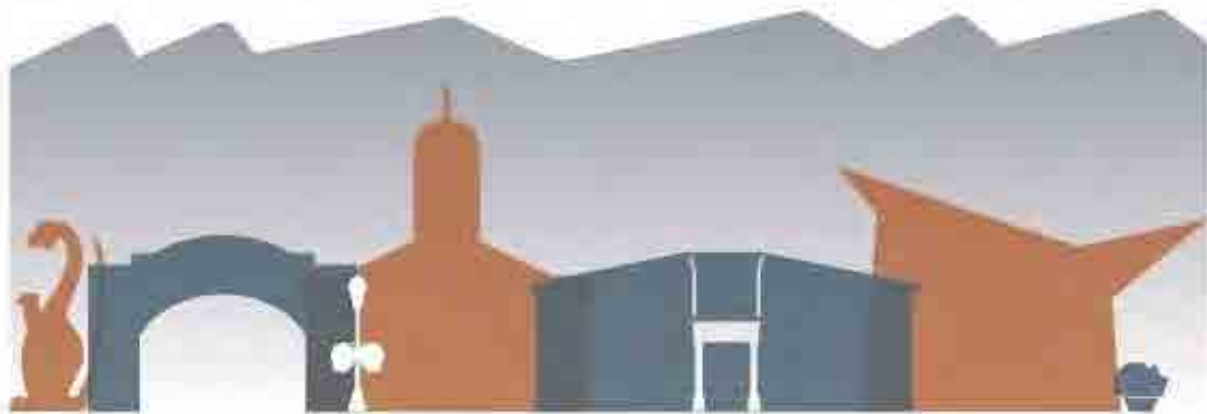


# Downtown Vernal Plan

Quinn Bennion  
Vernal City Manager





**VERNAL**

---

DOWNTOWN PLAN



If you want to go **fast** go **alone**.  
If you want to go **far** go **together**.

