5A. INTERCHANGE DISTRICTS

The intent of this Chapter is to establish the overall land use concepts, goals and specific development policies for the identified Interchange Districts. These goals and policies are to be used in the evaluation of development proposals within the identified boundaries.

Background

The Interstate 25 corridor provides an important economic opportunity for the Town. The four existing and proposed interchanges along I-25 serve as major entryways into the Town from I-25 and present unique opportunities for higher intensity and high quality economic development. Toward this end, an Interchange District is being identified around each of these interchanges. The Interchange District allows future high quality, high density development or redevelopment within these districts in conformance with the policies and goals set forth in this Chapter, allowing these to be attractive and vital gateways into the community from I-25.

The existing interchanges currently comprise a mix of predominantly commercial, industrial, and vacant lands with some residential existing at the Meadows/Founders Interchange. Where commercial and industrial uses exist, they are primarily big-box or convenience retail that inefficiently utilize the land by the use of sprawling parking lots and single-use building forms. The new Interchange District proposes enhanced design standards and features that are intended to create a memorable and positive first impression upon entering the Town and to establish an image and character that is uniquely Castle Rock's.

Purpose

The Town will encourage this desired high density, high quality development through form-based zoning codes. All existing zoning and land use entitlements currently in place for land within each of the Interchange Districts continue to exist for development upon this land. The higher density, higher quality mixed use development endorsed by the Interchange Districts will be achieved through an alternative development process detailed in the form-based code. While specific land uses are not being proposed with this plan amendment, the overarching goal of these districts is to promote economic development. The form-based code will address the form and design of the structures and the way the proposed uses relate to the public realm including streets, parking, civic spaces, and other structures.

The areas immediately around existing and proposed interchanges should be utilized to increase the economic viability of the Town by acting as a magnet for

Proposed Interchange Districts:
- Meadows/Founders
- Wolfensberger
- Plum Creek
- Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley
higher density commercial and mixed-use development and transit opportunities. It is intended that each Interchange District will include efficient use of the land through high-quality design in a more urban setting. Although specific land uses are not being proposed, it is expected that each district will have its own unique characteristics to complement their location and unique features such as topography and proximity to Downtown.

Methodology

The Town has identified four Interchange Districts. The boundaries of these Interchange Districts were established by identifying the existing and future interchanges along I-25 within the town limits of Castle Rock. An initial planning area of one-half mile around each of these interchanges was utilized. These boundaries were then modified to take into account significant natural features impacting development, man-made boundaries such as railroad tracks, and other planning processes currently underway, such as the Downtown Plan. The resulting interchange district boundaries are depicted on Map 1. The four Interchange Districts (from north to south) are:

- Meadows/Founders Interchange District
- Wolfensberger Interchange District
- Plum Creek Interchange District
- Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley Interchange District

Relationship to Other Plans

Downtown Plan: Areas impacted by the Downtown Plan are located to the east of I-25 between Wolfensberger Road and just south of Plum Creek Boulevard. These areas have been excluded from the Interchange District boundaries and the planning efforts complement each other.

Open Space Framework Plan: In 2007, the Town prepared an Open Space Framework Plan, which identifies key areas of open space within and adjacent to the Town that should be protected and are critical to the integrity of the Town’s parks, trails, and open space planning efforts. The plan’s goal is to better prepare the community for potential future annexations, development, or redevelopment requests that include these critical resources. Areas west of I-25, between the Meadows/Founders Interchange District and the Wolfensberger Interchange District as well as south of the Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley Interchange District have critical open space resources identified in this Plan.

Southwest Quadrant Plan: The Town has drafted a subarea plan for the Southwest Quadrant of the Town that is slated for adoption in 2008. The planning area for this plan overlaps with both the Plum Creek and the Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley Interchange Districts. The Southwest Quadrant Plan identifies important natural features and recommends land use densities and uses consistent with the proposed form-based code. Properties within the Interchange Districts that are also included within the Southwest Quadrant Plan will be able to take advantage of the higher density provisions of the Interchange
Districts; however preservation of significant natural features identified in the Southwest Quadrant Plan will be required.

