

# Castle Pines

Village Square  
Library Sub-Area Study

July 7 - 8, 2014



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



**DOWNTOWN  
COLORADO, INC**

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## Team Members

The Castle Pines assessment team appreciates the invitation to get to know the town and to assist the community to maximize its considerable assets. The volunteers worked diligently, pre- and post-visit to provide relevant and realistic input towards the betterment of your commercial district.

Scott Barnhart, Nolte Vertical Five  
Katherine Correll, DCI  
Kristin Cypher, C+B Design  
Michael Gasper, DHM Design  
Caitlin Hale, DCI  
Michael Hussey, Nolte Vertical Five  
Jeremy Nelson, REgeneration Strategies  
Jamie Shapiro, DCI  
Nancy Sprehn, DCI

## Introduction

Welcome to the Village Square Library Sub-Area Study for the City of Castle Pines. Colorado communities have the opportunity to apply for assistance in revitalizing commercial districts, town centers, and downtowns as a benefit to members of Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI). DCI is a nonprofit membership organization committed to building better communities by providing assistance to Colorado downtowns, commercial districts and town centers.

The City of Castle Pines underwent a community assessment process with DCI in 2012. In 2014, the City requested that DCI return to the community, this time for a more focused project: to strategize and recommend enhancements for a public investment project in the Library Sub-Area of Village Square, the ultimate goal being a vibrant commercial district and community gathering place.

To ensure quality and affordable services, DCI works with member volunteers to assemble a team of professional consultants experienced in their discipline. DCI and the assessment team members appreciate the invitation to return to assist your community. The team worked diligently to provide relevant and realistic input toward the betterment of your community's commercial area.

## Executive Summary

In June of 2014, the City of Castle Pines requested that DCI assist in determining how the City could coordinate with Douglas County Library District's new library project to catalyze enhancements in Castle Pines' commercial center. According to the goals for the study

determined by the City of Castle Pines, DCI assembled a team with expertise in landscape architecture, transportation engineering and planning, graphic design, and wayfinding and signage.

Prior to this visit, members of the DCI team met with the library architects and the City planning team to assess needs for parking, circulation, and building concepts to maximize on the parcel. Based on these meetings, the DCI team arrived to Castle Pines on June 7th already equipped with initial sketches and recommendations.

The first day began with presentations from the library district on their most recent plans and designs as well as from the City on its goals and challenges. Throughout the day, the assessment team hashed out details about circulation and signage and brainstormed ways to activate the spaces connected to the new library through Village Square.

During the second day, team members produced sketches, graphics, and visual examples to illustrate the recommendations they had come up with on the first day. Additionally, members of the team met with the City to go over financing options and a stakeholder analysis. At the conclusion of the visit, the team presented its recommendations to the City in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. The following report provides a brief background on the purpose and goals of the study, a list of challenges gathered from previous community surveys and team observation, provides action recommendations for short, mid, and long-term implementation, details projected costs, and outlines next steps. The report also offers talking points for the city, graphics and sketches, detailed expense estimates, and sample documents, all in the appendices.

## Purpose of the Study

Currently, the Douglas County Library District is developing plans for a new library in the Castle Pines Village Square. It is anticipated that the library district will build and open the building in 2015. City and community leadership have identified this project as an opportunity to implement supporting improvements to circulation, parking, and public spaces to begin the process of creating a walkable town center. DCI was invited to develop recommendations and cost estimates for these supporting improvements to complement the new library building. The City's guidance to DCI for prioritizing recommendations was to focus on projects that: 1) could be implemented in the short-term (0-3 years); 2) had a relatively low cost to the City; 3) considering what would be the mid- and long-term phases to move forward pending response to short-term implementation; and 4) considering possible financing opportunities. DCI assembled a multi-disciplinary team of experts who worked in Castle Pines during July 7th & 8th 2014 to develop a prioritized set of recommendations that met the above criteria. This document summarizes those recommendations.

## Background

In 2012 Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) conducted a Community Visioning and Strategic Assessment with Castle Pines. This exercise involved numerous stakeholders in examining potential actions for short and long-term community and economic revitalization of the commercial center. In 2013, Castle Pines completed a community-wide survey of several issues including some important questions about the future of the library, recreation center,

and general perceptions of service provision in the community. Following the DCI assessment and community survey, Castle Pines created a visioning committee which drafted a statement and resolution committing to ongoing revitalization of the commercial cores, and this resolution was endorsed by Council in August 2013. In Spring 2014, Council developed several strategic planning goals related to: Revenue & Fiscal Health, Infrastructure (including "Move... to a long-term capital improvement program"), Economic Development, and Community (including "Create opportunities and physical places to foster a sense of belonging and personal investment in Castle Pines").