# Main Street - Vernal



# Main Street - Vernal



# Trends in Downtown

**Small Local Businesses**

**Need for Parking  
Unmaintained lots**

**Declining Taxable  
Property Value**

**Underutilized space**

**Hwy 40 - heavy  
truck traffic**

**Vacant Storefronts**

**Need for walkable Areas**





**Unmaintained lots**



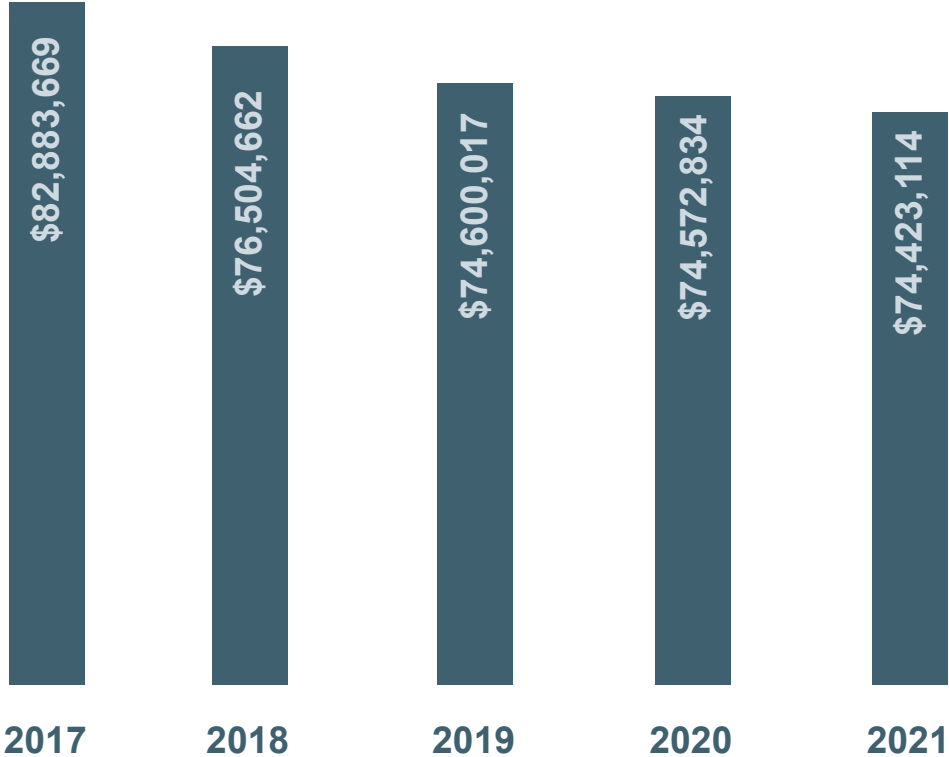
**vacancy**



**underutilized spaces**



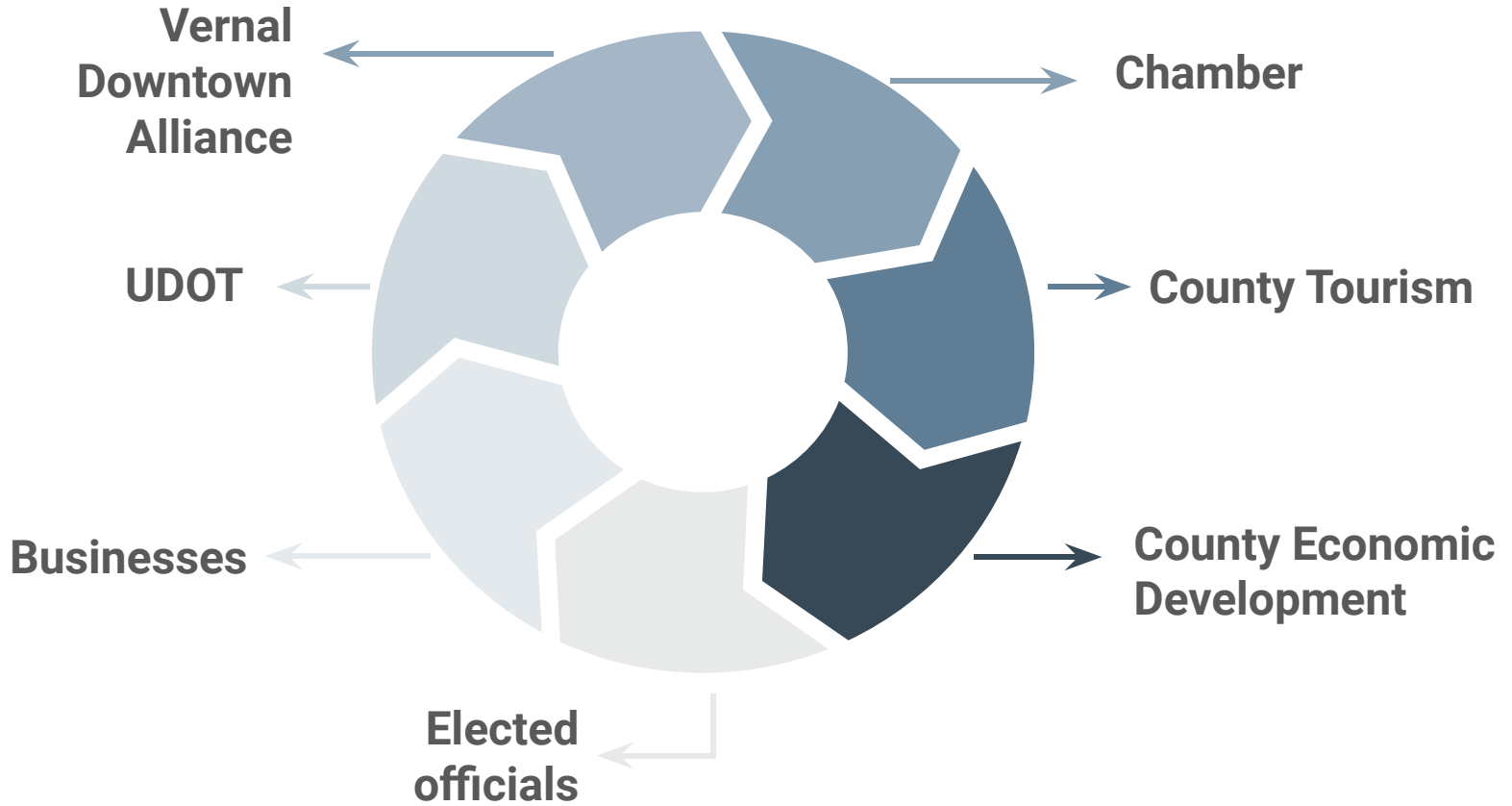
# Downtown Vernal Taxable Value (without Hospital)



# Strategies/ Steps



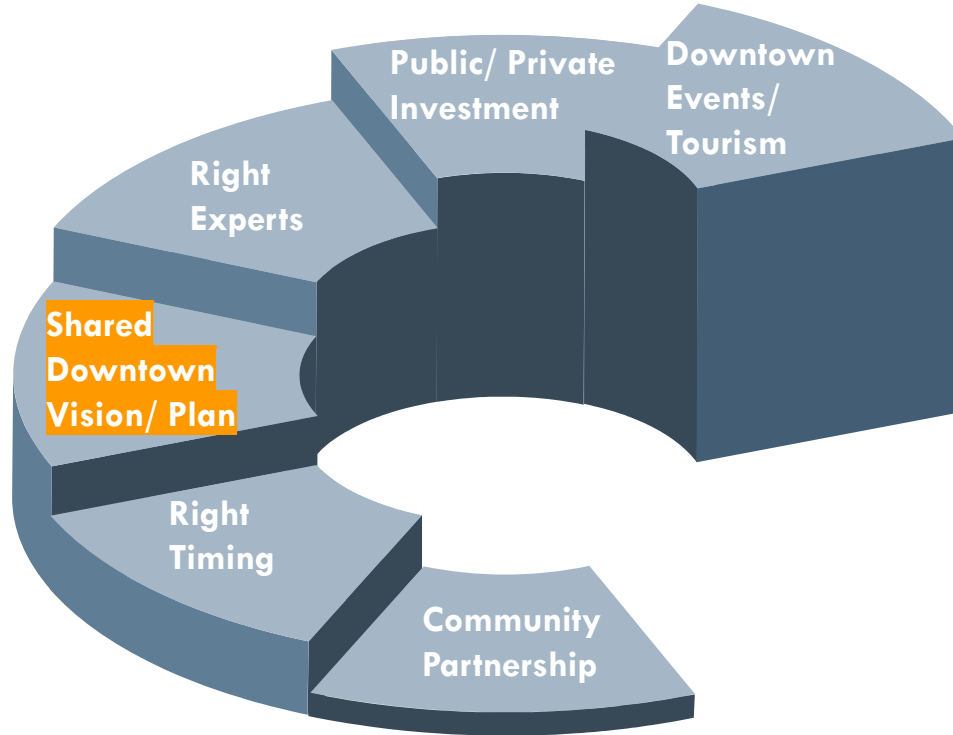
# Community Partners





If you want to go **fast** go **alone**.  
If you want to go **far** go **together**.

