

# Colorado College

## Long Range Development Plan

### *Project Statement*

#### **Preamble**

The Colorado College was established in 1874 on a portion of its present site as a grant from General Palmer to establish an institution of higher learning for the citizens of Colorado Springs and the world. Over the years the College has acquired additional land to form the current 90 acre campus. Among institutions of higher education in the United States, Colorado College is distinctive in its delivery of academic coursework and its engagement of students in the learning process.

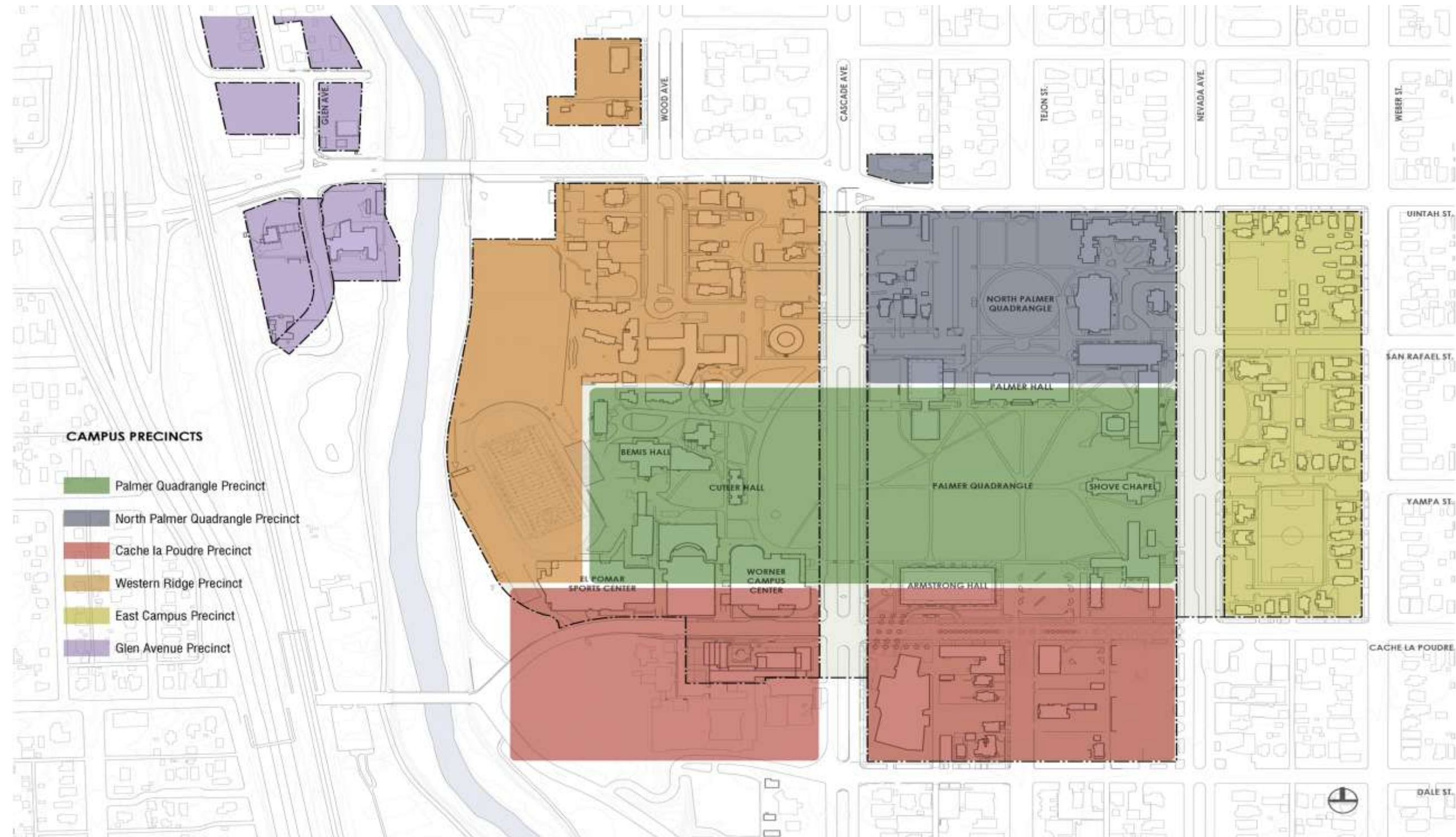
The mission of the College is “...to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country. Drawing upon the adventurous spirit of the Rocky Mountain West, we challenge students, one course at a time, to develop those habits of intellect and imagination that will prepare them for learning and leadership throughout their lives.” In achieving this mission, the College community is guided by a fundamental commitment to honor the life of the mind. Other core values include:

- valuing all persons and seeking to learn from their diverse experiences;
- practicing intellectual honesty and living with integrity;
- being prudent stewards of College traditions and resources;
- nurturing a sense of place and an ethic of environmental sustainability;
- encouraging engagement and social responsibility at local, national, and global levels;
- seeking excellence, constantly assessing the College’s policies and programs.

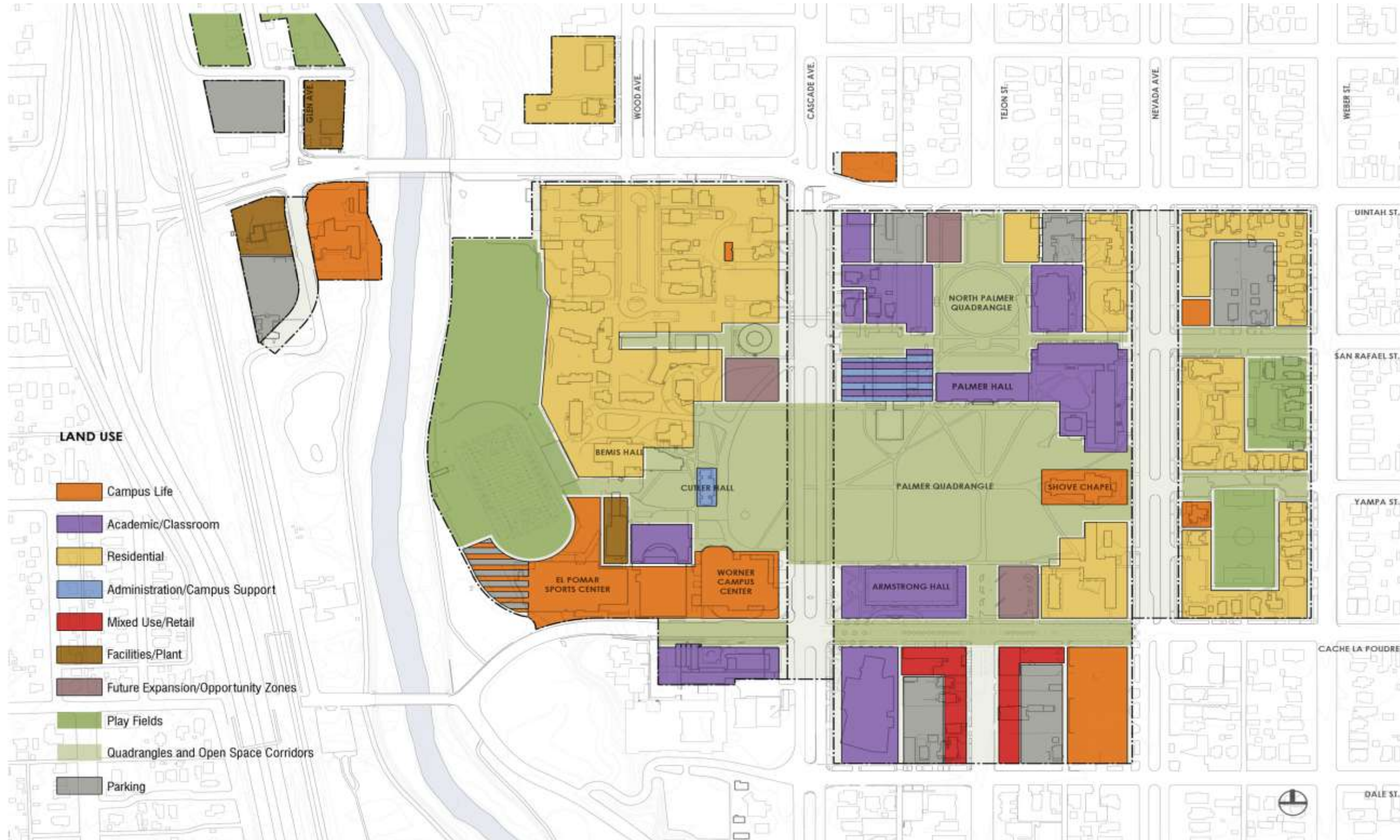
With this mission and these core values in mind, a Long Range Development Plan (LRDP or Plan) has been formulated for the “physical plant” that embraces the core value of “nurturing a sense of place and an ethic of environmental sustainability to strategically accomplish the College’s mission. The distinctiveness of the College lies in its innovative and unique “block plan” as well as its geographic location. These distinctive characteristics are recognized as the foundation to the past, present and future successes of the College. This LRDP is an amendment to, and update of The Colorado College Master Plan approved a decade ago.