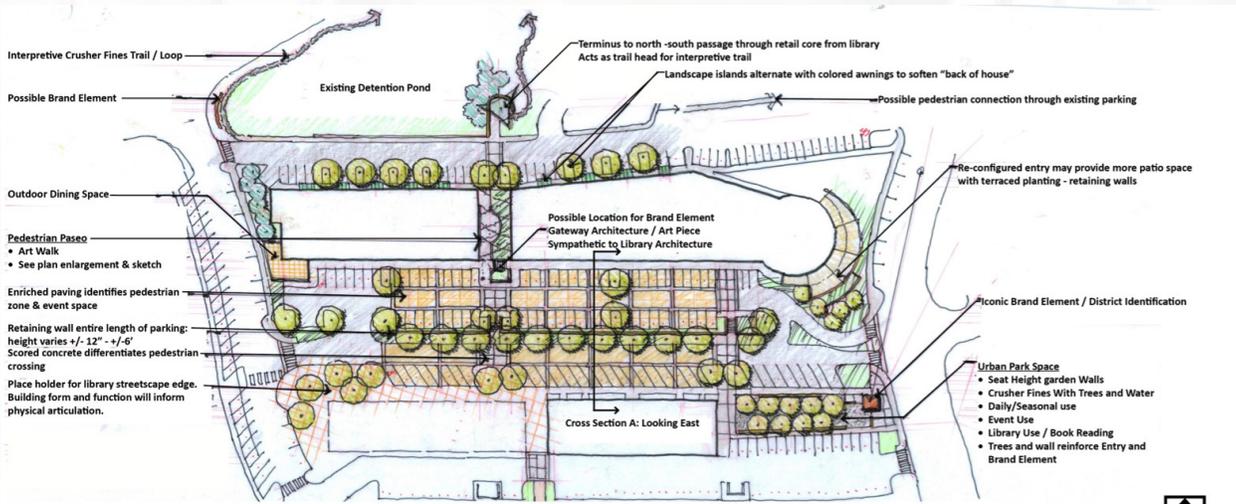
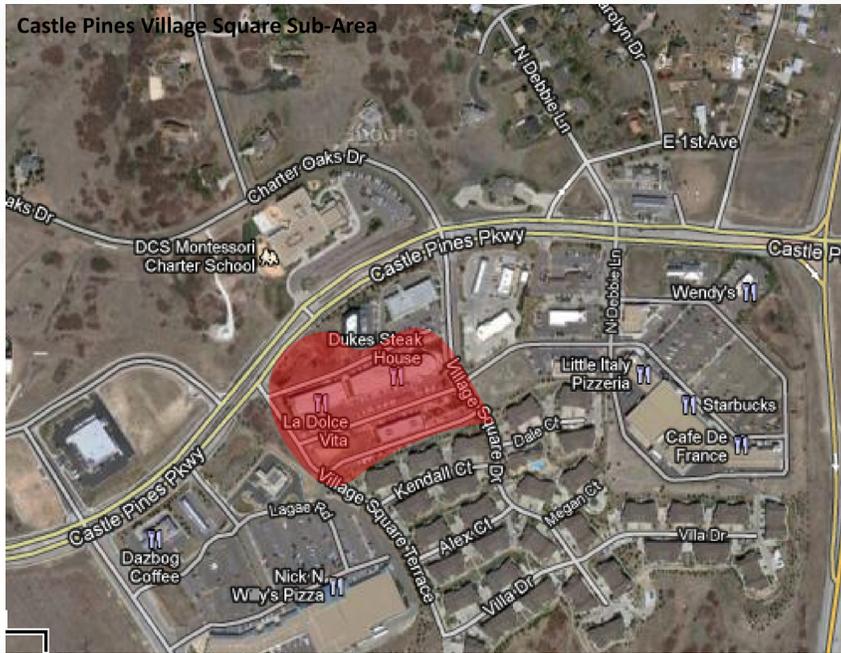
## Critical Challenges

- Current development patterns create challenging circulation and access, and detract from a cohesive identity.
- The buildings are entering into the last phase of their lifecycle. Operation and management costs will continue to increase.
- Commercial tenants concerned about comparably high rents. Stores experience relatively high turnover and vacancy.
- Residents concerned about lack of variety of goods and services on offer. Retail leakage is significant.
- The Canyons development will create substantial competition.

