

SOUTH BRIGHTON DEVELOPMENT

Development Opportunities to Create a Walkable, Urban Environment



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The City of Brighton, Colorado

ON THE COVER: Potential development sites
along Valente Drive, west of the Adams County
Government Center.



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The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific region, with members in 84 countries. ULI's extraordinary impact on land use decision-making is based on its members' sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns. Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. Drawing on its members' work, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

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About ULI Colorado

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policymakers dedicated to creating better places. The ULI Colorado district council brings together real estate professionals, civic leaders, and the community for educational programs, initiatives impacting the state, and networking events, all in the pursuit of advancing responsible and equitable land use throughout the State of Colorado. With 1,300 members, ULI Colorado provides a unique venue to convene and share best practices in the state. ULI Colorado believes everyone needs to be at the table when the state's future is at stake, so ULI serves the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines—from architects to developers, CEOs to analysts, builders, property owners, investors, public officials, and everyone in between. Using this interdisciplinary approach, ULI examines land use issues, impartially reports findings, and convenes forums to find solutions.

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ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

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ULI Advisory Services identify creative, practical solutions for complex land use and development challenges.

Technical Advisory Program (TAP)

Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in Indiana. Drawing from its professional membership base, ULI Indiana offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project and present it to the panel. TAP panelists spend two days interviewing stakeholders, evaluating the challenges, and ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations that the sponsoring organization can use to guide development going forward.

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Panelists tour the study area around the Adams County Government Center in South Brighton.

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The study area is marked by good road access, generally flat topography, and a view of the mountains in the distance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Brighton, Colorado, is in the path of development radiating northeast from Denver. Knowing that developers and property owners will be interested in developing new buildings, homes, and retail uses to the area, the City of Brighton (the city) has outlined clear intentions around the type of development it would like to see and where. For South Brighton and the area around the Adams County Government Center in particular, the city envisions a dense, walkable, urban area. In spite of its best intentions, however, the city has yet to see development emerge at the site.

To understand the potential disconnects between the development the city would like to see in the area and how developers and property owners would like to proceed, city leadership turned to the Urban Land Institute Colorado (ULI Colorado) district council for assistance.

The city identified the study site as the 374 acres in an area loosely bound by East 120th Street to the south, E-470 to the north, the Adams County Government Center (the government center) to the east, and the Second Creek floodplain to the west. Four property owners control the land in question, and the city's development conversations with these property owners have been ongoing for years.

Using its trusted Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) program, ULI Colorado convened a panel of real estate industry professionals with the expertise to study the challenge at hand by touring the site and interviewing stakeholders, including the property owners, municipal leadership, and other stakeholders with insights on the study site. Equipped with information gleaned from this process and their professional insights, the panel detailed a set of recommendations that the city can take under advisement in its pursuit of development in South Brighton.

Market Realities and Regulatory Environment

The city's vision for a vibrant urban core at the study site featuring a mix of uses—office, retail, and residential—must be viewed through the lens of the existing and near-term market realities. Potential for new office development at the site is limited, particularly as the office market continues

to be in a state of flux nationwide following the COVID-19 pandemic. With regard to potential retail development, the low population density of the surrounding five miles will not adequately support retail at the site without additional housing. As residential density increases and transportation improvements are made, however, the site's retail potential increases. Using plans currently under review by the city, the study site could accommodate approximately 3,000 housing units, which could create demand for approximately 150,000 square feet of retail commercial use. Developing new housing at the study site is likely the best first step as there is unmet demand for housing in Brighton and the surrounding communities.

Vision and Placemaking

In the pursuit of a dense, walkable environment, the city should create an identifiable core with buildings brought to the street edge. Building types can and should vary to help create an interesting and engaging pedestrian experience. Although true vertical mixed use, which relies on land scarcity, may not be realized for years, horizontal mixed-use development makes good sense for the site and will still support the city's development goals. A mix of price points and denser housing typologies—from townhomes to multi-family within the core and with lower-density residential options west of Sable—can also help create a neighborhood that is financially attainable for a wide range of potential residents.

The placement of commercial uses within the study site will play a critical role in establishing a framework for future urbanity and density. Sable Boulevard should be designed to slow speeds between North and South Adams Government

Parkway. A four lane facility can still be achieved but should be designed with minimum lane widths of 10 and 11 feet. Commercial uses should be located at the core (noted by the panel as the intersection of Sable and Valente Drive/ East 124th street) and along the corridors. Both of these actions will support further efforts to create a “Main Street” destination along Valente Drive. The addition of non-vehicular corridors—primarily through the addition of new trails and sidewalks—will further connect people across the site and showcase the natural beauty of the area. Finally, new employment opportunities should be welcomed and encouraged across the site with office and flex users locating primarily along the interstate where traffic visibility and access will be supportive of operations.

Financing Tools

The city has good financing tools in place to support development at the site. While the existing tax increment financing (TIF) at the site is due to expire soon, the city should explore using a TIF share-back agreement (or TIF extension), accessing metro district funding, or creating a general improvement district in the area to support development. There may also be retail incentives, county or state employer-specific incentives, and funding for affordable housing that the city could explore to support its mixed-use goals for the site.

Development Scenarios

As the city and developers will be creating a new market in this section of South Brighton, early efforts should focus on building residential density and finding quality retailers to locate in the core. Planning early for parking will also be important. While structured parking will not make financial sense in these early years, planning today with surface lots, tucked behind street-facing buildings, could provide viable garage locations in the future.

The city will also need to carefully evaluate its requirements around mixed-use typologies and open space dedication requirements as these may be impeding development in meaningful ways. Any discussion of adding a taxing district, which comes with an additional mill levy should be carefully evaluated as the total mills in the area may soon surpass what the market is willing to bear.

Regardless of development direction, the city should

continue to foster development that supports and strengthens a walkable, bikeable, pedestrian-oriented environment. Regardless of project scale, walkability principles will serve the development, the city, and the residents well today and into the future.

Process and Pathway Forward

Through the TAP process and stakeholder interviews, the panel made several process observations that should be considered as the city evaluates the most effective path forward.

As the city and all area landowners seek development alignment, collaboration is key. Presently, the city and Woodbury Corporation are not aligned on the purpose of the planned development (PD) process, potential open space credits, potential phasing of development, allowed and prohibited uses, and the level of detail required at each stage of development. Working together, the city and Woodbury Corporation should resolve these misalignments and focus on taking an updated PD to the city council.

To aid in additional development pursuits, the panel outlined three tables, which can serve as guiding tools through the course of development: a requirements table, a table of potential incentives, and a table to help guide decisions around parks and other improvements.

Finally, the panel recommended the city consider several code amendments to help spur development at the site while achieving long-range goals for the area. Public land requirements, private parks improvements, floodplains as “open space,” and parking minimums each deserve a second look with the goal of meeting developers where they are while still achieving the city’s goals. Lastly, the code approval process also warrants a closer look to eliminate burdensome requirements.

