

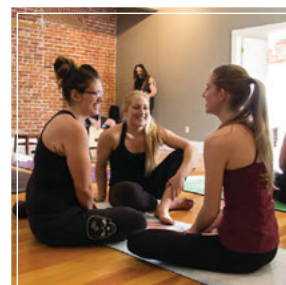
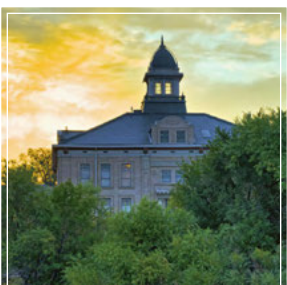


CITY OF LITTLETON, COLORADO COMPREHENSIVE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

# THINK-TANK REPORT

COLORADO, USA

JULY 2023







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COLORADO, USA

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This report summarizes the outcomes of the Littleton CEDs Think-Tank workshops that were held on July 17 & 18, 2023. Approximately 40 stakeholders participated in the workshops and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of the Littleton comprehensive economic development strategic planning project which aims to provide comprehensive direction that will guide decision-making for city leadership over the next ten years.

This report and the associated data analysis are available at:

[lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/](https://lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/)

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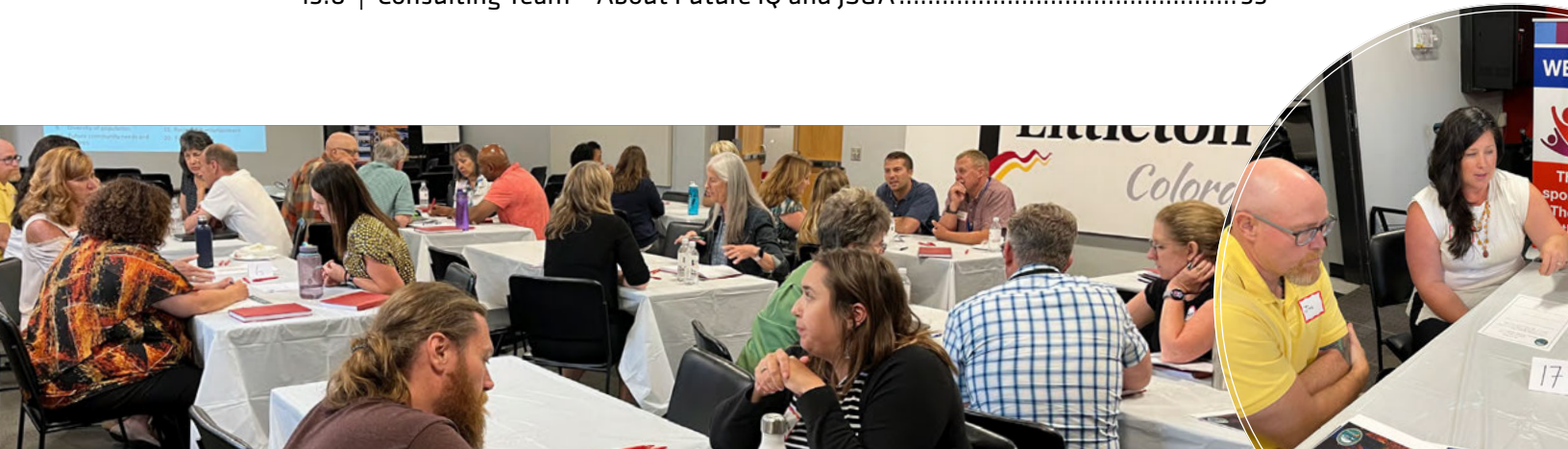


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# »»»» SNAPSHOT | REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

This report lays out the findings from the future-oriented scenario planning work for Littleton July 17 & 18, 2023. This work has identified a preferred future and highlighted some of the future challenges and opportunities in front of the city looking out to 2040. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out 'how we get there' and informs the upcoming comprehensive planning work.

## KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS PLANNING WORK TO DATE



### **STRONG DESIRE TO MAKE LIVING IN LITTLETON AFFORDABLE FOR ALL RESIDENTS**

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders consistently expressed a desire to make Littleton affordable and accessible for all residents. Expanding housing options and allowing more density will be key to attracting young professionals and to enabling an aging population to age in place.



### **LEVERAGE LITTLETON'S ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Littleton is known for its parks and extensive trail system. The location of the City also provides easy access to the mountains and City of Denver. Intentional promotion of these strengths would help to build the city's regional positioning in the state.



### **OPPORTUNITY TO USE CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

The community has shown a desire to use creative and innovative economic development strategies towards managed growth and workforce development. Placemaking, leveraging the city's unique assets, transit centered development and increased mixed-use development are suggestions to explore.



### **UTILIZE THE STRONG EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN LITTLETON FOR LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Littleton's strong K-12 school system attracts families to the city. The new EPIC campus provides a tremendous opportunity to build connections in the community with local businesses. Arapahoe Community College is also a significant resource for building a synergistic workforce development relationship with local businesses and the high school.



### **LEVERAGE THE HISTORIC MAINSTREET CHARACTER ON LITTLETON BOULEVARD AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS**

Littleton's historic downtown and history were cited as the city's greatest strength. There is a strong will to invest in the downtown and Littleton Boulevard as a development tool that will attract visitors and spur the local economy.



# 1.0 | HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The importance of visioning and planning for the future have been highlighted as critically important to building resiliency and sustainability for Littleton as stakeholders look to the grand challenges ahead.

This report lays out the findings from the Think-Tank and each key step in the process. More details about the overall planning process may be viewed on Littleton's project portal at: [lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/](https://lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/).

The Think-Tank process built a range of future possible directions for economic development in Littleton. This work represents robust 'future gazing' where stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. It should be noted that the narratives for these future directions were all created by the participants in the Think-Tank. The process, and the report, then drill down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out what next steps to take. The draft vision and economic development plan for Littleton will be completed after a series of in-depth focus groups in August and September.

## Steps in the process

Information gathered from the Stakeholder Survey, interviews, and research on existing plans and surveys.

Introduce the Think-Tank process and the goals for the process.

Identify macro trends shaping the future of Littleton.

Identify and describe key drivers for Littleton.

Create plausible future scenarios for economic development in Littleton.

Identify Expected, Least Desired, and Preferred Futures for Littleton.

Identify potential high-level strategic themes and actions.

Identification of the next steps in the strategic planning process.

## Sections of the report

Brief analysis of the Stakeholder Survey (Chapter 3)

Vision Summit Workshop (Chapter 4)

Forces Shaping the Future - Macro Trends (Chapter 5)

Key Drivers Identification (Chapter 6)

Creating the Scenario Framework (Chapter 7)

Expected, Least Desired, and Preferred Futures (Chapter 8)

Potential High-Level Strategic Themes and Actions (Chapter 9)

Next Steps (Chapter 10)



Littleton CEDS Think-Tank workshop allowed stakeholders to take a 'deep-dive' into strategic visioning and future-thinking through a scenario-planning process.

## 2.0 | INTRODUCTION

This scenario-based Think-Tank report summarizes the visioning and planning workshop that took place on July 17 & 18, 2023. The Think-Tank workshop was conducted as an initial step in the project to develop an executable plan that will guide Littleton's economic development for the next 10 years. The components of the planning work to date have been comprised of:



### STATE OF THE ECONOMY BENCHMARK REPORT

The State of the Economy Snapshot for Littleton, Colorado, is the benchmark report for reference throughout the city's economic development strategic planning process. This snapshot highlights a broad overview of the existing economic conditions encompassing Littleton and provides comparisons with other peer cities.



### KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

One-on-one interviews were held with fourteen key stakeholders to gather input and to further understand diverse perspectives on current and future economic development in Littleton.



### LITTLETON CEDS STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

An extensive survey was completed by 150 community members and stakeholders. In addition to community members, a variety of stakeholders were targeted to take the survey including workforce centers, schools, individuals from key industries, SBDC, etc. The survey aimed to understand stakeholder perspectives on current conditions in the city, as well as their aspirations for the future.



### THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The Littleton CEDS Think-Tank was held on July 17 & 18, 2023. At this workshop, participants learned about current conditions and macro trends impacting Littleton, and participants produced four plausible potential futures for the city.



### THINK-TANK PARTICIPANT HEATMAPS

Think-Tank participants completed heatmaps at the end of the Think-Tank to express their Least Desired, Expected, and Preferred future scenarios for Littleton, looking out to 2040. The results are examined in this report.

*"There is no reason why Littleton can't become the most economically successful city in Colorado and the most desired by sharing in a like-minded vision with residents, government and commercial entities."*

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent







## 3.0 | SURVEY RESULTS – KEY STAKEHOLDER INPUT

### 3.1 | HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY

Prior to the Think-Tank workshop, an extensive stakeholder survey was conducted in order to gather insight into the community's perceptions of trends influencing economic development in Littleton, including the most significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the city. At the time of the Think-Tank, approximately 150 people responded to the survey, which was promoted on the portal, social media platforms, and in the local press.

Respondent profile information is available on the project portal, and includes information such as age, race, zip code, stakeholder affiliation, and how long they have lived or worked in Littleton. Below are the compiled results of the SWOT analysis section of the survey. The stakeholder survey is currently still running and all of the results will be posted to the project portal at: [lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/).

In addition to the SWOT analysis, below is a list of topics explored in the survey:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Placemaking and neighborhood development    | 7. Preserving current mid-century heritage and design |
| 2. Connectivity - Downtown to South Park areas | 8. Mid-Mod Mile development                           |
| 3. Gateway development to the city             | 9. Workforce attraction                               |
| 4. Regional leadership positioning             | 10. Workforce development                             |
| 5. Safety and security                         | 11. Business attraction                               |
| 6. Housing availability and affordability      | 12. Business development                              |

For the purposes of this report, a selection of results will be presented. However, all interactive results can be viewed in real time on the project portal.



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- The majority of respondents were community residents (63%) with business owners (34%), government entity (21%), nonprofit (17%), economic development groups (8%), public/private education (5%), and other (7%).

