GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS
THE FORT LUPTON BUSINESS CORRIDOR PLAN
Ft. Lupton, Colorado
2004
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY OF FORT LUPTON

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Message from City Council:

The City Council of the City of Fort Lupton is pleased to endorse this economic development plan. By adopting this plan, the Council recognizes that all citizens of the City benefit directly when our businesses are healthy and generating sales tax. For example, the City’s general fund receives approximately as much revenue from sales tax as all other taxes combined. The general fund provides key services that our citizens demand.

This plan includes tasks and projects that range from simple to complex; inexpensive to luxurious; practical to visionary. Some of the goals and projects in the Plan are already implemented, some are underway, some will evolve, and some may never be realized. Adoption of this plan is not to be interpreted as a mandate for municipal funding and completion of each task. This plan is a roadmap to be used for future guidance. Decisions regarding implementation and funding should be made with the end goal of benefiting as many citizens as possible.

The Council also recognizes that economic development is needed for the entire City and not simply the specific corridors contained in the study area. However, tough choices regarding the scope of the plan needed to be made in the interest of fiscal responsibility and current budget constraints. It is the hope of Council that the plan presented will give the greatest return for every dollar invested. This plan should be viewed as the first step toward a comprehensive approach to economic development for the community.

The City of Fort Lupton is a community that is continually moving forward with high aspirations. In a small community with limited resources, public/private partnerships are essential. This plan was created through a public/private partnership. The City Council would like to thank the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Lupton Development Corporation for their financial contributions. Successful implementation of this plan will also hinge upon successful public/private partnerships and active participation from property owners and business owners alike.

On Behalf of the Fort Lupton City Council,

S. David Norcross, Mayor
1 INTRODUCTION

This master plan addresses Fort Lupton’s primary commercial areas – the Highway 52 corridor from US 85 to Denver Avenue, and the 6 blocks of Denver Avenue north of Highway 52 (the ‘Downtown’).

There are a number of vital, durable businesses in these commercial areas, but collectively, they face a number of challenges:

- aging buildings, many of which have not been well preserved or updated;
- a mixture of building styles so diverse as to prevent either area from having an overall character or image;
- the sidewalks are adequate in some areas, but they generally lack amenities that would make an attractive pedestrian setting;
- vacant lots and single family homes break the continuity of commercial facades;
- traffic levels that at times discourage local patronage;
- economic pressure from the developing business park on Highway 52 and Rollie Ave.;
- competition with emerging growth centers to the south and west of Fort Lupton.

Throughout the U. S., downtowns are being rediscovered as an important part of community living, specifically in small towns. In fact, in many new shopping centers, developments are being patterned after the outdoor, street-oriented atmosphere of a typical small town main street.

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![Diagram of Commercial Corridor Master Plan components.](image-url)
Notwithstanding the many challenges facing Ft. Lupton, we also have many of the key ingredients for successful commercial areas. This document provides a vision of the potential for both Highway 52 and the Denver Avenue 'Downtown' and specific implementation actions to help bring about that vision. It includes both short- and long-term strategies for revitalization. It must be remembered that this is a long-term process. It will take time for the market forces to materialize and it will take time to implement the needed improvements to take advantage of them. Therefore, this is a long-range plan and it is intended to be implemented over a 20 to 30 year period. Like any plan, it needs to be constantly reviewed and updated as conditions change and new ideas emerge. It won't happen overnight, and it won't be easy, but the success of our commercial areas is important for Ft. Lupton's future and we can't afford to fail.
2 DOWNTOWNS

"Why do we care about our older, traditional commercial areas?" "Shouldn't we just let the property owners and the 'free market' determine their future?" There are a variety of reasons that many communities are taking positive steps to reinforce their downtown commercial areas:

1. **Downtowns represent a significant capital investment.** According to recent records of the County assessor, Denver Avenue has an assessed value of $6.9 million and the Highway 52 commercial area has an assessed value of $11.8 million, a total of $18.7 million, not including the public investment in roads, drainage and utilities!

2. **Downtowns are a significant contributor to the City's taxes.** In 2002, the downtown area contributed $280,000 in property taxes and approximately $250,000 in sales taxes. With greater patronage, this amount has the potential to be even higher.

3. **Downtowns represent a link to our historical roots.** Over and above the dollars and cents, downtowns are a valuable reflection of our past, and our social institutions. Cities that take pride in their downtowns seem to have more of a sense of community than suburban communities with no central focus.

4. **Downtowns often provide an important economic and social interaction.** Perhaps the best support for preserving downtowns is that after three decades of indoor shopping malls, developers are coming full circle and creating outdoor shopping malls that resemble downtowns. They realize that there is something inherently valuable in the outdoor walking experience that cannot be replicated in an indoor environment.

5. **Competitive downtowns are never the result of "free market forces".** In today's regulatory environment, any major land use decision is affected by many rules, regulations and requirements. For example, most cities have revised parking standards that reflect the conditions at shopping centers, but they are often too high for the stores in a multiple...
use environment such as downtowns. Similarly, the suburban shopping centers that have forced many downtowns into economic decline are typically developed on less expensive farmland land on the periphery of town, which is made accessible through public road and utility extensions that, in reality, are a form of public subsidy to shopping centers. It is difficult for rehabilitation of downtown to compete with these lower rural land costs. Also, we are gradually realizing that the result of lower density rural development is sprawl—which generates high traffic, increases road costs and diminishes air quality. The regulatory environment has a significant impact on the form and function of our communities.
3 FT. LUPTON'S LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

3.1 Historic Context

Fort Lupton’s core business area has gone through a number of economic cycles and its focus has shifted over time. From a frontier crossroads, Main Street became a bustling stop on a railroad line. Eventually, automobile traffic to and from Denver shifted the commercial focus one block west to Denver Avenue. The construction of Highway 85 bypass drew traffic away from Denver Avenue to Highway 52, which connects the Boulder/Longmont areas to eastern recreation areas. The increased traffic attracted businesses and restaurants to Highway 52. The recent development of a new Safeway, Community Center, a Recreation Center and a planned business park continues to shift the “downtown” focus away from Denver Avenue toward the eastern segment of Highway 52.

3.2 Regional Context

On a regional scale, urban growth is marching slowly northward from Denver and eastward from the I-25 Boulder/Greeley/Fort Collins corridor. This growth is just reaching Brighton, to the south, and Frederick/Firestone/Dacono, to the west, of Fort Lupton. This is evidenced by a dramatic increase in residential development in these two communities. From 1990 to 2000 the Tri-Cities (Frederick/Dacono/Firestone) collectively grew by 62% (from 4,500 to 7,400), while Brighton grew by 47% (from 14,200 to 20,800), compared to Fort Lupton’s 39% growth during the same period. Brighton’s residential development is now reaching a critical threshold sufficient to attract major ‘big box’ retailers, such as Home Depot and Wal-Mart. This in turn is making
Brighton even more attractive as residential community with a full range of commercial services.

From a regional perspective, it is clear that Fort Lupton is in the path of development. However, the recent slowdown of the U.S. economy has also slowed down growth along the Front Range. This slower rate of growth, and land costs that are no longer escalating rapidly, are causing development to slow as well. That is, rather than leaping ahead to buy/develop cheap land to stay ahead of new markets, commercial development is moving more cautiously, focusing on areas that already have significant residential growth to support it. Commercial development that, in the past, might have been attracted to the growth potential of Fort Lupton, is now content with areas that have already experience residential growth, such as Brighton. As a result, Fort Lupton’s growth has slowed somewhat and its potential as a commercial center has been delayed. Whereas in the past Fort Lupton’s traffic volumes might have attracted major retailers, they now seem more interested in waiting until local residential development reaches a level sufficient to support additional retail.

