

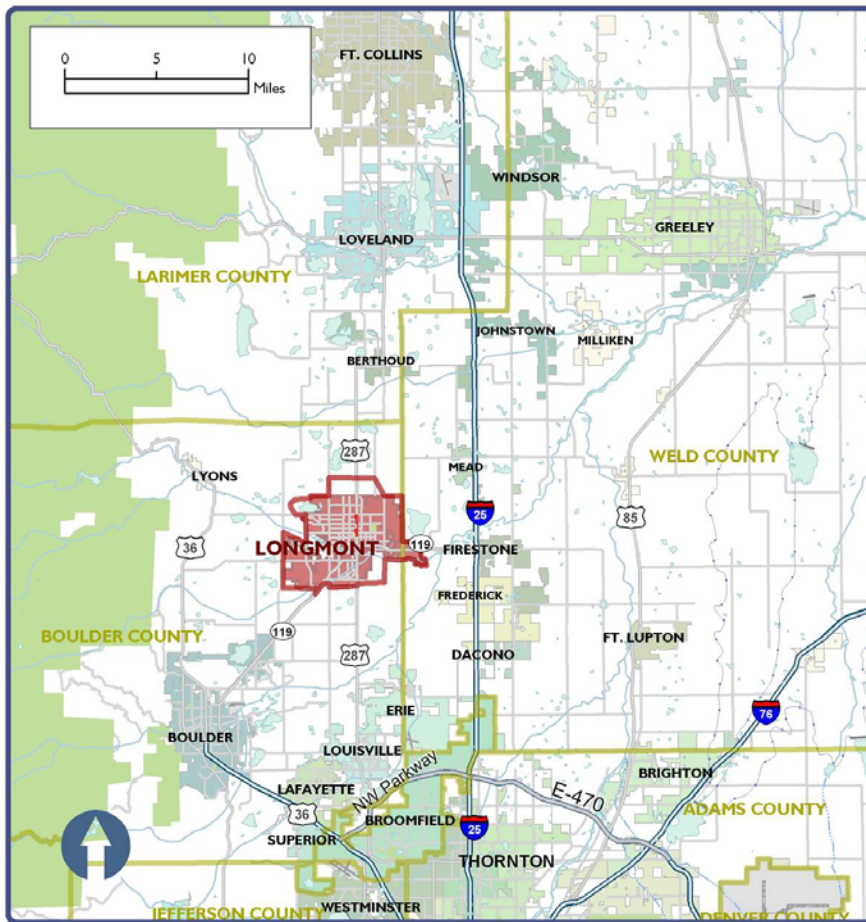
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Longmont Planning Area (which is slightly larger than the existing City of Longmont so as to include land around the perimeter of the City which may be annexed in the future), is located in the northwestern portion of Boulder County, with a small area located in southwestern Weld County (See Figure 1).

Regional influences which will likely impact growth in the Longmont Planning Area over the next twenty years include:

- Projected development growth along major transportation corridors such as I-25 North and Colorado State Highway 119
- Boulder and Weld Counties' existing and emerging roles in regional economic development

Figure 1
Regional Context Map



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Development Conditions Analysis

The Midtown Study Area, located between Longs Peak Avenue and 17th Avenue, is generally located in the central portion of the City, north of the Central Business District (CBD). The area benefits from a number of characteristics that make it appropriate for development of retail, office, residential and community uses. These include:

- limited competition among areas located in the central portion of the community;
- access and visibility along a critical north-south thoroughfare (Main Street) and gateway from communities north and south;
- adjacency to a variety of residential and employment uses in a currently under-served sub-market of the community;
- access to regional transportation corridor (U.S. Highway 287); and
- limited range of attached residential product inventory anywhere in the market (homogenous product).

The strengths of the area are countered, however, by select drawbacks (primarily market-driven) that need to be addressed if the benefits of development efforts are to be maximized. These drawbacks include:

- located in an older, established commercial corridor, proximate to a range of residential, commercial and industrial uses, yet lacking a significant level of contiguous activity;
- low- to moderate-density residential developments in the area, which limit the immediate trade area population; and
- recent competitive commercial development on the fringe of Longmont, yet limited activity proximate to the Study Area.

Table 1 summarizes conclusions from the analysis of these development conditions.

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Table 1
 Planning Area Development Conditions
 Midtown Study Area 


Development Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Accessibility	Principal access via Main Street			
Visibility	Excellent visibility along Main Street			
Adjacent Uses			Established residential neighborhoods east and west of the Study Area, although they provide limited immediate trade area population; newer commercial development north and south	
Utilities		Study area currently serviced by all major infrastructure, but there are portions unserved by water and sewer; upgrades would depend on redevelopment		
Level of Competition		Market-wide homogeneity among residential products; limited competition among residential and non-residential uses in surrounding trade area (although Downtown is potential competition)		

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Trade Area Demographics			Favorable demographics and market support for potential redevelopment concepts	
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Source: Leland Consulting Group.

Employment Growth Structure

The City of Longmont has always played an important role in the northern Front Range economy, although that role has shifted over the years from agriculture and related manufacturing (e.g. canning and sugar production) to a more diversified industrial base. In the 1980s and 1990s, the economy became more technologically driven, with the addition of the Gunbarrel IBM plant and other smaller employers, although agricultural industries (i.e., ConAgra Foods) do remain. Longmont is a free-standing community, as such its economy has remained diversified to serve its growing resident population. 

As housing prices have escalated dramatically over the past decade across the Front Range, and tolerance for lengthy commutes has increased, Longmont has partially evolved into a desirable locale for employees working in Boulder, Ft. Collins and north Metro Denver. Longmont has been viewed lately as a more affordable option to some of these communities among home buyers, with acceptable access to Boulder County’s impressive quality of life. As such, sectors of the economy, such as construction and retail services, have expanded to meet the demand for more residential development.

Figure 2 illustrates employment growth trends in Weld County, Larimer County, Boulder County, and the State of Colorado as a whole. Statewide employment has grown approximately 42 percent since 1990, while job growth in both Larimer and Weld counties has been near 60 percent since that time. Note that Boulder County employment was hit especially hard by the national economic downturn originating in the high-tech industrial sectors starting in 2001. Although concentration in high-tech sectors exposes Boulder County to recessionary risk because of a relative lack of diversity, the County remains well-positioned in terms of its workforce training and educational infrastructure to capture a greater share of growth in these industries as the economy recovers.