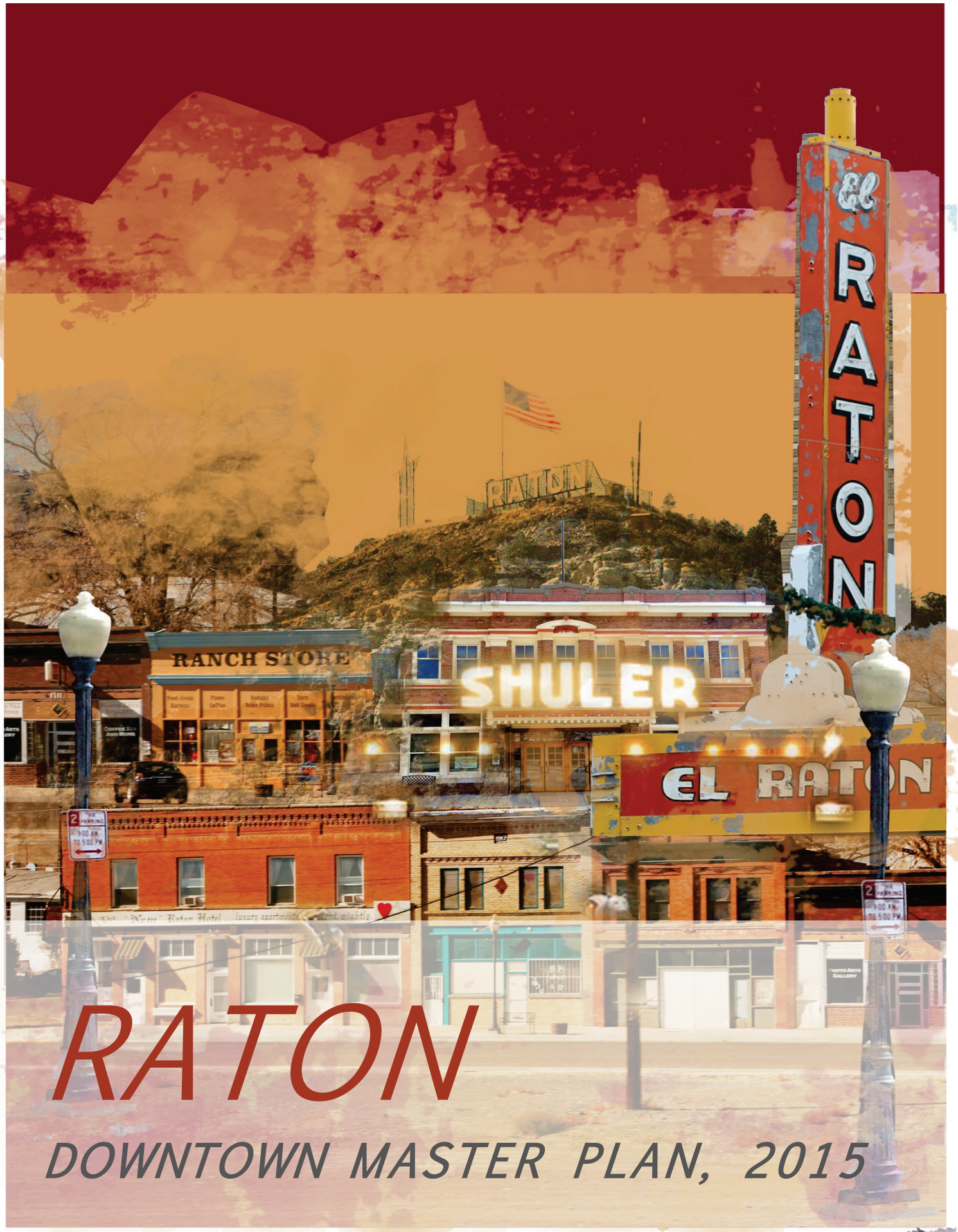

RATON

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN, 2015

RATON DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN, 2015 AND MRA DESIGNATION REPORT

NOVEMBER 18TH, 2015

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

"... Raton must re-conceive its economic future in new paradigms, train a new generation of 'knowledge workers,' enhance its quality of life, ambience and appeal to visitors and residents alike, and enthusiastically seek new partnerships and cooperation in the region."

- Raton Arts and Cultural District Resource Team Assessment, May 2010

The City of Raton's downtown has historically been the center of commerce for the City and the surrounding region. It is the City's civic center and its center of arts and culture. It also is home to some of the City's most significant historic buildings, with two registered historic districts encompassing the commercial core of downtown and surrounding historic residential areas.

According to existing City policies, including the City's Comprehensive Plan, the 2009 Downtown Master Plan, and the Arts & Cultural District Cultural Plan, the downtown area should be a walkable, mixed use district with an attractive mix of commercial, civic, residential, and arts and cultural activity. Downtown has a particularly significant role to play as an arts and cultural district that provides entertainment for locals, regional residents, and visitors.

Unfortunately, physical conditions of many downtown properties have impaired and arrested the sound growth of downtown and the economic health of the City as a whole. The presence of many vacant buildings and lots in the heart of Raton is a detriment to the City's fiscal well-being and to the ability of the City to meet the needs of its residents.

The good news is that downtown Raton is well-positioned to begin addressing the ongoing problems that have challenged downtown as the entire region's economy has transitioned from resource extractive industries to the service and hospitality sector over the last 30 years. As discussed in previous plans, Raton could benefit from pursuing a "creative economy" approach that focuses on local residents' talents and attracting new arts and cultural industries. Such an approach has the ability to attract additional visitors, create additional market opportunities, and improve livability for Raton residents. With the powers granted by the New Mexico Redevelopment Act, and the actions of local residents, downtown Raton can begin to fulfill Raton MainStreet's vision of the city as "small town America at its finest."

1. PLAN PURPOSE & GOALS

The Raton Downtown Master Plan seeks to address ongoing challenges facing downtown by defining a community vision for the district and identifying priority strategies and catalyst projects that can spearhead a downtown revitalization effort. Following Raton MainStreet's existing goals, as well as those outlined in previous plans and at community meetings, this plan has five primary goals:

1. Promote economic sustainability for new and existing businesses through development of catalyst projects that support Raton's growth and downtown revitalization.
2. Enhance Raton's natural, cultural and historic riches by developing a vibrant downtown community that engages multi-generational citizens by creating a unique sense of place.
3. Proactively stabilize historic and culturally significant buildings before they fall into costly disrepair or are lost forever.
4. Continue to support existing downtown business and actively recruit new businesses that will lead to a broader mixture of businesses and add to the vibrancy of downtown.
5. Provide a mixture of diverse housing types in downtown for future residents of all ages, including single family housing, live/work units, downtown lofts, and affordable housing.

2. METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

2.1 NEW MEXICO METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT CODE

The State of New Mexico has several statutes intended to help municipalities promote economic development, redevelopment, and stability where these are hindered by a variety of factors. The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48

NMSA 1978) is one such statute.

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code provides New Mexico cities with the powers to correct conditions in areas or neighborhoods within municipalities that "substantially impair or arrest the sound and orderly development" within the city. These powers allow the municipality to help reverse an area's decline and stagnation through activities that are designed to eliminate these conditions. A municipality may only exercise these powers in areas designated as metropolitan redevelopment areas and activities must conform to an approved metropolitan redevelopment plan for the designated area.

Designation of an MRA is based on findings of "slum or blight" conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-4). The criteria in the Code for a "blighted" area include both physical and economic conditions. As defined in the Code,

> "Blighted area" means an area within the area of operation other than a slum area that, because of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, improper subdivision or lack of adequate housing facilities in the area or obsolete or impractical planning and platting or an area where a significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed or significantly reduced their operations due to the economic losses or loss of profit due to operating in the area, low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth and economic health and well-being of a municipality or locale within a municipality or an area that retards the provisions of housing accommodations or constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare in its present condition and use;

In 2015, the City and Raton MainStreet evaluated conditions in downtown and reported these conditions to the City Commission. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the Commission found the area to meet conditions of slum and blight as defined in the MRA Code and designated the Downtown Raton MRA on November 10th, 2015.

2.2 LOCATION OF THE MRA

The general boundaries of the MRA correspond to Phase 1 of the Arts and Cultural District, as shown in MAP 1. The northern boundary is Parsons Avenue and North 2nd Street; the east boundary is North 1st Street and the railroad tracks; the south boundary is Galisteo Avenue, and the west boundary is mid-block west of Third Street. This area includes most of the historic commercial buildings in the Arts and Cultural District and is the focus of the highest priority projects for the Arts and Cultural District.

2.3 SUMMARY OF NEED

Downtown Raton exhibits a combination of factors that contribute to blight, including de-

teriorated or deteriorating structures, vacant buildings, deterioration of site or other improvements and low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment. There are 29 vacant and eight partially vacant buildings (i.e. one or more vacant storefronts in a multi-storefront building) in the area, some of which have been vacant for a number of years. There are 23 occupied buildings in need of repair, and there are vacant lots where historic structures have collapsed or burned. Building exteriors are generally maintained, but tenants report serious structural problems, including roofs in poor condition. Of 90 buildings in the MRA, one-third are occupied and in good condition.

Because of the large number of owners in the MRA – 125 separate owners of 166 parcels, coordinated redevelopment is difficult. The MRA allows the City to establish a program of incentives that can encourage multiple owners to coordinate their individual efforts.

An economic analysis conducted as part of the assessment of downtown shows low levels of economic activity in downtown relative to the City and region. The analysis also indicates low levels of redevelopment.

These factors combine to substantially impair and arrest the sound growth and economic health and well-being of the Downtown Raton MRA. The proposal is to focus public redevelopment activities in the core of downtown, defined for this purpose as Phase 1 of the Arts and Cultural District.

3. PLAN TIMEFRAME

The Downtown Master Plan sets out a list of projects and implementation strategies to guide downtown investments for the next five to ten years. Recognizing that conditions in Downtown will change over time, the plan should be reviewed at a minimum every five years to adjust priorities, account for completed projects and add new projects in response to new opportunities.

SECTION II

BACKGROUND

1. LOCATION & STUDY AREA

The City of Raton is located in Colfax County in northeastern New Mexico on the border between New Mexico and Colorado. The city rests at an elevation of 6,680 feet at the base of the fabled Raton Pass. This pass has marked the northern point of entry for those crossing between New Mexico and Colorado since before American settlers began arriving in the late 1800's, and was an important part of the Santa Fe Trail. The City was home to 6,607 residents in 2012; about 10 percent of whom lived downtown.

1.1 PLAN BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of this plan encompass approximately 150 acres in the core of the original Raton town site, which includes the Historic Downtown District as well as parts of the Historic Original Townsite District. The boundaries of the study area are the same as the boundaries of the full Arts & Cultural District, as shown in MAP 1. The northern boundary is Parsons Avenue; the east boundary is the railroad tracks; the south boundary is Legion Park; and the west boundary is mid-block west of Fourth Street.

For the purposes of the Metropolitan Redevelopment District (MRA), the boundaries follow the smaller Arts and Cultural District Phase 1 boundaries: the northern boundary is Parsons Avenue and North 2nd Street; the east boundary is North 1st Street and the railroad tracks; the south boundary is Galisteo Avenue, and the west boundary is mid-block west of Third Street. This smaller boundary is approximately 35 acres, excluding public rights-of-way and overlaps much of the Downtown Historic District.

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RATON

Raton was founded in 1880 on the site of an earlier village and trading post named Willow Springs (now the Original Townsite Historic District). The City probably took its name from the features of the surrounding region, including the Raton Pass, which was well known by settlers traveling along the Santa Fe Trail. The original naming of the area is uncertain, although there are several stories related to early explorers who named the area "mouse" (literally "small rat") – possibly because of the many field mice they encountered in the area. Efforts by a local resident to change the name of the town back to "Willow Springs" in 1986 were overwhelmingly opposed by residents, and the petition was dropped.

Although the area had been a stop along the Santa Fe Trail between 1821 and 1890, few wagons passed along this route, and the early townsite only became a strategic point of entry with the coming of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1880. The rapid expansion of the railroad into Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado fueled regional growth in agriculture (cattle and sheep) and coal mining. Raton developed alongside nearby Trinidad, Colorado as almost twin cities, both competing in the coal mining trade. This industry flourished throughout the region until the decline of mining beginning in the 1960's.

The railroad period ushered in a period of building construction, during which time most of Downtown Raton's historic structures were built. These included the elegant Shuler Theater, built in 1913 as a combination city hall and municipal auditorium. Rapp and Rapp, the architectural firm that designed the Shuler Theater, went on to design many of Raton's historic or cultural significant buildings. As with Las Vegas, NM to the south, the construction of many well-designed, modern buildings and residences contributed to a sense of refinement for the community (NM MainStreet, 2010).

2.1 EARLY TOURISM

Early on, Raton was a destination for tourists, given its scenic location and regionally attractive retail offerings. Tourism flourished after World War II, when La Mesa Racetrack was established as New Mexico's first racetrack. The site operated between 1946 and 1992 and attracted regional visitors who were interested in gambling at the races and the recreation opportunities provided by nearby attractions. The racetrack fed the development of motels and restaurants in both downtown and along Clayton Road.

After the closing of La Mesa Racetrack in 1992, the city entered into a period of relative decline that saw the loss of retail and hospitality jobs downtown. Further regional developments such as the decline in the mining industry, contributed to a gradual loss in population, as residents aged or moved away (see Market Study below). Additional developments, including the construction of a Walmart in Trinidad, also exacerbated the loss of retail businesses within Raton.

FIGURE 1: THE EL RATON THEATER, 1976

More recently, the City of Raton sought to bring the La Mesa Racetrack back to life as a "racino", but a development permit was retracted by the State's Racing Commission in 2011. This was a blow to the community that had hoped the revival of the racetrack would once again attract visitors and create more local jobs.

2.2 MAINSTREET DISTRICT

Raton became one of the first MainStreet Communities in New Mexico in 1986 and was able to rehabilitate some buildings on First Street; however internal conflicts caused the community to withdraw from Main Street in 1990 (NM MainStreet, 2010). Raton reapplied to become a MainStreet Community in 2004, and was designated as one of the first Arts and Cultural Districts in 2009. Since that time, Raton MainStreet has successfully overseen façade improvements, upgrades to the Shuler Theater, the reopening of the El Raton Theater, and the securing of funding for streetscape improvements along 1st Street.

MainStreet has also been actively involved with community and economic development, and has successfully established several reoccurring events within downtown Raton, as well as becoming involved with the NM True Campaign developed by the New Mexico Tourism Department. Most recently, Raton MainStreet has been given an award of excellence for economic development at the New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference.

3. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

3.1 EXISTING PLANS & STUDIES

Downtown Raton has been the subject of several recent planning efforts, which are summarized below. Each of these has identified downtown as the heart of the community and proposed various strategies to reinvigorate the downtown's economy, businesses, culture,

and sense of place. Key to these plans' success has been leadership from numerous residents, as well as the Raton MainStreet board and volunteers.

CITY OF RATON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2003

Although the Comprehensive Plan is over a decade old, it identifies several key themes that continue to be relevant to downtown Raton. The plan states that "the hidden potential for Raton rests in its ability to attract tourists to its downtown Historic District" (City of Raton, 79). In turn, the plan proposes several existing opportunities, constraints, and objectives to preserve and enhance Downtown Raton.

Among issues stated in the plan related to downtown that remain relevant:

- The history, architecture, and culture of downtown are often overlooked by travelers who never venture into downtown from I-25. *A lack of proper signage, advertising, and promotion continue to keep downtown from being discovered by more tourists.*
- There is ongoing economic leakage from downtown Raton, due to a broader base of retail opportunities in nearby Trinidad, CO. *This continues to make it hard for downtown to attract and retain additional retailers and service-orientated businesses.*
- There is a lack of housing choices in downtown Raton, although existing vacant buildings could be renovated as residences.

Additional objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan related to downtown redevelopment include:

- Create a historic overlay zone for the downtown Historic District with design standards, land use controls, and processes.
- Design gateways to welcome visitors to Raton and downtown.
- Develop a comprehensive signage program to direct visitors.
- Encourage the rehabilitation and remodeling of older historic buildings with incentives, such as historic preservation tax credits.
- Increase housing opportunities in downtown.
- Promote and market more downtown businesses to attract additional tourists. This includes additional programming activities and "signature" events to attract larger crowds.
- Create a streetscape program for downtown streets to make them more walkable, attractive, and safe.
- Expand arts and culture opportunities and build off key assets such as the Shuler Theater and the Raton Museum. Work to identify buildings that may be used as gallery or live/work spaces, as well as areas where public art may be displayed.

REVAMP RATON: UNM DESIGN AND PLANNING ASSISTANCE CENTER (DPAC), 2007

The University of New Mexico's Design and Planning Assistance Center (DPAC) offered a graduate level architecture studio during the spring of 2007 focusing on Raton's downtown core. Graduate students from the Architecture and Landscape Architecture programs conducted an assessment of downtown Raton and developed several projects ideas intended to promote walkability, increase economic vitality, and attract more visitors. These projects (some of which have inspired projects in the implementation section of this document) include ideas to:

- Enhance the pedestrian environment along 1st and 2nd Streets through streetscaping ideas, traffic calming, public art, public furniture, and street trees.
- Create more centrally located, vibrant civic spaces in downtown to host events and attract visitors. Sites included the rail depot, the Colfax County Courthouse square, and a new Roundhouse Park near the existing rail tracks.
- Ideas for temporary, "popup" installations for vacant lots and buildings.
- Create additional connections to existing assets outside of downtown.
- Market the history, sense of place, and architecture of Raton to a larger audience.

RATON DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN, 2009

The 2009 Downtown Master Plan for Raton (which this plan updates), provided a series of recommendations designed to 1) protect and encourage new downtown investments; 2) stabilize and promote compatible uses and services within the downtown core; 3) prioritize public improvements for downtown streets; 4) protect historic buildings with design guidelines and a proposed historic overlay zone; and 5) develop catalyst projects to spur development and increase downtown business activity.[1]

In addition, the plan conducted a market study that found that downtown Raton could absorb additional housing units downtown, expanded retail space, and increased lodging opportunities (see Market Study section below). The study also identified several "opportunity segments" geared towards attracting additional tourists, including the now shelved plans to open a "Racino" at the old La Mesa Racetrack.

Since the plan's adoption, several noticeable accomplishments have happened:

- The redevelopment of 1st Street between Park and Rio Grande as part of the "Great Blocks" program.
- Facade improvements as part of Raton MainStreet's "facade squads."
- A new "multimodal" facility for the rail depot is set to begin construction this year (2015).
- Steps toward the creation of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) for downtown Raton.

[1] Further information on the 2009 Downtown Master is woven throughout this document, which is intended to update and expand on recommendations from the 2009 plan.

However, in spite of these policies and actions, the district has not rebounded economically from regional economic restructuring and the effects of the Great Recession.

RATON ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT CULTURAL PLAN, 2011

In 2009, Raton became one of only a handful of communities in New Mexico to have an officially designated Arts and Cultural District (ACD) through the State's MainStreet Program. This designation is designed to help promote Raton's arts and cultural industries, increase investment in the ACD, leverage local assets, and provide resources to attract and retain creative and artistic professionals. The overall goal is to grow Raton's creative/cultural economy, which should promote the town and region as a whole.

Through the designation, Raton may offer incentives to property owners through historic tax credits, gain access to gross receipts taxes set aside for local economic development through LEDA, access technical assistance, and receive funds from a statewide ACD capital outlay fund for infrastructure projects.[2]

RATON GREAT BLOCKS ON MAINSTREET, 2015

In the spring of 2015, Raton MainStreet received the first "Great Blocks on MainStreet" grant from the New Mexico MainStreet Program. This grant provides funding for the design of streetscape improvements along 1st St. between Rio Grande Ave. and Park Ave. Improvements include facade renovations for buildings along 1st St., pedestrian improvements, traffic calming features, way-finding signage, and a public art installation. This is an exciting step for Raton MainStreet, which has been planning to implement streetscape improvements along 1st St. for years.

BBER COMMUNITY ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT, 2006

The University of New Mexico's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) completed an economic assessment of Downtown Raton in 2006. Although somewhat outdated, the report revealed several economic factors that are still relevant to any economic development strategies in Raton. Details on this report, as well as an updated market study, are presented in the *Market Study* section below.

4. COMMUNITY PROCESS

During the development of this plan, community participation and feedback have been central in developing goals, strategies, and an actionable project list that can be implemented effectively. Throughout the planning process, key stakeholders – including elected officials, property owners, business owners, arts and cultural organizations, and community residents – were engaged to help develop a comprehensive vision for the future development of Downtown Raton.

[2] Raton MainStreet Arts and Cultural District Cultural Plan, 2011

One community meeting was held during the development of this plan: one on June 8th that involved a short "charrette" planning session. Feedback from both of this meeting (as well as to the business survey outlined below) was used to select and prioritize the project ideas and planning goals in this document. Two public hearings were held by the City Commission in October 2015. The first was to designate the metropolitan redevelopment district and the second was to adopt the plan.

4.1 JUNE PUBLIC MEETING & CHARRETTE

The first community meeting took place on June 8th, 2015. The project team hosted a public meeting in the evening that included a short “charrette” that sought to elicit ideas for possible projects and strategies to employ in downtown. After a brief presentation on existing conditions within Downtown Raton, participants were asked to discuss three topics:

1. What defines downtown Raton as the “heart of the community” for you?
2. What needs to happen for you to consider downtown Raton to be successful?
3. If you had a magic wand, what one thing would you change?

During the meeting it became apparent that the historic Downtown constitutes a great asset to Raton. Specifically, the district's historic buildings (such as the Shuler Theater); well established businesses; friendly atmosphere; train station and railway connection; and community events (Christmas decorations, Cinco de Mayo, and fireworks show) were all described as features that define Downtown's identity. Additional assets were also highlighted, including regional attractions (Climax Canyon trails, Capulin National Monument, Philmont Scout Ranch), Raton's parks, historic homes, and the aquatic center to the east of the railroad tracks.

FIGURE 2: PARTICIPANTS AT FIRST PUBLIC MEETING, JUNE 2015

However, residents also brought up a number of challenges facing downtown and Raton in general:

1. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Downtown's historic buildings are one of its greatest assets. However, one of the largest challenges for Downtown Raton is stabilizing the historic building stock and the costs associated with restoring deteriorated buildings. Many of the buildings need to have roofs, walls, windows and other structural issues repaired. Unfortunately, the limited revenue generating potential of some of these buildings through rents and business income means that owners are unable to afford these repairs, and renovations to bring buildings up to code are not economically feasible. In addition, most people do not qualify for business/building improvement loans. Additional incentives/tax credits could make such repairs more realistic.

Some local business owners mentioned that they would like to see the street- and landscape be better maintained and additional street infrastructure (such as trash bins and seating) be installed.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the major challenges for Raton remains the overall poor state of the regional economy and the continued outmigration of residents to other parts of New Mexico and the U.S. However, residents felt that Raton could better capitalize on its assets to spur economic development. Specifically, a few strategies that were highlighted included:

A. *Events:* The community felt that additional large scale events could bring in more visitors and boost the economy. One community member suggested marketing Raton as the "The Festival City" and capitalizing on existing events to more visitors. Such a strategy has been successful in nearby Trinidad, CO, which hosts an annual Blues Festival.

B. *Better Mixture of Businesses:* Community members that work in downtown commented on the fact that general amenities were missing. These amenities include restaurants, a grocery store, public restrooms, an ATM, and general streetscape maintenance. Recruiting additional business downtown could lead to a virtuous cycle of additional business development from the "multiplier effect" of successful, core businesses.

C. *Anchor Development:* The community hopes to attract new anchor developments to town that will help bring people and money to downtown. For example, a "racino" (or other large tourist attraction) may still be seen as a possibility to jumpstart the local economy.

3. MARKETING & PROMOTION

A topic that was mentioned often was the need to increase promotion and marketing efforts. Raton should be better marketed regionally to attract more visitors.

In addition, a clear vision should be developed and communicated. Generally, the community felt that events needed to be better advertised to both local residents and potential visitors. In addition, the community hopes to educate hotel, retail, and restaurant staff to better market the variety of experiences that Raton has to offer -- both downtown and region-wide.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE

The community discussed calming traffic along 2nd street to help increase the overall appeal of downtown, increase pedestrian activity, and possibly attract more visitors to stop and venture into the historic downtown core. Bike lanes were mentioned as a possibility amenity that is attractive to locals and tourists. One community member mentioned that Raton used to attract bike tourists who stopped in downtown on longer journeys, but that an important connection had been cut off, which now discourages bicyclists from riding into downtown.

5. SIGNAGE

Improving the signage throughout downtown was expressed by a number of community members. Many residents felt that additional signage along the freeway (I-25) would attract more tourists and visitors to Raton.

6. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Some community members felt that there was not enough community involvement. In addition, it was mentioned that efforts needed to be better coordinated between local businesses and organizations.

7. LOSS OF WORKING AGE ADULTS AND YOUTH

The community was aware of dwindling number of youth in Raton and wanted to see efforts to retain the young, create more opportunities for youth employment and also establish more events and attractions that are attractive to younger generations.

4.2 BUSINESS SURVEY

A business survey was conducted in person the day following the first public meeting (June 9th, 2015) and sought to uncover the needs, constraints, and opportunities facing local businesses in Downtown Raton (see the Appendix for the original survey and complete results). Overall, 21 businesses and organizations responded to the survey, representing a fairly wide unweighted cross-sample of businesses and organizations.[3]

According to survey results, these businesses employed 139 full time employees and 15

[3] This was a convenience sample. The median year established for these 21 businesses was 1999, with the oldest organization (The Raton Museum) having been established in 1939. The median number of years in operation was 9 years, with 2 businesses under a year old. The median number of employees was 3 full time employees, and 2 part time employees, with some businesses indicating they relied on volunteers.

part-time or seasonal employees. Survey results were further supported by informal interviews with business owners, which elicited additional insight into the economic dynamics at work in Downtown Raton.

Overall, responses were generally positive, and indicated that:

1. **LOCATION**
   A majority (62%) of respondents were "very satisfied" with their location in downtown. An additional 29% were "satisfied" with their location, with only one respondent holding a "neutral" opinion. Respondents indicated that they were especially satisfied with downtown's safety, location, cooperation between downtown businesses, and the ability to buy local products. However, some respondents indicated that the existing mix of businesses could be improved, as well as the aesthetics and upkeep of downtown buildings and the public realm. In addition, a few people commented that adequate parking was sometimes an issue.

2. **SENSE OF PLACE**
   Several businesses (38%) felt that Raton's "sense of place" and "character" were important, as well as downtown's central location (52%). Once again, some respondents indicated a more diverse mixture of businesses may be appropriate.

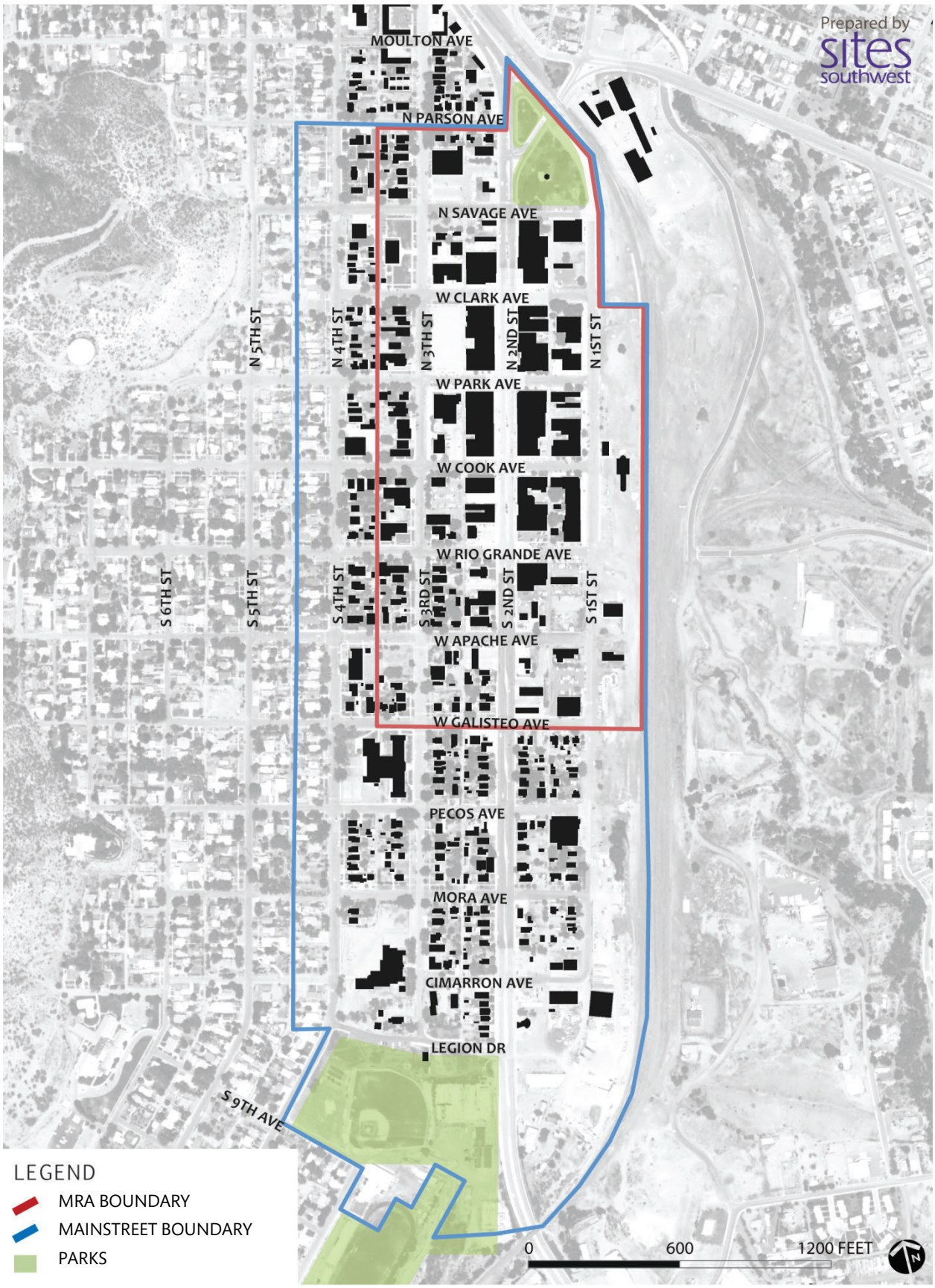
3. **BUSINESS PLANS**
   Only two businesses had plans to move to a new location. A majority (57%) indicated they didn't have any plans for change, while (33%) indicated they didn't plan to reduce the size or space of their businesses. In addition, 4 respondents (19%) indicated they planned to expand at their current locations, either hiring additional employees, or expanding the floor space of their businesses. About 40% of businesses said they had plans to invest in building improvements. However, only a few indicated that they had current plans to either upgrade facades or complete internal renovations.

4. **DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS**
   Over half (57%) of respondents indicated that improved signage downtown would help their business be more successful. Nine people (43%) indicated that upgrading and renovating neighboring properties would be beneficial, with eight people (38%) also indicating that a better mixture of businesses downtown is needed. In addition, seven respondents (33%) said that public seating or a gathering space, as well as better sidewalks, would benefit their business.

4.3 NOVEMBER PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Raton City Commission held two public hearings on the plan in November 2015. The purpose of the first hearing was to discuss the MRA designation report (Appendix A) and officially designate the MRA. The purpose of the second public hearing was to discuss and adopt the Downtown Master Plan and MRA Plan.

MAP 1: PLAN BOUNDARIES



SECTION III

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

1. LAND USE & ZONING

Land uses in central downtown Raton (the area encompassed by the smaller Phase 1 boundaries of the Arts and Cultural District) are generally commercial, with a few prominent public and institutional buildings such as the Colfax County Courthouse (see MAP 2). Within the core blocks of downtown, there are very few residential land uses, although such uses are permitted in the zoning code (see below).

The full plan boundaries also encompass part of the residential neighborhoods to the west and south and include two area schools: Kearney Elementary School and Raton Middle School. The area also has two parks: Ripley Park to the north, and the larger Legion Park to the south. A small portion of the eastern plan boundary encompasses the railway and train depot site.

Although most of the land within downtown is developed, there are a few vacant lots that could be redeveloped in the future. The most notable vacant lot is the recently cleared site of the El Portal, which was destroyed by a fire in 2012. This entire lot, on 3rd Street between Clark Ave and Park Ave, marks a great opportunity for possible redevelopment in the future. Smaller lots throughout downtown also offer the opportunity for infill or temporary uses. One example is the lot on 1st Street between Park Ave and Cook Ave, which is currently being used for a community garden.

1.1 LAND OWNERSHIP

The study area encompasses approximately 150 acres, not including public rights of way,

and 728 parcels. Within this area are over 600 separate owners. The smallest parcels are less than a tenth of an acre. The City is the largest landowner with 23 acres in 19 parcels.

The smaller Arts and Cultural District Phase 1 focus area encompasses approximately 35 acres, not including public rights-of-way. Within this area there are 172 parcels and 126 separate owners with an average holding of 0.27 acres. Again, the City of Raton is the largest property owner, with 12 parcels totaling 7 acres. The large number of owners and small amount of property held by any single owner makes coordinated redevelopment difficult.

1.2 ZONING

Downtown zoning districts include C-1 (Central Business District), C-2 (General Commercial District), R-O-I (Residential, Office, Institutional), and L-I (Light Industrial) as shown in MAP 3.

C-1: CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The C-1 Central Business District, which extends from Savage Ave on the north to Rio Grande Ave on the south and from 1st Street on the east to 3rd Street on the west, is designed to encourage concentrated development within the historic core of downtown. The districts' requirements seek to retain the existing historic character of downtown, with no lot area or setback requirements, no off-street parking requirements and no restrictions on lot coverage. In addition to a wide mixture of commercial and office uses, living quarters are allowed on second stories and above in commercial buildings. Building height is set at 60 feet maximum from the highest adjacent grade. As outlined in Raton's zoning code, this district "shall be limited to the present district boundary" and will not be expanded further (City of Raton, 13).

C-2: GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The C-2 General Commercial District allows residential and commercial uses, including multi-family residences. Maximum lot coverage is 60% and maximum height is 45 feet. Off-street parking is required.

R-O-I: RESIDENTIAL, OFFICE, AND INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT

The R-O-I Residential, Office and Institutional District is designed to accommodate the historic mix of uses in the residential mixed-use neighborhoods adjacent to downtown on the west and south. Permitted uses include residential up to multi-family and a variety of business and personal services and institutions, as well as small retail shops that occupy less than 2,500 square feet. This district has a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet for single family, office and institutional and 4,000 square feet for multi-family residential. Maximum lot coverage is from 30 to 50%, depending on use, and maximum height is 35 feet. Off-street parking requirements apply.