# Strategies/ Steps





HELLO

## I WISH THIS WAS...

**Purpose:** Learn from residents what they want from vacant buildings within the downtown.

**Timeline:** Ongoing

### Comments Left:

- An art gallery and sit-down coffee
- Tied, Bott, and Beyond
- Buzz in Creamery
- Public Restroom
- Texas Roadhouse
- Olive Garden
- Barnes & Noble
- Chick-fil-A or Carl's Jr.
- Roller Skating
- A bookstore or a record store
- Chick-fil-A
- Trampoline Park
- Old Rmatt building into a fun center  
17 and younger or pilates fitness
- Go Cartz!

- Skatepark or trampoline park
- Bink restaurant-gyms and micro-brewery
- A public restroom for out-of-town visitors
- Sazerac
- I want laser tag track
- A new gaming center for kids and adults
- Target
- Condo community

I WISH THIS WAS

PHOTO  
VIRTUAL





## ONLINE SURVEY

**Purpose:** Understand what community members perceive as Vernal's opportunities, constraints, and overall vision for a reimagined downtown.

**Timeline:** March 2021 - May 2021

### Major Takeaways:

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

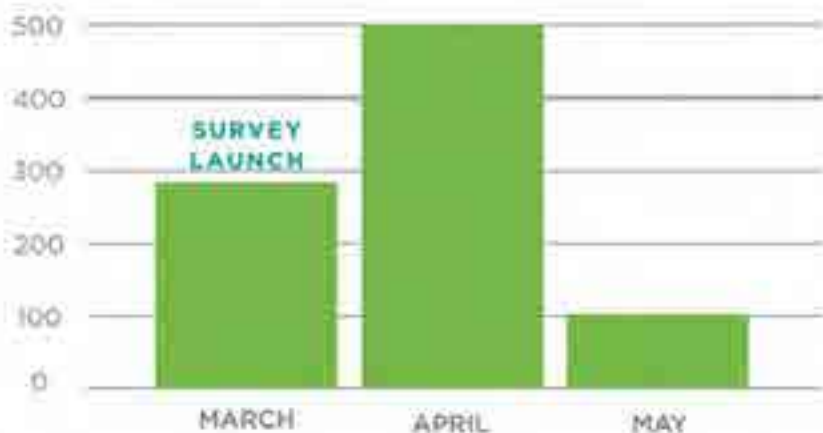
- Over half of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 44.
- Half of the participants have lived in the Vernal area for 20+ yrs.

#### DOWNTOWN AMENITIES AND APPRECIANCE

- The three most common words to describe Vernal is, Dotted, Pretty and Potential.
- The two spots shared most when asked what makes Vernal unique were, The beautiful flowers, summer, and the historic buildings.
- Challenges identified were lack of parking, ease and safety of walking, number of businesses and restaurant selection. *(Additional comments included...)*

# 903

responses collected



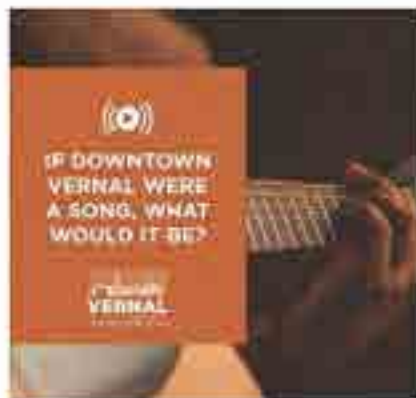
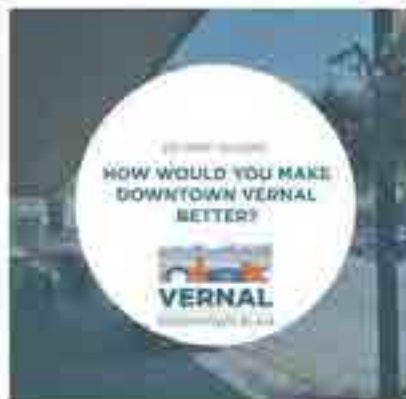


**Purpose:** through the use of questions and prompts, in addition to prizes for participation, solicit feedback from Vernal's community on what they wish their downtown could be:

**Timeline:** Ongoing

### Major Takeaways:

- Posts related to the Downtown Plan received 150 comments and 75 shares
- The question that asked participants to share their ideas about Downtown Vernal received the most participation with 92 comments, 45 shares and 89 likes.
- Answers were varied but related to reducing traffic, more shopping, entertainment, fitness/health, restaurant availability, more options for kids, more options of things to do in the evenings.
- Many participants wished to bring historic Vernal companies back (such as the ones in movie theater)





## DESIGN WORKSHOP

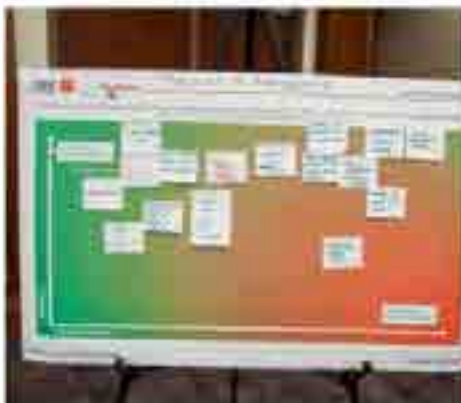
**Purpose:** Community members were invited to participate in a two-day design workshop where several boards were displayed around the conference room that presented a background to the project, the transportation study, market analysis, site visits to Caliper, WY, and Steamboat Springs, CO, and a SWOT analysis of the downtown.

