5.0 Design Alternatives
RTD’s North Metro Rail Corridor presents a tremendous opportunity for the City of Thornton, RTD and the entire Eastlake Community. This Plan is an important ingredient in preparing for this significant transit investment so that it meets the functional expectations of RTD, preserves the residential and historic qualities of Eastlake and enables the Community’s vision for the area to be achieved.

The following illustrations are design recommendations that illustrate potential development and redevelopment within the Eastlake vicinity. Each scenario is based upon key infrastructure investments, expected market trends and the Community’s desired vision for the area.

This framework is not intended to specifically predict or dictate future development, but rather provides a guiding framework for existing property owners, the City of Thornton and RTD.

The plan identifies actions for the City of Thornton and RTD to initiate, and the City of Northglenn to consider, specifically:

1. Enhance City policies for preserving the Eastlake Community;
2. Establish a framework for the development of a new residentially based mixed-use village west of the proposed transit station;
3. Outline strategies for the City to expand and connect the area’s recreational amenities;
4. Define the street network that will connect the community;
5. Provide RTD specific expectations for the proposed Eastlake Station; and
6. Inform the City of Northglenn of exciting opportunities for their consideration.
5.1 Three Lens Strategy

The Station Area Plan recognizes that within the Eastlake Station vicinity a variety of unique development conditions exist that will dictate different development and redevelopment approaches. The Design alternatives and recommendations below outline a “three lens strategy” of no change, incremental change and probable change that identifies three unique conditions within the Eastlake Station Area with a specific approach for each area.
No Change

This strategy applies to the residential neighborhoods throughout the Eastlake area, consisting of single-family and apartment residences. The neighborhoods are strong and need reinforcement and protection. Public intervention such as traffic calming and code enforcement can maintain the residential nature of these areas.

Figure 5.1

Areas of No Change
(Yellow Shaded Area)
Incremental Change

Within the Historic Eastlake Community, there is continued potential for small-scale revitalization and reinvestment. In some places, non-residential parcels have a limited buffer between existing residential uses. Parcel sizes that are narrow or shallow limit redevelopment opportunities. Long-term steps can help to incrementally define the image of this unique community.
Probable Change

West of the proposed station there are several vacant properties over 10-acres in size that are insulated from adjacent residential land uses capable of future higher-intensity development. Given their strategic relationship to the proposed transit station and ownership pattern, development and redevelopment of this area is expected. It is important that this area of probable change is positioned to fit within the community in order to become valuable for all of Eastlake.
5.2 Eastlake

The historic village has seen minimal changes in the last decade, with minor façade and sidewalk upgrades along Lake Avenue and 1st Street. The gridded street pattern that extends east from 1st Street to York Street is compact, walkable and amenable to improvements as facilitated by the Eastlake Subarea Plan, corresponding zoning and design guidelines adopted in 2003. This plan reinforces the character of Eastlake, and maintains the scale as it exists.

Streetscapes & Gateway Enhancements

1st Street, adjacent to the proposed station platform and the intersections of York Street at Lake Avenue and 124th Avenues, will serve as important gateways to the district, position businesses for success and traffic calm motorists as they enter and leave the area.

Roundabouts in the Study Area

A roundabout is a type of road junction at which traffic enters a one-way stream around a central island.

Overall, roundabouts are statistically safer than both traffic circles and traditional intersections, having 40% fewer vehicle collisions, 80% fewer injuries and 90% fewer serious injuries and fatalities according to a study of a sampling of roundabouts in the United States, compared with the intersections they replaced. Roundabouts also reduce points of conflict between pedestrians and motor vehicles and are therefore considered to be safer for them.

Reconstruction of 1st Street is an important ingredient to revitalizing Eastlake
The increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic projected near the station has prompted the need to examine roundabouts for specific intersections and modified parking and street design on the following streets:

- 1st Street should be redesigned with pedestrian improvements and formalized head-in and parallel parking.
- Roundabout at York Street & Lake Avenue
- Roundabout at York Street & 124th Avenue

The City will need to refine the designs for the proposed roundabouts at York Street and Lake Avenue, and York Street and 124th Avenue, including size, scale and capacity prior to station construction. Worth noting, any type of vehicle on the road today will be able to navigate through the roundabout in the future, as well as pedestrians seeking access to the station and Eastlake neighborhood from the south side of 124th Avenue.

**Preservation Incentives**

The City outlined in Chapter 6 of the Eastlake Subarea Plan recommends examination of City sponsored grants or loans as incentives for businesses to renovate their facades or surrounding land, and continue to pursue Historic Designations for buildings in the area. New investment in the transit corridor and development proposed to the west of the station will enhance visibility and access to Eastlake, and enable businesses and property owners to update their properties as they choose without imposing new regulations upon the adopted plan.
Façade Improvement Grants are needed to help business owners & property owners restore the character of Eastlake
5.3 New Village Development

The City of Thornton has an opportunity to enable and encourage the development of a residentially based mixed use community on the approximately 40 acres of vacant land west of the proposed transit station. This village would become a compact walkable neighborhood with supporting small scale retail services and recreational opportunities. The scale of development would complement the existing Eastlake village with:

- Two-three story commercial buildings with residential or office above.
- Multifamily residential development with a recommended density range of 20 to 30 units per acre.
- Two-story townhomes or row homes at 9 to 12 units per acre.
- Live-work units of 2-3 stories in height with work space on the ground floor and residential use above.

