

CODE ASSESSMENT

Unified Development Code Update

October, 2024



city of

PUEBLO

colorado

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Introduction

How does this document fit into Pueblo's Unified Development Code update?

Pueblo's Unified Development Code Update is driven by the recently adopted Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan. This document, with the Development Pattern Analysis, is intended to inform community engagement and discussion about the Pueblo community's Unified Development Code (UDC) priorities. The Code Assessment is structured around four Guiding Principles, drawn from goals outlined in the Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan. These Guiding Principles are Housing Options & Neighborhood Design, Strong Local & Regional Connections, Grow Smarter: Productive Corridors, Districts, & Centers, and Celebrate Pueblo: Emphasize Distinct Community Character.

The Code Assessment document, with the Development Pattern Analysis, provides a common starting point for community engagement conversations. Each section within the Code Assessment centers around one of the four Guiding Principles outlined above, and includes 1) a brief introduction for each Guiding Principle, 2) how the Guiding Principle ties in with the goals outlined in the Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan, 3) an overview of how Pueblo's current code addresses the Guiding Principle, 4) suggested community discussion starters, and 5) a brief "Code Topics" summary of various concepts and strategies that could help Pueblo achieve the goals set forth in the comprehensive plan.

In addition to these analyses, this project's community engagement included interviews with frequent users of the city's current code from the design and development community. The common themes from those interviews are summarized in the appendix to this document.

High-priority themes found throughout this Code Assessment.

The Key Findings highlighted on the following page have been identified as high-priority through the process of assessing the city's current code, due to their disproportionate impact on housing diversity in Pueblo's neighborhoods, multimodal connectivity and context-based development throughout the city, and the very processes by which the code is applied.

Addressing these themes, and the additional themes identified in each chapter of this assessment, will remain a critical priority moving into the next phase of the Unified Development Code Update.

Key Findings



Housing Options & Neighborhood Design

- ▶ Pueblo's code has not kept up with the changing housing needs of Pueblo's community.
- ▶ The code does not promote complete, connected neighborhoods that provide housing options, services, amenities, and employment opportunities.
- ▶ Instead, the code functions to promote disconnected suburban developments.
- ▶ The code relies heavily on density to regulate residential development, instead of considering equally impactful variables like context, design, lot patterns, building massing and scale, and many others.



Strong Local & Regional Connections

- ▶ Pueblo's code has prioritized car-oriented design over other transportation options, instead of balancing a variety of different transportation options varying by context.
- ▶ Connectivity standards are currently minimal, and do not coordinate between the block network and the street network to create space for multimodal transportation.
- ▶ Pueblo's current street system (based solely on functional classes) does not tailor street design to be appropriate for the variety of development contexts found throughout the city. Instead, it applies one set of standards regardless of context.



Grow Smarter & Celebrate Pueblo



- ▶ Pueblo's current code takes a limiting, restrictive approach to regulating places via land use that does not recognize Pueblo's diversity of places, or provide flexibility based on harmony with character and context.
- ▶ Pueblo's current development standards do not address the scale, form, or format of developments, and do not provide for the unique regional design styles characteristic of Pueblo's history.

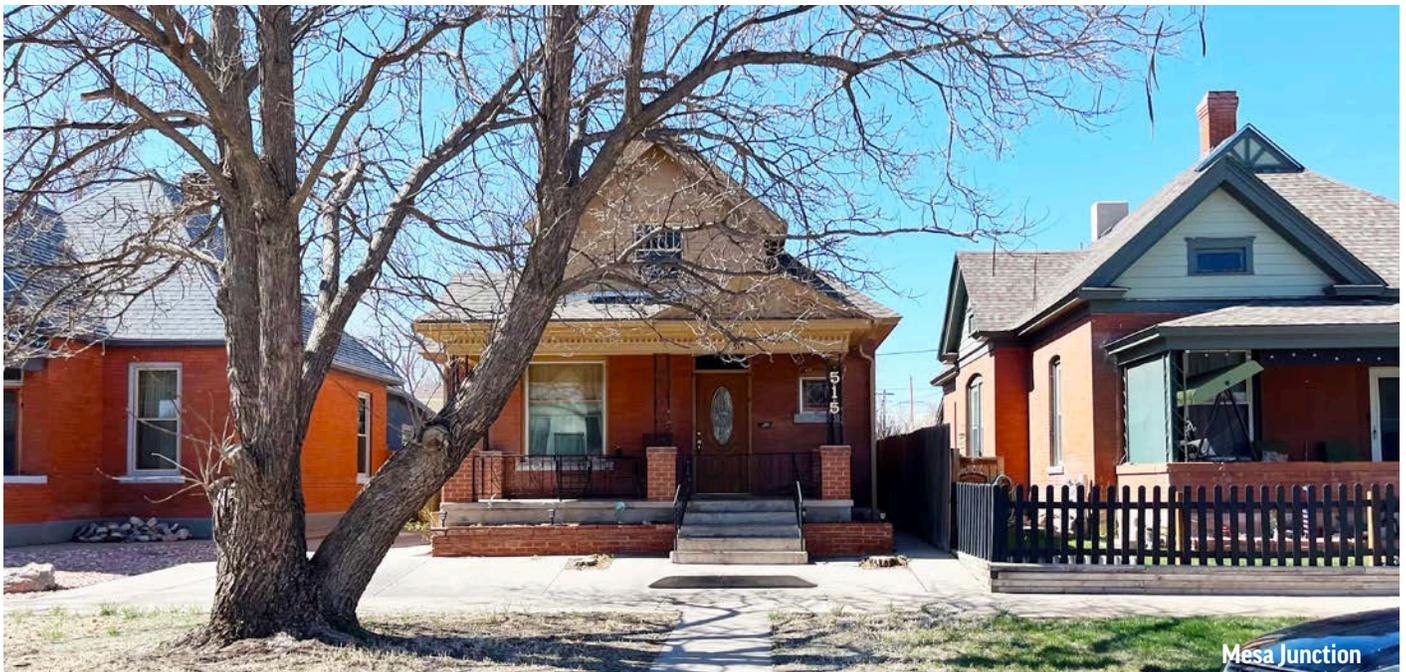


Housing Options & Neighborhood Design

Introduction

Housing options and neighborhood design are important topics for all development codes. A significant portion of land in all cities is dedicated to residential land uses and the services that support neighborhood living, and housing needs are constantly changing with the condition and supply of the existing housing stock and shifting demographics. As new populations move to Pueblo, as the existing population ages or becomes new homeowners, as lifestyle preferences shift, and as neighborhoods experience infill and reinvestment – housing and neighborhoods will evolve and change within this dynamic system.

In the past, development codes have been static and assumed that housing needs are also static: addressing these issues as either single-family detached projects or multi-family projects and promoting individual subdivisions and developments over complete, connected neighborhoods. An effective development code prepares a community for all of the potential directions that may occur in the market, while designing a structure and pattern for the types of neighborhoods that people desire and will continue to build value over time.



What does the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* say about housing options & neighborhood design?

Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan: Key Themes

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* includes several key themes to enhance **housing options and neighborhood design** in the City of Pueblo:

- ▶ Improve housing access through a diverse variety of housing typologies, scales, and formats throughout Pueblo, including ADUs, duplexes, townhomes, and small-lot houses.
- ▶ Encourage unique and complete neighborhoods in many different contexts.
- ▶ Promote the rehabilitation of existing housing.
- ▶ Encourage and ease the process for infill and redevelopment of vacant residential lots.
- ▶ Locate higher-density multifamily housing in urban areas, such as along corridors, in mixed-use areas, and in Downtown.
- ▶ Ensure walkable park and open space access from neighborhoods, and easy access to amenities, services, and employment from neighborhoods.
- ▶ Protect historic character of neighborhoods.
- ▶ Promote complete neighborhoods in Downtown.

Future Land Use:

This chapter is relevant to the following future land use categories as defined in the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* (within City of Pueblo city limits):

- ▶ UN: Urban Neighborhood
- ▶ SN: Suburban Neighborhood
- ▶ NMU: Neighborhood Mixed Use
- ▶ MUA: Mixed Use Activity Center
- ▶ DTMU: Downtown Mixed Use
- ▶ CMU: Commercial Mixed Use
- ▶ IMU: Institutional Mixed Use

What does Pueblo's development code currently require?

- ▶ Three different Agricultural districts are present within the city. Lot size minimums are 40 acres, 5 acres, and ½ acre.
- ▶ Two residential districts promote detached housing in neighborhood patterns, with minimum lot sizes of 7K s.f. and 5K s.f.
- ▶ Three residential districts prioritize multifamily housing (R-4, R-5, and R-6). There are no distinctions between these districts in the development standards; however, there are distinctions in permitted uses – with R-5 and R-6 being more permissive to non-residential uses.
- ▶ Smaller lot detached houses (2.5K s.f. lots to 5K s.f. lots) are only allowed in districts primarily set up for multifamily housing.
- ▶ Multifamily standards are based only on abstract measurements (density and Floor Area Ratio), with a minimum lot size per unit and a maximum lot coverage based on building height. This results in standards that lack predictability for the scale, form, and format of buildings and lots.
- ▶ Throughout all districts, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are only allowed if they were previously established.
- ▶ The two districts (R-7 and R-8) that address small or alternative format housing primarily treat them only as “mobile homes”.
- ▶ Residential use definitions are a blend of broader land use descriptions (i.e. multifamily) and building type descriptions (i.e. townhouse). Residential development standards only distinguish between single-family and multi-family categories, without further distinctions between buildings types within each category.
- ▶ Housing is limited in most non-residential districts. A few districts permit limited types, some districts allow more types by special use permit, while others only allow housing if it was previously established.
- ▶ Residential design standards address basic aesthetic elements of buildings such as roof forms, materials, ornamentation, and projections or offsets in wall planes.

Community Discussion Starters

- ▶ **Housing Options:** What variety of housing types is appropriate in Pueblo? Would this variety differ by context, neighborhood, or district, and if so, in what ways?
- ▶ **Neighborhood Design & Character:** What elements of neighborhood design & character are unique to Pueblo's history and neighborhoods that should be preserved, protected, or enhanced?
- ▶ **Mixed-Use Housing:** Where and how could residential uses be incorporated into non-residential districts to increase the variety of available housing in Pueblo?
- ▶ **Missing Middle Housing:** Where and how could a range of small-scale, multi-unit housing be expanded to provide more housing options for Pueblo residents?
- ▶ **Accessory Dwelling Units:** What design and context considerations are important for revisiting current standards for accessory dwelling units?

