Downtown Vernal
Main Street Placemaking
on a UDOT Highway
APA UT 2022
TODAY’S PRESENTERS

Quinn Bennion
City Manager
Vernal City

Ryan Wallace
Director of Urban Design
MHTN Architects

Dan Smith
Rural Planning
MHTN Architects

Alison Lewis
Landscape Architect
MHTN Architects
PURPOSE OF DOWNTOWN PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS

32,000 ADT truck traffic, creates a noisy downtown and the feeling of being unsafe when getting out of a parked car or crossing the street.

Historic buildings, like the Vernal Theater, give downtown Vernal charm and character.

Inconsistent and cracked paving makes the Downtown appear uninviting to pedestrians.

The hanging flowers and flower pots are a beloved part of Vernal Downtown.
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Vacant Storefront

Abandoned and underutilized lots with razor wire fences and graffiti

Underutilized Lamplighter Hotel block

Back/side buildings with miscellaneous parking within the Zions Block
OVERVIEW OF DOWNTOWN PLAN
“If you want to go fast go alone.
If you want to go far go together.”
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS | Stickers

What would you like to see Downtown Vernal?
Write your answer and drop in the box.
All suggestions will be considered in Planning for Downtown Vernal.
903 responses collected
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS | Site Visits

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

CASPER
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS | Facebook Campaign
Downtown Vernal is a destination that reflects its local and regional assets, past, traditions, and heritage. Its unique identity is present throughout downtown.

Downtown attracts locals and visitors with places for people to gather, build community, and experience Vernal’s unique culture. It fosters social connections 18 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and keeps people coming back again.

Downtown is the central Hub for business in Vernal and will expand economic opportunities for all. It will retain and enhance existing businesses and be inviting for new businesses.

Downtown Vernal supports an active lifestyle through its streets, outdoor spaces, events, and recreation opportunities.
DESIGN GUIDELINES | Site Design

- Building Setbacks
- Mid-Block Design
- Walking Boulevards
- Pedestrian-Oriented Streets
The side and rear of building in Downtown Vernal necessitates design guidelines due to the Plan’s mid-block design. Consideration of the awnings, window treatment, signs, and vertical separation between the upper floors and first floor of building is therefore necessary.

With the Plan’s mid-block design, the pedestrian experience is extended to other sides of the buildings. In addition to the façade improvements, areas to the side and rear also need a cohesive design, public art, and other forms of beautification.

It can also be activated as a destination spot and place for gathering. Therefore, mid-block spaces are recommended to draw in people traveling along the walking boulevards and serve as engaging connection points throughout the area.

A2 SIDE AND REAR OF BUILDING IMPROVEMENT

Casper, WY

Little B’s, Vernal, UT
S3 WALKING BOULEVARDS

A walking boulevard is a pedestrian passageway that acts as a mid-block connection between the main sidewalks. They add to the pedestrian interest and overall quality of the downtown, while also expanding retail opportunities with spaces for restaurants and cafes. 100 E between Vernal Ave. and 100 N and S will have the option to be designated pedestrian-only for special events.

- Twelve foot minimum unless not possible due to parcel size and ownership.
- Maintain visibility through the Walking Boulevard from adjacent buildings.
- Design elements for boulevard include seating, potted plants, shallow/recessed store windows, vines for color and interest, fin signs, lighting, banners for color, kiosks, awning and clear pedestrian through-way.
- Bollards, removable signs and roll-curbs along 100 E allows for pedestrian-only designation.
VERNAL DOWNTOWN PLAN

ZIONS

This design considers how redevelopment can include both a mixed-use product and residential, most likely in the form of town homes.

GOALS

G2
Leverage side streets to provide sidewalk dining and shopping and resolve parking challenges.

G3
Celebrating the historic nature of Vernal’s Downtown by encouraging a welcoming, walkable district.

G1
Support infill development, redevelopment and streetscape improvements to create a consistent and lively Downtown experience.

G1
Support local business parking needs by creating intuitive signage and access and improving conditions at existing parking lots.

G3
Encourage new business ventures in vacant storefronts and empty parcels to create a thriving district.

G3
Create an inviting transition between the Downtown commercial district and nearby residential areas.

