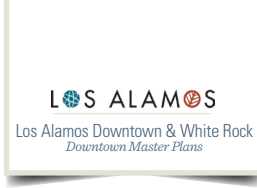




# *Los Alamos* **DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN**

*October 2021*





[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... V

### Process ..... v

### Vision & Recommendations ..... vi

## PART 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS ..... 2

### 1 - 1 Study Area Overview ..... 2

- 1-1.i Downtown Boundary .....2
- 1-1.ii Development History .....2
- 1-1.iii Los Alamos National Laboratory .....3

### 1 - 2 Existing Documents ..... 4

- 1-2.i 2000 Downtown Master Plan .....4
- 1-2.ii 2016 Comprehensive Plan .....5
- 1-2.iii 2019 Housing Market Needs Analysis .....8
- 1-2.iv 2019 Economic Vitality Strategic Plan ....8
- 1-2.v Tourism Strategic Plan.....8
- 1-2.vi Los Alamos Bicycle Transportation Plan.9
- 1-2.vii Wayfinding and Signage Plan.....10
- 1-2.viii Chapter 16 - Land Development Standards ..... 10

### 1 - 3 Demographic Information ..... 10

- 1-3.i Population .....10
- 1-3.ii Income .....12
- 1-3.iii Housing Tenancy .....12
- 1-3.iv New Housing.....12

### 1 - 4 Market Analysis ..... 12

- 1-4.i Commercial Inventory.....12
- 1-4.ii Employment .....12
- 1-4.iii Commuting.....14
- 1-4.iv GRT Analysis.....15

### 1 - 5 Existing Land Use & Zoning ..... 16

- 1-5.i Existing Land Use .....16
- 1-5.ii Future Land Use.....16
- 1-5.iii Zoning .....16
- 1-5.iv Redevelopment Potential .....18

### 1 - 6 Mobility & Transportation..... 18

- 1-6.i Vehicular infrastructure.....18
- 1-6.ii Pedestrian Facilities .....20
- 1-6.iii Bicycle Facilities .....20

### 1 - 7 Cultural Resources..... 22

### 1 - 8 Image and Identity ..... 22

### 1 - 9 Opportunities & Constraints ..... 24

### 1 - 10 Precedent Downtown Plans ..... 24

- 1-10.i Las Cruces Downtown Master Plan 2004-2016.....25
- 1-10.ii Colorado Springs .....26
- 1-10.iii Silver City.....27

### 1 - 11 National Best Practices ..... 29

- 1-11.i Downtown Placemaking .....29
- 1-11.ii Downtown Housing & Changing Housing Preferences .....29
- 1-11.iii Livable Downtown Centers.....30
- 1-11.iv Accommodating Shifts in Transportation / Mobility .....31
- 1-11.v Improvement Districts .....32

## PART 2. VISION & GOALS ..... 36

### 2 - 1 Overall Vision Statement ..... 36

- 2-1.i Introduction.....36
- 2-1.ii A Vision for Downtown .....37
- 2-1.iii Development Framework .....37
- 2-1.iv Key Vision Elements.....40

<b>2 - 2 Urban Form / Identity .....</b>	<b>47</b>	2-4.iv Transportation Goals.....	79
2-2.i Vision Statement .....	47	<b>2 - 5 Economic Vitality .....</b>	<b>81</b>
2-2.ii Introduction .....	47	2-5.i Vision Statement.....	81
2-2.iii Recommendations .....	47	2-5.ii Introduction .....	81
A. Update Downtown Zoning to Promote Pedestrian-Oriented Development Patterns.....	47	2-5.iii Recommendations .....	81
B. Increase and Enhance Pedestrian Infrastructure .....	50	A. Retail Space Preservation .....	81
C. Install Signature Gateway Features .....	55	B. Retail Space Development .....	82
D. Implement a Branded Wayfinding System.....	56	C. Tenant Recruitment .....	83
E. Expand / Increase Downtown Placemaking Strategies.....	57	D. Develop Strategies to Keep Commercial Rents Affordable .....	83
F. Rebrand Downtown as a Family- Friendly Environment .....	58	E. Promote Mobile Vending .....	84
2-2.iv Urban Form / Identity Goals .....	60	F. Develop Policies and Incentives to Activate First Floor Frontages .....	85
<b>2 - 3 Housing .....</b>	<b>63</b>	G. Streamline Development Process within Downtown .....	85
2-3.i Vision Statement .....	63	H. Develop Strategies that Incentivize Redevelopment of Vacant and Underutilized Sites and Structures ...	86
2-3.ii Introduction .....	63	I. Develop an Entertainment Use That Attracts People, Particularly Families, to Los Alamos.....	87
2-3.iii Recommendations .....	63	J. Promote Tourism as an Economic Driver.....	88
A. Allow Increased Multi-family Densities / Heights .....	63	2-5.iv Economic Vitality Goals.....	90
B. Incentivizing Affordable Housing .....	66	<b>2 - 6 Public Space / Streets.....</b>	<b>93</b>
C. Allow / Encourage an Urban Mix of Housing/Development Types.....	67	2-6.i Vision Statement.....	93
2-3.iv Housing Goals .....	69	2-6.ii Introduction .....	93
<b>2 - 4 Transportation .....</b>	<b>71</b>	2-6.iii Recommendations .....	93
2-4.i Vision Statement .....	71	A. Create Diverse, Interconnected Public Spaces .....	93
2-4.ii Introduction .....	71	B. Incentivize the Creation of a Pedestrian Corridor.....	95
2-4.iii Recommendations .....	71	C. Define Streets as Public Spaces .....	96
A. Implement Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure .....	71	2-6.iv Public Space / Streets Goals .....	97
B. Improve Vehicular Access and Connectivity.....	75	<b>2 - 7 Infrastructure .....</b>	<b>99</b>
C. Expand Convenient Access to Transit as Downtown Densifies .....	76	2-7.i Vision Statement .....	99
D. Improve the Parking Management Strategy.....	77	2-7.ii Introduction .....	99
		2-7.iii Recommendations .....	99



A. Incorporate Downtown Infrastructure Improvements Into County's CIP.....	99	2-8.iv Sustainability Goals.....	106
B. Promote Access to Utilities and Broadband .....	101		
2-7.iv Infrastructure Goals .....	101		
<b>2 - 8 Sustainability.....</b>	<b>103</b>		
2-8.i Vision Statement.....	103		
2-8.ii Introduction .....	103		
2-8.iii Recommendations .....	103		
A. Create Standards for Implementation of LID, Solar Covered Parking, and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations..	103		
B. Incorporate Green Parking Lot Practices .....	104		
C. Update Outdoor Lighting Standards .....	105		
D. Revise Landscape Requirements to Promote Native Plants .....	105		
		<b>PART 3. IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>111</b>
		<b>3 - 1 Funding and Financing of Downtown Improvements.....</b>	<b>111</b>
		3-1.i Capital Improvements Program .....	111
		3-1.ii Local Economic Development Act.....	111
		3-1.iii Development Incentives .....	112
		<b>3 - 2 Implementation Matrix .....</b>	<b>112</b>
		3-2.i Phasing Priorities .....	116
		A. Short-term Priorities .....	116
		B. Intermediate Priorities .....	118
		C. Long-term Priorities .....	120

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, Los Alamos County undertook completion of a new Downtown Master Plan for both White Rock and Los Alamos. The Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan establishes a vision and provides guidance for the future of Downtown Los Alamos ("Downtown"). The Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan ("Plan" or "Master Plan") aligns with and, upon adoption, will be a component of the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan ("Comp Plan"). Elements

within the Plan coincide with the structure of the core themes and sub-themes of the Comp Plan. These include the following seven elements: Urban Form/ Identity, Housing, Transportation, Economic Vitality, Public Space/ Streets, Infrastructure, and Sustainability. Each element contains a vision, intent, recommendations, goals, and strategies that support implementation within Downtown.

## PROCESS

The vision, goals, and strategies outlined in this Plan represent the culmination of extensive public engagement with the project team to understand opportunities and challenges facing the Los Alamos community. The public engagement process consisted of a series of outreach events that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent public health orders, had to be conducted virtually. A project website was an integral part of this effort and created a link between the project team, ongoing work tasks, and the community as it hosted meeting announcements, meeting summaries, draft document releases, and general project updates.

The project team held numerous meetings and workshops; to gather general input over a period of 18 months, the project team conducted 18 events including Vision Workshops, Design Workshops, County Council Work Sessions, Los Alamos National Laboratory ("LANL") Stakeholder Sessions, Business Stakeholder Sessions, a Historic Preservation Board Meeting, a Transportation Board Meeting, a Youth Meeting, a Tourism Improvement Task Force Meeting, a County Fair booth, and multiple public open houses.

The goals and policies of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan served as a starting point to identify the vision

and associated goals for the Master Plan that were further refined during a Visioning Workshop. From there, a Design Workshop was conducted to build upon the goals and vision identified during the Visioning Workshop through 'hands on' activities aimed to identify future development scenarios for the Downtown. Development scenarios created during the Design Workshop were evaluated by their ability to address various goals and the key concepts were incorporated by the project team into draft alternative frameworks as well as draft goals and strategies that aimed to achieve the desired vision identified in the Vision Workshop. The alternative framework plans were presented during a public open house to hear comments and identify a preferred alternative. Based on the feedback received, the project team created a final development framework and drafted the Master Plan document with oversight from County staff. The drafts were then refined through a process of public open houses, Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, and County Council meetings before final adoption by County Council.

## VISION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Los Alamos community faces some unique opportunities and challenges that can be helped by specific interventions in Downtown. These challenges include the following:

- *Lack of housing availability, especially attainable housing*
- *Vacant and underutilized structures and land with blighted conditions*
- *High commercial space rents for small, local businesses*
- *Scattered surface parking lots*
- *Large block size that hinders mobility*
- *Lack of pedestrian connectivity along Trinity Drive*
- *Lack of a comprehensive placemaking strategy*
- *Unclear and outdated Development Code procedures that hinder development*

Downtown Los Alamos is envisioned to be a place that is walkable and provides attractions for young and old. Key assets are connected by wide sidewalks that accommodate outdoor seating and allow businesses to expand their activities into the public realm. Downtown has a cohesive identity that is inspired by the unique history of Los Alamos and the surrounding natural landscape of the Jemez Mountains and Valles Caldera. A wide range of transportation options are available that bring people in from out of town, from adjacent neighborhoods, and major employers at all times of day and week.

To help achieve this vision for Downtown Los Alamos, the Master Plan and the development framework focus on the benefits of mixed-use, transit-friendly, pedestrian-oriented development.

As called for in the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan and community feedback from this planning effort, the development framework includes the following:

- P** *A Parking District that is oriented around three parking structures dispersed across Downtown that allows for a 'Park Once and Walk' strategy*
- 1** *The catalytic redevelopment of C.B. FOX, Central Park Square, and the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center as mixed-use developments*
- 2** *Targeted mixed-use and multi-family development*
- 3** *Pedestrian improvements along north-south roads and Trinity Drive including buffered sidewalks, landscaping, and pedestrian furnishings*
- 4** *Bicycle improvements along 15th Street, 20th Street, and Trinity Drive*
- 5** *Comprehensive placemaking strategy that creates a unified urban form and identity*
- 6** *A public space adjacent to Central Park Square with enhanced pedestrian amenities*
- 7** *A dedicated north-south pedestrian corridor as an extension of Central Park Square south of Central Avenue that features outdoor dining and retail*
- 8** *Street extensions of 6th, 9th, 15th, and 20th Streets to break up large blocks and create redevelopment opportunities*

The Master Plan outlines seven elements that align with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and inform a set of recommendations intended to implement the community vision for Downtown Los Alamos. These recommendations include the following:



The Development Framework illustrates the improvements outlined in this Plan for Downtown Los Alamos, such as infill development, parking structures, streetscape improvements, and street extensions.



**LEGEND**

- Proposed Parking Structure
- Redevelopment Opportunities
- Mari Mac Village Shopping Center Mixed-Use Infill
- Central Park Square Mixed-Use Infill
- Canyon Rim Trail



## **URBAN FORM/IDENTITY**

- Update Downtown zoning to promote pedestrian-oriented development patterns
- Increase and enhance pedestrian infrastructure
- Install signature gateway features
- Implement a branded wayfinding system
- Expand/ increase Downtown placemaking strategies
- Rebrand Downtown as a family-friendly environment

## **HOUSING**

- Allow increased multi-family densities/ heights
- Incentivize affordable housing
- Allow/ encourage an urban mix of housing/ development types

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Implement safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- Improve vehicular access and connectivity
- Expand convenient access to transit as Downtown densifies
- Improve the parking management strategy

## **ECONOMIC VITALITY**

- Retail space preservation
- Retail space development
- Tenant recruitment
- Develop strategies to keep commercial rents affordable
- Promote mobile vending
- Develop policies and incentives to activate first floor frontages
- Streamline development process within Downtown
- Develop strategies that incentivize redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites and structures
- Develop an entertainment use that attracts

- people, particularly families, to Los Alamos
- Promote tourism as a economic driver

## **PUBLIC SPACE/ STREETS**

- Create diverse, interconnected public spaces
- Incentivize the creation of a pedestrian corridor
- Define streets as public spaces

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Incorporate Downtown infrastructure improvements into County's CIP
- Promote access to utilities and broadband

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

- Create standards for implementation of LID, solar covered parking, and electric vehicle charging stations
- Incorporate green parking lot practices
- Update outdoor lighting standards
- Revise landscape requirements to promote native plants

Implementation of the Development Framework will take a long-term, incremental approach that requires the collaboration between the County, property owners, and the development community through a combination of strategic catalytic projects as well as the facilitation of smaller scale infill opportunities. Funding and financing of Downtown improvements comes from several sources including Capital Improvements Program (CIP), Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), and private sector funds from development incentives.





*An illustrative rendering of the southern portion of the pedestrian corridor showing the proposed recommendations for this area.*



[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]

# PART 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS

---

# PART 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

THIS STUDY PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF LOS ALAMOS. THIS IS THE FIRST COMPONENT OF THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN. IT PROVIDES BASIC INFORMATION ON THE MASTER PLAN AND OVERALL EXISTING CONDITIONS.

## 1 - 1 STUDY AREA OVERVIEW

Los Alamos is the larger of the two population centers in Los Alamos County ("County"). Referred to as Los Alamos Townsite or the Townsite, it holds about two-thirds of the population of the County at approximately 12,400 residents, according to the American Community Survey, 2018. With housing in short supply in the County, increasingly more of the Los Alamos National Laboratory ("LANL") workforce is locating outside of the County. According to the Housing Market Needs Analysis, 2019, approximately 7,500 people commute daily from the surrounding communities outside of the County, increasing the total daytime population of the County to approximately 25,700.

### 1 - 1.I DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY

The boundary of the Downtown area was established by the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan. Downtown Los Alamos, considered the commercial core, is situated in the south-central portion of the Townsite atop the Los Alamos Mesa and connected to the rest of Los Alamos through the east-west roads of Trinity Drive and Canyon Road. Developable areas in Los Alamos County are located atop four mesas separated by steep canyons. This creates a unique road network that features these two roads as the only vehicular access points to Downtown. They also carry heavy through-traffic from commuters traveling to LANL. The County acknowledges that there are existing commercial businesses and other buildings located directly outside of the Downtown boundaries that

are influenced by improvements made within the boundaries and should consider the impacts to these buildings when considering public realm improvements. Examples of these buildings include the Women's Army Corps Dormitory building and the Los Alamos Little Theatre.

### 1 - 1.II DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



*The Manhattan Project Technical Area surrounding Ashley Pond, LANL Photo archive*

Los Alamos County was created in 1943 and exclusively administered by the federal government in the development and creation of the first atomic bomb, referred to as the Manhattan Project. Formerly the site of a boys' ranch school, the area



**EXHIBIT 1. Downtown Los Alamos Boundary**



was acquired through eminent domain by the Department of War and transformed into a secret government research facility. After the end of World War II, Los Alamos was opened to the public and Los Alamos National Laboratory was founded. LANL is today known as one of the largest science and technology institutions in the world, attracting a highly educated and specialized workforce to the County. It is the largest employer in northern New Mexico with approximately 14,754 employees (Housing Market Needs Analysis, 2019) with a large number commuting from the surrounding area outside of Los Alamos County.

Downtown Los Alamos was designed originally as a temporary military town that was then converted into a low density commercial area to serve the growing population after World War II. Like many shopping areas during that time, the layout and circulation was designed to accommodate a car-centric population. The Downtown Master Plan in 2000 calculated that the streets and parking lots combined constitute 70 percent of the developable land area in Downtown. In the last twenty years, Downtown has seen marked improvements such as a redeveloped Ashley

Pond, some quality infill development projects and streetscape improvements along Central Avenue. Downtown Los Alamos has evolved into an attractive destination for visitors and an asset to the community. Given the County's overall need for more housing, Downtown has the potential to attract new residents and transform the character of the area into a more urban, mixed-use district.

### 1 - 1.III LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

The prosperity of Los Alamos County is intrinsically linked to the success of LANL. LANL is the largest employer in the County and draws workers from throughout the world. LANL is expected to add between 1,300 and 2,400 new jobs by 2025. In order to attract top talent, LANL needs the County to help create housing and overall quality of life amenities that compete with other places. Hence, LANL is a major stakeholder in the success of the downtown areas. One major objective is to create a framework to accommodate new housing within Downtown that appeals to the LANL workforce, allowing them to live in closer proximity to their workplace.

## 1 - 2 EXISTING DOCUMENTS

DETAILED BELOW IS A NUMBER OF EXISTING REGULATORY DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN AREAS OF LOS ALAMOS COUNTY.

### 1 - 2.1 2000 DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The Downtown Master Plan for Los Alamos (“2000 Plan”) was created in 2000 with the primary goal to revitalize Downtown and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, encourage infill of underutilized parcels, and generate more retail activity.



Excerpt from the 2000 Downtown Master Plan that illustrates the vision for downtown.



Excerpt from the 2000 Downtown Master illustrating a land use plan.

The 2000 Plan established a Development Strategy paired with recommendations for infrastructure improvements intended to revitalize Downtown through catalytic projects within key areas.



Excerpt from the 2000 Downtown Master illustrating the future build-out of downtown.

Four main catalytic projects are identified that include the Civic Center, Main Street, East End, and South Rim with recommended implementation sequencing. These projects were anticipated to spur investment within Downtown from the private sector. The 2000 Plan introduced a new development code that utilized a form-based approach as the primary instrument for revitalization. The form-based code aimed to encourage mixed-use buildings with shared parking to promote walkability within Downtown. The code consisted of a regulating plan to address use, building form, and public space standards within five subcategories. The development code

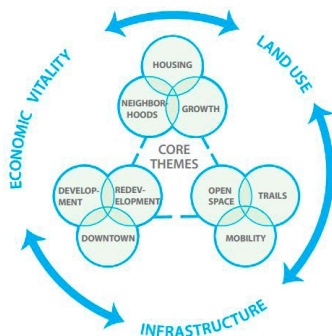


established the uses, building types, architecture, and public space regulations to implement the regulating plan. While the 2000 Plan was never officially adopted by the County, portions of the development code were incorporated into the zoning code. However, these standards were not fully integrated into the zoning code and were not integrated into Downtown implementation strategies.

## 1 - 2.II 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In 2016, Los Alamos County adopted a new Comp Plan. The purpose of the Comp Plan is to guide the physical development of the County through goals and policies established to implement the shared community vision. The Comp Plan emphasizes three key areas or core themes:

- *Housing, Neighborhoods and Growth;*
- *Development, Redevelopment and Downtown;* and
- *Open Space, Trails and Mobility.*



Excerpt from the Comp Plan illustrating the core themes.

The Development, Redevelopment and Downtown goals include strategies for redeveloping vacant and blighted areas, focusing development priorities Downtown, and guiding development to property in and around the current Downtown boundaries. There is strong community support for addressing blighted properties to improve overall appearances and to promote economic development within the

two downtowns (the Townsite and White Rock). The Comp Plan identifies several properties such as the Mari Mac Center in the Townsite and the Longview area in White Rock that are in need of significant improvements to contribute to revitalization of the downtown areas. The Comp Plan envisions a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes a central gathering place, nighttime entertainment, and more retail stores and restaurants while enhancing the historic, small-town character by focusing commercial activity in Downtown.

The Housing, Neighborhoods and Growth goals include planning for modest growth, providing more housing choices and protecting the character of existing residential neighborhoods. The Comp Plan emphasizes the need for new and varied housing types.

The Open Space, Trails, and Mobility goals include protecting virtually all existing open space, maximizing connectivity to open space, trails and pedestrian ways, and supporting street and infrastructure design for safety and comfort of all users.

In addition to the goals, policies, and strategies outlined for each of these three core themes, the Comp Plan also includes a Future Land Use Map that illustrates the direction of future growth and desirable land uses.

The goals and policies identified in the Comp Plan serve as a starting point to identify the vision and associated goals for this Master Plan. ["Table 1. Key Goals/Policies" on page 6](#) summarizes some of the most prominent goals that apply to Downtown. The goals served as a starting point during the visioning workshop to prioritize the existing goals and identify new goals. They are categorized into seven focus areas or elements including: Urban Form/Identity, Housing, Transportation, Economic Vitality, Public Space/Streets, Infrastructure, and Sustainability.

## 2016 Comprehensive Plan Key Goals and Policies

**TABLE 1. Key Goals/Policies**

Focus Area	Goals	Goal Summaries
Urban Form / Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote / encourage infill development</li> <li>- Eliminate blight in the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock</li> <li>- Enrich the vibrancy of business districts through the integration of design, public art, public space, historic preservation, and cultural spaces and programming</li> <li>- Maximize opportunities with the development of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park</li> <li>- Upgrade infrastructure, including streetscapes, green spaces, and entrances to the County, to reflect civic pride in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly downtown environment while retaining a small town character</li> <li>- Promote infill and eliminate blight</li> </ul>
Economic Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalize the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock</li> <li>- Support and retain LANL as the best wealth-producing employer</li> <li>- Diversify the community's economic base</li> <li>- Attract new tourism-related business</li> <li>- Significantly improve the quantity and quality of retail business</li> <li>- Support construction of new tech facilities to attract new tech businesses</li> <li>- Promote economic diversification by building on the existing strengths of the community: technology, innovation, and information, as well as natural resource amenities</li> <li>- Promote Los Alamos County as an "Outdoor Community"</li> <li>- Capitalize on Los Alamos County's role as gateway to three National Parks</li> <li>- Promote Los Alamos County as a venue for athletic events and competitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalize downtown with a focus on quality tourism-related businesses and a diversification of the economic base and businesses that support and retain the LANL workforce</li> </ul>
Public Space / Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown that includes a central gathering place, nighttime entertainment, and more retail stores and restaurants</li> <li>- Improve access to public open space and recreational facilities</li> <li>- Continue to implement streetscape improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment with access to open space areas and recreational facilities</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster and promote sustainability practices</li> <li>- Support green infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster and promote sustainability practices</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1. Key Goals/Policies Continued**

Focus Area	Goals	Goal Summaries
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain and improve transportation and mobility, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists</li> <li>- Design for accessibility</li> <li>- Make Los Alamos County a bicycle-friendly community</li> <li>- Revisit parking requirements in relation to transit access</li> <li>- Integrate parking with transit</li> <li>- Study current and anticipated parking demand and develop alternative approaches to meet that demand</li> <li>- Develop and expand trails connecting downtown to surrounding open space</li> <li>- Consider alternate means of circulation, especially for the purpose of accessibility</li> <li>- Complete development of the paved and accessible Canyon Rim Trail from DP Road through the historic core, Ashley Pond to the Aquatic Center and the Nature Center and possible loops</li> <li>- Consider expanded opportunities for off-site parking</li> <li>- Support a downtown circulator seven days per week and for extended hours, especially on weekends</li> <li>- Consider bike-share program associated with the Canyon Rim Trail</li> <li>- Support a "complete streets" policy for all newly constructed and rebuilt roadways</li> <li>- Develop and support transportation corridors that connect housing and employment centers through the historic core, Ashley Pond to the Aquatic Center and the Nature Center and possible loops</li> <li>- Add a transit route from the Townsite to Bandelier and Valles Caldera</li> <li>- Create a user-friendly, efficient, multi-modal system that connects LANL, Downtown Los Alamos, and White Rock</li> <li>- Examine the best approaches for safe pedestrian crossings on arterials such as Trinity Dr, Diamond Dr, and State Road 4, including HAWK and pedestrian/ bike-activated flashing lights</li> <li>- Revitalize downtown areas to become pedestrian-friendly mixed-use areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a user-friendly, efficient, multi-modal system that connects housing and employment centers</li> <li>- Maintain and improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure</li> <li>- Develop an alternative parking approach</li> </ul>



## 1 - 2.III 2019 HOUSING MARKET NEEDS ANALYSIS

The 2019 Los Alamos Housing Market Needs Analysis ("Housing Analysis") was commissioned by Los Alamos County to address current and future housing needs. The Housing Analysis estimates the unmet need for rental and for-sale homes in Los Alamos and proposes future actions the County can take to increase the supply of housing.

The Housing Analysis identified an immediate need for 1,310 units of rental housing and 379 units for homeownership. The need is distributed among all income ranges but is particularly acute for middle- and low-income households (p. 6 Los Alamos Housing Market Needs Analysis, 2019).

The Housing Analysis recommends a wide range of policy and implementation measures to increase the supply of housing including encouraging downtown infill through zoning incentives and encouraging residential development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties. The Housing Analysis notes that Downtown is the logical location for higher density housing, including mixed-use and multi-story apartment buildings. In addition to housing, those surveyed also identified the desire to see more shopping and entertainment options in Downtown which would support the additional density.

## 1 - 2.IV 2019 ECONOMIC VITALITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Economic Vitality Strategic Plan ("EVSP") 2019 focuses on the County's efforts to improve and enhance the community's living and working environment within a 10-year timeframe. The EVSP, created by members of the County Manager's Economic Vitality Action Team, recognizes that activity at LANL drives much of the region's economic vitality and that housing has a direct

impact on LANL's ability to attract new employees. Creating a range of housing types at different price points is therefore vital to maintaining the County's economy. Population growth creates the opportunity for new and expanded businesses that in turn enhance the quality of life for those living in Los Alamos County.

Goals identified in the EVSP are high level and generally don't refer to specific actions within Downtown. They include increasing the availability of quality housing in the County, both affordable and market rate, defining and addressing quality of life priorities, nurturing a separate, complementary economy to LANL and supporting and retaining LANL as the area's best wealth-producing employer.

## 1 - 2.V TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

The Los Alamos Tourism Strategic Plan ("Tourism Plan") outlines strategies and actions that contribute to tourism as an economic driver for the County, with the goal of diversifying the economy within a ten-year timeframe. The Tourism Plan helps unify ongoing tourism efforts by coordinating with the goals outlined in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The Tourism Plan outlines the strategic direction for tourism in four focus areas:

1. *Create and market an inviting community;*
2. *Increase the capture of visitor dollars;*
3. *Enrich attractions and downtowns and celebrate the natural beauty; and*
4. *Operate with intentional leadership, public and private investment and partnerships.*

Within these focus areas are goals and tactics related to marketing, programming, physical improvements, infrastructure investments and policy changes.

Priority action items that have a more immediate timeframe include increasing lodging supply,

modifying institutional structures, making marketing efforts more effective, enhancing guest experiences, and improving community quality for residents, businesses, and LANL.

The downtown areas are logical strategic locations for implementing priority action items and maximizing their impact. The Tourism Plan suggests making Downtown Los Alamos and White Rock Town Center aesthetically pleasing and welcoming to visitors by encouraging infill and beautification in core areas to create a vibrant and walkable experience. Additional strategies include maximizing Main Street and Creative District program opportunities and services and expanding eating and shopping options to meet visitor and resident expectations.

More specific references to projects in Downtown Los Alamos include the following:

- *A downtown circulator trolley between LANL and downtown Los Alamos that runs during weekdays could expand service to weekends when most visitors are in the area;*
- *Sidewalk and wayfinding/signage improvements that would enhance the experience of the self-guided Los Alamos Historic Walking Tour;*
- *Extension of the Canyon Rim Trail to 20th St that would provide a paved out-and-back option for hiking, nature trips, birding, and mountain biking, as it connects several mountain bike and multi-use trails in the area.*

Specific projects mentioned for White Rock Town Center include continuing to promote the expansion of the Main Street District to include White Rock Town Center and encouraging redevelopment of the Longview corridor.

## 1 - 2.VI LOS ALAMOS BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Los Alamos Bicycle Transportation Plan ("Bike Plan") was adopted in 2017. It proposes a comprehensive transportation network focused on bicycle facilities and promoting the use of bicycles as a key form of transportation. A key goal of the Bike Plan is to create connections between destinations and key points of interest. Specifically in Downtown Los Alamos, connections are prioritized utilizing the existing Canyon Rim Trail system and street network that link destinations such as Ashley Pond, Fuller Lodge, Mesa Public Library, the Bradbury Museum and the Downtown Business District. Economic development projects currently underway are planned with bicycle infrastructure and trail connections in mind.



Image of the Canyon Rim Trail Bridge from the Los Alamos Bicycle Transportation Plan.

The Bike Plan lists potential projects that could be considered for development based on public input and ongoing planning review include Trinity Drive bicycle facilities and a direct route from northern residential areas to the business district within Downtown Los Alamos. Within White Rock Town Center, potential projects include extending Canada del Buey Multi-Use Trail to connect to Overlook Park, improving trail crossing of the Canada del Buey Multi-Use Trail at Longview Dr and Rover Blvd and incorporating trails and bike lanes into development plans for Tract A-19.

To realize a well-connected and safe bicycle transportation system, the Bike Plan also outlines design policies and guidelines, inventories existing bicycle infrastructure, and identifies funding priorities.

## 1 - 2.VII WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE PLAN

The Los Alamos County Wayfinding & Signage System ("Wayfinding Plan") defines a cohesive and easily navigable wayfinding and signage plan that includes graphic standards of color, size, font, and materials, a menu of sign types that include vehicular, pedestrian, park identification, and information kiosks, and specific locations for placement of these sign types.

## 1 - 2.VIII CHAPTER 16 - LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The County's Development Code includes specific standards for the downtown districts. Downtown standards are defined through a Downtown District Overlay. The purpose of the overlay zone is "to promote land use, site planning, and design

criteria to implement the urban form and character envisioned by the Los Alamos Downtown Element or the White Rock Center Element, adopted as a part of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos Comprehensive Plan."

The overlay includes four subzones —Neighborhood General Overlay Zone (DT-NGO), Neighborhood Center Overlay Zone (DT-NCO), Town Center Overlay Zone (DT-TCO), Civic/Public Open Space Overlay Zone (DT-CPO) — which are used to further tailor the intended character of the downtown districts. Both uses and dimensional standards are customized for each subzone. More general parking and architectural standards apply to all Downtown development.

While the 2000 Plan envisioned a "form-based" approach that focuses on the massing, location and articulation of building facades, the integration of that Downtown vision into the zoning code is somewhat flawed. The zoning code adopted the Downtown overlays but the visual components of the 2000 Plan were essentially stapled onto Chapter 16, with less than optimal consideration for the form and content of the graphics.

