

Parker Mainstreet Master Plan

Continuing to Create Great Places and Spaces

September 2015



activity adjacent adult affordable already architecture around art bar better
bike build buses businesses car care chains change character community
congestion connections continuity create daily dancing development
different district dog downtown due east end events existing
extend goods gulch hometown hours housing improvements interested
intersection kids lighting live local location
mainstreet market moves music night open options
outdoor pace park parker particularly patios peak pikes
pine places plaza programming public really related residents
restaurants retail seating service shops sidewalk skating small
smaller space special street success system themed times town
traffic transit turn vehicle venue victorian walk wide winter work



Dear Citizens, Businesses and Visitors:

As the Mayor of the Town of Parker, on behalf of the Town Council, and in the spirit of cooperation with Parker citizens, stakeholders and partners, we are proud to introduce the new **Mainstreet Master Plan – *Continuing to Create Great Places and Spaces!*** This vision and action plan is the exciting result of a community desire and collaborative effort to continue promoting a successful, economically sustainable and vibrant downtown destination where citizens, businesses and visitors come together to live, work, shop and play.

As the heart of our community, Parker citizens value Mainstreet and the downtown area for its economic, cultural and social activities. However, great places don't just happen by chance or overnight. It takes a continual commitment to thoughtful and progressive planning to achieve the visions and goals that will affect positive change to downtown. The Master Plan has identified opportunities and challenges regarding land use, urban form and circulation from Twenty Mile Road on the west to Pine Drive at Town Hall on the east. For example, a top priority identified in the Plan is to increase daytime population and activity in order to support economic revitalization of the Plan Area. The Plan's recommendations reinforce the Town's strong commitment to strengthen and grow the Mainstreet Corridor. Businesses, residents and visitors will enjoy the results of the Plan's promotion of an enhanced downtown experience.

As a policy document, the Plan will help guide future development and revitalization along Mainstreet and the immediate surrounding areas - building upon the years of previous planning efforts and Town investment in the downtown area. Economic revitalization requires a common vision, goals, partnerships, education and participation among all who have a vital interest in the downtown area. The Town encourages community leaders, property owners, businesses, residents and future development partners to actively utilize the Plan and be champions for implementing the vision and change!

On behalf of the Town, elected officials and staff, we wish to thank everyone for their participation and support in the development of this Plan. Your input has been invaluable and has helped guide the process and outcomes. Town Council and I look forward to working with you and our partners towards a revitalized Mainstreet that is an economically, culturally and socially sustainable and the vibrant heart of our community.

Sincerely,

Mike Waid
Mayor

Acknowledgments

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Public Hearings

Planning Commission, September 10, 2015
Town Council, September 21, 2015

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Executive Summary

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Project Background

Purpose

Mainstreet is the heart and soul of the Parker community, reflecting its character, culture and heritage. The Town desires to strengthen its identity and grow downtown into an economically vibrant, dense and exciting area recognized as a destination and place of opportunity.

The Mainstreet Master Plan is a policy document intended to provide long-term, 20-year, guidance for all land use, urban form, circulation and parking decisions within the Mainstreet plan area (also referred to as the Mainstreet corridor) and the immediate surrounding areas of influence. The plan will help the reader understand existing conditions and visualize future development, overall intensity, urban design - how it may look and feel - and the community desire for a strong pedestrian environment throughout the corridor. It also addresses both physical and policy issues, as well as implementation strategies essential for advancing this vision to effect positive change and revitalization of the plan area.

As a vision plan that builds upon previous planning efforts and a continually evolving downtown corridor, it provides a foundation to which citizens and stakeholders can all be champions for revitalization and the ultimate future of the Mainstreet corridor. The goals, principles and recommendations described in the Plan are intended to guide future sustainable land use development and redevelopment. This action plan was informed by Parker citizens, visitors, businesses and property owners as stakeholders and will require their cooperation and engagement to work as partners with Town government towards implementation. The ultimate community benefit will be increased downtown activity, vibrancy and growing the Plan area's businesses resulting in a regionally recognizable downtown destination and experience! Finally, the Mainstreet Master Plan will be adopted as an element of the Town's comprehensive master plan, Parker 2035 – Changes and Choices.



