



**Smart Growth America**  
Improving lives by improving communities

## Pagosa Springs, Colorado

### Smart Growth 101

## Report and Suggested Next Steps - Revised

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program

**To:** Mayor Don Volger  
James Dickhoff, Town Planner

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**Date:** October 23, 2017

### Executive Summary

Pursuant to our technical assistance award with the Town of Pagosa Springs, this Memorandum constitutes Smart Growth America's final report summarizing the recent *Smart Growth 101* workshop, and suggesting possible **Next Steps** the town could take to craft a vision for Pagosa Springs' future development.

John Robert Smith, Chris Zimmerman, and Brian Lutenegger, representing Smart Growth America (SGA), met with local leaders and residents on May 24 and 25, 2017 to provide assistance via the *Smart Growth 101* tool, supported by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Sustainable Communities. Under separate funding received from USDA Rural Development, SGA also conducted and delivered a *Fiscal Impact Analysis* to Pagosa Springs. Please refer to the separate report describing the fiscal impact analysis for more information on the methodology and results.

Following a productive discussion with various stakeholders — including residents, advocates, business owners and elected officials — the following **Next Steps** are recommended:

- 1. Invest in the redevelopment of the Adobe / town site as a catalyst that recognizes downtown as the heart of the community for both locals and tourists.**
- 2. Create a walkable mixed-use development on the Springs Partners site including amenities for both residents and visitors.**

3. **Invest in techniques to encourage placemaking and streetscaping in downtown – including taking advantage of the Highway 160 redevelopment project – to establish a more cohesive sense of place.**
4. **Develop a sense of place in uptown.**
5. **Market the town amenities and lifestyle to bring new residents, economic opportunity, and visitors to town.**
6. **Invest in broadband Internet access to attract both new residents and new types of businesses.**
7. **Look for opportunities to increase affordable housing within and connected to downtown - including for Millennials and an aging population – along with the complementary services required to meet daily needs.**
8. **Work to coordinate Town of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County services and policies wherever possible.**
9. **Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Strategy.**
10. **Create an implementation committee to move these recommendations forward.**

## Need for assistance

The tourism industry makes up a large portion of the local economy throughout the year. Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County’s population more than doubles in the summertime when many second homeowners arrive. But, at the same time, tourism has resulted in a loss of affordable and workforce housing for year round residents as existing units are converted to short-term housing. Many residents the SGA team spoke with mentioned that, due to the high cost of housing, a number of Pagosans have been forced to move out of their apartments, put their personal belongings in a storage unit, and sleep in their cars.

In addition to the summer residents, Pagosa Springs’ unique attractions and location bring around 375,000 tourists to town each year. Its hot springs represent the largest and hottest natural mineral outflow in the world – and are known for their healing and restorative properties. The town is located in the center of the San Juan National Forest and the San Juan River runs through town, both of which offer many outdoor recreational activities. There are also a number of art galleries and other small local stores and restaurants in downtown. Finally, Pagosa Springs is located in the Four Corners region which attracts many tourists each year and is less than a 90 minute drive from Durango, with an airport receiving commercial service and popular tourist attractions of its own. In short, there is much about Pagosa Springs that makes it a worthwhile stop for tourists visiting the region.

Pagosa Springs is facing some very urgent challenges with housing affordability and jobs. But at the same time, the town has some unique development opportunities at

its fingertips that it can utilize to address these challenges. It can also use these development opportunities to bolster its tourism infrastructure while further increasing sales and lodging tax revenues.

There are several key opportunities on the horizon to increase the amenities for visitors – while also reducing housing costs for existing residents, attracting new residents, and encouraging new business development. Several sites in town present an opportunity for redevelopment in a manner that will help revitalize downtown, add affordable housing units, and bring new economic development. These include the following:

- The Adobe building and the adjacent bell tower site as a unified project
- Waterworks site
- The 27 acres near downtown owned by Springs Partners
- Improvements to Highway 160 through downtown

In addition, there is an opportunity to create a new vision for uptown so that it better serves the needs of the community.

Pagosa Springs is currently undergoing a comprehensive planning process to update its existing plan from 2006. While the process is nearing its completion later this summer, it is critical to ensure that the final product truly represents the desires and shared vision of the community. The town has collected public input in several ways, including a 13 member steering committee that meets monthly and several open houses. The information gleaned from this engagement with Smart Growth America will also factor in to the final plan.

For these reasons, a Smart Growth 101 workshop was extremely timely for Pagosa Springs as it helped the community to think about how to leverage the exciting redevelopment opportunities that have presented themselves and how to make the most of them while they can. Pursuing smart growth offers the community an opportunity to work together to create an economic future that is more sustainable and economically diverse. The SGA team was excited to see the interest in and passion for the community among the several dozen individuals present at the workshop.

## Workshop Review

SGA's technical assistance visit began on May 24th with a tour of Pagosa Springs. Major stops on the tour included the following:

- Uptown
  - Pagosa Springs Medical Center / Hospital
  - Country Center Shopping Center
  - Pagosa Lodge

- Walmart and neighboring opportunity site
- Downtown
  - Elementary, Middle, and High Schools
  - Home Town Grocery Market
  - CDOT Culvert Project
  - Geothermal Greenhouse Project
  - Archuleta County Courthouse
  - Downtown historic district
  - Adobe Building
  - Historic waterworks facility
  - Centennial & Town Parks + Riverwalk
  - Springs Partners Development
  - Lewis Street

These amenities are important to the community and played a key role in the discussions at the workshop as well as the recommendations in this next steps memo. Their importance is discussed in more detail below.

That evening, the technical assistance team gave an overview of the workshop's outline, purpose and goals in a public presentation, previewing many of the key themes to be discussed further at the workshop, particularly the emerging national demographic and economic trends at play across the American landscape. The SGA team examined the economic impact of 20th century suburban development patterns, discussing the trend of migration by both Baby Boomers and Millennials to vibrant city and town centers. The presentation considered the emergence of the Millennial generation as the predominant driver of economic demand and the workforce sought by today's job creators, emphasizing that generation's interest in walkable, bikeable, vibrantly social towns and cities. The presentation also touched on the economic advantages of broadband Internet access that would enable a town like Pagosa Springs to attract a larger Millennial population and new types of businesses.

On the second day, the workshop explored these trends as they pertain to Pagosa Springs' past and its future. SGA's presentation opened by defining "smart growth" and examining the ten principles of this pattern of compact, walkable development. The SGA team narrated photos of communities from across the country – many small rural towns much like Pagosa Springs – that have successfully implemented smart growth development. These case studies included Franklin, TN; Asheville, NC; Normal, IL; Cuyahoga Falls, OH; and Meridian, MS. The SGA team intended the presentation to help participants envision how they would like Pagosa Springs to develop in the future – which they would do in the afternoon.

Following the main presentation by the SGA team, James Dickhoff, Pagosa Springs' Town Planner, provided an update on the town's comprehensive planning process as well as a summary of recently completed and upcoming projects in the community.

Finally, the SGA team revealed the results of its fiscal impact analysis. The analysis considered how Pagosa Springs will accommodate an anticipated 601 new housing units by 2036. The study examined the fiscal costs of providing infrastructure (such as roads and water lines) to serve several levels of density and patterns of development that the town might choose to pursue. Refer to the separate report describing this analysis for more information on this study.

The afternoon was devoted to small group discussions and presentations back to the larger group. The SGA team guided the groups through exercises that first asked participants to identify their vision for the town in 10-15 years. The groups considered what the town will look like and what it will be known for to the outside world. Organizing the community's aspirational vision this way created a structured, prioritized approach to tackling issues that ranged in scope and degree of achievability.

After the three small groups presented their visions to the entire group, the SGA team then guided the small groups through discussions of unique focus areas within the town. The areas discussed in detail by the small groups were:

- Opportunity sites
  - Waterworks site
  - Adobe Building (which was destroyed by fire)
  - The 27 acres owned by Springs Partners
- Highway 160 improvements
- Uptown

The SGA team selected the above discussion topics based upon the town's recognized need to revitalize, increase the supply of affordable housing, and seek economic redevelopment. Each of the above represents a unique opportunity presented to the community to meet these goals.