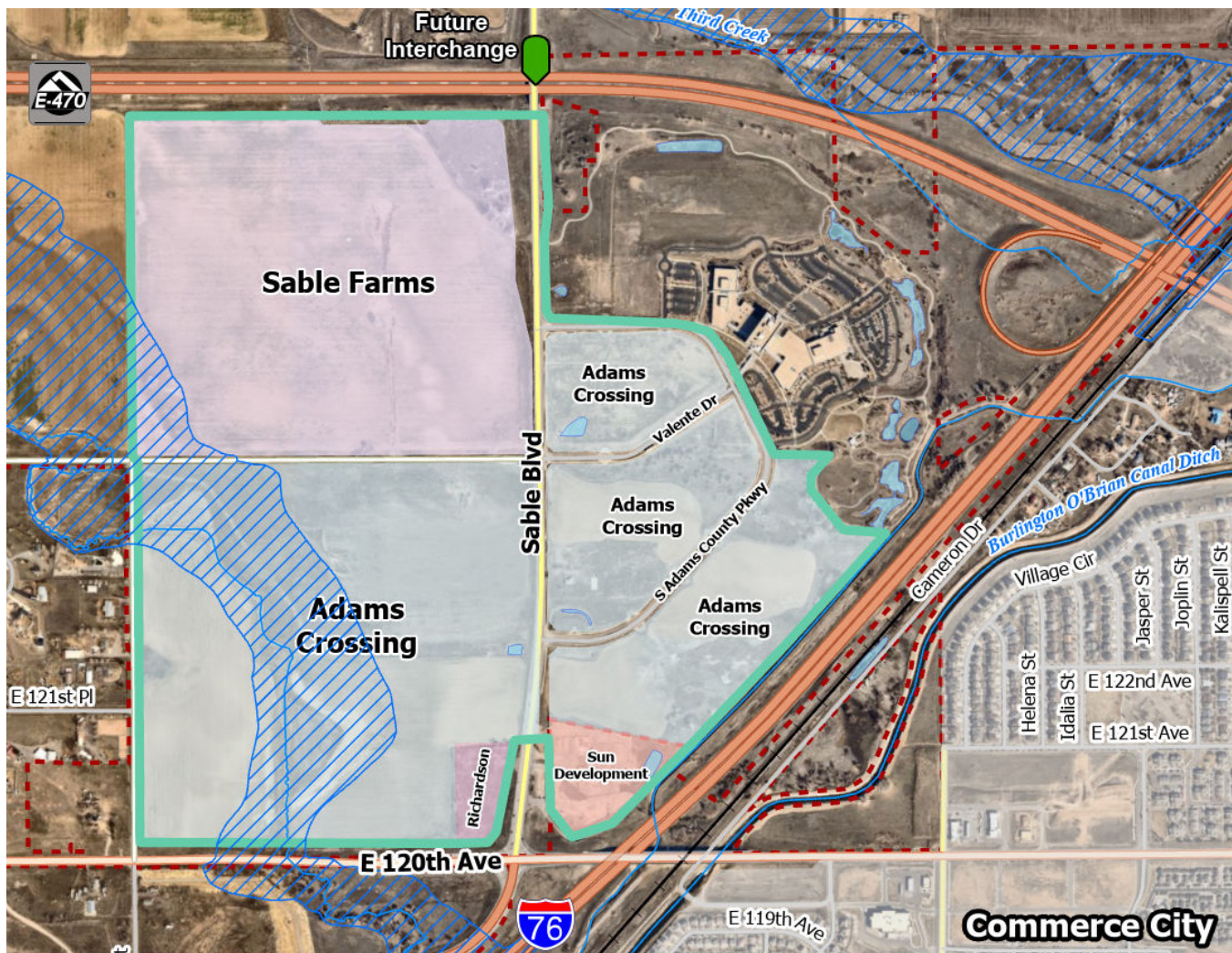
The area around the Adams County Government Center presents an exciting development opportunity and the city is working hard to ensure that the decisions made today serve the city and its residents well into the future. Market realities, however, are pushing developers to take a slightly different approach. Working together, the city and the developers can find middle ground, leading with a horizontal mix of uses that will provide Brighton with additional housing, new retail opportunities, and space in which to expand the city’s business and employment base.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The City of Brighton, northeast of Denver, is home to over 40,000 people, has a rich agricultural history, and sits on relatively level land with views of the Rocky Mountains in the distance. The city has experienced steady growth, in both population and commerce, and has identified land to the south and west of the Adams County Government Center (the government center) as land well-positioned for development.

In its efforts to attract development to the site, Brighton’s municipal staff and elected leadership are using the city’s comprehensive plan to guide its efforts. City leadership has indicated a strong interest in creating a walkable urban environment featuring a mix of uses across the 370+ acre

site. Private landowners and developers who hold the land around the government center are also interested in bringing a mix of uses to the site, yet the delivery of those uses and the density of each is dependent on market forces that are proving difficult to predict and agree upon.



The study site, shaded in white, is marked by excellent roadway access, the Second Creek floodplain, and the proximity of the Adams County Government Center.

Recognizing the challenges of a changing market and striving to encourage growth that serves its current and future citizens, the city turned to ULI Colorado for assistance in charting a path forward that can finally catalyze mixed-use development in the area.

Land within the study site, spread across approximately 374 acres, is owned by four separate property owners. The site is bound on the south by East 120th Avenue, on southeast by Interstate 76, on the west by Potomac Street and the Second Creek floodplain, and on the north by E-470.

E-470 is a busy commuter toll road that will soon feature an interchange at its intersection with Sable Boulevard, which bisects the study area north and south. Second Creek runs from the northwest corner of the study site southeast where it crosses under East 120th Avenue. The Adams County Government Center sits east and northeast of the study site and is the only significant development in the immediate area. The two smaller privately-owned parcels, located at the northeast and northwest corners of Sable and East 120th Avenue were not included in this study.

Questions for the Panel

Despite providing all available incentives to encourage the dense, high-quality development that is desired, the proposals received on the properties in the study area have fallen short of the City's vision for this area. Is the Comprehensive Plan vision for this area achievable based on real market conditions, understanding that it may take time for conditions to be right?

Supporting Questions

1. What trends should we be focused on (economic, financial, political, social, regulatory, property or design) to favor mixed-use development in the area?
2. Brighton lacks vertically mixed-use development despite encouraging this type of development in the Be Brighton Comprehensive Plan and providing mixed-use standards in the Land Use and Development Code. Because the code has not been tested with a real project, we would appreciate a review of the Land Use and Development Code standards for mixed-use buildings to identify any standards that should be amended to better facilitate mixed-use development.
3. Are we missing out on any financing opportunities to assist the developers in this area and how could the developers best leverage the available mechanisms?
4. All developers in this area struggle to define the types of commercial uses to attract and plan for, particularly in the mixed-use format. Can you provide examples of successful mixed-use commercial developments of a similar nature?
5. Are there impediments to making a mixed-use development work in this area that the city should undertake to improve the likelihood of a mixed-use development being proposed?
6. If a less dense product is more likely to develop, what principles should be incorporated into the developments to ensure this remains a walkable, bikeable, and transit friendly area?
7. If the current vision is unrealistic, what future land uses could be appropriate in the various sections of the study area?



A portion of the study site, with Valente Drive to the north, is bounded by the Adams County Government Center to the east in the distance.



TAP panelists interviewed a wide range of stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the complex nature of the TAP challenge.

The TAP Process

Using its technical advisory panel process, ULI Colorado convened a group of real estate professionals with expertise in development, economic development, finance, and land use planning to study the site and deliver a set of recommendations back to the city.

The TAP engagement, designed to be objective and instructive in its process, brings together unbiased real estate industry professionals equipped with experience directly related to the challenges at hand to serve as panelists, providing actionable recommendations and guidance to the TAP sponsor, in this case the City of Brighton. Equipped with extensive briefing materials before the TAP work sessions, the panelists spent the two days meeting with city leadership and touring the study area, which provided the panel with deeper insights into the challenge. Following the tour, the panel conducted interviews, meeting with stakeholders from the city and county, property owners, and developers. The insights

from these interviews further informed the panelists' understanding of the potential development opportunities for the land around the government center.

What the Panel Heard

Throughout the process and particularly the stakeholder interviews, the following key themes emerged.

- **Dense and walkable.** The city would like to see, and is trying to encourage through development controls, a dense, walkable environment for the study site.
- **Land use complications.** Developers and land owners in the area are ready to begin work but are finding it difficult to meet the requirements outlined in the city's comprehensive plan.
- **Affordable housing.** City officials would like to encourage more affordable housing across Brighton.

- **Gateway and destination.** City of Brighton leadership would like to create a gateway to the city at the study site and create a destination that will draw residents, employees, and visitors to the area.
- **New interchange.** The new interchange at E-470 will add additional auto accessibility to the site, which is presently largely auto-dependent with limited public transit (bus service).
- **Second Creek.** Second Creek flows through the site, its floodplain will impact development, and the space along the creek could become open space and a trail amenity.
- **Potential and challenges of East 120th.** East 120th Avenue is a busy thoroughfare for commuters, yet the sloping topography along the roadway presents challenges for potential vehicular access and would require significant dirt fill and leveling, which could negatively impact Second Creek.



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The study area is served by a bus line with an one-hour headway.



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The topography at the southern end of the study area makes access points for new commercial businesses challenging.

