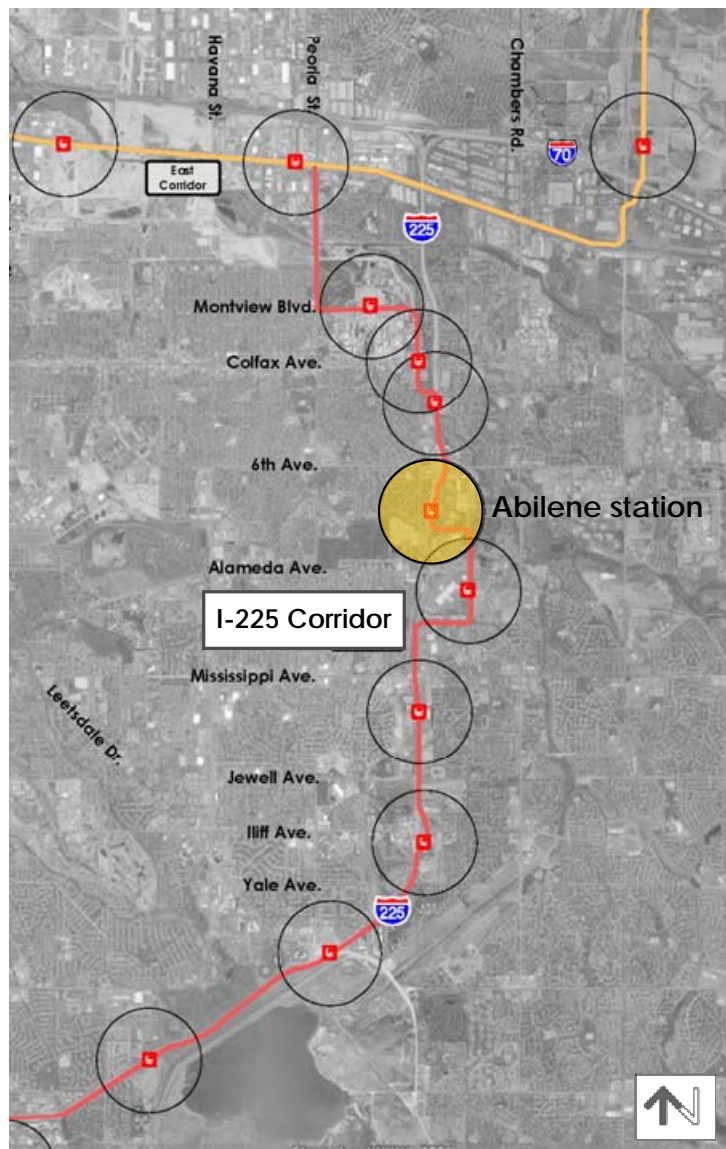


Abilene Station Area Plan

A Framework for Transit-Oriented Development



City of Aurora
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City of Aurora

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Preface

In 2008, the City of Aurora and RTD collaborated on the environmental evaluation process that refined the location of the I-225 light rail line and stations. During this time, the city conducted planning studies at several of the stations. The city retained a design team led by Crandall Arambula to prepare a station area plan for an area approximately one-half mile around the proposed Abilene light rail station. The Abilene Station Area Plan presents the long-term vision for the area developed with input from the Smith-Peoria/Fitzsimons-Colfax/13th Avenue/Abilene Steering Committee, property owners, RTD, and neighboring residents in three public meetings and workshops.

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is funding station area planning efforts throughout the region by administering federal funds. Funding is awarded to jurisdictions on a competitive basis and the funding amount is eighty percent of the study's cost. The remaining amount for this study was contributed by the City of Aurora.

This document is one in a series of station area plans prepared by the city to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) around the transit stations. Policy directions are derived from the **2003 Aurora Comprehensive Plan**. The intent of this plan is to identify opportunities for compact, mixed-use development that is transit-supportive, and to develop strategies to implement a common vision. Bringing property owners, residents and the design team together to discuss challenges and opportunities and to create the vision for this area has been the over-riding goal of this plan.

This plan provides a vision for this station area. The fundamental concepts and land use framework are intended to be flexible. Property owners and developers can provide site plans that vary from the fundamental concepts and framework visions without necessitating amendments to this plan. Such alternatives must conform to the key principles for transit-oriented development as outlined in the **Aurora Comprehensive Plan** and must provide alternatives to the fundamental concepts and framework described in this plan in a manner that conforms to those key principles. Such alternatives should conform to the general design guidance and guidelines described in this plan.



Figure 1. Aerial view looking north over the Abilene station area

1. Background Information

The planning, construction and opening of the I-225 light rail transit corridor is eagerly anticipated by businesses and residents in Aurora. The introduction of light rail stations can provide opportunities for changes in land use, creation of employment districts and new residential neighborhoods.

The Abilene Station Area Plan aims to create a neighborhood-serving station. By offering multi-modal accessibility and quality high density housing, the station will support increased light rail ridership. The goal of the Abilene station area plan is to promote the neighborhood around the station as a great place to live, with not only the benefit of proximity to the station, but also with a neighborhood character that capitalizes on the recreational opportunity of the High Line Canal trail and Toll Gate Creek.

The Abilene Station Area Plan serves as a tool to proactively plan for development rather than reactively respond to development pressures. The plan is not intended to mandate redevelopment for property owners who do not wish to redevelop. It provides a framework for future development, should existing property owners choose to redevelop, sell or relocate.

Through the station area planning process, the City of Aurora worked closely with the Regional Transportation District (RTD), property owners, neighborhood associations and residents to identify the planning principles that guided this plan, and the framework plan that is the result. This plan presents the vision developed with the public and RTD.

The plan is based on comments collected at three public meetings and workshops. As identified through this process and with RTD, the objectives of this plan are to:

- refine the location of the station together with developing access and land use concepts;
- improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the station;
- provide adequate commuter parking to serve the station;
- create a safe pedestrian environment at the station;
- address automobile-related impacts on adjacent streets; and
- identify long-term development concepts for undeveloped and underutilized land east of Abilene Street and adjacent to Sable Boulevard.

The project study area comprises the one-half mile surrounding the station, and includes multi-family housing, low rise suburban commercial, hotel, and retail uses. The study area comprises approximately 220 acres of land within one-half mile of the future light rail station. A portion of this area is within the identified Aurora City Center District.

The study area extends from 6th Avenue on the north, the Toll Gate Creek on the east, Ellsworth Avenue on the south, and Potomac Street on the west. To the south lies the Aurora City Place retail center, with a Target as the primary anchor and a variety of specialized retail stores. The study area includes a number of significant development opportunities. Within this area, there are approximately 30 acres of undeveloped land. Undeveloped land close to the proposed station provides the opportunity to create a compact, mixed-use neighborhood within easy walking distance of the station.

The largest vacant parcel in the study area is owned by developer David J. Erb & Company. There is an approved General development Plan (GDP) that identifies this parcel as the “Abilene Station TOD”. It is

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located east of Abilene Street between the High Line Canal and 4th Avenue. The GDP proposed over 760 residential units and 17,000 square feet of commercial use for this site. The Abilene Station TOD GDP block and street layouts are reflected in the illustrations in this plan. This station area plan acknowledges the transit-supportive density established by this GDP. The station area plan does not change the legal status of the Abilene Station GDP which remains in full force and effect.