**Representatives from the EPA attending the workshop included:**

- Cindy Cody, Sustainable Communities Coordinator, EPA Region 8

**Federal, state, regional, and local leaders attending the public presentation and/or workshop included:**

- Mary Jo Coulehan, Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation
- James Dickhoff, Town Planner
- Jennie Green, Pagosa Springs Visitors Center
- Emma Kelly, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- Anne Miller, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
- Justin Ramsey, Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District
- Allen Roth, Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association
- Jodi Scarpa, Pagosa Springs Medical Center
- Cindy Schultz, San Juan Basin Public Health
- John Shepard, Archuleta County
- Lindsey Smith, U.S. Forest Service
- Pattie Snidow, USDA Rural Development
- Don Volger, Mayor

In addition, representatives from SE Group, the consultant preparing the town's comprehensive plan update, were present.

**Note:** *The intent of these workshops is neither for Smart Growth America to create a plan nor bind the communities to any particular course of action, but to assist ongoing regional efforts to create a more vibrant, successful region, consistent with the goals of their envisioned plans.*

## The ten principles of Smart Growth

The workshop covered the ten principles of Smart Growth both in words and pictures of other communities around the country. The principles are:

1. Mix land uses
2. Take advantage of compact design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Direct development towards existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective

10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

These principles formed the basis for discussions at the workshop and inform the recommendations made in this next steps memo.

## The built environment and fiscal and economic health

Communities around the nation are always concerned about their fiscal and economic health. This is especially true of small towns and rural regions.

Fiscal health means a local government's bottom line: Does the life cycle cost of a project's investment—upfront infrastructure, ongoing service provision and eventual repair and maintenance—cost more than what it produces in tax revenue?

Economic health includes the general economic well-being of the community and its region: How does new investment and development add to or detract from the creation of economic competitiveness, fiscal efficiency and sustainability, jobs, jobs access, retention of local youth, cultural identity and wealth?

In approaching these questions for Pagosa Springs, as in any part of the country today, it is important to bear three trends in mind:

### **Our nation's demographics are changing in a way that profoundly affects the housing market in large cities and rural areas alike.**

Demographic trends are moving the housing market strongly away from conventional suburban housing.<sup>1</sup> That presents a significant opportunity for rural communities to compete for new growth. The two biggest demographic groups in the nation—retiring Baby Boomers and Millennials (18-39 year-olds) — both express strong preferences for a more walkable, urban/village lifestyle.

Data tells us that ten percent of all city-dwelling Americans would prefer to live in rural locales if those places are walkable, connected to the larger region and possess a strong sense of character and place. That represents a pool of 26 million potential transplants that the area could compete to attract. Indeed, forty percent of Millennials prefer to live in rural places, provided those places have a vibrant rural fabric. The vast

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<sup>1</sup> See; "The Changing Shape of American Cities," Luke J. Juday, Weldon Cooper Center for Public "Demographic Reversal: Cities Thrive, Suburbs Sputter," William H. Frey, Brookings Institution, State of Metropolitan America Series, June 29, 2012.

majority of net new households formed have no children at home, and most of them are one- and two-person households, which are much more likely to prefer a walking lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> These trends depart from those experienced in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The formula for economic growth is changing.**

Business growth used to be driven by large corporations that operated in a fashion that was both private in ownership structure and linear in manufacturing and production. In the past, new research breakthroughs occurred in sealed research laboratories controlled by the companies that owned them. Manufacturing and other business processes occurred in assembly-line situations, with little interaction across or inside industries. These conditions led to communities that featured large, sealed-off campuses and tended to be linear in their arrangements.

Today, business growth is driven by collaboration among many types of entities — private companies, research institutions, universities, and others — that must interact frequently and work together creatively. This trend requires cities and communities that encourage interaction and collaboration — the opposite of the older model described above. How communities are designed directly impacts their ability to create interactive and collaborative environments.

Most significantly, the innovation economy, as it is sometimes called, depends heavily on skilled workers. The companies that are driving innovation are pursuing highly educated talent, especially among Millennials. Increasingly, companies find it necessary to locate in places that their target workforce wants to live in. Increasingly, that means walkable communities. **People on the move are looking to relocate to places with a high quality of life. In fact, they are willing to sacrifice salary for location. High quality of life is defined more and more by the character of the town center than by the size of a front yard or square footage of a home.**

Every region, small or large, has ubiquitous “big box” retailers that are successful and generate major sales tax receipts. However, because they are ubiquitous and the

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<sup>2</sup> “Suburbs Try to Prevent an Exodus as Young Adults Move to Cities and Stay,” Joseph Berger, New York Times, April 16, 2014 (on-line at, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/nyregion/suburbs-try-to-hold-onto-young-adults-as-exodus-to-cities-appears-to-grow.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/nyregion/suburbs-try-to-hold-onto-young-adults-as-exodus-to-cities-appears-to-grow.html?_r=0).)

“See ya, suburbs: More want to live in the big city,” Greg Toppo and Paul Overberg, USA TODAY, March 27, 2014.

“Why urban demographers are right about the trend toward downtowns and walkable suburbs,” Kaid Benfield, bettercities.net, February 28, 2014.

“NAR 2013 Community Preference Survey: Americans Prefer to Live in Mixed-Use, Walkable Communities,” National Association of Realtors, November 1, 2013.

same in every community, they do not create a shopping experience that is unique to a particular community. With online buying playing a bigger role for consumers (especially for bargain hunters), many are looking for a more authentic experience when they shop in person. This type of retail occurs most readily in downtowns along walkable city blocks.

In Pagosa Springs' case, upscale and craft retail clearly appeals to out of town guests. The same experience that visitors find special or unique also appeal to Pagosans in the midst of their daily lives. There are retail and dining choices within downtown that appeal to them as well.

There is a distinctive niche in downtown Pagosa Springs for additional small specialty retail, restaurants, and coffee shops that will attract locals as well. These types of establishments should make no effort to compete with Walmart. Rather, they should seek out niches that Walmart cannot or has no interest in filling.

Major retailers that once developed in suburban locations only are now adopting a retail presence and footprint suitable for a storefront in a downtown. This is especially true in, for example, Franklin, TN. In addition, we are experiencing more online buying and some retailers are already imagining a downtown presence that is more cost effective because it has limited staff and no stock. Customers select their item locally and it is shipped to their home.

Consumers are demonstrating strong preferences for shopping locally at unique establishments that offer handcrafted, regional products. They prefer this experience to be a short distance from their homes and offices and within a comfortably walkable town center. This is bringing new value to traditional walkable main streets. Pagosa Springs is well suited to taking advantage of this shift in consumer choice.

### **Sprawling development patterns are making it more difficult for local governments to balance their budgets.**

Development patterns that sprawl outward from town center require extensive investments in capital infrastructure and ongoing service delivery. Sprawling development requires more infrastructure to serve relatively few people and requires service providers such as firefighters and school buses to travel farther. More compact development patterns reduce both life-cycle infrastructure costs and operating costs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/research/the-fiscal-implications-of-development-patterns/>

A 2013 study by Smart Growth America, *Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development*<sup>4</sup>, concluded that, compared to conventional suburban development, smart growth patterns can achieve savings of one-third or more in upfront infrastructure cost, and 10% annually in ongoing operating expenses. Smart growth development patterns can generate up to ten times more revenue on a per-acre basis.

More recently, SGA's *Core Values: Why American Companies are Moving Downtown*<sup>5</sup> examines the characteristics, motives, and preferences of companies that have either relocated, opened new offices, or expanded into walkable downtowns between 2010 and 2015. Smart Growth America partnered with global real estate advisors Cushman & Wakefield to identify nearly 500 companies that have made such a move in the past five years. Of those, Smart Growth America interviewed representatives from more than 40 companies to gain a better understanding of this emerging trend. These companies' new locations are in areas that are dramatically more walkable than previous sites. The average Walk Score of companies' previous locations was 52; the average Walk Score of the new locations is 88. Similarly, Transit Scores grew from an average of 52 to 79 and Bike Scores bumped from an average of 66 to 78.

This trend is visible across the country, in big cities and small ones alike and should be a factor in the economic development strategy of all communities, including Pagosa Springs.

**Note:** *Not all of these trends will be completely relevant in every situation. Rural communities are more reliant on private automobile ownership, and transit is often less feasible in these situations. But it is important to bear all three in mind in considering the fiscal and economic health of any community.*

## Participant viewpoints

### Vision for Pagosa Springs

When asked to define their vision for Pagosa Springs in the next 10-15 years, workshop participants identified the following characteristics:

#### *Arts, Recreation and Culture*

- Art and food hubs including incentives for artists
- Greater diversity of food and restaurant choices

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<sup>4</sup> The full report can be downloaded at, <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/building-better-budgets>.

