan Categories – Corridors and Gateways

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Corridors and Gateways			
Primary Commercial Corridor 	All Primary Corridors	The corridors generally run north-south along arterials. The properties along the corridors (between centers) will contain a broad mix of activities. They will accommodate multiple transportation modes and exemplify high quality urban design and appearance (over time).	ELU 1, ELU 2, ELU 4, ELU 5, NH 2, CC 1, CC 2, CC 3, CS 6, SF 1, SF 4
	Wadsworth Boulevard	Wadsworth Boulevard is the major north-south route through Wheat Ridge, connecting the city to its neighbors (Arvada and Lakewood). It is also the city's principal commercial corridor and a key target area for redevelopment. In the future, the City will focus on retaining existing businesses and improving the appearance and function of the corridor, including landscaping, trees, signage, and architecture. Wheat Ridge will also work with partners and focus on assembling	

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Primary Commercial Corridor (Continued)	Wadsworth Boulevard (Continued)	and redeveloping outdated and underutilized properties primarily from 35 th to 44 th Avenues. In these locations, the City will encourage development of a mixed-use Town Center that incorporates commercial and office uses, along with civic functions such as a library and/or City offices. The area will feature buildings close to the street with parking behind, higher intensities with high quality design and step-backs, outdoor gathering spaces such as patios and foundations, and a mix of uses, including multi-family housing (as lofts or part of the mix). Buildings adjacent to residential areas will transition down in height. The City will also improve bicycle and pedestrian connections along routes parallel to Wadsworth. (Also see the Wadsworth Corridor Subarea Plan).	
	Kipling Street	Kipling is also high on the list of the City's redevelopment priorities. The Structure Plan shows a Recreation Focus area around the Recreation Center, future park, and Greenbelt. Development in this area will include supporting uses such as retail, restaurants, and public gathering spaces, and will be sensitive to open space, topography, and adjoining neighborhoods. Areas along Kipling north and south of the Recreation Focus areas will accommodate a mix of commercial and office uses. Buildings along this corridor could be higher intensity (particularly north of 44 th Avenue), provided that taller buildings feature high quality design and step-down to reduce impacts on adjacent residential.	

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Primary Commercial Corridor (Continued)	Youngfield Street	<p>The City will focus on retaining existing commercial and offices along the Youngfield corridor near 38th and improving the appearance and transportation function so that the corridor will support commercial functions as the regional commercial/Crossing at Clear Creek site develops.</p>	
Main Street Corridor  	38 th Avenue Corridor (between Wadsworth Boulevard and Sheridan Boulevard)	<p>Along 38th, nodes of locally owned commercial businesses and employers will be showcased in a transit and pedestrian-friendly “main street” environment that emphasizes Wheat Ridge’s historic and hometown character.</p> <p>Small-scale mixed-use infill and redevelopment activities will be focused primarily between Wadsworth and Pierce, with additional nodes of development extending along 38th Avenue to Sheridan over time.</p> <p>Main Street streetscape and other urban design improvements have been completed on 38th Avenue between Sheridan and Harlan. These improvements will be extended through the Main Street corridor to provide a walkable and distinct gateway to Wheat Ridge’s historic commercial area between Wadsworth Boulevard and Pierce Street.</p> <p>“Portals” will be the main location for pedestrian and bicycle improvements (such as crosswalks and striping, generally every half to one-mile, corresponding with transit stop enhancements as shown on the Transportation Structure Plan in Chapter 7) to increase safe and inviting connections from neighborhoods to and across the corridor.</p>	ELU 1, ELU 2, ELU 4, ELU 5, NH 2, CC 1, CC 2, CC 3, CS 6, SF 1, SF 4

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Neighborhood Commercial Corridor  	<p>The plan shows Neighborhood Commercial Corridors along:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 44th Avenue (between Youngfield and Kipling Streets) ♦ 44th Avenue (between Kipling Street and the greenbelt) ♦ 44th Avenue (east of Wadsworth Boulevard) ♦ Harlan Street (from I-70 to just south of 44th Avenue) 	<p>The Neighborhood Commercial Corridors generally run east-west through the community. Properties along the corridors will contain a broad mix of activities, including small-scale pedestrian-friendly mixed-use retail, commercial businesses, and residential. They will focus on promoting a compatible mix of uses to supply the daily services and needs of adjacent residential areas and could also function for senior housing. These corridors need streetscape, trees, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities to increase vitality, create a “sense of place”, and encourage walking and biking from adjacent neighborhoods. Neighborhood Commercial Centers (see below) located along the corridors will be key focus areas for investment and redevelopment.</p> <p>“Portals” will be the main location for pedestrian and bicycle improvements (such as crosswalks and striping, generally every half to one-mile, corresponding with transit stop enhancements as shown on the Transportation Structure Plan in Chapter 7 and Neighborhood Commercial Centers) to increase safe and inviting connections from neighborhoods to and across the corridors. Adopted Subarea Plans (i.e. the Fruitdale Subarea Plan) will guide future development of these areas.</p>	<p>ELU 2, ELU 4, NH 2, NH 3, NH 4, CC 3, SF 1, SF 4</p>





Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Primary Gateway  	<p>Primary Gateways are at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ I-70 at Wadsworth ♦ I-70 at Kipling Street ♦ I-70 at Ward Road ♦ I-70 at Youngfield Street/ 32nd Avenue ♦ Wadsworth at 26th Avenue ♦ 38th Avenue at Sheridan Boulevard ♦ 26th Ave at Kipling ♦ 44th Avenue at Harlan Street 	<p>The City will develop programs to create unique and unified signage, landscaping, and/or streetscape improvements (in the right-of-way and on adjacent properties) to signify to travelers when they are entering or leaving Wheat Ridge.</p> <p>Other potential gateways not shown on the Structure Plan but identified as next priorities for future improvements are at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 29th Avenue at Sheridan ♦ Cabela's Drive at Highway 58 	<p>ELU 1, CC 1, CC 2, CS 6</p>


4. Activity Centers





Activity Centers are principal areas of focus, generally layered on the foundations or corridors. They are the community's social and economic gathering places—areas of higher-intensity development with a primary focus, such as retail, employment, or civic uses. Again, the city has varying sizes and intensities of activity centers; all of which are located at major intersections along the primary corridors. They include:

- ♦ Regional Commercial Center,
- ♦ Community Commercial Centers,
- ♦ Neighborhood Commercial Centers, and
- ♦ Employment Commercial Centers.

Table 4: Structure Plan Categories – Activity Centers

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Assets			
Regional Commercial Center  	<p>The plan designates one future Regional Commercial Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ West of I-70 and south of Highway 58 (future Crossing at Clear Creek site) 	<p>A 100-acre+ commercial center is located at the I-70 interchange and will serve a 5-mile+ trade area. The center will feature several anchor stores and other retail tenants, in addition to secondary uses such as employment, restaurants, or a hotel. Buildings could be higher intensity (possibly 5 or more stories) than other parts of the community east and south of I-70, so long as they are designed with landscaping, high quality urban design and architecture, preserve significant views to the extent possible, and incorporate green space.</p>	<p>ELU 1, ELU 2, ELU 3, ELU 4, ELU 5, CC 2, CC 3, CS 6, SF 1</p>
Community Commercial Center  	<p>Existing Community Commercial Centers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 38th Avenue and Wadsworth (Safeway) ♦ 38th Avenue and Sheridan (King Soopers) ♦ 38th Avenue and Kipling Street ♦ Kipling and I-70 ♦ Youngfield Street north of 32nd Avenue (King Soopers/ Wal-Mart) 	<p>The City will focus on retaining existing major supermarket shopping centers as commercial development nodes that serve 2-mile trade areas. Ensuring that these areas remain economically strong and serve community needs is important to the City's fiscal health and social well-being.</p> <p>Future improvements should address appearance and transportation functions of these existing centers.</p>	<p>ELU 2, ELU 3, ELU 5, ELU 6, CC 3, CC 2, CS 6, SF 1, SF 4</p>

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Community Commercial Center (Continued)	Future Centers: ♦ 44 th Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard	The future Community Commercial Center (shown at 44 th and Wadsworth) will include a higher density mix of commercial, employment, and potentially civic uses near transit. This center will blend with the existing center located at 38 th and Wadsworth, and together they will function as a mixed-use Town Center – a community gathering place and local destination. In order to facilitate development, buildings could be more urban and higher intensity in the Town Center area than other locations throughout the community, provided that buildings feature exemplary design and transition to surrounding residential uses. Particular emphasis will be placed on providing public gathering spaces and incorporation of arts and cultural elements.	ELU 2, ELU 3, ELU 5, ELU 6, CC 3, CC 2, CS 6, SF 1, SF 4
Neighborhood Commercial Center 	Centers are located based on current commercial activities: ♦ 44 th Avenue and Parfet ♦ 44 th Avenue and Garrison ♦ 44 th Avenue and Pierce ♦ 26 th Avenue and Kipling	Neighborhood Commercial Centers will feature small clusters of businesses and mixed-uses to serve neighborhood needs (at residential, neighborhood scale), offer unique niche business opportunities, and add a “sense of place” and destination within distinct neighborhoods. The City will prioritize pedestrian accessibility within these condensed commercial nodes that are generally along Neighborhood Commercial Corridors and neighborhood collector roadways. Other centers may occur in the community over time, particularly along other neighborhood collector roadways and within Neighborhood Revitalization and Neighborhood Buffer Areas.	ELU 2, ELU 4, ELU 5, NH 2, NH 3, NH 4, CC 3, SF 1, SF 4

Category	Location(s)	Future Character and Uses	Related Goals
Employment/ Commercial Center  	Future Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ward Road at future FasTracks Gold Line Commuter Rail Station (also known as the "T.O.D. site") 	The Employment/Commercial Center is designated as a mixed-use area that emphasizes primary employment complemented with commercial and retail services, and multi-family housing in a transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly setting (commonly referred to as transit-oriented development, or T.O.D.). Like the Regional Commercial Center, buildings in the T.O.D. area could be higher intensity than other parts of the community east and south of I-70, so long as they are designed with landscaping, high quality urban design and architecture, and incorporate green space.	ELU 1, ELU 2, ELU 3, ELU 4, ELU 6, NH 2, CC 2, CC 3, CS 8, SF 1
Primary Employment Center  	Existing Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Exempla Lutheran Hospital and the parcels immediately surrounding it are encompassed in the primary employment center. 	The City will support long-term expansion and job growth around the Exempla Lutheran center, including along the southern end of Wadsworth Boulevard and small-scale businesses along 38 th north of the hospital.	ELU 3, ELU 4, CC 3, CS 8, SF 1

Relationship to the Transportation Structure Plan

The Structure Plan identifies future land uses and targeted areas for corridor development, and redevelopment investments. It emphasizes the role of land uses in shaping an attractive and well-functioning transportation system. The Transportation Structure Plan, provided in Chapter 7, identifies targeted areas for future transportation-related improvements. These improvements focus on improving options and connectivity for all modes of transportation, including motorists, pedestrian, bicyclists, and transit riders. The improvement locations shown on the Transportation Structure Plan generally correspond with the key corridors, gateways, and activity centers detailed on the Structure Plan.

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4 – Economy and Land Use

Key Value:

Create a resilient local economy based on a balanced mix of land uses.



A vibrant and desirable community features an array of land uses.

Introduction

Wheat Ridge, like many inner-ring suburban communities, is mostly developed as a residential city. Its commercial services and centers are generally located along primary transportation corridors (including Wadsworth, Kipling, and Youngfield), which connect the community to neighboring Denver, Arvada, and Lakewood. The city's industrial and employment uses are most concentrated in the northern portions of the city (primarily north of I-70), with Exempla Lutheran Hospital (located in the center of the community) as a notable exception.

In order for Wheat Ridge to continue to be a viable residential community, and to maintain existing levels of services (such as police protection, roadway maintenance, and parks and recreation amenities) the City must chart a new course for the future to establish a diverse mix of land uses to build and sustain a broad and resilient tax base.

As future development and redevelopment occurs, it is important to prioritize opportunities for local employment, commercial goods and services, and mixed-use activity centers to serve and balance the community's residential foundation. A balanced mix of land uses is essential to ensure long-term fiscal stability due to the fact that Wheat Ridge, like many other Colorado communities, has a fiscal model that relies heavily on local retail sales tax.

Currently nearly 60 percent of general City revenues come from sales taxes. Because of increasing costs to provide services to the city's

residential base, and sales tax leakage to new commercial developments in Arvada and Lakewood, the City's budget is strained. Fiscal projections indicate that the City's expenses will exceed revenues within the near future, and financial reserves may be depleted by 2010.

The city's core has limited opportunities for new development due to its built-out nature. Most vacant and undeveloped sites within the city core are less than ten acres, though opportunities exist for property assemblage and consolidation. In addition to these small development sites, Wheat Ridge has many properties prime for redevelopment. Approximately 77 percent of the existing commercial structures are nearly thirty years old (built prior to 1980) – many of which are dated, deteriorating, or underutilized. Some key areas identified for redevelopment on the Structure Plan include the future FasTracks Gold Line transit station area (located north of I-70 near Ward Road), the Wadsworth and Kipling corridors, and 38th Avenue.

Current market analysis indicates demand for research and development and technology-related spaces, which may be most suitable as a component of the land use mix within the future transit station area. Along the Wadsworth corridor, market analysis shows potential for some additional office uses, retail, and potentially higher-density housing or senior living facilities. In the Kipling area a mix of uses would be supported, although like the other key redevelopment areas mentioned above, achieving adequate densities of development is important in order to fund necessary infrastructure improvements.

On its western edge, Wheat Ridge has one major new development area: the future Crossing at Clear Creek site (164 acres located west of I-70). A master plan for this site was approved in 2007, and development of the Cabela's store is pending. As shown on the Structure Plan, this area will develop as a future Regional Commercial Activity Center, featuring other retail anchors, as well as secondary uses. Market analysis indicates that secondary uses such as employment and a potential hotel would be supported in these areas.

Development of primary employment and commercial will provide revenue to sustain demand for city services.



Relationship to the Community Vision and Structure Plan

The economy and land use goals and policies contained in this chapter aim to achieve the vision for a strong, resilient, and sustainable local economy by balancing the mix of land uses. Promoting new and expanding employment areas will help provide local jobs and re-circulate dollars in the local economy. Emphasis on retention and reinvestment in commercial areas will ensure that residents have convenient local locations to shop, in addition to generating retail sales tax to maintain City services. To provide balance to the community's strong residential base, future employment and commercial development efforts will target key areas. As shown on the Structure Plan, and highlighted on Figure 7 below, activity centers and primary corridors are the targeted areas for future investment and commercial, employment, and mixed-use development.

Economy and Land Uses Goals

Goal ELU1: Make Wheat Ridge a “community of choice” in which to live, work, shop, and recreate.

Goal ELU2: Attract quality retail development and actively retain existing retailers to locate in Wheat Ridge.

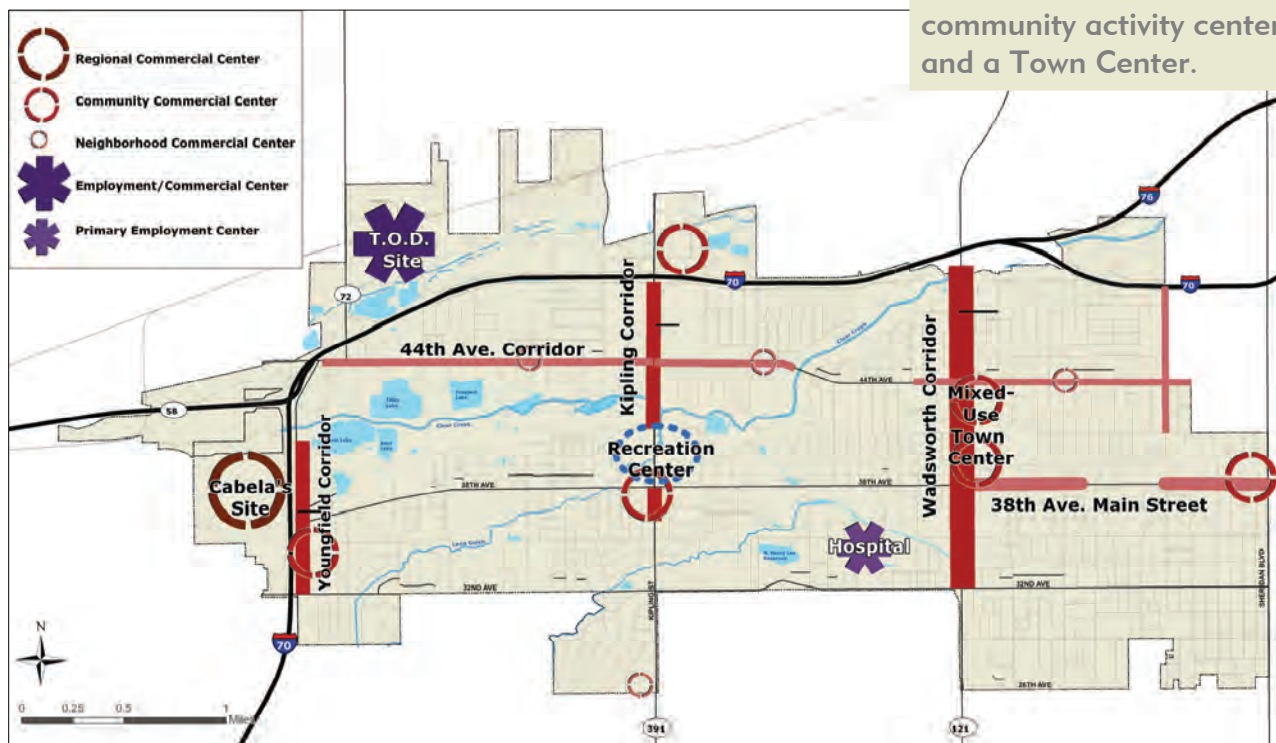
Goal ELU3: Retain and diversify local employment.

Goal ELU4: Increase the diversity of land uses.

Goal ELU5: Revitalize key redevelopment areas.

Goal ELU6: Establish community activity centers and a Town Center.

Figure 7: Targeted Corridors and Activity Centers



Goals and Policies

Goal ELU1 – Make Wheat Ridge a “community of choice” in which to live, work, shop, and recreate.

Wheat Ridge will actively promote the community’s positive assets to attract and retain residents, employers, and visitors. The City will emphasize and market its high quality of life to position Wheat Ridge as a desirable place to live, work, recreate, and visit.

The community’s mature tree canopy and recreational trails appeal to residents, employers, and visitors.



