

RUSSELLVILLE, ARKANSAS

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN



REVISED: MARCH 8, 2013

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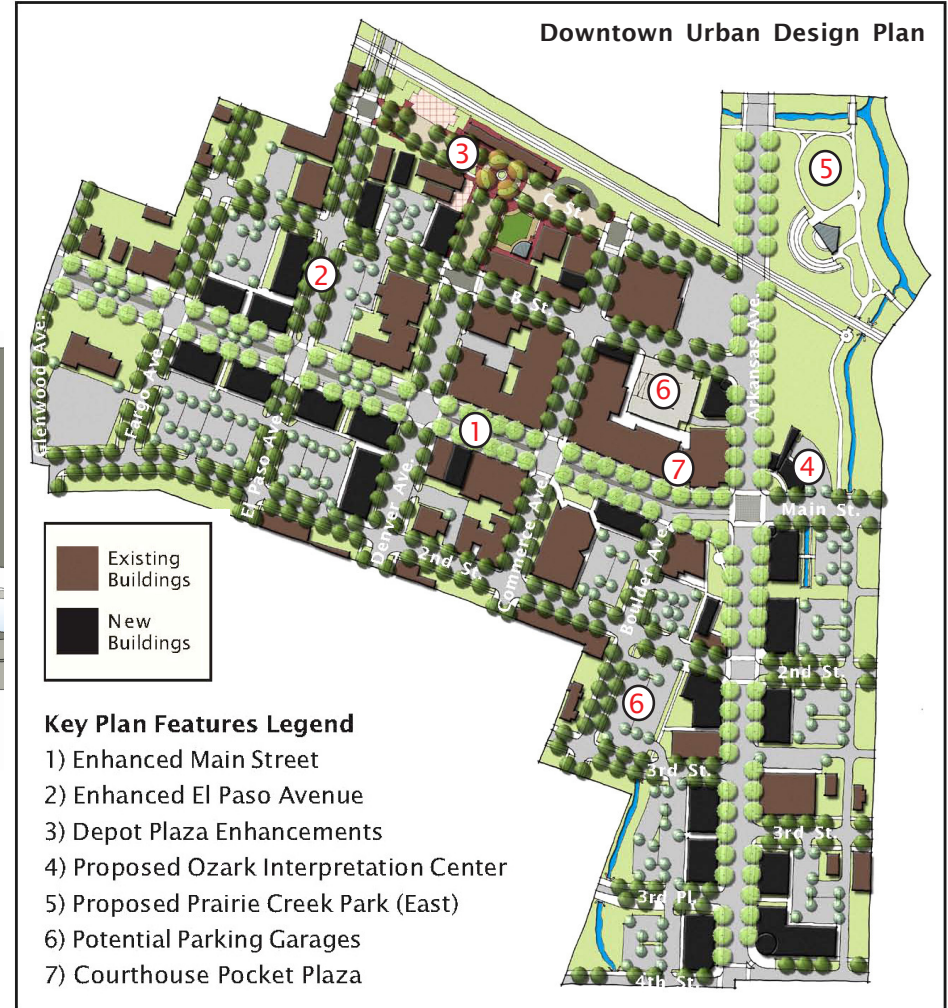
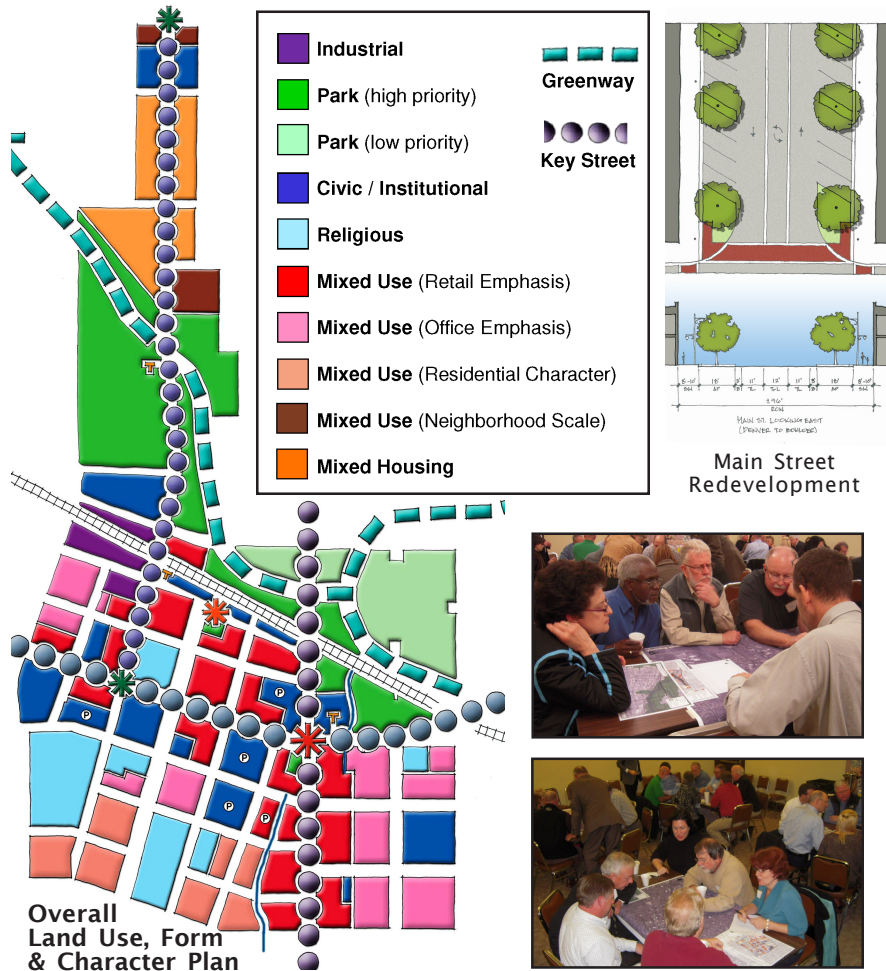


PLAN SUMMARY

PLAN SUMMARY

Project Purpose & Process

The purpose of this plan was to create a comprehensive strategy to revitalize Russellville's historic Downtown and the El Paso Avenue Corridor linking Downtown and Arkansas Tech University (ATU). Sponsored by the City and Main Street Russellville, and financially supported by Pope County and ATU, the planning project engaged the public by including a charrette (multi-day brainstorming process) and public workshop. The project's four steps included: 1) Research & Analysis; 2) Charrette & Concept Plan; 3) Draft Plan Preparation; and 4) Plan Presentation & Revisions.



Downtown Master Plan

This plan features a variety of strategies to revitalize the Downtown. In addition to some of the physical improvements mapped and listed above, other strategies include:

- Enhance and expand parking
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings
- Compatible infill development
- Develop a Downtown Library
- Employ business development tools
- Improve public policies (zoning, etc.)
- Adopt financial incentives

PLAN SUMMARY

Axometric View of the Future Downtown

The rendering at right depicts how Downtown Russellville might appear following implementation of this plan. Key features illustrated are (see correlating numbers on the rendering):

- 1) Redeveloped Arkansas Avenue
- 2) Redeveloped Main Street
- 3) Ozark Interpretation Center
- 4) Expanded Space Off Burris Memorial Plaza
- 5) New Parking Garage Behind Courthouse
- 6) New County Annex Building
- 7) Infill Commercial/Mixed Use Buildings (labeled in foreground areas only)
- 8) Redeveloped Depot Plaza

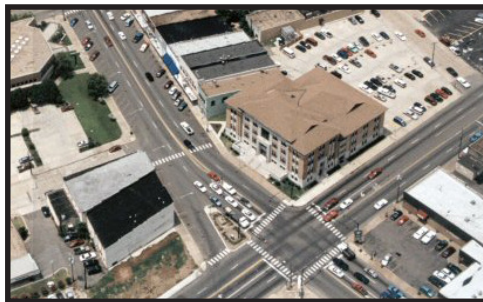


Photo of area near Main and Arkansas as it currently exists



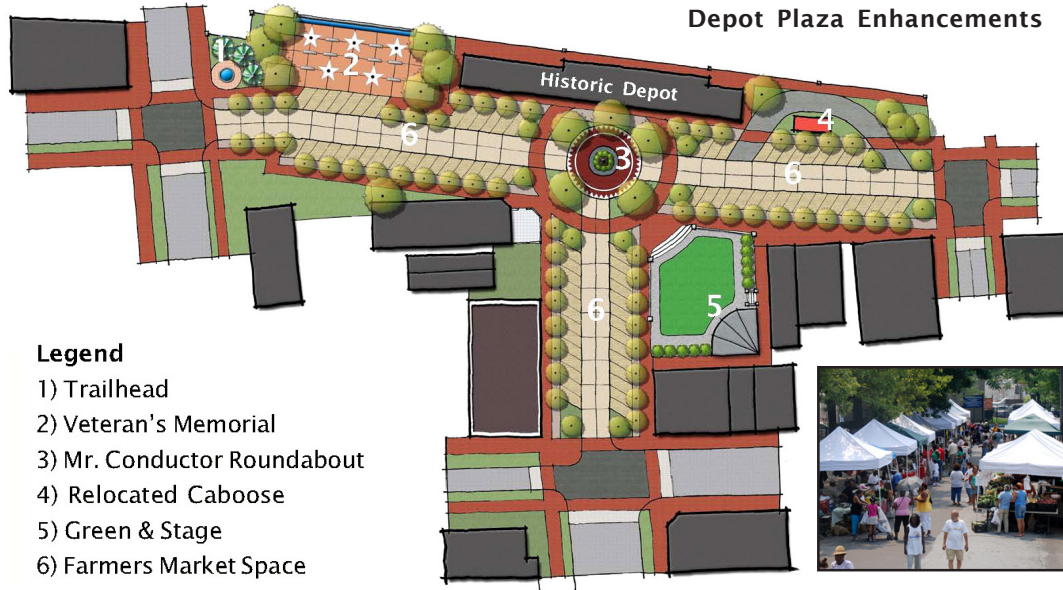
Main Street: South Side

The visual simulation at left illustrates potential improvements for the block located between Denver and Commerce Avenues, including:

- Streetscape redevelopment to include back-in angled parking, street trees, and new street lights.
- Compatible new infill development on the vacant lot.

PLAN SUMMARY

Depot Plaza Enhancements



Legend

- 1) Trailhead
- 2) Veteran's Memorial
- 3) Mr. Conductor Roundabout
- 4) Relocated Caboose
- 5) Green & Stage
- 6) Farmers Market Space

El Paso Ave. Corridor

Key ideas include:

- Enhanced streetscape to include a multi-use "cycle track" on the west side of El Paso
- Open space, greenway and athletic fields in the Prairie Creek floodplain on south end
- Varied higher-density housing in north half
- Gateway treatment to ATU at north end of El Paso



Main & Commerce: Current

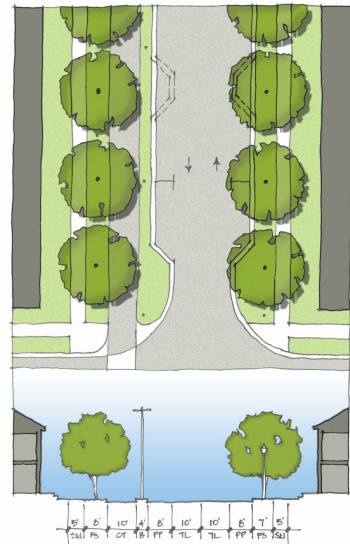


Main & Commerce: Proposed

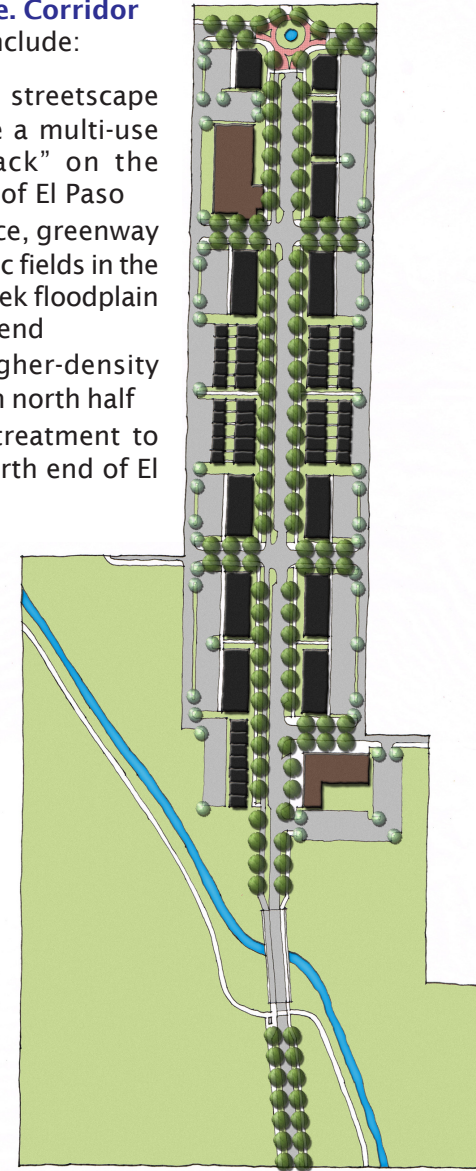
Main Street

It is proposed that Main Street be redeveloped as follows:

- "Road diet" to feature one driving lane in each direction
- Special pavers and landscaped median
- Pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks at intersections
- Back-in angled on-street parking



El Paso Avenue Redevelopment





I. BACKGROUND

I. BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide Main Street Russellville and the City of Russellville a blueprint for revitalizing the downtown area, as well as its link to Arkansas Tech University via El Paso Avenue. As summarized in the request for proposals (RFP) document prepared for this project:

“Development of a Downtown Russellville Master Plan for Russellville, Arkansas has been a topic of discussion between city government, local organizations and private businesses for much of the past decade. The plan is seen as a tool that would provide long-term, detailed, and phase by phase, guidelines for future development, while maintaining the historic character of Downtown Russellville.”

“Mayor Bill Eaton stressed the need to either renovate or remove some downtown buildings threatened by deterioration. ‘If we sit here, if nothing occurs in 25 years, and those buildings remain like they are, they will have totally imploded. They will just fall in on themselves,’ Eaton said.”

Courier News.com
February 1, 2012



Downtown Russellville currently faces many challenges, including historic buildings needing physical rehabilitation, more businesses to fill vacant space, and the management of parking.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA: DOWNTOWN

As illustrated in the aerial photograph map on the following page, this plan’s primary study area is the core of downtown as defined by the following boundaries:

- North Boundary - Parkway Drive
- South Boundary - Fourth Street
- East Boundary - Cleveland Avenue
- West Boundary- Glenwood Avenue

I. BACKGROUND

SECONDARY STUDY AREA: EL PASO CORRIDOR

This plan's secondary study area is the El Paso corridor, which links downtown and the

Arkansas Tech University (ATU) campus to the north. Strengthening this corridor can greatly benefit both the downtown and the university. See the aerial photograph map at right of this area.



I. BACKGROUND

PLANNING PROCESS

This plan was created through the following four key steps:

Task 1.0: Research & Analysis
Task 2.0: Charrette & Concept Plan
Task 3.0: Draft Plan Preparation
Task 4.0: Plan Presentation & Revisions

TASK 1.0: RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

This initial task served as the research and diagnostic phase on which the balance of the work relied. The Project Team performed the sub-tasks described below during a two (2) day trip to Russellville, as well as through work conducted prior to and following this trip.

Task 1.1: Review Background Information

Prior to making the initial trip to Russellville, the Project Team gathered and reviewed key information to gain insights into the project's context. Such information included, but was not limited to: existing land uses, zoning and development regulations, previous plans and studies, traffic information, parking, buildings, public spaces, utilities and infrastructure, economic and demographic data, real estate market information, base map data, aerial

photo maps, historic resources (historic sites inventory, photographs, insurance maps, etc.), and information related to the Main Street program.

Task 1.2: Kick-Off Mtg. & Study Area Tour

This meeting with the Project Steering Committee fine-tuned the project details and allowed the Project Team to gain additional insights from the Committee representatives. The study area tour was led by staff and members of the Steering Committee, with additional follow-up work by the Project Team as part of Task 1.3. During this task, the team was also provided with available information not previously provided up to this point.

Task 1.3: Physical Analysis

As part of the initial fieldwork for the project, the Project Team documented and evaluated the study area's general physical characteristics through mapping, measurements, field notes and photography. Based upon that field research and existing data, the Project Team conducted an evaluation of Downtown Russellville's existing conditions, with an emphasis on:

- Existing land uses
- Buildings / sites with potential for enhancement



Downtown tour led by project Steering Committee members.

- Buildings/sites with potential for redevelopment
- Streetscapes
- Streets and parking
- Utilities and infrastructure
- Existing/potential public spaces
- Pedestrian circulation
- Potential physical linkages beyond the downtown
- El Paso Avenue corridor between downtown and ATU

Task 1.3A: Market Assessment

To understand Downtown Russellville's overall market context, and to subsequently prepare a reality-based downtown revitalization plan, the Project Team studied economic conditions and conducted a

I. BACKGROUND

market assessment. This assessment determined the downtown's opportunities for housing, retail, entertainment, services, offices and institutional uses based on the following key components:

Market Assessment

- Economic profile, including economic and demographic trends, to understand the “drivers” of demand for various uses
- Interviews with key business owners and/or operators; brokers and leasing agents; economic development and business association representatives; institutional representatives
- Inventory of existing land uses (housing units by tenure, square feet of businesses by type, institutions, etc.)

- Analysis of factors impacting the downtown's overall marketability, including a review of pricing (sales and rents), ownership, product mix, absorption history, etc.
- Identify possible market opportunities as input to the planning process

Task 1.4: Stakeholder Focus Groups

The City and Main Street program identified key stakeholders who could provide useful information and perspectives on the various issues affecting the study area. Five (5) meetings with various stakeholder groups were conducted by key members of the Project Team, with each meeting including approximately ten (10) individuals having a common interest in Downtown Russellville.

Each meeting lasted approximately one hour, and stakeholder groups included the following:

- Residents (in and near downtown)
- Property owners and real estate professionals
- Business owners/operators and economic development representatives
- Institutional representatives (churches, schools, university, etc.)
- Public officials (including elected officials and relevant City and County department heads)

Task 1.5: Public “Kick-Off” Meeting

This interactive evening forum featured the following components:

- Introduction of Committee, City, and Main Street representatives and the Project Team
- Explanation of the project process
- Identification of the downtown's challenges and opportunities
- Identification of model downtowns

“What we like most about this process is the strong desire this organization has to get public input. We're sure as they sat through multiple meetings over the course of two days they heard many of the same ideas and concerns, but to their credit they noted every suggestion and asked questions that some of us had not asked ourselves.”

Courier News.com
February 1, 2012

I. BACKGROUND

TASK 2.0: CHARRETTE & CONCEPT PLAN

Although the project methodology was designed to encourage strong public input throughout the life of this project, Task 2.0 offered the single greatest opportunity for meaningful “hands-on” involvement of downtown stakeholders - including the Project Steering Committee, public officials, business and property owners, residents, and the public in general. The goal of the charrette process was to provide a forum for the public and to achieve a consensus on the future of Downtown Russellville. The most tangible outcome of the charrette was the creation of the Concept Plan for the study area. This four (4) day task required strong teamwork between the Project Team and the City/Main Street program, and the following sub-tasks were completed:

Task 2.1: Follow-Up Field Work (Day 1 - morning & afternoon)

This task gave Project Team members another opportunity prior to the evening Public Workshop to build on previous impressions of the study area gained during Task 1.0. In particular, examples of land uses, development and urban design features in Downtown Russellville that “work” and “don’t work” were identified. Also, any field information not previously obtained, but since recognized as neces-

sary, was gathered as part of this task. In addition to the field work conducted by the team, the transportation planner facilitated a “walking audit” to identify barriers to walking and impediments to connectivity within the study area.

Task 2.2: Public Workshop (Day 1 - evening)

Prior to Task 2.0, the City/Main Street program recruited participants to be involved in the Public Workshop. Participants included key stakeholders representing a variety of interests in the study area. The Project Team and Public Workshop participants gathered at City Hall and achieved the following over a three-

hour period:

Workshop Orientation

The Project Team presented the following:

- Workshop Purpose & Overview
- Background Research Findings
- Results of the Public Input to Date
- Workshop “Ground Rules”

Planning Session

Participants were split into teams of approximately ten (10) members each, and each team created a concept plan for the study area. The concept plans were created on “existing conditions” base maps with the help of colored markers coded to particular land uses and/or design issues.

The charrette offered the public an opportunity for hands-on involvement in planning the future of downtown and the El Paso corridor. Following an orientation to the project, stakeholders were essentially “deputized” as planners for the evening.



I. BACKGROUND

Workshop Team Presentations & Wrap-Up

Following the completion of the Planning Session, the Workshop Teams reassembled into a single group and one or more members of each team presented their plans for Downtown Russellville and the El Paso corridor. After each presentation, there was time dedicated for questions and comments. Following the Workshop Team presentations, the Project Team consultants concluded the evening by identifying common elements between the various ideas, and suggested how those ideas might be combined to form the basis for the Concept Plan that the Project Team consultants would produce as a prelude to the ultimate master plan.

Task 2.3: Concept Plan Development (Day 2 through Day 4)

Based upon the Task 1.0 research and findings, and the results of the Day 1 Public Workshop, the Project Team developed the Concept Plan. It included an illustrated plan map and schematic diagrams. The Concept Plan addressed the following key issues:

- Historic resources
- Land uses
- Mobility (motorized and non-motorized) and parking strategies
- Buildings, and urban design and public

spaces

- Public spaces Economic strategies
- Linkages between downtown and the surrounding context (ATU, etc.)

At a point relatively early during this task (mid-day on Day 2), the Project Team met with the Project Steering Committee to receive feedback on the work accomplished up to this point of Task 2.0.

Task 2.4 Concept Plan Presentation (Day 4 - evening)

Similar to the Task 1.5 public “kick-off” meeting, this evening meeting was widely-publicized to encourage a strong turn-out and included the following components:

- Opening Comments & Project Methodology
- Overview of Existing Conditions
- Explanation of the Public Input Results
- Presentation of the Concept Plan

The majority of time was dedicated to the Concept Plan, as opposed to the background information. Because of the importance of public interaction, a generous amount of time was provided for an open discussion.

TASK 3.0: DRAFT PLAN PREPARATION

While the project Scope of Work goes into detail listing each component of the plan document, repeating it here would be redundant. Thus, the plan is concisely summarized here:

- I. Background
- II. Plan Overview
- III. Downtown Improvement Plan
- IV. El Paso Avenue Corridor
- V. Non-Design Issues
- VI. Implementation

TASK 4.0: PLAN PRESENTATION & REVISIONS

Following sufficient time for the Steering Committee’s review, key members of the Project Team presented the draft plan in a public forum as part of a one (1) day trip to Russellville. Based upon a review of the draft plan by the Steering Committee, input from the public presentation, and the Committee’s submission of a single “redlined” copy (serving as a composite of all comments) back to the Project Team for any necessary revisions, the draft plan was revised and submitted as a final document.

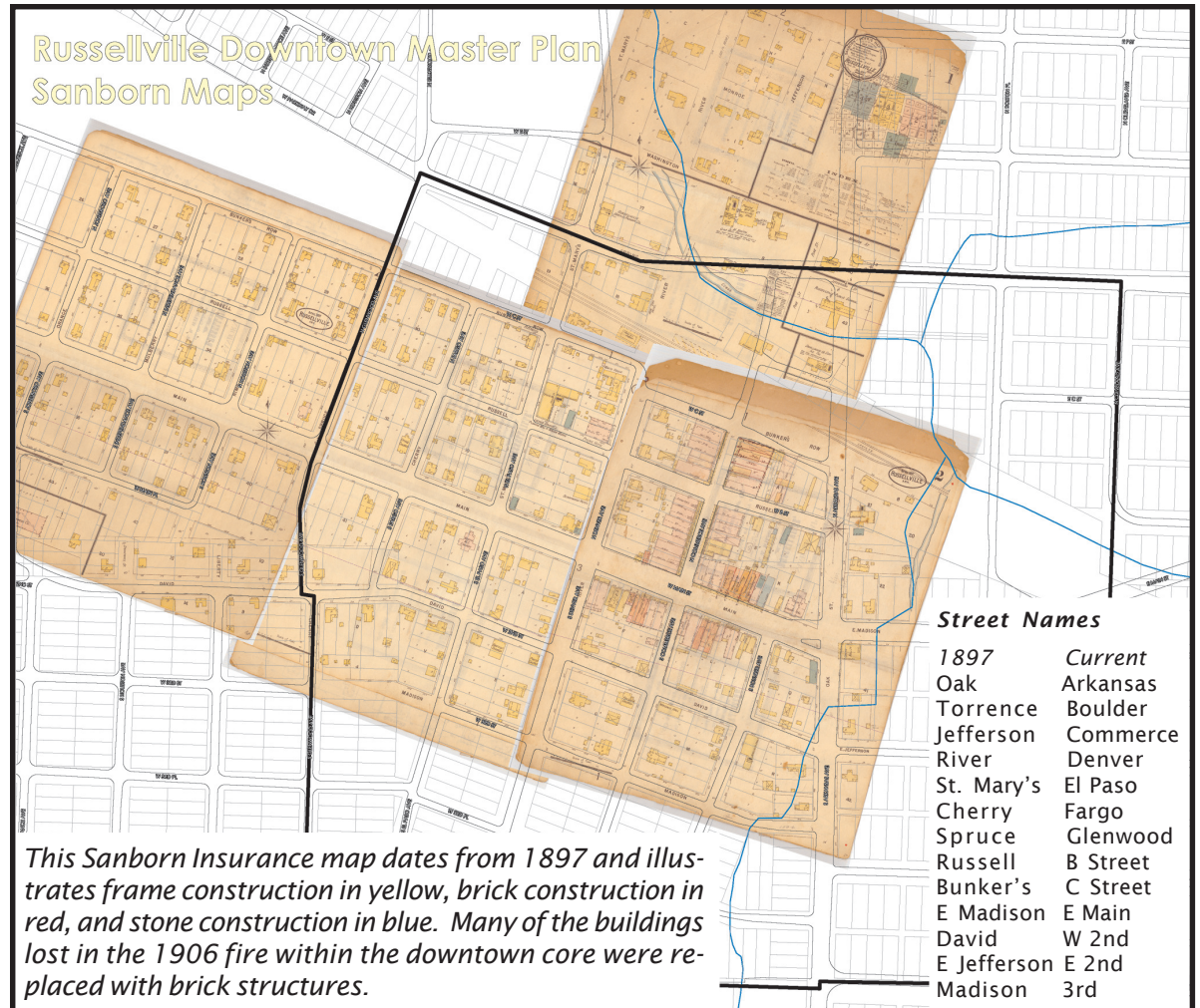
I. BACKGROUND

HISTORY

Pope County was established in 1829, seven years before Arkansas became a state. Before the founding of Russellville, there was a small town located on the Arkansas River directly south of what is now Russellville. Known as Norristown, it served as the county seat from 1830-1840. The first settler in the area was P.C. Holledger in 1834. The first business to be established was owned by Mr. Shinn, who later built a masonry structure to replace his wooden store in 1875. This building still exists today and is known as the Shinn Building. It was built at the intersection of an east-west road from Little Rock to Fort Smith and a north-south buffalo trail to a ford on the Arkansas River. Early travelers used these established trails to pass through the valley. When the town's residents decided to name it, it came down to two choices: Shinnville or Russellville, and Russellville won. In 1870, Russellville became an incorporated city. The town grew slowly, but during the early-1870s the railroad was built and the town exploded with growth. It connected Russellville to other towns in the area. Most 19th-century residents of the area

farmed for a living or, with the coming of the railroad, harvested timber. By the end of the 19th century, Russellville and the surrounding area had become a prosperous coal-mining area. By the early-20th century,

cotton became a profitable crop. In 1906, the town suffered a massive fire in its central business district. It consumed nearly half of the buildings, but they were quickly rebuilt, most within six months after the fire.



I. BACKGROUND

HISTORY (continued)



Circa 1940 axonometric view looking southwest from north of rail line



Main circa 1920 looking west with courthouse



Circa 1920 parade on Commerce looking north



Street fair on Main looking east



Early-20th century store interior



Cotton wagons on Main near Commerce

I. BACKGROUND

HISTORY (continued)



Circa 1920 event at depot



Peters-Baldwin Store circa 1940s



HOTEL PEARSON, MODERN FIREPROOF, RUSSELLVILLE, ARKANSAS. 113576



Ritz Theatre circa 1920



Main Street looking west from Arkansas circa 1940



First National Bank in the early-1900s



Bank, Russellville, Ark.



Main Street looking east from near Commerce

I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: NATURAL LAND FEATURES

The map at right depicts three categories of natural features within the downtown study area: topography, streams and floodways, and floodplains. Below is a summary of each:

Topography

As the map's contour lines illustrate, there is not much sloping to the downtown area's land. Elevations tend to range between approximately 340 and 370 feet above sea level, with the lower end of that range being concentrated in the study area's north-east corner where floodplains exist.

Streams & Floodways

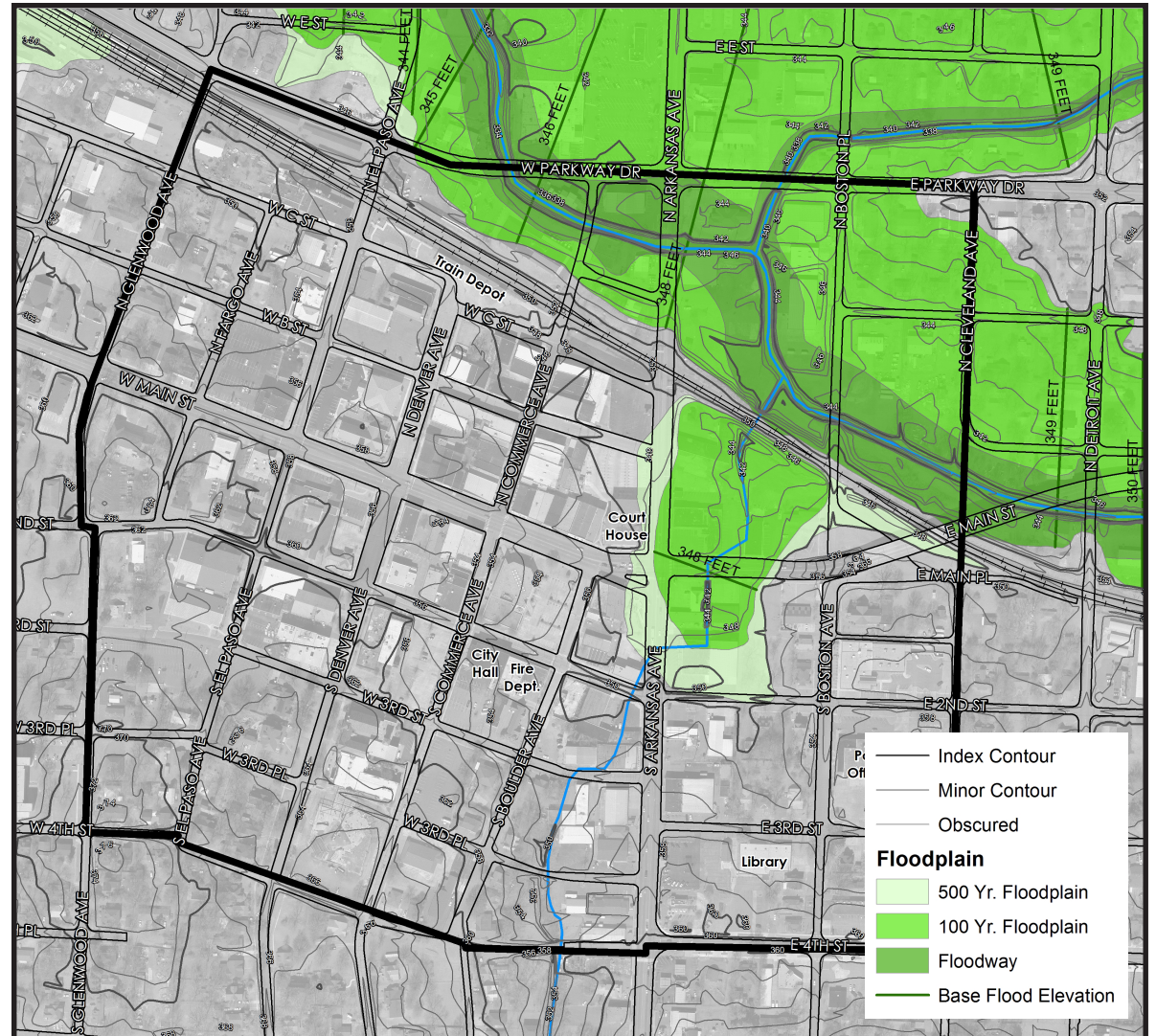
The study area's primary stream is Prairie Creek, located in the northeast corner of the area and depicted on the map at right by a blue line. A smaller secondary stream branches off of Prairie Creek and traverses the downtown along a north-south axis. Floodways are illustrated with the darkest shade of green adjacent to either side of Prairie Creek, but not along the secondary stream flowing from it to the south. Many segments of the stream system have been highly-engineered with concrete channeling that increases the velocity of water, precludes water filtration into the soils, and

eliminates ecologically valuable wetlands.

Floodplains

The study area's 100 year floodplains are

shown in the medium shade of green, while the 500 year floodplain is in the lightest shade of green.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: BLOCK & LOT PATTERNS

The map at right illustrates the various block and lot patterns that comprise the downtown. Below is a summary of both features:

Blocks

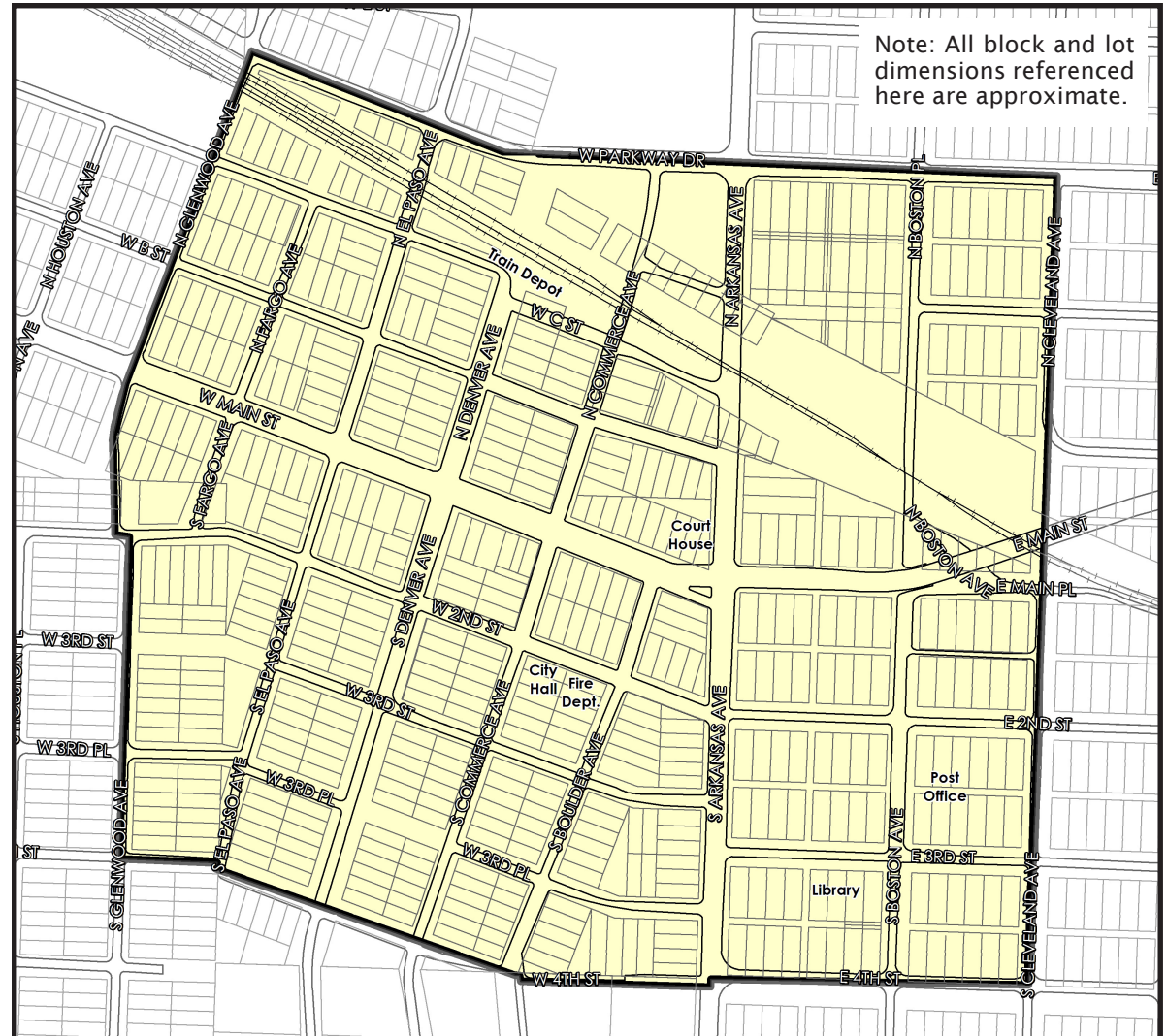
Downtown's gridded street pattern results in a series of rectilinear blocks, but there are two distinct block patterns. Those lying east of Arkansas Avenue are aligned with the axis of that street and the blocks have a horizontal orientation with dimensions of 300 ft. by 400 ft. Each block features one mid-block north-south alley and one mid-block east-west alley, causing the intersecting alleys to form a cross. The blocks found west of Arkansas are square with dimensions of 250 ft. by 250 ft. They are not aligned with the axis of Arkansas and, instead, appear to be more aligned with the railroad to the north. Where this system of blocks approaches Arkansas, a series of oddly shaped and sized blocks occur. The blocks located west of Arkansas also differ because of their lack of alleys.

Lot Patterns

As in the case of block design, lot design is also dictated by which side of Arkansas the lots are located. Those lying east of Arkansas are oriented along a north-south axis

and front onto the east-west streets. They average 130 ft. by 50 ft. in size. The slightly more narrow lots (120 ft. by 40 ft.) lying west of Arkansas generally have an east-west ori-

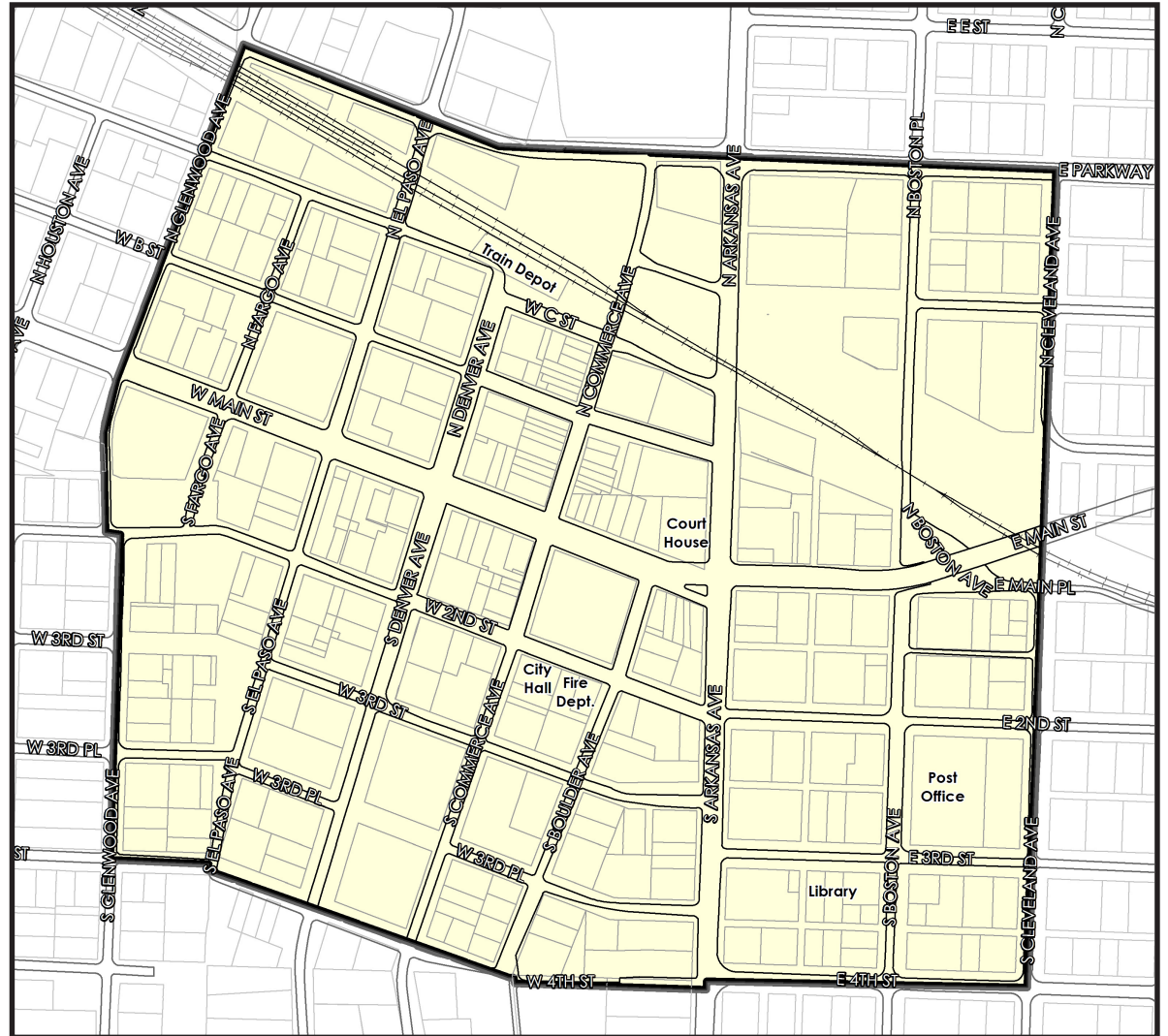
entation and front onto north-south streets, with the exception of the south side of Main Street and east of Fargo, which have north-south aligned lots.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: PARCEL PATTERNS

The map at right illustrates the pattern of land parcels within the downtown study area. Unlike lots, which are legal subdivisions of land, parcels define the boundaries of land ownership. For example, in some cases a single parcel might be comprised of multiple adjoining lots. However, those multiple lots are under single ownership. The most fine-grained pattern of parcels is found on either side of Commerce between Main and B Street where a series of relatively narrow east-west oriented parcels exist. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the block bound by Main, 2nd Street, Commerce and Boulder. Currently the site of the Bank of America Building, this block consists of a single parcel. Thus, the block and the parcel are one in the same. Most of the larger parcels downtown tend to be owned by institutions, such as churches and local government.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: LAND OWNERSHIP

While the parcel map on the previous page illustrates general patterns of ownership, its usefulness is limited because it only conveys patterns. The map at right, on the other hand, illustrates three categories of ownership: consolidated private ownership, private institutional ownership, and public ownership, as follows:

Consolidated Private Ownership

Highlighted in orange, these lands feature adjacent parcels owned by the same private individuals or corporate entities. Geographically, they are located in a relatively random pattern. In a few cases, an entire block is owned by a single person or entity, such as the block bound by West 2nd Street, West 3rd Street, Denver and Commerce, which is owned by First States Investors.

Private Institutional Ownership

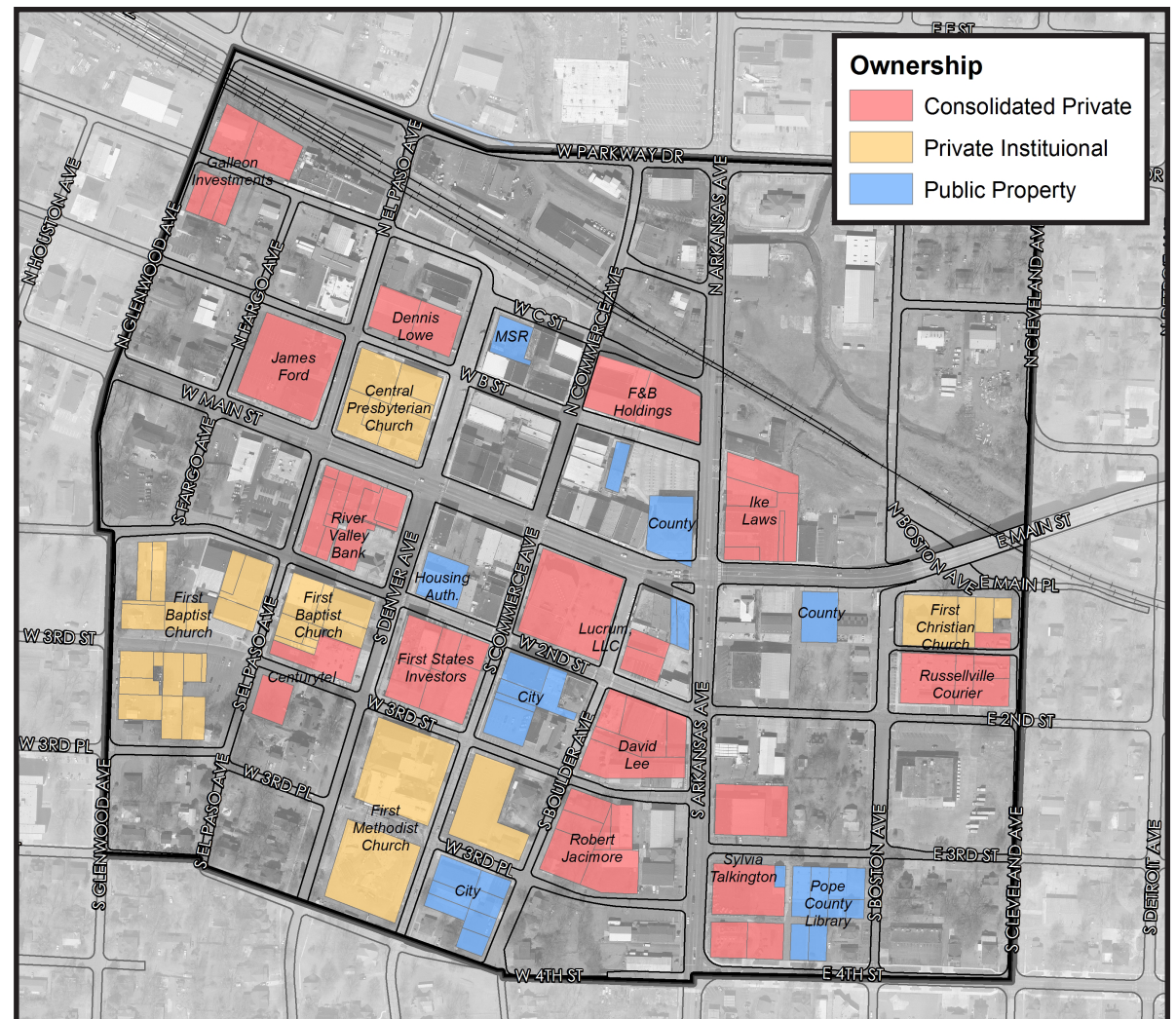
Highlighted in yellow on the map at right, these properties are all owned by churches, including the First Baptist Church, the Central Presbyterian Church, the First Methodist Church, and the First Christian Church. While some of these parcels are anchored by church buildings and related structures, some are merely parking lots to serve the church congregations. All but one are lo-

cated south of Main, and only one is located east of Arkansas.

Public Ownership

These properties are highlighted below in

blue and they include land owned by entities such as the City, County and the Housing Authority. They too are randomly located, although none are in the westerly third of the study area.



I. BACKGROUND

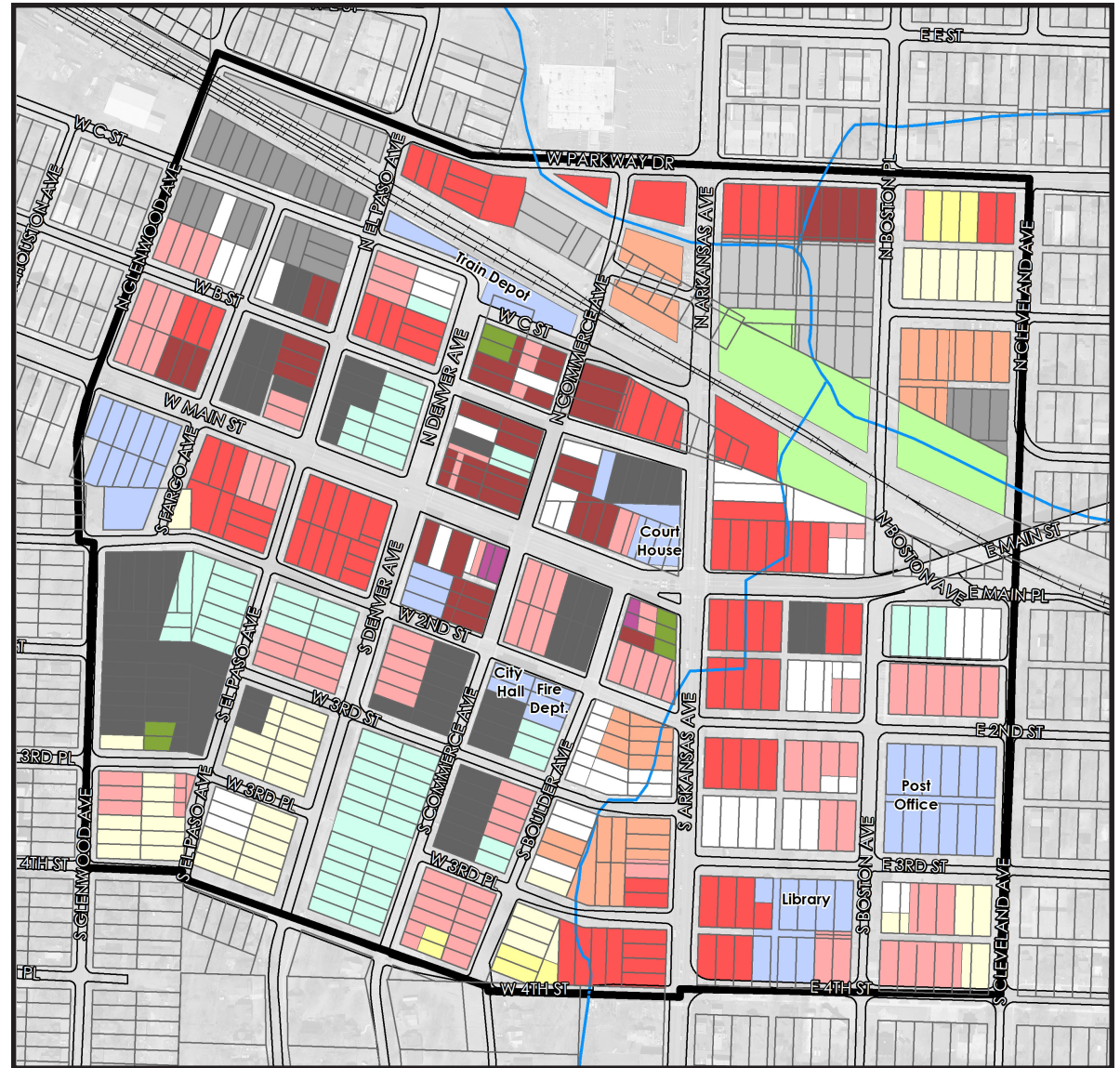
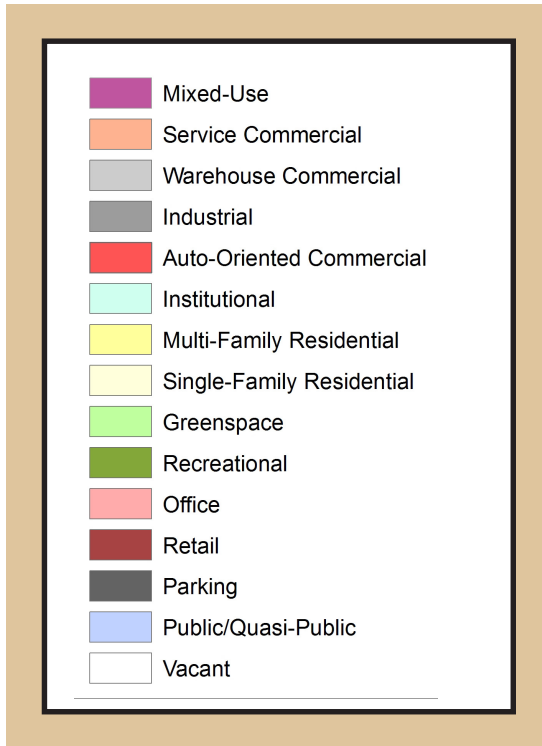
DOWNTOWN: LAND USE

As with most downtowns, Downtown Russellville hosts a rich mixture of land uses, as reflected in the map at right. Among the more unusual facets of the downtown compared to others are the following:

- Auto-oriented uses (red) dominate Arkansas and portions of Main Street.
- There are very few mixed use buildings (purple)

- Institutional uses in the form of churches (turquoise) adjacent to parking lots (dark gray) dominate much of the west half.

