

DOUGLAS, WY DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

MAY, 2015

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CHAPTER 1

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The Downtown Master Plan is an extension of the Comprehensive Plan which identifies Downtown Douglas as an historic center for entertainment and shopping and the civic and social center of the region. Downtown is only successful within the context of the entire city and the region it serves. Douglas as a whole is already an established rural regional center and all of the businesses and civic uses for a sizable area. Downtown is a critical component of the factors that allow Douglas to serve this regional role today. This plan articulates strategies for physical improvements to downtown and regulatory changes that will enhance this currently underutilized historic commercial and civic hub.

As an extension of the Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Master Plan articulates physical planning strategies to help make Downtown Douglas more attractive and prosperous. This plan focuses on what the City of Douglas can do to increase the vitality of downtown and to expand the livelihoods of downtown businesses and their employees. As a city government, Douglas can effect economic success in the following ways:

- Make improvements to the public rights of way: sidewalks, public gathering areas, landscaping, intersections and pedestrian crossings, signage/way-finding, and other physical enhancements to the public realm downtown.
- Initiate changes to the Land Use and Development Regulations that will expand property rights appropriately and encourage investment downtown.
- Initiate changes to the Land Use and Development Regulations that encourage residential infill and more people living in and near downtown to build in customers and increase the level of activity downtown.
- Define downtown's role in the regional economy and identify market opportunities for business growth that would be a good fit downtown.
- Articulate the community vision for downtown and provide leadership and support for existing businesses to improve their sales and to create an environment that encourages new investment.

1.2 DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS TODAY

Downtown has been picking up momentum in recent years as a result of deliberate strategies and coordination among downtown businesses. One downtown business owner put it succinctly: “People in Douglas are starved for something to do and downtown businesses have been working together to seize this opportunity by making investments and creating downtown events and activities.” The renovation of the La Bonte Hotel was a catalyst of sorts, because it was the first business to offer a full-service restaurant that is open year-round. The success of this cornerstone business built confidence for other businesses to make a go, including the Depot restaurant, the Headstrong Brewery, The Body Shop and other businesses that have followed this wave of activity and investment.

To build awareness and affection for downtown, businesses have coordinated informally and through associations facilitated by Main Street Douglas to create dynamic events downtown. For example, the Derby Days event, Taking It To The Streets, and Downtown Trick-or-Treat have all proven successful and have demonstrated the appetite of local and regional residents for fun activities downtown. Not only do these events provide a spike in sales for downtown businesses, they build awareness and affection for downtown as a fun and lively place.

These events have all been created, managed and grown from the grassroots by volunteer efforts and partnerships among businesses such as Headstrong Brewery, Allure, Grasslands Market, The Liquor Cabinet, and The Princess Theater, with the help of Main Street Douglas as an association that facilitates the communications and coordination needed to stage these events.

Building a successful downtown requires the grassroots efforts driven by businesses, the public sector effort and the careful coordination of each. These grassroots efforts have been complemented by city-initiated efforts, including the Historic Preservation Commission, which was created to promote historic preservation and awareness, conduct cultural resource surveys, propose entries to the National Register of Historic Places, designate historic districts and act as advisers on matters of historic preservation and information. Now, the city has initiated and funded this Downtown Master Plan which lines out a series of improvements to the public realm and streetscape. Adding to the city’s efforts are the county’s plans to rebuild the library, which is scheduled for completion in 2016. Other ways the city can facilitate revitalization downtown include a window painting and display program, a façade revitalization grant program, and a regular news blast about events, efforts and successes downtown.

1.3 MASTER PLAN AREAS OF FOCUS AND STRATEGIES

The Downtown Master Plan is an extension of the Comprehensive Plan and is structured around areas of focus. The areas of focus emphasize the role of the city in stimulating growth downtown. During the public engagement process, citizens overwhelmingly selected the City of Douglas as the best prepared entity to implement improvements to downtown. The city is also the only entity that can examine the Land Use and Development Regulations and change them as needed to attract and enable investment. The city is also best positioned to initiate enhancements to the public rights of way such as expanded sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings, and landscaping.

REVISE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT CODES TO ALLOW MORE FLEXIBILITY

One of the most effective strategies that the city can initiate at a relatively low cost is to change the zoning regulations to encourage investment. Identifying potential changes to the Land Use and Development Regulations first required a more detailed analysis of the form and function of the existing Downtown Business District. There are three distinct areas from a use and physical form perspective:

Main Street Commercial Areas - These are the areas that today exhibit the western downtown form, with storefronts built right on the sidewalk, and “zero lot lines” allowing buildings to build right up against one another. The result is a near continuous block face that provides the human-scale ‘feel’ of Downtown Douglas. The emphasis in this area is on expanding allowed uses, including residential uses upstairs, and to change standards that inhibit creative and diverse uses of downtown buildings.

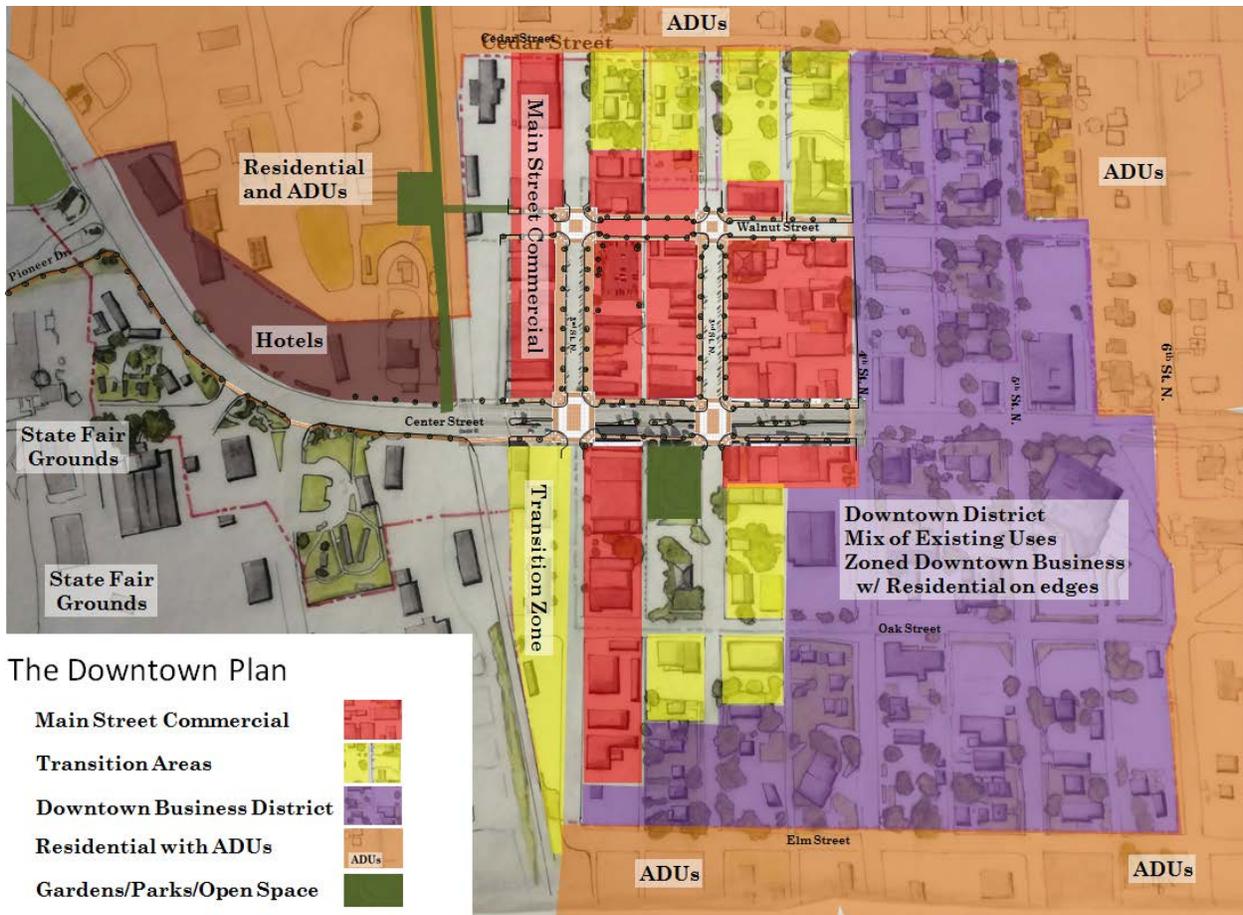
Main Street Commercial Transition Zones - These are the areas directly adjacent to the existing Downtown Commercial areas that are viable areas for extending the Main Street Commercial form as the city grows. Today, there is a mix of commercial uses that do not exhibit the Downtown Commercial form and residential uses. The emphasis for these areas is on expanding allowed uses to encourage mixed use, and changing the standards to allow the area to one day transition into the Main Street Commercial that is so valued by the community.

Remaining Areas of the Downtown Business District - These are areas that are on the east side of Fourth Street that function as a mix of civic, residential and auto-oriented commercial uses. With the existing capacity in the Downtown Commercial areas and the potential capacity in the Downtown Commercial Transition Zones, demand for Downtown Commercial will be met for several

decades. The emphasis areas east of Fourth Street and along the southern edge of the downtown study area call for flexible use and form to encourage redevelopment, expansion and mixed commercial and residential uses. One of the factors that make downtowns successful is to have people living and working in and within walking distance of downtown. Encouraging residential development on the edges of the commercial uses centered on Fourth Street calls for auto-oriented design with landscaped parking lots in front (vs. the zero lot line form of the Downtown Commercial areas). It is not the intent to extend the downtown form into this area.

Residential Neighborhoods Surrounding Downtown - Accessory Dwelling Units have many merits in today’s housing market, especially because affordable rentals are increasingly important. Allowing this “gentle” density in the neighborhoods around downtown will add more volume and more activity to the neighborhood and will mean more people downtown on a day-to-day basis. Building the day-to-day customer volume is ultimately what makes downtowns prosper.

MAP 1 - DESIRED CONDITIONS TO INCENTIVIZE INVESTMENT



RE-INVENTING ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

The Downtown Master Plan also presents a vision for new neighborhoods that would relate to and enhance downtown.

West Gateway Concept – The plan discusses a “gateway” concept that would apply to the area just west of downtown along West Yellowstone. This important gateway corridor could include lodging and other hospitality businesses and could build from its location adjacent to downtown and to the fairgrounds. The idea is to attract overnight visitors closer to downtown.

Whitewater Park and Access to the River - Having the North Platte flowing right through town is a great asset, and while the city has invested in a pathway and greenbelt along the west side of the river and has made fish-habitat improvements, the river does not relate to downtown and much more can be done to embrace this asset, including parking and river access, a whitewater park, and a thematic pathway that connects to downtown.

Railroad Yards - The area immediately west of downtown is mostly vacant and could be a great opportunity for responding to changes in the market by allowing residential development with innovative products such as “cottage neighborhoods” and housing for an aging population.

ENHANCEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Changing the economic trajectory of downtown will require significant investments to make downtown more attractive, inviting and pedestrian-friendly. This component of the Downtown Master Plan articulates and illustrates redevelopment strategies in the city streets right of way including sidewalk enhancements, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, parking strategies, way-finding and landscaping.

FOCUS ON THE DOWNTOWN CORE AS A CATALYST FOR SUBSEQUENT IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to the public streets downtown should occur block by block in phases, first focusing on the core of downtown, including Second Street and Third Street and their intersections with Center Street and Walnut Street. This is the most active area downtown today and will likely always be the core, so investments should start here and work outward, ultimately creating a consistent streetscape downtown that connects to other destinations and neighborhoods. Catalyst projects include a proposed Pocket Park and Courtyard at “Murphy’s Wall” and ultimately the redevelopment of North Second Street.

IMPROVEMENTS TO BUILDINGS

The buildings downtown are mostly in private ownership, with the exception of civic uses such as the post office and library. Murals are great opportunities to feature artists and to add character and color to downtown that show well even during the gloomiest winter weather. Awning signs are another way for businesses to express local character and advertise at the same time. Ultimately, the historic character of downtown is its core trait so it is critical to form partnerships to preserve and restore public buildings and landmarks.

ROLE OF DOUGLAS IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

The economy of the immediate region around Douglas is driven by traditional industries including extraction (mineral/oil/gas) and agriculture, and the transportation and logistical support needed to export these products out of the region. The traditional and transportation/warehouse sectors account for 72% of the immediate region's economic productivity.

Concentrations of economic activity show that Douglas acts as a rural regional center for residents and businesses within a 30-minute drive radius of the city. 73% of retail establishments and 89% of retail productivity in the immediate region occur within the city limits. With the exception of industries in the traditional sector, over half of all economic activity in the immediate region is concentrated in the city. Additionally, while the immediate region as a whole has a retail leakage rate of about 10%, the city has a \$43 million retail surplus. The presences of a surplus in the city but leakage in the region means that households outside of city limits, but in the 30-minute drive radius, are traveling into Douglas to purchase retail goods.

1.4 MARKET ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

For more detail than is offered in this summary see Chapter 3 - Market Analysis and Economic Development Strategies

DOWNTOWN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Even though the city as a whole is experiencing a retail surplus there are opportunities for retail development. Over \$73 million in retail sales from households in the immediate region “leaks” out of the area to retail establishments in other communities. This “leakage” represents a significant opportunity for retail development in downtown and in the city as a whole. The city should encourage development of auto-based and national-scale retailers in the highway corridors and other commercial areas of the city, while encouraging compact walkable commercial development downtown. These two types of development should not be viewed as competing; instead, these development areas should be viewed as complementary, creating a comprehensive retail base.

A higher concentration of people downtown expands the potential consumer base for businesses downtown, creates an atmosphere of activity and cements the area as the cultural and professional center for the region. The professional sector currently accounts for 43% of downtown establishments, 64% of downtown productivity and 38% of downtown employment. The city should continue to encourage the development of the professional sector downtown as well as residential and lodging development downtown to increase overall activity downtown.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Paying for capital improvements is often the largest obstacle preventing redevelopment of a downtown, because large-scale infrastructure projects are complicated and expensive. However, the following list of funding strategies could help facilitate infrastructure improvements downtown: spend a portion of existing general fund surpluses, earmark a portion of sales taxes generated from a national-scale retailer to finance improvements in downtown, or with the approval of county voters, implement a specific purpose or economic development tax. Grant funding can help, but absent dedicated and reliable funding sources, grant funding will not be enough money to pay for the improvements.



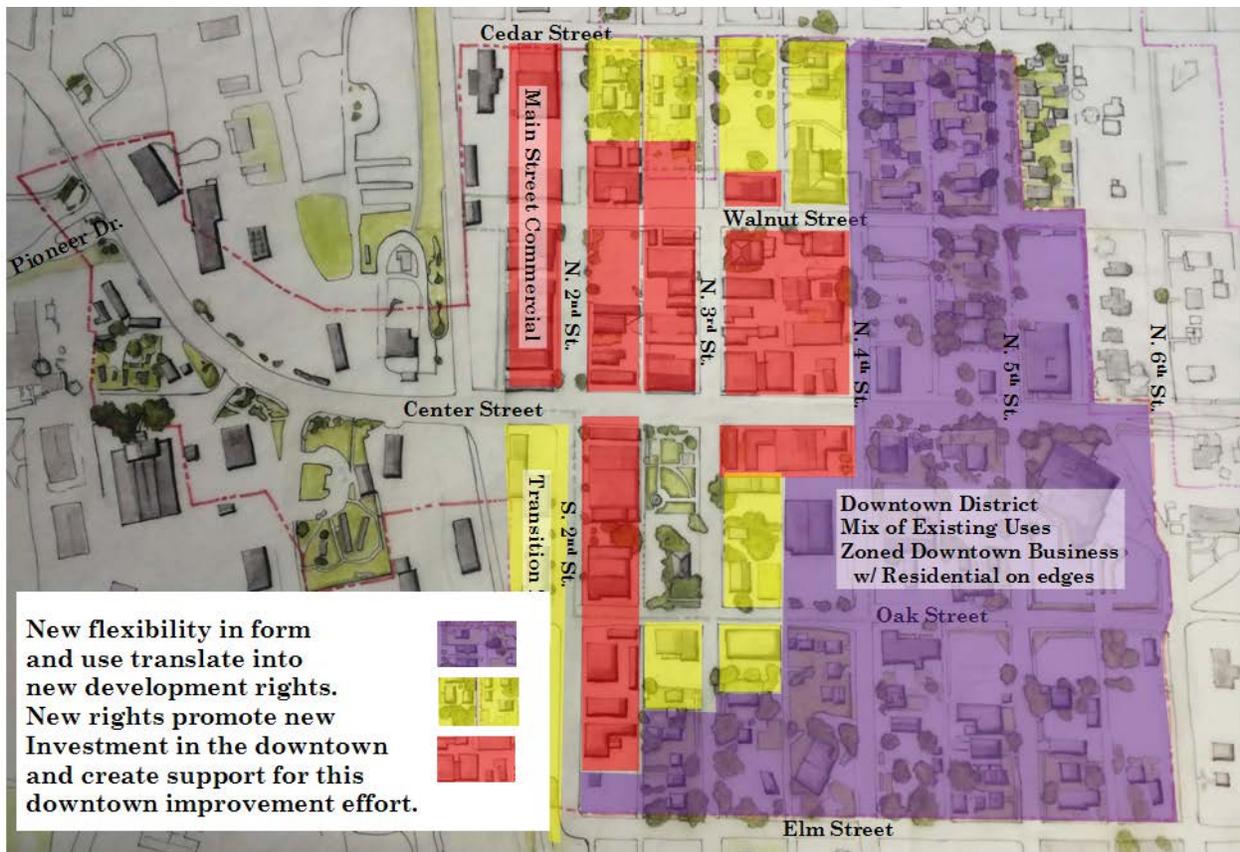
CHAPTER 2

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN PHYSICAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

2.1 REVIEW DOWNTOWN CODES TO INCREASE FLEXIBILITY

A proven technique for engendering support for downtown improvement plans has been included here as a strategy to dramatically heighten support for this redevelopment effort. Nothing stimulates investment and reinvestment as dramatically as new development rights. The notion of revising zoning within each of the land use zones identified in downtown to include new uses and opportunities will spur investments. This vesting process by local citizens translates into support for this planning effort and ultimately improves the chances of this plan to succeed.