3.3 Projected Growth

From 1990 to 2000, Fort Lupton grew from 5,200 to 7,200, a growth increase of 39%. Fort Lupton is projected to keep growing at a fairly aggressive pace. In a growth scenario developed in conjunction with the City’s 2000 Transportation Plan, FH&U\(^1\) estimated that Fort Lupton will reach 12,000 population by 2020, an annual increase of 3.5%. That suggests that Fort Lupton will eventually reach a population that will support a greater level of commercial development than currently exists.

In conjunction with this growth, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig projects a continued growth in traffic along both the Highway 52 and Denver Avenue corridors. This will be an increased

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\(^1\) Fort Lupton Transportation Plan, January 2000, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig.
attraction for businesses to locate in these corridors, assuming parking and access issues can be resolved.

3.4 Lots of Traffic...and More to Come

Traffic represents potential shoppers. In this respect, more traffic is better, as long as it is also convenient to park and appealing to walk around.

Traffic projections by Felsburg Holt & Ullevig\(^2\) suggest that traffic levels on Denver Avenue (near Hwy 52) will increase from a current 11,000 vehicles per day (vpd) to 14,000 vpd by 2020, a 27% increase. This will put additional pressure on Denver Avenue, but appears to be within the street’s traffic capacity at acceptable levels of service. This will be a benefit to Denver Avenue merchants as long as parking is convenient and the traffic speed doesn’t make the area undesirable for walking.

While Denver Avenue traffic will increase significantly, Highway 52 traffic is projected to more than double! The central portion of Highway 52 is predicted to increase from its current 13,000 vpd to 28,000 vpd, an increase of 115%. This creates a different kind of problem for the businesses along Highway 52. FH&U suggested that this volume would eventually require additional lanes, which will require widening of Highway 52 to 6 lanes. This will input the buildings close to the highway and some may be forced to relocate.

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\(^2\) Op cit.

Figure 7: Existing and projected traffic capacities. (Source: FH&U)
4 "1st STREET" (HIGHWAY 52)

4.1 First impressions

First impressions are important to any community. Impressions of Fort Lupton from the north, south and west begin at the US 85 Bridge. The overpass is a symbolic 'gateway' into the town. However, after passing under the bridge, or exiting US 85, one is confronted with a confusing array of advertising signs and assortment of buildings in various conditions with a wide variation in setbacks. There is also a generally low level of maintenance of the outdoor spaces—parking lots, vacant and overgrown lots, empty tree planters, etc. This creates a first impression of lack of personal care and community pride.

Figure 8: A first impression of Fort Lupton – the view entering from the west on Hwy 52.

A community-wide effort at sprucing up the gateways and major corridors through town should be a first, inexpensive first step toward upgrading Fort Lupton’s image.

A second, more significant action is to formally create a 'gateway' to Fort Lupton. A dramatic effect can be achieved by capitalizing on the 'gateway' created by the US 85 overpass and adding design elements. Figure 9 is a sketch illustrating one possible expression of a new entry to Ft. Lupton. There are other variations that could be considered, both more and less elaborate. Bridge improvements should be combined with landscape walls and tree/shrubs/flower planting at the key street corners both east and west of the overpass. Any action at this location will require cooperation and coordination with CDOT.
Figure 9: Concept illustration of gateway feature at US85 overpass.

Figure 10: A concept plan view of the 'gateway' feature shown above.
4.2 Future Highway Widening

Highway 52 is, and will remain, an auto-oriented roadway. The Ft. Lupton Transportation Master Plan predicts a four-fold increase in traffic for the in-town section, and recommends that the roadway be eventually widened (by 2020) to a 6-lane roadway with a 120’ right-of-way. This would significantly change the character of the street and would have a significant impact on many of the businesses along the corridor:

1. A six-lane roadway through the heart of town will create a street with very little ‘main street’ character. Wide roads, with few traffic lights encourage higher traffic speeds. A 6-lane roadbed is wide enough to discourage pedestrian crossing.
2. As can be seen from Figure 11, because many buildings are located relatively close to the street, increasing the right-of-way from the current 60’ to 120’ will require removal of a number of buildings in the corridor, and will leave relatively shallow setbacks for many other buildings.
3. Even though the widening is projected to be needed 15 years away, the prospect of removal of buildings or landscaping will discourage property owners from upgrading.

We recommend that additional investigation be made as to the need for, and alternatives to, a 6-lane roadway. There are a number of communities in Colorado that accommodate comparable traffic levels in a 4-lane roadway section (cf. Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Boulder, Longmont). Admittedly this does lower highway capacity, and thus slows traffic, but slower traffic will be safer, less intimidating to pedestrians.

To mitigate the impact that even a 4-lane roadway will have, we recommend:

1. On-street parking — this will preserve a ‘main street’ feel, further slow traffic, provide a safety and splash buffer between pedestrians and traffic, will benefit adjacent businesses; and
2. A planted median — this will further soften the impact of 4 lanes, give the street a ‘boulevard’ character; and will provide a ‘safe harbor’ for pedestrians caught in the middle of crossing.

We further recommend expanding Highway 52 entirely to the south, for several reasons:

1. The properties on the north are somewhat shallower and many of the buildings are close to the existing curb. A taking of these properties will render many of them so small as to preclude any viable remaining use and will require taking the whole property with little benefit. On the other hand, many of the properties on the south are generally deeper and would leave a viable parcel even after widening the street entirely to the south.
2. Expanding entirely to the south allows the north-side properties to be upgraded without fear of taking or impacting improvements.
4.3 "1st Street"

Highway 52 is actually 1st Street as it passes through Ft. Lupton. However the street signs are all labeled as "Highway 52". In spite of the fact that it is a State Highway, 1st Street is also a "main street" in Ft. Lupton. To reinforce the objective of maintaining 'Main Street' character and de-emphasizing it as a big highway, we recommend designating the street as "1st Street" again and reinforcing this image with better signage.

4.4 Preliminary Design Guidelines

Notwithstanding all of the above, 1st Street will continue to be an auto-oriented corridor, with some, but not extensive pedestrian usage. Within this context the following guidelines have been developed to guide site planning and building placement until a more extensive design analysis and guidelines can be created.

Guideline A: All retail and other public entries shall be clearly visible and accessible from the pedestrian way along the building’s primary street.
**Guideline B:** Visibility of parking from the street shall be minimized.

- Place parking behind the building or to the side of the building.
- Parking shall be set back 15' measured perpendicular from the build-to line on the primary and secondary street.
- Parking exposed to the street shall be screened by a landscape buffer located within the 15' parking setback, with planting or low wall that screens the parking lot from the street.

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**Guideline C:** Building facades shall be maintained at the build-to line and shall be at least 30% transparent. (windows) A minimum of 50% of the frontage along the build-to line on the primary street shall be occupied by building.

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**Guideline D:** Develop the first floor of building to provide visual interest to pedestrians along the sidewalk. Provide clear distinction between upper and lower floors.

- The first floor façade can accommodate a variety and exuberance of expression, while upper floors should be more restrained and quiet, providing an aesthetically pleasing background.