Noteworthy and unique community attributes to highlight and market:

- ♦ Open space, tree canopy, and views;
- ♦ Recreational amenities;
- ♦ Location and proximity to Denver and mountains;
- ♦ Established and distinctive neighborhoods;
- ♦ Affordability;
- ♦ Access to transportation;
- ♦ Proximity to National Renewal Energy Laboratories (NREL), Colorado School of Mines, and the metro area’s high tech business sector, and
- ♦ Hospital and senior services.

Policies:

ELU 1.1 – Attract Primary Employers to Attract Strong Households

The high quality of life, general affordability, and convenient location are positive attributes unique to Wheat Ridge. The City will emphasize and promote these attributes in marketing and economic development efforts in order to attract primary employers, which will in turn attract new families and homebuyers.

Strategies:

- A. Use community assets such as access to transportation, recreational amenities, proximity to major energy research laboratory and university, and workforce housing affordability to market development opportunities located in the Transit Oriented Development Employment/Commercial Center area and other key primary employment areas.

ELU 1.2 – Become a Regional Destination

The City will promote the community's attributes, and showcase entrances and travel corridors to draw visitors and position the community as a regional destination.

Strategies:

- A. Develop programs to enhance and highlight the city's main entrances (gateways) with landscaping and signage;
- B. Advertise unique specialty business districts;
- C. Continue to work on "branding" the community with its positive attributes and unique assets; and
- D. Promote heritage tourism with programs to showcase historic destinations and offerings (including the Carnation Festival, Historical Park, Baugh House, and Richards-Hart Estate);



The historic Richards-Hart Estate is a popular location for weddings, parties, and business events.

Goal ELU2 – Actively retain existing retailers and attract quality retail development.

Wheat Ridge will proactively work with existing quality retailers to remain and thrive in Wheat Ridge, and encourage new businesses, particularly those that provide healthy and high quality products and goods and services to locate in Wheat Ridge. In addition, the City will plan for future regional retail, community commercial, and neighborhood commercial centers and promote opportunities for niche and specialty businesses and districts.

Policies:

ELU 2.1 – Retain and Enhance Existing Retailers

The City, in conjunction with its economic development partners, will work with existing quality retailers and businesses to remain and expand in Wheat Ridge so that goods are purchased locally and retail sales taxes are not lost to neighboring communities.

Strategies:

- A. Monitor retail leakage to adjacent communities in order to identify opportunities to expand retailer offerings;
- B. Work with property owners to identify and assist local retailers who may be having difficulties;
- C. Assist existing retailers with expansion plans or opportunities for local relocation; and

Wheat Ridge's economic development partners currently include:

- ♦ Wheat Ridge Urban Renewal Authority
- ♦ Wheat Ridge 2020
- ♦ Enterprise Wheat Ridge
- ♦ Jefferson Economic Council
- ♦ The West Chamber Serving
- ♦ Applewood Business Association
- ♦ Wheat Ridge Business District
- ♦ Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Wheat Ridge Cyclery is a successful local business that draws regional customers



- D. Work with local businesses and districts on marketing and outreach campaigns (such as expanding the City's business directory, and developing coupon books, holiday shopping guides, or neighborhood events) to help promote local businesses and services.

Types of specialty and retail businesses to target include:

- ♦ Gardening, landscaping, and produce retailers;
- ♦ Outdoor lifestyle and recreation retailers;
- ♦ Full service, sit-down restaurants; and
- ♦ Hardware stores

ELU 2.2 – Promote Specialty Retail Businesses

The City, in partnership economic development partners, and the development and business communities, will work to establish and grow unique small businesses and niche business districts in areas identified as activity centers and along key corridors.

Strategies:

- A. Monitor retail leakage to other adjacent communities in order to identify opportunities to add specialty retailers;
- B. Work with small business organizations and others to help grow and expand local small businesses;
- C. Provide business start-up incentive programs and tools;
- D. Market niche business districts and activity centers to attract new specialty businesses; and
- E. Work with local brokers and developers to identify and attract regional niche retailers for a potential location in Wheat Ridge.

ELU 2.3 – Rehabilitate Underutilized Retail Spaces

Coordination and partnership between the City, economic development partners, and the development community to improve the appearance and function of outdated and inefficient

retail spaces will re-energize the community's primary corridors and key activity centers.

Strategies:

- A. Guide rehabilitation by establishing vision and desired character for corridors and centers;
- B. Encourage land assemblage and denser nodes of development within activity centers;
- C. Partner with area economic development organizations; and
- D. Continue to work with local property owners on identifying opportunities for façade and landscaping improvements and upgrades; and
- E. Identify community needs and opportunities to capture retail leakage.



Upgrades to existing retail spaces help re-energize areas and corridors.

ELU 2.4 – Develop Regional Retail

The City, economic development partners, and private developers will partner to develop the Regional Commercial Center west of I-70 (including the Crossing at Clear Creek site) with a mix of regional retail anchors, smaller retailers, and secondary uses such as offices and hotel.

Strategies:

- A. Market regional retail pad sites in partnership with developers and brokers;
- B. Enter public/private partnerships and facilitate the use of tools such as Tax Increment Financing through an Urban Renewal Authority, special districts, and other tools to share infrastructure development costs; and

- C. Provide business start-up incentives and financing tools (such as Tax Increment Financing).

The first Cabela's retail store in Colorado will be located west of I-70 and may employ as many as 400 people.



Goal ELU3 – Retain and diversify local employment.

Wheat Ridge will foster a business climate that encourages expansion or creation of employment opportunities. Particular emphasis will be placed on growing the community's existing health care industry, redevelopment of the area surrounding the future FasTracks Gold Line Transit Station, and allowing secondary employment opportunities in the Crossing at Clear Creek Regional Commercial Center area. This business climate will require the retention of industrially zoned lands, and will place emphasis on new, high-quality employment opportunities in growing fields such as clean energy and biotechnology.

Policies:

ELU 3.1 – Retain and Expand Established Employers

The City and its economic development partners will work with the community's existing primary employers such as Exempla Lutheran Hospital to maintain and grow operations to provide quality local jobs to residents.

Strategies:

- A. Supply an adequate mix of housing in the community to create a “whole community” where residents can live and work;
- B. Collaborate with area economic development partners to identify regional businesses with a potential interest in expanding in Wheat Ridge;
- C. Retain industrial zoning so that industry and commerce activities can remain or expand in Wheat Ridge;
- D. Work closely with local employers and business owners to address issues and retain them in Wheat Ridge; and
- E. Coordinate with employers to develop plans for future growth and expansion and help facilitate their plans through the City’s development review process.



A \$225 million update to Exempla Lutheran Hospital is on track to be completed by 2010. Development of new medical office buildings and supporting services near the Exempla Lutheran Campus will be



ELU 3.2 – Generate New Primary Employment

The City, in partnership with economic development and other business organizations, will recruit new primary employers to locate in Wheat Ridge, in order to provide quality jobs for the community’s large residential base, and to draw employees into the city on a daily basis.

Strategies:

- A. Market development sites within Enterprise Zone and Urban Renewal Authority areas;
- B. Target medical-related facilities and supporting services to complement the Exempla Lutheran hospital, and

clean energy and biotechnology companies to locate in the T.O.D. area; and

- C. Work on a package of appropriate incentives and establish the criteria by which these incentives can be used.

Goal ELU4 – Increase the diversity of land uses.

Wheat Ridge will work to ensure that the limited future development and redevelopment areas provide increased opportunities for employment, retail, and commercial services, along new housing options, to achieve a sustainable and balanced mix of land uses for the community.

Policies:

ELU 4.1– Efficient Use of Limited Land

Because of the limited amount of land available for new development, the City will require efficient use of newly developing and redeveloping areas by promoting higher-intensity development. Priority areas for new development include the Crossing at Clear Creek site west of I-70 and the future T.O.D. area north of I-70 near Ward Road.

Strategies:

- A. Emphasize mixed-use development in developing and redeveloping areas;
- B. Develop a new mixed-use zoning district and associated land use regulations;
- C. Prioritize areas for future subarea and corridor plans, and potential overlay districts to identify opportunities for property assemblage and efficient use of land;
- D. Promote shared parking or enact maximum parking standards for certain uses or near the future transit station; and
- E. Seek to remove height and density limitations from the City Charter in targeted development and redevelopment locations and examine/rezone those areas as necessary to achieve goals.

Goal ELU5 – Revitalize key redevelopment areas.

Wheat Ridge will target areas with immediate redevelopment needs with efforts that support and promote investment and quality design. Emphasize high quality development that projects a positive image for the community and enhances the surrounding context.



Before

Key redevelopment sites include the property located at 44th and Wadsworth, where a mixed-use Town Center is envisioned.



Potential After

Policies:

ELU 5.1 – Infill and Redevelopment

Many properties along Wheat Ridge's primary corridors and in activity centers are dated and underutilized. The City will work with partners and private developers to promote infill and redevelopment in key areas shown on the Structure Plan.

Strategies:

- A. Provide financing tools and incentives (such as Tax Increment Financing in Urban Renewal Areas and Enterprise Zone tax credits) to jump-start redevelopment in underutilized areas;
- B. Identify areas with potential for property assemblage (through future subarea and corridor plans) and provide assistance with assemblage;
- C. Actively pursue grants and technical assistance in determining the existence of brownfields at key redevelopment locations;
- D. Coordinate with all interested parties (property owners, adjacent property owners, and City) to plan and define the vision for future development on infill sites;

Priority areas for infill and redevelopment include:

- ♦ Wadsworth corridor;
- ♦ Future Transit Station area;
- ♦ Kipling at I-70; and
- ♦ 38th Ave. "Main Street" corridor

- E. Identify areas for future overlay districts; and
- F. Enter public-private partnerships (between City government, developers, financial institutions, non-profit organizations, and neighborhood organizations) to increase cooperation and development success.



High quality urban design will improve the image of the city's corridors and centers.

ELU 5.2 - High Quality Redevelopment

The City will require high quality urban design for all future infill and redevelopment, in order to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, and to improve the overall appearance of the community's primary corridors and activity centers.

Strategies:

- A. Assist with property assemblage to promote well-coordinated, complete areas for redevelopment (not piecemeal properties);
- B. Develop a new mixed-use zoning district to assure high-quality mixed-use development; and
- C. Identify areas for future subarea and corridor plans, and potential thematic-based overlay districts (to establish guidelines and standards to address suitable design and scale, variety and visual interest, and appropriate materials specific to each subarea or corridor).

Goal ELU6: Establish community activity centers and a Town Center.

Wheat Ridge will develop and enhance community activity centers and gathering places, in accessible and visible locations. Development of a mixed-use "Town Center" will provide a sense of destination for residents and visitors in a mixed-use environment that provides community gathering places and potentially civic uses. Additional community activity centers will incorporate a mix of uses and serve nearby neighborhoods and areas.

Policies:

ELU 6.1 – Community Activity Centers

The City will guide development and redevelopment to occur in planned activity centers. A range of existing and proposed activity centers along major corridors will discourage strip commercial development by concentrating a mix of uses to serve as neighborhood and community destinations.

Existing community activity center locations include:

- ♦ Youngfield at 38th Ave. (Community Commercial Center)
- ♦ Sheridan at 38th Ave. (Community Commercial Center)
- ♦ Wadsworth at 38th Ave (Community Commercial Center)

Future community activity center locations include:

- ♦ Wadsworth between 38th and 44th Ave. (Town Center)
- ♦ Crossing at Clear Creek site (Regional Commercial Center)
- ♦ Future Gold Line Transit Station area (Employment/Commercial Center)

Strategies:

- A. Partner with private property owners, economic development organizations, and developers to assemble parcels for redevelopment;
- B. Discourage strip commercial by using design standards, consolidating access points along major corridors, and establishing maximum parking standards
- C. Encourage a mix of uses in activity centers (including multi-family residential and senior housing where appropriate);
- D. Provide multi-modal transportation connections and options to activity centers (especially bicycle and pedestrian connections); and
- E. Coordinate development with established Urban Renewal Authority, Colorado Department of Transportation, and other regional plans.

ELU 6.2 – Town Center Development

In collaboration with economic development partners and other organizations, the City will guide the development of a mixed-use Town Center, located along Wadsworth between 38th and 44th Avenues.

Community Activity Centers

Regional Commercial



Community Commercial



Neighborhood Commercial





The plan shows a mixed-use Town Center at Wadsworth between 38th and 44th Ave.

Potential Town Center uses include:

- ♦ Shops and galleries
- ♦ Offices
- ♦ Outdoor gathering spaces
- ♦ Cafes and restaurants
- ♦ Recreation and seating areas
- ♦ Civic uses such as library
- ♦ Higher density housing
- ♦ Public art displays and cultural offerings (such as community concerts)

The Town Center will be a community gathering place that features a vibrant mix of uses with an emphasis on arts and quality design.

Strategies:

- A. Seek to remove height and density limitations from the City Charter in the future Town Center area;
- B. Establish and market a targeted mix of uses to be included (including potential civic functions such as a library with a strong emphasis on arts and cultural elements);
- C. Provide multi-modal transportation connections and options to activity centers (especially bicycle and pedestrian connections);
- D. Enter public/private partnerships to assist with development funding and design; and
- E. Establish an appropriate package of incentives to help jump-start redevelopment.



Ensuring a Sustainable Future

A balanced mix of land uses not only helps stabilize the local economy, but also benefits the natural environment and community's residents. The table below outlines the broad benefits to the community's residents, environment, and economic health that result from establishing a diverse mix of employment and commercial opportunities to support and serve a solid residential base.



Benefits Associated with a Balanced Mix of Land Uses

People 	<p>A balanced mix of land uses establish a diverse revenue base to fund core services that contribute to a safe and healthy community. It also provides convenience with opportunities to walk to diverse destinations and promotes healthy living.</p>
Planet 	<p>A balanced mix of land uses provides employment opportunities and retail goods and services near residential neighborhoods, which results in fewer vehicle miles traveled, thus reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improving air quality.</p>
Prosperity 	<p>A balanced mix of land uses provides local employment options and business opportunities for residents, and adds diversity and stability to City finances.</p>

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5 – Neighborhoods and Housing

Key Value:

Promote Vibrant Neighborhoods and an Array of Housing Options.

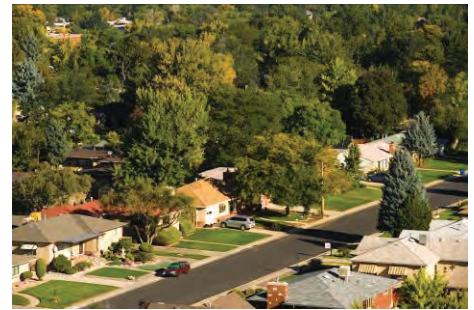
Introduction

Wheat Ridge's established and unique neighborhoods are sources of community pride and identity. They boast mature trees, affordable and quality homes, generous lot sizes, and convenient locations near Denver and the mountains. They offer opportunities to raise a family, and many feature local schools or community parks as key focal points.

Many residents enjoy the community and its neighborhoods so much that they live in Wheat Ridge for a lifetime. Residents embrace strong and established neighborhoods such as Paramount Heights, Applewood Hills, and Bel-Aire, and aim to preserve and highlight their unique qualities – which include scenic views, architectural styles, or semi-rural character.

While many of Wheat Ridge's residential areas are established and comfortable, scattered residential areas throughout the community are in decline and would benefit from reinvestment, as emphasized in the *Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy* (NRS) report. Areas with dilapidated properties, an abundance of rental housing, aging multi-family properties, and code enforcement issues are prime opportunities for revitalization and investment. According to the NRS, efforts to increase home ownership and code enforcement in these areas will not only enhance the immediate neighborhoods, but will also help to improve the overall image of the community.

The edges of neighborhoods, displayed as Neighborhood Buffer Areas on the Structure Plan, correspond with areas that have generally shifted away from predominantly single-family owner-



The city's mature urban tree canopy and designation as a Tree City USA is especially evident in established neighborhood areas.

occupied uses over time, to a mix of uses which currently include single-family rentals, multi-family housing, and scattered commercial businesses. Neighborhood Buffer Areas are generally located adjacent to primary corridors, and most align with or border established Urban Renewal Areas. In the future, Neighborhood Buffer Areas will continue to feature a mix of uses, including single and multi-family residential. Future efforts for these areas will aim to improve the appearance and vitality of these areas through continued code enforcement, updates to and rehabilitation of multi-family properties, and encouragement of appropriate small-scale infill development to buffer adjacent neighborhoods from more intense development along primary corridors.

According to the NRS, the homogenous nature of the city's housing stock is a somewhat limiting factor in attracting new residents and households. This is due to the fact that the housing types available in Wheat Ridge are generally older and smaller than the current Jefferson County market demands. Most of Wheat Ridge's neighborhoods are comprised of single and two-family homes, the majority of which are ranch-style homes built between 1950 and 1980. As reinvestment and redevelopment occur in revitalization and Neighborhood Buffer Areas areas, it will be important to add new housing types. New housing types will help satisfy current market demands, attract new households, provide housing options for residents to remain in the community as they age, and meet housing needs for new employers. Such housing types include market rate single-family homes, multi-plexes, accessory dwelling units (ADU's), townhomes, lofts, and senior living facilities.

A mix of housing types will cater to new household types and residents who are looking for alternatives to the community's large supply of single-family



Relationship to the Community Vision and Structure Plan

The neighborhoods and housing goals and policies contained in this chapter aim to maintain the appeal and character of the city's established neighborhoods. They also promote reinvestment to re-energize lagging residential areas, and encourage diverse housing options to meet the needs of various household types.

As shown on the Structure Plan, and in

Figure 8 below, neighborhoods are the predominant land use in Wheat Ridge, and form the community's solid foundation. Future focus is on maintaining the quality and character, while promoting home ownership and code enforcement in areas that are beginning to decline.

Neighborhood Buffer Areas present opportunities for image improvements, new housing types, and small-scale infill and redevelopment. Future efforts will aim to make these areas vibrant, desirable locations that feature a mix of uses to buffer neighborhoods from adjacent primary corridors.