MAP 2 - STIMULATING INVESTMENT AND REINVESTMENT FROM WITHIN



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The mix of uses should focus more on the form of the built environment, especially as it interacts with and creates additional pedestrian places, and should focus less on traditional notions of use-to-use separation. The CB-1 Zoning District currently allows this kind of outcome, but it would be a

worthwhile exercise to carefully scrutinize the standards to ensure that the degree of flexibility in form and the uses allowed encourage development.

- Consider adopting or allowing for alternative street cross-sections within the downtown area that better promote safe and enjoyable pedestrian circulation while also implementing compatible traffic-calming techniques.
- Streamline the review and approval processes for development and redevelopment in the downtown area by providing increased administrative authority over minor dimensional variances, use interpretations, and approval of minor Type B Development Plans proposing compatible redevelopment.

REVIEW AND REVISE CODES FOR EXISTING MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL AREAS FOR MORE FLEXIBILITY

This Main Street Codes Strategy will involve reviewing the existing zoning categories for zero lot line commercial to ensure that flexibility is not inadvertently limited. The CB-1 Zone District allows a high degree of flexibility such as residential “lofts” that can help the Downtown Business District achieve the customers they need to become successful. A thorough review of the zoning to ensure that there are no hidden barriers would still be well worth the effort.

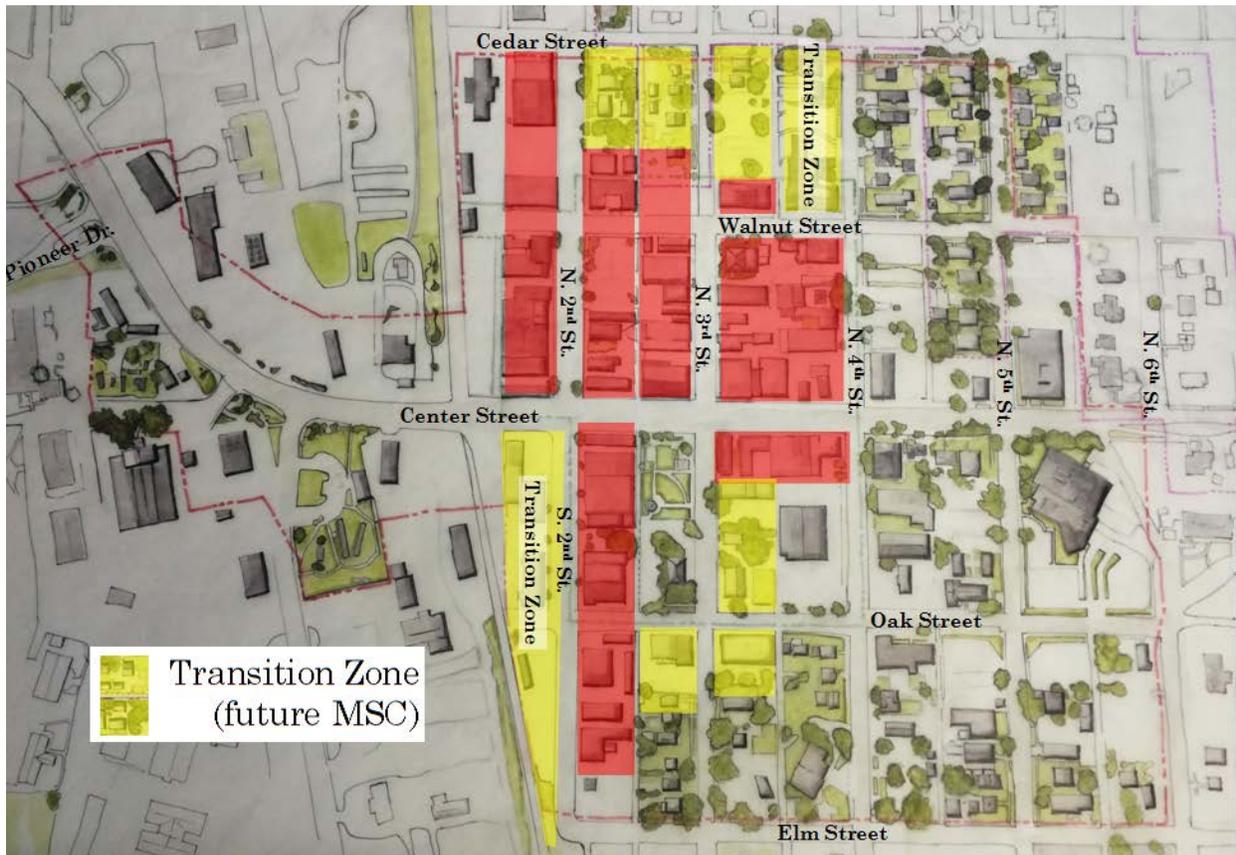
MAP 3 - MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL**RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN THE MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL AREA**

Douglas desires to infill the Main Street Commercial areas with businesses. Many downtown businesses have been “homegrown” businesses that started right here in Douglas. A complementary strategy to assist new entrepreneurs is to allow residential units upstairs or facing the alley. The notion is simple and is already allowed under existing zoning. A new business needs to be very efficient initially and a dwelling unit allow the new business owner to provide housing for themselves or for their employees as a means of minimizing costs or attracting and retaining employees. A built-in residential unit could also be rented out to help cover the cost of running a business downtown. The city should consider looking at “vertical zoning” standards that encourage retail and entertainment on the ground floor and residential and office on upper floors.

2.2 MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL TRANSITION ZONES

The Transition Zones in yellow depict the parts of downtown that could become Main Street Commercial form and function when demand increases, as downtown becomes more and more successful. The zoning of these areas is limited to the CB-1 (Downtown Business) and B-2 (General Business) Zoning Districts. The CB-1 District allows a zero lot setback while the B-2 District includes setback requirement on all sides. The intent is for a future form throughout the Transition Zone indicative of a zero lot line.

MAP 4 - MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL TRANSITION ZONES



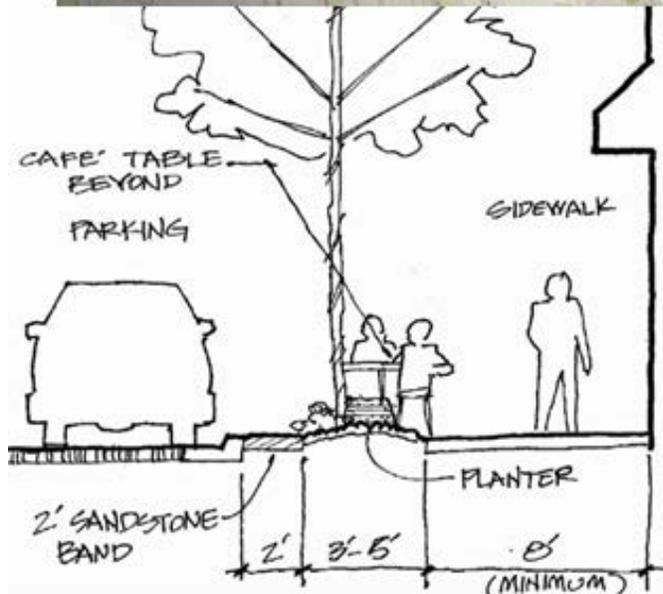
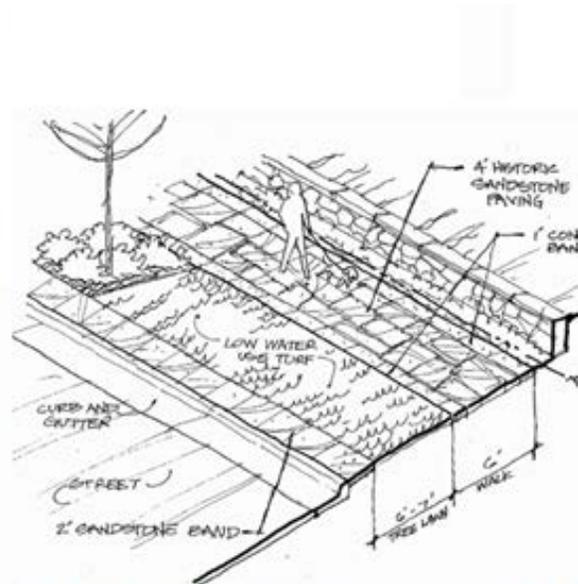
LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Revise the allowed residential uses in the CB-1 and B-2 Districts to facilitate appropriately scaled commercial and residential mixed-use scenarios.
- Include alley-loaded residential and second- or third-floor residential as allowed uses. The alley-loaded residential uses could be sited in the rear of a lot in a horizontal mixed-use scenario with an existing or redeveloped commercial storefront sited in the front of the lot. The creation of an overlay

zoning district may be necessary to limit these additional residential allowances to the Transition Zone, rather than creating a city-wide allowance for such uses within all B-2 zoned areas.

- If an overlay zone is created for this area, the zone should allow for zero lot setbacks for the respective B-2 zoned properties. An alternative to creating an overlay zoning district is to only allow the above described mixed-use and additional residential options in the CB-1 District in order to encourage rezoning of B-2 zoned properties to the CB-1 Zoning District.
- Clarify and/or revise the language in the CB-1 and B-2 Districts requiring a minimum lot area of 500 square feet for each residential use.

EXAMPLES OF TRANSITION AREA LANDSCAPING



USE AND FORM FLEXIBILITY FOR GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The land use codes that limit the form and use of development within the Downtown Business District need to be reviewed to ensure that they adequately permit uses such as upstairs residential, office and entertainment commercial. Uses that are deemed compatible with Main Street Commercial should be approved for uses in this district. The purple areas on this adjacent map depict the locations for increased flexibility in form and uses. Much of this area is in the National Historic District so accessory residential units would need to be reviewed in light of the specific standards that protect the historic character of the neighborhood.

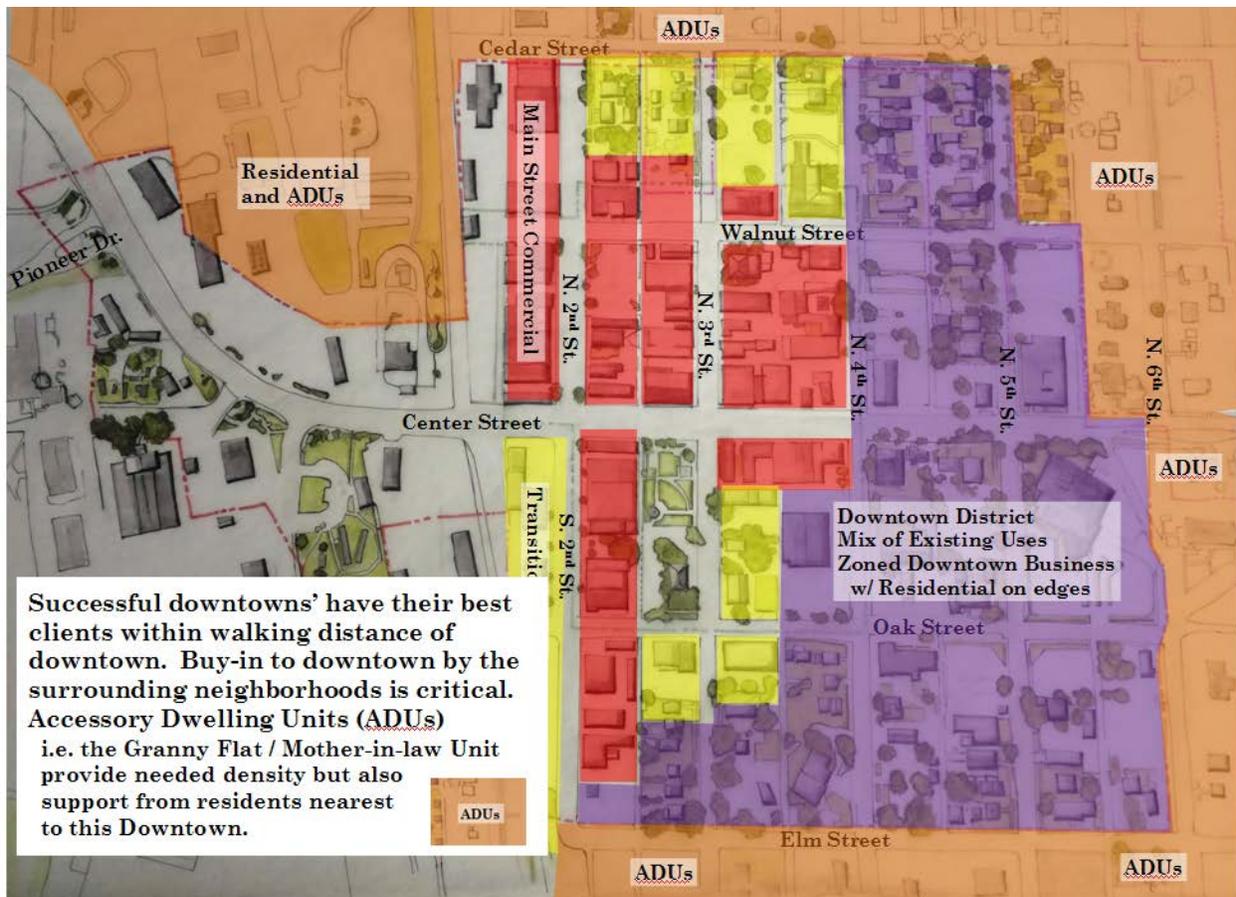
MAP 5 - DESIRED CONDITIONS TO INCENTIVIZE INVESTMENT



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) have become a popular strategy for densifying an area while keeping its character the same. Most densification strategies require building multifamily residential units, whereas this approach does not. This “ma and pa” approach produces an extra apartment for those that want to participate. These units are often over the garage with parking in the alley. While the potential for increased dwellers near downtown is very high, the impact to historic character is very low. The participation of citizens in the residential neighborhood surrounding the downtown translates into support for the downtown redevelopment effort and ultimately the likelihood of success.

MAP 6 - DOWNTOWN CONTEXT FOR ADU DEVELOPMENT



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Identify residential zoning districts that are ripe for allowing accessory dwelling units, mother-in-law apartments, and guest houses within close proximity to the downtown area.