## 3.2 | IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED VISION AND PLAN

Survey respondents were asked how important it is to have a shared vision and shared plan for economic development in Littleton. Respondents were asked the two questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

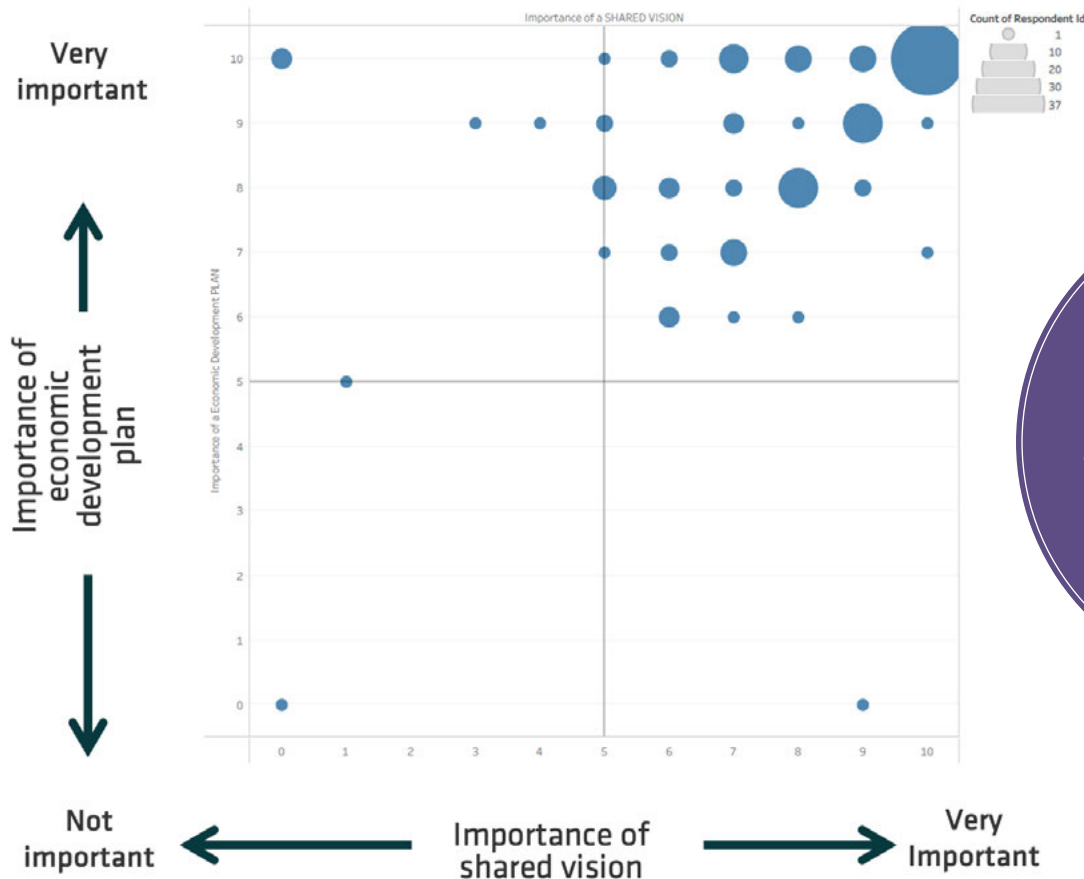
How important do you think it is to have a SHARED VISION for economic development in Littleton? (i.e. a vision or perspective on the future that is shared community-wide)

Scale: 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Very important

How important do you think it is to have a plan for economic development in Littleton?

Scale: 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Very important

### Shared vision and importance of economic development plan



*"Greatly appreciate the opportunity to share concerns and insights. This survey is a great start to integrating all parts of our community to create a shared vision. Thank you."*

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The size and color of the circle denotes the popularity of the response. This chart shows that respondents felt that a shared vision and plan were all important to the future of economic development in Littleton.
- These results can be filtered on the portal according to age, ethnicity, and length of time living and working in Littleton, and affiliation with Littleton.



## 3.3 | VIEWS OF THE FUTURE - SWOT ANALYSIS

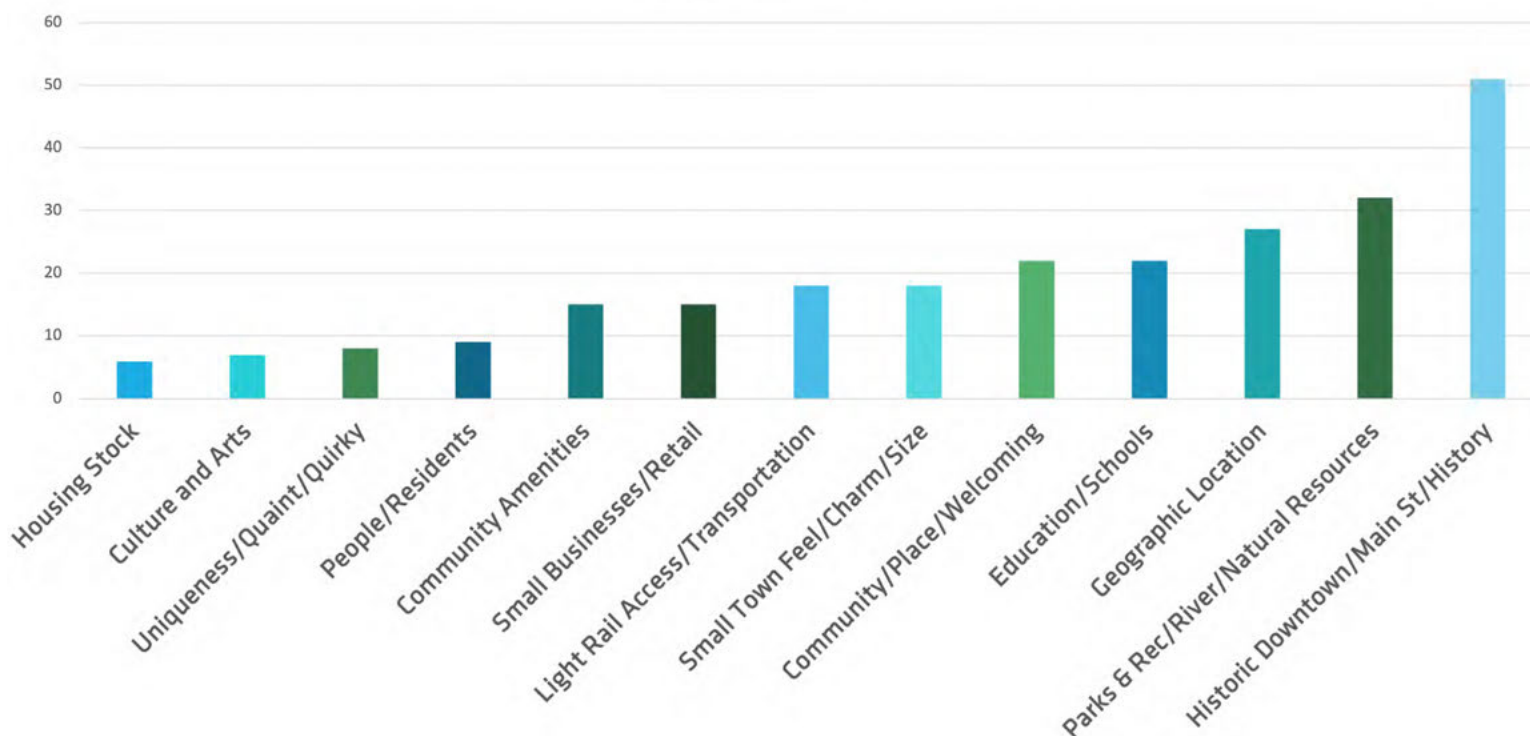
The U.S. Economic Development Administration requires a SWOT analysis of the city's economy for all CEDS plans. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is a strategic planning tool that ensures a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a city's capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies the city's competitive advantages—those indigenous assets that make the city special or competitive in the national and global economies—juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep a city from realizing its potential. (EDA, 090820)

An effective CEDS for Littleton will require proactively and creatively leveraging the city's unique strengths and assets to both attract residents, visitors, and workers to Littleton and to maintain its cherished community character.

### 3.3.1 | LITTLETON'S STRENGTHS

As a measure of what Littleton stakeholders consider City's strengths, survey respondents were asked to identify the city's strengths or competitive advantages in narrative form. More than anything else, respondents considered Littleton's historical context with its historic downtown and Main Street as its greatest strength.

Littleton Strengths



DataInsight

- Survey results indicate that Littleton's history and historic downtown area, its abundant recreational amenities and natural resources, and its geographic location are the city's greatest strengths.
- Littleton is seen to have very strong educational opportunities, especially through the Community College and the new EPIC high school campus. The challenge is to convert this into retention of a skilled local workforce.

"Littleton has interesting western history which can be capitalized upon in terms of architecture, signage, decor, events and promotions, creating a distinctive experience for visitors just 20 minutes from Denver!"

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

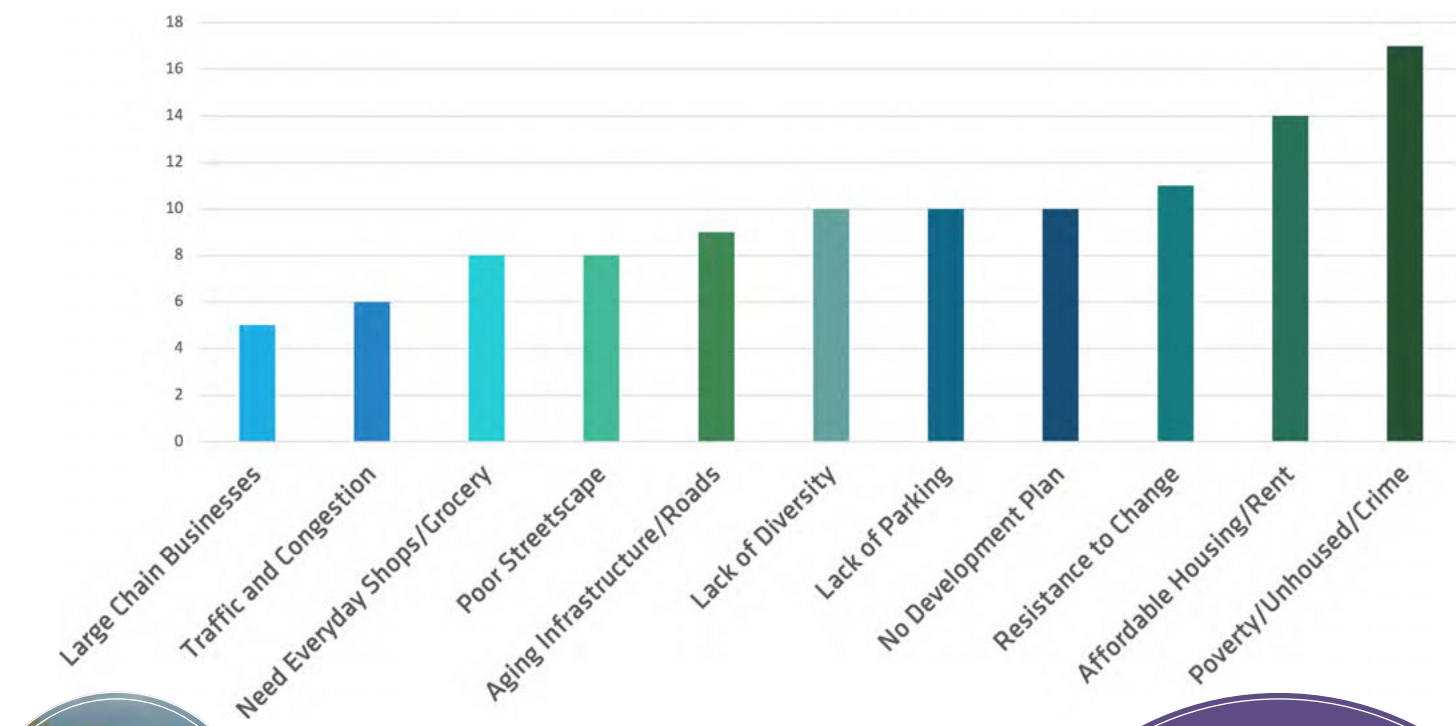


It is recognized by city Stakeholders that the issues surrounding the unhoused in Littleton will take a collaborative regionwide effort to find solutions.

### 3.3.2 | LITTLETON'S WEAKNESSES

As a measure of what community stakeholders consider Littleton's weaknesses, survey respondents were asked to identify the city's weaknesses in narrative form. The two most significant weaknesses were identified as poverty/unhoused/crime, and affordable housing/ rental prices, followed by community member resistance to change.