# 1 - 3 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

## 1 - 3.1 POPULATION

The population and household base of Los Alamos County has grown modestly since 2010, adding 688 residents and 383 households. About two-thirds of the growth was in the Townsite which added 438 residents and 245 households. The remaining third was in White Rock which added 250 residents and 138 households. Households grew at a slightly higher 0.5 percent annual growth rate, indicating a small reduction in average household size as shown in "[Table 2. Demographics, Los Alamos, 2010-2019](#)" on page 11. The population of Los

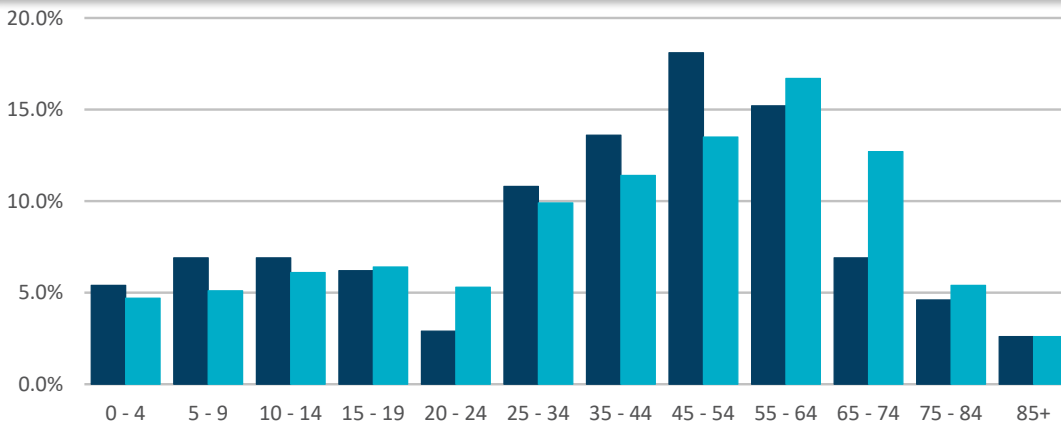
Alamos County has become older, as the median age increased from 44.3 to 46.8 and the share of residents over the age of 65 grew from 14.9 percent to 21.4 percent, while the share of residents aged 45 to 54 decreased from 18.6 percent to 13.9 percent, as shown in "[Exhibit 2. Population by Age, Los Alamos, 2010-2019](#)" on page 23. The stable and aging population indicates that the residents of Los Alamos are staying and 'aging in place.'

**TABLE 2. Demographics, Los Alamos, 2010-2019**

Description	2010	2019	2010-2019		
			Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
Los Alamos Townsite					
Population	12,225	12,663	438	49	0.4%
Households	5,377	5,622	245	27	0.5%
Median Age	43.1	45.8	2.7	0.3	0.7%
Median Income	\$101,503	\$112,275	\$10,772	\$1,197	1.1%

Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

**EXHIBIT 2. Population by Age, Los Alamos, 2010-2019**



Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

**TABLE 3. Housing Tenancy, 2010-2019**

Description	2010	2019	2010-2019		
			Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
Los Alamos					
Owner Units	3,736	3,678	-58	-6	-0.2%
Percent	61.6%	59.6%	-2.0%	0	-0.4%
Renter Units	1,641	1,944	303	34	1.9%
Percent	27.0%	31.5%	4.4%	0	1.7%
Vacant Units	691	553	-138	-15	-2.4%
Percent	11.4%	9.0%	-2.4%	0	-2.6%
Total	6,068	6,175	107	12	0.2%

Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

### 1 - 3.II INCOME

Median household incomes in the County have grown by an annual average of 1.4 percent to reach \$117,391 in 2019. The median income of White Rock at \$132,914 is 13 percent higher than the County as a whole and 18 percent higher than the Townsite at \$112,273.

### 1 - 3.III HOUSING TENANCY

In terms of tenancy, approximately 60 percent of all housing units in Los Alamos County are owner-occupied, 31.5 percent are renter-occupied, and 9.0 percent are vacant, as shown in *"Table 3. Housing Tenancy, 2010-2019" on page 11*. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of rental occupied housing increased by 303 units, increasing the percentage from 27 percent to 31.5 percent.

### 1 - 3.IV NEW HOUSING

Approximately 197 new housing units were built in Los Alamos County between 2010 and 2019. The new units comprised mostly of single-unit buildings and buildings with 5 or more units. The limited amount of new housing development in Los Alamos County combined with declining vacancy rates is resulting in a tight housing market and an increase in in-commuting by LANL employees.

**TABLE 4. Building Permits, Los Alamos County, 2010-2019**

Building Type	Units Built
1 Unit	94
2 Units	11
3-4 Units	0
5+ Units	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>

Source: U.S. Census; Economic & Planning Systems

## 1 - 4 MARKET ANALYSIS

### 1 - 4.I COMMERCIAL INVENTORY

Los Alamos has experienced minimal office development since 2010. On the retail side, the development of Smith's Marketplace in Downtown Los Alamos in 2014 added 110,000 square feet, while the ancillary retail in the Smith's shopping center added 30,000 square feet, and an O'Reilly Auto Parts added 7,200 square feet. The Smith's Marketplace has a significant retail impact on Los Alamos County given its scale. It has increased retail sales capture and reduced leakage to other markets, but also has created additional competition for smaller retail stores in attracting demand.

As shown in *"Exhibit 3. Commercial Vacancy Rates, Las Alamos County, 2010-2020" on page 13*, office uses command higher rents than retail uses in Los Alamos, due in large part to the greater demand for space from LANL contractors who are largely national companies accustomed to paying higher rates in urban areas. The average rate for office space is slightly above \$20 per square foot compared to \$15 per square foot for retail space.

### 1 - 4.II EMPLOYMENT

Employment in Los Alamos is driven by LANL, which provides the County with a stable, highly educated workforce. In 2019, LANL employed 11,881 people, which comprised over two-thirds of



**TABLE 5. Commercial Development, Los Alamos, 2010-2020**

Description	2010	2020	2010-2020		
			Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
<b>Downtown Study Area</b>					
Office (sq. feet)	341,068	344,068	3,000	300	0.1%
Retail (sq. feet)	500,023	645,298	145,275	14,528	2.6%
<b>Other Los Alamos</b>					
Office (sq. feet)	212,902	212,902	0	0	0.0%
Retail (sq. feet)	76,840	76,840	0	0	0.0%

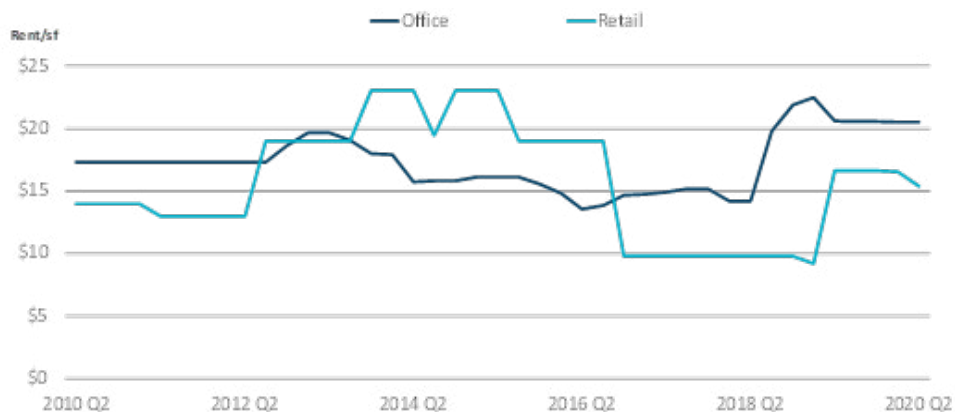
Source: Costar; Economic & Planning Systems

**TABLE 6. Employment, Los Alamos County, 2010-2019**

Description	2010	2019	2010-2019		
			Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
<b>LANL Employment</b>					
Payroll	8,727	9,410	683	76	0.8%
Contractor	1,601	1,747	146	16	1.0%
Other/Construction	1,357	724	-633	-70	-6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,685</b>	<b>11,881</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>NAICS Sector</b>					
Construction	249	233	-16	-2	-0.7%
Retail Trade	371	467	96	11	2.6%
Finance/Insurance	312	142	-169	-19	-8.3%
Education	109	82	-27	-3	-3.1%
Health Care	867	898	31	3	0.4%
Arts/Rec	127	112	-14	-2	-1.3%
Lodging & Food	472	466	-6	-1	-0.1%
Public Admin	512	454	-58	-6	-1.3%
Other NAICS	<u>2,175</u>	<u>2,620</u>	<u>445</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>2.1%</u>
<b>NAICS Total</b>	<b>5,194</b>	<b>5,476</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>16,879</b>	<b>17,357</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

Source: UNM; Economic & Planning Systems

**EXHIBIT 3. Commercial Vacancy Rates, Los Alamos County, 2010-2020**



the County's total employment, as shown in ["Table 6. Employment, Los Alamos County, 2010-2019" on page 13](#). Employment at LANL consists primarily of payroll employees, which comprise 80 percent of all employees, while contractors and construction-related employees comprise approximately 20 percent of all employees. Total employment at LANL has remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2019. Other sectors in Los Alamos County with significant employment include Health Care, Retail Trade, Lodging & Food Service, and Public Administration.

As LANL maintains the largest employee base in the County with a workforce of approximately 14,754 employees (Housing Market Needs Analysis, 2019), fluctuations in population have historically resulted from expansion or contraction of this workforce. A recent expansion of the mission of LANL has led to increased job growth. With the increase in LANL jobs comes an increase of employment in supporting industries.

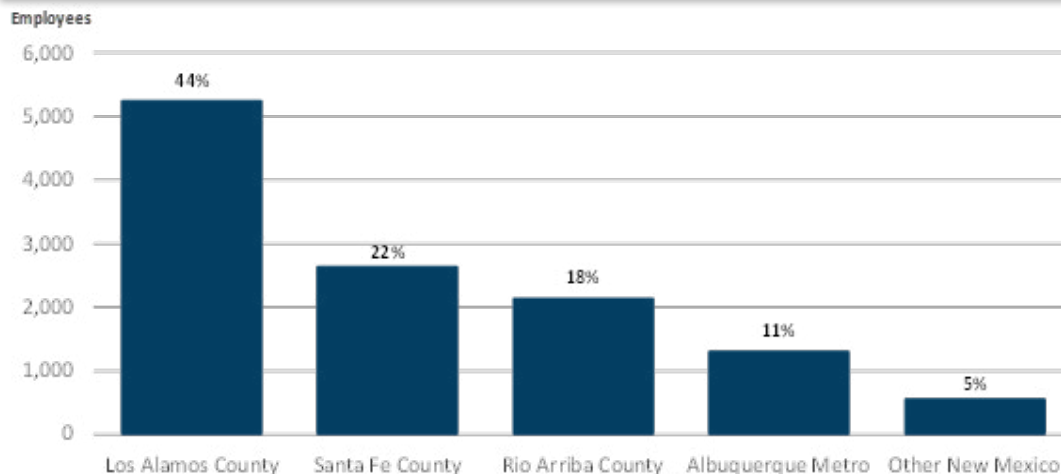
The 2018 estimated median household income in Los Alamos was \$106,288 among 5,312 total households, according to the American Community Survey.

Within Los Alamos Townsite, 68.7 percent of the workforce is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations, 14.1 percent is employed in service occupations, 10.9 percent is employed in sales and office occupations, 3.6 percent in production, transportation, and material moving occupations and 2.7 percent in natural resources construction and maintenance occupations (American Community Survey).

## 1 - 4.III COMMUTING

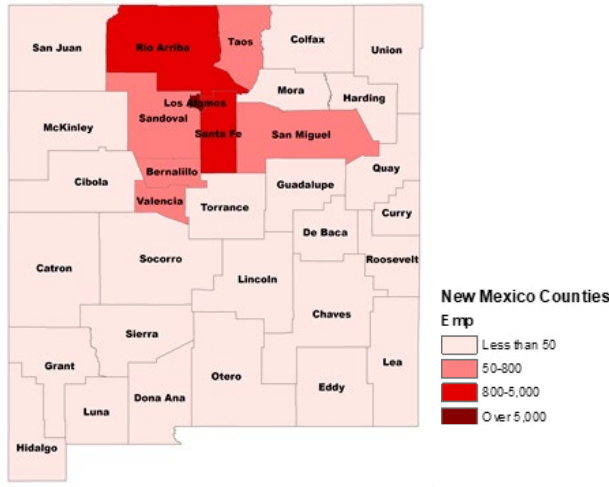
Of LANL's 11,881 employees, approximately 5,242 or 44 percent live in Los Alamos County, resulting in 56 percent of all employees commuting to Los Alamos for work, as shown in ["Exhibit 4. LANL Employees by County of Residence" on page 14](#). The highest number of in-commuters live in Santa Fe County with 2,639 employees (22%), followed by Rio Arriba County with 2,142 employees (18%), and the Albuquerque metro area (which includes Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties) with 1,304 employees (11%).

**EXHIBIT 4. LANL Employees by County of Residence**

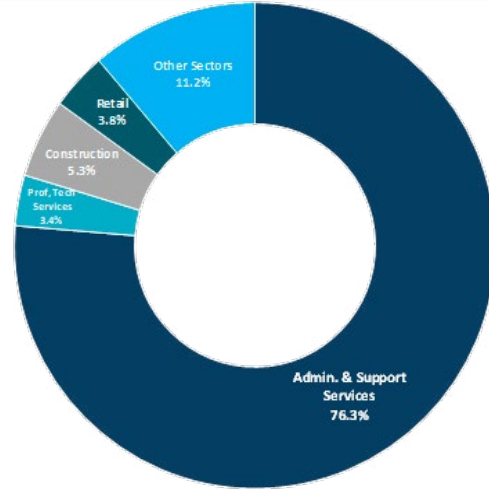


Source: UNM; Economic & Planning Systems

**EXHIBIT 5. Map of LANL Employees by County of Residence**



**EXHIBIT 6. GRT-based Revenue by NAICS Sector, 2020**



Source: NMF, Economic & Planning Systems

**TABLE 7. Impact of Smith's Marketplace on GRT**

Description	2014	2015	Change
Los Alamos Retail Sales	\$38,500,000	\$50,800,000	\$12,300,000
Smith's Store Size (sq ft)	44,000	110,000	66,000
Sales per sq ft estimate	500	306	
Portion of Retail Sales from Smith's <sup>1</sup>	\$22,000,000	\$33,685,000	\$11,685,000
% of Total	57%	66%	

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

<sup>1</sup> Assumes Smith's captured 95% of new retail GRT growth

## 1 - 4.IV GRT ANALYSIS

Using data from the New Mexico Finance Authority, an analysis was conducted with GRT-based revenues by North American Industry Classification System sector codes in Los Alamos County. While overall receipts fluctuated between 2010 and 2020, lab-related sectors, which include Administrative & Support Services, Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services, and Construction, comprised approximately 85 percent of GRT-based revenues in 2020. All other sectors comprised approximately 15 percent of GRT-based revenues, with Retail Trade accounting for only 4 percent.

The new Smith's Marketplace is a major source of retail sales for the County. Retail sales subject to GRT increased from \$38.5 million in the year before Smith's opened to \$50.8 million in the year after, which is an increase of \$12.3 million, as shown in ["Table 7. Impact of Smith's Marketplace on GRT" on page 15](#). An estimate was calculated of the impact of the new Smith's Marketplace. Assuming Smith's was achieving above average sales of \$500 per foot previously in its 44,000 square foot store, it would have accounted for approximately \$22.0 million or 57 percent of total retail sales. Assuming the new marketplace was the source of 95 percent of the increase in total retail sales, the new store would have an estimated \$33.7 million in sales or 66 percent of the County's total.

# 1 - 5 EXISTING LAND USE & ZONING

## 1 - 5.I EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land uses for Downtown Los Alamos are predominantly commercial interspersed with some public spaces, as depicted in *"Exhibit 8. Existing Land Use" on page 17*. Ashley Pond is designated as a Parks and Open Space area. Parcels along DP Road are classified as vacant.

## 1 - 5.II FUTURE LAND USE

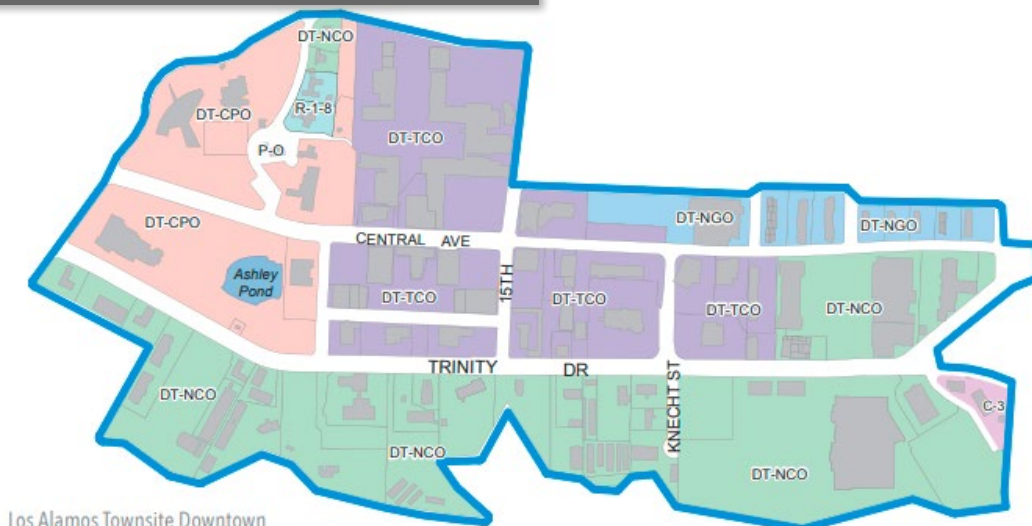
The 2016 Comprehensive Plan identified a future land use map that revises the existing land use classifications to accommodate a greater mix of uses, as shown in *"Exhibit 9. Future Land Use" on page 17*. All of the commercially classified areas are translated into a mixed-use category. Portions of the DP Road parcels are changed to high density residential.

## 1 - 5.III ZONING

Downtown Los Alamos is divided into four downtown subdistricts that allow a variety of mixed-use intensities, as shown in *"Exhibit 7. Downtown Zoning" on page 16*.

The Town Center (DT-TCO) zone accommodates a mix of office, commercial, civic, and certain types of residential uses at the highest density allowed within Downtown. This zone applies to most of central Downtown development blocks which are generally adjacent to the main street, Central Avenue. The Neighborhood Center (DT-NCO) subzones covers a lower intensity of residential, office, commercial, and civic uses. The Neighborhood Center designation applies mostly to Downtown properties south of Trinity Drive. The Neighborhood General subzone allows similar uses as permissive within the Neighborhood Center, but at lower densities and applies to established residential areas to the north of Central Avenue. The Civic/Public Open Space (DT-CPO) zone encompasses Ashley Pond, Fuller Lodge, the public library, and the Los Alamos History Museum with

**EXHIBIT 7. Downtown Zoning**



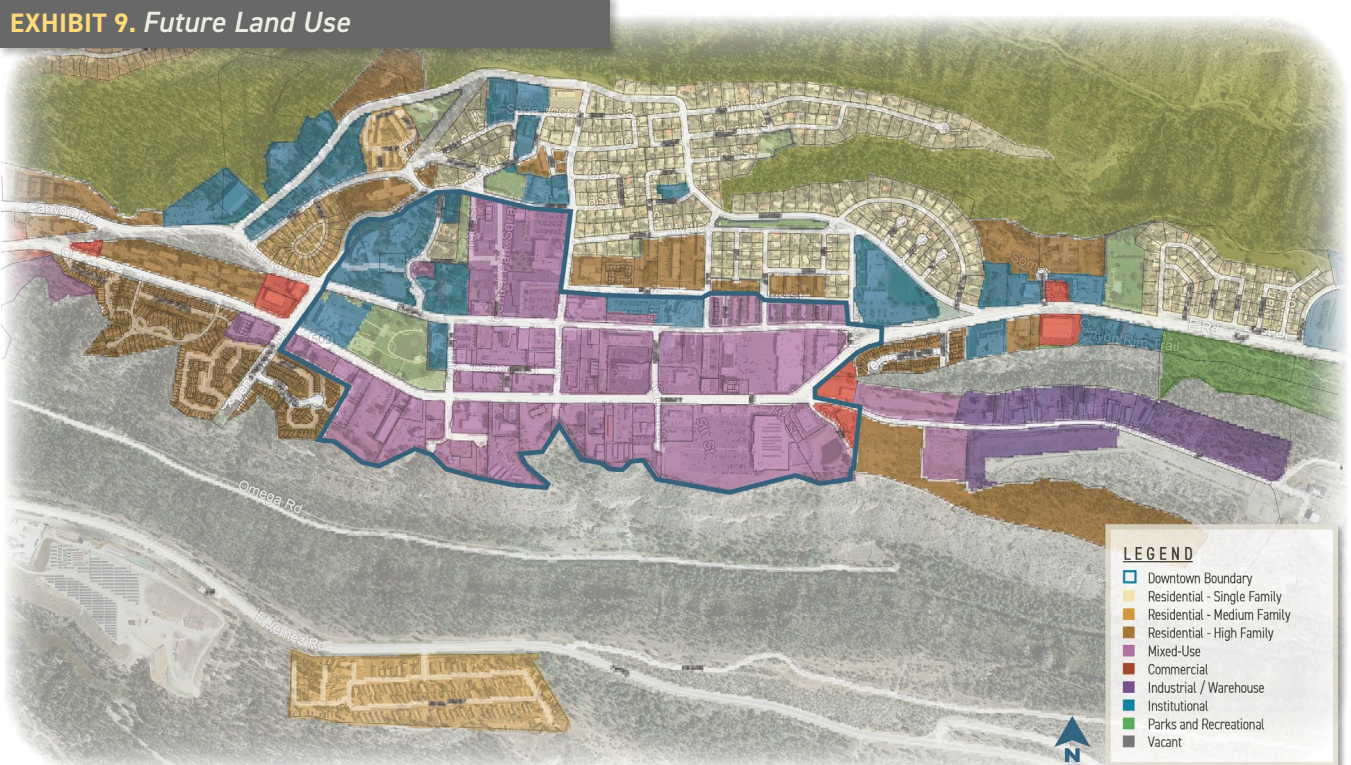
Los Alamos Townsite Downtown



**EXHIBIT 8. Existing Land Use**



**EXHIBIT 9. Future Land Use**





the intent of accommodating public uses such as parks, plazas, recreation, and civic buildings.

## 1 - 5.IV REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

As most of the land within Downtown Los Alamos has been developed, redevelopment of underutilized parcels is key to the revitalization of Downtown. Three key redevelopment areas have been identified through public engagement efforts: the former Smith's site, parcels along Deacon Street and Central Park Square. While the Mari Mac

Village Shopping Center that includes the former Smith's location does currently have tenants, some in the community have expressed the desire to see the site renovated, rather than demolished and redeveloped. The County is looking at options for Deacon Street, which is a prime redevelopment opportunity for the parcels between Trinity Drive and Central Avenue. Lastly, Central Park Square is located within the heart of Downtown and contains large swaths of surface parking that could become key infill opportunities. In addition to these redevelopment areas, infill opportunities exist on many underutilized surface parking lots throughout Downtown.

# 1 - 6 MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

## 1 - 6.1 VEHICULAR INFRASTRUCTURE

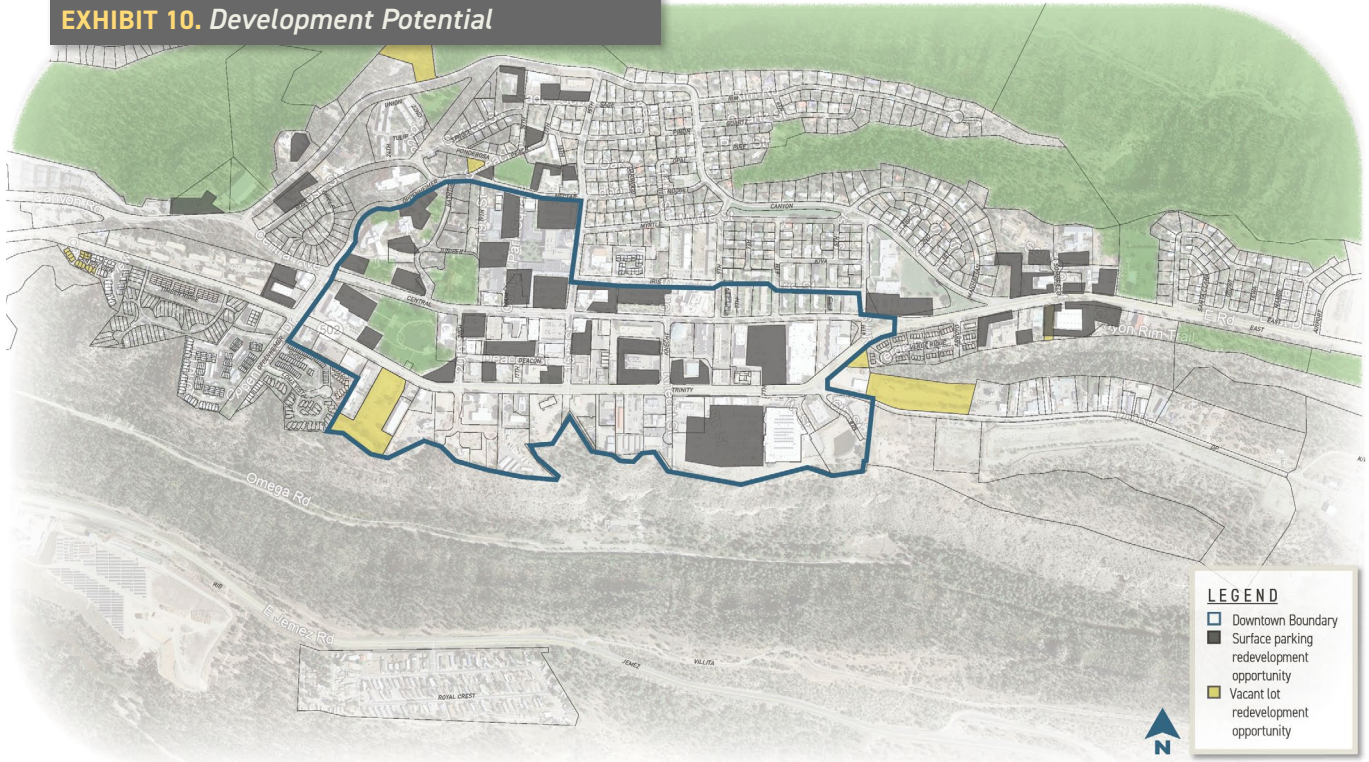
Los Alamos County contains the two census-designated places of Los Alamos and White Rock, as well as LANL and federal- and state-owned public land. The major road connectors between these destinations are State Road 4, West Jemez Road, and State Road 502. State Road 502 provides access from the Rio Grande Valley located to the east of Los Alamos County and carries the majority of LANL commuter traffic from the Valley, through Downtown Los Alamos, to the road's terminus at the intersection of Diamond Drive. West Jemez Road continues to the south, leading through LANL until it reaches the intersection with State Road 4 in the southwestern portion of the County. State Road 4 continues west towards the Valles Caldera National Preserve and east along the northern boundary of Bandelier National Monument. State Road 4 then turns northwest, passing through White Rock before continuing north to intersect with State Road 502, which then ascends the mesa to Downtown Los Alamos. Another major roadway within the area that sees a large volume of commuter traffic is East Jemez Road. This road

offers an additional vehicular connection between LANL, the Townsite, and White Rock and is located on LANL property.

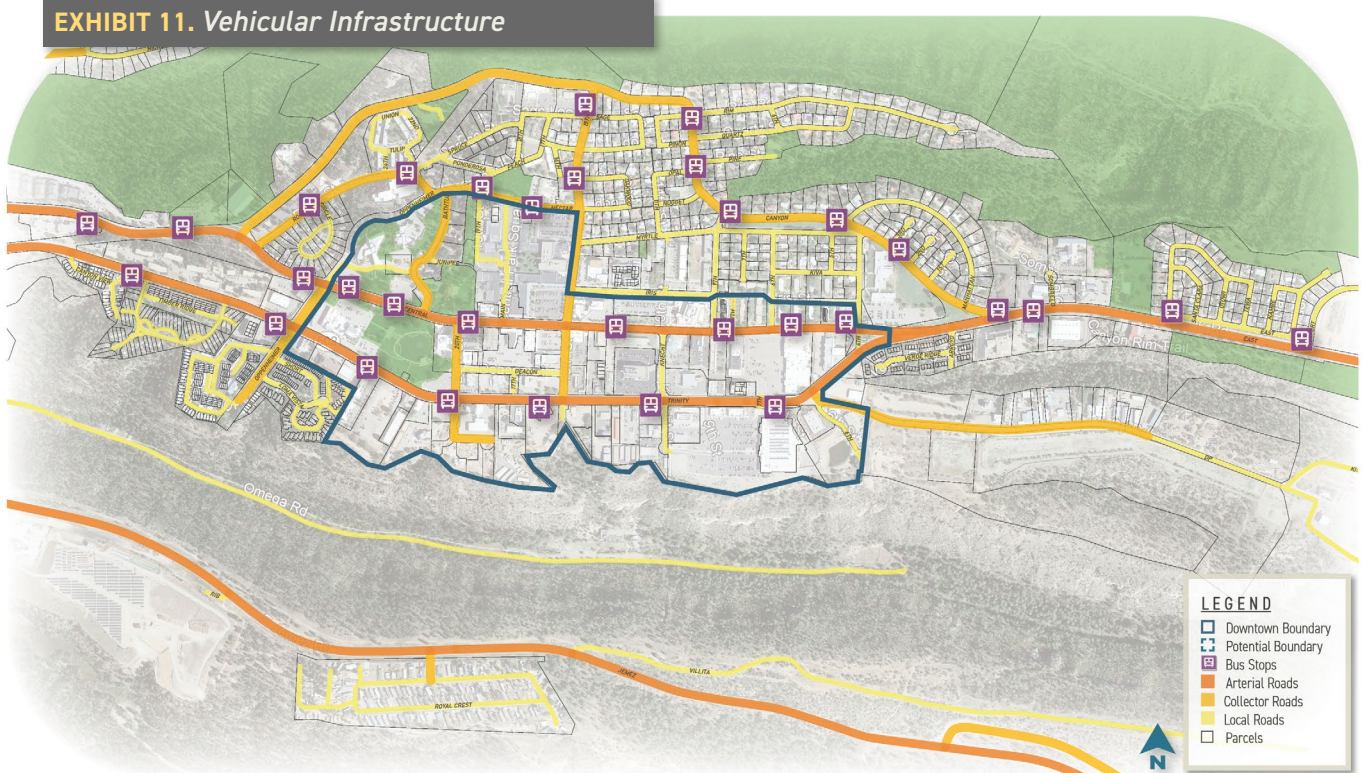
Developable land within Los Alamos Townsite is situated atop four mesas with steep canyons located in between. Because of the limiting topography, the Townsite does not have a traditional street grid and access to the separate mesas is afforded mainly through Diamond Drive.

Downtown Los Alamos is situated on the southernmost mesa. Two arterial roads, Trinity Drive and Central Avenue, run east-west through Downtown, as shown in ["Exhibit 11. Vehicular Infrastructure" on page 19](#). A loose network of streets runs north-south with collectors that include 15th Street, 20th Street, Knecht Street, and Bathtub Row; however, only 15th Street spans the entire north-south distance of Downtown. With fewer collector roads, a pattern emerges that includes large "superblocks" characterizing much of Downtown, measuring up to 700 feet per side. Trinity Drive, as the main thoroughfare and busiest road in the Townsite, facilitates a large volume of traffic to and from LANL. This presents challenges to the north-south movements, specifically for

**EXHIBIT 10. Development Potential**



**EXHIBIT 11. Vehicular Infrastructure**





pedestrians and bicyclists. The road includes only two signalized intersections which restrict crossings for pedestrians along the corridor. A recently completed project included a roundabout constructed at the eastern extent of Downtown where Trinity Drive and Central Avenue meet. Parking is distributed throughout Downtown with large parking fields and on-street parking spaces predominantly underutilized as indicated by a visual survey of aerial imagery over multiple years. As mentioned earlier, assessments made of the areas occupied by surface parking and roadways accounted for over 70 percent of available space within Downtown.

