

DECEMBER 2022

# ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING

RAPID GROWTH MEETING WESTERN STYLE

Revitalization  
Roadmap  
Setting the Course  
to a strong community



ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_ 2022

# ABOUT ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING

Rock Springs is a community created by a multitude of nationalities, each bringing their own unique attributes and amenities to the community. This conglomeration of efforts has created a vibrant, attractive, and caring community that is proud of their history. This civic pride represented has created a community fabric that desires to retain their unique attributes and promote their differentiating factors. In recent decades, the Rock Springs community has witnessed a stagnant population, creating a lack of turnover in the retail and service based industries.

As the community looks to continue their economic development and downtown revitalization efforts, providing strategies that will personify the unique cultural heritage and defined attributes will be critical for development of a sustainable ecosystem.



## History Highlights

- Historic railroad community
- Catalyst sites creating meaningful changes
- Primary construction started in the 1930's

**DECEMBER 2022**

**DIVERSE ARCHITECTURE IN A VARIETY OF CONDITIONS**



# ***Rock Springs Socioeconomic & Demographic Analysis***

Median Age



34.1 Yrs.

Cost  
Burdened



Owners: 67.0%

Race & Ethnicity

78.6% White; 10.5%  
Hispanic, 2% African  
American; 8.9%  
Other

Population



2010 Census:  
23,017  
2020 Census  
23,481

Median HH  
Income



\$74,625

Labor Force  
Participation:  
81.1%



Unemployment  
Rate: 7.1%

Poverty Rate



10.2%

Average  
Commute

18.8  
Minutes

# STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

## LONG-TERM OWNERS

There are multiple property owners that are multi-generational and are showing lack of desire

## IRREGULAR ENFORCEMENT

Residents and business owners are notating a strong difference in enforcement and interpretation of the municipal codes

## DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE TRACKS

There is a different level of investment being placed on each side of the railroad tracks, limiting the growth of some areas



A community must have a similar vision to support.

There were a few similar themes that became apparent during the public input process. They are as follows:

1

Codes and ordinances make redevelopment opportunities challenging

2

Downtown merchants are torn about what the downtown should look like

3

Residents support the downtown merchants regularly

4

Businesses are keeping irregular and unpredictable hours

5

Downtown is a corridor that has witnessed changes, yet there is still work to be completed

# DESTINATION DISCOVERY



Gathering existing conditions is the first step.

Identifying assets, preparing strategies and personifying character

Downtown Rock Springs and adjacent areas were studied and reviewed, determining the current conditions.



**DISTINCT ARCHITECTURE**

The downtown corridor has distinct and inviting architecture, including numerous historic properties



**UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES**

Properties represent a variety of uses, some maximized, and some underutilized



**AMPLE PARKING**

There is ample parking in the downtown area, both on the north and south side of the tracks

Rock Springs is a diverse and thriving community founded by residents from a variety of nationalities. The community has grown organically since inception, adapting to meet the demands of the community, while also remaining relevant in a changing market.



## CONCERNED CITIZENS

Citizens are concerned about their downtown.

- Residents are concerned about the lengthy process for permitting and approvals
- Businesses and developers are notating a different level of requirements for similar processes
- Community partners are similarly minded, but they are not working together
- Residents and business owners want to modernize their community

# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



Rock Springs residents demonstrate a desire for improving their community, both in terms of built environment and quality of life, yet this desire is hindered by a lack of knowledge on how to proceed forward.

Rock Springs is a community comprised of long-term residents, each helping to move the community forward and ensure the City remains current in an ever changing world.

- Residents are apathetic towards the prospect of community improvement
- Residents seem jaded about why their visions and desires matter
- Siloed groups are witnessing limited impacts from their efforts, hindering future progress



Lack of economic diversity is causing a stale ecosystem in downtown.



## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Downtown corridors are spread out, limiting impact
- 2 Recent efforts are being noticed, yet they are not providing ample change
- 3 Downtown has attractive buildings, yet they are mostly unused
- 4 The railroad is a hard barrier between districts of the main street
- 5 Residents are concerned about the longevity of the community



# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Rock Springs is a community made up of a distinct mixture of building typologies. The forming and massing provides a quaint urban feeling within a rural setting. However, many of the buildings are beginning to show signs of deferred maintenance and below standard conditions. If this process is allowed to continue, it is likely that, within five years many of the buildings will be past the reuse threshold.



**UNIQUE BUILDINGS**

The downtown has a variety of buildings and heights, offering a strong opportunity for outstanding housing



**MAINTENANCE**

Properties are demonstrating traits of deferred maintenance



**EMPTY SPACES**

Retail windows or first floors are often empty and not listed for lease/sale



**AMPLE PARKING**

The downtown has ample on and off-street parking



# COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Rock Springs is a community made up of vibrant, independent, and outspoken individuals; each pushing for their personal impact to be made on the community. While this often works, in the case of Rock Springs, there are multiple individuals or groups that are working independently, limiting the overall impact. Through shared efforts, the community will be able to maximize impact to the community, while also meeting individual desires.



## CONCERNED

Residents are concerned about the future of their community, desiring to change their direction for future generations



## OLD GUARD

There is a group of long-term residents and volunteers that are aging, without replacing their roles



## APATHY

Residents are showing strong signs of apathy toward their downtown, driven from lack of follow through



## COMMUNICATIONS

Residents are frustrated with the lack of consistent communication received from the City





# COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Rock Springs demonstrates a strong desire to preserve their unique and easily **identifiable** community characteristics. This evident through the residents fierce protection of their quality of life elements, and lack of desire for change. Community partners are also fighting about what the best “character elements” are, causing infighting between partners. Finally, there is a group of individuals who are resistant to change as their point of view is that everything is fine the way it is.



