



*White Rock*  
**TOWN CENTER  
MASTER PLAN**

*Part 2 - Vision & Goals*  
*May 2021 Working Draft*



## PART 2. VISION & GOALS

THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE VISION AND GOALS FOR THE DOWNTOWN AREA ALONG WITH STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THEM. THE VISION AND GOALS WERE CREATED THROUGH AN ITERATIVE PLANNING PROCESS SUPPORTED BY EXISTING COUNTY GOALS AND POLICIES. THE VISION AND GOALS ARE CATEGORIZED INTO EIGHT AREAS. IN THE FOLLOWING, EACH CATEGORY IS DESCRIBED WITH ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE.

### 2 - 1 OVERALL VISION STATEMENT

#### *White Rock Vision Statement*

*“A Town Center that is walkable with attractions for young and old, inspired by the unique history of Los Alamos and a place where local businesses can thrive.”*

#### 2 - 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The vision, goals, and strategies outlined in this section represent the culmination of analysis of existing conditions, research of national trends and extensive public input. They are informed by the Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan, as well as the specific opportunities and challenges facing the Los Alamos community.

Part 1: Existing Conditions outlines the opportunities and constraints of the White Rock Town Center. Major challenges include:

- General lack of an identifiable “town center”
- Blight due to vacant or otherwise dilapidated buildings
- Poor street connectivity and street layouts
- Lack of appropriate zoning
- Lack of housing, especially affordable housing
- High commercial space rents and lack of support

for small, local businesses

- Inadequate pedestrian / bicycle infrastructure

Starting in the summer of 2020 and continuing into 2021, public meetings ranging from visioning sessions to design workshops were held with the community to identify a vision, goals and development framework for the White Rock Town Center.

- A Visioning Workshop in the summer of 2020 focused on articulating a vision for the Center and identifying goals.
- A Design Workshop in the fall of 2020 built upon the goals and vision identified during the Visioning Workshop and involved ‘hands on’ activities that aimed to identify future development scenarios for the Center.
- Based on the feedback received from the Design Workshop, the project team created three alternatives that were presented to the community in early 2021 at a Public Open House. Based on the feedback received in the Public



**EXHIBIT 1.** State Road 4 Gateway Element Vision

*Open House, the project team created a preferred scenario that blended elements of the three scenarios and resulted in the vision outlined within this document.*

## 2 - 1.II A VISION FOR THE TOWN CENTER

White Rock Town Center, the gateway to Bandelier, is envisioned as a thriving hub with a vibrant mix of residential, retail, and office development at a character and scale appropriate for the surrounding community. With attractive housing, shopping and public spaces, along with network of trails and parks, it is a great place for residents to live and visitors to explore.

## 2 - 1.III DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

To help achieve this vision for the creation of a more livable town center, the master plan and its development framework focus on the benefits of mixed-use, transit-friendly, pedestrian-oriented development. As called for in the County's Comprehensive Plan and community feedback

from this planning effort, the Town Center should provide:

- revitalization of vacant and blighted areas
- a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment
- multi-modal transportation choices
- a variety of civic and entertainment spaces
- expanded opportunities for local business
- a variety of housing options at increased densities

The development framework proposes a combination of public and private investment in public spaces and underutilized/vacant properties to incentivize growth aligned with the County's long range vision.

Public investment, facilitated through the district's Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) designation, would focus on streetscape and trail improvements, the creation of gathering spaces, and placemaking strategies within the public realm. Such improvements include the creation of a town park, realignment of Longview Drive, and district wide improvements to trails and sidewalks. Streetscape improvements including contiguous sidewalks, crosswalks and reconfigured streets would create a more pedestrian-oriented district. New pedestrian crossings on State Road 4 will help

connect the emerging Mirador development and Visitors Center with the more established portion of the Town Center. Through these improvements, the corridor could create a “Main Street” character that helps provide a more defined identity in the White Rock Town Center. These targeted public investments will help spur redevelopment on private parcels while strengthening the character and livability of the White Rock Town Center.

Private investment is required on a number of strategic redevelopment sites, particularly along Bonnie View Drive and a realigned Longview Drive. Parcels on either side of Bonnie View Drive could accommodate new housing or mixed-use developments with more urban development forms and siting. Parcels along Longview Drive are envisioned to accommodate a range of residential and/or mixed-use development types and associated public spaces. Such a concentration of residential development will enhance the vitality of the Town Center and create an appropriate transition to the established neighborhoods to the south.

*“Exhibit 2. White Rock Town Center Development Framework” on page 5 illustrates the vision for the White Rock Town Center; key elements of that vision are outlined to the right. The following section outlines eight elements that align with the Comprehensive Plan, informing a set of recommendations and strategies. The eight elements of the Downtown Master Plan will help guide future site-specific projects and set priorities for public investments.*

## 2 - 1.IV VISION ELEMENTS

- 1 **Sherwood and Rover signature gateways** to include enhanced pavement treatment, lighting, landscaping and signage.
- 2 **Enhanced Visitor center pedestrian crossing** such as a z-crossing or pedestrian bridge.
- 3 **Placemaking improvements** along State Road 4 to create a “Main Street” character.
- 4 **Pedestrian and bicycle improvements** including buffered sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping and pedestrian furnishings along State Road 4, Sherwood, Rover and Longview
- 5 **Premier public gathering space** at the southern terminus of the visitor center crossing that features a higher level and concentration of pedestrian amenities.
- 6 **Bonnie View Mixed Use Corridor** that exhibits pedestrian-oriented development and enhanced pedestrian amenities.
- 7 **Canada del Buey Trail and arroyo enhancements** including green infrastructure improvements and the addition of trail amenities .
- 8 **Longview residential redevelopment** with associated residential open spaces.
- 9 **Targeted mixed use infill** along State Road 4 and Rover

EXHIBIT 2. White Rock Town Center Development Framework



**EXHIBIT 3.** *Bonnie View Mixed-Use Corridor Vision*





EXHIBIT 4. Longview Residential Corridor Vision









# URBAN FORM / IDENTITY

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## 2 - 2 URBAN FORM / IDENTITY

### 2 - 2.I VISION STATEMENT

*A vibrant, walkable Town Center with a mix of uses and small-Town character.*

### 2 - 2.II INTRODUCTION

The Urban Form & Identity element establishes a vision for the overall look and feel of the White Rock Town Center (the Town Center or the Center), facilitating a transformation from the existing suburban character of the Center to a more defined village or town center character. This requires a combination of public investment and new private development to create housing, the critical missing factor in the area now. The community has already invested considerable resources into the Town Center, notably the library, community center and Visitor Center facilities. The County has also installed a pedestrian crossing on State Road 4 and improved the multi-use path that runs along the south side with shade, benches, and public art. Similarly, Sherwood Boulevard has had targeted improvements including the widening of sidewalks and on-street parking adjacent to the library. Other roadways have not seen the same level of investment to ensure safe and attractive pedestrian facilities. These corridors should be improved to enhance their safety and aesthetic, which will help establish a more distinct identity. To ensure that new housing contributes to the Town Center's overall character, the siting and associated site standards of new development should reflect the overall goals of creating a pedestrian-oriented "village".

### 2 - 2.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Updating Town Center Zoning to Mixed Use**

Apart from the Downtown Town Center zoning on the north side of SR4 in Mirador, the White Rock Town Center area is mostly zoned as commercial (C-1 and C-2) and multifamily (R-3-H). While this combination of zones allows for a variety of high density residential, commercial/retail, office, public and governmental uses, it does not permit the vertical or horizontal integration of such uses on a single site. In order to generate the pedestrian-oriented development patterns that are desired within the Center, the true integration of mixed-uses should be permitted by zoning. The White Rock Town Center should be rezoned to a true mixed-use zoning designation that permits the development of higher density mixed-use projects on a single parcel.

A new mixed-use zoning district would allow a range of commercial/retail and entertainment uses as well as a variety of more urban housing choices such as live/work, townhouses, and multifamily dwellings. It is critical that the proposed zoning achieve the right balance of density while preserving the small town "village" character of White Rock. This plan recommends that the proposed zoning allow development up to four stories with appropriate building setbacks that promote a town center character. These dimensional standards will be paired with neighborhood protection standards that kick-in automatically at the periphery of the Center to create appropriate setbacks from existing residential areas as well as requirements for building height step-downs and/or vegetative screening requirements. Accompanying development standards for site and buildings

**EXHIBIT 5. Precedent Examples - Town Center Development**



design, parking and landscaping will be created to reinforce the desired character for the Town Center. These include pedestrian-oriented site design standards that require wider sidewalk widths on public streets, on-site pedestrian pathways and maximum front building setbacks. Building design standards should include requirements for high quality design materials and architectural detail along primary frontages. Parking design standards (addressed in more detail in [2-4 Transportation on page 31](#)) can help mitigate the visual impact and heat island effect of large parking lots, by requiring pedestrian pathways and landscaping. Landscaping requirements should provide guidance for planting within public right-of-ways and minimum plant coverage standards for private parcels. The table below outlines proposed standards that can help advance the vision for White Rock.

**TABLE 5. White Rock Town Center Development Standards Recommendations**

Element	Development Standards
Site design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require a wider minimum sidewalk width along all public right-of-ways</li> <li>• Require on-site pedestrian pathways that connect to the primary building entrance to public sidewalks.</li> </ul>
Building design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow residential and mixed-use developments up to four (4) stories with the Town Center core.</li> <li>• Require buildings that are within 30' or adjacent to a lower-density residential zone to step down to two (2) floors.</li> <li>• Enact basic urban design standards to activate ground level building elevations. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Minimum 30% glazing on ground floor</i></li> <li>- <i>Require at least one public entrance on commercial properties facing street frontage vs. parking lot</i></li> <li>- <i>Maximum of 100' building facade without a change in the elevation plane of at least 2'</i></li> <li>- <i>Maximum front setback of 25' along designated streets</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Introduce flexible material standards while requiring durable exterior cladding. (No "T-111" plywood siding on public facing elevations)</li> </ul>
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce off-street parking requirements within the Town Center by 50%.</li> <li>• Provide additional reductions for proximity to a transit stop and provisions for solar shade canopies.</li> <li>• Create on-street parking where feasible</li> </ul>
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require street trees at a minimum of 25' on center along public sidewalks.</li> <li>• Require a minimum on-site landscape coverage requirement.</li> <li>• Create parking lot landscaping requirements of 1 tree per 10 parking spaces.</li> <li>• Require a minimum 5-10' landscape buffer when periphery developments are adjacent to low-density residential uses.</li> </ul>

**EXHIBIT 6. Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure**



**B. Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure**

The existing pedestrian infrastructure, i.e. sidewalks and crosswalks could use some basic improvements. While the southern frontage of State Road 4 features a mixed-use trail with some landscaping and site furnishings, most of area's sidewalks are narrow and feature no pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, lighting or site furnishings. Pedestrian improvements that widen sidewalks and connect missing segments will create a safer and more functional walking environment. [Exhibit 6. Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure](#) on page 14 illustrates the types and locations of recommended pedestrian improvements.