L-I: LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

A small portion of the plan area next to the railroad tracks is zoned Light Industrial. This district is for less intensive industries that can be "operated in a relatively clean and quiet manner and which will not be obnoxious to adjacent land use." (City of Raton, 21). The

district supports some light manufacturing uses as well some service based examples, including material sales, warehousing, utility substations, parking lots, and service and repair shops. Residential is not allowed in this district. Minimum lot size is 1 acre, and lots shall be a minimum of 100 feet. Maximum lot coverage is 35%, and maximum height is 35 feet. Off-street parking requirements apply.

2. TRANSPORTATION

Raton's location at the base of the Raton Pass and proximity to the New Mexico/Colorado border, position it as one of the gateways into the state. Three key transportation connections link Raton with the rest of the region: I-25, which veers to the east of the city, bypassing downtown entirely; 2nd Street, a 4 lane state highway that runs through the heart of downtown and functions as the community's Mainstreet; and the BNSF railroad, which runs along the eastern edge of downtown and carries Amtrak's "Southwest Chief" line. Supplementing these central connections is U.S. Route 87 heading southeast to Texas, NM State Highway 72 heading east to Folsom, and U.S. Route 64, which heads south to Cimarron, Eagle Nest, Angel Fire, and Taos (see MAP 5).

There are four freeway entrance/exit ramps from I-25. Traveling north, the first is located at the end of 2nd Street, about 2.5 miles south of downtown. This exit provides access to the currently vacant La Mesa racetrack site. The second exit leads onto Clayton Road, where one may find "motel row" full of lodging, restaurants and other hospitality establishments. The third exit is located 1 mile north of the Clayton exit, and provides access to downtown through NM State Road 72. The final exit is at the northwest city limits, and connects to downtown via Canyon Rd and 2nd Ave.

2.1 STREETS & TRAFFIC

Downtown Raton was laid out as a traditional grid pattern using 300 foot blocks, with most commercial lots measuring 25 feet wide by 140 feet deep. These lots are bisected in the rear by service alleys that are approximately 20 feet wide, and run north-south forming an additional set of connections between blocks. Together, this network makes the entire district eminently walkable. In addition, one feature that makes the residential sections of the planning area unique are the "parkways" that provide a continuous network of sidewalks with generous landscape buffers and street trees along residential blocks. Combined with the system of service alleys, the series of walkways provides a high level of connectivity for area residents – not to mention several pleasant places to walk.

1ST STREET

1st Street runs north-south along the west side of the railroad tracks. First known as "Railroad Ave," the roadway has inherited a wide nominal right-of-way of 80 feet (55 feet for the traveled way), with two travel lanes, angled parked, and approximately 15-20 foot wide sidewalks along the western side of the street between Rio Grande Ave and Savage Ave. The sidewalks are currently only partially built on the east side of the street. As a local road maintained by the City of Raton, the roadway does not have regular traffic count infor-

mation, but traffic volumes are expected to be fewer than 2,000 vehicles per day.

On the east side of 1st Street are the Santa Fe Depot, Old Pass Gallery, and two small commercial buildings. A portion of the area north of the depot will be developed as a multimodal center with landscaping and amenities to serve as a transfer point between the multiple modes of travel that converge in downtown: train, Greyhound bus, pedestrians, and automobiles. Historic commercial buildings line the west side of the street.

The City of Raton, through a grant from New Mexico MainStreet, will be making significant streetscape improvements as the state's first Great Blocks project. This project includes installing street trees, wayfinding signs, traffic calming measures such as curb extensions, improved crosswalks, and drainage improvements between Rio Grande Ave and Park Ave. (see Figure 3). This section of the street is home to some of the oldest historic buildings in the district, and with pedestrian improvements, is planned to become one of the most walkable, lively parts of downtown.

FIGURE 3: 1ST STREET FACADES AND SIDEWALKS

FIGURE 4: 2ND STREET

2ND STREET

2nd Street runs north-south and serves as the major transportation corridor through downtown. The roadway completes a connection between the two major interstate exits to the north and south at Clayton Road and Sugarite Ave (NM 72), respectively. The road is also known as the I-25 Business Route. This means the road can be used as an alternative route when traffic needs to be diverted from I-25.[4] In addition to being the main thoroughfare through downtown, 2nd Street forms part of the Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway. Historic commercial buildings and the City's two historic theaters are located along 2nd Street.

The road is classified as a primary urban arterial and has a nominal right-of-way of approximately 104 feet, with four, 12 foot travel lanes, a 16 foot median/turn lane, 9 foot parallel parking spaces on both sides of the street, and 10 foot sidewalks (see Figure 5). The current speed limit is 35 MPH through downtown. There are three signalized intersections along 2nd Street at Clark, Park and Cook Avenues, each with marked crosswalks.

Traffic count information provided by the NM Department of Transportation shows that the average annual daily traffic (AADT) was between 8,328 and 13,913 vehicles per day in 2011. Traffic volumes have been falling since 2003, but not significantly. This is generally a low level of traffic that could be easily accommodated on a 2 lane roadway. As a long term strategy (after higher priority projects are completed), pedestrian comfort and safety along 2nd Street could be improved through coordination with NMDOT.

[4] This creates a complication for reducing the number of lanes on the road or introducing other traffic calming features.

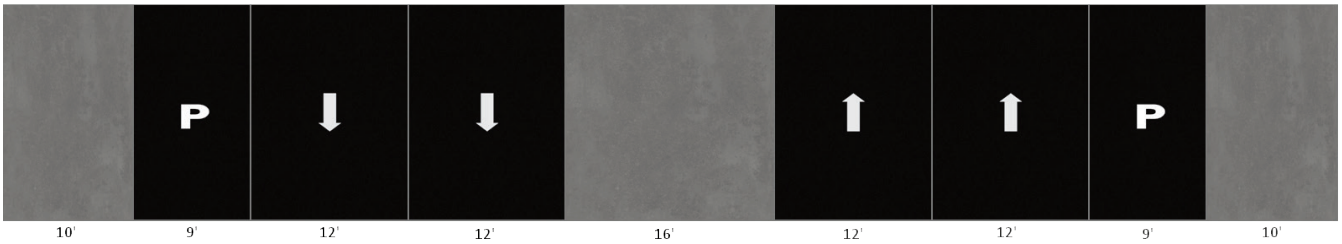


FIGURE 5: TYPICAL 2ND STREET CROSS-SECTION

3RD STREET

3rd Street is a mixed commercial and residential street. The historic Colfax County Courthouse is located along this road, as are several churches. As with 1st Street, the roadway has inherited a wide right-of-way of approximately 100 feet (about 55 for the traveled way). Although this is would normally lower the walkability of the roadway, the extra space along the street allows for angled parking throughout, as well as expansive sidewalks and landscape buffers. This street also introduces the residential district's system of "parkways" (sidewalks with generous landscape buffers). Together, these components complement one another to create another very walkable street within Downtown Raton.

EAST/WEST AVENUES

The east/west avenues in downtown rise gently to the west towards Goat Hill and create important connections between the major routes through downtown. Many of these streets provide the main entrances to existing businesses off the main drag of 2nd Street. These avenues are generally 90-100 feet wide, include angled parking, 10-20 foot sidewalks, and low traffic volumes. As with 3rd Street, these elements (especially the angled parking) create a very walkable series of east/west connections throughout downtown.

FIGURE 6: LOOKING EAST DOWN COOK AVE FROM 2ND STREET

Because these roads establish important connections, have existing businesses along them, and provide a large amount of on-street parking, they should be considered important spaces for MainStreet investment. Ongoing, phased streetscape improvements would enliven these streets and enhance their inherently walkable character. This plan also recommends the extention of Rio Grande Ave across the railroad tracks to create an important connection with the east side of Raton.

2.2 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS & WALKABILITY

The traditional grid layout of downtown, with its short blocks, complete network of sidewalks, alleyways, and historic buildings, make downtown remarkably walkable. Although downtown has an approximate walkscore of 52 (somewhat walkable), it is easy and pleasant to walk from one destination to another given the compact grid network, low traffic volumes, and existing landmarks, which aid in navigation. In addition, although some roads within downtown are quite wide (such as 2nd Street), because of the minimal setbacks of most of the buildings, and the prominent facades, many streets are perceptually well-defined, which serves to highlights the district's historic buildings.

The high levels of walkability can be quantified using a multimodal level of service (MMLOS) indicator and walkability index. These two indicators are simple measures that relate physical features of the roadway (width, presence of sidewalks, traffic volumes, traffic speeds, etc.) to the perceived comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists. [5] For example, 2nd Street along its busiest segment has a calculated multi-modal level of service of "B" (2.06) for pedestrians, "D" (4.30) for bicyclists, and "C" for automobiles. The walkability index for the same section is approximately 55/100 (a basic level of walkability).

Additional street trees and sidewalk buffers (especially along 2nd Street) would improve the walkability and aesthetics of downtown further. In addition, installing "traffic calming" measures in downtown would reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian safety. For example, as was recommended in the 2009 Downtown Master Plan, curb extensions (also known as bulb outs) would help slow traffic making right turns, and reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians. Such a strategy is already being implemented as part of the Great Blocks Project on 1st Street. In the future, such improvements could be extended to 2nd Street.

In addition, one important connection that could improve both pedestrian and automobile connectivity is an extension of Rio Grande Avenue across the railroad tracks to Memorial Lane. This would create a new connection between downtown and east Raton, which would link downtown to trails within Railroad Park, as well as the aquatic center. Although

[5] Multi-Modal Level of Service (MMLOS) is a simple measure of the perceived comfort of a roadway for all users. Each street is given a score on an (A-F) scale, with A being best. MMLOS is calculated using roadway width, lane widths, sidewalk widths and buffers, traffic volumes, traffic speeds, and the presence of street trees. The Walkability Index Score looks at similar physical features to produce a score on a scale of 0-100. Areas above 50 are generally considered "walkable."

there is an existing pedestrian underpass that travels under the railroad tracks, this underpass has been described as "entering a mineshaft" and is currently closed. As an unappealing, dark, claustrophobic tunnel, this underpass does not invite pedestrians to cross the railroad tracks. A new, at grade crossing would create a much more visible, pedestrian friendly connection that could generate new activity between east Raton and downtown.

2.3 BIKEWAYS

There is currently no dedicated bicycle infrastructure within downtown, although the low volumes on most streets accommodate bicyclists safely, with the exception of 2nd Street. With bicycle infrastructure in rural downtowns, it is important to establish connections with a larger city-wide or regional bicycle network. This allows bicyclists to travel safely to their desired destinations as easily as motorists. It also accommodates long-distance riders who travel along regional, recreational routes between communities. These riders often stop for food, refreshments, etc., and could potentially frequent businesses in downtown if the district were connected to a larger regional bicycling network.

The major connection that can be made within downtown is along 2nd Street, which currently has a bike lane from La Mesa Park (and the southern interstate exit) to Clayton Road. This bicycle lane could easily be extended northward through downtown to complete a connection with NM State Road 72. Additional route designations could also be established throughout downtown to direct riders to recreational assets such as Climax Canyon Park and Goat Hill, the trail system through Railroad Park, schools, and destinations within downtown.

2.4 PARKING

Parking in Downtown is well provisioned due to the large number of on-street parking spaces. Parallel parking is provided along the entire stretch of 1st street, and angled parking is provided along 1st Street and many of the east/west avenues. Additional off-street parking lots are also provided at some businesses as shown in MAP 6. The existing amount of parking spaces should exempt future developments from providing new or additional parking.

2.5 AMTRAK & TRANSIT

Amtrak's Southwest Chief line stops in downtown Raton at the 1st Street and Cook railroad depot. This route runs from Los Angeles to Chicago, and carries around 350,000 people annually (Amtrak, 2014). Boardings and alightings data for Raton indicate that an average of about 16,000 people stop at the Raton depot each year. This makes the Raton stop the second busiest stop within New Mexico, representing a larger share of riders than Las Vegas and Gallup.

There were recently concerns surrounding proposals by Amtrak to change the Southwest Chief's alignment to bypass northeast New Mexico and southern Colorado. Amtrak requested additional funds from both states to maintain BNSF owned track within the current alignment, arguing that without these funds it would have to shift operations to a

more lucrative route. Fortunately, this plan has not come to pass, and the existing alignment through northeast New Mexico will remain in place.

TRANSIT

There is currently no transit service within Raton. Rio Metro, which operates within the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area, provides a Rio Metro Dial-a-Ride service which offers curb-to-curb service anywhere within its service district. Such a service may be a future possibility for Raton, connecting residents who arrive by the Southwest Chief or by car to their final destinations.

3. ASSET INVENTORY

As residents already know, there are a wealth of community assets in Raton, which the community – with careful planning, leadership and foresight – can turn into opportunities that will help stabilize and revive downtown. The city's cultural assets in particular – the historic buildings, history, natural setting, and local culture – all contribute to Raton's sense of place. To help generate long term strategies that can leverage these assets, the project team conducted an assets inventory cataloging existing buildings, places, and events that can be built on in the future. This inventory reveals not only the wealth of assets that Raton has, but also some of the ongoing issues the community has faced in leveraging these assets.

3.1 BUILDING CONDITIONS

Along with Las Vegas, NM, Raton is home to one of the finest collections of historic buildings in Northern New Mexico. Dozens of now historic buildings were built during the railroad era, when the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad steamed through New Mexico. The Raton Arts & Cultural District is home to most of these buildings, with excellent examples of late Victorian, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Art Deco and late 19th century/early 20th century commercial, government, and cultural buildings. The majority of commercial buildings in the district were built between 1880 and the mid-1960s, and for the most part, have remained intact.

However, many of these majestic buildings are vacant, and both vacant and occupied buildings need repair. Signs of neglect include peeling paint, faded signs, and debris visible through storefront windows. Poorly maintained buildings not only create a negative image of the area, but can also lead to the slow deterioration of historic or otherwise habitable buildings. For example, exterior and interior damage caused by leaking roofs has put some buildings in danger of collapse.

Interviews with tenants and comments at public meetings indicate that there are concerns about the structural condition of buildings, some of which have leaking roofs or other conditions contributing to deterioration of the structures. During the site visit for the downtown public meeting in June 2015, the project team heard stories of an existing business where inventory was damaged by the collapse of the roof at the rear of the building.

FIELD SURVEY

A field survey was conducted in May of 2015 to document existing conditions in the commercial core of downtown. Photo documentation of existing buildings with notations of occupancy and general building condition that could be observed from the street were noted. Of the total of 90 buildings in the commercial core that were inventoried, 30 were occupied and in good condition, 3 were occupied but in need of repair, 29 were vacant, and 8 were partially occupied, multi-tenant buildings (see MAP 4).

FACADES

Building facades are generally maintained in decent condition, but there has been little recent obvious investment in older buildings. During interviews and public meetings, people who are familiar with downtown noted that buildings have deteriorating roofs and structures, even if the façade is maintained. There are signs of neglect, including peeling paint, faded signs, and similar issues. Overall, this creates a poor image of the study area and does not highlight the diversity and quality of the historic structures.

FIGURE 7: ENCHANTED GROUNDS CAFÉ - A CHARMING, RECENTLY RESTORED FACADE

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

In the case of Downtown Raton, the stabilization of the structural integrity of many buildings may be more important in the short and longer term than façade upgrades. The urgency of structure stabilization was seen with the recent loss of the El Portal (Seaburg Hotel) to a fire in 2012. This was one of the contributing historic buildings to the district and is now marked by an empty lot. Preserving additional buildings that are in danger of structural collapse or loss should be a priority as they are irreplaceable.

3.2 HISTORIC & SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

As is well known by residents, and uncovered by visitors, Downtown Raton's historic build-

ings retain a high degree of integrity, maintaining its historic railroad era character. The City of Raton is home to two historic districts: the *Downtown Historic District*, which was listed in 1977 and is encompassed within the boundaries of this plan, and the *Original Townsite Historic District* bordering downtown to the west, which was listed in 2008 and is made up primarily of residential buildings. The downtown historic district was recently expanded in 2004 to the north and south, and contains 75 contributing buildings.

Seven contributing buildings within the plan boundaries are registered on both the National Historic Register of Historic Places and the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties (see Table 1 below). Further, an additional 12 buildings are on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties alone. In addition to those already listed on the State and National Registers, there are several dozen contributing buildings that may meet the requirements for historic preservation in the future. These "good bones" have been recognized as a key asset that the City of Raton and Raton MainStreet can capitalize on over the long term, through historic preservation tax credits, façade upgrades, structural stabilization, "urban homesteading," and other strategies that can highlight these unique assets.

FIGURE 8: THE SHULER THEATER AND EL RATON

SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

The history of Raton is expressed through the city's many historic buildings, each of which comes with stories about previous owners, patrons, uses, and gradual evolution as the City and County have undergone massive transformations. Among the many contributing historic buildings, there are several that currently operate as successful anchors within downtown. These include:

1. *The Shuler Theater*, located on 2nd Street, is a two story live performance theater that currently hosts concerts, plays, and other live performances. The building was

designed by the Trinidad based architectural firm of Rapp and Rapp in 1915 and originally functioned as a city office and as a theater. The building's architectural style is decorative brick and the interior includes eight WPA murals by artist Manville Chapman. The theater was a recent recipient of LEDA funding through the New Mexico's Historic Theater Initiatives program.

2. *El Raton Theater* nearby the Shuler on 2nd Street was recently renovated and once again shows first run movies. The building was constructed in 1930 as a late Gothic Revival style building, and includes extensive façade detailing and interior features. The theater shows current movies, although some residents say that limited show times and screenings mean locals may travel to the theater in Trinidad to see all the latest movies. There has been recent money programmed for restoration work to the theater's marquee.
3. *The Raton Museum* is currently located on 2nd Street in a two story building originally built in 1910. The museum features regional artifacts associated with mining, ranching, and the pioneer life.
4. *The Amtrak Train Depot* on 2nd Street, at the terminus of Cook Ave, still functions as the Raton's passenger rail stop. The building was originally built in 1903 as a Mission Revival style building. Although still well-used as the main rail gateway into Raton, the building has would benefit from upgrades. There has been recent discussion of the City buying the site to facilitate a future renovation.

CONDITION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Most of these buildings were inventoried as part of the building conditions assessment outlined above. Although many of the historic buildings within downtown remain structurally intact, many buildings are currently vacant or in need of repair as noted above.

The block of 1st Street between Cook and Rio Grande is of particular concern. Buildings along this entire block are either currently vacant or in need of repair. These include the historically significant Coors Building, Carl's Antiques, the Haven Hotel, and the Raton Hotel. These are all listed on the State Register of Cultural Places. One bright spot along this block is the Palace Hotel, which is currently undergoing a renovation to accommodate a new steakhouse restaurant on the first floor.

Also of concern are buildings a block north on 1st Street between Park Ave and Cook Ave. These include Cook's Hall and the Roth Building. Together, these blocks not only represent some of the finest architecture in Raton, but they form one of the first impressions visitors have of the town when arriving at the train depot. Hopefully the Greats Block streetscape project along 1st Street will provide an incentive for the owners of these buildings to invest in building upgrades and renovations.

FIGURE 9: EXAMPLES OF VACANT AND DETERIORATED BUILDINGS IN DOWNTOWN.

The two blocks on 2nd Street between Park Ave and Rio Grande Ave are also of concern. Although anchored by the International Bank (Yucca Hotel Building), several surrounding buildings are in disrepair. These include the two buildings directly south of the International Bank which are both vacant and in disrepair, as well as several smaller storefronts between Cook Ave and Park Ave that have had their original facades altered. The warning signs for this block were recently felt with the collapse of the La Mesa Inn next door to the International Bank. Efforts should be taken to ensure more buildings within this district do not meet the same fate.

TABLE 1: CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS IN AND NEAR DOWNTOWN

MAP KEY	NAME	LOCATION	DATE	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	LISTING
1	Colfax County Courthouse*	3rd and Savage	1925-1949	Art Deco	NRHP, SRCP
2	Columbian School	700 N. 2nd St.	1925-1949	Modern	NRHP, SRCP
3	El Raton Theater	115 N. 2nd St.	1929	Late Gothic Revival	NRHP, SRCP
4	Kearny School	800 S. 3rd St.	1925-1949	Art Deco	NRHP, SRCP
5	Longfellow School	700 E. 4th St.	1925-1949	Modern	NRHP, SRCP
6	Raton Armory	901 S. 3rd St.	1925	Art Deco	NRHP, SRCP
7	Raton Junior--Senior High School	500 S. 3rd St.	1925-1949	Modern	NRHP, SRCP
8	Carl's Eclectic Antiques, post-1911	220 S. 1st St.	1911	Commercial	SRCP
9	Cooks Hall	142-144 S. 1st St.	1880	Italianate	SRCP
10	Coors Building*	216 S. 1st St.	1906	Decorative Brick	SRCP
11	Corner Bar and Raton Hotel	244 S. 1st St.	1898-1910	Decorative Brick	SRCP
12	Haven Hotel	208-210 S. 1st St.	1913	Decorative Brick	SRCP
13	Investment Block	136-144 N. 1st St.	1890-1896	Romanesque Revival	SRCP
14	Joseph Building	100 S. 1st St.	1890	Romanesque Revival	SRCP
15	Palace Hotel	200 S. 1st St.	1896	Romanesque Revival	SRCP
16	Roth Block	101-107 S. 2nd St. (Includes 127-131 Park Ave)	1905	Italianate	SRCP
17	Shuler Theater*	131 N. 2nd St.	1915	Decorative Brick	SRCP
18	Swastika Hotel / Yucca Hotel	200 S. 2nd St.	1929	Decorative Brick	SRCP
19	New York and Golden Rule Stores	120 S. 1st St.	1882	Italianate	SRCP
20	Arthur Johnson Memorial Library*	244 Cook Ave	1917	Neo-Classical	
21	Original Townside Historic District	-	-	-	NRHP, SRCP
22	Ration Downtown Historic District	-	-	-	NRHP, SRCP

*Note: NRHP=National Register of Historic Places; SRCP=State Register of Cultural Properties. *Publicly Owned.*

3.3 PARKS & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The City of Raton maintains a number of parks and community spaces within the downtown area. These include:

1. *Ripley Park* is a two acre park at the northern end of downtown. The park features a playground, gazebo, shaded areas, and a statue honoring area miners. The park hosts Music on MainStreet, Cinco de Mayo, and other events.

2. The *Raton Aquatic Center* is an indoor facility that opened in 2011. The center has a kiddie pool with a slide, diving board, tunnel slide, aquatic climbing wall, and whirlpool.
3. The *Arthur Johnson Memorial Library* is a prominent Neo-Classical style building located on Cook Ave. The library was first used as a post-office and is well maintained.
4. The *Raton Convention Center* was recently renovated and has space for parties, weddings, and other events. Located in Legion Park on 3rd Street, the building is just within the boundaries of the plan area.
5. *Roundhouse Memorial Park* is a large, 50 acre open space area east of the railroad tracks that features paved walking trails, a Santa Fe Trail interpretive garden, and will soon feature horseshoe pits and sand volleyball.
6. *Bonahoom Park,* just west of the Aquatic Center, has a softball field and additional parking.
7. *Legion Park*, a 20 acre park south of downtown, has a new baseball field, and is next to the Raton Convention Center and Raton Armory Building.
8. *Climax Canyon* is a large open space area to the west of town that features walking trails that lead to the Raton Overlook at 7242' feet. There is currently a trailhead at the end of Apache Avenue, which could be incorporated into any future wayfinding system.
9. A new *multimodal center* located north of the Amtrak train depot, is scheduled to begin construction in 2015, and promises to create a public plaza and greeting area next to the train depot.

FIGURE 10: RIPLEY PARK

During public meetings, residents expressed the need for additional public spaces that can be used to host public events. Some public comments indicated that Ripley Park is not adequately configured to host events, and its location at the north end of downtown separates it from activity within the core blocks of the district. This indicates the need to pro-

vide an additional flexible, reconfigurable public space within downtown that can accommodate various uses and support downtown redevelopment.

The proposed multimodal center may fulfill this role when it is completed, and future expansions to this facility could create additional space to host larger events. In additional to upgrading or constructing new formal public spaces, there is an opportunity to create informal, "pop-up" public spaces on vacant land within downtown as an interim solution. A number of strategies for informal spaces are included in the *Implementation Strategies and Projects* section of this document.

3.4 EVENTS

Although creating flexible, well-designed public spaces is important, events truly *animate* these spaces, turning an underused park into a lively community destination. Raton already hosts a number of events that utilize existing public spaces:

1. Raton Rodeo
2. Cinco de Mayo
3. Christmas Festival
4. Film Festival
5. Music on Main Street Concert Series
6. 4th of July Celebration

Although hosting additional events is time consuming, potentially costly and fraught with uncertainty, establishing *signature events* that draw regional crowds is important to maintain the identity and vibrancy of downtown. Residents at community meetings expressed the desire to see more community events, including those that were appealing to younger crowds. One community member recommended marketing Raton as the "Festival City" with multiple annual music events that would be similar to the Blues Festival in Trinidad.

3.5 OPPORTUNITY SITES

Strategically using the assets listed above will be central to the success of Downtown Raton. The good news is that each of these physical assets represent "opportunity sites" that could support new private development or would benefit from public investment (see MAP 8). Taking advantage of these opportunity sites has the potential to spur additional investment while improving the image of Downtown Raton.

FIGURE 11: THE AMTRAK TRAIN DEPOT – 1ST STREET AND COOK AVE

1. HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Although Raton has dozens of historic or contributing buildings, many are not being fully utilized. Some, as summarized above, are in disrepair or are vacant. Others face structural issues that if not addressed could lead to the building's eventual collapse or demolition. These buildings are candidates for renovation or façade upgrades that would help restore the dignity of these irreplaceable structures.

A. *The Amtrak Train Depot:* currently owned by Amtrak, the station is a crucial gateway to Raton and could be renovated in the future. The grounds of the site are also prime for redevelopment, and additions to the future multimodal center could help create a truly convivial public space. The site may also be able to support additional visitor buildings in the future, as well as wayfinding signage.

B. *Buildings on 1st Street:* as mentioned above, many of the historic structures on the two blocks directly across from the train depot (between Cook Ave and Rio Grande Ave) are vacant or need repairs. These buildings may benefit the most from façade upgrades, acquisition by the City, or structural stabilization given the upcoming improvements along 1st Street. As landmarks marking the entrance to Raton from the train depot, these building should be preserved and fully utilized for new businesses or live/work spaces.

C. *Coors Building:* this building is owned by the City and is currently vacant. The two story building was built in 1906 as a warehouse, and would be a great site for a public/private creative adaptive reuse project.

FIGURE 12: COMMUNITY GARDEN ON 1ST STREET

2. VACANT LOTS

Vacant and underutilized lots within downtown can be used for temporary uses (such as the community garden on 1st Street), additional public space, or as sites for future infill.

A. *El Portal Site:* The largest vacant lot within downtown is the site of the old El Portal building, which was recently lost. This lot is approximately 300 x 150 feet and could be used for a downtown community space, park, or future infill. In the interim, the site may be used for additional event parking, or as a site to host events, such as a flea market or cooking festival.

B. *210 S 2nd Street:* This vacant lot, next door to the International Bank, is a prime location to test out a "pop-up" event. Given the large number of workers who are employed at the bank, this site may also function as an plaza area for employees to enjoy lunch, socialize, or relax. Longer term, the site may be infilled to replace the building that collapsed.

C. *Community Garden Lot:* the lot on 1st Street is currently being used as a community garden, which is a great use for this space, as it enlivens the lot, and improves the image of the block to travelers. Longer term, this lot may also be used as an infill site for a new building that would complete the building wall.

D. *130 N 1st Street:* a nearby small lot on 1st Street next to the NM Highlands University building could be used a small seating space or pocket park in the future.

E. *Corner of 1st Street and Clark Ave:* This lot is currently underutilized and could be purchased by the city for future infill that would complete the strong build-

ing wall created by existing buildings on 1st Street.

F. *Corner lot on 3rd Street and Savage Ave:* This lot is directly across from the Colfax County Courthouse and could be turned into a pocket park, or used for a new residence. The lot was recently listed for sale for $25,000, and could be purchased by MainStreet or the City for future redevelopment.

G. *Roundhouse Park Grounds:* The large grounds surrounding the rail tracks directly east of downtown are a wide expanse of underutilized land. Future improvements could involve the extension of existing trails within Roundhouse Park or the creation of a new public space such as an amphitheater.

3. STREETS AND CONNECTIONS

Downtown has a very walkable system of streets that link many existing assets. There is potential to create additional connections to the network of trails in Climax Canyon Park, as well as across the railroad tracks to Roundhouse Park and the Aquatic Center.

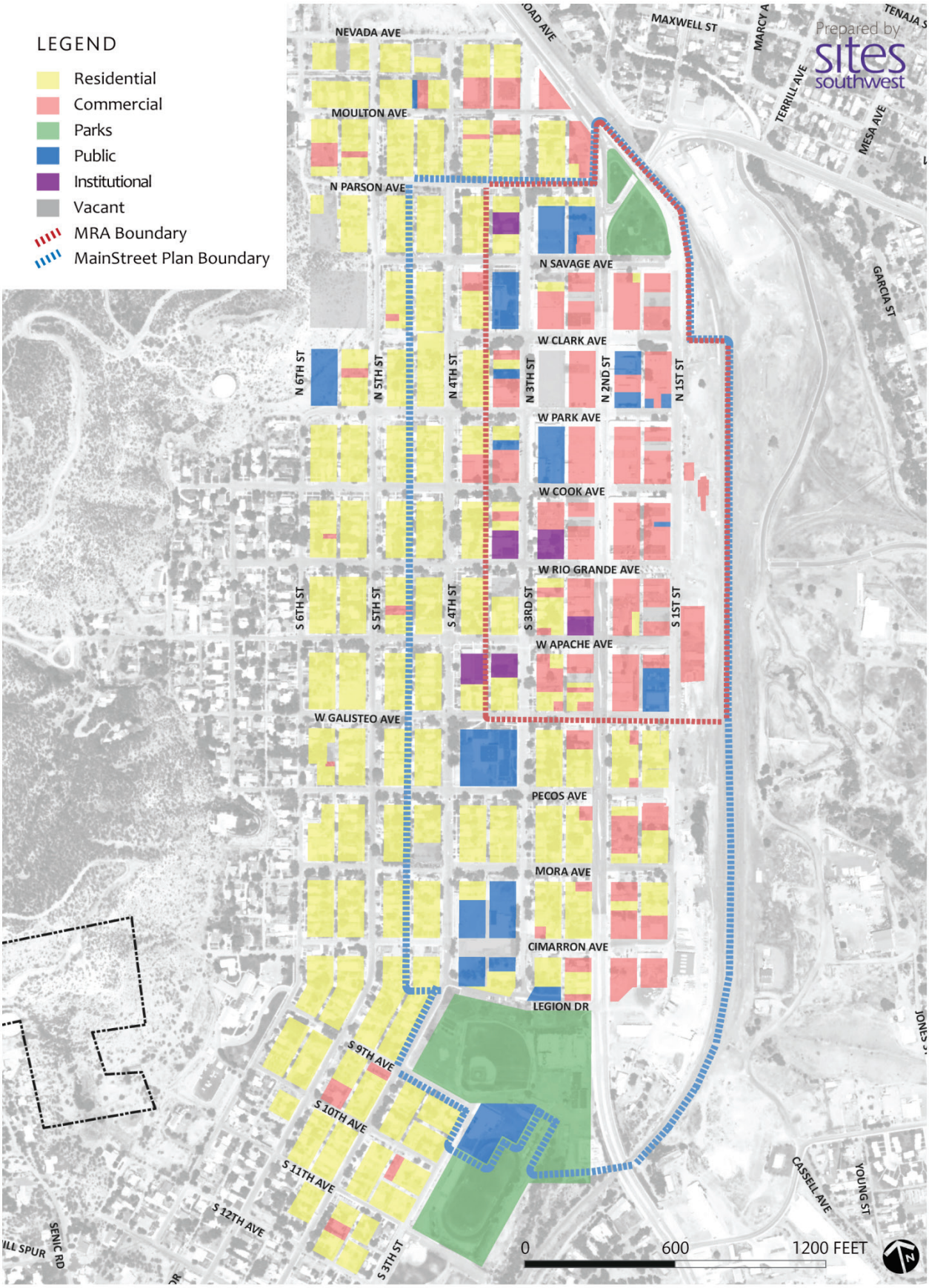
A. *1st Street:* as the Great Blocks improvements move forward, 1st Street is positioned to become the heart of the downtown and the place to host new events, target reinvestment, and promote downtown's historic identity.

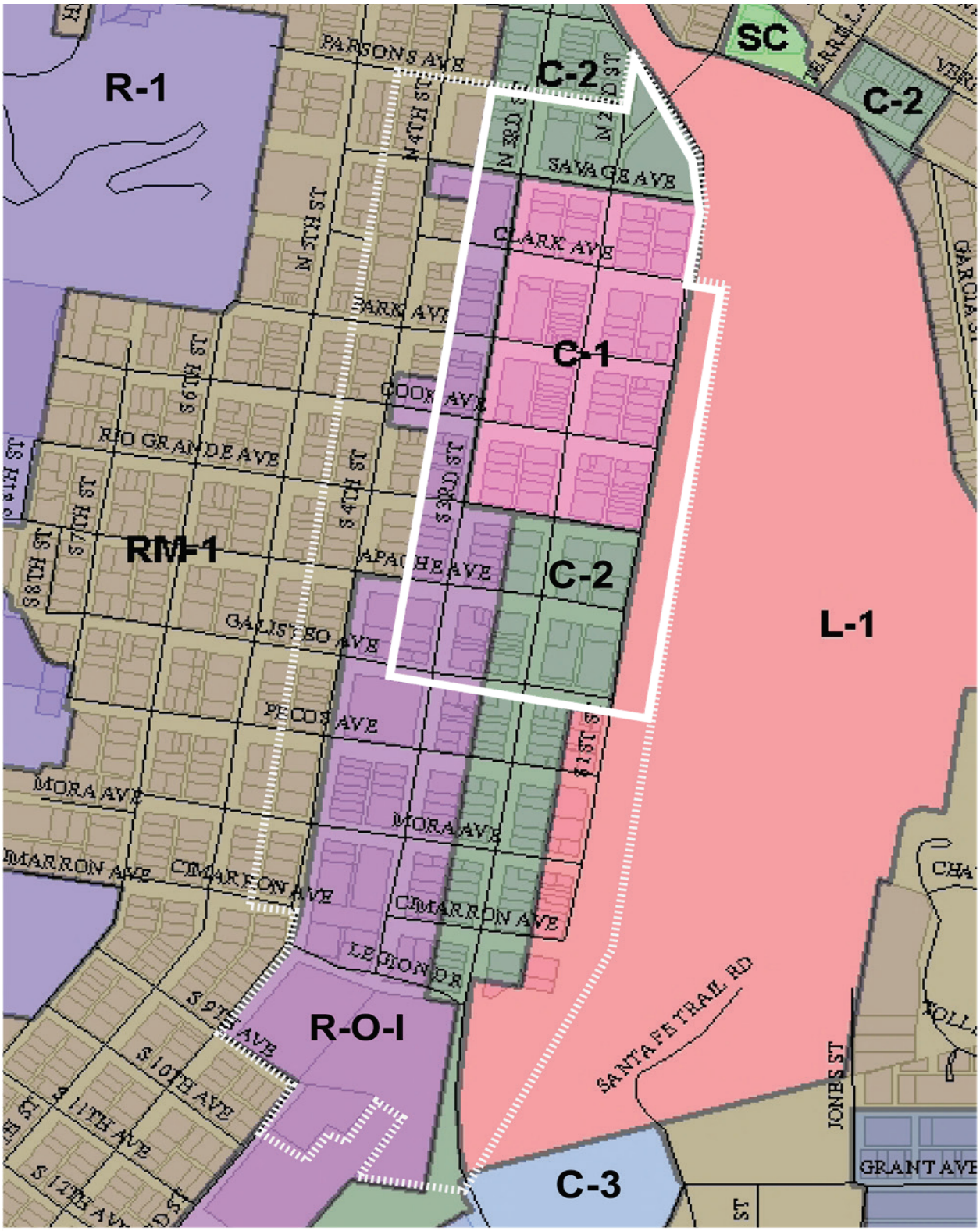
B. *2nd Street:* in the future, 2nd Street is primed for a road diet that would improve walkability and allow for the accommodation of bicycle infrastructure.

