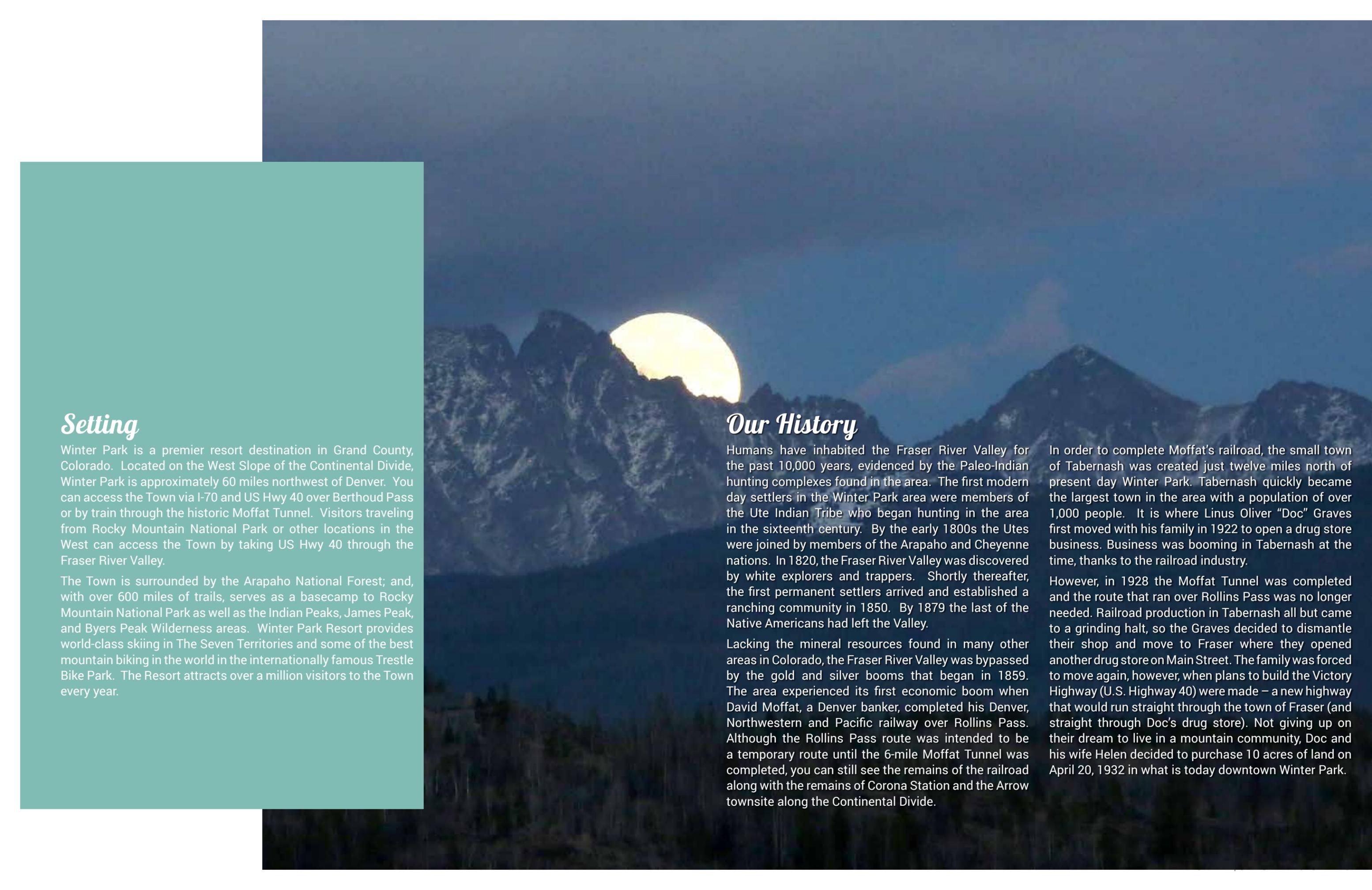


CHAPTER ONE

OUR PLAN





Setting

Winter Park is a premier resort destination in Grand County, Colorado. Located on the West Slope of the Continental Divide, Winter Park is approximately 60 miles northwest of Denver. You can access the Town via I-70 and US Hwy 40 over Berthoud Pass or by train through the historic Moffat Tunnel. Visitors traveling from Rocky Mountain National Park or other locations in the West can access the Town by taking US Hwy 40 through the Fraser River Valley.