## Short-Term Recommendations (0-3 years)

In the 2012 DCI Assessment Report, one area of Castle Pines Village Square was identified as the highest potential impact area for investment to create a walkable core. Due to the City's initiative to identify and purchase a parcel in the

Village Square to donate to the Douglas County Library, Castle Pines' property and business owners have a unique opportunity to leverage on this public investment to reactivate the declining commercial area with a walkable, active core with moderate investment and enhanced management techniques.



### Conceptual Plan

Castle Pines Village Square Sub-Area



Additionally, there are larger circulation issues stemming from circulation to and from Castle Pines Parkway. The investment in the new library can be further leveraged by additional City enhancements to improve traffic access and flow, while adding additional space for public gathering and use at important gateway areas. This will also require consideration of the County role with road access to the Montessori School.

Short-term recommendations as outlined in Appendix I look to define a walkable core area with activity, visual elements, and ease of use and create a logical flow of automobile and pedestrian traffic through the core area. In short, this concept includes identifying spaces for human interaction and identifying a flow based on usage patterns. The enhanced design has been created to make the largest impact with the lowest cost to allow for more immediate results.

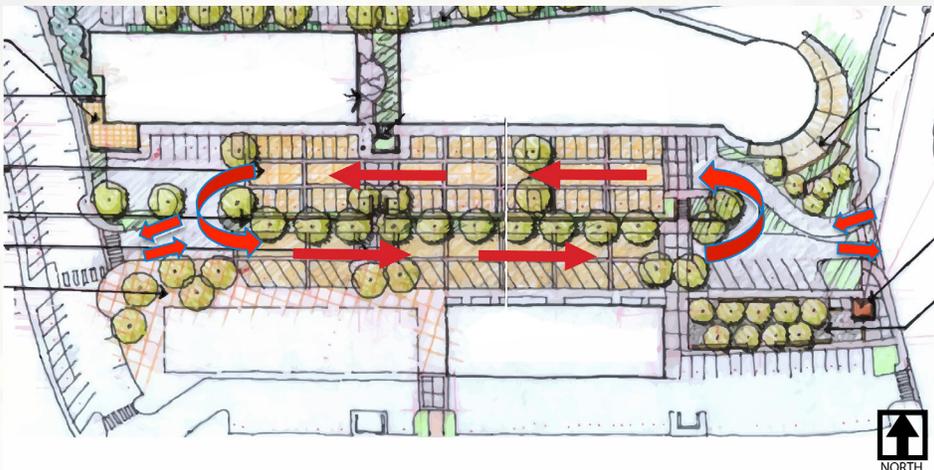
### Defining Village Square

- **One Way Couplet:** Creating a one-way couplet that circles a widened median defines the area as a destination rather than a pass-through that will calm traffic and create a sense of place. Reducing use of these roads to pass through traffic creates the possibility of temporary closure of the Square with bollards or even cones when a gathering space is needed for outdoor events.

- **Landscaping:** Adding trees and landscaping will add to the attractiveness of the area and also serve to break up the auto-centric feel with a softer more appealing look.

- **Concrete Pavers:** Colored concrete pavers further create a unique and defined area that can be closed off for events and further slows the traffic as a recognizable pedestrian area. If the pavers are installed appropriately, snow removal won't damage them, but a rubber-bladed or brush snowplow is best for snow removal on pavers.

- **Pocket Park:** The existing pocket park is not very inviting and is not well utilized. However, it could serve as a great entryway feature. We suggest a new, more decorative monument entry sign. Pave the park area with a pervious crusher fine material that would make the space more usable, and allow for an inexpensive change if this gets developed in the future. Provide shade trees and tables for people to sit at and to further identify the area as a public space, to make the space more inviting, and to provide an outdoor area for library programming or use by the neighboring businesses. Include some low walls with seating to define the area and separate it from the parking. Replace "fountain" with a new water feature – if the plumbing is still functional, or easily repaired.



