

# APPENDIX A



**VIBRANT**  
T O G E T H E R  
A DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE

## PHASE 1 AND 2 SUMMARY



APRIL 2019





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## 1 INTRODUCTION

When asked, local residents describe the City of Grand Junction as a welcoming community with a small-town vibe characterized by strong local arts and culture- and at the heart of it all is the downtown. However, residents also feel there is lot of potential. Regional population and economic growth are creating a demand for development. With this growth comes the need for strategic thought about what is best for the community.

The goal of this Downtown Plan of Development, called “Vibrant Together: A Downtown Initiative,” (referred in this document as ‘the Plan’ or ‘the POD’) is to communicate our shared values for growth in Downtown Grand Junction. This Plan will be a governing document for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and will identify a clear plan of action for priority projects, strategies, and partnerships in the near term, aligned with the community’s vision for downtown Grand Junction. To achieve this the Plan will;

- Provide a unified vision for downtown.
- Identify projects that advance the vision
- Bring local leaders together in pursuit of that vision.

**1.1 WHY DO THIS NOW?** The primary responsibility of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is to support and facilitate economic development efforts to enhance the vitality of the Downtown community through capital investment and construction. The current DDA Plan of Development, is 38 years old and therefore is challenged to guide development that is reflective of both the current market or the vision of the community for what the future of greater downtown should be. In this time of growth, the DDA should have a strong governing document that is reflective of the community’s wants and needs in downtown and develop strong partnerships for making a positive impact to the downtown.

While the City Comprehensive Plan, The Greater Downtown Plan and other guiding vision documents and strategic plans identify opportunities and regulate growth in the downtown, this Plan of Development will guide the types of projects and programs that for downtown with the goal of sustaining Downtown Grand Junction’s role as the preeminent hub for economic activity and commerce, cultural experiences and as a vibrant place to live and visit.

**1.2 HOW THIS DOCUMENT IS ORGANIZED.** This document represents a summary of Phase 1 and Phase 2 from the approach outlined above and provides written documentation of the current market trends and influences that influence daily life in downtown Grand Junction. This summary will be included as an appendix to the POD, and portions will be adapted as the introductory chapters of the Plan of Development.

The following chapters are outlined in this Summary Document;

1. Introduction
2. Background Context
3. Opportunities, Vision and Goals
4. Market Context
5. Summary of Existing Documents
6. Summary of Public Input

**1.3 A COMMUNITY DRIVEN PROCESS** A primary goal of Vibrant Together is to work with residents and local organizations to create a vision for a thriving downtown. In addition to providing strategies for the downtown, this process will work to build support from the community as well as local partnerships for successful implementation.

The planning process is being executed in four phases;



## WHO HAVE WE HEARD FROM?

**Pop Up Events:** Farmers Markets, Downtowner, Car Show, Tour De Rock (CMU Event)

**Photobooth**

**Comment Boxes:** Library, Colorado Baby, Gelato Junction, Transit Center, Art Center, RAW Canvas (50 Respondents)

**Focus Group Meetings:** Developer Meeting, Social Services Meeting, Recreation and Outdoor Meeting, CMU Meeting, Neighborhood Group Meeting, Beer 30 CAT Meeting

**Online Survey** (300 Respondents)

**Visitor Survey** (0 Respondents)

**Strategic WALKshop**(15 Attendees)

**Strategic Development Workshop** (10 Attendees)

**Strategic Workshop Public Open House** (100 Attendees)

**1.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW** Feedback from local residents and visitors is essential to understanding the community vision for downtown. This project aims to utilize a wide variety of public engagement activities and strategies to reach a broad spectrum of the population and to make providing input easy and fun. Between September 2018 and February 2019 community feedback was received at pop up events, through comment boxes around town, through online survey and Instagram surveys, focus group meetings, meetings with stakeholders, the community action team (CAT) and at a series of strategy workshops followed by a Community Open House. Feedback asked a series of questions that looked to better understand;

- what downtown means to residents and visitors in Grand Junction,
- how people get around and what challenges they face,
- What people like to see or do in downtown now and what they would like to see or do in the future.

We engaged with over 500 community members from in and around Grand Junction who provided their input to Vibrant Together. A complete summary of the engagement process and activities is provided in the appendix. Through listening and organizing the feedback, some key themes have emerged that have informed the goals and big ideas.

**1.5 THE BIG IDEAS.** Goal setting provides an opportunity for people to work together and build consensus. These goals are meant to serve several key purposes. First, they are meant to provide direction for advancing the community's vision of building a thriving downtown for everyone. They should act as a tool for guiding future decisions, like determining if a new project or policy is in line with the vision. They are also useful for monitoring progress, to identify successful efforts that should be expanded upon, or unmet goals and gaps that need to be addressed.

# THE BIG IDEAS



## GOAL 1: VIBRANCY

Downtown is the “The heart of it all” as a 18 hour/7 days a week center of activity for all ages and income levels.



## GOAL 2: DOWNTOWN LIVING

Downtown offers a diversity of quality housing choices for all price points to bring more people to live, work and play downtown.



## GOAL 3: IDENTITY

Downtown is recognized as the hub of regional culture for the western slope.



## GOAL 4: CONNECTIVITY

Downtown is connected to local destinations and outdoor amenities through safe pathways for bikes and pedestrians.



## GOAL 5: SAFETY AND COMFORT

Downtown is safe and comfortable environment that is welcoming to all.



## 2 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Grand Junction is a unique and special place in Colorado. Coined by locals as 'Colorado's best kept secret' or 'West Slope. Best Slope.' there is a sense of pride for all the region has to offer, with the City of Grand Junction and the downtown playing a crucial role at the heart of it all.

The following chapter will set the stage for understanding what is happening in Grand Junction and how this informs challenges and successes in the downtown.

- About the DDA
- A Step Back
- A Snapshot of Today
- Looking Forward

**2.1 ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP:** The Downtown Partnership consists of two special districts, the Downtown Development Authority and the Business Improvement District which share the same staff and Board of Directors. Large and small, Downtown Grand Junction is involved in a wide array of activities and projects Downtown, all with the goal of sustaining Downtown Grand Junction's role as the preeminent hub for economic activity and commerce, cultural experiences and as a vibrant place to live and visit.

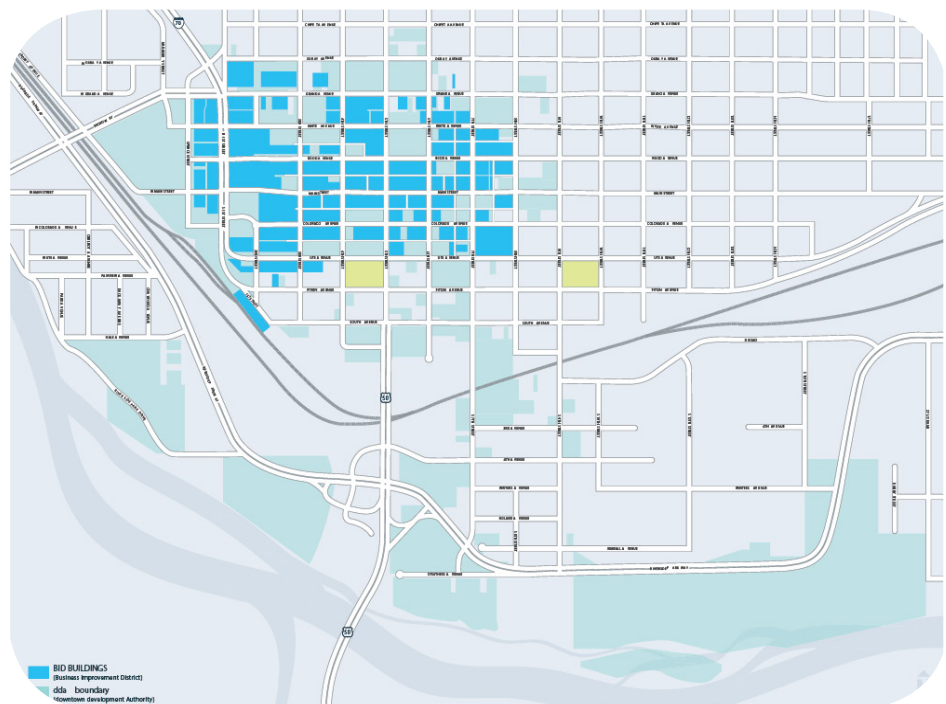
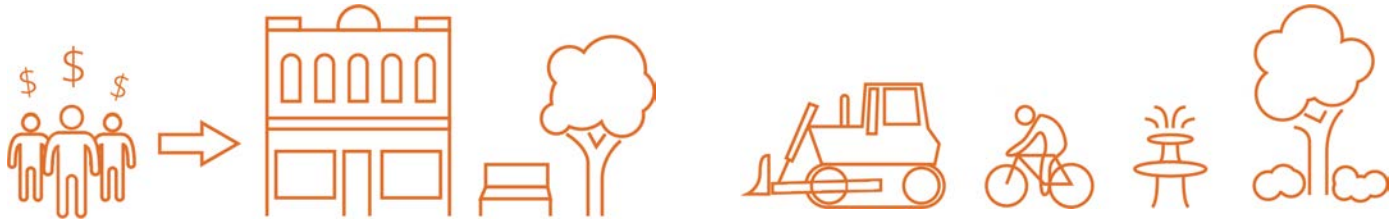


Figure 1 Map of DDA and BID Boundaries



The Business Improvement District (BID) produces and supports events that attract visitors, enrich life for residents, and drive revenue to local businesses. The BID also develops advertising, marketing, and public relations campaigns that reach regional, statewide and national audiences and help brand Downtown as a regional hub.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) focuses on supporting and facilitating economic development efforts to enhance the viability of Downtown through grants, capital investment and improvements to public amenities.

The DDA was established in 1981 by the City of Grand Junction after receiving approval through a special election of the Downtown property owners and businesses. The DDA was established to halt and prevent deterioration of property values within its district and to assist in the development and redevelopment of its district and to use its power to promote the general welfare of the district by the use of its direct and supplemental powers. The Authority was one of the first such organizations in the State of Colorado and focuses on supporting and facilitating economic development efforts to enhance the viability of Downtown through grants, capital investment and improvements to public amenities.

In late 2005, business and property owners within the boundaries of the BID voted to impose a special assessment which would fund marketing, promotions, public relations, advertising and special events. The BID affects Downtown Grand Junction commercial property owners only and excludes residential properties. The Business Improvement District (BID) produces and supports events that attract visitors, enrich life for residents, and drive revenue to local businesses. The BID also develops advertising, marketing, and public relations campaigns that reach regional, statewide and national audiences and help brand Downtown as a regional hub.

**Organization.** This nine-member board is appointed by the Grand Junction City Council. Eight of the members must be a resident, business lessee, or own real property within the boundaries of the DDA and BID. The City Council shall appoint one member that is exempt from the above qualifications. The four-year terms expire in June.

**Powers and Initiatives.** Downtown Grand Junction is involved in potential catalytic projects such as the Las Colonias Business Park and the Las Colonias Amphitheater that are transforming Downtown's River District into a vibrant area that will incorporate recreation, entertainment and job clustering into an area that has historically seen little investment. The DDA is also engaged in helping bring two new hotels to downtown as well as much needed renovation to Two Rivers that will allow it to continue to operate as an economic driver for downtown. Potential new downtown housing is also on the way as the DDA reached an agreement with a developer for the former R-5 building site to develop townhomes and find an adaptive reuse of the former school building. The most recent project is a public/private partnership with Kaart Group which will add four and six story class A office space to 7th and Main and add roughly 80 new jobs to Downtown.

**Policy and Decision Making.** The Plan of Development will be approved by the Downtown Board. Following Board approval, the Planning Commission will review the plan and make a recommendation to City Council for final approval and adoption.



Figure 2 Grand Junction within the United States



Figure 3 Grand Junction within the state of Colorado.

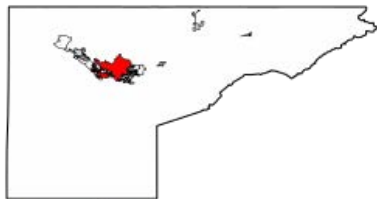


Figure 4 Mesa County with Grand Junction at the center.



Figure 5 The City of Grand Junction.

**2.2 A STEP BACK.** Grand Junction gets its name from its location at the confluence of the Colorado River (formerly named the Grand River) and the Gunnison River and offers sweeping views of the Grand Mesa, Colorado National Monument and the Book Cliffs. The Grand Junction town site was settled September 26, 1881, although human civilization in the area dates back thousands of years to include the Ute and Fremont tribes, among others. Grand Junction has been shaped by natural geography as well as man-made transportation connections, first by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroads in 1882 and again when the Interstate system reached the City in the 1960's. These connections supported the economic growth of agriculture across the Western Slope, and in later years wholesale goods and energy production. The River has a significant role in shaping Grand Junction and the surrounding landscapes. This powerful river provided water in the desert for the growth of both towns and agriculture. Between the river and the rail, Grand Junction became a regional hub of agricultural and mining industries that transformed the downtown.

In the 1950's, a time when many cities were looking towards pedestrian malls, Grand Junction embraced the concept of a chicane, which is a serpentine street design with pockets of green space and public art. Grand Junction's Main Street should be celebrated as an innovative and successful downtown revitalization strategy, the design of which is part of the unique character and history of the community. The downtown was first recognized nationally in 1962 when Operation Foresight began to reconstruct Main Street into a 'downtown shopping park' with landscape, parking and updated streets for which the city was awarded All America City recognition by Look magazine.

