Chapter 15: Specific Planning Areas

Overview

This chapter contains area-specific policies for the six specific planning areas. (See Figure 15-1, Specific Planning Areas, on the next page.)

Residential Subareas

- Lakes Planning Area.
- Central Planning Area.
- Downtown Planning Area.
- Eastern Gateway Planning Area.

Merchant Subareas

- West Merchant Planning Area.
- East and Central Merchant Planning Area.

The town is divided into these areas to address, in finer detail, specific needs of different parts of town, recognizing that different areas have a unique mix of characteristics, have different needs, and play a different role within the larger community. The following goals and policies reflect resident and merchant feedback from a series of "neighborhood meetings" held in the fall of 2005.

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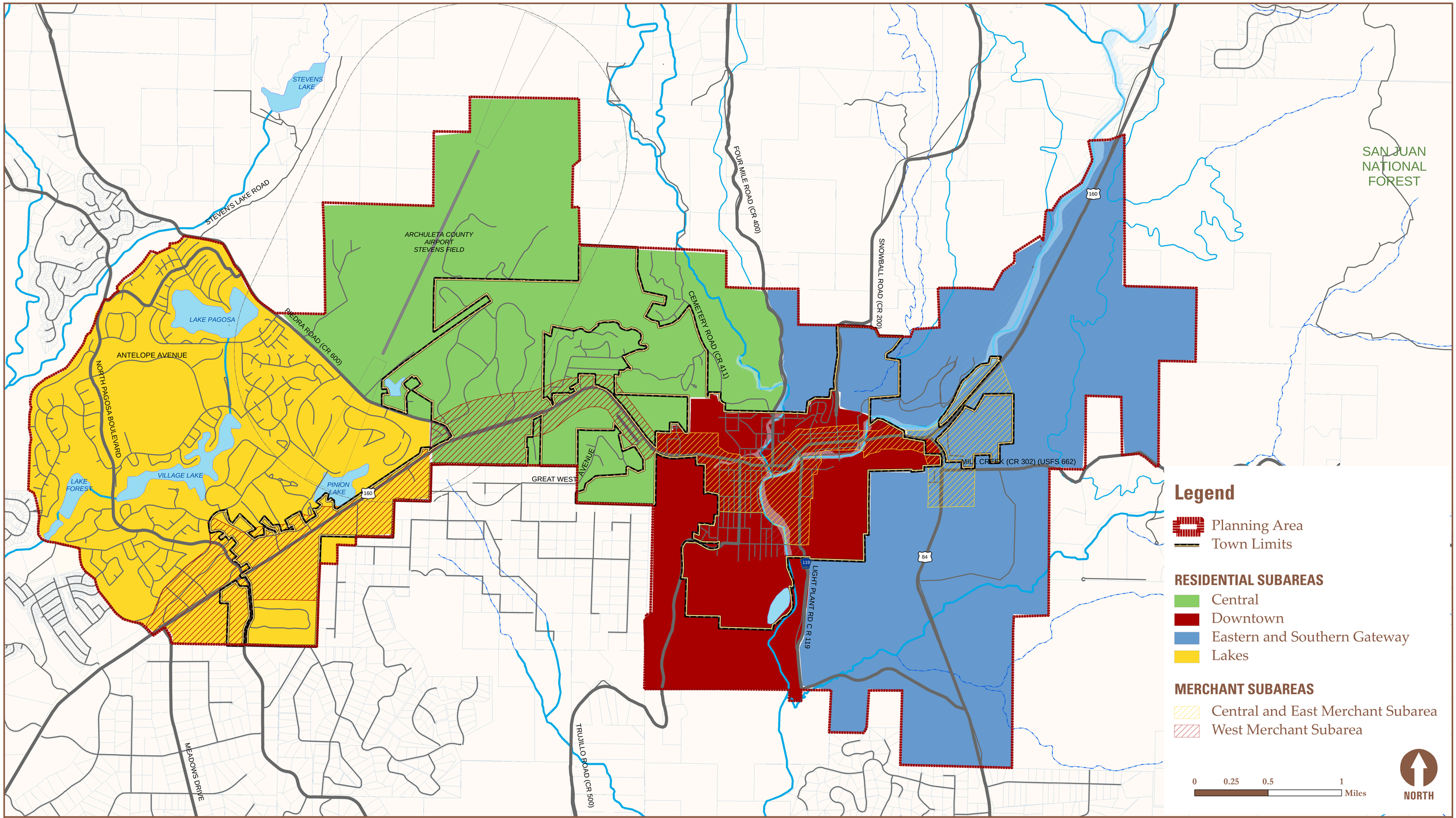

SPECIFIC PLANNING AREAS

PAGOSA SPRINGS

Comprehensive Plan

Figure 15-1
Specific Planning Areas

April 2006
CLARION

Residential Planning Areas

Lakes Area

The Lakes Area, located at the western portion of the planning area, is predominantly within Archuleta County and is developed with low-density neighborhoods. The rural subdivisions that dominate this area incorporate into their overall design the four lakes for which the Subarea is named: Lake Forest, Village Lake, Pinion Lake, and Lake Pagosa. Neighborhood streets feed into the major roadways of the area: North Pagosa Boulevard, Piedra Road and SH 160. The Pines Golf Course, located at the junction of SH 160 and Piedra Road, is a major recreation feature and draw for tourists. Because the majority of residential development north of SH 160 is within the county, trails in this area are maintained by the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association (PLPOA). This group has planned and maintains an extensive system of trails throughout the neighborhoods. Commercial activity along SH 160 will be addressed through the West Merchant Planning Area.

Townhomes in the Lakes Area provide housing for year-round residents and part-time residents.

