



WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

Clay Frickey, Redevelopment Program Manager

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

North College Projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North College has been the subject of focus and planning for the past 30 years. After 30 years of intentional planning and investment, the North College corridor has accomplished many of the goals articulated in City plans and policy documents. This AIS provides a brief history of planning in the corridor, what current projects are underway, and what the future holds for the North College corridor. While we have accomplished much, many of the desires for the corridor exist in tension with one another. Some of these tensions include:

- Affordability vs. desire for redevelopment and infrastructure investment vs. conservation.
- Desire for more amenities in the corridor vs. retaining the existing character of the neighborhood.
- Safe, comfortable, and accessible mobility options vs. fast vehicular movement through the corridor.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Are we focused on the right priorities with the next phase of North College's life?
2. How should staff navigate the tensions identified?
3. What more do you need to know as Council about North College?
4. Where else in the community would Council like to see a more focused, place-based implementation approach?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Overview of North College Planning Efforts

North College has long presented unique opportunities for the City and community. The North College corridor has long provided affordable housing and business opportunities while being next door to two of Fort Collins's greatest amenities: Downtown and the Poudre River. Despite this, North College has felt disconnected from the larger community due to infrastructure deficiencies and the corridor operating as a

State highway. Due to this unique context, the City has developed various plans and policy documents to support North College over the past 30 years. These planning initiatives include:

- North College Corridor Plan – 1995
- Urban Renewal Plan – 2004
- North College Corridor Plan Update – 2007
- Infrastructure Investment Plan – 2010
- Poudre River Natural Areas Management Plan – 2011
- Poudre River Downtown Master Plan – 2014
- Urban Renewal Authority Strategic Investment Plan – 2017
- Urban Renewal Authority Community Engagement – 2019
- North College MAX Plan - 2023

Through the years, these planning efforts have continued to hone the vision of the North College corridor and articulate goals and objectives for the future of the corridor.

When City staff began engaging the community to support the first North College Corridor Plan in 1992, the North College corridor looked very different than it does today. North College had no curb, gutter, and sidewalk. The Dry Creek floodplain covered most of the corridor, preventing development and presenting flooding hazards for existing residents and businesses. Few essential services existed in the corridor. This meant residents needed to go to other parts of the community for most of their day-to-day needs. Despite these challenges, stakeholders throughout the years have expressed their appreciation for the unique feel of the corridor that is distinct and unique to Fort Collins. North College was also an affordable place to live and run a business. All these factors lead to a vision for North College that the community has reinforced in all subsequent planning. This vision was:

- North College evolves to become more inviting and not just a highway
- More complete network of streets that are safe and comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Connect to Downtown
- Retain affordable housing and business opportunities
- Distinct design character that is more urban
- Bring more amenities to North College corridor (i.e., grocery store, restaurants, entertainment)

Summary of City Infrastructure Projects

New development in North College was difficult if not impossible prior to the City’s investment in resolving infrastructure deficiencies in the corridor. One of the major impediments to development in the North College corridor was the Dry Creek floodplain. The City has invested millions of dollars to remove large portions of the corridor from the floodplain. In 2010, the City and Urban Renewal Authority jointly created an Infrastructure Investment Plan for the corridor. The table below shows the projects in this plan and their status.

Project	Completed?	Comments
Improvements to Existing Streets		
<i>North College Avenue</i>		
750’ from Hemlock to Conifer, street edges	Yes	
½ mile from Vine to Conifer – medians, eastside circulators and overlay	Yes	
300’ Conifer to Hickory	Yes	
½ mile Hickory to Willox, permanent sidewalk, street edges, medians, and overlay	Yes	
¼ mile Eaton Ditch to Highway 1	Yes	

Project	Completed?	Comments
Conifer/Hickory intersection realignment	No	Would have required purchase of property on NE corner of Conifer and College, which is an historic property

Other

Vine Drive – ½ mile College to Linden	Yes	
Willox Lane – ½ mile from Union Pacific Railroad to College	Yes	
Alley upgrade east ¼ mile from Conifer to Bristlecone	Yes	

New Streets

Suniga Road – College to Redwood	Yes	
Redwood Street – Cajetan to Vine	Yes	
Mason Street to Alpine	No	Part of North College Drainage Improvement Design (NCDID)

Storm Drainage Facilities

Northeast College Corridor Outfall (NECCO)	Yes	
North College Drainage Improvement Design (NCDID)	No	Covers west side of corridor from Willox to the Poudre River. 30% design complete in 2022.

Sewer Line

Westside sewer from Alpine to Poudre Valley Plaza	No	Part of NCDID
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The last remaining major project from the 2010 Infrastructure Investment Plan is completing Mason Street with associated stormwater and sewer facilities in the corridor, for which engineering is currently underway.

Summary of New Development

One of the objectives of the North College Corridor Plan was for increased development activity in the corridor. After City investment resolved some of the major impediments to development, private development increased in the corridor. The tables below summarize the development activity in the corridor since 1995.

Residential Development Summary

Subdivision	Single-Family			Total Units
	Detached	Townhomes	Multi-family	
Old Town North	132	74	88	294
Crowne at Old Town North			304	304
Aspen Heights			220	220
Greenbriar Village	72		40	112
Revive		37	36	73
Village on Redwood			72	72
Total	204	111	760	1075

Commercial Development Summary

Project Name	Square Feet
Lyric	10,000
Feeders Supply	2,220
Country Club Corners	125,595
N College Marketplace	175,000
Innosphere	31,000
Kaufman and Robinson	10,000
Valley Steel	19,000
Hickory Commons	31,136
Total	403,951

The residential development in the corridor doubled the number of housing units. The new commercial development in the corridor has brought essential amenities to the corridor such as a grocery store, employment opportunities, entertainment, and incubator space for small businesses. Opportunities remain to fulfill the vision of the corridor. The corridor still has the character of a highway with many businesses oriented to the car. College Avenue is still a barrier to traveling on foot or bike to destinations within the corridor or to the rest of Fort Collins. New development will fill in infrastructure gaps and deliver more amenities to the corridor. New development, however, has led to increasing rents and a shift in the area's identity. This has raised the tension between providing essential infrastructure to enable development and bring amenities to the corridor while retaining the area's affordability and character.