Downtown Grand Junction is now home to dozens of outstanding locally-owned shops, music venues, restaurants, galleries and area services with a large collection of public art, fountains and historic buildings. Art on the Corner (AOTC) is a year-round outdoor sculpture exhibit which was established in 1984 by local sculptor, Dave Davis and was one of the first of its kind in the country. Art on the Corner, First Friday walks, farmers markets and events at the Avalon are noted as some of people's favorite events in the downtown that make Main Street a source of pride for local residents as well as a draw for visitors.

**2.3 A SNAPSHOT OF TODAY.** Grand Junction today is the largest City along the I-70 corridor between Denver and Salt Lake City with a City population of 58,000 and a metropolitan area of 146,000 people. As the major population and employment center in the region, the City is home to county and state offices, three major hospitals and Colorado Mesa University. The downtown population represents 25,000 people with approximately 10,000 residences.

Demographic research suggests that downtown is attracting a young generation of people starting their careers, and an older generation of retirees 'empty-nesters' who are downsizing. This in addition to a strong residential rental and for sale housing market in downtown, suggests a demand for increased housing and infill development in the downtown.

In addition, downtown serves as an important retail node for local and regional residents as well as tourists. Community input shows that 76% of

people go to downtown Grand Junction once or more each week. The downtown is supported by a large regional population of people that come to downtown for work (40%), shopping (54%) and/or for dining and drinks (78%). There is a growing market potential for restaurants and bars in the downtown as this area has seen 13% growth over the last 10 years. There is also a momentum in the downtown market driven by the recreation and tourism culture in the area exemplified by the Las Colonias River Development and 15-acre business park.

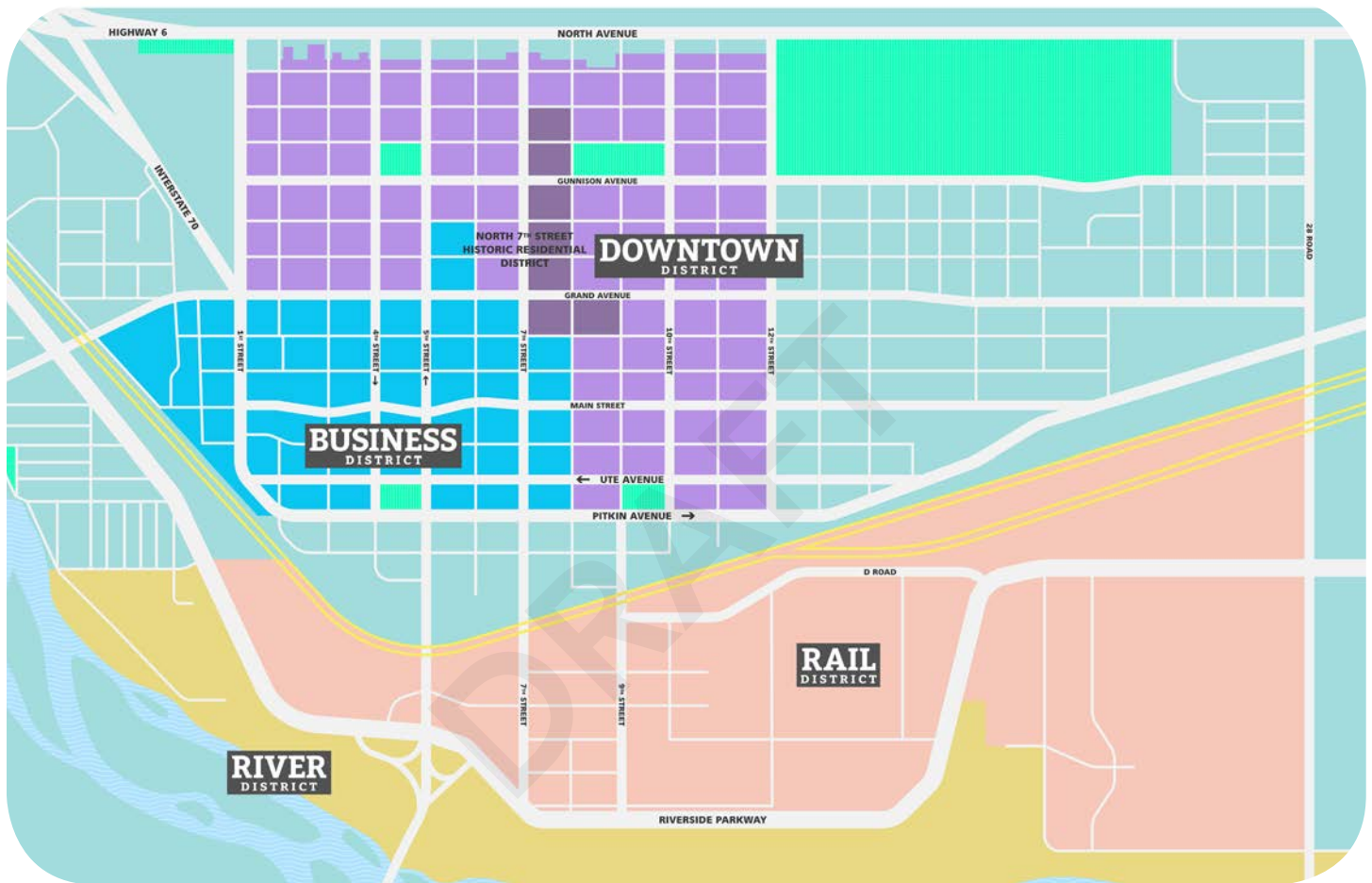


Figure 6 Map of Downtown Districts

**2.4 LOOKING FORWARD.** The future of Grand Junction looks bright. Based on the shifting demographic trends, the demand for housing and influence of the local arts scene, there is opportunity for growth in the City, specifically in the downtown. In addition, the outdoor amenities and agricultural assets of the region provide a unique setting that is attractive to both long time locals and new residents. Key to this is reactivation of the confluence in the River District, with Las Colonias Park, the River trails and connections to the Lunch Loops, and providing access to the Colorado River. Local residents know this is what makes Grand Junction special, there is an essential need to make the connection from the river area to and from Downtown.

As such, future growth needs to happen in a way that protects the unique history and celebrate the local assets of the community. Building on current momentum, new housing development in the downtown and the restoration and development along the river, this Plan will identify a vision for growth in the downtown that is aligned with the needs of the community.



### 3 OPPORTUNITIES, VISION AND GOALS

The vision and goals for Vibrant Together recognizes and builds upon priorities set by the DDA and previous planning efforts completed by the City and aligns these with feedback received from the community. The DDA's mission will be to focus efforts and resources on projects and programs that advance these goals as a shared agreement on a path forward for downtown. The Big Ideas were formed by:

1. listening to the community through a public input process and,
2. aligning that input with the priorities for the DDA and goals of the City as stated in recent plans.

Recognizing that change in the downtown will be incremental, these goals will become a benchmark for future revitalization efforts. Specific strategies for how to achieve these goals will continue to be explored throughout this process for how they can be applied in the downtown.

The following chapter will summarize what was learned from the market assessment and public input and how this led to the development of the Big Ideas for the Vibrant Together project.

- The Big Ideas
- Next Steps

**3.1 Behind the Big Ideas.** The following “Big Ideas” represent a community vision for the future of downtown. These goals will be expanded upon in the following sections.

**VIBRANCY:** Downtown is the “The heart of it all” as a 18 hour/7 days a week center of activity for all ages and income levels.

**DOWNTOWN LIVING:** Downtown offers a diversity of quality housing choices for all price points to bring more people to live, work and play downtown.

**IDENTITY:** Downtown is recognized as the hub of regional culture for the western slope.

**CONNECTIVITY:** Downtown is connected to local destinations and outdoor amenities through safe pathways for bikes and pedestrians.

**SAFETY AND COMFORT:** Downtown is safe and comfortable environment that is welcoming to all.



# IDENTITY

**DOWNTOWN IS RECOGNIZED AS THE HUB OF REGIONAL CULTURE FOR THE WESTERN SLOPE.**

Main street is 'the heart of it all'. Main Street is a source of pride for Grand Junction. It is the identity of downtown and should be supported and expanded on as it represents the heart of the community as the place of culture and history of life in Grand Junction. Yet there are also challenges on Main Street. Support is needed from the greater downtown area to create not just a great street, but a vibrant cultural district. Main Street needs a critical mass of people, living, working, visiting and recreating downtown to support this vibrancy and emphasize downtown as a hub of local and regional culture.

The DDA can invest in to help support business vitality, strengthening the existing local business environment which can help to attract new business. The DDA is the main promoter and marketing house for the over 400 businesses, restaurants, and services within the district. They assist in developing advertising, marketing, and public relations campaigns that reach regional, statewide, and national audiences and help to brand Downtown as a regional hub for the Western Slope. The efforts reach across many mediums, including social media, print media, digital advertising, and through story telling on Downtown's website.

- Promotion: Downtown works to not only market each signature event that the organization produces but also has the task to promote downtown as a whole. Included in that is the promotion of restaurants, lodging, art and culture, experiential businesses, shopping, and accessibility to Downtown.
- The Annual 'Downtown Guide Book': Produced by the DDA/BID and is a nearly 100 page book that lists all businesses within Downtown for visitors and locals to enjoy. Included in this book is a dining guide, list of all Downtown events, and facts about certain buildings and art pieces Downtown, such as the Avalon and other staples in the district. The guide book is produced in partnership with The Daily Sentinel each year. Each businesses within the district is included in this piece at no cost. In 2019, Downtown is releasing an online edition of the guidebook, providing easier accessibility and reducing waste.
- The Downtown Web Site: [downtowngj.org](http://downtowngj.org) is an informational site for tourists and residents about



## WHAT MAKES GRAND JUNCTION SPECIAL?

and you told us...

1. Arts and Creativity
2. local bike scene
3. Agriculture and Wine Culture
4. Recreation Economy and Natural Resources



Figure 7 The Buffalo on Main Street has been branded as a part of the creative District identity. An opportunity for 'Selfies with Art' along Main Street and a Hash-tag cam-

Figure 8 Arts and Poems are incorporated along the street in Tuscon.

events and happenings, it's also a place that each business within the district has the opportunity to create a listing and manage it. This listing provides website visitors an online directory of each business downtown and shows their address, phone number, hours, and any photos that the business provides. This is also a free service for any business.

**The arts are important.** When people describe downtown Grand Junction, art is often one of the first words they use. When asked what the community would like to make the downtown better, 8% of respondents to the community survey suggested a desire to see more public art. The arts are embedded in downtown throughout a large presence of murals, art galleries, public pianos, First Friday art walks, Mesa County Libraries / 970West Studio, the Annual Art Festival and performances at the renovated Avalon Theater creating a cultural vibe of creativity. Central to this vibe is the Art on the Corner Program (AOTC) which exhibits of over 100 unique artworks displayed in Downtown Grand Junction.

Downtown Grand Junction's long heritage of arts and culture is one of the reasons they were designated as a certified Creative District by Colorado Creative Industries. This designation makes the district eligible for financial support, funding opportunities and leadership opportunities. The tagline of the Creative District is "Creative from the start" which incorporates longstanding cultural amenities like Art on the Corner and more recent creative projects like Street Beats. The Creative District provides an opportunity for Downtown Grand Junction to further its image as the arts and cultural hub of the Grand Valley while paying homage to the past and encouraging continuing creativity in Downtown by recognizing the significance of arts and culture to Downtown's economy. Additionally, with the naming of the Certified Creative District, Downtown will play the key role in promoting all aspects of the Creative Districts, and continue to inform and educate the community on local art and the prominence that Downtown has in local culture.

Focus groups suggested an opportunity for expanding the arts program beyond downtown to connect the identity of downtown to the river so that art can be used as 'the identity' of downtown. There is an opportunity to engage the local creative community and open the doors to more regional and international artists. Potential arts projects could range from small projects like murals, an artist competition for branding and wayfinding in downtown, or larger experiential art and sculpture, perhaps integrated into play equipment or iconic art for 'selfies'.

**Capitalize on regional assets.** Mesa County is rich with outdoor recreation and local agriculture. Downtown Grand Junction has the opportunity to become a "hub" for showcasing these assets and providing central access to them. The ease of access to the outdoors from downtown is a huge asset that can be improved upon. The confluence of the Colorado River, the local Lunch Loop trails, views of the Book Cliffs, Colorado National Monument and the Grand Mesa are natural resources just out the backdoor of downtown. These assets are attracting a new generation of residents to Grand Junction who want to take a



Figure 10 “Walk Your City” is a campaign to signage to important destinations to encourage people to get around by walking and biking,.



Figure 9 A wine bar in Napa connects the regional wine culture to downtown.

mountain bike ride on their lunch break and float the river on the weekends. Creating better connections to and from the river and popular trails by improving walking and biking routes is a key opportunity. Providing bike (or scooter) rentals throughout the greater downtown area can also make these opportunities accessible to tourists.

There is also an opportunity to bring the local agriculture into downtown beyond farmers market events. Mesa County is famous for peaches and vineyards, restaurants that highlight farm to fork or tasting rooms from local vineyards connect downtown as the hub of regional culture. In 2019, downtown received the first wine tasting room from Palisade.

**Make it easy to get into and around.** Downtown Grand Junction is about 5 miles off the Interstate corridor. This has its benefits as large ‘big box’ retail is often located with easy access to highways and not in downtown, where local, smaller-scale retail thrives. However, this can also create a challenge in capturing potential customers if people have difficulty finding their way downtown. The existing signage directing people from 1-70/Horizon Drive to downtown doesn’t visually catch the eye and is inconsistent, resulting in potential visitors of downtown getting lost or not going downtown at all. Pictures of ex downtown signage/ Picture of existing downtown maps.