Neighborhoods and Housing Goals

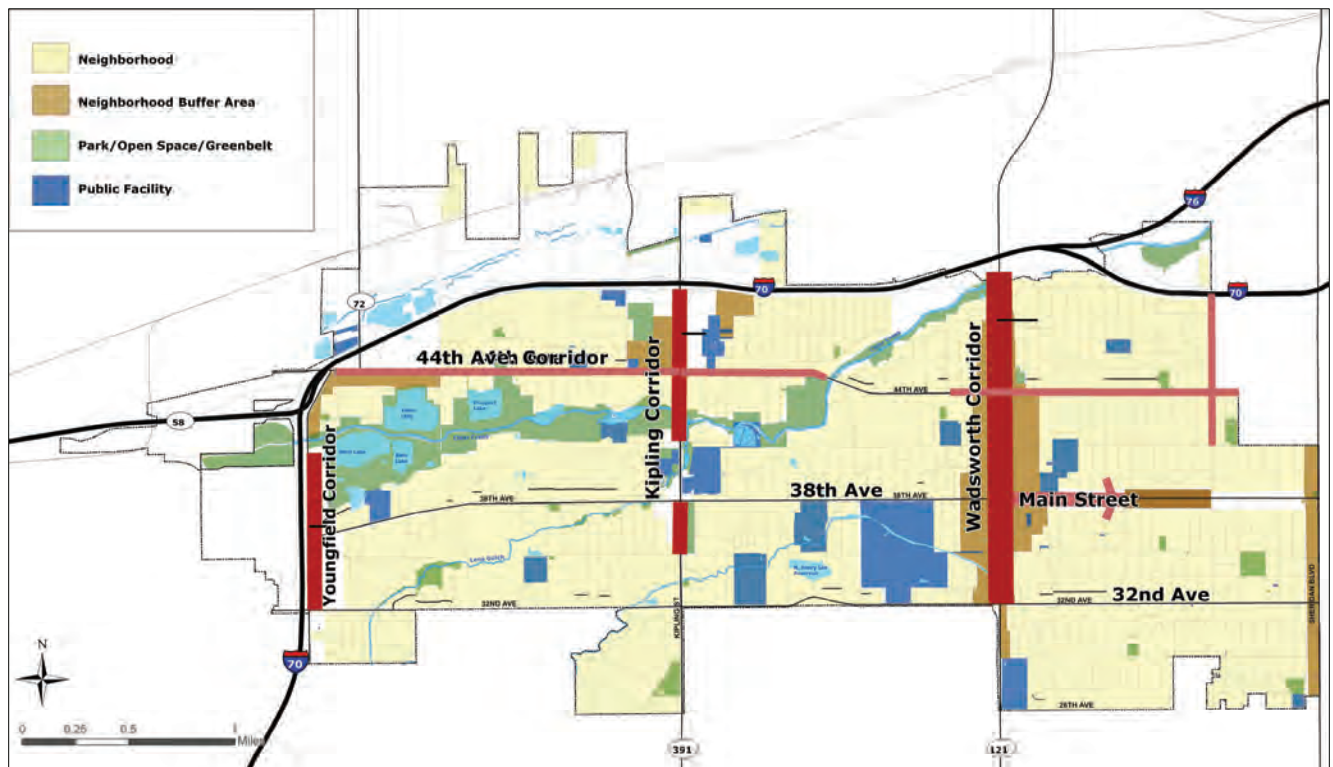
Goal NH1: Maintain and enhance the quality and character of Wheat Ridge's established neighborhoods.

Goal NH2: Increase housing options.

Goal NH3: Increase investment and stability in Neighborhood Revitalization Areas.

Goal NH4: Stimulate Investment and Redevelopment in Neighborhood Buffer Areas.

Figure 8: Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Buffer Areas, and Primary Corridors



Goals and Policies

Goal NH1 – Maintain and enhance the quality and character of Wheat Ridge’s established neighborhoods.

Wheat Ridge will protect and enhance the positive attributes of the community’s established, thriving, and unique neighborhoods.

Many of Wheat Ridge’s neighborhoods feature large, mature trees, large lots, and a “semi-rural” feeling.



Policies:

NH 1.1 - Neighborhood Identity Programs

The City will promote **neighborhood-level planning** and the establishment of programs to highlight individual neighborhoods and their unique identifying features.

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate with interested neighborhood groups to define appropriate boundaries and areas for neighborhood plans; and
- B. Use neighborhood-level planning to determine appropriate character and design for distinct areas, and work with interested neighborhoods to develop guidelines, standards, or other tools to retain neighborhood character.



Entrance signage and landscaping helps establish unique neighborhood identity.

NH 1.2 – Maintain Character of Neighborhoods

The City will guide future infill development and redevelopment to keep with the overall character and vernacular of the surrounding neighborhood.

Strategies:

- A. Enact standards for preservation of mature, healthy landscaping and trees, and tree removal mitigation requirements; and
- B. Review zoning ordinances to ensure adequate buffers, setbacks, and step-downs between residential and non-residential uses;
- C. Promote the development of neighborhood-specific signage and entryways; and
- D. Encourage neighborhood-specific activities such as picnics and clean-up events.
- E. Explore the possibility of residential design guidelines.



Most of Wheat Ridge's neighborhoods feature comfortable and affordably priced single-family homes.

NH 1.3 – Sustain Neighborhood Amenities

The City will continue to coordinate with Jefferson County Public Schools, local places of worship, homeowner associations, and other local organizations to ensure that their facilities remain vibrant neighborhood assets and focal points.

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate and partner with neighborhood organizations to maintain amenities, and identify and address deficiencies.

Goal NH2 – Increase housing options.

The City will work with private developers and Wheat Ridge 2020 to increase the diversity of the community's housing supply to attract new household types and meet the changing needs of the community's residents.

New housing types such as townhomes and senior living cottages and apartments will cater to a variety of existing and future residents.



Policies:

NH 2.1 – New Housing Types

The City will direct the development of new housing types such as townhomes, condos/lofts, and senior living units (especially in Neighborhood Revitalization, Neighborhood Buffer and other mixed-use areas) to meet market demand.

Strategies:

- A. Revise zoning requirements to require new residential and/or mixed-use developments to provide a range of housing options (including price points and/or dwelling unit types) to meet the changing needs of existing and future residents;
- B. Promote traditional neighborhood development with a variety of housing types (possibly including accessory dwelling units, multi-family, and senior housing units) as a component of infill/redevelopment sites.

Goal NH3 – Increase investment and stability in neighborhoods.

Wheat Ridge will promote revitalization and investment in residential areas that show signs of decline to improve neighborhood vitality, safety, and appearance.

Policies:

NH 3.1 – Promote Strong Households

The City will work with Wheat Ridge 2020, private developers and other groups to promote home ownership and to attract and retain “strong households” (per NRS recommendations).

Strategies:

- A. Provide relocation information to families and explore offering incentives to capture homebuyers;
- B. Coordinate with Wheat Ridge 2020, private developers, and other groups to develop new housing types to accommodate a range of household types; and
- C. Develop and offer homeowner programs or classes.

NH 3.2 – Neighborhood Revitalization

The City will partner with Wheat Ridge 2020 and other community and neighborhood groups to increase investment and engagement in neighborhood areas that show signs of decline. (See Implementation Chapter, page 124 for a description of why and how to designate a “Neighborhood Revitalization Area.”)



Strategies:

- A. Coordinate with Wheat Ridge 2020 and other groups to upgrade or rehabilitate existing multi-family properties and dated housing types, and to develop new housing types to attract a range of income levels;
- B. Facilitate neighborhood clean-up events;
- C. Continue and expand neighborhood walk and watch programs; and
- D. Continue current code enforcement efforts to address property maintenance issues, with specific emphasis on early intervention.

What are “Strong Households”?

The NRS says that Wheat Ridge must recapture its share of “strong households.” It categorizes strong households as ones that:

- ♦ are consistently employed and have the potential for upward mobility;
- ♦ demand quality rentals or own and reinvest in their homes;
- ♦ take good care of their property;
- ♦ participate in and contribute to civic life; and
- ♦ typically earn between \$59,000 and \$88,000 per year.

The NRS emphasizes that Wheat Ridge does not need all of its residents to embody the qualities listed above, although due to the city’s current demographics it needs a larger share of such households in order to reposition itself in Jefferson County.

Neighborhood Revitalization

The following characteristics help to identify areas with opportunities for revitalization and reinvestment:

- ♦ Increasing incompatibility of uses,
- ♦ Infrastructure needs (e.g., utilities in disrepair), and
- ♦ Less stability than established neighborhoods (e.g. increasing maintenance problems, higher crime rates, and/or lower rates of owner occupancy).

Goal NH4 – Stimulate Investment and Redevelopment in Neighborhood Buffer Areas.

The City, in collaboration with economic development partners, and other neighborhood and business organizations, will improve the appearance of Neighborhood Buffer Areas (as defined on the Structure Plan), by updating and rehabilitating multi-family properties, and encouraging appropriate redevelopment and small-Policies:

Simple façade and landscape improvements can improve the stability and appeal of dated apartment buildings.



NH 4.1 – Enhance Neighborhood Buffer Areas

The City will coordinate and partner economic development partners, neighborhood groups, and private developers to initiate investment and redevelopment efforts in Neighborhood Buffer Areas.

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate revitalization efforts with established Urban Renewal Authority areas and plans;
- B. Enter public/private partnerships to improve or redevelop outdated multi-family properties; and
- C. Encourage and facilitate property assemblage to accommodate new small-scale mixed-use developments to provide transition between primary corridors and residential neighborhoods.

Ensuring a Sustainable Future

Quality neighborhoods are the basic building blocks to establish a livable, safe, and successful community. They attract new households, and they meet the changing needs of their residents. By focusing on continued maintenance, investment, and opportunities for redevelopment and new housing types, a more sustainable future will be established. The table below outlines the broad benefits to the community’s residents, environment, and economic health that result from quality neighborhoods with an array of housing options.



Benefits Associated with Vibrant Neighborhoods and Diverse Housing Options	
People 	Vibrant neighborhoods with various housing options accommodate a mix of household types and cater to residents’ changing needs, allowing households to foster lasting relationships and grow and age in place.
Planet 	Vibrant and stable neighborhoods encourage residents to invest in their homes with efficiency and landscaping upgrades, and diverse housing options allow residents to live in the communities where they work, thus reducing vehicle miles traveled and GHG emissions.
Prosperity 	Vibrant and quality neighborhoods maintain property values, and various housing options enable residents to find suitable local housing regardless of income level. Strong neighborhoods and households create a sturdy income base to support local businesses.

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6 – Community Character and Design

Key Value:

Enhance Community Character and Accentuate Quality Design.

Introduction

Wheat Ridge is a special and appealing community due to its convenient location, scenic views, established neighborhoods, parks and open space resources, and public facilities such as the Recreation Center. Not only it is important to recognize and retain these assets, but also to recognize that there are opportunities to further promote these assets to attract future residents, employers, businesses, and visitors.

Many residents and people passing through Wheat Ridge note that the city's location often "blends in" among area communities; many do not know where the City of Wheat Ridge begins. To highlight Wheat Ridge's prominence in the region, the City will create a new image that is distinct from its neighbors, especially focusing along its major corridors (especially Wadsworth). Additionally, the City will highlight the community's main entrances (or gateways) to emphasize that Wheat Ridge is a special and unique community.

In addition to strong gateways and community identification, Wheat Ridge will ensure that all new development and redevelopment efforts feature high quality design. High quality development and design will further accentuate the community's character and attractiveness, and add a sense of place and appeal to the community's unique places.



Welcoming signage and streetscape design lets travelers know when they enter Wheat Ridge.

Interesting architecture and durable materials contribute to attractive buildings and streetscapes.

The City of Wheat Ridge will lead by example by providing high quality and energy efficient public buildings and facilities. Strong, well-designed public spaces will enhance the community's identity, and help to establish a desired character to set the stage for future private investment and development.



Community Character and Design Goals

Goal CC1: Create recognizable gateways and Corridors.

Goal CC2: The City of Wheat Ridge will lead the community in quality design.

Goal CC3: Ensure quality design for development and redevelopment.

Relationship to the Community Vision and Structure Plan

The community character and design goals and policies contained in this chapter aim to establish community identity to make Wheat Ridge a desirable place to reside and visit. They also aim to ensure that new development and redevelopment features high quality urban design and complements nearby uses. The City of Wheat Ridge is expected to lead the community in such design efforts, to set the tone for future private investment.

The Structure Plan identifies community gateways and primary corridors as key locations to accentuate community identity through streetscape and urban design improvements. Activity centers are also important areas to showcase community character and stress quality urban design.

Goals and Policies

Goal CC1 – Create recognizable gateways and corridors.

Wheat Ridge will establish a clear identity that promotes a positive community image in primary community entrances (“gateways”).



Themed signage and streetscapes contribute to community branding.

Policies

CC 1.1 – Gateway Identity

In collaboration with economic development partners, private developers, and other groups, the City will improve primary gateways into the community (as shown on the Structure Plan) so that they project a positive, cohesive community identity and clear sense of place.

Strategies:

- A. Develop signage and landscaping at gateways and along I-70 that uses recent community branding efforts to “tell the Wheat Ridge story” (such as the themed gateway signage and streetscape on 38th Ave. near Sheridan); and
- B. Provide and maintain attractively landscaped areas at community entrances (such as the recent I-70 and Kipling interchange improvements).

Primary gateways to the city include:

- ♦ Interstate 70 at Youngfield
- ♦ Interstate 70 at Ward
- ♦ Interstate 70 at Kipling
- ♦ Interstate 70 at Wadsworth
- ♦ 38th Ave. at Sheridan
- ♦ Wadsworth at 26th Ave.

Primary commercial corridors through the community include:

- ♦ Wadsworth
- ♦ Kipling
- ♦ Youngfield



Streetscape improvements including comfortable sidewalks, banners, lighting, and new landscaping highlight the 38th Avenue Business District.

CC 1.2 – Corridor Image

The City will work with private developers, economic development partners, Colorado Department of Transportation and other organizations to enhance the image of the city's primary corridors (as identified on the Structure Plan).

Strategies:

- A.** Develop a corridor design plan to differentiate primary corridors with attractively landscaped parkways and areas, unique architecture and streetscape improvements (such as the future 38th Avenue Main Street Corridor);
- B.** Enter public/private partnerships to coordinate, fund, develop, and maintain streetscape improvements; and
- C.** Continue the community sign code to ensure quality new signage along corridors and to encourage upgrades to existing non-conforming signage.

Goal CC2 – The City of Wheat Ridge will lead the community in quality design.

The City of Wheat Ridge will lead by example by committing to quality, energy efficient buildings and facilities.

The Wheat Ridge Recreation Center exemplifies high quality architecture and design.



Policies

CC 2.1 – Public Facility Design

When updating existing facilities or constructing new public facilities or spaces, the City of Wheat Ridge will meet or exceed

established design and character requirements to set the tone for future private development efforts.

Strategies:

- A. Require green building practices for major renovations to existing City facilities and for new City facilities (per Sustainability Task Force recommendations); and
- B. Continue to utilize the Architectural and Site Design Manual to guide the design and development of public facilities.

Goal CC3 – Ensure quality design for development and redevelopment.

Wheat Ridge will promote a high standard of design for development and redevelopment projects, and ensure that infill development is of high quality and meets the intent of the Structure Plan.

Policies

CC 3.1 – High Quality Development

The City will require new development and redevelopment to exemplify high quality urban design to enhance Wheat Ridge's character.

Strategies:

- A. Update the Architectural and Site Design Manual for use for all projects except single-family residential (including mixed-use, senior housing, and multi-family developments);
- B. Revise the Manual to correlate with varying degrees of densities, design, and desired character for targeted areas such as Urban Renewal areas, primary corridors, and community activity centers; and
- C. Promote preservation or incorporation of existing quality architectural structures or elements into redevelopment projects.



Quality commercial and mixed-use developments feature:

- ♦ Interesting details (such as windows, awnings, and cornices) designed to a human scale
- ♦ High quality and durable materials (such as masonry and stone)
- ♦ Complementary signage
- ♦ Streetscape and parking lot landscaping
- ♦ Buffers and screens to minimize impacts to neighbors
- ♦ Screened storage and service areas
- ♦ Pedestrian-oriented design
- ♦ Gathering spaces
- ♦ Connections to other properties and roadways



Ensuring a Sustainable Future

Quality design and enhanced community character will help increase Wheat Ridge’s prominence and appeal in the metro Denver area as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. They will contribute to the economic vitality of the community, integrate environmental stewardship, and boost community pride and social engagement. The table below summarizes the social, environmental, and economic benefits resulting from enhancing community character and emphasizing quality design.

Benefits Associated with Enhanced Community Character and Quality Design	
People 	Enhanced community character instills community pride, and quality design affords opportunities for social engagement and interaction.
Planet 	Enhanced community character integrates green building and resource conservation practices, and quality design respects natural assets.
Prosperity 	Enhanced community character and quality design are long-term investments in the appearance and vitality of the community that help retain and attract residents, visitors, and employers.

7 – Transportation

Key Value:

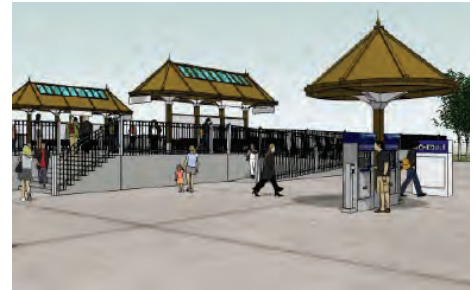
Increase transportation connections and options.

Introduction

Wheat Ridge is centrally located in the Denver metro region and as such it is easily accessible by an extensive transportation system including interstates, state highways, transit routes, and a regional trail system. Most Wheat Ridge residents use the automobile as their primary mode of transportation. However, there is an increasing desire within the community to improve transportation options for all modes. The goals and policies identified in this section aim to enhance the transportation connections and options for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit. The multi-modal focus of these goals will help reduce traffic congestion and improve the safety and efficiency of the transportation system as a whole.

The city's roadway network is a grid system which provides a high level of vehicular mobility within Wheat Ridge and to surrounding areas. Several of the east/west roadways including I-70 provide direct access to downtown Denver, allowing Wheat Ridge residents to have some of the shortest commutes to downtown in the region. The city's primary north/south roadways (Ward Road, Kipling Street, and Wadsworth Boulevard) are state highways that provide access to I-70 and the surrounding communities of Lakewood and Arvada. The state highways and I-70 interchanges experience the highest levels of congestion during the peak periods as these are the primary roadways used by commuters. The goals established in this plan serve to maintain the high levels of vehicular mobility while increasing the level of mobility for other modes.

While the city's established bus transit and trail systems are tremendous assets, there are opportunities to improve the linkages between these systems and existing neighborhoods and future activity centers. One of the primary opportunities will arise with the



The future RTD Gold Line Transit Station will enhance transportation connections between Wheat Ridge and the Denver metro region.¹

opening of the Gold Line commuter rail corridor that is planned for 2016 (see Figure 9 below). The Gold Line will provide commuter rail service to downtown Denver from stations in Arvada and Wheat Ridge. Several of the projects identified in this plan serve to provide multi-modal access to the light rail stations and opportunities for transit-oriented developments.

