

downtown Pagosa Springs  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



November 12-13, 2012



BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO  
DOWNTOWNS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND TOWN CENTERS IN COLORADO  
THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION

## Report Components



Introduction	3
Team Members	3
Executive Summary	3-4
Background	4
Observation	5-6
Communication	6-8
Organization	8-10
Promotions	10-12
Economic Restructuring	12-15
Design	15-18
Participating Stakeholders	18
Funding Mechanisms	18-19
Team Member Bios	20-21

## Introduction

Welcome to the downtown assessment for the Colorado community of Pagosa Springs. Qualifying communities in Colorado have the opportunity to apply for assistance through Downtown Colorado, Inc. in a downtown assessment process partially sponsored by the USDA Rural Development Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI), and completed in collaboration with the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

The Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) downtown assessment and training program is a process of gathering community leaders and stakeholders and developing a structure and process for them to support local businesses and the vibrancy of the commercial district. The process results in a road map to guide community leaders in providing services and training to help local businesses thrive.

Downtown Colorado, Inc. assembled a team of volunteer professionals including designers, planners, land use, and finance experts to work in Pagosa Springs for two days and then contribute to this final report. The assessment team appreciated the invitation to learn about and assist your community and worked diligently to provide relevant and realistic input toward the betterment of downtown Pagosa Springs.



## Team Members

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## Executive Summary

In the fall of 2012, the Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation, on behalf of the Town of Pagosa Springs and the citizens of Archuleta County requested a downtown assessment team visit from Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) for November 12-13, 2012. The purpose of an assessment visit is to bring a team of consultants specializing in downtown and community revitalization to provide tools, insights, and direction to help the host community with its downtown revitalization goals. The town's goals for the assessment included bringing the business community together with a common set of goals and objectives, identifying and creating a downtown brand, and initiating physical changes to enhance their downtown assets. In anticipation of this visit, a group of citizens representing the community formed an "Imagine Downtown" committee, planned focus groups, conducted a brief survey, and provided extensive background information about the history and status of Pagosa Springs downtown revitalization efforts and the issues facing the community.

Upon arrival in the community, team members were given a presentation on the history of downtown and the past initiatives for development and revitalization. Following this discussion, the team and city staff toured the town, including both uptown and downtown areas. Afterward, the team met with the city staff for lunch, and then held four well-attended focus group sessions with community stakeholders and interested citizens. The purpose of the focus groups was to hear directly from citizens

about the issues facing the downtown and the community as a whole; and to answer questions team members may have about the perceptions, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities related to downtown Pagosa Springs.



On day two, team members gathered to discuss their observations and formulate recommendations. That evening at the community center, team members presented their findings in the form of a PowerPoint presentation followed by question and answer session open to the community at large. The following report provides an overview of the downtown assessment visit, identifies partners and resources to help the community, includes observations from the visit, identifies issue areas, and makes recommendations for actions the community can take to strengthen the downtown.

## Background Information and Historical Context

Pagosa Springs, named after The Great Pagosa Hot Springs, is an area which encompasses some of the best of what the West has to offer. Taking in an area bounded on the north by the beautiful , Weminuche Wilderness and the Continental Divide, the south by the Colorado-New Mexico border, the west by the Yellow Jacket Pass Country, and the east by the San Juan Mountains, Pagosa Springs is a microcosm where history and the present come together. The area is rich in beauty and natural resources. Describing the appearance of the boiling,

bubbling spring, the ancient Utes called it Pah-gosa (“pah” - water, “gosa” - boiling). Modern usage and advertising has changed the orthography to “Pagosa” and the meaning to “healing waters.”

The settlement of Pagosa Springs occurred rather quickly. Once the news of the Great Hot Springs got out, travelers began to arrive to partake in the reported medicinal qualities of the bubbling mineral springs. Drawn by the springs and the fertile surrounding area, many pioneers began to stay by the early 1880’s. The early settlers raised cattle and sheep, hay, grains, and vegetables. They established businesses catering to the soldiers and travelers through Pagosa Springs. Bathhouses sprang up around the Great Pagosa Hot Spring. Motels and saloons were available. Some residents were seasonal, moving back and forth between the mining areas and Pagosa Springs.



In May of 1883, the town site of Pagosa Springs was surveyed and platted. Archuleta County was established in 1885, named in honor of Antonio D. Archuleta who sponsored the legislation. Pagosa Springs was incorporated on March 2, 1891. This action marked a turning point from a rough and tumble frontier village to a growing town. With the growth of cattle and sheep ranching, and the development of the lumber industry, Pagosa Springs began to flourish in the 1890’s and early 1900’s.

## Observations

The following observations were made in the four focus groups held on the first day of the downtown assessment.

- Abundance of natural resources
- Geothermal energy capabilities untapped
- Need to embrace vibrant history
- Dedicated and active community members
- Need to recognize and focus on a clear niche
- Lacking community engagement and personal development for young people
- Need to cultivate community cohesion
- Need to collaborate downtown business marketing

Pagosa Springs is Awesome. **Recognize the progress that this community has made.**



Above: Pagosa Springs 1988



Above: Pagosa Springs 2012

This community has so much potential that is only partially being tapped. Great strides have been made in Pagosa Springs to create a wonderful environment for both tourists and locals. However, the focus on what hasn't happened, the focus on conflict and disagreement, and the lack of initiative to bridge the differences and find areas of agreement is creating a negative energy instead of allowing you to forge ahead by accentuating and building on areas where agreement might be reached.