In addition to I-225, the major north-south roads include Potomac Street, Abilene Street and Sable Boulevard. Major east-west roads include E. 6th, 3rd and E. Alameda Avenues. The High Line Canal trail, a National Landmark Trail, serves as a major recreational amenity for hiking, biking, jogging and horseback riding and extends 66 miles through Douglas, Arapahoe and Denver counties.

The Toll Gate Creek Trail is planned to extend north from Alameda Parkway to connect into the Sand Creek trail system. This missing segment (Alameda Parkway to Montview Boulevard) is planned but will be implemented in phases over time.

The Abilene station is unique amongst the Aurora stations in that its purpose is primarily to serve the local residents rather than functioning as a major park-n-Ride station. It can also be considered as one of two stations serving the Aurora City Center area, with the other being the City Center station south of Alameda Parkway. Both RTD's and the City of Aurora's parking studies project that the commuter parking demand at the Abilene station can be satisfied by providing 200 parking spaces (opening day, anticipated as 2015). Through the planning process, a location for a 200 space surface parking lot close to the station was identified on the north side of Ellsworth Avenue.

The primary challenge for the Abilene station is how to provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian access for transit patrons walking or bicycling from the neighborhoods west of Potomac Street. As shown in Figure 2. Existing Conditions Map, a considerable portion of the Lynn Knoll neighborhood is within one-half mile of the station. This should be a comfortable walk to the station, but Potomac Street is a barrier to pedestrians and the tunnel beneath I-225 can be perceived as an unpleasant walking environment. This plan provides recommendations to improve this pedestrian access.

As with the other I-225 light rail stations, another concern expressed at the community meetings was parking in adjacent neighborhoods. Since overflow parking may occur in the future, the City recognizes that an expanded parking management program will likely be needed.

The Abilene Station Area Plan presents the long term vision for the station area and a framework plan for creating a neighborhood station that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle access. The plan was created in response to the public's vision for future growth and is based on information gathered through a community involvement process that included several stakeholder meetings and three community workshops.

This plan condenses information from a source document that contains details such as roadway cross-sections, detailed site plan illustrations, comments from the public process, etc. The reader should contact the Planning Department for further information on this document.

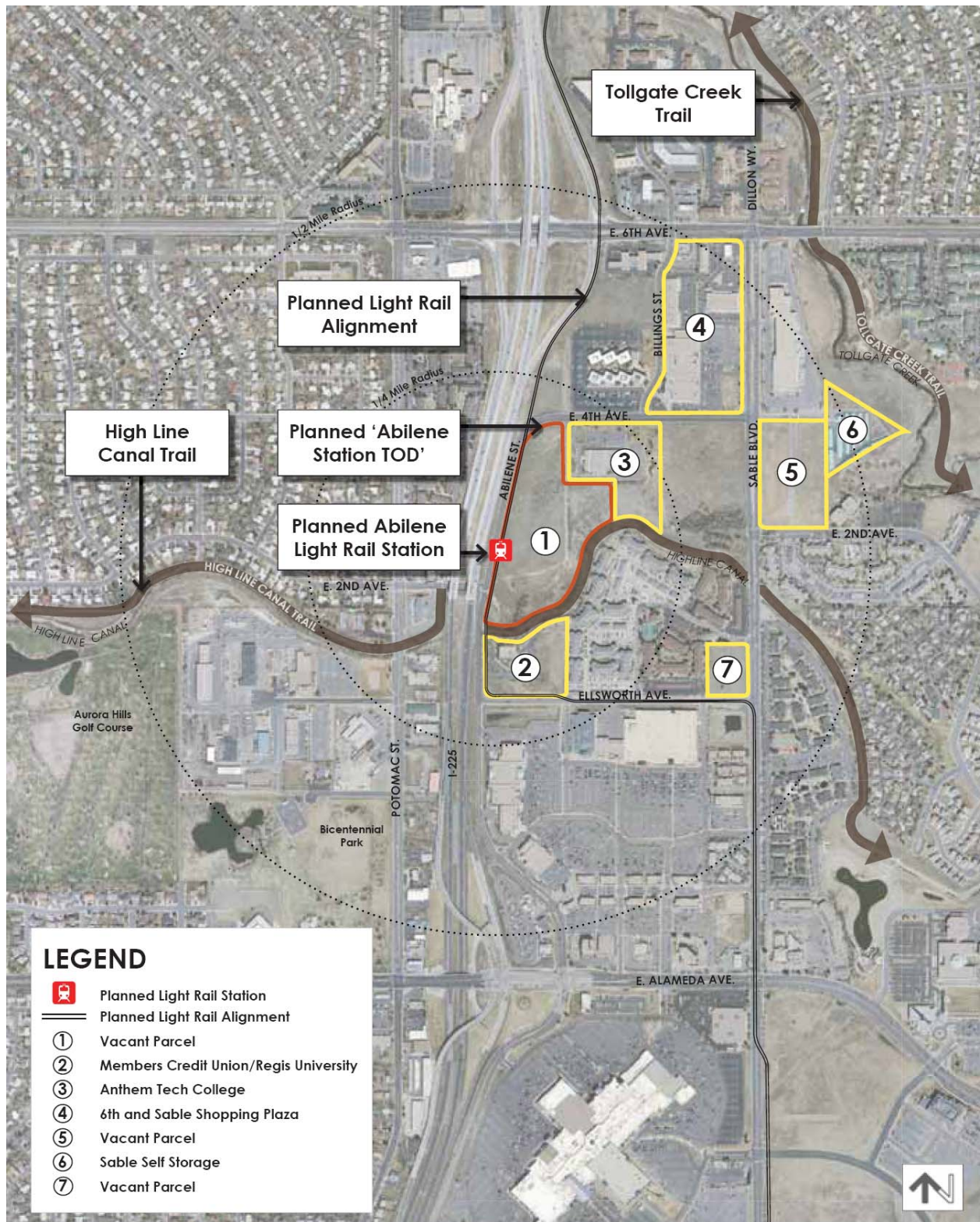


Figure 2. Existing Conditions Map

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2. The Plan

The following documents and studies have informed and guided the development of this station area plan:

- 2003 Aurora Comprehensive Plan;
- I-225 Corridor Environmental Evaluation (RTD); and
- Aurora Strategic Parking Study.

The planning process has also included an assessment of transportation and infrastructure needs. There are no significant limitations due to infrastructure capability that will reduce the medium density building forms recommended in this plan.

The station area plan builds upon a 20 year vision for the study area that reflects the community's vision for the future, as expressed during the public consultation events undertaken during 2008.

The key goals embodied in the station area plan seek to:

- Reinforce the existing neighborhood character and scale of the City Center residential area;
- Create a pedestrian and bicycle link to the Toll Gate Creek and High Line Canal trails to better provide a safe and attractive trail system to access the station;
- Provide new public open spaces to serve the increasing number of new community residents;
- Provide adequate commuter parking to serve transit patrons; and
- Create an attractive neighborhood character with pleasant and abundant public spaces.

The vision developed for the Abilene station is:

- Station Area Character: residential neighborhood
- Transportation Function: neighborhood walk-up station
- Primary land Uses: medium-density housing with some neighborhood-serving commercial.