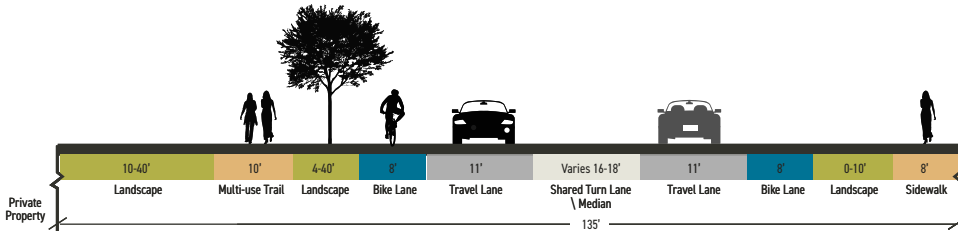
**STATE ROAD 4**

As the primary gateway and thoroughfare into the Town Center, improvements along State Road 4 should focus on enhancing the public right-of-way to create a sense arrival and place, while still

enabling the roadway to accommodate the volume of commuter-related traffic. Curb extensions and associated pedestrian crossings should be installed where State Road 4 intersects Sherwood Drive and Rover Boulevard to create visual cues to reduce travel speed and provide safe pedestrian crossings at these gateways into the Center. In cooperation with NMDOT, posted speeds could be reduced from Rover to Sherwood, from the current 35 MPH to 25 MPH. A cohesive streetscape treatment that features protected sidewalks, street trees, understory landscaping and a unified site furnishings scheme would contribute to the Town Center identity. Additionally, a raised pedestrian bridge or an at-grade enhanced pedestrian crossing as identified on [Exhibit 6. Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure on page 14](#) would improve the existing pedestrian link from the Visitor Center to the south side of State Road 4.

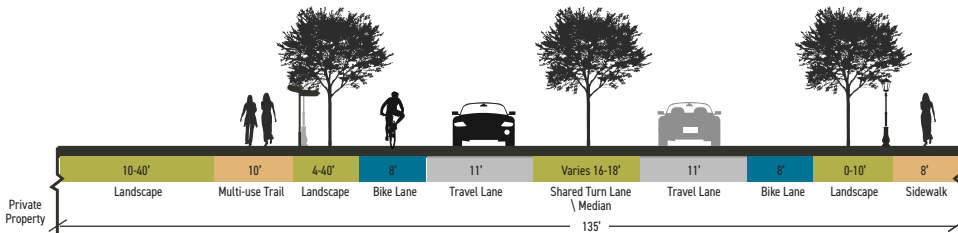
**EXHIBIT 7. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements**

Existing State Route 4 Street Section



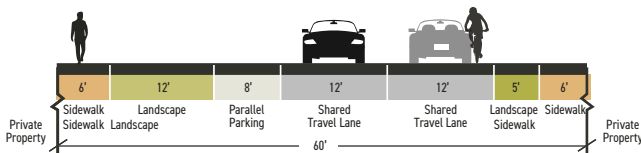
The County has made improvements to the northern section of Sherwood, near the library, reconfiguring the roadway to include narrower travel lanes, parallel, on-street parking and landscape areas.

Recommended State Road 4 Improvements



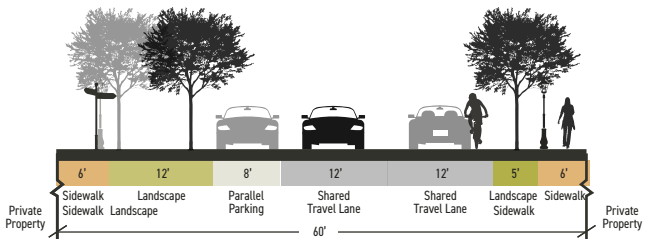
The roadway configuration of State Road 4 will remain, but a cohesive streetscape treatment that features unified street trees and under story landscaping scheme and a unified site furnishings scheme is recommended to contribute to the Town Center identity.

Existing Sherwood Street Section



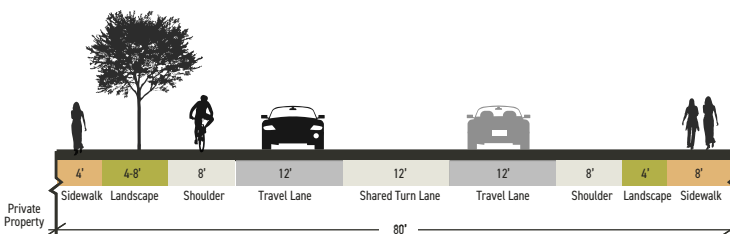
The County has made improvements to the northern section of Sherwood, near the library, reconfiguring the roadway to include narrower travel lanes, parallel, on-street parking and landscape areas.

Recommended Improvements Sherwood



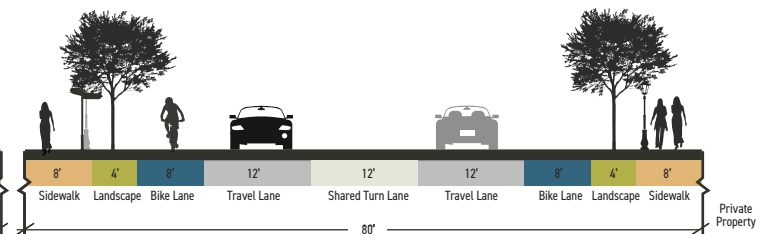
Further public investment to enhance the existing roadway configuration with pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and street trees and under story landscaping would create a more pleasant pedestrian experience.

Existing Rover Street Section A



Southern sections of Rover Dr currently exhibits extremely wide travel lanes could be narrowed and a turn lane that could be eliminated to accommodate pedestrian improvements within the right-of-way.

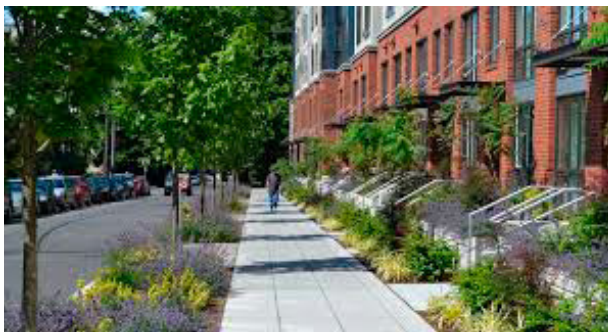
Recommended Improvements Rover Section A



Narrowing the width of travel lanes along Rover would allow for the addition of dedicated bike lanes. Existing sidewalks should be enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and street trees.

**NOTE: Sections are illustrative only and not to scale.**

**EXHIBIT 8. Precedent Examples - Streetscaping**



*Coordinated streetscaping treatments in regards to pavements, street trees, landscaping, lighting, signage and site furnishings helps set district identity.*

**ROVER BLVD & SHERWOOD BLVD**

The county has made improvements to the northern section of Sherwood Boulevard, near the library, reconfiguring the roadway to include narrower travel lanes, parallel, on-street parking and landscape areas. The portion of Sherwood Boulevard adjacent to the library has been improved to include on-street parking and wider sidewalks adjacent to the facility as well as designate it as a shared roadway for bicycles. The remainder of the existing sidewalks along Rover and Sherwood Boulevards are narrow and lack landscaping, pedestrian lighting and furnishings. Streetscape improvements along these corridors should focus on creating safe and pleasant pedestrian facilities such as wider, buffered sidewalks with cohesive landscaping, site furnishing, and signage treatments.

**BONNIE VIEW**

Bonnie View Drive is envisioned to be redeveloped as a mixed-use main street corridor. Alternative pavement treatments that introduce color and texture to the roadway would provide visual cues to drivers that this is a distinct pedestrian zone. Development standards associated with a new zoning designation should have minimal front setback standards to facilitate creation of a 'street wall', a consistent building frontage in relation to the street, a condition shown to contribute to a positive pedestrian experience. The addition of pedestrian scale lights, street trees, and site furnishings will help reinforce this appropriate urban character.

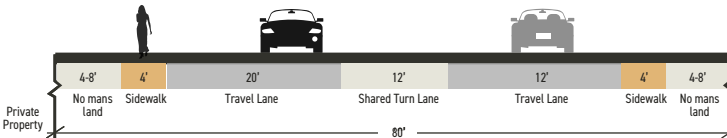
**LONGVIEW DR**

The existing alignment of Longview Drive is awkward and has been identified as a safety concern and hindrance to development of this area. The straightening of the Longview Drive alignment between Bonnie View Drive and Sherwood Boulevard is seen as crucial to ensure the Center's redevelopment into a pedestrian-oriented environment. When the realignment occurs, the



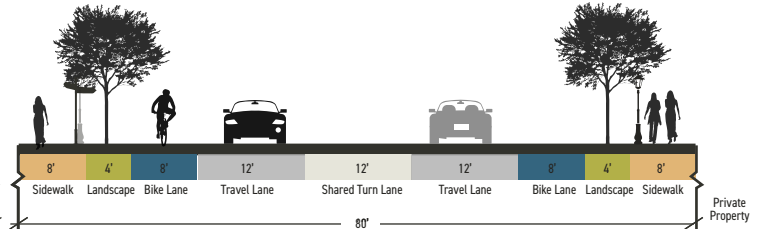
**EXHIBIT 9. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements**

Existing Rover Street Section B



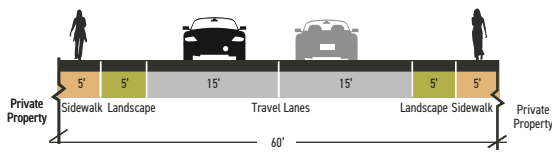
Southern sections of Rover Dr currently exhibits extremely wide travel lanes could be narrowed and a turn lane that could be eliminated to accommodate pedestrian improvements within the right-of-way

Recommended Improvements to Rover Section B



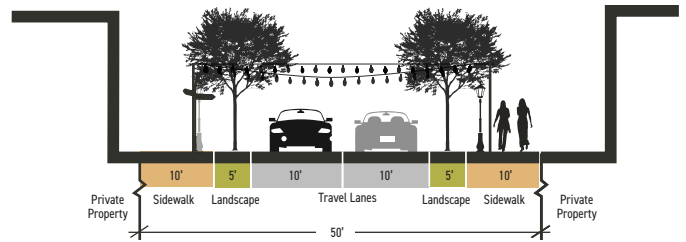
Narrowing the width of travel lanes along Rover would allow for the addition of dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks to be widened and enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and street trees.