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5 DENVER AVENUE (DOWNTOWN)

5.1 Vehicular Access and Public Visibility of the Downtown

When the major traffic pattern shifted from north-south on Denver Avenue to east-west on Highway 52, the downtown was effectively cut off from visibility to thousands of vehicles every day. This is further worsened by the fact that the core area of Denver Avenue (2nd to 5th Streets) is cut off from Highway 52 by a block of single-family residence and individual buildings separated by vacant lots and parking lots (Masonic temple, Century 21 real estate). This 'gap' makes it difficult for travelers on Highway 52 to realize there is a downtown. Even if one were aware of the downtown, the lack of a left turn signal makes it inconvenient to drive there from Highway 52. In Section 8.3 are several examples of ways to improve the downtown from Highway 52.

Figure 12: This view north on Denver Ave. shows the downtown (far background) is barely visible from Highway 52 (stoplight).

5.2 Adequate Parking

Although there appears to be vacant parking on Denver Avenue most times of the day, public comment suggests that parallel parking is difficult during heavy traffic periods. Several establishments have off-street parking and the cross streets also appear to have parking that is available at most times.

However, it may still be desirable to increase the convenience of the downtown. This requires a plan for additional parking and for the replacement of parking that may be lost with infill of vacant land or parking lots fronting directly on Denver Avenue. One reasonably inexpensive opportunity to create more parking downtown is to add diagonal parking to one side of 4th
Street on the blocks immediately east and west of Denver Avenue. This is the only cross street wide enough to accommodate diagonal parking.

Figures 13: Diagonal parking on 4th Street would add about 10 spaces

There are other potential actions to increase the availability and accessibility of parking, including: consolidating parking areas in the alley west of Denver Avenue (see example in Section 8.5), signage to make it easier to find parking, and improved walkways to make it pleasant to walk from the parking to downtown.

5.3 Pedestrian Access to the Downtown

In addition to access by cars, and parking, access by pedestrians is also important. Even though there may be residential areas nearby, a lack of sidewalks and too-narrow sidewalks discourage walking. Sidewalks need to be wide enough for at least two people to walk beside each other, and ideally to be able to pass one or two people abreast going in the opposite direction. Most of the sidewalks on Denver Avenue are 7' to 8' wide, which is not spacious, but adequate.

New and repaired sidewalks are needed in several sections of the Downtown and to connect surrounding neighborhoods to Denver Avenue.

Figures 14: 4th Street through the railroad corridor lacks sidewalks that would help connect east neighborhoods to the downtown.
Another barrier to walk-ability to the Denver Avenue is the railroad corridor that separates the east side residential area from the Downtown. The only street crossings of the tracks occur at 4th and 9th Streets. This also effectively limits the pedestrian access to the same locations (people do cross at other locations, but not safely). Pedestrian access is further discouraged by the lack of sidewalks to and through the rail corridor in these locations.

Sidewalks across the rail corridor are needed at 4th and 9th Streets, accompanied with street tree planting and signage to make the pedestrian connection more inviting and comfortable.

5.4 Streetscape Amenities

The success of downtowns are also related to their physical appeal and comfort. It is important to remember three considerations that are fundamental to the success of any shopping area:

1. people don’t spend money until they are walking (therefore, a key objective is make it convenient and appealing to park and walk);
2. once people are walking, if they pass by store fronts on the way to a destination they tend to make impulse purchases; and
3. shopping is increasingly recreation as well as necessity (all other things being equal, people will patronize areas that are pleasant to be in and where they can have social interaction).

Although these concepts may seem intuitively obvious, their recent ‘rediscovery’ is helping revitalize many traditional main streets.

Besides being able to accommodate pedestrians, sidewalks need to be appealing, to be a pleasant place to walk. That suggests they need to be made of attractive, durable materials and have amenities such as street trees for shade, benches for sitting, accessible to diverse population, light fixtures and signage that have visual interest.

Figure 15: Successful downtowns are inviting – shade, lighting, street ‘furniture’, gathering places, safety are all important.

Figure 16: Lack of shade trees and ‘furniture’ (benches, banners, planters, decorative paving) give the downtown a stark quality.
Denver Avenue has concrete sidewalks that are of adequate width and are for the most part in satisfactory condition. Yet, the Downtown sidewalks have a somewhat stark quality; there are amenities that would add to the pedestrian-friendliness of the downtown. Benches, shade trees and sitting/gathering areas are much needed. Since the sidewalk cannot be narrowed, these features can be added by creating “neck-downs” at corners and mid-blocks. A concept example is shown in Chapter 8. Neck downs extend out into the parking strip at street corners (and mid blocks if desired) and narrow the distance a pedestrian has to cross, making the whole downtown more pedestrian friendly, with little impact on parking.

5.5 Enclosure that Creates an ‘Outdoor Room’

Some downtowns just have a ‘feel’ that makes it comfortable and enjoyable to walk. On closer inspection, the ‘feel’ of the downtown is the result of two key factors:

- **Width of the street and/or distance between opposite buildings**—technical studies have shown that people feel “comfortable” in a space where the height of opposing buildings is equal to approximately half the distance between them. If the buildings are much taller it feels like a “canyon” and if they are much shorter there is no feeling of enclosure, similar to being in the middle of a parking lot.

- **Continuity of building facades**—large gaps between adjacent buildings, whether vacant lots or parking lots, tend to break down the feeling of the downtown as a place and make it more just a collection of free-standing buildings.

The core portion of Denver Avenue, approximately 3rd to 5th Streets, has the comfortable proportion that some have described as feeling as if you are in an ‘outdoor room’. The core area also has a good continuity of facades. Further north and south the continuity of facades is broken by large vacant lots, single-family homes and parking/car sale lots. These underutilized parcels are opportunities for new infill buildings that will not only increase the variety of stores, but also will create a more continuous walking experience. We recommend that Denver Avenue improvements (streetscapes, store fronts, etc.) be focused first (Phase I) in the section from 2nd to 5th Street, then expanded north and south as infill.
5.6 Character and Condition of the Buildings

Most successful downtowns have buildings that are clean and well maintained (painted, brick mortar repaired, signs and trim in good condition etc.). Further, downtowns take on a memorable character if they have buildings that have some form of consistency in materials and/or architectural style.

Denver Avenue has a significant number of brick buildings with traditional early-to-mid 1900’s styles. Some of the buildings have had their original facades maintained or restored (e.g. the Eye Care Center). Others have had their facades partially or wholly covered with ‘modernization’ such as façade overlays and canopies (e.g. IOOF #100 building). It is very likely that many of these modernizations could be removed and the original facades restored and upgraded with compatible architectural improvements. Design assistance and guidelines as well as funding aid would help encourage this transformation.

There are also a number of inconsistent building types in the Downtown—ranging in style from the barnwood siding of Smoker’s Haven, to the Southwest adobe style of United Power, to the contemporary style of the Medical Office building. Most of these buildings cannot be modified to match a traditional theme, nor is it necessary—as long as there is a preponderance of buildings with a consistent style, exceptions here and there do not detract.

Figure 19: Examples of non-traditional building types in the downtown.

Figure 20: An example of design guidelines for façade renovation.
Figure 21: Downtown buildings with existing traditional character or potential for restoration. (Listed by historic name if known)
In addition to the traditional retail and office buildings in the core area, Fort Lupton has a number of attractive Victorian homes in the downtown. The Tarr residence at southwest corner of Second Street represents a significant historical resource for the community. Adjacent to it are two other homes that may not be historic but have traditional turn-of-the-century character. This area may have potential for recreation of a historic theme perhaps in conjunction with use of some of the homes as offices or boutiques.