**Description**

The proposed LRDP incorporates six separate campus precincts as depicted below:



The land uses proposed within these precincts are shown in the following campus plot:



**Summary Table of Campus Land Usage**

<b><i>Planning Land Use</i></b>	<b><i>LRDP Land Use</i></b>	<b><i>Acreage</i></b>
Educational/Institutional	Campus Life	10.16
Educational/Institutional	Academic/Classroom	13.26
Residential	Residential	26.59
Educational/Institutional	Administration/Campus Support	1.55
Commercial/Mixed Use	Mixed Use/Retail	1.49
Educational/Institutional	Facilities/Plant	1.88
Open Space	Future Expansion/Opportunity Zones Play Fields Quadrangles and Open Space Corridors	27.28
Educational/Institutional	Parking	6.57

## **Justification**

The proposed LRDP provides a flexible planning framework for the future development of the campus and its relationship to its surrounding neighborhood environment. The College is positioned as the north anchor of the downtown area and is a vital participant in the Downtown Partnership and the “Imagine Downtown” initiative. The homeowners and residents of the Old North End Neighborhood benefit tangentially from a thoughtful plan that seeks to preserve and enhance the quality and character of Colorado College. Faculty, staff, students and visitors to the campus will be able to experience the fullness of teaching, working, living and learning at a first-class institution of higher education.

One of the major initiatives of the Plan includes partnering with the City of Colorado Springs to revitalize a portion of Tejon Street (from Cache La Poudre to Dale Street) with a mix of office, retail and housing. This initiative will also serve to create a gateway vista to a prominent and historic quadrangle of the College as well as become a connection point for the downtown shuttle. Another significant initiative related to this area is the College’s desire to construct a facility with one or two ice sheets along Nevada Avenue to create a recreational zone that will serve to integrate campus life with the City Parks and Recreation system. The proposed ice facility on the east, the Tejon Street re-development, the College’s Cornerstone Arts Center, the City’s Fine Arts Center, the American Numismatic Association and Monument Valley Park will carefully interweave Colorado College into the cultural and recreational fabric of the City.

The introduction of ice rinks on Nevada will further solidify Cache La Poudre as an integral, human-scale connector to regional recreational venues linking Monument Valley Park on the west and Shooks Run Park on the east. Moreover, consistent with the Downtown Master Plan, the LRDP envisions a streetscaping of this connector to enhance and encourage its use for pedestrians, joggers and cyclists while maintaining vehicular traffic. Streetscape design elements may include wider sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, landscaping, shade trees, street furniture, bicycle lanes and racks, banners, public art displays, and new way-finding signage. The Plan anticipates that Cache La Poudre will become a vital link to the City’s northern cultural district as well as a jewel in the proposed “Emerald Necklace” of recreational parks and trails encircling Colorado Springs.

The College’s LRDP, the Downtown Partnership and the Old North End Neighborhood also proposes to address the pedestrian and vehicular safety of the public by reducing the lanes of traffic along Cascade Avenue to one lane in each direction from Penrose Hospital on the north to Boulder Street on the South. This plan proposes the concept of traffic management for all neighborhoods from Penrose Hospital to Cimarron Street and Wahsatch Avenue to I-25. Four traffic circles or roundabouts are proposed on Cascade Avenue at Fontanero Street, San Rafael Street, Dale Street and Boulder Street. Over the years, there have been numerous vehicle/pedestrian accidents on Cascade Avenue in spite of marked crosswalks and appropriate caution signage. Reducing the lanes of traffic, crosswalk improvements and constructing strategically placed roundabouts will significantly improve pedestrian safety along this traffic corridor and serve to identify Colorado College as the northern anchor of the downtown center. This action will enhance Cascade Avenue as the cultural boulevard link of Colorado College and the Fine Arts Center to the Downtown Arts District. It is understood that these proposed changes, i.e. lane reductions and the introduction of roundabouts, will be subject to further examination, review and approval by the City as they evolve from concepts to actual construction designs.

