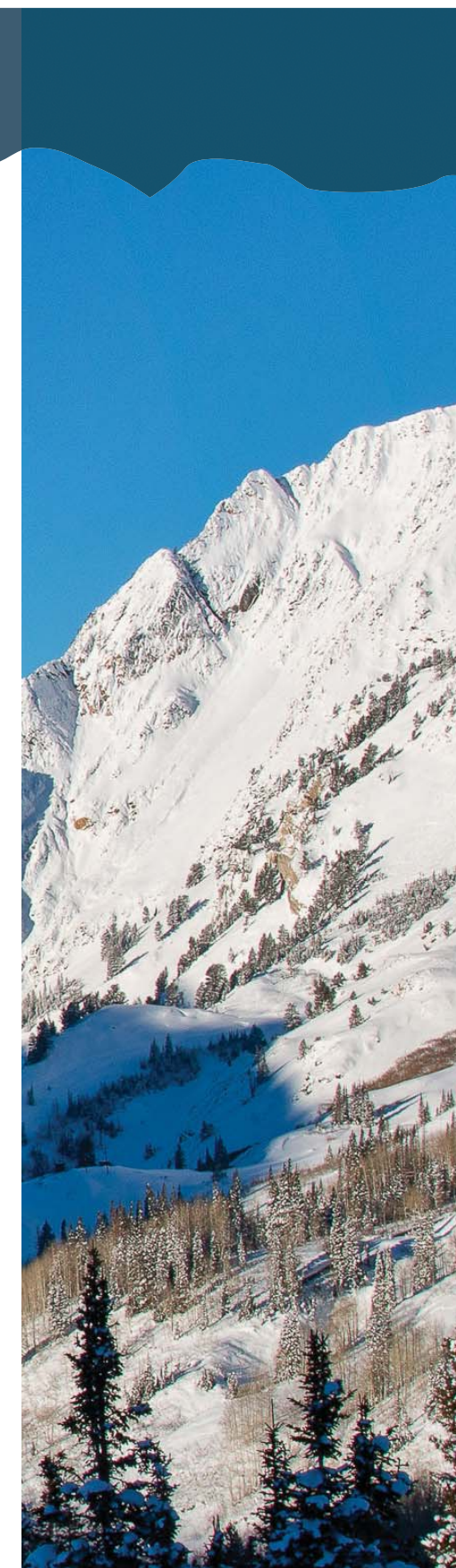


# TOWN OF ALTA COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN



DECEMBER 8, 2016







# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Jon Nepstad – Represents planning  
Dave Abraham – Represents architecture  
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## TOWN MAYOR

Tom Pollard

## TOWN COUNCIL

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# 1 BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The development of a plan for Alta’s “Commercial Core” has been under discussion for many years. The intent is specified in the existing *Town of Alta General Plan (2005)*, which states the need to “*create an identifiable center of Town for residents and visitors alike, with a focus on the creation, enhancement, support, and concentration of commercial development in the Base area between the Peruvian Lodge and the Albion base*”.

The plan clarifies the challenges of establishing an “identifiable” town center due to land ownership patterns and seasonal economic trends, yet states that an “identifiable Town Center and ‘economic heart’ of Alta should be established in or near the town core”. The general plan notes that the town has limited year round commercial activity, and that public and private efforts are supported toward the development of long-term, year-round commercial ventures. Summer economic development was identified as being particularly important for meeting this goal.

More than ten years have passed since the general plan was adopted and the idea of establishing a more detailed vision for the Commercial Core formalized. This plan represents the fruition of that idea and focuses on clarifying the form and vision for the Commercial Core, from the layout and types of uses to the details required for establishing a discernible “Town Center”.



This planning effort was focused on defining and articulating a vision for what the “Commercial Core” and town center should be, so the Town of Alta can lend its voice and vision as Alta Ski Area, Little Cottonwood Canyon and the greater Wasatch Mountain Region evolve.

In this introductory portion of the Commercial Core Plan, it is important to acknowledge a few significant aspects of Alta’s planning outlook as of August 2016. One is Mountain Accord, a regional planning initiative focused on transportation, recreation, economic, and environmental issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains. Neither the process followed during the development of this plan, nor the final products contained herein, assume or promote any of the transportation systems—such as a train in Little Cottonwood Canyon and a tunnel between Alta and Brighton—being evaluated in Mountain Accord. As planning for alternative transportation system advances, this plan, and future iterations of this plan, will allow Alta to express its preferences for the layout of facilities to other entities.

Another significant aspect of Alta’s planning outlook, and of Mountain Accord, is a proposed land exchange between Alta Ski Area and the U.S. Forest Service. Alta Ski Area may seek to acquire federal land in the Commercial Core in exchange for private property elsewhere in and around the Town of Alta, and the constraints applied in this project’s land suitability analysis do include an early representation of the land exchange. However, the Commercial Core Plan is not a direct response to the current land exchange proposal. Rather, the plan will provide the Town of Alta the means of anticipating and evaluating various proposals, and of envisioning its own future goals, regardless of whether the current land exchange proceeds or land management guidelines change in other ways.

Finally, the project team wishes to clarify the intent of this plan regarding economic development. This plan is not intended to encourage economic development in Alta. Instead, it is intended to present a vision for where the town would prefer to see development take place in the future, if demand for additional development and other market conditions make such development feasible.

### PROJECT APPROACH

A comprehensive process was used to develop the Commercial Core Plan, beginning with a public engagement plan, continuing with the identification and analysis of existing conditions, the development of plan alternatives, and ending with a preferred plan.

#### 1 COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A robust public involvement process was used to help ensure a wide range of voices and visions were heard and represented as the plan was developed. Key components of this process follow.

- Plan Advisory Committee – provided direction and input throughout the process. Included representatives of town staff, the Alta Planning Commission and the Alta Town Council; local residents; property owners and business operators; Friends of Alta; Alta Ski Area and the US Forest Service.
- Public Meetings and Workshops – these included a Scoping Meeting, Public Workshop and

## 1 BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

Draft Plan Open House Meeting.

- Interviews and Outreach – informal and formal discussions were held with local residents, local business owners and operators, Alta Ski Area representatives, UDOT, UTA and others.
- A Project web page was used to distribute information and provide opportunities to comment and add information to the process.



### Plan Advisory Committee “at Work”



*Members of the Plan Advisory Committee helped establish how people use the area - Example 2*

## 2 RESEARCH & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Investigations were undertaken to understand the opportunities and challenges of creating a commercial core for the Town of Alta. The *Existing Conditions and Analysis Report* (see Appendix A) summarizes the following planning-level assessments which were undertaken:

- Land Use Opportunities
- Place-making, Community Design & Built Form
- Transportation
- Economics
- Utilities and Infrastructure

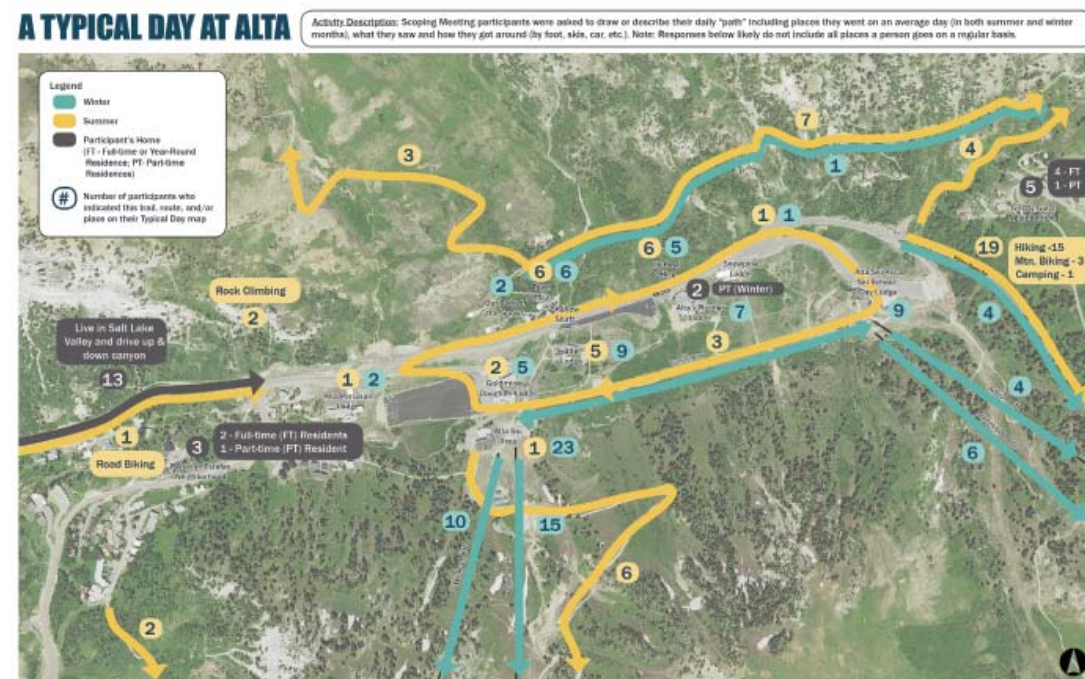
As part of this process, **Opportunities and Constraints** for creating a viable Town Center were assessed.

**Key Opportunities** acknowledge that the Town of Alta is an established community which is vested in this planning process and its outcomes. The town wishes to become more of a year-round community with recreational and commercial opportunities.

The **Key Constraints** are physical, such as limited water resources and challenging utility conditions, and ephemeral, addressing the unique and sensitive environmental conditions inherent, such as avalanche hazards, steep slopes, watershed/alpine ecology, viewsheds and others. Land ownership in the Commercial Core is a constraint to the implementation of concepts presented in this plan, as most of the land belongs to the U.S. Forest Service.

To summarize, four **key issues** emerged which needed to be addressed in the plan:

- Land uses and economic viability and feasibility;
- Resolution of transportation issues;



*Members of the Plan Advisory Committee helped establish how people use the area - Example 1*

- Balancing development and growth with preservation of the sensitive resources and intangible qualities that define Alta; and
- Integrating the various ideas, issues, concerns, and opportunities into a realistic and achievable future vision for the town.



