

I-25 ERIE GATEWAY - SOUTH PD DISTRICT

CHARRETTE REPORT

December 2022



I-25 ERIE GATEWAY - SOUTH PD DISTRICT

PREPARED FOR
TOWN OF ERIE

BY
TORTI GALLAS + PARTNERS

1 Introduction **4**

2 Information Gathering **6**

Existing Conditions Analysis	6
I-25 Erie Gateway Plan Principles	8
The Framework Summary	9
Site Diagrams	11

3 Charrette **12**

Local Context and Site Tours	12
Site Photos	14
Kick-Off Meeting	15
Team Workshopping	17

Introduction

Project Background

The Town of Erie Colorado produced a Vision Plan for the site known as I-25 Erie Gateway in 2018. Bordering I-25 along its eastern edge and Erie Parkway along its southern border, the site consists of several parcels of land that approximately total 1,100 developable acres. Although several properities within the site boundary are not incorporated in the Town of Erie, the Town actively communicates with all property owners within the planning area.

The vision and direction for development of the area as identified in the I-25 Erie Gateway Plan was derived with public outreach and has “buy-in” from the community, Town staff, and the Town’s elected officials. Since there is support for the established vision, it will be used as the basis for the current planning underway.

To implement the vision, a Planned Development (PD) is being prepared for the southern half of the property. This will provide direction and details needed to facilitate future development of this area. The northern half of the site will be developed by other parties and so is beyond the scope of this effort.

Documents Review and Stakeholder Outreach

Prior to arriving onsite, the project team reviewed reports and existing plans for the I-25 Erie Gateway and its environs. Specifically, the 2018 Vision Plan has set the stage with Planning Principles and a Framework strategy to build upon.

The project team also conducted a series of virtual one-on-one meetings and calls with private land owners in the planning area to learn of their thoughts and plans for their parcels. On the whole, property owners wish to stay informed throughout this process and have been encouraged to reach out to the project team with any questions or concerns.

Charrette Process

In order to implement the Vision Plan in a manner that acknowledges the realities on the ground and appropriately considers the community's vision for the district, the project team consisting of Torti Gallas + Partners and the Town of Erie, undertook a comprehensive review of the existing conditions, visited the site, explored the local context, and met with appropriate Town staff, local stakeholders, development partners, and interested parties.

Torti Gallas + Partners conducted a two day charrette in Erie, at Masters Restaurant on October 11th and 12th, 2022, to discuss and propose ideas for development. Tours of the site and neighboring communities allowed the project team to experience the local context and assess the feasibility of the Vision Plan goals. The charrette provided the opportunity for the project team to meet onsite with staff from various Town departments to collaborate on a shared strategy.



I-25 Erie Gateway - South PD District

Information Gathering

Existing Conditions

The Vision Plan document includes site background information that the project team referenced to develop an initial understanding of site constraints and opportunities.

The southernmost parcel of the I-25 Erie Gateway district was previously the location of extensive coal mining. Fortunately, remnants of the mines on the surface are minimal and the mineshafts underground are sufficiently deep that they pose little challenges to development in the area.

Oil and gas production is another matter. Recent regulations passed by the Erie Board of Trustees require development to be adequately setback to oil and gas facilities. These setbacks from both active and plugged wells must be carefully considered as the Concept Plan takes shape.

Although several properities within the site boundary are not incorporated in the Town of Erie, the town actively communicates with all property owners.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Vision Plan process included community outreach from several rounds of public engagement with the Erie community and the Board of Trustees which provides the basis for the team's understanding of local sentiment on the Gateway. Additional engagement with Gateway stakeholders began before the charrette and has continued since. Virtual meetings with internal landowners and interested parties allowed the project team to introduce themselves and hear directly from them before the team even visited the site. On the whole, property owners have shown interest in the idea of development in the area and desire to be included as the process continues to unfold. Since the conclusion of the charrette, all property owners interested in speaking with the project team about this effort have done so.



COUNTY ROAD 10

10

10

7

COUNTY ROAD 7

25

ERIE PARKWAY

Erie Pkwy

Satellite View of I-25 Erie Gateway - South PD District

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I-25 Erie Gateway Plan Principles

The Vision Plan incorporated community input and market study analysis to develop a set of planning principles, outlined below, to guide future growth.