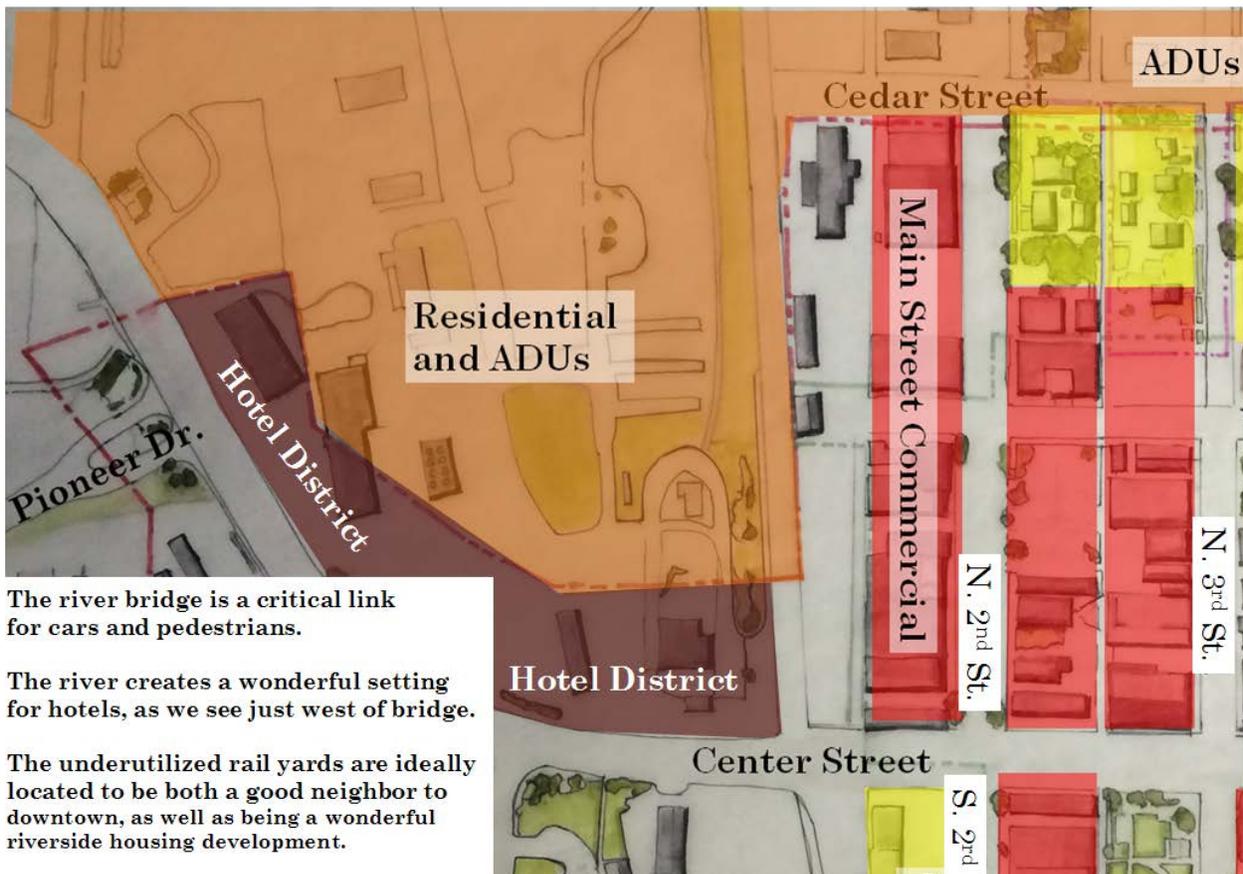
- Develop form-based regulations for new detached accessory dwelling units to ensure that the height, shape, siting, and footprint of such structures are consistent with the character of the area.
- Create a sliding scale for the number and/or size of accessory dwelling units based upon acreage and available infrastructure. A sliding scale will help ensure that accessory dwelling units will be compatible with the existing neighborhood in terms of building mass and density.

2.3 RE-INVENTING ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

COTTAGE NEIGHBORHOODS AND RETIREE/SENIOR HOUSING

Given the national demographic trends, the aging of baby boomers and static wages, it is imperative that small-sized affordable housing become available. The zoning of old rail yards west of downtown becomes a wonderful opportunity for people to live right downtown where a range of services are available. Regional agricultural centers are becoming increasingly popular as retirement communities when they have the needed public facilities and services. Housing, shopping, medical care, entertainment and professional services are all critical to these retirement decisions and Douglas is well positioned for this.

MAP 7 - RAILROAD RESIDENTIAL AND HOTELS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

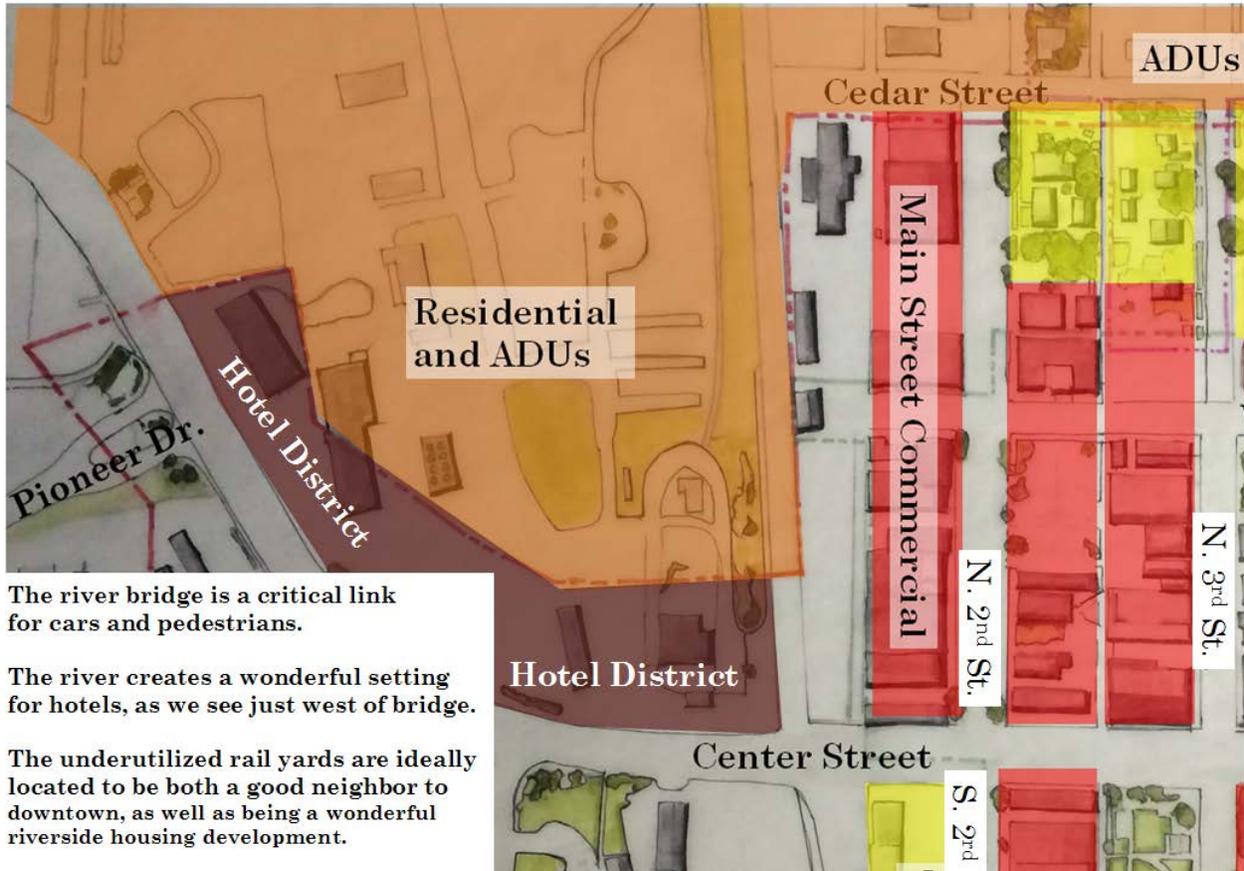
- Most of this area is currently zoned I (Industrial). The I (Industrial) Zoning District specifically prohibits residential uses.

- To accommodate redevelopment of this area, and other similarly situated areas in the city, as a retirement community, the current MU-PUD (Mixed Use – Planned Unit Development) Zoning District should be amended and encouraged in this area. The MU-PUD Zoning District would be the most appropriate mechanism to facilitate retirement-oriented residential densities, the preservation and maintenance of open space, and the siting and development of internal community facilities. Amendments to the MU-PUD regulations could include: 1) density increases where additional community amenities and passive open space are being provided, 2) requirements for providing improved pedestrian pathways and connections leading into the downtown area and recreational areas that are sited and designed to accommodate active use by the retirement community, and 3) developing appropriate buffering and screening requirements.

GATEWAY AND HOTEL DISTRICT

The Commercial Corridor that links the downtown to the North Platte River is an interesting mixture of old and new, commercial and industrial, in good repair and not. Given the location across the highway from the Wyoming State Fairgrounds and along a state highway adjacent to downtown, it would seem logical to see these areas devoted to hotels and the hospitality industry.

MAP 8 - RAILROAD RESIDENTIAL AND HOTELS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The properties within this corridor are zoned a mixture of industrial, local business, general business, and agricultural. In order to reconcile the broad array of allowed and conditional uses along this corridor, a new Downtown Gateway Zoning District should be developed and the city should initiate a rezoning of the properties in this area to the new district.
- The new Downtown Gateway Zoning District should feature pedestrian-scale service and retail uses that support hotel and hospitality uses. Reductions to the typical development standards, such as off-street parking requirements,

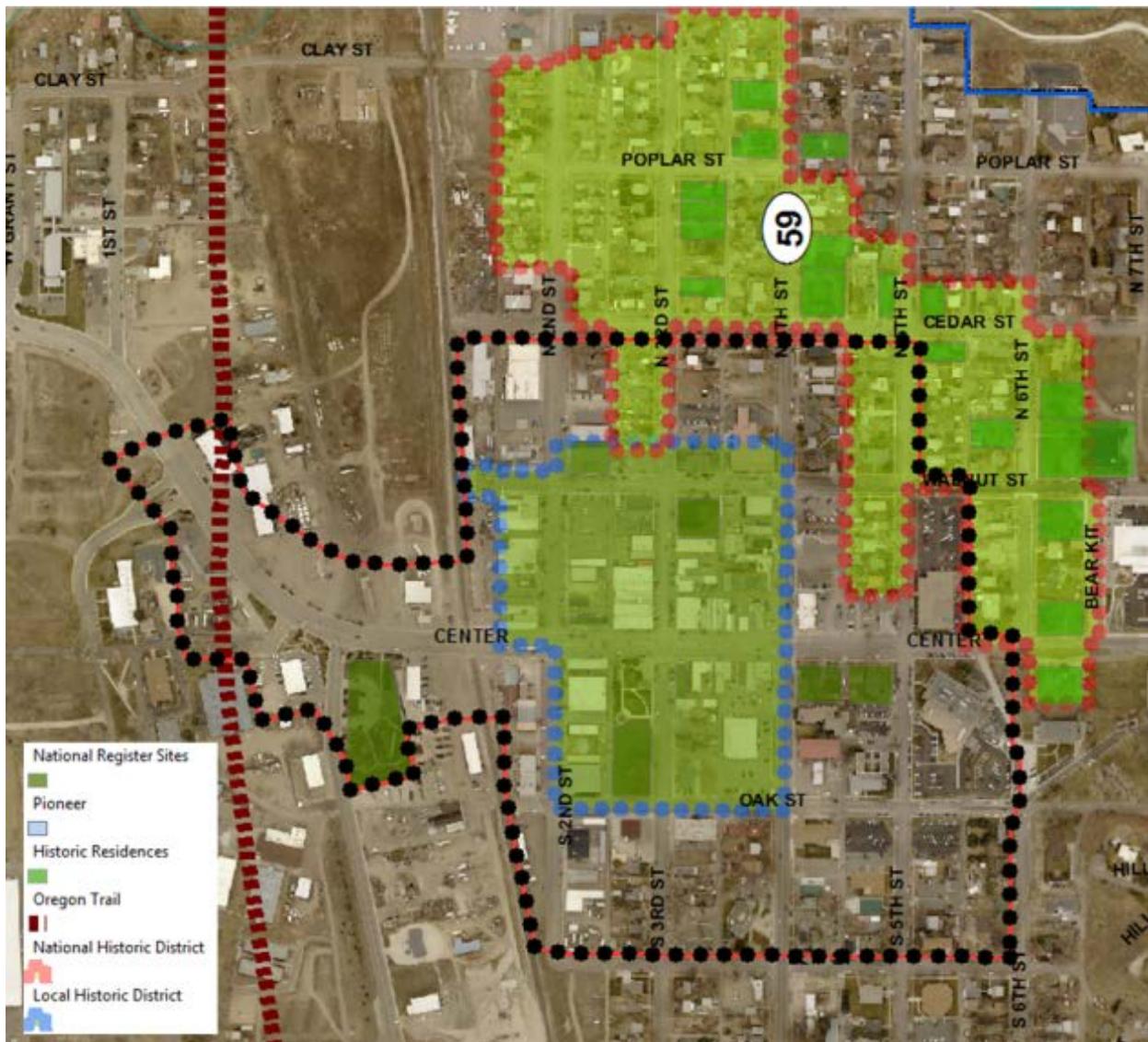
should be considered in favor of more pedestrian-oriented features, such as outdoor dining areas, outdoor seating areas, and passive open-space viewing areas.

- Increased signage, landscaping, and architectural design standards should be developed for the new Downtown Gateway Zoning District. The increased standards should be developed in a manner that will support and embody the character and history of the City of Douglas without inhibiting contemporary notions of commercial branding.

2.4 HISTORIC RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION AND GREENSPACE DOWNTOWN

Douglas has an appropriate appreciation for its local history. It has been said that “historic buildings are the keepers of the Community’s sense of place.” An inventory of historically significant buildings has been conducted to understand the full potential for history in Downtown Douglas. The Historic Preservation Commission was created to promote historic preservation and awareness, conduct cultural resource surveys, propose entries to the National Register of Historic Places, designate historic districts, and act as advisers on matters of historic preservation and information.

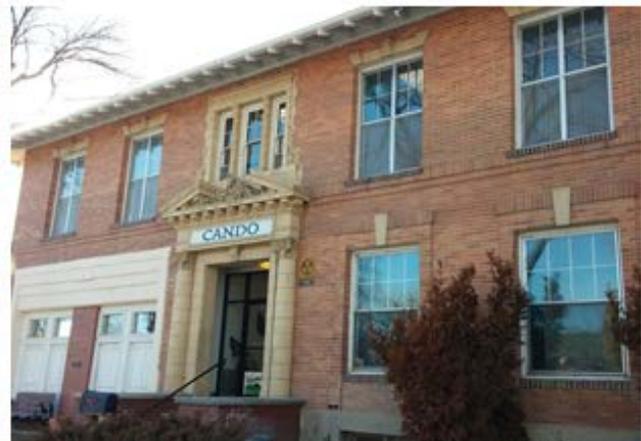
MAP 9 - HISTORIC DISTRICTS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The land use regulations should defer to the historic downtown overlay districts for design, construction, and maintenance requirements in this area.
- The regulations should be reviewed for consistency with the purpose and intent of the historic downtown overlay districts. Regulations should support appropriate redevelopment.

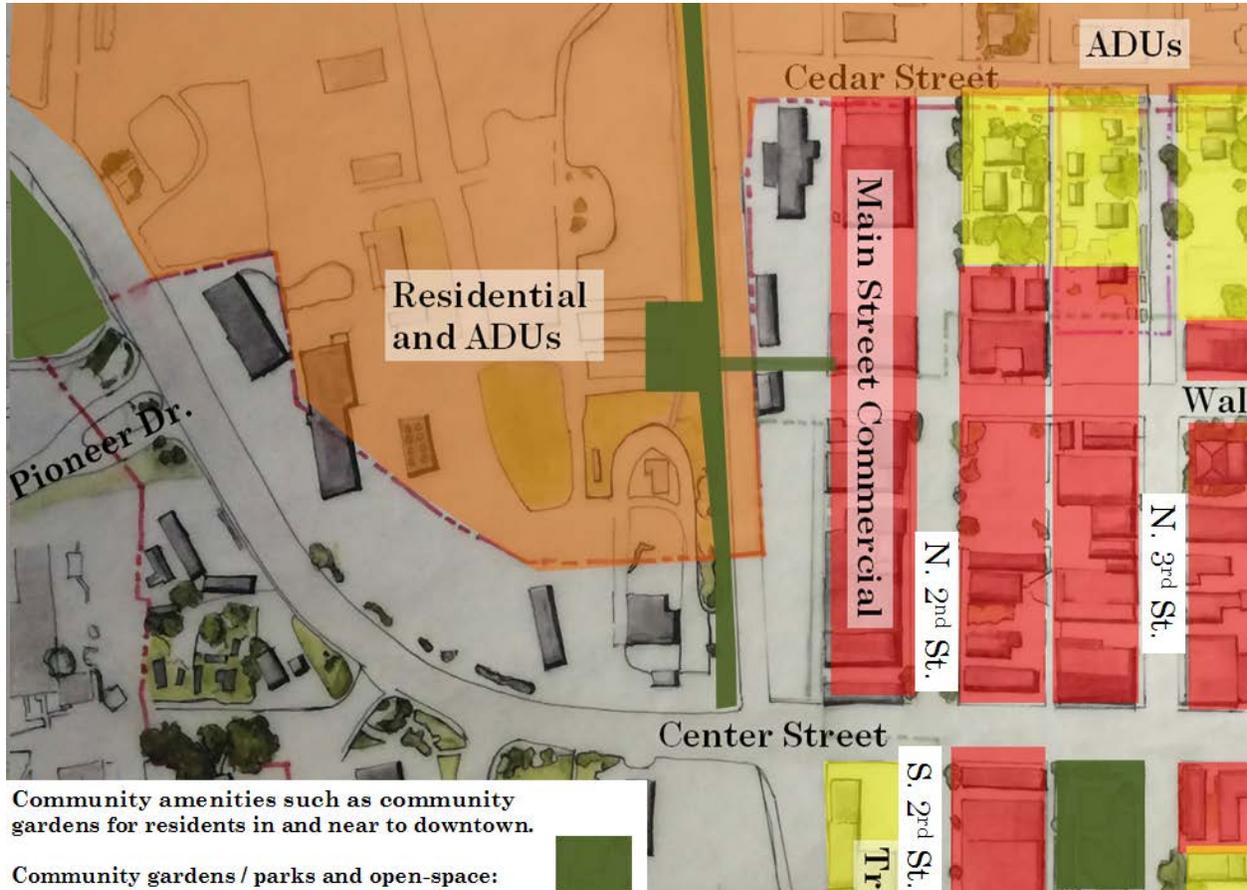
EXISTING HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



COMMUNITY GARDENS

Should this plan succeed at attracting new residents to live in the Downtown Business District, community facilities such as community gardens need to become part of the park and open space strategy for these downtown neighborhoods. The rail yards west of downtown would be an ideal location and even larger plots of land look desirable on the State Fairgrounds property near the river.

