

Chapter 4. Alternatives

This chapter provides a summary of the various concept alternatives that were considered in developing the DNDP Preferred Concept. An important starting point for development of the alternatives was the Hart Howerton Concept (see Chapter 1) which was thoroughly critiqued by the Focus Group at their first meeting. While most agreed that the Hart Howerton concept, in its entirety, was not the “right” concept for the Downtown, it did include a number of interesting and valid ideas, the best of which were carried forward into the alternatives process.

Early input to develop the alternatives included brainstorming ideas about the form, function and character of each of the subareas within the study area, and the type of place it should be in twenty years. Many of these ideas, which covered a broad range of issues and themes, were incorporated into the alternatives.

Alternatives development and review was a three step process, including review and input by the Focus Group and public at each phase, to narrow down and focus on the strongest consensus ideas and arrive at a Preferred Concept:

- Development and review of four Preliminary Alternative Concepts,
- Revision of the four preliminary concepts to two Refined Alternatives, and
- Creation of a single Preferred Concept, which was a synthesis based on the preferred components from the two Refined Alternatives.

A. Preliminary Alternatives

Based on a critique of the Hart Howerton Concept, Framework, existing conditions, opportunities and constraints, and input from the Focus Group, public, and agency partners, four preliminary alternative concepts were developed, reflecting a range of potential change from minimal change in the “Polished Plan” to a more substantial amount of change in the “Walkable Nodes” concept: The four alternatives, ranging from the least to the greatest degree of change were:

- Polished Plan
- Linked Anchors/Medians
- Linked Anchors/Greenway
- Walkable Nodes

Each of the preliminary alternative concepts was presented as a series of maps and diagrams that represented pattern, transect, mobility, economic/social capacity, and recreation/leisure capacity. All four reflected a series of common ideas, including that they would provide for a compelling long-term vision for the district, based on community input and providing broad community benefit. As noted in the Issues discussion, the alternatives also emphasized a commitment to avoid property downzonings or “takings,” and allowing for existing uses to continue. Finally, the alternatives each focused on the district’s major opportunity sites, and were grounded in the idea of practicality and financial feasibility.

In addition, certain ideas and components were consistent across all four concepts including placemaking², complete streets (i.e. streets accommodate pedestrians, bikes, transit, and cars), emergency access, snow management, successful economy, and signage and wayfinding.

1. Polished Plan Concept

The Polished Plan alternative would support focused incremental changes to improve and upgrade existing properties within the study area, aimed at improving visual appearance and function. Existing land use patterns would be expected to remain mostly unchanged, and there would be limited investment in new public facilities and infrastructure. The Polished Plan Concept is illustrated in Figure 4-1.

2. Linked Anchors/Small Median and Roundabouts

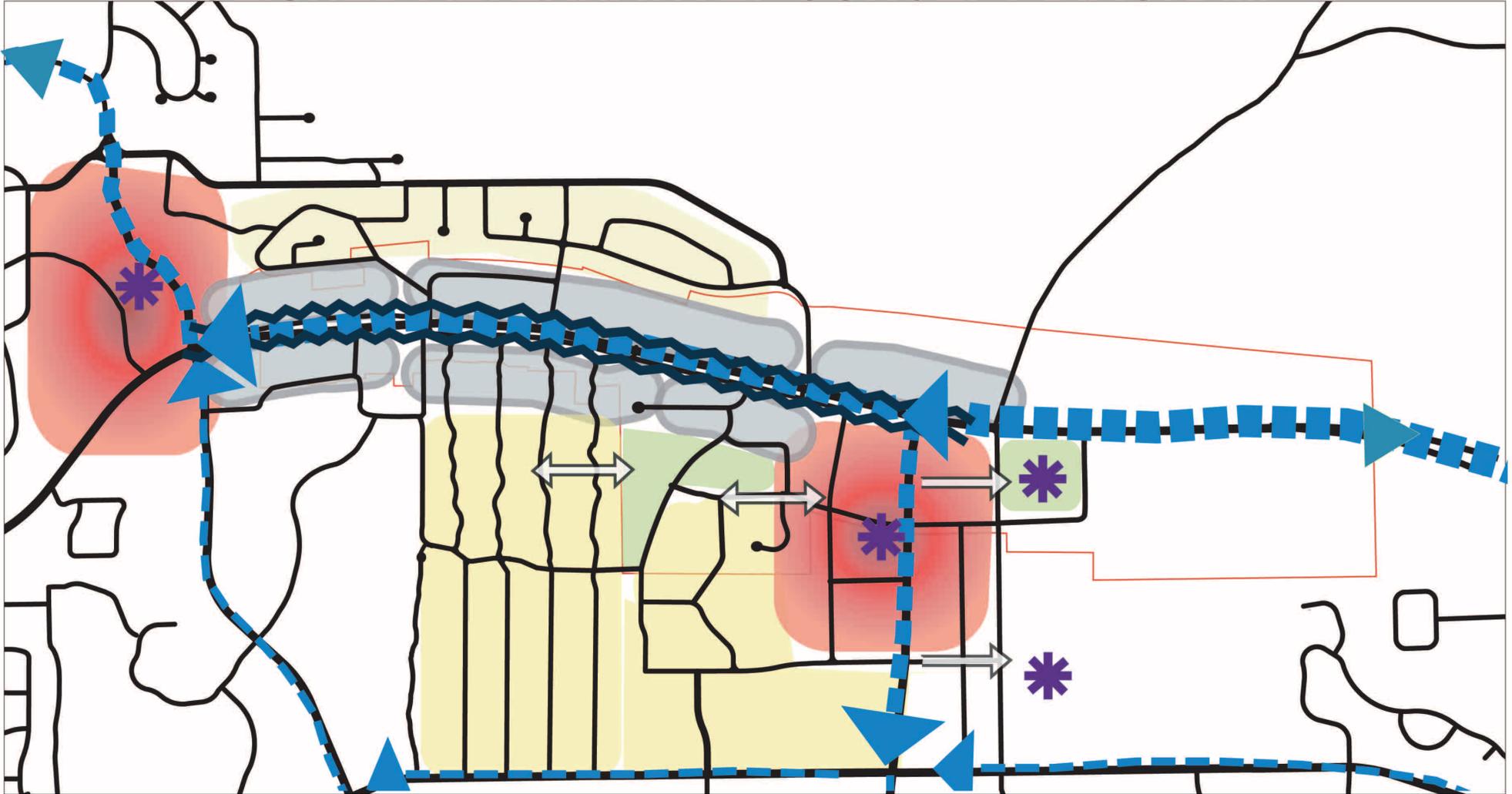
Figure 4-2 shows the concept for the Linked Anchors/Small Median and Roundabouts alternative. In this alternative, a modestly-sized landscaped median would be installed along the length of Main Street, with roundabouts placed at various intersections to smooth traffic flow. Main Street would be emphasized as the connecting transportation link between the two major mixed use hubs within the North Old Mammoth Road District and North Village. Other than the median and roundabouts, limited change to land use or function would be expected along the Main Street corridor, although additional definition would be provided at the town entry with a major roundabout, sports/event park located on the Town/County property, and Civic Center on the north side of Main Street at Old Mammoth Road.