Through the planning process, the following key principles from the Aurora Comprehensive Plan shaped the development of the concepts.

1. TOD works as a "district". The one-half mile area around the transit station is the minimum area of influence from the transit station. These areas can become new neighborhoods where development draws value from the transit stations, parks and plazas are gathering places, and the mix of uses allows pedestrians to easily reach their destinations.
2. TODs must be walkable. TODs are to create an urban scale where the pedestrian is important. Attractive and safe pedestrian connections are a priority in TODs.
3. Central spaces give identity to TODs. Public spaces are very important in TODs, and parks, plazas and main streets that are beautiful and useful can become important identifying elements.
4. TODs connect to the surrounding neighborhoods. The pedestrian network of the TOD should allow easy pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods. The relatively small size of the blocks

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should allow for an attractive and convenient pedestrian experience.

5. Density is important. TOD should have density sufficient to create an active center for an existing or new neighborhood. Higher densities take advantage of the massive public investment in transit. Density also creates the potential for diversity of housing types, a range of land uses, and the possibility of neighborhood-serving retail.
6. Design matters. The quality of building architecture and the design of streets, parks and plazas are important elements that create the identity of a station area.
7. Promoting sustainability. Compact development promotes efficiency in infrastructure, and may require innovative approaches to detention and water quality.

Fundamental Concept

The Abilene Station Area Plan links existing circulation elements and land uses to the future station, provides new transit-supportive land uses within the station area, and creates a viable transit-oriented neighborhood. The Fundamental Concept Diagram provides a quick visual summary of the essential elements of the station area plan. These are:

Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Enhancements

- The existing High Line Canal trail provides a safe and convenient off-street access to the Abilene station for pedestrian and bicyclists. The trail will provide transit patrons with an alternative to driving to and parking at the station. Improving connections to the trail, such as adding locations to cross the canal, will improve access to the station.
- A multi-use path on 2nd Avenue beneath the interstate currently exists. Enhancements such as pedestrian scale lighting and widening the sidewalks are needed to provide a safe, functional and attractive connection to the station.
- Constructing the planned expansion of the Toll Gate Trail will provide the north-south off-street access, via 4th Avenue, to the Abilene light rail station.

New Station Connections

The recommended new station connections will provide safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian and bicycle routes to and from the Abilene light rail station. The new connections will link the station to:

- The extension of the Toll Gate Creek trail via 4th Avenue;
- Existing single-family housing via 2nd Avenue and Vaughn Street;
- New housing via 4th Avenue and a proposed “Main Street” and from a proposed “Park Avenue” east of Sable Boulevard; and
- Neighborhood and regional retail centers via “Main Street” and a new pedestrian path south of the High Line Canal across Ellsworth Avenue.
- The new station connections should include wide sidewalks, lighting, benches, shade trees, and landscape buffers.

Light Rail Commuter Parking

- RTD plans to serve the Abilene station with a 200 space park-n-Ride lot on the vacant eastern portion of the Members Credit Union/Regis University site.
- The park-n-Ride’s planned location is conveniently located for transit patrons, and will also allow transit-oriented development to be located close to the station.
- To access the park-n-Ride, a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge is proposed over the High Line Canal in conjunction with the proposed Abilene Station TOD GDP.

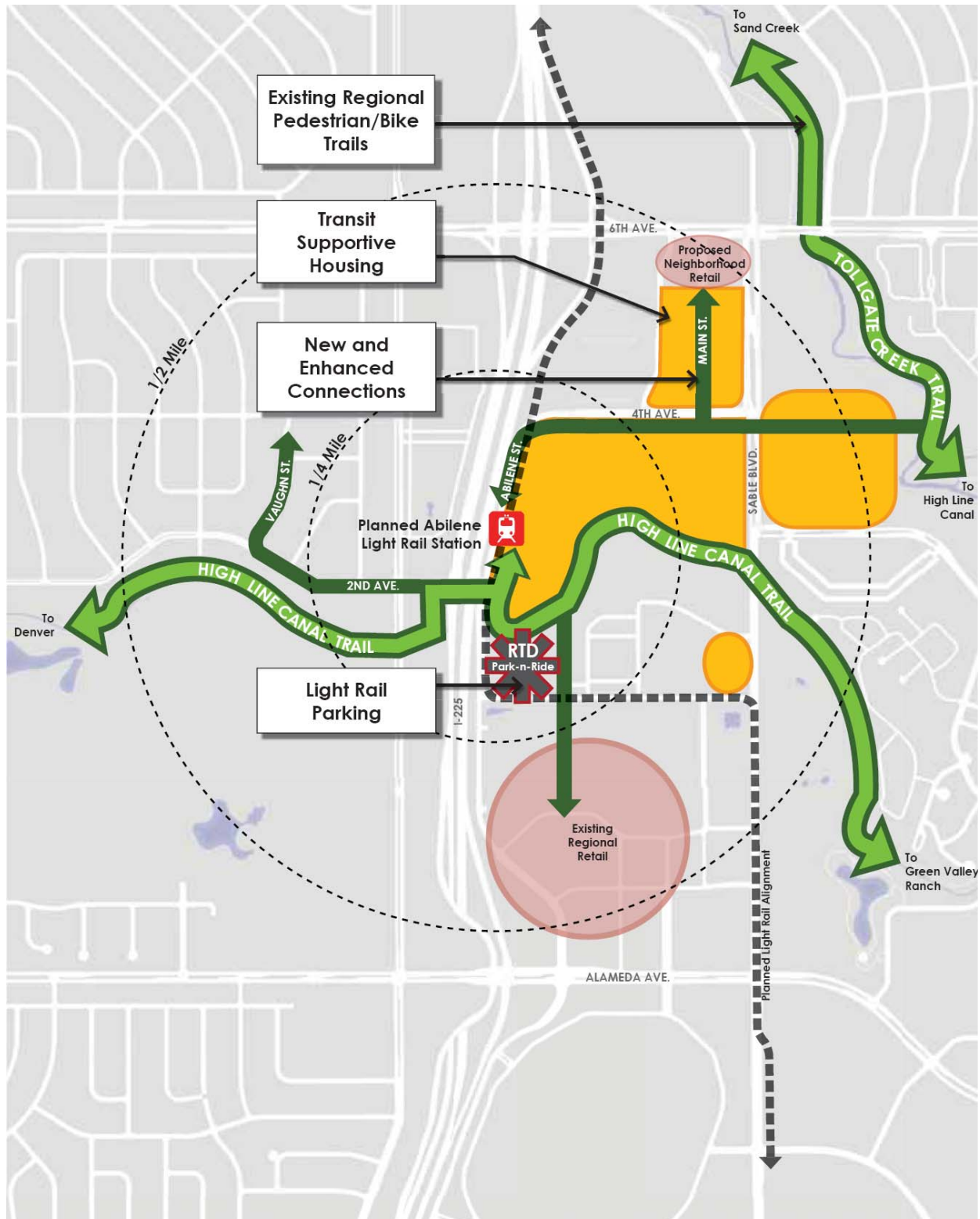


Figure 3. Fundamental Concept Diagram

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Transit-Supportive Housing

Transit-supportive housing is medium to high-density housing that supports transit ridership by providing a base of transit users that will use light rail. Transit-supportive housing close to the Abilene light rail station should:

- Provide a range of unit types, including market-rate, mixed income, rental and owned units;
- Be designed to face onto public parks, the High Line Canal and Toll Gate Creek. These existing and proposed public spaces are important amenities that can define the Abilene station neighborhood. Both the canal and the creek are unique amenities in Aurora and should be emphasized in the site design of new developments.
- Establish a neighborhood with buildings that have concealed on-site parking, and with parking requirements suitable for transit-oriented residential and commercial uses.
- Establish a medium density housing form that is oriented to the street and has concealed on-site parking. Ground floor uses on “Main Street” may include active uses, such as live/work spaces and commercial uses.