Existing Standards for Bonnie View



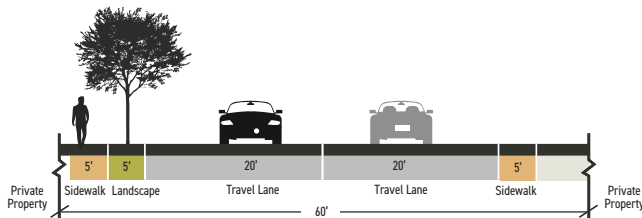
Bonnie View currently exhibits wide travel lanes that could be narrowed to accommodate pedestrian improvements within the right-of-way.

Recommended Improvements for Bonnie View



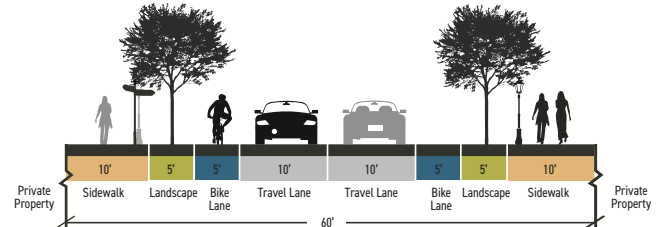
Narrowing the width of travel lanes along Bonnie View would allow for sidewalks to be widened and enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, string lights, street furnishings, signage, and street trees. Development standards will ensure pedestrian-oriented development patterns in which building engage the sidewalk edge.

Existing Standards for Longview Section A



Longview currently exhibits wide travel lanes that could be narrowed to accommodate pedestrian improvements within the right-of-way.

Recommended Improvements for Longview Section A



Narrowing the width of travel lanes along Longview would allow for the addition of dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks to be widened and enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and street trees.

**NOTE: Sections are illustrative only and not to scale.**

**EXHIBIT 10. Precedent Examples - Pedestrian Amenities**



*Pedestrian amenities such as signage, lighting and seating options create an hospitable pedestrian environment.*

new streetscape should provide wide, buffered sidewalks along with a unified landscaping, site furnishing, and signage scheme, similar to the measures discussed above for Bonnie View Drive.

**CANADA DEL BUEY TRAIL**

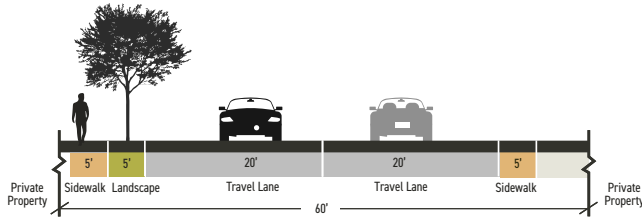
The Canada del Buey Trail should be expanded to the west through the arroyo to connect to Rover Boulevard. This extension would provide an additional pedestrian and bicycle through connection, and connect to the larger trail network in White Rock. Arroyo improvements should consist of a wide multi-use trail accompanied by pedestrian lighting, furnishings and signage.

**EXHIBIT 11. Precedent Examples - Trail Amenities**



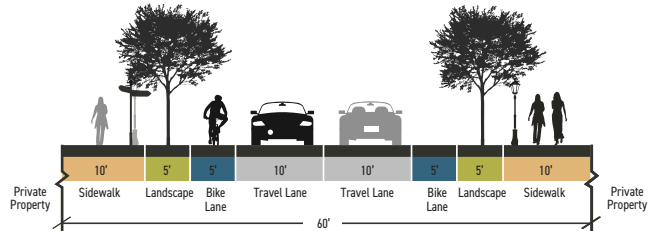
*Similarly, pedestrian amenities such as signage, lighting, seating and shaded rest options create an hospitable trail environment.*

### Existing Standards for Longview Section B



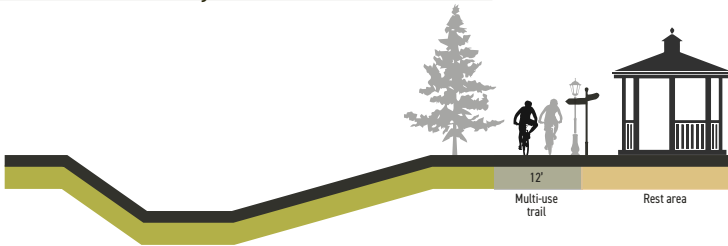
Longview currently exhibits wide travel lanes that could be narrowed to accommodate pedestrian improvements within the right-of-way.

### Recommended Improvements for Longview Section B



Narrowing the width of travel lanes along Longview would allow for the addition of dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks to be widened and enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and street trees.

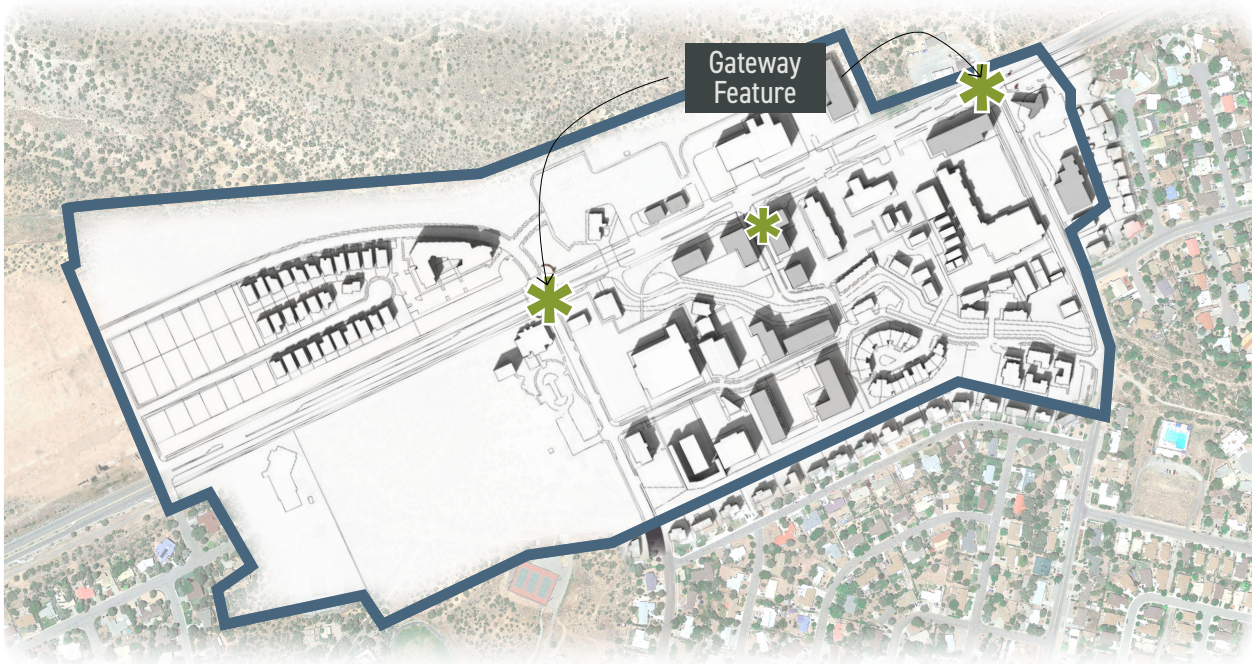
### Canada del Buey Trail Enhancements



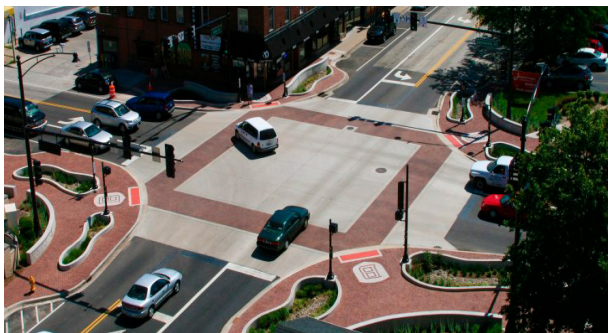
Canada del Buey Trail should be enhanced with pedestrian lighting, furnishings and signage.

**NOTE: Sections are illustrative only and not to scale.**

**EXHIBIT 12.** Signature Gateway Feature



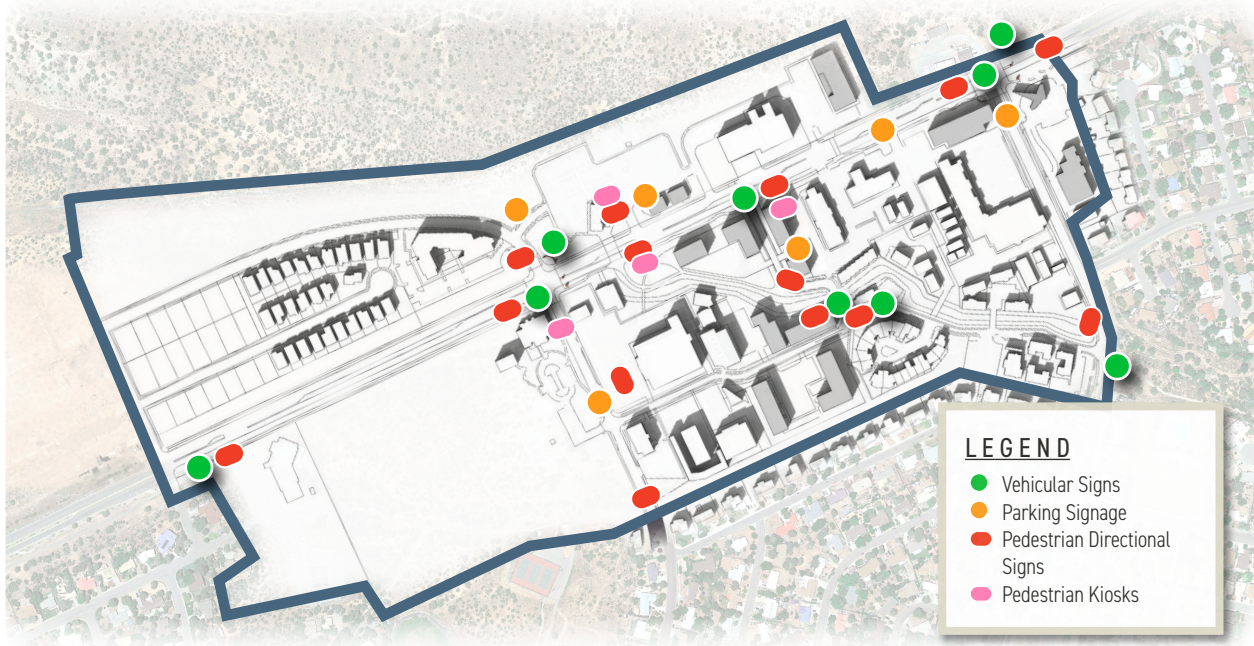
**EXHIBIT 13.** Precedent Examples - Gateway



**C. Install Signature Gateway Feature**

The installation of signature gateway features at the major vehicular entry points creates a sense of arrival into the Town Center. The signature “White Rock” at the intersection of State Road 4 and Rover acts as a gateway now and will continue to be an expression of the area’s identity. This can be augmented with additional signature gateway features at the two primary entries, where State Road 4 intersection with both Sherwood and Rover Boulevards, as identified in “[Exhibit 12. Signature Gateway Feature](#)” on page 20. These intersections should be enhanced with decorative paving, landscaping, lighting and signage similar to those shown in “[Exhibit 13. Precedent Examples - Gateway Features](#)” on page 20 intended to create both a unique gateway experience and opportunities for safer pedestrian crossings.

