City of Las Cruces®
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

TIDD Board Action and Executive Summary

Item # 3 **Ordinance/Resolution#** 16-006

For Meeting of _____ (Ordinance First Reading Date) **For Meeting of** July 25, 2016 (Adoption Date)

Please check box that applies to this item:
☐ QUASI JUDICIAL ☒ LEGISLATIVE ☐ ADMINISTRATIVE

TITLE: **A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE 2016 LAS CRUCES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN.**

PURPOSE(S) OF ACTION:

Recommend plan adoption.

TIDD DISTRICT: 1		
Drafter/Staff Contact: Andy Hume	**Department/Section:** Community Development / Planning & Neighborhood Services	**Phone:** 528-3048
City Manager Signature:		

BACKGROUND / KEY ISSUES / CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

At the TIDD Board (Board) meeting held on January 11, 2016, the Board adopted TIDD Resolution 16-002. That Resolution authorized funding for the development of a new downtown master plan. The current downtown revitalization plan is over 12 years old. Many factors have changed since its adoption in 2004, including a new economic environment.

The planning effort focused around a four-day charrette and emphasized crucial topics such as downtown identity, economic development, housing, neighborhood integration, and arts and culture. A great deal of data was included during plan development including retail, hospitality, and residential market research analyses. The analyses were conducted by national firms that are recognized by financial institutions, retailers, and developers. A public comment period was held May 1-July 15, 2016. The new 2016 Las Cruces Downtown Master Plan (LCDMP) is attached as Exhibit "A"; the URL for the exhibit is: https://indd.adobe.com/view/bb26d21e-4957-4306-a11d-f4049611a1ec.

The LCDMP will:

- Provide a guide for investing future TIDD monies and implementing the plan and projects.
- Coordinate with the current Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan.
- Allow for economic development planning efforts with potential investor opportunities.

- Identify new projects and activities that will continue to energize the downtown renaissance.

The purpose of this Resolution is to request that the Board review the LCDMP and make a recommendation to the City Council to adopt the new plan. In addition to review by the Board, the plan is also scheduled for review and action through the typical City land use plan adoption process. The next steps are as follows:

August 16th - Planning and Zoning work session
August 23rd - Planning and Zoning meeting
September 19th - City Council meeting

okay SUPPORT INFORMATION:

1. Resolution.
2. Exhibit "A", LCDMP

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Is this action already budgeted?			
N/A	Yes	☐	See fund summary below
	No	☐	If No, then check one below:
	Budget Adjustment Attached	☐	Expense reallocated from: _____.
		☐	Proposed funding is from a new revenue source (i.e. grant; see details below)
		☐	Proposed funding is from fund balance in the _____ Fund.
Does this action create any revenue			
N/A	Yes	☐	Funds will be deposited into this fund: ____in the amount of $_____for FY__.
	No	☐	There is no new revenue generated by this action.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

N/A

FUND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY:

Fund Name(s)	Account Number(s)	Expenditure Proposed	Available Budgeted Funds in Current FY	Remaining Funds	Purpose for Remaining Funds
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

1. Vote "Yes"; this action will recommend adoption of the LCDMP.
2. Vote "No"; this action will not recommend adoption of the LCDMP.
3. Vote to "Amend"; this action could modify the recommendation. This could delay adoption of the LCDMP and require direction of the Board to staff.
4. Vote to "Table"; this action would delay recommendation of adoption of the LCDMP and require direction of the Board to staff.

REFERENCE INFORMATION:

The resolution(s) and/or ordinance(s) listed below are only for reference and are not included as attachments or exhibits.

1. Resolution No. 16-002.

City of Las Cruces®
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

TIDD BOARD ACTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PACKET ROUTING SLIP

For Meeting of _____ (Ordinance First Reading Date)

For Meeting of July 25, 2016 (Adoption Date)

TITLE: A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE 2016 LAS CRUCES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN.

Purchasing Manager's Request to Contract (PMRC) {Required?} Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENT	SIGNATURE	PHONE NO.	DATE
Drafter/Staff Contact		528-3048	7/13/16
Department Director		528-3067	7-13-16
Other			
Assistant City Manager /CAO Management & Budget Manager		541-2078 541-2107	7-15-2016 7-14-2016
Assistant City Manager/COO		541 2271	7-19-16
DEPUTY City Attorney		541-2821	7-21-16
City Clerk		x 2115	7-22-16

Rev. 8/2011

RESOLUTION NO. 16-006

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE 2016 LAS CRUCES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN.

The TIDD Board is informed that:

WHEREAS, at the meeting on January 11, 2016, the TIDD Board (Board) approved funding to update to the downtown revitalization plan and conduct market research analyses; and

WHEREAS, over 200 people attending a four-day charrette held February 16-19, 2016; and

WHEREAS, discussion topics included downtown identity, housing, economic development, neighborhood integration, and arts and culture; and

WHEREAS, a public comment period was held May 1 through July 15, 2016; and

WHEREAS, it is in the Board's best interest to review and recommend adoption of the Las Cruces Downtown Master Plan to the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it resolved by the governing body of the City of Las Cruces Tax Increment Development District:

(I)

THAT the Las Cruces Downtown Master Plan, as shown in Exhibit "A", attached hereto and made part of this Resolution, is hereby recommended for adoption to the City Council.

(II)

THAT City staff is hereby authorized to do all deeds necessary in the accomplishment of the herein above.

DONE AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____20___.

APPROVED:

_____
TIDD Chair

ATTEST:

_____
City Clerk

(SEAL)

VOTE:
Chair Miyagishima: _____
Board Member Gandara: _____
Board Member Smith: _____
Board Member Pedroza: _____
Board Member Eakman: _____
Board Member Sorg: _____
Board Member Levatino: _____

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____
City Attorney

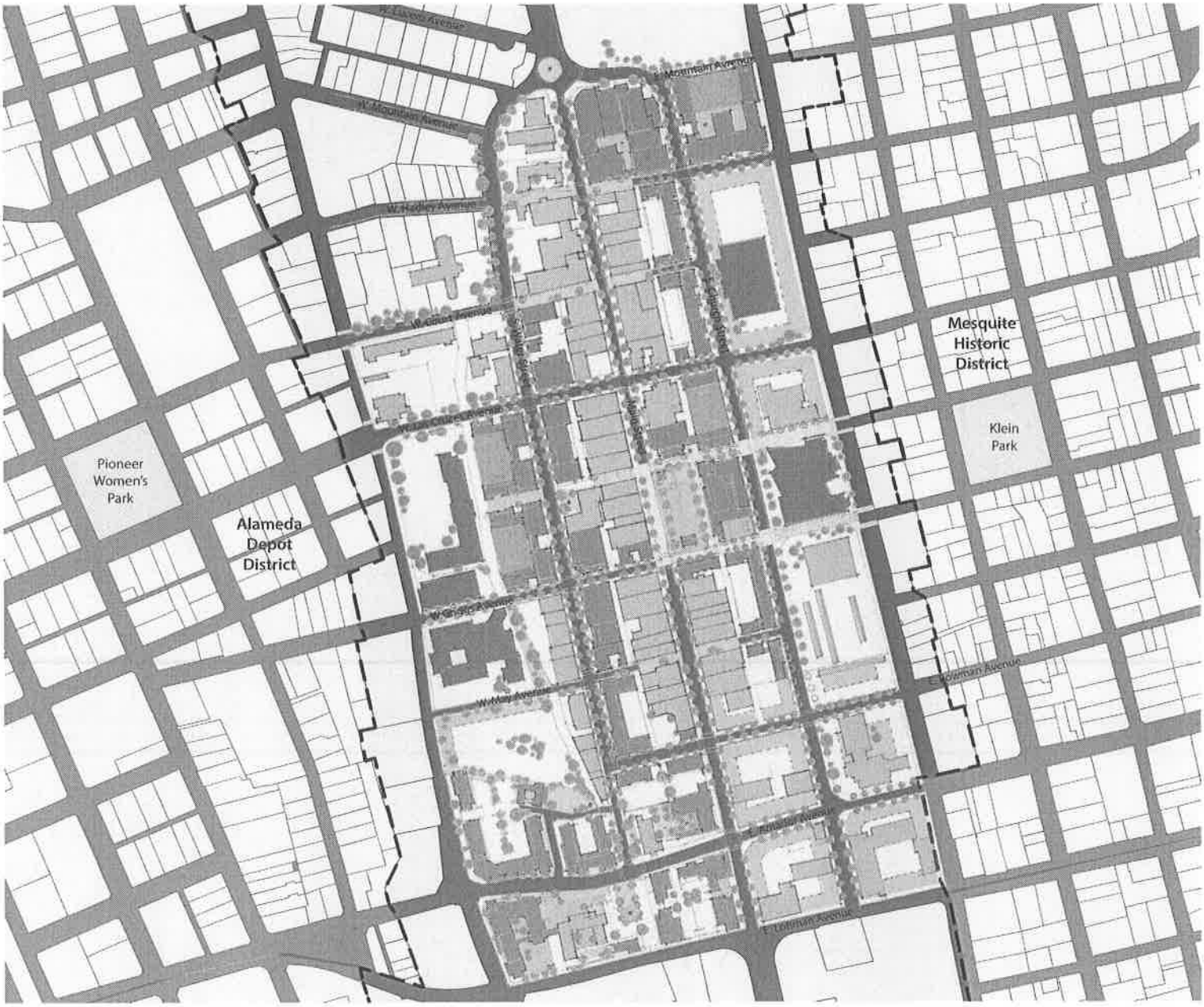
EXHIBIT "A"

11 JULY

2016

LAS CRUCES

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN



JULY
2016

DRAFT
2

DOWNTOWN

MASTER PLAN

CITY OF LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayor & City Council

MAYOR
Ken Miyagishima

DISTRICT 1
Kasandra Gandara

DISTRICT 2
Greg Smith, Mayor Pro Tem

DISTRICT 3
Olga Pedroza

DISTRICT 4
Jack Eakman

DISTRICT 5
Gill Sorg

DISTRICT 6
Ceil Levatino

City Staff

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
David Weir

DOWNTOWN COORDINATOR
Andy Hume

DOWNTOWN PLANNER
Armando Morales

Consultant Team

PLACEMAKERS, LLC
Susan Henderson
Hazel Borys
Ben Brown
Scott Doyon

ANDREW VON MAUR

BROWN URBAN DESIGN STUDIO

GIBBS PLANNING GROUP

SWIFT & ASSOCIATES

URBAN ADVANTAGE

ZIMMERMAN VOLK ASSOCIATES

Draft Two

July 2016

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BUILDING ON SUCCESS

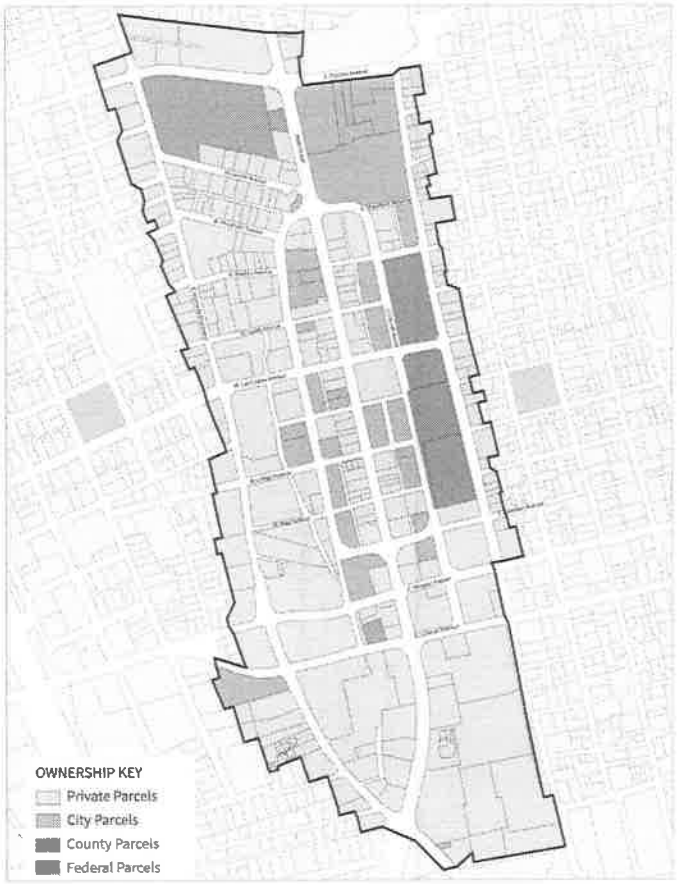
LAS CRUCES' DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN WAS CREATED IN **2004**, WITH A PLAZA UPDATE IN **2013**. THE PUBLIC PROCESS IN **2016** BRINGS IT UP TO DATE.

Plaza design development with Susan Henderson and Geoff Dyer including the PlaceMakers October 2013 charrette. Plaza construction underway in 2015.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the dozen years since our comunity came together to create an ambitious Revitalization Plan for Downtown Las Cruces, much has changed nationally and regionally, as well as in our city. So it's time to look again at our Downtown ambitions and at strategies for making the most of what's coming our way.

Downtown businesses, cultural institutions and residential neighborhoods are crucial to the social, economic, and environmental vitality of Las Cruces. From time to time, we review goals and strategies for protecting and enhancing their contributions. We adopted our Downtown Revitalization Plan in 2004, and updated it with the current Plaza design in 2013. Since the original plan, factors that affect ways in which we prioritize investments and shape policies have shifted in both subtle and dramatic ways. So it's time to revisit what we know and position our Downtown for a more opportunity-filled future.



The 2016 Downtown Master Plan is a made-in-Las-Cruces vision and action plan.

Instead of stringing the public discussion out over months, we compressed much of the conversation into four intense days of exploring the hopes and concerns of residents, business people, elected officials and staff, in a February 2016 public design workshop, or charrette.

In advance, we undertook a rigorous analysis of economic development potential in Downtown Las Cruces with a Residential Market Study, Retail Market Analysis, and Hospitality Market Analysis. This helped us be realistic during the charrette, as we identified key goals and tested strategies to achieve them. By the end of the February 2016 charrette, we established general agreement on an outline for our plan. The studies, analysis, public process, and community input can be found on the project iCharrette™ website, www.lascrucesdowntownplan.org.

This plan builds upon the foundation laid by nearly three decades of Downtown planning. Big picture goals of a more lively and prosperous Downtown remain. As does the commitment to assuring inclusion of the adjoining historic neighborhoods of Mesquite and Alameda Depot in the strategies and actions. The current effort has been an exercise in affirmation and continuity, just with an added incentive for accelerating the process.

A strong opportunity is presented by pent-up demand for both commercial and residential development. According to market analyses, there's immediate demand in the area for some 250 apartments and almost 105,000 square feet of retail. 100 new hotel rooms will be needed by 2021.

Getting to know our target market has helped us see that Downtown Las Cruces is a national draw to new residents. And with a little boost to our WalkScore, which already scores 75 Very Walkable, we will be a draw to national retailers as well, who usually look for a score of 80 or higher to open a new downtown store. (See Section IV What We Learned).

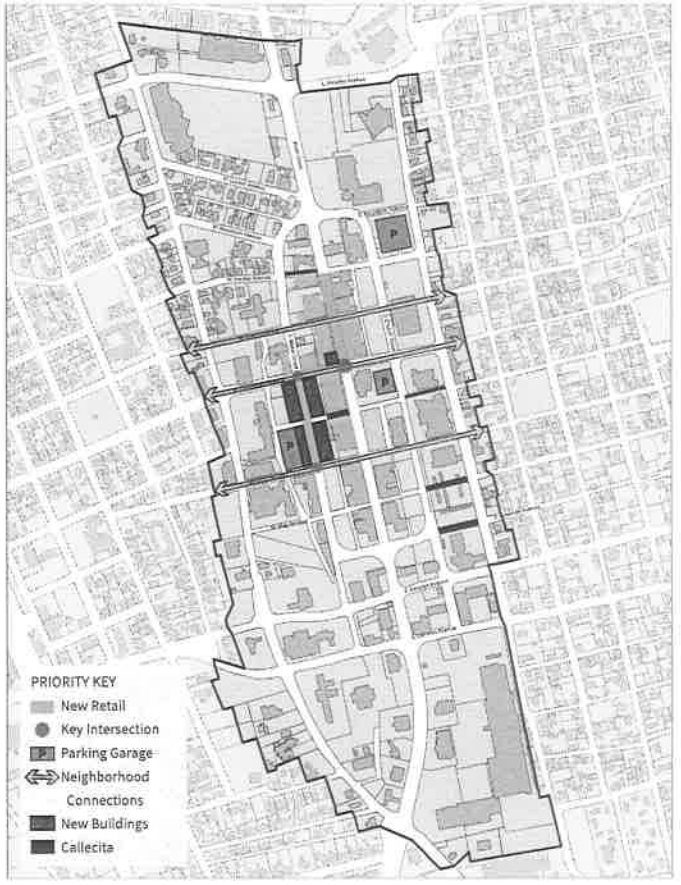
Since numbers like those are likely to attract developers, including many who might prefer addressing that demand in outlying areas, there is a heightened sense of urgency for Downtown planning and implementation. If the demand is absorbed in suburban regions, hopes for significant improvement in economic development and quality of life in the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods could be delayed — or even dashed — for a generation.

This plan sets the policy to ramp up the effort by concentrating the development focus in the short term on sections of the Downtown that are the best candidates for incubating a critical mass of walkable, mixed-use development that inspires broader private sector investment and public-private partnerships in the long term. High-priority strategies include:

PRIORITY NO. 1.
The first priority may be the easiest to fix: Begin eliminating barriers that inhibit connectivity between the Downtown and the Mesquite and Alameda Depot neighborhoods.

PRIORITY NO. 2.
The second recommended priority is to support the soon-to-be-completed Plaza with new development and redevelopment, adding restaurants, residences and other active uses that enliven street life.