In order to successfully enhance the Wheat Ridge transportation system, the City needs to prioritize future transportation improvement efforts to reflect planned land use decisions and community desires. In the upcoming years, there will be several opportunities for the City of Wheat Ridge to make substantial transportation improvements with projects like the Crossing at Clear Creek site development and the introduction of rail transit service. In addition, there are several established commercial areas that have been targeted for redevelopment. The redevelopment of these areas should be accompanied by enhanced bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities to be successful. In contrast, there are established residential areas within the city that prefer to retain their existing character which includes a small-scale local roadway network without sidewalks.

Figure 9: Future Gold Line Commuter Rail Transit Corridor¹



¹ Images courtesy of FasTracks Regional Transportation District of Denver, 2009.

Relationship to the Community Vision and Structure Plan

The transportation goals and policies contained in this chapter aim to increase mobility and convenience for Wheat Ridge residents, and to increase efficiency and function of the local and regional transportation system.

As shown on the Structure Plan, primary corridors are key areas of emphasis in the community. Not only are the future land uses important along these corridors, but so are the transportation options provided. Improved pedestrian and bicycle connections from neighborhoods (shown as “neighborhood portals” on the Structure Plan) to the primary corridors and activity centers will reduce dependence on personal automobiles for short trips and will enable residents of all ages to safely access community services.

Transportation Goals

Goal T 1: Provide an integrated transportation system to address all modes of travel and future funding priorities.

Goal T 2: Increase intergovernmental cooperation on regional transportation issues.

Goal T 3: Increase transportation efficiency and options.

Goal T 4: Improve coordination between transportation improvements and future land use decisions.

Transportation Structure Plan

Background

The Transportation Structure Plan identifies targeted areas for future transportation-related improvements. These improvements focus on improving options and connectivity for all modes of transportation, including motorists, pedestrian, bicyclists, and transit riders.

The Transportation Structure Plan will help the City achieve its vision for a convenient and connected transportation system, thriving business districts, and a high quality of life. The targeted areas identified on the Transportation Structure Plan will provide clear connections between the community’s neighborhoods and parks and open space assets to the city’s activity centers. Multi-modal enhancements to the city’s primary commercial corridors will help create vibrant and attractive business districts that are accessible, attractive, and safe. Transit enhancements and improvements at key locations will allow employees, residents, and visitors to move throughout the city with greater ease and convenience.

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TRANSPORTATION STRUCTURE PLAN

Future Improvements

Road Capacity and Safety Improvement "Complete Street"



Main Street Corridor



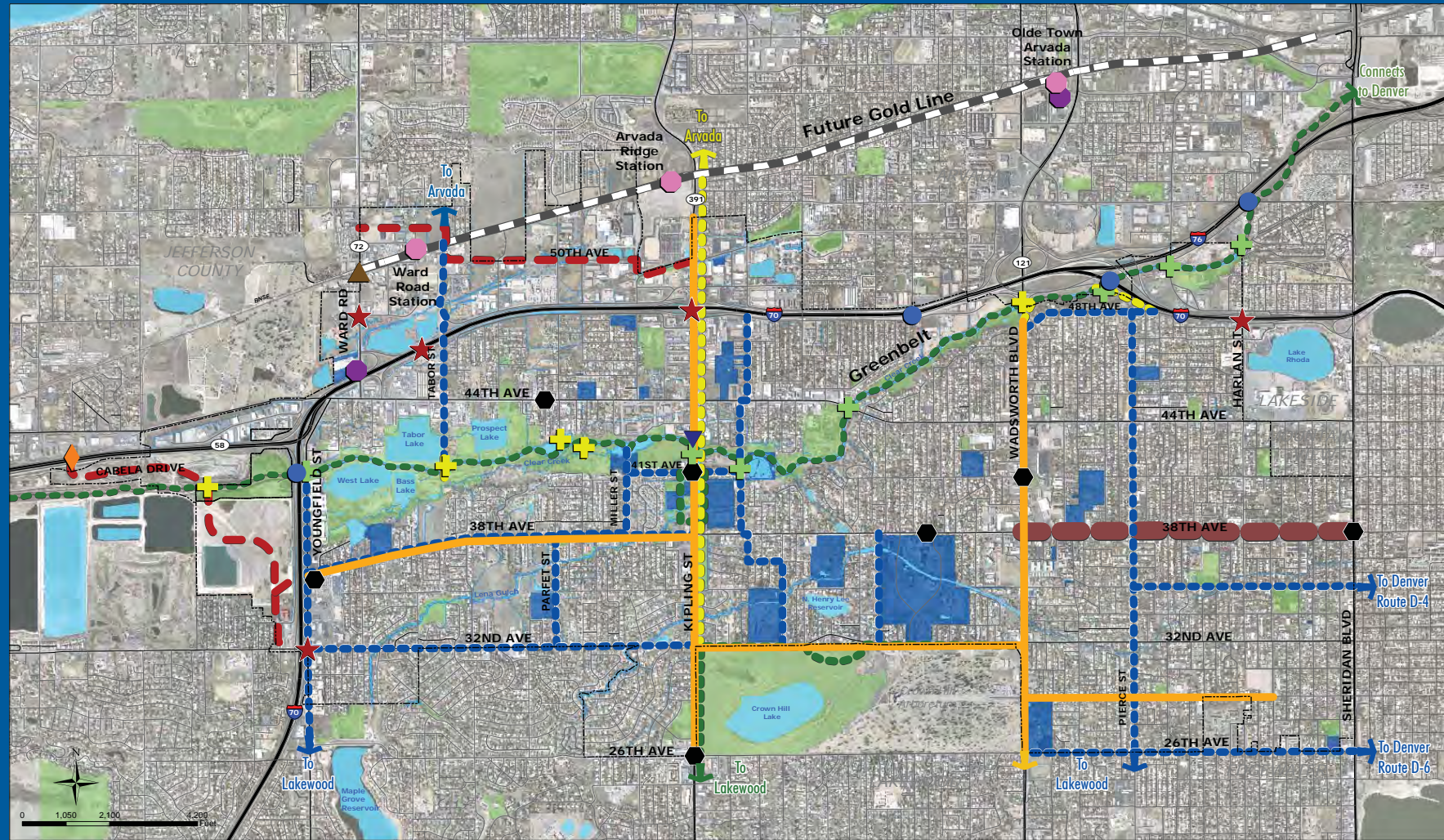
On-Street Bicycle Corridor Enhancement



Transit Enhancement



Future Commuter Rail Stations



Existing Features

- Parks and Open Space
- Public Facilities
- Existing Multi-use Trail
- Existing Trail Connection
- Existing Bicycle Underpass
- Existing Park-n-Ride

Other Improvements

- Vehicular Capacity Improvement
- Future Roadway Grade Separation
- Proposed Multi-use Trail
- Trail Access Improvement
- Future Trail Underpass
- Future Commuter Rail Line

Transportation Analysis

The key transportation infrastructure improvement areas shown on the Transportation Structure Plan originated with desires and feedback expressed by members of the public. After public priorities were identified, detailed review and analysis of existing transportation plans, proposed projects, the regional transportation model, freight and transit systems, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan helped to refine and validate the targeted locations shown on the Transportation Structure Plan. The City determined key projects based on the community's vision and goals, as well as the Planning Team's review and analysis of previous transportation-related plans and projects.

Road Network

Wheat Ridge is easily accessible from three major Interstates in the Denver metro area: I-70, I-25, and I-76. I-70 provides the most direct access as it is the only freeway passing through the community. Wadsworth Boulevard is a state highway (Highway 121) that provides the major north/south regional connectivity through the city. In addition, Wheat Ridge is served by three other north/south state highways under the jurisdiction of Colorado Department of Transportation: Sheridan Boulevard (Highway 285), Kipling Street (Highway 391), and Ward Road (Highway 72). These are all classified as arterial streets which carry high traffic volumes and provide limited property access. Three main collector streets provide east/west connectivity: 44th Avenue, 38th Avenue, and 32nd Avenue. Collector streets carry less traffic than arterials and typically provide direct access to the adjoining land uses. The rest of the roadway system is comprised of minor collectors and neighborhood streets that provide local access but do not serve as regional or citywide connections.

In general, the roadway network provides a complete grid that facilitates easy vehicular movement throughout the city. The DRCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies all federally funded transportation projects in the Denver region over a six-year period. It is prepared by DRCOG every three years, and must show compliance with air quality requirements. The DRCOG 2008-2013 TIP includes four roadway projects in the City of Wheat Ridge:

- ♦ I-70: Operational Improvements between Highway 40 to Highway 58 (western edge of Wheat Ridge);
- ♦ I-70: Interchanges (south ramps) at Highway 58 and Ward Road;
- ♦ Highway 72: Signal Upgrades at 48th Avenue; and

The Transportation Structure Plan is based on ideas from and analysis of the following transportation-related plans and projects:

- ♦ Jefferson County Countywide Transportation Plan (December 2002)
- ♦ DRCOG 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program
- ♦ Northwest Subarea Plan (2006)
- ♦ Wadsworth Corridor Subarea Plan (2007)
- ♦ Fruitdale Subarea Plan (2007)
- ♦ Cabela's Traffic Impact Study (2006)
- ♦ Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan (2007)

- ♦ Wadsworth Boulevard: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Study from 36th Avenue to 46th Avenue

Regional Transportation Model

Analysis and review of the DRCOG Regional Transportation Model provided insight about the capacity of existing and future roadways in Wheat Ridge. Observations about future roadway capacity include:

- ♦ In general, the existing congested locations and projected congested locations based on the 2035 model coincide with the areas identified for improvements in many of the plans.
- ♦ Kipling and Wadsworth are the locations with the highest levels of traffic congestion in the 2035 model. As such, these corridors are identified as targeted redevelopment areas in the comprehensive plan. The model shows congestion on some of the east/west roadways near the intersections with Kipling and Wadsworth. This reiterates the need for improvements along Kipling and Wadsworth. It is likely that the east/west roadways will notice traffic congestion relief once improvements are made to the Kipling and Wadsworth intersections.
- ♦ Analysis confirmed that the land use scenario included in the 2035 model is consistent with the future land use plan identified during the comprehensive planning process. No new major developments are being proposed that are not included in the model.

In addition to roadway capacity analysis, future DRCOG roadway classifications were determined from the 2035 regional model. The DRCOG classifications are slightly different than those presented in the 2000 Wheat Ridge Comprehensive Plan. Future roadway classifications are shown in Table 5 on the following page. A summary of roadway classification characteristics is provided in Appendix F.

Table 5: Future Roadway Classifications

Classification	Definition	Roadways
Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial roadways serve high traffic volumes and provide access to regional destinations, economic centers, and freeway interchanges. They have limited access points and are generally surrounded by commercial land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ward Road ♦ Kipling Street ♦ Wadsworth Boulevard ♦ Sheridan Boulevard ♦ 38th Avenue, Kipling to Sheridan
Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial roadways serve less volume than principal arterials but still serve to connect regional destinations. Minor Arterials are generally surrounded by a mix of land uses with limited access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Youngfield Street ♦ 44th Avenue ♦ 38th Avenue, Youngfield to Kipling ♦ 32nd Avenue ♦ 26th Avenue
Collector	Collector roadways serve moderate traffic volumes and primarily provide connections between neighborhoods and the arterial roadway system. Collectors are typically surrounded by residential land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ I-70 North Frontage Road ? ♦ Tabor Street (north of 44th Avenue) ♦ Cabela Drive ♦ Ridge Road ♦ Miller Street (north of 48th Avenue) ♦ Independence Street (north of 48th Avenue) ♦ Garrison Street (north of 44th Avenue) ♦ Pierce Street (South of 44th Avenue) ♦ Harlan Street (north of 32nd Avenue) ♦ Marshall Street (between I-76 and Lamar Street) ♦ 50th Avenue (between Ward Road and Independence) ♦ 49th Avenue (between Kipling and Garrison Street) ♦ 48th Avenue (between Lamar Street and Harlan Street) ♦ 29th Avenue (between Wadsworth and Sheridan)

Freight System

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad line runs through the industrial area north of I-70. With the BNSF line and the Coors Industrial spur, Wheat Ridge has a number of at-grade crossings of active freight railroads which affect mobility for other travel modes. However, freight movement was not identified as a key area of concern during the planning process. In addition, only one of the previous plans recognized freight as a transportation-related issue for Wheat Ridge.

The Northwest Subarea Plan identified that the existing freight tracks are planned to remain with the current configuration of an at-grade crossing of Ward Road. This was identified as an issue that will restrict vehicular circulation around the future Gold Line Transit Station. The Transportation Structure Plan shows a future grade-



Future employers may take advantage of proximity to the region's existing freight system.

separated crossing of Ward Road at the freight tracks to address future vehicular circulation issues.

Transit System

The existing Regional Transportation District (RTD) transit system and FasTracks plan were reviewed to determine adequacy of transit service and major transit projects planned in and around the city.

Currently, the city is served by local, limited, and express buses with high-frequency service (15 minute service) provided along Wadsworth Boulevard. The Ward Road Park-n-Ride serves as the hub for regional express buses that service downtown Denver. While most of the community is well covered by bus transit, few high-frequency or high-speed connections to major employment centers are provided outside of the Wadsworth and I-70 corridors.

Wheat Ridge will benefit from improved regional transit service with the completion of the Gold Line Corridor in 2016. The Gold Line is planned as a 11.2 mile rail corridor from Denver Union Station to Ward Road as part of the larger regional FasTracks Plan. The Gold Line is currently in the Final Environmental Impact Statement planning stage and construction is slated to begin in 2012. The Ward Road Park-n-Ride will be closed and moved to the transit station east of Ward Road. This will be the only station within the City of Wheat Ridge. However, as shown on the Transportation Structure Plan, the Arvada Ridge and Olde Town Arvada stations will be convenient for Wheat Ridge residents and employees.

The Structure Plan and Transportation Structure Plan focus on planning for transit-oriented development at the future Wheat Ridge station near Ward Road. In addition, the plan recognizes that the City of Wheat Ridge should work in concert with RTD to ensure that adequate bus transit connections are available to not only the Wheat Ridge station but also to the commuter rail stations in Lakewood and Arvada.

Throughout the planning process citizens identified enhancements to transit stops as primary needs. Therefore, the Transportation Structure Plan recommends key locations for transit stop enhancements based on future land uses. These enhancements should include improved bicycle and pedestrian connections between the transit stops and areas of interest.

The proposed design for the future Gold Line Commuter Rail Station, located on the east side of Ward Road, north of the existing freight tracks (shown in the figure below) includes a bicycle/pedestrian trail, future expansion area, and rail and bus loading facilities.

*Figure 11: Cross Section of Gold Line Commuter Rail Corridor at Ward Road Station
Courtesy of FasTracks RTD of Denver, 2009).*



Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

As shown on the Transportation Structure Plan, Wheat Ridge has several miles of off-street bicycle/pedestrian trails including the Clear Creek Trail and the Crown Hill Open Space Trails. These provide recreational opportunities for the residents but are not well connected to the surrounding transportation network as a whole.

The 2007 City of Wheat Ridge Bike & Pedestrian Route Master Plan shows proposed bicycle/pedestrian routes along Kipling Street and Wadsworth Boulevard that would serve to connect the off-street facilities. The plan shows several other areas for bicycle/pedestrian improvements but does not make recommendations about the type of facilities. Currently, very few streets have bicycle lanes and the city lacks a comprehensive sidewalk network. Sidewalks are now required with new development, but many key roadways were developed without sidewalks. Unlike most cities which require sidewalk maintenance and snow removal to be performed by the adjacent property owner, no specific maintenance responsibility is identified for sidewalks in Wheat Ridge.

In order to refine the Transportation Structure Plan, the Wheat Ridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan Map was reviewed to determine locations of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In addition, the Master Plan was used to determine deficiencies in the existing and future systems. Based on the review of the map and public comments, the number one area of concern was north/south bicycle routes. Therefore, three north/south bicycle facilities were selected as key projects for inclusion on the Transportation Structure Plan.

Better trail connections and more north/south connectivity across Clear Creek were also identified as key transportation improvement projects. Additional future trail connections, as shown on the Transportation Structure Plan were determined based on an aerial survey. Most of these locations already contain make-shift trails and pathways. This suggests that the demand is there to support the investment in these trail connections as resources allow.



Priority Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Projects:

On-street bicycle facility east of Wadsworth Boulevard on Pierce Street – this project includes bicycle enhancements to Pierce Street to create a continuous north/south bicycle connection through the city.



Detached bicycle trail along Kipling Street – this project is identified in the JeffCo Countywide Transportation Plan.



On-street bicycle facility east of Youngfield Street on Tabor Street – this project includes bicycle enhancements on Tabor Street north of Clear Creek. This will utilize the existing I-70 overpass as a primary bicycle connection to the future T.O.D. site.



Enhanced trail connections and more north/south connectivity across Clear Creek














The Clear Creek Trail provides an east-west bicycle and pedestrian system that connects Wheat Ridge to neighboring communities.







Transportation Structure Plan Categories Defined

Because the city's grid-style roadway network is established and high-functioning, the Transportation Structure Plan focuses on multi-modal transportation improvements throughout the community. It displays the existing multi-modal transportation features and highlights key locations for future corridor, trail, and transit improvements. The types of features and improvements are described in the following table.

