



Advisory Services  
Program

# Downtown Littleton Northern Gateway

Downtown  
Littleton

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL**

LITTLETON, COLORADO

MAY 21–22, 2025

## THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

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Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide

### MISSION COMMITMENTS

**CONNECT** active, passionate, diverse members through the foremost global network of interdisciplinary professionals

**INSPIRE** best practices for equitable and sustainable land use through content, education, convening, mentoring, and knowledge sharing

**LEAD** in solving community and real estate challenges through applied collective global experience and philanthropic engagement







**The Technical Advisory Panel Program has provided strategic, impactful recommendations to communities for over 70 years.**

We engage experts in a diverse array of real estate development and land use fields, including transportation and transit-oriented development; neighborhood and regional planning; infrastructure; retail and commercial corridors; academic and medical institutions; disaster response and sustainability; and housing.

# THANK YOU TO OUR CLIENT





# THANK YOU, STAKEHOLDERS

Sherri Almond  
Debbie Brinkman  
Pat Cronenberger  
Rick Cronenberger  
Tom Econopouly  
Kim Field  
MacKenzie Fleck  
Khaki Fleck  
Spencer Hanks  
Robert Hoene  
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JD McCrumb  
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Kal Murib  
Kalena Murib Steel  
Tiffany Sigler  
Brad Peterson  
Kate Peterson  
Erin Roethlisberger  
Patrick Santana  
Bob Schwinn  
Jason Smith  
Rob Stieg  
Denise Weed  
Amanda Williams





# ULI Panelists & Staff

Selected for their subject matter expertise to provide **objective, volunteer** recommendations

**James Atchison**  
Landscape Architect  
RDG

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Managing Director  
Quarterra