**WESTERN**

Residents resonate with the “western” attributes of their community, yet many disagree with what all that means



**STRONG VISIONS**

Residents have different vision about what character their community should personify



**DISTINCT HISTORY**

The City has a distinct history, including a multitude of distinct ethnic architectural typologies



**GOOD ENOUGH**

Many residents are only concerned about providing a status quo level of maintenance, impacting the overall visual impact





# REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Generational ownership is a problem plaguing the downtown area of Rock Springs. Due to these long-term owners retaining control of the properties for a long-period of time, there are few property owners who are leasing or interested in selling. This is causing a stagnant market, driving up rents, and lowering the quality of rentals. Properties must turn over before major changes can be realized.



**LIMITED OPEN**

There are limited properties available for rent or sale in the downtown, driving up prices



**ENFORCEMENT**

Property maintenance and health, safety, welfare requirements are not being regularly inspected



**STORAGE**

Downtown properties are being used as storage spaces, limiting the overall attributes and available parcels in downtown



**NEW DESIRES**

There is a new generation of individuals in the downtown, each wanting a desired level of change



# STREETSCAPE

Streetscapes within the downtown of Rock Springs are in a variety of conditions. They range in condition from hazardous to acceptable, yet all areas could use some improvements to provide a stronger and safer environment. Despite their age, many are still in usable conditions, providing an opportunity for phased replacement, limiting the costs for implementation. Efforts should be made to comprehensively improve the streetscapes, ensuring that construction completed is not repeated shortly.



**LIMITED GATHERING**

Limited gathering spaces are provided in the streetscapes, hindering tenure of participants



**WIDE R.O.W.**

The width of the ROW is larger than necessary, increasing the speed of car travel and limiting sidewalk width



**AMPLE PARKING**

The downtown corridors have ample parking for the current demand, and for the foreseeable future



**FEW AMENITIES**

Currently the downtown does not have ample amenities to attract people to gather





# PUBLIC INPUT SYNOPSIS

Outlined on this page are details about the data gathered during the public input process.

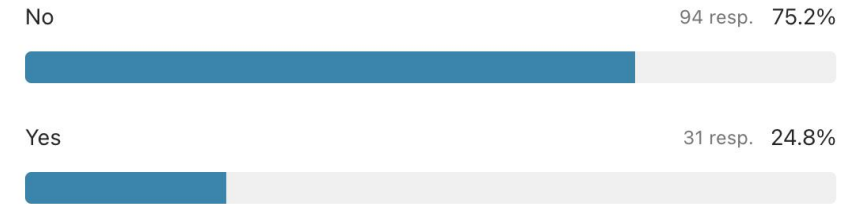
✓ 13 You have indicated that there are not enough services or retail establishments. Please select which amenities you feel would compliment your community (select all that apply):

94 out of 125 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



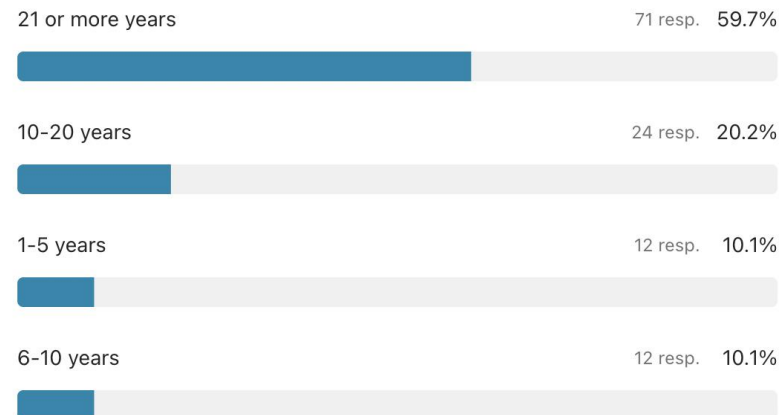
✓ 12 Do you feel there are enough services or retail amenities within downtown Rock Springs?

125 out of 125 people answered this question



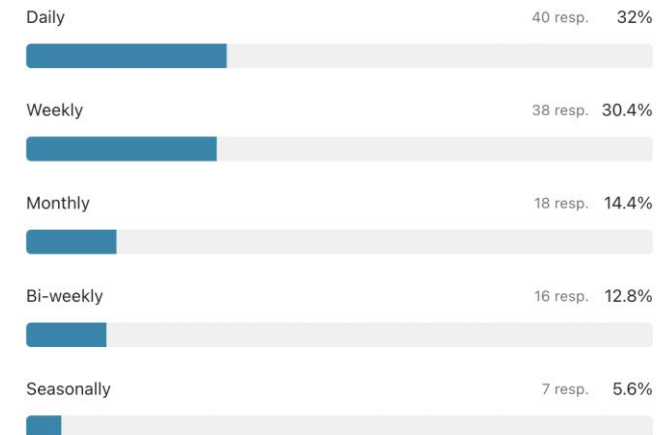
✓ 3 How long have you lived in Rock Springs?

119 out of 125 people answered this question



✓ 10 How often do you visit downtown Rock Springs?

125 out of 125 people answered this question



# ROADMAP RECOMMENDATIONS



The following slides will break down the recommendations for each of the five (5) categories listed on the graphic to the right. All recommendations are currently in conceptual or draft format and are still open for feedback.

