



Urban Land Institute (ULI) Colorado

# Resilience in Downtown Evergreen

A Technical Advisory Panel Report



A Report from the Evergreen Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)

By ULI Colorado

September 12-13, 2019



## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	2
II.	Overview.....	3
III.	Findings.....	7
IV.	Recommendations.....	9
V.	Conclusion.....	37
VI.	Stakeholders.....	39
VII.	ULI Volunteer Panelists.....	41

### Supported by:

Jefferson County, Evergreen Legacy Fund,  
and Denver Regional Council of  
Governments

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ULI volunteers walk through downtown Evergreen during the Technical Advisory Panel.

## Overview of ULI Advisory Services

Since 1947, the national ULI Advisory Services program has assembled 400+ ULI-member teams to help sponsors find solutions for issues including downtown redevelopment, community revitalization, and affordable housing, among other matters. In Colorado, ULI Advisory Services have provided solutions for such key sites as the Colorado Convention Center, Coors Field, Fitzsimons, and the Denver Justice Center.

## Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs)

ULI Colorado's Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) offer the same expertise at the local level. Each panel is composed of qualified and unbiased professionals who volunteer their time. Panel chairs are respected ULI members with previous panel experience. Since 2003, ULI Colorado has completed more than 50 TAPs leading to positive policy changes and built projects.

## I. Introduction

Downtown Evergreen is a charming mountain town main street in Jefferson County. It was built in a floodplain along Bear Creek near Evergreen Lake before zoning existed. Current zoning, onsite parking requirements, and floodplain regulations don't fit with the existing buildings or character of this unincorporated area. Recently, there have been proposals for retrofitting existing buildings to allow additional uses, such as residential above retail or office. While these uses are supported by the Comprehensive Master Plan, the zoning, parking, and floodplain regulations are hinderances to redevelopment. Additionally, there is not a sufficient funding mechanism in place for the local community to improve the physical infrastructure of the downtown.

In September 2019, ULI Colorado convened a Technical Advisory Panel composed of volunteer experts to help Jefferson County and the Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF) answer their questions about zoning, parking and connectivity, financing, and resilience.



ULI volunteers toured downtown Evergreen during the TAP.

## II. Overview

On September 12-13, 2019, ULI Colorado convened a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to provide guidance regarding resilience, safety, and revitalization in downtown Evergreen. For this two-day TAP, ULI Colorado assembled seven land use experts (see panelist bios on page 41) who volunteered to offer objective, third-party advice. The panel reviewed a detailed advance packet of prior studies, toured the study area, and interviewed local stakeholders, including county staff, elected officials, property and business owners, and local residents and organizational leaders (for a list of stakeholders interviewed, see page 39).

Jefferson County and the Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF) gave the panelists the following problem statement and questions to address during the TAP:

### Problem Statement

Downtown Evergreen is one of a handful of main street downtowns in Jefferson County. It was built before zoning and when zoning was enacted, it did not reflect the existing buildings or character of the area. The County has also enacted parking standards that heavily favor on-site parking, which is difficult in this area due to small lots and steep topography. Like many historic downtown areas, the buildings were built on flatter areas near water, which today translates to floodplains. There are many County and Federal regulations related to floodplains that are in place to protect lives and properties, but in areas that are already built, are seen as overly restrictive barriers to development. Recently, there have been some proposals for retrofitting existing buildings to allow additional uses, such as residential above retail or office. These uses are supported by the Comprehensive Master Plan, but the hurdles of parking, connectivity, and floodplains are difficult to maneuver. The County would like to foster the historic character of the Downtown Evergreen Area, but currently the zoning, parking, and floodplain are the biggest hinderances to

redevelopment proposals in the area. Additionally, there is not currently a funding mechanism in place for the local community to put improvements into place.

**Jefferson County and the Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF) sought the panel’s insight and recommendations in answer to the following questions:**

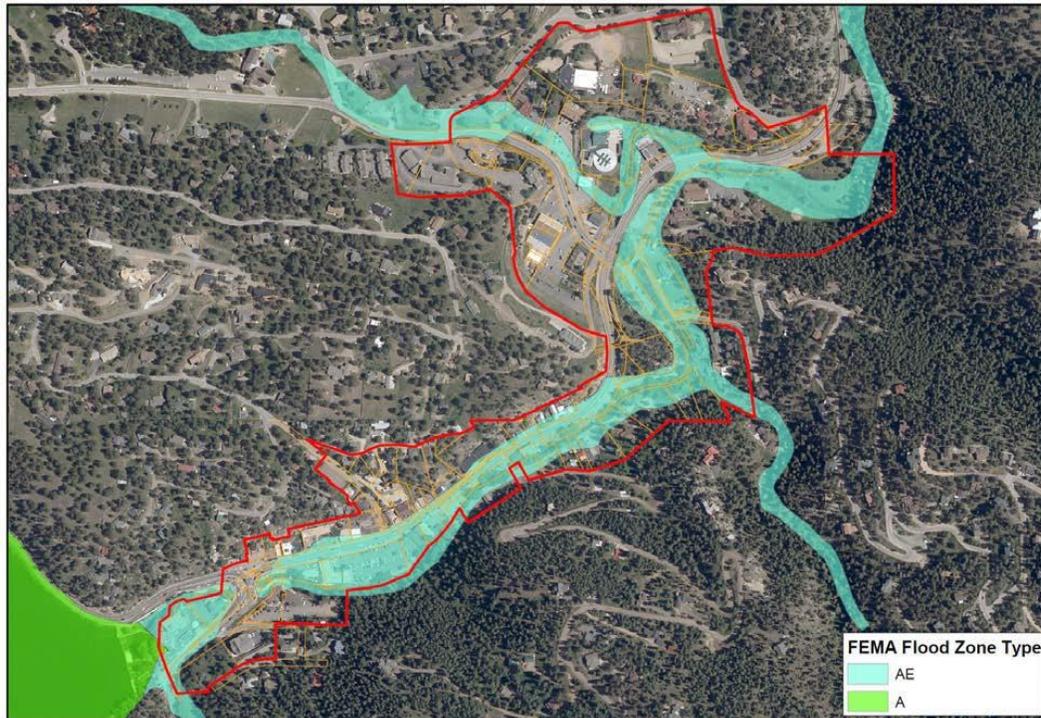
1. Would a form-based code be the best way to address the discrepancy between the existing Downtown Evergreen main street and the current commercial zoning? If not, what would a better zoning solution be? If so, what are the elements of a form-based code that would most effectively address the issues in the Downtown Evergreen Area, and are there other tools that we should use in conjunction with a form-based code?
2. How can the County and ELF create a revised road template for State Highway 74 that addresses vehicle trips, pedestrian walkability and maintaining the historic character of the area? Will the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) continue to allow on-street parking along State Highway 74?
3. Would a Local Improvement District foster additional development in this area? Or would the additional taxes be a hindrance to development?
4. What items could be addressed in a resiliency plan for emergency situations if rebuilding the downtown area would be necessary due to a natural disaster, such as a flood or wildfire?

This report includes findings and recommendations related to each of these questions.



The boardwalk in downtown Evergreen.

## About Downtown Evergreen



This map shows the study area of downtown Evergreen (outlined in red), the flood zone throughout the downtown (in blue), and Evergreen Lake (in green).

Evergreen's historic downtown lies along State Highway 74, occupying Bear Creek Canyon and bounded on the south by Bear Creek. While floods, fires, and development have affected the district's historic integrity, the pedestrian scale, wooden buildings and boardwalk attract visitors and locals alike to this small-town main street.

There are few unaltered historic buildings in downtown Evergreen. Nearly all have been enlarged or remodeled. The buildings in downtown Evergreen were constructed from 1896 to 2008, with most of the development occurring before 1980. Several of the oldest buildings are closest to SH 74, fronting the highway, and setback only the distance of the boardwalk or sidewalk on the northside. Most sites along the highway were developed without dedicated parking areas. The northern portion of the study area, near Meadow Drive, was mainly constructed in the 1960s and '70s. These northern sites include surface parking lots since automobile ownership was more prevalent during the time period these properties were developed. Currently, there are approximately 120 businesses in the study area.

The downtown area does not contain many residential land uses. Historically, there were dwelling units on the second story above shops and restaurants, but many of those spaces are being used commercially or as storage for the lower level businesses. Residential uses surround the downtown area, with low density single-family detached dwellings being the most prevalent form of housing. The low density of Evergreen paired with the steep slopes of the area exacerbates the need for automobiles as the main mode of transportation.

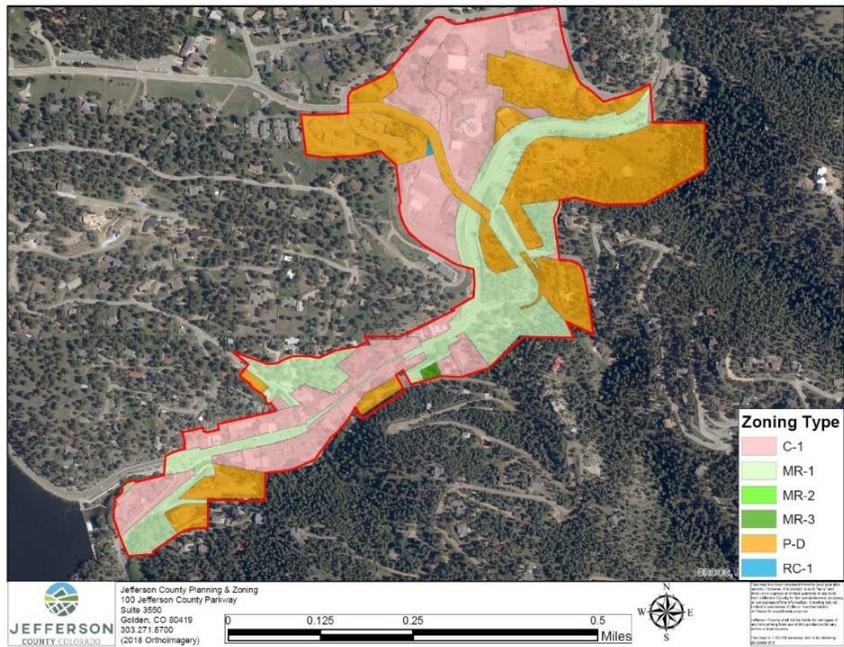
Pedestrian infrastructure is disjointed and missing in many areas. The western end of downtown received many pedestrian improvements in the early 2000s when the intersection of SH 74 and County Hwy 73 was reconfigured. Wide sidewalks connect downtown to the trail that circumnavigates Evergreen Lake. On the north side of SH 74, east of Douglas Park Road, is a historic boardwalk that provides separated pedestrian access to the businesses from Douglas Park Road east and is approximately 4 feet wide. The boardwalk adds charm and history to the area but is not ADA accessible. Once it stops on the east there are various sidewalks and social trails that extend until SH 74 narrows due to topography. At that point, pedestrians are forced to walk on the shoulder of the highway.

The area feels split by topography near Independence Trail. The eastern area is more spread out and more car-centric, whereas the western portion of downtown feels more like a pedestrian-friendly main street. There is easy pedestrian access between the two areas, but it is not well marked. Meadow Drive is a collector road that enters the study area. This road is often used by locals to bypass the intersection of SH 74 and County Highway 73. The intersection of Meadow Drive and SH 74 has developed with commercial and community uses and is one of the only areas of the County where existing buildings are being converted from commercial to mixed use.

Bear Creek, a 100-year FEMA floodplain, runs through the Downtown Area. The floodplain is relatively narrow given the steep slopes around the canyon. At the western edge of the study area is Evergreen Lake, which is a 40-acre lake located on the main stem of Bear Creek. The lake is formed by Evergreen Dam, which is a 380-foot-long, 34-foot-high structure. The lake was not created for flood control but serves as water storage for the Evergreen Metropolitan District, which provides water and sanitation. The lake impounds 670 acre-feet of water.

**HISTORY OF FLOODING IN DOWNTOWN EVERGREEN**

Portions of Downtown Evergreen were flooded in the area-wide flood of 2013, which seriously damaged several properties. Downtown Evergreen has flooded 24 times since the 1860s, with major floods occurring in 1866, two in 1878, 1885, 1886, 1893, 1894, 1896, 1903, 1907, 1908, two in 1921, 1923, 1925, 1933, 1934, 1938, 1946, two in 1957, 1965, 1969 and 1973.



The zoning in the downtown area is primarily Commercial-One (C-1) and Planned Development (PD). The southern end of the area was zoned C-1 in 1955 which is the original zoning of the property. Several structures in this area predate the zone district designation. Because the development predates the zone district, there are many non-conforming structures that cannot meet the building and lot standards of the C-1 zone district today. The dominant land uses of the downtown area are retail, restaurant, office, and art gallery, which are all permitted uses in the C-1 zone district. There are 12 PD's, each with their own unique use and building standards. The PD's are mainly to allow commercial uses, but several properties have also been rezoning to allow residential above commercial in existing buildings that had been solely commercial. There are also areas that are zoned Mountain Residential-One (MR-1), Mountain Residential-Three (MR-3), and Residential-Three (R-3). Many of the buildings were constructed prior to zoning and, given the constraints of the lots, could not be rebuilt as is under the current zoning. Many properties would not even be able to be built on if they were vacant today without rezoning.