<sup>5</sup> The report is available for download from <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/core-values-why-american-companies-are-moving-downtown/>

- More public events – take advantage of the amphitheater in the greenhouse project
- Downtown recreation center that is friendly to kids and all generations
- Arts and entertainment districts

*Development patterns and transportation options:*

- Infill and denser development
- Activity nodes including a walkable uptown with mixed use
- Uptown and downtown development nodes that are complementary
- Public transit connecting uptown and downtown as well as connecting tourists to ski areas
- Reuse of existing or vacant buildings such as the middle school and old courthouse
- Increased accessibility via walking
- Shared parking behind prime real estate with better walking / accessibility to destinations
- Use financial tools to promote or discourage development in certain locations

*Educational Opportunities:*

- Better schools and more educational opportunities for all life stages including vocational tech

*Family / Children:*

- Make town the perfect place to raise a family
- Opportunities for youth and teens

*Housing:*

- Greater housing choices, particularly downtown, including housing stock in line with jobs
- More affordable / workforce housing which will involve both public and private sector
- Creation of a nonprofit housing authority

*Identity:*

- One community, one identity
- Retain small town roots, including reenergizing agricultural, ranching and equestrian history
- Community champions
- Better sense of place

### *Jobs / Economic Development:*

- More diverse job base with good (livable) pay
- Business incubation to invest in and sustain new businesses
- Better broadband and cellular access
- Job creation from within that makes residents come downtown
- Conference center to bring people in during shoulder season
- Expand on geothermal

### *Local Government (Town and County)*

- More cooperation
- Unified town and county government
- Vision / plans that “stick” even with pressure
- Integrate and coordinate objectives of various plans
- Accountability
- Increased community engagement including more active citizen groups in public decisions
- Public servants accountable to a vision statement

### *Outdoor amenities*

- More trails and greenspace, including a more active Riverwalk that is extended as far as possible
- Conserve open land within urban area

### Opportunity Sites

#### *Adobe / Town Site*

A fire destroyed this building in October 2016, displacing 16 businesses. Redevelopment of the Adobe / town site – to include the nearby bell tower site and parking lot as a unified project – represents an important decision for the town in the future of its downtown. Workshop participants suggested that the site might be redeveloped as a downtown shopping mall and food emporium with residential above. They noted that affordable housing should be an important aspect of the project. Parking could potentially be underground below the site.

A well designed public plaza or square at the adjacent bell tower site would help bring people to downtown and, once there, around the corner to keep exploring. It is debatable among residents whether the bell tower should remain or be redeveloped into another use on the Adobe / town site.

### *Waterworks Site*

The San Juan Historical Society Museum is located at the old Waterworks site. Workshop participants suggested that the site be repurposed by expanding the museum and potentially providing space for Pagosa Springs' artist community. The site would also be a good location for a mixed-use development including office space.

As Pagosa Springs is the location of the headwaters for the San Juan River, participants suggested maximizing river views, providing interpretive signage, and ensuring the site has good pedestrian connections to the rest of downtown.

### *Springs Partners site*

Participants generally liked the mixed-use nature of the proposal for this site. However, they expressed a need to balance higher density with a sense of scale with the surrounding neighborhoods and downtown. The site should integrate geothermal and provide various types of housing at different price points. Traditional design aspects are appealing to residents including porches and walkability. They noted that a parking garage in one corner of the community would allow people to get to the community.

Based on the SGA team's observations and the small group discussions at the workshop, the following is a summary of Pagosa Springs' existing assets, obstacles / disconnects, and a summary of actions for success.

### Uptown

Workshop participants considered the connection between uptown and downtown. They discussed a vision for the district that adds new land uses and services that are complementary to downtown.

Those in attendance noted that uptown tends to have community level services rather than tourist level services. There is a need for some type of centerpiece for the district – other than Walmart or the City Market. Uptown also needs additional recreational and parkland for residents. It is troubling that people who work in uptown – which is where many low paying jobs are located – are unable to live there. The district also has several opportunity parcels.

### Highway 160 Improvements

Workshop participants noted the need for public input before planning and design begins on this project. Once money is spent, it is hard to get what the public wants later in the process. A task force, perhaps setup by the Town Council, would help

ensure that the public remains engaged throughout the process. The Chamber of Commerce would also be helpful.

Those in attendance recommended looking at accident data to understand what is happening along the highway and to identify where the problem spots are. This is anticipated to occur this summer. Residents would like to see both more crosswalks and traffic calming in downtown and they identified a number of locations. They also recommended that the community consider other sidewalk improvements.

Placemaking was an important part of this conversation and workshop participants offered suggestions for improving and increasing the number of public spaces downtown. Sidewalk lighting could also be improved downtown as could wayfinding through signage.

### Assets

- Mineral springs that have long been known for their healing and rejuvenation potential
- Other natural amenities:
  - Location in the San Juan National Forest
  - San Juan River
  - Wealth of outdoor activities
  - Parks and riverwalk
  - Geothermal
- Several art galleries, restaurants, and local businesses in downtown
- Two existing development nodes (uptown and downtown)
- Historic downtown structures

### Opportunities

- Thousands of summer residents and visitors resulting in increased lodging taxes
- Increasing local sales tax revenues
- Several parcels in town identified as opportunities for redevelopment
- Expansion of riverwalk
- Comprehensive planning process allows the town to create a new vision for itself and how it wants to develop in the future

### Obstacles/Disconnects

- Perceived lack of coordination between town and Archuleta County
- Limited housing choices and affordable units
- Few job opportunities outside of the tourism industry
- Need to invest in basic infrastructure for broadband

- Limited higher education opportunities in the town results in many young adults leaving the community
- Lack of a cohesive community identity

### Actions for Success

- Utilize the opportunity parcels to revitalize downtown, create new housing units, and new economic opportunity
- Improve broadband Internet infrastructure
- More housing options and affordability
- Create a marketing plan and brand encompassing a community identity
- Promote collaboration between the town and Archuleta County including a shared vision

Based on the SGA team’s observations from the walking and windshield tour, the input received during the workshop, and breadth of work in other rural communities, the SGA team offers the following recommendations and associated action steps.

## Recommendations

### 1. Invest in the redevelopment of the Adobe / town site as a catalyst that recognizes downtown as the heart of the community for both locals and tourists.

During the public presentation, Mayor Volger – referring to downtown – noted that Pagosa Springs needs a healthy heart or everything else will die. The SGA team agrees with his assessment and encourages the community to take advantage of its current amenities as well as existing and future redevelopment opportunities. Downtown is not just for tourists – locals clearly love it too!

At present, downtown Pagosa Springs has several projects in the works that have the potential to serve as catalysts for future development serving both locals and visitors. Each of these projects, if designed to promote walkability and compact development, represents the opportunity for new economic opportunity and more affordable housing units in Pagosa Springs. Combined, they offer an opportunity to reshape downtown. Downtown is ripe for transformation into a more comprehensive town center that continues to attract tourists while providing housing and opportunity for both current and future residents.

The SGA team strongly believes that redevelopment of the Adobe building and the adjacent bell tower along with its parking lot, as a single unified property, is the first order of business for Pagosa Springs. This combined site, referred to below as the

Adobe / town site, offers the best opportunity to create a catalyst for future development in downtown attracting both tourists and locals.

The Adobe building had a 115 year history in downtown and went through several incarnations. Its place in the town's history and the local economy should be remembered and celebrated. A few days after the fire, Pagosa Springs Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Mary Jo Coulehan referred to the fire as "one of the greatest business disasters we've had". Her comment speaks to the importance of this building – and the site on which it stood – to the business community and downtown as a whole.

Yet, the tragic fire resulting in the loss of 16 businesses, including a saloon, now represents an opportunity to transform the parcel on which it stood, combined with the adjacent bell tower site, into an economic opportunity for the town. Since the town owns the bell tower and parking lot, they have a leverage point for the full redevelopment of the site including the Adobe building. They should use that leverage to convene a meeting with the property owner of the Adobe building with the purpose of addressing the entire Adobe / town site through a master plan that the community then implements.

Utmost consideration should be given to the redevelopment of the Adobe / town site as a downtown shopping area with restaurants – and residential units above – unified by a vibrant public space that attracts both locals and visitors alike. As shown in SGA's fiscal impact analysis for Pagosa Springs, this type of development will result in lower infrastructure capital and maintenance costs over the coming decades than if these new housing units are sited further from downtown.