**Timeline:** May 5-6, 2021

### Major Takeaways:

#### CHALLENGES

- Residential needed above shops
- Some areas need investment and care
- Tourists vs. residents can have different needs, wants/desires
- The flower pots are outdated and, most of the time, in the way of parallel parking and pedestrians
- A lot of infrastructure and surrounding buildings need to be updated to match uniqueness of Vernal







## WALKING TOUR

**Purpose:** This walking tour visited multiple locations within Downtown Vernal as a way to understand different opportunities, constraints and perspectives from business owners.

**Timeline:** May 6, 2021

### Major Takeaways:

- Discussions with business owners revealed their desire for better parking options for their patrons.
- Some policies, such as requiring an engineer to review sign design, hinders small businesses.
- Development in the downtown, such as the new bowling alley, holds great potential to add vibrancy to downtown.
- Some sidewalks are not ADA accessible due to flower pots.
- Mural program a success - building on this is desired for the downtown.
- Mid-block areas seem as holding great potential.







## SITE VISITS

## CASPER, WY

## STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO

**Purpose:** Several community members including local small business owners and present and past community government leaders traveled to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and Casper, Wyoming to observe successful examples of downtown and Main St. revitalization efforts.

**Timeline:** April 30-May 1, 2021

### Major Takeaways:

The trip focused on Casper's David Street Station Project. Kevin Hawley, the Downtown Development Authority Executive Director of Casper, generously spent the two days answering questions concerning the development, phasing, funding and maintenance of the David Street Station project. He also provided insight to additional ongoing downtown initiatives that focus on improving walkability and economic vibrancy for the community.



# VERNAL DOWNTOWN PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2021



MHTN  
ARCHITECTS

Parametrix



CONSULTANTS

# ZIONS



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

## GOALS

- 1** Identify site needs by analyzing existing zoning & building area ratios, parking challenges
- 2** Calculate the housing needs of the site & Community by encouraging a welcoming, walkable district
- 3** Review and recommend development and site plan improvements to enhance surrounding streetscape, pedestrian experience
- 4** Recommend improved parking levels by creating attractive, secure and accessible conditions for existing parking lots
- 5** Encourage use of improved services in order to encourage and provide access to transit & walking routes
- 6** Create an inviting transition between the downtown commercial district and nearby residential areas



MIXED USE BUILDING



HOUSING



WALKING BOULEVARD - EAST

Downtown Vernal Plan – Project 1  
Parking lot / Walkway behind 100 W. block – Main Street



Main Street

Walking Boulevard

Proposed public parking

Future development















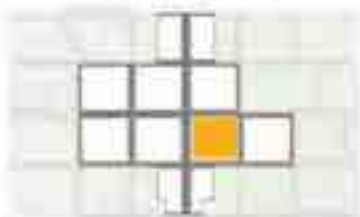
# Zions Block - mixed use



# Zions Block - mixed use



# COBBLE ROCK



Cobble Rock block holds every exciting mid-block opportunity with outdoor performances by the Grand Theater Company to jazz dining. This block holds great potential to be a vibrant place to visit.

## GOALS

GOAL 1	Improve the overall quality of the streetscape by providing opportunities for outdoor performances and public art.
GOAL 2	Improve site access to public transit and provide parking options.
GOAL 3	Improve the overall quality of the streetscape by providing opportunities for outdoor performances and public art.
GOAL 4	Improve the overall quality of the streetscape by providing opportunities for outdoor performances and public art.
GOAL 5	Improve the overall quality of the streetscape by providing opportunities for outdoor performances and public art.
GOAL 6	Improve the overall quality of the streetscape by providing opportunities for outdoor performances and public art.



