

# BOULDER, MONTANA

# — DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN —

## 2018



NOVEMBER 2018

This page intentionally left blank

**RESOLUTION NO. 2018-16**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BOULDER, MONTANA TO  
ADOPT THE CITY OF BOULDER DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, through the Making Boulder's Future Bright planning process, the City of Boulder identified the revitalization of downtown Boulder as a priority; and

WHEREAS, the City of Boulder's 2018 Growth Policy update recommends actions and steps to address current and projected challenges for the downtown area and the betterment of the City's future; and

WHEREAS, the Boulder City Council appointed the City of Boulder Planning Board to plan for future development of the Boulder jurisdictional area; and

WHEREAS, the City of Boulder Planning Board worked to develop a Downtown Master Plan for the City of Boulder to address the economic health and vitality of downtown Boulder; and

WHEREAS, the City of Boulder Planning Board held a public hearing on the Downtown Master Plan on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with notices of the public hearing published in the Boulder Monitor newspaper on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, more than 10 days prior to the hearing; and

WHEREAS, after considering the recommendations and suggestions elicited at the public hearing, the City of Boulder Planning Board recommended that the Boulder City Council adopt the Boulder Downtown Master Plan with revisions, and to pursue the goals and actions therein; and

WHEREAS, the City of Boulder City Council held a public hearing on the proposed Downtown Master Plan on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with notices of the public hearing published in the Boulder Monitor newspaper on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and October 3, 2018; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the City of Boulder City Council adopted a Resolution of Intention to adopt the Boulder Downtown Master Plan with revisions.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Boulder City Council, after considering the recommendations of the City of Boulder Planning Board and public testimony, to adopt a Resolution to adopt the Boulder Downtown Master Plan, and to pursue the goals, objectives, and policies therein.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 19<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2018 with the City of Boulder City Council voting as follows:

AYES: 3      NOES: 0      ABSENT: 1

 Mayor

 Attested by City Clerk



---

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

## **Boulder City Council**

Russell S. Giulio, Mayor

Bettie Schlueter, President

Shane Maichel

Sherry Lepley

Drew Dawson

## **City of Boulder Planning Board**

Ray Hayes

LaDana Hintz

Rodger Johnson

Sherry Lepley

Cliff Mendenhall

Susan Pasini

Dennis Wortman

## **City of Boulder Staff**

Ellen Harne, City Clerk

Diana Van Haecke, former City Clerk

Casey Gifford, City Clerical

Dennis Wortman, Public Works Director

Parry Lepley, Assistant Public Works Operator

Joe Canzona, Chief of Police

Juan Trujillo, former Chief of Police

Michael Hecht, Fire Chief

Michele St. George, Ambulance Dept Director

## **Boulder Growth Policy Steering Committee (BTAC)**

A special thanks to the members of BTAC who provided guidance and direction throughout the development of this plan.

## **Consulting Planners**



## **Citizens of Boulder**

Thank you to all of the dedicated residents of the Boulder community who contributed to this plan by participating in public meetings, submitting comments, and filling out surveys. Your time, efforts and ideas are very much appreciated and reflected in this plan.

---

# CONTENTS

---

## Chapters

Introduction.....	1
Downtown Site Analysis.....	6
Economic & Market Analysis.....	11
Action Plan.....	15
Appendix A - Public Feedback.....	49

## List of Figures

Figure 1 - Downtown Planning Area.....	1
Figure 2 - Main Street 4-Point Approach.....	3
Figure 3 - Downtown Core.....	6
Figure 4 - Downtown Inventory.....	7
Figure 5 - Tax Increment Financing.....	9
Figure 6 - Boulder Trade Area.....	11
Figure 7 - Survey Response: What types of goods or services are missing in Boulder?.....	14
Figure 8 - Typical Multi-Use Trail Section.....	22
Figure 9 - Potential Future Phases of River Trail.....	23
Figure 10 - Potential Phase One of River Trail.....	24
Figure 11 - Conceptual Visitor Information Kiosk.....	25

Figure 12 - Potential Building Frontage Improvements.....	28
Figure 13 - Conceptual Pocket Park Rendering.....	32
Figure 14 - Map of Select Appearance Actions.....	34
Figure 15 - Advisory Shoulder.....	36
Figure 16 - Bike Sharrow.....	36
Figure 17 - Pedestrian Lane.....	37
Figure 18 - Temporary Wayfinding Sign.....	38
Figure 19 - Straw Wattle Bulb-out.....	39
Figure 20 - Painted Bulb-out.....	39
Figure 21 - Rapid Flashing Beacon.....	41
Figure 22 - Map of Select Transportation Actions.....	42
Figure 23 - Conceptual Entrance Sign.....	43

## List of Tables

Table 1 - Retail Market Analysis.....	13
---------------------------------------	----

# INTRODUCTION

## Downtown Plan Overview

The City of Boulder's downtown master planning process began concurrently with the City's growth policy update in the Fall of 2017. To assist in the development of these plans and facilitate public involvement, Boulder hired consulting planners at Land Solutions. While the City's growth policy provides a comprehensive plan for Boulder, the downtown master plan focuses on the downtown and immediate surrounding areas. For the purposes of this plan, downtown Boulder is defined as Main Street between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hauser Street – see Figure 1.

The impetus for the downtown master plan was in part spurred by the impending closure of the Montana Developmental Center (MDC), which triggered the development of the *Making Boulder's Future Bright Master Plan*. Through that process, Boulder community members expressed a need to revitalize downtown and promote it as a destination for both residents and visitors. The intent of this plan is to address that need by laying out a path forward for creating a vibrant and healthy downtown Boulder that encourages economic development and growth.

Figure 1 - Downtown Planning Area



## Why Plan for Downtown?

Boulder's downtown is the civic, commercial, and social heart of the community. In order for Boulder to sustain the long-term health of the community, it is imperative for the City to be proactive in maintaining and growing the vitality of downtown. Increasingly, people are prioritizing quality of life factors, in addition to jobs, when choosing where they want to live, raise a family, and operate a business. A big part of that equation, for people choosing to live in small Montana communities, is a vibrant and attractive downtown. Boulder is in an enviable location, with outdoor recreation opportunities out its back door and a good supply of job opportunities that are a relatively short commute away in Helena and Butte. While downtown displays several characteristics of a healthy downtown – unique historic buildings, several restaurants and local shops, and an attractive streetscape – there are opportunities to improve the appearance and function of downtown and spark investment from existing and new residents. However, to realize these opportunities requires forethought and planning to ensure Boulder's downtown does not languish, but rather grows in a manner that is in line with the values of its community members. That is where the downtown master plan comes into play.

There is no one silver bullet for revitalizing a downtown; instead the process is slow and ongoing, with each small step building upon one another. The idea behind this plan is that over time, each small action will help create a downtown where people want to be, whether it is an existing resident coming to see what's new or a visitor passing through who may eventually become a new

resident or business owner. In either case, a healthy downtown will project the image of a community that is committed to making the downtown an attractive place to visit, shop, and do business. With the closure of MDC, and the resulting loss of jobs, now is the time for Boulder to address the future health of downtown.



# INTRODUCTION

---

## Plan Structure

Boulder’s downtown master plan is organized into the following four chapters:

1. Introduction – A high level overview of the downtown master plan.
2. Downtown Site Analysis – An examination of existing conditions in downtown Boulder, including transportation, land use and business inventory, and opportunities.
3. Economic and Market Analysis – An examination factors shaping the local economy including key demographic and economic indicators, a retail trade analysis, and potential market opportunities.
4. Action Plan – Detailed actions for improving downtown.

The action plan serves as the heart of this document. The action plan builds on public feedback and the analyses noted above, to provide specific action strategies for improving the health of downtown Boulder. Each action contains detailed guidance for moving forward, a list of partnering agencies, and a priority ranking.

To focus the plan, the actions are organized under the following five categories, which have their basis in Main Street America’s four point approach to downtown revitalization – see Figure 2.

1. Organization
2. Economic Development
3. Appearance
4. Transportation
5. Promotion

**Figure 2 - Main Street 4-Point Approach**





## Relation to Other Planning Efforts

### **Making Boulder's Future Bright Master Plan**

The City of Boulder is no stranger to recent planning efforts. In 2015, the Montana State Legislature decided to close MDC, which had been in operation in Boulder for over 100 years. With the impending MDC closure, the City began thinking about how to respond to the loss of the institution and brace for the potential impacts it may have on the community. This led to the creation of the Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC) and a subsequent study circle process to identify how Boulder could prosper amid changing economic circumstances in the community. Through the study circles, Boulder community members identified ideas and community priorities for moving forward which eventually led to the development of the *Making Boulder's Future Bright Master Plan*. The master plan provides a wealth of information on Boulder and recommendations for, among other things, how Boulder can revitalize downtown. This downtown master plan seeks to build on the *Making Boulder's Future Bright Master Plan* by providing detailed guidance on specific actions that the community can take in the near and long-term to revitalize downtown.

### **Growth Policy**

As mentioned previously, Boulder's downtown master plan was developed in conjunction with the City's growth policy. The downtown master plan compliments the growth policy by providing

an expanded focus on downtown. While these are separate plans, they both include actions which reinforce and complement one another. For instance, branding is a vital component of downtown revitalization. While the downtown plan does not specifically address branding, the growth policy does, with the logic being that any branding effort should address the larger Boulder community and not just downtown. Additionally, because the growth policy provides an in-depth look at conditions, trends, and projections for housing, demographics, the economy, and local services, many of these elements have been omitted from the downtown plan, which would have been included in the absence of a concurrent growth policy update. As such, the downtown master plan takes a more action-oriented approach.

## Public Engagement

The City conducted the public engagement process for the downtown master plan in conjunction with the growth policy update. The process began by interviewing key stakeholders and reviewing previous community planning efforts, which included a substantial amount of public input. At the beginning of the project, the project planners created a website to serve as a clearinghouse for information and to allow people to submit comments or questions for both plans. To directly engage residents, the process included two public meetings and a community survey to gather feedback regarding the community's interests and priorities. The first public input meeting took place on February 22, 2018 with roughly 25 people in attendance. The objective of the first meeting was to present a series of draft goals (derived from Boulder's draft

# INTRODUCTION

---

three-year action strategy from previous efforts) and identify and prioritize ideas to realize those goals.

In March of 2018 the project planners distributed a community survey to identify residents' views on detailed aspects of Boulder (including downtown) and what specific items they would like to see addressed in the plans.

Based on feedback from the first public meeting and the community survey, the project planners developed a series of draft actions strategies for both the downtown master plan and the growth policy, which were presented for feedback at a second public meeting on May 23, 2018. At that meeting, community members prioritized and provided feedback on the draft actions, which resulted in a series of revisions and priority rankings.

Additionally, the project planners and the City conducted a downtown walking tour on April 30, with roughly 20 participants. The walking tour was intended to get on-the-ground ideas for where opportunities exist for improving the health and vitality of downtown Boulder.

A comprehensive overview of public feedback is located in Appendix A of this plan.



## Community Vision

A vision statement serves as a high-level guide for the future of a community. It answers the question, “What do we want Boulder to be in the future?” Because Boulder had already undergone initial efforts to determine an overall vision through the “Making Boulder’s Future Bright” plan, that vision was used as a starting point and was presented to the community during the first public meeting. This statement was further refined to capture the identified direction the community wants to go.

### Vision Statement

*Boulder is a strong community committed to planned growth that enhances new economic diversity while preserving our natural beauty, clean environment, and friendly small-town atmosphere. Boulder is a family-friendly town with an emphasis and focus on promoting safe and healthy living for its residents, and creative new learning opportunities. Boulder has a diverse economy that builds on its natural resources and heritage while safeguarding our traditional agricultural culture. We continue to support and encourage local businesses and artisans while promoting value-added products.*

# DOWNTOWN SITE ANALYSIS

## Downtown Overview

Downtown Boulder extends along Main Street (State Highway 69) roughly from 5th Avenue north to Hauser Street – see Figure 3. While downtown extends along a roughly six block area, the “core” of downtown, which has the highest building density, is located on a two-block stretch of Main Street between Centennial Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Downtown Boulder is characterized by one to two story, brick commercial buildings, with interspersed single-household residential and civic uses.

Downtown Boulder possesses many elements of good urban form – storefronts abutting the sidewalk, complete sidewalks, well-marked and attractive cross-walks, landscaped medians, attractive murals, and attractive historic buildings. These factors contribute to the downtown’s appeal for residents and visitors alike. Despite these factors, downtown Boulder also faces many of the same challenges faced by other small communities in Montana. Throughout downtown there are interspersed vacant buildings and lots which detract from the continuity of downtown and project an image of disinvestment. Additionally, several buildings display signs of neglect and need either minor storefront improvements or major repairs. Overall, this detracts from the appearance of downtown Boulder which can serve as a disincentive for people to visit downtown.