Figure 1 Master Plan Study Area

The Mainstreet Master Plan study area extends from 20 Mile Road on the west to Pine Drive on the east. The plan area is bisected by Parker Road, which splits the area into two distinct areas, the West End and Old Town.

Study Area

The Mainstreet Master Plan focuses on an approximately 1.15-mile segment of Mainstreet from Twenty Mile Road to Pine Drive. This key and centrally located plan area is bisected by Parker Road, a state-level highway owned and maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), which divides the study area into two almost-equal pieces.

The western portion of the study area has been dubbed 'the West End' in this plan and extends from Twenty Mile Road to Parker Road. The eastern,

better-known portion of the plan area is generally referred to 'Old Town' in this plan. The northern and southern boundaries of the study area were set by the Town to generally include areas of development opportunity that do or could impact the Plan area's development, character and feel.

West End and Old Town are names for the purposes of this plan only. Town Council, later in this plan development, chose to simplify the plan area name to 'downtown' as the result of a concurrent planning process and analysis for a wayfinding signage program.

Existing Conditions

Land Use

The West End is dominated by low-rise, single-story retail and office uses, where typical tenants include banks, professional offices and franchise casual dining. Other West End uses include multi-family residential (under construction), senior assisted living, two small but underutilized parks and a community shopping center that includes a grocery store and big box spaces.

Old Town has a different mix of uses than the West End, with smaller-scale retail and office/commercial uses mixed with a variety of civic, cultural and institutional uses. Also, Old Town's retail market is under served by the existing tenant mix. O'Brien Park, the Town's flagship park and home to a long list of festivals and community events, is also within this portion of the study area. Other uses within Old Town include an older strip retail center (oriented 'sideways' to Mainstreet with minimal street frontage), the Parker Senior Center, a child day care, assisted living and the RTD Park n Ride and bus facility. Cultural and civic uses include the newly renovated Mainstreet Center, the Parker Arts Culture & Events (PACE) Center, Town Hall and a new Douglas County Library facility, which is currently under construction.

Urban Form

Within the West End, the majority of Mainstreet buildings are one-story structures built in a simple strip-type format. Buildings tend to cluster in groups on two or three sides of an internal parking lot and do not face Mainstreet. Building materials include a significant amount of masonry, brick and faux-stone veneer, providing some link to historic Old Town materials, but overall architectural form is generic and undistinguished.

Within Old Town, buildings display a different, generally smaller scale than that found west of Parker Road. Most buildings along this segment are two or three story with pitched roofs or articulated parapets, creating a higher level of pedestrian interest. The central portion of Old Town strives to create an historically-referenced western storefront architecture. Materials tend toward brick, masonry and clapboard siding.

Circulation

Pedestrians

As previously mentioned, the community desires an accessible and safe pedestrian environment for all users and abilities. Virtually all the public roadways within the study area have sidewalks, with only a few gaps in the system. However, sidewalks vary in width and cross-section with attached walks directly abutting the curb being prevalent throughout the study area.

The area's most challenging pedestrian condition is the intersection of Parker Road and Mainstreet. Pedestrians must cross 8 lanes of traffic and approximately 135' of arterial roadway, although two grade-separated alternatives to this crossing are available: Kieffer's Crossing underpass (approximately 375' north of the intersection) and the Sulphur Gulch Trail underpass (approximately a quarter-mile south of the intersection).



Bicycles

The Sulphur Gulch Trail is the study area's most prominent bicycle facility. This off-street, multi-use trail parallels Mainstreet through an open space corridor approximately a quarter-mile south of Mainstreet. The trail also connects users with other off-street trail links.

The study area features only one on-street bike lane, on Pine Drive, and throughout the plan area cyclists must blend with traffic. Limited bicycle racks are located sporadically within the right-of-way and occasionally on private property.