#### What are Littleton's weaknesses?



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- Creatively dealing with the issues of affordable housing and high rent prices could potentially be a sweet spot for the City of Littleton and would help to address the worker shortage and empty office spaces that local businesses and developers are experiencing.

*"It's very important to take proactive measures in regard to the dynamics that have created an unhoused population such as affordable housing programs that assist people with transition to a more stable existence, less restrictive (not so many rules and criteria to meet) mental health programs, seeing people as people with unmet needs rather than as a group to move out of the area, jobs that provide an actual living wage."*

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



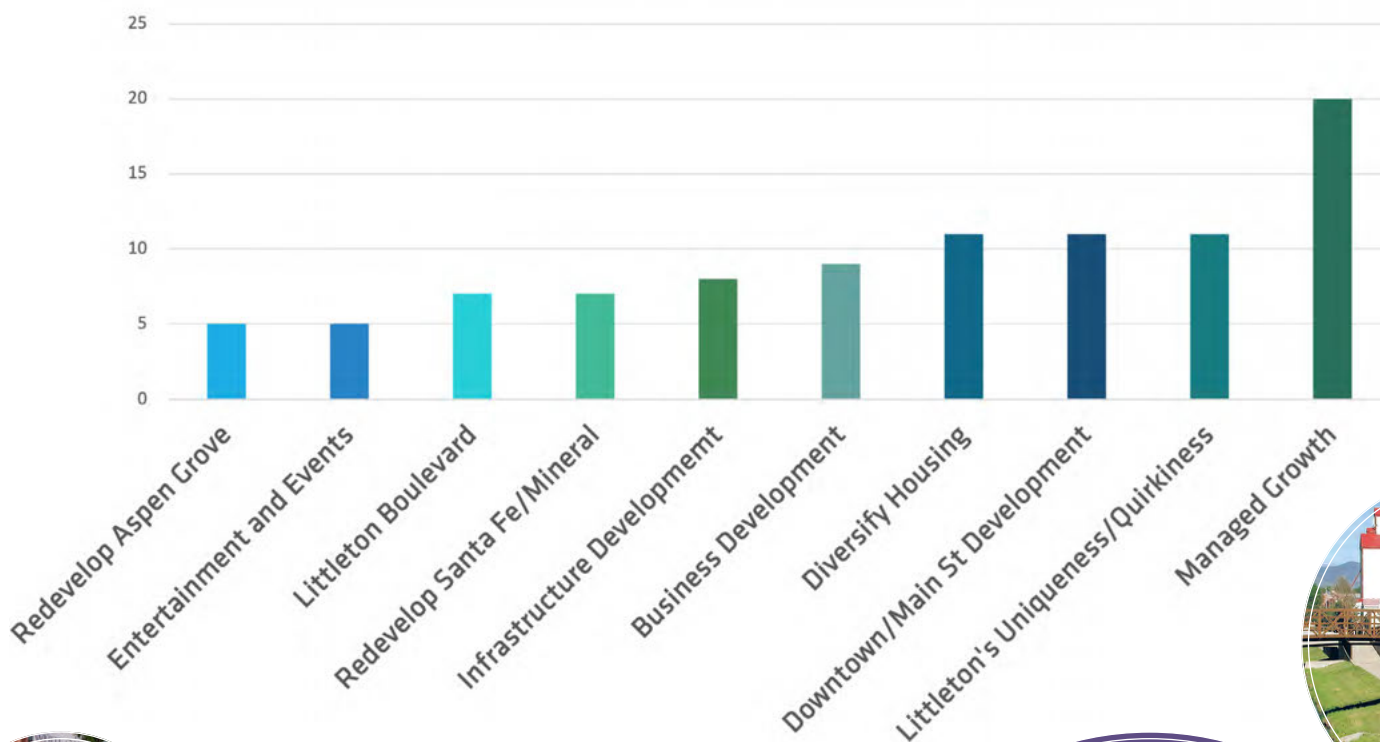


It has been clear throughout the engagement process, that the City of Littleton is a unique place and that maintaining its character while planning for growth is a desired component of the CEDS Plan.

### 3.3.3 | LITTLETON'S OPPORTUNITIES

Survey respondents were asked to describe in narrative form what they believed were the greatest opportunities for Littleton in the next 5-10 years. Managed growth was identified as the greatest opportunity, followed equally by Littleton's unique character, its downtown/Main Street development, and diversity of housing.

What are the biggest opportunities facing Littleton over the next 5-10 years?



DataInsight

- How growth in Littleton is managed is seen as both an opportunity and a threat. This future-splitting issue will be a determining factor in the trajectory of the city.

"Littleton can become the day-trip destination from Denver and an amazing place to live. Through creative downtown events, increased safety, beautification and a cohesive plan for growth, Littleton can be a one of a kind place for tourist, safe family living, an educational hub (ACC, Library, Hudson Gardens, & Museums) and exploration of our many walking paths, river access, bike paths, and outdoor venues."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

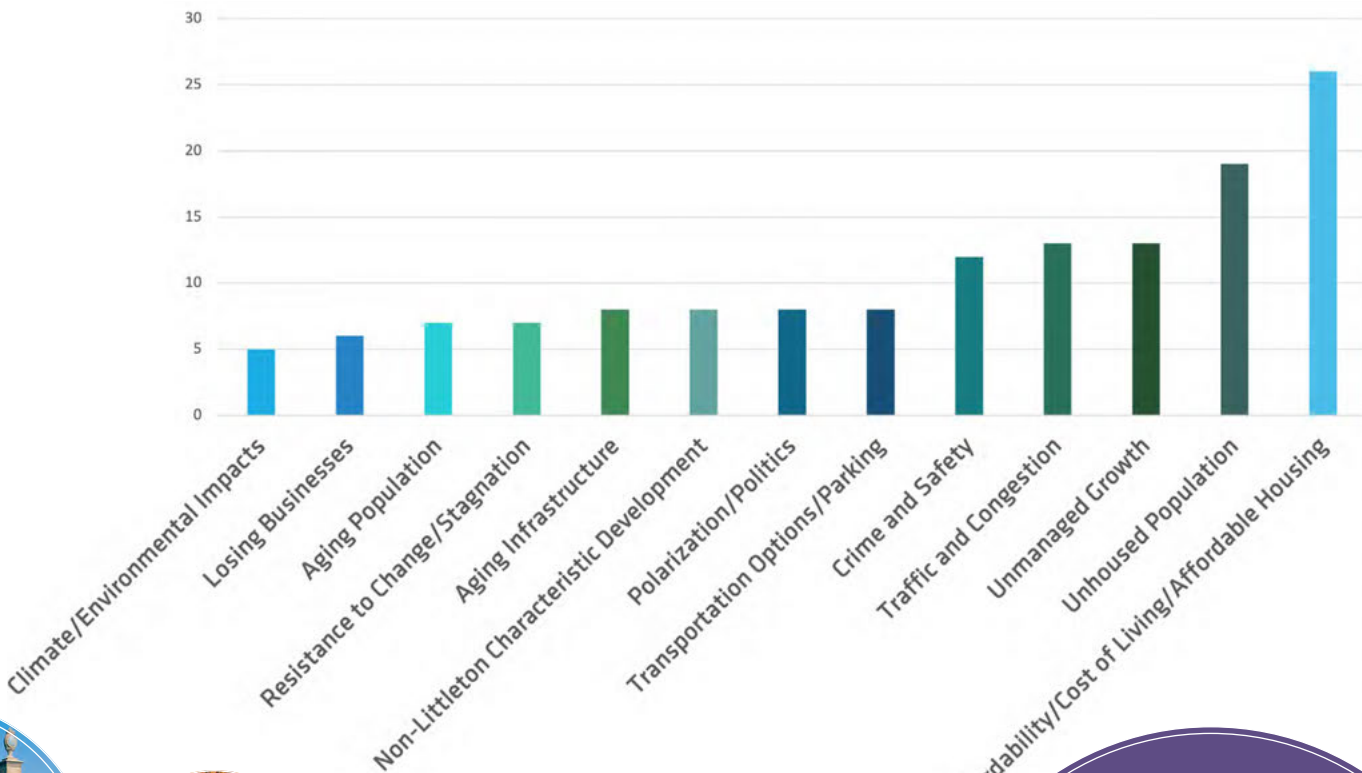


Affordability, cost of living, and affordable housing combined were cited as the most critical threat facing Littleton residents and stakeholders. How this threat is dealt with will dictate who can or cannot live here.

### 3.3.4 | LITTLETON'S THREATS

As a measure of where Stakeholders considered Littleton unprepared or threatened by future impacts, survey respondents were asked to describe in narrative form what they believed are the greatest threats or challenges facing the city over the next 5-10 years. Survey results show the greatest concern with affordability/cost of living/affordable housing, followed by the unhoused population, unmanaged growth, traffic and congestion.

What are the biggest threats or challenges facing Littleton over the next 5-10 years?



DataInsight

- Some of the same core issues are reflected in the threats as in the weaknesses for Littleton. The city will need a clear and articulated strategy to overcome these threats.

"Housing is one of the most critical issues facing many communities across the state and more broadly across the nation / world. Littleton can't solve the problem on its own necessarily and should look to partnerships across municipalities, best practice and innovative ideas wherever they're found to help address affordable housing for all. Good quality housing should be treated as a basic human right."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent





## 4.0 | SCENARIO-BASED THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The Littleton CEDS Think-Tank Workshop was conducted on July 17 & 18, 2023, at the Bemis Public Library in Littleton. The workshop explored how Littleton could evolve looking out to 2040 and consisted of:

- A review of global trends and the impact of these trends on Littleton
- Assessment of Littleton's strengths and weaknesses
- Formulation of the different plausible scenario 'spaces' and development of detailed narratives and descriptions of each scenario
- Examination of the impact and consequences of each scenario on various aspects of community and economic development in Littleton
- Identification of the preferred future and potential critical action steps to achieve the preferred future

Scenario planning provides a way to explore various plausible futures. This adds a richness and depth to the discussions about preferred future, and a consideration of the intended and unintended consequences.

The Think-Tank began with an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions, as well as a review of current economic conditions in Littleton before moving on to conduct scenario planning for the city. Future iQ's scenario planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and takes into consideration the implications of various future scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape Littleton looking out to 2040
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for Littleton
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision for Littleton
- Begin exploring high-level strategic themes for economic development in Littleton



The scenarios developed during this Think-Tank workshop and outlined in this report are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for the future of Littleton. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key strategic actions for the city and how various groups might best contribute to future developments.





## 5.0 | FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS – KEY THEMES SHAPING THE FUTURE

Think-Tank participants explored the forces of change shaping the future of Littleton, including three key areas of emerging macro trends and forces of change. Perceptions around the nature of impact of these trends, both in terms of size and timing of impact, were explored to gauge how important participants consider the trends. Participants discussed the emerging trends on global, regional and local scales, and related them directly to Littleton in terms of how well prepared they considered the city.

Specifically, the key trend areas included:

- Demographics, population and mass urbanization
- Energy, food, water and climate change
- Technology and the speed of change

Of relevance to the discussion on trends is the speed and scale of change occurring. Newly developed innovations are being implemented globally and locally at all scales, thereby changing the face of industries and society in a rapid and profound way. Velocity and trajectory are key elements that often create resistance to change and require clear communication and outreach to promote trust around the purpose of change. Think-Tank participants emphasized the need for increased intentional investment in people and infrastructure as well as consistent communication and messaging as the city pursues its preferred future.