The Town is surrounded by the Arapaho National Forest; and, with over 600 miles of trails, serves as a basecamp to Rocky Mountain National Park as well as the Indian Peaks, James Peak, and Byers Peak Wilderness areas. Winter Park Resort provides world-class skiing in The Seven Territories and some of the best mountain biking in the world in the internationally famous Trestle Bike Park. The Resort attracts over a million visitors to the Town every year.

Our History

Humans have inhabited the Fraser River Valley for the past 10,000 years, evidenced by the Paleo-Indian hunting complexes found in the area. The first modern day settlers in the Winter Park area were members of the Ute Indian Tribe who began hunting in the area in the sixteenth century. By the early 1800s the Utes were joined by members of the Arapaho and Cheyenne nations. In 1820, the Fraser River Valley was discovered by white explorers and trappers. Shortly thereafter, the first permanent settlers arrived and established a ranching community in 1850. By 1879 the last of the Native Americans had left the Valley.

Lacking the mineral resources found in many other areas in Colorado, the Fraser River Valley was bypassed by the gold and silver booms that began in 1859. The area experienced its first economic boom when David Moffat, a Denver banker, completed his Denver, Northwestern and Pacific railway over Rollins Pass. Although the Rollins Pass route was intended to be a temporary route until the 6-mile Moffat Tunnel was completed, you can still see the remains of the railroad along with the remains of Corona Station and the Arrow townsite along the Continental Divide.

In order to complete Moffat's railroad, the small town of Tabernash was created just twelve miles north of present day Winter Park. Tabernash quickly became the largest town in the area with a population of over 1,000 people. It is where Linus Oliver "Doc" Graves first moved with his family in 1922 to open a drug store business. Business was booming in Tabernash at the time, thanks to the railroad industry.

However, in 1928 the Moffat Tunnel was completed and the route that ran over Rollins Pass was no longer needed. Railroad production in Tabernash all but came to a grinding halt, so the Graves decided to dismantle their shop and move to Fraser where they opened another drug store on Main Street. The family was forced to move again, however, when plans to build the Victory Highway (U.S. Highway 40) were made – a new highway that would run straight through the town of Fraser (and straight through Doc's drug store). Not giving up on their dream to live in a mountain community, Doc and his wife Helen decided to purchase 10 acres of land on April 20, 1932 in what is today downtown Winter Park.



Tucked against the western slope of the Continental Divide, they named the area, “Hideaway Park,” and built ten small tourist cabins which were rented nightly, mostly to hunters and fishermen. Soon the number of cabins began to grow, and a café and service station were built, called “Doc’s Place.” Within a few years the village added three more businesses and nearly doubled its population.

Hideaway Park was located just down the Fraser River from the western terminus of the Moffat Tunnel. During the tunnel’s construction a small settlement was built there that was referred to by several names. Eventually the name “West Portal” came into usage. Rail workers also called the community “Little Chicago” as it was a favorite gambling, saloon, and brothel site. This area is now the base area for the Resort and is also known as the “Old Town” neighborhood.