3. Linked Anchors/Greenway

Figure 4-3 shows the concept for the Linked Anchors/Greenway Alternative. As shown in the diagram, the alternative is similar to the Small Median and

² Placemaking” is the creation of places that attract people because they are well designed, pleasurable, and have an interesting and animated mix of uses or other features.

POLISHED ALTERNATIVE: CONCEPT DIAGRAM



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan
Polished Alternative
Concept Diagram

	Activity Node		Traffic Flow		Physical Barrier
	Anchor		Pedestrian Flow		

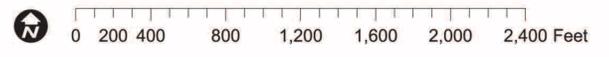


Figure 4-1: Polished Alternative Concept Diagram

LINKED ANCHORS - MEDIAN & ROUNDABOUTS: CONCEPT DIAGRAM

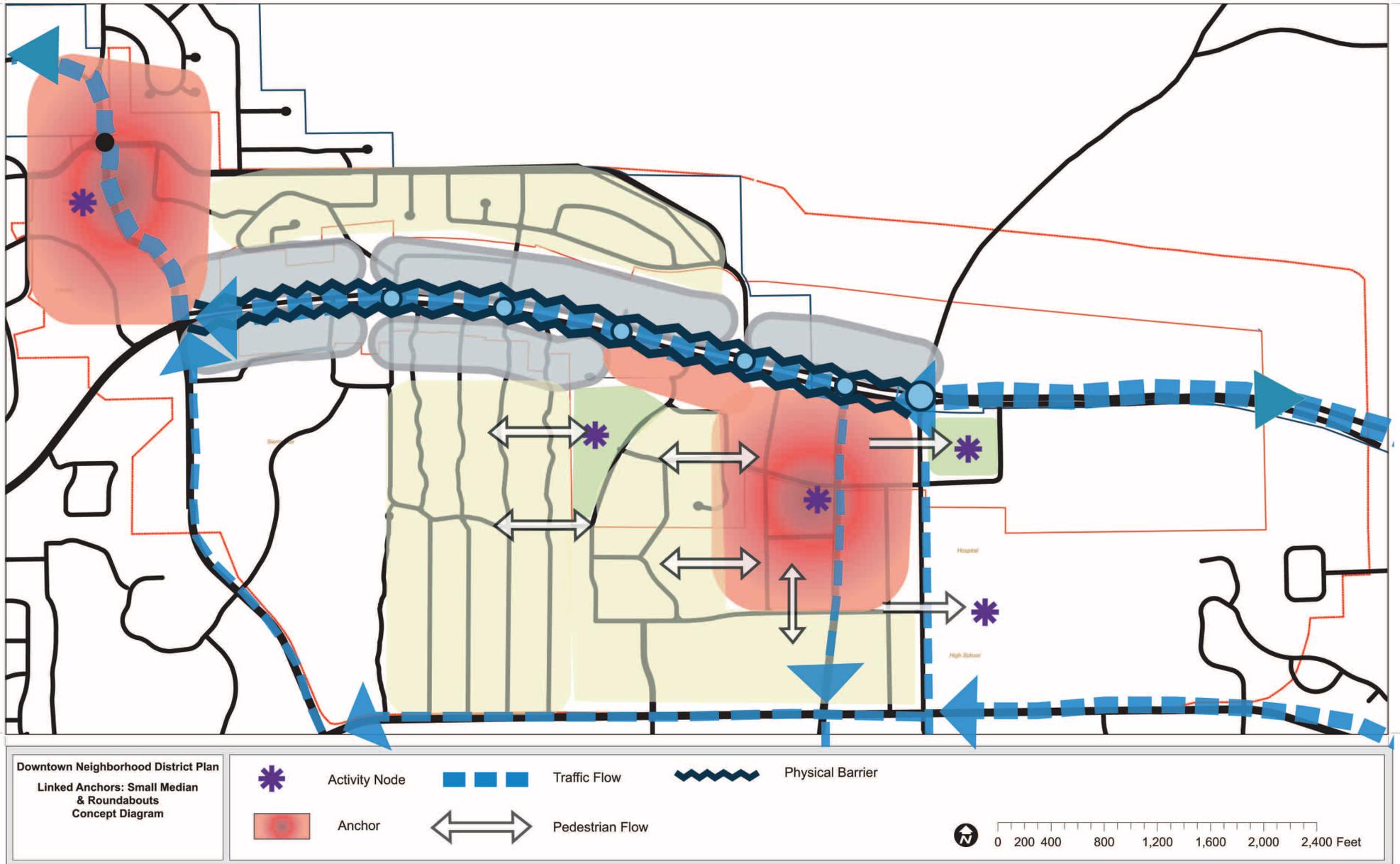
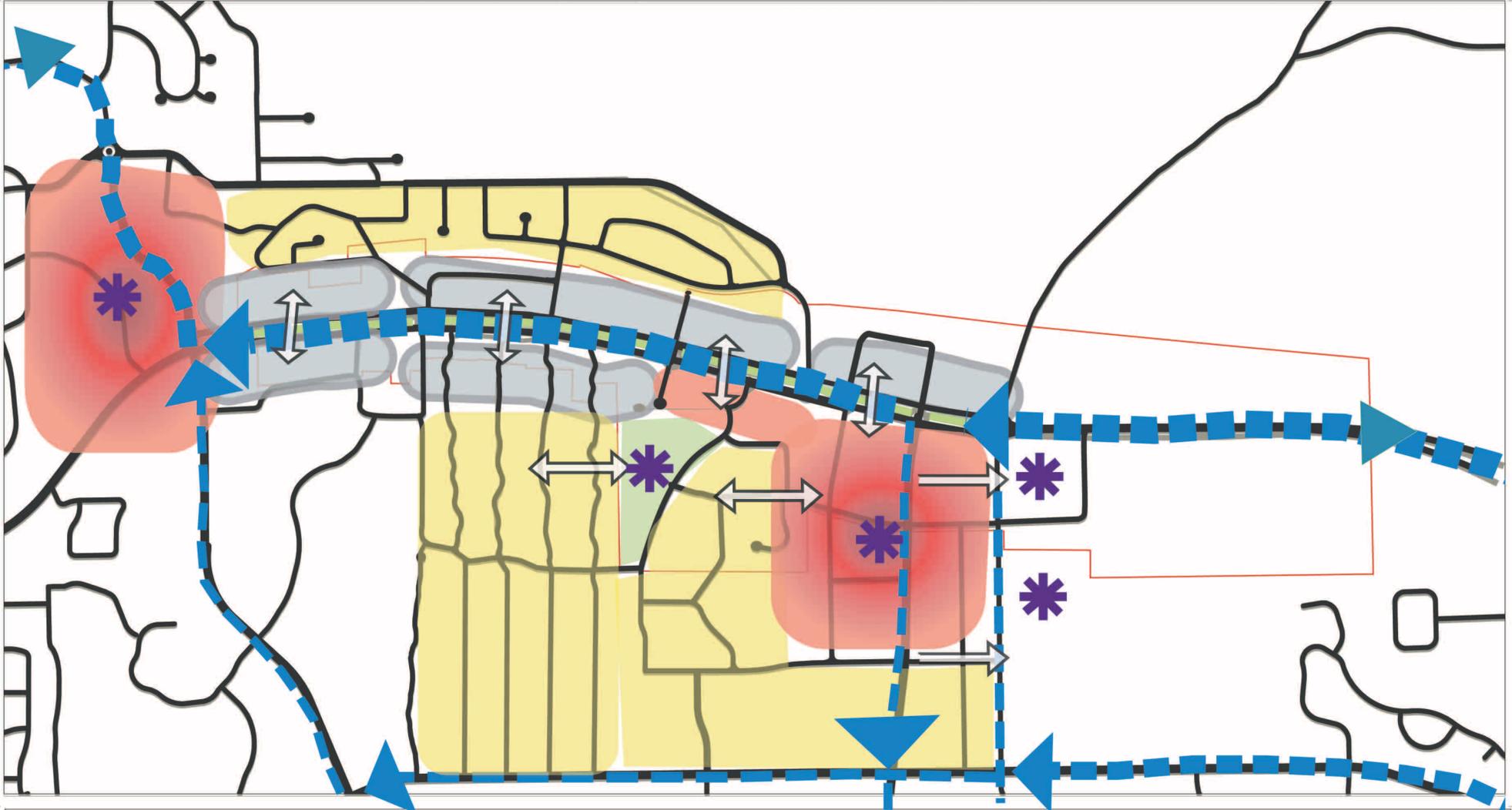