## 1 - 6.II PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Los Alamos County's natural beauty and good climate encourages many residents to lead active lifestyles, making trails and sidewalks an important element of the mobility network. While vehicular infrastructure is limited to areas with less slope, trails weave every direction through both the canyons and the mesas shared by bicyclists, hikers, runners, walkers, and equestrians.

While not the predominant means of commuting, some residents utilize trails as a way to commute to work.



Central Avenue looking east. Source Los Alamos County

Within the Townsite, the Canyon Rim Trail is located directly south of Downtown. The Canyon Rim Trail currently stops short of Downtown; however, it is anticipated to be expanded to connect to 20th Street. An Urban Trail will connect the Canyon Rim Trail and run north-south through Downtown to connect to Canyon Road and eventually tie into the Aquatic Center Trail, as shown in ["Exhibit 12. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities" on page 21.](#)

Most roadways in Downtown have existing sidewalks; however, when buildings are located in the center of parking fields, pedestrian connections from the public sidewalk to the building are often insufficient or nonexistent.

## 1 - 6.III BICYCLE FACILITIES

Bicycle facilities across Los Alamos County serve to provide another transportation option throughout the region while supplementing the already established infrastructure and services. The Los Alamos Bicycle Transportation Plan included a survey conducted with residents that asked about bicycle safety and habits. The survey respondents indicated that bicycles were used overwhelmingly for both recreation and transportation with the majority riding their bike over one mile every week and over 25 percent riding daily. The majority of respondents said they don't feel safe while biking, mainly because of distracted drivers/riders and the lack of bike lanes or bike paths. Existing bicycle facilities within the County are organized into four types that include bicycle lanes, multi-use, shared use, and side paths.

Downtown Los Alamos has a number of bike lanes and shared facilities including facilities along Central Ave and 20th Street. Future facilities are anticipated along 20th Street and Knecht Street. The Bike Plan identifies the need to connect more neighborhoods to destinations including destinations within Downtown.



**EXHIBIT 12. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**



## 1 - 7 CULTURAL RESOURCES

With a significant history of innovation and scientific development, Los Alamos is a unique community rich in cultural and historic sites. Downtown Los Alamos is the heart of this historic and cultural heritage and houses both a Historic District and a Creative District, as shown in [\*"Exhibit 13. Cultural Resources" on page 23\*](#). The Los Alamos Historic District includes sites from several historic era that can be experienced in close proximity to one another, including ancestral pueblo dwellings near an early homestead cabin which is within walking distance to the location where the first atomic bomb components were assembled. Other historical assets include Fuller Lodge, Los Alamos Historical Society, Bathtub Row, Ashley Pond, and the Los Alamos Post Office building. Los Alamos is also in close proximity to other historic sites, including Bandelier National Monument.

The Los Alamos community has a deep appreciation and involvement in cultural pursuits. This is exemplified within the Los Alamos Creative District, located within Downtown Los Alamos

and containing a high concentration of public open spaces and cultural facilities that serve the community. Cultural facilities within the district include Fuller Lodge Art Center, Bradbury Science Museum, Mesa Public Library, Los Alamos Little Theater, and New Mexico Dance Theater. The Creative District hosts a variety of events, including the popular Tuesdays at the Pond series, that bring citizens Downtown and boosts activity at local businesses.



Ancestral pueblo dwellings near Fuller Lodge. Source: Los Alamos County

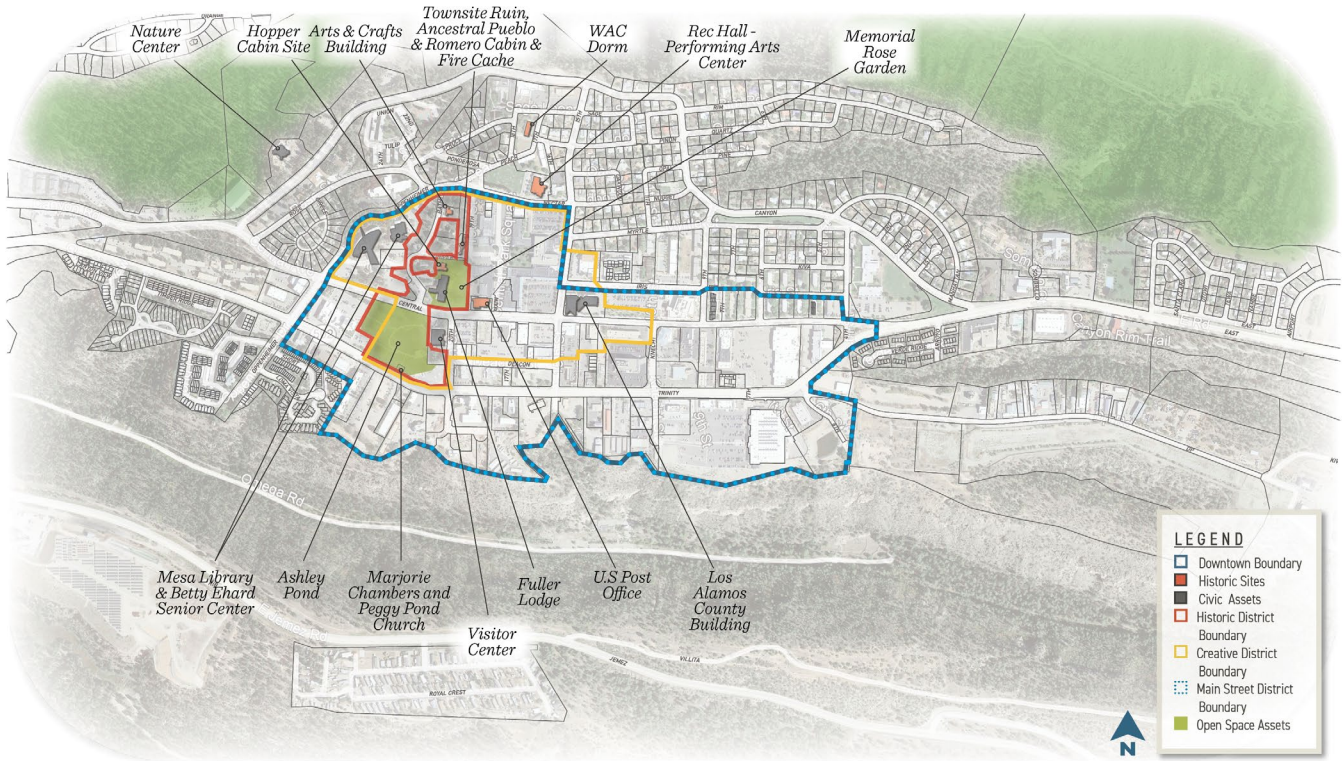
## 1 - 8 IMAGE AND IDENTITY

With its unique history, Downtown Los Alamos has a wealth of assets that tell its story; however, there is not an overall cohesive experience that helps convey the history and character of the area to visitors and residents. A comprehensive placemaking strategy that establishes signature gateways, streetscapes, and pedestrian amenities is needed to create a distinct Downtown experience. Streetscape improvements have been completed along Central Avenue from Oppenheimer Drive to 9th Street, but other key thoroughfares such as Trinity Drive, Deacon Street, and connecting north-south roadways like 15th Street are still in need of improvements. As mentioned during the stakeholder meetings, there is a lack of active

storefronts along critical Downtown streets, especially since a large portion of street-fronting buildings are occupied with office spaces on the ground floor or the street frontage is dominated by surface parking lots. Comprehensive signage is also lacking, though the County is working on implementing a comprehensive signage plan. These are all factors that affect the Downtown experience.



## EXHIBIT 13. Cultural Resources



## 1 - 9 OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Downtown Los Alamos offers opportunities for a complete, unique and vibrant Downtown experience, as shown in *"Exhibit 14. Opportunities and Constraints" on page 25*. It has cultural and institutional assets as well as natural features that are within walking distance. The short block along Central Avenue, between 15th Street and 20th Street, already functions as an active Downtown mainstreet with wide sidewalks and a number of businesses fronting onto the corridor. However, closer to 15th Street and beyond, large parking fields and buildings that are set back from Central Avenue break the 'streetwall' and inhibit a seamless pedestrian experience. Overall, a majority of surface area is occupied by parking, providing a unique opportunity for infill and redevelopment.

The Central Park Square Development, north of Central Avenue, houses a number of active businesses including restaurants, retail and brewery establishments. Businesses within Central Park Square are hidden from view from Central Avenue and access is not intuitive.

Deacon Street currently provides access to a large parking field with no roadway definition or buildings lining the roadway. The County is planning to install future improvements to enhance the corridor. Deacon Street also provides opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

As Trinity Drive carries most of the traffic going through the Townsite, it creates a challenge to pedestrian connectivity with only two signalized intersections spaced far apart. Most of Trinity Drive consists of two traffic lanes in both directions with a central turning lane, which measures approximately 60 feet curb to curb. Walking along this high speed, high volume corridor is not a pleasant pedestrian experience. Future roadway improvements and an additional intersection at Trinity Drive and 20th Street are planned to enhance the corridor. The intersection at 20th Street is also intended to tie into the future Canyon Rim Trail expansion to connect the Canyon Rim Trail to Canyon Road.

## 1 - 10 PRECEDENT DOWNTOWN PLANS

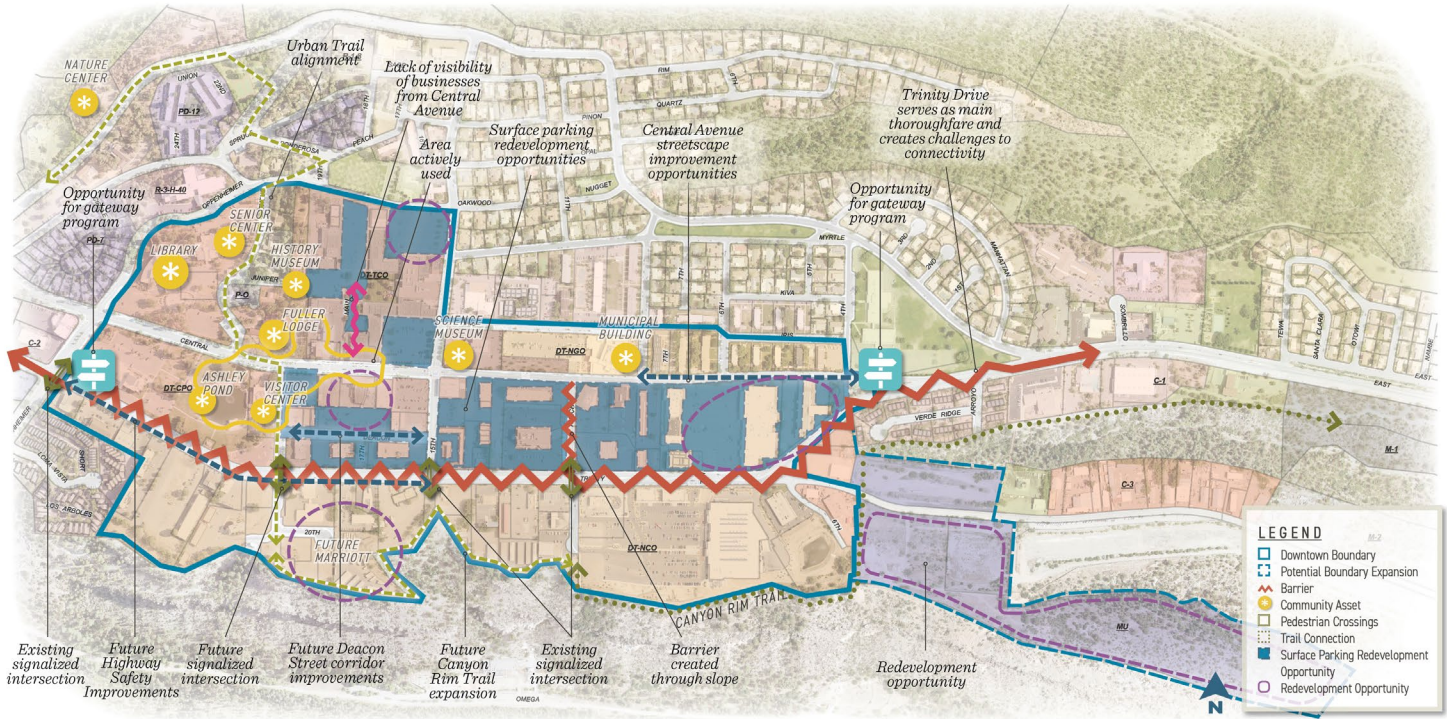
The ideal of a downtown Main Street, with small, locally-owned businesses, generous sidewalks, and throngs of shoppers is the image that many people hold dear when imagining a small town center. This pattern of retail had a long run of success in many towns for much of the twentieth century, including in Downtown Los Alamos. But like most small towns, Los Alamos faces the challenges of the national shift in shopping patterns, particularly with the emergence of "power centers" anchored by national retail chains as well as much of the commercial spending moving to online retail.

Over the years, different strategies have been employed to attempt Downtown revitalization,

although often with limited success. Initial responses attempted to retrofit downtown areas to include elements of suburban malls while many downtown areas converted roadways to pedestrian malls. Like the example in Albuquerque of the Fourth Street pedestrian mall, they eventually failed and were reconverted back into roadways. Civic leaders realized that downtowns could not compete with the suburban mall model, but needed to build on their unique assets and provide a different experience. Financial strategies including Tax Increment Development Districts and Business Improvement Districts were deployed to provide economic incentives for local businesses, bars, and restaurants to locate in the urban core areas.



## EXHIBIT 14. Opportunities and Constraints



The following examples are master plans created for communities in and around New Mexico. Each community struggles with a different set of challenges; however, all communities aim to revitalize and activate their community's core. While not all these strategies are applicable, lessons can be drawn from their revitalization models and applied to Downtown Los Alamos.

### 1 - 10.1 LAS CRUCES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN 2004-2016

The Las Cruces downtown area fell victim to Urban Renewal in the 1950s and was transformed from a historic district into a sea of parking, corporate central district architecture, and one-way roads. Following the decline of its downtown, Main Street was turned into a pedestrian mall which, despite the initial enthusiasm, failed to attract or retain businesses; over time the number of businesses declined from 160 to just 10. Through a series of downtown master plans, Las Cruces began to address this decline.



*The Las Cruces Plaza, constructed in 2015, helped activate downtown.*

In 2004, the pedestrian mall was opened up to traffic. The city created a Tax Increment Development District and renovated some of the existing assets, using City-owned properties to develop catalytic projects. The 2011 Master Plan focused on reconfiguring some of the one-way streets into two-way facilities. It also incentivized downtown housing along with updates to the zoning code and subdivision regulations. A parking study in 2012 studied actual parking demand and proposed to allow the market to inform demand rather than enforcing parking minimums. The 2013 Master Plan update included the creation of a plaza with gathering spaces, a splash pad, seating, and shade elements. In the same year, new zoning and subdivision standards were drafted and adopted. The 2016 Master Plan update integrated a market analysis to understand both the commercial and residential demand within downtown.

Looking at the Las Cruces core clearly illustrates that the actions taken since 2011 have reversed a long trend of disinvestment in the downtown area. Today, downtown is active and has become a destination for the local community and visitors.

## ***Tools & Takeaways***

- *Long term downtown planning (2004-2016)*
- *Historic Preservation*
- *City involvement in restoration of key properties*

- and creation of catalytic projects*
- *Reconfiguration of roads*
- *Construction of a plaza*
- *Revisions to zoning & subdivision ordinances*
- *Market study*

## **1 - 10.II COLORADO SPRINGS**

Beginning in the 1950s, urban renewal activities did not spare downtown Colorado Springs resulted in the demolition of a number of historic buildings. In 1990, the City Council appointed a Downtown Action Plan Advisory Committee to tackle the revitalization of their downtown. The result of their efforts was the first downtown-focused plan, the Downtown Action Plan, adopted in 1992. The objectives identified in this first plan materialized over the years before a second plan was created in 2007, the Imagine Downtown Plan. The plan organized downtown into distinct districts and identified specific land use goals for each area. The look and feel of downtown was updated and enhanced, streetscapes were improved, and public art and downtown-specific signage was installed. In 2006, a primary goal of the Imagine Downtown Plan was accomplished: the creation and funding of the Downtown Development Authority. That same year, a land use master plan was developed to establish land use objectives and a framework for physical development. Tejon Street, a one-way street, was converted to a two-way corridor. In 2009, the resulting Imagine Downtown Master Plan and corresponding form-based code were adopted by City Council. Downtown Colorado Springs today is bustling with energy and activity. Recent projects added new residential, restaurants, institutional uses and businesses. The efforts of the past have created a downtown framework that is supported by its residents and has become a regional draw.





*Downtown Colorado Springs achieved an active downtown core through a variety of strategies.*

## Tools & Takeaways

- Long Term downtown planning (1992-2016)
- Historic Preservation
- Streetscape, signage & overall look & feel enhancements
- Reconfiguration of roads
- Special Downtown District
- Business Improvement District
- The Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority identifying sites and incentivizing redevelopment
- Land Use Plan & Form-based Code
- Establishment of a dedicated downtown authority
- Financial support through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and \$5 million tax levy
- City involvement in creation of catalytic projects
- Revisions to zoning & subdivision ordinances
- Market study

## 1 - 10.III SILVER CITY

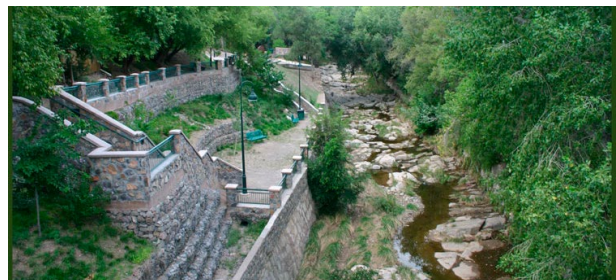
The community of Silver City, New Mexico developed as a mining town in the late nineteenth century, extracting copper, gold, and silver from ore deposits in the area surrounding the town. The city was laid out in a grid pattern with little consideration for managing stormwater runoff. A flood in 1895 destroyed the town's original Main Street, lowering it into the "Big Ditch" 55 feet deep that still remains today. At the turn of the twentieth century, the dry, mild climate and high desert conditions of Silver City attracted people who suffered from tuberculosis leading to the establishment of sanatoriums in the town. Residential neighborhoods developed around

the downtown area and spread further with the introduction of the automobile. Suburban strip malls along the highways offered the conveniences which traditionally had brought people to the urban center. Downtown experienced some stagnation and decline in the 1980s and 1990s, with increased commercial vacancies. In the last twenty years, it has focused on cultivating a downtown arts district and tourism economy.

The Silver City Downtown Action Plan, developed in 2010, helped to define a singular vision for the downtown, prioritizing projects and programs to revitalize the downtown area. One catalytic project identified was creating a Theatre District centered on three historic theaters as performing arts/ film venues and cultural center hubs. One historic theatre, the Silco Theatre, was effectively restored and the venue reopened in 2016, creating a draw for the community and an economic driver for downtown. The Main Street Plaza opened March 2020; this economic development project provides a central outdoor downtown event space, wayfinding signage, a public restroom and additional parking. Commercial vacancy rates are now at 10 percent.



*A close collaboration with Main Street helped achieve downtown goals in Silver City*



*One of the projects was improvements to the Big Ditch Park and trails system, which is located adjacent to downtown.*

## **Tools & Takeaways**

- *Historic Preservation*
- *Expand gathering opportunities*
- *Create wayfinding and signage system*
- *Street reconfiguration*
- *Expand pedestrian facilities and connections to trails*
- *Close collaboration with Main Street program*
- *Construction of a plaza*



# 1 - 11 NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

## 1 - 11.I DOWNTOWN PLACEMAKING

Downtowns are realizing that their competitive edge lies in offering a unique experience. More and more, downtowns are turning to placemaking strategies to create unique and vibrant destinations. Placemaking entails the transformation of the physical environment to enhance its visual appeal and improve the quality of the downtown experience. These strategies focus on the visual appeal as well as the quality and function of the downtown. Typical placemaking projects include the following:

- Improving streetscapes aimed to create public places
- Creation and enhancement of gateway features
- Provision of public art
- Provision of public gathering places and destination points
- Programming of events such as markets
- Provisions for pedestrian amenities
- Provision of cohesive landscaping improvements to enhance district aesthetics



Programmed community events such as temporary street closures along main streets to accommodate events are a popular placemaking strategy.

Many downtowns add design and landscape standards to regulate the physical environment to promote a unique community character and

integrate the built and natural environments cohesively. Through such strategies, placemaking is recognized as a tool for economic development by helping attract and keep talent in a community.

Many communities have implemented downtown-specific placemaking plans. Lowell, Michigan, for example, adopted the Downtown Lowell Placemaking Plan that establishes a vision for downtown and implements public improvements through the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing district that funds public space improvements.

## 1 - 11.II DOWNTOWN HOUSING & CHANGING HOUSING PREFERENCES

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, downtowns across the country have seen a resurgence of people wanting to live downtown. This has largely been attributed to changing housing preference among key demographic groups. Baby Boomers, those born between 1945 and 1965, are now often empty nesters looking to downsize into smaller homes and living arrangements that are closer to city amenities such as hospitals, entertainment, and fine dining establishments that allow them to 'age in place.' Millennials, the cohort born from 1981 to 1996, tend to favor living in central urban neighborhoods significantly more than previous generations did at the same stages in life. A 2015 survey by the National Association of Realtors found that millennials and baby boomers desire similar amenities in their neighborhoods. These include a diverse and rich selection of restaurants and bars, shops within walking distance, entertainment venues, an efficient public transit system, pedestrian-oriented downtowns, an arts and cultural scene and nightlife. Even as Millennials

begin to look for more affordable, family-friendly options, they desire housing near urban staples like dining, shopping, entertainment and jobs, all within a walkable distance.

Local governments can affect the supply side of the housing equation. This is done by reducing development costs through incentives and a supportive regulatory environment. Incentivizing affordable housing can be accomplished through the following: offering gap funding programs, modifying zoning ordinances, and providing incentives to decrease housing development costs. Zoning ordinances can include strategies for mixed-use zones, adaptive reuse to a wider range of uses, development incentives such as reduced or eliminated minimum parking requirements for housing, density bonuses for downtown housing, and expedited development review. Through these actions, local governments can reduce the cost of downtown housing and offer viable development opportunities for developers.



*Downtown housing designed to fit into the traditional downtown character.*

## 1 - 11.III LIVABLE DOWNTOWN CENTERS

In order to further encourage and support downtown living, many communities are promoting Livable Centers. Livable Centers are defined as promoting a diverse and balanced mixed-use pedestrian-oriented environment that allows residents to 'work, live, shop, and play.' These initiatives encourage a complementary, yet

diverse mix of land uses ranging from housing, employment, commercial, shopping, and recreation. They are designed to be easily accessible to all age groups, abilities, and income levels through a range of travel modes. Livable Centers allow residents to live in urban areas with less reliance on cars or function as one-stop destinations for drivers. They have been shown to create unique, identifiable destinations that enhance civic pride and act as a catalyst for investment and development.



*Livable Centers Initiative precedent that resulted in a public square with catalytic development surrounding the space.*



*Livable Centers Initiative precedent that resulted in street improvements aimed to reduce conflicts between the vehicle and pedestrians along main street.*

Communities in numerous states including Texas, Nevada, and Georgia have launched Livable Centers Programs to incentivize local jurisdictions to re-envision their communities as vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide improved access to jobs and services. These initiatives have proven most successful in communities or neighborhoods with a defined core that offer multiple attractions and reasons for pedestrians to frequent the area. Implementation strategies may include:

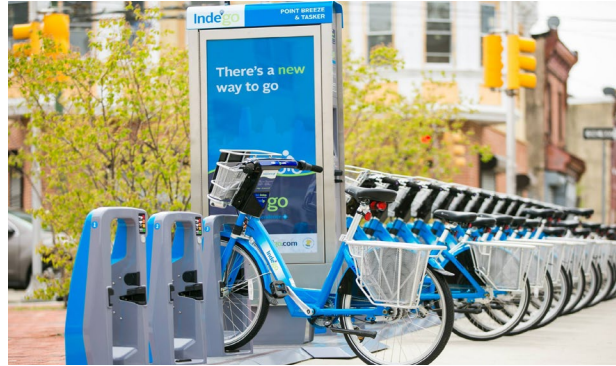
- Policy changes intended to activate ground-level uses
- Encourage targeted residential development to specific project recommendations for elements like pedestrian and bicycle facilities or the completion of catalytic projects built by public or private entities.

## 1 - 11.IV ACCOMMODATING SHIFTS IN TRANSPORTATION / MOBILITY

The transportation sector has experienced a convergence of disruptive technology advances and a diversification of mobility that will have implications on the downtown environment. Even though these trends are more apparent in larger metropolitan areas, shifts in consumer preferences and new transportation options will have an impact even in small communities like Los Alamos and White Rock. Millennials and Generation Z (born from 1997 to 2010) are less likely than older generations to own a vehicle. Particularly within these cohorts, people are increasingly choosing to hire transport as needed, rather than investing in the cost and upkeep of private vehicles. These preferences have led to an increase in ride-sharing and shared micromobility services throughout the country.

- Ridesharing refers to a service that arranges one-time shared rides on very short notice, usually arranged through a mobile app. A survey of almost 11,000 people in the U.S. indicated that 36 percent of people used ride sharing services in 2018, an increase from 15 percent in 2015.
- Shared micromobility refers to any small, human or electric-powered transportation solution such as shared-use fleets of bikes, e-bikes, scooters, e-scooters. According to the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), people took 84 million trips on "shared micromobility" in the United States in 2018, which is more than double the number of trips taken in 2017.
- Bike-sharing has also grown, with 35 million bike-

share trips taken in 2017, up 25 percent from the previous year.



Bike share programs are popping up in many downtowns across the country.

Like the changes brought by shared mobility and digital ride-sharing services, autonomous vehicles (AVs) will likely change the downtown environment. The potential impacts of AVs may include reducing the demand and altering the design and location of parking, altering the design of streetscapes, influencing changes to pedestrian and bicycle networks, and creating redevelopment opportunities in urban areas as needs for surface parking lots are reduced. Exactly how and when AVs will impact the built environment is tied to the uncertainty surrounding factors including the availability of technology, the cost, and anticipated changes to the vehicle ownership model (from private to shared). Nonetheless, experts anticipate a transition to an AV fleet in the coming decades.

Local jurisdictions are proactively beginning to identify appropriate policy and infrastructure improvements that respond to the implications these transportation shifts have on the downtown environment. As ride-shares, micromobility, and AVs grow in popularity, the demand for parking will decrease while the need for drop-off areas will increase. Policy and design guidance within downtown districts is trending towards decreasing or eliminating off-street parking requirements and addressing appropriate locations and design for pick-up and drop-off zones. Such facilities should be located in areas with high curbside activity and designed to minimize conflicts among modes.



## 1 - 11.V IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

As local municipal budgets grow tighter and federal funding is shrinking, many downtown areas are turning to improvement districts to help fund downtown improvements.

The two main improvement districts authorized by states are Business Improvement Districts (“BIDs”) and Tax Increment Development Districts (“TIDDs”). BIDs are defined districts within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax in order to fund projects within the district’s boundaries for services beyond what the local government offers in their area. BIDs are typically governed by a board of directors selected from the ratepayers in the district. BID funds are generally allocated to cleaning, maintenance, safety, marketing, business recruitment and retention, parking and transportation management and public space regulation efforts within the district. TIDDs are distinguished by authorization to utilize a financing mechanism called tax increment financing (“TIF”).

A TIF district does not impose a new tax in the district. Rather, it allows the future increases in property and/or sales taxes to be utilized to fund improvements and redevelopment projects within the district boundary. Most types of TIDDs must demonstrate the presence of adverse conditions in the district to be established and their formation requires municipal approval as well as a vote of property owners within the district. Additionally, the authorization of TIF funds typically requires the adoption of a plan that provides the municipality policy guidance for the purposes and uses of the financing.

Improvement districts are increasingly paired with other specialty districts including Main Streets, Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas (“MRA”), and Cultural or Tourism districts in order to become more adept at stimulating economic development. Improvement districts are proven devices for providing facilities and services to downtown districts, which can be tailored for the particular circumstances unique to the community.

[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]

[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]



# PART 2: VISION & GOALS

---

## PART 2. VISION & GOALS

THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE VISION AND GOALS FOR DOWNTOWN LOS ALAMOS 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 SEVEN ELEMENTS. EACH ELEMENT IS DESCRIBED WITH ASSOCIATED VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE.

### 2 - 1 OVERALL VISION STATEMENT

#### *Downtown Los Alamos Vision Statement*

*“A Downtown that is walkable with attractions for young and old, envisioned as a thriving community hub with a vibrant and balanced mix of residential, retail, and office development, inspired by the unique history of Los Alamos and the connection to the surrounding natural landscape, with attractive housing, shopping, and public spaces and is a great place for residents to live and visitors to explore.”*

#### 2 - 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Downtown Los Alamos has been shaped over its history by a wide range of factors that have led to the urban fabric that exists today. After the end of World War II, Los Alamos was opened to the public and LANL was founded. Downtown Los Alamos was designed originally as a temporary military town that was then converted into a low density commercial area to serve the growing population after World War II. Like many suburban shopping areas, the layout and circulation was designed to accommodate a car-centric population.

Previous visioning plans have had some successes as well as some challenges. The vision, goals, and strategies outlined in this document represent the culmination of several months of extensive public engagement efforts along with coordination amongst the project team in examining national best practices, the Los Alamos County 2016

Comprehensive Plan, and the specific opportunities and challenges facing the Los Alamos community.

The Los Alamos community faces some unique opportunities and challenges that can be helped by specific interventions in Downtown. These opportunities and challenges, summarized more succinctly in [Part 1. Existing Conditions](#), include the following:

- Lack of housing availability, especially attainable housing
- Vacant and underutilized structures and land with blighted conditions
- High commercial space rents for small, local businesses
- Scattered surface parking lots
- Large block size that hinders mobility
- Lack of pedestrian connectivity along Trinity Drive
- Lack of a comprehensive placemaking strategy
- Unclear and outdated Development Code procedures that hinder development



**EXHIBIT 15.** *Southern Portion of Pedestrian Corridor*

Through much of 2020 and 2021, the community and project team worked to identify a vision, goals, and a development framework for Downtown Los Alamos. During many meetings, community members from all walks of life expressed their ideas and desires for Downtown. From these meetings and discussions, a vision formed that describes how Los Alamos should look, feel, and function in the future.

## 2 - 1.II A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Downtown Los Alamos is envisioned to be a place that is walkable and provides attractions for young and old. Key assets are connected by wide sidewalks that accommodate outdoor seating and allow businesses to expand their activities into the public realm. Downtown has a cohesive identity that is inspired by the unique history of Los Alamos and the surrounding natural landscape of the Jemez Mountains and Valles Caldera. A wide range of transportation options are available that bring people in from out of town, from adjacent neighborhoods, and major employers at all times of day and week.