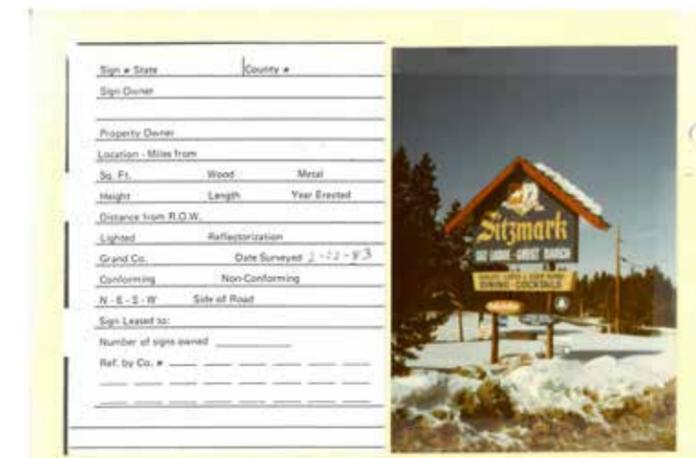
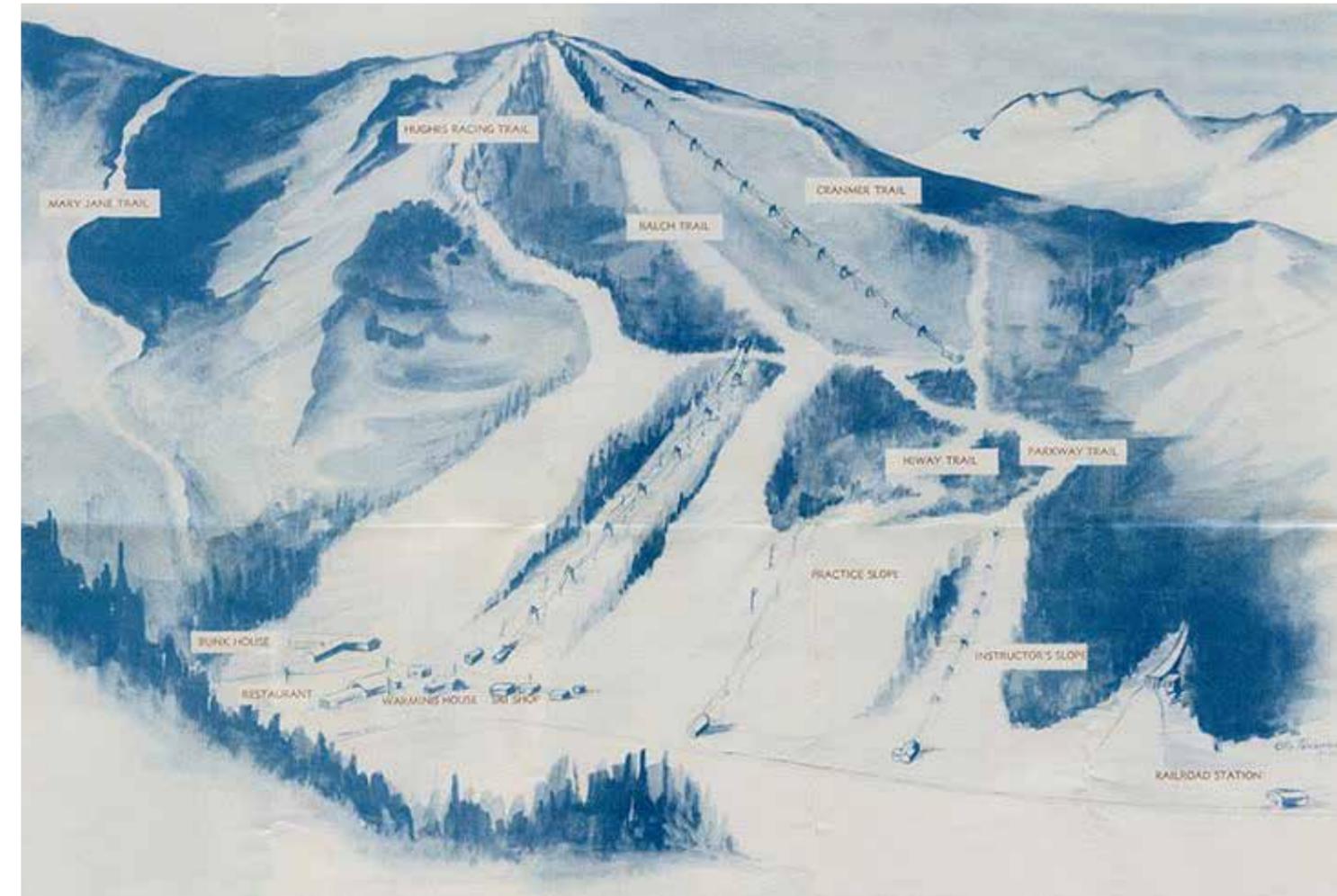
Recreational skiing was first introduced to Grand County in 1883. In the 1930s, when members of the Colorado Arlberg Club purchased and cut trails on the 160-acre parcel of land known as Mary Jane Placer, skiing took hold in the Winter Park area. As interest in skiing grew, additional trails were developed to the north of the parcel at the present site of the Winter Park ski area. At the same time this was occurring, the City of Denver decided it wanted its own “winter park”—a winter playground within easy access of the Denver metro area. A ski ‘boom’ began when the ski area officially opened in January 1940. Lift tickets cost one dollar.

In 1950, the City and County of Denver helped form the non-profit Winter Park Recreational Association (WPRA) to administer, operate, maintain, and develop the Winter Park Resort. By the late 1960s, a major expansion of the Resort was proposed on a portion of Mary Jane Placer. The Colorado Arlberg Club entered into a lease agreement that allowed WPRA to proceed with the construction of a portion of the Mary Jane trails.

In 1976, Winter Park Resort was expanded to include most of present day Mary Jane. In the early 1990s, the Resort was again expanded with the development of the Vasquez Ridge and Parsenn Bowl areas to the north of the main ski area. In the late 1990s, the Resort was again expanded with the development of the Vasquez Cirque to the south of the main mountain. In 2007 the Resort opened up Eagle Wind, creating the last of the Seven Territories that now make up the ski area.