Current Residential Zoning Districts:

- ▶ **R1** Single Family
- ▶ **R2** Single Family
- ▶ **R2U** Single Family
- ▶ **R3** One & Two Family Residential
- ▶ **R4** Mixed Residential
- ▶ **R5** Multiple Residential & Office
- ▶ **R6** Multiple Residential & Commercial
- ▶ **R7** Mobile Home Residential
- ▶ **R8** Manufactured Home Residential
- ▶ **RCN** Residential Charter Neighborhood

Code Topics

Elements of Neighborhood Character

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* prioritizes celebrating Pueblo through neighborhood character, calling for residential infill that fits existing neighborhood character, design standards that support neighborhood character, and new development that enhances Pueblo's diversity of neighborhood character. While neighborhood design includes the universal design elements found in every neighborhood (like frontage features, setback patterns, and streetscapes), neighborhood character refers to specific elements that are unique to a given neighborhood. For example, a neighborhood's character could be defined by a specific architectural style, boulevard-style streets, a theme of community art, distinctive local landscaping, or any other unique elements that differentiate one neighborhood from others. The architecture and design in many Pueblo neighborhoods were influenced by the cultural heritage of their communities, including building style and decorative elements. Development codes sometimes present challenges to a neighborhood expressing or preserving a unique character, but they can also be tailored to preserve and encourage unique expressions of neighborhood character.

Housing Types & Density

Density (or dwelling units per acre) is a conventional way to measure the intensity of residential development and is an important metric to understand how well a neighborhood can support transit or certain amenities. But by itself, this measure is incomplete. Variables like the size of units, the format and footprint of the building, the lot pattern and configuration, and the scale, massing and design of buildings all have a far more significant impacts on whether projects are compatible with their surroundings than how many units per acre of land they equate to. Additionally, density numbers are often set artificially low for fear that larger allowances equate to larger projects. This is not necessarily the case, and in fact the opposite can occur. When density limits are too low, regulations may unintentionally cause larger and more out-of-context projects, as they require a larger land area to reach a sufficient yield of units. In contrast, standards for building types (or the scale, format, and configuration of the building) provide better expectations for the physical

outcomes. These are often more important metrics for the community, and a complete range of building types in a development code can establish more appropriate fits for certain zone districts.

Mixing Housing Options

The housing type approach described above more easily enables a mix of housing options to be integrated into neighborhoods. This results from both a range of similarly scaled buildings allowing different unit configurations, and from more effective transitions between different building types on a block- or neighborhood-scale. These patterns often enable more strategic locations of smaller-scale, higher density projects (see **Missing Middle Housing**) but designed in such a way that it fits compatibly within the neighborhood's existing pattern and design. Pueblo's comprehensive plan specifically calls out the Urban Neighborhood land use pattern and several of the Mixed-Use land use patterns for increasing a cohesive blend of different housing types, in order to provide a greater variety of housing options for Pueblo residents.

Access to Services & Amenities

Access to services, amenities, and daily necessities is a key theme throughout the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan*. The plan's goals include strategies like locating higher density housing in targeted areas to support transit, ensuring neighborhoods provide walkable access to parks, increasing community-wide access to a variety of food options (groceries, community gardens), and locating critical services like healthcare in neighborhoods to improve accessibility even without a personal vehicle. Development codes can facilitate many of these goals by enabling better integration of a mix of uses (at compatible scales), encouraging more complete neighborhoods that include housing options along with neighborhood-scale commercial uses and amenities, and promoting connectivity standards that facilitate access via a range of transportation modes (active transportation and transit as well as automobiles).

“Missing Middle” Housing

Several housing types that the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* calls for promoting throughout many areas of the city fall

Code Topics (continued)

into the category of “missing middle” housing. This includes the range of housing types between detached single-family residential and higher-density multifamily residential: duplexes, multi-unit houses, row houses or townhomes, small apartments, and mixed-use or live-work housing types. While these kinds of residences were once common, development codes often make building these typologies challenging to impossible (see **Housing Types & Density**). Yet these types can meet important housing needs for a range of budgets, age groups, and living arrangements. In many of Pueblo’s older neighborhoods, there is a diverse array of older “missing middle” housing types integrated into mixed-density neighborhoods. Although some newer developments contain duplexes and townhomes, these are typically clustered into discrete developments and not integrated with other housing types. Development codes can ease the process of developing “missing middle” housing types while refining appropriate scales, locations, and design standards for these housing options.

Small Lot Houses

Small lot houses (detached single-family homes built on lots smaller than 5,000 square feet) are another traditional housing typology that can fill critical housing needs at a variety of budgets. Not all families or community members want or have the ability to maintain a home on a larger lot (older adults desiring a home for aging in place, for example), and small lot houses can provide independent living with greater flexibility through options like narrow lot houses, courtyard houses (smaller homes arranged around an internal courtyard), tiny homes, or homes located internally within a block. Currently, Pueblo’s code only allows small lot houses in multifamily districts, although many of the city’s older neighborhoods (like Bessemer) have an existing pattern of historic small and narrow lot homes.

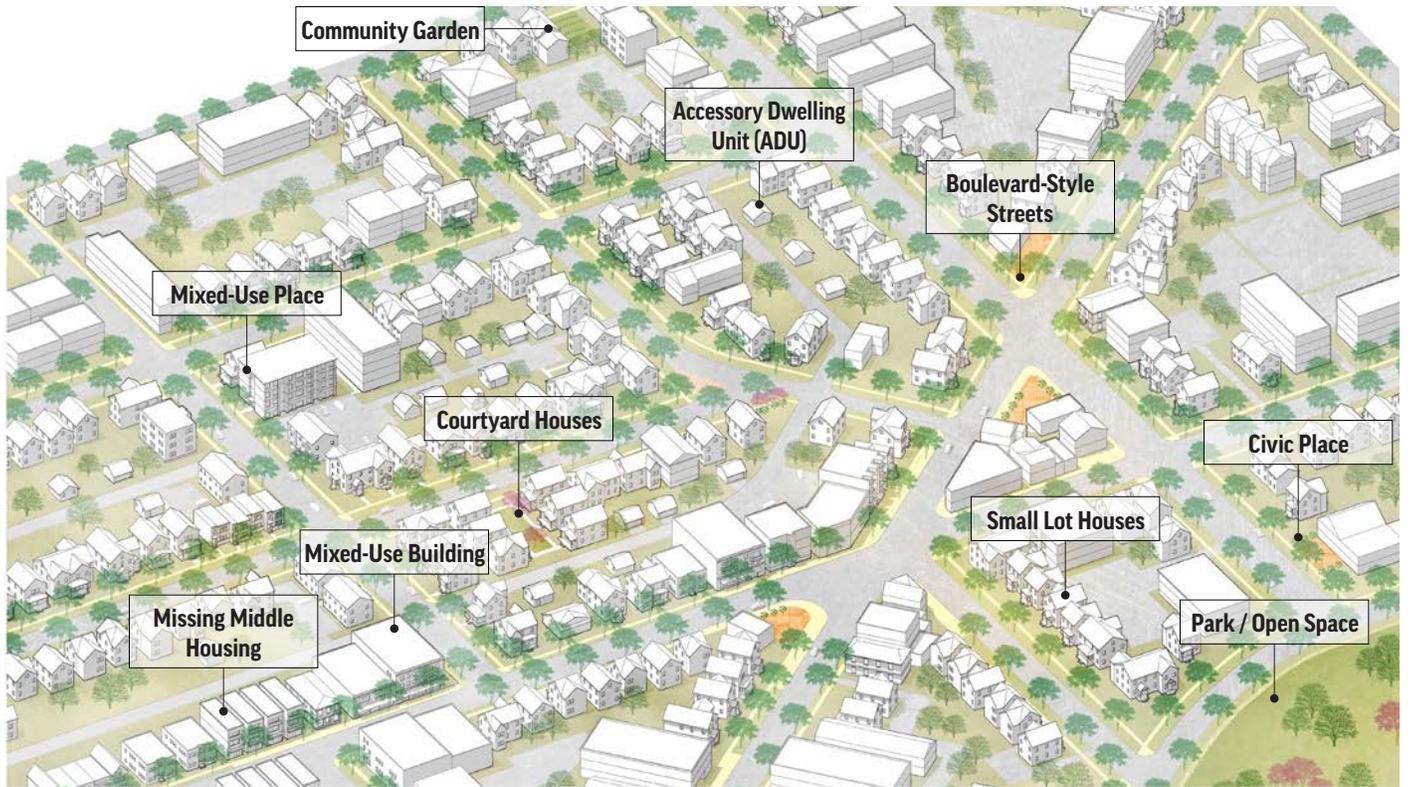
Accessory Dwelling Units

Pueblo’s current code does not allow new construction of ADUs, limiting them to preexisting instances where they were previously established. However, the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* prioritizes allowing ADUs in order to meet multiple of the plan’s goals: to support multi-generational

