North Avenue West Corridor Plan
(12th Street west to I-70B)
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Executive Summary

The planning for the North Avenue West Corridor Plan is an offshoot of a larger effort to address planning issues throughout the North Avenue Corridor. Over the years North Avenue has lost a significant amount of business to relocations to the west side of the City, and the recent recession has resulted in many business closures. These changes present the City with an opportunity to bring together City planners, residents, and business owners to examine ways to encourage re-development along the corridor and envision what the future might look like along North Avenue.

In 2007, the City Council adopted the North Avenue Corridor Plan for the area from 12th Street east to the I-70 Business Loop. This North Avenue West Corridor Plan addresses the area from 12th Street west to I-70B. Once both plans have been adopted, implementation of these plans will include creating an overlay district for the entire corridor that establishes a street cross-section and landscape standards. Over time as redevelopment and new development occurs in the corridor, North Avenue will begin to transform into the long-range vision outlined in these plans.

The North Avenue West Corridor Plan envisions North Avenue between 12th Street and west to I-70B as a mix of retail, office, commercial and residential uses that will provide services for the student population of both high school and college students, and provide mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The vision for this area includes safety, enhanced aesthetics, and a ‘sense of place.’ It will be a neighborhood that attracts residents and students with entertainment, educational opportunities, and public activity areas.

This plan divides the corridor from 12th Street west into three ‘districts.’ The first would be Automotive Sales and Service from I-70B to First Street. The second ‘district’ is the Sherwood Park Mixed Use District from 1st Street to 5th Street, and the third would be the Educational/Student Commercial and Entertainment District from 5th to 12th Streets.

In order to accomplish these goals, much discussion took place about the elements of the street that would contribute to creating a ‘sense of place’ as well as other guiding principles of safety, aesthetics and minimizing neighborhood impacts. These elements consist of consolidating existing curb cuts and parking lots, adding sidewalks and planting, and adding pedestrian scale street lights, trees, signs, benches and other outdoor spaces to bring people back into the corridor.

The public process for this plan was as inclusive as possible, involving focus groups with residents, businesses, and Mesa State College personnel and students, who were asked to fill out a questionnaire. This was followed by an open house and questionnaire for the public. The second public open house introduced concepts and design elements and asked for comments. Six options for street cross sections were developed and presented to the public for input, and an online survey was made available that was promoted to all previous open house attendees and the public at large through the
media and the City’s website and social media sites. There were 351 people who filled out the online survey.

Of the six street cross sections the first option was the most inexpensive option of just re-striping the street with a five-foot wide bike lane. The other five options all included adding 10 feet of right-of-way on either side of the street. Option 2 and 5 did not include bike lanes. Options 4, 5 and 6 included varying widths of sidewalk, buffer areas, and bike lanes.

Support was strongest for Options 3 and 4, which both included the 10 additional feet of right-of-way on each side of the street, eight–foot detached sidewalks, buffer areas and a bike lane.

From the comments received on the online survey, residents and business owners alike are concerned about the future of North Avenue, and wish to see it restored as a place which attracts people and businesses, and remains a vital part of our community and contributes to our local economy. These plans and the adoption of a unified street cross-section and design standards will enable North Avenue to grow and change in the future, and remain a viable, vibrant part of our community.
Planning Boundary

Why Plan North Avenue?

Historically, North Avenue was the northern most boundary of Grand Junction. As development continued to grow to the north, the North Avenue corridor now finds itself in the City Center area of Grand Junction, in proximity to many great assets and amenities such as Stocker Stadium and Lincoln Park, Colorado Mesa University (previously known as Mesa State College) and a wide range of community services, hospitals, and easy access to downtown.

Until the 1990’s North Avenue was the primary retail tax generator for the City of Grand Junction. However, over the last few years the area has experienced a dramatic loss in revenue in great part associated with the extensive development of new and large commercial and retail centers along the western edge of the City. With business pulled to these new commercial centers, North Avenue has an opportunity to reestablish itself by creating a unique community environment where people will come back to again and again.

Rather than mimic the developments occurring on the western edge, the North Avenue Corridor can reclaim its identity by promoting developments that combine retail, office, residential and civic components to establish a distinctive and thriving sense of place and character. This will provide, as supplement to downtown, a historically rich active neighborhood with a focus on educational opportunities, employment, entertainment and mixed use.

The Planning Area runs from I-70 Business Loop on the west to 12th Street on the east. It includes one or more blocks north and south of North Avenue for the northern and southern boundaries (see map below).
In 2007, the City of Grand Junction completed and adopted “The North Avenue Corridor Plan”, a corridor plan for the North Avenue area east of 12th Street to I-70 Business Loop. The North Avenue West Corridor Plan for that area west of 12th Street continues the planning effort for North Avenue. This Plan incorporates many of the 2007 North Avenue Corridor Plan elements, while acknowledging and enhancing the unique features of the west end of North Avenue such as its proximity to Colorado Mesa University, the historic downtown neighborhood and the Sherwood Park neighborhood, an early suburban growth area of the city. Both Plans look far into the future, over the next 25 years, the time horizon established by the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

In all long range planning, the collective ideas of many people will launch the community into the future in a way that will be meaningful and successful. The vision, guiding principles, and the street cross-section were shaped through public participation. Key elements of the process included public questionnaires, open houses, focus groups, a technical advisory committee and an online survey taken by over 350 people.

