Winter Park's Aspirational Approach to Comprehensive Planning: Imagine Winter Park



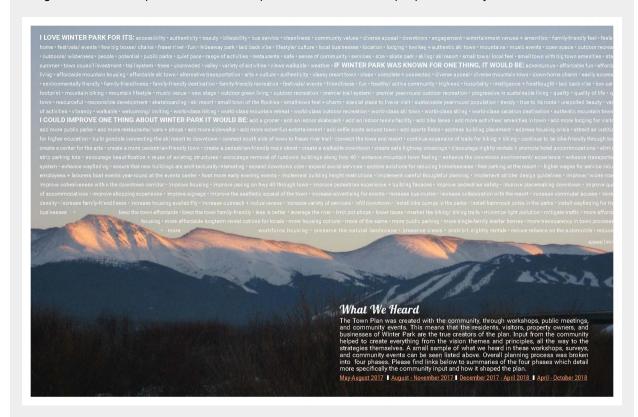
by Community Development Team, Town of Winter Park

The Town of Winter Park is one of the few Colorado ski towns not formed as a mining or railroad town. Instead, it has organically grown along with the Winter Park Ski Area into the eclectic and unpretentious resort community it is today. Slow and incremental growth built on this strong foundation has helped the Town to keep its small-town feel and unique character over time.

In contrast to the past however, Winter Park has experienced substantial transformation in the past five years. Unfortunately, the Town's previous Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2006, was outdated and made it difficult to

respond to the growing problems and stresses facing the community including attainable housing, water availability and healthy stream flow, transportation and mobility, and natural resource management.

Knowing that the previous plan was not working to positively shape the future as the Town continued to grow and change, the Town pursued the creation of a new Comprehensive plan. The intent of this new Comprehensive Plan was to refocus planning efforts and policies to address both current issues and future opportunities to ensure that future generations can experience the same aspects of Winter Park that people love today.



To accomplish this ambitious goal, the Town hired Logan Simpson in the spring of 2017 to assist in the development of a new Comprehensive Plan. After creating the tag line, "Imagine Winter Park," the Town started a year-long initiative working with the community to create a common vision for the future that everyone could embrace.

From the very first community event at one of our weekly free concerts, to the numerous workshops, public meetings, and steering committee meetings, people were at the heart of this plan. Food, games, concerts, and interactive events throughout the process promoted a lively public dialogue and resulted in thousands of comments, thoughts, and suggestions for the plan. This extensive community engagement resulted in an adaptive, visionary, and aspirational plan focused around four main themes:

Our Character and Our Culture

Our Global and Local Connectivity

Our World-Class Outdoor Recreation

Our Healthy and Thriving Environment

These Vision Themes create the structure and heart of the Plan, and are built around the community's values to ensure that the community is reflected in every principal and strategy. This aspirational approach aligns the Town under one common vision and allows the plan to be flexible and adaptable to both present and future challenges.

Since the plan adoption in January of 2019, the Town has already begun work on three catalytic projects that will help to bring the visions identified in Imagine Winter Park to life: a community informed Downtown Plan (assisted by Design Workshop), the development of a Unified Development Code (assisted by Kendig Keast) and the creation of a Sustainability Assessment (through a CU Denver MURP Capstone Project).

This rapid implementation is the direct result of a plan that was modeled by the community and continues to have incredible community support. Focusing the community on identifying their ideal vision for the future instead of evaluating individual projects also helped to foster conversations that are not often possible when specific proposals are presented. Instead of evaluating the merits of a certain set of projects, this approach allows broader community conversations around what the ideal future should be. Then, all future projects can be built to fit that vision instead of the other way around. The success of this aspirational approach to comprehensive planning we hope will serve as a model for other communities that face rapid change and could benefit from an adaptive and flexible guiding plan.