Figure 3 - Downtown Core



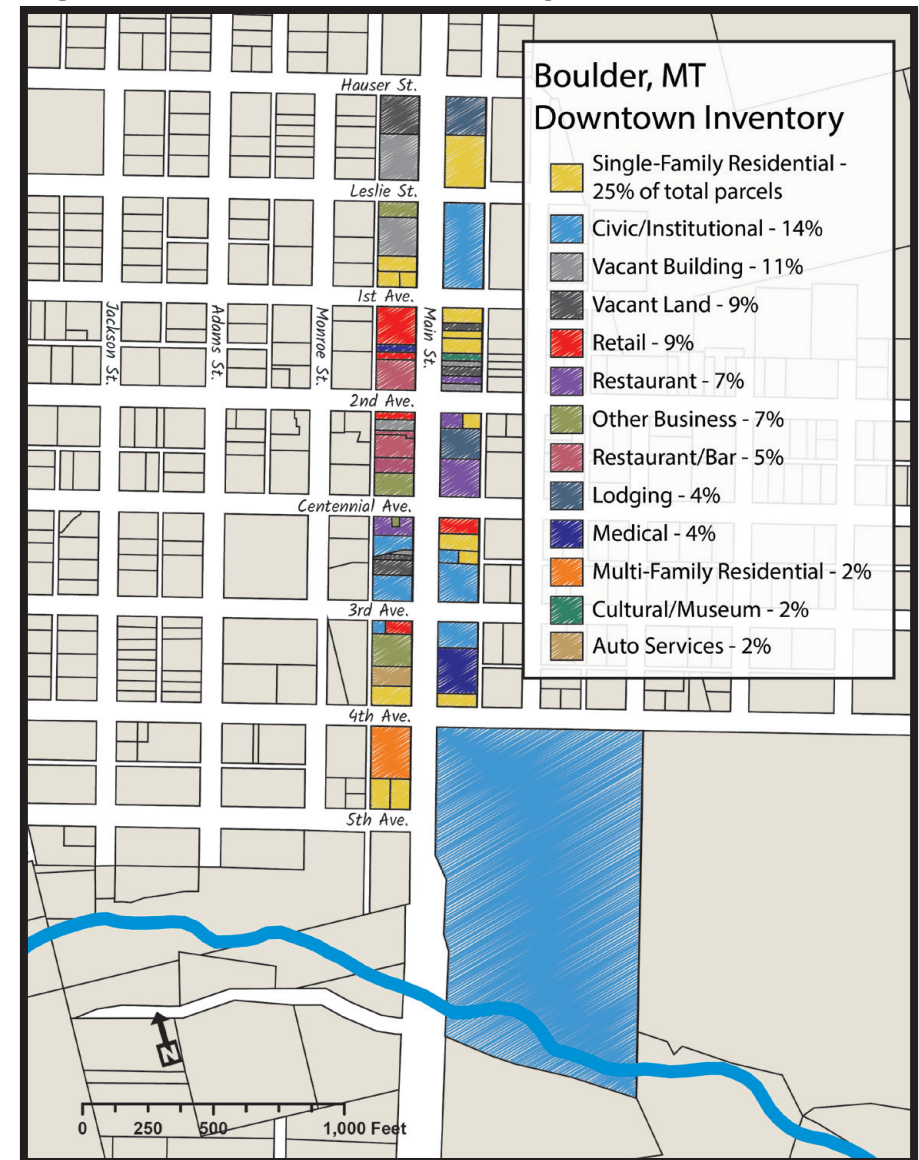
# DOWNTOWN SITE ANALYSIS

## Land Use Inventory

To gain an understanding of land uses and the mix of businesses in downtown, downtown parcels were inventoried on Main Street between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hauser Street, totaling 57 unique parcels. Figure 4 displays the results of the inventory in its entirety. On a parcel basis, the predominant use in the area inventoried is single-household residential, though in the downtown core (between Centennial Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue) there is a greater mix of commercial uses. Outside of residential, the dominant uses are civic/institutional (e.g. government buildings, churches, non-profits), vacant buildings, vacant land, and retail.

When looking at the downtown core, there is a relatively high concentration of eating establishments which bodes well for Boulder's ability to draw residents and visitors to downtown. One of the greatest strengths of downtown Boulder is the fact that the majority of businesses inventoried are locally owned, meaning money spent in downtown stays in the community. Additionally, several downtown buildings have second story residences, which is beneficial to the health of downtown, as these residents can serve as a reliable customer base for downtown businesses.

Figure 4 - Downtown Inventory



---

# DOWNTOWN SITE ANALYSIS

## Transportation

Main Street is the primary route for people entering and exiting downtown, while 2<sup>nd</sup> and Centennial Avenues also provide downtown access, primarily for local traffic. To the north of downtown, Main Street intersects with Interstate 15 which provides connections to Helena (30 miles north) and Butte (40 miles south). Going south, Main Street turns into State Highway 69 which leads to Interstate 90 and the highway system in southwest Montana.

On an average day during the year, thousands of cars pass through downtown Boulder on Main Street and thousands more pass by Boulder on I-15. The Montana Department of Transportation's 2016 short-term traffic counts estimated just over 3,000 vehicles pass through the intersection on Main Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in downtown on an average day.<sup>1</sup> As far as interstate traffic, an average of just over 3,300 northbound vehicles (southbound figure unavailable) drove past or got off in Boulder on an average day in 2016, with 443 of those vehicles exiting at Boulder. At the southbound interchange, average daily traffic for vehicles exiting into Boulder was 1,217. It stands to reason that a good portion of the traffic going to and from Boulder is local. However, there is likely also a substantial number of non-local vehicles passing through downtown on Main Street or near downtown on I-15. With this in mind, the question becomes how can Boulder entice travelers to stop in downtown, take a look around, and patronize local businesses?

## Non-Motorized Transportation

Boulder's non-motorized transportation network is primarily comprised of sidewalks along Main Street and a few side streets. There is also an off-street path south of the City along Highway 69 which ends just before entering downtown. For the most part, sidewalks and bike facilities are absent in residential neighborhoods east and west of downtown. While the low volume and low speed nature of these streets makes them relatively safe for walking and biking, there are opportunities for improving pedestrian and bicycle connections to downtown, which is discussed in action #25. On Main Street, there are several elements which create a good environment for pedestrians, including well maintained sidewalks, curb ramps, attractive and visible cross-walks, and landscaped medians. However, crossings on Main Street do not include sounds or warning strips for the visually impaired. Additionally, there are several crossings on Main Street that residents have noted can be uncomfortable to cross when traffic is present.

## Urban Renewal

Montana state law provides for the redevelopment of downtowns through the creation of urban renewal districts. Urban renewal districts are formed to address blighted areas and to provide for redevelopment and rehabilitation within a defined area of a city. Urban renewal projects can include a range of public improvements including, but not limited to, water and sewer upgrades, street improvements, utility upgrades, revolving loan programs supporting private infrastructure, façade improvement programs, and downtown

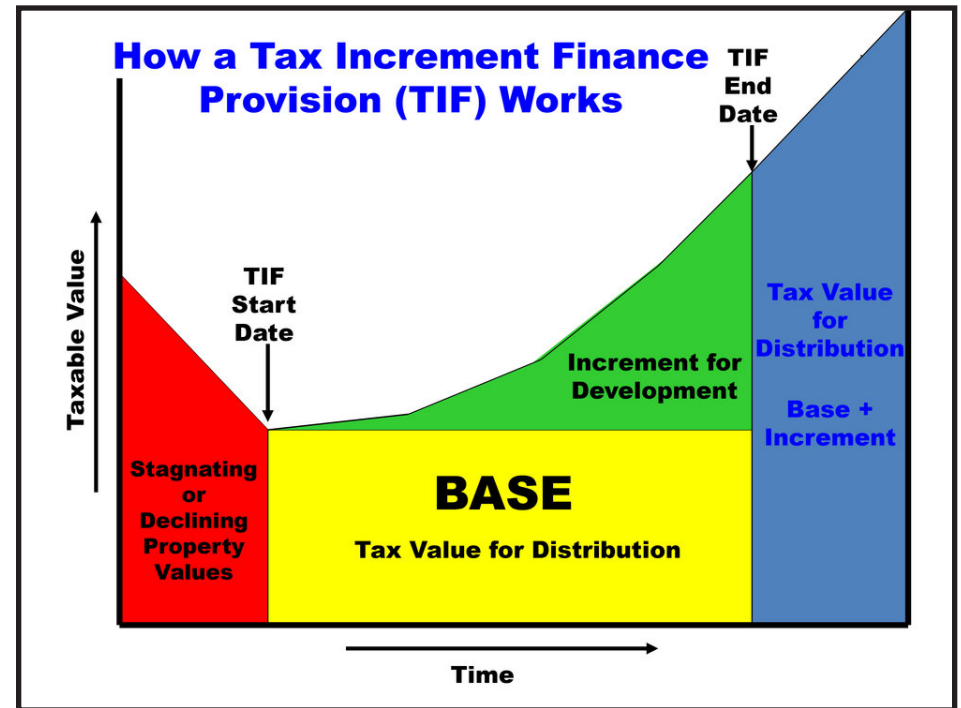
# DOWNTOWN SITE ANALYSIS

marketing and recruitment. One commonly used tool for financing urban renewal projects is tax increment financing (TIF). Under Montana state law, TIF can be utilized in urban renewal or targeted economic development districts, in accordance with an approved plan; it cannot however, be used as a stand-alone financing tool.

## Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing is a local funding mechanism that allows cities and towns to direct property tax dollars that accrue from new development, within an urban renewal district, for urban renewal activities. A base year is established from which “incremental” increases in property values are measured – see Figure 5. Virtually all of the resulting new property tax dollars can be directed to redevelopment and economic revitalization activities within the district in which they are generated. Tax payers located within the urban renewal district pay the same amount as they would if the property were located outside the district. TIF only affects the way that taxes, once collected, are distributed. Taxes that are derived from base year taxable values continue to be distributed to the various taxing jurisdictions – local and state government entities and school districts. Taxes derived from the incremental increase in taxable value are placed in a special fund for purposes set forth in establishing the urban renewal program.

Figure 5 - Tax Increment Financing



## Creating an Urban Renewal Program

To move forward with using TIF as a financing tool, Boulder must first create an urban renewal program and accompanying urban renewal plan with a TIF provision. The first step in this process is adopting a resolution of necessity, that finds that one or more blighted areas exist in the City based on having at least three blight determining criteria listed in MCA 7-15-4206(2); AND that rehabilitation of the area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of residents. The criteria for

---

# DOWNTOWN SITE ANALYSIS

identifying blight include a range of factors that, among other things, impair sound growth of the city or that may constitute an economic or social liability. Based on preliminary observations of downtown Boulder, the following blighted conditions, in accordance with MCA 7-15-4206(2), were noted:

1. *“The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential,”* (MCA 7-15-4206(2)(a).

Several buildings in downtown Boulder show signs of physical deterioration. Needed improvements range from small fixes to large scale rehabilitation or possible demolition. The deterioration of buildings in downtown Boulder detracts from the appearance of downtown, serves as a disincentive for investment, and can pose a safety risk for neighboring structures.

2. *“Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings,”* (MCA 7-15-4206(2)(c).

As noted in Figure 4, downtown Boulder has a high percentage of vacant buildings and lots, which if utilized could bolster the economic health of downtown. Additionally, there is also a relatively high number of single-family residences which disrupts the continuity of businesses in the City’s commercial core.

3. *“Deterioration of site,”* (MCA 7-15-4206(2)(i).

The combination of deteriorated buildings, vacant lots, and empty storefronts in downtown Boulder results in an overall look and feel of deterioration in downtown.

Once Boulder has adopted a resolution of necessity documenting the existence of blight in downtown, the City can then begin the process of developing an urban renewal plan with a TIF provision. The plan must lay out how the City will alleviate blighted areas. In developing this plan, the Boulder is required by state law to consult with the County and the school district and to take into account how a TIF provision will impact both entities.

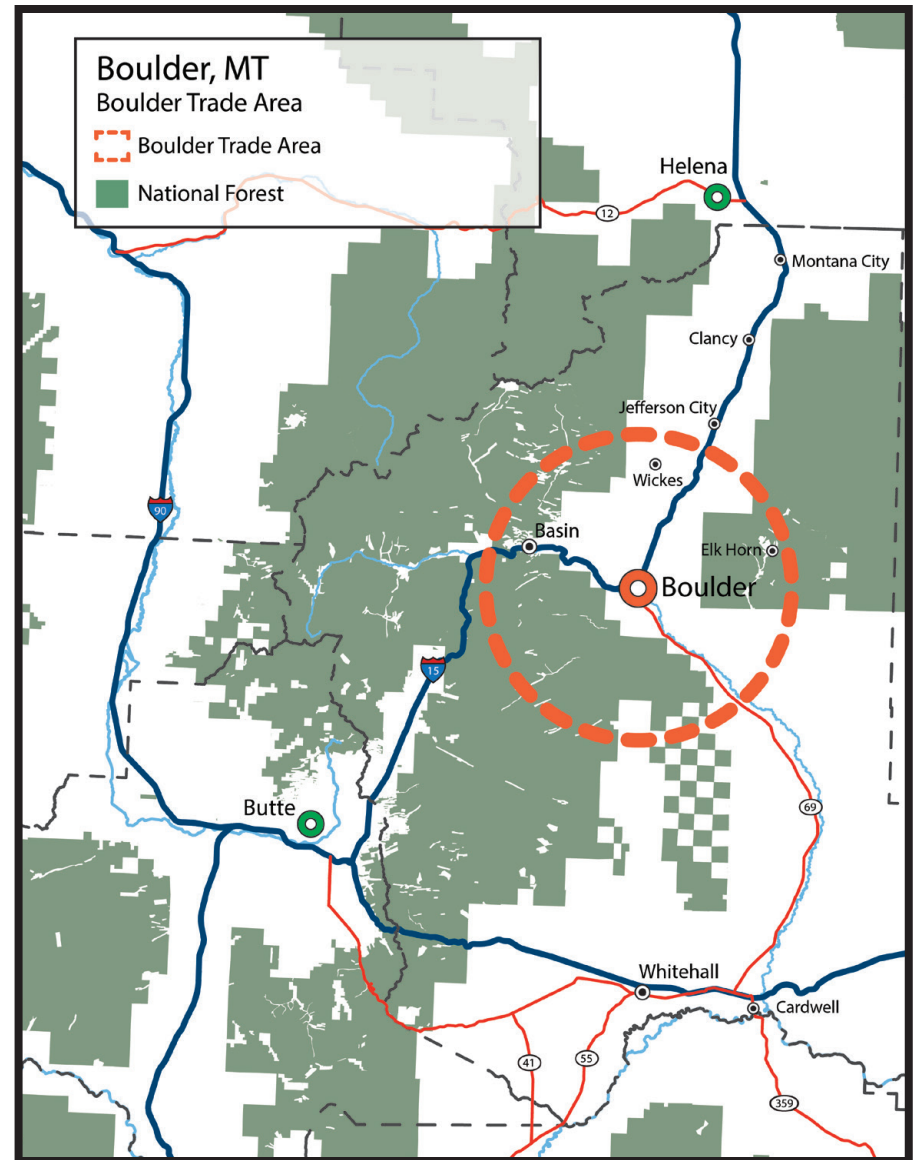


# ECONOMIC & MARKET ANALYSIS

## Overview

For purposes of analyzing local market conditions in Boulder, and identifying market opportunities, a custom drawn trade area was developed – see Figure 6. The trade area was developed based on Boulder’s proximity to adjacent retail markets as well as drive times to nearby communities. Boulder’s trade area includes the areas where downtown is likely to draw the majority of its day-to-day customers. Due to Boulder’s close proximity to Helena and Butte, the trade area is relatively small, encompassing Boulder and Basin as well as nearby residential communities. Outside of this area, individuals are more likely to rely on Helena or Butte for their shopping needs. In all likelihood, many residents from inside the trade area will also go to Helena and Butte for their shopping needs. Nevertheless, this analysis provides a glimpse into where there are potential new market opportunities in downtown Boulder.