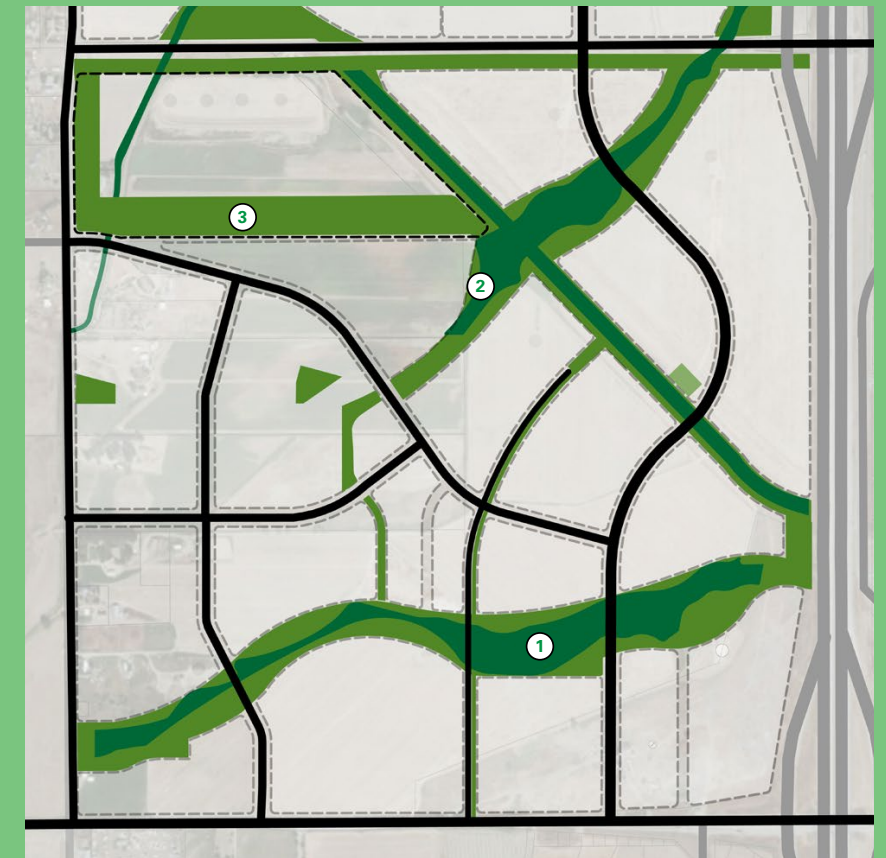
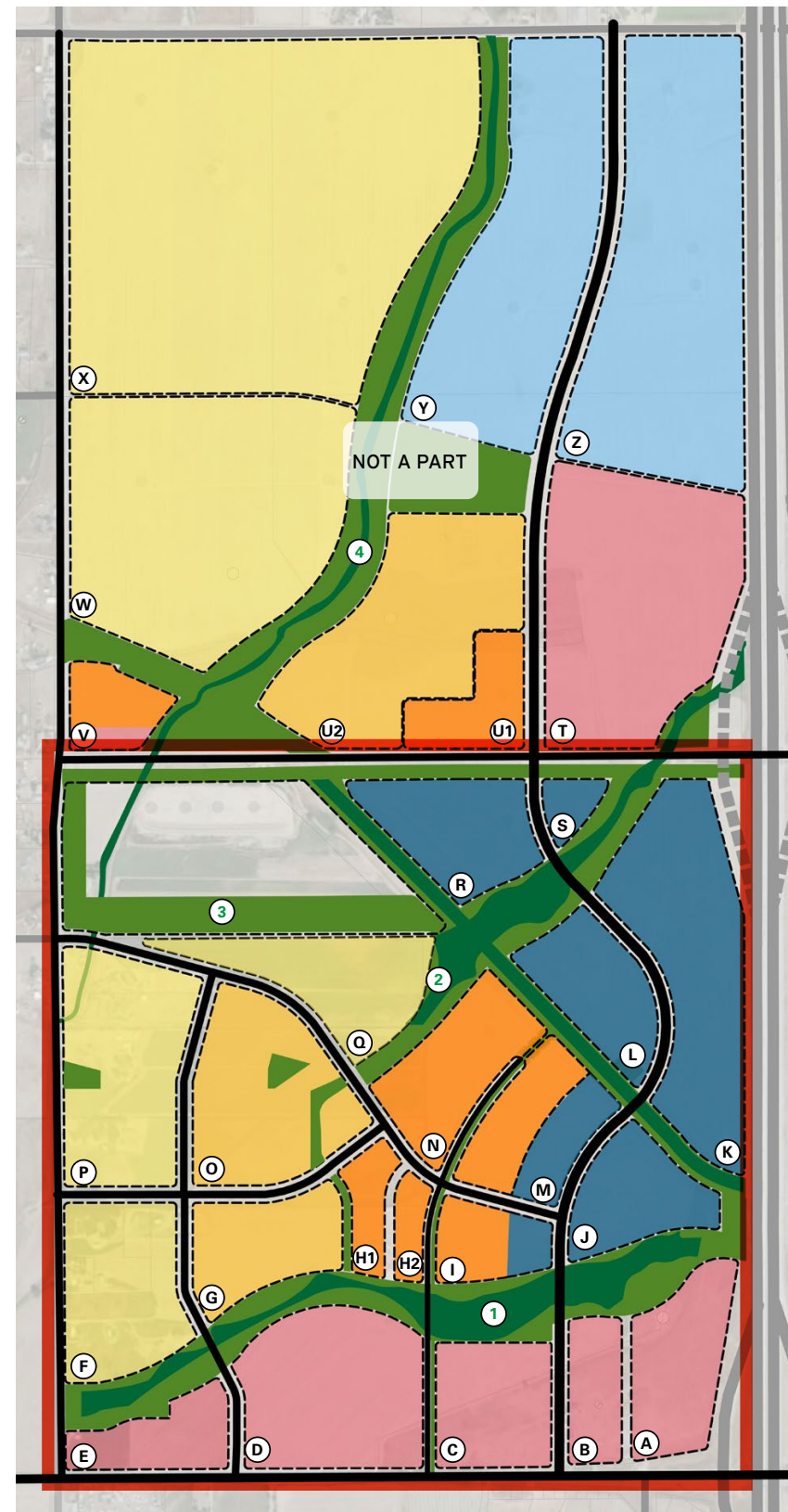
- A Mix of Uses
 - Attracts diverse visitor traffic
 - Different attractions
 - Live close to work and activities
 - Higher property values
- Creating a Destination
 - Entertainment opportunities
 - Sense of place
 - Walkable district
 - Amenities within 5 minute walk of every residence
- Low Impact Development
 - Preserve or provide habitat in open spaces
 - Preserve wetlands
 - Reduce infrastructure costs
- Quality of Life and Place
 - Public amenities for residents
 - Access to open space and parks
 - Encourage a sense of community
- Design with a Legacy
 - Balance environment, economics, art, and community factors
 - Multi-generational planning