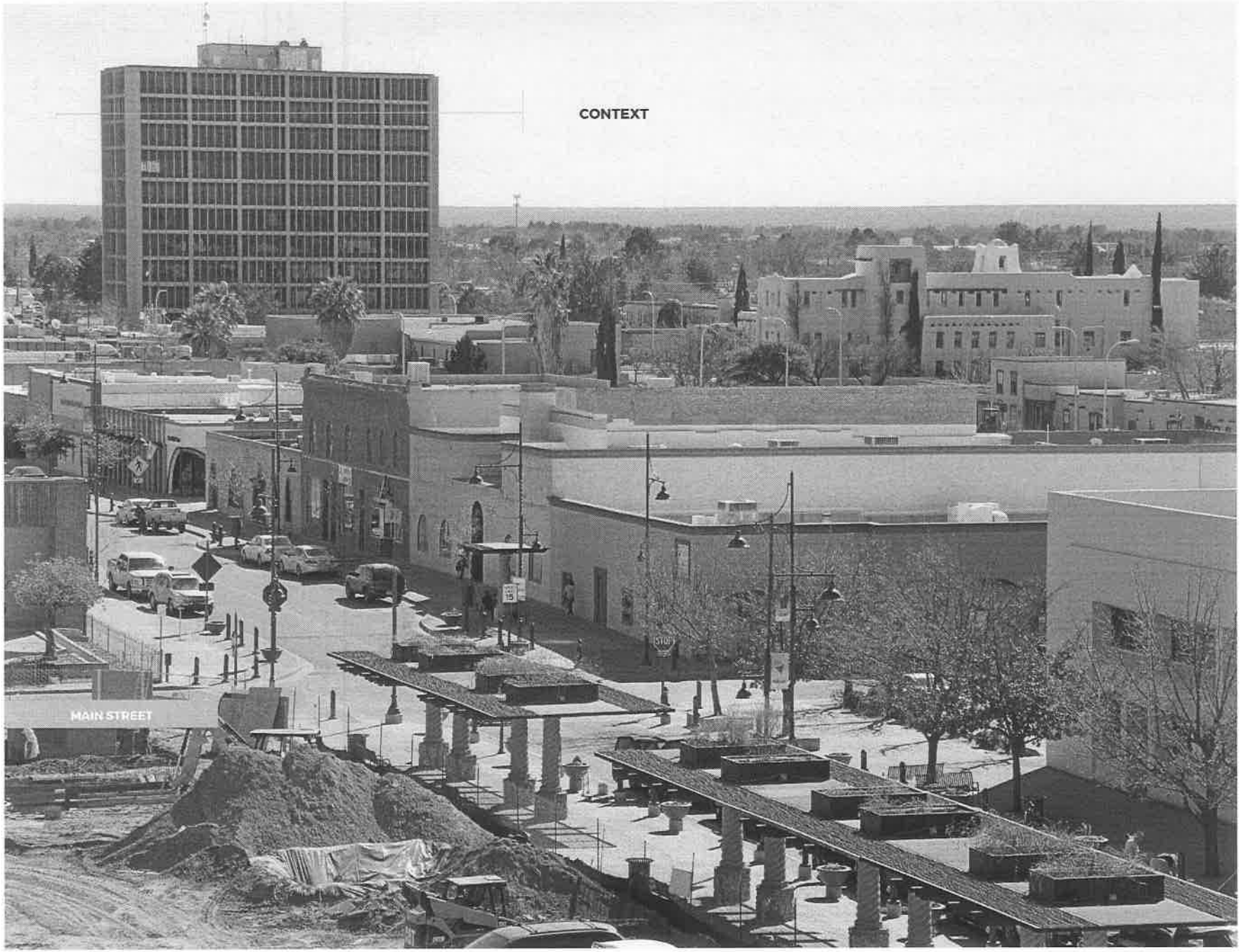
PRIORITY NO. 3.
The third priority is to create a heightened sense of arrival in the Downtown by leveraging the appeal and stature of the historic Hotel Amador and Doña Ana County Court House.



PLAN STRUCTURE

In this plan, you'll find **Section II. What We Know**: A Context for Master Planning that speaks to history, demography, economy, environment, arts and culture, and plans and ambitions. **Section III: What We Learned**: Research & Community Engagement delves into the Residential Market Study to consider the housing market, the Retail & Hospitality Market Analysis to take a pulse on economic development, and transportation and parking to tie it all together with a recap on the February 2016 planning charrette. **Section IV. Where We Want to Go**: Goals for design strategies and actions to become generators for a livable Downtown Las Cruces, in line with our Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan aspirations for healthy community, community character, economic prosperity, and sustainable growth. **Section V: What's Next**: Goals to Action lays out implementation recommendations.

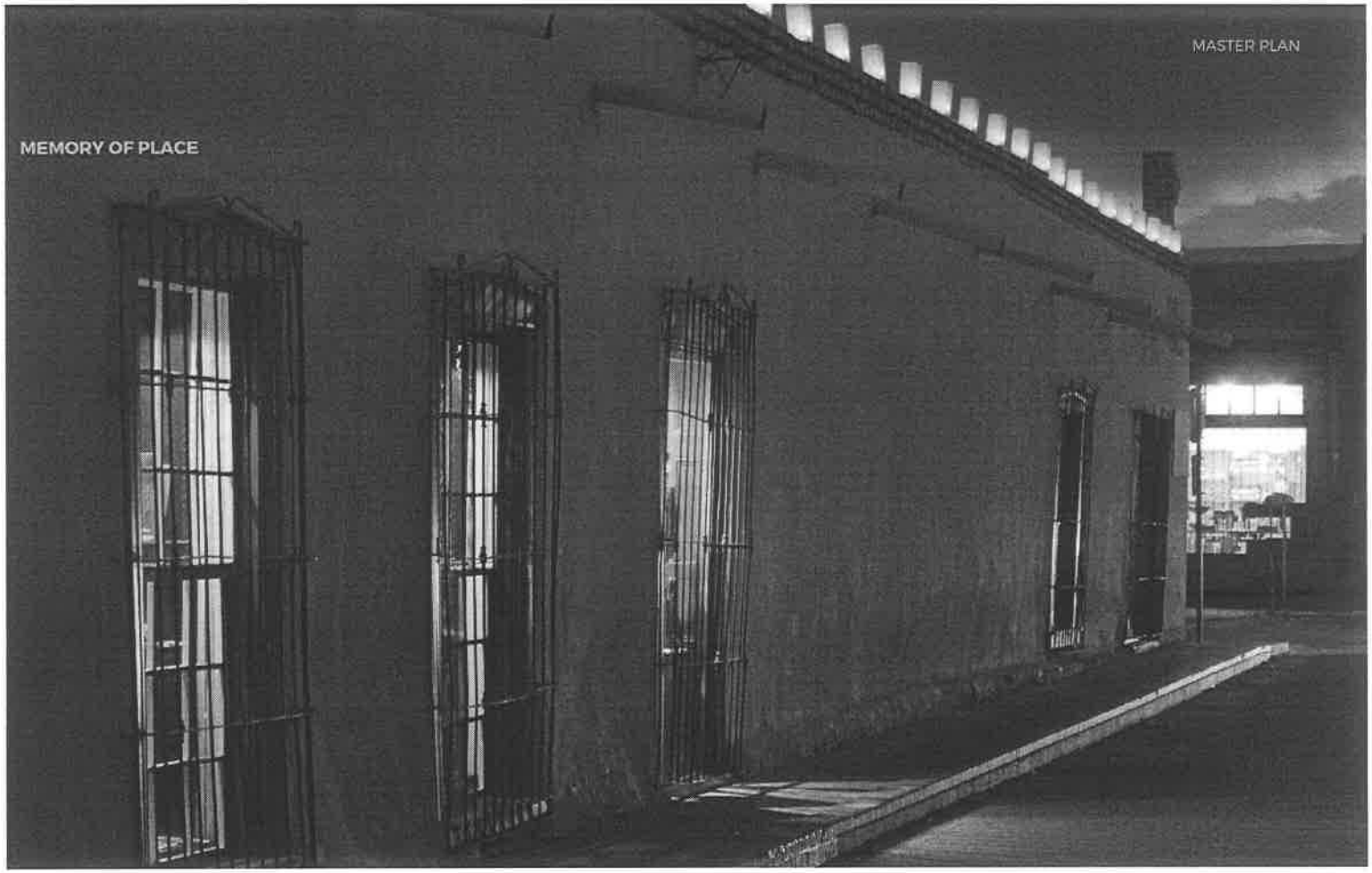
WHAT WE KNOW
THE CONTEXT



PERSPECTIVE:
Understanding the Downtown framework sets the stage for effective planning.

MESILLA VALLEY HERITAGE

LAS CRUCES' STORIED HISTORY



Las Cruces sits at the geographic center of the Mesilla Valley, the route from Mexico City to Santa Fe via El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. The city was founded in 1849, building on a long history of settlements of Native Americans, Spanish explorers, and Mexican colonists. Native Americans, Spain, Mexico, the United States, and the Confederacy have controlled the area over the centuries.

Some of New Mexico's prime soils and access to the Rio Grande water supply have long supported some of the most productive farms in the state, well connected to Mexican and US trade routes. Farmers, ranchers, soldiers, explorers, miners, traders, and students, and have shaped life along the Rio Grande in Las Cruces.

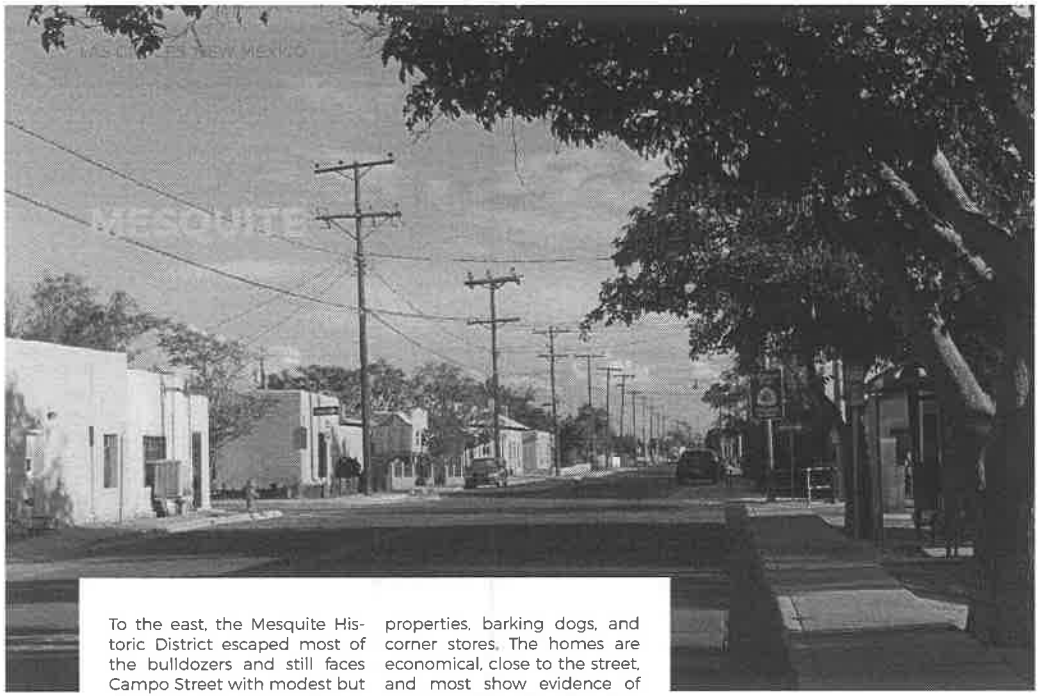
The original town site lies six miles south of Doña Ana near a stand of crosses marking the graves of travelers and soldiers. The landmark crosses gave the town its name, Las Cruces, or The Crosses. In 1849, U.S. Army surveyors divided Las Cruces into 84 blocks. They used a rawhide rope as a measure and reserved one block each for a church and a cemetery. After the survey, family leaders drew lots to determine which property they would own.

In the next year, Mesilla was founded by Mexican loyalists from Doña Ana and Mexico. Mesilla was the county seat when Doña Ana County formed in 1852, and provided a center for trade and farming. Within 10 years, Mesilla had more than 2,000 residents, twice that of Las Cruces. The national ownership of the village of Mesilla was disputed until The Gadsden Purchase of 1854 secured the Mesilla Valley within the U.S. border.

Due to the scarcity of lumber in the high desert, the primary building material was adobe. Logs from cottonwood trees were used for roof supports, or vigas. Primitive mud-plastered mesquite post and brush dwellings, or jacales, were another building type. Outlying farms relied on acequias, or irrigation ditches, to carry water from the Rio Grande for their crops of grapes, chile, corn and beans. (The Branigan Cultural Center, 2016)

Today, Downtown Las Cruces is bounded by Mesquite to the east and Alameda to the west. Crossing Campo Street from Downtown into the Mesquite Historic District is like crossing between two urban worlds that are often misunderstood.

Downtown Las Cruces is well on its way to recovery after being one of the country's textbook examples of what can go wrong with federally subsidized Urban Renewal, including the seas of parking, corporate central business district architecture, and a one-way loop that locals derisively referred to as "the race track." A stunning aerial view from 1974 shows the city after it's failed open-heart surgery. Even today, after a heroic struggle to dismantle the virtually abandoned pedestrian mall and reinstitute automobile-access on Main Street, this flattening experience serves as a reminder to honor local urban character. (von Maur, 2014)



To the east, the Mesquite Historic District escaped most of the bulldozers and still faces Campo Street with modest but charming one-story adobes. It is the original town site along the Camino Real and was platted in 1849 – a truly traditional neighborhood lived in by more than twenty of the original settler families.

In contrast to Downtown, the streets here are narrow with few parking lots, lined by modest one-room-wide adobe boxes with portales, small shop fronts, and garden walls. Age has given it character. Mesquite is alive.

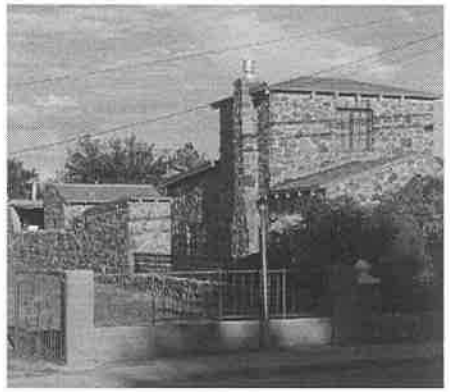
In Klein Park, families gather under a tree at the very corner where the first settlers cast lots for the newly surveyed properties. Kids zip by on scooters, and men work on their cars. It's a real place with thriving families, some economic struggles, many hip, renovated historic properties, barking dogs, and corner stores. The homes are economical, close to the street, and most show evidence of care and pride. It's a place that works and is loved by those that live there.

It wasn't always this way. The demolition of much of the city center proved a hard blow to Mesquite, which struggled with neglect and gang violence in the aftermath of Urban Renewal.

A 2006 ceramic tile mural stands in Jardin de Mesquite as a vivid reminder. The work was commissioned by Las Esperanzas, "the hopeful ones," a civic organization founded by a group of concerned women many of whom returned to care for their aging parents in the 1980s, but then found themselves in a critical leadership role to help reduce crime and uplift community pride. After years of hard work and collaboration, Mesquite is back on its feet, thriving within the same resilient blocks and buildings built generations ago.

The demolition of the city center is understood as an epic mistake by almost everyone here, but have we learned the important lessons from the tragedies of Urban Renewal? While we lament the losses of Downtown Las Cruces through Urban Renewal, the experience of the past underscores how the physical environment helps to support social, cultural, and economic resilience. And how repurposing of historic structures contributes to that resilience.

The Las Cruces Downtown Master Plan seeks to understand the significance of the simple, time-honored forms of common buildings. The essentials inspired by local traditions: a good frontage, with openings, walls, shelter, service and parking just in the right place for both residents and pedestrians.



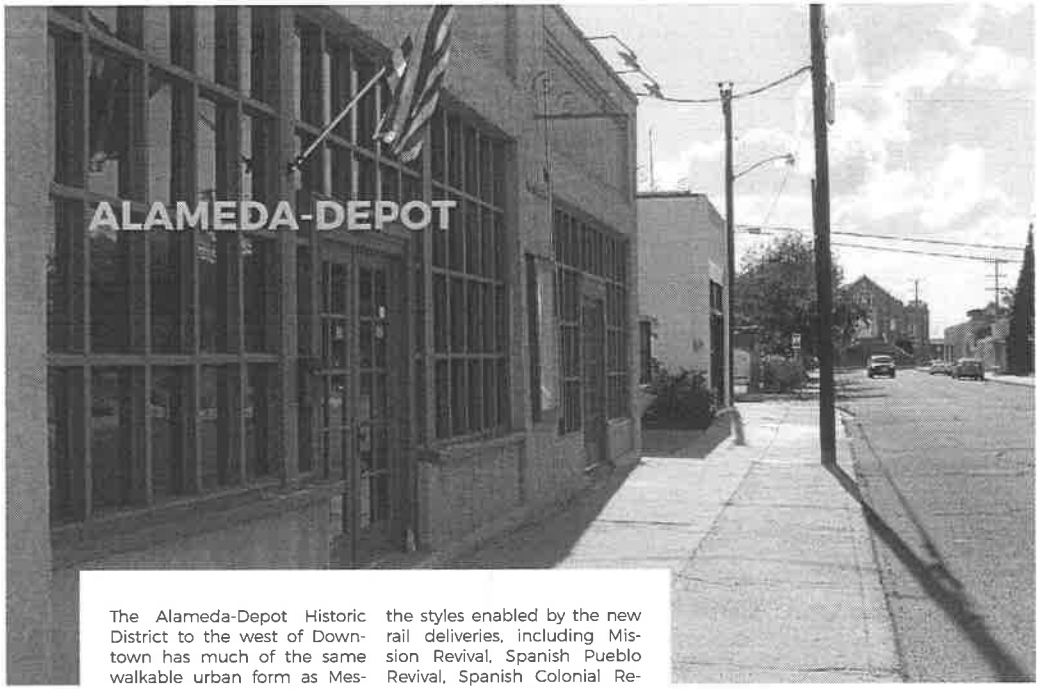
We can imagine the equally supportive environment that must have existed in Downtown Las Cruces. Of course it wasn't perfect and was showing its age, as does Mesquite. But it supported approximately 160 businesses on Main Street. Within three years of the pedestrian mall's completion, that number dropped to 90. (Las Esperanzas Inc., 2016) In 2005 there were fewer than 10. This kind of history should inspire respect.