Transit

The study area is served by three Regional Transportation District (RTD) bus routes, Route 410, Route P and Route 153. Schedules are calibrated to serve weekday commuters with no weekend service on any of the routes. RTD also provides a Call-n-Ride service in portions of Town including the Plan area. The Call-n-Ride is a curb to curb shuttle service that must be booked a minimum of 2 hours in advance. A 2005 study recommended future bus

rapid transit (BRT) service to connect the Plan area with the Southeast Light Rail Transit (LRT) extension; this bus would follow Mainstreet west of Parker Road. No timeframe or funding for BRT implementation was identified, but the Town wishes to preserve necessary right-of-way for this future potential.

Parking

The Mainstreet corridor offers approximately 264 free, on-street parking spaces within Old Town; these spaces have no time limits. On-street parking is not provided in the West End or its intersecting roadways west of Parker Road.

In addition to on-street parking, the Old Town area currently offers approximately over 1050 public parking spaces on-street and in lots ranging from 18 to 182 spaces in size - available at no charge and with no time limits. The largest parking reservoirs are at O'Brien Park, the Mainstreet Center, the PACE Center and Town Hall. Smaller lots exist off Pilgrims Place adjacent to St. Matthew's Church and near old Town Hall. Not included in this count

are the 173 spaces at the RTD Park-n-Ride which are often treated as public parking during events.

There are also two large private, off-street parking areas in Old Town. The approximately 265-space lot behind Parker Station was thought by many residents and visitors to be a public access lot but is located on private property, privately maintained and was gated off in 2015 to limit use to tenants, guests and other permitted users.

The second large private parking area is located internal to the strip mall behind Baskin Robbins ice cream shop and has approximately 230 spaces. Smaller amounts of private parking, also often treated as 'public' but technically reserved for tenants of the adjacent offices and businesses, are located behind the buildings that front Mainstreet in Old Town as well as north of Pilgrims Place.

All off-street parking in the West End is private and associated with adjacent buildings.



Recommendations

Land Use

The study area is challenged by three primary land-use related conditions and the Plan's recommendations focus on addressing these issues to support and grow a vibrant and sustainable downtown:

- **Appropriate Use:** An absence of active pedestrian-oriented ground-floor uses
- **Gaps:** A large number of physical gaps between existing buildings
- **Intensity:** A lack of development intensity and critical mass

The Plan's most prominent recommendation is to change Town policy—through zoning, an overlay district or other appropriate mechanism—to encourage active pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses for buildings and parcels adjacent to Mainstreet while directing office and residential uses to upper floors. Examples of appropriate first floor uses include restaurants, boutiques, coffee shops, art galleries, personal services and other similar uses. Directing office and residential uses to upper floors allows further economic development opportunities that will attract more workers, residents and visitors - enhancing the Plan area's appeal as a sought after business location and destination. The Plan promotes long-term transitioning of vacant parcels and non-pedestrian friendly uses to higher intensity, downtown-type development. Uses which bring more daytime use—such as employment nodes or higher education—are specifically encouraged.

Finally, in addition to promoting the appropriate uses, the Plan also recommends a greater number of uses. Throughout the Plan area, new development must be a minimum of two stories, with up to five stories permitted in most areas. The goal of these last two recommendations, higher intensity development and multi story buildings, are to create more activity and a more vibrant street life, which promote and support a larger customer base for existing and future businesses.