The Framework Summary

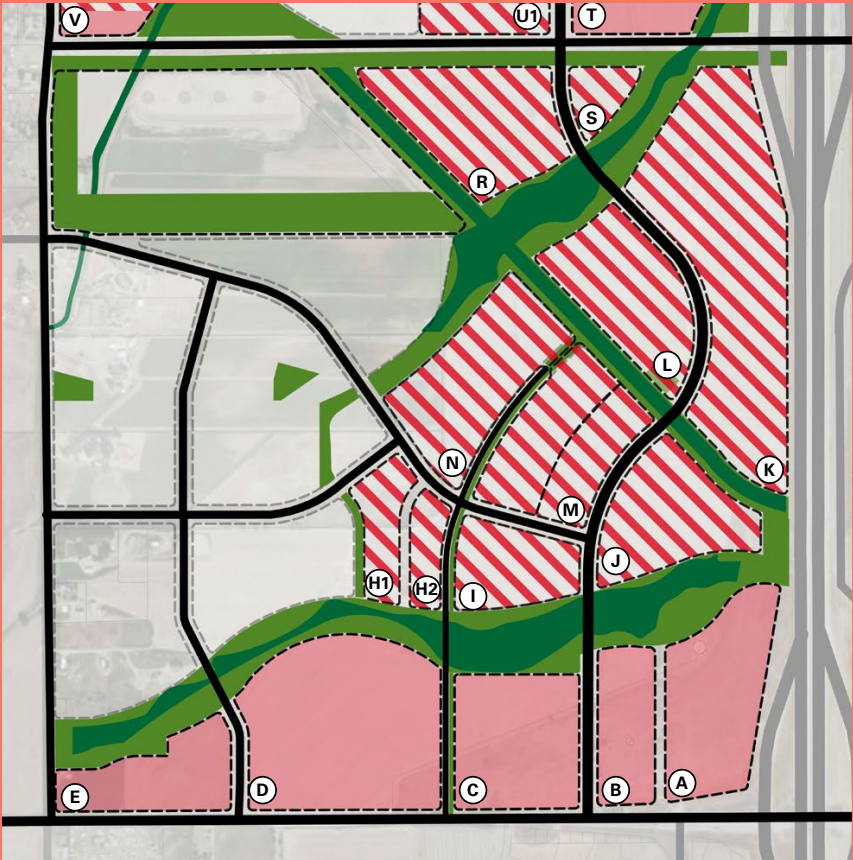
The Vision Plan's Framework laid out a conceptual development plan (right) that provided a general idea of how the principles should be applied. These Framework elements, listed below, are the starting point for this I-25 Erie Gateway effort. Upon discussions with Town staff, land owners, and stakeholders, it has been understood these Framework elements should be adapted for the proposed PD study area to better reflect community priorities, current market realities, and development potential.

- Integrated Open Space
- Mixed-Use Retail
- Embedded Employment
- Diverse Residential



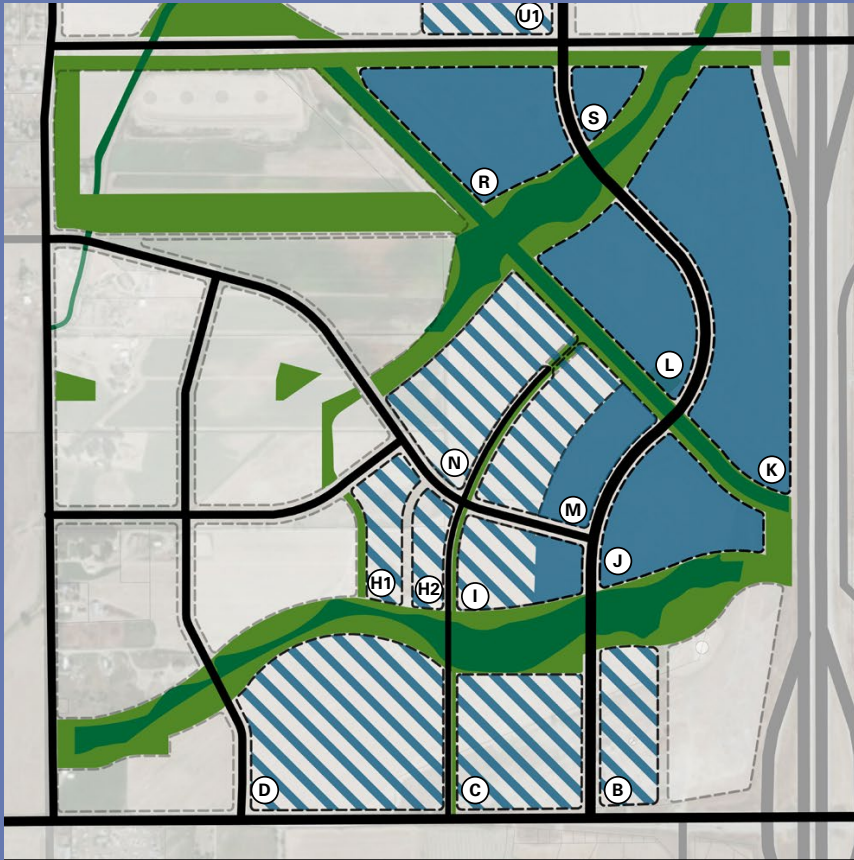
Integrated Open Space

- Connect the site with trails and bike paths
- Activate public spaces throughout the week
- Establish multi-functional parks and open spaces



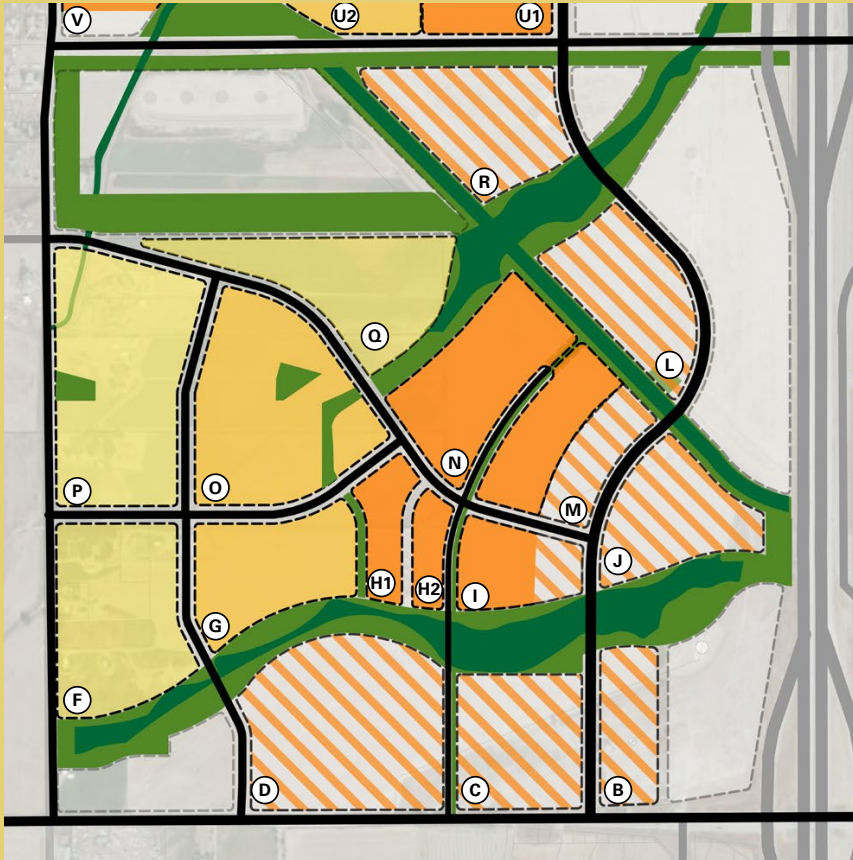
Mixed-Use Retail

- Promote a safe and walkable environment with multi-modal transportation options
- Create retail destinations with complementary adjacencies close to home
- Build resilience for market downturns