In city planning, this means respect for private properties, and the law of unintended consequences. It means respect for time-honored forms that have proven to be economical, resilient and capable of renewed purpose. It means respect for communities and the local particulars that enable them to thrive in the long term.

HONORING THE LAS CRUCES URBAN CHARACTER WITH LOCAL ESSENTIALS

Fortunately, Las Esperanzas and Mesquite have led the way. In partnership with the city's planning department, the neighborhood pushed for its own neighborhood plan, zoning overlay district and code. (Las Esperanzas Inc., 2007)

It's a clear, context-sensitive, and character-based zoning that encourages all of the essentials for Mesquite: mixed-use, higher densities, and excellent private building frontages. (von Maur, 2014)



ALAMEDA-DEPOT

The Alameda-Depot Historic District to the west of Downtown has much of the same walkable urban form as Mesquite, the original 1849 Las Cruces townsite, but with significantly different architecture. Alameda was platted in the farm plots on the fertile bottom lands of the Rio Grande after the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Depot was built in 1881, and is the earliest addition to the townsite. These 42 blocks centered on Pioneer Women's Park are about a half mile wide, and extend up Alameda Boulevard.

Clustered near the railroad depot and along old Camino Real – previously the Chihuahua Trail and now Alameda Boulevard – the district demonstrates the historic importance of transportation routes to New Mexican urbanism and architecture. Homes here combine indigenous vernacular adobe with the styles enabled by the new rail deliveries, including Mission Revival, Spanish Pueblo Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Gothic, Italianate, Queen Anne, Georgian, Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Prairie Style, Western Stick Style, and Shingle Style. Of the over 300 structures in the district, 192 are considered historically significant. (Alameda-Depot Historic District Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1985)

The railway imported building materials and jobs as well as people, one of the most memorable being the Chicago-trained architect Henry Trost. Henry and his brother Gustavus designed many homes along Depot Avenue – now Las Cruces Street – favoring Art Deco, Mission Revival and Pueblo Revival styles. Their designs include the Porter house on Picacho Avenue, built in 1905 for Mayor Robert Porter.

ALAMEDA-DEPOT IS THE RAILROAD ERA EXPANSION OF LAS CRUCES.

"Simultaneous revival and survival of an architectural style provides a key to understanding New Mexico architecture – an eclectic architecture based on different cultural influences and responsive to technological innovations reliant on the practicalities of trade patterns." (Bunting, 1976)

"Alameda" is Spanish for "grove," and Alameda Boulevard has long been tree-lined thanks to an old irrigation ditch, or acequia, it bordered. The farms between here and Water Street, also an acequia, were renowned for their orchards and vineyards, along with production of corn, wheat, and hay. Together with the railroad depot, the groves and fertile land made the area an attractive showpiece.

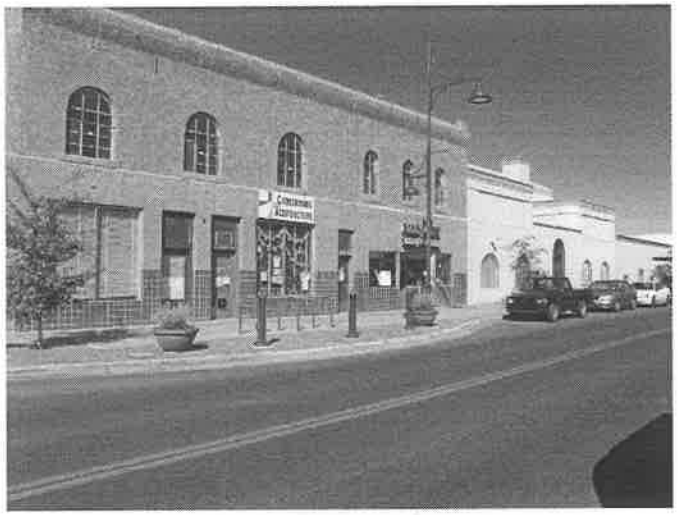
By 1910, all the land in Alameda-Depot had been subdivided into streets and lots, with many of the buildings completed in the 1880's and 1890's. This historic district is a big part of the national draw of Downtown Las Cruces today, thanks to its depth of history and careful preservation of its beloved character. (Alameda-Depot Historic District Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1985)

Three important civic anchors of the district are Pioneer Women's Park, the Las Cruces Railroad Museum, and Alma D'arte Charter High School. The historic Santa Fe Railroad Depot now houses the Las Cruces Railroad Museum, which interprets the railroad history of Las Cruces and the impact of the railroad on Southern New Mexico as well as hosting temporary exhibitions. Alma D'arte Charter High School provides strong programs in academics and the arts, and is housed in the historic Court Junior High School, opened in 1941. The school is on the northeast corner of Pioneer Women's Park, and was the home of the original Doña Ana County Court House from the 1890's until 1936. (Alma D'arte Charter High School, 2016)

There is not much room in the district for infill to satisfy the demand for more single-family detached homes that the Residential Market Study anticipates, nor to house new businesses that the Retail Market Study predicts, unless some of the houses were converted. However, there are a number of opportunities to connect and leverage the amenities of the neighborhood. This plan is in part a celebration of place, honoring history and acknowledging that a significant part of Downtown's attractiveness is due to Alameda-Depot. This historic neighborhood should continue to be protected and honored as an important part of the Downtown Las Cruces urban fabric.

LAS CRUCES PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHICS



POPULATION
- 101,408 people called Las Cruces home in 2014, up almost 4% since 2010. (United States Census, 2014)

INCOME
- Median household income is $40,658.
- Per capita income is $21,782.
- 24% people live in poverty. (United States Census, 2014)

HOME VALUES
- Median home value is $149,700.
- Median gross rent is $750 a month.
- Almost 39,000 households have an average of 2.5 people each. (United States Census, 2014)

* 101,408 PEOPLE
* MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME $40,658
* AGRICULTURE, AEROSPACE, AND DEFENSE INDUSTRIES
* NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION
- For those over 25 years old, 85% have a high school graduate or higher, and 34% have a bachelor's degree or higher. (United States Census, 2014)
- Las Cruces is home to New Mexico State University.

EMPLOYMENT
- 62% of people 16 years and older are in the civilian labor force, spending 19 minutes each way to get to work every day.

(United States Census, 2014)

- Unemployment: 6.9%
- Major Industries: Agriculture, Aerospace & Defense
- Job Growth (2015): 1.9%
- Gross Metro Product: $7.5 billion
- Cost of Living: 11.3% below national average
- Net Migration (2014): a loss of 330 people

(United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015)

RANKINGS
- #137 Best Small Places for Business and Careers
- #103 in Cost of Doing Business
- #112 in Job Growth
- #52 in Education.

(Forbes, 2016)

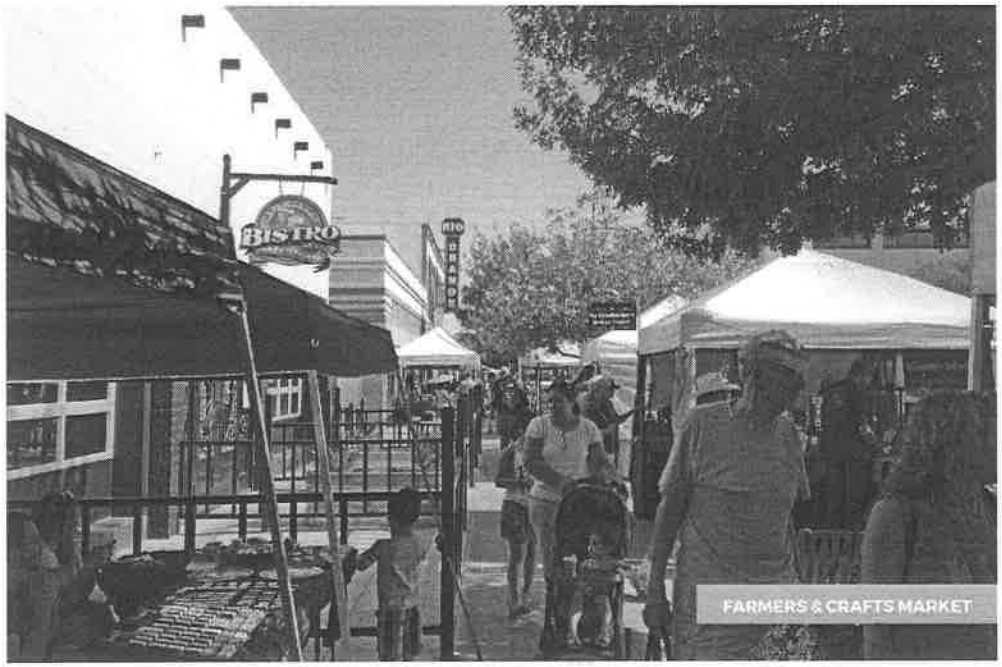
H+T INDEX
The average household:
- Spends 31% of income on housing
- Spends 30% of income on transportation
- Owns 1.65 cars
- Drives 21,743 miles per year
- Lives in a density of 2.76 households per acre

(CNT, 2016)

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE runs deep in Las Cruces, as the hub of farming and markets. Big crops include pecans, grapes, chile, corn, beans, and onions.

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

ECONOMY



FARMERS & CRAFTS MARKET

RIO GRANDE

Las Cruces is the economic center of the fertile Mesilla Valley, with a rich and productive agricultural heritage. The city is one of America's "Best Performing Small Cities" as ranked by Forbes.com and the Milken Institute. Las Cruces has more than doubled in population since 1970.

New Mexico State University, New Mexico's only land grant university, is just 3 miles south of Downtown Las Cruces. The city's major employer is the federal government, at White Sands Test Facility and White Sands Missile Range. This aerospace research and development has sparked a strong base of private employers and light manufacturing facilities.

Las Cruces enjoys a striking backdrop of the Organ Mountains, the Doña Ana Mountains, Robledo Mountains, and Picacho Peak, driving ecotourism opportunities with draws like the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument.

Cultural venues include the Las Cruces Museum of Art, Branigan Cultural Center, Las Cruces Museum of Nature & Science, Las Cruces Railroad Museum, and New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum.

The year-round temperate climate encourages a wealth of outdoor activities and events. The Farmers and Crafts Market of Las Cruces brings Downtown alive with a community vibe every Saturday. Streets flood with people, music, food, art, and crafts, filling seven blocks of Downtown's Main Street with 300 vendors. Soon to celebrate its 45th anniversary in 2016, the market was named "Number One Large Farmers Market in the Nation" in America's Farmland Trust's 2011 prestigious nationwide poll. (The Farmers and Crafts Market of Las Cruces, 2016)

The weekly Downtown market provides a steady beat to a multitude of annual events, including the Day of the Dead Festival at the Branigan Cultural Center Downtown and the Southern New Mexico State Fair.

Las Cruces averages 340 days of sunshine and an average January high temperature of 59 degrees. The weather makes for great year-round golfing at four local courses. 90 city parks plus recreation areas in the adjoining Organ Mountains provide hiking and trail bike riding a few minutes from Downtown. Camping, hunting, and fishing are plentiful in several nearby national forests.

150 churches, synagogues and mosques are housed in facilities ranging from historic structures that predate the city's founding in 1849, to non-denominational centers located throughout the city. (Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, 2016)

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Las Cruces is a high desert environment subject to drought, sustained heat, and seasonal flooding. To assure Downtown can redevelop as the heart of the City, pedestrians and cyclists must have a comfortable environment to engage in active transportation.

WATER

Most of Downtown and the Mesquite neighborhood are classified as areas of minimal flood hazard, but they are still susceptible to inundation during storms. Much of the Alameda Depot neighborhood is classified as a high flooding risk. Since over half the annual rainfall occurs during the summer, and three-fourths during the warmest six months, flooding is not unusual. (Malm, 2003) Therefore, green infrastructure and pervious surfaces are critical to the effective management of stormwater and may also cool the hot urban environment.

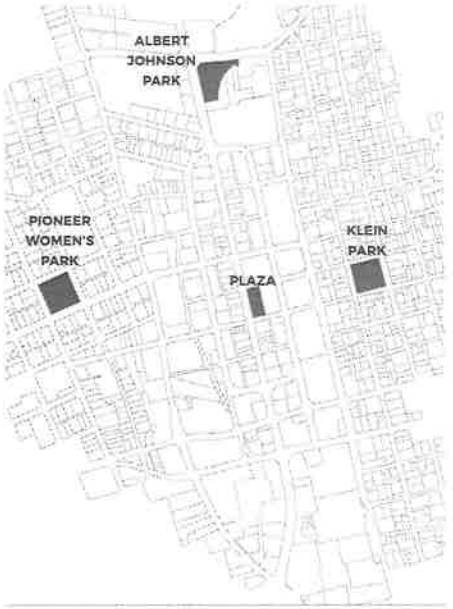
The *callecitas*, or streets that were closed in the late 1960's, can be retrofitted to be passages for people as well as water.

WALKABILITY

Compared with the City of Las Cruces' cumulative Walk Score® of **32**, or Car-Dependent, Downtown has a score of **75** which is defined as "Very Walkable." (Walk Score, 2016) However, this does not consider the condition of sidewalks, facades, or availability of shade. Every plan or report produced since the 1994 R/UDAT report has recommended the inclusion of additional shade and it is an important recommendation from this plan as well.

One physical attribute that contributes to Downtown's competent Walk Score® are the 300' blocks. Historic Las Cruces was laid out in a traditional grid pattern with neighborhood squares, and an informal plaza associated with the St. Genevieve church in the heart of Downtown. This fine network of streets is roughly 20 blocks east to west and 12 blocks north to south and includes the Mesquite and Alameda Depot neighborhoods. Some irregularities occur along the acequia madre and the San José Cemetery, and many streets have been clipped by the actions of "urban renewal."

STREET NETWORK



PARK SPACE

Another asset in creating a walkable environment is the two neighborhood parks: Klein Memorial Park in Mesquite and Pioneer Women's Park in Alameda Depot. They are approximately 2 acres each and both enjoy a grassy shaded landscape. They give each of the neighborhoods a heart and the Downtown two important destinations.

Klein Park has a more urban character with a cafe and coffee shop, and Pioneer Women's Park is slightly larger and more contemplative. The Plaza on Main Street is currently under construction and will serve as the stage for the Farmers & Crafts Market on Wednesdays as well as the venue for performances and festivals.

The historic social and religious heart of the City was the St. Genevieve Church and forecourt, located on Block 0 of the original town site. The forecourt functioned as the City's plaza, and the new Plaza is located one block to the south.

AERIAL VIEW OF ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH, DATE UNKNOWN (LEYVA)

EXISTING BUILDINGS

AREA AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

With the good block structure, neighborhood parks, and a wide range of uses available, Downtown will have a much higher Walk Score® as redevelopment occurs. The map on the facing page shows the existing buildings as well as the unbuilt areas that are largely used as parking lots.

The adjacent neighborhoods have a nice, tight fabric of buildings that define streets and public parks, as does the central portion of Main Street. This translates into a good pedestrian experience, with the exception of instances where shade and sidewalk improvements are needed.

> **There is a sense of urgency in taking advantage of the current market demand or there is a risk the development will occur in other areas of town, leaving Downtown in its current condition**

However, the parcels that have been utilized as parking since 1974 are a perfect location for adding housing, dining and retail to the robust Downtown employment.

Recent studies indicate there is strong potential for additional commercial and housing development in Downtown. (See Residential Market Highlights, p. 21 and Retail Market Study Highlights, p. 22.) The studies indicate this demand is partially predicated upon the rising preference for living and playing in an urban context. The only other urban context in Doña Ana County is the Town of Mesilla. The plaza area of Mesilla is well established and has developed into a regional tourist attraction in addition to successfully serving the local population.

It is fortunate the City has a number of parking lots available for redevelopment. With existing infrastructure, the improvement of streetscapes that will result from the Church and Water conversions, and the demand for urban living, Downtown is poised to leverage the current market demand.

The National Association of Realtors' 2015 Community Preference Survey of American priorities in housing reached this conclusion:

"...Americans prefer walkable communities more so than they have in the past. Forty-eight percent of respondents reported that they prefer to live in communities containing houses with small yards but within easy walking distance of the community's amenities, as opposed to living in communities with houses with large yards but they have to drive to all amenities. And while 60 percent of adults surveyed live in detached, single-family homes, 25 percent of those respondents said they would rather live in an attached home and have greater walkability." (National Association of Realtors, 2015

As the demand for walkability is met, studies indicate that the demand will continue to grow over the foreseeable future. When this happens, other sites that are underutilized with suburban setbacks and large parking lots could redevelop as well. This includes most of the area south of Lohman Avenue.

