

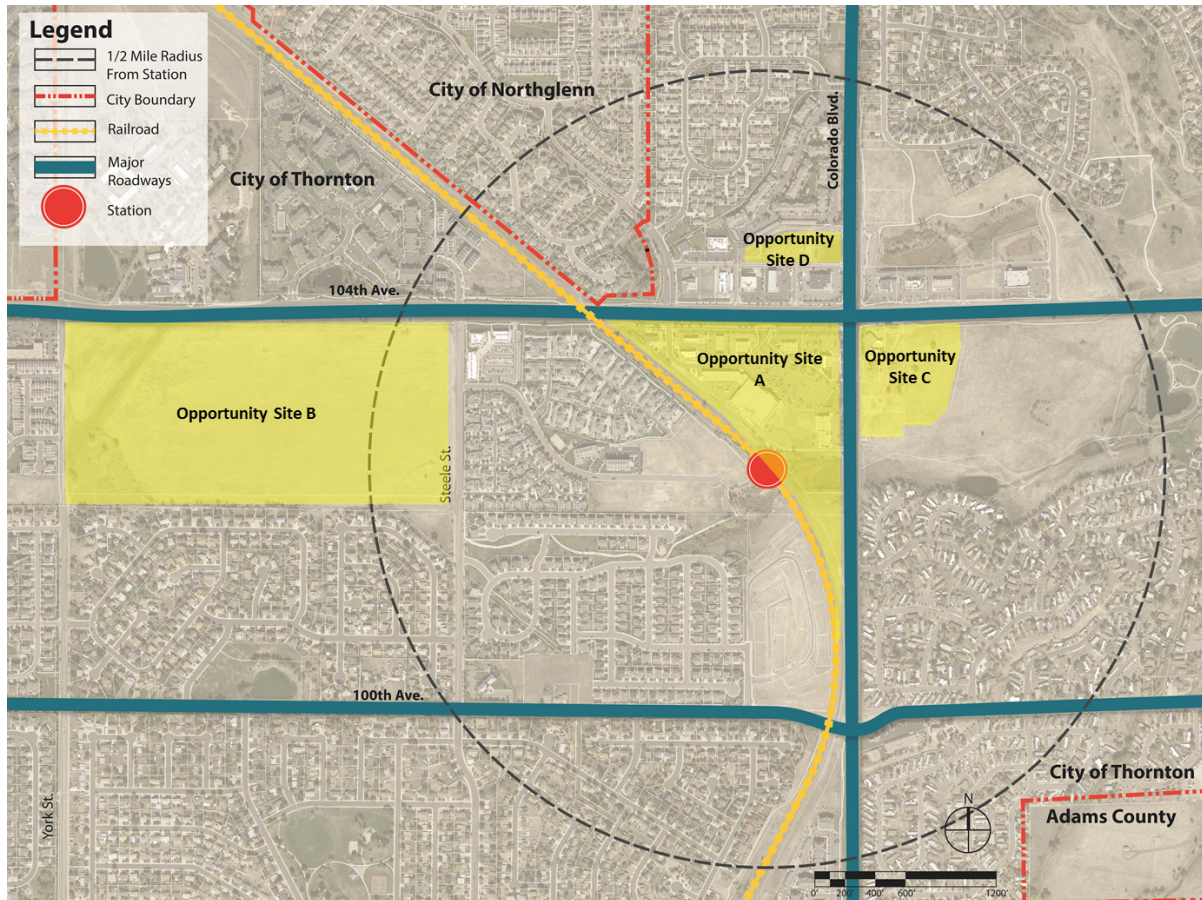
Chapter 4.0 Land Use Concepts

This chapter describes the Land Use Concepts proposed for each of the Opportunity Sites within the Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Area (shown in Figure 4.1). These Concepts are based on the long-term planning vision for this area and are intended to create a rich mix of land uses within convenient walking distance to the station. They were developed and refined through multiple working sessions with City staff, stakeholders, and public input and, in total, are planned to meet the forecast market absorption rates for the Station Area.

The Land Use Concepts provide examples of how TOD could evolve in the Station Area and include a mix of both infill and redevelopment. Actual development will depend heavily on the local economy and real estate market, local developer response to those market conditions, incentives that may be offered by the City of Thornton, as well as RTD investment and construction.

Note that the vacant parcels located west of the railroad tracks have not been identified as Opportunity Sites because, at the time of this Plan development, they are pending residential developments (as described in Chapter 3). These areas, known as Presidential Ridge and Settler's Chase, are currently entitled for up to 280 new multifamily units and will likely build out over the next few years. While these new units are included in the total planned land uses for the station area (as described at the end of this chapter) the Project Team did not develop Land Use Concepts for these two areas.

Figure 4.1: Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station Opportunity Sites



The following sections describe the Land Use Concepts for each Opportunity Site.

4.1 Opportunity Site A

Opportunity Site A, shown in Figure 4.2, includes the commuter rail station itself, which will be acquired and developed by RTD, and the privately-owned Colorado Marketplace commercial center just to the north of the station.

Figure 4.2: Opportunity Site A



This Opportunity Site will be most affected by the introduction of the commuter rail station because most transit patrons will access the station through this area. The sheer number of commuters coming into and out of this site on a daily basis will transform the way this area looks, feels, and functions. As such, this site also has the greatest potential to add and/or redevelop with transit-supportive uses that create a strong synergy between the station itself and the shopping center. With this in mind, the Project Team developed two distinct Land Use Concepts to incorporate transit supportive uses into the site, as described here:

- Infill Concept: The Infill Concept illustrates potential development on the last remaining vacant lot within Colorado Marketplace (and shows the current concept plan for the commuter rail station).

- Infill and Redevelopment Concept: The Infill and Redevelopment Concept illustrates potential development on the last remaining vacant lot within Colorado Marketplace and shows redevelopment of an adjacent lot (that is currently occupied by retail development).