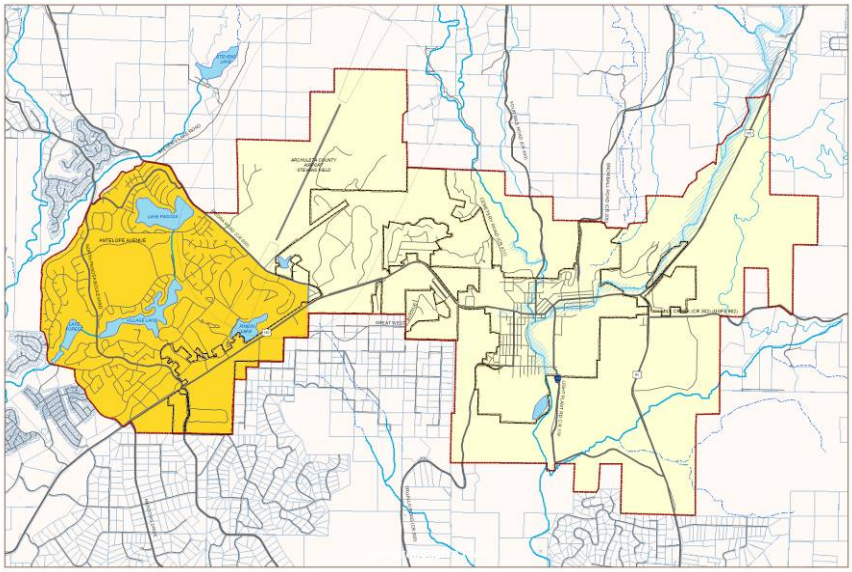

Figure 15-2: Lakes Residential Area Location

Goal SP-1: The Lakes Residential Area will coordinate with the county and Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association (PLPOA) to encourage connectivity and community between the western and eastern portions of town.

The Lakes Area is a stable and largely developed area primarily managed by the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association. The neighborhoods within this area, however, tend to be internally focused and would benefit from greater connectivity with the eastern portions of town.

Policies

Policy SP-1(a): Trail Planning Coordinated

Additional east-west trail connections should be planned for and implemented to increase opportunities for non-auto means of travel between the town's centers.

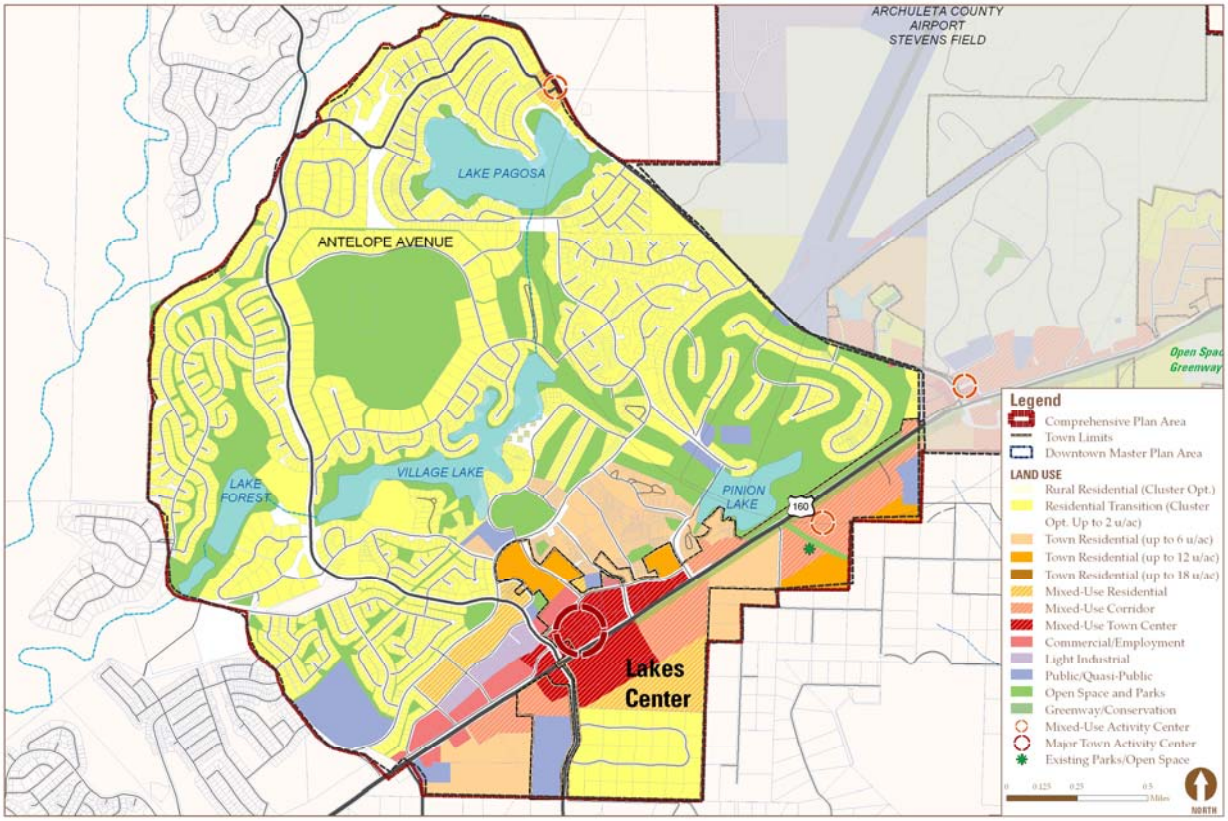

Figure 15-3: Lakes Residential Area Future Land Use Plan

Central Area

The Central Area is home to several subdivisions, including Knolls Ranches, Piedra Estates, Pagosa Hills, and Rock Ridge. The street networks of these rural residential and estate developments tend to serve the individual development and feed into SH 160. A major feature of this area is the Archuleta County Airport at Stevens Field, located along Piedra Road. Northern portions of this area become more diverse in their terrain as they approach the San Juan National Forest. McCabe Creek traverses the eastern portion of the area before joining with the San Juan River to the south. Commercial activity located along SH 160, including Putt Hill, is addressed as part of the West Merchant Planning Area.