The Land Use Framework

The proposed land uses in the Abilene station study area are compatible with the existing uses and are intended to support and promote transit ridership. The Land Use Framework Diagram illustrates the types and locations of land uses for the area east of I-225 between Ellsworth and 6th Avenues. The recommended land uses include:

- Retail;
- Mixed-use commercial;
- Mixed-use residential;
- Surface parking; and
- Parks and public spaces.

On many parcels, a mix of vertical uses is recommended. Where commercial and retail uses are located within the ground floor of a residential building, they are indicated as “ground-floor retail” or “ground-floor commercial” uses on the Land Use Diagram.

Development is indicated on parcels that are most likely to be developed or redeveloped over time. The purpose of this plan is to encourage new development patterns and building forms on undeveloped and underutilized parcels. For examples, on parcels fronting onto the “Main Street” and the north side of 4th Avenue, a mix of vertical uses is recommended. And should the existing shopping center south of 6th Avenue redevelop, it is recommended that a mixed-use development with a street grid be implemented.

Retail

The “retail” land use category identifies the areas for retail and restaurant uses, including off-street parking for these uses. The retail uses are recommended along the 6th Avenue and Sable Boulevard frontages due to good visibility and automobile access.

Mixed-Use Commercial and Ground Floor Retail

The commercial uses include services (e.g., financial, real estate, insurance services, etc.) as well as retail uses. These are proposed to be located along streets that provide easy access as well as the very important requirement for drive-by visibility. For this reason, it is recommended that the “Main Street” and the north side of 4th Avenue be zoned to permit these uses. The benefits that these uses will provide in this Abilene station area are:

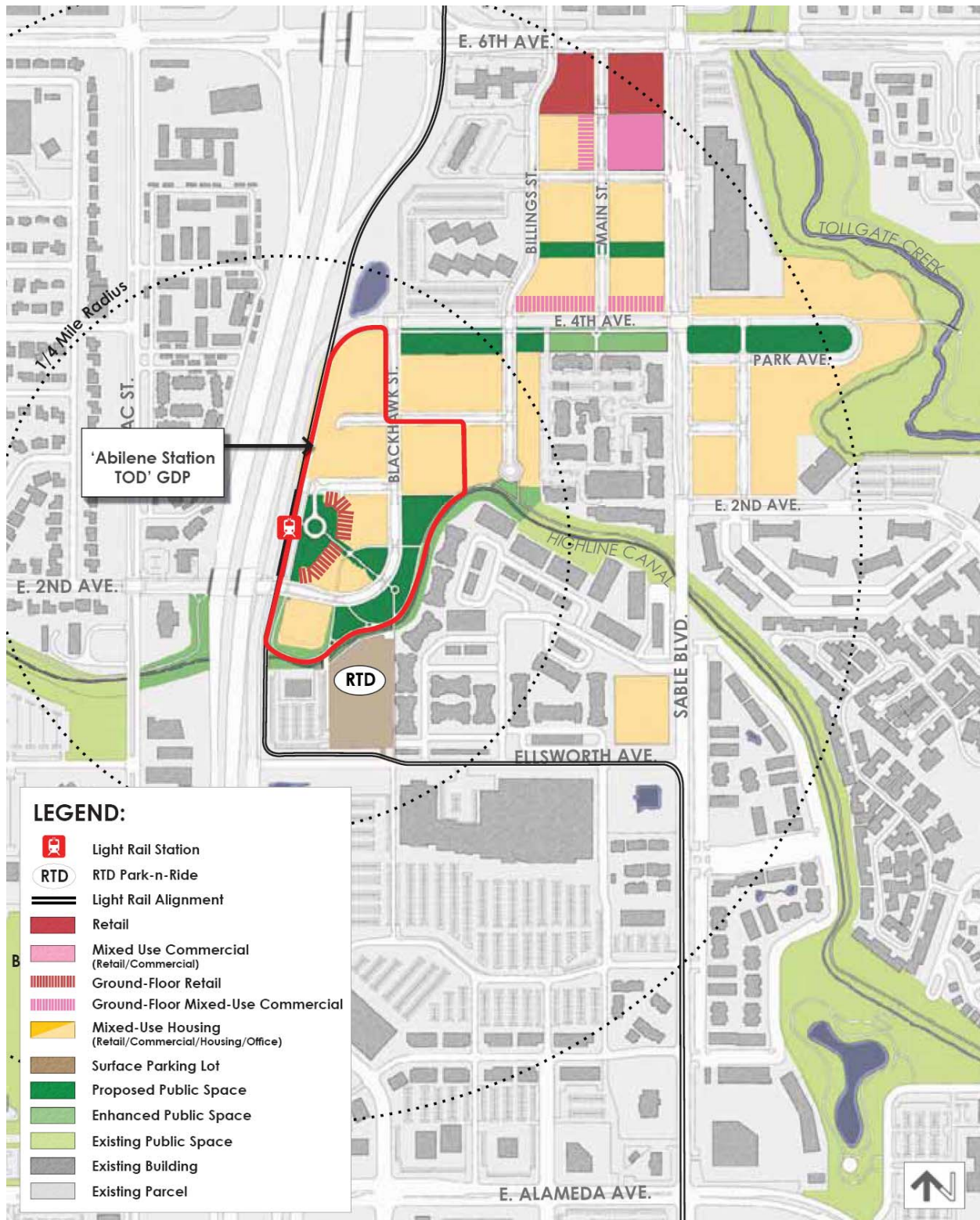


Figure 4. Land Use Framework Diagram

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- Support and strengthen the station area residential neighborhood; and
- Support existing commercial and retail land uses.

Housing

As shown in the Land Use Diagram, housing is envisioned as the most desirable use in areas closest to the light rail station and east of Sable Boulevard. The housing land uses are recommended in these locations since they benefit from:

- Proximity to the station because they are within an easy walking distance;
- Good accessibility to the centrally located park site which provides a major amenity to the residents;
- Flexibility to attain higher residential densities with parking provided on-site within buildings.

The “mixed-use” housing category includes multi-family housing such as townhouses, condominiums and apartments. Housing uses provide a customer base for retail and commercial uses, therefore ground-floor retail and commercial uses are encouraged where viable.

With its accessibility to light rail and bus transit and the City Center shopping centers, the Abilene station area may be well-suited for senior housing. A mix of for sale, rental and affordable units should be promoted in this area.

RTD Commuter Parking

The RTD park-n-Ride lot is to be built on the north side of Ellsworth Avenue with 200 surface parking spaces. Vehicular access will be at a traffic signal on Ellsworth Avenue. The amount of commuter parking at the station on opening day may be increased beyond that provided by RTD.