Infill Concept

Figure 4.3 shows the extent of the infill site, highlighted in yellow, in relation to the commuter rail station to the south and surrounding development. Figure 4.4 then illustrates the Infill Concept.

Figure 4.3: Opportunity Site A - Infill Area

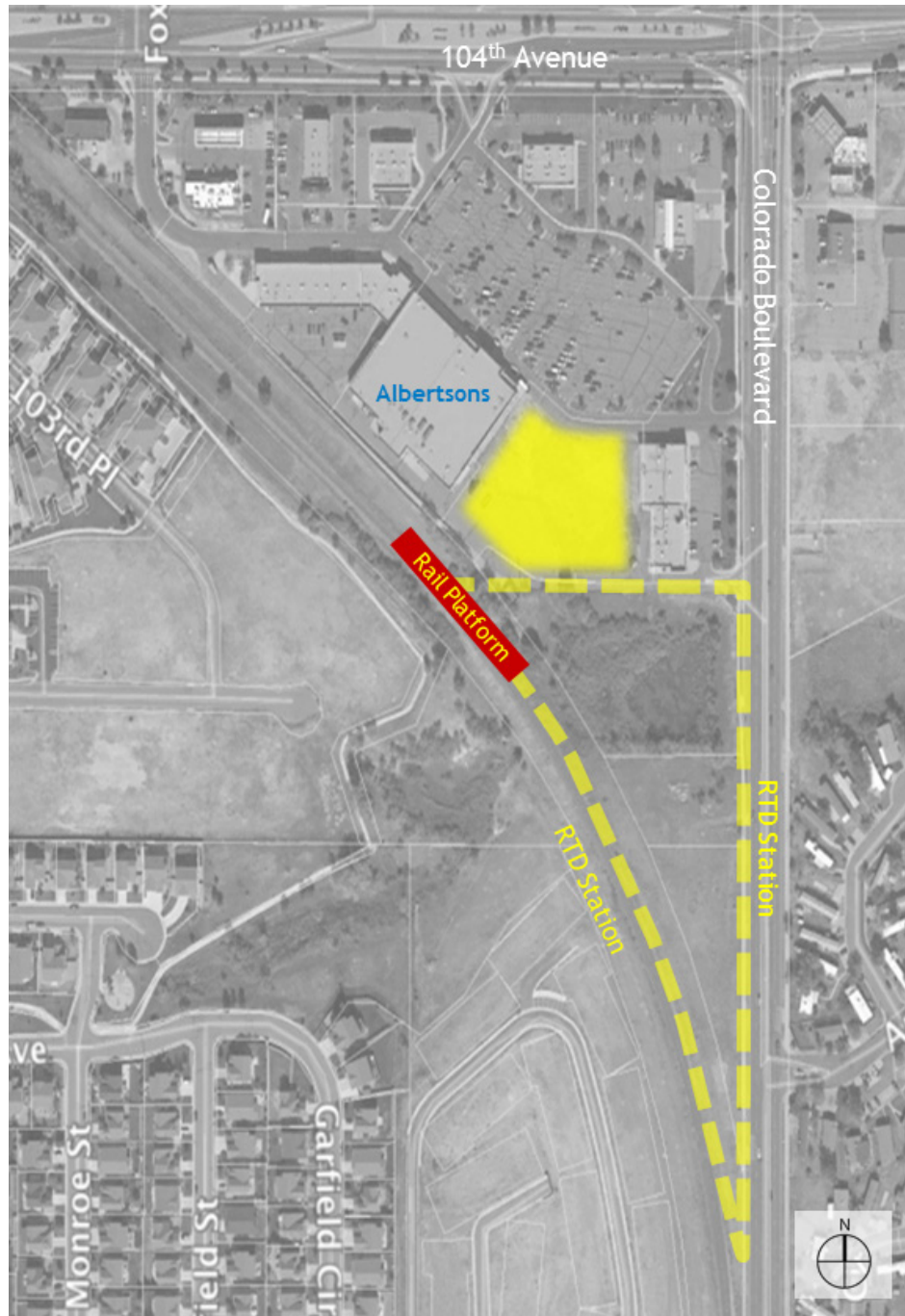


Figure 4.4: Opportunity Site A - Infill Concept



This concept proposes the integration of new mixed-use development into the existing building framework of the shopping center and creates a strong pedestrian connection between Colorado Marketplace and the station. The Infill Concept includes the following features:

- A tree-lined triangular shaped pedestrian plaza connects Colorado Marketplace to the commuter rail station, providing an appealing and convenient area for transit patrons to walk between the shopping center and the station. The approximately 20,000 square foot plaza will create a gateway into the station and a gathering space for shoppers, transit patrons and area residents. Plaza features such as fountains, play areas and sculptures can be incorporated into the plaza to create a distinct and vibrant hub within the station area.
- Mixed-use development, in the form of ground-floor retail storefronts and restaurants and 1-2 story residential units above, frame either side of the plaza. The footprint of the existing retail building (Albertsons) is extended into the adjacent vacant lot to create the storefront retail/ restaurants with residential units above. This building layout offers an opportunity to provide outdoor restaurant dining on either side of the plaza – helping to further draw people into this space – and activate the area outside typical commuting hours. And importantly, the orientation of these buildings frame the entrance into the plaza and allow for direct lines of sight between the station platform, transit drop-off area and the shopping center parking lot. When people have direct views between the station and Colorado Marketplace, they feel more open, connected and safe within the station environment.
- The Colorado Marketplace parking area and automobile access is reorganized to improve efficiency and eliminate awkward shapes, such as the small areas throughout the parking lot that are currently planted with Kentucky bluegrass. The reconfigured parking lot includes an additional north-south access point from 104th Avenue that provides a direct and clear connection to the plaza area. The reconfigured parking area also illustrates planted islands to delineate circulation paths for the benefit of both pedestrians and automobile drivers; and adds streetscape improvements along the building fronts to create appealing and safe pedestrian spaces.
- On-street and off-street pedestrian and bicycle paths will connect surrounding areas to the station, Colorado Marketplace and residential areas to the west of the platform. A planned pedestrian underpass below the railroad tracks will provide a direct link for people to walk or bicycle between the station and the surrounding neighborhoods and existing and planned trail network to the west. From the east, pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the station from Colorado Boulevard should have designated pedestrian crosswalks when one or more traffic signals are added to Colorado Boulevard south of 104th Avenue. While not illustrated in the Land Use Concept, grade separated pedestrian

connections across Colorado Boulevard and 104th Avenue would help to promote walking and cycling in the area, while providing a more convenient and safe travel option for pedestrians and cyclists.