MARKET REALITY AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

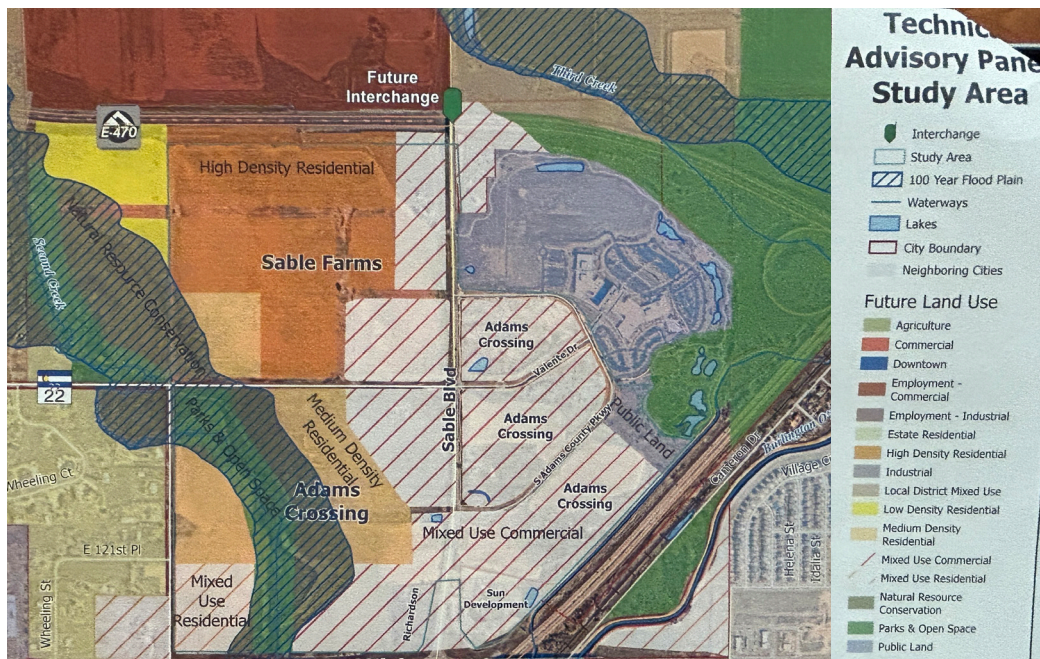
The city has been working diligently over the years to shape a comprehensive plan that would encourage walkable, mixed-use development in the area, yet development following those plans has yet to materialize. City leadership has indicated that it is patient and willing to wait for the right development at the site, yet, after a decade of waiting, it may be time to identify what could be standing in the way of the city's development goals and make revisions to better meet the market.

Trade Area Realities

When considering the potential for dense, mixed-use commercial uses at the site, as called for in the city's comprehensive plan, it is important to identify and understand the surrounding trade area. Within a three-mile radius of the site, there is a relatively low density of only 9,800 households. Within a five-mile trade area radius, the density increases slightly to 29,000 households. By comparison, grocery store anchored retail centers in Brighton and in Thornton have more than 12,000 households in their three mile trade area. While not particularly dense, the household incomes in the area are strong with an average income of \$144,000.

Land uses across Brighton and broader Adams County are influenced by efforts to preserve agricultural land. Large tracts of agricultural land have been set aside for preservation, both as a way to protect this important resource and as a manner in which to elevate the area's rich agricultural history and culture. These preservation efforts come with a cost as development and infrastructure must plan and build around the preserved land. Disjointed land use and transportation patterns result, and build-out density is impacted due to these physical and regulatory constraints.

Regional connectivity is a strong asset in this trade area. Interstate 76, East 120th Avenue, and E-470 provide excellent access to the study site, which will



TAP BRIEFING MATERIALS

The city's comprehensive plan calls for a mix of uses at the site and mixed-use commercial specifically covering a significant portion of the site.

only be improved once the interchange is added at the intersection of Sable Boulevard and E-470 (anticipated 2024 construction start).

Market Influences

The trade area around the study site may be somewhat weak presently, yet there are factors that can begin to positively influence the area's market dynamics and potential.

Increased residential density. Knowing that retail follows rooftops, additional housing in and around the study site will positively impact the viability of commercial and particularly retail uses here. Pursuing housing that is dense (*e.g.*, 10-20 units per acre instead of three units per acre) within and around the core can also significantly and positively influence market viability.

Transportation improvements. The site is easily accessible from Interstate 76 and East 120th Avenue. The addition of the E-470 interchange in the near future will add an additional access point from this busy commuter corridor, which may be of particular interest to potential commercial users.

Anchor uses/attractions. The addition of a significant employer, regional retailer, health care facility, and/or sports or entertainment destination could meaningfully impact the market viability of the site by bringing a large number of employees and/or visitors to the area on a regular basis.

Office+ Development

Brighton is not alone in facing a challenging office environment. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, new office construction has slowed significantly, and building owners across the United States are working hard to understand how to reposition their office portfolios and/or convert their office buildings into new uses.

For the Brighton study site, new office development will remain a significant challenge. The outlook for new office around the government center will remain limited without another driver entering the market that could catalyze ancillary office uses (*e.g.*, the construction of a new hospital sparks medical office construction nearby; the construction

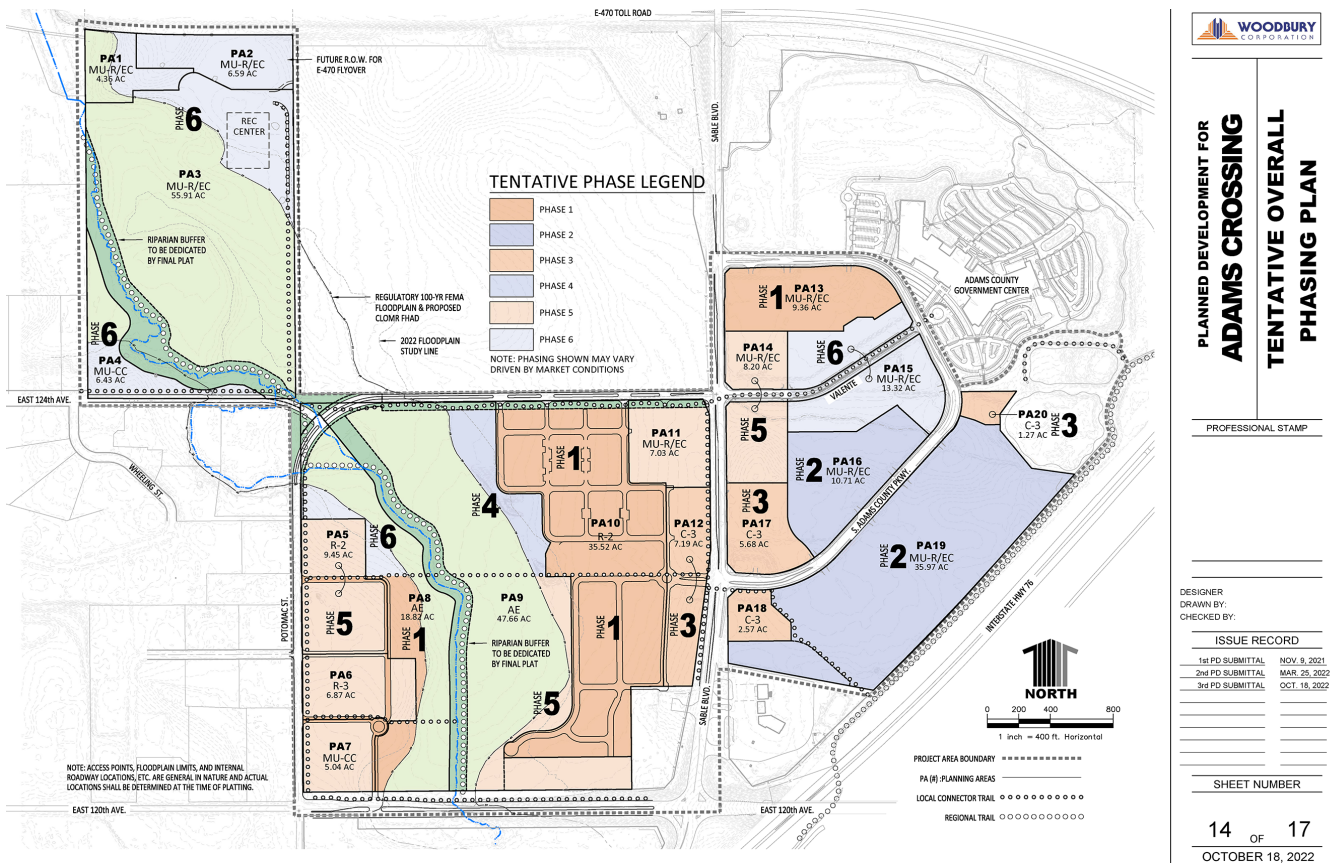
of a technology incubation center sparks new office locations for professional service providers wishing to support those new businesses).