Public Spaces

The proposed public spaces are:

- A public plaza adjacent to the Abilene light rail station and a public park adjacent to the High-line Canal. These are to be provided through the Abilene Station TOD development;
- A central park within the Park Avenue loop road; and
- A pedestrian greenway within new development.

As the residential density within this area increases, it is important to provide the necessary spaces for passive recreation. Since the closest neighborhood park is further than one-half mile away from the center of the study area, the introduction of public spaces provides the needed park spaces for residents.

The character of the proposed park spaces are:

- Park blocks along 4th Avenue. This is proposed to be a central organizing feature for the station area that serves as a park amenity to attract market-rate housing and link the station to existing and proposed residential developments east of the station. A portion of the park blocks currently serves as an existing drainage area (i.e., as part of the City Lights apartment project) and should be enhanced and integrated as part of a cohesive linear park.
- Pedestrian Greenway. A pedestrian and bicycle pass-through that provides a shared landscaped space for adjacent housing. This greenway is proposed as an element in a residential/mixed-use development north of 4th Avenue.

Park Space Alternative

An alternative that arose during the public review of the draft plan was to provide greater flexibility for the location of the park area east of Sable Boulevard. Park space is needed as an area amenity and to provide needed recreational opportunities. The purpose of the park space is to also provide the pedestrian and bicycle connection between the station and the planned Toll Gate Creek trail.

The following alternatives for the Fundamental Concept and Land Use Framework illustrate:

- The relocation of the park space from 4th Avenue to the north side of 2nd Avenue and the connection between the park and the High Line Canal trail and the planned Toll Gate Creek trail. Instead of the park being located adjacent to 4th Avenue, it would be located on the north side of 2nd Avenue.
- A trail link would extend from this 2nd Avenue Park through new development to the planned Toll Gate Creek trail.
- The park space would be a public park, available to all residents in the area.