Transit Needs Assessment: In 2007, the Town completed a Transit Needs Assessment document, which identifies the need for park-and-ride facilities in the southern part of Town. Locating these facilities near the Plum Creek interchange and/or Douglas Lane interchange makes access to the freeway more efficient for regional bus trips, more convenient for commuters, and can serve as transfer stations for local transit routes.

Wolfensberger Subarea Plan: In 1999, the Town adopted a subarea plan for the Wolfensberger area, west of I-25. This plan recommends a new mixed-use land use category. Amendments to the zoning code are currently being drafted to implement the recommendations of this plan. The Wolfensberger Interchange District includes most of the same properties and would encourage higher density economic development activities if they chose to take advantage of the new form-based zoning code.

Interchange Districts

Because of the unique characteristics of each Interchange District, described below, each district has different goals that should be utilized, in conjunction with the land use policies discussed later, when reviewing proposed land uses within the district. Map 1 depicts the general boundaries of the Interchange Districts. More detailed maps of each district follow. The implementation of these goals is further detailed in the Municipal Code. The specific interchange goals are outlined below.

*Meadows/Founders Interchange:*

This Interchange District is the northernmost intersection with I-25 for the Town of Castle Rock (Map 2). Meadows Parkway and Founders Parkway meet at I-25. This District contains existing residential and commercial land uses both within and outside the Town limits. The Town is currently studying the possibility of an additional interchange just north of the Meadows/Founders intersection. This additional interchange is currently proposed in the Douglas County Transportation Master Plan. Studies related to this potential interchange are a joint Town/County effort. The proposed Meadows/Founders Interchange District encompasses both the existing interchange and the potential new interchange. These goals apply to the entire Meadows/Founders Interchange District.

The area around this interchange, particularly on the northwestern corner, is a highly visible gateway into Castle Rock for traffic on I-25. It is also an area that is ripe for development. For this reason the boundary of this district has been expanded in the northwest to include all of the land between the Interstate and...
US 85 to the northern Town limits. This will allow this area to take advantage of the proposed alternative form-based zoning code and develop in a manner that promotes a high density, high quality urban form. The land outside the Town limits on the northeastern corner of this interchange has been excluded from this district because it has very limited access and the potential new interchange to the north is not planned to have any connections to the east to serve this area. This area will not be able to support the higher density development proposed for the Interchange Districts and can provide an effective buffer supporting Castle Rock’s goal of being a free-standing community.

The goals of this Interchange District are:

- To create the Northern Gateway to Castle Rock
- To promote high quality development in and around the Outlet Mall
- To create incentives for annexation of vacant lands currently in the County
- To create areas for redevelopment within the County proposed for urban development
- To encourage development to meet high design standards specific to this critical gateway
- To create two Interior Gateways to the Meadows/Founders areas
- To create outstanding wayfinding for east and west gateways
- To create pedestrian/non-motorized safety and connectivity

**Wolfensberger Interchange:**

The Wolfensberger interchange is the northern gateway into historic downtown Castle Rock (Map 3). The configuration of the interchange and its relationship to Front Street and the Rock Park results in limited development potential at the northeastern corner of this interchange. The southeastern corner of this intersection begins the historic downtown area and is included in a separate downtown planning effort. Because of this, the area east of the interchange is not included in this Interchange District. This area to the west of this interchange, currently developed primarily as retail and highway-oriented businesses, is the extent of this Interchange District.

