

# Lafayette, CO

December 9-10, 2009

**C**OMMUNITY  
**R**EVITALIZATION  
**P**ARTNERSHIP

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*Strengthening Colorado Communities*



BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO DOWNTOWNS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND TOWN CENTERS IN COLORADO THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION

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**Department of Local Affairs**



*Strengthening Colorado Communities*

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the downtown assessment for the Colorado community of Lafayette. Colorado communities have the opportunity to apply for assistance through the Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) program, a collaborative program between the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Downtown Colorado, Inc., the state's non-profit Main Street affiliate, and the local community.

Downtown revitalization is not an instant fix, and it will not happen over night. It will require community and business engagement, strong city leadership, and continual review of plans to ensure that ideas and steps are still relevant to your community. Success is measured in small increments, but with concerted effort and effective use of resources, Old Town Lafayette has a lot of potential. This report is be used as a tool to help guide downtown Lafayette in overcoming the challenges it presently faces. The report includes recommendations and guidelines, but is not intended to provide all of the definitive answers to address all of the issues.

Downtown Colorado, Inc. assembled a team of volunteer professionals including designers, planners, lawyers and finance experts to work in Lafayette for two days and then help write this report after the visit. The assessment team appreciated the invitation to learn about and assist your community and worked diligently to provide relevant and realistic input towards the betterment of Old Town Lafayette.

## FORMAT & USE OF THIS REPORT

This report is loosely organized along the Four Points of the Main Street Approach. Each section of the report was written by a member of the CRP team with an expertise in the one of the Four Points. The team members' reports were assembled together and then edited to integrate all reports into one cohesive document. Thus, each section may reflect the writing style of its writer.

## PARTNERS & RESOURCES

With the CRP visit, the community is setting the stage for an ongoing and strengthened relationship with DCI, DOLA, other governmental agencies and the local business sector. During the two day visit, the community interactions with the CRP team members resulted in a strong, consensus building foundation. This foundation will be increasingly important for the many efforts that may result from the visit. Stakeholders involved in the Old Town Lafayette CRP process included:

- Lafayette City Council and Mayor
- Lafayette Planning Commission
- Lafayette Historical Society
- Lafayette Historic Preservation Board

- Lafayette Urban Renewal Authority
- Lafayette Cultural Arts Commission
- Latino Advisory Board
- Public Arts Committee
- Downtown Action Committee
- Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Senior Advisory Board
- Energy Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Open Space Advisory Committee
- Waste Reduction Advisory Committee
- Youth Advisory Committee
- Lafayette Old Town Association (LOTA)
- Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
- Project YES
- Miners Museum
- WOW Museum
- Rocky Mountain Center for Musical Arts
- Mary Miller Theater
- Harlequin Theater
- Louisville Lafayette Downtown Revitalization
- Lafayette Public Library
- Bob L. Burger Recreation Center
- Sister Carmen Community Center
- Exempla Hospital
- Pioneer Elementary School
- Lafayette Society for the Performing Arts
- Lafayette Public Library Board
- Residents of Lafayette

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In October 2009, the Lafayette Urban Renewal Authority (LURA), based on a recommendation by its Downtown Action Committee (DAC), requested a CRP team visit from Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) for December 9-10, 2009. The purpose of a CRP visit is to bring a team of consultants who specialize in downtown and community revitalization to provide tools, insights, and direction to help the host community realize its downtown revitalization goals. In anticipation of this visit, LURA planned focus groups, arranged for work and presentation spaces, and provided extensive background information about the history and status of Old Town Lafayette's revitalization efforts and the issues facing the community.

Before the team arrived in Old Town Lafayette, the City provided a series of background documents, surveys, plans, regulations, ordinances, and the DAC's goals for the CRP. Internally, each team member reviewed this information. Upon arrival in the community, the team met with DAC and City of Lafayette staff to discuss Old Town in more detail. City staff took the team on a tour of Old Town to help frame the discussions and familiarize us with the area. Five well-attended focus group sessions with community stakeholders, City staff, business owners, elected officials, non-profit entities associated with Old Town and interested citizens were held. The focus groups' purposes were to enable the team to hear about issues facing downtown directly from the community as a whole, and to gain answers to questions about the perceptions, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of Old Town. Team members gathered after the focus groups to discuss their observations and prioritize issues for each element of the Main Street program: organization, promotions, economic restructuring and design. The next day the team met to formulate recommendations in the form of a Power Point presentation and written report for the community. On the evening of the second day of the CRP visit (December 10, 2009), team members presented their findings to the community at the Lafayette Public Library and stayed for a question and answer session open to the community at-large. The report which follows provides an overview of the CRP visit, identifies partners and resources to help the community, includes observations from the visit, identifies issue areas, and makes recommendations for actions the community can take to strengthen the Old Town corridor.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

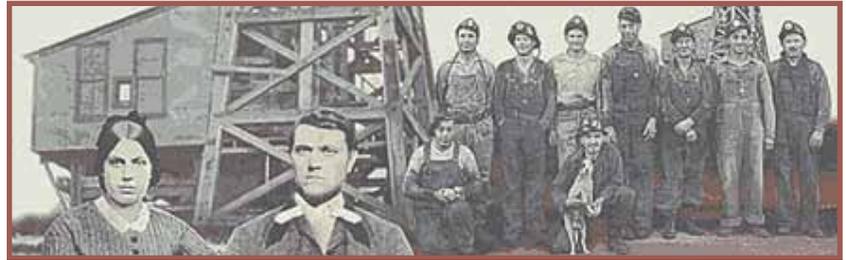
- Small town feel with close proximity to bigger city amenities
- Old Town is eclectic and funky
- Highly diverse economically and ethnically, fosters stronger culture and creativity
- Great festivals and events, well-known and well-attended
- Well-used and respected community amenities such as the library, recreation center, bilingual elementary school
- Many volunteer opportunities in the community
- Great destination businesses in Old Town

## OVERVIEW & HISTORIC CONTEXT

In June of 1863, newlyweds Lafayette and Mary Miller joined an ox-team wagon train of fifty wagons and made their way across the country. They arrived in Colorado and operated a stage stop along the Overland Trail between Denver and Cheyenne. In 1871 they moved to the Lafayette area and began farming on land they acquired through the Homestead Act. Lafayette Miller died suddenly and Mary took over the family farm. In 1888, Mary Miller platted 150 acres for the town of Lafayette, which she named for her late husband. The community became a center for coal mining activity, farming and related services. The mining industry began to slow down in the 1950s with one of the last regional mines (Eagle Mine) closing in 1979. Rapid growth and rising housing costs in Denver and Boulder

brought Lafayette substantial residential growth in the 1990s and 2000s and as the town grew, the farming-base economy shifted again as the land was developed into commercial enterprises, housing and small industrial and manufacturing businesses.