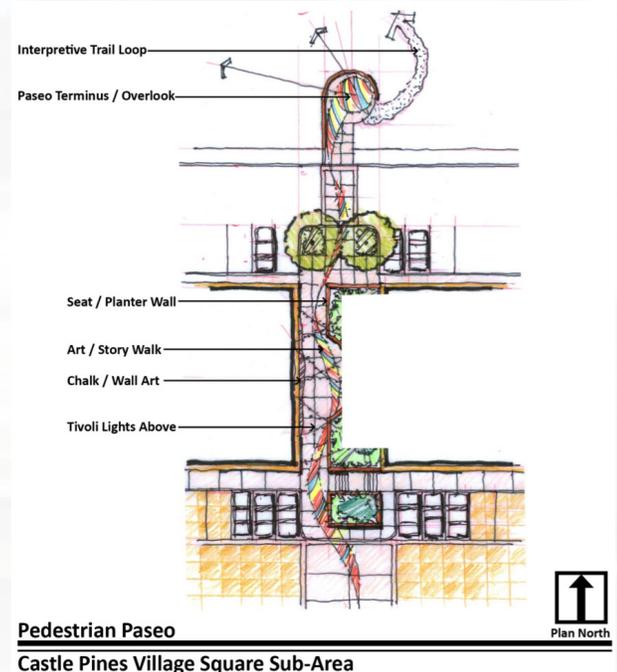
- Median Enhancements:** There are challenges with the median due to the change in grade. However, by adding beautification features and improving both stairways and possibly changing the west stairs to an ADA compliant ramp, the median will become an asset rather than an obstacle. The proposed median as depicted in Appendix III is 15 feet wide with space for enhanced landscaping including a tree row. There is not enough space to include a sidewalk or walkway on the median but pedestrian amenities in other areas will be enhanced.

- South Building Sidewalk:** Replace rock and sidewalk along the face of the south buildings with new sidewalk (could include some pavers) to create more space for merchants to display goods, create outdoor seating, and create a softer edge by providing space for more plantings. Maintenance and care of planting would be necessary and should be rolled into long-term costs and planning.

- Sidewalks:** Encourage outdoor seating similar to that at Dukes, as the presence of people creates a more vibrant atmosphere and attracts other people.

- Pedestrian Access and Amenities:** The existing pedestrian access from adjacent parking areas, behind the Village Square commercial buildings, is disconnected in some instances, uninviting, not well presented, and lacking adequate wayfinding signage. Creating clearly identified and appealing pedestrian ways will better connect parking options physically and functionally to the commercial area. There are several ideas for enhanced pedestrian access that can be done immediately because the locations are not impacted by construction of the library or road enhancement projects.

- Pedestrian Paseo:** The existing breezeway between buildings should be accentuated to 1) Create a pedestrian amenity and 2) Accentuate parking options beyond the "Village Square". The concept is simply to



enhance the existing breezeway and consider including a mirror breezeway between the new library location and the old library location. This can be as simple as wrapping the existing canopy around the corners of the buildings and draping Tivoli (catenary) lights (as depicted in the cross section shown in Appendix IV). Treat the paseo sidewalk with a path to draw people through the space and use programming to let it evolve. Consider including a shade cover with light and color. There are utilities, a mailbox, a bike parking rack, and some sidewalk issues but overall this is great space that is underutilized and not meeting its potential.

- Programming:** Encouraging activities and events in the Village Square will draw attention to the improvements, draw customers to the businesses and library, and begin to reframe the space as a community hub. Consider including a chalk wall, a library sponsored 'story walk' with plaques, climbing wall, and art along the pedestrian paseo and tying into the rest of the Village Square. Also consider partnering with the library or local businesses to program this area with special events and promotions throughout the year to

keep the space active.

- **Terminus:** Consider the paseo starting from a launching place between the existing City Hall and the drainage pond with a shade structure and seating as well as a nature interpretive trail or continuation of the story walk winding through the drainage pond. Consider how this can link to connect with pedestrian traffic to and from the Montessori school by leading to a designated crosswalk at the proposed new Village Square Terrace/ Max Drive intersection.
- **Backside of buildings:** Enhancing the drainage pond will also tie in the back side of the buildings and parking (from La Dulce Vita to Dukes) to a greater sense of place from outside of the Village Square and tie the current City Hall building block into the Core district. Adding some trees to break up the blank wall will do a lot to make this more attractive. In phase two, we have also outlined some potential changes to move to parallel parking, expanded sidewalks or an elevated ramp to allow for pedestrians and stair access, or consider vines or awnings. This will maintain all of the existing functions, while creating value through placemaking; the ramp will allow for more efficient delivery, and in the end allow for the possibility of outdoor retailing, dining and drinking functions.

