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CITY OF LITTLETON, COLORADO COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

COLORADO, USA

FEBRUARY 2024





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This report presents the outcomes of the Littleton Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning project. This report has been produced as part of the Littleton planning project which aims to develop a new economic development strategy that will guide decision-making over the next five to ten years. It should be noted that formal CEDS requirements mandate a five-year time horizon to receive federal funding for the project.

This report and the associated data analysis are available at:
lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/

REPORT PREPARED BY:



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Community members and stakeholders have engaged in this CEDS planning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest have ensured discussions are open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within Littleton. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment participants have to the future of the city.

Additionally, our appreciation is extended to the Littleton City Council and in particular to Cindie Perry, Brian Garner, and Jamie Crout, who meet on a weekly basis and provide the local expertise that helps guide this project. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.

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This report lays out the agreed upon future vision and strategic positioning for the City of Littleton's economic development over the next ten years. It identifies the key strategic actions and priorities needed to achieve the preferred future for Littleton.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE LITTLETON CEDS PROCESS



WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE NEW IDEAS

Littleton stakeholders expressed a keen desire to try new approaches to tackle the grand challenges of today. For example, in the areas of housing and connectivity, stakeholders see potential for the city to take a leadership role by specifically addressing the needs of middle-class America – to experiment with housing options, living arrangements, and multimodal transportation for all ages.



CELEBRATE AND PROMOTE LITTLETON'S AMENITY DENSITY

The City of Littleton is rich in amenity density. It's location as a transportation hub makes accessing the outdoors and natural resources easy. Its top educational institutions provide learning opportunities for all ages, and the historic downtown with cultural amenities and small businesses create a highly desirable living environment. This richness in amenity density is a strength that should be celebrated and promoted as an economic development tool that attracts businesses, new residents, and visitors to the city.



MODERNIZE CITY INFRASTRUCTURE WITH INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

To attract, develop, and retain businesses and residents, cities must leverage their strengths, and remain relevant by updating and providing cutting-edge city infrastructure. Throughout the planning process, stakeholders consistently expressed a desire for more connectivity, multimodal options, mixed-use and transit-oriented development. Intentional adoption of innovative solutions such as electrification, smart technology, and new energy sources would help to build the city's resiliency and desirability.



LEVERAGE HERITAGE, ARTS, AND CULTURE AS HIGH-PROFILE ECONOMIC DRIVERS

The planning process has highlighted the potential to leverage Littleton's heritage, arts, and culture as high-profile economic drivers for the city. Development should be pursued that brings the Mid-Mod Mile on Littleton Boulevard to life and celebrates this unique architectural style. Investment in the city's rich arts and culture resources will help establish Littleton as 'the place to be' and help boost the brand reputation of Littleton.



1.0 | INTRODUCTION - OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Littleton staff, community members and stakeholders made significant contributions to the visioning and planning process. In total, approximately 540 people provided significant direct contribution to the plan development and there were over 45,000 social media or direct mail touches.

In creating Littleton's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan, community members and stakeholders worked together to explore the city's economic development ecosystem and how it could evolve in the future. The 10-month planning process began in March and ended in January 2024. This report outlines how the extensive accumulated data has informed the identification of a unified preferred future and key strategic action areas for future economic development in the City of Littleton.



"I'm of the millennial generation and have lived in dense metropolitan areas. Littleton is a great city and has the potential to bring all kinds of new business and economic development. A place where one can live and play is the key!"

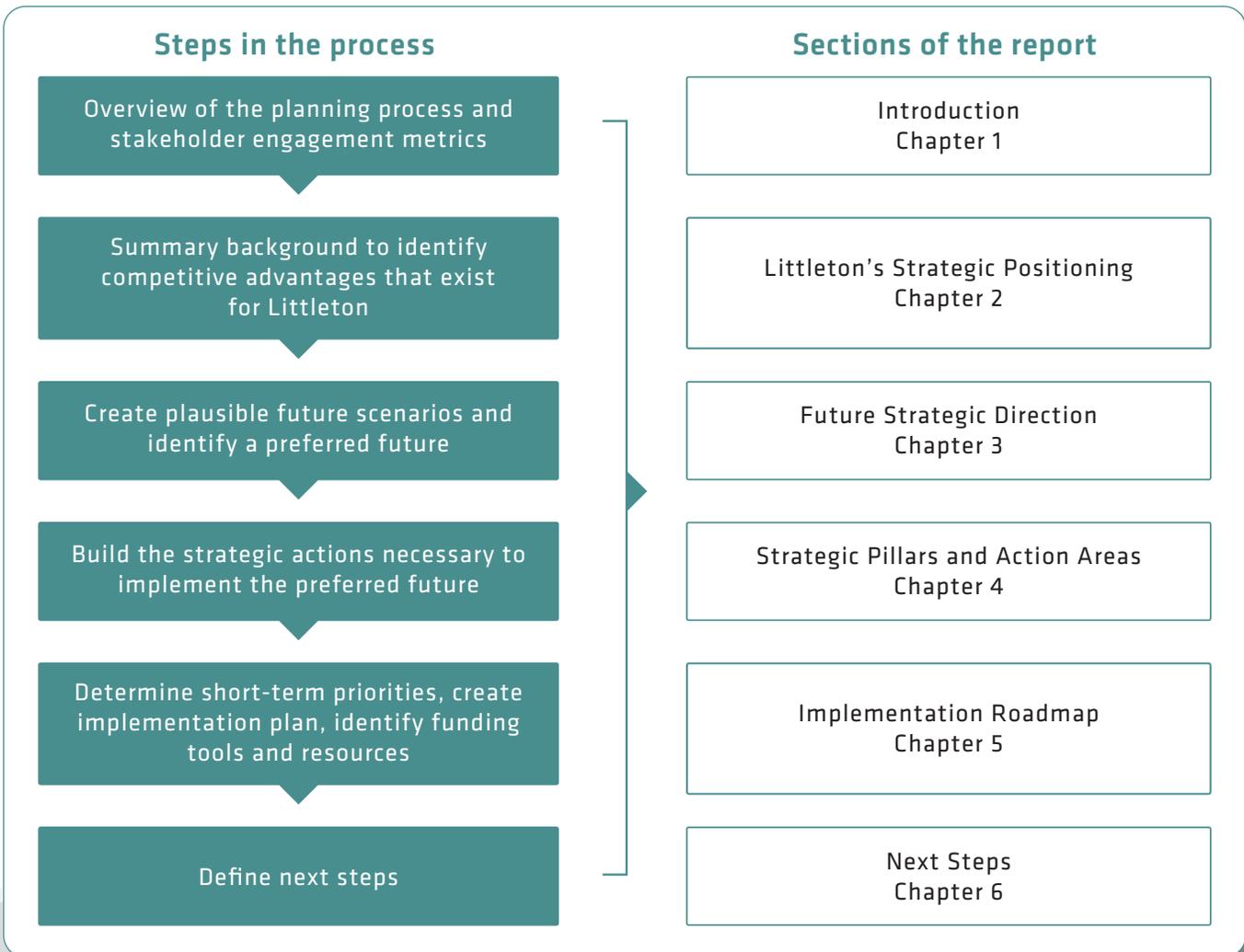
- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

1.1 | HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

As cities across the United States emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and look to the future, anticipating new realities and being 'future ready' is essential for building resiliency and regeneration for Littleton.

This report lays out the findings from each key step in the planning process. The process moved from background analysis and exploration, through to identifying key priorities for the future of economic development in Littleton. More details about the overall planning process may be viewed on Littleton's project portal at: lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/.

This work represents robust 'future gazing' where stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process, and the report, then drill down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out what next steps to take. The preferred future identified through this process presents an exciting and compelling vision for how the City of Littleton could evolve as a community over the next decade.





1.2 | SETTING THE CONTEXT - WHAT IS A CEDS?

The CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) is a locally based, regionally driven economic development planning process and document that identifies economic strengths and weaknesses and engages stakeholders to grow employment, diversify the economy, and spur economic growth. Regions must prepare a new CEDS at least every five years to qualify for certain funding through the US Economic Development Administration and the US Department of Commerce.

“A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of a region.”

- Economic Development Administration (EDA), 2015

Littleton's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a strategy-driven plan for economic development that is designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of the city over the next five years.

According to the EDA's regulations and guidelines, a CEDS must incorporate the concept of economic resilience (the ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, the impacts of climate change, etc.) and meet the following general criteria:

- It is developed with broad-based community participation
- It is readily accessible to stakeholders
- It is usable to stakeholders as a guide to the local economy and for action to improve it
- Seen through the lens of economic resiliency, the four required elements (Summary Background, SWOT Analysis, Strategic Direction/Action Plan, Evaluation Framework) logically build upon each other to result in a coherent, targeted document

This project has been funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The funding is part of a federal stimulus bill intended to aid communities with public health and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



1.3 | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT METRICS

The Littleton CEDS planning process is built on extensive stakeholder input. This engagement was a central design feature of the planning process. The engagement and data-driven methodology progressively focused the discussion on emerging key themes and stakeholder aspirations for the future. The purpose of the process was to arrive at a 'point of consensus' that represented the shared vision for future of economic development in Littleton. The result is a CEDS Plan with actions that propel the city towards that preferred future.

A key feature of the engagement and planning process was the mixture of virtual and in-person sessions to reach the broadest range of stakeholders possible. The process was also informed by the existing 2022 Business Survey data and the recent Retail and Mixed-Use Market Analysis to inform this planning.

The Littleton CEDS planning process involved extensive public engagement over the course of 10 months. Survey results, reports, and project activities were all published on the project portal to provide an open and transparent process for the community.