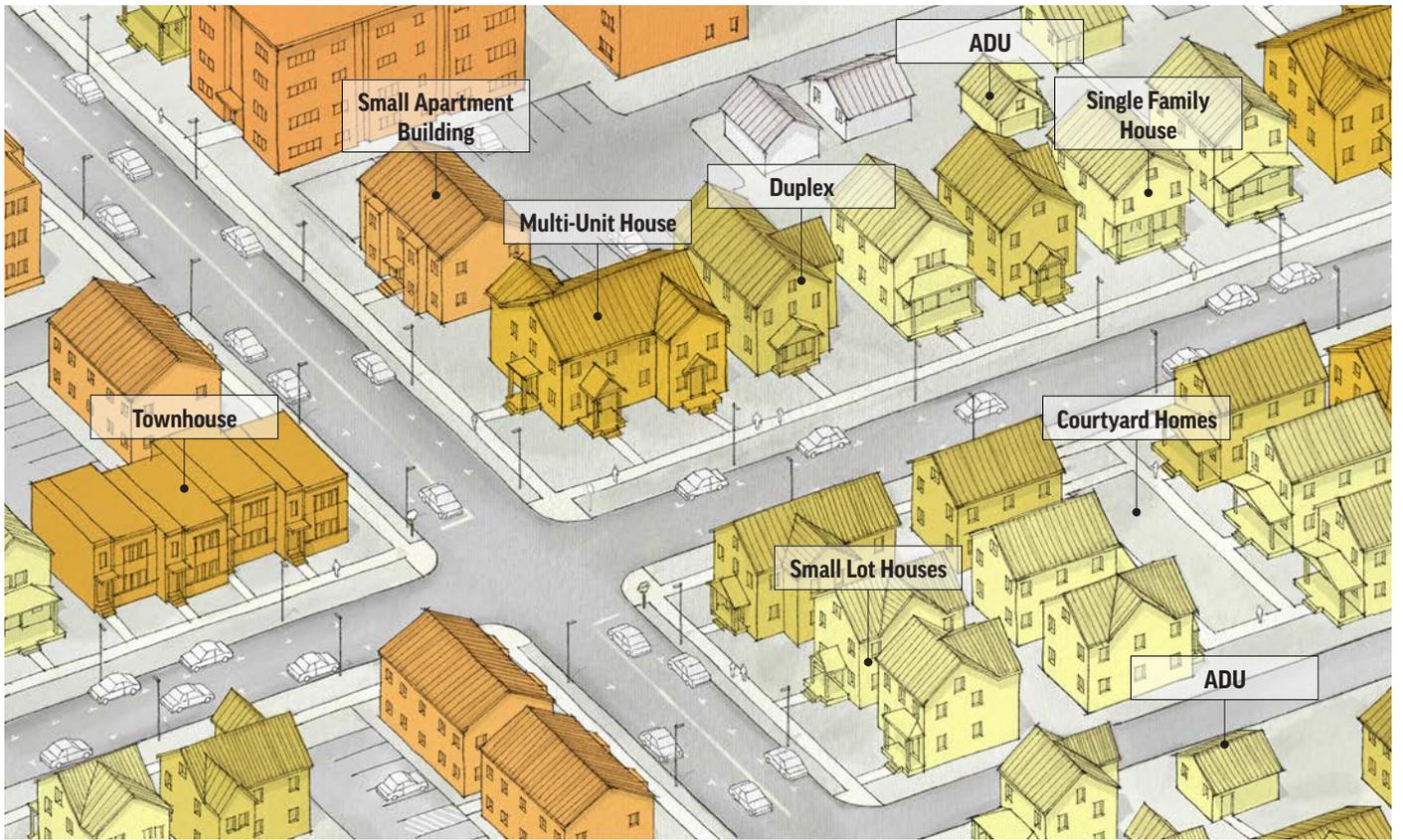
living, to increase infill opportunities, and to diversify available housing options. Recent pending legislation at the Colorado state level may also impact this issue, but the UDC Update provides Pueblo with an opportunity to ensure that city’s code incorporates an approach to ADUs that is highly tailored to Pueblo’s existing neighborhood contexts, goals, and housing needs. ADUs can meet critical housing needs for many communities, ranging from older adults or young professionals living with their families, to students looking for safe, lower-cost housing. This update to the city’s code is an opportunity to consider which contexts ADUs are most appropriate within, whether to allow detached (free-standing) ADUs, whether to allow ADUs on rental properties, and what kind of standards would ensure that appropriate neighborhood design elements are maintained.

Mixed-Use Housing: Buildings & Places

Mixed-use housing integrates residential and non-residential uses and increases a community’s diversity of housing options. This typically occurs in two ways: by stacking residences on the upper floors of a building with non-residential uses on the ground floor (a mixed-use building), or by locating residential and non-residential buildings in one development, district, or corridor (a mixed-use place). A familiar example may be a historic district that blends residences with shops, restaurants, offices, civic destinations, and other small businesses. Mixed-use buildings create harmonious transitions between higher-intensity non-residential areas and nearby neighborhoods, and foster active transportation by providing a place to live close to employment, services, recreation, and civic amenities. Pueblo’s comprehensive plan calls for utilizing mixed-use buildings for infill, rehabilitating historic buildings to accommodate mixed-use housing, and promoting mixed-use projects to support transit. Development codes can define design standards to ensure that mixed-use housing enhances community character, while considering which districts are appropriate for mixed-use housing, and how and where residential buildings could be incorporated into non-residential districts.



A neighborhood with a variety of housing options, easy access to amenities, and walkable streets.



A variety of housing types integrated into an urban neighborhood.



Strong Local & Regional Connections

Introduction

Development codes impact the strength of local and regional connections in a variety of ways and at multiple scales. Subdivision regulations impact big picture, long-range issues such as the pattern of streets and trails, and the specific designs of streets and streetscapes. Zoning districts and standards affect the relationship and scale of land uses, specifically impacting the proximity of complementary uses and how they coordinate with transportation systems to determine how people move throughout the community. Site design and development standards define how development supports these larger-scale patterns, accommodates transportation options, and supports the access and mobility of people through the design of public and private frontages, internal circulation (pedestrian and vehicle), and parking (bicycles and automobiles).

In the past, development codes have focused on mitigating the impacts of cars and traffic as development occurs, but in the process, this has caused the prioritization of automobile-oriented designs over other options and the needs of people. However, Pueblo's recent Union Avenue & Main Street Master Plan and City Center Streetscape Standards have already begun to engage with the process of targeting street and streetscape design standards to improve the street as a place for all people, not just for cars. An effective development code can build on this progress and better coordinate new development and infill and redevelopment with quality transportation investments and urban design. Over time and across multiple projects and areas, these decisions cumulatively impact which transportation options become reasonable choices for the people of Pueblo. The **Code Topics** section of this chapter explores a variety of methods for improving the design of a street network, individual streets, and the streetscape for all users.



What does the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* say about strong local & regional connections?

Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan: Key Themes

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* includes several key themes to enhance **strong local and regional connections** in the City of Pueblo:

- ▶ Improve street, streetscape, and open space design to prioritize active transportation.
- ▶ Promote the connectivity of streets and streetscapes.
- ▶ Promote multimodal (pedestrian, bicycle, mobility devices, automobile, and transit) transportation throughout Pueblo's street network.
- ▶ Encourage greater connectivity through efficient development patterns.
- ▶ Improve Pueblo's streetscapes for beautification, heat mitigation, stormwater management, and multimodal transportation.
- ▶ Promote walkable commercial centers.
- ▶ Encourage pedestrian, bike, trail, and transit transportation throughout neighborhoods.
- ▶ Promote development patterns that support transit.

Future Land Use:

This chapter is relevant to the following future land use categories as defined in the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* (within City of Pueblo city limits):

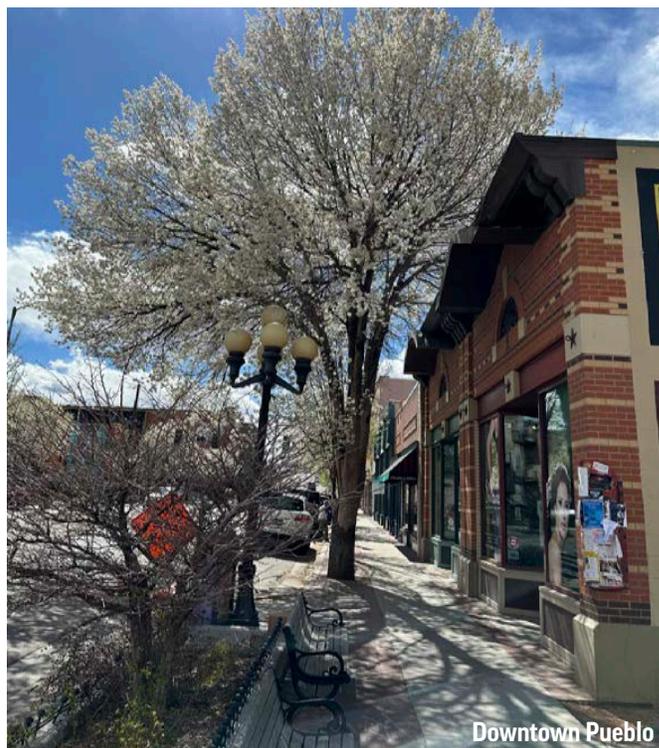
- ▶ UN: Urban Neighborhood
- ▶ SN: Suburban Neighborhood
- ▶ NMU: Neighborhood Mixed Use
- ▶ MUA: Mixed Use Activity Center
- ▶ DTMU: Downtown Mixed Use
- ▶ CMU: Commercial Mixed Use
- ▶ IMU: Institutional Mixed Use
- ▶ EMP: Employment
- ▶ LI: Light Industrial
- ▶ TDI
- ▶ POS: Parks and Open Space
- ▶ Floodplain

What does Pueblo's development code currently require?

- ▶ The street design standards do not include priorities specific to the City of Pueblo's wide rights-of-way, resulting in a lack of strategies for ensuring that those rights-of-way support nearby development and the unique characteristics of different districts and neighborhoods within the City.
- ▶ There are no streetscape design standards in the development code. This results in no clear priorities for pedestrian and / or bicycle facilities, and there are no established standards for aligning and coordinating these facilities with adjacent land use, development, and design.
- ▶ Sidewalks are only addressed minimally, with a 5' or 6' required sidewalk width in different districts. The City Traffic Engineer may require additional width.
- ▶ There are limited specific requirements for streetscape plantings or street trees. Street trees may contribute towards landscape requirements and are encouraged, but not required.
- ▶ There are no clear access standards, and no hierarchy of access strategies to coordinate access options at the block scale (i.e. alleys or internal lanes), street scale (shared drives), or lot scale (driveways).
- ▶ Street connectivity standards are minimal and do not implement a specific connected block structure or local street network.
- ▶ The City Center streetscape standards are an exception and begin to recognize the role of streetscapes and street design types within the overall network. They promote the relationship between different street design types and adjacent development.

Community Discussion Starters

- ▶ **Complete Streets:** How can Pueblo's streets be used to improve access and mobility for all modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, mobility devices, automobile, and transit)?
- ▶ **Streetscape Design:** How could streetscape design standards create context-appropriate priorities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
- ▶ **Streetscape Design:** How could streetscape design standards increase and improve integration with surrounding neighborhoods and development contexts throughout different areas in Pueblo?
- ▶ **Street Trees:** What opportunities are there for incorporating street trees into Pueblo's streetscapes to reduce urban heat and assist with stormwater management?
- ▶ **Street Trees:** What tree species considerations (low-water, drought-tolerant, maintenance, appearance, etc.) are important to incorporate?



Code Topics

Street Networks

Connectivity

Connectivity determines how well compatible parts of the community can relate and how people will move about and experience the community. The current code's connectivity standards are minimal, and are not tailored to coordinate the street network and block structures to facilitate multimodal transportation. However, the level of connectivity between streets (the roadway and the streetscape) and other public spaces (parks, open spaces, civic spaces that interface with the street network) establishes a development pattern that has lasting implications for future development – even as things change over time. Differences in connectivity and development patterns are key differentiators among different types of places, and the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* specifically calls out improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to connect neighborhoods to each other and the rest of the city. Development patterns that contribute to better connectivity (smaller block sizes and more frequent intersections) also help to increase transportation options over time. Higher connectivity can help a community grow towards a level of density that can support transit in the future, even if it is not yet supported. This concept, called growing towards transit, centers around the reality that planning for good bike and pedestrian connectivity will eventually lead to an environment that is conducive to transit.

Complete Streets

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* recently set the goal of implementing Complete Streets principles in Pueblo. Complete Streets is a concept that emphasizes the principle that streets are not just for moving vehicular traffic. Instead, streets should provide a connected network of safe facilities for multiple modes of transportation (pedestrians, bicycles, transit, vehicles) to use the street network concurrently (multimodal transportation). Implementing a Complete Streets policy does not necessarily mean that all streets must accommodate all transportation modes at all times – instead, different priorities can be established for different streets depending on the community or neighborhoods transportation needs. Over time, this approach results in a complete, multimodal network of different street types that serve different roles supportive of their surrounding context.