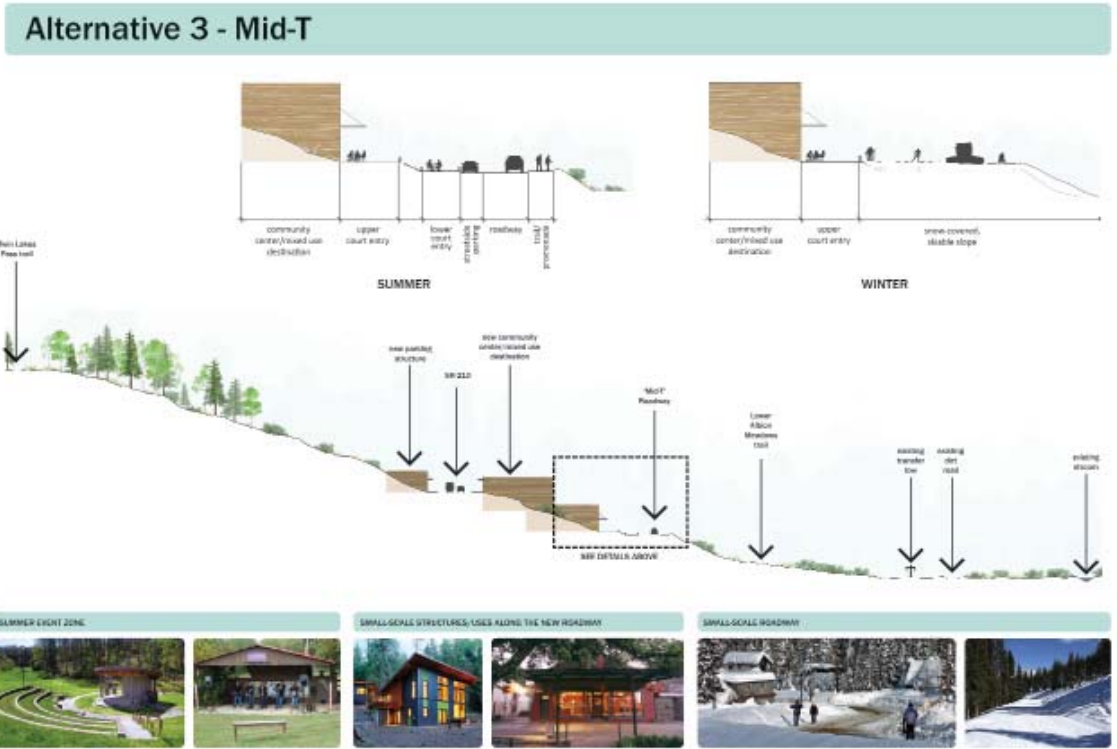
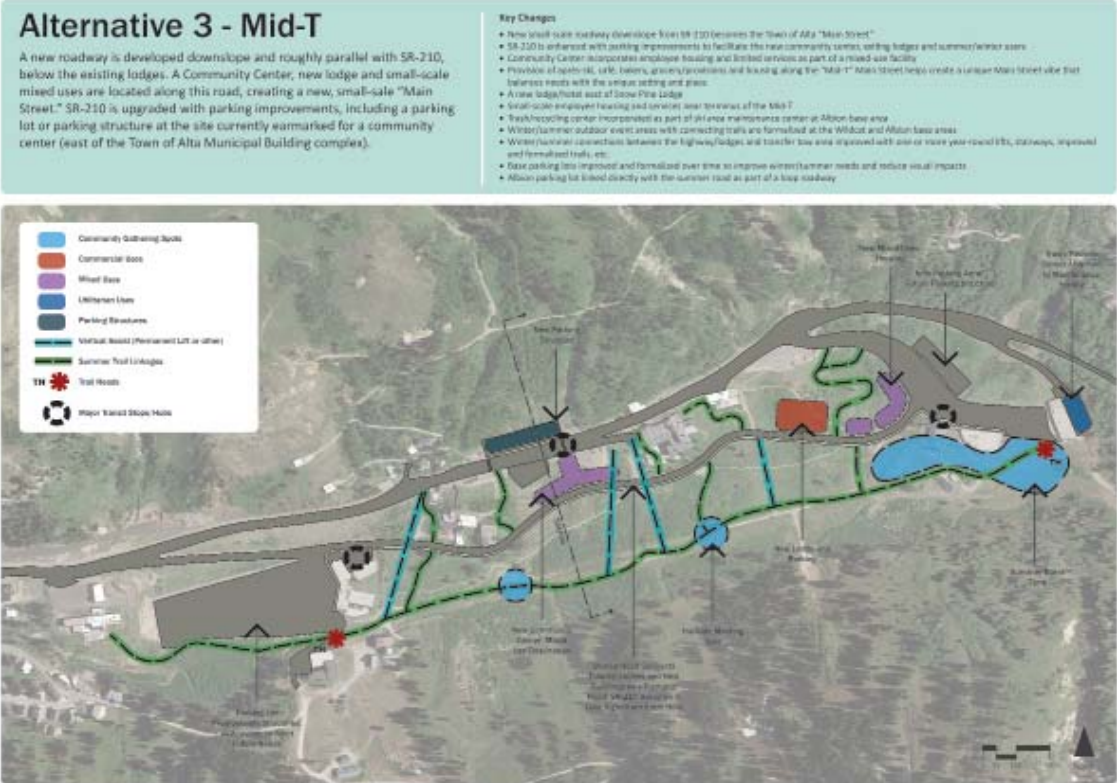
Preservation of the sensitive qualities of Alta needs to be balanced with solutions that address the unique and harsh environment

3 ALTERNATIVE PLAN CONCEPTS

As illustrated in Appendix C, five alternative concepts emerged, each providing a unique take on what the Alta Commercial Core could be. The alternatives varied broadly in size, extent, location, scope and ambition, yet were all grounded in the project vision.

Some of the key questions that were posed and ideas addressed as part of developing different ideas include:

- What are appropriate and viable land uses that can complement and support a town center and the associated public gathering spaces and activity areas desired by the community?
- Is there a look or architectural style that is appropriate for the unique mountain setting and the vision of the town?
- What transportation enhancements will support the town’s goals while respecting the unique qualities of this small mountain community?
- Are exiting utilities and infrastructure adequate to accommodate commercial core development?
- Is it possible to align the Town of Alta’s vision for the commercial core with that of Alta Ski Area’s future plans?
- How do decisions in Alta align with and address those of nearby ski areas, other interests in Little Cottonwood Canyon and the Wasatch Mountain region?
- How can trails and trailheads be incorporated into the structure of a new and more dynamic commercial core?
- What regulatory processes are needed to implement and control the desired plan?
- Can new models of zoning and the use of new design guidelines help ensure the town’s vision is achieved?



Example of an Alternative Plan Concept & Associated Details

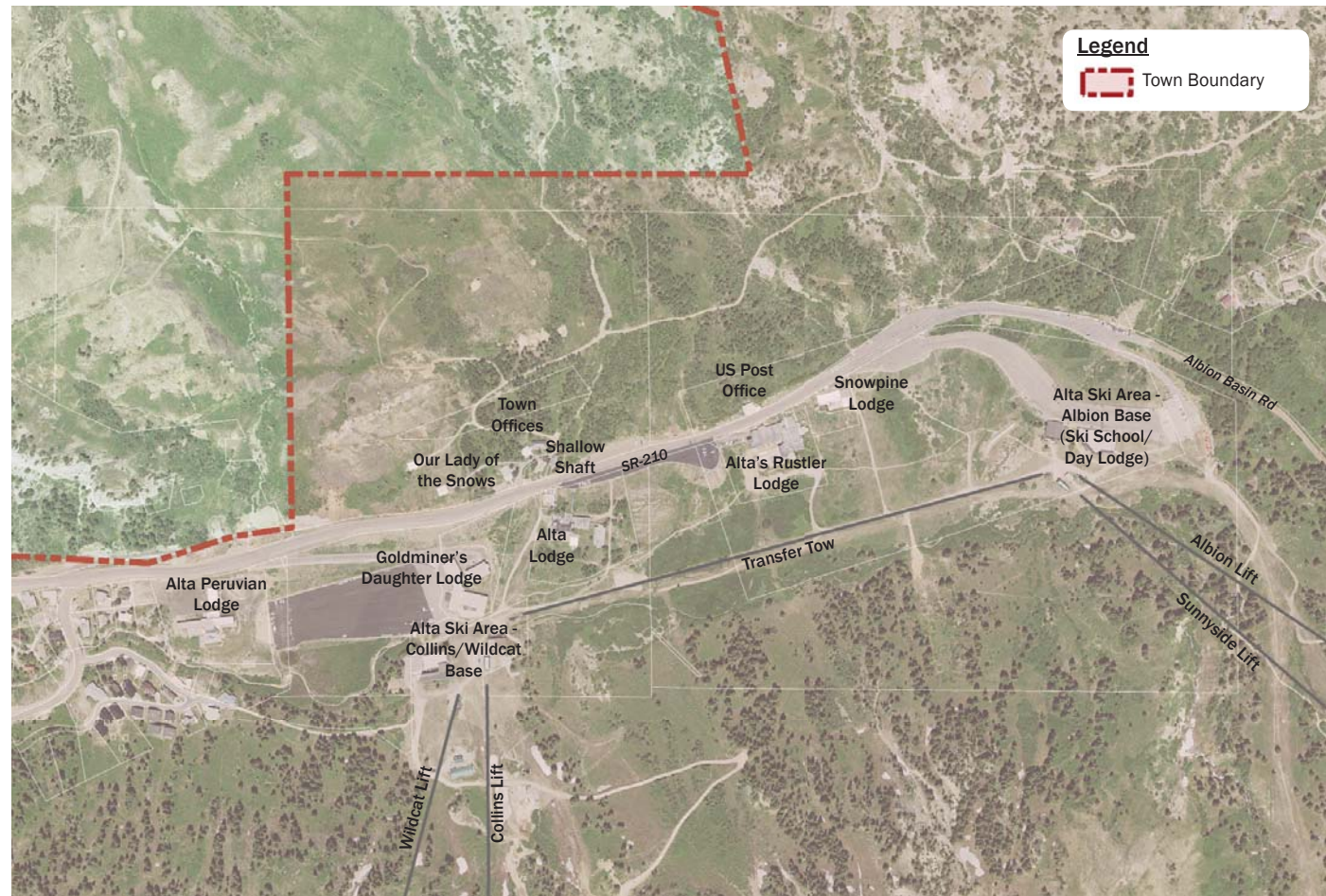


## 2 THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN

### DEVELOPING A PREFERRED COMMERCIAL CORE CONCEPT

The Town of Alta Commercial Core Plan represents a consensus vision that was established thorough analysis of opportunities and potentials, review of a wide range of ideas, and extensive input and comment by stakeholders and members of the public.

As illustrated in the vicinity map below and defined in the Town of Alta General Plan, the “Commercial Core” is located between the Albion Base Area, the Alta Peruvian Lodge, the Highway 210 corridor, and the Alta Ski Area. The area extends from the north side of Highway 210 to the toe of the ski slopes to the south, and from the Albion base area to the Peruvian Lodge. The study area encompasses both sides of the highway and areas immediately north, such as the Town of Alta municipal buildings. It includes the five existing lodges (Peruvian Lodge, Goldminer’s Daughter, Alta Lodge, Rustler Lodge and Snowpine Lodge); the Albion and Collins/Wildcat base areas; Little Cottonwood Creek, the transfer tow zone and adjacent hillsides; and all existing parking, circulation and service areas.



Town of Alta Commercial Core Vicinity Map

## TOWN OF ALTA COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN

As previously noted, much of the land in the Commercial Core belongs to the U.S. Forest Service and is managed under a special use permit with Alta Ski Area.

In order to develop concepts that respond to the vision established for the project, a four-step analysis and assessment process was utilized as summarized below (see **Alta Commercial Core - Existing Conditions and Analysis Report** in Appendix A for details).