“North Avenue improvements are much needed to upgrade old conditions. It’s important that North Avenue remains a vital business center for growth.” - Online Survey Comment
North Avenue West Corridor Plan Vision

We are planning North Avenue for people and places, a crossroads of Grand Junction, a corridor to the City Center (see graphic on following page). A place where higher education facilities connect with medical facilities, downtown, sports facilities, historic neighborhoods, existing and future residential neighborhoods, regional retail and employment opportunities.

The North Avenue corridor is suffering with a higher vacancy rate, nearly double than the rest of the City combined. Major vacancies have occurred in the Eastgate and Teller Arms shopping centers in the recent past, both of which are located east of 12th Street outside of this planning area, but no less affect the West Corridor Study area. It is certainly understandable that the entire North Avenue corridor must work together for sustainability and the future success of the corridor. Infrastructure needs crossover both planning areas and must be planned together and either be the same or at the very least complement each other.

The North Avenue West Corridor Plan includes an overall strategy to revitalize the corridor and support its continued growth in order to promote the future development of retail, commercial, office, entertainment and residential opportunities in the corridor. Specific strategies for the implementation of improvements have been identified and include the following.

1. Create services at the neighborhood level and for the student population;
2. Improve mobility for pedestrians, bicyclist and transit riders; and
3. Create a significant “neighborhood” of residential, retail, commercial, entertainment, educational and public activity areas.
4. Designing the public realm. Develop guidelines for design that answer the questions:
   a. What is the appropriate setback related to the public right-of-way?
   b. What should happen between the street curb and the front of the building?
      i. What is appropriate landscaping? Should it be a combination of landscaping and hardscape?
      ii. Pedestrian amenities, what should they include?
   c. Where should parking be located? How should it be accessed from the building(s)?
d. What is the function of public streets?
   i. What role do alleys and neighborhood streets play in traffic circulation?
   ii. What is the functionality of North Avenue and how does that interface with the street edges?
Guiding Principles

From the focus group meetings held to the open houses attended, participants identified specific elements for each of the four guiding principles; safety, aesthetics, placemaking and neighborhood impacts.

Safety – Establishing a multi-modal approach by promoting pedestrian safety and key locations for pedestrian crossings; creating safe access routes for bicycles; constructing bus pullouts and public stops for transit passengers and maintaining an efficient street for all motorized traffic.

- Safe pedestrian access on North Avenue Corridor, along and across the corridor. Key crossings include 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 10th & 12th
- Provide adequate lighting along the corridor.
- Provide access management by limiting the number of access points onto North Avenue and keep medians.
- Provide a safer environment for bicycle traffic.
- Provide bus pull-outs at transit stops.

Aesthetics – Creating standards that support the vision and corridor as a destination and a crossroads.

- Create standards for
  - Landscaping
  - Signage
  - Way Finding
  - Building Architecture
  - Building Location
  - Lighting
  - Entry Features
  - Banners (pedestrian scale)
  - Public Spaces (medians, pocket parks and plazas)

Placemaking – Envisioning North Avenue holistically, a corridor that is a destination itself, not simply a street to travel through.

- Establish an entrance, you have arrived, slow down.
- Establish three sub-areas or districts and create a vision for each.
  - Automotive Sales and Service District (I70B to 1st St.)
  - Sherwood Park Mixed Use District (1st St. to 5th St.)
  - Educational/Student Commercial and Entertainment District (5th St. to 12th St.)
- Create parking areas. Locate parking to the rear of businesses.
- Encourage outdoor spaces/uses (i.e. outdoor seating, plazas).

Questionnaire Question #5
What is your biggest concern regarding this section of North Avenue?
Survey Responses:
Safety = 73%
Aesthetics = 57%
Neighborhood Impacts = 30%
Neighborhood Identity = 27%
(Note: multiple answers were received)
- Create work/live opportunities (mixed use).
- Establish entertainment venues.
- There is a need for hotel(s).

**Neighborhood Impacts** – Minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods as Neighborhood Centers are established on 3rd Street between North Avenue and Sherwood Park; and in the vicinity of Colorado Mesa University. As future university expansion occurs west to 7th Street and subsequent university supportive development occurs north and south of North Avenue between 5th Street and 12th Street, mitigate potentially negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.

- Establish 3rd Street as a mixed use center (increase density and intensity) and tie to Sherwood Park.
- Allow for university expansion to 7th Street.
- Minimize traffic impacts to existing and future residential areas.
- Encourage the use of secondary streets for neighborhood traffic circulation and buffering from more intensive uses.

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*Area residents and business owners came to the April 20th Open House to view the proposed North Avenue West Corridor Plans and give comments.*
Revitalizing North Avenue

The City of Grand Junction conducted a “windshield” survey of vacant commercial building space for the North Avenue Corridor in January 2011. Results show that the area has an 11.4% vacancy rate. The same survey showed a vacancy rate of 6.4% for the entire City.

Concentrated efforts in streetscape treatment, community identity, way finding, signage and architecture can help existing businesses and spur future business development of a corridor. Improving the streetscape would set a foundation that is enticing for new development and improve North Avenue as a destination.