Infill and Redevelopment Concept

Figure 4.5 (on the following page) shows the extent of the infill and redevelopment sites, highlighted in yellow, in relation to the commuter rail station to the south and surrounding development.

Figure 4.6 (on page 4.9) illustrates the Infill and Redevelopment Concept. Like the previous concept, this plan depicts the integration of new mixed-use development into the shopping center and creates a strong pedestrian connection between Colorado Marketplace and the station. This concept then goes one step further by exploring the idea of redeveloping the strip retail development currently located at the southeast corner of Colorado Marketplace. While most of the features related to the plaza, mix of uses, parking and pedestrian and bicycle circulation are similar to the Infill Concept, this plan is distinct in the following ways:

- The tree-lined plaza connecting Colorado Marketplace to the commuter rail station is designed as more of a linear “pedestrian mall.” Like the triangular shaped plaza shown in the Infill Concept, the linear shaped plaza provides an appealing environment for pedestrians to walk between Colorado Marketplace and the station. It also becomes a destination for shoppers, transit patrons and area residents and, like the Infill Concept, is envisioned as a vibrant area lined with retail storefronts and outdoor cafes.
- Mixed-use development, in the form of ground-floor retail storefronts and restaurants and 1-2 story residential units above, frame either side of the plaza. On the east side of the plaza, the footprint of the existing retail building (Albertsons) is extended into the adjacent vacant lot. On the west side, the concept assumes the existing commercial building along Colorado Boulevard is removed and the site is redeveloped with a larger mixed-use project that extends from Colorado Boulevard to the western edge of the plaza. The configuration of the 3-4 story mixed-use development frames both the pedestrian plaza and the north side of the RTD station. This layout creates an interesting and active environment for many different types of users – from people simply passing through the area, like transit patrons stopping for convenience items before boarding a train – to those who are attracted to the area for a more leisurely experience, like dining in an outdoor café.

