

Chapter 5: Implementation

This chapter provides a strategy for implementing the recommendations contained in the Downtown Master Plan. Residents and property owners must recognize that although the Downtown Master Plan suggests specific projects for selected sites, a number of variables will determine which of those projects can be executed. For example, some projects may be constructed in different configurations or even on alternative sites not considered in this Downtown Master Plan. Flexibility in the implementation of specific recommendations should be anticipated and is vital to the success of the Downtown Master Plan and the future of the Town.

Successful implementation of the Downtown Master Plan requires a coordinated effort between public and private entities. It requires vision, investment and commitment from a broad base within the community: private citizens, public officials and Town departments. The implementation strategy must include tools that result in a balanced mix of public and private action.

The Downtown Master Plan includes proposed public improvements on land under private ownership. If acquiring private land, existing buildings or other facilities necessary to implement a specific project, the Town should proceed on a basis of “willing buyer, willing seller”. Acquiring property through condemnation or eminent domain is not envisioned and would only be used for the most vital project in terms of public benefit and use.

Implementation Plan Approach

The Downtown Master Plan outlines a framework for improvements in a manner that provides clear direction for action, but with sufficient flexibility in the recommendations that allow the Town to respond to changing conditions. In general, high priority should be given to those projects and improvements that support specific public and private actions and development that is consistent with the vision and goals of the community. The Downtown Master Plan Implementation Strategy shown in Appendix C employs the following approaches:

- Use of public sector resources (land, parking, financing) to create public/private development opportunities.
- Align existing Town policies, regulations and development standards with provisions of the Downtown Master Plan.
- Use public financing to facilitate additional public and private investment.
- Commit sufficient staff resources to assure successful implementation of the Downtown Master Plan.

Administrative Actions

Tool: Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Currently, the Town does not have an economic development office and many inquiries are directed to the Town Manager. The Town should consider the creation of a Downtown Development Authority that assumes responsibility for infill and redevelopment projects and works to stimulate the local economy through Downtown revitalization efforts.

Tool: Urban Renewal Authority (URA)

An Urban Renewal Authority or other type of special district may be desirable in those cases where significant redevelopment is needed. Special districts may be necessary to address specific areas in Downtown that include dilapidated buildings and neglected landscapes. Designation of an Urban Renewal District requires a blight designation and approval of a development plan by the governing municipal body. After authorization of the plan, the new area is operated by a board of directors. The Urban Renewal Authority, appointed by the Town Council has a broad array of powers that include the use of tax-increment financing and eminent domain.

Tool: Monitoring and Coordination

Staff and elected/appointed officials will have opportunities to implement individual elements of the Downtown Master Plan; however, it is important that one department monitors the implementation and coordinates projects. This responsibility should be delegated to the Planning Director. In this role, the Planning Director will establish a work plan on an annual basis that is coordinated with the Town's fiscal calendar. The work plan will identify key projects and phasing of those projects that is consistent and integrated into a Capital Improvement Plan. The Planning Director will coordinate projects with other Town Departments, Historic Preservation Board and other entities to ensure continuity and consistency with the goals, policies and recommendations of the Master Plan. Once the Capital Improvements Plan list is generated it should be distributed to the Town for prioritization and funding.

Tool: Public Notification

The public should be apprised of new development plans that are submitted for review and permitting. The Town should create a document on its existing website that is designated for listing active projects. The page should include the date of initial submittal, a processing timeline and public hearing dates. This web page should be considered a vital educational tool that is continuously updated to reflect current decisions regarding future development and public improvements.

Tool: Planning and Design Review Training

Training for elected and appointed officials and Town Staff should occur on a rotational cycle to ensure that all persons involved in project review understand local planning issues and concerns. Training could be divided into separate categories and each category would be reviewed in alternating years, which would allow newly elected/appointed officials and new staff to be trained in a timely manner. Ideally, experienced planning professionals should facilitate training sessions.

Tool: Create Design Review and Cultural Boards

Two new boards should be created as part of the implementation strategy for the Downtown Master Plan. A separate Design Review Board should be established that reviews development plans for consistency with the Downtown Master Plan and other adopted design guidelines. If the site is located within the Historic Business District, the Historic Preservation Board conducts the review relative to adopted design standards. The composition of the Design Review Board should include at least one design professional (i.e., architect, planner, etc.) either serving in a volunteer or consulting capacity to the Board.

A Cultural Board should be established to create a “Cultural Plan” for the Town. The Board should be tasked with developing and implementing arts/cultural-related initiatives as part of the Cultural Plan. The Cultural Board will also review all public art installations and participate in design of public improvements such as signage, gateway features, streetscape improvements, etc. Members of this Board should have expertise in the areas of public art, arts/cultural event development, architecture, planning and visual and/or performing arts.