For North Avenue west of 1st Street, the cross section of the existing street is a highway with wide medians and frontage roads. Although pedestrian/bicycle access through this section of North Avenue is recommended, the street cross section is much different than what should be recommended east of 1st Street. The width of right-of-way west of 1st Street is much greater.

Ultimately, the right-of-way width of North Avenue east of 1st Street needs to be 100 feet wide with 50 feet of half right-of-way expected from each side. Much of the street today is 80 feet in width except where new development occurred over the past 20 years and additional right-of-way was dedicated. The same is expected of future development as well. Having 100 feet of right-of-way will allow for ample streetscape improvements; revitalize North Avenue into a corridor that is once again a destination for the community.

The pictures above (taken on Grand Ave.) show visually the amount of space that can be set aside for streetscape on North Avenue.
Existing Pedestrian Conditions

Existing sidewalk conditions along North Avenue range from narrow 3 feet attached sidewalks to paved surfaces that are shared with parking areas, to detached 6 feet wide sidewalks with a landscaped area between the curb and the sidewalk. North Avenue is a high pedestrian use corridor within the study area particularly between 5th Street and 12th Street with the influence of the student population during the day.

Street Cross-Sections

During the planning process existing conditions were studied, six concepts were developed and studied and public comments sought. Public input on potential street cross-sections was received at the April 2011 open house and from an online survey conducted in May and June 2011. These six concepts (Option 1 through Option 6) are included in the appendix. Generally, the street sections focus on the following elements:

1. Construct wider sidewalks – detached and/or attached; and/or
2. Provide bike lanes on North Avenue by restriping existing pavement or widening pavement section; and/or
3. Provide on-street parking by reconstructing the street within a wider right-of-way.
April 2011 Open House Results

The following table presents details of each of the six options. At the April 2011 open house, those in attendance were asked to identify their two favorite options. Options 2, 3 and 4 garnered the most support. Support for these three options placed strong emphasis on creating a corridor with wide detached sidewalks and landscaping; and gives good support for a bike lane on North Avenue, but also suggests that there are concerns with narrow vehicular travel lanes. The question needs to be asked, “Are 11 ft. wide lanes too narrow?” Clearly they are still wide enough to accommodate heavy truck traffic. They also help curb speed and slow traffic down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Conditions</th>
<th>Option 1 (Restripe with Bike Lanes)</th>
<th>Option 2 (Widen sidewalk/Add Landscaping Strip)</th>
<th>Option 3 (Add Bike Lane &amp; Widen Sidewalk/Add Landscaping Strip)</th>
<th>Option 4 (Remove Curb and Widen Street 3 ft/Widen Sidewalk/Add Landscaping Strip/Add Bike Lane)</th>
<th>Option 5 (Remove Curb and Widen Street 5 ft/Widen Sidewalk/Add Parking Lane)</th>
<th>Option 6 (Remove Curb and Widen Street 8 ft/Widen Sidewalk/Add bike Lane/Add Parking Lane)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Based on citizen input from the open house, the preferred street cross sections are Option 2 and Option 3 for the following reasons.
- Both options provide wider detached sidewalks.
- Both options provide landscaping.
- Both option are simpler to implement and can be completed in increments.
- The bike lane in Option 3 can be implemented in the future by restriping the pavement to add the bike lane. What is constructed beyond the curbs is the same for both options.

May – June 2011 Online Survey Results

The City of Grand Junction conducted an online survey for 30 days between the months of May and June 2011. A total of 351 surveys were completed by the public. Using the same cross-sections introduced at the April Open House, the survey focused on seeking input from the public regarding dedicated bike lanes, on-street parking, and just how wide the travel lanes, bike lanes and pedestrian areas along the corridor should be if they are desired.

Results from this survey indicate nearly three out of four responders said that bike lanes should be

Do you think bike lanes are important to have along North Avenue?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
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</table>

74% of respondents are in favor of bike lanes along North Avenue.
incorporated into the future design of North Avenue. However, creating parallel parking on North Avenue didn’t receive much support with 92\% saying that it was a bad idea.

The survey asked each person to identify their top two options for cross-sections for North Avenue. There were six options to choose from and descriptions along with the results of the survey are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number One Choice</th>
<th>Number Two Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1. Re-stripe North Avenue with a five-foot wide bike lane.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2. Add 10 feet of right-of-way width on each side with eight-foot detached sidewalks and eight feet of buffer between pedestrians and traffic.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3. Add 10 feet of right-of-way on each side of the street, an eight-foot detached sidewalk, an eight-foot buffer area, and a five-foot wide bike lane.</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4. Add 10 feet of right-of-way on each side of the street, an eight-foot detached sidewalk, a five-foot buffer area, and a six-foot striped bike lane.</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 5. Add 10 feet of right-of-way on each side of the street, an eight-foot parking lane, and no bike lane.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 6. Add 10 feet of right-of-way on each side of the street, an eight-foot parking lane, and a five-foot bike lane.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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If you combine the top two choices that people selected, Option 3 comes out as the overall top choice with a total of 247 picks and Option 4 is second with 210 people picking it either number one or number two.
The survey also asked participants to rate various elements of any future redesign of North Avenue from “Very important” to “Not at all important.” The results are shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic flow and convenience</td>
<td>70.70%</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
<td>6.80%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>85.20%</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics (appearance)</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
<td>38.20%</td>
<td>13.10%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike lanes</td>
<td>49.90%</td>
<td>22.20%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
<td>15.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-street parallel parking</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>16.20%</td>
<td>66.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a pleasant place to walk</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
<td>33.60%</td>
<td>13.10%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traffic flow and convenience and safety ranked very important to the public. Aesthetics, bike lanes and creating a pleasant place to walk are important to those taking this survey as well with most people ranking them as either Very Important or Somewhat Important. Results for on-street parallel parking were Not Important to most survey participants.