As the community's identity evolved, the traditional downtown area shifted from Simpson Street to Public Road and the Highway 287 corridor which became an increasingly major thoroughfare after World War II. In 1994 Lafayette developed a Downtown Plan to respond to anticipated changes



*Mural at Lafayette Public Library*

caused by the re-alignment of Highway 287. Eventually a bypass for Highway 287 was constructed that allowed automobiles to bypass the Old Town area entirely and the lack of car traffic impacted big box retailers that anchored the Old Town area at the Public Road and South Boulder Road intersection. Comprehensive plans adopted in 1997 and 2003 further defined goals for Old Town and an Urban Renewal District was established to address conditions of blight and to provide funding for district improvements, including projects in Old Town. Needed infrastructure improvements after the bypass' construction along Public Road offered an opportunity revamp the streetscape in addition to making the necessary improvements. New lights, paving, and other streetscaping elements made the corridor much more inviting to pedestrians and re-established Old Town as an important component of the community. Today, many businesses, residents, advocacy groups and City staff and commissions continue to work to enhance Lafayette's Old Town and further develop the corridor as the heart of the community.

In anticipation of the CRP, DAC, LURA and City staff worked together to determine key issues. The following major issues were identified.

- Difficulty in engaging stakeholders, organizing their efforts, and keeping them committed;
- What is the most appropriate type of downtown organization to attract more activity downtown? What are the roles of the various downtown groups; in particular, DAC, the Lafayette Old Town Association (LOTA) and the Chamber of Commerce?
- Need for and role of a Downtown Coordinator to support businesses and organize events at Festival Plaza;
- Inadequate funding sources to support long-term downtown revitalization efforts. Assistance in understanding potential legal and organizational frameworks for a downtown association;
- A weak or perhaps non-existent brand; Need for more advertising.
- Revitalization and sustainability efforts are fractured and spread across a number of groups/organizations. There is no lead organization working on the revitalization of downtown;
- Lack of foot traffic, pedestrian environment, and adequate parking;
- Desire to increase residential density. Currently there is little to no medium/high density in the immediately downtown area;

- Residential adjacent to downtown. Can/should developers be attracted to provide denser housing developments, and if so, how?; and
- How to create and sustain an economically viable business community. High commercial vacancies in the downtown area are problematic.

## ORGANIZATION, IDENTITY & MESSAGING

To be effective, downtown revitalization cannot be a haphazard undertaking or a set of disparate projects. It requires collaboration, focus and continuity. Organization is about bringing these qualities to a community's downtown revitalization efforts by integrating diverse interests in the community and focusing them on a shared, long-term agenda for restoring downtown's physical beauty and economic viability.



*Peach Festival, 2009*

Organization, one point of the Main Street Four Point Approach™, is about marshaling the human and financial resources to implement a comprehensive downtown revitalization process. Indeed the credibility of the Old Town organization, and therefore revitalization efforts as a whole, rely on the management's effectiveness in outreach to the community and setting the standard for transparency, governance, and accountability.

Many commercial districts struggle to find their own unique niche. What makes one district different from another, and how those unique differences are capitalized on, is a key element to promoting any community, and it's no different for Lafayette.

Knowing the true identity of your downtown, and finding ways to effectively communicate and build on that message with your unique audience, is a key element to downtown success. And success will occur when you learn to gently guide the change in perception through strong connections with your audience, consistency, persistency, and the patience to find a message and stick with it.

The following observations and recommendations present specific ideas for improving Old Town Lafayette's messaging and identity, and provide suggestions to assist the Old Town community, City staff and businesses to coordinate activities and perform more effectively.

**Observation:** There are unresolved past differences that appear to be stalling progress in the community.

**Recommendations: Look forward - not backward.** Have you ever considered what would happen if you drove only looking in the rearview mirror? While there are important lessons to learn from past mistakes, focusing only on past issues may actually inhibit progress by taking the focus away from what needs to be done today. Understand where you want to go and make progress toward that goal, understanding that every organization needs to focus on the needs of the community and your shared vision. Old Town must work to celebrate the positive aspects of Lafayette without dwelling on what hasn't worked, or what people didn't like. It is a new day for Old Town, with a rich history, an exciting demographic mix, and an energetic and focused workgroup, the future looks bright.

**Observation:** There do not appear to be clearly defined human, financial, or organizational resources dedicated to Old Town Lafayette. Many resources and best practice models are available for guidance in the arena of professional downtown management, but downtown revitalization in Old Town will require active and transparent management of DESIGNATED resources.

**Recommendations: Focus on Old Town.** An established downtown is the heart and soul of any community. To a great extent, the perception of a city as a great place or just another place depends on a vibrant downtown. Being vibrant means being lively, a place to go, a place to do things. Old Town is in a position to be the gathering and entertainment center of Lafayette. But it takes work and commitment from many parties.

- **Commit to revitalize Old Town.** The City has to buy in to the importance of Old Town and announce intentions to focus resources there. The whole City Council needs to get on board.
- **Identify or establish an organization (one entity) with ONE point of contact that is accountable for Old Town activities.** Establish a leadership position or organization that has the ability to build confidence, credibility, consistency, and continuity. Determine that a single entity or person be accountable to Old Town. Base performance objectives on increased collaboration, communications plan, attendance at festivals, etc. Their performance should be tied to indicators that demonstrate downtown improvement. By designating one point of contact for all services *to* Old Town businesses and residents, services *available in* Old Town, and all marketing and communications *about* Old Town, Old Town will begin to build the public's and business community's confidence and will demonstrate that the health of downtown is important enough to deserve full time, focused, single source attention and resources.
- **Build sustainability into plans from the outset.** Once Lafayette determines which person and organization will be responsible for Old Town, a plan for financial support should be developed. This plan should include a decreasing support structure to encourage this entity to eventually become self-sustaining. For example, year one the city might provide one full time employee or the equivalent in funds; each year thereafter, this would be reduced by a percentage. It would be useful to look to a self-funded entity like an agency, a non-profit, or an authority or district able to develop diverse funding streams. Plan to include a cap on the percentage of administrative costs allowable as a requirement for City funds. Please review the options provided in the District Matrix

in the Appendices, and contact Downtown Colorado, Inc. for assistance in coordinating continued public education sessions.

- **Develop informational material on Old Town.** Create an “Old Town Resources Directory” and an Annual Lafayette 101 Educational Event. Having an open house associated with the event would allow every organization to educate and inspire each other. This event is not only for the businesses, but also for residents.

**Observation:** There does not appear to be a clear vision for Old Town Lafayette. You can’t sell it if you don’t know what it is! Old Town is uncertain of its own identity. You lack a unified response to the question, “Who are you?”