While limited, there is some office potential at the site. Should a business wish to move to the study area, the study area could be home to a build-to-suit office development. This type of development may include a manufacturing or light industrial component, which, with good design, can still blend into the mixed-use goals the city has for the site. The site could also work well for supportive office uses such as real estate services, dentists' offices, or for other medical services.

While the city was skeptical about the addition of industrial uses at the site, citing concerns of truck traffic and limited walkability, there are flex Industrial uses that could work well. These flex industrial users typically feature a more significant office component (in proportion to manufacturing space) than traditional industrial users, generate limited truck traffic or use smaller trucks, and could attract ancillary businesses that thrive near potential research and development activities. These uses could be accommodated along the interstate where visibility and access are supportive of these operations.

Retail Development

The panel reviewed the current submitted plans from Adams Crossing and Sable Farms, the developments currently posed for the study site. Using those plans as a guide, the study site would accommodate approximately 3,000 housing units, which could create demand for approximately 150,000 square feet of retail commercial space (assuming that the retail was able to capture 100% of the demand from those housing units; as an over-estimation, the panel used this figure conservatively). Expanding to a five-mile radius, 8,500 housing units could be added to the trade area over next ten years, which could create demand for an estimated 450,000 square feet of retail/commercial space. A grocery store could be a nice anchor for the study site, yet the viability of a grocer could be in question if competitive sites develop first and lessen the available demand.



The developer’s plans for Adams Crossing, which covers a significant portion of the study site, leads with residential construction in Phase 1.

A regional retailer maybe attracted to the area particularly along Sable Boulevard, but competition from other sites is strong, particularly with the Prairie Center shopping area, which features a number of regional big box retailers, within three miles of the site.

Residential Development

Developing new housing units at the study site is likely the best first step. There is demand for housing in Brighton and in surrounding communities, and the addition of households to the trade area will help catalyze demand for all other uses.

The area could—and should—feature diverse housing types, providing entry points for homeowners from a variety of income levels and providing opportunities to both own and rent. Options should include for-sale single family and attached housing options, for-rent single family and attached housing options, and garden or walk-up

multifamily housing units. Diverse housing types and land uses tend to create more stable and sustainable environments over the long term, allowing residents to transition from rental to homeownership in the same area and providing opportunities for families to grow or downsize within their beloved neighborhood. Diverse housing can better withstand economic shocks over the long term, and diverse housing types can support the creation of a visually interesting streetscape the city wishes to see along the streets in south Brighton.

Larger-scale multifamily, like the kind found in many dense urban centers, is likely not financially viable in the near term. The development costs associated with this type of development, notably the addition of structured parking at the site, could not be supported by the area’s current rental rates. If the city really wishes to see this type of development at the site, project-specific financial support will be needed to make it reality.

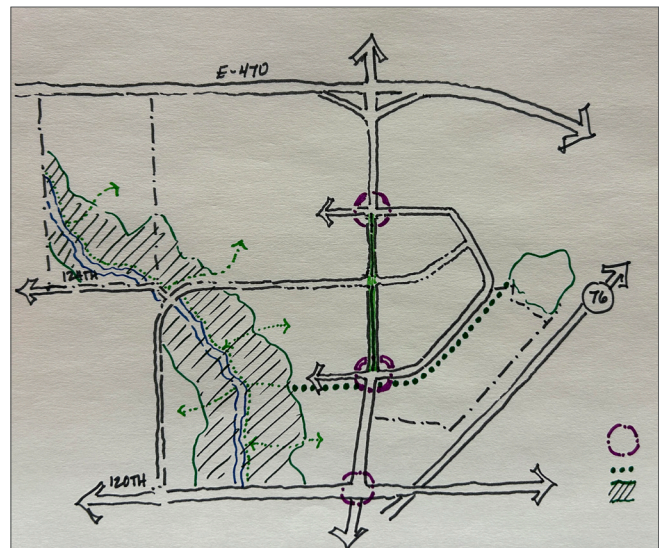
VISION AND PLACEMAKING

As the panel began to envision how the study site could develop, led by the city's vision and within the confines of the market realities, the center of gravity for the site shifted to the intersection of Sable Boulevard and East 124th Avenue. The proximity and volume of traffic from both E-470 and I-76 requires a transitional period, to create a safer environment to support walkability in the site's core. Traffic will need to slow as it moves into the new urban core from these commuter thoroughfares, and in doing so, will expand opportunities for walkable development and placemaking at the site.

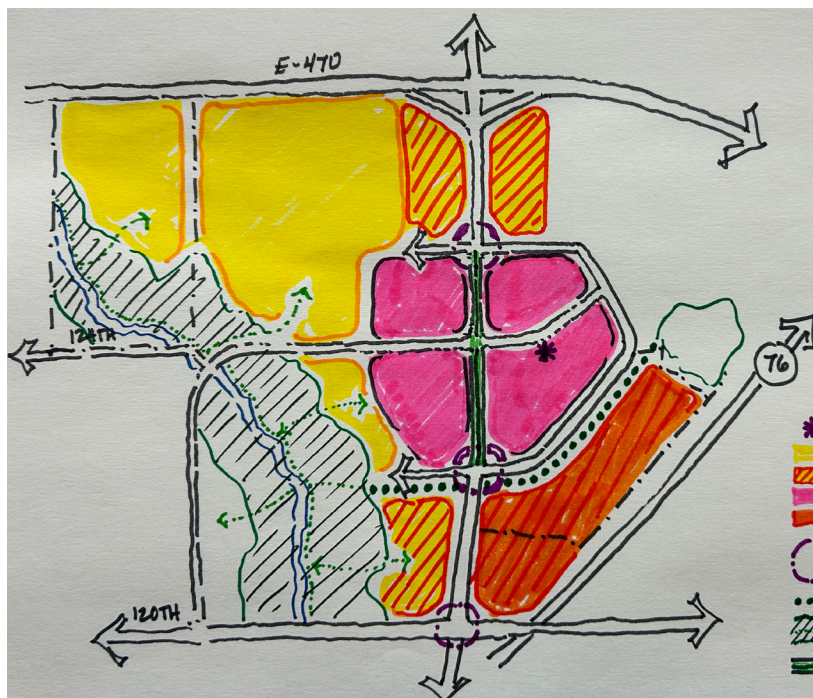
Land Use Mix

In pursuit of a dense, walkable environment, the city's comprehensive plan calls for a mix of uses across the site. While the panel agreed that a mix of uses is desirable is valuable, the city is encouraged to remain flexible in how and where that mix is developed. A variety of building typologies, complementing site context and geography, can support an interesting and walkable environment in areas where a mix of uses may be more challenging.

Pursue horizontal mixed-use development. The city's plans call for a vertical mix of uses within buildings, which is often found in dense urban environments. Mixed-use development



ULI TAP PANEL



ULI TAP PANEL

(above) Circulation around the site, both vehicular and trail, is noted with arrows. The green line on Sable denotes where the roadway should be scaled down for walkability and main street activation. Additional traffic signals at each end of Adams County Parkway would help further slow traffic through the core of the new urban center, creating a safer pedestrian environment.

(left) Land uses around the urban center are mixed and dense in the pink-shaded zones. Residential and/or commercial uses surround the core and a network of new lanes and trails connect residents and visitors to destinations throughout the site and to destinations in the surrounding areas.

is complex and can be more expensive to build than single-use development. Given the relatively weak commercial market in south Brighton, the city is strongly encouraged to consider horizontal mixed use in this area while maintaining a main street built form within the core. No longer bound to the confines of a single building, horizontal mixed use can spread along the street edge, creating a diversity of building use, supporting a variety of business types, and adding visual interest to the streetscape.

Encourage a variety of housing typologies and price points.

A mix of housing density should be included across the site. By mixing small lot single-family homes with townhomes and multifamily buildings with urban frontages and parking interior to the project, the city can encourage residential density and promote walkability in the new urban core and surrounding neighborhoods. A range of housing typologies should also be delivered at a range of attainable price points, making safe and affordable housing possible for single residents, working families, and affluent residents alike.