**Recommended Street Cross-Section**

The recommended street cross-section is Option 3. After taking into account the survey results, public comments received at open houses, focus group meetings, the work by the Technical Advisory Committee for this corridor plan, and the financial costs for construction, the street cross-section in Option 3 was selected. Option 3 incorporates the most features the public stated as being important. These features include creating an improved, more aesthetic and safer pedestrian corridor and include bike lanes. These features are also found in Option 4, but Option 3 is financially a better choice than Option 4. Option 4 would require reconstruction of the curb and gutter and adding additional pavement to the street while Option 3 works within the existing curb and gutter or street width. Both options will require ten additional feet of right-of-way to improve the pedestrian and landscaping areas.
Plan Elements

The following elements of this Plan will aid in helping the North Avenue corridor achieve its Vision and Guiding Principles; create services at the neighborhood level; improve mobility and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, and create a significant neighborhood of residential, retail, commercial and public activity areas.

Creating a more unified street edge condition along North Avenue

Creating a more unified street edge will improve the overall character of the corridor. This can be accomplished by:

- Consolidating existing curb cuts and parking lots.
- Providing more definition to vehicular entry ways.
- Adding sidewalks and plantings.
- Adding pedestrian scale street lights, trees, benches and other amenities.

These suggested changes to North Avenue will create a more pedestrian friendly environment and encourage local residents to walk. Most of these improvements can be made within the existing street right-of-way. East of 1st Street, the future overall width of the right-of-way will be 100 feet with right-of-way dedication needed up to 50 feet from each development on both sides of North Avenue.

Designing Street Intersections

The design of an intersection requires a balance between the needs of vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, freight and transit. The following are attributes of good intersection design for pedestrians, as documented in AASHTO’S guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities (2004).
• Clarity – Making it clear to drivers that pedestrians use the intersections and indicating to pedestrians where the best place is to cross;
• Predictability – Drivers know where to expect pedestrians;
• Visibility – Good sight distance and lighting so that pedestrians can clearly view oncoming traffic and be seen by approaching motorists;
• Short Wait – Providing reasonable wait times to cross the street at both unsignalized and signalized intersections;
• Adequate Crossing Time – The appropriate signal timing for all types of users to cross the street;
• Limited Exposure – Reducing conflict points where possible, reducing crossing distance and providing refuge islands when necessary; and
• Clear Crossing – Eliminating barriers and ensuring accessibility for all users.

Signalized intersections typically have marked crosswalks, Walk/Don’t Walk indications, and regulatory signing. Motorists expect pedestrians and pedestrians are reasonably well protected when crossing at these locations. The North Avenue West corridor currently has six signalized intersections. Most of these signals are located at approximately one quarter mile intervals.

In urban areas, pedestrians must be able to cross streets at regular intervals. They rarely will go more than 300 to 400 feet out of their way to take advantage of a controlled intersection. Consequently, the crossings at uncontrolled locations deserve serious consideration as urban arterial corridors redevelop. Treatments commonly used on higher-volume multi-lane streets throughout the United States include: high-visibility markings with double-posted pedestrian crossing signs; refuge islands; flags; and flashing beacons. Signals that are used just for pedestrian crossings are used primarily at mid-block crossings.

Pedestrian Crossings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Avenue Pedestrian Crossings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signalized &amp; Striped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are six pedestrian crossings identified within the study area that are the most ideal locations for pedestrian traffic to use. Five of these crossings are currently
signalized with crosswalks painted on the existing pavement. The sixth crossing is located in a place that has potential gaps in vehicular traffic affording the pedestrian an opportunity to cross. Future analysis and review of this sixth location will be needed to determine signal warrants for a safer and friendlier crossing.

Over the life of this Plan (the next 25 years) as pedestrian oriented development occurs on 3rd Street north of North Avenue, an area identified as a neighborhood mixed use core for the Neighborhood Center, a signal will likely be needed.

**North Avenue Streetscape**

There are many tools that can be used in design of a streetscape that improves the look, functionality and vitality of a corridor along with establishing a sense of place that brings people back. Street furniture such as benches, art sculptures, plantings and trash cans dispersed within pedestrian ways and civic spaces encourages pedestrian use and provide a sense of belonging. Pedestrian lighting provides a safer environment in the evening encouraging businesses to stay open longer hours, providing a catalyst for activity and night life.
The creation of a more unified street edge condition along North Avenue will improve the overall character of the corridor. This can be accomplished by consolidating existing curb cuts and parking lots, providing more definition to vehicular entry ways, and adding walks and plantings. The addition of pedestrian scale street lights, trees, benches and other amenities will create a more pedestrian friendly environment, and encourage local residents to walk or ride a bicycle. Most of these improvements can be made within the existing street right-of-way.

