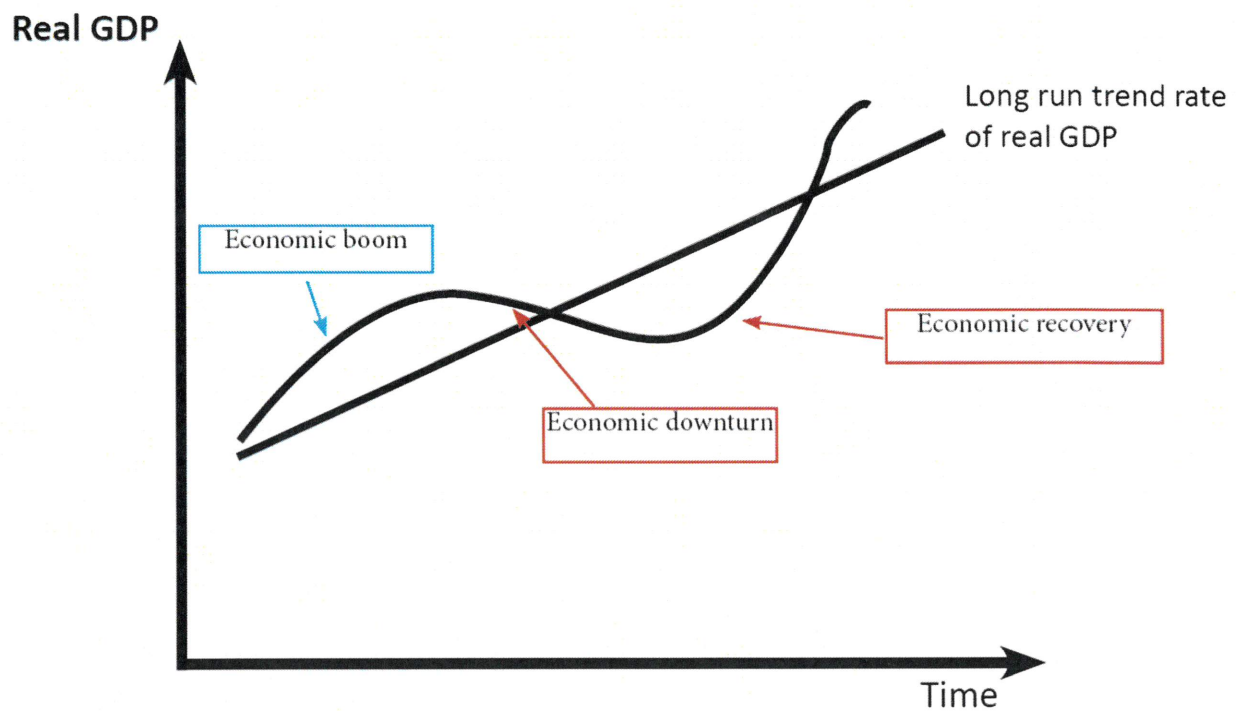
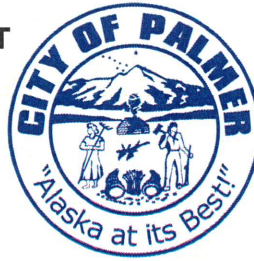




City of Palmer
Board of Economic Development
November 7, 2022



**BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 7, 2022 6 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
231 W. EVERGREEN AVENUE, PALMER
www.palmerak.org**



CHAIRMAN	Ronalee Moses
BOARD MEMBER	Christopher Chappel
BOARD MEMBER	Peter Christopher
BOARD MEMBER	Barbara Hunt
BOARD MEMBER	Janet Kincaid
BOARD MEMBER	Lorie Koppenberg
BOARD MEMBER	LOUIS YOUNG

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:
CITY MANAGER – John Moosey

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Organization of the Board
 - 1. Election of Chairperson
 - 2. Election of Vice Chairperson
- E. Approval of Agenda
- F. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings
- G. Reports
 - 1. Manager/Staff Report
- H. Audience Participation
- I. Unfinished Business
 - 1. Committee of the Whole: IM 22-003 Presentation and discuss of Resolution 22-001, Railroad Tracks and more effective use of that area, including Farmers Market, Community Stage area and parking (note: action may be taken by the board following the committee of the whole)
- J. New Business
- K. Board Member Comments
- L. Adjournment



Downtown Palmer Survey

The Palmer City Council and Board of Economic Development has prioritized community project improvements to the downtown Railroad right-of-way, and we'd like your input as we move forward in this effort. Please share your feedback by scanning the QR code below. Thank you!



DowntownPalmerSurvey.pplak.org



**CITY OF PALMER
BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 22-003**

Substitute for 21-003

SUBJECT: Railroad Tracks Utilization

AGENDA OF: November 7, 2022
May 11, 2022
March 14, 2022
February 16, 2022
January 17, 2022
January 4, 2021
November 1, 2021

November 7, 2022

A presentation and discussion on BED Resolution No 20-001.