## 2 - 1.III DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

To help achieve this vision for Downtown Los Alamos, the Master Plan and the development framework focus on the benefits of mixed-use, transit-friendly, pedestrian-oriented development. To balance the envisioned densification necessary to create this pedestrian-oriented development, the vision acknowledges the value of the natural realm in the landscaping and sustainability practices of new development, along with the honoring of Los Alamos history within the branding scheme and placemaking strategies that help visitors feel welcome and guide them to these historical sites.

As called for in the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan and community feedback from this planning effort, Downtown should provide:

- *A Parking Management strategy*
- *A pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment*
- *Multi-modal transportation choices*
- *A variety of civic and entertainment spaces*
- *Expanded opportunities for local businesses*
- *A variety of housing options at increased densities*

This vision focuses on a development framework based around a combination of placemaking



improvements and targeted infill development within strategic redevelopment parcels achieved through a combination of public and private investment. Implementation of the development framework is anticipated to be incremental. The framework builds on the strengths of existing Downtown assets and investments and strategically plans for catalytic public and private investments in key areas intended to spur collateral infill development as the market allows. While the development footprints illustrated in the Development Framework are conceptual and individual buildings will likely develop differently based on market conditions, the framework acts as a roadmap that is intended to guide future development/redevelopment within the Master Plan area for how to achieve the community vision for Downtown.

Public investment, facilitated mostly through the County's Capital Improvement Plan, would consist of streetscape improvements and placemaking within the public realm, such as gateway features, sidewalk enhancements, intersection treatments, public spaces, street extensions, and the investment of site furnishing such as signage, lighting, and seating. These placemaking strategies build on and extend the improvements that have already been made along Central Avenue in order to increase both the aesthetic quality and sense of identity and place within Downtown.

Private investment is necessary to infill quality mixed-use and high-density residential developments on a number of strategic underutilized and/or vacant redevelopment sites as identified in the Development Framework and highlighted in *"Exhibit 17. Development Framework" on page 41* to capture growth in accordance with the County's long-range vision to focus development priorities and increased housing options Downtown. One critical mixed-use redevelopment area is the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center which lost its anchor tenant, Smith's Marketplace. Given the parcel's size and location near a major gateway into Downtown,

this is a prime site for mixed-use development that combines commercial and high-density housing uses along with public space amenities and becomes a major destination and anchor on the eastern edge of Downtown. Another location identified as key to creating a welcoming gateway into Downtown is the former hotel east of the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center called the Hilltop House. These structures are fully or partially vacant and derelict and serve as key opportunities for mixed-use redevelopment Downtown. An envisioned residential development south of Trinity Drive provides this area of Downtown with more residents and would serve as an impetus to improve pedestrian connections across Trinity Drive.

This targeted infill development has the capability of generating a more vibrant, pedestrian-oriented development pattern Downtown as well as capturing anticipated regional growth. The County's leading land use policy document, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, establishes policy to focus development priorities Downtown, particularly for providing a variety of housing options. The Los Alamos County Housing Market Needs Analysis completed in 2019 identified an immediate need for 1,310 units of rental housing and 379 units for homeownership, with a particularly acute housing need for middle- and low-income households. The analysis affirmed the best location to add housing units is Downtown. The Development Framework, as depicted, is capable of infilling an approximated 507,996 square feet of commercial space and 2,591 housing units.

The desired increase in density needed to accommodate a sufficient number of Downtown housing units and create the envisioned pedestrian-oriented development patterns will ultimately require infilling existing surface parking lots. In order to continue to accommodate necessary parking, this Plan anticipates the need for several new parking structures within Downtown. While the exact location of these structures needs further study and negotiation, preliminary alternatives

**EXHIBIT 16. Infill Key Map**



**MIXED-USE BUILDINGS**

**MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS**

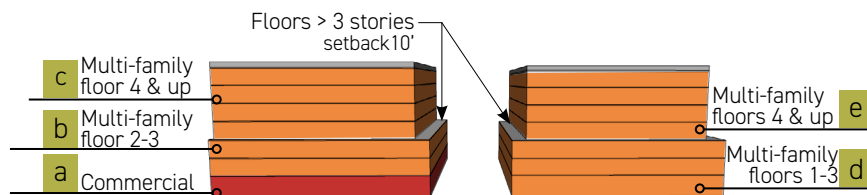


TABLE 8. Downtown Los Alamos Infill Potential					
Category	Category Area (sq. ft.)	# of Stories	Total Floor Area (sq. ft)	No. of Residential units (1000 sq.ft./ unit)	
a Commercial	201,945	1	201,945	201	
b Mixed use floor 2-3	201,945	2	403,890	403	
c Mixed use floor 4 and up	82,041	3	246,123	246	
d Multifamily floor 1-3	105,674	3	317,024	188	
e Multifamily floors 4 and up	137,976	4	551,907	551	
<b>Total Housing Units</b>				<b>1,589</b>	

Note: These calculations were generated by calculating conceptual building footprints on vacant/underutilized land in Downtown, determining the most likely land use (housing vs. retail vs. office), assigning an expected number of floors and then making calculations on the overall potential square footage. Housing units are calculated at 1,000 sq. ft. per unit, a reasonable median size for an apartment/ townhouse.

on existing surface parking lots are illustrated in [“Exhibit 17. Development Framework” on page 41](#). These include the southwest corner of Nectar Street and 15th Street, north of Deacon Street, and the northeast corner of Trinity Drive and the 9th Street extension. In order to ensure these structures don't negate the desired pedestrian-oriented development patterns, any future parking structures should provide “liner buildings,” (i.e. a thin building that lines the edge of the street to provide activation along the sidewalk and conceals parking). Such a mixed-use liner building that has commercial use on the ground-floor and residential units above could accommodate an additional 30,200 square feet of commercial space and 130 housing units.

In addition to the existing assets of Ashley Pond and areas surrounding Fuller Lodge, the development framework envisions a network of diverse public spaces. A critical component of this system is a new public plaza adjacent to Central Park Square. This area is currently serving as a surface parking lot and would be converted to a public plaza on the west side of Central Park Square. Excellent pedestrian connections would lead south along Central Park Square, cross Central Avenue, and continue south to Trinity Drive. The area between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive specifically is envisioned as a pedestrian-only corridor with restaurants that feature outdoor seating and retail sales that overflow to outdoor areas. [“Exhibit 17. Development Framework” on page 41](#) illustrates the vision for Downtown Los Alamos; key elements of that vision are outlined below.

As it stands, the Development Framework is conceptual and illustrates a vision of how Downtown could develop. Downtown may develop differently than what is illustrated in [“Exhibit 17. Development Framework” on page 41](#).

## 2 - 1.IV KEY VISION ELEMENTS

Key elements of the Development Framework include:



**A Parking District** that is oriented around three parking structures placed across Downtown that allows for a 'Park Once and Walk' strategy



**The catalytic redevelopment of C.B. FOX, Central Park Square, and the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center** as mixed-use developments



**Targeted mixed-use and multi-family development**



**Pedestrian improvements** along north-south roads and Trinity Drive including buffered sidewalks, landscaping, and pedestrian furnishings



**Bicycle improvements** along 20th Street and Trinity Drive



**Comprehensive placemaking strategy** that creates a unified urban form and identity



**A public space** adjacent to Central Park Square with enhanced pedestrian amenities



**A dedicated north-south pedestrian corridor** as an extension of Central Park Square south of Central Avenue that features outdoor dining and retail



**Street extensions of 6th, 9th, 15th, and 20th Streets** to break up large blocks and create redevelopment opportunities

The following sections outline seven elements that align with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and inform a set of recommendations intended to implement the community vision for Downtown Los Alamos.



EXHIBIT 17. Development Framework



- LEGEND**
- P Proposed Parking Structure
  - P Redevelopment Opportunities
  - P Mari Mac Village Shopping Center Mixed-Use Infill
  - P Central Park Square Mixed-Use Infill
  - P Canyon Rim Trail

The Development Framework illustrates the improvements outlined in this Plan for Downtown Los Alamos and is conceptual in nature. Downtown Los Alamos may develop differently than illustrated.



**EXHIBIT 18.** *Downtown Los Alamos Public Space*









**EXHIBIT 19. 20th Street Extension and Redevelopment**











# URBAN FORM / IDENTITY

---





## 2 - 2 URBAN FORM / IDENTITY

### 2 - 2.I VISION STATEMENT

*A vibrant, walkable Downtown with a mix of uses and a vibrant Main Street catering to all ages, tying together existing assets and honoring the unique culture and history of Los Alamos.*

### 2 - 2.II INTRODUCTION

The Urban Form & Identity element establishes a vision for the overall look and feel of Downtown Los Alamos. This is achieved by the building form, type and location of structures, the design, materials and theme elements employed and placemaking features in the public right-of-way. The community has already invested considerable resources into Downtown to enhance the look and feel, particularly along Central Avenue, Ashley Pond, and the historically significant areas. Enhanced crosswalks, wide sidewalks, street furnishing, lighting, and signage are a few of these improvements. Central Avenue, also known as the Main Street Corridor, will remain a focus and should build upon prior investments to strengthen its identity as the core downtown area. Other areas, however, have not seen the same investment. These areas should specifically receive attention to create a more attractive and cohesive look and feel for the entire Downtown.

Safe, accessible, and well-maintained sidewalks promote more pedestrian activity and maximize social capital. They are considered a basic asset for downtowns as they provide a space along streets dedicated to pedestrian movement and promote connectivity and interaction.

Creating a more unified identity for Downtown will offer a greater sense of place and a distinct Downtown experience. The placement of buildings

in relation to the sidewalk, the location of parking, and other features within the public realm influence the pedestrian experience. Controlling and improving these elements will enhance walkability and create a pedestrian-friendly Downtown.

### 2 - 2.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Update Downtown Zoning to Promote Pedestrian-Oriented Development Patterns**

Downtown development standards are currently regulated through a Downtown Overlay District that is divided into four downtown subdistricts that are intended to allow a variety of mixed-use intensities. The Town Center (DT-TCO) zone accommodates a mix of office, commercial, civic, and certain types of residential uses at the highest density allowed within Downtown. The Neighborhood Center (DT-NCO) subzone covers a lower to middle range of development intensities of residential, office, commercial, and civic uses at densities lower than the Town Center, but higher than the lowest intensity subzone - Neighborhood General (DT-NGO). The Neighborhood General subzone allows similar uses as permissive within the Neighborhood Center, but at lower densities. The Civic/Public Open Space (DT-CPO) zone specifically accommodates public uses such as parks, plazas, recreation, and civic buildings.

Overlay zones are intended to create a special zoning district which is essentially placed over an underlying base zone(s) such as commercial or multi-family. An overlay identifies special provisions within the overlay district in addition to those in the underlying base zone in order to protect a specific resource or guide development within a special area. While Downtown zoning is currently labeled as an overlay, it functions more like a

**EXHIBIT 20. Precedent Examples -Downtown Development**



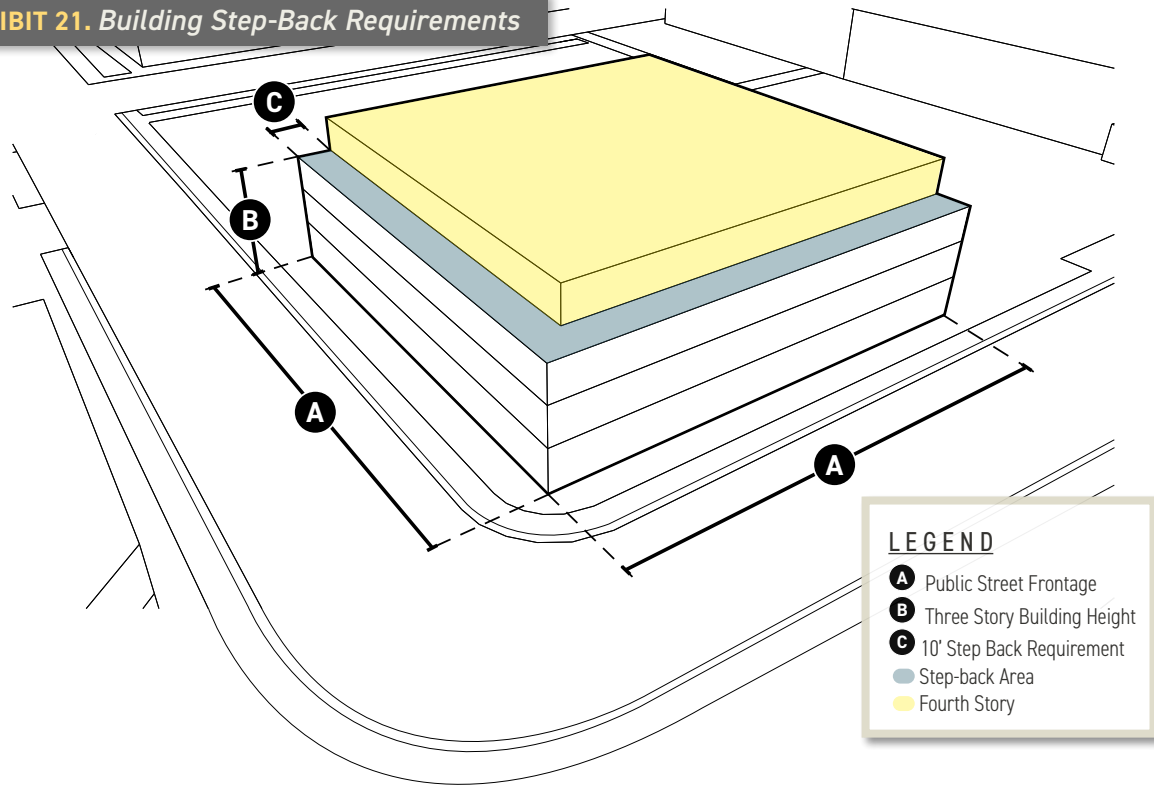
base district with standards tailored to achieve a unique vision for Downtown. This Plan therefore recommends that a new Downtown-specific mixed-use base district that reflects the recommendations contained in this document be created to replace the existing Downtown Overlay Zone. The new zoning district should allow a range of commercial/retail and entertainment uses and also allow a variety of urban housing choices including live/work, townhouses, and multi-family apartments.

Based on the vision established in this master plan in coordination with public feedback, there is no need for the zoning district to introduce subdistricts. Rather, pedestrian-oriented development standards should be universally applied throughout the entire district. The proposed zoning district should carry forward reduced building setbacks and limit building heights to an agreed upon number of stories (this Plan recommends a maximum building height of 7 stories) to promote higher density and pedestrian-oriented development yet balance it with the desired character for Downtown.

In order to reduce the visual impact of the increased building heights, this Plan recommends that updates to Downtown zoning include the provision of a minimum 10-foot building step-back after the three (3) stories. Building step-backs are commonly utilized in Downtown environments to reduce the scale of the building, while exposing and emphasizing the ground-level/pedestrian elements of a structure and preserving views of the surrounding areas. For instance, Downtown Steamboat Springs, Colorado has specific building height standards for new development in their mixed-use Downtown Code. Within the Commercial Old Town zone district, a 0-foot front setback is required for the first and second floor, while a 15-foot step-back is required for the third floor. This encourages residential housing density Downtown while complementing the scale and massing of existing historic buildings.



### EXHIBIT 21. Building Step-Back Requirements



In order to protect the stability of the established residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown, standards can also be paired with neighborhood protection standards that automatically require building height step-backs and/or landscape buffers where periphery development is directly adjacent to low-density residential development. Accompanying development standards for site and buildings design, public spaces, parking and landscaping can help implement the desired Downtown character. These include pedestrian-oriented site design standards that require wider sidewalk widths on public streets and tuck parking behind or to the side of buildings to promote active building frontages rather than surface parking lots along Downtown sidewalks. Parking design standards should limit the amount of surface parking in front of buildings, require layouts that break up the visual impact of large parking lots, and include provisions for pedestrian pathways and landscaping. Recommendations for revisions to parking standards are largely covered in ["2](#)

### EXHIBIT 22. Precedent Examples - Building Step-Back



**TABLE 9. Downtown Los Alamos Development Standards Recommendations**

Element	Development Standards
Site design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a minimum sidewalk width requirements along all public rights-of-way.</li> <li>• Require building orientation that limits parking between the building and the sidewalk edge.</li> </ul>
Building design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow mixed-use developments at a maximum height of seven (7) stories.</li> <li>• Require a 10-foot step-back after the third floor on the sides of a building that abut a public street.</li> <li>• Require buildings that are adjacent to a lower-density residential zone to step down to a building height maximum of 35'.</li> <li>• Enact basic urban design standards to activate ground level building elevations. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum 30% glazing on ground floor</li> <li>- Require at least one public entrance on commercial properties facing street frontage vs. parking lot</li> <li>- Maximum of 100' building façade without a change in the elevation plane of at least 2'</li> <li>- Maximum front setback of 25' along designated streets</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Update material standards to be more flexible while requiring durable exterior cladding (i.e. 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 Downtown.</li> <li>• Where surface parking is provided, have incentives for solar shade canopies.</li> <li>• Require a minimum number of bicycle parking spaces within new developments.</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>• Create parking lot landscaping requirements of 1 tree per 10 parking spaces or exceptions for solar parking canopies.</li> <li>• Require a minimum landscape buffer when periphery developments are adjacent to low-density residential uses.</li> </ul>

- 4 *Transportation*" on page 71. Given that a major goal of this Plan is to promote multi-modal alternatives to/from and throughout Downtown, this Plan recommends that off-street parking requirements are drastically reduced or completely eliminated within Downtown Los Alamos.

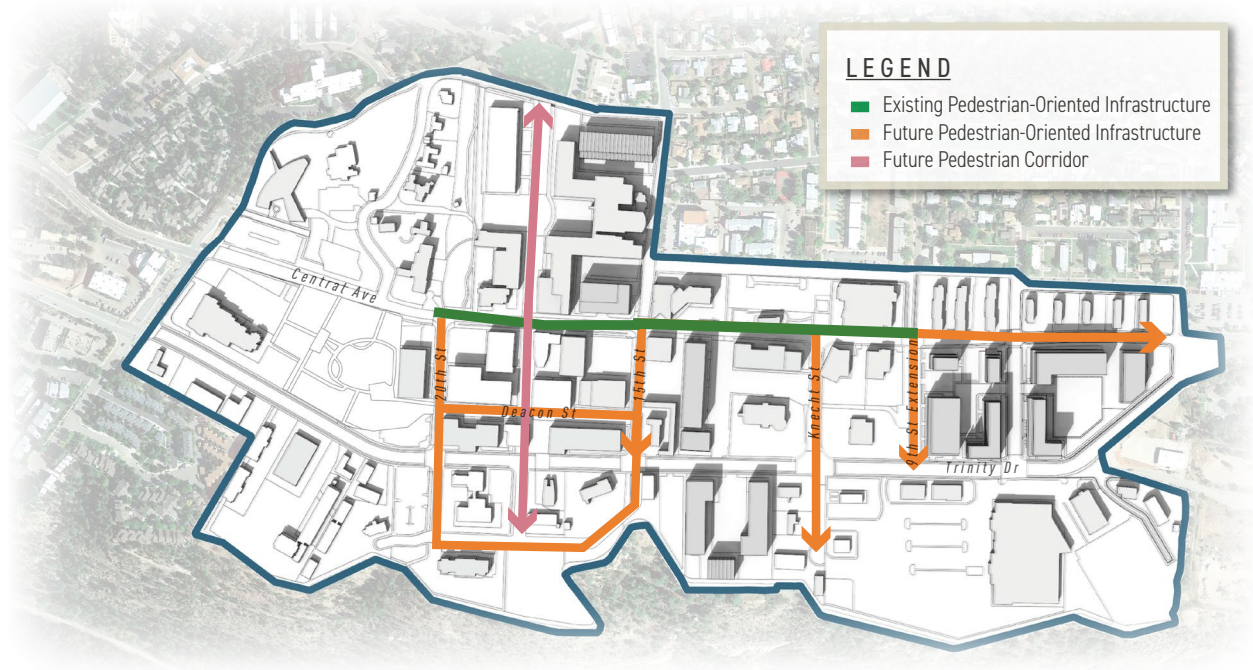
Landscaping requirements should provide guidance for planting within public right-of-way. The *"Table 9. Downtown Los Alamos Development Standards Recommendations"* on page 50 outlines some general items that should be included in Downtown-specific development standards.

## **B. Increase and Enhance Pedestrian Infrastructure**

The western portion of Central Avenue between 9th Street and Oppenheimer Drive has been improved through the addition of on-street parking, wide 13-18 foot sidewalks, landscaping, and unified street furnishings. These improvements have led to more activity and visually enhanced this corridor. Other streets have not seen this type of investment in the pedestrian realm and are in need of similar upgrades.



### EXHIBIT 23. Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure



Implementing similar improvements along other streets will not only enhance Downtown's pedestrian infrastructure and subsequently the pedestrian experience, but also aid in the establishment of a unified Downtown identity and sense of place.

The existing and recommended updates to Downtown development standards outlined above provide a good basis to encourage the implementation of appropriate pedestrian infrastructure. Buildings are currently permitted to be placed at the zero lot line, with no setback from the sidewalk or alleyway. This creates a so-called 'streetwall' of a continuous building frontage along the sidewalk, a condition that is associated with many successful downtowns. The zero lot line placement of buildings along Central Avenue and other corridors identified as pedestrian corridors should therefore be maintained.

The existing road sections, however, need to be adjusted to provide pedestrian improvements

### EXHIBIT 24. Central Avenue Improvements



Existing improvements along Central Avenue

similar to those that exist along Central Avenue. As one of the major goals of this Plan is to increase multi-modal alternatives within Downtown, a Complete Streets model that includes more equitable facilities for all modes should continue to be incorporated into all Downtown street facilities and is further discussed in the Transportation element of this Plan. The development standards for Downtown should be updated to require a minimum of 8-foot sidewalk width to provide space for outdoor dining and retail activities. These activities add to the pedestrian experience and sense of place in a community.

In addition to wide sidewalks, Downtown will benefit from 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 should therefore 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 and public spaces or amenities such as the Urban Trail.

## **CENTRAL AVENUE**

The County has made numerous pedestrian improvements along the western portion of Central Avenue between 9th Street and Oppenheimer Drive. Existing improvements provide an excellent pedestrian environment and have created an atmosphere and identity for this stretch of the street that is desirable and should be replicated throughout the rest of the corridor. This treatment, which includes wide sidewalks, planting strips, street trees, and street furniture, should be continued east to the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center site to connect eastern portions of Downtown to the central portion of Downtown.

## **15TH & 20<sup>TH</sup> STREETS**

15th Street and 20th Street are two critical roadways to facilitate north-south connectivity throughout Downtown. Both streets could benefit from more investment in pedestrian safety and experience. For instance, raised crosswalks and curb extensions would help to reduce travel speed, shorten pedestrian crosswalk distances and create a visual connection between the east and west sides of the roadway. In addition, street trees installed along both sides of the street would help combat the urban heat island effect while also shading the sidewalk and softening the appearance of the roadway. Material changes, such as integral colored concrete, should also be considered to create a distinction between the sidewalk and roadways. Bike “sharrows” or shared bike facilities are pavement markings that indicate a shared lane environment for bicycles and vehicles. These should be installed along 15th Street between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive.

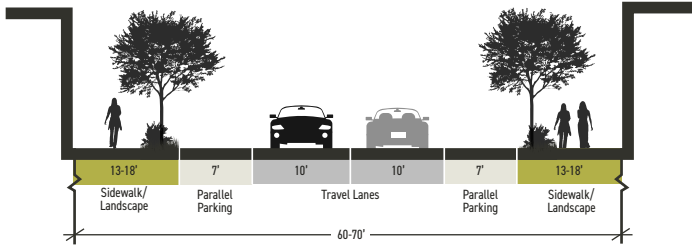
This Plan recommends a minimum sidewalk width of 8 feet with a landscaping and site furnishing scheme similar to what is established along the western portion of Central Avenue to be implemented along 20th Street, 15th Street, Central Avenue east of 9th Street, and Central Park Square, as identified in [\*“Exhibit 23. Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure” on page 51.\*](#)

The already-funded Urban Trail project is planned to create a multi-use trail along the west side of 20th Street, crossing Central Avenue, and continuing along existing pathways through the east side of Fuller Lodge lawn and 19th Street. This trail will provide a connection to the Canyon Rim Trail system and other Downtown amenities to the north. A future traffic signal at the intersection of Trinity Drive and 20th Street is planned to facilitate trail crossing at Trinity Drive. As the intersection of 20th Street and Trinity Drive will be a key crossing for the trail, it should be designed with a decorative or colored pavement scheme that identifies it as such an provides visual cues for drives to slow



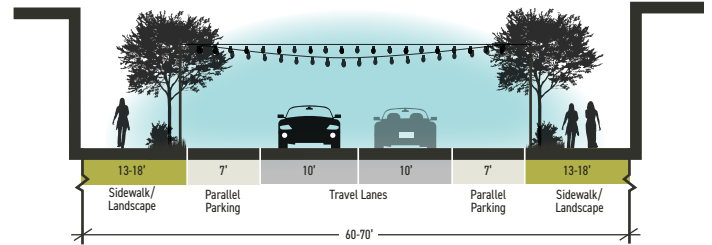
## EXHIBIT 25. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements Cross-Sections

### Existing Central Avenue



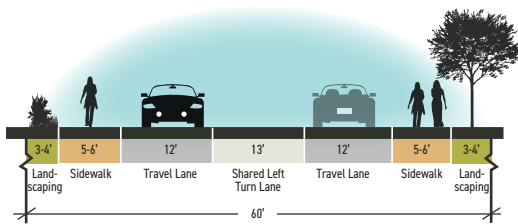
The County has made significant investment into the portion of Central Avenue between Oppenheimer Drive and 9th Street. This segment features two narrow travel lanes and on-street parking. Wide sidewalks are buffered by landscaping strips with a unified street tree and understory planting scheme.

### Recommended Central Avenue



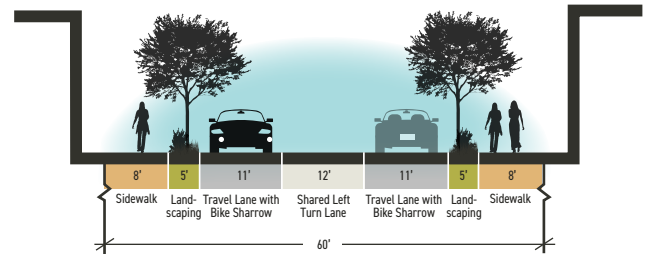
The existing Central Avenue improvements are recommended to be continued to the east past 9th Street. In order to create a more festive and memorable experience along the Main Street, additional amenities such as string lights could be added.

### Existing 15th Street



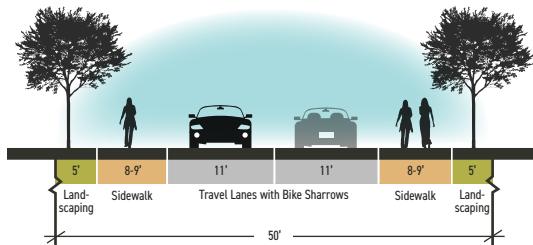
15th Street currently exhibits two wide travel lanes, a shared left turn lane and a pedestrian / landscape area bordering the right-of-way.

### Recommended Improvements to 15th Street



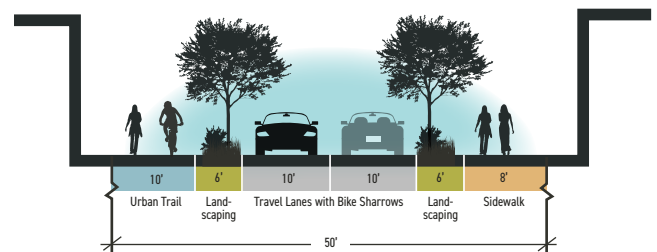
Narrowing the width of travel lanes along 15th Street would allow for the addition of wider sidewalks that are enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and street trees. Landscaping strips act as a buffer between the sidewalk and travel lanes. Bike sharrows can be added to travel lanes to accommodate bike traffic.

### Existing 20th Street



20th Street currently exhibits two wide travel lanes with bike sharrows and a wide pedestrian / landscaping area.

### Recommended Improvements to 20th Street



Narrowing the width of travel lanes along 20th Street would allow for sidewalks to be widened and enhanced with decorative paving treatments, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and additional landscaping. Landscaping strips act as a buffer between the sidewalk and travel lanes. The Urban Trail is planned for the west side of 20th Street along the sidewalk.

**NOTE: Sections are illustrative only and not to scale. Field verification for feasibility is required.**

down thereby enhancing the safety for pedestrian and cyclists using the trail.

### **DEACON STREET**

Deacon Street is currently used mainly to access the parking lot to the south of C.B. FOX Department Store and as access to the loading dock for Metzger's Hardware. There are currently very limited sidewalks and curbs/gutters along this street. There is some on-street parallel parking on the south side. As another east-west roadway located between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive, Deacon Street is an important street connection that can enhance the pedestrian experience Downtown. A complete redesign of Deacon Street is planned to receive Capital Improvement Funds for improvements such as pedestrian-scaled lighting, street trees, landscaping, reconfigured parking, and pedestrian linkages to Central Avenue.

### **TRINITY DRIVE**

As a primary east-west thoroughfare through Downtown, improvements along Trinity Drive should focus on enhancing the public right-of-way to safely accommodate cross-district pedestrian movement and create a sense of arrival and place, while still enabling the roadway to accommodate the volume of commuter-related traffic. The County has already completed a road diet improvement to the segment of Trinity Drive from Diamond Drive to Oppenheimer Drive. The County has secured funding for the Trinity Drive Safety Project for the segment of Trinity Drive from Oppenheimer Drive to Knecht Street. Safety improvements, according to a recent safety audit, are likely to include curb extensions and associated pedestrian crossings along major intersections including 20th Street, 15th Street, and 10th Street, as well as a landscaped median that provides a pedestrian refuge while crossing Trinity Drive. The study phase allows for consideration of alternatives including the addition of bike lanes, transit bus pullouts or auxiliary lanes (shared bus lane/right turn lane) and a road diet option. These options are dependent

on additional transportation study and New Mexico Department of Transportation ("NMDOT") approval. Utilizing decorative intersection and/or crosswalk treatments would create visual cues to reduce travel speed and increase pedestrian safety at crossings.

As with the other Downtown streets, a cohesive streetscape treatment that features protected sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, and a street furnishing scheme that emulates that of Central Avenue would create a sense of arrival and identity.

### **PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR/ CENTRAL PARK SQUARE**

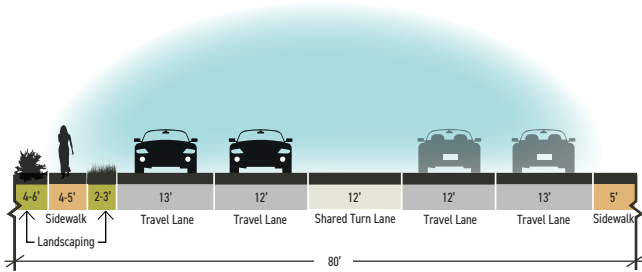
A pedestrian corridor prioritizes pedestrian movement rather than vehicular movement. Pedestrian corridors allow easy pedestrian access to businesses that are oriented along this street, as well as outdoor dining and retail options. If desired for special events, the street can be easily blocked off to accommodate small concerts and exhibitions. Currently there are no pedestrian corridors in Downtown that prioritize pedestrians over vehicles, but the community expressed interest in such a facility during the outreach efforts of this Plan. The creation of a north-south pedestrian corridor beginning at Nectar Street that travels south to Trinity Drive is recommended. The area between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive in particular would not allow any vehicular traffic. The current extent of Central Park Square, between Central Avenue and Nectar Street, would then become a pedestrian corridor that allows vehicular traffic at very low speeds (recommended 10-15 mph) , illustrated in [\*"Exhibit 26. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements Cross-Sections" on page 55.\*](#)

Material changes, such as integral colored concrete, should also be considered to create a distinction between the sidewalk and roadways. The addition of festive and memorable pedestrian amenities such as movable site furnishings, shade elements, string lights, and public art increase the vitality of this corridor.