**Building Adjacent To Street**

In areas where buildings front the street, suggested improvements include sidewalks that connect building entrances to sidewalks along North Avenue, defined curb cut entrances, and the relocation of parking between buildings. These improvements will enhance the street edge by reducing the number of parked cars in front of building entrances, provide space for street tree plantings, and reduce the expanse of asphalt.

Building adjacent to the street makes the buildings easier to see and identify from North Avenue. A front door on North Avenue invites foot traffic to go from one business to another. Additional sidewalks provide a clear, safe pedestrian path between parking lots to building entrances, and provide pedestrian connections to North Avenue.
**Curb Cut Consolidation**

Reducing the quantity of curb cuts along North Avenue will greatly enhance the overall character of the corridor, and improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Curb cuts can be consolidated in areas where parking lots can be linked and shared by adjacent uses. Consolidating curb cuts also provides additional space for plantings and sidewalks adjacent to North Avenue within the right-of-way and less discontinuity of the sidewalk. It will result in fewer interruptions in traffic flow. Curb cuts will be consolidated at the time of redevelopment of a site.

Areas of potential redevelopment along the corridor provide an opportunity to greatly enhance the character of the corridor, by creating pockets of redevelopment that will stimulate further improvements. Redevelopment will consist primarily of additional residential, office, retail/commercial areas, or new mixed use developments.

In all cases, each project should provide connectivity to the pedestrian network and include public open space.

**Residential Land Uses**

Multi-family developments adjacent to North Avenue will provide a distinct living option for residents along the corridor. Multi-family development is currently needed by Colorado Mesa University students. That need for housing will continue to grow as the student population grows. Located within walking distance of shopping, restaurants, bus service, and employment opportunities, multi-family development offers a very desirable alternative to single family housing.

One of the Guiding Principles includes minimizing neighborhood impacts to existing and future residential areas. Minimizing such impacts includes buffering between land uses with landscaping and berms, as well as providing good traffic circulation. Creating and enhancing a grid system of streets and corridors provides traffic a number of choices, thereby dispersing the traffic.
A green corridor in a walking environment will create a pedestrian connection with existing neighborhoods and North Avenue providing convenient access to the street for existing residents. On-street parking along the side streets provides parking for visitors. On-site parking areas must provide buffering with residential areas through the use of berms and landscaping.

**Commercial / Retail Land Uses**

Commercial and retail buildings along North Avenue are best located close to the street, which helps to define and increase the use of the street edge. Generous sidewalks with spaces for outdoor seating, active open space, pedestrian lights, and street trees enhance the character of the corridor.

Building signage can be located directly on the face of the buildings, which can be readily identified from passersby on North Avenue. Front door access to retail/commercial uses should be provided on North Avenue with additional access from the interior side, providing easy access from nearby parking.

Civic spaces such as plazas, corridors, or pocket parks create a permeable frontage along North Avenue that provides easy pedestrian flow between the street and commercial or retail uses. Parking lots must buffer themselves from adjacent and across the street residential areas through the use of berms, fencing and landscaping.
Transit

North Avenue is the highest transit use area for Grand Valley Transit (GVT). All transit stops on North Avenue should be off-street pull-outs. Bus Shelters should be incorporated at higher use transit stop locations.

North Avenue Bus Routes

GVT Route 7 Bus Stops
West of 12th Street (Colorado Mesa University)
West of 11th Street
East of 8th Street
West of 7th Street (REI Sports)
West of 5th Street
West of 3rd Street (former Harbert Lumber)

GVT Route 9 Bus Stops
East of 8th Street
East of 9th Street
West of 11th Street

Annual Ridership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Route 7</th>
<th>Route 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>69,786</td>
<td>189,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>65,440</td>
<td>169,105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7th Street and 12th Street are bus transfer points connecting passengers to other routes in the City.
Signage

Improvements to signage along North Avenue can be accomplished by minimizing the quantity of pole mounted signs, and replacing them with monument signs. This will aid in reducing the visual clutter of the pole mounted signs, and also provide an opportunity for street trees to be planted. Because monument signs are low, they are not in conflict with the larger canopy of the street trees, and can be readily seen from passing traffic. This philosophy supports a distinction of commercial areas as opposed to individual pad development. It encourages a walking environment and provides for a group of retailers to engage the property as a whole.

Encouraging buildings to be constructed next to the street allows the building along with signs on the face of the building to advertise the business to passersby on North Avenue. In effect, the building becomes part of the sign advertising the business, helping the public identify the business.

These recommended changes to signage west of 12th Street are also part of the recommendations found in the 2007 North Avenue Corridor Plan adopted by the City of Grand Junction for North Avenue east of 12th Street.
Districts

The North Avenue West Corridor Plan is divided into three districts. Each district is unique and should transition from one to the next. The goal for each is to establish its own identity providing a sense of place. “Placemaking” is a process of creating a place that will attract people because the place is pleasurable or interesting and encourages people to come back again and again. Maintaining North Avenue as a destination is very important to its long term sustainability and for the City as a whole. Creating three districts along this section of North Avenue allows diversity and encourages a unique vision for each. (Additional maps are located in the Appendix.)

Automotive Sales and Service District

Located on the west end of North Avenue and comprising only seven properties, the Plan is recommending little change for the Automotive Sales and Service District. This area has long been established as a commercial area with car sales and services. The area currently comprises a mix of automotive sales and service businesses, a furniture store and other retail and service businesses. The continued indoor and outdoor retail and service is appropriate and expected to continue for this area of the Plan.

