



# Town of Castle Rock

## Agenda Memorandum

**Agenda Date:** 4/6/2021

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**Item #:** 22. **File #:** DIR 2021-008

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council

**Through:** David L. Corliss, Town Manager

**From:** Tara Vargish, PE, Director Development Services  
Tony Felts, AICP, Assistant Director Development Services

**Discussion/Direction:** Downtown Development Guiding Documents and Codes

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### Executive Summary

Downtown Castle Rock is a special and unique part of the Town, and as such, the identity of Downtown is an important part of the identity of the Town as a whole. Owing to this unique identity, and recent discussions and questions on the guiding documents that govern downtown development, staff has prepared this summary of the various documents for discussion with Council. There are several documents in place which guide the development of Downtown and several that regulate the development. This report details each of those documents and Castle Rock Municipal Code (CRMC) sections, including their history and purpose. These guiding documents and codes, and the years they were adopted, or most recently updated are listed below, from oldest to most recent:

- Castle Rock Style, 1996
- Castle Rock Design, 2003
- Town of Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan, 2007
- Downtown Castle Rock Master Plan, 2008
- Downtown Castle Rock Plan of Development, 2017
- Historic Preservation regulations, CRMC Chapter 15.64 , 2010
- Downtown Overlay District (DOD) regulations, CRMC Chapter 17.42, 2010
- Castle Rock 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan, 2017
- Castle Rock Downtown Parking Study, 2017
- Castle Rock Downtown Mobility Master Plan, 2019

This report summarizes these documents and demonstrates that a variety of plans, studies, guides, municipal code and documents go into the review and development proposals in Downtown Castle Rock. The Town Code (CRMC) specifically requires the consultation of some documents for certain development projects (depending on the area where the project is located); while specifically not requiring consultation of other documents. While the documents are generally complimentary to

each other, there can be varying language in the different documents which may lead to confusion and questions in application.

Staff is recommending that a comprehensive review and update of the Downtown Master Plan be conducted with the assistance of a consultant who specializes in downtown planning and community engagement. As a part of that review, staff believes it may be best to include updated style and design guidelines for downtown in the Downtown Master Plan update, and this would supersede and replace all other style and design guidelines for this area of town. Staff would look to the guidance of the Downtown Master Plan consultant on how best to achieve this, however the ultimate goal would be to update or reaffirm the vision for downtown, then formalize the plan by housing all Downtown vision and guidelines in a single, cohesive, and consolidated document. This would likely also result in updates to the sections of the CRMC Downtown Overlay Zone if changes were determined necessary.

## **Background**

Several plans, documents, studies and regulations are in place that guide the development of Downtown Castle Rock. Each of these documents and the applicable Castle Rock Municipal Code (CRMC) sections are summarized in the following sections to aid in this discussion. Also included is information on when they were adopted or approved, and if any updates have occurred over the years.

### **Castle Rock Style - 1996**

Castle Rock Style is a document which is intended to record the architectural style and methods of building construction in the historically significant areas of Castle Rock. These areas are generally defined as the area bounded by the Rock Park to the north, Plum Creek Parkway to the south, Gilbert Street to the east, and Interstate 25 to the west. The document is intended to help people understand the Town's early development and architecture in order to appreciate it and understand it. The guide includes suggestions and guidelines that were intended for use by the Historic Preservation Board.

This document was developed in 1996 and has not been updated, however this document was largely superseded by the 2007 Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan. The 2007 Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan notwithstanding, Castle Rock Style is specifically referenced by current Town Code in Section 15.64.200.C.1. with respect to new construction in the Craig and Gould neighborhood.

#### ***15.64.200 Approval for new construction and alterations to non-Landmarked properties; Craig and Gould neighborhood***

*C. Criteria to review new construction and Alterations to non-Landmarked properties. Applications for new construction and alterations to non-Landmarked properties within the Craig and Gould Neighborhood shall be reviewed for conformance with the applicable standards outlined in the:*

- 1. Castle Rock Style standards;*
- 2. Castle Rock Design standards;*

3. *F.R.E.S.H. standards in the Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan; and*
4. *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.*

Castle Rock Style includes standards for scale, setback, landscaping, and architectural details including roof forms, eaves and brackets, walls, doors and doorways, and windows. For Downtown it describes common building elements and looks to ensure that: façades have ornamentation and details interesting to pedestrians; that first floor levels have large areas of display windows; front of the stores are aligned at the sidewalk edge; signs are sized and positioned to be read at eye level; second stories (if they exist) are more solid than the first with smaller windows; brick is the dominant building material; main store entrances are recessed; top of buildings are capped with a cornice or parapet; and first floor display windows are capped with a belt cornice or molding.