Figure 4.5: Opportunity Site A - Infill and Redevelopment Area

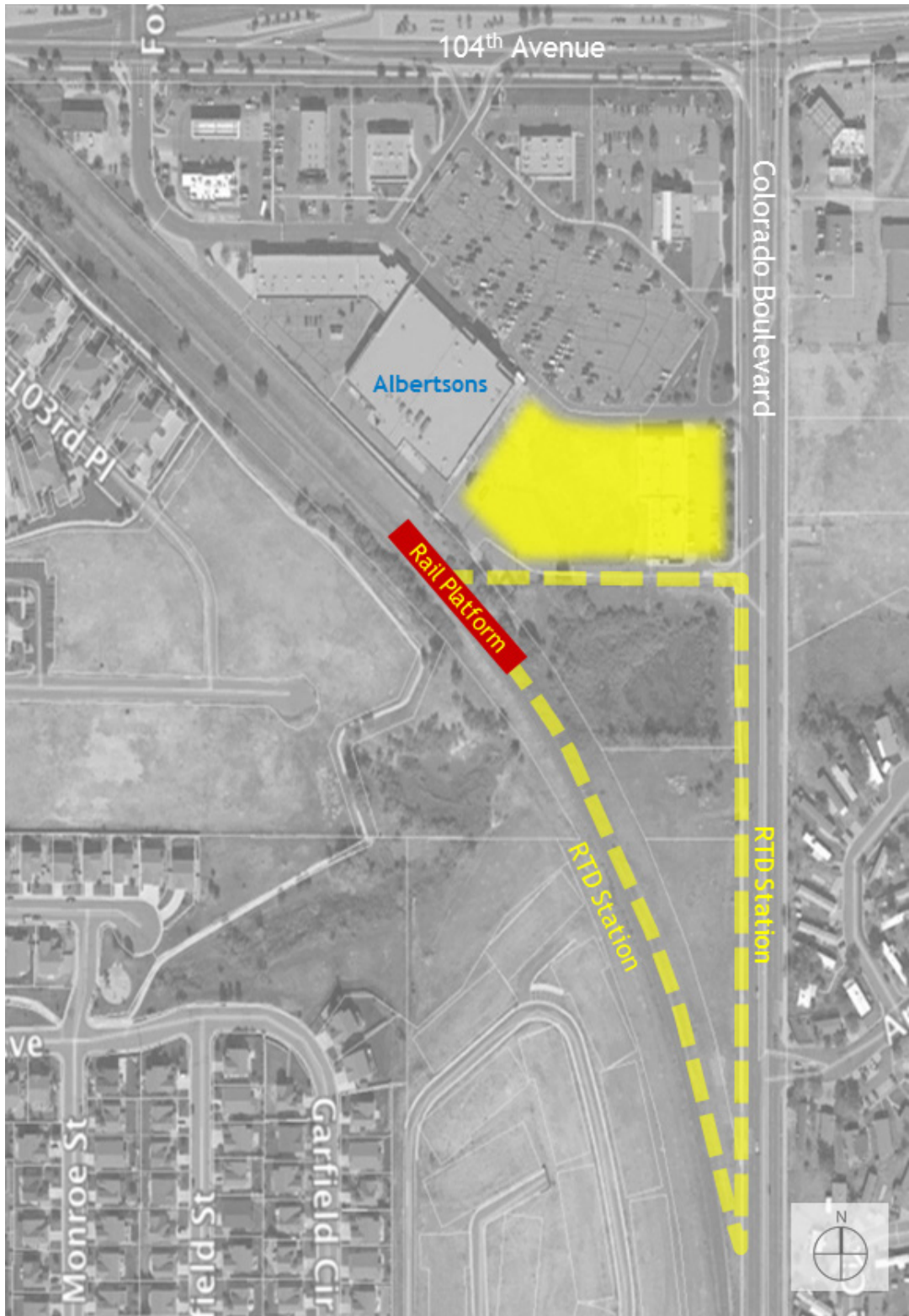
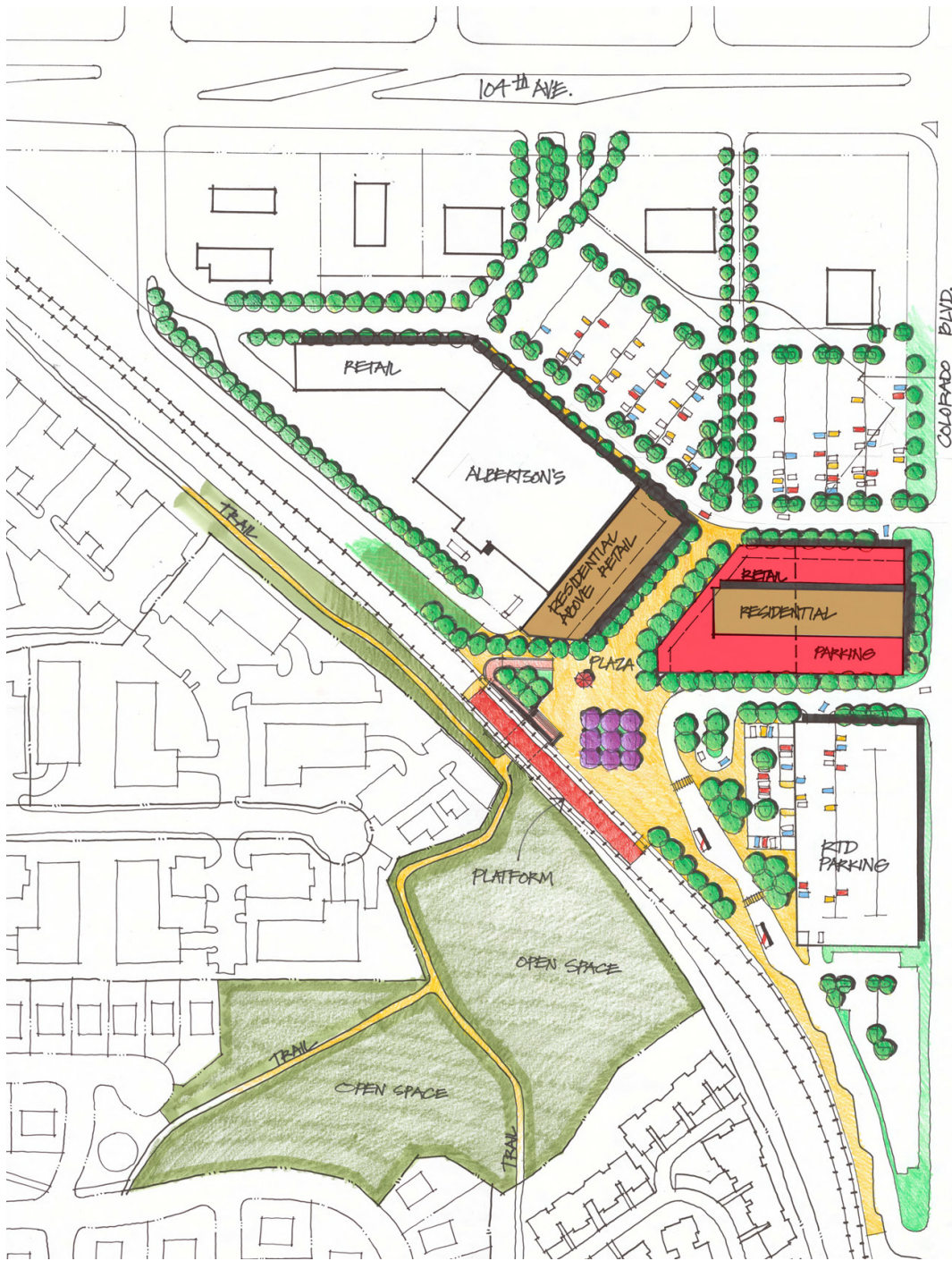


Figure 4.6: Opportunity Site A - Infill and Redevelopment Concept



Planned Land Uses

Table 4.1 below compares the land use buildout for both Land Use Concepts. Note that the Infill and Redevelopment Concept could generate slightly more residential units with less retail and commercial square feet, but the two concepts are fairly comparable in their land use makeup.

Table 4.1: Opportunity Site A - Proposed Land Uses

Land Use Type	Opportunity Site A: Infill Concept	Opportunity Site A: Infill and Redevelopment Concept
Multifamily	80-100 Units	100-120 Units
Retail/Commercial	30,000 sf	25,000 sf

4.2 Opportunity Site B

Opportunity Site B, shown in Figure 4.7, is located just on the western edge of the half-mile radius of the Thornton Crossroads at 104th Station. It is a 72-acre site bordered by 104th Avenue on the north, the Sherwood Hills neighborhood to the south, Steele Street on the east and York Street on the east.