C. *Wayfinding Sites:* there are a number of crucial wayfinding sites including the existing overpasses, the exits off I-25, and public areas along 1st and 2nd Streets. There are also places to highlight connections to area parks, Climax Canyon Trails, Goat Hill, and major local attractions.

D. *Rio Grande Ave Extension:* there is the potential to extend Rio Grande to the east and establish a new connection with the Raton Aquatic Center and east Raton neighborhoods.

MAP 2: LAND USE





LEGEND

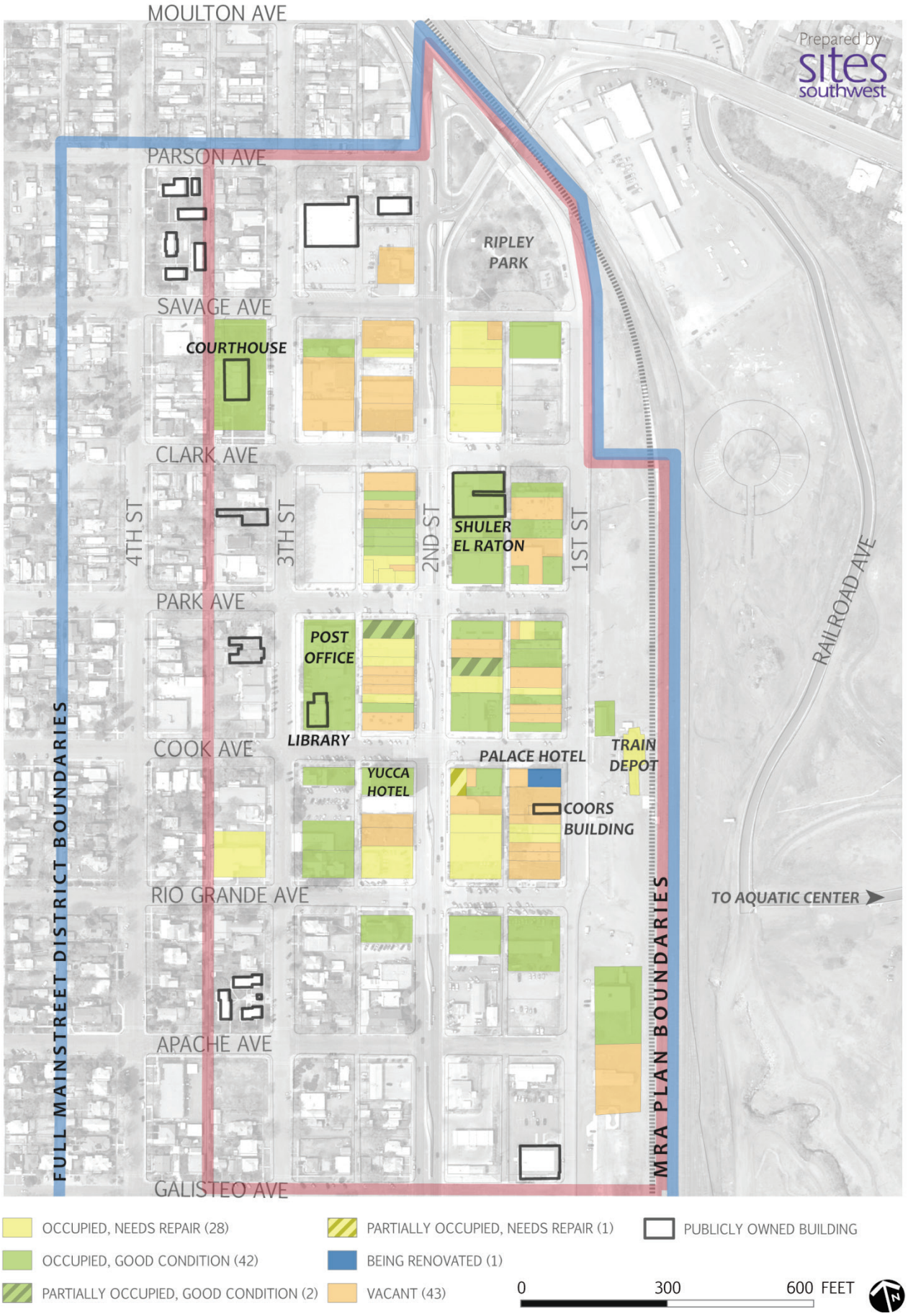
MRA BOUNDARY

MAINSTREET BOUNDARY

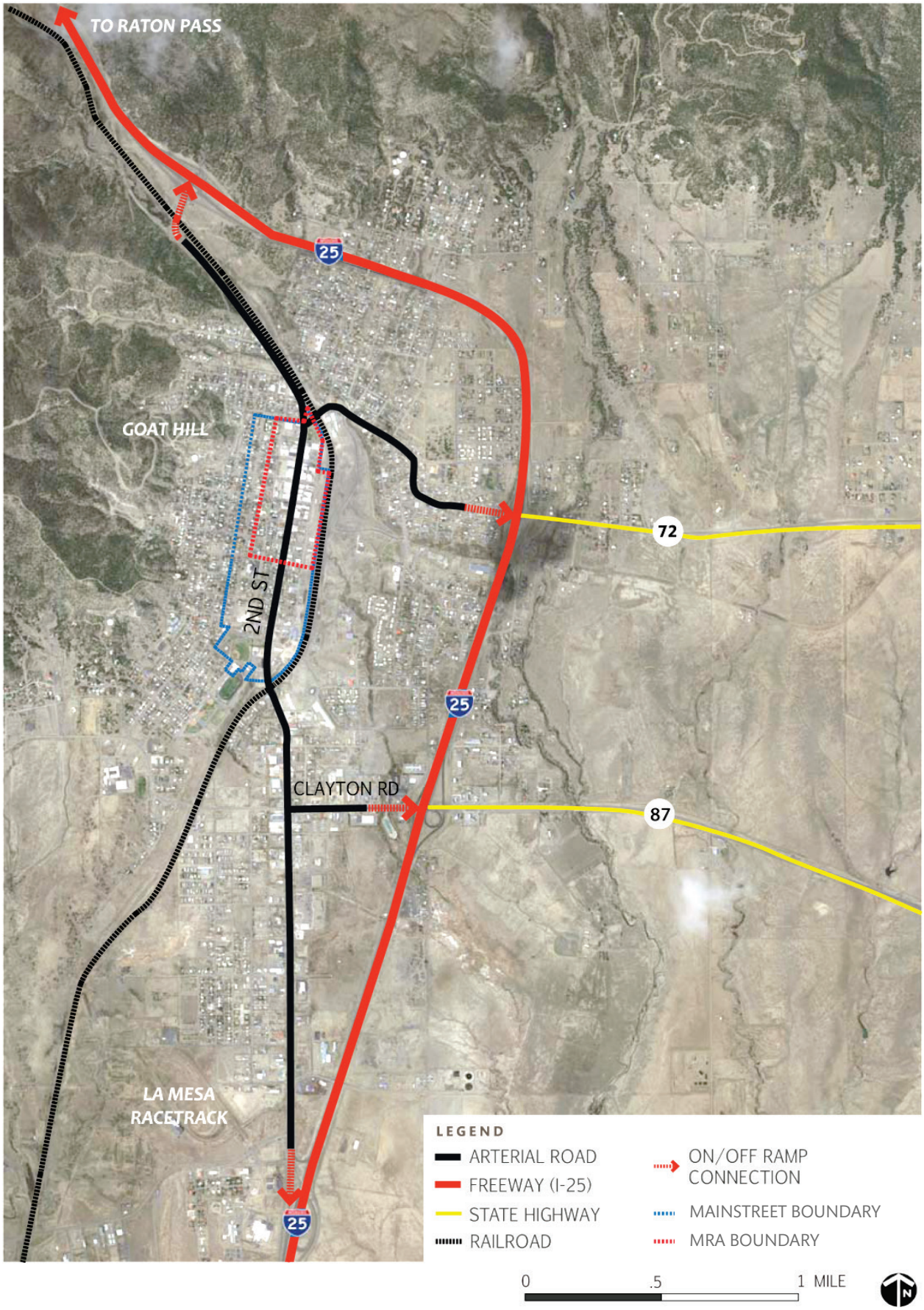
0 300 600 FEET

Prepared by sites southwest

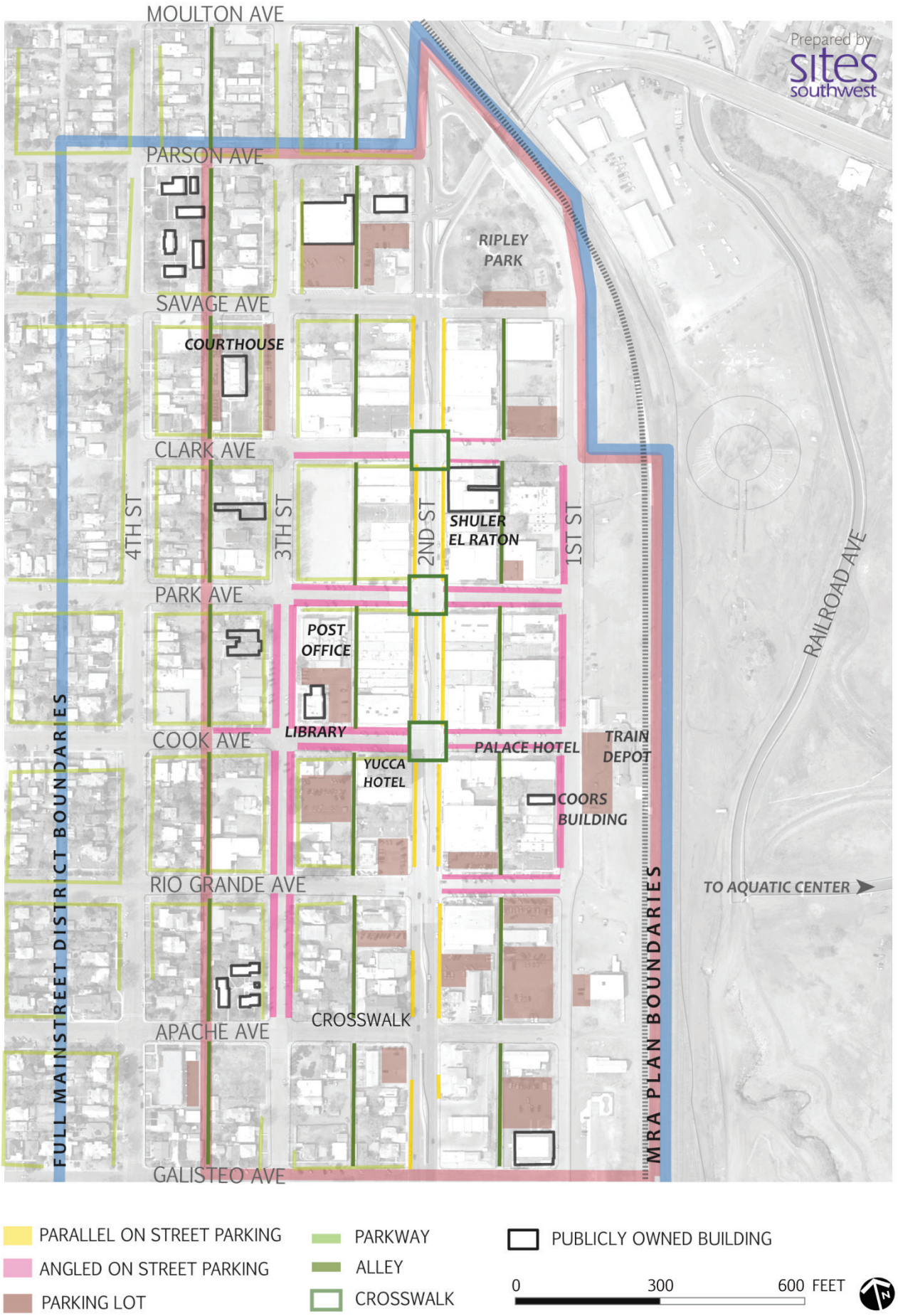
MAP 4: BUILDING CONDITIONS



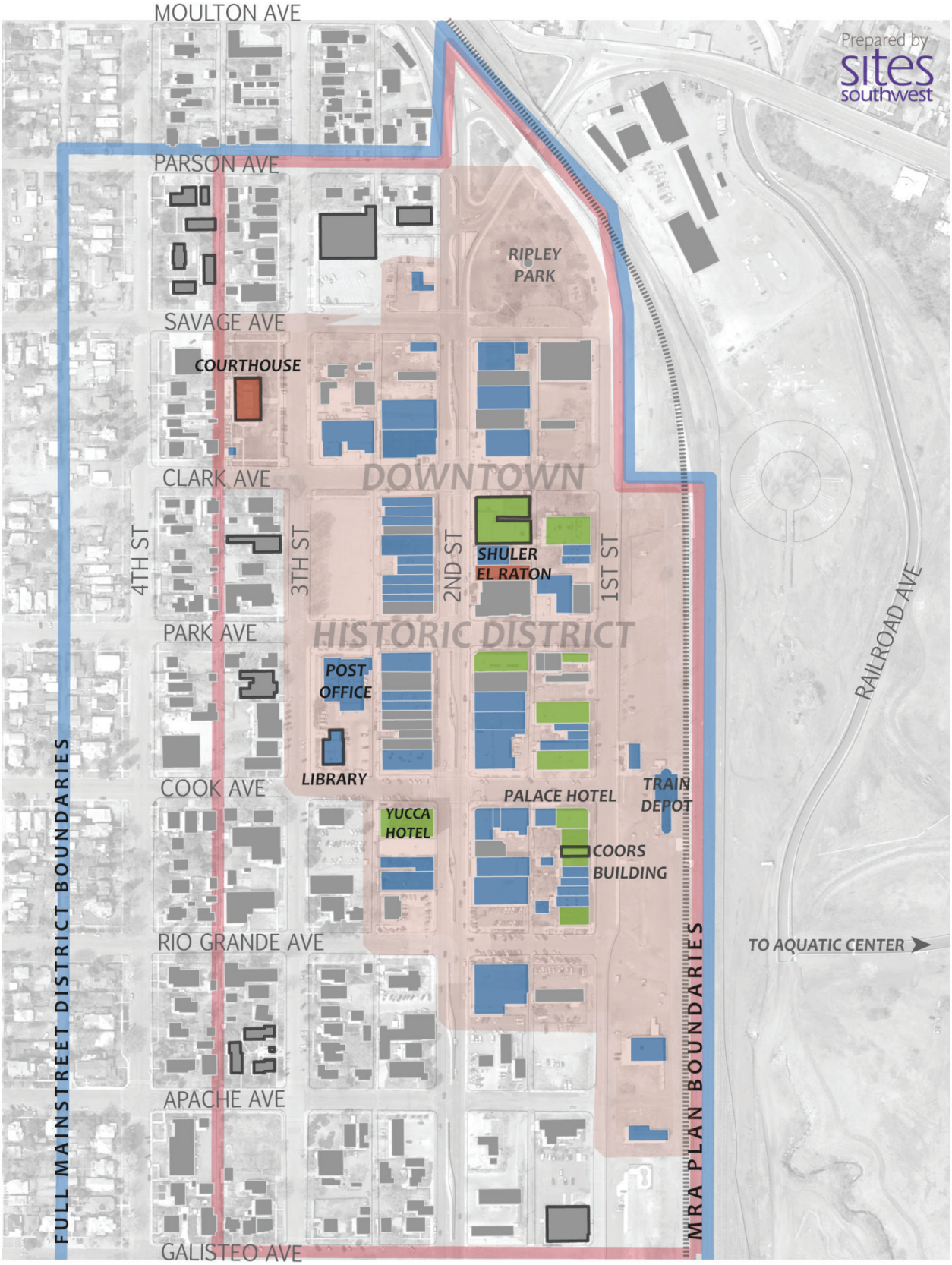
MAP 5: CITY ROAD NETWORK AND CONNECTIONS



MAP 6: DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS



MAP 7: HISTORIC BUILDINGS



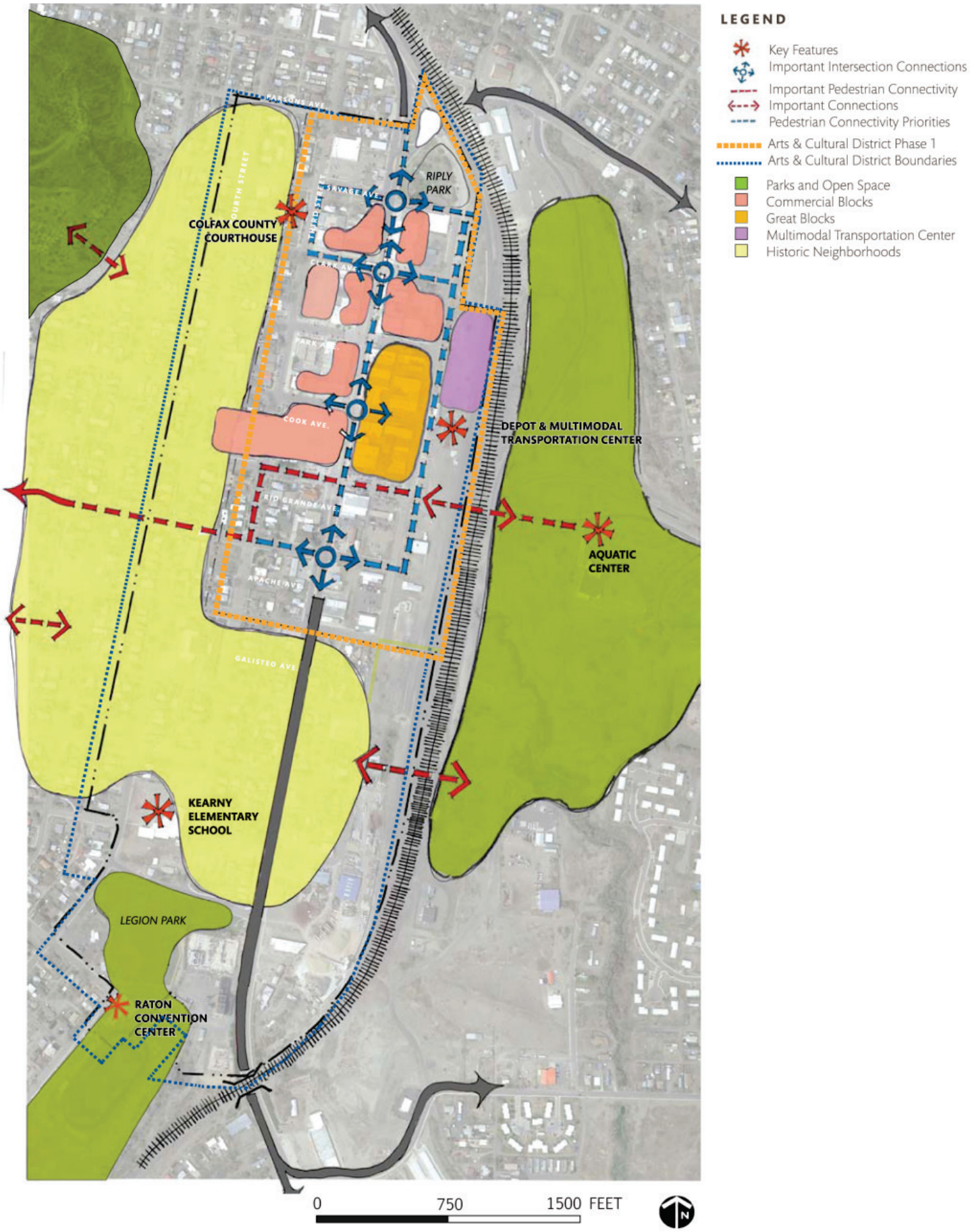
CONTRIBUTING BUILDING

PUBLICLY OWNED

ON STATE REGISTER OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES

ON STATE REGISTER & NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

0 300 600 FEET


LEGEND
Key Features
Important Intersection Connections
Important Pedestrian Connectivity
Important Connections
Pedestrian Connectivity Priorities
Arts & Cultural District Phase 1
Arts & Cultural District Boundaries
Parks and Open Space
Commercial Blocks
Great Blocks
Multimodal Transportation Center
Historic Neighborhoods
COLFAX COUNTY COURTHOUSE
RIPLY PARK
DEPOT & MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER
AQUATIC CENTER
KEARNY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LEGION PARK
RATON CONVENTION CENTER
FOURTH STREET
COOK AVE.
RIO GRANDE AVE
APACHE AVE
GALISTEO AVE
0
750
1500 FEET

SECTION IV

MARKET STUDY

As part of this plan, a market study was conducted to assess the current economic climate in Downtown Raton. Data from the 2010 U.S. Census, as well as 5 year estimates from the American Community Survey, New Mexico Workforce Solutions, ESRI Business Analyst, and the Bureau for Labor Statistics were used to compile this section of the document.[6]

Market studies were previously conducted in 2006 by UNM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER), and as part of the 2009 Downtown Master Plan. These studies both indicated that there are structural challenges facing Raton: the population is stagnant and aging, there are low levels of educational attainment, and there is continuing out-migration of younger workers. In addition, as was noted during public meetings and through the business survey conducted for this plan, Downtown Raton could benefit from a more diverse mixture of businesses, especially "amenity businesses" such as restaurants, drinking establishments, and arts and entertainment venues.

Since these two previous studies were published, there have been large-scale nationwide and regional economic changes that have affected Raton. Most noticeably, the city is still recovering from the effects of the "Great Recession" in 2008-2009. Plans to construct a "racino" have also not come to fruition, much

[6] Because Raton is a small community, some data were either not available or were outdated. In some cases, Colfax County was used to measure specific indicators, such as overall employment or gross receipts taxes. Because Raton makes up approximately half of the County's population, this proxy measure should reveal economic and demographic changes happening in Raton.

to the chagrin of many residents who felt the racino would have brought much needed visitors and expanded retail sales dollars.

In addition, since that time, the Downtown Arts and Cultural District and its companion Cultural Plan have been established, which advocate for Raton to pursue a *creative economy approach*. Such an approach seeks to shift the economy away from declining traditional industries, and grow the arts, performance, music, crafts, film, and other creative industries. This strategy builds upon existing community assets (such as historic buildings and natural scenery) to attract more visitors seeking a unique, "authentic" experience that cannot be found elsewhere. The promise of this strategy is that not only has economic benefits, but also improves the quality of life and livability of a place.

1. DEMOGRAPHICS

1.1 POPULATION & AGE

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Raton's population was 6,885, with 2,963 households (2.28 people per household). The estimated population in 2014 showed a slight decrease to 6,326 residents. Overall, this decline follows an ongoing trend: since 1980 Raton's population has been steadily declining at an average rate of about 0.5% annually. This follows a larger regional trend of declining population in Colfax County (see Chart 2). In addition, *this trend seems to have affected downtown Raton, which has seen a recent decrease in population* from 703 residents in the study area in 2000 to 573 in 2010, and an estimated 540 residents according to the most recent ACS estimates.[7]

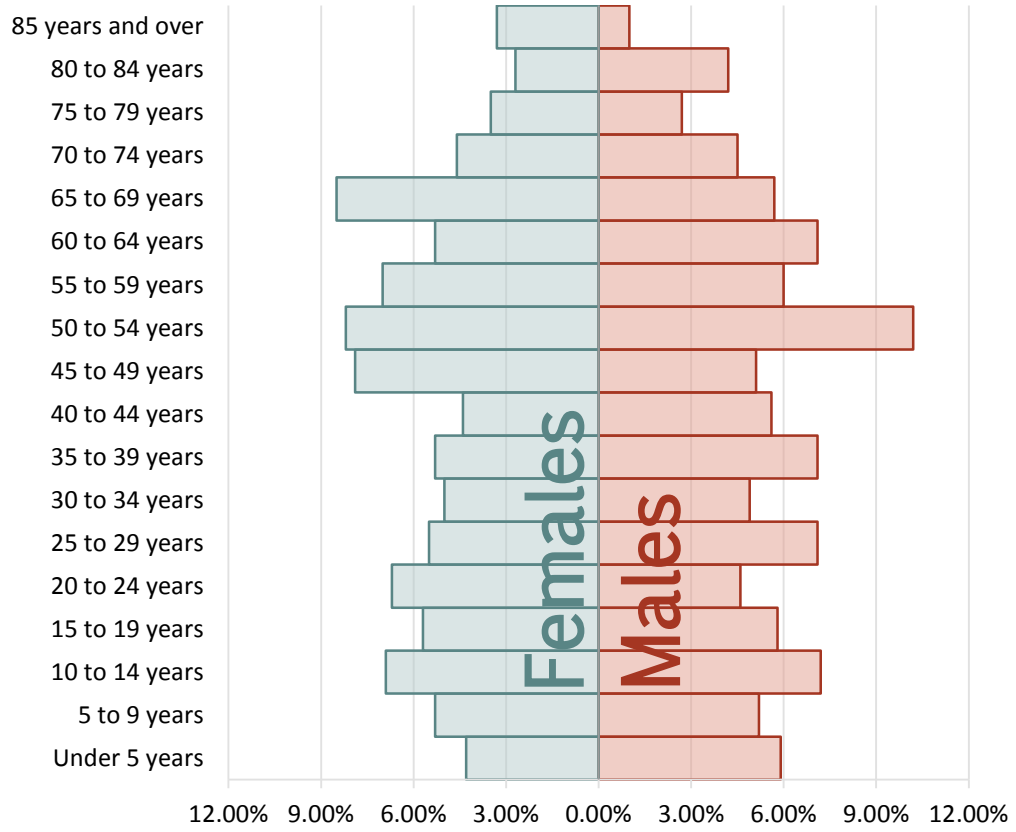
As was mentioned in the previous market studies, Raton also has an aging population, with an estimated median age of 43.5 years. This is significantly higher than the median age of 36.7 years for New Mexico as a whole. *It also indicates that Raton's population has continued to age since 2000*, when the median age was 39.7 years. Reviewing a population pyramid for Raton shows the age of the population, with a large "bulge" in population for age groups above 45 years old (see Chart 1). The low percentage of residents between the ages of 19 and 40 represent the outmigration of younger residents mentioned in the two previous studies.

The age-dependency ratio – which reveals the number of people who are too young or too old to work – is also very high at 71.3. This means that a significant amount of the population in Raton is not part of the full time labor market. Although not necessarily a

[7] ACS, 5 year 2009-2013. These data are for Census Block Group 3, Tract 9506, which overlays an area very similar to the boundaries of the Arts and Cultural District. The block group includes some parcels to the north and west of the study area, but is the best Census area geography to use when comparing trends longitudinally. Overall, the downtown area represents about 10% of Raton's overall population currently.

negative trend, it does indicate a lower level of participation in the labor market and the continued outmigration of young workers.

CHART 1: AGE OF POPULATION BY SEX



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2013 Five-year Estimates.

PROJECTIONS

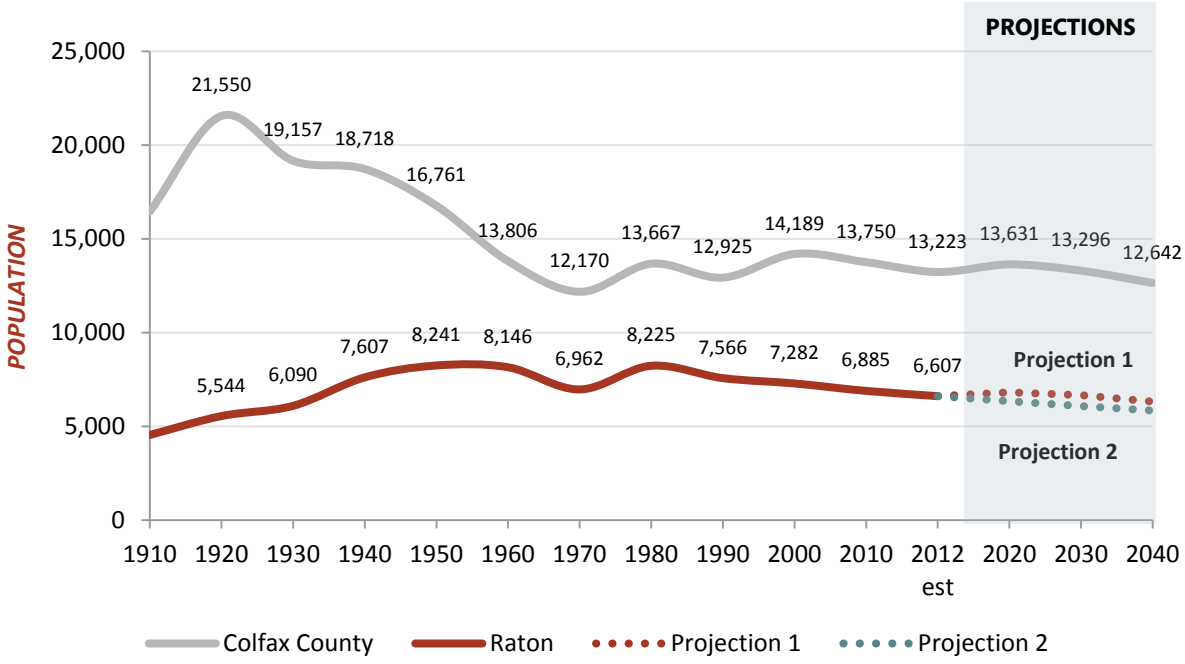
Population projections produced by UNM's *Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER)* for Colfax County can be extrapolated to Raton to project future growth patterns. BBER's projections rely on historical growth, and assume that growth rates will continue to follow historical trends.

Given BBER's projections and historical population trends in Raton, two projections are provided. *Projection 1* assumes that Raton will maintain its current share of Colfax County's population, which is approximately half of the County's entire population. Under this projection, Raton's population will remain fairly steady until 2030, when it will decline slightly to approximately 6,300 residents. *Projection 2* relies on an exponential growth model that assumes Raton's growth rate will follow recent historical trends and have a smaller share of Colfax County's population in the future. This projection shows a gradual decline in population to approximately 5,839 people in 2040.

Both these projections show that Raton may not expect to gain population in the near fu-

ture, and may continue to lose residents. This trend can be expected to impact downtown as well, unless economic or housing conditions are made more attractive to new residents. However, it should be noted that city and county-wide developments could change these projections in the near future. For example, successful implementation of revitalization strategies outlined in this plan could attract new residents looking to start a business or a place to retire. In turn, coordination between local agencies (such as Raton MainStreet, and the City of Raton) has the potential to successfully re-position Raton as a dynamic, rural participant in the "creative economy".

CHART 2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS



Source: UNM BBER, Projected Growth Rates by County, November 2014.

1.2 INCOME

Income for Raton is lower than the rest of New Mexico: in 2013 the median household income was $32,967 – considerably lower than New Mexico's median income of $44,927. Raton's average household income was slightly higher at $40,843.

Newer data provided by New Mexico Workforce Solutions indicates that annual income in Colfax County is currently $32,292, which ranks 22/33 for New Mexico's Counties. The poverty rate was 19.8%, which has been declining since the 2008 recession. The median income for full time female workers was much lower than that for males – $22,662 versus $35,156 respectively. The number of people receiving Social Security was quite high, with an estimated 42% of households receiving Social Security. In addition, an estimated 23% of households had retirement income of some sort. 17.4% of people had used Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past year.

1.3 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Raton's education attainment continues to be lower than New Mexico as a whole. 18.3% of adults over 25 years old were estimated to have not obtained a high school degree or equivalent, while only 13.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, about 16.4% of New Mexican's over 25 years old do not have a high school degree, and 25.8% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The number of residents age 18-25 with less than a high school degree was much higher, at 32%.