Colorado College has a deep interest in helping to improve and vitalize the downtown area of Colorado Springs. The College is highly selective in its admissions process and attracts outstanding students from across the country, as well as internationally. The College seeks to share the resources, programs and talents of the

College community in partnership with the City for our mutual benefit. While the mission of Colorado College is to "...provide the finest liberal arts education in the country..." the City plays a supporting role by providing opportunities for service learning, student/faculty volunteerism, and classrooms in the community for experiential learning.

The LRDP is a framework that provides strategic flexibility for the operations, maintenance, growth, re-use and redevelopment of the College's physical resources and assets. The Plan will serve to ensure that the growth and prosperity of the College will be in consonance with the College's surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown city center of Colorado Springs.

### ***Issue List*** (from February 2007 Preliminary Public Meeting)

#### **Planning & Community Development Comments** (Steve Tuck, Ira Joseph)

1. The proposed closure of Cache La Poudre Street between Nevada Avenue and Cascade Avenue and west of Cascade Avenue, and the termination of Tejon Street with a cul-de-sac are inappropriate and not supported. Cache La Poudre Street and Tejon Street are classified as minor arterials on the City's Intermodal Transportation Plan. These streets provide important access routes in and from the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. The interconnectedness of the arterial system of Cascade Avenue, Tejon Street, Nevada Avenue and Cache La Poudre Street provide an integrated transportation network for the surrounding neighborhoods and beyond that would be deleteriously impacted by the elimination of the streets. Additionally the shifting of the current traffic onto adjacent local streets is inappropriate. The function of these minor arterials as part of the connected system of City streets is far too important to eliminate.

#### *Response:*

*Colorado College has reviewed the proposed closure of Cache La Poudre Street in light of Planning & Community Development (PCD) comments and desires to withdraw and modify the proposal. Instead of closing Cache La Poudre Street, the College intends to keep it open to vehicular traffic while yet enhancing the street by adding amenities such as public art, benches, planters, bicycle lanes, trees, banner poles, etc. to mark it as an integral east-west connector to recreational and cultural venues. Cache La Poudre Street is envisioned to become a vital link to the proposed Tejon Street re-development and a route along the northern part of the "Emerald Necklace" ring of parks encircling the downtown as envisioned in the Downtown Master Plan.*

2. The roundabouts on Cascade Avenue are not consistent with the historical medians in the street and do not further the function of Cascade Avenue as a minor arterial. If pedestrian safety is the concern then other design avenues are available. Minimizing the pedestrian crosses on Cascade Avenue between Cache La Poudre Street and Uintah Street, pedestrian directional devices (e.g. fencing, walls, landscaping, sidewalks, signage, and lighting) and education will provide alternative methods to address the safety issues without dramatically altering Cascade Avenue with the additions of roundabouts. Many urban campuses across the U.S. are divided by major streets without significant modification to the design or intent of the street. Pedestrian bulb-outs at the street intersections adjacent to the campus should be evaluated to enhance pedestrian safety.

#### *Response:*

*The College believes that the roundabouts can, with good design, be constructed in a manner that is consistent with the historical medians and actually enhance the character and flavor of the street. We tend to view the introduction of roundabouts as an opportunity to herald to motorists that they are entering and traversing a special place. A common myth of roundabouts is that they will slow traffic whereas the opposite is true. The*

*Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) determined that the average intersection delay is reduced by 62-74% less than that of a typical signalized intersection. The delay reduction would save motorists time and fuel. Moreover, research has found that roundabouts reduce crashes by 37%, and injury crashes by 75% when compared with intersections that have signals. The College continues to explore various means to enhance pedestrian safety along Cascade Avenue.*

3. The intensification of land uses in the block surrounded by Nevada Avenue, Dale Street, Tejon Street and Cache La Poudre Street represents a significant increase in density and intensity and is hindered by the proposed elimination of Cache La Poudre Street. This level of development may only be supported with the existing street pattern.