Castle Rock Style is a snapshot of the community's historical architectural style and methods of building construction in the historically significant areas of Castle Rock, and as such staff finds that this document is appropriate to remain as is. The full document can be viewed at this link:

[Castle-Rock-Style <http://co-castlerock2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1105/Castle-Rock-Style?bidId=>](http://co-castlerock2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1105/Castle-Rock-Style?bidId=>)

### Castle Rock Design - 2003

Castle Rock Design is a document intended to guide developers, design professionals, and the community as projects are conceived and developed in Castle Rock. Further, the document is intended as an evaluation tool and reference for Town Staff, Town Council, the Planning Commission, and the Design Review Board. The document also states, however, the design guidelines are not intended to dictate a particular architectural style nor are they presumed to assure good design. The document is not solely focused on Downtown, but rather it is intended to help guide design professionals as development proposals are made throughout Castle Rock.

Although the document states that it is required to be updated "approximately every three years" this document has not been updated since its adoption in 2003. Staff generally reviews the document when they are applying the standards to a project, although other code sections in the CRMC address specific elements and have superseded some sections of this document. Over the years, there have been informal discussions, however no formal direction to update these design guidelines. Castle Rock Design is specifically referenced by Town Code in Section 15.64.200.C.2. with respect to new construction in the Craig and Gould neighborhood and in Section 17.42.080.B. with respect to Design Standards for the Downtown Overlay District.

#### **15.64.200 Approval for new construction and alterations to non-Landmarked properties; Craig and Gould neighborhood**

*C. Criteria to review new construction and Alterations to non-Landmarked properties. Applications for new construction and alterations to non-Landmarked properties within the Craig and Gould Neighborhood shall be reviewed for conformance with the applicable standards outlined in the:*

1. *Castle Rock Style standards;*
2. *Castle Rock Design standards;*
3. *F.R.E.S.H. standards in the Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan; and*
4. *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.*

**17.42.080 Design Standards (Downtown Overlay District)**

B. All project design should be based on the Castle Rock Design (see Resolution No. 2003-64) and the Downtown Master Plan (see Resolution No. 2008-38).

Castle Rock Design includes standards for site design and layout, building setbacks and edge, mass and scale of buildings, architectural details, building materials and color, roofs and parapets, signage, awnings and canopies, lighting, and landscaping. For Downtown, the document lists several goals for buildings: develop an attractive street façade, place buildings at an appropriate setback, promote mixed use buildings, encourage a variety of architectural styles which are complementary to historic precedents, encourage continuous building street frontage, locate parking in the rear of buildings or in parking structures, encourage dual entryways, locate signs on traditional signage locations. The full Castle Rock Design document can be viewed at this link: [Castle Rock Design <http://co-castlerock2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/240/Design-Guidelines---Full-Version?bidId=>](http://co-castlerock2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/240/Design-Guidelines---Full-Version?bidId=>)

*Town of Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan - 2007*

The Historic Preservation Plan is a document that is intended to provide clarity in the development process as it relates to historic preservation through policies on demolition, historic designation, documentation of historic resources, and infill design. Additionally, the document also seeks to ensure compatibility of new structures within the historically significant areas of downtown which are identified in the plan, including Courthouse Square, Wilcox School area, and the South Perry area. Additionally, the plan identified four subareas of Downtown - North Wilcox, Central Downtown, South Wilcox, and Craig & Gould - and made suggestions as to which character elements to preserve. The document also introduced the F.R.E.S.H. development philosophy to Castle Rock.

The Historic Preservation Plan was adopted in 2007. The F.R.E.S.H. standards are specifically referenced by Town Code in Section 15.64.200.C.3. with respect to new construction in the Craig and Gould neighborhood. F.R.E.S.H. is an acronym standing for Footprint, Roof, Envelope, Skin, and Holes. These standards are intended to encourage new and innovative design while safeguarding the context and integrity of historic neighborhoods. The Town of Castle Rock Historic Preservation Plan can be viewed at this link: [Historic Preservation Plan <http://co-castlerock2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/365/Historic-Preservation-Plan?bidId=>](http://co-castlerock2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/365/Historic-Preservation-Plan?bidId=>)

*Downtown Castle Rock Master Plan - 2008*

The Downtown Master Plan was adopted in 2008 and was intended to develop a comprehensive vision and strategy for development of the Downtown area which built upon the previous work that had been done to guide development in the area. The document presented a vision statement for downtown which read: "Downtown Castle Rock should be the Main Street of Douglas County, providing the region with an authentic Western Downtown experience and a central gathering place, which unites neighborhoods, families and individuals. Castle Rock can achieve this vision for Downtown thorough a welcoming environment that combines a sampling of urban elements with distinct local flavor and provides a variety of amenities."