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ULI Colorado

# TAP Questions & Scope



# TAP Study Area

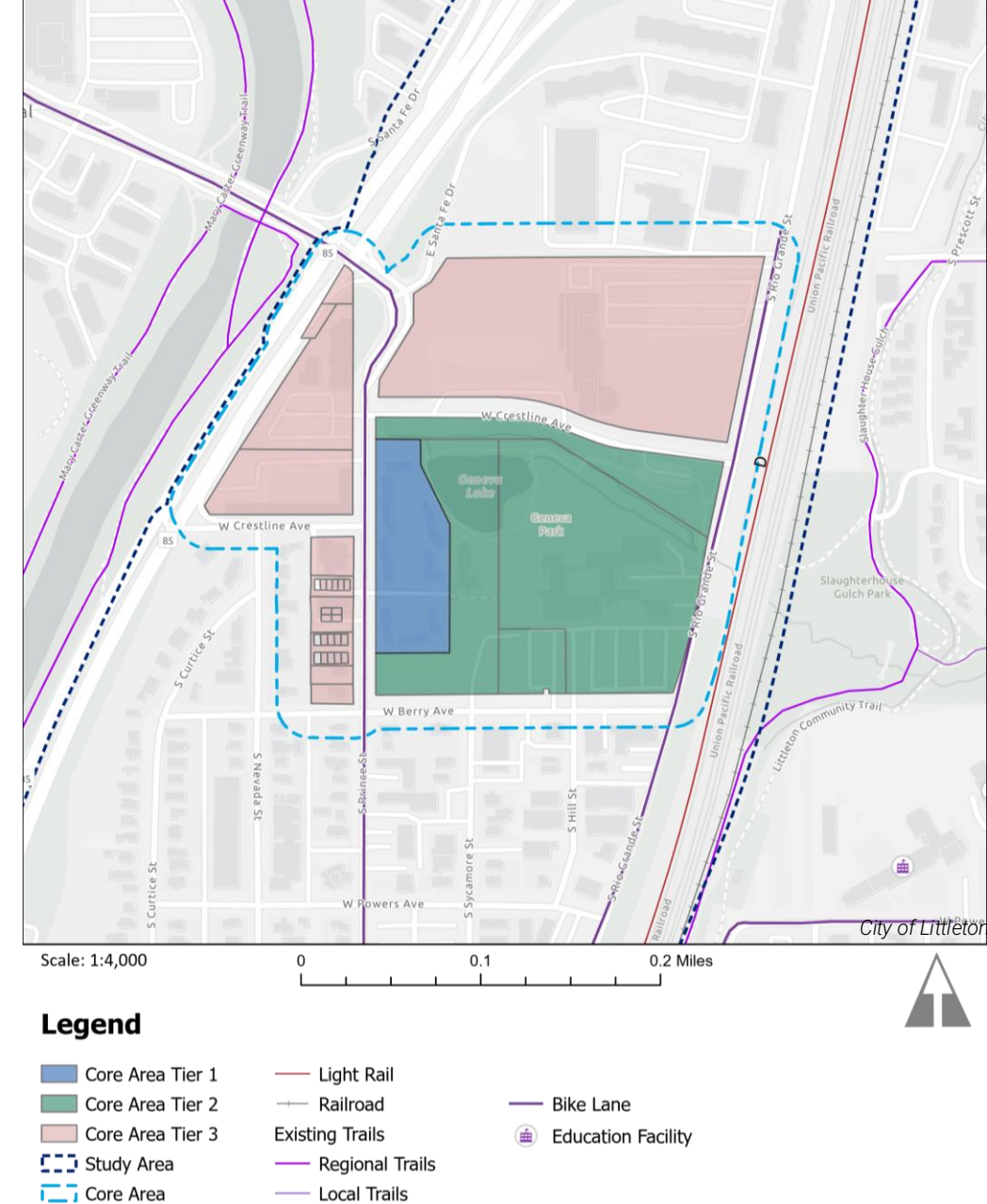


# TAP Study Area

The 28-acre Northern Gateway study area includes five city-owned parcels in downtown Littleton with Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zoning. The site includes the 28 Geneva Village apartments (all vacant), the historic Geneva Lodge, Geneva Park, and Littleton Center.

The overall study area is divided into a tiered core area:

1. Core Area 1 includes the 2.8 acres Geneva Village sits on
2. Core Area 2 includes the other city-owned parcels
3. Core Area 3 incorporates an Arapahoe County building, retail area, and some residential and commercial buildings facing Prince Street



# Questions for the Panel

## Northern Gateway, Littleton

1. What type of development will best preserve Littleton's historic legacy and elevate the arts and culture scene for a vibrant, inclusive city?
2. What are the best practices that ensure development will nurture a resilient and dynamic urban environment while preserving natural resources?
3. How can the city think through the best way to foster an enduring and thriving economy to bolster prosperity, innovation, and sustainable growth?
4. How will redevelopment help prioritize high-quality public safety services, enhanced engagement, and strategic reinvestment in public infrastructure and transportation for a safe community?
5. What strategies should the city consider to ensure it is advancing a governance model that is adaptive, fiscally responsible, transparent, and responsive for an informed and empowered community?



# What We Learned







## STRENGTHS

- Adaptive reuse of some structures
- Live/work developments
- Mix of housing types
- Good accessibility from Santa Fe
- Publicly owned land
- Healthy downtown
- Willingness from Arapahoe County
- Opportune timing
- Great views to the west
- Site is geometrically sound for development
- Large area
- Lake
- Mature trees
- Great location
- Great road network surrounding the area
- Utility access

## WEAKNESSES

- Vehicle circulation
- Light rail frontage
- Access and visibility
- FEMA floodplain
- Redevelopment may be very time intensive
- May need to find a new home for city offices
- Lack of financial resources
- Drainage – site suitability
- Potential community resistance to some housing options



## OPPORTUNITIES

- Geneva Lake and park space
- Redevelopment potential for the city building
- Sternberg Design Principles
- Creativity in funding mechanisms
- Large infill site is very rare along the Front Range
- Augment the core appeal of Littleton
- Repurposing road corridors for multimodal access
- Possible shared facility with Arapahoe County
- Community buy-in through strategic preservation
- Arts and culture
- Public/private partnership potential
- Land sale
- Investment potential
- New housing
- Additional retail revenue
- City ownership of land and desire for a vision