As the Resort continued to expand, Hideaway Park and Old Town continued to grow. Eventually, on August 1, 1978, the Town of Winter Park was incorporated. The original town boundaries encompassed Old Town and Hideaway Park. Later annexations added significantly to the Town’s boundaries. The Town’s main park—Hideaway Park—was named as a tribute to the original village, and a plaque commemorating the Graves Family is located in the park at an area affectionately referred to as ‘Helen’s Spot’.

Although a lot has changed since Doc and his family first settled in Winter Park, the Town still maintains a unique, small-town charm, and natural beauty. What once was a community with a few mountain cabins is now a thriving resort town with shops, restaurants, hotels, and an abundance of recreational opportunities. Its stunning natural vistas and authentic ski town feel make Winter Park a must visit destination for both Front Rangers and international travelers.



Clockwise from top: Winter Park Ski Area, Denver Mountain Parks; Ski Idlewild Lodge, 1983; Sitzmark Ski Lodge/ Guest Ranch, 1983

The Town currently encompasses 16.8 square miles, split between the land surrounding Downtown and the Resort. Approximately 13 square miles are within United States Forest Service (USFS) land. Winter Park boasts the highest point of any incorporated town in the United States with a peak elevation of 12,060 feet.

As of 2018, the Town has approximately 1,100 full-time residents, with a seasonal population that often exceeds 20,000 people. The Town population contains an interesting mix of full and part-time residents with almost 80% of its housing utilized as second homes or rental units.



This Plan is Important to:

Locals and Guests:

The Town Plan identifies community character elements and locations for future housing, parks, trails, community facilities, etc.

Business and Property Owners:

The Town Plan provides direction on the topics of development, policies, programs, natural environment, and services provided by the Town for a sustainable future.

Town Officials:

The Town Plan will give guidance on budget, timing for capital improvements, and review of development proposals.

A Growing Community

The Town of Winter Park is quickly becoming a vibrant year-round destination with unique potential for smart growth. One of the most inviting resort towns in the West, Winter Park maintains a small town, authentic character while continuing to provide world-class scenic and recreation experiences unlike any other mountain town. Enhanced transportation connections, world-renowned recreation, attainable housing, quality design, and a commitment to economic, environmental, and social sustainability are among the elements that form the foundation of Imagine Winter Park (Town Plan).

Imagine Winter Park

Imagine Winter Park, the Town Plan, builds upon previous planning efforts and creates a roadmap for future development and redevelopment. The Plan's intent is to refocus planning efforts and policies to address current issues and future opportunities. It is a policy document that aids in making decisions on land use, development and redevelopment, public services and facilities, and economic development within the Town's boundary and Growth Management Area (GMA).

Imagine Winter Park recommends a multitude of policies to take advantage of new and unique opportunities while staying true to the Town's roots to provide the best quality of life for Winter Park's residents, visitors, employees, and businesses.

For the Town Plan to remain effective, it must be regularly reviewed and amended to address current standards, goals and strategies, and future needs, as well as to provide additional social, economic, and environmental sustainability elements. Furthermore, it is essential that the Town Plan remains current with changing local, regional, and global conditions.

Why Does it Matter?

The Town Plan is an official document of land use policy adopted by the Planning Commission and approved by the Town Council. State law authorizes the Town to adopt a comprehensive or master plan pursuant to Section 31-23-206 of the Colorado Revised Statutes as amended:

"It is the duty of the commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside its boundaries, subject to the approval of the governmental body having jurisdiction thereof, which in the commission's judgment bear relation to the planning of such municipality. The master plan of a municipality shall be an advisory document to guide land development decisions; however, the plan or any part thereof may be made binding by inclusion in the municipality's adopted subdivision, zoning, platting, planned unit development, or other similar land development regulations after satisfying notice, due process, and hearing requirements for legislative or quasi-judicial processes as appropriate..."

State law recognizes the legislative authority of the municipality's governing body by expressly requiring that the Planning Commission's adopted comprehensive plan be subject to approval of the Town Council. In effect, the Town Plan is not fully effective until the Town Council approves the plan.

Because the Town Plan is derived from public input about what people want for their community, the policies and future land use plan designations of the Town Plan have an important role to play in many regulatory decisions the Town does make surrounding land use, such as annexation, rezoning, discretionary land use approvals, and updates to town codes and standards.