- There are very few recreational spaces (dark green), and greenspace (light green) is associated with Prairie Creek floodplain.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: STREETS BY DRIVING LANES

The map at right categorizes downtown streets by the number of driving lanes they have. Below is a summary:

Five-Lane Streets (red line)

The only streets in the downtown featuring five-lane segments are Arkansas and Main Street, and there are segments of Main that go down to four lanes.

Four-Lane Streets (blue line)

The only four-lane streets downtown include short segments of both East and West Main, Parkway, and the two blocks of North Denver.

Three-Lane Streets (yellow line)

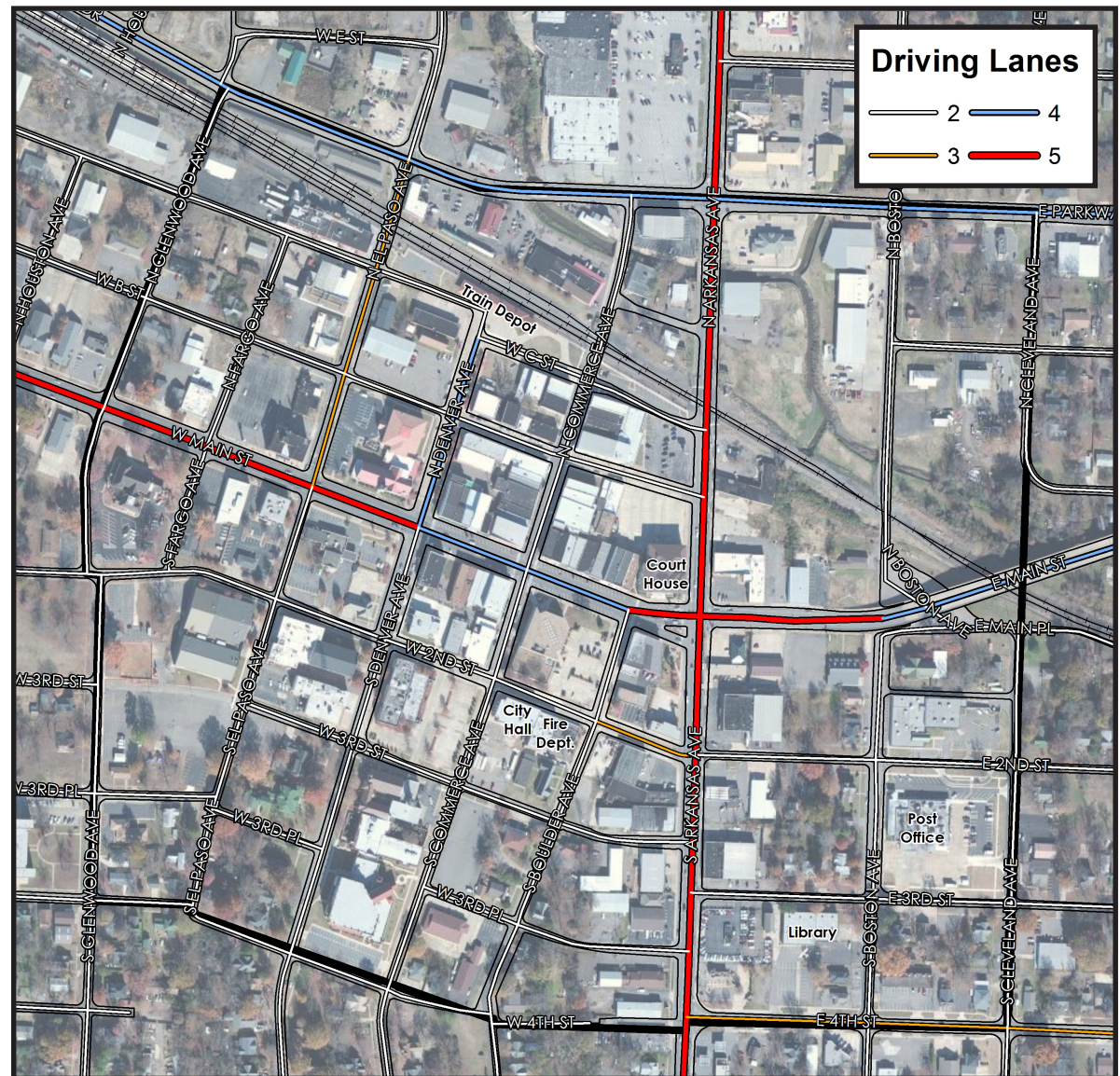
There are very few three-lane streets. They are limited to North El Paso - between Main and Parkway, East Fourth Street, and one block of West Second Street between Arkansas and Boulder.

Two-Lane Streets (white line)

The balance of the downtown street network, which constitutes the majority of streets, features just two driving lanes. Such streets, as with most streets in the other street categories, include on-street parking.

It is noteworthy that some of the street profiles illustrated below do not feature the

ideal number of lanes and their current design warrants reconsideration in this plan.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: STREETS BY TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Because there is a strong correlation between the number of available driving lanes and traffic volumes, the map at right somewhat resembles the map on the previous page. Below is a summary of this map, which illustrates the number of average daily trips (ADTs) by automobiles for each street or street segment:

19,000 to 24,999 ADTs (maroon line)

The only streets in the downtown featuring this highest level of traffic are Arkansas and West Main Street. They are also state-designated roads.

10,000 to 18,999 ADTs (salmon line)

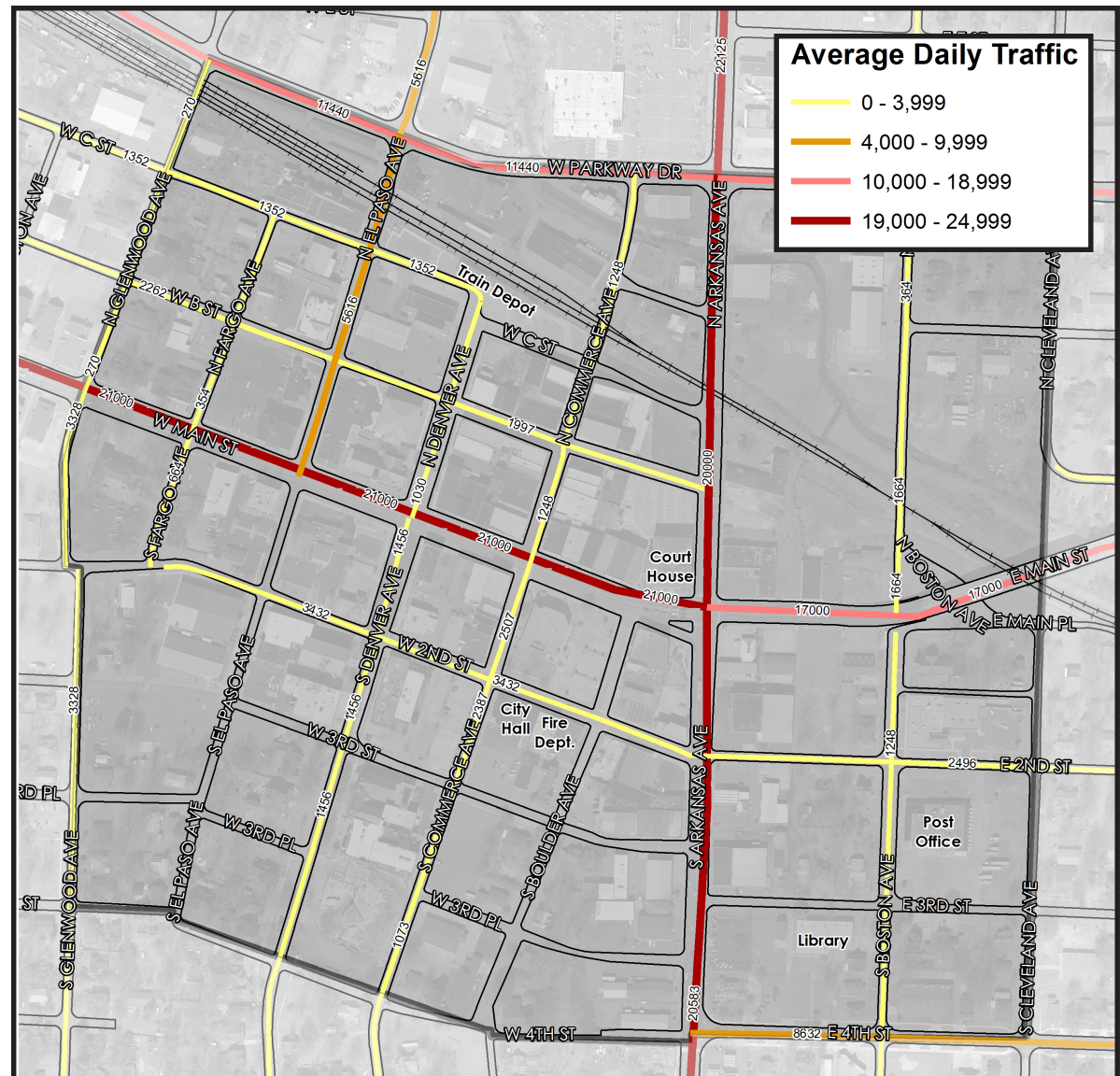
The only streets having this level of traffic are East Main and the full length of Parkway.

4,000 to 9,999 ADTs (gold line)

The only two street segments within the downtown study area experiencing this level of traffic are North El Paso and East Fourth Street.

0 to 3,999 ADTs (yellow line)

The balance of the downtown street network, which constitutes the majority of streets, features this relatively low level of traffic.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: SIDEWALKS

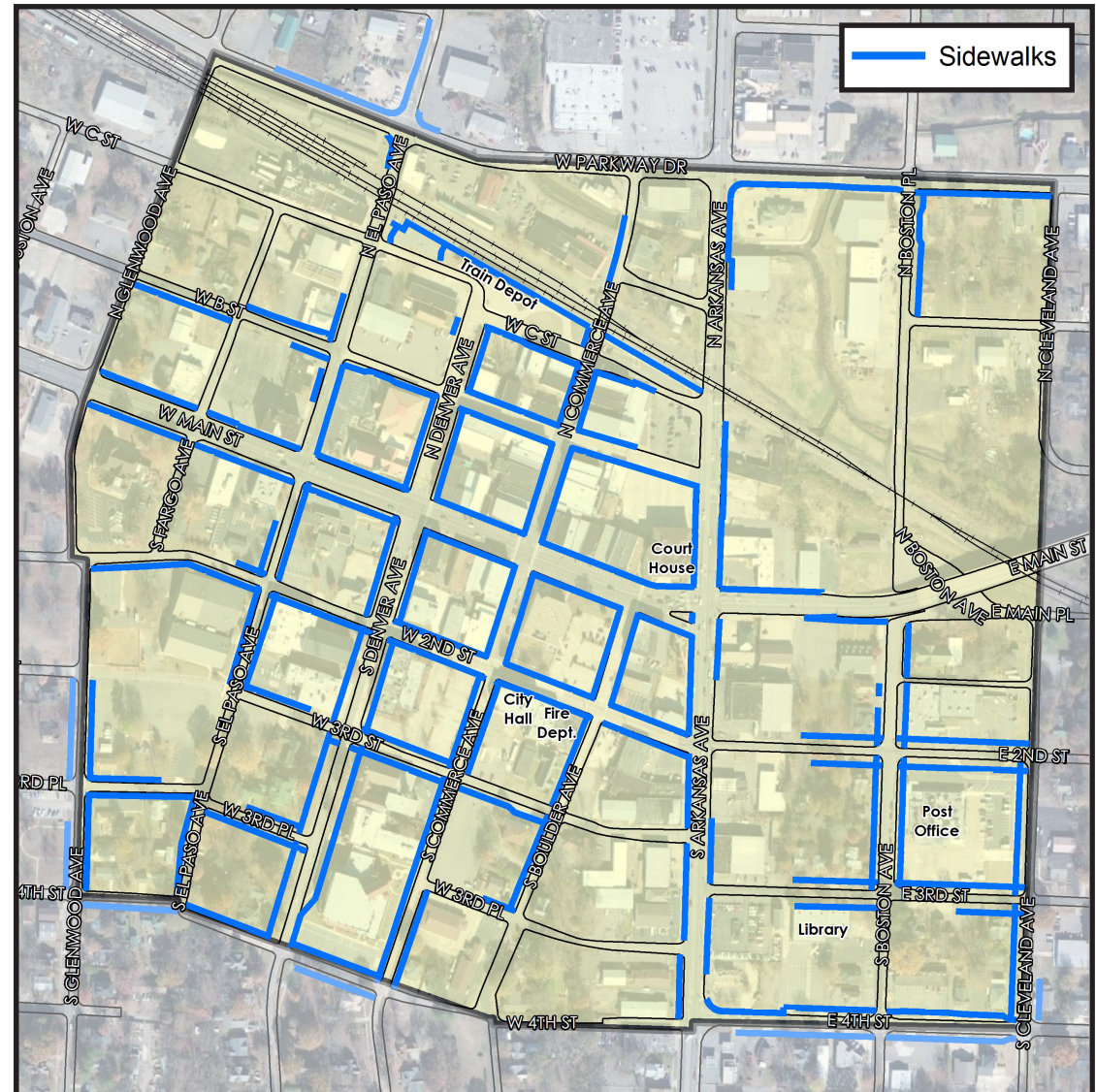
Sidewalks are a critical component to a pedestrian-friendly downtown. As conveyed by the map at right, the vast majority of downtown's streets feature sidewalks. These sidewalks are constructed of concrete and some have minor maintenance deficiencies, but they are generally sound for walking. The only areas lacking sidewalks include the following:

- Segments of El Paso both north and south of Main
- All of Fargo on both sides of the street
- Segments of Glenwood both north and south of Main
- Segments of B Street, and most of C Street
- The most northern block on Denver - west side
- Most of the east side of Boulder, and one block on the west side



This segment of Parkway near Commerce lacks sidewalks on both sides of the street.

- The most easterly blocks of West Third Street, West Third Place, and West Fourth Street
- Random segments of Arkansas, East Main, Boston, and East Second and Third Streets
- Most of both sides of Parkway



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: PARKING

The map at right depicts two types of existing parking in Downtown Russellville: on-street and off-street parking. There is currently no off-street structured parking (garages), although one or more garages will need to be considered for the future, particularly as it relates to parking for the county courthouse and/or the proposed new downtown library. Below is a summary of existing parking conditions:

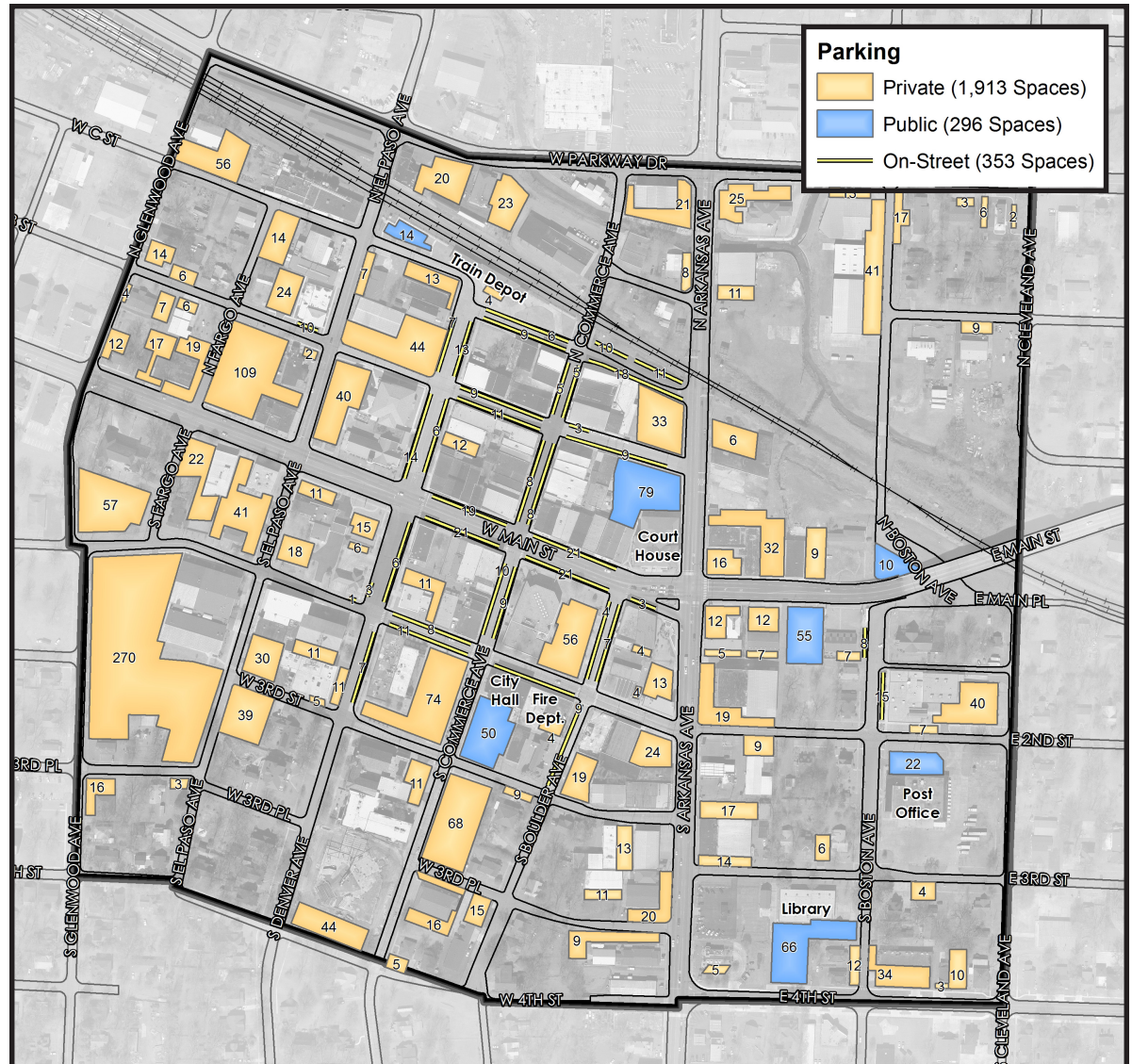
On-Street Parking

There are currently approximately 350 designated on-street spaces located within the core of downtown. Most of downtown's on-street parking is parallel, but there are some segments of angled parking, such as on Main Street. Where space permits, angled parking is preferable because it provides more parking spaces per linear foot of street frontage. Also, there are plenty of parallel on-street parking opportunities within the peripheral portions of the study area, but they are not formally designated as parking. One current challenge to on-street parking in the downtown is the complete lack of parking regulation enforcement by the City, which results in a significant problem with employee on-street parking.

Off-Street Parking

There are nearly 300 spaces in public lots, most of which are affiliated with facilities

such as City Hall and the Courthouse. There are also nearly 2,000 spaces in private parking lots throughout downtown.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: SEWER LINES

The map at right illustrates downtown's existing sewer line system. Generally, sewer service is adequate, although there are some random locations where service is inadequate. For example, the public restrooms located within the depot facility cannot be used for public events because of capacity limitations that result in sewage back-up. Below is an overview of key components mapped out at right:

Force Main Line (red line)

The single force main within the downtown study area traverses downtown on the north side of the railroad line running somewhat parallel with the railroad line.

Gravity Flow Lines (pale line)

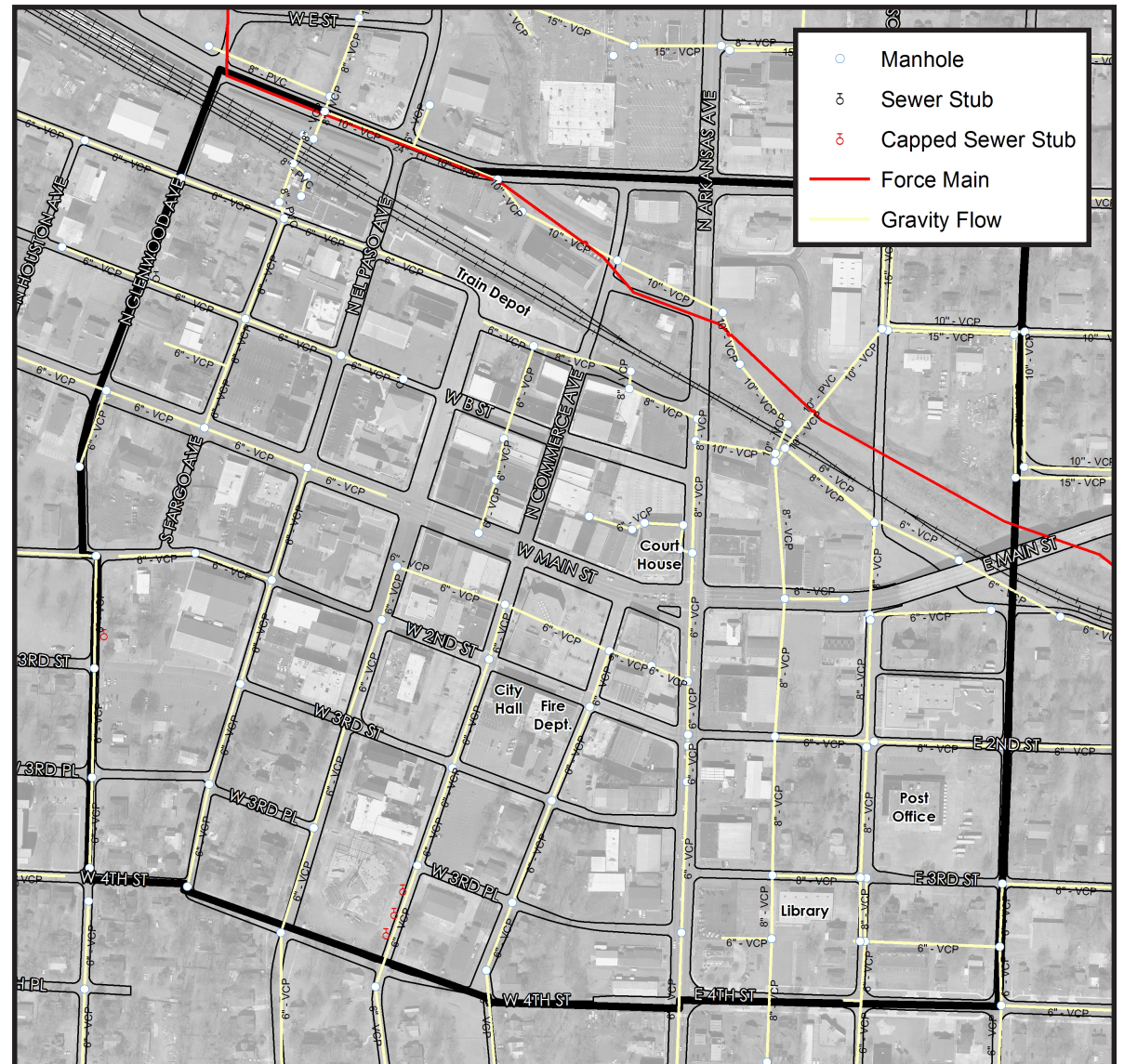
These sewer lines extend throughout the downtown and typically follow street rights-of-way (ROWs). However, there are a few blocks in which they run mid-block. Most of these lines are interconnected, but some terminate with no connections.

Manholes (blue circles)

Manholes are important to any sewer system because they provide above-grade access points for maintenance of the lines. Manholes are depicted on the map at right

as small blue circles and they are typically located at the intersection of a north-south

and east-west line.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: WATER LINES

The map at right highlights two key components of the downtown public water system - water lines and fire hydrants. Public water is provided for two key purposes - domestic use (drinking, bathing, toilet flushing, washing dishes and clothes, etc.) and fire fighting needs. While the current water system appears to be generally sufficient for domestic purposes, it is not sufficient for firefighting purposes. The following text has been adapted from a concise report on the subject by Russellville Fire Chief John L. Cochran:

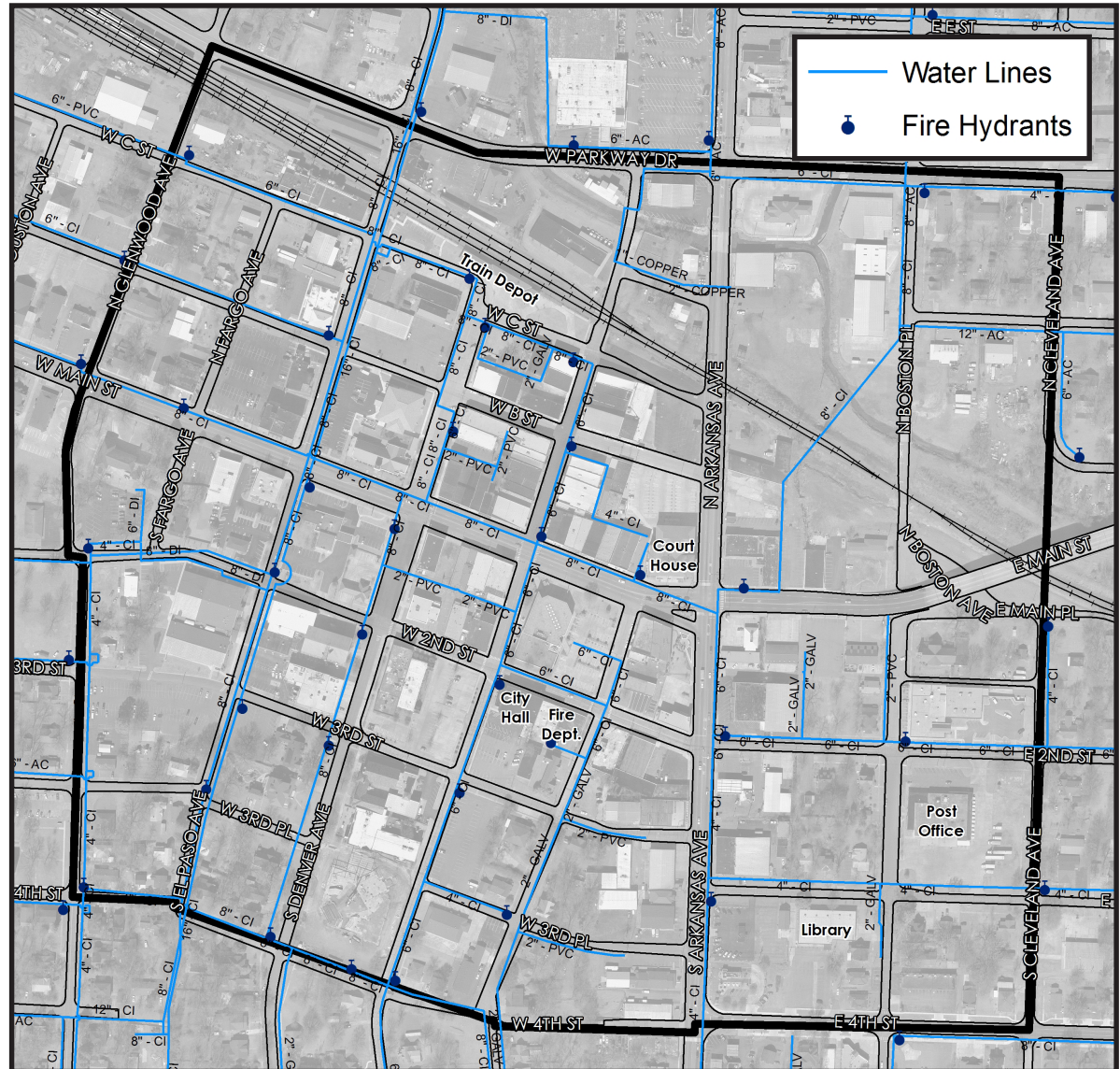
Background

Forty percent of a community's fire insurance rating (which equates to the annual insurance premiums paid by property owners) is derived from the adequacy of the water system to produce water flows in gallons per minute (GPM) and pressures (PSI) needed for effective firefighting operations. Water mains must be able to flow adequate GPM that matches the fire risks of the area. The older and larger the fire risks (age, type and condition of construction, and square feet and/or number of stories, along with distance from exposures - such as other structures), the more water is needed to successfully suppress a fire in a high density

urban area such as in a typical pre-war downtown district.

Current System

That part of the Russellville system that pro-



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: WATER LINES (continued)

vides service to the downtown district was originally installed in the years 1909 through 1910. Aside from domestic needs, the primary reason for the system being installed at the time was the aftermath of the downtown fire of 1906. Prior to the installation of the system, much of the area was served via cisterns and wells. Between 1906 and 1908, the community worked to create an improvement district whereby bonds could be sold to fund the system. The system was completed in 1910, at which time the operation was handed over to the City. The original system was minimally designed with regard to fire protection. It mostly included small 6 inch or smaller mains and two-way “toggle” type fire hydrants with no isolation valves. Some areas of the surrounding community were served with dead end mains, a feature that sometimes does not produce the volume and/or pressure needed to successfully suppress fires in high density urbanized areas. Though well below today’s standards, the system could produce adequate fire streams from hose and nozzles connected directly to fire hydrants that were transported by a horse drawn hose wagon.

Over the years, the system in the downtown area has become a hodgepodge of modifications with some limited upgrades. The most noticeable has been via requests by the fire department to replace older inferior two-way toggle valve fire hydrants with three-way “vertical valve” hydrants. Many of the two-ways were nearing 100 years old when their gradual replacement began in the 1990s. What is still needed is the replacement of some of the aging water mains and valves. A concern is that much of the area within the outermost areas of the master plan study area is served with mains of six inches or less and the original two-way toggle valve fire hydrants which were manufactured in 1909-10. The dependability of these hydrants is often in question during firefighting operations.

Recent Discussions

In recent years, the fire department has been in discussion with the water department for a need to seek opportunities to upgrade areas of the community that are served with older infrastructure. One of the primary areas that have been discussed is the downtown historic district. As part of the discussions the following has been pointed out:

- Much of the system in the downtown could be improved with regard to current and future fire risks. This will become even more pertinent as newer and larger structures are designed with modern building and fire codes, which in some cases require built-in fire protection such as automatic fire sprinklers and built-in stationary fire pumps.
- Many of the water mains and isolation valves are old and no longer produce gallons-per-minute (GPM) flows in proportion to the main size due to a long term build-up of sediments. All water mains and valves should be inspected for replacement and/or upgrades.
- Mains are undersized and, in certain areas, nonexistent along city streets. As an example, no water mains exist along North Arkansas Avenue from Main Street north to C Street or along West B Street from North Commerce to North Arkansas. Other areas lacking mains include along South Boulder from West Main south to West 2nd Street.
- The distribution of fire hydrants does not meet current standards. In downtown, hydrants should be distributed at every intersection, but several areas do not meet these criteria. However, there has been a concerted effort in recent years to add additional three-way hydrants at intersections where no hydrants had previously existed or had been taken out several years ago with no replacement.

I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: ZONING

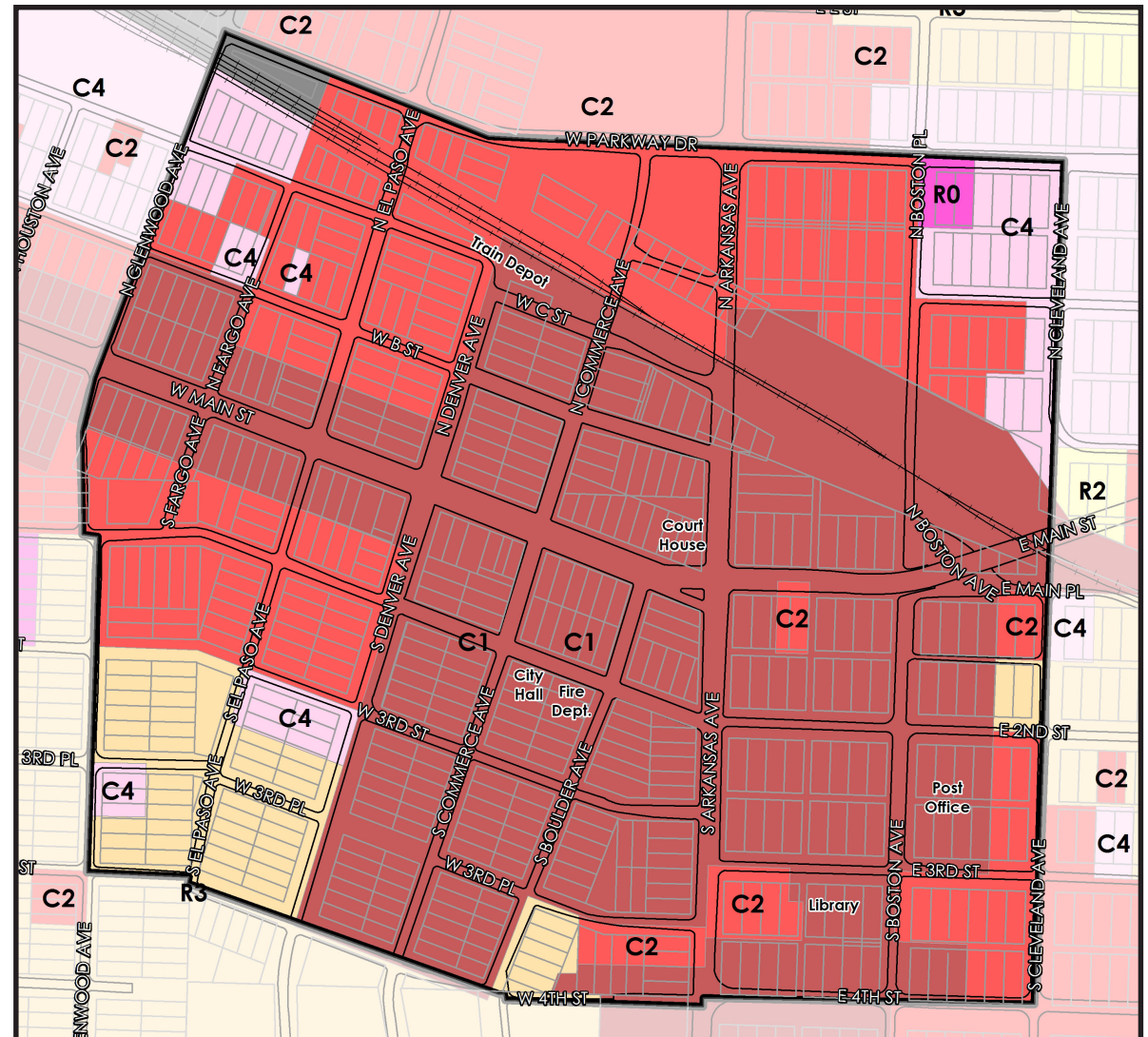
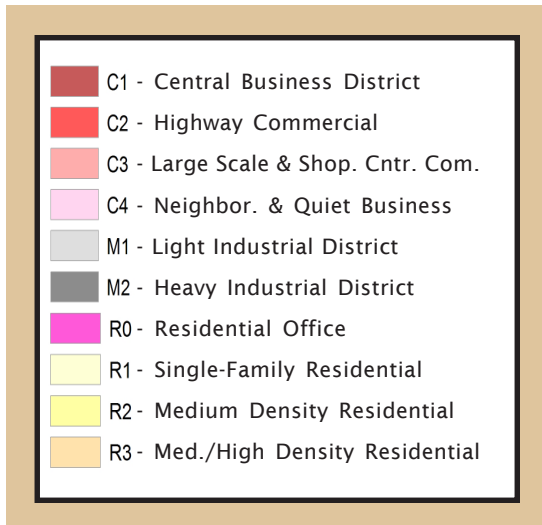
As illustrated by the map at right, the downtown study area has five different zoning districts. Each is summarized below:

Central Business District (C1)

According to the zoning ordinance, “The C-1 District encompasses the historical portion of the City commonly referred to as “Downtown.” This district is intended for the conduct of personal and business services and the general retail business of the community. Persons living in the community and in the surrounding trade area require direct and frequent access to this area, which provides space for professional offices, banks, places of amusement, governmental offices, and retailing services of

all kinds. Because of its unique and historical nature, normal parking and setback requirements are relaxed.” In general, the physical bulk standards allow for an urban form of

development. However, there are several uses, both permitted and prohibited, that warrant reconsideration. This issue is covered in this plan’s implementation section.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: ZONING (continued)

Highway Commercial (C2)

According to the zoning ordinance, *“This district is intended to provide space for certain retail and business activities and primarily serves the motoring public. This district provides for the commercial uses that do not need to be in shopping areas or the central business district or which are undesirable in such areas. It is characterized by establishments such as motels, drive-in 21 restaurants, automobile sales and service, general retail, and other activities of this nature.”* The auto-oriented character of this zoning is clearly incompatible with that of a pedestrian-oriented historic downtown, and its inclusion within certain areas of the study area is addressed in this plan’s implementation section.

Neighborhood & Quiet Business (C4)

According to the zoning ordinance, *“This commercial District (C-4) is intended to provide a place for those types of office, service, and commercial activities that provide for the regular needs and/or for the convenience of the people residing in the adjacent residential areas. Because these shops, stores, and offices may be an integral part of the neighborhood closely associated with residential, religious and recreational elements, requirements for light, air and open space are more restrictive than*

those of other commercial districts. This district can also serve as a buffer between higher intensity commercial districts and residential districts.” While this zoning serves a useful purpose, its random spatial allocation appears to have been driven by circumstances more than comprehensive planning.

Heavy Industrial District (M2)

According to the zoning ordinance, *“This industrial district is intended to provide for heavy industrial uses and other uses not otherwise provided for in the districts established by this Zoning Code.”* This designation is applied to only a single site in the very northwest corner of the downtown study area.

Residential Office (RO)

According to the zoning ordinance, *The Residential Office District (R-O) presents residents with conventional services.*

1) Residential Provision - The Residential Office District is intended to provide a place for those types of offices, professional and service activities that provide for the regular need or convenience of persons residing in the city. It is further intended to preserve the residential character of the district.

2) Office Conversion - This district is intended to provide conversion of older residential structures to office use. Such offices will be located in established city areas in proximity

to residential uses.

3) New Construction - New construction designed to reinforce existing area characteristics and not detrimental to the use of surrounding projects for residential or office use will be allowed in the district.

Like the M2 zone, RO only applies to a small site in the northeast corner of downtown.

Medium/High Density Residential (R3)

According to the zoning ordinance, *“This district encourages affordable housing of varied types in specified locations within the city. The district is designed to permit medium density residential of up to 24 dwelling units per acre. The principle use of land is for single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, townhouses, low-rise multiple-family dwellings, and garden apartments. Recreational, religious, and educational uses normally located to serve residential areas are also permitted to provide the basic elements of convenient, balanced, and attractive living areas. Zero-lot line developments may occur as set forth in this section. The district permits site-built housing, manufactured housing, and modular housing constructed on individual lots with uniform design guidelines imposed to maintain neighborhood harmony and consistency in appearance.”* This zoning is limited to peripheral sites in the southern half of the study area.

I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: SPECIAL DISTRICTS

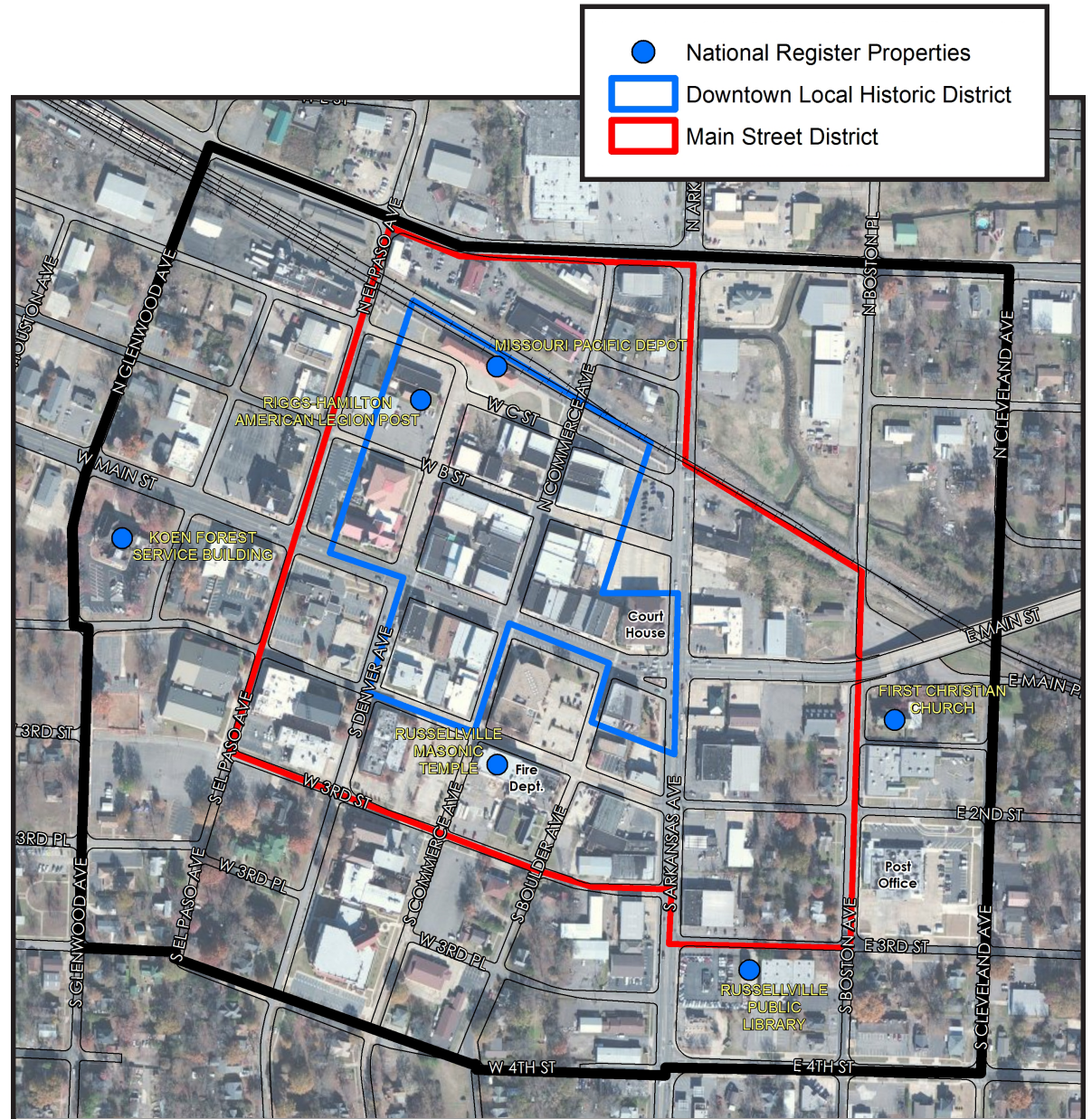
In addition to conventional zoning, the downtown area has multiple special districts and sites, as illustrated by the map at right.

MAIN STREET DISTRICT

Outlined with a red line at right, this district is the area where Main Street Russellville focuses its revitalization efforts, and it constitutes the commercial and mixed use core of downtown. See page 41 for more on the Main Street program.

NATIONAL REGISTER SITES & DISTRICT

The blue lines in the map at right illustrate both the locally designated historic district boundaries and the National Register of Historic Places district, as the boundaries are identical. Individual National Register properties are indicated by blue dots, and examples include Missouri Pacific Depot, the Masonic Temple (now City Hall), and the Russellville Public Library. It is noteworthy that National Register designation provides financial incentives for qualified building rehabilitations via both state and federal investment tax credits (see page 119 for details). It also offers protections related to federally funded or licensed activities through Section 106 Review. However, designation cannot otherwise prohibit demolition of a National Register resource.



I. BACKGROUND

DOWNTOWN: SPECIAL DISTRICTS (continued)

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Outlined on the previous page in blue, this district provides much greater protections than does National Register designation. Ordinance #2023 created the local historic district, the process for designating districts and protecting them, and it expanded on the policies dictating the Russellville Historic District Commission (RHDC). The RHDC was initially created through Ordinance #2011. The following is a summary of the key elements of the existing local historic zoning program:

Preservation Ordinance (Ord. #2023)

This ordinance is generally well-written and includes all of the key provisions contained in an effective preservation ordinance:

Russellville Historic District Commission

The RHDC has all of the powers of a typical preservation commission, including adopting design guidelines, conducting historic sites surveys, nominating sites and districts to the National Register, making recommendations to the City Council regarding ordinances and districts, hiring staff or consultants, providing advice to historic property owners, and conducting design review to issue Certificates of Appropriateness

(COAs), to name just some of their powers.

Design Review Process

As currently written, it appears that any exterior alteration to an existing structure requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Many communities only require a COA for alterations that are visible from a public street or public right-of-way, and such an approach might be considered in Russellville.

Two issues that are not necessarily addressed in a preservation ordinance, including Russellville's, but that deserve consideration, include the following:

- Pre-application meetings do not currently occur, but they could be helpful in avoiding pitfalls prior to an applicant spending money on designers for work that might later require costly changes.
- The existing COA application is not formatted in a way that allows the information submission requirements to be tailored to the scale and magnitude of the proposed project.

Demolition

As currently written, it appears that proposed demolitions can be stalled so that alternatives can be explored, but cannot be indefinitely prohibited as in the case of many preservation ordinances.

Other Key Provisions

Other important provisions that are left out of some preservation ordinance, but are included in Russellville's, include:

- Economic hardship provisions that, wisely, only apply after a COA application is denied
- Demolition by neglect provisions laying out a detailed process for determining and resolving the deterioration of buildings
- Appeals to RHDC decisions are made to the Pope County Circuit Court

Design Guidelines

While the City currently lacks design guidelines by which to evaluate COA applications, they are currently being drafted.



Although this 1926 former Masonic Temple is located just south of downtown's National Register Historic District, it is individually designated on the Register. It was recently adapted for use as the Russellville City Hall.

I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: NATURAL LAND FEATURES

The map at right depicts three categories of natural features within the El Paso Avenue Corridor: topography, streams and floodways, and floodplains. Below is a summary of each:

Topography

As the map's contour lines illustrate, there is not much sloping in this area's land. Elevations range between approximately 338 to 345 feet above sea level, with the lower end of that range being concentrated in the corridor's southern half where floodplains exist.

Streams & Floodways

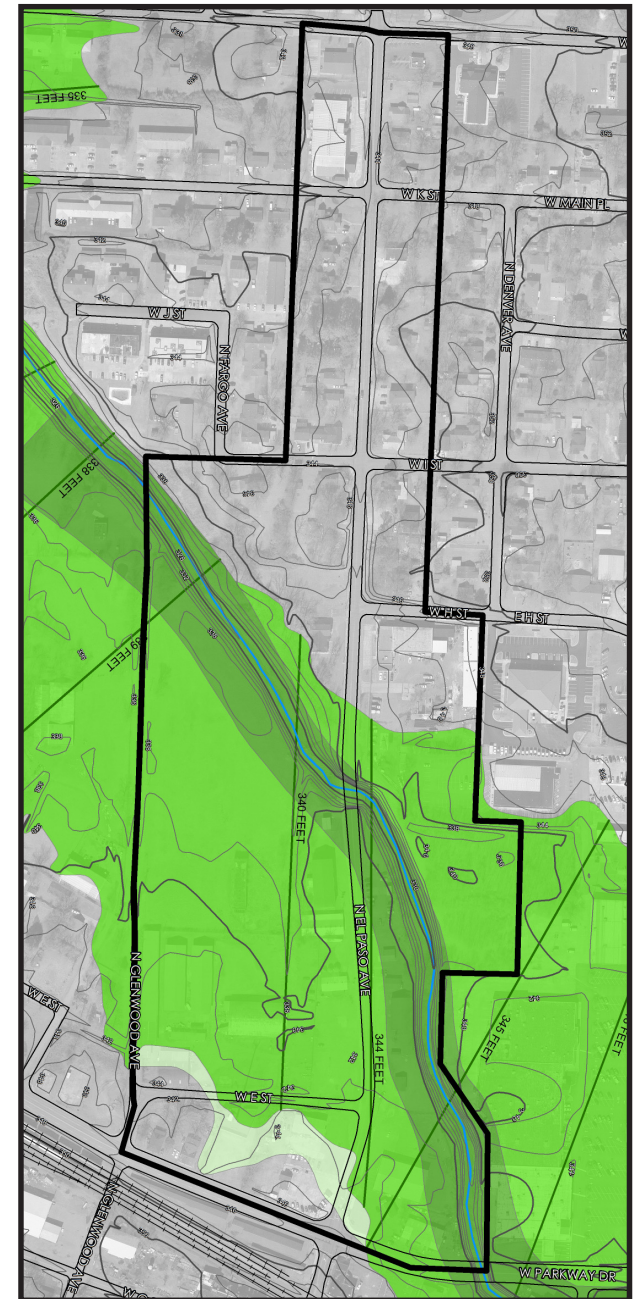
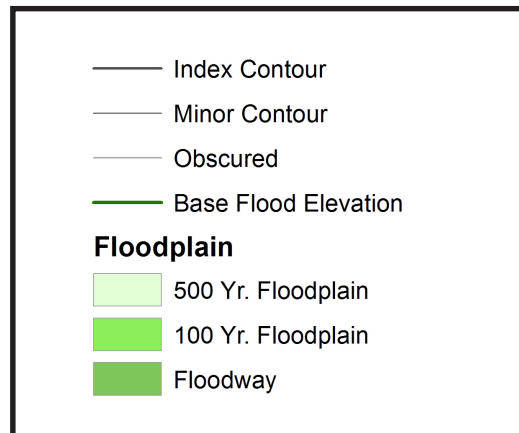
The corridor's only stream is Prairie Creek, located in the southern half of the area and depicted on the map at right by a blue line. It traverses the corridor along a northwest to southeast axis. Floodways are illustrated with the darkest shade of green adjacent to either side of Prairie Creek.

Floodplains

The El Paso Avenue Corridor's 100 year floodplains are shown in the medium shade of green and are quite extensive. In fact, they occupy the majority of land in the southern half of the corridor. There are only limited 500 year floodplains in this area.