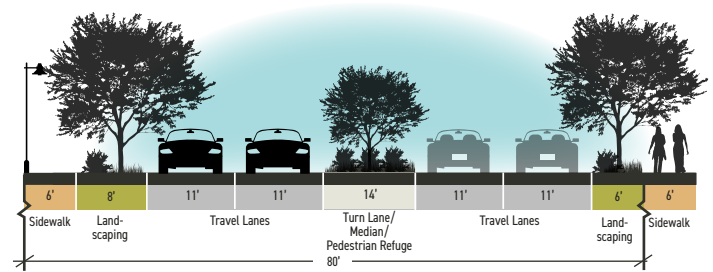
## EXHIBIT 26. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements Cross-Sections

### Existing Trinity Drive



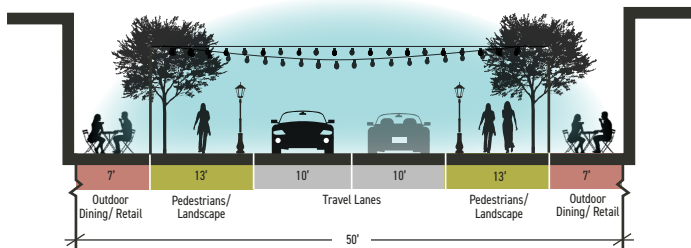
Trinity Drive currently exhibits two travel lanes within each direction, a shared left turn lane and narrow sidewalks with no street trees or understory planting.

### Recommended Improvements to Trinity Drive



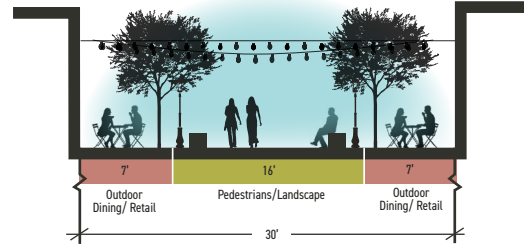
This Plan recommends creating a landscape strip planted with street trees and understory planting adjacent to the roadway to create buffered, enhanced sidewalks that create a more pleasant pedestrian experience.

### Pedestrian Corridor: Travel Lanes Option



The northern portion of the proposed pedestrian corridor will include two travel lanes a wide landscape and sidewalk area and a frontage zone that can accommodate outdoor dining or vending.

### Pedestrian Corridor: No Travel Lanes Option



The southern portion of pedestrian corridor, south of Central Avenue is proposed to prohibit vehicles to become a pedestrian-only area.

**NOTE:** Sections are illustrative only and not to scale. Field verification for feasibility is required.

## EXHIBIT 27. Signature Gateway Feature



### C. Install Signature Gateway Features

The installation of signature gateway features at the major vehicular entry points to Downtown along Trinity Drive as indicated on [“Exhibit 27. Signature Gateway Feature” on page 56](#) would enhance the Downtown identity, image, and sense of place. These features could be an over-the-road archway, a sculpture, monument signage, or a small park or landscape element.

Themes could include the Townsite history or science-themed symbology that can be incorporated into signage featuring a Downtown map to serve as a wayfinding tool. The precedent images in [“Exhibit 28. Precedent Examples - Gateway Features” on page 56](#) show examples of signature gateways that feature elements that could be considered.

## EXHIBIT 28. Precedent Examples - Gateway Features



Gateway sculpture, Newport News, VA



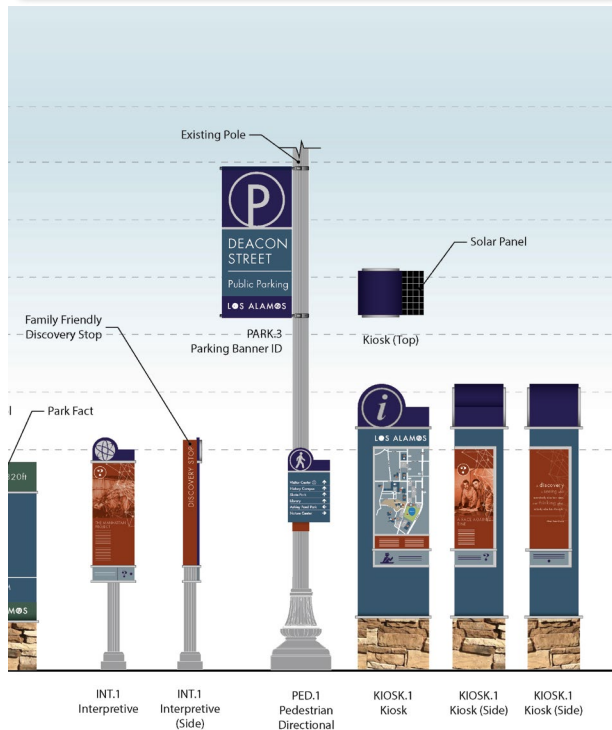
Gateway map feature, Buena Vista, CO



## EXHIBIT 29. Signage Locations



## EXHIBIT 30. Signage Conceptual Designs



Branded wayfinding concepts for Downtown Los Alamos from the Wayfinding Plan.

## D. Implement a Branded Wayfinding System

The Los Alamos County Wayfinding & Signage System was approved by County Council in 2017. The Wayfinding Plan outlines the design, placement, and content of a branded Downtown signage system, 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. Specific locations are identified in the Wayfinding Plan for these signage types and are indicated in ["Exhibit 29. Signage Locations"](#) on page 57. The County should begin to seek funding for the implementation of this Downtown signage system by including it in the Capital Improvements Program.

## E. Expand / Increase Downtown Placemaking Strategies

As mentioned above, the County has invested in placemaking improvements along the Central Avenue right-of-way to widen and add amenities to sidewalks including unified landscape and site furnishings as well as on-street parking. These improvements have successfully created a sense of place and activity along a limited stretch of the corridor, which should be expanded through the remainder of the corridor and adapted to other Downtown streets. In addition, increasing placemaking strategies to include more festive and memorable elements such as public art, string lighting, interesting seating, and additional public spaces will add to Downtown vitality. Interesting seating elements serve multiple purposes: they provide a memorable experience, encourage pedestrians to spend time in a place, and act as public art. Crosswalks with a different color/material/texture than the roadway provide visual cues to motorists, creating a safer pedestrian

crossing experience. Lighting elements such as string lights that span the roadway or pedestrian corridor create an “outdoor room” that provides a memorable and pleasant pedestrian/motorist experience. For instance, string lights could span the proposed pedestrian corridor that extends south from Central Park Square to Trinity Drive. Landscaping is also an important component of placemaking; a cohesive scheme throughout Downtown with a similar plant palette and arrangement would help reinforce the area's identity. Downtown landscaping should tie into the existing scheme established along the western portion of Central Avenue. Themes for placemaking elements such as public art should be a nod to the history of Los Alamos, including science-related symbology and include natural elements that reflect the surrounding landscape.

Potential locations of various placemaking strategies are represented in [“Exhibit 32. Placemaking Strategies” on page 59](#). The

### EXHIBIT 31. Precedent Examples - Placemaking Strategies



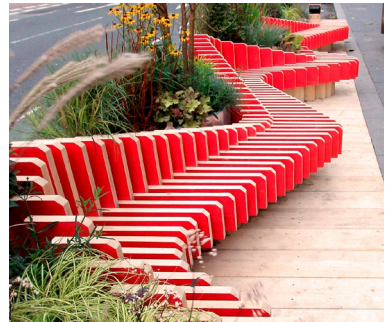
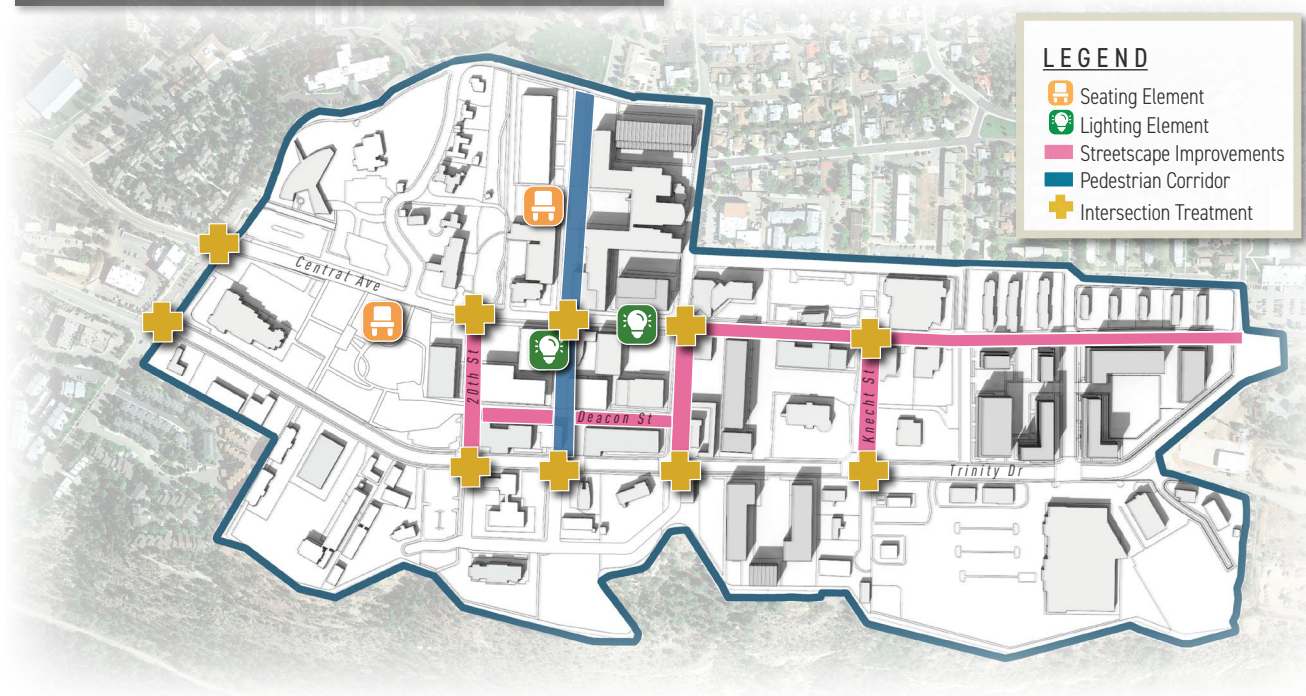
Colorful, decorative intersections and crosswalks act as gateway features and help pedestrians feel more safe as the designs catch the eye of drivers more easily.



Existing improvements to Central Avenue



## EXHIBIT 32. Placemaking Strategies



Fun and memorable amenities such as creative or moveable seating choices, public art, and lighting should be utilized within new public space and along the pedestrian corridor.



The incorporation of public art into the streetscape creates fun and memorable moments and could be used to tie into the history of the community.

precedent images in *“Exhibit 31. Precedent Examples - Placemaking Strategies”* on page 58 show examples of placemaking strategies that could be employed in Downtown Los Alamos.

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

The community has expressed a desire to include the implementation of multi-generational programming that ensures 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.

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

The goal is to create quality housing options that are attainable to residents and the workforce within all age groups and abilities in Downtown. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and strategies through County ordinances, public and private investment, and public-private partnerships amongst others. *“Table 10. Urban Form / Identity Goals”* on page 61 summarizes the goals for the Urban Form/ Identity element and associated strategies.



**TABLE 10. Urban Form / Identity Goals**

**INTENT:** Build on the existing assets and create a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use Downtown.

**VISION:** A vibrant, walkable Downtown with a mix of uses and a vibrant Main Street catering to all ages, tying together existing assets and honoring the unique culture and history of Los Alamos.

**GOAL 1: Create a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use Downtown**

**Strategy 1.1:** Update Downtown Overlay Zone to a Downtown Los Alamos specific mixed-use base zone district.

**Strategy 1.2:** Update the Development Code downtown specific development standards to encourage and incentivize pedestrian-orientated development patterns.

**Strategy 1.3:** Update the Development Code to require building step-back after the third floor of buildings to minimize building scales and preserve viewsheds.

**Strategy 1.4:** Update Downtown specific development standards to create continuous and activated street frontages.

**Strategy 1.5:** Development strategies to incentivize commercial/retail uses on the ground-floor of Downtown buildings through mechanisms like waived permitting fees.

**Strategy 1.6:** Update development standards to require 8-foot sidewalks where feasible in appropriate areas to provide space for outdoor dining and retail activities.

**Strategy 1.7:** Plan for and seek funding for the addition of festive and memorable placemaking elements such as string lights, public art and interesting seating options to be implemented along public streets, the proposed pedestrian corridor and Downtown public spaces.

**Strategy 1.8:** Update zoning to require on-site pedestrian pathways that provide cross-parcel connections.

**GOAL 2: Enhance Downtown identity, image, and sense of place**

**Strategy 2.1:** Create signature gateway features at the intersections of Trinity Drive and Central Avenue and Trinity Drive and Oppenheimer Drive.

**Strategy 2.2:** Plan and seek funding for a series of public spaces that serve all ages. Ensure connection between existing and new public spaces with accessible pedestrian facilities.

**Strategy 2.3:** Continue to implement the wayfinding plan to construct a branded Downtown signage system.

**Strategy 2.4:** Plan for and seek funding to implement a cohesive streetscape system that includes unified sidewalk materials, street trees and landscaping palette, and street furnishing based on the existing Central Avenue improvements to visually unify Downtown and celebrate the history of Los Alamos.

**Strategy 2.5:** Update downtown development standards to create enforceable landscape standards.

**Strategy 2.6:** Plan for and seek funding for the creation of a north-south pedestrian corridor and accommodate areas for outdoor dining and retail.



# HOUSING

---





## 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 Downtown Los Alamos. Housing has become a critical issue, particularly the lack of affordable housing options for households that are priced out of the single-family detached market. The recent 'Los Alamos County Housing Market Needs Analysis, 2019' estimated an immediate need of 1,310 units of rental housing and 379 units for homeownership. Given that the County has very limited land resources and is experiencing a severe shortage of housing, Downtown is the prime location to encourage the development of multi-unit, multi-story apartments and mixed-use buildings with residential components. Absorbing housing within Downtown will not only alleviate the housing shortage, but aid in achieving the mix of uses and activity levels needed to revitalize the district. Downtown is also an ideal location to add affordable housing, as the location allows for close proximity to amenities and public transit options while protecting the character of existing neighborhoods. Such a strategy supports numerous recommendations and policies of the Los Alamos

County Strategic Leadership Plan, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, and the Economic Vitality Strategic Plan.

A primary goal of this master plan is to increase the provision of affordable housing within Downtown, guided by Downtown goals and policies set forth in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. Housing options are envisioned to target retirees that wish to downsize, young adults, student interns, and the general workforce. Short- to mid-term rental housing including micro-units, townhouses, apartments, condos, and live-work units could be developed. These types of units can be developed in multi-family structures or in mixed-use buildings that offer commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above. Mixed-use buildings should be the preferred building type in order to also serve to increase the provision of commercial square footage in Downtown.

### 2 - 3.III RECOMMENDATIONS

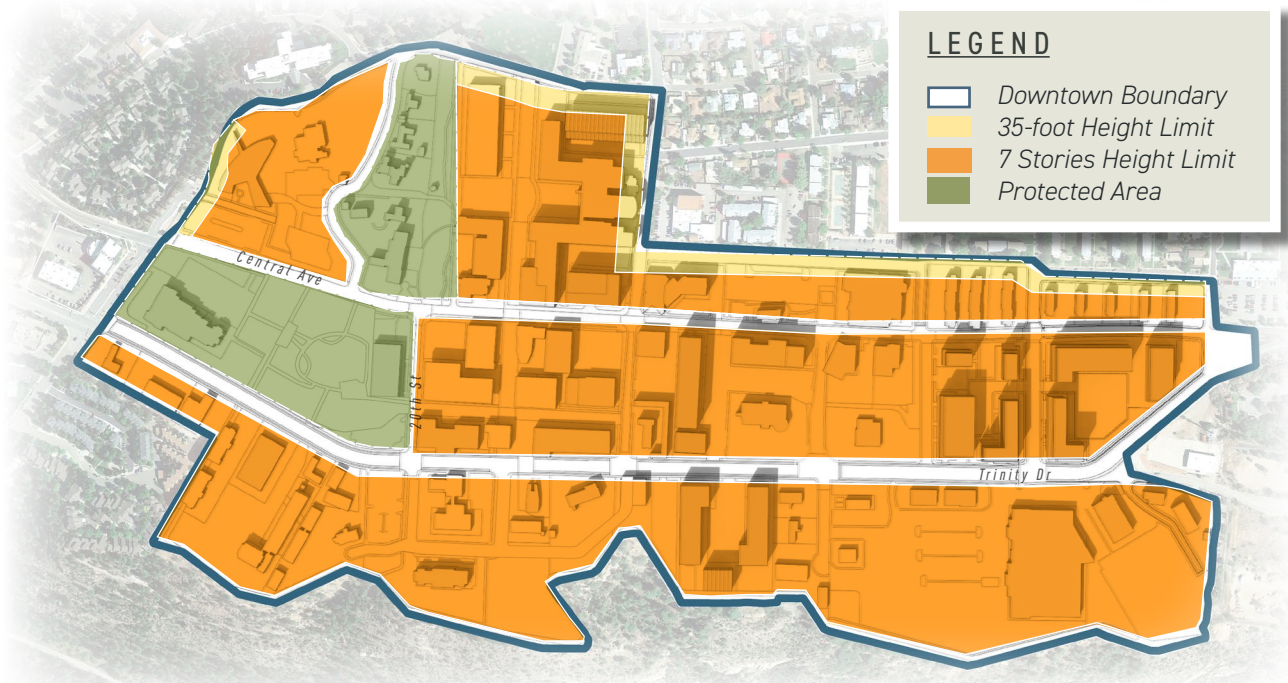
#### A. Allow Increased Multi-family Densities / Heights

Currently, the Development Code allows for a maximum building height of 60 feet within Downtown Los Alamos, with an exception that increases the maximum allowable height to 75 feet if at least 20 percent of the building floor area

**TABLE 11. Existing Building Heights**

	CIVIC SPACE (DT-CPO)	TOWN CENTER (DT-TCO)	NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER (DT-NCO)	NEIGHBORHOOD GENERAL (DT-NGO)
Allowed Maximum Building Height	60'	60' or, if at least 20% of the building floor area is residential OR parking is locat- ed in the building, then 75'	45' or, if at least 25% of the building floor area is residential, OR parking is locat- ed in the building, then 60'	45'

**EXHIBIT 33. Heights and Building Step-Back**



is residential or parking is located in the building within the Town Center (DT-TCO) subzone. The remaining subzones limit building heights to 45 feet, with the Neighborhood Center subdistrict providing a similar exception for buildings that provide residential uses for at least 25 percent of the building floor area allowing building height increases to 60 feet. The maximum building height for any property within 150 feet of the Los Alamos Canyon is limited to 45 feet.

Increasing the allowed maximum residential densities and building heights is one of the main tools to increase the provision of housing in Los Alamos County and make housing more affordable. Zoning provisions should be changed so that multi-unit, multi-story apartments, and mixed-use residential buildings can be more easily accommodated Downtown. This Plan recommends a maximum building height of seven (7) stories. Typical floor-to-floor heights needed for vertical

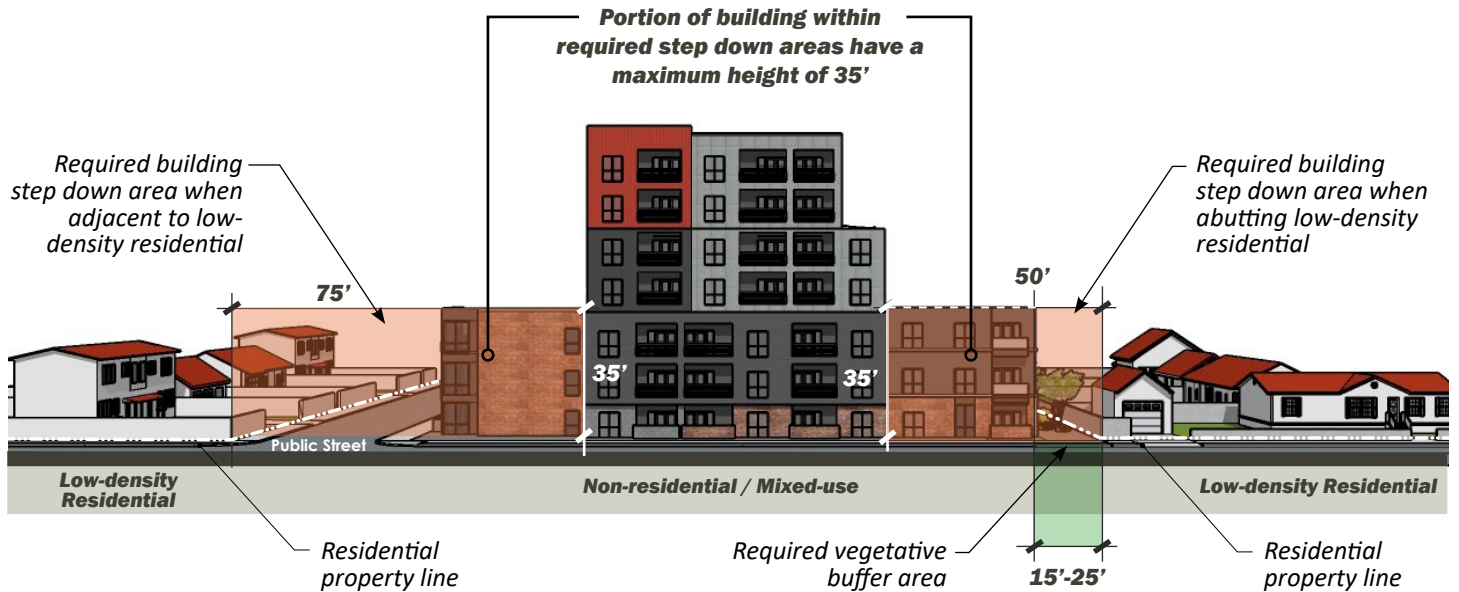
mixed-use construction are outlined in ["Table 12. Typical Floor Heights" on page 64.](#)

Based on the Development Framework identified in ["2-1.iii Development Framework" on page 37,](#) a combination of mixed-use and higher density multi-family housing at seven stories could result in an approximate addition of 1,589 housing units

**TABLE 12. Typical Floor Heights**

Development Type > Typical Floor-to-Floor Heights	MULTI-FAMILY	MIXED-USE
First Floor Height	11'	14'-16'
Upper Floor Height (if any)	11'	11'
Top Floor, including roof structure	12'	12'
Parapet Height	4'	4'
*Numbers reflect floor-to-floor heights utilized by Dekker/Perich/Sabatini when constructing such facilities.		

#### EXHIBIT 34. Neighborhood Protection Standards



NOTE: This illustration shows the general concept of neighborhood protection standards to ensure development creates appropriate transitions to established neighborhoods outside of Downtown. Specific transition requirements will be determined through the Development Code update.

#### EXHIBIT 35. Precedent Examples - Building Step-Backs



Development adjacent to low-density residential at the periphery of Downtown should be required to step down in height.

within underutilized or vacant Downtown lots. This number of housing units is capable of exceeding the rental housing need within the County by providing units solely within Downtown.

As mentioned in the Urban Form / Identity element, the key is to pair increased building heights with neighborhood protection standards that automatically apply when higher density development occurs adjacent to single-family uses. In those instances, the Development Code update should create neighborhood protection standards that require building height step-downs and landscape buffers to be implemented to mitigate the impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. The existing overlay sets maximum building height for developments that are adjacent to or abut any residential district to be limited to 35 feet within 50 feet of the property line. These types of protections should be carried forward in any zoning updates.

"Exhibit 33. Heights and Building Step-Back" on page 64 indicates the areas of Downtown to



which these neighborhood protection standards would apply.

## **B. Incentivizing Affordable Housing**

One of the most effective strategies to encourage and spur the market to provide affordable housing is through inclusionary zoning requirements and/or incentives. Inclusionary zoning requires developers to set aside a given share of new housing developments for affordable units. While inclusionary zoning has helped produce affordable units in cities with strong housing markets, such requirements still don't fully address the demand for affordable units in most communities. Furthermore, many communities simply do not command high enough rents per square foot to absorb the subsidy required by affordable units and such inclusionary requirements often can inhibit housing developments.

A more commonly used alternative that is recommended by this Plan is to create voluntary incentive programs that encourage developers to include affordable units through rewards such as expedited permitting processes and fee waivers or reductions. Affordable housing incentives are most often tied to the dedication of a percentage of residential floor area as rental housing affordable to households with incomes up to 80 percent of the

area median income. Expedited review/permitting processes including the reduction or elimination of permitting fees or granting administrative rather than discretionary approval processes (i.e. those that require a public hearing with the Planning and Zoning Commission) could be offered.

Within the Downtown Improvement Plan for Downtown Bozeman, Montana, increasing housing units Downtown to meet the needs of different members of the community was a significant goal for the community. They created a Downtown Residential Incentive Program that provides partial reimbursement for residential-related impact fees for the creation of eligible new downtown residential units including one program for studio and one-bedroom units and a second for affordable housing. As of 2019, this program has helped support the construction of nearly 100 new residential units, with 46 more units approved but not yet constructed. As Los Alamos is in need of affordable housing, a similar incentive program could be implemented that encourages the construction of affordable housing Downtown.

### **EXHIBIT 36. Precedent Examples - Housing**



*Mixed-use development in Bothell, WA*



### **C. Allow / Encourage an Urban Mix of Housing/Development Types**

As mentioned above, Downtown is best suited to accommodate affordable 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. The updated zoning district should allow housing types including mixed-use, multi-family, townhouses, micro-units and live-work spaces.

#### **MIXED-USE**

Mixed-use housing consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses, generally vertically integrated. In many instances, the mixed-use building consists of ground floor commercial with residential uses on upper floors. Mixed-use buildings are popular

in downtowns as they provide the opportunity to activate the street level with commercial uses 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



Above: Multi-family Development | Below: Townhouse Development

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

## **TOWNHOUSES**

Townhouses or rowhouses are buildings that contain three or more dwelling units that are connected in some manner, usually 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 goal is to create quality housing options that are attainable to residents and the workforce within all age groups and abilities in Downtown. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and strategies

facilitated through County ordinances, public and private investment and public-private partnerships amongst others. *"Table 13. Housing Goals" on page 69* summarizes goals for the Housing element and associated strategies.

**TABLE 13. Housing Goals**

**INTENT:** The lack of affordable housing options in the County 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 and the workforce, within all age groups and abilities.

**Strategy 1.1:** Update the Development Code to allow higher-density residential development.

**Strategy 1.2:** Update the Development Code to allow mixed-use, apartments/condos, live/work, micro-units, and short-term or temporary housing options.

**Strategy 1.3:** Develop standards for the provision of quality, affordable housing.

**Strategy 1.4:** Form a working group with LANL to collaborate on strategies for the development and provision of workforce housing.

**Strategy 1.5:** Update the architectural standards of the Development Code to ensure quality development with increased design flexibility.

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

**Strategy 2.1:** Create neighborhood protection standards that require development to scale down at the periphery of Downtown when adjacent to single family uses.



# TRANSPORTATION

---



## 2 - 4 TRANSPORTATION

### 2 - 4.I VISION STATEMENT

*A safe and efficient multi-modal system that connects Downtown with adjacent neighborhoods and places of interest, accommodates a variety of transportation options, connects Downtown to LANL and White Rock, and supports a walkable Downtown.*

### 2 - 4.II INTRODUCTION

The transportation element establishes a vision for multimodal access to and connectivity throughout Downtown. 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 Downtown. Pedestrian improvements should focus on the creation of a premier pedestrian environment that will promote active lifestyles while decreasing carbon emissions associated with driving.

The County has made significant investments into the streetscape of Central Avenue between Oppenheimer Drive and 9th Street including wide and amenitized sidewalks that have aided in enhancing the vitality and character of the Main Street Corridor. Such improvements should be expanded throughout the remainder of the district. Downtown can and should be a place where people walk more and drive less, enabled by a safe, well-connected pedestrian network and street crossings. Roadway improvements should continue to be conducted under a Complete Streets model that provides safe, comfortable, and convenient access to and throughout Downtown for all modes of travel. The implementation of multi-modal transportation network within Downtown will aid in the establishment of a more livable district in

which people can access residences, shops, and workplaces by foot, bike, or transit.

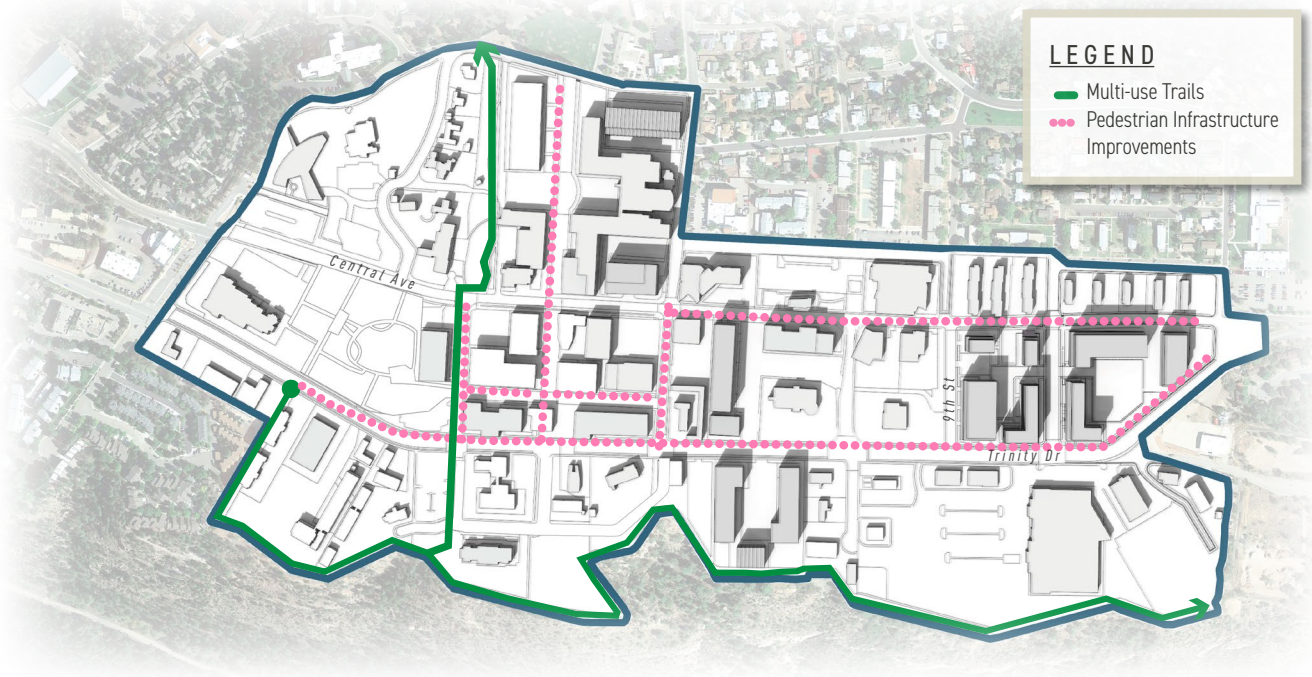
### 2 - 4.III RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Creating a safe, efficient, and convenient pedestrian network is key to a vibrant, accessible and walkable Downtown. Most of Downtown's pedestrian realm - the area between the curb and the property line of the bordering parcel - hasn't received the same investment as the segment of Central Avenue between Oppenheimer Drive and 9th Street. As Downtown is envisioned to be the premier pedestrian environment, pedestrian realm improvements including widening sidewalks and enhancing them with landscaping and site furnishing among the remaining Downtown streets is crucial. County specifications currently require 6-foot sidewalks along arterials and collectors. Such narrow sidewalk widths aren't conducive to creating the active pedestrian experience desired within Downtown. It is therefore recommended that the minimum width of sidewalks in Downtown is increased to 8 feet with 10-foot widths implemented where feasible. Such wide sidewalks would more easily accommodate public realm elements typically found within Downtowns including a landscape buffer zone, a clear sidewalk width, and a building frontage zone that can support adjacent businesses through sidewalk cafes or sidewalk vending. Particularly along Trinity Drive, a heavily traveled New Mexico State Highway, buffered sidewalks are recommended to create a safe and welcoming experience for pedestrians. This includes a landscape strip with street trees that separates the vehicular traffic from the sidewalk, rather than locating the sidewalk adjacent to the travel lanes.