The document's framework includes maintaining Castle Rock's character, maintaining a pedestrian-oriented downtown, and creating a "place" downtown. The document outlines design features, infrastructure improvements, locations for parking, suggested uses, as well as development challenges for the areas of downtown. The document also presents several suggested regulatory changes for making the vision of downtown a reality, such as zoning changes that include higher densities and increased residential allowances and encouraging buildings set to the street and architecturally detailed facades, design guidelines changes, historic preservation, and the train quiet zone. The Downtown Master Plan is specifically referenced by Town Code in Section 17.42.080.B. with respect to Design Standards for the Downtown Overlay District. The plan has not been updated since its adoption in 2008.

The document specifically states that the highest level of design scrutiny, with full compliance with the Design Guidelines, should be placed on buildings which are designated as contributing to the Downtown historic district and any new development within the historic district. Conversely, the document states that a lower level of scrutiny, focusing on aesthetic quality and compatibility of paint, awnings, and signage is appropriate for non-contributing buildings and locations outside of the historic district. The document also lists desirable attributes of revised zoning in Downtown Castle Rock including: increase capacity of the area for new jobs by allowing higher densities, clarify desired land uses, allow residential uses throughout the central business district and encourage mixed use development, encourage buildings to be set on the street with parking in the interior and rear, encourage architecturally detailed façades on infill buildings, place a premium on the pedestrian experience, consistent setbacks that respect historic building contexts, and overall respect for existing conditions with respect to height limits, bulk planes, and similar items. The Downtown Master Plan can be viewed at this link: [Downtown-Master-Plan-PDF](http://www.crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/22546/Downtown-Master-Plan-PDF?bidId&fbclid=IwAR3zdQLf9srNLQNT3KGquYo5Kbw38bqv870srtZn5AdJpWJbtH0IsyBHFmw>)  
<<http://www.crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/22546/Downtown-Master-Plan-PDF?bidId&fbclid=IwAR3zdQLf9srNLQNT3KGquYo5Kbw38bqv870srtZn5AdJpWJbtH0IsyBHFmw>>

### *Downtown Castle Rock Plan of Development -2017*

The Downtown Castle Rock Plan of Development is a document utilized by the Downtown Development Authority to guide the activities of that agency especially preventing the deterioration of Downtown and the continued development of downtown consistent with the needs and plans of the Town. This language in this document largely mirrors the language in the Downtown Castle Rock Master Plan. This document was adopted by the DDA, and accepted by Town Council in 2008 and amended in 2015 and 2017. This document has no regulatory authority for development, and is not considered by staff when reviewing Downtown development.

The Downtown Plan of Development can be viewed at this link: [Downtown Plan of Development](https://da8a34ec-fe7e-4ae0-93ef-8337533e8161.filesusr.com/ugd/ebea16_186a98fba4d64b1db81d6564bf8cafc4.pdf)  
<[https://da8a34ec-fe7e-4ae0-93ef-8337533e8161.filesusr.com/ugd/ebea16\\_186a98fba4d64b1db81d6564bf8cafc4.pdf](https://da8a34ec-fe7e-4ae0-93ef-8337533e8161.filesusr.com/ugd/ebea16_186a98fba4d64b1db81d6564bf8cafc4.pdf)>

### *Castle Rock 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan - 2017*

The Castle Rock 2030 Comprehensive Plan is a document that outlines the vision and strategy which guides the development and operation of the Town through 2030. The plan outlines four