Figure 4-2: Linked Anchors/Median and Roundabout Concept Diagram

LINKED ANCHORS - GREENWAY: CONCEPT DIAGRAM



<p>Downtown Neighborhood District Plan Linked Anchors: Greenway Concept Diagram</p>	Activity Node	Traffic Flow
	Anchor	Pedestrian Flow

Figure 4-3: Linked Anchors/Greenway Concept Diagram

Roundabouts Concept described above, but provides a more substantial central greenway along Main Street connecting the North Village hub and a “town center” or downtown hub. The greenway, which might be up to 100 feet in width, would include a multi-use path, and would allow for a large pedestrian refuge area and safer street crossings. Moderate changes to land use and development standards would occur at certain areas along Main Street, particularly the area south of Main Street and around Center Street, which would be emphasized more strongly as an extension of the mixed use downtown area at North Old Mammoth Road. Similar to the Small Median alternative, there would be a much more strongly defined town entry with a roundabout, event/sports park, and civic center.

4. Walkable Nodes

In this alternative, shown in the concept graphic in Figure 4-4, land use intensity would be focused within a series of concentrated pedestrian-oriented areas or nodes along Main Street. Most of the change would be focused around the east end of Main Street, with more limited change west of Manzanita Road. Each node would have a somewhat unique character and land use focus, and would be focused around a central square or other public space. Traffic calming would be provided via these central squares. The cross section of Main Street would be changed substantially, with a narrowed right-of-way that allows for easier pedestrian crossings, and would allow for increased pedestrian safety via a narrowed Main Street, and substantial pattern and visual change to create a traditional “main street” character. Because of the narrowed cross-section, more emphasis would be placed on traffic reduction measures. These would include internal trip capture (placing uses in proximity to one another so that it is not necessary to travel outside of the area by car), providing new roads and shared parking facilities, and expanding transit options to decrease cars and traffic. Similar to the other alternatives, this alternative would also include a strongly defined town entry with roundabout, event/sports park, and civic center.