### EXHIBIT 37. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements



### EXHIBIT 38. Precedent Examples -Pedestrian



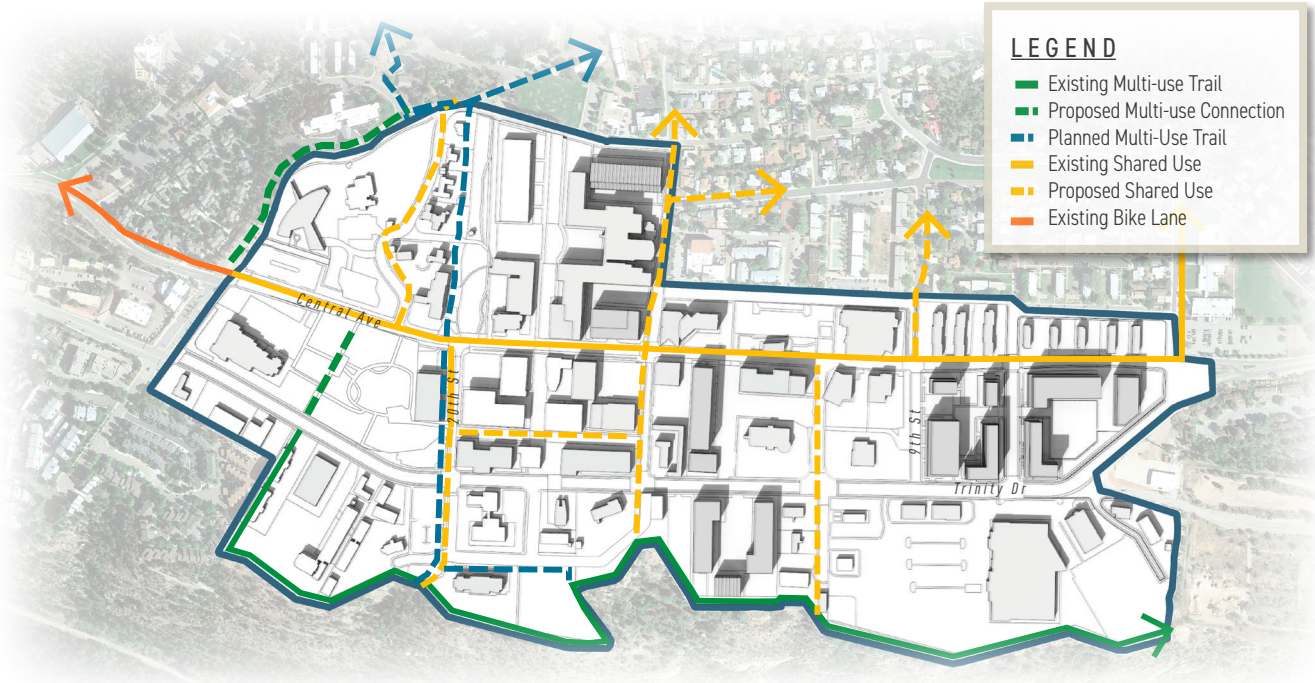
A high-intensity activated crosswalk provides a protected pedestrian crossing in Scottsdale, Arizona

Creating safe pedestrian crossings, particularly along heavily traveled corridors like Trinity Drive, is another crucial component to creating a walkable Downtown. A variety of safety mechanisms including unsignalized crosswalks, raised crossings, high-intensity activated crosswalk beacons, and pedestrian/bike-activated flashing lights should be installed as appropriate at major pedestrian crossings, but will need to be coordinated with NMDOT as signalized crossings can only be added when warrants are met. Crossing types should be selected depending on the road type, availability of right-of-way and suitability of crossing types. Protected crossings such as these are particularly crucial at the intersection of Trinity Drive and 20th Street, where the Urban Trail project is planned to connect to the Canyon Rim Trail and at the intersection of Trinity Drive and DP Road.

Traffic calming measures are also employed in downtowns to increase safety where pedestrians are present. Measures include medians, chicanes, bulb-outs, and speed tables and can be installed



### EXHIBIT 39. Bicycle Infrastructure - Existing and Proposed



### EXHIBIT 40. Precedent Examples - Bicycle



TOP: A pavement marking known as a "sharrow"  
BOTTOM: A bike lane with pavement marking

where appropriate. The County has implemented a road diet along the segment of Trinity Drive from Oppenheimer Drive to Diamond Drive that includes the reduction of one travel lane in each direction to accommodate a dedicated bicycle lane. *"Exhibit 37. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements"* on page 72 illustrates the areas where improved pedestrian infrastructure should be prioritized, including crosswalks and improved sidewalk conditions.

Downtown Los Alamos has a number of existing and planned bicycle facilities as illustrated in *"Exhibit 39. Bicycle Infrastructure - Existing and Proposed"* on page 73. Existing shared street facilities or "sharrows" exist along Central Avenue and 20th Street between Central Avenue and Deacon Street. Shared facilities are indicated through pavement markings and function as a shared lane environment for bicycles and vehicles. The Bike Plan identifies expansions of these types of facilities for several Downtown streets including along Deacon Street and Knecht Street as well

as Bathtub Row. These types of facilities are appropriate for internal Downtown roadways with low posted speeds and will facilitate safe movement of cyclists throughout Downtown.

The Bike Plan also targets dedicated bike lanes that demarcate a portion of the roadway for the exclusive use by bicyclists through pavement markings and appropriate signage. These proposed lanes would facilitate access and connectivity between Downtown and the greater community. As a state highway, Trinity Drive is a more heavily traveled facility and any bicycle lanes, if installed, should be protected through painted pavement buffers or some sort of physical barrier between moving motor vehicle traffic and the bike lane. In addition to these facilities, a multi-use path that is part of the larger Urban Trail project is planned and funded along the west side of 20th Street. The Urban Trail will provide a direct connection from the Canyon Rim Trail which runs along the canyon edge on the southern boundary of Downtown. This facility in particular will facilitate connectivity and access between Downtown and the greater Los Alamos County trail network. Funding is in place for both the Urban Trail and the extension of the Canyon Rim Trail. Implementation of these planned bicycle facilities is critical to achieving the multi-modal vision for Downtown. Prioritizing these facilities aligns with the goals of the Bike Plan for the County transportation system to encourage and empower use of a bicycle as a key form of transportation.

Another critical element to consider in the design and construction of planned bicycle facilities is the treatment of crossing and/or intersection, particularly those across Trinity Drive. Protected intersection design elements such as bike boxes should be utilized to ensure adequate safety measures to protect these non-motorized user groups from vehicles. Bike boxes function as a pavement marking located in front of stopped traffic at a traffic signal that help cyclists safely make left or right turns, as the bike box allows greater visibility of cyclists. Bicycle signals and beacons

#### EXHIBIT 41. Precedent Examples - Bike Security



ABOVE: Bicycle racks are installed along Central Avenue along the public sidewalk.

BELOW: Bike lockers at a RailRunner Station

should be implemented where a traffic signal does not already exist. These signals have red, yellow, and green bicycle-stenciled lenses that are used at standard signalized intersections and hybrid signal crossings. Where there is an unsignalized intersection crossing, flashing amber warning beacons can be activated by push buttons along with signage and pavement markings that indicate to motorists to stop.

Short-term bicycle parking facilities are another critical component to the Downtown bicycle network. If the envisioned multi-modal paradigm is achieved within Downtown, an influx of people will travel to and through the district by bike. Bicycle parking facilities that allow for the convenient



and safe storage of bicycles, both in the public and private realms, will be needed. Parking can consist of simple bike racks, bike lockers, or indoor bicycle storage rooms. Racks are relatively low-cost devices that are secured to the ground so that cyclists can securely lock their frames and wheels. Bike racks direct cyclists to a specific location to park and provide peace-of-mind for riders to leave bicycles unattended while shopping and dining Downtown. Currently, there are no provisions in the Development Code for requiring bicycle parking with new development. Some bicycle racks are installed along Central Avenue along the public sidewalk as well as in front of the Visitor Center. In order to begin to incrementally build bicycle parking infrastructure, this Plan recommends that the Development Code be updated to include requirements for new development to provide on-site parking spaces for bicycles. The number of spaces required should be based on the use.

## B. Improve Vehicular Access and Connectivity

Currently, Downtown features large blocks broken up with very few streets in a grid pattern. Vehicular access and connectivity as well as those of other transportation modes can be improved by breaking these blocks into smaller pieces with defined roadways that link to existing roadways. Several roadway extensions aimed to create more vehicular and pedestrian connectivity are recommended by this Plan. Both 15th Street and 20th Street should also be extended south of Trinity Drive to provide adequate access and connectivity to parcels to the south. Both 6th Street and 9th Street should also be extended to Trinity Drive to create smaller and more connected block structures that are typical of walkable Downtowns. The planned redesign of Deacon Street, between 15th Street and 20th Street, will also aid in increasing access and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Downtown Las Cruces, New Mexico has undergone a transformation since the creation of the Las Cruces Downtown Revitalization Plan. Large

blocks and one-way traffic that surrounded Main Street constrained the access and connectivity within Downtown and discouraged connections to surrounding neighborhoods. In order to improve access and connectivity, east/west streets that were closed off to traffic were either opened back up to vehicular traffic, or became enhanced pedestrian alleyways with seating, murals, awnings, and other amenities. This improved circulation to surrounding neighborhoods and provided a pleasant pedestrian experience. It is now common for these alleyways to host small events and provide outdoor dining options to nearby restaurants.

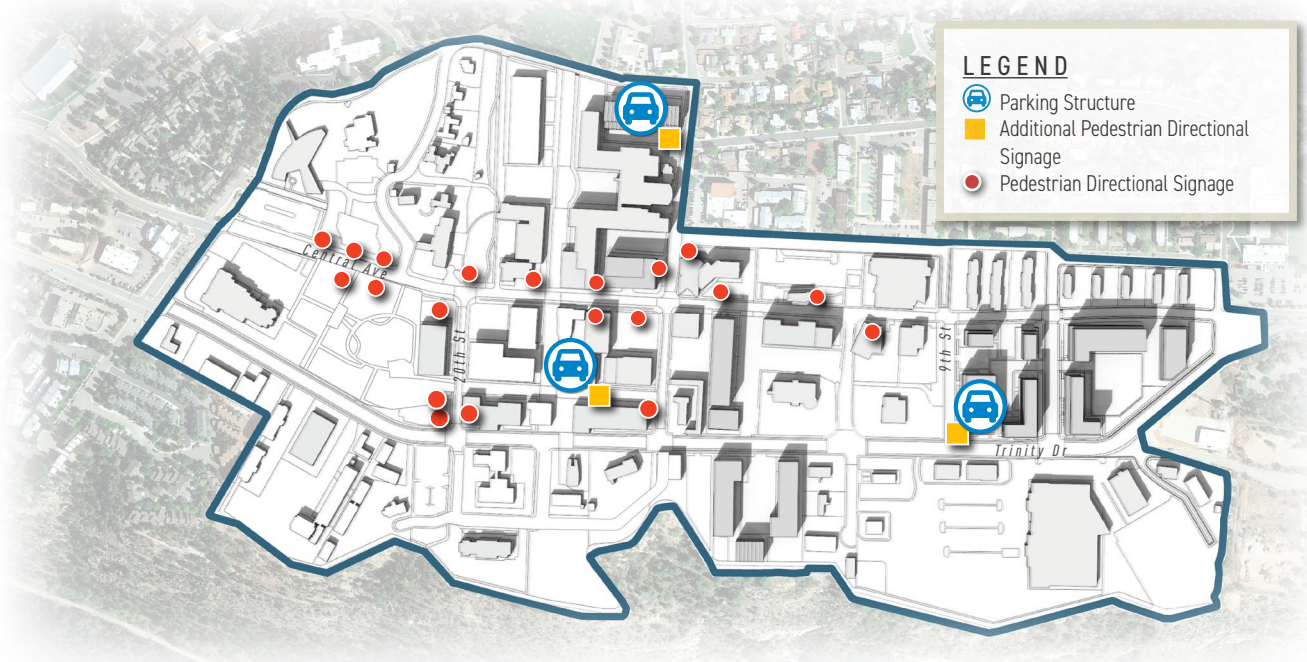
An additional step to consider when improving and delineating roadways is to refer to the Complete Streets checklist. This checklist is designed to encourage a multi-modal approach to roadway design within the appropriate context as

EXHIBIT 42. Precedent Examples - Bus Stops



ABOVE: Bus stops with amenities such as digital real time signage and accessible design.

#### EXHIBIT 43. Parking Facilities



#### EXHIBIT 44. Precedent Examples -Parking



Parking structure with mixed-use liner building.

redevelopment occurs. The County currently uses a Complete Streets checklist when completing road improvements and should continue to do so in the future.

#### C. Expand Convenient Access to Transit as Downtown Densifies

The Atomic City Transit system provides free transit options available during the week between 6AM and 7PM. A Downtown circulator bus (Route 1) operates during the week and two bus routes connect to White Rock (Route 2M and Route 2T). Route 1, the Downtown Circulator, begins at the Transit Center, travels along Trinity Drive through Downtown to East Drive and Airport Road and then returns to the Transit Center along Central Avenue, Canyon Road, and Diamond Drive. Other route options connect Downtown with adjacent areas like North Mesa and the airport. The current schedule is limited to weekdays and buses are generally used as a secondary choice to get Downtown. As Downtown begins to densify and more people



begin to live within the district, adaptations to the existing public transit service will likely be needed and should be considered by the County. When the population density of the district is adequate, a dedicated Downtown circulator that would transport riders along a designated Downtown loop that would connect major destinations would be beneficial and further support a “Park Once” strategy.

Bus shelters are a critical component of the transit system that have the potential to improve rider experience and increase choice ridership. Enhancing existing bus stops to create a more attractive and pleasant user experience is also recommended. Shelters should be updated to fit into the established Central Avenue site furnishing scheme in terms of materials and color. Amenities that enhance the pre-and post-boarding experience including digital signage and WiFi hotspots should be considered. Bus stops should promote visibility and facilitate branding of the Atomic City Transit system.

#### **D. Improve the Parking Management Strategy**

Current parking requirements in the Development Code set a minimum number of off-street parking spaces by land use to be located within a specified parking envelope that is shielded from the street and residentially zoned properties. Shared parking is allowed but not well-defined as to what uses can share parking according to operating hours. The Planning and Zoning Commission has the authority to waive parking requirements if the peak parking demand occurs after the evening peak period parking demand and adequate on-street or public parking is available. A “Park Once” strategy is in place authorizing Council to permit developers to make a payment-in-lieu of providing required off-street parking spaces. The program has not had much success in reducing off-street parking.

Downtown should focus on a “park once and walk” strategy that focuses on centralized shared facilities

that allows visitors to drive to the district, park, and walk or use alternative transit modes while there. A variety of strategies could be utilized to achieve such a walkable parking strategy including on-street parking options, park and ride facilities, and a series of parking “courts” or structures that are shared by a number of local businesses. Three existing surface parking lots have been identified as good locations for the construction of shared parking structures that could serve Downtown, shown in [“Exhibit 43. Parking Facilities” on page 76](#). Investments in centrally located parking structures would open up redevelopment opportunities within Downtown that would facilitate the larger goal of Downtown densification. Such parking structures could be funded entirely through the capital budget, a public-private partnership that splits the cost between the County and private developers, or an in-lieu payment program.

Downtown Bozeman, Montana also has a cash-in-lieu program for private developers to pay a fee for providing fewer parking spaces than the minimum off-street requirement. The 2009 Downtown Improvement Plan recommended developing a Downtown Strategic Parking Management Plan. This was completed in 2016 with a recommendation to re-evaluate and restructure the cash-in-lieu program to reflect current construction costs and objectives of Downtown since the original program was written in the 1970s. At that time, the fee was set at \$5,000 per space; in 2018, it was changed to \$25,000 per space. The cash that is raised then provides the city with funds to build new parking facilities that consolidate parking to central locations that serve multiple businesses.

New parking structures located along a public street should include commercial liner buildings along the street-facing facades so that the parking decks have less of a visual impact, as illustrated in [“Exhibit 44. Precedent Examples -Parking” on page 76](#). Pedestrian directional signage should be installed at parking garages to help give clear directions to nearby attractions and destinations. Places on the fringe of Downtown with ample parking, such as the Smith's parking lot, can potentially accommodate



Park & Ride facilities. Other strategies outlined in the Transportation element support a “Park Once” strategy that is augmented with additional pedestrian, cycling, and public transit options that provide more localized mobility opportunities while reducing carbon output associated with motor vehicle travel.

In addition to a Park Once strategy, minimum parking requirements within the Development Code should be evaluated based on national best practice. Most municipalities recognize that mixed-use environments such as Downtown need revised parking standards. Downtown Bozeman, Montana decided to reduce parking requirements to follow National Best Practices for downtown areas. They revised their Zoning Code in 2010 as recommended by the 2009 Downtown Improvement Plan to exempt the first 3,000 square feet of a development or reuse, reduce minimum requirements for residential development to one space per unit, and allow for parking reductions for proximity to transit and structured parking. These Zoning Code updates, combined with working with a consultant to develop a comprehensive parking management plan for public parking, have proven

successful in providing the right amount and locations of parking Downtown.

Given the changes anticipated to the parking management, permissive uses, transit access, improved bicycle facilities, and the proximity to established neighborhoods, removing minimum on-site parking requirements is recommended for all uses except for residential uses. It is recommended that residential uses have a reduced minimum parking requirement, which allows parking spaces for residential personal vehicles at a minimum of one space per dwelling unit. Parking design standards should be revised to design off-street parking so that it is located behind or to the side of the building in order to create a better pedestrian environment where businesses can take advantage of the increased foot traffic and visibility. In addition, standards should add incentives to encourage covered parking and electric vehicle parking stations.

## 2-4.IV TRANSPORTATION GOALS

The goal is to create safe, efficient, and convenient infrastructure that accommodates all modes including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicles.

In addition, the goal is to also create sustainable, accessible, efficient, and convenient parking options that support a pedestrian-friendly environment. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and updates to the County Code, detailed in ["Table 14. Transportation Goals" on page 79.](#)

**TABLE 14. Transportation Goals**

**INTENT:** Downtown lacks connectivity specifically across Trinity Drive. A cohesive parking management system should be implemented to reduce the number of underutilized surface parking lots.

**VISION:** A safe and efficient multi-modal system that connects Downtown with adjacent neighborhoods, accommodating a variety of transportation options, and connecting downtown to LANL and White Rock.

**GOAL 1: Create safe, efficient, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Create safe pedestrian / bicycle crossings on arterials, including HAWK beacons and pedestrian/ bike-activated flashing lights specifically along Trinity Drive and consider traffic calming measures where appropriate.

**Strategy 1.2:** Analyze existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure and implement measures to make them safe and convenient (e.g. buffered bike lanes, signalized crossings, appropriate facility widths and signage). Create standards that require the implementation of safe bicycle / pedestrian infrastructure where appropriate.

**Strategy 1.3:** Prioritize the funding of the design and construction of bicycle facilities within Downtown.

**Strategy 1.4:** Identify connectivity gaps within the pedestrian and bicycle network and increase and prioritize facilities that provide access to public open spaces and recreational facilities.

**Strategy 1.5:** Form a working group with LANL to collaborate on strategies for a mode share / transportation program.

**GOAL 2: Create a safe, efficient, and convenient transit and vehicular transportation system.**

**Strategy 2.1:** As Downtown densifies and land uses shift adapt Atomic City Transit Service correspondingly.

**Strategy 2.2:** Enhance existing bus stops with shelters that emulate established Central Avenue site furnishings and include pedestrian amenities such as real time signage and WiFi hotspots.

**GOAL 3: Create sustainable, accessible, efficient, and convenient parking options that support a pedestrian-friendly environment.**

**Strategy 3.1:** Revisit the existing 'park once' strategy and improve the overall parking management. Consider sites for a potential Park & Ride facility.

**Strategy 3.2:** Plan and seek funding for centralized, shared parking structures.

**Strategy 3.3:** Add a minimum bicycle parking requirement for new development.

**Strategy 3.4:** Revise parking requirements and reduce overall parking supply provisions, add standards to locate parking behind buildings, add incentives to encourage covered parking and electric vehicle parking stations, and revise landscape standards to require appropriate landscape in parking lots. Consider measures to bring out-of-compliance parking lots into compliance.

**Strategy 3.5:** Identify convenient visitor parking and implement the Wayfinding Plan to aid visitors in locating parking and places of interest.



# ECONOMIC VITALITY

---





## 2 - 5 ECONOMIC VITALITY

### 2 - 5.I VISION STATEMENT

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

### 2 - 5.II INTRODUCTION

The Economic Vitality element establishes a vision for a vibrant Downtown containing a balanced mix of civic, employment, retail, lodging and entertainment uses, and moderate- to high-density housing. Downtown is currently a strong location for civic uses including County government and historic and cultural attractions such as Fuller Lodge and the Bradbury Science Museum that celebrate the community's unique history. For a small community, Downtown Los Alamos also has a significant number of jobs in professional and technical services oriented to LANL. With respect to the retail sector, Downtown has a core of community-serving stores providing everyday needs, but lacks a diversity and critical mass of small locally-owned stores and restaurants that add to the character and vitality of a downtown. Lastly, housing is an emerging land use with a huge up-side for redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties and adding to the area's population and spending potential.

This Plan recommends a multifaceted approach to creating Downtown economic vitality. The recommended strategies below are designed to address downtown's challenges and contribute to the overall vision of a healthy, diverse, and vibrant district that the community can take pride in, including zoning modifications, public investments in infrastructure and amenities, targeted infill development and redevelopment, and a variety of programs to aid business retention and attraction.

### 2 - 5.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Retail Space Preservation

The strength of the office market and the lack of multi-tenant office space has resulted in ground level building space in Downtown being occupied by office uses (primarily LANL contractors) that can easily pay \$30 per square foot and higher to rent space, while most local retailers can only afford to pay half of these rates at best.

To preserve ground level space for retail uses, the County Council has considered a number of zoning modifications and restrictions. A blanket requirement of limiting all ground level space to retail uses is not the answer. The overall land use development pattern in Downtown is that of a series of post-WWII shopping centers with large dedicated parking fields. There is only a small portion of Downtown, largely on Central Avenue, that has the characteristics of a traditional main street supporting pedestrian activities with buildings fronting the sidewalks and parking in the rear, side, or in consolidated parking lots. Restricting ground level space to retail-type activities only makes sense in these settings. It is unrealistic to apply this strategy to the entire Downtown as there is insufficient demand to support this amount of small, pedestrian-focused businesses.

A number of cities with strong Downtown retail sectors have considered use restrictions on the ground floor to prohibit specified non-retail uses. Boulder, Colorado considered limiting a proliferation of banks and financial institutions. Telluride, Colorado and many other mountain resort communities have considered restrictions on real estate offices and design firms oriented towards second home buyers. After extensive debate, most

**EXHIBIT 45. Precedent Examples - Uses That Support Small Business**



communities have chosen not to implement specific restrictions.

Other cities have considered measures to address the preservation of retail or requirements for new space to be developed. Crested Butte, Colorado prohibits office uses, medical and dental offices and clinics, and financial institutions on the ground floor of buildings that front a certain street. The ground floor of these buildings is reserved for retail commercial establishments, museums, and personal service establishments.

Healdsburg, California requires a conditional use permit for certain office uses, such as travel agencies, chiropractor, insurance, real estate, and financial offices when located on the ground floor in their Plaza Retail and Downtown Commercial Zone Districts. Those same uses are permissive and allowable by right when located above the ground floor.

Tumwater, Washington requires properties fronting main streets in their Town Center Zone District to have a minimum of 20 percent of the gross floor area on the first floor dedicated to retail sales, restaurants, personal services, museums, or art galleries. First floor uses must be "externally oriented," meaning it has a public entrance opening directly to the outside and facing the main street.

The alternative to use restrictions would be to create regulations that require a certain percentage of the street frontage to be for active uses (e.g., retail, restaurants, bars, and personal services such as salons and fitness studios). These restrictions should be limited to defined downtown zones where buildings front the sidewalks and there is an existing pedestrian retail environment (e.g., 25 percent of ground floor area or a percentage of the linear street frontage).

**B. Retail Space Development**

An alternative to prohibitions on ground floor office uses is to incentivize the development or

renovation of first floor space that is configured for retail-type uses. Some of the existing first floor space is vacant or outmoded and occupied by low rent uses.

Local retailers are generally undercapitalized and do not have the ability to take on building improvements. The County could establish a Retail Space Improvement Program to provide grants to building owners for the renovation of existing first floor space or the development of first floor space in new mixed-use developments that is marketable to retail uses. These grants would be limited to a percentage of the cost of tenant improvements to a warm shell standard. In return, the landlord would be required to limit the retail lease rate to an affordable level for a period of time sufficient to amortize the amount of public investment.

Madison, Wisconsin established a Facade Improvement Grant Program to support and encourage small businesses to reinvest in Downtown and neighborhood business districts. Eligible projects may receive a grant for up to half the cost of the facade improvements, to a maximum of \$10,000 per street facing facade. Maximum amounts ranged to \$10,000 for a single facade, \$20,000 for a building with two facades, and \$25,000 for “flatiron” buildings. The owner/tenant must use private, non-city funds to match the City’s grant. Property owners of service or commercial/mixed-use structures and building tenants, with leases of more than one year in length, are eligible for funding. Governmental entities and public and quasi-public authorities are ineligible for funding. The City of Madison has awarded 99 Facade Improvement Grants, totaling \$1,285,200 to businesses.

### **C. Tenant Recruitment**

The retail environment in Los Alamos is challenged by both changes in the national market as well as local conditions. Nationally and globally, the retail sector is impacted by the growth of E-commerce, declining brick and mortar store sales, and retail

store chain consolidations. There are fewer tenant options, with lower overall demand, and requirements for larger trade area populations to support specific retail stores. Locally, Los Alamos is also affected by slow growth rates, an aging population with lower retail spending, as well as leakage to the large store base in Santa Fe.

There are, however, some demographic shifts that favor Downtown, including growth in demand for locally-based food, beverage, and entertainment uses, all of which prefer a downtown or neighborhood commercial district environment. The restaurant, bar, and microbrewery segment has grown rapidly, and new food and beverage formats have been introduced (e.g., food halls and market halls, farm to table restaurants, and food trucks). These market/food hall establishments focus on creating a community atmosphere with shared eating and common spaces and a variety of food options and small format retail options. These businesses are largely local entrepreneurs starting new enterprises.

A number of zoning-based strategies can be implemented to promote new business start-ups. Food trucks and food halls with multiple small tenants have a low cost of entry and provide chefs and other food providers with an opportunity to test the market and grow their clientele. Outdoor dining is increasingly popular and has helped many restaurants survive during the occupancy restrictions and closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Development Code should be modified to provide greater flexibility to allow for these businesses to get started and grow.

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

Commercial spaces have seen an increase in rent costs recently, following a national trend. Nationally, as the cost of space rises, local businesses are being forced out and replaced by national chains that can negotiate better rents or afford to subsidize a high-visibility location. This is



especially detrimental to those who are looking to start a new business.

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. Providing expanded access to capital is a huge hurdle for small businesses and communities are becoming creative with how to fund small business through public partnership banks, modeled on the Bank of North Dakota, or establish a one-stop, single-application portal for local entrepreneurs seeking loans. The County should introduce new legislation that creates a partnership with local banks to remove barriers to funding or create local lease-to-own programs.

In addition to exploring innovative funding options, the County should explore policies that allow for the conversion of existing large-scale commercial spaces to be divided into smaller, multi-tenant spaces. Large commercial spaces are often harder to fill and therefore sit empty adding to Downtown's vacancy issue. Multi-tenant conversions create spaces that better accommodate the needs and lease rates of smaller-scale, local businesses. These conversions also lessen the risk for property owners who would no longer be dependent on one singular tenant but can attract a variety of tenants to one location. Such spaces could also be treated as "commercial condominiums" that provide possibilities to be individually owned units that are part of a larger multi-unit building with various owners. This further supports the buy your own building programs mentioned above. The County can encourage and promote such conversions through a variety of incentives including design flexibility from regulatory requirements or permit

fee waivers and a faster timeline for eligible projects. In addition, the County may be able to utilize LEDA and/or MRA funding to help provide necessary infrastructure to facilitate conversions and support tenant refurbishment.

A variety of zoning-based strategies are also available. These include updating the Development Code to include a variety of uses that naturally support small business including co-working facilities, business/restaurant start-ups/incubator spaces, food halls and allowance for mobile vending of food or merchandise out of a motor vehicle, cart, kiosk, or other temporary structure. Another strategy is to establish requirements for new developments with a certain amount of commercial uses fronting the public street. Under such regulations, 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. This strategy should be considered cautiously as it can inherently impact the ability to implement mixed-use or multi-family developments and thereby create additional vacancies or stifle Downtown redevelopment. At minimum, the Development Code update should update the Use Index Matrix to allow uses that will support small local businesses such as those listed above.

### **E. Promote Mobile Vending**

Encouraging mobile vending of food or merchandise out of a motor vehicle, cart, kiosk, or other temporary structure is another strategy to support small local businesses and promote food and beverage services that specifically cater to subsets of the community such as the youth and families. Such allowances could particularly benefit small businesses that can offer ready-made food options that allow customers to quickly grab-n-go such as ice cream, smoothies, and coffee/tea. These types of uses can contribute to the creation of a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment by allowing more

affordable options for the youth and families and encouraging spending time in Downtown's public spaces while they enjoy their food/beverages. This increases desired activity within the Downtown public realm. The Development Code should be updated to allow mobile vending. In addition, new public space projects or rehabilitations of existing facilities should provide public utility hookups that support mobile vending through kiosks and/or food trucks.

### **F. Develop Policies and Incentives to Activate First Floor Frontages**

Some community members have remarked that office use on the first floor of commercial buildings has proliferated to the extent where it is restricting the retail opportunities that most often require first floor spaces for successful operation. The existing zoning within Downtown allows a variety of uses including office on the ground floor.

Creating regulations that limit the amount of office uses that can occur along a frontage, e.g. 25 percent of ground floor area or a percentage of the linear street frontage, is one way to activate first floor frontages with commercial and retail rather than office space.