MAP 10 - COMMUNITY GARDENS TO SUPPORT SMALL RESIDENTIAL UNITS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that community gardens are listed as an allowed or permitted use in the downtown zoning districts and in nearby neighborhoods.

WHITEWATER PARK AND RIVER ACCESS

The North Platte River runs immediately west of the State Fairgrounds and a giant parking lot is precisely located to make a whitewater park possible. Although the city has installed a river trail and greenways along the river, and has made fish-habitat improvements, the river does not relate to downtown as an amenity and attraction. Traffic to the downtown brings customers and this concept is mentioned here and should be include in Douglas’s parks and recreation master plan.

A series of put-ins and take-outs can be located along the river. Part of the system can be designed to be seen from Interstate 25 just south of town. The parking lot along the river that is part of the State Fairgrounds would provide ample parking for river use, but would require communications and a formal agreement with the state agencies.

WHITEWATER PARK AND RIVER ACCESS LOCATION AND CONCEPTS



2.5 ENHANCEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Changing the economic trajectory of downtown will require significant investments to make downtown more attractive, inviting and pedestrian-friendly. This component of the Downtown Master Plan articulates and illustrates redevelopment strategies in the city streets right of way including sidewalk enhancements, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, parking strategies, way-finding and landscaping.

WALKWAY ENHANCEMENT AREA AND INTERSECTIONS

The strategy to enrich walkway surfaces and upgrade crosswalks and intersections in downtown Douglas is characterized in this adjacent diagram. Linking downtown to surrounding neighborhoods and attractions is a primary objective for this plan. The walkway starts at the State Fairgrounds on Pioneer Drive on the west and connects those patrons to Downtown Douglas on a continuous enhanced sidewalk surface.

Center Street is a Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) right of way. An early step in implementing this plan will be to come to an agreement with WYDOT regarding the desired future design of Center Street through downtown and document this agreement, possibly as a memorandum of understanding.

MAP 11 – PROPOSED WALKWAY AND INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Draft additional street cross-section requirements for the designated streets that depict the proposed improvements. Crosswalk plan details and construction standards should also be drafted and included into the street and sidewalk regulations.
- Landscaping regulations should be created that provide for increased vegetative streetscapes along the designated routes without interfering with pedestrian traffic.

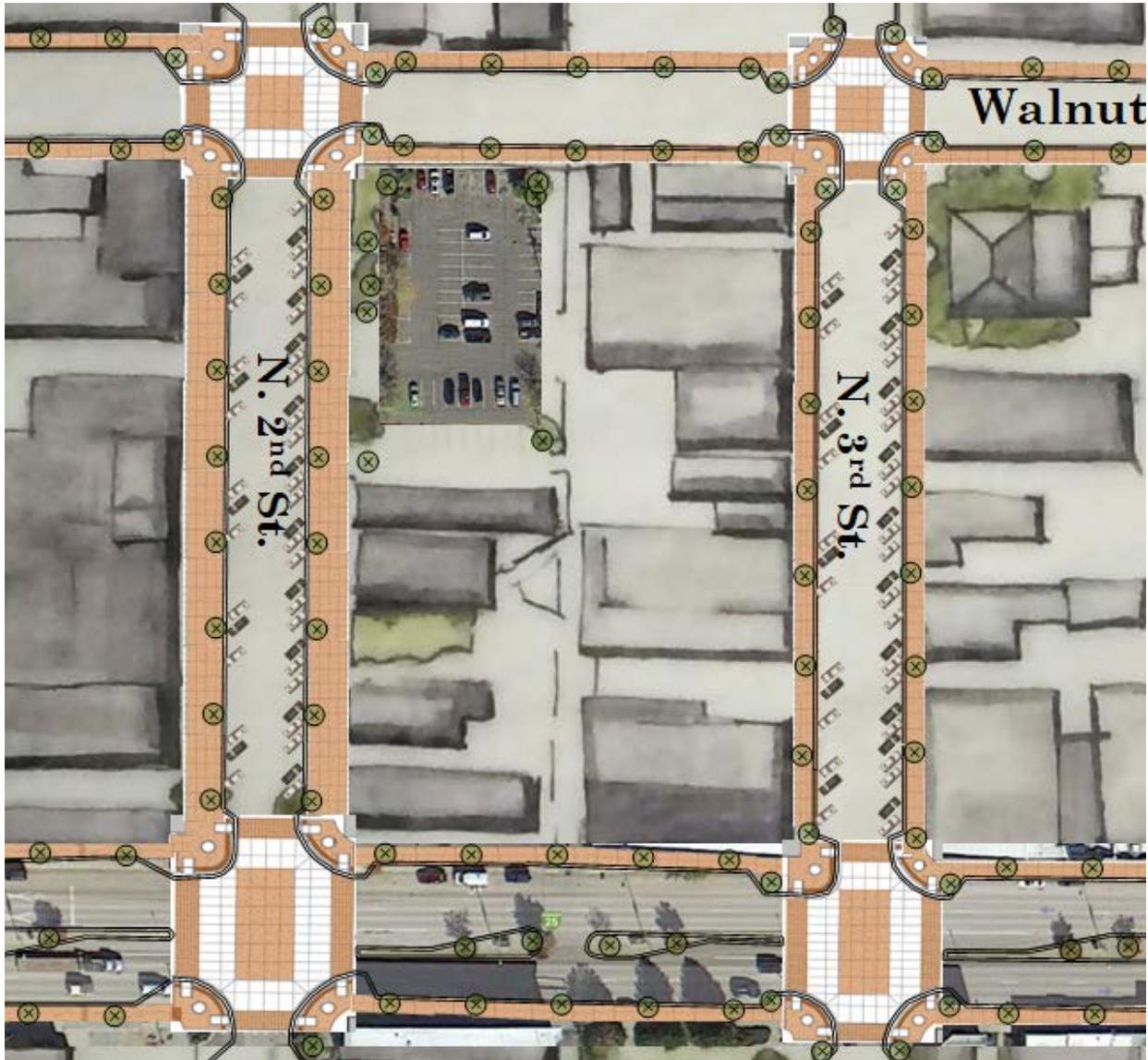
EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



ON-STREET PARKING STRATEGY

Participants were asked the importance they placed on handy curb-side parking. Overwhelmingly, participants favored retaining as much diagonal parking as possible. Bulb outs and crosswalks were desired even if a few parking spaces were lost.

MAP 12 – PROPOSED ON-STREET PARKING STRATEGY



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider rezoning the State Fairgrounds from A (Agricultural) to the new Downtown Gateway Zoning District to allow for service and retail uses that

support the entertainment and recreational features of the Fairgrounds and the proposed white-water kayak course.

- Draft regulations pertaining to seasonal temporary uses for the purpose of regulating and encouraging activity and event-oriented stands and kiosks. Food stands, convenience kiosks, and informational booths could help support the fairgrounds and kayaking activities as seasonal temporary uses.

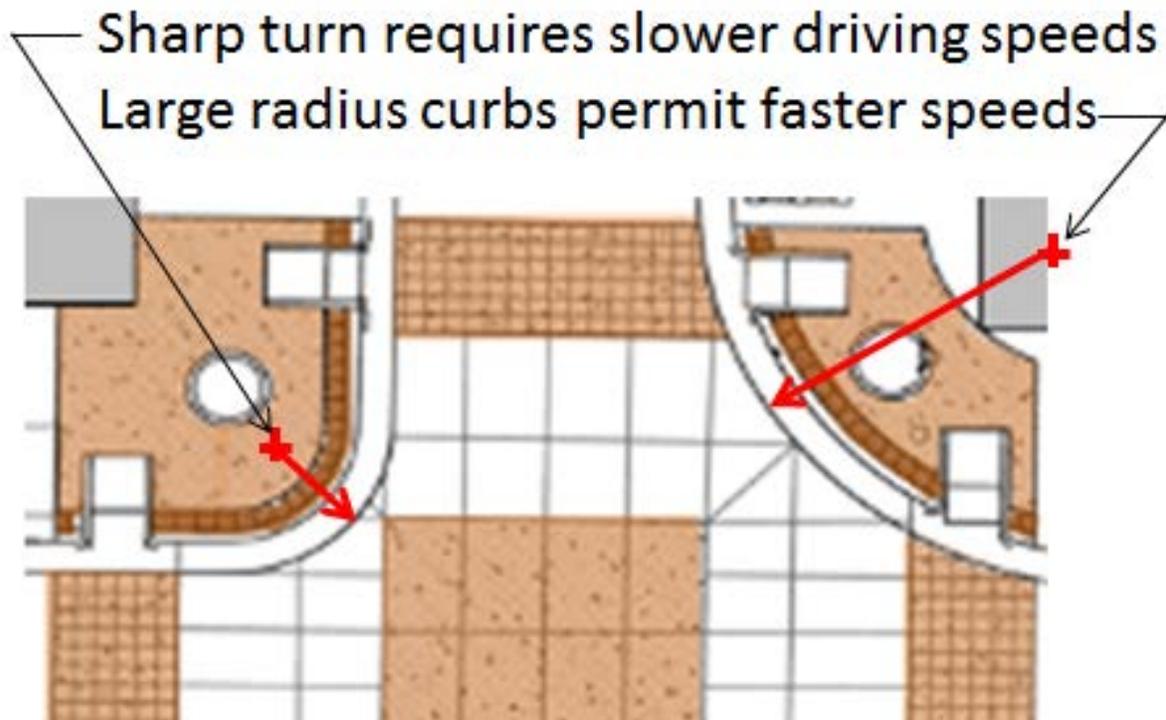
TRAFFIC-CALMING TECHNIQUES FOR SAFETY

Whenever pedestrians occupy the same space as automobiles, we need to consider safety issues. Design techniques have been developed to influence the performance of drivers in these narrow roadways adjacent to the Main Street Commercial area. Traffic-calming techniques such as turning radius, narrow roadways and raised crosswalks are frequently used. Citizens did not like the raised-crosswalk approach because raised crosswalks act as speed-bumps. Citizens did like the concept of a tighter turning radius, as that simply requires the driving speed to be reduced.

Corner Radius

What engineers call the “corner curb radius” is the sharpness of the corner. On most older, traditional main streets, the corners are often very sharp, with a small corner radius; this is one of the most effective tools for controlling speed. A vehicle turning the corner has to clear the curb, and the sharper the corner, the slower the vehicle must go.

EXAMPLES OF CORNER CURB RADIUS AND VEHICLE SPEED



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop regulatory graphics for the construction of intersections that detail sidewalk and crosswalk alignments, turning radii, clear zone standards by

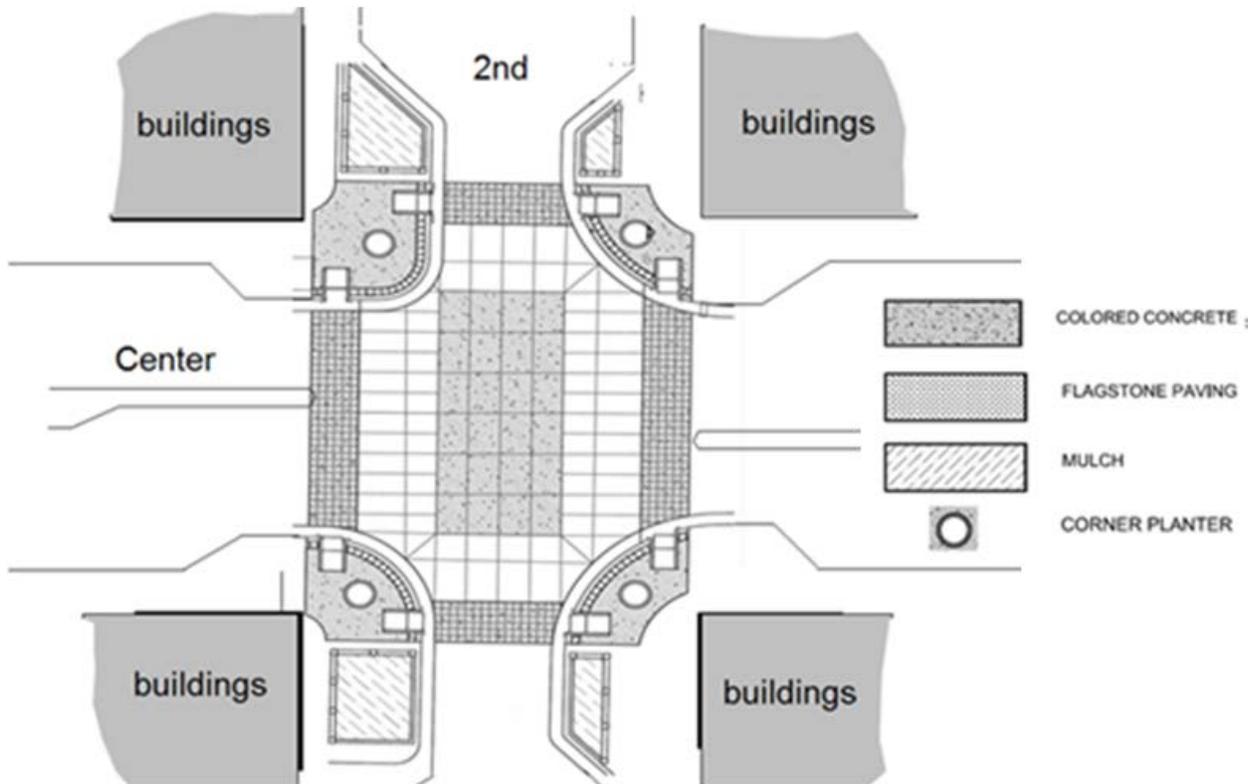
roadway design speed, and sight triangle restrictions based upon street classifications.

- Develop vegetative streetscaping standards that will not screen pedestrians from vehicular view and which can have a positive traffic-calming effect.

2ND STREET AND CENTER INTERSECTION SURFACE TEXTURES AND PATTERNS

No single element of the Downtown Plan is more characteristic of streetscape improvements than intersection surface enhancements. The surface textures can be achieved with sandstone pavers or colored and scored concrete.

2ND STREET AND CENTER INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS



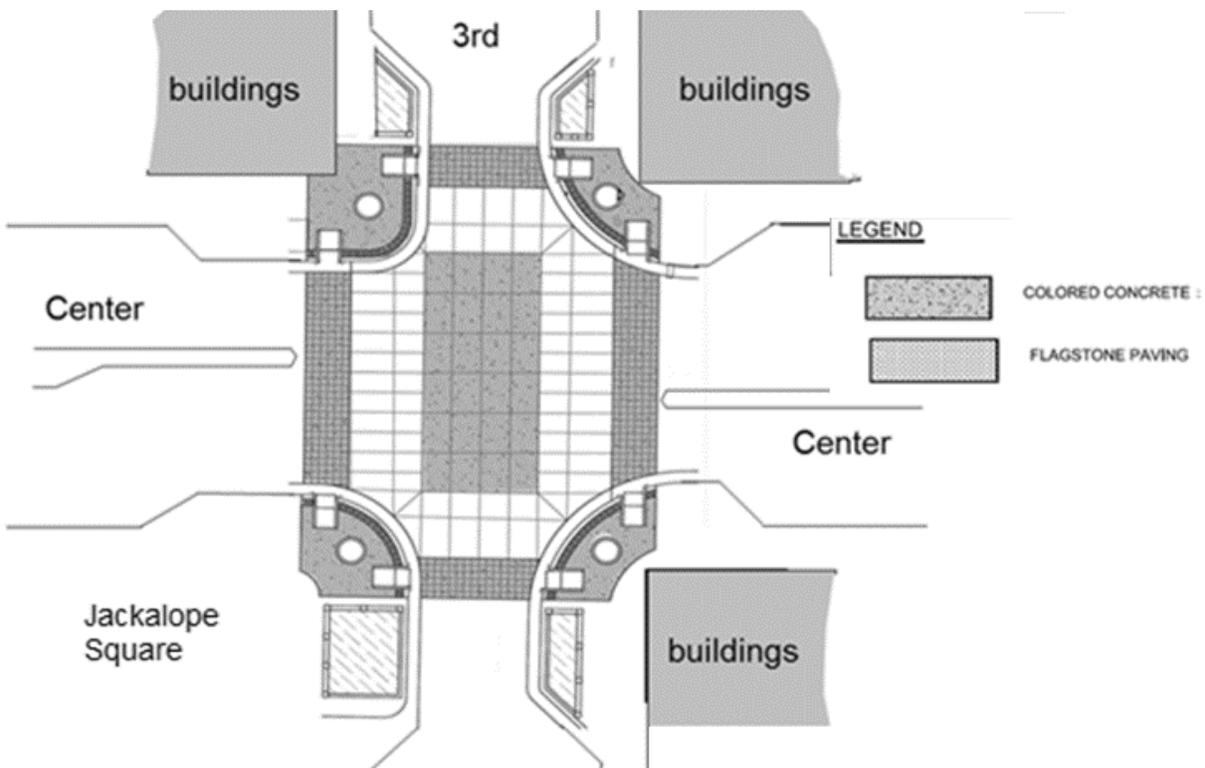
LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop regulatory graphics for the design and construction of public improvements. The graphics should include a list of acceptable construction materials for specific improvements and should identify acceptable locations for the siting and installation of public art, planters, and pedestrian amenities (benches, bicycle racks, outdoor dining areas, etc.).