**Recommendations: Recognize and build on the community’s unique assets.** Revitalizing Old Town will begin with looking to the history and current assets of the community. Old Town has multiple assets that can be used to build a compelling environment. Your job is to pause and determine who you are, and use that to map out where you are going. Build on community enthusiasm and recent outreach efforts to your audience, create a downtown identity that is real and compelling, and be consistent and persistent in your repetition.

- **Engage the community in a visioning process for Old Town.** Conduct an inclusive process with all stakeholders to capture input to develop a vision, mission, and objectives for the Old Town area. Ensure participation from underrepresented groups (Hispanics, youths, seniors, etc.). Be sure to identify mistakes or past issues in a constructive conversation that looks at how to avoid future pitfalls, without getting lost in the blame game.
- **Celebrate history!** Lafayette and especially Old Town have a rich history with many characters, movements, and historic structures that are here to help you tell your story. Build a brand and slogan based on your traditions. Some ideas might include looking to the mining history for identify, “Lafayette – The find of your Life”; a business attraction/retention program might also follow this line, “Lafayette – Mining Your Businesses”.
- **Be the keeper and enforcer of the identity.** Ensure that materials, logos, slogans, and campaigns retain the authenticity of the identity. This will not only build pride and buy in from your community who participated in the visioning, but will build brand identification with a larger area.
- **Connect all of the organizations through collaborative activities.** Focus on your community first. Who are you to the diverse residents of Lafayette? Create a stakeholder analysis looking at non-profits, service providers, public entities, etc. and prioritize the relationships that must be built in the short-, mid-, and long-term. Try to identify tension that may exist between groups in advance so that the facilitator might better focus on common goals, identify areas for collaboration, and ensure that the City offers positive reinforcement for groups that are willing to team up on planning, implementing, and adding value to activities that encourage the community-agreed-upon objectives for Old Town. Build trust, excitement, interest and belief among them. Unite them. For example, work with the recreation center to hold programs developed by the historic society looking at the history of Old Town, partner with the WOW! Museum, local restaurants, and retail stores to hold a “Kid Friendly Lafayette Weekend”.

**Observation:** There are many organizations and entities trying to do multiple things in this community. There's a lack of clarity about who does what for downtown.

**Recommendations: Conduct a facilitated discussion.** Invite an outsider (e.g. DOLA Field Manager or DCI can assist) to facilitate a discussion that includes all organizations, committees, and advisory boards (don't forget the recreation center, library, museums, and theaters) to determine all roles in planning for and supporting Old Town. Determine the mission, goals, potential duplication, funding initiatives, and how to communicate in the future.

- **Build collaboration.** All community groups need to understand the identity of Old Town and their role in Old Town. All can have unique identities, but need to be working towards the same goal. Identify the Old Town coordinating entity. Divide the responsibilities for strategies to achieve objectives. Only by breaking tasks into workable pieces will Old Town be able to achieve community and economic revitalization.



*Home in Old Town Lafayette*

**Observation:** You may not be bridging the gaps with the diverse audiences and groups in Lafayette. Find out what your marketplace desires.

**Recommendation: Know your audience.** Before you began looking outward for downtown support, expand your horizons locally. If you can learn to engage your own community, primary employers, and residents in downtown, the momentum will build. Start by identifying the diverse markets that make up your community and target your outreach to them. Find out what is compelling to the community. How do they identify with Old Town? Determine the answer to these questions by:

- Meeting them for morning coffee sessions at a coffee shop;
- Asking them to merchant and customer surveys; and
- Attending organizational meetings on a regular basis.

**Recommendation: Reach out to new or untapped audiences of residents.** Focus groups indicated that there are many untapped resources in the community. Old Town must reach out to all segments of the community.

- Tell residents that Old Town is the core of the community where things are happening;
- Engage all groups in the process of revitalizing Old Town. This cannot happen if clear messages are not reaching all audiences in a language they understand. Plan messages to under-served groups, including:
  - Families;
  - Seniors;
  - Hispanic community; and
  - Youths.

**Recommendation: Maintain consistent and clear communication lines.** Create consistent times and methods of communication with all constituencies. Develop a monthly message posted in the newspaper, on the website, and in local gathering places. Look for a time once a month when people know there is an Old Town/City staff available to discuss issues before they become problems.

- **Develop messages carefully.** The message statement should:
  - Highlight features that have been identified as primary motivators for your target markets.
  - Have no more than 5 to 7 clear, descriptive words.
  - Be accurate and concise.
  - Create accurate perceptions. It should NOT exploit a message you cannot deliver on. It SHOULD take a positive, even aggressive, position and highlight your strengths.
  - NOT try to be all things to all people.
  - Convey a sense of excitement, energy, vibrancy.
  - Consider renaming Public Road to something more indicative of Main Street.
- **Recommendation: Old Town Lafayette is many things.** Some things to consider in your statement:
  - Serving the community, first and foremost.
  - Independent and locally owned.
  - History.
  - Personal service.
  - Small business.
  - Character.
  - Gathering place.
  - Uniting.



*Festival Plaza , summer 2009*

## VISIONING

**Observation:** There is lack of vision and consensus on what Old Town Lafayette *is* and what it should *be* in the future.

**Recommendations: Update the 1995 Lafayette Downtown Plan.** Many lessons have been learned over the years on how to best undertake the difficult task of downtown revitalization. Among the most important of those lessons is the critical role that the development of, and adherence to, a well defined and broadly accepted *vision* of what ‘downtown’ *should* become plays in the framework of any revitalization effort. Creating a community-developed and approved *vision* that is embraced by the entire community is the only way to ensure Old Town Lafayette will serve as the community’s commercial, social and civic center – the

heart of Lafayette. Once you have a vision, consider renaming Public Road to better reflect the community vision and use this change as a time to celebrate the Old Town revitalization efforts.

In order to capture the vision for Old Town Lafayette, the City needs to take the lead in updating the *1995 Lafayette Downtown Plan* and amending the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* accordingly. The updated Plan should be based on the Main Street Four Point Approach and provide a comprehensive “blueprint” for stimulating development and revitalization of Old Town while preserving and enhancing existing qualities of the area. As with all planning efforts, public outreach, collaboration, consensus building and ownership of the Plan is the key to its ultimate adoption and implementation. The City should consider the following community engagement strategies to ensure that issues, aspirations, and concerns raised are consistently understood, considered and feedback is provided on how public input influenced decisions:

- Identify your leaders - form an Old Town Organization that will help facilitate downtown revitalization. Their role will be to provide guidance and community insight throughout the development of the Downtown Plan to ensure community ownership and support of the adopted document.
- Gather public feedback about community desires for the downtown (utilize community surveying, visual preference surveys, workshops, stakeholder interviews, etc).
- Provide a transparent process for how public input is used. Be transparent and inclusive.
- Utilize the City’s website, direct email notification, and social media tools (i.e., Twitter and Facebook) to provide information about the project including background materials, draft documents, meeting summaries, as well as notification of upcoming community meetings and upcoming events. Ensure all materials/information are bilingual.
- Conduct Community Outreach events (i.e., Peach Festival, Lafayette Days, City’s Cinco de Mayo celebrations, etc).
- Facilitate a “*Planning for Old Town Lafayette*” Education Program or series of workshops city-wide. Ideas for workshops could include a “Life on the Streets” workshop educating participants on the importance of having medium to high density residential uses downtown. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, Lafayette Urban Renewal Authority, LOTA, City Boards/Commissions, local non-profits, city schools and the development community. Use the program/workshops to teach the community about planning, downtown revitalization, Main Street Four Point Approach, historic preservation, importance of your downtown and impacts of the Residential Growth Initiative on your downtown, etc., for use by City Council and Planning staff.
- Publish articles in the *City Update* and *The Lafayette News*.
- Post information on Channel 8 (Cable TV government access).
- Foster participation of Elected and Appointed Officials (find a respected champion). Facilitate joint meetings with LURA, DAC, LOTA, the Chamber of Commerce as well as all other City Boards and Commissions.

**Recommendation: Implement your vision for Old Town Lafayette.** The evolution of land use zoning has largely been based on an assumption that the activities found in urban form are static, unchanging, and separated; thereby, working against market changes that favor

infill projects. The traditional concept and application of zoning codes could be enhanced to better meet new market opportunities and the special considerations of infill projects within small community's downtown areas. The key is to set forth regulations that ensure the ability to shape pedestrian scale, mixed use, fine-grained urbanism, enforceability, and ease of use. Code revisions can range from simply adding overlay zones on existing codes to addressing infill challenges to rewriting particular codes to better reflect infill and redevelopment project characteristics.

Lafayette's current regulatory framework may present some challenges for infill and revitalization efforts in Old Town. This coupled with high commercial vacancies and some community member's perception that the City/City Council is challenging to work with makes it difficult for staff to "sell" Old Town Lafayette as the place for new businesses to locate. Although the proposed amendments to the 2003 Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Map and creation of the Old Town Transitional (OTT) zone district may prove to be useful tools, they may have gotten ahead of any agreed consensus vision for Old Town. The list below outlines some of the challenges of the city's existing regulatory framework:

- Old Town could be over-zoned for commercial uses and limits residential uses.
- Investment in older residential properties has gained momentum of late and there is a possibility that the new OTT zone district designation may undermine this momentum if consensus on the vision for Old Town (updated Downtown Plan) is not obtained prior to adoption.
- Unpredictability of Planning Unit Developments (PUD's) – Any mixed use or residential development proposals are required to rezone to PUD, which leads to unpredictability due to multiple review steps and high degree of discretion rather than objective standards.
- Lack of a plan to address parking issues in Old Town.
- Lack of an Old Town mixed-use zoning district or overlay for the downtown area.
- Lack of strong downtown design guidelines.
- Growth limitations stemming from the Residential Growth Initiative.
- Regulatory "barriers" to property assemblage.

**Recommendation: Update the Development and Zoning Code and City policies.** Once the desired vision and character of Old Town Lafayette is secured through a newly updated *Downtown Plan*, the Development and Zoning Code, and City policies will need to be amended to accommodate contemporary development patterns, meet market demands and to maintain valued features of existing neighborhoods within Old Town. The following are potential regulatory change recommendations for the City to consider:

1. Facilitate a community engagement process as noted above but be sure to collaborate with service providers and public works department up front and test the regulations with developers, business owners, and civic associations as well.
2. To achieve desired smaller-scale mixed-use developments, consider adopting a Downtown Mixed-Use zoning district(s) or overlay(s). The new zone district should include strong standards to address building relationship to street, sidewalks, and provision of public gathering places. Additionally, the new zone district or overlay should be lower intensity than the majority of commercial zoning in Old Town

and allow for residential uses including Attached Dwelling Units<sup>1</sup> (ADUs), relaxed parking, and setbacks along the street and for side-yards. The City might want to consider/explore adopting a form-based or hybrid form-based code for Old Town.

3. Develop a Parking Management Plan as a component of the updated *Downtown Plan*.
4. Examine the palatability and ease to proactively rezone properties within Old Town (Legislative Rezoning), or to provide incentive for incremental rezoning to new mixed-use zoning district(s).
5. Allow for increased densities and establish criteria for ADUs.
6. Establish density bonuses and expedited approval for residential development.
7. Consider amending the Residential Growth Initiative to exempt properties within Old Town consistent with the newly updated *Downtown Plan*.
8. Continue to restrict inappropriate uses such as auto-related, outdoor storage adjacent to the street and drive-through facilities.
9. Protect established, intact residential districts adjacent to Public Road through zoning regulations, historic overlay district and individual designations.
10. Eliminate parking requirements for landmarked structures.
11. Set forth administrative review processes (Planning Director approval) for projects in the Old Town Mixed-Use zoning or overlay zone district.
12. Consider adopting an alternative compliance process within the new overlay zone(s) or zoning district(s) wherein the Planning Commission may approve an alternative approach that may be substituted in whole or in part for a plan not meeting one or more of the development standards contained in the standards. This approach provides flexibility to meet the development standards in the ordinance and should apply in circumstances in which an alternative approach would provide a result that is equal to or superior to that which would be provided by the standards in this ordinance.
13. Ensure amendments to the Development and Zoning Code have a well-defined and predictable review process - allow for administrative approvals and ease of parcel assemblage.
14. Fine tune site planning standards as they apply to certain uses.
15. Provide “How to” sections and include graphics to convey intent of the regulations.
16. Consider adopting an *Old Town Lafayette Development Handbook* that includes flowcharts, checklists, submittal requirements, illustrations and incorporates the various code requirements for the district(s) or overlay(s) zone into a single document for ease of use by property owners, business owners, developers, citizens, and City staff.
17. Adopt incentive-based design guidelines to complement and supplement the newly adopted zoning and development regulations. *The Old Town Lafayette Design Guidelines* should address building siting, access and circulation, architecture,

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<sup>1</sup> An ADU (often referred to as “Mother-in-Law” unit) is a self-contained apartment in an owner occupied single-family home/lot that is either attached to the principal dwelling or in a separate structure on the same property. ADU's are a strategy to increase density in neighborhoods surrounding downtowns, while having the least impact on historic character of the area.

landscaping, streetscape design, lighting, parking, signage and public art.

18. Organizational changes in the Community Development department such as dedicating a staff member(s) assigned to Old Town may be useful to accelerate regulatory approval processes and reduce friction from the development community. Infill projects can often require extensive adjustments to utilities, demolition, hazard mitigation, traffic impacts, and structure improvement requirements resulting in significant increase in the number of permits required for project review. Dedicating a staff member(s) to expedite development approvals of projects in Old Town will ensure downtown projects are processed through the various City departments/ City system quickly – possibly providing over-the-counter approval of smaller scale developments proposals within Old Town.
19. Facilitate continual education efforts. Educate/train staff on newly adopted *Downtown Plan*, updated regulations, design guidelines, and new City policies.