### STEP 1: IDENTIFYING SUITABLE LAND IN THE COMMERCIAL CORE

In order to identify land that is most suitable for development, a system of overlay maps was developed, eliminating environmentally sensitive land, developed land, and land that is otherwise unsuitable for development from consideration. This assessment utilized readily-available mapping data and was intended to provide a high-level assessment appropriate for planning purposes. As illustrated in the accompanying maps, four types of overlays were generated:

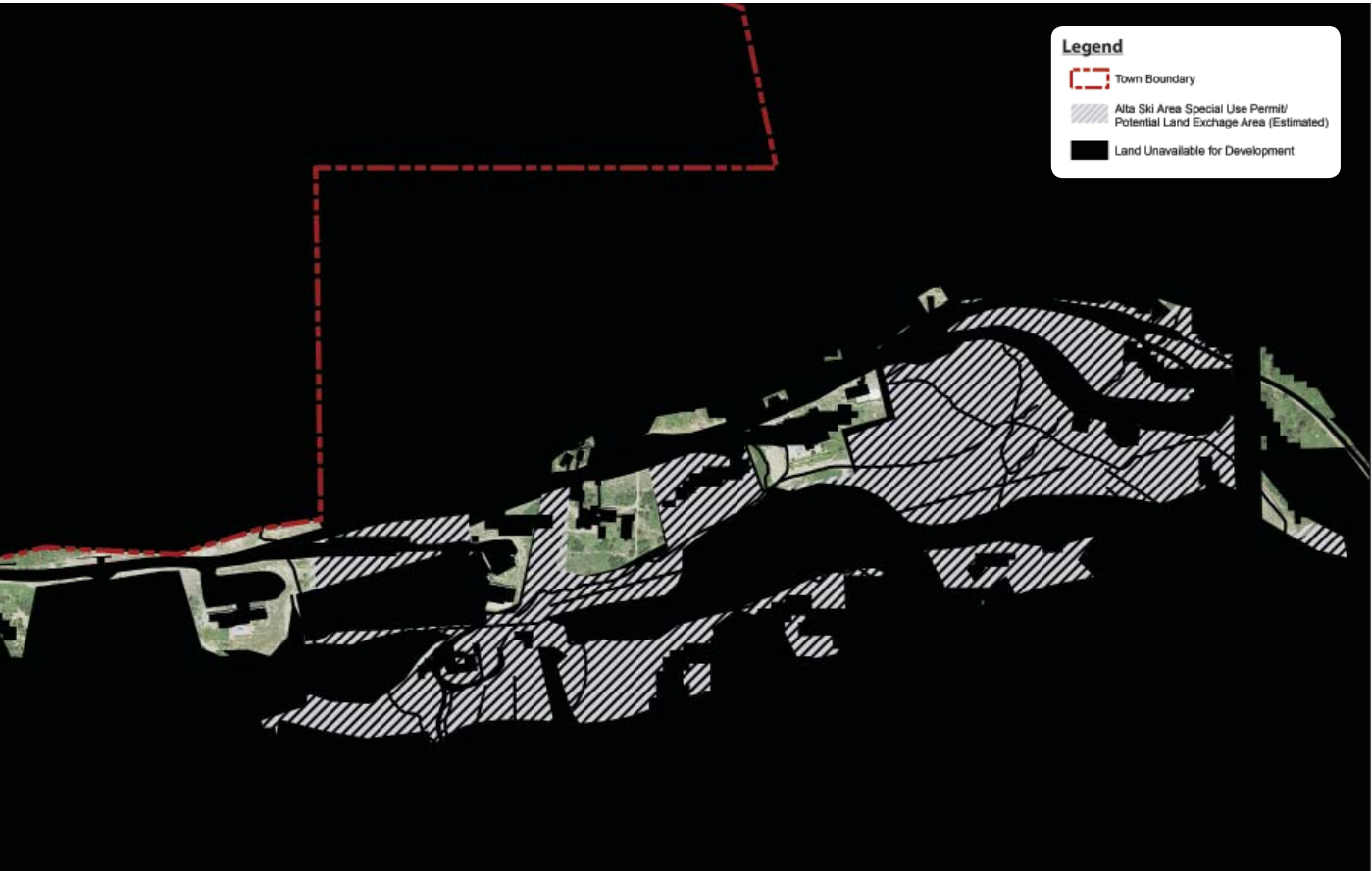
- **The Built Environment** – *existing buildings, parking, roadways and similar established uses.*
- **Federal and Residential Lands** – *properties controlled and managed by others, and generally not available for development consideration. Federal land under consideration for the ASL-USFS land swap is not included.*
- **Natural Constraints** – *this classification includes drainages, creeks, wetlands, waterways, areas that are predominantly forested, areas with slopes greater than 30-percent, areas with slopes between 30 and 70 percent, and rock outcrop areas. Avalanche exposure was also mapped for consideration of specific design needs of potential future facilities.*
- **Potential Land** – *Private land associated with the lodges and similar properties that are either vacant, undeveloped, or partially-developed. While these sites were not eliminated outright, they were carefully considered when planning alternatives were developed in order to ensure the impact of specific proposals to the property owners was understood.*

# 2 THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN



Overlay Process to Determine Land Most Suitable for Development

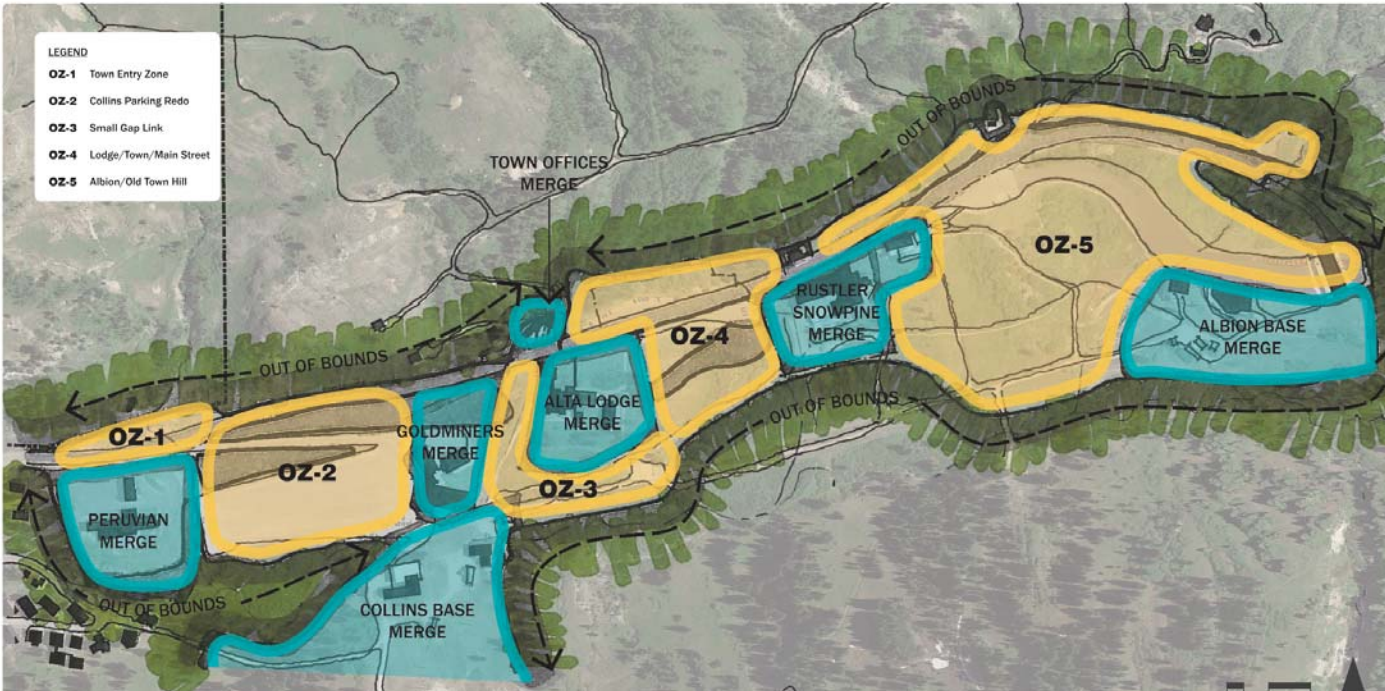
As illustrated below, the result of this process was a composite map that identified land most suitable for potential development in the area. This map also includes federal land that is currently within Alta Ski Area’s special use permit, but which is implicated in the proposed land exchange, and the undeveloped portions of private property which might be suitable for development.



Potential Land within the Land Exchange Area

As described and illustrated on the following page, a final map was then developed to aid in the formation of preliminary design concepts. This map identified thematic zones of potential development, as follow:

- 1. Town Entry Zone**  
The small area north of the highway near the west edge of the town and highway - might be developed into a gateway feature that clearly announces that one has arrived in Alta.
- 2. The Collins Parking Re-do Zone**  
Most of the land suitable for development in this area is currently occupied by the large parking lot stretching from Peruvian Lodge and Goldminer’s Daughter. Any development in this area would need to address parking needs.
- 3. The Small Gap Link Zone**  
This area is dominated by steep slopes separating Goldminer’s Daughter and Alta Lodge. Potential development in this area would be limited and access challenging.
- 4. The Lodge/Town Main Street Zone**  
This zone extends along both sides of Highway 210 from the town office/Alta Lodge to the Rustler/ Snowpine Lodge area. Potential development in this area includes an undeveloped property belonging to the Town of Alta just east of the existing municipal building complex, the south edge of the highway and adjacent hillside leading to Little Cottonwood Creek and the transfer tow. Development in this location should connect existing uses on both sides of the highway and leverage the undeveloped Town of Alta property.
- 5. The Albion/Old Town Hill Area Zone**  
This the largest opportunity zone, extending from the Rustler and Snowpine Lodges to the Albion parking lot, encompassing the slopes south of the highway. This area is currently undeveloped and utilized primarily for parking along the highway and ski school activities on the hill below. Any development in this area would logically be located on the downhill slopes below the highway.



Opportunity Zones for Potential Development

STEP 2: ESTABLISHING GUIDING PRINCIPLES & POTENTIAL USES/ELEMENTS FOR THE COMMERCIAL CORE IN ALTA

Guiding Principles

Once the land most suitable for development was determined, **Guiding Principles** were identified to help evaluate growth and development concepts. As illustrated and described below, the principles addressed the key concerns of the plan, including land use, community form, economics, transportation, sustainability and regional coordination. The initial list consisted of more than 40 principles, which were eventually pared down to a list of twelve by the Advisory Committee. That short list was then presented to the public, resulting in some final modifications as represented in the accompanying list.

Potential Uses and Elements

Similar to the process used to develop Guiding Principles, a preliminary list of **Potential Uses and Elements** was developed. The list represents uses identified by the advisory committee and members of the public, in addition to uses identified in previous planning studies and reports. The initial list was reviewed by the Advisory Committee, and was modified accordingly. The final list of potential uses and elements ultimately served as a “master program” when preliminary concepts were developed.