Prairie Creek near its intersection with El Paso Avenue



I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: BLOCK & LOT PATTERNS

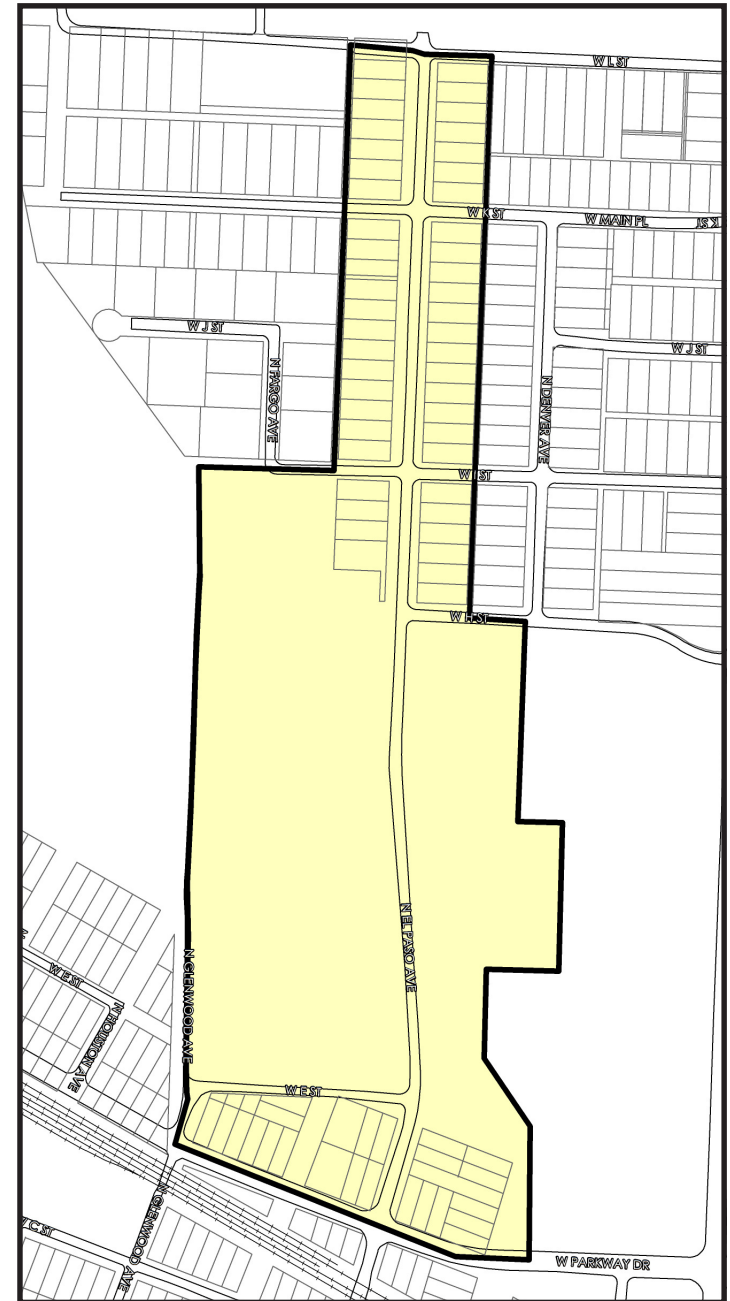
The map at right illustrates the various block and lot patterns that comprise the El Paso Avenue Corridor. Below is a summary of both features:

Blocks

The northern half of this corridor has a distinct block pattern, while there are no formal blocks in the southern half with the exception of the extreme southern end. The northern end has a gridded street pattern resulting in a series of rectilinear blocks oriented along a north-south axis. Their dimensions vary greatly. While some of the blocks located near this corridor but just beyond it feature alleys, none exist within our defined study area. The extreme south end of the corridor features one oddly shaped block bound by Parkway on the south, West East Street on the north, El Paso on the east, and Glenwood on the west. On the opposite side of El Paso is another grouping of lots, but it is not technically a block because it is not bound on all sides by a street. Just north of this area is a large floodplain area that lacks a lot and block pattern because of its lack of potential for development.

Lot Patterns

The lots found in the northern half of this corridor feature an east-west orientation and they average approximately 130 ft. by 50 ft. in size. The lots in the extreme south of the corridor are slightly more random in size. Some have an east-west orientation and some have a north-south orientation.

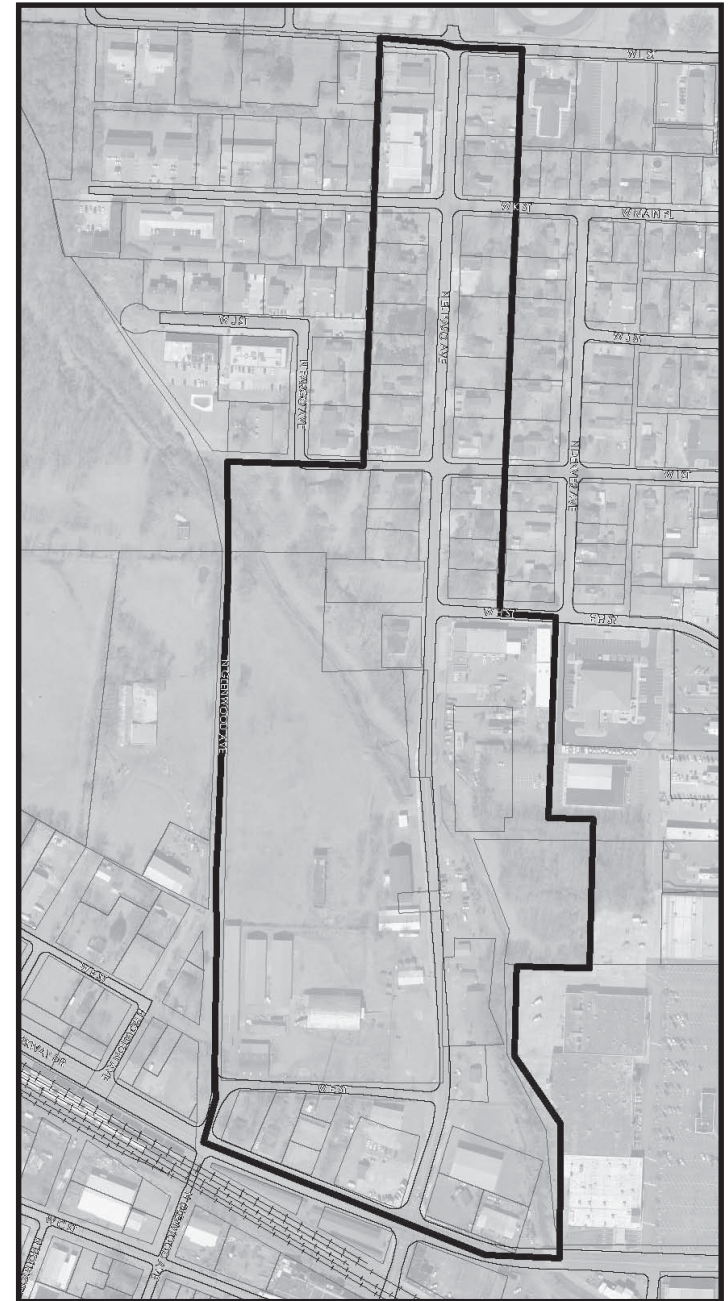


I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: PARCEL PATTERNS

The map at right illustrates the pattern of land parcels within the El Paso Avenue Corridor. Unlike lots, which are legal subdivisions of land, parcels define the boundaries of land ownership. For example, in some cases a single parcel might be comprised of multiple adjoining lots. However, those multiple lots are under single ownership.

The most fine-grained pattern of parcels is found in the northern half of this corridor. The parcels found in these blocks have the same east-west orientation as the lots, but they tend to be a bit wider because they combine adjoining lots. A similar parcel pattern exists in the very southern part of this corridor and it somewhat reflects the lot pattern there. As with the map on the previous page illustrating block and lot patterns, the majority of the southern half of this corridor lacks a fine-grained parcel pattern because of the expansive floodplains.



I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: LAND OWNERSHIP

While the parcel map on the previous page illustrates general patterns of ownership, its usefulness is limited because it only conveys patterns. The map at right, on the other hand, illustrates three categories of ownership within the El Paso Avenue Corridor: consolidated private ownership, private institutional ownership, and public ownership, as follows:

Consolidated Private Ownership

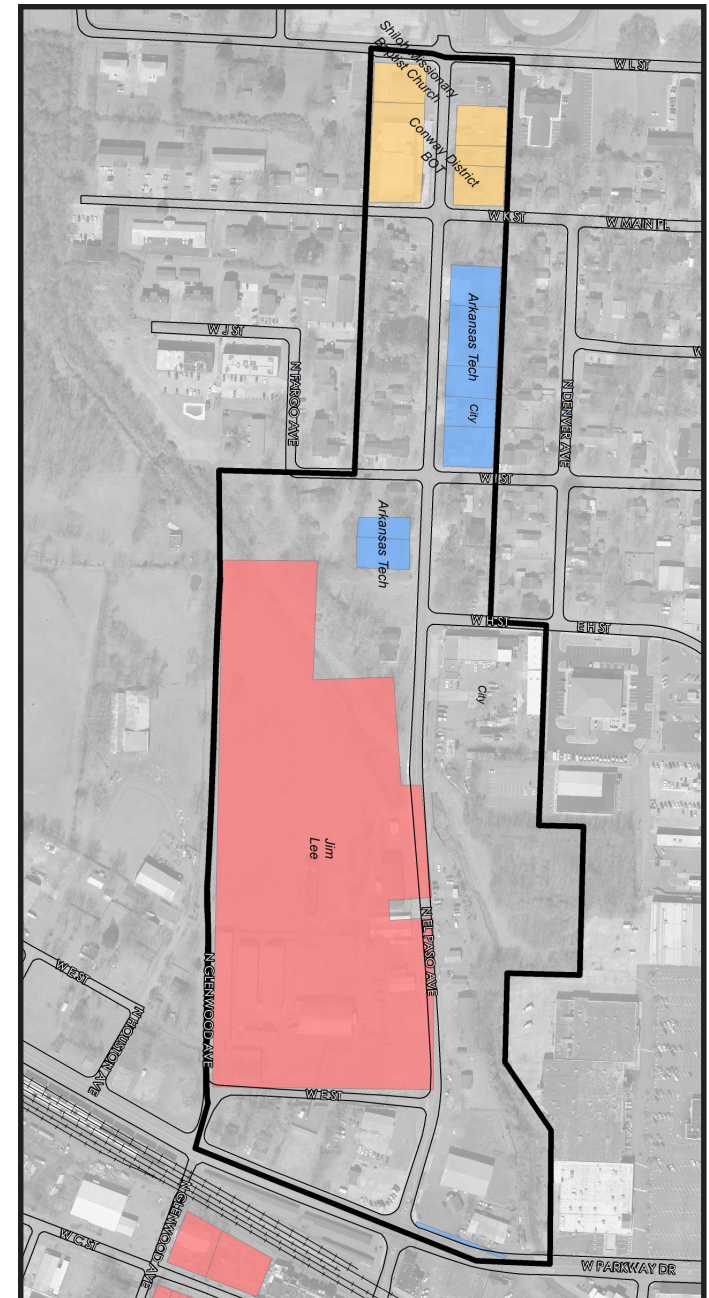
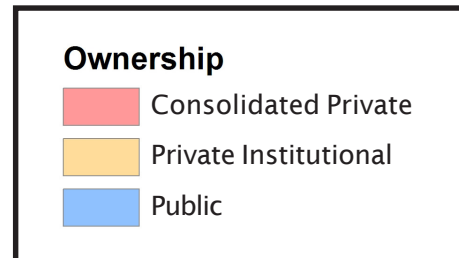
There is a single expansive area highlighted in pink in the southern half of the corridor that is under single ownership by a private individual. This area is comprised of the large floodplain shown on the previous floodplain map. Because of the floodplains, future development of this land is quite limited.

Private Institutional Ownership

Highlighted in yellow on the map at right, these properties are limited to both sides of the most northerly segment of El Paso. One grouping of properties is owned by a church (west side of El Paso), while the other side is owned by the Conway District BOT and a church.

Public Ownership

These properties are highlighted at right in blue and they include three geographic areas. On the east side of El Paso between West I and West K Streets are several parcels owned by Arkansas Tech, as well as one parcel owned by the City. Further south on the southeast corner of El Paso and West H is another City-owned property, which is used by the Public Works Department. The only other publicly-owned property within this corridor is located on the west side of El Paso just south of West I Street. It is owned by Arkansas Tech.



I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: LAND USE

For an area that is not a downtown, which is typically the most diverse place in a community for varied land uses, the El Paso Avenue Corridor is extremely diverse. Existing land uses are illustrated in the map at right, and below are some key findings related to land use:

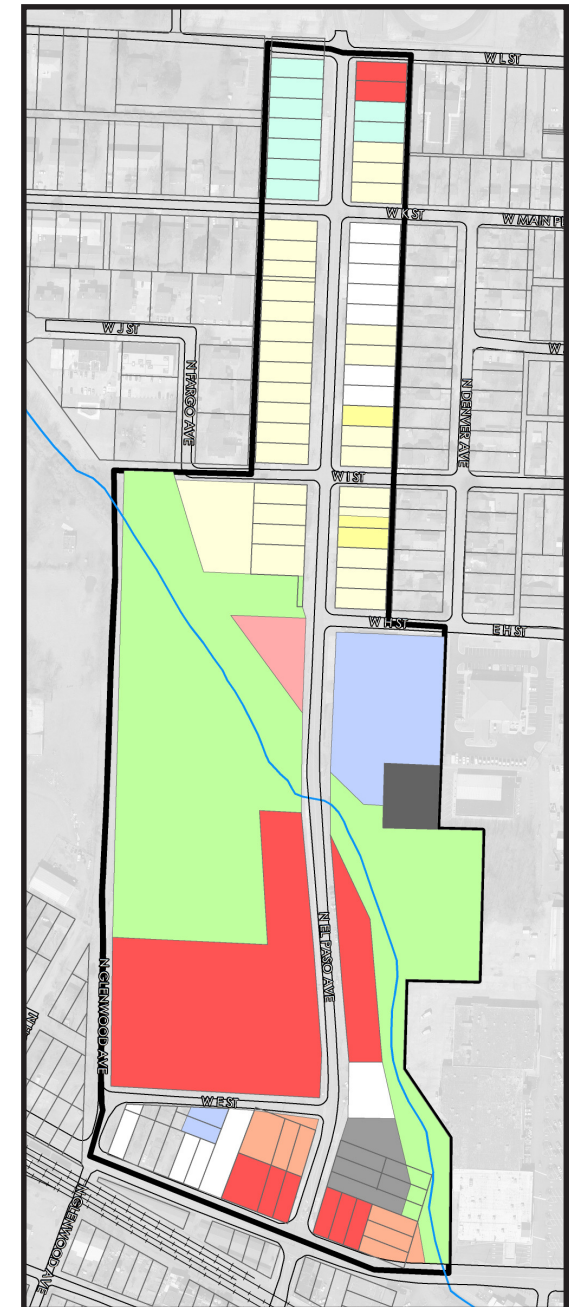
- The most dominant single land use in this corridor is greenspace (light green) because of the floodplains.
- The second most dominant land use is auto-oriented commercial (red). Most of this land area is within the southern half of the corridor, with one exception in the very northeast corner.
- The northern half of the corridor is dominated by institutional uses (turquoise) and single-family residential (pale). There are also several vacant parcels and a few
















multi-family properties.

- The City’s Public Works site (blue) occupies a large parcel central to the corridor on the east side of El Paso.
- The southern end of the corridor has multiple industrial and warehouse commercial uses.
- The only standard land use categories not represented within this corridor are recreational, mixed use and retail uses.



The City of Russellville’s Public Works Department is located on El Paso Avenue.

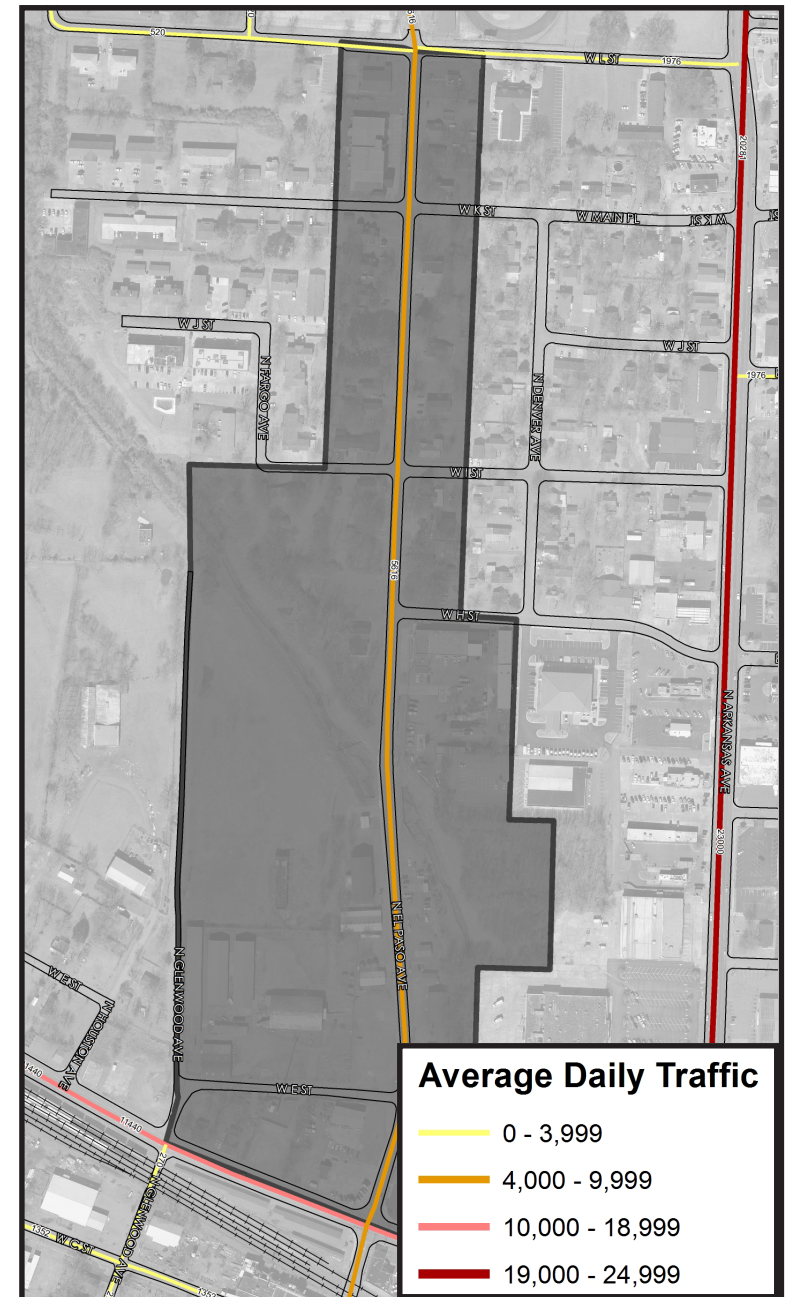


Use					
	Mixed-Use		Institutional		Office
	Service Commercial		Multi-Family Residential		Retail
	Warehouse Commercial		Single-Family Residential		Parking
	Industrial		Greenspace		Public/Quasi-Public
	Auto-Oriented Commercial		Recreational		Vacant

I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: STREETS BY TRAFFIC VOLUME

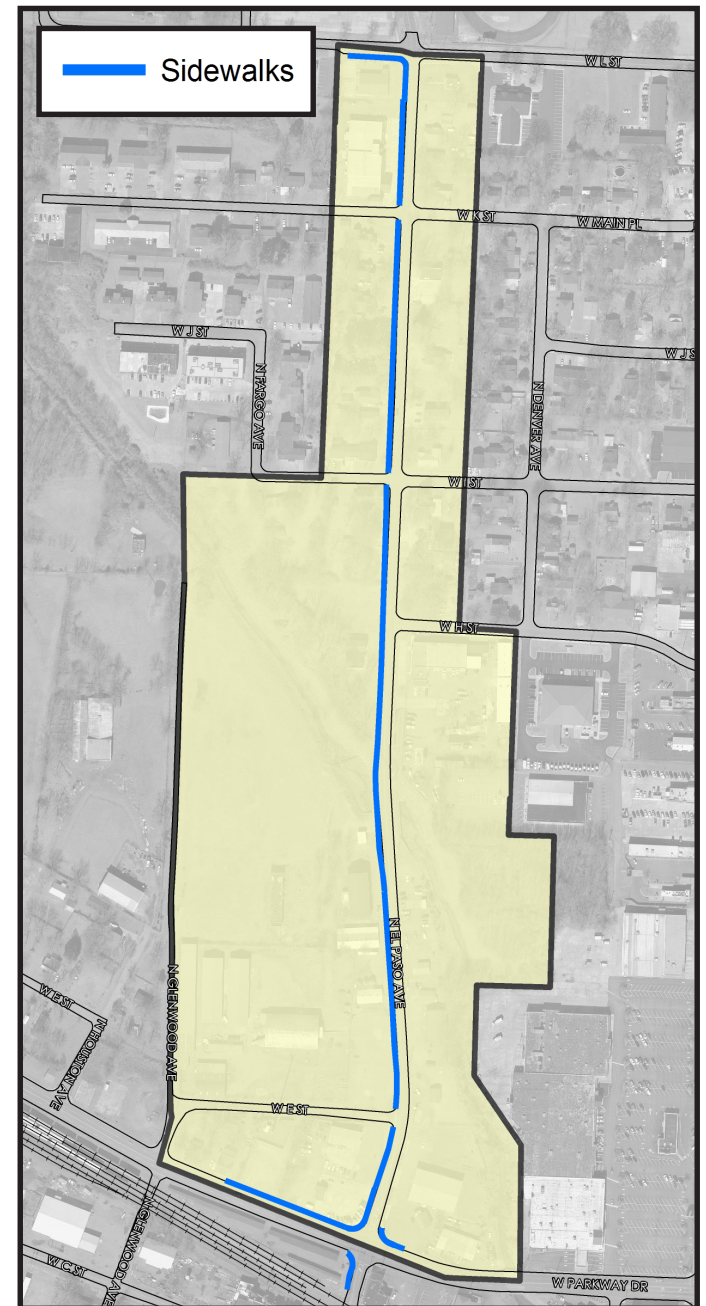
Below is a summary of the map at right, which illustrates the number of average daily trips (ADTs) by automobiles for streets within the El Paso Avenue Corridor. While a similar map for the downtown study area featured a broad range of ADT categories, this corridor features only one street with a significant level of traffic. That street is El Paso, and it falls within the 4,000 to 9,999 ADTs category. More specifically, this street experiences approximately 6,500 ADTs.



I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: SIDEWALKS

For this corridor to become an effective link between downtown and Arkansas Tech, it is critical that it can easily accommodate multiple modes of transportation, including pedestrians. As the map at right reflects, the only existing sidewalks within this corridor occur on the west side of El Paso, and none of the adjoining side streets feature sidewalks. The only exception is a segment of sidewalk on the north side of Parkway west of El Paso.



I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: SEWER LINES

The map at right illustrates downtown's existing sewer line system. Generally, sewer service is adequate, although there may be some random locations where service is inadequate. Below is an overview of key components mapped out at right:

Force Main Line (red line)

The single force main within this corridor travels up Parkway and turns north at Glenwood where it extends up the street and terminates just north of the street's termination. This same termination point is where Prairie Creek traverses the corridor.

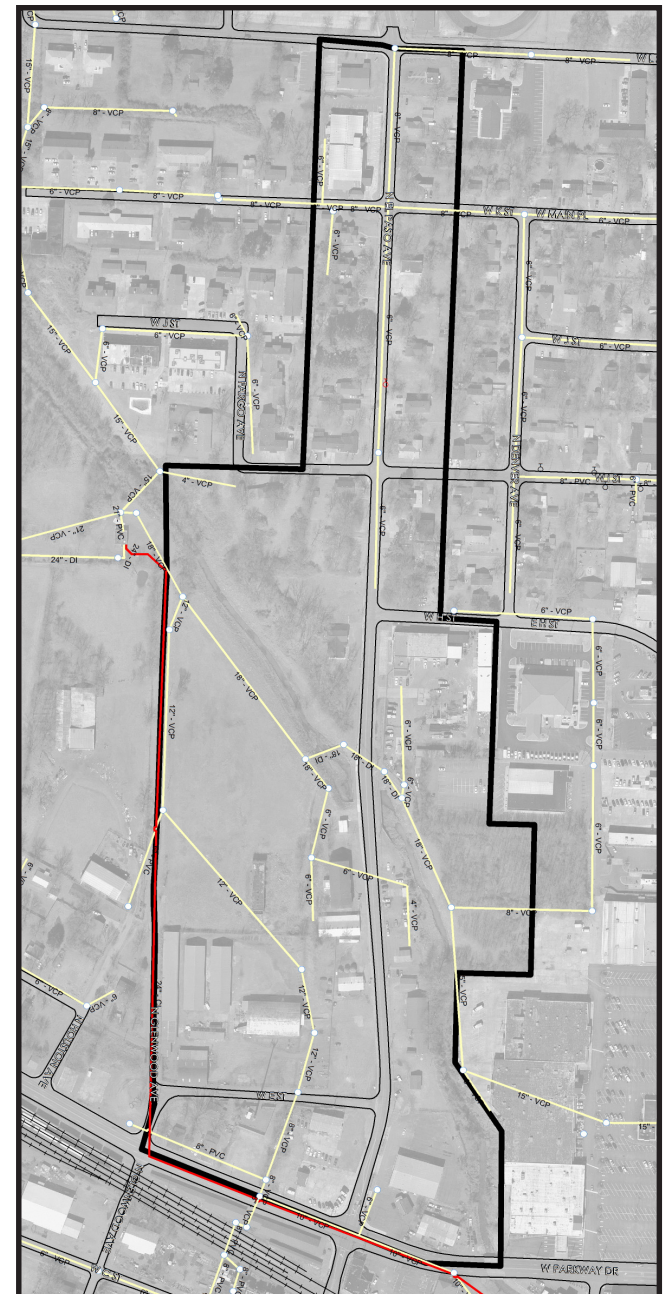
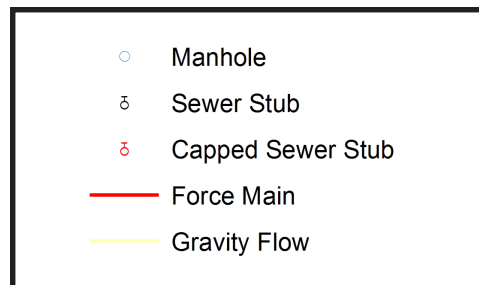
Gravity Flow Lines (pale line)

Within the northern half of this corridor, gravity flow lines follow street rights-of-way (ROWs), including that of El Paso and most of the adjoining streets. However, within the southern half of the corridor, which is dominated by floodplains, the gravity flow lines follow a more random course and are not affiliated with streets. This pattern is likely the result of the lack of a developed street network in this area.

Manholes (blue circles)

Manholes are important to any sewer system because they provide above-grade access points for maintenance of the lines.

Manholes are depicted on the map at right as small blue circles. Within the northern half of the corridor where sewer lines are integrated into the street system, they are typically located at the intersection of a north-south and east-west line. However, within the southerly area lacking a street system, manholes are located where the angle of the line changes or an intersection of lines occurs.



I. BACKGROUND

EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR: ZONING

There are only four zoning districts within the El Paso Avenue Corridor, and they include the following:

- Highway Commercial (C2)
- Neighborhood & Quiet Business (C4)
- Heavy Industrial District (M2)
- Medium/High Density Residential (R3)

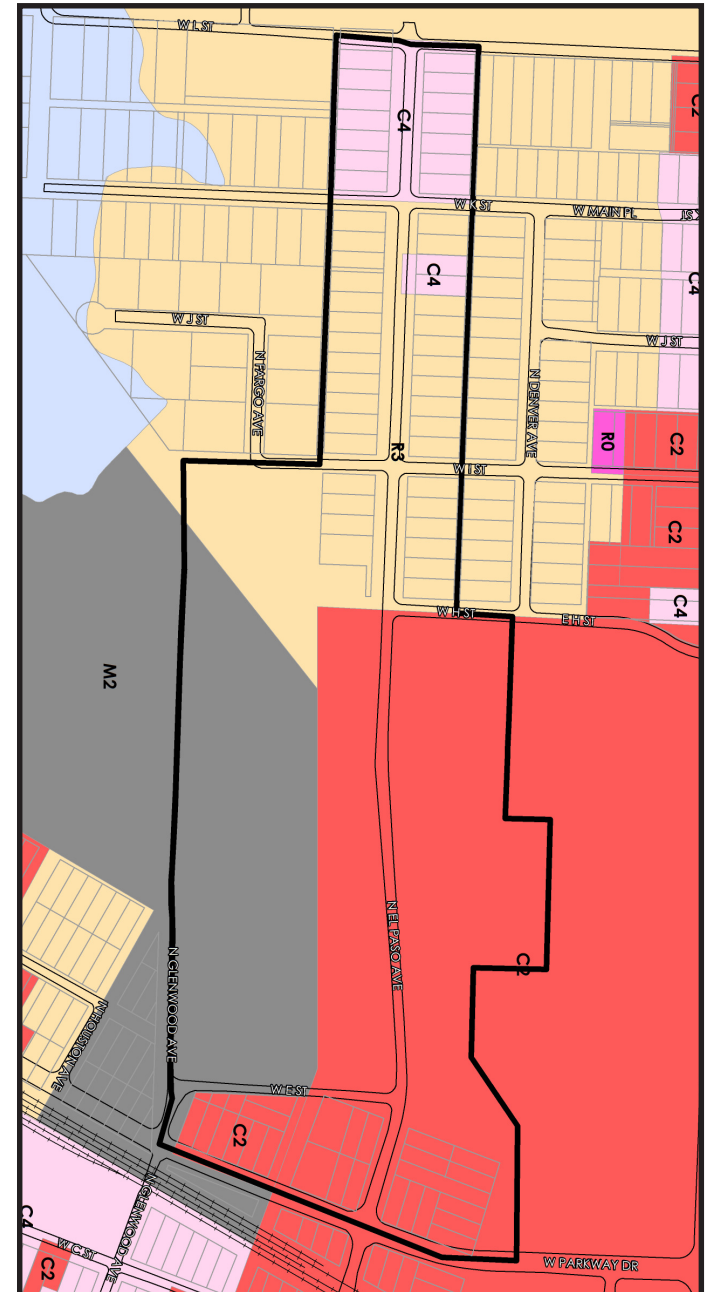
An overview of each of these districts is provided on pages 22 - 23, which addresses downtown zoning. Although the southern half of this corridor features Highway Commercial and Heavy Industrial zoning, most of it consists of floodplains, making it difficult to develop. Most of the northern half of this corridor is zoned for Medium/High Density Residential uses. This district allows a wide range of residential uses, including single-family detached, duplexes, multi-family, and zero lot line houses. The

other zoning district within the north half of this corridor is the Neighborhood & Quiet Business zone, most of which occupies the most northerly block in the corridor. While the zone's name implies that permitted commercial uses would be low-impact, uses such as car washes are permitted in that category. Consequently, permitted uses should be reconsidered for potential amendments.



Consistent with the predominant existing land uses, the El Paso Avenue corridor's north end is zoned for residential uses.

	C2 - Highway Commercial
	C4 - Neighbor. & Quiet Business
	M2 - Heavy Industrial District
	R3 - Med./High Density Residential



I. BACKGROUND

ECONOMIC & MARKET CONDITIONS

This section provides an overview of existing economic and market conditions as context for planning and concept development for Downtown Russellville. The overall economic base and downtown economy is described, with particular attention to the physical environment and factors impacting the overall marketability and development of Downtown Russellville. Key strengths and weaknesses are identified as they relate to the overall market conditions of the downtown area.

OVERALL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Russellville is located between Little Rock and Fort Smith in west-central Arkansas. Proximate to the Ozark mountain range, Russellville is situated near several national forests including Ozark-St. Francis and Mount Magazine / Ouachita. As such, the city has access to excellent natural and recreational amenities, and represents a crossroads for Ozark tourism. Overall, the Russellville area has a relatively diverse economy, anchored by Arkansas Tech University, a large and growing state institution which helps generate economic spin-off and growth for local businesses.

SITE ASSESSMENT

Downtown Russellville is strategically-located at the intersection of Highway 7 and Highway 64, but otherwise lacks visibility and positive exposure. Downtown commercial frontage on Highway 7 is limited to suburban strip retail and the back of the County Courthouse. As such, Downtown does not offer “curb appeal” to the passing motorist on Highway 7. The environment on Highway 64 is somewhat more attractive, offering a more typical “main street” environment. Downtown offers a number of historic buildings and a strong sense of local heritage. While only several blocks square, downtown is generally intact, with few gaps in the form of large vacant spaces or parking lots. That being said, downtown also lacks unique or identity-driven streetscape improvements that could enliven the environment and help establish destination appeal. Downtown side streets are dark at night, and perceptions of a lack of safety impacts the marketability of certain sections of the downtown area.

While there is available on-street parking on most blocks, the angled parking on main streets is impacted by a lack of visibility to oncoming auto and truck traffic. Convenience-oriented businesses have more concerns about a lack of parking for

easy access, especially for the elderly. But in general, there appears to be ample parking in much of the downtown area. Businesses noted that the only reason that there appears to be sufficient on-street parking is that there are so many vacant buildings. Building vacancies contribute to the overall perception that downtown does not offer consumers a reason to be there and the general lack of destination appeal.

DOWNTOWN RUSSELLVILLE BUSINESS BASE

An assessment was conducted of the existing business base in Downtown Russellville. This assessment inventoried and analyzed the existing business mix, building vacancy, downtown business conditions, and key issues. Many of these issues were identified through interviews conducted with nearly 20 businesses in the downtown area as part of this study.

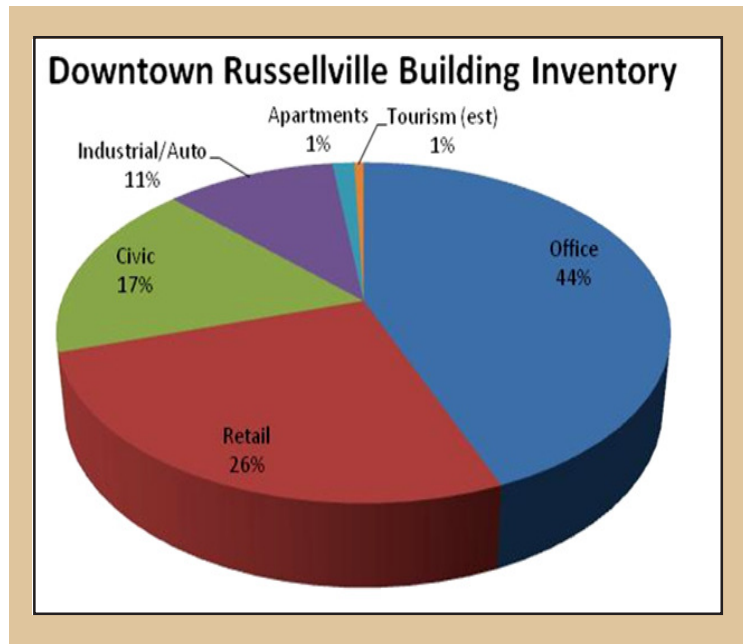
Inventory

Overall, the downtown area has a total of about 842,800 square feet of building space. Of this, about 370,000 square feet (44%) is in office use, 222,000 square feet (26%) in retail and 144,000 in (17%) civic/government uses. More than 90,000 square feet (11%) in the downtown area, mainly on the northern fringe, is in industrial or automotive service use. Only about 12,000 square feet is in residential uses (apartments), and less

I. BACKGROUND

ECONOMIC & MARKET CONDITIONS (continued)

than 1% or 4,900 square feet is in tourism use, primarily the Depot and associated tourism offices. Of the total building inventory, about 675,000 square feet is in first-floor use, while 194,000 square feet is located in upper-floor uses.



Retail

Downtown Russellville is home to several businesses that have become anchors for downtown and fixtures in the regional market. Key businesses include a large

furniture store, a historic pharmacy that also includes a small café, jewelry store, florist, hardware store, full-service restaurant, and three of the city's sporting goods stores. There are also several discount clothing stores, office suppliers, bakery, game shop, and a large number of barber shops, among others. There is a handful of full-service restaurants. Most unique is the concentra-

tion of sporting goods stores, each of which carries different merchandise but occasionally overlap on some items. Downtown is lacking, however, in food stores, restaurants, books/music, and especially, entertainment venues.

Vacant Space

At present, nearly 50,000 square feet of first-floor downtown commercial space is vacant, accounting for close to 25% of that commercial space. This is a significant vacancy that impacts the overall marketability of downtown for existing

and potential businesses. Some of this vacant space is located in Main Street buildings with significant exposure, adding to perceptions that downtown lacks activity. Making matters worse is the fact

fact that some existing businesses lack strong merchandising components for their street-front spaces. At least one major business, despite having an active interior space, used black garbage bags to cover a large share of its valuable storefront window space. Such poor merchandising and exposure further reduces the overall marketability of vacant spaces in the downtown area.

Finally, some merchants complain about the intransigence of landlords who appear to seek higher rents for low-quality or low-maintained spaces. In reality, downtown rents are comparatively low, so increasing rents would not be unreasonable if downtown were marketed effectively to attract the types of destination tenants which, collectively, would pay a slightly higher rent.

EXISTING DOWNTOWN BUSINESS CONDITIONS

Interviews were conducted with nearly 20 downtown-area businesses to gather information on existing business conditions, market sources and other inputs. Additional interviews were conducted with real estate brokers and others with knowledge of the downtown market. Findings from these interviews are summarized below.

I. BACKGROUND

ECONOMIC & MARKET CONDITIONS (continued)

Existing Sources of Business

Despite Russellville's ideal location for Ozark tourism, downtown-area businesses only attribute about 3% of their sales to tourism and other visitors. By far the largest share of business is generated by local residents of Russellville, who account for about 61% of downtown sales. On the other hand, Russellville does attract business from surrounding counties and towns, with about 23% from neighboring counties and 13% from adjacent towns/suburbs of Russellville within the county. Thus, Russellville contin-

ues to serve as a regional commercial hub for west central Arkansas.

Business Characteristics

Many of the businesses located in Downtown Russellville have been there for many years, with an average of 24 years in business downtown. These businesses are generally small, having an average of about six employees each.

Downtown Sales

Based on data collected from the downtown businesses, sales are averaging about \$145 per square foot. This amount is fairly standard for small downtowns, but lags far behind typical performance of \$250 per foot or more in shopping centers and malls. On average, sales have been stagnant over the past five years, having increased by only about 0.3% before adjusting for inflation. Yet, performance varied significantly among businesses. Despite the recession, about 47% of downtown businesses reported some increase in sales over the past five years, averaging about 7.8% (1.6% per year). On the other hand, about 40% reported a decrease

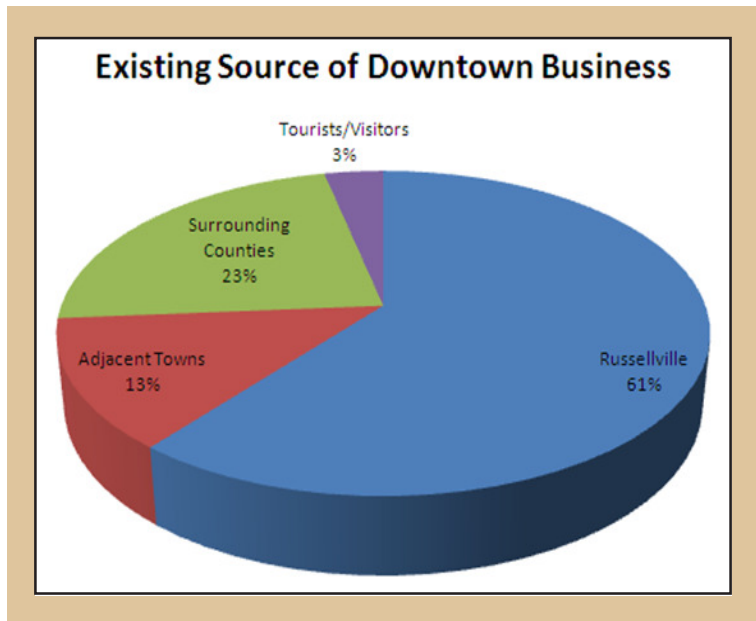
in sales and 13% saw no change. After accounting for inflation, it is likely that more than half of all downtown businesses saw a decrease in sales since 2007. For many, sales dropped precipitously during the 2007-08 recession, but have started to increase again since that time. For others, sales have continued to slide since the recession.

Tenure and Rents

The majority of downtown businesses rent their space, with only a handful who actually own their buildings. Downtown rents are relatively low, at an average of \$4.52 per square foot, when compared to \$14.00 per foot at the mall. Of course, downtown consumer traffic and volumes are also much lower than the mall.

Key Issues

Businesspeople interviewed for this plan identified several key issues that appear to be impacting their business. The biggest concern, mentioned by nearly one-third of the businesses, was the large number of vacancies or the lack of businesses and consumer traffic in the downtown area. Some merchants mentioned the need for more restaurants downtown, as destinations that would help bring people to the area. The difficulty of obtaining liquor licenses in the county has discouraged more restaurants from opening downtown. With-



I. BACKGROUND

ECONOMIC & MARKET CONDITIONS (continued)

out the ability to serve alcohol, which is an important generator of income, full-service restaurants would have a much higher risk threshold for survival in the downtown area.

Another set of concerns relates broadly to traffic and parking. Truck traffic was mentioned as a concern of businesses, not only because trucks impact on safety and on the ability of people to cross the street, but also because they appear to impact building conditions. The logging industry is significant in this region, and large logging trucks barrel down the key streets downtown en route to their destination. Parking was a concern, not so much because of a lack of parking but rather, due to the safety issues associated with the current angled parking situation and a lack of visibility. Taken together, parking and traffic issues accounted for about 20% of responses.

Similarly, about 20% of responses related to negative perceptions of the downtown area, which some linked to the large number of discount and “2nd hand stores,” which they believed had an impact on efforts to attract a more affluent customer downtown. Another 13% of responses related to the

issue of physical conditions in the downtown area, such as the poor condition of building stock, lack of pedestrian amenities, or overall poor appearance of the area. The issue of physical conditions was also linked to perceptions and the lower-quality stores having an impact on marketing.

SUMMARY

Downtown Russellville has a fairly substantive building inventory of about 850,000 square feet, of which about 225,000 square feet is in retail use. There is about 50,000 square feet of vacant, first-floor commercial space yielding a 25% vacancy rate (not including a significant amount of

upper-floor vacancy). This substantial vacant space, coupled with a lack of exposure from Highway 7, declining building conditions, and a lack of anchor retailers, have contributed to perceptions that “there is no reason to go downtown” in Russellville. Changing perceptions must be a key component of the overall plan for downtown, with a focus on establishing a lively and attractive environment. Further information on the market potentials and concepts are provided in plan sections that follow.

Groundfloor building space in Downtown Russellville includes approximately 50,000 square feet of vacant space, which equates to a 25% vacancy rate. These figures do not include upper floor space, which has even greater vacancies.



I. BACKGROUND

ECONOMIC & MARKET CONDITIONS (continued)

Market Sources:

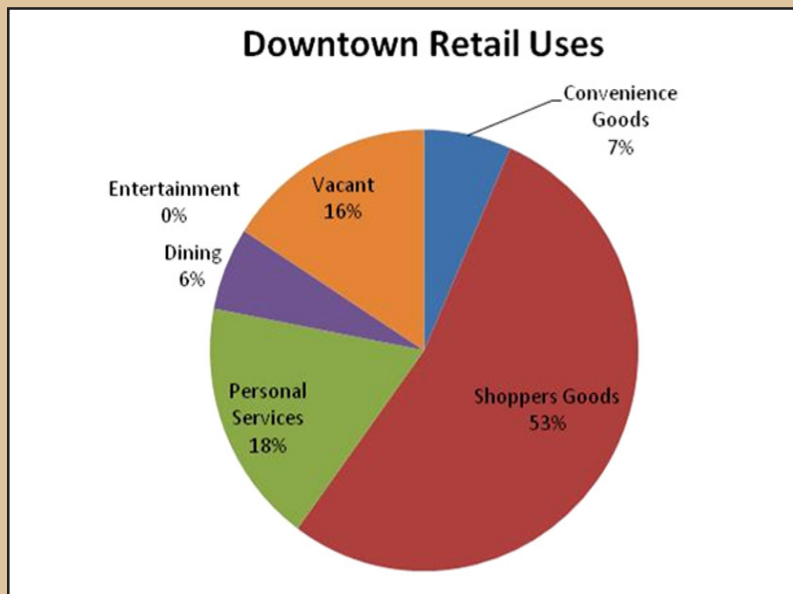
- 62,000 Trade Area Households
- 10,500 ATU Students
- 1,500 Downtown-Area Workers
- 2.0 million Ozark Visitors

Summary Potentials:

- Convenience - 44,800sf
- Shoppers Goods - 77,500sf
- Dining - 29,100sf
- Entertainment - 28,500sf
- Personal Svcs - (2,500sf)

Housing

- CBD: 30 units
- El Paso: <200 units



Warranted Retail Demand by Use: Downtown Russellville

Type of Good	Gross Demand (Sq Ft)		Existing Uses	Warranted Demand
	2012	2017		
Convenience				
Grocery	16,112	22,678	-	22,678
Convenience	2,922	3,867	-	3,867
Specialty Food	5,364	6,907	2,300	4,607
Health/Pers Care	9,228	12,400	4,928	7,472
Gas/Convenience	4,848	6,398	1,684	4,714
Misc Conv	4,576	6,298	4,804	1,494
Sub-Total	43,051	58,547	13,716	44,832
Shoppers Goods				
Apparel	12,585	16,650	7,393	9,258
Accessories	1,052	1,198	-	1,198
Jewelry	5,003	6,592	5,680	912
Shoes	1,491	1,797	-	1,797
Furniture	16,630	22,763	23,600	(837)
Home Furnishings	5,319	7,354	3,100	4,254
Appliances	11,195	15,987	16,666	(680)
Hardware/Bldg/Home	13,620	19,196	16,579	2,618
Garden Supply	1,062	1,455	-	1,455
Gen Mdse/Dept	28,084	39,086	-	39,086
Auto Dealers	-	-	-	-
Auto Supply	4,173	5,610	5,174	436
Electronics/Comp	2,633	3,665	2,300	1,365
Books/Music	3,038	3,829	-	3,829
Camera/Photo	440	545	-	545
Gift, Novelty, Svr	4,106	5,460	350	5,110
Hobby/Toy/Game	3,355	4,417	1,200	3,217
Luggage/Leather	270	344	-	344
Office/Stationary	6,565	9,423	8,560	863
Sewing/Piece	1,603	2,183	1,125	1,058
Sporting Goods	9,663	12,651	10,939	1,712
Sub-Total	131,887	180,206	102,665	77,540
Dining & Entertainment				
Restaurant-FF	6,912	9,294	2,100	7,194
Restaurant-FS	11,387	24,535	10,400	14,135
Drinking Establishmt	5,956	7,800	-	7,800
Entertainment	18,278	28,499	-	28,499
Sub-Total	42,533	70,129	12,500	57,629
Personal Services				
	23,710	34,411	36,958	(2,547)
TOTAL	241,181	343,293	165,839	177,454
Existing Vacant			48,606	
Net New Space				128,848

I. BACKGROUND

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

One of the most critical factors in successful downtown revitalization is an organizational structure that will support and spearhead revitalization efforts. Below is a summary of the existing structure for Downtown Russellville.

Main Street Russellville

This organization is the single most critical entity for downtown revitalization because that is the organization's sole focus. Main Street Russellville's staff consists of a director and assistant, and it is lead by a Board of Directors and committee system organized by key downtown issues. It is funded by financial support from the City and memberships, and it follows the Main Street Four Point Approach (see description at right).



Arkansas Tech University is a key stakeholder in the future of Downtown Russellville.

City of Russellville

The City not only supports the Main Street program financially, but many of its departments are directly involved with the design and other initiatives of that program.

Pope County

The County not only has an economic and fiscal stake in downtown, but its major fac-

ilities (Courthouse, etc.) are located downtown. It is currently planning a new downtown library.

Arkansas Tech University

While located north of downtown, the university has tremendous potential for lending the downtown additional market support if appealing uses will develop.

MAIN STREET FOUR POINT APPROACH

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets. The four points summarized below are adapted from the National Main Street Center's description of this approach.

Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district. A governing board of directors and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of volunteer-driven revitalization programs. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director.

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors. It takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in a commercial district by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials.

Economic restructuring strengthens a community's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support.

Promotion takes many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in the commercial district. Advertising, retail promotions, special events, and marketing campaigns help sell the image and promise of Main Street to the community and surrounding region.

I. BACKGROUND

PUBLIC INPUT

Public input is a critical component of any community planning project, as it is important that the ultimate plan reflects the perspectives and preferences of the area's stakeholders. While public input has been integrated throughout the planning process for Downtown Russellville, below are some of the key elements:

Steering Committee Meetings:

These meetings were on-going throughout the life of the planning project and were held both while the project consultants were in Russellville and at necessary times between consultant trips.

Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings:

The following five meetings were held on October 10th and 11th, 2011:

- Meeting #1: Public Officials
- Meeting #2: Property Owners & Real Estate Professionals
- Meeting #3: Business Owners/Operators & Economic Development Reps.
- Meeting #4: Institutional Representatives
- Meeting #5: Residents (living in or near Downtown)

Public Kick-Off Meeting:

Held October 10th, 2011, see results at right.

Public Comments

Public Kick-Off Meeting: October 10, 2011

Opportunities for Downtown

- Prairie Creek
- El Paso Corridor
- Elected officials are working with Downtown (including County)
- Pervious paving
- Making better use of upper floor space
- Mix of land uses on El Paso between ATU and Downtown
- Well-maintained Downtown

Both Challenges & Opportunities

- Provision of underground utilities

Challenges for Downtown

- Getting property owners on board with the plan
- Public perception of parking
- Main Street and Arkansas Avenue are not pedestrian-friendly
- Traffic signal timing
- Downtown zoning has not kept pace with planning and changes
- ATU foreign students don't have transportation to Downtown
- Need to address ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements
- Need irrigation for streetscape
- Sign clutter

Model Downtowns

Meeting participants were asked about other downtowns they had visited that might have some aspect worth imitating in Downtown Russellville, and the following models were offered:

- Fairhope, Alabama
- Conway, Arkansas
- Durango, Colorado

- Stillwater, Oklahoma
- Dallas, Texas (SMU area)
- Stillwater, Minnesota
- Columbia, Missouri (night life)
- Franklin, Tennessee
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Bricktown)
- Ashville, North Carolina
- Sebastian, Florida
- Fairfield, Iowa (alleys & bulb-outs)



I. BACKGROUND

PUBLIC INPUT (continued)

On January 24, 2012, a public workshop was held, kicking off the first evening of a four-day charrette. A “charrette” is an intensive multi-day brainstorming process in which the public is actively engaged in creating a plan for a particular geographic area. The public workshop included the following key steps:

- 1) Participants were split into 8 teams of 6-8 people.** Participants included a broad range of downtown stakeholders (property owners, business owners, residents, public officials, etc.), as well citizens in general. Each team was assigned to a table.
- 2) Each team was given a base map of the study area, supporting information, and colored markers.** Supporting information included aerial photo maps, existing land use maps, and environmental constraints maps.
- 3) Each team developed a plan for the study area.** The teams were led through the process by the consultants by addressing specific issues in sequence.
- 4) All participants reconvened and presented their plans.** Following the presentations, the consultants identified common denominators among the plans.