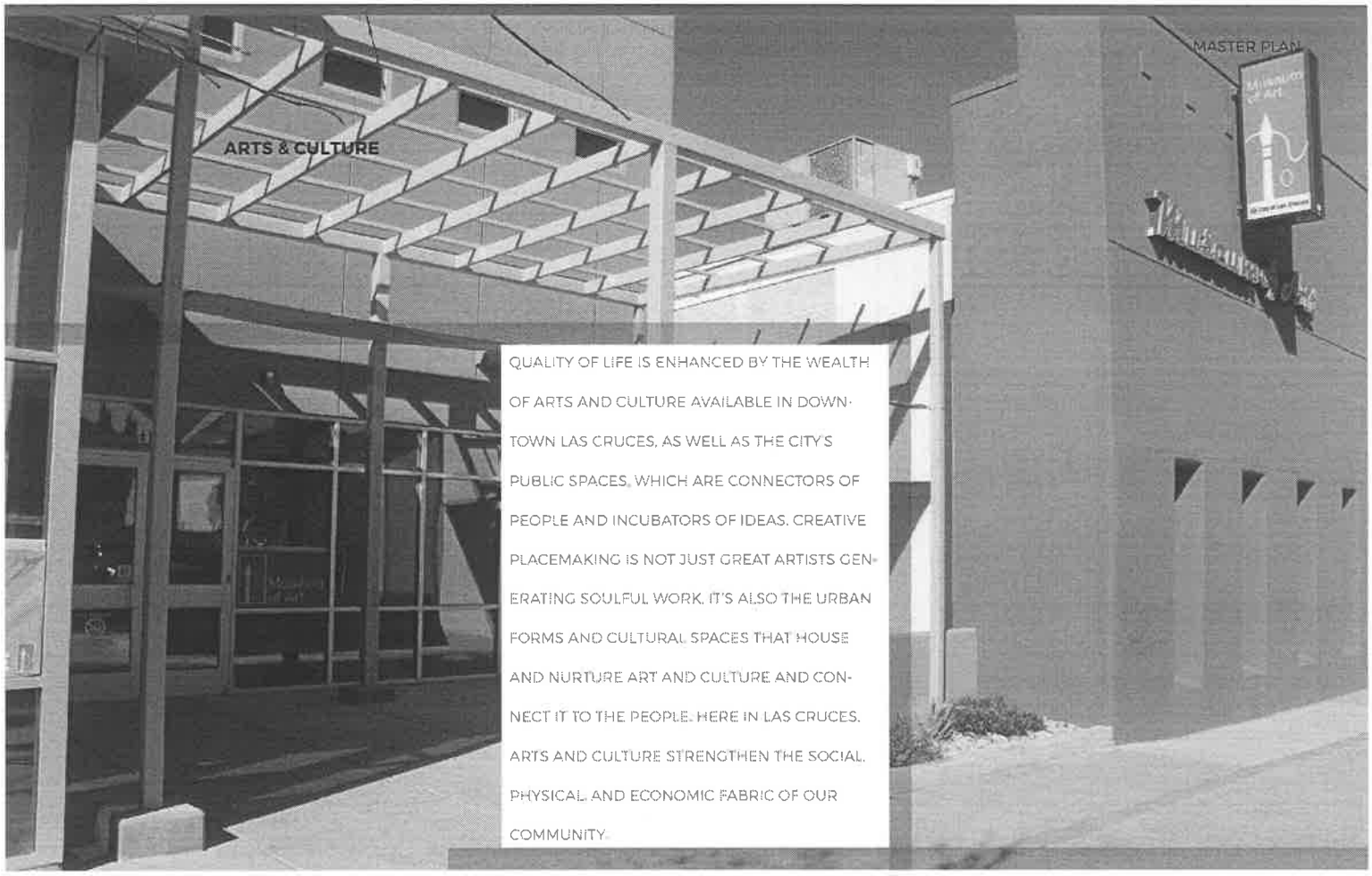
OPPORTUNITY AREAS

1. SOUTHERN GATEWAY

There is immediate opportunity for redevelopment at Amador Avenue and Main Street, framing the southern entry to Downtown. The restoration and repurpose of the Amador Hotel and the redevelopment of the Doña Ana County Courthouse provide a near term opportunity to build activity at the southern end of Main Street.

2. PARKING LOTS

The City owned parking lots along Church and Water are another immediate opportunity for development. If replaced by structured parking, the surface lots are optimal locations for housing and mixed uses within a block of the Plaza.



CULTURE, ARTS, SCIENCES, AND HISTORY GET MIXED UP IN CURRENT EVENTS AND GOINGS-ON

MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL ASSETS GRAVITATE TO DOWNTOWN

QUALITY OF LIFE IS ENHANCED BY THE WEALTH OF ARTS AND CULTURE AVAILABLE IN DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES, AS WELL AS THE CITY'S PUBLIC SPACES, WHICH ARE CONNECTORS OF PEOPLE AND INCUBATORS OF IDEAS. CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IS NOT JUST GREAT ARTISTS GENERATING SOULFUL WORK. IT'S ALSO THE URBAN FORMS AND CULTURAL SPACES THAT HOUSE AND NURTURE ART AND CULTURE AND CONNECT IT TO THE PEOPLE HERE IN LAS CRUCES. ARTS AND CULTURE STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, AND ECONOMIC FABRIC OF OUR COMMUNITY.

All of the civic museums in Las Cruces are clustered Downtown and in Alameda-Depot, providing a strong draw for residents and visitors to engage with history, culture, arts and sciences. The City of Las Cruces Museum System includes the Branigan Cultural Center, the Las Cruces Museum of Art, the Las Cruces Museum of Nature & Science, and the Las Cruces Railroad Museum. The first three of these are on Main Street and the fourth in Alameda-Depot. Rio Grande Theatre and the Farmers Market round out cultural offerings with a wealth of music and arts events.

The City recognizes the importance of balancing arts and cultural programming with hundreds of neighborhood-based activities. One percent of the General Fund in the Capital Improvement Program is dedicated to funding public art throughout the city.

The following summaries on Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Science and History Museums, and Festivals pull from the mission statements of each of the listed organizations.

VISUAL ARTS

Art and culture in Downtown Las Cruces is truly a public-private partnership, with museums, galleries, and artists' studios offering a rich assortment of experiences – exhibitions, education, and festivals.

Las Cruces Museum of Art hosts changing contemporary art exhibits, including national, international, juried, traveling, and invitational exhibits. The museum runs an extensive art studio, with classes for all ages.

The Department of Art at the New Mexico State University serves a diverse population through its dynamic studio, design, art history, and conservation programs.

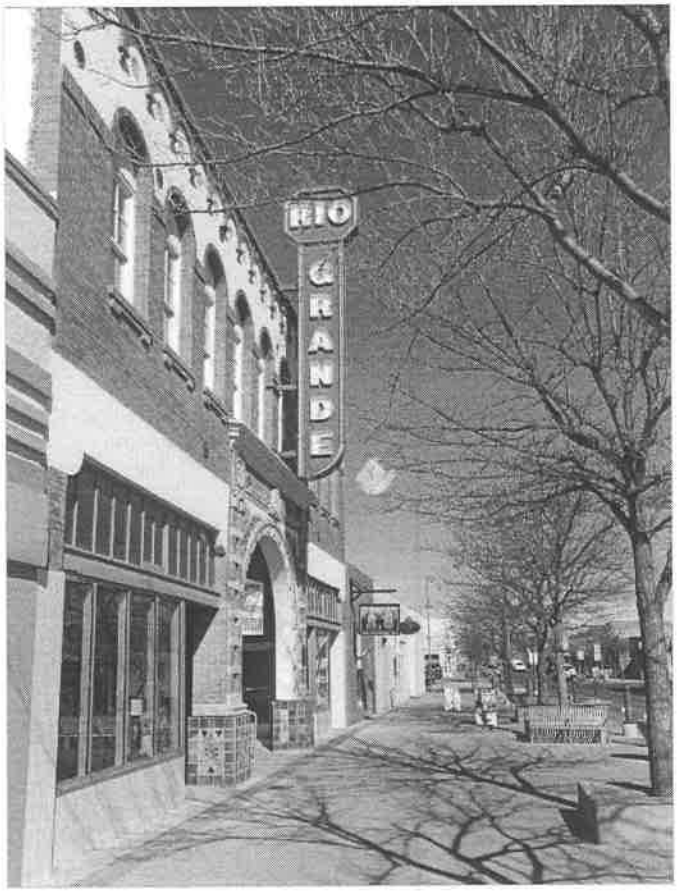
Art Galleries in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods offer a wide variety of genres and exhibitions, thanks to M Phillip's Fine Art Gallery, Mesquite Art Gallery, Unsettled Gallery & Studio LLC, Quillin-Stephens Gallery, Connie Hines Interior Design, Camino Real Book Store and Art Gallery, Firebird Rising Fine Art, Desert Roots Artist Market And Gallery, Luis Navarro, and Big Picture Digital Image Lab. The Farmers and Crafts Market of Las Cruces also offers up a range of artworks on the Wednesday and Saturday events.

PERFORMING ARTS

The Film Office, established by the City of Las Cruces, is a liaison between City government and local, national, and international filmmakers and TV producers. The Film Office team assists with locations, equipment, accommodations, and advising on State incentives, such as the 25% Refundable Film Production Tax Credit and the Film Investment Loan Program.

American Southwest Theatre Company at the New Mexico State University is a professional regional theatre company affiliated with NMSU Theatre Arts, bringing professional actors to the Las Cruces community and at the same time enhancing the training of majors in Theatre Arts.

Rio Grande Theatre has been an important anchor of Main Street since 1926. The 422-seat



performing arts facility, its forty-foot fly loft, and state of the art audio-visual equipment enjoys a refurbished lobby and gallery spaces. The theatre is home to the **Doña Ana Arts Council** and the **El Paso Electric Gallery**.

Las Cruces Symphony was established 55 years ago, to present and promote music of the highest artistic quality for the region's enrichment and serve as a musical, cultural and educational resource. The Las Cruces Symphony touches thousands of local music students each year with events such as Friday Night At The Symphony Classics Dress Rehearsals and Youth Concerts.

Mesilla Valley Concert Band is an ensemble of 100 performers and includes full-time musicians and music teachers, local business people, educators, retirees and students. Chamber groups associated with the concert band include the Las Cruces Flute Orchestra, saxophone quartets, horn quartet, brass quintets, and a percussion ensemble. The band rehearses and performs at the New Mexico State University School of Music.

Las Cruces Community Theatre has called the old State Theatre building on Main Street its home since 1976, and is undertaking a capital campaign to purchase and renovate the space. The company showcases local talent in plays and musicals.

No Strings Theatre is the resident company of the Black Box Theatre on Main Street, presenting contemporary or little known works, providing an opportunity for local playwrights to develop new works, and delivering less traditional theatre forms like puppet theatre, improvisation, and performance art

SCIENCE AND HISTORY MUSEUMS

Las Cruces Museum of Nature & Science is an interactive experience with three permanent exhibits featuring Desert Life, Permian Trackways, and Light and Space, with descriptive materials in English and Spanish.

Las Cruces Railroad Museum interprets the railroad history of Las Cruces and the impact of the railroad in Southern New Mexico. The museum is located in the historic Santa Fe Railroad Depot on North Mesilla Street.

Branigan Cultural Center hosts a permanent local history exhibit and changing cultural exhibits, plus educational programs, classes and other special events. The building, pictured to the right, is a white adobe on Main Street, on the National and State Registries of Historic Buildings.

FESTIVALS

The Farmers and Crafts Market of Las Cruces fills Main Street every Saturday and Wednesday with art, crafts, music, dance, and food, for almost 45 years now. The market was named "Number One Large Farmers Market in the Nation" in America's Farmland Trust's 2011 notable nationwide poll.

Electric Light Parade on July 3rd celebrates the Declaration of Independence with a parade of floats festively decorated with lights, entertainment and spectacular fireworks.

Renaissance Craft Fair features local, state, and regional artisans who gather to participate in a juried art show and exhibition. An artisan market of high quality arts and crafts is available to shoppers, along with Renaissance-themed live theater, dancing, music and food.

SUPPORT NETWORK

The Foundation for Las Cruces Museums is a nonprofit providing financial and volunteer support to the four Smithsonian-affiliated Las Cruces museums. Friends of Las Cruces Museums are members of the Foundation, helping with education and outreach at The Branigan Cultural Center, the Museum of Art, the Museum of Nature and Science, and the Railroad Museum, each putting on exceptional exhibits and programming that enriches the experience of residents and visitors. The Foundation works to increase community attendance at the museums, sponsor programs designed to enhance the cultural life of Las Cruces, and advocate for favorable legislation and appropriations. The museum system is part of the municipal government, and experiences a range of funding levels based on tax revenue. The Foundation assists the museums financially by creating fund raising events, and encouraging gifts and endowments.

PLANS AND AMBITIONS

94

11

04

13

12

16

1994 R/UDAT

St. Genevieve Memorial | Government facilities remain Downtown | Landscape upgrades | Removal of Main St canopy | Downtown RoadRUNNER Central Transfer Point | Las Cruces Farmers & Crafts Market | Marketing & Branding Plan

2004 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

Main Street open to traffic | Rio Grande Theater renovated | Federal Courthouse constructed | Tax Increment for Downtown District | Optimized shade | Las Cruces Community Partners agreement paved the way to use city-owned properties as catalysts

2011 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AD HOC COMMITTEE

Dedicated planning staff member focused on Downtown needs | Support reconfiguring Water and Church as two-way streets | Support Downtown housing | Support zoning and subdivision updates | Support pedestrian and bicycle facilities

2012 DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY UPDATE

Affirms sufficient parking to address needs | Permit development to respond to market demand rather than enforce parking minimums | Evaluate a pay parking pilot program

2013 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Build a Plaza as the heart of Downtown Las Cruces, with gathering places of a bandstand, splash pad, seating, and shade | Reconstruct Water and Church as two-way streets | Zoning and subdivision regulations drafted and ready for adoption

2016 DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Now is the time to couple the past planning successes with a careful analysis of market realities to complete a master plan rewrite that doesn't just capture value, but drives value. This plan is a call for investment and a Downtown strategic plan.

CHRONOLOGY

What We Learned

RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Robust market analyses have not been done for Downtown post-recession and are a central informant to the current Plan.

This plan has new retail, lodging, and housing studies for Downtown Las Cruces. The design work was based upon the input from these analyses and sets the stage for an effective response to current market demand. The studies will be reviewed in this section and consider immediate and near-term development opportunity.

One message shared by the market analysis is that much of the demand is immediate, and while it is based upon an unmet urban development option, it could migrate to suburban locations if not acted upon.

Market studies and design options were tested by meetings with Downtown landowners, developers, and neighbors from Mesquite and Alameda-Depot.

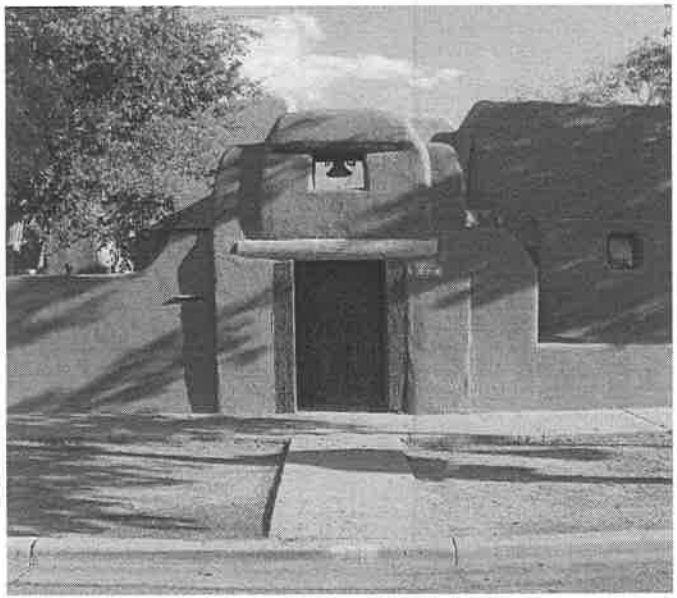
While data is very important to successful planning, local input is crucial to implementation. A week-long workshop was held in February of 2016 to discuss the future of Downtown with the citizens of Las Cruces and City staff.

Central to that discussion was the need to consider both historic neighborhoods as a part of the Downtown whole. Neighbors provided critique and ideas of missing pieces and hidden assets, and this helped shape the physical design as well as the recommended actions of this Plan.

WATER STREET ILLUSTRATION

RESIDENTIAL
MARKET STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

See Appendix for full Residential Study.



FUTURE RESIDENTS OF DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PREFER MULTI-FAMILY

RESIDENTIAL STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

RESIDENTIAL

DRAW AREAS
Households with the potential to move to new housing units in the Downtown currently live in these draw areas:

- City of Las Cruces (Local Draw Area): 39%
- Doña Ana County (County Draw Area): 3%
- El Paso, Bernalillo, and Otero Counties (Regional Draw): 15%
- Balance of US (National Draw): 43%

> **Up to 1,850 households with median annual incomes of $40,000 or higher and currently living in the draw areas represent the annual potential market for newly-created housing units in Downtown Las Cruces each year over the next 5 years**

- Total: 100.0%

ANNUAL DEMAND
In order to increase the number and impact of households living in Downtown Las Cruces as quickly as possible, rental and for-sale multi-family development, both single-use and mixed-use buildings, is the most efficient residential land use. That's because multi-family makes up 57% of the demand, or 1,055 households per year.

865 households per year prefer multi-family loft and apartment rentals.

190 households per year prefer to own their condo, loft, or or co-op.

TARGET MARKETS

- Younger singles and childless couples: 79%
- Empty nesters and retirees: 15%
- Traditional & non-traditional families 6%

The protracted ownership housing slump since 2008 has been one of several factors behind the measurable shift in market preferences from home ownership to rental, particularly among younger households. There is currently a much greater consumer preference for multi-family rentals even among relatively affluent consumers than would have been typical a decade ago. At the same time, there has been a significant shift in preferences from auto-dependent subdivisions toward mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods.

The primary target markets for Downtown Las Cruces are younger singles and couples in eight target market groups, that make up 79% of the total annual potential market. These young adults aged 40 and younger are part of the "Millennial" cohort, the 88 million people born from 1977 through 1996, the largest generation in American history.

MARKET PREFERENCE
The Millennials are demonstrating a strong preference for downtowns and urban neighborhoods, particularly those served by transit. In contrast to the traditional family—a married couple with children—that comprised the typical post-war American household, Millennials are predominantly childless singles and couples.

Other factors driving the larger share of the downtown market held by younger singles and couples are mobility rates and preference to rent.

DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES IS A NATIONAL DRAW TO NEW RESIDENTS

URBAN PREFERENCE
The downtown target market wants walkability and transit.

MOBILITY RATES
Young people tend to move much more frequently.

RENTAL APARTMENTS
Strong preference for rental apartments is partly because

many Millenials do not have sufficient funds for a down payment and partly because many of them remain skeptical about the value of owning versus renting, thanks to the collapse of the housing market in 2008.

PRICE POINT
Apartment and loft rents and condo purchase prices are not limited by the current, largely auto-dependent housing context, but rather are based on the characteristics and incomes of households that would move to Downtown Las Cruces if appropriate housing options were available there.