3RD STREET AND CENTER INTERSECTION SURFACE TEXTURES AND PATTERNS

Third and Center is not the same width as Second Street yet a bold statement can be made with the addition of streetscape improvements, enhanced walkways and intersection design that includes scoring pattern, bulb outs onto both Center and 3rd, and crosswalks that are both safe and highly visible by motorists. This diagram depicts a range of curb radius design that can influence driving speeds.

3RD STREET AND CENTER INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

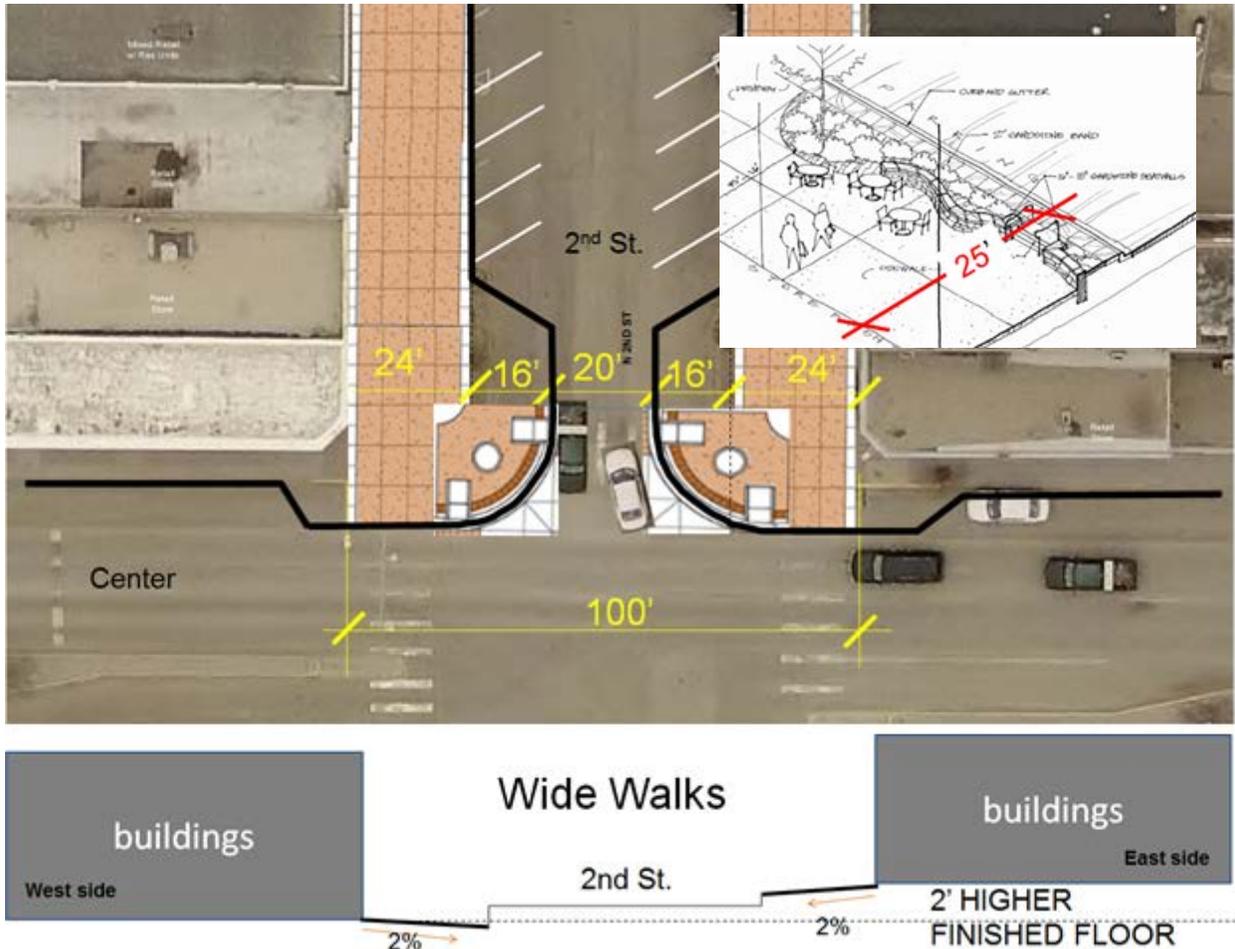
- Develop regulatory graphics for the design and construction of public improvements. The graphics should include a list of acceptable construction materials for specific improvements and should identify acceptable locations for the siting and installation of public art, planters, and pedestrian amenities (benches, bicycle racks, outdoor dining areas, etc.).

2ND STREET WIDE WALKWAY CONCEPT

The difference in finished floor elevation between the east and west sides of the street becomes a substantial design opportunity. The scale of the new walkway translates into landscape rooms available to shopkeepers, making goods and services visible to all that walk the promenade.

When this much street instantly becomes walkway, the transformation is astonishing. The potential to engage customers is maximized with a shopping street of this magnitude. Walls and planters, shade and tables will enhance this community gathering area, offering event attendees a vital shopping and entertainment district.

WIDE WALKWAY CONCEPT APPLIED - 2ND STREET IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Revise the CB-1 Zoning District regulations to include outdoor dining standards, such as maximum dining-area square footage, hours of operation,

alcohol sales, access, waste-receptacle standards, and street-side setback requirements.

- Amend the current regulations to include regulations pertaining to sidewalk sales, signage, and lighting. The regulations should also address operational considerations such as hours of operation, seasonal limitations, and pedestrian solicitation. Roadway-specific dimensional standards may be necessary to ensure that all areas of public gathering are appropriately protected from vehicular activities.

3RD STREET WALKWAYS AND BULB OUTS

3rd Street is not nearly as wide as 2nd Street, and if diagonal parking is to be maintained on 3rd, there is no room to move any curb lines. Enhancements of walkway surface, landscape elements and bulb outs are all part of the improvements anticipated for 3rd Street.

WIDE WALKWAY AND BULB OUTS APPLIED – 3RD STREET IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Draft additional street cross-section requirements for designated streets that depict dimensional standards for various on-street parking scenarios and for vegetative planting locations and spacing on attached sidewalks. Crosswalk bulb-out dimensional and construction standards and details should also be drafted and included in the street and sidewalk regulations.

MID-BLOCK BULB OUTS

Douglas has long streets, with most being over 400 feet long. Downtown designs often consider mid-block bulb outs to narrow the street, slow vehicular traffic and provide attractive and convenient landscape features such as benches, newspaper racks and trash receptacles.

A few parking places are lost as a result of inserting these pedestrian crossings at mid-block on 2nd and 3rd Streets.

EXAMPLES OF MID-BLOCK BULB OUTS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Draft additional street cross-section requirements that prescribe mid-block dimensional and construction standards for sidewalk bulb outs and crosswalk construction specifications. Detailed graphics should be created that identify acceptable landscaping locations and specific planting schedules should be created that target climate-specific species. Standards for landscaping and maintenance of these areas should be developed.

WAY-FINDING AND ORIENTATION SIGNAGE

Getting people to where they desire to go is critical to the success of this plan. Signs and maps need to anticipate auto and pedestrian needs and direct travelers to and through the downtown area with ease.

A family of signs is needed for the Downtown Business District that include banner holders and maps to local businesses and attractions. The scale of signs needs to reflect the speed at which cars and pedestrians are travelling.

WAY-FINDING APPLIED – PROPOSED SIGNS ALTERNATIVE FOR DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop downtown-specific sign regulations that provide uniform sign standards for way-finding and advertising signage. The regulations should identify acceptable construction materials, lighting standards, sign area, and area limitations.

SUSTAINABLE PLANT MATERIALS

Native, trouble-free plants that are adapted to zone 2 are ideal plants for the streetscape. A range of evergreens and deciduous trees, shrubs and ground covers has been suggested here for both landscape appearance and hardiness. Native plants are accustomed to climate and moisture extremes and are likely the most sustainable pallet of plant materials to consider.

EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE PLANT MATERIALS



LAND USE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A landscaping manual should be developed and incorporated as an appendix to land use regulations. The manual should emphasize the use of species suitable for the local climate and options for irrigated and non-irrigated planting areas.

PUBLIC ART AND MURALS

Concentrating art in public spaces can help distinguish downtown as a unique place within the city. Public art contributes to the atmosphere that can be the reason that visitors or locals come downtown and stay downtown. Public art installations can take many forms including murals, large-scale sculptures, sidewalk inlays, and decoration of public infrastructure (power boxes, manhole covers, power poles, etc.). It is important that public art installations match the theme and feel of the downtown environment.

Since the jackalope was first discovered in Douglas over 75 years ago and it is such a unique character in the town's history, its role as public art theme downtown could be expanded. Jackalope stamps in the sidewalks, a jackalope mural and jackalope-themed street paintings would all be great ways to get the jackalope downtown.

EXISTING PUBLIC ART IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



Participants have clearly voiced their desire to include colorful murals on appropriate walls that complement our historic western character. The walls available for art are considerable; the biggest issue is which of many great concepts to choose. Local landmarks, regional legacy or historic trails would seem to fit well as a means of attracting visitors and enticing them to stop and look around.

MURALS APPLIED – MURALS ON BUILDINGS IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS



AWNINGS AND SIGNS

Awnings are a colorful and informative element along Main Street and increasingly an element addressed in Downtown Improvement Plans. Where walkways are narrow, careful design is needed to ensure that street lights, trees and awnings work well together. A continuous sign element that identifies businesses offers welcome information to pedestrians and the detailed plans will define a strategy to reflect these expressed desires.

EXAMPLES OF AWNINGS AND SIGNS



EXAMPLES OF EXISTING AWNINGS AND SIGNS IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS

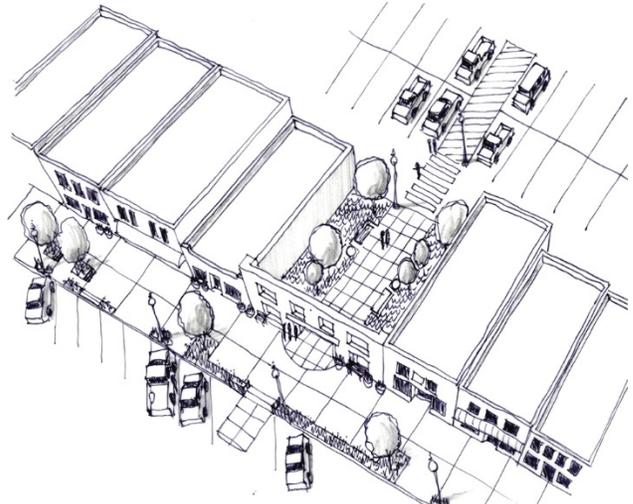


2.6 CATALYST IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

One thing that has been proven in many communities is that initial investments by the city and its downtown partners can help spur investment. This plan includes two catalyst projects, the Murphy's Wall Pocket Park, which is achievable in the short term, and the Douglas Boulevard Project, which is more ambitious and is tied to streetscape improvements on North Second Street.

MURPHY'S WALL POCKET PARK

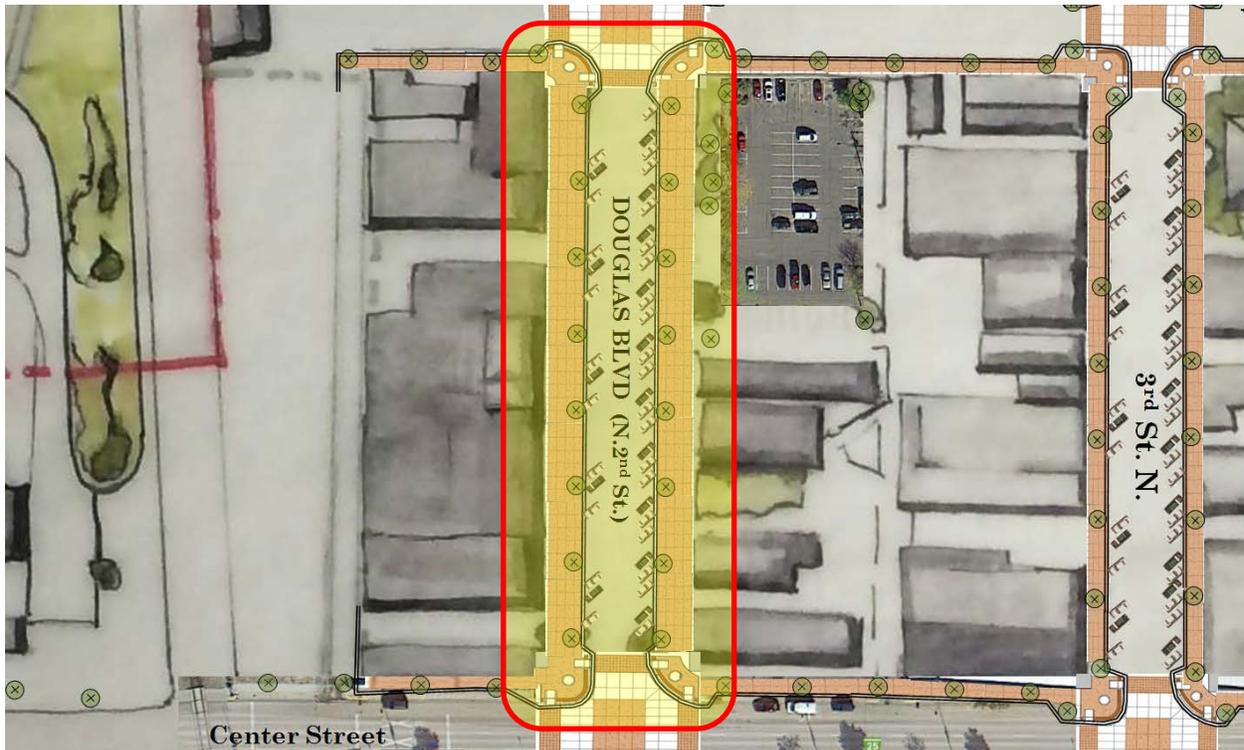
CATALYST PROJECT - MURPHY'S WALL POCKET PARK AND ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS



DOUGLAS BOULEVARD COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE

A grand community gathering place as a venue for events and celebrations would be a valuable addition to Downtown Douglas. The streetscape amenities and widened sidewalks proposed in this plan on Second Street are the obvious setting for future downtown events. This is a wonderful opportunity to define any amenities for community gathering, such as a performance area or stage, and design them into this space accordingly. Design elements for this area should facilitate closing the street to vehicular movement, lighting and outdoor seating. We would suggest a name change to emphasize the new resource, a name that reflects its area-wide importance. Douglas Boulevard has been used as a “placeholder” in this plan, but future branding exercises should customize the name of this important block.

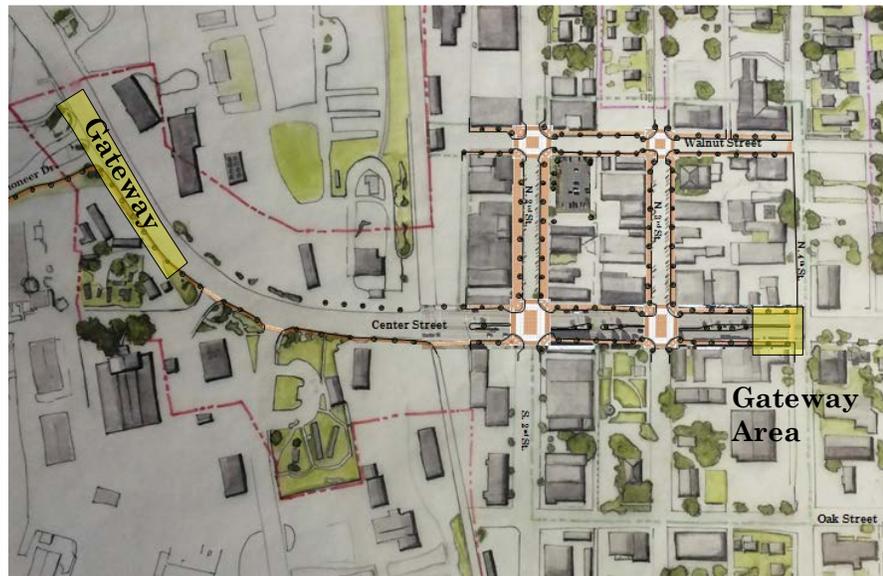
CATALYST PROJECT APPLIED – DOUGLAS BOULEVARD COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE



DOUGLAS GATEWAY CONCEPT

The state fair and other special events are opportunities to bring patrons to our downtown establishments. Lodging guests fill beds local hotels. Gateways on both ends of Center Street to announce downtown areas would help attract visitors downtown.