In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to long-term resiliency for Littleton is the ability to anticipate change, adapt, and remain agile in response to emerging trends. This includes collaboration and a city-wide approach to change.







## 6.0 | KEY DRIVERS IDENTIFICATION


Drivers are events, trends, developments, catalysts, or forces that actively influence or cause change. The top 20 economic development drivers for Littleton are seen to shape the city's future.

With the background of external trends, Think-Tank participants produced drivers that they considered most likely to shape the future of Littleton. The drivers had been discussed at a small group level and then at the wider workshop level. The scope of each driver was clarified, and any similar drivers were grouped, and new drivers added, until a list of twenty unique key drivers were identified.


### 6.1 | DRIVER DESCRIPTIONS

Key drivers shaping the future of economic development in Littleton, as identified and developed in small working groups by the Think-Tank participants:


(Please note that these drivers are not in any particular order.)




**TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY AND TRAFFIC**  
Need to shift from car-centric to multimodal by redesigning infrastructure and connecting areas.




**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - FULL RANGE**  
Immense need to address housing affordability and variation of housing types to relieve the barrier for diversity of people to support businesses.



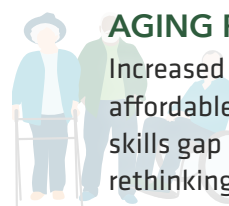
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
As population grows, anticipate and implement sustainable management practices to lessen the burden on our existing natural resources.




**PRIMARY JOBS AND TALENT**  
Diversify skills for the community through education systems; employers provide upskilling for jobs of the future.




**INFRASTRUCTURE - ELECTRICAL / GRID / FIBER**  
Ensure community keeps pace with technology changes and provide consistent connectivity and access.



**AGING POPULATION**  
Increased need for services, healthcare, and affordable housing as population ages. Growing skills gap in workforce will require upskilling and rethinking of future workforce needs.



**BUILDING LOCATION AND ZONING**  
Demands on services/resources will increase with higher density and traffic; more affordable housing, accessibility, mixed use development needed to create 20-minute walkable city.



**SMALL BUSINESS / ENTREPRENEUR**  
Provide the support needed to make small businesses in Littleton thrive; determine and seek out the types of desired business in the city.



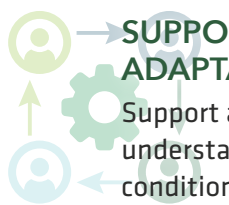
### DIVERSITY OF POPULATION

An inclusive atmosphere will draw and retain a diverse population. More people will fill the community's workforce need/demand.



### FUTURE COMMUNITY NEEDS

Prepare for workforce and social needs of the population to build resiliency and economic diversity in the community. The decisions made now set the incentives that drive the new generations of the community.



### SUPPORTING BUSINESSES / ADAPTATION

Support and engage existing businesses to understand evolving needs; adapt to external conditions and macro trends.



### SALES TAX REVENUE

Necessity of finding the optimal level of taxation to support the desired government services.



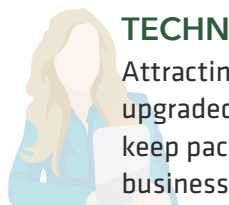
### CULTURAL FLUENCY

Enhanced consciousness of diversity and social awareness, especially relating to restaurants, grocery stores, retail stores, arts, small business / entrepreneurship.



### EXTERNAL LEGISLATION

Keep up with legislative activity and advocate for community. Collaborate at regional level to maintain influence and leadership roles.



### TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

Attracting and retaining business depends on upgraded technology and fiber optics. Need to keep pace with other communities or will lose businesses and people.



### REDEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY

Need to determine what we want Littleton to be in 20 years; the community fabric, look and feel of the community.



### MENTAL HEALTH

Education and support around safety and the unhoused population will require a proactive community, not a reactive one.



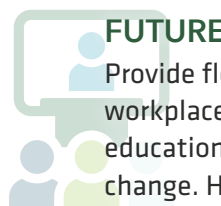
### MASS URBANIZATION

Need to pivot away from car-oriented development and turn towards greater density and connectivity.



### RECREATION, ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT

Continue to grow recreation, arts and entertainment amenities to attract visitors and provide quality of life to residents and stakeholders.



### FUTURE OF WORK

Provide flexibility and options for workforce and workplace to attract and retain workforce of all ages; education and upskilling needed as technologies change. Housing and transportation options are important elements of the future of work.

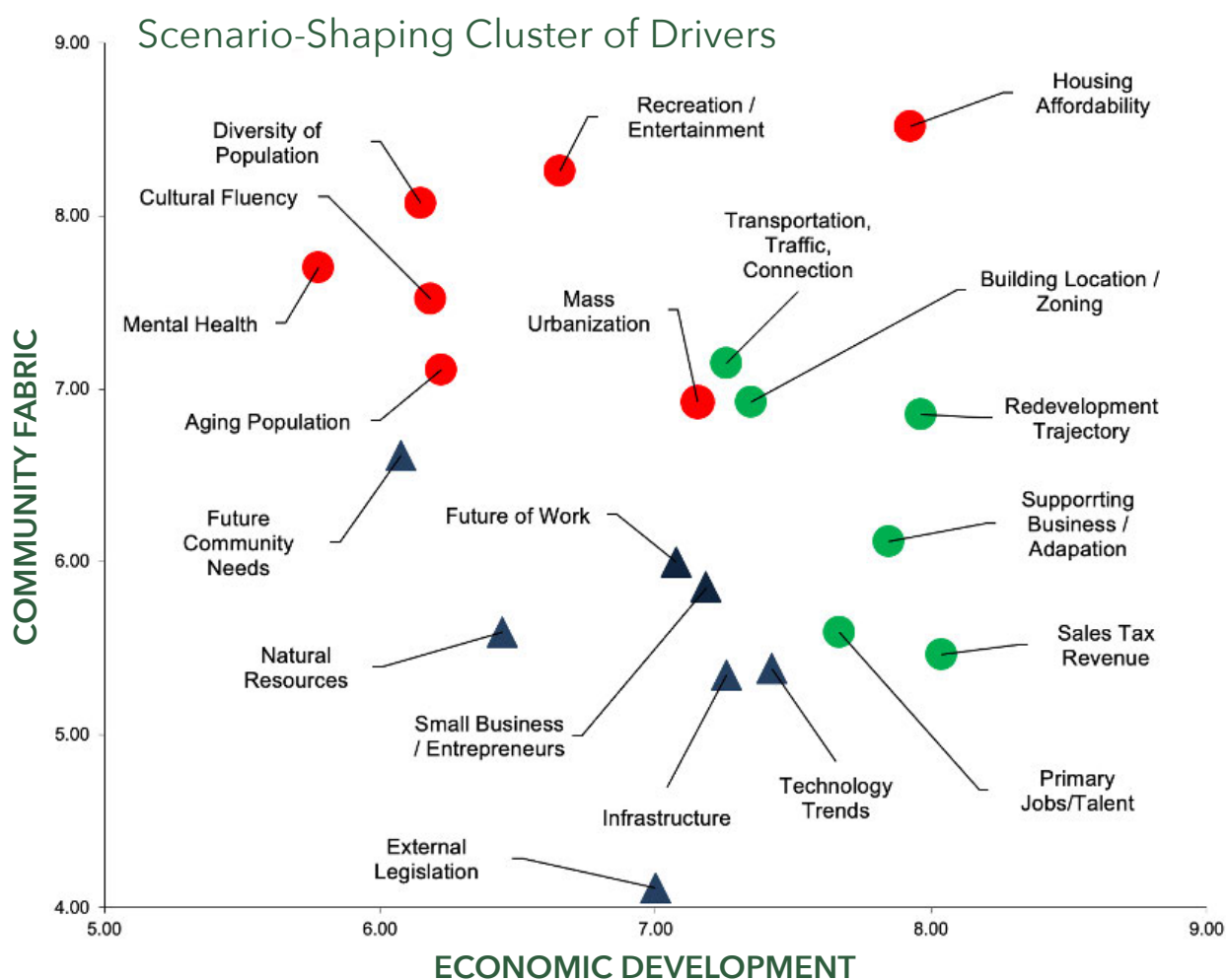


## 6.2 | IDENTIFYING SCENARIO SHAPING CLUSTERS OF DRIVERS

After agreement on the drivers, Think-Tank participants rated each of the twenty key drivers in terms of the size of impact on the future of Littleton. The scale used was 1 - 10 (1 = low relative future impact; 10 = very high relative future impact). The individual ratings by each participant were pooled and averaged, providing an overall rating for each driver by the entire group of participants. Then, a scatter diagram of the drivers, based on size of impact were developed. The diagram represents the driver assessment in terms of **development approach** and **community character**. The process illustrated below show the clusters of drivers that were seen as most critical in shaping the future – these clusters are termed ‘Scenario-shaping clusters of drivers.’

The scatter diagram allows the identification of clusters which are relatively high in impact. (Red dots = Economic development drivers; Green dots = Community character drivers; Black triangles = Additional drivers)

This scatter diagram identifies the clusters of drivers considered most critical in shaping the economic development future of Littleton looking out to 2040.



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- The identified drivers for economic development were clustered around the dimensions of transportation, connectivity and traffic; building location and zoning, redevelopment trajectory, supporting business/adaption; sales tax revenue; and, primary jobs/talent.
- The drivers identified as having the greatest impact on community character were housing affordability; diversity of population; recreation and entertainment; mass urbanization; cultural fluency; aging population; and, mental health.





## 6.3 | CLUSTER MAP DEVELOPMENT AND SCENARIO AXIS

Grouping similar drivers into two categories, clusters of drivers were identified by adding a thematic name linking the drivers in the clusters. These themes became the basis for the two axes on the scenario matrix that define the four scenario 'spaces', with quadrants either towards or away for each driver cluster. These quadrants were used to formulate four plausible scenarios. The two axes were defined as 'Development Approach' and 'Community Character'.

The two axes of the scenario matrix were developed through the thematic clustering of the key drivers identified by Think-Tank participants.