NEAR-TERM DWELLINGS

250 NEW RENTAL AND OWNERSHIP MULTIFAMILY UNITS COULD BE ABSORBED IN DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES WITHIN FIVE TO SIX YEARS, IN AN AREA THE SIZE OF THE TIDD. THESE 250 HOMES WOULD HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT TO REDEFINE DOWNTOWN AS THE CIVIC CENTER AND ESTABLISH IT AS A VIABLE MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD.

MULTI-FAMILY FOR-SALE

Adjusting the target market size by capture and absorption rates, 250 new multi-family dwellings Downtown could be reality in the near term.

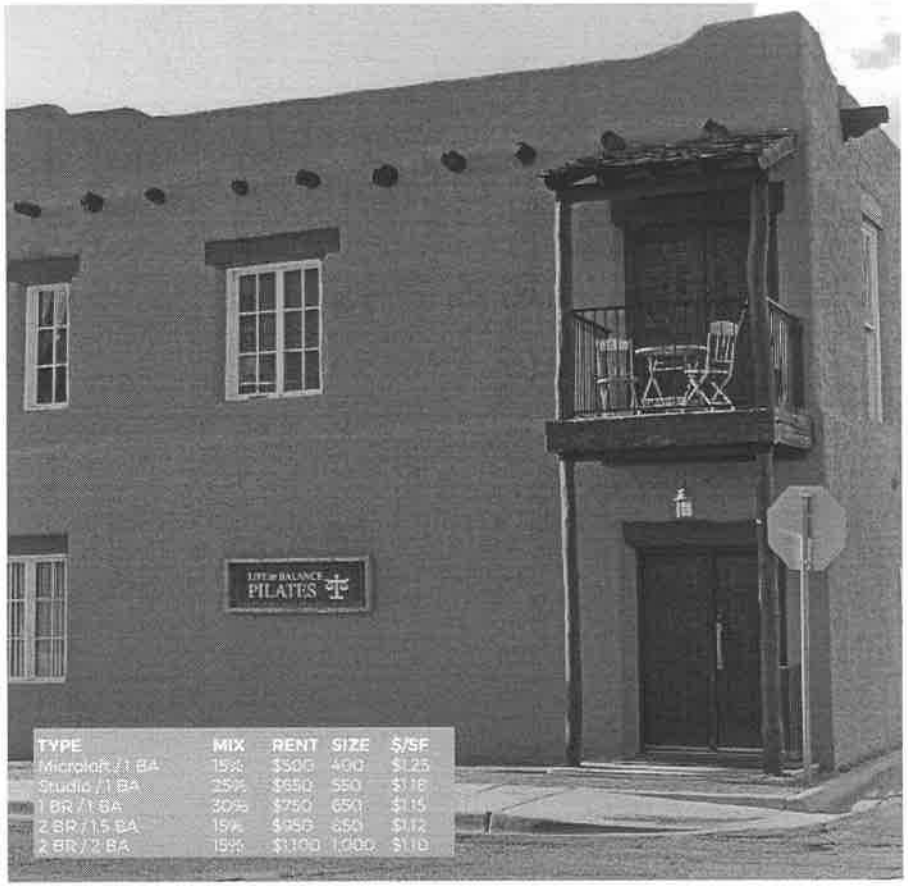
Over the next 5 to 6 years, 45 for-sale condominiums are supportable in a sale price range of $125,000 to $195,000, at 800 to 1,325 SF, and $147-$156 per square foot. This is in 2016 dollars, exclusive of floor or location premiums or consumer-added upgrades. The weighted average base price of these for-sale condos is $160,000 for 1,063 square feet, or $151 per square foot.

TYPE	MIX	SALE PRICE	SIZE	$/SF
1 BR / 1 BA	35%	$125,000	800	$156
2 BR / 1.5 BA	55%	$165,000	1,100	$150
2 BR / 2 BA	30%	$195,000	1,325	$147

MULTI-FAMILY RENTALS

The first new Downtown dwellings should be developed as rental properties, since there are higher absorption rates for rental than ownership units and renters show greater willingness than owners to populate emerging neighborhoods.

Over the next 5 to 6 years, 205 apartments and lofts are supportable in a rental range of $500 to $1,000/month, at 400 to 1,000 SF, and $1.10-$1.25 per square foot. This is in 2016 dollars, exclusive of floor or location premiums or consumer-added upgrades. The weighted average base rent is $770/month for 670 square feet, or $1.15 per square foot.



TYPE	MIX	RENT	SIZE	$/SF
Micrplex / 1 BA	15%	$500	400	$1.25
Studio / 1 BA	25%	$650	550	$1.18
1 BR / 1 BA	30%	$750	650	$1.15
2 BR / 1.5 BA	15%	$950	850	$1.12
2 BR / 2 BA	15%	$1,100	1,000	$1.10

SOUTH MAIN ILLUSTRATION

RETAIL
MARKET STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

See Appendix for full Retail Market Study.

TRADE AREA REPRESENTS A PENT UP MARKET FOR DOWNTOWN COMMERCE

RETAIL MARKET STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

RETAIL

Downtown Las Cruces can presently support up to **104,700 additional square feet of retail and restaurant development, generating over $26.3 million in new sales.**

By 2021, residential development in the study area and household income growth in the primary trade area could increase the total additional supportable retail to **128,100 SF** capturing up to **$35 million** in potential sales. The demand could partially be absorbed by existing businesses and/or with the opening of **50 to 65 new restaurants and stores.**

Filling existing vacancies and new development in the study area can provide needed goods and services for the existing surrounding consumer base of nearby residents, employees, college students and visitors.

Furthermore, attracting a critical mass of retailers and restaurants Downtown can reestablish the historic commercial, social and civic functions to the core of Las Cruces.

Apart from conventionally suburban shopping near I-25 and the small village of Mesilla, the region is devoid of an urban shopping and dining experience. However, the demographics of the trade area represent a **pent up market for Downtown commerce** furthering the potential for sustainable retail development. The leading categories of supportable retail growth are **restaurants, general merchandise and pharmacy**.

Dating back to the 1970s and earlier, downtown commerce has suffered in the name of suburban growth and regionally scaled shopping centers. In an effort to reverse this trend, Las Cruces, like many cities, converted Main Street into a pedestrian mall separating cars from people.

Although well intentioned, pedestrian malls have proved to be a failure in most cases, leaving many downtowns charged to reinvent the commercial core once again.

Main Street was recently reopened to traffic and a new public plaza is under construction. Momentum appears to be building Downtown, however, only a few traditional retailers presently operate in the study area and the biggest draw is a successful Saturday market.

A new master plan is being crafted for Downtown and developers are showing renewed interest, creating the synergy to recruit new retailers and restaurants to deploy in the study area.

With nearly **18,500 nearby students** at New Mexico State University and a **burgeoning retirement population**, Downtown Las Cruces is in position to cultivate a refined identity for the next generation and to revive commerce in the historic core.

DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES CAN SATISFY DEMAND FOR URBAN RETAIL

DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PRIMARY TRADE AREA
Population of 54,800 persons

HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Median household income in Primary Trade Area is $27,400, which is lower than state and national averages due to the student population as well as low-wage households. Household income is expected to grow by 2.6 percent annually to $31,200 by 2021.

HOUSING
Housing favors renter-occupied units, which comprise 49.1 percent of all housing, compared to 42.5 percent owner-occupied households. The vacancy rate is 8.4 percent.

LABOR BASE
The primary trade area has a labor base of 38,900 employees and a college student population of nearly 30,000, including NMSU, DACC, UTEP students.

NEAR-TERM RETAIL

DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES CAN PRESENTLY SUPPORT UP TO 104,700 ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL AND RESTAURANT DEVELOPMENT, GENERATING OVER $26.3 MILLION IN NEW SALES.

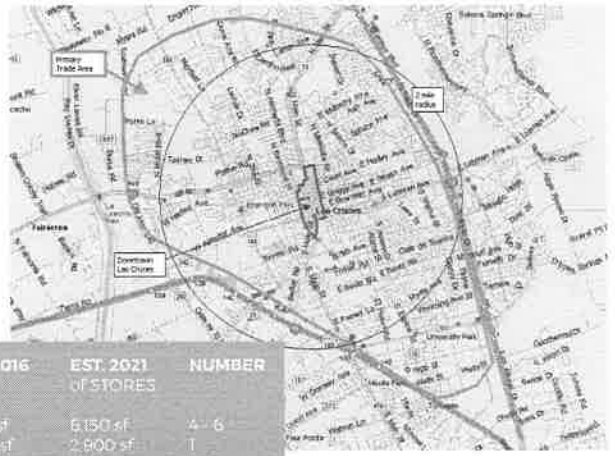
WELL-CONNECTED DOWNTOWN

Las Cruces, New Mexico's second largest city, is located in the southern part of the state, west of the White Sands Missile Range and 40 miles north of El Paso, Texas.

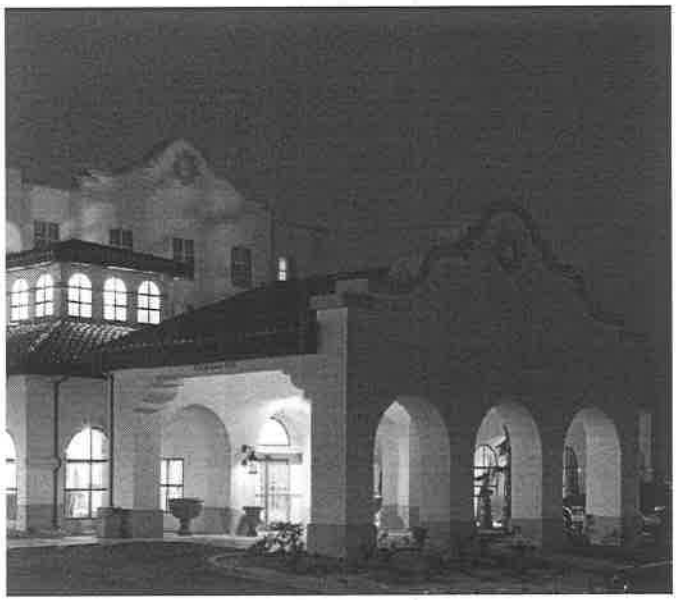
As seen in the aerial photo below Downtown is well-connected and easily reached by many locally significant routes. The majority of the Las Cruces regional population is within 4 miles of Downtown.

PENT UP URBAN DEMAND

The trade area includes many nearby neighborhoods and New Mexico State University. Based on Gibbs Planning Group's site evaluation, the existing retail hubs, population clusters, highway access, and the retail gravitation in the market, as well as our experience defining trade areas for similar communities throughout the United States, it was determined that consumers in the primary trade area generate demand to support a variety of retailers. This potential will continue to increase over the next five years, sustained by anticipated development projects and household income growth of 2.6 percent. The primary trade area is the consumer market where the study area has a significant competitive advantage because of access, design, lack of quality competition and traffic and commute patterns.



RETAIL CATEGORY	EST. 2016 SUPPORTABLE SF	EST. 2021 SUPPORTABLE SF	NUMBER OF STORES
RETAIL			
Apparel & Shoes Stores	5,140 sf	6,150 sf	4 - 6
Book & Music Stores	2,480 sf	2,900 sf	1
Electronics/Appliance Stores	3,790 sf	4,720 sf	2 - 3
Florist	1,600 sf	1,750 sf	1
Furniture/Home Furnishings	6,180 sf	7,350 sf	4 - 5
Garden Supply Stores	2,240 sf	2,430 sf	1
General Merchandise Stores	17,750 sf	21,110 sf	6 - 7
Grocery & Specialty Food	10,180 sf	14,230 sf	1 - 2
Jewelry Stores	3,210 sf	3,430 sf	2 - 3
Miscellaneous Retailers	3,870 sf	4,930 sf	4 - 5
Office Supplies & Gift Stores	6,210 sf	6,650 sf	5 - 6
Pharmacy & Beauty Supply	8,900 sf	12,910 sf	3 - 4
Sporting Goods & Hobby	2,750 sf	3,360 sf	2 - 3
Retail Totals	**74,300 sf**	**91,890 sf**	**36 - 47**
RESTAURANTS			
Bars, Breweries & Pubs	3,700 sf	3,860 sf	1 - 2
Full-Service Restaurants	10,140 sf	12,020 sf	4 - 5
Limited-Service Restaurants	12,130 sf	14,820 sf	5 - 6
Specialty Food Stores	4,430 sf	5,510 sf	4 - 5
Restaurant Totals	**30,400 sf**	**36,210 sf**	**14 - 18**
Retail & Restaurant Totals	**104,700 sf**	**128,100 sf**	**50 - 65**



NEAR TERM HOTEL DEMAND SATISFIED WITH CURRENT HOTELS UNDERWAY

HOTEL/HOSPITALITY
STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

HOSPITALITY

100 NEW HOTEL ROOMS WILL BE NEEDED BY 2021. IMMEDIATE DEMAND FILLED BY 178 ROOMS IN CONSTRUCTION.

The Las Cruces study area lodging market **cannot statistically support any additional lodging** facilities at this time, **because of the two existing hotel projects** which are projected to come on line in 2016 and 2017.

However, lodging revenue growth and existing room depletion caused by obsolesce over the next five years will create unmet demand for $3.25 million dollars in lodging revenue, supporting **100 new midscale class rooms by 2021**.

In 2026, the Las Cruces study area's lodging market can support an **additional 130 midscale rooms**, generating $4.51 million in revenue.

This forecast is based on the 2026 revenue per available room (RevPAR) in the submarket expanding to just less than the **$49.75** level, and occupancy stabilizing at today's level of about **55 percent**.

This Las Cruces study area is projected to capture just over $2.3 million dollars of unmet lodging demand revenue in 2016, most of which will be absorbed by the upper midscale project scheduled to open in March 2016.

Numerous midscale national chain hospitality brands including America's Best Suites, Best Western, Hawthorn Suites by Windham and MainStay Suites are among the hotels that meet the industry's 2.0 to 2.5 star midscale rating.

This analysis takes into account the **178 rooms in the pipeline** at the construction stage in the overall Las Cruces market. The Gibbs Planning Group study does not factor in projects in the planning phases, like the hotel project at the Las Cruces Convention Center, because of uncertainties in financing and branding.

Although the regional lodging industry suffered during the 2008-2009 recession, the New Mexico market in general, and the overall Las Cruces submarket specifically, have returned to pre-crisis levels.

Anticipated lodging development could out-perform the projection by being a part of a mixed-use commercial redevelopment project, which would capture demand from increasing levels of both the leisure and business trip segments.

A future lodging project should attempt to establish access to on- and off-site attractions in the immediate vicinity, and offer at least the minimum amenities associated with the 2.0 to 2.5 star economy classifications. To earn the hospitality industry's hotel rating level of 2.0 to 2.5 stars, the midscale rooms must be in the 40th to 75th percentile price range, have onsite fitness, pool, and/or restaurant, good state highway access, and possible visibility from the interstate highway system.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

WORKSHOP CONCLUDES WITH A TO-DO LIST: THINK LONG-TERM BUT START WITH SHORT-RANGE FOCUS

WORKSHOP INPUT

February 16 – 19, 2016

THINK OUTSIDE DOWNTOWN

Think of Downtown with the adjacent neighborhoods as one complete organism since it is unique in the City and the region and functions economically, urbanistically, and socially as a whole.

ENCOURAGE ADAPTIVE REUSE

Historic buildings Downtown and in the adjacent neighborhoods are difficult to reuse due to building code restraints. Find a solution to ease reuse for economic development and sustainability goals.

IMPROVE WALKABILITY

Successful urban retail requires a high degree of walkability, and neighbors also requested better connections to Downtown as pedestrians. Shade, accessible sidewalks, and additional crosswalks were all recommended.

CAPTURE OPPORTUNITY

Don't let the anticipated development opportunities slip through our fingers. Leverage the recent TIDD investments to assure the market demand is met Downtown.

GOALS

EXISTING CONDITION

GOALS
WHERE WE WANT TO GO

BANK OF THE WEST REDEVELOPMENT

THIS ILLUSTRATION SHOWS THE REDEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE BANK OF THE WEST WITH RESIDENTIAL AND DINING FACING THE PLAZA.

Illustrative Master Plan

WHERE WE WANT TO GO: GOALS

MASTER PLAN

THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS AND DESIGN WERE SHAPED BY THEMES FROM THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

The success of Downtown's recent redevelopment initiatives and the completion of the recommendations from prior plans is impressive. The current planning effort was an opportunity to consider how much has been repaired since the urban renewal actions of the 1960's and early 1970's. The residential, retail and hospitality studies affirm that Downtown is poised to receive substantial growth and the only question is how quickly can the City respond to that sense of urgency.

The 2013 plan update recommended the new Plaza design and the conversion of Church and Water to two-way streets as well as re-opening Bowman and the south end of Water. These efforts are currently well underway. Other recommendations from the 2013 plan were reconsidered relative to the recent studies and there are a number of new recommendations.