### Wayfinding Strategy

Engaging residents and visitors with attractive, informative, and meaningful wayfinding is an important step in the planning and placemaking process and will be critical to defining and revitalizing a community core for Castle Pines and removing the feeling of fragmentation and piecemeal development. A good approach to signage and wayfinding is to develop consistent standards that can be adapted and altered as required to highlight existing destinations and future development. Creating a strategy for consistent and recognizable visual images

and a pattern for placement, sizing, and logical content will increase the impact of infrastructure and circulation planning. The result of a cohesive wayfinding combined with physical improvements to the commercial center in Castle Pines will help develop a user-friendly and more appealing community core. Ease of navigation and developing clear connections begins the process of extending economic and cultural benefits to the idea of creating community and civic pride.

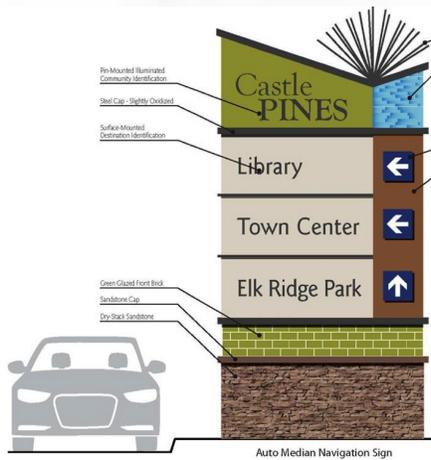
Wayfinding should be more than simple signage. It should incorporate a process to navigate through your community, and it should maximize the experience with promises that lead navigators to destinations. Consider three stages for arriving someplace: 1) entering the community, 2) identifying parking, and 3) connecting to the destination. Making each of those stages clear, direct, and appealing fosters a positive response to the place and can lead to continued visits. Wayfinding is also a key concept to further economic development because it is necessary to attracting and retaining business and keeping residents engaged while capturing tourist dollars. Appropriate signage requires a look at the materials, and placement of the signage continues the promise through an authentic and meaningful community “brand.”

- **Branding Elements:** Determining the “promise” of Castle Pines’ Village Square is a combined effort in engaging the community, developing a meaningful identity, marketing, planning, function, and design to determine the brand. See Appendix XII for a suggested Scope of Work for this process. Branding exercises should be incorporated into the process to collect local input on design elements that will accurately capture the character of the community. It should further be useful and encourage multiple modes of transportation and engage people on foot, bike, or car. Consistency of materiality demonstrates how a cohesive signage system can help establish

a legible community identity. An effective wayfinding strategy enhances the experience through “legibility” and leads residents and visitors to discover the unique destinations Castle Pines has to offer.

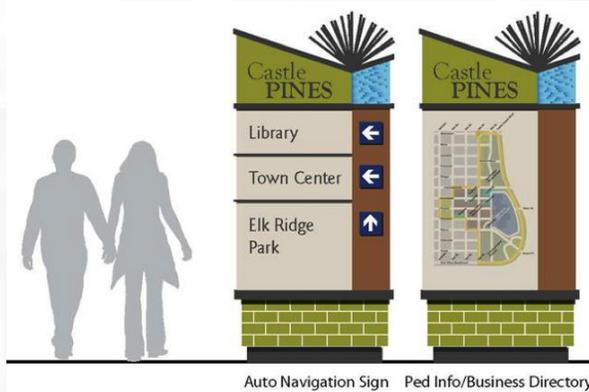
- **Types of Signage:** To ensure that signs are legible and meaningful to all types of users, there are guidelines for developing appropriate signs. The entire sign family suggested for Castle Pines outlined in Appendix VII is also displayed on maps in Appendix VIII. These graphics provide perspective on size and dimension of signs.

- **Auto Navigation Signs:** Auto navigation signs direct automobile traffic through the district, and should be strategically placed to manipulate the desired circulation and flow. These directional signs guide drivers off the interstate and major streets toward the core area and other primary destinations, or guide drivers from town to the interstate. Auto median navigation signs are meant to guide drivers through key decision points, either in the median or on the side of the street.