May 11 – Special Meeting Update

Included in the packet is a resolution for consideration. The resolution requests the council fund a downtown study that priorities improvements for downtown through a series of community meetings.

March 14 Update

Bed members were requested to provide staff with their top five choices of project elements for the railroad right of way. Staff received Three responses. Their compiled prioritized responses are below:

- Community Event Space North of Depot
- Parking enhancements
- Motorized and non-motorized connectivity
- Park & Playground expansions in RR ROW
- Walkability and accessibility
- Branding and signage recognizing Palmer's history
- Additional public restrooms

January 3 Update

Included in the packet is BED Resolution No. 21-001 that was passed and submitted to the City Council for consideration of improvements that would promote economic development in the city. Also provided are past studies that support railroad right of way improvements that improve the quality of life in Palmer. Excerpts from the Area Wide Plan and the Palmer Urban

Revitalization are included to show efforts that have been made to increase the utility of the corridor. Both studies can be found at <https://www.palmerak.org/community-development/page/economic-development>. Support for railroad improvements can also be found in the Palmer Comprehensive Plan and the University of Washington plan.

The city has applied to the Alaska Railroad to renew the Permit for Grow Palmer and Shane Woods Trail. If there any supplemental requests, now would be the time to approach the railroad.

The Parks and Recreational Advisory Board will be getting an update to the BED's progress on the railroad discussion at their January 6 meeting. The Parks and Recreational Advisory Board has not actively participated in the railroad discussion and will be presented similar information. A joint meeting should be considered if the BED wishes to pursue improvements further.

A strategic plan will help guide discussion and should include:

- Railroad corridor concept for elements/improvements
- Comprehensive approach to parking and circulation
- Preservation of historically important items, concepts, or architectural features
- Pre-approved specialty features the community members or groups can purchase or install
- Discussion and involvement of Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreational Advisory Board
- Alaska Railroad concurrence

Archived information

Upon completion of the Downtown Palmer Brownfield Area-Wide Plan approval by the Mat-Su Borough and the Department of Environmental Protection, the BED should begin discussion about the economic and community impact of the railroad corridor in Palmer.

November 1 Update

The BED at the July meeting passed a resolution for the Palmer City Council recommending they consider implementation of elements of the Brownfield Area Wide Plan. The Resolution encouraged the city to pursue development and beautification of land within the railroad corridor for public use and enjoyment, now. The BED recognized when Resolution 21-001 was passed that the Alaska Railroad will retain within their existing leases with the city the right to rehabilitate the tracks and utilize them whenever they desire. Further, anything placed in the right of way would need to be relocated with no obligation to preserve or protect by the Alaska Railroad.

The question for the BED is should we pursue a strategy that will encourage development within the railroad right of way that benefits residents and visitors today?



**CITY OF PALMER
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 22-006**

SUBJECT: Railroad Tracks Utilization

AGENDA OF: November 3, 2022
January 13, 2022

ACTION: Discuss the Area-Wide Plan for the Railroad Corridor

Attachments: 1) Downtown Palmer Improvement Presentation

November Update

On October 26, 2022, a presentation was given at the Palmer Community Center (Depot). The board should consider a resolution of support for a strategic direction of improvements to downtown Palmer, including Parks and Trails.

The city of Palmer completed a Brownfield Area-Wide Plan for Downtown Palmer, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should begin discussion about opportunities for further park development within the railroad corridor in downtown Palmer.

Included in the packet is BED Resolution No. 21-001 that was passed and submitted to the City Council for consideration of improvements that would promote economic development and park improvements in the city. Also provided are past studies that support railroad right of way improvements that improve the quality of life in Palmer. Excerpts from the Area Wide Plan and the Palmer Urban Revitalization are included to show efforts that have been made to increase the utility of the corridor. Both studies can be found at <https://www.palmerak.org/community-development/page/economic-development>. Support for railroad improvements can also be found in the Palmer Comprehensive Plan and the University of Washington plan.

The city has applied to the Alaska Railroad to renew the Permit for Grow Palmer and Shane Woods Trail. If there any supplemental requests, now would be the time to approach the railroad.

The Parks and Recreational Advisory Board has not actively participated in the railroad discussion, a joint meeting with the Board of Economic Development should be considered if the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board wishes to pursue improvements in the railroad corridor.

The question for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should the city pursue a strategy plan that will encourage development within the railroad right of way that benefits residents and

visitors today?

The strategic plan will help guide discussion and should include:

- Railroad corridor concept for elements/improvements
- Comprehensive approach to parking and circulation
- Preservation of historically important items, concepts, or architectural features
- Pre-approved specialty features the community members or groups can purchase or install
- Discussion and involvement of Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreational Advisory Board
- Alaska Railroad concurrence

Recommendation: Direct staff on the direction the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board would like to pursue.