WALKABLE NODES: CONCEPT DIAGRAM

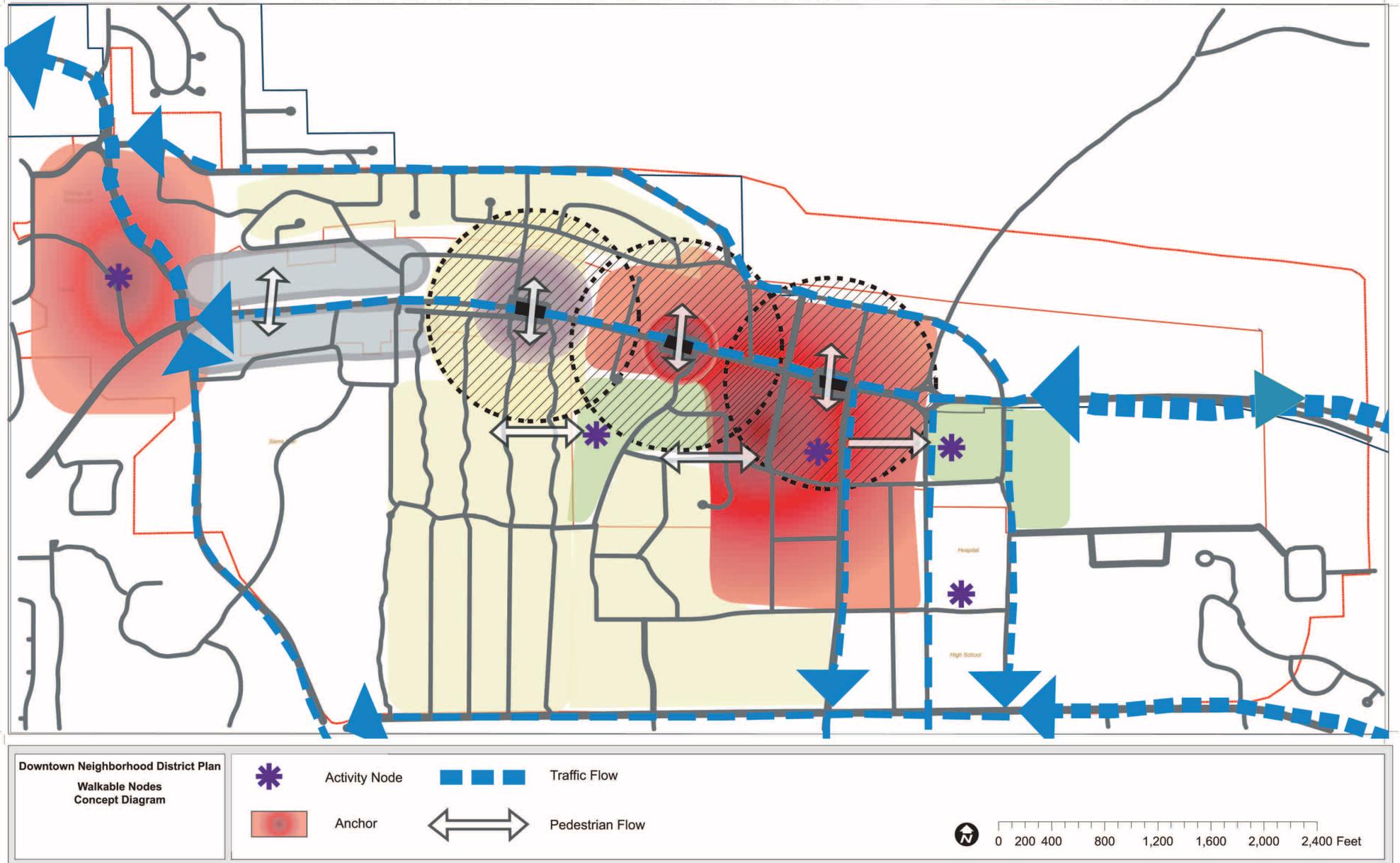


Figure 4-4: Walkable Nodes Concept Diagram

B. Refined Alternatives

The four alternative concepts described above were reviewed by both the public and the Focus Group at meetings in October and November 2009. At the meetings, a consensus emerged around two of the four alternatives being the strongest concepts. Participants agreed that the Linked Anchors/Greenway and Walkable Nodes concepts appeared to be most consistent with achieving the DNDP Guiding Principles and goals, since they included a range of more substantial improvements that had the potential to result in positive and highly effective changes, particularly for the Main Street corridor.

Although some ideas from the other two alternatives, the Polished Plan Concept and Linked Anchors/Small Median and Roundabouts Concept, were felt to be reasonable, ultimately these concepts were not selected because they would be less likely to achieve the goals and Guiding Principles of the DNDP. However, the idea of incremental change and improvement, as presented in the Polished Plan Concept was felt to be a reasonable way to conceptualize the early and progressive phases of change that were likely to be necessary in implementing any of the alternatives; the idea of more incremental change could also be applied to parts of Main Street, like the west end, where more extensive change was unlikely or unnecessary.

Based on the Focus Group and public input, some adjustments were made to the selected alternatives to create two refined alternatives, labeled the Greenway Alternative and the Downtown Alternative.

1. The Greenway Alternative

In the Greenway Alternative, Main Street would become a more attractive, functional, and efficient corridor, including a central greenway extending from Old Mammoth Road to Manzanita Road, linking well defined anchors at the North Village and town center. Figure 4-5 through Figure 4-7 show the overall concept, and land use and mobility framework for the Greenway Alternative. As shown in the Figures, the major components of the Greenway include:

- An expansive Main Street greenway from Sierra Park Road to Manzanita Road, that provides an aesthetic and functional median, and effectively pushes the street to the front of buildings (by eliminating frontage roads), while maintaining efficient traffic flow.
- Event/sports park at town entry.
- Civic Center complex and USFS housing on USFS land.
- New road to serve Civic Center complex.