Summary of Public Space

One of the priorities at the onset of planning for the North College corridor was to provide parks and open space within the corridor. Parks opened Soft Gold Park in 2004. In 2019, Parks opened the Poudre River Whitewater Park. The Whitewater Park provides additional recreation opportunities on the Poudre River while connecting the North College corridor to the river as well as Downtown. Natural Areas has acquired, restored, and maintains four Natural Areas within the corridor: Salyer (1985), McMurry (2003), Magpie Meander (2013), and River's Edge (2001). Salyer has been City-owned natural area since 1985. All these amenities are connected by the Poudre Trail and Hickory trail spur.

Current Plans and Projects

Many projects are underway in the North College corridor. These projects represent the work of many departments within the City as well as the development community. Upon completion of these projects, nearly all the goals and objectives for the corridor articulated in the various planning documents will have been achieved.

Current Plans and Projects

Project Name	City, URA, or Private Development	Status
North College MAX Plan	City	Council to consider in Q1 2023.
Mobile home park re-zonings	City	Hickory Village and North College re-zoned by City in 2022.
Land Bank acquisition	City	Acquired property in 2018.
North Mason	City and URA	30% design completed. Preparing to acquire right-of-way.

Project Name	City, URA, or Private Development	Status
Poudre River Zone Update	City	Natural Areas updating plan, slated for completion in 2023.
Powerhouse II	Private development	Approved by Planning & Zoning Commission. Construction in 2023.
Jerome Street Station	Private development	Approved by hearing officer. Construction in 2023.
North College Marketplace	Private development	Construction completed on last pad sites.
24/7 Shelter	Private development	In development review process.
Sit and Stay Dog Bar	Private development	Approved by hearing officer. Construction in 2023.
Albertsons	URA	URA performing due diligence to participate in redevelopment or purchase site.

A team of City staff meets every month to coordinate on the current projects in the corridor. This allows for better collaboration and ensures that projects work together to reinforce the vision for North College.

Future of North College

City Plan identifies North College as being an Infill/Redevelopment Opportunity Area with a Community Activity Center at Wilcox and College. Current zoning supports this vision by allowing a wide range of land uses. Recent analysis supporting the Housing Strategic Plan shows the North College corridor houses two census tracts in the process of gentrification. The census tract on the east side of the North College corridor is the only census tract in Fort Collins in the middle part of gentrification (Attachment 2). Much of the new development in the corridor has occurred east of College. The new residential development has largely been market rate. That has meant that the neighborhood has more residents that are wealthier, more educated, and whiter than before. Despite this, 44% of the population is Hispanic/Latinx and the corridor has more renters, families earning less than 80% of median household income, and people with less than college education than the average for Fort Collins.

Community members' perceptions match what the data shows. During the community engagement effort for the North College MAX Plan, community members identified gentrification as one of the main issues facing the neighborhood. Due to this, community members expressed an interest in expanding MAX to the corridor and accompanied by additional investment in affordable housing and other policies to stabilize rents in the corridor.

These aspects of the corridor highlight several tensions, including:

- Affordability vs. desire for redevelopment and infrastructure investment vs. conservation
- Desire for more amenities in the corridor vs. retaining the existing character of the neighborhood
- Safe, comfortable, and accessible mobility options vs. fast vehicular movement through the corridor.

The concept of the 15-minute City could provide a framework to navigate these tensions and others. The 15-minute City helps identify what assets exist in a neighborhood and what amenities are missing in a neighborhood that would allow community members to accomplish most of their day-to-day tasks and needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. The 15-minute City Report as part of the Active Modes Plan identifies North College as being an equity focus area. This means there are the presence of vulnerable

populations with lack of connections to destinations. Combined with the other data at staff's disposal, the 15-minute City could help with prioritizing projects to fill infrastructure gaps, inform updates to zoning that would create a more complete neighborhood, and ensure investments targeting the communities that need these improvements most.

On February 21, 2023, Council will consider adoption of the North College MAX Plan. This plan has a vision that states:

The vision for North College Avenue is for a safe, accessible, attractive, and affordable corridor for people who live, work, and visit the North College area. North College Avenue will be a gateway and hub for local and regional transit connections that link people to essential services, recreation, and entertainment. The corridor will connect to a comfortable and convenient network for people using active modes made up of sidewalks, share-use paths, and bike lanes.

Transit stations will be focal points for new, multi-story development that de-emphasizes surface parking. Corridor development will bring upgrades to infrastructure, improve public space, and fill in existing vacant land and buildings. New development will occur in a way that protects the natural environment and preserves affordability and diversity of residents, local businesses, and service providers. North College Avenue will become a district and destination with its own distinct character that is driven by residents, workers, and local business owners. The corridor will be a safe and comfortable corridor to travel through and a destination for people of all socio-economic statuses, ages, and abilities.

Questions for Council

1. Are we focused on the right priorities with the next phase of North College's life?
2. How should staff navigate the tensions identified?
3. What more do you need to know as Council about North College?
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ATTACHMENTS

1. North College Corridor Plan Vision
2. Gentrification Analysis
3. Presentation