Figure 4.7: Opportunity Site B



The land is currently vacant and under single ownership. It is one of the last remaining large undeveloped parcels in this area of the city and it (1) presents a tremendous opportunity to add a mix of residential product types to the area; and (2) offers the advantage of providing close and convenient access to the station. As one of the last remaining large developable parcels, all or part of the site may also be suitable for development of an educational campus. With these factors in mind, the Project Team developed two distinct Land Use Concepts, as described here:

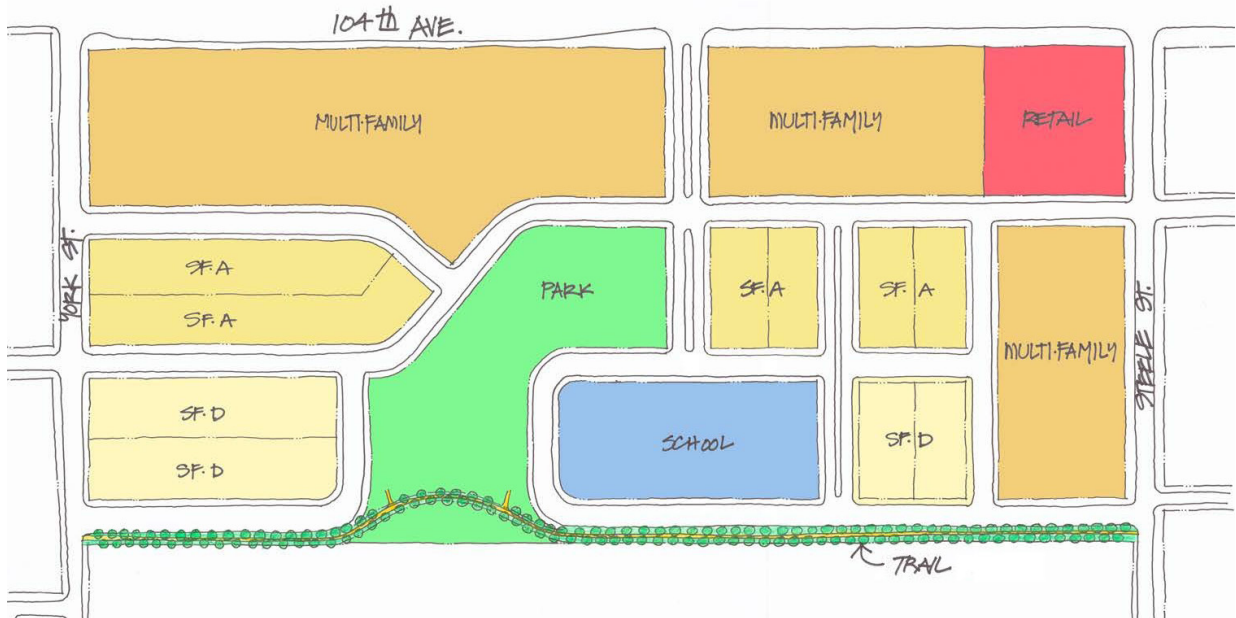
Mixed-Use Concept: The Mixed-Use Concept illustrates potential development of a residential neighborhood with supporting retail and community facilities such as a neighborhood park and school.

Mixed-Use + School Campus Concept: The Mixed-Use + School Campus Concept illustrates most of the site developed as an educational campus.

Mixed-Use Concept

Figure 4.8 illustrates the Mixed-Use Concept. Proposed land uses envisioned for Opportunity Site B include a mix of land use types. While development of the site would predominantly be residential, a mix of neighborhood-supporting commercial, parks, a school and regional trail connections help to create a dynamic and vital neighborhood.

Figure 4.8: Opportunity Site B - Mixed-Use Concept



The Mixed-Use Concept includes the following features:

Residential Land Uses

A diversity of housing types is integrated throughout the site, with higher intensity uses located to the east within closer proximity to the station and to the north bordering 104th Avenue. Residential intensities would taper down to the south to ensure compatibility with the existing scale of the adjacent neighborhood. Residential land use designations include the following product types:

- Multifamily residential areas are planned at approximately 25-30 dwelling units per acre and are envisioned as 2-3 story apartments or condominiums. Within the multifamily land use designation, there may also be a demand for senior continuum of care services – from senior apartments to assisted living. As Thornton’s population ages, the demand for senior facilities, (like the Village at Sunny Acres senior citizen housing complex located just north of the site), will likely strengthen. This area may be well suited for senior housing, given its proximity the transit station and the number of medical services located on the east side of Steele Street.
- Single-family attached and detached residential areas are planned at approximately 8-12 dwelling units per acre and located more internally

to the site. 1-2 story single-family attached and detached products, stacked row homes and patio homes are all product types envisioned as an appropriate mix of products within these land use designations.

Commercial Land Uses

Approximately 20,000 square feet of commercial uses are designated at the southwest corner of 104th Avenue and Steele Street. This retail development would mirror the existing retail corner located across Steele Street; thereby creating a commercial node of services and providing convenient access on a highly visible corner for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

School

Given the degree of interest in locating an educational facility in the station area, this concept plans for a 7-acre school campus in the southern portion of the site. The school would be centrally located with direct north-south access from 104th Avenue, thereby minimizing school traffic on neighboring streets.

Park and Trail

A 4-acre central park provides a recreational amenity to new residents and helps to knit the distinct areas of the site into one cohesive neighborhood. By locating the park adjacent to the future school, the park may be used by both residents and students. Another important feature is the planned trail connection running along the south side of the site. The trail would provide a key link to the existing and planned regional trail network that runs through the station area and connects the commuter rail station to neighborhoods on the west side of the railroad tracks.