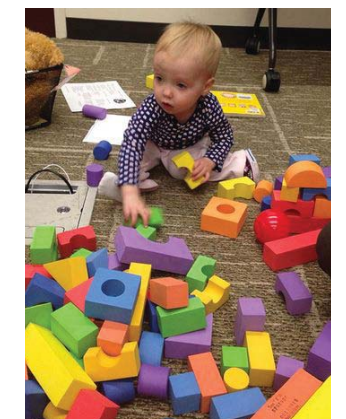
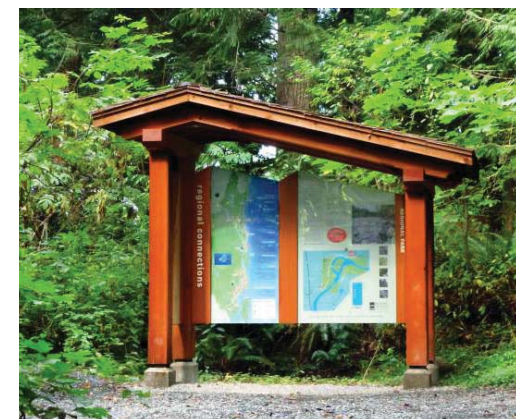
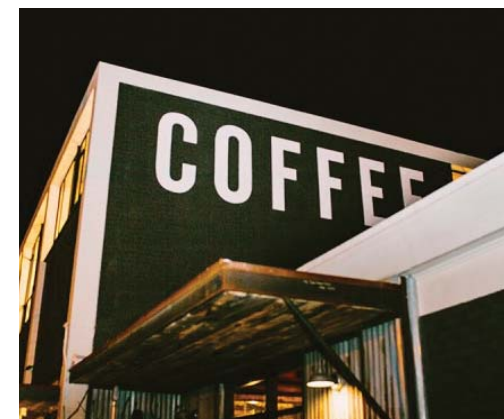
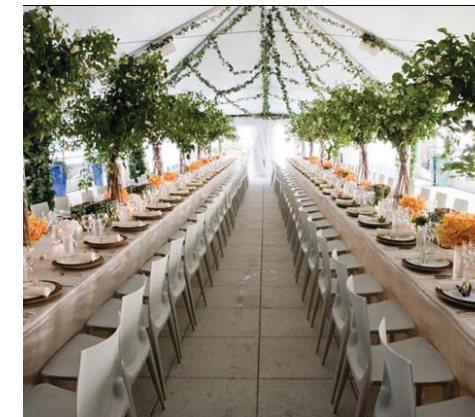
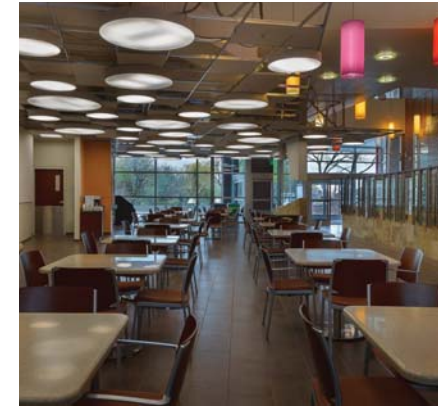
COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Preserve, respect, and enhance Alta’s sensitive lands, views, natural resources, and its unique setting.
- 2 Keep Alta eclectic, small-scale, and respectful of the existing environment and conditions.
- 3 Sustain Alta environmentally, economically, and socially.
- 4 Balance the needs of residents, property owners, the business community employees and visitors.
- 5 Enhance the Alta economy by appropriately leveraging existing resources.
- 6 Facilitate organic change over time.
- 7 Support and develop a year-around economy that focuses on the summer in addition to the winter.
- 8 Develop one or more walkable centers with mixes of uses, intensive activity, human scale development and a quality pedestrian realm.
- 9 Provide safe interactions among pedestrians, motorists, skiers and cyclists at Alta.
- 10 Improve multi-modal connections among winter and summer destinations in Alta.
- 11 Recognize the relationships that exist between Alta and other areas—Snowbird, the canyon, and the region—and respond accordingly.
- 12 Plan for Alta’s role in long-term mountain solutions.

## 2 THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN

### POTENTIAL USES AND ELEMENTS

- Additional lockers and/or a ski/hike locker building
- Transit/arrival station (flexible to work with or without a train)
- Community Center (at identified town-owned site or other)
- Flex space to accommodate cultural and community events
- A bar/coffee shop/cafe (separate from the facilities listed below)
- Workout rooms (yoga, etc.)
- Classrooms
- Recycling/Trash Sorting Center
- Store for basic provisions
- Cafe
- Bakery
- Restaurant(s)
- Bar/Pub for after-hours/Apres-Ski independent of the lodges
- Subsidized/low-cost housing for employees
- Pedestrian enhancements and linkages between destinations
- Pedestrian improvements along highway
- Pedestrian trails – summer/winter
- Trailheads/restrooms
- Better wayfinding
- Better parking
- Alternative uses for parking lots during the off-season
- Larger meeting spaces for conventions, larger weddings, corporate-type events
- Summer amphitheater/outdoor event space



STEP 3: ADDRESSING RESULTS FROM THE EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ANALYSIS REPORT

An *Existing Conditions and Analysis Report* (see Appendix A) was developed early in the process, identifying opportunities and constraints related to land use, community form, economics and utilities. As the various Commercial Core options were developed, the key assessments from this report were acknowledged and addressed, as summarized below:

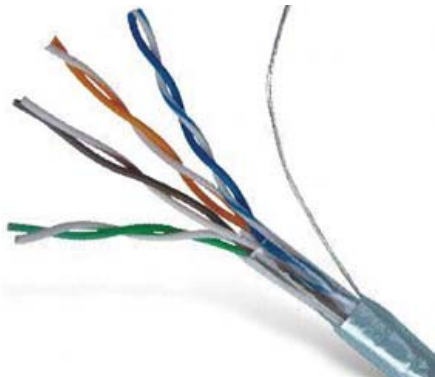
UTILITIES

Access to culinary water is the most significant utility constraint to development in the Commercial Core. As discussed in the Existing Conditions Report, roughly ten percent of Alta’s total water allotment within its agreement with Salt Lake City Public Utilities is available for future growth. As specific Commercial Core development proposals are received in the future, they will need to be thoroughly vetted in light of these conditions to determine whether or not the level of development can be supported.

The water distribution system however, is generally acceptable under normal demand conditions, although flow would be improved if a more traditional looping system were in place.

Access to sewer and gas utilities are also generally adequate and capable of accommodating development in the Commercial Core assuming normal upgrades and improvements are incorporated.

A future utility corridor should be anticipated as the highway is modified and improved, accommodating required upgrades to electrical, telecommunications, water, sewer and gas lines as necessary.



ECONOMICS

Key commercial uses that were identified include a convenience store, a small grocery store, a bakery, a centrally located coffee shop, an amphitheater or area for outdoor music and events, a convention center or conference hall that can host large weddings, corporate events and festivals, more locker storage, dedicated employee housing and more independent restaurants.

Current demand can support 1,000 to 1,500 square feet of additional commercial space, with an additional 1,500 to 2,000 square feet possible depending upon improved summer activities at the Albion Base or along the main highway. However, transportation. Transportation improvements could have significant impact on retail demand, however.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

As concepts are developed, the following economic considerations should be addressed:

- 1. A vision for the future of Alta’s economy needs to be established or the town will continue to lose business to other resorts and communities.
- 2. There needs to be better planning between the resort and lodges/retailers as part of creating a unified plan for a summertime economy.
- 3. For retailers looking to expand in Alta, the shoulder season needs to be shortened by adding festivals, retreats, concerts, weddings and similar events.
- 4. Restaurant uses could expand if more lodging was available during summer months. Lodges would not need to open their kitchens if there were restaurant options in Alta.
- 5. There needs to be a gathering area/community center that can attract people year round. This facility should have the flexibility to accommodate a corporate retreat, a wedding or similar large events. A community center has the potential to generate income for the town and provide a community benefit. If properly located, it could be accompanied by new retail space, thereby creating a more focused town center.

## 2 THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN

### TRANSPORTATION

Transportation opportunities were identified as the plan options were developed. They address the range of range of potential modes at Alta, during the winter and summer seasons. This plan does not

assume or promote large-scale public transportation improvements in Little Cottonwood Canyon, or a connection to Big Cottonwood Canyon.

#### VEHICLES

- Improve safety between moving vehicles and parked vehicles/pedestrians/skiers on the highway.
- Provide real time travel information on “red snake” traffic congestion and/or when other down canyon accidents/delays exist.
- Increase winter parking efficiencies.
- Maintain existing parking spots - no more - no less.
- Provide more precise parking layouts and address different types of use.
- Provide more efficient parking, such as a parking garage or linked lots.
- Calm traffic on Highway 210 in the town core.
- Consider a parallel route to SR 210 in summer to connect visitors to the Albion Base – cross tow or road along slope.
- Create an additional connection from the Wildcat parking lot to SR 210.
- Incentivize summer drivers to get out of their cars at the Albion Base instead of driving up the summer road.
- Promote park-and-ride facilities in the valley near the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon.
- Study parking or vehicle fees in the canyon.

#### TRANSIT

- Enhance UTA ski season service - increase frequency, provide express service to Alta, extend operations until later in the evening.
- Investigate the viability of summer canyon service.
- Incentivize transit trips to reduce the number of cars driving through Little Cottonwood Canyon and Alta.
- Utilize Alta Resort Shuttle service better and/or investigate other shuttle opportunities to move around town without a car.
- Consider bringing shuttle further into the town where the community center is planned.
- Promote a rideshare program.
- Develop a transit hub that can be developed in phases.
- Understand and reflect potential fixed guideway alignments and stops.
- Coordinate with appropriate agencies to create incentives for transit and disincentives for driving from the valley to Alta, including park-and-ride lots and the development of centers at the canyon mouths where skiers can board.
- Transit Demand Modeling - work with Alta Ski Area and other entities to reduce demand for single occupancy vehicle trips.

#### PEDESTRIAN (WALKING/HIKING)

- Formalize informal summer pedestrian connections.
- Create a clear and cohesive winter pedestrian network - better connections for walking among ski area destinations.
- Formalize pedestrian destinations and create connections among them.
- Increase safety measures to protect pedestrians from moving traffic.
- Negotiate the steep grades - maintain viable routes up and down the steep slopes between the transfer tow and the highway.
- Provide restrooms at all major trailheads.
- Increase ease and desirability for residents and visitors to walk and ski around the town.
- Re-design Highway 210 through the Town Center as a walkable street.
- Create a pedestrian-oriented conclusion to Highway 210 and the summer road with a discernable gateway/trailhead.
- Integrate transit and recreation use while reducing car traffic.
- Improve and make connections between the Highway 210 corridor and lower slope areas (a year-round vertical assist and trails).

#### SKIERS

- Consolidate trailhead parking with facilities for backcountry skiers.
- Focus on two nodes for backcountry skiers – the municipal building complex and the end of highway/summer road merge area.
- Create more formal trail network to allow backcountry skiers to get into the commercial core directly.
- Improve modes of connection between the two base areas.
- Improve and make connections between the Commercial Core Highway 210 and lower slope areas (year-round vertical assist and trails).

#### BICYCLE

- Increase safety for road cyclists on Highway 210
- Create a basic network of bicycle facilities connecting existing and proposed town destinations.
- Create a clear destination or destinations for cyclists riding up the canyon.
- Create a formal staging area / jumping off point for cyclists riding up trails or summer road.

#### MAINTENANCE

- Increase safety of pedestrian interface with roadway maintenance operations by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements.
- Decrease challenges/obstacles for effective plowing.
- Decrease conflicts between Alta Ski Area snow cats/snowmobiles and skiers/pedestrians.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

As specific buildings are designed for the Town of Alta Commercial Core, the focus should be on creating structures and places that are authentic, genuine and original. Achieving authenticity begins acknowledgment of:

Current Conditions...  
...at a Specific Time  
...for a Specific Place – the Town of Alta.

Current Conditions include financial and technological advancements, which have great influence on the way buildings are constructed. In previous eras labor was inexpensive, which supported simple construction techniques and high-levels of craftsmanship. Today, labor is expensive and technological ability is high. The result is automated processes and the use of new materials.

In order to create original architecture appropriate for Alta, the first rule should be that no fake forms, details or material are used. Materials should not represent something they are not – there should be no fake log cabins, no fake Swiss chalets, no fake stone walls.