II. PLAN OVERVIEW



II. PLAN OVERVIEW

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Once all of the background research has occurred for a downtown plan, an intermediate step is necessary before the actual planning process can begin. Before launching into specific ideas for a plan, a much more general set of ideas should be developed. By creating a set of broad goals or “principles” for the plan, consensus building can typically occur more readily. Once stakeholders agree on the most basic ideas, more specific ideas on how to achieve those ideas can be explored, evaluated, and decided upon.

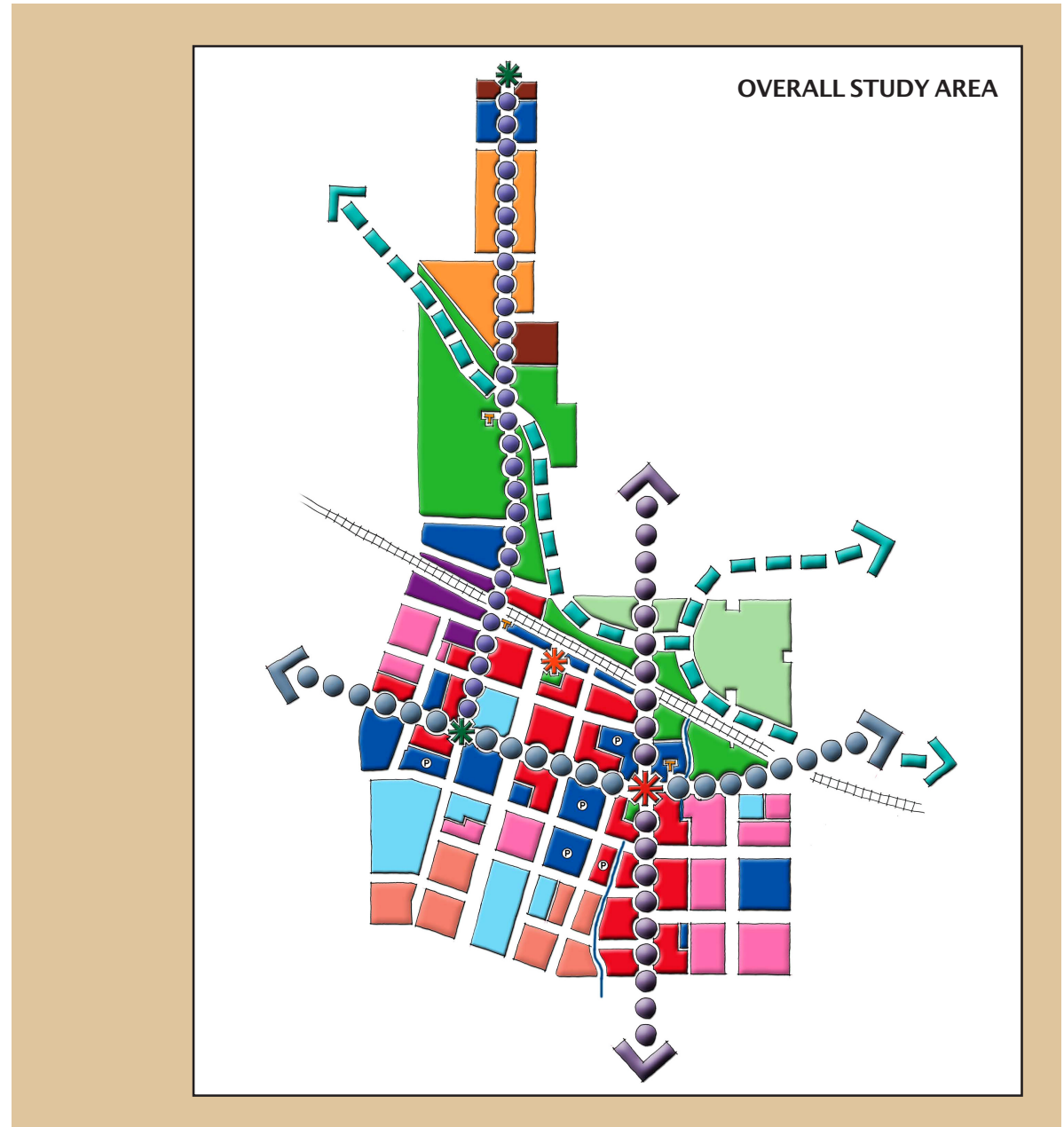
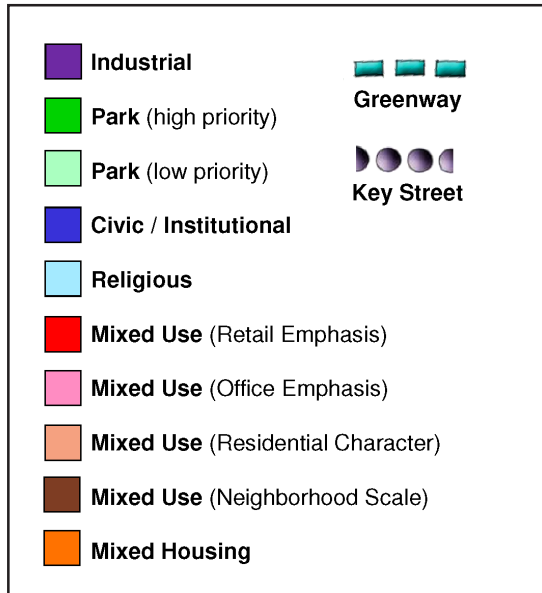
Based upon the relatively intensive public input process that proceeded the creation of the downtown master plan for Russellville, a set of principles were created for the planning process. These principles, listed at right, were presented to the public and confirmed as accurately representing the collective perspectives and preferences of downtowns many stakeholders. They will serve as the backbone of this plan.

- 1) **Preserve and enhance natural and historic resources.**
- 2) **Land uses should be diverse and physically integrated - horizontally and vertically.**
- 3) **Buildings should have a human scale.**
- 4) **Downtown’s architectural past should be respected.**
- 5) **Provide inter-connected streets that are pedestrian-friendly (“complete”).**
- 6) **Streetscapes should be attractive, safe and interesting.**
- 7) **Accommodate parking without degrading downtown’s appearance/function.**
- 8) **Provide a generous amount of public space in a variety of forms (events).**
- 9) **Offer a variety of downtown housing alternatives - by types and cost.**
- 10) **Provide a rich mixture of shopping, dining, entertainment, etc.**
- 11) **Offer a variety of civic, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities.**
- 12) **Create an environment that will allow businesses to succeed.**

II. PLAN OVERVIEW

PROPOSED LAND USES, FORM & CHARACTER: GENERAL

The plan map at right illustrates the proposed land uses, physical form and character for the overall study area. More detail is provided on the following two pages for each of the two distinct study areas - the Downtown and the El Paso Avenue Corridor. The categories assigned to each area feature a combination of considerations rather than solely land use. While several of these categories propose a mixture of land uses, each mixed use category has a particular predominant land use and/or character. Existing key streets and a proposed new greenway are also highlighted at right.



II. PLAN OVERVIEW

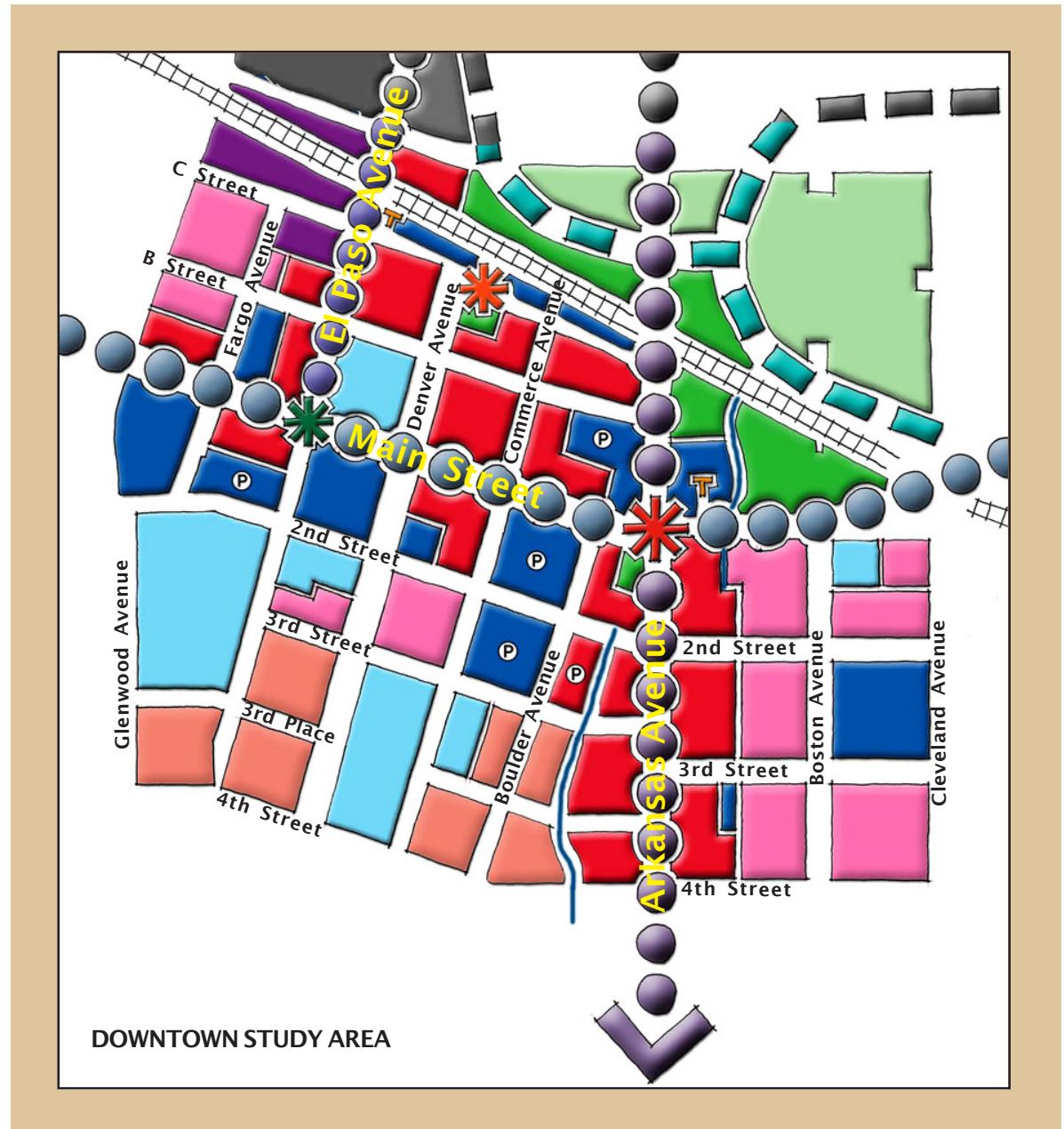
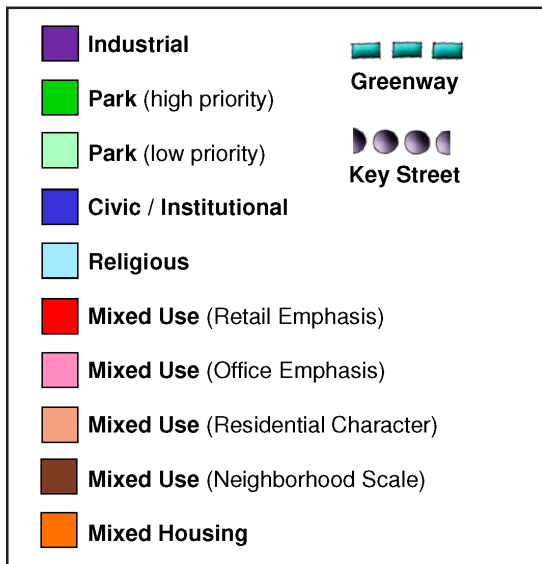
PROPOSED LAND USES, FORM & CHARACTER: DOWNTOWN

Key features of the plan at right include:

Civic/Institutional and Religious areas mirror the current location of such uses, as well as three different potential locations for the proposed new library (see pages 58-59 for more information on this issue).

The **“P”** symbol represents potential public parking locations. Two are proposed garages, although only one is currently contemplated (multiple options for a single garage). See pages 66-67 for information.

Mixed use areas with a retail focus are concentrated along Arkansas Avenue and Main Street, while mixed use areas with a residential character serve as a transition to actual residential areas. Retail and dining should be located on groundfloor levels.



II. PLAN OVERVIEW

PROPOSED LAND USES, FORM & CHARACTER: EL PASO AVENUE

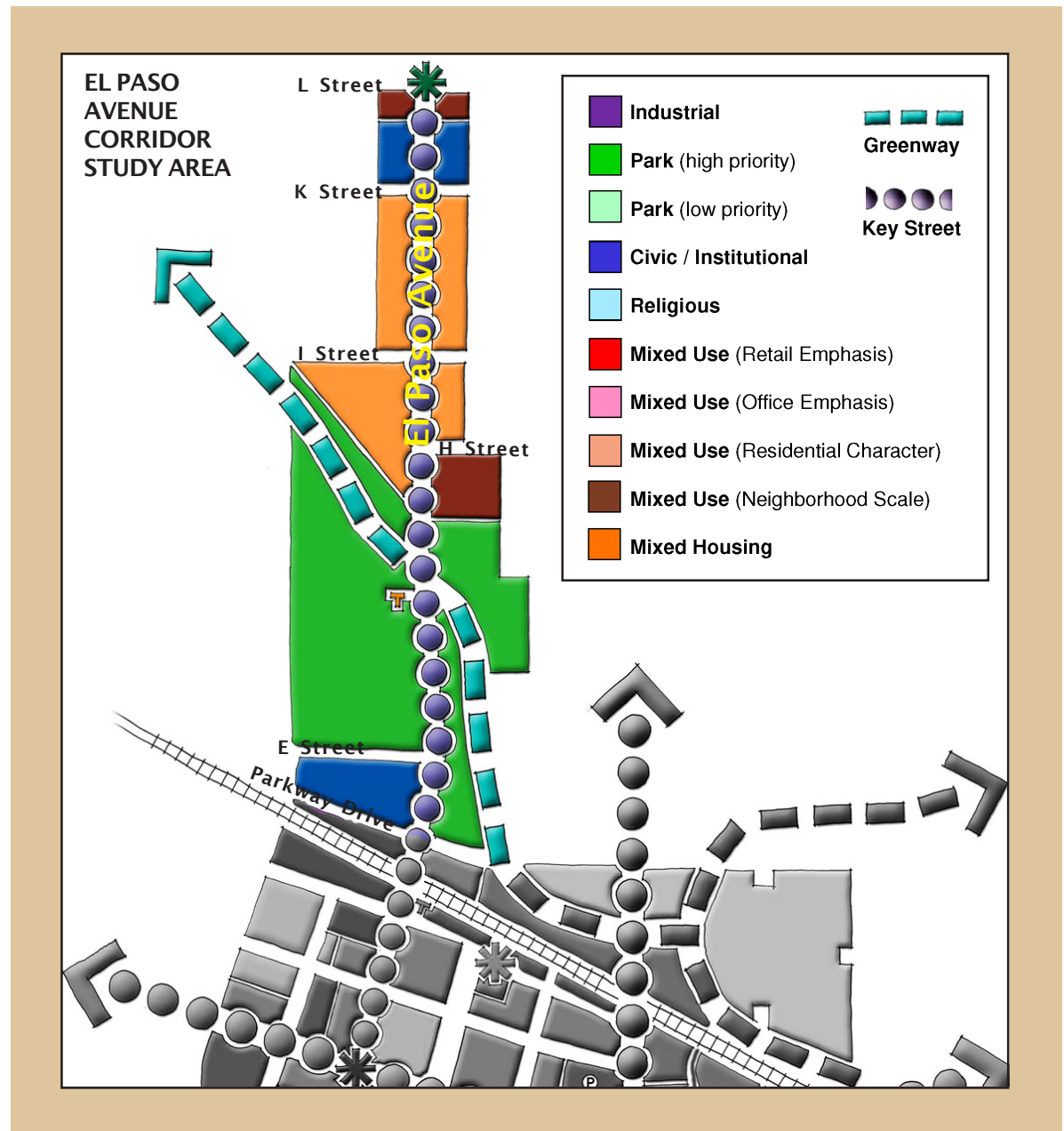
The **Park** designation has been applied to the lower half of this corridor because of the dominance of floodplains, which greatly limits the area's development potential and lowers future land acquisition costs. A distinction has also been made between high priority and lower priority park lands, as the lower priority lands are located east of this corridor (see page 89 for more information on this proposal).

The **Mixed Housing** designation has been applied to the upper half of this corridor. This area is already dominated by single-family housing, but higher-quality and more dense housing is proposed to target a student market. See pages 87-88 for more information on this idea.

It is proposed that neighborhood scale **Mixed Use** development occur at H and El Paso, as well as at the terminus of El Paso. See page 81 for more information on this idea.

Another category illustrated at right is the **Civic/Institutional** areas, of which there are two. On the north end are multiple university-owned properties, while a proposed recreation facility is proposed on the west side of El Paso between Parkway and E Street. See page 89 for more information on this idea.

The final two categories illustrated on this map are the **Industrial** and **Mixed Use** (Retail Emphasis) areas in the very south of the corridor, which reflect the current uses, form and character.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

“Urban design” is the collective layout and three-dimensional design of the most fundamental components of an urban environment, including streets, parking areas, public spaces, and buildings. While many of the components of this urban design plan have non-design facets, below is a summary of each and a reference to pages for details.

1) Enhanced Main Street

Proposal: Reduced number of driving lanes, intersection improvements with pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks, “back-in” angled parking, and streetscape improvements.

Details: page 60-64

2) Enhanced El Paso Avenue

Proposal: Intersection improvements with pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks, and streetscape improvements.

Details: page 82-86

3) Depot Plaza Enhancements

Proposal: Greenway trailhead, veteran’s memorial, roundabout, relocated caboose, green and stage, and farmers market space.

Details: page 72-77

4) Proposed Ozark Interpretation Center

Proposal: Interpretive center, parking, pathways, and interpretive wayside exhibits.

Details: page 70-71, 101-102



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

URBAN DESIGN PLAN (continued)

5) Proposed Prairie Creek Park (East)

Proposal: Amphitheatre, pathways, and interpretive wayside exhibits.

Details: page 69-71

6) Potential Parking Garages

Proposal: While only a single garage is needed within the near term, potential locations include behind the Courthouse and on the southeast corner of Boulder and 2nd.

Details: page 66-67

7) Courthouse Plaza & Burris Plaza

Proposal: A small new plaza at the southwest corner of the Courthouse fronting Main, and an expansion of the Burris Plaza.

Details: page 79-80

OTHER PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Additional proposed improvements that would be more prevalent throughout the downtown than the seven key improvements summarized above include the following:

Existing Building Improvements

Proposal: There are numerous historic buildings in dire need of physical rehabilitation. Much of this work would undo inappropriate alterations done previously.

Details: page 51-52, 107-108

Infill Development / Redevelopment

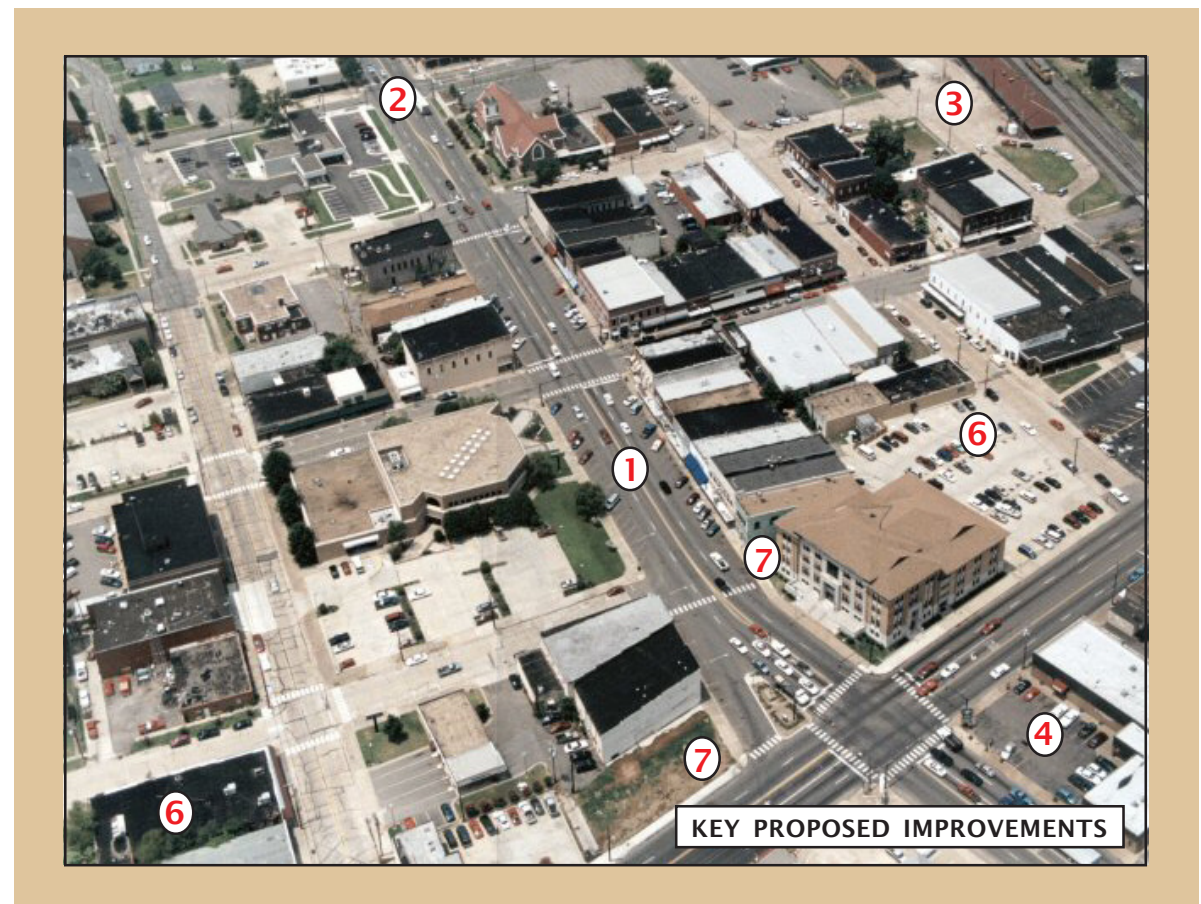
Proposal: Existing vacant lots such as sites on Main and Commerce should have new compatible infill development. In other cases, where incompatible development exists, such as several buildings on the south side of Main developed after 1950, redevelopment should occur.

Details: page 53-57

Enhanced Parking Lots

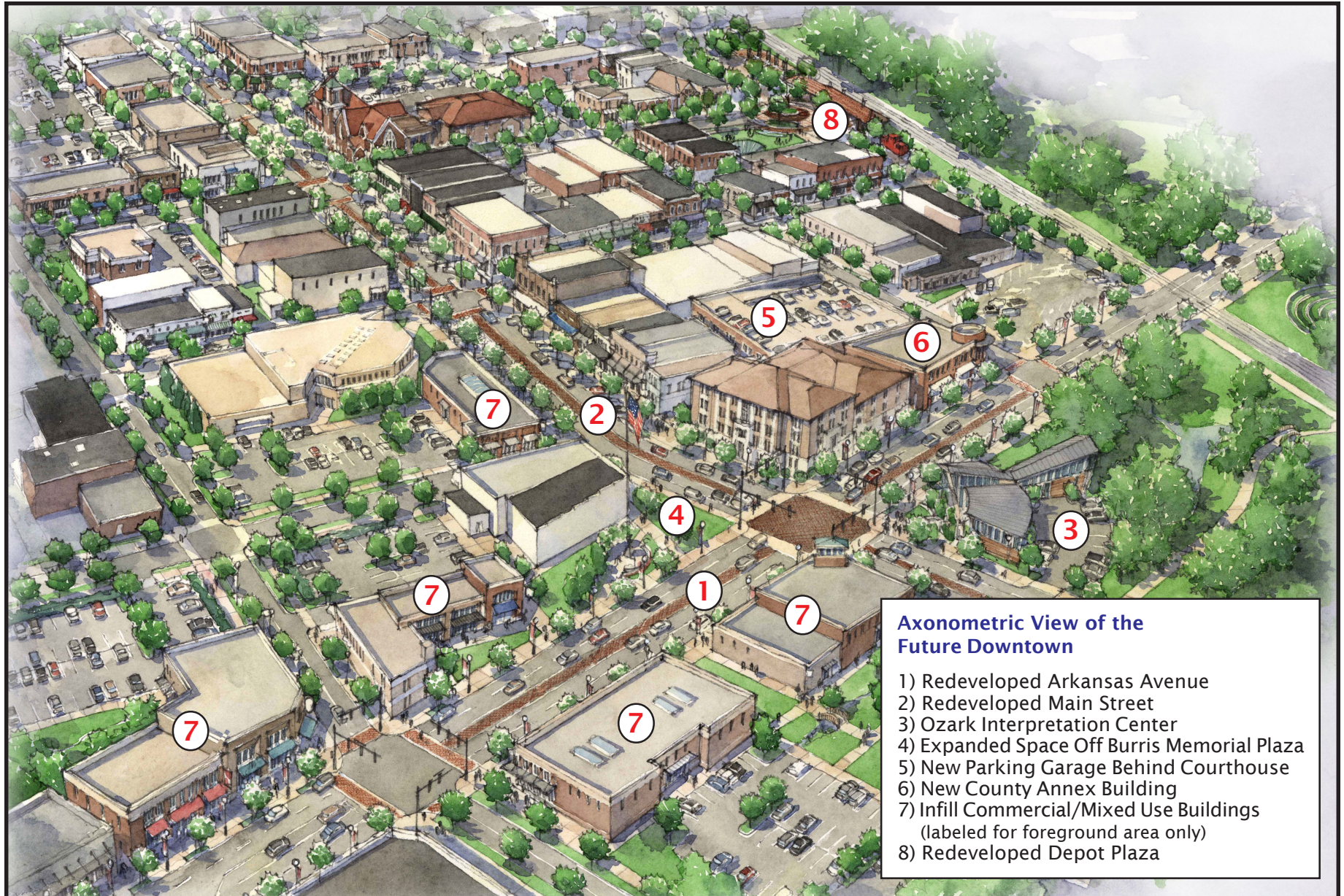
Proposal: Many of the existing parking lots are not efficiently designed to maximize the number of vehicles they will accommodate. Also, landscaping and lighting improvements are needed in most lots.

Details: page 65



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

URBAN DESIGN PLAN (continued)



Axonometric View of the Future Downtown

- 1) Redeveloped Arkansas Avenue
- 2) Redeveloped Main Street
- 3) Ozark Interpretation Center
- 4) Expanded Space Off Burris Memorial Plaza
- 5) New Parking Garage Behind Courthouse
- 6) New County Annex Building
- 7) Infill Commercial/Mixed Use Buildings
(labeled for foreground area only)
- 8) Redeveloped Depot Plaza

III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

While this plan recommends new infill development in specific targeted locations, the sensitive rehabilitation of existing historic buildings should be given the highest priority for the following reasons:

- The history and historic character of Downtown Russellville is a key element for “branding” the downtown (see more on this in the “Non-Design Issues” section of this plan).
- Every dollar spent on historic rehabilitation has a greater local economic impact than the same dollar spent on new development. This circumstance is because rehabilitation is more labor-intensive than new construction, while new construction is more material-intensive. Labor tends to be local, while materials are not.
- There are more existing financial incentives for historic rehabilitation, such as the state and federal investment tax credits, than there are for new construction.

It is important that all future building rehabilitations in Downtown Russellville follow federal standards - the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation - to insure the highest quality

work and to meet the standards to achieve the state and federal investment tax credits for historic rehabilitation. Fortunately, the City’s existing broad design guidelines,

which are now being expanded and improved, are consistent with the federal standards. See pages 107-108 for economic strategies to address historic buildings.



Potential Building Rehabilitation: Removal of Facade Covering
During the 1950s through the 1980s, many historic buildings were covered with inappropriate cladding (aluminum, vinyl, etc.) that covered their original facades. Such was the case for the building in the center of this photograph. Removal of the “slip cover” would likely reveal an attractive late-19th or early-20th century facade. Similarly, the transom windows above the storefront of the building to the left have been covered and should be exposed.



Potential Building Rehabilitation: Restoration of Original Storefront
While this pharmacy on Commerce is an important tenant that adds greatly to the economic health of downtown, the restoration of its original facade would contribute to the street’s appearance. As the surviving cast iron columns (painted white) exhibit, this building once had a traditional storefront before being bricked-in. There are numerous existing examples of traditional storefronts in the downtown that could serve as models, which would include significantly increasing the amount of glass (“glazing”).

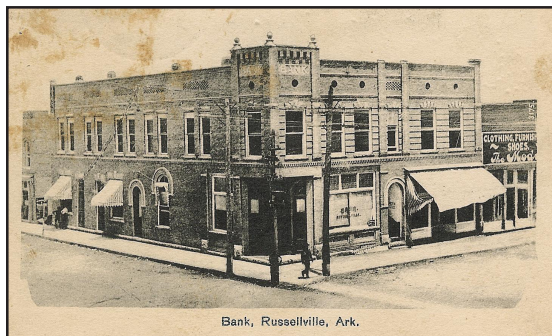
III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

HISTORIC BUILDINGS (continued)

First National Bank

Built in the early-20th century on the north-east corner of Main and Commerce, this building has been inappropriately altered over the years, particularly on the ground level (see top photograph at right). Fortunately, historic photographs such as the one below illustrate the building's original appearance. Among the various potential improvements that have been illustrated at bottom right through a computer-generated visual simulation are the following:

- Removal of the facade enclosure at the corner entrance.
- Opening of the bricked windows and entrances on the Commerce Street facade
- Restoration of the storefront fronting Main
- Removal of the metal window canopies
- Replacement of the heavily-tinted inoperable windows with operable one-over-one double-hung windows
- Removal of the facade paint on the east half of the building to unify its appearance

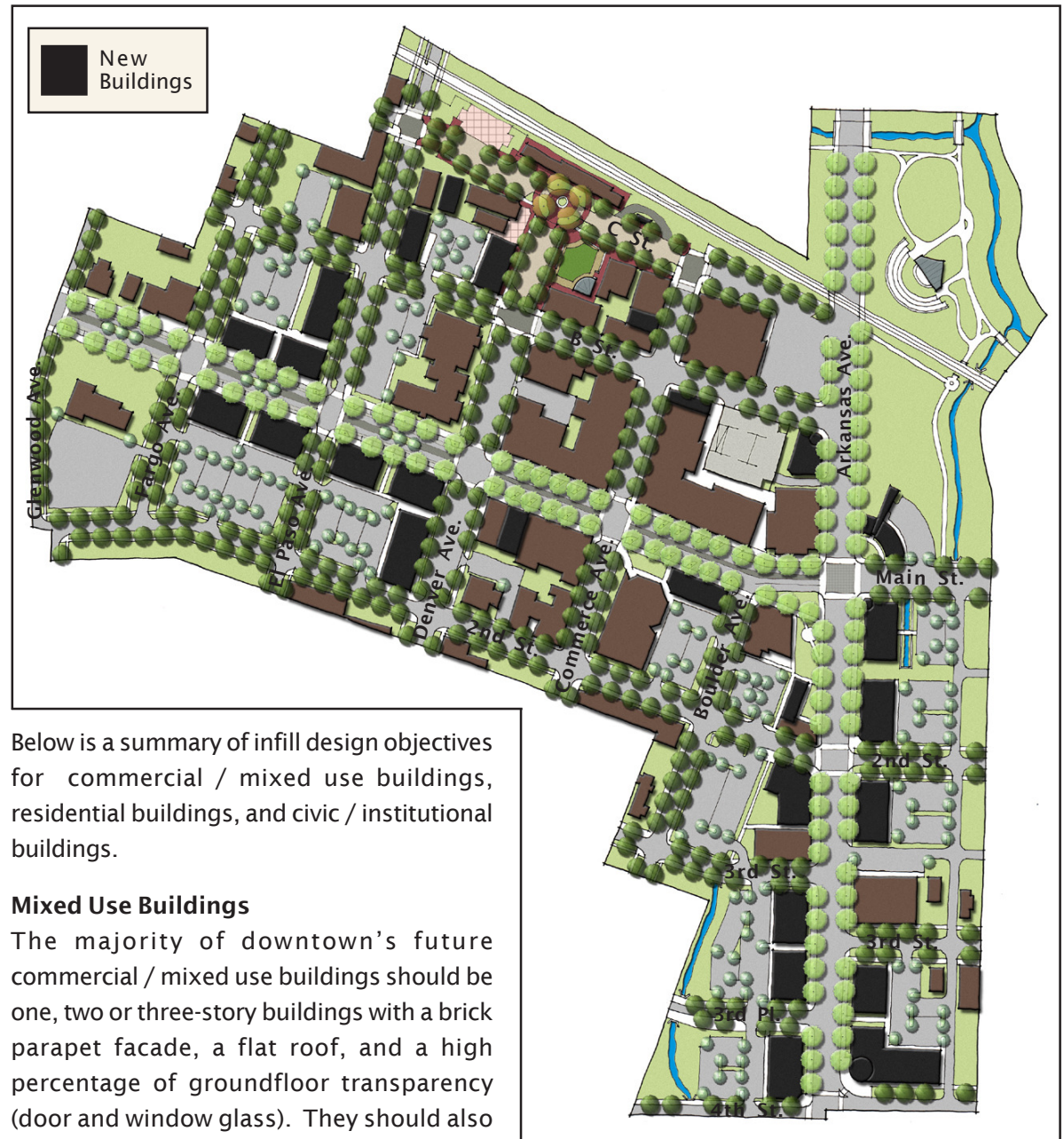


III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW BUILDINGS

It is important that, as market demand for new development grows in time and existing historic buildings are rehabilitated, new buildings should be constructed. As highlighted on the map at right, vacant parcels should be targeted for compatible infill development. Although some communities see such sites as opportunities for parks or parking lots, such an approach for Russellville should be discouraged. Parks should only be created in strategic locations based upon sound planning, as opposed to randomly occurring where vacant lots just happen to exist. Similarly, parking lots fronting onto downtown streets are unattractive and create “dead spots” within an otherwise vibrant streetscape needing retail energy.

Assuming that downtown’s older buildings continue to be protected through the City’s existing historic zoning, there are limited opportunities for new buildings. However, it is important that any new buildings be of a compatible design that reinforces the character of Downtown Russellville instead of diluting it. Fortunately, the City is currently having a set of design guidelines prepared to implement the historic zoning, and that will help to insure that new development is compatible with the historic downtown.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW BUILDINGS (continued)

have little to no front setback. Locations for this building form are designated on the map on page 46 as Mixed Use (Retail Emphasis and Office Emphasis).

However, given that there are some existing residential buildings on the periphery of downtown that have evolved into commercial uses, and this is a reasonable trend, it is also acceptable to have commercial and mixed use buildings with a residential character. Such buildings should have a shallow to moderate front setback, a wood exterior, pitched roof, raised foundation, and front porch. Locations for this building form are designated on the map on page 46 as Mixed Use (Residential Character).

Civic/Institutional & Religious Buildings

Although excessively large building footprints and expansive unbroken facades should be avoided, civic/institutional and religious buildings can deviate from the norm as a means of underscoring their significance to the community by having distinctive design features. The map on page 46 illustrates the existing locations of these sites.

The following page provides a set of design principles for new infill buildings.

EXAMPLE: INAPPROPRIATE INFILL VERSUS APPROPRIATE INFILL

Below are photographs of two different commercial buildings. While they were built for the same business and located in the same community, one is clearly incompatible with a historic downtown, while the other one would be compatible.

Inappropriate Infill Building

The following design features would make this development incompatible with a historic downtown: parking lot fronting the street, lack of a traditional storefront design, and the lack of facade massing that creates vertically-oriented bays.



Appropriate Infill Building

The following features would make this development compatible with a historic downtown: most of the parking is in the rear, the existence of a traditional storefront design, and the facade massing that creates vertically-oriented bays.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW BUILDINGS (continued)

NO: Inappropriate



Building heights in Downtown Russellville should not exceed three stories. The front setback above is too deep, and parking should not be in front of the building.



Downtown's residential building types have pitched roofs, but they should feature roof overhangs rather than the roof edge being encased in a cornice.



This facade's uninterrupted plane fails to achieve a human-scaled massing. It also has a horizontal orientation rather than a more appropriate series of vertical bays.

Height & Setback

Roof Forms

Massing & Facade Design

YES: Appropriate



New buildings in Downtown Russellville should not exceed three stories. Mixed use and commercial buildings should be built up to the sidewalk.



Flat roofs should be screened with a parapet facade on the building's frontage. The parapet should also screen rooftop equipment.



Pilasters (attached pillars), storefront windows, and cornice line variations on this new building break up the facade into vertically oriented bays.

Height & Setback

Roof Forms

Massing & Facade Design



Institutional buildings can be set back from the street to front onto a lawn or plaza to emphasize their symbolic significance.



Varied roof lines are one tool for breaking up the massing of large structures. These roof forms are compatible with downtown.



This building represents an attached housing type. The projections and recesses are effective in breaking up the facade mass.

III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW BUILDINGS (continued)

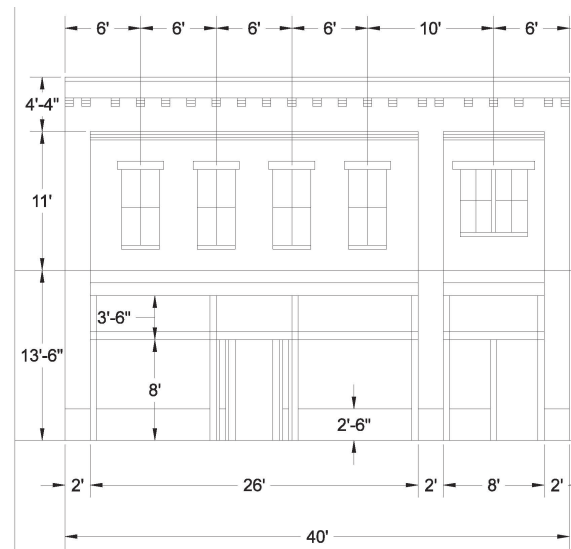
Infill Development: South Side of Main

A key site that remains undeveloped, but that would benefit the Downtown with compatible new infill development, is located on the south side of Main Street between Commerce and Denver. It is recommended that a mixed use building be developed here with a groundfloor occupant consisting of retail, services or dining, and upper floor space for housing or offices. While the building that occurs here does not need to look exactly as depicted at right and on the following page, below is a list of the design features that the new building should exhibit to insure design compatibility with the balance of the street:

- Two-story height is ideal for compatibility, but a one or three-story building may also be acceptable
- Brick cladding
- Traditional storefront design on the groundfloor level (visually transparent glazing, transom windows, bulkheads under main windows, etc.)
- Vertically-oriented upper floor windows proportioned to match historic precedents
- Cornice capping the top of a parapet wall

This particular sample building features a separate entrance and stairwell on the west

**PROPOSED
INFILL
BUILDING:
DIMENSIONS**



**PROPOSED
INFILL
BUILDING:
APPEARANCE**



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW BUILDINGS (continued)

end to provide access to the second floor. This design is further reflected in the smaller ganged windows on the upper floor of this stair well and hallway.

As with all mixed-use buildings, whether historic or new, more active uses (dining, retail) should occur on the groundfloor level, while less active uses (housing, office) should occur on upper floors.

The simulation at right includes not only the sample infill building, but streetscape improvements as well. Those improvements include back-in angled parking, projecting planting areas for trees, removal of overhead wiring, and enhanced street lights.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

The existing Pope County Library is located on Boston Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets. Because of the need for a larger and higher quality facility, the County's Library Board has spent the past few months working with a consulting library architect to select a site for a new library. Fortunately, they are determined to remain in the downtown area. In fact, because of this planning process for the downtown resulting in this plan, the County's library consultant has coordinated his work with this plan for downtown. On January 28th, 2012, a one-day charrette was conducted by the library consultant and the downtown planning team to focus specifically on the library as a means of concluding the week-long downtown charrette.

Needs of the Library Board & Downtown

From the Library Board's perspective, they have the following criteria for a site:

- Prominent location with good access for multiple modes of transportation
- 48,300 sq. ft. building footprint (2 stories)
- 58,400 sq. ft. parking

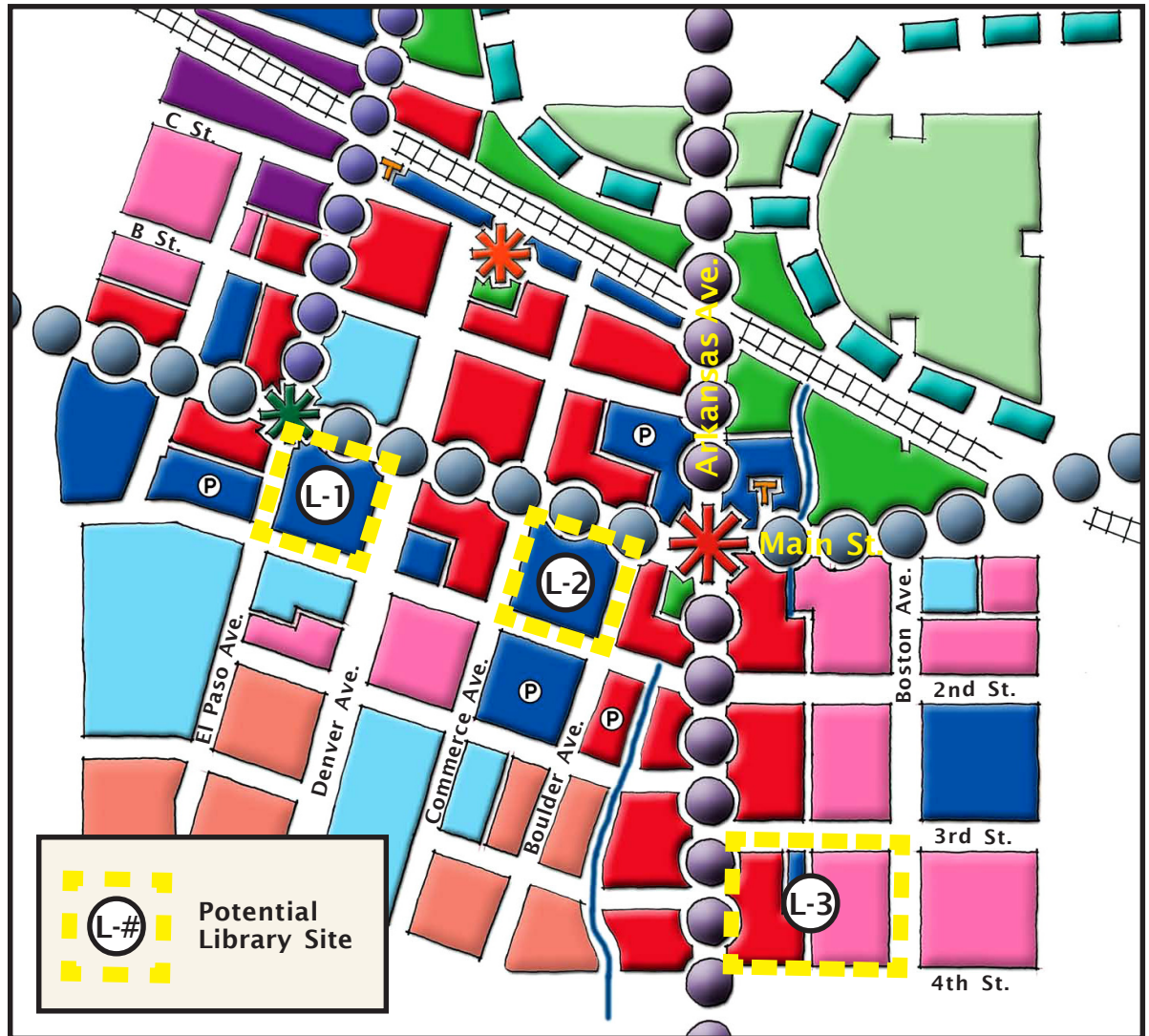
Some of the challenges faced in finding an adequate site include:

- No single block can accommodate the full development program

- Some of the parking will need to be on an adjacent block

To optimize benefits that the new library

might leverage to downtown, it is hoped that an outdoor public space (park or plaza) can be part of the library's site. Also, because of the physical and psychological



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEW DOWNTOWN LIBRARY (continued)

barrier created by Arkansas Avenue, it would be most beneficial to downtown's economy if the library were to be located west of Arkansas, as it is more likely that library visitors will visit other parts of the downtown if they do not have to cross this high-traffic north-south corridor.

Preliminary Sites

As illustrated on the map on the previous page, three sites were initially identified for further consideration as a site for the new library, as follow:

L-1: Bank of the Ozarks / Regions Site

Fronting the south side of Main and bound by El Paso on the west and Denver on the east, this site is currently home to two banks. Both are developed in a very suburban character (front-located parking, etc.) that is incompatible with the balance of the historic downtown.

L-2: Bank of America Site

Fronting the south side of Main and bound by Commerce on the west and Boulder on the east, this site is currently developed with the Bank of America building. This building is presently not being fully utilized, and it is the only site which poses the possibility of utilizing the existing building.

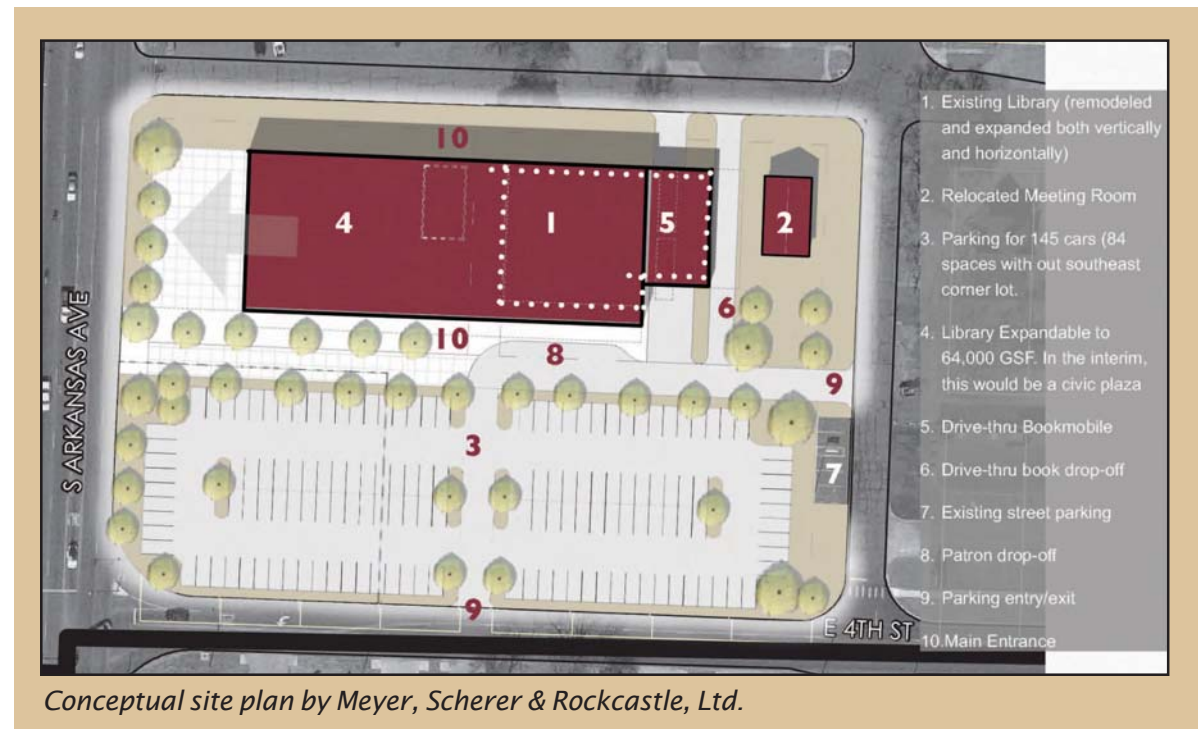
L-3: Current Library Site

The third site being considered is the block where the current library is located. It is bound by Arkansas (west), Boston (east), 3rd (north), and 4th (south).

Selected Site

The site ultimately selected by the County was the existing site on the east side of South Arkansas Avenue. As the conceptual site plan below indicates, the existing building (outlined in white dashes) can be expanded upon. The existing structure will constitute the eastern half of the new library

and parking is proposed on its south side. **An important issue is the front facade's orientation.** As proposed below, the main entrances would be on the building's north and south sides (#10). **However, it is critical that the main facade and entrance be located on the west side to front onto the proposed plaza and Arkansas. While the proposed entrances can remain, the primary entrance and facade should be on the west side. Otherwise, the library will fail to contribute a strong sense of civic presence where it is needed most.**



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MOBILITY & STREETS

Creating a Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown

There are many ways to achieve a downtown that accommodates walking. One important approach is to ensure that development patterns are urban, including buildings that address the street and parking lots behind buildings. Broad sidewalks, interesting storefronts, and night-time lighting are also important. Below are key strategies recommended for Downtown Russellville:

- **Rebalance streets to enhance pedestrian comfort.** When streets or street segments feature more driving lanes than are necessary, a “street diet” should be implemented. See pages 61-64 for recommendations for the Main Street.
- **Enhance street crossings.** In addition to delineating crosswalks with pavers that are distinct from the street surface,

“pedestrian bulbs” (extensions of street corners) can decrease the distance that pedestrians walk to cross a street.

- **Add pedestrian signals with countdown timers.** This equipment informs pedestrians of the amount of time they have to cross a street. They would only be needed for Main and Arkansas.
- **Make the walk interesting and provide shade.** Walks are interesting with storefront window displays, attractive streetscape design, and public art. Shade is provided by canopies and street trees.
- **Increase driver awareness of pedestrians.** Crosswalks should be designed to be slightly raised and made of a material distinct from the street asphalt to be noticed more by drivers, while still following federal ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements.

Encouraging Cycling

While urban streets can be inherently bike-friendly because of relatively slow driving speeds, there are other techniques for achieving an environment conducive to cyclists. Designated bike lanes can be provided between driving lanes and on-street parking lanes and, where bike lanes cannot be accommodated, “sharrow” (shared cycling and driving lanes) can be designated. Specific recommendations include:

- Bike lanes on west segments of Main
- Sharrows on east segments of Main
- Bike racks throughout Downtown
- Trailhead at the Depot
- Slower, bike friendly streets



Pedestrian Infrastructure
In addition to framing urban streets with buildings rather than parking lots so that a comfortable outdoor room can occur, other specific elements are needed for a pedestrian-friendly downtown. Examples include delineated crosswalks (left) and signals to convey timing (right).