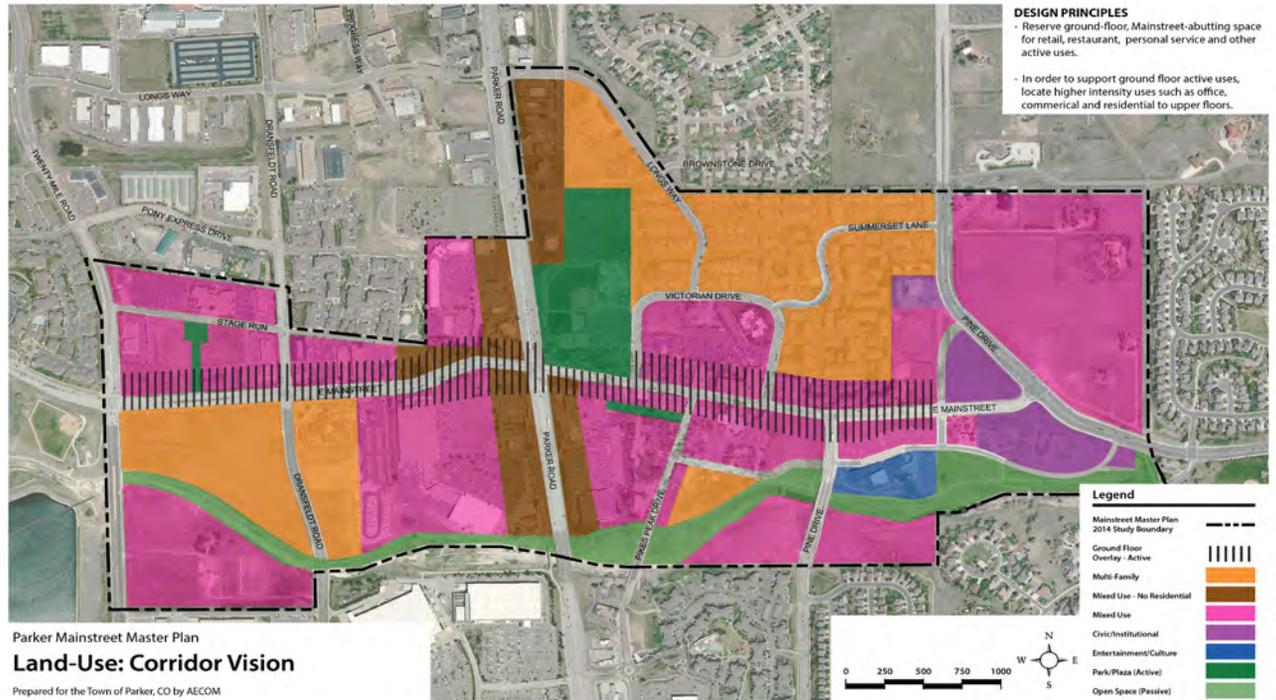


Figure 2 Land-Use: Corridor Vision

Future development and tenancing should focus on active, ground-floor uses that promote an interesting, pedestrian-focused downtown. Office and residential uses should be directed to upper floors (on Mainstreet) and side streets.

Top 3 Land Use Recommendations

ACTIVE USES: Promote active ground-floor active uses such as retail, restaurants, galleries and personal services with interactive storefronts for Mainstreet abutting buildings and parcels.

MORE HOUSING: Encourage increased residential housing throughout the plan area, with a focus on higher-density multi-family development as a part of vertical mixed use development.

MORE DAYTIME ACTIVITY: Actively pursue employers to create a higher intensity of office jobs within the Plan area and higher education uses that support a daytime economy.

Urban Form

Creation of unique character feel and appropriately scaled development, buildings and public spaces in the West End and preservation of the unique character of Old Town are the central themes of the Plan's urban form recommendations. Architectural style and material recommendations focus on creating a high-quality, diverse human scaled environment that is interesting to residents and visitors alike, but not limited to a particular style or period. Public art and streetscape (street trees, lighting, furnishings) are both emphasized as 'common threads' to tie together the downtown's two distinct districts, the West End and Old Town.

The Plan also outlines urban form guidance for priority redevelopment parcels, such as the Crossroads Shopping Centre area and PACE Center block. These design recommendations focus on the Plan's urban form design principles and desired outcomes, recognizing that there are many possible development approaches to achieve the desired character goals.

Note: Design illustrations are conceptual only and meant to emphasize the Plan's design principles.