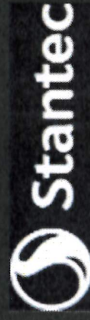


PALMER

Palmer, AK
October 26, 2022

Downtown Palmer

PLANNING FOR
COMMUNITY SPACES



Agenda

1. Review of Past Plans
2. Community Events
3. Existing Conditions
4. **Program Elements**
5. Next Steps

*Presentations at:
6:00 and 7:00pm



Past Plans

Past Plans

<u>Study</u>	<u>Year</u>
• Urban Revitalization Plan	2002
• Pioneering Palmer's Future (Washington Study)	2005
• City of Palmer Comprehensive Plan	2006
• Community Branding and Way Finding	2015
• EPA Brownfield Area-Wide-Plan	2020

Community Events

Community Events in Downtown

- Bike Blessing
- Road/Bike Races
- Trick or Treat Street
- Farmers Markets
- Weddings
- Car Shows
- Corporate Customer Appreciation Events
- Advocacy Demonstrations
- Drive your tractor to work
- Non-profit events
- Mid-Summer Garden and Art Fairs



Community Events in Downtown

- Colony Days
- Colony Christmas



Existing Conditions

The Quadrangle
Palmer's historic Quad is an asset that will best serve downtown if its original design is strengthened and more active uses are implemented.

Visitor Center and Garden
Use the Visitor Center and Garden to reinforce Palmer's agricultural traditions. Provide a year round answer to the question: "Where's the giant cabbage?"

Railway Corridor
Better utilize the rail corridor for a variety of community benefits. The corridor can provide trail and walkway links, serve as a community green belt, and host future light rail service.

Downtown Core
The Downtown core is a vital resource for Palmer that could be strengthened. Work toward improving the variety of shopping, attractions, and experiences for Palmer visitors and residents. Utilize the downtown as a hub for an extensive trail and walkway system and identify private-public parking options to serve growth.

Gateways
Reinforce Palmer's identity with gateway features at key entry points. Incorporate screening of the electrical substation into the gateway feature at the "Y".

Mat-Maid Property
Revitalize the Matanuska Maid Historic Creamery. The site offers a good venue for events, retail, offices, restaurants, institutional and other mixed uses.

Historic Depot
The historic Depot is a strong symbol of Palmer's historic past. Continue improvements in the vicinity of the Depot.

Historic District



Improved Sidewalks
Improve the condition and maintenance of downtown sidewalks, particularly east-west across the railroad corridor.

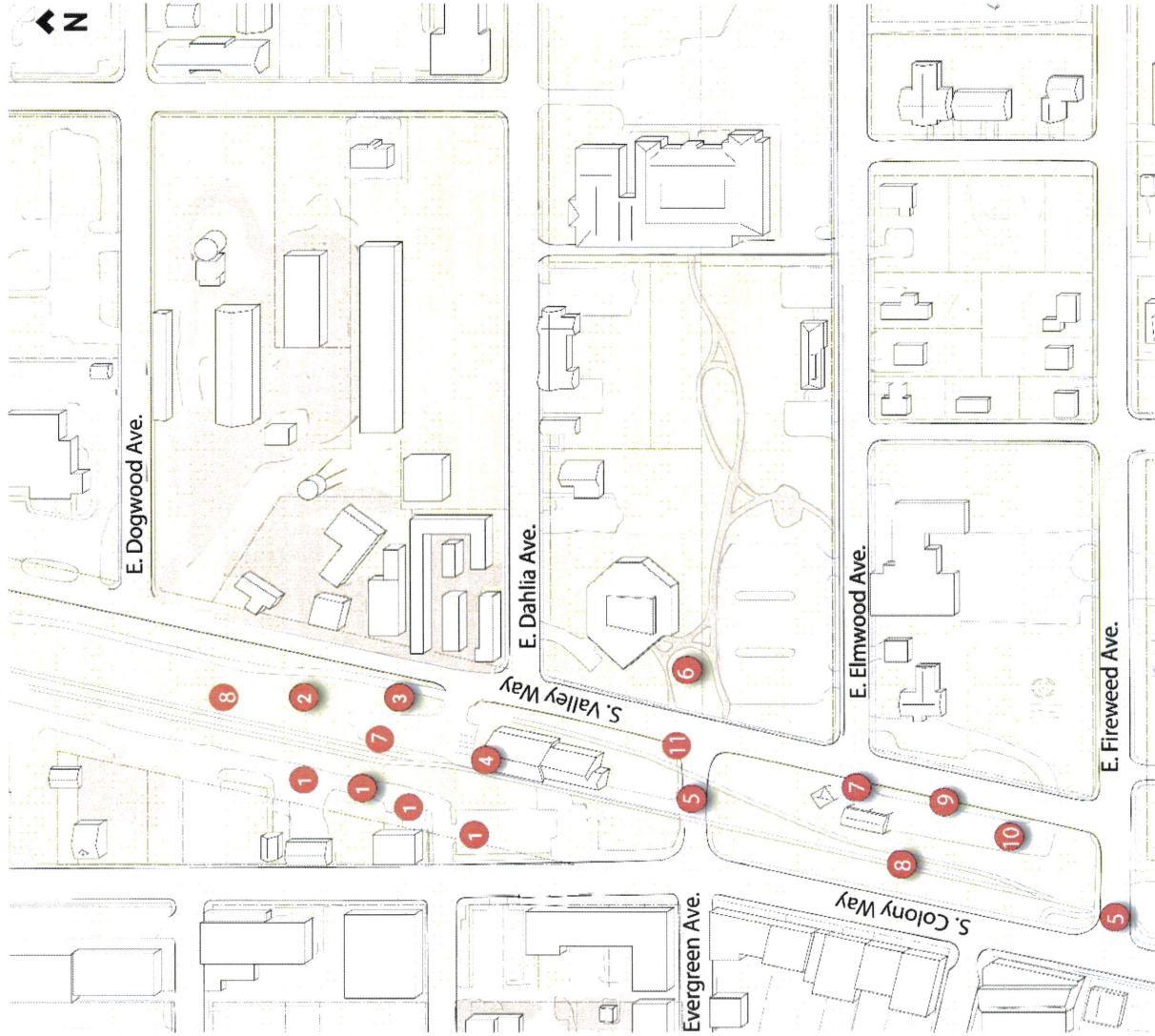
Glenn Highway / Palmer-Wasilla Highway
Improve linkages for pedestrians and vehicles along and across the Glenn. Reconfigure the Glenn as a boulevard-style street that connects rather than divides "east and west Palmer."