## PROMOTIONS

**Observation:** There is a lack of awareness of Old Town shops and amenities from locals and regional area. Without the support of locals, businesses downtown will have a difficult time drawing in visitors from other areas of the state.

**Recommendation: Develop comprehensive web and print materials for Old Town.**

These materials include an “Old Town Business Directory”, maps, and promotional events taking place in Old Town. Due to the large Hispanic population in the area, all materials created for downtown must be bilingual. Ensuring all residents can easily identify what can be purchased downtown and what services are available will allow them to easily direct out-of-town guests to the services downtown.

**Recommendation: Focus promotions locally and on the residents of Lafayette to get them vested in Old Town.** The best proponents of Lafayette are the residents of Lafayette. If they are not invested in the Old town, no one else will be. Events should be focused on making the residents of Lafayette feel welcome in Old Town.

**Recommendation: Hold a Lafayette Open House Day.** Each business/organization offers something (e.g. chocolate for all!) to familiarize everyone in the community about the services and products available downtown.

**Observation:** There is a lack of collaboration in events and marketing for broader outreach and appeal. So many groups have the interest of Lafayette in their missions and hearts. All of that energy is being focused on very specific events that do not have a broad range of constituents. This causes burnout and can wear out volunteers who are constantly busy.

**Recommendation: Compile a list of all of the events and activities happening in Old Town.** Once this has been completed, create a comprehensive event strategy and matrix. Include all demographics that use Old Town (Latino, young family) and all reasons for those residents and visitors to use Old Town (retail, ambience, habit). By utilizing the matrix, events will have specific purposes and will give the businesses, residents, and organizers the outcomes they need/desire.

**Recommendation: Institute collaborative/cross-marketing between businesses and other entities (e.g. Valentines: flowers and a massage; Coffee & a book).** This will increase the potential success of each new and existing event.

**Observation: Old Town businesses to do not see themselves as one group that should be working together.** There is a lack of cohesiveness in events, marketing, and promotions in Old Town that seriously decrease the ability of businesses to successfully bring people to the area. Additionally, groups whose focus is on Old Town should be present at every event located in or around Old Town. This participation will increase Old Town's visibility to the rest of the community.

**Recommendation: The Old Town businesses should function and collaborate as one entity with planned hours, marketing, and promotions.** Start with one night a week and everyone agree to stay open until 8 p.m. It may take a few weeks for residents to get used to the idea and begin coming to Old Town in the evening, but eventually they will remember that you are open for business after dark!

**Recommendation: The Chamber of Commerce should target Old Town groups for event participation.** They could do this in a number of ways. First, offer non-profit and cultural groups a discounted booth rate at community events. Second, offer discounts to businesses interested in event booth space in front of their store.

**Observation: The Old Town's assets are underutilized or ignored.** Lafayette has a rich history of mining and agriculture. It is not a suburb of Denver and should be celebrating the assets associated with the history of the area and the character of the community.

**Recommendation: Identify and capitalize on assets in Old Town, that surround Old Town and that use Old Town.** This includes, but is not limited to the Recreation Center, Library, theaters, and museums. These anchors and assets must be engaged in order to develop and facilitate Old Town events (i.e. Lafayette Florist could help host a summer gardening/flower information event or festival, Recreation Center hosts wellness fair at Festival Plaza).

**Recommendation: Celebrate your history!** Create a "History of Lafayette" campaign where teenagers work with seniors to learn about the architectural and cultural history of the community.

**Recommendation: Re-brand Public Road. Consider re-naming Public Road and bestow a more "welcoming" and exciting name that helps reinforce the road as Lafayette's Main Street and articulate the community's vision for Old Town.** Consider engaging Old Town businesses to offer a prize for a naming contest, create an online poll and forum where residents can choose options and debate, and work with the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center, WOW Museum and other Old Town stakeholders to publicize the effort.

## ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

The focus of economic restructuring is to assist in efforts to recruit, retain and expand opportunities for investment in downtown. Ensuring that investors and businesses are aware of all available assistance resources and benefits associated with downtown locations is critical. Investors and businesses also need to know about opportunities that may exist to capitalize on promotional activities. Economic restructuring is also important to help build strong relationships and to cultivate synergy between downtown businesses, residents, and users.

### General Observations:

- In a challenging economic climate nationally, regionally and locally, new and existing businesses along the corridor need to bind together toward a greater good and currently the business community in Old Town is not uniting together to strengthen the corridor.
- There is no cohesive group that represents majority of downtown businesses working for positive change. Currently, a mix of businesses support LOTA and/or the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and some support neither.
- Vacancy is too high along corridor. The addition of the Sunflower Market will anchor the southern portion of the corridor and hopefully stimulate renewed interest in the area.
- Vacant big box retail centers at Public Road and South Boulder Road intersection do not currently contribute aesthetically or economically to Old Town.
- Dropping traffic counts along Public Road and South Boulder Road as a result of the bypass is impacting the number of possible consumers that may shop in Old Town. Re-asserting South Public as the heart of Lafayette and as the community's main street is needed to help encourage more locals and visitors to visit Old Town.
- People in West Lafayette have equally accessible shopping options in Louisville – they need to be more aware of opportunities to shop in Old Town Lafayette and why it is important to support the local downtown (i.e. potential consumers need to know what's there, that shopping locally helps ensure quality community services, etc.)

**Observation:** There is a perception that the City of Lafayette and City Council are challenging to work with.

**Recommendation: Create a business growth, retention, and new business development online center.** Provide information about how to start a business, the City's permitting, and fees and a "frequently asked questions" section to help potential and existing business owners receive answers to questions as soon as possible. Also, consider including services that exist for businesses like façade improvement matching grants and low interest loans through the City, County and Federal governments. Offer information regarding training and networking opportunities organized by entities such as the Counselors of America's Small Business Owners (SCORE), the Colorado Small Business Development Center Network (SBCD), Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and Trade. A good example of an online resource center can be found at <http://web.cityofthornton.net/businessSite/>.

**Recommendation: Refine and enhance business development and retention**

**programming.** Developing an online business center is a first step toward ensuring business retention because it helps get new businesses “off on the right foot” so they can become successful from the onset. However, online resources are not as effective as hands-on interaction with other people. Consider creating a mentorship program that connects new and struggling businesses with businesses that have been successful in Old Town. The business owners can share ideas and insights regarding successful small business ownership. Highlight new Old Town businesses’ services on the Old Town Entity website and in the newsletter, to all homeowners associations in Lafayette, on the City of Lafayette’s website, and in the *Lafayette News* and *Boulder Daily Camera*.