PLAZA

PARKING

INFILL DEVELOPMENT





# Cobblersrock Block





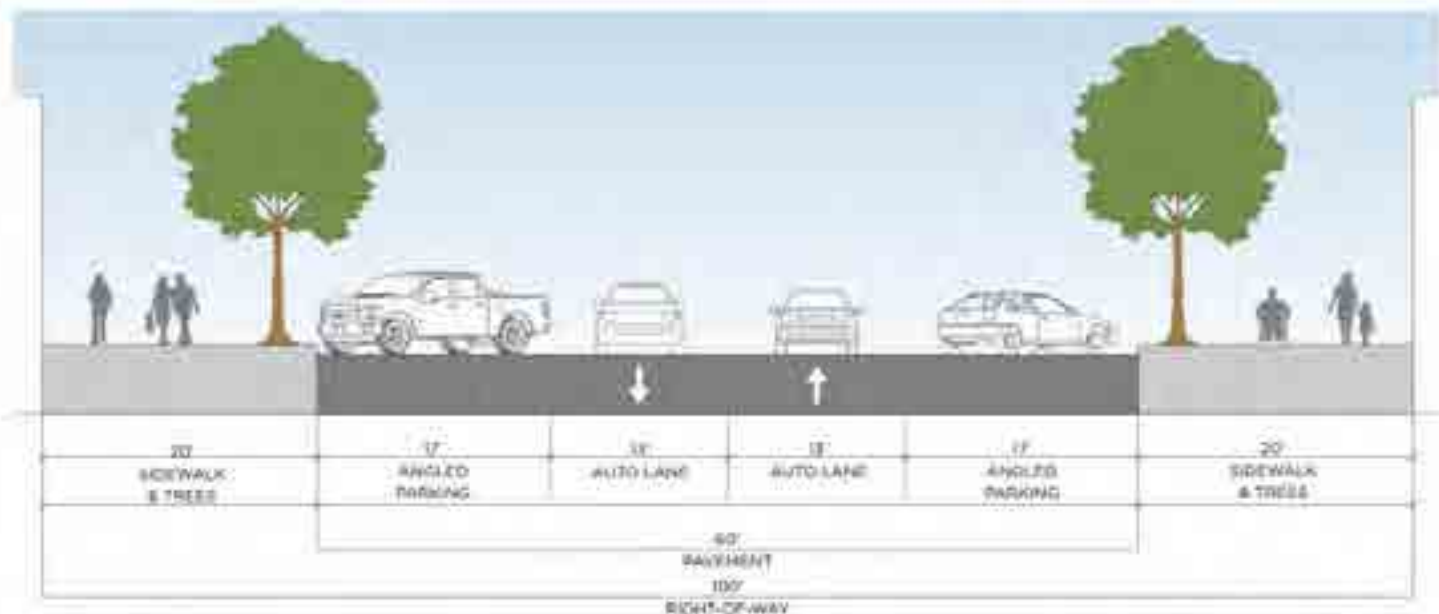


# Cobblerock Block









## VERNAL AVENUE SOUTH OF MAIN

South of Main Street, Vernal Avenue currently has a relatively low traffic volume. With ample opportunity for future mixed use, retail, and housing, this segment of Vernal Avenue will provide angled parking for visitors, ample sidewalk space, and decorative lighting.