Embrace your assets:

- River is an incredible draw: The beauty and utility of water is something to treasure and accentuate. The overlook and other opportunities to see or be near the water are wonderful but could be accentuated further in design, signage, recreational opportunities, and marketing.
- Environment is a finite resource: Consider carefully how you utilize and impact those resources, as they are not replaced easily. The natural beauty and access to the environment are key assets for Pagosa Springs. Though economic development and increasing revenues, population, and jobs are important, the community must think strategically about how to approach these topics without endangering the very reason people have chosen Pagosa thus far. The costs, not only in dollars, but in changes to the environment should be considered carefully when determining how best to attract visitors and new residents.
- History is a story to be told: The history of this community differentiates you from others and should be intertwined with all that you do. Pagosa Springs has a pretty unique and special tale to tell that is not bubbling to the top of your collateral materials and online presence. This is a huge asset that can be capitalized on with relatively low costs.
- Human capital and organizational know-

how are both broad and deep: Use the diversity for good not evil! Different opinions and skill sets are an important part of innovation and successful communities. The variety of folks attracted and born in Pagosa Springs are what makes the community so special. It is important to find a way to give people a voice but not let any one faction monopolize the decision-making or paralyze progress.

- Geothermal is your unique niche: Get behind the project, help find the funding, expand the concept, and make it an educational, historical, and community gathering opportunity. This is one area everyone appears to support, it is trendy and hip, and it is a unique and special asset that your neighbors do not have.

## Communications

**Observation:** There seems to be lack of clarity around information distribution and decision-making.

**Recommendations:** Simplify with one of contact for communications.

- The town has already begun working to address this by increasing opportunities for public input at meetings. Continue the positive steps to include more public comment in meetings and encourage all groups to come and share ideas. Perhaps having an option for written comments to be submitted through the website would also be helpful. However, once people share, the Town should be sure to make them know they are heard. Creating a way to respond to comment, perhaps sharing all comments on the website and then posting responses or actions taken would encourage a broader community dialogue.
- Consider becoming a Candidate for the Colorado Main Street Program. This program is coordinated by the Department of Local Affairs and uses the Four Point

Approach for working with Organization, Promotions, Economic Restructuring, and Design. This program allows the community to create an umbrella structure to coordinate the various efforts of groups already working in town. The Candidate program allows communities to receive training, guidance, and networking with specialists and peer communities around the state over three years before making the commitment to become a full Colorado Main Street Community.

- Identify a Downtown Champion who looks at safe and clear environment, downtown appearance, healthy businesses, partnerships, communication, and events. The items listed here appear to be the biggest priorities shared with the team by the community, the task now will be to identify how to support downtown and impacts in these areas with man (or woman) power. There are several communities who have completed downtown assessments and used the momentum to secure a full time intern (Best and Brightest) or volunteer (VISTA) to work on the downtown action items. Ask DCI or DOLA for more information on both of these programs to understand how Pagosa Springs might benefit from these resources.
- Develop one point of contact for accountability and clarity in personal and virtual relations. The community has many resources and support groups looking to improve the community, however, there is not one place that serves as a clearinghouse for all resources and questions that existing or potential businesses or residents might have. It is important to have one group that is an authority on what is going on downtown and with business support services. Whether a formal Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or one of the existing organizations, one entity must serve as an objective,

impartial, and accountable group to ask and answer important questions, to bridge communication issues, and identify needs for resources and partnerships when implementing improvements downtown. To accomplish this, it is recommended that the Mayor/city council, a county commissioner, the Chamber, a lodging board member, and three small business owners serve on an advisory council that informs and creates positions and responses to community issues. While participants on this council may vary, the important piece is that different interests are represented and that everyone is committed to communicating clear, honest, and meaningful messages and receiving and sharing input from all groups.

- Consider sharing resources for websites and social media for the Chamber, Tourism, and Town websites to target tourists, locals, potential residents, businesses, and property owners. Each of the websites has some good information but the resources spent to maintain several sites could be consolidated into one. This will also help consolidate messages so that visitors or locals can easily find the one definitive website to guide them through opportunities for recreation, shopping, investing in property, and living in Pagosa Springs.
- Find a way to list all businesses and non-profits in one place and on one map. The current map is a bit intimidating, confusing, and only includes some of the businesses or sites to see. While there is a lot going on in Pagosa Springs, the map must be easy to use and really guide folks to find shopping, recreation, cultural activities, etc. Consider creating one community map instead of some people paying to be highlighted one place, and others somewhere else.

**Recommendations:** Focus on regular and

transparent venues to discuss current initiatives.

- Hold regular coffee and conversation monthly meetings where the non-profit, business, and community at large can sign up to present 5 minute updates. The Town and the Downtown should have a brief update as well and all minutes posted online and in regular locations each month. Most of the time these conversations are successful if held early morning on a regular day of the month (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7am) so that people will always know it is going on. It is also suggested to have a record of what was discussed and post it for download for people who couldn't make the meeting.
- Create a regular downtown update from the Downtown Champion for Town Council and County Commissioners each month. As the downtown revitalization moves forward, have the advisory committee or "champion" create a five minute update with written report to share with the Council and Commissioners each month. This is a way to identify need for support, upcoming challenges, and celebrate little successes as a community.

**Observation:** There is a broad range of interests and priorities and a perceived lack of information.

**Recommendations:** Communicate priorities and focus resources accordingly. While each group in town seems to have a priority or focus, there are not overarching community materials that indicate the priorities of Pagosa Springs, which based on our meetings, were largely focused around safe and clear environment, downtown appearance, healthy economy and businesses, partnerships, and communication.