Panelists walk along State Highway 74 to Downtown Evergreen.

### III. Findings

During the workshop, the panelists toured the study area, spoke with local stakeholders, and reviewed materials from Jefferson County about downtown Evergreen and its surrounding community. Before diving into recommendations, the panelists came up with the following findings.

#### Community Assets

Panelists agreed that Evergreen has a strong community with an attractive downtown, including historic elements and natural features that make it a wonderful place to live, work, and visit. Some of the specific assets serving the area include:

- Character of a historic-looking western downtown
- Bear Creek
- Beautiful natural surroundings
- People want to come to Evergreen
- Economic viability
- Evergreen Legacy Fund

**“We love this town. We want to maintain its small historic western town feel.”**

**- Tom Cordova, Alpen Way Chalet Mountain Lodge**

- County support for the downtown
- Groundswell for a Local Improvement District (LID)
- Desire for downtown vibrancy
- Interest in housing in the downtown

## Challenges

Jefferson County and ELF are wise to proactively pursue zoning, parking and connectivity, financing, and resilience solutions as redevelopment proposals come in and the downtown deals with the risks of the floodplain. Since downtown Evergreen was built in a floodplain before zoning existed, it has significant challenges that must be addressed soon. The panelists identified the following challenges:

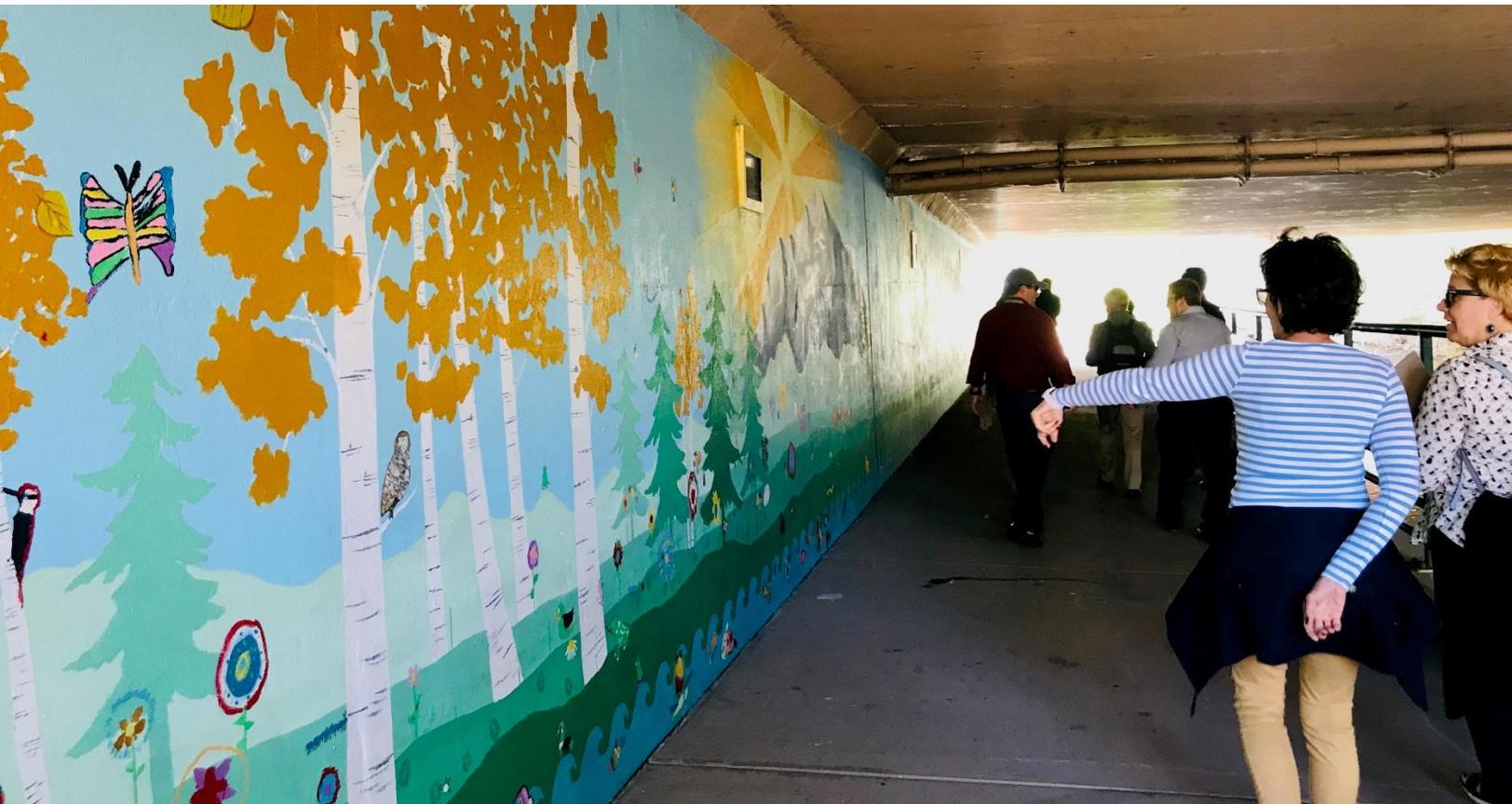
- Physical constraints: floodplain, downtown squeezed between Bear Creek and canyon wall, CDOT right-of-way along SH 74
- Lack of pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of equal access for people with disabilities on the boardwalk
- Parking issues: onsite parking is required for each site, people who park farther away must walk along the street
- Zoning and setback restrictions in the downtown
- Multi-jurisdictional issues between downtown Evergreen, Jefferson County and CDOT
- Property aging, blight and erosion
- Minimal pedestrian access to Bear Creek in the downtown
- Flood and fire access issues
- Fears around resilience issues & ability to rebuild
- Insufficient water taps for uses
- Red tape: permitting, entitlements process, right-of-way
- Complacent/unknown property owners
- Lack of lighting on roads and trails
- Erosion and sediment going into creek
- Amount of money needed for needed infrastructure maintenance over time

### EVERGREEN LEGACY FUND

The Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF), is a revenue stream generated from a voluntary one percent contribution from customers who purchase goods or services at participating businesses as well as private donors. These funds are matched with state and federal grants to pay for infrastructure improvements and public amenities throughout Evergreen. The fund grows at a rate of approximately \$60,000 per year. While this is a good amount of money, one small infrastructure project would exhaust all funds and the ability to fund larger scope projects is very limited.

**“We’re concerned with how tight main street is and how vibrant it is. There’s not much space to walk. We have problems around parking. How do we facilitate downtown vibrancy?”**

**- Chris O’Keefe, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning**



ULI volunteers tour the study area during the Technical Advisory Panel.

## IV. Recommendations

The panel's recommendations are divided into sections based on the questions posed to them:

1. Zoning and Design Recommendations begin on page 11
2. Road and Parking Recommendations begin on page 15
3. Financial Recommendations begin on page 27
4. Resilience Recommendations begin on page 30

### Why Downtown Redevelopment?

Before diving into recommendations that respond to the questions above, the panel wanted to address why redevelopment and reinvestment is important for downtown Evergreen. Without tackling the issues of zoning, parking, connectivity, financing for infrastructure, and resilience, the downtown's buildings and infrastructure will deteriorate over time. Current buildings in the downtown are at risk of flood and fire could not be reconstructed without rezoning the area.

**“We’re missing opportunities to enhance the downtown, which would attract people here and support local businesses. There are safety issues along the creek and on highway. Pedestrian connectivity would help.”**

**- Alexa Cowley, Mountain Home Furnishings**

Redevelopment in the downtown is important to support and enhance Evergreen. Additional benefits of investment in the downtown:

- Enhances quality of life for residents
- Provides public places
- Fosters business creation, attraction and retention
- Strengthens bond rating
- Protects historic resources and character
- Reduces sprawl
- Increases property values
- Supports a community identity
- Preserves authenticity
- Serves demand for a mix of uses

“Bear Creek is a beautiful asset for the town, but instead of celebrating the creek, we stick our parking lots on it.”

- Rachel Emmer, Evergreen Legacy Fund

“We need a vision for what downtown Evergreen could become. We’re currently lacking this, and our downtown looks run down.”

- Rachel Emmer, Evergreen Legacy Fund

## Creating a Community Vision

As a first step, the panel recommended undertaking a community engagement process to establish a shared local vision for the downtown. ELF and/or a local special district could lead this process, which would help to unite property owners in the downtown and assist with a plan for moving forward.

Through the community engagement process, downtown Evergreen could confirm a vision for what they want to become. A mission statement could also help to prioritize efforts in the downtown. In terms of process, the panelists recommended engaging design and market professionals in the development of a vision for the downtown and reviewing the vision and mission with Jefferson County staff for buy in and implementation over time.



## ZONING & DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Would a form-based code be the best way to address the discrepancy between the existing Downtown Evergreen main street and the current commercial zoning? If not, what would a better zoning solution be? If so, what are the elements of a form-based code that would most effectively address the issues in the Downtown Evergreen Area, and are there other tools that we should use in conjunction with a form-based code?

### Form-Based Code?

The TAP hosts posed the following questions to the panelists: Would a form-based code be the best way to address the discrepancy between the existing Downtown Evergreen main street and the current commercial zoning? If not, what would a better zoning solution be? If so, what are the elements of a form-based code that would most effectively address the issues in the Downtown Evergreen Area, and are there other tools that we should use in conjunction with a form-based code?

**Short Panel Answer:** *There are easier ways to address the zoning challenges than creating a form-based code.*

To clarify this response, Don Elliott, FAICP, a Director with Clarion Associates, explained the ins and outs of form-based codes and the alternatives for editing zoning codes.

Elements of Form-Based Codes (in Theory) all aim to increase predictability:

- Prescriptive Building (and Frontage) Forms
- Flexibility on Permitted Uses
- Administrative Approvals

Use of Form-Based Codes (in Practice):

- A mix-n-match of elements you need and elements for which you can get political support
- Not often used in lower density, large-lot, curvilinear contexts

*Overall, all newer codes of all types aim at predictability of form, flexibility of uses, and administrative approvals. Form-based code is not the best way of achieving those goals.*

**“Why put money into properties here? If there’s a change of use, permitting is too difficult.**

**As a result, we have blighted properties. We need some freedom to allow these buildings to flourish.”**

**- Bob Cardwell, Stillwater Partners**

**“Zoning and setbacks are an issue in the downtown.”**

**- Justin Montgomery, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning**

**“We need more mixed-use.”**

**- Betsy Hays, Evergreen Chamber of Commerce**

## How to “Fix” Zoning

Don Elliott mentioned three primary methods for fixing zoning issues:

1. Removing existing rules that thwart good things
2. Creating incentives to encourage better things
3. Adding new regulations to require better things

*Most of the problems with Evergreen’s current zoning can be fixed by removing existing outdated rules.*

A few of the problems can be fixed by adding new design standards to ensure that new buildings fit into the existing scale and feel of downtown (see page 14 for recommendations related to design standards).

None of these changes require – or are made easier – by form-based code.

### **Recommendations for current rules to remove (or revise):**

- Reduce front building setbacks to 0 or almost 0, since the current setback requirements do not make sense for the small sites in the canyon.
- Reduce side setbacks and let fire code govern.
- Allow second floors to be used for residential uses.
- Allow residential in commercial districts (outside floodplain).
- Categorize permitted land/building uses into broader, more flexible categories to allow easier adjustment to changing market needs and tastes.
- Revise “non-conformity” rules to allow existing buildings that are damaged to be rebuilt in their current sizes and location, and to allow old uses that are discontinued to be restarted.

### **Recommendations for revising the current parking standards:**

- Start with a parking utilization study (see page 25 for more recommendations related to a parking utilization study).
- Depending on the outcome of the study, possible solutions include:
  - Reducing required parking ratios (current eating and drinking ratios are very high)
  - Automatically reducing required parking for mixed-use development and shared parking
  - Increasing permitted distance of parking from 500 to between 1,000 and 1,320 feet (many people walk throughout downtown from a single parking spot already)
  - Creating a parking fee-in-lieu option
  - Repealing all minimum parking requirements (many walkable areas do – visit [www.strongtowns.org/parking](http://www.strongtowns.org/parking) for more information)

“Floodplains and insurance are the biggest issues. The local municipality has to put pressure on local property owners to invest in their properties.”

- Chris Parr, Denver Housing Authority

“How do we provide more housing options for people who live and work in Evergreen? Housing downtown would help retail and add vibrancy downtown.”

- Josh Russell, Medici Communities

“Jefferson County needs to pressure property owners to clean up their blighted properties. Parking should all be shared. Make the connectivity work. This area could also use some nice workforce housing.”