Materials are a big part of achieving authenticity. They need to address environmental considerations such as weather and climate, durability and avalanche danger. They also need to be strong while addressing the unique site specific conditions of the uphill and downhill sites at Alta. The materials selected will therefore have significant impact on the form that buildings and architecture will take. Concrete, steel, timber, stone and glass are appropriate materials for creating an authentic design for the Alta Commercial Core at this point in time, and the materials used should express what they are.

The building forms for Commercial Core should be simple and uncomplicated, A building that is an honest expression of its function and place is usually more significant than how it “looks”.

STONE



STEEL & GLASS



CONCRETE



TIMBER



Examples of Potential Materials for Creating Authentic Design in the Commercial Core

# 2 THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN

## STEP 4: CREATING AND ANALYZING COMMERCIAL CORE OPTIONS

A series of options for the Commercial Core were developed, each interpreting the preceding analyses and principles, and incorporating the potential uses and elements. The results were eventually refined into five distinct alternatives, which are detailed in **Appendix C** and described and illustrated here:

### Alternative 1 – Status Quo

According to this scenario, growth is limited to existing private properties in the commercial core and to Alta Ski Area facilities currently proposed by the ski area and approved by the United States Forest Service through the Ski Area’s Special Use Permit Master Development Plan.

### Alternative 2 – Connect the Dots

This option envisions that SR-210 is developed into a mixed-use “Main Street” between the municipal building complex and the Snow Pine Lodge, linking existing uses and a new community center and “Alta-scaled” uses along the roadway.

### Alternative 3 – Mid-T

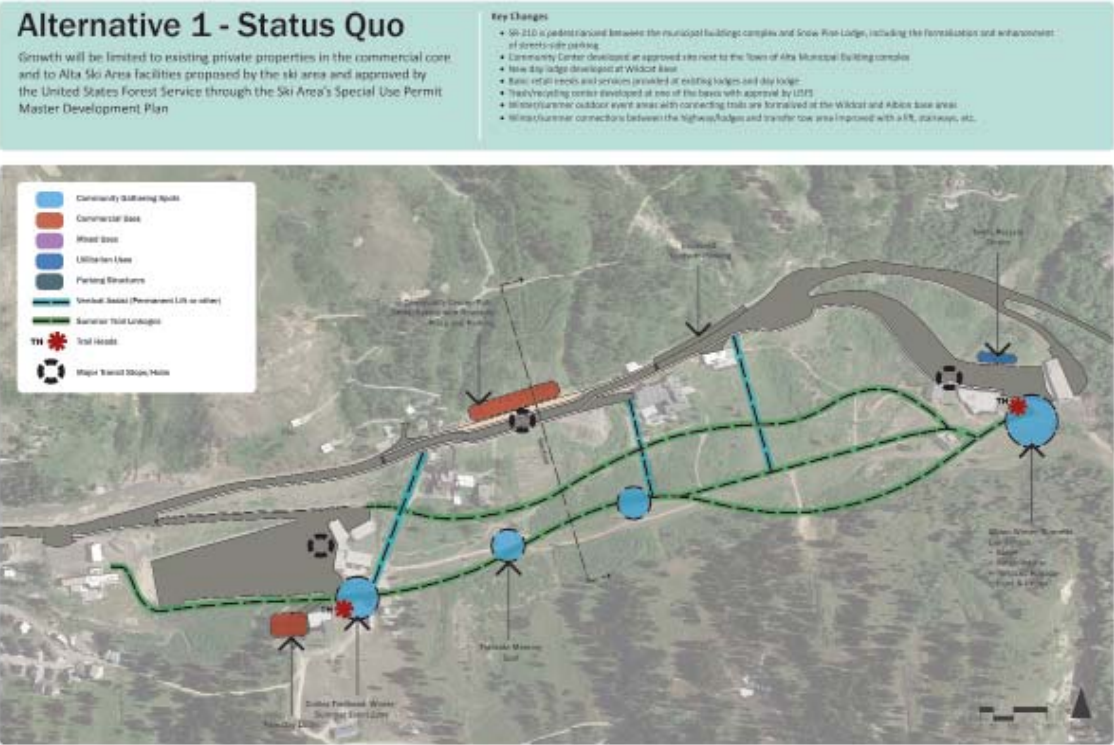
A new roadway is developed downslope and roughly parallel with SR-210 in this option, below the existing lodges. A Community Center, new lodge and small-scale mixed uses are located along this road, creating a new, small-scale “Main Street.” SR-210 is upgraded with parking improvements, including a parking lot or parking structure at the site currently earmarked for a community center (east of the Town of Alta Municipal Building complex).

### Alternative 4 – Town and Park

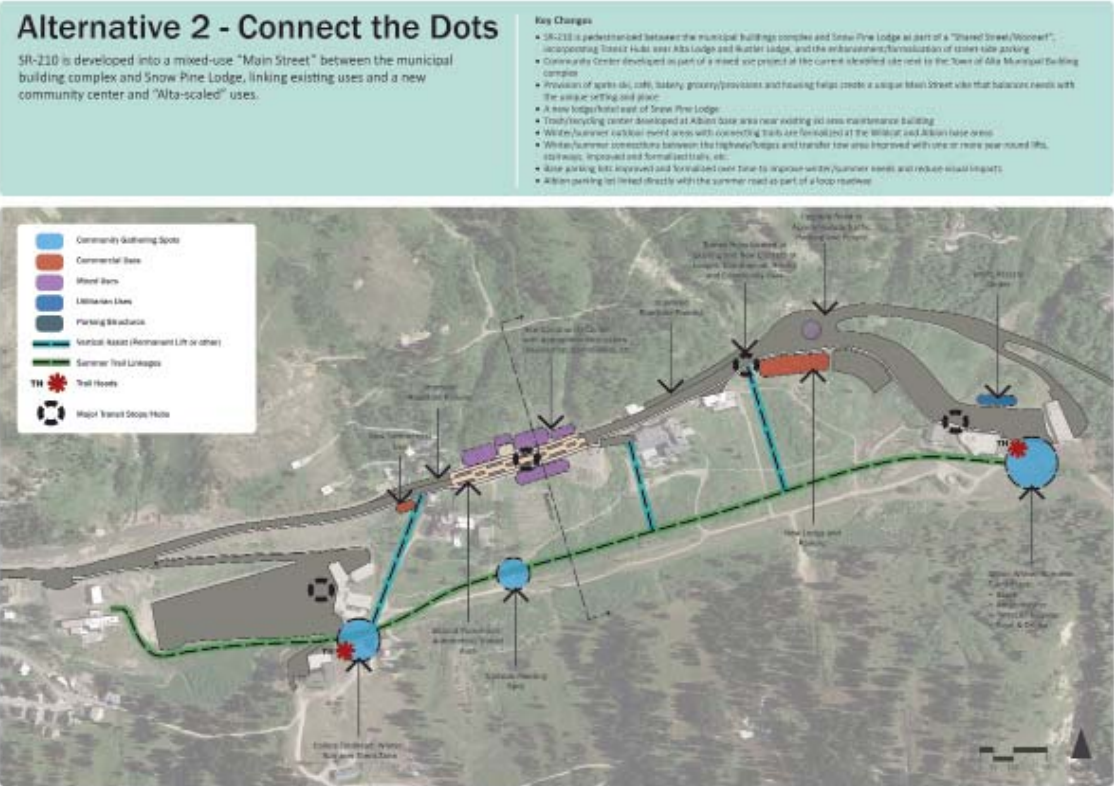
Unify the Municipal Offices/Alta Lodge area and the Rustler Lodge/Snow Pine Lodge area with a centrally-located transit hub, creating a walkable Main Street in the process. The transit hub allows transit riders to access the ski resort from a centralized location, with most vehicle passengers continuing to use the two base parking lots. Anticipated reductions in parking at the Albion parking lot allow the highway to be converted into a town park east of the Day Lodge Road intersection, with summer road access provided directly from the Albion parking lot.

### Alternative 5 – Ski Hubs

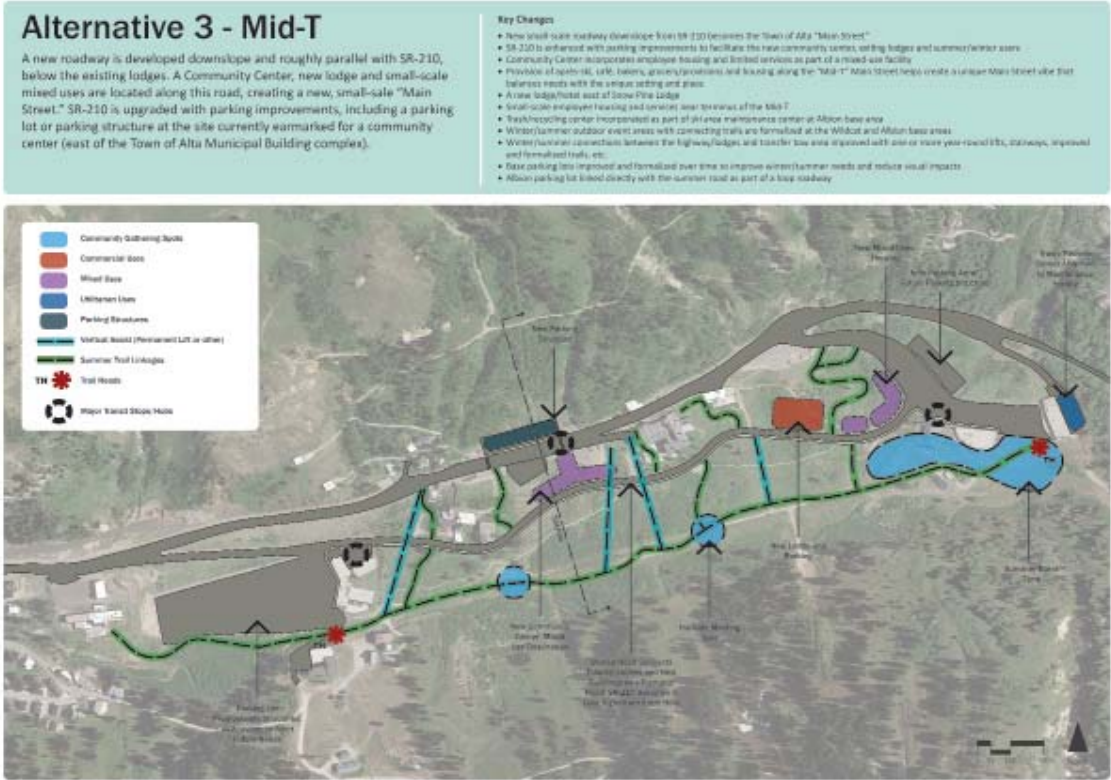
This alternative envisions that the Wildcat and Albion Base areas are converted into walkable centers, linked by SR-210 with formalized parking and pedestrian enhancements. The centers are developed as small villages, incorporating structured parking, small-scale services, restaurants, cafes and similar uses. A new hotel/lodge is located along SR-210 between the Alta Lodge and Rustler Lodge.