Sharrow



Artistic bike rack

III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

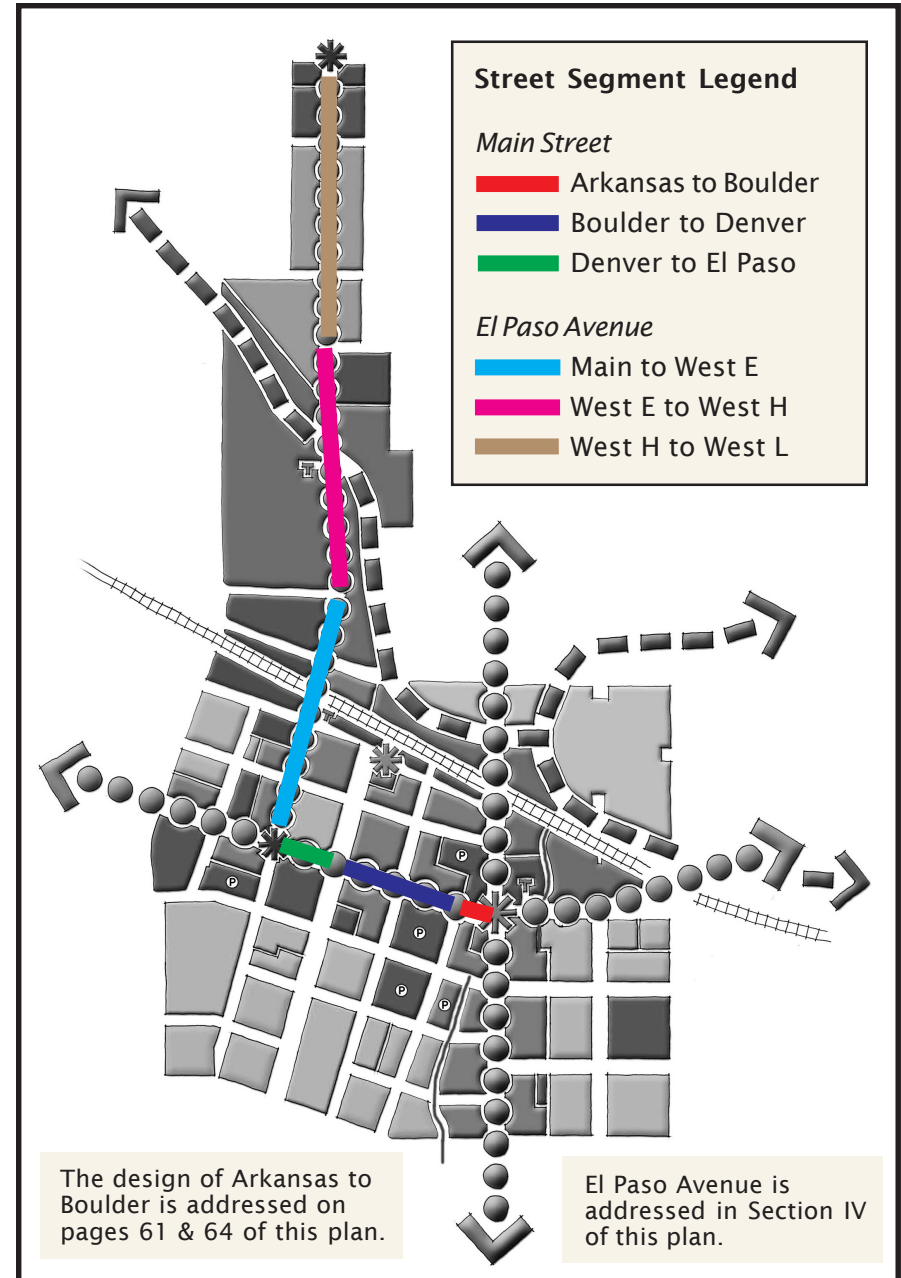
MOBILITY & STREETS

While it is important to accommodate motorized vehicles in Downtown Russellville, it is also critical that downtown be more user-friendly to other modes of transportation, including walking and cycling. Among the improvements being promoted on the following pages on mobility and streets are: the provision of “pedestrian bulbs” at key intersections to shorten the distance that pedestrians walk to cross the street; the provision of specialty paver crosswalks that remind drivers to yield to pedestrians; and multi-level streetlights for Main that address both driving and walking (see cross-sections on the following pages for Main).

Advantages to Back-In Angled Parking

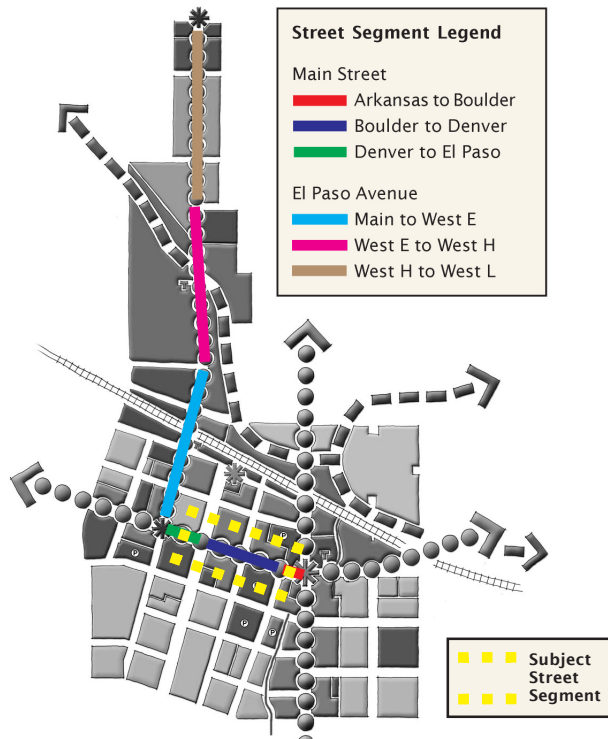
More and more communities within the past few years have converted their downtown on-street diagonal parking to the “reverse angle” or “back-in” parking. Their reasons for choosing this option, and the reasons it is being recommended for Russellville, are as follow:

- It is easier and safer to depart because the driver is driving straight out.
- It is safer for children exiting vehicles, as car doors “corral” them to the sidewalk.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MOBILITY & STREETS MAIN STREET: BOULDER TO DENVER



Proposed Changes

Intent

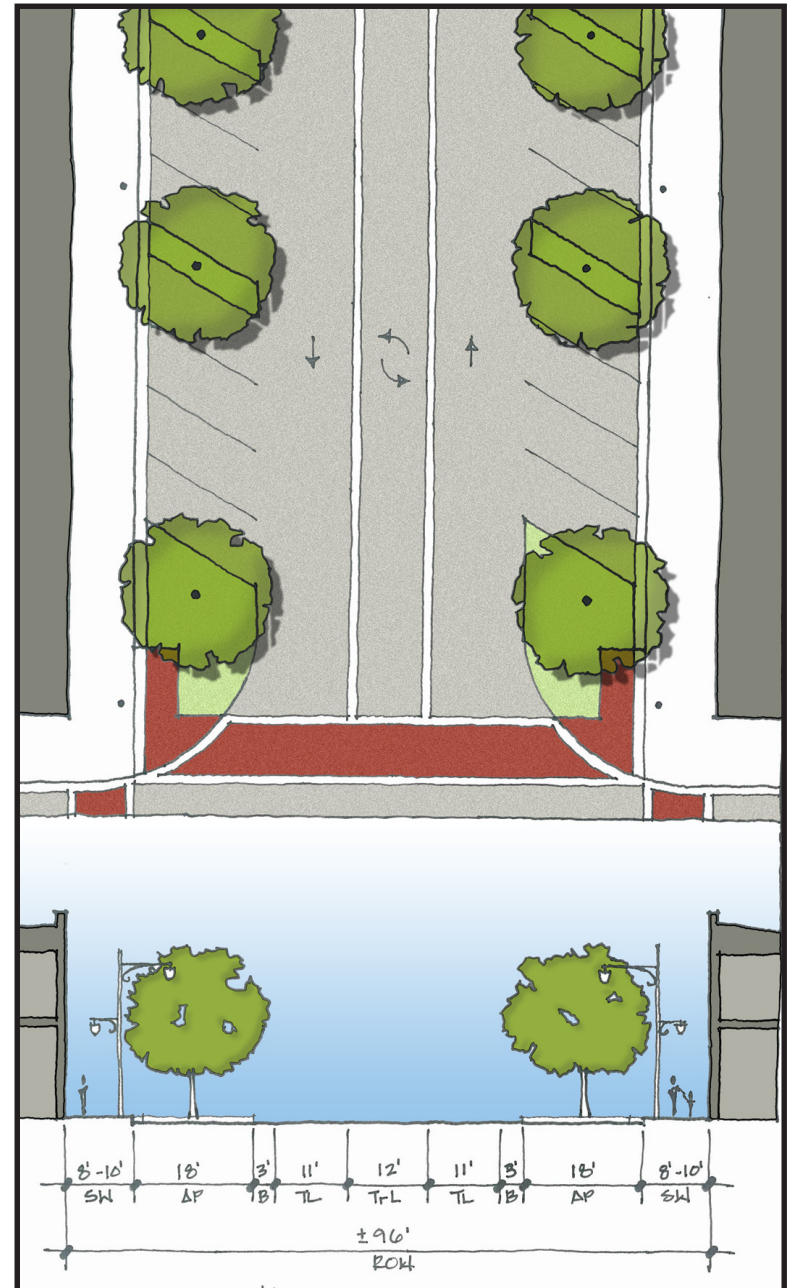
To make the street more pedestrian-friendly and to maximize the amount and safety of on-street parking.

Proposed Cross-Section

- 2 travel lanes (11 ft. / one each direction)
- 1 central turn lane (12 ft. width)
- 3 ft. buffer area between parking and travel lanes
- 18 ft. depth of angled back-in parking
- 8-10 ft. wide sidewalks

See page 61 regarding back-in angled parking.

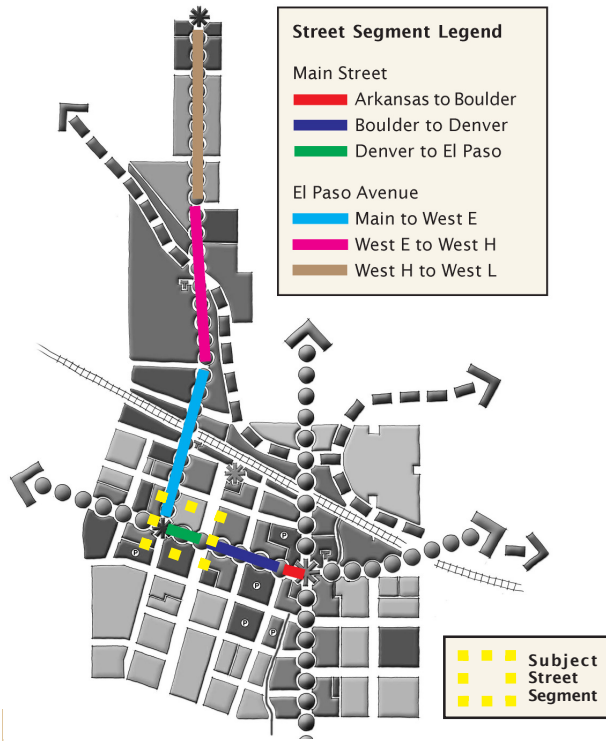
Existing Appearance



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MOBILITY & STREETS

MAIN STREET: DENVER TO EL PASO



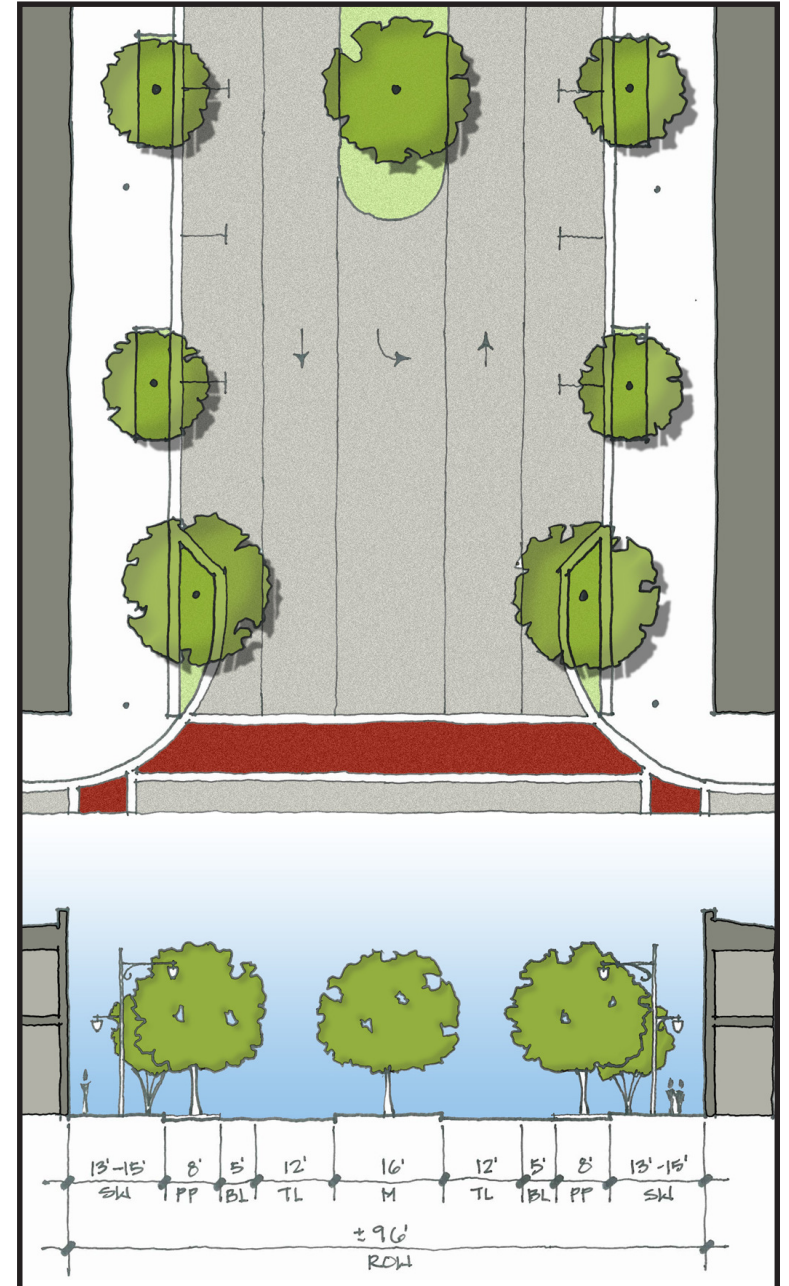
Proposed Changes

Intent

To make the street more pedestrian-friendly and to increase its visual quality.

Proposed Cross-Section

- 2 travel lanes (12 ft. / one each direction)
- 1 central turn lane (16 ft. width / landscaped medians central to blocks)
- 5 ft. bike lanes
- 8 ft. wide parallel parking lanes
- 13-15 ft. wide sidewalks



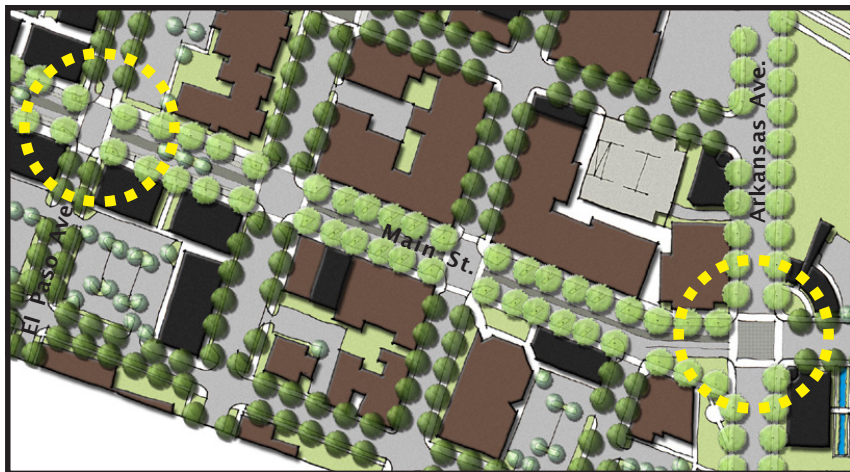
Existing Appearance



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MOBILITY & STREETS INTERSECTIONS

Street intersections are one of the most important components of any downtown because they are the location where pedestrians cross streets. Making street crossings easier and safer to execute can greatly enhance the pedestrian experience. In fact, by targeting intersections relative to the balance of their streetscapes, downtowns can substantially improve their physical condition with only limited costs. This plan's proposed intersection improvements are limited to Main, Denver and C Streets, and two of those intersections are mapped below (see yellow circles for highlighting) and illustrated at right. The two key components of these intersection improvements are pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian bulbs. The former would consist of special pavers that are slightly raised above the street surface in a manner that drivers will feel them under their tires as a means of emphasizing the pedestrian realm to drivers. The pedestrian bulbs will decrease the walking distance for those crossing a street, as well as better protecting the end vehicles within the associated parking lanes.



Pedestrian Bulbs
This visual simulation of the north-east corner of Main and Commerce illustrates the proposed streetscape improvements for key intersections.



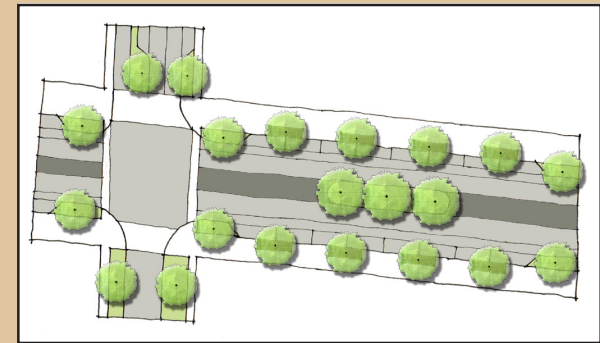
Main & Arkansas
The proposed improvements include:

- *Repaving the center of the intersection with special pavers.*
- *Redesigning the turn lane from Main onto Arkansas to create a public space on the southwest corner.*



Main & El Paso
The proposed improvements include:

- *Repaving the center of the intersection with special pavers.*
- *Redesigning the north segment of El Paso to introduce the 10 ft. wide cycle track.*



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PARKING

Whether a true parking undersupply exists or not, the issue of parking is always a key issue for any downtown. For those downtowns lacking a parking problem, getting one is typically an inadvertent goal, as that means the downtown is economically prosperous. Consequently, it is a primary goal of this plan to ensure that parking is available to serve the needs of downtown patrons in the optimal locations.

On-Street Parking

This plan's section on "Mobility & Streets" on pages 60-64 addresses the location and design of on street parking. As noted there, on-street parking should be provided along any street frontages that will accommodate it. Furthermore, where angled parking can exist, it should be designed as "back-in" angled parking for convenience and safety purposes.

At present, no parking management is occurring. This situation may not currently be a problem. However, as revitalization success is achieved and parking demands increase, management will be needed. Management does not require parking meters, but it should require that vehicles be limited to two to three hours for on-street parking. In the meantime, the merchants should ensure that they and their employ-

ees are not parking on-street so that shoppers have convenient parking.

Parking Lots

The enhancement of some privately owned off-street parking lots is recommended, as such changes would enhance the overall customer experience and increase the likelihood of repeat visits. Below are examples of measures that can enhance parking lots:

- Relocate and screen dumpsters
- Provide landscaping and shade trees anywhere that vehicles are not intended to drive
- Provide human-scaled lighting to increase

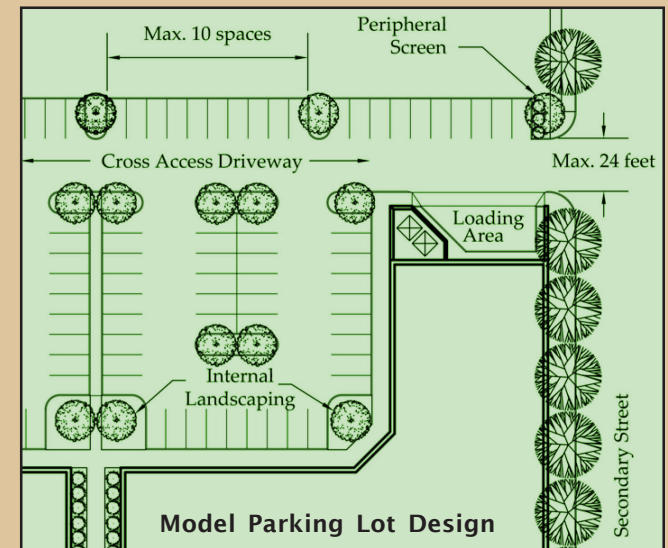
safety and perceptions of safety

- Clearly delineate parking stalls with paint-striping to maximize efficiencies and the number of stalls
- Enhance the connections between parking areas and Main Street with lighting and other improvements
- Provide directional signage along Main and other key streets to parking areas

It is also proposed that the front edges of parking lots facing streets be visually screened through landscaping, low fencing, and/or low walls. The site plan at right illustrates these concepts.

Parking Lot Design

The parking lot on the block south of City Hall (below) lacks important features such as landscaping. In particular, the frontage along Commerce should be landscaped to help screen automobiles. The graphic at right is an example of the types of design standards that should be applied to Downtown's parking lots.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PARKING (continued)

New Parking Garage

While the availability of parking in Downtown Russellville is not a critical issue at present, it will be once significant revitalization occurs. Even if the management of on-street parking is instituted by the City, as recommended in this plan, the supply of parking will need expansion. It is proposed that at least one parking garage be considered for development within the next few years. Such a garage should service demands within the Main Street and Commerce Street corridors, in particular. Demand is particularly

acute near the courthouse. It is important that a new garage be located within a five-minute walk of downtown's core if it is to

be truly useful. The map below illustrates a five-minute walk, as well as the most optimal sites for a garage (see the next page).



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

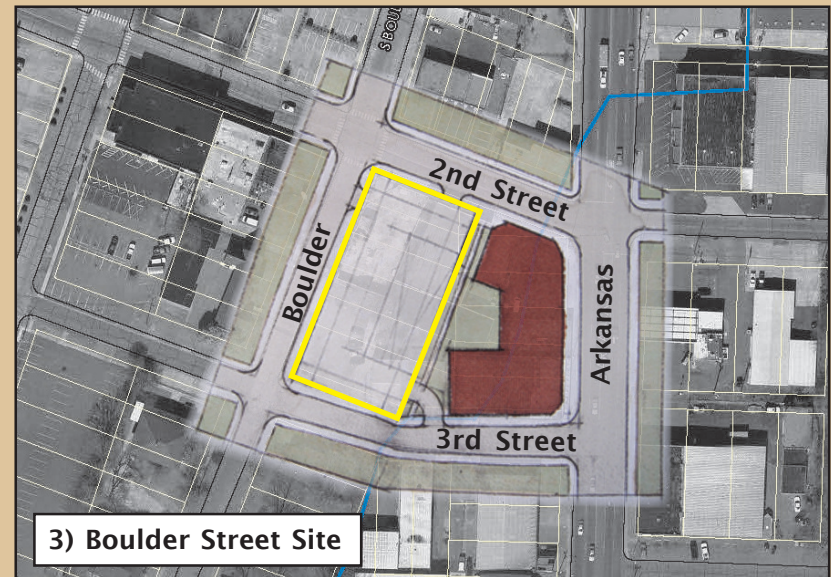
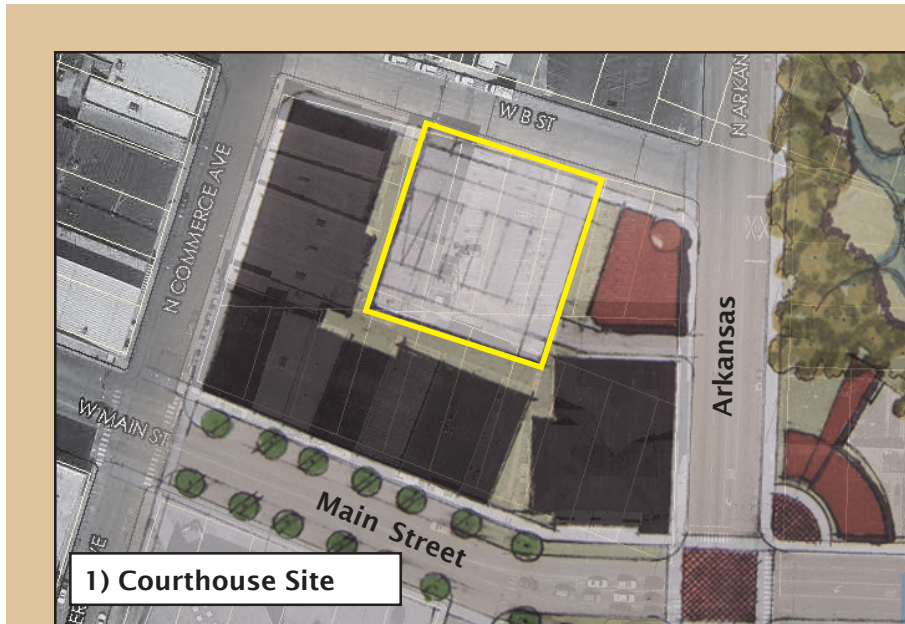
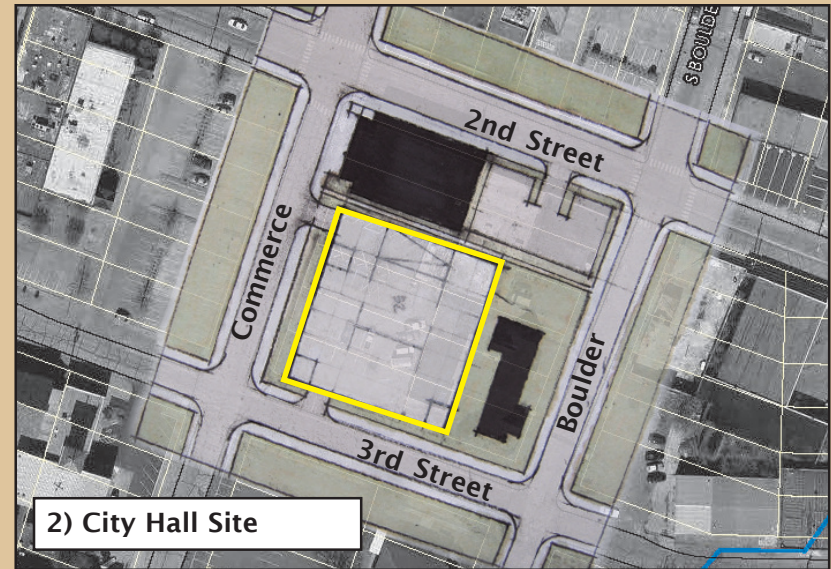
PARKING (continued)

This page features the three sites that could potentially serve for a new parking structure. The buildings shown in black are existing, while those in crimson are new buildings. The garages are highlighted.

1) Courthouse Site - This structure would be accessed from both Arkansas and B Street, and it would be partially screened by a new courthouse annex building on the site's northeast corner.

2) City Hall Site - This structure would be accessed off both Commerce and 3rd Street. It would be screened from the north by City Hall and from the east by the adjacent historic church.

3) Boulder Street Site - This structure would be accessed by both 2nd and 3rd Street. It would be screened from Arkansas by a new infill building to its immediate east. Unlike the other two sites, this one is privately owned.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

STREETSCAPES

The “Mobility & Streets” section of this plan addresses many streetscape issue for Downtown. Recommended improvements include the following:

Street Lights - Streets are currently dominated by tall cobra-head lights oriented to

vehicular traffic (Image A). It is recommended that a two-tiered historic light be used as designed in Image D and styled in Image F.

Benches - The traditional metal bench as currently exists in Image C should be utilized throughout the downtown.

Trash Receptacles - There is currently a random assortment of receptacles, as seen

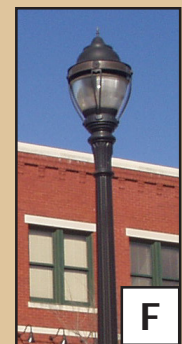
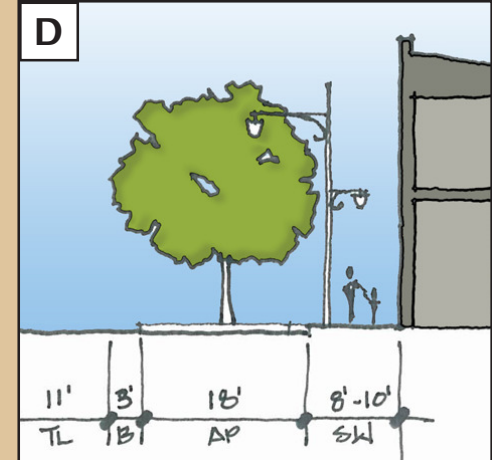
in Images A and B. It is recommended that a traditional style as seen in Image E be used.

Sidewalks - Downtown’s current sidewalks are of a simple concrete construction. Some segments are in better condition than others, but most are generally functional and safe. While it might ultimately be decided to install specialty pavers, the near-term recommendation is to focus on intersections.

Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES

Most successful downtowns feature a variety of public spaces, yet that is one amenity type that is lacking for Downtown Russellville at present. Public spaces are important for the passive use of area residents and citizens in general, for recreation, and for special events. Consequently, a varied assortment of public spaces are proposed in this plan. Their locations are mapped at right and listed on this map. The following pages describe each.

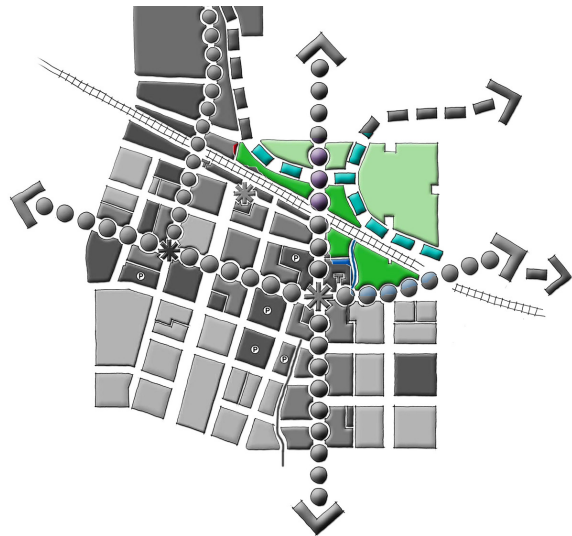


III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES LARGE PASSIVE & RECREATIONAL SPACES

Prairie Creek Park (East)

The northeast corner of the Downtown study area is dominated by floodplains that exist because of Prairie Creek. Much of this land is undeveloped, although there are a few existing commercial and light industrial uses. This area once likely featured more extensive wetlands than now exist because much of the creek has been channelized with concrete, which negatively impacts the environmental value of these lands (see photographs at right above). It is proposed that the original integrity of the creek be restored by removing the man-made alterations so the surrounding lands can again provide their



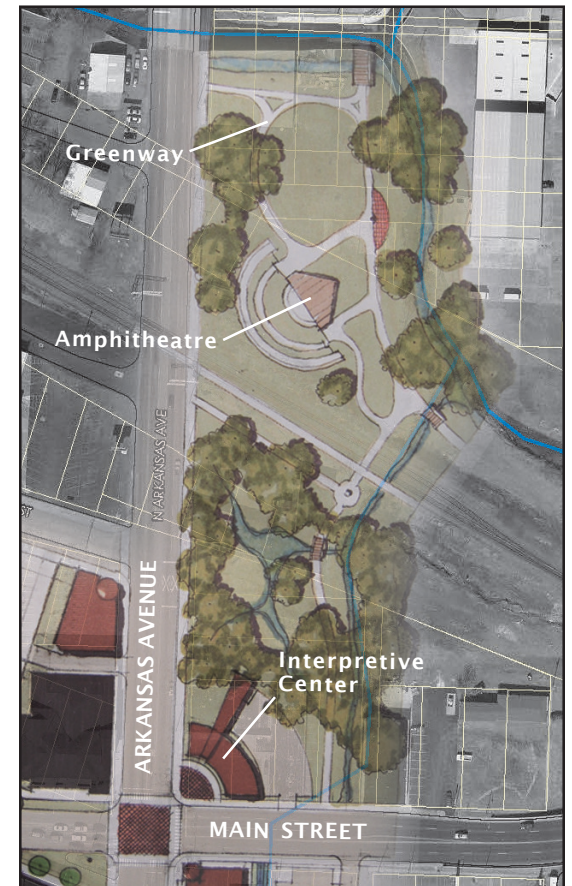
Existing Character:
Prairie Creek Park (East)



Proposed Character:
Prairie Creek Park (East)



Example Amphitheatre



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES LARGE PASSIVE & RECREATIONAL SPACES (continued)

Prairie Creek Park (East)

natural flood controlling function and restore the original wetlands. Wetlands are important for filtering storm water and serving as a habitat to many important plant and animal species. As illustrated in the conceptual site plan on the previous page, key elements of this park would include:

Ozark Interpretive Center

Russellville is strategically located between the Ozark and St. Francis National Forests and the Mt. Magazine and Ouachita National Forests, which host approximately 2 million visitors per year. The proposed interpretive center would consist of approximately 3,500 square feet of space and would have a high-visibility location on the northeast corner of Main and Arkansas. See pages 101-102.

Amphitheatre

This outdoor performance venue located north of the interpretive center would feature a covered and elevated stage with adjacent terraced seating configured in a semi-circle shape.

Prairie Creek Greenway

See page 90 for information on the proposed greenway system.

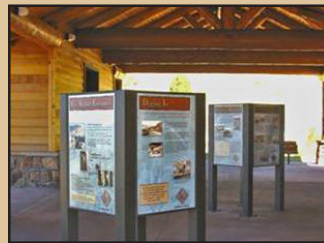
Interpretive Wayside Exhibits

These outdoor exhibits would interpret themes related to the natural environment.

Ozark Interpretive Center

This proposed interpretive center would be affiliated with the U.S. Forest Service, which currently has offices on Main Street in Downtown Russellville. While they have made no commitments or official statements regarding the concept, they have informally expressed at least some level of initial interest. If this concept could be pursued, there would be potential for federal funding. Components of the center would include:

- Interpretive exhibits
- Restrooms
- Brochures and other info.

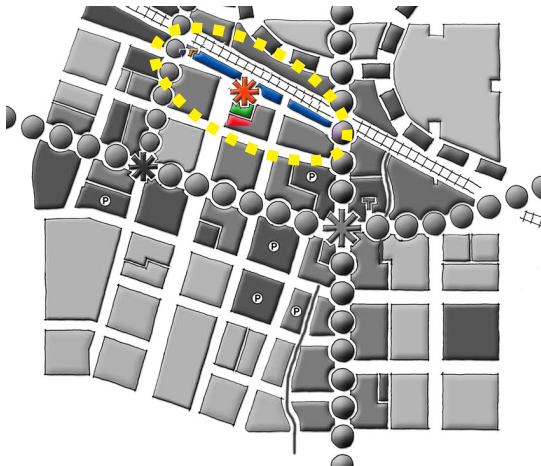


III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES

Depot Plaza & Green

While this plan places a great deal of focus on Main Street, Commerce Avenue and other important areas of Downtown Russellville, the depot is also important. It has a significance going back to the 1870s when the railroad came through Russellville and the original depot was built. In recent years, the depot has housed the Main Street pro-



gram offices and been the scene of various special events that are important to the well-being of downtown.

It is proposed that a variety of improvements occur to the depot area to make it even more of a focal point for downtown. In particular, it should

be redesigned to better accommodate special events, and to make it more appealing to citizens wanting to use the area during non-event times.

In addition to enhancing the grounds around the depot, improvements to the depot itself include enhancing and expanding the museum component of the building. In fact, such expansion may require relocation of the current offices housed in the building.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: DEPOT AREA



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

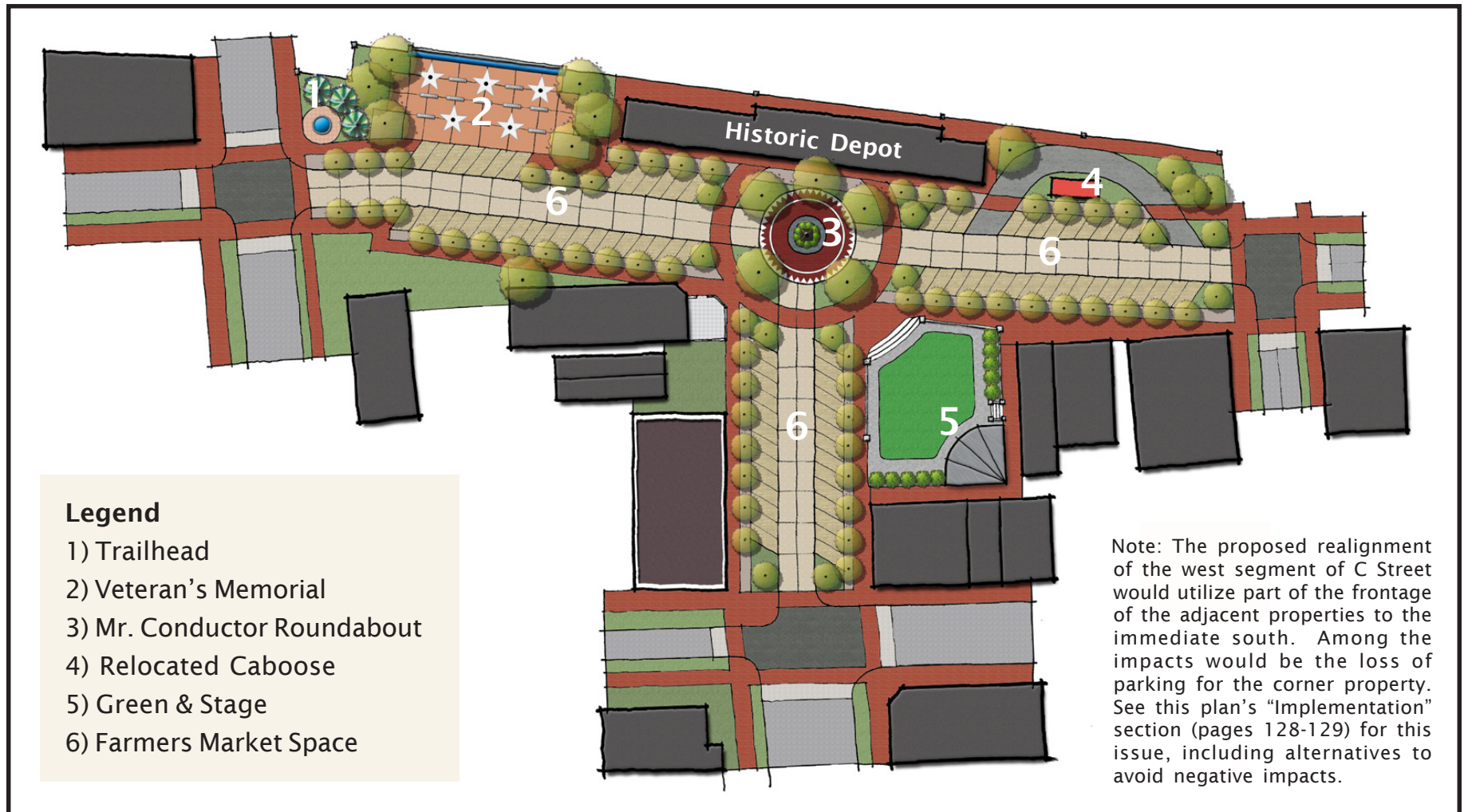
PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES (continued)

Depot Plaza & Green (continued)

The concept plan below for the depot area

features numerous new ideas to be applied to the area. Using the historic depot as an anchor, the existing “Mr. Conductor” statue would become the focal point for a traffic roundabout for the intersection of Denver

and C Street. Other key improvements include relocating the caboose, enhancing the existing green and providing an adjacent performance stage, providing a greenway trailhead, and creating a veterans’ memorial.



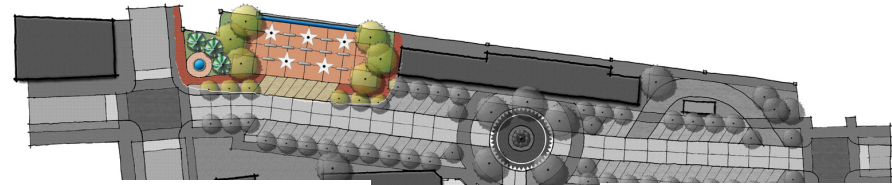
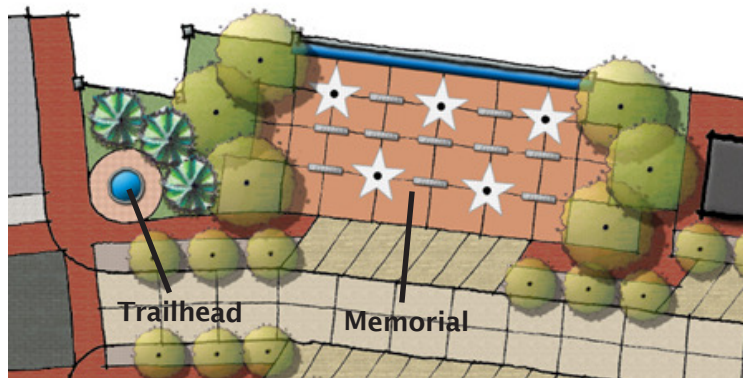
III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES (continued)

Depot Plaza & Green (continued)

TRAILHEAD

The proposed Prairie Creek Greenway is addressed in detail on page 90 of this plan, and it suggests locations for greenway trailheads. Trailheads are key access points to a greenway that often have features such as parking. They sometimes even include amenities such as restrooms and water fountains. There is only one trailhead currently proposed as being located in the downtown. That proposed trailhead is in the Depot Plaza area at the northeast corner of C Street and El Paso Avenue. While its design would be an implementation step following this plan's adoption, the most tangible component of the trailhead might be a simple kiosk with information related to the greenway (map, etc.) and amenities at the trailhead site. Amenities that would be available even if the trailhead were not designated include the public restrooms located at the west end of the depot and on-street parking along C Street.



Sample Trailhead Kiosk



American Legion Post No. 20

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL

With the exception of the Confederate Mother's Memorial Park located south of Downtown on S. Glenwood Avenue, there are no existing major veteran's memorials in Russellville. Because of the importance of the depot area and its proximity to the Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post at 215 N. Denver Avenue (listed on the National Register), this location has merits. It might honor veterans of all wars. Its design should be a separate undertaking from this plan and might even involve a design competition. However, the two images below of other veteran's memorials offer some potential concepts.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES (continued)

Depot Plaza & Green (continued)

RELOCATED CABOOSE

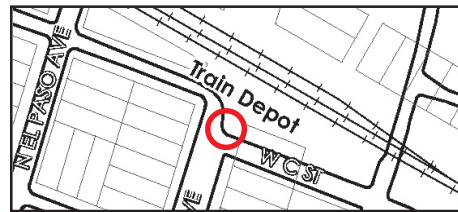
At present, a historic caboose is located just south of the depot and it anchors the south end of the small green located on the southeast corner of C Street and Denver. It has a small wooden platform in front of it to serve as a stage. It is proposed that the caboose be relocated a bit north on the east end of the depot. This relocation will achieve two objectives:

- 1) It will clear the way for a higher-quality new stage that will be located in the current location of the caboose.
- 2) It will place the caboose closer to the depot, strengthening the thematic relationship between the two.

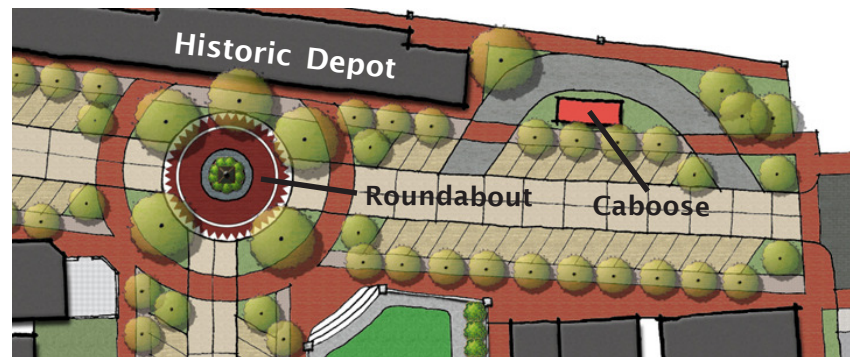
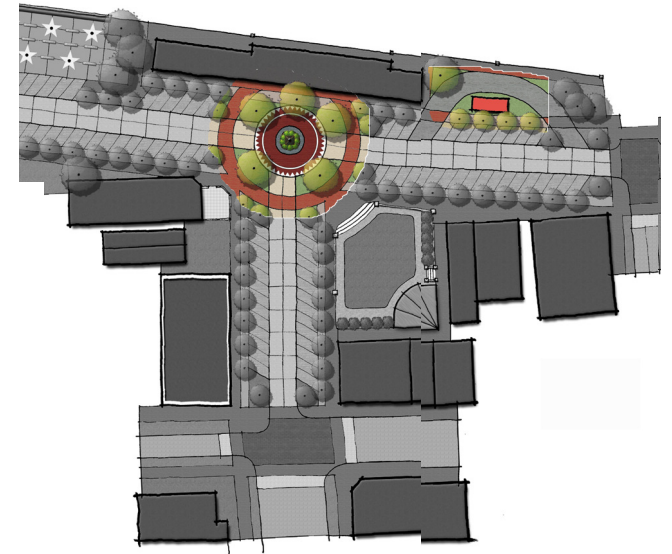
It is noteworthy that railroad representatives have reportedly indicated that there are sight-line issues with locating the caboose here. However, given that the location is not as close to the rail line as the existing depot, this concept appears to warrant further pursuit.



Caboose to be relocated



Current C Street configuration (red circle indicates proposed roundabout)



MR. CONDUCTOR ROUNDABOUT

As currently configured, C Street makes a “dog leg” bend where it intersects with Denver in front of the depot (see map above). It is proposed that this street be realigned and provided with a traffic roundabout at this intersection. Utilizing the existing Mr. Conductor statue in its current location, it would anchor the roundabout. It would also be paved with specialty pavers to provide aesthetic value and turn this location into an urban design feature. Thus, this proposal would both improve traffic safety and flow, while providing another iconic landmark to the Downtown.



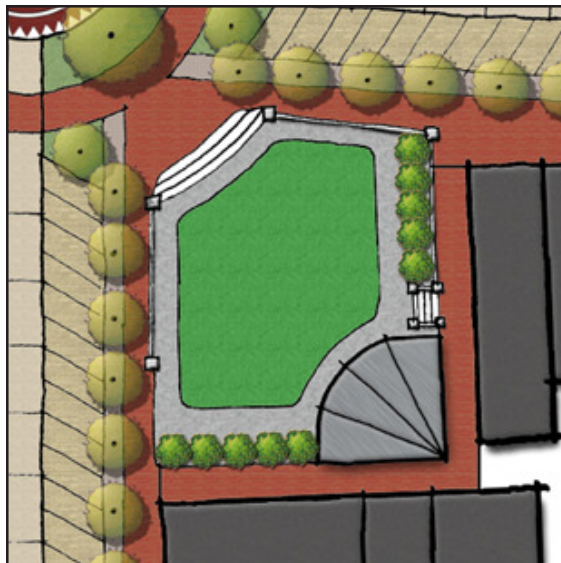
III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES (continued)

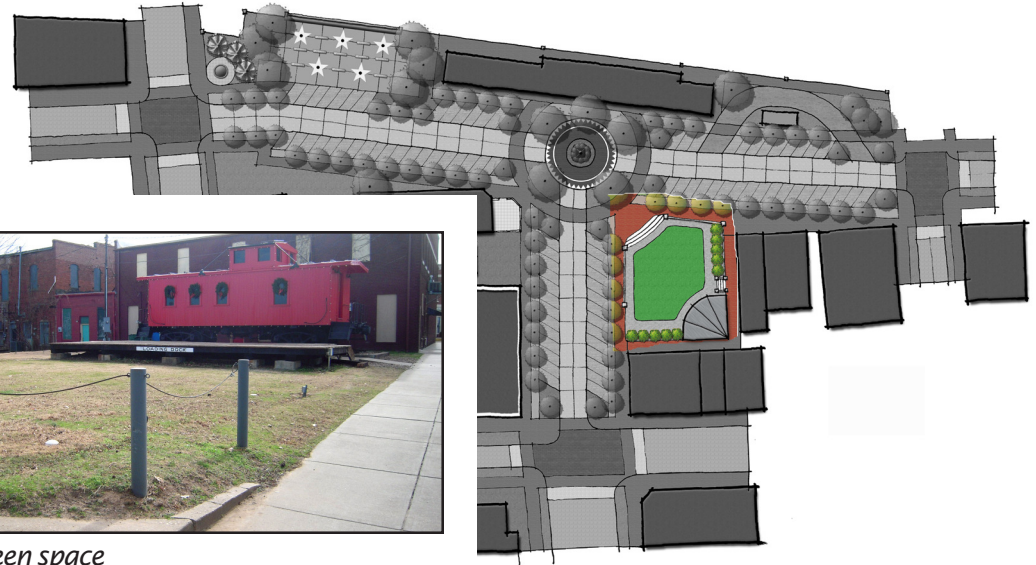
Depot Plaza & Green (continued)

GREEN

As illustrated in the photograph at right, the existing green space is in need of enhancements to become a truly great public space. As illustrated below, it is proposed that the perimeter have a paved surface, a set of steps occur in the green's northwest corner, street trees define the space along its street frontage, and the east and west sides be enclosed with screening type landscaping. The proposed stage, described at right, would be nestled in the southeast corner of this space.



Current green space



STAGE

As with many facets of this plan, the detailed design of the proposed performance stage will be a distinct project. There is no specific “correct” design at this point, but it should be creative, visually interesting, functional, and appropriate for a historic downtown. As in the case of the photograph at right, this space will be framed with a backdrop of historic urban buildings. The stage should be elevated above the green's grade so that the performers will be readily visible to the audience, and it should have some sort of roofing to protect performers from the elements. This space should also be programmed by Main Street Russellville with regularly scheduled events that will draw more people to Downtown, including ATU students and families.



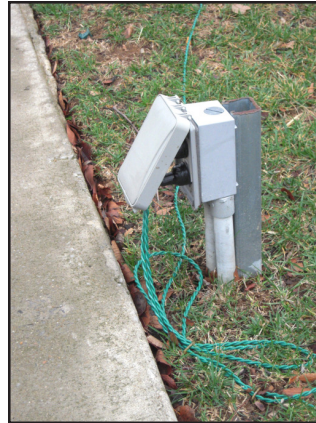
III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES (continued)

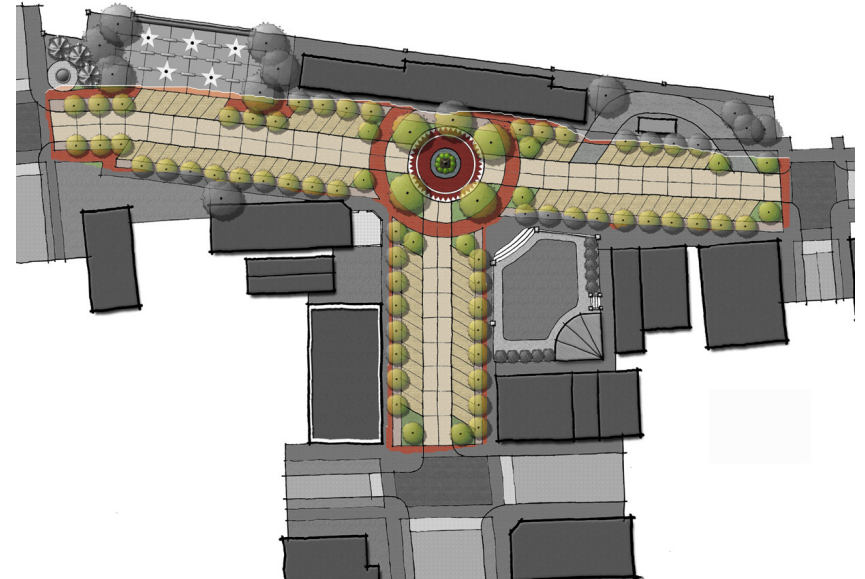
Depot Plaza & Green (continued)

FARMERS MARKET

At present, the Pope County Farmers Market occurs in a parking lot on West Main Street outside of the Downtown area. Because there are no permanent structures associated with it that would have to be abandoned or moved, the idea of relocating the market to the Depot Plaza appears to be viable. It is recommended that the segments of C Street and Denver near the depot be utilized for the market. The ends of these street segments could be closed off to traffic when the event is held (perhaps with decorative removable bollards), and utility hook-ups should be provided at frequent locations.