Another alternative way to activate the ground floor is to develop mechanisms to incentivize the desired commercial uses. Within the Downtown Core Zone District of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, developments may incorporate features to receive an increase in floor area ratio ("FAR"). The FAR multiplied by the parcel size (in square feet) equals the amount of allowable floor area that can be built within a development. The maximum allowable FAR multiplier in the Downtown Core is 6.0. Features that are included in the development that increase FAR include street level retail, public courtyards, structured or below-grade parking, green roofs, workforce housing, and others as defined in the Downtown Core Zone District standards. For street level retail, 100 square feet of additional floor area

is granted for each linear foot of retail frontage at street level. Development applications that contain the desired ground floor commercial uses could receive expedited County review/approval processes and/or have their permit fees waived. Boulder, Colorado provides rebates of permit fees and City sales and use taxes on purchases of fixed assets and equipment for businesses and nonprofit organizations that meet the city's definition of a primary employer. Participating businesses must demonstrate commitment to environmental, social, and community sustainability. In 2019, \$107,269 in rebate payments were made to the Flexible Rebate Program participants. A similar rebate program could be established to incentivize desired commercial uses on the street level in Downtown.

### **G. Streamline Development Process within Downtown**

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 when a particular project is for a permissive use that meets all the development requirements, including automatic neighborhood protection standards, can be a mechanism for Downtown development. It is therefore recommended that development applications that meet the County's development standards can be approved administratively rather than by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Administrative approvals within such activity centers is a common national best practice



*Ground floor office uses along Central Avenue create inactive storefronts*

utilized by cities and most have seen a resulting increase in areas targeted for redevelopment. It is therefore recommended that mixed-use, multi-family, and non-residential development projects under 50,000 square feet or that contain 75 or less dwelling units per acre that meet the updated development standards for Downtown can be approved administratively rather than by the Planning and Zoning Commission. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, development application approvals for the downtown area have been fast-tracked by allowing administrative approval after updating the zoning code to include specific design guidelines for downtown.

### **H. Develop Strategies that Incentivize Redevelopment of Vacant and Underutilized Sites and Structures**

Vacant and underutilized properties are one of the main concerns within Downtown Los Alamos. Many existing structures and sites are in a state of disrepair which inhibits the development of desired uses. Vacant commercial buildings around Downtown Los Alamos are not only unattractive to residents and visitors, but they also have a negative effect on surrounding property values and can be a magnet for crime. Incentivizing redevelopment of these sites and structures is key to a successful, vibrant, and economically viable Downtown. Several key properties with redevelopment potential are highlighted.

The Mari Mac Village Shopping Center lost its anchor tenant when Smith's Marketplace relocated to a new location with a significantly larger Marketplace format south of Trinity Drive. The large, underutilized parking lot and the adjacent vacant structure provide a significant opportunity for redevelopment because of its central location Downtown.

C.B. FOX Department Store, which closed in April 2020 after 40 years of business, is another key vacant property. Although repurposing or re-

tenanting the current building is a possibility, the highest and best use of the site may be for a mixed-use housing development with ground floor active commercial uses.

Redevelopment of existing commercial properties can often have extraordinary costs that keep the project from being feasible. These higher costs can be for property assembly, demolition, remediation, and utility upgrades, to name a few. The County may need to provide public assistance including property acquisitions and gap financing to make a desirable project feasible. This involvement could be provided through a MRA or other economic development incentives. The County's participation in redevelopment is a public-private partnership that is a recommendation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Vacant Building Ordinances are a tool to motivate property owners to lease, redevelop or sell vacant properties. Such a strategy is currently utilized in Las Vegas, Tucumcari, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. 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;



Former Smith's Marketplace, Mari Mac Village Shopping Center



#### EXHIBIT 46. Key Redevelopment Sites



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 Downtown 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.

#### I. *Develop an Entertainment Use That Attracts People, Particularly Families, to Los Alamos*

Successful downtowns often feature an entertainment venue that hosts a variety of performances and events and draws people of all ages to the area year-round. Currently, Ashley Pond features free outdoor concerts during the summer, but there is no indoor venue that allows ticketed events during colder times of the year. Indoor entertainment venues that feature activities such as amusement arcades, bowling alleys, pool halls, skating rinks, theaters, laser tag and trampolines are also missing from Downtown and offer excellent options for family activities as desired by the community. There are, however, ample opportunities to create an entertainment venue of this kind, particularly along the 20th Street

#### EXHIBIT 47. Precedent Examples - Entertainment Venues



Indoor entertainment facilities such as bowling alleys, laser tag, and arcades can attract people, especially families and the youth, to Downtown.

extension south of Trinity Drive that will house the new Marriott Town Place Suites and Conference Center or the former C.B. FOX department store building along Central Avenue. The former C.B. FOX building can be renovated to accommodate a small entertainment venue seating 100-250 people.

#### J. Promote Tourism as an Economic Driver

A viable way to increase the market support for retail businesses is by attracting more visitors. The State of New Mexico, and particularly nearby Santa Fe, are major tourism destinations. Los Alamos is primarily a day trip for visitors to the Santa Fe area to go to the Manhattan Project National Historic Park or the nearby natural sights of Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera. The current impact of visitors on retail spending is relatively small; depending on the business, it is estimated at an average of 10 percent of annual sales volume or less. However, every new visitor generates additional retail spending in the Downtown economy.

The County has an existing Tourism Plan that provides a roadmap for capitalizing on the area's attractions and amenities. It will be important to locate any urban type attractions in Downtown to build on the existing concentration of uses and to increase the overall draw.

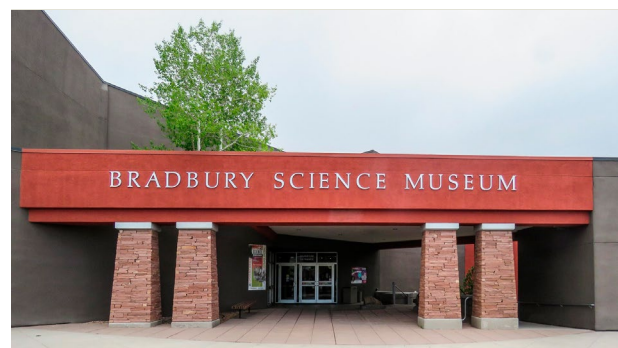
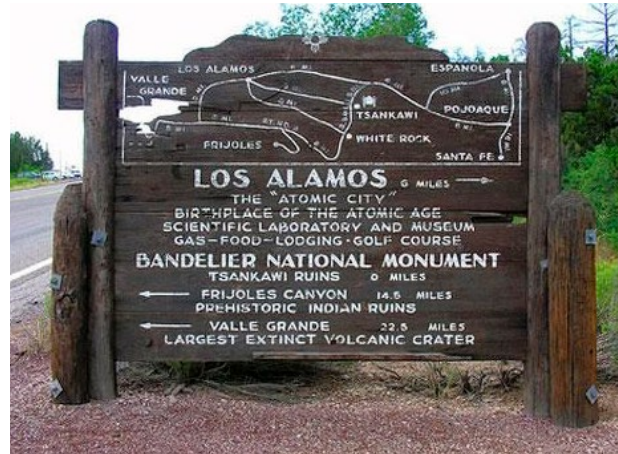
Tourism is a growing sector of the economy in Los Alamos County as visitors come to learn about the area's unique history, partake in outdoor recreation, and visit nearby National Parks such as Bandelier and the Valles Caldera. The Tourism Plan outlines strategies and actions seen as critical for promoting tourism as an economic driver for the County. Downtown Los Alamos is in a position to harness the economic impact of tourism development as it drives the growth and helps diversify the economy. Downtown Los Alamos is described as a critical strategic location for implementing a variety of the Tourism Plan's priority action items, including provisions for increasing wayfinding and



lodging supply, enhancing guest experiences, and improving quality of life for residents, businesses, and LANL.

A critical component to leveraging tourism as an economic driver for Downtown is enhancing the overall aesthetics to create a more welcoming atmosphere for visitors. This can be accomplished by encouraging infill of vacant commercial buildings and infrastructure improvements aimed at creating a convenient and vibrant walking experience. The Development Framework and recommendations for updating zoning and pedestrian infrastructure improvements listed throughout this Master Plan will create more walkable, pedestrian-oriented development that is in line with the goals of the Tourism Plan. Additionally, the recommended zoning updates and public space improvements will accommodate a variety of expanded eating, shopping and public space options to meet visitor and resident expectations and encourage more time spent Downtown.

#### EXHIBIT 48. Tourism



*Downtown Los Alamos is in a position to harness the economic impact of the tourists that visit the area to drive growth and help diversify the economy.*



## 2 - 5.IV ECONOMIC VITALITY GOALS

*Vitality Goals*” on page 90 summarizes goals for the Economic Vitality element and associated strategies.

The goal is to create a Downtown in which local businesses can thrive by using various strategies and through the update to the Development Code. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and strategies facilitated through County ordinances, public and private investment and public-private partnerships amongst others. “*Table 15. Economic*

**TABLE 15. Economic Vitality Goals**

**INTENT:** Vacant and underutilized properties are one of the main concerns within Downtown Los Alamos. The deterioration of existing structures and sites that inhibit the development of desired uses is also a concern.

**VISION:** A vibrant Downtown with an environment in which local businesses can thrive.

**GOAL 1: Create a downtown in which local businesses can thrive.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Develop strategies to keep commercial rents affordable, either through ordinance or other means.

**Strategy 1.2:** Update the Development Code to incentivize desired commercial uses on ground floors through mechanisms like expedited review/approval processes and waiving permitting fees.

**Strategy 1.3:** Incentivize the development or renovation of first floor space to be configured for retail-type uses.

**Strategy 1.4:** Update the Development Code to support small business start-ups including co-working spaces, food trucks, multi-tenant food halls, and greater use of outdoor spaces with restaurants.

**Strategy 1.5:** Update the Development Code to allow mobile vending, particularly for ‘grab-n-go’ food options for youth and families.

**Strategy 1.6:** Update the Development Code to allow administrative review and approvals for development proposals that are compliant with all updated Downtown district standards.

**Strategy 1.7:** Work with Los Alamos Main Street to expand Downtown programming and events in the winter months.

**Strategy 1.8:** 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 1.9:** Streamline procedures for property owners seeking to divide large existing commercial spaces into smaller, multi-tenant spaces.

**GOAL 2: Engage in public-private partnerships to incentivize Downtown infill development and redevelopment.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Implement the economic development and redevelopment tools and incentives needed to assist private developers with financing gaps and other redevelopment obstacles.

**Strategy 2.2:** Provide an incentive to a developer/property owner willing to build an entertainment venue.

[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]



# PUBLIC SPACE / STREETS

---





## 2 - 6 PUBLIC SPACE / STREETS

### 2 - 6.I VISION STATEMENT

*A vibrant and pedestrian-oriented Downtown that connects assets and provides a variety of pedestrian amenities.*

contributes to an overall vibrancy. Linking the existing assets in Downtown with more pedestrian amenities contributes to increased walkability that supports the 2016 Comprehensive Plan goals for Downtown.

### 2 - 6.II INTRODUCTION

The Public Space / Streets element establishes a vision for an inclusive, vibrant and pedestrian-friendly downtown in Los Alamos.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 has elevated the value of public spaces within communities. The use of trails, parks, and other pedestrian infrastructure has increased exponentially since March 2020. Places where people can gather safely outdoors are in high demand in communities of all sizes across the country. Many municipalities temporarily changed standards and permit processes involving outdoor dining in order to expand service while remaining safely distanced. Some municipalities even shut down streets to allow for outdoor dining to expand from the sidewalks into the street. Such actions illustrate the high demand for more public spaces and outdoor retail options.

Creating spaces with attractive pedestrian amenities and placemaking features in the public right-of-way allows people of all ages to safely interact and have an enjoyable experience. The community has already invested considerable resources into Downtown to enhance the pedestrian experience along Central Avenue and Ashley Pond. In addition, a pedestrian corridor allows for a dedicated space for outdoor dining and retail opportunities while public plazas will provide spaces for food trucks, pop-up businesses, and entertainment venues. Creating more spaces for people to feel welcome to gather Downtown

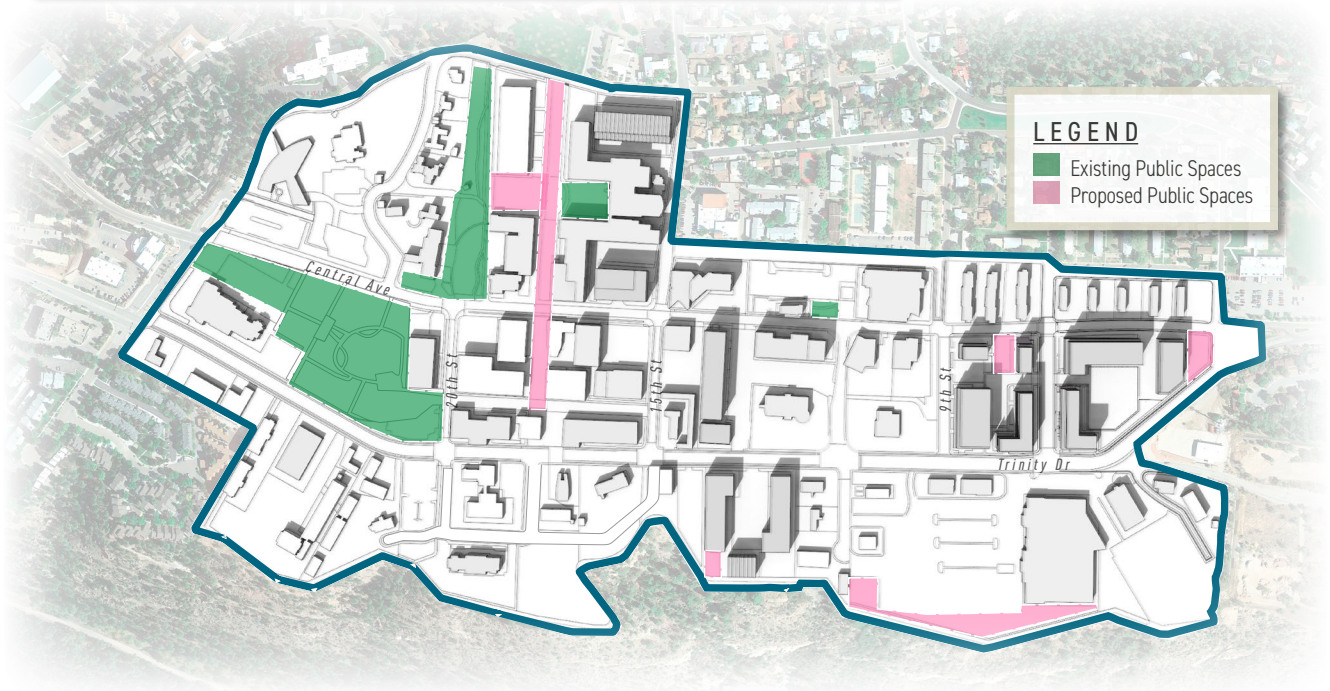
### 2 - 6.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Create Diverse, Interconnected Public Spaces**

Existing public spaces, such as Ashley Pond and the wide sidewalks along Central Avenue, are excellent anchors to the Downtown public space network, that should contain a diverse variety of interconnected public spaces. Amenitized sidewalks, pedestrian corridors, and/or multi-use paths should connect existing and new public spaces including plazas, pocket parks, parklets, and mini plazas to create an interconnected open space network. These new spaces are ideal for adding outdoor dining and accommodating spaces for food trucks, pop-up businesses, and entertainment venues throughout Downtown. They can be as small as a parklet, which is generally the size of an on-street parking space, to a large plaza that can host small concerts and festivals. Connections between open spaces through enhanced sidewalks, the creation of a new pedestrian corridor as described in [\*"B. Incentivize the Creation of a Pedestrian Corridor"\* on page 95](#), or through multi-use trails like the planned and funded Urban Trail along 20th Street should be prioritized to establish an interconnected open space network. Such a network can support local businesses and greatly enhance the vitality and livability of Downtown.

Las Cruces, New Mexico converted half of a block within its downtown into a civic plaza, featuring portals for shading, plentiful seating, a stage, a splash pad, and a mix of hardscape and softscape

**EXHIBIT 49.** Existing and Proposed Public Spaces



**EXHIBIT 50.** Precedent Examples of Public Spaces



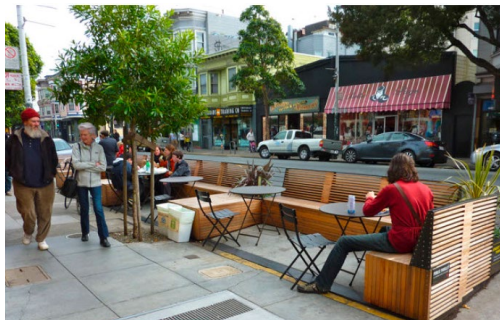
Plaza with food truck festival at Harvard University, Boston, MA



Plaza with food truck festival, Boulder, CO



Pocket park with seating and landscaping, Newcastle University, UK



Parklet that adds outdoor dining option for restaurant, South Milwaukee, WI



landscaping. It has served as a gathering place and event space for the community and was completed in 2016 through a public/private sector agreement between Las Cruces Community Partners, LLC and the City of Las Cruces. The plaza helped revitalize the city's downtown. In addition to this central gathering plaza, alleyways that were once vehicular streets have been converted into small public spaces with the addition of pedestrian amenities such as murals, benches, shading, and lighting. These alleyways also serve the purpose of providing a connection to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Potential locations for pedestrian connections and additional public spaces are illustrated in *"Exhibit 49. Existing and Proposed Public Spaces"* on page 94, as well as precedent examples of public spaces illustrated in *"Exhibit 50. Precedent Examples of Public Spaces"* on page 94. The County should plan and seek funding for larger centralized public spaces like a plaza.

## **B. Incentivize the Creation of a Pedestrian Corridor**

A pedestrian corridor dedicates a portion of private development parcels or public right-of-way exclusively to pedestrian use. Such corridors can act as through-block connectors that add dimension to and improve linkages within the Downtown pedestrian network by offering alternative pathways off the street. This Plan recommends that a major north-south pedestrian corridor is established to increase pedestrian movement between Nectar Street and Trinity Drive. A potential location for the pedestrian corridor is shown in *"Exhibit 49. Existing and Proposed Public Spaces"* on page 94. This scheme extends the parking corridor that bisects Central Park Square south of Central Avenue to create a break in the large block and allow more pedestrian mobility. Since Central Avenue already has improved pedestrian infrastructure, it would be a natural connection for pedestrians to have a dedicated corridor between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive. The

### **EXHIBIT 51. Precedent Examples of Pedestrian Corridors**



Dedicated pedestrian corridors can act as through-block connectors that add dimension to and improve linkages within the downtown pedestrian network. These spaces should contain a high level of pedestrian amenities.



corridor would run from Nectar Street south to Deacon Street, where it would turn east and then south again at 17th Street to follow the current street network. The corridors should feature outdoor dining and retail areas with shopfronts or entertainment venues that activate the corridor. Facades and storefronts along the pedestrian corridor should be designed to cater to the eye level of pedestrians with plentiful window glazing and primary pedestrian entrances. Other pedestrian amenities should include string lights, street furniture, decorative pavement treatments, water fountains, and public restrooms. Special events can also be held along the pedestrian corridor. These additional amenities create an “outdoor room” within the urban fabric.

### C. Define Streets as Public Spaces

Downtown streets are in need of improvements to create a walkable, pedestrian-oriented environment. Without an established street scheme, Downtown’s public realm feels disjointed. As Downtown should serve as Los Alamos’s premier community destination, the implementation of a unified streetscape will unify the public realm, strengthen the identity of Downtown, and increase the supply of public space. A cohesive streetscaping design scheme that emulates the existing condition along the western portion of

Central Avenue is therefore recommended to be implemented among all Downtown streets. This includes the widening of sidewalks where feasible, and continuing the established street furnishings schemes for benches, trash receptacles, lighting, and bike racks to help create a cohesive look throughout Downtown. Mimicking the style found in these areas along other streets will make the best use of past and future available funding. Examples of already existing streetscape / amenity design elements are illustrated in [“Exhibit 52. Existing Streetscape Design Elements Along Central Avenue” on page 96](#). Along with this scheme, a cohesive street tree and landscaping plant palette should be established that allows designers to choose from a curated list of plants that are drought-tolerant and appropriate for the specific climate of Los Alamos. Typical street sections that indicate how wider sidewalks, landscaping, and bicycle infrastructure could be incorporated are shown in [“Exhibit 26. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements Cross-Sections” on page 55](#). The County should include the funding of streetscape improvements that emulate the improved portions of Central Avenue in the Capital Improvements Program.

#### EXHIBIT 52. Existing Streetscape Design Elements Along Central Avenue



Bench and waste receptacles on Central Avenue



Bike racks and light fixtures on Central Avenue

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

The goal is to establish an inclusive, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes a central gathering space, nighttime entertainment, and more retail and restaurants. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and strategies

facilitated through County ordinances, public and private investment and public-private partnerships amongst others. *"Table 16. Public Space / Streets Goals" on page 97* summarizes goals for the Public Space/ Streets element and associated strategies.

**TABLE 16. Public Space / Streets Goals**

**INTENT:** Downtown has a number of existing assets that are not connected, and lacks space for food trucks, outdoor dining, and pop-up businesses.

**VISION:** A vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Downtown that connects the existing assets and provides a variety of pedestrian amenities.

**GOAL 1: Create a welcoming, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes a central gathering space, nighttime entertainment and more retail and restaurants.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Enhance, maintain, and connect existing public spaces and assets.

**Strategy 1.2:** Identify, plan for, and fund/incentivize the development of a north-south pedestrian corridor to encourage walking and outdoor dining.

**Strategy 1.3:** Identify, plan, and seek funding for larger, more centralized public spaces like a plaza.

**Strategy 1.4:** Create/incentivize a series of diverse public spaces including parklets and mini plazas that provide spaces for outdoor dining, food trucks, pop-up businesses and entertainment events.

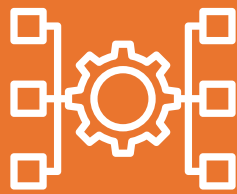
**GOAL 2: Enhance Downtown streets so they act as public spaces.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Implement streetscape designs that emulate the improved portions of Central Avenue along other Downtown streets.

**Strategy 2.2:** Include the funding of streetscape improvements that emulate the improved portions of Central Avenue in the Capital Improvements Program.

**Strategy 2.3:** Update the Development Code to require street trees a minimum of 25' on center along Downtown streets.

**Strategy 2.4:** Increase sidewalks widths in Downtown to a minimum of 8 feet and/or incentivize property owners to dedicate additional right-of-way as appropriate/feasible.



# INFRASTRUCTURE

---





## 2 - 7 INFRASTRUCTURE

### 2 - 7.I VISION STATEMENT

*Reliable public infrastructure that enhances the overall quality of life while reducing associated carbon output.*

### 2 - 7.II INTRODUCTION

The Infrastructure element establishes a vision for public infrastructure that is accessible, equitable and low carbon. This applies to Downtown transportation, water, sewer, power, and broadband. It addresses the currently unreliable broadband network to provide more access and bandwidth within Downtown.

Shared public power outlets are also in short supply in Downtown. These outlets would allow pop-up businesses and food trucks to position themselves in public spaces without the use of diesel generators.

### 2 - 7.III RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **A. Incorporate Downtown Infrastructure Improvements Into County's CIP**

The various sections above speak to an extensive number of public infrastructure improvements ranging from vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails, open space, and public amenities to be integrated into Downtown. These items should be incorporated in the County's Capital Improvements Program.

Within the goals established in *"2 - 6 Public Space / Streets" on page 93*, a series of public spaces of varying sizes is recommended to be implemented.

The installation of public power outlets that are ideally generated on-site from a renewable source should be coordinated with the installation of public spaces within Downtown in order to facilitate public events, pop-up businesses, and food trucks to fully utilize these spaces. Potential locations for these public hook-ups for utilities are shown in *"Exhibit 53. Potential Public Utility Hook-Up Locations" on page 100*.

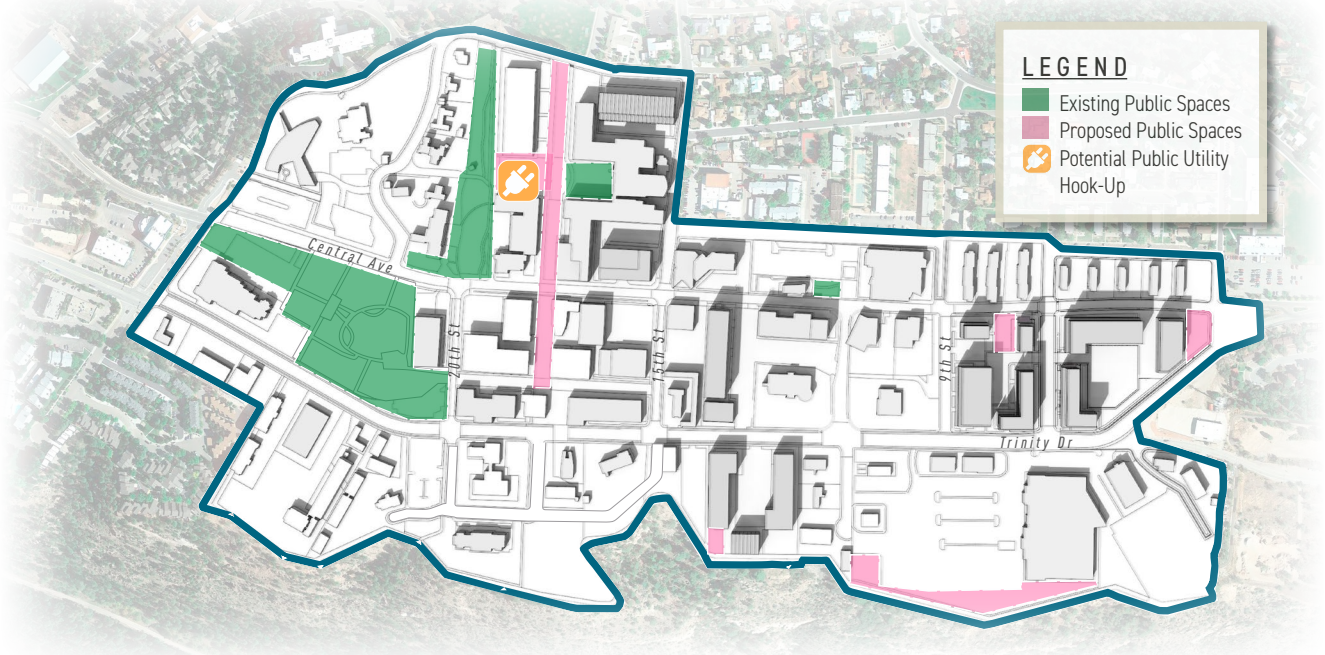


*The areas surrounding Ashley Pond have free WiFi access*



*Public power outlets can be installed in public places to support special events.*

**EXHIBIT 53.** Potential Public Utility Hook-Up Locations



**EXHIBIT 54.** Precedent Examples -Technology



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



AT&T Street Charge NYC Solar Powered Phone Charging Stations



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



LinkNYC system supplies free public WiFi hotspots and charging stations.



## B. Promote Access to Utilities and Broadband

This Plan recommends improving the reliability of the free public WiFi in the areas where it is currently available while also expanding the range to include more of Downtown Los Alamos, with new public spaces prioritized.

The internet has become an essential part of our daily lives and access to free, high-speed, reliable broadband service is a priority for Downtown Los Alamos. Free public WiFi is already provided in the Ashley Pond area as well as Fuller Lodge. This free public WiFi should be upgraded to improve reliability as well as expanded into more locations within Downtown to increase opportunities to connect. Expansion to bus stops should also be

prioritized in order to create smart stops where riders can browse the internet and charge their devices while they wait.

## 2 - 7.IV INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

The goal is to promote access to renewable sources for power and broadband throughout Downtown. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and strategies facilitated through County ordinances, public and private investment and public-private partnerships amongst others. "[Table 17. Infrastructure Goals](#)" on page 101 summarizes goals for the Infrastructure element and associated strategies.

**TABLE 17. Infrastructure Goals**

**INTENT:** The County lacks reliable public infrastructure to serve residents and the workforce.

**VISION:** Reliable public infrastructure that enhances the overall quality of life while reducing associated carbon output.

### **GOAL 1: Promote access to utilities and broadband throughout the County.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Plan and seek funding for the Implementation of a reliable broadband network throughout Downtown.

**Strategy 1.2:** Provide public WiFi hotspots at destinations like Ashley Pond, major public spaces, and at bus stops.

**Strategy 1.3:** Offer access to public power outlets to support pop-up businesses and food trucks in public spaces.

### **GOAL 2: Implement public infrastructure improvements, streetscape improvements, transportation, recreational trails, and open space improvements that will aid in Downtown revitalization and general quality of life.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Seek funding for priority infrastructure improvements identified within Downtown through the Capital Improvement Program.





# SUSTAINABILITY

---



## 2 - 8 SUSTAINABILITY

### 2 - 8.I VISION STATEMENT

*A Downtown that integrates sustainable practices throughout.*

### 2 - 8.II INTRODUCTION

The Sustainability element establishes a vision for a sustainable Downtown. Practicing sustainability moving forward is key to protecting the natural environment and beautiful landscapes that surround Los Alamos as well as the air and water quality of the County for future generations.

Sustainable development practices within Downtown are currently lacking. The implementation of green buildings and infrastructure strategies provides a vision for Downtown to be a local model of environmental stewardship that generates environmental, social, and economic benefits. 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. Create Standards for Implementation of LID, Solar Covered Parking, and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

Low Impact Development (“LID”) techniques are systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat (US Environmental Protection Agency). If designed, installed, and maintained properly, LID can help enhance regional water quality by

reducing and filtering stormwater runoff before it enters waterways, add value to development projects by reducing infrastructure costs, and preserve or create on-site natural systems that manage stormwater, add aesthetic value, and double as a public amenity. LID techniques feature sloped curbs, bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and cisterns or rain barrels for rainwater harvesting.

By including requirements for incorporating LID techniques into new development and redevelopment, a higher level of sustainability will be reached in Downtown. The Development Code should be updated to include the following LID practices:

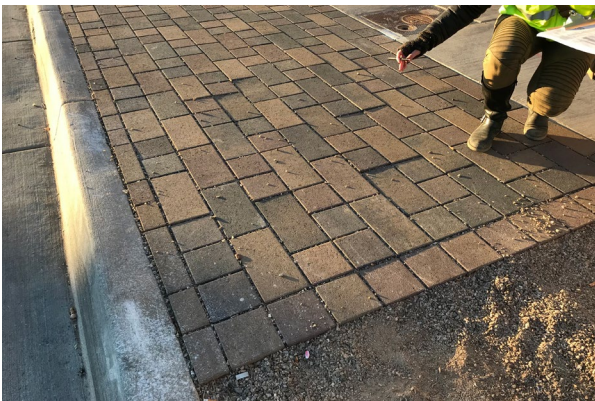
- Better site design requirements that reduce impervious surfaces and direct runoff to landscaped areas to promote infiltration and reduce runoff volumes.
- Bioretention requirements in parking lots such as rain gardens, bioswales, and bioinfiltration practices that collect runoff and manage it through infiltration, evapotranspiration, and biological uptake of nutrients and other pollutants.
- Allowances for porous pavement including porous concrete, porous asphalt, and interlocking pavers that allow runoff to infiltrate into the ground.
- Encourage 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.