Embedded Employment

- Promote active transportation commuting
- Appeal to a diversity of business sizes and types
- Utilize visibility from I-25
- Draw from local educated workforce

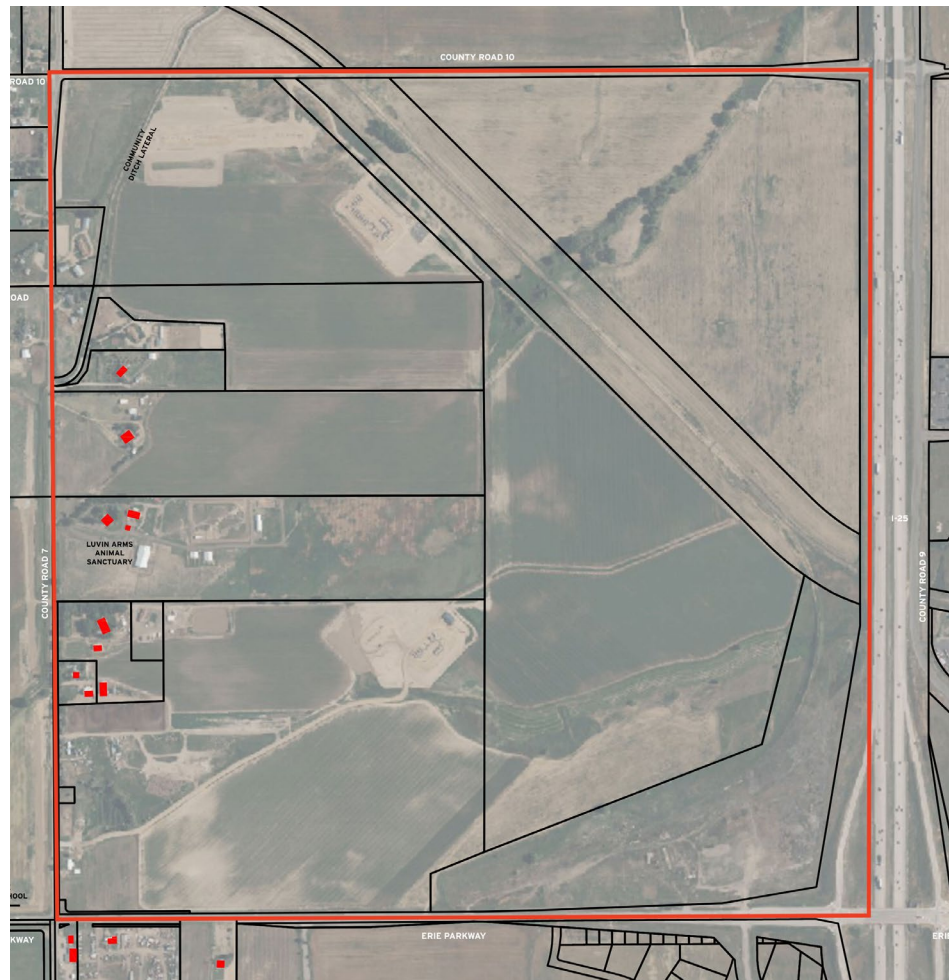


Diverse Residential

- Increase density and allow a wide variety of housing types, allowing for diverse lifestyles
- Locate amenities within walking distance to a variety of housing types

Site Diagrams

The Vision Plan originally developed a set of site diagrams that informed the conceptual plan and the team's understanding of the site. A few more were created to augment them with new information that provides actionable context for the plan's feasibility.