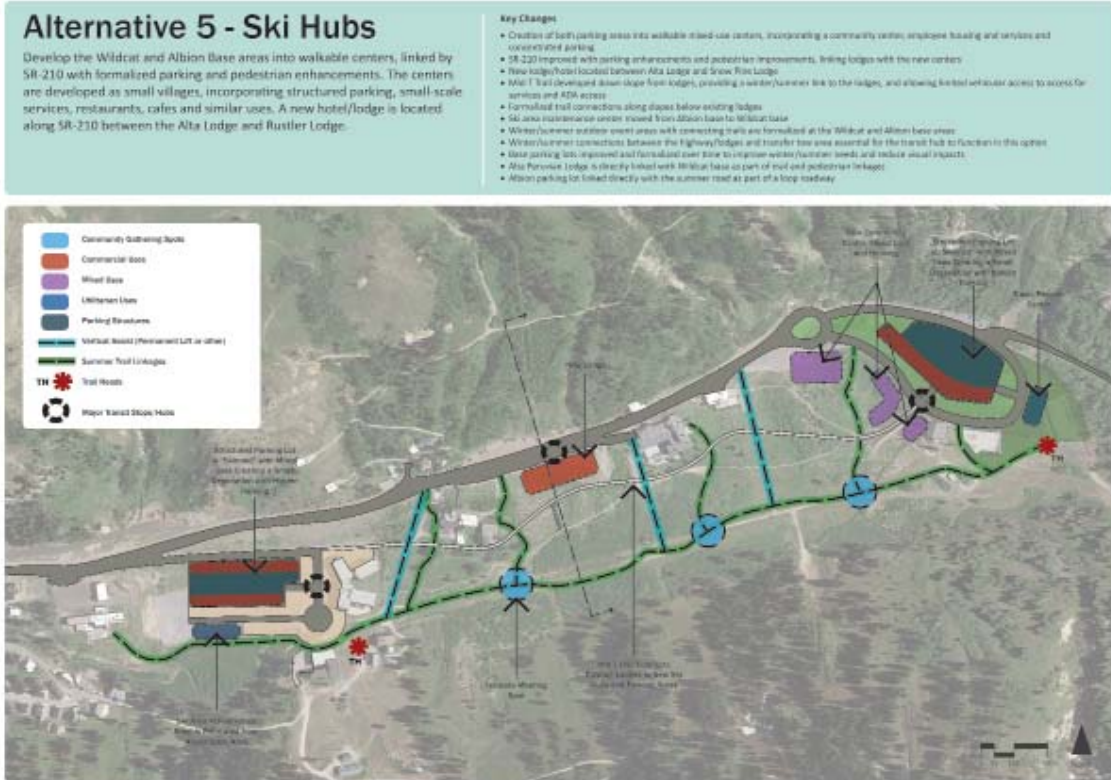
Alternative 1 - Status Quo



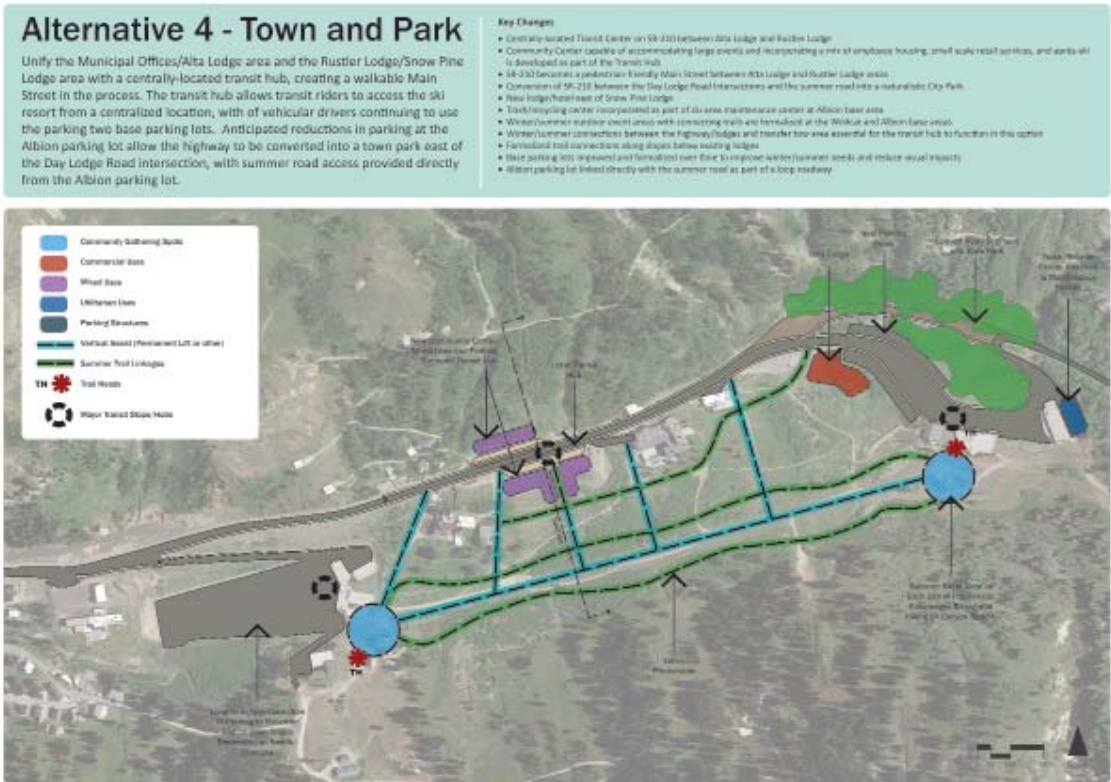
Alternative 2 - Connect the Dots



Alternative 3 - Mid-T



Alternative 5 - Ski Hubs



Alternative 4 - Town and Park

THE PREFERRED COMMERCIAL CORE CONCEPT

The Preferred Concept for the Alta Commercial Core reflects extensive comment and discussion by the public, stakeholders, Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Town Council, town staff and others. It also reflects objective analyses, including the scoring and ranking of each alternative against the twelve guiding principles that were established earlier in the process.

The Preferred Commercial Core Concept Plan represents a consensus vision for the area, incorporating elements from each of the alternatives, while focusing on **Alternative 2 - Connect the Dots** regarding the location of a Main Street Town Center along the highway, and the inclusion of a long-term road and circulation solution according to a variation of **Alternative 3 – Mid-T**.

Overview

The Preferred Alternative envisions that SR-210 is developed into a mixed-use “Main Street” between the municipal building complex and the Snow Pine/Rustler Lodges, linking existing uses with a new community center/mixed use center along both sides of the roadway. The community center and an associated mix of small-scale uses are located along both sides of the highway, forming a “town center” in the process.

Transportation solutions include enhanced pedestrian and trail concepts throughout the area, as well as new loop road near the Albion Base which is intended to facilitate transit circulation as future demand requires. The Albion Base area is transformed into a terminal transit hub, with a mix of small-scale, mixed-use development emerging over time. Other key components include the following:

## 2 THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLAN

- The incorporation of employee housing at the town center and Albion Transit Center;
- Après-ski, café, bakery, grocery/provisions, conference and indoor event space is located at the town center, helping to create a unique Main Street vibe that balances civic, cultural, retail and service needs with the unique setting and place;
- The enhancement of SR-210 with parking improvements and a series of pedestrian plazas and spaces to facilitate pedestrian movement between the new community center, existing lodges, trails and summer/winter destinations;
- A trash/recycling center is located at the western end of town
- Major winter/summer outdoor events are accommodated at the Town Center as part of the indoor event facilities and associated outdoor plaza and streetscape system;
- Secondary winter/summer outdoor event areas with connecting trails are formalized at the Wildcat and Albion base areas;

- Winter/summer connections between the town center/highway and Little Cottonwood Creek/transfer tow area are improved with a year-round lift and improved/formalized trails
- Parking at both base areas is formalized to improve winter/summer circulation and reduce the visual impacts of the large parking expanses;
- The parking area at the Wildcat Base is adjusted to create a transit loop from SR-210 in the long-term; and
- Albion parking lot is linked directly with the summer road as part of a looped circulation system.

### COMMUNITY CENTER AND TRANSIT CENTER ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTS

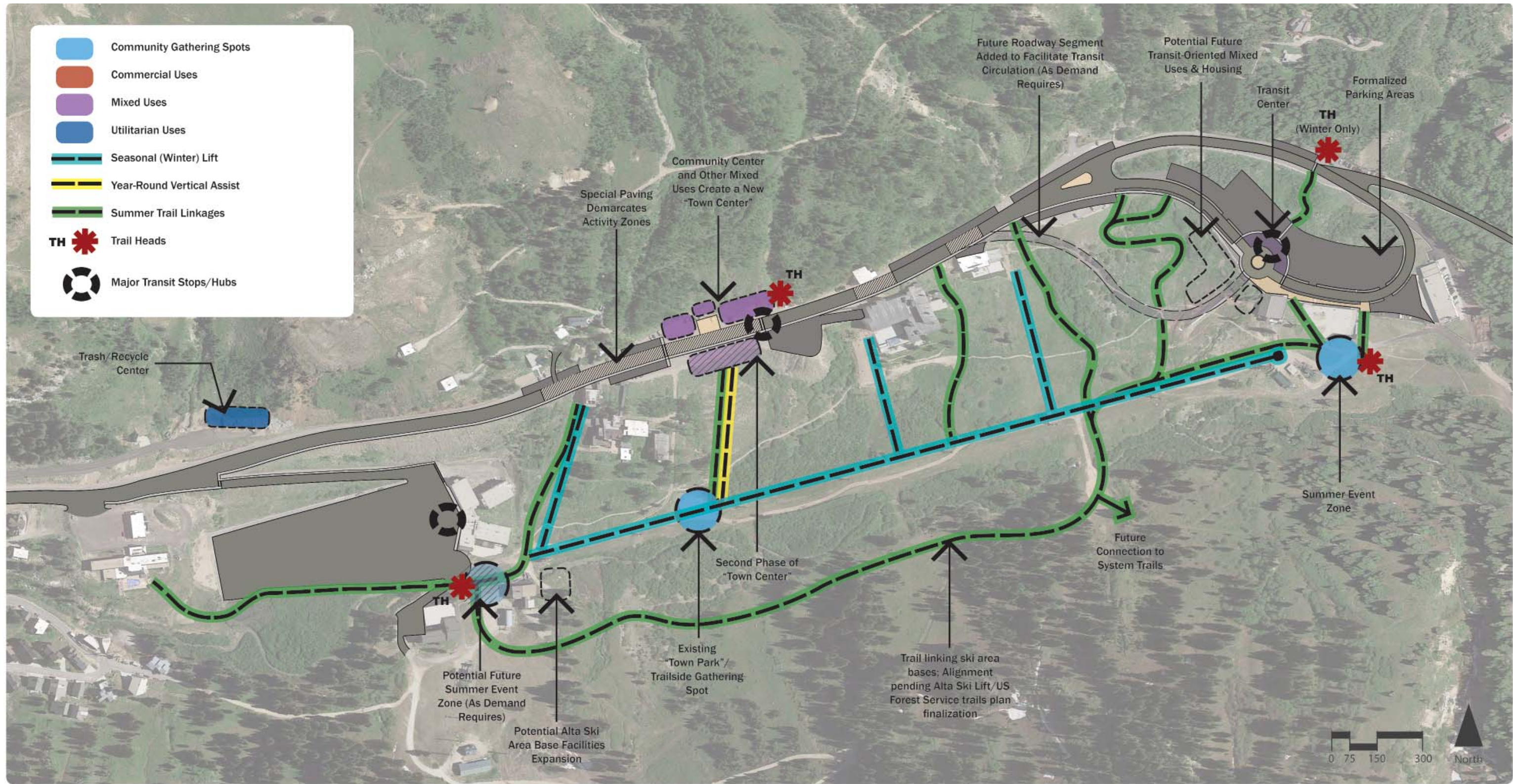
Architectural concepts for the Community Center and Transit Center are provided in Appendix D.