These standards should specifically define the purpose, function, and specifications of LID while leaving room for flexibility to creatively apply these systems where it is appropriate. Precedent examples of LID are shown in [\*“Exhibit 55. Precedent Examples of LID Techniques” on page 104.\*](#)

**EXHIBIT 55. Precedent Examples of LID Techniques**



A curb cut to a bioswale allows stormwater to infiltrate through the soil naturally instead of being directly diverted to storm drains, Albuquerque, NM



Permeable pavers allow water to infiltrate the soil instead of contributing to runoff, Albuquerque, NM

**EXHIBIT 56. Precedent Example - Solar Parking**



Solar covered parking in Albuquerque, NM

**B. Incorporate Green Parking Lot Practices**

While necessary for urban environments like Downtown, 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 Downtown development. This can be largely achieved through incorporating LID practices that incorporate bioretention and porous pavements as discussed above. Innovative parking lots are now also incorporating elements like solar parking covers and electric charging stations. Solar covered parking has numerous benefits including a better usage of current space, reduced energy consumption and electrical costs, and cooler and more comfortable interiors of vehicles. Solar covered parking can also reduce the heat island effect within cities. Structures and roads absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes, contributing to higher temperatures than outlying areas. Solar covered parking maximizes the limited space Downtown while keeping energy bills more predictable. A precedent example of solar covered parking is shown in ["Exhibit 56. Precedent Example - Solar Parking" on page 104](#). Landscaping standards would not be required within parking lots if solar covered parking is used.

With the continued increase of electric cars on the roads, cities have begun including requirements and standards for electric car charging stations within their parking requirements. Electric vehicles reduce air pollution and transportation contributions to climate change. Providing locations for charging electric vehicles allows residents and visitors opportunities to have an impact on reducing the effects of climate change within the community. It is recommended to update the Development Code to incentivize installation of electric vehicle charging stations for existing development when building improvements take place and for new development.



### C. Update Outdoor Lighting Standards

Los Alamos is situated in close proximity to two units of the National Park System - Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve. Both of these places have applied for certification by the International Dark Sky Association as International Dark Sky Parks. This certification requires demonstration of robust community support for dark sky protection.

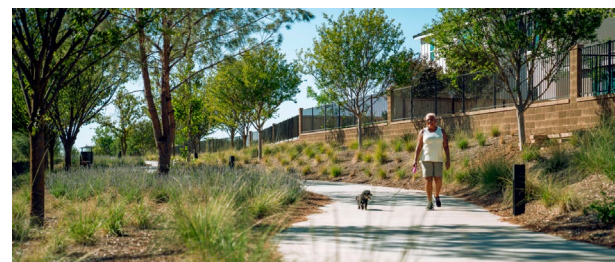
When fully redeveloped, more urbanized areas such as Downtown are likely to generate a significant amount of nighttime lighting. The trespass of nighttime lighting is a significant concern to Los Alamos residents who desire to preserve the remarkable natural setting in which the community exists. The County has funded a streetlight light-emitting diode ("LED") replacement program which should be utilized to update existing lighting fixtures within Downtown. In addition, the County Public Works Department should explore funding for a control system that allows the dimming and turning off of district lighting and provides notifications when lights are out. This Plan recommends that the lighting regulations within the Outdoor Lighting section of the Chapter 16 Development Code be updated to reflect national best practices to encourage the preservation of a dark nighttime sky. At a minimum, the Development Code Update needs to regulate the use of fully shielded and full cut-off light fixtures to reduce light emission to ensure outdoor lighting does not exceed levels specified in the Illuminating Engineering Society recommendations and to encourage the use of energy-efficient light fixtures.

### D. Revise Landscape Requirements to Promote Native Plants

Currently, the Development Code states in Sec. 16-754 that "landscape design should emphasize native plants and water conservation practices and should give due consideration to the recommended plant materials list." The Development Code

should be updated to include a recommended plant material list that encourages native and regionally adapted plants, as they work best within applications of LID techniques to control storm runoff and erosion and are appropriate for the specific climate of Los Alamos. Native plants require a minimum effort to maintain and provide natural habitat for birds and wildlife, including sustaining populations of pollinators and other beneficial insects. Precedent examples of native plant schemes are shown in ["Exhibit 57. Precedent Examples of Native Plants Schemes" on page 105.](#)

#### EXHIBIT 57. Precedent Examples of Native Plants Schemes



*Native landscape palettes used throughout public improvements including streetscapes and along multi-use trails*

## 2 - 8.IV SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

The goal is to foster and promote sustainability practices. This can be achieved with a variety of tools and strategies facilitated through County ordinances, public and private investment and

public-private partnerships amongst others. *"Table 18. Sustainability Goals" on page 106* summarizes goals for the Sustainability element and associated strategies.

**TABLE 18. Sustainability Goals**

INTENT: Sustainable development practices within Downtown are currently lacking and could be increased.

VISION: A Downtown that integrates sustainable practices throughout.

### **GOAL 1: Foster and promote sustainability practices.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Create standards that require and incentivize the implementation of Low Impact Development techniques, solar covered parking, and electric vehicle charging stations.

**Strategy 1.2:** Create development regulations for outdoor lighting fixtures that mitigate light pollution to maintain dark skies in concert with local efforts as applicable.

**Strategy 1.3:** Encourage renewable energy integration in new development and County facilities.

**Strategy 1.4:** Update the Development Code to include a recommended plant list of native and regionally adapted plants suited for Los Alamos.

[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]



[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]

# PART 3: IMPLEMENTATION

---

[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]



## PART 3. IMPLEMENTATION

THIS SECTION OUTLINES IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS PLAN. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WILL NOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT, AND THERE IS NOT A SINGLE GROUP OR ORGANIZATION THAT HAS THE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT ALL OF THE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED IN THIS PLAN. IT WILL TAKE AN INCREMENTAL APPROACH THAT REQUIRES THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE COUNTY, PROPERTY OWNERS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY THROUGH A COMBINATION OF STRATEGIC CATALYTIC PROJECTS AS WELL AS THE FACILITATION OF SMALLER SCALE INFILL OPPORTUNITIES.

### 3 - 1 FUNDING AND FINANCING OF DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS

The following section outlines several funding sources that could be utilized to fund the improvements outlined in this Plan.

#### 3 - 1.I CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The County's Capital Improvements Program ("CIP") provides a roadmap for necessary capital improvements needed during the upcoming planning period, typically five years, and the proposed method to finance those improvements. The County's capital budget can be utilized to pay for a variety of public infrastructure projects identified in this Plan including improvements to public buildings and sites, utilities infrastructure, roadway and streetscape improvements, and creation of public spaces. The County should begin to connect the recommendations within this Plan to the capital planning process.

#### 3 - 1.II LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT

The Local Economic Development Act ("LEDA") is a critical funding mechanism that would allow the County to invest public money in private business ventures that could facilitate Downtown redevelopment or critical projects with public benefits such as job creation. Before LEDA, governments could not devote public funds to privately sponsored economic development initiatives. LEDA changed that by allowing cities to pass a local ordinance that enables them to earmark proceeds from the 1/8 percent local-option gross receipts tax for publicly beneficial infrastructure projects, which Los Alamos County has implemented.

The LEDA program has a competitive grant program funded by an annual appropriation from the legislature that is managed by the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) that provides grants to local governments (city, county, or tribal) for economic development projects and initiatives. LEDA requires communities to first complete a LEDA resolution and create an economic

development organization and strategic plan. A total of 83 New Mexico communities, including Los Alamos County, have completed a LEDA resolution, which allows the community to apply for State funding for qualified projects based on funds appropriated by the State legislature. So far for FY 2021, the State has allocated approximately \$37 million in grants for projects. Projects using State funds must be in economic base industries (primary jobs), create permanent full-time jobs, and have a 10 to 1 ratio of private investment to LEDA funds. LEDA-qualified uses include public infrastructure, grants or loans for land or buildings, and economic development incentives.

New legislation in 2020 (SB-118), referred to as the Local and Regional Economic Development Support Fund, amends the LEDA program to allow the EDD to participate in economic development projects including grants or loans for acquiring or improving land, buildings, or infrastructure; ROW infrastructure including broadband; and infrastructure improvements for cultural facilities. The program requires a Project Participation Agreement with the local government for a "substantive contribution." In separate legislation, the LEDA fund received an additional \$15 million for this new initiative.

These LEDA funds are a key way for Los Alamos County to be able to invest public money in private ventures that will directly have an impact on the overall business environment in Downtown. LEDA funding could be utilized to help subsidize projects and improvements in the broadest sense in order to achieve community goals.

### 3 - 1.III DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Private sector funds will also be critical to implementing the recommendations outlined within this Plan. The County could establish a variety of development incentives to attempt to stimulate private investment throughout Downtown. Indirect funding mechanisms in the form of development incentives could include:

- *Property tax abatements or deferrals in exchange for provisions of public amenities*
- *Below-market rate land sales or ground leases*
- *In-lieu payments*
- *Fast tracked approval processes for downtown housing or catalytic mixed-use development to lower developer costs*

## 3 - 2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

"Table 19. Downtown Los Alamos Development Framework Implementation Matrix" on page 113 outlines the general types of projects envisioned by the Development Framework outlined in "Part 2. Vision & Goals" on page 36 and the type of funding mechanisms that could be utilized to implement them. The priority column indicates implementation priorities to guide the phasing of improvements. Projects indicated as short-term should begin with completion of this Plan as they are seen as catalytic investment that will spur further redevelopment within Downtown. Intermediate should be targeted to begin within seven years of adoption of this Plan

and long-term are those that are anticipated to take around 15 years from adoption of this Plan. On-going efforts are those that are anticipated to be phased in as infrastructure renovations and infill development take place.

Implementation of the projects detailed will likely be incremental; priority term phasing indicated may change depending on a number of factors including funding availability and community needs.

TABLE 19. Downtown Los Alamos Development Framework Implementation Matrix					
Priority	Project Type	Description	Entity	Funding Mechanism	Potential Regulation and/or Incentive
Short-term	<b>Broadband Infrastructure</b>	Improve broadband infrastructure downtown to encourage new private investment.	Public	CIP, LEDA	N/A
Short-term	<b>Parking Structures</b>	Construct three parking structures that are strategically located throughout Downtown to accommodate a 'park once and walk' parking management strategy.	Public Private	TIF or LEDA Private Development Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public contributions toward parking structure</li> <li>- In-lieu contributions</li> </ul>
Short-term	<b>Catalytic Infill Development</b>	Redevelop three key sites including the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center, C.B. FOX Department Store, and Central Park Square through public-private partnerships that can provide spatially targeted mixed-use infill development that aims to spur additional economic investment in the area.	Public Private	LEDA Private Development Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public infrastructure investments</li> <li>- Revised development regulations that allow higher density development with reduced parking standards</li> <li>- Staff Technical Assistance to streamline development process through administrative approvals</li> </ul>
Intermediate	<b>Strategic Infill Development</b>	Infill mixed-use and higher density housing on targeted infill lots Downtown.			
Ongoing	<b>Existing Facade Improvements</b>	Implement façade improvement programs to improve the exterior appearance of buildings and storefronts.	Public Private	CIP, LEDA	N/A
Short-term	<b>Gateway Features</b>	Install highly visible gateway features including elements such as roadway arches, sculptures, signage, decorative paving, lighting, and landscaping at the intersections of Central Avenue and Trinity Drive and Central Avenue and Oppenheimer Drive.	Public	CIP	N/A
Intermediate	<b>Wayfinding Signage</b>	Implement a comprehensive and unified Downtown signage system.		CIP, TIF	N/A
Short-term	<b>Roadway Extensions of 6th Street and 9th Street</b>	Extend 6th Street and 9th Street between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive to create smaller and more connected block structures that are typical of walkable Downtowns.	Public Private	CIP, LEDA Private Development Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private dedication of right-of-way</li> <li>- Requirements for the construction of roadway segments</li> </ul>
Intermediate	<b>Roadway Extensions of 15th Street and 20th Street</b>	Extend 15th Street and 20th Street south of Trinity Drive to create more north-south connectivity and generate more redevelopment potential for sites south of Trinity Drive.			
Intermediate	<b>Central Avenue Intersection Crossing Improvements</b>	Install protected crossing improvements such as raised crosswalk, pedestrian bulb-outs or speed tables along Central Avenue intersections and mid-block crossings.	Public	CIP	N/A
Short-term	<b>Trinity Drive and 20th Street Intersection Crossing Improvements</b>	Install protected crossing improvements at Trinity Drive and 20th Street to facilitate the Urban Trail connection. Funding is in place for the traffic signal at Trinity Drive and 20th Street.	Public	CIP	N/A
Intermediate	<b>Remaining Trinity Drive Intersection Crossing Improvements (Knecht Street to Central Avenue)</b>	Create more visibility and safer conditions among the remaining Trinity Drive intersections from Knecht Street to Central Avenue by installing enhanced pedestrian crossing improvements such as colored crosswalks.	Public	CIP Private Development Funds	N/A



[THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]

TABLE 19. Downtown Los Alamos Development Framework Implementation Matrix					
Priority	Project Type	Description	Entity	Funding Mechanism	Potential Regulation and/or Incentive
Short-term	Central Avenue Streetscape Improvements	Continue Central Avenue streetscape improvements that emulate those that exist between Oppenheimer Drive and 9th Street, along the eastern segments of Central Avenue past 9th Street.	Public Private	CIP Private Development Funds	- Development regulations for new construction and additions
Short-term	Deacon Street Improvements	Redesign of Deacon Street between 15th Street and 20th Street is planned and will aid in increasing access and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.	Public	CIP	N/A
Short-term	Trinity Drive Streetscape Improvements	Address crossing improvements and streetscape improvements through the Trinity Drive Safety Project between Oppenheimer Drive and Knecht Street. Design is funded and an RFP will be issued shortly.	Public	HSIP (Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program)	N/A
Long-term	Remaining Streetscape Improvements	Implement roadway reconstruction and/or improvement projects of remaining Downtown roadways to include wider sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, and unified street furnishings that emulate existing improvement along Central Avenue as feasible.	Public Private	CIP Private Development Funds	N/A
Short-term	Urban Trail Bicycle Improvements	Complete the Urban Trail that provides a direct connection from the Canyon Rim Trail which runs along the canyon edge on the southern boundary of Downtown. This project is funded and in the design stage.	Public	TAP (Federal Transportation Alternative Program), CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality)	N/A
Short-term	Canyon Rim Trail Improvements	Complete the Canyon Rim Trail which runs along the canyon edge from Knecht Street to 20th Street is funded and will soon proceed to final design.	Public	CIP	N/A
Long-term	Remaining Bicycle Improvements	Install pavement markings to indicate sharrows along Deacon Street and Knecht Street as well as Bathtub Row.	Public Private	CIP Private Development Funds	- Development requirements for construction and additions to the bicycle network on/near adjacent development
Ongoing	Short-term Bicycle Parking Facilities	Install bicycle parking consisting of simple bike racks, bike lockers or indoor bicycle storage rooms throughout Downtown, but particularly within infill development sites.	Public Private	CIP Private Development Funds	- Development regulations for bicycle parking within new construction and additions
Intermediate	North-south Pedestrian Corridor	Create pedestrian-only portion of the north-south pedestrian corridor between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive.	Public Private	LEDA Private Development Funds	- Development regulations for new construction and additions
Long-term	North-south Pedestrian Corridor	Create a shared pedestrian corridor between Nectar Street and Central Avenue.			
Intermediate	North-south Pedestrian Corridor	Create pedestrian-only portion of the north-south pedestrian corridor between Central Avenue and Deacon Street.	Public Private	LEDA Private Development Funds	- Development regulations for new construction and additions
Short-term	Premier Gathering Spaces	Create premier public gathering spaces such as plazas within the two major redevelopment sites, Central Park Square and the Mari Mac Shopping Center.	Public Private	LEDA Private Development Funds	- Development regulations for new construction and additions
Ongoing	Pocket Parks, Mini-plazas, and Parklets	Create a variety of public spaces Downtown including pocket parks, mini-plazas and parklets as part of Downtown redevelopment.	Public Private	CIP, LEDA Private Development Funds	- Development regulation requiring open space
Ongoing	Transit Improvements	Enhance existing transit stops with new shelters, lighting, landscaping, and rider amenities such as WiFi hotspots on digital onboarding signage.	Public Private	CIP Private Development Funds	- Development regulations for new construction and additions

### 3-2.1 PHASING PRIORITIES

#### A. *Short-term Priorities*

Projects designated as a short-term priority are those seen as catalytic, or those of a sufficient magnitude to stimulate redevelopment of vacant or underutilized areas around them. Gateway features at the east and west bookends welcome visitors into the area. Mixed-use redevelopment of two critical sites, Central Park Square and the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center, can create critical masses of commercial and high density housing to become anchors along each end of the Central Avenue corridor. Public gathering spaces such as plazas with enhanced placemaking features and pedestrian amenities should be incorporated into both of these development sites to create yet another anchor of activity at each end of the corridor.

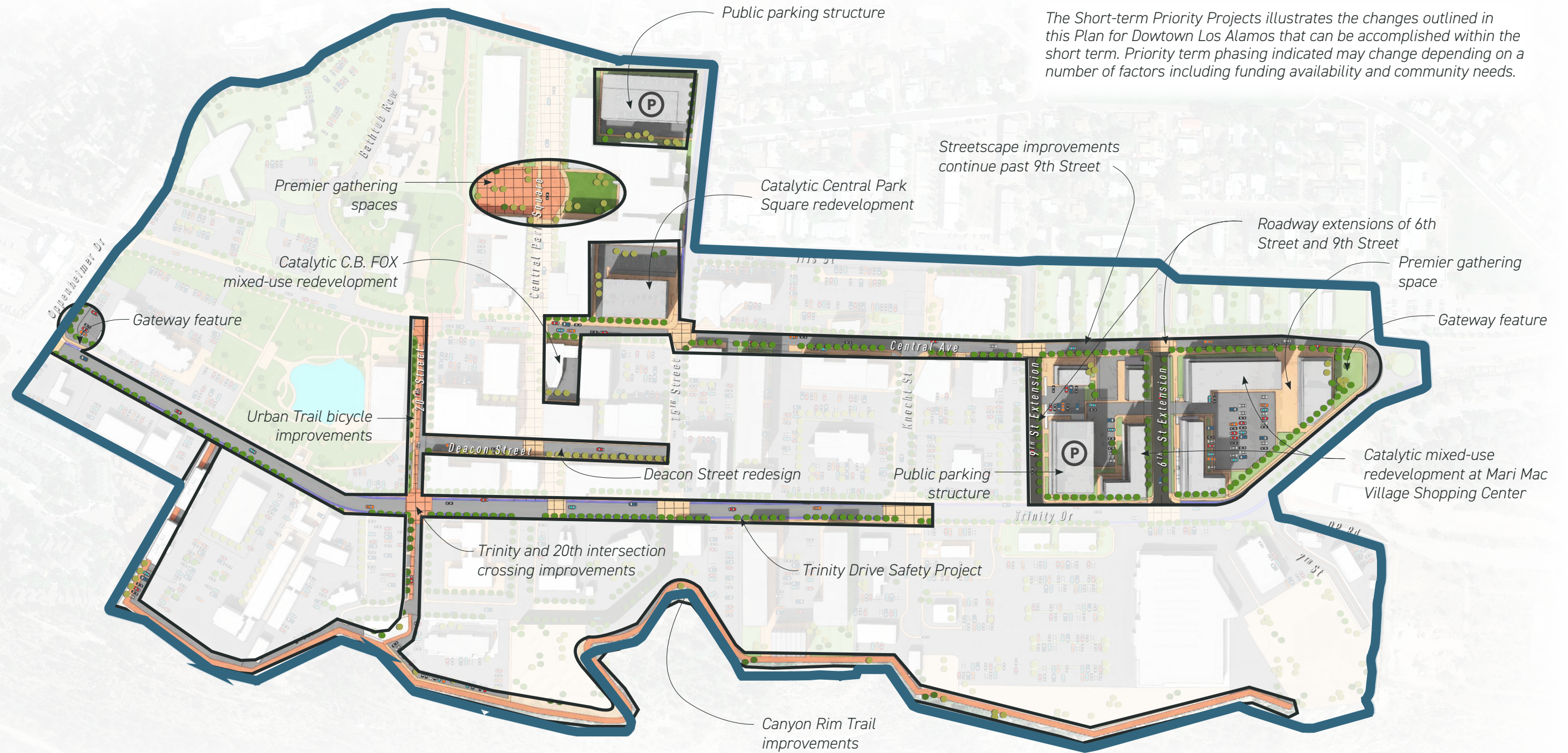
Roadway extensions of 6th Street and 9th Street between Central Avenue and Trinity Drive create smaller and more connected block structures that are typical of walkable downtowns and create even more redevelopment potential for the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center site while the initial portions of a north-south pedestrian corridor have a similar effect for Central Park Square. The

anticipated concentration of activity that could occur within these two sites also makes them ideal locations for public parking structures. Anchoring two significant parking resources at each end of Central Avenue will also create the infrastructure necessary to support a true parking district within Downtown as most destinations within the district would be easily accessible by foot from either structure.

The continuation of the Central Avenue streetscape improvements along the eastern portion of the corridor ensures a pleasant walking environment along the Main Street corridor between these two activity centers and creates further infill opportunities between them. Safety and streetscape improvements along Trinity Drive from Oppenheimer Drive to Knecht Street will also facilitate a more pleasant and connected pedestrian experience. Provisions for Broadband infrastructure within Downtown would facilitate further redevelopment opportunities by creating a critical infrastructure service for commercial, office, and housing uses alike. The remaining short term priority projects revolve around bicycle and pedestrian improvements needed to facilitate the completion of the Canyon Rim Trail and Urban Trail projects that is anticipated to be a major alternative connector into Downtown.



**EXHIBIT 58. Short-term Priority Projects**



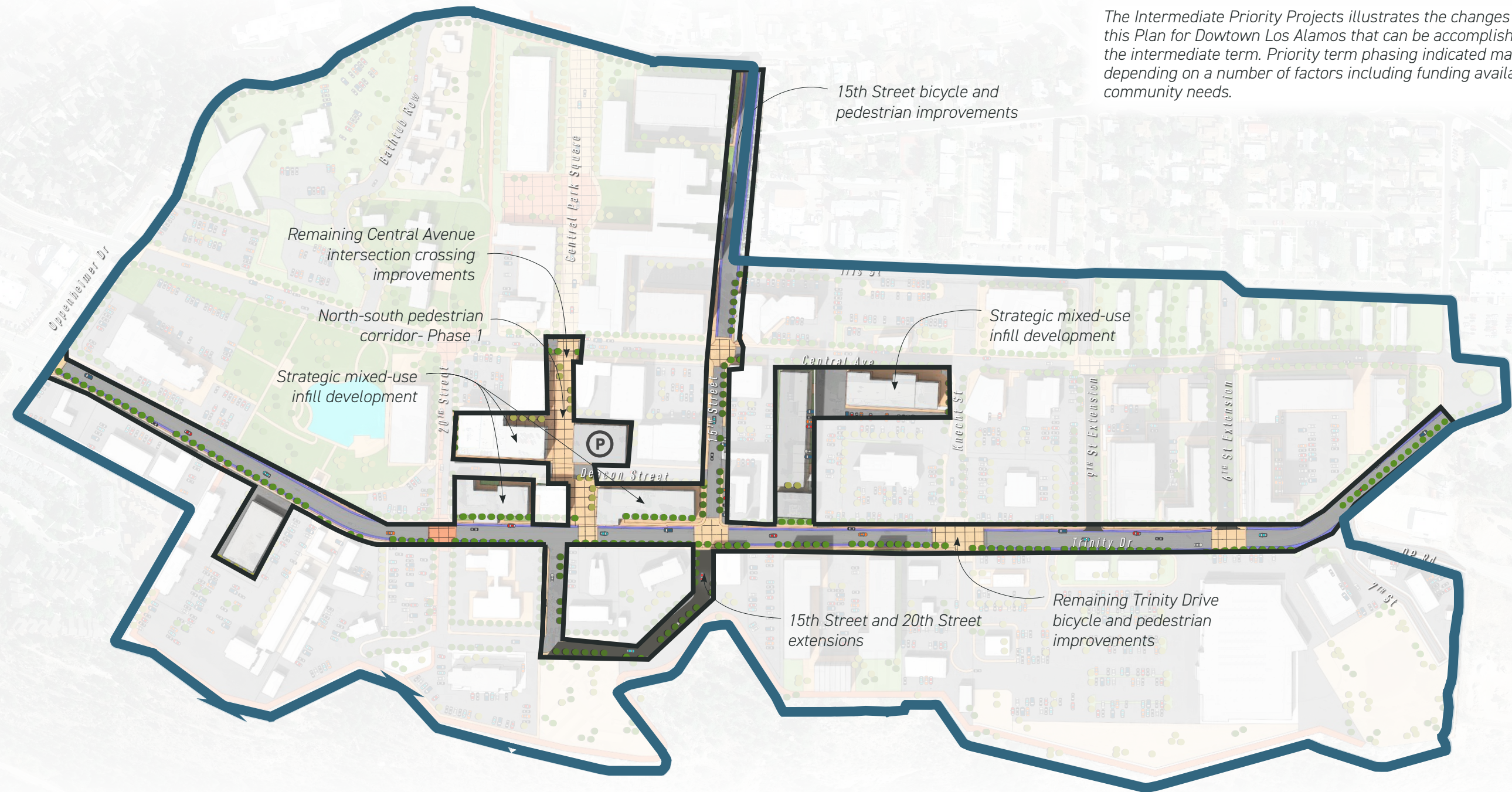


## **B. Intermediate Priorities**

The intermediate tier of projects builds off the momentum from the short-term priorities tier. Intermediate mixed-use and high-density residential infill development is anticipated to occur along Central Avenue between Central Park Square and the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center. One particularly important node for mixed-use infill development is along Deacon Street, where an additional parking structure is proposed. The majority of remaining projects within this phase revolve around creating opportunities for cross-district connectivity off of the central spine.

Roadway extensions of 15th Street and 20th Street south of Trinity Drive as well as the pedestrian safety enhancements of the remaining Trinity intersections provide necessary north-south connectivity and generate more redevelopment potential for southern sites. The continuation and evolution of the pedestrian corridor south of Central Avenue creates a distinct pedestrian-only connector capable of becoming a unique destination. Paired with the redevelopment of Deacon Street, these improvements can spur further redevelopment of sites between 15th Street and 20th Street. Dedicated bicycle lanes along Trinity Drive and sharrows along 15th Street can complete a robust bicycle network that can facilitate cycling as an alternative transport method within Downtown. The implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding system ensures that visitors and residents alike can easily navigate Downtown, find key destinations, and easily locate parking.

**EXHIBIT 59. Intermediate Priority Projects**



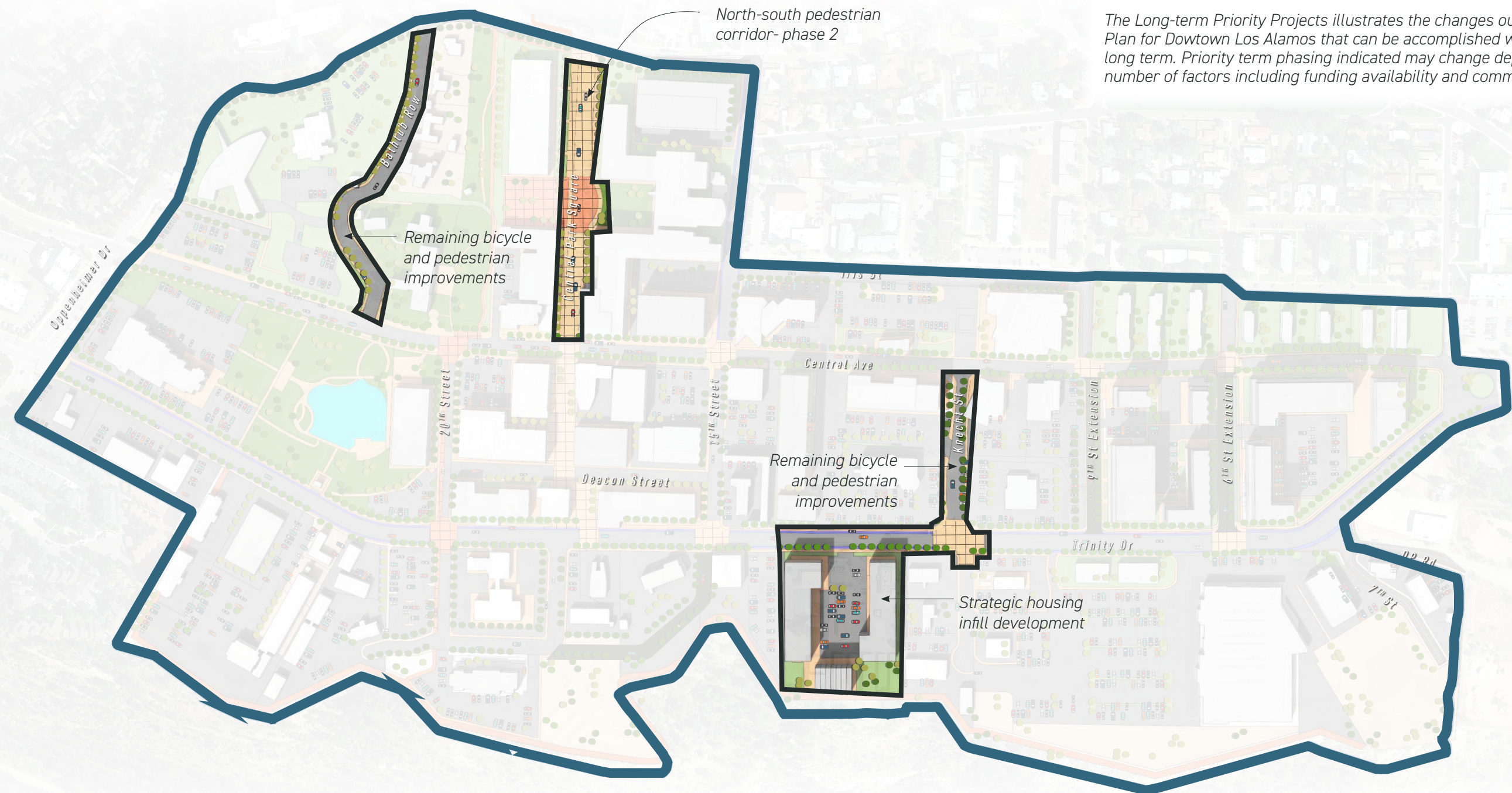
The Intermediate Priority Projects illustrates the changes outlined in this Plan for Downtown Los Alamos that can be accomplished within the intermediate term. Priority term phasing indicated may change depending on a number of factors including funding availability and community needs.



### **C. Long-term Priorities**

The final phase of redevelopment completes pedestrian and bicycle improvements among the remaining Downtown roadways to ensure a pleasant street corridor that meets all modes of transport. Streetscape improvements are completed along roadways that include sidewalk enhancements, a unified landscape scheme, and site furnishing palette that takes its cues from the established theme along Central Avenue. These improvements paired with those stated above are anticipated to spur redevelopment of any remaining vacant or underutilized sites, particularly those south of Trinity Drive.

**EXHIBIT 60. Long-term Priority Projects**



The Long-term Priority Projects illustrates the changes outlined in this Plan for Downtown Los Alamos that can be accomplished within the long term. Priority term phasing indicated may change depending on a number of factors including funding availability and community needs.