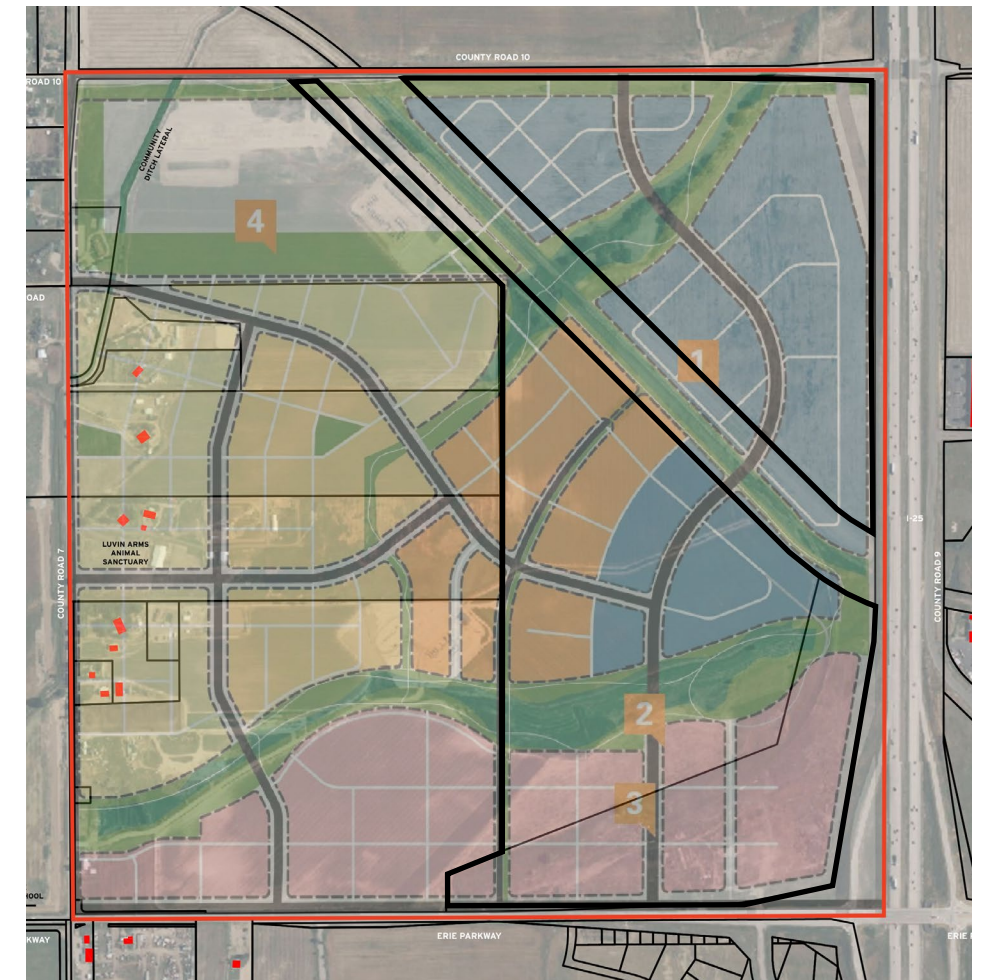
South PD District Site Plan

The South PD District is comprised of 18 individual parcels, both publically and privately owned. Uses include agriculture, animal sanctuary, residential, and oil and gas production.



District Land Ownership Map

While there are 18 parcels in total, a few entities own several parcels, such as the Town of Erie (identified in yellow above) and the Cleland Estate. There are 12 property owners for the 18 district parcels.



Vision Plan Overlay Map

Overlaying the Vision Plan's development plan onto the site plan illustrates how the proposed land uses intersect with individual parcels.

Charrette

Local Context and Site Tours

Torti Gallas + Partners conducted a two day charrette onsite to meet and collaborate with local team members. The charrette began with exploring the site with Town staff and discussing new and existing opportunities for the Gateway. The Town's ownership of 255 acres along the eastern edge of the site provides the opportunity to develop a north-south connecting thoroughfare through the entire site. Given that the southern I-25 Erie Gateway is not entirely within the Town boundary, development on Town-owned land along I-25 can catalyze development for the surrounding area and provide much needed infrastructure.

An existing RTD right-of-way that bisects the Town's parcels provides another catalytic opportunity for the Gateway. By utilizing this resource with new passenger rail technology, the district can be connected to the heart of Erie and beyond and anchor transit-oriented development, thus fulfilling a Vision Plan goal.



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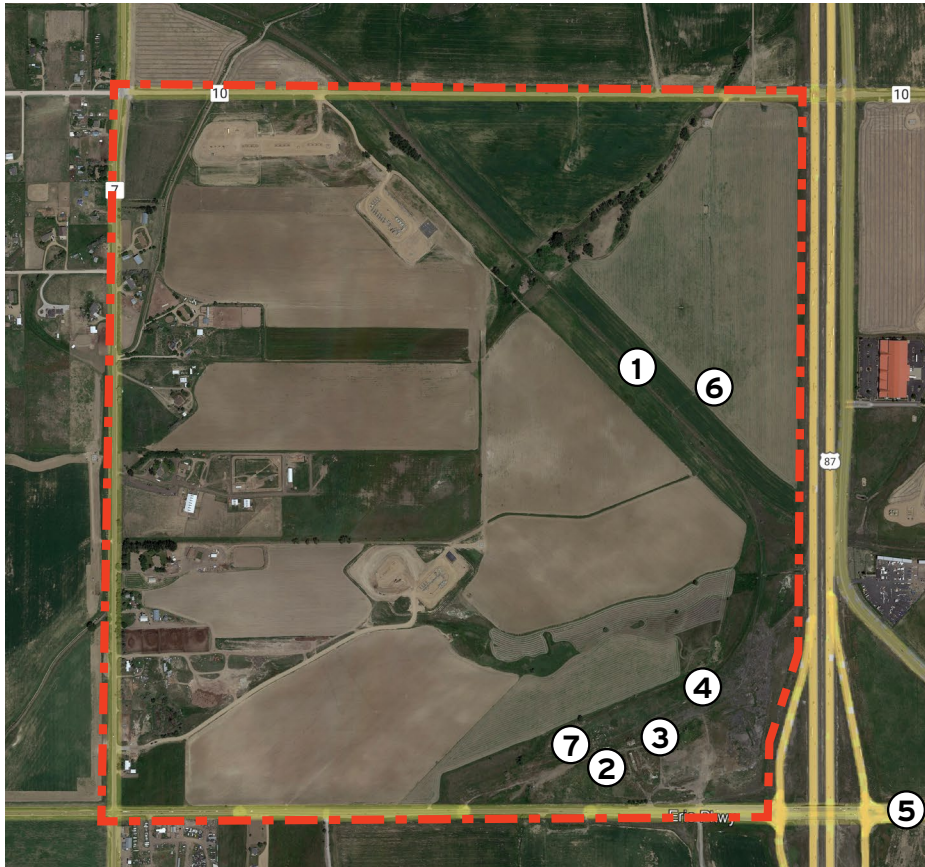
While the district itself was the focus of much of the team's time onsite, the team also toured surrounding communities to develop a better understanding of the built context and local character, such as the stone pillars commemorating Colorado's WWI soldiers (right).

The project team explored the site - by foot and vehicle - to experience and evaluate the existing conditions. The remnants of a water tower (right) is an historic feature that will provide cultural context for the Gateway's future development.



U.S. 287 and Arapahoe in Erie, CO

CHARRETTE: SITE PHOTOS



Erie Gateway - South PD District



① RTD Existing Railroad Tracks



② Historic Water Tower Structure



③ Northern View



④ Looking South East toward I-25 Interchange



⑦ Entrance to Abandoned Mine



⑤ 1-25 and Erie Parkway Interchange Looking West



⑥ Disused Railroad Ties with Track Embankment

Kick-Off Meeting

Following the morning’s tours, the project team gathered to meet with town staff to gain their perspectives on development in the Gateway as it pertains to their respective departments and subject matter expertise. Environmental, civil, and geotech subconsultants were also present to meet town staff and gather information. Representatives from various town departments including Planning & Development, Economic Development, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Transportation, came together to collaborate on a shared strategy. They each discussed background information for the site, issues associated with the site or vision plan, and processes needed to be developed to effectuate the concept plan.