How Does The Plan Work?

Developed through a dynamic, community-driven planning process, Imagine Winter Park is built around four Vision Themes:

**[OUR CHARACTER AND
OUR CULTURE]**

**[OUR GLOBAL AND LOCAL
CONNECTIVITY]**

**[OUR WORLD-CLASS
OUTDOOR RECREATION]**

**[OUR HEALTHY AND
THRIVING ENVIRONMENT]**

These themes create the general structure for the Town Plan, and each has a dedicated chapter within the Plan. Within the chapters, each theme is further supported by its principles, illustrative framework map(s), and strategies.

While the themes are separated into individual chapters, they are intertwined. For example, Our Global and Local Connectivity involves pedestrian and bicycle connections that are key to Our World-Class Outdoor Recreation. The social, economic, and environmental sustainability addressed in Our Healthy and Thriving Environment is key to an inclusive, year-round community, as detailed in Our Character and Our Culture. Chapters Three through Six include the following sections:

VISION STATEMENTS

The four Vision Statements, one per each Vision Theme, were developed through a series of community conversations, and represent the aspirational outlook for Winter Park's land use development and redevelopment, public services and facilities, and economic development. They are overarching statements that describe the desired future of the Town based on shared community values.

FRAMEWORK MAP

The Framework Maps illustrate how the Vision Statements are applied to the landscape and include key future projects, nodes for specific activities, and opportunity areas that relate to the Principles.

PRINCIPLES

The Principles fall under each of the Vision Statements to elaborate on the future setting, character, and opportunities for the Town in the next 10 to 15 years.