1.4 WORKFORCE & UNEMPLOYMENT

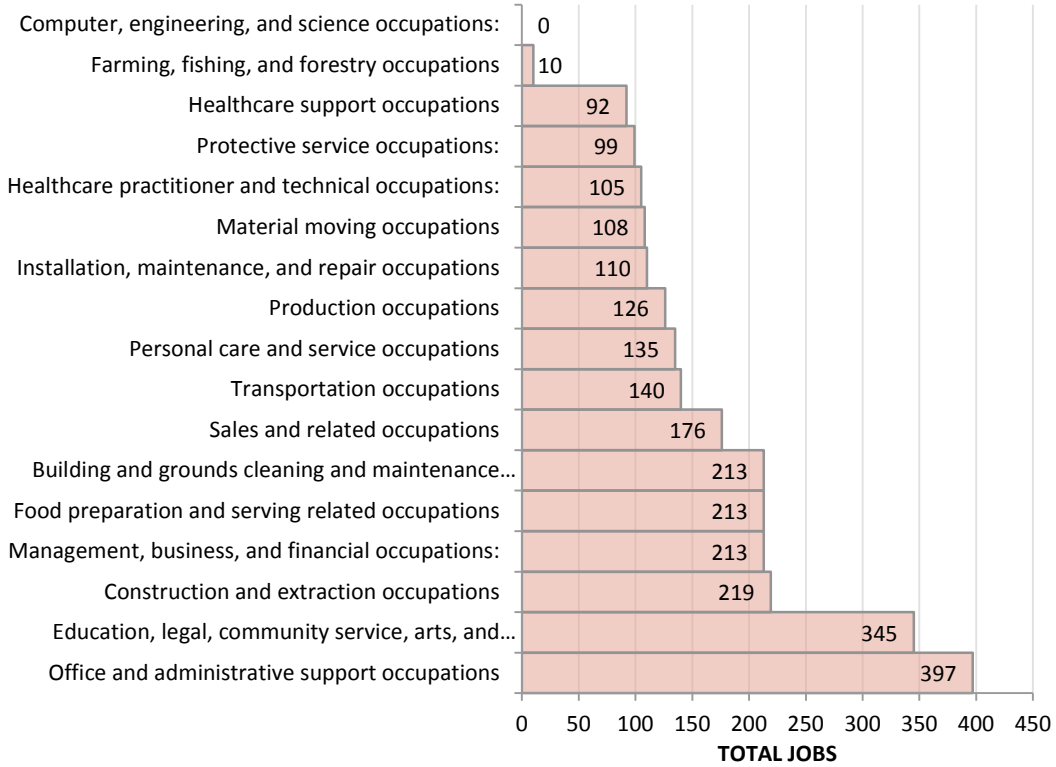
As with the population as a whole, Raton's workforce is aging, with a large number of residents no longer in the workforce (due to retirement or otherwise). The total civilian workforce over 16 years old is 2,911 according to the latest ACS estimates. This corresponds to about 53% of the total population over 16; the total population not in the labor force is 2,600 or 47% of the total population. Further, the estimated number of people on disability is 1,215 people or 33.7% of the working age population.

OCCUPATIONS

Major occupations within Raton follow the major industrial sectors outlined below. The occupations with the highest total employment are management occupations, education and training, food preparation, building and grounds cleaning, office and administrative support, personal care, sales and related occupations, and construction and extraction occupations. The occupations with the highest location quotients (OLQ) (indicating a higher level of specialization) are community and social services, healthcare and support, protective services, building and grounds cleaning, construction and extraction, food preparation and serving related, and material moving occupations. Together these data suggest:

1. Residents' skills are within the education, legal, community services fields, as well as within service occupations and those related to hospitality.
2. Some of the occupations with the highest degree of specialization remain in the production, transportation and material fields, including material moving occupations, construction and extraction, transportation, and production fields.
3. Although 45 people are estimated to have an arts, design, and entertainment occupation, the overall location quotient for this category was slightly lower (0.94) than New Mexico as whole, indicating that Raton's residents are not currently specialized in these occupations relative to New Mexico. If this is true, it reflects the slow adoption to a creative economy within Raton.
4. Further, there were few residents employed within computer, engineering or science occupations, except perhaps the City Engineer and employees of Stolar Global Mining. As a subset of the creative economy, these occupations are often a complement to traditional arts and cultural based creative economy jobs.

CHART 3: OCCUPATIONS WITHIN RATON BY TOTAL JOBS



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2008-2013 5-year estimates.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Colfax County's unemployment rate has followed New Mexico's unemployment rates closely for the last decade. After a peak during the "Great Recession" of over 8.0%, the County's unemployment rate has dropped to 5.9% for June 2015.[8] The good news is that during that same period, the County's labor force has remained fairly stable, with about 6,500 people employed, despite the County's loss in population. Raton's unemployment rate has followed the County's as a whole for the last several years.

1.5 INDUSTRIES

Reviewing industry data for Raton offers an additional lens to understand how employment and business activity has change over the last decade. This can show which industries not only employ the most people, but which are most competitive within the larger economy.[9]

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[8] NM Workforce Connection, Area Profile for Colfax County, Retrieved July 2015.

[9] Unfortunately, the industry estimates for Raton included a high margin of error and were in some case unavailable for recent years. For this reason, Colfax County industry data were used instead. Although there may be some local differences between Raton and Colfax County, because Raton makes up about half the county's population, these overall numbers should be relatively similar. This analysis looked at the latest available data From the Bureau of Labor Sta-

LOCATION QUOTIENTS & SHIFT-SHARE ANALYSIS

One way to analyze an industry's employment strength is by looking at its *location quotient (LQ)*. An industry's location quotient shows an industry's relative employment specialization to a larger base economy during a set year. In other words, it shows the specialization of each industry for that given year. Those industries with a high location quotient (over 1.0) that produce export goods or services represent the *base industries*, and usually bring money into the local economy. These include tourism based industries such as hospitality and food services, as well as some arts and cultural industries.

Shift-share analysis is another tool that can be used to analyze a region's overall competitiveness with the national economy. Like location quotients, shift-share analysis can show how individual industries are performing. However, unlike location quotients, shift-share analyzes how industries are *changing over time*, which can reveal larger trends such as emerging industry segments or industries that are declining. Such an analysis can help classify industries by group: *emerging* (low LQ, nationally competitive), *declining* (decreasing LQ, not competitive), *transforming* (high LQ, not competitive), and *growing base* (high LQ, competitive).

Location quotient and shift-share analysis for Colfax County reveal that many industries within the County are not currently competitive within the national economy. Although some industries have grown by number of employees and number of establishments, only a few have produced as many jobs as expected if local industries had followed national trends. For example, although retail trade is a base industry, given the growth in the national economy and the retail sector, an additional 42 jobs or so were expected to be generated over the 2008-2014 time period. This shows that the retail trade industry is *underperforming* in Colfax County as a whole.

Together, these data show that the specialization and competitiveness of certain industries in Colfax County have been declining relative to New Mexico since the Great Recession. Eight takeaways include:

1. The transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, real estate, management of companies, and arts and entertainment industries have all declined relative to New Mexico's economy.
2. Healthcare, information, and administrative services are emerging industry sectors.
3. Agriculture remains a base industry for the County and has remained competitive.
4. The retail sector can be considered "transforming" – an adjective that is revealed in the data, but also makes sense as local retail establishments continue to adjust to the economy post the Great Recession.

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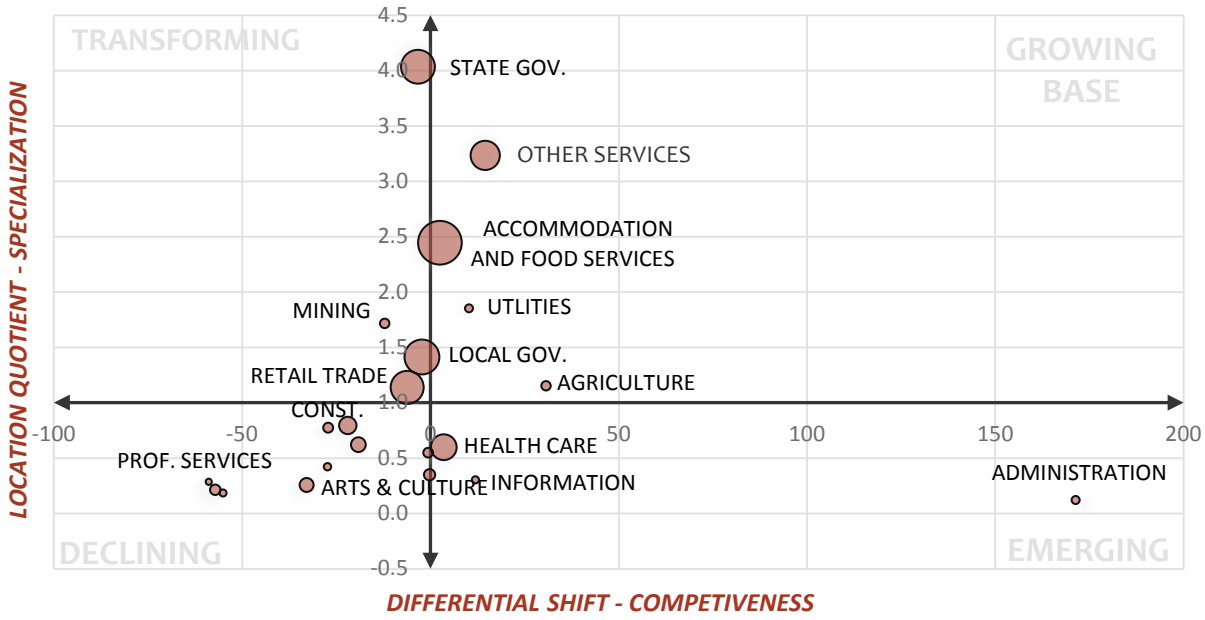
tistics for the time period between 2008 and 2014. This analysis period clearly shows the effects of the Great Recession and the region's slow recovery from the economic doldrums of late 2008 and 2009.

5. Although no longer a major employer, mining is still important to the county on a small scale and can be considered a "transforming" industry.
6. Many of the County's base industries are non-export based industries, such as local and state government. These industries do not necessary bring tourist money into the economy, even though they provide a stable source of employment. However, federal jobs often bring in money from outside through contracts and large federal grants.
7. Perhaps most revealing of these data is the weakness in the "creative economy" sectors. There has been a marked decline in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry, which has lost workers since 2008 and currently has a low level of specialization. In addition, the professional services industry has lost almost half its jobs since 2008. These data suggest that an effort to transform Raton's economy to a "creative economy" still faces challenges and will take renewed effort on the part of the City, County, and Raton MainStreet to provide catalysts to future growth.
8. If anything, these data reinforce the strength of Raton's accommodation and food services sector, which caters mainly to tourists. There remains potential to expand the capture of tourists who visit regional attractions, which will benefit complementary sectors such as retail trade and perhaps the arts and cultural sector.

CHART 4: INDUSTRY COMPARISON



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Employment Report by Industry. The size of each bubble represents the number of employees within that industry sector. Accommodation and Food Services, with 1145 employees in 2014, is the largest bubble. The Y-Axis shows the location quotient, which is a measure of specialization for an industry (relative to NM's economy). Higher values show a larger degree of specialization. The X-Axis shows the differential shift, which shows how well the industry performed relative to the national economy, and is a measure of competiveness. Higher values correspond to local industries that performed better than would have been expected given the growth or decline in that industry sector nationally.

2. TRADE AREA CHARACTERISTICS

Raton's trade area encompasses the area within approximately 50 miles of downtown. This area includes most of the populated areas of Colfax County, including Springer, Cimarron, Eagle Nest, and Folsom, as well as parts of Las Animas County in Colorado, including Trinidad, CO. The approximate population of this trade area was 30,000 in 2010, with Raton accounting for almost a quarter of the trade area population. As with Raton (and Colfax County), Las Animas County in Colorado has a stagnant or slowly declining population, meaning the trade area's population as a whole is not expected to grow significantly (if at all) in the next decade. This is a change from the 2009 market study that projected the trade area would gain population between 2010 and 2020.

2.1 TRADE AREAS

The trade area can be described as having four components, each with a different customer segment. Finding ways to market to each customer group (with different preferences, incomes, etc.) will be important to step to attract additional visitors to downtown.

1. PRIMARY TRADE AREA

Includes nearby neighborhood residents and workers who shop and/or dine within downtown. Businesses in this trade area include shops within easy walking distance of residents and employment centers. Overall, Downtown's total employment has remained relatively stable, but downtown's role is shifting from amenity based jobs that benefit from or support tourism to administrative and service jobs. While the total number of jobs in downtown has been stable, one-third of ground floor commercial space is vacant. A significant increase in jobs is needed to fill vacant buildings, along with conversion of second floor and above spaces to residential. Amenity based jobs and continued increases in services are opportunities to improve downtown employment and commercial occupancy. Additional details on the primary trade area are summarized in *3.2* Downtown Retail Market Gaps below.

2. SECONDARY TRADE AREA

Includes residents of Raton who travel downtown for products, services, or entertainment. As mentioned above, downtown no longer has the retail and hospitality offerings that it once had, meaning many Raton residents may travel to other parts of town for some goods and services. While there may be additional opportunity to bring local residents to downtown, but local resident spending will not be enough to support the wide expansion of downtown business, given current incomes and a stagnant population. In addition, the concentration of businesses and employment opportunities in other parts of town (namely Clayton Road), will make it difficult for Main Street to attract new employment opportunities that do not simply shift the location of jobs from one part of town to another.

3. REGIONAL TRADE AREA

This area includes residents of the surrounding region who travel to downtown Raton for specialty goods, arts and culture, professional services, or entertainment. Given that Raton is the largest city within northeastern New Mexico after Las Vegas and the last stop before crossing the New Mexico/Colorado border, it is a natural retail hub and place of employment. However, local retail has struggled to compete with the opening of the Walmart in nearby Trinidad, and Raton has lost some of its retail market position as a result. Despite this, the City's hospitality sector has remained strong, and provides a base industry sector that the City should continue to support.

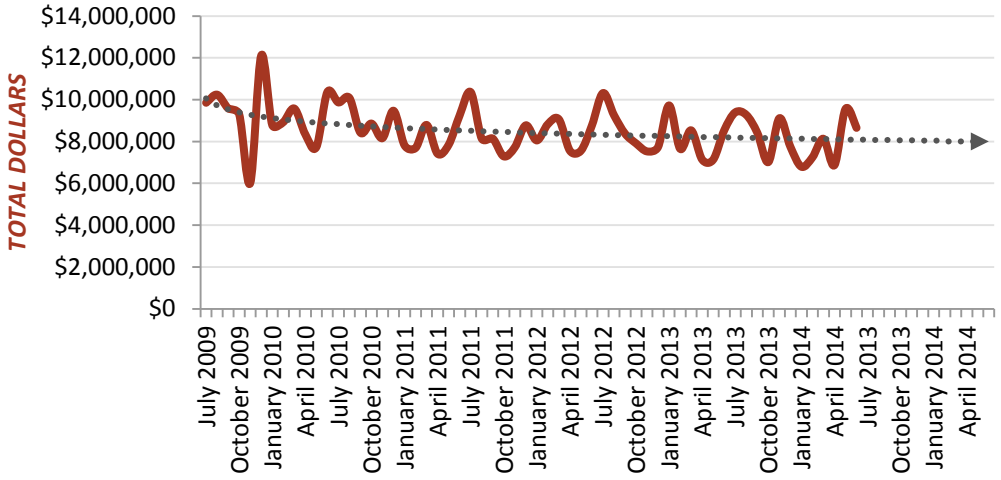
4. TOURISTS

Tourists may be drawn to regional attractions and seek lodging, dining, specialty retail, events or other opportunities in downtown. As pointed out in the two previous market studies, downtown Raton has lost lodging and tourist based businesses to other locations within Raton or to Trinidad, CO. However, as detailed below, there is a huge potential to capture additional tourists within downtown.

2.2 GROSS RECEIPT TAXES

Gross receipts data indicates that total receipts have fallen slightly since 2009 from $110,816,933 in FY2010 to $98,205,262 in FY2014. This is a troubling indicator, as gross receipts should have recovered from the Great Recession, and should be comparable to returns pre-recession. However, these data probably reflect the decline in Raton's population since that time, and the corresponding decline in spending. These data do not necessary suggest that Raton is seeing fewer visitors or that they are spending less.

CHART 5: GROSS RECEIPT TAXES, FY2010 - FY 2014



Source: New Mexico Finance Authority

2.3 REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS & TOURISM

Raton's local assets are complemented by a wealth of regional assets that attract visitors from around the county (see MAP 9). These include:

1. *Sugarite Canyon State Park* is about 8 miles northeast of Raton, and features campgrounds, hiking, and boating opportunities on Lake Maloya. This park hosts many recreational events during the year, including the Master of the Mountains Adventure Race and Relay, which are a potential source of additional visitors and/or lodgers for downtown. Although visitor information was not obtained, visitors at the nearby Eagle Nest State Park are over 100,000 people per year, and similar numbers could be expected to visit Sugarite.
2. *Capulin Volcano National Monument,* an extinct volcano 30 miles east of Raton, attracts approximately 50,000 visitors each year, mostly in the summer months. The national park does not have overnight lodging and does not allow camping, which makes Raton a natural stopping point for those who travel from long distance to do a day hike of the volcano.
3. *Maxwell National Refuge* is a wildlife refuge 32 miles south of Raton featuring year round views of 215 migratory bird species and other wildlife.
4. *Philmont Scout Ranch* is a Boy Scouts camp located 46 miles southwest of Raton. The camp sees approximately 18,000 scouts per summer, with about 6,000 of them arriving by the Southwest Chief. As pointed out in the 2009 market study, these scouts and their families offer an opportunity to capture more overnight stays, and convenience/souvenir spending.
5. *Vermejo Ranch Park* is a wildlife reserve and resort camp owned by Ted Turner that located about 55 miles west of Raton. It is considered the largest single contiguous parcel of land owned by a private owner in the United States. The grounds have capacity for 70 visitors at one location and 16 at another, with an estimated 2,500 visitors per year.
6. *NRA Whittington Center* is a shooting range and event space 10 miles south of Raton off Highway 64 and attracts 150,000 visitors a year. Although the Center offers some lodging accommodations on site, many travelers may be enticed to visit and/or stay in Raton. Capturing more of these guests (especially those who take overnight trips or attend events) would be boon for downtown, and are one of the largest opportunity segments to focus promotional efforts.

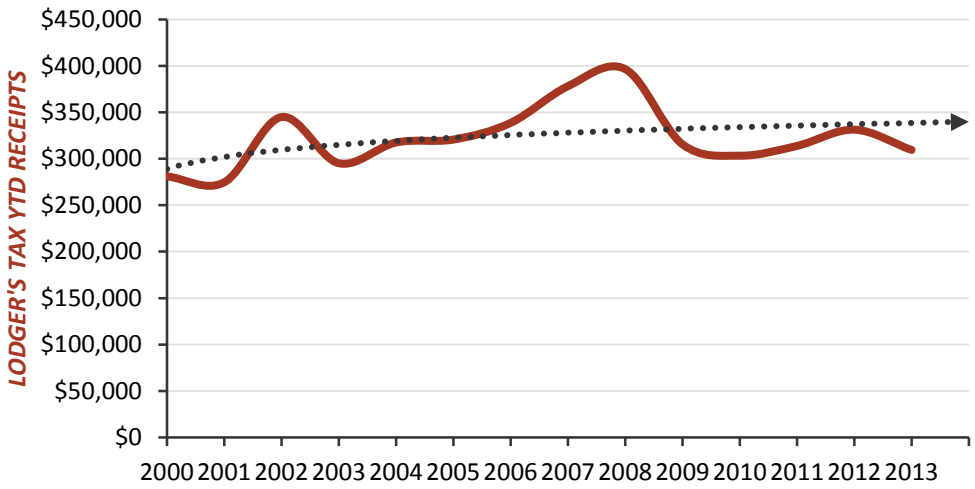
These regional assets represent an opportunity to attract additional visitors who currently pass through Raton, without stopping or exploring downtown. Although it is hard to know how many of these visitors already visit downtown Raton and spend money there, they do represent significant market potential. For instance, if downtown were able to capture a modest 10% of these visitors and each were to spend $25, this would amount to $894,000 annually. *The potential is even greater if these travelers also stayed in downtown Raton and dined there.* Future efforts should seek to market Raton as a destination for these visitors in addition to their primary attractions to help lure additional tourists.

2.4 LODGER'S TAX DATA

The potential for downtown Raton to capture additional tourists is also shown in lodger's tax data, which is currently set at a rate of 5.0%. Although the total receipts from this tax have fallen slightly from a high before the Great Recession, they have slowly stabilized and continue to represent a sustainable income stream for the city.[10]

Receipts from this tax indicate that approximately 75,000 visitors stay in local motels each year.[11] If a small portion of these travelers had additional options to stay in downtown, or an incentive to visit, the district could see a large increase in activity. For example, using a conservative estimate assuming that 15% more travelers would visit downtown and spend $25 dollars each while there (for dining or shopping), would mean approximately $400,000 additional dollars spent in the downtown district each year. Changing these assumptions even slightly to account for increased tourist spending or number of tourists, could easily equate to over $1,000,000 being spent in downtown each year. Additionally, with lodging opportunities within downtown, some of these visitors could be expected to stay within the district and spend larger amounts of money.

CHART 6: LODGER'S TAX RECEIPTS, 2000 - 2013



Source: UNM BBER

2.5 POTENTIAL DEMAND

To estimate some of the potential demand for additional retail, lodging, and dining options in downtown, this market study used the visitor numbers outlined above and used modest assumptions to calculate potential demand if these travelers were to visit and/or stay with-

[10] These data were not adjusted for inflation.

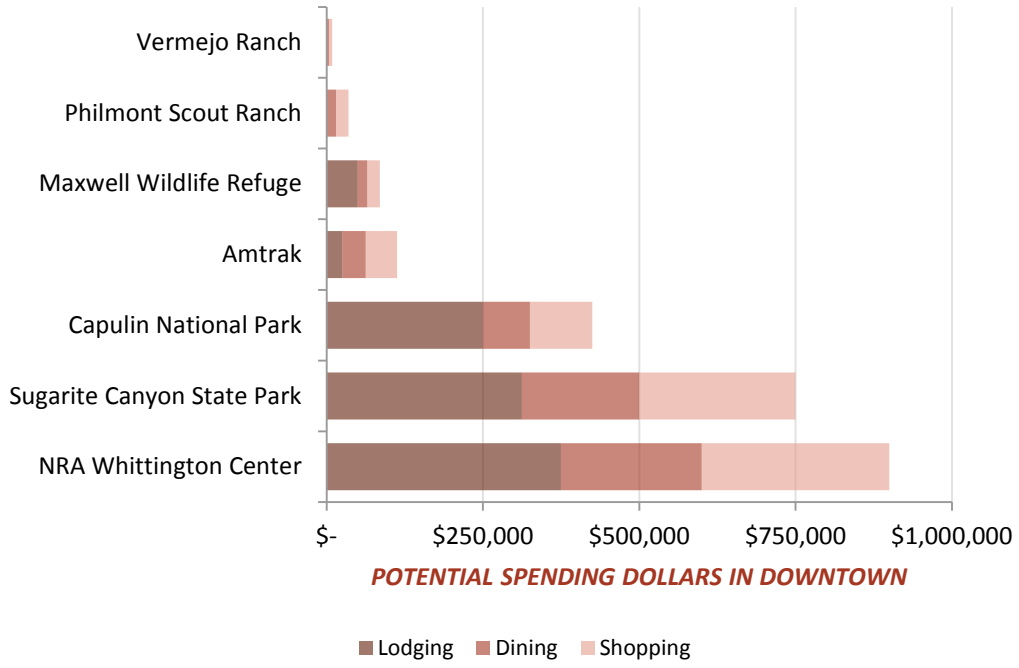
[11] This number was calculated assuming that the average hotel rate was $120 per night, and each room was occupied by 1.5 people. Overall, this is a conservative estimate and visitor totals may be much higher.

in downtown.[12] It is important to note that these estimates are for *additional visitors* that may be captured in downtown, as it is currently unknown how many already visit downtown Raton or stay in other parts of town. In addition, these estimates do not account for seasonality, which could mean the market demand is much higher during the summer months when many people visit the largest nearby attractions (such as Capulin and Sugarite).

From these modest estimates, it is clear that downtown Raton has a huge potential to capture additional tourist dollars, including:

1. $1,012,500 additional dollars in lodging dollars from 37,000 more visitors per year. This equates to approximately 42 new hotel rooms in downtown, with an assumed occupancy rate of 66%. Taking into account seasonality, additional rooms may be warranted for peak summer months.
2. $558,750 in new dining dollars, or approximately 3,200 more square feet of dining space. This alone may be enough to support an additional restaurant.
3. $745,000 in new retail dollars, or approximately 4,300 square feet of retail.

CHART 7: POTENTIAL VISITOR SPENDING



Source: Sites Southwest estimates based on annual visitor numbers, and expected number of new tourists attracted to downtown (approximately 10%). See the Appendix for a more detailed summary of assumptions used.

[12] Depending on the facility, different capture rates were used to reflect the potential for visitors to spend money in downtown. Changing these assumptions even slightly to account for increased visitor capture raises these estimates significantly.

3. MARKET CONDITIONS IN DOWNTOWN

3.1 DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES & JOBS

ESRI data indicate that there are 164 firms within downtown, which corresponds to about 25% of the total firms in Raton. The business sectors with the most firms were Retail Trade (14%), Other Services (23%), Finance and Insurance (15%), and Government (12%.). Those sectors with very few or no firms included food stores, general merchandise stores, hotel and lodging, legal services, communication, utility, and miscellaneous retail.

Although many of the office based firms provide relatively stable tenants befitting a traditional main street district civic center, there is a clear lack of more business vibrancy that is attractive to tourists and new residents. For a historic downtown with plenty of daytime workers, there is a surprising lack of eating and drinking establishments, food stores, and general merchandise stores. In addition, the lack of service and hospitality based firms catering to potential visitors is a telling sign that downtown is not capturing enough travelers to support additional businesses at this time.

The good news is that the business survey conducted for this study indicated that many downtown businesses are satisfied with their location in downtown. Respondents to the survey indicated that they were especially satisfied with downtown's safety, location, cooperation between downtown businesses, and the ability to buy local products. Building off these foundational, competitive assets will be one of the keys to MainStreet's success.

FIGURE 13: THE INTERNATIONAL BANK - ONE OF THE MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND ANCHORS WITHIN DOWNTOWN

INFLOW/OUTFLOW

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's *OnTheMap* tool, there were a total of 617 jobs in within the downtown Census Block Group in 2013.[13] Of these jobs, 585 were filled by people living outside the study area, while 32 lived in the study area and were also employed there. In addition, 156 people lived in the study area, but worked elsewhere. Most workers lived within 10 miles of work; however, about 180 workers lived over 50 miles away from the place of employment, indicating that many people have a long commute each day. In addition, data from the American Community Survey indicate that most people (80%) drove to work (mainly to jobs near Clayton Road), with a significant percentage also walking to work (20%). This is a hopeful statistic that reflects the walkability of downtown and the potential to attract additional residents who wish to be within walking distance of their employment.

In addition, these data show that there has been a decline in the total number of jobs since 2010, although overall the number of jobs has averaged approximately 650 total jobs since 2002. A large number of these jobs were in Health Care (19%), Retail Trade (19%), Public Administration (13%) and Finance and Insurance (8%). Somewhat surprisingly, there were very few people employed in the Accommodation and Food Services sector (~10), indicating once again the weakness of downtown's position within the hospitality compared to other parts of Raton. This weakness is also an opportunity for downtown, as seen in the above data showing the huge potential to bring additional tourists to the district.

3.2 DOWNTOWN RETAIL MARKET GAPS

Data obtained through ESRI's *Business Analyst* confirms what many community members brought up during public meetings: Downtown Raton lacks essential establishments such as restaurants and could benefit from a more diverse mix of businesses. Results from this analysis show *surplus and leakage factors*, which indicate which businesses are meeting local demand (a surplus in retail dollars), and which are not capturing local demand (and could possibly retain more business dollars).[14]

These data indicate that although there is economic leakage of some establishments, *local demand will not be enough by itself to support the expansion of expansion of new retail establishments.* Because of Raton's slowly declining population (and low median incomes), it will be hard for new businesses to become successful without a corresponding increase in

[13] ESRI estimates the number of jobs to be much higher, at 1,197 employees within downtown. This probably indicates government jobs not represented in the Census data, including the district's public schools, the Colfax County Courthouse, and fire and service stations within downtown. Overall, the number of workers downtown is probably closer to 1,000 people, instead of the estimated 617 jobs provided by the Census. However, these additional jobs most likely represent government jobs and are not necessarily reflective of the business climate within downtown.

[14] An important note is that these results apply to local resident demand in downtown, and do not necessarily account for visitor demand. However, these data can show gaps in existing businesses that do not fulfill both local and tourist demand.

tourist dollars. One additional challenge for new retail establishments will be establishing a client base and well-regarded regional reputation. Without significant promotion by MainStreet and the City of Raton, it may be hard for small-scale businesses to capture additional customers.

SURPLUS

Surplus factors indicate a business sector where customers are drawn in from outside the local trade area. In these cases, the business sector meets local demand and attracts additional outside dollars. Overall, these data indicate that there is a large surplus of retail trade within downtown amounting to about $10,000,000. These additional, surplus dollars represent money spend by tourists or others from outside the trade area. In a particular, the establishments with the highest surplus sales are: Auto Dealers ($9,048,748); Furniture Stores ($908,095); Building Materials and Supplies ($554,032); Shoe Stores ($311,981); Electronics and Appliance Stores ($232,865); Sporting Goods, and Hobby Stores ($186,101); and Used Merchandise Stores ($164,298).

LEAKAGE

Leakage factors represent business sectors that are not meeting demand, and have potential to expand. In many cases, this leakage is complete, as there are no establishments of that type within downtown. In practical terms, this means that residents and visitors must travel outside of downtown to buy these goods or services. It also means retail dollars are not being spent in downtown even though there may be a latent demand. For example, given the few restaurants in Downtown the leakage factor (market gap) is $232,000 for dining establishments. In practical terms, this means that visitors may not be able to find a place to eat in downtown and decide to travel to restaurants along Clayton Road or elsewhere in Raton. The other retail sectors with the largest leakage factors were:

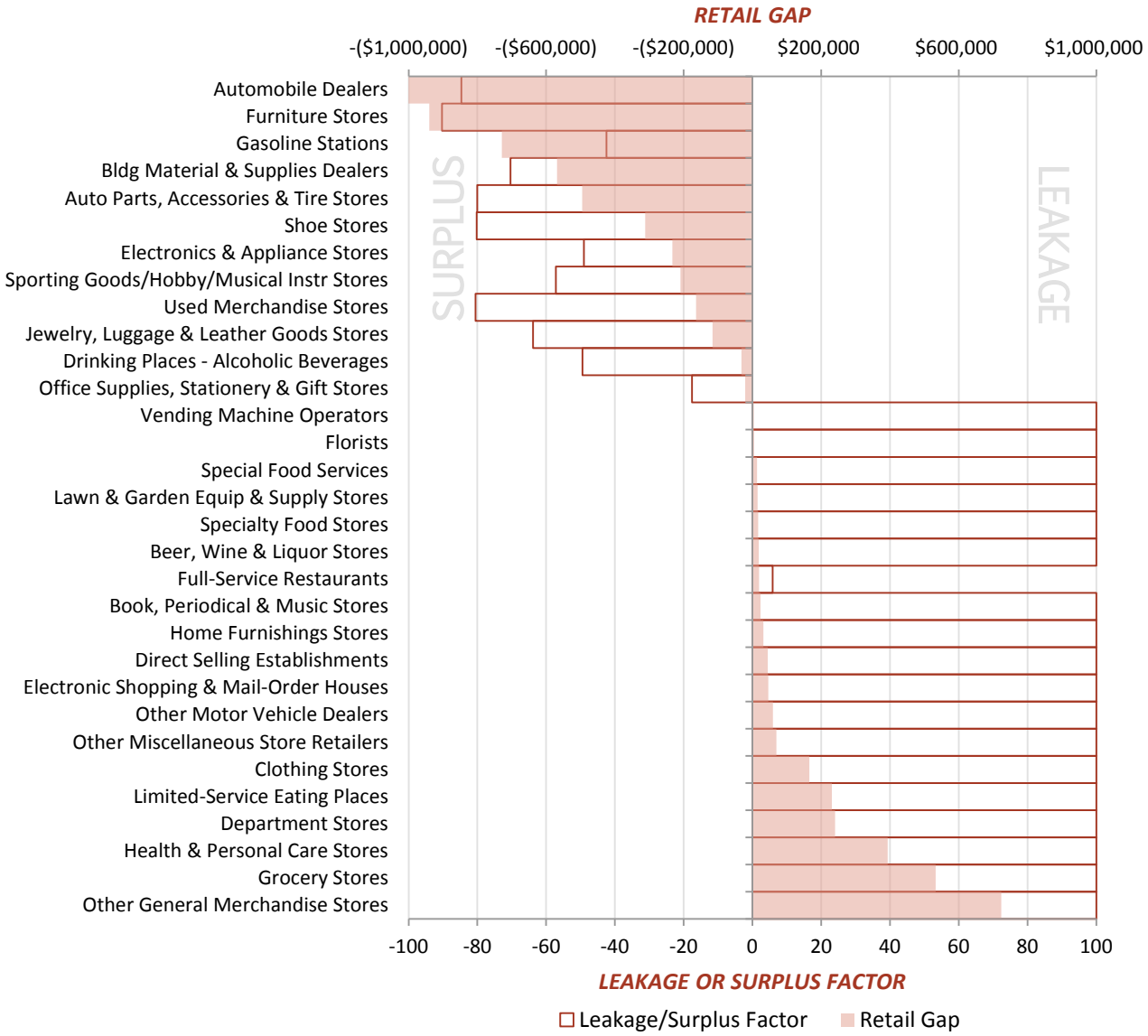
1. **FOOD AND BEVERAGE STORES - $568,000**
   Includes grocery stores and beer, wine and liquor stores, with no establishments within downtown. The potential demand translates to about 3,250 square feet of additional retail space, or enough for a small market.
2. **FOOD SERVICES AND DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS - $232,127**
   Although the leakage factor above translates to about 1,300 square feet of additional restaurant space, it does not account for the new bakery and restaurants that have recently opened. However, it does point to an ongoing demand for these establishments, as well as the huge potential tourist demand outlined in the section above.
3. **HEALTH AND PERSONAL CARE STORES - $393,023**
   There are currently no establishments in downtown, and there is potential to support a small store of approximately 2250 square feet or so.
4. **CLOTHING STORES - $165,751**
   Despite presence of Solano's Western Wear, there is additional demand. This indi-

cates the potential for Solano's to expand and/or capture additional business.

5. OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS

Bookstores - $23,288; Other miscellaneous store retailers - $69,553; Non-store retails includes direct selling establishments - $94,323. These businesses probably have too small of a local demand to support a full business, but could offer an expansion opportunity for existing businesses.

CHART 8: DOWNTOWN RETAIL LEAKAGE FACTORS



Source: ESRI Business Analyst. The Leakage/Surplus Factor presents a snapshot of retail opportunity. A positive value represents 'leakage' of retail opportunity outside the trade area. A negative value represents a surplus of retail sales, a market where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area.

3.3 HOUSING MARKET

The planning area includes parts of the historic residential district to the west of downtown past 3rd Street, along with a smaller series of houses to the north and south of downtown. With the addition of some housing units directly within the downtown core, the entire district had a combined total of 389 housing units in 2010. This is slightly lower than the 421 units counted in 2000, which may indicate conversion or demolition of former dwelling units.

The vacancy rate was 25% in 2013, which is higher than Raton's 18% vacancy rate and high overall. Unfortunately, this reflects Raton's slow decline in population over the last 30 years, and the out-migration of young workers. More optimistically, however, this surplus of housing can be seen as an opportunity. Depending on the condition of these houses, there may be an opportunity to renovate, repackage and resell these homes to new residents.

