



Downtown Streetscape Capstone

Presented to the City of Littleton

Prepared by Jon Brachna & Gabby Masucci

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Executive Summary

The City of Littleton has a vibrant downtown with a mix of uses that take advantage of the gridded street network and light rail on the east side of the area. The historic district along Main Street and small-scale design along Alamo Avenue contribute to the Downtown character and appeal. Denver Water's impending project to replace outdated infrastructure is an opportunity for the City of Littleton to improve the streetscape and alleviate some of the current pedestrian and accessibility challenges. One of the main project goals was to ensure that the Main Street and Alamo Avenue redesign proposals address current ADA compliance issues. The project team's final design proposals for each street will help reimagine the streetscape as a pleasant experience for all visitors by all modes of travel along Main Street and Alamo Avenue.

The project team began their research with the intent to understand the current city policies and future goals. The project team utilized relevant information from Littleton's plans and guidelines that outline the current and future goals of the Downtown area. These include the Transportation Master Plan, Envision Littleton Comprehensive Master Plan, Downtown Littleton Design Standards and Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. The project goal to improve walkability through placemaking and compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is supported by these adopted plans that want to maintain Littleton's small-scale and historic character.

The relevant takeaways from the Littleton planning documents were essential considerations for different kinds of improvements. Although these plans have a common goal of preserving the historic character of Littleton, they present different approaches. The recently adopted Comprehensive and Transportation Master Plans value Littleton's well-known characteristics and acknowledge that through intentional land use designations and multimodal considerations there is opportunity to increase multimodal forms of travel. Comparatively, the Downtown Design Standards and Historic Preservation Guidelines are considerably more focused on the preservation and maintenance of the existing character of Main Street and Alamo Avenue. Specifically, that on Alamo Avenue the commercial and residential character areas should remain two distinct areas, which may present a limitation as Littleton continues to grow. The convergence of these plans on Main Street and Alamo Avenue is important because it reinforces the community value of its history, while providing an avenue for creative solutions to improve walkability throughout the Downtown area. The project team consulted these plans to ensure that improvements are consistent with the City's overall vision for the Downtown.

Further research on walkability found that more and more cities in the United States are wanting to understand and improve walkability and the pedestrian experience. Whether it be for recreation or transportation, walkable spaces are incredibly valuable to communities. Improving walkability requires a comprehensive understanding of the streetscape and surrounding environment, including vehicular traffic and speeds and land use types. Placemaking emerged as a common result of walkability improvements and can be accomplished through temporary pilot projects that allow the community to interact with potential future changes.

The project team developed the project methodology using the research conducted on the current walkability and planning discourses. A key takeaway from this research was the importance of understanding community values. COVID 19 stay at home restrictions impacted the project team's data collection and community engagement. Although public outreach and data collection was a project limitation, the project team attended a studio workshop for the Unified Land Use Code; a project running concurrently with this project. The team utilized information from the research, provided data, plans and public meeting to guide the development of the preliminary and final streetscape design recommendations.

The project team proposed several specific recommendations for Main Street and Alamo Avenue to the client, who provided insightful and guiding feedback for moving forward with final design development.

The final design recommendations for Main Street look to build upon the current historic character by adding physical elements that will improve safety and allow accessibility for all users. The designs explore alternative ways to activate spaces by using temporary and long-term changes. Other recommendations examine how the redistribution of trees can change the viewing experience and create a distinct pedestrian zone. These changes will look to improve the social wellbeing, economic stability and environmental impact of Main Street.

The final design recommendations for Alamo Avenue seek to build upon the existing characters and conditions of the street, while improving the general sense of place that connects people to their surroundings. The overall streetscape recommendation will serve to establish one unified identity on Alamo Avenue, while also providing more space for the pedestrian. The temporary and permanent parklet recommendations take advantage of two on street parking spaces that can be moved to other areas of the street. Both the short and long-term recommendations propose a way to create a multi-use space in front of two store fronts between S. Curtice and S. Nevada.