This could be complemented with traditional gardens and brick sidewalks and form a quaint gateway to the downtown, visible from Highway 52. Additional ‘homes of character’ are located along Main Street, just east of the downtown. A number of these homes are in good repair and form attractive neighborhood groupings. The Cannery is not necessarily a building with architectural character, but it does have historical significance, recalling the agricultural roots of the city.

The City is currently documenting the character and history of a number of buildings in the downtown (see Figures 21 and 22). Efforts should be made to encourage their preservation. Whether as residences or as offices and boutiques, their value to the downtown will continue to grow over time.

We recommend the development of architectural guidelines for Denver Avenue. These guidelines should be somewhat general in nature and based on historic styles in the downtown. They can be used to give suggestions for remodeling existing properties and to guide future infill of vacant properties. If followed, they will, over time bring about a more adhesive, appealing character to the downtown.

5.7 Denver Avenue’s Market Niche: A Complementary Mix of Stores

The regional growth that will eventually reach Ft. Lupton will also attract large retailers. It is a reality that these large stores have efficiencies of scale that are difficult for small, downtown merchants to compete with. Therefore, the Downtown must find its own special niche within the whole spectrum of contemporary commercial marketing, both locally and regionally. While this requires careful analysis and some experimentation, fortunately there are a number of communities that are making successful transitions that are bringing life back to their Downtowns. (See Appendix for recommendations)

People come to Ft. Lupton’s downtown, or any shopping area, for a variety of reasons:

- **Destination Businesses** – attract patrons because their unique goods or services (including quality of service) are only found in one place. One generally makes a deliberate trip to this type of establishment for a particular purpose. Destinations in downtown Ft.
Lupton might include stores such as: Purifoy Chevrolet, George's True Value Hardware, the Post Office, United Power, La Familia restaurant or even Rosalee's Golden Scissors beauty salon. Examples are restaurants, public services, car dealerships and movie theatres.

- **Impulse Businesses** — provide incidental goods and services that take people take advantage of passing by on the way to other destinations. 'Drop-in' shopping might include getting a birthday card at Dale Pharmacy after paying the electric bill at United Power. Examples in Ft. Lupton are ice cream stores, eateries and the hardware store.

- **Convenience Businesses** — Some stores' primary benefit is being closer and more convenient than their competitors. These stores include gas station, video rental and drug stores, etc. Purchases in this category might include running down to H&H Video on Saturday night or a downtown employee eating lunch at Pizza Hut. For incidental items, convenience can even outweigh a small price differential with competitors.

Obviously, some stores fall into more than one category. For example, George’s True Value Hardware may be a destination for a contractor, but a downtown employee may drop in for an impulse purchase on a lunch hour. Denver Avenue currently has store types in each category, which is an asset on which to build a revitalization strategy. We recommend that a primary objective be to increase the number of Destination type of establishments, which are key to attracting new patrons to the downtown. Section 9.2 contains specific recommendations about prospective businesses to target for Denver Avenue’s market niche.

### 5.8 Nearby Residential

Having a residential population within walking distance from the downtown is also a significant asset. If they can be attracted to use the downtown, not only do they increase the pool of customers, but they also are a body of shoppers that don’t impact parking. They also are more responsive to convenience shopping factors, and their presence in the downtown at all hours adds to the “busyness” of the downtown and feeling of security.
5.9 Vacant Land is an Opportunity for New Development

There are a variety of vacant parcels in the downtown area that can play a role in its revitalization:

- **Vacant parcels and parking lots on Denver Avenue**

There are a number of vacant lots scattered along Denver Avenue. Infill development could be encouraged on these underutilized parcels in a variety of ways: new commercial buildings (with residences above) or even a downtown plaza (see Strategies and Actions). Of all the vacant parcels on Denver Avenue, the most strategic are those nearest Highway 52. This area represents the ‘missing link’ between the Downtown and Highway 52. Infill development here will make an important physical, visual and pedestrian connection to the Downtown.

- **The railroad corridor**

The railroad corridor two blocks west of Denver Avenue is approximately 200 feet wide and largely vacant through town. A strip on the east side of the tracks has been leased to the town for playfields. West of the tracks, closest to the downtown, it is largely open, except for a few metal warehouse buildings and storage yards. This area could be used for a variety of purposes:
expanding the Main Street residential neighborhoods, creating more employment/business buildings, even used more intensively for low-cost manufacturing or warehouse buildings.

- The Cannery site

Two blocks west of the downtown is an under-utilized 4-block (8 acre) site that was formerly a cannery. Brick warehouse-type buildings line the eastern edge of the property and are being studied for their preservation potential; however, the remainder is occupied by metal buildings and an open storage yard. Neighborhood streets fronted by single-family residences surround the property. Two-thirds of this site (preserving the brick cannery buildings) presents an opportunity for increased residential development that would be within walking distance of the downtown, employment, parks, churches and the Fort Lupton Museum.

The Cannery is not necessarily a building with architectural character, but it does have historical significance, recalling the agricultural roots of the city. In any redevelopment, every effort should be made to preserve and re-use the important part of Fort Lupton’s historic heritage.

Figure 25: Vacant or underutilized land in the downtown area.

Figure 26: A large portion of the old cannery site (left) is either vacant or occupied by metal buildings that could be redeveloped for residential uses to match the surrounding neighborhood.
6 IMPLEMENTATION: GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

6.1 Goals

The primary mission of the Commercial Corridor Plan is to improve the viability and success of Fort Lupton's primary commercial areas being 1st Street and Denver Avenue. Two key goals go hand in hand to achieve this mission:

1. Increase the patronage of existing downtown businesses. That is, to bring more people into downtown, visitors from Highway 52 as well as our own residents; and
2. Attract a diversity of good businesses, which will create a setting that will in turn attract more people.

A key facet of retail development is that the stores go where the people are. That is, stores tend to locate where there is either significant traffic, or the location is convenient to a large population. Currently, Fort Lupton does not have a large enough population to attract commercial development. The Safeway, in the vanguard of growth, located in Fort Lupton to take advantage of Highway 52 traffic as well as local residents. But most of the significant new retail development is happening to the south and west of Fort Lupton, following behind the residential growth curve. However, if regional trends continue, Denver and Front Range growth will eventually reach Fort Lupton. When it does, the existing commercial conditions will eventually change. However, we can't afford to merely wait—it is not clear how quickly growth will reach Fort Lupton, and if it takes more than a few years, the downtown will experience significant decline, which will be a loss to the community as well as to the businesses. When the growth comes, we want to be positioned to take advantage of it, to make sure that it blends with, and reinforces our unique community, rather than turn us into another indistinguishable part of suburban sprawl.

This suggests both short- and long-term objectives. In the short term, we need to take advantage of what we have—we can improve the entry, make simple public improvements in the commercial cores to make them more visible, appealing, comfortable and convenient. Simultaneously, we need the local merchants to upgrade their buildings and services. This includes paint-up/fix-up as well as thoughtful renovations. We can also begin to create more events that will provide other reasons to go downtown and discover what's there. In the longer-term we need to gradually bring about new buildings in the downtown, fill in the vacant lots, plan for more significant change to highway 52, and develop an overall coordinated plan for future growth that will assure that new commercial reinforces and complements the current conditions and businesses.
6.2 Strategies

To accomplish this, the planning process has identified seven basic strategies (see Figure 27 for key to location of Strategies):

1. **Upgrade first impressions**
   Creating a positive first impression of Fort Lupton will have spillover benefits not only for the downtown, but for other aspects of the city. There are many small improvements that do not require major capital expenditures. Rather, they can include: pulling weeds, painting declining structures, fixing aged signs, replacing sidewalks and curbs, screening parking lots with hedges, etc. The objective is to convey a sense of community pride and cleanliness.