Providing strategic recommendations for the downtown core is an exercise in community capacity building, not borrowing.

NOTE\* - All recommendations are based on public input and data collected in December 2022.



## ROADMAP RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Built Environment
- 2 Community Character
- 3 Real Estate Development
- 4 Community Capacity
- 5 Streetscape Enhancements



# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## **Purpose of the Built Environment**

The built environment of a downtown embodies the physical space where users interact with stores or services, gather in civic spaces, and assimilate into the small-town culture of their community. It is this space that serves as the vital “third space” in a personal-interaction scenario (live, work, play). Without this space, residents and visitors lack a common area to congregate and share a story and cannot bond to a common thread.

## **Benefits of a Strong Built Environment**

The benefits of a strong and uniform built environment are numerous, but there are a few that are more important than the others. The important benefits are that people form an intrinsic bond with buildings that are significant to their childhood or have played a role in important life milestones.

18.5 M

National average  
amount of visitors to a  
small town annually

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Built Environment section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet exceed resident/stakeholder requirements.

1

Create and annual facade program

2

Update and enforce a vacant property ordinance

3

Implement a linear park on the North side of the railroad tracks

4

Perform a downtown programming or real estate reinvestment plan

5

Implement International Property Maintenance Code



# **BIG IDEA #1**

---

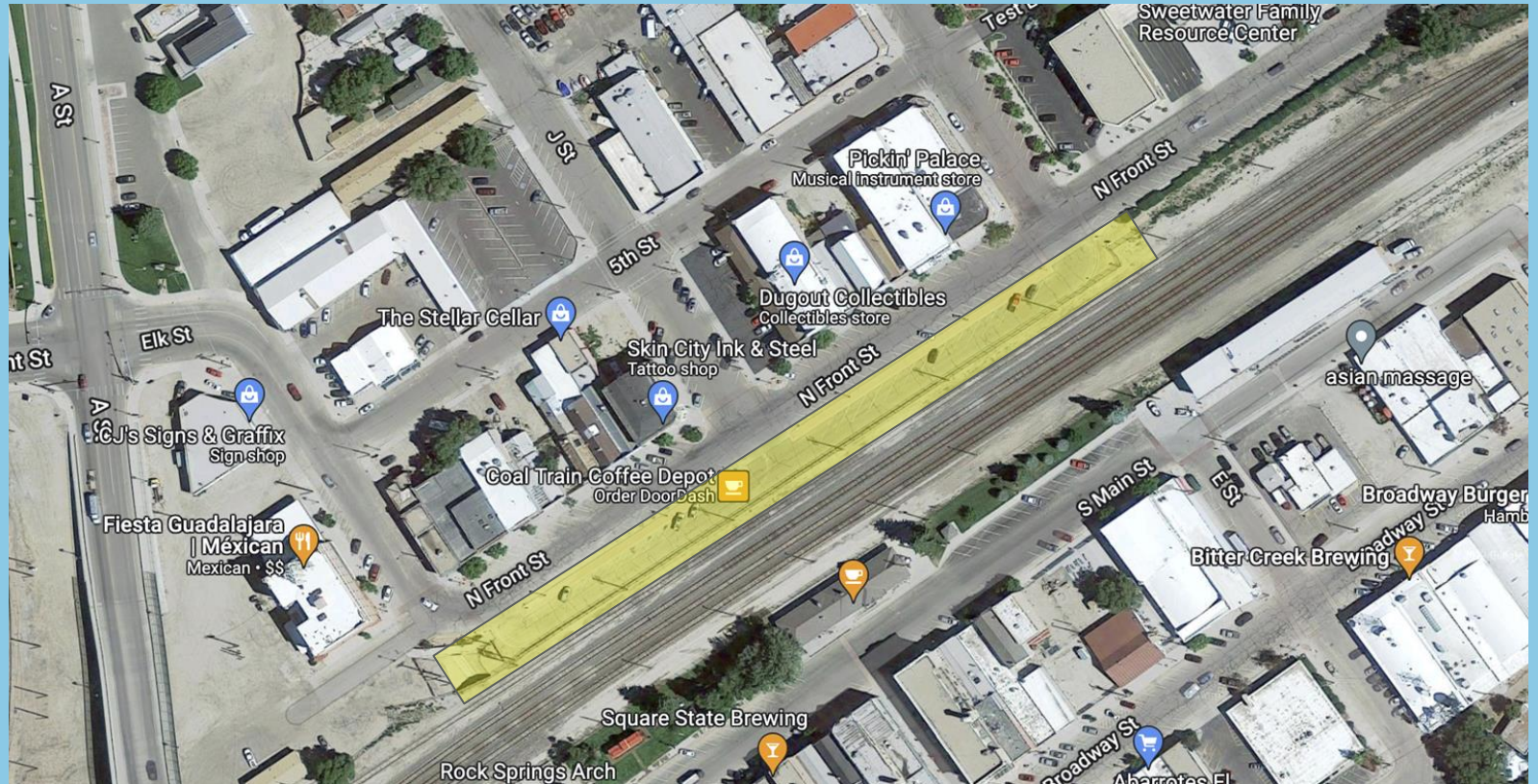
## **Linear Community Park**





# PURPOSE OF THE LINEAR PARK:

- Create an outdoor gathering space
- Buffer the noise of the railroad
- Provide a space for the farmers market and/or food trucks
- Programmable site for regular uses
- Provide green space on both sides of the tunnel entrances





# SAMPLE IMAGES OF THE LINEAR PARK:







# COMMUNITY CHARACTER

## **Purpose of Community Character**

Community character is the atmosphere that makes a downtown feel like a desirable place to be. Without this character, a downtown begins to feel like a lifeless shopping mall or lifestyle center. Community character helps residents and visitors alike feel a connection to the community, forming a symbiotic relationship. By identifying and personalizing the unique community character within Rock Springs, the residents have a more tangible connection with their community and can begin to interact more frequently within the downtown.