Table 6: Transportation Structure Plan Categories

Existing Features		
Multi-Use Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Wheat Ridge Greenbelt/Clear Creek Trail ♦ Kipling Street at Recreation Center 	<p>The regional Clear Creek trail traverses the community from west to east and is a key community asset. An additional multi-use trail crosses under Kipling adjacent to the Recreation Center.</p>
Trail Connection 	<p>Clear Creek Trail at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Youngfield Street / I-70 ♦ Kipling Road ♦ Marshall Street ♦ 44th Avenue ♦ Harlan Street ♦ Independence Court ♦ Clear Creek Drive ♦ Cabela Drive 	<p>Connections and trailheads to the Clear Creek Trail are located near primary road corridors and at key intersections.</p>
Park-n-Ride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ward Road at I-70 	<p>The Park-n-Ride at Ward Road and I-70 will close when the Gold Line Commuter Rail is complete.</p>
Bicycle Underpass 	<p>Clear Creek Trail at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Youngfield/I-70 ♦ I-70 ♦ I-76 <p>Carr Street at I-70</p>	<p>Grade-separated bicycle and pedestrian underpasses are located where the Clear Creek Trail intersects with interstate highways and major roadways, and where Carr Street passes under I-70.</p>

Category	Location(s)	Description
Future Improvements		
Vehicular Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 32nd Avenue at I-70 ♦ Ward Road at 48th Avenue ♦ Kipling Street at I-70 ♦ Harlan Street at I-70 ♦ Ward Road Ramp at I-70 	Intersections that experience routine traffic congestion will benefit from improvements to increase vehicular capacity and encourage traffic flow. Improvements might include additional turn lanes.
Road Capacity and Safety ("Complete Streets") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Kipling Street ♦ Wadsworth Boulevard ♦ Sections of 29th, 32nd and 38th Avenue 	Major regional vehicular travel corridors with heavy travel volumes, routine traffic congestion, and pedestrian and bicycle safety issues will benefit from improvements to increase road capacity and safety for all transportation modes. Improvements might include driveway consolidation, modified cross-sections, and enhanced streetscaping.
Proposed Roadway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Cabela Drive ♦ 50th Avenue extension from Transit Station to Kipling 	<p>The future Crossing at Clear Creek development will be served by Cabela Drive connecting Highway 58 to I-70 and 32nd Avenue. These new roadways will be designed with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.</p> <p>The Northwest Subarea Plan identifies a future roadway connection from the future transit station to Kipling to provide an additional east/west route north of I-70.</p>
Future Interchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Highway 58 at Cabela's Road 	A new interchange on Highway 58 will serve the future Crossing at Clear Creek development west of I-70.
Future Grade Separation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ward Road at UP Railroad Tracks 	A grade-separated crossing will reduce automobile congestion and delays at a key railroad crossing and greatly enhance safety.
Main Street Corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 38th Avenue east of Wadsworth Boulevard to Pierce Street and east of Harland Street to Sheridan Boulevard 	This corridor will be a transit and pedestrian friendly "main street" that features an extension of streetscape and urban design improvements that have been completed between Sheridan Boulevard and Harlan Street.
Future Trail Underpass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Clear Creek Trail at Kipling Street 	A future grade-separated trail connection will allow pedestrians and bicyclist to travel under Kipling Street.

Category	Location(s)	Description
Future Improvements		
Proposed Multi-Use Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ North/south route along east side of Kipling Street 	<p>A new north/south multi-use trail will provide an off-street travel route alongside the Kipling Corridor, connecting Crown Hill Park to the future Arvada Transit Station.</p>
On-Street Bicycle Corridor Enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Youngfield Street ♦ Tabor Street ♦ Parfet Street ♦ Miller Street ♦ Holland Street to Independence Court to Iris Street ♦ Pierce Street ♦ 26th Avenue east of Wadsworth ♦ 32nd Avenue west of Kipling ♦ 35th Avenue east of Pierce ♦ 38th Avenue between Youngfield and Kipling ♦ 41st Avenue from Kipling to Clear Creek ♦ 48th Avenue from Pierce to Wadsworth 	<p>On-street bicycle facilities will connect to established east/west bicycle routes in Denver. Additional north/south on-street bicycle facilities will provide north/south bicycle corridors between arterial streets. Refer to Appendix F for a matrix of bicycle facility design options.</p>
Trail Access Improvements 	<p>Clear Creek Trail at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tabor Street ♦ Parfet Street ♦ Wadsworth Boulevard ♦ North of 41st Avenue 	<p>Access to the Clear Creek Trail is confusing and limited in several areas. Suggested enhancements include creek crossings, increased signage, sidewalk widening, and grading improvements</p>
Transit Enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 26th Avenue and Kipling Street ♦ 38th Avenue and Youngfield Street ♦ 38th Avenue at Sheridan Boulevard ♦ 38th Avenue at Hospital ♦ 44th Avenue at Pierson Street ♦ Kipling Street at Recreation Center ♦ 41st Avenue at Wadsworth Boulevard <p>Locations are subject to change to coordinate with redevelopment patterns.</p>	<p>Areas identified as future transit stop enhancement areas will benefit from improved transit stops and shelters where they do not already exist, pedestrian crossings, and sidewalks. Many neighborhood “portals” identified on the Structure Plan coincide with transit stop enhancement areas. Portals will emphasize safe and clear connections to enhanced transit stops, activity centers, and across corridors.</p>
Future Commuter Rail Line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Northern edge of community 	<p>The Regional Transportation District’s future Gold Line Commuter Rail system is planned for completion in 2016 and will provide a high speed transit link Wheat Ridge to the greater Denver metro region.</p>
Future Commuter Rail Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ East of Ward Road at Gold Line 	<p>The future Gold Line Commuter Rail route will end at the Wheat Ridge station, located east of Ward Road and north of I-70. The area surrounding the station will develop as a transit-oriented Employment/ Commercial Center with a mix of uses.</p>

Goals and Policies

Goal T 1 – Provide an integrated transportation system to address all modes of travel and future funding priorities.

Wheat Ridge will accommodate all modes of travel including motorists, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit riders.

Policies:

T 1.1 – Targeted Improvement Areas

The City will focus future investment for infrastructure improvements in targeted corridors and intersections, as identified on the Transportation Structure Plan.

Strategies:

- A. Institute transportation improvements as activity centers and primary corridors develop and redevelop;
- B. Use the improvements shown on the Transportation Structure Plan to establish key areas for each travel mode and capital improvement projects; and
- C. Establish criteria to identify neighborhoods that are not targeted areas for street or sidewalk enhancements.

T 1.2 – Improvements Funding

The City will continue to invest in transportation infrastructure improvements and will seek opportunities to partner with regional, state, and national agencies to establish funding for key projects.

Strategies:

- A. Seek to establish a new local funding source for pedestrian and bicycle system improvements; and
- B. Work to establish a blend of local and matching funds for multi-modal improvements.

T 1.3 – Complete Streets

The City will coordinate with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to establish roadway design criteria that ensure safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users (also commonly referred to as “complete streets”).



The Transportation Structure Plan identifies priority locations for the following improvements:

Corridors for road capacity and safety improvements:

- ♦ Kipling Street
- ♦ Wadsworth Boulevard

Vehicular capacity (congestion relief) improvements:

- ♦ I-70 at Harlan Street
- ♦ I-70 at Kipling Street
- ♦ 32nd Avenue at I-70
- ♦ Ward Road at 48th Avenue
- ♦ Ward Road at I-70

Multi-modal corridor improvements:

- ♦ Wadsworth Boulevard
- ♦ 38th Avenue (Main Street area)
- ♦ Kipling Street



What are “Complete Streets”?

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Characteristics of complete streets:

- ♦ Great places for people;
- ♦ Defined by buildings and entrances, not the roadway;
- ♦ Enhance the places that they serve;
- ♦ Form community character and shape civic design.

Strategies:

- A. Develop new road cross sections for principal corridors that meet the needs of all modes of transportation;
- B. Review and revise development regulations to require new development to construct or enhance segments of pedestrian and bicycle systems; and
- C. Establish and require level of service standards for all travel modes.
- D. Complete the Implementation Plan (Phase 2) of the Bike and Pedestrian Route Master Plan.

Goal T 2 – Increase intergovernmental cooperation on regional transportation issues.

Wheat Ridge will emphasize the interconnectedness of regional transportation systems, continue coordination, and increase cooperation with transportation providers, entities, and adjacent communities.

Policies:

T 2.1 – Multi-Modal Connections

The City will coordinate with regional communities and transportation organizations to identify and create multi-modal connections.

Strategies:

- A. Establish bus to serve future commuter rail stops and activity centers (with RTD and other regional transportation organizations); and
- B. Identify necessary pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections and develop improvement strategies and funding mechanisms (with Jefferson County, CDOT, DRCOG, Arvada, Lakewood, Golden, Denver, and other regional transportation organizations).

T 2.2 – Regional Planning

The City will support and participate in regional transportation planning to encourage efficient use of transportation funds and coordinated transportation systems.

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate improvements and signals along primary roadways (with DRCOG, CDOT, and other regional transportation organizations);

- B. Plan for railroad and commuter rail infrastructure (with RTD, BNSF, Southern Pacific, Coors Industrial); and
- C. Work with DRCOG to get key project(s) included in the regional Long Range Transportation Plan.

Goal T 3 – Increase transportation efficiency and options.

Wheat Ridge will expand and enhance transportation efficiency and options, including vehicular traffic, bus and rail transit, bicycling, and walking. Wheat Ridge will coordinate with regional transportation agencies to reduce barriers that impede traffic flow and promote safety.

Policies:

T 3.1 – Reduced Traffic Congestion

The City will collaborate with regional partners, developers, and motorists to improve traffic flow and traffic congestion in order to improve air quality and reduce vehicle hours traveled.

Strategies:

- A. Improve coordination of traffic signals on major corridors (work regionally with DRCOG and CDOT);
- B. Consolidate access points (on state highways) with development and redevelopment projects; and
- C. Develop and continue programs that promote carpooling and alternative mode commuting.

T 3.2 – Expanded Travel Options

The City will work to expand and improve non-vehicular transportation options within and through the City to increase mobility and recreation opportunities, and to provide convenient access to activity centers.

Strategies:

- A. Secure funding and implement key bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements shown on the Structure Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan.

T 3.3 – Commuter Rail Connections

The City, in coordination with RTD and other regional communities, will connect future commuter rail with other transportation modes.



Access to a range of transportation options helps reduce automobile traffic congestion and improves air quality.

Strategies:

- A. Secure funding and implement key bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on the Structure Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan; and
- B. Coordinate with RTD for bus service to Transit Station Area and other community activity centers.



Enhanced pedestrian and cyclist-oriented signage will help highlight existing trail connections.



Wide walkways and safe crossings improve mobility for all residents, including seniors and children.

T 3.4 – Priority Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

The City, in conjunction with private developers, will work to prioritize and improve necessary pedestrian and bicycle facilities shown on the Transportation Structure Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan.

Strategies:

- A. Review and update development standards to require development to maintain, construct, and/or enhance segments of pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- B. Identify deficiencies and improve safety of key at-grade crossings;
- C. Collaborate with regional transportation organizations and other groups such as Livewell Colorado to identify funding for key bicycle and pedestrian improvements; and
- D. Establish north/south bicycle routes and crossings.

T 3.5 – Increase Mobility

The City will work with regional transportation organizations to increase mobility for the students and the aging senior population.

Strategies:

- A. Provide convenient and accessible transit stops at schools, senior facilities, hospital, and community activity centers;
- B. Partner with schools, Senior Center, Senior Resource Center, and other groups to develop safe routes and crossings.

Goal T 4 - Improve coordination between transportation improvements and future land use decisions.

Wheat Ridge will promote the development of transit-supportive growth patterns in major transit corridors. Throughout the city,

Wheat Ridge will focus on establishing a desired image and function of the community's principal roadway corridors in relation to the future land uses.

Policies:

T 4.1 – Land Use and Transportation Relationship

The City will stress the connected relationship between future land use and transportation, and will decrease dependence on the personal automobile with coordinated land use and transportation planning.

Strategies:

- A. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods and activity centers and corridors to reduce reliance on the automobile for short trips;
- B. Study planned future right-of-way widths and their impact on adjacent properties (especially Wadsworth and Kipling) and develop alternative cross-sections to accommodate preferred land use patterns and multiple travel modes; and
- C. Coordinate and communicate preferred future land use and roadway vision to regional entities (CDOT, DRCOG, and other regional transportation organizations).



Desired land use patterns should inform future right-of-way widths.

T 4.2 – Transit-Supportive Development

The City will emphasize transit-supportive development patterns in major transit corridors to promote and increase transit use.

Strategies:




- A. Partner with private developers to incorporate transit into the design and function of future mixed-use activity centers (such as the future transit station area, Crossing at Clear Creek site, and Kipling civic area);
- B. Seek removal of the City Charter restrictions on height and density to allow higher density and multi-story development near transit stations and along high-frequency bus corridors; and
- C. Revise development regulations to require installation and maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle facilities with new development.



Ensuring a Sustainable Future

A connected transportation system enables residents, employees, and visitors of all ages to move throughout the community with ease and efficiency. A multi-modal system provides travelers with options that lead to decreased traffic congestion and improved air quality, as well as opportunities for fitness and recreation. The social, environmental, and economic benefits resulting from an enhanced, connected multi-modal transportation system are summarized in the table below.

Benefits Associated with a Connected Transportation System with Options

People 	<p>A connected transportation system with multi-modal options provides mobility for residents of all ages, and encourages and facilitates healthy living.</p>
Planet 	<p>A connected transportation system with multi-modal options reduces dependence on the personal automobile, therefore contributing to improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
Prosperity 	<p>A connected transportation system with multi-modal options provides flexibility for travelers as fuel prices fluctuate, and multi-modal projects are top candidates for diverse funding opportunities. Additionally, households may save money as increased transportation options potentially reduces the number of vehicles needed per household.</p>

8 – Community Services

Key Value

Provide Quality Community Amenities, Services, and Resources.

Introduction

Wheat Ridge residents are fortunate to have an array of community amenities such as the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Wheat Ridge Recreation Center, numerous parks and open areas, quality schools, and urban utilities and services. These amenities and services improve the quality of life for residents – thus they help attract and retain residents, employers, and new businesses.

As the community grows and matures, the City will continue its commitment to providing and investing in community amenities, services and resources that sustain and enhance the community's livability. In order to provide such services, the City will need to work to stabilize its financial situation by encouraging a mix of land uses. By promoting additional employment and retail opportunities that generate revenue, the City will be able to fund the services and amenities community residents need and desire.

Wheat Ridge is not a full-service city, meaning that it provides some, but not all of the community's basic services. Some separate districts and service providers address basic community needs, including education, water and wastewater utilities, fire protection, and electric and natural gas services. Increasing costs of providing services will continue to strain all service providers and agencies. Continued coordination among providers will help to identify opportunities for cost savings through partnerships and increased efficiency. Community engagement and participation will also help agencies determine funding priorities, inefficiencies, and changing needs.



Residents and visitors enjoy outdoor concerts at Anderson Park – one of the community amenities offered by the city's Parks and Recreation department.

Community Services Goals

Goal CS 1: Provide and maintain quality core community services and facilities.

Goal CS 2: Continue investment in parks, recreation, and open space.

Goal CS 3: Increase community safety and code enforcement.

Goal CS 4: Continue coordination with fire districts and utility providers to maintain quality service.

Goal CS 5: Maintain and improve educational offerings.

Goal CS 6: Continue to support diverse arts and cultural amenities.

Goal CS 7: Increase opportunities for public involvement with City government.

Goal CS 8: Invest in technology infrastructure.

Relationship to the Community Vision and Structure Plan

The goals and policies contained in this section aim to sustain the quality levels of community services provided by the City and special service districts and organizations. They are also intended to continue advancement and investment in education, technology, environmental stewardship, citizen engagement, arts and culture, and community safety.

The Structure Plan shows parks and open spaces, and public facilities such as schools, Senior Center, Recreation Center as assets, or important areas that form the community's solid foundation. Future focus on continued investment in these public areas and facilities, in addition to continued coordination with utility and education providers, fire districts, and other organizations will ensure that basic needs and quality services are maintained in Wheat Ridge.

Goals and Policies

Goal CS 1 – Provide and maintain quality core community services and facilities.

Wheat Ridge will continue to provide core City services and facilities such as parks and recreation, community development, street maintenance, and code enforcement at satisfactory levels in the future.

Policies:

CS 1.1 – Adequate Levels of Service

The City will work with other service providers and districts to maintain adequate levels of essential and desired services in the future.

Strategies:

- A. Review and adjust budgets and fees based on adequate level of service criteria; and
- B. Use the policies and strategies outlined in the following goals to maintain and improve levels of service.



The City of Wheat Ridge runs most of its operations from City Hall, located at 7500 W. 29th Street. Residents expect quality services from City government. The City's ability to provide services at such levels in the future may be in jeopardy unless new revenue-generating land uses are introduced.

Goal CS 2 – Continue investment in parks, recreation, and open space.

Wheat Ridge will maintain and continue to invest in providing quality parks, open space, and recreation facilities that are accessible to all neighborhoods and residents, using the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide investment and locations.

The city's 21 parks offer abundant opportunities for recreation and leisure.



Policies:

CS 2.1 – Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The City, in coordination with Jefferson County, Jefferson County Schools, and other organizations will continue to maintain and enhance parks, recreation, and open space offerings and facilities.

Strategies:

- A. Periodically review and update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify future parkland needs (based on established effective levels of service);
- B. Improve connections and visibility of the parks and the trail system in targeted areas identified on the Transportation Structure Plan;
- C. Continue to coordinate with Jefferson County and private landowners for the acquisition of additional open space, as defined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Goal CS 3 – Increase community safety and code enforcement.

Wheat Ridge will proactively ensure the safety and welfare of residents by providing high levels of police and emergency response services. In addition, the City will promote community maintenance and involvement with crime prevention and code enforcement programs.



Police Department programs such as Bicycle Safety Rodeos demonstrate bicycle safety and promote community building.

Policies:

CS 3.1 – Community Safety and Maintenance

The City will work with neighborhood groups and local organizations to encourage community engagement in safety and property maintenance efforts, and will continue to provide quality police and emergency services.

Strategies:

- A. Define adequate levels of service for police and emergency operations and adjust staffing levels accordingly;
- B. Continue community involvement, safety and crime prevention, and strategic patrolling programs (including Police Academy, Walk and Watch, Bicycle Rodeos, Strategic Analysis for Effective Response (SAFER), and CADmine services);
- C. Sponsor neighborhood activities and clean up events; and
- D. Periodically review and update nuisance codes and policies.

Goal CS 4 – Continue coordination with fire districts and utility providers to maintain quality service.

The City will continue to coordinate with utilities and fire districts to maintain quality levels of service to existing customers and provide new services to areas where future growth will occur.

Continued coordination between the city's numerous water, sanitation, and fire protection districts is essential to maintain quality health and safety services.



Policies:

CS 4.1 – Utility and Service Districts

The City will continue to coordinate development and redevelopment activities with utility providers and service districts.

Strategies:

- A. Invite utility and service district organizations to attend development review and construction coordination meetings; and
- B. Develop and offer credits or incentives for development/redevelopment that reuses, establishes new connections to, or upgrades existing utility infrastructure.

Goal CS 5 – Maintain and improve educational offerings.

The community will recognize the need for quality schools and the role they play in attracting and retaining families and employers, and promote continued investment in quality educational opportunities for all residents.



Jefferson County Public Schools offers K-12 educational opportunities in convenient neighborhood locations.



Policies:

CS 5.1 – Educational Opportunities

The City will continue coordination with Jefferson County Public Schools, private and charter schools, and other educational providers to maintain existing educational resources and to increase educational opportunities for all types of residents.