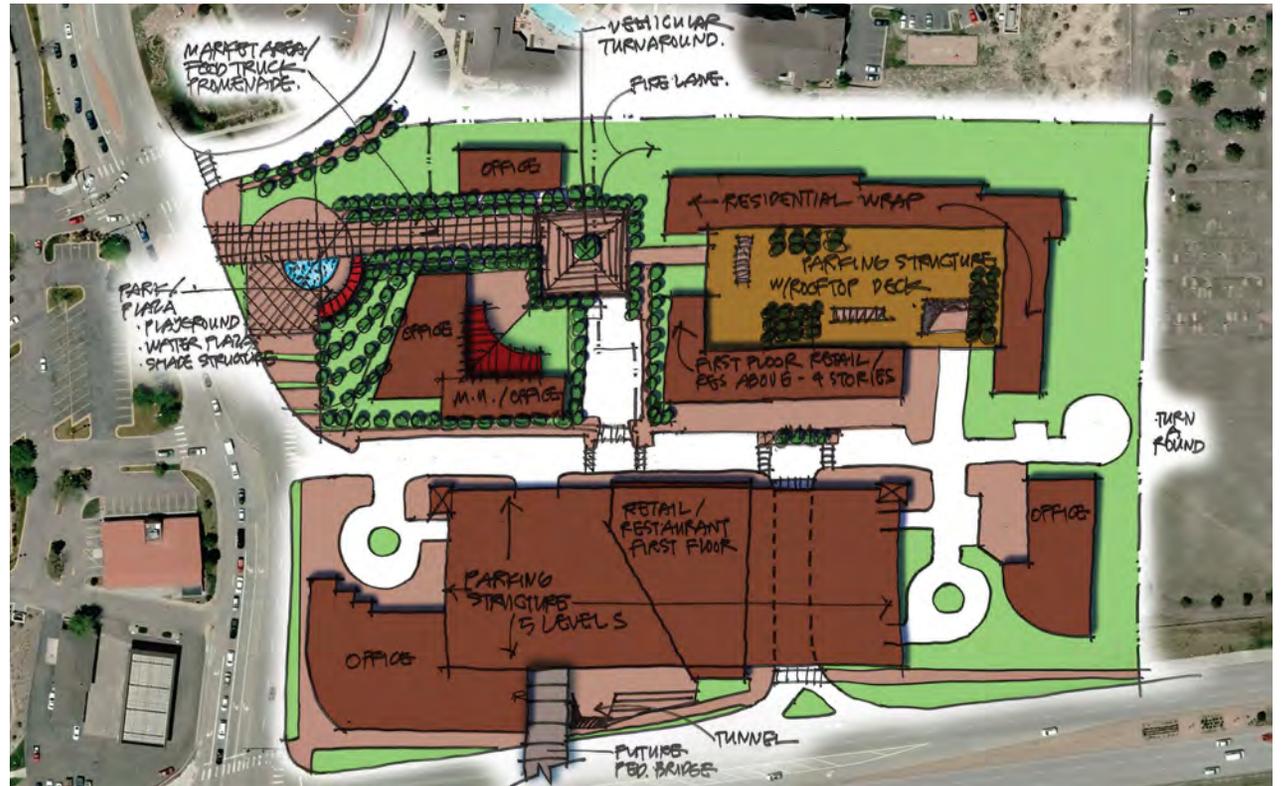


Figure 3 Potential Crossroads Mall Redevelopment

New development should pay special attention to street edges and community integration. This sketch for potential Crossroads Mall redevelopment demonstrates design principles that should be used in future development.

Top 3 Urban Form Recommendations

STREET TREES: Install a continuous line of street trees spaced 30 feet apart, as well as art, street furnishings and enhanced hardscapes along both sides of Mainstreet to create character, shade, visual interest and a healthy environment.

BUILDING HEIGHTS: To provide continuity with existing buildings and character, as well as increase housing and employment opportunities, buildings in the Plan area should be a minimum of 2 floors minimum and a maximum of four to five floors.

ARCHITECTURE: Emphasize high quality materials as well as authentic and diverse architecture that promote and enhance the downtown character instead of following a prescribed style.

Circulation and Parking

Taking a cue from the Town's 2014 *Transportation Master Plan* (TMP), the Mainstreet Master Plan emphasizes multimodal network with a focus on options. The Plan outlines a complete network of bicycle facilities, including both north-south and east-west links into both the West End and Old Town. Bicycle parking is also discussed, with specific rack and location suggestions.