- Focus resources for greater impact: Downtown Boundaries. The historic district is the draw for tourists and has the ability to capture folks passing through. If the community can focus resources for

marketing, improvements, etc. on making the downtown more functional and easy to use, the impact of improvements will be more acutely realized than if divided and spread thinly all over the community.

- The Town and County should declare priorities for marketing and economic development. Developing a strong model for collaboration, partnership, and conservation of resources will make your resources go further. Encourage all groups to propose solutions using partnerships to make dollars go further.
- Begin dialogue with the TimeBank to become a community-wide resource. This non-profit group that assists in developing a barter system around professional services is a great asset and can help both with supporting non-profit and small businesses but also with increasing the level of training and skill acquisition for underemployed and youth in the community.
- As a community hoping to attract and maintain young families, it is important to cultivate opportunities for youth. Regularly plan with all education and youth providers to develop communications with young people to engaging youth in business development, marketing, city/county advisory functions, etc.

## Organization

The second section of this report focuses on organization, which includes developing collaboration, volunteer recruitment and management, fund-raising for the organization, and developing operational strategies. Organization involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a downtown revitalization program. The four principal components of organization are:

- Public and media relations
- Volunteer development

- Fundraising
- Policy development and strategies

A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of a volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are best coordinated and supported by a paid, full-time or part-time program director. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders. While a paid downtown coordinator may not currently be feasible, it is something to strive for in the future.

Notwithstanding this fundamental description of a typical downtown organizational structure, numerous variations exist throughout the country and are driven largely by local circumstances. In some towns, for example, the Chamber of Commerce is strong enough to add an organizational component designated to focus on the downtown. Other districts develop some form of special district to dedicate resources and focus on downtown.

Regardless of the organizational structure chosen, one overriding factor is demonstrated time and again in communities undertaking a program of downtown revitalization: the most successful communities accomplish their desired outcomes by developing a solid organizational component early in the process to oversee and manage their downtown revitalization efforts. If the community does not create and develop a solid organizational component to oversee and manage the process early on, despite the best intentions of all concerned, the program most likely will not accomplish the desired outcomes and risks fading away before it has a chance to succeed.

Given these realities, we cannot overemphasize the importance of placing organizational development among the highest priorities of early revitalization activities. Most, if not all, of the recommendations in this report are made within the framework of this understanding.

**Observation:** There does not seem to be ONE organization or entity that represents the special interests of the downtown business community and the other residences and government agencies in the Downtown District. Additionally, business owners can enhance their collective voices, champion their interests and create a sustainable funding stream.

**Recommendation:** Identify a Downtown Champion by forming a DDA or BID. Consider creation of a financing mechanism to fund long-term enhancements and management of the commercial district.

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) enables businesses and property owners to work together to strengthen the central business district by generating funding from property and/or sales tax in the district that can reinvested into projects and programs that benefit the area.

By legal definition, a DDA is a quasi-municipal corporation that is intended to halt or prevent deterioration of property values or structures in the central business districts. Funds can be generated by a DDA through a variety of options, including:

- Tax increment financing (TIF) on property
- Tax increment financing on sales
- Up to 5 mil property tax for operations

Any or all of these can be utilized with a DDA. Once created, the DDA can continue collecting TIF and the mill levy for up to 30 years before the district must be dissolved and a new DDA must be created.

Unlike an Urban Redevelopment Authority (which also captures TIF increment but does not allow for a mil levy), creation of a DDA does not require a finding of blight. The only restriction is on where it can be placed, which by law must be in the central business district and/or the area traditionally considered as such. For Idaho Springs, that area is demonstrated in red coloring in the following map:



A downtown development authority has the power to:

- Acquire property
- Construct and equip improvements
- Lease and sell property
- Establish fees, rates and charges for the use of property

A plan of development, describing the improvements, must be approved by the City and includes, but not limited to:

- Streets
- Parks
- Plazas
- Parking facilities
- Pedestrian malls
- Right-of-ways

The process to create the DDA, including plan development, consensus building, ordinance creation and vote, is likely to take at least a year from start to finish (see appendices for more detail). Typically, the final day of voting for the DDA is Election Day, so the creation process should start accordingly.

Once created, the DDA is governed by a Board of Directors with 5-11 members, including a Town Council member. These board members are appointed by Town Council and have 4-year terms.

Community Outreach and Consensus Building

**Observation:** There is a lack of understanding in this community about how and for what reasons

decisions are being made vies-e-vies ED.

**Recommendation:** This step is intended to have an open discussion amongst the organizations involved with economic development and the public. This includes the Town, the lead agency, County, CDC, TTC and Chamber. One purpose is to reach consensus as to understanding the purpose and action items required to successfully engage in economic development and growth.

The Town of Pagosa Springs should plan for approximately six monthly public meetings. During the several interviews, the Assessment Team often heard frustration voiced over what the interviewees perceived as poor collaboration and communication between the local governments, the CDC and the Chamber (not sure if the chamber was included in this). This problem often exists in community efforts to pursue economic development and/or downtown improvements. This is another reason for the downtown businesses and the Town to consider the DDA or BID. It does not guarantee that collaboration and communication and consensus problems discontinue, but it should improve.

The town should consider interim steps now. One possible option is to organize and galvanize a downtown steering committee as a prelude to any formal organization such as a DDA or BID. This would help the affected interests focus on the issues and goals. If a more formal organization is part of this focus, then the next steps can be taken.