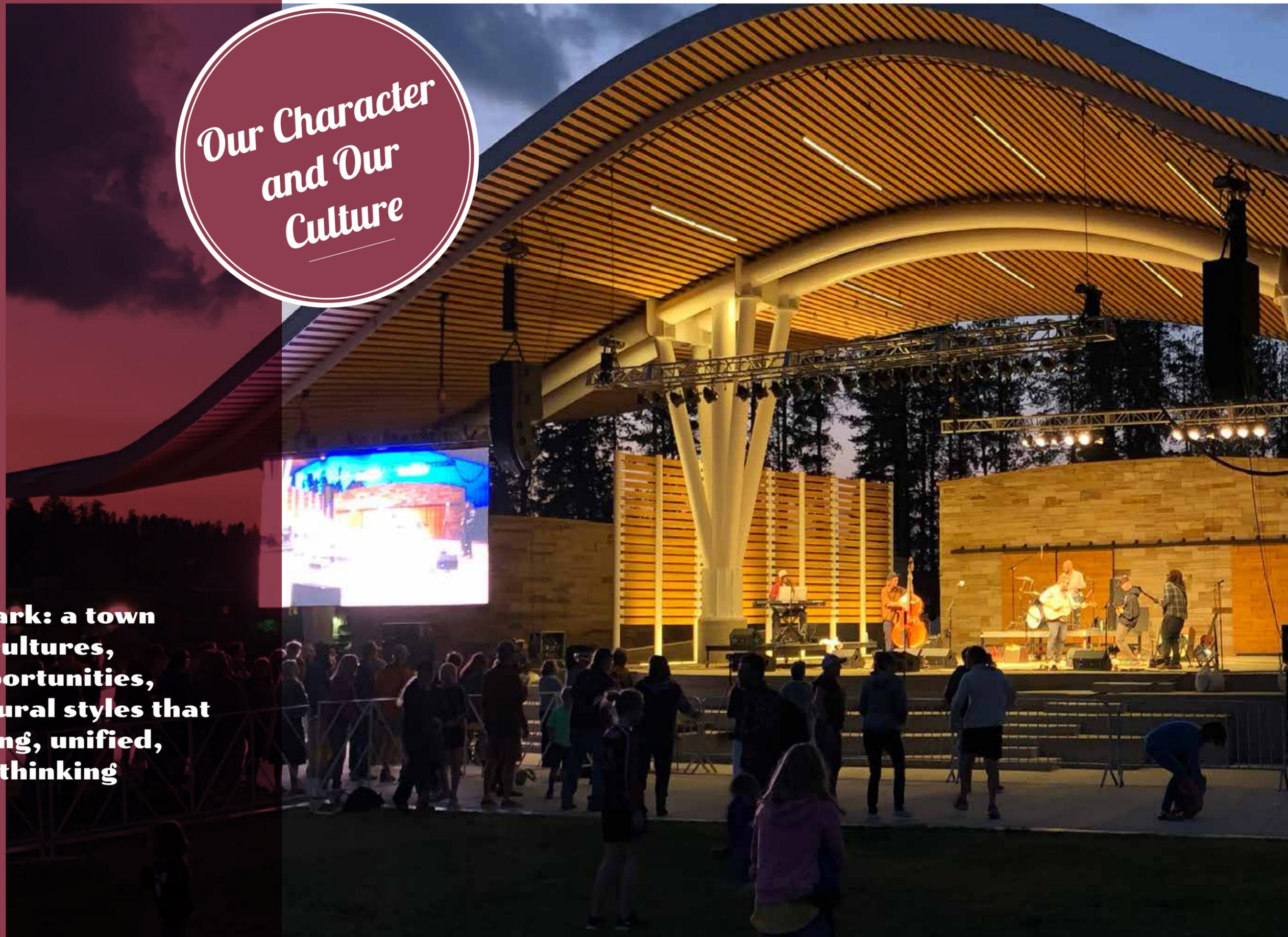
STRATEGIES

The Strategies are the last and most specific component within the chapter. A Strategy is a statement of intent or expectation—a course of action that provides clarity on the methods for achieving the Principles.

*Our Character
and Our
Culture*

VISION

One Winter Park: a town with diverse cultures, economic opportunities, and architectural styles that fosters a strong, unified, and forward-thinking community.





Our Global
and Local
Connectivity

VISION

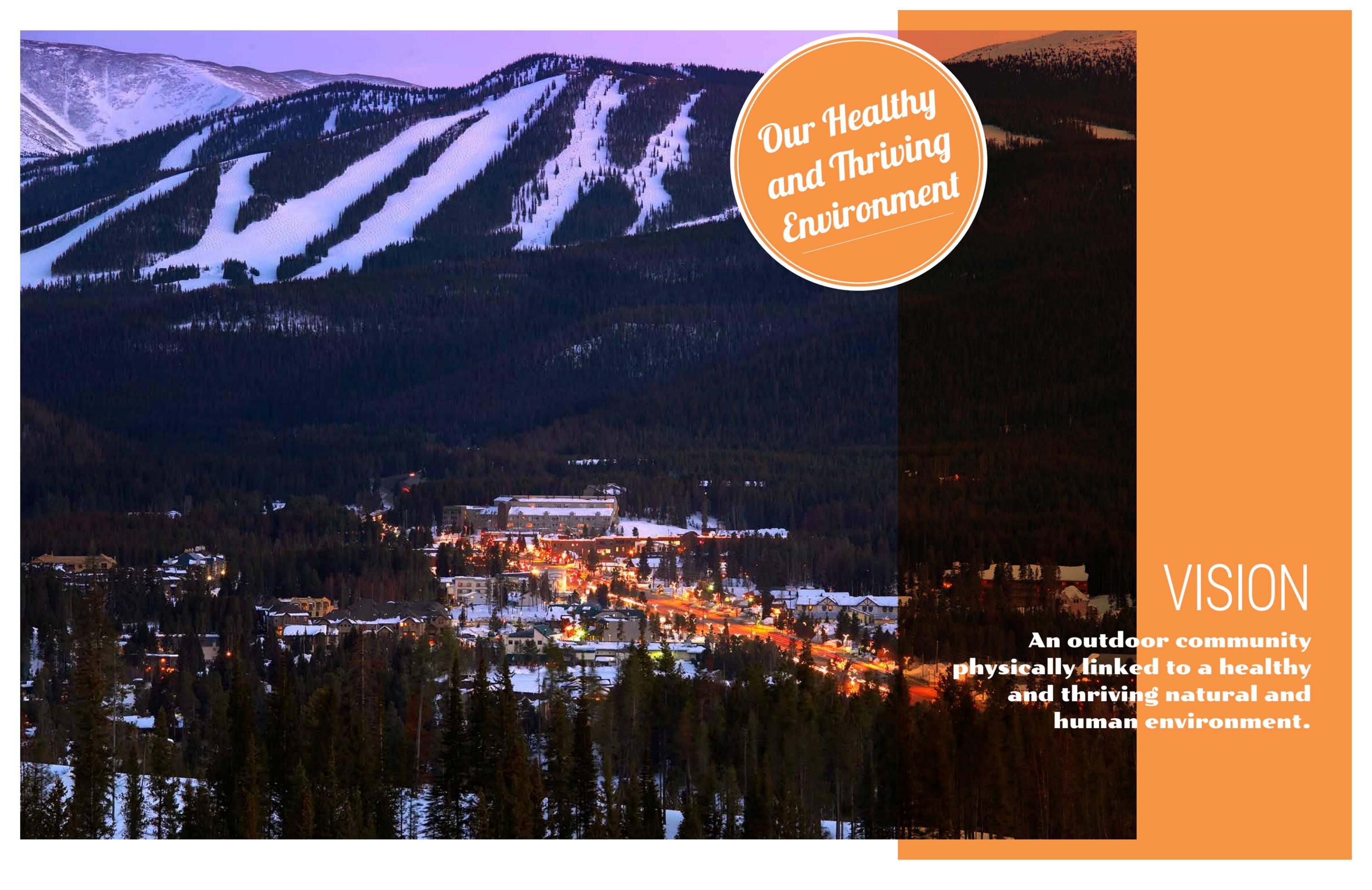
Winter Park is a community linked with majestic physical attributes, connected with state of the art technology, integrated with safe walkable places and diverse transportation linkages, and characterized by seamless connectivity to both the natural and technological environment.