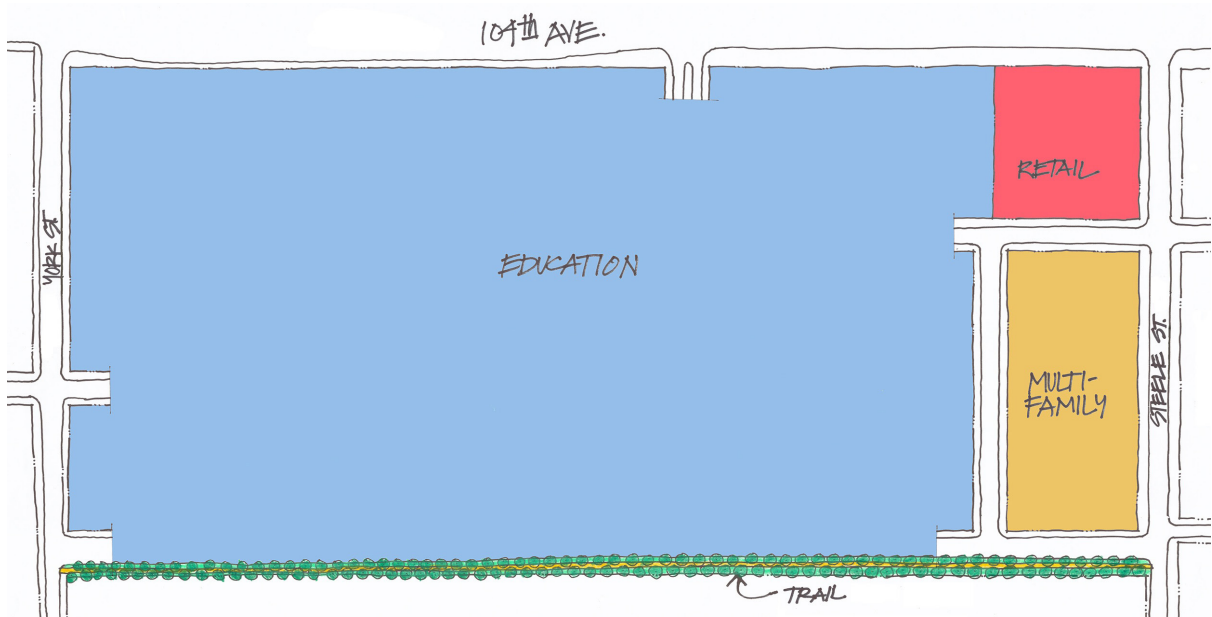
Circulation and Access

The planned transportation network creates several means of access into and out of the site via 104th Avenue, York and Steele Streets. The Mixed-Use Concept calls for an east-west collector through the center of the site. It has been designed with an S-curve to slow traffic and provide visual interest, creating a sense of place within the neighborhood, particularly as it bends around the planned park. Within the site, the small residential block configuration creates a clear, walkable and well-connected neighborhood with a human scale and distinct character. Alleys and rear loaded garages could further break up the residential blocks and promote a more inviting and walkable neighborhood. An alley configuration is recommended as it would allow for porches, trees and sidewalks to front homes, rather than garages and driveways, as is more typical of suburban residential neighborhoods; thereby creating a more inviting residential character.

Mixed-Use + School Campus Concept

Figure 4.9 illustrates the Mixed-Use + School Concept. In this concept, the majority of the site – approximately 72 acres – is planned as a school campus. The remainder of the site, on the eastern edge and within half-mile of the station is divided between retail and multifamily uses as described above in the Mixed-Use Concept.

Figure 4.9: Opportunity Site B - Mixed-Use + School Campus Concept



Planned Land Uses

Table 4.2 below compares the residential and commercial land use build-out for both Land Use Concepts. Note that the Mixed-Use + School Concept dedicates the majority of the site to a school facility.

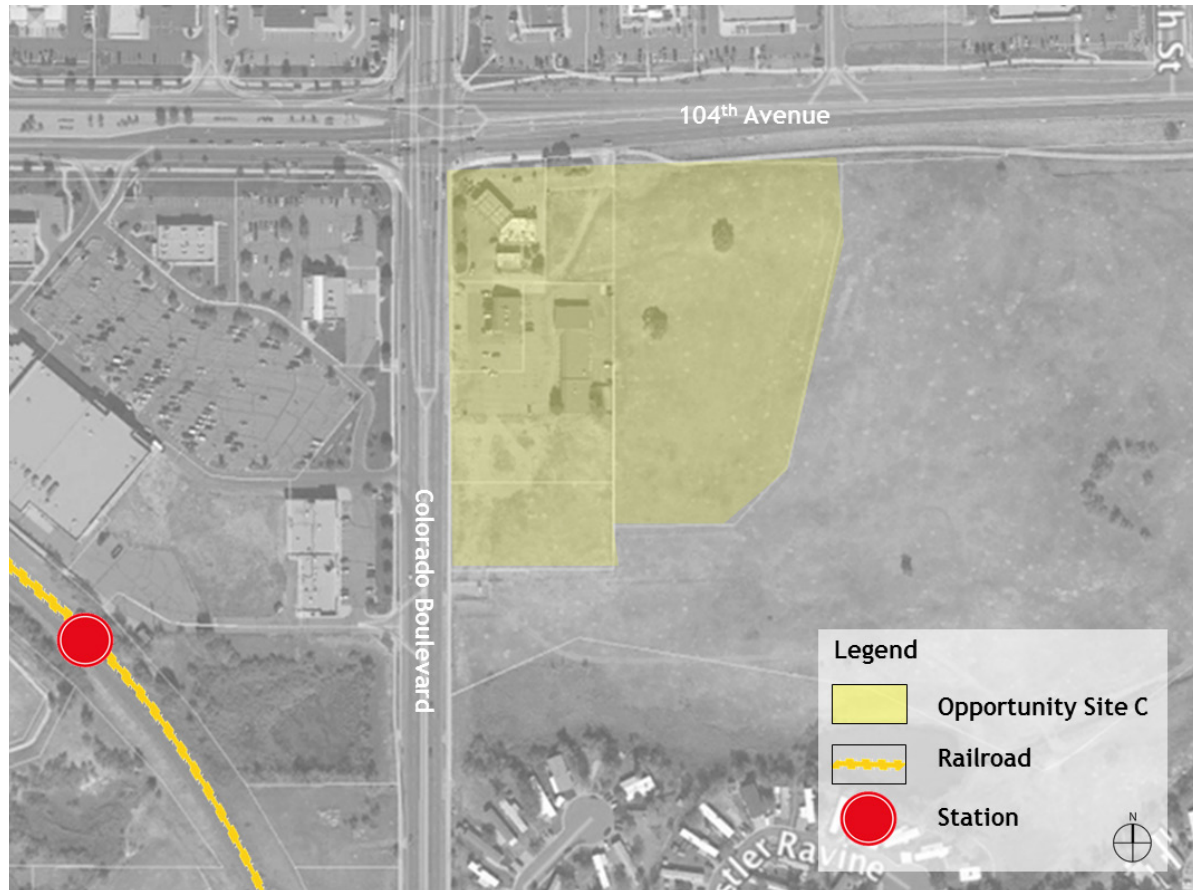
Table 4.2: Opportunity Site B - Proposed Land Uses