Tool: Expedited Planning and Building Entitlement Process

The Town of Pagosa Springs should establish a process whereby review and approval of planning and building projects are given priority and expedited timing for proposed projects that are located within and are consistent with the Downtown Master Plan. For such projects, the Town would commit to a stipulated period for completing review. The period should be less than the current average amount of time required for completing review and approval, such as a shortened Planned Unit Development process. This approach assures private developers of desirable projects that processing and review will be completed within a reasonable period of time.

Tool: Alternative Compliance

A process such as alternative compliance may be considered as an appropriate tool for implementing the intent of the design guidelines within the Downtown Master Plan. Alternative Compliance allows set standards to be met in alternative ways through consideration of design issues by the Town. A process for review should be established depending on the degree or type of compliance that is being proposed by an applicant. A project should be considered by staff, Historic Preservation Board or Design Review Board review, depending on the deviation proposed for such standards as landscaping, height, density and setbacks.

Tool: Minor Modification

Minor modification may be considered as a tool to review minor deviations from set standards. This tool is generally used for deviations that have minimal or no impact to adjacent property owners and are reviewed by planning staff.

Regulatory Actions

Tool: Zoning Amendments

At each public workshop, discussion occurred regarding specific design regulations such as front setbacks and building heights. There are several existing development standards that may require review and amendment if the community believes that such amendments are necessary to fulfill the vision of the Master Plan. The Town is commencing the update of the Land Use and Development Code based on the recommendations proposed within the Comprehensive and Downtown Master Plans. As the code is updated, the following changes should be evaluated.

Mixed Land Use

Allowing for a uses by right such as residential, retail and office space to be organized vertically (in one building) or horizontally (adjacent to each other) was discussed many times during the planning process and should be considered for implementation. “Mixed-Use” development has been demonstrated to effectively increase pedestrian activity and reduce overall parking demand.

Building Height

Building heights were discussed repeatedly throughout the process of developing this plan. Several workshop participants expressed concern regarding the impact new development was having on adjacent, smaller structures. The existing mid-span building height of 35 feet is applicable throughout most of the Downtown Master Plan Study Area, with heights of 40 feet allowed in the D-1 zoned areas of the Downtown Core and 45 feet allowed in the Hot Springs Boulevard zoning districts. Taller structures may be appropriate in specific areas of Downtown but should be evaluated through a process such as the minor modification or alternative compliance, as appropriate. Height in residential areas within the Downtown Study Area should be lower than those allowed within the commercial area.

Front Setbacks

In the Downtown Core and property within the Historic Business District, maintaining the existing zero-setback is critical to the existing character of the street. Other areas such as the East and West End should use setbacks to convey a feeling of pedestrian-friendliness and enclosure, as appropriate. In certain neighborhoods, variation in setbacks may be necessary to provide desirable public amenities such as outdoor seating and public art displays.

East Village Setbacks

A key topic of discussion has been the alignment of building fronts in the East Village. In the East Village neighborhood the existing setbacks range from 10 feet to 20 feet and include an attached sidewalk with landscaped front yards. This is typical of residential development that once was the primary use in this neighborhood. However, the expanding needs of the community and propensity for adaptive reuse in the neighborhood have resulted in conversions of existing residential homes into new uses and requests for allowable increases in massing along this stretch of Highway 160. Minimum building setbacks should be established that allow for some variation but still retain the visual front yard element of the neighborhood.

Lot Consolidations

In areas such as the Downtown Core and the East Village, historic development patterns should be honored. Based on comments regarding mass and scale received from the Steering Committee, the town should consider limiting lot consolidations in order to create natural breaks in building facade widths that emulate historic development patterns.

Density

Residential densities are currently regulated by the Land Use and Development Code. Existing densities for development were not cited by local residents as a major issue facing the Town. However, local developers indicated that increased densities were desirable to offset the costs of development. The town may chose to consider an increase in density when a project includes affordable housing units or public parking spaces. This may serve as an potential incentive to developers who can demonstrate that each project contains elements that reflect the design policies and design guidelines contained in the Master Plan.

Floor Area Ratio

Floor Area Ratios (building square footage: site area square footage) generally apply to commercial development and are not currently regulated by the Land Use and Development Code. Commercial development is currently allowed to construct a building at any size granted the project must meet on-site landscaping, parking and any other applicable requirements as defined in the Land Use and Development Code. The town should consider creating a minimum floor area ratio for the downtown commercial and residential neighborhoods. The Town should also consider granting additional FAR if a commercial project provides housing, especially those including affordable or attainable housing.