GREENWAY: CONCEPT DIAGRAM

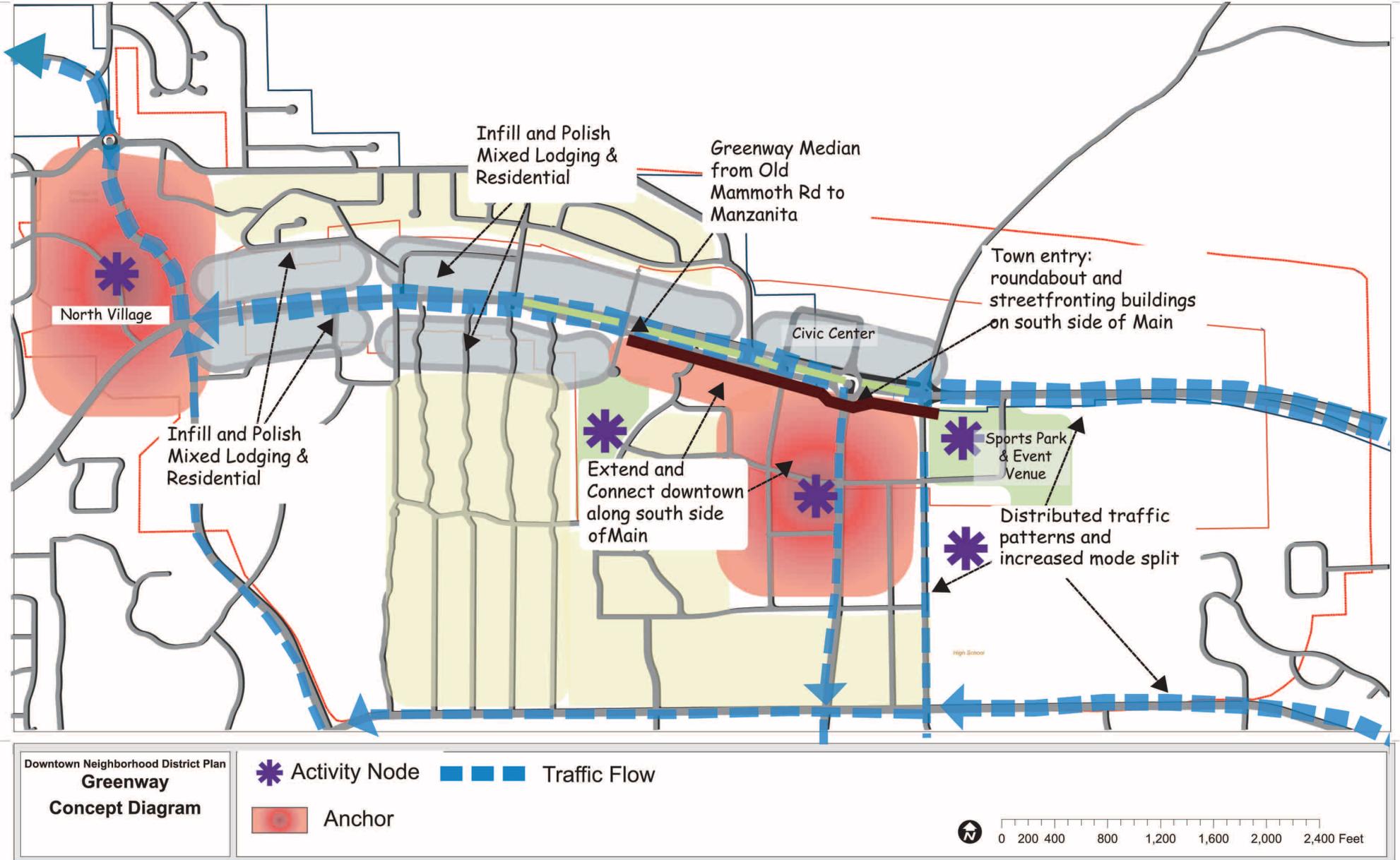


Figure 4-5: Greenway Concept Diagram

GREENWAY: LAND USE



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan

Greenway Land Use

- Downtown NDP Study Area
- Downtown NDP SOI
- Urban Growth Boundary



Figure 4-6: Greenway Land Use

GREENWAY: FUTURE ROADS

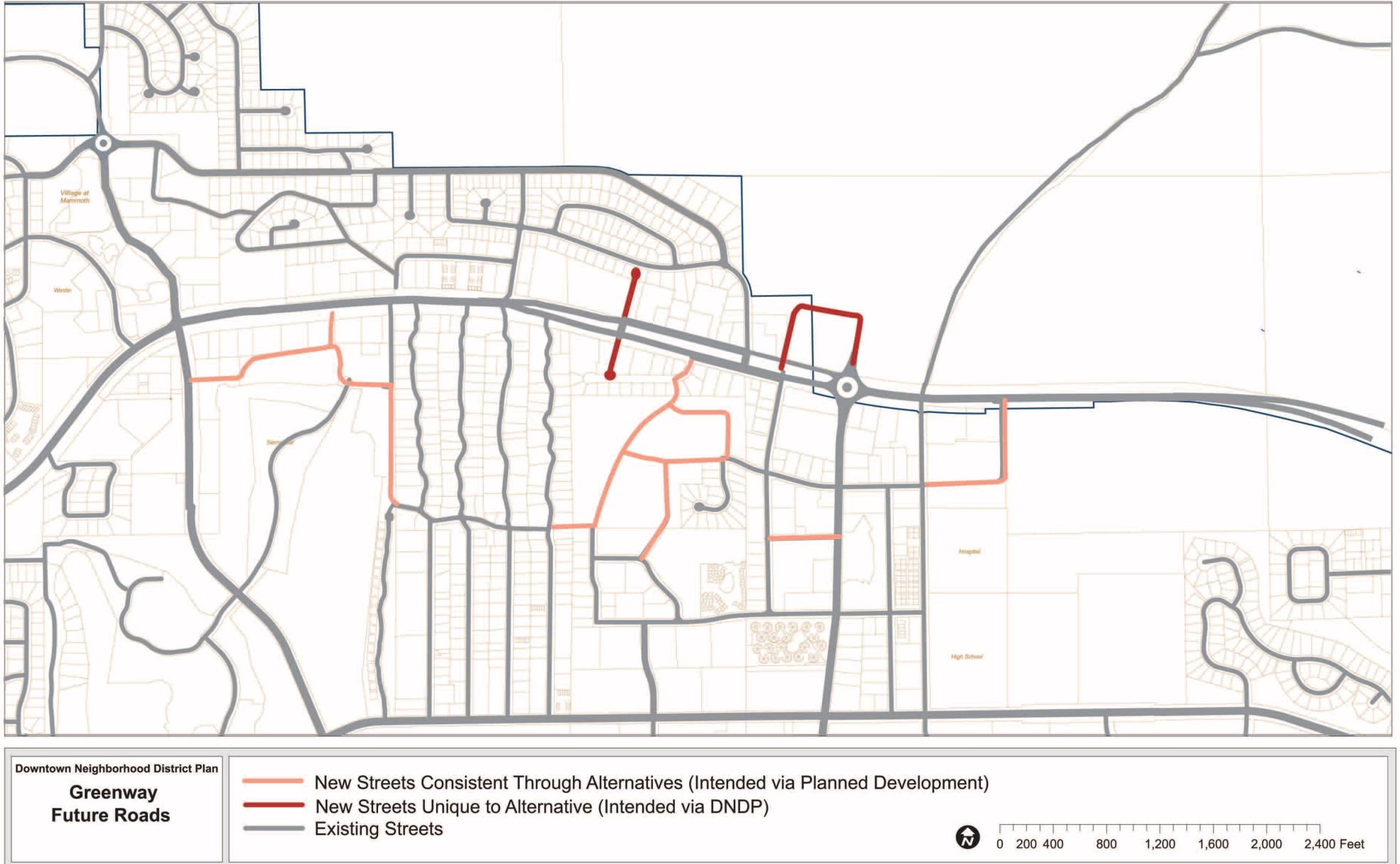


Figure 4-7: Greenway Future Street Network

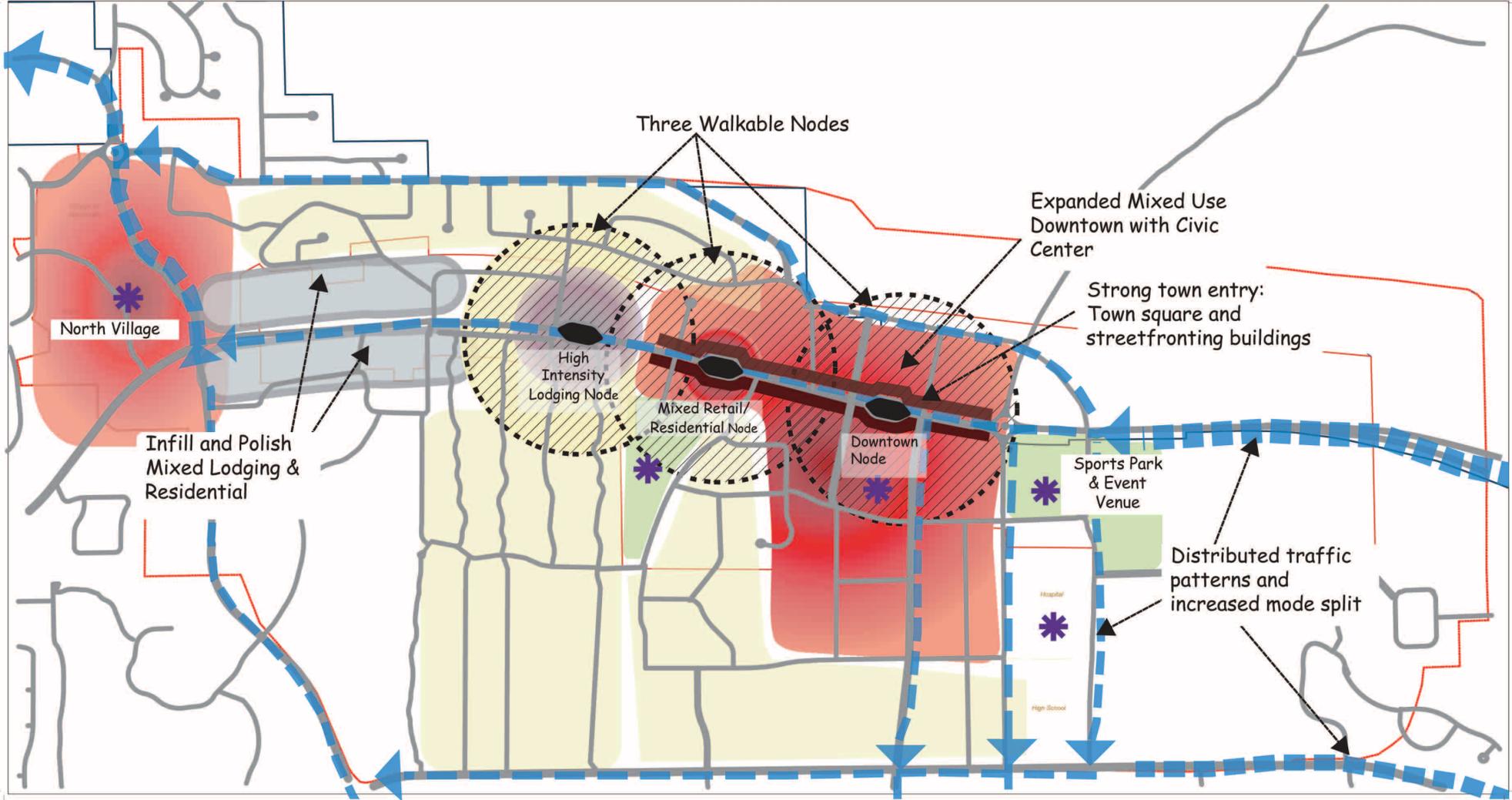
- Extension of a mixed use Town Center from Old Mammoth Road to the south side of Main Street to Manzanita Road.
- On-street parking and strategically located parking structures.
- Inclusion of mixed housing and park/open space areas on the Shady Rest Tract.
- Feet-first mobility provided via “complete streets” that include sidewalks, bike lanes, and parking, completing gaps in the existing pedestrian and bike system, provision of safer pedestrian crossings, expansion of the transit system with a gondola, tram, rapid bus line, or other mode of transit.
- Continuation of current mixed lodging/residential uses along Main Street west of Manzanita Road.

2. The Downtown Alternative

In the Downtown Alternative, Main Street is defined by a series of strong, well integrated and walkable nodes that unify and connect its north and south sides. This alternative provides a traditional “main street” character with street-fronting buildings, supported by a greater mode split and improved traffic management to a more connected street grid. Figure 4-8 through Figure 4-10 show the overall concept, and land use and mobility framework for the Downtown Alternative, which includes the following major ideas:

- Main Street is narrowed, squares added, and buildings moved to the street to achieve a traditional “main street” character.
- Three “nodes” or walkable centers are provided along Main Street: a Town Center with civic center node, Mixed Retail/Residential node, and High Intensity Lodging node.
- Event/sports park at town entry.
- Mixed-use Civic Center complex on USFS land.
- Multiple new roads serve the Civic Center complex, events/sports park, schools, and industrial park to increase route options and spread traffic over a broader network.
- Extension of mixed-use Downtown from Old Mammoth Road along north and south Main Street to Post Office area.
- On-street parking and strategically located parking structures at each node.
- Inclusion of housing and park/open space on the Shady Rest Site.
- Feet-first mobility provided via complete streets, completion of gaps in existing system, safer pedestrian crossings, and traffic calming via squares.