Student Survey
294 responses

Social Media
8,800 impressions

Stakeholder Survey
150 responses; offered in English & Spanish; 2,500 invited

2-Day Think-Tank Workshops
Day 1: 34 Participants
Day 2: 28 Participants

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Key Partner Interviews
30-60 minutes; 14 participants

3 Project Newsletters
3,100 recipients each

7 Focus Groups
33 participants; 2,400 invited

Articles in Newsletters
~ 35,000 individuals reached

2 Chamber of Commerce Listening Sessions
7 attendees

"Overall, this is a great place to live and work. It is critical that we spend the time now to create a viable future for us all. Thanks for asking for our feedback!"
- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

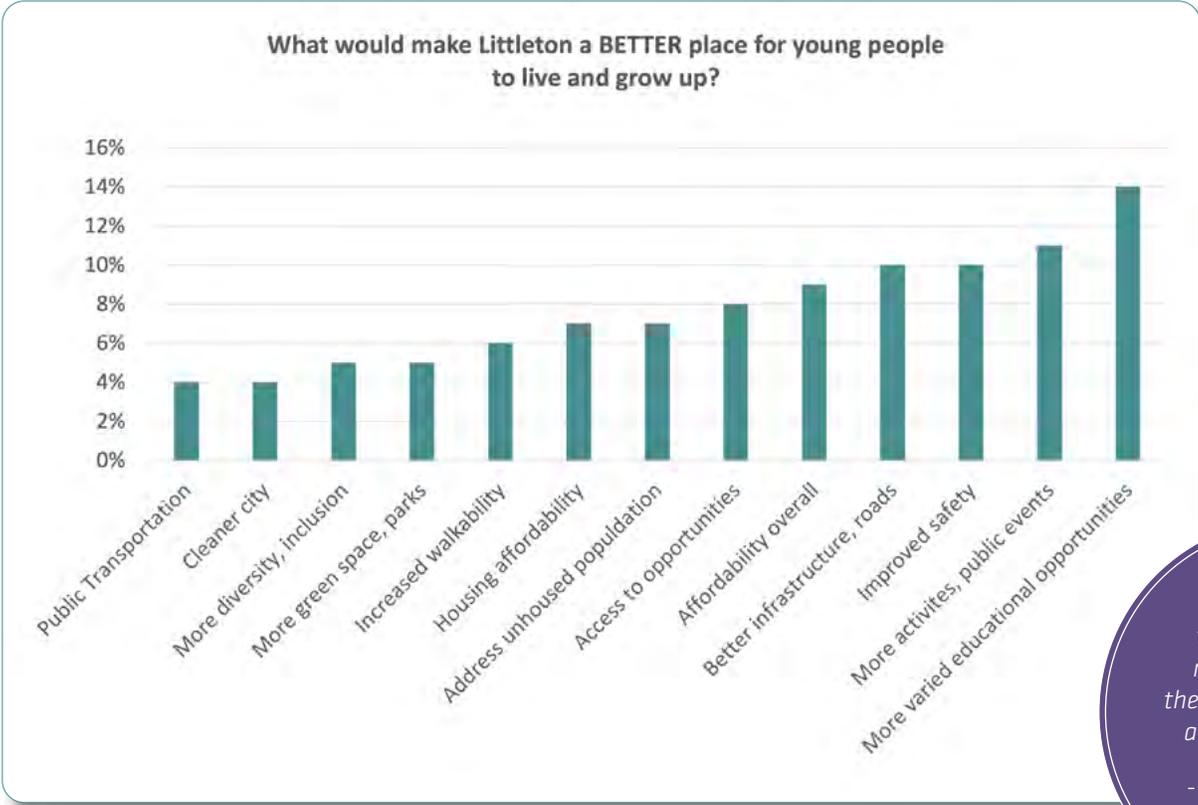




1.4 | STUDENT SURVEY - HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY

To broaden the range of voices represented in the Littleton CEDS Plan, the City of Littleton conducted a Student Survey in November-December 2023. The aim of the survey was to understand student perspectives on the future, Littleton as a community, and students' thoughts on future careers and education. The survey was distributed to Arapahoe High School, Heritage High School, Littleton High School, EPIC Campus, and Arapahoe Community College. The survey collected 294 responses. To view the complete results of the Student Survey, please visit the [project portal](#).

For the purposes of this report, a selection of results is presented. However, all interactive results can be viewed in real time on the project portal.



"As a community, there is a positive mindset regarding the future and priorities are in a good place."
- Littleton Student Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The majority of student respondents attended EPIC Campus (56%), followed by Heritage High School (33%), Littleton High School (29%), Arapahoe High School (26%), Arapahoe Community College (16%), and Other (3%).
- It should be noted that 33 students indicated they did not know what would make Littleton a better place to live or grow up, and 11 students indicated 'nothing'.
- These results can be filtered on the portal according to age, length of time lived in and/or attended school in Littleton, ethnicity, and school attended.



2.0 | SUMMARY BACKGROUND - LITTLETON'S STRATEGIC POSITIONING

2.1 | BENCHMARK ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS

The Littleton CEDS process blends vision setting and engagement with a data-driven approach, balancing the qualitative aspects and sentiment of the community with specific metrics to quantify the city's economy and future opportunities. Key findings from the 2023 City of Littleton Economic Benchmark Report include:

To read the Littleton Economic Benchmark Report, please visit: future-iq.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/JSA-Littleton-CEDS-Benchmark-Report-July-2023.pdf

- Over 2,600 businesses call Littleton home, and more than 29,600 people work in the city.
- Littleton's economy is rooted in several major industries, including professional, scientific, and technical services; health care and social assistance; and retail industries. These top three sectors make up almost 40% of Littleton's businesses.
- The city's labor market, oriented towards white-collar occupations, reflects healthy conditions with appropriate unemployment levels and high labor force participation across prime-age workers.
- Downtown Littleton, Mid Mod Mile, and the abundance of cultural and recreational opportunities throughout Littleton are key assets central to local economic development efforts and remain critical to the city's future economic success.
- Littleton stacks up to its peer city cohort communities by key demographic, socioeconomic, and economic metrics, following in the middle of the pack for many of these aspects.
- Littleton's population may grow slightly in the coming years, based on the city's Comprehensive Plan. Median household incomes reflect the broader MSA. Housing considerations remain at the forefront of many people's minds. Nearly 30% of Littleton's residents are over the age of 60 which is almost 10% higher than the Denver Metro area.
- The city's commercial real estate market has remained relatively stable in recent years despite market turbulence that affected commercial communities across the country during the recent pandemic.
- Highly regarded for its livability and strong community character, Littleton's brand reflects the city's desirability, family-friendly orientation, accomplished school district, and a strong transportation and connectivity network within the region.

Overall, these key findings highlight the economic conditions and assets of Littleton, exemplifying the strong foundation of the city's economy and areas of opportunities to leverage its current positioning for continued economic success.



WHAT IS A SWOT ANALYSIS?

The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis is defined by the EDA as “a strategic planning tool that ensures a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a city or region’s capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies the city or region’s competitive advantages—those indigenous assets that make the city or region special or competitive in the national and global economies—juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep a city or region from realizing its potential.”

The SWOT Analysis aims to deepen the understanding of Littleton’s unique capabilities and capacity as the city is impacted by anticipated trends and accelerated change. The process discerns areas of competitive advantage that have been incorporated into the CEDS strategic plan.

The primary data for the Littleton SWOT Analysis was generated by the Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey and the key stakeholder interviews that were conducted April through September 2023. The information was then vetted and validated at the Littleton CEDS Think-Tank, and 7 Focus Group Sessions. Below is a high-level summary of the SWOT Analysis for the Littleton CEDS planning process. For a complete analysis and breakdown of the SWOT elements, please see the Littleton CEDS Think-Tank Report at [lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/](https://future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/).

STRENGTHS

- Historic Downtown/ Main Street/History
- Parks & Rec/River/ Natural Resources
- Geographic Location
- Education/Schools
- Community/Place/ Welcoming
- Small Town Feel/ Charm/Size
- Light Rail Access/ Transportation
- Small Business/Retail
- Community Amenities

WEAKNESSES

- Poverty/Unhoused
- Crime
- Affordable Housing/ Rent
- Resistance to Change
- No Development Plan
- Lack of Parking
- Lack of Diversity
- Aging Infrastructure/ Roads
- Poor Streetscape
- Lack of Everyday Shops/Grocery

OPPORTUNITIES

- Managed Growth
- Littleton’s Uniqueness/Quirkiness
- Downtown/Main Street Development
- Housing Diversification
- Business Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Santa Fe & Mineral Redevelopment
- Littleton Boulevard
- Entertainment and Events
- Aspen Grove Redevelopment

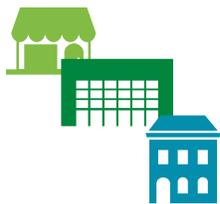
THREATS

- Affordability/Cost of Living/Housing
- Unhoused Population
- Unmanaged Growth
- Traffic and Congestion
- Crime and Safety
- Transportation Options/Parking
- Polarization/Politics
- Non-Littleton Characteristic Development
- Aging Infrastructure
- Resistance to Change/ Stagnation



»»»» 2.3 | LEVERAGING KEY LOCAL ASSETS

Littleton has some strong key clusters of physical, institutional, and cultural assets that can be leveraged to promote economic development. These assets include:



SMALL BUSINESSES PROFILE

Littleton is characterized by a relatively large number of small businesses, which shows the small business ecosystem and city infrastructure has the capacity to nurture and grow these businesses. This small business profile is a key contributing factor to the character of the community and is a focus of this economic development strategic plan.