### FUTURE-SPLITTING THEMES BASED ON CLUSTERS OF DRIVERS

#### Development Approach

- Transportation, connectivity, traffic
- Building location and zoning
- Redevelopment trajectory
- Supporting business / adaptation
- Sales tax revenue
- Primary jobs / talent

#### Community Character

- Housing affordability
- Diversity of population
- Recreation and entertainment
- Mass urbanization
- Cultural fluency
- Aging population
- Mental health



#### Additional Drivers

- Future community needs
- Natural resources
- Future of work
- Small business / entrepreneurs
- Infrastructure
- Technology trends
- External legislation



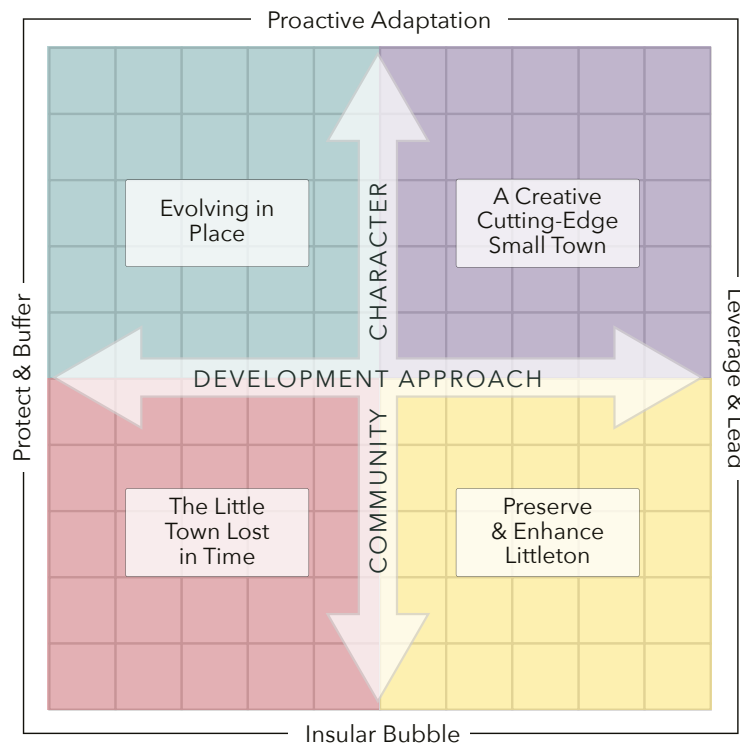


# 7.0 | CREATING THE SCENARIO FRAMEWORK

Workshop participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by the two major axes, 'Development Approach' and 'Community Character'. Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each driver axes. Participants were divided into four groups to develop a narrative for each scenario. Each group was asked to describe the characteristics of Littleton in 2040 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given. After the characteristics were established, Think-Tank participants were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2025, 2030 and 2040, and to give their scenario a descriptive name. The name is intended to represent the description of the scenario in the form of a short title. Narratives, descriptions, and names of each scenario as developed by the workshop participants are included in the following sections.

The community intentionally works to proactively absorb and manage change and growth by facilitating affordable housing and building community services. Enhanced community recreation and entertainment amenities help forge stronger community connectivity. There is a focus on being future-ready with lifelong learning and continued high levels of workforce and community participation. The community works to embrace diversity, foster new ideas and to ensure everyone feels at home and belongs.

Create policies and approaches that buffer the community and economy from rapid change and work to keep the rate of growth 'slow and manageable'. There is strong preservation of green spaces and heritage features. The focus is on supporting existing businesses and job types and guiding the gradual redevelopment of existing commercial and business areas. The residential focus remains primarily on single family homes, and transit is predominately car oriented as people commute to work.



Strong focus on leveraging and repurposing unique features in creative ways that preserve and enhance - while creating business innovation and renewal. Technology and smart infrastructure help to optimize resource use and drives sustainability. The city has a regional leadership role as a forward-looking creative community. Housing is more diverse with deliberately selected zones of higher density. The community nodes are connected by a strong network of multimodal corridors.

The community works aggressively to retain the 'urban haven' feel as part of the community character. The community is more inward looking, with a focus on traditional amenities, education and schools, and supporting a high quality of life for residents. There is a high value placed on stability, and the 'unique Littleton character'. This is protected by resisting rapid demographic change and cultural shifts.





The 'Evolving in Place' scenario conveys a future where Littleton residents and businesses are welcoming and enjoy a high quality of life and amenities. A synergistic workforce development relationship between the EPIC campus and local business grows.

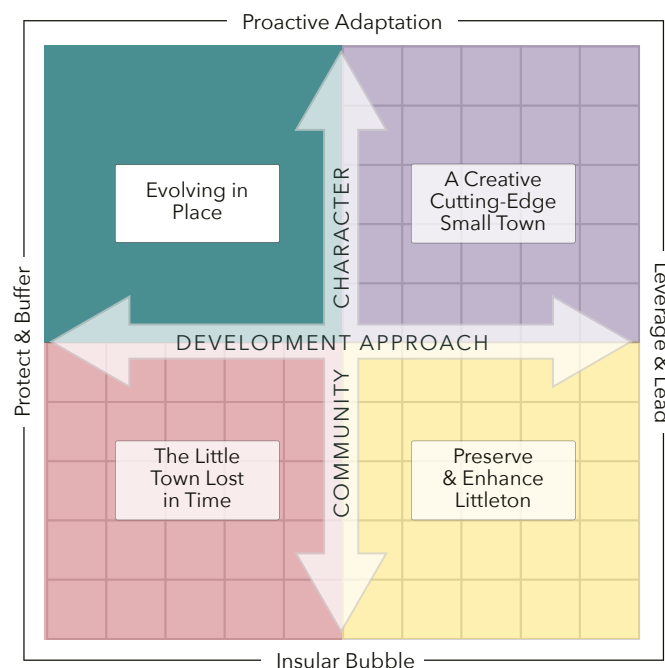
## 7.1 | SCENARIO A: EVOLVING IN PLACE

This scenario forecasts a future that is shaped by policies and approaches that protect and buffer the community and the economy from rapid change, while proactively absorbing and managing growth by enhancing community services and amenities and pursuing a future-ready mindset.

Under this scenario, economic development in the city is risk adverse and the focus is on protecting and supporting existing businesses and job types. Boutique businesses and restaurants are attracted to the city. Green space and heritage features are protected. Housing options are not expanded, although there is an increase in multigenerational and unrelated people households in the community.

### SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- **Conservative growth with a focus on building social infrastructure**, and amenities that build community connectivity.
- **Residential remains primarily single family homes** with existing homes containing multiple families or multi-generational family members.
- **Support for local and small businesses is high**, but it is difficult for new and larger businesses to break into the market.
- **Transportation connectivity lags** as transit remains predominately car oriented for commuters.





# SCENARIO A CHARACTERISTICS: 'EVOLVING IN PLACE' - 2040

In the 'Evolving in Place' scenario, a tension develops between those who want to keep things the same and those who want to proactively adapt to the times.

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where the community intentionally seeks to increase its high quality amenities for existing residents. The deliberate policy of slow and manageable economic growth over time discourages innovation and the arrival of new residents and young professionals. Lack of housing and new options for businesses force people to look to surrounding areas to live and start new businesses.



## 2040 Social Fabric and Community Characteristics

**The City attracts people who seek enhanced community amenities and affordability.**

- There is an increase in multi-generational and unrelated people households in the community.
- EPIC and local businesses develop synergistic workforce development approach.
- A decrease in homeownership and increase in renters in the community exacerbates housing shortage.



## 2040 Local Economy and Industry Characteristics

**Conservative growth rate with focus on development of social infrastructure.**

- City supports existing businesses and attracts small boutique businesses and tech companies.
- Slow growth policies turn away large scale investment that may create significant change in the community.
- More cultural events that honor the changing demographic makeup of the community take place.



## 2040 Built Environment and Landscape Characteristics

**City strikes a balance between historic preservation and needs of new residents.**

- Policies are created to allow multiple families in existing single family homes.
- Cutting edge green infrastructure replaces existing aging infrastructure including high-speed fiber.
- New development is only allowed to be one story higher than what is next door.

### 2025 Headline News

**"FIRST TASTE OF LITTLETON  
EVENT REPRESENTS CULTURES  
OF THE COMMUNITY."**



### 2030 Headline News

**"AI START-UP MOVES  
INTO EXISTING LITTLETON  
BUILDING WITH AN ALFRED  
PACKER GRILL."**



### 2040 Headline News

**"LITTLETON WINS AWARDS  
FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE  
INITIATIVES."**





## 7.2 | SCENARIO B: CREATIVE CUTTING-EDGE SMALL TOWN

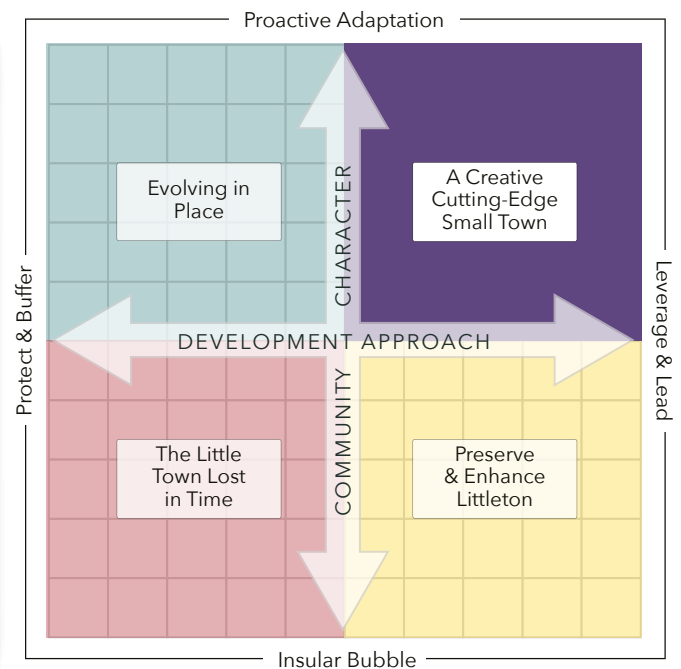
This scenario forecasts a future where the community is welcoming and forward-thinking with leadership that encourages cultural heritage, technology use and engagement. The community leverages its unique assets while leading and adapting for future residents.

Under this scenario, the City of Littleton utilizes creative economic development tools to remain flexible and to proactively meet the challenges that occur on an on-going basis. The community optimizes resource use and technology to drive sustainability. The city takes on a leadership role in the region and embraces diversity and new ideas to ensure everyone feels at home and belongs.

The 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town' scenario conveys a future where economic development is intentionally used to improve the living and working conditions for all community members and stakeholders.

### SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- **Investment in innovation and renewal increases** as the community embraces technologies, improved accessibility, and smart infrastructure.
- **The community celebrates its diversity** as new residents of different ethnicities and backgrounds move to and set up businesses in Littleton.
- **Housing is more diverse** with higher density areas and intentional design that fits the location.
- **Natural resources are protected** and the community targets clean manufacturing to fill large commercial spaces.





# SCENARIO B CHARACTERISTICS: 'A CREATIVE CUTTING-EDGE SMALL TOWN' - 2040

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future that is proactive and intentional about incorporating new technologies and creativity into economic development in Littleton. Smart infrastructure replaces aging infrastructure and transportation is transformed to provide improved mobility and a pivot away from car culture. Well managed growth results in a community where all residents are cared for and nurtured.

In the 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town' scenario, no one is left behind, and economic development adapts to social, environmental, and technological needs as the community evolves over time.



## 2040 Social Fabric and Community Characteristics

**Littleton is a diverse community that attracts young professionals and families and takes care of its residents.**

- Millennials assume leadership roles in the community.
- Alternative educational pathways are supported and life-long learning promoted as part of workforce development.
- The majority of new residents are not born and raised in Littleton; the community is more diverse.



## 2040 Local Economy and Industry Characteristics

**There is support for high-tech, green technologies and forward-thinking modes of transportation.**

- Live/Work scenarios for housing increase.
- Business innovation and renewal is encouraged through policies and community support systems.
- Clean manufacturing is targeted to fill large commercial spaces.



## 2040 Built Environment and Landscape Characteristics

**Intentional density that fits the location is pursued with a focus on increased accessibility and mobility for all ages.**

- Programs that protect natural resources are encouraged and pursued.
- Housing options are expanded to facilitate affordability with deliberately selected zones of higher density.
- Proactive measures and incentives are given to repurpose existing structures and buildings.