Wayfinding within the downtown can also be improved, especially along the one-way streets where all signage is oriented to the cars. Small directional signage oriented to pedestrians and bikes with walking/ biking times or distances has a great value to encouraging people to walk to key destinations in the City. Picture of Walk Your City.

A quick win project, in partnership with the City, could incorporate a banners or new signage along of Horizon Drive. There are light poles along Horizon Drive and 7th Street that are unused, presenting an opportunity to create a banner program that would highlight downtown events or businesses. This would support the local businesses as well as create a visual pattern connecting to downtown. There is an opportunity to align this banner program with a painted crosswalk program or painted street signage in the same graphic family to reinforce the sense of identity and wayfinding.

A more comprehensive wayfinding study would offer a family of signage elements, from gateways to kiosks, to directional signage, that could be implemented throughout the City. The DDA could lead an effort to coordinate with GJEP and the Visitors Bureau to create a branding and wayfinding study that creates a sense of arrival to Grand Junction supported by a consistent visual identity throughout the City and helps to orient people on where they are and which ways to go towards key destinations, specifically downtown and the Riverfront. Included within this should be a pedestrian and bike signage plan that outlines pedestrian and bike scaled signage within the downtown.



# VIBRANCY

**DOWNTOWN IS THE “THE HEART OF IT ALL” AS A 18 HOUR/7 DAYS A WEEK CENTER OF ACTIVITY FOR ALL AGES AND INCOME LEVELS.**

**78%**

of survey respondents go downtown **1X OR MORE PER WEEK**



**87% For Dining**



**61% For Shopping**



**48% For Work**

**28%**

of comments would like to see **MORE DINING AND SHOPPING DOWNTOWN.**

**12%**

of comments suggest a need for **LONGER HOURS FOR BUSINESSES**

**Bring more people downtown.** People are more motivated to shop when it is a cultural experience. Until recently, retailers competed largely on quality, price and product availability, but now personalized touches and a high-quality experience plays an essential part in retail success. 78% of people surveyed stated they primarily go downtown for dining and drinks, and 58% for shopping. Still, 28% of people would like to see more options in downtown for shopping, dining and nightlife. A vibrant streetscape, at all times of day, and a diversity of shops that appeal to differing shopping and dining demands is essential to creating this Main Street experience in downtown Grand Junction.

The DDA is a conduit for information for downtown businesses and their special Downtown Projects and Programs serves to provide educational opportunities for businesses to support a strong retail environment. For example, Downtown created and established a marketing ‘co-op’ program in 2017 to provide Downtown businesses with the opportunity of a partnership with the DDA to market to the community. The DDA worked with a bus bench advertising company to place ads of businesses that bought into the marketing co-op. In 2019, the DDA will expand to create a social media marketing co-op is to keep evolving and growing the program. Additionally, the Downtown Gift Card was created several years ago, and is a successful program, with over 100 businesses and restaurants signed up. This service is provided at no cost to any business that signs up and allows for more advertising for each business that is included.

**Events are a huge draw.** Events are a creative way to activate downtown with a lot of people and support the local businesses. The DDA currently produces and supports ten events that bring visitors and residents to downtown and is also the permitting agency for any event that occurs Downtown. Currently, Downtown sees about ten annual events, marches, or parades that occur through a third party, including Cinco de Mayo, The Women’s March, Veterans Day Parade, and many others.

In 2019, the Market on Main will expand by opening a beer garden and incorporating a Summer Concert Series. In addition, in collaboration



Figure 11 Based on feedback, the farmers market is the ‘main reason people go downtown’ and/or peoples ‘favorite thing downtown’.

with Colorado Mesa University, during ‘Mav Month’ to encourage more students to come downtown.

However, shutting down Main is often a challenge to these events and can have an impact to property and business owners. There is an opportunity to explore additional spaces along Main Street. There was feedback from the public for a community plaza or event stage off Main Street or along Colorado. In addition, Las Colonias could provide a venue for increased programming if the connections are in place to support a synergy between Main Street and the River.

Future efforts of the DDA should develop a strategy for event management to encourage more leadership from the local community and businesses to take on event organization and production. This would allow the DDA to better focus their resources focus on development in the downtown and business vitality. The would also create more sense of ownership from the community around the events, leading to more successful events overall. The DDA and BID will continue to support event marketing and promotion

**Expand business hours.** 12% of all comment from the online survey noted a significant challenge to vibrancy in downtown is the limited business hours in the evenings and on weekends. When businesses noted reasons for not being open longer hours many stated that staffing was a challenge and that the demand for weekend hours isn't there. Limited business hours are a challenge among many small businesses who are often run by just 1 or 2 people and have a hard time staying open when the sales don't justify extended hours. This can be a challenging cycle, when people don't think stores are open, they will choose to go somewhere else, further justifying stores not opening. Another challenge is some of the established businesses are not looking to expand- they are comfortable with their business as it is. There is an opportunity to engage and support the newer businesses. Pop up business, such as the holiday Pop-up shop, is an example of having stores to showcase or explore different ways to market their goods as well as provide an avenue for new businesses to integrate into the downtown.

20%

of comments would like to see **MORE EVENTS** including live music and festivals

**Events that The DDA produces are:**

- Downtown Restaurant Week (March)
- Four Peaks Downtown Music Festival / GJ Off-Road (May)
- Downtown Market on Main (June - September)
- 4th of July Parade (July)
- Downtown Car Show (September)
- Downtown Art Festival (October)
- Spooktacular (October)
- Downtown Tree Lighting (November)
- Parade of Lights (December)



Figure 13 Larimer square in Denver is a retail destination for being a great street experience.



Figure 12 Brown cycles features a coffee shop inside.

Downtown businesses should work together on a strategy for expanding business hours that can be beneficial to all, recognizing it will take time to build the evening and weekend customer base. Weekends offer the best opportunity for capturing the highest amount of sales. Businesses should explore expanding business weeknight hours, starting by being open late during downtown events or one night a week. In addition, businesses will need to explore ways to diversify the product base to attract a different evening and weekend clientele than weekday shoppers. Successful commitment to increased hours throughout all Main Street businesses will be the start of a positive cycle; better local shopping, more people thinking local, more sales captured, more repeat sales earned, more prosperity for business, more prosperity in the community.

**Capture a diverse set of shoppers.** Demographic and market studies demonstrated a significant amount of wealth outside the downtown area that could be attracted to spend more time, and money, in downtown. In addition, because Grand Junction is the economic center of the Western Slope, regional shoppers are an important clientele in the downtown. Local and regional demographics suggest that 20 to 30 year olds early in their careers, young and established families, as well as retirees frequent the downtown.

Downtown needs to adapt in order to support the diverse wants and needs of people of all ages and incomes. As a part of bringing a more diverse clientele downtown, an effort should be made to be more inviting to a broad customer base, including college students as a way of integrating campus life into downtown. The DDA can support local businesses as a partner. Programs bring education and partnerships to help support businesses be successful. An example would be connecting and helping create a system for businesses to co-share spaces to help support a customer base and shared business expenses. Some examples already exist downtown such as the bike/coffee shop and the beer brewing/florist shop.

**Activate streets and alleys.** Engaging streets interact with the buildings along it, creating a great pedestrian experience. This is accomplished through active uses such as shops, cafés, businesses or community facilities being located on the ground level of buildings with windows and doors facing the street. This also contributes to a sense of safety by creating more “eyes on the street.”

In addition to activated streets, Grand Junction has an interesting network of alleys and breezeways that have the potential to be unique spaces in the downtown and expand the experience beyond Main street. Alleys could be activated by encouraging art on the wall, backdoor entrances to shops, improved paving and enhancing the spaces between buildings to create a connection to Main Street.

**Funkify Colorado Avenue.** Public input suggested that Colorado Avenue is a ‘cool, funky street’ with a low key, authentic vibe in the downtown. Currently, Main Street expands from east to west, with limited north to south street activity. There is an opportunity to expand the Main Street experience to include Colorado Avenue by promoting infill development and retail expansion to the south of Main Street. Colorado already has some of the infrastructure of Main Street, including bulbouts, sidewalk improvements and parking. Additional bike parking, public open space and art along the street could encourage more people to experience Colorado.

Expanding activity beyond Main street creates more opportunities for unique types of development that will create a diverse experience and meet the needs of a wider clientele. Colorado is a great street for encouraging new businesses along Colorado or relocating existing businesses that are currently along Main Street with ground level retail storefronts dedicated to office space. This strategy could focus shops and dining along Main and encourage other types of active frontage, such as office and residential to expand along Colorado. This would also be a great location for pop up shops or an “ArtLine” project similar “40 West ArtLine” in Denver which is focused on an interactive walking and biking art experience.

**Create more outdoor public spaces.** Improvements outside of the shops help activate the street as well. Public input suggested a desire to see more outdoor seating to activate Main street in downtown. 17% of suggestions from the community for improving downtown focused on increasing pedestrian gathering spaces including more café seating, more kid friendly activities and more comfortable spaces to hang out. Increased greenspace in communities has been linked to improved health and wellness, increased public safety and increased property values.

There were a number of creative suggestions for improving public spaces in the downtown. There is an interest to identify a location for a town square

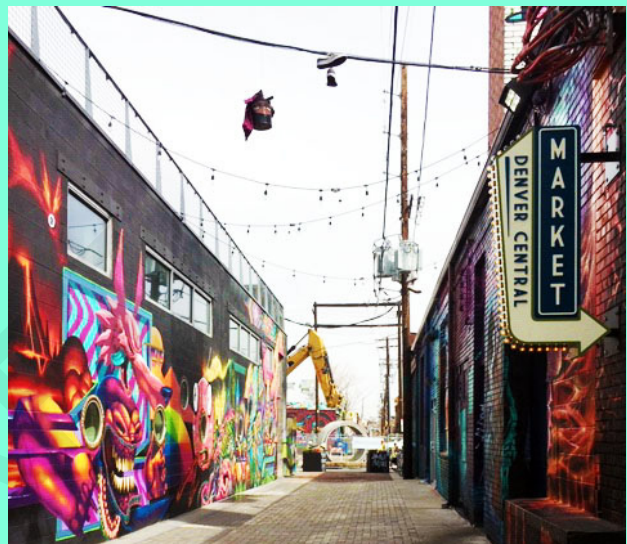
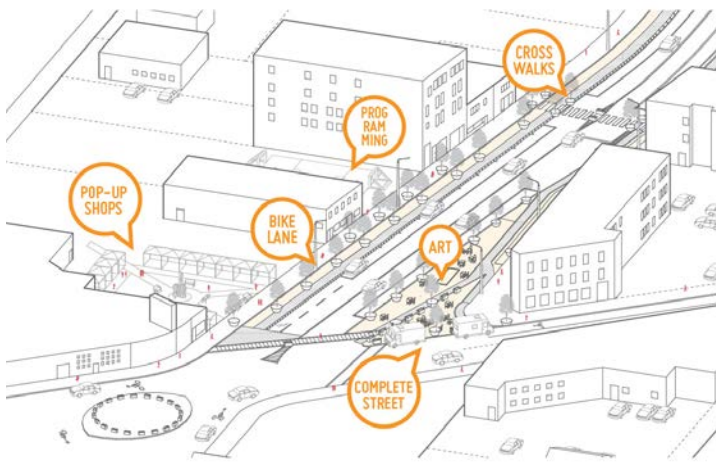


Figure 15 Murals on the Walls in an active alley in River North, Denver Arts District.



Figure 14 The ArtLine



or central plaza. A central gathering space could have a stage that can be used for music events and community gatherings, a playground for kids activities and/or to locate a Christmas tree at the holidays. There is an opportunity for improving downtown with beautification such as more planters, landscape and shade trees along sidewalks with more benches and places to sit to make walking more comfortable. There were also a number of suggestions about more pedestrian access to river and more park spaces along river with benches and picnic tables.

One suggestion that came up frequently in the community survey was to close off Main Street as a pedestrian mall. While the suggestions point to Pearl Street in Boulder and 16th Street Mall in Denver, these examples tend to be the exception, not the rule. When a street is closed to cars vacancy rates along the mall increase, and retail mix deteriorates. The retail tends to shift from destination goods to convenience stores and the mall can become an uncomfortable and threatening environment. Some reports suggest as many as 85% of pedestrian malls are reintroducing cars because of these issues.

The better block project educates, equips, and empowers communities and their leaders to reshape and reactivate built environments to promote the growth of healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. Projects encourage safe, inclusive, and active spaces in the community.

2018 was the year of the first parklet downtown which was generally positively received. Further process could be explored to incorporate shade for the hot summers, more landscape and encourage a more community-based process for how local residents and business owners can incorporate this type of public space along the street.

**Increase food access downtown.** In December of 2018, the City Market at First Street and Rood Ave. was closed. A significant amount of input was received from the community about a need for a grocery store in the downtown. Many people stated there is a shortage of conveniences downtown and City Market was the only option for a 'quick lunch' or for 'a quick run to the store' for people working downtown. From a market perspective, in order to support a larger grocery store, more people are needed living, working and shopping in downtown.

Alternative locations for an urban grocery store, such as or the Amazon Whole Foods model, or smaller scale community market, such as the Denver-based Marczyks, could be explored that may capture more customers or require a smaller customer base to succeed. Currently, a small upscale convenience 'grab and go' store expressed interest as potential addition to the downtown.