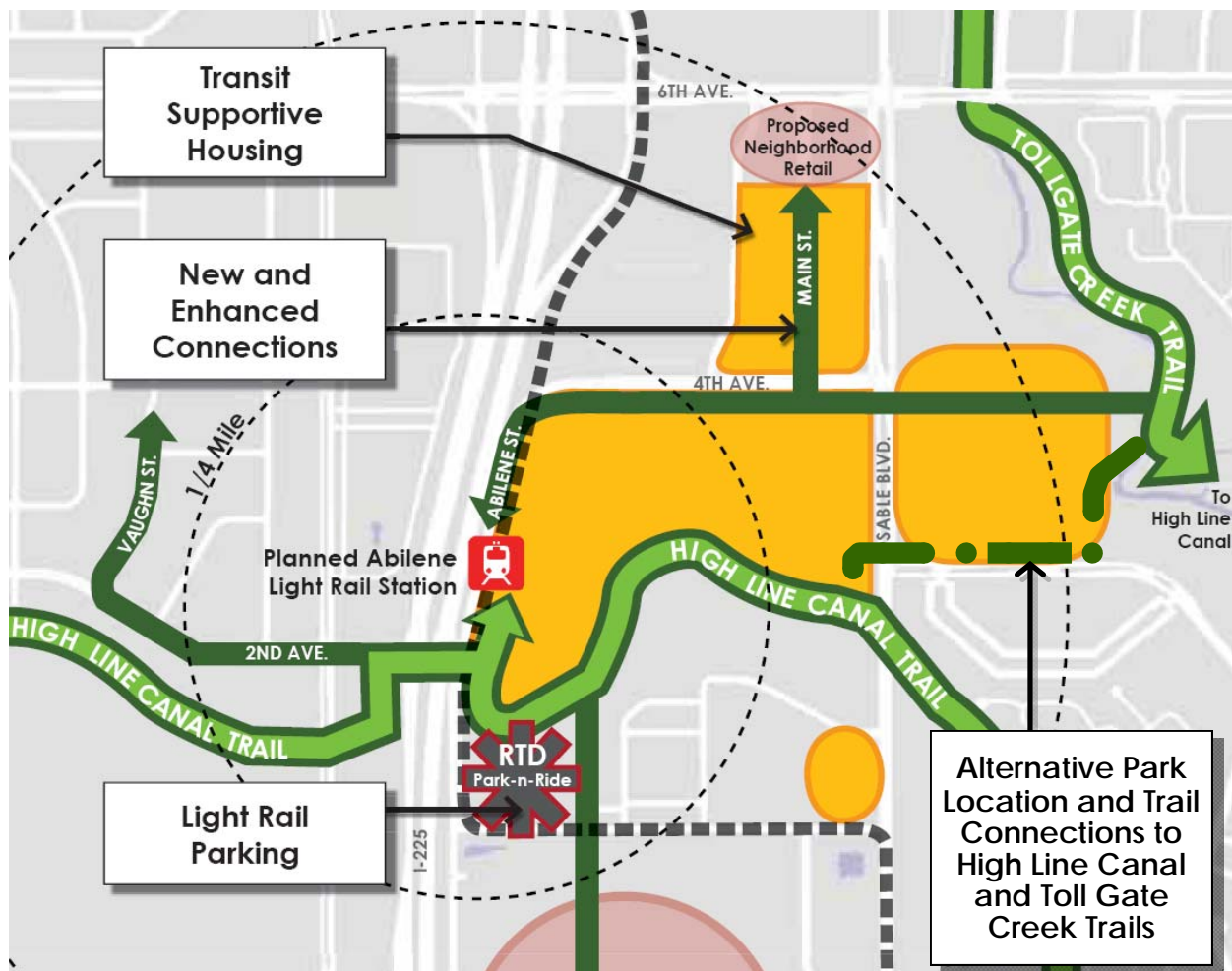


Figure 5. Park Location Alternative for the Fundamental Concept

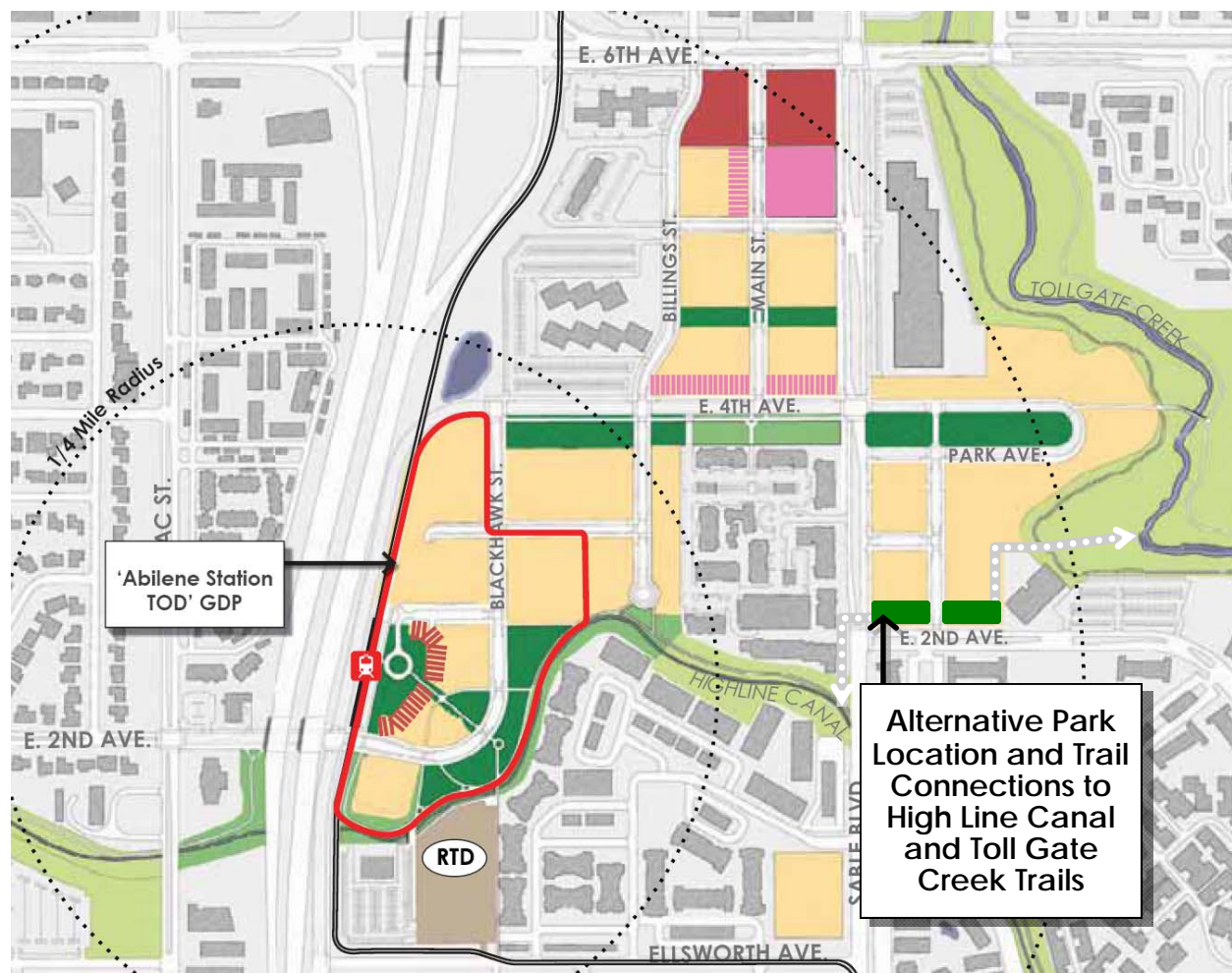


Figure 6. Park Location Alternative for the Land Use Framework

3. Zoning Guidance and Design Guidelines

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning District

A Transit-Oriented Development Zoning District is available for use in Aurora around the light rail and commuter transit stations. The TOD zoning district references the station area plan to provide guidance concerning boundaries, building form and intensity. This station area plan is to be used by applicants in conjunction with the city's TOD zoning district. Specific sections of the TOD zoning district are modified by this station area plan.

Existing zoning around the station currently consists of a wide range of commercial zoning districts. These land use districts do not permit the mixed-use, compact and high density building form envisioned by this plan. TOD zoning will be essential to take full advantage of the development potential of this area. The city anticipates that TOD zoning will be applied at the request of property owners.

Sub-Districts and Land Use

Two sub-districts can be defined for the Abilene Station area, each with its own land use characteristics:

1. Core Sub-District.

- a. *Location.* This sub-district includes all commercial lands east of I-225, south of E. 6th Avenue, east of Sable Boulevard, and north of Ellsworth Avenue.
- b. *Uses.* This zone includes medium to high intensity commercial, residential, hotel, civic and entertainment uses. Public and private parking structures are also permitted. Ground-floor commercial uses are encouraged to occur within a "main street" and along the north side of 4th Avenue.

2. General Sub-District.

- a. *Location.* This sub-district includes all the commercial lands east of Sable Boulevard and south of E. 6th Avenue. This is an area which can transition from office and storage uses to residential and mixed-use development.
- b. *Uses.* With a density less than the Core, the uses in this area will be primarily commercial, mixed-use and residential.

There is no Transition Sub-District identified at the Abilene station. The major roads in the area effectively separate the land uses that may have potential conflicts.

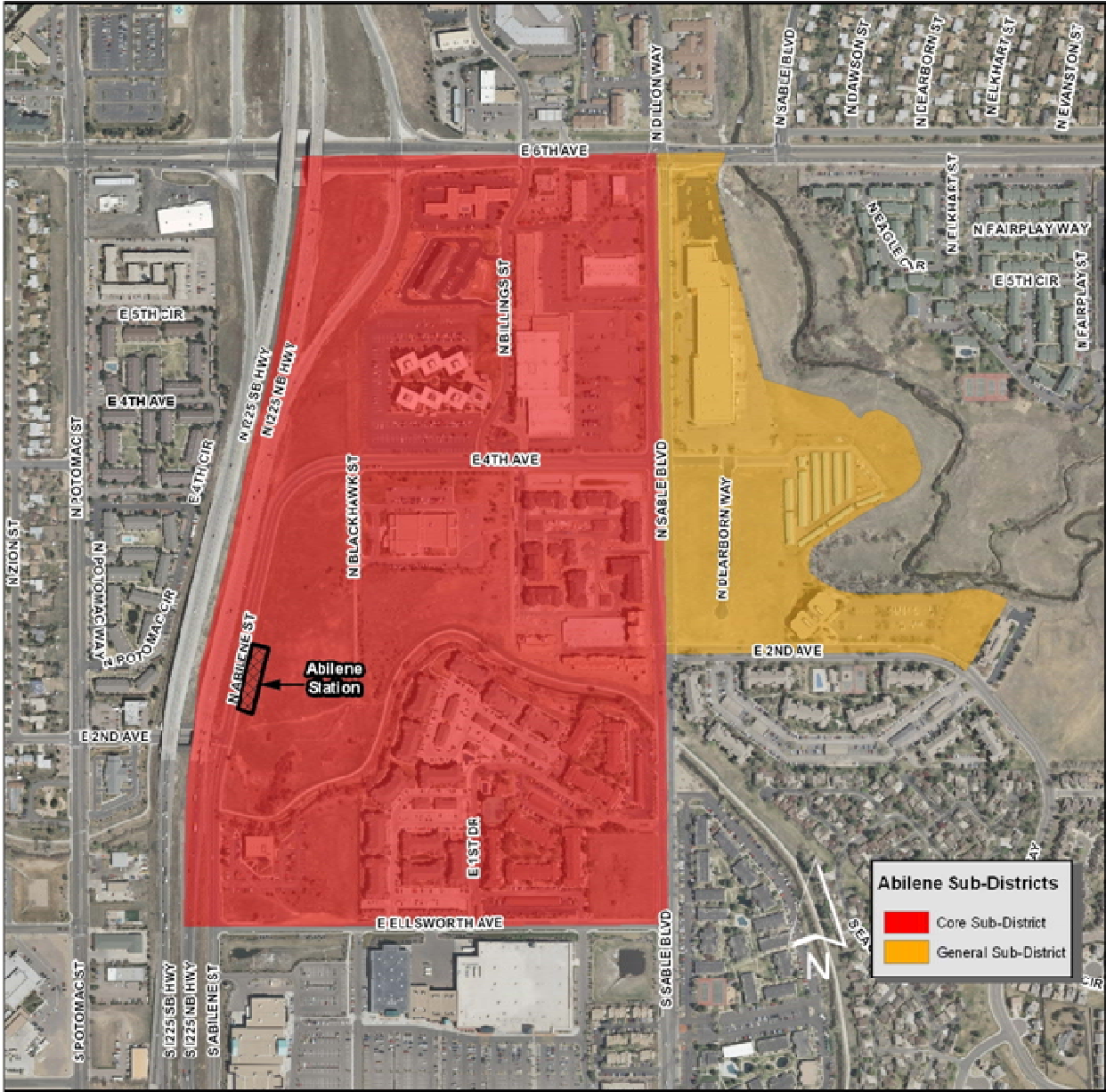


Figure 7. Abilene Station Area Sub-Districts

Development Standards

This section provides modifications to Sec. 146-728. Development Standards of the City of Aurora Zoning Code:

Block Size and Street Grid. Blocks shall typically be no longer than 500 feet in length and no more than 1,600 feet around the perimeter.