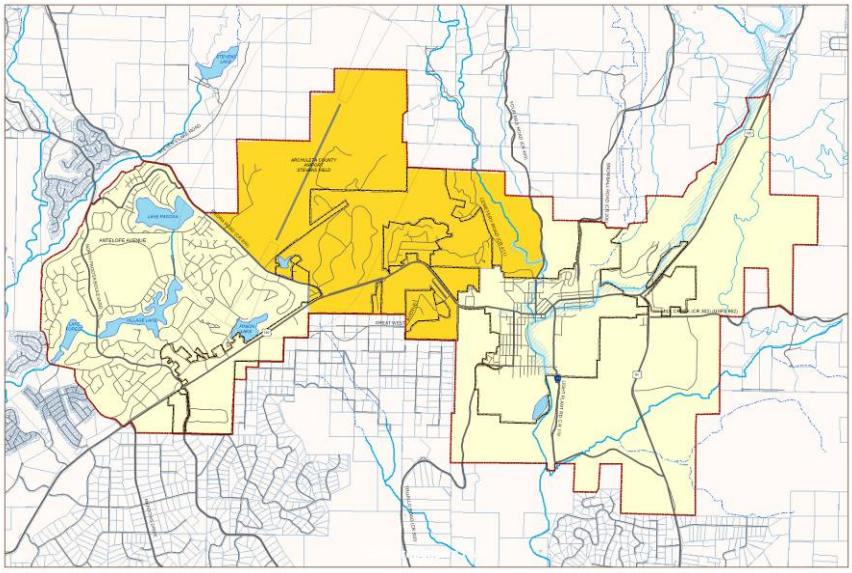

Figure 15-4: Central Residential Area Location

Goal SP-2: The Central Area will retain and build upon the rural quality of its residential developments while protecting the natural environment.

Residents of the Central Area will continue to enjoy the privacy and lifestyle afforded by their low-density neighborhoods. Future development on vacant lands north of existing neighborhoods should be in keeping with the character of existing neighborhoods.

Policy SP-2(a): Key Natural Features and Open Space Preserved

The future Land Use Plan designates new development north of existing subdivisions to be clustered as a means of protecting open space and natural features. Residents have expressed concern over particular open areas; a concern that should be recorded and brought to bear in the development review process.

Archuleta County Airport at Steven's Field is shown from the air.

Goal SP-3: The Central Area will maximize its existing transportation features, including the airport.

This area hosts the Archuleta County Airport, a major transportation asset for the town that should be developed and used in a manner that meets the needs of the greater community. Another key transportation function that this area provides is to connect the eastern and western portions of town. All desired roadway and trail connections between these areas of town will, by necessity, impact the Central Area and should be carefully planned.

Policy SP-3(a): Airport Uses Consider Residential Neighbors

The Archuleta County Airport is a major transportation asset for the town, and its importance and use is likely to increase as the town's population and regional tourist draws (e.g., Wolf Creek Ski Resort) expand in the future. The airport should seek, now and in the future, to avoid use conflicts with adjacent residential developments. Conversely, the town should avoid approving land uses near the airport that may create conflict.

Policy SP-3(b): East-west Trail Connections Increase Mobility

Increasing trail connections between the east and west parts of town is a key priority for the community. While it may not be practical or desirable to attempt to locate trails through existing neighborhoods, future development should accommodate multi-use trails to serve the community.

Actions

SP-3.1: Ensure that airport uses or expansions are reviewed for compatibility with surrounding neighborhood areas; buffering or screening may be required if new development occurs.

SP-3.2: Consider impacts of land use decisions on the airport.