Land Use Type	Opportunity Site B: Mixed-Use Concept	Opportunity Site B: Mixed-Use + School Concept
Single-Family	100 - 240 Units	
Multifamily	450 - 650 Units	100 units
Retail/Commercial	20,000 sf	20,000 sf

4.3 Opportunity Site C

Opportunity Site C is approximately 7-acres located at the southeast corner of 104th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard, as shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: Opportunity Site C



A corner gas station and older retail/office establishments line the corner of this site, while the back 5-acres, which border the Grandview Ponds Open Space and Prairie Dog Habitat, is undeveloped. Given that this is one of the few remaining vacant parcels in the area and is within convenient walking distance of the station, the undeveloped portion of the site could become an attractive location for higher density residential development. The vacant area has the added appeal of being located adjacent to open space with expansive views to the southeast. However, it would require the extension of roadway infrastructure into the site to provide auto access.

The Project Team developed two distinct Land Use Concepts for this site. One concept featured redeveloping the existing commercial buildings and adding residential development to the back portion of the site, while the other concept left the existing and planned retail establishments intact and only planned for residential development of the back portion of the site. Through extensive discussions with stakeholders, elected officials and the public, it was determined that the existing retail establishments may be updated and/or redeveloped over time, particularly as the commuter rail station comes online and property values in the area potentially increase. However, a full-scale redevelopment and consolidation of the existing retail establishments is not likely to occur within the planning horizon.

Given these factors, the preferred concept for Opportunity Site C focuses only on infill development, with a plan for higher density multifamily residential uses bordering the Grandview Ponds Open Space to the east and the build out of two additional retail pad sites adjacent to existing retail, as show in Figure 4.11. Depending on the height of the multifamily buildings, the site could accommodate between approximately 125 units (2-stories) and 220 units (3-stories). Auto access could be provided from 104th Avenue to the north and Colorado Boulevard to the west. However, with the desire to limit the number of curb cuts off these major thoroughfares, a more detailed roadway and circulation design will be required in the future. Pedestrian and bicycle connections between Opportunity Site C and the commuter rail station would occur at grade via a new signalized intersection on Colorado Boulevard at the south end of the site (or via a pedestrian underpass as described earlier).

Figure 4.11: Opportunity Site C - Land Use Concept



Planned Land Uses

Table 4.3 below details the proposed land use buildout for Opportunity Site C.

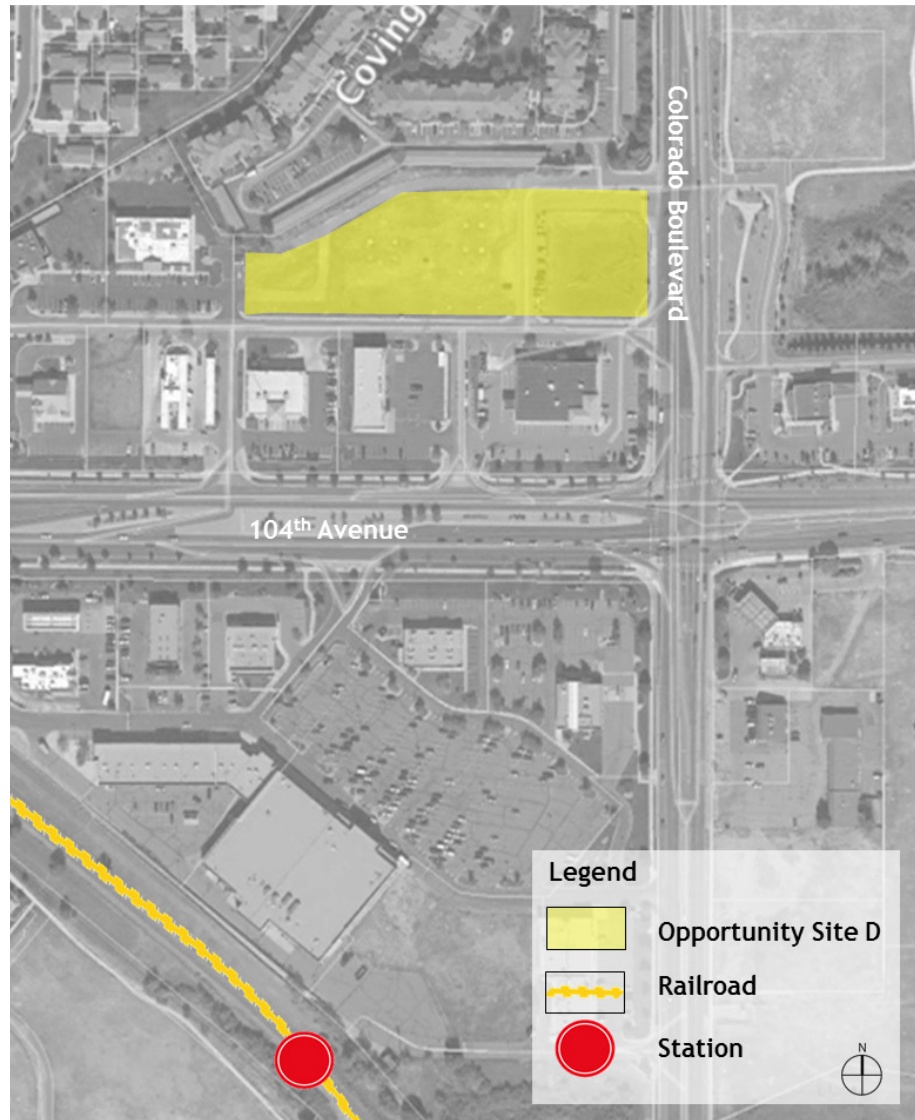
Table 4.3: Opportunity Site C - Proposed Land Uses

Land Use Type	Opportunity Site C: Land Use Concept
Multifamily	125- 250 units
Retail/Commercial	10,000 sf

4.4 Opportunity Site D

Opportunity Site D is approximately 3.8-acres located north of 104th Avenue, as shown in Figure 4.12.