## THREATS

- Community pushback to development
- Lack of experience in implementing vision
- Limited city financing experience
- Security for the vacant site
- A slow response will increase blight and make redevelopment harder
- Loss of views from higher density
- Competing visions for redevelopment



# Vision/Framework



Colorado



# Littleton's Voice

Stakeholder Interviews





# Northern Gateway Vision

A Place of Discovery, Culture, and Opportunity

- Grounded in the history and original intent of the Geneva Village site as a place of **community, sharing, and respite in nature.**
- A destination that **anchors and activates** the north end of Downtown.



# Northern Gateway Vision

A Place of Discovery, Culture, and Opportunity

- Provides a variety of experiences and distinct places where Littleton residents are **entertained and engaged**.
- **Variety of housing options** at different scales and tenures (townhomes, live/works, apartments)





# Framework

- Preservation & Reuse
- Working Neighborhood
- Leverage city-owned property
- Infill at gateway
- Improve Prince Street
- Slaughterhouse Gulch





# Implementing the Vision

## One Step at a Time

- Start with **Geneva Village** – imminent need to address a soon-to-be vacant property
- Evaluate options for leveraging City-owned property – start to **change the physical landscape** and identify opportunities for strengthening the gateway



# Land Use







Courtesy of City of Littleton

# Land Use as Economic Driver

- Importance of Main Street to the City of Littleton as an economic driver
- Geneva Village – walk to Main Street
- Land use must be complementary to Main Street
- Essential for right mix of housing and retail
- Main street needs rooftops to support retail





# Opportunity/Working Neighborhood

*Create sense of ownership and organic interaction between housing and work*

- Variety/diversity of housing options (something for everyone)
- Townhomes/Condos, apartments, senior housing
- For sale/for rent – continue current balance according to the Colorado Regional Housing Study
- Mixed-Income options (market rate and workforce housing)
- Workforce Housing (80% AMI and up)
- Stakeholder sensitivity to placing more affordable housing in this area
- Littleton Housing Study: Evaluate the potential for the development of affordable and mixed income housing on city owned land
- Combination of state funds and city incentives to support development of workforce housing



- Working neighborhood based on arts, culture, and food
- Reflect previous use
- Small office spaces
- Boutique hotel in historic lodge
- Outdoor dining – rooftop and patios
- Live/work opportunities
- Experience-oriented retail
  - Incubator – arts, food, maker space
  - Commissary kitchen hub/food hall
  - Important connection to past, present, and future community needs



# Arts & Culture as Economic Driver

*Importance of Arts & Culture as an Economic Driver for the City*

- Creation of a public plaza
  - Creates opportunities for community uses/gathering space
  - Activates the area
- Economic development driver
  - Creates a reason to visit
  - Stakeholders say they need a reason to come downtown and to stay downtown
- Combining municipal land use with arts & culture hub
  - Build pride in the community
  - Ideal place to co-locate these public uses



Photo Courtesy of CNU

## City of Littleton Arts & Culture Strategic Plan

"Shared vision is of the City serving as a catalyst for intentional development that supports local creatives while driving tourism."







# Placemaking/Destination



# Placemaking Approach

Strategies below were developed from listening to stakeholders and our understanding of the problem statement.

- Celebrate the cultural and historical significance of the site through developing community focused open space, housing of various typologies, and preservation of historic buildings.
- Provide opportunities for Arts and Culture to be created, acknowledged, and enjoyed.
- Use smaller scale buildings to help create the edge of the public space.
- Use landscape and urban design to enhance the character of Downtown Littleton and provide opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy social interactions, outdoor dining, and walkability.
- Establish a destination and complementary anchor of the Northern Gateway of Downtown Littleton.
- Use different materials throughout the public space to support the special character of designated public, community open space.
- Provide generous amounts of landscape and tree canopy throughout the site to help emphasize the established character of Littleton.
- Utilize lighting design to emphasize special areas, provide wayfinding, and create a sense of safety throughout the site.