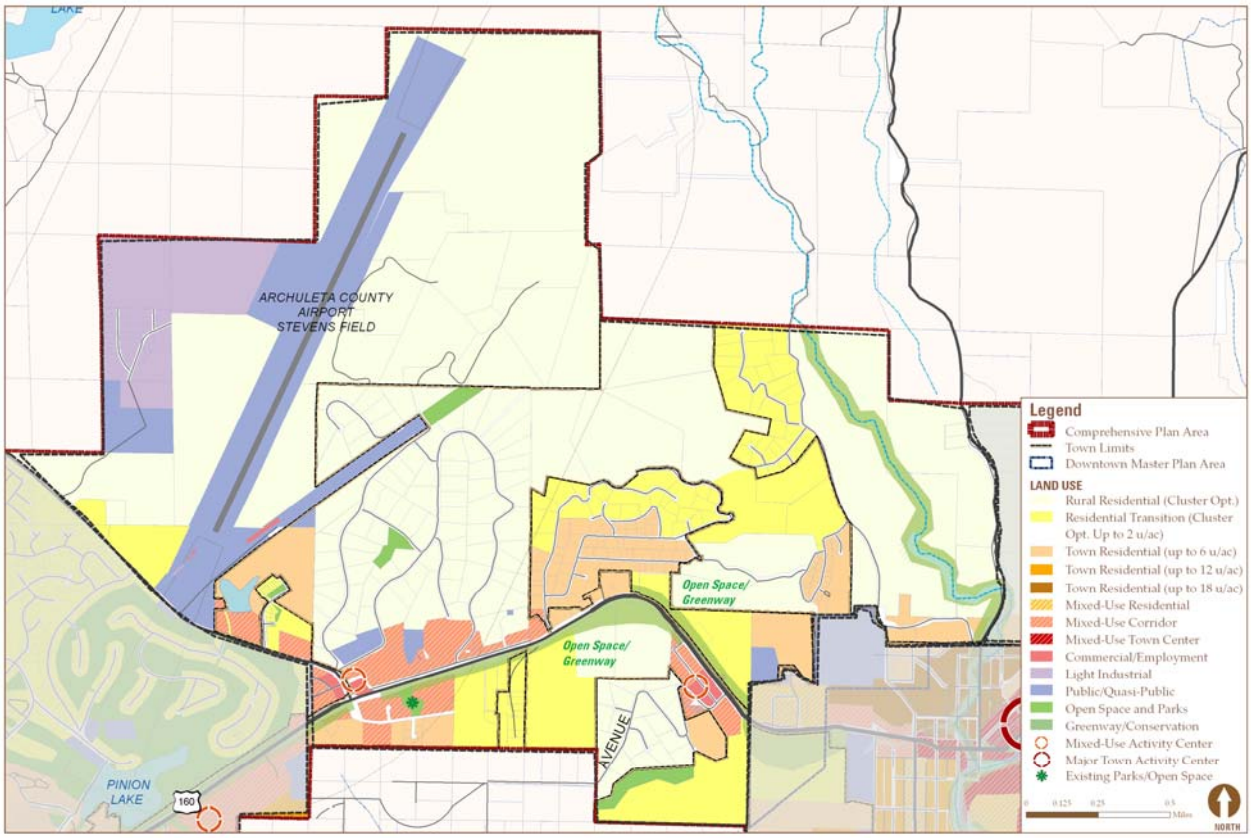

Figure 15-5: Central Residential Area Future Land Use Plan

Many old homes in the downtown have been converted to business uses over time.

Downtown

The downtown contains the oldest neighborhoods and is within town limits. Homes and lot sizes tend to be smaller, on smaller lots, with an emphasis on bungalow-style neighborhoods. In some cases, residential structures have been converted and are occupied by various local business including restaurants, bakeries, and salons. The Downtown Area boasts numerous parks and recreation features, including the San Juan River and Riverwalk, hot springs, Reservoir Hill, Town Park, South Park, and Riverside Park. Town and County government buildings and public schools are also located within this area—a major draw for all area residents. SH 160 and Light Plant Road are the key roadways that serve this area. Commercial activity, located in the Downtown and along SH 160, will be addressed as part of the Central and East Merchant Planning Area.

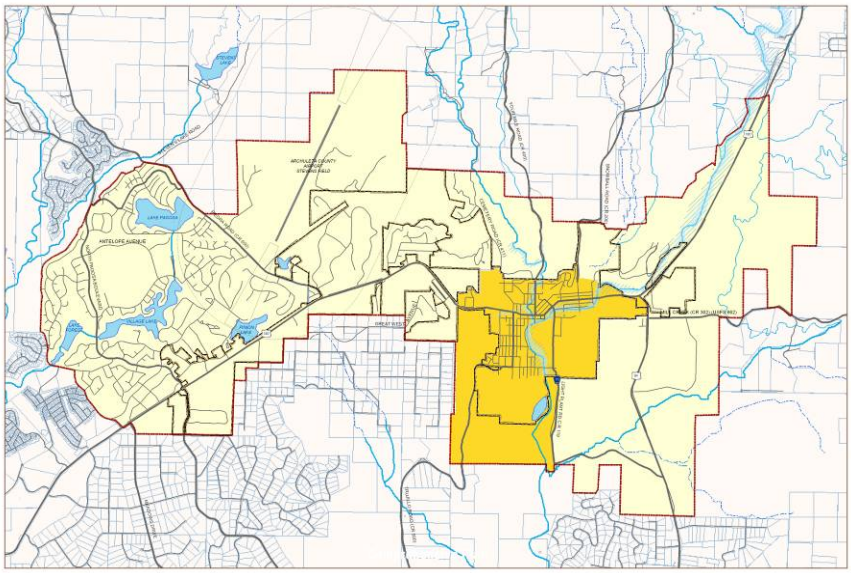

Figure 15-6: Downtown Residential Area Location

Goal SP-4: The town will reinforce the historic downtown as a thriving center for social and economic activity.

The historic downtown of Pagosa Springs is recognized as a center for the community that reflects the character and history of the town. This area is a hub of local business activity and tourism economic activity. The future Land Use Plan calls for this area to be developed as one of the three primary mixed-use centers for the town. How this is implemented will relate directly to more focused planning efforts that address the downtown and transportation system.

Policy SP-4(a): An Effective Downtown Master Plan

The Downtown Master Plan provides a more detailed guide for policy and land use decisions to help develop the downtown business core as a thriving center for local business and tourist activity with healthy and attractive neighborhoods. In addition to this Comprehensive Plan, the town should implement the Downtown Master Plan.

Policy SP-4(b): Transportation Plan Targeted to Community Needs

The Transportation Plan will address, in a greater level of detail, the transportation needs of the community. These needs relate to traffic and parking issues, particularly as they relate to traffic along SH 160 and pedestrian movement within the downtown. The town should implement the Transportation Plan in conjunction with other land use and economic efforts.

