

Following identification of the catalyst investment areas and analyses came the challenge of outlining an implementable strategy for promoting investment in the target areas, as well as throughout the corridor and study area. Webster’s Dictionary defines implementation as “a means for accomplishing an end” or “an action to put into effect.”

As explained in earlier work products and during the plan process, no one project will revitalize the Midtown study area. Rather, revitalization will be dependent on a series of actions designed to capitalize on market opportunities and overcome barriers - effectively readying the environment for investment. Key to the successful implementation of the redevelopment plan will be the continued identification and implementation of actions tailored to the unique issues of the study area and respective districts and catalyst sites within it.¹ This strategy builds community goodwill; enhances quality-of-life; provides opportunities for public participation; allows special-interest groups to have a role in the revitalization effort; sends a message that the area is successful and making positive strides; and, creates an increasingly attractive environment for investment and development. Investors, developers and lenders seek out environments with market opportunity and prospects for success, devoid of obstacles and sound in sustainability.

Strategy Elements

The first work product attached here is an Action Plan Matrix. The range of actions presented and identified to move the plan forward were selected based on a foundation of select strategy elements. These strategy elements, while general in nature, were considered responsive to the conditions analyses, market opportunities, catalyst concepts and (re)development programs, and stakeholder input. The strategy elements are:

¹ The definition of “actions” is broad as it applies here - it includes public, private or public-private physical projects, social programs, and educational programs: public relations and goodwill-building programs; and policy reform - identified to promote opportunities and overcome barriers.

Standard Strategy Elements

- City maintains a pro-business attitude towards redevelopment in the study area
- Underdeveloped properties are put into productive use over a phased period of time
- Commitment is made to remedy existing problems and prevent future ones
- Higher-density infill projects in the study area will be encouraged in key catalyst locations
- Public commitment will be long-term
- Development and framework concepts are intended to stabilize first, then enhance (“bones, then beautification”)
- Physical environment will balance the role of vehicles, pedestrians, bikes, buses and other modes of transportation
- Advocacy entities will be identified and empowered to implement projects to further the vision
- Catalyst projects which receive incentives will be expected to provide a leveraged financial return
- Creative reinvestment strategies and “tools” will be diverse and made available
- Awareness of the study area’s role in the region will be heightened and stakeholder education will continue
- Study findings and strategies will be enforced and supported by Council and public policy
- Areas of reinvestment in the community, including the study area, will have a distinct set of standards, regulations and incentives

Actions for Change

Just as the challenges or “barriers” to investment are multifaceted, so too must the solutions be. The national trend of stagnating and declining commercial corridors is evident not just in Longmont and Colorado, but throughout the U.S. Facing increasing competition from development on the “fringe”, as well as in revitalizing downtowns, Midtown, as an “in between” location, could experience a heightened decline in commercial property values and market share unless specific actions are taken. Together, the public and private sectors face the challenge of

revitalizing the Midtown study area. Before moving forward, the City must accept that its competitive position will continue to be eroded unless there is a significant repositioning of its role in the market; restructuring of its physical layout; recognition of the economic challenges inherent in infill and corridor redevelopment; and, aggressive recruitment of niche opportunities. The City and its leadership must further accept that infill, and particularly corridor areas, are at a distinct economic, social and market disadvantage compared to vacant “Greenfield” sites. To that end, it is their responsibility to “level the investment and regulatory playing field.” Private investment alone will not fill the financial “gap,” rather, it will move elsewhere. There are several opportunities along the corridor where these types of “leveraged” investments can be made. The purpose of these “catalyst investment areas” in advancing the plan is described below.

Potential Catalyst Sites

As explained early in this process, the strategy for revitalization of the Main Street Corridor is based on redevelopment and targeted investment in key nodes, or “catalyst areas”, which hold investment potential despite, select economic and physical redevelopment challenges. These nodes are defined as: urbanized places with concentration of jobs, housing units, commercial uses, public spaces, public transportation, pedestrian activity and/or a sense of place. These nodes are frequently located at significant intersections. Predominant land uses within nodes can be residential, commercial and public. Within this relatively compact geographic area, different land uses are found side by side or within the same structures. The mix of uses in the node is located in developments with minimal setbacks, reduced parking requirements, and taller structures, all in an effort to achieve higher densities necessary to support pedestrian activity, private investment and a sense of place. A node serves as a catalyst for public and private investment and economic activity, effectively building off the strengths of the surrounding area and connecting to adjacent neighborhoods.

Catalysts were generally identified and evaluated based on screening criteria, with guidance from stakeholders and community leaders. While an expressed interest in an immediate development or redevelopment project influenced the selection of certain areas, and/or underutilized or vacancy of the site or improvement, most were selected because they presented a compelling location or market advantage for future investment.

Potential nodes of investment within the Midtown study area were selected using a set of criteria. However, experience has proven that implementable plans must maintain a high degree of flexibility. As markets change, the physical realm must change with them. Therefore, while these nodes have been identified today as offering potential for leveraged investment, the concepts will provide the City with the tools to evaluate future projects which might occur outside the identified areas, and which are still consistent with the vision for the study area.

Conclusion

The *Longmont Midtown Redevelopment Plan 2005* is the roadmap to move the City's and stakeholders' vision towards reality and to ensure that redevelopment of the area be accomplished in a way that balances private investment objectives with community sustainability. The attached series of actions / strategies will capitalize on market opportunities and overcome barriers to investment. Ultimately, the City of Longmont, its Council, Commission, staff and citizenry will have to select a final course of action for change. The information presented here is designed to provide a range of actions for consideration and sound decision-making.