Traffic Calming

For pedestrians, the plan recommends a policy shift to give greater priority for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly at intersections. The plan recommends across-the-board pedestrian improvements, as well as further study of alternatives to crossing Parker Road on foot. While the Mainstreet corridor relies on adequate traffic volume and flow to maintain its vitality, traffic should not overwhelm the pedestrian experience. Enhanced traffic calming techniques should consider slowing the speed of vehicles to support non-vehicular modes of travel and provide the desired safe and strong pedestrian/bicycle environment. Treatments such as consistent use of vehicle stop lines at all plan area crosswalk intersections and consideration of in-street pedestrian crossing signs are recommended. Doing so will reinforce Mainstreet, through the Plan area, as more of a destination versus a through route. The plan also proposes enhancements to the Kieffer's Crossing underpass and outlines criteria for evaluating the potential of a future pedestrian bridge.

Alternate Routes

Foremost among the Plan's vehicular recommendations is the promotion and creation of parallel routes to Mainstreet. This recommendation is intended to ease vehicular congestion and, in doing so, promote a pedestrian-priority downtown environment. The Plan recommends strategies such as time limits and peak-time valet parking to manage and maximize existing parking supply, with an ultimate goal of constructing a public or shared public/private parking structure when needed to support the ongoing growth and economic sustainability of downtown Parker.

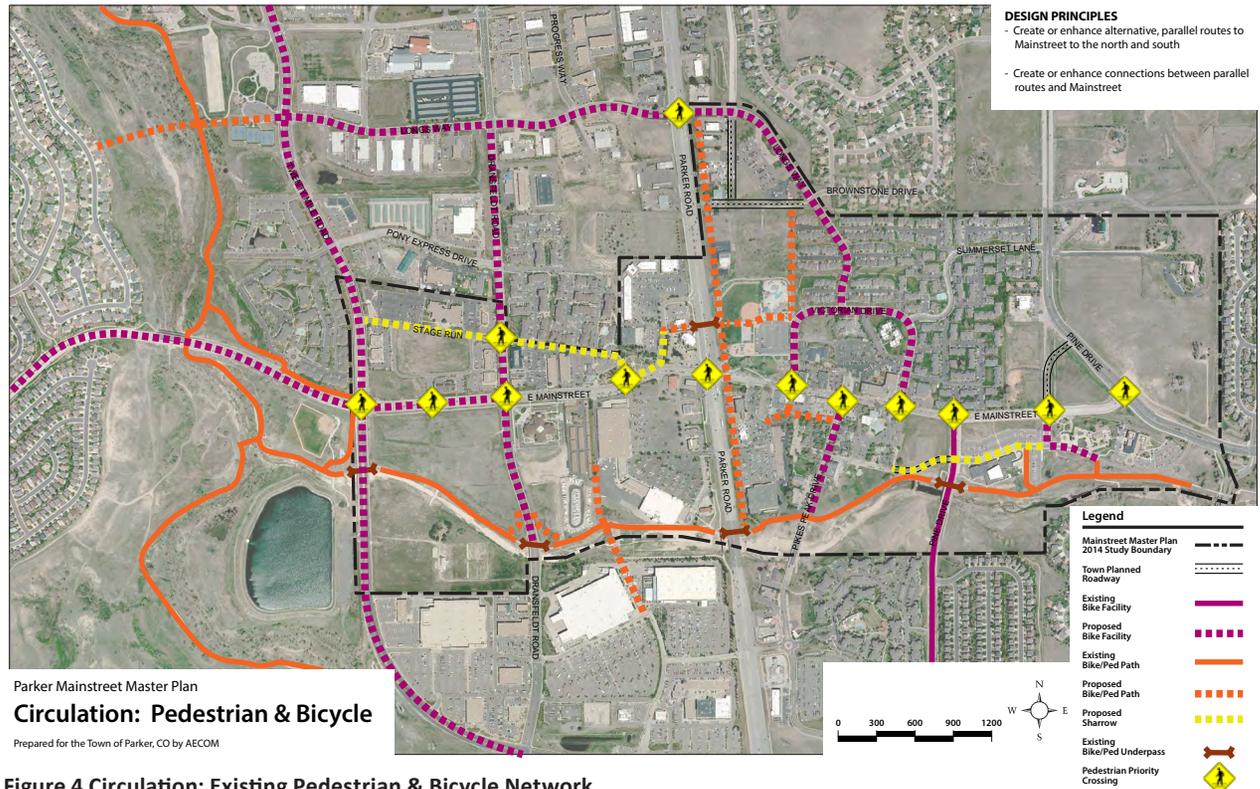


Figure 4 Circulation: Existing Pedestrian & Bicycle Network

A new bicycle network, including north-south and east-west facilities, promotes multi-modal travel to and within the downtown.