The goals of this Interchange District are:

- To create an interior Gateway to the uses to the west
- To create outstanding wayfinding to highlight uses to the west
- To create design standards and incentives to promote high quality, high-density development/redevelopment west of the interchange that complements the historic downtown character, but may be out of scale with the downtown itself; this area is expected to be an extension of the downtown area in the future
To interconnect the historic downtown area with development west of the interchange by enhancing vehicular and pedestrian connections

**Plum Creek Interchange:**

The Plum Creek interchange forms the southern gateway into the historic downtown core (Map 4). The current interchange configuration consists of a northbound on and off-ramp located farther south of the primary downtown area and a southbound on and off-ramp at Plum Creek, which forms the southern boundary of downtown. This interchange is being reconfigured and reconstructed as a diamond interchange, with all four ramps leading to and from Plum Creek Parkway. The new interchange complements two additional Town road projects that include the continuation of Coachline Road from Wolfensberger Road to I-25 (also known as the Southwest Arterial Connector) and the continuation of Plum Creek from Lake Gulch Road to Ridge Road to the east (also known as the Southeast Arterial Connector). The new interchange and Southwest Arterial Connector opens up currently undeveloped land to the west of I-25 for high quality economic development that complements the Downtown core. Land to the northeast of the interchange is considered a part of the Downtown planning area and is not included in this Interchange District. The railroad tracks form the eastern boundary of the District.

The goals of this Interchange District are:

- To create design standards and incentives to promote high quality, high density residential and economic development opportunities with enhanced design standards and features
- To encourage higher density development to the west of the interchange, which respects the major land features of that area, but allows the built environment to frame the views to the west
- To encourage higher density development within this Interchange District, there is a limited opportunity to allow buildings to have an increased height at an internal intersection of local streets with the proposed new North/South minor arterial within this district; view corridors would have to be protected; consideration of such a proposal would occur through the development review process
- To create an Interior Gateway to the uses to the west
- To create outstanding wayfinding for the west gateway to highlight uses
- To create outstanding landscaping installations to support gateways and uses
- To enhance aesthetics for the trail crossing along Plum Creek under the new bridge

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**Highlights of Plum Creek Interchange District:**

- Southern Gateway to historic downtown Castle Rock,
- Promote high quality, high density residential and economic development,
- Encourage higher density development west of I-25, which respects the major land features of the area,
- Promote uses that complement activities and goals of Downtown,
- Provide an opportunity for a possible future transit facility,
- Develop pedestrian connections to the downtown from this area.
• Protect the natural features identified in the Southwest Quadrant Plan
• To promote uses that complement activities and goals of Downtown, but are at such a scale as to be out of character with Downtown (for example, major entertainment venue, lodging, larger retail development, tall office buildings)
• To create pedestrian/non-motorized safety and connectivity
• To provide an opportunity for a possible future FLEX station, park ‘n’ ride, and/or multi-modal transit facility
• To continue to pursue the potential use of the Santa Fe Depot and Station Master House as a future park ‘n’ ride and as a future commuter rail stop as well as future pedestrian connections to the Downtown from this area

Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley Interchange:
The Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley Interchange is a future interchange with I-25 at the point at which Douglas Lane and Crystal Valley Parkway meet I-25 (Map 5). The Town and the developers in this area are pursuing funding and design options for this interchange. When constructed, this will serve as the southern gateway into Castle Rock and will allow this Interchange District to serve as a significant employment center for the Town.

The goals of this Interchange District are:
• To create the Southern Gateway to Castle Rock.
• To create two Interior Gateways to the Southwest Quadrant of Town and the Crystal Valley Ranch development to the east of the interchange.
• To create design standards and incentives to promote high quality, high density economic development opportunities with enhanced design standards and features.
• To create outstanding way finding for east and west gateways.
• To create the opportunity for a center for local and regional transit connections adjacent to and west of I-25.
• To create pedestrian/non-motorized safety and connectivity.
• To create outstanding landscaping installations to support gateways and uses.
• Protect the natural features identified in the Southwest Quadrant Plan.

Principle LU-8: Interchange Districts

Development and Redevelopment within Interchange Districts should contribute to the overall economic health of the Town by attracting regional commerce through efficient high density commercial and mixed land use patterns, high quality design, and creating a positive image of the community.
NOTE: THESE POLICIES APPLY TO ALL FOUR OF THE INTERCHANGE ZONES AND SHOULD BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH GOALS DISCUSSED EARLIER IN THIS CHAPTER.