In addition to the high vacancy rate, there were a large percentage of renters within downtown (48% for the 2010 Census). Median gross rent was estimated at $590.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Many homes are part of the original townsite, and as such are generally quite old. The median year built was 1939. The age of the downtown housing stock points to a higher likelihood of existing homes having structural or maintenance issues if they have not been renovated or inspected for foundation settling, weatherization, bathroom and kitchen upgrades, etc. The relatively poorer condition of these homes may be reflected in the median home value of $64,400, which is slightly lower than Raton's median value of $88,900, and well below the state's average.

FIGURE 14: AN EXAMPLE OF A MAJESTIC HOME IN THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT

CURRENT MARKET

A review of real estate websites in August of 2015 revealed 11 homes for sale within downtown (30 overall for Raton). The average asking price was $107,000 with the most expensive home listed at $159,000 and the lowest at $60,000. These data also indicated that three homes have been sold in the downtown district within the past year. The average home size was 1841 square feet, with 3.5 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms.

Overall, these data indicate that there are a variety of housing sizes available at reasonable prices. The variety of housing types and sizes can be considered an asset for downtown, as these homes may be marketed to potential homebuyers in the future who may wish to relocate to downtown. For instance, there may be an opportunity to market to those who desire small town character and who work from home. A more thorough inventory of building conditions, however, would reveal whether the existing homes meet buyers' needs.

During this same period, there were no homes listed for rent within downtown, which is surprising given the high estimate of renter occupied housing in downtown. This suggests that many rental properties may not be listed on major websites or be rented by word of mouth and local references. ACS data indicate that many of these renters moved into rental properties between 2000 and 2009, indicating possible long term tenure and a slow turnover of rental properties within downtown.

4. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The structural issues outlined in the previous market studies continue to be a challenge for Raton. The population is still declining slowly, and the population has continued to age faster than New Mexico as a whole. Additional challenges include:

1. Capturing the large number of travelers who visit regional attractions. Although many are well established and have well-regarded reputations, promoting downtown Raton as a destination to visit has been slow to materialize.
2. Workers who lack education may not have the necessary skills to fill jobs offered by new employers, especially those offering "creative economy" positions in information, design, or the knowledge economy.
3. There are not enough residents within Raton itself to support the expansion of many retail businesses. Because of the slowly declining population (and low median incomes), it will be hard for new businesses to become established without increased tourist dollars.
4. Stabilizing vacant buildings and repairing those that are in disrepair or could benefit from renovation.
5. Finding ways to effectively capitalize on existing assets (as adaptive reuse), including historic buildings and community facilities.

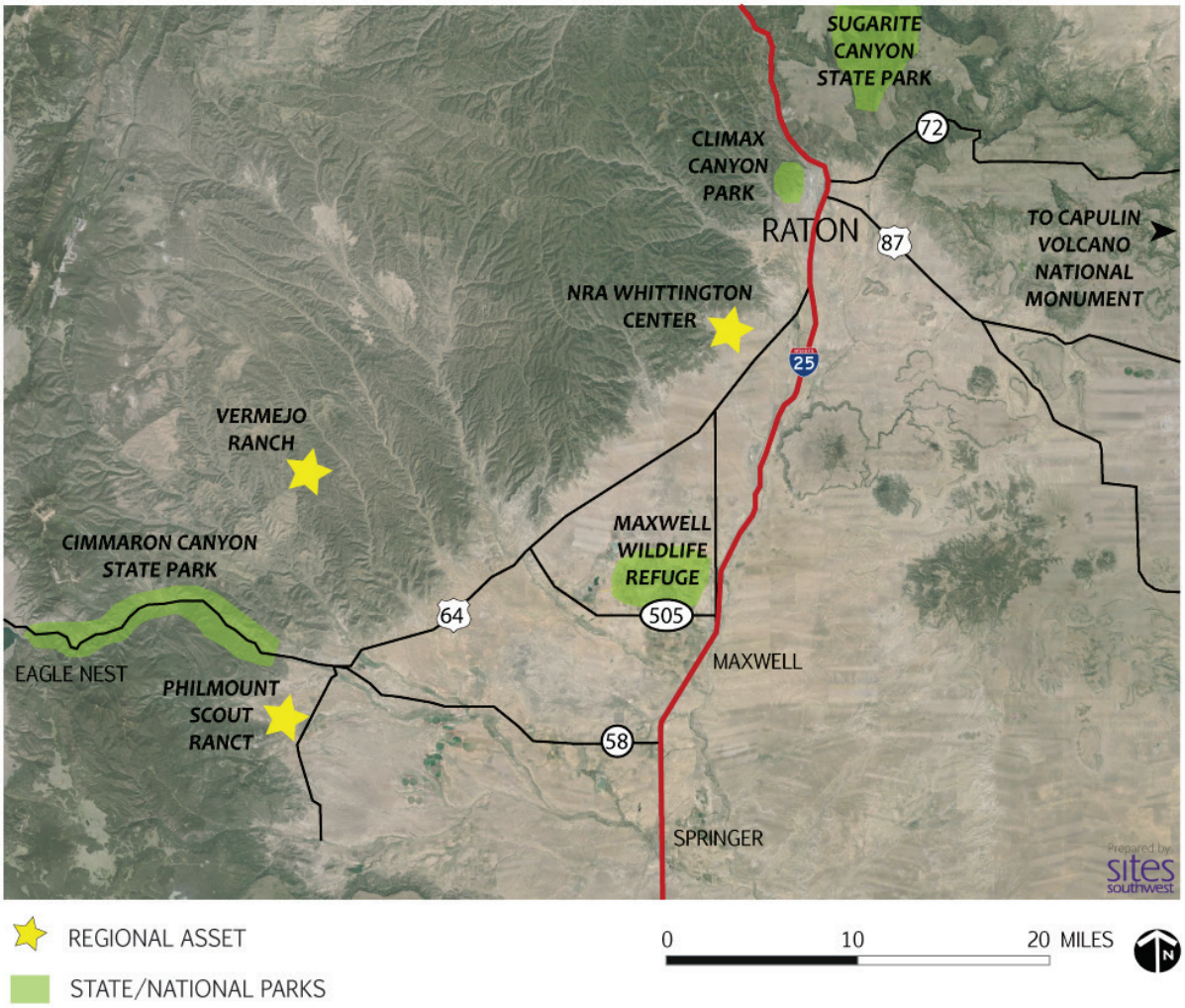
6. Transition away from uncompetitive industries to those that show promise. This is a key challenge for implementing a creative economy approach.

4.2 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

In spite of the challenges, many of the recommendations from the 2006 BBER study and 2009 Downtown Master Plan remain relevant. There are still opportunities associated with the City's role as a commercial center for the region and a tourist attraction based on downtown's exceptional cultural and historical amenities. Additional opportunities include:

1. There are many more travelers that could be enticed to visit downtown, especially those visiting major nearby attractions. As outlined above, even capturing 10% of these travelers would result in over $1,000,000 in additional revenue for downtown businesses. This could translate into several new businesses, especially new restaurants and a boutique hotel.
2. Raton and its surroundings are an outdoor paradise that could be used for all promotional material. The City's scenic views and recreational opportunities would be complemented by recreation oriented businesses. Partnerships with the National Park Service to promote nearby attractions (e.g. Capulin Volcano National Monument) could benefit the entire region. In addition, there is an opportunity to foster increased bicycle tourism.
3. There is potential to develop marketing solutions with regional tourism generators and co-promote with local organizations.
4. There are some retail gaps in downtown that could be filled by new businesses. This would increase the mixture of businesses in downtown, which was a key theme during public meetings and among respondents to the business survey.
5. Although stagnant, the realization of a creative/cultural economy championed in the 2011 Arts and Cultural District Cultural Plan is still a worthy goal. With the large number of people visiting the region annually, additional arts and cultural attractions and products have a potential large market to sell to.
6. The housing market downtown represents a stable, but aging stock of housing sizes and styles set within a historic district. There is potential to market downtown to empty nesters as an attractive place to retire or younger workers who desire a rural lifestyle. There is also potential to expand the range of housing options with creative reuse of existing buildings.

MAP 9: REGIONAL ASSETS



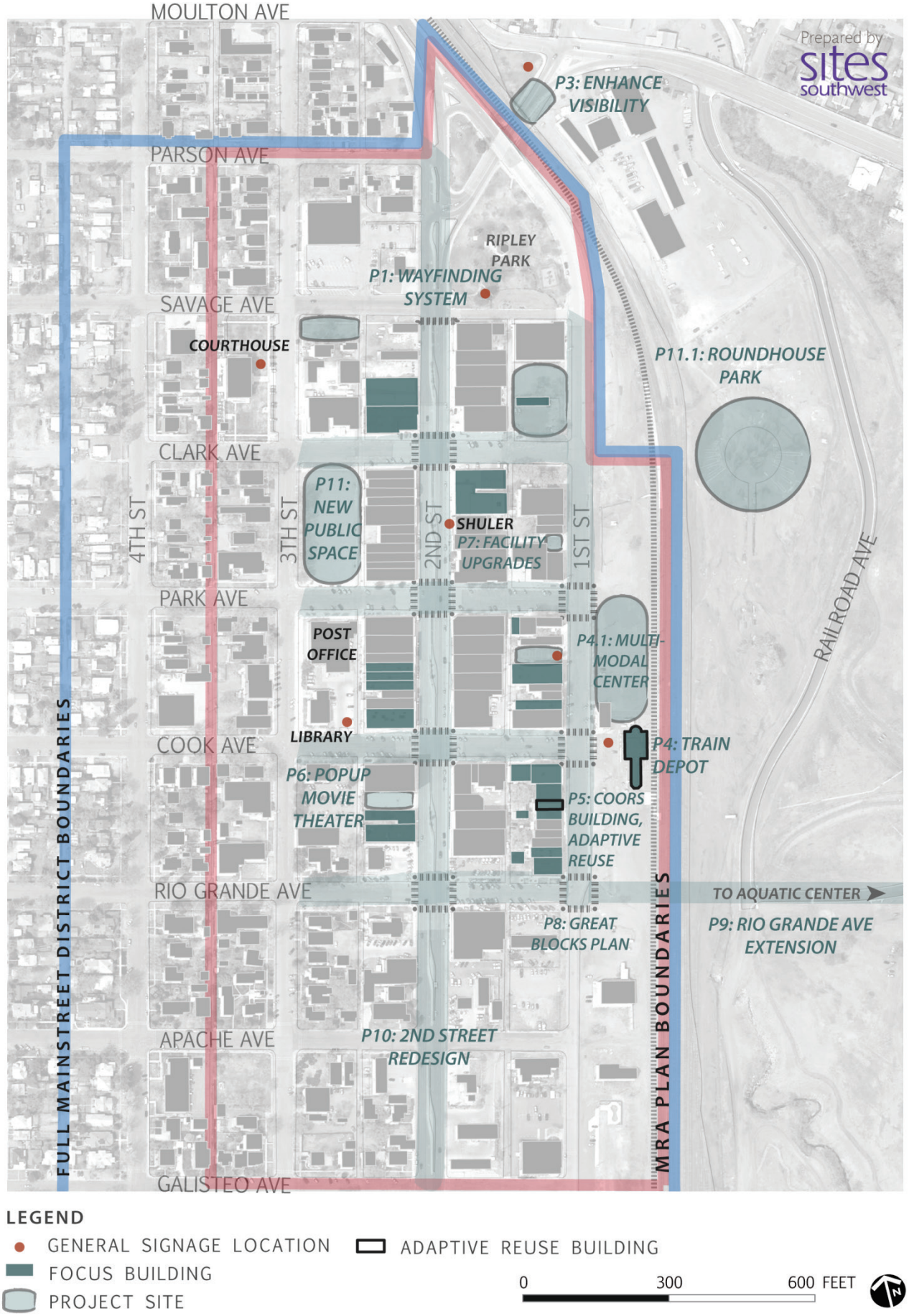
SECTION V

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES & PROJECTS

Implementing the plan vision and goals outlined in the Introduction will be an ongoing effort that will take the commitment of Raton MainStreet members, the Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee, the City of Raton, residents, downtown businesses, and other stakeholders. To help guide the successful implementation of this plan, a prioritized list of strategies and projects has been developed. The strategies and projects utilize MainStreet's *Four Point Approach*, to provide a holistic set of recommendations that address economic positioning (i.e., development), promotion, physical design, and organization.

This list includes a set of priority *catalytic projects* that range from small projects that can be implemented through partnerships with the City and the Community's Arts and Cultural District organization using local volunteers and staff, to larger projects that may require Capital Outlay or Legislative funding. Catalytic projects are designed to be implemented by the City or MainStreet for low cost, and have the potential to spur new private reinvestment in Downtown.

MAP 10: IMPLEMENTATION SITES



LEGEND

- GENERAL SIGNAGE LOCATION
- FOCUS BUILDING
- PROJECT SITE
- ADAPTIVE REUSE BUILDING

0 300 600 FEET

1. STRATEGIES

Strategies are actions that Raton MainStreet and the City can take to further the goals of this plan. In many cases, these strategies are long-term actions that will take continued commitment to be successful.

STRATEGY 1: BUILDING & BUSINESS INVENTORY

A simple, foundational practice that Raton MainStreet and the City should follow is to keep an up-to-date (annual) inventory of downtown businesses, building conditions, and vacant spaces. Such an inventory will:

1. Track the integrity of historic buildings so additional contributing buildings can be stabilized before they are beyond repair or in danger of collapse.
2. Help the City track development, which can help with effective promotion of new businesses or organizations within downtown.
3. Identify future opportunity sites for redevelopment that may potentially be acquired by the City or matched to interested developers. An inventory can also assist in marketing potential spaces online to those who may be interested in starting a business in downtown or redeveloping an older building.
4. Develop a broader understanding of the local business climate in downtown by identifying the needs of existing business such as current customer bases, parking issues, building conditions, etc. This inventory can also assist potential new business owners who may want to expand or renovate, but need help finding additional space or funding.

STRATEGY 2: BUILDING STABILIZATION & RENOVATION

One of the most important actions Raton MainStreet can take is to actively preserve historic or culturally significant buildings in Downtown that may be in disrepair or need structural stabilization. Raton MainStreet, along with the Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee, should develop a program to help owners identify, stabilize, and repair vacant or deteriorated buildings. This program can focus on 1) connecting property owners with funding sources; 2) providing technical assistance such as design, engineering and planning expertise; 3) promoting successful building renovations; 4) connecting property owners with potential volunteers for cleanup and façade squad repairs; and 5) possible code enforcement for properties that pose a public safety hazard.

Although some owners may not be willing to allow access to formal building inspections (and possibly be cited for code violations), the urgency of this action is highlighted by the recent collapse of the El Portal building. Additional losses to the historic fabric of downtown can be prevented by working with owners to identify constraints to building repairs or renovation (monetary or otherwise), and possible ways to match owners with the resources they need to stabilize and preserve the irreplaceable buildings within Downtown.

As summarized in the Existing Conditions section of this report, there are several blocks

that could benefit from a structural assessment and future renovation. These include:

1. The block of 1st Street between Cook Ave and Rio Grande Ave. Buildings along this entire block are either currently vacant or in need of repair. These include the historically significant Coors Building, Carl's Antiques, the Haven Hotel, and the Raton Hotel.
2. Also of concern are buildings a block north on 1st Street between Park and Cook. These include Cook's Hall and the Roth Building.
3. The two blocks on 2nd Street between Park Ave and Rio Grande Ave are also of concern. Although anchored by the International Bank (Yucca Hotel Building), several surrounding buildings are in disrepair. These include the two buildings directly south of the International Bank which are both vacant and in disrepair, as well as several smaller storefronts between Cook Ave and Park Ave that have had their original facades altered.

STRATEGY 2.1: FACADES

Many of the buildings within downtown may be sound structurally but could benefit from façade upgrades. Facade improvements are important to maintain the character of downtown and highlight the original features on existing buildings. As was brought up in existing conditions sections and at public meetings, the poor appearance of buildings downtown are a barrier to attracting more visitors and do not celebrate the wealth of historic buildings within Raton. Some buildings' facades are in need of repair, while some facades would benefit from additional design details (windows, entrances, awnings, signs, etc.) to create more inviting storefronts. Great progress has already been made by MainStreet and business owners, but ongoing work should continue as funding becomes available.

In some cases, existing buildings can be improved with simple, cost-effective facade improvements that repaint, re-stucco, or re-plaster damaged or decaying facades. Facade upgrades can include replacing damaged windows, doors, architectural detailing, tile, or dilapidated cladding. More in-depth façade improvements seek to restore facades to their original condition; for example, restoring a brick facade that has been covered up after construction in an effort to look more "modern." In other cases, facade upgrades can mean updating aging signage, restoring original entryways, awnings.

To help facilitate facade upgrades, Raton MainStreet should identify potential buildings and continue to speak with the property owners about improving their facades. Connecting owners with potential funding sources (such as MainStreet's revolving loans or historic preservation tax credits) can bridge the gap between owners who wish to improve the appearance of their buildings but need financial assistance or incentive. In addition, the façade squad approach to utilize volunteers and low-cost solutions could improve the appearance of those buildings that only need minor treatments such as new paint, stucco, o cleaning.

STRATEGY 3: URBAN HOMESTEADING/SHOPSTEADING

Urban homesteading (and its close relative urban stopsteading) is a concept whereby local governments sell or lease properties in their present condition for nominal sums to those who agree to rehabilitate the buildings for specified uses, such as live/work spaces, artist studio space, or specialty retail. The city benefits by filling otherwise vacant buildings with developers who promise to rehabilitate them, while developers have an opportunity to develop a historic or otherwise significant building at lower cost. The overall benefit is catalyzing private development that otherwise would not happen while meeting development goals of the city.

One example of urban homesteading in practice is seen with the Town of Montague, MA (population 8,473). The town has implemented a commercial homesteading program that offers city property for a nominal charge to developers who offer the most "creative approach to the rehabilitation and reuse of the structure" and provides the most attractive investment plan that promotes the economic development goals of the town. In 2015, a brownfield site was transferred to a developer who committed to rehabilitate three currently deteriorated mixed-use buildings.

Making such a strategy successful in Raton will require:

1. Focusing on city owned buildings that may be sold without significant changes or upgrades.
2. Developing a clear purpose and set of conditions for buildings that are marketed by the City.
3. Working to possibly consolidate buildings with different owners to sell to one developer who may have the funding to rehab several buildings at once.
4. Looking for useful properties to acquire that may serve long term goals of the district if creatively readapted.
5. Creating an evaluation process to compare project proposals and ensure developers' projects meet the economic development goals of the city.

STRATEGY 3.1: ARTS INCUBATOR/CO-WORKING SPACE

Both the 2009 Downtown Master Plan and the Arts and Cultural District Plan have discussed the possibility of creating an "arts incubator" within downtown that would help spur creative enterprises within Raton. Arts incubators normally provide low-rent co-working studio space to artists, as well as business assistance, classes, and sometimes equipment and materials. In essence, they provide a central location for artists to co-mingle, collaborate, learn, and promote their work. An arts incubator would be managed by an arts or cultural non-profit that would promote the space and other creative programing within Raton. Arts incubators can also be paired with a local gallery to features artists' work, and host additional events that highlight local creative initiatives.

Creating an arts incubator in downtown would help concentrate artist activity within the district, and could become a regional destination signaling Raton's transition to a creative economy. Depending on the level of interest among local artists, an arts incubator could

also take the form of a more traditional co-working space. Such a space would locate existing successful businesses in a flexible open-office space where different organizations would have the ability to interact, share expertise, and pay lower rents.

STRATEGY 4: LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & RECRUITMENT

Foremost on the mind of many MainStreet board members and local businesses are strategies to increase local economic development. As was discussed during public meetings, the current mixture of businesses in downtown could be more diverse, with more restaurants, food service establishments, and nightlife. And, as was shown in the market study, the regional economic conditions present a number of challenges to Raton. Unfortunately, there is no "magic bullet" to fix larger structural issues within the economy. Instead, it will take a gradual shift in thinking to find ways for Raton to adjust to structural changes, leverage assets, and build off small-scale strategic projects.

The good news is that there is an opportunity to form "creative clusters" of mutually supportive creative businesses that animate community assets, such as downtown's historic buildings. In practical terms, this means supporting emerging local businesses and organizations that are mutually supportive, such as a restaurant and brewery, or an arts incubator and galleries. The establishment of key "anchor businesses" such as these can lead to a virtuous cycle where more businesses are established, each supporting one another by attracting additional customers or residents. In turn this can create a critical mass of activity that leads to downtown revitalization.

"HYPER-LOCAL" BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

To accomplish local business development, Raton MainStreet and the City should take a "hyper-local" approach to economic development, focusing on existing businesses and local entrepreneurs who wish to expand or start new businesses. Such a strategy focuses on growing multiple small local businesses who may be able hire to additional workers, instead of focusing on wooing one larger employer. Over the long run, the addition of these extra jobs can lead to more sustained growth that helps a wide range of local businesses that provide a diverse mixture of services and products.

Additional general strategies to help local business development include:

1. Focus on skill training classing and programs. Business training should be offered for interested business owners who wish to find ways to expand, diversify, or better promote their businesses to a wider market. Many training opportunities are already offered by NM MainStreet, the New Mexico Economic Development Department, and other organizations.
2. Develop a promotion plan that successfully markets the assets within downtown to potential new tenants and/or shoppers.
3. Continue to support less formal, temporary markets such as the 1st Street Farmers Market. These offer a crucial retail space for sellers who cannot afford (or do not

desire) a permanent storefront. They can also successfully market a wider-range of goods that cannot be found in traditional businesses, including seasonal product or local artisan products.

CREATIVE ECONOMY

Transitioning Raton to a "creative economy" is a strategy outlined in the Arts and Cultural District Plan and Assessment Reports. The Assessment Report highlighted the importance of focusing on partnerships and networks to make such an effort successful: "Communities and regions interested in developing the creative and cultural economies must pay attention to the development of a 'creative ecology,' or the inter-connected networks that support economies, markets, talent, products and ideas. Planning and developing the systems of support for an Arts and Cultural District is a primary concern" (ACD Assessment, 2010: 8). Given Raton's aging population and rural location, it is unlikely that a stereotypical creative economy will emerge that attracts young professionals and the traditional "creative class". Instead, Raton's creative economy will have to grow from local talent, community identity, and shared history.

The good news is that with the large number of people visiting the region annually, additional arts and cultural attractions and products have a potential large market to sell to. *However, there is an ongoing need to define the types of creative businesses that are unique to Raton (e.g. galleries, studios, clothing stores, recreational shops), and provide additional support and incentives to jump start their formation.* Understanding the barriers to entry for small scale craft makers, artists and those who work from home may help define the types of creative businesses who may be willing to locate in downtown. In addition, Raton should seek to recruit or foster a creative non-profit that can oversee cultural facilities, plan events, seek out new artisans and work on installing more public art.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

In addition to supporting existing local businesses, Raton MainStreet should continue to actively recruit new businesses to broaden the number of retail and hospitality establishments within the downtown district. As with local business development, any business recruitment strategy should focus on multiple small scale businesses that meet local resident needs or provide products and services that attract tourists. One important consideration is to seek businesses that complement one another and to not cannibalize business from other areas of town. Instead, new businesses should provide an additional venue that supports locals while also drawing in out-of-town guests. Overall, expanding business opportunities in Downtown will be an incremental process that will take both local properly owners and outside entrepreneurs to be successful. A few sample businesses that may be successful in downtown include:

1. **BOUTIQUE HOTEL AND/OR BED AND BREAKFAST**
   A boutique hotel with 40 or so rooms, marketed to those who currently visit regional attractions and want to "get away from the city." This could offer an alternative to hotels along Clayton Road. The historic hotel sites in Raton may be rede-

veloped for this purpose, such as the upper floors of the Palace Hotel or the two hotel buildings nearby. Additionally, a small bed and breakfast, also catering to regional visitors could be successful downtown and also utilize an existing historic building. Additional lodging would complement the existing Hearts Desire B&B and Melody Lane and add visitor capacity in downtown.

2. RESTAURANT

   A midsized, restaurant offering outdoor seating. Such a restaurant would complement a future hotel and provide expanded dining options for the many downtown workers. There are currently plans for a new steakhouse in the Palace Hotel building, reopening of Hamburger Heaven, and a new pizza parlor, which will all be welcome additions.

3. DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS

   A small brewery, pub, or wine bar. One local business owner is planning to open a brewery, but may not sell alcohol onsite. An additional small, "exclusive" tasting room may help this business owner or others market their product to a wider audience.

4. RECREATIONAL TOURS AND RENTAL EQUIPMENT

   A recreational tours office and equipment rental. This could include guided tours of major regional attractions, and camping, fishing, bicycling, hunting, hiking, and other gear. This could be a new store or expanded inventory at Sports Arena or another existing business.

5. SPORTSWEAR

   A sportswear shop, offering more clothing choices. This could include hiking, camping, or hunting apparel. As with recreational equipment, sportswear could be offered at a new store or through expanded inventory at an existing store.

6. MISCELLANEOUS STORES

   Other small scale retail stores offering a potpourri of unique goods, including scout memorabilia, antique firearms, taxidermy, railroad memorabilia, etc. Such a store could also offer a "New Mexico Handmade" sales gallery featuring handcrafted items made by New Mexico artists (pottery, hand-woven goods and clothing, baskets, turned wood, glass, handmade paper, leather goods, etc.)

7. ART SPACES

   Artists' studio and galleries or an artists' cooperative gallery.

8. RELAXATION AND BEAUTY SHOPS

   A spa or other beauty/relaxation location.

STRATEGY 5: ELEVATE THE RATON MAINSTREET "BRAND"

As discussed in the market study, downtown Raton would benefit greatly if even a small number of the tourists could be captured who are already visiting nearby attractions. To accomplish this goal, Raton MainStreet and the City will need to pursue a more consistent and persistent marketing message for downtown and Main Street. Both entities must together with local business to create distinct "brand" for Raton. Such a brand message should appeal to existing visitor audiences by highlighting complementary, yet distinctive

experiences that may be had within Downtown Raton. All promotional material, events, and advertisements should be coordinated to reach multiple audiences across multiple platforms. The City's lodgers tax may potentially be used to fund some promotional efforts, as they directly benefit local hotels. A few promotional avenues that MainStreet can explore:

1. **NM TRUE CAMPAIGN**
   Continue to work with New Mexico Tourism Office to develop a long term "NM True Campaign." Although the specifics of this marketing message will have to be honed, Raton's has many "authentic" identities to promote, including a history of ranching, a history with the railroad (that continues to this day), a history with the Santa Fe trail and as the gateway to the state, and as a scenic destination with plenty of small downtown charm and small-scale, unique attractions (such as the El Raton Theater and the Shuler Theater). NM True offers free Ad Builder toolkits on their website and awards Cooperative Marketing grants to cities and non-profits.
2. **CO-PROMOTION**
   Raton may wish to co-promote events with the largest visitor generators, such as Whittington Center, to more effectively market the entire region and its many assets. Depending on the visitor group, downtown can be featured as an alternative place to spend a night, shop, or dine. One potential partner is the National Parks Service, which may be willing to promote Raton as a gateway to Capulin Volcano National Monument. Such a partnership could include an in-town visitor's center, information booth about the monument.
3. **FOOD AND ART EVENTS**
   The promotion of more outdoor events could help attract younger community members and regional visitors. These include more festivals, art shows, or food events. It could also mean the eventual expansion or evolution of existing events such as Music on Main Street. Although hosting additional events is time consuming, potentially costly and fraught with uncertainty, establishing *signature events* that draw regional crowds is important to maintain the identity and vibrancy of downtown. NM True offers an event sponsorship grant that can help cover advertising costs for events of all sizes.
4. **SPONTANEOUS EVENTS**
   Host "cool", spontaneous pop up art events, phantom galleries, Parking Day, and creative reuse of spaces. These low cost, non-traditional events have the unique potential to create a buzz about downtown and attract more formalized displays or ongoing events.

STRATEGY 6: HOSPITALITY TRAINING

Increased promotion of downtown may best be accomplished through word of mouth by existing retail and hospitality staff who currently engage with the public and can provide recommendations on where to eat, what to see, where to shop, and all the things to do in

town. The last thing a visitor who has not been to Raton wants to hear is that "there's nothing to do in Raton." Not only is this not true, but it promotes a negative image of the city. To effectively promote Raton and downtown, MainStreet should create a hospitality training program to train area retail and hotel staff to be enthusiastic ambassadors of the City. As discussed in the Arts and Cultural District Plan, "Hospitality training addresses how to create a professional but welcoming environment, promote the community and the ACD, and how to 'drive' visitors to additional businesses in the district."

STRATEGY 7: ART AND HISTORIC WALKING TOURS

Another strategy to help with the promotion of downtown is to establish weekly or monthly walking tours of downtown's historic buildings, historic sites, and local stories. Walking tours have become an important tradition in historic places around the country, and offer a unique mechanism to celebrate a City's hidden stories. Walking tours can be coupled with local business promotions, other events, and peak visitor times to generate additional revenue for local businesses, and a festive atmosphere. In addition, Raton would benefit from a historic walking tour map to be developed with other promotional material.

STRATEGY 8: ESTABLISH TIF & BID

Using the authority granted by the MRA designation, it may make sense for the city to establish a Tax Increment Finance district (TIF) to collect additional property taxes on future development that can then be used for investments within downtown. Public improvements the TIF could fund include everything from streetscape improvements to public infrastructure or building rehabilitation. The creation of a TIF district only involves the approval of City Council and can be passed at the same time as the MRA designation.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

One way to support future downtown maintenance, hospitality training, and promotional efforts is through a Business Improvement District (BID). As downtown gains new business, local owners may find this option to be attractive, as it also for additional services to be allocated to the downtown district. Revenues collected by the City would be distributed to a business improvement district organization to pay for district maintenance, safety, small scale infrastructure projects, hospitality training, and promotion. Although some owners may not want to contribute additional taxes, the mission of the BID can be kept simple, and provide clear benefits to every business.

STRATEGY 9: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic preservation can be a crucial tool for downtown revitalization, especially in a community as rich in historic buildings as Raton. The 2009 Downtown Master Plan included design guidelines and recommended the establishment of a historic district overlay zone, which has not been adopted. The future adoption of a historic preservation ordinance (and associated overlay zone) as well as a formal historic preservation commission may have positive effects in shaping future development and should be considered by the community.

Some of the benefits of establishing a historic preservation ordinance and overlay zone include:

- Allows the City of Raton to become a Certified Local Government (CLG). This designation allows the City to apply for federal historic preservation grants. CLGs also receive technical assistance in historic preservation through training, workshops, statewide meetings, and conferences. CLGs participate with the Historic Preservation Department and National Park Service on reviewing local nominations.
- Creates a historic preservation commission to review development proposals and ensure compliance with specified historic design guidelines. Such a commission can help ensure Raton's existing historic buildings continue to be preserved and are restored in a manner compatible with the building's historic character.
- In addition, the adoption of design guidelines for a future historic overlay zone could encourage context-sensitive design and protect historic buildings. A series of recommendations, guidelines, and best practices are outlined in the *Design Guidelines* section of this document. It is recommended that a version of these guidelines is used as the basis to establish a downtown historic preservation overlay zone. Such guidelines can be used in the future to encourage redevelopment while preserving historic structures.

TAX CREDITS

With or without a historic district ordinance and overlay zone, contributing buildings within the Downtown Historic District are eligible for Federal and State tax credits. As both districts are designated on the Federal Register of Historic Places, as well as the State Register of Cultural Properties, buildings in these districts are eligible for both tax credit programs. In addition, properties within the Arts and Cultural District boundaries (the same as the MRA boundaries) may receive up to twice the tax credit through the state tax credit program. Please see *Funding sources* on page 88 for more information about tax credit programs.

STRATEGY 10: BENCHMARKING REPORT

In addition to a building inventory, an annual or bi-annual benchmarking report should be prepared to track the progress of this plan and any projects throughout the arts and cultural district. This report should focus on simple *measures of success*. These correspond to measurable outcomes that can be observed after a strategy or project is completed. Some measures may simply measure success if something gets build or a policy is implemented. Others, when data is available, can be quantified as in number of new jobs generated, number of new business, number of new visitors, etc. For example, after completing the first portion of 1st Street's Great Blocks plan, the City may expect to see more visitors and more activity along these blocks, as well as rehabilitation of some of the vacant buildings across from the train depot. Although potentially labor intensive, such a report can:

1. Ensure that plans and projects are on track to be implemented and meeting their intended goals.

2. Allow the city and MainStreet to base investment decisions on objective criteria that can be measured periodically. If the project or strategy does not go as expected, changes can be made to ensure future efforts are more successful. This can also track returns on investment, regional trends, and effectiveness of policies.
3. Provide evidence for future investment when seeking outside funding or support.
4. Highlight success stories and help with promotion of downtown.

2. CATALYTIC PROJECTS

During public meetings, residents expressed the desire to see more projects implemented, instead of ongoing discussion of future plans. In an effort to respond to community needs, the following list of catalytic projects are designed to have short timeframes, smaller budgets, and the ability to spur private investment.

PROJECT 1: DISTRICT WAYFINDING SYSTEM

One of the projects brought up during community meetings that could have the most immediate impact is to install a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system within downtown. Such as system would include a family of signs (navigation, information, etc), maps, and potential landmark/gateway features that would direct visitors to key destinations. A wayfinding system would not only help visitors navigate downtown, but would help them *discover* downtown assets they may not otherwise learn about, including the many historic buildings, community facilities, and businesses. Overall, a wayfinding system can enhance awareness of downtown by:

1. Announcing the presence of downtown at strategies locations such as the I-25 off-ramps and the train depot.
2. Helping visitors locate parking and important destinations whether they are in cars, on bikes, or on foot.
3. Reinforcing downtown's image and identity as a welcoming, interesting, and desirable place to be.
4. Providing interpretive information for visitors, including historical or cultural information regarding the City and its important personas.
5. Highlighting less well known assets such as the connection from the Train Depot to trails in Climax Canyon, Roundhouse Park, Legion Park, the Armory Building, etc.

A series of signs has been developed for the Great Blocks Plan on 1st Street. To ensure the signage family remains cohesive, this design (or variations) should be used throughout downtown. General locations for signs include: the train depot; Cook Ave and 2nd Street; the north entrance to downtown at 2nd and Parson Ave; the Colfax County Courthouse; the Raton Library; locations along 2nd Street; and The Shuler Theater and El Raton block.