Minimum/Maximum Parking Standards and Shared Parking

The Town should consider supplementing traditional parking standards with a standardized approach to identify where some percentage of code-required parking should be transferred off-site. In addition, application of the Urban Land Institute's *Shared Parking* methodology should be utilized to calculate temporal and locational shared parking reductions. As a part of the Land Use and Development Code update, new parking ratios should be considered that acknowledge sharing of spaces, both on-site and on-street and account for the provision of multi-modal facilities.

Tool: Overlay Districts

The creation of new and the modification of existing overlay districts may be appropriate to assure that the design guidelines contained in the Downtown Master Plan are enforced. Design guidelines should be generated for each overlay district to ensure that property owners and developers have the information necessary to develop site plans and structures that respond to the vision of the community. Overlay districts that should be considered correspond to each one of the following neighborhoods identified and delineated in the Downtown Master Plan:

- Downtown Core (Existing Downtown Business, Lewis Street, Historic District and Corridor Business Overlay)
- West End (Existing Corridor Business Overlay)
- East End (Existing Corridor Business Overlay)
- East Village (Existing Central Business Overlay)

Tool: Parking Management Agreements

Parking management agreements should be considered for each development application that will entail (1) provision of code-required parking supplied off-site; and/or (2) reduction of required parking attributable to shared parking calculations (i.e., parking determined to be shared with nearby uses due to temporal sharing opportunities or multiple-stop patron parking). If used, these agreements should identify the location for both patron and employee parking and require a commitment for employee parking away from congested parking areas. In all cases, 100 percent of the code-required parking should be accounted for through a combination of on-site, off-site, shared parking and multi-modal scenarios.

Tool: Encourage Local Businesses

Unique local businesses are encouraged to make up the majority of the downtown retail and office sector. The town should consider implementing an incentives program for retaining and attracting local and unique businesses. The town should also consider requiring architecture and signage that are compatible with the downtown and unique to Pagosa Springs.

Tool: Streetscape and Signage Plan

A streetscape and signage plan should be developed that builds on the concepts discussed within the Framework Plan. That is, the streetscape should remain modest in character and include amenities that enhance the pedestrian environment and access to cultural attractions. The signage plan would include development of a specific graphic package for the wayfinding system and specific sign locations would be identified.

Tool: Highway 160 Corridor Enhancement Plan

A corridor enhancement plan would address public sector improvements including construction of sidewalks, landscaping and public signs for the stretch along the downtown area. The plan would also include the street section design in more detail. While general recommendations for lane widths and on-street parking designs appear in this plan, the Phase One plan and the Comprehensive Plan, a more detailed study would use accurate dimensional information for the entire corridor and apply the desired guidelines to each block on a case-by-case basis.

Tool: Town Park and Centennial Park Master Plan

Several specific improvement projects, both public and private have been discussed during the Downtown Master Plan process which could affect the character of these two downtown parks. A detailed master plan pertaining to their uses, how they connect, and interrelate to existing infrastructure should be developed. This would also identify specific improvement projects, such as bridges, interpretive sites and furnishings.

Tool: Cultural Plan

A cultural plan should be developed that establishes the role of cultural facilities in the downtown and identifies appropriate locations. This would include public museums and galleries, schools, performance venues and libraries. The role of public art would also be established.

Tool: Recreational Access Management Plan

A plan to establish a coordinated system for recreational access should be developed. This would address trails and pedestrian routes that connect recreational facilities and establish locations for other facilities. The plan would also identify appropriate points for the public to reach the riverbank and locate those areas that should be protected or avoided. This plan would be coordinated with trails and parks planning.

Tool: Geothermal Resource Plan

A comprehensive view of the geothermal resources would address ways in which to use this resource for other purposes. For example, a demonstration greenhouse could be constructed that would be a testing ground for development of plants in the region that could be cultivated for commercial or research purposes. Interpretive programs that explain this resource would be included in the plan. Specific sites where geothermal resources are visible would be mapped and suggestions for their improvements would be included.

Tool: Preservation Plan

A preservation plan should be produced that clearly defines the role of preservation in the community. It would outline a work program for additional survey work, rehabilitation needs and recommend incentives. This plan would also identify the roles of other key players in promoting heritage tourism and appreciation of historic resources.