Place commercial at the core and along corridors. With the intersection of Sable and East 124th positioned as the new center of the emerging district, main street and street-fronting retail should be placed along Sable, between North and South Adams County Parkway, and east and west of Sable, along Valente Drive and East 124th. Buildings—whether they be single story retail uses or multistory mixed

use buildings—should front Valente and Sable within the core, maintaining a consistent frontage of 75 to 90 percent along the street edge. This central core should feature walkable retail and parking should be placed behind the buildings where lots can be accessed via interior connector lanes. Building placement and parking lot placement should be considered carefully in these spaces to allow for auto access while still supporting the overall walkable nature of the broader district. All of the more auto-oriented commercial development should be placed along Sable to the north and south, closer to E-470 and East 120th, and along the interstate.

Office and flex should locate along the interstate. The proximity of the interstate provides an interesting and compelling site for a potential office or flex user. Interstate access, for distribution purposes and ease of employee commute, and interstate visibility could be particularly valuable for commercial users. While the size of this quadrant, at roughly 35 acres, could accommodate a sizable user, operations requiring a smaller footprint should be pursued instead. Smaller users with tighter loading bays and limited loading and distribution activities could benefit from the interstate proximity and access. Positioned close to the interstate, traffic generated by these flex users would have limited negative impact on the rest of the site and could instead add potential customers to the retail and restaurants who locate in the urban core.



A flexible, open-air pavilion in a public park, like this one in Watersound, Florida, or other open space can create a community destination and beloved gathering space.



Events, like farmers' markets, performances, and fairs in a public space, like this one in Winchester, Virginia, can further activate the area and encourage return visitors.

Create a destination. Throughout the development process, the city and property owners should collaborate to make the area a destination for surrounding residents and outside visitors. A farmer’s market at the site could highlight the region’s rich agricultural history and could facilitate farm-to-table restaurant experiences in the district. Destination branding could also highlight and leverage the work done to date to elevate the history and present-day benefits of the Splendid Valley.

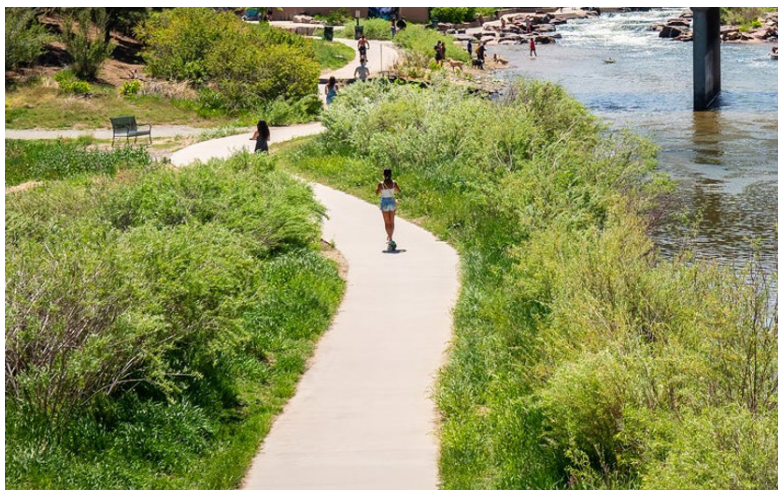
Create non-vehicular corridors to showcase the area. In addition to the commercial corridors that border the site, additional trail corridors should be created along the Second Creek floodplain and connecting to the Adams County Natural Park and related trail. The trails will help residents and visitors explore the area and connect them to the walkable urban core while leaving their cars at home. In addition to connecting to other trails and open space, this expanded trail network will also support the health and wellness of Brighton’s residents and visitors.

Scale Sable to a walkable width. Sable Boulevard is 110 feet wide—a width that allows and even encourages cars to move quickly through. In order to create an environment that supports walkable, urban commercial at the intersection of Sable and East 124th, the width of the corridor should be reduced, embracing a redesign that emphasizes connectivity and creates a walkable scale with buildings at the street edge. The right of way could be reduced from 110 feet to around 84 feet, with 15 feet of landscape buffer and sidewalk, 10-foot outer lanes and 11-foot inner lanes, and a 12 to 14-foot center landscaped median. By bringing the buildings to the edge of the right-of-way, traffic typically slows and results in a safer and more welcoming environment for pedestrians.



GOOGLE EARTH

Little Raven Street in Denver features walking trails along one edge of the street and buildings situated close to the property line on the other, creating an environment that works well for vehicles and pedestrians alike.



VISIT DENVER

This hardscape trail makes good use of the river’s floodplain, creating space for both active and passive recreation.



GOOGLE EARTH

The buildings that line the streets surrounding Orengo Station were constructed close to the property line and sidewalk, creating a more welcome, walkable environment.

Create Main Street along Valente Drive. In the center of the study area, between E-470 and East 120th, Valente Drive offers an interesting opportunity to create a main street experience. With a scaled-down Sable Boulevard between north and south Adams County Parkway, the intersection of Sable and Valente is the heart of the district and Valente (to the east) and E124th (to the west) is an important intersection. Valente should become home to a mix of one-story and mixed-use buildings. As development across the site matures, additional buildings could go vertical and include a mix of uses; in early stages, the development focus should be destination creation regardless of building height.

Encourage employment through a variety of users. There is ample opportunity to designate space within the study site for smaller flex-industrial uses. By designating a smaller parcel size that limits square footage and warehouse/distribution uses, residents and visitors in the area can avoid conflicts with truck traffic and related issues that often surround larger industrial operations. These smaller flex sites often feature flexible interiors that include more people-oriented spaces (including office, creative, and co-working spaces) than traditional industrial manufacturing sites.



SPRINGDALE GENERAL



SPRINGDALE GENERAL

Springdale General, in Austin, features a variety of flexible commercial spaces, including office space, creative work space, and small maker spaces for innovation and experimentation.



Streetscapes featuring one-story retail can be just as inviting and interesting as multistory streetscapes.



Streetscapes with varying building heights and styles provide visual variety and appeal.

FINANCING TOOLS

The city has assembled a solid toolbox of financing mechanisms and development incentives to support real estate development around the city and at this site specifically. The strategic implementation of those financing incentives may not have been as strong as required, however, leaving the city with tools that will expire before any developer can leverage the resources to their fullest extent.

Existing Financing Tools

The city's existing financing tools include the following:

Tax increment financing share-back agreement. The current tax increment finance (TIF) tool that applies to the Adams Crossing portion of the site provides developers with a 50 percent rebate on eligible improvements. The TIF has yet to be used and is due to expire in 2036, leaving potential developers with only limited potential to generate the incremental rebate on costs associated with site improvements.

Metro District. The site sits within a metro district, which can provide similar financial resources as would be available through a General Improvement District (GID) and would apply to similar improvements such as roads, sewer, trails, and parks. The use of a metro district can prove useful for a developer, allowing cost recovery for items related to infrastructure improvements; if the mill levy inches too high, however, project feasibility and market support may begin to erode. The current base rate is 110 mills; a rate above 125 mills is likely to be problematic in the market today.

General Improvement District. The current general improvement district (GID) provides similar financial support as a metro district, including "district" wide improvements like parks and open space, transportation and mobility, and flood and stormwater improvements. The GID that applies to the study site will expire in 2024, has yet to have taxes levied against it in the 20 years it has been in place, and raises the same potential concern about a high

mill levy as some of the other tools. While this particular GID may represent a missed opportunity, it is also a good reminder of the importance of an implementation strategy in the deployment of development incentives.

Potential Future Financing Tools

Additional financial tools may be available to support development at the study site, and the city is encouraged to explore the following suggestions.

Tax increment financing. The current TIF on the site is due to expire soon, but the following options may open the door to similar funding opportunities:

- Extend the TIF clock for the existing urban renewal area once it expires.
- Form a new urban renewal area(s) and start a new TIF clock for the larger area or create project specific TIF areas.
- Use any increment generated by 2036 to support district-wide improvements.

Retail incentives. Given the city's interest in seeing retail at the site, the following financial vehicles are also worth exploring to support retail development:

- Use a sales tax share-back arrangement to provide project/retailer-specific incentives to support the attraction of additional retail uses.
- Use public improvement fees as an incentive for larger retail development at the site.

County/state employer specific incentives. Additional financial tools may be available at the county or state level, including Enterprise Zone tax credits and personal property tax credits/sharing. Enterprise Zone tax credits provide financial benefits to the end user, rather than the developer, and have yet to be fully utilized in Adams County, although officials are unsure as to the reason behind the low adoption rates.