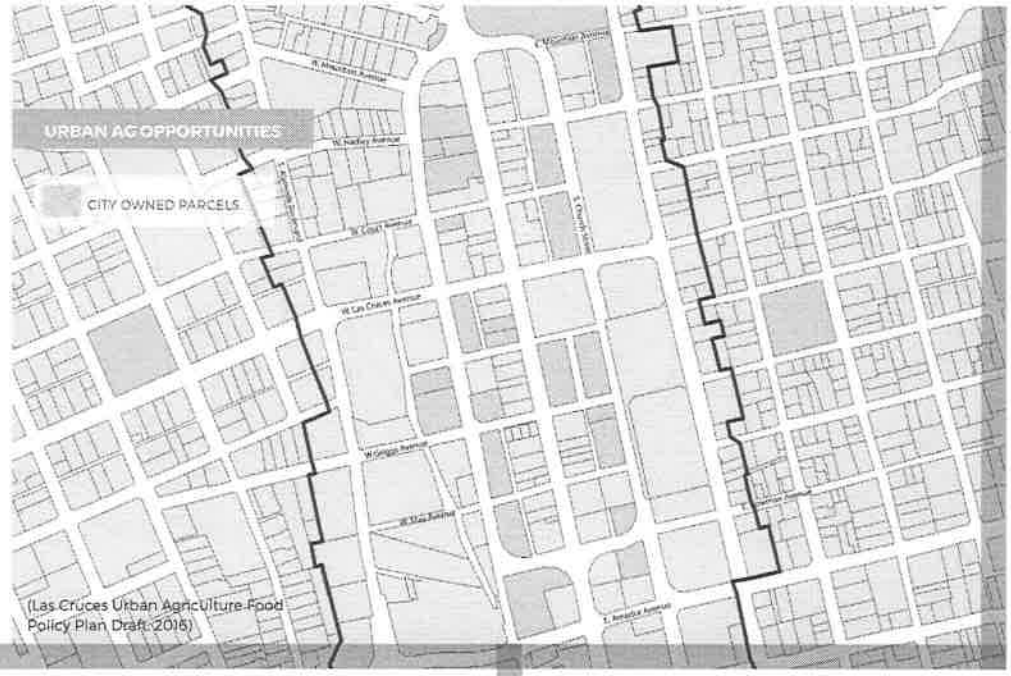
A priority in this Plan is to consider the larger context and not merely the TIDD boundary. The Downtown is the centerpiece in the larger organism that includes Mesquite and Alameda, and the Plan must consider all three areas as a holistic composition.

The Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan includes a primary theme of **HEALTHY COMMUNITY** that includes balanced development, multiple mobility options, great parks, community services, and a healthy and safe environment. Each of these issues are explicitly addressed in the Downtown context.

Las Cruces has tremendous recreational resources, from the Organ Mountains to the regional golf courses. However, there are concerns with childhood obesity and access to healthy food. A well connected, highly walkable, mixed-use Downtown addresses many health-related issues through active transportation, safe routes to schools, and enabling healthy lifestyles.

URBAN AGRICULTURE

A source of concern for Downtown is the lack of healthy food access. Mesquite is defined as a certified food desert. (United States Department of Agriculture, 2015) However, the City adopted the Las Cruces Urban Agriculture and Food Policy Plan in June of 2016. The recommendations of this plan should be incorporated into the Downtown Master Plan. Opportunities exist Downtown to provide small-scale urban agriculture, and these should be prioritized.



(Las Cruces Urban Agriculture Food Policy Plan Draft 2016)

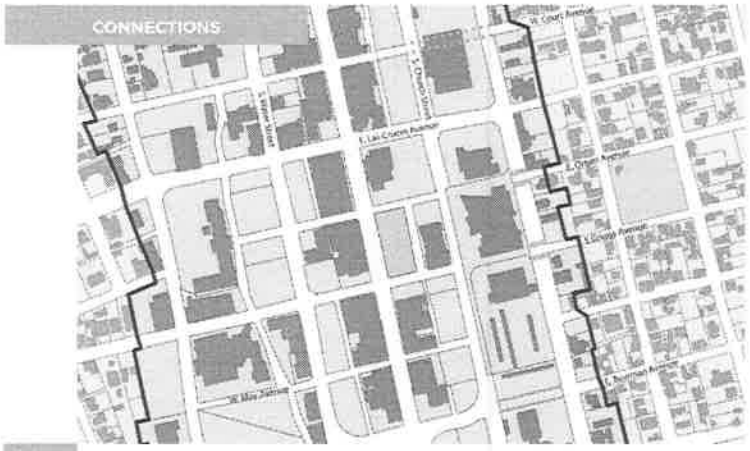
NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

A priority for Downtown and its neighborhoods is to re-establish walkable, bikable connections between the Plaza and the neighborhoods. Mesquite is quite isolated from Downtown due to the clipped grid resulting from the governmental development between Church and Campo. Las Cruces Ave. has the only cross walk at Campo between Amador and Mountain, or virtually the entire length of Downtown.

Reopening E. Court Avenue upon the future redevelopment of the Post Office and reopening E. Bowman Avenue are important, however the highest priority is adding crosswalks for Campo at Griggs and Organ. This will reconnect Mesquite pedestrians to the Plaza and should be executed during the Church & Water conversion.

::: STREET COMPLETION

||||| NEW CROSSWALK



HEALTHY COMMUNITY

CALLECITAS

A number of streets that were closed in the 1960's still serve as pedestrian passages, but they are largely underwhelming, are subject to flooding, and have minimal landscaping. These cannot include portions of Court, Hadley, May and Organ.

Shared Space

A connectivity solution that began in northern Europe and has moved to many cities throughout the U.S. is for low volume streets, where pedestrians, cyclists and cars all have equal priority. There are no curbs, no sidewalks, and no lane markings. This system has proven to reduce accidents in London, Seattle, Washington and Auckland.

Components

A shared street is like a dated below and should include:

1. Raised crossing at entrance
2. Flexible use of parking areas
3. Multiple others of paving colors
4. Parking lane planters
5. Chicanes
6. Pocket parks or seating areas
7. ADA clear zones

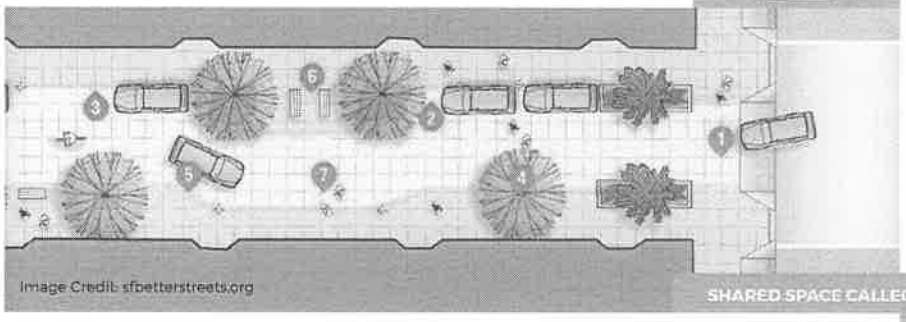


Image Credit: sfbetterstreets.org

SHARED SPACE CALLECITA

GOALS

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE is not a critical key to **COMMUNITY CHARACTER** if buildings have compatible scale, rhythm, materials, and fenestration. One of the most critical components to architectural character is the building frontage, or what occurs at the front face of the building. Storefronts, awnings, and canopies are a part of the Downtown character, while portals, garden walls, porches, and terraces contribute to the character of Alameda-Depot and Mesquite.

The Comprehensive Plan's theme of **COMMUNITY CHARACTER** addresses the community's sense of place and its identity, and establishes policies that encourage context-sensitive development for buildings, streets, and open space. The character of a place is frequently exemplified through architecture, urban form, and public spaces.

While many of the historic buildings of Downtown were lost, one goal of the Master Plan is to provide policies to **PROMOTE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE SURVIVING STRUCTURES**. The historic street grid will soon be largely restored, and the Plaza is under construction. Many efforts have been underway since the 1990's to preserve and enhance the character of Downtown, Mesquite, and Alameda.

This section will discuss ways to connect the primary public spaces of the Plaza, Klein Park, and Pioneer Women's Park, with **COURTYARDS, FORECOURTS, AND POCKET PARKS**. These smaller oases help reduce the urban heat island affect and leverage the regional practices of providing intimate, shaded, green spaces for dining, relaxing, and conversation. This Plan does not address architectural style, but it establishes **GUIDELINES FOR MATERIALS, MASSING, SCALE AND FENESTRATION** that are appropriate in the historically rich character of Downtown.

The previous sections (Callecitas, p. 55, and Neighborhood Connections, p. 54) discuss restoration of the grid, or the framework, that is unique to Downtown within the region. The majority of Las Cruces' land area was developed post 1940's when suburban forms began to emerge. The areas covered by this plan are the only part of the city that utilize the historic grid pattern, and the preservation of that development pattern is critical to Downtown character.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

As a home rule jurisdiction, Las Cruces has the right to amend State Building Codes as is appropriate to the City, and frequently does so. The City utilizes the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) which is applicable for adaptive reuse. A simple amendment to the section on historical structures (See What's Next: Goals to Actions, p. 84) permits greater flexibility in reusing the City's existing structures. As buildings evolve, they frequently are repurposed for new uses and that makes complying with the rigorous building code standards difficult to achieve. The IEBC will require general life safety for renovations, but will permit compatible, non-hazardous use changes without requiring renovations that are impossible to achieve.

PRIVATE GREEN SPACES

The new zoning district for Downtown identifies a series of civic spaces that are appropriate to the heart of the City. In addition to public spaces, private courtyards are a historic architectural pattern in southern New Mexico. They provide shade and quiet in an urban environment that is valued for residential development as well as a venue for dining or lodging.

KLEIN PARK

While the availability of water is a constraint for grass and trees, utilizing native and adaptive plants strategically is a significant environmental and economic asset. Proximity to green space is a significant monetary value for both retail and residential uses, with increases of up to one-fifth the value of the property. (Nicholls & Crompton, 2005)

SOUTHERN GATEWAY

The southern edge of Downtown is composed of a suburban development pattern that does not signal arrival at the City's heart to the motorist on Amador or Lohman. A key to Downtown economic success is enticing the passing motorist to stop and linger. Thus, signaling arrival at the intersection of Amador Avenue and Main Street is very important.

This location provides views of two of the most significant historic buildings in the the City – the Amador Hotel and the old Doña Ana County Courthouse. With restoration and repurposing, these buildings can play an important role in the Downtown economy.

This Master Plan illustrates a technique above that may be applied to this and other sites throughout Downtown

INFILL GUIDELINES

Infill development in Downtown should follow some basic guidelines to ensure the protection and enhancement of the important **COMMUNITY CHARACTER** in the heart of the City. Most of this will be regulated in the new Downtown Development Code, but to summarize:

- Buildings should be located close to the street.
- Parking should be located on the street and in parking lots behind buildings.

AMADOR & MAIN ILLUSTRATION | LOOKING WEST ON AMADOR

- Shade should be provided and may include street trees, awnings, and galleries.
- Buildings should have active frontages. The face of the building along the sidewalk should have ample clear glass to showcase the activity or the products inside.

Providing attractive, accessible crosswalks, and in the long-term, adding on-street parking and street trees along Amador will improve the walkability of the southern gateway to Downtown. The completion of development on the block south of Amador should be a priority.

The hotel study (See Hotel/Hospitality Study Highlights, p. 70) indicates a demand for an additional 100 rooms within five years, and Downtown currently has no options available. There is interest in redeveloping the Courthouse as a boutique hotel, but it is important to provide off-site attractions within the immediate vicinity. The redevelopment of the Amador block could provide this critical synergy, creating important activity at the southern gateway.

SOUTHERN GATEWAY COMPONENTS:

AMADOR HOTEL AS AN EVENT SPACE

OLD COURTHOUSE AS A BOUTIQUE HOTEL

NEW RESTAURANT AND BAR IN PROXIMITY TO AMADOR

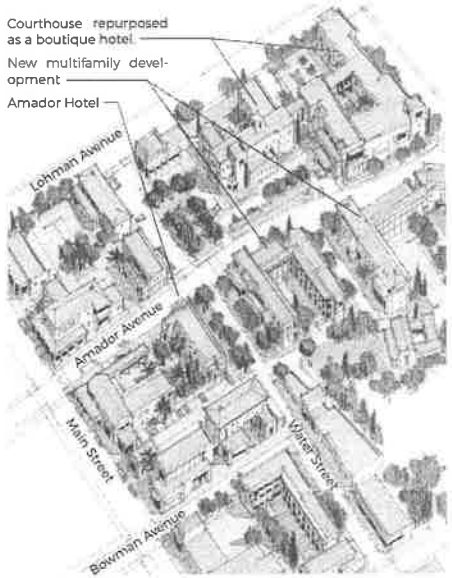
DINING, BAR & EVENTS SHARE A COURTYARD SPACE

CONVENTION & VISITOR'S BUREAU ADJACENT TO AMADOR HOTEL

URBAN BUILDINGS SIGNAL THE ENTRY TO DOWNTOWN

The illustration to the right is an aerial view of how these two buildings and surrounding development might complement each other and build value to the whole.

EXISTING CONDITIONS | LOOKING WEST ON AMADOR



INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT WEST OF MAIN AT AMADOR AVE.

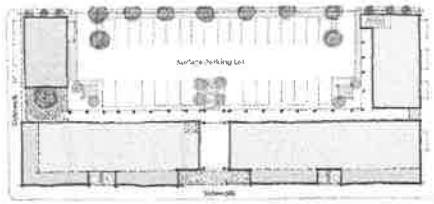
WATER STREET REDEVELOPMENT ILLUSTRATION

ADDING RESIDENTS

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

The housing study will be discussed in the next section (see Residential Market Study Highlights, p. 58). It indicates a significant demand for Downtown housing. Housing has been a recommendation in every Downtown plan and report since the R/UDAT study decades ago. Adding people increases opportunities for retail, restaurant, employment, and transit success.

There are multiple opportunities to develop City-owned parking lots into multifamily housing throughout Downtown.



HALF BLOCK WITH PARKING LOT = 50 UNITS PER ACRE

Housing is discussed here under **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**, since how the housing is developed is critical to the preservation of character. However, adding housing also plays a role in all of the Comprehensive Plan categories implemented by this Master Plan:

HEALTHY COMMUNITY – housing in proximity to jobs, markets, and schools enable residents to walk or bike to daily needs

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY – residents support local businesses and employers

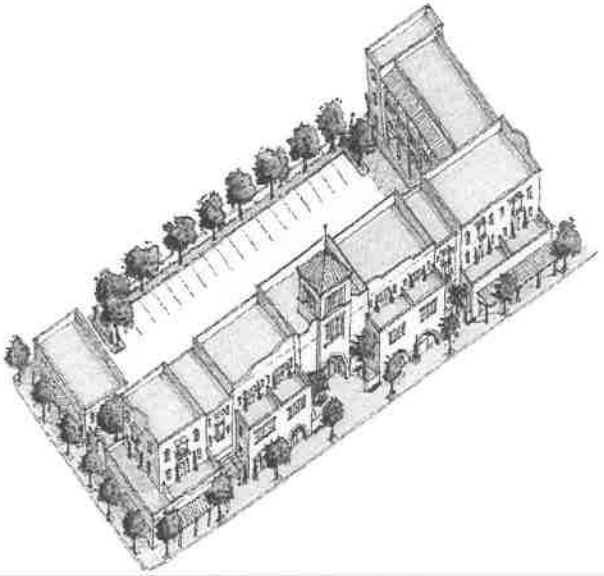
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH – enabling active transportation options reduces carbon emissions. Building in a compact mixed use manner preserves agricultural and fragile lands.

Not only is there a significant demand for Downtown housing, it has support from the adjacent neighbors, and it is crucial to economic development. However, if it is built in the conventional suburban garden apartment format, it will damage the important urban character of Downtown.

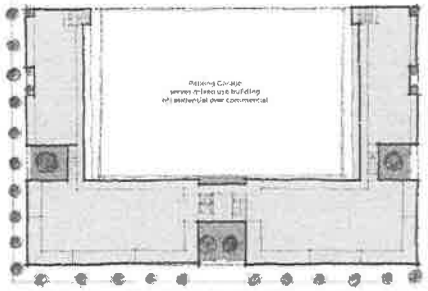
The urban form criteria discussed in Infill Guidelines, p. 58 are applicable for housing as well as commercial and institutional uses. Most suburban garden apartments are built in 8-unit breezeway configurations. Because of the necessity of placing parking behind the building, urban apartments are usually thinner buildings that line parking lots or garages. See the illustration above.

Buildings that span the 280' length of a block should be varied in mass, as illustrated above, to avoid feeling monolithic. Building massing and frontage details will be discussed further in Architecture, p. 62.

Another challenge with urban housing is to balance the need for parking with the densities necessary to assure a vibrant, economically resilient Downtown. Recent parking studies show Downtown has a parking surplus. But as the parking lots receive new development, parking management will become an issue.



HALF BLOCK DEVELOPMENT | HOUSING OVER RETAIL



HALF BLOCK WITH PARKING GARAGE = 70 UNITS PER ACRE

Public/private partnerships will be required to provide parking garages over time. Studies show an almost perfect match between the daytime parking needs of office users and the evening demand of housing. Garages should be designed to serve multiple uses and properties.

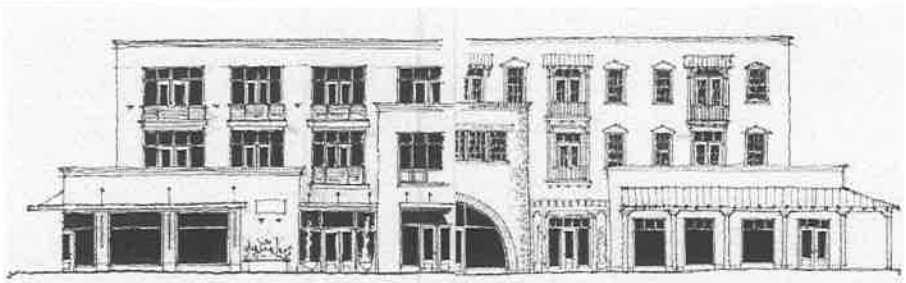
The image at the left illustrates a parking garage lined with a mixed use building on three sides. Access is from the alley, and the streets and sidewalks remain active and interesting for the pedestrians. It is as important to hide garages as it is to hide parking lots.

GOALS

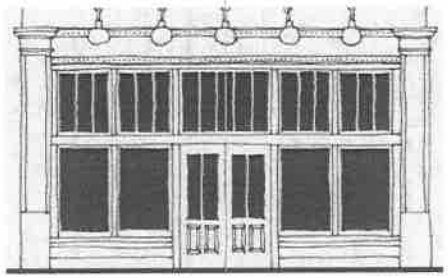
Architecture

KEY COMPONENTS

Architecture plays a critical role in the promotion of **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**. While this Plan does not establish policy concerning style, the massing of the building and how it faces the sidewalk are critical components of authenticity. How the building meets the sidewalk will be regulated by the new Downtown Development Code.