**Recommendation: The newly identified “Old Town Entity” and City of Lafayette should work together to identify and recruit small businesses downtown.**

This effort will be an ongoing process that will evolve over time. As mentioned above, the online business resource center will provide a significant amount of information to help prospective business owners and investors evaluate whether Old Town is right for them. In addition, consider creating an Old Town coordinating entity that includes a City staff member as the official “recruiter” for downtown businesses. This will create a consistent point of contact for potential new businesses and directs accountability and responsibility toward one party as opposed to many. This individual can respond to inquiries, connect interested parties to landlords and brokers that have access to the working space they need, and take charge of assembling a series of small packages with relevant information geared toward a diverse array of potential Old Town businesses such as live/work tenants, restaurants, specialty retail shops, service providers, etc. that includes maps. The “recruiter” should also take care to look for businesses that will complement and enhance what’s already located in Old Town and what types of businesses will attract people from surrounding areas. For example, if downtown Louisville or another retail center already has a specialty wine shop, encouraging one to locate on the corridor may not be the best choice to strengthen the corridor.

**Recommendation: Conduct a customer and merchant survey to better understand**

**needs.** It’s extremely important for businesses to care about what their consumers think of Old Town because their dollars derive profit for Old Town business owners. What may be an obvious success or failure to a consumer shopping the corridor may not be as obvious to a business owner and vice versa. A consumer survey enables business owners to learn more about their customers’ shopping preferences (i.e. times they shop, whether parking is an issue, how they transport themselves to the corridor, etc.) that can influence their business’ success. In addition, tracking consumer survey results over time may help Old Town advocates to recognize and evaluate changes in preference and perception over time. For example, consumers might list “high vacancy” as a reason they don’t walk the corridor and casually shop. If in the future there is low vacancy, businesses may be able to track whether lower vacancy is affecting their sales. Conducting merchant surveys is a helpful tool that enables the City and the Old Town Organization to learn more about how downtown businesses are faring, what is helping them succeed or detracting from their business, how City efforts and projects are affecting them, etc. It’s an important forum for businesses to state their needs and preferences from both individual business and business community perspectives while providing important information to the Old Town Organization and City of Lafayette that may impact future efforts and programming.

**Observation:** There should be funds allocated to Old Town.

**Recommendation: Consider formation of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or Business Improvement District (BID) to finance downtown improvements.** The vision formulated by the community may impact whether a DDA or BID is right for Old Town Lafayette. More information regarding the differences between a DDA and BID can be found in the Appendix of this report.

**Recommendation: Whatever urban redevelopment that takes place must be leveraged with improvements in Old Town.** There is a perception within the community that the City favors redevelopment in the outskirts of the community and “subsidizes” big box retailers, possibly at the expense of Old Town. Although the City is facilitating projects fairly in Old Town and other parts of the community, there appears to be a communication gap with some residents and businesses. A great first step toward demonstrating a commitment to redevelopment and revitalization in Old Town is to create a vision for Old Town and openly declare Old Town the main street of Lafayette and a community priority. Announcing a bold pledge of support will make the community and downtown stakeholders accountable for backing up the statement and stir up interest. Incorporating information about past, current and upcoming redevelopment initiatives and projects on the City and Old Town Organization’s website and submitting regular press releases to the *Lafayette News* and *Boulder Daily Camera* may also help bridge the communication gap.

**Recommendation: The City of Lafayette should create easily accessible, transparent guidelines and performance measures to attach to grant opportunities.** There is a perception that it can be challenging to acquire information about grant opportunities and sometimes the process of awarding grants appears to be subjective to some people. The City should create a small booklet that is available online and in hard copy form that clearly lays out what is required to acquire a grant. Developing this booklet should take place after an Old Town vision has been finalized to ensure that the grant program will help implement the vision. Items to be included in the booklet include but are not limited to: information regarding what grants are available and what activities are not funded by the City; when and how to apply for grants and submit applications; a detailed description of the application review process and parameters by which applications are judged; a direct contact person for questions about the process; a checklist for the applicant; and links to other available grant opportunities in Colorado. A good example can be found at [www.denverfoundation.org](http://www.denverfoundation.org).

**Observation:** Old Town businesses and organizations are not collaborating or utilizing resources to the maximum capacity.

**Recommendation: Businesses need to make a concerted effort to show that they are open for business.** Currently, the businesses in Old Town do not display a “unified front” as a community working together to mutually boost sales. Although each business must focus on its own survival and some on the corridor may even compete against one another, there is a need for all Old Town businesses to work together toward a mutually-beneficial outcome. It may not be possible to get *every* business on board, but a strong majority is needed for ultimate success. It may take some time to develop this atmosphere and it requires coordination and cooperation on a complex array of fronts. For example, each business appears to hold hours independently of one another and may not be catering to the needs of prospective consumers. An internally-focused business community makes

it challenging for people to stroll and shop with a portion of businesses are not open and infringes on a potential customers' schedule if they commute outside of Lafayette to work and want to shop at night or on the weekend. It will take time to find the right timing that works for the corridor so start small. One Old Town business owner suggested that every business stay open until 9:00 p.m. every Thursday for example as a way to cultivate a tradition of staying open later to meet commuters' needs.

**Observation:** Old Town's assets are not viewed as easily accessible to all sectors of the community.

**Recommendation: Increase access to Old Town area amenities (i.e. Bob L. Burger Recreation Center, WOW Museum, Festival Plaza, etc.) and streamline the communication process to further integrate low income people and the Hispanic population into the Old Town community.** For example, the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center has extensive low-income programming to make the facility's services available at a low price and received a grant to offer scholarships to low income youths in the area. The recreation center also has a staff member that speaks Spanish and provides bilingual printed information. Although these programs exist, they are not as heavily used as they could be primarily because many residents seem to be unaware of them. Use a variety of medias (newspaper, flyers and posters, postcards, email blasts, Twitter updates, etc.) and work with the Youth Advisory Committee and Latino Advisory Board to make Lafayette residents more aware of the services offered by the many facilities located in or near Old Town. Giving members of the Youth Advisory Committee and Latino Advisory Board hard copy information enables them to connect directly with their constituents on an informal social basis that may in turn make more residents aware of existing programming.

**Recommendation: Create Old Town mentorship programs and training opportunities for youth through businesses, non-profit organizations, and commissions.** The Youth Advisory Committee is a great way to integrate youths into community-wide affairs and some activities related to Old Town, but there are opportunities to strengthen Old Town's connections to young people. Young people may or may not be certain what they ultimately want to do with their lives, but they are interested in developing the skills necessary for them to make those choices later in life. Youths could learn basic skills related to data entry, graphic design, supply and inventory management, public relations, etc. that not only helps them become stronger young professionals but also the business owner, non-profit or commission they assist. For youths that may already know what career path they want to pursue, there are numerous opportunities for them to become involved in voluntary or paid internships with local groups. For example, an aspiring Civil Engineer may be able to hold a summer voluntary internship where they "shadow" the head of Public Works once a week and help with some designs for better stormwater detention or evaluate potential for a new pedestrian crossing in Old Town.