- Brian Roberts, BVR Development

## Overall: What Zoning Tool Works Best?

- Form-based zoning would work but:
  - It often starts with requiring specific building and frontage forms, which is more complicated than what Evergreen needs to address the current problems
  - It is usually not used in areas like the one east of Meadow Drive
  - The goal of getting administrative approvals (without public hearings) can be achieved in simpler ways
- Overlay zoning would work – but a second layer of zoning is not needed.
- *New base zoning that allows mixed-use by-right and establishes height and scale regulations to reinforce the existing scale and character of downtown Evergreen is the simplest solution.*

“There is a way to force change on privately-owned blighted properties: enforce building codes.”

- Greg Dobbs

### CODE ENFORCEMENT IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Life safety concerns and property maintenance in Evergreen should be addressed by the following code enforcement entities. The panel recommended conducting an organizational audit to identify any gaps in enforcement between the entities. They also recommended removing the fine maximum since property owners are not responsive to the current fines. The additional fine revenue can support code enforcement activities.

**Jefferson County Code Enforcement Offices:** Code Enforcement in Jefferson County, Colorado is responsible for enforcing the building and fire codes, health and housing codes, zoning regulations, property maintenance regulations, trash disposal requirements, noise ordinances, and other regulations. Alternatively, responsibility for Jefferson County Code Enforcement may be divided among several agencies or departments with expertise in certain aspects of Code Enforcement.

**Code Violations and Complaints:** Enforcement of codes involves a combination of inspections, responses to complaints, the issuance of Jefferson County code violations, and abatement. Code Enforcement personnel in Jefferson County continuously monitor for violations and investigate instances where a potential violation has occurred. Code Enforcement relies on complaints from Jefferson County residents in order to discover and investigate potential violations.

**Enforcement of Code Violations in Jefferson County:** When a code violation has been identified in Jefferson County, Code Enforcement contacts the owner of the property. Property owners are usually afforded an opportunity to address the code violation within a specified timeframe before a notice of violation is officially issued. The Jefferson County property will be re-inspected to determine whether corrective action has been taken by the owner. If corrective action has not been taken, a violation will be issued, and the Jefferson County government may abate the situation without additional notice to the owner. Abatement actions may include removal of junked vehicles, removal of overgrown vegetation, or demolition of dangerous structures. The cost of Jefferson County abatement is billed to the owner, and a lien is usually filed on the property.

**Source:** [www.countyoffice.org/co-jefferson-county-code-enforcement/](http://www.countyoffice.org/co-jefferson-county-code-enforcement/)

## Design Standards, Not Building Form

Adding new design standards can help ensure that new buildings fit into the existing scale and feel of downtown. Design standards are a small stick to preserve the historic character of the downtown.

“Pull downtown together with design standards.”

- Alexa Cowley, Mountain Home Furnishings

### Process for Developing Design Standards

- Create a task force to identify sacred cows that the community wants to protect.
- Reach out to the community to confirm vision of where the community wants to go.
  - Create mission statement and guidelines
  - Example themes: Main Street, Rejuvenation, Heritage, Sustainability, Vibrancy, Adaptability
- Engage design professionals to create design standards.
- Review design standards with Jefferson County for buy in and implementation.

### Considerations for Design Standards



Little Bear Saloon in downtown Evergreen. Image courtesy Holly on skyscanner.com.

The panelists recommended including the following elements in the design standards:

- Guidelines for building transparency & scale
- Overall building envelope
- Building massing, height and rhythm

- Building stepdowns to the street (focus on the pedestrian experience)
- Articulation: proportions & details
- Streetscape elements
- Uniform wayfinding
- Adjoining uses and surrounding neighborhoods
- Guidelines for:
  - Safety
  - Lighting
  - Accessibility (including ADA accessibility)
  - Resilience
  - Sustainability
  - Art

**“The boardwalk is not handicapped accessible. Can CDOT add sidewalks and crosswalks that are accessible to all?”**

**- Rachel Nicks, Seasonally Yours**

The panel recommended empowering local leaders to engage in developing the vision, mission, guidelines and standards for their community.

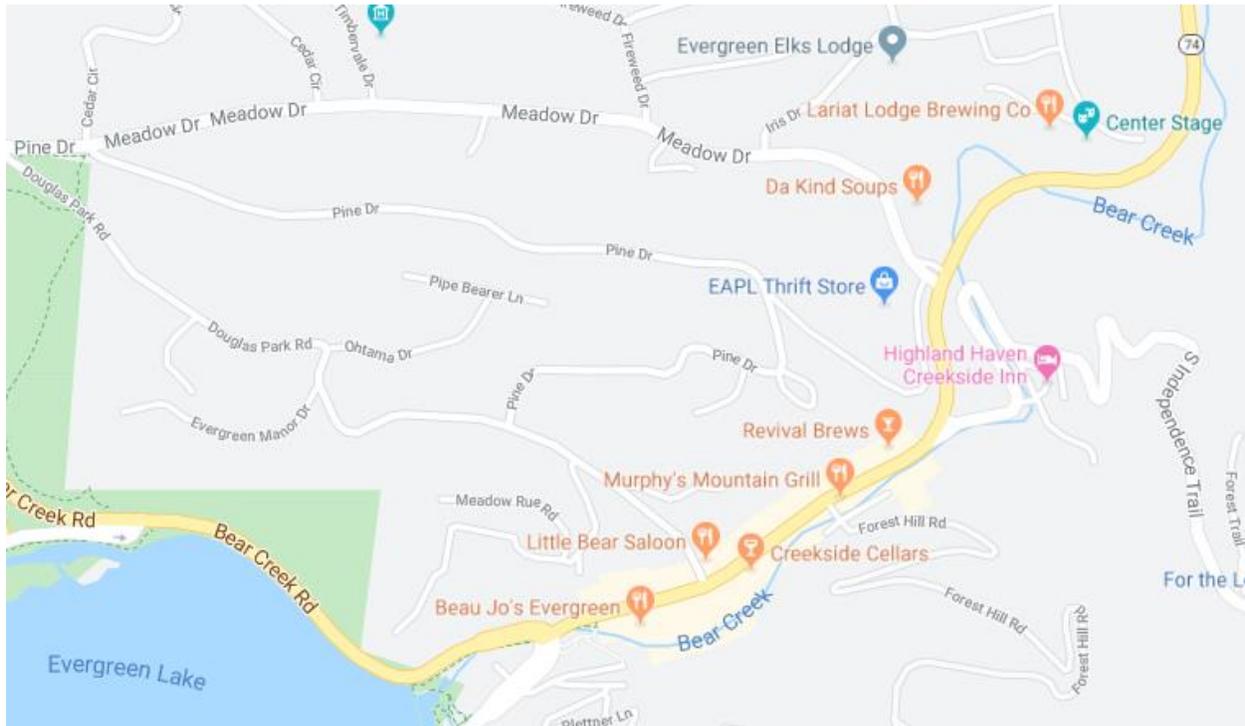
## ROAD & PARKING SOLUTIONS

How can the County and ELF create a revised road template for State Highway 74 that addresses vehicle trips, pedestrian walkability and maintaining the historic character of the area? Will CDOT continue to allow on-street parking along State Highway 74?



Aerial image of parking lot in downtown Evergreen courtesy Google Maps.

## Street Form



Map of downtown Evergreen  
courtesy Google Maps.

State Highway 74 (SH 74), the main road running through downtown Evergreen, is owned and maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). CDOT has stated that they typically use the local jurisdiction's standards for the right of way and road templates. Jefferson County does not have a road template specific to this area of SH 74, therefore, their standard templates are being used.

Jefferson County and ELF asked the panel to help create a revised road template for SH 74 that addresses vehicle trips, pedestrian walkability, and the historic character of the area. Since the character of the road changes dramatically throughout the downtown, the panelists studied various subareas of the study area and the walkability between them to provide recommendations.

Pedestrian infrastructure is disjointed and missing in many areas in downtown Evergreen. To the east of downtown where SH 74 narrows into Bear Creek Canyon, sidewalks have not been constructed. Additionally, access points to properties are not well defined, so vehicles can pull in and out of properties nearly anywhere along SH 74 in the downtown.

The western end of downtown, however, received significant pedestrian improvements in the early 2000s when the intersection of SH 74 and County Highway 73 was reconfigured. Wide sidewalks connect downtown to the trail that circumnavigates Evergreen Lake.

**“We’re concerned about pedestrian safety and access. If we add walking paths, will they be lit properly? We want them to be easily patrolled, but people are also concerned about light pollution. Other issues include people parking in the roadway, not enough parking during events, and ingress and egress for emergencies.”**

**- Del Kleinschmidt,  
Jefferson County Sheriff's  
Office**

On the north side of SH 74, east of Douglas Park Road, is a historic boardwalk that provides separated pedestrian access to the businesses from Douglas Park Road east. The boardwalk contributes significant charm and history to the area but is not ADA accessible. Once it ends on the east, there are various sidewalks and social trails that extend until SH 74 narrows due to topography. At that point, pedestrians are forced to walk on the shoulder of the highway.

On the south side of SH 74, there is a longer stretch of road that lacks a sidewalk. There is also a large, informal surface parking lot in addition to on-street parking, which causes pedestrians to walk amongst cars. On this side of the road, just prior to the narrowing of SH 74, Independence Trail intersects SH 74 and could provide a route for pedestrian travel that would have fewer conflicts with cars. While pedestrians would still have to walk on the road, the road has much fewer vehicle trips and therefore, feels less intimidating to pedestrians. There are three designated mid-block crossings in the western portion of downtown.

#### ADDING SIDEWALKS TO STATE HIGHWAY 74

According to the State Highway Access Code, the local authority (in this case, Jefferson County) can require CDOT to add sidewalks:

“Access design shall provide for the safe and convenient movement of all highway right-of way users and modes of transportation, including but not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and the physically challenged. **Sidewalks may be required where deemed appropriate by the Department or when required by the local authority.** Bike paths and a local commitment to maintain the facility, may be included in the access permit requirements upon request by the local authority.” (State Highway Access Code, page 59)

In unincorporated areas, CDOT maintains the right of way. CDOT has been reluctant to build sidewalks in downtown Evergreen because then it would then have to shovel and maintain them over time. CDOT has built sidewalks in an unincorporated area (Southwest Plaza in Jefferson County) where there’s a Local Improvement District that maintains them. Financial recommendations related to Local Improvement Districts are included on page 27.

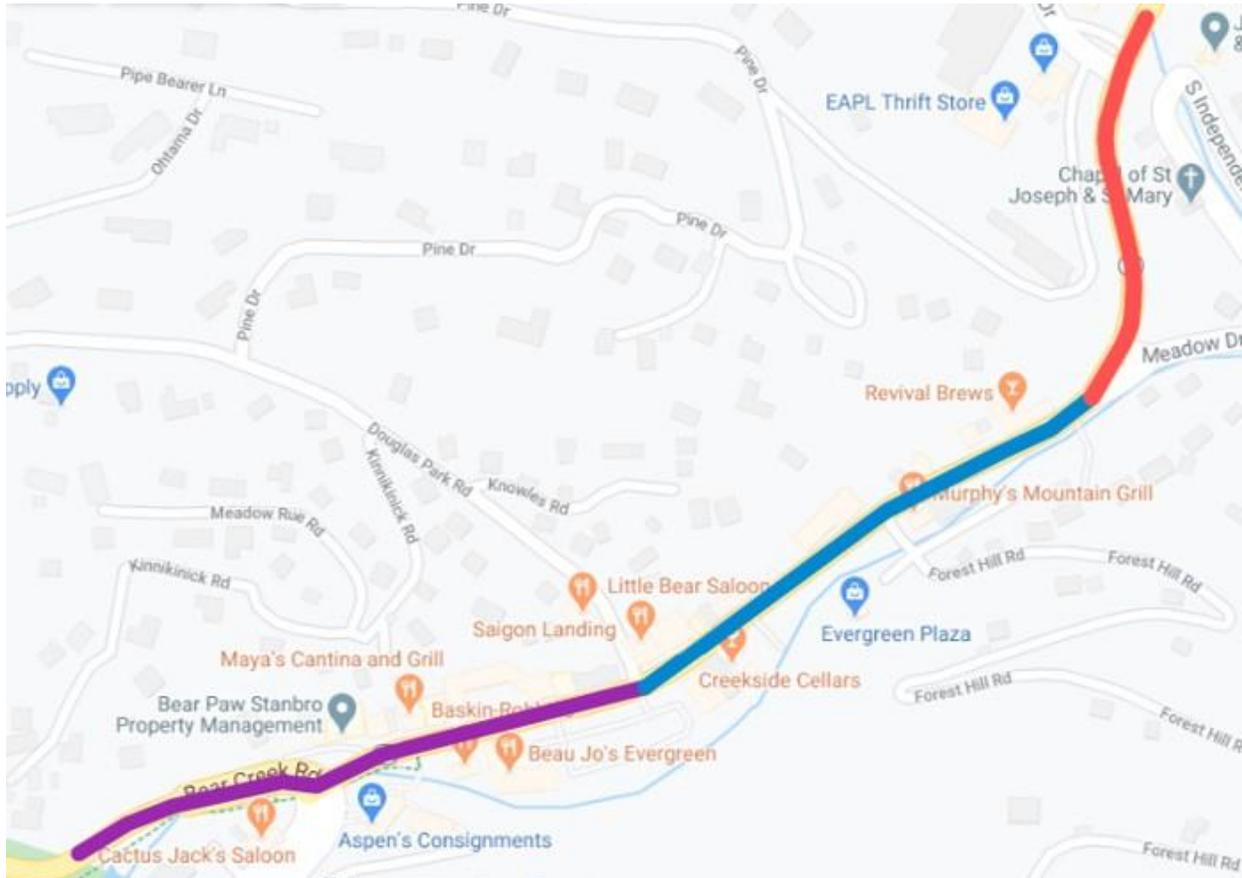
**“The right of way is unusual – it was built before CDOT existed and buildings come into the right of way. In unincorporated areas, CDOT has to maintain entire right of way. CDOT has been reluctant to build sidewalks here because then it will have to shovel and maintain them. However, CDOT has built sidewalks in an unincorporated area where there’s a special district that maintains them.”**

**- Stephen Harelson, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)**

## Road Templates

To address the current issues of pedestrian and bicyclist safety and connectivity, traffic congestion and parking in downtown Evergreen, the panelists came up with the following road templates for sections of SH 74.