Add median and reduce lane widths



No recommended facilities



Wider pedestrian facilities

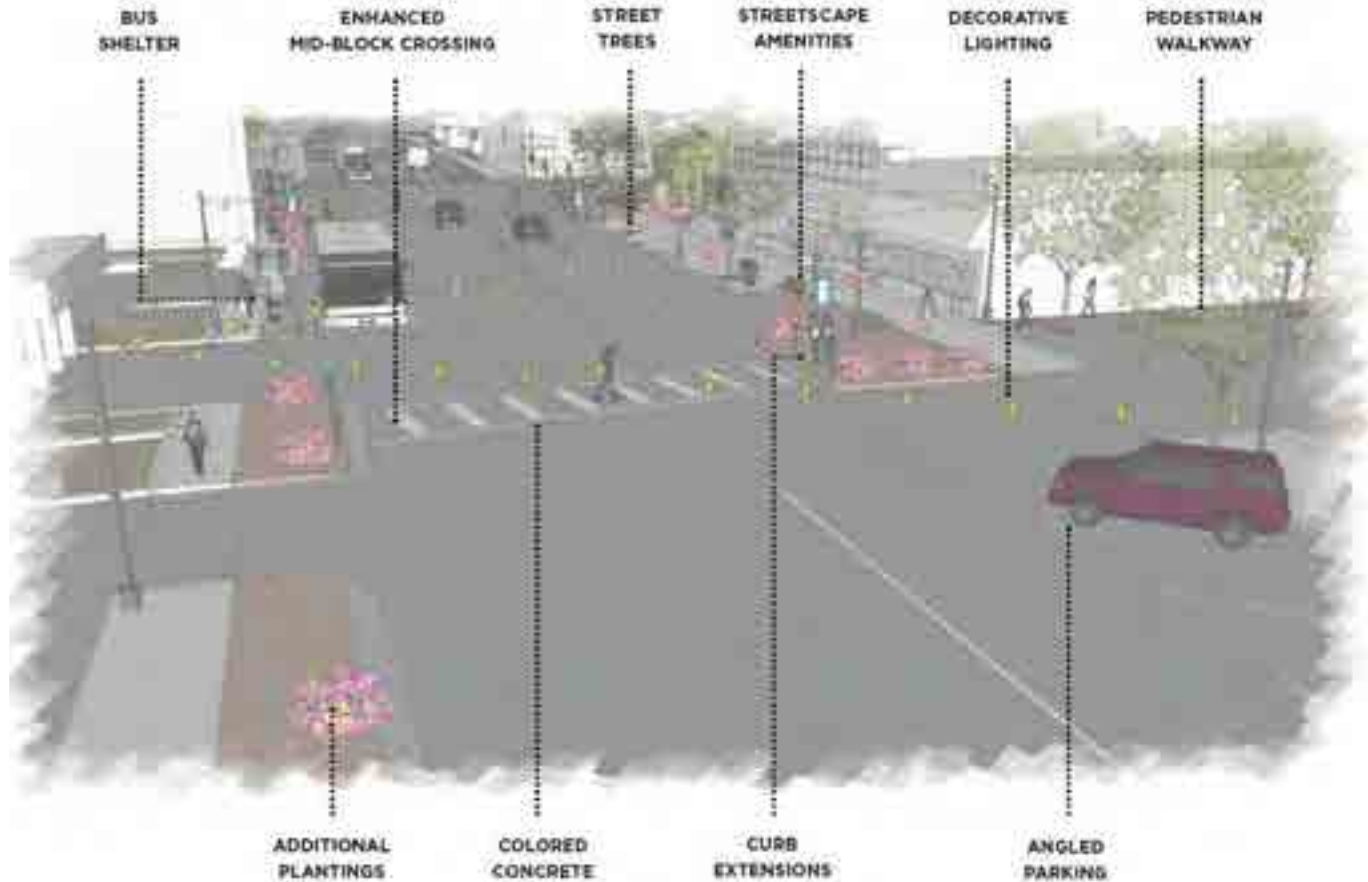


Angled parking on both sides





# Vernal Avenue



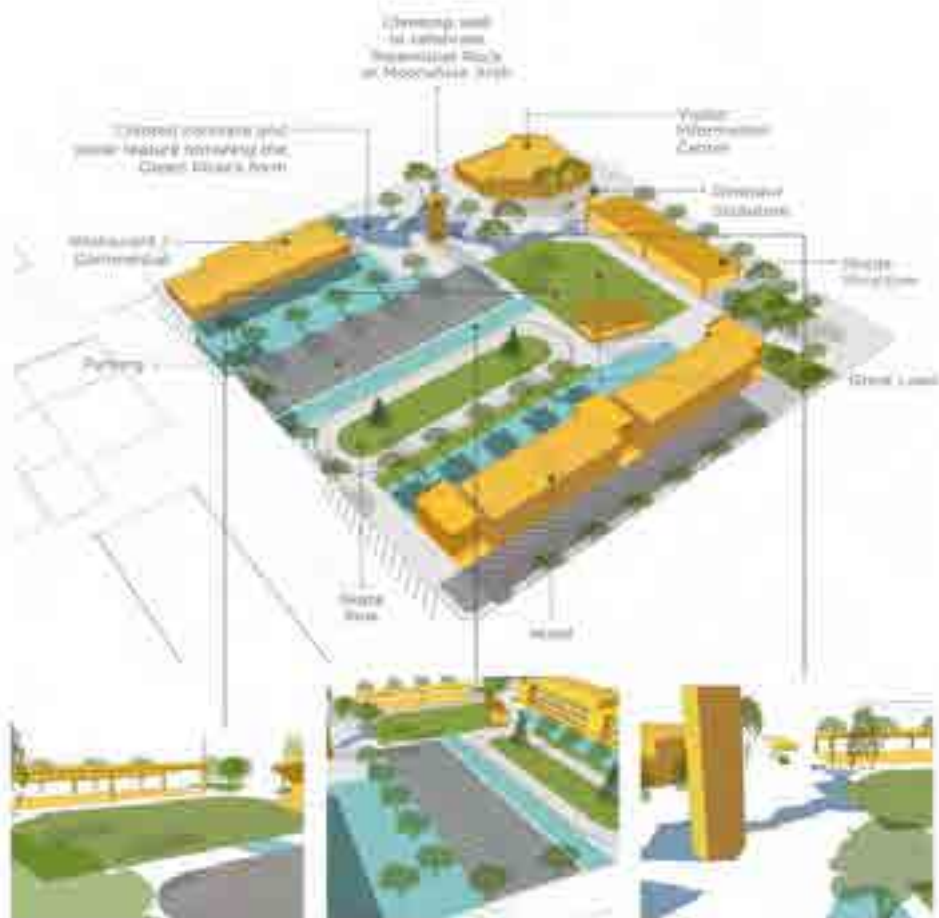


# PUBLIC SPACE

This concept for four acres of public space shows a "Vital Corridor" featuring, hotel, outdoor recreation opportunities, bike rental, a flexible paved area that could host food trucks, and an event space with a stage and break area. This could fit in a number of areas within the downtown and would occupy sites and areas between blocks of neighboring blocks.

## GOALS

- +
 Create "Cherry Hill" area for events, outdoor recreation, and bike rental.
- +
 Enhance the historic "Heart of Downtown" area with outdoor recreation, bike rental, and event space.
- +
 Focus on creating destinations throughout downtown to encourage pedestrian activity & enjoyment.
- +
 Support new business ventures in downtown by providing outdoor recreation, bike rental, and event space.
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GREAT LAWN