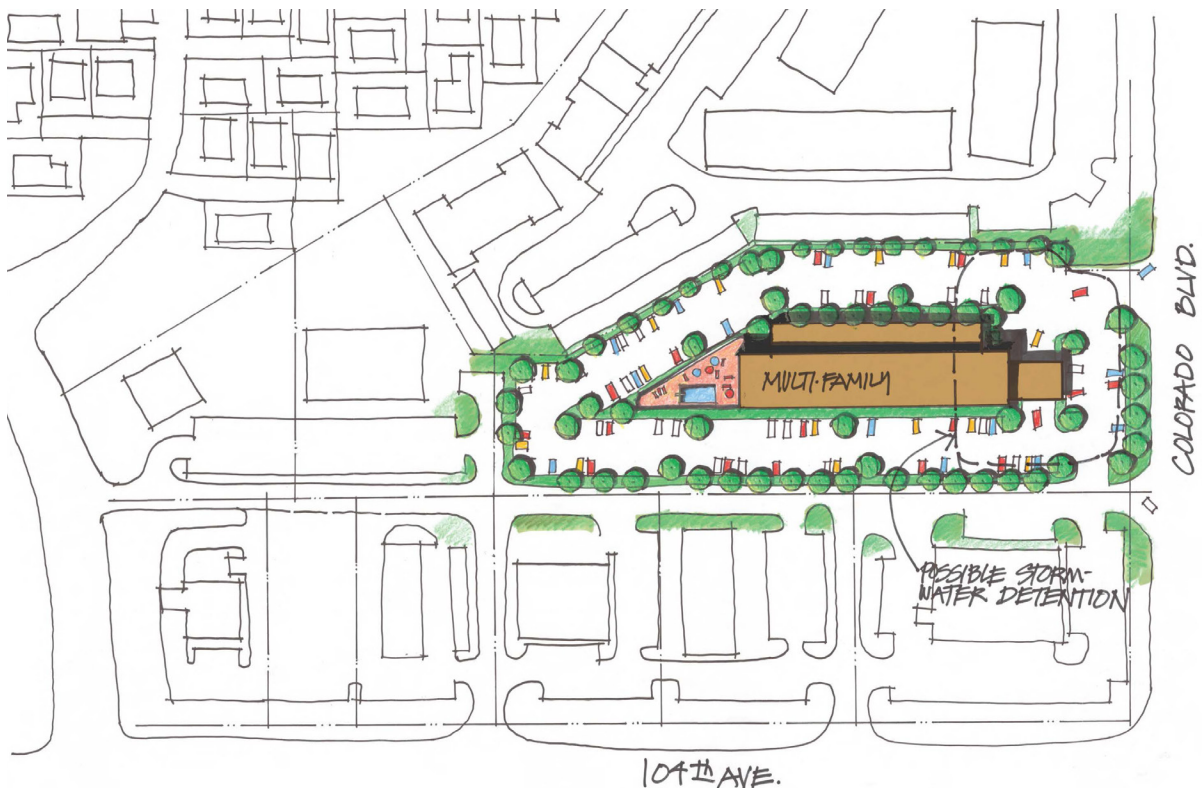
Figure 4.12: Opportunity Site D



It is situated between Covington Ridge to the north, retail establishments to the south and Colorado Boulevard to the east. The Project Team examined potential uses for this site because it may offer an infill opportunity and is conveniently located within close proximity to the commuter rail station. While Opportunity Site D has existing roadway access, it is encumbered by a large detention area on the east side and limited roadway frontage from Colorado Boulevard and 104th Avenue. While it is currently zoned for commercial uses, it would unlikely be viable for retail development because it lacks visibility from adjacent thoroughfares. Therefore, the Project Team explored alternate uses on the site and illustrated one concept that adds more residential development to the station area.

As shown in Figure 4.13, the Project Team developed a concept that plans for 2-story multifamily residential development, and up to approximately 120 dwelling units. While a corridor-type multifamily building may be feasible on the site, developers will have to address the need to accommodate storm water detention, which may limit the size of the residential development shown. Or, alternative uses such as offices or daycare facilities that would require less developable property could be considered.

Figure 4.13: Opportunity Site D - Land Use Concept



Planned Land Uses

Table 4.4 below details the proposed land use buildout for Opportunity Site D.

Table 4.4: Opportunity Site D: Proposed Land Uses

Land Use Type	Opportunity Site D: Land Use Concept
Multifamily	120 units
Other Potential Uses (not shown in Land Use Concept)	Office, Institutional/Community Services, Lodging

4.5 Summary of Planned Land Uses

Table 4.5 below summarizes the proposed land uses for each of the four Opportunity Sites, as well as buildout of the two undeveloped parcels west of the rail station (Settler’s Chase and Presidential Ridge). The number of planned residential units falls below what the market forecast calls for in the station area, but is consistent with the community’s desire to develop transit-supportive uses that are appropriately scaled to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Table 4.5: Summary of Proposed Land Uses

Land Use Type	Settler’s Chase & Presidential Ridge	Opportunity Site A	Opportunity Site B	Opportunity Site C	Opportunity Site D	Total
Residential	280 units	80-120 units	100*-890 units	125-250 units	120 units	705-1,660 units
Retail/Commercial	-	25-30,000 sf	20,000 sf	10,000 sf	-	55-60,000 sf

Please note that all development needs to follow the design principles contained in Chapter 5. This includes creating a gradient of densities when transitioning from high densities to the existing lower density area.

*Assumes majority of site is developed as a school campus with limited residential development.