Since the character of the right of way changes dramatically throughout the downtown, the panelists created different road templates for three distinct subareas described below.



Three subareas in downtown Evergreen that the road templates address shown in purple, blue, and red. Map of downtown Evergreen courtesy Google Maps.

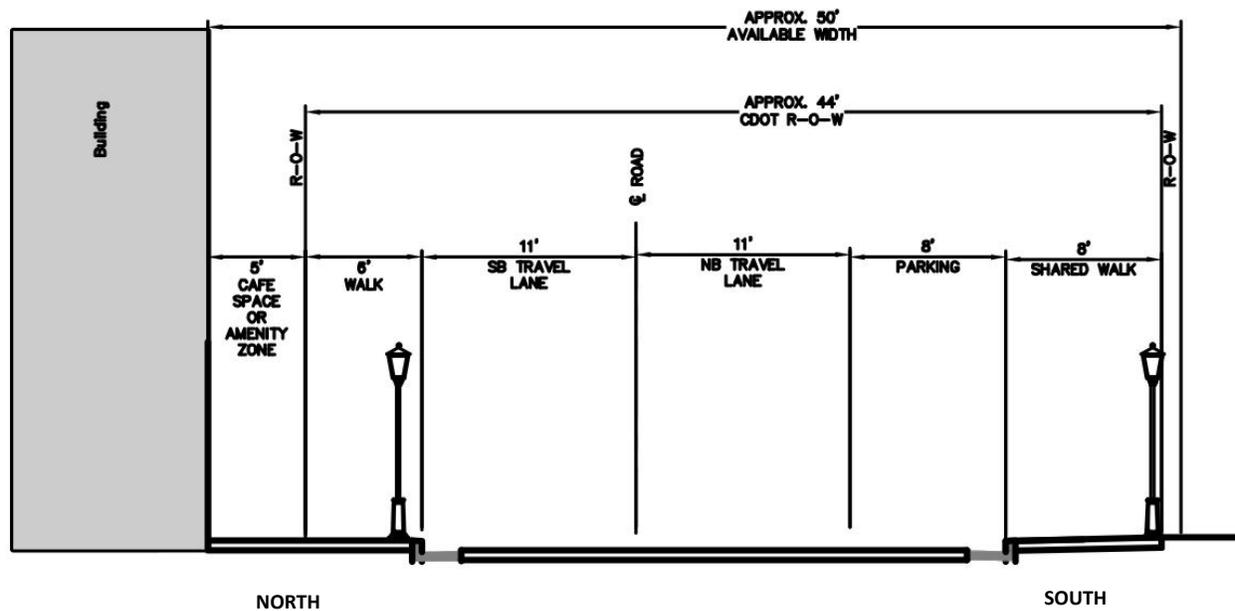
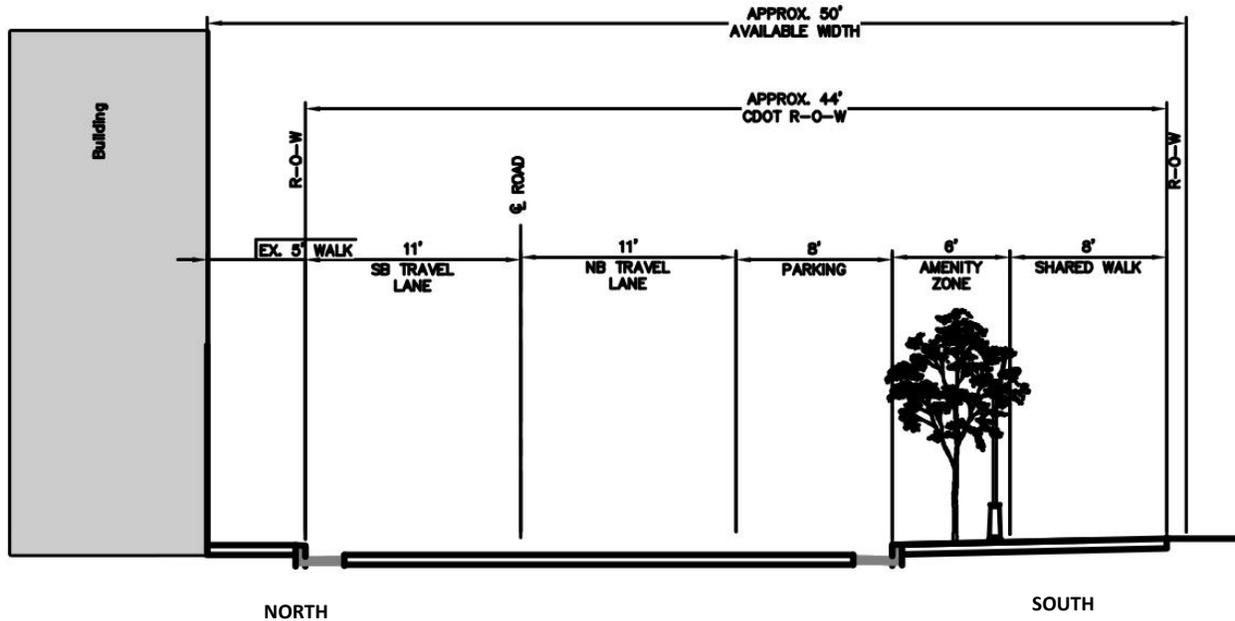


From left: Traffic calming courtesy Urban Engineers on [TDM Encyclopedia](#). Outdoor café seating in Lyons, CO courtesy Loris and Associates.

## West of Douglas Park Road:

West of Douglas Park Road (the purple section on the page 18 map), the panelists proposed adding a continuous multi-use sidewalk on south side of SH 74 by narrowing lanes. They also suggested that on-street parking could be removed from north side of the street if the parking study finds that to be feasible. As shown in the street template options below, the sidewalk and amenity zones could be focused on the south side to provide a continuous connection through town to additional parking areas on the east side of town. The sidewalk width could be split in the downtown sections of SH74 to allow for additional café space on the north side of SH 74.

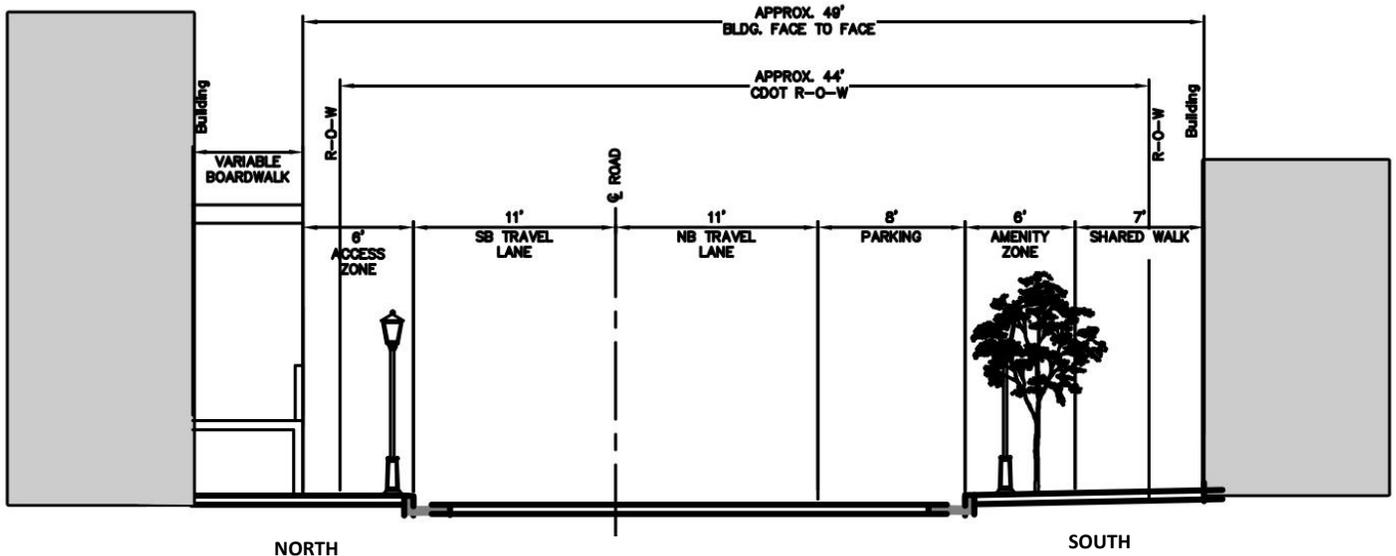
State Highway 74 West of Douglas Park Road



## Boardwalk Area:

In downtown Evergreen along the boardwalk (the blue section on the page 18 map), the panelists suggested adding a multi-use path on the south side of State Highway 74. They also recommended removing on-street parking on the north side of State Highway 74 to add a boardwalk access zone that would be ADA accessible.

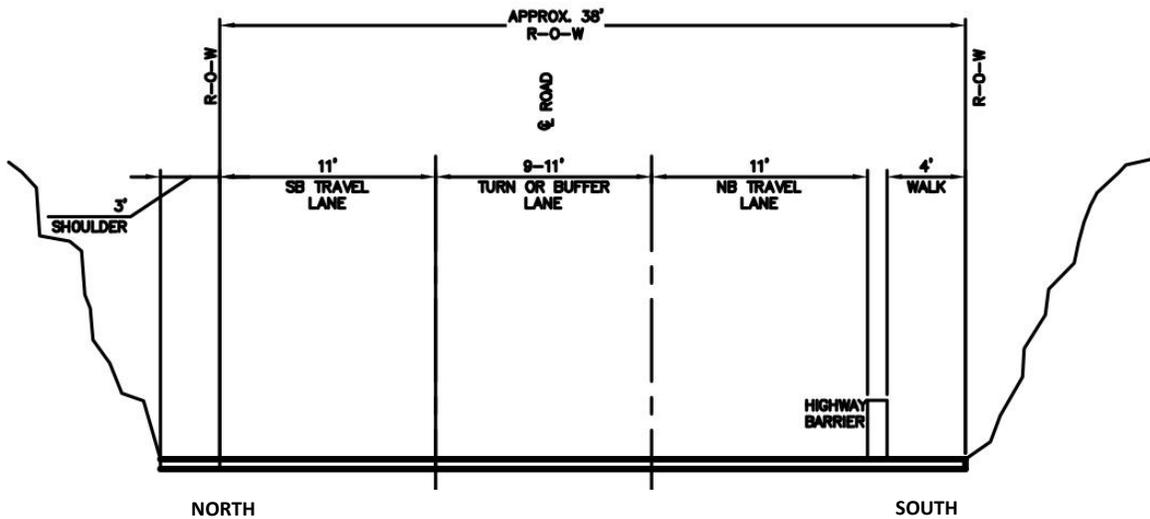
State Highway 74 along the Downtown Evergreen Boardwalk



## Canyon Area:

East of the downtown area (the red section on the page 18 map), State Highway 74 curves through Bear Creek Canyon walls. The panelists proposed adding a continuous sidewalk to connect the downtown to additional parking areas on the east side of downtown Evergreen.

State Highway 74 through Bear Creek Canyon Curve



## Connectivity & Placemaking



Proposed map of improvements to downtown Evergreen by panelist Gretchen Wilson.  
Satellite map of downtown Evergreen courtesy Google Maps.

### Connectivity

Currently, sidewalks and regional paths peter out east of downtown, causing people to walk along the highway, which is unsafe. In addition to providing the street templates, the panelists created plans for how the elements of connectivity and placemaking in downtown Evergreen could fit together.

Throughout the study area, the panelists proposed adding a continuous multi-use sidewalk on the south side of SH 74 by narrowing lanes and potentially removing on-street parking on the north side of the street. Pedestrian connectivity to shared public parking areas on the east side of town would increase safety throughout the downtown area. Additional recommendations related to parking begin on page 25.