Top 3 Circulation Recommendations

ALTERNATE ROUTES: Extend existing roadways to promote alternate routes to Mainstreet creating a better connected grid system throughout the downtown.

ADD BIKE LANES AND ROUTES. Introduce bike lanes and routes providing connectivity to and within downtown.

ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS: Introduce additional crosswalk enhancements to increase safety, comfort and visibility at all Mainstreet intersections within the Plan area, especially Parker Road and Mainstreet.

Parks & Public Spaces

Parker loves festivals, and most of these events are held in O'Brien Park. Stakeholder and public feedback indicate a desire for more and varied events. Event organizers expressed that existing events could expand if additional space were available.

Twenty Mile Historic Park and Living Wheel Park: These two highly underutilized parks, comprising almost two acres and 430 feet of prime Mainstreet frontage, create a significant 'dead zone' in what should be one of the West End's most vibrant areas.

Both parks need to be redesigned to focus on creating an interesting street frontage that continues the energy of Mainstreet and encourages visitors to continue along the corridor. A new park design will create interesting active and passive areas with shade that could be used for casual dining, reading, play or other activities.

Stage Run: A new park/plaza located between the movie theater and Mainstreet will be configured to create a more formalized public open space that draws residents of nearby neighborhoods to this West End amenity. The plaza will be easily accessible, visually interesting and allow for restaurant outdoor dining and other pedestrian-friendly uses at its perimeter. The space should be flexible and designed to allow for events and festivals in the West End.

Pilgrims Place: Pilgrims Place will be reimaged as a flexible, multi use space intended to accommodate events, pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The new space would be identified through enhanced paving materials that would extend to a new plaza in the adjacent park and the pedestrian passage to Mainstreet between the restaurants. This treatment will create a plaza like feel along the roadway.

Removable bollards would make it possible to close the street for use as a stand-alone public space or extended, special-event spillover space from O'Brien Park.