DOWNTOWN: CONCEPT DIAGRAM



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan
**Downtown
 Concept Diagram**

- * Activity Node
- ▬▬▬ Traffic Flow
- Anchor



Figure 4-8: Downtown Concept

DOWNTOWN: LAND USE



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan

Downtown Land Use

- Downtown NDP Study Area
- Downtown NDP SOI
- Urban Growth Boundary

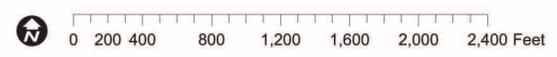
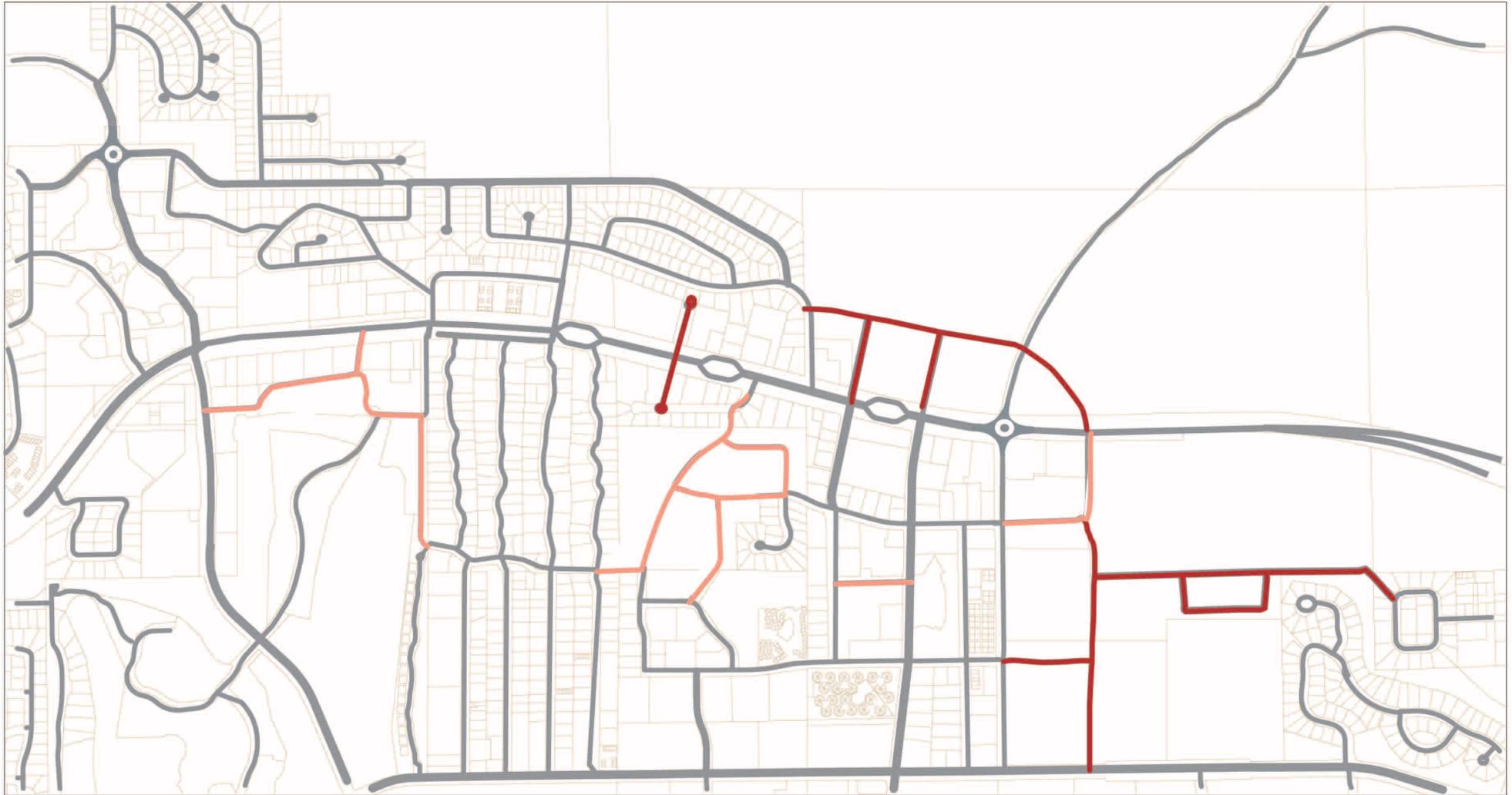


Figure 4-9: Downtown Land Use

DOWNTOWN: FUTURE ROADS



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan

Downtown Future Roads

-  New Streets Consistent Through Alternatives (Intended via Planned Development)
-  New Streets Unique to Alternative (Intended via DNDP)
-  Existing Streets



0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 2,000 2,400 Feet

Figure 4-10: Downtown Future Roads

- Expansion of the transit system with a gondola, tram, rapid bus line, or other mode of transit
- Continuation of current mixed lodging/residential uses along the west end of Main Street.

C. Alternatives Review

The Focus Group reviewed the Greenway and the Downtown alternatives during their third meeting on January 29, 2010, and the alternatives were then presented to the public at an Open House held on February 19th and 22nd, followed by a public workshop on February 23rd.

Both the public and the Focus Group agreed with the principles guiding the alternatives development, and provided input on which components of the alternatives they liked and disliked. Comments were wide ranging, and included the following:

1. Greenway Alternative Comments

Many liked the idea of a greenway median, in terms of improving aesthetic conditions. Although some felt that this alternative, which would require less change to the overall Main Street cross section was good, others expressed concern about the costs to maintain a large (100 foot median), and that if it were used for snow storage, similar visual impacts to those created by berming snow to the sides might result. The need for crossing points to allow for turn movements to and from side streets was also mentioned. Others noted that the greenway, by itself, may not create enough of a sense of change to allow for the Framework principles to be meaningfully achieved.

2. Downtown Alternative Comments

The much stronger sense of visual and functional change for Main Street was positively received in the Downtown alternative, including the reduction in total right-of-way width to allow buildings to be brought closer to the street. This was seen as a potential incentive to redevelopment. However, concern was expressed that a travel-way reduced to only three lanes would not be adequate. Some commented that it may be inadvisable to place too many retail uses on the north side of Main Street, because it would entice pedestrians to cross back and forth, and because the market may not be able to support that amount of retail.