CATALYST IMPROVEMENT PROJECT APPLIED – DOUGLAS GATEWAY CONCEPT



2.7 PUBLIC PARKING AND ALLEYS

CRITICAL PUBLIC PARKING

Convenient parking is critical to downtown business and monitoring parking availability is an ongoing process. The diagram below is intended to identify the most critical parking areas serving the Main Street Commercial areas. The critical parking areas consist of on-street parking along the core blocks of downtown and of consolidated parking lots within easy walking distance of the Main Street Commercial areas on North Second and Third Streets, Center Street and Walnut Street. One important early step will be to formalize the status of the most critical consolidated parking lots and identify those parking lots that could be used as future development sites. In many communities, the downtown business district or the city purchases or leases the consolidated lots to ensure that they remain part of the parking inventory.

MAP 13 - CRITICAL PARKING IN DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS

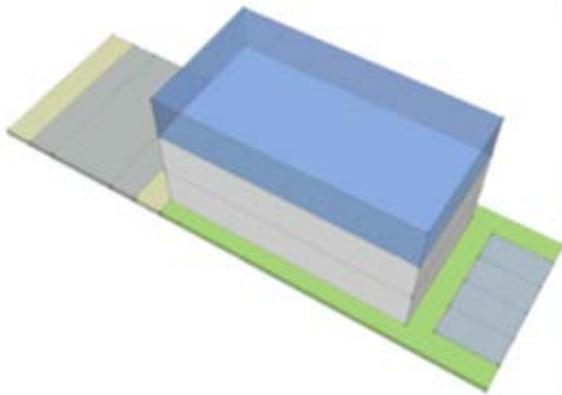


BETTER UTILIZATION OF THE ALLEYS

Initial investments in the alleys that parallel North Second and Third Streets should focus on upgrading the road structure and drainage and better utilizing opportunities for alley parking for employees and customers. In order to encourage use of the alley for parking, lighting, removal of hazards and other safety improvements are needed as well as pedestrian improvements.

The alley façade concept that has been used so effectively in other areas is recognized as a little premature here in Douglas. It is important, however, that we avoid implementing policy and standards that could inhibit or preclude this from occurring as demand increases for retail space.

EXAMPLE OF ALLEY PARKING CONFIGURATION AND ALLEY FACADE



COVERED WALKWAYS

Typically, covered walkways begin in parking areas, and allow patrons to exit their parked car and get on a covered walkway that takes them to shopping and storefronts.

The weather can often be harsh in Downtown Douglas and covered walks could improve the functionality and use of consolidated parking lots downtown even during foul weather. Covered walkways would be lighted to provide safety after dark for downtown nightlife.

A wooden boardwalk concept may be an appropriate style for Douglas. In some places, such as Jackson, Wyoming, covered “boardwalks” are connected to the building façades and act as sidewalks.

EXAMPLES OF COVERED WALKWAYS



2.8 NEED FOR A PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING REPORT

Before implementing streetscape, alley or parking improvements, the city needs to complete a preliminary engineering report that surveys all of the existing infrastructure and develop a phasing plan and construction-impact mitigation plan that addresses street/lane closures, parking, temporary sidewalks, temporary business signage and other impacts during construction. A preliminary engineering report should list what needs to be done, how and when it is to be done, and approximately how much each phase will cost.



CHAPTER 3
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIES AND MARKET ASSESSMENT

3.1 ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

EXPAND THE ROLE OF DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS IN THE REGION

The market analysis shows that Douglas acts as a regional rural center today and that there is clear market potential to expand this role. There is at least \$15 million in retail sales annually that is “leaking” out of the Douglas market area. Douglas is the civic center, the closest source for shopping, services, and entertainment, the major employment center and the place that people call “town” for a large region. This master plan presents strategies to establish Downtown Douglas as the heart of the regional community, the center for civic life, entertainment, and creative commerce. This requires a deliberate economic strategy that looks at not only downtown, but the entire city and the unique role that downtown plays.

The retail-leakage analysis summarized in the Market Assessment shows a list of potential retail opportunities, several of which would work downtown:

- bars/taverns
- restaurants
- specialty goods
- clothing
- health and personal care
- electronics
- home furnishing
- specialty food stores

Not all categories with significant leakage are appropriate development for downtown. Retail establishments with high customer volume that require visibility and convenient parking belong in other commercial areas of the city. Continuing to build from the status as regional center requires a deliberate strategy to establish downtown’s role while recognizing that other commercial development that would not work downtown also builds on the regional status.

While downtown can accommodate some level of auto-based commercial development, it is distinctive in that it is a good place to park the car and walk around. The highway corridors and other commercial areas of the city present better opportunities for auto-oriented commercial development. Infrastructure designed to facilitate compact pedestrian-oriented commercial activity can enhance the overall amount of economic activity in the city. Downtown should not be viewed as competing with other commercial areas; instead it should be viewed as providing

space that is complementary and unique. Specialty shops, restaurants, bars, and an atmosphere with public art, historic buildings, outdoor seating, compactness and walkability, events, and well-designed public spaces can distinguish downtown as a unique destination within Douglas.

INCREASE DENSITY OF RESIDENTS, WORKERS, AND VISITORS DOWNTOWN

A higher concentration of people in and near downtown expands the potential consumer base for businesses, creates a vibrant atmosphere and cements the area as the cultural and professional center for the region. The presence of the hospital, government buildings, banks and churches already helps with this goal; however, there are opportunities to “build-in” more companies and residents downtown to add volume and vitality.

- Increased residential densities, including apartments above businesses and accessory dwelling units in and around downtown, can increase housing options in Douglas while increasing the downtown population. Individuals living close to downtown will be more likely to walk downtown, alleviating parking issues that arise when people are forced to drive in order to patronize downtown businesses.
- The professional sector is the dominant sector in downtown. This sector is an important component of the downtown economy, including lawyers, banks, healthcare, consultants and real estate.
- Increased lodging options in and near downtown would bring more visitors into downtown. Many travelers prefer to stay in close proximity to a city’s center, where entertainment, food, shopping, and recreational amenities are within walking distance.

3.2 MARKET ANALYSIS

The downtown economic analysis in this report relies on data compiled by ESRI, an industry leader specializing in mapping and data analytics. Analysts used ESRI’s Business Analyst Online (BAO) tool to gather and analyze economic data about downtown, the City of Douglas and the 30-minute drive radius surrounding Douglas.

BAO is a web-based solution that provides baseline data for custom site evaluation and market analysis. Utilizing extensive demographic, consumer-spending, and business data, BAO provides detailed information and insights about consumers, their lifestyles and buying behavior, and businesses in the market area.

The databases are compiled by Dun & Bradstreet and include “information from a mix of data sources to collect, maintain, and verify information on individual establishments. This process leverages Dun & Bradstreet's proprietary databases, customer-generated information, and publicly available sources such as business registries, Internet/web mining, news and media reports, telephone directories, court and legal filings, company financials, banking information, directory assistance, industry trade data, and telephone interviews” (ESRI, 2014). The list of businesses is compiled by address to provide location-based economic data.

ESRI business data is prepared and organized using the North American Industry Classification System. This analysis consolidates the 22 primary industry categories into five primary categories. Table 1 provides a summary for the industry simplification used in this report. As the report progresses, specific categories are highlighted to examine potential opportunities and high-performing sectors.

INDUSTRY SIMPLIFICATION

Traditional	Agriculture, Mining, Utilities, Construction, Manufacturing, Public Administration
Retail Trade	Retail
Transportation / Wholesale Trade	Transportation, Warehousing, Wholesale Trade
Professional	Information, Finance/Insurance, Real Estate, Prof/Scientific, Legal, Management, Admin, Education, Health Care, Auto Repair
Hospitality	Accommodation, Food, Arts, Recreation, Entertainment
Other / Local Services	Local Services (repair/maintenance, laundry, personal care, civic/religious organizations), Unclassified

Two types of analyses are used to describe the economic role and conditions in and around Douglas, economic-activity concentration and retail leakage.

Economic-activity concentration is measured using three variables: number of establishments, employment, and productivity or sales. The number of establishments shows the relative concentration of firms located in an area and has implications for the character and land use where certain industries are concentrated. (Think industrial parks vs. retail centers, vs. agricultural lands.) This is an important consideration when trying to encourage appropriate development downtown. Employment levels by industry provides an examination of the types of workers present in a local economy. Different types of workers will require different land use mixtures. This factor is very important when trying to create a sense of place. Productivity, or sales, shows the monetary volume of each industry in a local economy, and can indicate which types of businesses drive the local economy.

If a leakage is occurring it means that area residents are traveling to purchase retail goods; conversely, if a surplus is present, an area is attracting spending from outside residents.

GEOGRAPHIES AND POPULATION

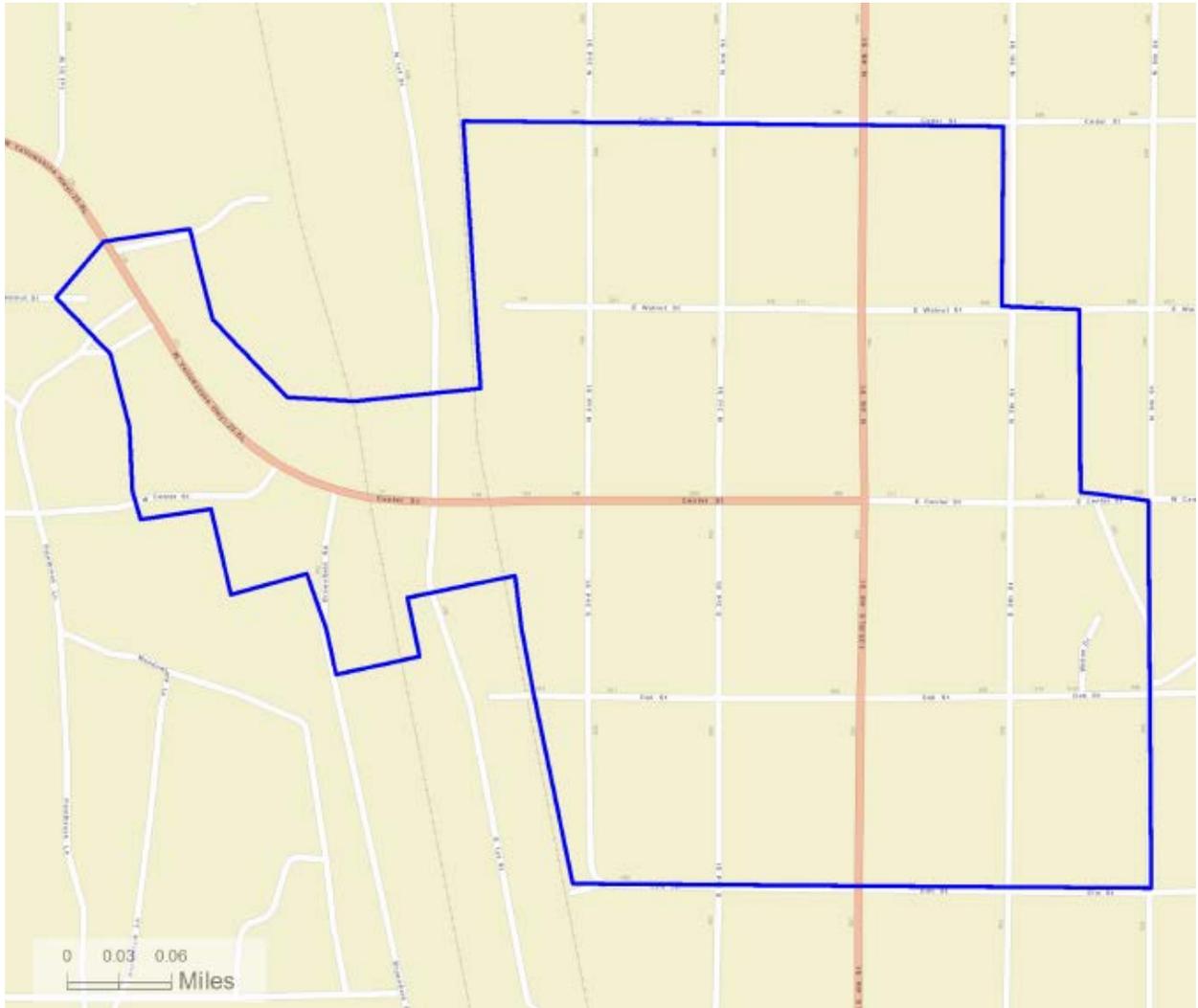
The economic section of this report focuses on three geographies to determine the role of the City of Douglas and downtown Douglas, and a 30-minute drive radius from downtown Douglas. It is important to examine commercial activity in the city as a whole to understand the relationship between downtown as a commercial area and other commercial areas in the city. The 30-minute drive radius was chosen to examine the potential customer base for economic activity in downtown Douglas. This radius was chosen because residents and businesses located further than 30 minutes from downtown Douglas will likely travel to Casper, Wheatland, Guernsey, Wright, Lusk, and Gillette for baseline regional services.

According to ESRI estimates, the city has a total of 6,487 residents in 2,738 households. The immediate region is approximately twice the size of the city and has a total population of 12,575 in 5,275 households, including municipal population.

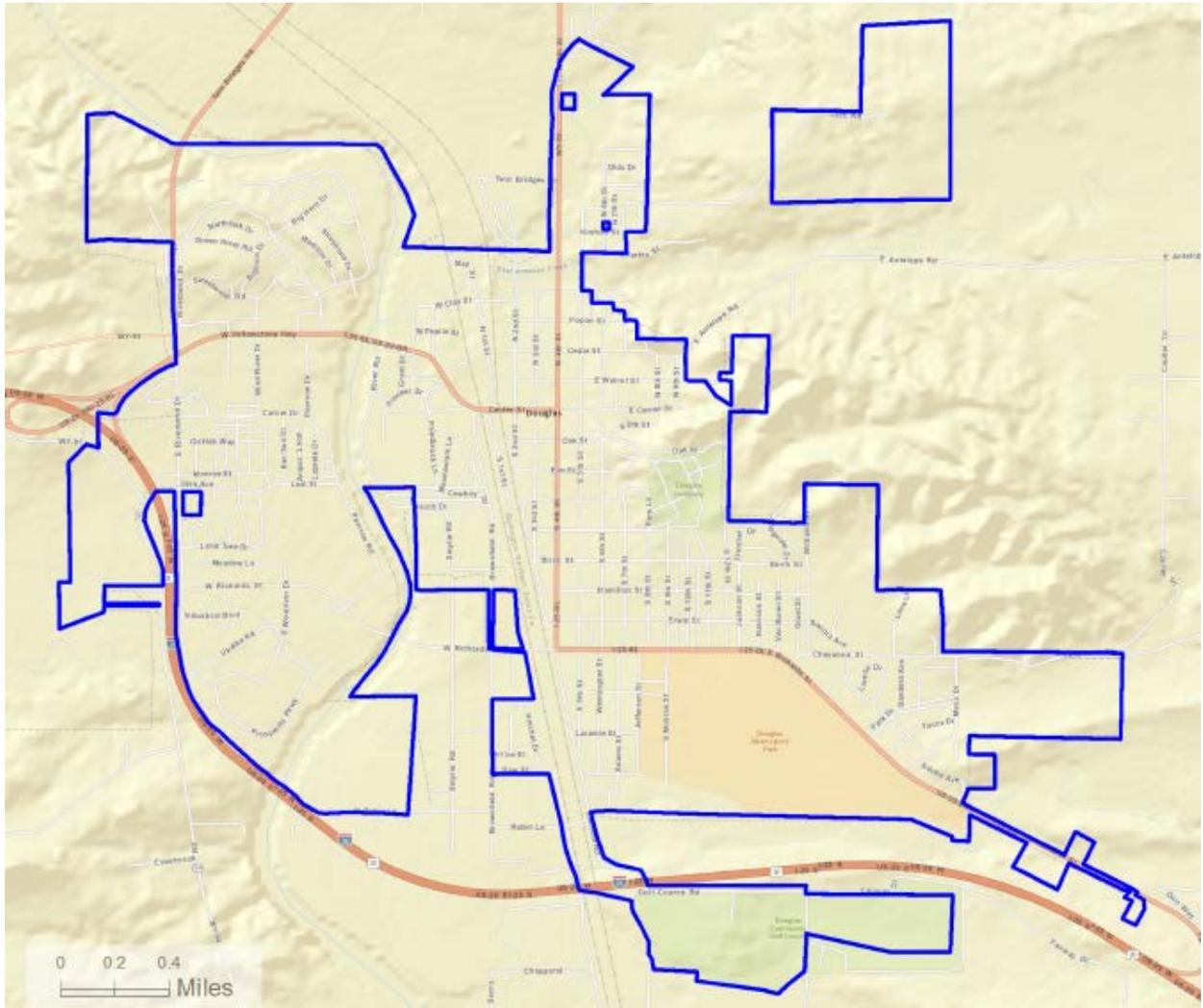
CITY OF DOUGLAS AND IMMEDIATE REGION POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS – ESRI BUSINESS

