

- Park-n-Ride
- Public Facility
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City of
Evans, Colorado



**US Highway 85 Overlay
District Master Plan**

2014

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HISTORY & BACKGROUND

HISTORY

When John Evans and his business partners began to build the Denver Pacific Railroad, the City of Evans was born as a railroad town. This stretch of the rail line was constructed through the City of Evans in the late 1860s and continues to pass through the City today. Known as the Queen City of the Platte, Evans was the first town to file for incorporation with the Weld County Clerk on November 22, 1869. The town was named Evans in honor of John Evans, who later became the second territorial governor of Colorado.

The Denver Pacific (now Union Pacific) Railroad became a vital part of the Evans community for many years as one of the main stops along the route from Denver to Wyoming. With the onset of automobiles, US Highway 85 has replaced the rail line as the main transportation connection to and from the City of Evans.

BACKGROUND

In addition to the original residential properties, numerous commercial businesses have been established along the Highway 85 corridor since its completion in the 1970s. While some businesses continue to thrive along the corridor, many owners have been forced to close their doors due to changes in consumer preference and demand. As a result, the Highway 85 corridor has become fragmented and has lost much of its ability to attract local residents and commuters as customers. City Council wishes to work toward energizing the corridor for locals as well as passersby. As a result the US Highway 85 Overlay District was created in 2002 by the City of Evans in response to the immense potential that this area provides for future commercial development in the City.

The new US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan proposes specific future land uses that can preserve existing properties but also adjust the district's development priorities. This 'Master Plan' – the US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan – will further strengthen and energize the Highway 85 corridor in Evans to retain and attract retail, entertainment, and dining uses that will serve the community for many years to come.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use can be characterized as general commercial which includes offices, hotels, oil and gas support services, light industrial, and vehicular oriented retail uses. Multiple vacant lots are also present along the corridor. Development is generally patchy and not uniform. Please refer to the map on Appendix 2 of this document for more information regarding existing land uses

CURRENT ZONING

Properties within the Overlay District are currently zoned with one of six base zone districts: High Intensity Commercial (C-3), Residential Commercial (RC), Single Family Residential (R-1), Light Industrial (I-1), Medium Industrial (I-2), and Heavy Industrial (I-3). Many of these zone districts do not reflect the current uses on properties. The Existing Zoning Map is provided as Appendix 1 at the end of this document.



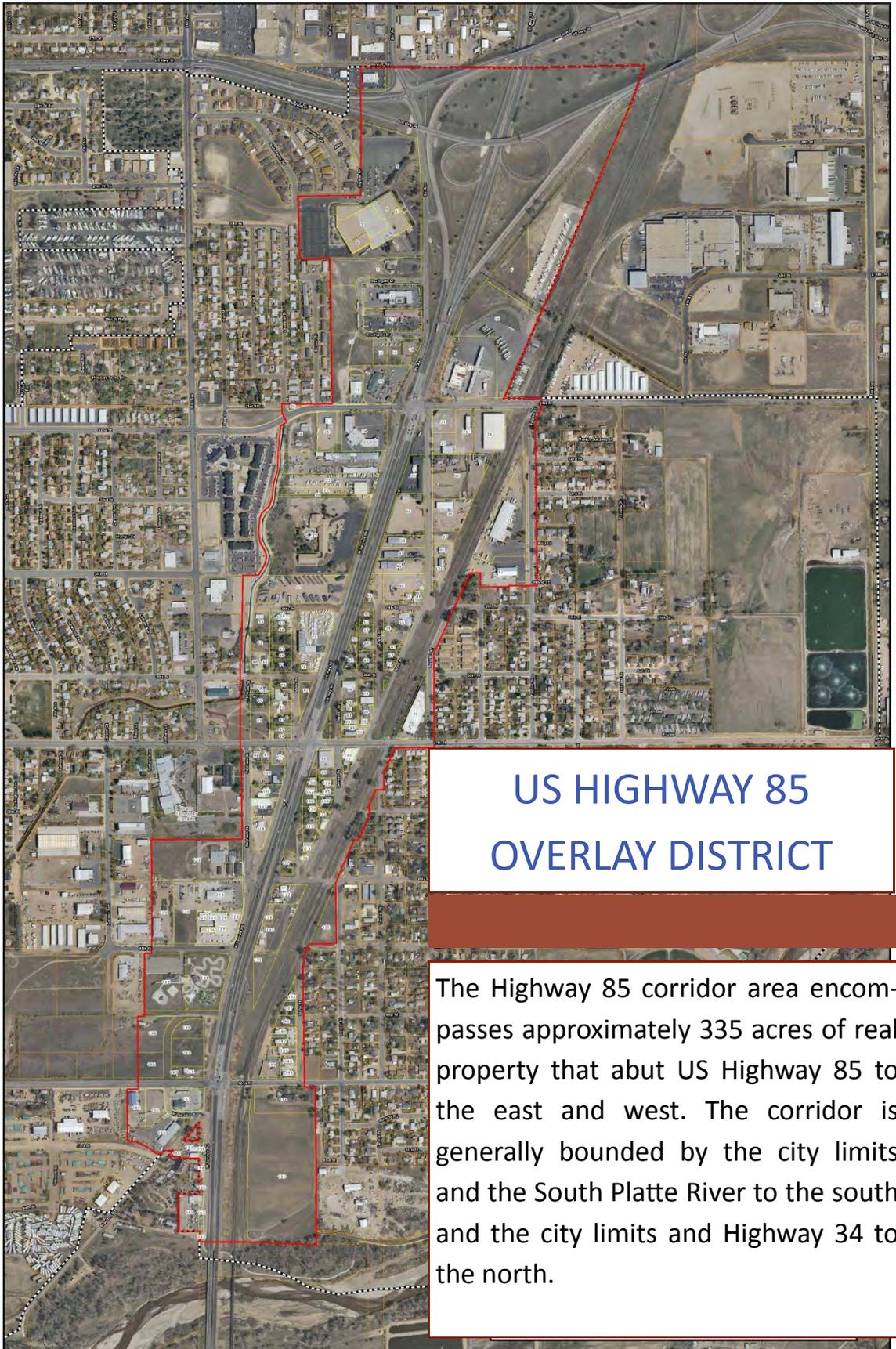
Courtesy of the Denver Public Library: Digital Collections

VISION

The US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan will direct future development proposals in the following ways:

- The Master Plan will help unify the fragmented land uses present along the corridor by focusing specific future development in specific areas; and
- Designate future land use opportunities based on access, parcel size, existing uses, and conditions; and
- Promote infrastructure improvements to create safe access opportunities and improve traffic circulation and flows; and
- Eliminate fragmented local roadways to increase development flexibility; and
- Address transportation linkages and connections to promote better safety, health related options, and quality access for local residents; and
- Address the lack of vibrant pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to connect the surrounding neighborhoods and community to the planned and existing park and trail systems, and commercial uses





US HIGHWAY 85 OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Highway 85 corridor area encompasses approximately 335 acres of real property that abut US Highway 85 to the east and west. The corridor is generally bounded by the city limits and the South Platte River to the south and the city limits and Highway 34 to the north.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

2010 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan builds on the goals and policies established in the 2010 City of Evans Comprehensive Plan. Together these two documents will guide development and redevelopment within the City and the Highway 85 corridor to provide a framework for any applicable land use decisions made by the City.