Historic District

Downtown Opportunities

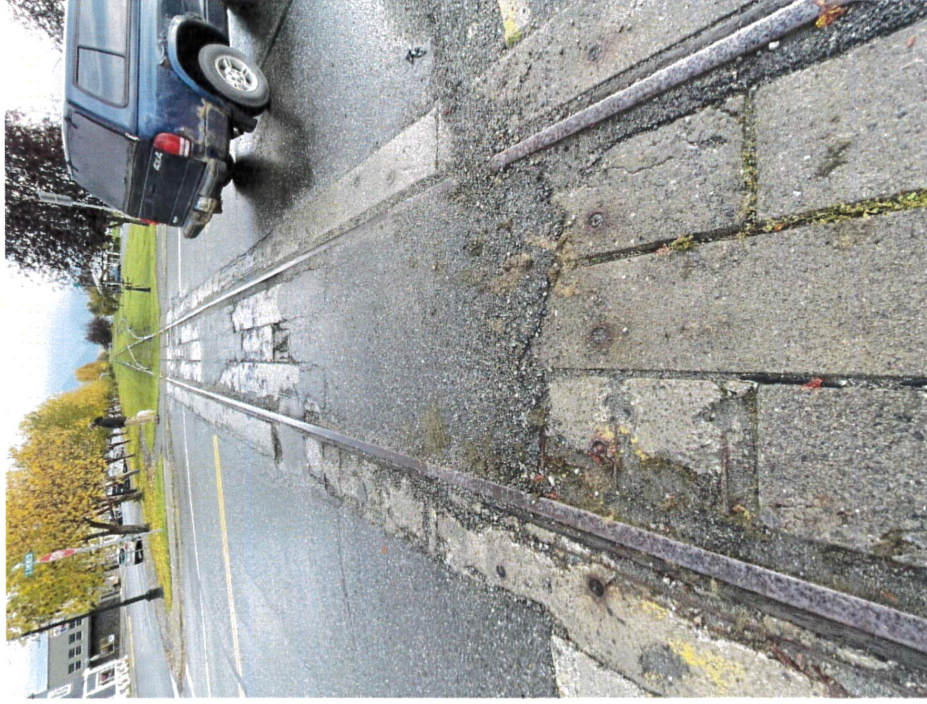
Land Use Goal 4, Objectives B & C





1. Expanded Parking and street improvements on Colony Way
 2. Create Community Event Space on the property between Depot and Dogwood
 3. Remove Railroad siding and expand parking
 4. Add handcart display
 5. Remove track crossings to facilitate pedestrian and improve motorized connectivity
 6. Library Courtyard improvements for amphitheater and plaza
 7. Relocate existing pavilion to Community Events Center – North of Depot
 8. Remove or improve existing tracks to reduce tripping hazards
 9. Add sidewalks on park side
 10. Include stations for Electric Vehicle charging
- ** Branding and signage throughout the concept area