Street Design

Street Zones

Breaking streets down into different “zones” is an increasingly common way to understand how streets are designed. Street zones typically include the Vehicle Zone (space dedicated to cars, transit, and parking), the Pedestrian Zone (space dedicated to people walking, using wheelchairs, and using mobility devices), and the Amenity Zone (space dedicated to a variety of streetscape amenities and street furniture – see **Streetscape Amenities** below). While most streets will typically include all three zones, the amount of space dedicated to each zone will vary according to the transportation needs of the surrounding context. For example, a highly walkable, mixed-use Downtown area may allocate more space to the Pedestrian Zone and the Amenity Zone and relatively less space to the Vehicle Zone to create a lively pedestrian-oriented district. But a faster, multi-lane, vehicle- and transit-oriented corridor may allocate more space to the Vehicle Zone while including a wider Amenity Zone to protect people using the Pedestrian Zone from adjacent traffic.

Street Design Typologies

Street Design Typologies is an approach to street design that applies the Street Zone concept to the specific transportation and development contexts of a city. By creating a range of different street designs tailored to the city's various development contexts, this approach ensures that street designs appropriately allocate space to all three zones based on the needs of the area's nearby land uses, development patterns, and block structures. While Functional Classification (Arterial, Collector, Local, etc.) has historically been the typical way cities approach street design, this approach is based exclusively on vehicular traffic issues: speeds, through-put, and the traffic volume of streets at a system-wide scale. In contrast, the street design typologies approach incorporates the needs of all of a street's users (not just vehicles), coordinates street designs to support different development contexts, and can be modified to prioritize a range of different transportation modes depending on the surrounding area's transportation needs. In most cities, functional classifications and street design typologies will be applied in combination: the functional classification system is maintained, while a range of street design typologies for each classification allows

Code Topics (continued)

street designs to be better adapted to different contexts.

Green Streets

See **Green Streets** in Chapter 4: *Celebrate Pueblo*.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are often overlooked elements of street and streetscape design, but their design has massive impacts on safety and the ability of many community members to successfully reach their destinations on a daily basis. A one-size-fits-all approach to these facilities almost always results in unsafe, underutilized, and uninviting bicycle and pedestrian spaces. Instead, these spaces should be designed appropriately for surrounding conditions, such as development context, vehicle speeds, width and number of adjacent vehicle lanes, frequency of curb cuts or driveways, and right-of-way width. For example, a slow residential area with a network of alleys for vehicle access may be appropriately served by sharrows or a bike boulevard approach. However, a 45 MPH street in a busy commercial area, with multiple vehicle lanes in either direction, may require a physically protected bike lane or cycle track. Similarly, Pueblo's current code only requires a 5' or 6' sidewalk throughout most districts, but many contexts (Downtown, mixed-use districts, and commercial areas with high pedestrian traffic, for example) may need greater width – 10', 12', or even 20'. Street design typologies can ease the process of designing bicycle and pedestrian facilities appropriate for different street types and can help ensure that street improvements and street designs contribute to a wholistically functioning network.

Streetscapes

Streetscape Standards

Streetscape standards can maximize the value of streets as public, social, and civic spaces. Street rights-of-way typically account for 30% and 40% of a city's land area, which means that effective streetscape design successfully designs a significant portion of your city, and an even larger portion of your city's public and social spaces. Streetscape design also significantly impacts how development responds to its surrounding context, and how well (or poorly) adjacent

land uses are supported. Streetscape elements like sidewalk location and width, bicycle facilities, on-street parking, landscaping and green infrastructure, streetscape amenities, and width and number of vehicle lanes all significantly affect the safety, function, and value of these spaces for the people who use them. Outside of the City Center Streetscape Standards, the current regulations include only limited streetscape design standards – elevating the importance of this topic for the development code update.

Streetscape Amenities

Streetscape amenities refers to the elements that support a safe, pleasant, and functional bicycle and pedestrian environment in the public right-of-way. This includes human-scale street lights to improve safety, wayfinding signage to direct users to their destination, street trees to provide shade, and street furniture like benches and trash receptacles which increase safety and walkability for older adults and children. Public art, bike racks, and parklets are also common streetscape amenities, particularly in more urban areas. These amenities will typically be found in the Amenity Zone of a street (see **Street Zones** above), and the included amenities will vary based on a street's context.

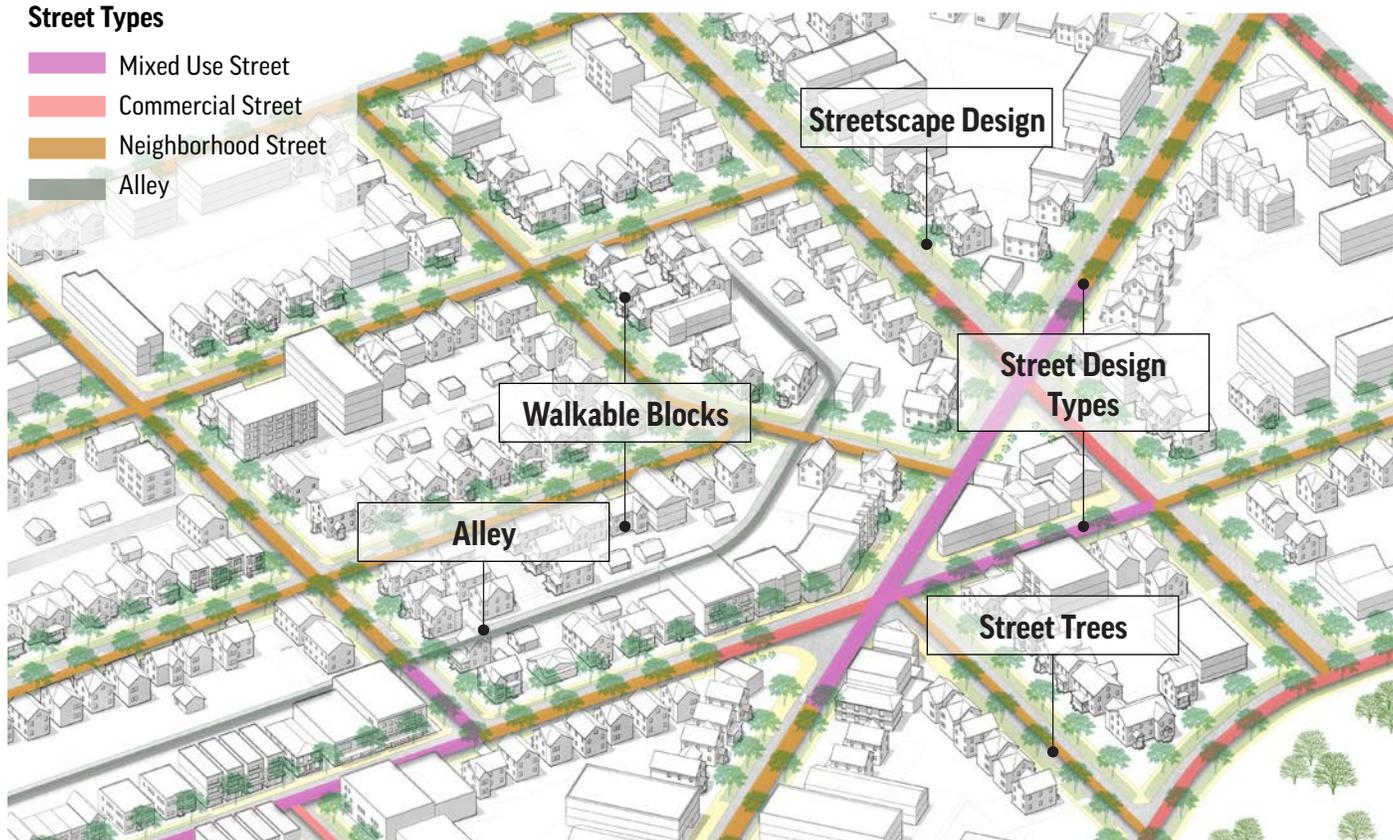
Street Trees

Street trees are one of the fundamental and essential elements of streetscape design. Street trees shape public spaces, impact users' experience of streets and streetscapes, and significantly impact the sustainability and attractiveness of a block, corridor, district, and city. A sustainable street tree canopy brings many social, environmental, and design benefits that return value for a city far beyond the investment – providing relief from urban heat, assisting with stormwater management, and helping to create safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists. Species selection is crucial, and particularly in Pueblo's environmental context should be carefully selected from drought-resistant and native species. Pueblo's current code requires street trees to be planted in high density residential, commercial and industrial development project areas. However, these standards need to be reviewed and be provided in a more easier format within the updated code .

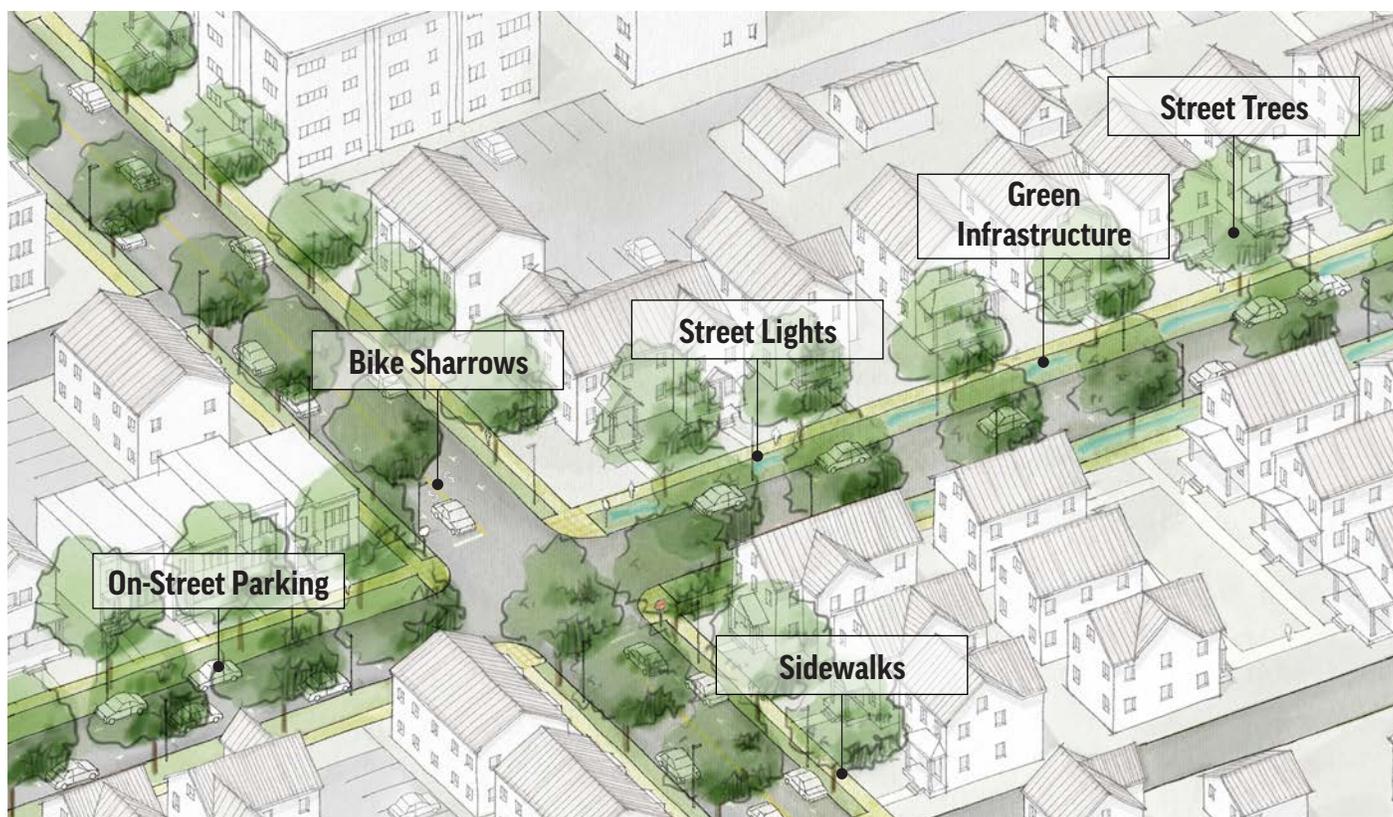
However, the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* states that street trees should be prioritized in infrastructure improvements and required with new development.