# History, Arts, and Culture

*Celebrate the cultural and historical significance of the site through developing community focused open space, housing of various typologies, and preservation of historic buildings.*

- Preserve the “Lodge” Building and design a community open space around its location. Use the building as an anchor to build around and create public space. Remove the residence buildings of Geneva Village.
- Use the Eugene Sternberg Design Principles of designed community open space, smaller scale architecture but provide large amounts of natural light, housing for the working class, and creating places for the people.
- Weave theme of food throughout the site (e.g. community garden, food commissary, and farmers market).





# History, Arts, and Culture

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# History, Arts, and Culture

*Use the Eugene Sternberg Design Principles of designed community open space, smaller scale architecture but provide large amounts of natural light, housing for the working class, and creating places for the people.*





# History, Arts, and Culture

*Food is a way to bring people and the community together. Provide opportunities to help generate vertical agriculture, community gardens, and farmer's markets.*





# History, Arts, and Culture

*Provide opportunities for Arts and Culture to be created, acknowledged, and enjoyed.*

- Locate local, public art in places of high visibility
- Incorporate outdoor performance areas
- Provide spaces for artists to craft, design, and showcase their art





# History, Arts, and Culture

*Locate local, public art in places of high visibility*





# History, Arts, and Culture

*Provide spaces for artists to craft, design, and showcase their art*





# Urban Downtown Mixed-Use Scale

*Use smaller scale buildings to help create the edge of the public space*

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# Urban Downtown Mixed-Use Scale

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# Urban Downtown Mixed-Use Scale

*Utilize lighting design to emphasize special areas, provide wayfinding, and create a sense of safety throughout the site*





# Geneva Village Focus

## Core Area 1

- Preservation of the lodge
- New public plaza
- Working neighborhood based on arts, culture & food
- Housing with ownership, mix of incomes (80% AMI and up)