- **Pedestrian Information and Business Directory Signs:** To ease navigation by foot, the directory includes a map with direction

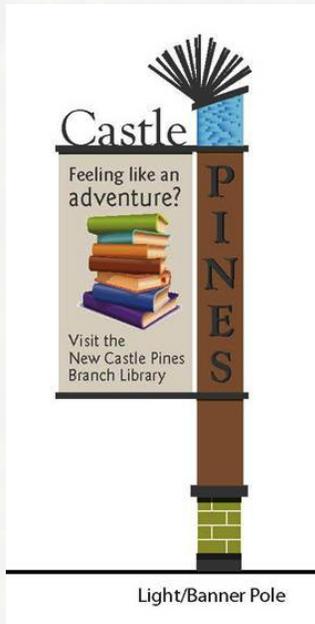
to all businesses and key points of interest. These signs are located along pedestrian routes leading toward pedestrian destinations. This type of signage may consist of a map of the core area, correctly oriented to the environment, and a list of area destinations. To capture cyclists, a mesh and aluminum bike orientation sign can be posted at key bike trails to direct bicyclist to the nearby features of interest.



- **Entryway or Monument Signage:** This type of sign announces to the travelers that they have arrived in town. They should be located on primary traffic routes at the town limits and should provide a sense of arrival and celebrate the community character. These signs should be made of quality materials and should have attractive landscaping to create a lasting first impression. The Storywalk Gateway is one concept for creating a structure at the terminus of the Pedestrian Paseo. The rendering in Appendix VII shows the height, while additional wayfinding components can be added to guide auto, cyclist, or pedestrian traffic.



- Light Poles, Banners, and Visual Elements: Adding visual cues that indicate arrival in a destination is an important component to define a sense of place for the community core. Light poles that tie into the sign family can replace existing street lighting, while banners, street furniture and other elements can create a cohesive feel.



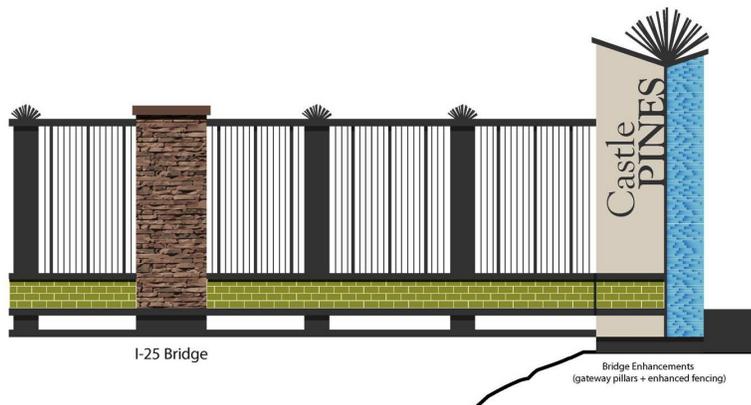
## Mid-Term Recommendations (4-7 years)

### Enhanced Circulation and Parking Options

- Consider adding some signage on I-25 to indicate a City of Castle Pines exit, including but not limited to commercial and civic uses. While a CDOT sign would be the first step, with

time, we suggested adding a more elaborate sign over the bridge. See Appendix VII for signage to be placed over I-25.

- Realign Max Drive to intersect with Village Square Terrace to simultaneously improve vehicular circulation and pedestrian safety for the Montessori School by creating a new access point for the school off of Charter Oak Drive and limiting the entry off Castle Pines Parkway to right in/right out only instead of the existing full movement access that causes traffic to back up on the Parkway.
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation, safety, and access to/through the commercial area by creating a signalized pedestrian crossing at the new Max Dr/Village Square Terrace intersection, sidewalks along both sides of Village Square Terrace, and the other sidewalk improvements discussed throughout this report.
- Work with property and business owners adjacent to Village Square to determine property ownership, circulation patterns, and develop guidelines for future new development and redevelopment. Develop a similar planning process for new building proposals to ensure that public and private investments are coordinated and support larger community objectives.



## Max Drive Realignment



- Create a “Village Square Redevelopment Plan” to create vision, planning & design guidelines, and operating agreements to coordinate development of private parcels and improvements to public realm through public-private partnerships. Recommended joint planning exercise between City and all interested commercial property owners.