### Revolving Loan Fund

**Observation:** There is a need for investment capital in existing downtown buildings.

**Recommendation:** In conjunction with the creation of a DDA: Town to help create, capitalize and seek matching grant funds for a RLF for downtown building improvements.

## Promotion

Promotion is another of the four key points in building a vital downtown. According to the National Trust Main Street Center, promotion sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play, and invest in the Main Street district.



By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image. This image can then be reinforced through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

**Observation:** Events are well received and plentiful!

**Recommendations:** While events are a great way to attract visitors and engage locals in the community, they are also labor and resource intensive to plan and implement. Consider enhancing events and reducing resource usage through greater collaboration amongst event organizations.

- Identify the downtown objectives for events e.g. retail sales, generating foot traffic, changing local habits, etc. Evaluate

all events on an annual basis, why you are doing them, and how to increase partnership and impacts for less money. A sample strategic event matrix is in the appendices, but also a 2005 strategic events matrix for Pagosa Springs can be found in the Colorado Community Revitalization report in your files. These tools should be updated each year when an evaluation of each event is completed by those who coordinate events. Be sure to consider quality over quantity because it is more meaningful to have one event that meets multiple objectives than to have five that each only achieve one.

- There is much concern and disagreement over store hours and how best to engage community members with retailers. Part of the problem is breaking old habits. If retailers stayed open one night and got no business, they believe it isn't worth their time to do business at night. If customers come downtown to shop but only find closed stores, they believe that Pagosa Springs is a ghost town after 6pm. Change these thoughts slowly but consistently by developing a habit changing retail event e.g. Chamber's Sundowner Night with special local discount:
  - Start by identifying products available in Pagosa Springs that might surprise people who leave town to shop. Post this list on the website local section, in the newspapers. Or create a little rack card brochure that can be placed around town.
  - Create a special invitation to locals (county-wide) to come to downtown Pagosa Springs on the third Thursday for a special local's night. Ask a different business to host each time or even do a progressive evening with snacks and drinks at different walkable venues around

the downtown.

- Work with business to stay open at night. Look for a critical mass of 3-5 business the first event, and try to build numbers and participation (hosting, creating local specials, etc.) with each event.

**Observation:** There are a great number of publications, websites, and information available from multiple sources.

**Recommendations:** Consider using the power of numbers, business support, marketing, and economic development organizations to advocate for business interests in a more targeted fashion.

- Consider an inclusive versus exclusive approach to business support. Ever heard the phrase "cut off your nose to spite your face?" Pay to play organizations and marketing do just that because by only showing SOME of the businesses and resources, it hurts the appearance of the whole community.. It is actually more helpful to ALL businesses and the community to have EVERY business listed on materials and maps because it makes the whole community look stronger and more inviting. Consider developing one marketing brochure, website, etc. where everyone is listed for free as a minimum, additional benefits can be added if the businesses want to invest.
- Chamber, the Tourism Committee, CDC and the DDA or BID can work with local paper, publications, etc. to negotiate a combined listing for the downtown area (include everyone). Develop a collaborative marketing campaign. Remember, this helps everyone, those who pay and those who do not.
- Work through the lodgers association to get one brochure with local coupons for Pagosa Springs business, services, amenities, sample itineraries, etc. into every hotel,

motel, and time share. Don't rely on paid advertisements. Having a lodging board and tax is a great asset, but it doesn't help if the material is not distributed consistently or effectively.

- Partner with realtors to showcase downtown opportunities. The realtor community in Pagosa Springs seems active and engaged and a perfect partner in promoting investment opportunities. On the community website there should be a place for listings of great opportunities that show what a property might house, the opportunities for various types of businesses, and the incentives and benefits for buying and building in Pagosa Springs.

Partner with schools to engage students in downtown businesses and beautification opportunities. Youth are a huge asset and something to cultivate with opportunities and investment in the downtown. If teams of youth can do beautification projects, design window displays, and be spokespeople for Pagosa Springs it will increase the rate of return after college, it will encourage them to try new ideas for business development, and it will help them to develop professional skills for their future.

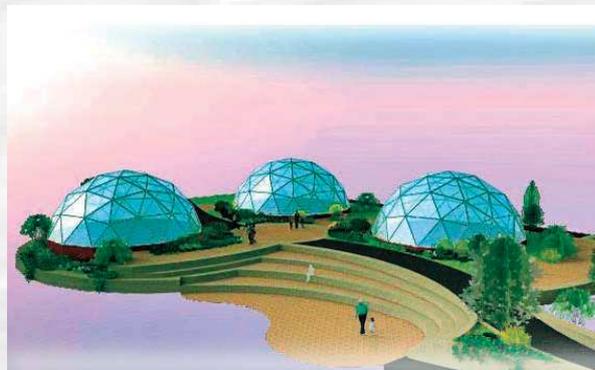
**Observation:** Tourism is an important part of this community that is handed to you by nature and proximity.

#### Recommendations:

- Continue the good work of the tourism board in considering all types of tourism: Heritage Tourism, Geo-Tourism, AgriTourism, Volunteerism, EcoTourism, etc. Pagosa Springs can market to a new type of resident/visitor by differentiating Pagosa Springs from all of the other communities in the area.
- The story of Pagosa's history could be marketed much more thoroughly in town, online, or through the sites around town.

Marketing groups could assist the historic preservation group and student classes in compiling content for use in promoting the town.