Electrical outlets should be provided throughout the Depot Plaza area to accommodate special events.



CURBLESS STREETS

One desirable characteristic of an effective space for public events is to have a consistent grade - in short, a flat ground-level surface lacking grade changes such as street curbing. While streets that are at the same grade with their adjacent sidewalks and that lack curbs are not typical, they can be effective when thoughtfully employed. Such a design is proposed for the segments of C Street and Denver near the depot. The following features are recommended to delineate between driving and walking areas:

- Changes in the shape and color of specialty pavers
- Street trees
- Bollards where appropriate



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES MID-SIZED PASSIVE SPACES

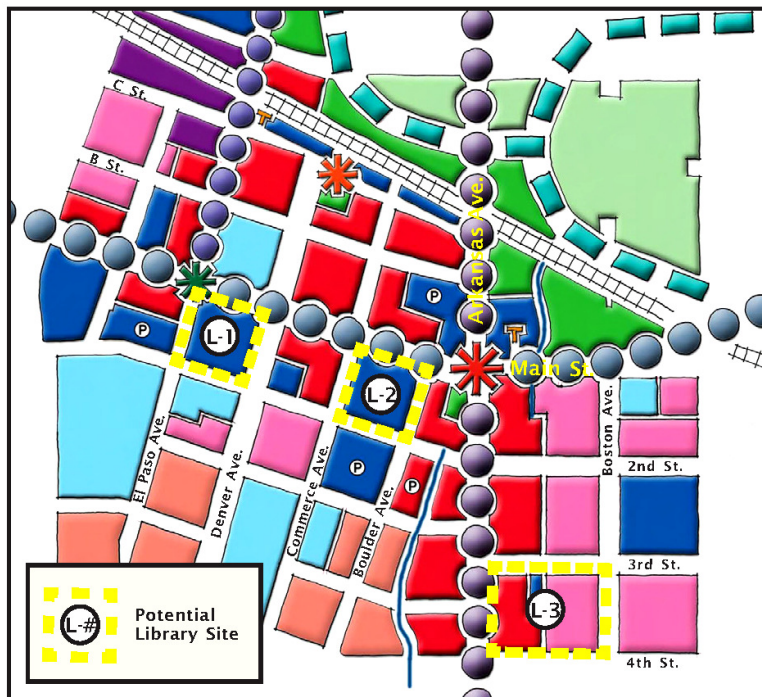
Library Park

As described previously on pages 58-59 of this plan, the County is proposing to construct a new library within Downtown. A larger and higher-quality library will provide an important new anchor for the area. It also provides a unique opportunity to develop an associated outdoor space. Regardless of the specific site that is ultimately selected for the library (see map below), the following design criteria are recommended:

- A location directly fronting one or more key streets (including Main if the library is sited on Main)
- Building enclosure on two sides
- A combination of greenscape and hardscape ground cover, but with an emphasis on greenscape (in light of the extensive hardscape surface already being provided at the Depot Plaza)
- Shade trees, but not so densely planted as to preclude sufficient sunlight
- Extensive seating
- Potentially a fountain or similar water feature to provide interest and background “white noise”



While the context and scale of New York City's Bryant Park - located behind the New York Public Library - is tremendously different from Russellville's future library park, its ability to draw people should serve as an inspiration.



The public space at right includes many of the design elements suggested above for Downtown Russellville's proposed new library park, including a combination of green-scaped and hardscaped surfaces, a moderate amount of shade trees, seating, and a water feature. It is also framed on at least one side by a building and on another side by a street.



III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES SMALL FORMAL SPACES

In many communities, small formal spaces occur from random decisions driven by available vacant parcels. While it is certainly preferable that a public space be created on an existing vacant lot rather than entailing the demolition of a historic building for a public space, utilizing vacant lots is often not the best solution. Vacant lots tend to be randomly located, while public spaces should be strategically located. In general, lots that once had a building are best served with a new infill building, while public spaces should occur through a comprehensive planning approach. This plan has identified one existing small formal space to be expanded and it has proposed another.



COURTHOUSE POCKET PLAZA

An undeveloped small area exists off the southwest corner of the Courthouse fronting onto Main Street (see photograph at right). It is presently landscaped with two small trees, planting beds, and a concrete walkway. There are also a few bulky shrubs at the rear of this triangular space along the Courthouse's west wall. With a lack of seating, the space is clearly intended as a place to be traversed by pedestrians, but not for them to linger and enjoy the space. While this current treatment is well-executed and well-maintained from a landscaping perspective, it is not the optimal use of the space.

Instead, it is recommended that it be redesigned as a "pocket plaza" - a small public space intended for passive use. While the example plaza pictured at right is slightly larger than this space, its general design and character offers a model to emulate.



Existing Condition

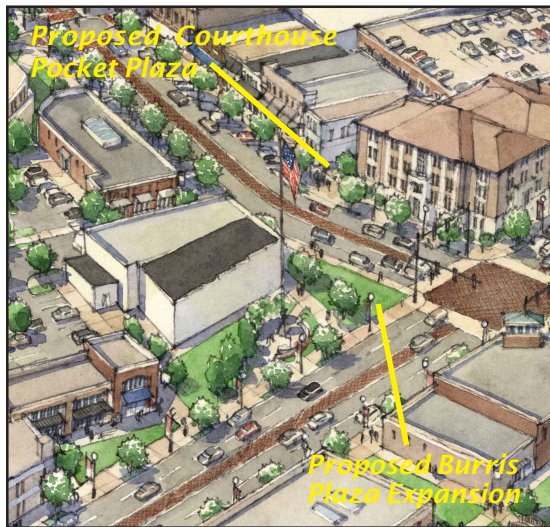


Proposed Character

III. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SPACES SMALL FORMAL SPACES (continued)

In addition to providing small public spaces that can be used by downtown visitors, employees, and residents, the proposed Courthouse Pocket Park and expanded Burris Memorial Plaza can also provide a visual gateway treatment that serves as an entry point for Main Street for those approaching from Arkansas Avenue or from the east on Main Street.



BURRIS MEMORIAL PLAZA

This important space pays tribute to the six Russellville citizens who lost their lives in a 1999 airline crash. Because of this space's very formal design and proximity to heavy traffic along Arkansas, it fails to attract users. While the sacred nature of this space precludes substantial changes, the redesign of Main Street where it intersects Arkansas from the west has yielded additional adjacent green space extending to the immediate north of Burris Memorial Plaza. This space should be designed for greater use to serve as an extension of the Burris Memorial Plaza.

With respect to this space's ongoing maintenance, that function is currently being performed by Main Street Russellville. Unlike the City government, which has the resources to efficiently and effectively maintain numerous public spaces throughout the community, the Main Street program is ill-equipped to provide this service. Consequently, it is recommended that the City take over maintenance of this important space and treat it as a public park.



Existing Conditions



IV. EL PASO
AVENUE CORRIDOR



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

LAND USES & DEVELOPMENT

Although a description of the proposed land uses, form and character for this corridor was provided previously in the Plan Overview section of this document, below is a summary to provide context for this plan section.

Park - This designation has been applied to the lower half of this corridor because of the extensive floodplains, which limits its development potential and reduces land values. Unlike some of the proposed park lands within the downtown study area, all of the park lands within this corridor are considered high priority.

Mixed Housing - This designation has been applied to the upper half of this corridor. While this area currently features single-family housing, it is recommended that higher-quality and denser housing occur here focused on a primarily student market. See pages 87-88 for more information on this concept.

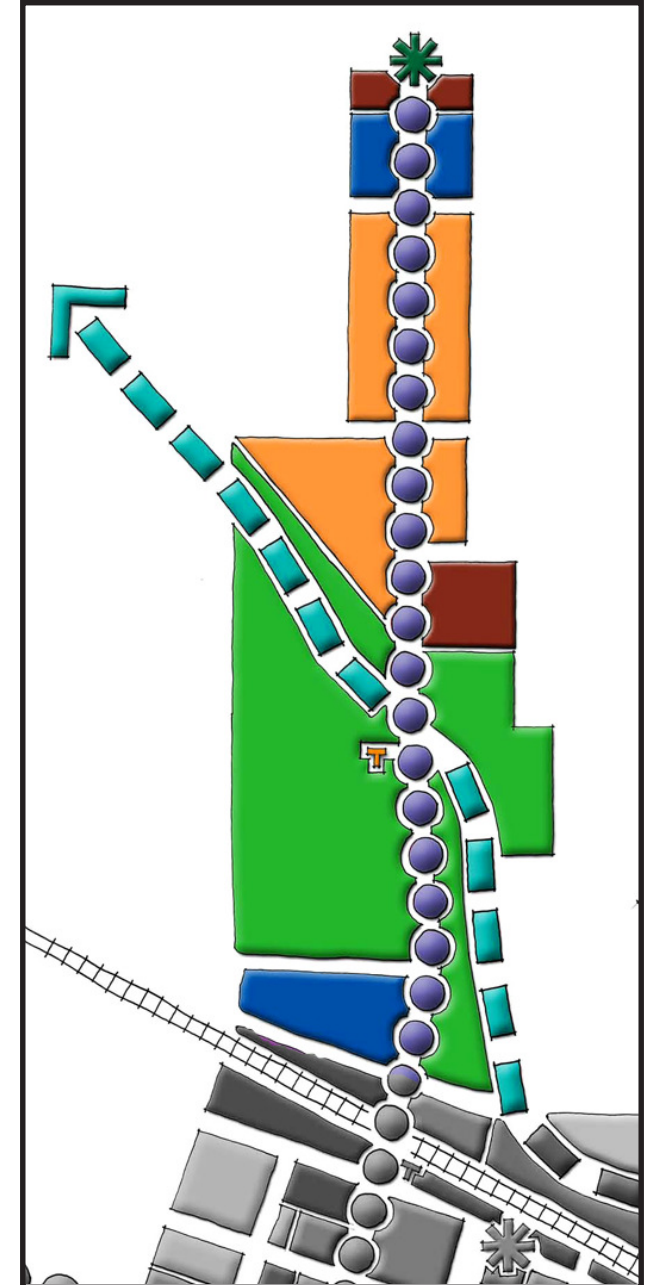
Mixed Use (Neighborhood Scale) - This category would apply to development on the northeast corner of H and El Paso (current site of the City’s Public Works Department), as well as at the terminus of El Paso.

Civic/Institutional - This designation applies to two areas within the corridor. ATU owns those parcels located on the north end and a recreation facility is proposed on the west side of El Paso (between Parkway and E Street). See page 89 for more information on this latter concept.

Industrial & Mixed Use (Retail Emphasis) - These final two categories feature the areas in the very south of the corridor. They reflect the current uses, form and character in this area.



Although it might be clad in either masonry or wood, this building represents the scale and urban design of potential new mixed use development on the northeast corner of H and El Paso.



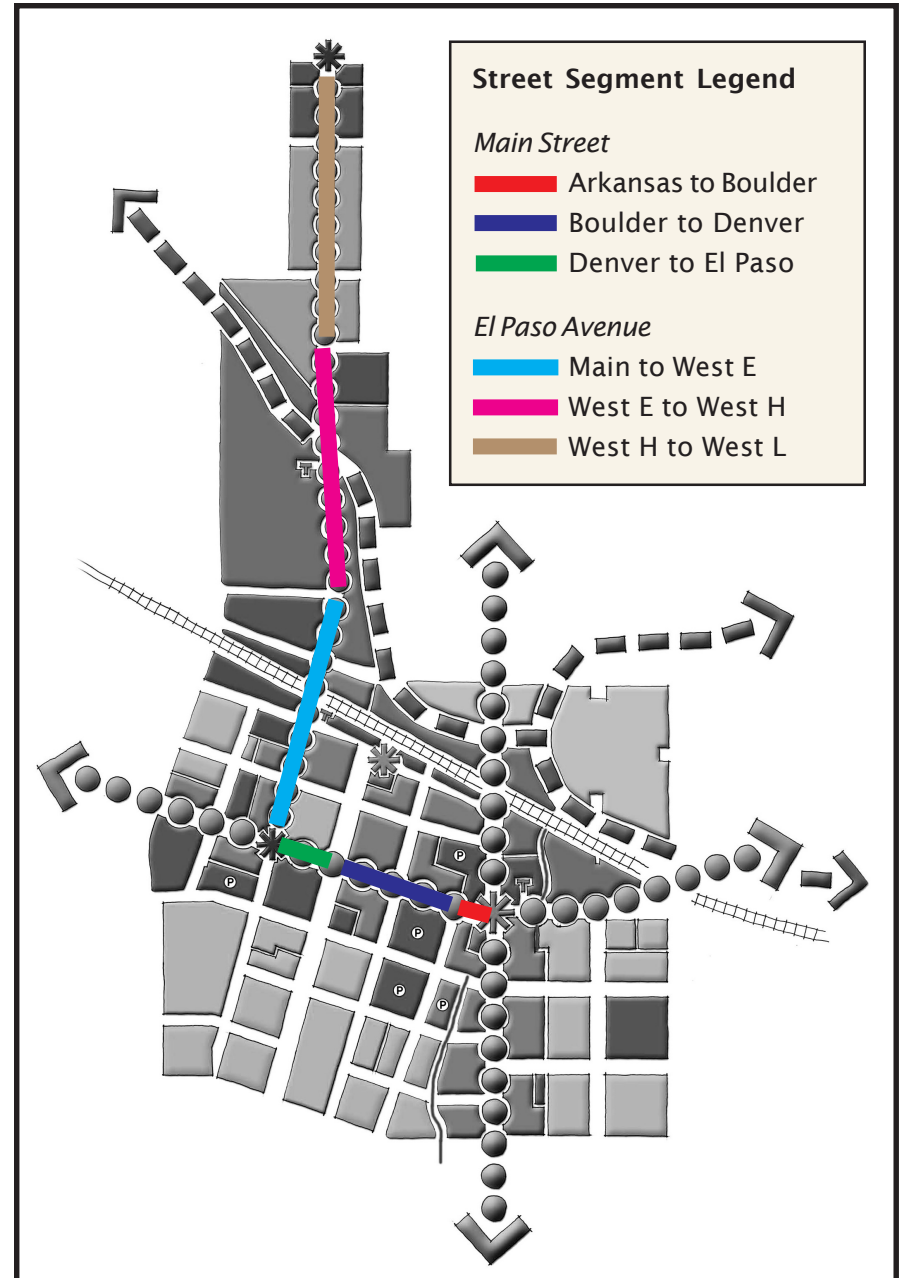
IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

MOBILITY & STREETS

El Paso Avenue represents a critical link between ATU and the Downtown. ATU and the market support that it can lend Downtown is vital. Because the only other key link between the two is Arkansas Avenue, which is a strip commercial highway that only accommodates motorized vehicles, El Paso is the key to making a stronger connection between the two anchors of Downtown and the university. It is important that El Paso become physically transformed within the near future in a manner that will be much more inviting to alternative modes of transportation, including walking, jogging and cycling.

Cycle Track Concept

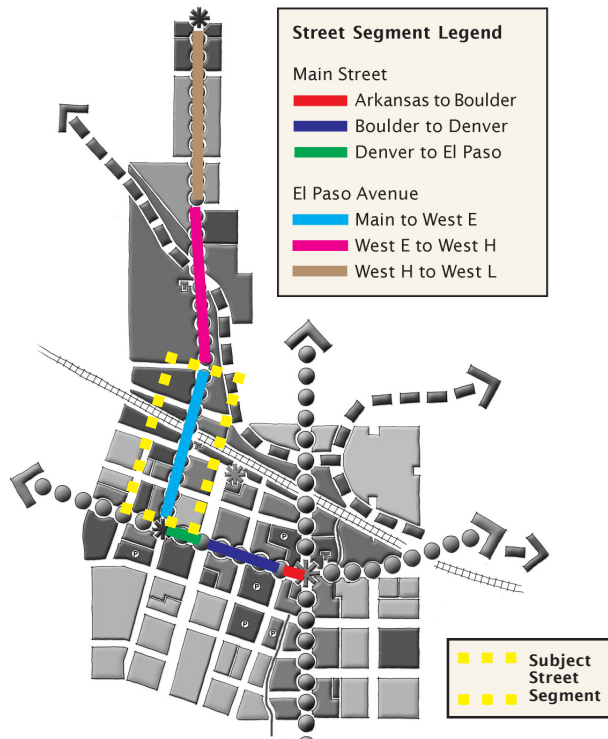
Although none of the images here represent the exact design proposed for El Paso, each features the same basic configuration of driving lanes, a parking lane, a buffer area, a bike lane, and a sidewalk - in that order.



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

MOBILITY & STREETS

EL PASO AVENUE: MAIN TO WEST E



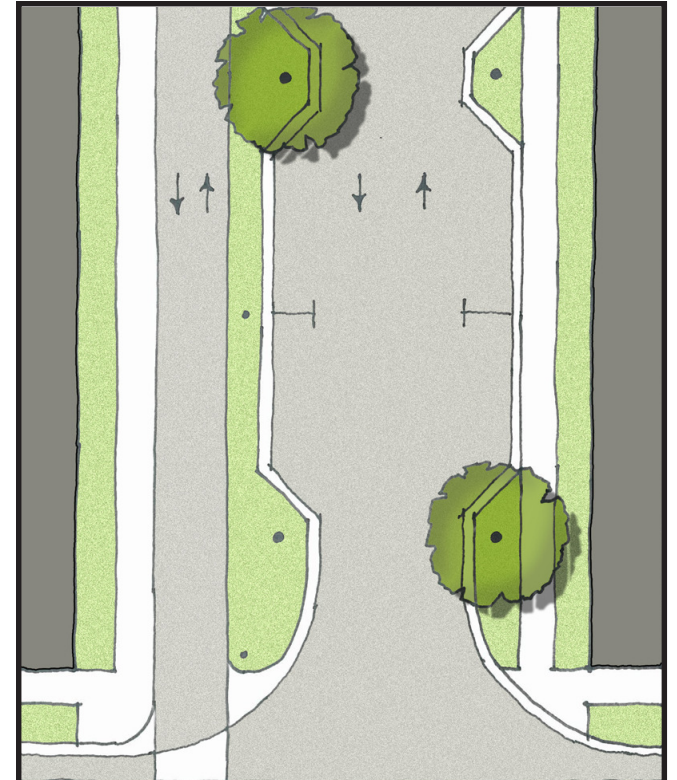
Proposed Changes

Intent

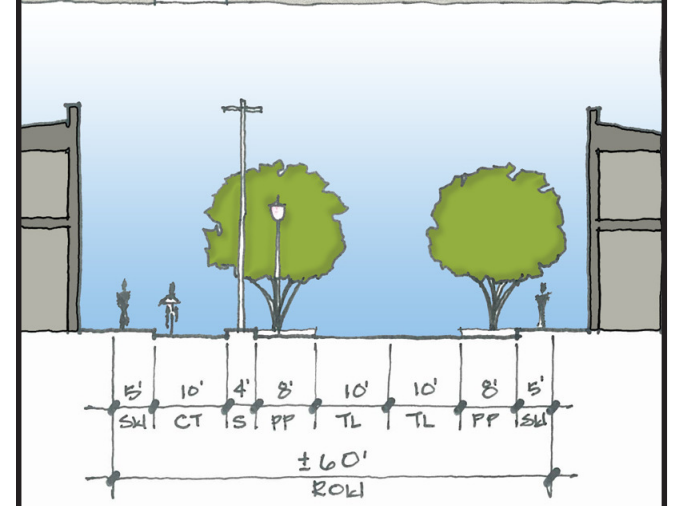
To make the street more pedestrian-friendly, to maximize on-street parking, and to encourage other modes of travel (cycling, jogging, etc.).

Proposed Cross-Section

- 2 travel lanes (10 ft. / one each direction)
- 8 ft. wide parallel parking lanes
- 4 ft. wide planting strip and separated 10 ft. cycle track on west side of street
- 5 ft. wide sidewalks



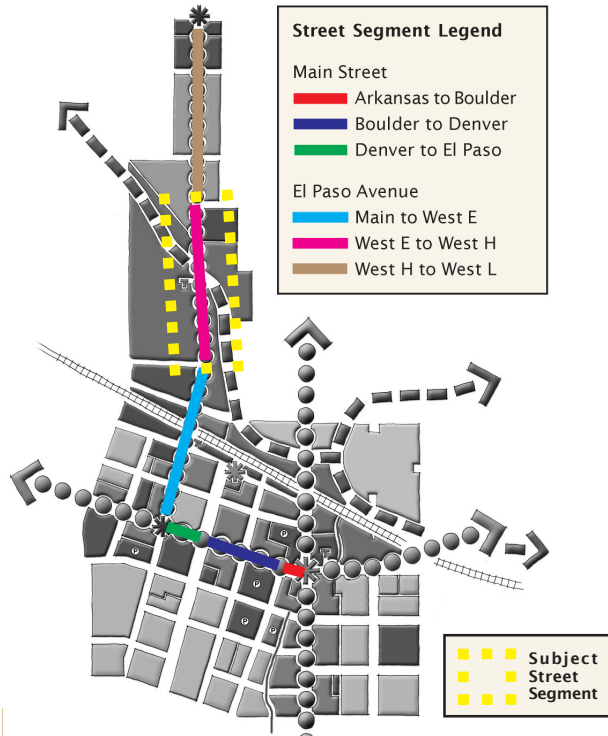
Existing Appearance



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

MOBILITY & STREETS

EL PASO AVENUE: WEST E TO WEST H



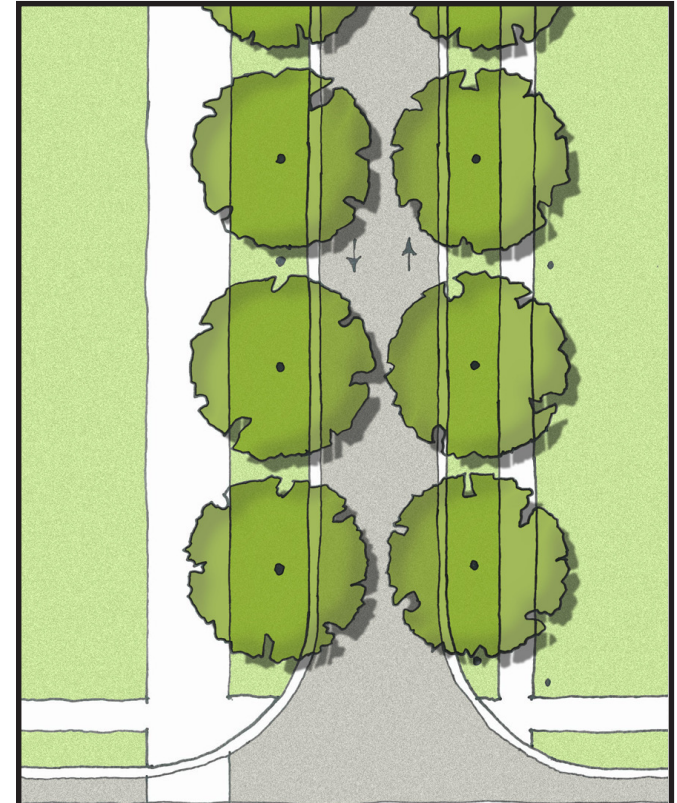
Proposed Changes

Intent

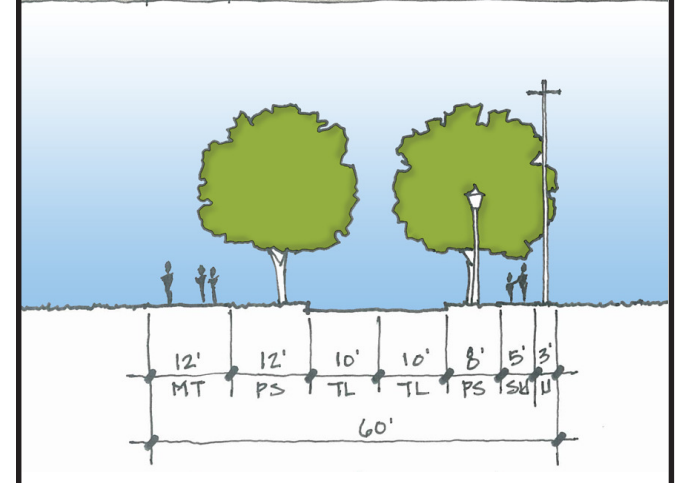
To make the street more pedestrian-friendly, to provide shade and aesthetics, and to encourage other modes of travel (cycling, jogging, etc.).

Proposed Cross-Section

- 2 travel lanes (10 ft. / one each direction)
- 8 ft. wide (east side) and 12 ft. wide (west side) planting strips
- 5 ft. wide sidewalk and 3 ft. wide utility strip (east side)
- 12 ft. wide separated and paved multi-use trail (west side)



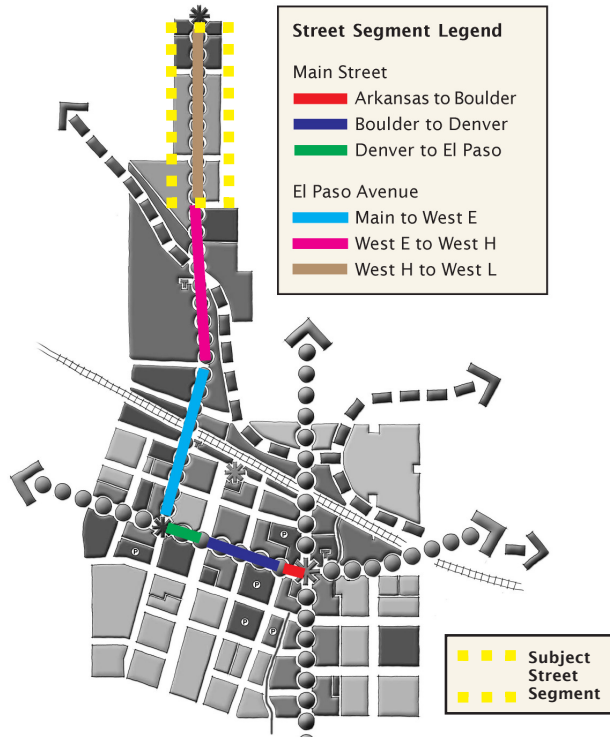
Existing Appearance



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

MOBILITY & STREETS

EL PASO AVENUE: WEST H TO WEST L



Proposed Changes

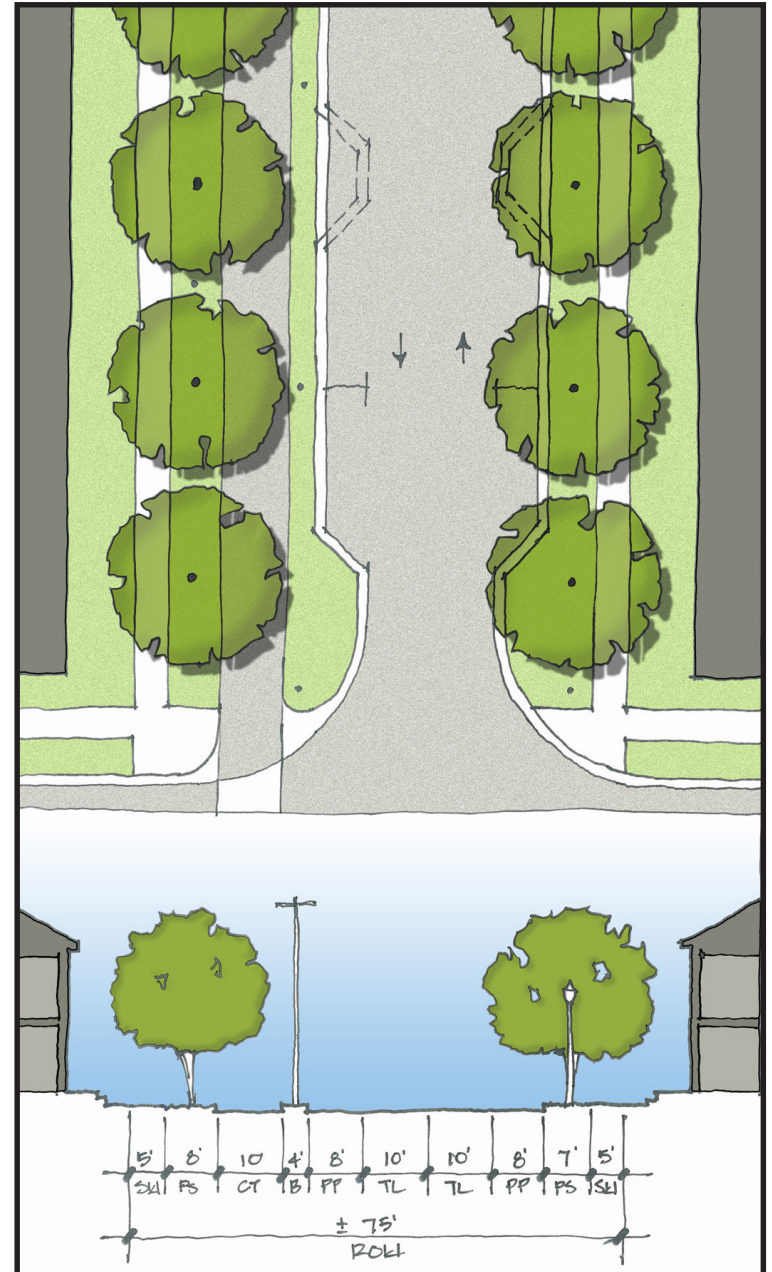
Intent

To make the street more pedestrian-friendly, to maximize on-street parking, and to encourage other modes of travel.

Proposed Cross-Section

- 2 travel lanes (10 ft. / one each direction)
- 8 ft. wide parallel parking lanes
- 4 ft. wide planting strip and separated 10 ft. cycle track on west side of street
- 7 ft. wide (east side) and 8 ft. wide (west side) planting strips
- 5 ft. wide sidewalks

Existing Appearance



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

MOBILITY & STREETS GATEWAY TREATMENT

It is proposed that El Paso's northern termination at the foot of ATU be transformed into a gateway treatment, as it is a potential "front door" for ATU from the Downtown. Highlighting this location as a gateway would physically create the transition between "town and gown." One potential treatment could be a single-lane roundabout with an inscribed diameter of 90-120 feet. At this scale, the roundabout could be contained mostly within the existing right-of-way, and would alleviate the current queuing associated with the all-way stop control of the intersection. Regardless of the gateway treatment, landscaping or statuary could formalize it while providing a transition point from the conventional street section of L Street to the cycle track section on El Paso Avenue.

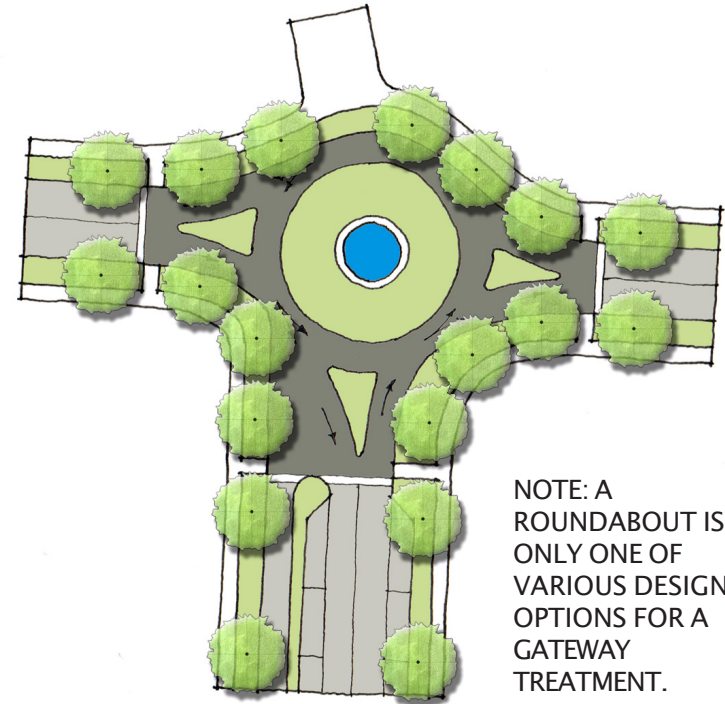


A key building at ATU serves as an iconic visual termination for El Paso. To symbolically reinforce this termination point, a gateway treatment is proposed.



Although the roundabouts pictured here feature four legs intersecting them and are slightly larger in scale, their general character is similar to a potential roundabout at the north end of El Paso. However, other approaches to a gateway treatment without a roundabout are possible.

If a roundabout were ultimately selected as a gateway treatment, it would have three street legs intersecting it - El Paso at the south and L Street at the east and west. Located at the south end of ATU, a gateway treatment would help to underscore the significance of this location as a gateway to the campus, as well as its role as the north terminus of El Paso. It is recommended that some sort of sculpture or architectural element be included in the design.

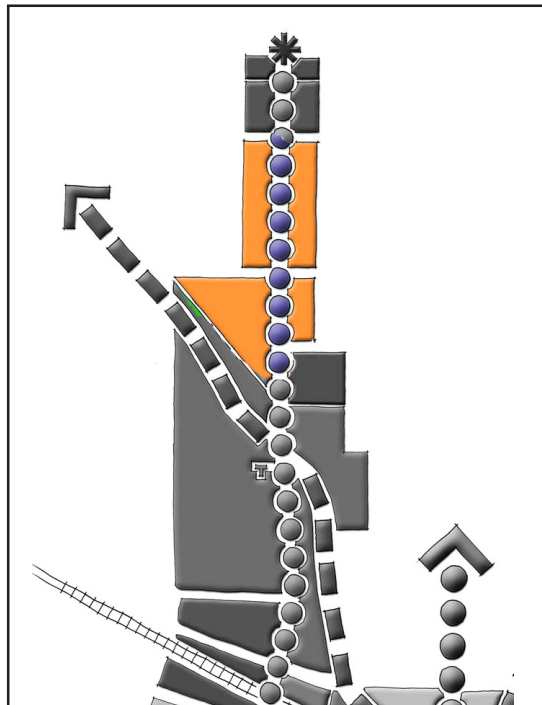


NOTE: A ROUNDABOUT IS ONLY ONE OF VARIOUS DESIGN OPTIONS FOR A GATEWAY TREATMENT.

IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

HOUSING

Based upon the market assessment conducted as part of this plan, there is clearly strong demand for housing - especially for college students. Concentrating medium to high-density housing along the El Paso Avenue Corridor serves multiple purposes. Not only does it place housing in close proximity to ATU, where it is needed, but it also precludes a linear pattern of strip commercial development - a pattern that already dominates Arkansas Avenue. This plan pro-



poses the following strategy for housing:

- **A variety of housing forms are recommended.** In addition to the types of multi-family housing pictured below, attached housing such as tri-plexes and quads would also be appropriate here.
- **Building heights should range between 1 and 3 stories.** Concept plans for this area reveal that there will be limited opportunities for 3-story building heights

because of parking demands that must be met on site.

- **Buildings should relate strongly with the street and have a general urban form.** While housing does not need to be built right up to the sidewalk, front setbacks should be relatively shallow with parking in the rear. Streetscapes should feature sidewalks and street trees with only limited curb cuts (driveways).

These images represent a broad range of medium density multi-family housing types that would be compatible with the future redevelopment of El Paso between Downtown and ATU.



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

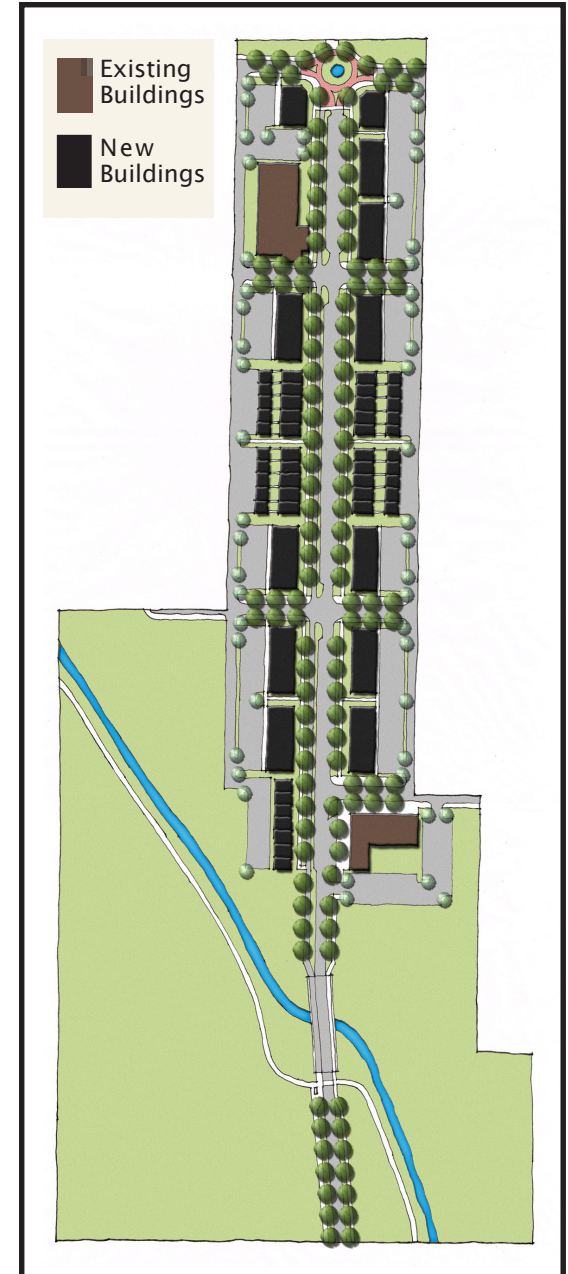
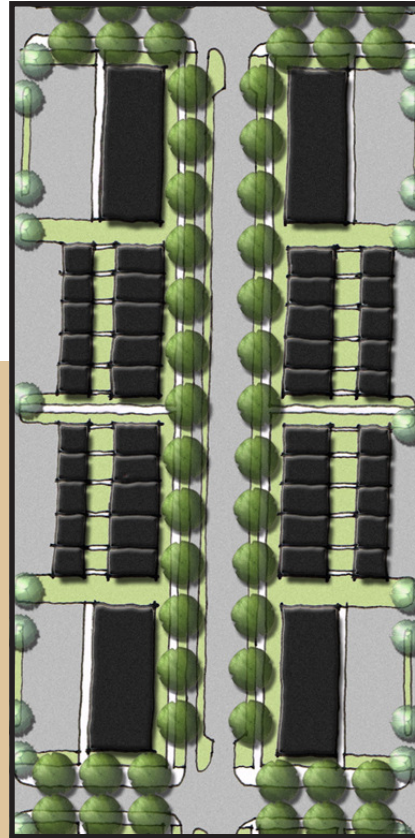
HOUSING (continued)

According to the market assessment conducted for this plan (see pages 36-40), there is market demand for approximately 200 units of housing within the El Paso Avenue Corridor. At right is a rendering of how that development might conceptually occur with a mix of housing types. Below is a regional model for student housing that may have some applicability to Russellville.

Duncan Avenue Apartments: Fayetteville, Arkansas
Geared toward upper-class students, these 4-bedroom apartments are leased so that each student has a separate contract. Units are fully furnished and the rent includes all utilities except telephone bills.



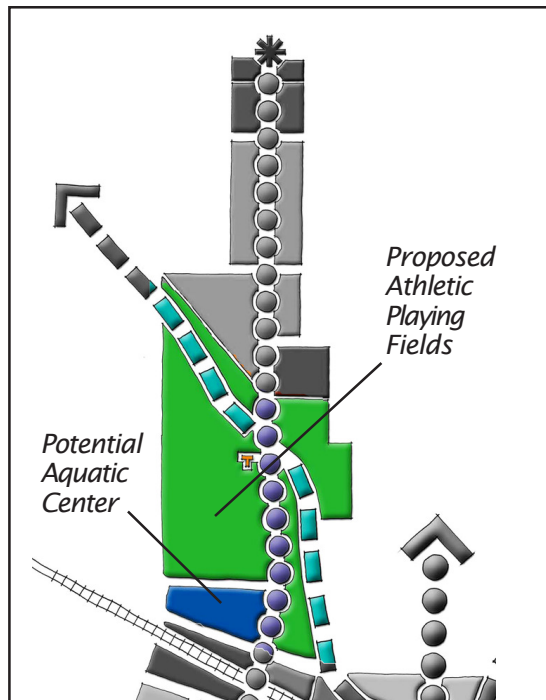
University of Arkansas
Division of Student Affairs
University Housing



IV. EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

PUBLIC SPACES

As noted throughout this plan, the lower half of the El Paso Avenue Corridor is dominated by floodplains associated with Prairie Creek. Because the floodplains preclude substantial development and greatly reduce land acquisition costs, it is recommended that this area be utilized for athletic playing fields. It may also have potential for the new aquatic center that is being discussed. Finally, by eliminating the channeling that has occurred to the creek, there is potential to restore lost wetlands.



AQUATIC CENTER

Until recently, Arkansas Tech University (ATU) had a swimming facility that was open to the community to use. However, that facility is no longer available, so a need for an aquatic center has resulted. While there will be a variety of site selection criteria that will be developed by the City's Recreation Department, this plan recommends that at least one site to consider is the block bound by West, Parkway, El Paso and Glenwood. Designated on the map a bottom left as Civic/Institutional (blue), part of this site features floodplains. However, enough of it is out of the floodplain and could be filled that this may be a viable site. The site's parking can be located within the floodplain.



ATHLETIC PLAYING FIELDS

The area proposed for athletic playing fields is designated Park (High Priority) in green on the map at bottom left. It is traversed by El Paso Avenue along its north-south axis, and it is also traversed by the creek and the proposed Prairie Creek Greenway along a northwest-southeast axis. Examples of the types of playing fields that might be developed here, along with supporting parking, include the following:

- Baseball
- Soccer
- Multi-use

Not only is this area suited for recreational uses, but its proximity to proposed residential development to the north underscores that idea.



A historical black and white photograph of a street scene. On the left, a long, two-story brick building with several windows is visible. In the center, a tall utility pole with cross-arms stands prominently. To the right, another utility pole is visible, and further back, a structure with a tower or crane-like top is seen. The street is filled with a large crowd of people, some standing and others near horse-drawn carriages. The overall scene suggests a busy urban environment from the late 19th or early 20th century. The text "V. AREA-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS" is overlaid in white, serif, all-caps font across the middle of the image.

V. AREA-WIDE
IMPROVEMENTS

V. AREA-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

GREENWAY SYSTEM

Greenways are linear green spaces that are used for both non-motorized transportation and recreation. They typically follow existing rights-of-way, such as streets or railroad lines, as well as streams. Streams are especially popular for greenways because they follow a linear path that can traverse most topography and their adjacent floodplains make land acquisition relatively affordable. Below are some of the most basic recommended features for the Prairie Creek Greenway:

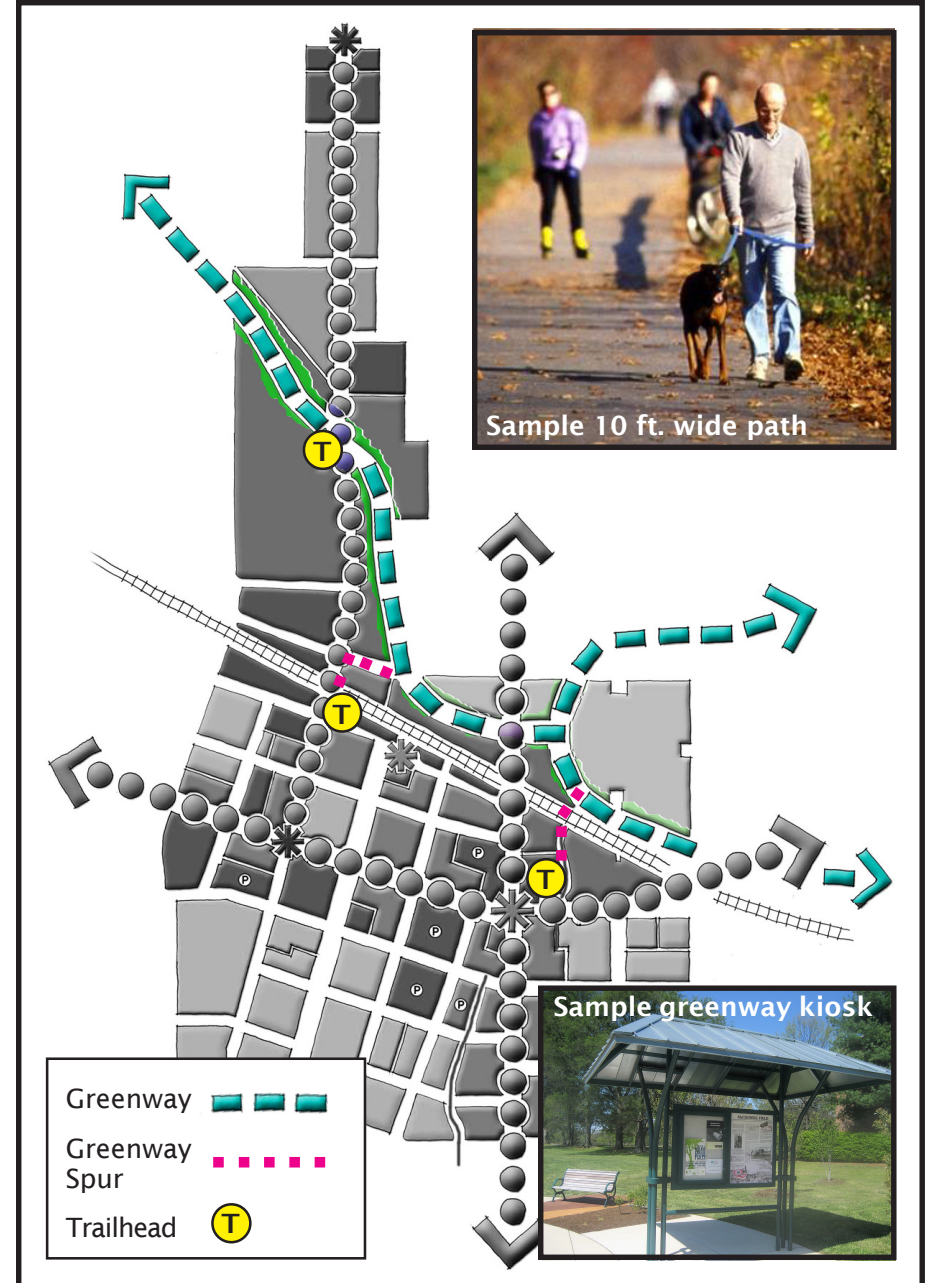
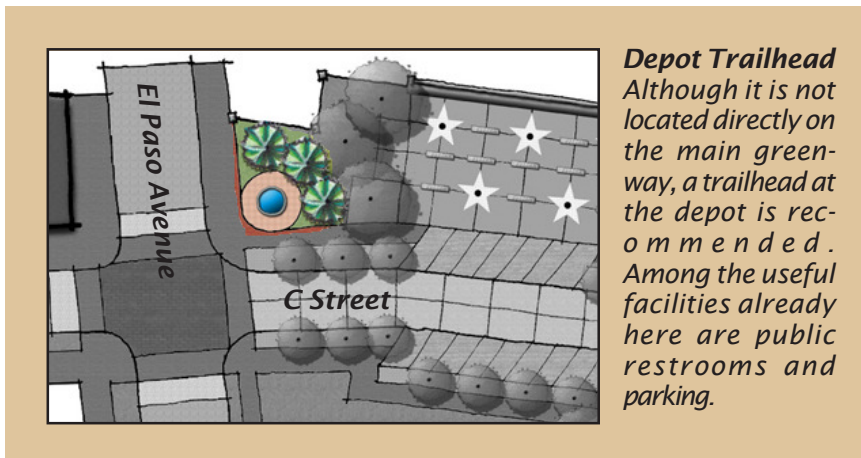
Location: Along Prairie Creek, with the selected side of the creek dependent upon environmental constraints and acquisition viability.

Intended Users: Walkers, joggers, cyclists, roller bladers, etc.

Design: 10 ft. wide asphalt path

Trailhead Locations: While there would be numerous trailheads throughout the greenway system, those located within the study area include the Depot Plaza, the proposed Ozarks Interpretive Center on the northeast corner of Main and Arkansas, and the intersection of the greenway and El Paso Avenue.

Trailhead Features: Parking, information kiosks, and (where they can be accommodated) restrooms and water fountains.



V. AREA-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

GATEWAYS

It is important that those entering a downtown are keenly aware that they have arrived to a downtown. Otherwise, the concept of “branding” the downtown and creating a strong sense of place is lost. Gateway treatments can help to make a strong first and last impression. Below are recommendations for specific locations and designs for gateway treatments within the study area.

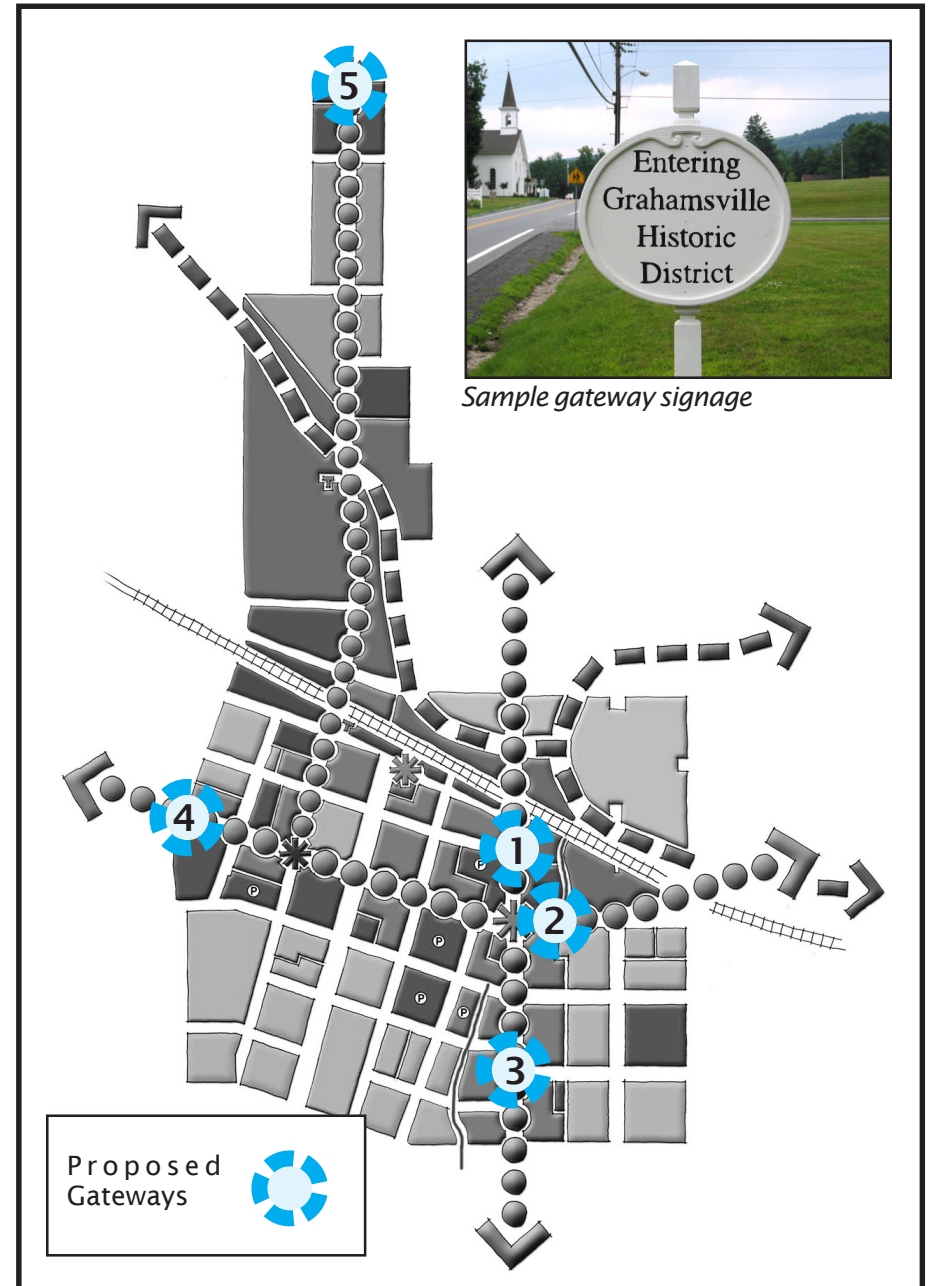
Locations

Gateway treatments should only be located on the major corridors leading to the subject area and at locations where the development typology becomes visually distinct and is in keeping with the subject area. In the case of a historic downtown, such areas are typically at the point where urban development patterns begin. Below are the recommended gateway locations for this study area:

- 1) North Downtown Gateway: Located on Arkansas at B Street, this gateway will be greatly enhanced if the proposed parking garage and corner annex building to the Courthouse are constructed.
- 2) East Downtown Gateway: Located on Main just east of Arkansas, this gateway would occur where the area becomes urban. The proposed Ozark Interpretive Center would reinforce this gateway.
- 3) South Downtown Gateway: Located on Arkansas at 3rd Street, this gateway would be enhanced if the new library were located here.
- 4) West Downtown Gateway: Located on Main at Glenwood, the U.S. Forest Service building substantially reinforces this gateway.
- 5) ATU South Gateway: See page 86 regarding the ATU treatment.