- Back of Buildings: Move to parallel parking, expanded sidewalks or an elevated ramp to allow for pedestrians and loading access, or consider vines or awnings as an aesthetic short-term strategy. This will maintain all of the existing function, while creating value through placemaking, the ramp allows for more efficient delivery, and in the end allows for the possibility of outdoor retailing, dining, or drinking function especially for corner retail spaces.

### Long-Term Recommendations (7-20 years)

Implement “Village Square Redevelopment Plan” recommendations including: catalytic redevelopment projects, “complete streets” network, “park once district” parking management plan, and community gathering spaces.

### Projected Costs

**Short-term recommendations:** Very preliminary, order of magnitude cost estimates for short-term to mid-term recommendations on Village Square Placemaking and Wayfinding can be reviewed in detail in Appendices IX and X. To ease this process, it is further recommended to undergo analysis of various types of financing mechanisms to determine which model would best meet the financing objectives for Castle Pines. We also propose a branding effort to continue the dialogue on

Castle Pines identity as part of the wayfinding strategy implementation. Suggested scope of work documents for both of these initiatives have been outlined to provide the desired scope for under \$10,000 in Appendices XI and XII.

**Mid-term recommendations:** Prior to implementing mid-term recommendations it is suggested to undergo a comprehensive planning process that would likely cost between \$150,000 and \$300,000 depending on the size and scope of the study. Note that this is only a rough estimate that could be more narrowly focused on priority needs to maintain forward momentum within available resources. This planning effort should be a public-private partnership with cost-sharing among the City and private property owners and other commercial interests that will benefit from repositioning the Village Square to anticipate and respond to pending threats and opportunities.

**Long-term recommendations:** The cost for long-term recommendations will be contingent on the recommendations developed in the comprehensive Redevelopment Plan recommended in the mid-term phase.

## Next Steps

The City of Castle Pines should:

- Continue to coordinate with Douglas County Library District on library design and construction. These conversations should be expanded to develop some concrete steps for community partners, especially property owners in the Village Square section can begin to implement to make changes to circulation, design, and programming of activities as recommended in this assessment.
- Engage commercial property owners/ management groups to build support for “Village Square Redevelopment Plan” including potential

realignment of Village Square Terrace/Max Drive will be an important next step.

- Use the conceptual plans, very preliminary cost estimates, and tools in the Appendices to further investigate funding options and legal entities who can perform commercial district management, alleviate pressures of taxes and fees, implement and maintain infrastructure improvements. Also use these tools to issue RFPs for design and construction of capital improvements recommended in this assessment concurrent with Library project.
- Once local partners and ownership groups are engaged, consider how to establish the partnership to groups impacting the development outside of the commercial core area.
- Begin discussions with CDOT for installation of updated signage on I-25 to indicate a City of Castle Pines exit as soon as possible.
- Foster a dialogue with Douglas County and the Montessori School to improve on-site access, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, safety, and access to/through the commercial area.



## Team Member Bios

### Scott Barnhart

Traffic Engineer, Nolte Vertical 5  
 Scott Barnhart, PE, PTOE is an engineering manager in the Colorado Springs office of Nolte Vertical Five. Scott has over 20 years of experience in a wide variety of traffic and transportation engineering projects. Scott has been responsible for the design of roadway signing and striping, traffic signals, intersections and roundabouts. Scott has also developed neighborhood traffic calming projects and bicycle lane and bicycle path projects. Scott has studied downtown circulation, parking and pedestrian movements in locations such as Chino Hills, CA; Ontario, CA; Anaheim, CA; Fort Collins, CO and Colorado Springs, CO. Scott is currently managing Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) capital improvement projects for the City of Colorado Springs including the Woodmen Road corridor, the Austin Bluffs Bridge over Cottonwood Creek and the Fillmore Street Corridor Improvements.

### Katherine Correll

Executive Director, Downtown Colorado, Inc.  
 Katherine Correll has experience spanning the fields of community outreach to advance downtown and community development, not-for-profit administration, project development and management, local government planning, marketing, financial and economic development services, and education. Katherine joined Downtown Colorado, Inc. as the Director of Communications and Operations in 2006; in 2007 she became the Executive Director.