### 2025 Headline News

**"SOUTH PARK BUILDING GOES SOLAR."**



### 2030 Headline News

**"YOUNGEST MAYOR IN HISTORY ELECTED TO CITY COUNCIL."**



### 2040 Headline News

**"LITTLETON AWARDED SMART CITY OF THE YEAR."**





## 7.3 | SCENARIO C: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE LITTLETON

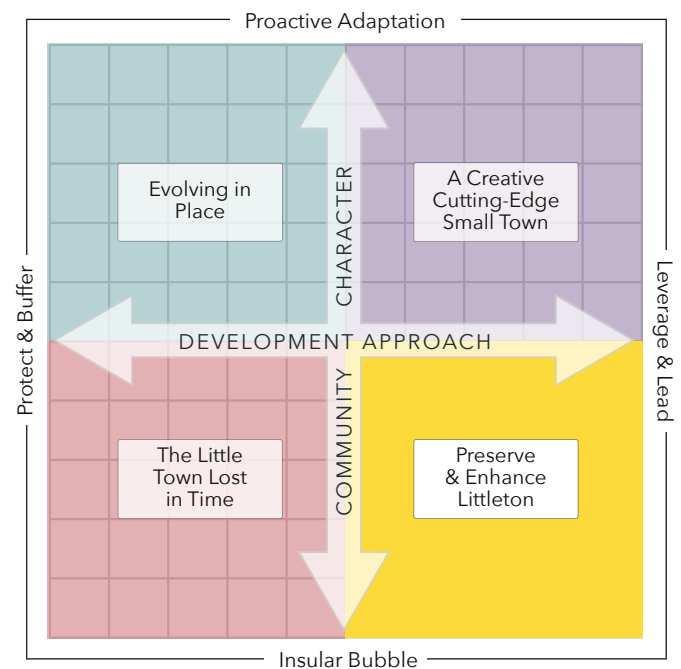
This scenario forecasts a future where the community leads the region in creative economic development strategies by leveraging its unique assets while at the same time working aggressively to retain its insular bubble and 'urban haven' feel.

Under this scenario, the City focuses economic development strategies on improving and supporting living and working conditions for existing residents and businesses. Traditional amenities are updated with new technologies and education plays a key role in supporting workforce development in the city. Littleton's unique character is protected by resisting rapid demographic change and cultural shifts, and the city is not known for being welcoming.

The 'Preserve and Enhance Littleton' scenario conveys a future where a focus on stable economic development seeks to preserve and enhance Littleton's unique character by insulating the community from rapid change.

### SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Economic development takes a 'small biz incubator' approach where the focus is on maintaining and growing existing businesses.
- Growth is deliberate and selective as the community seeks to retain its historic downtown and single family homes.
- Existing buildings are retrofitted for solar and new energy options supported by city programs and funding.
- Educational programs are better aligned with business and industry with a focus on apprenticeship programs.





# SCENARIO C CHARACTERISTICS: 'PRESERVE AND ENHANCE LITTLETON' – 2040

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future that focuses on the preservation and enhancement of existing businesses and community features. In the short-term, existing residents and stakeholders enjoy stability and consistency. Over time, the inward focus reduces Littleton's ability to adapt to evolving economic demands such as new housing and life/work options for its residents, and the community becomes known for its inward-looking orientation.

In the 'Preserve and Enhance Littleton' scenario, life in Littleton is good for existing residents and businesses, but the community's 'urban haven' feel develops a reputation for being insular and unwelcoming to newcomers and diversity.



## 2040 Social Fabric and Community Characteristics

**The community strives to maintain its cultural heritage with a slow and natural integration of change.**

- Deliberate and selective zones are created to retain historic downtown and single family homes while adding density and mixed use locations.
- Existing parks and amenities are enhanced to meet the needs of the population.
- Community, safety and wellness is prioritized.



## 2040 Local Economy and Industry Characteristics

**Focus is on maintaining and growing existing businesses through innovation and infrastructure technology.**

- Infrastructure enhancements support small and medium size businesses to create a 'connector system' and Smart City environment.
- ACC, EPIC Campus and the High School are aligned with businesses and industry; apprenticeships increase.
- Medical and healthcare industries are enhanced to support aerospace industry.



## 2040 Built Environment and Landscape Characteristics

**An adaptive reuse approach is adopted with respect to homes and commercial properties.**

- Expansion and preservation of the downtown historical district is prioritized and pursued as an economic development driver for the city.
- Housing affordability remains a challenge for new and older residents as options are limited to designated locations.
- City programs that support conversion to solar and new energy are commonplace.

### 2025 Headline News

"LITTLETON LAUNCHES  
SMALL BUSINESS  
INCUBATOR."



### 2030 Headline News

"MID-MOD MILE  
ENERGY RETROFITS."



### 2040 Headline News

"WESTERN WELCOME  
WEEK - LARGEST  
EVER."





## 7.4 | SCENARIO D: THE LITTLE TOWN LOST IN TIME

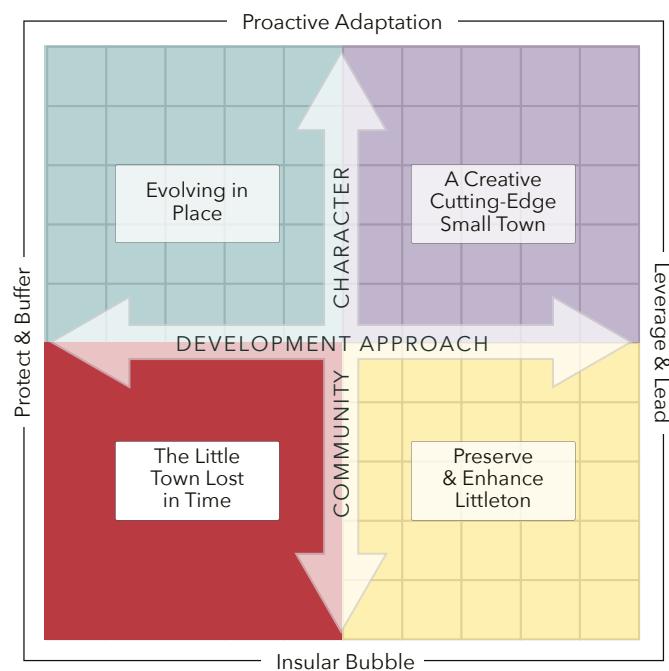
This scenario forecasts a future where the community works hard to retain its 'urban haven' feel and unique Littleton character by creating policies and approaches that protect and buffer the community from change and growth. This creates a disjointed future where resistance to change causes the community to fall behind and fade.

The 'Little Town Lost in Time' scenario conveys a future where those who can afford to live in Littleton enjoy a lifestyle and business environment that works hard to resist change.

Under this scenario, economic development in Littleton takes on a 'no-growth/no-change' approach with the intent of preserving and protecting an existing way of life and community environment. Lack of investment in solutions to address evolving conditions such as housing access/affordability, workforce demands, climate change, and aging infrastructure creates a slowly deteriorating environment that causes people and businesses to leave. The 'insular bubble' of Littleton is not open to new ideas or diversity and over time, few people or businesses want to locate here.

### SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Economic development takes a 'small biz incubator' approach where the focus is on maintaining and growing existing businesses.
- Growth is deliberate and selective as the community seeks to retain its historic downtown and single family homes.
- Existing buildings are retrofitted for solar and new energy options supported by city programs and funding.
- Educational programs are better aligned with business and industry with a focus on apprenticeship programs.





# SCENARIO D CHARACTERISTICS: 'THE LITTLE TOWN LOST IN TIME' - 2040

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future that is familiar and comfortable to existing Littleton residents and businesses in the short-term. Strategic economic development is minimal and market forces are allowed to steer development in the city. Resistance to change discourages innovation and creative solutions to a rapidly changing world.

In the 'The Little Town Lost in Time' scenario, lack of economic investment and willingness to evolve with societal changes puts the city on a trajectory to irrelevance and stagnation over time.



## 2040 Social Fabric and Community Characteristics

**Families are attracted to Littleton for the schools but population stagnates and declines as residents age and family sizes decrease.**

- Manufacturing is reinvented with AI and electric vehicle production.
- Lack of labor places a strain on workforce development and new work patterns and educational pathways develops.
- The region focuses on expanding infrastructure and transportation network.
- There is an increased need for healthcare services.



## 2040 Local Economy and Industry Characteristics

**Declining population does not support thriving businesses and businesses are forced out to surrounding areas.**

- Region becomes a community of dreamers and value conflicts emerge.
- Emphasis on traditional values discourages diversity and there is less draw to the community.
- Stay the course economic approach stymies automation and AI.
- Intentional bridging of cultures occurs.



## 2040 Built Environment and Landscape Characteristics

**Focus is on slow change and preserving historical buildings, amenities, and green spaces.**

- Community sprawl impacts suburban growth in the region
- Heavy dependence on single occupancy vehicles necessitates transportation transition to electrification and innovative mobility solutions.
- Concerns rise for climate change and weather impacts on farming.
- Baby Boomers affect future housing construction.

### 2025 Headline News

"LITTLETON RENAISSANCE IN MOTION."



### 2030 Headline News

"LITTLETON = PLEASANTVILLE - BRING YOUR FAMILY HERE."



### 2040 Headline News

"LITTLETON'S DECLINING HOUSING VALUES IMPACT RESIDENTS' INVESTMENT."



# 8.0 | LEAST DESIRED, EXPECTED, AND PREFERRED FUTURES

## 8.1 | LEAST DESIRED FUTURE

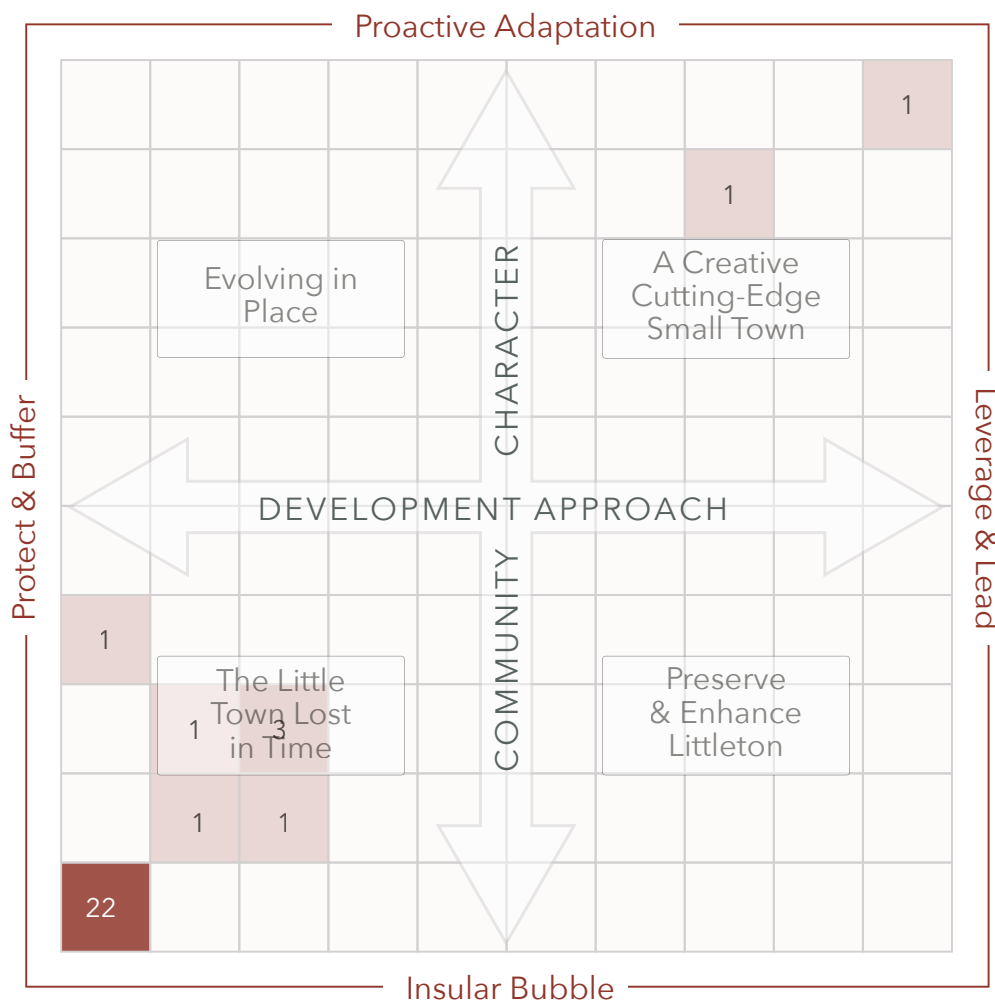
The Least Desired Future is defined as ‘the future that you think will be the most undesirable (or least optimal or least desired) for the future of Littleton. Think-Tank participants most definitely considered Scenario D, ‘The Little Town Lost in Time’ to be the Least Desired scenario for Littleton.