	Douglas	Immediate Region
Population	6,487	12,575
Households	2,738	5,275

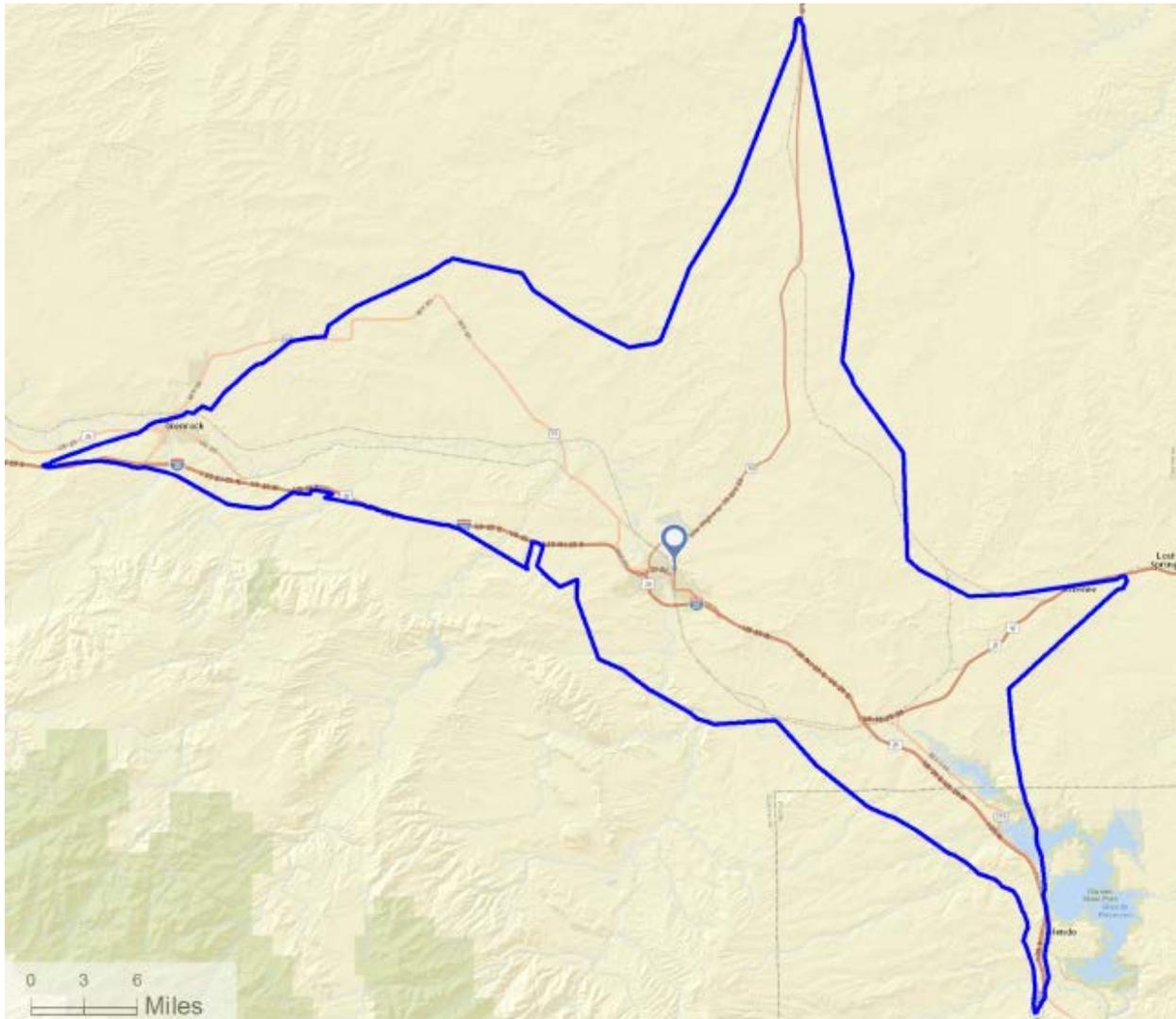
DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS ECONOMIC BOUNDARY MAP – ESRI BUSINESS



CITY OF DOUGLAS ECONOMIC BOUNDARY MAP – ESRI BUSINESS



**IMMEDIATE REGION, 30-MINUTE DRIVE RADIUS ECONOMIC BOUNDARY MAP –
ESRI BUSINESS**

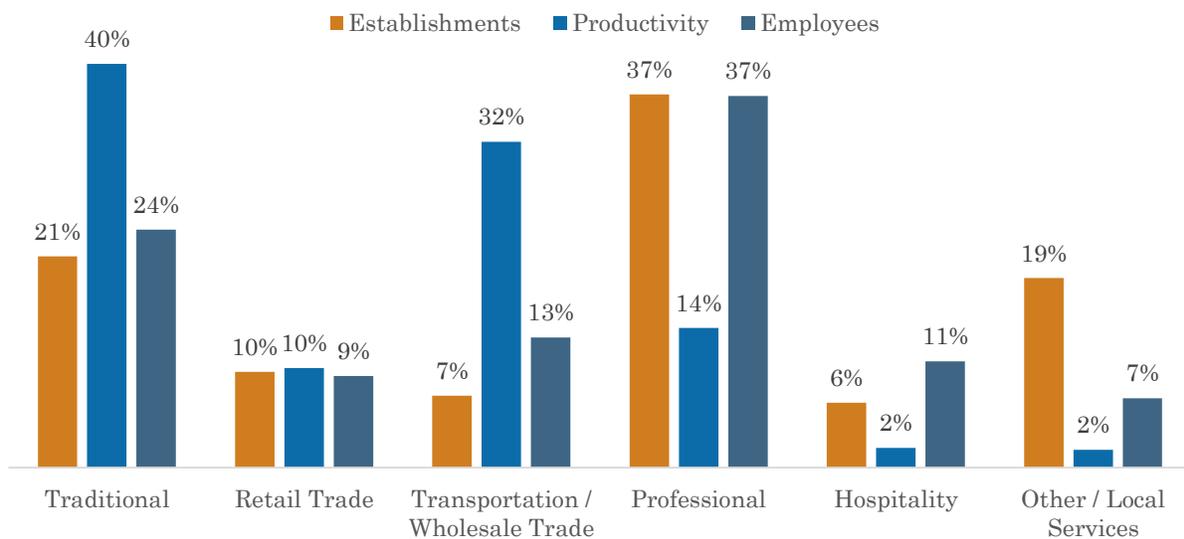


IMMEDIATE REGION ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The immediate region is defined as a 30-minute drive radius extending from Douglas east to Glenrock, southwest past Glendo and north along Highway 59 to around the intersection with Highway 32. The region has three retail/commercial centers, two relatively small centers in Glenrock and Glendo and a larger commercial center in Douglas. It is important to reiterate that this boundary provides the customer base for commercial activity in the city and downtown.

The region’s dominant economic sectors are the traditional, professional and transportation/ wholesale sectors. Activity in these sectors is primarily a result of oil and gas extraction, agricultural production and the distribution network related to I-25 and the region’s rail network.

IMMEDIATE REGION ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CONCENTRATION PERCENTAGE BY PRIMARY INDUSTRY – ESRI BUSINESS



In terms of productivity, the top three specific industry sectors are mining with 23% (which includes oil and gas extraction, and coal mining), transportation and warehousing at 31%, and utilities at 13% (power generation). These are classic base industries which bring money into the local economy from outside sources; in other words, the goods and services from these industries are exported and serve areas outside the region. Base industries typically account for a smaller percentage of employment in an area but are responsible for a relatively high level of productivity. Other than office space relating to administration of these three industries, activities associated with mining, transportation/warehousing, and utilities are not appropriate land uses for a downtown. These sectors typically rely on large

machines, have high traffic volumes, require large amounts of land, and are not aesthetically pleasing.

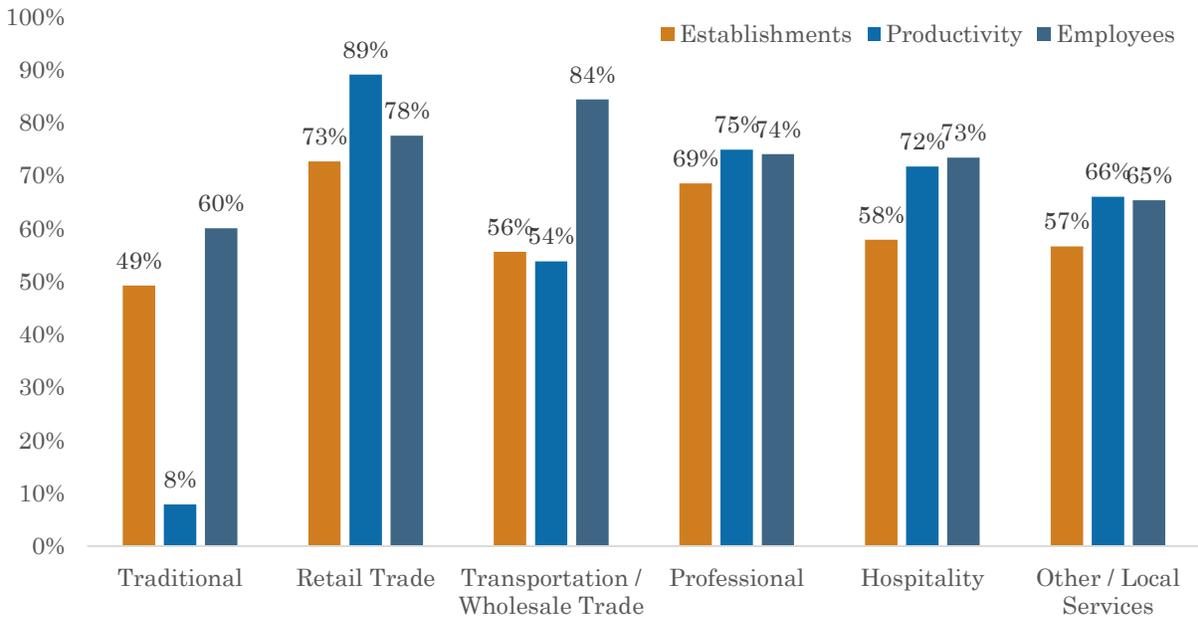
In terms of employment and establishments, the professional industry category accounts for 37% of activity in the immediate region. The professional sector in the immediate area is largely driven by the real estate, professional/scientific/technical services, administrative services, education and health/social assistance sectors. The professional sector accounts for 32% of total business establishments, and 31% of total employment in the immediate area. While these businesses account for a relatively small amount of productivity, they do account for a significant portion of land use in the region and a significant portion of total employment.

It is important to note that when the regional area as a whole is examined, retail trade accounts for 10% of establishments and productivity, and 9% of total employment. The hospitality sector accounts for 6% of businesses, 2% of total productivity, and 11% of employment in the immediate region. While these two sectors account for a relatively small portion of total economic activity on their own, when combined with the local services sector they balance out the local economy by providing needed support to local residents and businesses.

DOUGLAS AS RURAL REGIONAL CENTER

An examination of the concentration as a percentage of immediate-region economic activity in Douglas shows that 89% of retail productivity, 72% of all employment and at least half of all other economic activity in the immediate region is located within the city limits, with the exception of the traditional sector. Based on this pattern it is clear that Douglas acts as an employment, shopping, entertainment and professional/local service center for the area’s 12,575 residents.

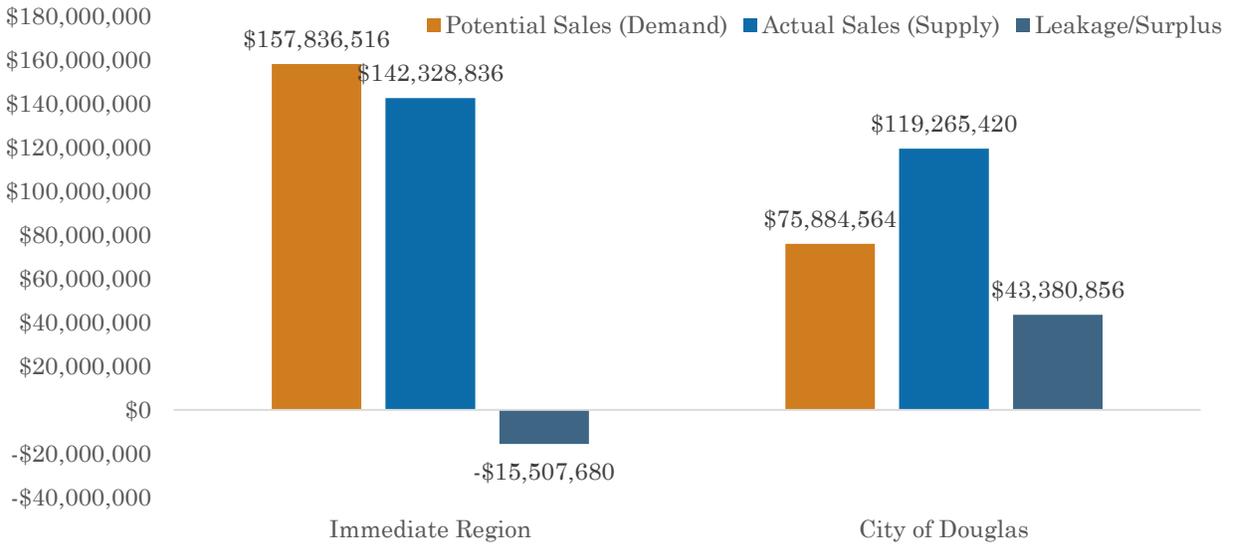
CITY OF DOUGLAS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CONCENTRATION AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ACTIVITY IN IMMEDIATE AREA– ESRI BUSINESS



Comparing retail leakage in the immediate region with retail leakage in the city reinforces the idea that Douglas acts as a rural regional center. In 2014, aggregate household demand in the 30-minute drive radius totaled over \$157 million, while actual sales in the immediate region totaled over \$142 million, creating an overall leakage rate of over \$15 million or about 10% of total demand. The city has a retail surplus of over \$43 million as a result of actual sales totaling over \$119 million and an estimated household demand of only \$75 million. The presence of a surplus in the city but leakage in the region means that households outside of city limits but in the 30-minute drive radius are traveling into Douglas to purchase retail goods.

Important note: the total retail sales in the immediate region and the city are bolstered by interstate traffic and retail spending attributed to gasoline stations, which totaled over \$45 million, compared with an estimated regional demand of \$18 million.