Born and raised in Denver, Colorado, Katherine has worked with development initiatives in Denver, New York, Chicago, and the Former Soviet Union. Her focus on strategic planning and organizational development and management includes building viable and sustainable private, public, and non-for-profit institutions and programs. Prior to her current

position, Katherine served as the American Councils for International Education Country Director for the Republic of Moldova, where she managed the national American Councils' portfolio focusing on building civil society initiatives, education, and public administration reforms. She was also responsible for management and growth of the American Language Center, language and professional training school. Katherine received her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University and her Bachelor's Degree in Politics with a Minor in Urban Studies from New York University.

### Kristin Cypher

Landscape Architect, Britina Design  
 In both her professional and educational experience, Kristin Cypher has had the opportunity to research, design and manage an interesting mix of public and private land planning projects. As both a planner and a landscape architect, Kristin's expertise ranges from field work documentation to the planning and design of historic and current places. A researcher at heart, Kristin continually drives the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of Britina's work. As the primary point of contact for Britina's community planning and design work, Kristin is often the 'face' of Britina during public meetings and project presentations, where her gift for communication and consensus-building shines.

### Michael Gasper

President, DHM Design  
 Mike has over 30 years of diverse project experience in planning and landscape architecture. As President of DHM Design, he has proven leadership capabilities in guiding complex multi-disciplinary teams and successfully navigating the stakeholder outreach and consensus building process. Mike moves effortlessly between public and private sector projects with an in depth understanding of the diverse issues that influence successful and

creative decision making.

Michael Hussey,

Planning Manager, Nolte Vertical 5

Michael Hussey is the manager of planning and landscape architecture for the Colorado Springs office of Nolte Associates, Inc. Michael has over 30 years of experience in a wide variety of urban design, landscape, planning, environmental engineering, and architectural projects. He has worked on urban development and renewal, and downtown streetscape improvement projects including Billings, Montana (downtown), Colorado Springs (Downtown BID), Avon (Town Center), Manitou Avenue (Manitou Springs downtown), Monte Vista (downtown), Broomfield (US 287), and Fountain (US 85). Project responsibilities have included grant opportunity identification and application, master planning, urban and site design, and construction observation and management. Michael has participated in numerous DCI workshops and conference programs, and has served as a DCI/DOLA team member on several Community Revitalization Program (CRP) visits. Michael is also the co-author of "Grow Native," one of the earliest Colorado xeriscape landscape guides, and has worked on a number of award winning projects – including the Colorado Springs Downtown Business Improvement District and Manitou Avenue.

Jeremy Nelson

President, REgeneration Strategies

Jeremy Nelson is President of REgeneration Strategies, where he advises public- and private-sector clients on strategic community revitalization, with a focus on projects that integrate land use and transportation planning, urban design and placemaking, and real estate development. Throughout his 15-year career he has executed on a variety of projects that have catalyzed community consensus and delivered lasting economic benefits. Mr. Nelson has worked at diverse organizations, including the City of Portland Planning Bureau,

Group 4 Architecture + Design, Livable City, and the Land Use and Transportation Coalition. Mr. Nelson holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Reed College, a Master of Arts in Urban Planning from UCLA, and a Certificate in Sustainable Management from the Presidio Graduate School, where he is a Fall 2014 "Expert in Residence."

## Emerging Leader Team Support

Caitlin Hale

Membership and Events Coordinator,  
Downtown Colorado, Inc.

Originally from Houston, Texas, Caitlin attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she received a B.A. in Urban and Regional Planning in 2012. After graduation, she spent a year assisting with planning related projects for the Park Board of Trustees of Galveston, Texas, a government entity that directs tourism efforts for the island. Caitlin joined Downtown Colorado, Inc. as a Marketing & Administration Intern in November 2013. She is now the Membership and Events Coordinator for Downtown Colorado, Inc.

Nancy Sprehn

OSM/VISTA/Community Assessment  
Coordinator, Downtown Colorado, Inc.

Nancy is originally from Fort Myers on the southwest coast of Florida. She received her B.S. in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University in 2014. While in college, Nancy assisted in the development of a university public engagement initiative for service-learning and community-based research. Her passion for community development has also led her to work with school gardens in Belize, parks programming in New York City, and the immigrant farmworker population of Upstate New York. Nancy is currently putting her communications, planning, and placemaking knowledge to use as DCI's AmeriCorps OSM/Vista for 2014-2015.