The US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan supports the Goals in the Comprehensive Plan in a number of ways: The Master Plan:

- Promotes an orderly, efficient growth pattern and adequate public facilities
- Addresses concerns regarding the efficiency of the transportation system
- Promotes increased pedestrian trails and connections to parks and open space
- Provides an opportunity for the US Highway 85 Overlay District to become a destination center in the City of Evans
- Encourages stable, cohesive development areas to improve the community's identity
- Establishes appropriate locations for employment and commercial development
- Helps to promote flexibility for future development design and siting
- Encourages a more balanced mix of uses in the community

US 85 ACCESS CONTROL PLAN (1999)

The access control plan addresses various areas of city transportation planning such as automobile, pedestrian, and public transportation. This document was utilized in the development of the US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan as it contains vital information with regards to the volume and type of traffic most prevalent in the corridor. The Master Plan reflects the goals of the US 85 Access Control Plan in the following ways.

- Expand the development of facilities for all modes of transportation
- Strengthen connectivity between different neighborhoods
- Continue improvement of Level of Service (LOS) standards in the area
- Build upon existing infrastructure to develop a continuous network of streets and pathways

The US 85 Access Control Plan also provides additional recommendations that relate to future land use and connectivity issues along the corridor. Many of these recommendations were utilized in the creation of the US 85 Overlay District Master Plan.

US 85 CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN (2002)

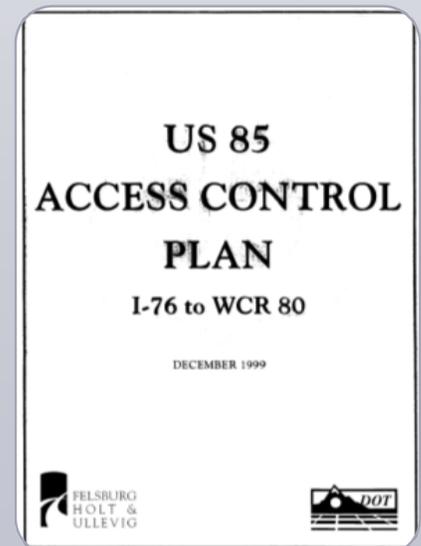
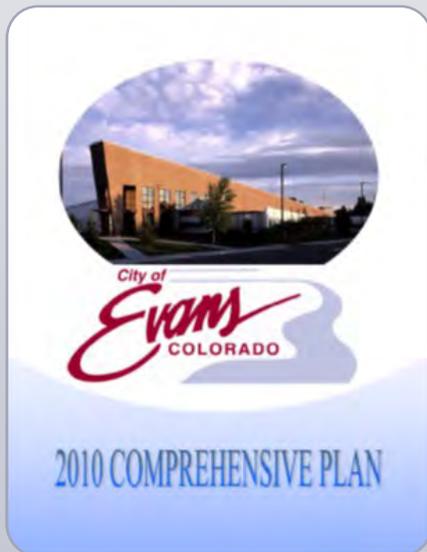
The Highway 85 Corridor Master Plan was completed in 2002 and offers long range planning ideas for the future of the corridor. This document presented goals to improve safety, architectural elements, connectivity, land-use, and signage. The recommendations outlined in this document are focused around input from the community and previous studies. The document's suggestions as they relate to architectural improvements and landscaping influenced the creation of Section 19.62 in the City of Evans Municipal Code.

EVANS REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY & URBAN RENEWAL

The City Council serves as the Evans Redevelopment Agency (ERA). The Agency was formed in 2009 to assist in redevelopment of blighted and run-down neighborhoods and districts that were attracting little or no private investment and to stimulate the transformation of certain areas of the City into attractive and thriving areas. The same boundary that reflects the Highway 85 Overlay District is also an Urban Renewal district within the City of Evans and can receive Urban Renewal funding.

US HIGHWAY 85 OVERLAY DISTRICT

The US Highway 85 Overlay District is a zoning district. As its name implies, it is a district that overlays other base zone districts. The district has a specific set of design guidelines and criteria that are applicable only along this corridor. Section 19.62 of the City of Evans Municipal Code outlines these requirements, such as landscaping, setbacks, uses, color and sign standards. The overlay district was first established in 2002 and the guidelines were updated in 2013.



COMMUNITY INPUT

This Master Plan has been prepared with the help of the local community. The plan takes into account the comments and perspectives heard during two community Open House meetings conducted on November 21 and December 19, 2013. During the meetings, staff from Baseline Engineering Corporation presented overviews and potential site development improvements and land uses that will help increase the commercial retail presence within the Highway 85 Overlay District. Various interested residents, property owners and business owners attended the meetings to provide input. City Council, Planning Commission, and staff appreciate the ideas expressed by the individuals who have attended the meetings.



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

- NOVEMBER 21, 2013—OPEN HOUSE FORMAT
- DECEMBER 19, 2013—PRESENTATION/Q&A SESSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

The US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan provides the following guidance with regards to both future land uses and access improvements in the vicinity of the US Highway 85 corridor. Following this section will be recommendations for future land use classifications and traffic network improvements.

Concentrate Uses into Specific Areas of Activity

The US Highway 85 Overlay District should create unique commercial areas of activity by clustering similar types of uses into specific districts. These districts will help promote uniformity within the corridor and increase awareness as to where certain services can be found. These areas will also target different types of clientele. For example, an increase in regional retail will help attract US Highway 85 commuters, while local residents will also be attracted by restaurants or entertainment venues.

The character of these individual districts will be influenced in part by current uses along the corridor as well as by the best current design practices. Future development should take advantage of the close proximity to residential neighborhoods near the US Highway 85 Overlay District. The inclusion of new and “walkable” commercial centers characteristic of small local services will provide a destination for local residents.

In addition, the close proximity to US Highway 85 must also be acknowledged. The Overlay District is strategically designed to attract commuters as they pass through the City of Evans. Future development and redevelopment includes areas reserved for larger retail commercial activities and parking facilities that will attract commuters passing through Evans on Highway 85. Such uses include larger format regional retail stores and centers.

The concentration of similar uses into specific areas will aid in creating a stronger sense of identity and character within the Highway 85 Overlay District.