Our World-Class Outdoor Recreation

VISION

A recreation-based community anchored by a national ski and mountain bike resort, that provides a wide range of unsurpassed outdoor activities for everyday enthusiasts to live, work, and play.





*Our Healthy
and Thriving
Environment*

VISION

**An outdoor community
physically linked to a healthy
and thriving natural and
human environment.**

Planning Process

Imagine Winter Park is the result of a year-long initiative that engaged the public in defining a shared vision for the Town. With a strong focus on community engagement, the planning process built consensus among different groups including citizens, developers, landowners, business leaders, second-homeowners, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders. The process resulted in a community-supported vision.

"In 10 years, Winter Park will be...

...KNOWN AS A PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY PLACE TO STROLL, SHOP, AND EXPLORE!"

- Winter Park Resident



The Four Planning Phases

The planning process consisted of four phases, outlined in the graphic below. Each phase included outreach events and an associated online questionnaire. The process was guided by the Steering Committee, with Town Council and Planning Commission regularly updated and asked to provide comments.

“Winter Park is a...

...CLOSE KNIT, AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY WHERE NEWBIES AND REGULARS FEEL WELCOME.”

- Winter Park Resident



KICKOFF EVENTS
Engaging events such as High Note Thursdays and Tacos and Tequila introduced the community to the plan and asked about community values. Through input gathered from the public, preliminary vision statements were formed and initial opportunities were outlined.



VISIONING OPEN HOUSE
An open house event allowed the community to review the vision and big ideas. Approximately 75 attendees and 130 online respondents provided feedback. This phase assessed the community's priorities through the discussion of choices. Policies and strategies were developed to meet the community's vision.



CHOICES WORKSHOP
Thirty-five community members participated in an interactive workshop to discuss each of the vision themes. Key policies and methods for achieving success of the policies were brainstormed. Bringing together all of the input and data collected throughout the process, this phase established a user-friendly, concise planning document.



DRAFT PLAN OPEN HOUSE
Nearly 100 community members joined us for the public open house or participated in the online survey. Feedback was collected on the Draft Plan's strategies and future implementation actions. Comments from the public meeting and online survey were incorporated for Planning Commission and Town Council review.