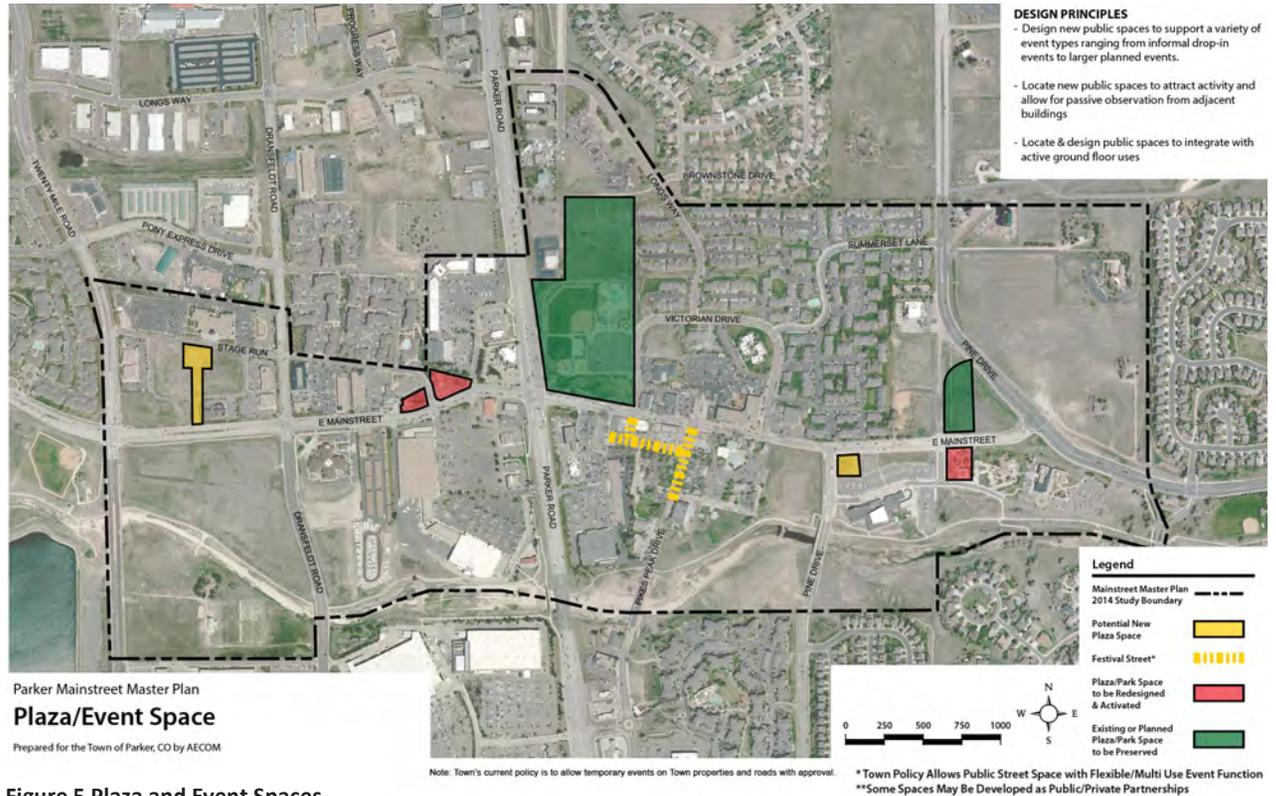


Figure 5 Plaza and Event Spaces

Top 3 Parks and Public Spaces Recommendations

20 MILE HISTORIC PARK AND LIVING WHEEL PARK: Redesign the existing 20 Mile Historic Park and Living Wheel parks to promote activity in the parks and create a pedestrian friendly street edge.

STAGE RUN PUBLIC PLAZA: Construct a new public plaza space abutting Stage Run, in tandem with development.

PILGRIMS PLACE: Redesign Pilgrims Place as a shared multimodal flexible space that can be closed and used as a special event space.

Implementation

The recommendations outlined in the Mainstreet Master Plan will be carried out over the next 20 years by a variety of public and private entities. Some recommendations are clear and straight-forward, can be implemented in a fairly short amount of time and administered by a single department or entity. Other recommendations will require cooperation and collaboration between single Town departments or a larger number of parties—as well as an extended period of time—to implement. Actions are grouped into five categories:

- 'Groundwork' (Immediately)
- Phase 1 (0-5 years)
- Phase 2 (6-10 years)
- Phase 3 (11-20 years)
- 'As Appropriate' (AA)

The Master Plan also identifies a specific lead department or responsible party to each action, to ensure a 'champion' to carry the Plan's recommendations through to execution.

The Town and the community will need to make a coordinated effort to align our annual and day to day decisions with the visions and goals of this Plan to achieve a more vibrant and economically sustainable downtown. These important decisions will be made during capital projects prioritization, budgeting, events planning, policy amendments and other projects/programs.

Successful advancement of the vision and the desired long-term outcomes of this Mainstreet Master Plan will depend on acknowledgment of and partnered efforts to overcome several potential barriers discussed in this document. Potential challenges to implementing the Plan's recommendations include:

- **Physical** - Vacant/underutilized parcels and no critical mass; inconsistent pedestrian environment
- **Market** - Lack of critical mass of rooftops and businesses to create a daytime economy as well as retail and retail diversity; this results in limited sales volumes and limited private investment
- **Regulatory** - Inconsistencies among regulatory documents that may not support this master plan vision (urban renewal plan, zoning, design standards)
- **Financial** - Limited investment and/or reinvestment in properties; the need for appropriate cost effective incentive tools to attract business and investors
- **Political (leadership & community-driven)** - Consistency among elected officials willing to advance the vision; attitudes (fears) about density and affordability, complacency or unwillingness to change; understanding of public and private sector roles and responsibilities within the Mainstreet Master Plan corridor
- **Organizational** - Lack of a formal business organization working together on management issues and facilitating district-wide improvements.