Partnerships and Neighbors

The realization of this new village development is reliant upon livable infrastructure strategies to change the industrial character of the area and successful partnerships with property owners and established neighbors. The Lambertson family and Adams 12 Five Star Schools own approximately 37 acres of land adjacent to the station, and have actively participated in the development of this plan. A key recommendation of this effort was to enable both property owners to initiate their own development activities or collaborate, if desired, upon the creation of the new village.

The City of Thornton’s maintenance facility on the west side of the new village is in the planning stages for expansion and needs to commit to being a good neighbor. An edge treatment for the facility could be a public use building (administrative use) with dedicated community space for meetings. This would provide a strong presence on the east side of the parcel and present a welcome face to residential development currently lacking in the area.

Illustrative Development Opportunity for the Eastlake Station area
Examples of story mixed-use commercial and live work buildings with residential above

Examples of two and three story multi-family and residential townhome developments
5.4 Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Parks, trails and open spaces need to be a focal point of the Eastlake Station Area Plan in order to stabilize existing neighborhoods and change the industrial character of the area.

Eastlake #1 Open Space

The former agricultural reservoir is owned by the City of Thornton as the majority share owner of the Eastlake Water Company, but is within the City of Northglenn. This property could become a community park and a vital gateway and focal point for the Eastlake vicinity.

Trail connections

Key trail connections will add to the existing robust network in the study area, and further connect the Highline Canal trail to Eastlake Open Spaces #1, #2 and #3. The trails promote and unite the station and new development to parks and open spaces in a manner consistent with the desires voiced by the community and stakeholders. An additional multi-use trail connection between 128th Avenue and the station area is recommended.

The grain elevator is an emblematic tie to Eastlake’s rural heritage. Owned by the City and maintained by the Community Services Department, it should be renovated and utilized for civic or public use. It is recommended that the City fund an adaptive reuse study for the structure to determine how to best showcase the building and enhance its use as a museum or community space integrated into the station area as a key architectural feature.
5.5 The Streets

Street connections are critical features that are predominantly non-existent in the study area. In order to maximize the new development to the area and alleviate traffic congestion on the few existing east-west and north-south streets, extensions and connections are a necessity for future development.

Extend 124th Avenue

Extending 124th Avenue to Washington Center Parkway accomplishes dual objectives. First, it will improve access and visibility to underperforming parcels and create new opportunities for land west of the platform, as well as Thorn creek Crossing and Redhawk Apartments Phase II (north of Target); second, these new connections minimize traffic impacts associated with the transit station and new development.

Traffic Calm 124th Avenue

The community has stated in no uncertain terms that 124th Avenue is unfriendly to pedestrians and cyclists, and is concerned it will only grow worse if there is no immediate action taken to slow traffic. A traffic calming action plan is a top priority to address the issues and plan for the traffic accessing the station area from the neighborhoods to the east.

The City of Thornton, at the time of submission of this report, is developing an independent plan to address the situation on 124th Avenue, which will be activated prior to long-range infrastructure and planning activities identified in this report.

Lafayette Street

The next critical street connection hinges on Lafayette Street extending from 128th Avenue down to 124th Avenue, and positioned to further extend down to 120th Avenue should Northglenn choose to invest in the construction. In order to provide the network of smaller pedestrian and bike supportive streets, and relieve congestion on Claude Court, Lafayette is a critical connection that must be one of the first infrastructure improvements made to the study area.
Claude Court and Race Street Connection

Two design scenarios for extending Claude Court through the station area are available for the City of Thornton and RTD to consider with regard to the design of the transit station and framing development opportunities for neighboring properties. The first infrastructure priority for the City is to design Claude Court as a pedestrian-first street.

The Recommended Grid Option

The first option maintains Claude Court’s location separating the station platform from commuter parking.
Realignement of Claude Court

The second option realigns Claude Court to the west to create contiguous connection between the station platform and commuter parking lots.

The Rationale for the Grid Recommendation

Claude Court should be maintained to encourage a grid pattern of development. It allows for optimal development potential, and shares the cost burden with private development. It allows land use phasing to successfully integrate with the station and can be built independent of immediate action by the City of Northglenn.

Figure 5.8

The Not Recommended Claude Realignment Option
### The Not Recommended Claude Station Parking Configuration

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<thead>
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**Figure 5.9**

The Not Recommended Claude Station Parking Configuration
5.6 Eastlake Station

A key objective of this station area plan is to provide RTD with guidance on the proposed Eastlake Station design for inclusion in the North Metro Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The Platform

The location of the platform for the Eastlake station is critical to pedestrian connectivity, parking locations and economic activity around the station. The location proposed seeks to situate the final construction of the platform no more than 100 feet from 124th Avenue, and allows for a direct pedestrian crossing at Lake Avenue. The platform is ultimately expected to build out to 800 feet.