Figure 6 - Boulder Trade Area





---

# ECONOMIC & MARKET ANALYSIS

## Demographic and Economic Indicators

As of 2017, the Boulder trade area had an estimated population of 2,171 of which 1,166 lived in the City of Boulder. Since 2010, the population of the trade area has declined slightly and is projected to continue to decline slightly over the next five years. The median age in the trade area is 45.3 which is older than that of Montana at 39.7. In terms of age distribution, as of 2017, the 45-64 age group made up the largest share of the trade area's population (32%) followed by 20-44 (29%), 0-19 (21%) and 65+ (18%). Over the next five years, the trade area's population is expected to age, with the 65+ population projected to increase by 25%, while all other age groups are projected to decline in population.<sup>2</sup> This aging trend may suggest a need for housing, transportation, and medical options that meet the demands of an older population, including improved non-motorized transportation options and easy access to goods and services. A more thorough analysis of Boulder's economy is provided in the City's growth policy update.

## Retail Trade Analysis

To better understand Boulder's downtown economy, the project planners completed a retail trade analysis using ESRI Business Analyst Online, which provides custom market analyses using extensive demographic, consumer expenditure, and business data from a variety of public and private sources. This analysis identifies two things:

1. Industries within Boulder's trade area that are experiencing retail leakage, and
2. Industries within Boulder's trade area that are experiencing retail surplus.

The retail trade analysis gives insight into what sectors of the economy have the potential to expand in downtown Boulder and provides the basis for further study. It provides a window into which industries in the trade area are under-performing and over-performing. Under-performing industries represent opportunity to grow within the trade area, while over-performing sectors represent sectors of the economy where Boulder is attracting outside spending.

### **Retail Supply and Demand**

The retail market analysis compares total local sales (supply) with total consumer expenditures (demand), of residents in the Boulder trade area, to identify whether industries are experiencing a retail leakage or surplus. Retail leakage occurs when consumers are making purchases outside of the trade area, indicating that the supply of locally available retail goods is inadequate or that

# ECONOMIC & MARKET ANALYSIS

prices are not competitive enough to meet local demand. Retail leakage represents opportunity in the local economy; areas where businesses could theoretically expand or where new businesses could open. Retail surplus occurs when sales are greater than local consumer demand. A surplus signifies that the trade area is attracting outside spending.

As can be seen in Table 1, the Boulder trade area is experiencing retail leakage of varying degrees (the gap between retail sales and demand) in 16 of the 18 industry categories analyzed. It is important to note that in a community as small as Boulder the data may have higher than normal margins of error, therefore this analysis focuses trends instead of specific numbers. What Table 1 is telling us is that people inside the trade area are traveling elsewhere for most of their goods and services. While on the surface this does not sound like a bright outlook for Boulder it makes sense. With Helena and Butte being so close, the trade area population is likely attracted to these locations due to the fact that they have a greater diversity of goods and services to choose from. As a result, potential customers likely choose to drive a bit further (or order online) in order to be able to take care of all their shopping, and other, needs in one trip. The two industries where Boulder is experiencing a surplus are drinking establishments and gas stations, which also makes sense as people tend to fill their gas tanks or grab an alcoholic beverage close to home.

**Table 1 - Retail Market Analysis**

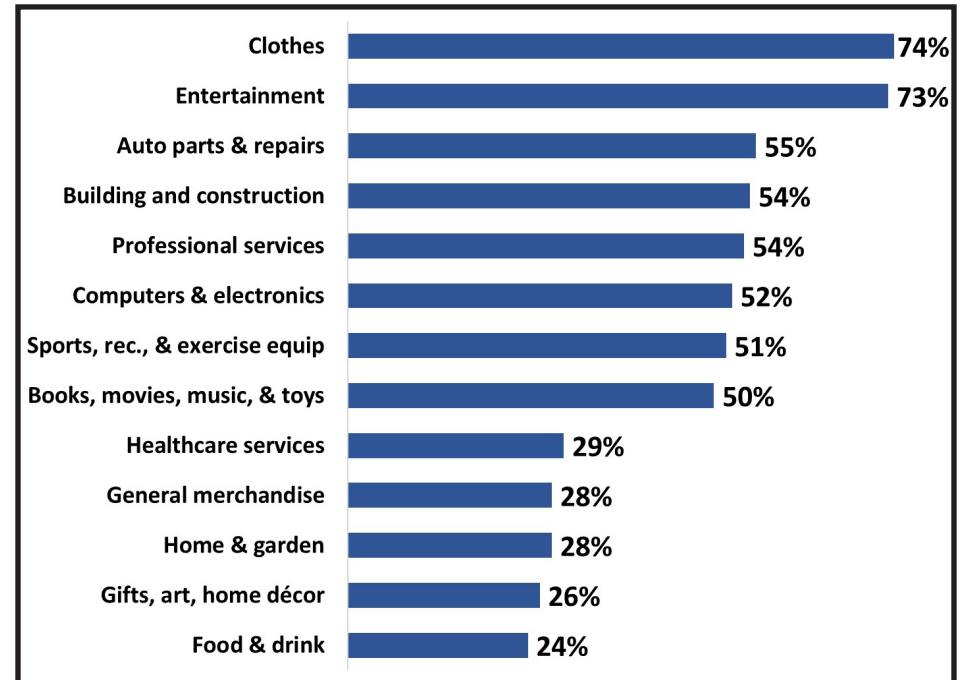
Industry	Retail Gap
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	high leakage
General Merchandise Stores	high leakage
Food & Beverage Stores	high leakage
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	high leakage
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	high leakage
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	high leakage
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	moderate leakage
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	moderate leakage
Electronics & Appliance Stores	moderate leakage
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	moderate leakage
Health & Personal Care Stores	moderate leakage
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	moderate leakage
Used Merchandise Stores	low leakage
Nonstore Retailers	low leakage
Florists	low leakage
Special Food Services	low leakage
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	surplus
Gasoline Stations	surplus

# ECONOMIC & MARKET ANALYSIS

## Retail Opportunities

In theory industries where the Boulder trade area is experiencing leakage represents opportunities for new businesses. However, with nearby retail centers in Helena and Butte, in addition to online retailers, it is unlikely that Boulder could support new business in many of the industries experiencing leakage. The industries that are more likely to succeed in Boulder are those that serve the immediate needs of residents and offer needed goods and services for visitors passing through. The community survey can help provide further insight into this question by looking at the results of the question “*What types of goods or services are missing in Boulder that require you to shop online or out of town*” – see Figure 7. When asked this question 74% of respondents indicated ‘clothing and apparel stores’ followed by ‘entertainment’ (73%), ‘auto parts and repair’ (55%), ‘building and construction materials’ (54%), ‘professional services’ (54%), and ‘computer and electronics’ (52%). With all of these industries experiencing leakage, there may be opportunities for new businesses providing these goods and services in Boulder.

**Figure 7 - Survey Response: What types of goods or services are missing in Boulder?**



# ACTION PLAN

---

## Using the Action Plan

Boulder's downtown master plan is intended to be actionable with achievable recommendations. The idea is that this plan will be implemented over time, with the success of each action building on one another to achieve the City's vision for downtown. The key is to start small with actions that can be implemented quickly and at low cost. If the City can show small successes in the near future, it will show residents that changes and improvements are happening in downtown, which will build momentum for further implementation and hopefully bring in additional organizations, individuals, and businesses.

Engaging the larger community is especially important in Boulder where paid staffing and volunteers are limited. For instance, the Boulder Chamber of Commerce is comprised of a limited number of volunteers who are already stretched thin. However, the Chamber is a key partner that will be needed in the City's effort to strengthen downtown Boulder. To address the Chamber's resource constraints, it will be imperative to recruit additional Chamber board members as well as other community volunteers to help implement this plan.

The action plan serves as the heart of this document and provides guidance for improving the health of downtown Boulder. Each action includes detailed descriptions and guidance for how to move forward towards implementation. In recognition that the City can't go it alone, each action also lists partnering organizations as well as a priority ranking. To assist Boulder in finding funding for the actions outlined in this section, the action plan concludes with a list of possible public and private funding sources. The actions

are organized under five broad categories: 1.) organization, 2.) economic development, 3.) appearance, 4.) transportation, and 5.) promotion.

## Guiding Principles

- 1. Effective partnerships between local, regional, and state organizations are key to the success of downtown Boulder.**
- 2. Improving downtown Boulder will not happen overnight. The process will be incremental with each success building upon one another.**
- 3. Initial improvement efforts should focus on actions that can be achieved in the near term which will have tangible and lasting impacts – lighter, quicker, cheaper.**
- 4. Creating an attractive and walkable downtown will increase the vibrancy of downtown and encourage sustained investment.**
- 5. Preserving existing businesses is the foundation of success.**

## Organization

Having a sound organizational structure in place is a key first piece of the downtown revitalization puzzle. Any effort to improve the health of downtown requires coordination and partnerships among a variety of public and private groups and individuals. Without an effective organizational structure, the best laid plans can languish on the shelf. This does not mean that everyone needs to agree on every detail, though consensus on a general approach for improving downtown is a first step for moving forward.

To begin the process of putting this plan into action, Boulder needs to identify an organization or individual to lead downtown improvement efforts. This entity would serve to coordinate improvement efforts, facilitate communication between stakeholders, build local capacity for action, identify funding opportunities, and ensure projects move forward in timely manner. Once a lead organization or individual is identified, improvement efforts in Boulder should begin by focusing on low-hanging fruit actions that are achievable in the near term and which will show tangible results to the Boulder community. Demonstrating positive momentum will help build local support and encourage additional groups and individuals to get involved. This is especially important in a community of Boulder's size where there is limited paid staff dedicated to downtown. As such, improvement efforts will require a committed volunteer base. From the outset of this effort it is crucial to recognize capacity constraints and set manageable expectations for what can realistically be achieved in a given time frame.

## Organizational Actions

- 1. Create a Main Street committee of public and private stakeholders whose sole focus is improving downtown and implementing Boulder's downtown master plan.**

Description: Boulder benefits from having many local groups, in addition to the City, working to improve the community as a whole, including the Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC), the Boulder Chamber of Commerce, and the Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC). What is missing is a group whose sole focus is on improving downtown. It would make the most sense if this group were housed under the City, BTAC, or the Chamber of Commerce. Wherever it is housed, it is crucial that this group have diverse membership, including individuals representing the City, BTAC, downtown business owners, the general public, and JLDC.

Partners: City, BTAC, Chamber of Commerce, JLDC

Priority: High

# ACTION PLAN

---

## 2. Work with local banks or develop a fund to offer low (or no) interest loans for community improvements.

Description: Implementing the actions laid out in this plan will require financial resources beyond what is available within the City's general fund. This means identifying a variety of alternative funding sources, including grants and money from the legislature set aside to help with the closure of MDC. Another option that has been employed by other small communities around the state is reaching out to local banks to offer no (or low) interest loans for community revitalization projects. These programs generally involve a bank setting aside a specific dollar amount which is available to loan for community projects which meet pre-determined criteria. Initially the program could start small to test its viability and usefulness and if successful, could continue.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, local banks, JLDC

Priority: High

## 3. Engage Boulder youth in downtown improvement efforts.

Description: While several actions identified in this plan may take several years to fully implement, and will require substantial financial resources, there are also many actions which can be implemented in the near-term, with minimal financial investment. For these actions the greatest need is people to do the work. In a City of Boulder's size volunteer capacity can be limited. During the public engagement process, one commenter mentioned that it is the same

several people volunteering in the community, which can lead to people getting burnt out and hesitant to take on additional volunteer responsibilities.

One way to increase volunteer capacity is to engage Boulder's youth in putting this plan into action. This could be done by reaching out to teachers and administrators at Jefferson High School about developing a campaign to enlist students in revitalizing downtown Boulder. Recognizing this is easier said than done, as it is important that students feel ownership in their involvement. This could take the form of students developing (and implementing) an idea for a mural or public art, creating an event catered to their interests, or assisting on storefront and community beautification projects. In any case, successfully bringing in Boulder youth will require making their involvement engaging and fulfilling.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson High School, Boulder Elementary School (for middle school students)

Priority: High

## 4. Develop an annual work plan for implementing the downtown master plan.

Description: A work plan is the first step in identifying how to put this plan into action. The work plan should identify a list of prioritized projects for the year, including both short-term projects and projects that will take more than a year to fully implement. The work plan should identify stable funding sources as well as potential grants to apply for. It

is important to maintain realistic expectations in terms of funding availability. The work plan should also identify roles and responsibilities for individuals and organizations.

Partners: City, BTAC, Chamber of Commerce, JLDC

Priority: High

## 5. Hire a paid staff person devoted to implementing Boulder's downtown master plan.

Description: Implementing this plan will be a significant undertaking, which will require the efforts of many volunteers and organizations working in collaboration. However, it is challenging to rely exclusively on volunteers. A full-time or part-time staff person would provide added capacity, plus, they would be able to take on other City duties beyond implementing the plan such as scheduling and managing events, coordinating the façade improvement program, and other tasks related to economic development.

Partners: City, BTAC

Priority: Medium

## 6. Host a volunteer recruitment and action day each spring.

Description: As mentioned in action #3, maintaining a sufficient number of community volunteers overtime is a challenge in a City of Boulder's size. As a result, the City and its partners will need to be proactive in recruiting new volunteers to engage in downtown revitalization efforts. This could take the form of a spring volunteer day (or week) where the Main Street committee, or another group, organizes fun projects for volunteers to work on that will show tangible results. This can help people realize the importance of their individual action and connect them to the people and organizations who are working to improve downtown Boulder.

Partners: City, BTAC, Chamber of Commerce, JLDC

Priority: High



# ACTION PLAN

---

## Economic Development

Key to the success of any downtown is the presence of a diverse array of small businesses offering a variety of goods and services. A healthy business mix drives people to downtown and creates a public space that is the heart of a community. In small downtowns like Boulder, one of the most important overall strategies is preserving what already is there by supporting existing businesses. At the same time, Boulder needs to focus on attracting new businesses that fit the community's character and could realistically be supported by both residents and visitors. With the rise of online retailers and nearby regional centers, operating a successful downtown business is more challenging than ever. Rather than trying to compete with outside shopping options, Boulder needs to focus on developing a downtown business mix that supports the everyday needs and demands of residents while also providing needed services and unique-to-Boulder shopping opportunities for visitors and travelers.