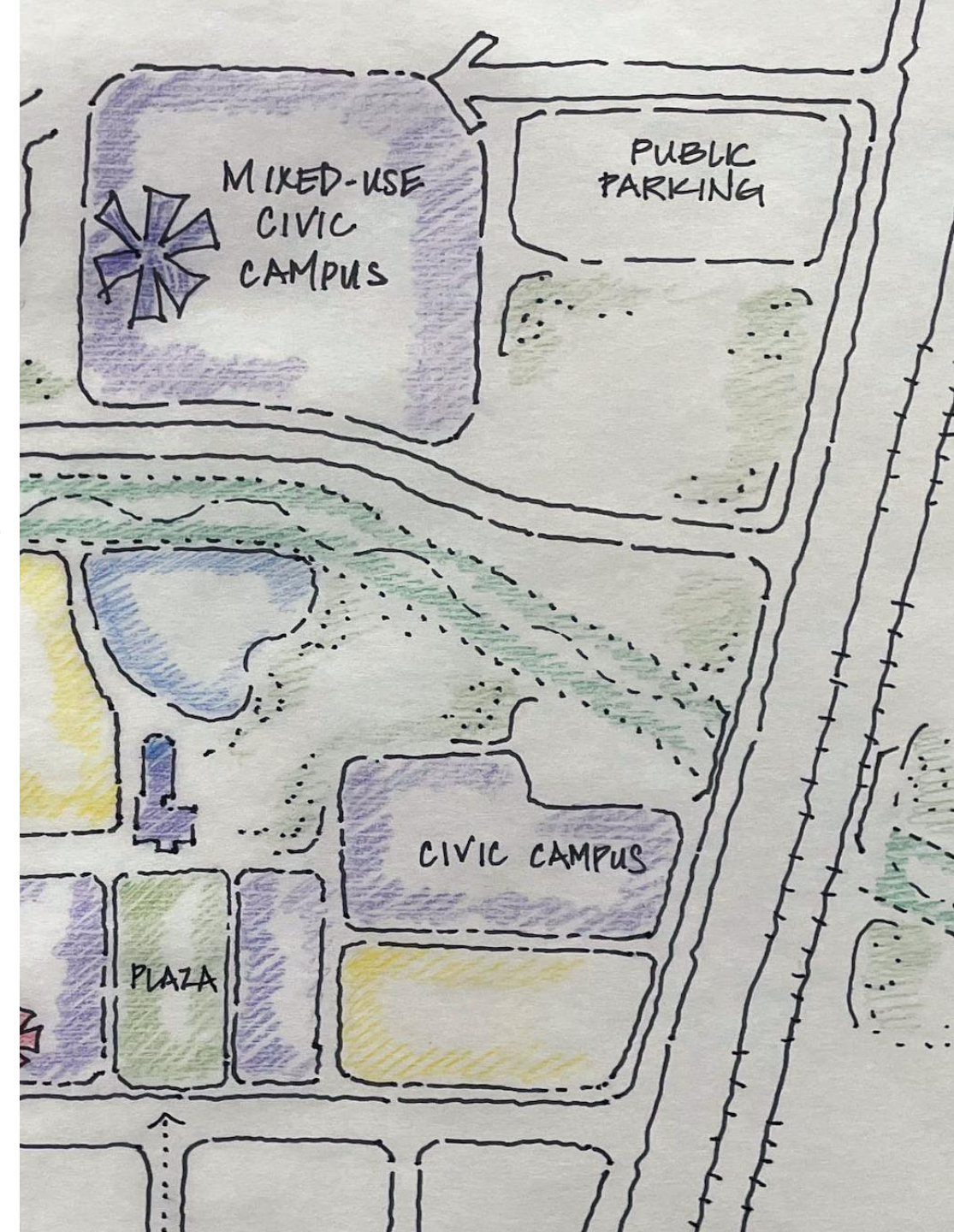




# City Center Focus

## Core Area 2

- Develop all or a portion of the site for residential and mixed uses
- Maintain the existing character of the lake and surrounding park
- Enhance the use of the park with nature play area, outdoor play kitchen, added seating and gathering spaces





# Prince Street Gateway Focus

## Core Area 3

- Use infill to reinforce the gateway at Prince Street
- Utilize a public private partnership to build a new mixed-use civic campus that could include housing
- Reimagine the Riverbend/Essex corner with a re-established Slaughterhouse Gulch as the central core between mixed-use development