   A major ‘gateway’ opportunity exists in conjunction with the US 85 overpass (Fig. 7). This will be more expensive, and require coordination with CDOT, but the result will be a dramatic transformation of first impressions of Ft. Lupton.

2. **Make a visual connection from Highway 52 to the Denver Avenue downtown.**
   One of the first challenges for the downtown is to make itself more visible to the large and growing number of travelers on Highway 52. This can be done through signage, landscaping, structural improvements and infill development. The goal is to bridge the one block ‘gap’ north of Highway 52 by creating physical, visible improvements that will announce the presence of the downtown and create interest sufficient to draw guests to the downtown.

3. **Create pedestrian amenities in the downtown.**
   Pedestrian amenities make the downtown comfortable, enjoyable and memorable. Shade trees for comfort, benches for rest, a gathering place to meet and watch people and safe street crossings all contribute to the ‘invitingness’ of the downtown. With Bank of Colorado moving its retail center to Highway 52, the old bank building will be used for offices and a drive-up service window. The bank will no longer need the parking lot on the northwest corner of 4th and Denver. This central site would be a prime location for a downtown plaza.

Figure 27: Key map to the Commercial Corridor strategies outlined in the text.
4. **Encourage upgrade of commercial buildings.**
   Attractive downtowns are generally the result of an overall coherent style or theme, rather than any one individual building. Our downtown has some truly handsome buildings, many of which are unfortunately hidden behind ad hoc improvements such as false facades and canopy overhangs. This mixture of styles contributes to the lack of downtown character, all the styles are competing for attention. It is very likely that many of these modernizations could be removed and the original facades restored and upgraded with compatible architectural improvements. Design guidelines or design assistance and funding assistance would help encourage this transformation.

5. **Bring additional residential and business development downtown.**
   The vacant and underutilized land on Denver Avenue, other vacant tracts, portions of the Cannery site, and potentially even portions of the railroad corridor are opportunities to bring additional development, residential, commercial and other to the downtown area. It will not be easy to lure development away from the many ‘Greenfield’ sites or raw land, further east along Highway 52. Even small shops will be attracted to locate in new shopping centers such as near the Safeway. However, with incentives and the removal of regulatory barriers, the Downtown will be attractive to one-of-a-kind businesses that thrive on impulse shopping in a pedestrian-oriented environment. It will require a gradual, general upgrade of the downtown, coupled with incentives and a high level of public/private cooperation (special districts, urban renewal tax benefits, etc.).

6. **Increase/consolidate downtown parking**
   While the actual amount of parking available appears to be adequate for the current level of business activity, the on-street parking on Denver Avenue is significantly occupied during peak hours. The prospect of parallel parking is intimidating to some, especially during heavy traffic periods. Opportunities exist to add diagonal parking on 4th Street, to formalize the somewhat haphazard parking in the alley west of Denver Avenue (Fig. 8.5), and to make more pleasant, inviting sidewalk connections to parking on side streets and Main Street.

7. **Plan for the widening of Highway 52 and upgrade of the 1st Street commercial areas.**
   Widening of Highway 52 is not imminent. However, if and when it is ultimately required, the way it is widened will have a major impact on existing properties and the overall appearance and function of the highway corridor.

8. **Assure effective, coordinated, continued implementation.**
   Plans seldom get implemented if no one is responsible and accountable. Consistent implementation over time will come about only through the designation of a specific person to work on the specific action items and see that they happen. Responsibilities would also include working with property owners and tenants to create a funding source (such as a special improvement district). Other community plans, policies and actions should be carefully reviewed to assure that they are consistent with, and do not undermine, the goal of downtown revitalization.
6.3 Implementation Actions

To implement the strategies above, planning participants have developed the following specific actions. A number of actions may contribute to any one strategy, and one action may contribute to more than one of the strategies. For example, several actions may help make the visual connection from Highway 52 to the Downtown: left turn (north) signal on eastbound Highway 52, signage and landscape “gateway” improvements at the intersection, infill development in the ‘gap’ first block of Denver Avenue and street trees.

1. Create Funding Mechanism

A reliable funding mechanism is essential to the success of the plan. It will enable physical improvements, paint-up/fix-up, maintenance and retaining services of a Downtown Coordinator to implement the other recommendations below.

Consider a Business Improvement District (BID)³, with authority to levy property taxes on businesses in the district and to use the revenues to construct improvements and conduct business development efforts specifically for the downtown.

- Conduct a detailed analysis of BID formulation, including: potential revenue levels associated with various tax rates (see Potential Funding Approaches in this document), possible District boundaries, powers and limitations of a BID, governing structure (a Board appointed by the City Council), a preliminary budget allocation (for example, physical improvements vs. staff needs), etc.⁴
- Conduct meetings with local merchants and property owners to discuss formulation of a BID.
- Request that City Council provide ongoing funds for a finite period, to match BID revenues, for downtown improvements. Consider earmarking an annual allocation from the Street Fund for curb, gutter, sidewalk and storm drainage) improvements.
- Prepare ballot for referendum by potential District property owners.

2. Downtown Coordinator

Downtown revitalization will require a significant amount of coordination, salesmanship, vision, and personal communication skills. It is not realistic to think that the work can be added to the workload of current City staff. The position could be filled by a volunteer or part-time employee (if a funding mechanism is approved).

- Once a funding mechanism for this position is determined, create a formal job description and solicit candidates.
- Interview and select an organized, enthusiastic person to coordinate and promote downtown improvements.
- Require quarterly reports to the City Council and downtown property owners.

³ Other options include an Urban Renewal Authority (URA) or private non-profit corporation (similar to Fort Lupton Development Corporation)
⁴ It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel, start by contacting other BID’s in the Denver metro area.
3. **Paint-up/Fix up**

- Initiate a community-wide effort at improving the gateways and major corridors through town. This could include weed removal, planting shrubs to screen parking lots, replacing broken concrete walks, repairing and painting buildings and fixing signage.

4. **Sponsor Additional Downtown Events**

   Trapper Days is an important annual downtown event that unites the community and brings guests to the downtown.

   - Under the direction of the Downtown Coordinator, stage quarterly events in the downtown similar to Trapper Days (such as sidewalk sales, farmers market, Christmas tree in the new Town Square, Cinco de Mayo, Purifoy Corvette Rally, etc.).

5. **Left Turn Signal on 1st Street at Denver Avenue**

   - Install City street signs renaming Highway 52 to 1st Street.
   - Request of CDOT a left turn (northbound) signal on Highway 52 at Denver Avenue.

6. **Remove Barriers to Downtown Development/Redevelopment**

   - Evaluate current zoning and development standards to identify those elements that can be removed or reduced to make downtown development easier and less costly for entry businesses. For example, the C-2 Heavy Commercial zoning on Main Street doesn’t allow residential uses. A modified category for Main Street could be developed to encourage a mix of commercial and residential uses, similar to what currently exists. Examine also, parking requirements, and ways to encourage 2nd floor residential uses above the Denver Avenue stores. The railroad corridor requires a study to determine the potential to rezone, or encourage mixed-use development.