The community itself must decide whether to preserve or remove the existing bell tower as part of the public space on the redeveloped Adobe / town site. The bell tower could be incorporated into the new site design and create a recognizable landmark for downtown. This would help create a sense of arrival into the town center. On the other hand, the community might be better served via a larger plaza area with more amenities. The plaza, if furnished with seating and other amenities, encourages visitors and residents to linger in downtown Pagosa Springs before or after eating at nearby restaurants and shopping in the numerous small stores.

A plaza at this location is also ideal for supplementing space for community festivals. Lewis Street has been the site of at least one annual festival in the past – a car show. As recommended below, the SGA team recommends utilizing Lewis

Street for additional festivals that bring both residents and visitors into downtown.

Parking facilities, beyond on-street parking, should not be located between the sidewalk and buildings. The sidewalks should be lined with active building fronts with parking located behind, below, or above.

This can be accomplished by creating the desired parking wrapped by buildings that face the public infrastructure thereby containing the parking within the building envelope. Appendix A provides a diagram showing the SGA team's recommended design of parking facilities if surface parking is selected. While at first glance, surface parking may be cheaper to create, the community would be taking valuable ground floor space out of a more productive land use such as commercial or residential.

### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Proactively meet with the owner of the Adobe / town site to discuss partnering with them on redevelopment of the combined site (Adobe building, bell tower, and adjacent parking lot) into a site attracting both locals and tourists.
- Create a working group to discuss a unified redevelopment of the Adobe / town site including the adjacent bell tower property. Work towards reaching a community vision on next steps for this site.

Consider retaining an urban design consultant to help the community create this vision for the site and for downtown.

### **Medium-term Actions (6-12 months)**

- Research funding options (such as USDA grants and loans, low to moderate income tax credits, TIF districts, historic tax credits and New Market Tax Credits) to pay for the redevelopment of the Adobe and bell tower sites.
- Continue partnering with the site owner to keep the project moving forward.

### **Long-term Actions (12 months and longer)**

- Using available funding sources implement the community's vision for the Adobe and bell tower sites.

## **2. Create a walkable mixed-use development on the Springs Partners site including amenities for both residents and visitors.**

The 27 acre Springs Partners site (also known as Springs Village) adjacent to downtown has a vested rights agreement in place until 2022 that stipulates the type of development that can occur on it. Two sketch plans for the site have been developed, both envisioning about 550,000 square feet of various types of

development.

One plan includes a bridge across the San Juan River at 5<sup>th</sup> Street while the other does not. The vested rights agreement assumes that the town will pay for the bridge and a connection if possible; otherwise, it assumes development will proceed without the bridge. The SGA team encourages the town to identify a funding plan for this new bridge.

A signature hotel and a conference center have been discussed as a part of the site plan in addition to a mixed-use development with residential, restaurants, offices and retail. The development will include 3 story townhomes, apartment/condo buildings, and 2-3 story mixed use buildings. In addition, the site will take advantage of the location along the river to provide connections to the riverwalk.<sup>6</sup> The site would have features and amenities attracting both locals and tourists.

A new hotel could help alleviate the pressure placed on existing housing units resulting in their conversion to short-term housing. Additional hotel rooms in downtown Pagosa Springs will be a boon to the increase in tourists that the town has seen that has resulted in existing housing units become short-term rentals.

As with the Adobe and bell tower site, concentrating development on this site (versus the edges of town or elsewhere in Archuleta County) would be expected to have a positive net fiscal impact on long-term infrastructure capital and maintenance costs. This was demonstrated in SGA's fiscal impact analysis prepared for the community.

The SGA team recommends that the buildings constructed on the site wrap around any parking lots or structures so that the buildings, which can be residential or commercial, face the street and the San Juan River. This will help to further disguise the parking. SGA's recommended configuration for surface parking, if that option is selected, is shown in Appendix A. The parking should be accessible from side streets or rear alleys to allow the major streets to remain attractive walking environments for pedestrians. This will maximize the best use of the site for those walking between various destinations. As noted above, structured parking – although more expensive to construct – would allow a more productive use for the ground level, such as commercial or residential.

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<sup>6</sup> Source for description of development: <http://pagosadailypost.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/21Bridge5thStreetDevelopment.jpg>

### Short-term Actions (3-6 months)

- Proactively meet with the owner of the Springs Partners site to discuss the development of the site in a manner consistent with the comprehensive plan.

### Medium- and Long-term Actions (6 months and longer)

- Research funding options (such as USDA grants and loans, low to moderate income tax credits, TIF districts, historic tax credits and New Market Tax Credits) to pay for the site development including a new pedestrian bridge.
- Continue partnering with the site owner to keep the project moving forward.

### 3. Invest in techniques to encourage placemaking and streetscaping in downtown – including taking advantage of the Highway 160 redevelopment project – to establish a more cohesive sense of place.

Downtown already has a natural attraction that draws people in with the San Juan River and the associated Riverwalk. Parks are in easy walking distance via the Riverwalk. There is an overlook for views of the water and hot springs. The water and associated amenities are natural focal points for downtown and should be celebrated. While downtown's location adjacent to the San Juan River already makes it an attractive place to spend time, there are further placemaking and streetscaping improvements that will encourage residents and visitors alike to linger and patronize local businesses and restaurants.

#### Highway 160 signage / murals

Pagosa Springs is located along U.S. Highway 160, which connects the town to Durango and other destinations within the Four Corners region. It continues west to Arizona and east to Missouri. This important national roadway brings thousands of people through Pagosa Springs each year – some with the intention of stopping in town, while others keep going.

The town's location along Highway 160 offers the community a perfect opportunity to market its amenities and attractions to those passing through the area who would otherwise not stop. The community should invest in additional signage and infrastructure to entice drivers to slow down as they drive through downtown – and hopefully stop for a visit to experience the local culture and amenities that make Pagosa Springs more than just a town to pass through along Highway 160.

There is currently a small "Welcome to Pagosa Springs" sign on at least the western entry to town along Highway 160. A larger artistic, architectural gateway on each end of the community that does not infringe travel along the highway right

of way itself would serve as an inviting entrance to town. These landmarks could include a moniker such as the existing “Refreshingly Authentic” one adopted by the Visitor Center. This welcome would encourage drivers to become visitors and serve as an invitation to experience the local culture and assets as they drive along Highway 160 through town.

With a continued series of signage and visual markers, drivers will be more intrigued to stop and eat lunch or sip coffee from one of the local restaurants when they reach downtown. Seasonal street flags<sup>7</sup> throughout downtown would also add to the draw of the town center as a place to visit. The result is that Pagosa Springs will become more than a blip on the map they must pass through on the way to their final destination.

The goal is to get people to take a closer look at the town. Once out of their cars, they will be more likely to notice the other great assets around them. For example, these unexpected visitors may decide to extend their stay by browsing one of the local retail stores, walking on the riverwalk, or exploring one of the parks.

The installation of traffic calming infrastructure – such as center islands and additional bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure – will further encourage drivers to slow down while passing through downtown. Once visitors are already driving more slowly, this will increase the likelihood that they will consider stopping to explore.

#### Placemaking and streetscaping efforts

Spaces for outdoor entertainment, including music and arts, as well as for community and holiday celebrations will bring additional people to downtown and encourage those already there to linger. Quality landscaping and streetscapes will also make the downtown more pleasant to explore. This directly influences the success of downtown businesses. Pagosa Springs already has several events in its downtown parks throughout the year – including the 4<sup>th</sup> of July as well as several music festivals throughout the year.

During the tour, our guides noted that the annual car show closes down Lewis Street for a weekend each year in June. Additional community celebrations – including those that turn downtown streets into pedestrian-only corridors for a period of time – will bring both residents and visitors into downtown and encourage

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, this flag from Unicoi, TN:  
[http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/image/2016/06/23/x700\\_q30/Unicoi-Arts-Grant-9-3.jpg](http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/image/2016/06/23/x700_q30/Unicoi-Arts-Grant-9-3.jpg)

them to explore.

The community should seek additional locations in downtown for public art. Workshop participants noted that the wall at Goodman's would be a good location for a mural or other artwork that draws people to Lewis Street. Archuleta School District #50 students or local artists could create additional artwork for this or other identified venues.

Trash receptacles and additional seating would be an asset to downtown, perhaps funded by a merchants association, local tourism tax revenues, or another entity. These amenities would beautify the area and encourage people to walk through the town center by providing comfortable places to rest during their explorations.

### Historic Preservation

The historic fabric of downtown defines Pagosa Springs. While the big box retailers appear nearly the same in every community, downtowns do not. It is the historic fabric of downtown that is truly definitive of the community and its place in the history of the region.