- Highlight the GeoThermal Village concept. This is huge for ecotourism, but also in terms of business development. The options to grown year round in a high altitude and cold environment are few so consider how Pagosa Springs can take the lead in this area. Also consider that, free heat is a huge incentive to housing or commercial in a cold environment...

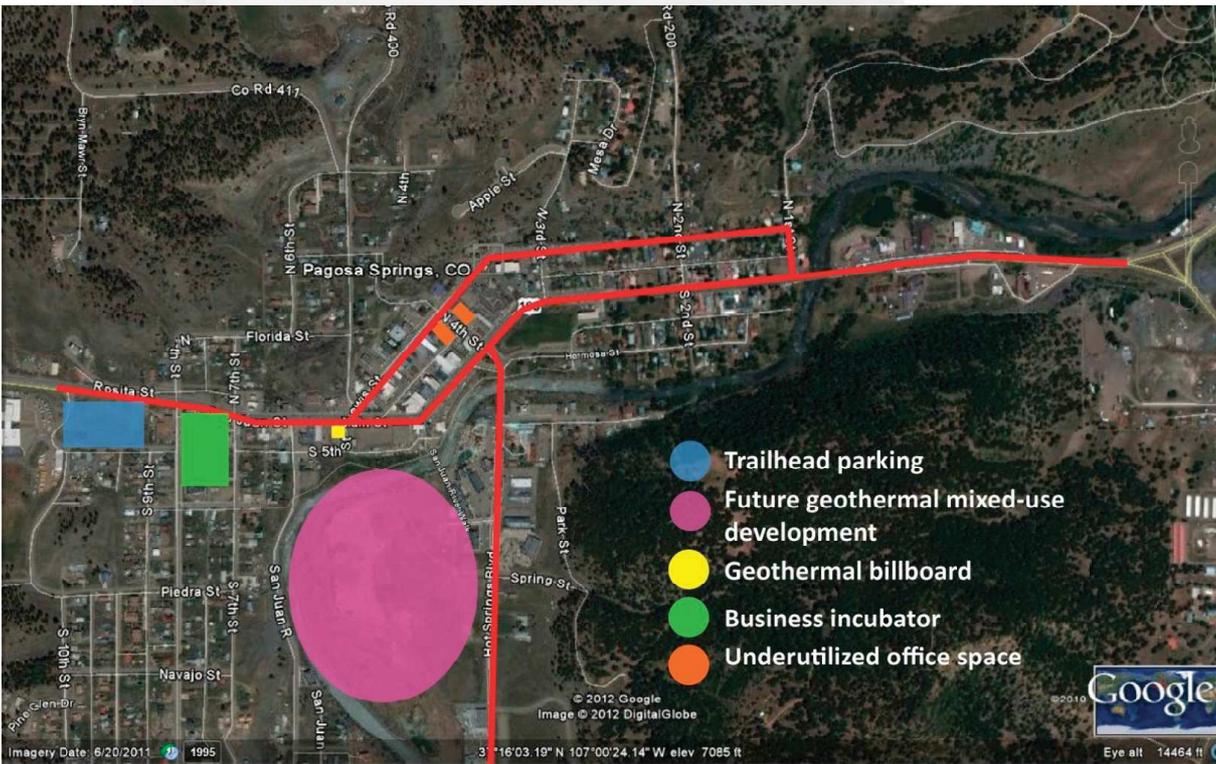


Above: Example of what the Geothermal village could look like

- Consider combined efforts at attracting conventions, activity groups, and interest groups through developing clear specifications for what the town can manage in rooms and meeting space and proactively seeking out events. Use the tourism board to create a package that outlines the options for conventions in one venue, divided around town, what meeting spaces are available, special offers from the springs, special offers for skiing Wolf Creek, etc.
- DCI has quarterly and annual events... WE would love to hold one in Pagosa Springs downtown in 2014. Send us info!

Increase capacity and reduce duplication through enhanced task distribution:

- The school district is including a community service component in the curriculum. This is a great opportunity for partnership. Work with school district to shape the community



service requirement to address needs for skills around downtown development.

- Work with the TimeShare organization to post requests for assistance to accomplish items listed in this action plan.

## Economic Restructuring

The focus of economic restructuring is to assist in efforts to recruit, retain and expand opportunities for investment in downtown. This is accomplished by ensuring that investors and businesses are aware of all of the resources available for assistance and all of the benefits of choosing to locate their business in downtown, including the opportunities that may exist to capitalize on promotional activities. It also works to build strong relationships between downtown businesses, residents, and users.

**Observation:** There are significant opportunities for infill development that could support economic restructuring and the downtown economy.

## Recommendations:

- Embrace and support the concept of Pagosa Springs as a Geothermal Village and support the efforts with the strategic development of key parcels using incentives and title services. This can not only be a vehicle to attract new business and create jobs, but it is an attractive educational and environmental niche that is pretty unique to Pagosa Springs.
- Piggyback on the Geothermal Greenhouse Partnership effort and enhance it with the redevelopment of a vacant highway frontage parcel at the SE corner of 5<sup>th</sup> & Main.