Street Types

- Mixed Use Street
- Commercial Street
- Neighborhood Street
- Alley



A network of street types tailored to support nearby development.



Streetscape elements.



Grow Smarter: Productive Districts, Corridors, & Centers

Introduction

Districts like Downtown, historic corridors like Bessemer's Northside Avenue, and centers like employment hubs or civic destinations, are all shaped by development codes and how well or poorly the code adapts its standards to a wide variety of contexts, scales of places, and development patterns. The comprehensive plan calls for prioritizing compact and efficient development patterns, increasing mixed-use development in many areas, and for promoting infill, adaptive reuse, and targeted redevelopment throughout Pueblo to foster a more economically and environmentally resilient community.

In the past, development codes have focused extensively on land uses to achieve compatible development, under the assumption that similar uses belong in similar places. However, this ignores many of the nuances that impact how people experience these places. It has led to less vibrant, more sprawling, and more use-segregated places, which tend not to be adaptable to shifts in the market and fail to build value over time. An effective development code will recognize a wide variety of places (varieties of scale, intensity and mix of uses, and character and design) and allow the flexibility to promote redevelopment and investment in these places that can adapt to shifting markets over time while preserving harmony with existing context and character.



Union Ave.

What does the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* say about growing smarter?

Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan: Key Themes

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* includes several key themes to enhance **productive districts, corridors,** and **centers** in the City of Pueblo:

- Promote context-appropriate infill of vacant sites and redevelopment of under-performing sites throughout Pueblo.
- Prioritize historic preservation in historic districts and corridors.
- Encourage adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Promote efficient development patterns and conserve land.
- Increase commercial, higher-density housing, and offices along major corridors.
- Improve access to amenities, services, and employment.
- Increase mixed-use development and overall mixing of uses throughout Pueblo.
- Locate higher-density housing in Pueblo's Downtown.

Future Land Use:

This chapter is relevant to the following future land use categories as defined in the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* (within City of Pueblo city limits):

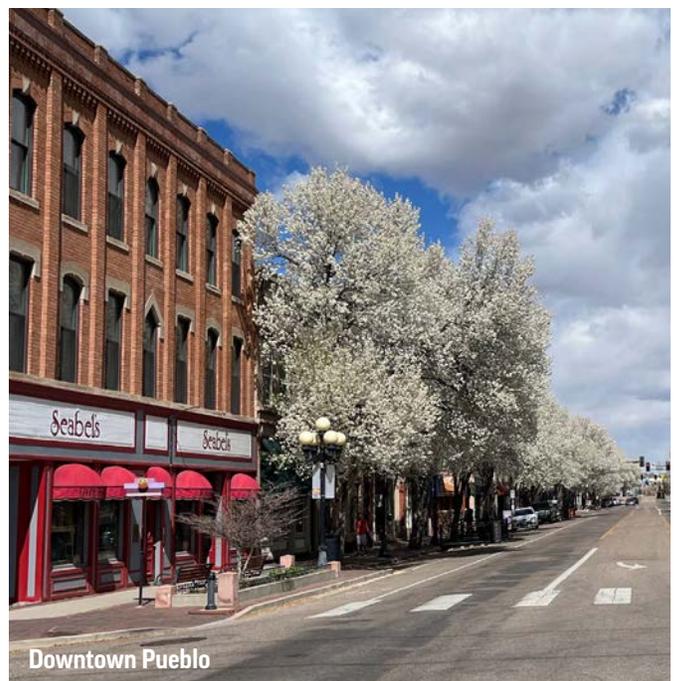
- UN: Urban Neighborhood
- NMU: Neighborhood Mixed Use
- MUA: Mixed Use Activity Center
- DTMU: Downtown Mixed Use
- CMU: Commercial Mixed Use
- IMU: Institutional Mixed Use
- EMP: Employment
- LI: Light Industrial
- TDI
- POS: Parks and Open Space
- Floodplain

What does Pueblo's development code currently require?

- ▶ Large-, medium-, and small-scale development standards address some design issues, but are generic to all types of development, and do not recognize different contexts or places within the city. Because there are few distinctions between the different categories, similar outcomes will result regardless of the scale.
- ▶ Development standards for non-residential districts do not address the scale, form, or format of development. They only address minimum lot size and minimum setbacks, and anything beyond those items is permitted.
- ▶ Required parking is based only on suburban or car-oriented contexts, not recognizing more walkable and bikeable contexts. Opportunities for flexibility in required parking rates are unclear or administratively challenging. In some circumstances, parking minimums are calculated using building occupancy, while in others they are calculated using floor area. While intended to increase flexibility, this more frequently results in confusion and additional parking variances.
- ▶ Residential uses are limited in most non-residential districts. A few districts permit limited mixed-use types, some districts allow more types by special use permit, while others only allow residential uses if they were previously established.
- ▶ The use standards do filter some uses by scale, but they typically only address the type of use and not the form or format of the use.
- ▶ Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirements are abstract, and may lead to a wide variety of outcomes, including unintended outcomes.

Community Discussion Starters

- ▶ **Infill & Adaptive Reuse:** What considerations are important for increasing and encouraging infill and adaptive reuse throughout Pueblo?
- ▶ **Infill & Adaptive Reuse:** What barriers are discouraging infill and adaptive reuse currently?
- ▶ **Design & Community Character:** What elements of design and community character are important to Pueblo's variety of contexts? How would these elements differ in vehicle-oriented contexts vs. more walkable contexts?
- ▶ **Design & Community Character:** How could design standards begin to differentiate between different types of development?
- ▶ **Mix of Uses:** How and where could residential uses begin to be incorporated into non-residential areas?
- ▶ **Mix of Uses:** What non-residential uses are supportive of residential uses, and could be strategically located near or within residential areas?



Code Topics

Mixed Uses: Use vs. Scale & Format

Development codes have historically relied on regulating land uses to enable development and make distinctions between zoned districts. However, this approach is often insufficient and frequently functions to inadvertently exclude businesses or uses that could contribute to valuable, vibrant places. For example, Pueblo's current code limits opportunities to incorporate residential uses into predominantly non-residential areas, and in some districts, residential uses are only allowed if they predate the current regulations, significantly limiting how mixed-use places could develop in Pueblo. However, a mix of complimentary uses is instrumental to creating the thriving corridors, centers, and districts envisioned by the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan*, and a pattern of compatibly scaled buildings are crucial to completing well-designed places while preserving compact, efficient growth patterns. To implement plan's policies, codes need to be more flexible regarding the types of uses while adding more specificity to the scale and format of the uses.

Design & Community Character

Preserving, enhancing, and celebrating community character is a theme throughout many goals of the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan*. Community character will look different in different areas of the community, and these differences can be incorporated into the development code through design standards tailored to different contexts. For example, a more walkable context (like Downtown, urban neighborhoods, and campuses, for example) will incorporate different context-appropriate design features than a context intended primarily for vehicle access (such as an industrial park, for example). Design elements in the walkable context will be tailored to foster a safe, lively street life: high ground floor transparency, frequent building entrances, build-to-street frontage, and urban-scale landscaping elements. Design elements in highly auto-oriented contexts would likely include more off-street parking, require larger landscaping and stormwater infrastructure elements, and may incorporate deeper building setbacks. An effective development code can account for a variety of contexts so that standards applied to development are appropriate to the project's context, avoiding the problem of attempting to apply suburban-oriented standards to an urban infill project. Context-appropriate design standards will also promote historic preservation and the rehabilitation and

adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Ensuring that standards are tailored to Pueblo's historic contexts, which often includes small lots and smaller buildings sizes typical of an earlier era, can enable instead of creating barriers to preservation and reuse.

Infill & Adaptive Reuse

Infill and adaptive reuse are strategies applicable to most contexts and can be utilized at a wide variety of scales. Infill is accomplished by developing a new building or project on an existing vacant or abandoned site within an already-developed area. Adaptive reuse takes an existing building (such as a historic building, a former big-box store, or an abandoned school) and rehabilitates it to house a different use. For many older neighborhoods with vacant or abandoned buildings, or declining commercial areas experiencing a rise in vacancy, both strategies can bring reinvigorating activity and investment. However, development codes may unintentionally provide barriers to infill and adaptive reuse by requiring that new development or redevelopment adhere to standards that may no longer be applicable, may be inappropriate for a proposed new use, or may counteract newer goals of efficient development that incorporates a greater mix of uses. Promoting and removing barriers to infill and adaptive reuse in all contexts are key goals of the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* – to promote more efficient development patterns, to utilize more of Pueblo's historic building stock, to activate areas like Downtown and the city's historic main streets, and to provide a greater variety of housing options.