Downtown currently has a historic district with limited boundaries plus additional potentially eligible buildings in the surrounding area. The SGA team recommends taking steps to celebrate the historic district through signage as described below while exploring whether the district can be expanded.

The Pagosa Springs Visitor Center has a self-guided walking tour of the historic district available for downtown on its website. Their website also indicates that guided walking tours are periodically available. These walking tours should be offered whenever possible, perhaps in connection with the several festivals and other special events that occur in Pagosa Springs throughout the year. In addition, the self-guided walking tour should be kept up-to-date as changes to downtown occur over time.

Finally, the maps of downtown already provided on paper through the Pagosa Springs Visitor Center (and the historic district self-guided tour) should be ideally consolidated and supplemented with additional wayfinding signage in downtown directing visitors to major amenities and attractions, again while describing and celebrating the history of the city center.

Historic preservation can play an important role in attracting tourists. By

celebrating the historic downtown and marketing this aspect of downtown to tourists (see below), the town can bring in new visitors.

#### Creating a bicycle and pedestrian-oriented downtown

The CDOT project to redevelop Highway 160 (Pagosa Street) through downtown offers opportunities to create more pedestrian and bicycle friendly infrastructure along this main thoroughfare. The SGA team noticed that pedestrians tend to jaywalk across this busy roadway due to a lack of available crosswalks. Additional crosswalks will encourage safety while making exploration of local businesses and other amenities more pleasant and enjoyable. Specifically, as noted at both the workshop and by the SGA team, midblock crossings are needed at the following locations:

- Midblock crossing to Lewis Street
- Midblock crosswalk at Pagosa Baking Company

The time to discuss the need for additional crosswalks in downtown along Pagosa Street is now – before money is spent on the planning and design effort for the project.

While placing crosswalks on Highway 160 through downtown may require additional coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation, crosswalks on town- or county-owned roadways are more straightforward. Creating a walkable, pedestrian-oriented environment throughout downtown is critical, not only for safety, but also to create an environment where people explore and linger.

Creating and implementing a Complete Streets Policy within Pagosa Springs (see recommendation #9 below) will demonstrate the local commitment to these modes of transportation.

#### Waterworks Site

This site, which includes the Pagosa Springs Museum, has the opportunity to become a multipurpose facility that celebrates the natural amenities of the town while providing space for cultural and economic pursuits. It has received State Historic Fund Grants for its restoration.

Workshop participants noted efforts to expand the museum on the site while providing space for mixed use such as retail and offices. Echoing the cultural

theme, the site could also be ripe for art spaces and studios.

The SGA team encourages the community to work together on a viable plan for this site that celebrates both the community's history and its natural features.

### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Create a task force of Pagosans to represent the community throughout the Highway 160 improvement project and encourage the Chamber of Commerce to rally downtown businesses to participate in the process.
- As part of the Complete Streets policy development (described below), consider where bicycle lanes could be added to offer connections to nearby residential neighborhoods and other destinations.
- Inspect and where required, paint / repaint crosswalks in downtown on town- / county-owned roadways.

### **Medium-term Actions (6-12 months)**

- Begin discussions with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to utilize Highway 160 right of way to place signage – including monuments, street flags, and markers where they will be visible by motorists.
- Begin work on any sidewalks identified as needing improvements and design them to be Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant.
- Implement benches and trash receptacles at suitable locations throughout the downtown such as pocket parks on currently vacant lots to encourage residents and visitors to rest and linger.
- Consolidate the several downtown maps already available by creating a comprehensive downtown map (via a cell phone app and on paper) showing historic buildings, art galleries, restaurants, recreational sites, and other amenities
- Install additional wayfinding and historical signage that allows visitors to explore and learn about the history of downtown.
- Consider temporarily repurposing one or more parking spaces as outdoor dining at one or more restaurants during warmer months.<sup>8</sup>
- Determine as a community how to proceed with redevelopment of the Waterworks site.

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<sup>8</sup> As an example, see <http://archive.jsonline.com/business/two-east-side-parking-spaces-replaced-by-14-outdoor-dining-tables-b9982256z1-220860751.html/>

### Long-term Actions (12 months and longer)

- Design and place monuments and markers along Highway 160. Ensure that this signage, once placed, has attractive landscaping that receives ongoing maintenance.
- Leverage existing transportation assets found with various entities city, county, or faith community to provide limited transportation system during special events, to move people between parking, event venues, and other important downtown destinations. These agencies have access to transportation vehicles such as vans that could be made available during special events.
- While downtown already has some rotating examples of public art, create a plan for public art in the downtown that involves the community, both as participants in the process and as artists.
- Investigate lighting design to increase pedestrian safety during evening and nighttime hours.
- Consider the application of the following features to increase pedestrian safety and visibility to drivers:
  - Traffic calming techniques such as a planted median in the middle of Main Street / Pagosa Street.
  - Additional signage or raised crosswalks
  - Different pavement types or colors to distinguish them from the roadway pavement
  - High-Intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) or Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs)<sup>9</sup>
- Implement bike lanes to connect the downtown with neighborhoods and recreational destinations
- Add additional human-scale street lighting around sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as at important destinations, in the downtown. Ensure there is sufficient lighting on connection routes to nearby neighborhoods.

#### 4. Develop a sense of place in uptown.

Despite downtown being the “heart” of the community, as noted above, this does not mean that it is the only area of town worthy of focus. Uptown, with its range of community services, is another district of the community that has potential for further development into a second node of activity.

At present, uptown has several important amenities for the community including:

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on this technology, see <http://www.bikewalknc.org/2015/04/understanding-pedestrian-signals/>

- Health care facilities - Pagosa Springs Medical Center and the new Axis Health facility
- Shopping - City Market Grocery Store and Walmart
- Recreational facilities – such as the golf course, lakes, San Juan National Forest access including trails, and the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association recreational center

Workshop participants noted the different role uptown serves in the community compared to downtown. This district has more community-level services whereas downtown tends to have more services for tourists. The major healthcare facility is located in uptown, as is the Walmart store and other large format retail. While many jobs are located in uptown, there are fewer housing options, particularly for those in low wage jobs.

As noted above, a major concern among residents is the lack of a central gathering place within the district that draws people in. As workshop participants noted, the Walmart and City Market – although a significant regional draw – do not fill this need. These stores do not provide the sense of place and community gathering that the district needs.

Workshop participants also expressed a desire for recreational amenities and parkland in uptown. Further, there are several opportunity parcels within the district that could be redeveloped as mixed-use sites including additional retail and housing.

Yet there are opportunities to create new services and amenities for current and future residents and workers in the district. A subarea plan for uptown will help the community identify a vision and focus for the district. Aspects to consider in the plan include:

- One or more of the identified opportunity parcels – perhaps the one located closest to Walmart – as a mixed use catalyst for the district (similar to the Adobe / town site in downtown)
- A new use for the Pagosa Lodge, which has been closed for an extended period of time
- New recreational and park amenities
- More affordable housing options so that those who work in uptown are able to live there if they choose

It is critical that any discussion and planning for uptown must include and engage all of those living within the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association. These individuals may feel disconnected from uptown due to their distance but are very much impacted by what happens there. Some of these individuals have expressed a need for downtown level services in uptown.

Uptown is unique from downtown – and should remain that way. By creating a plan for the district moving forward, Pagosa Springs will be able to increase uptown’s value to the entire community.

### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Create a committee of uptown stakeholders – including individuals living in all areas of the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association – to help create a vision for uptown in conjunction with input from the general public.

### **Medium- and Long-term Actions (6 months and longer)**

- Prepare and implement a subarea plan for uptown that expresses the community’s vision for its future and creates a path towards creating the amenities and assets within uptown desired by the community.

## **5. Market the town’s amenities and lifestyle to bring new residents, economic opportunity, and visitors to town.**

The SGA team repeatedly heard from workshop participants that they came to Pagosa Springs for the lifestyle. They were attracted to the town’s natural beauty, small town feel, recreational activities, and other unique aspects of the town and region. As noted above, there are opportunities to attract visitors who happen to be passing through. A more comprehensive marketing plan will enable the town to bring in more visitors, new residents, and new businesses, all of whom deliberately choose Pagosa Springs. Pagosa Springs should be proud of its natural, cultural, and historic amenities.

A marketing campaign for the town would help advertise the community both online and offline. This campaign should strive to embody the unique features Pagosa Springs has to offer visitors and potential new residents. A marketing image or logo as part of this campaign will help bring an identity to the town. The campaign will also provide new opportunities to market local businesses to new customers located both within and outside the community.