# Finance

No  
Trespassing  
Violators will  
be Prosecuted



Colorado

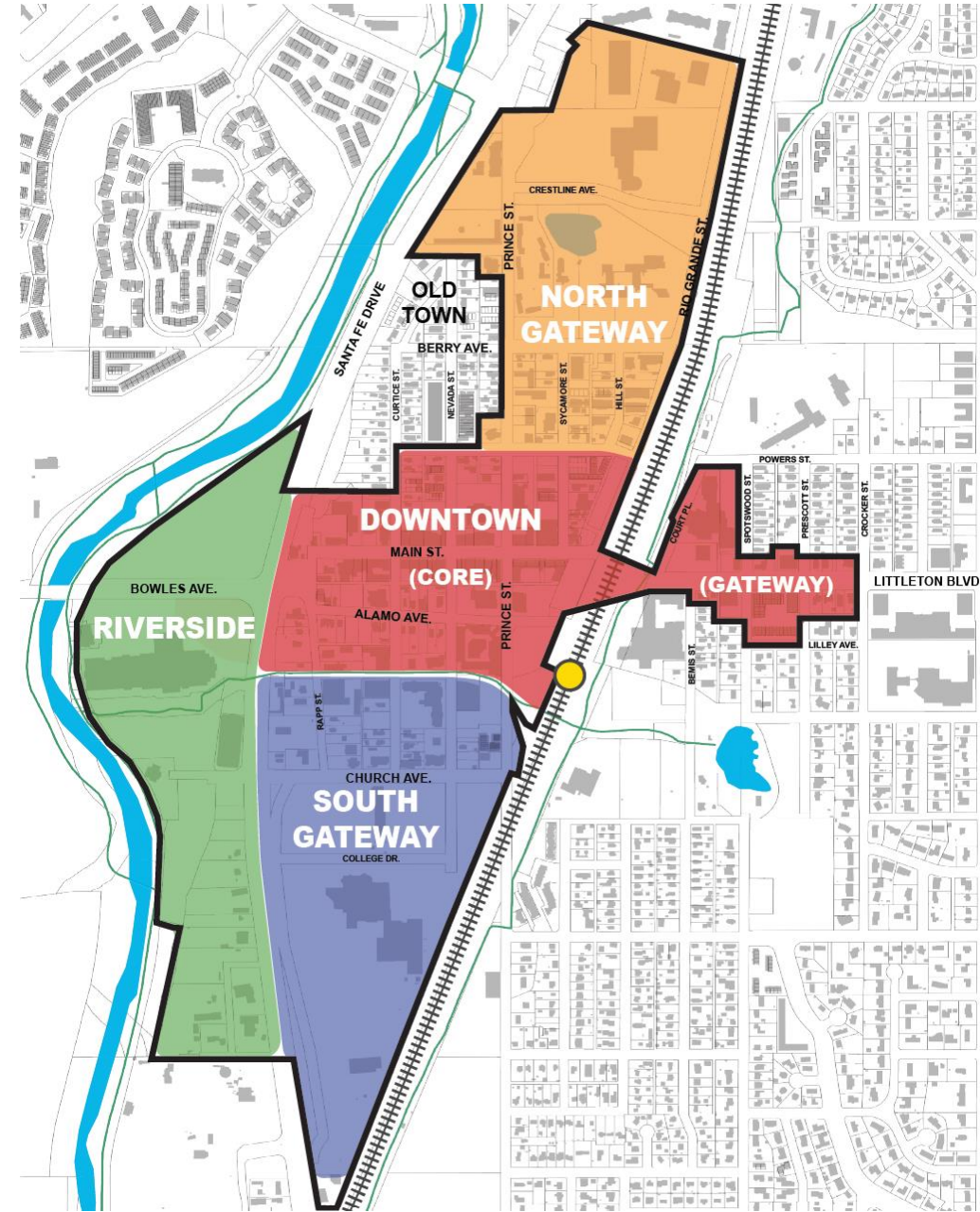


# Littleton Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a tool that can support the cost of infrastructure, public improvements, civic spaces, and redevelopment

- Property must be sold or transferred to a private entity to generate TIF
- Property TIF will be generated from redevelopment
- Sales TIF will be generated from new retail and hotel development
- The level of TIF funding should be calibrated to the cost of improvements and implementation of the City's vision and goals for the site

*Example: Colorado Springs DDA*







# Establish a Public Private Partnership (P3)

Minimize	Leverage	Create
Minimize the risk for the City	Leverage private sector expertise	Create a development agreement that clearly defines the requirements of the developer <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific land uses</li><li>• Civic and non-profit spaces</li><li>• Public improvements</li><li>• Affordability requirements</li></ul>



# Options to consider to develop a new municipal building

For Core Areas 2 and 3



**Option 1:** Sell the current City Hall to a developer and use the revenue to hire a fee developer to build a new shared municipal facility on Arapahoe County property



**Option 2:** Sell property to a developer, have them construct a new shared municipal facility on Arapahoe County property and lease back with the right of first refusal to the City



**Option 3:** Establish a P3 and have a developer create a new, smaller City Hall on-site



# Incentives and Subsidies

*Required to achieve specific City goals of civic, non-profit, and workforce housing uses*