I LOVE WINTER PARK FOR ITS: accessibility • authenticity • beauty • bikeability • bus service • cleanliness • community values • diverse appeal • downtown • engagement • entertainment venues + amenities • family-friendly feel • feels like home • festivals/ events • few big boxes/ chains • fraser river • fun • hideaway park • laid back vibe • lifestyle/ culture • local businesses • location • lodging • low key + authentic ski town • mountains • music events • open space • outdoor recreation • outdoors/ wilderness • people • potential • public parks • quiet pace • range of activities • restaurants • safe • sense of community • services • size • skate park • skiing/ ski resort • small town/ local feel • small town with big town amenities • stage • summer • town council investment • trail system • trees • uncrowded • valley • variety of activities • views walkable • weather • IF WINTER PARK WAS KNOWN FOR ONE THING, IT WOULD BE: adventurous • affordable fun • affordable living • affordable mountain housing • affordable ski town • alternative transportation • arts + culture • authenticity • classy resort town • clean • complete + connected • diverse appeal • diverse mountain town • down-home charm • easily accessible • environmentally friendly • family-friendliness • family-friendly destination • family-friendly recreation • festivals/ events • friendliness • fun • healthy/ active community • high-end • hospitality • intelligence + forethought • laid back vibe • low carbon footprint • mountain biking • mountain lifestyle • music venue • new stage • outdoor green living • outdoor recreation • premier trail system • premier year-round outdoor recreation • progressive in sustainable living • quality • quality of life • quiet town • resourceful • responsible development • skateboarding • ski resort • small town of the Rockies • small-town feel + charm • special place to live or visit • sustainable year-round population • trendy • true to its roots • unspoiled beauty • variety of activities • vibrancy • walkable • welcoming/ inviting • world-class hiking • world-class mountain retreat • world-class outdoor recreation • world-class ski town • world-class skiing • world-class vacation destination • IF I COULD IMPROVE ONE THING ABOUT WINTER PARK IT WOULD BE: add a grocer • add an indoor skatepark • add an indoor tennis facility • add bike lanes • add more activities/ amenities in town • add more lodging for visitors • add more public parks • add more restaurants/ bars + shops • add more sidewalks • add more sober-fun entertainment • add selfie spots around town • add sports fields • address building placement • address housing crisis • attract an institution for higher education • build gondola connecting the ski resort to downtown • connect south side of town to fraser river trail • connect the town and resort • continue expansion of trails for hiking + biking • continue to be bike-friendly through town • create a center for the arts • create a more pedestrian-friendly town • create a pedestrian-friendly main street • create a walkable downtown • create safe highway crossings • discourage nightly rentals + promote hotel accommodations • eliminate strip parking lots • encourage beautification + reuse of existing structures • encourage removal of rundown buildings along hwy 40 • enhance mountain town feeling • enhance the downtown environment/ experience • enhance transportation system • enhance wayfinding • ensure that new buildings are architecturally-interesting • expand downtown core • expand social services • explore solutions for reducing homelessness • free parking at the resort • • higher wages for service industry employees + laborers host events year-round at the events center • host more early evening events • implement building height restrictions • implement careful thoughtful planning • implement stricter design guidelines • improve/ widen roads • improve cohesiveness within the downtown corridor • improve housing • improve paving on hwy 40 through town • improve pedestrian experience + building facades • improve pedestrian safety • improve placemaking downtown • improve quality of accommodations • improve shopping experience • improve signage • improve the aesthetic appeal of the town • increase advertising for events • increase bus routes • increase collaboration with the resort • increase commuter access • increase density • increase family-friendliness • increase housing availability • increase outreach + inclusiveness • increase variety of services • infill downtown • install bike pumps in the parks • install hammock poles in the parks • install wayfinding for trails/ businesses • keep the town affordable • keep the town family-friendly • less is better • leverage the river • limit pot shops • lower taxes • market the biking/ hiking trails • minimize light pollution • mitigate traffic • more affordable housing • more affordable long-term rental options for locals • more housing options • more of the same • more public parking • more single-family starter homes • more transparency in town processes • more workforce housing • preserve the natural landscape • preserve views • prohibit nightly rentals • reduce reliance on the automobile • reduce the speed limit on main street • regulate camping on Vasquez • re-route heavy through-traffic away from downtown • stricter enforcement of speed limits through town • sustain a year-round population • update ski area

What We Heard

The planning process ensures that the community's values align with the Town's roadmap for the future. The project team began the process by asking residents and community members what they love most about Winter Park, and what they would like to see change over the next ten to fifteen years. This feedback informed the vision themes and statements, as well as the remainder of the plan development process.



Previous and Relevant Plans

Since 2006, additional studies and master plans have been completed in support of the previous master plan. These documents provide more specific recommendations on topic areas. The time and energy spent on these plans affords this Plan a head start on growing challenges, opportunities, and community preferences throughout Winter Park. Referenced plans (with hyperlinks when available) include:

[Planning for Sustainability: The Winter Park Town Plan \(2006\)](#)

[The Winter Park Town Plan: Old Town Amendment \(2013\)](#)

[Town of Winter Park Housing Needs Assessment \(2015\)](#)

[Town of Winter Park Strategic Plan for Attainable Housing \(2016\)](#)

[Winter Park Multi-Modal Transportation and Mobility Plan \(2005\)](#)

[Community Trails Plan: Winter Park and Fraser Trail Plan \(2014\)](#)

[Town of Fraser, Town of Winter Park Broadband Feasibility Final Report \(2017\)](#)

[Stream Management Plan: Grand County, Colorado \(2010\)](#)

[Colorado River Cooperative Agreement \(2013\)](#)

[Grand County \(Winter Park\) Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan \(2013\)](#)

Attainable Housing Site Development for the Town of Winter Park (2017)

Land Ownership Adjustment Plan (2006)