The panel also suggested adding space on the north side of SH 74 for ADA accessibility onto the boardwalk. Adding width to the north side could also allow for additional café space.

Safety enhancements to the area include protected pedestrian crossings, continuous sidewalks, narrower 11' car lanes, traffic calming treatments (like texture and/or color added to the street surface and curb extensions), and separated bike and pedestrian trails.

**“It’s dangerous to park in a Meadow Drive lot and then walk downtown along the road. Drivers can’t see pedestrians coming around the corner. We want safe pedestrian connectivity.”**

**- Kay D'Evelyn, Mountain Home**

**“We have an equal problem for bicyclists. Drivers have hit pedestrians because there is no give for street parking and one bicyclist was dragged under a car.”**

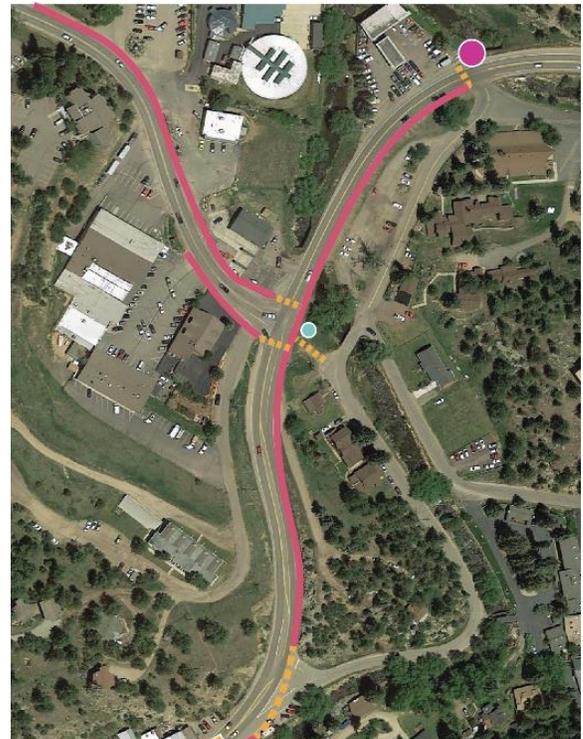
**- Richard Toussaint, Evergreen Economic District (EED)**



Proposed map of improvements to the area east of Douglas Park Road in downtown Evergreen by panelist Gretchen Wilson. Satellite map of downtown Evergreen courtesy Google Maps.



From top: A proposed curb extension and streetscape renovation in Hot Springs, Arkansas courtesy the Walc Institute, TDC Design Studio and AARP. Complete street design concept by Stantec and Kasian for the City of Guelph.



Proposed map of improvements to the area at the intersection of Meadow Drive and State Highway 74 by panelist Gretchen Wilson. Satellite map of downtown Evergreen courtesy Google Maps.

## Placemaking

To enhance the downtown and respond to resilience challenges, the panelists provided recommendations for placemaking that would simultaneously express the mountain town character of downtown Evergreen.

Placemaking recommendations for SH 74 in the study area include gateways leading to the downtown (see examples of gateways below), wayfinding signage, decorative lighting, public gathering spaces, plantings and landscaping, and furnishings like public benches.



From top: Gateway to Golden, CO courtesy The Family Voyage. Gateway sign for Ridgway, CO courtesy smalltownexplorer.com. Image of lighting in downtown Steamboat Springs courtesy REcolorado.

“There’s a giant parking lot downtown that people don’t use because of lack of access and safety. There are no barriers between properties and the creek. The lack of dedicated and safe parking hampers economic vibrancy and growth potential.”

- Betsy Hays, Evergreen Chamber of Commerce

“In addition to wanting walkability and safety, we want the downtown to be aesthetically pleasing. It’s currently deteriorating. The orange fence has been in the area that began falling into creek since 2013. Landscaping and a walkway along the creek would be great.”

- Kate Higgins, Evergreen Chamber of Commerce

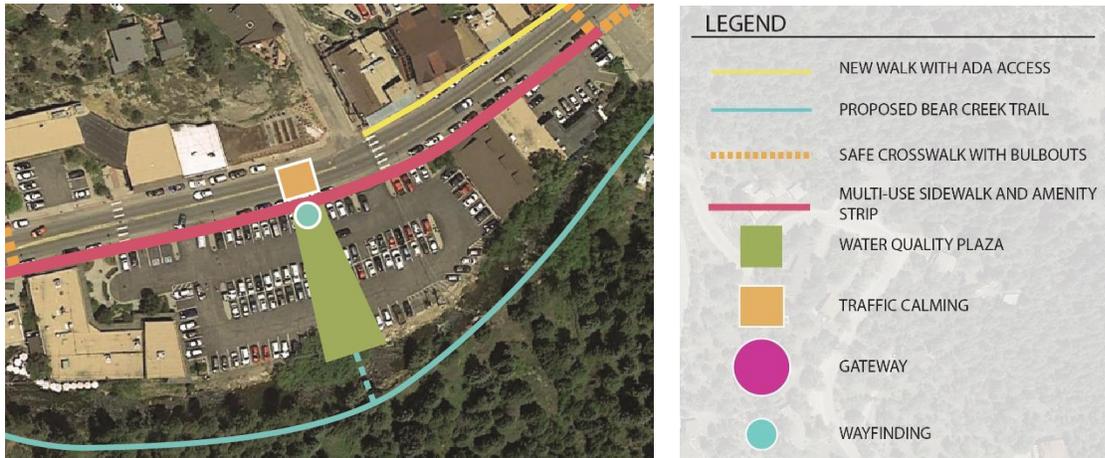
“The parking lot downtown has a lot of flooding since this area is in the floodplain. We’re currently working on a trails plan in area.”

- Steve Durian, Jefferson County Transportation & Engineering

“Trail connectivity is very important. Easier trails that anyone can use would be great.”

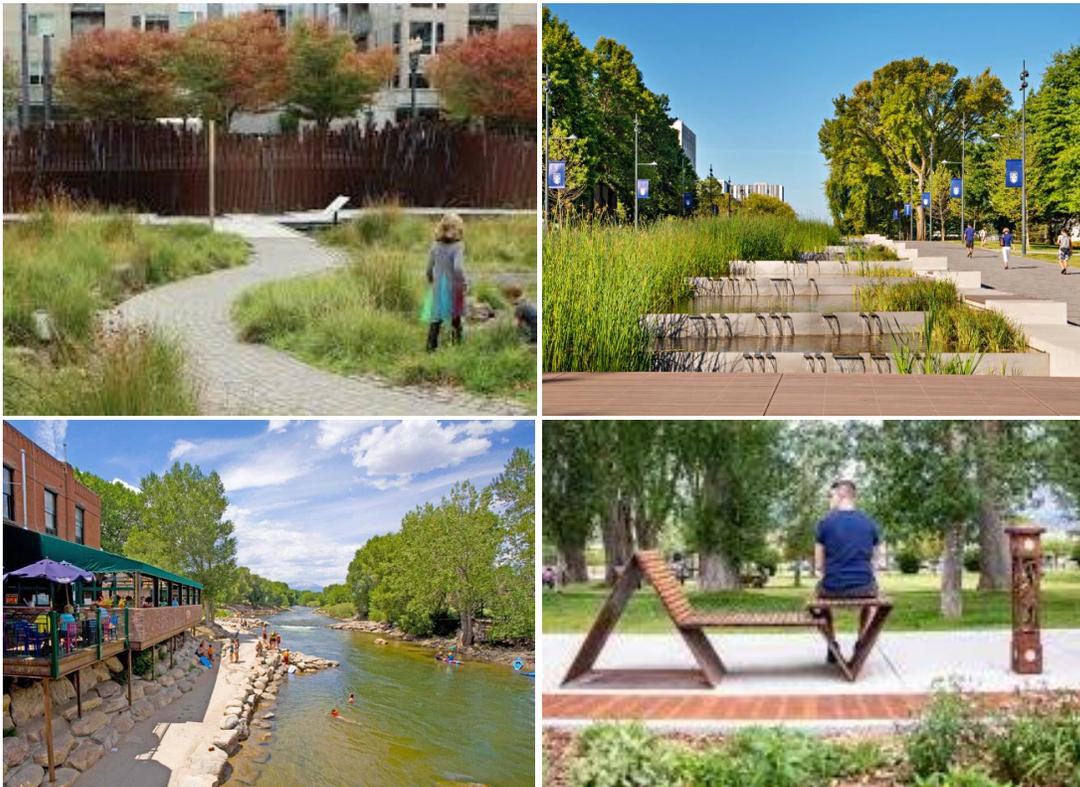
- Luis Berroteran, OMG Bike Shop

## Downtown Water Quality Plaza & Access to Bear Creek



Proposed water quality plaza (shown in green) in downtown Evergreen. Map by panelist Gretchen Wilson, base map courtesy Google Maps.

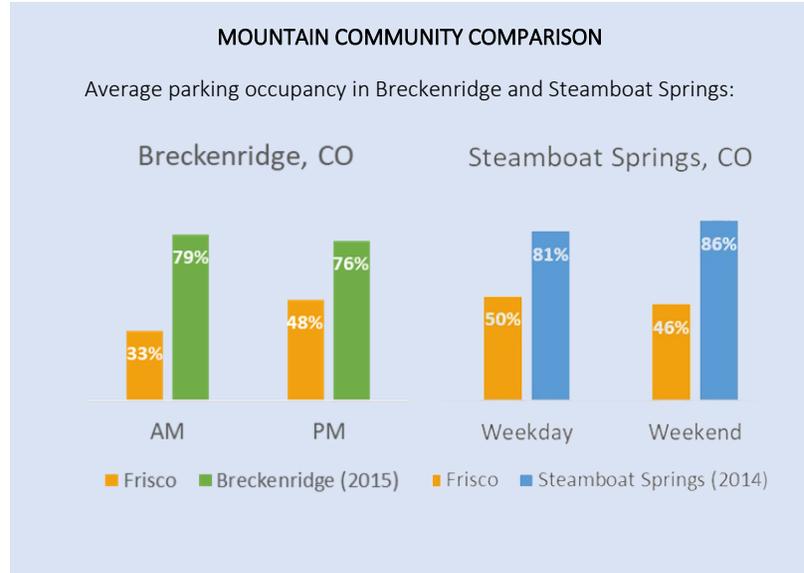
A primary placemaking recommendation was to use the downtown parking lot to create a water quality plaza and community gathering place. Since the surface parking lot frequently floods, a public easement could be used to create access to the creek with green infrastructure for public benefit. The water quality plaza would include a pocket park, which would provide a buffer for future flooding in the downtown. The pocket park would help to beautify the downtown, and provide community gathering space and access to the creek, trail connectivity to the downtown, and stormwater management.



From top left to bottom right: Photo of stormwater management park by Martina Frey for the EPA. Landscaping with a water feature at the University of British Columbia Vancouver campus. Salida's event center along the Arkansas River courtesy Salida Chamber. Park bench image by DHM Design for the Ridgway, CO streetscape.

## Parking Solutions

Parking was a frequent theme in the interviews with local stakeholders. Some think there isn't enough parking in the downtown, some think the on-site parking requirements preclude positive redevelopment from occurring in the downtown, and many think that increased walkability from parking outside the downtown would be beneficial. Overall, parking influences the streets and connectivity of the town, as well as what's possible to develop in downtown Evergreen.

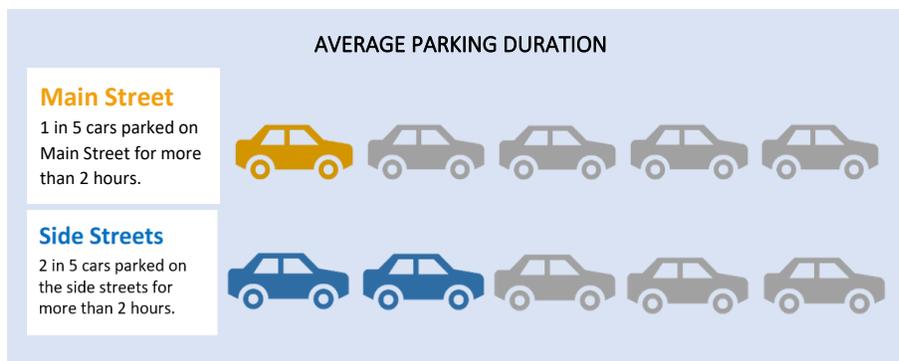


## Parking Utilization Study

A Parking Utilization Study will show if there's a parking supply issue in downtown Evergreen. The study could focus on the quarter mile (5-minute) walkshed around the downtown.