EDUCATION & TALENT ATTRACTION

Talent development and attraction is a key part of any good economic development strategy. Littleton has the chance to out-perform in this aspect, with a strong educational system and a high livability in the region and city.



ARTS AND CULTURE

This is a standout asset for the community, with strong cultural experiences in the downtown area, and the potential to enhance the Littleton Boulevard experience. This asset group also offers the chance to uniquely identify the community and create a distinctly 'Littleton' flavor to the streetscapes and amenity rich areas.



ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

The region offers some exceptional and sought after outdoor recreation lifestyle opportunities. Littleton has its own subset of this, with trails and parklands. This package is a key part of the live and work proposition.



In addition, Littleton is well positioned in the broader Denver metro landscape, with good connectivity and proximity, and the opportunity to offer a distinctly different experience.





3.0 | FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

3.1 | IDENTIFYING THE PREFERRED FUTURE - VISION FOR LITTLETON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To identify the preferred future or vision for Littleton’s economic development, stakeholders participated in a scenario-planning workshop called a Think-Tank. This two-day Littleton CEDS scenario-based Think-Tank was conducted in-person on July 17 & 18, 2023. Approximately 34 people attended including Littleton staff, community members, industry, and agency representatives. The Think-Tank was intended to build coherency around a vision for future regional economic development planning for Littleton that will guide stakeholders looking out over the next 10 years.

The scenario planning process provides a method to explore plausible futures and consider the implications of various future scenarios. The Think-Tank workshop aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape the region looking out to 2040
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for Littleton
- Explore alignment around a shared future vision
- Explore potential high-level strategies that could propel Littleton to its preferred future

The scenario planning process encourages curiosity and collaboration by providing a way to explore plausible future scenarios from a speculative standpoint.

The scenarios developed during the planning process are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for economic development strategies for Littleton. In addition, the Think-Tank deliberations assisted in identifying key actions for the city and in exploring how various groups might collaborate to best contribute to future policymaking. The process involved exploration of local trends and forces of change; development of a scenario matrix defining four plausible scenario spaces for the future. The event concluded with discussion of the scenarios, selection of a preferred scenario, and the identification of potential high-level strategic themes and actions that could propel Littleton to its preferred future. For additional information and details on the Littleton’s visioning process, please read the Littleton CEDS Think-Tank Report at lab2.future-iq.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Littleton-Think-Tank-Report.pdf.





The scenario development process at the Think-Tank provided stakeholders the opportunity to examine the implications and consequences of different and plausible future directions for economic development in Littleton.

3.2 | SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE - FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORATION

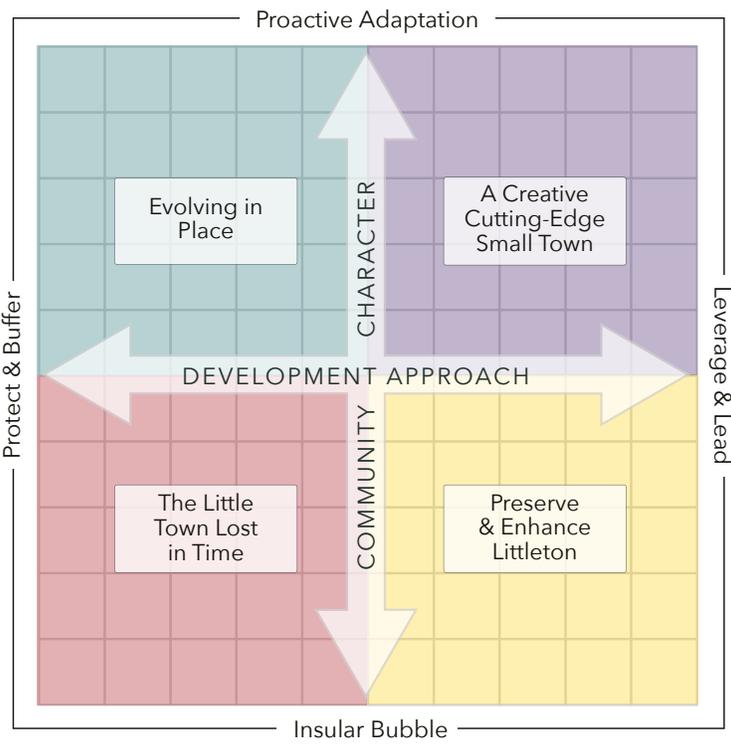
During the Littleton CEDS Think-Tank, participants worked through a scenario planning methodology to create four different scenarios of the future. The scenarios were created using the participant generated data that informed a scenario matrix framework that was build around the two macro themes of **Development Approach** and **Community Character**.



The community intentionally works to proactively absorb and manage change and growth by facilitating affordable housing and building community services. Enhanced community recreation and entertainment amenities help forge stronger community connectivity. There is a focus on being future-ready with lifelong learning and continued high levels of workforce and community participation. The community works to embrace diversity, foster new ideas and to ensure everyone feels at home and belongs.



Create policies and approaches that buffer the community and economy from rapid change and work to keep the rate of growth 'slow and manageable'. There is strong preservation of green spaces and heritage features. The focus is on supporting existing businesses and job types and guiding the gradual redevelopment of existing commercial and business areas. The residential focus remains primarily on single family homes, and transit is predominately car oriented as people commute to work.



Strong focus on leveraging and repurposing unique features in creative ways that preserve and enhance - while creating business innovation and renewal. Technology and smart infrastructure help to optimize resource use and drives sustainability. The city has a regional leadership role as a forward-looking creative community. Housing is more diverse with deliberately selected zones of higher density. The community nodes are connected by a strong network of multimodal corridors.

The community works aggressively to retain the 'urban haven' feel as part of the community character. The community is more inward looking, with a focus on traditional amenities, education and schools, and supporting a high quality of life for residents. There is a high value placed on stability, and the 'unique Littleton character'. This is protected by resisting rapid demographic change and cultural shifts.





3.4 | DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED FUTURE - 'A CREATIVE CUTTING-EDGE SMALL TOWN'

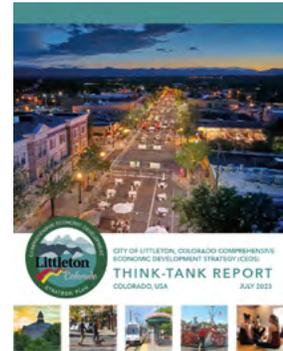
The visioning process allowed stakeholders to explore the future evolution of economic development in Littleton around the two main themes of 'Development Approach' and 'Community Character'. These themes allowed stakeholders to wrestle with the implications and responses to changing demographic makeup and needs of the community, climate change, and the emerging impact that technology and development is having on multiple aspects of the community.

The preferred future for economic development in Littleton is identified as 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town'. The preferred future was described as:

The future of 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town' reflects stakeholders' desire to plan for a future that builds on the city's history and character and propels it to a position of leadership in the region. This CEDS Report lays out a series of actions and ideas that can be incorporated into the upcoming comprehensive planning process to set the community on its preferred future of economic development in Littleton.

A CREATIVE CUTTING-EDGE SMALL TOWN

This scenario forecasts a future where the community is welcoming and forward-thinking with leadership that encourages cultural heritage, technology use, and engagement. The community leverages its unique assets while leading and adapting for future residents. The City of Littleton utilizes creative economic development tools to remain flexible and to proactively meet the challenges that occur on an on-going basis. The community optimizes resource use and technology to drive sustainability. The City takes on a leadership role in the region and embraces diversity and new ideas to ensure everyone feels at home and belongs.



FutureInsight

- As communities emerge from the COVID pandemic, the importance of high-quality community infrastructure (both hard and social) has become a critical element in economic development in cities across the United States. This plan highlights this need and provides the intentional steps to improve Littleton infrastructure.
- The preferred vision for economic development in Littleton lays the groundwork for the city's comprehensive planning process to follow. The vision was developed by community stakeholders and identifies the guiding principles for decision-making in economic development looking out to 2040.



3.5 | STRATEGY FOCUS GROUPS - VALIDATING THE PREFERRED FUTURE

Following the Think-Tank, a series of seven Focus Groups were held to build out the Strategic Pillars of the CEDS Plan. The purpose of the Focus Groups was to validate the preferred future and to gather strategic ideas on how to implement the steps needed to get to the preferred vision for economic development in Littleton. The stakeholder input from the seven Focus Groups informed the development of the Action Areas of CEDS Strategic Pillars. Below are key takeaways that emerged from each Focus Group:

The common thread running through all Focus Group discussions was the need for the city to articulate the story of what stakeholders want to city to be, and then to work collaboratively to take those actions that will implement the change needed to make the story a reality.