Planning

The Vision Plan designated land uses within the district that the team decided should be further integrated for a much more mixed-use development pattern. Housing and employment proximities in conjunction with transportation and open space networks drove the idea that land uses should be co-located, when possible, or conveniently accessible when remote. Industrial uses that generally degrade pedestrian environments were thought of as appropriate along I-25 and north of the

RTD parcel due to the planned interchange at County Road 10 that would give direct regional access for manufacturing and logistic employers and its separation from the lively urban area envisioned elsewhere in the district.

Engineering

A variety of topics were discussed, focusing primarily on infrastructure requirements necessary to support the future development of the I-25 Erie Gateway. Sewer, recycled water, potable water, stormwater and drainage capacities were all discussed with the town engineer to strategize blue-green infrastructure possibilities.

Transportation

Multi-modal transportation networks were stressed as a critical component in realizing Vision Plan goals. Incorporating passenger rail, bus rapid transit, bicycle paths, and pedestrian-friendly street types into a mobility hub with first/last-mile connections proved to be a popular strategy. Along with converting the Erie Parkway interchange into a diverging diamond interchange, redesigning Erie Parkway into a multi-lane boulevard and providing appropriately located parking within the blocks further reinforced this multi-modal transportation scheme.

I-25 Erie Gateway Charrette Schedule

October 11, 2022

- 8:30AM Meet at Town Hall and travel together to Site
- 9:00AM Site tour and tour of surrounding area
- Noon Working Lunch
- Noon-3PM Kick-off Meeting, all relevant staff and consultants
- 3-5PM Working design session with Planning staff

October 12, 2022

- 9:00AM Meet with Hines
- 10:00AM Meeting with other significant property owners
- 11:00AM Meetings with impacted stakeholders
- Noon Working Lunch
- Noon-2PM Debrief staff on results from meetings with owners
- 2-5PM Working session with Planning staff
- 5PM Team departs

Parks & Open Space

Erie’s Parks & Open Space master plan designates a “regional park” for this area, though one may not be necessary given the development of other open space facilities in the area. A more robust parks and open space network than shown in the Vision Plan is necessary to meet open space needs associated with future development. Adapted and new park and open space types may be necessary to better integrate to a mixed-use environment. Current standards and requirements should be considered for the more urban character that is envisioned in the Gateway. Linking into existing and planned bicycle and trail networks is a top priority to knit Erie Gateway into the surrounding community.

Historic and natural resources should be incorporated into the public realm and open spaces network. Mountain views, riparian habitats, and wildlife corridors should be appropriately considered when developing a parks and open space network. Stormwater detention areas should be amenitized into recreational open spaces for public use.

Economic Development

Development on Town-owned parcels can provide the catalyst needed to spur further development in the district. Given its immediate proximity and access to the I-25 corridor and Erie Parkway, these parcels are highly-visible and well positioned to provide a north-south connection through the site. Possibilities for an anchor tenant in this location include sports, entertainment, health care, education or something entirely unique to the area.

Future commuter rail service, bus rapid transit (BRT), and park and ride facilities bolster the opportunity to propel transit oriented development (TOD) in the district. Leveraging this opportunity to create a unique place at this key location, rather than the traditional highway commercial uses that flank other regional interchanges, will help attract new workforce and daytime traffic to Erie from Denver Metro and Northern Colorado.

Oil and gas facility setbacks are a considerable concern. The concept plan must acknowledge and take into account the required setbacks necessary when building in the vicinity of wells, whether active or plugged. Coordination with the town staff on this issue will be an ongoing effort.

Sustainability

While the overall approach to developing this concept plan is sustainable in nature - walkability, multi-modal transportation networks, neighborhood-serving retail, accessible parks and open spaces, etc. - infrastructure planning practices that focus on community resiliency and adaptability were also discussed. District-wide sustainable systems such as geothermal technology, community solar, and recycled water systems could be incorporated to proactively build resilient neighborhoods that can be self-sufficient.

Design standards for buildings and streets could further foster green and clean practices.

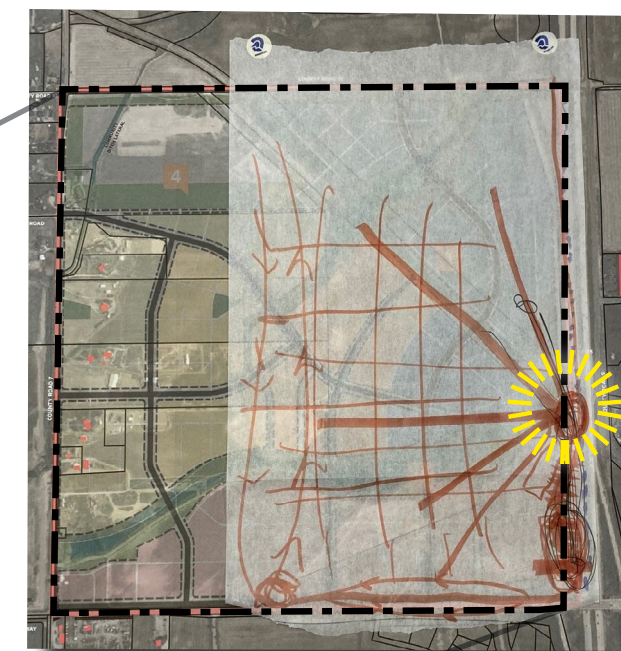
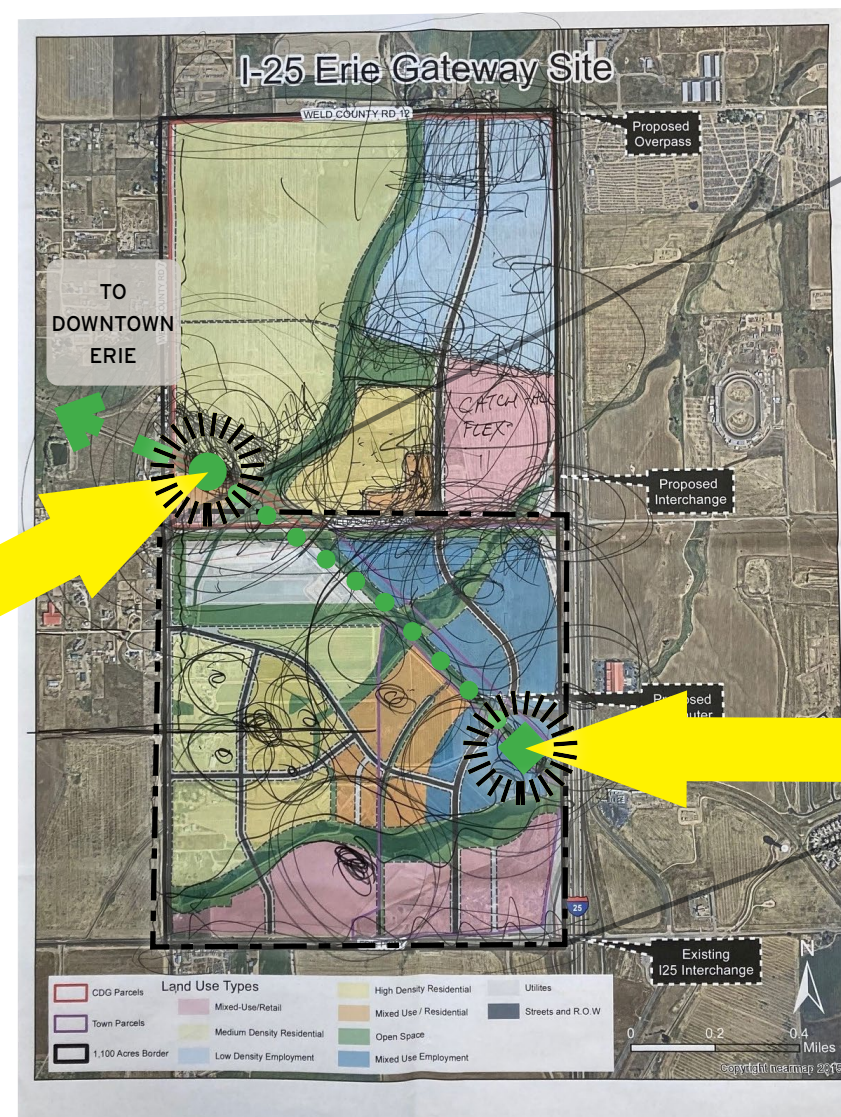
Team Workshopping