- If there's a parking supply issue:
  - Designate areas outside of downtown core for public parking, increase walkability to the downtown, and provide shuttle services as an option
- If there's a parking turnover issue:
  - Parking time limits (short term)
  - Paid parking (long term)

*The panel recommended transitioning to shared parking for all uses within walking distance of the downtown, instead of requiring each use to self-park, which is less than optimal for the limited land in the downtown.*



**“Parking is an issue in downtown. We want people to spend time in the downtown as opposed to driving through.”**

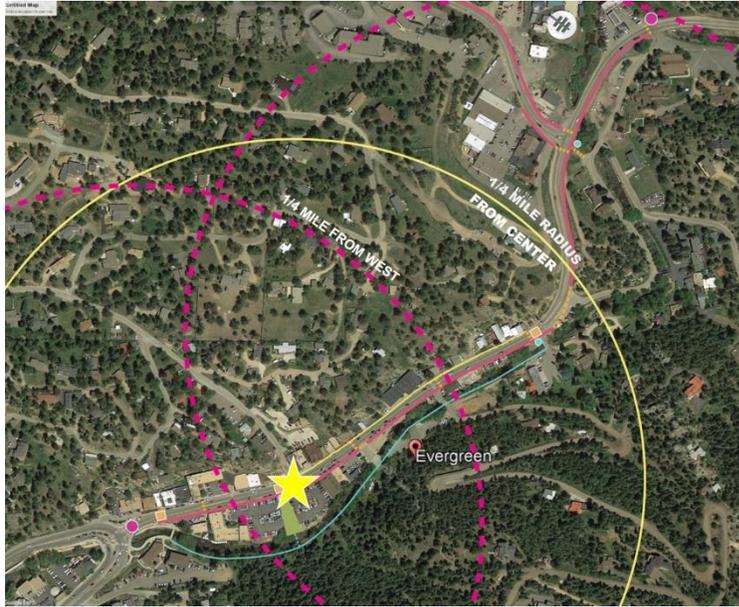
**- Tom Cordova, Alpen Way Chalet Mountain Lodge**

**“It would be interesting to get a parking study to show who uses the parking when, and how far people are walking. Instead of requiring on-site parking, developers could pay a fee-in-lieu that could be used to develop shared public parking.”**

**- Jeanne Shaffer, Groundwork Entitlement Services**

## Connectivity to Parking

Adding shared public parking within a ¼-mile, 5-minute walk of the downtown would allow more people to enjoy Evergreen and for downtown land to be better utilized. Sidewalks and trails between parking areas and the downtown would encourage people to walk and spend more time in the downtown, supporting local businesses.



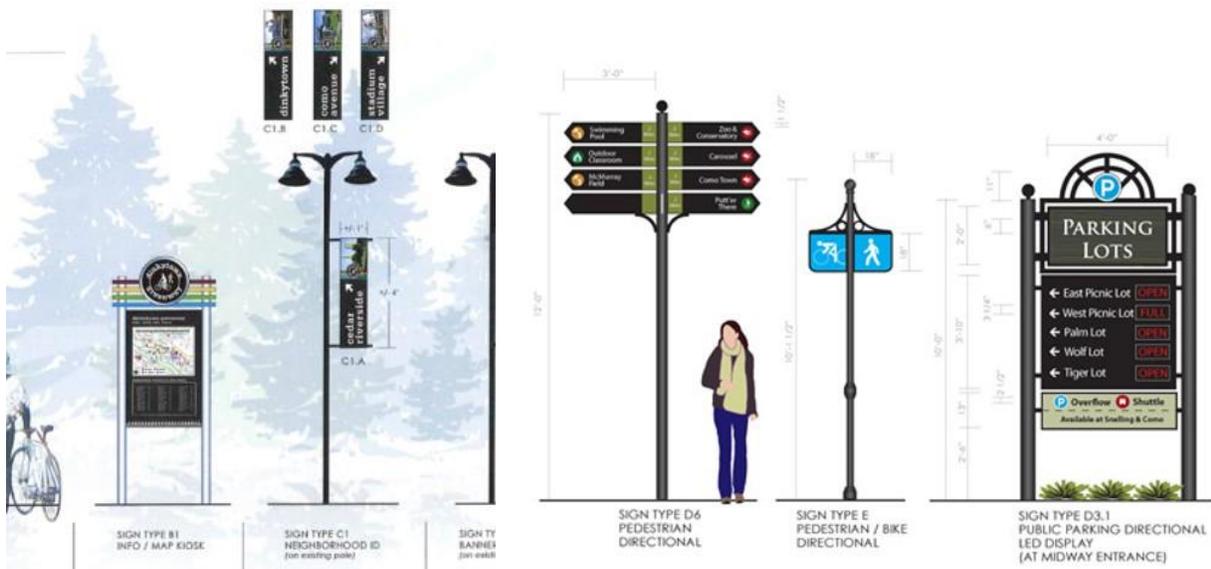
“Church parking lots are so close and so empty, and residents live within walking and biking distance of downtown. Surface parking lots can easily be changed.”

- Rachel Emmer, Evergreen Legacy Fund

Map of the ¼-mile, 5-minute walkshed around downtown Evergreen by panelist Gretchen Wilson, base map courtesy Google Maps.

## Parking Signage & Wayfinding

Wayfinding and signage are important for visitors to be able to find parking and walk to their destinations. Below are examples of wayfinding signage provided by the panelists:



# FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

Would a Local Improvement District foster additional development in this area?  
Or would the additional taxes be a hindrance to development?

Since the Evergreen Legacy Fund doesn't bring in enough money to support all the infrastructure and improvement needs of the downtown, many are interested in additional financial tools. As Evergreen is unincorporated, some financial tools make more sense than others.

Many residents seem interested in the potential of a Local Improvement District (LID), which is why they asked the panel whether a LID would foster or hinder additional development.

*In response to this specific request, the panel instead urged the community to pursue more than one financial tool to accomplish the community's multiple goals for downtown Evergreen, since a LID would likely not generate enough revenue for both capital improvements and maintenance over time. Suggestions regarding several relevant tools are included below.*

## Local Improvement District

Currently, Evergreen residents appear to prefer a LID because it does not require local government and it allows for the use of sales tax as a revenue source to construct public infrastructure. The suggested one percent sales tax is projected to generate around \$900,000 per year, which will likely not be enough to cover significant infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

LIDs are used to finance public infrastructure within its boundaries, often including roads, sidewalks, water and sewer lines, and amenity-related services. In response to the questions posed to the panel related to whether a LID would foster or hinder development, the panel provided the following guidance:

- Based on the input received, a LID would not be a deterrent to local development efforts, primarily because local property owners seem supportive and property bases are strong.
- Despite additional financial burden...
  - Provides greater certainty that select improvements will be available
  - Spreads cost of capital investments, rather than burdening individual balance sheets
  - Affords source of revenue for certain amenities
  - Could provide ongoing sidewalk shoveling and maintenance for CDOT constructed sidewalks

**"Many people signed up initially for ELF, but it's plateaued. There's not nearly as many businesses contributing as there could be."**

- Rachel Emmer,  
Evergreen Legacy Fund

**"We're not realizing our potential with ELF and we don't get enough local support during the off season."**

- Jim Sherwood,  
Evergreen Clothing

**"It's important for us to make the downtown shine and make it attractive to locals."**

- Karen Belmont,  
Go Paint

**"Annual sales tax around \$900,000 doesn't get you very far with infrastructure improvements and maintenance."**

- Stephen Harelson,  
Chief Engineer, CDOT

The panelists investigated whether a LID is the appropriate tool for Evergreen’s conditions and community objectives and if it would adequately address circumstances both within and beyond the study area.

A LID was identified as a solution for:

- Financing construction and maintenance of capital improvements, such as sidewalks
- Provision of an entity that can partner and leverage resources

Other local matters that a LID would not address:

- Business attraction, due to increased sales tax
- Reluctance to reinvest in downtown properties
- Onsite life safety concerns on privately owned properties
- Inconsistencies in private property maintenance
- Lack of business operating hours coordination
- Lack of signage and wayfinding
- Property line confusion
- Seasonal swings in visitation

**“The plastic orange construction fence along that dangerous property in the downtown has been there for years and no one likes it, but we don’t know who the property owner is.”**

**- Karen Belmont, Go Paint**

The following chart compares relevant financial tools to show how they could address these other local concerns. The ability to clean property titles would help the community identify absentee property owners who have not been maintaining their properties according to code, and to take relevant action. The ability to issue bonds would provide additional resources for implementing the vision for the downtown, and resources to market and maintain local businesses would support the vibrancy of the downtown and its tenants.

Financial Tool	Funding Mechanism	Ability to Clean Property Titles	Ability to Issue Bonds	Resources to Market and Maintain Local Businesses
Local Improvement District	Special assessment	No	Yes	No
Public Improvement District	Special assessment and income from capital improvements	Yes	Yes	Yes, maintain capital improvements
Urban Renewal Authority	Incremental revenues	If authorized by the plan	Yes	No

## Public Improvement District

A Public Improvement District (PID) is used to finance, construct, acquire, operate and maintain public infrastructure (with some exceptions) that is not duplicative in a specific area for the benefit of those properties within its boundaries. In addition to leveraging a special assessment, it can also generate income from capital improvements. Unlike a LID, it can be used to clean property titles, issue bonds, and provide resources for marketing and maintaining local businesses.

## Urban Renewal Authority

Since Evergreen is unincorporated, a financially sustainable solution would be for Jefferson County to create an Urban Renewal Authority (URA) for Evergreen, especially since URAs are not subject to TABOR requirements (LIDs and PIDs are). Counties can create a URA as long as county commissioners approve. The primary financial tool of URAs is Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and URAs can also issue bonds, making them a powerful source of financial support for public infrastructure. The URA could be used in conjunction with a LID or PID, and it could be used to condemn blighted properties, which would be useful for creating a community gathering place and access to the creek in the downtown where there are currently blighted properties with absentee owners.

### CLEANING PROPERTY TITLES

A PID (Public Improvement District), similar to a GID (General Improvement District), Title 32 District and URA (Urban Renewal Authority), is authorized to use the power of eminent domain (or condemnation) in certain instances, primarily involving a public benefit. As such, a property title that is "clouded," or one where one or more of the owners is absent, may be condemned in order to advance a sale, purchase or other activity.

A "cloud" on title is any document, claim, unreleased lien, or encumbrance that might invalidate or impair a title to real property or make the title doubtful. Clouds on the title are usually discovered during a title search.

## Short-Term Financial Recommendations

- Research all potential funding mechanisms and potential boundaries – the tools are not mutually exclusive and can be used together
- Quantify expected capital costs and maintenance expenses
- Consider ability to gain needed political support and to influence prioritization
- Determine which financial tools most comprehensively address local conditions, desired outcomes and required revenue
- Prepare public education program to explain the selected financial tools – customize messaging for residents, property and business owners, and developers and brokers

Additional sources of revenue:

- Enhanced code enforcement (see highlight box on page 13)
- Solicit local and regional lenders for [Community Reinvestment Act](#) (CRA) dollars
- Work with a title company to better understand property ownership and boundaries in the downtown
- Investigate resources available given impaired 303(d) designation of Bear Creek
- Conduct an organizational audit for existing and available resources

# RESILIENCE SOLUTIONS

What items could be addressed in a resiliency plan for emergency situations if rebuilding the downtown area would be necessary due to a natural disaster, such as a flood or wildfire?

Downtown Evergreen lies in a floodplain and in a forested area, making it particularly vulnerable to both floods and wildfires. The panel came up with the following guidance on how to mitigate risks to real estate assets and the community in downtown Evergreen.

## Flood Risks

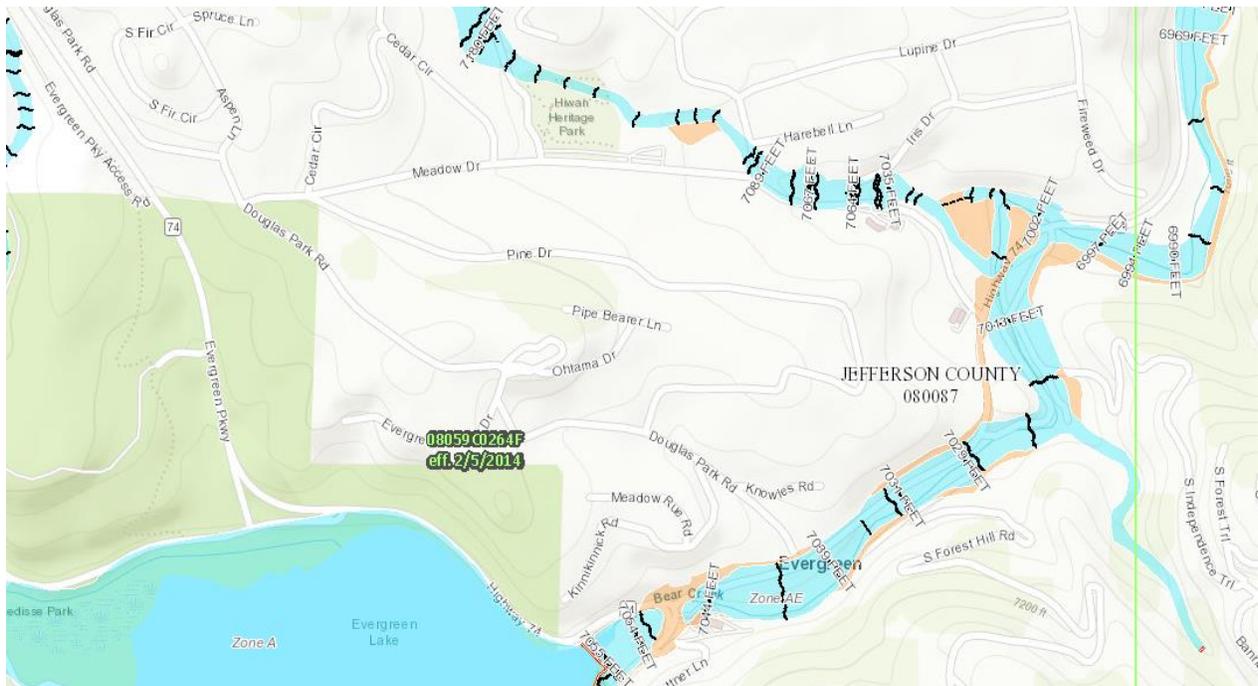
Bear Creek Watershed had 24 known flood incidents between 1866-1973, and between 1974-2007, there were 23 flood events. Floods in this watershed have resulted in 45 deaths. Bear Creek Dam in particular has been identified as a critical hazard for Evergreen if it fails.