BUSINESS VITALITY AND ADAPTABILITY FOCUS GROUP

- Be a city known for its support of small businesses; find Littleton's niche and promote it
- Save, foster and nurture local businesses; identify ways to allow businesses to adapt to rising costs; provide incentives, grant programs, tax breaks, flexible financing
- Ask large companies what they need in terms of small business support and attract them to Littleton
- Provide more mixed-use development and multigenerational housing; incorporate worker housing and healthcare access
- Encourage high density workforce businesses (small manufacturing, industrial, aerospace)
- Provide more transportation options and connectivity for workers
- Build larger entertainment space downtown; grow meeting spaces and areas
- Develop a Toolbox for the City that includes targeted interventions



WORKFORCE AND TALENT ATTRACTION FOCUS GROUP

- Develop Littleton's reputation prioritizing a high-quality workplace culture
- Promote quality of life and amenities, entertainment in the city to attract workers
- Incentivize businesses to hire; promote policies to hire underrepresented groups and limit regulatory issues
- Support businesses and workers with city infrastructure - fiber optic (emphasize quality)
- Work with employers to educate about workforce opportunities such as Workforce Development-Connecting Colorado; reskilling opportunities; apprenticeships
- Provide more housing diversity for workers (affordable for all working incomes)
- Develop a shared workforce talent strategy to customize talent allowing for multiple and flexible skillsets





FOSTERING A LIVABLE ECONOMY FOCUS GROUP

- Promote the notion of becoming a *laboratory of living*, where innovative ideas are tried and tested – ignite and amplify the community as an exploratory pathway; leverage and lead – be proud to be a model community
- Articulate the needs of the Middle-Class Livability
- Be a place where younger people want to be and where older adults can downsize and stay
- Maximize and leverage distinct unique places and higher education
- Be a place where everyone who works here can live here (affordability)
- Prioritize mobility; become more walkable & bikeable; move away from car-centric society; develop Littleton Boulevard as a true ‘boulevard’ (pedestrian/bike friendly)
- Diversified housing means diversified communities; be creative about keeping costs down; up-zone; subsidize housing for middle class (teachers, first responders, etc.)
- Build on existing recreational amenities and create a nightlife to activate engagement; support policies that enable this



INCORPORATING INDUSTRIAL AND FLEX FOCUS GROUP

- Adapt zoning to allow new uses (building adaptation); allow repositioning of assets for developers
- Pivot zoning codes to evolve into a live/work community; reduce carbon footprint; allow for mixed-use large scale
- Adopt a ‘pursuit narrative’ for Littleton; seek out what we want; an explorative approach to development
- Eliminate barriers to entry for businesses around rent rates, politics, zoning
- Pursue innovative funding arrangements for development; collaboration between developers and residents
- Pursue alternative energy possibilities for Littleton; seek Inflation Reduction Act Funds
- Educate community members about development; collect input and seek collaboration



REGIONAL ECONOMY POSITIONING FOCUS GROUP

- Littleton is a regional leader in amenity density with a Main Street; also geographically well placed
- Leverage the city’s Transportation Asset; pursue transit-oriented development with higher density hubs and circulation; need more East-West corridors
- Increase housing diversity to draw workers from the region
- Be proactive with economic development
- Create greater connectivity; incentivize people to work from home and promote Littleton’s ‘amenity density’/quality of life; circulator bus potential
- Be a place where companies/ideas are piloted
- Improve technology/smart city infrastructure; end users demand this infrastructure





ENHANCING HISTORIC CHARACTER & FABRIC FOCUS GROUP

- Develop Broadway to Downtown with more multimodal options and parking
- Establish a designated Conservation Overlay District for Littleton Boulevard
- Establish activity centers and quiet zones
- Activate Littleton Boulevard with multimodal development, adaptive reuse, walkability
- Focus on Littleton Boulevard's streetscape; wider sidewalks, bike lane, trees, mixed-use zoning, branding (banners), wayfinding signs, bring buildings to street, add beauty; redesign the street
- Promote aesthetic guidelines for Littleton Boulevard



LEVERAGING ARTS & CULTURE FOCUS GROUP

- To quantify and understand Arts tourism, conduct an Arts Economic Impact Study for Littleton
- Strengthen discussion forums around Arts & Culture
- Shift the thinking around culture in Littleton; collectively invest in these organizations so they have more time to do art and don't have to spend so much time on admin
- Sell the arts to developers
- Help to break down the existing siloes that exist in Arts & Culture businesses in Littleton
- Actions to incorporate: marketing the arts, bring patrons, show the Arts as part of the economy (data-driven connection), encourage collaboration, highlight the visitor experience/tourism
- Storytelling is key - Map out and articulate what is happening in Arts & Culture in Littleton; show effect on economy and show business alignment
- Build a boutique hotel in Downtown Littleton to help culture organizations and link visitation to Arts & Culture
- Conduct a hotel study



4.0 | STRATEGIC PILLARS AND ACTION AREAS

The Strategic Pillars are an organizing framework to help identify actions that will enable the city to pivot toward the preferred future for economic development in Littleton.

The strategic themes and action areas are the building blocks of the Strategic Pillars that create the foundation of Littleton's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

4.1 | STRATEGIC PILLARS

The Strategic Pillars for the Littleton CEDS Plan were developed following the Key Stakeholder Interviews, Think-Tank, Focus Groups, and in consideration of the 2022 Business Survey and other more recent studies and planning efforts. The pillars represent the major theme or topic areas that underpin the preferred future for comprehensive economic development in Littleton. They have been drawn directly from the scenario planning and stakeholder engagement process. The Strategic Actions are structured around these six strategic pillars that are the fundamental building blocks that support the vision for economic development in Littleton.



4.2 | STRATEGIC ACTIONS - SUMMARY

Following the establishment of the Strategic Pillars, the specific Strategic Actions were developed to guide implementation of each Strategic Pillar.



PILLAR 1: BUSINESS VITALITY AND ADAPTABILITY

- Celebrate, foster, and nurture local Littleton businesses.
- Enhance Littleton's existing business ecosystem.
- Adopt a focused 'Pursuit Narrative' for Littleton.
- Implement initiatives that ensure ongoing business vitality and adaptability.



PILLAR 2: WORKFORCE AND TALENT ATTRACTION

- Boost Littleton's reputation as a great place to work.
- Identify creative ways to make Littleton a great place for workers.
- Encourage businesses to help develop and hire local talent.
- Develop a local workforce talent pipeline strategy.



PILLAR 3: FOSTERING A LIVABLE ECONOMY

- Foster and encourage a range of housing options and affordability.
- Prioritize multimodal mobility.
- Continue to strengthen Littleton's community image, identity, and livability.
- Incorporate Economic Development in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan.



PILLAR 4: ENHANCING HISTORIC CHARACTER AND CULTURAL FABRIC

- Activate the streetscape of Littleton Boulevard.
- Adopt an 'Overlay District' type for Littleton Boulevard.
- Conduct an Arts Economic Impact Study.



PILLAR 5: SUPPORTING INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENT IN CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Focus on reinvestment and modernization of city infrastructure.
- Encourage building adaptation and facilitate new and emerging industries.
- Strengthen relationship and collaboration with SouthPark Business Park and other key partners.
- Support businesses and workers with city infrastructure.
- Engage community in understanding redevelopment options and creative ideas.



PILLAR 6: REGIONAL ECONOMY POSITIONING

- Encourage regional dialogue and economic development leadership positioning.
- Leverage Littleton's regional transportation and connectivity assets.
- Increase visitation and extended stay in Littleton.
- Evolve the city to be a place where companies and ideas are piloted.

The Strategic Actions represent a series of catalytic actions that will propel the city towards the preferred future. They are intended to support existing planning initiatives and to fill critical gaps.





Economic Gardening is an entrepreneurial approach to economic development that originated in 1987 in Littleton to respond to the loss of a large employer. The approach is a key reason why the city is known for its strong support for local growth companies and entrepreneurs. (<https://economicgardening.org>)

4.3 | STRATEGIC PILLAR 1: BUSINESS VITALITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Strategizing for bringing new businesses to Littleton, fostering entrepreneurship, and supporting the city’s existing business network.

The decade ahead will be defined by accelerating pace of change. This creates new opportunities and places pressure on businesses and cities to adapt and evolve faster than ever. A key thrust of the Economic Development Strategy is helping Littleton businesses and its business ecosystem adapt and grasp emerging opportunities in its many sectors.



FutureInsight

- The recent establishment of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for Littleton is a fantastic opportunity for the city to seek out ways to collaborate and prioritize downtown development and activation.
- In the 2022 Littleton Business Survey, nearly 1 out of every 4 businesses (22%) cited obtaining permits (buildings/events), licenses, etc. as one of the top three biggest challenges they face with operating their business in Littleton. This is an opportunity for the city to address as part of the CEDS plan to make it easier for businesses to locate in Littleton in the future.

“Remote and small businesses should always be welcomed. They contribute to our local economy and greatly enhance the quality of life.”

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

1. CELEBRATE, FOSTER, AND NURTURE LOCAL LITTLETON BUSINESSES

Identify ways to allow businesses to grow in Littleton and meet business challenges such as rising costs; assess incentives, grant programs, tax breaks, and flexible financing opportunities. Find the niche of supporting small businesses and promote this approach locally and in the region. Develop an Economic Development Toolbox for the city that includes targeted interventions and incentives.



2. ENHANCE LITTLETON'S EXISTING BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Prioritize business attraction by engaging with companies to identify what they need in terms of the supply chain network and create an outreach plan to bring those identified businesses to Littleton. Collaborate with the local partners on initiatives to enhance the local business ecosystem. Grow meeting spaces, networks, and areas for businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers. Build new partnerships with the Hispanic Chamber and the Northeast area of Littleton.

3. ADOPT A FOCUSED 'PURSUIT NARRATIVE' FOR LITTLETON

Actively seek out industry and businesses that fit the Littleton culture and match the available infrastructure. Include economic and business diversification as a goal and create the necessary messaging that will attract businesses that are a good fit. Part of this narrative includes that Littleton is working hard to support business growth.



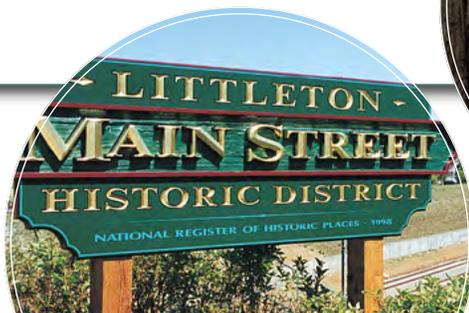
4. IMPLEMENT INITIATIVES THAT ENSURE ONGOING BUSINESS VITALITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Conduct an Incentive Audit of current city incentives. Complete and implement the current 'Design the Future Process' efforts and measure performance outcomes.