Downtown

One of the contexts in Pueblo in which many of these topics intersect is Downtown. Downtown Pueblo is a historic district (see **Historic Preservation** in Chapter 4: *Celebrate Pueblo*) that preserves the city's history of human-scale patterns of smaller, walkable blocks and lots. Some of the challenges facing the Downtown are how to enable smaller, context-appropriate infill projects and adaptive reuse of existing buildings to new, modern uses. Design standards in the current code lack distinctions between different scales and contexts of development, and the development standards do not address the form or format of development – issues which can make infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse in a context

Code Topics (continued)

like Downtown more challenging. The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* calls for incorporating higher-density housing into downtown, making sure that Downtown areas form “complete neighborhoods” (providing housing, employment, recreation, as well as daily goods and services), maintaining Downtown’s historic character, and activating the area for tourism. This variety of goals highlights the need for context-appropriate design and development standards for Pueblo’s Downtown to enable the mix of uses and activities called for in the plan, and to ensure that investment still preserves and enhances the area’s historic character.

Urban Centers & Corridors

Pueblo’s development history led to distinct neighborhoods emerging around commercial centers. These centers currently form a series of commercial nodes throughout the community, with architectural and design elements reflective of the cultural heritage of the communities that developed them. Where possible, preserving these commercial centers and allowing them to adapt to new land uses and a greater mix of uses could infuse new life into those areas that have fallen into disrepair. The comprehensive plan calls for promoting neighborhood-scale mixed use development along these “historic main streets” of Pueblo, and for targeting infill and adaptive reuse in these contexts. Reinvesting in these existing centers will also help Pueblo to meet the comprehensive plan’s goals of more efficient and compact development, and context-appropriate design standards can protect the integrity of historic commercial centers by ensuring that new development complements existing architectural styles to promote a harmonious blend of old and new.

Transition & Suburban Corridors

Another distinct development context that requires standards and regulations to be tightly tailored to a community’s goals for the area are busy corridors in Transition and Suburban development patterns (for more on this topic, see the **Development Pattern Analysis** document). Corridors originally designed to prioritize automobile traffic and access over all other modes often suffer from multiple conditions that cause decline and underutilization over time. They frequently lack connectivity, they may have poor-quality streetscapes due to

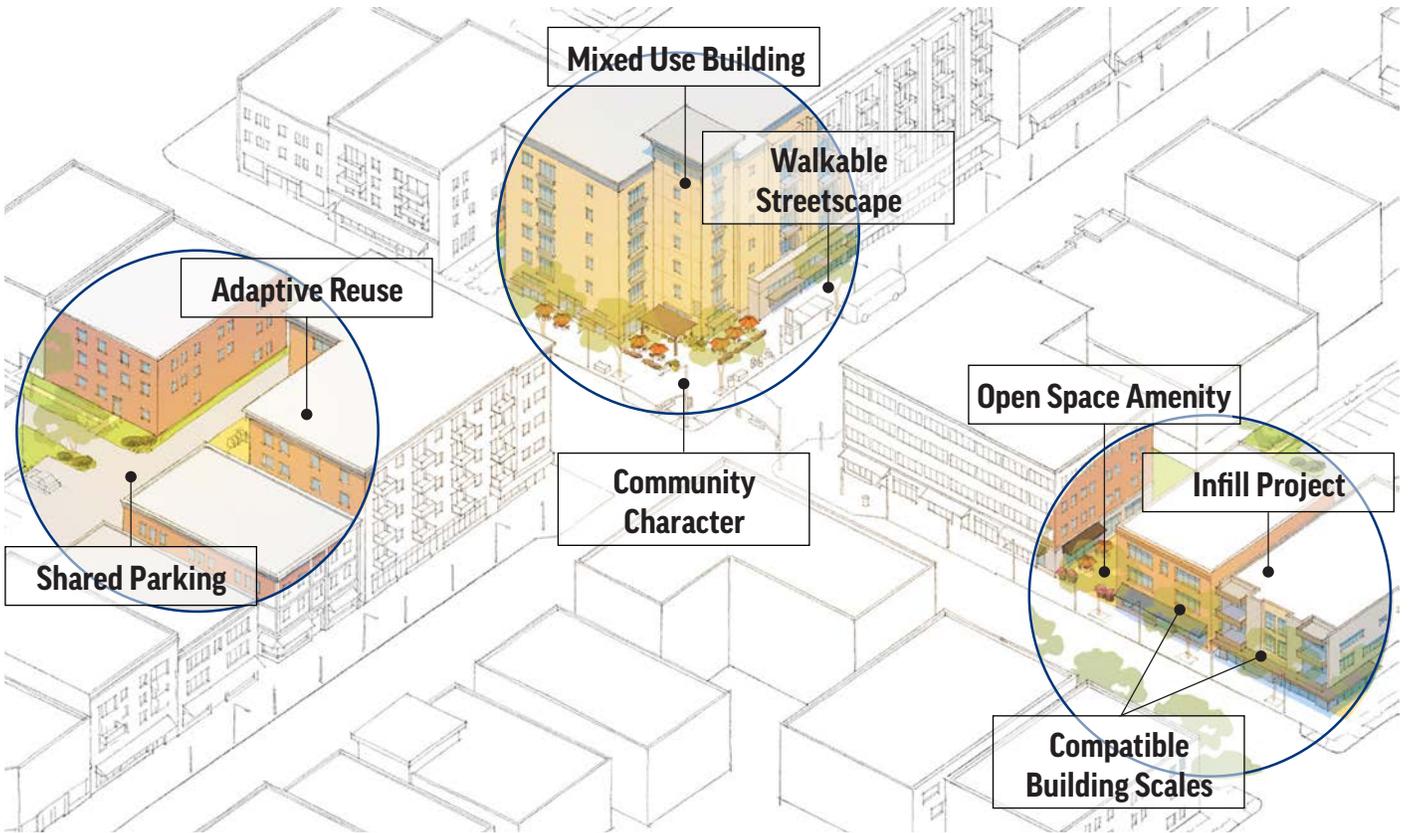
frontage and street design exclusively designed for cars, and they typically promote single-use environments when large sites and buildings are not required to relate to one another. The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* addresses contexts like these by promoting redevelopment and infill targeted to these areas, incorporating more multimodal streetscape designs, and adding higher-density housing in order to encourage more compact, efficient development patterns. Development codes can help to meet these goals and create the right conditions for redevelopment by re-instituting a connected block structure and pattern, re-envisioning existing internal drive aisles as streetscapes and multi-modal connections, and by introducing new connections through the perimeter of buildings and parking blocks (See **Connectivity** in *Chapter 3: Strong Local & Regional Connections*).

Optimizing Parking

Parking accounts for a significant amount of land in most communities, and always requires trade-offs: people need a place to park their vehicles, but poorly designed parking reduces walkability and the social life of a streetscape, while contributing to undesirable environmental issues like heat islands and excessive stormwater runoff. A key role of development codes is to optimize the amount of parking required and mitigate unwanted impacts to the streetscape and the local environment. Parking can be optimized by tailoring requirements to avoid requiring too much parking, maximize opportunities for on-street parking (which contributes to safer streetscapes), encourage shared parking strategies, and coordinating parking at the project, block, or district scale. Because not all neighborhoods or communities have the same parking needs, parking standards should be based on context: including location or use-based parking exemptions, increasing credits for on-street parking, establishing parking maximums, and requiring pedestrian paths through parking lots to create safer environments for everyone. Additionally, design standards to mitigate the impacts of parking whenever it is required (and particularly impacts on streetscapes and frontages) can be strengthened and adapted to fit the needs of different contexts within a city.



A mixed-use downtown or urban center.



Strategies for creating a vibrant, connected mixed-use center.



Celebrate Pueblo: Emphasize Distinct Community Character

Introduction

Development codes provide a critical opportunity to implement a community's goals for community design and character, historic preservation, and environmental resilience on an ongoing basis as development and redevelopment occurs. Elements of community character (like historic preservation, local environmental context, native landscaping, and public art) are key contributors to enhancing a city or neighborhood's distinctive identity, while beautifying the city, preserving its history, and improving resilience. Incorporating these elements into the development code can help enhance and celebrate the features that make Pueblo a unique place and community.

In the past, development codes have treated these elements with a one-size-fits-all approach (if they incorporate them at all) – often neglecting to incorporate local histories and the needs of different neighborhoods and development contexts. This has ignored opportunities to strengthen local culture and sense of place through historic preservation and public art, and to harness ecosystem benefits while increasing community resilience through sustainable, context-appropriate landscaping and green infrastructure. An effective development code will not only incorporate standards that include all of these elements of community character, but will strategically tailor them to support community goals with different strategies in different contexts. Effective historic preservation will promote a wholistic approach to preservation that addresses building preservation, encourages reuse and rehabilitation, incorporates streetscape design, and functions to preserve historic character throughout a district or neighborhood. Effective landscape standards will promote sustainable, context-appropriate strategies suited to Pueblo's arid climate at every scale and within every project, strengthening the contribution of sites, streets, and buildings to overall community resilience. And finally, an effective development code will provide plentiful opportunities for public art and other expressions of local culture and character.



What does the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* say about celebrating Pueblo?

Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan: Key Themes

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* includes several key themes to enhance **distinct community character** in the City of Pueblo:

- Historic preservation and protection of historic character in Pueblo's neighborhoods.
- Increase and expand public art.
- Prioritize beautification and placemaking.
- Expand Pueblo's network of parks & open space, and improve the design of parks.
- Provide public spaces for all ages & abilities.
- Activate Downtown Pueblo.
- Prioritize infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse along Pueblo's historic main streets.
- Implement streetscape improvements.
- Encourage health through expanded food access and active living.
- Promote resilience through water conservation, heat mitigation, and sustainable stormwater management.

Future Land Use:

This chapter is relevant to the following future land use categories as defined in the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* (within City of Pueblo city limits):

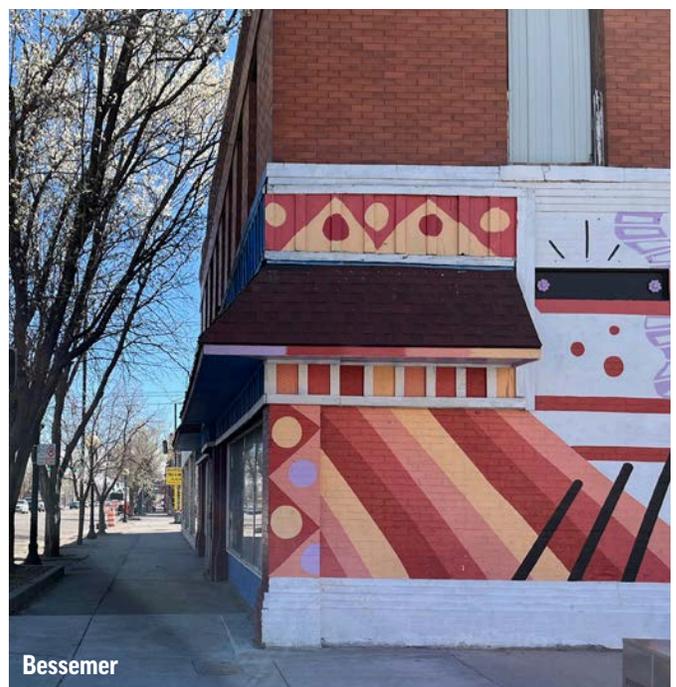
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- Floodplain

What does Pueblo's development code currently require?