A map of the current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain is below. According to FEMA, areas in blue have a one percent annual chance of flooding and areas in orange have a 0.2 percent annual chance of flooding.

*Seventeen percent of homes hit by the 2013 floods were outside of the mapped floodplain.*

**“The 2013 flood had a major impact on downtown Evergreen. We need to think about flood control. After the flood, people rebuilt without permits because they’re too difficult to get, especially with the current setback and onsite parking requirements, which don’t match how the buildings were previously built.”**

**- Eric Gill, Bear Paw Stanbro Property Management**



Map of the current FEMA floodplain in Evergreen. According to FEMA, areas in blue have a one percent annual chance of flooding and areas in orange have a 0.2 percent annual chance of flooding.

*FEMA flood maps are based on historical data only. Studies show that the actual flood risk is around three times higher than what is shown in FEMA flood maps. On average, it takes around 2-3 years to update a region's flood maps.*

A panel recommendation is to make sure the five-year flood update information gets disseminated in a timely fashion so that property owners can prepare accordingly.



The 2013 flooding in Downtown Evergreen. Photo by Scotty McWalter.



The 2013 Bluebell wildfire near Evergreen. Photo via KVDR.com.

## Fire Risks

Most of Evergreen has a high fire hazard rating. Evergreen is characterized as a high-risk wildfire urban interface by several factors: aggressive development into fire-adapted ecosystems, steep topography, frequency of natural and human-caused ignitions, hazardous fuels, prolonged drought, and dry, windy weather conditions.

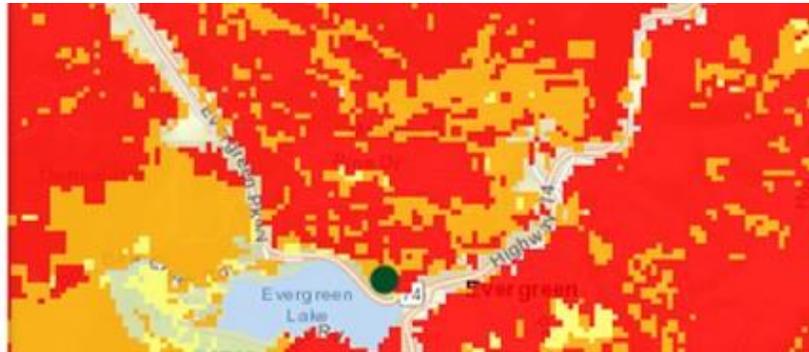
“In terms of fire and emergency services, there are a lot of concerns in this area of Evergreen. Parking on both sides of the road makes access difficult on an already tight road. One-way community roads are also a concern. How do we evacuate people if something major happened? We’re dealing with planning and zoning to try and manage this over time. We’re thinking about how to implement the wildland interface fire code, which was shown to work in California, and we’re looking at ingress and egress since access is really important. Our one station covers a lot of ground and the community continues growing.”

- Michael Weege, Fire Chief, Evergreen Fire Rescue

According to Colorado State University, wildfires in Colorado have worsened over the last 60+ years. In the '60s and '70s, wildfire destroyed less than 100,000 acres per decade. That rose to over 200,000 acres per decade during the '80s and '90s. During the 2000s, the total was approximately 1,000,000 acres and there's little indication that this upward trend will turn around any time soon.

**Wildfire Risk**

- 1 - Lowest Risk
- 2 - Low Risk
- 3 - Moderate Risk
- 4 - High Risk
- 5 - Highest Risk



Map of wildfire risk in Evergreen from the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal, available online at [www.ColoradoWildfireRisk.com](http://www.ColoradoWildfireRisk.com).

According to the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal, the area around Evergreen has a high to very-high fire intensity rating. That means Evergreen can expect large (up to 30 ft) to very large (up to 150 ft) flames that generally cannot be effectively attacked by firefighters, engines or dozers. Those types of fires have significant potential for harm or damage to life and property and extensive preparedness measures are needed to protect property. Visit the website at [www.ColoradoWildfireRisk.com](http://www.ColoradoWildfireRisk.com) to generate a map showing details such as the likelihood of an acre burning, potential fire intensity, historic fire occurrence, and the risk of wildfire.

**EXISTING RESOURCES FOR FLOOD AND FIRE PREPARATION IN EVERGREEN**



**JEFFCO FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT**

- Jefferson County DFIRM (flood map) shows overlay district boundaries
- Development permit criteria, floodproof requirements, performance standards



**WILDFIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

- Evergreen Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan developed in 2007
- Wildfire mitigation plan includes creating defensible space, fuel mitigation, and prescribed fires

**...and 2018 Building Codes**

**“You can’t rebuild a building here if it catches on fire or is flooded due to the current zoning and building requirements. Also, there are no barriers or buffers between downtown properties and the creek. Downtown is heart of economic stability for Evergreen—if it can’t be rebuilt, then there’s no opportunity for economic resilience.”**

**- Betsy Hays, Evergreen Chamber of Commerce**

## Short-Term Recommendations

- Update flood maps for downtown Evergreen. Develop Base Flood Elevation (BFE) and Design Flood Elevation (DFE) data for each downtown parcel and structure.
- Community education around using insurance to manage the financial risks of natural hazards.
- Community education around low-cost risk mitigation retrofits that also reduce flood insurance costs (see page 36 for recommendations).
- Continue to educate existing property owners about fire mitigation best practices (see page 36 for recommendations).

### ELEVATION DATA TERMS

**Base Flood Elevation:** Elevation of the 100-year flood. The BFE is determined by statistical analysis for each local area. This elevation is the basis of the insurance and floodplain management requirements.

**Design Flood Elevation:** The elevation of the highest flood that a retrofitting method is designed to protect against.

## Wildfire Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies

- Revisit goals and objectives established in the 2007 [Evergreen Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#). Determine if the action items have been implemented and if the plan needs to be updated.
- Ensure appropriate access, including ingress and egress, for emergency vehicles in the area.
- Apply Fire Overlay District Zoning requirements to new construction commercial buildings, since fire code should apply to all buildings (new and existing, residential and commercial).
- Add hardened structure requirements to Fire Overlay District Zoning requirements (example: Colorado Springs WUI Section K104). The overlay can be updated according to best practices.

### EXAMPLES OF WILDFIRE PUBLIC EDUCATION



The City of Castle Pines in Colorado uses goats for fire mitigation as well as public education about wildfire mitigation. Goats eat ladder fuel (vegetation that allows fire to climb from the landscape into the tree canopy, such as shrubs), but not ground cover, making them perfect wildfire mitigators, and they also draw attention!

Communities can also put action steps related to wildfire mitigation and readiness into an educational resource, like California's wildfire readiness website, [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org).

Revisit goals and objectives in the 2007 Evergreen Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan. These recommended actions are listed on pages 42-43 of the plan:

**Table 13. Recommended Actions by Category**

Project	Actions
Outreach/Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage stakeholder participation in community meetings.</li> <li>▪ Distribute Firewise materials.</li> <li>▪ Assess individual homes.</li> </ul>
Defensible Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a fuel-free zone around homes.</li> <li>▪ Establish a treated second zone that is thinned, pruned, and cleared of excess surface fuels.</li> <li>▪ Extend treatment to property boundary to improve natural forest conditions and reduce excess hazardous vegetation.</li> <li>▪ Employ defensible space practices around identified resources such as cisterns, dip and draft sites, potential safety zones, or observation areas.</li> </ul>
Firewise Building Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Replace shake roofs with fire-resistive roofing.</li> <li>▪ Implement Firewise construction principals for all remodels.</li> <li>▪ Enclose exposed decks and gables.</li> <li>▪ Screen vents and chimneys.</li> </ul>
Shaded Fuelbreaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treat along primary and secondary evacuation routes.</li> <li>▪ Improve/expand utility right-of-ways.</li> </ul>
Access/Egress Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve hazardous primary access routes.</li> <li>▪ Create/improve dead end turnarounds.</li> <li>▪ Create/improve secondary evacuation routes where needed.</li> <li>▪ Improve restricted switchbacks.</li> </ul>
Strategic Fuelbreaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide for fuelbreaks in identified treatment zones.</li> <li>▪ Conduct removal where possible.</li> <li>▪ Burn piles where needed.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with adjacent public land management agencies.</li> <li>▪ Expand to address infestation where needed.</li> </ul>
Supporting Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support grant funding acquisition actions.</li> <li>▪ Involve Jefferson County in evacuation improvements.</li> <li>▪ Revise county statutes addressing defensible space requirements for home sales.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with agency forest management plans.</li> </ul>
Fire Department Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrate project GIS</li> <li>▪ Update and distribute run books.</li> <li>▪ GIS and update all water resources.</li> <li>▪ Survey potential dip sites and safety zones</li> <li>▪ Develop community pre-plans based on surveys</li> <li>▪ On-going community education</li> <li>▪ Conduct ongoing recruitment, training, and certification</li> <li>▪ Coordinate mutual aid strategic planning.</li> <li>▪ Upgrade apparatus, facility, and personal protective equipment (PPE).</li> </ul>

## Stormwater Management

To better manage stormwater and flooding, integrate green infrastructure throughout the downtown area. Other recommendations for dealing with stormwater and flooding include:

- Incorporate easier, low-cost floodproofing measures in new construction building codes.
- Wet floodproofing allows unoccupied portions of buildings to be flooded, which greatly reduces damage and recovery time. Older buildings may not be designed to withstand hydrostatic pressure, making it important to allow water to flow through the building in a controlled way. Dry floodproofing is not recommended by FEMA.
- Encourage the use of building materials that will be able to survive water exposure without major damage. Steel studs, stone, cement, mineral board, marine grade plywood, and no paper-faced gypsum.

“Our infrastructure is the issue—it’s from 1963. We had a water main break in January.

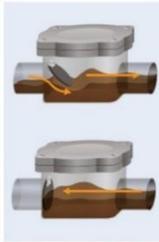
We also need to upgrade the sewer system. Bear Creek is on the list of impaired waters from sedimentation from roadways and properties.”

- Chris Schauder, Evergreen Metro District

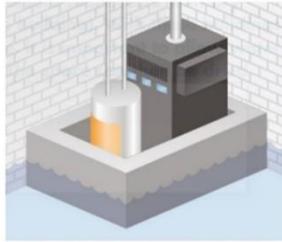
**Sump pumps**  
Remove water that accumulates at lowest point in building



**Backwater valves**  
Prevent sewage backflow



**Protect/elevate mechanical equipment**  
Build barrier around critical systems if it can't be elevated



**Shield openings**  
Protect entryways with flood gates



Images of low-cost floodproofing measures courtesy “[Strategies for Multifamily Building Resilience](#)” by Enterprise Green Communities.

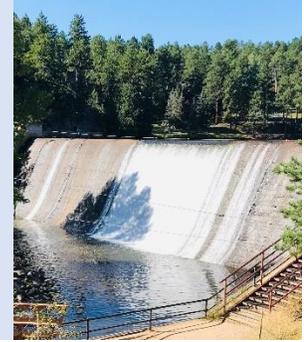
### JEFFERSON COUNTY FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT PROVISIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Floodplain Development Permit Criteria and Submittal Requirements	J(1) – Post Construction Certificates	K – Performance Standards	L – Specific Construction Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topographic mapping</li> <li>Location of floodway boundaries</li> <li>Building elevations</li> <li>Specs demonstrating compliance with Performance Standards</li> <li>Floodplain study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required 30 days after construction</li> <li>No Certificate of Occupancy issued until Elevation Certificate or Floodproofing Certificate is submitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted Use and Restricted Activities</li> <li>Development shall not increase water surface elevation</li> <li>Buildings must be anchored to resist floatation, collapse, and lateral movement</li> <li>Flood resistant building materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowest floor elevated to 2 feet above BFE</li> <li>Structure below BFE is floodproof</li> <li>Flood vents below grade</li> <li>Adequate drainage system in below-grade crawlspace</li> <li>If no BFE data, assume 4’ above grade</li> </ul>

To reduce flood damage, Jefferson County’s Floodplain Overlay District includes provisions for new development. For example, anchored buildings must be supported by reinforced piers and the lowest occupied floor of buildings must be 2 feet above Base Flood Elevation (BFE) or 4 feet above grade. Adding an ADA boardwalk access zone (see page 20) could help existing buildings in the downtown meet both flood and ADA access requirements. In areas where this is not possible, Jefferson County could investigate flood mitigation amendments specific to rebuilding in Evergreen.