**EXHIBIT 14. Recommended Signage Locations**

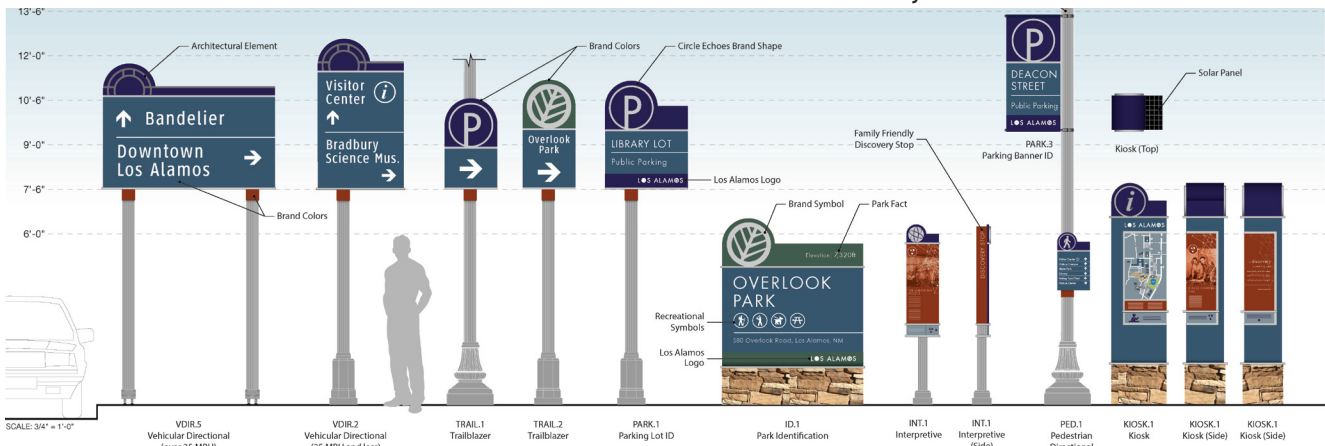


**D. Implement a Branded Wayfinding Signage**

The Los Alamos County-wide Wayfinding Plan final design concept was approved by County Council in 2017. This Wayfinding Plan outlines design, placement and content of signage, allowing a cohesive look and feel throughout the County to

guide visitors to destinations. Signage types range from vehicular directional to pedestrian directional to park identification and information kiosks. While the plan identifies some specific locations for these signage types as indicated in *“Exhibit 14. Recommended Signage Locations”* on page 21, this Master Plan recommends the addition of pedestrian signage along sidewalks of internal streets of the White Rock Town Center as well as the Canada del Buey Trail.

**EXHIBIT 15. Branded Wayfinding Signage**



**EXHIBIT 16. Placemaking Strategies**



**EXHIBIT 17. Precedent Examples - Placemaking Strategies**



Colorful, decorative intersections and crosswalks act as gateway features and help pedestrians feel more safe as the designs catch the eye of drivers more easily.



Decorative street and sidewalk paving along with string lights should be utilized along the Bonnie View mixed use corridor to delineate it as a destination within the Town Center.

## E. Placemaking Strategies

Placemaking is an approach that applies consistent branding and attractive amenities to public spaces to improve the quality and vitality of a place. Placemaking strategies, if done right, can result in the creation of a distinct destination that attracts residents, visitors, and businesses. Integrating placemaking strategies such as the creation of signature gateways and targeted pedestrian, public space and trail improvements as indicated in *“Exhibit 16. Placemaking Strategies” on page 22*, is crucial to the establishment of the White Rock Town Center as a distinct destination with a unique sense of identity. Pedestrian amenities including decorative paving to delineate crosswalks, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, furnishings, and public art along public streets will help define pedestrian pathways and aid in the establishment of a safe, consistent pedestrian experience. Colorful pavement treatments should be utilized within major intersections or crosswalks to create visual cues for drivers to slow down. Fun and memorable amenities such as creative lighting, art or seating

should be utilized within public spaces and along Longview and Bonnie View. The precedent images in *“Exhibit 17. Precedent Examples - Placemaking Strategies”* on page 22 show examples of placemaking strategies that could be employed within the White Rock Town Center.

## F. Rebrand Downtown as a Family-Friendly Environment

The community has expressed a desire to include the implementation of multi-generational programming that ensures the Downtown is a family-oriented environment that particularly captures youth under the age of 18. Family-oriented activities are currently lacking within Downtown and should be considered when development occurs within the built environment and in programming spaces. Entertainment venues and hang out locations for youth and families are an important part of keeping the youth engaged and juvenile delinquency rates low.



*Fun and memorable amenities such as creative or movable seating choices, public art and lighting should be utilized within new central gathering space and along Bonnie View.*



*The addition of a pavilion and or event spaces could accommodate community festivals similar to Ashley Pond for Los Alamos.*

## 2 - 2.IV URBAN FORM / IDENTITY GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been established to create a strong Town Center identity and sense of place.

**TABLE 6. Urban Form / Identity Goals**

**INTENT:** Make the Town Center district a new hub for White Rock.

**VISION:** A vibrant, walkable Town Center with a mix of uses and small-town character

**GOAL 1:** Create a Town Center specific mixed-use zone district that allows a mix of uses, including urban housing, commercial/retail, office and entertainment uses as well as public spaces.

**Strategy 1:** Update the Development Code to create a Town Center mixed-use zone district that permits higher density residential and commercial uses.

**Strategy 2:** Encourage a vertical mix of uses through development standards and incentives within the Development Code update.

**GOAL 2:** Create a unique Town Center identity, image, and sense of place.

**Strategy 1:** Enhance gateways at the intersection of Rover Boulevard and State Route 4 and Sherwood Boulevard and State Route 4 through decorative paving, signage, lighting and landscape treatments.

**Strategy 2:** Integrate placemaking strategies to create a distinct Town Center experience through unified gateways, public art, lighting, landscape/streetscape treatments.

**Strategy 3:** Create cohesive streetscape standards for public right-of-way improvements with the proposed Town Center district.

**Strategy 4:** Create enforceable landscape standards for public rights-of-way and private development parcels.

**Strategy 5:** Add a primary public space to serve as a central node and connect this space with existing and future trails, amenities, and destinations

**GOAL 3:** Create a Town Center district that achieve the right balance of density while preserving the small town "village" character of White Rock.

**Strategy 1:** Develop development standards that promote reduced building setbacks and higher density development of 4 stories to create a more compact "village" character and pedestrian-oriented development patterns.

**Strategy 2:** Create development standards for site and building design, parking lots, open spaces and landscaping that achieve the desired village center character.



EXHIBIT 18. Vignettes - Bonnie View Sidewalks





# HOUSING

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## 2 - 3 HOUSING

### 2 - 3.I VISION STATEMENT

*Quality housing options that are attainable to all residents while protecting existing neighborhoods.*

### 2 - 3.II INTRODUCTION

The Housing element establishes a vision for the residential component of the White Rock Town Center. Given that the County has very limited land resources and is experiencing a severe shortage of housing, the Town Center district is a prime location to encourage the development of multi-unit, multi-story apartments and mixed-use residential buildings. Absorbing housing within the White Rock Town Center will not only alleviate the housing shortage, but aid in achieving the mix of uses and activity levels needed to revitalize the Center. Such a strategy supports numerous recommendations and policies of the Los Alamos County Strategic Leadership Plan, the Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan, the Economic Vitality Strategic Plan, and the White Rock Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan.

The County has identified a need for additional housing stock distributed among all income ranges but is particularly acute for middle- and lower-income households. The Town Center in particular is well equipped to accommodate affordable housing options demanded by demographic subsets such as retirees that wish to downsize, young adults, student interns and the general workforce. Short- to mid-term rental housing within a variety of affordable housing types including micro-units, townhouses, apartments, condos, and live-work units could be developed with the White Rock Town Center to meet the desired housing demands. An additional benefit of this type of housing stock is that they lend themselves to

mixed-use development patterns that accommodate commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above. Mixed-use buildings such as these are a critical element to creating the mix of land uses and active urban realm necessary for successful Town Center environments.

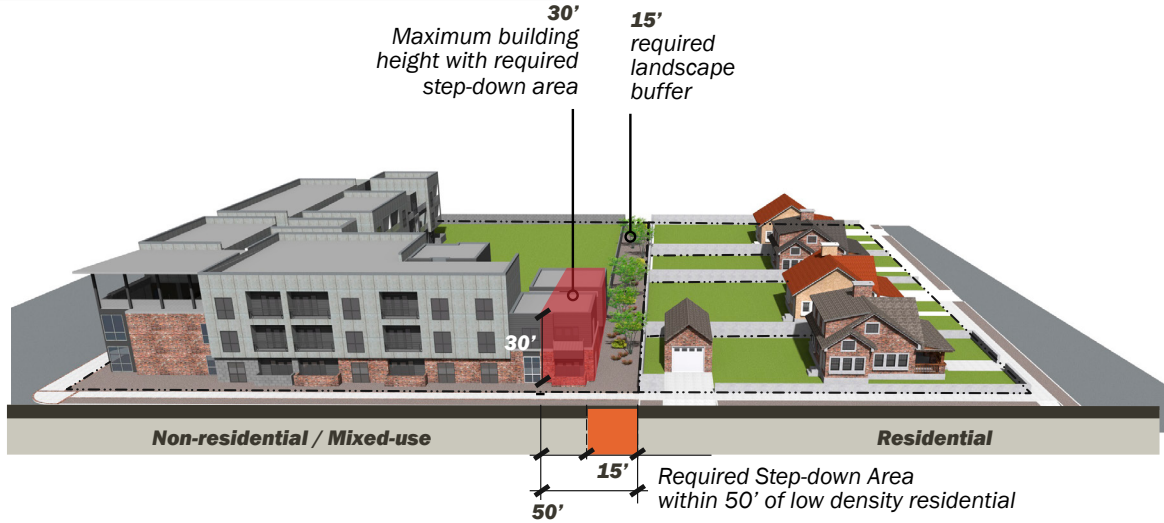
### 2 - 3.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Allow Increased Multi-family Densities / Heights**

Increasing the allowed maximum residential densities and building heights is one of the main tools to increase the provision of housing and make housing more affordable. Zoning provisions should be changed so that multi-unit, multi-story apartments and mixed-use residential buildings can be accommodated. Increasing the minimum allowed building height to at least 54 feet would allow the development of a four story mixed-use building with ground-floor commercial uses and 3 stories of residential above. This plan also recommends that further incentivizes are provided for provisions that implement at adopted County goals and the recommendations of this plan through additional height bonus incentives for affordable housing or public space amenities.