The Automotive Sales and Service District serves as the west entrance to the four mile long North Avenue corridor. The large existing landscaped open space within the public right-of-way along the south side of the corridor is extremely important as an entry feature. It is important to maintain this feature into the future.
Vision
Continue to serve as an automotive and services center for the Grand Junction area.

Street Cross Section
North Avenue (through this district) is a State Highway (US Hwy 6) designed with a frontage road along the north side and an interchange using slip lanes at its intersection with I-70 Business Loop. The Plan does not recommend any changes to this street section as it does for the other two Districts, except for providing for future pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Pedestrian and bicycles are now left to their own to navigate this section of the corridor. It is recommended that off-street pedestrian and bike paths be constructed on both sides of the corridor. Along the south side of the corridor a future path should be located within the landscaped open space. On the north, a path should be constructed along the existing frontage road and any future frontage road that is built as part of redevelopment of that area.
Existing Traffic Issue
Vehicular traffic currently backs up along west bound North Avenue at the intersection of 1st Street. This traffic issue is the result of motorist’s need to get in the right lane prior to the left turn lane for the Ed Bozarth car dealership. West of 1st Street the left through lane ends and requires a left turn movement at Ed Bozarth, therefore many motorist are cueing up in the right lane east of the traffic signal at 1st Street and North Avenue to avoid this conflict. This Plan recommends that a dedicated left turn lane be constructed at Ed Bozarth allowing both westbound lanes to be used by vehicular traffic heading west (see exhibit). This will allow for the motorist not to have to move over to the right lane east of 1st Street which often creates a back-up of traffic for a block or more.
Sherwood Park Mixed Use District

The Sherwood Park Mixed Use District comprising that area from 1st Street to 5th Street has many existing multi-family, office, retail and service businesses already. The Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as a Neighborhood Center and encourages infill and redevelopment providing additional density and intensity. This Plan recommends that the core area of the Neighborhood Center be established along 3rd Street from North Avenue to Sherwood Park. This location is ideal with its proximity to North Avenue, a major arterial street providing access to the core area and the park a couple of blocks to the north. Sherwood Park provides open space opportunities and public facilities for the Neighborhood Center. Parking for businesses should occur to the rear or side of businesses, and shared parking facilities is encouraged.

Vision
Establish a mixed use center as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
Educational / Student Commercial and Entertainment District

Students define a large part of what is happening and what is expected to happen in this district. This Plan encourages future business growth centered on the needs of the student population (both high school and college students), the needs of a higher learning institution, in addition to the community at large. During the planning process both Colorado Mesa University students and Grand Junction High School students voiced their desire and need for more student oriented services including food establishments and entertainment venues within this area of North Avenue from 5th Street to 12th Street.

Apartment living already exists in this district and adjacent areas, many of which house college students. Colorado Mesa University added new on-campus housing over the past several years for nearly 1,000 students. As the student population grows additional housing for students will be needed. Students commuting to the university often park on the residential streets near the campus adding to the number of
pedestrians using this corridor. With students comes the need for pedestrian access and amenities.

Parking for businesses and students creates high demand for parking on neighborhood streets. Parking along Glenwood Avenue and Belford Avenue help meet this parking demand; however, shared parking facilities need to be considered and planned for as the demand for parking continues to increase.

**Vision**
Provide appropriate housing, businesses and services for the student population and in support of the existing and future university educational facilities.
Implementation Plan

1. Create an Overlay District for both the North Avenue West Corridor Plan (1-70 B east to 12th Street) and the 2007 North Avenue Corridor Plan (12th Street east to I-70 B).

Include the following elements in the Overlay District:
- Establish a street cross section for the entire length of North Avenue. Results of the online survey and recommendations from the Plan’s Technical Advisory Committee select Option 3 as the preferred street cross-section.
- Create landscaping and setback standards for the corridor that will:
  - Incorporate design features found in the street cross section.
  - Support the placement of buildings adjacent to the street.
  - Establish desired buffering and landscaping between residential and commercial uses and other Plan elements. These standards will modify existing landscaping standards required as part of the existing zoning for properties within the corridor.

2. Establish Implementation Tools.

The following are possible tools that can be considered within or without an Overlay District. Some will require a change in current policy and will need to be formulated and approved by the Grand Junction City Council. Others will require existing property owners to join together to implement.

a) Form a Business Association.
   Businesses in a given area can come together voluntarily to create an association for the improvement and enhancement of their properties and businesses. This can include creation of covenants that run with the land and provide for assessments on the parcels of land subject to the covenants. This creates a pool of funds for improvements that benefit the group.

b) Require new development to build the detached sidewalk and other improvements. Construction of detached sidewalks can occur along any frontage with sufficient right-of-way, but requires the sidewalk to transition back to the existing attached sidewalk on both sides of the property being developed. Local examples of this can be found on other corridors as well as North Avenue. The picture taken of 12th Street north of Orchard Avenue (to the right) is an example of this concept of transitioning the sidewalk on both sides of the development.
c) Modify the Transportation Capacity Payment (TCP) fee for the corridor. This tool could be implemented with the previous tool where new development is required to construct detached sidewalk and other improvements along their business frontage. It can be argued that North Avenue is an area where street improvements are already built for the traffic capacity of the roadway. Widening of the road is not anticipated and appropriate infrastructure is already in place, so there is less need to collect a Transportation Capacity Payment (fee) from properties along this corridor. This argument would support collecting the fee in areas of the City where “Greenfield” development, development constructed away from the City Center, is occurring.