Design

Gateway designs can include a variety of elements, including signage, sculpture, archways, landscaping, flags, banners, lighting, and similar features. Unless the design concept is strongly tied to an overall branding strategy and downtown “identity,” gateway designs can often be relatively arbitrary. Consequently, it is recommended that either consultants be hired to determine the gateway treatments or a public design competition be hosted to make the selection.





VI. NON-DESIGN
ISSUES

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET POTENTIALS

The potential market for retail, dining, entertainment and personal services was determined for Downtown Russellville, based on a basic retail market analysis. In addition, opportunities for development of other uses, such as office, housing, and lodging were identified but not tested for the downtown area. Based on these assessments, recommendations are made with respect to a logical “mix” of businesses that might be recruited or otherwise attracted to the downtown area under the right circumstances. Strategies for achieving this mix are described in Section 3 of this report.

MARKET SOURCES: WHO IS THE MARKET?

Downtowns, because they are geographically and traditionally the trading center of a broad region, draw from a diversified market base.

The General Community

Downtown Russellville draws from a Retail Market Area that includes households located not only the city of Russellville and Pope County, but also in Yell, Johnson, and Logan counties. Russellville can also potentially draw consumer base from other parts of the region, including Conway and Newton counties, for example. This broad

destination Trade Area market base has a total of about 62,000 households.

Given its size relative to the other market segments listed above, this market segment often brings the greatest pay-off, but can be the toughest to attract. Downtown employees and residents are already a captive market, tourists have disposable time and money that makes them strong candidates for downtown shopping and dining, and students are easy to target through direct marketing vehicles. Although, the broader community can be more difficult to attract, the sheer numbers can reap huge benefits if successfully achieved. The potential pool of Russellville’s “destination shoppers” and diners can be tremendous, so capturing even a small percentage can benefit the Downtown substantially. The same principle applies to the housing market, and the potential residential market should be viewed in broad terms with respect to various demographic segments.

Students

Between 1997 and 2010, enrollment at Arkansas Tech increased by 131 percent. The university marked its twelfth consecutive record enrollment in the fall of 2010, and enrollment now exceeds 10,000 students. The university also has hundreds of employ-

ees to add to that market potential.

It must be recognized that many of the students will purchase goods and services on campus and that undergraduate students often have limited disposable income. Still, the university’s students (as well as faculty and staff) represent a substantial, largely untapped market for niche downtown products, restaurants, and services.

Despite ATU’s growth, downtown has seen only limited benefits from the university market over the years, primarily because a lack of businesses and activities that will draw them. With respect to dining and entertainment, students are often looking for interesting and hip places to hang out, and many prefer a unique urban environment to the atmosphere of the suburbs. They are also easy to target for advertising via school newspapers, radio stations, and social media, and their student identification cards lend themselves to targeted discounts and specials. College students are not only an important retail market segment for some downtowns, but they are a significant housing market as well, as has been proposed for the El Paso Avenue corridor.

Downtown Employees

For downtowns like Russellville’s that lack many residents, downtown employees can

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET POTENTIALS (continued)

be the most significant market segment for consuming goods and services. In the case of downtowns in which the majority of restaurants only keep breakfast and lunch hours, employees are likely the market focus. Fortunately, that is not the case here, as Downtown Russellville has many restaurants with evening hours.

Nevertheless, the estimated 1,500 people who work in or near the downtown area are an important source of downtown retail expenditures. Downtown-area workers, such as employees at the courthouse, lawyers, church staff, merchants, corporate staff and others, represent a “captured” market in particular for lunch-time expenditures on retail and personal services.

Tourists

The benefits offered by tourists to a downtown are typically dependent upon the downtown’s volume of, and/or proximity to, tourist attractions, as well as the drawing power of those attractions. In general, downtowns that can successfully attract their local market will also attract tourists, but downtowns that focus primarily on tourists are often limited primarily to tourists. As indicated previously in this plan,

the nearby national forests are currently drawing approximately 2 million visitors a year, and fishing tournaments at Lake Dardanelle have experienced robust growth in recent years. This plan’s proposed Ozark Interpretive Center (see pages 70-71, 101-102) could help draw these tourists to the Downtown. Downtown Russellville, being well-situated to become the “crossroads” of the Ozark mountains and forests, has the

opportunity to tap into this market.

Downtown Residents

This market segment applies not only to people living in the downtown, but also residents of neighborhoods directly adjacent to the downtown. Regrettably, few residents actually live in Downtown Russellville. However, a primary goal should be to retain the few that exist and to attract new residents, as downtown residents typically spend three to four times as much money downtown as do downtown employees.

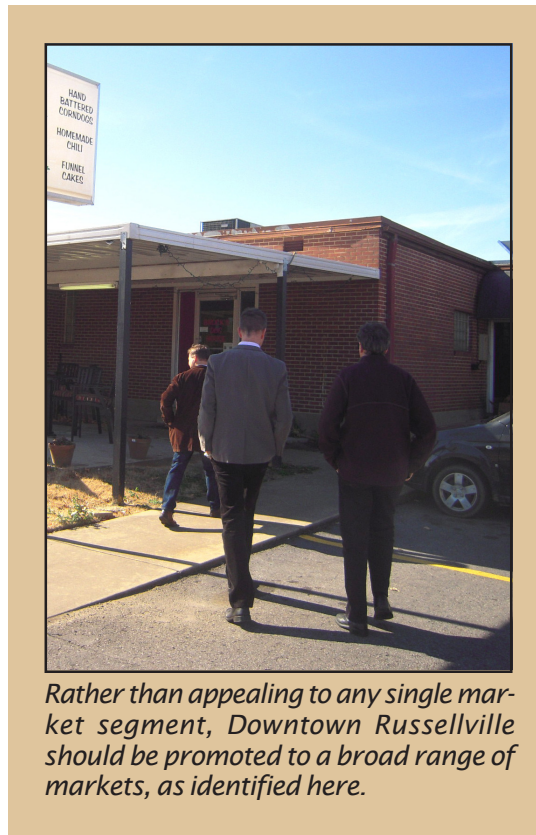
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS & FORECASTS

The household trade area will generate the largest share of sales for Downtown Russellville. As such, demographic changes can impact on the overall market potentials.

Demographic Trends

Overall, the trade area has seen growth in population and household base since 1990, as detailed in the Appendix. Within Russellville, the population increased by almost 7,400 or 34.2% to a total of nearly 30,000 over the 22-year period. The city’s household base saw a similar rate of growth, to a total of about 11,000.

The remainder of Pope County saw slightly slower population growth (32.8%), but much



Rather than appealing to any single market segment, Downtown Russellville should be promoted to a broad range of markets, as identified here.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET POTENTIALS (continued)

faster household growth (40.9%) as average household size fell in those areas. The county (outside of Russellville) has about 33,000 people and 12,000 households. Yell and Newton counties saw somewhat slower growth, especially when compared with Johnson and Logan counties. Despite its

growth as a large commercial hub, Conway County had relatively slower population and household growth since 1990 when compared with Russellville and Pope County.

Despite the growth in population and household base, trade area incomes have generally fallen since 2000, after accounting for inflation. Russellville has an average

household income of approximately \$48,400, which is 24.8% lower than it was in 1990 (after accounting for inflation). The city has seen steadily declining incomes over the 22-year period, perhaps as the student population has increased along with more lower-paid production and service-oriented

employment. A similar trend in household incomes has occurred in other parts of Pope County. By comparison, household incomes have actually increased in real terms in Yell, Newton and Conway counties. Newton County's incomes had increased by almost 78% during the 22-year period. Most of the region's income growth mirrored national trends, with substantial real growth during the 1990s, followed by stagnation and decline since 2000 (and particularly during the two recessions that occurred over the past 12 years).

Demographic Forecasts

Population and household growth are expected to continue throughout much of the greater Downtown Russellville trade area. Russellville itself is expected to add about 1,800 residents by 2017, yielding a growth rate of 6.4%. This growth also includes the addition of 670 households. Additional growth is also expected in the remainder of Pope County, with the addition of about 700 residents and 400 households by 2017. Slightly faster growth is expected in Yell, Johnson and Conway counties. Meanwhile, several counties including Logan and Newton may see declining population and household base over the next few years. Modest income growth is expected as the region slowly pulls out of recession.

Table A1. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, RETAIL TRADE AREA, DOWNTOWN RUSSELLVILLE, 1990-2012					
Factor	1990	2000	2012	1990-2012 Change	
				Number	Percent
Russellville					
Population	21,401	23,682	28,728	7,327	34.2%
Households	8,075	9,241	10,853	2,778	34.4%
HH Income	\$ 64,400	\$ 53,512	\$ 48,431	\$ (15,969)	-24.8%
Pope					
Population	24,482	30,787	32,519	8,037	32.8%
Households	8,753	11,460	12,335	3,582	40.9%
HH Income	\$ 61,757	\$ 54,366	\$ 48,601	\$ (13,157)	-21.3%
Yell					
Population	17,759	21,139	22,911	5,152	29.0%
Households	6,907	7,922	8,470	1,563	22.6%
HH Income	\$ 42,521	\$ 53,158	\$ 44,476	\$ 1,955	4.6%
Johnson					
Population	18,221	22,781	25,343	7,122	39.1%
Households	7,059	8,738	9,634	2,575	36.5%
HH Income	\$ 40,971	\$ 37,034	\$ 40,562	\$ (409)	-1.0%
Note:	Income expressed in constant 2010 dollars.				
Sources:	Claritas, Inc. and Randall Gross / Development Economics.				

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET POTENTIALS (continued)

Table A3. DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS, RETAIL TRADE AREA, DOWNTOWN RUSSELLVILLE, 2012-2017				
Factor	2012	2017	2012-2017 Change	
			Number	Percent
<u>Russellville</u>				
Population	28,728	30,570	1,842	6.4%
Households	10,853	11,520	667	6.1%
HH Income	\$ 48,431	\$ 48,930	\$ 499	1.0%
<u>Pope</u>				
Population	32,519	33,215	696	2.1%
Households	12,335	12,696	361	2.9%
HH Income	\$ 48,601	\$ 49,668	\$ 1,067	2.2%
<u>Yell</u>				
Population	22,911	23,665	754	3.3%
Households	8,470	8,726	256	3.0%
HH Income	\$ 44,476	\$ 45,480	\$ 1,004	2.3%
<u>Johnson</u>				
Population	25,343	26,236	893	3.5%
Households	9,634	9,952	318	3.3%
HH Income	\$ 40,562	\$ 41,214	\$ 652	1.6%
<u>Logan</u>				
Population	22,259	21,904	(355)	-1.6%
Households	8,759	8,653	(106)	-1.2%
HH Income	\$ 40,562	\$ 48,434	\$ 7,872	19.4%
Note:	Income expressed in constant 2007 dollars.			
Sources:	Claritas, Inc. & Randall Gross / Development Econ.			

Within Russellville, household incomes are expected to increase by just about 1.0% over the next five years, while incomes in the county will increase by 2.2% overall. Again, these data are summarized in the Appendix tables.

Retail Potential

Based on the demographic forecasts, coupled with data on expenditures by type of good, the total retail expenditure potentials for the trade area were forecasted through 2017. Additional expenditures for students, downtown workers, and tourists, were also calcu-

lated. Of course, Downtown Russellville must compete not only with other shopping areas in town but also with other retail nodes in the county and the region and with tourist expenditures captured elsewhere. Conway has established itself as a major retail/commercial node and competitor to Russellville, particularly for destination goods and restaurants, partly because of the availability of liquor licensing to restaurants in that area. Based on a competitive analysis, the amount of retail space supportable within Downtown Russellville was forecasted.

Based on this analysis, it was determined that there will be gross demand for about 343,300 square feet of retail space within the Downtown Russellville area within the next five years or so. However, there is already 165,800 square feet of existing retail use within the downtown area. Once that existing space is netted out, there is "warranted" demand for about 177,500 square feet of additional retail, restaurants, entertainment, and personal services use.

There is net demand for about 44,800 square feet of convenience goods space, including about 22,700 square feet for a grocery store. There is also potential for up to 77,500 square feet of shoppers' goods uses

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET POTENTIALS (continued)

Table 1. SUMMARY WARRANTED RETAIL DEMAND BY USE				
DOWNTOWN RUSSELLVILLE, 2012 AND 2017				
Type of Good	Gross Demand (SF)		Existing Uses	Warranted Demand
	2012	2017		
Convenience	43,051	58,547	13,716	44,831
Shoppers Goods	131,887	180,206	102,665	77,541
Eating/Drinking	24,255	41,629	12,500	29,129
Entertainment	18,278	28,499	-	28,499
Personal Services	23,710	34,411	36,958	(2,547)
TOTAL	241,181	343,293	165,839	177,454
<i>Existing Vacant</i>			<i>48,606</i>	
<i>Net New</i>				<i>128,848</i>
Source:	Randall Gross / Development Economics.			

uses, including about 39,000 square feet in “general merchandise” stores (which can range from dollar stores to department stores), 9,200 square feet in apparel and accessory stores, and 5,000 square feet in gift and novelty stores, among others. Demand for the general merchandise store assumes that a large chain store will not locate on West Main Street within the next five years. Otherwise, there would be competition to downtown and this demand will evaporate.

In addition, there is potential for another 29,100 square feet in dining establishments, and 28,500 square feet in entertainment venues. However, it should be noted that demand for restaurants is largely dependent on the assumption that liquor licenses would be available to full-service restaurants in the downtown area. Without the availability of such licenses, demand would remain suppressed and Russellville would continue to experience leakage to other counties in Arkansas. Finally, the market

analysis suggests that there is a slight over-supply of personal services establishments (such as barber shops), at least through the next five years. Findings for each of the specific retail categories are summarized in table on the following page.

These findings are based on assumptions relating to improvements and enhancements in the other physical conditions and urban design context in the downtown area. Assumptions were also made with respect to the availability and rehabilitation of buildings, and the overall marketing and promotion of downtown as a destination for the regional trade area, students, and tourism markets. There is clearly latent market support that is not being fulfilled at present in Downtown Russellville. Constraints are partly superficial, in terms of a lack of destination marketing and design improvements, but there are also substantive issues with the financing of rehabilitation, the availability of liquor licenses, and recruitment of businesses to locate downtown. These constraints must be addressed in order to start to realize the market potentials for downtown. Strategies for addressing these issues are discussed later in this plan.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET POTENTIALS (continued)

Other Opportunities

In addition to retail, restaurants (eating & drinking), entertainment and personal services, there are opportunities for other uses. Based on site reconnaissance, existing market conditions, and experience, the downtown area can expect to accommodate demand for an additional 20 to 30 residential units beyond what is already there. There is likely to be additional demand for up to 200 units of housing within the El Paso Corridor, which extends from Downtown to Arkansas Tech. Certainly a pro-active approach taken by the university could help leverage some of this housing opportunity, coupled with improvements to El Paso to establish an attractive walking/bicycling corridor between Downtown and the campus.

There may also be opportunities for lodging in the downtown area, possibly oriented to the university in the El Paso Corridor. There is limited accommodation downtown at present, but demand for lodging (and housing) can be leveraged through an improved physical environment, as well as through the addition of dining establishments in the downtown area.

**Warranted
Retail
Demand by
Use
Downtown
Russellville -
2012 & 2017**

Type of Good	Gross Demand (Sq Ft)		Existing Uses	Warranted Demand
	2012	2017		
Convenience				
Grocery	16,112	22,678	-	22,678
Convenience	2,922	3,867	-	3,867
Specialty Food	5,364	6,907	2,300	4,607
Health/Pers Care	9,228	12,400	4,928	7,472
Gas/Convenience	4,848	6,398	1,684	4,714
Misc Conv	4,576	6,298	4,804	1,494
Sub-Total	43,051	58,547	13,716	44,832
Shoppers Goods				
Apparel	12,585	16,650	7,393	9,258
Accessories	1,052	1,198	-	1,198
Jewelry	5,003	6,592	5,680	912
Shoes	1,491	1,797	-	1,797
Furniture	16,630	22,763	23,600	(837)
Home Furnishings	5,319	7,354	3,100	4,254
Appliances	11,195	15,987	16,666	(680)
Hardware/Bldg/Home	13,620	19,196	16,579	2,618
Garden Supply	1,062	1,455	-	1,455
Gen Mdse/Dept	28,084	39,086	-	39,086
Auto Dealers	-	-	-	-
Auto Supply	4,173	5,610	5,174	436
Electronics/Comp	2,633	3,665	2,300	1,365
Books/Music	3,038	3,829	-	3,829
Camera/Photo	440	545	-	545
Gift, Novelty, Svr	4,106	5,460	350	5,110
Hobby/Toy/Game	3,355	4,417	1,200	3,217
Luggage/Leather	270	344	-	344
Office/Stationary	6,565	9,423	8,560	863
Sewing/Piece	1,603	2,183	1,125	1,058
Sporting Goods	9,663	12,651	10,939	1,712
Sub-Total	131,887	180,206	102,665	77,540
Dining & Entertainment				
Restaurant-FF	6,912	9,294	2,100	7,194
Restaurant-FS	11,387	24,535	10,400	14,135
Drinking Estabshmt	5,956	7,800	-	7,800
Entertainment	18,278	28,499	-	28,499
Sub-Total	42,533	70,129	12,500	57,629
Personal Services				
	23,710	34,411	36,958	(2,547)
TOTAL	241,181	343,293	165,839	177,454
<i>Existing Vacant</i>			<i>48,606</i>	
Net New Space				128,848

Source:
Randall Gross /
Development
Economics

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

OPTIMAL MIX OF USES

Recommended Business Mix

Based on the findings of the retail market analysis and the review of other opportunities, a “business mix” is recommended that helps provide context and a framework for marketing, branding, and overall development in the downtown area. In general, these additional or expanded businesses would build on existing strengths and would help cultivate target markets for downtown businesses.

The recommended mix is disaggregated by “anchor” uses and other key downtown uses. In addition, to the market-based uses, there are also recommendations for civic and other types of anchors and uses that would help strengthen the overall mix.

Summary

This market assessment has forecasted potential for about 100,000 to 130,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, entertainment, and personal service space in the Russellville downtown area. However,

there are a number of assumptions underpinning the ability for downtown to capture this potential within the next five years. First, there is the assumption that there would be liquor licensing options available so that restaurants could be recruited to locate downtown as a key component of destination marketing. Second, there is the assumption that a major new general merchandise store will not locate on West Main (outside of downtown) as is purported to be planned. Third, there is the basic assumption that there would be improvements to the urban design framework in the downtown area to enhance the overall physical appearance and visibility of the district. In addition, there is the assumption that there would be proactive destination marketing, regional tourism development, and a recruitment strategy to attract businesses downtown to fill vacant spaces. Finally, there is the assumption that the university would play an active role in promoting housing development in the El Paso Corridor coupled with investment in university-related anchor facilities downtown to help leverage the market.

A recommended mix of uses in the downtown area would see the addition of a regional specialty food store, an Ozark

Recommended Anchors:

General Merchandise (if chain does not locate on West Main)	35,000 sq. ft.
Regional Specialty Food Market (destination)	20,000
Full-Service Restaurants (only if liquor sales are allowed)	14,000
Live Music/Family Entertainment or Cultural Venue	20,000
ATU Continuing Education / Prof. Development Center	21,900
New Pope County Library	28,700

Recommended Other Key Uses:

Ozark / Forest Interpretation Center & Park	3,500 sq. ft.
Ozark Mountain Gear (Re-Merchandised)	4,000
Regional Art/Home Furnishings Gallery	2,500
Clothing/Accessory (ATU) and Shoe Shop(s)	7,500
Ozark Music & Books	3,200
Electronics/Camera	1,000
Toys & Children’s Clothing	3,000
Pope County Rail Heritage Museum & Shop (Depot)	3,000

Housing: Downtown Apartments (30 units) + El Paso Corridor (<200 units)

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

OPTIMAL MIX OF USES (continued)

mountain/forest interpretation center, an ATU continuing education center, full-service restaurants, and a live music or cultural and family entertainment center. Regional art and music, along with recreational outfitting and a larger railroad museum, would be integrated and expanded within the downtown business mix as part of the regional destination and tourism marketing strategy. Toys, clothes and a university-themed shop would help broaden the existing market base. Overall, the expanded business mix can help downtown capture existing and potential untapped regional, student, and tourism markets.



This plan's recommended tenant mix is critical to Russellville's future business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts for Downtown.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET & DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

This section provides a summary of marketing themes and development concepts created based on the findings of the market and opportunities assessments and resulting from the recommendations for developing the business mix. As noted previously, a key objective is to establish more of a destination draw for Downtown Russellville, in order to capture a larger share of the regional market base, tourism flow, and student expenditures. The broad marketing themes relate to developing downtown's railroad heritage, strengthening downtown's role as a "college town" hub, and establishing Downtown Russellville as the "Crossroads of the Ozarks." In addition, there are two primary development concepts that are mutually-supportive: one is the development of an Ozark Interpretation Center near the intersection of Main and Hwy. 7, while the other is the development of a family entertainment or cultural center to attract more locals downtown.

MARKETING THEMES & BRANDING

Railroad Heritage

Russellville has a strong railroad heritage, especially given the role that railroads

played in the city's early development and in establishing its role as the County Seat. Rehabilitation of the city's Railroad Depot was a major accomplishment for which the city and key stakeholders should be proud. The Depot serves as a tourism office and provides much-needed downtown space for meetings. There is also a small railroad history museum in a portion of the depot plus gift sales. There are opportunities to expand the interpretive component of the museum to ensure that the facility becomes more of a destination attraction. Meeting space might be better accommodated in a cultural venue that could have dedicated space for this purpose. A nearby restaurant also carries a railroad theme, with rail passenger cars parked on site and incorporated into the dining experience. The restaurant offers a model train operating during meal times. In addition, there are opportunities for more rail-themed events and activities that focus on rail heritage in the downtown area and that build destination potential.

College Town

Russellville is home to Arkansas Tech University (ATU) and there are opportunities to build on the city's role to create more of a "college town" feel to downtown and the El Paso Corridor. Working with ATU to establish a continuing education and/or

professional development center downtown would help anchor the college town environment and branding. Recommendations were also provided for the business mix to include an ATU-themed shop that would sell ATU clothing and merchandise and that would target not only ATU students and staff but also alumni, visiting parents, and tourists. The new County Library will also add to the academic feel and college town environment. Finally, moderately-priced restaurants and entertainment venues will help attract college students into the downtown area. There is already a gaming store that attracts mainly college students and staff to the



Arkansas Tech University not only constitutes an important market to support Downtown and the El Paso corridor, but it can also lend its image for branding purposes.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET & DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS (continued)

downtown area, there are opportunities to build on this activity.

Ozarks Crossroads

Finally, Downtown Russellville can be branded as the “Crossroads of the Ozarks” to help build regional and national name recognition. While cities in Missouri such as Branson and Lake of the Ozarks have been successful at attracting tourists with recreation and entertainment activity, there are few examples of Arkansas cities taking advantage of the massive tourism flow of two million visitors to the area’s national forests. There is a National Forest Service office in Downtown Russellville which has recently been rehabilitated, but there is little interpretation or museum-quality exhibition in this office building. Also, a new building at ATU may include a Center for Ozark-Ouachita Studies room, so a partnership there may be possible. Given the fact that the city has a large number of recreation-oriented retailers not only near downtown but also in outlying areas, there is the opportunity to market the city as a hub for recreation merchandise, to attract at least one of these merchants into larger space downtown, and to develop visitor interpretation facilities, bikeways, music

venues, recreation themed events and other activities that strengthen the city’s appeal to these tourists. The Ozarks have national name recognition, so tying Downtown’s brand to the Ozarks can help strengthen its overall exposure in the market.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

As noted previously, several anchor development concepts have been proposed that build on market findings and strengthen destination branding and marketing strategies. These concepts are addressed below and on the following page.

OZARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER

One key purpose of the Ozark/Forest Interpretive Center is to help attract and capture tourism along Route 7, which links the northern and southern branches of the Ozark National Forest system in Arkansas. Furthermore, locating the center at or near the foot of Main Street would help extend downtown into Route 7 and integrate pedestrian activities on Route 7 with the Main Street downtown node.

The concept for the Center would be an open-air or partially-enclosed facility of perhaps 3,500 square feet that would provide passive interpretation of the Ozark Mountain range and the region’s forests. The center would also include an outdoor park area that could incorporate floodplain areas that are not otherwise recommended for development. National Forest Service staff members are supportive of the concept, so long as there is no requirement for significant additional personnel, due to budgetary constraints. See pages 70-71 for more information on this facility’s physical facets.

There are excellent examples of comparable forest interpretation facilities, some of which are located in urban areas although most are located near or within the forests themselves. Among the comparables are the following national forests:

- **Lewis & Clark** - Located in Great Falls, Montana, this facility includes permanent exhibits plus a 158-seat theater, education facilities and a gift shop.
- **Wilkerson Pass** - This facility is located in Lake George, Colorado and includes indoor and outdoor exhibits.
- **Others** - Other relevant facilities include interpretation centers at Great Trinity Forest (located in Dallas), Cedar Bog (Ohio), Tillamook (Oregon), and Nest House (located in Arkansas).

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKET & DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS (continued)

OZARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER (continued)

Potential State Participation

This project may offer an opportunity for collaboration between the National Forest Service (NFS) and the State. Arkansas currently has a 1/8 cent sales tax that is dedicated to environmental conservation. It has been primarily utilized as auxiliary funding for state parks and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC). They have already built a few interpretive centers around the state with these funds. While there is already a State-operated Ozark-themed center (the Ozark Folk Center), it focuses more on the region's culture rather than the natural environment. Similarly, the AGFC-operated Witt Stephens, Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center is located on the Arkansas River near Downtown Little Rock. While this center focuses on the natural environment, it does so within a more urban setting than a center in Russellville might offer. Another potential model is the AGFC-operated Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center in Fort Smith.

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CONCEPT

The Family Entertainment Concept builds on the tourism component of the Ozark Interpretive Center while also appealing to the local and regional market base and students at ATU. This concept would include the following elements:

Family Entertainment Center. Family entertainment centers, which can range from small businesses to giant chains like Dave & Busters, often include games, bowling, and restaurants.

Live Music Venue(s). As noted in the market findings, there is potential for live music venues in the downtown area, especially where such venues can appeal to ATU and other college students.

Performance Space. A cultural or performance venue could be an important destination for local and regional markets as well as for tourists and other visitors.

Dining: Dining options supported in the market (so long as there is licensing for alcohol) would include:

- *Full-Service Restaurants* - including regional specialties (which can appeal to the tourism market), steakhouses with al fresco dining, international/ethnic foods that would appeal to the students including the many international students, other college-oriented dining, and a coffeehouse. A coffeehouse could be ideally located between downtown and the campus along the El Paso Corridor.
- *Brewpub / Sports Pub* - which would obviously appeal to students, but also to adults and tourists throughout the region.



VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The market forecasts are predicated, in part, on the assumption that an environment would be created for downtown to capture its full potential. This “environment” includes not only physical features but also pro-active marketing and business recruitment strategies that build on the efforts of existing marketing organizations. The overall strategy for business development focuses on a pro-active effort to recruit businesses to the downtown area, in order to establish a destination business mix that would help draw from various markets. Dining and entertainment are keys to this strategy, but there is also an overall focus on tourism development and capturing a portion of the two-million strong Ozark regional tourism market. Merchandising strategies for individual businesses would also flow from this approach.

BUSINESS EXPANSION AND RECRUITMENT

Business expansion and recruitment efforts draw on the findings of the market analysis, which identified an optimal market mix that captures the potential market. The primary elements of the business recruitment effort include a focus on recruiting anchors at important locations, developing recruitment and marketing materials, and assisting existing businesses with re-merchandising to

meet market demand.

Anchors

Several anchor uses have been identified as development concepts for downtown, including an Ozark Forest Interpretive Center and a Family Entertainment or Cultural Center. Those venues, coupled with public facilities including the planned new County Library and the concept of an ATU continuing education or professional development center, can help create synergies as “drivers” for destination marketing of Downtown Russellville.

The feasibility of each of these anchors should be thoroughly tested to maximize the opportunities for their development. Other public facility projects, such as the proposed new convention center that has been discussed in the past, should also be examined. A cultural venue could be publicly-sponsored or developed as a private entertainment venue. Pope County should be engaged to work with the City on a Pope County Rail Heritage Museum or a county museum that focuses on rail heritage at the Depot.

As public facilities, the focus would be less on “recruitment” per se and more on coordination and collaboration between the appropriate public entities to vet the pro-

jects and examine opportunities for them to be located in the downtown area. A tourist attraction, such as the Ozark Interpretation Center, would be best situated at or near the critical intersection of Highway 7 and Main Street, since this is a prime opportunity to leverage tourist traffic and circulate tourists onto Main Street and into the downtown. This intersection affords visibility and exposure for downtown. Civic facilities such as a library serve a more localized public purpose and it is less critical for them to be located on Highway 7. Such facilities can anchor downtown to the west or at its heart on Main Street.

Key Businesses to Recruit

In addition to public anchors, there are also key businesses for which a pro-active recruitment process needs to be engaged. The types of businesses to recruit are identified as part of the recommended business mix, but key elements include the following:

- ATU merchandise store
- Full-service restaurants (only if liquor sales are permitted)
- Ozark music/books/gifts store(s)
- Toys (possibly hand-made/craft) and children’s clothing
- Regional art and home furnishings gallery

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

- An excellent model is Appalachian Spring, a successful art & home furnishings specialty store on the east coast that focuses on high-quality Appalachian craft.
- Live music venue(s)
- General merchandise store (unless one locates further onto West Main)
- Regional food market (which may consist of a single store or of a public market with multiple vendors)
- Electronics and/or camera store

Recruitment Approach

Recruitment would be implemented through several policy directives and actions. An incentive package should be developed that includes, for example, a special downtown district for restaurants that would receive collective or fast-track approval for liquor licensing. There could also be other financial or fiscal incentives such as low-interest building rehabilitation loans and loan guarantees, property tax abatements, and/or rental and technical assistance.

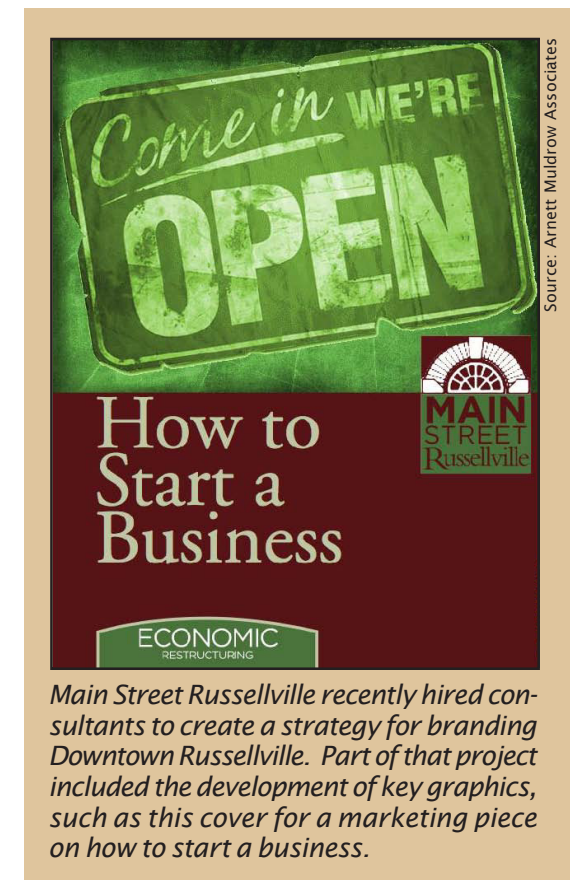
Main Street Russellville and the Chamber of Commerce should have responsibility for pro-active business recruitment efforts. These efforts must be monitored, benchmarked, and evaluated on a regular

basis to ensure that they are meeting expectations. Recruitment efforts would begin with a thorough understanding of the market findings and recommendations, followed by identification of specific target tenants or local entrepreneurs to operate the downtown businesses. Recruitment materials, including market findings, would be packaged and distributed through in-person or conference call meetings with prospective tenants and/or developers who would help recruit the appropriate tenants to infill or rehabilitation projects in coordination with property owners. Pro-active outreach to prospective tenants would focus not only in the local market but also regionally and nationwide.

Materials

As noted above, recruitment materials would be packaged to include the key market findings relevant to the target tenants, along with building information and the package of business incentives. However, the marketing materials should not be sent alone to fulfill the need for recruitment. Rather, outreach should be conducted to the prospective tenants through in-person or conference call meetings, or through a consultant who can detail the market findings and gather the appropriate information on tenant require-

ments. By collecting information in this manner, the approach for offering incentives or other assistance can be refined to meet the needs of specific target tenants.



Main Street Russellville recently hired consultants to create a strategy for branding Downtown Russellville. Part of that project included the development of key graphics, such as this cover for a marketing piece on how to start a business.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Existing Businesses

There is also the need to recruit existing businesses for expansion in the downtown area. One key target would be Ozark Mountain Gear, which is already located in the area but could help strengthen the overall tourism concept if relocated and expanded near the proposed Ozark Forest Interpretive Center. Ozark Mountain Gear (OMG) specializes in bicycles and off-road gear which is a perfect “fit” for merchandising related to the interpretation center. If willing, other downtown area sporting goods stores might also help strengthen the concept and add value for attracting tourism. There are good examples of sports & recreation gear suppliers in college towns and recreation hubs throughout the country.

The City might consider providing (contracting) technical assistance to these and other downtown businesses to enhance merchandising strategies and enliven the downtown business mix with more youth-oriented merchandise.

DEVELOPMENT & FINANCING

Critical to attracting and retaining downtown businesses is to focus attention on specific buildings and sites and to enable rehabilitation and development. Several recommendations are provided below for financing and development within the downtown area.

Targeted Blocks

There is a need to target specific blocks, sites and buildings for rehabilitation and development. As noted earlier, anchor sites at Highway 7 and Main Street are critical for increasing exposure, changing perceptions of the downtown area, capturing pass-through traffic, and creating destination draw with anchor tourism projects. For other buildings within the downtown core, the following is recommended:

Detailed Building Assessment

Conduct a detailed assessment of physical conditions in the downtown area with a focus on the architectural, heritage, and structural integrity of each building. The assessment should identify targeted, high-priority and well-located buildings for rehabilitation and should determine the types and scale of costs required for rehabilitation.

Public Facility Anchors & Public Ownership

As noted previously in this plan, there is a need to identify public facilities and venues that can act as anchors for revitalization, and examine opportunities to use or secure public ownership of sites and buildings for this purpose. Such facilities include:

- Ozark Forest Interpretive Center and Park
- County Library
- ATU Professional Development / Continuing Education Center
- Cultural Center, and others

Key Redevelopment Potential

Focus on buildings with a high level of exposure and rehabilitation potential, such as 315-319 West Main. Such buildings should have high exposure, good “bones” (structural soundness and architectural heritage), willing owners and tenants, or otherwise there is the opportunity to focus on vacant sites for infill development.

Developer Recruitment

Once key sites, buildings and projects have been identified, the City can embark on an RFP (request for proposal) process to recruit a developer partner who will work with the City and/or private property owners in a public-private partnership for development. The advantage of this process is that it allows the City and private

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

owners to work collaboratively to attract developers with experience in rehabilitating historic buildings, working in smaller cities, and packaging projects for business recruitment. While local developers should be given priority, regional developers may bring contacts for attracting and recruiting new tenants, and also bring access to financing and economies of scale that local builders may not have.

Other Incentives

In addition to building rehabilitation financing, there are other types of incentives that local government can utilize to help leverage revitalization and attract business to the downtown area. Importantly, such incentives are most useful when packaged and restricted for use in the downtown area specifically.

Recruitment / Assembly

The City of Russellville, in coordination with Main Street Russellville, can offer facilitation services to assist property owners and developers with assembly of properties and with developer and/or business recruitment. Such facilitation services provide an alternative to direct municipal government involvement in property

assembly, offering instead a voluntary approach to assistance leveraged by the package of incentives. A “carrot and stick” approach is often effective, by combining financing and other incentives with regulatory mechanisms such as strict enforcement of design guidelines. Such approaches help encourage private property owners to participate in broader projects such as will be required for site assembly to accommodate the Ozark Forest Interpretive Center or rehabilitation of a full block of buildings to attract destination tenants and upper-floor housing. The City would also provide technical assistance and can collaborate with property owners through an RFP process, as noted earlier.

Business Incentives

In addition to the loan guarantees mentioned earlier, there are also other types of business assistance and incentives that local governments can provide to leverage business development. For example, the City can establish an equipment loan program that focuses on providing loan financing for equipment, or purchasing programs that utilize the City’s contracts to purchase equipment and supplies at lower prices for downtown businesses. Main Street Arkansas also provides a variety of incentives for businesses in the state.

Summary

While there is market potential for over 100,000 square feet of retail, entertainment, personal services, and restaurants in the downtown area, this potential would be difficult to realize without pro-active building rehabilitation and business recruitment. Local building owners have difficulty obtaining financing for rehabilitation and some local developers are less committed to downtown than to suburban, interstate-accessible sites. Meanwhile, the lack of destination exposure and appeal creates roadblocks for Main Street in marketing Downtown Russellville for new businesses. Thus, the strategies focus on leveraging downtown’s historic assets through public-private partnerships for financing and development. The City has a pro-active role to play by: 1) collaborating with banks to establish loan pools and guarantees for downtown rehabilitation; 2) collaborating with property owners to secure financing and recruit regional developers with experience in rehabilitation and recruitment; and 3) working with Main Street, the County, the National Forest Service, and other partners to secure public facilities and pro-actively recruit target businesses.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

STRATEGY FOR VACANT & DETERIORATING BUILDINGS

Several factors have converged to reduce the quality of downtown building stock. First, the shift in commercial development towards Interstate-accessible and suburban locations has long impacted the economic viability of Downtown Russellville. Businesses closed due to competition or relocated out of downtown to more suburban locations. As market demand was diminished, downtown rents fell and the ability of landlords to maintain buildings in good condition was reduced. Today, full buildings or upper floors sit vacant in part because of a lack of financing to rehabilitate and maintain the buildings, but also because the rents that can be achieved in these buildings as they are would not be sufficient to support their rehabilitation costs.

There is a need to halt the downward spiral in building conditions and to ensure that these important heritage resources are rehabilitated as assets for marketing the downtown area, since historic resources are among the qualities that make downtown unique and set it apart from suburban locations as a potential destination. By rehabilitating the buildings and then, proactively recruiting new businesses and anchor functions, downtown can re-create

itself to become a regional destination and center for dining, culture, education, entertainment, shopping, urban living, civic functions, and business development. Key financing mechanisms that the City might help make available to leverage such rehabilitation include the following:

Revolving Loan Fund

The City of Russellville can collaborate with the local banks to establish a revolving loan fund to help finance building rehabilitation projects specifically in the downtown area. Because of the collaboration between the various banks and the City, the interest rate,

or cost of lending, can be written down to make rehabilitation loans more affordable for building owners and prospective redevelopers.

Development Loan Guarantees

Another tool that the City of Russellville can use to leverage rehabilitation would be to provide direct loan guarantees for building rehabilitation and/or infill development. For the past five years, the country has experienced a “credit crunch,” which occurs about every 60 years. Financing is extremely difficult to obtain for business and development projects. As the country

Downtown Russellville has several buildings in serious need of rehabilitation. It is critical that existing hurdles to financing be overcome, which will require both the participation of local banks and the City's intervention.



VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

STRATEGY FOR VACANT & DETERIORATING BUILDINGS (continued)

slowly pulls out of recession, lenders are only starting to ease credit yet still impose substantial requirements on development, such as pre-leasing requirements and high equity positions. Loan Guarantees can help provide building owners and developers a leg up in obtaining financing for redevelopment by reducing risk to lenders and therefore enhancing the credit options available. Because they are guarantees, rather than direct loans, there is also somewhat less risk borne directly by the municipal government for assisting private entities. Loan guarantee programs can also be used for prospective target tenants, such as restaurants, to assist in financing the fitting out of expensive kitchen or other equipment.

Historic Tax Credits

The federal government's Investment Tax Credit for Historic Rehabilitation can be used to help write down the total cost of redevelopment, and can be marketed as part of a downtown financing package with local incentives. This credit, which is available for National Register designated or eligible properties that are rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of the

Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitation and that are income-producing structures, provide a 20 percent tax credit for all rehabilitation costs (so long as those costs exceed the adjusted cost basis). The State of Arkansas provides a similar tax credit at the state level, although it is underutilized (see pages 119-120 under "Funding").

CDBG Grants and Loan Funds

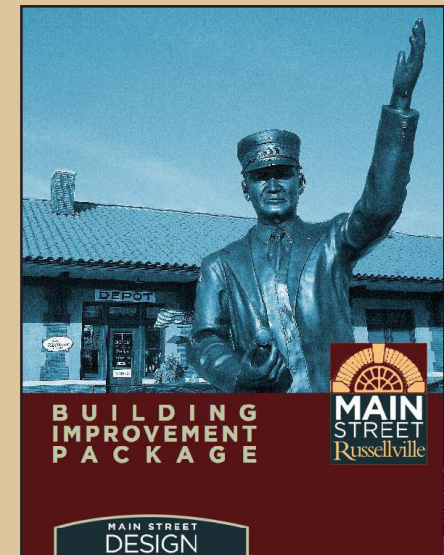
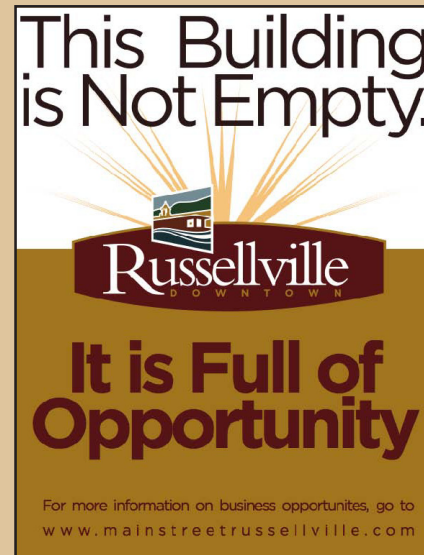
Russellville is not an "entitlement city" receiving federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds directly for local community development projects. How-

ever, the City can still compete for State CDBG funds by packaging and bundling the prospective building rehabilitation projects identified through the various plans and assessments into annual competitive applications.

Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and other government agencies also offer various loan funds for community development, including rehabilitation of vacant and historic buildings, in small towns.

These graphics prepared by the branding consultants hired recently by Main Street Russellville suggest the types of materials that might be created to rehabilitate and market historic buildings.



Source: Arnett Muldrow Associates

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKETING & PROMOTION

While multiple partnering entities are needed to achieve successful revitalization, marketing and promotion activities are a key focus of Main Street Russellville, as well as the City's Tourism/Convention and Visitors Bureau. The following marketing and promotion approaches are proposed for Downtown Russellville.

CENTRALIZED RETAIL MANAGEMENT

Centralized Retail Management (CRM) is the same technique used by thousands of shopping malls across the country in which the retailers are organized to function as a single unit. CRM includes coordinated days and hours of operation, common area maintenance, a tenant location strategy, merchandising, customer service standards, and joint advertising. In a shopping mall, CRM is simple to execute because there is one single owner, and all tenants leasing space must follow the requirements of that owner as part of their lease agreement. In a downtown of multiple property owners and business operators, a high degree of organization and commitment is necessary in order for CRM to succeed. The following strategies are recommended:

Consistent Days and Hours of Operation

One competitive advantage enjoyed by sub-

urban shopping malls is that mall tenants must comply with consistent days and hours of operation, and shoppers are aware of those days and hours of operation. Downtown retailers need to use the same strategy. A challenge for small downtowns such as Russellville's is motivating retailers to maintain extended days and hours of operation beyond merely weekdays and 6:00 p.m. closing hours. Business operators often explain that the low volume of business cannot justify enduring the costs of staying open on weekends and evenings. They are correct because, as long as the market believes that downtown is closed on evenings and weekends, few people will venture downtown for shopping.

Instead, Downtown Russellville's retailers must band together and agree on the specific days and hours of extended operations. A potential starting point is for all businesses to remain open every Friday and Saturday evening, as well as staying open on weekdays until at least 7:00 p.m. to give shoppers a window of opportunity to make purchases after work. Another approach is to target a regularly scheduled special event to extend business hours and then to get the word out through advertising. It may take up to six months of extended days and hours before the mar-

ket catches on, but the long-term rewards for Downtown Russellville may be worthwhile.

Merchandising

Merchandising is the activity of promoting merchandise to potential buyers, including the selection of specific product lines to sell. It is no surprise that retail businesses that eventually fail after years of relative prosperity are often a victim of their operator's lack of "re-merchandising" to keep pace with constantly changing market tastes and demands. While merchandising is an activity that is the responsibility of individual business owners and an organization such as Main Street Russellville can only do so much, the following approaches might be useful:

- *Disseminate educational information* on merchandising available from the State and National Main Street programs.
- *Conduct one or more workshops* with a merchandising expert targeted to retail operators.
- *Hire a retail consultant* to visit individual businesses and offer merchandising suggestions.
- *Sponsor a merchants "field trip"* to visit other successful commercial districts (or even shopping malls) to get ideas.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKETING & PROMOTION (continued)



Merchandising that accurately reflects market demand is important to the future success of Downtown Russellville's retail segment.

Customer Service Standards

Customer service is one topic that many downtown programs across the county have focused on with measurable success. The quality of customer service in Down-

town Russellville varies from store to store, yet it is an area in which a concentrated effort can allow Downtown's businesses to be more competitive. The National Main Street Center advocates the application of "opening day standards" in everyday operations, which simply means applying a keen focus on customer service as if it were the business's first day of operations. As with the issue of merchandising, Main Street Russellville could sponsor workshops with Downtown business operators and employees on how to build strong customer loyalty. Seemingly small gestures, such as knowing the customer's name, keeping their size measurements and preferences on file, and contacting them when a certain product becomes available, can go a long ways in selling Downtown as the most customer-friendly place in Russellville.

ADVERTISING

Because advertising typically comes with a price tag, Main Street Russellville should first exhaust all opportunities for free advertising. While it appears that the organization already has a strong relationship with local media professionals who can be helpful in promoting downtown events and positive news stories, it is important to always keep in mind the need

to continue cultivating those relationships. When newsworthy happenings occur or interesting issues arise in Downtown Russellville, a press release should be sent to the right people. Likewise, if the media comes through by being helpful, the organization's appreciation should be strongly conveyed. While most downtown organizations utilize a variety of approaches to advertising, one particular strategy that should be contemplated for Downtown Russellville is joint advertising.

Joint Advertising

For most downtown programs, electronic forms of media are reserved for key occasions, such as the promotion of special events. Newspaper advertising, on the other hand, is much more achievable and lends itself to the collaboration of multiple businesses through joint advertising. Joint advertising is an effective way for small businesses to leverage their limited marketing funds by joining forces with like-minded downtown businesses. Joint advertising is often employed by businesses sharing some common theme, such as restaurants, clothing stores, and antique stores, and Main Street Russellville would be the obvious entity to spearhead such efforts. It is also an opportunity for Main Street Russellville to use its logo within the

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKETING & PROMOTION (continued)

ads in order to convey the image of a unified commercial entity, much as is done by suburban shopping malls.

Storefront Window Displays

Window displays are one of the most underrated opportunities for downtowns to shine. Storefronts are essentially free advertisements that can run constantly. The five key principles for good storefront window design are quality, simplicity, creativity, illumination, and variation over time. Only the highest-quality merchandise should be used in the display, as quality will attract consumers. Although displays should not be boring, simplicity can be a virtue. Displays that are too cluttered and busy will confuse window shoppers and dampen their interest. Although creativity is easier said than done, efforts at being clever and different will usually pay off because window shoppers will remember creative displays even if they do not enter the store at that particular time. Illumination is another critical factor. Lighting should be carefully directed onto the subjects of the display, but glare should be avoided. Illumination should be maintained 24-hours a day to keep downtown looking lively. Storefront lighting is also an important, but

often overlooked, means of lighting evening streetscapes. In order to maintain interest, displays should be changed a minimum of once every three weeks.



By simply aiming fans at the apparel on mannequins, the resulting movement greatly animates this storefront window display.

Another technique related to window displays that Downtown Russellville's merchants might apply is "cross-marketing." This approach occurs when a window display features the merchandise of another Downtown store as part of their display. For example, a stationary store might display stationary as lying on a desk from a Downtown furniture store. A small sign can be placed on the merchandise from the other store to advertise that business.

Other Forms of Media

Other forms of print and electronic media either already used or potentially employed to promote Downtown Russellville include the following:

Print Media

- Brochures - Either as a series of separate brochures or in combination, the following types of information about Downtown Russellville might be communicated: history and architecture, dining and shopping, parking locations, antiquing, and special events. In addition to placing brochures on Downtown at typical locations where tourists go (hotels, restaurants, interstate rest areas, etc.), they should also be downloadable on the websites of Main Street Russellville and the Tourism/Convention & Visitors Bureau.
- Newsletters - Newsletters have been a long time staple for many non-profit organizations as a means to convey achievements, promote events and provide general information. Most newsletters are now available digitally and are frequently e-mailed to recipients. Main Street Russellville is currently using such an e-mailed newsletter and should continue to do so.

Electronic Media

Main Street Russellville already has an excellent website and should continue to utilize social media to promote Downtown. They currently use Facebook and might consider using Twitter as well.