Affordable housing support funding. The city's interest in spurring the development of additional affordable housing in Brighton aligns with the state's housing interests. State Proposition 123 created the State Affordable Housing Fund, which supports land banking, equity, and debt investments to advance affordable housing in Colorado. The city is encouraged to explore potential funding alignments between this fund and the city's development goals.



DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

For the mix of uses the city would like to see developed across the site, the panel took a closer look at how each might best be realized and what barriers may presently be in the way. The city's goals for a walkable, bikable, pedestrian-oriented development informed the panel's considerations and associated recommendations.

Retail Development

The development of retail will benefit from a clear focus on a few, high-impact areas.

Focus early on establishing a core. Retail does well when it is clustered and regularly fails when it is developed using

a scattered approach. For the study site, the majority of the early retail development will likely be stand-alone, single-story buildings with adjacent or proximate surface parking lots. These should be pushed to the new urban core at Sable and Valente. Later, in-line retail along the corridors can begin to fill in between established buildings, helping create density.

Successful Retail Examples

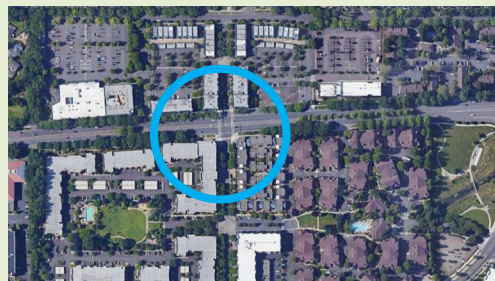
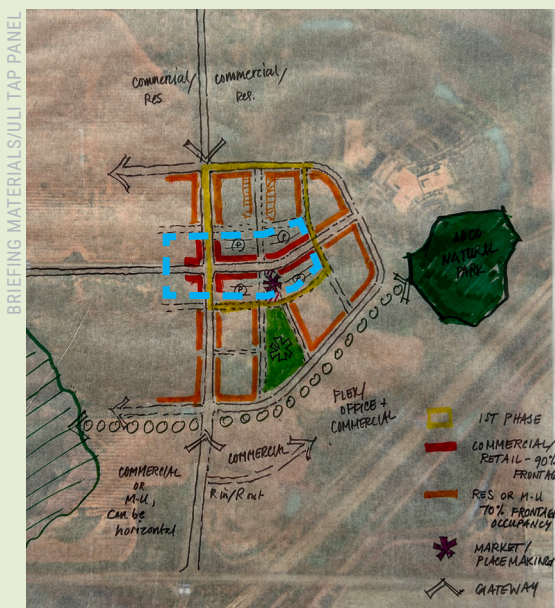
In the center of the development area, at the intersection of Sable and Valente/East 124th, a hard corner will form, providing retailers with excellent visibility from both streets and an early opportunity for in-line retail. Orenco Station in Hillsboro, Oregon, has guided development at its hard corners in a way that could be a good model for

this important intersection in Brighton. Moving east along Valente Drive, early retail development should be pulled close to the sidewalk and street and feature parking behind the buildings. In Boulder, the retail buildings that line 29th Street are a good example of how early retail development might take shape. Additional retail inspiration can be

found at the Shops at Lowry in Denver and at Bradburn in Westminster.

Shops along 29th Street in Boulder provide a good example of in-line retail along a walkable street.

The hard corner at Orenco Station in Hillsboro, at the intersection of NE Cornell and NE Orenco Station Parkway, provides a good example of how to envision development at the intersection of Sable and Valente/East 124th.



Seek quality over quantity. Quality retailers can attract customers to the area and oftentimes arrive with a gravitational pull of their own. By focusing on quality of the retailer and retail experience, the area can become a draw for discerning shoppers rather than just another place to shop among big boxes and national chains.

Multifamily Residential Development

Multifamily residential buildings will be important additions to the site’s new urban core.

Design to add to streetscape activation. The design and placement of multifamily residential buildings along the site’s core streets will be critical. By activating the primary façade of the buildings, encouraging the dispersal of

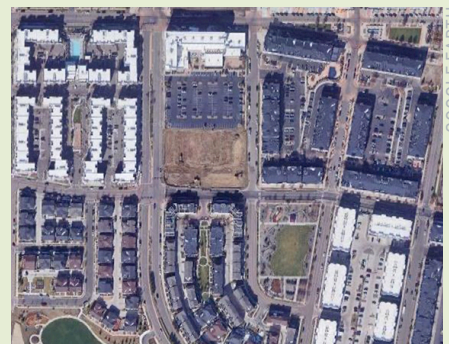
amenities across the development, and tucking parking behind the buildings, these larger residential structures can still actively contribute to the walkable streetscape.

Encourage scale. Developers considering building multifamily residential in the area will likely benefit from and include institutional investment in a project’s capital stack. This type of institutional attention typically hinges on developments of a certain size—typically parcel sizes that can readily accommodate 250 to 350 units. The city should be acknowledge this reality and ensure that development guidelines not only allow but actually encourage buildings of scale, particularly along street frontages. Design of these projects should still carry forward the gridded street network, public sidewalks and streets, and walkability vision for the area as a whole.

Successful Multifamily Examples

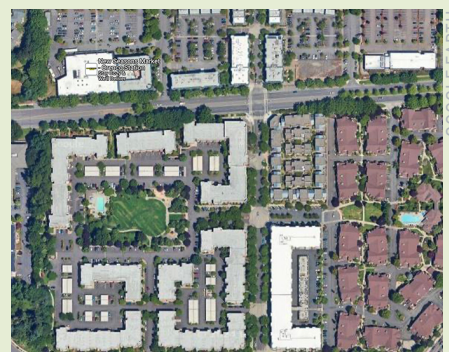
Surrounding and radiating out from the new urban center, multifamily residential buildings would be a welcome addition to the area. These buildings, a combination of townhomes and three- and four-story multifamily buildings, will be a welcome addition to a city in need of

additional housing options and will add much-needed households to the retail trade area for the businesses locating in the site’s urban core.



GOOGLE EARTH

Arista, in Broomfield, is a good example of multifamily buildings that feature an activated primary building edge.



GOOGLE EARTH

Orenco Station, in Oregon, is home to multifamily buildings arranged in institutionally-sized blocks that still contribute to an active streetscape.

Plan for parking evolution. Although surface parking will be the norm in early stages, when development is just gaining momentum, the placement of these lots will be critical in supporting broader walkability. Tucking lots behind buildings will preserve the street frontage for buildings and improve the pedestrian experience. Later development phases could convert those surface lots into new buildings with tucked-under parking. The construction of structured parking, even in later phases, will remain financially challenging without public subsidies.

Potential Impediments to Mixed-Use Best Practices

In addition to the challenges of creating market demand in the study site, there are a few key elements that may impede the realization of a successful mixed-use development.

Mixed-use typology and phasing. The city's requirements relating to vertical mixed-use development may be quite difficult to achieve. Allowing for horizontal mixed-use can still achieve the desired mix of uses but in a manner that will be more financially feasible in the subject market. The city should consider the amount of "mixed-use" a stand-alone project is achieving (e.g., housing units plus stand-alone retail) versus mandating vertical mixed-use particularly in earliest phases. The market will dictate when development projects become financial viable; recognizing this important market influence, the city should allow for flexibility on the phasing of uses.

Open space (public land) dedication requirements.

Brighton is working hard to ensure its residents and visitors have ample access to open space, recreation, and the public land for which Colorado is so well known. Balancing its open space goals with development can be tricky. The city should consider how the Second Creek floodplain can best be utilized by the community and credited as open

space in development pursuits. Potential solutions might include the following:

- Provide effective connectivity with existing parks and Second Creek.
- Require a small allocation of internal public parks that amplify the connection between the Adams County Government Center's open space and Natural Park and Second Creek.

Current mill levy and sunset TIF. The addition of financial incentives to attract and support development at the site is not without risk. Market support for mill levies above 110 diminishes quickly.

Walkable, Bikeable, Pedestrian-Oriented Development

The city should hold fast to its goal of fostering a walkable environment across the site. Automobile access to the area is excellent, but, once there, visitors and residents should be encouraged to and feel comfortable walking, biking, and leaving their cars behind.