Opportunities and Constraints



Opportunities and Constraints



Opportunities and Constraints



Existing Parking

- Off-street surface parking lots are evenly dispersed within downtown
- The ratio of parking to building footprints is nearly balanced
- On-street parking is available around the perimeter of the site, and is widely used by area businesses
- Surface parking lots, serving institutional and government offices, are open to the public

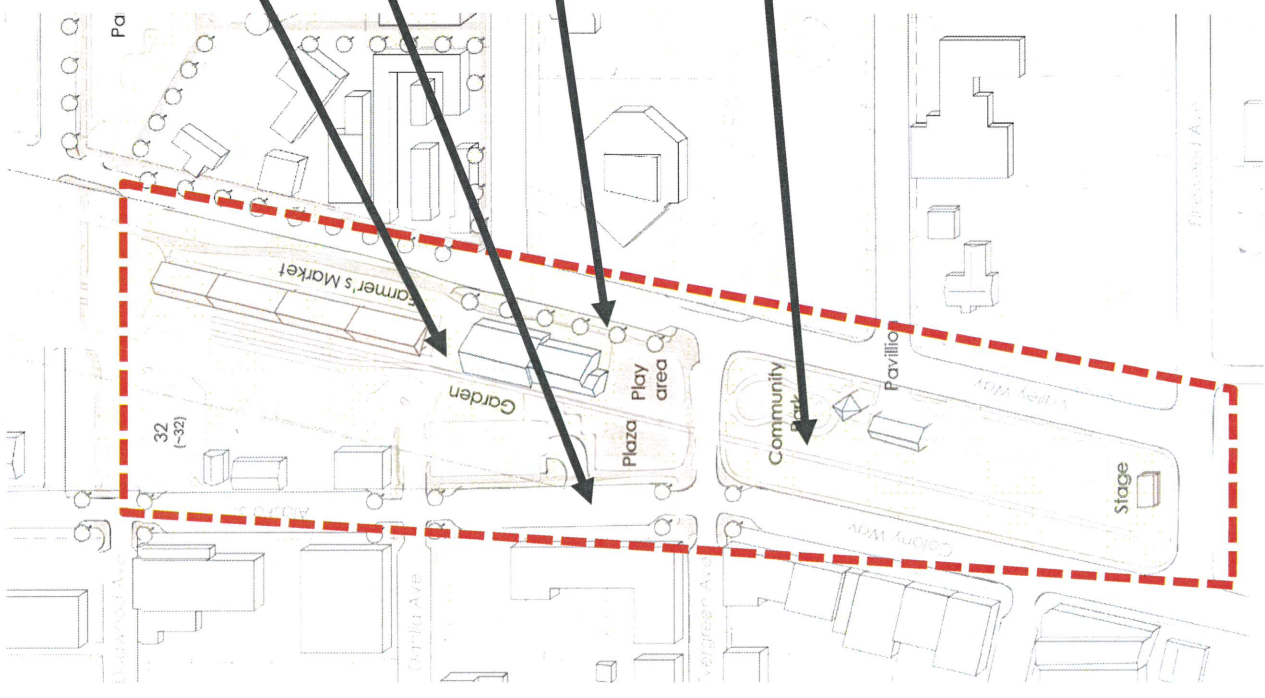


Existing Connections

- Trails and sidewalks (illustrated in green) enhance walkability for downtown
- Trails should be further developed within the Mat-Maid site
- Vehicular connectivity is strong in the downtown core, but is underserved to the Mat-Maid site
- Additional vehicular connectivity, between the Mat-Maid site and downtown, should be considered to support long-term growth

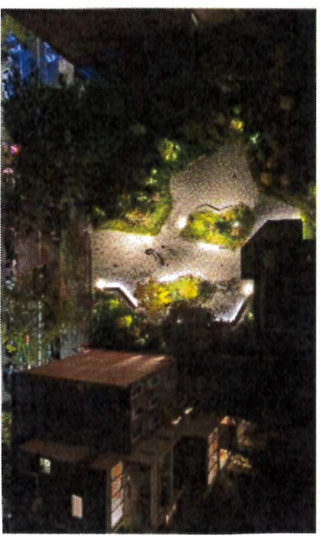
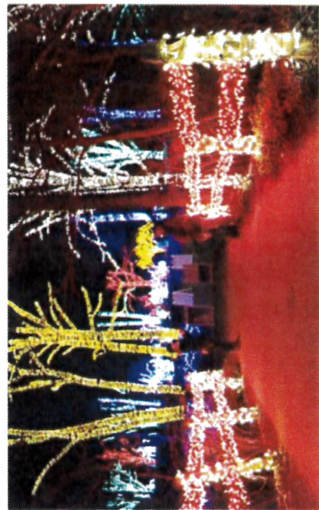
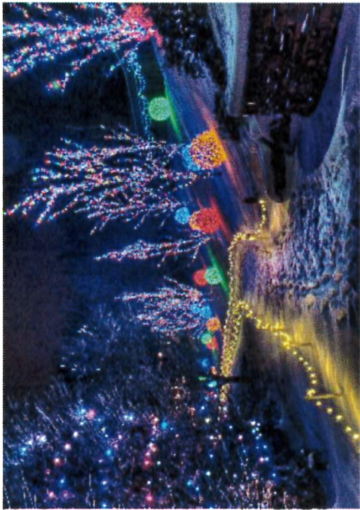