**Recommendation: Investigate the financial feasibility of a loop shuttle along Public Road with a route that includes the hospital, Lafayette Town Center, Lafayette Public Library, the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center and the Old Town corridor.** Work with major employers along the purposed route (i.e. Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center, City of Lafayette, Pioneer Elementary, King Soopers, Bob L. Burger Recreation Center, etc.), and residents (with a particular emphasis on those that may have limited access to automobiles such as youths and seniors) to gauge the interest and needs of prospective

riders. Consider comparable shuttle programs such as the Berthoud Area Transportation Service (BATS) operating structure and costs to determine how they match with the needs of Lafayette employees and residents. Contact any applicable shuttle programs to gain insight as needed. Analyze the amount of riders, timing needs, operation, maintenance and start up costs, staffing needs, etc. and determine if a shuttle would be financially feasible. If deemed feasible, proceed with an in-depth business plan to make the shuttle program a reality.

## DESIGN WAYFINDING AND ORIENTATION

**Observation:** Old Town needs to celebrate its image and presence from the major arterials that frame the area - Baseline Road, South Boulder Road and Highway 287.

**Recommendation:** Continue with plans for a cohesive iconic gateways/signage system that celebrates the Old Town core and directs visitors into the Old Town area. In order to alert visitors and residents into the Old Town district, more significant directional signage is needed from Highway 287, South Boulder Road and Baseline Road. Along Highway 287, the existing newer signage adjacent to the toll road announces entry into the community, but does not help create awareness or orientation to Public Road and the Old Town core area. Leading up to the intersection of Highway 287 and South Boulder Road, either a single larger sign or a series of smaller, banner-like announcement signs celebrating the Old Town core (and orienting drivers to its location) would raise awareness of Lafayette’s historic “Main Street” (Public Road), and illustrate a community commitment to the cultural importance of Lafayette’s historic core.



*Signage along Baseline Road*



*Signage along South Boulder Road*

**Recommendation:**

**Additional Old Town core signage will help direct traffic into heart of Lafayette.** Another important signage/ orientation point along Highway 287 is at the intersection of Baseline Road, which is an important gateway into Old Town Lafayette. In order to create a hierarchy of signage along Highway 287, the new signage at the intersection of Highway 287 and Baseline

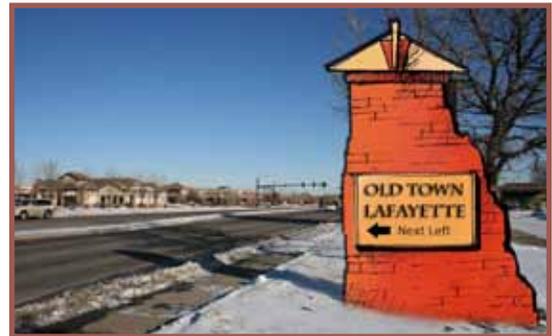
Road should be larger and more significant than the signage at the intersection of the highway and South Boulder Road, which currently functions as more of a ‘back door’ entrance into the Old Town district. With the library, recreation center, school and other significant community buildings located along Baseline Road, the signage pointing visitors into Old Town should be more prominent at the Baseline/287 intersection.

**Recommendation: Use intersection of Baseline Road and Public Road to emphasize the importance of Lafayette’s “Main Street.”**

Signage at this location could also be combined with improved pedestrian crossing amenities, which would help reduce the speed of traffic and create greater connection between the businesses and shops along Public Road and the recreational center and school north of Baseline Road. Overall, additional signage and wayfinding from the arterials leading into the Old Town core would help raise awareness of the Public Road “Main Street” among residents and visitors – a concern expressed by both residents and Lafayette City staff.



*Old Town Lafayette Signage Map*



*Re-envisioned signage along South Boulder Road*



*Sample signage hierarchy*

## MULTI-MODAL IMPROVEMENTS

**Observation:** Multi-modal improvements along Public Road would improve the function and accessibility of the downtown.

**Recommendation: Identify east-west connections for pedestrians and bicyclists from the neighborhoods and improve accessibility to the downtown and trail corridors.**

As a community of neighbors that enjoy walking, biking and taking advantage of public transit, Lafayette is well-positioned to enjoy the benefits of more multi-modal transit opportunities along Public Road. The current right-of-way travel lanes widths along Public Road allow for shared travel between cars and bicyclists, and adding shared bicycle lanes to accommodate bicyclists along the road would create a designated biking corridor through the Old Town area.



*Major east-west connections to Public Road*

In addition to creating shared bicycle lanes, installing infrastructure to support biking in the downtown – such as bike racks along the sidewalks and bike lockers at the RTD park-n-ride – would further support a multi-modal approach to transportation within Old Town Lafayette.

**Recommendation: Add infrastructure that supports multi-modal improvements such as bicycle racks, bus shelters, and shared bike lanes on Public Road.**

For example, bus shelters would not only provide greater awareness of the existing public transit system, but could also become important community messaging areas, where creative design and public-art-as-storytelling could combine to create unique shelter/seating environments that are both appealing and iconic.



*Example of a shared bicycle lane*

In keeping with the theme of including creative design and public art within the bus shelters, consider how benches, bicycle racks and other street furnishings can be customized to reflect Lafayette’s history and character and help infuse the Old Town environment with references to the history and character of Lafayette.



*Re-envisioned gateway at Baseline Road and Public Road*

## PUBLIC SPACE ENHANCEMENT & CREATION

**Observation:** There is a need for additional gathering and open space in the Old Town core to allow for celebrations, sidewalk displays and large community events.

**Recommendation: Support the creation of a green public park within the downtown district, ideally adjacent to Public Road.** Work with the community to program the park with desired amenities (i.e. skate park or theater performance space). Prior to the creation of the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center, there was an open public park that provided space for residents and visitors to play, relax and enjoy being outdoors. Although the community strongly values the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center, there is interest in bringing back a small public park within the downtown core. Ideally, this park would be located along Public Road, where its visibility from the street would increase usage and policing of the park space. A location along Public Road would also create an opportunity to utilize the park as a space for informal community events and performances, supporting the existing hardscape public gathering spaces within Festival Plaza.