The campaign should market the community’s proximity to nearby destinations

such as Durango as well as to visitors and residents of most distant places like Denver, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque. The town government, the Visitor Center, Archuleta County, a business group, or another existing community group could run the campaign.

An action plan bringing together all of the town's unique cultural and natural features will create a marketable "Pagosa Experience". The goal of this plan will be to take stock in what the area already has to offer and what it could offer to new visitors, residents, and businesses. The town will then work together as a community to implement the plan and leverage the area's resources to the outside world. It will provide a mechanism to encourage new businesses and employers to relocate to town.

As noted above, the Pagosa Springs Visitors Center already makes an effort to market the historic downtown to visitors through self-guided tours and maps. Further, by improving wayfinding signage and historic markers in downtown, the community will call out its history.

It is notable that the Pagosa Springs Visitor Center<sup>10</sup>, the town itself<sup>11</sup> and the local Chamber of Commerce<sup>12</sup> already have a viable web presence and that the Chamber of Commerce makes regular use of Facebook. By creating a more extensive online presence for the community – particularly as the town invests in broadband Internet access as recommended below – the town will have, at its disposal, new ways to market itself. As part of this marketing plan, local businesses may find new customers who never even visit Pagosa Springs in person to make a purchase.

### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Take stock in Pagosa Springs' local assets as a community – including its natural, cultural, and historic features.
- Prepare a marketing campaign (including an image or logo) and an action plan that describes how to market the town – including to new visitors as well as potential new residents and business owners, both within the community and beyond.

### **Medium- and Long-term Actions (6 months and longer)**

- Implement the marketing campaign in the community.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.visitpagosasprings.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.pagosasprings.co.gov/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://pagosachamber.com/>

## **6. Invest in broadband Internet access to attract both new residents and new types of businesses.**

### Broadband Internet Access

Numerous workshop participants highlighted the need for more reliable and faster broadband Internet access in Pagosa Springs.

Communities like Pagosa Springs are seeking new opportunities to drive job growth but the inadequate broadband access inhibits economic development and the attraction of new businesses and residents. Businesses demand fast and reliable connection speeds to move and manage information efficiently and to stay competitive in an increasingly tech-oriented economy. Further, broadband Internet access is one of the keys for attracting Millennials to the community.

Refer to Appendix D for links to additional resources for planning and implementing broadband Internet access in small towns like Pagosa Springs.

### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Engage potential broadband and network maintenance providers to begin initial conversation about expansion of broadband access.

### **Medium-term Actions (within 6-12 months)**

- Conduct survey of Pagosa Springs' existing assets that can be used for broadband implementation such as conduit infrastructure, utilities infrastructure, water towers, etc.

### **Long-term Actions (12 months and longer)**

- Secure funding for upfront infrastructure installation costs for broadband access in downtown Pagosa Springs, as well as funding to support ongoing operations of downtown Wi-Fi.
- Develop and advertise a broadband Internet Request for Proposal.

## **7. Look for opportunities to increase affordable housing within and connected to downtown - including for Millennials and an aging population – along with the complementary services required to meet daily needs.**

During the workshop, residents identified a need for affordable housing as well as a need to address the needs of an aging community. Housing for older residents must take into account that they are less likely to be licensed drivers and may have mobility issues making walking to needed services challenging. Therefore, any assisted living facility or other senior housing should not be far removed from the walkable downtown. Seniors should be able to easily reach their daily needs on

foot or via reliable transit including groceries and medical appointments. Millennials also tend to prefer living in areas where they can walk to their daily needs.

It is also critical to note that attracting and keeping these populations requires providing the services they need – fresh food choices, health care, and other support services.

Further, certain downtown buildings may be ideal to convert into housing for Millennials, artists, senior citizens, or others who may lack good transportation.

### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Research potential local, state, and federal funding mechanisms for affordable housing. Appendix B includes USDA and other potential resources for funding.
- Reach out to potential nongovernmental affordable housing partners - developers, churches, and other parties -- to assess interest in creating affordable housing in or connected to the downtown.
- Convene a committee of seniors to understand their housing needs and existing mobility issues in the community.

### **Medium- and Long-term Actions (6 months or longer)**

- Working with identified affordable housing partners, governmental and nongovernmental, seek to develop and construct a model project in or directly connected to downtown.
- Solicit additional medical care providers, particularly primary care providers, to open offices downtown, perhaps in conjunction with the marketing plan recommended above.
- Solicit the reestablishment of a nonprofit housing authority in the community.
- Seek funding to increase the frequency and service hours of the Mountain Express Transit service throughout the community to provide reliable connections to daily needs who choose not to or who cannot drive themselves.

## **8. Work to coordinate Town of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County services and policies wherever possible.**

Not including special districts, there are two governmental bodies in play in Pagosa Springs – Archuleta County and the town as the county’s only incorporated jurisdiction and major generator of local sales tax. In addition, many residents who live in the county, but outside town limits, still consider themselves Pagosans.

Given the sales tax arrangements, these two entities are necessarily tied together.

This arrangement has great positive upside for Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County if and when the government structures plan, coordinate, and execute together as they each bring different strengths. If there is not that coordination, then overlapping governments can produce more turf issues than future vision. When local officials and residents hear and respect each other, they will be successful in planning for their shared future together.

SGA recommends that the two government bodies redouble their efforts to work together on issues impacting both. In addition, creating a plan for future growth for both the Town of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County – keeping in mind the lessons learned from the fiscal impact analysis – will help both entities focus and target their redevelopment to avoid disagreements with each other.

#### **Short-term Actions (3-6 months)**

- Recognizing each other's strengths, convene a task force of elected officials and/or staff from each jurisdiction (Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County) to discuss shared goals and a vision for the community

#### **Medium-term Actions (within 6-12 months)**

- Determine whether the jurisdictions can commit to working together to implement select planning and development projects that benefit all of the citizens in the region.

#### **Long-term Actions (12 months and longer)**

- Consider whether a joint town and county government planning advisory council is viable.
- Create a plan for future growth for both the Town of Pagosa Springs and for Archuleta County.

### **9. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Strategy.**

Pagosa Springs should adopt and implement a Complete Streets policy to ensure that all future street design efforts consider the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and persons with disabilities. The town should then work with Archuleta County and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to adopt their own policies and to implement Complete Streets throughout the region. Adopting a Complete Streets Policy demonstrates the town's commitment to establish, design, and implement transportation improvements, addressing and balancing the needs of citizens of all ages and abilities.

Refer to Appendix C for a list of helpful Complete Streets resources online.

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, an ideal Complete Streets policy:

- Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete the street
- Specifies that the term “all users” includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles.
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
- Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
- Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy

Taking a Complete Streets policy from paper into practice is not easy, but providing some momentum with specific implementation steps can help. Some policies establish a task force or commission to work toward policy implementation. There are four key steps for successful implementation:

1. Restructure procedures to accommodate all users on every project;
2. Develop new design policies and guides;
3. Offer workshops and other educational opportunities to transportation professionals, community leaders, and residents; and
4. Institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users. Each of these steps requires agencies to think in new ways and, in order to do so they must include a wider range of stakeholders in decision-making.

### **Short-term Actions (within 3-6 months)**

- Create a timeline for the adoption of a Complete Streets policy within three to six months. The timeline should consider:
  - Who needs to be involved in the development of the plan?

- Local elected officials and Pagosa Springs staff
- Smart Growth America recommends the city work to bring seniors and people with disabilities together with CDOT to work on accessibility issues
  - It is recommended that a meeting and tour with CDOT be setup to demonstrate the accessibility issues some citizens face on a regular basis when interacting with state highways
  - This is a fantastic opportunity to affect change not only at a local level but also at a state policy level
- When to release a draft of the plan to the public.
  - The timing of this release is critical to project success
  - The public should see a draft version
- What type of feedback it will ask from the community and what it will do with the feedback.
  - To create community buy-in, Smart Growth America recommends sharing a draft of the plan with the public and asking for their buy-in. However, the town must be clear on exactly what type of feedback they are looking for (high level, such as does this fit your vision for the city, or more details-oriented, such as what do you think of this sentence) and how the town will use the feedback. This will create transparency and manage expectations for residents.
  - Host open houses within the community, otherwise known as meeting people when and where they are. For example, Pagosa Springs could reach out to local religious institutions or have meetings on weekends, which may be easier for some residents to attend.
- Determine the type of plan(s) to adopt
  - A Complete Streets policy will change and add value to Pagosa Springs' decision-making process. The town should identify the type of policy that would be most effective in sparking change, while being realistic about the type of policy that can be passed and implemented successfully. Many communities begin with a simple resolution that then leads to a more complex internal policy.
    - A Mayoral Resolution will allow the mayor to lead the initiative on Complete Streets and leverage their leadership to highlight the importance of Complete Streets with the public and the media.
    - A Council-adopted ordinance will codify the policy into law.
- Plan a community/press event
  - The town should celebrate the success of the adoption of a Complete Streets policy with a public event. This will help educate the public and

media about Complete Streets, as well as allow the city and the community to celebrate the passage of the policy.