## **Benefits of a Strong Community Character**

Unique community character is what ties residents to the place they call home. It is through this connection that people feel a sense of shared ownership for their downtown and take pride in preserving the amenities or services it provides.

75%

Of tourists prefer  
experiential  
tourism

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Community Character section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet exceed resident/stakeholder requirements.

1

Update a community master plan and comprehensive visioning

2

Undertake a cultural heritage & preservation plan

3

Create downtown districts 1) Restaurant & retail, & 2) Cultural

4

Create and implement a wayfinding and signage brand

5

Identify necessary community character elements (i.e. rural atmosphere, quality of life, etc.)



# BIG IDEA #2

---

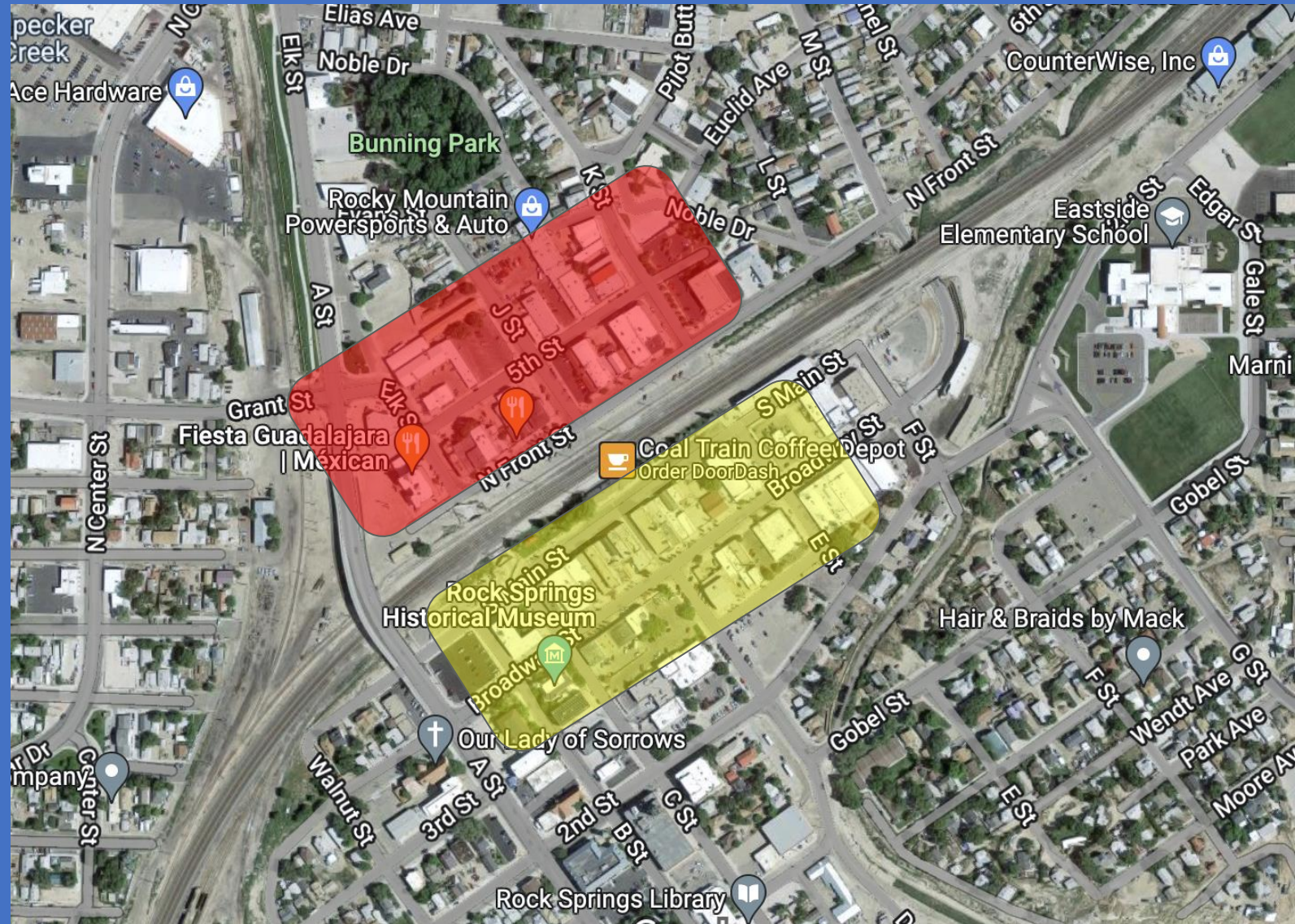
## Create Distinct Districts





# CREATING DISTINCT DISTRICTS

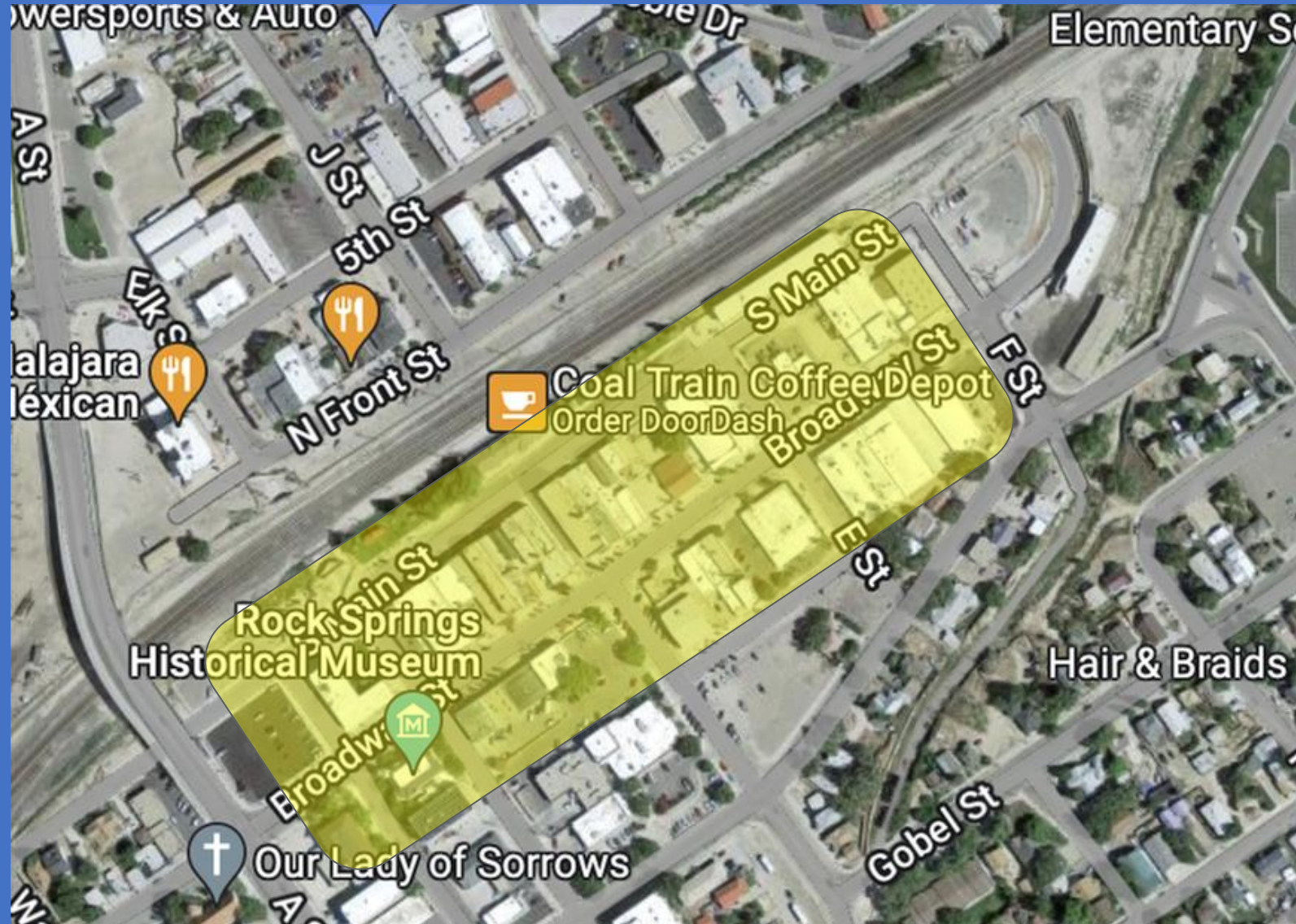
- 1) Restaurant and Retail District - Southern side of the tracks
- 2) Cultural district - Northern side of the tracks