d) Define and create a Business Improvement District (BID). Colorado Statute Section 31-25-101et seq authorizes for the formation of Business Improvement Districts (BID). BIDs are formed within a municipality and as such the City of Grand Junction would oversee the formation of the District and appoint a Board of Directors. Under the Statute, the District is granted the power to levy and collect ad valorem taxes on all taxable commercial property within the boundaries of the District. All property assessed in a BID must be commercial property. The tax or mil levy is set by the District up to a limit of 5.0 mils (.005) upon every dollar of the valuation assessment of taxable property within the District. The Mesa County Assessor would collect the mil levy for the District through property taxes. These tax dollars can be used by the District for infrastructure, aesthetic treatment and other improvements within the District which will benefit the District members. A BID can finance improvements, provide services and can issue bonds. Examples within the City where BID’s currently exist are the downtown area and Horizon Drive.

e) Special Improvement District.
The focus of a Special Improvement District (SID) is for capital improvements, infrastructure. A SID is formed by petition of property owners of more than 50% that will bear the costs assessed by the district and established by the City by ordinance. Funding comes from property assessments and the City constructs any funded improvements.
f) **Create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.**

Colorado law allows municipalities to establish Urban Renewal Authorities (URAs) to finance public improvements such as streets, sewers, sidewalks, and other infrastructure related to residential, commercial, or industrial development; to redevelop slum or blighted areas; and to fund private economic development. The primary source of funding for urban renewal projects in Colorado is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF is a method whereby a portion of the property taxes levied by all taxing authorities within an urban renewal area are reallocated to the municipality that is undertaking the urban renewal project. Tax increment financing (TIF) is a mechanism for funding redevelopment projects in Colorado exclusively targeted at improving blighted areas. State law in Colorado authorizes urban renewal authorities (URAs) and downtown development authority’s (DDAs) to use TIF for projects that improve blighted areas. TIF allows an authority to issue and repay redevelopment bonds by using the "increment" of increased taxes collected within the TIF district after improvements are made (Section 31-25-101 et seq., C.R.S.). Tax increment revenue may be generated from property or sales taxes. The *property-improvement fee* (PIF) is a sales-tax version of TIF: some or all sales taxes from a retail development are diverted to subsidize the development.

g) **Urban Renewal Authority (URA).**

An Urban Renewal Authority (URA) can be established to eliminate blighted areas for either development or redevelopment. It is done with purchasing land, rehabilitating; and/or selling land for development. Financing occurs through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that must be approved by the county, on property and/or county approved sales tax. A URA is governed by a City Council appointed commission. The Authority has the ability to issue some types of bonds to finance projects.

h) **Establish incentives for development and redevelopment along the corridor.**

Establish a City infill and redevelopment policy and define what types of activities would receive consideration for development incentives. Incentives can include many different choices including paying required fees, constructing off-site improvements, undergrounding utilities, etc.

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**North Avenue - a destination corridor!**

- *North Avenue is a great community asset with great potential.*
- *It needs to be planned as a good public place that promotes health, happiness and well-being.*
Planning/Public Process

Public Involvement

Focus Groups
The City held five focus groups during the early part of the planning process to obtain a wide cross section of issues, concerns and suggestions for the Planning area. These focus group meetings included two meetings with two different neighborhood groups, a focus group with Colorado Mesa University staff and students, and a focus group with youth group made up of mostly Grand Junction High School students and a focus group with School District 51 personnel.

Public Open Houses
Two open houses were held, one in December 2010 during the beginning of the planning process and one at the end of the planning process in April 2011. The first open house primarily introduced the planning process to attendees and asked for their involvement, comments and input. The second open house introduced the many elements and concepts formulated for the Plan and asked for comments. Street cross sections were also introduced and comments on each option were sought. Attendees were informed on the results of the questionnaire conducted during the first half of the planning process which is discussed below.

Questionnaire
A questionnaire was created and made available to focus group attendees and participants at the first open house. It was available online on the city’s website and available at the City’s Planning Division’s customer service counter. Results were tabulated and made available on the City’s website at www.gjcity.org.

Online Survey
A survey was created and made available to the public online at the City’s website. There were 351 people that finished the survey. The survey focused on seeking input from the public regarding dedicated bike lanes, on-street parking, and just how wide the travel lanes, bike lanes and pedestrian areas along the corridor should be if they are desired. Results were tabulated and made available on the City’s website at www.gjcity.org.
Planning Commission Workshops
Four workshops were held to inform, discuss and obtain input from the City Planning Commission throughout the planning process.

Technical Advisory Committee Involvement
A Technical Advisory Committee was formed to provide expertise, analyze community input and provide recommendations. The committee members represented City of Grand Junction departments/divisions, the Colorado Department of Transportation, Mesa State College and Grand Valley Transit. It was with their input that the Plan’s vision, guiding principles, and the various concepts, elements and options were created by analyzing the information obtained through the focus groups meetings, survey/questionnaire and open houses.