NEAR-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Complete an Incentive Gap Assessment and Audit to update the city's incentive packages aligning with targeted goals and opportunities, particularly with Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) opportunities.
- Develop marketing and pitch collateral for targeted industries and sectors including tourism and arts and cultural users. Create one-page pitch sheet collateral targeted to sectors on competitive advantages and available resources/incentives.
- Continue conducting Littleton's Binannual Business Survey.





CASE
STUDY
#1

4.3.2 | BUSINESS VITALITY AND ADAPTABILITY CASE STUDY

STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Kansas City, Kansas

The Toolbox Small Business Resource Center is dedicated to empowering its community to own their economic future. The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization enhances the entrepreneur support ecosystem by providing free-of-charge services to county residents looking to start or grow their local businesses.

After receiving financial support from the Ewing Marin Kauffman Foundation, The Toolbox grew out of the Kansas City ESHIP (Entrepreneurship) Communities initiative with the beginning steps of extensive outreach, survey, and conversations with small businesses in Kansas City, Kansas, to understand the current needs and gaps within the existing support systems for entrepreneurs. The Toolbox identified four barriers more prevalent with local entrepreneurs: trust issues between entrepreneurs and service providers to address specific needs, cultural competency challenges, lack of multilingual programs, and unawareness of existing resources available to entrepreneurs. The Toolbox developed specific organizational strategies and services to address these real on-the-ground needs.

Through private one-on-one entrepreneurial and small business coaching, The Toolbox works hand-in-hand with entrepreneurs to help plan, register, fund, operate, and grow their businesses. The support of The Toolbox has increased access to minority residents looking to start their businesses and has strengthened the network of business growth support.

Image Credit: The Toolbox



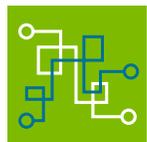


4.4 | STRATEGIC PILLAR 2: WORKFORCE AND TALENT ATTRACTION

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are critical elements to a successful workforce development approach in Littleton.

Ensuring a modern workforce and talent pool for Littleton’s employers and employees.

Successful cities across the United States are actively engaged in a talent attraction competition. The ability to be able to develop and attract talent is a key part of the value proposition for these cities. Littleton has some clear advantages, with a strong educational system and location within the attractive broader Denver metropolis. This strategic pillar aims to better connect the existing strengths with future economic prosperity for the city.



FutureInsight

- In the 2022 Littleton Business Survey, skilled workforce ability and retention was reported the second biggest challenge businesses face running a business in the City of Littleton, trailing only behind inflation pressures, and rising costs of materials and services.
- The strong public school system, including the new Explorative Pathways for Innovative Careers (EPIC) campus and Arapahoe Community College, provide a strong backbone to workforce development in Littleton.

“The looming labor shortage is an issue that every single village, town, and city needs to address now! The battle for skilled labor is about to get intense as the U.S. population faces reducing birth rates. This is an issue that we need to strategically prepare for now and not later.”

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



4.4.1 | WORKFORCE AND TALENT ATTRACTION KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. BOOST LITTLETON'S REPUTATION AS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Promote Littleton as a place where workplace culture is valued and nurtured. Promote the city's livability, quality of life and amenities to businesses. Emphasize Littleton's entertainment options in addition to attracting workers.

2. IDENTIFY CREATIVE WAYS TO MAKE LITTLETON A GREAT PLACE FOR WORKERS

Expand healthcare access for all workers in the city. Encourage the development of multigenerational housing and housing diversity within city limits. Provide transportation options that build connectivity and multimodal transportation options throughout the city. Pursue the CDOT discussions that consider passenger rail access at the Santa Fe/Mineral stop.

3. ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO HELP DEVELOP AND HIRE LOCAL TALENT

Work with industry, area high schools and Arapahoe Community College to develop talent pipelines through local apprenticeships, internships, modern hiring practices and other options. Engage with surrounding communities in regional talent-seeking initiatives.

4. DEVELOP A LOCAL WORKFORCE TALENT PIPELINE STRATEGY

Intentionally work with the EPIC Campus and Arapahoe Community College and continue collaboration with Arapahoe-Douglas Works! Workforce Center. Educate employers about workforce opportunities such as reskilling opportunities and apprenticeships. Promote the value of multiple and flexible skillsets.

NEAR-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Continue strengthening partnerships with talent and workforce development entities and institutions.
- Establish a new partnership with the Latino Leadership Institute.





CASE
STUDY
#2

4.4.2 | WORKFORCE AND TALENT ATTRACTION CASE STUDY

WORK-BASED LEARNING WITH MODERN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS

Boulder, Colorado

The Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) brings “Work-Based Learning” to students to promote stronger pathways for career competitiveness and opportunities. BVSD partners with CareerWise Colorado to “allow students many opportunities throughout their K-12 education to learn ABOUT work, learn THROUGH work, and learn AT work.” CareerWise Colorado offers paid apprenticeships for high school students through programs that span from one year up to three years in length.

Through these modern youth apprenticeships, students gain work experience beyond short internships, have the opportunity to achieve professional certification, obtain college credits, and foster more robust professional networks, all while receiving paychecks and compensation for their work.

This new approach to apprenticeships addresses the disconnect between traditional education models and student career readiness. Employers recognize the value of these programs for talent pipelines and cultivate a future talent pool. BVSD, through CareerWise Colorado, helps connect prospective apprentices with local businesses in targeted industry fields.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.careerwisecolorado.org>

Image Credits: CareerWise Colorado

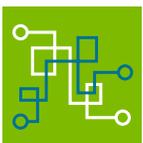


4.5 | STRATEGIC PILLAR 3: FOSTERING A LIVABLE ECONOMY

Fostering the future for the people who live, work, and play in Littleton.

A key theme throughout the strategic planning process has been the notion of Littleton as a community that offers something different and retains a natural sense of identity and quality of livability. Housing affordability and availability has emerged as a critical element in the future livability of Littleton. Additionally, multimodal mobility is seen as a key future aspect for all generations. This strategic pillar focuses on the overarching action areas that will help foster and retain the high livability of Littleton.

The City of Littleton is in the process of developing a downtown mobility and streetscape improvements plan called 'Project Downtown' to guide the city's investment decisions that improve multimodal connectivity, parking, pedestrian safety, wayfinding, green infrastructure, and streetscape enhancements in Downtown Littleton.



FutureInsight

- CDOT is considering making the Littleton Santa Fe/Mineral train stop into a passenger rail stop. This is a perfect opportunity for the city to pivot to a transit-oriented development approach to enhance mobility for residents and visitors. (Front Range Passenger Rail – Station Area Conversation South Metro Area, CDOT, November 2023)
- Retail leakage for Littleton is estimated at 51% which is significantly higher than the approximately 20% usually considered normal in a fully stored retail market. This reflects the location of competitive retail development on or close to the city's boundary and provides insight into potential future investment focus for the city. (Retail and Mixed-Use Market Analysis, EPS, September 2023)

"Housing is one of the most critical issues facing many communities across the state and more broadly across the nation / world. Littleton can't solve the problem on its own necessarily and should look to partnerships across municipalities, best practice, and innovative ideas wherever they're found to help address affordable housing for all. Good quality housing should be treated as a basic human right."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



4.5.1 | FOSTERING A LIVABLE ECONOMY KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. FOSTER AND ENCOURAGE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS & AFFORDABILITY

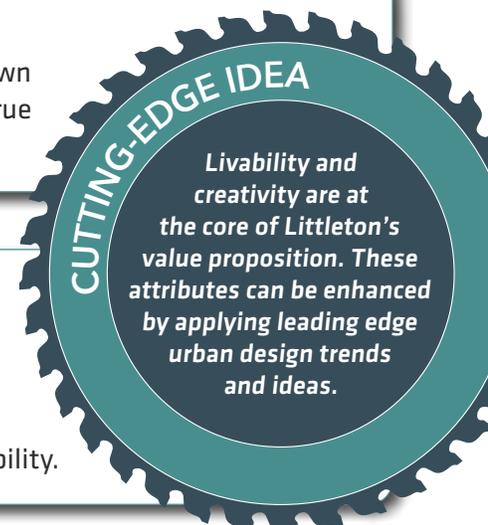
Diversified housing means diversified communities. Be a place where younger people want to be, where older adults can downsize and stay, and where people who work here can live here. Be creative about keeping costs down by up-zoning and exploring housing market challenges for middle class (teachers, first responders, etc.).

2. PRIORITIZE MULTIMODAL MOBILITY

Become more walkable and bikeable, especially connecting areas of employment to businesses. Connect Littleton's two primary multimodal corridors (light rail downtown to Broadway to the east via Littleton Boulevard.) Develop Littleton Boulevard as a true 'boulevard' that is pedestrian and bike friendly.

3. CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN LITTLETON'S COMMUNITY IMAGE, IDENTITY, AND LIVABILITY

Support policies that build on existing recreational amenities and create a nightlife to activate engagement. Expand Town Hall and options for entertainment spaces downtown. Leverage the community's amenity density by promoting the city's livability.



CUTTING-EDGE IDEA
Livability and creativity are at the core of Littleton's value proposition. These attributes can be enhanced by applying leading edge urban design trends and ideas.

4. INCORPORATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE UPCOMING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Place a stronger emphasis on Economic Development in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan and its planning process. Leverage the Comprehensive Planning process to analyze existing land uses, current zoning, and comp plan designations in areas of economic activity such as the Littleton Boulevard corridor to reduce conflicts and adjust zoning/Land Use designation as needed for economic growth.



NEAR-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Increase economic development participation and role in Littleton's 2025 Comprehensive Plan.