		Alternative 1				Alternative 2				Alternative 3				Alternative 4				Alternative 5			
		Status Quo				Connect the Dots				Mid-T				Town & Park				Ski Hubs			
Score Value		0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Principle																					
1	Preserve, respect, and enhance Alta’s sensitive lands, views, natural resources, and its unique setting.				X			X			X						X		X		
2	Keep Alta eclectic, small-scale, and respectful of the existing environment and conditions.				X			X			X				X			X			
3	Sustain Alta environmentally, economically, and socially.	X							X			X				X			X		
4	Balance the needs of residents, property owners, the business community, employees and visitors.	X							X				X				X		X		
5	Enhance the Alta economy by appropriately leveraging existing resources.		X						X			X			X						X
6	Facilitate organic change over time.		X						X				X		X			X			
7	Support and develop a year-round economy that focuses on the summer in addition to the winter.		X					X				X				X					X
8	Develop one or more walkable centers with mixes of uses, intensive activity, human scale development and a quality pedestrian realm.		X						X				X				X				X
9	Provide safe interactions among pedestrians, motorists, skiers and cyclists at Alta.		X						X				X				X			X	
10	Improve multi-modal connections among winter and summer destinations in Alta.	X							X				X				X		X		
11	Recognize the relationships that exist between Alta and other areas—Snowbird, the canyon, and the region—and respond accordingly.		X					X				X					X			X	
12	Plan for Alta’s role in long-term mountain solutions.	X					X					X					X				X
Subtotal		0	6	0	6	0	1	8	21	0	2	10	15	0	3	4	21	0	4	4	12
Total		12				30				27				28				20			

- Score Definitions**
- 0 Does not meet the Guiding Principle
  - 1 Partially satisfies the Guiding Principle
  - 2 Substantially satisfies the Guiding Principle
  - 3 Fully satisfies the Guiding Principle

Alternatives Ranked According to Guiding Principles

PREFERRED COMMERCIAL CORE CONCEPT





# 3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to help ensure that the Commercial Core is implemented as envisioned. They include references and ideas for the Town of Alta and its partners to consider as the area is developed, and are intended to help clarify how the buildings, landscape and streetscape can be built in a sustainable manner.

### TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL CORE

As the commercial core is developed, it should be developed in a manner that is sustainable. Alta Ski Area has adopted a sustainability policy, and it seems logical that the Town of Alta should have a similar policy in place to ensure that development efforts are unified and will have minimal impact on the surrounding environment and community.

Many communities have adopted sustainability policies and programs; each is unique and developed in a “place-specific” manner. In order to ensure the commercial core is sustainable, a sustainability policy should be developed that meets the needs of the town and its residents. In order to begin the process of creating the policy, the following ideas are presented for consideration:

#### Sustainable Town Operations

- **Create a safe and healthy work environment.** Increase and maintain employee health and safety. Increase employee options and participate in wellness efforts.
- **Increase efficiency in overall performance of the town fleet.**
- **Increase reuse and recycling rates and decrease contamination at municipal parks, facilities, and events.**
- **Increase energy efficiency and energy performance of town buildings.** Effectively manage and reduce municipal energy use. Ensure optimal energy performance of all municipal facilities. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by municipal operations. Increase renewable energy generation.
- **Adhere to sustainable purchasing practices.** Buy local when appropriate, and encourage the purchase of eco-friendly products certified through programs such as Forestry Stewardship Council, EPA WaterSense, Energy Star and similar programs.
- **Reduce municipal water consumption.** Establish water-wise building design, building operations and landscape policies for all city facilities.
- **Effectively manage and reduce municipal paper consumption.** Create and implement a city-wide electronic media and printing policy.
- **Maintain and improve sustainability of local open spaces and natural areas.**



#### Community-Wide Sustainability

- **Help improve local and regional air quality.** Reduce emissions and the number of automobile trips. Discourage unnecessary vehicle idling. Support the use of heating and cooling sources that minimize contribution to particulate and pollution levels.
- **Increase reuse and recycling awareness and participation among town employees and local citizens.**
- **Encourage tele-commuting and similar operations as appropriate.**
- **Increase resident participation in community activities.** Promote local activities and amenities to establish local pride and business.
- **Keep residents involved and informed in the decision-making process.**
- **Encourage healthy lifestyles for residents.** Create a community wellness program. Encourage skiing, hiking, biking, walking and other day-to-day operations that promote healthy lifestyles.
- **Increase education and outreach for sustainability and quality of life issues.** Provide sustainable and quality of life educational opportunities for the community, from students in grade school and high school and to the public, businesses and town staff through programs, workshops, presentations, training and web resources.
- **Incorporate Green Design principles wherever possible in new projects, particularly in the commercial core.**
- **Protect the physical environment and enhance the character, quality and livability of the town and its surroundings by preserving the natural environment to the greatest degree possible.** Encourage careful site planning and the use of construction techniques to minimize adverse impacts of new and redevelopment projects in the Town. Avoid the unnecessary destruction of environmentally sensitive areas such as streams, floodplains, and areas with substantial vegetation.
- **Restore and improve natural resources.** Encourage the preservation and protection of natural areas in all development proposals. Capitalize on natural resources through the retention and protection of trees, streams, and other ecological features.
- **Enhance and maintain the cultural, historical and economic character of the built environment through effective preservation and development programs.** Encourage partnerships between environmental and conservation agencies and the development and business community.
- **Curtail greenhouse gas emissions through energy conservation.**
- **Adopt “green” building standards such as LEED and SITES.**

### ARCHITECTURAL AND BUILT FORM GUIDELINES

The following are general guidelines for the design and development of buildings and structures at of the commercial core. While the size and function of new buildings are likely to vary according to specific needs, the following qualities should be incorporated for all new buildings in the area:

- Use of modern building techniques and materials that address the unique and challenging conditions at Alta (steep slopes, heavy snow, avalanches, etc.)
- Simple and straightforward building forms.
- Practical and utilitarian use of space.
- Simple and genuine building materials (concrete, steel, timber and glass, for example)
- Structures with strong image-making capability.
- Emphasis on street-level design and the creation of positive pedestrian connections.
- Restraint and order with little or no decoration.

# 3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

## Scale, Massing and Form of New Buildings

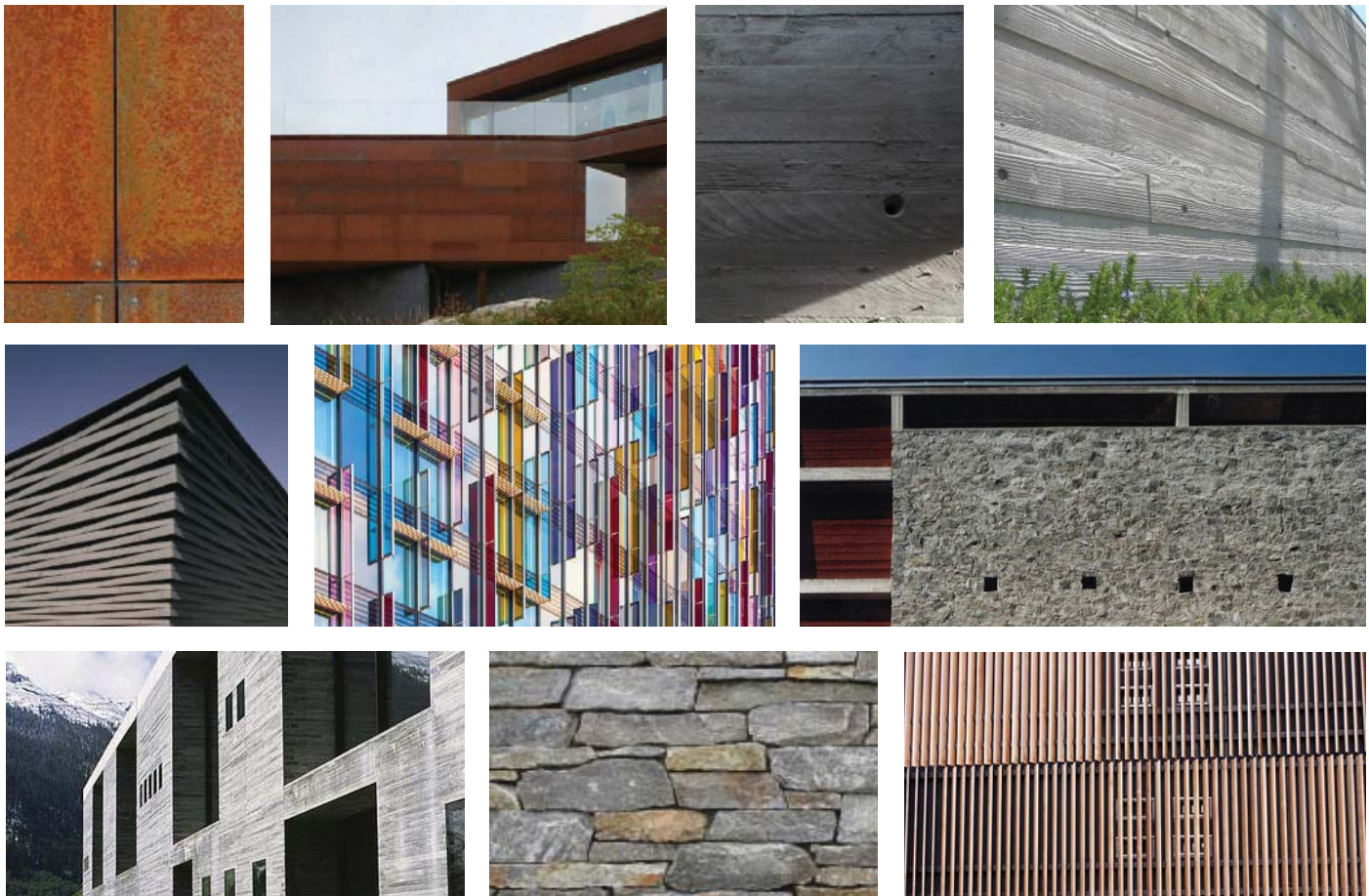
New buildings in the commercial core should exude a simplicity that makes each building easy to understand. Original designs and forms are essential for aligning the buildings with the surrounding setting. The use of stylized designs and “theme” architecture should be avoided, with each building designed to capture the character and lend respect for the site and surroundings.

New buildings that are located along the highway should be carefully designed to address the steep slopes and impacts of potential avalanches. They should generally be three stories or less, with slightly taller heights for structures on the downhill side of the highway. Multiple buildings on the same site should be planned as a single building when possible, and designed so a visual relationship is established between the buildings, the surrounding landscape and the pedestrian connections between them.