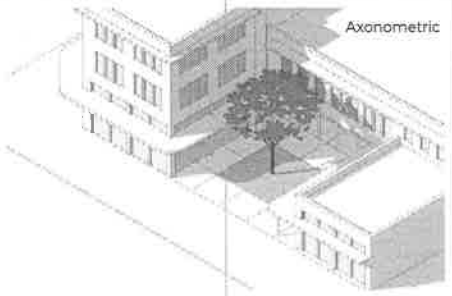


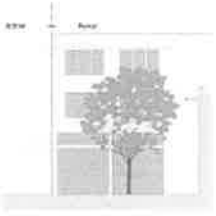
MASSING
The images above illustrate the fact that style isn't critical to character if building massing is broken up to provide pedestrian scale and diversity. Variety in height and stepbacks provide outdoor spaces as well.

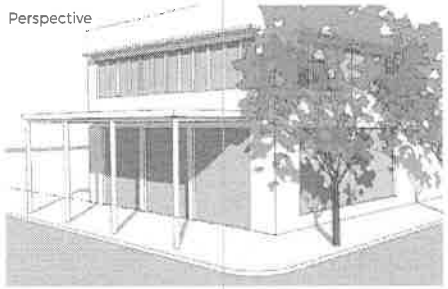


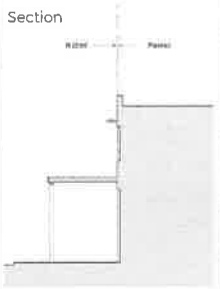
SHOPFRONT
Many of the Main Street shopfronts suffer from tinted or reflective glazing. This prohibits shoppers from seeing the merchandise. Shopfronts should have at least 70% clear glass to enhance retail success.

FORECOURT
Courtyard spaces are a part of the Las Cruces urban character, and forecourts provide enclosure while engaging the sidewalk. These spaces are perfect for gardens, outdoor dining, or providing an entry to multiple shops or residences.









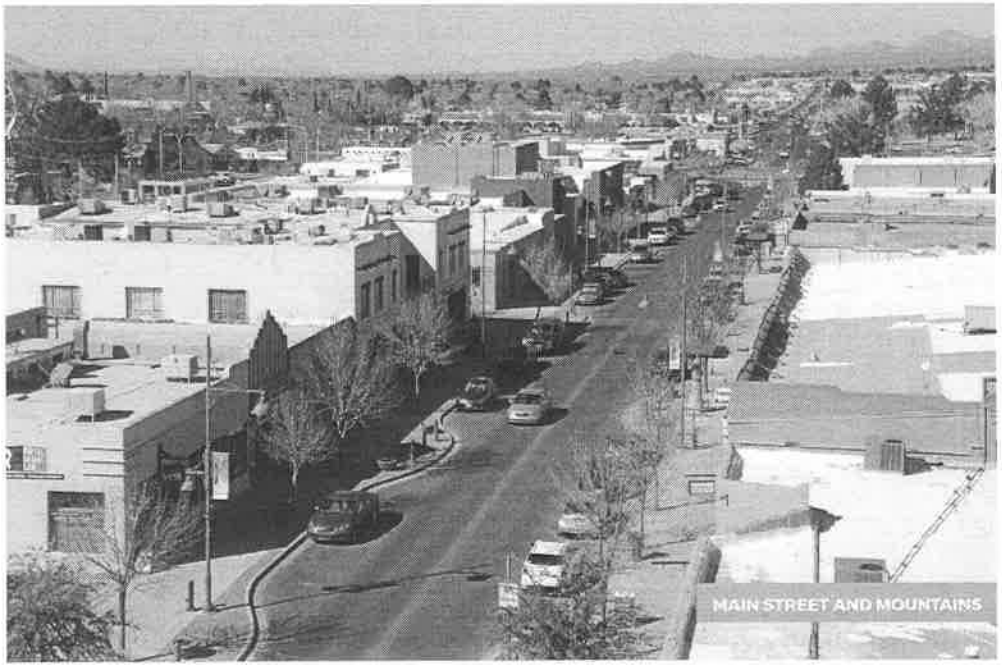
GALLERY
Shade is critical to walkability in the high desert environment. Galleries shade the sidewalk and encourage the pedestrian to walk closer to the shopfront. This frontage type is combined with a shopfront.

COMMON ENTRY
The common entry type is used for multi-family, office or institutional uses. It may be lined with a planter and requires a minimum of 50% clear glass along the street.

GOALS

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

COMMUNICATION is key to **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY** because economic development is the connection of existing assets in new ways.



MAIN STREET AND MOUNTAINS

The City's economic priority is to provide for an environment for existing business to thrive and new businesses to be created or attracted, to provide quality jobs for residents of all skill levels. The Comprehensive Plan's theme of **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY** addresses economic diversity, business and industry support, and ready workforce and environment.

WALK TO WORK

Downtown, Mesquite, and Alameda-Depot, as the most walkable parts of Las Cruces, should leverage the powerful connection between compact, walkable communities and attracting and keeping those quality jobs. American companies are gravitating to walkable downtown neighborhoods, from the very small to the Fortune 500. These moves include relocations, consolidations, and expansions to places with considerably higher Walk Scores, Transit Scores, and Bike Scores from where the businesses were previously located.

Companies are making their move downtown to attract and retain talented workers, to build brand identity and company culture, to support creative collaboration, to be closer to customers and business partners, to centralize operations, and to support the triple bottom line. They're looking for vibrant, walkable neighborhoods where people want to live and work. Great office space is another draw, particularly repurposed spaces with the sort of adaptive reuse and infill that the Community Character section envisions. And of course, clean, safe streets are a must. (Smart Growth America, 2015)

This trend toward more new jobs in city centers, with employment growth shrinking in the suburbs, has built up momentum in the last several years. Businesses are choosing to locate in walkable locations, to attract younger workers who prefer a less car-dependent, more urban lifestyle. (Cortright, 2015)

This national pent-up demand for walkable, urban environments is echoed in Las Cruces. The Section 5 What We Learned, Residential, Retail and Hotel/Hospitality Market Studies all show significant local demand for downtown development.

DWELL DOWNTOWN

The rising Millennial generation coupled with the retiring Baby Boomers make up half of the US population, and are driving the demand for a walkable urban alternative in Downtown Las Cruces. Across North America, downtown residents are frequently younger and better educated, and being close to work and public transit are their top two reasons for living downtown. (Sustainable Prosperity, 2013)

Americans prefer walkable communities more so than they have in the past. 79% place importance on being within easy walking distance of neighborhood destinations. (National Association of Realtors, 2015) This shift in housing demand is estimated to cause a surplus of 23 million large lot homes by 2030.

This master plan sets policy to promote this kind of development, with balanced investment in all transportation modes, support for a range of housing types, offices, shops, restaurants, and hospitality within a compact mix of compatible uses.

GET RETAIL RIGHT

Downtown Las Cruces has the potential to be a very vibrant shopping district. Significant pent-up demand exists today for new shops and restaurants in an urban format.

Downtown has a strong primary trade area of over 50,000 people, with very strong anchors of a courthouse and post office. (Retail Market Study, p. 70).

For Downtown to have a critical mass, the goal is to capture 20% of the retail market share. That is 10 times the current average of the 2% that most downtowns in the U.S. capture today. The following list are issues critical to capturing that market share:

Perception and Zoning. There are many reasons for the current imbalance that has created dark and under-performing storefronts in second tier cities, and some of it has to do with perception.

GOALS

Retailers are biased against locating in middle income areas, even though the spending power per acre is usually significantly greater than the suburbs because of greater density.

Walkability. All national retailers pay attention to Walk Score, often requiring a score of 80 or higher to consider adding a new store downtown. Downtown Las Cruces has a Walk Score of 75. However, in the 51 largest U.S. metro areas, only 12% of neighborhoods are walkable, which is down from 19% in 1970. The 50/50/50 rule says that Main Street retail's ideal sweet spot enjoys at least 50,000 people earning at least $50,000 per year, or 50,000 cars going by a store.

Anchors. Trying to build a downtown out of just specialty shops also does not work because form follows anchor. Only about 30,000 square feet of retail is supportable without an anchor. This may include a baby box retailer as well as non-retail amenities. A library, post office, and courthouse are all strong civic anchors. In most places, the anchor's lease rate is half the rent of in-line stores to reflect the value they bring to the Main Street.

The Mix. The strategy of all downtowns should start with providing the goods and services that the community wants to buy. Downtowns that are the most successful at competing with the suburbs have a healthy mix of local, regional, and national brands.

Rising Tide. It is not just retail that benefits from walkable, compact places. Hotels are seeking urban environments because they sell more rooms at higher rates if their guests can walk to restaurants and shops. Universities find they can attract more students and better faculty if there is a vibrant Main Street retail and restaurants.

Bring home the bacon. The average U.S. mall sells about $275 per square foot per year. The average U.S. downtown independent retailer earns $80 per square foot per year. About $200 per square foot per year is needed to support a family, so to make downtown retail provide quality jobs, policies must be established to improve Downtown retail profitability.

People do what they see rather than what they read. Signals of storefronts are more important than signage. An open front door is much more welcoming than multiple signs that state the store is open. Rents are about 10% of sales, so landowners should work with retailers to get storefronts to send the right signals.

Show the Goods. Retail thrives when the storefront consists of 70% clear glass, so people can "read" the offerings (See Architecture Key Components, p. 44). When the glass has zero tint this reading is easier. Retailers should wash windows once a day and wash doors once an hour.

Keep it Clean. Rodeo Drive, one of the most expensive shopping streets in America, has concrete sidewalks, but they power wash them once a week. Do not gold plate the urbanism, but do keep it clean and welcoming. Keep sidewalks and landscape simple and well designed, so shoppers can focus on the storefronts.

Visual merchandising drives higher sales per square foot. A shopper should be able to understand the store organization in two to three seconds. It takes about eight seconds to walk by an average storefront, and most people decide in two seconds whether or not to walk in.

Central Welcome. Once people walk into the store, the first two to three steps should be neutral space for eyes and ears to transition from the street. A central table at the end of those steps should welcome and orient, and provide at least one sale item.

Wind up for the pitch. Nine out of ten Americans turn right in every store. So the flow of the store should respond to this tendency.

Signage. A range of sign types are appropriate to Downtown Community Character, including: pinned to the wall of the building, bands, projecting, sculpture, and hand-crafted sandwich boards. Quality is essential. Predictability is critical. Better retailers only invest in downtowns that have high standards. The Downtown Development Code will regulate these types of signs.

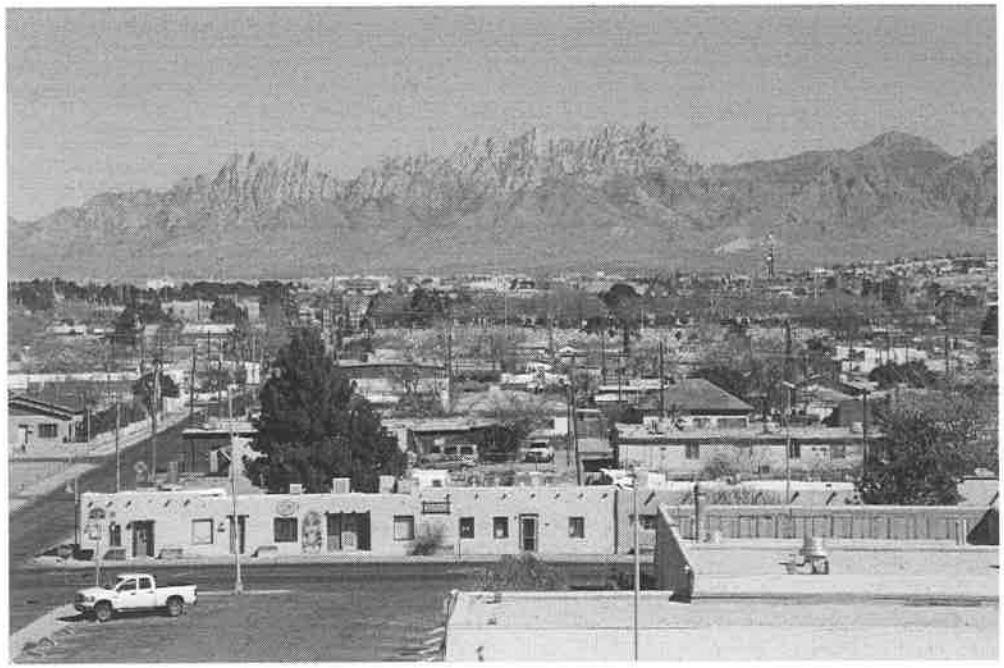
Restaurants. In dining establishments, ensure each room has three light sources: on the ceiling, wall, and table. Wherever you sit, the restaurant should feel more than 60% occupied.

Parking. Getting parking right is essential to downtown viability. This plan discourages store owners and workers from parking in front of their stores, as this practice causes them to give up 25-30 customers every day. In the event that parking meters are installed, they should be the old-fashioned meters that accept coins or credit cards, as shoppers do not like parking kiosks.

Timing. Time is the new luxury. The shopper today spends more money in 20 minutes than her mom did in two hours. Millennials consider shopping a chore. 75% of all retail sales happen after 5:30 P.M. and on Sunday.

RESILIENCE is enabled by **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH** when land use laws are in line with development policy.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



City policy on managing development and its effect on neighborhood character is founded on a context sensitive, mixed-use development. This plan further defines the Comprehensive Plan Sustainable Growth policies with context sensitive, mixed-use development concepts appropriate for Downtown (see Community Character, p. 38).

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City of Las Cruces has recently enacted a Downtown Development Code. This Code replaced the Central Business District and Main Street Overlay.

The benefits of the Development Code are:

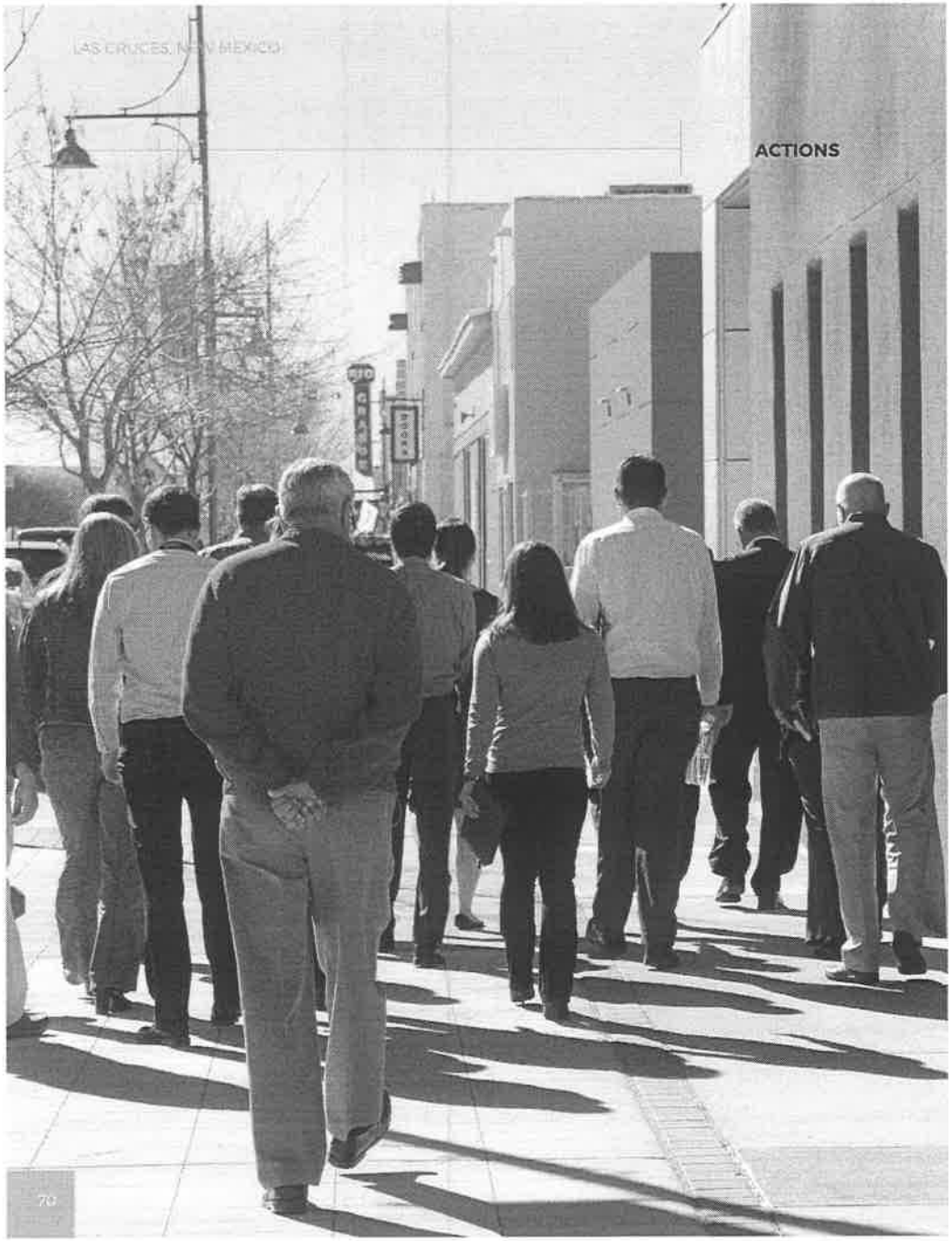
- Balances development flexibility with predictability for adjoining property owners.
- Encourages a mix of uses within a compact, walkable urban setting.
- Blends a more urban downtown environment with adjoining historic neighborhoods.
- Enhances and preserves historic elements of downtown.

PLANNING AREAS

Downtown, Mesquite, and Alameda-Depot already have well-established community character, and do not need additional stylistic injections. However, the City and community should protect and nurture this character with additional policies and funding sources, as well as signal a sense of arrival by emphasizing the gateways to Downtown (see Community Character, p. 38)

While Mesquite and Alameda-Depot have overlays that allow new development to be in character with its surroundings, further tools should be considered to trigger additional funding sources. A Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan should be considered to support the Mesquite neighborhood with a Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) to define special benefits and to meet the state and federal requirements to obtain funding and tax incentives.