# RESTAURANT & RETAIL DISTRICT

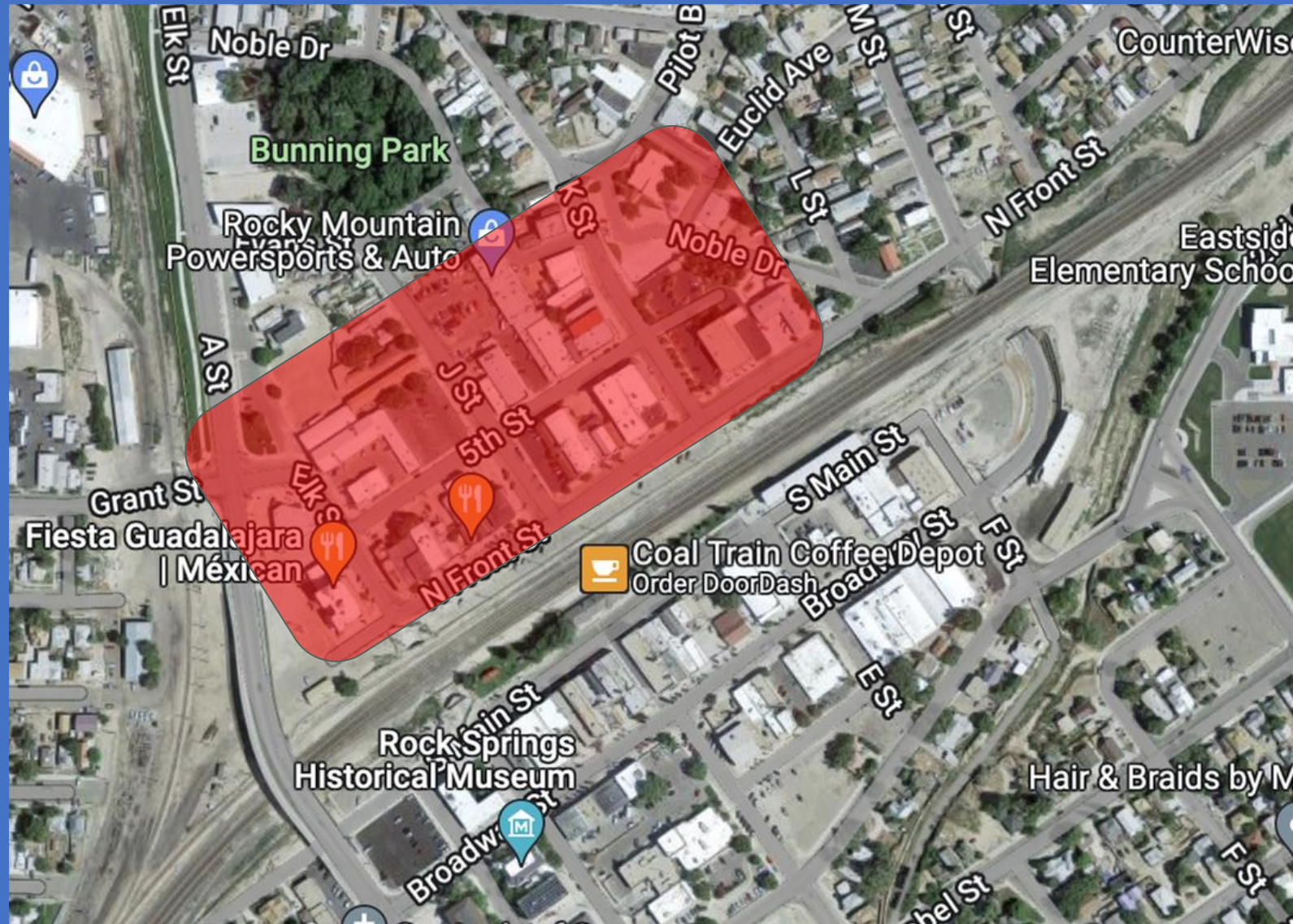
- Focused on providing services and dining opportunities standard with Rock Springs
- Provides a quaint family friendly atmosphere
- Ensures the rural western charm is retained





# CULTURAL DISTRICT

- A district that is distinct, based on the heritage of the area
- Celebrates the multiple nationalities historically in the area
- Provides a heritage or monument tour
- Creates a distinct feel that is ethnically accurate



# DISTRICT BENEFITS

- Allows for a distinct feel and atmosphere, while paying homage to the unique character of the areas
  - Promotes cultural heritage tourism
  - Offers a diverse opportunity for regional attraction
  - Distinct amenity that is not met regionally
- Provides a defined purpose for the downtown corridors
  - Defines the purposes and uses for each district
  - Promotes a more inclusive and inviting community



# REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

## Purpose of Development

The purpose of real estate development in a Downtown is to create spaces for business creation and expansion. Without local real estate development, buildings within a downtown often slip into disrepair and will never meet their full economic potential. Local developers will provide the community with necessary spaces for business location and job creation. As regional, state, and federal grants continue to become harder to attain and more complicated to administer, local developers have been turned to more and more to pick up the slack for downtown revitalization efforts.

## Benefits of a Development

Incentivizing local developers will drive the small downtown economy, preserving jobs and generating a new tax-base. It is through successful incentivization that Rock Springs could realize the benefits below:

- Improved rental spaces (residential and commercial).
- Larger clientele for downtown rentals.
- More jobs created and retained within downtown.
- Local tax dollars being spent at local stores.

**\$7.75**

National Average Sq  
Ft rental rate for  
downtown spaces

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Real Estate Development. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet exceed resident/stakeholder requirements.