Strategies:

- A. Work with Jefferson County Public Schools and other school providers to maintain quality schools and to identify and address deficiencies;
- B. Collaborate with the public library, and other organizations to identify and increase opportunities for adult and lifelong learning (for example senior computer training or adult second language classes);
- C. Develop resource and facility-sharing networks between schools and other public and semi-public facilities; and
- D. Partner with employers and schools to provide youth mentoring and job shadowing.

Goal CS 6 – Continue to support diverse arts and cultural amenities.

Wheat Ridge will continue to promote and support a rich assortment of community amenities to improve and enhance the quality of life for area residents, employees, and visitors.

Public art displays add visual interest to public spaces. Cultural offerings, such as the annual Carnation Festival, instill community pride.



Policies:

CS 6.1 – Arts and Culture

The City will continue to provide existing arts and cultural offerings such as community concerts, public art, the historic park, and the Carnation Festival, and will seek opportunities to partner and expand arts and cultural programs.

Strategies:

- A. Showcase arts and cultural amenities and offerings in new activity centers, at community gateways, and along primary corridors;
- B. Partner with the school district, Wheat Ridge Foundation, library, Senior Resource Center, Historical Society and other organizations to develop additional arts and cultural programs and to establish new funding opportunities; and
- C. Explore expansion of the City's Public Art Program to potentially require dedication of public art with public and/or private construction projects, and sponsor the creation of small public art displays.

Goal CS 7 – Increase opportunities for public involvement with City government.

Encourage community involvement in issues that affect the quality of life in the city and provide ample opportunities for discussion and involvement to build a greater sense of community.

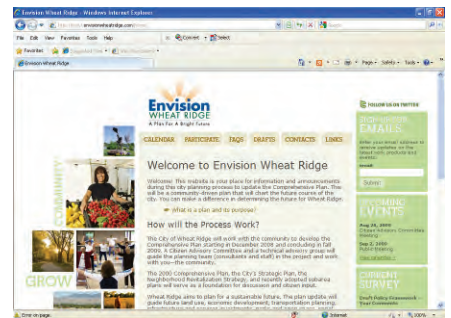
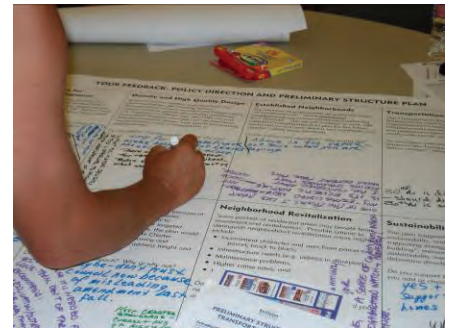
Policies:

CS 7.1 – Civic Engagement

The City will strive to make all aspects of City government transparent, engaging, and accessible for all community members.

Strategies:

- A. Review and modify customer service functions to make them clear and customer-oriented;
- B. Continue programs such as Civic and Police Academies and Walk and Watch to encourage participation in local government;
- C. Provide public information a variety of formats including on-line, at community workshops and meetings, on television, and in print to cater to different demographic groups; and
- D. Solicit community feedback from a diverse audience using multiple formats including websites, meetings, and comment forms.



Goal CS 8 – Invest in technology infrastructure.

Wheat Ridge will promote investment in broadband and/or wireless technology infrastructure in sub-areas or community-wide to meet demand and enhance educational and employment opportunities.

Policies:

CS 8.1 – Technology Infrastructure

The City will coordinate with technology providers to facilitate the development of technology infrastructure during future public and private development and redevelopment projects.

Strategies:

- A. Enter public/private partnerships to fund improvements and test emerging technologies in high-demand areas (such as the Town Center and TOD site).

City government is more relevant and engaging when residents have diverse and comfortable options to participate.



Ensuring a Sustainable Future

Services, amenities, and resources are essential factors contributing to the community's overall quality of life. By committing to providing quality services and resources, the City and its associated service districts and organizations are investing in a positive future for existing and future residents and employers. The table below outlines the overall benefits to the community's residents, natural environment, and economic vitality that result from a commitment to maintaining and investing in quality community services and amenities.

Benefits Associated with Quality Community Services and Amenities	
People 	Quality services and amenities increase community health and safety, and promote recreation and social interaction.
Planet 	Quality community services and programs protect and enhance environmental assets.
Prosperity 	Quality community services and amenities retain strong households, and help attract future residents, employers, and visitors assets.

9 – Sustainable Future

Key Value

Ensure a Sustainable Future.



Introduction

Wheat Ridge is committed to becoming a prominent, thriving, and sustainable community in the future. A sustainable community carefully balances the needs and quality of life of its people, with stewardship and respect for the natural environment and resources, and economic opportunities and benefits. To ensure a sustainable future, Wheat Ridge will emphasize balance among the three core elements of sustainability – People, Planet, and Prosperity. These elements of sustainability are interrelated and impact one another and the city’s future. Evaluation of the community’s decisions with consideration of balance between the elements of sustainability will help to ensure a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to the community’s future.

People

A sustainable community values quality of life and promotes social equity and opportunities for its people. It offers residents employment opportunities and convenient access to needed retail goods and commercial services within the community. It also provides opportunities for residents to raise families and to grow and age in safe neighborhoods where lasting relationships are formed. It promotes health and wellness, and encourages civic engagement.

Planet

A sustainable community provides stewardship of the natural environment and aims to protect and conserve resources. It promotes reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and resource consumption. It strives for improved air quality, energy

efficiency, and increased recycling. A sustainable community protects and preserves natural assets such as mature trees, views, wildlife habitat, and streams.

Prosperity

A sustainable community recognizes the importance of economic prosperity (both for individuals and the community as a whole). It strives to provide diverse employment and career opportunities for residents. It promotes economic gain for commercial businesses, and fiscal health of City government. A sustainable community maintains property values and retains strong households.

Relationship to the Community Vision and Structure Plan

The places shown on Structure Plan layer together to create the type of city described by the community vision. In a similar fashion, the goals and policies contained in this section link together the goals and policies in the previous chapters, to relate land use decisions and patterns to social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits. With continued focus on providing balance between the key values, and stressing the importance of both the existing and future places shown on the Structure Plan the City will achieve its mission to create a sustainable and successful future that respects the needs of its people, natural environment, and prosperity.

Sustainable Future Goals

Goal SF 1: Establish and maintain a resilient and sustainable tax base.

Goal SF 2: Protect and preserve natural assets.

Goal SF 3: Reduce resource consumption and increase conservation.

Goal SF 4: Create a healthy and active community.

Goals and Policies

Goal SF 1 – Establish and maintain a resilient and sustainable tax base.

Wheat Ridge will establish and maintain a resilient tax base that will be able to fund community services. The City will base future economic development strategies and land use decisions on community service expectations and fiscal realities.

Policies:

SF1.1 – Coordinated Planning

The City will coordinate with economic development partners, private developers, and other groups to coordinate land use and fiscal planning.

Strategies:

- A. Review and align zoning regulations in key activity center areas and along primary corridors with the intent to add future employment and commercial land uses, in order to generate revenue and meet existing residential service requirements;
- B. Focus on attracting strong households and a healthy mix of ages within the community; and
- C. Align development impact fees to ensure development and redevelopment “pays its way”.

SF 1.2 – Diverse Revenue Base

The City will work with economic development partners to diversify and broaden the City’s revenue base.

Strategies:

- A. Facilitate the development of local and regional retail and employment that provides a net positive fiscal impact;
- B. Develop programs to encourage local shopping and dining.



Money stays in the community when residents shop and dine locally.

Goal SF 2 – Protect and preserve natural assets.

Wheat Ridge will protect and conserve its natural, scenic, and environmental assets including the urban tree canopy, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Lena Gulch, and other drainage ways.

The Wheat Ridge Greenbelt and the city's numerous lakes and streams provide natural habitats in an urban setting.



Policies:

SF 2.1 – Natural Resource Stewardship

The City will continue to work with Jefferson County to provide stewardship of unique and sensitive natural resources and areas.

Strategies:

- A. Continue floodplain development permit process to limit development in floodplains;
- B. Review and update development code to maintain development buffers and setbacks adjacent to areas with sensitive natural resources (for instance Clear Creek);
- C. Continue coordination with Jefferson County Open Space to acquire and manage lands;
- D. Continue the City's Forestry Program (planning and tree maintenance in the public right-of-way); and
- E. Enact standards for preservation of mature, healthy landscaping and trees, and tree removal mitigation requirements.

Goal SF 3 – Reduce resource consumption and increase conservation.

Wheat Ridge will explore opportunities to reduce consumption of resources and energy and promote conservation in City programs and with private development.



A commitment to sustainability will conserve resources for future generations to utilize and enjoy.

Policies:

SF 3.1 – Sustainability Task Force

The City will appoint a Sustainability Task Force to prioritize and establish goals related to conservation efforts and resource consumption, develop a Sustainability Action Plan, and lead outreach efforts related to community sustainability.

Strategies:

- A. Develop and regularly update a Sustainability Action Plan to address key sustainability topics, measures, and priority actions; and
- B. Provide public outreach to continuously increase awareness and participation in sustainability efforts.

Sustainability Action Plan topics might include:

Solid Waste Reduction

- ♦ Community recycling and composting services
- ♦ Construction waste diversion
- ♦ Resource reuse and exchange

Water Use Reduction

- ♦ Low water use landscaping requirements
- ♦ Water reduction incentives and programs (both landscaping and interior fixtures)
- ♦ Sprinkler system audits
- ♦ Continue park maintenance best management practices

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies

- ♦ Energy efficiency standards
- ♦ Building orientation standards
- ♦ Incentives for renewable energy development

Low Impact Development

- ♦ Stormwater best management practices
- ♦ Parking lot landscaping and placement standards
- ♦ Green roofs

Goal SF 4: Maintain a healthy and active community.

Wheat Ridge will promote a healthy lifestyle and environment for all residents, and encourage opportunities for lifelong activity and engagement.

Recreation programs and facilities contribute to a healthy and active community.



Policies:

SF 4.1 – Physical Activity

The City will continue to work with the existing Live Well Wheat Ridge program, Jefferson County Public Schools, and other partners to promote physical activity and increase recreational opportunities.

Strategies:

- A. Follow policies in the Center for Disease Control's Active Community Environment Initiative (ACES), including disseminating information related to active community environments;
- B. Identify and reduce barriers for active lifestyles (such as enhancing pedestrian connectivity and routes);
- C. Coordinate with health organizations to utilize resource tools such as Health Impact Assessments (HIA) or any other relevant tools and processes to evaluate key development proposals and their health impacts;
- D. Establish and promote Safe Routes to School;
- E. Continue and expand neighborhood Walk and Watch program;
- F. Develop pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods and existing and proposed community activity centers and employment opportunities; and

- G. Investigate and respond to the activity and lifestyle needs of an aging population and young families.

SF 4.2 – Accessible Healthy Foods

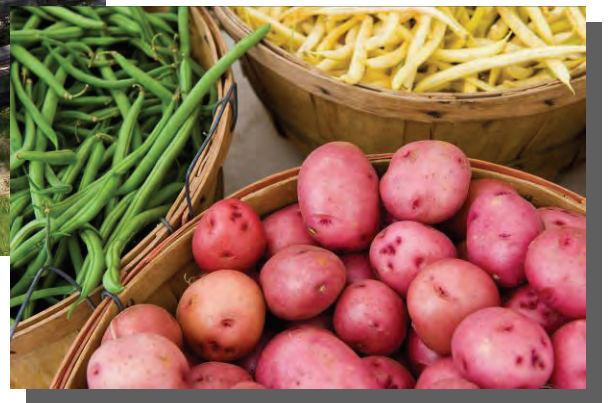
The City will continue to work with the agricultural community, small business owners, and health organizations to provide residents with opportunities for accessible and affordable healthy foods.

Strategies:

- A. Continue investment in community gardens;
- B. Revise regulations to allow farmer's markets, produce stands, and urban agriculture (including shared gardens, composting, and domestic animals on large lots); and
- C. Preserve existing small agricultural operations (keep current agricultural zoning or allow limited agricultural operations in various zoning districts).



The community's gardens and farmer's market provide access to affordable, healthy local foods.



SF 4.3 – Environmental Interaction

The City will encourage community interaction with and opportunities to experience environmental assets.

Strategies:

- A. Coordinate with Jefferson County to maintain and further enhance connections to Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Clear Creek Trail, Crown Hill Regional Open Space, and local parks; and
- B. Encourage new development to incorporate natural amenities on or near the development site (for example outdoor patios, and sitting areas near Clear Creek).



Ensuring a Sustainable Future

The following table summarizes the community goals established in the previous chapters and their impacts and contributions to establishing a sustainable future. Check marks beside each goal indicate whether it ultimately contributes to the betterment of the community's people, the planet and natural environment, or personal and community prosperity.

Table 7: The Plan's Goals and their Relationship to a Sustainable Future

	People	Planet	Prosperity
Economy and Land Use Goals			
Goal ELU1: Make Wheat Ridge a "community of choice" in which to live, work, shop, and recreate.	✓		✓
Goal ELU2: Attract quality retail development and actively retain existing retailers to locate in Wheat Ridge.			✓
Goal ELU3: Retain and diversify local employment.	✓		✓
Goal ELU4: Increase the diversity of land uses.		✓	✓
Goal ELU5: Revitalize key redevelopment areas.			✓
Goal ELU6: Establish community activity centers and a Town Center.	✓		✓
Neighborhoods and Housing Goals			
Goal NH1: Maintain and enhance the quality and character of Wheat Ridge's established neighborhoods.	✓	✓	
Goal NH2: Increase housing options	✓		✓
Goal NH3: Increase investment and stability in Neighborhood Revitalization Areas.	✓		✓
Goal NH4: Stimulate investment and redevelopment in Neighborhood Buffer Areas.	✓		✓
Community Character Goals			
Goal CC1: Create recognizable gateways and Corridors.	✓		✓
Goal CC2: The City of Wheat Ridge will lead the community in quality design.	✓	✓	
Goal CC3: Ensure quality design for development and redevelopment.		✓	✓

	People	Planet	Prosperity
Transportation Goals			
Goal T 1: Provide an integrated transportation system to address all modes of travel and future funding priorities.	✓	✓	✓
Goal T 2: Increase intergovernmental cooperation on regional transportation issues.		✓	✓
Goal T 3: Increase transportation efficiency and options.	✓	✓	
Goal T 4: Improve coordination between transportation improvements and future land use decisions.		✓	✓
Community Services Goals			
Goal CS 1: Provide and maintain quality core community services and facilities.	✓		✓
Goal CS 2: Continue investment in parks, recreation, and open space.	✓	✓	
Goal CS 3: Increase community safety and code enforcement.	✓	✓	
Goal CS 4: Continue coordination with fire districts and utility providers to maintain quality service.	✓	✓	
Goal CS 5: Maintain and improve educational offerings.	✓		✓
Goal CS 6: Continue to support diverse arts and cultural amenities.	✓		✓
Goal CS 7: Increase opportunities for public involvement with City government.	✓		✓
Goal CS 8: Invest in technology infrastructure.			✓
Sustainable Future Goals			
Goal SF 1: Establish and maintain a resilient and sustainable tax base.			✓
Goal SF 2: Protect and preserve natural assets.		✓	
Goal SF 3: Reduce resource consumption and increase conservation.		✓	
Goal SF 4: Create a healthy and active community.	✓		

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10 – Plan Implementation

Introduction

The Envision Wheat Ridge Plan is a starting point for many of the activities the City of Wheat Ridge and its partners will need to undertake to achieve the plan’s vision. This chapter addresses a key aspect of the plan—how the City will implement it. This chapter contains:

1. A summary of the types of actions necessary to achieve the Plan’s goals, such as Code amendments, funding strategies, and partnerships;
2. A Priority Action table, which includes a list of actions for completion within the next five years. The table is intended to be updated periodically;
3. A description of more specific steps the City should undertake to achieve immediate and high priority actions;
4. The procedures for amending this Plan; and
5. Specific subarea plan amendments that are necessary to ensure consistency with this Plan.

What Types of Actions are Necessary?

Plan Implementation

This Plan will be implemented through:

1. Strategic actions and partnerships,
2. Zoning and Development Code amendments,
3. On-going policy decisions, and
4. New programs and funding (based on public support).

Implementing the Plan will require many actions, such as these described below.

Strategic Actions/Partnerships

Much of what should be undertaken for this Plan will involve partnerships and economic development strategies to recruit, attract, and retain business, and ways to provide catalysts to spur redevelopment and investment in key corridors and commercial centers. The third part of this chapter describes the strategic actions and partnerships that may be necessary to accomplish economic development and redevelopment goals for target locations.

Code Amendments

For the City to successfully achieve many of its goals and to be consistent with this Plan, the City will need to amend portions of the Zoning and Development Code. Certain development regulations and zoning should be amended to achieve the development patterns or neighborhood protection this Plan aims to attain. In general, revisions to the Code should occur soon after plan adoption. The third part of this chapter describes focused amendments that could help spur appropriate desirable redevelopment by removing “barriers” and clarifying standards.

On-going Policy Decisions

The Plan identifies a number of policies that will be carried out during day-to-day decisions of City Council, Planning Commission, and staff. These groups will routinely make decisions regarding development proposals and plan amendments and will use the Plan to guide policy decisions as they occur.

New Programs

This Plan establishes a framework for the development of some new programs to carry out the goals. For example, the plan recommends continuing and establishing additional neighborhood-level planning. Recognizing funding limitations, the City will need to weigh issues and availability of funding prior to initiation of any new programs.

New Funding

Some of the goals within this plan may entail establishing a new funding source, reprioritizing general funds, or seeking matching grants from State or Federal sources to leverage local funding. The City will need to continue to monitor public support for new funding sources.

A Guide to Priority Actions

The Priority Action Table, starting on the next page, provides a summary list of the necessary actions to implement this Plan. It identifies the overall actions, the related chapters and policies, and the action's relative level of priority for a five-year timeframe.

Because the intent is to establish a manageable list of City actions, the table does not identify all of the actions identified in previous chapters of this Plan. However, the table still establishes a very ambitious program.

City staff and planning and elected officials will need to update the Priority Action table periodically (i.e., either annually or every two years), to keep the list relevant as actions are completed and to add new ones. In developing its annual work programs, the City may want to expand on the table to assign responsibilities and provide greater specificity.

The last column of the table identifies the **Priority Levels** (or time frame for initiating and completing actions). It should be interpreted as follows:

1 =	Immediate Priority	To be initiated with adoption of the Plan or soon thereafter;
2 =	High Priority	To be initiated as soon as possible and completed within one to two years after Plan adoption;
3 =	Moderate Priority	To be initiated and ideally completed within three to five years after Plan adoption;
O =	Ongoing	Actions that are already occurring or that will occur continually.