## Economic Development Actions

### **7. Encourage an anchor tenant to locate in downtown Boulder.**

Description: Anchor tenants serve to draw people to a destination; they are the kind of places that will attract people to stop in downtown or possibly drive out of their way to visit Boulder. Anchor tenants benefit adjacent businesses by increasing pedestrian activity and bringing in customers who may not have visited downtown otherwise. In small downtowns such as Boulder, anchor tenants are generally service oriented (breweries, cideries, restaurants, bakeries, etc.) or small-scale retail. Actively working with and encouraging interested entrepreneurs to create new anchor businesses downtown should be a key focus of the City in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, JLDC, and BTAC. This will require developing a marketing package that includes a quick and easy way for potential business owners to determine what properties are available in downtown, the assets and needs of each specific location, and details related to square footage, uses allowed, and regulatory requirements. Additionally, the marketing package should also include information on available financial resources including tax credits, grant funding opportunities, and business development assistance programs to encourage and aid the creation of new businesses.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, JLDC, BTAC

Priority: High



## 8. Create a downtown Urban Renewal District with a Tax Increment Financing provision.

Description: As mentioned earlier in this plan, creating a downtown urban renewal district with a TIF provision could help Boulder in financing downtown improvement projects. Before moving forward with TIF, the City will need to adopt a resolution of necessity documenting the existence of blight in downtown and develop an urban renewal plan with a TIF provision. In developing this plan Boulder will need to work with both Jefferson County and the Jefferson School District to evaluate how TIF will impact the County and School District.

Partners: City, JLDC, BTAC

Priority: Medium

## 9. Work with JLDC on developing an inventory of downtown properties to use as a tool to present to potential new business owners, including information on square footage, energy costs, infrastructure needs, amenities in place, and taxes.

Description: A comprehensive database of downtown properties would be a useful tool for highlighting business opportunities in Boulder. This database could be used by local realtors, the Chamber of Commerce, and JLDC to disseminate information to potential business owners on what commercial properties are available, the level of amenities in place, and building operating and maintenance costs. This information will take some of the leg work out

of buying a commercial property in downtown and show the City's commitment to supporting downtown business. Additionally, this information could potentially put Boulder on the radar of regional investors who may have not previously considered Boulder as an option for a new business.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, JLDC, BTAC

Priority: Medium

## 10. Work with owners of vacant buildings on offering short-term leases to tenants only needing space on a seasonal basis.

Description: Short-term leases offer flexible lease terms ranging from a few days to a year, with rates generally lower than ordinary commercial leases. Pop-up leases benefit landlords because some rent is better than no rent and they can also serve to attract more customers to downtown as a once empty storefront becomes open for business. This approach could be used to offer small business owners and craft makers a chance to reach a wider market during summer months and the winter holiday shopping season, without having to commit to a long-term lease.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, downtown property owners

Priority: Medium

# ACTION PLAN

---

## **11. Work with local business owners on utilizing online tools to reach a wider customer base.**

Description: More and more people are turning to online resources to identify travel destinations and stops along the way. From restaurants and gas stations to unique local spots like the Boulder Hot Springs, travelers rely on sites such as Google and Yelp to find their next meal or a unique Montana experience. While many Boulder businesses can currently be found on these sites, there is more opportunity to better craft messaging to potential customers. This can be done through providing or expanding business descriptions, adding professional pictures, or offering promotions during the summer traveling season. This could help attract pass-through visitors to Boulder who in turn could become return visitors and could help spread the word on what Boulder has to offer.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce

Priority: Medium

## **12. Continue to work with JLDC and interested entrepreneurs on offering business start-up classes, including developing a business plan and accessing capital.**

Description: JLDC currently offers business assistance classes to help budding entrepreneurs in their business start-up efforts. These classes are invaluable resources for new business owners who may be unfamiliar with developing a business plan, accessing capital, and understanding the nut

and bolts of operating a successful small business. Boulder should continue to work with JLDC on offering business assistance classes in Boulder to foster the development of homegrown business in the community.

Partners: City, JLDC

Priority: Medium

## **13. Work the JLDC and existing business owners (on an as needed basis) to develop business transition plans.**

Description: Rural communities across Montana are at risk of losing thousands of jobs in the coming years as small business owners near retirement and struggle to find people to buy their business and keep workers employed.<sup>3</sup> Selling a business takes planning and precision, which can often be overlooked by business owners approaching retirement. For business owners to effectively transition into retirement and sell their business they need to be prepared to make their business attractive to potential buyers. This means evaluating tax returns and financial statements, usually with assistance from a financial professional, to figure out what changes may be needed to show additional value to a potential buyer.

Partners: City, JLDC, U.S. Small Business Administration Montana Office

Priority: Low

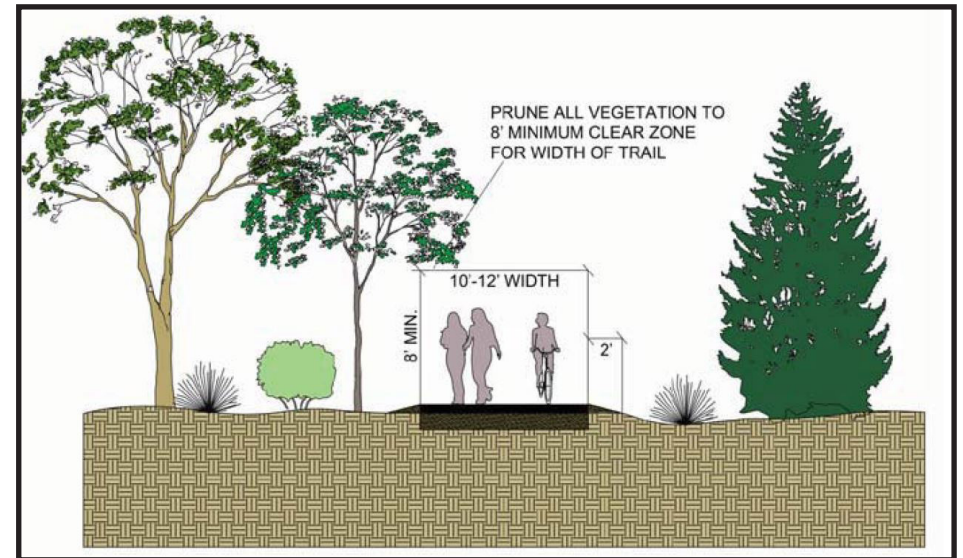
## 14. Create a river front park and trail that connects to downtown Boulder and attracts new recreational users and tourists.

Description: The Boulder River runs through the south end of the city and is a tremendous resource that is yet to be fully appreciated. A river front park and trail system starting to the east of the bridge on Highway 69 would help to open up this resource to be used and enjoyed by residents and visitors. Tying the river trail to the downtown could be done through signs or sidewalk stamps, to ensure that those visiting downtown are aware of the opportunity to visit the river while in Boulder. Trail surface recommendations are for asphalt or crushed stone aggregate (see images on this page). Initial investigations show that there is potential for the river trail to travel from the bridge to the east, utilizing easements from the City, County, and State if they are able to be secured. Future phases of the trail could loop to the north and 4th Avenue, and/or to the south and the fairgrounds area. Fishing access may be able to be opened up in the future, creating additional draw to the area. Additionally, the high school would benefit from having a multi-use pathway for educational and sports related activities. First steps to realize this project would be to consult with a survey/engineering company to determine the feasibility of securing easements.

Partners: City, JLDC, County, BDFB, FWP, Jefferson High School

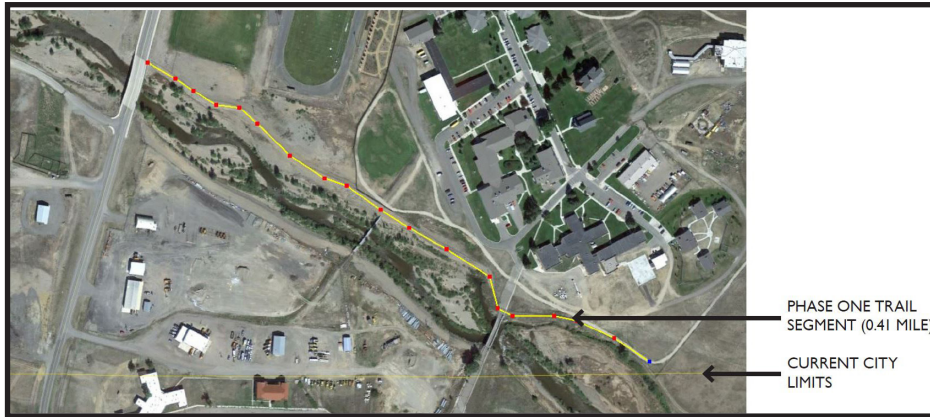
Priority: High

Figure 8 - Typical Multi-Use Trail Section





**Figure 10 - Potential Phase One of River Trail**



## Appearance

Visual appearance is crucial to the vibrancy of downtown. A downtown that is visually appealing is a space that is inviting and encourages visitors to stop, get out of their car (or bike) and explore. When people invoke an image of a healthy downtown they have visited, they generally picture a variety of visual elements that create a vibrant setting. There is no one element that makes “good” visual appearance, rather it is many small features of a downtown; the design of buildings, street infrastructure, presence of people, vegetation, the relation of buildings to the street, the presence of windows (not blank walls), public art, and viewsheds all contribute to a downtown’s visual appearance. Creating a visually appealing downtown shows a community’s pride and commitment to downtown and can serve to leave a lasting impression on visitors, who could one day become residents and future business owners. Additionally, a variety of visual design features can serve to create a more inviting walking environment and calm traffic on Main Street as passing motorists are forced to slow down and focus more on their surrounding environment rather than simply on the stretch of pavement in front of them. Boulder has many features that add to downtown’s visual appeal, but there is room for improvement as community members have noted throughout the public process. Many of the appearance actions described below are shown on Figure 14 at the end of this section.

# ACTION PLAN

---

## Appearance Actions

### **15. Enhance Veterans Park as a central and attractive gathering space for residents and visitors.**

Description: Veterans Park already serves as a vital community gathering and open space in downtown. While Veterans park is a treasured community asset, there is opportunity to improve the park so that it becomes a destination for both residents and visitors alike. This includes improving the public restrooms and adding a visitor information kiosk.

These improvements could help turn Veterans Park into the backyard of downtown, a place where residents go to meet friends and catch a show, families take their kids to play, and visitors passing through town stop to grab a take-out lunch. The importance of quality and attractive public spaces is directly tied to the economic health of downtown. It is these types of spaces that catch the eye of visitors and encourage them to stop and also give residents a reason to come downtown more often. Figure 11 shows a conceptual idea of what the visitor information kiosk could look like.

Partners: City, BTAC, Chamber of Commerce

Priority: High

**Figure 11 - Conceptual Visitor Information Kiosk**



## **16. Relocate the RV dump station away from City Hall.**

Description: Currently, the RV dump station location requires that traffic travel in front of the City Hall building and park near the building to use the station. Residents have expressed concern over this service being offered in a highly visible location downtown. Relocating the station would allow for better traffic flow in the downtown area and would not utilize a central area near City Hall and Veterans Park.

Partners: City

Priority: Medium

## **17. Develop a façade improvement program for downtown.**

Description: Façade improvement programs help revitalize neglected buildings, where the cost of improvements may be too large for property owners to cover on their own. They use financial incentives to encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts. Financial incentives can take the form of matching grants, loans, tax incentives, and/ or design assistance.

Quality building facades call attention to unique historical buildings and downtown as a whole, encouraging people to stop and check out what there is to offer. Improved building facades can help attract new shoppers and businesses to downtown, creating sustained success. Studies have found that façade improvements can also have the effect of encouraging surrounding property owners to make similar

improvements, thereby stretching the positive impacts of the program.

To implement a façade improvement program in Boulder, the City could apply for a grant from the Montana Main Street Program to develop such a program or it could apply for funding from the Boulder Development Fund. To ensure building improvements are done in accordance with set standards the City could make funding contingent upon meeting Boulder's design guidelines as outlined in action #24. In any case it will be important that the City outline a structured and clear process for how funding and/ or financial incentives are allotted. This includes defining a target area for improvements, establishing clear criteria, identifying eligible and ineligible projects, emphasizing good design, establishing a clear and transparent application and selection process, and identifying a board, organization, or individual who will oversee the program. Depending on the success of the program, the City could choose to extend its life using local funding sources and/ or incentives.

Partners: City, BTAC

Priority: High

# ACTION PLAN

---

## **18. Work with Main Street property owners on increasing window transparency and adding visual appeal to building frontages along Main Street.**

Description: The visual appeal of any downtown serves as a first impression and can influence whether people choose to visit and shop in local businesses. A building's aesthetics and the degree of transparency (e.g clear windows adjacent to sidewalk) are two key contributing factors in creating an inviting environment for pedestrians. Research has shown that high levels of window transparency and unique visual factors increases pedestrian activity in a downtown.<sup>4</sup> Pedestrian activity is one indicator of a successful downtown as it shows people see enough interest and value in downtown to get out of their automobile, take a walk, and visit local business. While several downtown buildings in Boulder have unique historical architectural features, there are areas where building frontage improvements are needed and where windows are either boarded up or heavily tinted. By taking steps to improve building frontages and increasing transparency, Boulder can create a downtown that encourages pedestrian activity which in turn will help bring more foot traffic into local businesses. Figure 12 displays a rendering of what potential improvements could look like.

Partners: City, downtown property owners, Chamber of Commerce

Priority: High





Figure 12 - Rendering of Potential Building Frontage Improvements



# ACTION PLAN

---

## 19. Install decorative street infrastructure that reinforces Boulder's identity including, but not limited to, street lamps, trash cans, seating, bike racks, and flower baskets.

Description: In addition to serving a useful purpose, decorative street infrastructure can increase the visual appeal of downtown by adding small elements that add unique character. Decorative street infrastructure is a small piece of the overall puzzle to improve the appearance of downtown. Decorative street lamps, trash receptacles, benches, and bike racks alone will not transform downtown Boulder. However, in combination with improvements to buildings facades and store fronts, these small visual elements will increase the attractiveness of downtown and aid in creating a cohesive visual identity that reinforces the sense of place in downtown. Over time, increased visual appeal will aid in economic development as downtown Boulder becomes a visually welcoming place that encourages both residents and visitors. To ensure consistency with other community improvement and branding efforts, the City will need to identify a brand identity, as noted in the growth policy.

Partners: City, BTAC, downtown property owners

Priority: Medium



## 20. Work with owners of downtown vacant buildings on increasing the visual appeal of their storefronts.

Description: Downtown Boulder has several vacant storefronts which detract from the visual appeal of downtown and which can project an image of decline, thereby discouraging investment from potential new business owners. Improving the visual appeal of vacant storefronts can be simple and low-cost, including a fresh coat of paint, creative window displays, or simply tidying up the interior and exterior of buildings. Overall visually appealing vacant storefronts will add to the aesthetics of downtown and will highlight these properties as opportunities for potential tenants or buyers. Again, this action alone will not likely spark investment in downtown in the immediate future. Rather improving the visual appeal of vacant storefronts will work in conjunction with other actions to improve the overall appearance of downtown Boulder in an effort to encourage more people to stop, shop, and possibly invest in downtown.