During the workshopping sessions, team members sketched ideas to contemplate possibilities for future development in the district. Multi-modal transportation networks, mixed-use neighborhoods, and appropriate frontages along Erie Parkway were all topics of lively consideration and collaboration.

Erie Gateway as a TOD District

An early breakthrough during discussions about the transportation network came from the realization that a true transit-oriented development (TOD) district is feasible in Erie Gateway because of RTD's railroad parcel that diagonally traverses the site. Utilizing an existing ROW corridor with meaningful transportation options to connect the district with the surrounding communities could help unlock development potential. The I-25 interchange at Erie Parkway already provides direct regional access and the expansion of the BRT line to this location to create a mobility hub would boost access to the Gateway. Linking into the regional bicycle and trails networks to and through the district would further cement the Gateway as a rich multi-modal neighborhood that fosters active, passive, and recreational transportation.

TOD NORTH
STATION



ERIE
GATEWAY
SOUTH
STATION
(TOD)

Erie Gateway Station (TOD) would be located at the southeastern edge of the RTD parcel to better connect with the I-25 interchange and the future BRT station. A last-mile strategy that incorporates bicycle paths, walking trails and pedestrian amenities would link these assets and create a multi-modal hub for the Gateway.

TOD Principles *Connecting People to Assets*

- Concentrate high and mid-density housing and development within 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius around transit stations
- Provide a mix of uses and services in station areas
- Create high-quality pedestrian environments and enhanced open spaces
- Taper density down to existing neighborhoods
- Create a grid of streets integrated with the station area

Walkable Neighborhood



Erie Gateway as a Set of Neighborhoods

Once the project team started to think of the Gateway as a transit-rich community, a pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use environment followed. Chief among strategies to achieve a multi-modal community is the mixing of land uses and housing types across the entirety of the developable area. This allows for many of life’s daily activities to be within walking or biking distance of residents and members of the local work force, resulting in a vibrant public realm. Supporting that strategy is a set of mixed-use neighborhoods that differ in scale and building intensity, but are linked together to support a greater whole, such as shown to the left. This allows for a range of businesses, housing types, and services to locate in proximity to each other, thus supporting the accessibility, walkability, and neighborly interaction.

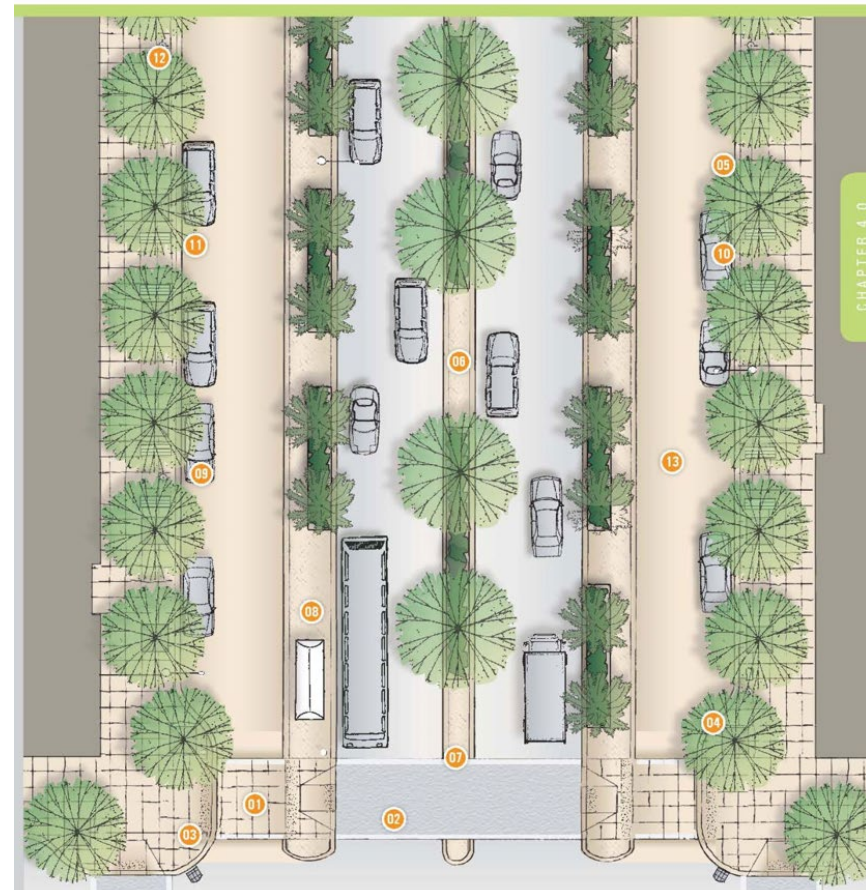
Pedestrian-friendly design can bring daily necessities within an easy walk of many residents, stimulating economic activity while reducing the stress on transportation systems. Thus, neighborhoods should be limited in size to the distance a pedestrian can walk in five minutes - roughly 1/4 mile from the center of a neighborhood to its edge - as well as provide a street network that prioritizes pedestrian safety, mobility, and comfort. Local streets should be woven through the district to create walkable block-sizes, such as shown on the right.