Littleton, Colorado Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan Project **Think-Tank Workshops**



### Least Desirable Future

This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

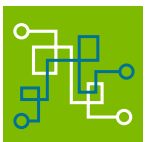


The least desired future is one where community members and stakeholders have said, ‘We don’t want that.’ This provides leadership a mandate to change the trajectory of the community to avoid this scenario.



“Littleton could easily become just another suburb. Without attention to our unique attributes, Littleton could lose its unique identity and become just another stop on the lite rail.”

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



FutureInsight

- The intensity of color in the bottom left corner of the scenario matrix indicates that Think-Tank participants have a shared view of the least desirable future.
- The corners of the scenario matrix quadrants indicate the extreme versions of the scenarios.



## 8.2 | EXPECTED FUTURE

The expected future is one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory of Littleton. Most participants believed that Scenario A, “Evolving in Place”, or Scenario D, “The Little Town Lost in Time” were the scenarios that represented the expected future for Littleton. To a lesser extent, some participants thought scenario B, ‘A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town,’ and Scenario C, ‘Preserve and Enhance Littleton,’ could also be possible expected futures.

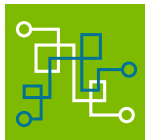
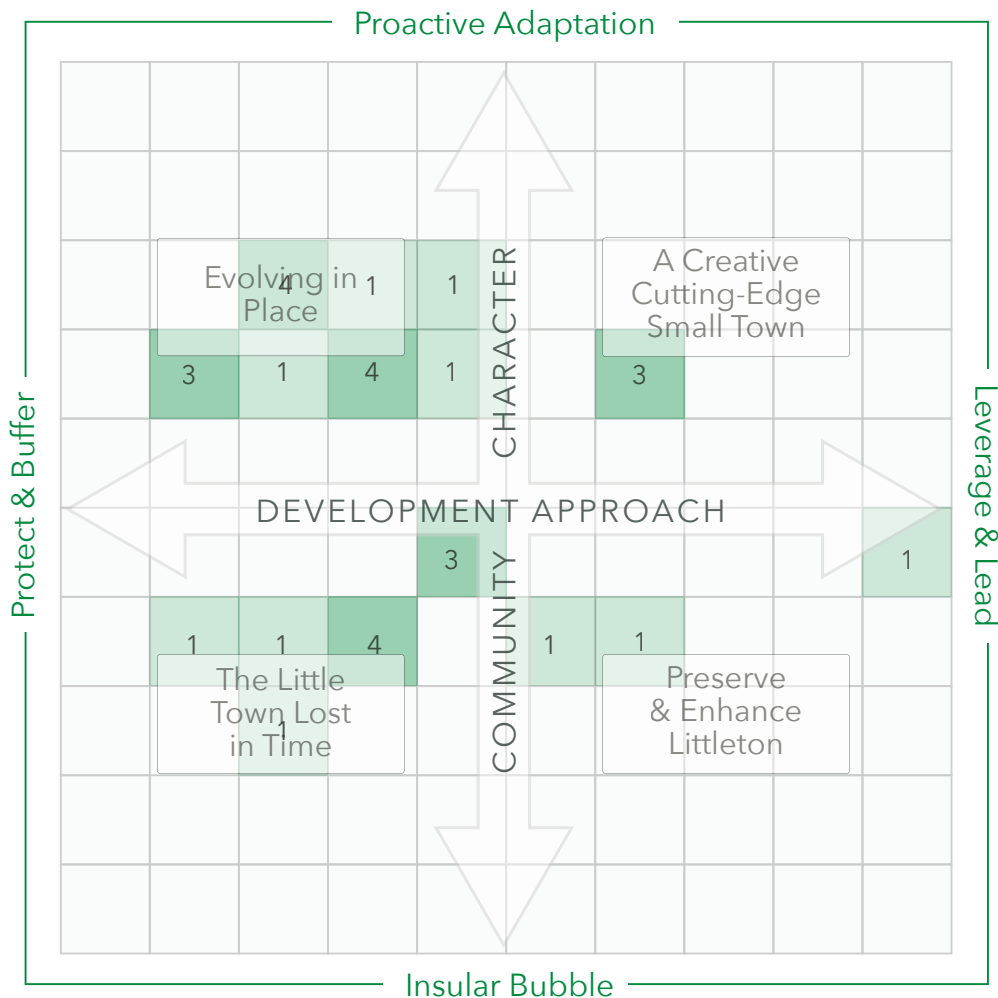
The Expected Future represents the future that is most likely to happen if the community does nothing to change direction or trajectory.

Littleton, Colorado Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan Project **Think-Tank Workshops**



### Expected Future

This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.



FutureInsight

- The expected future represents a middle ground future. This outcome would be adequate for the city, with moderate progress and not too much change.

*“The decisions we make today in terms what we build will have impacts for the next century. We should be planning ahead for a world that doesn’t revolve around cars.”*

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

## 8.3 | PREFERRED FUTURE

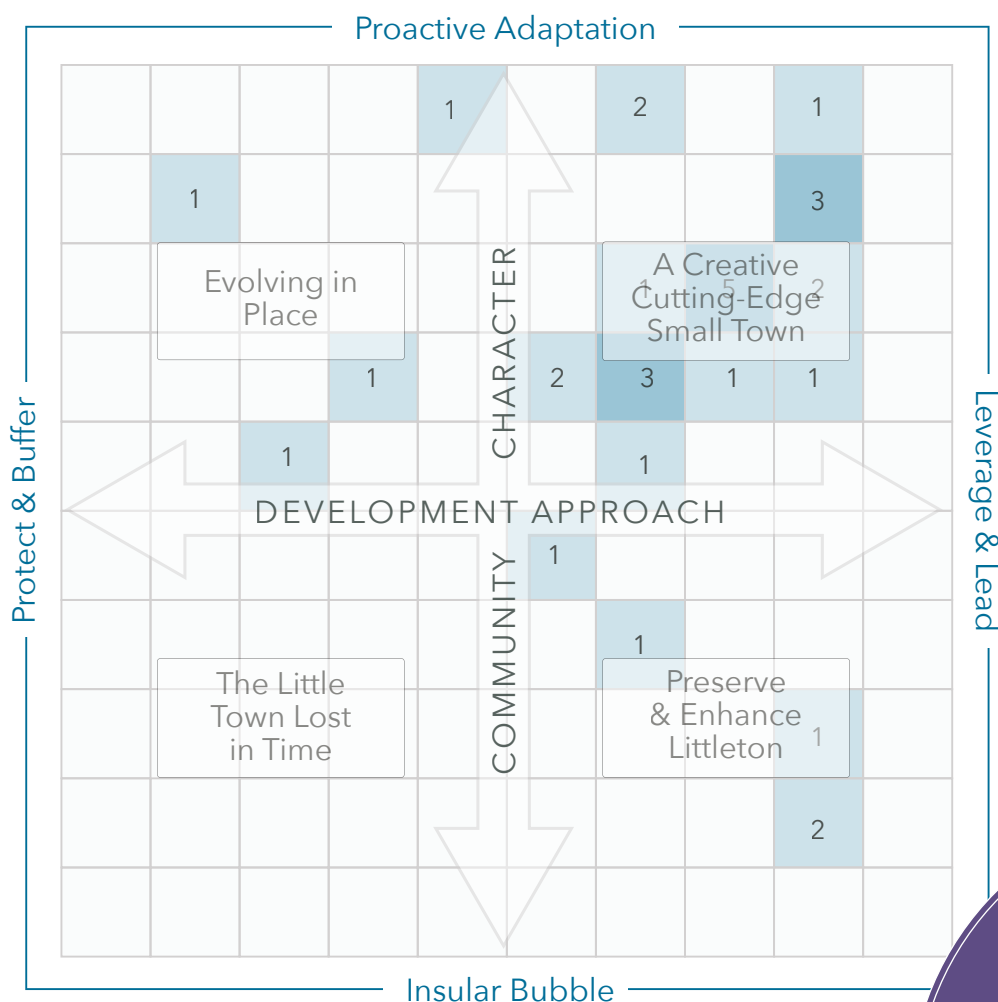
Think-Tank participants expressed an overwhelming preference for Scenario B, 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town' as the Preferred Future for Littleton in 2040. Think-Tank participants discussed the consequences of inaction and the need to take decisive action NOW to redirect the region's trajectory over the next 10 years. There was a sincere desire by participants to build on and leverage the city's existing unique assets and to tell the story of Littleton more proactively and intentionally.

Littleton, Colorado Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan Project **Think-Tank Workshops**



### Preferred Future

This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

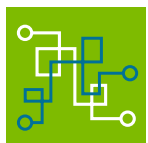


Getting to the preferred future requires collaboration, alignment of vision and strong leadership. Think-Tank participants showed a clear desire for change and a willingness to work together to achieve the preferred future for economic development in Littleton.



"Littleton can become the day-trip destination from Denver and an amazing place to live. Through creative downtown events, increased safety, beautification and a cohesive plan for growth, Littleton can be a one of a kind place for tourist, safe family living, an educational hub (ACC, Library, Hudson Gardens, & Museums) and exploration of our many walking paths, river access, bike paths, and outdoor venues."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent



FutureInsight

- The concentration of color in Scenario B, 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town', indicates a close alignment of thinking among Think-Tank participants, and a significant appetite for change.
- Arriving at a point of consensus among stakeholders about the preferred future is very important to the visioning process as it provides a sense of cohesion, agreement, and balanced solutions going forward.