CASE
STUDY
#3

4.5.2 | FOSTERING A LIVABLE ECONOMY CASE STUDY

RELATING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Bend, Oregon

Like many places across the country, in Bend, Oregon, housing affordability has become a pressing concern for its community and stakeholders. The Bend Chamber of Commerce recognized a growing challenge of attracting workers and talent to Bend. As part of the Bend Chamber Workforce Housing Initiative launched in 2021, the chamber commissioned a study to assess the relationship between housing affordability and economic growth. The study analyzed the city and region’s residential and labor market trends and surveyed over 200 regional employers to provide a comprehensive look at housing costs affecting the local economy.

The analysis concluded that more than 80% of employers reported that housing significantly impacted businesses’ ability to hire. More than 90% of employers cited high housing costs limiting their company’s growth. Nearly half of the employers considered direct interventions like providing land for residential development, purchasing workforce units, or offering employees payment assistance for down payment and mortgage support.

This study demonstrates a successful quantitative approach to help better understand the relationship between housing and the local economy. Results from the study are being leveraged to advocate for regulatory and legislative change and increase the supply and diversity of housing stock.

For more information, please visit: <https://bendchamber.org/workforce-housing-initiative/>

Image Credits: Kôrazón Development in Bend, OR by Kôr Community Land Trust Land

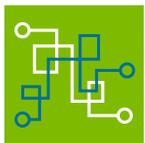


4.6 | STRATEGIC PILLAR 4: ENHANCING HISTORIC CHARACTER AND CULTURAL FABRIC

Leveraging Littleton’s architectural and cultural assets to strengthen the city’s brand and identity.

Throughout the economic development strategic planning work, a strong emergent theme has been the sense of character and cultural uniqueness of Littleton. This includes the architectural and neighborhood richness and is potentially one of the key under-developed aspects of Littleton. This unique architectural landscape, coupled with a vibrant cultural community, is a potential winning combination.

The Arts and Culture industry in the Metro Denver area had an impact of \$2.6 billion in total economic activity in 2022. This is a 72% increase over 2020 and a 13.6% increase over 2019 (Economic Activity Study of Metro Denver Culture, CBCA, 2023).



FutureInsight

- The city’s Arts & Culture Commission (A&CC) was created following the 2019 Envision Littleton Comprehensive planning process and is guided by its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The fundamental outcomes of the Strategic Plan are Economic Development, Sense of Place, and Quality of Life. It is recommended that close collaboration and alignment with the Commission occur in the implementation of this CEDS Strategic Pillar.

“The uniqueness (of Littleton) is not our mid-century orientation, but our high concentration of Mid-century modern commercial architecture on Littleton BLVD! This is what makes Littleton unique in the south suburban area. People thrive in historic areas and tend to spend more time and money in them.”

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



The Arts & Culture industry employed 13,551 people in 2022 in the Metro Denver area. This is a 39.9% increase over 2020 and 1.2% increase over 2019 (*Economic Activity Study of Metro Denver Culture, CBCA, 2023*)

4.6.1 | ENHANCING HISTORIC CHARACTER AND CULTURAL FABRIC KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. ACTIVATE THE STREETScape OF LITTLETON BOULEVARD

Littleton Boulevard offers the opportunity for imaginative and innovative urban renewal and streetscape activation. This should include multimodal development, widening sidewalks, and incorporating activity centers and quiet zones from Broadway to Downtown Littleton. Improve the pedestrian and biking environment of Littleton Boulevard.



2. EXPLORE WAYS TO ACTIVATE CULTURAL HERITAGE ALONG LITTLETON BOULEVARD

Adopt an Overlay District type for Littleton Boulevard. Use the district parameters to further develop Littleton Boulevard. Emphasize guidelines that promote the Mid Mod Mile theme as an economic development/business attraction tool.

CUTTING-EDGE IDEA

Littleton Boulevard provides a perfect area to create a renowned cultural and heritage destination, and add new dimensions to the community experience.

3. EVALUATE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Quantify the economic value of arts and culture in Littleton to recognize and strategize for continued growth of cultural assets and arts as an economic driver to the city.

NEAR-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Conduct an Economic Impact Assessment of arts and culture in Littleton.
- Explore adopting an Overlay District for Littleton Blvd. to better preserve, protect, and enhance the character of the corridor.

Total contributions to Metro Denver Arts, Scientific & Cultural organizations in 2020 was \$294 Million. (*Economic Activity Study of Metro Denver Culture, CBCA, 2023*)





CASE
STUDY
#4

4.6.2 | ENHANCING HISTORIC CHARACTER AND CULTURAL FABRIC CASE STUDY

CONNECTING ARTS AND CULTURE WITH THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Kingston, New York

The City of Kingston, New York, recognized the important role of arts and culture in not only the brand and identity of the city but in the local economy. As part of a citywide Arts and Cultural Master Planning effort, the city conducted an Economic and Fiscal Impact Assessment for the city of 24,000 people. This analysis provided the city and its arts and cultural stakeholders with quantitative data insights about the role and value of the arts, helping city officials, the arts community, and the broader community constituency understand the relationship between arts and the greater local economy.

The city's 351 arts and cultural establishments, inventoried as part of this study, support 845 jobs, over \$31.2 million in annual salaries and wages, nearly \$73 million in annual revenue, and \$35 million in visitor spending attributable to arts and culture. The economic impact generates \$3.3 million in direct fiscal revenue for the city, \$820,000 for the county, and \$2.1 million for the State of New York.

After completing the Economic and Fiscal Impact Assessment and Arts and Cultural Master Plan, the city approved a new public art policy, attracted the Center for Photography at Woodstock to locate 40,000 SF in the city, and Ulster County decided to mirror the study and plan to provide a countywide Arts and Cultural Master Plan and Economic and Fiscal Impact Assessment.

Image Credits: And North (Left), Kingston Visitors Guide (Right)

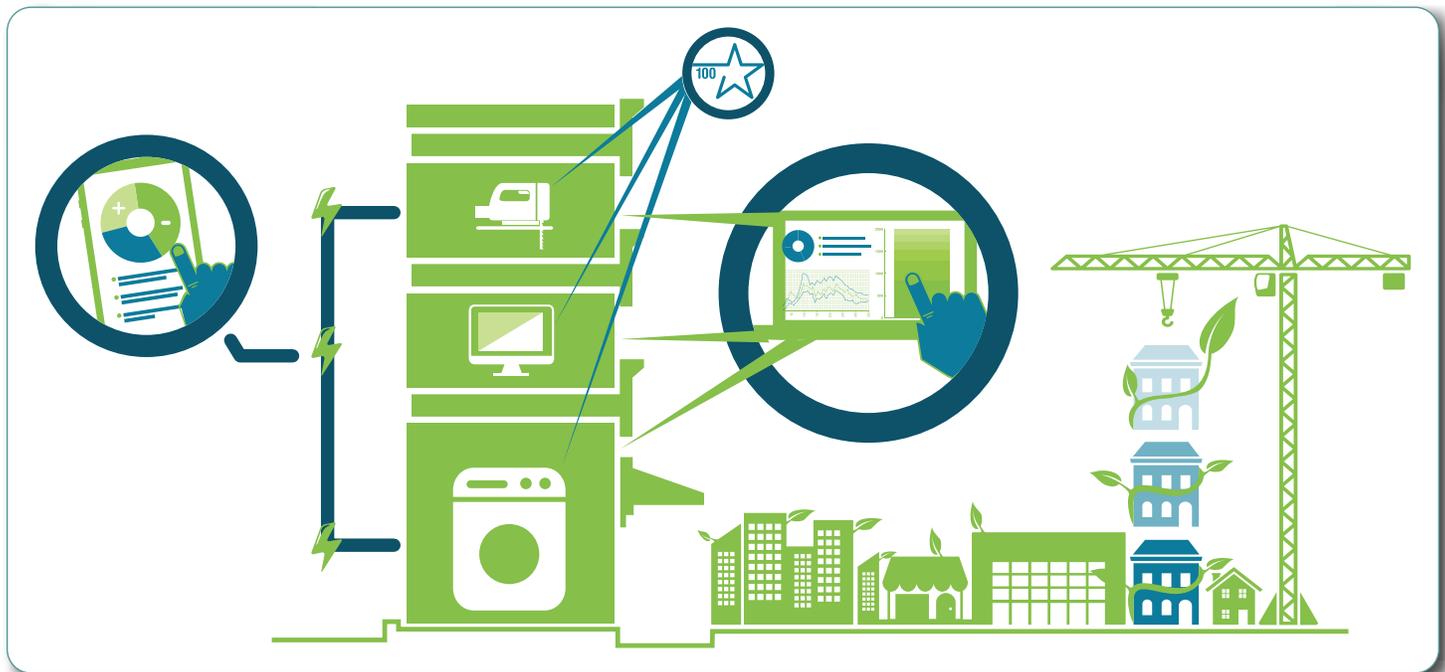


4.7 | STRATEGIC PILLAR 5: SUPPORTING INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENT IN CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Adapting the built environment and infrastructure for continued industry growth and diversification.

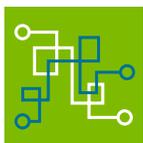
Basic maintenance of city infrastructure is a critical element in quality of life for residents and businesses. The city infrastructure of the future will need to offer great amenities for residents, as well as provide the critical infrastructure for new industries. This will require attention to electrification, renewable energy, digital technologies and the associated zoning and policy issues. A key focus of this strategic pillar is the notion of ‘future ready’ city infrastructure and policy.

Development and redevelopment efforts that leverage existing infrastructure investment and the strength of a rich community network can contribute to a sense of place that stands out in the region.