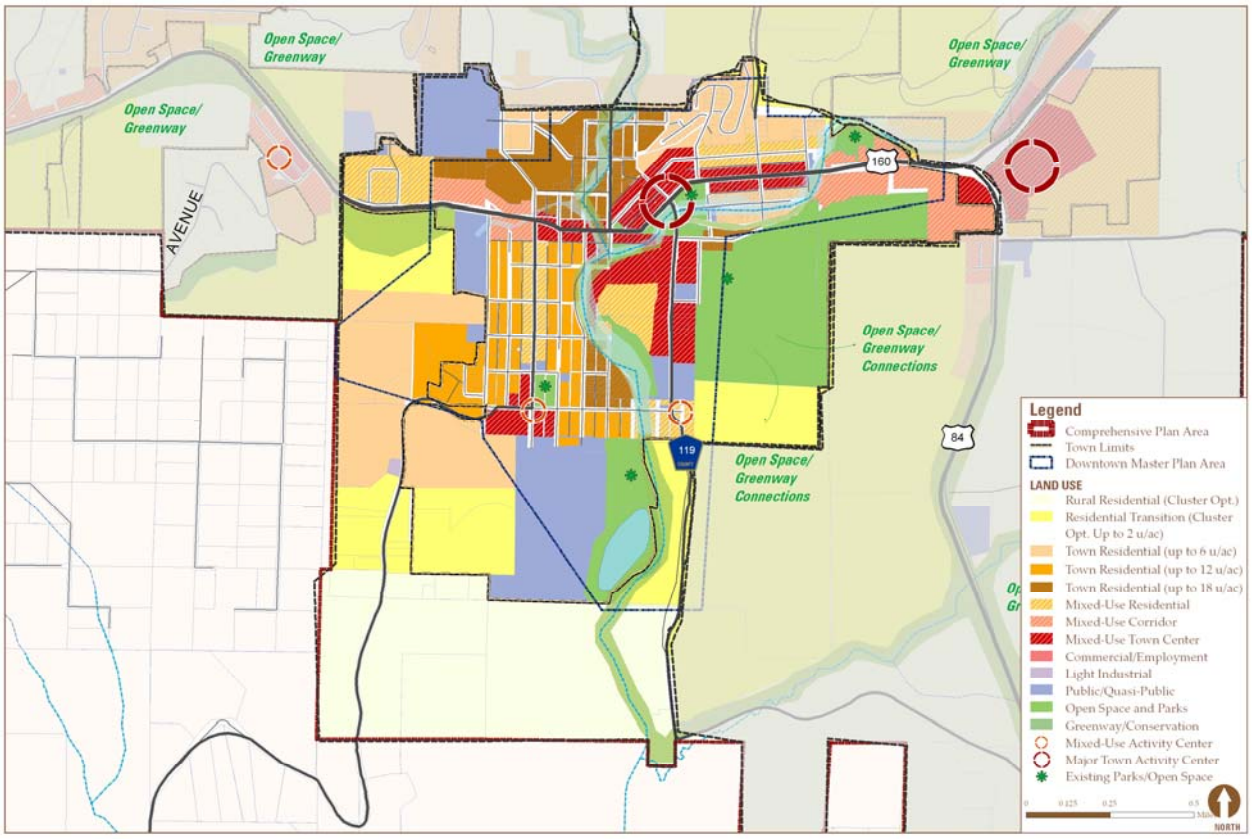

Figure 15-7: Downtown Residential Area Future Land Use Plan

Eastern and Southern Gateway

The Eastern and Southern Gateway area is so named for the two points of entry to the town it provides: the eastern gateway, along SH 160, and the southern gateway, along SH 84. Much of the land within this area is agricultural, and the area offers scenic views of the mountains as drivers enter and leave the town. Commercial activity along SH 160 and SH 84 is addressed as part of the Central and East Merchant Planning Area.

Open views of the mountains are an important gateway element.

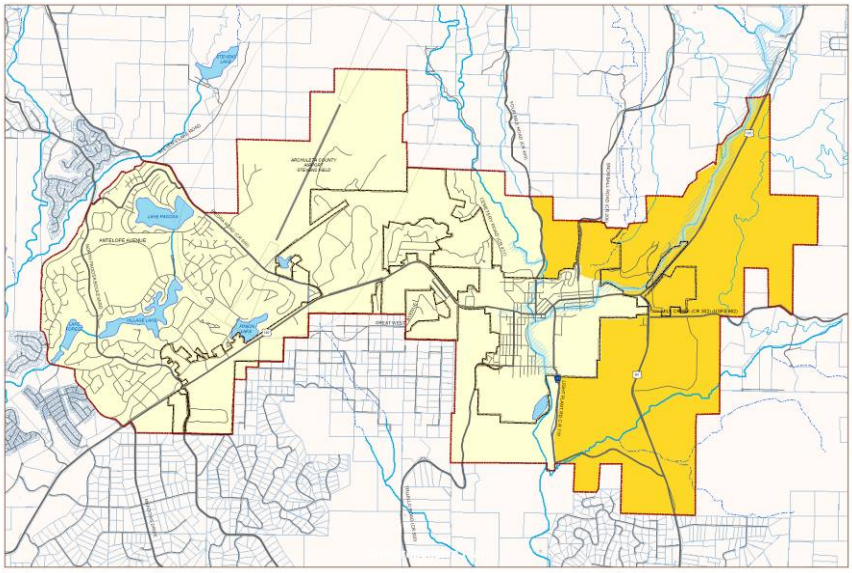

Figure 15-8: Eastern and Southern Gateway Residential Area Location

Goal SP-5: The town will retain the open, rural scenery and views that provide attractive points of entry into the town in the Eastern and Southern Gateway.

The Southern and Eastern Gateway areas along SH 160 and SH 84 currently offer mountain views across agricultural fields. The town will maintain the scenic views and natural areas to the extent possible.

Policy SP-5(a): Scenic Views Along Gateways Protected

Prime view corridors, as visible from the two highways, should be identified and conserved through the process of

site planning for clustered developments to ensure new developments do not mar these views.

Policy SP-5(b): Open Spaces Along Gateways Conserved

The town and county should work to foster partnerships and pursue grants to fund the acquisition of key open space areas.

Policy SP-5(c): Gateways Areas Enhanced

The town should enhance gateways to denote a clear and attractive entry into town. Materials used in landscaping and signage should build upon the natural beauty and use native plantings, rock, and natural wood signage. The town may also establish design criteria for gateway enhancements.

Actions

SP-5.1: Identify and pursue partnerships, grants and other means of open space conservation along the Eastern and Southern Gateways.

SP-5.2: Identify and conserve important scenic views along these gateway areas through the use of setbacks and clustering of development.

SP-5.3: Work to enhance gateway areas with appropriate signage and landscaping treatments that do not detract from the beauty of the natural landscape.

SP-5.4: Coordinate gateway efforts with code enforcement.