7. **Signage/Landscaping at Denver/Hwy 52**

   - Commission new design for signage and landscaping for the four corners of the Denver Avenue/Highway 52 intersection. “Downtown” signage could be in the form of a sculpture, stone pillars, etc. along with landscaping (such as tree clusters in the background, colorful annual planting beds in the foreground). The objective is to create a major visual landscape statement reinforced with signage to identify the Downtown. (See Sections 8.2 and 8.3)

8. **Street trees, Neckdown Curb Extensions and Street Furniture**

   The curb extension ‘neckdowns’ will add a pedestrian-friendly quality to the downtown, as well as providing a theme to unify the current diversity of architectural character. (See
Sections 8.1 and 8.2) As proposed, these improvements can be relatively inexpensive additions to the existing sidewalks, as described below:

- Retain a landscape architect to prepare design and construction documents for adding curb extensions and street trees on Denver Avenue in the study area.

For the first block, the trees can be located between the sidewalk and curb, spaced evenly to create a row of trees that will draw the eye to and through the first block toward the Downtown. In the core area the trees could be planted in the curb extensions at each corner and at a mid-block location, possibly in conjunction with a mid-block crossing.

These neck-downs can be constructed simply by creating a new curb, and filling in with gravel, sand and a brick or colored concrete paver surface. Utilize decorative brick pavers or simulated worn paving stones with an 'old' character. Include benches, newspaper kiosks, and seasonal lighting for the trees. Include in the design considerations for tree irrigation. The corner neck-downs are also appropriate locations for benches and simple attractive trash receptacles. Brackets attached to the existing light poles could display the Downtown logo and/or seasonal themes. Installation can be phased according to availability of funds.

9. **Initiate 1st Street Gateway at US 85**

The gateway project identified in Chapter 4 requires a number of steps, several of which may take time and may be initiated concurrently. The project can be done in phases. Begin the process by:

- Review initial concepts with CDOT and develop parameters for detailed design.
- Commission a landscape architect to prepare preliminary designs.
- Use preliminary designs to start fund-raising effort. Potential funding sources include:
  - CDOT (in conjunction with bridge or highway improvements),
  - GoCO (bike/pedestrian connections to recreation)
  - Energy Impact grants (signage, landscaping, paths)
  - Private donations (sponsorship opportunities)
  - City general fund (anything not otherwise funded)

10. **Pedestrian Plaza on 4th Street**

The downtown plaza is an opportunity to inexpensively transform the character of the heart of the downtown. (See Section 8.1) It can become a place for individuals to meet or sit, a
central gathering place for community celebrations, a location for the Town Christmas tree, sidewalk sales and a community fair.

- Negotiate with Bank of Colorado for acquisition, or long-term lease, of the corner of 4th and Denver Avenue for a public plaza.
- Commission design for a Town Square urban park with brick or concrete unit pavers, shade trees and benches, decorative lighting and perhaps a water fountain. The plaza need not fill the entire parking lot; the west portion of the parcel could accommodate a small infill commercial building to form a second side to the plaza, or could remain as parking separated from the plaza by a low wall.

11. **Diagonal Parking on 4th Street**

To add easy-to-access parking in the downtown, add diagonal parking on one side of 4th Street in the blocks east and west of Denver Avenue. A total of approximately 20 cars should fit in this area, a portion of which will partially offset the loss of the bank parking lot to the plaza identified above. (See Figure 11 and 25 below)

- Conduct a test by laying out the parking with removable pavement marking tape. Use concrete curb stops to simulate the curb extensions.
- After testing and refining the concept, convert to permanent installation with concrete curbs and brick pavers in the curb extensions (coordinate with the Denver Avenue curb extension designs).

![Figure 29: A conceptual layout for diagonal parking on 4th Street, which would add about 6 spaces.](image)

12. **Detailed Analysis of Increasing Downtown Parking.**

- Do a detailed study of parking opportunities in the alleys east and west of Denver Avenue. (See Section 8.5) The objectives are twofold: increase the amount of parking,
and make the parking more organized and easy to find and use. Consider opportunities through a BID to gain additional land for parking, and then making the parking more efficient consolidating dumpsters, removing outbuildings, etc. Finally, then increase the efficiency and user-friendliness of parking by paving and striping. (See Figure 30) Explore the feasibility of creating rear entries for customers that have alley parking.

- Evaluate opportunities to utilize Main Street for downtown parking by improving sidewalks and installing street trees, lights and signage.
- Identify locations for attractive signage that will direct traffic from Denver Avenue.

13. Design Guidelines

- Develop simple design guidelines that illustrate basic principles for rehabilitation of existing buildings in the downtown, and guidelines for general location and character of new infill buildings in the downtown and on 1st Street.

14. Façade Renovations

- With design guidelines, encourage renovation of existing facades in the downtown. Use as incentives United Power funds to make low-interest loans to property owners and merchants.
- Brainstorm with merchants and property owners to identify meaningful assistance from City and/or BID. Consider assistance from City staff (permit process) and assistance from the BID in the form of troubleshooting assistance and grants for design assistance. Implement recommendations.

15. Move Public Uses Downtown

- As City staff outgrows the current City Hall over time, increase activity in the downtown by locating any appropriate City offices in existing downtown buildings.
- Include in next update of the Comprehensive Plan, an analysis of future City office expansion and potential locations in the Downtown as appropriate.

16. Art District

- Inventory vacant or underutilized industrial buildings in the downtown area (railroad corridor, Main Street, Canner site).
- If unused capacity exists, meet with building owners to explore potential for low-rent uses.
- If building owners concur, contact artists, foundries and artisans to gauge interest in locating ateliers in Fort Lupton.
- If sufficient interest, work with artists to set up arts district similar to Loveland CO.
17. **Historic Theme in Denver Avenue's First Block 'Gap'**.

In the 100 block of Denver Avenue, exists the potential for adaptive re-use of residential structures for commercial purposes. (See Section 8.2)

Meet with property owners to discuss adaptive, historic preservation re-use of existing buildings. If interest is sufficient, rezone for adaptive re-use for mixed uses (residential, office, small retail).

- In conjunction with BID, explore cost and legal feasibility of landscape treatment to unify houses and make connection from Highway 52 to Downtown.
- If feasible, retain landscape architect to design historic-character sidewalks, picket fences, etc.
- Provide annual prize for historic gardens (in this area as well as on Main Street).

18. **Sidewalk Connections**

- Design and insert in Capital Improvements budget the construction of sidewalks along 4th Street through the railroad corridor to the downtown.

19. **Cannery preservation/residential infill**

The Cannery site has the potential to be a major economic stimulus to the Downtown, as well as an ongoing asset for the community. (See Section 8.4) Redevelopment will probably require some level of public/private partnership to assure that public as well as private objectives are met.

![Image of Cannery site](image_url)

*Figure 30: The City is currently exploring the potential for historic preservation/reuse of the old cannery shown here. A significant land area to the west would be a good candidate for residential or mixed-use development.*

- Provide planning assistance to encourage preservation and adaptive re-use of Cannery buildings, and residential development of the remainder of the site.
- If appropriate, work through BID to provide funding and tax benefits.
Request City in-kind services, and Fort Lupton Development Corporation to participate in development.

20. **Screen Parking**

Parking lots, with or without chain link fences, that front cars directly on the sidewalks on 1st Street and on Denver Avenue detract from the desired pedestrian character. Many communities require partial screening of cars with low walls and/or planting to provide a more refined streetscape character.