cornerstones of the vision of the Town. Three of the four cornerstones, Distinct Town Identity, Responsible Growth, and Thriving Economy, each specifically reference downtown in their principles and implementation. Principle ID-1.2 of the plan states that the Town should “foster ongoing historic preservation and revitalization efforts in Downtown Castle Rock, reinforcing its role as a central gathering place for the community and a major character-defining feature of the Town.” Implementation for this principle includes continuing “to support public and private investment/reinvestment in Downtown Castle Rock through implementation of the Downtown Plan of Development.” Principle RG-6.1 specifically mentions Downtown stating “honor Castle Rock’s multitude of existing historic structures and historic street grid pattern while introducing new infill projects that offer retail, office, residential, and civic uses the promote current design elements.” Principle RG-5.1, while not specifically mentioning Downtown, states that “infill development...shall ensure compatibility” with surrounding development including “building materials, colors, and forms while allowing flexibility for innovative design solutions.” Implementation for these principle includes incorporating architecture that is current to the era that also blends with the existing structures.” Finally, Principle EC-3 describes Downtown Vitality, Downtown Housing, and Public/Private Partnerships. These principles focus supporting the vitality of Downtown, strongly supporting downtown housing options to ensure a mixed-use environment and 365-day, around-the-clock activity, and seeking opportunities for public and private partnerships.

While the 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan is not a regulatory document, it does outline the vision, and is consulted by Town Staff in identifying development opportunities in Downtown Castle Rock. The 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan can be viewed at this link: [2030 Comprehensive Master Plan <http://www.crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/17658/Comprehensive-Master-Plan?bidId=>](http://www.crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/17658/Comprehensive-Master-Plan?bidId=)

#### *Castle Rock Downtown Parking Study - 2017*

The Castle Rock Downtown Parking Study is a document that was designed to serve as a guide for Town decision makers for parking management in Downtown. The document includes an inventory of available parking and existing management, current parking demand, future projected parking demand, infrastructure improvements, and funding strategies. This document was produced in 2017 and can be viewed at this link: [Castle-Rock-Downtown-Parking-Study-for-Web <http://crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/17409/Castle-Rock-Downtown-Parking-Study-for-Web?bidId=>](http://crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/17409/Castle-Rock-Downtown-Parking-Study-for-Web?bidId=)

#### *Castle Rock Downtown Mobility Master Plan - 2019*

The Downtown Mobility Master Plan is a document which seeks to create solutions to enhance mobility while preserving the uniqueness of Downtown. The document includes strategies for updating infrastructure standards like sidewalks and lighting, distribution of parking and public transit, curbside management, and improving mobility with roundabouts and other intersection improvements. This document was produced in 2019 and can be viewed at this link: [Downtown-Mobility-Master-Plan-PDF <http://crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/23686/Downtown-Mobility-Master-Plan-PDF?bidId=>](http://crgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/23686/Downtown-Mobility-Master-Plan-PDF?bidId=)

#### *Castle Rock Municipal Code*

The Castle Rock Municipal Code (CRMC) regulates development throughout the Town. Within Downtown, the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) regulations (Chapter 17.42 of the CRMC) generally control the development of Downtown. This overlay district begins generally at the intersection of Wilcox Street and I-25, and follows the Union Pacific Railroad south to the Brookside Business Center Development and then west to I-25. The purpose of the DOD is to establish architectural, landscaping, design, building, and use and site development regulations that encourage compatible land uses, ensure higher quality development and function in order to protect property values and provide safe and efficient pedestrian and automobile access. These architectural, landscaping, design, building, use and site development criteria can encourage quality development through the use of a variety of design and site techniques while continuing to provide for a wide range of economic development opportunities.

The DOD allows certain uses in addition to those allowed by the underlying zoning such as multi-family housing and places of worship, while also prohibiting certain uses, such as self-storage, towing services and auto body shops, and outdoor storage. The DOD also contains provisions regarding height limits and allowances specific to certain areas of Downtown, setbacks of buildings, size of dwelling units, and special parking standards. The DOD regulations create the Design Review Board and detail the powers and duties of that board, as well as outline the design standards for the Board to review for Downtown development.

While the DOD regulations comprise the majority of Downtown-specific regulations, the Historic Preservation regulations (Chapter 15.64 of the CRMC) also regulate some development in Downtown, particularly regarding modifications to landmarked properties as well as demolition of buildings constructed prior to 1945.

### **Discussion**

Downtown development applications are largely site development plans for either new projects, or amendments to existing buildings such as additions, facades change and awnings. Staff review for site development plans include detailed analysis of the project and its conformance with the Municipal code requirements for Chapter 17.38 Site Development Plans, and Chapter 17.42 Downtown Overlay District. Both of these code sections contain review and approval criteria that every project must meet in order to be recommended for approval.