Create Opportunities for Live Work

It is important to recognize that the Highway 85 corridor is not only a retail corridor, but also a home to Evans residents. The corridor is surrounded by several established neighborhoods. The Master Plan offers an opportunity to create some commercial developments that include vertically developed residential units. The inclusion of residential uses in limited areas will create opportunities to live, work, and recreate in a single area. Future land use development can offer the ability to incorporate vertical mixed use development to accommodate these lifestyle choices. These developments should be positioned at least one block away from the Highway 85 roadway to minimize exposure to traffic noise along US Highway 85.



Increase Pedestrian Connections

To enhance the Highway 85 Overlay District as a true 'destination experience,' additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will need to be incorporated into City plans and landowner development plans. The close proximity of the Evans Community Complex, the new Riverside Library and Cultural Center, existing neighborhood parks, and the future Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) park-n-ride offers the unique opportunity to connect commercial and recreational amenities while improving pedestrian mobility. The corridor offers a tremendous opportunity to become a major activity center with the City of Evans. Increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will build on the policies of the Comprehensive Plan that wish to interconnect neighborhoods and activity centers throughout the City.



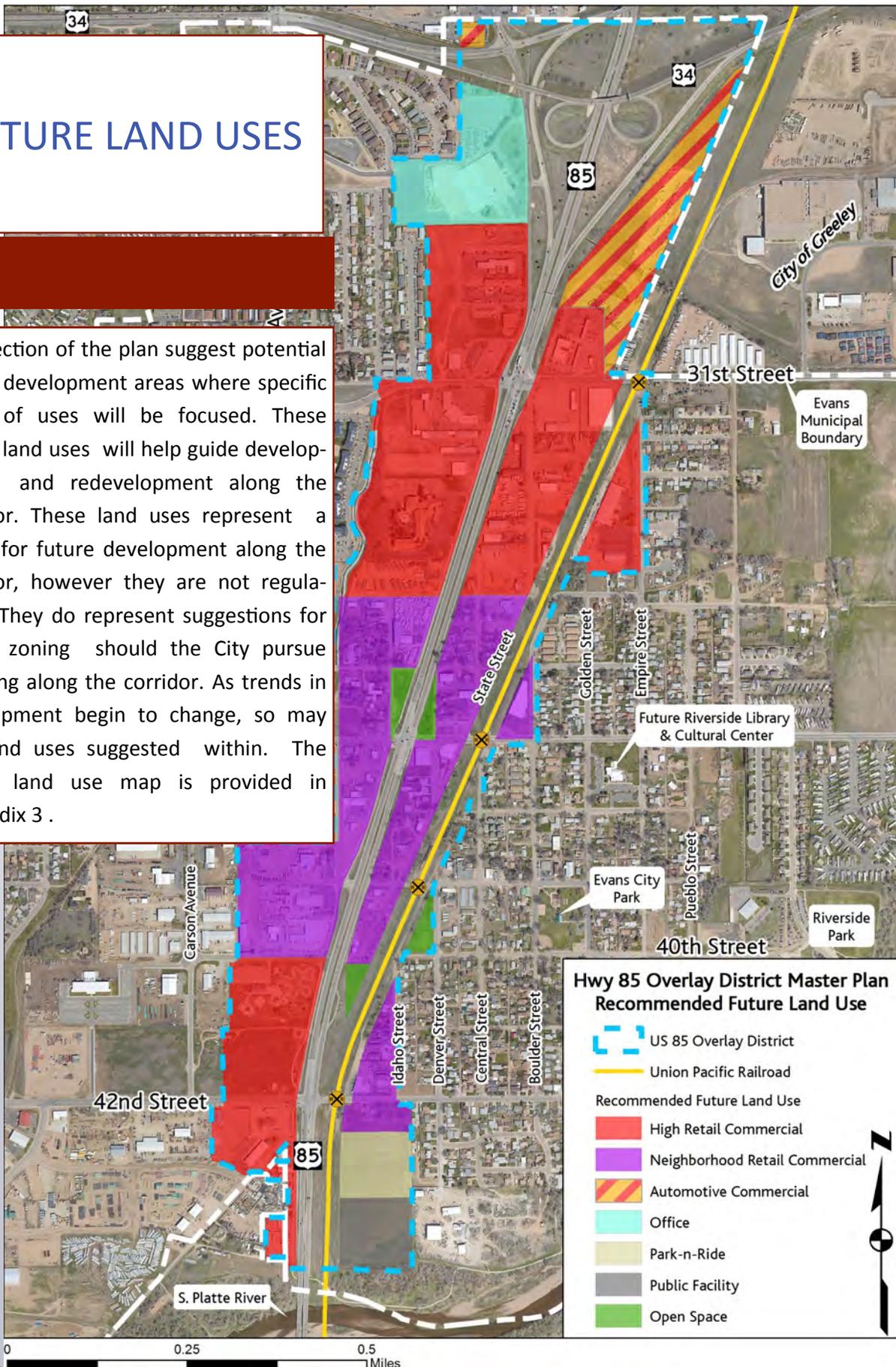
Increase Access and Improve Traffic Conditions

Over time, the access and traffic connections within the corridor have become unaccommodating and not safe. Numerous public streets and awkward frontage road connections have made it difficult for property owners to take full advantage of the layout and function of their properties. The Master Plan provides guidance to alleviate some of the access problems with the Highway 85 Frontage Road system. The City will make changes to the frontage road system by eliminating intersections which are too close to Highway 85 for safe access. The Master Plan examined the existing access points to Highway 85 and makes specific recommendations on improvements and, where necessary, closures.



FUTURE LAND USES

This section of the plan suggest potential future development areas where specific types of uses will be focused. These future land uses will help guide development and redevelopment along the corridor. These land uses represent a vision for future development along the corridor, however they are not regulations. They do represent suggestions for future zoning should the City pursue rezoning along the corridor. As trends in development begin to change, so may the land uses suggested within. The future land use map is provided in Appendix 3 .



**Hwy 85 Overlay District Master Plan
Recommended Future Land Use**

-  US 85 Overlay District
-  Union Pacific Railroad
- Recommended Future Land Use**
-  High Retail Commercial
-  Neighborhood Retail Commercial
-  Automotive Commercial
-  Office
-  Park-n-Ride
-  Public Facility
-  Open Space

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

HIGH RETAIL COMMERCIAL

The High Retail Commercial category envisions traditional retail center land uses. This category is characterized by one or two anchor stores with other smaller supporting retail uses. These types of centers and uses typically offer a wide variety of goods and:

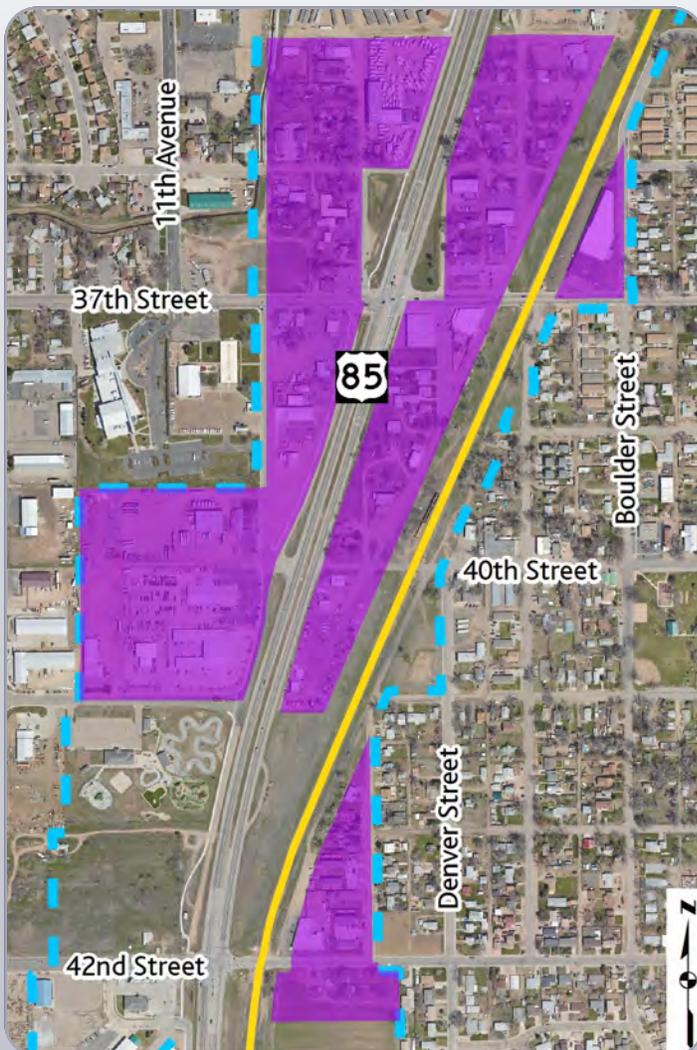
- Can be located in areas with large lots that can accommodate large building footprints
- Will be mostly located in the northern part of the US Highway 85 Overlay District as well as a smaller area in the southern portion of the plan
- Will be designed to be buffered from surrounding neighborhoods as best as possible, and try to keep traffic generated by these retail uses along the main two roadway corridors



NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL & COMMERCIAL

The Neighborhood Retail & Commercial category includes a variety of small retailers and services, including convenience stores, sit-down restaurants, specialty shops, drugstores, financial services, and personal services. Acceptable uses should be compatible with surrounding development. The Neighborhood Retail & Commercial area shall be located in the center of the plan and may abut existing residential uses outside the District. The lower-intensity commercial operations in the Neighborhood Retail & Commercial category shall include:

- Smaller-scale buildings or “neighborhood” size in bulk
- Commercial developments/uses that are developed with the intention to not generate a high volume of customer or delivery traffic
- Vertically integrated residential units, if provided, on the second and above story of new commercial developments
- Attractive walkable pedestrian environments



OFFICE

Office uses include a variety of office types, including multi-tenant mid-rise offices, single-tenant corporate offices, medical or post-secondary facilities, and out-patient services. Office uses do not require the same high level of visibility and access as the proposed retail commercial land uses. The Office area is positioned in the northwest corner of the US Highway 85 Overlay District in areas that currently have medical office uses present on site.

AUTOMOTIVE COMMERCIAL

The Automotive Commercial category will allow for new automotive related uses (e.g. dealerships) in addition to all uses permitted within the Commercial High land use. New automobile uses will help utilize the awkwardly shaped parcel located in the northeastern portion of the District. It is difficult to accommodate most commercial high intensity uses on this parcel. However the close proximity to the US Highway 85 and US Highway 34, the parcel offers a great level of visibility and accessibility, which are important factors for automotive dealers.



NEW CAR SALES USE



OFFICE USE

OTHER LAND USE CATEGORIES

PUBLIC FACILITY

The Public Facility category includes land designated for governmental uses, including Park-n-Rides, City owned facilities, and developed park lands.

OPEN SPACE

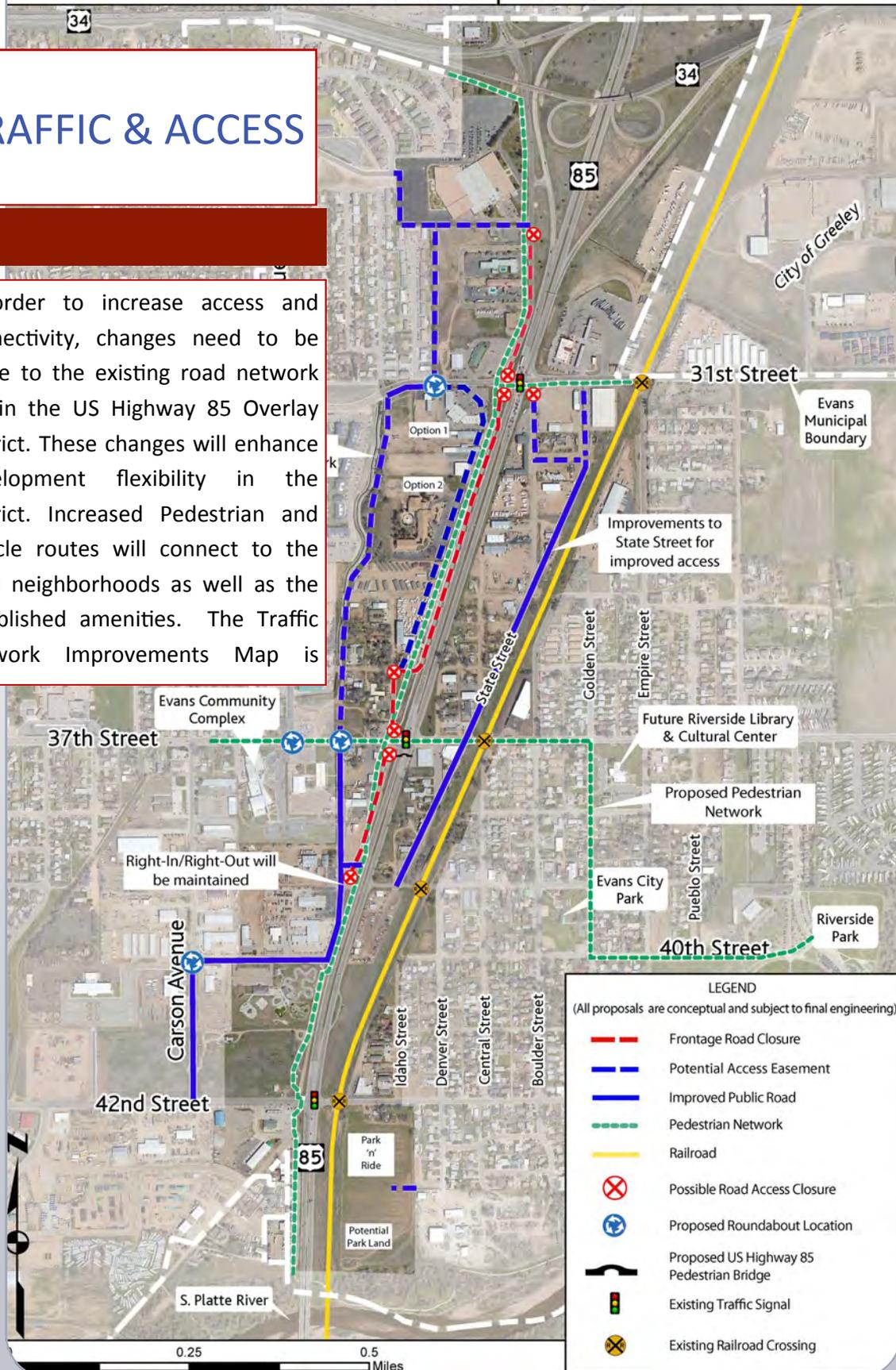
Land designated as open space in the Master Plan mostly consist of remnant city owned parcels. These lots are often awkwardly shaped and development is not likely. These lands can be set aside for open space as buffers, pocket parks, and plazas where possible. Neighboring development can incorporate these lands into site plans as pubic open areas and include them as part of the open space.



Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan Traffic Network Improvements

TRAFFIC & ACCESS

In order to increase access and connectivity, changes need to be made to the existing road network within the US Highway 85 Overlay District. These changes will enhance development flexibility in the District. Increased Pedestrian and Bicycle routes will connect to the local neighborhoods as well as the established amenities. The Traffic Network Improvements Map is



LEGEND
(All proposals are conceptual and subject to final engineering)

- Frontage Road Closure
- Potential Access Easement
- Improved Public Road
- Pedestrian Network
- Railroad
- ⊗ Possible Road Access Closure
- ⊗ Proposed Roundabout Location
- Proposed US Highway 85 Pedestrian Bridge
- ⬆ Existing Traffic Signal
- ⊗ Existing Railroad Crossing

TRAFFIC NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

The Traffic Network Improvement recommendations will guide future development of transportation related infrastructure along Highway 85 and within the boundaries of the US 85 Overlay District. Since the completion of Highway 85 in the 1970s, the road network within the Highway 85 Overlay District has been realigned to an extent that it provides some inadequate and unsafe access to the business areas along Highway 85. Some of the roads, such as the West Service Road and State Street with their close proximity to the Highway, are confusing to navigate and have created safety problems. Additionally, the railroad bisecting the corridor adds further limitation to the transportation network. To allow future redevelopment to prosper, the following concept improvements are proposed. Additional regulations as they relate to parking can be found in chapter 19.62 of the City of Evans Code. These concepts have been evaluated against the previous assessment of the road network in the US 85 Access Control Plan from 1999 and future land use designations proposed in the corridor. Specific suggestions regarding road improvements are provided in Appendix 1. Please note that all suggestions are conceptual in nature and are subject to final engineering.

Improve traffic safety through:

- Traffic calming measures including roundabouts in key locations*
- Closure of nonconforming road intersections
- Creating a network that is easy to navigate
- Distributing traffic volume from US Highway 85 to the surrounding road network
- Improved way-finding signs and directions

Strategically re-route traffic in certain areas to increase business visibility through:

- Aligning of the road network that is safer and more visible to businesses
- Establishment of new public access easements to be determined with future developments
- Improved way-finding signs and directions
- Reducing traffic speed where businesses are in close proximity to the road

Increase pedestrian and bicycle access through:

- Connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the entire area of the US Highway 85 Overlay District
- Identification of parks and recreation amenities as destinations for increased connections to the US Highway 85 Overlay District – such connections could include Evans City Park, Riverside Park, the Evans community complex and recreation center, and the future Riverside Library and Cultural Center, and the South Platte River
- Increasing way finding elements such as signs along surrounding neighborhood roads

*Information and benefits in regards to roundabout safety and traffic flow are available

NEXT STEPS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

To better facilitate the goals set forth in this US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan, new zoning needs to be established along the corridor. These new zoning districts will ensure that The US Highway 85 Overlay District can successfully build upon the ground work that was established in not only this document, but the other plans mentioned above. The Future Land Use Map must also be updated to reflect these changes. Finally Chapter 19.62 of the City of Evans Municipal Code will be updated to reflect the new Master Plan. It should be noted that the City's development goals may change over time as dynamic market forces and demographics influence Evan's development potential. The City will need to monitor the progress and feasibility of the goals and strategies delineated in the US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan and make changes and adaptations as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

EVANS MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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Ward 1: John Morris – Mayor Pro Tem
Laura Brown

Ward 2: April Neibauer
Mark Clark

Ward 3: Jay Schaffer
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Thank you to other City of Evans staff members that provided valuable assistance and served as technical advisors throughout the planning process.

APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

One of the main focal points of the US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan will be to recommend potential road network improvements. The following section divides the Highway 85 Overlay District into three Traffic Improvements Areas to better explain the proposed improvements and their approximate locations. All of the proposed improvements are conceptual.

TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT AREA 1

Traffic Improvement Area 1 is located in the northern third of the Highway 85 Overlay District. Specifically it is the entirety of the overlay district's geography, north of 31st Street. All of the proposed traffic network changes will occur in the area northwest of the intersection of 31st Street and US Highway 85.

The recently completed 29th Street Road is foreseen to be extended southerly along the western edge of the Highway 85 Overlay District. This will either take the form of an improved public road or a public-access easement. This improvement will help provide an alternative “spine-route” to take the place of the West Frontage Road that is proposed to be removed. This connection would establish a better traffic flow through the area and access to the future developments on the western portion of the Overlay District

It is proposed that a portion of 8th Avenue will be closed as well as the Intersection of 8th Avenue and 31st Street. However the northern section of 8th Avenue will remain in place as it provides access onto US 85. An access easement could potentially connect 8th Avenue with the proposed continuation of 29th Street Road. However it is important to note that the location of future easements will be influenced by future development.