### **Medium and Long-term Actions (6 months and longer)**

- Incorporate Complete Streets policy into roadway and intersection redesigns as they occur.

## **10. Create an implementation committee to move these recommendations forward.**

The workshop hosted by Smart Growth America was a great first step towards revitalizing Pagosa Springs. The town should be proud of its local assets and amenities. Those in the workshop were enthusiastic about the future of the community in terms of its vision and opportunities.

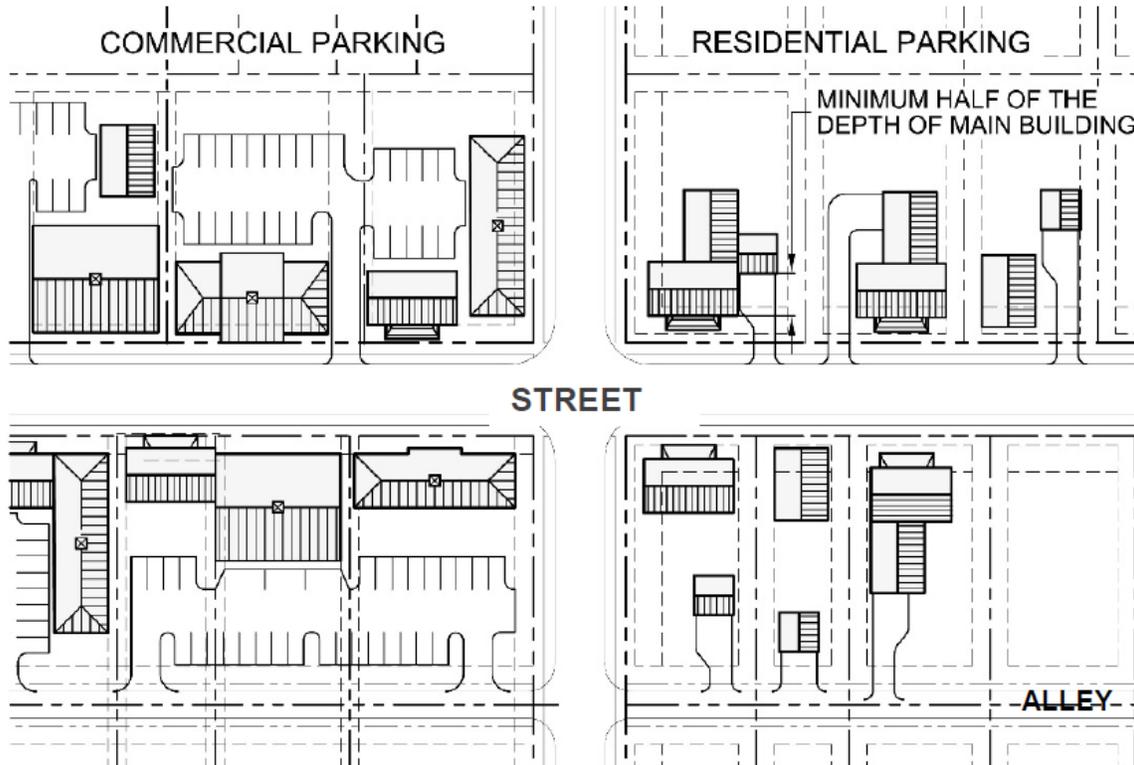
Building local leadership capacity is vital to move these next steps forward. Smart Growth America recommends establishing an implementation committee to take responsibility for these next steps. Members of the committee should come from, but not necessarily be limited to, the following sectors of the community – representing both uptown and downtown:

- Local governments – Pagosa Springs, Archuleta County (both elected officials and staff)
- Major employers
- Small business owners
- Healthcare facilities
- Pagosa Springs Visitors Center and the Chamber of Commerce
- School districts and higher education
- Other citizens

In a small community, the temptation is that any development will be a step forward but which may lead to incompatible land uses. SGA encourages the town's leaders to put the long-term vision and goals of the town ahead of pursuing short-term financial gain comprised of uses incompatible with their long-term strategic vision for the community.

## Appendix A: Parking Diagram

The SGA team recommends that projects, including the unified Adobe and bell tower redevelopment project as well as the Springs Partners site, incorporate parking as shown in the diagram below.



Source: Marshall, Virginia draft form-based code

## Appendix B: USDA funding and development resources

USDA – Rural Development Mission

***“To increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans.”***



## Population Guidelines

**Business Programs: 50,000 and below (exception is local foods projects)**

**Community Programs: 20,000 and below**

**Housing Programs: 35,000 and below**

**Water and Waste Water Programs: 10,000 and below**

## Community Connect Grant

**Program Purpose:**

Program helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service.

**Who May Apply:**

Most State and Local Governments/Federally-Recognized Tribes/Non-Profits/For-Profit Corporations

**Special Considerations:**

SUTA/Strikeforce and Promise Zone Areas (Extra 15 points for scoring)

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

MINIMUM = \$100,000 MAXIMUM = \$3,000,000

**Application Match Requirements:**

Minimum = 15% of Grant Request

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$11 Million (5 out of 68 applications)

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$11,740,000 Available

**Grant Application Period:**

Opened April 18, 2016 and Closed June 17, 2016 ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or Paper applications)

## Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant

**Program Purpose:**

Assists rural communities to use telecommunications by purchasing equipment to connect remote locations to urban areas or other rural areas for purposes of increased education or healthcare opportunities.

**Who May Apply:**

Most State and Local Governments/Federally-Recognized Tribes/Non-Profits/For-Profit Corporations

**Special Considerations:**

SUTA/Strikeforce and Promise Zone Areas (Extra 15 points for scoring)

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

MINIMUM = \$50,000 MAXIMUM = \$500,000

**Application Match Requirements:**

Minimum = 15% of Grant Request

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$23 Million (75 out of 191 applications)

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$19,000,000 Available (182 Applications Received)

**Grant Application Period:**

Opened January 12, 2016 and Closed March 14, 2016 ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or Paper applications)

## Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loans

**Program Purpose:**

Bolsters the existing private credit structure through the guaranteeing of loans for rural businesses, allowing private lenders to extend more credit than they would typically be able.

**Who May Apply:**

Lenders with legal authority, sufficient experience, and financial strength to operate a successful lending program

**Eligible borrowers:**

For-profit business, Nonprofits and cooperatives, Federally recognized Tribes, Public bodies

**Loan guarantee limits:**

80% for loans of \$5 million or less

70% for loans between \$5 and \$10 million

60% for loans exceeding \$10 million, up to \$25 million maximum

**Terms:**

Interest rate negotiated between lender and borrower, subject to Rural Development review.

Real estate – 30 years, machinery and equipment -15 years and working capital – 7 years.

Initial guarantee fee of 3% with annual renewal fee of 0.5% on outstanding principal.

## Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG)

**Program Purpose:**

Assist small and emerging businesses in rural areas

**Who May Apply:**

Public bodies, units of government and community-based non-profit organizations

**Special Considerations:**

Eligible costs include real estate improvements, equipment, utility/infrastructure, feasibility studies, engineering services, and/or technical assistance to small businesses

Competitive application process

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

Grants less than \$100,000 have highest competitive priority

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$674,519 (18 Grants)

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$610,000

## Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants (REDLG)

**Program Purpose:**

Assist economic and community development projects in rural areas

**Who May Apply:**

Rural electric or telecommunications utilities

**Special Considerations:**

Real estate improvements, equipment, working capital

Pass-through funding

20% Match Required from utility

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

Up to \$300,000 to establish Revolving Loan Fund for electric or telecommunications utility

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$40,000,000 (National Competition)

## Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)

**Program Purpose:**

Assist rural small businesses and agricultural producers by conducting and promoting energy audits, and providing renewable energy development assistance.