Policies:

LU-8.1 Significant natural features, such as buttes, ridgelines, and major drainageways are critical to the character of Castle Rock and should be respected by all development. The Interchange Districts encourage a high-density built environment within these natural features through alternative form-based zoning regulations. The alternative form-based code will detail how these alternative regulations relate to the existing Municipal Code requirements. Incentives will be provided in the form-based code to promote the high-density, high-quality development desired at these interchanges.

LU-8.2 The desired higher density urban level development will be required to protect significant natural drainageways by creating opportunities for natural design and added value; to protect the Plum Creek Corridor and its tributaries; to protect the designated floodplains and designated mouse habitat protection areas; and to integrate water conservation and water quality design concepts into the proposed land use plans.

LU-8.3 Public gathering places take the form of plazas and other urban-type gathering areas rather than programmed parks.

LU-8.4 Densities around the Town’s interchanges should be between 1 and 3 F.A.R. and generally no more than 72 feet in height (except in the Plum Creek Interchange District, there may be areas where up to 95 feet is appropriate) to promote Castle Rock as a regional destination and to ensure highest and best economic use of the land.

LU-8.5 Property owners should be allowed to access increased development rights, via new regulatory mechanisms in the form-based code pertaining to required dedications, skyline-ridgeline requirements, intersection spacing on minor arterials, or other relevant regulations, in exchange for such things as contributions to specific gateway enhancements, adherence to increased design standards, cash-in-lieu, and creation of high quality architecture and amenities.

LU-8.6 All development within Interchange Districts should create a favorable and memorable impression of the community through increased architectural, design, and landscaping standards, including gateway enhancements, streetscape and wayfinding.
LU-8.7 Gateway enhancements, such as enhanced bridge architecture and entryway landscaping should be required during plan review to define place and create interest.

LU-8.8 Comprehensive wayfinding and directional signage for businesses and attractions in the Town should be required with development approvals.

LU-8.9 Development within Interchange Districts should support Town and regional transportation initiatives by incorporating transit solutions, such as park ‘n’ ride facilities, and pedestrian/bicycle interconnectivity into proposed development plans. Future light-rail or commuter rail stops are desirable within the Interchange Districts. Dedication of land for transit and park ‘n’ ride uses should occur with approval of plans for land within the Interchange Districts.

LU-8.10 Development within Interchange Districts should be primarily mixed-use, emphasizing vertical development and parking sited behind structures. Parking for a variety of needs, including longer term parking for residents and employees and shorter term parking for retail customers, shall be accommodated. Parking structures should be encouraged over surface parking lots, further ensuring efficient use of land.

LU-8.11 Nontraditional form-based zoning codes should be used in place of traditional zoning codes to achieve Town design goals. All proposed land uses and zoning requests for developments proposed within the Interchange Districts should adhere to the goals and policies set forth in this Chapter.

LU-8.12 Residences should be integrated into or be located adjacent to Interchange District developments in a manner that promotes pedestrian interconnectivity and promotes alternative means of commuting. In particular, residences to accommodate populations dependent on transit, including affordable housing and housing for seniors, are encouraged.

LU-8.13 Development within Interchange Districts should balance attracting interstate automobile traffic and other desired development with strong design for pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity.

LU-8.14 Authorization of any special financing or Metropolitan District formation must include financing for gateway elements, such as bridge enhancements, streetscaping, landscaping, wayfinding, public plazas, and other community benefits such as park ‘n’ ride facilities. Funding levels should be between 5 and 10% of total requested funding for the Metro District.
LU-8.15 Site design, building layouts, and architecture shall be oriented to create and frame an interesting and active public realm including locating surface lots away from public streets.

Land Use Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies are specific steps by which the goals, policies and principles of the Land Use Chapter of the Master Plan may be achieved through execution of the future Action Plan. These strategies are found in Chapter 5.
MAP 1: General Boundaries of the Interchange Districts
MAP 4: Plum Creek Interchange District
MAP 5: Dawson Ridge/Crystal Valley Interchange District