

Town of Grand Lake

Motorized and Non-Motorized Circulation Assessment

2021

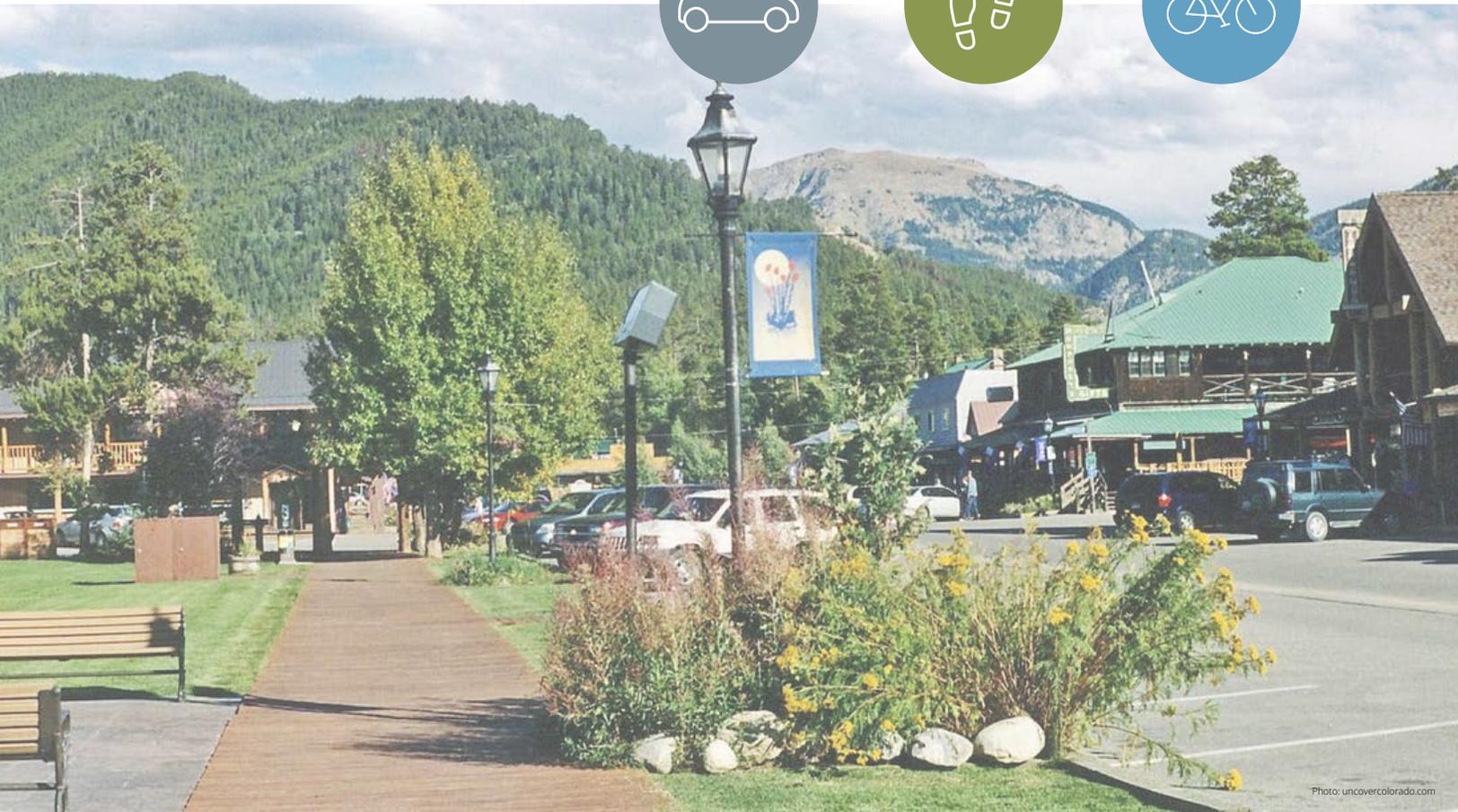


Photo: uncovercolorado.com



Master of Urban and Regional Planning
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

Town of Grand Lake

Motorized and Non-Motorized Circulation Assessment

Prepared for:
Kimberly White
Town Planner
Town of Grand Lake

Prepared by:
Katie Baum

Capstone project submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Urban
and Regional Planning, College of Architecture and
Planning, University of Colorado Denver

14 May 2021



Master of Urban and Regional Planning

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER**



Executive Summary

The Town of Grand Lake is a small, mountain town located in north central Colorado and adjacent to Arapahoe National Forest and the western entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park. Grand Lake is mainly supported by tourism as well as an abundance of outdoor recreation. The community experiences its highest visitation during the summer, and visitors flock to the historic Main Street and the town's lakefront, overburdening already limited parking supply and stressing the limited pedestrian walkways. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has only increased, and further emphasized the need for improved circulation and parking management, flexible streetscapes, and enhanced bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

Literature review indicates a strong relation between communities dependent on tourism and the need for efficient vehicular and non-vehicular circulation and comfortable visitor experiences related to transportation. Multi-modal networks enhance community connectiveness and support economic vitality. Additionally, peer community case studies prove that rural, mountain communities can pursue great streets and more robust multi-modal planning.

Assessment Overview

As the primary arterial, Grand Avenue is the main street that moves vehicular traffic from Highway 34 through to Grand Lake's historic commercial district and main destinations. Although serving as a main street, Grand Avenue is largely unimproved with dirt shoulder and informal intersections. Many collector and local roads are unpaved. During the summer months, residents and visitors note high congestion and traffic volumes, as cars slow for informal pedestrian crossing and search for available parking.

Parking around town is informal, with inconsistent orientation and condition from street to street. Surface parking areas around the downtown are unrestricted and unimproved. The majority of parking is on-street, diagonal parking along Grand Avenue. Inconsistent parking and a lack of wayfinding signage to available parking can cause confusion and exacerbate congestion during peak season.

The Town of Grand Lake and its destinations are most easily accessed by vehicles, as there is little pedestrian infrastructure past the main street boardwalk and varying conditions throughout town. The historic main street boardwalk is an 8-foot wide, wood-planked walkway that spans a little over five blocks on both the north and south side of Grand Avenue. Past the boardwalk, walking infrastructure and amenities are inconsistent. With an increase in short-term rental properties, even more visitors are attempting to walk through and around town and with little to no infrastructure, are often seen walking in the street or across unimproved intersections, creating unsafe conditions for both drivers and pedestrians. Informal crossing also exacerbates congestion as traffic slows to accommodate crossing outside of identified intersections. Similarly, very little infrastructure currently exists to support bicycling even though the opportunity exists to take advantage of large, underutilized public rights-of-way.

Recommendations

Developed with the client, recommendations include feasible, highest-impact projects, programming, and policy changes. The intent of the recommendations is to improve circulation, reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflict, enhance visitor experience and economic vitality, and encourage cycling and walking within the Town of Grand Lake. Recommendations include:

- Improve on-street parking, provide parking wayfinding and signage, and consider utilizing Town-owned properties for seasonal parking.
- Utilize Grand Avenue's large right-of-way by developing a side path that can connect the community west to east and expand parking west.
- Add an enhanced pedestrian crossing at W. Portal Ave and Lake Ave to connect the current sidepath to the north to the rest of the community.
- Redesign the alley running from Broadway to Garfield to expand multi-modal options and provide flex space for businesses.
- Implement the 2014 Wayfinding Masterplan.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy.
- Fund a comprehensive parking study that incorporates parking space utilization to better understand the use of on-street and surface parking in the community and better inform parking decision-making.