The key is to pair increased building heights with neighborhood protection standards that automatically kick in when higher density development occurs adjacent to single-family uses. In those instances, the development code update shall create neighborhood protection standards that require building height step-downs or landscape buffers to be implemented to mitigate the impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

**EXHIBIT 19. Neighborhood Protection Standards**



**B. Allow a Greater Mix of Housing Type within Town Center**

As mentioned above, the White Rock Town Center is well suited to accommodate higher density housing options for targeted demographics identified during this master planning phase. These include retirees that wish to downsize, young adults, student interns and the general workforce. Recommended housing types include townhouse, multi-family, and mixed-use developments. *“Exhibit 9. Development Potential”* identifies some opportunities for infill housing development; mixed-use housing options are particularly desired along Longview and the Bonnie View Drive. The above mentioned neighborhood protection standards should be utilized along the parcels south of Longview Drive to create a transition to adjacent neighborhoods to the south.

**MIXED-USE**

Mixed-use housing consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses, generally vertically integrated.



Vertical mixed-use buildings with space for small commercial uses on the ground floor



Mixed-use development in Bothell, WA

In many instances, the mixed-use building consists of ground floor commercial with residential uses on upper floors. Mixed-use buildings are popular in downtown areas as they provide the opportunity to activate the street level while adding residents that frequent the commercial businesses. They are also popular with young adults and empty nesters as they vertically integrate valuable amenities. Because of the density and number of units gained, mixed-use developments can provide affordable housing options.

### **MULTI-FAMILY**

Multi-family housing consists of a number of apartments or condominiums located in a building of multiple stories. Building types vary significantly; some structures appear to be similar to single-family houses in the design, while others are distinctly apartment buildings. Shared amenities have become popular with apartment buildings.

Many developments provide shared gardens, dog parks, gathering spaces, gyms and outdoor patios. Because of the density and number of units gained, apartments can provide affordable housing options for Downtown Los Alamos.

### **TOWNHOUSE**

Townhouses or rowhouses are buildings that contain three or more dwelling units that are connected side by side in a row. These units typically have their own individual entrances, and can appear to be one single building or several distinct structures. Townhouses can be micro-units and live-work constructed on their own lot or on a shared lot as condominiums. Their heights generally range between one to three stories.

## 2 - 3.IV HOUSING GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been established to create quality housing options that are attainable to residents and the workforce within all age groups and abilities in the White Rock Town Center.

**TABLE 7. Housing Goals**

**INTENT:** Address the lack of affordable housing options in the County; it is one of the main concerns of the community.

**VISION:** Quality housing options that are attainable to all residents while protecting existing neighborhoods

**GOAL 1:** Create quality housing options that are attainable to residents, the workforce, all age groups and abilities

**Strategy 1:** Allow townhouse, apartments, mixed-use and live/work dwelling types within the Town Center.

**Strategy 2:** Create flexible architectural standards that ensure high-quality housing developments.

**GOAL 2:** Protect existing residential neighborhoods surrounding the Town Center district by creating neighborhood protection standards within the Development Code.

**Strategy 1:** Create neighborhood protection standards that require development to scale down to two stories and/or provide a vegetative screen at the periphery of the Town Center.



# TRANSPORTATION

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## 2 - 4 TRANSPORTATION

### 2 - 4.I VISION STATEMENT

*A safe and efficient multi-modal system that provides connections to adjacent neighborhoods, LANL and Los Alamos.*

*gaps in the system should be the first priority. Sidewalks should be widened and buffered through the addition of a planting strip between the curb and sidewalk where feasible. Additional enhancements to the pedestrian experience include the incorporation of street trees and understory landscaping, lighting, signage and site furnishings.*

### 2 - 4.II INTRODUCTION

The transportation element establishes a vision for multi-modal access to and connectivity throughout the White Rock Town Center. This is achieved by creating an efficient and convenient multi-modal network that safely accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, public transit, and motor vehicles to, from and within the Center. Recommended improvements focus on the creation of a premier pedestrian environment that will promote active lifestyles while decreasing carbon emissions associated with driving. The Town Center can be a place where people walk more and drive less, enabled by a safe, well-connected pedestrian network and street crossings.

*In addition to sidewalks, the Town Center should feature a network of on-site pedestrian pathways within private development parcels that ensure pedestrians can safely reach primary building entrances and site amenities. The Development Code update could include requirements for on-site pedestrian networks that provide pathways across parking lots, connections between building entrances and/or site amenities and public sidewalks, as well as adjacent development parcels. The large volume of traffic to and from LANL along State Road 4 presents challenges to the north-south movement of pedestrians and bicyclists. The major intersections along State Road 4 that act as gateways into the Center, i.e. at Rover and Sherwood Boulevards, lack safe pedestrian crossings. With the development of the Mirador mixed-use project, a new pedestrian crossing at Sherwood is expected to be completed, likely by sometime in 2022. A similar crossing could be constructed at Rover, along with enhancements to the existing pedestrian crossing near the Visitor Center. All three of these pedestrian crossings would allow safe, convenient passage for visitors wishing to cross into the Town Center. If an at-grade crossing is not part of a signalized intersection, then high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) beacons or pedestrian/bike-activated flashing lights should be utilized to ensure user safety.*

### 2 - 4.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Implement Safe Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure**

*Creating a safe, efficient, and convenient pedestrian network is key to the creation of a successful Town Center. As mentioned in the Urban Form and Identity section, the existing pedestrian infrastructure is minimal. While Canada del Buey Trail runs along the southern frontage of State Road 4 and features some landscaping and site furnishings, most of the Center's sidewalks are narrow and feature no pedestrian amenities. Generally, all sidewalks could use improvements to create a better pedestrian experience. Repair of existing sidewalks and the completion of*

**EXHIBIT 20. Precedent Examples - Bicycle Infrastructure**



Dedicated, protected bicycle lanes.



Artistic bike racks can be used to add more public art to the Center.

**EXHIBIT 21. Precedent Examples - Hawk**



HAWK or High-intensity Activated crosswalk -- provides a protected pedestrian crossing in Scottsdale.

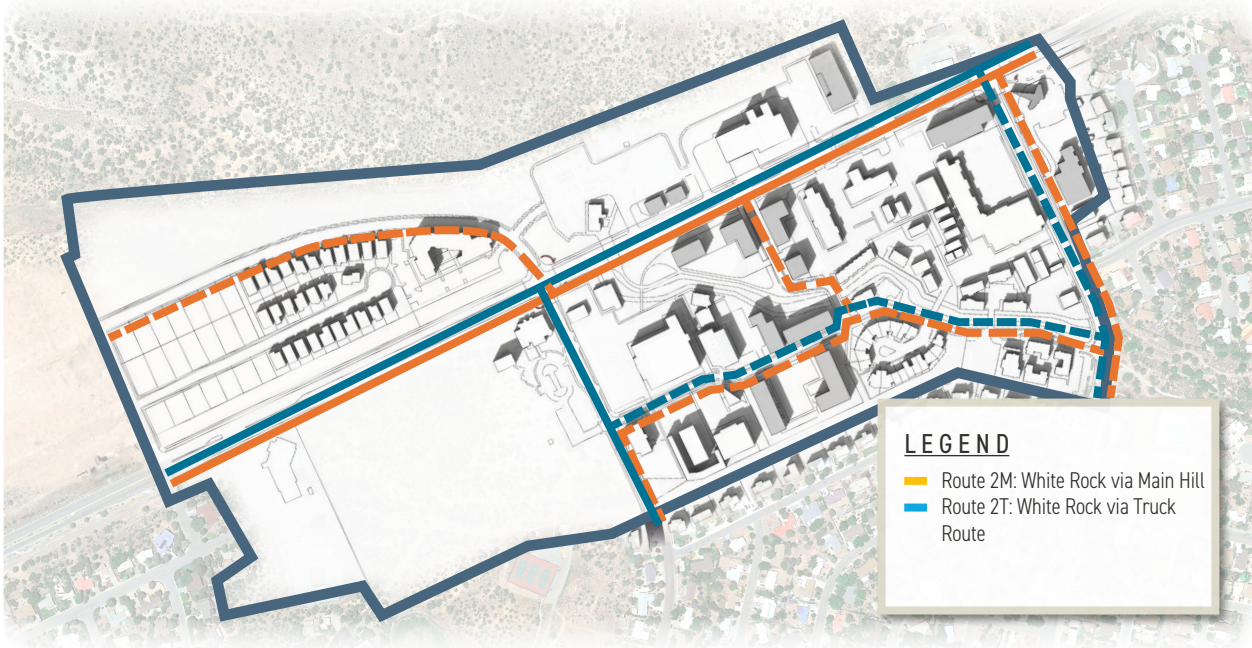
Bicycle infrastructure is currently limited to bicycle lanes along State Road 4 and a shared use facility along Sherwood Boulevard. State Route 4 is a popular cycling corridor and the Center could capitalize off of this mode of travel to bring in more County residents and visitors alike. To do so, the Center could create more defined network of designated bicycle lanes/routes along Rover Boulevard, Sherwood Boulevard and the realigned Longview Drive, as indicated in ["Exhibit 22. Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements placemaking Strategies"](#) on page 33. In addition, both the Canada del Buey Trail and the White Rock Canyon Rim Trail are critical components of the Town Center pedestrian and bicycle network. The multi-use pathways should be widened and improved with amenities including landscaping, lighting, signage, site furnishings and/or rest stops. Such improvements would support goals of the County's adopted Bicycle Transportation Plan (June 2017) which aims to "advance a bicycle friendly environment where residents and visitors alike can enjoy a transportation system that encourages and empowers use of a bicycle as a key form of transportation".