*Response:*

*The College has reconsidered the proposal for closure of Cache La Poudre and agrees that it should remain open for motorists.*

4. The potential elimination of the existing structures along the west side of Weber Street from Uintah Street to Cache La Poudre Street is inconsistent with the City's adopted Design Guidelines for the Weber/Wahsatch Historic District and the area's designation on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1997 when the initial Colorado College Master Plan was approved the College touted the retention of these structures as providing a compatible and appropriate relationship with the privately owned properties on the east side of Weber Street.

*Response:*

*The proposed re-development and increased density of this area will be accomplished in a manner that retains and respects the historic character of the neighborhood. The existing structures are in poor condition and are not economically feasible to repair or restore. The College proposes to eliminate the existing structures and build new ones that will comply with current codes. This LRDP submission is an amendment and update to the Colorado College Master Plan that was submitted and approved over a decade ago.*

5. The City's parking requirements have not adequately addressed the parking needs or demands of the College as demonstrated by issues raised by neighbors since the initial Colorado College Master Plan was approved. A parking demand and location analysis will be necessary.

*Response:*

*A parking study was completed in April 2006 and updated in May 2008 and is included in this submission as Section E. The study addressed parking demand and location which exceeds the city code requirements.*

6. Parking does not appear conveniently located to the students. Existing lots have been eliminated or reduced in size southeast and southwest of the intersection of Cascade Avenue and Uintah Street. This area contains a significant amount of student housing. The effectiveness of student/staff parking at remote lots on the west side of Monument Creek is unknown, and could result in added parking stress in the Old North End Neighborhood.

*Response:*

*With our newly developed parking system, parking spaces are assigned for Faculty, Staff, and students. The College has been involved in on-going conversations with ONEN relative to the issue of parking with demonstrated success.*

7. The driveway opposite Wood Avenue is shown open to Uintah Street. The access is presently closed and available for emergencies only. The driveway is not open because of potential hazards and should remain closed. Closure will also minimize intrusion into the Old North End neighborhood from campus traffic.

*Response:*

*The College would like to explore the possibility of opening the access to Uintah Street from the Wood Avenue parking area with right turn in/out restrictions. Preliminary reviews indicate adequate sight lines can be maintained with these turning restrictions.*

8. Several parcels shown on the plan are not owned by the College. Land within the boundaries of the master plan submitted to the City must either be owned by the College or permission provided by the owner. A Pre-application meeting is required to begin the City's land development review process. Neighborhood meeting(s) will be required. The proposals represent a major amendment to the master plan which requires review by the Planning Commission and City Council.

*Response:*

*The plan will be corrected to reflect only the property owned by the College when re-submitted.*

### **Traffic Engineering & Transportation Planning** (Scott Logan, Craig Blewitt)

- 1) Closure of Cache La Poudre

*Response: The College has reconsidered and withdrawn its proposal to close Cache La Poudre. Our LRDP will reflect Cache La Poudre as continuing to be a through street for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.*

- 2) Impacts on historic medians requires reviews and support from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

*Response: The College understands and is prepared for the additional review and oversight from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.*

- 3) Need a parking analysis that identifies parking facilities, identifies the areas/uses to be served by each facility, and identifies pedestrian routes and connections that would link facilities with areas served. Pedestrian routes between parking facilities and destinations should cross streets (especially high volume streets) in a convenient and safe location. Need for a parking study to assess impacts on off street facilities.

*Response: The parking analysis is included as Section E. The LRDP addresses pedestrian circulation.*

- 4) Cascade Roundabouts: We are concerned that the roundabouts as shown would not facilitate the ease and safety of pedestrians crossing Cascade. One option might be to use a roundabout type design without cross street "legs". Instead, the roundabout would act more like a chicane, which would slow traffic without complicating drivers' decisions and sight paths. Again suggested as an option to consider, not an endorsement.