Program Elements

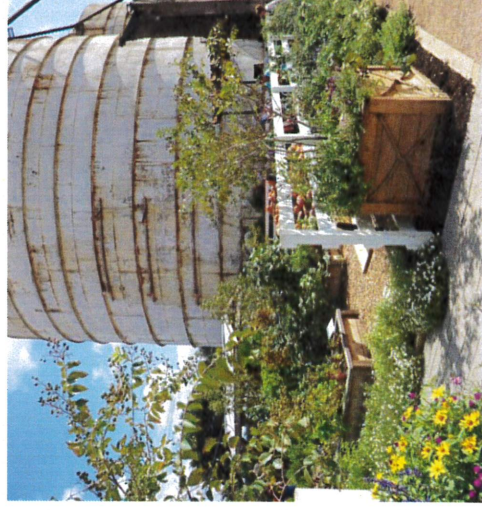


- Community Event Space
- Parking Enhancements on Colony Way and Valley Way
- Motorized and Non-Motorized Activity
 - Bike Path Extension – South
 - Pedestrian Crossing North of Depot
 - Elimination of RR Crossing at Fireweed
- Parks and Playground Improvements
- Branding and Signage

All Season Use



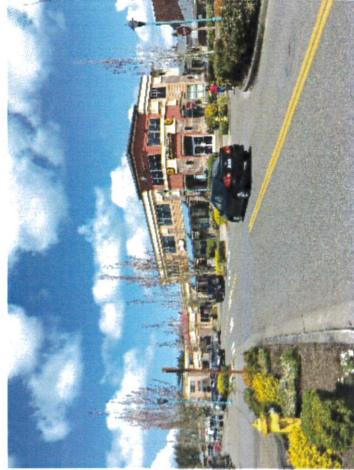
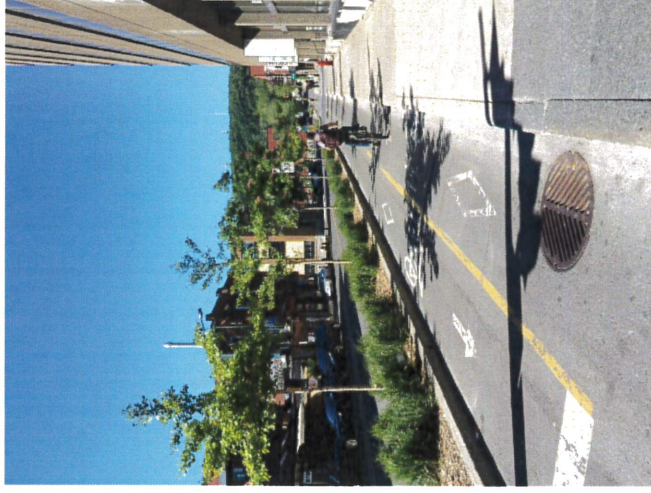
Community Event Space