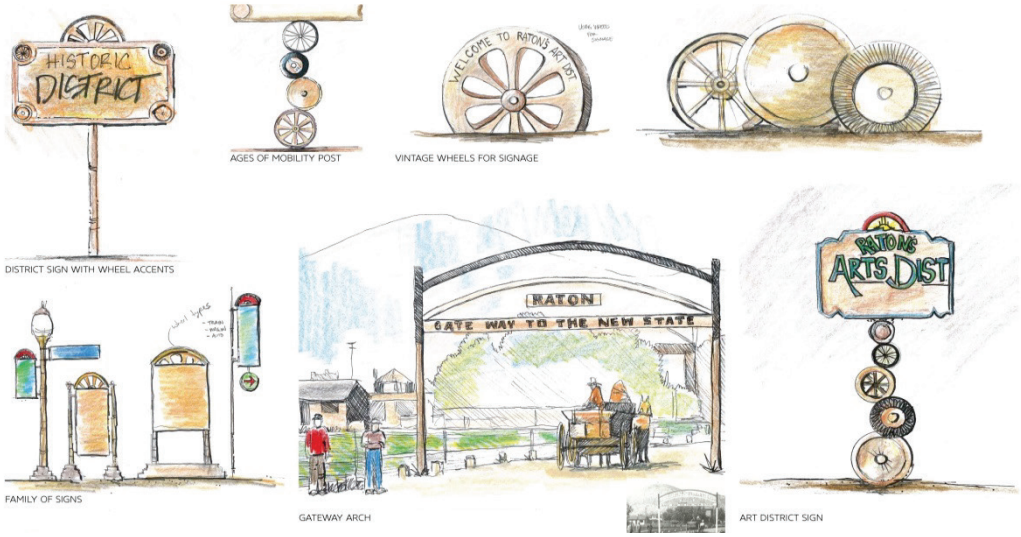


FIGURE 15: CONCEPTUAL SIGN DESIGNS FROM GREAT BLOCKS PLAN. CREDIT: MRWM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

PROJECT 2: SIGNS FOR I-25 AND CITY ENTRANCES

As a crucial aspect of wayfinding and promotion, the City should install signs near the I-25 off ramps directing motorists to downtown. Apparently, there is already such a sign that has been sitting in storage. Installing this sign would be a first step in establishing a presence along the freeway. Additional signage should be provided along Clayton Road, to direct visitors to downtown who are already off the highway and planning to stay in motels along Clayton.

PROJECT 2.1: PAINT/LANDSCAPE RAILROAD UNDERPASS

Painting, adding public art, landscaping or otherwise improving the appearance of the railroad underpass at the south end of downtown is another project that would bring visibility to downtown. These improvements would create a sense of "entry" into Downtown, and function as a gateway landmark utilizing existing infrastructure. This is also a great opportunity site to have local residents create a public art installation. A similar project could be installed at the northern underpass as well, to complete a series of related art pieces at both entrances to downtown.

FIGURE 16: UNDERPASS LEADING TO DOWNTOWN

PROJECT 3: ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF DOWNTOWN

Enhancing the visibility of Downtown will be an ongoing process that involves the renovation of existing structures, capital improvements such as those along 1st Street, and ongoing events. What these projects all have in common is that they seek to enhance the sense of place within downtown, accentuating key places, events, persons, histories, and other aspects that make downtown unique. In practice, this can include allowing food and retail carts, street artists, public art, light displays, sidewalk cafes, and other elements that contribute to a lively public space. Together, they can elevate the Arts and Cultural District to a destination that attracts visitors looking for an "authentic," one of a kind experience. A few formal ways to enhance downtown's visibility are through:

1. PUBLIC ART

   Public art often expresses community stories, reflecting the spirit, character, and personality of the culture of a place and the time when it is created. Public art should become a part of Raton's downtown district, expressing the stories of place that make Raton unique. Raton MainStreet can start this initiative by determining locations where public art should be displayed, the general subject matter, and sending out a request for artists.

2. LIGHT DISPLAYS & ADDITIONAL LIGHTING

   Pedestrian scaled lighting along streets provides a consistent design element that helps create a distinct image for downtown. Although some existing lighting poles have been installed throughout downtown, some may be ready to be replaced and/or upgraded. Pedestrian lighting can take many forms, including lighted bollards, light canopies, landmarks, and building lighting. One example proposed by a UNM student as part of the 2007 DPAC studio proposed a series of hanging lights across 2nd Street. This is an excellent example that would create a distinctive, festive yet refined image for 2nd Street at night.

3. SMALL SCALE SEATING & EVENT SPACES

   Small scale seating areas throughout downtown could be constructed/installed to fill in smaller vacant lots or unused parking space. These can include simple design elements such as movable furniture, small tables, planters with trees, and shade structures. Alternatively, these could be used for smaller events.

FIGURE 17: TELLURIDE, CO - AN EXAMPLE OF A STREET BEING USED AS A PEDESTRIAN WAY WITH SEATING AND SHADE

PROJECT 4: TRAIN DEPOT BUILDING & GROUNDS

Acquiring the train depot building has been a goal of Raton MainStreet. The building is currently in decent condition, but could be renovated to better celebrate the building's history and presence as a gateway to the City of Raton and Raton MainStreet. The Depot could be a public/private partnership and redeveloped as a museum and incubatory/start-up space to provide entrepreneurial opportunities and job creation. Such a space could catalyze future development and help Raton MainStreet secure future grants and infrastructure funding.

The addition of the multimodal next door provides a further impetuous to acquire this building and carry out renovations. Further, acquiring surplus property north and south of the train depot would allow the City to invest in a future public space along these blocks or allow for future infill.

PROJECT 4.1: COMPLETE MULTI-MODAL CENTER

The center is under construction, but additional items or enhancements could be future projects as needed.

PROJECT 5: ADAPTIVE REUSE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS

As a holistic, ongoing catalytic project, the preservation and restoration of historic buildings should be pursued by the City and MainStreet. The City of Raton owns several buildings and parcels in downtown that can be used for adaptive reuse projects or as part of a larger urban homesteading program. As with the train depot building, these buildings can be redeveloped as public/private partnerships, either by offering the buildings to interested developers, issuing an industrial revenue bond, or helping potential business owners secure funding. The City should also consider purchasing additional historic buildings that

are offered for sale in the future.

PROJECT 5.1 COORS BUILDING

The Coors Building on 1st Street is owned by the City of Raton and offers an opportunity for the city to engage in an adaptive reuse project. The two story building was built in 1906 as a warehouse and shares a common wall with the Haven Hotel. Adaptive reuse projects for the building could involve conversion to residential on the upper floor, while retaining commercial uses on the first floor. The commercial space could be geared towards attracting one of the businesses identified Strategy 4, such as a brewery to complement the upcoming Palace Hotel Restaurant or another art gallery.

PROJECT 5.2 UPPER STORY RESIDENTIAL

The many partially or fully vacant commercial buildings in downtown offer the opportunity to create upper story residential living units. This would create a new use for the upper floors of these buildings and offer additional housing choices beyond the single family homes currently available in downtown. Live/work units, downtown lofts, vacation rentals, and other multifamily residential types may appeal to current residents as well as those looking to move to a smaller community such as Raton. Converting second floors of underutilized second story buildings can be accomplished through public/private partnerships using both City owned buildings (such as the Coors building) and by providing redevelopment support.

COMMERCIAL SPACES

In addition to offering new housing units, it makes sense to provide additional "business ready" commercial or retail space for prospective tenants. Such space can be used by small scale retail or office users who cannot find or afford space elsewhere. This could be especially important to any arts or education based non-profits.

One strategy is to see if any businesses or organizations within Raton or Colfax County are willing to relocate to Downtown if offered more useable or attractive space. These businesses would not represent net growth in local employment, but could fill vacant buildings in downtown and increase activity within the district. This may provide these businesses or organizations a more prominent central location, and access to the main amenities that downtown has to offer (walkable streets, character, other nearby businesses, etc.).

PROJECT 6: POPUPS & TEMPORARY USES

Although formal, capital intensive projects are traditionally thought to be the primary way to enhance the appearance of a downtown district, lower cost, "pop-up" projects and temporary installations have the potential to be just as beneficial. One of the huge advantages of these projects is that they can be removed or modified at low cost, depending on their observed effects. For example, planters installed in one location that does not see much pedestrian activity can be moved if it becomes apparent that they would be more beneficial at another location with more people. Another advantage is that these projects often involve modular components that can be combined, expanded, remixed, and modified to

create a "package" of mutually supportive elements. Pop-up uses are essentially "placemaking tools" and are a great option to consider before investing capital dollars in improvements to host a permanent use. A series of popup components that MainStreet can experiment with include:

1. Planters
2. Seating
3. Shade Structures/Umbrellas
4. Stages
5. Food Trucks/Venders

TEMPORARY USES

A central aspect of pop-ups is that they readapt vacant or underutilized spaces in creative, sometimes counterintuitive ways. In the best cases, this creates a sense of surprise that is endearing to those who encounter these installations. Several locations within downtown lend themselves to creative reuse: the vacant lot on 2nd Street next to the International Bank; the recently cleared lot that was home to the El Portal on 3rd Street; underutilized on-street parking; and currently vacant buildings along 1st and 2nd Streets. Some temporary uses that could be explored include:

1. Phantom Galleries
2. Parklets
3. A pop-up movie theater

FIGURE 18: EXAMPLE OF A POPUP THEATER IN THE VACANT LOT ON 2ND STREET NEXT TO THE INTERNATIONAL BANK

PROJECT 7: UPGRADE ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

To help catalyze Raton's arts and cultural organizations and cultural tourism, the City should continue to invest in existing arts and cultural facilities. Over time, the City should continue to upgrade public entertainment venues to enhance events at these venues and accommodate a wider variety of events. Great progress has already been made to restore the Shuler Theater and revive the El Raton Theater. The Shuler, for instance, has received LEDA funding through the State's Historic Theater Initiative. This fund has helped historic theaters in New Mexican towns invest in building restoration and upgrade to digital equipment to show newer films. Future improvements to these buildings could include upgrading the Shuler with digital equipment or restoring the marquee on the El Raton Theater.

PROJECT 8: COMPLETE GREAT BLOCKS PLAN

The Great Blocks plan reconfigures the two blocks on 1st Street between Rio Grande Ave. and Park Ave. The plan calls for improved sidewalks, street trees, curb extensions, enhanced crosswalks, wayfinding signs, and a gateway sign across Cook Ave. New landscaping that is being installed as part of the project will establish a pattern of street trees and green spaces in downtown. Full funding for construction of the first phase of the project still needs to be secured and should be a priority of Raton MainStreet.

After the first phase of the project is complete, a continuation of similar streetscapes on 1st Street, side streets, and 3rd Street would fill in gaps in the existing streetscape. Depending on levels of funding and the success of this first phase, it therefore makes sense to extend these improvements north to Savage Ave and south to Apache Ave. This extension would complete a pedestrian friendly zone to Ripley Park to the north, and a proposed new connection at Rio Grande Ave to east Raton.

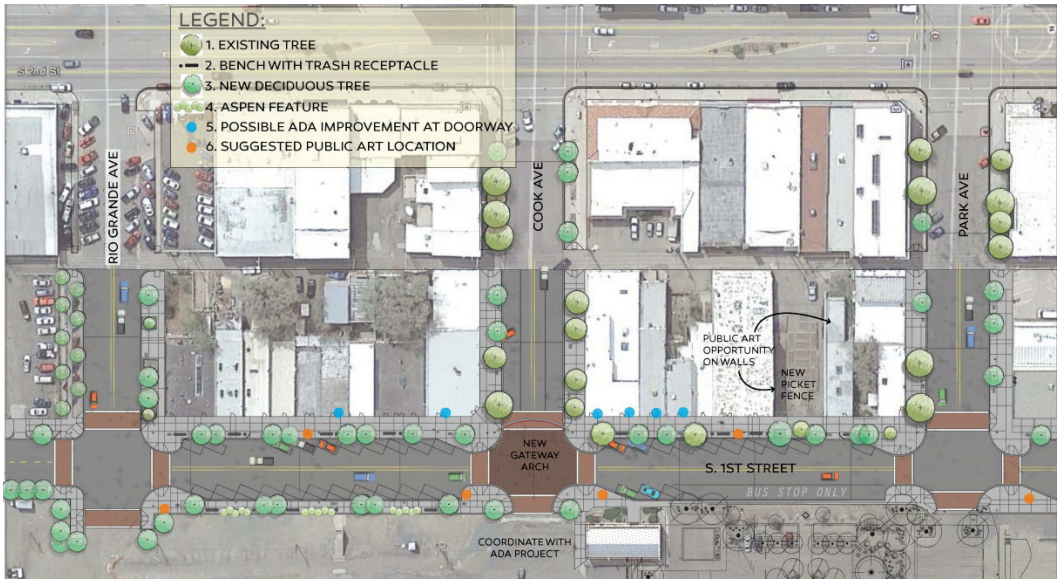


FIGURE 19: DESIGN FEATURES IN 1ST STREET GREAT BLOCKS PLAN. CREDIT: MRWM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

In the future, these improvements should be extended to the rest of the downtown district starting with key east/west connections between 1st and 3rd Streets such as Cook, Clark, and Park Avenues, and to major pedestrian zones along 2nd Street. Improvements can include:

1. TRAFFIC CALMING

   Traffic calming features are included in the 1st Street Great Blocks Plan. The plan features curb extensions, additional street trees, and expansion of on street parking. For segments of 2nd Street, the city should work with NMDOT to implement a conceptual design and operations plan that includes traffic calming (see project below).

2. PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

   Pedestrian amenities go hand in hand with efforts to enhance the visibility of downtown. Pedestrian amenities increase the quality of a space and encourage community activities and informal social interactions. As with popup components, pedestrian amenities involve a package of mutually supportive elements that support pedestrian comfort and satisfaction. Generally, these include: benches, eating areas, public trashcans, pedestrian lighting, shade structures, and safe places to wait.

3. STREET TREES

   On essential streetscape improvement that the City of Raton should make a priority is the installation of additional street trees throughout downtown. Planting additional street trees has numerous benefits: they create a consistent shade canopy for pedestrians; mitigate issues with stormwater runoff; promote traffic calming and lower vehicle speeds; and help improve the image of downtown streets. Street trees also create real estate value and support increased pedestrian activity. Street trees could be installed in trenches to ensure better odds at survival and growth. As proposed in the 2007 DPAC studio, a family of tree species could be used to distinguish specific streets. For example, east/west avenues could use flowering ornamentals, while 2nd Street could have larger trees to create a cohesive canopy. As part of additional street trees, a watering an maintenance plan will have to be developed. Such a plan should identify sustainable funding sources for watering and landscape maintenance and a responsible agency. The City of Raton may be able to perform this work, especially if it is able to use a TIDD or contract with a BID.

4. BIKEWAYS

   A complementary component to creating more walkable places is improving an area's bicycle facilities. Currently, downtown does not have any formal bicycle infrastructure, although the low traffic volumes on downtown streets lend themselves to a fairly bikeable district. Additional improvements would further support bicyclists and encourage increased bicycling activity, which has numerous secondary benefits including increased downtown activity, higher retail sales, and the opportunity to capture long distance riders who enjoy stopping at local stores and restaurants during longer rides. Given the low traffic volumes on most downtown

streets, designated routes can be established along most roads. These routes can include signage for bicyclists, sharrows (indicating shared roadways), and bicycle parking.

PROJECT 9: EXTENSION OF RIO GRANDE AVE TO EAST RATON

One project that would increase connectivity between east and west Raton is to extend Rio Grande Ave across the railroad tracks to connect to the intersection of Memorial Lane and Round House Road. An at grade street extension would provide increased access to amenities on the east side of the tracks including the Aquatic Center and trails throughout Roundhouse Park. This could increase activity between the two sides of town, while opening up additional opportunities for visitors to explore the many assets Raton has to offer. It would also allow for a connection between the proposed Roundhouse Park and downtown, which is currently lacking. In addition, it would open up potential infill opportunities for the eastern side of 1st Street, which is currently vacant land.

PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

The existing pedestrian underpass south of the train depot is current unused. A UNM studio project recommended turning this facility into an underground museum celebrating area mining. The underpass would then function as a "mineshaft" entrance that would lead to a museum in the center. While a great concept, it is unlikely that the city would like to take this approach. Instead, if may be better to remove this facility entirely and focus on creating additional at grade crossings, including the new crossing at Rio Grande Ave.

FIGURE 20: EXAMPLE OF AN AT GRADE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

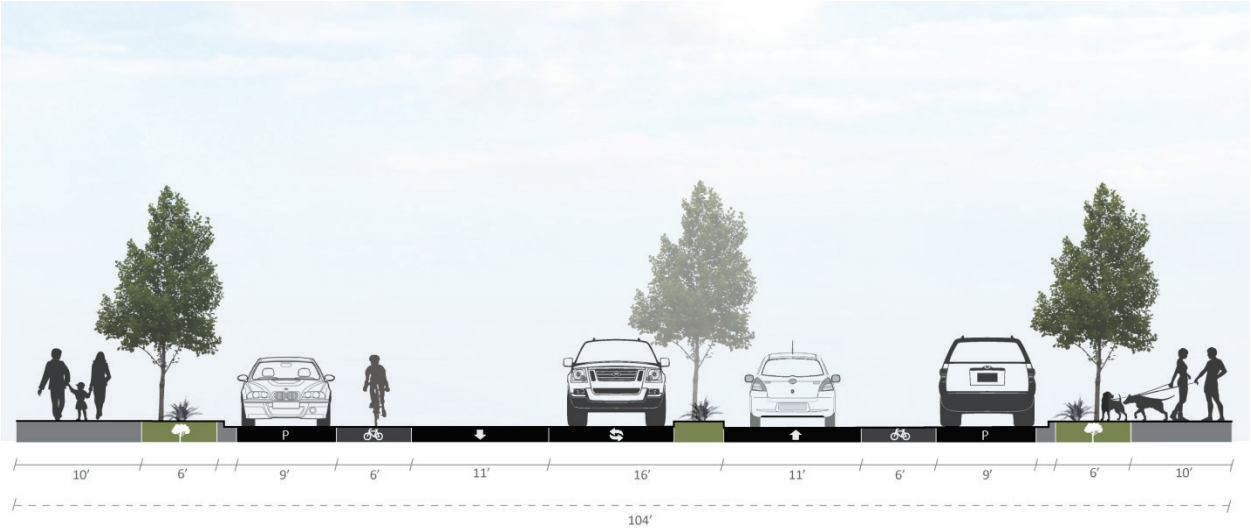


FIGURE 21: PROPOSED ROAD DIET FOR 2ND STREET

PROJECT 10: SECOND STREET RECONFIGURATION

Four conceptual design proposals were presented in the 2009 Downtown Master Plan to reconfigure Second Street. These plans recommended either reducing the number of lanes, narrowing lanes, adding bike lanes, reducing the speed limit or expanding the sidewalks. In any case, the large right-of-way provides flexibility for a future pedestrian and bike friendly reconfiguration of the street. Given that the roadway volumes are not expected to change significantly, even with increased business activity downtown, the recommendations from the 2009 plan could remain as a long term strategy once 1st Street improvements are complete.

LOCAL CONTROL OPTION

Because the street is a state owned roadway and an alternative route for I-25, it must comply with NMDOT design regulations. In the short term, the City should begin working with NMDOT to develop a future design and operations plan for the downtown segment of Main Street and determine if exceptions to the NMDOT design standards would be required. The plan should address issues including traffic speed, the design of a complete street that is appropriate for a downtown context, signage, and options for better utilizing the roadway's excess capacity in the future.

Longer term discussions could consider "devolving" the downtown segments of 2nd Street to local municipal ownership. This approach would give the City greater flexibility in the design of these roadways, but could come with some increased financial costs (e.g. ongoing maintenance), depending on the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the transfer of ownership from NMDOT to the City of Raton. However, this option would give the city more control in determining the configuration of the street and would allow the city to introduce its own wayfinding system, bike facilities, landscaping, and other street features.

CONCEPTUAL ROAD DIET DESIGNS

To help jump start a renewed discussion of a possible reconfiguration of 2nd Street, it is worth having a conceptual design in place that the community has agreed upon. One concept is to do a full scale redesign through the downtown corridor that would introduce bicycle lanes, calm traffic, and improve multi-modal level of service. As with improvements to 1st Street, this reconfiguration would involve installing curb extensions, a lower speed limit, and additional street trees. Because of downtown's grid network, any change in traffic volumes could easily be accommodated on parallel streets such as 1st and 3rd, which in some cases may actually be welcome to business owners who desire increased visibility.

For the most part, a similar result could be accomplished at a low cost, with restriping only instead of curb and gutter replacement. Given the existing lane widths and on-street parking, there is space to accommodate buffered bike lanes and an expansion of the sidewalks. If the road remains under NMDOT control, one option would be to introduce bicycle lanes that could be used as through lanes should the need arise to divert traffic from I-25. This configuration would improve bicycle level of service considerably (from a D to an A), while maintaining pedestrian level of service.

An alternative option is to reduce the number of travel lanes to two and add angled on-street parking instead of bike lanes. Sharrows could be added in this option to indicate a shared bicycle/auto street. Either conceptual design will be worth exploring further in the future to transform 2nd Street into a street befitting a main street corridor.

PROJECT 11: DEVELOP NEW PUBLIC SPACE IN DOWNTOWN FOR EVENTS

Some community members mentioned the need for a new, more flexible public space within downtown to host events. The proposed multimodal center may fulfill this role when it is completed, and future expansions to this facility could create additional space to host larger events. Given the concentration of historic buildings, activity around the train depot, and the ongoing public investment along 1st Street between Park Ave and Rio Grande Ave, it makes sense to establish a future public space within these two blocks. Although an expansion/reconfiguration of Ripley Park could provide new facilities, it is at the northern edge of downtown and is not an ideal location for concentrating activity.

STREETS AS EVENT SPACE

Perhaps the best strategy is simply to utilize the existing streets as event spaces. With the wide cross-sections on most downtown roads (relative to traffic volumes), it makes sense to utilize them as ongoing event spaces that can easily be closed off to traffic for a wide range of events. 1st Street is the most likely candidate to function as an event space, given the scheduled improvements and central location. Existing events, such as the Downtown Farmer's Market, have already begun to position the street as a new community space that is beginning to generate new activity.

FIGURE 22: EXAMPLE OF A SMALL PLAZA PARK, SUCH AS ONE THAT COULD BE CREATED ON THE EL PORTAL SITE

EL PORTAL SITE

The vacant lot that used to be home to the El Portal Building and a dilapidated housing building is a large space (1 acre) that could be used as a future park, plaza, or for future infill. Given the site's central location, on 3rd Street between Clark and Park Ave, next to the historic townsite district, it is in an almost ideal location to function as an additional community space in the future.

ROUNDHOUSE PARK

Longer term, if the community desires a larger event space, it may make sense to redevelop the roundhouse site as a large amphitheater or other community gathering space. Such a space was proposed in the 2007 DPAC studio document as place to pay homage to the roundhouse structure itself, while providing a park space that would be dedicated to Raton's history.

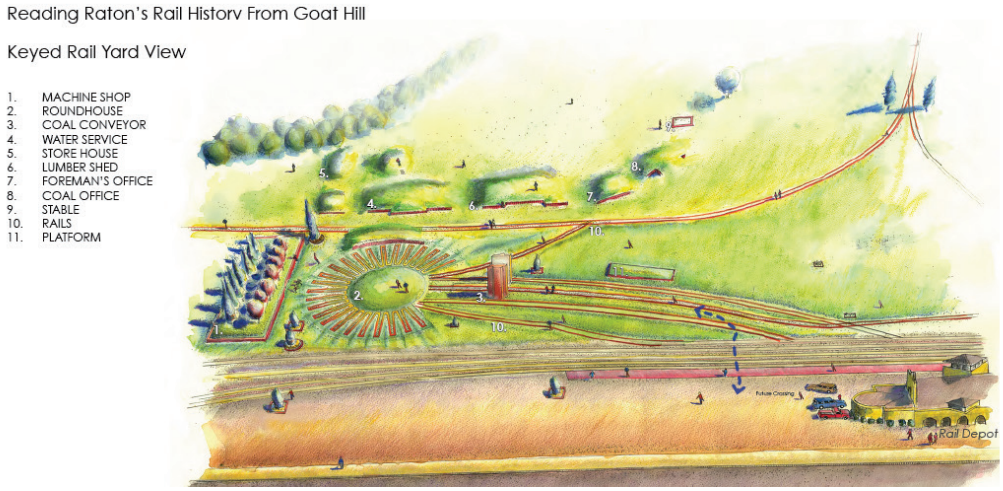


FIGURE 23: STUDENT PROPOSED PROJECT FOR ROUNDHOUSE PARK

Although a potentially promising site to redevelop, there are issues within connectivity to the site, as it east of the railroad tracks and is not currently connected to downtown. If this site were to be developed in the future, it would be crucial to establish a direct connection between the facility and downtown businesses, possibly using an at grade crossing that would extend past Park Ave.

3. IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The projects and strategies summarized above are tied to a simple evaluation process that looked at the relative cost of the project, timeframe, complexity, and expected benefits. This approach helps determine which projects and strategies are a priority, as well as which have the largest potential to have the greatest impact. Using an approach such as this can also indicate whether the strategy has had the intended benefits after being implemented.

1. *Funding Sources*: A list of potential funding sources is organized by number (1-29), which corresponds to a full list of sources located in section 4 of this chapter. Funding sources range from City budget expenditures to private business loans for business expansion.
2. *Relative Cost:* potential cost of project/strategy in relation to other projects. Costs do not have an exact monetary value, but have a range of one dollar sign (<$1000), two dollar signs ($5,000 - $25,000), three dollar signs ($25,000 - $100,000), or four dollar signs (>$100,000).
3. *Priority:* high – identified as high need to address within the next year; medium – should continue to be pursued within the next 3 years; low – long term project idea that can be implemented after higher priority projects are completed.
4. *Complexity:* simple – can be implemented without extensive additional planning or collaboration with outside agencies; moderate – requires coordination with outside agencies and additional planning; complex – requires coordination with multiple outside agencies, extensive planning, and/or the securing or funding.
5. *Timeframe:* short – 1 year or less; medium – 2-3 years; long – 4-6 years; ongoing – strategy/project should be continued indefinitely and respond to changes in downtown.

	PROJECT	AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES	RELATIVE COST	PRIORITY	COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME
P1	Cultural District Wayfinding System	MainStreet, City, Chamber	1,3,4,6,9,13, 16,17,28,29	$$	High	Simple	Short
P2	Signs for I-25 and Off Ramps	MainStreet, City, NMDOT	1,6,9,12,28, 29	$$	High	Moderate	Medium
P2.1	Paint/Landscape Railroad Underpass	MainStreet, City, NMDOT/BNFS	1,6,9,28,29	$$	Medium	Moderate	Medium
P3	Enhance the Visibility of the Arts and Cultural District	MainStreet, City, Business Owners	1,3,4,5,6,7,9, 13,28,29	$$	Medium	Moderate	Medium
P4	Acquire Train Depot Building & Grounds	City, Amtrak	1,2,3,8,9,13, 18,21	$$$$	Low	Moderate	Medium
P4.1	Complete Multimodal Center	City	1,2,3,8,13	$$$	High	Simple	Short
P5	Adaptive Reuse of Public Buildings	MainStreet, City of Raton	1,2,3,8,9,13, 18,21	$$$	Medium	Complex	Medium
P5.1	Coors Building	MainStreet, City of Raton	1,2,3,8,9,13, 18,21	$$$	Medium	Complex	Medium
P5.2	Upper Floor Residential	MainStreet, City, Developers	1,2,3,8,9,13, 18,21	$$	Medium	Complex	Long
P6	Popups and Temporary Uses	MainStreet, City, Business Owners	3,4,8,9,13,28 ,29	$	Medium	Simple	Short
P7	Upgrades to Arts & Cultural facilities	City, MainStreet, Business Owners	1,3,9,13,16, 18,24,25,28, 29	$-$$$	High	Simple	Ongoing
P8	Complete Great Blocks Plan and expand to additional blocks	City, MainStreet	1,2,3,4,9,13, 16	$$$	Medium	Moderate	Long
P9	Extension of Rio Grande Ave to Aquatic Center	City, BNFS	1,2,3,11,12, 13,21	$$$$	Low	Complex	Long
P10	2nd Street Reconfiguration	City, MainStreet, NMDOT	1,2,3,11,12, 13	$$$$	Low	Complex	Long
P11	Develop New Public Space in Downtown for Events	City, County, BNFS	1,2,8,9,13,16	$$$ - $$$$	Low	Complex	Long

	STRATEGY	AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES	RELATIVE COST	PRIORITY	COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME
S1	Building & Business Inventory	MainStreet	-	$	High	Simple	Short
S2	Building Stabilization & Renovation	MainStreet, City	1,3,4,5,7,13, 16,18,24,25, 26,28,29	$ - $$$	Medium	Moderate	Medium
S2.1	Façade Upgrades	MainStreet, Business Owners	3,4,5,7,13,16 ,18,24,25,26, 28,29	$ - $$$	Medium	Moderate	Short
S3	Urban Homestead-ing/Shopsteading	MainStreet, City, Building Owners	1,3,8,9,10,13 ,14,15,16,28, 29	$$$	Low	Moderate	Medium
S3.1	Arts Incubator Space & Artist Spaces	MainStreet, City, Building Owners	8	$$	Low	Moderate	Long
S4	Local Business Development & Recruitment	MainStreet, City, Business Owners	3,4,8,9,8,15, 19,20,22,23	$$	High	Complex	Medium
S5	Elevate the Raton MainStreet "Brand"	MainStreet, City	4,6,7,8,16,17 ,28,29	$$	High	Moderate	Short
S6	Hospitality Training for Downtown Staff	MainStreet, Business Owners	4,6,7,28,29	$	Medium	Simple	Short
S7	Art and Historic Walking Tours and Promotional Materials	MainStreet, Raton Museum	4,27,29	$	Low	Simple	Short
S8	Establish BID and TIF	City, Business Owners	-	$	Low	Moderate	Long
S9	Historic Preservation	City	-	$	Low	Moderate	Medium
S10	Benchmarking Report	MainStreet	-	$	Medium	Simple	Short

4. FUNDING SOURCES

4.1 CITY BUDGET AND TAXATION AUTHORITY

1. **Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP)**
   Agency: City of Raton
   Type: Capital Outlay
   Description: The City of Raton may fund infrastructure projects through the existing city budget and its infrastructure capital improvements plan. Although city funds are limited, they may offer be used as matching funds to secure larger grants and/or loans by outside agencies (e.g. matching road funds for a street reconfiguration on a state highway).

2. **General Obligation (GO) Bonds**
   Agency: City of Raton
   Type: Bond
   Description: For future large scale community facilities or infrastructure projects, the City of Raton may issue a general obligation bond to pay for improvements.
3. **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District or Tax Increment Development District (TIDD)**
   Agency: City of Raton
   Type: Tax Funds
   Description: The City of Raton, with the powers granted by the Metropolitan Redevelopment District designation, may elect to establish a downtown tax increment financing district (TIF) or tax increment development district (TIDD). Both policies use expected future gains in property and/or gross receipt taxes (the tax increment) to pay for current improvements, such as streetscape improvements, public infrastructure, or building rehabilitation. Although similar tools, TIDDs may more flexible in Raton, as they also collect the additional increment in gross receipts taxes that may be generated by the addition of new business locating in Downtown (or higher overall sales).
4. **Business Improvement District (BID)**
   Agency: City of Raton/Business Owners
   Type: Additional Tax Funds
   Description: A majority of property owners in downtown may elect to establish a business improvement district (BID) to pay for district maintenance, safety, small scale infrastructure projects, hospitality training, and promotion. Revenues are collected by the City and provided to the business improvement district organization to support downtown business needs.
5. **Quality of Life Tax**
   Agency: City of Raton
   Type: Additional Tax Funds
   Description: The City Council may adopt a quality of life tax increment to support arts and cultural programs identified in this plan, including additional promotional events. These programs can be administered by local arts and cultural non-profit. This tax increment must be approved by a majority of voters.
6. **Lodgers Tax**
   Agency: City of Raton
   Type: Tax Funds
   Description: The City may use the existing lodgers tax for promotion of downtown's attractions and events to visitors. The tax may also be used to acquire, establish, and operate tourist-related facilities.
7. **Local Options Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT)**
   Agency: City of Raton
   Type: Additional Tax Funds
   Description: As part of the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), residents in Raton may vote to raise the local gross receipts tax to help fund additional economic development projects within the city. The tax is collected by the State as part of the statewide gross receipts tax and redistributed to the community for local projects. In general, LOGRT provides the community with a source of additional revenue to fund additional services or projects related to arts and cultural activities as well as district revitalization.
8. **Public Private Partnerships (P3s)**
   Agency: City of Raton and Local Developers
   Type: Partnership
   Description: The City of Raton may consider establishing public private partnerships with interested developers who seek additional financial support or incentives to develop community facilities, including additional affordable housing or retail and office space. Although public pri-

vate partnerships take many forms, the City may enter agreements with interested organization that may wish to develop or operate a city owned property such as a future arts incubator or cultural facility.

4.2 CAPITAL OUTLAY

9. **NM MainStreet Capital Outlay Fund**
   Agency: New Mexico MainStreet
   Type: Capital Outlay
   Website: http://nmmainstreet.org/
   Description: New Mexico MainStreet receives money from the State Legislature each year that may be requested by MainStreet Communities to implement identified priority catalytic projects in a MainStreet district. Program funds are competitive, and are ranked using an objective scoring system. Applying for these funds for fully developed projects (such as a district wayfinding system), is also a great way to highlight Raton MainStreet's commitment to implementing district-wide projects.
10. **LEDA Capital Outlay Requests**
   Agency: New Mexico Economic Development Department
   Type: Capital Outlay
   Website: http://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/finance-development/leda/
   Description: The New Mexico Economic Development Department administers Local Economic Development Act capital outlay (LEDA CO) funds to local to help stimulate economic development efforts. LEDA funds are provided on a reimbursable basis only and must be used to fund those projects that create "stable, full-time, private sector" jobs in targeted industries.
11. **Transportation Alternatives Program**
   Agency: NMDOT / MRCOG
   Type: Capital Outlay
   Website: http://dot.state.nm.us/en/Planning.html
   Description: The New Mexico Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a Federal-Aid funding program. TAP funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities, in addition to other projects, related to economic development, increased safety, and increased accessibility. The New Mexico Department of Transportation has a competitive process to afford TAP funds, based on how well each project proposal addresses the goals of the program. Such funds could be used for a reconfiguration of 2nd Street to include bike lanes or pedestrian improvements.
12. **Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund**
   Agency: NMDOT
   Type: Capital Outlay
   Website:
   http://www.torcnm.org/downloads/Final%20Approved%20TorC%20Downtown%20Master%20Plan%2010.2014.pdf
   Description: The New Mexico Department of Transportation sets aside money each year for local government road improvements. This program assists local governments to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets with matching funds from NMDOT.