- ▶ There are few elements of the code that recognize any design styles unique to Pueblo. The large-scale development performance standards briefly reference the three dominant architectural styles in Pueblo (Mediterranean / Mission, Pueblo's National Park style, and Pueblo or Adobe styles) but there are no standards designed to reflect, encourage, or reinforce these styles.
- ▶ The code is very permissive to community gardens, permitting them as an accessory or principal use subject to basic performance standards.
- ▶ There are no landscape standards or open space design provisions tailored to Pueblo's unique local and regional environmental context, and some requirements are highly unsuited to Pueblo's climate.
- ▶ Open space standards are overall minimal. The standards typically do not include specific design or functional requirements for different types of open spaces (civic, common, or private open spaces). The subdivision regulations include a parks dedication requirement, but this is largely included as a platting and fee mechanism.
- ▶ Several sections allow public art to contribute to points in the design standards. This enables public art to contribute to meeting the standards but does not require it.
- ▶ There are inconsistencies and unaddressed topics within Pueblo's current Historic Preservation regulations, and between those regulations and the current Historic Preservation Guidelines.
- ▶ Within the Historic Preservation standards, there is little to no differentiation in process and requirements between minor and more substantial alterations.

Community Discussion Starters

- ▶ **Historic Character:** How do elements of historic character differ between different historic neighborhoods and districts within Pueblo?
- ▶ **Historic Preservation:** How can clarity and consistency be increased in Pueblo's historic preservation processes?
- ▶ **Historic Character & Preservation:** What elements of Pueblo's historic character could be incorporated into design standards?
- ▶ **Native Landscaping:** How could landscape standards increase Pueblo's resilience through xeric, drought-tolerant, low-water, and other landscaping strategies appropriate for Pueblo's environmental context?
- ▶ **Open Spaces:** How can open space standards begin to foster a connected network of open spaces throughout Pueblo? What types of open spaces should be encouraged in different contexts?
- ▶ **Community Character:** How can public art contribute to community character and "celebrating Pueblo"?



Code Topics

Community Character

See ***Design & Community Character*** in Chapter 3: *Grow Smarter*.

Historic Preservation

Pueblo's current historic preservation regulations have many gaps and inconsistencies between different sections of the regulations and between the regulations and the city's Historic Preservation Guidelines. The preservation standards do not differentiate between minor alterations and larger or more significant alterations, and lack clarity regarding the treatment of contributing and non-contributing structures. Following the dissolution of the Pueblo Architectural Review Board in 2015, some critical historic preservation processes were discontinued that have led to lack of clarity around development processes and procedural timelines. Updates are needed to align the city's historic preservation standards and processes with the Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan's goals for preservation of Pueblo's historic character. The plan calls for increasing preservation of historic buildings and sites that contain cultural, archaeological, or paleontological significance throughout Pueblo. To do this, regulatory and administrative process barriers to restoring, reusing, and designating historic properties must be removed. The UDC update effort will closely examine the city's historic preservation standards, regulations, and processes to identify and clarify inconsistencies, as well as promote goals aligned with the comprehensive plan's policies for celebrating and preserving the Pueblo community's rich history.

Open Space Network

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* lays out four primary goals for the community's parks and open spaces: 1) ensure parks encourage and are accessible via active transportation, 2) improve connectivity through an interconnected network of parks and public spaces, 3) design parks and public spaces for all ages and abilities, and 4) utilize parks and open spaces to protect and conserve land, water, and native habitat. Pueblo's existing code is not yet tailored to meet these goals and does not currently require specific standards of design or function for public spaces. One method for addressing each of the comprehensive plan's goals is to define a system of open space typologies (a defined set of open space categories). Typologies typically include trails (greenways, multi-use trails, and nature

trails), parks (mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, school parks, and sports complexes), civic and social spaces (greens, gateways, squares, plazas, courtyards, gardens, and streetscapes), and natural areas (water bodies, prairies, wetlands, or floodplains) – but should be suited to a community's goals and ecological context. This approach allows a community to create open space standards designed to 1) fit seamlessly into surrounding land use and development context, 2) encourage active transportation by strengthening the city's network of usable and high-quality public spaces, 3) increase resilience and provide important ecosystem services, and 4) implement design standards specific to a community's goals.

Public Art

Many areas of Pueblo feature a strong presence of public art that celebrates Pueblo's history, diverse cultures, and local design traditions. Protecting, encouraging, and easing the inclusion of more public art throughout all areas of Pueblo is something that the code can influence. Currently, Pueblo's code encourages public art by allowing the inclusion of public art to contribute towards points in the design standards. The Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan also encourages public art; calling for investing in and promoting public art throughout Pueblo, including public art with development projects, and utilizing public art to enhance gateways into Pueblo's community. While a new code likely wouldn't require public art, it could require the types of public, semi-public (courtyards, plazas), and focal points that create a conducive environment for public art.

Community Gardens

Community gardens are shared spaces where community members can grow their own fresh fruits and vegetables. Vacant lots are frequently used for community gardens (resulting in the dual benefits of activating the vacant lot and providing fresh produce), and are also commonly located on school grounds, land owned by a community group or non-profit, or in public parks. Urban farming is a broader concept and includes food production on a variety of scales in an urban setting: from a community member growing vegetables on an apartment deck or rooftop, to incorporating edible landscaping within a site or streetscape, to small-scale for-profit food production (vertical or traditional) occurring in an urban setting. The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive*

Code Topics (continued)

Plan includes multiple goals that seek to increase access to healthy and fresh foods through community gardens and urban agriculture, and notes that these practices also honor Pueblo's agricultural heritage. The current code is remarkably permissive towards community gardens (permitting them in all districts), providing an opportunity to foster a local food culture and address food insecurity within Pueblo's neighborhoods.

Water as a Resource

The *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan* consistently prioritizes water conservation and quality through thoughtful treatment of water as a resource. In Pueblo's arid climate, this is increasingly important to improve city-wide resilience from the intersecting effects of drought, heat, severe precipitation, and flooding. The principle of treating water as a resource can be implemented through a range of strategies influenced by the Unified Development Code: green infrastructure and green streets for sustainable stormwater management and cooling, xeriscaping and water-wise landscaping for water conservation (which can also contribute to celebrating community character), and street trees for shade and stormwater management.

Sustainable Landscapes: Water-Wise, Xeric, & Native Landscaping

Sustainable landscaping is a critical issue in Pueblo's region. The arid climate means that landscaping should be drought-tolerant and require little irrigation, while the area's high summer temperatures contribute to urban heat that must be mitigated through landscaping and the tree canopy. Several related landscaping strategies can help Pueblo achieve this balance: water-wise landscaping, xeric landscaping, and native landscaping. Water-wise landscapes feature drought-resistant plant species and are designed for highly efficient water usage. Xeric landscapes are ideal for an environmental context like Pueblo's, further minimizing the need for water with plant species that thrive in dry climates and require little to no irrigation. Native landscaping uses plant species native to the region and adapted to local climate conditions. These species will have a high survival rate, provide ecosystem services like stormwater management and supporting the local food web, and will have a reduced need for maintenance and irrigation. These strategies not only function to conserve water in drought-prone regions, but also create beautiful landscapes that celebrate and work with the local environment –

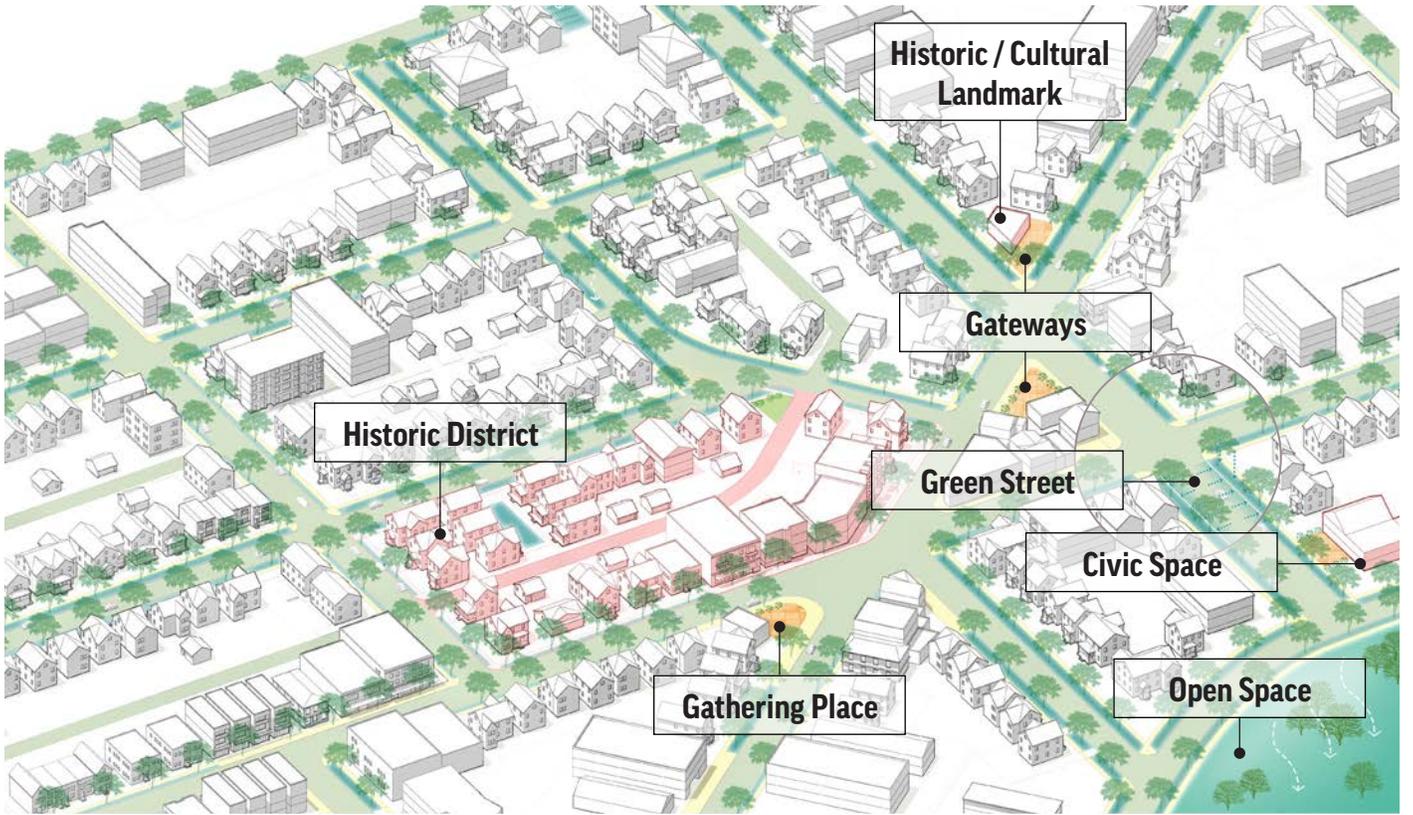
enhancing a community's unique sense of place. Pueblo's comprehensive plan includes several goals calling for improved landscaping that prioritizes native species, is xeric and drought-tolerant, and contributes to stormwater management and heat mitigation.