- This parcel could serve as an attraction for those passing on the highway to stop and learn about Geothermal Pagosa.
- This parcel has potential environmental issues which can be managed using brownfields programs. Assistance from Colorado Brownfields Foundation is available.
- Consider catalyst sites and how best to use community strengths to bolster property development initiatives. The former City Market location could serve as a business incubator location or other means to support the local economic restructuring.
  - A Phase I Environmental Assessment should be performed by a Qualified Environmental Professional (as defined by EPA) before any title transfers to the CDC (as proposed).
  - Funding assistance may be available for all environmental phases of the redevelopment process (assessment and cleanup) that private entities would not be eligible for.
- Enhancing connectivity and supporting the trails master plan could be accomplished with the redevelopment of a former brownfield site west of the Sisson Library. This site could serve as trail parking and advertisement of the trails available in Pagosa Springs for the high volume traffic passing by on Highway 160.
  - Documentation exists and some degree of regulatory closure has been obtained from previous efforts. Cleanup easily could be compatible with its future use as a parking lot.
- Revisit past initiatives and try to utilize the past efforts to jumpstart those catalyst projects in today's market. A previous

redevelopment effort south of the Hot Springs Hotel and north of the Community Center is in limbo for numerous reasons.

- Redevelopment economics of this significant parcel could be enhanced with the inclusion of an incentive such as the possible 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge.
- The planned inclusion of this area in a geothermal service area could provide critical business start-up costs.
- Inclusion of mixed use residential in the PUD could provide a critical body of residential housing for support of the nearby downtown location. "Mixed use" consisting of live-work space and some percentage of affordable housing is supportive of the burgeoning creative industries group and the need to support local families. While this is no doubt a substantial project it easily could be done in phases and is supportive of the Geothermal Village concept which could become a national model.

**Observation:** Some existing office buildings in downtown locations are currently underutilized. Greater utilization of these buildings could provide additional income to current users by providing below-market rents and communal meeting space supportive of the nonprofit and business start-up community.



**Recommendation:**

It has been pointed out to this group that the Century Link and Gas Utility Buildings are underutilized. The City or DDA might approach these tenants or owners about a suggested sublet opportunity. The benefit to the tenant or owner is additional income to offset costs and some of those costs could be used to provide below-market rental space for non-profits or business start-ups. The downtown business community could benefit from additional daytime foot traffic from these additional office workers.

**Observation:** The community may not have considered all sides of economic development projects and goals as well as the goals for historic preservation.

**Recommendation:**

The town must be sure to take time to explain potential projects, areas of consideration, and how the impartial evaluation is completed, before opening up a public discussion on whether any given project should proceed. Considering the full long term impact of a project's impact on current and future generations might take under consideration the length of the benefit versus the length of the environmental impact to a resource. Likewise, in the realm of historic preservation, a weighing of the owner's property rights and the right of the public to its memories of a place should be considered. The cost to retain a historical resource could be a joint responsibility of those charged with historic preservation and the property owner. Development fees could take into consideration the cost of historic preservation and these could be matched with historic preservation funding. Remember that the final decision is made by elected officials, who are elected by the citizens to lead the community.



**Design**

Design takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in downtown by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, landscaping, merchandising, displays, and promotional materials. Its aim is to stress the importance of design quality in all of these areas, to educate people about design quality and to expedite improvements in the downtown. At the forefront of the design effort is the restoration of historic buildings, which helps provide the backdrop for downtown's sense of place.

Downtown Pagosa Springs benefits from beautiful scenery, a good building stock, and a variety of businesses. Challenges associated with a difficult economy, locally, regionally and nationally have resulted in vacant storefronts. At the forefront of the design effort is the activation of vacant storefronts, which will help restore a sense of vibrancy downtown.

**Observation:** There are many empty storefronts in Pagosa Springs. The vacant storefronts remain empty, dark, and some of the windows are dirty.



Empty storefronts = missed opportunity

**Recommendations:** Storefronts are street level billboards that should command attention and entice people downtown. Window displays project the image of the quality of goods and services available throughout a district and therefore empty storefronts may become distracting. Additionally, activating storefronts will give a sense of liveliness and activity to the downtown.

**Display options for vacant storefronts:**



- Encourage entrepreneurs, artists and community groups to occupy space for short-and long-term use.
- Create geothermal diorama in windows to further depict Pagosa Springs as a Geothermal Village. The interpretive signage could be created by the high school students so that display also acts as an educational project involving youth.
- Each holiday have a contest for the best dressed windows and include vacant storefronts. To create holiday displays in the vacant storefronts contact local artists, schools, senior, and secular groups to discover who is interested in volunteering their time and creativity to the effort.
- During Historic Preservation Month, work with the Town Historic Preservation Board to showcase students posters highlighting Pagosa Springs’ history. The new window displays could enhance a historic walking

tour of downtown Pagosa Springs.

See article in the Appendix, “Shining a Light on Window Displays” by Scott Day for more tips to storefront activation.

**Observation:** There is a lack of connection, both physical and visual, in the downtown area.

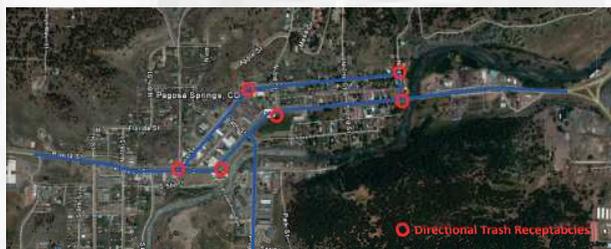
**Recommendations:**

- Continue to implement the concepts from the 2008 Streetscape Furnishings and Signage Plan to improve signage and wayfinding to connect all the pieces of the community together in one cohesive package.
- Add benches and trash receptacles to improve the experience downtown.
  - Make your trash receptacles speak for you! Install multipurpose



directories at the major corners in the core of downtown. These directory/ trash receptacles will encourage shoppers to continue around the bend where Main Street and San Juan St. intersect. Even visual cues that

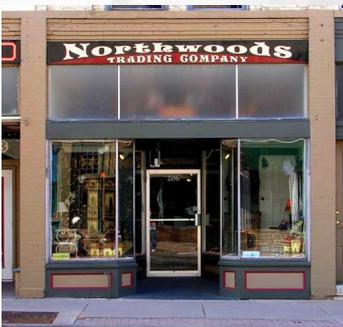
seem very obvious to community members are important for visitors and those unfamiliar with the town. Wayfinding signage should act as a silent guide for visitors helping to direct them at every turn. Please see map below (larger map in appendices) for suggested placement.