Sites along 7th street or along Colorado would provide better access to people living and working downtown and to capture future market potential from Las Colonias. As more people live downtown the demand for a food access will increase and further support the need for either a grocery or smaller local market. Another strategy could be an emerging trend for food halls, which grew by 37% in 2016, and could provide mid-range quick food options and activate a larger ground floor industrial building in the Rail District that can bridge the downtown and river districts.



# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

DOWNTOWN OFFERS A DIVERSITY OF QUALITY HOUSING CHOICES FOR ALL PRICE POINTS TO BRING MORE PEOPLE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY DOWNTOWN.

**Build out other areas of downtown.** While Main Street is how most people identify downtown, most people in the community do not think of the Rail and River Districts as part of downtown. The community expressed a need to create more of a sense of place in the Rail District and connect to the up-and-coming River district. Since Main Street is already a very successful part of downtown, there is an opportunity to focus future development infill opportunities in the Rail and River District. The River District has captured recent momentum for redevelopment at Las Colonias Park, the Sugar Beet Building and along the riverfront. However, existing industrial uses, manufacturing and active rail yards in the Rail District creates a barrier between the river and the Central Business District.

The Rail district is an important bridge to connect the River and Downtown. Redevelopment should focus on the core downtown and along the Riverfront. Over time, market demand will begin filling in the space between. Infill development in this area will be incremental and will need to be compatible with existing uses. There is an opportunity to explore experiential development concepts such as co-working spaces, maker districts and food halls in the Rail District as a strategy to activate the area. The existing large footprint buildings present opportunities for shared uses such as artist spaces, local food markets, woodworking shops, bakeries, brewpubs, and co-working spaces.

**New development should be incremental.** Incremental development is a planning concept that growth doesn't happen all at once, but incrementally over time. The strategy focuses on small sites with projects that are of the scale and context of the existing neighborhood. A small business can become a developer by owning their own building and adding housing above or by transforming a garage to additional units (ADU) or even building a new structure within an underutilized part of the property. A landowner of a vacant property can transform the space by introducing food trucks and around a small green space to activate the land and make it revenue producing. With success over time, there may be an opportunity to transform a mobile food truck to a brick and mortar restaurant. This model of development works

**27%**

of survey respondents not currently living downtown would like to.

Reasons for not living downtown include...

- Quality of Homes
- Cost of Homes
- Limited Inventory
- Need more space



**Median Home Price  
In Mesa County: \$225,000**



**71%** of residents own their home in Mesa County  
**29%** of residents rent their home in Mesa County



Figure 16 Incremental development and infill is tangible for small, local urban developers—and even a tiny development can build value and contribute to community.

particularly well in working with neighborhoods, such as the Rail District, with existing infrastructure close to the downtown, to make the neighborhood more livable for more people.

**People are interested in more active uses downtown.** Infill development focuses on the reuse and repositioning of underutilized buildings and sites within an existing urban setting. A key benefit of infill is that because it takes place in existing neighborhoods, it reduces the need for expensive new public infrastructure while infusing new activity into the area. Infill development in the downtown would capture the growing demands of millennials and empty nesters for walkable urban living. Another benefit of infill development is that it can result in a critical mass of people living downtown that sustains and positively impacts local businesses while contributing to the overall vibrancy of the community.

Public input demonstrated a community interest in seeing infill development along 7th Street and throughout the Rail District to activate this part of town, make it more comfortable and create a vibrant connection to the river. One community member described this as a ‘mixed, new urban area’. Multiple comments suggested looking at the River North District (RiNo) in Denver as an example with working artists studios, small scale breweries, eateries as well as greenspaces. Another area of downtown where comments suggested a need for increased development and activation is the area around the Train Depot and Whitman Park. There was also significant amount of input about transforming the old City Market site on 1st avenue back to a grocery store or to provide an infill housing development.



Figure 17 Incremental Development Transect



Figure 18 All of the shops in a Maker District support the idea of “making the products being sold”

**People want to live downtown, but are lacking options.** Communities like Grand Junction with a strong mix of housing and commercial properties are well positioned to make gains from these previously mentioned demographic shifts. By almost all accounts, the residential market in downtown Grand Junction is robust, thriving and extremely tight. 35% of people surveyed who do not currently live downtown stated that they would like to. Reasons provided for not living downtown included that options for housing were limited, that the available housing was too expensive and the quality of the housing required significant renovation to make it desirable.

A way to meet this emerging market is through Missing Middle housing, which refers to a wide range of multiunit housing types, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), townhomes, bungalow and courtyard apartments, and live/work apartments. Missing Middle housing is typically no more than two or three stories high and is developed in existing neighborhoods where it is possible to walk to shops, restaurants, cafes, markets and even work.

Survey respondents and Public Meeting attendees expressed an interest in providing more residential units above retail throughout the downtown. Comments also suggested a need for more affordable, midrise housing throughout downtown including condominiums, apartments and townhomes. Missing Middle housing is an excellent strategy for creating more homes within historic neighborhoods that were originally developed as single-family, like the residential areas in Grand Junction’s downtown district, because they



Figure 19 Missing Middle Housing Transect



## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BUILDING DOWNTOWN?

and you told us...



#1 The Train Depot



#2 The Avalon



#3 Blue Moon

are designed to fit the existing character. One example is creating multiple smaller units from a large existing single-family house. This redevelopment strategy can result in the increase of the supply of affordable housing options for middle income households in the downtown core while not changing the rich historic character of the area.

As communities work towards increasing the supply of affordable housing in their communities, the first step is to evaluate the current zoning that is in place and to determine whether it is flexible and dynamic enough to allow for slightly increased number of units per acre. Within the City of Grand Junction, however, zoning codes are generally more flexible since residential uses are allowed in commercial zones; commercial uses are allowed in industrial zones; and, industrial uses are allowed in commercial zones. An analysis of residential zoning regulations within DDA boundaries should be conducted to determine the feasibility of accommodating a range of housing typologies under existing code. The extremely tight residential market that currently exists downtown coupled with additional unmet demand from millennials and empty nesters could be solved by slight modifications to the zoning code.

**Preserve historic character.** The architecture of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods is part of what gives downtown Grand Junction its unique, historic character. Future development should be context sensitive and match the existing character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Adaptive reuse is a strategy that preserves obsolete or vacant historical buildings while reusing the original structure for a new purpose. This provides powerful story-telling to future generations and visitors while protecting a distinct architectural identity that positively impacts the community. The recent reuse of the R-5 school building site that will be complimented by new townhomes is an example of how the DDA is committed to this strategy. The White Hall church site is another example, which includes a three-story education annex constructed in the 1950's and was identified in the 2015 Downtown Grand Junction Housing Study as a key opportunity for reuse. Historic preservation is often a challenge as construction costs are significantly higher. To encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings, the DDA and City can partner to help offset these costs by to reducing or defer fees and assisting with building procurement.

Public input from the Open House identified some historic buildings that characterize downtown. At the top of people's list is the Grand Junction Train Depot, which has been vacant since the 1980's. Other sites that were identified as having historic value to the community include the Sugar Beet Mill building, dating back to 1899 and Stranges Grocery, built in 1909. Stranges Grocery, a two-story sandstone building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.



# CONNECTIVITY

DOWNTOWN IS CONNECTED TO LOCAL DESTINATIONS AND OUTDOOR AMENITIES THROUGH SAFE PATHWAYS FOR BIKES AND PEDESTRIANS.

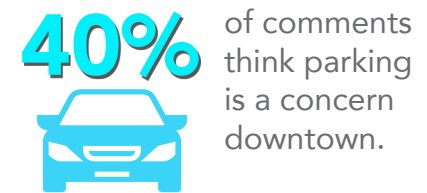
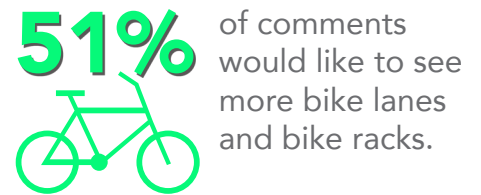
**Connect downtown to the river.** Connection from downtown to the river is an important theme that has emerged from public outreach. There are some significant physical constraints to overcome such as active railroads and railyards, existing industry and manufacturing and an incomplete street network that creates challenges for connecting downtown and the river.

Focus group meetings, previous studies and community input all suggest that 7th street is a key connection from downtown to the river for retail development. 9th Street is also an important connection and has been identified by focus groups as a more pedestrian and bike friendly street. The Greater Downtown Plan outlines improvements for these streets and encourages connecting the grid along 9th Street through the Rail District. Development and infill that creates an active street with comfortable places for walking and biking should be encouraged along these corridors.

One suggestion that arose from a focus group was to create a linear park for pedestrian and bikes along 8th Street connecting downtown to the river. 8th Street is currently disjointed, with the roadway starting and stopping along the north-south axis, so it does not serve as an important vehicle connection, yet the historical right of way remains. A green parkway could be developed incrementally and serve as a strategy for reconnecting the grid and serve as a corridor for connecting existing workers in the district to goods and services in downtown. This kind of bold project could be a catalyst for infill development in the area.

**The role of streets in downtown.** Streets in the downtown play an important role in getting people where they would like to go, whether it is a favorite restaurant or a downtown show. Downtowns should be comfortable and safe for pedestrians, bikes and cars.

In Grand Junction, 4th and 5th streets and Ute and Pitkin are one-way streets which make it easier and faster for cars to get through downtown. During the WALKshop, participants noted the increase



73% of people drive to downtown



20% of people walk downtown



7% of people bike downtown



Less than 1% take public transit

## SHARE THE ROAD

Bicyclists should be expected on all streets and roadways within Colorado except those where their use is prohibited.

Bike Colorado outlines the Bicycle Rules of the on the road as follows;

- Be courteous, share the road and obey all traffic laws, signs and signals.
- Ride on the shoulder (if one exists) or on the right side of the road
- You may ride two abreast when doing so does not impede the flow of traffic. Ride single file to allow vehicles to pass.
- When riding curving canyon roads without bike lanes or shoulders, play it safe and ride single file.
- Signal turns for 100 feet in advance, unless you need both hands to brake or control your bicycle.
- You may use either arm to signal a right turn. Either point to the right or raise your left arm in an "L" shape.
- At night, ride with a white front light and a red rear light or reflector.
- Yield to pedestrians.



Figure 20 Existing bike lane on 12th Street.



Figure 21 Bike racks and shared bike infrastructure.

noise and speed of cars made walking along the one-way streets less enjoyable and feel less safe than on the adjacent two-way streets. This is typical of one-way streets in downtowns which often operate below capacity and create swaths of empty pavement, create high speed, noisy roadway conditions that do not support a vibrant and walkable downtown district. Re-examining these roadways can be an opportunity to increase pedestrian and bike infrastructure as well as parking to reduce traffic speeds and increase the street as a public space in downtowns.

**Connect downtown to campus.** The University is an important driver of growth, providing a talent pool for employers and supporting the local economy. Students represent about 15% of population of the City of Grand Junction, and are an important part of the community. In addition, much of the faculty and staff live in close proximity to campus. This student population is an important influence in the downtown and has differing transportation needs than previous generations. Many prefer walking, biking and the use of public transportation over driving, making these types of connections between campus and downtown a high priority. There is an existing bike lane on 10th Street that dead-ends at campus. The Dash shuttle launched in March 2019, connecting campus and downtown.

Future projects should prioritize attracting students to downtown. Along 12th Street on campus is a separated bike lane frequently used by students. Expanding this along 12th Street to downtown and connecting to an east-west route along Main or Colorado is a key opportunity. Further expanding the bike and pedestrian connection with a bridge over the railroad to D Street presents a great opportunity of connecting the campus to the river.

**Provide better bike infrastructure.** During the past two decades, cycling has increased in the United States with the number of bike commuters rising by 64% from 1990 to 2009. Studies show, people are more likely to bike as their level of comfort increases. These comfort factors include feeling safe while biking and understanding of the bike

## KEY STREET DESIGN ELEMENTS



**Streetscape Amenities:** Art and sculpture is a fun, beautiful way to introduce placemaking into the street, resulting in a pedestrian-friendly place.



**Lighting & Shade:** Street trees and benches along sidewalks provide shade and respite. Lights minimize dark and unseen spaces to increase comfort.



**Active "Window Shopping" Zone** First floor activity will increase visual interest and promote walkability. Active and interesting sidewalks encourage walking and help keep pedestrians safe.



**Signage:** Maps oriented to pedestrians and bicyclists that highlight time to reach key destinations help people feel at ease about walking and biking.

routes. 51% of survey responses suggested a need for better bike infrastructure including more lanes and bike racks.

There is a great bike path system that connects through the valley that could be better communicated through signage. However, existing bike infrastructure in downtown struggles with disconnected paths that end abruptly. Specific areas that struggle is 1st street, connections across the railroad to access the River Trail system and connections across Grand and North Avenues. Other challenges noted were that biking at night was difficult due to the lack of street lighting along designated bike routes. With the focus on bringing the outdoor recreation industry into downtown, a connected bike system, with separated bike lanes when possible, and multiple points of connection from downtown to the River Trail is needed. From the River Trail, cyclists can connect to a greater trails system including the Lunch Loop trails and Palisade. The Urban Trails Committee is working on a comprehensive bike plan with signage for the City and should be a partner in developing a connected system. The DDA could help fund a study to coordinate Urban Trails and City engineering projects and incorporate messaging, tie to identity, wayfinding, branding and promotions.