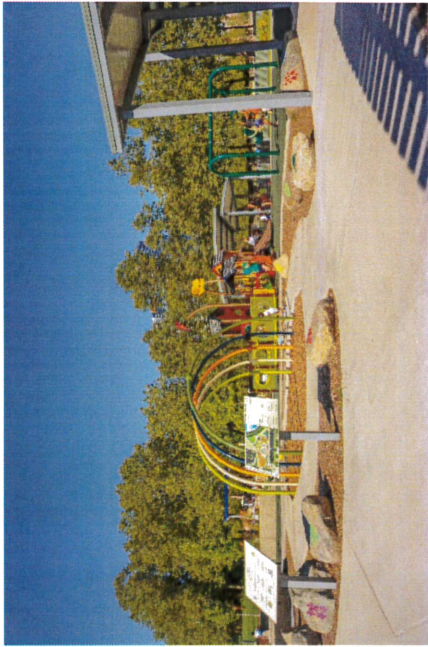
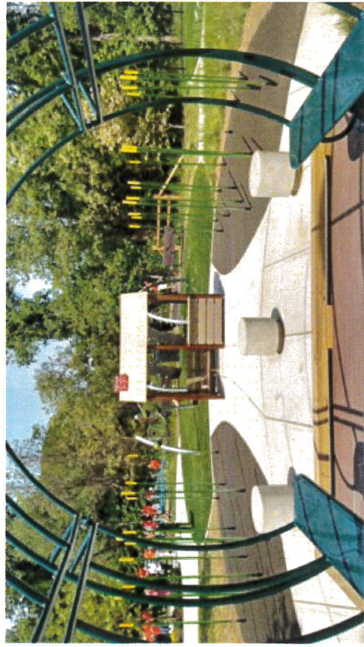
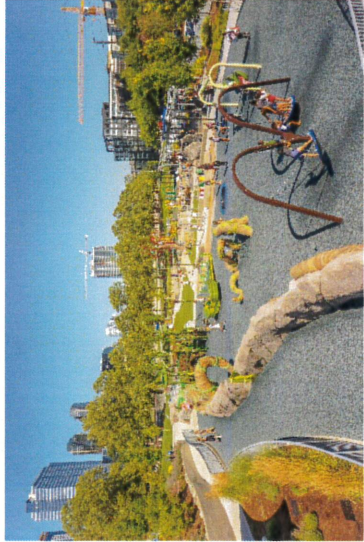
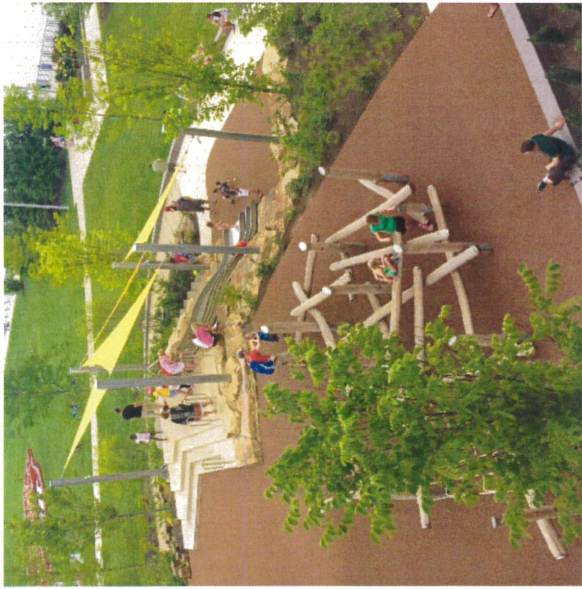
Parking Enhancements On Colony and Valley Way



Motorized and Non-Motorized Activity



Park and Playground Improvements



Branding and Signage

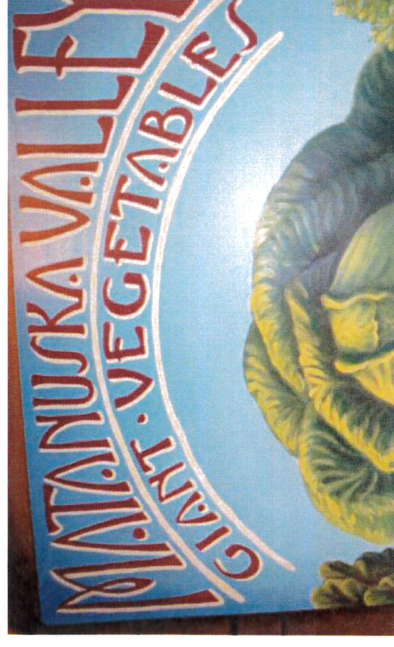
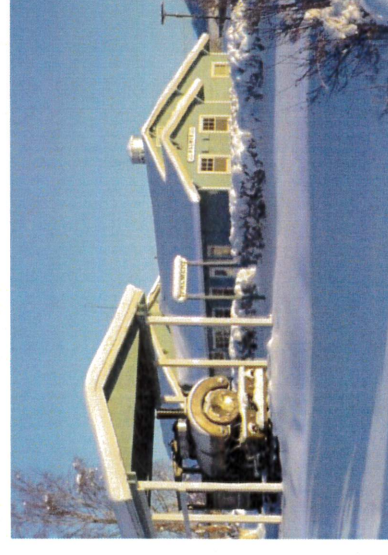
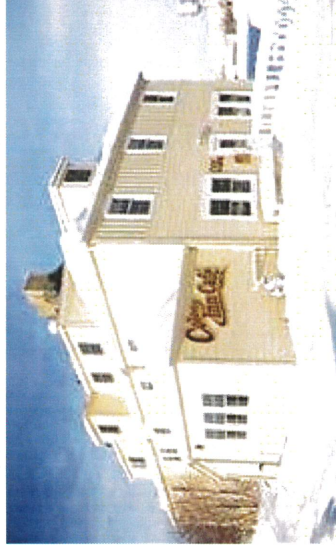
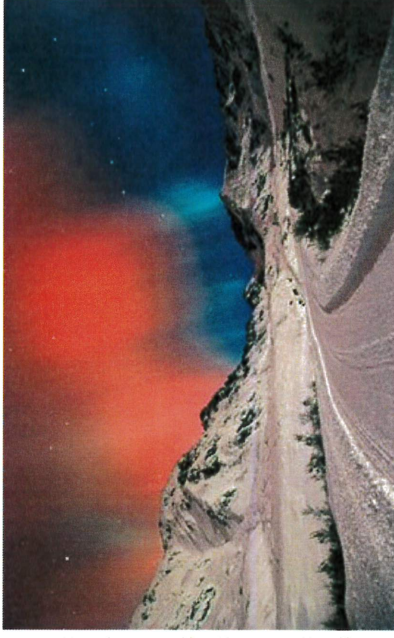
Local History