**Recommendation: Install additional street furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks) along the street to enhance the welcoming atmosphere, sociability and pedestrian comfort of the public spaces.** Strategically place streetscape amenities to help address vacant lots, large parking lots adjacent to the street, and other ‘holes’ that reduce the comfort level of people walking along the street. The location and placement of benches is a “quick fix solution” that would take a current use (benches) and maximize its impact through thoughtful placement and location. Placing benches so they create positive gathering space – having benches facing each other, or in an “L” configuration that encourages face-to-face interactions - will create small informal gathering areas along the street. At these bench gathering nodes, public art can be used to enhance the potential for people to connect, giving them opportunities to interact with the art or use it as a springboard for conversation.



*Examples of creative, functional outdoor art*

**Recommendation: Consider additional seating options at Festival Plaza.** Current plans for Festival Plaza include a second shade structure which will allow for flexibility in use of this area. However, considering options for installing elevated seating at one end of the plaza would help to create a stronger terminus to the space. It would also increase the ability to view performances in the space, provide a sunny space to sit and relax, and create an important traffic control device.



*Example of elevated outdoor plaza seating*

**Observation:** Along Public Road, there are a number of single family residences that have been converted to a business or storefront.

**Recommendation: Create a stronger edge to Public Road by encouraging adaptive reuse properties to create a small curb cut to access the property.** In these adapted use areas, the former front lawn space has typically been converted to public parking, and is accessed through wide curb cuts that stretch across the front of the property. A smaller curb cut will ensure these areas where cars and people must share the space are safer and give emphasis to the pedestrian sidewalk edge. Smaller curb cuts will create sidewalk widths that can accommodate street furniture, lighting, shop boards, and possibly restaurant seating and allow for smooth pedestrian flow, safe from auto traffic. As properties redevelop along Public Road, set standards for minimum sidewalk widths, streetscape amenities and a reduction in the number of curb cuts along the street.



*Active streetscape environment*

**Observation:** Old Town assets are not sufficiently being tied into planning and promotions for Old Town.

**Recommendation: Encourage pedestrian connections to the WOW Museum and the Rocky Mountain Center for the Musical Arts by expanding the Public Road streetscape amenities/improvements along Geneseo and Simpson Streets.** The WOW Museum, Rocky Mountain Center for the Musical Arts, Bob L. Burger Recreation Center and the original historic core of the Old Town area are all just a couple of blocks from Public Road – easily walkable but with little presence along the street. In order to encourage connection to these areas – as well as expand the Old Town retail opportunities at the north end of Public Road – additional streetscape improvements along Geneseo and Simpson Streets would provide the infrastructure



*WOW Museum*

to connect people to existing Old Town businesses, while also providing a framework for expanding the Old Town retail core east of Public Road.

**Recommendation: Add improvements to allow pedestrians to cross Baseline Road with greater safety.** These improvements would also help connect the Old Town area to the Recreation Center and school located on the north side of Baseline. Improvements to the crossings at this location would also help define the gateway onto Public Road, strengthening the visibility and appeal of the Old Town core.

**Observation:** Along the Public Road Old Town corridor there is no one or two focus points of commercial activity where one could leave their car and walk to many shops. The length of the corridor and separation of retail shops along Public Road inhibits Old Town from possessing a defined focus.

**Recommendation: During the visioning process identify segments of Public Road which hold the most promise for redevelopment and focus and invest in shop façade, parking, pedestrian and signage improvements at those “catalyst” locations.** Consider public/private partnerships, grant opportunities, and private investment as vehicles to pay for improvements and also be aware that much of the success or failure of initiatives will be dependent upon market trends. There should be one or two primary focus locations along the corridor. One of the focus areas might be near Festival Plaza and another between Baseline Road and Simpson Street. As the retail interest along the corridor grows, these focus areas may be expanded to connect to or blend with alleys or side streets. Another potential focus area is the historic downtown Lafayette along Simpson Street. There was some discussion pointing to Simpson Street as a possible theater and arts district for the community. The team does not recommend pursuing the south end of the corridor (including the new development and empty big box stores and parking lots) as focus areas because there is not much potential to create thriving, pedestrian-oriented retail in these areas.



*Old Town nodes*

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Historic preservation has often been portrayed as the alternative to economic development – it’s either we have historic preservation OR we have economic growth. This is absolutely a false choice. Increasingly historic preservation is becoming a uniquely effective vehicle for economic growth across the nation (center city revitalization, job creation, small business incubation, housing, tourism, and others). Lafayette has a rich, diverse heritage and the City should capitalize on the unique historic character of Public Road as well as the architecture of residential and commercial structures in Old Town, particularly in the residential housing stock.

**Observation:** There is a sense of historic character within the architecture of residential and commercial structures in Old Town.

**Recommendation: Successful downtown rehabilitation should include historic preservation as a priority strategy.** Older buildings that are not being maintained should not be seen as “eyesores” needing replacement but, rather assets that need improvement. Older buildings should not be blamed for problems that may have more to do with property maintenance and/or social issues. Communities in Colorado are fortunate in that there are several strong financial assistance programs available to assist with the rehabilitation of historic buildings. These include the State Historical Fund and both federal and state income tax credits for rehabilitation of designated historic structures.



*Historic business in Old Town*

The City has previously conducted three (3) historic resource surveys of the residential areas in Old Town Lafayette. A fourth survey was completed in 2008 that included commercial and residential properties along Baseline Road and agricultural properties just outside of the city limits. The City recently submitted a grant request to the State Historical Society for a historic resource survey of up to 29 commercial properties on Public Road. The City should continue to update the surveys as a way to provide an objective basis for evaluating the significance of potential landmark structures. As always, Old Town businesses, residents, the Chamber of Commerce, LURA, DAC, LOTA, City Boards/Commissions, and local non-profits should be involved in reviewing the results of the survey.

**Recommendation: Designate additional structures as landmarks worthy of local protection.** Designation brings financial incentive for property owners and creates stable environment for investment. Historic rehabilitation projects have proven to be sound economic investments as costs generally run 25 – 33% less than new construction (“Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation”, Readings in Historic Preservation, 1983). In addition to locally designating historic structures, they can also be officially protected through local, state and national designation. Districts as well as individual landmarks and buildings can also be designated.

**Recommendation: Historic designation is not the only way to conserve and enhance the historic character of a place.** Other types of planning and zoning tools such as establishing a Neighborhood Conservation District overlay, ensuring that the base zoning districts and standards re-enforce historic character where it is valued and considering a form-based code or zoning district that can more effectively promote design elements than conventional Euclidean zoning codes.

Historic preservation resources include:

- State Historical Fund - <http://www.coloradohistory-oahp.org/programareas/shf/shfindex.htm> (source for help with survey and designation, for example)
- Federal and State Tax Credits - <http://coloradohistory-oahp.org/programareas/itc/taxcredits.htm>
- Conservation Districts - <http://www.preservationalliance.com/publications/>

Conservation%20District%20Description.pdf (good summary put together by Philadelphia Preservation group)

- Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation - <http://www.coloradohistory.org/publications/1620.htm>