**1**

Prepare district marketing materials

**2**

Perform a NAICS level market analysis

**3**

Perform feasibility studies for critical properties

**4**

Prepare a process and flow chart for property development

**5**

Improve communications between city departments and local businesses/developers

# **BIG IDEA #3**

---

## **Bank Building - Civic Minded Development**

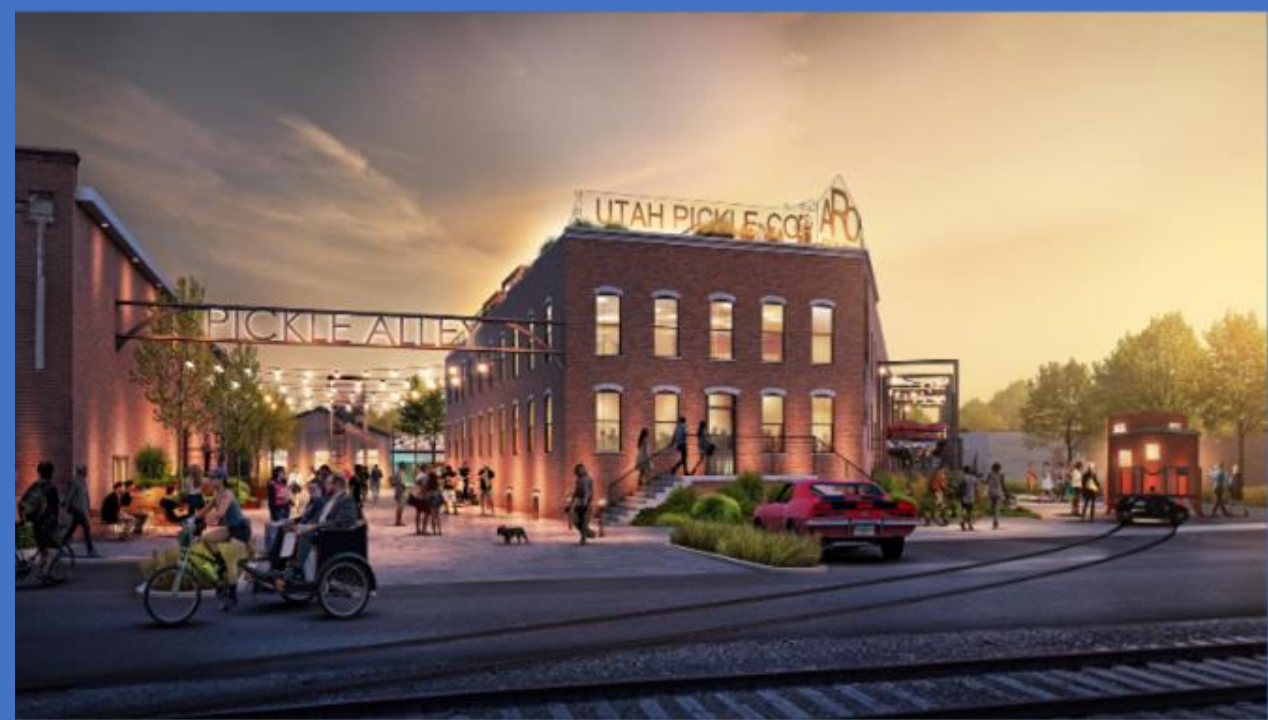




# ANCHOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

## BANK BUILDING

- 1st Floor
  - Indoor food court
  - Commercial prep kitchen
  - Prime job creation, with dining
- 2nd Floor
  - Executive Offices
  - SBDC
  - Business incubator
- 3rd Floor
  - Maker-space
  - College/university partnership
- Plaza
  - Outdoor dining
  - Night-time activities

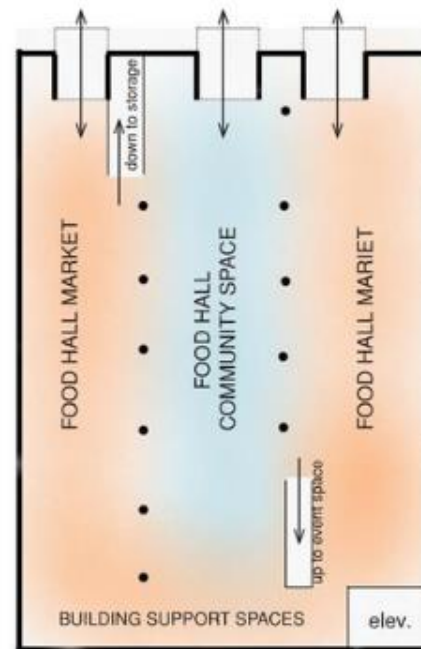




# ANCHOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

## BANK BUILDING

### Indoor Food Court

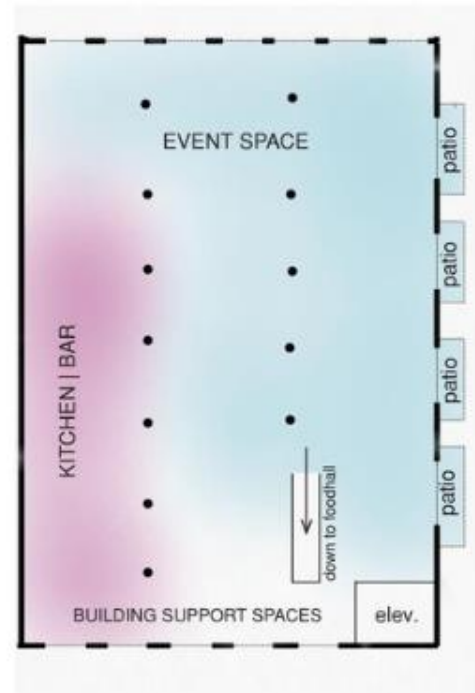




# ANCHOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

## BANK BUILDING

### Event Space



# ANCHOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

## BANK BUILDING

### Perks of Layout

- Can create strong partnerships with SBDC and university
- Opens the door for additional grant opportunities (university)
- Fosters prime jobs through business creation
- Fulfills a civic use, as well as providing strong ROI
- Activates the plaza/alleyway

### Next Steps

- MOU and Partnerships
- Funding Acquisition
- Construction Documentation
- Funding Administration
- Bidding
- Contractor Coordination
- Construction





# COMMUNITY CAPACITY

## **Purpose of Community Capacity**

A community is made up of talented individuals, all of whom have a unique skill set and the common goal of downtown revitalization. Everyone has a certain capacity and part to play in the overall process of downtown revitalization. By understanding the roles and responsibilities of the many different groups, this community will be better able to create a comprehensive volunteer base for community-based projects.

## **Benefits of Community Capacity**

Through identifying the unique capabilities of each individual or group, the downtown will be able to:

- Better leverage volunteer efforts
- Capitalize on available resources and expertise within the community
- Allow locals to build a deeper connection and sense of ownership with the community
- Increase civic pride
- Provide a more cost-effective option to consultant-led projects

LOCALS ARE THE  
TRUE EXPERTS ON  
THEIR DOWNTOWN.  
ALLOW THEM TO  
HELP AND PROVIDE  
THEIR MEANINGFUL  
INPUT

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Community Capacity section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet exceed resident/stakeholder requirements.