Residential Density. Minimum residential densities for the sub-districts are:

Core Area:	40 units per acre
General Area:	15 units per acre

Building Heights. Building height may be maximized adjacent to the high traffic streets (E. 6th Avenue) and minimized adjacent to the existing residential neighborhoods. There is no height limit in the Core Area. Building heights should shade the sidewalks on the south and west sides of streets in hot weather but allow sun exposure on the north side of streets during cold weather. Building heights for the sub-districts are:

1. Core Sub-District:

Minimum height of two stories. No maximum height, except for buildings adjacent to the existing residential neighborhoods. Buildings that front or back directly on existing residential properties shall have a maximum building height of four stories.

2. General Sub-District:

Minimum height of two stories and a maximum height of five stories.

Urban Form. Building forms should be related to the width and activity on the street that fronts them, so that a sense of enclosure is created. Ground floor uses shall consist of active commercial uses, restaurants and entertainment venues in areas that will be frequented by pedestrians. The active space shall be organized in relation to a logical pedestrian flow, without isolating retail activities from public spaces and streets. Landscape and streetscape shall be urban in character, allowing for pedestrian traffic and seating, and for visual relief from the urban environment. In the Core Sub-District, buildings shall be built to the property line, defined as the back of sidewalk, with allowances made for shallow setbacks, consistent with a uniform street frontage.

Desired Building Setbacks. The setbacks for the sub-districts in the TOD Zoning District shall apply. In addition, the following development standards shall apply.

- a. **Front.** Setback not more than ten (10) feet in the Core and General sub-district. The ten (10) foot setback is permitted in the Core and General sub-districts for outdoor cafes and overhanging balconies, but shall not exceed forty (40) percent of the building frontage. Steps, stoops, balconies, awnings, chimneys, bay windows, etc. may encroach into the setback.

Desired Building Forms. The following additional development standards shall apply.

- a. Continuous building frontage is required on the main commercial street ("Main Street"). A continuous building height façade along all streets shall be a minimum of two stories to provide a defined urban edge to the street.
- b. Commercial uses at-grade on main streets and surrounding any public spaces are required

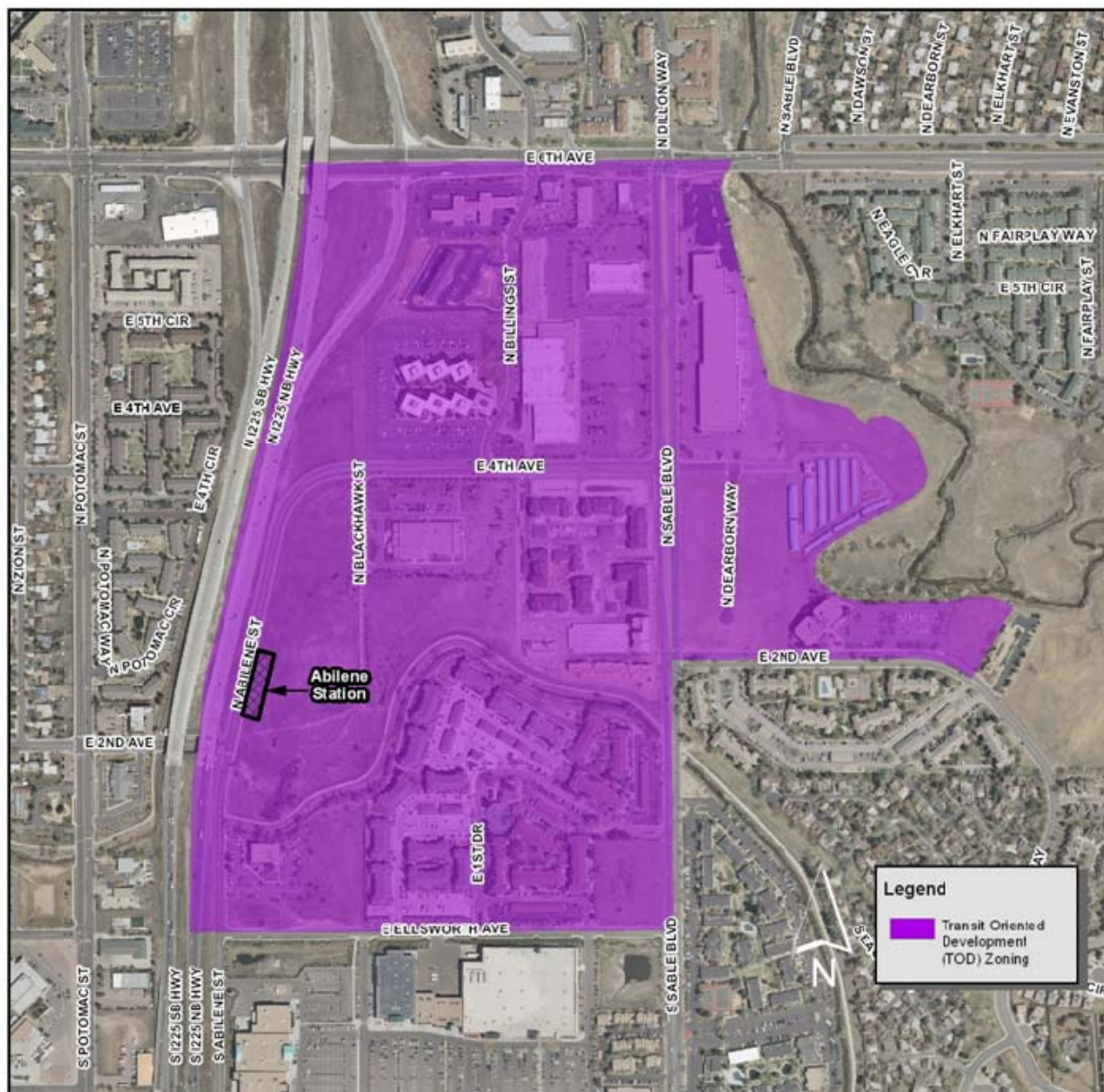


Figure 8. Abilene Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning Map

- to support pedestrian activity.
- c. Clear windows at grade are required for a minimum of sixty (60) percent of the façade length except for residential uses.
- d. Quality materials on the ground floor façade are required on all buildings on major streets.
- e. Sixty (60) percent of the building façade excluding door and windows facing a public park or plaza must be brick, stone or cultured stone.
- f. Entries shall front on the major streets and shall be generously proportioned and defined with architectural features. Awning and structural canopies for weather protection at building entrances are desirable.
- g. Drive-through facilities of any kind shall not be permitted in the Core sub-district.
- h. Blank walls are not permitted on any façade. All façades shall have architectural details that add visual interest.
- i. Loading docks and entrances shall not be located on the major pedestrian streets.
- j. Alternative uses for building roofs such as terraces, roof gardens and green roofs are encouraged.
- k. Any utility, service or loading area facing Sable Boulevard or 6th Avenue shall not be directly visible from the street. Complete screening matching the building design or a landscape buffer achieving eighty (80) percent screening in three (3) years shall be installed where necessary to meet this requirement.
- l. Residential units facing Sable Boulevard shall be oriented with their front door to this street wherever possible.