Adopt walkable/bikeable connections regardless of project scale. The city should provide pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the city's existing parks, planned parks, and the site's portion of Second Creek.

- Prioritize improvements that advance Second Creek infrastructure and connect developments at the site to the area's open space and network of trails.
- Implement pedestrian and bike corridors at every phase of development across the site.
- Be creative about how the city's open space requirements are implemented, and prioritize connections to further open the site to visitors who may be using proximate trails.

PROCESS AND PATHWAY FORWARD

In outlining the path forward for development around the Adams County Government Center, the panel first recognized the challenges and opportunities associated with the current development process and then turned to recommendations as to how the city and developers might collaboratively find development solutions that meet the city's goals for the site while meeting the market where it is and expected to go in the near term.

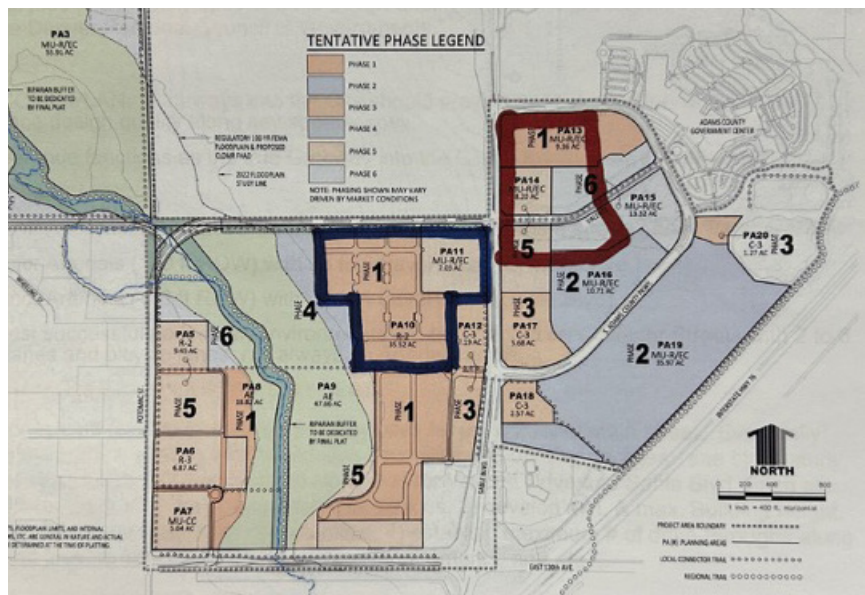
Process Observations

The previously submitted planned development (PD) from the Woodbury Corporation represents a significant opportunity to launch development at the site. Presently, there are several key points around which leaders at Woodbury Corporation and city leadership do not yet align.

- **Zoning.** Woodbury Corporation is proposing straight zoning for all planning areas except PA-1.
- **Planned development requirements.** There are disconnects between the city and developers in the purpose of a planned development. The city is encouraged to instead provide flexibility or relief from zoning requirements rather than use a planned development tool to exceed the stated standards and intentions.
- **Open space.** The requirements and guidelines around open space are also in question as the specifications for calculating open space, receiving credits for open space, and the location of and amenities related to open space are not clear for the developer.
- **Phasing.** The phasing required for a development of the size posed by Woodbury Corporation for Adams Crossing is also a concern. The city would like to see early development

close to the government center while the developer would like to pursue housing along the Second Creek floodplain first.

- **Land use.** The amount, locations, and certain allowed or prohibited uses across portions of the site is also a point of disagreement between the city and developer.
- **Plan detail requirements.** Plan detail for the entire site, as submitted by the developer, does not align with the city's expectations for detail at this stage, regardless of the phase of development.



The phasing plan, as detailed in Woodbury's most recent PD, launches development near the panel's identified urban core. Outlined in red are the areas where the panel recommend early commercial work begins. Similarly, the area outlined in navy should be the focus of early residential development. Combined, an urban core can begin to gain traction.

BRIEFING MATERIALS/ULI TAP PANEL

Recommendations and Path Forward

As the city and developers look toward the future for the study site, the public and private sectors are encouraged to work together with the goal of taking an updated PD to City Council. This revised approach to the PD should incorporate and include the following actions and consider how carrots (incentives) could be used perhaps more effectively than sticks (regulations).

- **Land use.** Address land uses across the site, planned public parks, all potential connections, the new street grid, and phasing of development and improvements.
- **Phasing.** Focus on a phasing plan in PD that incentivizes the city’s desired phasing. While the phasing plans outlined by the developer today may not align with the city’s goals, the city might find ways to incentivize revisions that push its preferred phases to the forefront.
- **Threshold requirements.** Build a list of incentives and baseline requirements into the PD. With optional elements listed and threshold requirements outlined, the city could build out a menu that the developer could consider as it updates its plans for the site.

Follow a revised phasing plan. The panel reviewed the developer’s plans current and revised plans to see how and where phasing decisions might be adjusted to better meet the city’s development progress goals.

Following the panel’s recommendation that early attention be paid to the intersection of Sable and Valente/East 124th, early phasing would be most effective if it included activating the parcels on Valente closest to Sable as well as

Requirements

Element
Define the baseline public improvements and parks for the project.
Second Creek Improvements tied to phasing plan or percentage of total of residential units constructed (50%).
Limitation on residential building permits until a defined amount of non-residential has been built on Valente Dr.
Create key building frontage requirements to create walkable, pedestrian oriented development.
Define horizontal mixed-use requirements for mixed-use planning areas.

Incentives

Element	In exchange for:
Vertical mixed-use development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reduced parks and open space requirements » Credit for private park facilities » Release of residential building permits in intervals » For example, no more than 600 residential building permits until a defined amount of non-residential is constructed
Commercial development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a scale based on the amount of non-residential square feet built. » Incentivize commercial development along Sable Blvd and Valente Dr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Additional vesting period for PD
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improvement in lieu credit for parks and open space
Higher density product types for residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Financial contributions by City or BURA

the parcels in the southwest corner of the intersection of Sable and East 124th. With this initial focus, the developer could begin to establish retail at this key intersection and, at the same time, include early residential opportunities, which will add needed rooftops to the area for future retail development considerations.

Use a requirements table. The panel identified a list of baseline requirements that the city should request at the outset of any development at the site. Further development incentives could build from this baseline, but these requirements would serve as the foundation for any development at the site.

Use an incentive table.

In an effort to tie the wide range of incentives the city may be willing to offer to potential concessions made by a developer, the city is encouraged to construct an incentives table. The clarity this type of table provides could assist both the city and the developer in finding viable paths forward quicker and with less friction.

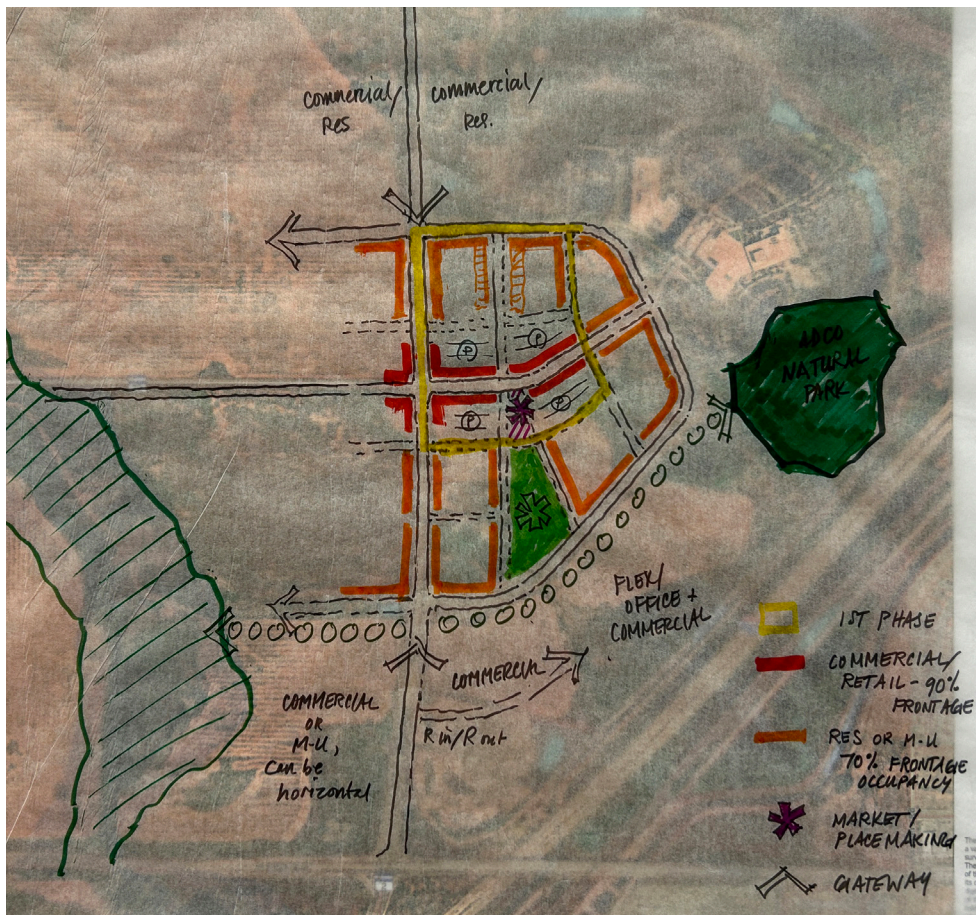
Use parks and improvements in lieu.