Partners: City, downtown property owners, Chamber of Commerce

Priority: Medium



# ACTION PLAN

---

## 21. Explore opportunities for creating a pocket park in downtown.

Description: Quality downtown public gathering spaces can serve as the front yard of downtowns; spaces where social interactions occur, events and celebrations take place, and residents and visitors stop to grab a bite and take in the surroundings. Increasingly, communities around the country are looking at vacant and underutilized land in downtowns as opportunities for creating great public spaces in the form of pocket parks. Pocket parks are small-scale parks tucked into existing development, which provide a community gathering space amid commercial businesses. They can include a variety of elements to serve the needs of residents and visitors including play areas, stages or event spaces, public art, areas for people to relax and grab a bite to eat, etc. Pocket parks take vacant land and turn it into an attractive space that welcomes people to visit and linger downtown in an attractive setting.

In Boulder, there are several potential areas for a pocket park, including the vacant lot on the east side of Main Street between 1st and 2nd Avenue as well as the vacant lot across from the post office. Figure 13 shows a conceptual idea of what a pocket park could look like in downtown Boulder. The addition of a pocket park in downtown would create a central space for social interactions that would attract people of all ages to downtown and could also turn a vacant property into an eye-catching attraction. This may require the City to work with private landowners on purchasing or leasing property,

prior to planning for improvements.

Partners: City, downtown property owners, Chamber of Commerce

Priority: Medium



Figure 13 - Conceptual Pocket Park Rendering



# ACTION PLAN

---

## 22. Create a revolving loan fund to fund higher cost community improvements.

Description: The City should create a revolving loan fund of very low interest rate loans to landowners who wish to make larger improvements (in the neighborhood of \$20,000) to their buildings. The low interest loans would be paid back, and then could be reinvested into another property.

Partners: City, BTAC, downtown property owners

Priority: High

## 23. Develop new and enhance existing public art in downtown, including murals and sculptures.

Description: Public art adds interesting visual elements to a downtown, conveying a sense of civic pride and adding character to the streetscape. Whether it be a mural or sculpture, public art is another element that can improve the overall appearance of downtown and lead to more vibrancy and activity on downtown streets. Boulder currently enjoys several great murals in downtown, which are maintained and add to the visual appeal of downtown. Moving forward, Boulder should work to preserve existing murals and work with local artists and Boulder youth on generating ideas for additional public art in downtown.

Partners: City, downtown property owners, local artists, Chamber of Commerce, Boulder youth,

Priority: Medium



## 24. Develop design guidelines for downtown.

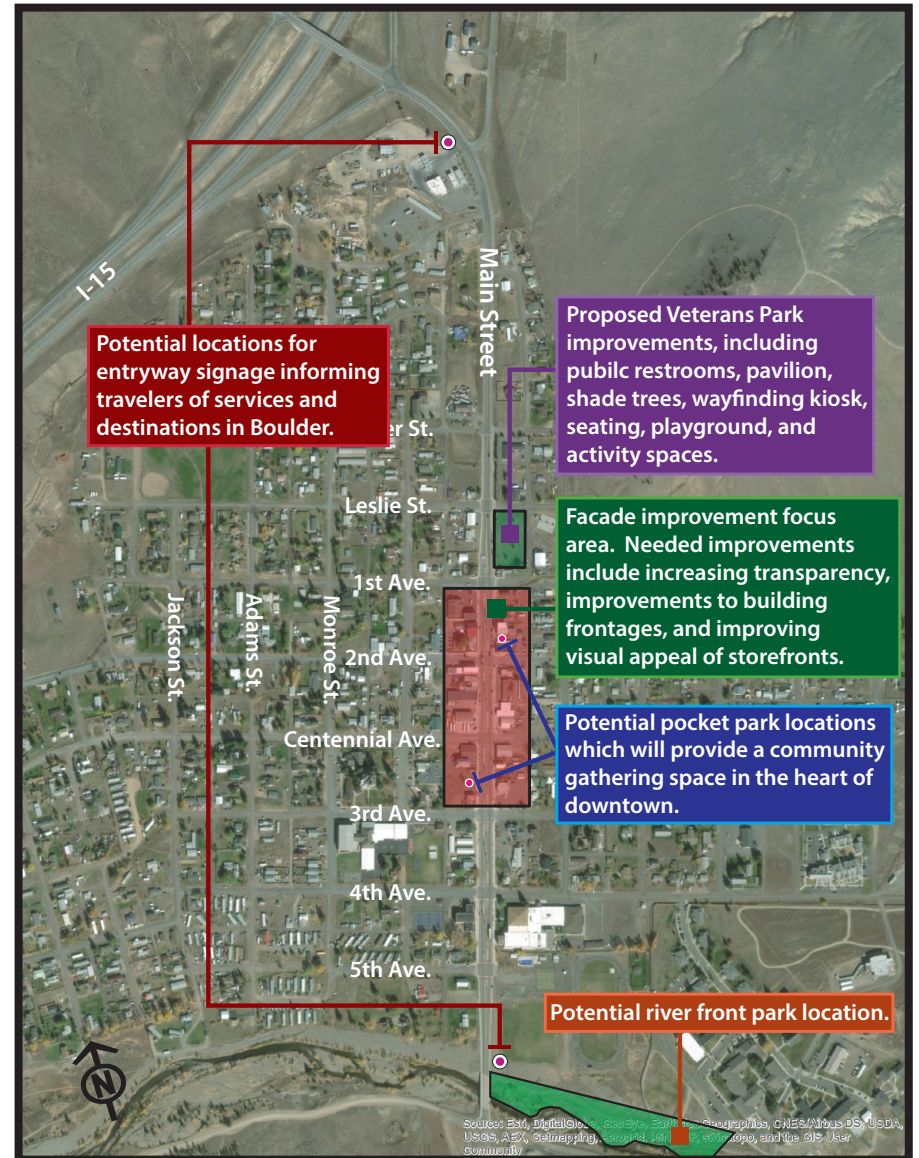
Description: Design guidelines are intended to create a coherent and aesthetically pleasing look for downtown through recommendations for building designs. They are not regulatory, meaning they serve only as a guide for building owners. However, if tied to a funding mechanism they could be required as a condition for financial assistance. While not regulatory, design guidelines are beneficial in that they encourage building owners to think about how the design of their building can influence the look of the downtown, pedestrian activity, and how customers interact with their building and the rest of downtown.

The historic quality of buildings in downtown is one of Boulder's greatest assets and serves as an attraction for visitors and potential new residents and businesses. However, there are opportunities for creating greater cohesion and preserving and enhancing unique architectural elements on downtown buildings. Design guidelines can address a range of topics including building style, building materials and colors, minimum levels of transparency on building frontages (windows), maximum setbacks and/or certain types of awnings. Design guidelines in Boulder could be developed as part of the City's zoning update.

Partners: City, downtown property owners

Priority: Low

Figure 14 - Map of Select Appearance Actions



# ACTION PLAN

---

## Transportation

The transportation network in a community, and how it interacts with downtown, can serve to influence people's decisions to visit, linger, and shop in downtown. The key to this is creating a walkable environment that is welcoming and easy to navigate for individuals of all ages and abilities. At the same time, a successful downtown needs to accommodate vehicle traffic and provide sufficient parking for customers. However, what makes traditional downtowns (such as Boulder's) unique is that they were originally designed for people, not cars. The image of a healthy downtown is not one of a sea of parking lots and wide streets for vehicles to zip through town. Rather it is a space that encourages walking through thoughtful design, safety, and numerous activity generators, while also accommodating safe and efficient vehicle access. At some point everyone is a pedestrian, and a downtown that makes the pedestrian experience safer and more enjoyable can encourage people to stay downtown for longer durations. Additionally, with the rise of bicycle tourism in Montana, there are opportunities for attracting these visitors to Boulder, visitors who are increasingly seeking small inviting downtowns. In short, a healthy downtown is one that is accessible for all modes of transportation – pedestrians, bikes, and cars. Several of the transportation actions described below are shown on a map in Figure 22 at the end of this section.

## Transportation Actions

### **25. Create safe bicycle and pedestrian connections between downtown and other destinations in Boulder.**

Description: A high degree of walkability and bikeability can create greater mobility for individuals without access to a car, improve economic productivity as pedestrians and cyclists are far more likely to frequent multiple businesses than if they were just driving to a specific store, and improve health outcomes by getting people to be more active.

While Boulder is a fairly walkable community, the majority of the City's residential streets do not have dedicated facilities for pedestrians and bicycles. Given that many of these streets are low volume and low speed, bicycles and pedestrians can still utilize them with relative safety. However, the absence of dedicated facilities can serve to discourage people who may be inclined to walk or bike but choose not to due to a perception of unsafe conditions and/or a lack of inviting spaces for them to walk or bike. In developing a non-motorized transportation network Boulder needs to create safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian connections between downtown, residential neighborhoods, schools, the Boulder River, and the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. While this action addresses areas outside of the downtown planning area, a safe and connected non-motorized transportation system will benefit downtown by encouraging more people to walk and bike in Boulder.

As Boulder's residential streets are low volume and low



speed, there are many options, with varying costs, for providing safe pedestrian and bicycle connections in Boulder, several of which are described below.

**Sidewalks** – Sidewalks provide the highest level of safety and mobility for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. However, sidewalks can be costly to install and require ongoing maintenance. As such, the City will need install sidewalks in strategic locations that provide key connections in the City’s higher traffic areas.

**Advisory Shoulder** – Advisory shoulders provide a prioritized space for pedestrians and cyclists through the use of pavement markings and signage with little or no widening of the paved roadway surface – see Figure 15. Advisory shoulders can work on two-way streets with low to moderate vehicle traffic. In comparison to a traditional shoulder, advisory shoulders are part of the travel way, thus it is expected that vehicles will encounter passing situations where they must enter the advisory shoulder.

**Bike Lanes** – Bike lanes are designated by a white stripe on the road, a bicycle symbol, and signage that alerts drivers that a portion of the road is dedicated to bicyclists.

**Sharrows** – Sharrows are a shared lane bicycle marking, indicating to motorists that bicycles are allowed to use the full lane – see Figure 16. They generally require paint on the roadway and signage indicating that the street is a bike route. Streets with sharrows do not have bike lane markings.

**Bike Boulevards** – Bike boulevards are low-speed, low-

**Figure 15 - Advisory Shoulder**



**Figure 16 - Bike Sharrow**



# ACTION PLAN

---

volume streets that have been enhanced for bicycle travel. Bike boulevards are designed to give priority to bicyclists as through traffic by discouraging cut-through vehicle traffic but allowing local vehicle traffic. This is achieved through small design improvements ranging from signage to traffic calming elements.

**Pedestrian Lane** – Pedestrian lanes are designated spaces on a street exclusively for pedestrians – see Figure 17. Pedestrian lanes can be on one side or both sides of the street. They are generally appropriate on streets with low volumes and speeds. Pedestrian lanes can be created by using paint on the street, or using more creative and visual measures such as flower pots or flexible delineator posts.

Partners: City, Jefferson County, Montana Department of Transportation

Priority: Medium

**Figure 17 - Pedestrian Lane**



Photo Credit: FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks

## **26. Identify a location off Main Street for dedicated RV and trailer parking.**

Description: RV travelers passing through Boulder are not likely to stop and take a look around if suitable parking is unavailable or difficult to find. Through the public outreach process Boulder residents noted that during summer months RVs and trailers take up significant portions of downtown parking or are unable to find parking downtown and thus do not stop in downtown. As a result, there was an expressed need for dedicated RV and trailer parking in close proximity to downtown. Wherever RV parking is located it is crucial that adequate signage be in place on the north and south ends of downtown directing RV drivers to the lot. As peak RV season is during the warmer months of the year, any RV parking would only need to be dedicated during a portion of the year.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, local property owners

Priority: High

## **27. Create a pilot project for the installation of temporary wayfinding signs in downtown.**

Description: Wayfinding refers to using informational signage to direct people (pedestrians and/or vehicles) through a community and enhance their experience in the city. Developing a wayfinding program typically entails creating a wayfinding plan to identify a consistent theme and design for signs, where signs will be located, and what destinations to highlight. However, in a community of Boulder's

small size a full-fledged wayfinding system may not be necessary. Information signage at the north and south ends of downtown (identified in action #33) and an individual wayfinding kiosk at veterans park will certainly be useful and benefit downtown and the community. However, the process of developing a wayfinding plan and installing signage can take a year or more and cost thousands of dollars. In reality Boulder can take a quicker and cheaper route to wayfinding that if successful, could turn into something more permanent if it is shown to be effective.

One strategy commonly employed is the use of temporary wayfinding signs that not only direct people to destinations but also tell residents how far it is to walk or bike to downtown, school, or other community destinations. This has the benefit of orienting visitors and encouraging walking and biking among residents by showing how close destinations

**Figure 18 - Temporary Wayfinding Sign**



are in the community. The website [walkyourcity.org](http://walkyourcity.org) provides an easy process for creating wayfinding signage that can be implemented in the near term – see Figure 18. Using this as a guide, Boulder can identify what destinations to highlight, where to place signs, and then order signs for installation. These signs, while temporary, can remain up for several months. Depending on the success of these temporary wayfinding signs, and the level of community support, Boulder could decide whether to invest in permanent wayfinding signs that incorporate the City's identified brand.

Partners: City, downtown property owners

Priority: High

**28. Create a temporary demonstration project for bulb outs (aka curb extensions) at Main Street Intersections between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.**

Description: Curb bulb-outs extend the sidewalk into the street, which narrows crossing distances and provides additional space for pedestrians at intersections. This benefits pedestrians because they have a better field of vision to see oncoming traffic and it benefits drivers as they are better able to see pedestrians waiting to cross the street because they are not tucked behind parked cars.

During the public process for this plan, there was concern that bulb-outs might limit turning movements for large trucks. In recognition of this concern, and the fact that bulb outs can be costly to install, this action is recommending a temporary bulb-out demonstration project to show how they function

# ACTION PLAN

---

with turning trucks and how they can improve the pedestrian experience on Main Street. Demonstration projects such as these are becoming increasingly common in Montana and the Country as a whole. For bulb-out demonstrations, communities have employed very temporary solutions using straw wattles (see Figure 19) as well as longer lasting solutions using paint and delineator posts (see Figure 20). The overall idea is to try it as a demonstration before fully committing the resources to full-scale implementation. If the demonstration project works and is well received, the hope is that it will lead to a longer term solution that has been shown to be effective and has support from the community. As Main Street is a state highway any demonstration would need to be approved by the Montana Department of Transportation before being implemented.