Plan Adoption
The work of many individuals including the public, property owners and business owners on North Avenue, residents, University personnel, representatives from School District 51, the Technical Advisory Committee and City staff developed this North Avenue West Corridor Plan. The proposed final draft went through a public hearing process, first with the Grand Junction Planning Commission on July 26, 2011, and then before the Grand Junction City Council on September 7, 2011.
Acknowledgements

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David Thornton, AICP, Principal Planner, Public Works and Planning

Special thanks to the Focus Group participants from:
Colorado Mesa University
School District 51 Administration
Students of Grand Junction High School
Business owners and residents of North Avenue and vicinity
Appendix

Street Cross Sections

North Avenue Existing Plan View
Option 1 Plan View – Restripe with Bike lanes
Option 2 Plan View – Widen sidewalk/ Add landscaping strip
Option 3 Plan View (Recommended) – Add Bike lane/ Widen sidewalk/ Add landscaping strip
Option 4 Plan View – Remove Curb and Widen Street 3 ft/ Widen sidewalk/ Add landscaping strip/ Add Bike lane
Option 5 Plan View – Remove Curb/ Widen Street 5 ft/ Widen sidewalk/ Add Parking lane
Option 6 Plan View – Remove curb/ Widen Street 8 ft/ Widen sidewalk/ Add Bike lane/ Add Parking lane

Maps

Map of Corridor Plan Area

District Maps

1. Automotive Sales and Service District Map
2. Sherwood Park Mixed Use District Map
3. Educational/Student Commercial and Entertainment District Map
Option 1
- No changes would be made to any existing structures, pavement width, curb-and-gutter location, sidewalk width, turn lanes, and medians would remain as they are. Only the striping of the lanes would be modified.
- The changes would be made within the existing 80’ right-of-way. No additional right-of-way would be required.
- Involves 5 striped bike lane (3’H paved width, 1’H gutter width)
- Reduces the width of the existing traffic lanes from 13’W to 11’. The 11’ lanes provide a measure of traffic calming, but must receive special approval from CDOT.

NORTH AVENUE EXISTING
PLAN VIEW
FOR COMPARISON

OPTION 1 PLAN VIEW

OPTION 1 SECTION
Option 2
- No changes would be made to the pavement width, lane stripping, curb-and-gutter location, turn lanes, or medians. Only the existing sidewalk would be removed and replaced with an 8’ detached walk.
- 15’ of additional right-of-way would be required from each side of the street, increasing the total right-of-way width from 80’ to 100’.
- Provides an 8’ detached sidewalk and an 8’ buffer area between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The buffer area could accommodate a landscape strip, urban tree groves, benches, bike racks, public art, and/or bus pull-outs.
- Does not provide any biocide facilities.
Option 4

- No changes would be made to the turn lanes or medians. The existing pavement would be widened approximately 3' on each side, the existing curbs, gutter, and sidewalk would be removed and replaced with an 8' wide sidewalk.
- 10' of additional right-of-way would be required from each side of the street, increasing the total right-of-way width from 80' to 100'.
- Provides an 8' wide sidewalk and a 5' buffer area between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The buffer area could accommodate a landscape strip, urban tree grates, benches, bike racks, public art, and/or bus pull-outs.
- Maintains the standard 10' width of the existing traffic lanes at 12'. No special approval from ODOT would be required.

North Avenue Existing
Plan View
For Comparison

Option 4 Plan View
Option 5
- No changes would be made to the turn lanes or medians. The existing pavement would be widened approximately 5 feet on each side, and the existing curb, gutter, and sidewalk would be removed and replaced with an 8' parking lane and an 11' sidewalk with urban tree grates, benches, bike racks, public art, etc.
- 10' of additional right of way would be provided. The street rights of way would be increased from 40' to 50'.
- Provides 2 dedicated parking lanes (8' paved width, 11' gutter width). Parking would be eliminated where bus pull-outs were needed. The on-street parking must receive special approval from CDOT. On-street parking will cause a slight decrease in volume capacity of the outside traffic lane.
- Does not provide any bicycle facilities.
- Maintains the standard CDOT width of the existing traffic lanes at 12'. No special approval from CDOT would be required.
OPTION 6

- No changes would be made to the turn lanes or medians. The existing pavement would be widened approximately 8' on each side, the existing curb, gutter, and sidewalk would be removed and replaced with an 8' parking lane and an 8' sidewalk.
- 10' of additional right-of-way would be required from each side of the street, increasing the total right of way from 80' to 100'.
- Provides 8' striped parking lane (12' pass width, 10' gutter width). Parking would be eliminated where bus pull-outs were needed. On-street parking must receive special approval from CDDD. Off-street parking will cause a slight decrease in volume capacity of the outside traffic lane.
- Provides 5' striped lane lane.
- Reduces the width of the existing traffic lanes from 135' to 11'. The 11' lanes provide a measure of traffic calming, but must receive special approval from CDDD.

50' HALF - R.O.W. (PROPOSED)

- Sidewalk
- Parking
- Bike Lane
- Lane
- Lane
- 5' Median/Turn Lane

NORTH AVENUE EXISTING PLAN VIEW FOR COMPARISON

OPTION 6 PLAN VIEW
MAP OF CORRIDOR PLAN AREA