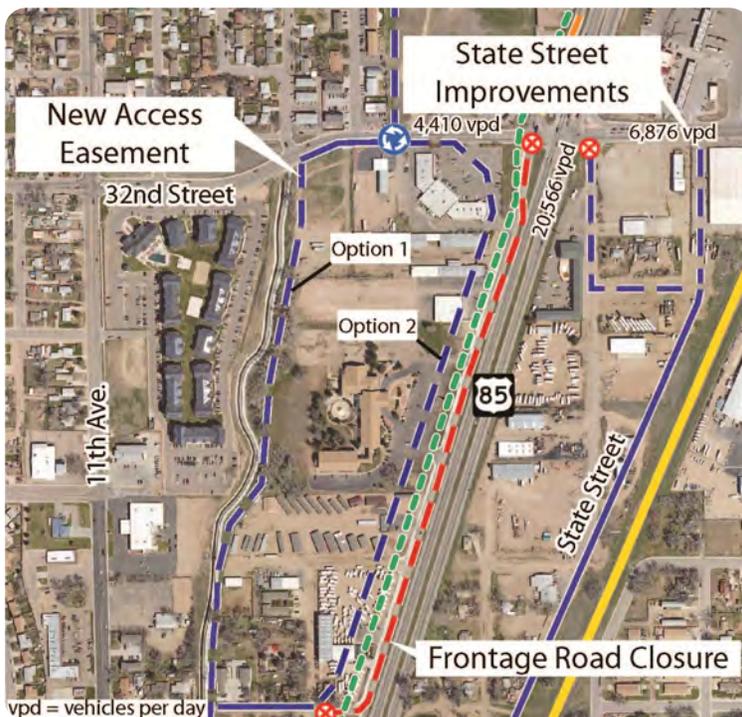


TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT AREA 2

Traffic Area 2 (see image below) is located between 31st Street and 36th Street, east of 11th Avenue and west of State Street. Several traffic network improvements will occur in this area.

Traffic Area 2 forms the majority of the proposed Commercial High land use area. To help provide a larger developable area for large commercial uses, it is envisioned that the majority of local roads would be removed in favor of access easements. The future location of any future easements will be determined as opportunities for redevelopment occurs, however two examples have been provided to help visualize how the easements will connect with the greater traffic network. The two examples identified on the map below have been determined to be most accommodating for commercial uses with large building footprints. Once the access easements are established within this area, they will form a connection to an improved 36th Street. It is envisioned that the future network will connect with St. Vrain Street through a future build out of right-of-way between 36th and 37th Street. This connection will continue the roadway spine running from north to south along the western half of the US 85 corridor.

The portion of the West Service Road between 31st and 37th Streets will be eliminated. The elimination of this route, along with the access points located at 31st and 37th Streets, will allow for reuse of this right-of-way space.



East of US Highway 85, priority will be to expand the road network to enhance access. State Street will be improved to accommodate increases in traffic that would likely result from large commercial developments; however, its access on to 31st Street will be closed and re-located approximately 400 feet to the east. This relocation will be accomplished through the construction of either a public road or easement. The State Street access onto 31st Street will be closed in this situation.

TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT AREA 3

Traffic Improvement Area 3 encompasses the entirety of the US 85 Overlay District geography south of 37th Street. Most of the traffic network improvements will occur on the portion of the Area 3 that is west of US Highway 85. These improvements include two roundabouts at the intersection of 11th Avenue and 37th Street and Saint Vrain Street and 37th Street. The roundabouts are provided as they are known to be safer and more effective traffic control measures.

To accommodate a future pedestrian network a bridge extending over US Highway 85 is envisioned. All proposed pedestrian connections identified on the map below will serve as Primary Trail connections as identified in the 2004 City of Evans Open Space and Trails Master Plan. As this plan indicates, all Primary Trails will be multi-modal with a minimum of 8' width. Future pedestrian paths must also accommodate Chapter 19.62 of the City of Evans Code. The section of the West Service Road between 37th Street and 39th Street will be eliminated to accommodate re-use of right-of-way space. However, it is important to note that the right-in right-out access at 39th Street and US Highway 85 is expected to remain. As mentioned in the previous sections, the network spine will continue southerly along St. Vrain then head west along 40th Street. Finally Carson Street will receive a roundabout and additional improvements where it meets with 40th street. Improvement

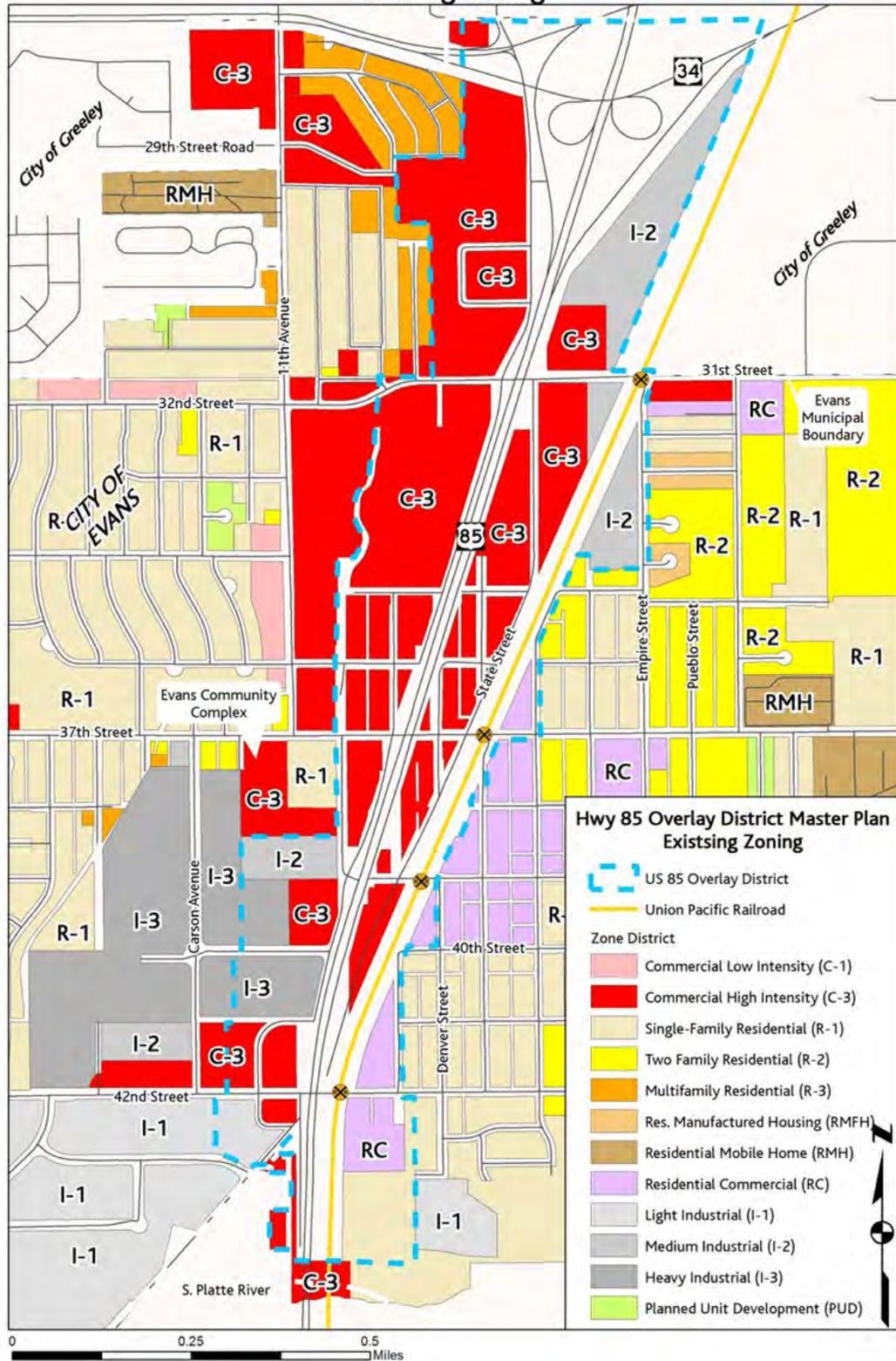
of this intersection and in addition to the improvements planned for Saint Vrain Street, West Service Road south of 39th Street and 40th Street will provide more efficient traffic flow management to what currently exists.