**Improve pedestrian infrastructure.** Dated street design can have a negative impact on how people experience a place. Some areas of downtown, such as Main Street, have a very comfortable walking environment. However, off Main Street, and especially in the area around Whitman Park,

Why Doesn't the Street Feel Safe?	Design Elements That Can Help
There is no buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-street parking</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Street trees</li> </ul>
The condition of the sidewalk is not meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADA ramps</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> </ul>
Pedestrians cannot comfortably cross the street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curb extensions</li> <li>• Pedestrian refuge islands</li> <li>• Crosswalks</li> <li>• Mid-block crossings</li> <li>• Traffic signals</li> </ul>
Bicyclists are riding on the sidewalk instead of the street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bicycle lanes</li> <li>• Separated bicycle lanes (cycle tracks)</li> </ul>

Figure 22 Safety—both real and perceived—is critical to a successful downtown street. People will not walk or bike on a street that feels unsafe, even if there hasn't been a history of pedestrian or cyclist crashes there.



**Bump Outs/Curb Extensions:** Curb extensions make pedestrian more visible at intersections by reducing crossing distances and improving both pedestrian and motorist sight lines.



**Mid-Block Crossings:** In the appropriate locations, mid-block crossings provide safe, visible locations for pedestrians to cross the street away from intersections.



**Crosswalks:** Marked crosswalks direct legal pedestrian movements to desirable and safe crossing points to reinforce pedestrian right-of-way at intersections and enhance safety and visibility.



**Refuge Islands :** Refuge islands provide a protected area for pedestrians in the middle of the street to help people cross four or more lanes of traffic.

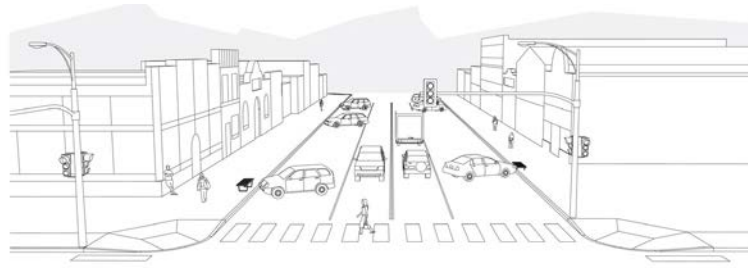


Figure 23 Dated street design can have a negative impact on how people experience a place. Design elements, such as curb extensions, ramps, street trees, furnishings, signage and bike lanes make a street safe and comfortable for all users.

there is a need for safety improvements such as better lighting, improved crosswalks and better quality sidewalks. Some people noted attached sidewalks increasing the sense of exposure to vehicles traveling at high speeds, the orientation of the pedestrian crosswalks, debris such as gravel and garbage on the sidewalks and limited visibility from alleys contributing to a feeling of discomfort walking downtown.

More active streets encourage walking by creating a more comfortable experience. Design elements, such as curb extensions, ramps, street trees, furnishings, art and signage make a street safe and comfortable for all users. Lighting and activity on the street is important for feeling safe in the downtown. Specific intersections for potential improvement include Colorado and 3rd Street, 5th and Main, 4th and Main, all the intersections along Grand Avenue and the roundabouts. Some short term, low cost strategies could be explored as pilot projects at specific locations to encourage more walkable spaces such as painted crosswalks, parklets or temporary moveable planters.

**More options for public transit.** Survey data indicates that most people drive downtown, then park and walk around Main Street. Census data and survey data support that less than 1% use public transit. Routes don't run frequently enough to be reliable and the system does not expand far enough to be useful to commuters. There are no park and ride locations. As of March, 2019, the DDA in partnership with GJEP launched the The Dash, a free local shuttle that will connect downtown to CMU campus and the riverfront. This may potentially influence the dynamic of transit in the downtown and connecting to campus and the river. If this pilot project is successful there are opportunities to expand the service and increase the availability of times available.

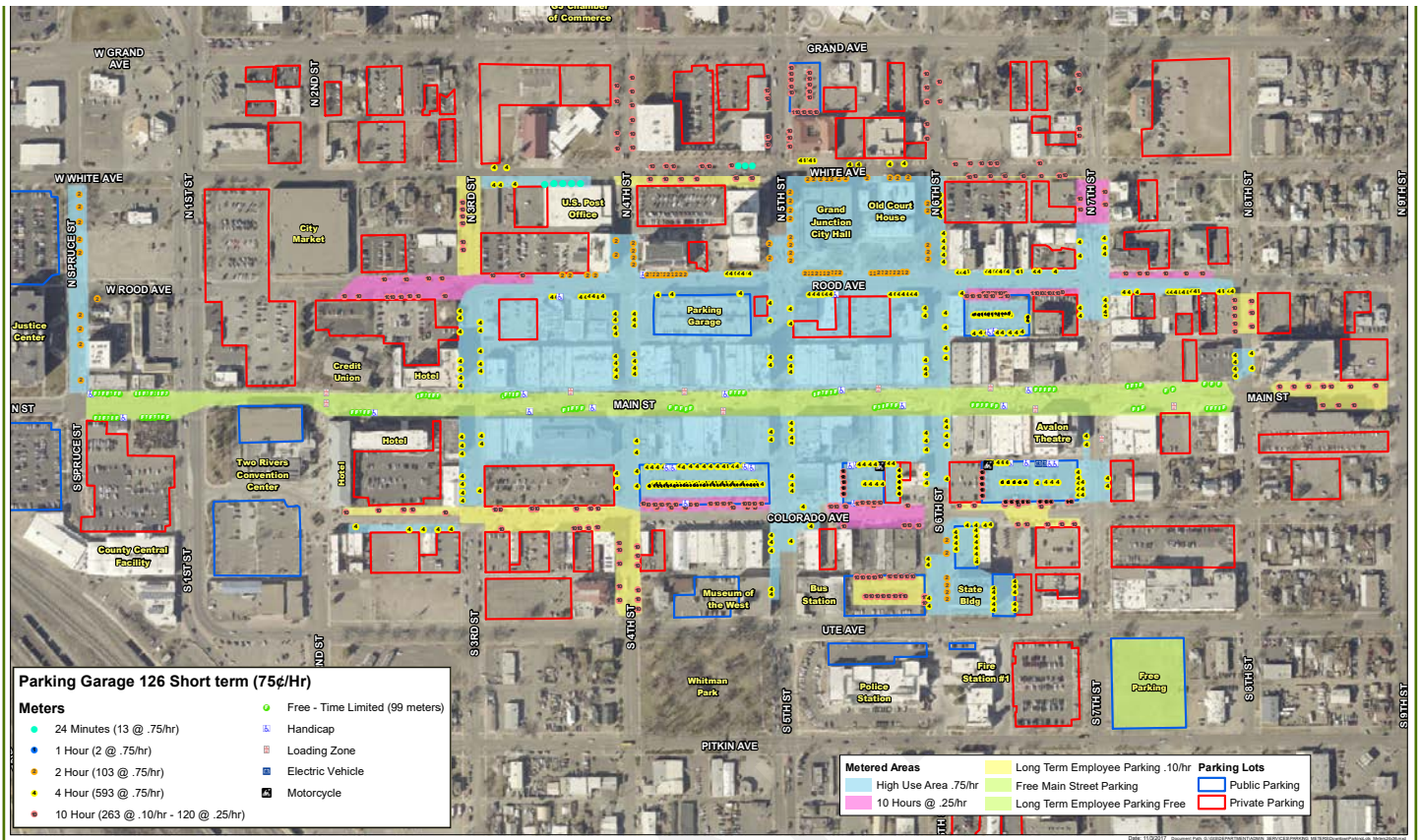


Figure 24 Downtown Parking Map

**The perception of parking.** Downtowns need the right amount of parking, in the right places, to thrive. Too much parking takes up valuable space that could be generating revenue for downtown and instead creating voids that discourage the activated streets needed for a vibrant downtown. Insufficient parking can create traffic congestion and create challenges for accessing local businesses. Downtown currently has a supply of garage parking, on street and public parking. Much of the input received revolved around a community desire for free parking downtown and more parking downtown. Another challenge noted by local businesses was the need for employee parking. Since public transit does not support a commuter culture, most employees drive but don't have a place they can park for eight hours a day. Improvements to transit and bike infrastructure could incentivize alternative modes of transit and off-set some of the parking demand.

Some strategies such as a parking audit, shared parking strategies and improving signage to existing public parking lots could help to improve the perception that there is not enough parking downtown. Advances in parking technology could also be explored. For example, Grand Junction does have an existing app for parking downtown that could be expanded to show where parking is available to simplify the parking and save visitors time and money.



# SAFETY & COMFORT

DOWNTOWN IS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT THAT IS WELCOMING TO ALL.

## KEY TERMS:

**“Eyes on the Street”**  
People feel safe when there are “eyes on the street.” This means that people are present to see the activity that is going on there. This can be encouraged by creating streets where people feel comfortable spending time. Buildings also promote “eyes on the street” when they are oriented to the street (not separated by parking or expansive landscaping) and have plenty of windows.

**“Broken Windows Theory”**  
suggests that one ‘broken window’ or nuisance, if allowed to exist, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties could solicit criminal activity.

**Sense of comfort in the downtown.** The top concern in the downtown raised from public comments is on the issue of homelessness and issues that surround homelessness such as panhandling, access to restrooms, and the perception of safety. Visitor surveys noted a concern for homelessness in the downtown. Local businesses struggle with restroom access and people sleeping on the thresholds which has a negative impact to their businesses. One of the reasons why people choose not to live downtown is because of homelessness and sense of safety. This is an important issue and is having a big impact on downtown. However, homelessness is a national concern, and this process needs to be realistic that it cannot solve issues of mental health, housing costs and loss of support networks that are some of the reasons that impact homelessness on a national scale. In addition, this is a sensitive issue and should be met with compassion for a segment of the Grand Junction community that is struggling.

There are a number of strategies that can increase the perception of safety and minimize negative behaviors in the downtown. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CEPTD) is based on the premise that the design of our environment directly affects our behavior. It influences both the opportunities for crime to take place and our fear of crime. This has an important impact on quality of life. Many of these strategies revolve around increasing activity on the street to create a culture of co-existence with the homeless community. The more people that are around the safer people feel about their environment.

In 2018, the Grand Junction Police Department applied for a grant to improve the alley between the parking and Main Street that was notorious for loitering and criminal activity. Since the redesign, which eliminated benches, increased lighting and heightened visibility, the GJPD has seen a significant decrease in criminal activity in this area. Similar strategies could be explored in other problem areas, specifically Whitman Park and the alley connection to Main Street adjacent to the Avalon.

# CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is based on the premise that the design of our environment directly affects our behavior. It influences both the opportunities for crime to take place and our fear of crime. This has an important impact on the quality of life.

## STRATEGY #1: NATURAL SURVEILLANCE



Lighting



Increase visibility and activity in hard to see spaces

## STRATEGY #2: SENSE OF OWNERSHIP



Maintenance: "Broken Windows Theory"



Maintained landscape & signage

## STRATEGY #3: ACTIVITY



Street Activity "Eyes on the Street"



## STRATEGY #4: ACCESS CONTROL



Large windows promote casual supervision of the sidewalk.  
Porches and sidewalk encourage interaction between neighbors.  
Paving and architectural treatments define public and private zones.

Small-scale on street lighting.

Low landscape and fences define property lines without creating hiding spaces.

There are currently two full time safety enforcement officials in the downtown that perform enforcement as well as connect people in crisis to services. According to local service providers, there are approximately 700 homeless people in downtown, most of whom are local residents of Grand Junction. Concentrating services is an important part of successfully bridging care for getting people into safe housing situations.

### Enforcement to engagement.

Some ideas expressed in focus groups suggest shifting from in the downtown through volunteering and outreach to break down barriers and stigma around being homeless. In the past, there was a program for a downtown ambassador, which included volunteers to point people in the right direction that could be reinstated. Potential projects should include options to provide a safe access to bathrooms and places to store personal items are essential for the dignity of homeless individuals and helps to alleviate problem behaviors on Main Street.

While these strategies may alleviate some of the issues, the most cost-effective way to reduce needs for services and increase safety for all in the downtown is to provide housing. National legislature suggests communities adopt a Housing First approach that emphasize permanent housing, with the right level of services, as the goal for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

**3.2 WHATS NEXT?** These Big Ideas do not work in a silo but rather overlap and work together to support an overall vision of creating a more vibrant downtown Grand Junction. As such, the next steps will unite what has been learned from the market and community input and the potential strategies outlined above to develop ideas and actions to guide the Plan of Development. These Big Ideas guide the long range vision and the strategies for action provide on the ground change over 1,3,5 and 10-year horizons. Specific strategies that have developed that will be explored in greater detail are;

## VIBRANT TOGETHER DESIGN WORKSHOP

On April 30-May 2 there will be a 3-day design workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to refine strategies to achieve the goals of the Vibrant Together Plan of Development for creating a more vibrant downtown. The workshop will engage the Community Builders team, the project management team, local consultants, the Community Action Team and the DDA Board to explore ideas for downtown, discuss and refine the concepts developed based on feedback and to share outcomes at a final Public Open House.

Over the three days, the teams will explore strategies for downtown and discuss them with specific stakeholders through focus groups. Each morning will start with a strategy session to outline objectives for the day, and each evening will host a review and discussion of the ideas and strategies developed, either internally, with the DDA/CAT or with the Public. The work sessions are a place for developing ideas through an iterative process through of questioning and problem solving. The PMT, CAT and DDA are welcome to drop in to discuss ideas and projects that are being worked on. Through a collaborative cycling of ideas, the goal the outcome is a draft strategy for achieving the goals of the POD.