## FLOOD CONTROL: RETROFITTING THE EVERGREEN DAM?

Evergreen Dam was constructed in the 1920s to form Evergreen Lake for recreation. The dam was strengthened in 1980. While it would be possible to retrofit the dam for greater flood control, it may be prohibitively expensive depending on the condition of the dam. Further research is needed to determine required freeboard, structural, and design requirements to hold up against a 100-year flood, for example. The annual engineering inspection report for the dam should provide a better idea of what may need to be done to add flood control.



## Defensible Space, Building Hardening, and Fire-Resistant Landscaping

Property survival goes up from 15 to 85 percent when the jurisdiction helps people protect their homes and businesses.

### MITIGATION EFFORTS

Primary determinants of a home's ability to survive a fire are **roofing material** and surrounding **defensible space**.

- Break up continuity of horizontal and vertical fuel sources
- Replace wood shingled roofs with non-combustible material
- Prescribed fire control (burns)

### Defensible Space Zones

Homes with 30' defensible space and non-combustible roofs have a 85% survival rate in the event of a wildfire.

Image of defensible space from [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org).

Ideal slopes for building sites are generally less than 10 percent, but the mountainous topography of Evergreen means that properties are especially vulnerable. Not only does fire travel faster upslope, it also limits availability of alternative evacuation routes and increases risk of entrapment. The required distance for the defensible zone increases on steep slopes. The commercial development located along valley floors, however, are less susceptible to problematic fire behavior.

Homes without at least 30 feet of defensible space and combustible roofs have around a 15 percent survival rate. Using ember-resistant building materials improves that survival rate. More information about building hardening and fire-resistant landscaping can be found at [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org).

**“Many homes in the District are perched on steeper slopes, restricting access and exposing structures to higher intensities of fire behavior.”**

**- Evergreen Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan**



View of Evergreen Lake.

## V. Conclusions

Downtown Evergreen is a special place. Instead of allowing flooding, out-of-date codes, and poor infrastructure and connections to degrade this mountain town's unique and attractive attributes, local leaders have the opportunity to protect and enhance this community for generations to come.

The panel encouraged Evergreen to take proactive steps with zoning, parking, connectivity, financing, and resilience.

### Key Takeaways

- Define the vision for downtown Evergreen
- Establish a predictable process for redevelopment
- Clean up the zoning that doesn't support the vision for downtown Evergreen
- Enhance code enforcement
- Encourage downtown housing
- Complete safe, walkable connections and accessible infrastructure throughout the downtown
- Integrate green infrastructure and community gathering places into the downtown
- Add shared public parking within a walkable distance to the downtown

**"We have a strong and vibrant supportive community. People love saying they're from Evergreen."**

**- Rachel Emmer,  
Evergreen Legacy Fund**

**"We started the Evergreen Legacy Fund and now we need to do something with the money. Parking, aesthetics, the river walk—we have a lot of options."**

**- Jim Sherwood,  
Evergreen Clothing**

- Revisit and combine funding mechanisms for infrastructure development and maintenance
- Support existing owners
- Retain and support businesses
- Develop resources for community resilience
- Educate communities
- Establish and empower local leadership

Overall, this is the ideal time to protect and enhance downtown Evergreen!

## VI. Stakeholders

### Stakeholders Who Participated in the Workshop

#### Local Government:

- Casey Tighe, County Commissioner
- Leigh Seeger, Jefferson County Economic Development Commission
- Nathan Seymour, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning
- Brad Eckert, Denver Mountain Parks
- Justin Montgomery, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning
- Chris O'Keefe, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning
- Tom Hoby, Jefferson County Open Space
- Mike Weege, Evergreen Fire Chief
- Jim King, Evergreen Fire & Rescue
- Chris Schauder, Evergreen Metro District
- Ellen O'Connor, Evergreen Park and Recreation District
- Russell Clark, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning

#### Transportation:

- Heather Gutherless, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning
- Del Kleinschmidt, Sherriff's Office
- Andy Rohwer, Jefferson County Road and Bridge
- Bob Yost, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Jana Spiker, CDOT
- Stephen Harelson, CDOT
- Rick Solomon, CDOT Permitting
- Steve Durian, Jefferson County Transportation & Engineering

#### Local Nonprofits:

- Julia Purrington, MMAR
- Richard Toussaint, Evergreen Economic District (EED)
- Bob Wallace, Rotary Club
- Betsy Hays, Chamber
- John Davis, Evergreen Players
- Joyce Masyga, Evergreen Downtown Business Association
- Josette Montgomery, MMAR
- Rachel Emmer, Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF)
- Greg Dobbs
- Gail Riley, EED and ELF
- Kate Higgins, Chamber

#### Property Owners:

- Eric Gill, Bear Paw Stanbro Property Management
- AJ Knoll
- Rash Hendryx
- Scott Ratcliff

- Ross Perrelli
- Jeff Bradley, Ross Lewis Trust
- Dean Dalvit
- Anders and Debbie Ruikka
- Kay D'Evelyn

#### Developers

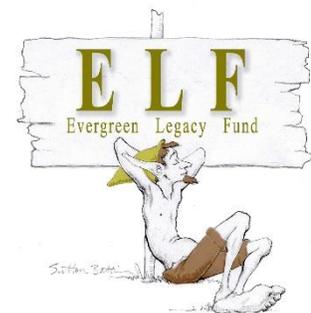
- Chris Parr, Denver Housing Authority
- Chad Ellington, Peak Development Group
- Josh Russell, Medici Communities
- Bob Cardwell, Stillwater Partners
- Chris Vogelsang, OV Consulting
- Brian and Holly Roberts, BVR Development

#### Business Owners:

- Luis Berroteran, OMG Bike Shop
- Larae and Tom Evans, Marmalade
- Jenny Shafer
- Ashley Ward
- Star Ratcliff
- Alexa Cowley, Mountain Home
- Karen Belmont, Go Paint
- Tom Cordova, Alpen Way Chalet Mountain Lodge
- Rachel Nicks, Seasonally Yours
- Jim Sherwood, Evergreen Clothing

#### About Evergreen Economic District (EED) and Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF)

Formally established in 2012, with two years preceding under another name, EED is comprised of an all-volunteer group of business owners, property owners, and residents who strive to preserve Evergreen's mountain culture and community from infrastructure over-use and under-repair. Because Evergreen is unincorporated and has no local town government, there are many challenges to relying on outside agencies to build and maintain infrastructure. As a result, the sidewalks/crosswalks/streets have fallen by the wayside. EED is simply about preserving and maintaining Evergreen.

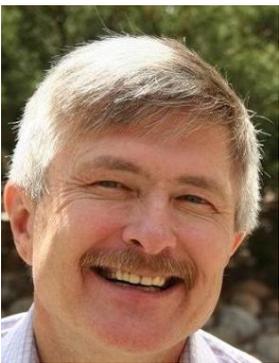


EED's primary funding source, the Evergreen Legacy Fund (ELF), is a revenue stream generated from a voluntary 1% contribution from customers who purchase goods or services at participating businesses as well as private donors. These funds are matched with state and federal grants to pay for infrastructure improvements and public amenities throughout Evergreen. Participating businesses include restaurants, retail shops, art galleries, service professionals, building industry contractors, lodges, health and beauty service providers, property managers, and more.

## VII. ULI Volunteer Panelists



**Panel Chair John Koval** is the Vice President of Operations and Director of Development for Coburn Development. Coburn Development is a Boulder-based design/build firm specializing in historical renovation and urban in-fill projects. Coburn has consistently pioneered environmentally sound methods since its founding in 1985. The result is healthy and productive places that connect people and sustain the earth. Their portfolio includes new homes and renovations, residential developments, affordable housing, commercial buildings, urban infill and mixed-use urban centers. John has worked with Coburn for over 22 years and supervises day-to-day operations for the company. He manages all acquisitions and dispositions of real estate, strategic business planning, implementation and new business development and marketing.



**Don Elliott**, FAICP, is a Director with Clarion Associates, LLC, a national land use consulting firm. Don's practice focuses on land development regulation, fair and affordable housing, and international land and urban development issues. Don has assisted over 40 U.S. communities to update plans and regulations related to housing, zoning, subdivision, and land development. He is the author of *A Better Way to Zone* (Island Press 2008), co-author of *The Rules that Shape Urban Form* (APA 2012) and *The Citizen's Guide to Planning* (APA 2009) and has served as the editor of *Colorado Land Planning and Development Law* for over 25 years. Don teaches graduate level course on Land Use Regulation at the University of Colorado at Denver School of Architecture and Planning and is a member of the Denver Planning Board. Don has a bachelor's degree in Urban Planning and Policy Analysis from Yale University, a law degree from Harvard Law School, and a master's degree in City and Regional Planning from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.



**Ann Bowers**, Principal and Project Manager in Fehr & Peers' Denver office, has over twenty-nine years of comprehensive transportation planning and engineering experience. Ann has a keen understanding of the dynamic between land use and transportation in the often-challenging environs of the Greater Metro Denver area and the Rocky Mountain region. Her areas of expertise include the most advanced, state-of-the-practice transportation analysis techniques and working with clients to achieve positive and sustainable transportation solutions that improve communities. This has led her to work with clients as diverse as small landowners, large developers, consulting firms, city agencies, and state and local agencies. Ann is a registered Professional Engineer in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Idaho; a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE), and a certified Professional Transportation Planner.



**Anne Ricker** is an Owner and Managing Principal for Ricker | Cunningham, a practice of Real Estate Economists and Community Strategists which specializes in assisting communities and the investors in them, with preparation of strategies for development and redevelopment, along with identification of partner roles and resources. As a former senior real estate associate in the international real estate advisory services division of Laventhol & Horwath (L&H) in Denver and Los Angeles, she managed teams working with the FSLIC and Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) to identify solutions for problem assets. Her extensive experience in urban redevelopment and real estate market analysis, together with vision building for public and private sector clients, has engendered her with a keen understanding of the essential elements of successful projects and sound investments.



**Michael Levinson**, CEM, is a principal at Group14 Engineering, an applied building science firm. Michael has 15 years of experience in the built environment, and has helped improve the sustainability and resiliency performance of over 50 new construction projects. Michael and his team have reduced the utility consumption of 20,000 units of multi-family housing by 20 percent or more, while increasing facility resilience to natural hazards. His super power is getting small children to sleep through the night.



**Gretchen Wilson**, ASLA, PLA, LEED AP is a Principal Partner with Dig Studio. Dig Studio is a landscape architecture, urban design and planning firm based in Denver. Gretchen draws from all aspects of a project including client goals, history, culture, site features, users and ecology to create meaningful, successful designs. Her knowledge of construction and attention to detail allow her to shape ideas into reality. Gretchen's dedication and collaboration has shaped streetscapes, parks, plazas, and public spaces at varying scales to artfully and sustainably tie communities together.



**John Binder** is a Principal with Kephart, a Denver-based residential architecture and land planning design firm. John's passion for architecture is unmatched. He appreciates watching a design come to life; such moments act as an incentive to do more. He has received several awards on projects stretching nationwide. His pride and devotion to architecture extends past his involvement at KEPHART. He is an active member of several local industry groups including, Leading Age, Transit Alliance and ULI organizations. John is a leader within the office. His mantra, "let's make it happen" instills a sense of importance among his peers and encourages a heightened level of motivation.

*Special thanks to the ULI Colorado TAP Committee Chairs Al Colussy, Andrew Knudtsen, LaDonna Baertlein, and Anna Jones and to the hospitality and sponsorship of Jefferson County, Evergreen Legacy Fund, and the Denver Regional Council of Governments.*



### ULI Colorado Leadership in Responsible Land Use

ULI Colorado is the 1,400-member District Council of the global Urban Land Institute. ULI Colorado consists of a four-person staff, 25-member executive committee, and 15 committees with more than 250 volunteers. More than 40 programs a year include advisory panels, leadership and mentoring programs, panels, project tours, publications, and community service. ULI is a non-lobbying educational and research institute supported by its members, sponsors, and foundations. Key issues include affordable housing, healthy communities, transit-oriented development, and sustainable design and planning.

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Executive Director: Michael Leccese  
Director: Marianne Eppig  
Director: Sarah Franklin  
Associate: Elise Martinez