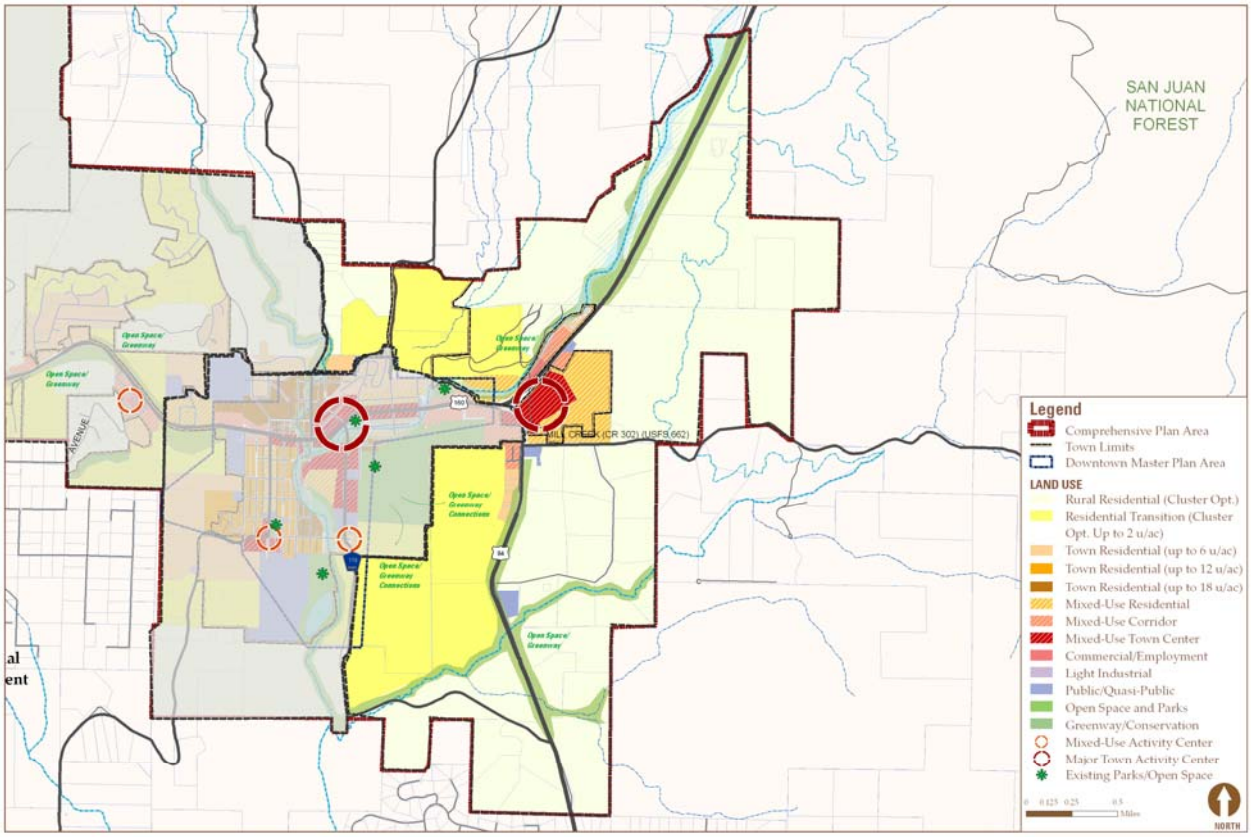

Figure 15-9: Eastern and Southern Gateway Residential Area Future Land Use Plan

Merchant Planning Areas

Newer commercial development serves community needs in the West Merchant Area.

West Merchant Area

The West Merchant area includes a mix of retail and businesses along SH 160. This area acts as a western gateway into the town and provides a variety of goods, services, and employment options to nearby residents. The town and county's limited amount of light industrial activity is located just north of SH 160. Older businesses tend to be scattered along SH 160, while newer commercial centers are generally located near the Lakes Area, west of Piedra Road.

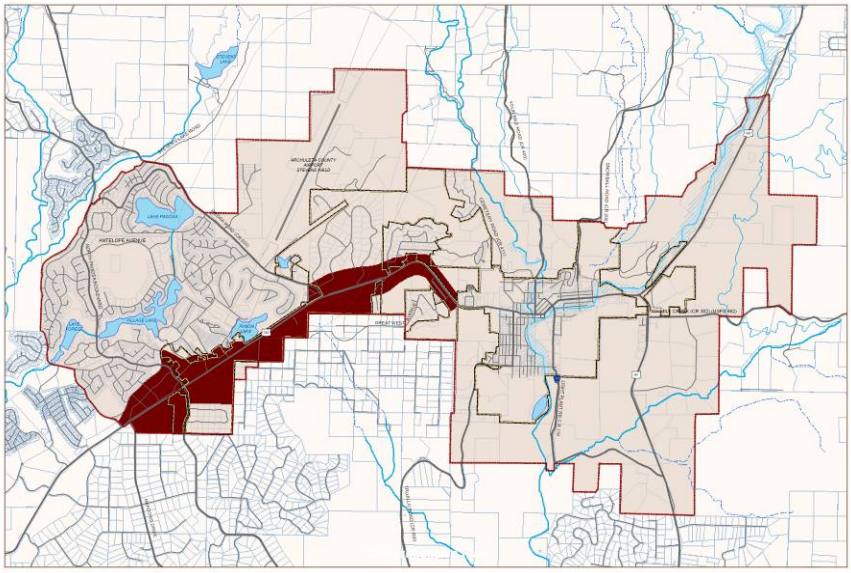

Figure 15-10: West Merchant Area Location

Goal SP-6: The West Merchant Area will continue supporting existing businesses and unique aspects of this area.

This area contains most of the businesses that locals use for day-to-day needs. The town will continue to encourage these types of businesses. This area should remain primarily commercial; residential development should be kept on its periphery. Ideally, lower intensity commercial uses will gradually blend into the outlying residential neighborhoods. Through

appropriate traffic adjustments and new signage, residents and visitors will be able to easily access and navigate this area.

Policy SP-6(a): Accessible Western Pagosa Springs

Although the western and eastern parts of Pagosa Springs are in many ways different, it is important to the integrity of the town that the two be tied together. Each plays a unique role and the town should ensure that customers can easily and clearly access both. As this area continues to grow, the town should establish services, parks, signage, and appropriate amenities, to decrease the need for residents to travel downtown.

Actions

SP-6.1: Address highway signage so that tourists and highway travelers clearly understand the edge of town, location of attractions, and directions to the downtown area.