### 1. Connecting downtown to the river

- Bring more activation of uses into the Rail District.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for a complete, connected bike network from CMU, through downtown, to the River.
- Build safe, active and walkable pedestrian corridors with safe crossings, active street frontage and streetscape amenities.
- Incorporate art into wayfinding, trail corridors, open space to connect to the cultural history of Grand Junction including experiential and interactive art pieces that highlight recreation and agriculture.

### 2. Creating a safer, more active downtown

- Bring more, and different, people downtown to activate the streets at most times of day by increasing businesses vitality and increasing retail mix.
- Provide opportunities for food access in the downtown to support existing residents and office workers as well as for future residents who desire goods and services in walking distance.
- Create more of a vibe in downtown by expanding the energy beyond Main Street to activate the alleys and breezeways, Colorado Street and increasing the opportunity for public spaces to hang out in downtown.

### 3. Increasing housing and retail opportunities in the downtown

- Look at opportunity sites and project feasibility for missing middle and incremental development opportunities throughout downtown.
- Explore infill opportunities that create a synergy between the arts and culture of downtown, existing manufacturing in the Rail District, and outdoor recreation amenities of the River District.
- Preserve the historical character of Grand Junction through adaptive reuse of historical buildings and integrating contextual architectural elements.

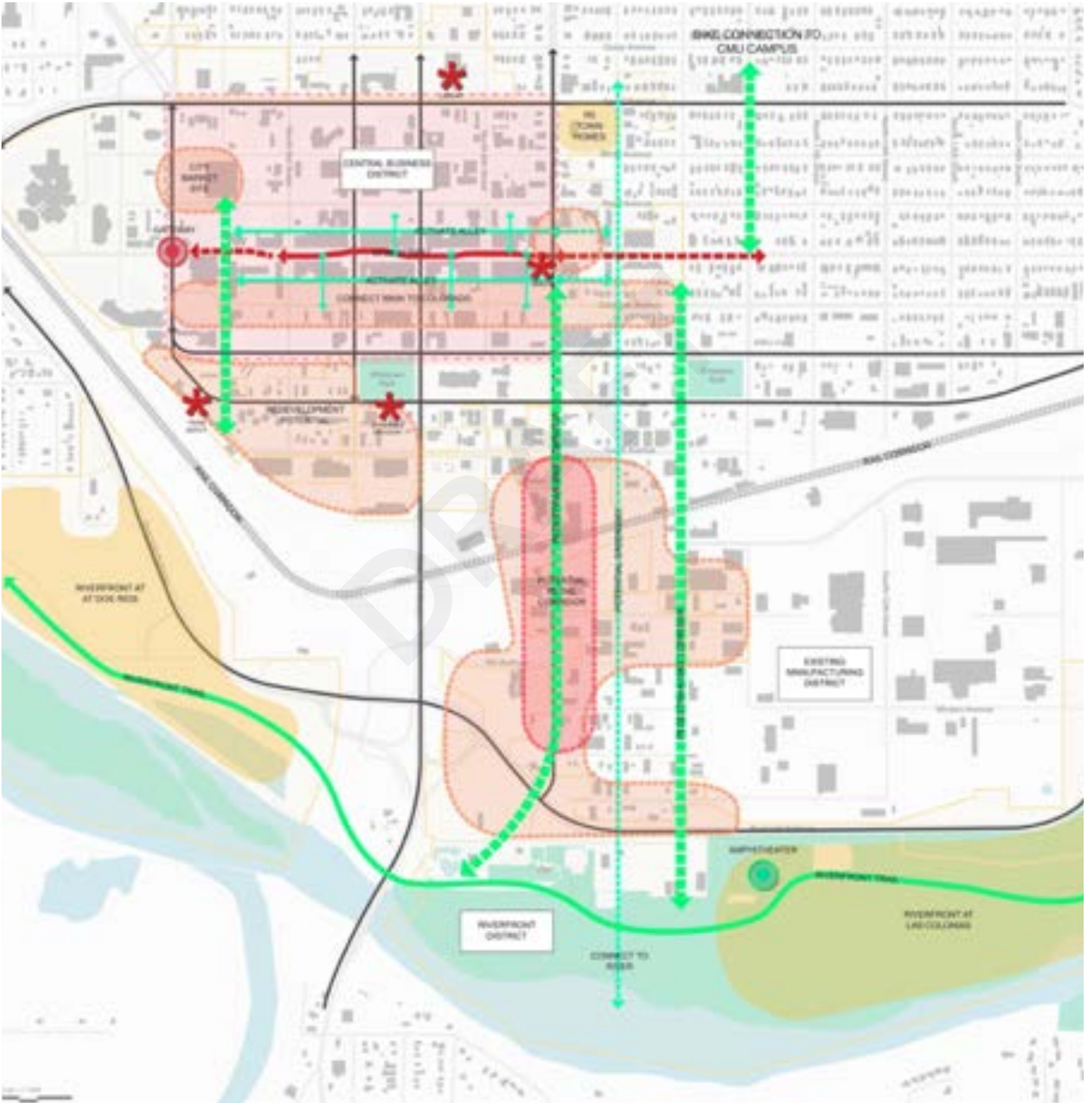


Figure 25 Opportunities Map



## 4 MARKET CONDITIONS

Understanding current trends and market shifts in the downtown assists in making informed decisions around planning and policy. While the future is always an unknown, markets can shift and change, a keen understanding is needed for how economic growth has affected development in the downtown and how current shifts in the market can inform future growth. This information was gathered utilizing ERSI data from the American Community Survey (ACS 2013-2017).

The following chapter will outline details to support market trends in downtown Grand Junction.

- Demographics
- The Residential Market
- The Retail Market
- The Office Market

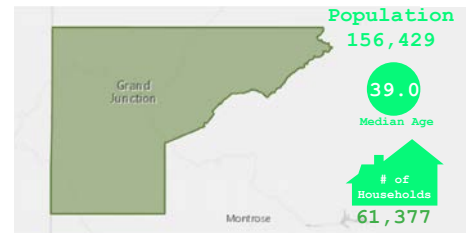
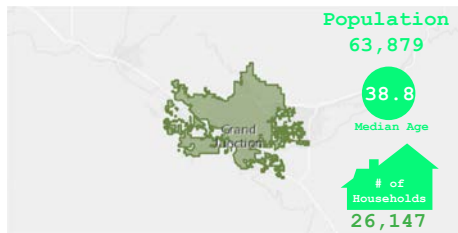
**4.1 WHO LIVES DOWNTOWN? DEMOGRAPHICS** Since 2000, Grand Junction’s population has steadily been growing younger both on a citywide and a downtown level (Figure 2.1). Census data shows that the average age downtown is 32.9 compared to 38.8 and 39 in the City and metropolitan area of Grand Junction. Two trends are at play here. The first, the trend of millennials, defined as young, early 30-somethings, who are choosing to live downtown either in apartments or in smaller homes rather than suburban, single-family homes. A second notable trend considers emptynesters, households who are 55-year and older who are seeking to downsize from their suburban single-family homes who are increasingly viewing downtown living as a convenient and stimulating alternative (Figure 26 and Figure 27).

Figure 26 Median Age from 2000 to 2017

	2000	2017	2000-2017 Difference
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	34.1 years	29.8 years	-4.3 years
Grand Junction City	38.8 years	35.9 years	-2.9 years
Grand Junction MSA	38.1 years	38.9 years	+0.8 years
Colorado	34.3 years	36.5 years	+2.2 years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

From 2000 to 2017, the median age of the city’s population decreased 2.9 years from 38.8 years to 35.9. In the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction, the median age has been decreasing even faster. From



## DOWNTOWN



### WHO ARE SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE DOWNTOWN?\*



- College Educated, Single, Early-30s
- Live in apartments or small homes
- Work in service industry, admin, office
- Enjoys live music, nightclubs
- Shops at Walmart and discount stores
- Owns a used car



- College Educated, Single, Late-30's
- Works in professional or service industry
- Volunteers, fundraises and recycles
- Enjoys a movie a home
- Views cars for transportation only



- College Educated, Single, Late-30's
- Works as a professional or in management
- Travels frequently
- Enjoys books, magazines and NPR
- Eats organic foods and values 'going green'

\*Top profiles according to ESRI Business Analyst

## THE CITY



### WHO ARE SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN THE CITY?\*



- College Educated, Single, Late-30's
- Works in professional or service industry
- Volunteers, fundraises and recycles
- Enjoys a movie a home
- Views cars for transportation only



- College Educated, Single, Early-30s
- Live in apartments or small homes
- Work in service industry, admin, office
- Enjoys live music, nightclubs
- Shops at Walmart and discount stores
- Owns a used car



- College Educated, Married, Dual-Income Middle Age
- Works as a professional or in management
- Active investors
- Drives a late model SUV or luxury car

\*Top profiles according to ESRI Business Analyst

## THE REGION



### WHO ARE SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN THE REGION?\*



- College Educated, Married, Mid-30's
- Works in professional or service industry
- Buys children's toys and clothes
- Enjoys hunting, fishing, bowling and baseball
- Drives an SUV or truck



- College Educated, Married, Dual-Income Middle Age
- Works as a professional or in management
- Active investors
- Drives a late model SUV or luxury car



- College Educated, Married, Dual-Income Middle Age
- Works as a professional or in management
- Are members of a veterans club or charitable organizations
- Do home improvement projects
- Drives a SUV or truck

\*Top profiles according to ESRI Business Analyst

2000 to 2017, the median age declined from 34.1 years to 29.8, a decrease of 4.3 years. On the contrary, the median age for the Grand Junction region, or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which includes all of Mesa County, increased slightly from 38.1 years in 2000 to 38.9 years in 2017, a gain of 0.8 years. From 2000 to 2017, the median age of Colorado increased by 2.2 years from 34.3 years to 36.5 years.

Figure 27 Figure 2.2 - Percentage of Empty Nesters from 2011 to 2017

	2000	2017	2000-2017 Difference
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	23.5%	20.2%	+1.8pp
Grand Junction City	26.5%	27.2%	+1.3pp
Grand Junction MSA	24.5%	27.5%	+3.7pp
Colorado	17.5%	22.4%	+3.3pp

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Despite a significant decrease in median age in the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction, the overall percentage of empty nesters, defined as residents aged 55 years or older, began to increase starting from 2011, despite a longer term decrease since 2000. The overall percentage of empty nesters in the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction grew from 20.2% in 2011 to 22.0% in 2017, an increase of 1.8 percentage points. This reflects a broader trend of an overall increase in the percentage of empty nesters throughout the city, region and state from 2000 to 2017.

In general, the people living in the downtown have less disposable income and a lower net worth than the City or metropolitan area of Grand Junction. Reasons for this could include the smaller population of downtown residents with a more concentrated population of students and the younger demographic profile that has not yet established significant savings. However, this suggests a need to bring people from the City and region into downtown in order to support local shops and restaurants.

Figure 28 Figure 2.3 – Median Disposable Income

	2018
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	\$33,422
Grand Junction City	\$43,686
Grand Junction MSA	\$47,757

Source: 2019 ESRI MarketPlace – Median disposable income in Mesa County and Grand Junction is 42.9% and 30.7% higher, respectively, than in the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction.

**4.2 WHAT IS HOUSING LIKE IN DOWNTOWN? THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET.** Housing within the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction has performed above the overall markets in both the city and Mesa County. Since 2011, vacancy rates for both rental and for-sale housing continue to decrease while home values and rental rates continue to increase at higher rates than both the city and the county (Figure 2.4 and 2.5).

RENTAL VACANCY RATES	2011	2017	2011-2017 Difference
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	4.8%	1.9%	-2.9pp
Grand Junction City	4.6%	2.1%	-2.5pp
Grand Junction MSA	3.3%	2.6%	-0.7pp
Colorado	7.1%	4.8%	-2.3pp

Rental Vacancy Rates. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2017, the vacancy rate for rental housing in the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction declined to 1.9%, a decrease of 2.9 percentage points from the 4.8% recorded in 2011. In 2017, the rental market vacancy rates for the city, county and state were 2.1%, 2.6% and 4.8%, respectively.

HOMEOWNER VACANCY RATES	2000	2017	2000-2017 Difference
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	1.2%	0.9%	-0.3pp
Grand Junction City	1.4%	1.6%	+0.2pp
Grand Junction MSA	1.3%	1.6%	+0.3pp
Colorado	2.6%	1.2%	-1.4pp

Homeowner Vacancy Rates. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The homeowner vacancy rate, defined as the proportion of the homeowner housing inventory which is vacant for sale, was similarly tight for downtown Grand Junction. In 2017, the vacancy rate for for-sale housing in the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction declined to 0.9%, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points from the 1.2% recorded in 2011.

In addition, the slower pace of construction of new home construction in downtown Grand Junction significantly contributed to an already tight housing market in downtown Grand Junction adding pressure to home value and rental rate increases.

NEW HOUSING UNITS PER YEAR	2011	2017	New Housing Units Per Year	2011-2017 Growth
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	10,444	10,595	25	1.4%
Grand Junction City	25,936	26,995	177	4.1%
Grand Junction MSA	61,696	65,251	547	5.3%
Colorado	2,197,823	2,319,737	20,319	5.5%

New Housing Units Per Year . Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

From 2011 to 2017, 151 new residential units were developed in the 81501-zip code in downtown Grand Junction yielding an average of 25 new residential units per year, or 1.4% increase over the six-year period. During the same period, the number of new housing units in the city, county and state increased by 4.1%, 5.3% and 5.5%, respectively.