Bicycle parking is an important part of the Town Center's cycling infrastructure, but is currently very limited, likely because the Development Code does not require bicycle parking to be provided within new developments. Bicycle parking within



Bus stops with amenities including

**EXHIBIT 22. Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements**



**EXHIBIT 23. Public Transit**



*the Town Center should be increased to provide cyclists secure and convenient storage options while shopping or dining at the Center. Provisions for adequate bicycle parking facilities will support the desired multi-modal vision for the Center. One strategy for increasing bicycle parking within the district is to update the Development Code to require new developments to provide bicycle parking. Bike racks could be branded to be cohesive with the street furnishing scheme or used as an opportunity to add another public art element.*

### **B. Implement Convenient Transit and Vehicular Transportation System**

The Town Center's existing suburban development characteristics exhibit poor street connectivity and street layouts that hinders accessibility to and connectivity throughout the Center and its businesses. State Road 4 is the main thoroughfare and busiest road in White Rock. It facilitates the primary access to and from the Center and funnels large volumes of traffic to and from LANL. The road includes only one signalized intersection which presents challenges to the north-south movement, specifically for pedestrians and bicyclists. Sherwood Boulevard, Bonnie View Drive and Rover Boulevard provide north-south connections while Longview Drive serves as the main interior east/west connection. The alignment of both Bonnie View and Longview Drives are meandering and make internal accessibility and navigating confusing. In addition, internal roadways exhibit deterioration within the public rights-of-way including poor pavement condition, damaged or missing sidewalks, non-ADA compliant ramps, and unmaintained landscape. Such conditions not only create barriers to connectivity throughout, but perpetuate impressions of blight that deter businesses, visitors and residents alike.

The addition of a signalized intersection at State Road 4 and Sherwood Boulevard is a critical improvement. This would alleviate several issues through the creation of a western gateway into

the Center, slowing through traffic and increasing north-south movement. A realignment of Longview Dr is another critical improvement to enhance Center's connectivity and redevelopment potential. Additional improvements along all primary roadways, should consist of repaving, buffered sidewalks, the addition of ADA compliant ramps, and cohesive landscaping.

Atomic City Transit currently serves White Rock through Route 2 (2M, 2T, and 2P) that provides connections to Los Alamos via Main Hill and the Truck Route as indicated in *"Exhibit 23. Public Transit"* on page 33. During peak service, these lines operate in White Rock between 7am and 7pm, with buses arriving and/or departing approximately every hour. Bus stops are located along State Road 4, Sherwood and Rover Boulevards. Extending the Atomic City Transit bus service further into the evening hours during

#### **EXHIBIT 24. Precedent Examples - Bus stops**



*Bus stops with amenities including*

weekends would support more activity. Existing bus stops currently contain shelters, but few additional amenities. Enhancing existing bus stops with more attractive shelters and additional amenities will create a more attractive welcome and overall pleasant user experience. Precedent examples of enhanced bus stops are shown in [“Exhibit 24. Precedent Examples - Bus stops” on page 34.](#)

### C. Improve the Parking Management Strategy

Currently, parking is distributed throughout the commercial core with a number of large parking fields that are underutilized. The Town Center should promote a “park once and walk” approach using a variety of strategies including expanding on-street parking options and identifying and establishing a series of parking “courts” that are shared by a number of local businesses. Providing a variety of parking options will serve a wide range of users and further benefits the diverse needs of local businesses. Provisions for on-street parking on internal streets such as Bonnie View and Longview Drive have additional benefits. Providing on-street parking enhances the pedestrian environment by

buffering pedestrian from busy street traffic. In addition to a park once strategy, minimum parking requirements should be evaluated based on national best practices. Most municipalities recognize that mixed-use environments, such as those envisioned for the Center, need revised parking standards. Reduced parking requirements should be considered, given the changes anticipated to the permissive uses, transit access, improved bicycle facilities, and the proximity to established neighborhoods. This could be paired with additional reductions for desired features such as solar parking covers or improvements transit facilities. Additional considerations could include shared parking for businesses in close proximity to each other to further promote a park once strategy.

## 2-4.IV TRANSPORTATION GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been established to create safe, efficient, and convenient infrastructure that accommodates all modes including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicles.

**TABLE 8. Transportation Goals**

**INTENT:** The Town Center exhibits an ineffective street layout and lacks convenient and safe transportation options within, to and from the Center.

**VISION:** A safe and efficient multi-modal system that connects the Town Center with adjacent neighborhoods, accommodating a variety of transportation options and connecting the Town Center to LANL and Los Alamos.

**Goal 1: Enhance and improve the physical connection within and between the Town Center and the surrounding neighborhoods and destinations**

**Strategy 1:** Provide multi-modal links between the Town Center destinations and amenities such as the library, trails and restaurants

**Strategy 2:** Provide multi-modal connections between the Town Center and outside destinations and amenities such as established neighborhoods, the Los Alamos townsite, LANL, Bandelier National Monument and the Valles Caldera National Preserve

**Strategy 3:** Maintain and improve existing public transportation to ensure system efficiencies

**Strategy 4:** *Develop a comprehensive Town Center wayfinding system*

**Goal 2: Prioritize mobility for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the Town Center district**

**Strategy 1:** *Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety on all Town Center streets, but particularly along State Route 4.*

**Strategy 2:** *Update the Los Alamos Bicycle Transportation Plan to develop a comprehensive Town Center Downtown bicycle network that connects to the larger county-wide network, based on the guidance of this Master Plan*

**Strategy 3:** *Create safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings at the intersections of State Route 4 and Sherwood Blvd and State Route 4 and Rover Boulevard.*

**Goal 3: Create a Park Once Program for the Town Center.**

**Strategy 1:** *Update the Development Code to reduced minimum parking standards within the new Town Center zoning district.*

**Strategy 2:** *Provide a shared parking credit for compatible uses within the new Town Center zoning district of the Development Code.*

**Strategy 3:** *Provide additional parking reductions for proximity to transit or desired parking lot enhancements such as the addition of solar parking canopies within the new Town Center zoning district of the Development Code.*

**Strategy 4:** *Update the Development Code to require new developments to provide bicycle parking.*

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# ECONOMIC VITALITY

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## 2 - 5 ECONOMIC VITALITY

### 2 - 5.I VISION STATEMENT

*A vibrant Town Center with an environment in which local businesses can thrive.*

### 2 - 5.II INTRODUCTION

The Economic Vitality element establishes a vision in which local businesses can thrive in a vibrant Town Center environment. The existing condition of blight caused by numerous vacant or otherwise dilapidated buildings, inefficient street layouts, low levels of commercial activity, and the general state of disrepair of the Center inhibit redevelopment. A balanced mix of employment-intensive uses, ground-level shops and restaurants, lodging and entertainment uses, and moderate- to high-density housing are needed to create a vital, sustainable market. The solution to combat the existing blight is multifaceted. Strategies will involve getting to the root of the issue through updates to Town Center zoning, public investments into district wide infrastructure, and a variety of programs to aid business retention and attraction.

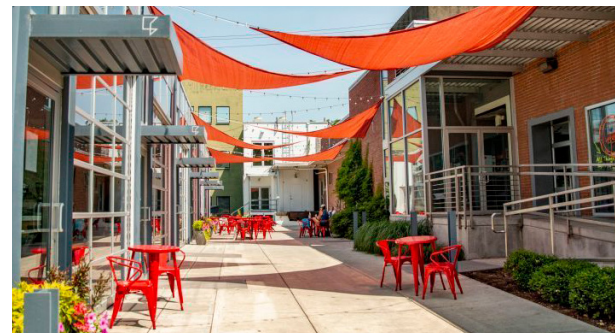
### 2 - 5.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Updating Town Center Zoning

As mentioned in other sections of this plan, the development code should be updated to include a new White Rock Town Center specific mixed-use district that allows a variety of higher density residential, office, commercial/retail uses at a maximum of four (4) stories. Updating the Center's zoning to a mixed-use zoning district will encourage more mixed-use development within the Center. The new Town Center's zoning permissible use table, aka the Use Index Matrix, should be updated to permit a variety of commercial/retail, office, and

entertainment uses, including subsets like micro-retail and startup spaces that could be utilized by small businesses. Additional development standards as outlined under the Image/Identity element in section 2-1 are critical to creating a pedestrian-oriented development that entices the revitalization of the Town Center.

#### EXHIBIT 25. Precedent Examples - Uses



Micro Units Commercial

#### B. Promote Entertainment Venues

Entertainment venues are currently in short supply within the White Rock Town Center. Often, entertainment venues such as performing art centers, amphitheaters, theaters, or arcades become anchor amenities that draw people to a center and provide the catalyst for the reinvigoration of the area. Indoor entertainment venues that feature activities such as amusement

**EXHIBIT 26.** Targeted Sites for Mixed-use and Multi-family Infill Development



arcades, bowling alleys, billiard halls, skating rinks, theaters, laser tag and trampolines are excellent options for family activities and desired by the community. The Development Code update should ensure that indoor and outdoor recreation facilities are permitted within the Town Center.

### C. Streamline Development Process within the Town Center

A lengthy and drawn out approval process can add significant cost to a project and can ultimately threaten the financial solvency of a (re)development project. Fast tracking approvals for smaller projects of a permissive use that meets all the development requirements, including automatic neighborhood protection standards, can be a mechanism to spur the Center's redevelopment. It is therefore recommended that mixed use non-development projects under 50,000 square feet or that contain 50 or less dwelling units per acre that meet the updated development standards for the Town Center can be approved administratively rather

than by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Administrative approvals within such activity Centers is a common National Best Practice utilized by cities and most have seen a resulting increase in areas targeted for redevelopment. Development code updates should therefore include provisions for administrative approvals of development of the above mentioned size that are compliant with the standards of the Town Center zoning district.

### D. Leverage the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area

The designation of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) which covers a portion of the Town Center boundary as shown in exhibit x, offers a variety of tools to provide numerous infrastructure improvements or spur reinvestment of vacant or blighted properties.

The MRA allows the County to offer incentives to private property owners to incentivize redevelopment of vacant or blighted properties.



Incentives can range from direct contributions of public funds for items like facade improvements to the completion of needed infrastructure improvements to assistance / streamlining of development procedures like zone changes. The Facade Improvement Program are often used to encourage and support small business to reinvest in the downtown and neighborhood business districts. These programs provide matching grants to small business owners and tenants to assist them to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts. While The Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation (LACDC) has an established facade loan program, the program is only allocated a total of \$100,000 annually and individual grants are capped at \$25,000 per property. The existing cap is not enough to make substantial improvements to most properties, particularly large ones, and the program in its existing state is often used to fund signage improvements. The MRA offers an opportunity to substantially increase individual loan caps so that more impactful facade improvements can be undertaken within the Town Center. In addition to facade improvements, the County can provide infrastructure improvements that can aid in the redevelopment of properties including necessary utility stub outs and potentially necessary improvements such as fire sprinkler systems needed to bring buildings up to the building code.

Under the MRA, the County can establish a Tax Increment Finance district that could establish a mechanism to fund the district-wide infrastructure improvements recommended by this plan. Property tax monies would be earmarked from the anticipated future tax revenue that results from redevelopment. Such funds could pay for the installation of new buffered sidewalks, streetscaping and public gathering spaces that in turn increase the aesthetics of the town center and make it more attractive to new development. TIF district are actively being utilized in communities including Albuquerque, Lovington, Silver City, Farmington, and Gallup.