4.3 COMMUNITY GRANTS

13. **Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**
   Agency: New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration
   Type: Community Grant
   Website: http://nmdfa.state.nm.us/CDBG_Information_1.aspx

Description: Community Development Block Grants can be used to fund planning projects and the construction of public buildings, community facilities, infrastructure, and housing. Funds are administered by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, with a $500,000 grant limit per applicant. Five percent of matching funds must be provided by the applicant.

14. **HUD Hope VI Mainstreet Housing Grant**
    Agency: US Department of Housing and Urban Development
    Type: Community Grant
    Website:
    http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/hope6/grants/mainstreet
    Description: HUD offers housing grants to local governments with less than 50,000 people and less than 100 units of public housing. In general, the grant funds may be used to build new affordable housing or reconfigure obsolete or surplus commercial space into affordable housing units. The grant funds cannot be used on general infrastructure or commercial development. Main Street housing units must be affordable to the initial residents that occupy the Main Street housing project.
15. **Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)**
    Agency: USDA
    Type: Community Grant
    Website: http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants
    Description: Rural Business Development Grants are available to rural communities under 50,000 in population. Grant funds may be used to finance and facilitate the development of small, private, business enterprises which includes any private business which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and has less than $1 million in projected gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities.
16. **McCune Foundation Grants**
    Agency: McCune Charitable Foundation
    Type: Community and Organization Grants
    Website: http://nmmccune.org/apply
    Description: The McCune Charitable Foundation awards grants to communities, non-profits, public schools, and government agencies that are engaged in community-based projects related to the Foundation's nine foundational priorities. This includes projects that build capacity in the non-profit sector, promote economic development, education and childhood development, healthcare, local food, the arts and community engagement, natural resources, urban design, and rural development are all considered. The average grant award is $15,000, with some as large as $25,000.
17. **National Endowment for the Arts** Our Town Grant
    Agency: National Endowment of the Arts
    Type: Community and Organization Grants
    Website: http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction
    Description: The National Endowment for the Arts offers the "Our Town" Grant to fund creative placemaking projects that showcase the distinct identity of their community. The grant will pay for cultural planning efforts, design of projects, and arts engagement efforts. The grant will not fund construction, renovation, or purchase of facilities. Projects must involve a partnership with a local non-profit organization. Grants range from $25,000 to $100,000.

4.4 COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LOANS

18. **MainStreet Revolving Loan Fund (MSRLF)**
    Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Type: Business/Organization Loan
Website: http://nmmainstreet.org/Coalition/Members/pdfs/revloanfund-leg.pdf
Description: The MainStreet Revolving Loan Fund provides low cost loans to property owners within MainStreet districts who seek to restore, rehabilitate, or repair their properties. The MSRLF can help fund improvements to historic and non-historic buildings, including façade improvements and structural repairs. Owners must agree to repay the loan and to maintain the eligible property as restored, rehabilitated or repaired for a specified period but in no case less than 5 years. Funding amounts vary, but the maximum loan amount is $75,000. The fund is administered by the Historic Preservation Division.

19. **NM Community Development Loan Fund (The Loan Fund)**
Agency: The Loan Fund
Type: Business/Organization Loan
Website: http://www.loanfund.org/
Description: The Loan fund is a private, non-profit lender that provides $5,000 - $500,000 loans to small businesses and non-profits. The Loan Fund will finance equipment, inventory, building renovations, operating capital and business expansion expenses. As a private lender, the Loan Fund seeks to support low-income individuals and communities that need additional "bridge funding" to establish or expand their organizations.

20. **ACCION New Mexico**
Agency: ACCION New Mexico
Type: Business/Organization Loan
Website: http://www.accionnm.org/
Description: ACCION is small-scale micro-lender that makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for traditional bank loans, and also provides business support services. Loans are primary intended for low-income borrowers and minority entrepreneurs. Since being founded in 1994, ACCION has financed the start-up or expansion of more than 2,300 new businesses in New Mexico with loans totaling more than $23 million.

21. **The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)**
Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority
Type: Community Loan
Website: http://www.nmfa.net/financing/public-project-revolving-fund/about-the-pprf-program/
Description: The PPRF is an up to $200,000 revolving loan fund that can be used to finance public infrastructure projects, fire and safety equipment, and public buildings. Both market rate based loans and loans to disadvantaged communities at subsidized rates are made from PPRF funds. Such funds could be used for larger infrastructure projects in the future, including upgrades to the existing public safety buildings in downtown.

22. **Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)**
Agency: New Mexico Economic Development Department
Type: Job Training/Business Grants
Website: http://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/job-training-incentive-program/
Description: New Mexico has one of the most generous training incentive programs in the country. The Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly-created jobs in expanding or relocating businesses for up to 6 months. The program reimburses 50-75% of employee wages. Custom training at a New Mexico public educational institution may also be covered.

23. **New Markets Tax Credits**
Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority
Type: Business Loan
Website: http://www.nmfa.net/financing/new-markets-tax-credits/

Description: New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) loan funds are intended to help business investment in low-income census tracts. The fund will help finance the development of commercial, industrial and retail real estate projects (including community facilities), and some housing projects. Loans for up to 25% of the project are available at low interest rates. NMTC loans are combined with other sources of funding that is secured by the applicant and managed by Finance New Mexico.

4.5 TAX CREDITS

24. **The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties**
Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
Type: Tax Credit
Website: http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/tax-credits.html
Description: The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties program was established in 1984 to encourage the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of cultural properties. Since then, more than 800 projects have been approved for New Mexico homes, hotels, restaurants, businesses and theaters that benefited from one of the few financial incentives available to owners of historic properties. In a recent five-year period, the statewide program saw approved rehabilitation construction projects totaling $7.4 million, spurred by the catalyst of $1.4 million in taxpayer-eligible credits. To be eligible, buildings must be individually listed in or be listed as contributing to a State Register of Cultural Properties historic district. The maximum amount of project expenses eligible for the tax credit is $50,000; if listed in an Arts and Cultural District the maximum is $100,000. The total cost may exceed this amount. Maximum credit is 50% of eligible costs of the approved rehabilitation or 5 years of tax liability, whichever is least. The credit is applied against New Mexico income taxes owed in the year the project is completed, and the balance may be carried forward for up to four additional years.

25. **Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program**
Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, National Park Service
Type: Tax Credit
Website: http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm
The National Park Service administers the **Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program** in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office. It is a three-part application process. Participation in the program is initiated with the State Historic Preservation Office. The building must be individually listed in, or contribute to a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In some cases the property may be determined eligible for listing, but has not yet been listed at the beginning of the rehabilitation project. The eligible expenses of a rehabilitation project must be at least equal to the adjusted basis of the building (value of building minus value of land). The project must be an income producing property and expenses for any portion used for personal residence do not qualify. The program generally allows up to 20% of the eligible costs of rehabilitation work to be credited against Federal income taxes. The credit is applied against federal income taxes owed in the year the project is completed, and can be carried backward 1 year and forward 19 years. Some provisions of the Internal Revenue Service Code may affect a taxpayer's ability to utilize the full credit. Taxpayers should seek professional tax advice concerning their specific circumstances.

26. **Preservation Loan Fund - Historic Buildings Only**
Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
Type: Business/Organization Loan
Website: http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/loan-fund.html
Description: The Historic Preservation Division makes 3 percent fixed rate loans in cooperation with commercial banks and preservation organizations to restore and rehabilitate historic properties listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties. Loans are for a maximum of $200,000.

27. **Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)**
Agency: Mortgage Finance Authority
Type: Tax Credit
Website: http://www.housingnm.org/developers/low-income-housing-tax-credits-lihtc
Description: The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) provides federal income tax credits to individuals or organizations that develop affordable housing through either new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation. The tax credits provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the developer's tax liability for a 10-year period. Tax credits can also be used by nonprofit or public developers to attract investment to an affordable housing project by syndicating or selling the tax credit to investors. In order to receive tax credits, a developer must set aside and rent restrict a number of units for occupancy by households below 60 percent of the area median income. These units must remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years.

4.6 DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP

28. **Sponsorships**
Agency: Miscellaneous
Type: Donation
Description: Although they may often be considered insubstantial or time consuming, sponsorships from local businesses including banks, large retail chains, and other donors can be an effective way to raise money for small scale projects. Often, this is enough to fund façade improvements, basic building rehabilitation efforts, additional streetscape amenities (trees, furniture, etc.) and events. Some sponsorships may also involve the donation of materials or equipment. Raton MainStreet should seek out additional sponsors for MainStreet events in the future, including the International Bank, Amtrak, area hotels, and others that may desire to have their businesses advertised in return for a donation.
29. **Crowdfunding**
Agency: Miscellaneous
Type: Donation
Websites: many, including Kickstarter.com; Indiegogo.com; gofundme.com; StartSomeGood.com; Causes.com
Description: Crowdfunding is a way for individuals from around the world to pool their assets to fund projects or organizations they support. Most crowdfunding relies on internet platforms that allow donors to connect with projects they are interested in funding. Crowdfunding can be used to support a wide variety of projects that individuals feel are worthy of funding, including many of smaller-scale MainStreet projects such as façade treatments, public art installations, a downtown wayfinding system, etc. Although donations amount vary, they can be used as a supplement to larger funding sources. In some cases, these efforts can also be the impetus to moving a conceptual project to one that can actually be implemented.

SECTION VI

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines are intended to guide future design decisions and foster the evolution of a vibrant and resilient community. Guidelines can also help preserve cultural and historic assets that are present in a community. Design guidelines, when drafted based on the historic and cultural character of an area, can encourage future development that expresses the community vision and reflects the architectural styles present in a community. This can be instrumental in creating a *sense of place*, preserving the built environment, and encouraging development that a community can be proud of.

The following design guidelines are intended to accomplish just this: preserve the history and culture of the downtown core, encourage future development that creates a vibrant and resilient community, and instill pride in residents. The intent is to stimulate the improvement and reuse of existing buildings in a manner that is appropriate to the character of Downtown Raton. As such, these guidelines provide *recommendations* for property owners, developers, and the City of Raton to use when renovating, rehabilitating or constructing new buildings in the downtown district. Future enforcement of these guidelines (or similar) will require the City to adopt a formal ordinance that incorporates these design guidelines or establishes a historic preservation overlay zone and historic preservation commission to review site plans for compliance.

1. DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

The streetscape and architectural styles in downtown Raton evoke a turn-of-the-century railroad town like others throughout the region. The quality of Raton's downtown compares favorably with Silver City and Las Vegas, New Mexico as well as Trinidad and Telluride, Colorado - all railroad boom towns of similar age, development patterns, and character. These downtowns were founded during the railroad's western expansion, with Trinidad sharing a common history with Raton and the regional coal and ore mining industry.

As stated in the Physical Inventory section of this document, Downtown Raton is remarkably intact, with few vacant parcels within the core of the historic commercial area. The nomination for listing the Downtown Raton Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places notes the high degree of integrity of the district. The integrity of the district is seen in the wide variety of preserved buildings, representing a range of architectural styles, from late Victorian to Art Deco, along with more contemporary buildings at the edges of the district. Specific styles that are well represented include:

- Late Victorian: Italianate, Romanesque, Queen Anne
- Late 19th and early 20th century: Classical Revival, Mission/Spanish, Colonial Revival
- Modern movement: Art Deco, Modern
- Mid-century: modernist and international styles

These characteristics not only make Raton a unique place but provide the basis for design guidelines to preserve downtown's character and historic resources as redevelopment occurs in downtown.

2. BUILDING DESIGN GUIDANCE

The following guidelines suggest ways to preserve the special character of Raton's buildings within downtown. These standards are meant to offer a common-sense approach to redeveloping historically signification buildings that can be applied by property owners as well Raton MainStreet. The goal is to retain the existing structures through preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration. In most cases, buildings that are lost will not be reconstructed, although parts of existing buildings may be reconstructed. Guidelines for new construction stress the importance of massing, scale, and design that is compatible with the existing context of the building.

Detailed standards and guidelines for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction projects are contained in the in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995). There are also standards for incorporating sustainability into rehabilitation in a way that does not damage the integrity of the building. The

standards are regulatory for the Federal Historic Tax Credit Incentives Program while guidelines are advisory.[15]

2.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

As summarized above, the downtown district contains many different architectural styles representing different eras. Because of the diversity of architectural styles within the district, it makes it hard to provide specific guidelines for all styles, some of which have more prominent defining characteristics than others. In general, however, building renovation and rehabilitation should seek to preserve the original architecture's defining characteristics instead of significantly altering the original design intent. For example, decorative brick facades should not be covered with false fronts in an attempt to make the building look more "modern."

- → Preserve existing architectural styles' defining characteristics when present.
- → Avoid false fronts and seek to restore altered buildings to original styles if possible.

2.2 BUILDING SCALE AND HEIGHT

Generally, building heights and massing should be similar to adjacent buildings to preserve a sense of scale. Most of the buildings within downtown are predominantly one or two stories; however, the International Bank is 6 stories and the tallest building in Raton, while the County Courthouse is five stories and the Palace Hotel is 3 stories. Given the existing heights of buildings, the recommended height for buildings within the core blocks of downtown should complement adjacent buildings. Such a range of heights will preserve the existing pedestrian scale of downtown and provide adequate definition to the district's wide streets.

- → Building heights should complement adjacent buildings.
- → Building heights should complement neighboring building heights.

[15] These documents are available for download from the National Park Service at:

1. http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-guidelines.pdf
2. http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/sustainability-guidelines.pdf
3. http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/about-tax-incentives-2012.pdf

FIGURE 24: THE ARTHUR JOHNSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY – A TWO STORY BUILDING BUILT TO A PLEASANT PEDESTRIAN SCALE

2.3 FACADES

While the decorative features on the facades vary from building to building and by age and style, these features help define the quality and character of the district. Examples include decorative brick patterns, decorative tile inlays and trims, window details, columns and arches, and sculptural elements. In addition to stylistic elements, it is important to maintain original window designs as they are one of the most important parts of a historic building. Existing windows on the ground floor of many buildings are large and create active facades that are inviting to pedestrians and shoppers.

- → Maintain historic window design elements.
- → Repair and rehabilitate historic windows.
- → Maintain horizontal bands and relationships of adjacent buildings, pattern of windows and doors – glass storefronts, front entries.
- → Discourage false fronts and repair existing materials before considering replacement.
- → Maintain original entrances.
- → Maintain original window and door openings, styles and frame materials
- → Maintain original parapet style and shape.
- → Retain original details, such as decorative brick and ceramic tiles, columns, window sills, cornices, glass block, ornamental trim.

FIGURE 25: FACADE ARTICULATION AND DETAILING ALONG 1ST STREET

2.4 MATERIALS & COLOR

For facades and walls, common materials are brick, stone, concrete, ceramic tile, and decorative iron. The materials vary from building to building, and the objective is to maintain the materials that are original to the building. Roofs are typically flat, but pitched roofs are wood, metal or composite shingles, metal and terracotta tile. As with facades, it is important to maintain the roofing material that is original to the building. When materials have deteriorated, first repair the original. If that is not possible, repair or replace only the deteriorated material, using the same material or, if not available, material that matches the old material in design, color, and textures.

- → Do not paint over original façade materials.
- → Repair existing materials before considering in-kind replacement.

3. PUBLIC SPACE

Creating human-scaled, well-designed public places is an art form, although there are some generally agreed upon principles that can be applied. One straightforward approach was developed by Danish architect Jan Gehl, who has written extensively on livability, especially as it relates to public spaces. Gehl has named *12 quality criteria for public spaces* that help create places that are attractive and meaningful to their users. Each quality consideration is organized into one of three categories – protection, comfort, and delight – to reflect the essential needs of the space's users. These criteria are not prescriptive; they are general guidelines that can be applied to any place, including future developments in Downtown Raton.

PROTECTION

The first consideration for any public place is to ensure there is protection against risk, injury, insecurity, and unpleasant sensations. This includes 1) protection against traffic and

accidents; 2) protection against crime and violence; and 3) protection against unpleasant sensory experiences such as harsh weather, pollution, noises, etc.

COMFORT

After protection has been ensured, there are six qualities of public spaces that promote comfort, including opportunities to 1) walk, 2) stand/stay, 3) sit, 4) see, 5) talk/listen, and 6) play. In practical terms, this translates into adding active central spaces, benches, movable furniture, trees, plants, and other elements that satisfy basic human needs to rest, see and be seen, and communicate.

DELIGHT

Finally, there are three qualities that allow people to take delight in a place. These include: 1) providing appropriately scaled buildings and details; 2) creating opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of the climate; and 3) providing positive sensory experiences through high quality design details, fine views, etc. Once again, having these qualities helps enhance the social aspects of a place, contributes to walkability, and leads to more memorable experiences.

3.1 BLOCK PATTERN & STREETSCAPE

The existing blocks in the historic district are 300' X 300' with 25' X 140' lots and rear service alleys that run north/south. Street rights of way are approximately 100' wide with low curbs and concrete sidewalks. Stamped concrete sidewalks are contributing structures in the district. In addition, residential blocks have an attractive pattern of landscaped parkways and sidewalks that reinforce the small town character of downtown's neighborhoods. Although many plantings are post 1976 and not historic, they are now a defining feature of downtown, which should be preserved.

- → Preserve the historic grid block pattern of the Original Townsite Historic District.
- → Reinforce the Landscape Patterns of the Streetscape and Green Spaces.

3.2 PARKING

Many of the roads within downtown have on-street parking, which is complemented by ample surface, off-street parking lots throughout the Downtown district. While the availability of parking options is important, surface parking lots should not dominate Downtown. Accordingly, parking should to be strategically-located to provide accessible parking to existing businesses, but also not discourage walking.

- → On-street parking is desirable as it narrows the street and slows traffic. The continuation of the current pattern of angled on-street parking, with off-street parking in locations not visible from the road is also desirable.
- → Require any new surface parking lots to be screened with edge treatments (e.g. landscaping, high-quality fencing that is porous for visibility but also can be a can-

vas for public art installations).
→ For existing surface parking lots, the City can install the edging themselves along the property line in the public right of way.
→ Provide bike parking at new businesses and community facilities.

3.3 STREET TREES

The benefits of street trees are almost too numerous to name. Shade, safety for pedestrians, privacy, enhanced aesthetics, improved air quality, storm water capture, urban habitat, and a reduction in the urban heat island effect. Not to mention, street trees planted close together (30 feet on center or less) can form a beautiful shade canopy.

→ Trees should be planted approximately every thirty (30) linear feet of street frontage.
→ Whenever possible, street trees shall be placed between the curb and pedestrian walkways.
→ Suitable street trees for are mostly hardwood, non-fruit-bearing, deciduous trees. Low water consumption and non-allergenic trees are preferable.
→ Adequate vertical clearance below street tree branches should be maintained at no less than eight feet over pedestrian walkways and nine feet over streets.

FIGURE 26: 1ST STREET'S PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT WITH SHADE AND SEATING

3.4 LIGHTING

Lighting within downtown should be pedestrian scale and conform to the Night Sky Protection Act to preserve night sky views and energy.

- → The exterior lighting of any buildings, structures and surrounding grounds should provide illumination for safety purposes, and should be placed and screened such that it does not shine directly or reflect into any adjoining residential properties or streets.
- → Fixtures used in exterior lighting should be selected for functional and aesthetic value and shall not contain fluorescent lamps.
- → Parking lot lighting should provide for adequate security but must be shielded to prevent light from shining directly onto abutting residential lots.

SECTION VII

APPENDICES

A. MRA Designation Report

B. Public Meeting Notes

C. Business Survey

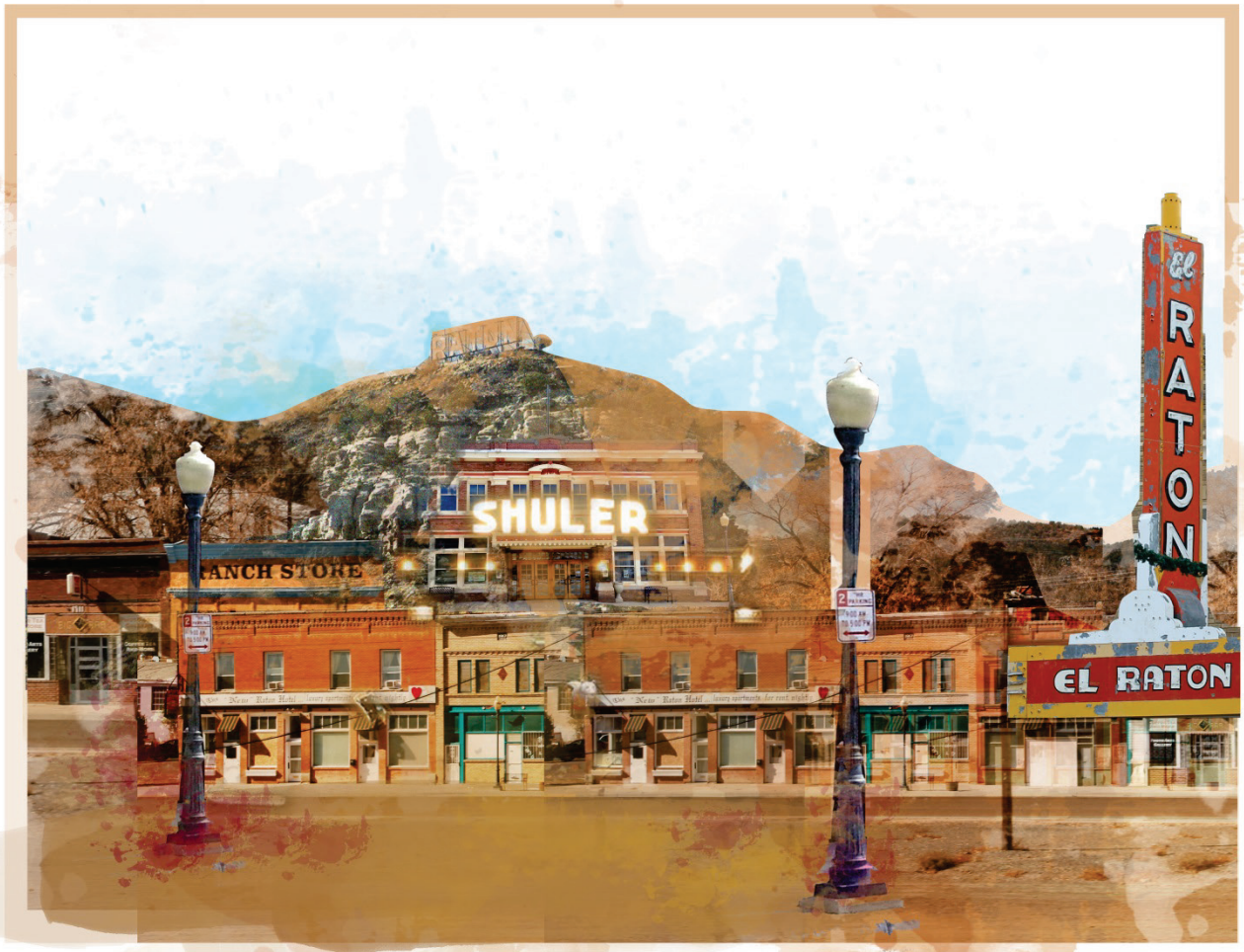
D. Data Tables

A. MRA DESIGNATION REPORT

Raton MainStreet District Conditions Analysis and MRA Designation Report

July 23, 2015

Prepared by
Sites Southwest Ltd. Co.
For the City of Raton, New Mexico and Raton MainStreet
As a part of the update to the Raton Downtown Master Plan



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Introduction

The City of Raton and Raton MainStreet have embarked on update to the City's 2009 downtown master plan. The Downtown Master Plan update includes designation of the downtown as a metropolitan redevelopment area to enable the City to assist and provide incentives for downtown development and redevelopment. The City has established downtown as an Arts & Cultural District. The redevelopment designation area boundary ("district") is the same as the Arts & Cultural District boundary as shown in Figure 1.

The State of New Mexico has a number of statutes that are intended to help municipalities in New Mexico promote economic development and redevelopment in areas where such activity is inhibited by a variety of factors. The Urban Development Law (§3-46-1 to §3-46-45 NMSA 1978), the Community Development Law (§3-60-1 to §3-60-37 NMSA 1978), and the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to §3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) all enable municipalities to implement strategies and projects to eliminate blight. Because the Urban Development Law and the Community Development Law are closely associated with specific Federal renewal programs, the preferred approach for the City of Raton and Raton MainStreet accomplish goals for the Raton Arts & Cultural District is through the powers conferred by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code.

The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) provides cities in New Mexico with the powers to correct conditions in areas or neighborhoods within municipalities which "substantially impair or arrest the sound and orderly development" within the city. These powers can help reverse an area's decline and stagnation; however, the municipality may only use these powers within designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas.

Designation of a MRA is based on findings of "slum or blight" conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60S-8). The criteria set by the Code for a "blighted" area include physical conditions and economic conditions.

As defined in the Code,

"Blighted area" means an area within the area of operation other than a slum area that, because of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness, un-

sanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, improper subdivision or lack of adequate housing facilities in the area or obsolete or impractical planning and platting or an area where a significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed or significantly reduced their operations due to the economic losses or loss of profit due to operating in the area, low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth and economic health and well-being of a municipality or locale within a municipality or an area that retards the provisions of housing accommodations or constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare in its present condition and use.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The City of Raton in its Comprehensive Plan stressed the importance of Downtown . . . – the cultural and economic center of the City. The City has invested in streetscape improvements and owns key properties that now constitute redevelopment opportunities – the site of the former El Portal hotel, ...

The City and Raton MainStreet have helped by securing funding for landscape improvements along 1st Street. The first project, creation of a multimodal facility adjacent to the Raton railroad depot will begin construction in summer 2015. Funding for design of streetscape improvements along three blocks of 1st Street has also been secured as part of the state's first Great Blocks project. Concept designs are complete, and construction documents will be completed in summer of 2015. The City is constructing utility upgrades throughout downtown.

The analysis contained in the report shows that in spite of public investment and the work of Raton MainStreet, the following conditions exist that inhibit new development and redevelopment and have substantially impaired the sound growth of Downtown and, therefore, the economic health and well-being of the City of Raton as a whole.

Deteriorated or deteriorating structures, including a number of vacant buildings

There are 29 vacant and eight partially vacant buildings in the study area. In addition, there are 23 occupied buildings in need of repair and vacant lots where historic structures have collapsed or burned. According to participants in public meetings and interviews, some buildings are deteriorating because of leaking roofs or other structural problems that may not be visible from the street. Out of 90 buildings, only one-third are occupied and appear to be in good condition.

Deterioration of site or other improvements

The Raton Arts & Cultural district is home to excellent examples of late Victorian, Art Deco and late 19th century/early 20th century commercial, government, and cultural buildings. However, many of these buildings are vacant, and both vacant and occupied buildings need repair. Signs of neglect include peeling paint, faded signs, trash visible through storefront windows and similar. The disadvantage to lack of maintenance is not only that this creates a poor image of the study area. Exterior and interior damage caused by leaking roofs has put some buildings in danger of collapse. During the

site visit for the downtown charrette, the project team heard stories of an existing business where inventory was damaged by the collapse of the roof at the rear of the building..

Diversity of ownership, which while typical of a downtown, makes coordinated redevelopment efforts difficult

The study area encompasses approximately 150 acres, not including public rights of way, and 728 parcels. There are over 600 separate owners. The smallest parcels are less than a tenth of an acre. The City is the largest landowner with 23 acres in 19 parcels. Within the Arts and Cultural District Phase 1 focus area are 166 parcels and 34 acres. There are 125 separate owners with an average holding of 0.27 acres. Again, the City of the Raton is the largest property owner, with 12 parcels totaling 7 acres. The large number of owner and small amount of property held by any single owner makes coordinated redevelopment difficult.

Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment

The economic analysis shows low levels of commercial activity and the conditions analysis shows low levels of investment in redevelopment. A community economic assessment conducted by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of New Mexico found . . .

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The area within the boundary of the district and the subject of this designation report, is the City of Raton's downtown and has historically been the center of commerce for the City and the surrounding region. It is the City's civic center and its center of arts and culture. It also is home to some of the City's most significant historic buildings, with two registered historic districts encompassing the commercial core of downtown and surrounding historic residential areas.

According to existing City policies, including the City's Comprehensive Plan, the existing Downtown Master Plan and the Arts & Cultural District Plan, the downtown area should be a walkable, mixed use district with an attractive mix of commercial, civic, residential and arts and cultural activity. Downtown has a particularly significant role to play as an arts and cultural district that provides entertainment for locals, regional residents and visitors.

Physical conditions of many downtown properties have impaired and arrested the sound growth of downtown and the economic health of the City as a whole. The presence of so many vacant buildings and vacant lots in the heart of the City is a detriment to the City's fiscal well-being and to the ability of the City to meet the needs of its residents.

In spite of supportive policies and public investment the City's historic theaters and in parks and streetscape improvements, there is evidence of declining private investment and decreasing economic activity.

The following analysis demonstrates that there exists a combination of factors that contribute to blight in the study area. The redevelopment and development of the study area is necessary in the interest of the welfare of the residents of the municipality. The powers granted to municipalities in New Mexico

through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act are intended to enable municipalities to promote economic activity in areas like the study area, where growth and development is hindered by physical and other conditions. Based on the findings of the designation report, a development/redevelopment plan should be carried out to aid in the elimination and deterrence of blight.

Boundary of the Study Area

The boundaries of the study area are the same as the boundaries of the Phase 1 area of the Arts & Cultural District, as shown in **FIGURE 27**. The northern boundary is Parsons Avenue and North 2nd Street; the east boundary is North 1st Street and the railroad tracks; the south boundary is Galisteo Avenue, and the west boundary is mid-block west of Third Street. This area includes most of the historic commercial buildings in the Arts and Cultural District and is the focus of the highest priority projects for the Arts and Cultural District.

FIGURE 27. STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

Existing Conditions Assessment

CITY POLICY

Several City documents lay out policies for the MainStreet district and identify needs and redevelopment goals. These documents recognize the importance of downtown to the City's identity, culture and economic well-being.

RATON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2003.

The Comprehensive Plan is more than 10 years old, but it recognizes downtown's architecture and the contribution of the downtown and historic district to the City and region's tourism economy.

While all of the Comprehensive Plan goals affect downtown as an integral part of the community, there are some that are specific to downtown. Goals related specifically to the downtown include:

Economic Development Goal 1: Diversify the City's economy by attracting, promoting, and supporting stable and sustainable industries.

Objectives:

- Work with the Raton Chamber of Commerce on recruiting new retail businesses and growing existing businesses.
- Coordinate with the State Department of Economic Development on promoting job opportunities in Raton.
- Explore regional economic development opportunities with other communities, counties and organizations.

Economic Development Goal 2: Promote and support tourism in Raton.

Objectives:

- Maintain the Historic District by creating an historic overlay zone that includes design standards and controls, and coordinate with the Historic Downtown Merchants Association.
- Develop a brochure that highlights the City's cultural, historic and recreational assets.

- Design and develop gateways to Raton that welcome visitors to the City
- Develop an overall signage program the directs visitors to community attractions
- Encourage the remodel, repair, rehabilitation and use of older historic buildings in order to maintain the character of the community.
- Promote "tourist magnet" type businesses (i.e. galleries, book stores, museums, walking tours, etc.) to the Central Business District.

Land Use Goal 3: Recognize the Historic District as a community asset.

Objectives:

- Expand the Historic District to include the area to the south.
- Rezone the Historic District and develop a design overlay zone with development and design standards specifically geared toward preservation.

Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Goal 1: Provide a diversity of passive and active recreational activities and opportunities for all residents, regardless of age.

Objectives:

- Develop new community facilities, and maintain and expand existing facilities such as the Raton Convention Center, Municipal Pool, Arthur Johnson Memorial Library, senior centers and community centers.

Community Character Goal 1: Enhance the appearance of the City by promoting façade improvements and maintenance of existing commercial buildings.

Objectives:

- Work with the State on Main Street and Façade Beautification programs to assess feasibility of establishing such programs in Raton.

Community Character Goal 3: Maintain a wide variety of arts programs and promote Raton as an art community.

Objectives:

- Work with the local arts community on establishing a series of arts related festivals (music, film, multi-ethnic)
- Promote cultural tourism by improving and supporting the Arts and Education Museum, Shuler Theater, Amphitheater, Arts and Humanities Council and the Whited Foundation.

- Coordinate with the State Department of Tourism on marketing Raton as an arts community in Northeast New Mexico.
- Study the feasibility of developing a public arts program that would allow local artisans to display their work in public places.

Transportation Goal 1: Provide a multi-modal transportation system that enhances the community and supports the safety of residents

Objectives:

- Provide sidewalks to connect neighborhoods, trails, parks and community facilities.
- Work with Amtrak in order to maintain the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe line to Raton and explore the feasibility of acquiring the train depot for development of an intermodal center.
- Coordinate with [NMDOT] regarding signalization, signing, striping, speed limits and traffic flows through the City.
- Coordinate with [NMDOT] to maintain rights of way on State and Federal roadways as they traverse the City of accommodate non-vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and emergency vehicles.

Transportation Goal 2: Maintain the integrity of existing neighborhoods and residential areas through improvements to existing transportation systems.

Objectives:

- Mitigate existing transportation impacts through signalization, signage, and appropriate traffic speeds.
- Study the need for traffic calming devices such as cross walks, traffic signals, stop signs, and yield signs on residential streets and the historic district.

The City has accomplished a number of the goals related to downtown through Raton MainStreet, including the designation of a MainStreet district, recognition and preservation of historic structures, and landscape improvements. However, in spite of these policies and action, the district has not rebounded economically.

RATON ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT CULTURAL PLAN, 2011

The Arts and Cultural District Plan documented the history of Raton's economic decline since 1990. The closing of La Mesa Park racetrack in 1992 and the opening of a Walmart in Trinidad are cited as recent reasons for the decline of tourism and retail jobs during the past 25 years. The plan identifies the need for additional retail and small businesses in downtown.

The proposed boundaries of the MRA are the Arts and Cultural District (ACD) boundary. The Plan identifies a phase one focus area in the core of downtown, as shown in **FIGURE 27**.