This slow pace of construction in downtown Grand Junction has contributed to home and rent values increasing at a faster rate than the city and the county.

MEDIAN HOME VALUE	2011	2019	2011-2019 Difference
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	\$132,500	\$194,800	+47%
Grand Junction City	\$165,700	\$237,300	+43.3%
Grand Junction MSA	\$163,700	\$238,500	+46.0%

Figure 2.7 – Median Home Values Source: Zillow Home Value Index

From 2011 to 2019, the median home value in the 81501 zip code increased 47.0% to \$194,800, faster than the growth rates for the city and county, which were 43.2% and 46.0%, respectively.

MEDIAN RENT VALUES	2011	2019	2011-2019 Difference
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	\$1,060	\$1,154	+8.9%
Grand Junction City	\$1,268	\$1,323	+4.3%
Grand Junction MSA	\$1,265	\$1,317	+4.1%

Figure 2.8 – Median Rent Values. Source: Zillow Rent Index

From 2011 to 2019, the median rent in the 81501-zip code increased 8.9% to \$1,154 per month, faster than the growth rates for the city and county, which were 4.3% and 4.1%, respectively.

According to the code, Missing Middle housing types can have densities of up to 30 units per acre even though the buildings may be only two or three stories tall. Under Grand Junction’s current zoning code which only allows up to 24 units per acre in the R-24 zone, these types of units would not be allowed.

Housing in downtown Grand Junction has been and is expected to increase in popularity with smaller households comprised of millennials and empty nesters. In addition, a strong housing market in downtown Grand Junction is regarded as a critical element for economically strong and socially vibrant downtown commercial sectors.

**4.3 WHO SHOPS DOWNTOWN? THE RETAIL MARKET** The Grand Junction region is supported by a diverse economy. As Colorado's largest food producer for over 100 years it is famous for its peaches, pears, cherries and more recently vineyards. Much wealth was brought to the region in the later part of the century through shale extraction. In recent years, recreation and tourism have become major economic drivers with rafting, hiking, and biking access to the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers, Colorado National Monument and the Grand Mesa.

Downtown retailers on a national scale have changed in order to keep themselves relevant with the evolving market is the move towards a more experiential economy. In response to the shift towards online shopping, brick and mortar retailers have moved towards using their stores as a marketing gateway where interactive experiences generate increases in online purchases. Input received from the community demanded longer hours for businesses and a desire to see more diversity of shops and restaurants in the downtown.

In 2017, the supply of retail exceeded demand (see chart below) thus yielding a positive gap, or surplus, confirming Grand Junction’s position as a regional shopping hub at all levels (downtown, city and county) and that retailers attracted more shoppers that reside outside of the respective trade area. Subsectors within the retail industry that performed well on a citywide basis from 2008 to 2017 and who brought in increased amount of tax revenue included 1) restaurants and bar increasing 26.0%; 2) grocery, convenient and drug stores increasing 54.6%; and 3) liquor stores increasing 39.0%. Retailers in these subsectors performed well despite challenges from the increased use of online shopping. Miscellaneous retail, defined as stores with unique characteristics or specialized lines of merchandise, such as used-merchandise stores or ski equipment stores, fell flat increasing slightly at 0.1% from 2008 to 2017 while general merchandise retailers, defined as retail stores that sell a number of lines of goods and products, such as big box stores, fared the worst decreasing the contribution to city tax revenue by 8.2% from 2008 to 2017. This subsector of bricks and mortar retailer likely faced the stiffest challenge from online retailing.

RETAIL INDUSTRY SUMMARY	DEMAND	SUPPLY	GAP
Downtown Grand Junction – 81501	\$252 MILLION	\$684 MILLION	\$432 MILLION
Grand Junction City	\$876 MILLION	\$1.9 MILLION	\$1.1 MILLION
Grand Junction MSA	\$2.2 MILLION	\$2.6 MILLION	\$375 MILLION

Figure 29 2017 Retail Industry Summary. *Source: 2017 ESRI MarketPlace*

Surplus in any given area represents a condition where supply exceeds the area’s demand (2017 Methodology Statement: Esri Retail MarketPlace). An oversupply (supply exceeding demand) exists in downtown Grand Junction, and city and county levels. Therefore, retailers are attracting shoppers that reside outside the respective trade areas.

In recent years, Downtown Grand Junction has adapted its Main Street from a predominantly retail business environment to an entertainment district, with more of a mix of restaurants, bars and other entertainment venues. Events in the downtown such as the farmers market and live music on Main Street were stated through input received as the community’s favorite reasons to go downtown. These programs help to bring people into downtown and support local businesses.

**4.4 WHO WORKS DOWNTOWN? THE OFFICE MARKET.** Having office tenants downtown has a positive effect on increasing daytime population while contributing to business activities of nearby stores and restaurants. Similar to the retail market, demographic shifts and technological advances are also having an impact on the office market in Grand Junction, and once again, millennials are providing some of the driving force behind the changes that are happening. The rise of the creative industries, a broad range of economic activities from advertising and architecture to performing arts and publishing has attracted millennials in increasing numbers. Recognizing this trend, in 2018 downtown Grand Junction applied and became a certified Creative District. The convergence of technological advances and these demographic shifts has

factored into the emerging trend of workers and entrepreneurs choosing a flexible co-sharing work location over a traditional office space environment.

Another sector that the city has taken notice of is the outdoor recreation economic activities that is inherent to the region. To accommodate the growing demand from this sector, the much-anticipated launch in 2019 of the 15-acre business park within the Las Colonias development at the riverfront will offer outdoor recreation companies a new office submarket within the Greater Downtown.

Finally, while there might exist opportunities to attract new private sector employers to locate their businesses in downtown Grand Junction, these business models often require the use of taxpayer funded incentives for corporations which have the potential to generate backlash among residents, such as in the case of protesters derailing New York City's attempt to attract Amazon to set up a headquarter. In order to stimulate the economy, Grand Junction offers comprehensive business incubator service that trains entrepreneurs and emphasizes the creation of local jobs.

## SUMMARY OF MARKET TRENDS

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- Growth is expected to continue in the area, increasing by .8% over 5 years.
- 15 year Olds and 55 year olds are the highest groups moving to the area.
- The average age of people downtown is 32 (compared to 38 regional and US average)
- Incomes and net worth are lower in the downtown.
- A family in The City and Greater Grand Junction spends 2X more on mortgage and basics than in Downtown.

### MARKET TRENDS- Economic

- Smaller local stores have higher turnover.
- High demand for downtown rental housing. Low supply of existing SF housing.
- Challenge to keep office and retail affordable.
- There is a significant supply of most retail in downtown. Therefore, there is NOT significant amount of retail potential in downtown.

### MARKET TRENDS- Housing

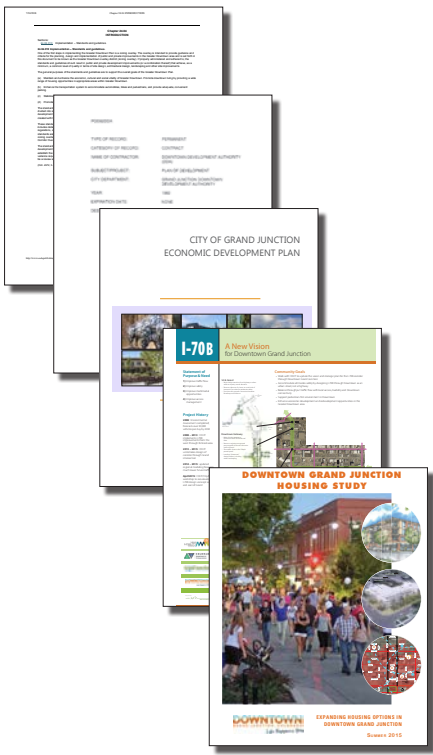
- The overall median home value in Grand Junction is estimated to be \$225,000.
- The the median home value downtown is \$208,000 and the median home value in The City is \$302,000 and Greater Grand Junction is \$309,000. (US average \$218,492)
- There is a demand for a Range of Housing Types and Costs Downtown for people of all incomes and ages..
- There is a market demand for Downtown Housing and Rental Housing. A healthy market has a 3 month supply, downtown Grand Junction has only a 1 month supply.
- Denser products lacks political/ neighborhood support but has market support

### MARKET TRENDS- Transportation

- Approximately 85% of workers commute into downtown.
- People who live downtown are 70% more likely to walk or bike.
- Less than 1% of people in downtown or Greater Grand Junction utilize public transit.



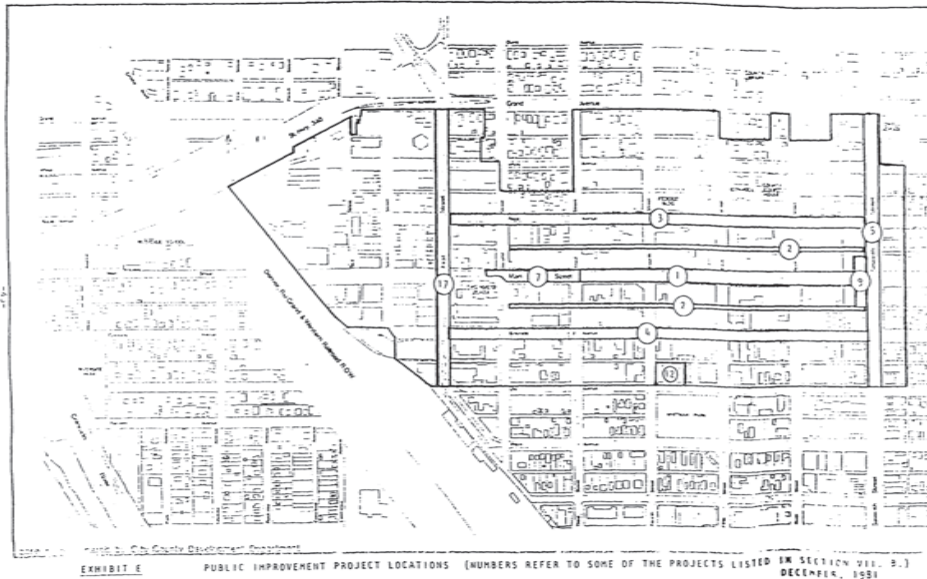
## 5 EXISTING PLANS AND PROJECTS



There are a number of existing plans that are of significant influence to Downtown Grand Junction, including the 1981 Plan of Development. It is important to consider how these existing plans will support and work in collaboration with this Plan of Development. Vibrant Together will work in alignment with the City's Plans such as the Great Downtown Plan and provide recommendations from this update should help to inform revisions to the Comprehensive Plan update currently underway with the City. A detailed description of these and other plans and impacts to the Plan update are outlined below.

The following chapter will outline the existing documents that will influence the Vibrant Together project including

- The 1981 Plan of Development
- The Greater Downtown Plan
- Grand Junction Economic Development Plan
- The I-70 B Corridor Study
- The Downtown Grand Junction Housing Study



**5.1 1981 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT ('1981 POD')** In 1962, a General Improvement District was created in response to a need for revitalization in downtown that focused on 'converting four blocks of Main Street into a Shopping Park'. In April of 1977 the DDA was established to 'promote growth and halt deterioration of existing structures and property values' in the Central Business District. The current Plan of Development was adopted with this goal in December 1981.

A primary concern of the 1981 POD was to halt the blight and deterioration of the downtown. Similar to today, there was a need to bring back life to downtown with office and residential but the City was challenged to attract new development and/or redevelopment. A major concern of the 1981 POD was the need for utility upgrades in the downtown, especially joint sewer and sanitary lines and other outdated or deteriorating infrastructure. Circulation challenges identified included improving poor alley conditions and backdoor access, one-way streets restricting access to parking. There was also a need for more hotels and lodging as well as higher density and better utilization of upper stories of buildings in order to support sales tax revenues.

Actions for implementation identified by the 1981 Plan of Development outlined both specific and short-term physical improvements to improve circulation and utilities within the downtown as a way of creating an environment for specific redevelopment activities. The plan noted a need to further explore special studies and plans for; Parking Management, Design Guidelines from Downtown, Landscape and Street Lighting Plan, Zoning and Development Control Reviews, Traffic Management, Retail Mix and Recruitment, Detailed Improvement Designs, Housing Rehabilitation. Circulation related improvements included the renovation of the existing Main Street Shopping Park to include landscape, street furnishings and lighting along a well as the extension of the shopping area to 2nd and Main. Alley and street Improvements included converting Rood and Colorado to two-way traffic with associated landscape improvements as well as improvements to 7th and 1st Streets to include landscape and improved intersections. A key consideration to supporting future development within the downtown was to identify locations to construct public parking facilities in the downtown. Site specific improvements included relocation of the regional bus terminal, site improvements to Whitman Park for increased safety and an expansion to the Museum of Colorado. Following these specific projects, the 1981 Plan of development outlined a strategy to acquire and assemble key Public Buildings and Redevelopment Sites. The following redevelopment areas were identified for redevelopment in the downtown.

- **Commercial Renovation District:** This area is focused on the restoration of the buildings along Main Street and the historical preservation of character through materials, color, signage and architectural style.
- **Commercial Center Redevelopment Area:** This area is focused on redevelopment of high intensity commercial along Rood and Colorado between Third and Seventh Streets.