Grid of Streets



Better Streets Plan San Francisco, CA

Boulevard Street Type – Better Streets Plan

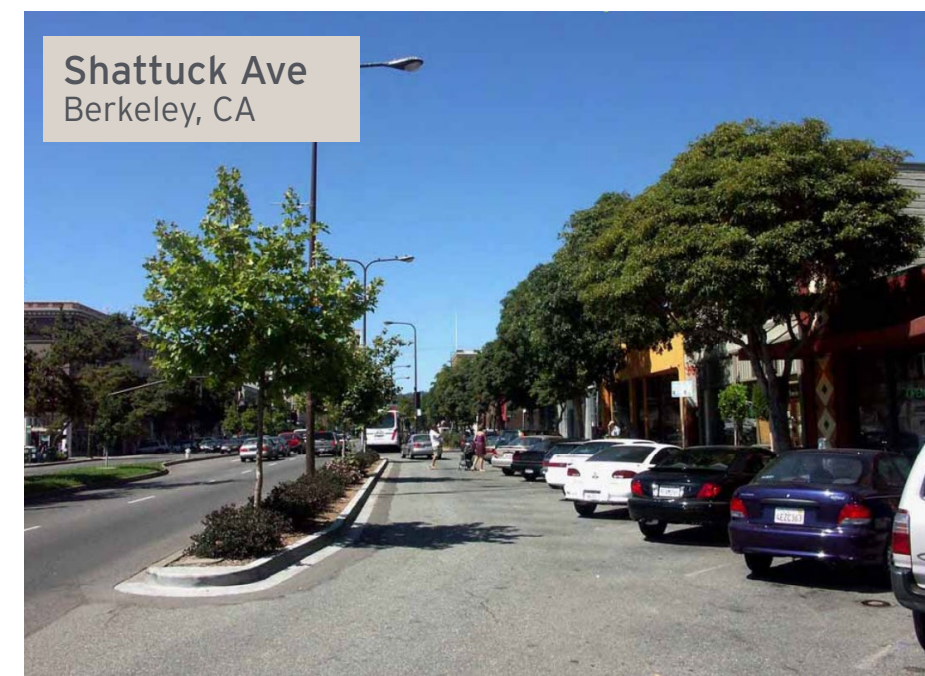


Erie Parkway as a Multi-Lane Boulevard

Erie Parkway along the southern edge of the district is a regional thoroughfare that provides access to I-25 and the surrounding communities. Leveraging this highly-visible thoroughfare to draw people into the district, as opposed to just through the district, requires a strategy that slows traffic, provides parking, and creates an inviting street frontage - multi-lane boulevards have proven to be particularly effective at achieving these goals. Multi-lane boulevards separate through travel lanes from local access lanes to simultaneously move vehicles while providing a calm, spacious pedestrian and living environment for adjacent residences. The project team envisions Erie Parkway as a multi-lane boulevard that provides a distinctive gateway into the district while also still serving as a regional thoroughfare. While further study is needed, it is believed that the existing right-of-way is sufficiently sized to accommodate this type of intervention as the TMP designates this section of Erie Parkway as a 6-lane arterial road at full buildout.

Multi-Lane Boulevard Considerations

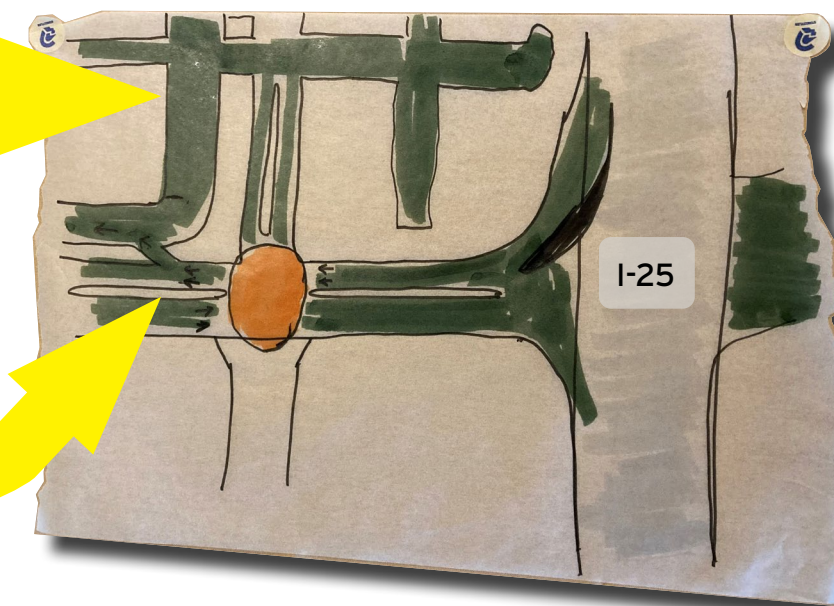
- High volumes of through traffic separated from local access
- Generous pedestrian realm by calming traffic and maximizing pedestrian space on local lanes
- Opportunity to provide enhanced bicycle facilities
- Opportunity to provide recreational amenities
- Opportunity to provide ecological functioning such as stormwater conveyance systems and heat-island effect disruptors
- Requires sufficient street width



The project team virtually-explored various examples of built multi-lane boulevards to better envision what Erie Parkway may look like. Through traffic lanes, left turn lanes, and local access lanes with street parking meet the needs of regional and local traffic. Bike and pedestrian paths can also be incorporated to support multi-modal transportation options on Erie Parkway.

Local Street Grid

Erie Parkway



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