The City is seeking that the Platform be constructed in phases, initially built as a 400-foot platform placed immediately south of Lake Avenue.

The second Phase expands the platform to 600 feet, with approximately 200-foot extensions south toward 124th Avenue. The third Phase expands the platform to 800 feet, adding 100 feet both north and south of the platform, placing the platform 100-feet north of 124th Avenue.
Parking

RTD has determined a demand of approximately 800 parking spaces for the Eastlake Station. Two primary parking configurations are available for consideration:

- A single 800-space parking facility west of the platform;
- A split parking configuration with 400 spaces west of the platform and approximately 400 spaces southeast of the platform on the former Adams County Maintenance Facility Site, which is owned by the City of Thornton.

One centralized parking lot directly adjacent to the station creates several disadvantages for the City and RTD. The surface parking needed for the station consumes too much land in the TOD zone of opportunity; it disconnects Eastlake from the new development opportunities; it increases costs to the City of Thornton and fails to effectively distribute traffic.

An alternative to a single surface lot is the construction of a two level parking structure. The costs of the structure are prohibitive and not determined feasible for the Eastlake Station.

Split surface parking lessens the breadth of land needed directly adjacent to the station and positions more property for development in the TOD zone of opportunity; it effectively connects opportunities to Eastlake; it lessens the land costs of the station; it does not require immediate action from the City of Northglenn and it distributes traffic better. While the split parking is attractive for many reasons, if poorly designed, it could have a detrimental impact on nearby neighborhoods. The City of Thornton and RTD should design the station parking with appropriate lighting, exceptional landscape buffers and appropriate security and surveillance equipment.

### Things to Consider - Transit Station

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<tr>
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<td>Relationship to Neighborhoods</td>
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*RTD/Thornton must design the Southeast Parking to be a good neighbor (exceptional landscape buffer, dark skies ordinance, security/surveillance)
An appropriately designed split parking configuration is RECOMMENDED for the Eastlake station to better fit within the community.
Pedestrian Access and Connections

There are several methods to safely deliver pedestrians to the station, through connected streets, traffic calming new and existing roadways and dedicated paths.

124th Underpass

Using the split parking design, pedestrians can either access the station via a pedestrian underpass beneath 124th Avenue from the southeast parking lot or cross 124th Avenue at grade. The surface grade is elevated naturally, and could accommodate an underpass with minimal excavation.

Lake Avenue

An at-grade pedestrian crossing at Lake Avenue and Claude Court is encouraged. This amenity creates a visual and physical connection to the train station for pedestrians arriving from the east side of the station and better connects the historic Eastlake community on the east side of the station to new opportunities.

Claude Court

One requirement of the split parking within the street grid configuration is that half the RTD customers will be required to cross Claude Court. With the Extension of Lafayette Street to accommodate through traffic, Claude Court would be redesigned as a pedestrian priority street with fronting land uses and a healthy walkable environment. Pedestrians seeking access to the transit station will cross Claude Court at-grade to reach the platform, and this crossing will need to be designed with the intent to minimize contact with vehicles. Bulb-outs, pavement treatments and reduced lane widths are design details to consider.
Bus Interface

Buses would converge from all directions to the Eastlake station and enter the station area via Claude Court. There are six proposed bus bays with direct access to the platforms. RTD and Thornton will need to closely examine the bus operations when designing the turnaround at the station to streamline the bus traffic moving into and out of Eastlake.

Sound Walls

Sound walls are currently being proposed virtually all along the rail corridor. This study recommends mitigating noise impacts along commercially-zoned property in Eastlake using landscaping between 124th Avenue and Birch Avenue.

5.7 Observations for Northglenn

A critical neighbor, stakeholder and participant in the development of the Eastlake station Northglenn is positioned to benefit greatly from the Eastlake Station TOD Master Plan. The three most important observations for Northglenn consideration include:

Eastlake #1 Open Space and future trail connections serve as a gateway not only to the transit station and new development in Thornton, but also any new development on parcels in Northglenn to the south. It is encouraged for both cities to facilitate the construction of Eastlake #1 Open Space into a community park. Both cities will benefit from new visibility, street connections and additional open space.

The City’s Maintenance Facility is a valuable piece of real estate if the City is willing and able to relocate the facility to another location. The City’s tax base could benefit greatly from the proximity to the station, the Eastlake #1 Open Space community park and development of a healthy TOD.

The Hinkhouse parcel, known as Karl’s Dairy, is 65 acres of land situated at 120th Avenue between Race and Irma Streets, and is the largest undeveloped parcel in the study area. This property is beautifully positioned to benefit both from the proposed transit station and 120th Avenue. New development of the parcel should encourage multiple connections to Eastlake on both Race Street and Irma Streets. Thoughtful zoning and design standards would help guide the right type of development to locate in this prime location.

See the illustrative master plan graphic on the following page.
An integrated development and redevelopment concept for both Thornton and Northglenn around RTD’s proposed Eastlake Transit Station