Two Rivers Convention Center The \$7.3 million renovation project which is expected to begin in spring 2019 is expected to improve the functionality of the existing 23,000 square foot complex as well as to attend to much needed maintenance repairs. In addition, in order to improve the capacity of the convention center to attract new conference business, a new service corridor will be constructed to connect to a possible future downtown hotel. The DDA contributed \$3 million to this project while the city contributed \$3.3 million. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) contributed an additional \$1 million. According to forecasts, the direct 10-year impact of the project is estimated to be over \$120 million.



R-5 After the DDA purchased the former R-5 school building from Mesa County School District 51 for \$1.4 million they solicited a call for proposals to develop residential on the site. In 2017 REgeneration was chosen as the developer for the project. The DDA contributed the land to the developer in a phased approach in which it maintains control of the site until the homes are completed. The planned development will include 36 modern townhomes that fit the character of the surrounding neighborhood and contribute to the vibrancy of downtown. Currently, the school building is being utilized as a shared space among a variety of tenants, and in the future could be developed into either commercial or additional residential space. The developer broke ground in early 2019.

- **Mixed Use Redevelopment Area:** This area at the western end of Main Street focuses on a multi-block mixed use development with office and convention facilities at Two Rivers Plaza.
- **Primary Governmental and Professional Office Redevelopment Area:** The existing public buildings offer the opportunity to encourage new professional and office buildings with skyway connections between and showcase a high-rise element for skyline.
- **Secondary Governmental and Professional Office Area:** The area adjacent to the existing police, fire, sheriff office and jail could be other civic uses such as public safety, criminal justice and general government.
- **Medium to Low Density Redevelopment:** These areas should offer smaller scale uses and multi-family with on-site parking as a transition to single family neighborhoods.
- **Entrance Development District:** The area west of first street is suitable for large scale redevelopment projects such as food market, office or research park, housing or regional transportation center.

The 1981 Plan of Development is the existing framework for the future updates contained within this Plan. Significant improvements have taken place in the downtown over the last 40 years that include upgrades to utility and transportation infrastructure, the development of the Convention Center and increased lodging in the downtown as well as a thriving Main Street. While some areas, such as Whitman Park, still struggle, The DDA has been directly involved with a number of great successes over the past 40 years.

This combination of public and private investment is a model for continued success in Downtown Grand Junction. There have been numerous partnerships at the state level with the Colorado Creative Industries, Downtown Colorado Inc and other DDA's around Colorado. A number of small but impactful projects have also taken place like partnering with 32 Waves to provide Downtown WiFi, working with PNCI to design and build the first parklet in Grand Junction.

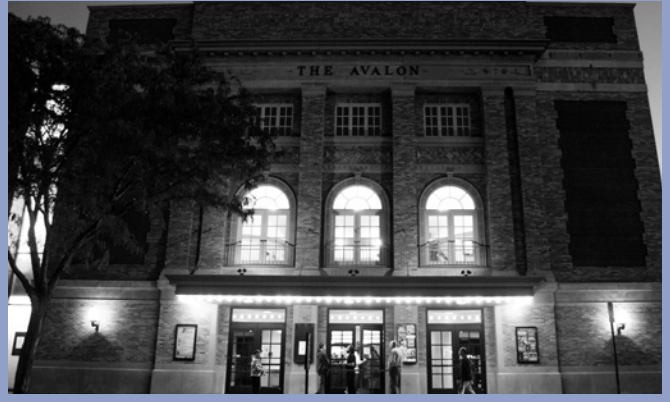
**Financing Opportunities.** One of the DDA's sources of income is a 5-mill levy on downtown properties within the district's boundaries. This provides income for DDA's operations fund, generating approximately \$300,000 annually. (One mill is one dollar per \$1,000 dollars of assessed value.) Another way which the DDA receives its funding from tax increment financing (TIF) within the boundaries of the downtown district. One of the primary goals of the DDA is the economic development of Downtown Grand Junction, including South Downtown. The TIF funds that the DDA receives are specifically intended to address the following areas:

- Serve as market catalyst that can reduce the risk of pioneering investments as well provide public infrastructure upgrades.
- Tax increment financing to fund capital improvement projects, economic development and other efforts that promote the downtown area.

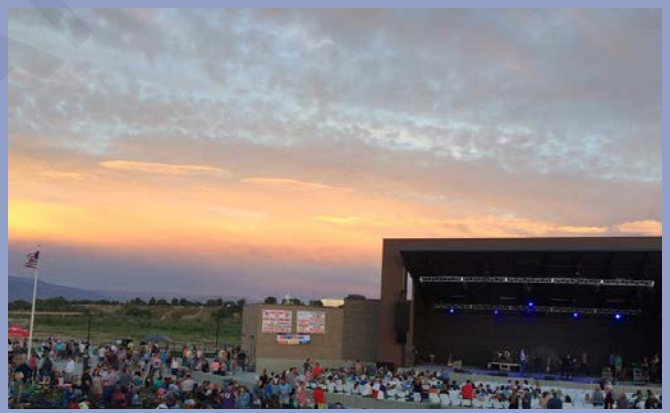
This is the most common form of TIF is bond financing, in which a local government issues bonds backed by a percentage of projected future (and higher) tax collections caused by increased property values or new business activity within the designated project area TIF expenditures are often debt financed in anticipation of future tax revenues. A 2011 ballot measure approved by voters enables the DDA to issue bonds for a total of up to \$65 million over 20 years to finance capital projects.

The DDA accounts for its sources of funding from a variety of different revenue streams.

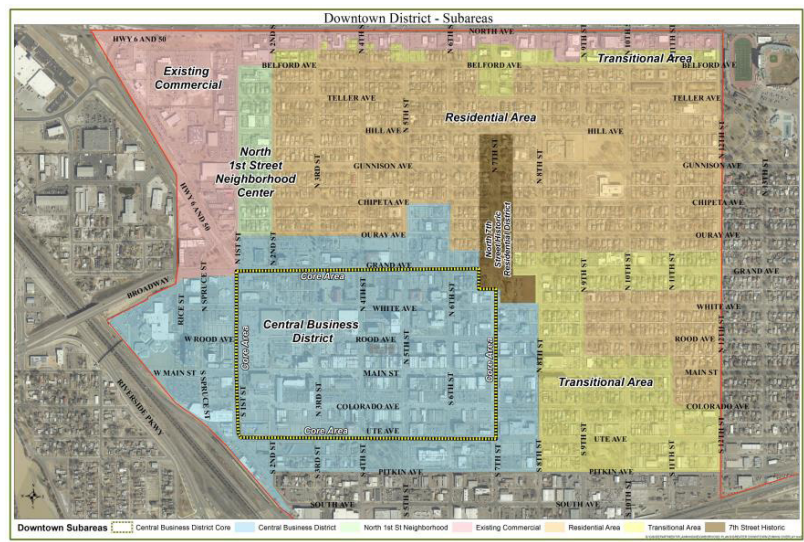
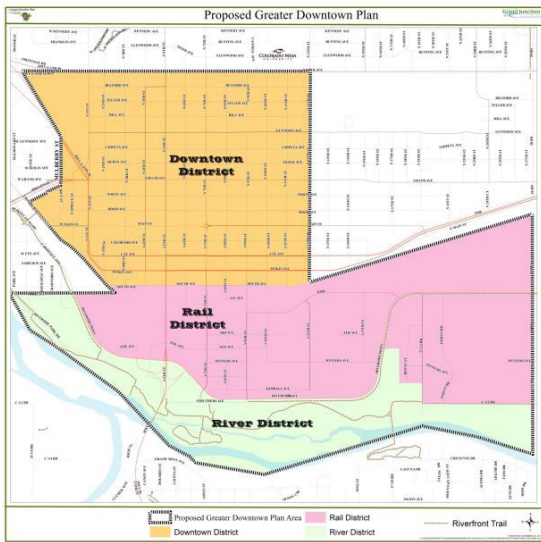
Special revenue funds:	Accounts for all revenues and expenditures associated with operating the DDA.
Debt service funds:	Accounts for resources which are being accumulated for long-term debt, principal and interest payments on DDA Tax Increment Bonds maturing in future years.
Capital projects funds:	Accounts for capital improvements within the boundaries of the DDA.



The Avalon The \$9.65 million renovation project saved the historic Avalon Theater from being shut down. This revitalized space contributes significantly to downtown's economy as it hosts private and public events, concerts, film festivals and the popular Dining, Shopping and a Movie event. In addition, the renovation increased the seating capacity of the theater by 20%, added a new multipurpose and rooftop terrace while bringing the complex up to code with ADA compliance. The DDA contributed \$3 million to the renovation of the Avalon.



Riverfront at Las Colonias Park. In 2017, Bonsai Design, an outdoor recreation business founded in Grand Junction approached the City, DDA and Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) about expansion plans. Through the formation of a public/private partnership, the City is developing a Business Park at the east end of Las Colonias Park, integrating it into the community park, which includes the recently completed Amphitheater. Since Bonsai Design announced their plans, the Rocky Mounts from Boulder CO has also announced that they will relocate to the Business Park. The long-planned revitalization of Las Colonias Park from an underutilized space began with the building of a \$3.5 million amphitheater in which the DDA contributed \$500,000. Las Colonias is a \$9 million project with the DDA contributing \$1 million and the City contributing \$8 million along with grants. This public investment is expected to leverage \$20 million of private investment into the park.



**5.2 THE GREATER DOWNTOWN PLAN, 2013.** The Greater Downtown Plan (GDP) has a significant influence to the zoning and streetscape design guidelines for the downtown area. The document establishes subdistricts, planning overlays and primary corridors for the downtown which supplement the City of Grand Junction Development code. Important policies identified in the Plan that will impact the POD are as follows;

- Subdistricts (Downtown, Rail and River). The downtown district is focused on providing a mix of retail, office, commercial and services to provide a hub of activity for residents and visitors of Grand Junction. The downtown district is divided into subareas for the Central Business District, Existing commercial, existing residential, north first street neighborhood center, 7th street historic district, and a transitional zone.
- The Rail district is characterized by incomplete streets, existing industrial and large land parcel. The GDP identifies a need to connect the existing employment base to good and services provided within the downtown district. Policies outlined in the GDP outline that Industrial zoning will be maintained with a goal to Re-establish the grid network within the district. 9th and 12th will be considered 'industrial streets' and 7th and Riverside Parkway will be pedestrian oriented 'public streets'.
- The River District is at the confluence of the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers has a long history in Grand Junction. In recent years the focus has been to connect to the River as an open space and recreation amenity for Grand Junction. The existing bike trails, gardens, amphitheater and future Las Colonias development create an amenity and sense of identity for Grand Junction. Creating connections from downtown to the River are an important outcome for the community.
- Primary Corridors (Riverside Parkway, South Avenue, 5th and 7th Street). Recommendations to Grand Ave, 1st Street, and North Ave in the GDP show improvements to the safety, circulation and aesthetics of the street including sidewalk improvements, street trees, medians, and bike lanes as well as roundabout improvements at Grand and 7th street, Grand and 1st Street, and West Main and Spruce Street. 7th and 9th street are recommended to be redesigned to incorporate bike lanes, parallel parking, street trees and a detached walk. Commercial and retail will be focused along 7th Street. Commercial, retail and housing will be located along Riverside parkway to activate the park.

**5.3 GRAND JUNCTION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 2014.** The goal of this plan focuses on creating a strategy to attract/retain businesses in Grand Junction. The mission statement is "to create the most livable community West of the Rockies by 2025". Therefore, there is an opportunity to align strategies of the POD with the GJEDP to create a synergy for supporting mutual goals for creating a thriving downtown and a more livable community. Specific actions identified by the GJEDP for potential partnership with

the DDA POD include strategic investments in public amenities and development of office/business park, specifically at Las Colonias and along the Riverfront area. The report outlines a significant amount of commercial and industrial property that has been identified as 'ready to develop'. sites that should overlap with future DDA reinvestment projects.

**5.4 THE DOWNTOWN GRAND JUNCTION HOUSING STUDY, 2015.** The Downtown Grand Junction Housing Study aims to identify ways to increase downtown housing as a way of supporting economic growth in the downtown. The core challenge identified by the study was a lack of diversity on available housing typologies. This project explored the 2015 market context to identify gaps and opportunities for developing site specific opportunities sites and implementation strategies to bring in actionable and feasible housing projects to the downtown. Four opportunity sites were developed into conceptual site plans, development programs with potential funding capacity. The housing study provided a roadmap for the DDA to begin the process of developing housing in the downtown district through infill development.

**5.5 GRAND JUNCTION I-70B AND CURRENT CDOT STUDY, 2015** (Unadopted). This report looked at solutions for the downtown portion of I-70B along 1st Street, Ute and Pitkin, that coordinate pedestrian facilities and critical links between the neighborhoods and outdoor amenities to downtown with competing travel demands along the state highway. Significant effort was put into community feedback and support and working with CDOT. The plan called for working with CDOT to develop an updated vision for what i-70B should look like in the downtown by balancing access for vehicular travel with livability of the downtown, enhancing rather than dividing pedestrian and bike infrastructure connections and maintaining redevelopment opportunities in the area. The plan included pedestrian crossings, streetscape improvements, gateways to the downtown and recommendations for 2-way streets surrounding Whitman Park. Ultimately the plan was not adopted by council. However, the project area and recommendations of this study overlap with the DDA boundary and the goals of Vibrant Together project and should be reviewed for 'what worked, what didn't' to understand why the plan ultimately was not supported.

**5.6 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND 2020 UPDATE** This Thrive Together process will lay the groundwork for policy and zoning that supports a vision for the Downtown. The POD will provide land use recommendations in the downtown for the Comprehensive Plan update.