NOTE: ANYTHING RENDERED YELLOW OR BLUE DEPICTS AN IMPROVEMENT TO THE BLOCK.

MAIN ST.

VERNAL AVE.

MIXED USE BUILDING

HOUSING

WALKING BOULEVARD - EAST
Cobble Rock block holds many exciting mid-block opportunities from outdoor performances by the Vernal Theater Company to patio dining. This block holds great potential to be a vibrant place to visit.

**GOALS**

1. **Build upon and expand the “Dinosaurland” brand theme for Downtown Vernal with Complementary themes of natural resource amenities and outdoor recreation.**
2. **Leverage side streets to provide sidewalk dining and shopping and resolve parking challenges.**
3. **Celebrate the historic nature of Vernal’s Downtown by encouraging a welcoming, walkable district.**
4. **Focus on creating destinations throughout Downtown to encourage exploration, discovery, & experience.**
5. **Support local business parking needs by making intuitive signage and access and improving conditions at existing parking lots.**
6. **Prioritize safety & comfort for people walking and biking.**

*NOTE: ANYTHING RENDERED YELLOW OR BLUE DEPICTS AN IMPROVEMENT TO THE BLOCK.*
The Sage Block shows a pedestrian connection from Main St. to the mid-block that is shared with vehicular traffic. There is also a small connection made between the parking lots on the west and east side of the block. Additionally, this block proposes infill development.

GOALS

G1 Leverage side streets to provide sidewalk dining & shopping and resolve parking challenges.

G1 Celebrate the historic nature of Vernal’s Downtown by encouraging a welcoming, walkable district.

G1 Support infill development, redevelopment, and streetscape improvements to create a consistent and lively Downtown experience.

G1 Support local business parking needs by creating intuitive signage and access and improving conditions at existing parking lots.

G1 Prioritize safety & comfort for people walking and biking.

NOTE: ANYTHING RENDERED YELLOW OR BLUE DEPICTS AN IMPROVEMENT TO THE BLOCK.

VERNAL AVE.
MAIN ST.
PUBLIC SPACE

This concept for four acres of public space shows a Visitor Center, restaurant, hotel, outdoor recreation opportunities, skate ribbon, a flexible paved area that could host food trucks, and an event space with a stage and great lawn. This could fit in a number of areas within the downtown and could occupy either one entire block or pieces of neighboring blocks.

GOALS

G 1 Build upon “Dinosaursland” brand for Downtown Vernal with complementary themes of natural resources amenities and outdoor recreation.

G 3 Celebrate the historic nature of Vernal’s Downtown by encouraging a welcoming, walkable district.

G 2 Focus on creating destinations throughout downtown to encourage exploration, discovery, & experience.

G 1 Support local business parking needs by creating intuitive signage and access and improving conditions of existing parking lots.

G 3 Support new business ventures in vacant storefronts and empty parcels to create a thriving district.

G 1 Prioritize safety & comfort for people walking and biking.

G 2 Support outdoor recreation and activities in Downtown.

GREAT LAWN

SKATE RINK AND PARKING

CLIMBING WALL AND DINOSAUR SCULPTURE
Looks back at progress made, identifying whether plan is on track

Change Key Ideas of Plan
Update and Add Revisions as Needed

Additional Ideas, New Research, Data
Add Appendix

WHO'S INVOLVED:
City and County
- Stakeholders
- Community Taskforce

WHO'S INVOLVED:
City
- County
- Planning Commission

Progress made
No update needed

New Ideas
PROGRESS OF ZIONS BLOCK
VERNAL DOWNTOWN PLAN

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
FUNDING
# Downtown Vernal Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
<th>Estimated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City general / reserves / street</td>
<td>$2,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDOT grants</td>
<td>$1,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City ARPA</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Econ Dev grant - Part B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revitalization funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>County ARPA</td>
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<td>CRA Loan</td>
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<td>Special Assessment Area (SAA) parking lots</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIB loan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIB grant</td>
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<td>Federal earmark</td>
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<td>Brownfield grant (targeted sites)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LWCA grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDA tourism grant - Denver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utah Outdoor Rec grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redeveloping grant</td>
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<td>Rural Econ Dev grant - Part A2, Part A3</td>
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<td>CDBG residential street</td>
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<td>Utah Outdoor Rec grant - Part B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redeveloping grant - Part B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utah Main Street funds - Tier 2 cities</td>
<td>$22,980,000</td>
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* Listed in order of probability & ability to designate funds