Design Guidelines and Standards

The following design guidelines and standards have been developed to establish high quality requirements for the design of all projects within the station area.

Sustainability:

Sustainability of the Abilene Station Core Sub-District should be encouraged by promoting the use of the well-established Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, established by the US Green Building Council (USGBC). Buildings in the Abilene station are encouraged to achieve a minimum of LEED-NC Certified rating (NC refers to New Construction). Refer to the USGBC web site for a full description of the LEED ratings that are available. Certified is the lowest of all ratings, which progress upward to Silver, Gold and Platinum.

Pedestrian Connections:

- Walkways, bridges and pedestrian crossings shall constitute a network that interconnects all transit, commercial and residential buildings.
- Hidden areas and blind corners shall be avoided in favor of open, visible gathering places and unobstructed paths with clear visual connections to destinations beyond.
- Pedestrian walkways should avoid doubling back or acute changes in the travel path, and should have good visual connection with the surroundings at all times. Active uses should be located along the pedestrian paths.

Landscape and Streetscape

Streetscape and open space areas should add a distinctive identity to the area, using planting, paving, lighting, signage and street furnishings as cohesive elements. Features should be coordinated throughout the development. The landscape treatment on each development parcel shall be coordinated with the public space streetscape design.

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The station area should contain a hierarchy of streets which reflect different streetscape treatments, according to the Aurora Urban Street Standards.

Site Furnishings and Lighting Fixtures: Site furnishings and public lighting should:

- be incorporated as part of the building design and architectural style;
- express a hierarchy from the TOD core to outlying areas;
- be durable and appropriate for the climate;
- illuminate all sidewalks and pedestrian pathways with uniform light levels;
- not cast light directly into residential windows

Roof Landscaping: Building roofs should be developed as open space resources, amenity decks and green roofs where possible.

Landscape Materials: Materials should be provided based on the following considerations;

- safety – avoid visual obstructions especially at circulation intersections;
- local microclimate – provide summer shade and open canopies for warmth in winter;
- low watering requirements – 100 percent of plant material should be drought resistant;
- ease of maintenance – minimize litter from plant materials and trees;
- attractiveness – intensify in key locations with seasonal color, texture, scale;
- screening – screen service areas, parking lots, meters and garbage dumpsters.

Parking

Automobile parking is a necessary part of an urban environment but it should not compromise the relationship between streets and surrounding uses, or the character of a station area.

- Surface parking lots are discouraged in the Core Sub-District.
- The entire Core Sub-District should be self-sufficient in terms of parking; shared parking should be utilized and may be shared from parcel to parcel.
- Parking structures shall adhere to the same requirements in terms of orientation, building materials, fenestration, design and architectural elements as for other commercial or residential buildings.
- Parking structures should be wrapped with residential or commercial buildings to minimize visual impact on public streets and spaces.
- Vehicle access to parking should be avoided on high-traffic pedestrian frontages.
- Parking access shall be well-identified by a way-finding signage system.

Architecture

Architectural design should distinguish the Abilene station area as a primarily residential district. Long building profiles shall be broken up with relief in the façades and rooflines to minimize apparent bulk and mass.

360 Degree Architecture: To create an urban environment that is visually pleasing from all points of view, all sides of a building shall exhibit design continuity, with no unimproved sides being visible from public rights-of-way. Early phase buildings which will have buildings abutting them may have building faces that are without fenestration or other façade design features.

Solar Orientation, Shading and Solar Access: Building façades shall be environmentally responsible by adapting fenestration, shading and materials individually to respond to the environmental conditions of each façade's orientation. Buildings shall minimize the negative impact of winter shade on public open spaces and sidewalks. Buildings shall not contain gold glass coating or other first surface coatings that are highly reflective or mirrored.

Fenestration: Clear glass storefronts on ground floor façades should be provided to ensure visibility of

active uses. On upper levels, façades should respond to their orientation by individualized treatment of façades to accommodate sun shading and solar gain as appropriate. Clear, low E or slightly tinted glazing should be used. Clear glass shall not have a reflectance rating of greater than .20.

Awnings and Canopies: Awnings and canopies shall be an integral part of the architectural design. Canopies shall not extend more than ten feet beyond the faces of buildings, and no less than six feet. Awnings shall be solid colors. Awnings or canopies shall not be supported from the sidewalk.

Materials and Finishes: Materials, finishes and detailing shall enrich the Station Area's visual and tactile qualities. Regionally-appropriate and compatible materials shall be used, carefully detailed and combined. The building materials shall establish a consistent and high level of quality that is durable and appropriate to pedestrian contact at the street level. Materials used shall convey a high level of visual amenity that is commensurate with the urban character of the station area.

Storefront Design: Storefront entry thresholds shall be at the adjacent sidewalk level. Storefronts shall be scaled and detailed to break down large façades of buildings into small units. A variety of small scale storefront designs shall predominate over a uniform series of longer storefronts. A high proportion of clear glass shall be used in storefronts, consistent with energy conservation requirements and to increase visibility.

Equipment and Service: All ground floor equipment, trash storage and utilities shall be screened from view from public rights-of-way,

Building Signage: Signage shall comply with Aurora codes and ordinances. Signs directly related to a business shall be allowed to extend over the sidewalk, at a height of no less than 9'-0" above the sidewalk.

External Building and Site Lighting:

- External lighting of buildings shall be minimized, except for accent lighting of building entries or features.
- The impact of lighting on the night sky shall be minimized by cutoff fixtures, downward projecting fixtures and minimizing light energy.
- Exterior light fixtures shall confine direct light rays to the premises, and the light source shall not be directly visible from any adjacent property or beyond two mounting heights distance from the fixture.
- Power consumption for external building lighting shall be minimized.
- Levels elsewhere shall comply with Aurora code and ordinances, and shall be as uniform as possible on pedestrian sidewalks.

4. Implementation

The Abilene Station Area Plan presents the vision developed through a collaborative process between government agencies, property owners and residents.

Policy Changes

The specific implementation steps are:

- Adoption of the Abilene Station Area Plan as an amendment to the 2003 Aurora Comprehensive Plan;
- Design and budgeting for pedestrian and bicycle improvements to 2nd Avenue between Abilene and Potomac Streets; and
- Adoption of the Transit-Oriented Development Zoning District for the currently zoned commercial properties in the Abilene station area. This may be implemented in phases, depending on a property owner's development plan and schedule.



City of Aurora

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