Financing Actions

The following key funding mechanisms should be explored to fund and/or contribute to the implementation of recommendations contained in the Downtown Master Plan:

Tool: Local Property/Business Improvement Districts (BID)

This mechanism allows property owners within a defined area to assess themselves increased taxes to finance improvements that will benefit all property owners within that defined area. Construction bonds may be issued based on the income stream projected from the assessment. Business improvement districts can also be used for marketing and other promotional efforts to stimulate downtown revitalization. This tool enables construction of improvements that can benefit a broader area and can be used for projects such as constructing expanded streetscape enhancements throughout Downtown, installing wayfinding signage and gateway improvements, constructing a public parking structure, enhancing existing public parking lots and other relevant capital projects.

Tool: Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The Town of Pagosa Springs' Capital Improvements Program is a potential source for constructing public infrastructure and improvements including sewer, storm water, streets, curb/gutter/sidewalks, landscaping, streetscape furnishings and pedestrian and vehicular street lights. The CIP generally outlines a variety of federal, state and local funding sources designated to fund such improvements; the priorities and criteria for allocation of CIP funding are established by the Town of Pagosa Springs in the context of the annual budgeting process and the 5-year Capital Improvements Plan. CIP funding is a potential means to finance certain public infrastructure and facilities improvements that may jointly serve a redevelopment agency (such as a DDA or URA) or privately-owned sites designated for development with proven public benefits.

Tool: General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds are funded by a tax assessment that is approved by the voters. Income from the assessment is used to retire the bonds. These are generally used for larger projects and should be used for projects such as construction of an outdoor performance space, acquisition, construction and/or renovation costs associated with a cultural arts facility, major park improvements or to supplement river edge restoration and improvements.

Tool: Grants

Grants may be awarded by federal and state agencies for public improvements that meet the guidelines for specific programs. Noteworthy grants are for water resource improvements, enhancements for alternative modes of transportation and the restoration of publicly owned historic buildings. Other grants may come from private foundations, typically for smaller projects. Grants may be important for projects such as improvements to the San Juan River, special residential development projects, streetscape and circulation improvements that enhance alternative modes of transportation or other projects that have a significant public benefit.

Tool: Potential Riverfront Improvement Fees

The Town should consider establishing a Riverfront Improvement Fee. This fee could be imposed in the general geographical area of the San Juan River with the exact boundaries to be determined based on further analysis and a specific nexus study based on use and benefit. It would create a funding source dedicated for riverfront improvements. Funds from an improvement fee would be generated by new development in the Downtown Master Plan area. Due to the structure of the fee, the Town would need to provide some form of interim financing to catalyze development in the area. A Riverfront Improvement Fee could be established as a mechanism to repay interim public or private investments made from other funding sources and potentially pay for a portion of the proposed long-term capital improvement projects.

Tool: Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing may be a viable tool for consideration. Property and sales tax revenue that exceeds the base evaluation are paid into a separate fund overseen by a DDA or URA and are used to pay debts incurred by the project. Property tax increments are based on an increase in assessed valuation, not on an increase in taxes due only to rising mill levies.

Tool: Lodging Tax

The Town's lodging tax of 4.9% is currently used to support the Visitor's Center and other marketing and tourism efforts. These taxes were approved by the electorate in November 2005 and April 2006. By statute, lodging tax revenues can be used for capital improvement projects that enhance tourism and the visitor's experience. Several municipalities in Colorado have a much higher lodging tax, some in excess of 10%. The Town should consider increasing the existing lodging tax in the future to accommodate increased tourism marketing and to fund specific improvements that are essential to tourism and beneficial to the community.

Tool: Parking In-Lieu Fees

Chapter 3 concluded that approximately 1,000 new parking spaces will be needed to accommodate parking from predicted future growth. Of these 1,000 spaces, 500-600 of these spaces should be accommodated off-site, in public lots, in a parking structure and by the provision of transit opportunities. This conclusion implies that during the development review process, individual applications are allowed to transfer portion of code-required parking to off-site locations. In order to fund development of off-site parking locations such as surface lots and structured parking, in-lieu fees should be collected by the Town. An in-lieu fee enables an applicant to pay for the parking stalls that are not accommodated on-site. The fee amount should be generated by the cost of providing a parking stall at a comparable location, including the market price of the land required for a stall plus the actual cost of construction for that stall. In-lieu fees may vary for areas that will use surface lots and areas that will be required to accommodate their off-site parking in structured facilities. These fees should be collected over time and dedicated to the provision of public parking lots and parking structures that may be monitored by a potential Downtown Development Authority or other special district.

Prioritization Process and Criteria

The recommendations for phasing of actions, projects and improvements in the Downtown Master Plan should be considered dynamic and responsive to plans and projects by other agencies, proposed private development and other public funding opportunities that are present. The following criterion has been used to establish the Implementation Strategy Matrix (Appendix C). If the Town needs to reassess the priority of a recommended action, project or improvement, then it should also use the following criteria. Those projects that meet several of the following criteria should be given the highest priority for implementation.