In conjunction with proposed paint-up/fix-up efforts, work with downtown landowners (perhaps a special committee) to develop appropriate regulations to screen parked cars from the street with low walls, hedges, planted berms. Solicit regulations from other Front Range communities.

21. **Plan for 1st Street/Hwy 52 widening**

Improvements to Highway 52 are still far into the future. However, given the long lead times, and the importance of making near-term decisions about property improvements along the highway, it will be prudent to initiate discussions that will lead to long range design policies.

City planner and traffic engineer hold exploratory meetings with CDOT to determine traffic indicators that will trigger need for widening Highway 52, criteria for, and alternatives to, a 6-lane roadway, likely timing of improvements, design options, etc.

Develop a detailed ‘City preferred’ plan for widening Highway 52 corridor, identifying which buildings might need to relocate and which will stay. Include in the plan detailed beautification plans for Highway 52 corridor, identifying specific projects that can be undertaken and would not be jeopardized by future highway widening.

Encourage landowners, especially on the north side, to make beautifications through low-interest loans – United Power revolving fund, urban renewal district (if formed).

22. **Write Down Cost of Land**

Work with financial partners to write down the cost of land in key locations. Encourage infill development in the downtown through the use of BID funds (if formed) and/or Fort Lupton Development Corporation to acquire vacant land and write down the cost for resale.

23. **Reinforce the Downtown in Comprehensive Plan Update**

Incorporate the downtown vision and strategies in future updates of Fort Lupton Comprehensive Plan.
- Make 'reinforcing the downtown' a key consideration for the Comprehensive Plan Update and for all future land use decisions by the City Council and Planning Commission.

- Annually conduct a workshop with the Planning Commission and City Council to review the Business Corridor Plan and reaffirm its objectives and priorities, and to consider appropriate amendments.
7 POTENTIAL FUNDING APPROACHES

Some action items identified above could conceivably be accomplished by volunteer efforts, but many of them will require both public and private investment. Given current fiscal conditions this will be challenging for both the City and local merchants. However, the 'do-nothing' alternative will likely result in continued decline in real revenues for downtown businesses and lower tax revenues to the City. The fundamental question is whether the proposed actions will result in increased business, and revenues, for the downtown and the City.

To test the cost/benefit of Downtown improvements, we provide the following range of options:

7.1 Property tax

The City of Fort Lupton currently levies a property tax of 12.9 mils. In 2002 this mil levy raised 155,000 from the businesses on Denver Avenue in the study area. By way of comparison, the Highway 52 businesses generated $125,000 in property taxes for the same period. (See Table 1)

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<tr>
<th>Table 1: Current Property Tax yield</th>
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<tr>
<td>Current mil levy:</td>
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<td>City 12.9m</td>
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<td>Rec ctr 8.5m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other 71.5m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 93.0m</td>
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<td>At 12.9 mils, for 2002:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denver Ave = $155,000</td>
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<td>Hwy 52 = $125,000</td>
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<tr>
<th>Table 2: Potential Property Tax Bonding Capacities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mil levy</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.9 mils</td>
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<td>6.5 mils</td>
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<td>4.2 mils</td>
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<th>Table 3: Hypothetical range of annual taxes for various levels of Special District tax levy</th>
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<td>No. of establ.</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>12</td>
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5 Out of a total of 93 mils. (e: Recreation Center = 8.5 mils, and School District and others = 71.5 mils.)
If a special improvement district were formed, with the authority to impose a property tax, following table approximates various levels of tax levies, the resulting income that would be produced, and the amount of bonding that income level could support for a 12 year bond with a 5% interest rate (see Table 2)

The Bonding Capacity column in Table 2 represents the amount of money that would hypothetically be available for capital improvements in the district. It is probably somewhat overestimated since it might be prudent to not bond for the entire income stream, leaving some portion of annual income for operating expenses. (See Table 2)

How would this affect individual businesses? Table 3 illustrates the general tax ranges, and the number of businesses in that category, for most of the businesses in the study area on Denver Avenue.

For example, if a 4.2 mil levy were adopted by the members of the Special District (property owners), approximately 23 businesses would pay an additional tax annually in the range of $300 to $900.

If the Special District boundary, and improvements, were expanded to include the Safeway and other businesses in the new business park, the property tax revenues would be increased significantly.

7.2 Sales tax

Denver Avenue businesses generated approximately $250,000 in sales taxes in 2002. The City could hypothetically adopt (through referendum) an increase in the sales tax that would be earmarked for downtown improvements. This sales tax increase would have to be imposed City wide, and the resulting improvements would have to be shown to benefit the entire community (a legal requirement known as rational nexus).

7.3 Revolving loan (United Power)

United Power, Fort Lupton’s power utility, has had for 10 years a revolving loan fund of $50,000 which is available, at prime lending rate, for building improvements. United Power generally makes loans of up to $5,000 per applicant. Over the 10 years they have made 5 loans, 4 have been repaid and one is still active.
7.4 Tax increment financing

An alternative to a Special Improvement District is to form an urban renewal authority and fund it through tax increment financing. Tax increment means that taxes in a designated (urban renewal) area are frozen at their current amounts. Then, as redevelopment occurs, and property values increase, the additional tax income from the increased value of the property, is dedicated to pay for improvements that enabled the redevelopment—such as roads, utilities, etc. In Colorado, the use of tax increment funding can be affected by the TABOR (Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights) and Gallagher amendments to the state constitution.

7.5 City contributions

Currently faced with other financial challenges, the City’s contribution to downtown revitalization may be restricted, at least for the near term, to two areas:

- Lower impact fees and fees for building permits, applications, etc. Fort Lupton’s impact fee is currently approximately $30,000/home. Fee reductions for in-town development are easily justified (infrastructure already exists) and could become a significant incentive for infill development (including the Cannery site).
- Public improvements (by City crews) focused in the downtown area

7.6 Fort Lupton Development Corporation

The FLDC undertakes specific projects to stimulate economic development in Fort Lupton. They are financed by a revolving fund begun through a bond issue in the 1960's. Past projects include the Medical Offices on Denver Avenue (sold to the resident doctors) and the Pizza Hut on Denver Avenue (a former Safeway store). Although they are not oriented toward retail development, it might be possible to identify a suitable project for the FLDC in the downtown.

7.7 Energy Impact Fund

The State of Colorado, Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) administers a substantial fund that provides financial assistance to communities impacted by energy development (gas and oil production). Fort Lupton has received significant funds from this source in the past (e.g. $310,000 in 2002 and $300,000 in 2003). This funding can be used for infrastructure, transportation and other improvements related to energy impacts.

7.8 State Historical Grants

The State Historical Fund provides matching grants for preservation of historic buildings, including analysis to determine feasibility as well as actual renovation/restoration. The City has received a $10,000 grant for an analysis of the La Familia building, to be matched by $1,850 by the building owner. Following the analysis of what will be needed to restore/preserve the building, the project will be a candidate for additional matching grants for actual construction.
8 URBAN DESIGN STUDIES

8.1 Design Concept for 4th Street Plaza

Figure 32: Plan and perspective showing 4th St. and Denver Avenue plaza and parking improvements simulated.
8.2 Concept Plan for Denver Avenue improvements

Figure 33: Plan and perspective of street tree connection in the First Block gap from Highway 52 to core area of Denver Avenue. New infill buildings to connect the facades are also shown (in red).
Illustration of Design Objectives for 1st Street/Denver Avenue Intersection.

