

Emerging Opportunities

Rifle Transit Oriented Development Strategic Plan



EXECUTING RIFLE'S DOWNTOWN VISION

Rifle's 2005 Downtown Master Plan outlined a vision for a vibrant, mixed-use downtown that would serve as a hub for culture and commerce. That vision sparked a revival of downtown Rifle, with new projects such as Centennial Park, the new Rifle Library, the New Ute Theater, Brenden Theater and multiple building renovations. Building on these successes, Rifle's Transit Oriented Development Strategic Plan is now setting the stage for the next phase of Rifle's downtown renaissance, producing catalytic projects that advance transportation, housing and economic development goals while respecting market realities. The emerging opportunities identified for Rifle's downtown are described below along with the next steps needed to make Rifle's vision a reality.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN CHARRETTE

A weeklong design charrette was held in April 2012 to address site planning, street network and multimodal facility design concepts for the downtown through a creative, collaborative public process. Designers worked alongside economists to identify future housing, retail and office space demand in the downtown and built designs around these projections. The goal of the charrette was to initiate conceptual design and preliminary engineering of public facilities as well as site development plans. The well-attended charrette identified five design principles that inform these emerging opportunities.



- **Embrace the Colorado River:** Citizens identified the strong desire to connect to the Colorado River from the downtown visually, physically and socially.
- **Catalyze Market Opportunities:** Capitalize on opportunity sites that have the potential to positively impact other sites in the downtown area, triggering additional public and private investment.
- **Implement District-Wide Utility Systems:** When possible, create an environment where issues are addressed at the district-level and not on a site-by-site basis, especially for public utilities such as stormwater management and parking.
- **Put the Pedestrian First:** Make downtown a place where pedestrians have priority over vehicles.
- **Leverage Placemaking:** Enhance the aesthetics and character of the downtown to establish it as both a local and regional destination.



EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

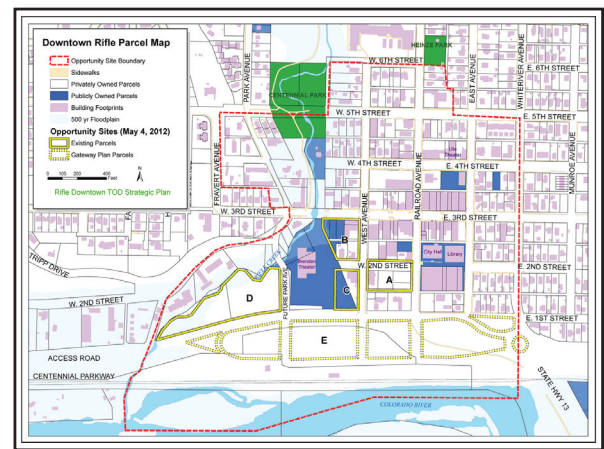
Transit Oriented Development and Downtown Revitalization

Transit-oriented development (TOD) will provide the framework for the next phase of downtown revitalization, aligning commercial and residential redevelopment and infill opportunities with urban design, housing, transportation and economic goals. TOD builds on Rifle's progress toward creating a walkable, mixed-use downtown and recognizes that the success of the downtown depends on modern connections to the community and larger region. The City is working with the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) to explore the potential extension of bus rapid transit (BRT) from Glenwood Springs to Rifle and as well as a strategic plan for developing fixed route, scheduled transit service within Rifle.