“Improving infrastructure is priority. It is not being done in the cities around us. It would make us very competitive in attracting businesses. I have it on good authority that traffic problems cause businesses to look elsewhere.”

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



FutureInsight

- Supporting industry and developing city infrastructure will require prioritizing public investment in alignment and partnership with other city departments and agencies such as Community Development, Public Works, the Downtown Development Authority, South Suburban Parks and Recreation, and Utility partners.

4.7.1 | SUPPORTING INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENT IN CITY INFRASTRUCTURE KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. FOCUS ON REINVESTMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve streetscapes (fiber & tech ready/energy efficient infrastructure/water wise policies) to encourage diversity of future ready uses and cluster types such as mixed use, industrial and flex. Specifically, upgrade lighting system to LED lights.

2. ENCOURAGE BUILDING ADAPTATION AND FACILITATE NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Adapt zoning to allow new uses for buildings in Littleton. Allow repositioning of assets for developers and allow for readaptation of office space. Provide creative funding for new development and re-purposing of business and industrial space.

3. STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONSHIP AND COLLABORATION WITH SOUTHPARK BUSINESS PARK AND OTHER KEY PARTNERS

SouthPark Business Park represents a concentration of key primary jobs, businesses, and economic opportunities. Collaborate with SouthPark Business Park to ensure future economic success of the area, that businesses are supported for growth, and prospective businesses continue to seek location in the area.

4. SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND WORKERS WITH CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

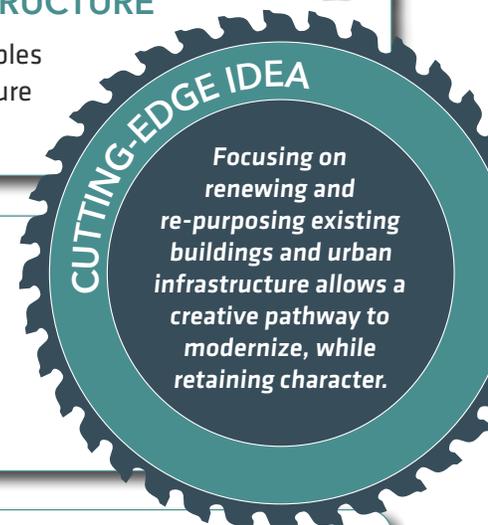
Pursue alternative energy possibilities for Littleton especially in the areas of renewables and new technologies. Seek Inflation Reduction Act Funds for support of infrastructure projects. Include both hard and social infrastructure initiatives.

5. ENGAGE COMMUNITY IN UNDERSTANDING REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS AND CREATIVE IDEAS

Educate community members about the potential new uses of properties. Include messaging into existing meetings such as city council sessions, downtown development association, etc.

NEAR-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Prioritize investment in streetscape and infrastructure improvements on key corridors and investment areas such as Littleton Boulevard.





CASE
STUDY
#5

4.7.2 | SUPPORTING INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENT IN CITY INFRASTRUCTURE CASE STUDY

CATALYZING INVESTMENT THROUGH STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

Denver, Colorado

Brighton Blvd in Denver's RiNo Arts District spent decades as a two-lane road with little infrastructure, limited sidewalks, and a reputation as "the ugliest road in Denver." The City of Denver launched a transformational effort: reimagining Brighton Blvd as a thriving multimodal thoroughfare for people. By redesigning Brighton Blvd through underground utilities, sustainable green infrastructure for stormwater management, public art, and streetscaping furniture for people to sit and linger, the corridor demonstrated the city's commitment to the greater neighborhood. In the initial years following the phased streetscape improvements, RiNo Arts District estimated that more than \$850 million of private investment followed the infrastructure improvements.

Building upon the success of Brighton Blvd, RiNo Arts District developed four streetscape masterplans for nearby corridors. These projects guide development and property owners for cohesive street infrastructure and help streamline the design process for individual developers by having 30% design documents that can be leveraged in their submittals to the city and county. This approach alleviates piecemeal approaches to infrastructure investment and improves the overall character and quality of the area's public realm through a collaborative process.

Image Credit: RiNo Arts District



4.8 | STRATEGIC PILLAR 6: REGIONAL ECONOMY POSITIONING

Proactively leading Littleton's economic position in the Denver Metro region.

Littleton is in a prime position relative to its proximity to the Denver Metro. This allows Littleton to leverage the heft of Denver, but also offer a more intimate and unique community experience and value proposition. Littleton should ensure it has a seat at the table of regional discussions, and actively advocates for important local issues.

Littleton's prime-age workforce participation rate slightly exceeds both Arapahoe County and the Denver MSA across all age cohorts.



"Maintaining and expanding leadership role in the region will contribute to economic development and tax revenue to help build a strong community with lots of areas to explore, beautiful places to live, opportunities for families and students."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



FutureInsight

- The economic impact of cultural tourism in the Metro Denver area is \$654 million, with industry employment at 13,551 people (Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA), 2022). Littleton has the potential resources to nurture and grow this industry within the city limits.
- The Littleton's Economic Development Department is encouraging small scale manufacturing in the city to reinvigorate and repurpose spaces in its downtown area. This concept has been developed by Recast City, an organization that works with cities to reimagine business spaces and investment in infrastructure to build economic resiliency in communities.

1. ENCOURAGE REGIONAL DIALOGUE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP POSITIONING

Host quarterly brown bag lunches for administrators, planners, developers, public to talk about regional issues.

2. LEVERAGE LITTLETON'S REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY ASSETS

Promote the City of Littleton as a remote work location with high quality of life amenities. Prioritize technology. Focus on transit centered development; light rail stations; higher density hubs. Emphasize the city's connectivity with a focus on reducing carbon footprint.

3. INCREASE VISITATION AND EXTENDED STAY IN LITTLETON

Promote quality of life in Littleton. Emphasize amenity density, and how this creates a unique destination experience. Work with Project Downtown and Littleton Downtown Development Authority on initiatives.

4. EVOLVE THE CITY TO BE A PLACE WHERE COMPANIES AND IDEAS ARE PILOTED

Create an experimental environment for entrepreneurs. Promote this niche regionally and nationally.

NEAR-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Conduct a hotel feasibility assessment to explore the opportunity for hotel development near Downtown and Littleton Blvd.
- Leverage takeaways from Recast City initiative for continued business growth and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Host regional economic leaders and partners for annual roundtable conversations regarding trends and needs.
- Explore and advocate for an enhanced regional transit network with a new Front Range Passenger Rail Stop in Littleton.
- Expand regional tourism opportunities to capture more visitors to Littleton. Take leadership in the development of a regional comprehensive tourism strategy for the South Metro area.





CASE
STUDY
#6

4.8.2 | REGIONAL ECONOMY POSITIONING CASE STUDY

CHAMPIONING HOME-BASED BUSINESS REGULATION REFORM

Ann Arbor, Michigan

According to the US Small Business Administration, half of businesses in the US start as home-based businesses, and nearly 60% of solopreneurs work from home. The rise in e-commerce, streamlined pathways via the internet to start businesses without significant capital investment, the COVID-19 pandemic, and demand for flexible work environments continues to bolster entrepreneurship and home-based business operations. As a result, some cities in the US are reexamining their home-based business regulations, often reflecting antiquated zoning and use regulations.

The City of Ann Arbor is recognized nationally as a small city to undertake a comprehensive overhaul of its home-based business regulations to encourage more pathways for entrepreneurs and business growth in their community. Regulatory reform in 2021 reduced regulations such as enhancing the types of businesses allowed as home businesses, enhancing the number of clients permitted on-premise daily, and reconfiguring spatial regulations to be more easily understood. Elected officials in passing the regulations cited that increasing work-from-home options will also help the city achieve its sustainability goals, such as its A2Zero initiative of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

Image Credit: Zingerman's





5.0 | IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

The following matrix presents suggested near-term implementation action steps for each strategic pillar of the Littleton Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan. These strategic actions intended to help propel the City of Littleton to the identified preferred economic development future for the community. Each Action Step is identified by Pillar, Partners, Timing, and Resource Intensity.

5.1 | IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Action Step	Pillar	Partners	Timing	Resource Intensity
Complete an Incentive Gap Assessment and Audit to update the city's incentive packages aligning with targeted goals and opportunities, particularly with Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) opportunities.	P1 Business Vitality and Adaptability	Metro Denver EDC, OEDIT, Development Services Team	2024	Moderate
Develop marketing and pitch collateral for targeted industries and sectors including tourism and arts and cultural users. Create one-page pitch sheet collateral targeted to sectors on competitive advantages and available resources/incentives.	P1 Business Vitality and Adaptability	Communications Dept	2025+	Low
Continue conducting Littleton's Biannual Business Survey.	P1 Business Vitality and Adaptability; P2 Workforce and Talent Attraction	Polco, Communications Dept, Local Business owners	2024, 26, 28+	Low
Continue strengthening partnerships with talent and workforce development entities and institutions.	P2 Workforce and Talent Attraction	Arapahoe Community College, EPIC Campus and Littleton Public Schools, A/D Works! Workforce Center	Ongoing	Low
Establish a new partnership with the Latino Leadership Institute.	P2 Workforce and Talent Attraction	Latino Leadership Institute	2024	Low
Increase economic development participation and role in Littleton's 2025 Comprehensive Plan.	P3 Fostering a Livable Economy	City Manager's Office and Community Development Department	2024-25	Moderate

5.1 | IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONT.)