- Land is most significant leverage the City has to encourage the desired vision
  - The value of the land is used as a subsidy for gap financing
- TIF can be used as gap financing to support the redevelopment and fund eligible or public improvements
- Economic Partnership Incentive Policy
  - Retail Development Incentive Program
  - Revitalization Incentive Grant Program
  - May need to give special considerations and offer expanded incentive options
- Low interest loans to attract specific uses and tenants



# Bonding Capacity

- Consider issuing bonds (debt) to have upfront funding for infrastructure, public improvements, and ROW improvements
  - Can support this site as well as other projects in Downtown
- DDA can issue bonds based on projected TIF revenue the site will generate
  - Recommend negotiating with the Littleton School District #6 to include their mill levy in the TIF
    - In 2024, Littleton School District #6 had a mill levy of 64.793, which is 62% of the total property tax mills
    - Including the School District significantly increases the amount of property TIF generation and the bonding capacity
- Line of Credit Option
  - Dedicate a portion of 3 to 5 years of increment to create a mini-bond/line of credit to allow for access to funds sooner and flexibility
    - Example: OKC URA



# Additional Funding Tools To Consider

## Metropolitan District

An additional mill levy for commercial and residential development to fund on-site infrastructure and ROW improvements

## General Improvement District (GID)

Public infrastructure district that applies an additional property tax or assessment to a specific improvement area to pay for new public infrastructure improvements

## Certificate of Participation (COP)

Alternative to issuing bonds

Lease-purchase agreement to finance the construction of infrastructure, utilities, and new government facilities



# Implementation



# Implementation

## Stewardship



The city owns this land, so is responsible for its outcome, whatever that may be.



Stakeholders believe the site should be redeveloped, primarily into housing. This includes an array of options such as market rate rentals and/or owned homes, along with an attainable/workforce component.



Other common usage ideas include active public spaces such as an amphitheater/outdoor concerts and common areas. Retail uses were also regularly mentioned, but not as much as housing. No one we spoke with wanted retail that would compete with Downtown Littleton.



# Implementation

## Project Champions



Internal city project management structure: need a staff project champion and manager, needs to be maintained over time, leadership level (city management).



City leadership—maintain the effort over time, understanding that project will go through multiple Council compositions.



## City's Role

*As owner of this parcel, the city's options to move this project forward:*

- **Partner with a developer** that has the experience and financial capacity to complete the project. The city still plays a role in the process, including participation in community outreach, design, entitlements, and assisting in financing the project through public vehicles such as bond issuance. Through this relationship, the city would have some ownership in the project with respect to the public spaces, and would also be expected to participate financially, particularly in public improvements.
- **Sell the land to a developer:** This is the simplest and most cost-effective option. The city would rely on a market-based process to sell and develop the parcel. Interested parties would submit proposals based on an RFP process and a purchase contract would be engaged. Once a purchaser is engaged, the city's involvement revolves around the ULUC process, which is now a core function of the city.

## RFP/RFQ Process

In either scenario, a RFP/RFQ process is an effective way to get started:

- Clearly articulates the city's vision and goals for the site
- Identify/select developer
- Establish terms that address city financial participation, timing, specific performance, right to repurchase, public improvements and management, close at building permit approval
- Draft terms and PSA approval to Council in Executive Session
- Work through Development Agreement with developer, approval by Council



# Urgency of Timeline

Items to consider with respect to timeline:



The property will require ongoing maintenance to slow its deterioration.



Costs of construction will continue to rise.

## Urgency of Timeline

If the city decides to redevelop the site, it should move forward in an expeditious manner. Here is a proposed timeline:

Phase	Time Allowance
RFP/RFQ and marketing process to select developer	1 year
Negotiate purchase agreement and city agreements	6 months
Entitlements process	2 to 3 years
Begin construction	3 years from start of process
End of construction	6 years from the start of process



# Public Engagement

The city owns this parcel, so public engagement throughout the redevelopment process is extremely important. Fortunately, the ULUC implements a thorough process of community involvement, so the city will accomplish its goals of community involvement by following its own codes.

However, it would be beneficial to all stakeholders for the city to provide continual updates throughout the process.



# Q&A

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