*Response: The roundabouts at San Rafael and Dale will serve as gateways to the College from both the north and south and signify to drivers to slow down and be wary of pedestrians. In addition, the College seeks to reduce the northbound and southbound lanes of traffic on Cascade to a single lane in each direction. The requested change in drive lanes from two to one in each direction effectively reduces the physical dimension of the pedestrian crossing thereby minimizing the time that a pedestrian is exposed to vehicular traffic and improves visibility for both drivers and pedestrians.*

- 5) Cascade Pedestrian Safety: Consider other options for convenient and safe pedestrian crossings of Cascade, including a pedestrian underpass. Changes to the design of Cascade might make sense. We would need to maintain 4 through travel lanes and on-street bike use (preferably striped lanes). There may



be opportunity to narrow the curb to curb dimension and add some chicane effect. Again, changes to the median require review and support from the Parks Advisory Board.

*Response: Other options continue to be considered for enhancing the safety of pedestrians crossing Cascade including motion activated warning lights, crossing guards, roadway installed lights, etc. The cost for either overpasses or tunnels will be excessive when predicted usage will be minimal as the academic core of the campus is bisected by Cascade Avenue.*

6) Access drive on Uintah Street (opposite Wood Avenue): Concern about sight distance between the drive and Uintah traffic. Possible need for eastbound deceleration lane. Retain on-street bike lane on Uintah.

*Response: The College believes this issue is solved or very close to being solved.*

7) Connectivity of bikeways in the area.

*Response: This would be an excellent opportunity to complete this section of the “Emerald Necklace.”*

8) If the closure of Cache La Poudre continues to be proposed, public meeting notice might include notification of motorists who use Cache La Poudre – perhaps using a variable message sign.

*Response: Cache La Poudre is no longer proposed to be closed to vehicular traffic.*

#### **Fire Department** (Chris Kooper)

As mentioned in the meeting with CC, the fire department has concerns that the pedestrian oriented campus may create significant problems related to fire department access. On a concept level we have no objections, but as more concrete planning, and design takes place we need to be in communication with the design team to make sure our access is accounted for. The campus currently has some areas that cause us difficulty for access that we would like to work through in the design process, such as narrow roads and tunnels that won't support our apparatus' weight.

*Response: The College will work closely with the Fire Department to ensure any future development is compliant with the need for access for emergency responders.*

#### **Parks & Recreation Department** (Chris Lieber)

1. Overall, we believe an update to the Colorado College Master Plan affords several opportunities to further improve upon the already positive physical relationship between park related facilities and the College.

*Response: The College agrees and looks forward to collaborating with the City in order to improve this communal interface.*

2. Any changes to the historic median within Cascade Ave, Nevada Ave, etc. will require extensive review by staff and approval by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

*Response: Colorado College understands the significance of potential changes to the median and the need for review and approval from the appropriate oversight bodies.*

3. Opportunities may exist to relocate the fence along Monument Valley Park to improve the relationship and access between the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail and the College.

*Response: The LRDP will present a multitude of opportunities to further explore areas where the College and the City can enhance and improve physical relationships of our facilities.*

4. The proposed closure of Cache La Poudre and construction of round-a-bouts in Cascade may result in additional traffic through Monument Valley Park along Dale Street, Mesa, and Glen. This potential traffic impact through the park needs further study.

*Response: The proposed closure of Cache La Poudre has been reconsidered and withdrawn. The traffic study will analyze the traffic impact of the roundabouts on neighboring streets.*

5. The expansion of the College to areas north of Uintah at Glen provides opportunities for shared parking with Parks.

*Response: The College welcomes the opportunity to further explore the possibilities of sharing parking resources with the Parks & Recreation Department.*

6. Expansion of the College to areas north of Uintah at Glen also provides opportunities to re-align the public streets to provide better vehicular and pedestrian access between Uintah and Recreation Way.

*Response: The College intends to explore the opportunities for re-alignment of the street wherever it may improve vehicular and/or pedestrian circulation.*

7. Consideration needs to be given to providing adequate landscape setbacks and buffers between proposed long-term park lots and adjacent park land.

*Response: The LRDP contains planning principles and design guidelines to assist us in the future development of all of our land uses including parking.*

8. Any impacts to trees within the public right-of-way will need approval by the City's Forestry Dept.

*Response: Colorado College understands and will comply with this requirement as it has in the past.*

9. Our comments are obviously based upon very conceptual drawings. As more information is provided, we may have additional comments.

*Response: The LRDP provides a general framework of core values and planning principles and is not meant to be a specific "blueprint." It is understood that each discrete project will subsequently be subject to a further examination, review and approval process.*