- There are some banners downtown but there needs to be more repetition to make an impact. Installation of additional banners along the downtown core will bring a clear sense of unity, consistency, and cohesiveness to the downtown. These banners will also act as a visual cue for visitors that “this is downtown Pagosa Springs!” The repetition of the banners will also bring necessary color to the downtown during the winter months.

**Observation:** Not all of the signage downtown is pedestrian friendly. Many businesses downtown have only primary signage to attract highway traffic but are lacking secondary signage to appease those at the pedestrian level. When a pedestrian is unable to quickly identify the name of your business and the type of service or goods you offer they are less likely to visit your business.

**Recommendation:** Signage in Downtown that is comprised of high quality design elements can serve to unify the downtown and send a consistent and welcoming message. All businesses downtown should have a primary and a secondary sign to accommodate highway traffic and pedestrians. Please see examples of primary and secondary signage below.



Primary Signage (visable from highway)



Secondary Signage (visable at the pedestrian level)

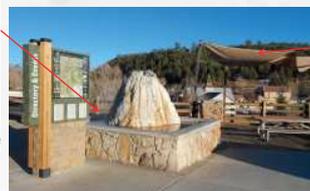
**Observation:** The downtown is very dark after 5pm.



**Recommendations:**

- Businesses should keep their windows dimly lit at night
- Use gooseneck lights to illuminate signage at night
- The Pagosa Springs business community should work together to schedule and offer extended business hours during peak tourist times.

**Observation:** “The overlook” is lacking color and does not serve as a draw for the highway tourists.



Add color

**Recommendations:**

- Add color and excitement around the overlook with the addition of trees, plantings, colored shade features over the picnic area.

- Work with CDOT to install a “guide” sign before the overlook to direct highway traffic. This will alert those that are unfamiliar with the area that there is something to stop for. In addition, your downtown businesses are likely to be visited from those stopping to see the scenic overlook.

**Observation:** The back of the courthouse and the jail is very prominent along the San Juan Riverwalk and Hot springs Blvd. With a lack of architectural details and color it is currently a missed opportunity.



**Recommendation:** Utilize the back wall of the building for a large-scale mural using local artists. This will provide color year round and act as a backdrop to the riverwalk’s natural beauty.

Possible themes for the large scale mural:

- Tell the history of Pagosa Springs
- Include information about the geothermal opportunities in Pagosa.

## Participating Stakeholders

- Pagosa Springs CDC
- Town & County Residents
- Town & County Businesses and property owners
- Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Imagine Downtown Committee
- BOCC
- Town Planning Commission
- Town Historic Preservation Board
- Town of Pagosa Springs
- Friends of Reservoir Hill
- Pagosa Springs Youth Center
- Habitat for Humanity of Archuleta County
- Archuleta School District
- Nurturing Center
- Arts and Culture Project
- Archuleta County Education Center
- Dr. Mary Fisher Medical Foundation
- Town Tourism Committee
- Parks & Rec Commission
- Pagosa Springs SUN
- Town Council
- Mayor of Pagosa Springs
- Community Center

## Funding Mechanisms

### Local Funding Sources

**Lodging Tax:** This is a great asset that is in place to bring folks to town and utilize the lodging establishments. Don’t forget that highlighting more of what is going on in town will create the idea of staying one more night in lodging.

**Business license Fees:** Dedicate all business license fees to business and economic development.

**Severance Tax Direct Distribution:** Currently the town places these funds in the General Fund. We recommend the town allocate all or a portion or all of these funds to downtown capital improvements.

City General Funds: Consider using a portion of this sales tax for downtown capital projects.

Consider forming a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). DDA can be a taxing district and can use tax increment financing to help market and improve downtown.

Region 9 Façade Loan Program and Region 9 and Business Loan Program

- The Downtown Revitalization/Retail Enhancement program is intended to encourage the revitalization of core downtown business areas: beautification of downtown buildings, bring buildings up to code. The funds are targeted for building and esthetic improvements. Businesses need to be in the central business district.
- Lower interest loans to downtown businesses can help provide one more support to help small businesses start and survive.

Downtown Revolving Loan Fund: Create and capitalize a locally based incentive program for commercial building investments. The fund is targeted toward improvement projects that enhance the appeal of downtown properties. Take advantage of the USDA-RD Rural Business Enterprise Grant to match any town funds.

## State Resources

Department of Local Affairs  
Energy Impact Grants:

Tier 1 and 2 grants are available for own owned infrastructure in the downtown such as:

- Streetscape
- Redevelopment of the Geothermal System
- Visitors Center
- Fifth Street Bridge.
- Local match for these projects can be from town sources mentioned above or from other grants.

DOLA Main Street Mini-grants available to Candidates, Main Streets and Graduates.