IMMEDIATE REGION AND CITY OF DOUGLAS RETAIL SUPPLY AND DEMAND - ESRI BUSINESS

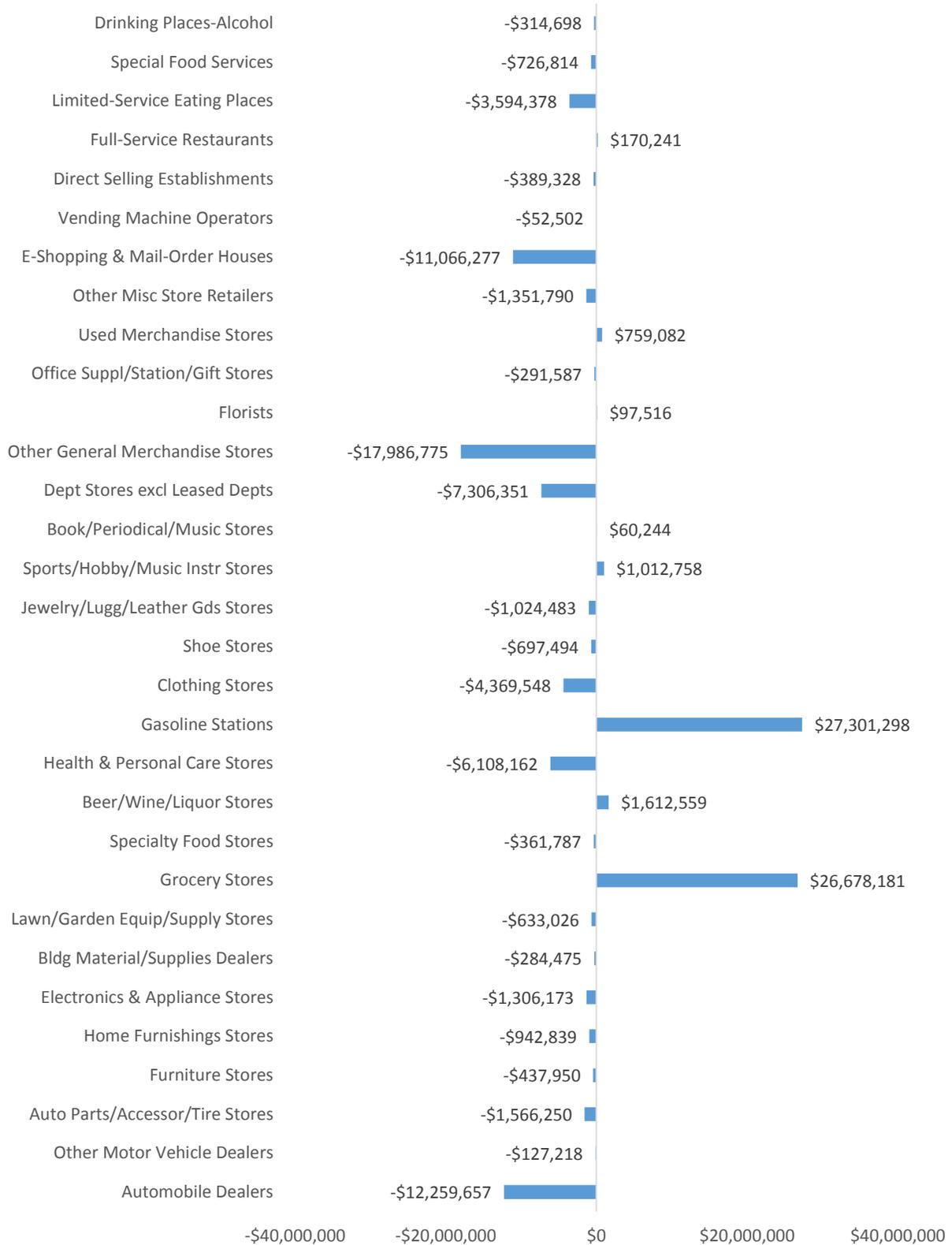


IMMEDIATE REGION RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES

In total over \$73 million in spending is leaving the immediate region. This represents a significant opportunity for the city to further develop its retail base and increase its role as a rural regional center. Categories with large leakage rates or small surpluses represent opportunities for development in Douglas and potentially downtown. Strong opportunities exist in the following categories: limited-service eating establishments (i.e., fast food, buffets, counter service, etc.), general merchandise stores, department stores, clothing stores, health and personal care, and automobile dealers.

It should be noted that small leakage and small surplus volumes can represent a significant opportunity because of the regional service nature of commercial development in Douglas. If Douglas can expand commercial development there is the potential to attract residents from outside the 30-minute drive radius.

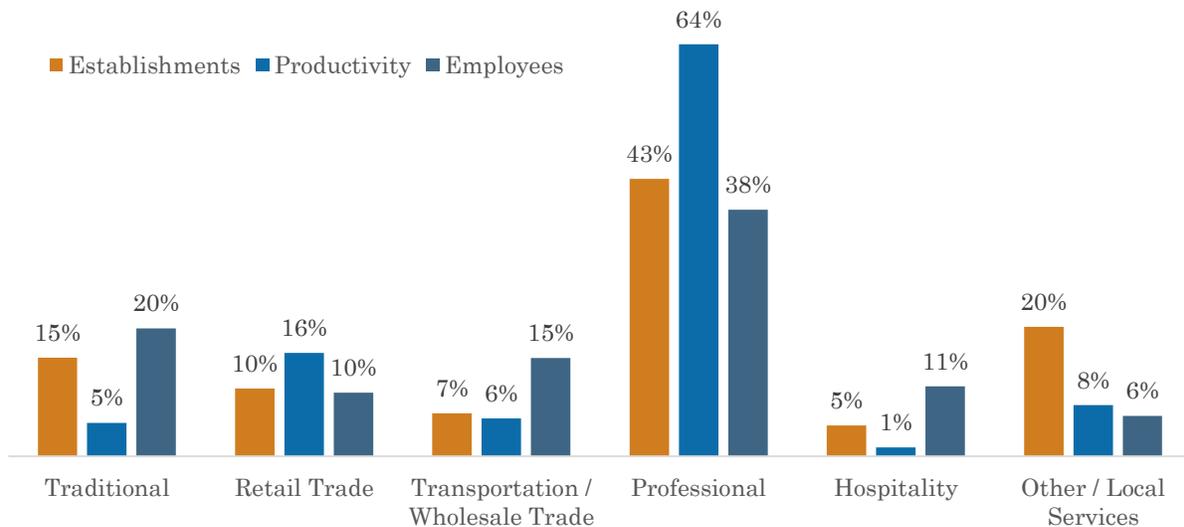
IMMEDIATE REGION SUB-CATEGORY RETAIL OPPORTUNITY AND SURPLUS – ESRI BUSINESS



DOWNTOWN EXISTING CONDITIONS AND MARKET CAPTURE

Examining productivity, number of establishments and employment in the downtown study area shows that businesses in the professional sector are dominant. The professional sector accounts for 43% of downtown establishments, 64% of downtown productivity, and 38% of downtown employment. This is important because this workforce represents an opportunity for development of additional professional services downtown, as well as establishments including restaurants, retail shops, and local services that cater to the workforce that already works downtown.

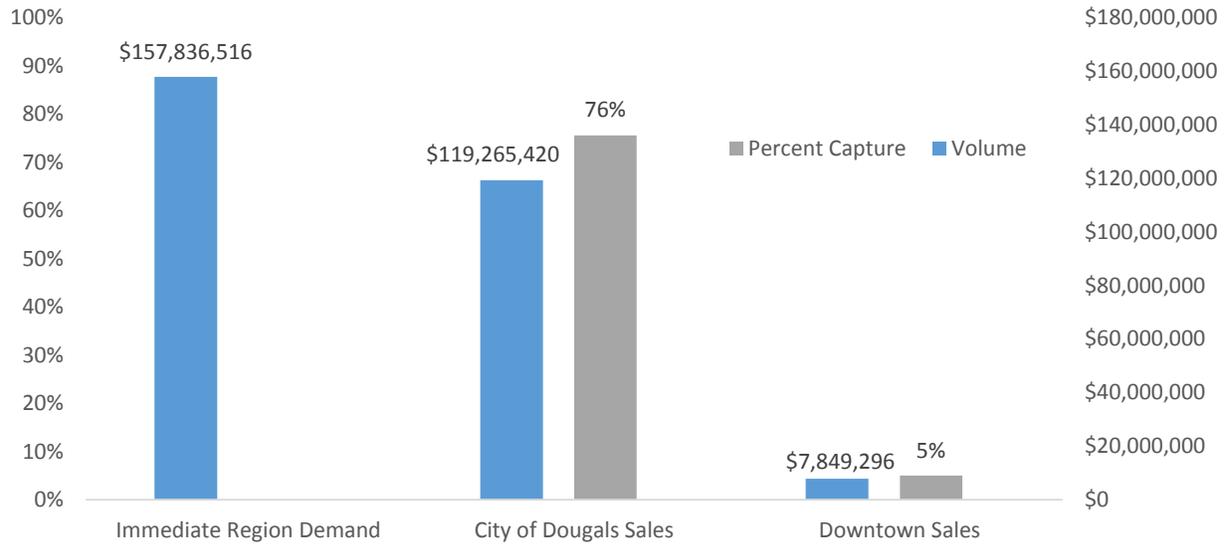
DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC CONCENTRATION BY PERCENTAGE – ESRI BUSINESS



In 2014 the City of Douglas captured 76% of aggregate retail demand originating from the immediate area, while downtown only captured 5% of regional demand with a total sales volume of over \$7 million. This is a clear indication that the potential exists for downtown to capture an increased percentage of area demand. An increased capture rate could occur with additional development in the hospitality and retail sectors and an increase in local and professional development in the downtown area.

Again, it is worth noting that the \$119 million in sales occurring within the city is likely bolstered by gasoline sales resulting from interstate traffic.

CITY OF DOUGLAS AND DOWNTOWN RETAIL CAPTURE OF IMMEDIATE REGION DEMAND - ESRI BUSINESS



3.3 POTENTIAL FUNDING STRATEGIES

The biggest obstacle to implementing large-scale capital improvement projects, including bulb outs, walkway improvements, public art installations, and recreation improvements, is funding.

In general, capital projects can be completed using debt financing, grant financing, building in phases as revenues are collected, saving revenues until enough money is collected to fully fund the project, or a combination of these methods. The advantage of saving up money or completing projects in phases as money becomes available is that there are no interest costs. However, it requires a long wait time to build and enjoy these projects. Just as most people decide it is best to purchase a home with a 30-year loan, the benefit of using debt financing or grant funding is that projects can be completed sooner and enjoyed immediately by those who will be repaying the debt. The trade-off is the cost of paying interest on loans or the time expended managing grants.

The following is a list of funding strategies that could be used to help facilitate infrastructure improvements in the downtown district:

SURPLUS SPENDING – Over the past few years the city has been fortunate enough to generate significant general fund surpluses. If deemed appropriate by city leadership while maintaining budgetary reserve requirements, a portion of these funds could be used directly for infrastructure improvements or used as a cash match for federal and state grant programs.

EARMARKING FUTURE REVENUES FROM NEW DEVELOPMENT – National-scale retailers typically generate large amounts of retail sales and by extension large amounts of sales taxes. A portion of collected state sales taxes is distributed back to municipalities and counties where they are collected. The city could enact a policy where sales taxes generated from a national-scale retailer are specifically directed to finance improvements in downtown.

SPECIFIC-PURPOSE / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TAX – Currently the county sales tax rate is 6%; statutorily the county can total up to 7%. 4% of the existing tax is the state-wide tax, 1% is a specific-purpose tax that funds county operations, and 1% funds library and educational improvements in Douglas and Glenrock. This tax is estimated to sunset in 2017. With the voters' approval the county could charge a 1% optional tax to fund capital improvements throughout the county, a portion of which could be directed to downtown improvements.

The state also allows counties to charge an economic development tax in 0.25-cent increments. Again with the voters' approval and review by the city's attorney it may be possible to use funds from the economic development tax option to fund improvements in downtown.

GRANT FUNDING

Grant funding can help fund the improvements called for in this plan, but not without a core funding source generated by tax dollars as described above. Some grant opportunities include:

- State Programs: Business Ready Community Program, Community Development Block Grant, Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program, Industrial Development Revenue Bonds, Historic Architecture Assistance Fund, Wyoming Loan Programs, Main Street Challenge Loans
- National Endowment for the Arts – Our Town Grant Program
- Federal Transportation Enhancement Funds
- USDA Community Facilities Loans and Grants
- Federal Transit Administration
- The Ford Foundation

APPENDIX 1

DOWNTOWN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

DOWNTOWN STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

The public process and research by the consulting team revealed a distinct set of strengths to build from to make downtown more vibrant and prosperous. This is accompanied by a set of challenges that need to be addressed to accomplish the goals charted in this plan. This assessment was developed early in the planning process to inform discussions leading to the Downtown Master Plan.

Downtown Strengths	Downtown Challenges
Downtown is the Heart of the Rural Region	Need More Customer Volume Downtown
Small Town, Historic Character and Buildings	Incomplete, Unmaintained Landscaping
Streets and Alleys Historic Grid Pattern	Lack in Continuity of Streetscape
Civic Anchors: Library, Post Office, Jackalope Square, City Hall	Disconnect Between Interchange Lodging Areas and Downtown
New Businesses and Momentum	Railroad Tracks Between Downtown and River
On and Off-Street Parking Options	Pass Through Commercial Truck Traffic on Highways
Business Coordination Via Main Street Douglas	Underutilized Alleys
Proximity to River	Dark Parking Lots
Fairgrounds Nearby	Not Enough for Youth Downtown
Residential Neighborhoods Surrounding Downtown	Need to Project a Regional Identity/Brand
Special Events	Competition from Evansville, Casper and Wheatland
Existing Art Downtown	Some Buildings and Storefronts Need Improvement
Jackalope Theme	Lack of Pedestrian Friendly Streetscape
Variety: Retail, Entertainment, Restaurants and Taverns, Professional, Civic	Limited Hours for Businesses
Location of Schools and Employment	Unsafe Feel for Youth Downtown in the Evening
Younger People Starting Businesses	Disconnect Between River/Park and Downtown
Farmers Market	Lack of Entertainment, Eating, Drinking Options
Commercial Anchors (Douglas Grocery, Princess Theatre, Hotel Labonte, etc.)	Retail Leakage to Casper, Wheatland, Cheyenne and Internet
Recent Upgrades to Some Downtown Buildings	Lack of Established River Recreation

Visitor Center and Railroad Museum
Very Low Rate of Vacant Buildings
Opportunities for 'Loft' Living Spaces
Downtown
Railroad Heritage
Downtown is Central and Accessible

Lack of Cohesive Signage Leading Downtown
Need for Integrated Marketing
Impacts of State Highways, Vehicle Speeds,
Pedestrian Barriers
High Cost for Start-ups
Lack of Enthusiasm, Identity, and Support for
Downtown

APPENDIX 2

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

		Completion Date
2.1 Review Downtown Codes to Increase Flexibility		
	Review and revise the list of allowed and conditional uses within the downtown	
	Consider adopting or allowing for alternative street cross-sections within the downtown	
	Streamline the review and approval processes for development and redevelopment in the downtown	
Review and revise codes for existing main street commercial areas for more flexibility		
Residential units in the main street commercial area		
2.2 Main Street Commercial Transition Zones		
	Revise the allowed residential uses in the CB-1 and B-2 Districts to facilitate appropriately scaled commercial and residential mixed-use	
	Include alley-loaded residential and second- or third-floor residential as allowed uses	
	Clarify and/or revise the language in the CB-1 and B-2 Districts requiring a minimum lot area of 500 square feet for each residential use	
Use and form flexibility for general business district		
Accessory dwelling units in adjacent neighborhoods		
	Identify residential zoning districts that are ripe for allowing accessory dwelling units	
	Develop form-based regulations for new detached accessory dwelling units	
	Create a sliding scale for the number and/or size of accessory dwelling units	
2.3 Re-Inventing Adjacent Neighborhoods		
Cottage neighborhoods and retiree/senior housing		

	Rezone/amend current zoning to MU-PUD (Mixed Use – Planned Unit Development) zoning district	
	Develop a new Downtown Gateway zoning district	
2.4 Historic Restoration and Preservation and Greenspace Downtown		
	Ensure that land use regulations defer to the historic downtown overlay districts for design, construction, and maintenance requirements	
	Review regulations for consistency with the purpose and intent of the historic downtown overlay districts	
Community gardens		
	Ensure that community gardens are listed as an allowed or permitted use in the downtown zoning districts and in nearby neighborhoods	
Whitewater park and river access		
2.5 Enhancements in the Public Rights of Way		
Walkway enhancement area and intersections		
	Draft additional street cross-section requirements for the designated streets that depict the proposed improvements	
	Landscaping regulations should be created that provide for increased vegetative streetscapes along the designated routes	
On-street parking strategy		
	Consider rezoning the State Fairgrounds from A (Agricultural) to the new Downtown Gateway zoning district	
	Draft regulations pertaining to seasonal temporary uses for the purpose of regulating and encouraging activity and event-oriented stands and kiosks	
Traffic-calming techniques for safety		
	Develop regulatory graphics for the construction of	

	Develop vegetative streetscaping standards	
2 nd street and center intersection surface textures and patterns		
	Develop regulatory graphics for the design and construction of public improvements	
3 rd street and center intersection surface textures and patterns		
	Develop regulatory graphics for the design and construction of public improvements	
2 nd street wide walkway concept		
	Revise the CB-1 zoning district regulations to include outdoor dining standards	
	Amend the current regulations to include regulations pertaining to sidewalk sales, signage, and lighting	
3 rd street walkways and bulb outs		
	Draft additional street cross-section requirements for designated streets	
Mid-block bulb outs		
	Draft additional street cross-section requirements that prescribe mid-block dimensional and construction standards for sidewalk bulb-outs and crosswalk construction	
Way-finding and orientation signage		
	Develop downtown-specific sign regulations that provide uniform sign standards for way-finding and advertising signage	
Sustainable plant materials		
	Develop a landscaping manual as appendix to land use regulations	
Public art and murals		
Awnings and signs		
2.6 Catalyst Improvement Projects		
Murphy's Wall pocket park		

Douglas Boulevard community gathering space	
2.7 Public Parking and Alleys	
Critical public parking	
Better utilization of the alleys	
Covered walkways	
2.7 Need for a Preliminary Engineering Report	

APPENDIX 3

THE DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS SKETCH BOOK

Available as separately downloadable background document