In much the same way as the incentives table, a table outlining the correlation between a potential developer's delivery of benefits to the city in lieu of the traditional parks and open space requirements can help speed development in a manner that serves both the city and the private developer's interests. The potential improvements along and leveraging Second Creek, in particular, could provide a number of opportunities for recreation that could or should be credited toward the more traditional parks and open space requirements.

Using these recommendations as a framework on which to begin to foster development at the study site, the intersection of Sable and Valente/ East 124th becomes the core commercial and retail center around which other uses are built. In the sketch to the right, the yellow markings outline the panel's recommended first phase. Open space is noted in green and a new trail,

Parks & Improvements in Lieu

Potential credits toward open space requirements
Active uses in floodplain » Identify criteria » Reduced percentage (50% or 75% for example)
Second Creek trail enhancements » Trail construction » Key connections from Second Creek to other public spaces and parks » Channel restoration and/or enhancements
Public market or plaza space
Bike / trail connection(s) » Under 120th Ave. » Enhanced trail connection from Second Creek to Adams County Natural Park



TAP BRIEFING MATERIALS/ULI TAP PANEL

connecting the Second Creek watershed to the Adams County Nature Park begins to connect people more directly to recreation and nature. Outlined in red, commercial/ retail uses line Valente Drive east of Sable and residential and mixed-use buildings fill the surrounding blocks and

beginning to support the nascent retail district. New interior roads and alleys provide important connections throughout the site while allowing additional access to buildings off the main streets, further dispersing traffic and parking in support of area walkability. Directly to the north and south of this new urban core, at the intersections of Sable and north/south Adams County Parkway, new gateways are established, marking important entry points to this new urban center and gateway to south Brighton.

Code Amendments to Consider

As the city considers the recommendations outlined by the panel, there are a number of potential code amendments that may need to be made to support and foster the type of development the city wishes to see in south Brighton.

- **Revise public land dedication requirements for dense residential.** There is a balance to strike between the level of density the city would like to see at the site and the amount of public land that is required to be set aside. The current requirements may exceed the threshold for a potential project's financial viability and thus require additional study.
- **Adjust credits for private parks improvements.** Similarly, the current criteria for considering credits for private parks improvements may require adjustments going forward in order to support development plans with potentially private park land. Retaining some park land for private use by surrounding residents could help the developer meet open space requirements while still providing desirable park space for proximate households.
- **Revise the definition of "open space."** The Second Creek floodplain should count as open space in the development plan, yet the current criteria for open space may not provide that connection easily today. Changes should be made to credit the floodplain

as open space, particularly given the Woodbury Corporation's plans to construct a public trail along the waterway.

- **Adjust parking requirements.** The city is encouraged to reconsider minimum parking requirements for certain projects or zone districts to better balance the realities of parking needed with the desired commercial uses.
- **Streamline the PD approval process.** The current PD approval process is a bit cumbersome at present and may be overly burdensome for developers. The code currently contemplates the following:
 - » The Illustrative Plan, which is equivalent to a preliminary PD;
 - » A Regulating Plan, which is equivalent to rezoning;
 - » The Conceptual Plan, which is concurrent with a subdivision plan; and
 - » The Final Development Plan, which contains the final site plan and final plat.

City staff should review the process steps, evaluate the efficacy and intention of each, and determine whether or not the third step in the process, the Conceptual Plan, is indeed adding value to development review.

Development near the Adams County Government Center has the potential to create a vibrant new mixed-use district for the City of Brighton. Achieving this vision will take willing and capable development partners who are willing to work with the city, meeting in the middle or adjusting as needed to foster an urban center. Similarly, the city will need to adjust its objective along the way as well. The long-term development goals can still be met, but incremental development will require a more flexible, market-based approach today to help support those urban center goals of the future.

ABOUT THE PANEL



Lee Ferguson
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Lee Ferguson serves as Senior Vice President in the Denver office of TCC. Lee focuses

on sourcing and executing new office and mixed-use development and investment opportunities, along with multifamily opportunities for High Street Residential, TCC's residential subsidiary, within the Greater Denver and Salt Lake City markets. Combining a background in both business and architecture, Lee is responsible for identifying new development and investment opportunities and plays a key role in the pursuit, analysis and predevelopment of ground-up development throughout Colorado and Utah. During his 19+ year career, Lee has had the opportunity to develop a variety of projects with success at leading and managing all aspects of a development including pursuit and predevelopment, entitlements, design, bidding, negotiation, permitting, construction, stabilization, and disposition. He brings diverse business, management and development experience with a track record that has consistently steered projects through the development process on-time and under-budget. Lee holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin and a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from Texas Tech University.



Greg Himmel
Director of Development
AvalonBay Communities

Greg is a Director of Development with AvalonBay Communities, where he is responsible for sourcing,

developing, capitalizing, and delivering multifamily communities in the Denver Metro area. Prior to joining AvalonBay in 2022, Greg was a Director with Greystar where he developed multifamily and student-housing communities in Austin, Alabama, and Denver. Prior to a career in real estate, Greg served as an active-duty Army engineer officer for eight years. During this time, Greg led construction and combat missions in stateside training scenarios and in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. He also served in the USACE Mississippi River Division as a General's Aide, where he directly supported the organization's leadership with emergency response, public project management, and national infrastructure policy. Greg holds a BS in Civil Engineering with Honors from the United States Military Academy at West Point and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He is also an active member of ULI, where he currently also serves as a member of the Discovery Committee and has previously served in the Young Leader's Group and the Austin Multifamily Local Member Council.



Sarah Nurmela
**Planning and Development
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Sarah Nurmela is the Planning and Development Director of the Town of Erie and leads the

Planning, Building, Transportation, and Affordable Housing divisions. Sarah has a wide range of experience in both the public and private sectors, with 23 years in the fields of planning, real estate development, and urban design. Her prior public sector roles prior to Erie include leading Planning and Implementation at the City and County of Denver and managing the real estate development of Downtown Westminster. Sarah's experience is heavily focused on the identification and implementation of unique places and communities and includes negotiating and vision-alignment with developers, businesses, cultural and civic organizations, and transportation entities. Her current and past work includes leading long range planning efforts like citywide Comprehensive Plans, specific area plans and zoning, TOD, and urban design. Outside of work, Sarah currently serves as the Co-Chair for the Women's Leadership Initiative for Colorado ULI, and serves on Westminster's City Council. Sarah has a Master of Urban Planning from Harvard University and a B.A. in Architecture from Washington University in St. Louis.



Matthew Prosser
**Principal
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Matt Prosser is an economist and planner with 19 years of experience in land planning

and real estate economics. Matt has provided consulting specialized services related to real estate development feasibility, retail market analysis, comprehensive and subarea planning, fiscal impact analysis, and transit-oriented development to several communities throughout the western United States. He has a broad base of experience and education in land use and entitlement planning, urban design, real estate development, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Mr. Prosser has a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado, Denver, and a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Design from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He is a member of the urban Land Institute.

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Kristin has focused her career on the integration of various disciplines involved in real estate, land use, and transportation. Prior to joining FGMC, Kristin spent 15 years in various local government leadership roles. She previously served as a planning director and public works director for a county in the Denver metro region. Kristin holds a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado – Denver, and a Bachelor's degree in Geography from Colgate University.



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