Colorado Creative Districts-funding and technical assistance

State Historical Fund

Pagosa Springs is a Certified Local Government as defined and recognized by the State Historical Society. Funds are available for historic preservation of buildings in Pagosa Springs.

Colorado Tourism Office

CDOT Enhancements

GOCO-GOCO funds are a potential funding source for park renovations/expansion.

The town is encouraged to leverage, using local matching funds, and multiple grants from state sources, and federal if appropriate, for one particular project.

Other Opportunities and Funding for Business and Economic Development

Small Business Development Centers

Business planning consulting is available for businesses in Pagosa Springs through the services of the SBDC located at Fort Lewis College.

EPA Brownfields Program

- This program provides direct funding for both brownfields assessment and cleanup.

Southwest Youth Corp, NCCC, Trails 2000, Local Volunteers

- The organizations listed above can assist the town with construction and development of the Trails system. Consider using them in construction.

## Team Member Bios

### **Ken Charles**

#### **Colorado Department of Local Affairs**

Ken Charles began his career with the Department of Local Affairs in 1988 in the Department's Durango Office. He works with local governments in the Southwest Region, which includes eight counties. His responsibilities are tied to the needs and issues the local governments are experiencing and fluctuate as the issue change and acts as the liaison for the Department with local governments. This includes individual project development, budget and financial management, elections, various land use management and planning roles, goal setting and counsel to local governments. Additionally, he manages the Department's grant contracts in the region. Ken particularly enjoys assisting local governments with developing projects, be it a capital project or planning, or helping draft intergovernmental agreements and resolutions, or assisting with city/county manager recruitment processes, to highlight a few. He has received training at the Nation's Emergency Management Institute in Recovery from Disaster and in Public Assistance. He managed the Governor's Rural Healthcare Initiative for the Department.

### **Katherine Correll**

#### **Executive Director, Downtown Colorado, Inc.**

Katherine Correll has experience spanning the fields of community outreach to advance downtown and community development, not-for-profit administration, project development and management, local government planning, marketing, financial and economic development services, and education. Katherine joined Downtown Colorado, Inc. as the director of communications and operations in 2006; in 2007 she became the executive director. Born and raised in Denver, Colorado, Katherine has worked with development initiatives in Denver, New York, Chicago, and the former Soviet Union. Her focus on strategic planning and organizational development and management includes building viable and sustainable private,

public, and non-for-profit institutions and programs. Prior to her current position, Katherine managed the American Councils' portfolio for the Republic of Moldova, focusing on building civil society initiatives, education, and public administration reforms. She was also responsible for management and growth of the American Language Center, language and professional training school. Katherine received her master's degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University and her bachelor's degree in Politics with a minor in Urban Studies from New York University.

### **Pattie Snidow**

#### **USDA Rural Development**

Pattie earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Regis University, with a minor in communications, and is currently completing her master's degree in Executive Public Administration through the University of Colorado Denver, and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. She is certified in community development, and is utilized as a resource to her national office in training others in community development, as well as working with the communities she serves. She is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute, and an instructor of the Basic Economic Development course for that institute. Pattie joined the USDA Rural Development as Northwest Area Director in 2005 with offices in Delta and Craig. Rural Development is a federal finance agency, specializing in infrastructure which can build a rural community from the ground up, including financing the businesses in that community.

### **Mark Walker**

#### **Colorado Brownfields Foundation**

Mark joined Colorado Brownfields Foundation in 2009 after leaving state employment to continue his work in the Brownfields arena. Mark was employed for 20 years with state and local health departments in Colorado, and formerly coordinated Colorado's Voluntary Cleanup Program since its inception in 1994. He also served on a national task force of the states dealing with issues unique to voluntary

cleanup and brownfields programs. Prior to joining Colorado's Voluntary Cleanup Program, Mr. Walker worked for three years with Colorado's Underground Storage Tank Program. In the early years of the Brownfields Initiative, he completed an assignment with the EPA Region 8 Brownfields Program. Most recently he served in a liaison capacity with other state agencies and non-profits in promoting Brownfields and economic development. Mark holds a Bachelor's Degree in Microbiology and a Master's Degree in Environmental Health from Colorado State University.

**Genevieve Zeman**  
**Downtown Colorado, Inc.**

Genevieve Zeman has worked in design since 2008 with experience spanning historic preservation, detail drafting, graphic design, marketing, and website development. Genevieve joined Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) in March of 2010 as the Historic Preservation Assistant and became the Preservation and Design Specialist in 2011. Prior to her position with DCI she was an interior design intern at the Department of Local Affairs for two years helping local governments set goals, make decisions, and create conceptual designs to meet the needs and vision of the local communities. She received her bachelor's degree in Interior Architecture from Colorado State University in May of 2009. She is very passionate about sustainable design practices and obtained LEED Accreditation in June of 2009. Genevieve has lived in Colorado for about 10 years, and hopes to continue to work in commercial design assisting the wonderful communities throughout Colorado.

## Emerging Leader Team Support

**Isabel Waldman**  
**OSM/VISTA**  
**Downtown Colorado, Inc.**

Isabel Waldman is a graduate of the University of Oregon where she received a bachelor's degree in International Studies with a concentration in Environmental Studies and a minor in Planning, Public Policy, and Management. Her field of study

gave her the opportunity to study community development and resource planning in Chile and Bolivia. Isabel grew up in Colorado and is currently serving as the OSM/VISTA for Downtown Colorado, Inc., which is part of the Western Hardrock Watershed Team.