Catalytic Redevelopment

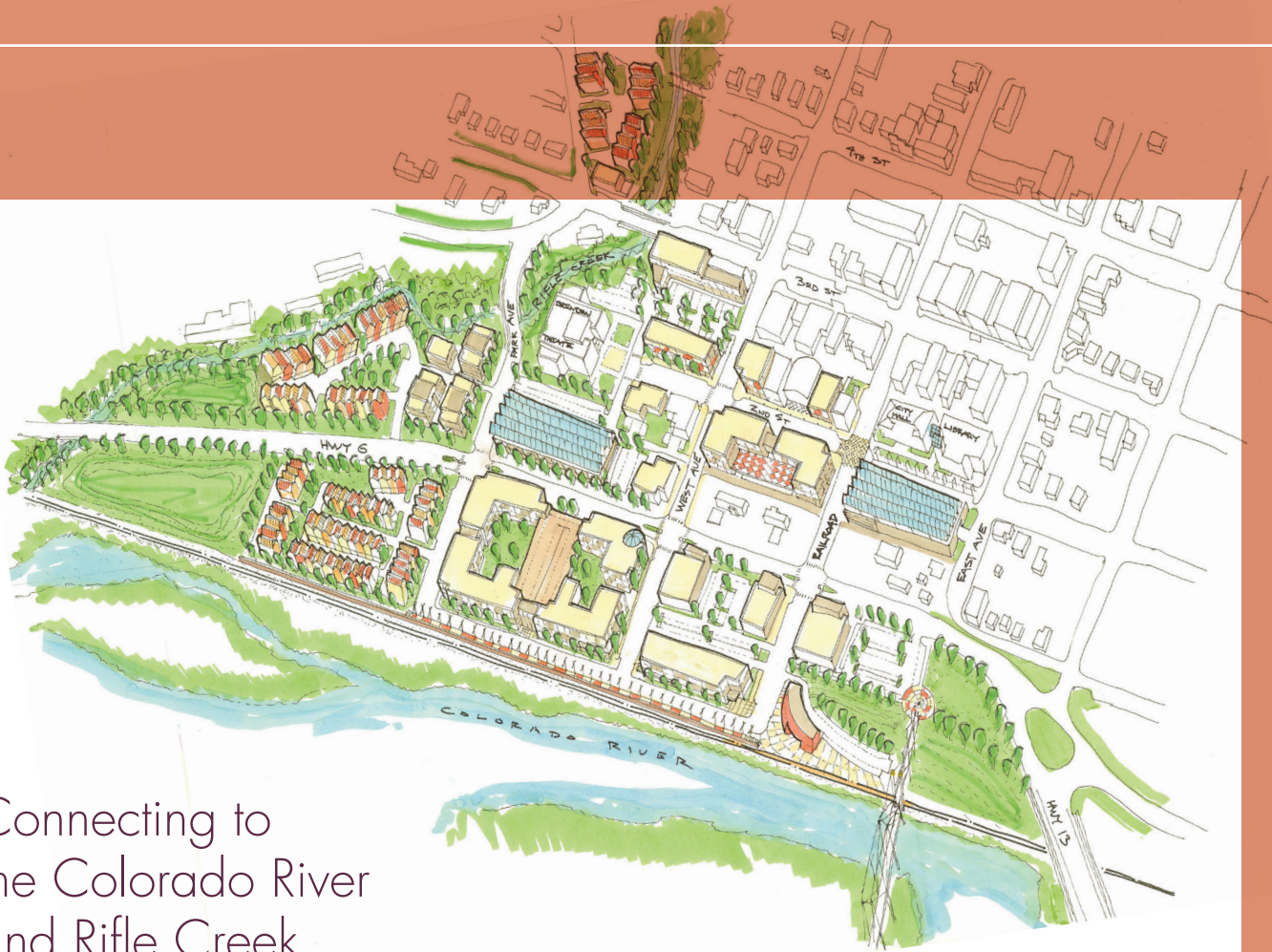
Downtown Rifle is poised for active market interest due to the location and ownership of several catalytic opportunity sites, sites that have the potential to energize other sites in the downtown area, triggering additional private and public investment. There are several large vacant parcels of land predominantly under single or dual ownership with great access and visibility located along Highway 6, Railroad Avenue, and West Avenue. These sites include the southwest corner of Railroad Avenue and Second Street, the northwest corner of Highway 6 and West Avenue, the large vacant parcel west of the Brenden Theater fronting Highway 6, and the 'Gateway' area, located between Highway 6 and the rail road track. Each of these sites has been ranked based on a market assessment of the greatest potential for vertical development, both in terms of timing and catalytic impact.



District-wide Utilities Systems

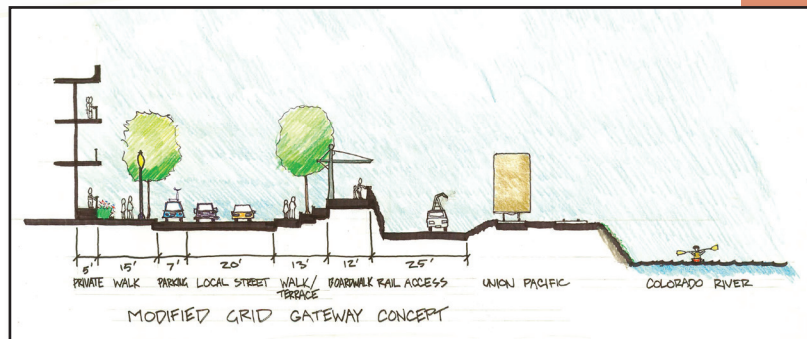
Utilities such as storm water detention, parking and energy generation can be implemented as district-wide services in the downtown, using a "public utility" model based on existing sewer, water, gas and electric service. By shifting these infrastructure requirements off of private lot development sites, infill and redevelopment projects will be able to achieve a mixed-use, urban development pattern. District wide storm water detention, shared parking facilities and energy generation facilities can be developed in optimal locations and shared, leading to a more dense, walkable downtown.