Building height is one example where the DOD code section is explicitly clear on what height is legally allowed in the three sub-districts of downtown, and the process to request a variance for an increase in building height. Alternatively, some of guiding documents contain statements about lower heights being more consistent in some areas, which conflict with the adopted code language in the DOD. Although the DOD code states “project design should be based on the Castle Rock Design and the Downtown Master Plan”, neither of these documents is prescriptive in building height, whereas the DOD code section 17.42.070 Crown design and Building Height is very clear on what the maximum allowed building height. This code language was adopted into the CRMC in 2010, and has been reaffirmed with code updates in 2012 and 2015.

#### ***17.42.070. Crown Design and Building Height (Downtown Overlay District)***

*B. 1.a. Building height in the Downtown Core District is limited to four stories, with a maximum height of 60-feet. A building's crown cannot exceed the sixty-foot building height limitation.*

*B. 2.a. Building height in the North or South Districts is limited to six (6) stories, with no maximum height limitation.*

*C. A landowner may request one (1) additional floor (with the corresponding increase in building height) in the Downtown Core District, or two (2) additional floors in the North and South Districts through the Board.*

However the Castle Rock Design document from 2003, which is a document that the DOD regulations state

“should be” considered, reference downtown building heights in several places, using different statements, and conflicts the more recently adopted DOD code language above:

**Castle Rock Design, Chapter 2.I.B (Mass and Scale for New Buildings in Downtown)**

Intent. New development must be compatible in scale with the surrounding buildings and respect the pedestrian-oriented nature and village character of the Downtown. The mass, form and scale should relate to the pedestrian scale of the street. Historically, buildings were one and sometimes two stories in height, and the goal is to balance this traditional lower scale with consideration to establish a pattern for more efficient land use. New buildings should be predominantly two and three stories in height.

B.1.1 A new development’s height and form should be consistent with that of its neighboring buildings. Building heights should range from one story to a 50-foot height maximum in the Downtown.

B.1.5 The third story of a building should be set back from the façade of the first two stories in order to reduce the apparent scale of the building.

It should be noted that the building height language in the DOD has been approved by Town Council more recently than the Castle Rock Design document, and in the most recent amendment to this section in 2015, the ordinance language stated “the Town’s Downtown Overlay Ordinance provides for additional building height to further development of the downtown.” (Ordinance No. 2015-60). This example on building height in the downtown area was used to illustrate that the documents and the codes do not always align.

**Summary**

This memo demonstrates that a variety of plans, studies, guides, and documents go into the review and development proposals in Downtown Castle Rock. Town Code specifically requires the consultation of some documents for certain development projects (depending on the area where the project is located); while specifically not requiring consultation of other documents. Even though Town Code may not specifically require consultation of a specific plan, at times Town Staff will consult these documents for greater clarity of intent when reviewing development proposals.

While the documents are, on the whole, complimentary to each other, there can be varying language in the different documents which may lead to confusion and questions in application. This typically dictates that staff reviews projects to determine if they “generally” conform to the prescribed guiding documents when required. Additionally, many of the guiding documents have not been updated in quite some time. Staff reviews land use applications to the Castle Rock Municipal Code first, and then if there is an area that is not addressed or is unclear, they use the guiding documents to further address those areas of the project. If there is a conflict between the two, the Town code provisions are followed.

**Recommendation**

The Downtown Master Plan was established in 2008, 5 years after the adoption of the Castle Rock Design document. Then 2 years later, the Town adopted the Downtown Overlay District requirements into the CRMC in 2010. The DOD was amended in 2012 and 2015. Because of the variations in the guiding documents and the age of many of them, staff is recommending that a comprehensive review

and update of the Downtown Master Plan be conducted with the assistance of a consultant who specializes in downtown planning and community engagement. It is also recommended that this revised Downtown Master Plan incorporate new style and design guidelines that would supersede all other style and design guidelines for downtown. Staff would seek the guidance of the Downtown Master Plan consultant on how best to achieve this, however the ultimate goal would be to update or reaffirm the vision for downtown, then formalize the plan by housing all Downtown vision and guidelines in a single, cohesive, and consolidated document.

Our community has evolved in the past thirteen years, achieving some of, but not all of the goals for downtown that were laid out in the 2008 Downtown Master Plan. Staff recommends engaging the community and various downtown stakeholders, to review, reaffirm, and/or update the community's vision for Downtown Castle Rock. Following a Downtown Master Plan update, there will likely be updates to the CRMC Downtown Overlay Zone if changes were determined necessary.

- Staff is seeking Council direction on starting the process of updating the 2008 Downtown Castle Rock Master Plan and incorporating or updated related design documents as necessary, to provide consistency and clarity to the community.