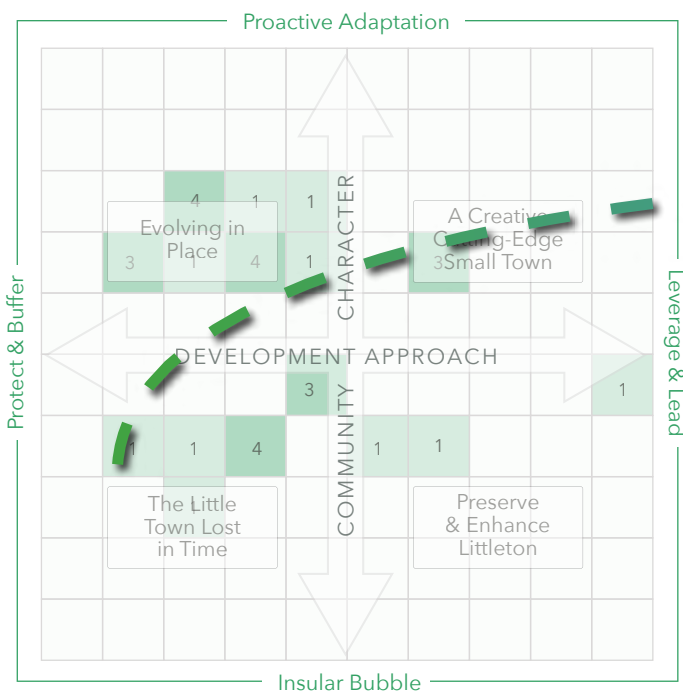
## 8.4 | GETTING TO THE PREFERRED FUTURE

Think-Tank participants discussed the ramifications and implications of failing to achieve the preferred future. While there was strong alignment among Think-Tank participants that Scenario B, 'A Creative Cutting-Edge Small Town,' represented the preferred scenario, it was also recognized that reorienting the current trajectory will require significant collaboration, communication, and leadership in the community.

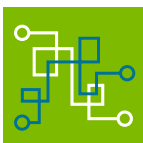
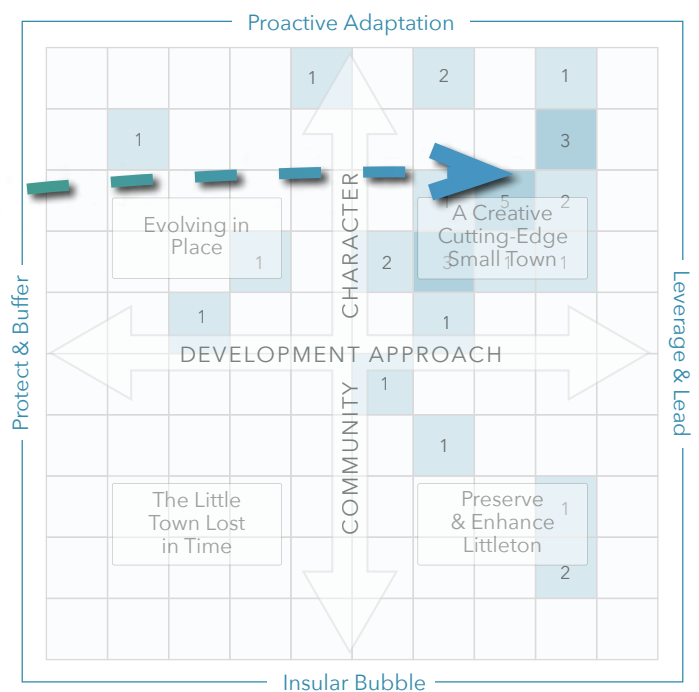
Because of the long-term nature of the Scenario Planning methodology, stakeholders often see the 'distant future vision (2040)' as unattainable and unrealistic. However, this underestimates the progress that can be made during the intervening years, and the cumulative positive impacts of change.



### Expected Future



### Preferred Future



### FutureInsight

- The Think-Tank scenario planning is a significant step in the City's economic development planning process to define collectively how Littleton will strategically implement a plan to achieve its preferred future.
- There will need to be a significant pivot in moving to a strong 'leverage and lead' development approach, and more intentional proactive adaptation of the community character over the next ten years.

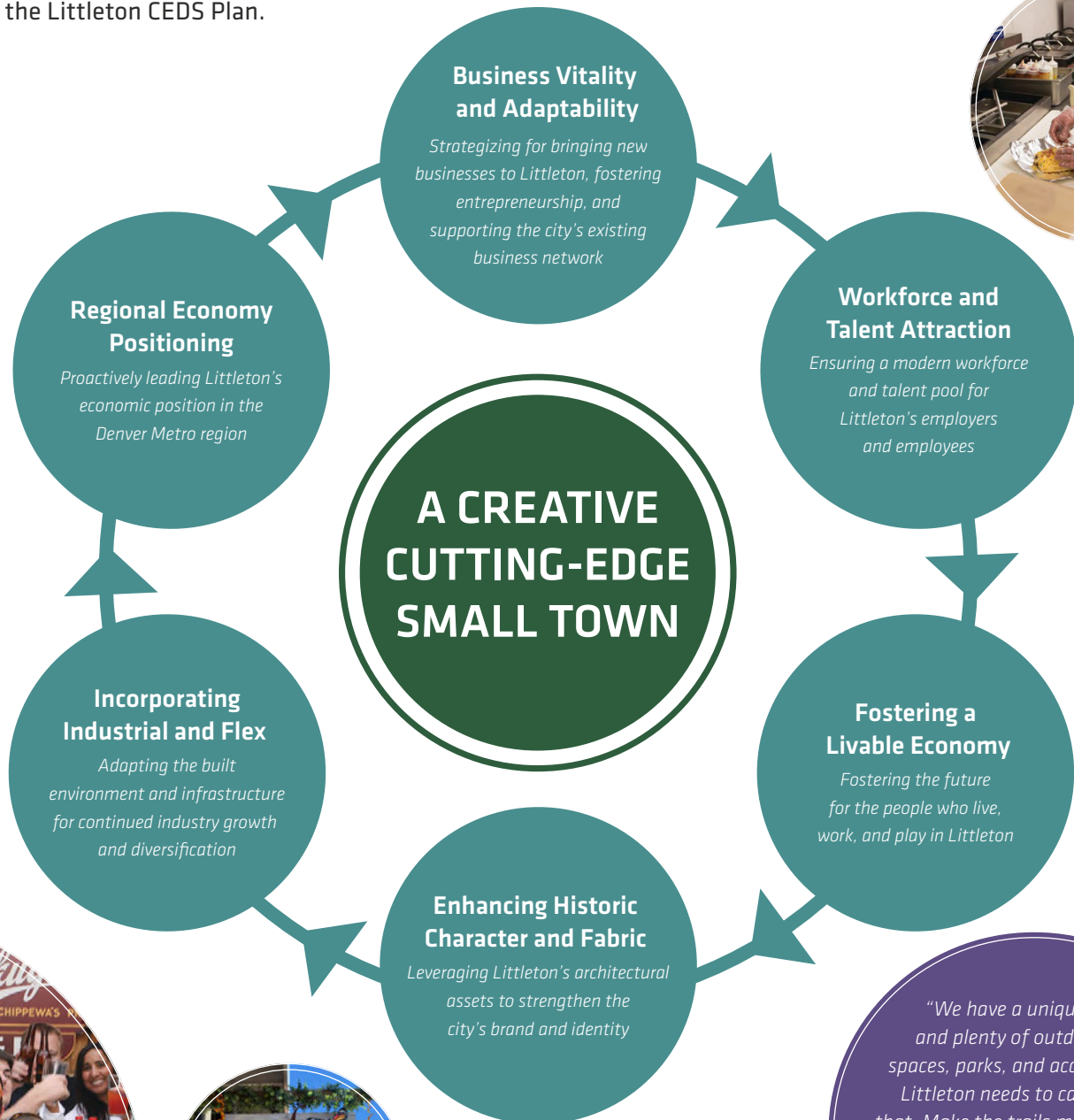
"Littleton has strong sense of community, pride and a sense that we are unique. We are not Denver, Cherry Creek nor Highlands Ranch - nor do we want to be! Capitalizing on our unique western, small town, quirkiness is our greatest asset."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent

# 9.0 | POTENTIAL HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC THEMES AND ACTIONS

The strategic themes and actions are the building blocks of the Strategic Pillars that will create the foundation of Littleton's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Following the scenario development and presentations, Think-Tank participants assembled into five small groups to discuss potential high-level strategic themes and actions that could propel Littleton to its preferred future. Each group recorded and presented out their ideas to the larger group. This information, along with the stakeholder survey data, interview input, benchmark report data, and prior business survey data were compiled to create six overarching strategic pillars for the CEDS Plan. These Strategic Pillars will be further developed in Focus Groups that will take place in August and September. Below are the six Strategic Pillars of the Littleton CEDS Plan.



"We have a unique charm and plenty of outdoor green spaces, parks, and access to trails. Littleton needs to capitalize on that. Make the trails more accessible. We also have a beautiful downtown area and the Mid-Mod mile."

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent





Please stay connected to Littleton's CEDS planning project at [lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/](https://lab2.future-iq.com/littleton-colorado-comprehensive-economic-development-strategic-plan-project/).

## 10.0 | NEXT STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Following the Think-Tank, this Think-Tank Report was written and published for distribution. The project will then move into the 'Develop Draft Strategic Plan' phase of the CEDS planning process.

### City of Littleton, Colorado Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Planning Process



- August 7 & 9 and September 6, 2023 – Six in-person Strategic Pillar Focus Groups were held to build out the strategies and actions for each Strategic Pillar of the CEDS Plan.
- August-September, 2023 – The draft CEDS Plan
- September-October, 2023 - Update project news bulletins and Toolkit
- October 2023 – Virtual Future Summit and Final Presentation to Council

*"You will never get everyone to agree, and not everyone will be happy. But set a plan, and march forward. If you have to tweak over time, then tweak. If you decide it's the wrong direction, then change direction. These questions are difficult and there are NO black and white answers. What's important is that you MAKE a commitment, FUND it, and have strong leadership willing to take risks, and fail, and then pivot with new knowledge. GO LITTLETON!"*

- Littleton CEDS Stakeholder Survey Respondent





## »»»» 11.0 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Community members and stakeholders have engaged in this CEDS planning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest have ensured discussions are open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within Littleton. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment participants have to the future of the City.

Additionally, our appreciation is extended to the Littleton City Council and in particular to Cindie Perry, Brian Garner, and Jamie Crout, who meet on a weekly basis and provide the local expertise that helps guide this project. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.

### LITTLETON CITY COUNCIL

**Kyle Schlachter**  
Mayor

**Gretchen Rydin**  
Mayor Pro Tem  
At Large

**Stephen Barr**  
Council Member  
District III

**Patrick Driscoll**  
Council Member  
District I

**Pam Grove**  
Council Member  
At Large

**Kelly Milliman**  
Council Member  
District IV

**Jerry Valdes**  
Council Member  
District II







## »»»» 12.0 | FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Littleton's CEDS planning project, please contact:



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## 13.0 | CONSULTING TEAM – ABOUT FUTURE IQ AND JS&A

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit [future-iq.com](https://future-iq.com) or by email at [info@future-iq.com](mailto:info@future-iq.com).

For this project, Future iQ has partnered with the economic development and planning firm of Jon Stover & Associates (JS&A). To learn more about JS&A, visit [stoverandassociates.com](https://stoverandassociates.com).



**DAVID  
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**BRITTANY  
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**WALTER R.  
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Data Engineer



**LESLIE  
GRAY**

Vice President



**JON  
STOVER**

Managing Partner







CITY OF LITTLETON, COLORADO COMPREHENSIVE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

# THINK-TANK REPORT

COLORADO, USA

JULY 2023