Green Infrastructure

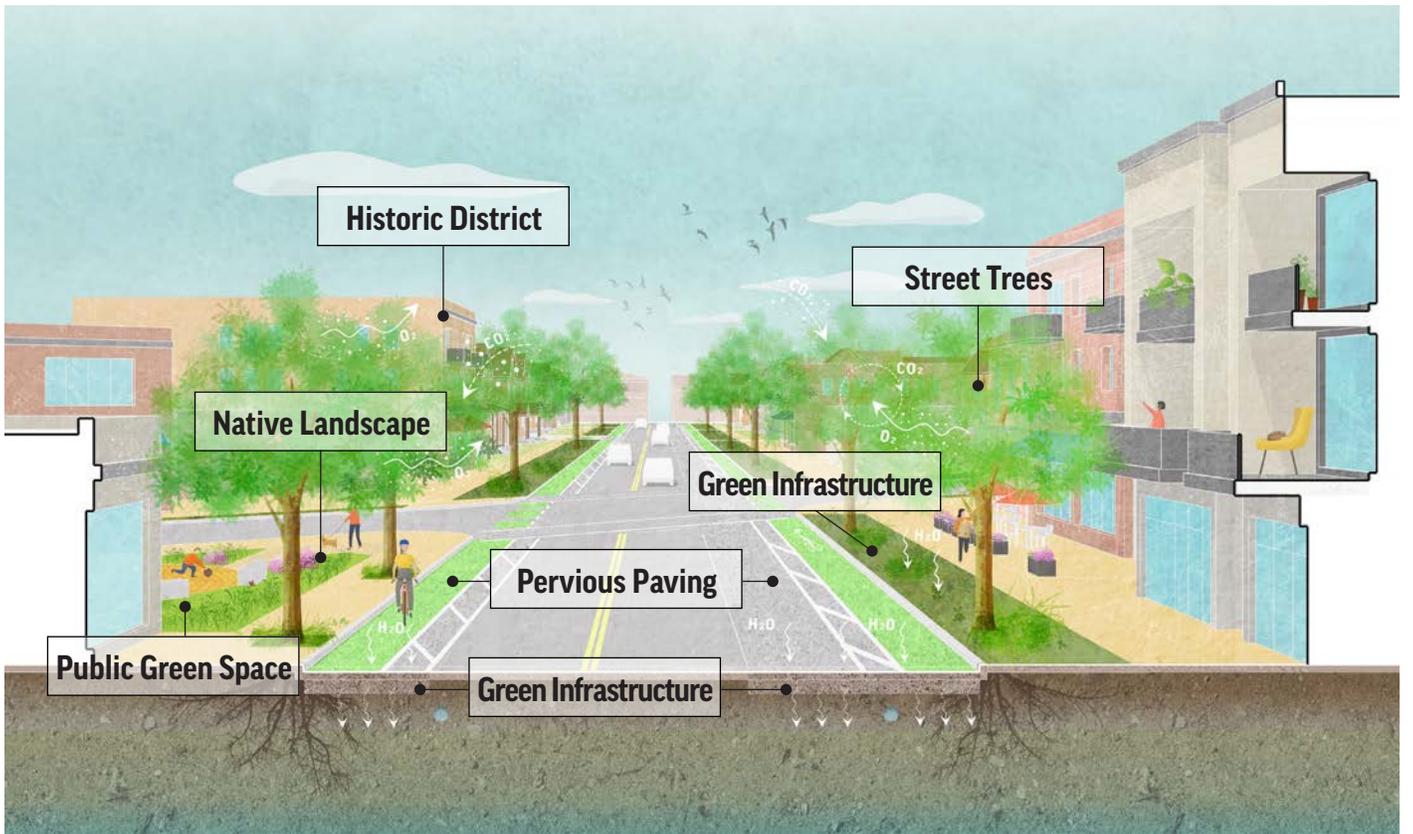
Increasing green infrastructure in Pueblo is recommended in multiple sections of the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan*. Green infrastructure is an approach to stormwater management that utilizes nature-based systems to filter stormwater back into the ground where it falls, allowing the water to pass through layers of filtration materials on its way back into the groundwater system. It can be utilized at all scales throughout a community: at a district scale in open space and parks, at a block or street scale through Green Street strategies, and at the site design scale through strategies like rain gardens or bioswales. Effective development standards can coordinate all scales of stormwater management together – relieving pressure on sewer systems, improving local water quality, reducing impervious surfaces, and increasing options for site drainage. These strategies also provide co-benefits that meet additional goals of the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan*: community and site beautification, urban heat mitigation, and reducing the impact of development on Pueblo's local environment.

Green Streets

Green streets envision streets as not only a place for multimodal transportation, but for bringing all the benefits of green infrastructure into the streetscape. A green street includes a wholistic suite of green infrastructure elements in the public right-of-way: including street trees, pervious paving, rain gardens and bioswales, or any other contextually appropriate green infrastructure elements. Increasing greenery and trees in streetscapes creates safer environments for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike, while improving property values, cooling the streetscape, contributing to improved public health, and managing stormwater. Green streets that are tailored to Pueblo's local environmental context could help meet the *Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan*'s goals for increased green infrastructure, beautification, and improved streetscapes throughout the city. Including green street strategies in streetscape design standards can enhance the role of streetscapes as multi-functional public spaces.



Strategies for celebrating local character & environment.



Streetscape strategies for community character and environmental sustainability.

Appendix: Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

Introduction

Throughout the early phases of Pueblo's Unified Development Code Update, a variety of stakeholders from the development and design community have been interviewed, either in individual interviews or in a focus-group-like setting. These stakeholders were asked to provide their experiences as frequent users of the city's current development code, and the themes that emerged from these interviews are summarized here.

Note: Over time, the city has taken steps to address some of the issues identified in these interviews. However, the experiences of stakeholders are documented in this summary as they were provided in the interviews.

Interview Themes

Planning Department

Stakeholders frequently complimented the Planning Department for being communicative and responsive, and many expressed that planning staff exhibit a strong willingness to work with applicants to find reasonable solutions.

Organization & Process

Desire for the code to be simplified and streamlined was a recurring theme. Many stakeholders expressed difficulties with the code's current lack of organization, finding it challenging to navigate. They identified issues with sections of the code contradicting other sections, and many sections being unclear, leading to inconsistent and changeable interpretations. One stakeholder cited an issue where certain uses were not included in the code leading to lack of clarity.

In addition, several stakeholders mentioned that the code does not provide flexibility when a standard does not apply to a particular situation or context. Many expressed that the standards are not tailored for the city's very different contexts, citing standards that are tailored for commercial retail being applied to industrial projects, significantly increasing costs. Multiple stakeholders described frustrations with the code's lack of a minor subdivision process and would like to see one added. They expressed that for even very minor lot adjustments, consolidations, or combinations, they had to take the project through a full subdivision process that could take up to a year and involved significant costs.

The development review process was also an area of significant concern. Many stakeholders expressed issues with receiving comments from all departments on applications – describing many experiences where comments from various

city department were received piecemeal in many batches, and without a final deadline. They all expressed a desire to receive comments from staff in fewer and consolidated rounds, in a timely manner based on a defined timeline for comments.

Several stakeholders also expressed that the city's checklists are helpful but need to be updated. Some would like to have a process for pre-application meetings to better understand requirements from the outset of a project. One mentioned that there is not a process for notifying an applicant of final approval of a project.

The use of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) was a recurring theme, with several stakeholders sharing concerns over PUDs expiring in three years while many projects can take longer to develop. Stakeholders appreciated the flexibility of PUDs but the process and timeline for them was a concern.

Architectural Guidelines

Many stakeholders described challenges with the current code's architectural standards. They mentioned that the guidelines are not always applicable or appropriate for the variety of buildings being built, and in particular stated that they often faced challenges meeting the guidelines on smaller-format homes while also keeping the homes affordable. Several stakeholders shared issues with the application of the guidelines to infill and reuse projects, finding that they could often be inapplicable for infill projects where the surrounding context was already highly developed. They also said that the guidelines are not tailored to the variety of building types and contexts found throughout Pueblo. Many would like to see an expanded variety of choices for meeting the guidelines, and with increased flexibility for a range of architectural styles that fit the city's context.

Infill, Reuse, & Historic Preservation

Several stakeholders identified that the current regulations do not differentiate between different contexts throughout the city, instead applying the same requirements to a development on the edge of town as to an infill project in a fully developed part of the city. They stated that the regulations seem to be oriented towards greenfield development but not suited to infill and reuse projects. Historic preservation was mentioned by one stakeholder, who expressed challenges with modernizing elements (such as windows) of historic facades in order to have the flexibility to reuse a building.

Neighborhoods & Housing

Multiple stakeholders expressed that multi-family and mixed-use options under the current code aren't tailored to that type of development and do not provide flexibility for a variety of housing types, so a PUD process was often preferred to develop multi-family and mixed-use housing. However, another stakeholder described a practice of over-zoning properties to avoid a PUD process as a solution. Stakeholders expressed that they want to see neighborhoods able to grow at organic and affordable rates.

Some stakeholders expressed the desire to build small-lot, clustered or courtyard format homes, and being unable to under the current code. They identified that some architectural requirements do not always fit the building type. A stakeholder mentioned a desire for ADUs to be rented, and another expressed that design standards for ADUs are needed. One stakeholder expressed concern that a two-car garage does not count towards two off-street parking spaces in residential contexts.

Landscaping

Several stakeholders expressed that they could not design and install xeric and native landscaping under the current code's requirements, instead being required to install water-intensive landscaping. Some expressed concern that street tree species being planted were not suited to the climate and needed significant irrigation. One stakeholder expressed that the landscaping requirements do not differentiate between different contexts (commercial retail versus industrial, for example).

Infrastructure

Some stakeholders brought up that there is a heavy reliance on detention ponds for stormwater management in the current code, and that temporary stormwater improvements are being required which are not providing longer-term solutions. Additionally, stakeholders mentioned that required road widths are very high, increasing construction costs and maintenance costs.

These themes will be considered with the plan review, code assessment, and development pattern analysis when discussing code reforms and processes with a new unified development code.



city of

PUEBLO

colorado