Regional Influences



Color & Texture

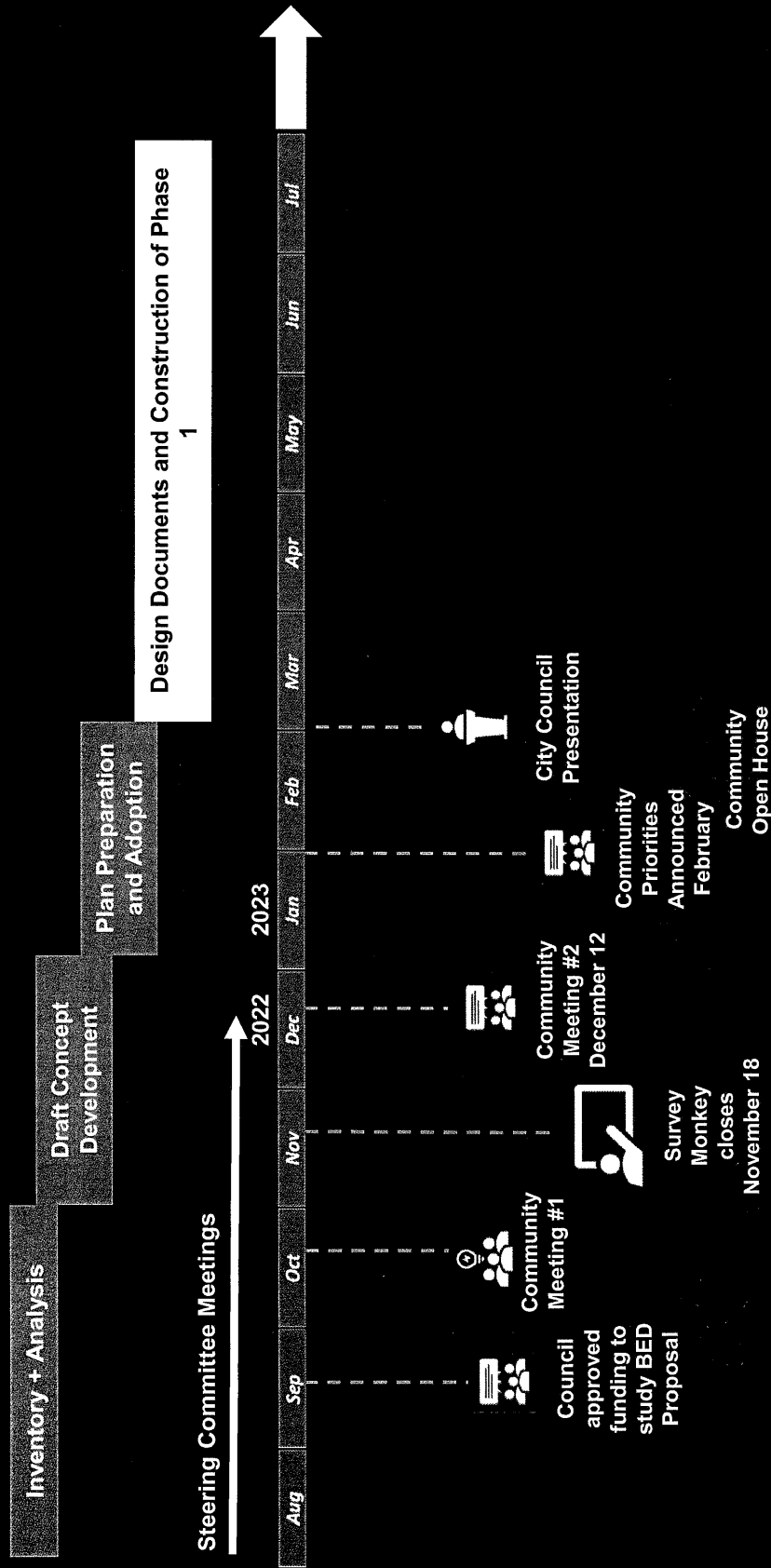


Next Steps

Community Survey



Timeline



Thank You!