** Sub-total of funds that are secured: $15,580,000

DOWNTOWN VERNAL FUNDING
# Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Small Business Incentives</strong></td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Built Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Façade Improvement Incentives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Building Demolition Incentives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4. Historic Sign Incentives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. Recreational Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>2022-23</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td>Pickleball Courts</td>
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<td>Rock Climbing Wall</td>
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<td>Ice Skating Rink / Spray Pad</td>
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<td>Mountain Bike Pumptrack</td>
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<td><strong>6. Public Space</strong></td>
<td>2022-24</td>
<td>Built Environment</td>
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<td>Property Acquisition, Public Space Construction</td>
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<td>Vernal Information Center</td>
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<td><strong>7. Walking Boulevards and Public Parking</strong></td>
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<td>Streetscape</td>
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<td>Zion's Block</td>
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<td>Cobblestone Block</td>
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<td>7-11 Block</td>
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<td>Chamber Block</td>
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<td>Farm Exchange Block</td>
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<td><strong>8. Road Improvements</strong></td>
<td>2023-26</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Vernal Avenue</td>
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<td>Main Street</td>
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<td>100 East</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 West</td>
<td>2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streetscape, art. and sculptures</td>
<td>2023-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Profile Tourist Attraction</td>
<td>2024</td>
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**TIMELINE**

**Vernal Downtown Plan Implementation**

**Downtown Plan**
- Plan creation & development: Jan. to Oct. 2021
- Plan review: City Council, County Commission: Nov. 2021
- Plan adoption: City Council: Dec. 1, 2021
- Submission for Utah Mainstreet Program: May 2022
- Plan implementation:
  - Zions block project '22
  - Vernal Ave. rebuild '23
  - Cobblerock block '23
  - Sage block '24
- Establish Formal Downtown Vernal Alliance: Feb. 2022
- Grants / Funding
  - UDOT small urban grant: $1.5M
  - CDBG residential street: $190K
  - Community Project Funding: $1.2M
  - Part A County Economic grant: $150K
  - Part B County Economic grant: $275K
  - CIB grant / loan: $746,000
  - EDA ARPA Tourism grant: $746,000
  - Outdoor Recreation: $1.2M
  - Community Reinvestment Area
  - Inter-local Agreement
  - Special Assessment Area
  - Creation of MXD Zone

**Downtown CRA**
- Notification of CRA Public Hearing: Nov. 2021
- CRA Public Hearing: Dec. 15, 2021
- Approval of CRA Budget & Plan: Jan. 5, 2022
- Develop CRA programs:
  - Façade grant program
  - Demolition grant
  - Affordable housing program (10%)
  - Significant investment - participation & development agreements
- Implement CRA programs:
  - Vernal City staff & Façade Grant Review: March, April 2022
  - Issue CRA Loans / Bonds: May 2022

**ILA with Agencies**
- Discussion with taxing entities re: ILA terms: Dec. 2021
- Draft ILA Agreements: Jan. 2022
- Review & Approval ILA Agreements:
  - Vernal City: Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Jan. 3, Mar. 7
  - Uintah County: Jan. 12, Feb. 9
  - CUP: Feb. 24
  - Water Conservancy: Jan. 11, March 8
  - Mosquito Abatement: Feb. 10, April 14

**SAA Parking District**
- SAA Notice: Mar. 16, 2022
- Meetings with business owners: Feb., Mar. 2022
- Approval of SAA District: March 2022
- Implementation of SAA:
  - Protest period
  - Setup payment method
  - Expand SAA to other public parking blocks - '23, '24, '25

**SAA with Agencies**
- SAA Public Hearing: March 2022
- Approval of SAA District: March 2022

**Zoning**
- Creation of MXD Zone: Dec. 2021

All actions require simple majority.

Updated: Mar. 18, 2022
LESSONS LEARNED
THANK YOU