ZONING

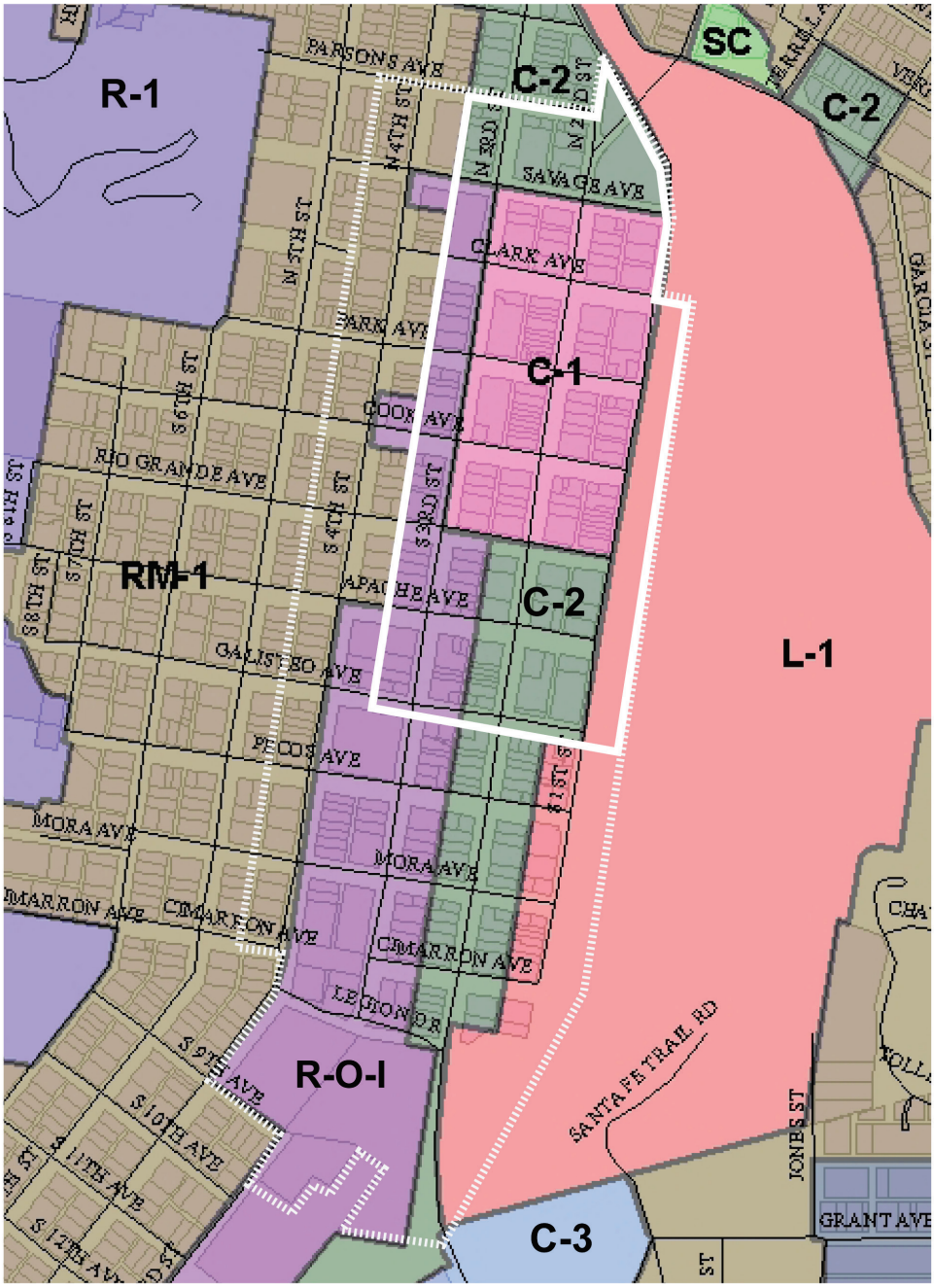
Downtown zoning districts include C-1 (Central Business District), C-2 (General Commercial District) and R-O-I (Residential, Office, Institutional), as shown in **FIGURE 28**.

The C-1 Central Business District, which extends from Savage on the north to Rio Grande on the south and from 1st Street on the east to 3rd Street on the west, is designed to encourage development that is similar to the existing historic district, with no lot area or setback requirements, no off-street parking requirements and no restrictions on lot coverage. Living quarters are allowed on second stories and above in commercial buildings, and building height is set at 60 feet maximum from the highest adjacent grade.

The C-2 General Commercial District allows residential and commercial uses, including multi-family residences. Maximum lot coverage is 60% and maximum height is 45 feet. Off-street parking is required.

The R-O-I Residential, Office and Institutional District is designed to accommodate the historic mix of uses in the residential mixed-use neighborhoods adjacent to downtown on the west and south. Permitted uses include residential up to multi-family and a variety of business and personal services and institutions, as well as small retail shops that occupy less than 2,500 square feet. This district has a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet for single family, office and institutional and 4,000 square feet for multi-family residential. Maximum lot coverage is from 30 to 50%, depending on use, and maximum height is 35 feet. Off-street parking requirements apply.

FIGURE 28. EXISTING ZONING



LEGEND

MRA BOUNDARY

MAINSTREET BOUNDARY

0 300 600 FEET

Prepared by sites southwest

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The following section describes the physical conditions in the downtown.

FIGURE 30 at the end of the section maps out vacant parcels and buildings. There are also sites that include large parking lots or in other ways could be more fully developed to create a more compact downtown.

1st Street runs along the west side of the railroad tracks. On the east side of 1st Street are the Santa Fe Depot, Old Pass Gallery, and two small commercial buildings. A portion of the area north of the depot will be developed as a multimodal center with landscaping and amenities to serve as a transfer point between the multiple modes of travel that converge in downtown – train, Greyhound bus and autos. Historic commercial buildings line the west side of the street. The City, through a grant from New Mexico MainStreet, will be making significant streetscape improvements along first as the state's first Great Blocks project.

2nd Street or I-25 Business Route serves as a major transportation corridor from the southern interstate exit to the northern interstate exit. 2nd Street through downtown is part of the Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway. Historic commercial buildings and the City's two historic theaters are located along 2nd Street.

3rd Street is a more mixed commercial and residential street. The historic Colfax County Courthouse is located on 3rd Street, along with several churches.

BUILDING AND SITE CONDITIONS

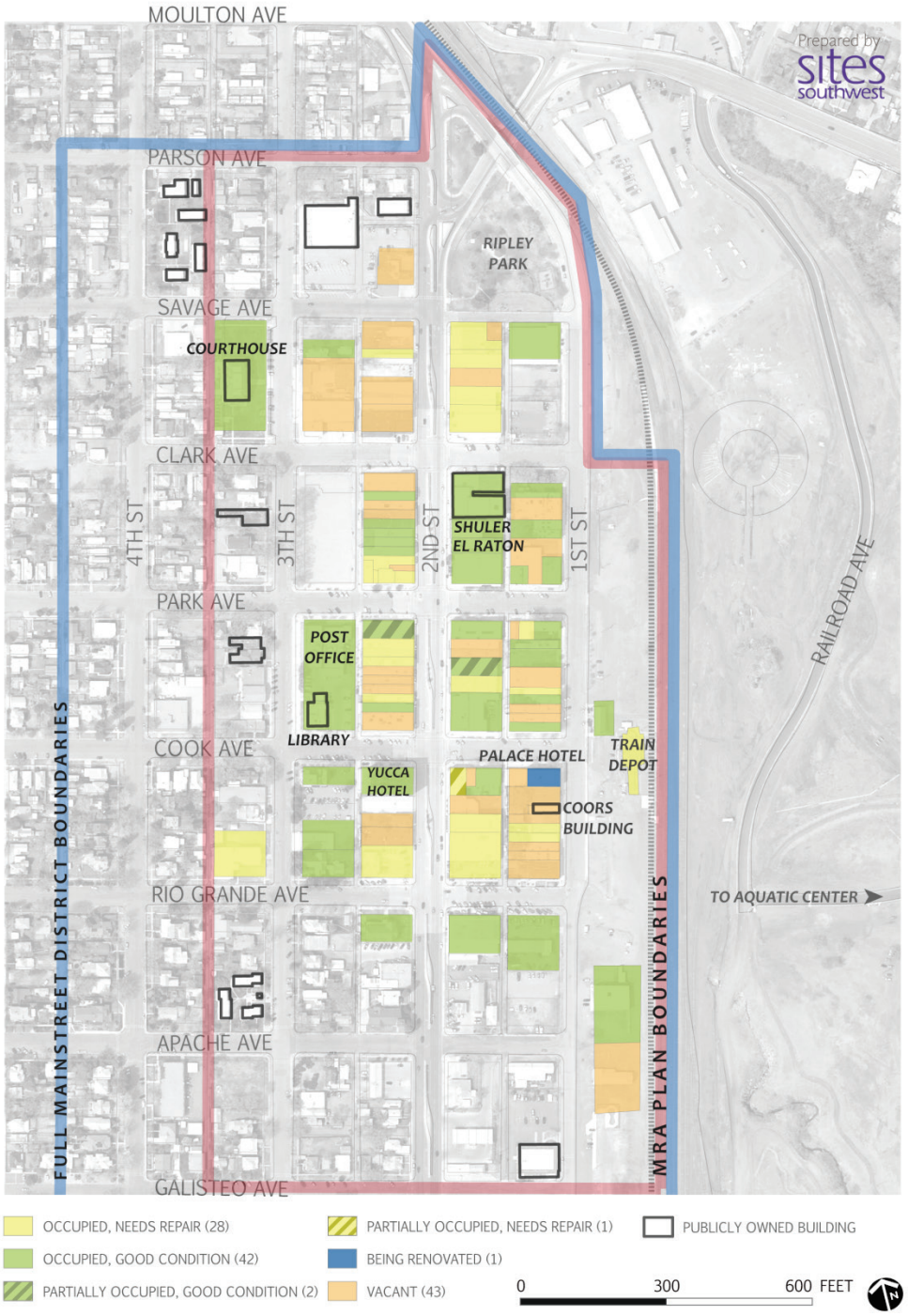
A field survey was conducted in May of 2015 to document existing conditions in the commercial core of downtown, which is bounded by Savage Ave. on the north, Rio Grande on the south, First Street and Third Street. Photo documentation of existing buildings with notations of occupancy and general building condition that could be observed from the street. As shown in **FIGURE 30**, there are a significant number of vacant commercial buildings within the commercial core area, and of those commercial buildings that are occupied, approximately half need repairs.

A total of 90 buildings in the commercial core were inventoried. Of those 30 were occupied and in good condition, based on the appearance of the front of the building, 23 were occupied but in need of repair, 29 were vacant, and 8 were partially occupied multi-tenant buildings.

Interviews with tenants and comments at public meetings indicate that there are concerns about the structural condition of buildings, some of which have leaking roofs or other conditions contributing to deterioration of the structures.

FIGURE 29. VACANT BUILDINGS

FIGURE 30. BUILDING OCCUPANCY AND BUILDING CONDITION



The photos below illustrate the conditions of vacant and deteriorating buildings and vacant lots.

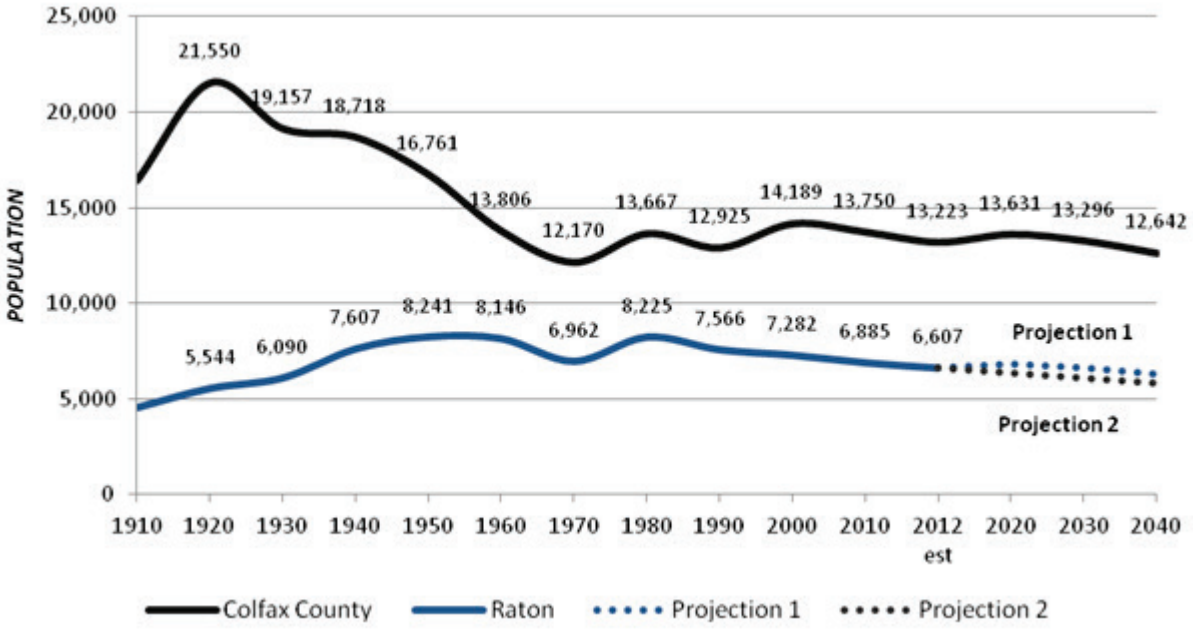
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) conducted a community economic assessment of Raton MainStreet in 2006, and a market study was included in the 2009 Downtown Master Plan. The community economic assessment and the market study made the following observations about Raton and the area within the MainStreet boundary.

THE CITY OF RATON AND THE REGION

The Community Economic Assessment noted Raton's population decline, which has continued in the decade since the economic assessment was completed. The County's population increased from 1990 to 2000 but has declined since. Projections prepared by the BBER for all counties in the state indicate that the County's population will remain stagnant into the future. The estimated population in 2012 was 6,607 in the City of Raton and 13,223 in Colfax County.

Given BBER's projections for Colfax County and historical population trends in Raton, two projections are provided to show the likely future without positive intervention on the part of local government, as well as MainStreet and local economic development organizations. Projection 1 assumes that Raton will maintain its current share of Colfax County's population, which is approximately half of the County's entire population. Under this projection, Raton will remain fairly steady until 2030, when it will decline slightly to approximately 6,300 residents. Projection 2 relies on an exponential growth model that assumes that Raton's growth rate will follow recent historical trends and have a smaller share of Colfax County's population in the future. This projection shows a gradual decline in population to approximately 5,839 people in 2040.



Source: US Census

The assessment noted a trend in loss of working age adults and in migration of retirees. As a result, per capita incomes are low compared to New Mexico, and a large share of Raton's households depends on fixed incomes, including Social Security and retirement benefits.

The economic assessment reported that weaknesses in Raton's economy were most notable among various amenity sectors. Gross receipts from food services and drinking establishments declined in spite of the town's location on I-25. Arts and entertainment also showed significant weakness. The assessment noted that these weaknesses created opportunities in those sectors, given strength in the accommodation sector and tourism.

THE MAINSTREET DISTRICT

MainStreet District businesses accounted for 20% of all of Raton's businesses and 13% of the town's employment. During the time period covered by the economic assessment, downtown's employment declined slightly as a share of the City's businesses.

The composition of downtown employment was balanced, but there were significant decreases in hospitality jobs downtown. The loss of these jobs was offset by increases in finance, insurance and real estate; administration; and professional and educational services.

Downtown's total employment has remained relatively stable, but downtown's role is shifting from amenity based jobs that benefit from or support tourism to administrative and service jobs. While the total number of jobs in downtown has been stable, one-third of ground floor commercial space is vacant. A significant increase in jobs is needed to fill vacant buildings, along with conversion of second floor and above spaces to residential. Amenity based jobs and continued increases in services are opportunities to improve downtown employment and commercial occupancy.

In spite of the low level of economic activity in downtown, and the indicators of economic decline, there are opportunities associated with the City's role as a commercial center for the region and a tourist attraction based on downtown's exceptional Victorian era buildings and cultural and historical amenities. In addition, downtown has existing and potential pedestrian links to the network of trails in Climax Canyon Park and to trails, the interpretive garden, the Aquatic Center and other facilities in Roundhouse Park. Designation of the MainStreet district as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area would enable the City to actively invest in ventures that could improve local economic conditions and put downtown's historic resources to productive use.

Findings

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The City of Raton in its Comprehensive Plan, the 2009 Downtown Master Plan and the Arts & Cultural District Plan stressed the importance of Downtown as the cultural and economic center of the City. The City has invested in streetscape improvements which are being designed and/or constructed.

The analysis contained in the report shows that in spite of public investment and the work of the City and Raton MainStreet, the following conditions exist that inhibit new development and redevelopment and have substantially impaired the sound growth of Downtown and, therefore, the economic health and well-being of the City of Raton and the entire region.

Deteriorated or deteriorating structures, including a number of vacant buildings

There are 29 vacant and eight partially vacant buildings in the study area. In addition, there are 23 occupied buildings in need of repair and vacant lots where historic structures have collapsed or burned. According to participants in public meetings and interviews, some buildings are deteriorating because of leaking roofs or other structural problems that may not be visible from the street. Out of 90 buildings, only one-third are occupied and appear to be in good condition.

Deterioration of site or other improvements

Building facades are generally maintained in decent condition, but there has been little recent obvious investment in older buildings. During interviews and public meetings, people who are familiar with downtown noted that buildings have deteriorating roofs and structures, even if the façade is maintained. There are signs of neglect, including peeling paint, faded signs, and similar. This creates a poor image of the study area.

Diversity of ownership, which while typical of a downtown, make coordinated redevelopment efforts difficult

The entire Arts and Cultural District encompasses approximately 150 acres, not including public rights of way, and 728 parcels. There are over 600 separate owners. The smallest parcels are less than a tenth of an acre. The City is the largest landowner with 23 acres in 19 parcels. Within the Arts and Cultural District Phase 1 focus area are 166 parcels and 34 acres. There are 125 separate owners with an aver-

age holding of 0.27 acres. Again, the City of the Raton is the largest property owner, with 12 parcels totaling 7 acres. The large number of owner and small amount of property held by any single owner makes coordinated redevelopment difficult.

Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment

The economic analysis shows low levels of commercial activity and the conditions analysis shows low levels of redevelopment. Recent studies note the decline in tourism oriented and retail employment in Raton. The BBER Community Economic Assessment noted that from the period from 1995 to 2004, there were significant losses in health care and social assistance, hospitality and retail trade jobs in the MainStreet area. The economic assessment recommended an emphasis on businesses such as restaurants and drinking establishments and arts and entertainment venues. The Shuler Theater and El Raton provide entertainment options in downtown, but there is still a lack of restaurants and drinking establishments.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The area within the boundary of the proposed Metropolitan Redevelopment Area and the subject of this designation report, is downtown Raton, which has historically been the center of commerce for the City and the surrounding ranches and small communities. It is the City's civic center and its center of arts and culture. It also is home to some of New Mexico's most significant historic buildings. The recently expanded downtown historic district contains 78 contributing buildings.

According to existing City policies, including the City's Comprehensive Plan and it Arts and Cultural District Plan, the downtown area should be a walkable, mixed use district with an attractive mix of commercial, civic, residential and arts and cultural activity. The downtown should present an opportunity for amenities, goods and services that are oriented to tourism and capitalize on the arts and entertainment amenities within downtown. However, the downtown has lost almost all jobs in those categories over the past 20 years.

Physical conditions of many downtown properties have impaired and arrested the sound growth of downtown and the economic health of the City as a whole. The presence of so many vacant buildings in the heart of the City is a detriment to the City's fiscal well-being and to the ability of the City to meet the needs of its residents. Even when a building is occupied, poor building condition may be a detriment to the tenant business.

In spite of supportive policies and public investment in parks, streetscape improvements and entertainment, there is evidence of declining private investment and decreasing economic activity or redevelopment. Over the past ten years, restaurants have virtually disappeared from downtown.

The analysis demonstrates that the property included in the analysis exhibits a combination of factors that contribute to blight in the study area. The redevelopment and development of the study area is necessary in the interest of the welfare of the residents of the municipality. The powers granted to municipalities in New Mexico through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act are intended to enable municipalities to promote economic activity in areas like the study area, where growth and develop-

ment is hindered by physical and other conditions. Based on the findings of the designation report, a development/redevelopment plan should be carried out to aid in the elimination and deterrence of blight.

B. PUBLIC MEETING NOTES

JUNE 8, 2015 PUBLIC MEETING

The June 8 public meeting was held in the City Commission Chambers. A total of 23 people signed in, although approximately 30 people filled the room, not including the consultant team. The group was asked the following open ended questions. Comments are listed.

1. WHAT DEFINES DOWNTOWN RATON FOR YOU?

Schuler and live performances

- El Raton Theater
- Friendly atmosphere for newcomers – retail clerks & customers are friendly
- Happy storefronts
- Shopping: Solano, Sports Area, S.F. Traders
- Museum (events through the summer)
- Well preserved historic buildings and history of Raton
- "Can do" attitude of the past
- Lightening in core of downtown
- Train Station (Amtrak and future Multi Model Center)
- Greyhound station
- Planters and community garden (Master Gardeners)
- Events and festivals:
    - Christmas decoration
    - Fireworks – great display during the 4th of July celebrations
        - Balloon rally
    - Farmers Market
    - Music on Main Street (June-August) (9)
    - Cinco De Mayo
    - Raton Museum, Beer & Wine
    - Rodeo
- Raton Whittington Center
- Airport
- Vermejo Ranch
- Raton Downtown "entails all of Raton"

2. ASSETS

- Tracks – need a crossing
- Aquatic Center
- Climax Canyon
- Roundhouse Park
- Painted Bears
- Museum
- Historic Homes
- Downtown itself
- Post office

- Parks

3. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Economic cost of renovation of historic buildings
  - Rents are not enough to fix up buildings
- Code issues
  - Changing uses requires a lot of alterations to the building and cost increase dramatically.
  - Look for alternatives to triggers
- Size of economy
- Lending practices – not a lot of people can qualify for loans
- Promotion of downtown
  - Promotion needs to go beyond Raton
  - Better web/social media presents
  - Get New Mexican tourism bureau involved
  - More national exposure
  - Survey at hotels/restaurants on 64 to find out where people come from and how they found out about Raton.
- Get large welcome sign on i25
-
- Events not always promoted
  - 'week at a glance' send by Chamber can be outdated
- No ATM downtown
- No Money for new Chamber brochure
- Train not always on schedule
- Safety for parking at train station
- Busy Bees service (like UBER) to help people get around
- Racino
- Need more focus – connect all efforts

4. WHAT IS NEEDED FOR A SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWN?

- Need more people
- Get people to park/stop in Raton
- Ballfields (Well thought of, next to the powerplant)
- More restaurants
- Close freeway
- Tear down buildings that are beyond repair.
  - There are many hazardous landfills that are very expensive to remedy.
- Bike tourism
-

5. IF YOU COULD WAVE A MAGIC WAND, WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU CHANGE?

- Change frame of mind
  - More positive outlook
  - We could be the change – have to start with ourselves
- More awareness of surrounding beauty

- Change attitude of Clerks in town (educate clerks to help visitors to learn about events and assets of Raton)
- Support ourselves – participate in Raton
- List of available resources such as grants, loans, funding etc. (from the outside)
- Encourage people to volunteer more
- Grow Raton (pride)
- Keep youth here, help them appreciate Raton – bring them back to Raton
- Slow traffic in downtown (2 lane with parking, trees etc.)
- More focus on retirees and attracting them
- Need succession planning (bring in young skilled stuff)
- Improve border relations (even to Denver)
- More activities for 20 something's

C. BUSINESS SURVEY

Business surveys were conducted at the June 8 public meeting, and on June 9, the consultant team visited each business downtown to conduct the survey in person. Surveys were collected from 23 businesses and/or property owners. Two thirds were business owners, and one-third were tenants.

Responses are summarized below:

Downtown assets:

- People
- Historic Buildings
- Schuler Theater

Downtown needs (bold statements mentioned most often):

- **Welcome Signs on Freeway**
- **More restaurants and mixture of businesses**
- More Trash Cans and Cleanup
- **Better Maintenance of public areas and private buildings**
- Parking enforcement/Metering
- More police presence
- More community involvement
- **More maintenance of streetscape and landscape**
- Building facades and signage improvements
- Stores need to stay open longer – also on weekends
- Need to hold people accountable
- Need strong "anchors" to be developed
- Trees are barriers, visitors cant see the buildings.
- **More jobs and economic development**
- Many roofs need improvement
- Need a grocery store
- Incentives for businesses
- Public Restrooms
- More opportunities for kids and young adults
- **Bring more tourists to downtown**
- Need to train hospitality and retail staff to better promote Raton
- Make downtown a vacation destination.
- Develop vision and brand for downtown
- Improve connectivity of local businesses.
- Bike trails and lanes for community and tourists
- Parking for Amtrak users
- Outdoor public center/space
- **Improved Signage/Wayfinding**
- Renovation of vacant/dilapidated buildings

Opportunities

- Make Raton the "Festival City"
- Central location and positioned between ABQ, Denver, and Amarillo

For property owners:

Fifteen of the respondents owned a building. The term of property ownership ranged from one to 75 years, with an average of 24 years.

Seven of the owners operated their own business in the building, three owners leased to another business. One owner lived above their business.

Business owners had owned their businesses for from one to 76 years. Businesses had existed for one to 76 years, and several owners had bought the business from the original owner. All of the businesses have been in downtown since they were founded. Respondents included 16 retailers, five services and two museums.

Plans to expand or move:
About half of businesses have no plans for changes, and 7 do not plan to reduce the space they occupy. Four businesses plan to expand at their present location, and one has bought another downtown building and will move. Responses are as follows:

- I plan to expand my business at its present location - 4
- I plan to reduce the space my business occupies at its present location - 0
- I plan to move to a new location – 2 (one has bought another downtown building)
- I don't have any plans for changes - 12
- I don't have plans to reduce the space – 7

Other respondents recently completed an expansion, are in the process of renovating their building or are looking for an opportunity to expand.

Planned building improvements by the business or building owner:
Eight owners and/or businesses plan to improve their building, and eight have no plans for improvements. Four are uncertain.

Number of Employees
A total of 139 full time, 13 part time and two seasonal workers are employed by the businesses that responded to the survey.

Complementary businesses
Survey participants were asked which three businesses in downtown complement their business the most. Businesses benefit from the presence of like businesses or businesses that meet their needs. The retailers mentioned other nearby shops and restaurants as complementing their businesses. Restaurants and retailers benefit from nearby businesses that draw people into downtown – the train, the museums, banks, the theaters, lodging. Businesses benefit from similar stores that draw people to comparison shop. They also benefit from the presence of different types of businesses that provide services, buy from them or attract visitors into downtown.

Characteristics that make downtown a good place to do business:
The characteristics of downtown that make it a good place to do business are listed below in order of how important they are from a lot to not at all.

1. Parking
2. Hours businesses are open
3. Services offered
4. Other
5. Character/Sense of Place
6. Location
7. Selection
8. Types of products offered

9. Quality
10. Convenience
11. Price

Satisfaction with downtown location:
Two thirds of resondents are very satisified with their location in downtown, and one third are satisified. One respondent was neutral. Reasons for satisfaction include downtown's central location, its history and character, proximity to other businesses and activities, and that downtown is Raton's business center. Respondents would like to have more traffic and to attract more people from the interstate.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Participants were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statements, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree. The weighted scores of the responses is shown below. Respondents agree most strongly that they direct customers to other local businesses and cooperate with each other. Overall, respondents were very positive about downtown, especially concerning safety, location, cooperation between downtown businesses, and being able to buy products downtown. However, many respondents indicated that the existing mix of businesses could be improved, as well as the aesthetics and upkeep of downtown buildings and the public realm. In addition, a few people commented that adequate parking was sometimes an issue for their businesses..

Statement	Weighted Score
I always direct customers to other local businesses.	1.05
I look for ways to cooperate with other downtown businesses.	1.19
I feel safe in downtown, even at night.	1.35
I always try to buy products and services locally	1.38
Downtown should improve the aesthetics	1.60
My customers can always find convenient parking.	1.65
The look and feel of downtown helps my business.	2.05
The existing mix of businesses and government services helps my business.	2.43

Improvements that would help businesses be more successful:
Participants were asked which improvements from a list of possible improvements would help their business be more successful or would help their property be more productive. They could mark up to four of the possible improvements. Better signage, upgrades to neighborhood properties and more business activity in downtown were the top three listed, followed by better sidewalks and public seating/gathering places.

Better signage	12
Upgrade/renovation of neighboring properties	9
More businesses activity in downtown	8
Better sidewalks	7
Public seating/gathering	7
Drainage improvements	6
Better landscaping	5
Public parking	4
Special events	4
More businesses activity in Raton	4
Other	4
None of these	1

Support for downtown residential development:
Over 80 percent of the respondents support new residential development in downtown.

Other comments:
Respondents had the following additional comments.

- Social media
- Look at Clayton/Red River
- Huge Communication void - no one knows when things are happening
- Sponsor events that bring money back in.
- Focus/streamline all activities happening. Grow Raton Chamber
- Blues Fest in Trinidad. Could be similar event here.
- Advertise ahead of time.
- Cops walk the streets more - metering/presence. More community involvement.
- Better highway signage for downtown. Show local businesses. Business loop.
- More people.
- Holding people accountable
- Restaurants
- Encourage redevelopment.
- Working on alley on drainage. Fixed it
- Bring jobs, economic development
- More businesses
- Need more police presence, grocery store, restaurants, more stores in walking distance. No incentives for businesses.
- Improve business, maybe something fun for kids to do. Outdoor public center.
- Wants to see Raton Grow. Opportunities for kids.
- Rockin 50's restaurant - can't get permit. Didn't follow ADA. New nursing home on Frances – hopes it happens
- On north end, can't see businesses
- Divert tourists to downtown! Losing your people. Need economy. Racetrack needs to come back.
- Work on negativity of other business owners. Facades. Problems: lots of empty businesses being out of state owners. Getting multimodal started.
- The streets have a lot of trash. City trash cans not emptied in a timely manner. Parking lanes need to be repainted in downtown area.
- Same distance to ABQ, Denver.
- Need to coordinate with scouts.
- Community needs to start patting ourselves on the back. A celebrating for everybody-accomplishments shown
- Need leadership!
  Have done training for hospitality - need more
- Need more training for staff that doesn't care
- Chamber does weekly e-blasts
- John Q public doesn't know what's going on as needs to get information
- More bite into code enforcement - weak code division: broken windows on bus; handed off to fire department
- Local timely information (over city website)
- KRTN radio - best website
- City transportation

- A donut/bakery shop
- First, need to develop "vision" including industry to improve economy. If it's tourism, then fully develop the plan to make Raton downtown a vacation destination for out of state people. Improve connectivity of local businesses.

D. DATA TABLES

TABLE 2: OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Estimate	OLQ
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,701	1.00
Management, business, science, and arts occupations:	**663**	**0.70**
Management, business, and financial occupations:	213	0.62
Management occupations	137	0.56
Business and financial operations occupations	76	0.75
Computer, engineering, and science occupations:	**0**	0.00
Computer and mathematical occupations	0	0.00
Architecture and engineering occupations	0	0.00
Life, physical, and social science occupations	0	0.00
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations:	**345**	**1.12**
Community and social services occupations	103	2.12
Legal occupations	32	1.02
Education, training, and library occupations	165	0.91
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	45	0.94
Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations:	**105**	0.73
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations	73	0.72
Health technologists and technicians	32	0.76
Service occupations:	**752**	**1.36**
Healthcare support occupations	92	1.27
Protective service occupations:	**99**	**1.31**
Firefighting and prevention, and other protective service workers including supervisors	28	0.69
Law enforcement workers including supervisors	71	2.03
Food preparation and serving related occupations	213	1.26
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	213	1.79
Personal care and service occupations	135	1.14
Sales and office occupations:	**573**	**0.90**
Sales and related occupations	176	0.65
Office and administrative support occupations	397	1.09
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations:	**339**	**1.08**
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	10	0.33
Construction and extraction occupations	219	1.21
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	110	1.07
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	**374**	**1.52**
Production occupations	126	1.24
Transportation occupations	140	1.47

Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap tool 2013 data.

TABLE 3: EMPLOYMENT DATA

	2014	2008	Percent Change	NM LQ 2014 (Specialization)	Differential Shift (Competiveness)
Total Jobs	**5,110**	**5,340**	**-4%**	**-**	**-**
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	53	39	36%	0.74	30.67%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	54	51	6%	0.30	-12.11%
Construction	181	284	-36%	0.66	-21.98%
Manufacturing	117	202	-42%	0.65	-32.91%
Wholesale trade	76	78	-3%	0.55	-0.22%
Retail trade	653	694	-6%	1.10	-6.15%
Transportation and warehousing	30	63	-52%	0.26	-55.11%
Utilities	38	35	9%	1.34	10.19%
Information	31	30	3%	0.39	11.92%
Finance and insurance	131	170	-23%	0.95	-19.12%
Real estate and rental and leasing	59	85	-31%	0.92	-27.21%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	66	133	-50%	0.20	-57.15%
Management of companies and enterprises	23	42	-45%	0.71	-58.88%
Administrative and support and waste management services	39	14	179%	0.15	171.32%
Educational services	0	0	0%	0.00	-12.71%
Health care and social assistance	399	337	18%	0.58	3.55%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	33	42	-21%	0.58	-27.30%
Accommodation and food services	1145	1020	12%	2.18	2.50%
Other services, except public administration	512	470	9%	3.92	14.52%
Unclassified	0	0	0%	0.00	-4.54%
Federal Government	56	57	-2%	0.30	-0.58%
State Government	686	725	-5%	2.22	-3.28%
Local Government	728	769	-5%	1.11	-2.22%

Source: US Department of Labor, Quarterly Employment Reports, 2015.NM Economic Development Department.

TABLE 4: POTENTIAL VISITOR CAPTURE

	Sugarite Canyon State Park	Capulin National Park	Philmont Scout Ranch	Maxwell Wildlife Refuge	Vermejo Ranch	NRA Whittington Center	Amtrak	**Total**
Total Visitors	125,000	50,000	10,000	10,000	2,500	15,0000	10,000[6]	**357,500.0**
Percent Visiting	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	25%	**-**
Percent Staying	5%	10%	0%	10%	0%	5%	5%	**-**
Lodgers Dollars[1]	$312,500	$250,000	$0	$50,000	$0	$375,000	$25,000	**$1,012,500**
New Rooms	13	10	0	2	0	16	1	**42.0**

	Sugarite Canyon State Park	Capulin National Park	Philmont Scout Ranch	Maxwell Wildlife Refuge	Vermejo Ranch	NRA Whit-tington Center	Amtrak	**Total**
Dining Dollars[2]	$187,500	$75,000	$15,000	$15,000	$3,750	$225,000	$37,500	**$558,750**
Sq Feet[3]	1071.43	428.57	85.71	85.71	21.43	1285.71	214.29	**3192**
Shopping Dollars[4]	$250,000	$100,000	$20,000	$20,000	$5,000	$300,000	$50,000	**$745,000**
Sq Feet[5]	1429	571	114	114	29	1714	286	**4257**

1 Assumption of $50 per night per guest
2 Assumption of $15 per person
3 Assumption of $175 of sales per square foot
4 Assumption of $50 per night per guest
5 Assumption of $175 of sales per square foot
6 Minus estimated scout trips