## Materials

Architectural materials consistent with the canyon/mountain setting are encouraged, as follow:

- a. Wood and timber siding, including horizontal, vertical and board-batten types.
- b. Metal siding in pre-finished colors and natural metal finishes, including weathering steel.
- c. Exposed board-formed concrete.
- d. Monolithic stone.
- e. Glass



Examples of the use of concrete, wood, timber, glass and steel as part of a genuine architectural response in Alta

## Orientation

Building design and siting should take into consideration slopes and solar orientation; climatic conditions including wind, rain and snow; and the need to remove snow and survive an avalanche. The location of buildings along the highway makes it essential that the design of the rear of the building on downhill-sloping sites be carefully considered to ensure visual impacts are minimized.

## Screening

Rooftop and ground level mechanical units, condensing units, electrical equipment and transformers, dumpsters, and service loading areas should be screened from view. Screening for all equipment and dumpsters should be integrated and complementary to the design. Service loading areas will need to be considered early on in the site planning process to accomplish effective screening.

## Building Signage

Signage is often a prominent feature for commercial establishments. Numerous signs, highly colored and stylized signs, and signs that are out of scale can have a negative impact on the surrounding beautiful setting. The use of buildings as advertising, which prominently display corporate identity, is not conducive to this area and should be discouraged. Billboards and similar signs should be explicitly forbidden throughout the commercial core.

## LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape GUIDELINES

### General Landscape Treatments

Landscaping should be water-wise and regionally appropriate, contributing to the development of a unique commercial core and town center. Landscape treatments should be used to soften parking lots, street edges, and the perimeter of buildings while buffering different land uses and providing shade. Landscaping may be used to delineate spaces, to help create legible site for users, and to assist with storm water management.



The use of trees and vegetation should be used to provide shade and comfort, but not to compete with the incomparable natural setting. In order to fit in, only native species specific to the Little Cottonwood Canyon location and elevation should be used.

Trees and vegetation should be used judiciously, and only in places where they are able to withstand the forces of snow, wind, avalanche and cold. Plant materials should be limited to native species found in the immediate environs (aspens, pine and fir trees; mountain ash and snowberry shrubs; and native grasses and forbs; for example). The use of manicured lawns and other inappropriate and high-maintenance treatments should be strictly prohibited.

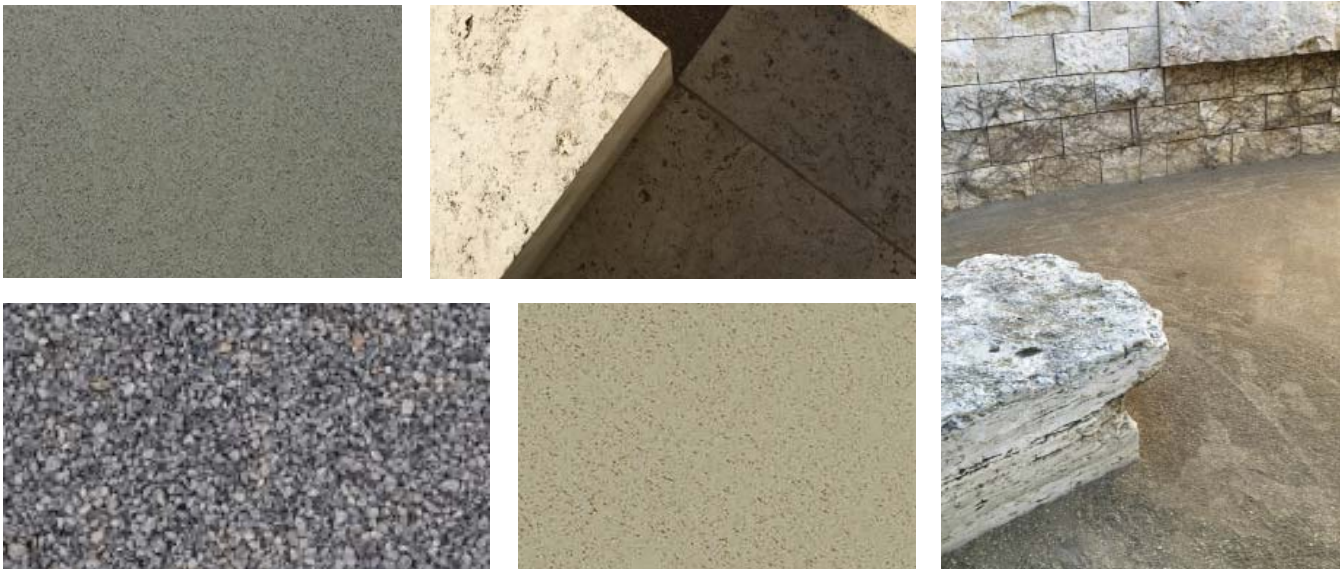
Landscape design should minimize the amount of regular maintenance and fertilizers required, whenever possible. Plants should be placed according to their mature size to reduce the amount of pruning and/or trimming required and to allow them to retain their natural shape and form. Existing open spaces and natural areas along the edges and adjacent to development areas should be protected so they can continue to serve as places for recreation, trails and visual relief.

Site Design

Sites should be designed in a clear and legible manner that contribute to a sense of unity and that provide clear and legible layouts for all users, including those accessing the site via vehicle, bike, on foot or by ski. All sites should provide convenient pedestrian connections, not just along the street frontage sidewalk zones, but between buildings, within parking lots, plazas and parks, and along pathway corridors that link the spaces and places together.

Plazas, Sidewalks, Trails, Streetscapes, Parking and Trails

The treatment of the plazas, sidewalks and streets should incorporate simple details and materials appropriate for vehicular and pedestrian activity. A limited palette of materials should be used, helping to merge the plazas, paths, parking lots and street with the buildings and surrounding landscape. Paved surfaces might be limited to asphalt, gray-toned concrete and crushed stone, all of which are durable. Walls should be constructed of stone or board-formed concrete, helping to merge the buildings and structures with the surrounding landscape.



Paving surfaces should be simple and durable, supporting specific uses and functions within the commercial core. The highway and parking lots should be paved with asphalt, with the exception of the segment connecting the north and south sides of the town center, which should be concrete in simple tones of gray. Pedestrian zones such as sidewalks and plazas should be concrete where heavily trafficked, with softer, more natural materials such as crushed granite used elsewhere to provide a connection with the surrounding natural environment.

Plazas and outdoor meeting spaces should be natural in appearance, merging new development with the surrounding slopes and natural areas. Pathways should be wide and simple, promoting movements or large groups and aiding in the removal of snow. The town center plaza should be multi-functional, able to be ‘closed’ to traffic at key dates and support large community events and festivals.

Trails and trailheads should be connected with the commercial core plaza and sidewalk system as part of a seamless system for pedestrians, bikers, hikers and skiers. The focus should be on creating a flowing, natural experience for trail and sidewalk users, leading to and from the transit station and bus stops.

Parking lots and service areas should be better delineated than at present, utilizing more formal street and “parking court” layouts to direct traffic and reduce the scale of these expansive yet essential spaces. Structured parking garages should be considered a potential long-term enhancement, although they are too costly to implement at present.

Lighting and Street Furnishings

Lighting and street furnishings should be part of a unified palette for the commercial core or town. Street lights should be avoided, with “night-sky” friendly bollard lights and low-level lighting used instead. Benches and seats should be durable yet comfortable, able to withstand the extreme weather and conditions.



Low-scale bollard lights should be used in the town center plazas and similar pedestrian-focused areas. The use of additional street lighting should be avoided unless required to meet safety requirements. All street and pedestrian lighting should be “night sky friendly.”

### 3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



*Seating should be comfortable and durable, constructed of wood and timber as possible to enhance winter use. Seating on other street furnishings should be carefully designed to ensure they fit in with the overall look of the town center and commercial core.*

Sidewalks should be located along both edges of the highway as part of fully-connected systems to promote pedestrian movement through the area. The design of curbs should be carefully considered, with rolled-curbs and similar details used to facilitate the removal of snow from the roadways.



*The use of mountable gutters is encouraged to separate pedestrian movement on sidewalks and roadside pedestrian zones from vehicles traveling on roadways and parking lots. This system will allow snow to be easily moved across all surfaces, facilitating snow removal. The use of street lights, utility poles, bollards and similar fixed street furnishings should be limited to plazas fully separated from the roadways, limiting potential damage by snow plows and other vehicles.*

#### Public Art

Public art brings an air of imagination and creativity to public spaces, encouraging curiosity and at times, interaction. Public art can also provide visual relief and lively energy to otherwise indistinct places. In addition to the design elements described above, the metered use of public art can help create a more active commercial core.

#### Signage & Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to the process of finding your way through an unfamiliar place. It begins with the establishment of a clear and logical layout of site elements, and the establishment of hierarchical spaces, which help visitors form a mental image of the area. The use of specific wayfinding signage is a more direct form of directing people to and the commercial core. Signage may be specific to the core, or part of a system used for the town as a whole. Wayfinding signs typically consist of the following types:

- Town Center Identification Signs
- Sub-District Signs (Albion Base, Highway/Main Street, Collins Base—for example)
- District Directional Signs
- District Parking Identification Signs
- Information Kiosks
- Interpretive Destination/District Information Signs
- Special Area Entry Signs

Wayfinding signs should be designed and sited according to UDOT standards, encompassing clear zones from the travel ways, parking, and curb and gutters. Signage within the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) rights-of-way must be submitted to UDOT Headquarters and go through the permitting process prior to installation.

Wayfinding signage should be located away from other signs, streetscape elements and vegetation. In general, signs should be located far enough apart from other vertical elements, such as trees, light poles, and other signage, to still be readable from the road. The signs should be located at a sufficient distance from the intersection so that drivers and bicyclists have adequate time to read the sign and make a decision.

#### ADOPTION OF THE PLAN AND ASSOCIATED POLICY AND ORDINANCE CHANGES

Now that the vision for the Alta Commercial Core has been established, it is essential that it is adopted as part of the General Plan. Once adopted, applicable policies and ordinances should be reviewed and revised accordingly. In particular, the Town of Alta General Plan Map, Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map should be reviewed and adjusted to ensure they are aligned with this plan. Once the plans, ordinances and policies have been adjusted, it is essential that positive dialogue continues with the Alta Ski Area, Mountain Accord, U.S. Forest Service, UDOT, UTA and other partners to ensure the vision is understood and supporting actions take place. A Commercial Core Implementation Committee might be established, with the specific purpose of promoting the plan, reviewing implementation ideas, and providing input and advice as development occurs, and to ensure the vision contained in the plan is maintained over time.

It must be noted here that implementation of significant portions of this plan will follow different time lines and processes if land ownership in the Commercial Core changes. Currently, Alta Ski Area’s U.S. Forest Service Special Use Permit Master Development Plan is the primary regulatory instrument by which development in much of the Commercial Core is governed. With a vision for the future of the Commercial Core Plan in place, the Town can more clearly evaluate its support for Alta Ski Area proposals for base development. The Alta community faces imminent decisions about how critical resources such as culinary

water allotments, open space, and public transportation investment will be administered, and this plan will provide the Town and its partners with a framework for evaluating those choices.

If ownership of what is currently U.S. Forest Service land in the Commercial Core changes hands through the proposed land exchange or a future land exchange, or if land becomes privately-owned through some other mechanism, implementation of concepts presented in this plan will be regulated directly by the Town of Alta zoning ordinance. Strategies to consider in the event that significant zoning updates are pursued include:

- Develop and adopt a **form-based code, Commercial Core overlay**, or similar tool to enhance development as envisioned in the Commercial Core.
- Develop and adopt a **sustainability ordinance**.
- Ensure that future transportation improvements are aligned with the intent and needs of the Commercial Core.