1

Create a cultural oversight committee

2

Spread out events to both sides of the railroad

3

Facilitate cultural heritage events, based on localized nationalities

4

Volunteer mentorship program

5

Volunteer survey and database creation

6

Partner with local college for business support

# BIG IDEA #4

---

## Business Growth





# HYBRID IS BEST BUSINESS GROWTH

- Provide trainings and support to help businesses branch to online
- Work with the local college to provide business plan prep, website development, and business development support
- Utilize the SBDC to provide trainings and necessary assistance for onboarding or hybridization





# STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

## Purpose of Streetscapes

The purpose of a streetscape is to provide a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and to encourage alternative transportation methods to make full use of the downtown. A successful downtown revitalization requires a successful streetscape. Each streetscape must be uniquely situated to cater for the needs of the residents and the climate of the region.

## Benefits of a Strong Streetscape

Through constructing and maintaining an accessible and well-landscaped streetscape, the downtown will be able to:

- Better connect downtown destinations
- Foster a strong public life and business environment
- Invite residents and visitors to stay, recreate, shop, dine, go to church, etc. in downtown
- Create a comfortable atmosphere for people of all abilities and ages

# \$4.25

AVERAGE RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT FOR EVERY  
\$1 INVESTED AFTER 5  
YEARS.

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Streetscape section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet exceed resident/stakeholder requirements.

1

Prepare a unified streetscape master plan

2

Undertake a parking warrant analysis

3

Provide “complete street” treatments to S Main St

4

Install directional signage within the downtown

5

Conduct a downtown circulation study & Implement signage/activations



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## MATRIX

Creating accountability to ensure implementation

The chart below will help outline a framework for the prioritized recommendations out of the Revitalization Roadmap process:

26

Determining Who, What, When, Where & How

Priority No.	Project/Recommendation	Category	Rock Springs Main Street	Rock Springs URA	City of Rock Springs	Business/Property Owners	Schools/Universities	Regional/State Partners	Milestone/Completion Date	Anticipated Cost
	Create and annual facade program	Built Environment		●	●				Years 3 - 5	\$32,500
	Update and enforce a vacant property ordinance	Built Environment		●	●				Years 1 - 3	\$75,000 (annually)
	Implement a linear park on the North side of the railroad tracks	Built Environment	●						Years 1 - 3	\$0.00
	Perform a downtown programming or real estate reinvestment plan	Built Environment	●	●	●				Years 1 - 3	\$25,000 (annually)
	Implement International Property Maintenance Code	Built Environment	●	●	●				Years 1 - 3	\$20,000
	Update a community master plan and comprehensive visioning	Community Character	●	●	●				Years 3 - 5	\$50,000
	Undertake a cultural heritage & preservation plan	Community Character		●	●				Years 1 - 3	\$35,000
	Create downtown districts 1) Restaurant & retail, & 2) cultural	Community Character	●	●		●			Years 1 - 3	\$5,000
	Create and implement a wayfinding brand	Community Character	●	●	●	●	●		Years 1 - 3	\$2,500
	Identify necessary community character elements (i.e. rural atmosphere, quality of life, etc.)Im	Community Character								
	Prepare district marketing material S	Real Estate Development		●	●				Years 1 - 3	\$30,000
	Perform a NAICS level market analysis	Real Estate Development		●	●	●			Years 3 - 5	\$5,000
	Perform feasibility studies for critical properties	Real Estate Development		●	●				Years 1 - 3	\$10,000
	Prepare a process and flow chart for property development	Real Estate Development	●	●	●	●			Years 6 - 7	\$15,000
	Improve communications between city departments and local businesses/developers	Real Estate Development	●	●		●			Years 1 - 3	\$7,500

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

# MATRIX

## Creating accountability to ensure implementation

The chart below will help outline a framework for the prioritized recommendations out of the Revitalization Roadmap process:

26

## Determining Who, What, When, Where & How

Priority No.	Project/Recommendation	Category	Rock Springs Main Street	Rock Springs URA	City of Rock Springs	Business/Property Owners	Schools/Universities	Regional/State Partners	Milestone/Completion Date	Anticipated Cost
	Create a cultural oversight committee	Community Capacity	●	●	●				Years 3 – 5	\$10,000
	Spread out events to both sides of the railroad	Community Capacity	●						Years 1 - 3	\$0.00
	Facilitate cultural heritage events, based on localized nationalities	Community Capacity	●						Years 1 - 3	\$0.00
	Volunteer mentorship program	Community Capacity	●			●	●		Years 3 – 5	\$5,000
	Comuniteer survey and database creation	Community Capacity	●						Years 3 – 5	\$50,000 (annually)
	Partner with local college for business support	Community Capacity		●	●			●	Years 6 – 7	\$100,000
	Prepare a unified streetscape master plan	Streetscape		●	●				Years 6 – 7	\$50,000
	Undertake a parking warrant analysis	Streetscape		●	●				Years 1 – 3	\$10,000
	Provide “complete street” treatments to S Main St	Streetscape	●	●	●			●	Years 1 – 3	\$20,000
	Install directional signage within the downtown	Streetscape		●	●			●	Years 3 – 5	\$75,000
	Conduct a downtown circulation study & Implement signage/activations	Streetscape	●						Years 1 – 3	\$1,000





## REVITALIZATION ROADMAP PROCESS

The Revitalization Roadmap was crafted to identify assets in a community and strategies to personify them, capitalizing on catalyst efforts with limited upfront costs

[DTREDEVELOPMENT.COM](http://DTREDEVELOPMENT.COM)

REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES,  
EMPOWERING PEOPLE