Figure 34: 1st Street/Denver Avenue--existing conditions. Shows old technology cable traffic lights. No medians with minimal landscaping and no pedestrian crosswalks.

Figure 35: 1st Street/Denver Avenue--a new building on one corner, landscape and signage improvements on the other three corners. Landscape median in 1st Street.

Figure 36: At build out, in the future, buildings frame the intersection and yet leave views to Denver Ave Downtown.
8.3 Cannery Property Design Concept

Figure 37: Plan and perspective of one approach to redevelopment of the Cannery.
8.4 Conceptual Alley Parking Layout

- Add building to fill gap on Park Ave.
- Combine parking
- Preserve bank drive-through.
- Add 10' to church parking lot, allows perp. parking. Joint use by church, County, shoppers.
- Two new parking entrances.
- Acquire rear of property.
- Acquire corner of property, leave existing uses.
- Remove outbuildings, relocate dumpsters, consolidate parking.
- Formalize parking, allows plazas or landscaping.
- Remove outbuildings, relocate dumpsters.
- If rear of building could be removed, would increase parking capacity.

Figure 38: Conceptual alley parking study, showing consolidated parking lots and potential plazas related to upgrading the character of alley parking between Denver Avenue and Park Avenue.
9 APPENDIX

9.1 Public Forum Input

**Fort Lupton's Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats**

**STRENGTHS**

1) Platte Valley historical society  
2) Location 30/30/30  
3) E-470 access  
4) Location, have railroad, close to DIA  
5) Growth of rural area, hobby farms  
6) Good infrastructure, sewer, water, etc.  
7) Compact Downtown  
8) Proximity to colleges  
9) River  
10) Rec. Center, golf course  
11) Weather

**OPPORTUNITIES**

1) Make city limits bigger to control growth in county and adjacent to town  
2) Preparing for growth  
3) Opportunity to decide what our niche is  
4) Good People  
5) Enhance tourism by rebuilding the Fort  
6) Aims C.C. expansion?  
7) Higher priced homes (increased tax base)  
8) State Historical grant fund  
9) Safeway

**WEAKNESSES**

1) In Weld county, not perceived as Denver metro, not in Denver phone book  
2) No Transit service  
3) No stores- must go outside FL for underwear, jeans, shoes, and other basics  
4) Business hours do not conform to commuters needs (everything closes at 5PM)  
5) No off-street parking for downtown employees  
6) No evening entertainment  
7) Lack of Marketing (no signs on 85)  
8) Age of downtown buildings (hard to remodel with old wiring)  
9) Nothing for kids to do

**THREATS**

1) Water  
2) No more affordable housing - big box - fast food  
3) Internet (shopping at home- not tax revenue)  
4) Regional malls at I-25 and hwys 7, and hwys 76 and 132nd  
5) 85 corridor ugly dev. (junk yards)  
6) Cleanliness of town not good, entrances bad  
7) Ugly movie theater, dirty downtown, needs paint  
8) Multi-use of downtown not contiguous, all different markets  
9) Large % of absentee owners downtown  
10) Loss of farm lands  
11) Sprawl  
12) No more useless plans (5 plans gathering dust on shelf)
13) No government interference (zoning regulations that hurt vested property owners).

What is 'Small Town' Character?
1) Safe walking distance to anywhere in town.
2) Knowing all your neighbors
3) There is an edge and center
4) Knowing all business owners
5) Rec. Center
6) Using small town-not driving
7) Small schools
8) Longevity (not uncommon to go to a function and find 3 generations there-we must provide opportunity, jobs)
9) Safety, low crime, houses have eyes on the street
10) You know the fire chief, police chief, etc.
11) Involvement, everybody gets involved
12) Everybody pitches in
13) Size – it’s small
14) Friendly, welcoming
15) Mixture of uses – downtown has hardware, drugstore, doctors

What's in your vision?
1) Glass
2) Low volume/ high margin
3) Restaurants and specialty shops
4) Local ads in big box – old fashioned dentists office
5) Fort Reconstructed/ historic theme
6) Ice cream soda fountain
7) If there is big box then why go downtown- better local service
8) Educate people to shop locally
9) Historic theme buckskin clothing, taxidermists
10) Farmer’s market, craft stores southwestern jewelry
11) Trees in the downtown plus maintenance
12) Pleasing to the eye-cleaned up and painted
13) Design guidelines are they coming?
14) Time passes fast and with the slow economy there is time to think about future
15) Brian Grubb’s point is that we are all thinking of Antique districts and historic themes like Disneyland. What about keeping it real.
16) No vacant store fronts
17) Winston: right stores find right niche. Example Pearl St.
18) Frick: evolution of downtown: Market works well. If demand then shops. If there are obstacles then they need to be removed. Can we have public incentives, renewal projects, and seed projects yes but removing the obstacles are more important. Can't create Pearl St. here but can remove obstacles.
19) People live in downtown want it to stay that way
20) Winston will present 3 alternatives
21) Nothing on second story
22) Educate owners to stay open later
23) Educate consumers to stay in town
24) Charlie says it has enough parking once second story comes in then need more

9.2 Denver Avenue’s Potential Market Niche

The Fort Lupton downtown has gone through a number of economic cycles and commercial focus has shifted in response to these broader market trends. Once a thriving Main Street, oriented toward railroad connections and a regional farm market, the downtown has lost much of its competitive position over time, as a burgeoning regional retail concentration in Brighton and an emerging grocery anchored retail center along Highway 52 has siphoned off much of downtown’s retail trade.

Today the commercial core is a mix of traditional downtown businesses, convenience retail and local services. Some longstanding operations, such as Purifoy Chevrolet and True Value Hardware have withstood competitive pressures and remain as important destination tenants. A cadre of locally oriented restaurants, offices and convenience stores and services complement these longstanding operations.

Over the near term, the mix of businesses is likely to remain similar to the current diverse profile of longstanding businesses, restaurants and services. The downtown will continue to serve a convenience and local service function with its competitive advantages being reasonable rents, historic structures and an inviting ambiance. New or additional enterprises that might will naturally migrate to this area include:

Local Services
  > Hair salon
  > Shoe Repair
  > Video rentals
  > Banking
  > Dance/Martial Arts/Yoga Studio
  > Offices including medical
  > Cleaners
Restaurants
  ➤ A greater mix of price points and styles
  ➤ Coffee shop
  ➤ Fast Food

Convenience Goods
  ➤ Gifts/accessories
  ➤ Antiques
  ➤ Liquor
  ➤ Specialized clothing; (used, youth, uniforms, maternity etc.)

Arts and crafts, particularly crafts that are manufactured on the premises are another prospect. Household specialty production goods, such as pottery or ironwork, where the ability to fabricate in the same location as retail sales would occur might also be attractive, although it doesn’t appear that much of existing building stock is adequately sized.

It is likely that most specialty stores (e.g. glasses) or comparison goods (e.g. electronics) will be attracted to other locations where there is greater visibility and access, such as the Safeway Center. Over time, it is hoped that the downtown’s ambience qualities and competitive leasing costs will overcome its locational disadvantages as a critical mass of convenience stores supports an emerging specialty market.

An immediate goal should be the attraction of an additional anchor tenant. If a promotional district can be developed, the town might consider taking a single building through a repair and upgrade process and trying to induce a destination restaurant, an office complex or an antique/gift shop that would bring more people to the downtown. What is really needed next is more “body heat” – simply more people and customers using the downtown and raising local awareness levels.