VI. NON-DESIGN ISSUES

MARKETING & PROMOTION (continued)

Special Events

Special events can be an extremely effective means of bringing people to Downtown Russellville who may otherwise never visit. While merchants in many downtowns often complain that few sales occur during such events, the long-term benefit of enhancing a downtown's image is more important. If people come to Downtown Russellville and have a positive experience, the odds are greatly increased that they will return at some future point in time to shop and dine. There are currently several key events that occur Downtown, including the following:

- *Downtown Art Walk* - 1st Friday in March, June, September and December
- *Tri Peaks Community Market* - May through October: Saturdays from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM / Thursdays: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- *Taste of the Valley* - fourth Thursday in April
- *Police Memorial* - May
- *Memorial Day Ceremony* - last Monday of May
- *Rummage 'Round the Rails* - May 25 - 26, 2012
- *Russellville High School Homecoming Parade* - October 5, 2012
- *Arkansas Tech University Homecoming Parade* - October 6, 2012
- *Downtown Fall Festival & Chilli Cookoff* - last Saturday in October

- *Russellville Christmas Parade* - first Thursday after Thanksgiving
- *Veteran's Day Parade & Salute to Freedom Ceremony* - date varies (Veteran's Day week)

Generally, the dates of these events are spread apart in a manner to keep people coming Downtown throughout the year. However, the one exception is the Summer season. Fourth of July activities have recently occurred at Lake Dardanelle State

Park or Pleasant View Park, but there is no Downtown event. It is recommended that a Downtown Fourth of July Parade be considered in the future.

Also, it is critical that the quality of these events be maintained and that the impacts on Downtown - both positive and negative - be continuously evaluated for potential needed changes.



Photo Source: Main Street Russellville

Taste of the Valley occurs each April at the depot. This award-winning tasting party features food and drink provided by River Valley restaurants, caterers, vineyards, and food service institutions. Live musical entertainment is provided by local musicians.



VII. IMPLEMENTATION

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC POLICIES

ZONING: DOWNTOWN

Zoning is a key tool for implementing any plan, as much of a downtown plan addresses privately-owned property, which is controlled by zoning. Unless the appropriate zoning and development regulations are adopted, a plan cannot come to fruition.

Issues with Current Zoning

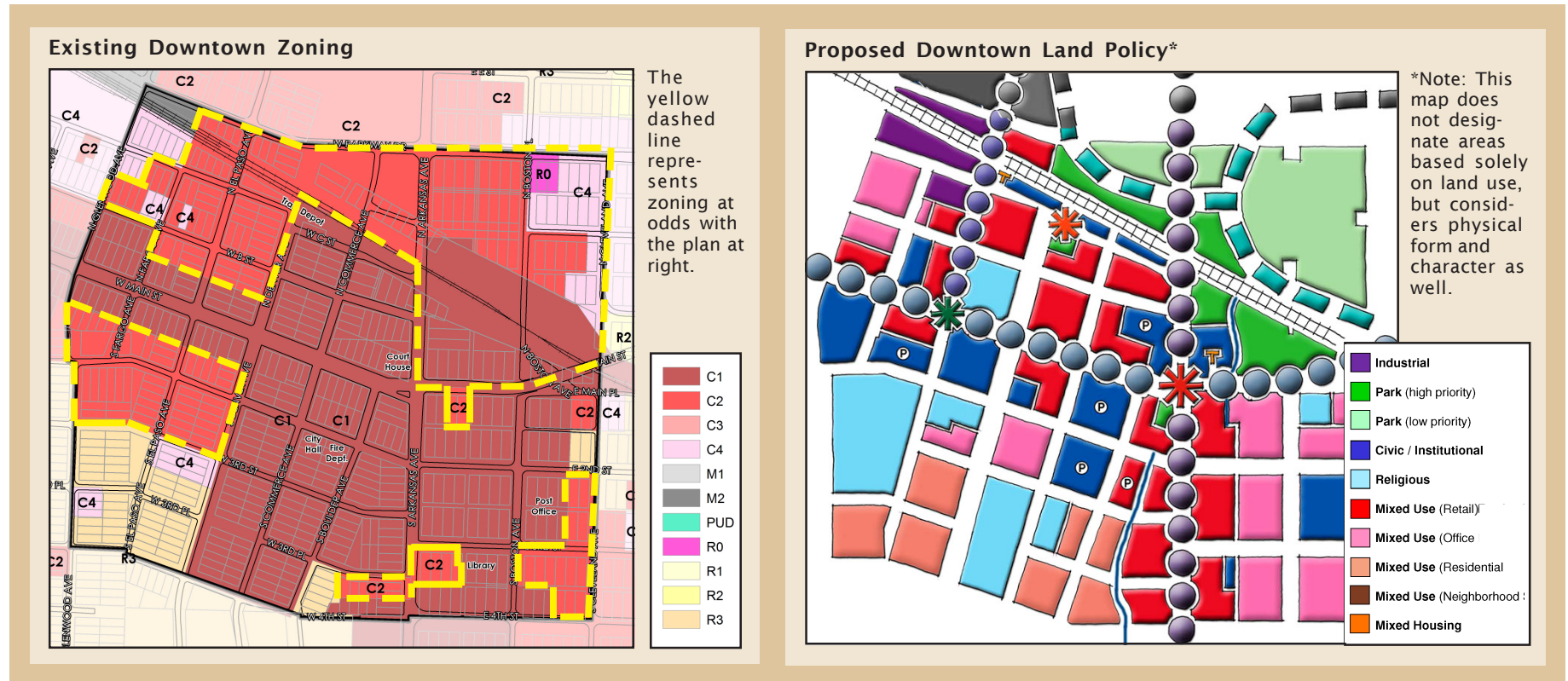
Pages 22 and 23 provide a general overview

of the existing zoning for Downtown. As indicated in that section, the current zoning poses many challenges, as follow:

- Several permitted uses should be prohibited
- Several prohibited uses should be permitted (some conditionally)
- Some standards related to the physical characteristics of development are incompatible with a historic downtown and this plan

While the locally designated historic district's design review process offers some design protections, that district only covers a small core area of the downtown (see historic district map on page 24).

The existing zoning map below at left has been highlighted in yellow at the most significant locations where the zoning is inconsistent with the proposed land policy below at right (see note below regarding this map, which is not based only on uses).



VII. IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC POLICIES (continued)

ZONING: DOWNTOWN (continued)

Proposed Zoning Alternatives

In addition to the various land uses that are permitted in the C-1 and C-2 zones, but that are incompatible with a historic downtown, as well as the uses prohibited that should be allowed, there are problems with setback requirements. For example, the C-2, which is a highway commercial designation, requires a minimum front setback of 25 feet, which is excessive in a historic downtown. Because of the numerous drawbacks of the current zoning, two alternative approaches to zoning are proposed:

A) Amend the Zoning Map and Permitted Land Uses and Expand the Historic District

There are two problems with the current zoning - inappropriate uses and inappropriate design standards. To address the use issue, the C-1 category could be revised to fine-tune the permitted uses in a manner that is compatible with Downtown Russellville. Once the uses are addressed, the zoning map could be revised to locate the C-1 where appropriate, which would include eliminating the C-2 district from Downtown. Once the use issue is addressed, the historic district boundaries could be substantially expanded to provide design protections to the

broader Downtown area, rather than delineating it with such a conservative approach that is based solely on the National Register boundaries.

B) Rewrite the Zoning for Downtown

While Alternative A is the most time-efficient and least expensive option, a more clear and permanent solution is to rewrite the zoning for Downtown. This process would likely result in entirely new zoning districts for Downtown that are tailored to it and that would reflect the map on the previous page created by this plan to illustrate appropriate land uses, physical form and character. Rather than requiring the local historic district boundaries to expand to achieve appropriate design, design standards would be built into this zoning to dictate building heights, setbacks, off-street parking locations, driveways, and similar design issues.

Accommodating Existing Uses

It is important to note that there are some existing uses that may be inconsistent with the existing or proposed zoning, but that should be accommodated. Such uses are “grandfathered in” if they do not expand, but even uses such as the frozen yogurt facility (light industrial) on El Paso and C Street should be able to expand so long as truck access issues can be addressed and any potential negative impacts are mitigated.

Land Use Compatibility

Article XIII of the City’s zoning ordinance features a multi-page chart of permitted uses for each zoning district. One of the most problematic districts for downtown is the C-2, as it is intended for highway commercial areas dominated by automobiles. Just a few examples of inappropriate zoning for the study area are noted below (this is not an exhaustive list):

Examples of Uses to Eliminate

C-1 and C-2 zones both allow “Automobile Car Washes” as-of-right. This use is incompatible with a downtown.

Examples of Uses to Allow

Among uses prohibited in the C-2 zone are “Art Gallery or Museum,” which should clearly be permitted downtown. “Condominiums” are Special Permit uses in the C-1 and C-2 districts. Since they are form of ownership and not a use, this category needs to be revised. Convenience stores are prohibited in the C-1, but should be permitted with appropriate design (rear parking, etc.).

Examples of Uses to Allow Conditionally

Banks and restaurants with drive-in windows are permitted as-of-right in the C-1 and C-2 zones. They should be a conditional use anywhere downtown contingent upon the drive-in’s design for compatibility.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC POLICIES (continued)

ZONING: EL PASO AVENUE CORRIDOR

Issues with Current Zoning

Unlike the existing zoning map for Downtown (page 113) in which specific areas were highlighted for their substantial inconsistency with this plan, all of the zoning within the El Paso Avenue Corridor is inconsistent with this plan. Although the R-3 zoned area is somewhat consistent with this plan, the existing zoning limits the number of units for any multi-family building to eight, and the zoning's front setback and lot width requirements are too suburban for this area.

Proposed Zoning Alternatives

As with the Downtown zoning, there are two options for the City to pursue:

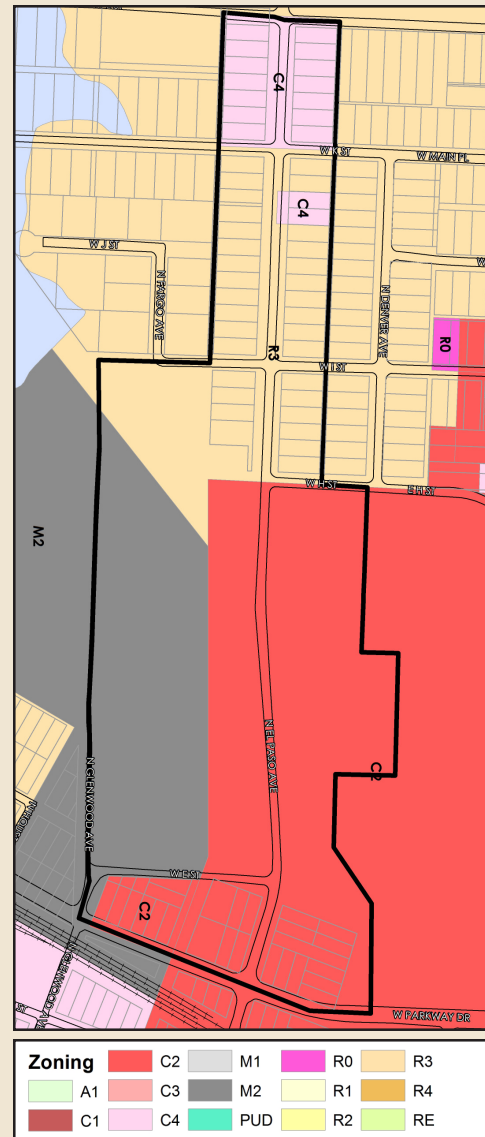
A) Amend the Zoning Map and Permitted Land Uses and Adopt a Design Overlay Zone

This option would result in the zoning map looking more like this plan and adjustments being made to permitted land uses and bulk standards (setbacks, etc.). To insure high quality design, a design overlay district with detailed guidelines would then be applied.

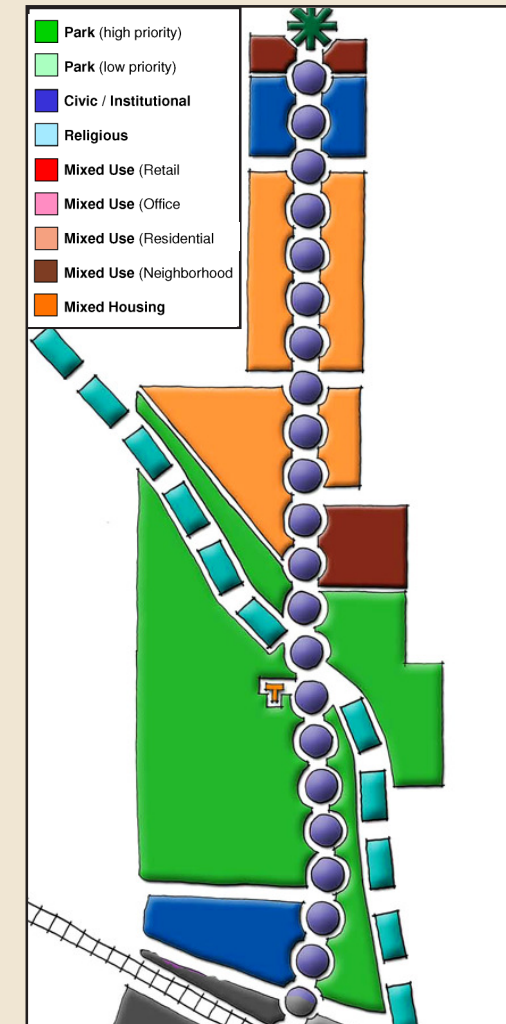
B) Rewrite the Zoning for the El Paso Corridor

As in the case of the options for Downtown, this one is the most straightforward. If pursued, it is critical that the zoning include design standards integrated into it.

Existing El Paso Corridor Zoning



Proposed El Paso Corridor Land Policy*



*Note: This map does not designate areas based solely on land use, but considers physical form and character as well.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC POLICIES (continued)

DOWNTOWN HISTORIC ZONING

Pages 24 and 25 of this plan provide background information on Russellville's existing historic district. Based upon that review, the following recommendations are provided:

Expand the Historic District Boundaries

The current boundaries are consistent with the National Register boundaries, but many local districts cover more land area to insure better control of development over a larger area. It is recommended that boundaries closer to those of the study area for this plan be pursued, although boundary determinations will also need to be consistent with the City's preservation ordinance.

Adopt the New Design Guidelines

The City is currently in the process of drafting design guidelines. Until now, the City has relied solely on the very broad principles contained in the federal preservation standards (Secretary of the Interior's). Once completed the guidelines should be adopted as formal public policy and they should supercede the underlying zoning.

Conduct Workshops for New Guidelines

Although many communities have well-written preservation ordinances and design guidelines, that situation does not guaran-

tee that sound decisions during the design review process will always result. The reason many design review bodies fail to function effectively is because of a lack of familiarity with, and focus on, the design guidelines. With a completely new set of detailed standards, it is important that an experienced expert work with the Historic District Commission so they can use the guidelines effectively. If no one at the local level can do this, it is recommended that either the consultant who drafted the guidelines be hired or the State Historic Preservation Office or the State Main Street program be approached for their help.

Improve the Design Review Process

The following changes should occur to the current process for COA applications:

- 1) Require (or strongly encourage) a pre-application meeting with the HDC staff and Chair before an application is submitted.
- 2) Create a COA application form that can be tailored to the proposed project with respect to the specific information that must be submitted (photos, plans, etc.).
- 3) Resist putting an application on the HDC's meeting agenda until the application is deemed "complete" and all required information is submitted well in advance of the meeting.
- 4) Have staff prepare review memos prior to HDC meetings to address issues and provide a recommendation that goes to the applicant and HDC before the meeting.

Potential Revisions to Design Guidelines

After relying on federal preservation standards since the Historic District Commission has existed, the City recently adopted guidelines while this plan was being finalized. Given that the guidelines are new and have no track record to illuminate needed revisions, the following are general recommendations to consider if and when the guidelines are revised at some point in the future:

- Add "informal pre-application meeting" as the first step in the process chart (pg. 12).
- The list of benefits of National Register designation needs to include state and federal rehab tax credits benefits (pg. 8).
- The list of information required for COA applications is too rigid and should be tailored to the specific application (pg. 9).
- The graphic labeling facade components should be moved up in the doc. (pg. 51).
- The regulation of colors should be revisited, as doing so is typically subjective and undermines support for design review.
- It would be helpful if graphics were labeled to convey the point they are making.
- The site planning standards are vague and best left to the City's general standards.
- It appears that a COA is required for any exterior alterations to a property. The City should consider limiting review to alterations visible from a street for a number of reasons.
- The guidelines for new construction are very general and lack dimensional standards for building heights, facade bay patterns, window proportions, facade glazing percentages, and similar design issues.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC POLICIES (continued)

BUILDING CODES

Background

The City of Russellville enforces volumes I, II, and III of the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code. The Arkansas Fire Prevention Code is essentially a mirror image of the three volumes that make up the International Building Code (IBC). Volume I corresponds to the International Fire Code (IFC). Volume II corresponds to the IBC. Volume III corresponds to the International Residential Code (IRC). Volumes I and II would likely be the most applicable codes to downtown revitalization efforts. The City Building Official has the final authority on the code compliance of a proposed project.

The revitalization of downtowns often involves the adaptive reuse of older and, in many cases, historic buildings. Russellville is no different, in this regard, and flexibility in bringing adaptive reuse projects into compliance is imperative. Quite simply, historic buildings not only contribute to a downtown's sense of place, but the preservation and repurposing of these buildings is a sustainable practice at its core.

Fortunately for Russellville, there are two options that provide flexibility in code compliance. First, Chapter 34 of the Arkan-

sas Fire Prevention Code volume II provides code requirements for alterations, additions, and repair of existing buildings that vary from the requirements for new structures. If an applicant determines that additional flexibility is necessary, they may choose to apply the requirements of the International Existing Building Code (IEBC). The IEBC utilizes a prescriptive method based on a point system. The applicant must provide written notification to the Building Official as to whether Chapter 34 or the IEBC will be used. The two options cannot be mixed.

The City of Russellville has not had many cases involving older or historic adaptive reuse projects in downtown. That is expected to change as this plan is implemented and revitalization takes root. In one cited case involving a downtown building, a requirement from the Historic District Commission could not be implemented because the requirement was not in compliance with applicable building codes. As revitalization occurs, it is important that City departments, commissions, and other entities involved in downtown work together to find a solution that meets applicable codes, but does not hamper preservation and revitalization efforts.

Recommendations

- Include the City Building Official or designee as an ex officio member of the Historic District Commission.
- Develop a handout for prospective redevelopers that clearly outlines the design review process and provides guidance on how to utilize available, alternative means of meeting applicable codes.
- Ensure that design guidelines for historic structures are not overreaching, thereby creating difficulties in meeting life safety codes. This recommendation can be accomplished by limiting design to building elements that are visible from the public right-of-way.
- Encourage the City Building Official to work closely with redevelopers to identify alternative methods of code compliance that do not make revitalization costs prohibitive.



Codes that treat historic buildings with flexibility are critical to upper floor uses.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING

There are two basic types of funding sources that should be explored by the City and Main Street Russellville to help implement this plan: A) public sector funding that might be utilized by the City, Main Street program, or other public entities; and B) private sector funding and financial incentives that might be employed by private sector property owners, developers and business owners. Also, while most of these sources summarized below are existing, there are recommendations here for new funding and incentive mechanisms that should be considered. They will all require much more research and consideration beyond this plan before being established.

FUNDING/INCENTIVES: PRIVATE SECTOR

There is a need for incentives that make it easier and more desirable for businesses to locate in Downtown Russellville and for investors to improve property and develop small-scale, infill commercial and mixed-use buildings. Various incentives could be included as part of an overall package for businesses. Among the existing and potential incentives are the following:

Existing Programs for Private Sector

The following are local, state and federal funding sources and incentives that cur-

rently exist for the private sector to utilize for property improvements and businesses.

It is noteworthy that many of the State programs have been funded by the State's Real Estate Transfer Tax. Because of the recent economic downturn, little to no funding has been available for such programs. It is hoped that they can be funded at their past levels within the near future.

Mini-Grant Program

The Main Street Russellville Mini-Grant Program offers a matching grant of up to \$500 to property or business owners for improvements to building facades. Matching funds for approved applications are for one-half of the total project cost. The Mini-Grant program is funded through Main Street Russellville's special events and fundraising projects, or grants and/or other donations to the program that have been earmarked for building improvements. No membership contributions are used to fund the local Mini-Grant Program unless requested by the donor. Typical projects funded by the Mini-Grant Program include, but are not limited to, signs, awnings and fresh paint. Grants are continually open for application and awarded on availability of funds. Despite the small size of these grants, the 38 projects have totalled \$19,000 of investment. Main Street may want to consider fewer projects with larger grants.

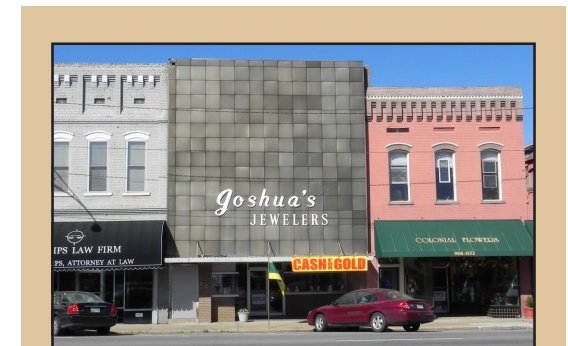
Model Business Grant

Model Business Grants are provided to local Main Street Cities for application by Main Street Arkansas, a program of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. This grant

program requires a dollar for dollar match, of which one-half of the local investment may be in-kind. Funded by the Real Estate Transfer Tax, the Model Business Grant addresses facade and interior rehabilitations, as well as business management to serve as a model business for other downtown merchants and property owners. Russellville acquired a total of \$151,188 via nine grants, but the program was eliminated by the State when the economic crisis occurred and will likely not be resurrected.

Slipcover & Mansard Removal Grant

The purpose of this grant is to provide an incentive to remove "slipcovers" (mid-20th century cladding over historic facades) and inappropriate mansard roofs to restore buildings to their original historic appearances. This grant requires a match of 25%. The match can be both cash and in-kind services, with the in-kind portion not to exceed 50% of the match. Like the Model Business Grant, this grant program is pro-



Downtown Russellville has multiple buildings that could benefit from the "slipcover" removal program.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING (continued)

FUNDING/INCENTIVES: PRIVATE SECTOR (continued)

vided to local Main Street Cities for application by Main Street Arkansas. Russellville has received two grants for two projects totalling \$20,000, but the State has indicated that it may be two years before the program if funded again.

Downtown Revitalization Grant

The focus of Downtown Revitalization Grant projects are high visibility, high impact, long term projects that benefit the greatest number of people. This grant requires a 1 to 2 match. For example, the local program must secure \$10,000 to be eligible for \$20,000 from Main Street Arkansas. Up to 50% of the match may be in-kind services. Like the Model Business and the Slipcover & Mansard Removal grants, this incentive is provided to local Main Street Cities for application by Main Street Arkansas. Nineteen grants have been awarded to Main Street Russellville for a variety of projects, including development of Burris Memorial Plaza, the farmers market start up, windows at City Hall, the Depot Project, construction of the stage at Depot Park, a branding campaign, funding for the local Mini Grant program, as well as funding for development of this Downtown Master Plan. Currently, this source of funds has remained available in much smaller amounts.

Small Business Assistance Consulting

The Main Street Arkansas Small Business Consultant provides no-cost, on-site confidential business assistance on an as-

requested basis to businesses located within the designated Main Street District. The consultant's mission is "to provide businesses with the tools and support needed to succeed in today's competitive environment." In addition to providing small business workshops, the consultant provides assistance with store operations, merchandising, market and sales analysis, and management.

Exterior & Interior Design Assistance

The Main Street Arkansas Design Consultants provide no-cost exterior and interior design assistance to business and property owners within the designated Main Street District. Areas of Exterior Design Assistance include rehabilitation advice for building facades, review of streetscapes, signs and planning, written recommendations and resources, and drawings of facades with material colors. Areas of Interior Design Assistance include rehabilitation advice for interior spaces, window and merchandise display workshops, auto CAD drawings for floor plans and feasibility studies, conceptual design plans and design research for building projects.

State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

A state law passed in 2009 allows Arkansans to claim a portion of their investment in historic properties as a credit on their state income taxes. This program is administered by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP). In many ways it mirrors the federal rehabilitation tax credit program, but it differs in other ways. For this program, twenty-five percent (25%) of the approved rehabilitation expenses on a his-

toric building may be claimed as a tax credit. Owners of income-producing properties (commercial, office, rental residential, etc.) may claim up to \$125,000 per project. Property owners may claim up to \$25,000 per project for work on their private residences. In either case, an owner must invest a minimum of \$25,000 to claim any credits. State law allows the AHPP to award up to \$4 million in tax credits per year. In addition to meeting all the requirements described above, projects should address one of the program's goals as listed below in order of priority: 1) Creation of a new business, 2) Expansion of an existing business, 3) Establishment of a tourist attraction, 4) Revitalization of a business district, 5) Revitalization of a neighborhood. This State tax credit has been underutilized and needs greater promotion and technical assistance for candidate users.

Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

This 20 percent income tax credit is available for buildings listed on (or eligible for) the National Register, that are income producing (office, retail, hotel, rental housing, etc.), and that entail building rehabilitations following federal standards. The federal tax credit is worth 20 percent of the eligible rehabilitation costs for qualified buildings and projects. Eligible project costs generally must exceed the value of the building itself (not including the land) at the beginning of the project. Most rehabilitation costs are eligible for the credit, such as structural work, building repairs, electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, roof work and painting. Certain types of project costs are not eligible for the credit, such as acquisi-

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING (continued)

FUNDING/INCENTIVES: PRIVATE SECTOR (continued)

tion, new additions, furniture and landscaping. The IRS also allows a separate 10 percent tax credit for income-producing buildings constructed prior to 1936, but not listed in the National Register. Since this program is not one that involves limited financial resources that must be carefully targeted to specific areas for the maximum leveraging, it is applicable throughout Downtown Russellville.

Small Business Programs

The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) can provide grants, loans and technical assistance to small businesses. The SBA does not offer grants to start or expand small businesses, but it does offer a wide variety of loan programs. While the SBA does offer some grant programs, these are generally designed to expand and enhance organizations that provide small business management, technical, or financial assistance. These grants generally support non-profit organizations, intermediary lending institutions, and state and local governments. "7(a)" loans are the most basic and most used type loan of SBA's business loan programs. Its name comes from section 7(a) of the Small Business Act, which authorizes the Agency to provide business loans to American small businesses. All 7(a) loans are provided by lenders who are called participants because they participate with SBA in the 7(a) program.

Not all lenders choose to participate, but most American banks do. There are also some non-bank lenders who participate with SBA in the 7(a) program, which expands the availability of lenders making loans under SBA guidelines. 7(a) loans are only available on a guaranty basis, which means they are provided by lenders who choose to structure their own loans by SBA's requirements and who apply and receive a guaranty from SBA on a portion of this loan. The SBA does not fully guaranty 7(a) loans. The lender and SBA share the risk that a borrower will not be able to repay the loan in full. The guaranty is a guaranty against payment default. It does not cover imprudent decisions by the lender or misrepresentation by the borrower. Under the guaranty concept, commercial lenders make and administer loans.

In addition to its loan programs, other SBA programs include small business development centers, small business investment companies, preferred and certified lenders, micro-loan information, and export assistance. Another helpful organization for small businesses is the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). SCORE is a resource partner with the SBA. The SCORE Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit association dedicated to entrepreneurial education and the formation, growth and success of small businesses nationwide. SCORE's extensive, national network of 10,500 retired and working volunteers are experienced entrepreneurs and corporate managers/executives. They provide free business counseling and advice as a public service to all types of businesses, in all stages of development. The Arkansas

Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC) is housed at ATU's College of Business in Rothwell Hall.

State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI)

In December 2011, Arkansas was awarded \$13.1 million by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to help create jobs through lending and guaranteeing loans to small and minority businesses, supporting venture capital investments and making risk capital investments in technology based enterprises. The program is expected to generate a minimum leveraging of at least \$10 in new private lending for every \$1 in federal funding. As such, \$13 million is expected to support more than \$130 million in new private lending. The Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) will use these SSBCI funds to support and provide additional funding for its existing Arkansas Capital Access Program, Bond Guaranty/Loan Participation Program, Risk Capital Matching fund, the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Small Business Loan Guaranty Program, the Arkansas Development Finance Authority Co-investment Fund and the Seed and Angel Capital Network. The allocation of funds is available in thirds. At least 80% of the Treasury's initial transfer of one-third of the awarded amount, \$4,345,556 will have to be expended or obligated before receiving each successive transfer. The SSBCI program is a one-time limited duration program. At the end of 24 months, funds not transferred may be considered by the Treasury no longer allocated.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING (continued)

FUNDING/INCENTIVES: PRIVATE SECTOR (continued)

Proposed Programs for Private Sector

In addition to the improvements being recommended here to existing funding and incentive programs for the private sector, new programs are recommended. Pages 107 and 108 already describe a set of new financial tools at the local level being recommended for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, but here is a summary below:

Revolving Loan Fund

The City of Russellville can collaborate with the local banks to establish a revolving loan fund to help finance building rehabilitation projects specifically in the downtown area. Because of the collaboration between the various banks and the City, the interest rate, or cost of lending, can be written down to make rehabilitation loans more affordable for building owners and prospective developers.

Development Loan Guarantees

Another tool that the City government can use to leverage rehabilitation would be to provide direct loan guarantees for building rehabilitation and/or infill development to overcome the current “credit crunch” occurring nation-wide. Loan Guarantees can help provide building owners and developers a leg up in obtaining financing for redevelopment by reducing risk to lenders and therefore enhancing the credit

options available. Because they are guarantees, rather than direct loans, there is also somewhat less risk borne directly by the municipal government for assisting private entities. Loan guarantee programs can also be used for prospective target tenants, such as restaurants, to assist in financing the fitting out of expensive kitchen or other equipment.



There are numerous older buildings in Downtown Russellville that could greatly benefit from programs such as a revolving loan fund and City-backed development loan guarantees.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING (continued)

FUNDING/INCENTIVES: PUBLIC SECTOR

Existing Programs for Public Sector

Because the City of Russellville and Main Street Russellville cannot control the availability or substance of existing public sector programs of the state and federal governments, this section on public sector programs only addresses existing programs and does not feature recommendations for enhancing those programs or creating new ones:

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

The CLG program provides funding to enable local communities to develop programs and participate in the state's preservation process. Only cities and counties officially designated as a CLG by the state can apply for these grants. CLG communities must have a legitimate historic preservation program, such as historic zoning and a preservation commission. The program is administered in Arkansas by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) and Russellville is currently a designated CLG community. CLG grants are funded with money appropriated from Congress for preservation efforts through the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). CLG grants do not require a match from the community, but because of the competitive nature of securing these grants, a local financial commitment is helpful in securing grants. Eligible grant projects include, but are not limited to: training for local preservation commissions; completing or updating surveys of historic resources; produc-

ing historical walking or driving tour brochures, physical restoration projects; preparing preservation plans; and preparing National Register of Historic Places nominations. An example of a CLG grant acquired by the City was a \$3,500 grant in 2008 for training members of the newly-created Historic District Commission when the local historic district ordinance was adopted. CLG grants should continue to be pursued.

Transportation Enhancement Funds

The "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU) includes opportunities for funding within its Enhancement Program. The Enhancement Program is a federally funded program that promotes diverse modes of surface transportation, increases benefits to communities, and encourages citizen involvement. In Arkansas, the program is administered by the Arkansas State Highway Commission. There are twelve categories from which local governments may apply for reimbursement funding, mostly related to: scenic beautification, historic preservation, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. All qualified projects must have some relationship to surface transportation. Cost reimbursement for eligible projects can range from \$1,000 to \$1 million. Streetscape projects are a common enhancement funds project and might include lighting, historic sidewalk pavers, benches, planting containers, decorative walls and walkways, signs, public art, historical markers, or other similar elements. These funds can also be utilized to upgrade or create bike and pedestrian pathways. Russellville has been fortunate to secure these funds

for the Depot Project, which included two rounds of funding (ISTEA and TEA 21). Transportation enhancement funds will also be utilized for the Sidewalk Enhancement Project that will be used to redevelop Main Street. Among this plan's other projects that may be funding candidates are the greenway development, including trailheads.

Community Development Block Grants

CDBG funds are available for specific program categories including: community revitalization, scattered site housing, infrastructure, economic development, housing development, urgent needs, and capacity building. Each program has specific requirements. Non-entitlement cities, such as Russellville, must compete with other non-entitlement communities for CDBG funds. These funds can be used for a wide range of community development activities and must prioritize benefits to low and moderate income persons. Qualified activities include: property acquisition, relocation and demolition, rehabilitation of buildings, construction of infrastructure, limited public services, and assistance to job creating businesses.

National Endowment for the Arts - Challenge

America Grant - The National Endowment for the Arts provides national recognition and support to significant projects of artistic excellence in the visual, literary, media, design, and performing arts, thus preserving and enhancing the nation's diverse cultural heritage. Grants are intended to provide the best of the arts in communities throughout the nation, including projects to benefit people in underserved areas or whose access to the arts is limited by

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING (continued)

FUNDING/INCENTIVES: PUBLIC SECTOR (continued)

factors such as age, disability, ethnicity, educational or economic level. Eligible activities are those that promote the arts, and eligible recipients include local governments, public non-profit institutions/organizations, and federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments. This program's "fast track" category provides \$10,000 grants that require a local match.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing is a public financing method that is used for subsidizing redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community improvement projects. TIF is a method to use future gains in taxes to subsidize current improvements, which are projected to create the conditions for said gains. The completion of a public project often results in an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, which generates additional tax revenue. Sales tax revenue may also increase, and jobs may be added, although these factors and their multipliers usually do not influence the structure of TIF. When an increase in site value and private investment generates an increase in tax revenues, it is considered the "tax increment." TIF dedicates tax increments within a certain defined district to finance the debt that is issued to pay for the project. TIF is typically designed to channel funding toward improvements in distressed, underdeveloped, or underutilized parts of a jurisdiction where development might

otherwise not occur. In short, TIF creates funding for public or private projects by borrowing against the future increase in these property tax revenues.

In November 2000, Arkansas voters approved an amendment to the Arkansas Constitution that enables local governments to utilize TIF. Per the enabling legislation, a TIF redevelopment district must be in an area that is considered blighted, deteriorated or underdeveloped. To date, TIF has not been successful in Arkansas and Russellville has not initiated a TIF program.

USDOT's TIGER Grants

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program is a program of the U.S. Department of Transportation to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. Congress dedicated \$1.5 billion for TIGER I, \$600 million for TIGER II, and \$526.944 million for the FY 2011 round of TIGER Grants to fund projects. TIGER's highly competitive process allowed DOT to fund 51 projects in TIGER I and 42 capital projects in TIGER II. TIGER II also featured a new Planning Grant category and 33 planning projects were also funded through TIGER II. In the FY 2011 round of TIGER Grants, DOT awarded 46 capital projects in 33 states and Puerto Rico. Each project is multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional or otherwise challenging to fund through existing programs.

HUD Community Challenge Grants

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Challenge Plan-

ning Grant Program fosters reform and reduces barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities. Such efforts may include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning codes, and building codes, either on a jurisdiction-wide basis or in a specific neighborhood, district, corridor, or sector to promote mixed-use development, affordable housing, the reuse of older buildings and structures for new purposes, and similar activities with the goal of promoting sustainability at the local or neighborhood level. This Program also supports the development of affordable housing through the development and adoption of inclusionary zoning ordinances and other activities to support planning implementation. This HUD program is closely coordinated with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). While funding for this program was eliminated in 2012, it may be restored in 2013.

Interagency Partnership for Sustainable

Communities - This joint program of HUD, DOT and EPA features a variety of programs, the most relevant which may be the Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Program and the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants. However, because the most recent funding levels for these two program have been relatively low for national programs (\$15 million and \$5 million, respectively), securing funding for Downtown Russellville is not likely.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Other implementation issues to be addressed include water line upgrades, Main Street and El Paso Avenue improvements, Implementation Committee and staffing, promotion of the plan, adopting the plan, and future plan updates.

Water Line Upgrades

Pages 20 and 21 of this plan's background section discusses the condition of existing water mains. While the current limitations do not necessarily preclude greater utilization of the downtown with respect to building rehabilitations and new infill development, the situation may pose a concern in that the current infrastructure of water mains and fire hydrants lack sufficient flows and pressures for fire engines to produce streams that will effectively suppress fires. This issue may warrant further review and consideration for remedial work regardless of other physical improvements suggested by this plan.

Main Street & El Paso Avenue Enhancements

The concept for Main Street/US 64 includes a road diet that allows for enhanced sidewalks and streetscape opportunities, as well as bicycle lanes and back-in angled on-

street parking. In the concept, one travel lane was removed and replaced with a center turn lane to facilitate left turning vehicles; this reduction in width allowed for bicycle lanes on either side of the roadway and the construction of landscaped bulbouts at the intersections. As a first step, the City is utilizing a state Transportation Enhancement Grant to design and construct the bulbouts as a "Quick Victory" project.

The El Paso Avenue corridor included development of a cycle track concept intended to strengthen the bicycle and pedestrian connection between Downtown and Arkansas Tech University. Fuss & O'Neill is currently engaged in implementation with the City, leading the design of the Cycle Track/Complete Street on El Paso Avenue. The concept includes a gateway treatment at the entrance to ATU at L Street and incorporates a one-way cycle track to connect ATU to Downtown and the Depot area. The first phase constructs the cycle track to Parkway, and later phases are intended to connect the cycle track to Main Street. The project is entirely funded through the City's local option sales tax.

Implementation Committee & Staffing

It is recommended that the Steering Committee that was created to help oversee the creation of this plan be adapted into a new

Implementation Committee. It might consist of the same members, although any who may not have been very active might drop out, while newly identified candidates for the committee might also be added. It is recommended that the committee meet at least monthly to monitor plan implementation, and that it be staffed by either the Main Street Russellville staff, the City's Planning Department, or both in a joint effort.

Promoting the Plan

To insure implementation of the plan over time, it is critical that it be promoted throughout the community among both municipal leaders and the public in general. While the average Russellville citizen cannot be expected to read the full plan document, there are three opportunities for promoting the plan in a more user-friendly format:

Main Street Website

A PDF of the full document can be provided on the website of the Main Street Russellville for public viewing.

Plan Summary Document

The front pages of this plan include a two page summary of the plan that summarizes the key ideas in text and is supported by the plan's primary graphics. When printed on both sides of a single piece of paper, this plan summary can be broadly distributed.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (continued)

PowerPoint Presentations

The final presentation of this plan by the consultant team will be made available to the City and Main Street program. It, or an edited down version, can be used by City officials and Main Street representatives to give “dog and pony” shows

Adopting the Plan

To give the plan greater weight than it might have otherwise, it is recommended that the City formally adopt the plan as part of its public policy. While the plan would not have the same legal “teeth” as codes (legislation), it would help to direct future decisions by the City.

Future Plan Updates

It is recommended that this plan be updated at least every five years, and it may be worthwhile to create a separate new plan, depending upon this plan’s relevance as time evolves.

Explanation of the Implementation Matrix

Pages 130-131 feature a plan Implementation Matrix that summarizes the key recommendations of this plan provides the following information:

Subject Category

The matrix has organized the key plan ideas into the following four categories: buildings and facilities, transportation and public spaces, non-design issues, and implementation strategy.

Alphanumeric Designation

Each subject category has been assigned a sequential letter and each plan recommendation has been given a sequential number. The category letter and recommendation number are combined for an alphanumeric designation for easy reference.

Page Number

This column indicates the page numbers that explain the recommendation in detail.

Responsible Party

This column indicates the recommended party (or parties) to spearhead implementation.

Time-Frame

This section sequences implementation into Near Term (Year 1), Mid Term (Years 2-3) and Long Term (Years 4-5) categories.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (continued)

Implementation Phasing

While this master plan features numerous strategies, there is a particular sequencing that should occur for at least some of them. The timing of some strategies will be driven by available resources, such as funding. However, others will be driven by a strategic sequencing, as follows:

Physical Improvements

In general, public realm improvements, such as streetscape redevelopments, tend to precede private sector improvements. It is often necessary for public realm improvements to occur first as an incentive to leverage the private realm enhancements, such as building rehabilitations. The photograph at right illustrates the existing conditions for the intersection of Main and Commerce, while the graphics on the following page illustrate the potential phasing for physical improvements. Phase 1 would entail streetscape enhancements, while Phase 2 improvements would be limited to building rehabilitations.

Marketing

When implementing a downtown plan, it is generally advisable to focus initially on physical improvements - or “product improvement” - prior to marketing. The reason is that if



Issues with Public Realm

- A lengthy pedestrian crossing distance across Main Street
- A lack of a clearly delineate crossing area for both Main and Commerce
- Front-in angled parking that makes backing into traffic dangerous
- Tall and unattractive street lights that cater to automobiles but not pedestrians
- A lack of landscaping, including street trees that provide shade during warm months

Issues with Private Realm

- Historic facades have been negatively altered
- Original door and window openings have been enclosed
- Transom windows above storefronts have been obscured

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (continued)

too many people visit the downtown prior to it being enhanced, they run the risk of being underwhelmed. First impressions can be lasting impressions, so it is important that downtown put its best foot forward before putting a public spotlight on itself.

Illustration of Phased Improvements

The “before” and “after” versions of the intersection of Main and Commerce illustrated at right have been phased to first reflect the public realm improvements and then the second phase private realm improvements. Below is a description of improvements.

Improvements to Public Realm (top image)

- Pedestrian bulb-outs at corners and brick paved crosswalks
- Back-in angled on-street parking
- Human-scaled street lights
- Landscaping at bulb-outs and street trees throughout the streetscape

Improvements to Private Realm (bottom image)

- Restored building facades consistent with historic photographs
- Reopened door and windows that were previously enclosed
- Transom windows that have been re-exposed above storefronts
- Removal of paint on portions of the corner building to unify its appearance



VII. IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (continued)

Implementation Flexibility

Fortunately, there are no components of this plan that serve as a “linchpin” that, if not implemented, would cause the rest of this plan to unravel. Also, any useful plan should never be viewed as being “etched in stone.” Not only are there often multiple approaches to achieving a plan’s particular objective, but changing circumstances over time can also prompt the need to adjust the recommendations of a plan. In fact, changing circumstances that occur with time are the main reason that most plans such as this require a periodic update. A frequently used “rule of thumb” is to update a plan at least every five years, and many states that mandate citywide comprehensive plans use a five-year timeframe as their requirement for updates. At the very least, a plan is needed every ten years as an absolute minimum. While the physical characteristics of a downtown may not change dramatically over the course of a decade, but political, social and economic conditions will certainly change.

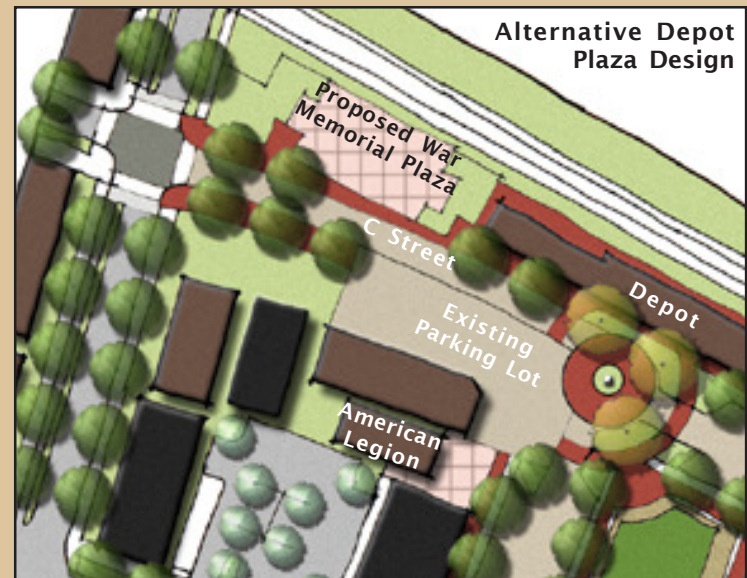
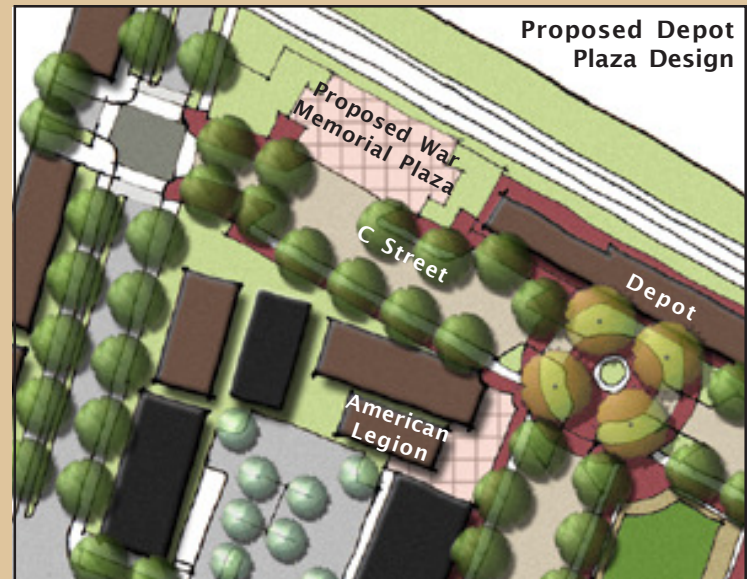
PLAN FLEXIBILITY EXAMPLE: DEPOT PLAZA ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Plan

Pages 72-77 of this plan feature a plan for the Depot Plaza area, which includes realigning and redesigning the segment of C Street between Denver and El Paso so that the following three key benefits can be realized:

- 1) *C Street can be straightened* to eliminate the current “dog leg” that would occur at it intersects this plan’s proposed traffic roundabout to be created around the Mr. Conductor statue; and
- 2) *A total of 33 reverse angle on-street parking spaces can be created* where no on-street parking currently exists.
- 3) *A defined sidewalk system and street trees can be provided* along this segment of C Street where they are currently lacking.

While this recommended redesign of the area



VII. IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (continued)

PLAN FLEXIBILITY

EXAMPLE:

DEPOT PLAZA

ALTERNATIVES (continued)

would clearly benefit the downtown and community in general, it would negatively impact the adjacent properties on the south side of this segment of C Street. Because this segment of the street would need to be shifted to the south, it would encroach into the northern portion of those properties, including eliminating the parking for the property on the corner of C Street and Denver. While implementing this project would include compensating the impacted property owners for any property value losses, there are other alternatives that could be considered.

Alternatives to Plan

Alternative A: Designate Parking for Property

This alternative would feature the proposed plan as designed (top plan on previous page), but the proposed on-street parking on the south side of the segment of C Street between El Paso and Denver would be reserved for use by the adjacent properties to the immediate south. Whether the new on-street parking would be created on the adjacent properties and remain in private ownership or be acquired by the City and become part of the public right-of-way,

these spaces would be clearly marked for private use. Combined with the on-street parking that will be provided on Denver adjacent to the corner property, that particular property would retain approximately the same amount of parking that it currently has on-site.

Alternative B: Retain Current Street Alignment

The most extreme alternative to the recommended proposed plan is illustrated at the bottom of the previous page, which would entail leaving the segment of C Street between Denver and El Paso as it currently exists. This approach would preclude the creation of the 33 new on-street parking spaces, as well as the extension of the proposed new sidewalk system along the corner property's two street frontages. Because new on-street parking could not be created in this scenario, which would have far exceeded the number of existing spaces on the corner property, the proposed war memorial plaza immediately west of the depot may need to be eliminated from this plan to retain the 12 parking spaces currently existing there (see more on this issue at right).

Alternative C: Alternative B with Sidewalk

A middle ground alternative might be to implement the Alternative Plan that retains the current alignment of C Street, but provide the proposed sidewalk along both frontages of the corner property.

Alternatives for War Memorial Plaza

Regardless of which design option is ultimately pursued for the design of C Street between El Paso and Denver, alternatives also need to be available for the proposed War Memorial Plaza. That new public space would replace the existing 12-space parking lot to the immediate west of the depot. While the loss of these spaces would be compensated if the proposed street alignment and on-street parking were to occur, an open space for event tents and similar functions would be lost. A recommended alternative to the memorial plaza here would be a smaller version in front of the existing American Legion post building fronting Denver Street within this depot area. This alternative would require concurrence of the post, but the theme of the plaza would clearly be consistent with the post.



VII. IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

No.	Recommendation	Page #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
A. Buildings & Facilities				
A-1	Rehabilitate Various Historic Buildings - follow standards and focus on Main & Commerce	49, 51-52	Property Owners	Near Term (Yr. 1)
A-2	Develop a New Downtown Library - alternative sites on Main and Arkansas	58-59	County	Near Term (Yr. 1)
A-3	Develop Housing in the El Paso Ave. Corridor - variety of forms, including attached units	81, 87-88	Developers and/or ATU	Near Term (Yr. 1)
A-4	Develop an Aquatic Center - consider site on NW corner of Parkway and El Paso	89	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
A-5	Develop Infill Buildings on Vacant Lots - follow standards and focus on Main & Commerce	49-50, 53-57	Property Owners	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
A-6	Build a Downtown Parking Garage - behind Courthouse or on SE corner of 2nd & Boulder	49-50, 66-67	City and/or County	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
A-7	Develop the Ozark Interpretation Center - exhibits, restrooms, trailways, parking	70-71, 101-102	US Forest Service	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)
B. Transportation & Public Spaces				
B-1	Enhance Main Street - "road diet," intersection improvements, "back-in" angled parking	48, 60-64, 68	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-2	Enhance El Paso Ave. - intersection improvements, gateway, streetscape, cycle track	48, 82-86	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-3	Develop Park as part of New Downtown Library - alternative sites on Main and Arkansas	69, 78	County	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-4	Enhance Parking Lots - provide landscaping, lighting and delineate spaces with striping	49, 65	Property Owners (includes local gov't)	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-5	Develop a Courthouse Pocket Plaza & Expand Burriss Memorial Plaza	49-50, 69, 79-80	County	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-6	Develop Prairie Creek Greenway - trails, trailheads, interpretive waysides	69, 90	City	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
B-7	Enhance Depot Plaza - trailhead, memorial, roundabout, green, stage, relocated caboose	48, 69, 72-77	City	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
B-8	Develop Athletic Playing Fields - southern half of the El Paso Ave. Corridor	81, 89	City	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
B-9	Develop Prairie Creek Park (East) - amphitheater, trails, wayside exhibits	48-50, 69-71	City	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)
B-10	Create Gateway Treatments - locate at key entrances to downtown	91	City	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)
C. Non-Design Issues				
C-1	Pursue Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment - base on this plan's optimal mix	98-99, 103-106	Main Street Russellville	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-2	Adopt Marketing Themes and Branding - railroad heritage, college town, Ozark crossroads	100-102	Main Street Russellville	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-3	Adopt and Implement a Program for Building Revitalization - revolving fund, loan guarantees	107-108	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-4	Adopt and Implement this Plan's Marketing and Promotion Strategy - CRM, advertising, etc.	109-112	Main Street Russellville	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-5	Pursue a Family Entertainment Concept - entertain. center, performance venues, dining	102	Main Street Russellville	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

D. Implementation Strategy				
D-1	Adjust the Zoning for Downtown and El Paso Corridor - amend and supplement or rewrite	113-115	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-2	Improve Downtown Historic Zoning - expand district, adopt guidelines and improve process	116	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-3	Utilize the City's Existing Building Codes - use them in as flexible a manner as is possible	117	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-4	Improve Existing Local Funding Programs and Promote All Programs	118-123	City and Main Street	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-5	Establish a Plan Implementation Committee with Staffing - must meet regularly	124	Main Street Russellville & City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-6	Promote this Plan - use Main Street website, plan summary document, and presentations	124-125	Main Street Russellville	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-7	Formally Adopt this Plan - City Council should pass a resolution as official public policy	125	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
D-8	Upgrade Water Lines Downtown - issue is water pressure deficiencies for fire fighting	124	City	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
D-9	Update this Plan in the Future - revisit at least every five years and may need new plan	125	Main Street Russellville & City	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)