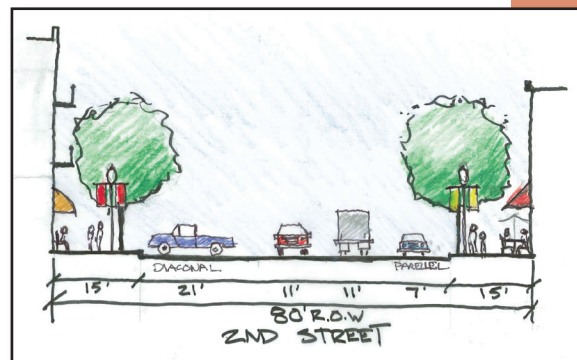
Connecting to the Colorado River and Rifle Creek

Rifle has been blessed by its location along the extraordinary Colorado River, and the smaller, more intimate Rifle Creek. Unfortunately, past development patterns in Rifle turned their collective backs to these assets. These invaluable resources are worthy of greater care and the community can enjoy them more fully by connecting to them. The Colorado River can become part of the “brand” of Rifle for cultural, recreational and commercial opportunities, thereby differentiating Rifle from other 1-70 corridor communities.



Pedestrian Propulsion

The community’s vision for downtown Rifle is of a lively pedestrian place where people of all ages come to shop, eat, stroll, linger and interact on the streets. The success of downtown Rifle and any future transit system will be determined largely by how well-connected, safe and inviting the pedestrian environment is. Downtown Rifle’s small block structure, and alley-loaded, gridded-street network provide a great opportunity for realizing this vision. With strategic infrastructure investments, downtown Rifle will be transformed into the active pedestrian place envisioned by its residents.



PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

The project has already uncovered several “ripe” project opportunities that would address project goals and help to catalyze private sector investment.

Bridge Connections

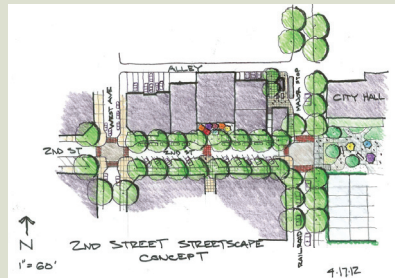
Before I-70 was built, a one-way motor vehicle bridge was used to cross the Colorado River south out of



town. For years, the bridge has been in disuse, even considered a liability. This historic bridge (owned by Garfield County) is now emerging as an important asset – a way to connect people and Downtown directly to the Colorado River. Redeploying the historic bridge as a pedestrian and bicycle facility is a top priority that will not only become an attraction, but support several project goals while providing an important link both to the River and to Rifle’s history. Providing access to the bridge will also complement emerging development concepts for the Rifle Gateway parcels.

Pedestrian Improvements

The ability to comfortably walk to destinations throughout the downtown is crucial to its viability. Several opportunities have been identified to enhance the pedestrian environment in the downtown, increase the safety of the streets, and create an enjoyable place to walk, shop, and socialize.



Gateway Grid

One of downtown Rifle’s greatest assets is its historic small block structure, and alley-loaded, gridded-street network. Rifle’s undeveloped Gateway Area, which fronts the



Colorado River, provides an unprecedented opportunity to extend the grid structure and enhance the connectivity of the downtown while also achieving the local vision of becoming a riverfront community.

Park Avenue Extension

One outcome of the charrette is a plan to extend Park Avenue south to Highway 6, thereby providing a key missing link in the local street network, distributing traffic within and around the Downtown. This project will include a new bridge over Rifle Creek, providing an opportunity to rehabilitate the creek-side environment and while also providing access to a large infill site with significant potential for development (one of the five opportunity sites).

5/2012

NEXT STEPS

The consultant team is working alongside the City and a large group of stakeholders to refine the results of the design charrette week in preparation for a public meeting in June, 2012. After that the team will complete an action plan identifying revitalization projects to be advanced into conceptual design and preliminary engineering early in 2013.



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