SKATE RINK AND PARKING

CLIMBING WALL AND BINOCULAR SCULPTURE

CASPER, WY

## Downtown Festival Space





CASPER, WY

## David Station



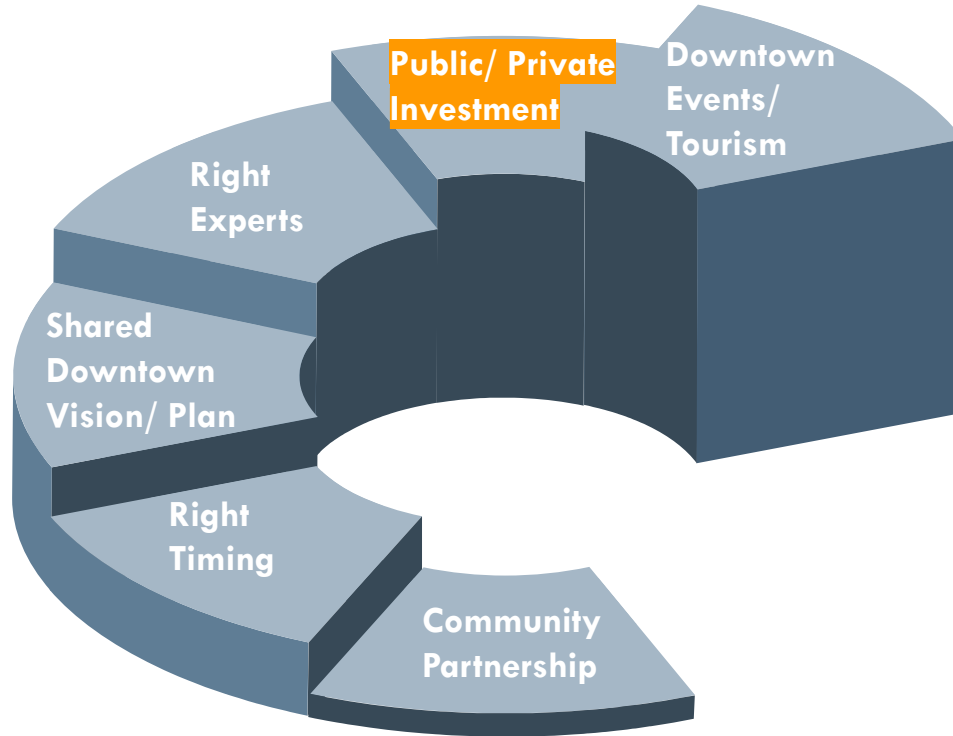
CASPER, WY

David Station





# Strategies/ Steps



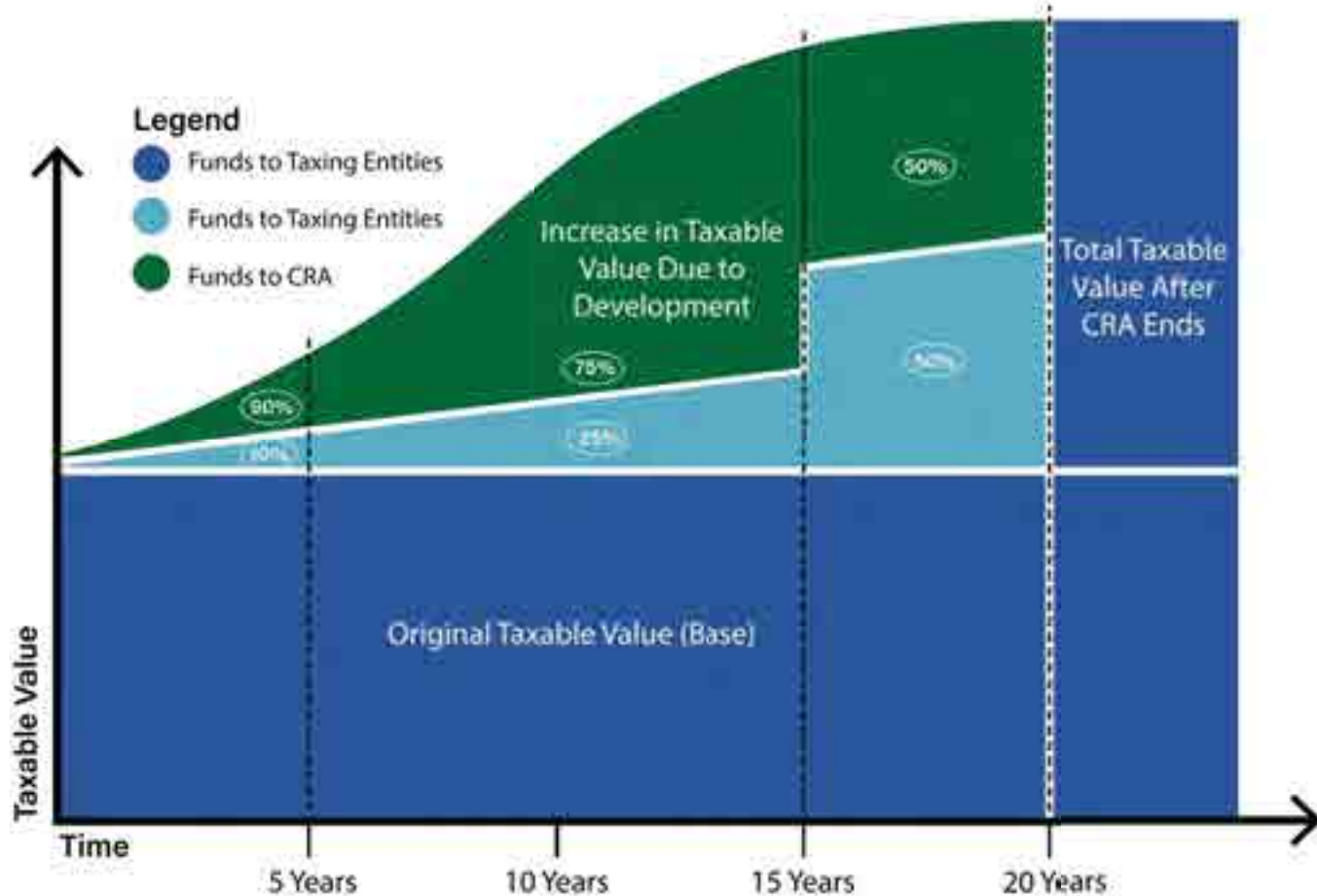
# Community Reinvestment Area



# How a CRA functions

- Entities levy taxes in downtown
  - Uintah County
  - School District
  - Vernal City
  - Water Conservancy
  - Mosquito Abatement
  - Central Utah
- Interlocal Agreements with each entity and CDRA

# Illustration of Distribution of Property Taxes with CRA - Option 2





## Downtown Vernal FAÇADE GRANT



Example of various types of downtown façades

### Summary

Vernal City, in partnership with Uintah County Economic Development, is offering a matching grant to eligible businesses to assist with exterior improvements to business façades. The purpose of the facade grant is to promote the enhancement, restoration, improved aesthetics and renovation of the exterior of commercial structures in the downtown area. The facade grants support the revitalization of our downtown and economic development of Uintah County.