Partners: City, Montana Department of Transportation, Chamber of Commerce, local business owners

Priority: Medium

**Figure 19 - Straw Wattle Bulb-out**



**Figure 20 - Painted Bulb-out**



## **29. Support Jefferson County’s efforts to promote and improve the bike camp at the County Recreation Park.**

Description: Bicycle tourism is a fast-growing activity in Montana that has economic benefits for communities large and small. A 2014 University of Montana study found that bicycle travelers spend an average of \$75 per person per day and stay eight nights or more in the state.<sup>5</sup> Several small Montana communities have made a commitment to welcoming cyclists and have since become favored destinations for cyclists around the world. One key way these communities have welcomed cyclists is through the development of bike camps.

Jefferson County recently completed the bike barn at the County Recreation Park that offers cyclists a sheltered space to stay the night or tent camping for a small fee. The bike barn also includes amenities valued by cyclists, including a

microwave, a mini-fridge, a coffee maker, counters, tables, chairs, restrooms and showers.

An increasingly popular bike tour, that brings riders from around the globe, is the great divide mountain bike route (GDMBR), which crisscrosses the continental divide from Banff, Alberta to Antelope Wells, New Mexico. Boulder currently sits on an off-shoot alternate route of the GDMBR. The community of Ovando (population 65) has made a concerted effort to welcome GDMBR cyclists, including providing spaces for them to camp, offering needed biking related supplies, and presenting a welcoming atmosphere among business owners. Word travels fast in the bike community and Ovando has since become a preferred destination for thousands of GDMBR cyclists each summer. With Boulder's new bike barn and proximity to the GDMBR, there is no reason the community could not also become a favored destination for touring cyclists. This could be beneficial for downtown as these riders are looking for unique small town destinations and are always in need of supplies, food for the road, and a hot meal.

The challenge now is getting the word out that Boulder is a cycling destination. This will require working with the Jefferson County and JLDC to disseminate information on the bike barn to bicycle tourism organizations such as Adventure Cycling in Missoula. Additionally, while the bike barn has many of the amenities that cyclists need, one additional element that would add to its attractiveness is a bike pump and repair stand which provides common tools

used for bicycle repair.

Partners: City, Jefferson County, Montana Office of Tourism

Priority: Medium

### **30. Improve the safety of Main Street crossings.**

Description: While Main Street intersections have well marked cross-walks, several Boulder residents have indicated that crossing Main Street can be unsafe during times of high traffic, at night, or when children are going to and from school. This action is aimed at alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrians through better signage. One potential solution is the installation of rapid flashing beacons – see Figure 21. Rapid flashing beacons use user-actuated flashing lights that supplement warning signs at unsignalized intersections. They can be activated by pedestrians manually by a push button and have been shown to significantly increase driver yielding at crosswalks when supplementing standard crossing warning signs and markings.

Partners: City, Montana Department of Transportation

Priority: Low

# ACTION PLAN

---

**Figure 21 - Rapid Flashing Beacon**



**31. Install ADA compliant crossings at Main Street intersections between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

Description: While Main Street crossings in downtown have well-marked cross-walks and curb ramps, they do not provide any indication to individuals with a visual impairment that they are at a crossing. Installing truncated domes or accessible pedestrian signals (audible) at downtown intersections will make downtown Boulder a truly accessible destination for all individuals. As Main Street is a state highway this will require coordination with and approval from the Montana Department of Transportation

Partners: City, Montana Department of Transportation

Priority: Low

**32. Paint parallel parking stalls on Main Street.**

Description: While Boulder residents and business owners did not cite parking congestion as a significant issue impacting downtown, they did mention that parking can be hard to find on certain blocks during summer months. When parking is in high demand and vehicles are coming and going, blocks on Main Street may be left with large gaps between cars that are not quite big enough to park a car in. This results in an inefficient use of on-street parking capacity. Painting lines on Main Street, indicating where vehicles are intended to park, will help in making more efficient use of existing parking supply. As Main Street is a state highway, Boulder will need to coordinate with the Montana Department of Transportation on implementing this action.

Partners: City, Montana Department of Transportation

Priority: Low

Figure 22 - Map of Select Transportation Actions



## Promotion

Promotion is about getting the word out on Boulder. From the health mines and hot spring to downtown and nearby recreation on public lands, Boulder has many assets that attract visitors now and could attract even more with the right promotion strategy. The key is getting Boulder on peoples' radars so they become inclined to seek out downtown and the greater Boulder community. Every year people from all over the world travel to Montana to visit national parks and outdoor recreation opportunities. When traveling around the state they are seeking locations that offer unique local experiences. In order for these visitors to identify Boulder as a destination they need to know 1.) where it is and 2.) why they should come. At the same time, it is equally important to promote downtown Boulder locally and develop engaging opportunities for regional and state residents to visit Boulder.

## Promotion Actions

**33. Install signs at the north and south ends of the City, listing downtown and area attractions and businesses.**

Description: When drivers pull into Boulder either off the interstate to the north of via Highway 69 to the south, there is little to inform them of what services and restaurant options are available downtown. Prominent signs on the north and south ends of the City could list available eating, lodging, and recreation destinations in and near Boulder, which could help in enticing visitors to make a stop in downtown

# ACTION PLAN

---

and patronize local businesses. The signs do not have to be billboard size, but should be large enough to read from a vehicle driving at moderate speeds. To anticipate changing businesses, the sign should be designed in way to easily add and remove highlighted destinations. Figure 23 shows what a potential entrance sign could look like in Boulder.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, area business owners

Priority: High

**Figure 23 - Conceptual Entrance Sign**



## **34. Work with farmers market organizers on establishing a weekend market or evening weekday market.**

Description: Currently Boulder’s farmers market occurs on Thursdays from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. This action is not aimed at discontinuing that market as there are established vendors and a lot of work has gone into its development. However, the time that it occurs is inconvenient for working adults and thus many Boulder residents are unable to attend. Additionally, this time is not conducive to attracting visitors who may want to travel to Boulder for the market.

Increasingly, farmers markets are more than just a place to buy produce from local farmers. They serve as community gathering spaces where people come together to enjoy a social atmosphere, local crafts people sell their wares, and street performers come to entertain. As Helena’s and Butte’s farmers markets may attract producers on the weekends, Boulder could reach out to local producers to gauge their willingness to participate in an evening weekday market. A weekday market could serve to enliven downtown during summer evenings, attracting people of all ages to downtown. Additionally, a weekday market would allow residents to restock their pantry in between weekend markets.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, local producers

Priority: Medium



**35. Work with the Chamber of Commerce on developing a hard copy events calendar that is mailed to all households in the area.**

Description: The Chamber of Commerce currently lists area events on its website and in the local phone book that is mailed out to residents. However, this requires people to actively seek out this information which they may not readily do. To support existing resources that keep residents and visitors informed of area events, and boost attendance, the City could work with the Chamber of Commerce on creating a one-page events postcard calendar that is mailed out to area residents each spring – similar to what the Chamber has on its website. The idea is that residents could post this on their fridge or wall and would thereby be continually reminded of community events.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, Boulder Monitor

Priority: Medium

**36. Utilize Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms to highlight Boulders beauty and unique assets.**

Description: Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook have become common tools for trip planning. These tools could be an effective and inexpensive platform to showcase attractions in Boulder and the beauty of the community. The City could work with the Jefferson High School students to hold an Instagram contest to find the best Boulder photos from residents or could allow residents to take over the City Instagram feed for a day to showcase Boulder from different people's perspective. Facebook is currently being used by the Chamber of Commerce to highlight area events, which could be expanded to more broadly highlight tourism and recreation opportunities in the surrounding area.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce, Boulder Monitor

Priority: Medium

## **37. Organize smaller, more regular, downtown events during summer months.**

Description: While large events attract many people to downtown they also take time and resources to plan and execute. Furthermore, outside of these events people may choose to visit downtown infrequently. This action is focused on creating small regular events that attract people downtown on a more continual basis. These types of events should be relatively simple from a logistics standpoint and should focus on highlighting downtown businesses. The City, Chamber of Commerce, and residents can be creative in creating a unique event– e.g. monthly street dances, theater performances on Main Street, community bike rides, etc. It should be noted that it takes time for these types of events to catch on as people will need to become familiar with when they occur. Therefore, it is critical to not lose steam if the first few events are not well attended. For these events to succeed all parties involved (business owners, the City, Chamber, etc.) will need to stay committed to its success, even if it takes a bit of time. Additionally, with new and enhanced public spaces, frequent events are crucial to their successes. This action could be implemented by a paid staff person to coordinate with other economic development actions.

Partners: City, Chamber of Commerce

Priority: Low

## **Potential Funding Sources**

### **Local Options**

#### **City General Funds**

Every year the City Council establishes a budget for the expenditure of general funds. The City Council can direct general funds towards implementing the downtown master plan.

#### **General Obligation Bonds**

The sale of general obligation bonds can be used to finance public improvements in Boulder. State statutes limit the level of bonded indebtedness.

#### **Impact Fees**

Impact fees are assessed to new development and are intended to finance the added cost of infrastructure in proportion to the impact of new development. They cannot be used to maintain existing infrastructure or fix existing deficiencies.

#### **Tax Increment Financing**

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a special district that allows a community to borrow against the area's future tax revenues. The money raised through a TIF district is invested in infrastructure projects that will encourage development within the district. Revenues created by the increased tax base in the district are used to pay off the debt. TIF districts are discussed in more detail under action #8

## **Business Improvement District**

A business improvement district (BID) is a special district where an additional assessment is placed on properties in the district. The funds generated by the assessment are used to fund projects and programs that benefit the property owners within that district and funds can only be used within the district. The use of funds is governed by a board of property owners in the district. Funds can be used for promotion and marketing, events, beautification projects, maintenance of existing facilities, security, and infrastructure improvements.

## **Loans and Tax Credits**

### **New Markets Tax Credit Program**

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program is intended to spur community development and economic growth in distressed communities by allowing taxpayers to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities. The credit provided to the investor totals 39% of the cost of the investment and is claimed over a seven-year period. Using the capital from these equity investments, CDEs can make loans and investments to businesses operating in low-income communities on better rates and terms and more flexible features than the market. In Montana, the NMTC program is administered by MoFi (formerly the Montana-Idaho Community Development Corporation).

## **USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program**

The USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Examples of essential community facilities include, health care facilities, town halls, street improvements, utility services, local food systems, public safety services, and community support services.

## **Grants**

### **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**

This grant program, administered through the Montana Department of Commerce, assists communities with housing, public facilities and neighborhood renewal projects. Communities must have matching funds for CDBG projects.

### **Treasure State Endowment Program**

The Treasure State Endowment Program is administered by the Montana Department of Commerce and helps local governments with infrastructure planning and constructing or upgrading drinking water systems, wastewater facilities, stormwater systems, solid waste disposal systems and bridges.

### **Big Sky Trust Fund**

The Big Sky Trust Fund provides funding to promote sustainable economic growth, with financial assistance for job creation and

# ACTION PLAN

---

planning projects. Local governments are eligible for job creation project grants while planning project grants are only available to Certified Regional Development Corporations, Tribal Governments, and Local Development Corporations.

## **Transportation Alternatives Program**

The Transportation Alternatives program is a federal program administered by the Montana Department of Transportation which provides funding for non-motorized transportation projects.

## **Montana Office of Tourism Grant Program**

This program awards funds to projects that strengthen Montana's economy through the development and enhancement of the state's tourism industry. The grant program offers funding in three categories – arts/culture/heritage preservation, visitor facility upgrades/construction, and niche product development.

## **Montana Main Street Program**

The Montana Main Street Program offers grants to help communities strengthen and preserve their historic downtown commercial districts by focusing on economic development, urban revitalization, and historic preservation through long-range planning, organization, design, and promotion.

## **Recreational Trails Program**

The Recreation Trails Program (RTP) is a federal program administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. RTP grants can be used for a variety of purposes including constructing and maintaining trails and building infrastructure associated with recreational trails.

## **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal program which provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Examples of eligible projects include: ball fields, open space acquisitions, public parks, outdoor swimming pools, playgrounds, picnic facilities, walking trails and more. In Montana the program is administered by Montana State Parks, which accepts applications on an annual basis subject to available funding.

## **Federal Lands Access Program**

The Federal Lands Access Program is intended to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. Projects are selected by a Programming Decision Committee established in each State, which requests project applications through a call for projects.

## **USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program**

The USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program offers funding to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and have less than \$1 million in gross revenue.

## **Montana History Foundation**

The Montana History Foundation offers small grants to preserve and protect the historic legacy of communities across the state.

Funding is provided in the following categories – historic cemeteries and sacred sites, building and structures, collections and artifacts, oral history, and education and outreach.

## **Montana Arts Council**

The Montana Arts Council offers a variety of grants for cultural and aesthetic projects.

## **NorthWestern Energy Community Works Fund**

The NorthWestern Energy Community Works Fund offers donations to certified nonprofit organizations focused in the one of the following categories – education, health and human services, civic and community, culture and the arts, and resource conservation.

## **Elkhorn Community Foundation**

The Elkhorn Community Foundation provides grants to non-profits working on projects serving the Jefferson High School District.

## **Endnotes**

- 1 [https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/traffic\\_maps.shtml](https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/traffic_maps.shtml)
- 2 ESRI Business Analyst Online
- 3 [http://missoulian.com/news/local/jobs-could-disappear-in-rural-montana-as-business-owners-retire/article\\_179b994d-ab2b-51a5-8f3b-6723f56ab4e1.html](http://missoulian.com/news/local/jobs-could-disappear-in-rural-montana-as-business-owners-retire/article_179b994d-ab2b-51a5-8f3b-6723f56ab4e1.html)
- 4 <https://www.citylab.com/design/2015/07/how-urban-designers-can-get-smaller-cities-walking/399545/>
- 5 [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1322&-context=itrr\\_pubs](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1322&-context=itrr_pubs)

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

---

## Public Meeting #1 Feedback

### Priority Actions

**Goal #1: Boulder as a lively, attractive, and functional downtown that is unique and emphasizes the town's heritage.**

1. Refresh buildings.
2. Get commitment from downtown property & business owners.
3. Flowers to Main Street
4. New dance floor in town.
5. More parking downtown.
6. Façade improvement grants.
7. More events on Main Street.
8. More sidewalk seating.
9. Maintain center median landscaping.
10. Apartments in 2<sup>nd</sup> stories of Main Street buildings.
11. Create more visible signage.
12. Create a pocket park and places to sit and socialize.
13. Preserve historic buildings.
14. Create more sidewalk amenities.
15. Repaint ghost signs on buildings.
16. Highlight and improve the farmer's market.