SP-6.2: Decrease traffic speeds and increase stoplights and left turn opportunities. Other general road/safety improvements should be implemented to facilitate traffic flow.

Goal SP-7: The West Merchant Area is the "Uptown" center that will contain businesses that are unique to the region, that offer quality jobs, goods, and services for residents.

This West Merchant Area (Uptown) has a mix of retail and business activity as well as a supply of developable land. Future economic growth in this area should seek to meet retail and employment needs as expressed by the community and documented in community economic research.

Policy SP-7(a): Larger Retailers Meet Local and Regional Needs

Residents have expressed a desire to see a number of larger retailers, including clothing and natural food stores, located within the town. Emphasis should be placed on locating a commercial entity that is unique, rather than duplicative, within the region.

Policy SP-7(b): Pedestrian-Friendly West Merchant Area

To create a cohesive identity for the town, future development within this center should work to improve the general sense of place, by moving away from a corridor-style development in favor of activity centers. Street improvements and signage should assist with this by emphasizing connections between this center and Downtown.

Actions

SP-7.1: Assist the function and identity of this area to become more pedestrian-friendly through appropriate signage, design, and traffic calming measures to foster a safe and convenient area for people to access goods and services.

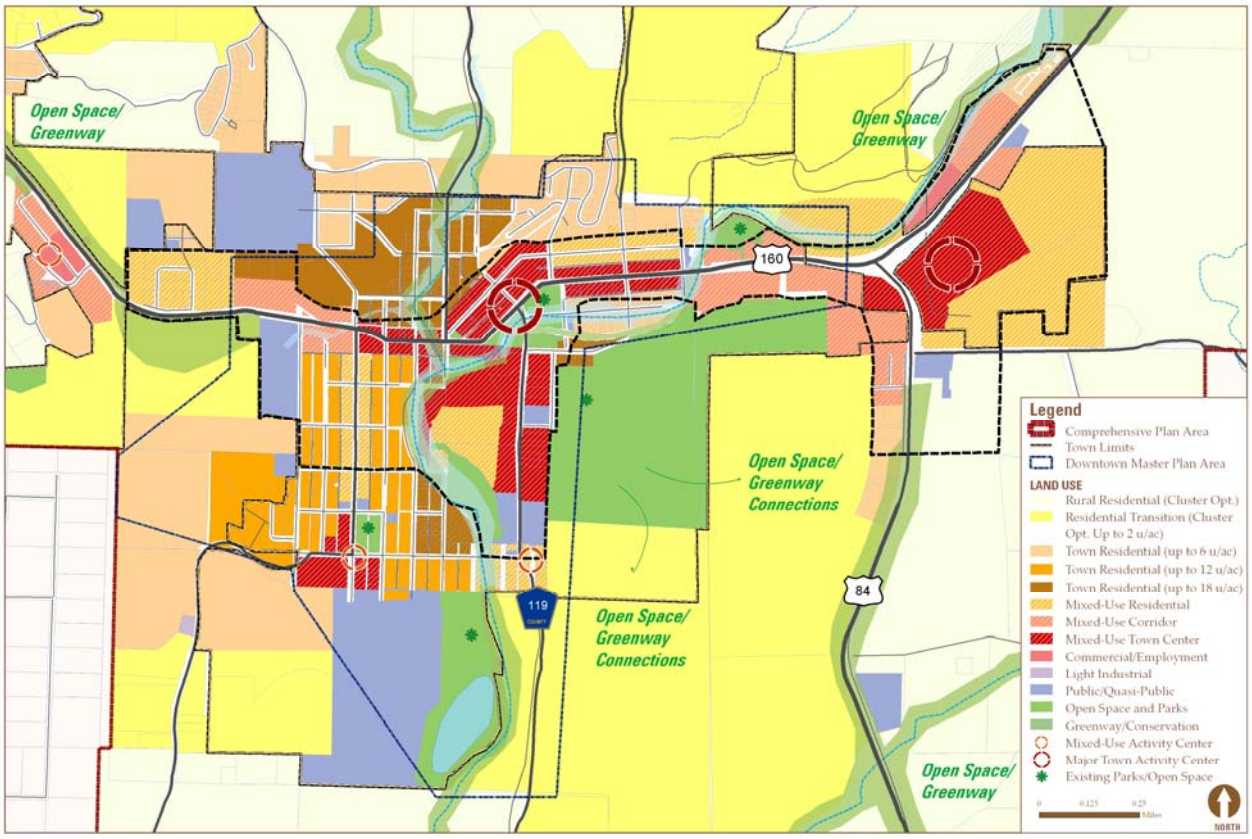

Figure 15-11: West Merchant Area Future Land Use Plan

Central and East Merchant Area

The Central and East Merchant area, which includes the entire Downtown and portions of surrounding economic activity on SH 160 and SH 84, represents the historic center and primary tourist destination area for the town. Amenities include a Main Street downtown business district with older buildings and a variety of local businesses, the Pagosa Hot Springs along the San Juan River, and several parks.

The historic downtown is a center of tourist and local business activity.

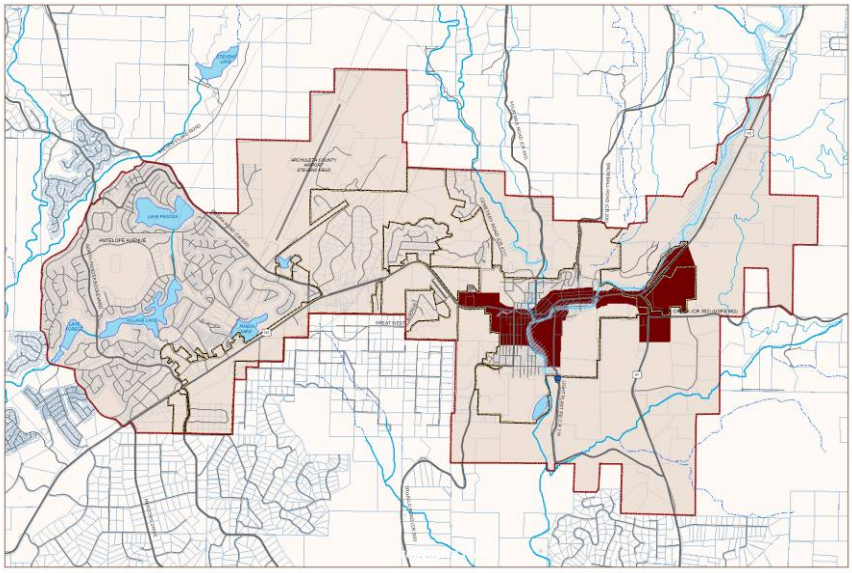

Figure 15-12: Central and East Merchant Area Location

Goal SP-8: The Central and East Merchant Area will continue making Downtown a vibrant destination for residents and visitors to enjoy.