The portion of the Traffic Improvement Area 3 east of US Highway 85 is envisioned as part of the Neighborhood Retail District. To accommodate the future visitors to this area, a section of the State Street between 37th Street and 39th Street will be improved to the Level of Service (LOS) that is appropriate for such developments.



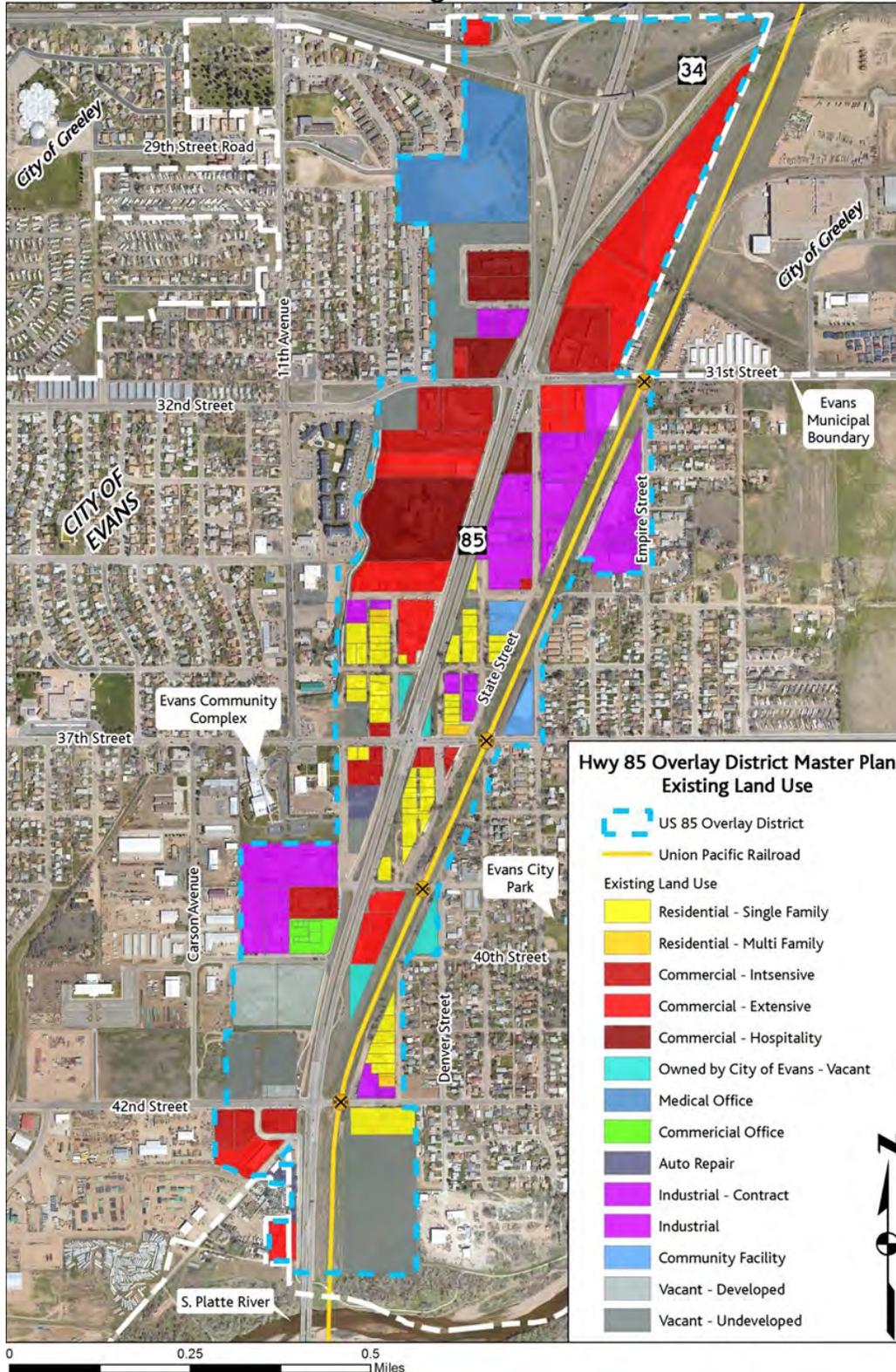
APPENDIX 2: ZONING MAP

Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan Existing Zoning



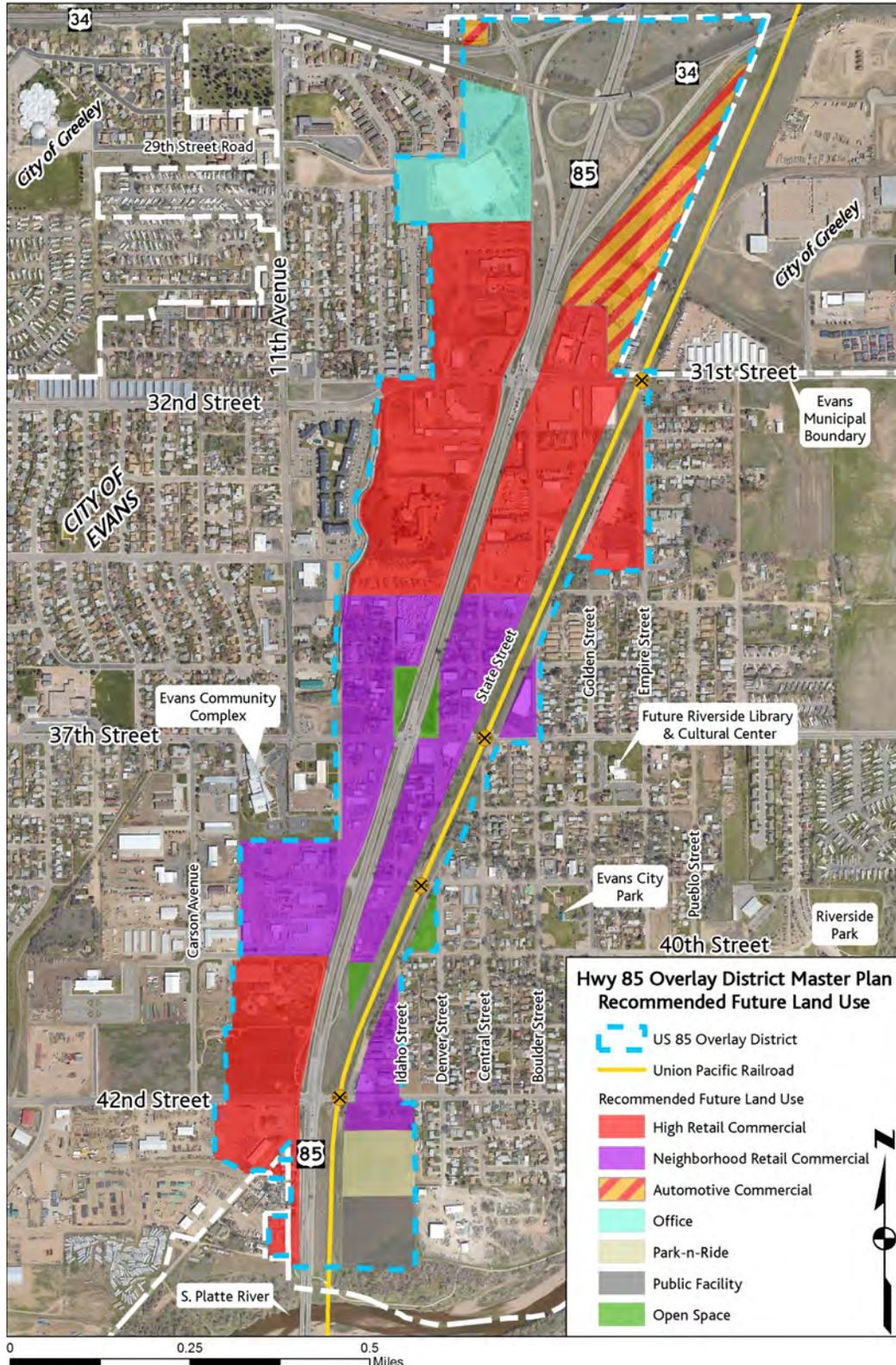
APPENDIX 3: EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan Existing Land Use