YOU'RE A GOOD MAN CHARLIE  
BROWN SEP 9 TO 17

TICKETS ONLINE NOW

<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<i>UDOT grants</i>	\$1,800,000
<i>City general / reserves / street</i>	\$3,200,000
<i>City ARPA</i>	\$1,200,000
<i>Rural Econ Dev grant - Part A</i>	\$175,000
<i>CDBG residential street</i>	\$190,000
<i>Rural Econ Dev grant - Part B</i>	\$275,000
<i>County ARPA</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>CRA Loan</i>	\$2,100,000
<i>Federal earmark</i>	\$1,200,000
<i>Special Assessment Area (SAA) parking lots</i>	\$40,000
<i>Redeveloping grant</i>	\$1,200,000
<i>CIB loan</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>CIB grant</i>	\$3,000,000
<i>Brownfield program (targeted sites)</i>	
<i>Rural Econ Dev grant - Part A2</i>	\$50,000
<i>Rural Oppotunity Grant</i>	\$400,000
<i>State Matching Grant (ARPA)</i>	\$1,000,000
	<b>\$19,830,000</b>





# Downtown Parking - Special Assessment Area





# Utah Main Street Program

**New (reintroduced)  
Program**

INFO

**Apple to be  
recognized as a Utah  
Main Street City**

INFO

**Possible grant  
funding**

INFO

# Downtown Vernal Alliance



Renamed/ recommitted group



Now a 5013c status- registered NFO

# Strategies/ Steps





## New Downtown Events & Art

1. Murals
2. Kids Marketplace
3. Dinosaur Sculptures
4. Block Party
5. Outlaw Trail ATV Jamboree
6. Freedom Fest
7. Rock the Ride Concert Series
8. Balloon Festival- Dinah Soar Days
9. John Wesley Powell River Fest
10. Outlaw's Lost Treasure
11. PhenomeCon
12. Hotel Vernal Haunt
13. Mayor's Walk

# Murals

- started in 2020
- 20+ in Vernal area
- focus on dinos, outdoor recreation
- funded: businesses, tourism grant program





# Kid's Marketplace

- Young Entrepreneurs
- 30+ a night
- Thursday nights in summer
- Passport to Summer



# Dinosaur Sculptures

- dinosaur bike racks
- organic effort to place a painted dinos





**Block Party**

# Block Party

- started in 2021
- center of town
- 2,000 attend
- food trucks, shops, beer garden
- funded: tickets (\$10), local radio station, Tourism, sponsors







- 700 riders
- 2000+ room nights
- parade on Main Street





# Dinosaurland Freedom Fest

- expanded in 2021
- 8,000 attend
- food trucks, vendors
- veteran flag field
- concert
- fireworks
- funded: sponsors, City, Tourism



# Rock the Ride Concerts

- privately organized
- Saturday night a month
- 300 attend
- food trucks, vendors
- bounce houses
- funded: sponsors, City, Tourism





**Dinah Soar Days**





**Dinah Soar Days**

# Dinah Soar Days

- started in 2018
- 38 balloons in 2022
- Friday, Saturday, Sunday flights
- 2 nights of festival on Main Street
- 6,000 a night
- funded by sponsors, Tourism







**John Wesley Powell River Fest**

# River Fest

- Started in 2018
- Celebrate river rafting history
- Thursday, Friday, Saturday
- Music Festival
- Food, Beer Garden, Vendors
- Cornhole Tournament
- Paddle Pond
- 3,000 a day
- Funded: Tourism, City, Radio Station

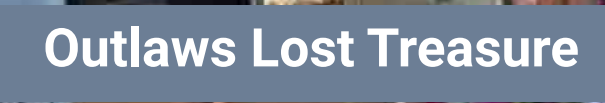




# Escape Rooms



**Outlaws Lost Treasure**



# PHENOMECON

WE BELIEVE

PhenomeCon

A large audience is seated in a conference hall, facing a stage. The stage features several large projection screens displaying a presentation. The room is dimly lit, with green ambient lighting on the walls and ceiling. The audience is diverse in age and appearance, and many are looking towards the stage. The chairs are light-colored with dark frames. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.



# HOTEL VERNAL HAUNT



We'll leave the lights OFF for you!







**DOWNTOWN VERNAL  
MAYOR'S WALK**

- 8,000+ treaters
- 90+ business tables
- 2 hours
- relatively low cost

**Last Saturday in October**

# Advancements Resulting from Plan

Business Desire to be  
Downtown

More activity

Mixed-use Interest

Diversify Our Economy

District Geothermal  
System

Performing Arts Center

# Advantages of Revitalized Downtown

Community Pride/  
Perception of Vernal

“Something” to do

Successful Small  
Businesses

Diversify Our Economy

Prepared for Future  
Development

Reverse Trend of  
Downtown Property Values



If you want to go **fast** go **alone**.  
If you want to go **far** go **together**.

**Questions / Comments**