### EXHIBIT 27. Precedent Examples - Vacant Properties



Vacant properties along Longview Drive within the White Rock Town Center.

The MRA could also aid with infrastructure improvements needed by small business including necessary utility hook-ups and potentially even necessary improvements like fire sprinkler systems to bring facilities up to building code requirements.

### E. Develop Strategies that Incentivize Redevelopment of Vacant Properties

Vacant or otherwise dilapidated buildings within the Town Center contributed to the blighted status that resulted in the establishment of the MRA. Such properties are not only unattractive, but discourage economic development, diminish adjacent property values, and can act as public nuisances. Incentivizing the occupation and/or redevelopment of these neglected properties is critical to eliminate blight.

Vacant Building Ordinances are a tool utilized within MRAs to motivate property owners to lease, redevelop or sell vacant properties. Such a strategy is currently utilized in Las Vegas, Tucumcari, and Albuquerque. Effective vacant building ordinances generally include the registration and annual inspection of vacant properties, minimum maintenance requirements, and a system of penalties and fees for noncompliance. Often, penalty and registration renewal fees increase over time to further incentivize code compliance or the revitalization/redevelopment of the property. Enforcement and administration of a vacant building ordinance requires additional County resources to track and manage the process; something that should be part of the deliberation about adopting these measures.

Another potential strategy that could be implemented through the Development Code update is to include a provision that allows a wider range of uses after a defined period of vacancy. These become available if a property has been vacant for an extended period of time, typically five years. For instance, under such a scenario, the County may not allow a particular use such as office use to be located within the Town Center initially, but would allow this use if the building has been sitting vacant for an extended period of time. The rationale behind the strategy is that while the community may not particularly favor certain uses, this could still be a better alternative and be more favorable than a vacant building.

## **F. Develop Strategies to Keep Commercial Rents Affordable**

One common concern expressed in the public meetings is that commercial rents in Los Alamos are high relative to the anticipated revenue/level of activity. The procurement of office space by LANL and its contractors has put pressure on the availability of commercial space in White Rock and the Townsite, putting upward pressure on rental rates. As a result of this, the retention of existing local business as well as the recruitment of new

business is difficult as businesses cannot compete with the rates LANL and its contractors can afford. As such businesses are often a critical component to the vitality of Town Center, it is recommended that the County pursue a variety of strategies to keep commercial rents affordable for local entrepreneurs.

One of the best ways to ensure stable occupancy is to provide a mechanism by which businesses can purchase, rather than lease space. In order to aid businesses, municipalities are helping local businesses access credit through “lease-to-own” or “Buy Your Building” programs. These programs either connect local businesses with a network of local bank partners or are subsidized through local grant funding. Another ownership model involves community ownership through commercial community land trusts, and real estate investment cooperatives.

Other strategies include creating incentives through property tax credits. Some programs compensate landlords who voluntarily limit rent increases when they renew their leases with small businesses. Other programs, like New York City’s long standing Commercial Revitalization Program and companion Commercial Rent Tax Special Reduction provide both a property tax abatement and a rent tax reduction. An abatement of up to \$2.50-per square-foot is provided to landlords in exchange for modest improvements to older buildings, which is then passed through to the tenant who receives a break in the amount of their rent that’s subject to the city’s commercial rent tax.

A variety of zoning based strategies are also available. These include requirements for new developments with a certain amount of commercial frontage. Developments are required to have a minimum number of storefront establishments aimed to increase the supply of smaller spaces that tend to be hospitable to local businesses, or to simply cap maximum store sizes to increase supply and keep rents affordable. The County in conjunction with Los Alamos Main Street should

evaluate and adopt appropriate policies to ensure commercial/retail rents are affordable within the Town Center.

## 2 - 5.IV GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been established to diversify, revitalize, and promote the economy of the White Rock Town Center.

**TABLE 9. Economic Vitality Goals**

**INTENT:** Blight is one of the main concerns within the Town Center of White Rock. Blight in the area is attributed to low levels of commercial activity, the deterioration of existing structures and sites, and ineffective street layouts and platting.

**VISION:** A vibrant Town Center district with an environment in which local businesses can thrive.

### **GOAL 1: Diversify, revitalize, and promote the Town Center economy**

**Strategy 1:** Create a new Town Center mixed-user zoning district that allows higher density mixed-use development. Updates to the Use Index Matrix for this new district should allow a variety of residential, commercial/retail and entertainment uses.

**Strategy 2:** Allow administrative review and approvals for development proposals that are compliant with all new Town Center mixed-use standards.

**Strategy 3:** Utilize the MRA to establish funding mechanisms such as a TIF to implement proposed infrastructure improvements or BID for advertising and maintenance efforts.

**Strategy 4:** Utilize the MRA tools to develop strategies to fill vacant buildings within the Town Center.

**Strategy 5:** Address prolonged vacancies through the adoption of a Vacant Building Ordinance or zoning provisions that allow buildings vacant for 5 or more years a wider range of uses.

**Strategy 6:** Adopt strategies such as ownership programs or property tax credits to keep commercial rents affordable.



# PUBLIC SPACE / STREETS

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## 2 - 6 PUBLIC SPACE / STREETS

### 2 - 6.I VISION STATEMENT

*A vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Town Center that offers a variety of public spaces and amenities.*

### 2 - 6.II INTRODUCTION

The public space / street element establishes a vision for an inclusive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown that includes high quality gathering spaces and amenities. Public spaces and streets are a critical element that contribute to the identity and sense of place of an area. They can also enhance the health of the community - whether socially, economically, culturally or environmentally. These spaces can become anchors and act as focal points.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of public spaces utilized by the community. The use of trails, parks and other pedestrian infrastructure has increased exponentially since March 2020. Places where people can gather safely are in high demand. Many municipalities temporarily changed standards and permitting processes for outdoor dining in order to expand dining options. Some municipalities even shut down streets to allow for outdoor dining to expand from the sidewalks into the street. Such actions illustrate the need for more public spaces and outdoor retail options.

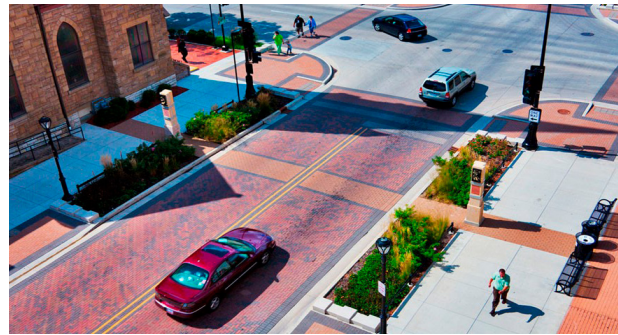
Combating the existing blight of the White Rock Town Center and spurring its redevelopment is highly dependent on the creation of attractive streets and public spaces as outlined below.

### 2 - 6.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Defining Streets as Public Spaces**

As mentioned in several sections above, streets are in need of improvements to create a walkable, pedestrian-oriented environment. As the Town Center should serve as White Rock's premier community destination, the development of wider, buffered sidewalks meeting all required ADA standards should be a priority for the County, particularly in instances where there are currently missing sections of sidewalk or sidewalks that are too narrow. In addition, a cohesive streetscaping design scheme should be developed and implemented. This scheme should include unified street tree and landscape palette, a branded wayfinding system, pedestrian lighting and site furnishing such as benches and trash receptacles. A comprehensive design of streetscape elements can help establish a distinct identity for the Town Center and increase the supply of public spaces. Streetscape design guidelines should aim to create a unified and visually attractive environment through unified street materials, furniture selections and landscape palettes. Sidewalk and intersection materials and site furnishings should further support the identity of the White Rock Town Center. Currently, paving consists exclusively of plain gray concrete. Introducing more distinct materials and patterns within public spaces, sidewalks and/or major crosswalks, particularly along State Road 4 can add interest and identity and serve as a wayfinding element. Street furnishings not only serve a utilitarian function but also improve the aesthetic quality of streets and the larger public realm. Street furnishings include all items placed within the public right-of-way, such as streetlights, benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks.

**EXHIBIT 28. Precedent Examples - Public Streets**



*Mixed-use streets, as is envisioned for Bonnie View, with mixed use buildings directly along the sidewalk edge with spaces for sidewalk cafes.*

*Decorative paving, buffered sidewalks with amenities such as street trees, landscaping, signage and street furnishings create public spaces within the remaining roadways.*

All furnishings should be of a high-quality, style and color to tie into the established brand of the Center. Landscaping in the public right-of-way improves the appearance of roadways, complements private properties, and unifies the district. A curated plant palette of drought-tolerant plant materials that are appropriate the local climate should be established.

located at the intersection of State Road 4 and the Arroyo, directly across from the Visitor Center to engage residents and visitors alike.

**B. Create Diverse Public Spaces**

The Arroyo and the Canada del Buey Trail are crucial components of the Center's open space network and offer natural relief from the more urban environment envisioned for the rest of the Town Center. The arroyo should continue to be improved through enhancements including widening of the multi-use trail and the Installation of pedestrian lighting, furnishings and signage.

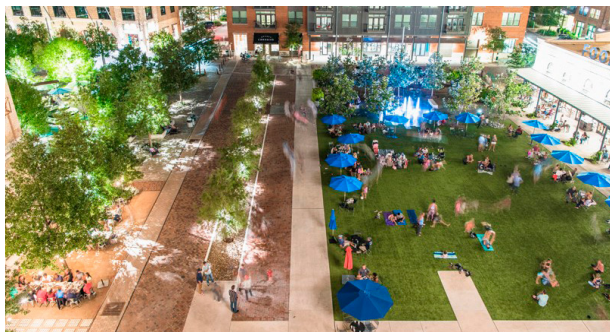
While Pinon Park is located within the boundaries of the White Rock Town Center and has several great assets including the library, Skate Park, and Splash Park, residents desired to increase the number and diversity of public spaces. Of critical importance to the community was the addition of a central gathering space or plaza that could accommodate events such as farmers markets or host performances and festivals similar to Ashley Pond. This gathering space is envisioned to be

As the Center begins to redevelop, the community would like to see opportunities for the introduction of a series of smaller public spaces such as patios, parklets and mini plazas. These would provide additional opportunities for outdoor dining, food trucks, pop-up businesses and programmed events. One potential strategy to increase the supply of

**EXHIBIT 29. Placemaking Strategies**



**EXHIBIT 30. Precedent Examples - Public Streets**



Large central gathering space that could house a variety of recreation opportunities and community events.