To retain and encourage thriving local business, accessibility, and pedestrian-friendly design in the downtown area, the Town should look for development opportunities that emphasize these qualities. The town should build on its attractive historic qualities and natural features, such as the San Juan River that continue to be a source of resident and tourist enjoyment.

Policy SP-8(a): River-focused Park

The town should develop a river-focused park and appropriate trail improvements to increase the overall quality of the downtown area for residents, visitors, and merchants. Regularly maintain other existing amenities, such as bridges, benches, waste receptacles to promote the overall image of this area.

Policy SP-8(b): Parking, Traffic, Pedestrian Balance

Traffic is both a burden and a boon to downtown merchants. Controlling the speed of traffic, improving pedestrian access, analyzing parking capacity and placement, improving the visual quality of parking, and facilitating appropriate traffic turns are key to revitalizing the area. Traffic solutions should equally consider the needs of automobiles and pedestrian/cyclists.

Policy SP-8(c): Development Reflects Needs of Town

A mix of uses, that allow residents to live and work in the same area, is encouraged in the downtown core. Public buildings and facilities should be moved elsewhere and commercial uses encouraged to take their place to foster an active Downtown for local businesses that builds upon the assets of the town, reflects the history and character of the town, and serves the needs of residents and visitors alike.

Actions

SP-8.1: Investigate funding opportunities to provide improvement funds for the Downtown river area.

SP-8.2: Undertake a Parking Study that analyzes capacity, visual design, and placement. Traffic improvements should also address safety concerns and needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.

SP-8.3: Identify opportunities for additional commercial development in existing residential and mixed use neighborhoods. Lewis Street and 8th Street are two areas where additional commercial development may be appropriate, if the scale of that development is compatible with the neighborhood.

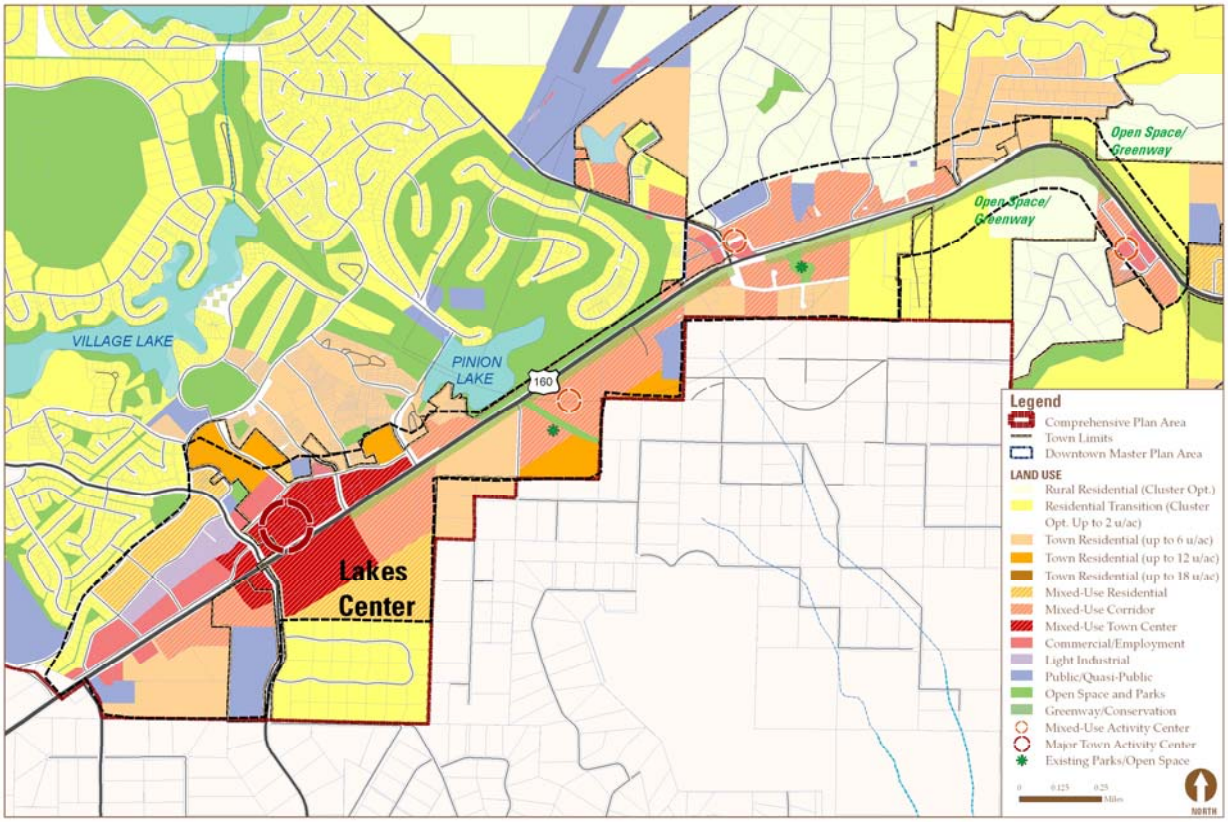

Figure 15-13: Central and East Merchant Area Future Land Use Plan

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