The chapter section after the table provides more detailed descriptions for the immediate priority actions.

Table 8: Priority Actions

Strategy	Description of Types of Actions	Chapter/ Goals	Priority
Economy and Land Use Strategies (Ch. 4)			
Promote/market Wheat Ridge	Enhance Wheat Ridge identity through promotion of unique assets (e.g., the greenbelt, unique business districts, events, recent investments such as the hospital renovation, proximity and convenience in the Metro area, established neighborhoods, and other features).	ELU 1.1, 1.2	1/0
Prioritize and assist with infrastructure improvements to spur redevelopment	Prioritize physical enhancements for the following areas: (1) Crossing at Clear Creek, (2) 38 th Avenue Main Street, (3) Kipling corridor, (4) Wadsworth/Town Center, and (5) the Ward Road transit station site. The following section identifies tools and actions.	ELU 1.1, 1.2	1/0
Retain and attract retail (revenue-generating activity)	Develop programs, tools, and partnerships to retain and increase retail and revenue-generating activities in activity centers. The following section identifies tools and actions.	ELU 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4	1
Address zoning and design standards for targeted areas	Amend/clarify commercial and mixed-use districts and design standards to help encourage redevelopment and infill only in targeted activity center areas with high quality design, higher density mixed-use, transitions, buffers, public gathering spaces, and landscaping, etc.	ELU 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2	1
Increase primary job opportunities	Develop programs, tools, partnerships, and funding to increase primary employment opportunities.	ELU 3.1, 3.2	2/0
Guide Town Center development	Amend regulations to accommodate a Town Center with a civic center, retail/services/dining, housing, and possible boutique hotel component. Provide incentives for, find partners, and financing for the center described in this Plan.	ELU 6.2	2
Neighborhoods and Housing Strategies (Ch. 5)			
Support neighborhood and sub-area planning to address neighborhood needs	Use neighborhood-level planning to work with residents to: (a) improve their identity and maintain character and stability (e.g., landscaping, tree protection), and (b) identify necessary infrastructure or other improvements and possible zoning amendments to achieve neighborhood/City goals.	NH 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2	0
Continue partnerships for housing revitalization	Continue working with Wheat Ridge 2020 to develop programs and strategies to promote new housing opportunities to meet the needs of changing households and to attract new residents.	NH 2.1, 4.1	2

Strategy	Description of Types of Actions	Chapter/ Goals	Priority
Maintain and update subarea plans	Make minor amendments to the Fruitdale, Wadsworth Corridor, and Northwest Subarea plans for consistency. Prepare new sub-area plans for other areas.	NH 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2	2
Promote investment in declining residential areas	Continue coordination with Wheat Ridge 2020 and other groups to promote investment and a variety of households in declining neighborhoods.	NH 3.1, 3.2, 4.1	O
Stimulate revitalization in Neighborhood Buffer Areas	Partner with Wheat Ridge 2020, the URA, the private sector, and others to stimulate redevelopment in Neighborhood Buffer Areas and residential areas in need of revitalization (identified through criteria on page 21) and to attract a variety of households to declining neighborhoods.	NH 4.1	O
Community Character & Design Strategies (Ch. 6)			
Improve gateways (image)	Prioritize gateways and enhance community identity through priority gateway improvements, including art, signage and landscaping, in gateway areas and identifying requirements for new development to convey a positive image. Use public/private partnerships.	CC 1.1, 1.2, 2.1	3
Integrate arts and culture in developments (public and private)	In conjunction with the Public Art Plan, modify streetscape standards to include greater art and design guidelines, so that arts are integrated throughout the community's public buildings rights-of-way, and parks. Explore a funding source (e.g., 1% for Arts in public projects).	CS 6.1	2/O
Increase arts and cultural offerings	Continue and enhance City arts and cultural offerings, building on the Public Art Action Plan, to identify measures to improve arts and culture in the community.	CS 6.1	3
Transportation Strategies (Ch. 7)			
Identify pedestrian and bicycle improvements funding	Explore possibilities for a new local funding source for pedestrian and bicycle system improvements, to be able to better tap into state and federal funding.	T 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5	3
Prioritize bicycle corridors (esp. north/south), and make improvements	Prioritize bicycle corridors (particularly north-to-south), identify local funding to match state and federal funding, and build priority bicycle corridors and enhanced trail system connections.	T 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4	3
Coordinate transit service improvements with new redevelopment sites	Coordinate with RTD to improve transit service and particularly to ensure adequate connections as future activity centers (including future rail station) develop.	T 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1	O/3

Strategy	Description of Types of Actions	Chapter/ Goals	Priority
Target road improvements/"Complete Streets"	Prioritize corridors and develop new road cross-sections for priority corridors that accommodate future land uses and all modes of transportation. As future road improvements occur, ensure complete streets are implemented.	T 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 4.1, 4.2	O/2+ and beyond
Provide neighborhood-to-centers bicycle/pedestrian connections	Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods and future activity centers and primary corridors.	T 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1	O/3 and beyond
Provide greenbelt connections (per Transportation Plan)	Implement the Transportation Structure Plan recommendations for connections between parks and the greenbelt.	T 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1	3
Community Services Strategies (Ch. 8)			
Provide access to local government	Provide a diverse range of options for residents to actively engage in the civic process and volunteerism.	CS 7.1	O
Coordinate with non-city service providers	Continue to coordinate with non-city service providers including utility, fire and school districts.	CS 1.1, 4.1, 5.1, 8.1	O
Continue public safety and property maintenance programs	Continue and strengthen programs to enhance community safety and police protection and property maintenance (code enforcement).	CS 3.1	O
Sustainable Future Strategies (Ch. 9)			
Improve standards for natural resource protection	Revise policies and regulations to require tree canopy preservation and replacement and natural resource buffers.	SF 2.1	1
Develop a Sustainability Task Force / Sustainability Action Plan	Appoint a Sustainability Task Force with a mission to develop a Sustainability Action Plan to prioritize the City's activities toward becoming a more sustainable community.	SF 3.1	1-2
Coordinate actions for a Healthy Community	Coordinate with partners (including Jefferson County Health department) to identify strategies to improve community health and access to healthy foods; seek available grant funding to improve walkability, education about physically active community, etc.	SF 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	1*
<i>* This immediate priority is due to the fact that Live Well Wheat Ridge funding will diminish significantly after 2 years. The City should start pursuing funding now if wanting to tap into that source.</i>			

Detailed Strategies

1. Economic Development and Redevelopment Strategies

An Economic Development Strategy

This Plan, and the process to develop it, has continually identified economic development of targeted redevelopment areas as a primary strategy for the City to accomplish its livability, fiscal, image, and identity-related goals. Wheat Ridge needs an economic development strategy that will address the following topics:

Organizational Structure

The strategy should clarify the organizational structure and roles and responsibilities of departments and agencies that address economic development, particularly of City economic development staff, Wheat Ridge 2020, and the Urban Renewal Authority. It should also identify roles related to particular geographic areas where the agencies overlap and work together or where gaps may exist. The strategy should also identify roles and responsibilities of each organization in retaining and attracting new development in retail, housing, and other sectors.

Primary Target Industries

The strategy should identify specific industries and businesses that staff should focus on and steps each organization should undertake in attracting, expanding, and retaining industries and business. For instance, the Fruitdale Subarea Plan suggested gardening and nursery industries as a favorable niche. Other members of the public have suggested industries relating to the hospital and senior services and “green” renewable energy-related industries. The strategy could confirm viability of certain niches.

Short- and Long-Term Priorities

The strategy should confirm, in discussion with policymakers and staff, short- and long-term priorities for redevelopment and geographic areas. For example, redevelopment priorities in the “target areas” should focus on the long-term desires as reflected in the Comprehensive and Sub-Area Plans, while in other commercial and industrial areas, the priority may be to minimize vacancies. This plan identifies five target areas, in order of priority:

Economic Development Strategy

The strategy for Wheat Ridge should address:

1. Organizational Structure
2. Primary Target Industries
3. Short- and Long-Term Priorities

Five Target Redevelopment Areas

The five areas are:

- a. The Crossing at Clear Creek (Cabela’s),
- b. 38th Avenue “Main Street”,
- c. Kipling Corridor,
- d. Wadsworth Corridor/Town Center, and
- e. The Gold Line/Ward Road Station - Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).



- a. The Crossing at Clear Creek (Cabela's),
- b. 38th Avenue "Main Street,"
- c. Kipling Corridor,
- d. Wadsworth Corridor/Town Center, and
- e. The Gold Line/Ward Road Station - Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

Identify Appropriate Financial Tools

Public agencies can employ a number of financing tools to finance public improvements. The special districts, authorities, and other tools described in the following table are a short list of financing tools that are applicable to the redevelopment of key areas in Wheat Ridge. The list is by no means exhaustive and is meant to be a general outline of tools the public sector can use.

Table 9: Financial Tools

	Purpose	Financing Mechanism	Governance
Districts			
General Improvement Districts	Created to construct, install, acquire, operate and maintain certain public improvement facilities	Ad valorem taxes, rates, fees, charges	Mayor and Council are the ex-officio board
Special Improvement District	Created to assess the costs of public improvements to those who are specifically benefited.	Assessments	Municipality
Metropolitan District	Established by developers to service bonds issued to construct public improvements. Ongoing revenues can be used to cover O&M costs	Ad valorem taxes, fees, charges	Quasi-municipal autonomous district board
Business Improvement District	Constructs/maintains public improvements and funds marketing and economic development services.	Ad valorem taxes, property assessments	Appointed or elected board
Local Marketing District	Provides organization, promotion, marketing and management of public events; supports business recruitment, management and development ; coordinates tourism promotion	Fees and charges	Appointed or elected board
Authority			
Urban Renewal Authority	Designated urban renewal area allows for consolidation, demolition, construction, operation/maintenance of public improvements. In rare cases the City could use condemnation.	Sales/property tax revenue increment above pre-established base. The URA enables Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Board appointed by Council
Other			
Public Improvement Fee	Instituted in lieu of or in addition to sales tax and used to finance public improvements / services	Fee charged on sales	Development agreement with City and private contracts with businesses
Tax Rebates	Typically instituted to help defray initial development costs. Subject to negotiation.	NA	Agreement with City
Land Write-Down	A method of encouraging new development offering land at lower than "market value."	NA	Typically found in urban renewal areas

Source: DOLA, ArLand, 2009.

Note: Any levies, taxes, and revenue increases must be instituted under the guidelines of Article X, Section 20 of the State Constitution (TABOR).



The Crossing at Clear Creek is a prime 164-acre regional retail site located west of I-70.

Economic Strategies for Geographic Areas

a. *The Crossing at Clear Creek (Cabela's)*

Background

This site is the best opportunity for Wheat Ridge to start “reinventing” itself. Wheat Ridge faces similar challenges as other inner-ring suburban communities of revitalization and reinvigoration. Redevelopment opportunities in these communities are usually incremental and it is often difficult to change market perceptions on a small project site basis. Because of the site size, The Crossing/Cabela's is Wheat Ridge's best opportunity to not only garner needed sales tax revenues, but to also begin to change market perceptions.

Potential Public Financing Tools

- ♦ Urban Renewal Authority,
- ♦ Metropolitan District,
- ♦ General Improvement District,
- ♦ Public Improvement Fee,
- ♦ Use tax rebates, and
- ♦ Others.

Action Items

The Crossing at Clear Creek is one of Wheat Ridge's top priorities. The City has already been working with partners to facilitate improvements on the site. It will likely take several years for the site to build out.

Short-Term	5 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Coordinate / plan infrastructure with CDOT and other agencies (ongoing) ♦ Create Urban Renewal District and Plan (ongoing/ completed) ♦ Work with Cabela's and master developer in marketing the site at ICSC and other appropriate venues. ♦ Work directly with potential retailers and other commercial services potentially interested in the location. ♦ Work with master developer and tenants in implementing high quality site planning and architectural design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Work with master developer to attract other high quality land uses compatible with the Cabela's master plan area and Wheat Ridge's Comprehensive Plan

b. 38th Avenue “Main Street”

Background

Establishing a small locally oriented retail center at 38th Avenue is a high priority for residents of Wheat Ridge. Challenges include the perception that there is “no market,” checkerboard zoning, the lack of funding for significant improvements, and land assembly. Initial action items are focused on market creation.

Potential Financing Tools

- ♦ Urban Renewal Area,
- ♦ Local Marketing District, and
- ♦ Business Improvement District.

Action Items

While 38th Avenue is important in the community, the issues identified above will make it a challenging and long-term process to facilitate redevelopment.



Continuation of the recent streetscape improvements to 38th Avenue will help create a pedestrian-friendly “Main Street”.

Short-Term	5 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Prepare a 38th Avenue Subarea Plan. ♦ Public private partnership with the merchants and owners along 38th Avenue to start making the area attractive for private investment (i.e., local marketing district, merchants association or special events committee). ♦ Work with a commercial broker and medical center to identify a potential location for redevelopment of a medically-oriented office building. ♦ Identify interim uses that would be acceptable to the merchants and the community. ♦ Work with broker to identify appropriate location(s) for neighborhood-oriented restaurant anchor(s) to help attract local residents to the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Develop a Streetscape Plan. ♦ Attract / work with a private developer to identify potential assemblages and redevelopment potentials. ♦ Business Improvement District to help fund public improvements and beautification efforts.



The Kipling Corridor features several large vacant sites which would be suitable for infill.

c. Kipling Corridor

Background

The Wheat Ridge Recreation Center located along the Kipling Corridor serves as one of the informal centers of the community. Parts of the Kipling Corridor are also within Wheat Ridge’s new urban renewal area. The Kipling I-70 intersection has good regional access and visibility and is potentially suitable for a regional commercial use or mixed-use center.

Potential Financing Tools (long-term)

- ♦ Urban Renewal Authority,
- ♦ Metropolitan District,
- ♦ General Improvement District,
- ♦ Special Improvement District,
- ♦ Public Improvement Fee,
- ♦ Use tax rebates, and
- ♦ Others for specific projects.

Action Items

Kipling appears to be an “easier” candidate geographic location for facilitating redevelopment because there are some vacant parcels and the corridor is a bit less fragmented than other redevelopment areas. It will still take many years to affect desirable redevelopment.

Short-Term	5 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Begin to identify vacant, underutilized and other suitable parcels for redevelopment along the Kipling corridor. ♦ Begin a dialogue with relevant property owners and businesses about their future plans, relocation, and redevelopment potential. ♦ Identify viable potential assemblages. ♦ Work with a broker to identify potential regional commercial users. ♦ Begin dialogue with private developer on redevelopment potentials along the corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Develop a Kipling Corridor Subarea Plan, if appropriate. ♦ The Kipling Corridor is one of Wheat Ridge’s key areas. Care should be taken with interim projects along the corridor to ensure that they are compatible with the Comprehensive Plan.

d. Wadsworth Corridor/ Town Center

Background

The Wadsworth Corridor between 38th and 44th Avenues has been identified as the preferred location for a Town Center that would have a small civic component such as a library, retail development, and places for public gathering. The URA owns the site just east of the 1st Bank at 44th and Wadsworth and has been working with public and private partners to foster its development. Redevelopment of the Wadsworth Corridor hinges on actions by CDOT to widen and/or improve the road.

Potential Financing Tools

Specific parcels may require land write-down assistance, environmental remediation, and assistance with current property ownership. Other tools to encourage redevelopment in this corridor area are listed below. Their use will depend on the specific situation.

- ♦ Metropolitan Districts,
- ♦ General Improvement Districts,
- ♦ Urban Renewal Area,
- ♦ Special Improvement Districts,
- ♦ Public Improvement Fees, and
- ♦ Use tax rebates.

Action Items

Redevelopment of Wadsworth has long been important to Wheat Ridge. However, land vacancies and other complexities of the area have made it challenging to facilitate redevelopment. Consequently it is seen as a longer-term undertaking than other areas of the City.



A future Town Center proposed along the Wadsworth Corridor will be a convergence of private development and community gathering spaces.

Short-Term	5 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Identify vacant, underutilized and other suitable parcels for redevelopment along corridor. ♦ Begin a dialogue with relevant property owners and businesses about their future plans, relocation, and redevelopment. ♦ Continue to work with CDOT on Wadsworth Boulevard requirements and highway concerns. ♦ Work with Exempla Lutheran on interest in developing office buildings along the Wadsworth Corridor or in a location close to the Town Center area. ♦ Discuss with library district their potential interest in opening a branch library in/near the Town Center location. ♦ Work with other potential users to assess interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Identify viable potential assemblages. ♦ Attract / work with a private developer to identify potential assemblages and redevelopment potentials. ♦ The Town Center area is one of Wheat Ridge's key areas. Care should be taken with interim projects along the corridor to ensure that they are compatible with the Comprehensive and Sub-area plan.



The future Ward Road Station area will be a transit-oriented mixed-use setting with convenient transportation options.

e. The Gold Line/Ward Road Station - Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Site

Background

This site is seen as having longer term importance to the City; however, potential projects are not likely to materialize until after the commuter rail line is close to completion (Gold Line station estimated completion for 2016).

Potential Public Financing Tools

- ♦ Urban Renewal Authority,
- ♦ Metropolitan District,
- ♦ General Improvement District,
- ♦ Special Improvement District,
- ♦ Public Improvement Fee,
- ♦ Use tax rebates, and
- ♦ Others for the specific TOD project.

Action Items

Even though the area around the station will likely not develop until 2016, the City can begin taking actions in the next several years to accomplish the desired mixed-use pattern and the station area and to avoid steps that would make it more difficult in later years.

Short-Term	5 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Monitor and stay involved with ongoing RTD / Gold Line activity to ensure that Wheat Ridge's interests are upheld. ♦ Monitor development at the Arvada Ridge station and other Gold Line stations. ♦ Work with property owners to begin to assess environmental conditions, remediation, other infrastructure needs, and potential costs. ♦ Develop an overlay zone or new TOD zoning district (See "Code Amendments"). ♦ Allow "short-term" uses, such as storage, and parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Update the subarea plan. Include market analysis.

2. Code Amendments to Achieve Economic and Land Use Goals

Overview

Wheat Ridge’s Zoning and Development Code has been in place since the 1970’s and has been amended periodically over the years to achieve a variety of goals. Recently, the City undertook a comprehensive reorganization of the Code but generally did not amend the regulations, aside from some precise changes in residential zoning districts and a few procedural requirements.

In general, the perception of Wheat Ridge’s development review process is that it has become more challenging over the years—in part because Wheat Ridge is mostly built out, but also because the Code and regulatory structure is overly complex, somewhat out-of-date (standards and procedure), and unpredictable. It also contains regulatory “barriers” to achieving desirable patterns, such as mixed-use development.

