



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 19, 2008

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Town Council adopts 20-year plan for downtown Castle Rock

A Town welcome center where Wolfensberger Road merges into Wilcox Street. Spacious sidewalks lined with cafes, wide-windowed shops and public art. A live/work neighborhood with street-level businesses and upper-level residences.

All these visions could become a reality for downtown Castle Rock over the next 20 years as part of the Downtown Master Plan, which Town Council voted 5-0 to adopt at its March 18 meeting. Councilman Douglas Lehnert was absent.

Work on the plan began in early 2006 and was guided by an advisory commission made up of downtown property and business owners and civic leaders. Past studies and community values were built upon, and more than 600 community members participated in the plan's development, said Fabby Hillyard, the Town's downtown coordinator.

Guiding principles for the plan included a desire to create a welcoming, friendly downtown core; to enhance downtown's historic character; to create a "downtown first" policy for Town and county government expansion; to provide easy access to open space and trails; and to ensure public spaces/event areas that are family friendly.

The plan defines the vision for downtown: "Downtown Castle Rock should be the Main Street of Douglas County, providing the region with an authentic Western downtown experience and a central gathering place that unites neighborhoods, families and individuals. Castle Rock can achieve this vision for downtown through a welcoming environment that combines a sampling of urban elements with distinct local flavor and provides a variety of amenities."

The plan divides downtown into three primary "character districts":

- North Downtown – north of Fifth Street, between Interstate 25 and Perry Street
- Downtown Core – between Fifth and Second streets and Interstate 25 and Front Street
- South Downtown – between Second Street and Plum Creek Parkway and Interstate 25 and Perry Street

Under the plan, North Downtown would serve as the northern gateway to Town and would have a mix of office and commercial uses. The Downtown Core would be a central gathering place with unique, locally owned shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. South Downtown would be the Town's southern gateway and would be ideal for those looking for a home and workplace within steps of each other.

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The plan also recommends possible methods of financing the changes for downtown, including forming a downtown development authority and a business improvement district. A majority of voters within the boundary of the proposed downtown development authority would need to approve the authority's formation. More information about financing options will be presented in greater detail to the public this spring and summer.

Council members and a community business leader expressed enthusiasm for the plan when it first was presented to Council on March 11.

"I look forward to this getting implemented," Lehen said at the March 11 meeting.

The Castle Rock Economic Development Council's board supports the plan, said David Mitchem, the group's president and CEO and a Castle Rock resident.

"We believe that the downtown commission and staff have done an extraordinarily good job, and they're to be commended," Mitchem said.

Staff intends to start implementing the plan immediately now that it has been adopted, Hillyard said.

The plan calls for the installation of new street furniture and signage this year and for a vote on the formation of a downtown development authority to be part of the November 2008 election.

2009 and 2010 would bring the installation of informational elements at downtown's north and south gateways, the addition of amenities to Festival Park at Second and Perry streets, the creation of a free Wi-Fi zone and the development of design standards for downtown.

Plans for 2011 and beyond include the development of a public green space at the upper edge of Plum Creek north, south of South Street, continued land acquisition for parking and continued work toward a downtown transit hub.

The entire Downtown Master Plan is available at CRgov.com by clicking on "Downtown Castle Rock Information" in the left-side menu. The link to the plan is at the bottom of that page.

Those with questions about the plan can contact Hillyard, 720-733-3557 or fhillyard@CRgov.com.

For information about what's happening downtown, call the Town's What's Up Downtown hot line, 720-733-3577.

Downtown Castle Rock – It's gonna surprise you!