Action Step	Pillar	Partners	Timing	Resource Intensity
Conduct an Economic Impact Assessment of arts and culture in Littleton.	P4 Enhancing Historic Character and Cultural Fabric	Arts & Culture Commission, Museum, Town Hall	2024	Moderate
Explore adopting an Overlay District for Littleton Blvd. to better preserve, protect, and enhance the character of the corridor.	P4 Enhancing Historic Character and Cultural Fabric	Historic Preservation, Community Development Department	2024-25	Moderate
Invest in streetscape and infrastructure improvements including climate resilience and adaptation on key corridor and investment areas such as Littleton Blvd.	P5 Supporting Industry and Investment in City Infrastructure	Community Development, Public Works & Engineering Departments	2025+	Moderate
Conduct a hotel feasibility assessment to explore the opportunity for hotel development near Downtown and Littleton Blvd.	P6 Regional Economy Positioning	DDA, Arts & Culture Commission, Museum & Town Hall	2026	Moderate
Leverage takeaways from Recast City initiative for continued business growth and entrepreneurship opportunities.	P6 Regional Economy Positioning	DDA, Littleton Business Chamber, Small Scale Manufacturers and Community Development Department	2024+	Low
Host regional economic leaders and partners for annual roundtable conversations regarding trends and needs.	P6 Regional Economy Positioning	Nearby Economic Development Departments; Regional Entities in South Denver, Metro Denver EDC, South Metro Denver Chamber, Littleton Business Chamber	2024+	Low
Explore and advocate for an enhanced regional transit network with a new Front Range Passenger Rail Stop in Littleton.	P6 Regional Economy Positioning	CDOT, FRPR, Community Development (Planning), Public Works (Transportation Planner)	2024+	Moderate
Expand regional tourism opportunities to capture more visitors to Littleton. Take leadership in the development of a regional comprehensive tourism strategy for the South Metro area.	P6 Regional Economy Positioning	South Metro Chamber, OEDIT, Communications Dept	2024+	Moderate

5.2 | FUNDING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

By having an established Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the City of Littleton is in an improved position to apply for and access both federal and statewide grants and funding programs to help implement the strategies set forth in the plan.

5.2.1 | RELEVANT FEDERAL AND NATIONAL GRANT PROGRAMS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)

Through its Planning and Local Technical Assistance programs, EDA assists cities and other eligible recipients in developing economic development plans and studies designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency through the creation and retention of high-quality jobs. For more information:

<https://www.eda.gov/funding/funding-opportunities/fiscal-year-2021-2023-eda-planning-and-local-technical-assistance>

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to cities and counties for community enhancement through housing and livable environments and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low and moderate-income persons. For more information:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg

REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY (RAISE)

RAISE grants (formerly known as TIGER or BUILD) are competitive grants that allocate funds for surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, partnership and collaboration, and innovation. For more information:

<https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/infrastructure/tiger/>

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT GRANTS (WIOA)

WIOA is a federally-funded, state-run program that helps people prepare for employment, find and keep a job, and increase earnings. While eligible applicants are individuals, the City of Littleton could connect residents to these services through Colorado's Workforce Centers and the Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development. For more information:

<https://cdle.colorado.gov/wioa-js>

AARP COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANTS

A part of the national Livable Communities Initiative, AARP Community Challenge Grants are intended to help communities make immediate improvements and jump-start long-term progress in support of residents of all ages. Areas of focus include Public Places, Housing, Transportation, and more. For more information:

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/aarp-community-challenge/>

NEIGHBORWORKS AMERICA

NeighborWorks America is a national nonprofit organization dedicated towards community development by helping people access affordable homes, improve their lives, and strengthen their communities. NeighborWorks America offers access to grants and resources to communities across the country. For more information:

<https://www.neighborworks.org/>

MAIN STREET AMERICA GRANTS

Main Street America, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with corporate partner support, helps connect communities with grants and funding resources to improve the vitality and vibrancy of downtown districts. Various grants are offered throughout the year, and some grants are available for communities like Littleton that are not designated Main Streets. For more information:

<https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/fundingopportunities>



5.2.2 | RELEVANT STATE OF COLORADO GRANT PROGRAMS

COLORADO CREATIVE DISTRICTS

The Colorado Creative District program designates communities that support the state's economy through art, culture, and creativity. The program is designed to connect jobs, income, and investment with creative places across the state. After becoming a certified district, creative districts are eligible for a technical and professional assistance grant and partnership support with the Colorado Tourism Office. For more information:

<https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-creative-districts>

GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) offers several competitive grants for outdoor recreation, land conservation, outdoor community spaces, and stewardship projects in Colorado. Municipalities are eligible to apply for the following: Land Acquisition, Community Impact Grants, Planning and Capacity, RESTORE Colorado, Stewardship Impact, and Conservation Service Corps. For more information:

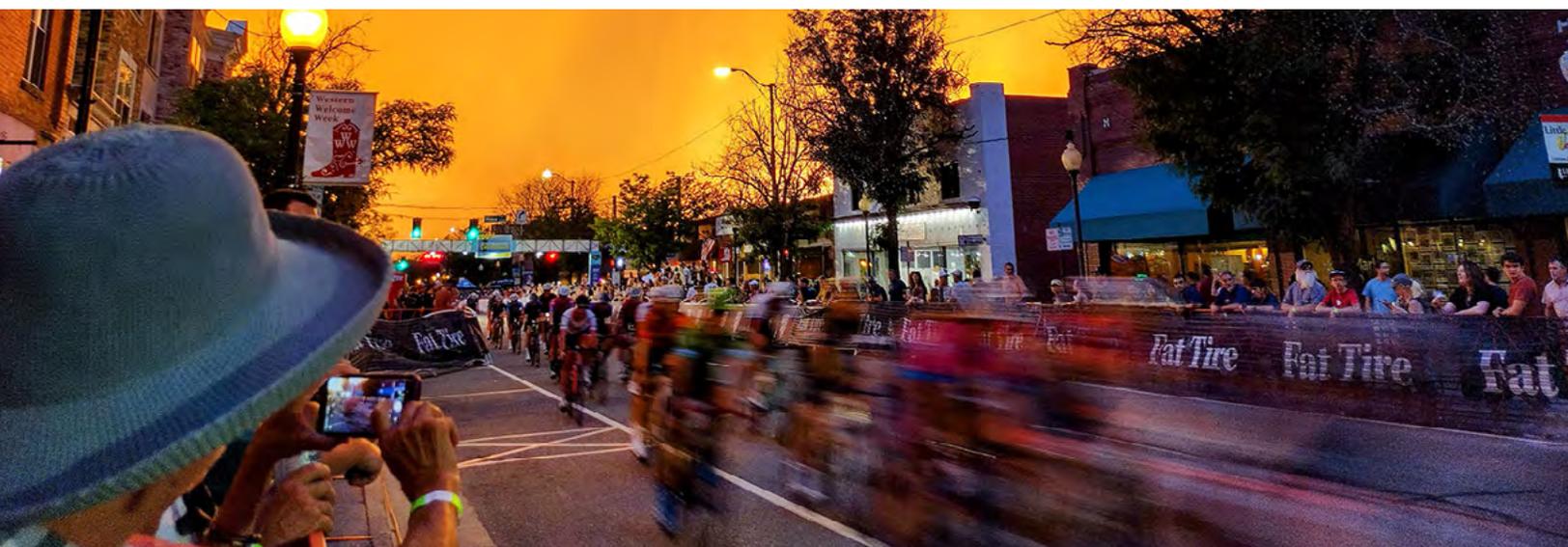
<https://goco.org/programs-projects/our-grant-programs>

ADVANCED INDUSTRY BUSINESS SPECIFIC GRANT PROGRAMS

The Advanced Industries Accelerator (AIA) Program was created through the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade to promote growth and sustainability in Colorado's advanced industries. The program focuses on driving innovation, accelerating commercialization, encouraging public-private partnerships, increasing access to early-stage capital, and creating a strong ecosystem that increases the state's global competitiveness. The City of Littleton can help connect specific businesses eligible for grant opportunities. For more information:

<https://choosecolorado.com/doing-business/advanced-industries/>

<https://oedit.colorado.gov/advanced-industries-accelerator-programs>





6.0 | NEXT STEPS

Participants in the CEDS planning process have shown a healthy appetite for change going forward. This is the first step toward the preferred future 'A Creative, Cutting-Edge Small Town' that will guide economic development in Littleton over the next five years.

Littleton stakeholders have undertaken an extensive visioning and economic development planning process that has resulted in the following outcomes:

- Documented a detailed understanding of stakeholder views on economic development as they relate to planning for the future.
- Allowed detailed examination of plausible future scenarios, explored expected, least desired, and preferred futures, and built an understanding of the implications of these future options.
- Identified a vision for the future of economic development, acknowledging that there are a variety of viewpoints, with the majority in a central range.
- Identified key strategic pillars of economic development, and action areas to implement the CEDS plan.

This work has been built on extensive public participation, and open and transparent dialogue with community and key stakeholders. The vision for economic development looks out to 2040.

The next phase of work needs to begin. The following immediate steps are recommended:

- Consideration and approval of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by the City Council.
- Incorporation of key elements of the CEDS plan in the City's upcoming Comprehensive Planning Process.

"Overall Littleton is one of the best places to live when looking at the 'Denver' Metro area. As all cities do, there are problems but in the grand scheme of it all, Littleton is great."

- Littleton Student Survey Respondent





7.0 | FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Littleton Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project, please contact:



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8.0 | CONSULTING TEAM - ABOUT FUTURE IQ AND JS&A

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com.

For this project, Future iQ has partnered with the economic development and planning firm of Jon Stover & Associates (JS&A). To learn more about JS&A, visit stoverandassociates.com.



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CITY OF LITTLETON, COLORADO

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDDS)

COLORADO, USA

FEBRUARY 2024