17. Add flags and banners on Main Street.

18. Create a sidewalk sale for downtown.

**Goal #2: Boulder has a diversified economy with new companies that align with the vision of the community, as well as long-time businesses the community supports.**

1. Attract a brewery or cidery.
2. Improve broadband internet.
3. More accommodations.
4. Tax Increment Financing/ TEDD
5. Signage
6. Coordinate with county parks plan
7. Improve appearance of town
8. Improve stores advertisements
9. Maintain Boulder's identity
10. Buy local campaign
11. Create more housing
12. Market local agriculture
13. Ag Tourism
14. RV parking
15. Address Main Street parking capacity
16. Public policies to support development.
17. Support family amenities

---

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- 18. Marketing – capitalize on assets.
- 19. Family transfer of agriculture
- 20. Family Oriented Businesses
- 21. Highlight local airport

**Goal #3: Boulder is known as an outdoor recreation hub between Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, attracting tourists from all over the region.**

- 1. Promote MT Cowboy Hall of Fame
- 2. Get city/visitor website
- 3. Promote trails
- 4. Signage (seasonal banners, highway signs)
- 5. Promote health mines.
- 6. More public restrooms and maintenance.
- 7. Promote Boulder as a place to unplug and find peace.
- 8. Advertise hunting and fishing opportunities
- 9. Advertise hot springs.
- 10. Market Boulder as an active community: walkable, access to recreation
- 11. Promote ATV trails and add safety signage
- 12. Promote area ghost towns.
- 13. Add more parking.
- 14. Create a unified brand identity.
- 15. Promote biking and advertise bike barn

- 16. Create maps and brochures of trails
- 17. Promote the walking tour
- 18. Create more accommodation options
- 19. Incentivize developers
- 20. Extend city services.

**Goal #4: Boulder serves as an appealing place to live for residents commuting to Helena or Butte for work.**

- 1. Movie theater
- 2. More affordable housing
- 3. Maintain quality schools
- 4. Focus on people commuting to Boulder
- 5. Get people to spend money here
- 6. Ride share transportation
- 7. Maintain low cost community
- 8. Host more weekend activities
- 9. Develop attractions to keep people in Boulder
- 10. Promote on local radio

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

---

## **Goal#5: Boulder is known as a health-oriented community with an abundance of trails, parks, recreation opportunities and health facilities.**

1. Website development (tourism, health and recreation)
2. Link town to recreation park and hot springs
3. Map existing trails
4. Promote bicycle tourism and use bike barn
5. Rails-to-trails
6. Add wayfinding signage for parks, trails, & health facilities
7. Park on Boulder River
8. Promote health mines
9. Prescription trails
10. Accommodations
11. Updated or newer pool
12. Promote existing pool
13. Covert bike trails to cross country ski trails in winter
14. Flyers
15. Biking/walking events – folks march, geocaching, rides, runs, 5ks
16. Promote hot springs
17. Birding
18. Renovate sports facilities
19. Group activities (hiking, etc.)

20. Create and maintain cross country ski trails

21. Snowshoeing

### *Not supported:*

1. Hockey rink/pond hockey

2. Water park (in downtown?)

## **Goal #6: Boulder has a consistent marketing strategy that is successful at highlighting the community's assets and drawings in new residents and visitors.**

1. More hotels

2. Improve signage

3. Coordinate with tourism website

4. Create a City of Boulder website.

5. "Quality of Life" brand

6. Partner with County, Whitehall, and MSU on developing marketing plan

7. Identify community assets

8. Take advantage of existing marketing opportunities

9. Create a unified identity

10. Emphasize outdoor recreation

11. Utilize social media

12. Create one coordinating entity for marketing.

13. Emphasize schools, low cost of living, central location, access to outdoors, small town character



---

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

14. Don't get ahead of ourselves – amenities/infrastructure first, then market

**Goal #7: Boulder has a sufficient personnel resources, is adept at acquiring funding for important projects, and is achieving its strategic planning goals.**

1. Get paid staff to work on implementing the plan(s)
2. Getting chamber more involved
3. Supplement chamber capacity with additional staffing/volunteers
4. Coordinating entity for volunteers
5. Require community service to graduate or stay on the honor roll
6. Organized training for volunteers
7. Grant writer coordinator
8. Organize Main Street committee/tie in with chamber
9. Continue getting grants
10. Promote youth volunteers
11. Getting youth involved – connect youth with civic engagement
12. Recruit Avista (or other) volunteers
13. Credit for public service for youth

**Goal #8: Boulder has an attractive and connected street network with safe and convenient pedestrian accessibility.**

1. Parking
2. Curbs, gutters, sidewalks, “stop for pedestrians” signs
3. Safety audit for Main Street
4. Signage, landscaping
5. Seating, benches
6. Visibility
7. Trailer parking
8. Maintain sidewalks in winter
9. Clearly marked crosswalks
10. Flowers
11. Trash cans
12. Bike racks
13. Snow removal plan
14. Address divider issues
15. Center median safety concerns
16. School access improvements

*Not Supported:*

1. Truck bypass
2. Decrease speed limit
3. Pedestrian activated lights

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

---

4. Add spot light (Centennial)

**Goal #9: Boulder has adequate housing supply to meet demands, with a range of style options and affordability.**

1. Focus on affordable housing
2. More rentals
3. Address floodplain issues within zoning
4. More apartments
5. Senior housing
6. Improve roads with bike lanes
7. Establish city limit lines
8. Clean-up existing housing stock
9. Build up and create second-stories
10. Lots and subdivisions

*Not Supported:*

1. Increase density
2. Subdivision regulations for curb, gutter, and sidewalks

**Goal #10: Boulder supports creative redevelopment and re-use of MDC, including the continuation of services for the developmentally disabled and group homes.**

1. Veterans home
2. Walking trails that connect MDC/City/Fairgrounds/Hot Springs
3. Youth challenge

4. Cowboy Hall of Fame
5. Animal shelter
6. Adult education classes
7. Continue servicing developmentally disabled – even if it's just a portion of the site
8. Mixed use entertainment facility
9. Improve partnership with state
10. Identify/inventory MDC site

*Not Supported:*

1. Repurpose gym for recreation center

**Goal #11: Boulder has adequate healthcare, housing, and amenities for the senior population and families.**

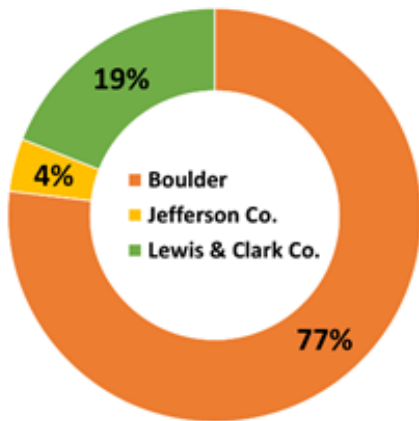
1. Encourage all types of housing to be developed
2. Work with internet providers to expand capacity
3. Purpose public transportation services
4. Fishing pond
5. Extend sidewalks and curb ramps
6. Trail system for all uses
7. Maintain clinic and make open full time
8. Affordable housing
9. Expand service across interstate
10. Encourage expansion of city boundaries (west of cemetery)

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

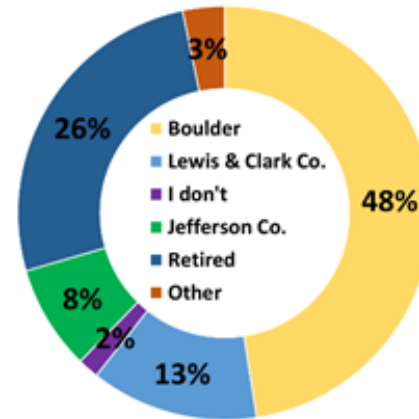
- 11. Encourage ambulance volunteers and volunteer firefighters
- 12. Facilitate creation of developable lots
- 13. Activities for seniors and families
- 14. More vibrant community center – old administration building at MDC
- 15. More dentist availability
- 16. Expand services along interstate
- 17. Indoor recreation center

## Community Survey Results

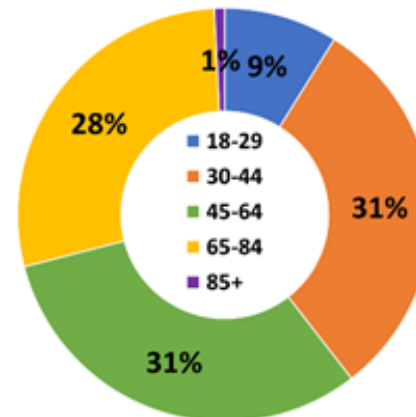
Q1: Where do you live?



Q2: Where do you work?

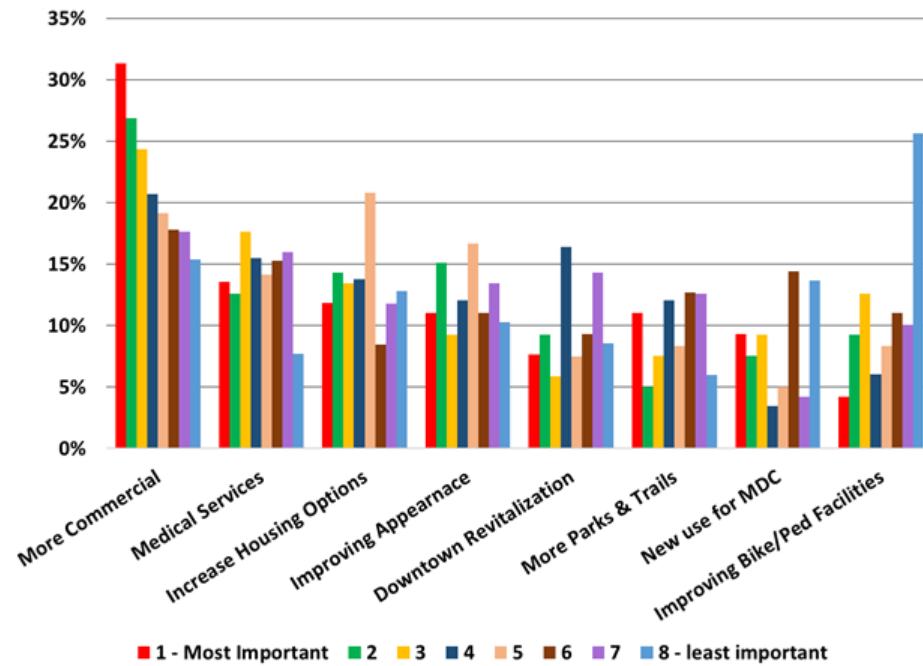


Q3: What is your age?



# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

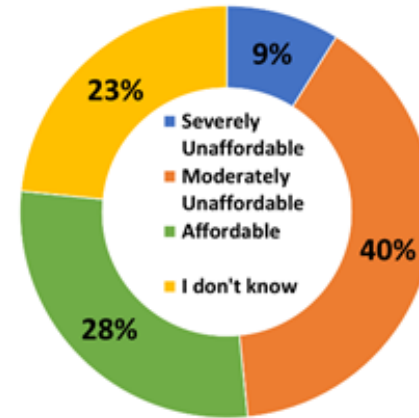
**Q4: What issues are most important to you – 1 being most important and 8 being least?**



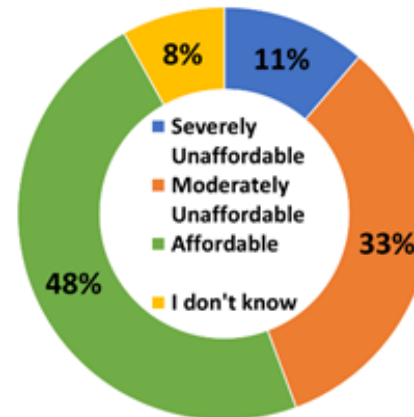
**Q5: What other issues should the growth policy and/or downtown plan address?**

Due to length, open ended responses are not included.

**Q6: How affordable do you feel residential RENTALS are in Boulder?**

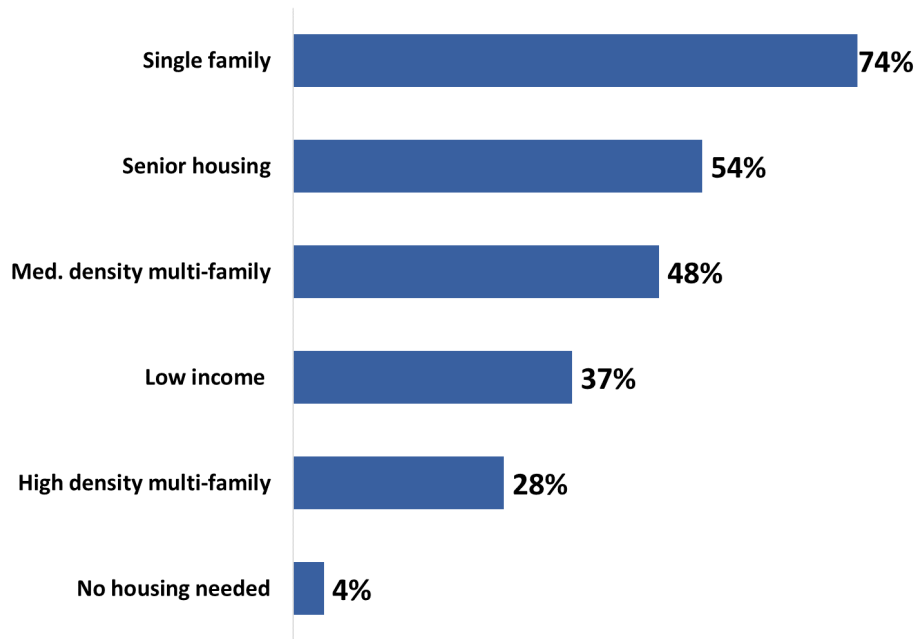


**Q7: How affordable do you feel FOR SALE HOUSING is in Boulder?**

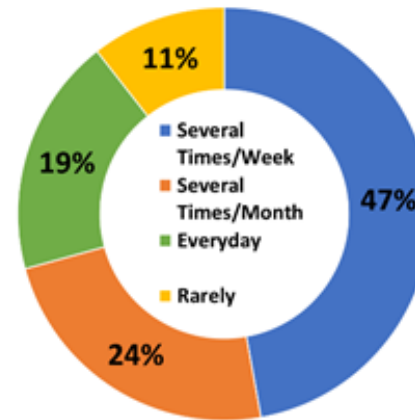


# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Q8: What type of house do you feel is need in Boulder – check all that apply?



Q9: How often do you spend money in downtown Boulder businesses?