A neighborhood TIDD would allow the City to designate property taxes in the defined district to support funding of infrastructure and public improvements for the district. The tax revenue can be used to initiate bond financing for specific projects. This incentivizes redevelopment because infrastructure and public improvements can be funded by the TIDD. Private funding is required for private development and is the basis for the public private partnership.



City staff touring Downtown

WHAT'S NEXT
GOALS TO ACTIONS

THE CITY HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING GOALS FROM PRIOR PLANS. THIS SECTION PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN.

This Plan's primary Goal is to build upon all of the successful efforts of the City, businesses, and citizens of the last twenty years. While much progress has been made and significant milestones met, much is left to do to return Downtown to its early 20th century vibrancy.

This section lists recommendations across many topics including urban development, economic development, and infrastructure. Like the Goals section, this is organized by the major topics from the City of Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan: **HEALTHY COMMUNITY**, **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**, **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**, and **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**. Some actions achieve more than one topic goal, and will be tagged with the icons that apply.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STRATEGIES

This section is organized by the general topics of the Comprehensive Plan. However, many actions support more than one Comp Plan policy. If an action is applicable for multiple strategies, all relevant icons will be shown below that action.

- Healthy Community
- Community Character
- Economic Prosperity
- Sustainable Growth

1. HEALTHY COMMUNITY

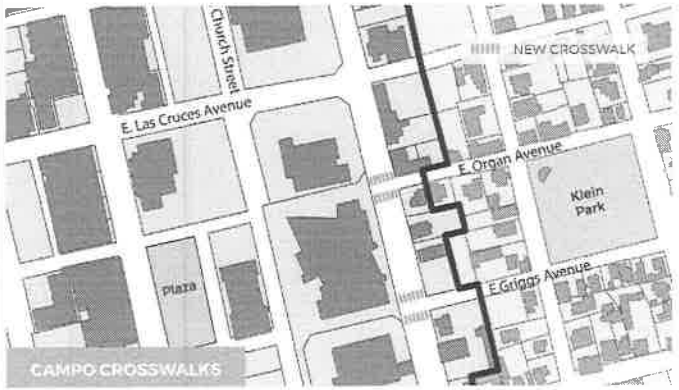
URBAN AGRICULTURE

Action 1.1 Permit and incentivize small-scale urban agricultural solutions Downtown and in Mesquite and Alameda-Depot including:

- Community garden sites within City parks
- Home garden training
- Introduction of edibles into City landscaping
- Water harvesting
- Neighborhood farm stands

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Action 1.2 Provide crosswalks from Mesquite across Campo prioritizing E. Organ Avenue and E. Griggs Avenue through the current street improvement budget as shown in the diagram below.



Action 1.3 Prioritize pedestrian connections from Pioneer Women's Park and Klein Memorial Park to the Plaza. As capital improvements are planned, budget for accessible, shaded sidewalks from:

- N Reymond Street to Main Street along W Las Cruces Avenue, and
- S San Pedro Street to N Church Street along E Organ Avenue

See diagram below for locations.

Action 1.4 Establish a policy that upon redevelopment, the U.S. Post Office site will provide the right-of-way for the extension of W. Court Avenue.

Action 1.5 Plan and budget for the completion of E. Bowman Avenue through the U.S. Bank parking lot.

Action 1.6 Designate the *callecitas* as Shared Space, including:

- Hadley between Church and Water,
- Court between Church and Water,
- Organ between Church and Main, and
- May between Church and Water.

See diagram to the right for locations.

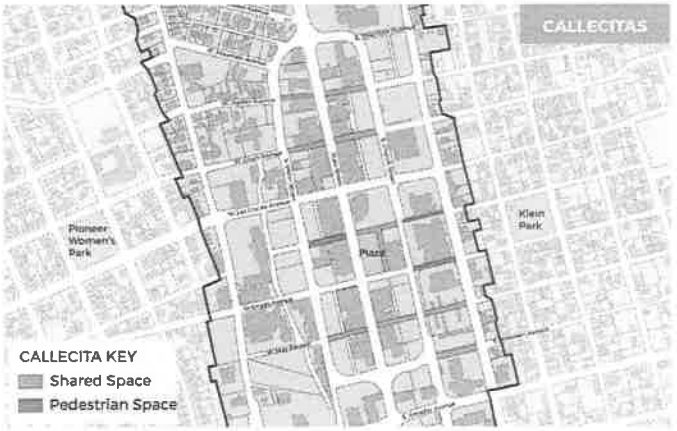
Action 1.7 Plan for pervious pavement and green infrastructure solutions when transitioning the *callecitas* into Shared Space. Utilize green infrastructure solutions throughout Downtown.

Action 1.8 Provide 12' of vehicular space with structural concrete in Shared Spaces for emergency access.

Action 1.9 Shared public ways may be considered in other areas of Downtown with low traffic volume and no transit service.

Action 1.10 Shared public ways should use the following techniques to slow traffic and emphasize the pedestrian nature of the *callecita*:

- Gateways: The entrance should be narrow and include vertical elements.
- Paving: Changes to pavement type should occur at entrance such as a band of rough cobblestone.
- Chicanes: A serpentine pathway for automotive travel through landscaping.



Healthy Community

Community Character

Economic Prosperity

Sustainable Growth

2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Action 2.1 Amend the City of Las Cruces Existing Building Code (IEBC) section 1101.1.1 Scope as follows:

Add Subsection **1101.1.1 Buildings of Historic Value.**

Buildings constructed in the Mesquite Historic District, Downtown Central Business District, and Alameda-Depot Neighborhood prior to January 1, 1970 shall be considered buildings of historic value to the City of Las Cruces. These buildings shall qualify for all exceptions and preservation protocols established by this Chapter.

PRIVATE GREEN SPACES

Action 2.2 Implement the Downtown Development Code Civic Space and Frontage Type Standards.

Action 2.3 The City should support private development that utilizes forecourt and courtyard spaces because they may increase the urban tree canopy, assist in stormwater management and reduce the urban heat island effect. City support may include:

- Expedited approvals for projects with private green spaces that are equal to or greater than 5% of the lot area.
- Reduction in fees for projects with private green spaces that are equal to or greater than 5% of the lot area.

INFILL GUIDELINES

Action 2.4 Regulate urban form as listed in Infill Guidelines, p. 58 with the Downtown Development Code.

Action 2.5 Plan for Amador evolving into a multi-modal complete street over time. Provide attractive, accessible crosswalks, and in the long-term, add on-street parking and street trees to improve the walkability of the southern gateway to Downtown.

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

Action 2.6 Invest in a Downtown Parking Management plan that will fill the parking gap as multifamily housing replace the surface parking lots.

Action 2.7 Plan for at least three parking structures over time as Downtown densifies. See the Priority Plan on page 7. Locations should include:

- A shared garage with the relocated Municipal Courts.
- A public private partnership to fund a garage at the northeast corner of Las Cruces and Church. This garage will provide capacity for the Farmer's Market, festivals and housing.
- A pubic private partnership to provide a garage on Water and Griggs as surface lots develop.

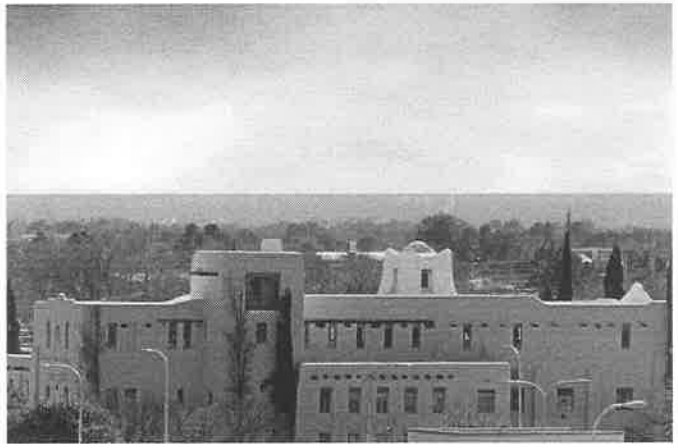
PARKING STRUCTURE LOCATION RECOMMENDATION

Action 2.8 Assure multifamily housing development character reflects the urban environment as regulated by the Downtown Development Code.

ARCHITECTURE

Action 2.9 Implement Frontage Types appropriate to Downtown through the Downtown Development Code standards.

Action 2.10 Assist local businesses in applying for NM Main Street facade improvement assistance. Set a target of three to five facade improvements per year.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STRATEGIES

- Healthy Community
- Community Character
- Economic Prosperity
- Sustainable Growth

3. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Action 3.1 Promote LEDA Development Incentives:

- The City may waive permit and processing fees for vacant parcels in the city center.
- A simplified subdivision review process is available for commercial or industrial parcels within previously master planned area, with an average length of process of 6 to 8 weeks.
- The City provides a project liaison to coordinate communications through the review process for economic development projects.
- LEDA-qualified projects may justify processing fee waivers in exchange for economic development.

Action 3.2 Promote LEDA Construction Incentives:

- The City can provide complimentary review for projects at the conceptual design phase and work with developers to identify issues and address questions as early as possible.
- The City will waive permit fees for vacant parcels within the city center.
- The City provides a project liaison to coordinate communications through the review process for economic development projects.
- LEDA-justified projects may obtain permit fee waiver in exchange for economic development.

Action 3.3 Promote LEDA Operation Incentives:

- Economic development office will assist existing businesses in negotiating through the government processes and providing a point of contact addressing problems and concerns.

Action 3.4 Ensure streets and sidewalks are clean and safe.

Action 3.5 Install parallel on-street parking along Main Street between Las Cruces and Griggs Avenues. Study the potential to increase on-street parking along Main Street.

Action 3.6 Remove light bollards along Main Street between Las Cruces and Griggs Avenues.

Action 3.7 Implement a marketing program for existing retailers and restaurants.

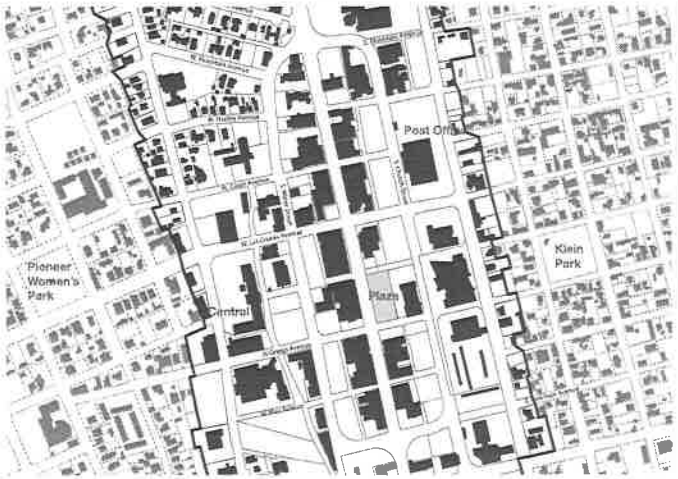
Action 3.8 Clean, repair and repaint all existing street furnishings and trash receptacles.

Action 3.9 Maintain existing street lighting fixtures, several bulbs are not working.

Action 3.10 Street lighting levels along Main Street, except between Las Cruces and Griggs is too dark for comfortable pedestrian use. Improve light levels without creating a harsh level of illumination.

Action 3.11 Install additional flower containers and hanging flowers from light fixtures, encourage flower box installation along storefront windows.

Action 3.12 Implement a business management program to assist retailers and restaurants with modern techniques for improving visual merchandising, store planning and operations.



Action 3.13 Discontinue existing street closures on Wednesdays and Saturdays when the new plaza is completed.

Action 3.14 Install additional and larger trees along Main Street and the Avenues to provide more shade. Locate trees away from storefronts and signage.

Action 3.15 Develop a mid and long range merchandising tenant mix plan for Downtown to be used for business recruitment.

Action 3.16 Implement a targeted retail, cinema and restaurant recruitment program, participate in Urban Land Institute and International Council of Shopping Centers leasing and business recruitment programs.

Action 3.17 Implement a signage loan and grant improvement program to replace or upgrade existing commercial signage. Encourage retro signage with neon. Implement a sunset ordinance to require all existing nonconforming signage be replaced.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STRATEGIES

- Healthy Community
- Community Character
- Economic Prosperity
- Sustainable Growth

Action 3.18 Implement a program to encourage businesses to maintain window display lighting until 11:00 pm.

Action 3.19 Research, plan and implement a year-round public market based on the Oxbow Market, Napa, CA or the North Market, Columbus, OH.

Action 3.20 Require clear storefront glass along Main Street, Water and Church Streets and all cross (east-west) streets.

Action 3.21 Implement a façade improvement loan and grant program to promote updated storefronts, signage and awnings.

Action 3.22 Expand outreach to retailers to ensure they know code allows an 18" outdoor display zone along retail storefronts, to enliven sidewalks.

Action 3.23 Install a business wayfinding system on each block highlighting businesses on each block.

Action 3.24 Install a public parking lot wayfinding signage system throughout the downtown commercial area.

Action 3.25 Implement an expanded banner program to install larger street banners featuring bolder graphic and highlighting existing retailers and restaurants.

Action 3.26 Improve pedestrian walkways, or *callecitas*, between parking lots and Main Street. Upgrade paving, lighting, signage and landscaping.

Action 3.27 Implement a program to install additional civic art throughout the Downtown shopping district.

Action 3.28 Improve landscaping, signage, paving and lighting of existing surface parking lots.

Action 3.29 Illuminate the facades and key architectural features of existing significant buildings located in or near Downtown.

4. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CODE

Action 4.1 Implement the regulations of the Downtown Development Code to:

- Balance development flexibility with predictability for adjoining property owners.
- Encourage a mix of uses within a compact, walkable urban setting.
- Blend a more urban downtown environment with adjoining historic neighborhoods.
- Enhance and preserve historic elements of Downtown.

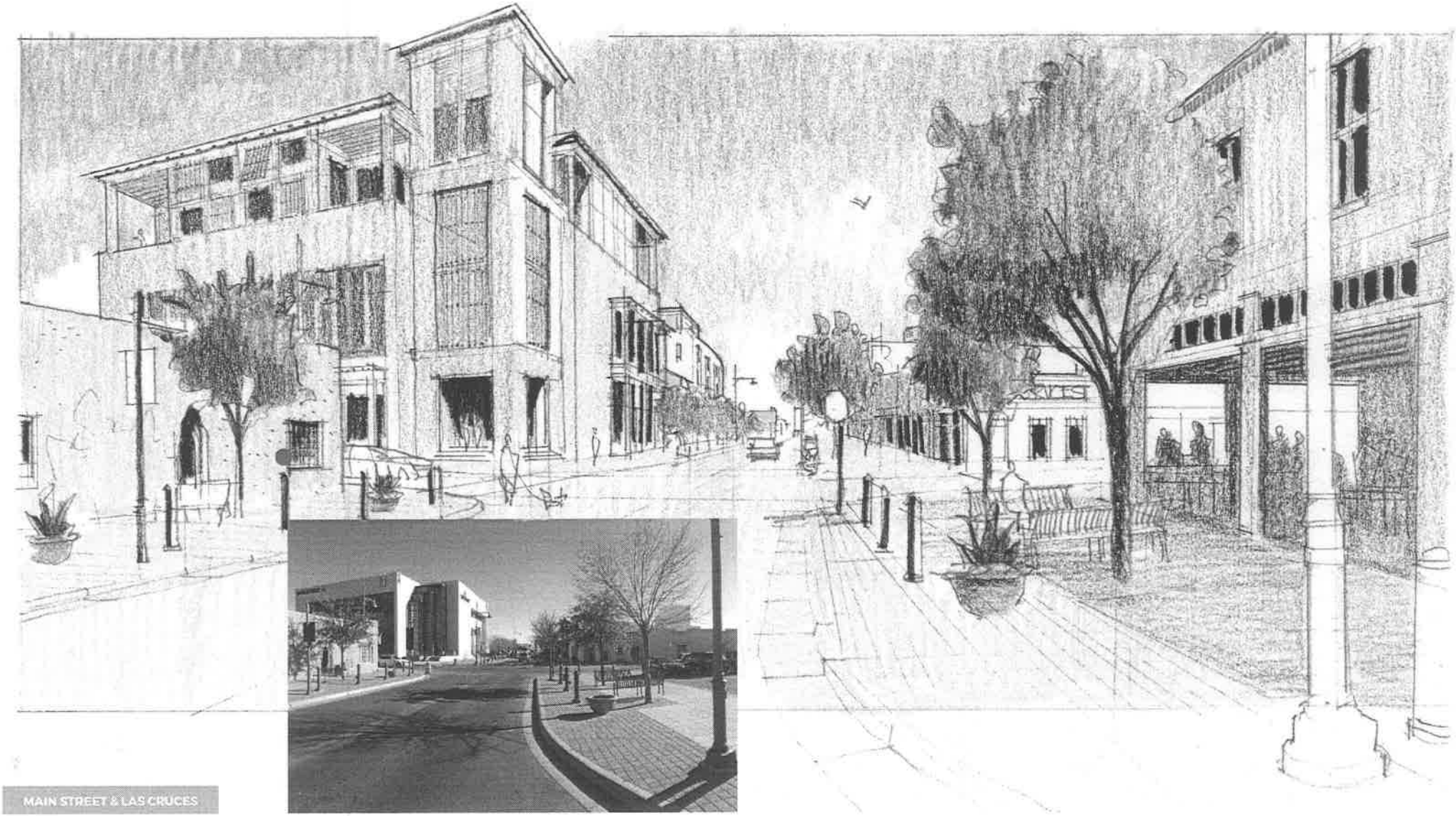
EXPAND FUNDING OPTIONS

Action 4.2 Explore further tools to trigger additional funding sources for Mesquite and Alameda-Depot, such as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan to expand the areas eligible for a Tax Increment Development District.

RESULTS

WATER STREET EVOLUTION

5 MAIN STREET EVOLUTION



MAIN STREET & LAS CRUCES

MAIN STREET & ORGAN

MAIN STREET & AMADOR

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BISTRO
RIO
GRANDE
My Grandmother's
Broken Dishes