**Who May Apply:**

Farmers and rural small businesses

**Special Considerations:**

Grant is 25% of eligible project costs

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

\$500,000 maximum for renewable energy projects

\$250,000 maximum for energy efficiency

\$100,000 maximum for energy audit and rural energy development assistance

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$1,978,341 (85 Grants)

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$819,000

## Community Facilities Grant Program

**Program Purpose:**

Provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities

**Who May Apply:**

Public body or community-based non-profit organization

**Special Considerations:**

Essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community.

Does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

Grant for up to 15%, 35%, 55% or 75% of proposed project depending upon population and MHI of proposed service area

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$314,000 (21 Grants)

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$543,780

## Economic Impact Initiative (EII) Grant Program

**Program Purpose:**

Provides funding to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural communities with extreme unemployment and severe economic depression

**Who May Apply:**

Public body or community-based non-profit organization

**Special Considerations:**

Essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community.

Grants may made in combination with other Rural Development financial assistance.

Community facilities may include

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$118,700 (14 Grants)

**FY2016 Budget Allocation:**

\$118,700

## Rural Community Development Initiative Grant (RCDI)

**Program Purpose:**

Provide funding to help non-profit housing and community development organizations support housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects

**Who May Apply:**

Public bodies and non-profit organizations

**Eligible Uses:**

Training sub-grantees; for example, home-ownership or minority business entrepreneur education

Technical assistance such as strategic plan development, board training, effective fundraising techniques

**Application Grant Request Limits:**

\$50,000 minimum award

\$250,000 maximum award

Matching funds equal to the amount of the grant award

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$155,000 (1 Grant)

## Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) Program

**Program Purpose:**

Provides grants to sponsoring organizations for the repair or rehabilitation of housing occupied by low- and very-low-income families and individuals.

**Who May Apply:**

State and local government entities and non-profit organizations

**Eligible Uses:**

Home must be in a rural area or community under 20,000 population

Repairing or replacing electrical wiring, foundations, roofs, insulation, heating systems, water/waste disposal systems

Handicap accessibility features

Labor and materials

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$86,273 (3 Grants)

## Single Family Housing 504 Grants Program

**Program Purpose:**

Provides loan and grant funds to be used to pay for needed repairs to dwellings of very low income families. To remove health and safety hazards – leaky roofs, bad heating systems, structural problems, handicap accessibility.

**Who May Apply:**

Very-low income families or individuals

**Special Considerations:**

Home must be in a rural area or community under 35,000 population

Lifetime grant assistance up to \$7,500. Grants only available to applicants 62 years or older who do not have repayment ability.

**FY2015 Funded Projects:**

\$379,383(154 Grants)

**FY 2016 Budget Allocation**

\$367,834

## Community and Economic Development (CED)

### Partners With Potential to Assist Downtowns / Communities:

- Colorado Department of Local Affairs – Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- History Colorado – State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)
- Community Foundations
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Local Foods/Local Places Initiative
- Brownfields Program (EPA and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment)

## Let's Talk!

What projects do you have underway or under consideration in your community?

What barriers/obstacles exist to successful implementation or completion of the project?

Are projects being hindered or threatened by government processes?

What projects would you undertake if money were not an issue?

What assistance or expertise do you need in your community to bring your project to fruition?

What assets are present in your community which are not currently being utilized fully?

## Appendix C: Complete Streets Web Resources

Below are some of the many resources available to guide a Complete Streets initiative in your community. All of the resources listed here are free to download and free to use.

### Fundamentals

Communities just getting started with Complete Streets will find these materials most useful. They present a comprehensive overview of the benefits and basics of the Complete Streets planning and design approach. The resources listed in this section can be found at <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/policy-development/>.

**Introduction to Complete Streets.** A comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on why we need Complete Streets, available to download for use and adaptation in your community. <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/introduction-to-complete-streets/>

**Presentation and Fact Sheets: Benefits of Complete Streets.** A free PowerPoint provides an overview of the research-backed benefits of safe, multi-modal street planning and design. The Coalition's series of research-based fact sheets exploring the many benefits of Complete Streets for various groups of users and outcomes are available at <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/search/benefits+of+complete+streets/>

Topics include: *Health; Safety; Economic Revitalization; Children; People with Disabilities; Older Adults; Public Transportation; Climate Change; Gas Prices; Lower Transportation Costs; Livable Communities; Equity.*

**Other Resources.** A variety of Complete Streets handouts, downloadable presentations, articles and reports, can be found at [https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources?resource\\_type=&authors=&category\\_name=complete-streets&s=](https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources?resource_type=&authors=&category_name=complete-streets&s=)

### Changing Policy

After a community has agreed to the concept of Complete Streets, the next step is to develop a formal policy. The Coalition provides many resources to illuminate best practices, share actual policy documents from across the country, and help communities develop the best, most appropriate policies for their needs.

**Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook.** A comprehensive workbook for communities to follow when writing their own Complete Streets policies. For use by city and county agencies, the guide is based in national existing policy and best practices and encourages a thoughtful, inclusive process for developing locally appropriate policy language. See <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/complete-streets-local-policy-workbook/>

**State Legislation.** AARP and the National Complete Streets Coalition developed a toolkit to use in a state-level Complete Streets effort. Complete Streets in the States: A Guide to Legislative Action includes model legislation and a discussion of the various elements of an ideal law, a roadmap for legislative action, and analysis of existing state Complete Streets laws.

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/complete-streets-in-the-states-a-guide-to-legislative-action/>

**Presentation: Complete Streets: Changing Policy.** Use this PowerPoint presentation and its comprehensive presenter's notes to lead a discussion of Complete Streets policy development in your town. The presentation covers the reasons to adopt a policy and details on the ten elements of a Complete Streets policy.

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/complete-streets-policy-development-101/>

**Complete Streets Policy Atlas and Annual Policy Analysis.** The Coalition compiles information on all policies adopted to date in our Policy Atlas

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/policy-development/policy-atlas/>.

The Atlas includes an interactive map of all regional and local policies, and downloadable lists of known Complete Streets policies, across all jurisdictions and at the state level.

The Coalition also reviews all the policies adopted each year and assesses how well they fulfill the ten elements of an ideal Complete Streets policy. The annual report highlights exemplary policy language and provides leaders at all levels of government with ideas for how to create strong Complete Streets policies.

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/tag/best-complete-streets-policies/>

## Implementation

Once a Complete Streets policy is in place, the day-to-day decisions a transportation agency and community leaders make in funding, planning, design, maintenance, and operations should be aligned to the goals of that adopted policy document. The Coalition helps communities implement their policies by collecting and sharing best practices and examples.

**Five Steps to Implementation.** The Coalition has identified five types of activities needed to reorient a transportation agency's work to fully and consistently consider the safety of all users: Planning for Implementation; Changing Procedure and Process; Reviewing and Updating Design Guidance; Offering Training and Educational Opportunities; and Measuring Performance. The process is summarized in our guide, "Taking Action on Complete Streets".

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/taking-action-on-complete-streets-implementing-processes-for-safe-multimodal-streets/>.

Resources, activities, and best practices from communities across the country are at

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/complete-streets-implementation/>

**Answering the Costs Question.** A handbook and slide presentation that helps transportation professionals, advocates, and decision-makers make the case that implementing Complete Streets won't break the bank:

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/complete-streetsguide-to-answering-the-costs-question/>.

**Implementation Resources.** The Coalition's series of research-based fact sheets on specific elements of Complete Streets implementation is available at

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/tag/complete-streets-policy-implementation-resources/>.

Topics include: *Costs of Complete Streets; Change Travel Patterns; Ease Traffic Woes; Complete and Green Streets; Networks of Complete Streets; Rural Areas and Small Towns.*

## **Blogs and Newsletters**

For ongoing news and links to useful resources from across the web, read the National Complete Streets Coalition blog (<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/category/complete-streets/>) and sign up for the Coalition's monthly e-newsletter. The newsletter includes updates on federal, state, and local complete streets policies, other news from the campaign and across the country, and a summary of resources that you can use. Current and past issues and a sign-up form are available at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/tag/complete-streets-news/>.

## Appendix D: Broadband Resources and References

- [Appalachian Regional Commission's Broadband Planning Primer and Toolkit](#). Also available in [Kindle](#) format. – Geographically specific but a good overall primer on broadband terminology.
- [Federal Broadband Programs List and Funding Source Grants for Community Development and Marketing >>](#)
- [Non-profit Research on Broadband and Planning >>](#)
- [EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs >>](#)
- [EDA Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance program >>](#)
- [Broadband Catalysts – Broadband Coverage maps and reporting tool for underserved locations](#)

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