Economic

- Projects that generate funding to cover portions of development costs.
- Projects that leverage funding/investment from other sources.
- Projects that have grant funding available to cover portions of development costs.
- Projects that are part of a larger capital improvement project.
- Funding for maintenance of the improvement is available.
- Projects that generate balanced employment opportunities for the community.

Public Benefits

- Projects that provide a direct benefit to local residents, visitors and/or employees.
- Projects that serve multiple users, organizations or interest groups.

Relationship to Other Projects

- Projects that support desired public or private development.
- Projects that provide opportunities to connect with existing or future public improvements.
- Projects that will function upon their completion without reliance on future phases.

Compliance with Policies and Plans

- Projects that help achieve goals and policies established in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Projects that help to accomplish the vision of the community as set forth in the Downtown Master Plan.
- Projects that fit within current strategic plans of the Town, community organizations and institutional partners.
- Projects that are within the administrative oversight capacity of the implementing entity.

Alternative Implementation Roles for the Town

There are various potential approaches for implementation, which vary in the degree to which the Town actively participates in a specific project. The extent to which the Town participates in a project should be determined by following two general overall considerations: (1) The potential impact/effect on financial capacity of the Town related to funding both development costs and ongoing management, maintenance and operation costs; in particular near-term and long-term risk to the Town General Fund; and (2) The potential impact/effect on administrative capacity of the Town related to undertaking development activity and ongoing management, maintenance and operational responsibilities.

In considering the appropriate approach to implement recommended projects, these basic questions should be answered:

- Is public financing available for the project?
- Will public financial participation leverage other public or private sector funding?
- Will the public sector or the private sector implement the project more efficiently, cost effectively and in a timely manner?

Examples of alternative roles that the Town could play are:

Alternative A: Direct Implementation by the Town

In this approach, the Town directs the project and is responsible for funding, scheduling and construction. For example, the Town may install a wayfinding sign package with funds derived from public sources.

Alternative B: Joint Venture or Partnership with Other Entities (Public or Private)

In this approach, the Town joins forces with another organization or a private entity. The participating parties each contribute some resources and have some degree of responsibility for implementation. For example, the Town may joint venture with a private developer to construct a project that would include a public parking facility with privately owned commercial and residential space.

Alternative C: Incentives provided by the Town

In this approach, the Town may offer flexibility in development regulations to encourage a developer or partner to take action in creating an exceptional project and thereby exceeding the requirements of the Downtown Master Plan.

Alternative D: Regulatory provisions that permit or accommodate desired development

In this approach, the Town would assure that zoning regulations permit the uses set forth in the plan in the designated areas.

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Alternative A: Direct Town Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town control of project in terms of total financial responsibility, type, extent, timing and quality 	Total financial responsibility Economic risk related to development cost overruns and ongoing operations Very limited Town financial resources and potential negative impact on Town General Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector may lend more expertise and/or resources to the project
Alternative B: Joint Venture/Partnership Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared financial responsibility for development cost • Shared economic risk (initial development or ongoing operation) • Leveraging of public investment • Potentially greater public benefit in relationship to public investment • Pooling of expertise and knowledge base from public and private sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than total control of project • Some financial responsibility • Some economic risk • Some impact on Town General Fund
Alternative C: Private Sector Implementation (Town Incentives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct economic responsibility (development cost or ongoing operation) • No negative impact on Town General Fund • Minimal economic risk if public financing investment is required for project; no economic risk if no public investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct control over project • Project is implemented (or not) at discretion of private sector • May require relaxation of certain regulatory provisions and/or some public financing • Very limited Town funding for even some public financing assistance
Alternative D: Private Sector Implementation (Regulatory Provisions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct economic responsibility (development cost or ongoing operation) • No economic risk • No negative impact on Town General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptability of requirements by private sector • Difficulty for public sector to regulate • Town capacity to regulate • Requirements may not be realistic based on market conditions • Need to establish appropriate regulations, secure public policy

Depending on the nature of the project, an incentive-based approach and joint partnerships yield the maximum benefits through the inherently complementary nature of public/private partnerships. For example, projects such as parking lots/structures, gateway features, signage and wayfinding and streetscape improvement would be enhanced from public financing and accountability combined with the expertise and resources of the private sector. As such, public/private partnerships should be developed when feasible on those projects that are, either through magnitude, visibility, or opportunity for artistic enhancement, suited for this type of collaborative approach.