The sections below address some focused amendments the City could undertake to address Code deficiencies and/or inconsistencies with this Plan. Fortunately, the City has some good foundational resources to address mixed-use and streetscape design (e.g., its two design manuals and the Planned Mixed Use Development (PMUD) zoning district), so suggested amendments will not begin with a “blank slate”. The City has also recently addressed and amended problems in residential zoning districts, so the zoning districts, subdivision standards, and other residential standards in the Code are of lesser priority than commercial/mixed-use areas. Also, the City can build on and promote strengths, such as agricultural (estate-style) zoning and a variety of residential lot size options.

Code Amendments - Mixed Use Centers and Commercial Corridors

Background

Wheat Ridge needs to update its Zoning and Development Code to accommodate contemporary development patterns and market demands (such as pedestrian-oriented mixed-use), and to maintain particular features of neighborhoods that residents value. Some of the problems and issues are further described below.

Lack of Mixed-Use Zoning to Implement the Plan

Currently the Zoning and Development Code lacks mixed-use zoning districts (or effective overlay districts) and standards to implement the desired character of Centers and Corridors proposed through the Structure Plan and in Chapter 3. While the Code contains a Planned Mixed Use Development (PMUD)

Code Issues to Address

Some of the issues that the city should address to improve its code include:

- ♦ Lack of mixed-use zoning districts to implement the Structure Plan,
- ♦ One-size-fits-all commercial zoning,
- ♦ Over-reliance on Planned Development (PD) process,
- ♦ Architectural and Site Design Manual that has unclear application and relationship to zoning and in need of clearer site planning standards,
- ♦ Streetscape and Architectural Design Manual with limited usefulness in Wheat Ridge’s built environment,
- ♦ Industrial zoning that is inflexible and not in alignment with the Structure Plan,
- ♦ Residential zoning districts that are generally working but may need fine-tuning as addressed through neighborhood planning.

district, the PMUD would likely need to be adapted to accomplish the aims of the Structure Plan that suggests different character districts for different corridors (e.g., along the Wadsworth Corridor versus along 38th Avenue).

Commercial Zoning

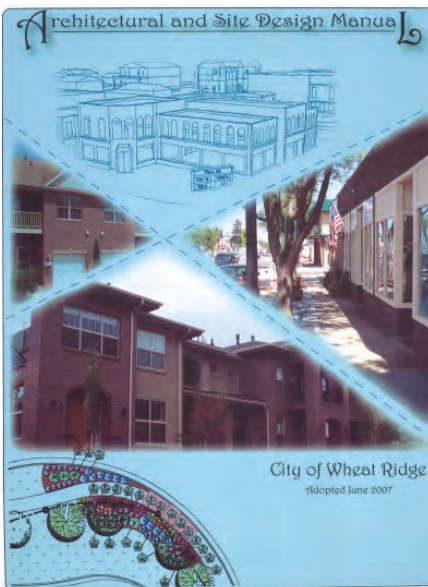
The commercial zoning districts (e.g., C-1) are somewhat dated and universally applied along corridors. They tend to foster “strip commercial” patterns of the 70s, rather than advancing more contemporary commercial development patterns (such as buildings near the street, integrated landscaping, and walkways and plazas). The application of commercial zoning also does not correspond with the general pattern and location of centers and corridors identified on the Structure Plan. The C-1 zoning district does not allow residential. The one-size-fits all approach to commercial zoning generally does not work well, if the City is trying to foster different types of places being built over time. Additionally, certain allowed uses may not be appropriate in target redevelopment areas, such as automotive and drive-through facilities.

Planned Developments – Over Reliance and Unpredictability

In addition, the Code promotes over reliance on Planned Developments (PDs) for new development instead of using straight zoning districts and standards. This means that development projects require multiple review steps and are subject to a high degree of discretion rather than objective standards. As a result, predictability for developers, neighborhoods, and decision-makers is low. In addition, the requirement for rezoning to PDs adds another step to the process and adds uncertainty for new developments, which can be expensive and unpredictable for businesses and industries and frustrating for neighbors.

Architectural and Site Design Manual Use Unclear

Finally, the City’s Architectural and Site Design Manual begins to address many issues related to urban design, mixed-use, and walkability; however, its relationship to zoning districts and standards in the Code is unclear, and the process by which a developer should use it is vague. For example, its guidelines do not supersede underlying standards such as landscape requirements. Site planning standards also need fine tuning as they apply to certain uses.



The Architecture and Site Design Manual's relationship to zoning and application is somewhat unclear.

General Recommendations for New Mixed-Use Zoning Districts

New mixed use zoning districts could help facilitate desired development. The City could pursue several approaches to mixed-use zoning.

Summit Meeting Regarding Mixed-Use

First, the City could start by holding a Mixed-Use Summit Meeting (and/or mailed information and survey) with property owners in each target area (e.g., 38th Avenue Main Street, Kipling Corridor, Wadsworth Corridor, and TOD site, respectively) to discuss potential options. Discuss whether it is more palatable and easier to proactively rezone properties in the corridors, or to provide incentives for incremental rezoning to new mixed-use zoning district(s).

Develop New Mixed-Use Zoning

Drawing from the Architectural and Site Design Manual, the City could develop new mixed-use zoning district(s). Standards would not only ensure quality architectural design, but also address site planning. For example, they could require new projects to provide transitions or buffers near single family neighborhoods, allow for shared parking, relax front setback standards so buildings relate to the street, provide ample pedestrian features, and encourage (not just allow) public gathering spaces and public art. New projects would also need to maintain essential components of Wheat Ridge's character, including landscaping and trees, and other appropriate themes.

Determine how/whether to rezone the C-1, R-C designated properties along the corridors and possibly some of the R-3 or N-C, so that the corridors are more logical and provide buffers/transitions for neighborhoods.

Alternatively, the City could implement the mixed-use district through an overlay district(s) that supersedes underlying zoning.

Restrict Inappropriate Uses in Target Areas

Prevent certain uses along the corridors in areas where they are not appropriate, including automotive-related and drive-through facilities, and outdoor storage adjacent to the street.

Recommendations for Target Sites

Allow Vibrant Mix within Regional Commercial at the Crossing at Clear Creek

This Plan has identified the Crossing at Clear Creek as a future regional commercial center that should entail a vibrant mix of commercial uses with supporting services, offices, and possibly some multi-family housing. Commercial development would be the predominant land use, as established in the approved Outline Development Plan (ODP). The City (with the owner) should consider amending the ODP prior to the Final Development Plan to allow for the desired mix of supporting uses to realize a vibrant and inviting site and accommodate some community needs, such as primary jobs and senior housing.

Allow for Mixed-Use Primary Commercial Corridors (Kipling and Wadsworth)

The Structure Plan identifies two primary corridors as appropriate for mixed use: Kipling and Wadsworth. Both are generally zoned C-1, but not entirely. The City should develop a new Primary Corridor mixed-use zoning district (or overlay), with standards adapted from the PMUD. The district could provide incentives for high quality development/redevelopment (e.g., reduce parking requirements, or ease front-yard setback requirements, so buildings can be near the street), and encourage offices and lofts on upper floors. At the same time, standards for tree planting, quality architecture, and transitions to neighborhoods need to be rigorous.

Achieve “Main Street” and Neighborhood Corridor Mixed-Use (38th and 44th Avenues)

To achieve the desired smaller-scale mixed-use described in the Structure Plan for the 38th and 44th Avenue corridors in particular, the City (after meeting in the Summit), should amend the Code to develop a new Neighborhood Corridor mixed-use zoning district(s) or overlay(s) that is lower intensity than the Primary Corridor zoning district and allows for residential on upper floors and behind commercial development, again relaxing parking and possibly setbacks along the street and for side-yards. The zoning district should include strong standards to address building relationship to street, sidewalks, and provision of public gathering places.

Develop T.O.D. Mixed-Use Zoning District for Ward Road - TOD Site

To implement the future station area Transit-Oriented Development, develop a new T.O.D. zoning district to emphasize

commercial, employment, and some multi-family residential (e.g., loft-style) to be served by the transit station. Allow for temporary transitional uses on the site (e.g., parking, temporary structure warehouses, storage lots), because the station area development will not occur until 2016 and beyond. Do not approve housing in the area unless it is part of a planned development that includes a mix of transit-oriented uses.

Code Amendments - Employment Areas

Background

Industrial Zoning

The industrial (I) zoning district does not provide for flexibility to accomplish office and professional uses or light manufacturing, and locations of the I district do not align with the employment areas identified on the Structure Plan.

Recommendations

The City should consider amending the Code as follows:

Develop a New Employment (E) District

Develop a new Employment (E) district that allows for light manufacturing, flex office space, and certain commercial services to support offices (e.g., dining, mail, other services). Apply the zoning district to areas designated as Employment on the Structure Plan. Up zone A districts north of I-70 to allow for and encourage light industrial, consistent with the Structure Plan designation that is generally east of Tabor and west of Kipling. Up zone the A district north of I-70 along Ward Road to be consistent with the Structure Plan designation and the Northwest Subarea Plan.

Modify the Industry (I) District

Modify the Industry (I) district, assessing if all the allowed or special review uses are still appropriate (e.g., commercial uses, contractor plant or storage yard, car wash, auto service repair). Add contemporary uses (e.g., offices/flex), and consider whether other light manufacturing uses should be allowed by right instead of through special use review.

3. Neighborhood Goals/Planning Strategies

Neighborhood Revitalization Area Designation Process

This section describes the rationale and method to designate a neighborhood area.

Why Designate a Neighborhood Revitalization Area

It is not necessary to designate an area as a Neighborhood Revitalization Area to enable an individual property to develop under current zoning; however, it might be beneficial to designate an area as a precursor to a zoning change, for example to a higher density residential zoning or mixed-use category.

How to Designate a Neighborhood Revitalization Area

A property owner, neighborhood representative, city staff person, or elected or appointed official of the city may nominate a neighborhood area for designation as a Neighborhood Revitalization Area. For an area to be designated, it must be at least one-half acre in area and located next to a public right-of-way, and it must meet two of the following criteria;

- A. The area shows increasing incompatibility of uses,
- B. The area has infrastructure needs (e.g., utilities in disrepair),
- C. The area has increasing maintenance problems,
- D. The area has higher than city average crime rates,
- E. The area has lower rates of owner occupancy than other city neighborhoods.

The Planning Commission will review the Neighborhood Revitalization Area designation nomination and criteria and determine whether to officially designate an area or not.

Changes to the Future Land Use Plan

Once an area has been designated and approved as a Neighborhood Revitalization Area, it will be added to the Future Land Use Plan through the Minor Plan Amendment process.

Neighborhood Planning

This Plan has suggested the City develop a neighborhood planning program that would enable neighborhoods to organize at a “grass roots” level to identify conservation features and necessary physical improvements. The City should establish a process by which neighborhoods can apply to work with the City to prepare a plan, apply for small grant funding, and propose zoning amendments to be completed through a public process.

Code Amendments – Residential Zone Districts

Background

The City has recently addressed and amended residential zoning districts and dimensional standards, so these parts of the Code may be of lesser priority. However there is still some unnecessary complexity with multiple zoning districts and a checkerboard pattern within neighborhoods. Several Code amendments that could help achieve plan and neighborhood goals are described below.

Recommendations

Consolidate Seldom-Used Residential (R) Categories

The multiple categories of zoning add complexity and are somewhat confusing. Consider consolidation of certain categories that are rarely used (such as R-2A with R-2).

Clarify Residential Checkerboard Zoning

Determine if certain R-3 areas should be rezoned (e.g., to R-2) to be more consistent with established neighborhoods. Also, determine how and where to allow small neighborhood-oriented commercial uses along collector streets. Should be allowed in R-3 zoning (on neighborhood collectors)?

Retain and Provide Trees

This topic is further addressed under Strategies for Natural Resource Protection, below.

Retain/Promote Agricultural Districts South of I-70

Background

Many large properties in the western part of the City are zoned Agriculture. The Agricultural (A) zoning districts can be viewed as



Communities are increasingly seeking ways to promote local produce.

an asset, in an era where people are showing renewed interest in local food and energy production.

Recommendation

Retain Residential Agricultural Districts South of I-70

Retain the A districts south of I-70 that align with neighborhoods on the Structure Plan. Promote the areas as Metro Area Agricultural Areas appropriate for greenhouses, small-scale food production, small-scale energy production (such as solar panels), and the like, continuing to allow estate-style residential.

Otherwise, revisit the zoning district allowed uses to ensure they are appropriate and consistent with the subarea plans and intent of this Plan.

4. Transportation Strategies

Background

This Plan recognizes that achieving the transportation goals and connections on the Transportation Structure Plan will be a long-term assignment. This is due to limited local funding and necessity to coordinate with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on the arterial improvements and “complete streets”.

Short-Term Recommendations

Coordination with CDOT

On-going coordination is necessary and important to achieve streets that will accommodate multiple forms of transportation (i.e., vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit).

Prioritizing Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements

Throughout the process of developing this Plan, the public has repeatedly suggested that bicycle improvements and some pedestrian improvements are important, particularly those identified on the Transportation Structure Plan. Prioritizing routes is a necessary early implementation step.

Local Funding for Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Improvements

Another early implementation step will be to identify local funding sources. Participants during the planning effort have expressed interest in seeking additional funding to provide citywide bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The City could slightly re-apportion local



Identifying bicycle routes is a priority.

transportation funds to put Wheat Ridge more on par with neighboring jurisdictions – Arvada and Lakewood – that provide funding for bicycle and pedestrian modes at a slightly higher rate than the City. Wheat Ridge residents may even be willing to support local funding (taxation) for specifically-identified improvements, such as north-south bicycle improvements, and connections within the fragmented pedestrian system along neighborhood collector streets. The City should consider polling residents and businesses over coming years to determine support for local funding.

Dedication Requirements/Streetscape Design Manual Amendments

While the Streetscape Manual contains helpful background and contextual information about Wheat Ridge, and guidance appropriate to “greenfield” (large vacant parcels) development situations, the requirements for dedication do not apply well in a built out environment where isolated properties redevelop. Using the approach set forth in the Streetscape and Architectural Design Manual it would take decades for the City to accomplish connected sidewalks and cohesive street design. The City should explore alternative dedication (fee in lieu requirements) that could be used on a district-wide basis.

5. Natural Resource Protection and Conservation Strategies

Background

The Code does not contain tree canopy protection standards.

Recommendations

The City could take several angles to achieve resource protection and conservation goals.

Tree Conservation Standards

Develop new standards to conserve mature, healthy trees and replace tree canopy. Standards would apply to new development.

Remove Sustainability Barriers

Remove barriers in the Code to achieving “sustainability” goals, such restrictions or extra process to install solar panels or small wind turbines. Allow for gardening/small food production, and possibly small fowl in appropriate residential districts.



Wheat Ridge was the first Denver metro area community to be designated as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Plan Updates and Amendments

The planning process is ongoing and does not stop when the Comprehensive Plan is adopted. Additional elements or planning studies may be necessary to address new issues or opportunities from time-to-time, and the City may need to update the plan as conditions change, and to keep it relevant by updating it on a five-year time schedule.

Plan Updates—Every Five Years

For this Comprehensive Plan to serve the City well over time, the City must periodically review and amend it to reflect changes in the community. A plan update approximately every five years will enable the City to assess changes in economic conditions, development trends, and community values, and to validate whether the vision and goals are still relevant and add new ones as changing conditions merit.

The City can determine whether to initiate an update depending on changing economy, environment, housing affordability, traffic congestion, local priorities, projected growth, or other conditions. A Plan Update will then include a thorough re-evaluation of the vision, goals, and policies as well as review and update of all information. An update should include ample and appropriate opportunities for involvement by the public, boards and commissions, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and other affected interests. The update may result in changes or removal of policies, and new additions in some instances and will provide new implementation strategies.

Minor Plan Amendments

The City will follow a separate process for Plan Amendments—to be performed on a yearly or periodic basis as needed, but no more than four times per year. Plan amendment requests by City Council, City staff, Planning Commission and annexations and Neighborhood Revitalization Area designations may be initiated any time.

Plan Amendments may include revisions to one or more sections of the Comprehensive Plan as a result of adoption of subarea plans or a specific issue/policy plan, or by directive from City Council or Planning Commission, or upon request by staff or a landowner or development applicant. Plan Amendments may include changes to the Structure Plan map. Small non-substantive corrections to text errors do not require process or criteria.

Process for Minor Plan Amendments

The process for making these amendments is described below.

1. All Plan Amendments shall be considered by the Planning Commission.
2. Based on its consideration of the recommendations from staff and evidence from public hearings, the Planning Commission could then adopt the Plan Amendment (with or without further revisions) or reject it.

Criteria for Minor Plan Amendments

When considering a plan amendment (other than minor corrections), the City shall consider the following criteria and make a finding that the amendment meets the intent of the criteria:

1. The existing Plan is in need of the proposed amendment because of changing circumstances or conditions;
2. Strict adherence to this Plan would result in a situation neither intended nor in keeping with the goals and policies of this Plan;
3. The proposed amendment is compatible with the surrounding area, and the goals and policies of this Plan;
4. The proposed amendment will have a positive benefit (or impacts that can be mitigated) on fiscal balance, economic development, transportation, services and facilities, and is compatible with planned service provision; and
5. The proposed Plan amendment will promote the public welfare and will be consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.

Subarea Plan Amendments

For existing Subarea plans to align with the vision, goals and policies in this Comprehensive Plan, the following Subarea Plan amendments are recommended:

Northwest Subarea Plan

The Northwest Subarea Plan generally corresponds with the goals, policies, and Structure Plan map contained in this Comprehensive Plan. However, the City should amend the Preferred Future Land Use map and recommended mix of uses in the Northwest Subarea Plan to reflect the proposed Employment/Commercial Center with new emphasis on increasing primary employment opportunities in this area, as shown on the Structure Plan.

Wadsworth Corridor Plan

The City should revise the Wadsworth Corridor Plan to reflect the new Community Commercial Center locations shown on the Structure Plan. The Wadsworth Corridor Plan references a future Town Center development in the same location at this plan, but the Corridor Plan should reflect the desired uses and character within this center, as well as its connection to the proposed Main Street Corridor on 38th Avenue.

Fruitdale Subarea Plan

The Fruitdale Subarea Plan is generally consistent with this Plan. The City should amend the Fruitdale Subarea Plan to reflect the proposed Neighborhood Commercial Corridor and Neighborhood Commercial Center along 44th Avenue (as shown on the Structure Plan) and the proposed north/south bicycle and pedestrian connections through the subarea (as shown on the Transportation Structure Plan).