3. Other Comments

In addition to the above, some comments were made that were common to both alternatives, including:

- Support for the idea of a strong town entry with civic center, town square and sports park/events venue was also well-received in this alternative.
- Support for the idea of an expanded mixed use downtown that extends along the eastern portion of Main Street, and includes north part of Laurel Mountain Road as a primary retail street along with Old Mammoth Road and Main Street.
- That the Shady Rest site should be a mixed income workforce housing neighborhood.
- An emphasis on the need for successful snow management.
- Analysis of the feasibility of any alternatives is still needed, including a determination on how improvements are funded and costs reasonably shared between the public and private sectors.
- Concept should emphasize upgrade and improvement of properties along the west end of Main Street, to reduce the “hodgepodge” of development types there and create better connectivity.
- The design and operation of all roadways (width, presence of sidewalks, etc.) needs to support the land uses along those streets.

D. Gondola Options

In addition to the concept alternatives described above, the alternatives review included consideration of options related to a potential future in-town gondola system.

One transit option, first expressed in the Hart Howerton Concept, was extension of a gondola line/system along Main Street. Both positive and negative comments were received in response to this idea. On the positive side, many felt that a new gondola line could be “signature” feature for Mammoth, a fun and exciting attraction for residents and visitors, and a new transit option that could ease pressure on the road system, especially at peak winter periods. Concerns about a gondola included its practicality, potential costs, and potential visual impacts.

To allow further discussion as part of the alternatives process, three concepts of extending one or more gondola lines/systems through town were developed with input from MMSA. The Linked Anchors/Greenway and Walkable Nodes concepts could both accommodate a gondola extension, or some other mode of rapid transit such as a tram or rapid bus line.

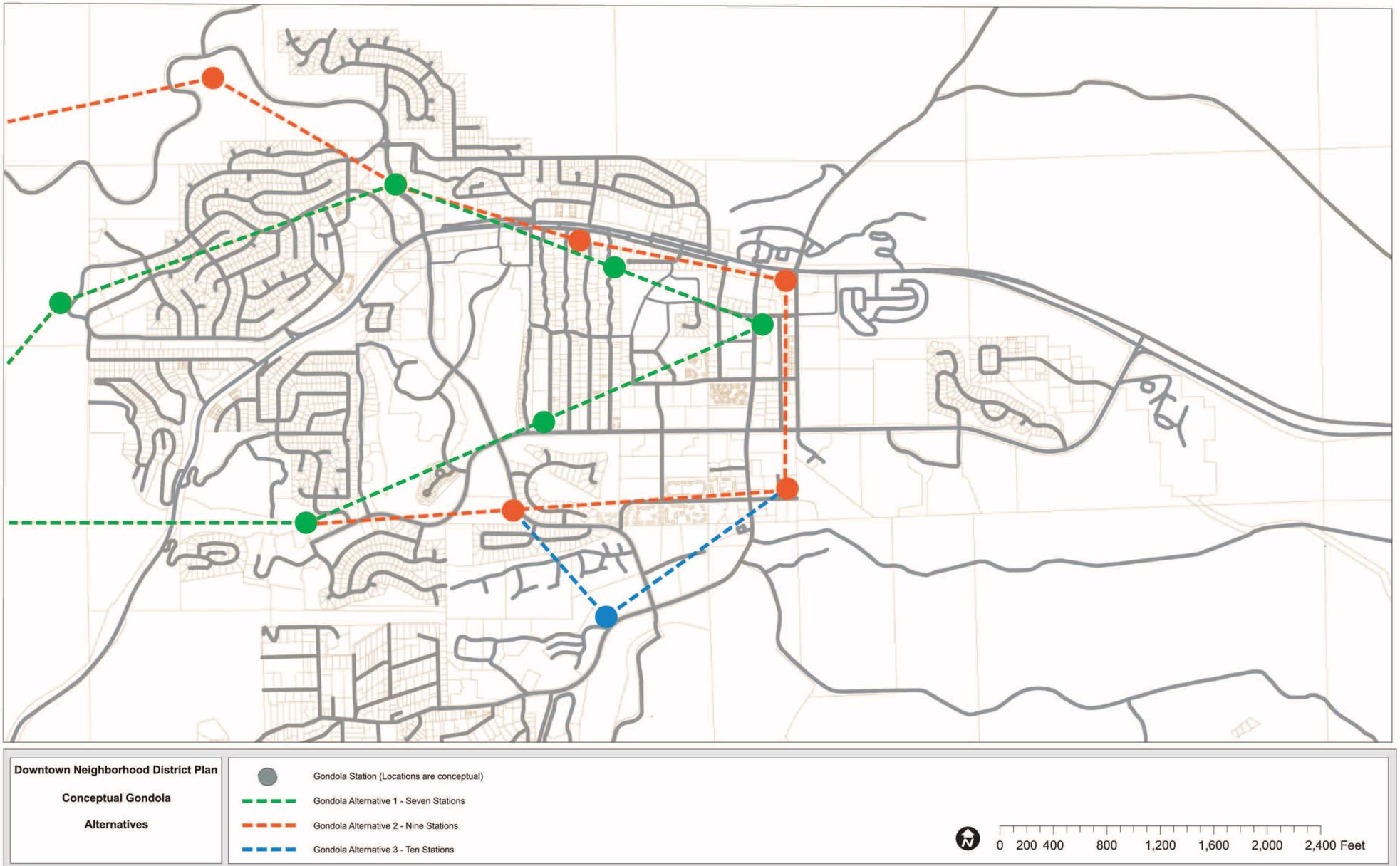


Figure 4-11: Conceptual Gondola Alternatives

E. Consensus Points: Synthesis Concept

The input from the public and the Focus Group formed a strong consensus around a number of key features that should be reflected in the preferred concept. This consensus informed the creation of the Preferred Concept described in Chapter 4, which is a synthesis or “hybrid” concept that includes the best features from both the Greenway and Downtown alternatives. Major points of consensus included the following:

- Four travel lanes on Main Street, with a moderately sized median along the eastern portion of the street, and improved streetscape.
- Street fronting buildings on primary retail streets.
- Year-round pedestrian facilities and connectivity along the length of Main Street.
- On street public parking.
- Emphasis on increasing alternate transportation modes, such as walking, transit and biking.
- Multi-use animated public and event spaces.
- Strong sense of arrival/welcome statement at the Town entry.
- Calm traffic, but don’t push traffic to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Implement an aggressive snow management program.