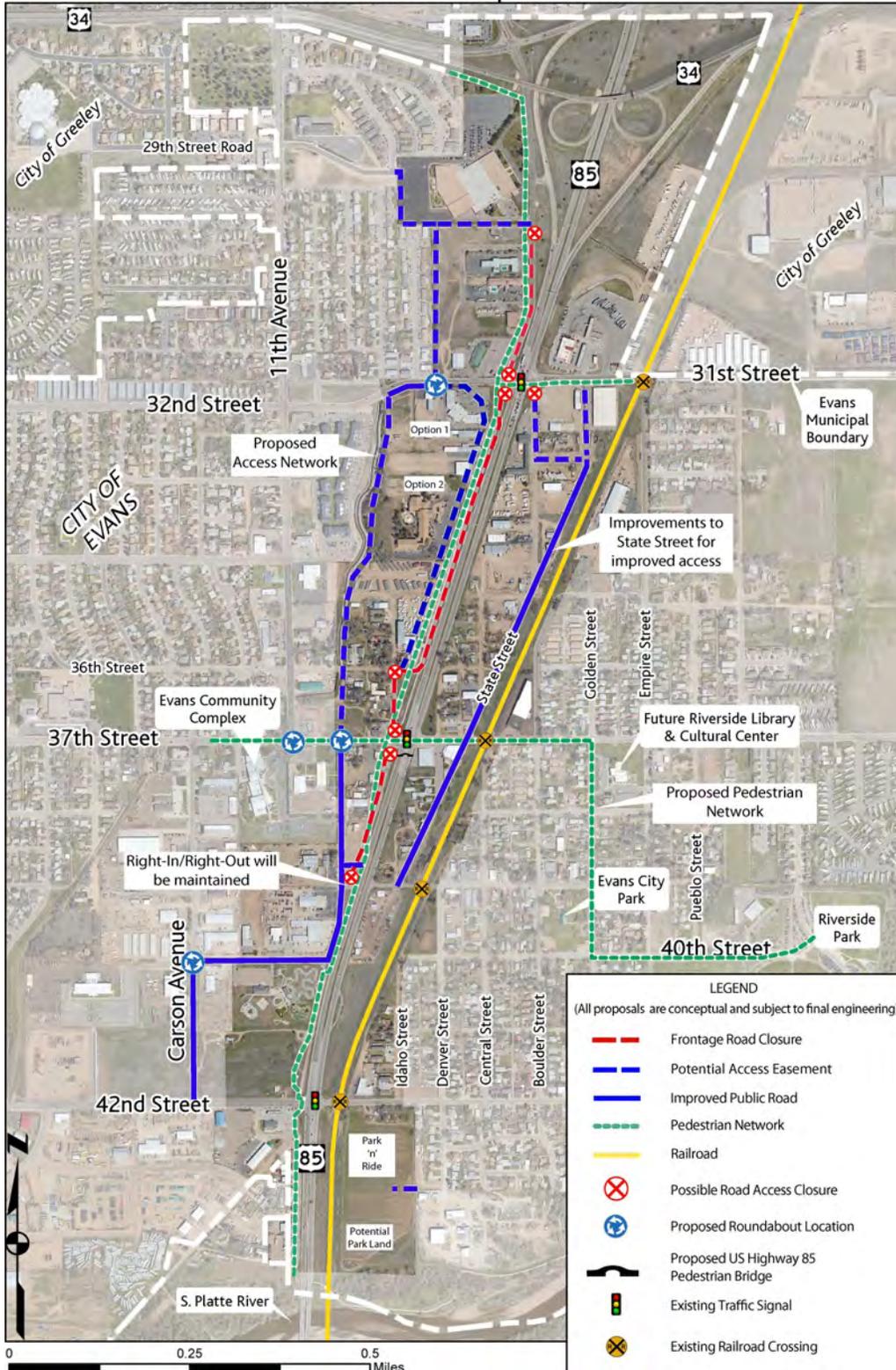
APPENDIX 4: FUTURE LAND USE MAP

US Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan
Recommended Future Land Use

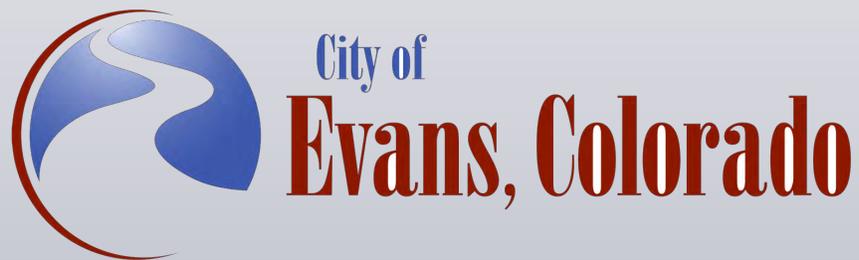


APPENDIX 5: TRAFFIC NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Highway 85 Overlay District Master Plan Traffic Network Improvements



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