Parklets, above, can provide additional public space amenities for restaurants or shops and the multi-use trail along the arroyo provides natural relief from the more urban

public spaces is to require new developments to include a small public space component. Such a provision would begin to increase the number and diversity of public spaces and enhance the Centers vitality.

range of multi-generational programming within the Town Center can inject new a sense of energy and activity into the social and economic vitality of the Center.

### C. Promote Free Family-Friendly Programming

While downtown Los Alamos features a variety of family friendly programming, including the popular Tuesday at the Pond series, that bring citizens Downtown and boosts activity at local businesses, White Rock currently holds no such events. The White Rock community would like to create central gathering space within the Center that could hosts a range of events including art walks, outdoor performances, concerts, or farmers markets. A

## 2 - 6.IV PUBLIC SPACE / STREETS GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been created to create a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Town Center that features an increased number and diversity of public spaces.

**TABLE 11. Public Space / Streets Goals**

**INTENT:** The Town Center environment isn't pedestrian-oriented and lacks public spaces and amenities.

**VISION:** A vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Town Center district that provides a variety of public spaces and amenities.

#### **GOAL 1: Create a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Town Center environment**

**Strategy 1:** Develop a Town Center streetscape plan that defines coordinated streetscape improvements such as landscaping, lighting, and site furnishing to enhance the pedestrian experience.

**Strategy 2:** Update the Development Code to include development standards that create a pedestrian-oriented development patterns within the Town Center.

#### **GOAL 2: Increase the number and diversity of public spaces in the Town Center**

**Strategy 1:** Update the Development Code to require new development in the Town Center to provide a minimum provision of patio or public spaces.

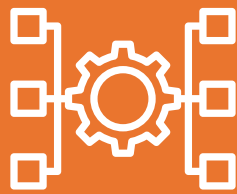
**Strategy 2:** Update the Town Center zoning within the Development Code to include open space standards.

**Strategy 3:** Create/identify a series of public spaces including parklets and mini plazas that offer spaces for outdoor dining, food trucks, pop-up businesses and programmed events

**Strategy 4:** Actively pursue the funding for development of public spaces to host activities and events and attract residents, employees and visitors throughout the year



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# INFRASTRUCTURE

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## 2 - 7 INFRASTRUCTURE

### 2 - 7.I VISION STATEMENT

*Reliable public infrastructure that includes broadband, transportation, recreational trails, and open space to enhance the overall quality of life.*

### 2 - 7.II INTRODUCTION

The Infrastructure element establishes a vision for a series of infrastructure improvements needed to support the remaining elements of this plan, including streetscapes, recreational trails, and open space. In addition, a more extensive broadband network is desired to provide better access to the community.

Public utilities hook-ups are also in short supply in Downtown. These hook-ups would allow pop-up businesses and food trucks to position themselves in public spaces.

### 2 - 7.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Town Center Public Infrastructure Improvements**

The various sections above speak to an extensive number of public infrastructure improvements ranging from vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails and open space, and public amenities to be integrated into the Town Center. These items should be incorporated in the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and or MRA tools such as a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

The installation of public utilities hook-ups should be coordinated with the installation of public spaces within the Town Center in order to facilitate public

events, pop-up businesses and food trucks to fully utilize these spaces.

#### **EXHIBIT 31. Precedent Examples - Utility Hook Ups**



*Simply Grid supply easy access to grid electricity to food trucks.*

#### **B. Planning for Access to Broadband**

Internet has become an essential part of our daily lives and access to affordable, high-speed, reliable broadband service is a priority for White Rock residents. Computers and mobile devices, and the physical infrastructure that supports them, facilitate social, educational and economic activities of communities. Those without reliable high-speed internet service cite a growing gap between the resources and opportunities available to them and those in communities that have a robust network. This has been further highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, which created an unprecedented need for telework, telehealth and remote learning. While public facilities such as the White Rock Library provide access to internet, the closing of such facilities has highlighted the need for access to public WiFi hotspots. Quality and affordable communications infrastructure is critical and the County should pursue funding for broadband infrastructure, particularly within the

**EXHIBIT 32. Precedent Examples - Bus stops**



Smart bus stop terminals provide free WiFi hotspots and charging stations for passengers.



LinkNYC system supplies free public WiFi hotspots and charging stations.



AT&T Street Charge NYC Solar Powered Phone Charging Stations

Town Centers. This can be achieved through CIP funding and statewide initiatives including the New Mexico Broadband Program. The County should prioritize the provision for free WiFi hotspots at major destinations such as the Visitor Center, public open spaces such as Pinon Park and the newly envisioned public gathering space south of State Road 4, and at bus stops where riders can surf the web and charge their devices while they wait.

**C. Infrastructure Goals**

The following goals and strategies have been established to implement public infrastructure such as broadband, transportation, recreational trails, and open space improvements that will aid in the Centers revitalization and general quality of life.

**TABLE 12. Infrastructure Goals**

**INTENT:** Aside from recent County improvements, infrastructure is still in need of updating and modernization.

**VISION:** Reliable public infrastructure that includes broadband and streetscape, transportation, recreational trails, and open space that enhance the overall quality of life.

**GOAL 1:** *Implement public infrastructure improvements streetscape improvements, transportation, recreational trails, and open space improvements that will aid in Town Center revitalization and general quality of life.*

**Strategy 1:** *Seek funding for priority infrastructure improvements identified within the Town Center vision through a TIF or other MRA mechanism.*

**Strategy 2:** *Maintain and improve existing and aging infrastructure within the Town Center*

**Strategy 3:** *Establish strategies and programs through the Main Street program to minimize construction impacts to small businesses.*

**GOAL 2:** *Provide broadband access throughout the White Rock Town Center.*

**Strategy 1:** *Implement a reliable broadband network throughout the Town Center.*

**Strategy 2:** *Provide public WiFi hotspots at destinations like visitor center, major public spaces, and at bus stops.*



# SUSTAINABILITY

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## 2 - 8 SUSTAINABILITY

### 2 - 8.I VISION STATEMENT

*A Town Center district that is a model for sustainable practices for the larger Los Alamos community.*

### 2 - 8.II INTRODUCTION

The sustainability element establishes a vision to encourage the inclusion of sustainable development practices within the Town Center. Through the implementation of green buildings and infrastructure strategies the Town Center is envisioned to be a local model of environmental stewardship that generates environmental, social and economic benefits. Sustainable development practices are currently lacking in the Town Center. Publicly funded improvements and incentives for private development could encourage the integration of sustainability measures and contribute to this vision.

### 2 - 8.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Incorporating Green Infrastructure Strategies**

Green infrastructure strategies can be utilized throughout the White Rock Town Center to implement sustainable development practices, and enhance the Center's aesthetic and recreational value. Green infrastructure refers to a variety of strategies that utilize both the natural environment and engineered systems to solve urban and climatic challenges such as flooding, excessive heat, air, soil and water quality. Green infrastructure solutions can be applied on different scales ranging from the inclusion of rain gardens, permeable pavements or green roofs on a single parcel to community wide solutions such as the preservation and restoration of natural landscapes such as

canyon areas or arroyos that double as recreation corridors. Green infrastructure improvements are also recommended to be utilized within the arroyo to improve stormwater quality and increase the aesthetics along the Canada del Buey Trail.

Low Impact Development (LID) practices in particular can be incorporated into the Town Center specific development standards. These can help maintain pervious surfaces, minimize stormwater discharge, increase groundwater infiltration rates and reduce the urban heat island. Provisions that allow alternative forms of previous pavements, requirements for curb cuts, rain gardens, and/or bioswales along street sides or in parking lots that capture stormwater for irrigation are recommended to achieve these goals. Subsequently, these types of standards also support landscaping along streets and in parking lots, which enhances the visual appeal and pedestrian experience. The development code update should be updated to include the following LID practices:

- *Better site design requirements that reduce and disconnect impervious surfaces and directs runoff to landscaped areas or porous pavement to promote infiltration and reduce runoff volumes.*
- *Bioretention requirements in parking lots: rain gardens, bioswales, and bio-infiltration practices that collect runoff and manage it through infiltration, evapotranspiration, and biological uptake of nutrients and other pollutants*
- *Allowances for porous pavement including porous concrete, porous asphalt, and interlocking pavers, contain pore spaces that store and allow runoff to infiltrate into the ground.*
- *Encouraging ecological landscaping through native plants that are easy to maintain and are adapted to local climate and soil conditions to decrease the need for watering, fertilizers, and pesticides*

**EXHIBIT 33. Precedent Examples - Bicycle Infrastructure**



*Dedicated, protected bicycle lanes.*



*Artistic bike racks can be used to add more public art to the Center.*

**B. Incorporating Green Parking Lot Practices**

While necessary for urban environments like a town center, parking lots are notorious for polluting stormwater runoff and adding to the heat island effect. The incorporation of green parking lot practices can create a more sustainable Town Center development. This can be largely achieved through incorporating LID practices that incorporate bioretention and porous pavements as discussed above, but more innovative parking lots are now also incorporating elements like solar parking covers and electric charging stations. Solar canopies have numerous benefits including reduced energy consumption and electrical costs, and cooler and more comfortable micro-climates within the lot and the interiors of vehicles parking in it. Additionally, allowing or even requiring electric vehicle charging stations within the parking provisions of the Development Code can encourage the development of infrastructure necessary for widespread electrical vehicle deployment and create more sustainable practices within the Town Center.

**C. Update Outdoor Lighting Regulations to Mitigate Light Trespass**

When fully redeveloped, more urbanized areas such as the White Rock Town Center is likely to generate a significant amount of nighttime lighting. The trespass of nighttime lighting is a significant concern to White Rock residents who desire to preserve the remarkable natural setting in which the community exists. The lighting regulations within the Outdoor Lighting section of the Chapter 16 Development Code should be updated to reflect national best practices to encourage the preservation of a dark nighttime sky. A local group, the Jemez Mountains Night Sky Consortium, has submitted a draft version of an updated Outdoor Lighting section of the Chapter 16 Development Code which should be considered as part of the code update. At a minimum, the code update needs



to regulate the use of fully shielded and full cut-off light fixtures to reduce light emission to ensure outdoor lighting do not exceed levels specified in the IES- recommendations and to encourage the use of energy-efficient light fixtures.

## 2 - 8.IV GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been established to foster and promote sustainability practices in the White Rock Town Center.

**TABLE 13. Sustainability Goals**

**INTENT:** Sustainable development practices within the Town Center are currently lacking and should be increased and incentivized.

**VISION:** A Town Center District that integrates sustainable practices throughout.

**GOAL 1:** Foster and promote sustainability practices in the Town Center district.

**Strategy 1:** Develop and integrate standards into the zoning code that require and incentivize the application of Low Impact Development (LIDs), solar covered parking, and electric car charging stations, among other strategies

**Strategy 2:** Create development regulations for outdoor lighting fixtures that mitigate light pollution to maintain dark skies in con-cert with local efforts as applicable