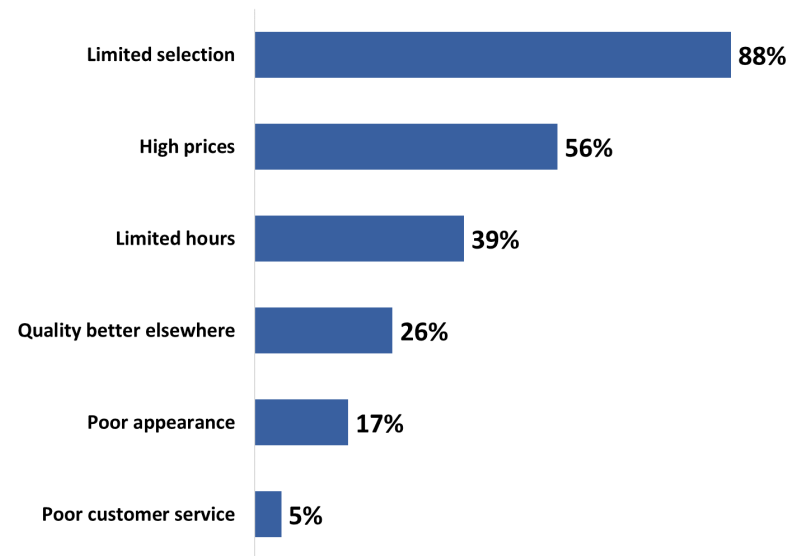
# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

---

**Q10: What do you see as the ADVANTAGES to shopping downtown – check all that apply?**

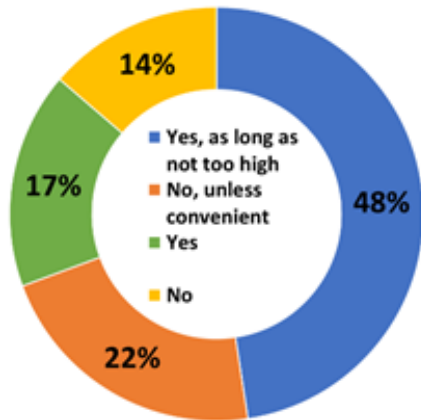


**Q11: What do you see as the DISADVANTAGES to shopping downtown – check all that apply?**

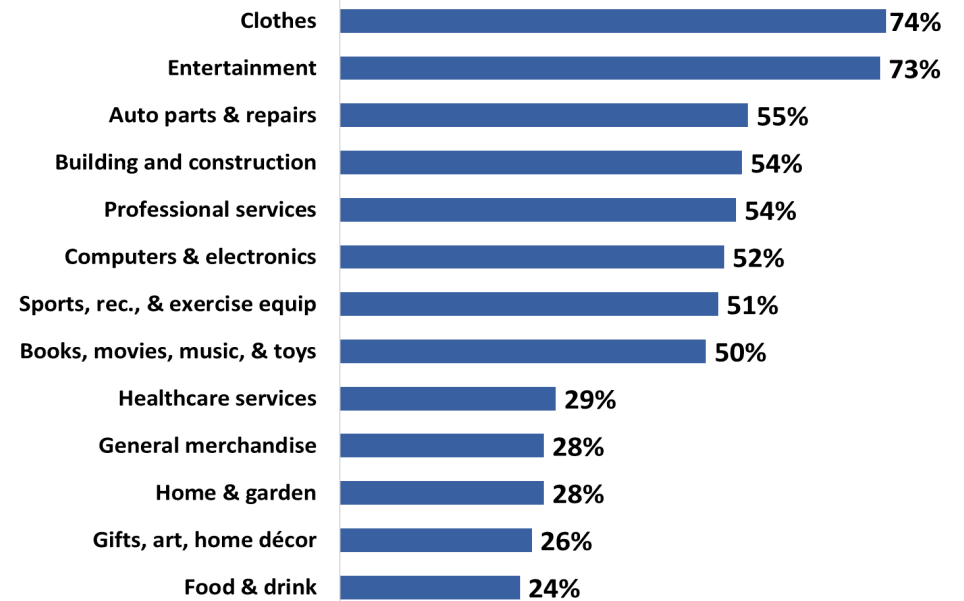


# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

**Q12: Are you willing to spend more on a product in Boulder as opposed to online or elsewhere?**



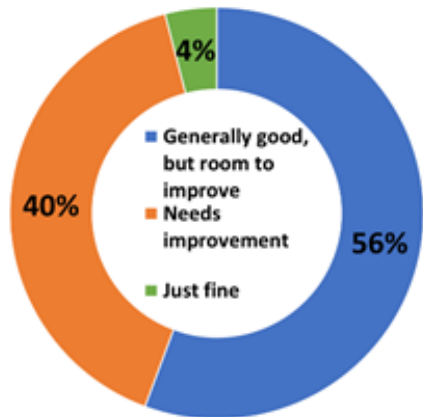
**Q13: What types of goods or services are missing in Boulder that require you to shop online or out of town - check all that apply?**



# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

---

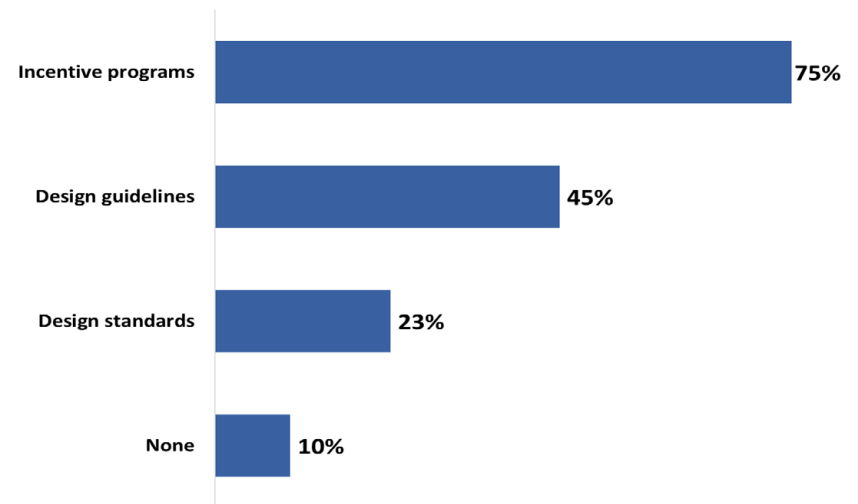
**Q14: How would you characterize the appearance of downtown Boulder?**



**Q15: In reference to the above question, why do you feel that way?**

Due to length, open ended responses are not included.

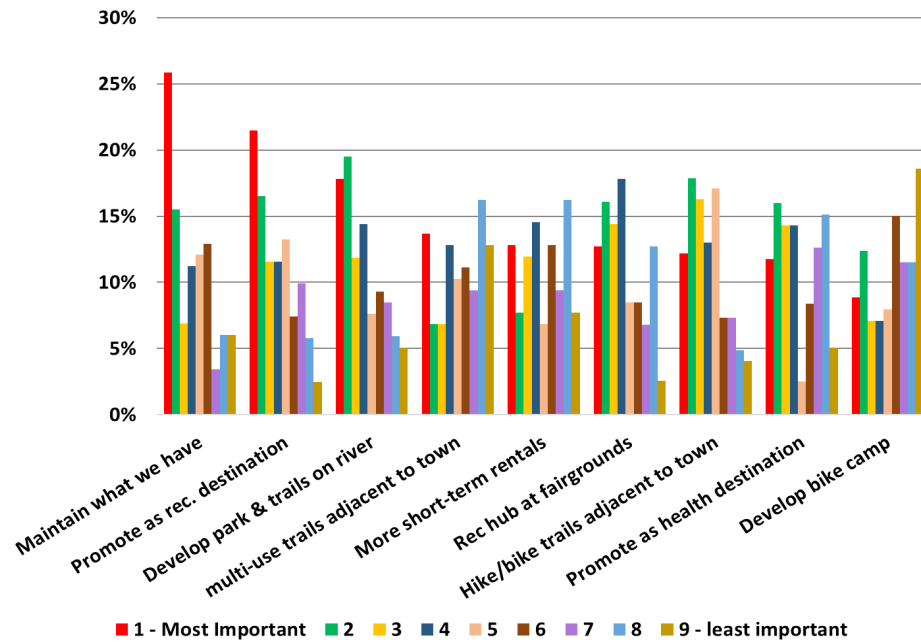
**Q16: Which of the following downtown appearance actions would you support - check all that apply?**



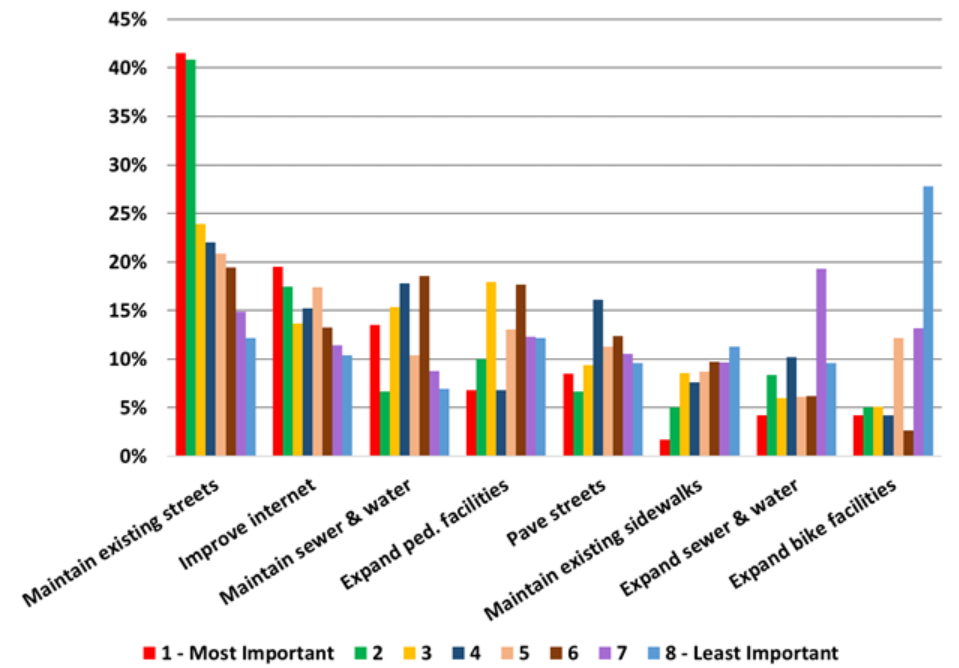


# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

**Q17: What recreation/tourism actions are most important to you – 1 being most important and 9 being least?**



**Q18: What infrastructure issues are most important to you – 1 being most important and 8 being least?**



# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

## Public Meeting #2 Feedback

### Actions Prioritization

Each dot represents support for each action.

Organizational Actions	Dots
Work with local banks on offering low (or no) interest loans for community improvements.	5
Engage Boulder youth in downtown improvement efforts.	5
Create a Main Street committee of public and private stakeholders whose sole focus is improving downtown and implementing Boulder's downtown master plan.	3
Host a volunteer recruitment and action day each spring.	1
Hire a paid staff person devoted to implementing the Boulder's downtown master plan.	1
Develop an annual workplan for implementing the downtown master plan.	1
Economic Development Actions	Dots
Develop a strategic plan for targeting an anchor tenant to locate in downtown Boulder.	8
Explore creating a Tax Increment Finance district in downtown.	5

Work with JLDC on developing an inventory of downtown properties including information on square footage, energy costs, infrastructure needs, amenities in place, and taxes, to use as a tool to present to potential new business owners.	3
Continue to work with JLDC and interested entrepreneurs on offering business start-up classes, including developing a business plan and accessing capital.	2
Work with local business owners on utilizing online tools for reaching a wider customer base.	2
Work the JLDC and existing business owners (on an as needed basis) to develop business transition plans.	0
Work with JLDC on organizing a quarterly (or bi-annual) business owners round table, where business owners can discuss success, challenges, and opportunities for addressing operational needs.	0
Work with owners of vacant buildings on offering short-term leases to tenants only needing space on a seasonal basis.	0
Utilize the results from the downtown master plan survey as a tool for informing and attracting potential new business owners.	0
Appearance Actions	Dots
Develop a façade improvement program for downtown buildings.	11

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Install decorative street infrastructure that reinforces Boulder's identity including, but not limited to, street lamps, trash cans, seating, bike racks, and flower baskets.	5
Work with Main Street property owners on increasing window transparency and adding visual appeal to building frontages along Main Street.	4
Develop new and enhance existing public art in downtown, including murals and sculptures.	4
Develop design guidelines for downtown.	2
Work with owners of downtown vacant properties on increasing the visual appeal of their buildings.	2
Create a pocket park on the vacant lot on the east side of Main Street between 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue.	1
Increase vegetation coverage on Main Street.	0
<b>Transportation Actions</b>	<b>Dots</b>
Identify a location off Main Street for dedicated RV and trailer parking.	9
Create a temporary demonstration project for curb extensions (aka bulb outs) at Main Street Intersections between 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue and 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue.	5
Create a pilot project for the installation of temporary way-finding signs in downtown.	5
Install ADA compliant crossings at Main Street intersections between 1 <sup>st</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue.	4

Support Jefferson County's efforts to develop a bike camp at the County Fairgrounds.	3
Create safe bicycle and pedestrian connections on local avenues and streets adjacent to downtown.	3
Paint parallel parking stalls on Main Street.	2
<b>Promotion Actions</b>	<b>Dots</b>
Install a sign at the north end of town near the Town Pump listing downtown and area attractions and businesses.	8
Identify a central outdoor location for downtown events.	4
Develop advertising, highlighting Boulder area attractions (Hot Spring, Health Mines, downtown, trails, etc.), and publish in targeted market areas.	2
Organize smaller, more regular, downtown events during summer months.	1
Work with farmers market organizers on establishing a weekend market or evening weekday market.	1
Utilize Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms to highlight Boulders beauty and unique assets.	1
Create a Boulder visitors brochure that highlights downtown and other area attractions including the health mines, hot spring, and recreation on public lands.	0
Work with the chamber of commerce on developing a hard copy events calendar that is mailed to all households in the 59632 zip code.	0

# APPENDIX A - PUBLIC FEEDBACK

---

## General Comments:

- Any vegetation on Main Street needs to be low level to preserve site lines on road. No trees.
- Volunteer capacity is low and many of the volunteers are getting burned out as it is usually the same few people involved. We need to get more youth involved and excited about doing these projects.
- Where are the hotel recommendations? To improve existing hotels we need an independent and impartial party to come in and give hotels owners honest feedback on what they need to do to improve and attract guests.
- We need enforcement of junk vehicles.
- We need to clean up properties along the north end of Main Street where cars enter Town after leaving freeway. Don't just force them; give them solutions.
- Public bathrooms are need (*numerous people mentioned this*)