

DESERT HOT SPRINGS DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN

CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN LUIS OBISPO



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DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN

DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA

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summarizes the Downtown Concept Plan for public viewing.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the community members and the business stakeholders of Desert Hot Springs who participated in our tabling event November 11th, our community workshop session in City Hall on January 19th, and an online workshop on March 2, 2023.

INTRODUCTION



Graduate students from Cal Poly's City and Regional Planning program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Desert Hot Spring Downtown Concept Plan proposes a concept for the future of Downtown Desert Hot Springs (Downtown) based on community values and desires. It outlines a vision for the future, development goals, and actions to achieve those goals. The Desert Hot Spring Downtown Concept Plan serves as a guidance document for future planning processes as the City of Desert Hot Springs continues to invest in the development of its downtown area.

The plan was developed by California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly) in coordination with the City of Desert Hot Springs. Cal Poly conducted extensive

outreach including multiple site visits to Desert Hot Springs, surveys, and workshops. The following plan was conceived based on the feedback from city staff, residents, business owners, and others involved in the outreach process.

The Desert Hot Spring Downtown Concept Plan proposes a vision, concepts, and policies for the City of Desert Hot Springs as it continues to develop the downtown area. City staff may choose to adopt the plan as is written, amend the proposed plan, or substitute the plan for another development plan.

INTRODUCTION

CAL POLY CITY & REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM

Fifteen graduate students in their second year of the Master's of City and Regional Planning (MCRP) Program, Department of City and Regional Planning (CRP), Cal Poly State University San Luis Obispo created the following: an Existing Conditions Report of the downtown area, two Community Outreach Summaries, and a finalized Downtown Concept Plan that aims to revitalize Downtown Desert Hot Springs.

The Desert Hot Springs Downtown Concept Plan is a report sharing refined ideas from the community that the city can adopt. It has four sections: Community Character, Economic Development, Land Use, and Transportation. Each section will provide goals, policies and programs that aim to revitalize the Downtown environment. The plan will detail new land uses, public space enhancement, incubator programs, and streetscape design elements with the overall goal to make downtown a space that people want to use. The end goal of the Downtown Concept Plan is for the city to review the ideas and incorporate them into future plans.

LOCATION

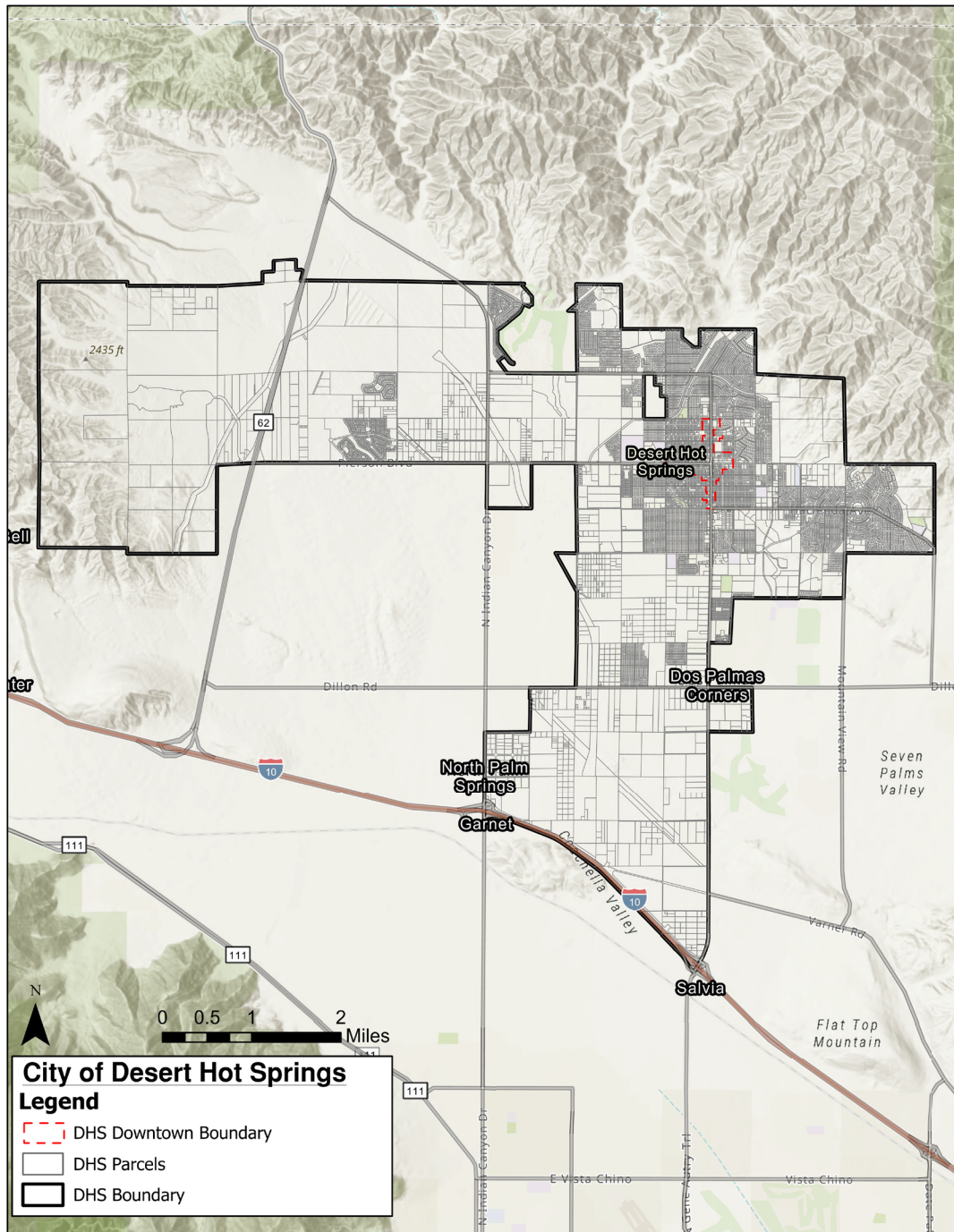
Desert Hot Springs is a small town of 32,000 residents in the greater Coachella Valley region of Riverside County, California. Although the city boundary encapsulates 30

square miles, the majority of the urban area occupies approximately 10 square miles (see figure 1). It is located approximately 10 miles north of Palm Springs and 108 miles east of Los Angeles. The city resides to the east of the San Bernardino Mountains and northeast of the San Jacinto Mountains, which provides access to a variety of hiking trails. It also serves as a base for travelers visiting the Joshua Tree National Park just east of the city. Sitting above the rest of the valley at about 1,000 feet above sea-level, the city overlooks Palm Springs to the southeast and offers panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountain and desert landscape.

The city experiences a desert climate, with mild winters and extreme heat in the summer. Summer months are regularly higher than 90°F during the day, and cool down to around 70-80°F at night. Temperatures may reach above 105°F during extreme heat events between June and September. Additionally, the city frequently experiences blustery wind patterns throughout the year.

The city lies in a unique geologic setting, bisected by the San Andreas fault. The fault line separates two underground aquifers, one containing hot water – the city's namesake – and the other with cool water that drains from the surrounding mountains. The natural aquifers in Desert Hot Springs boast exceptional water quality – which is

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

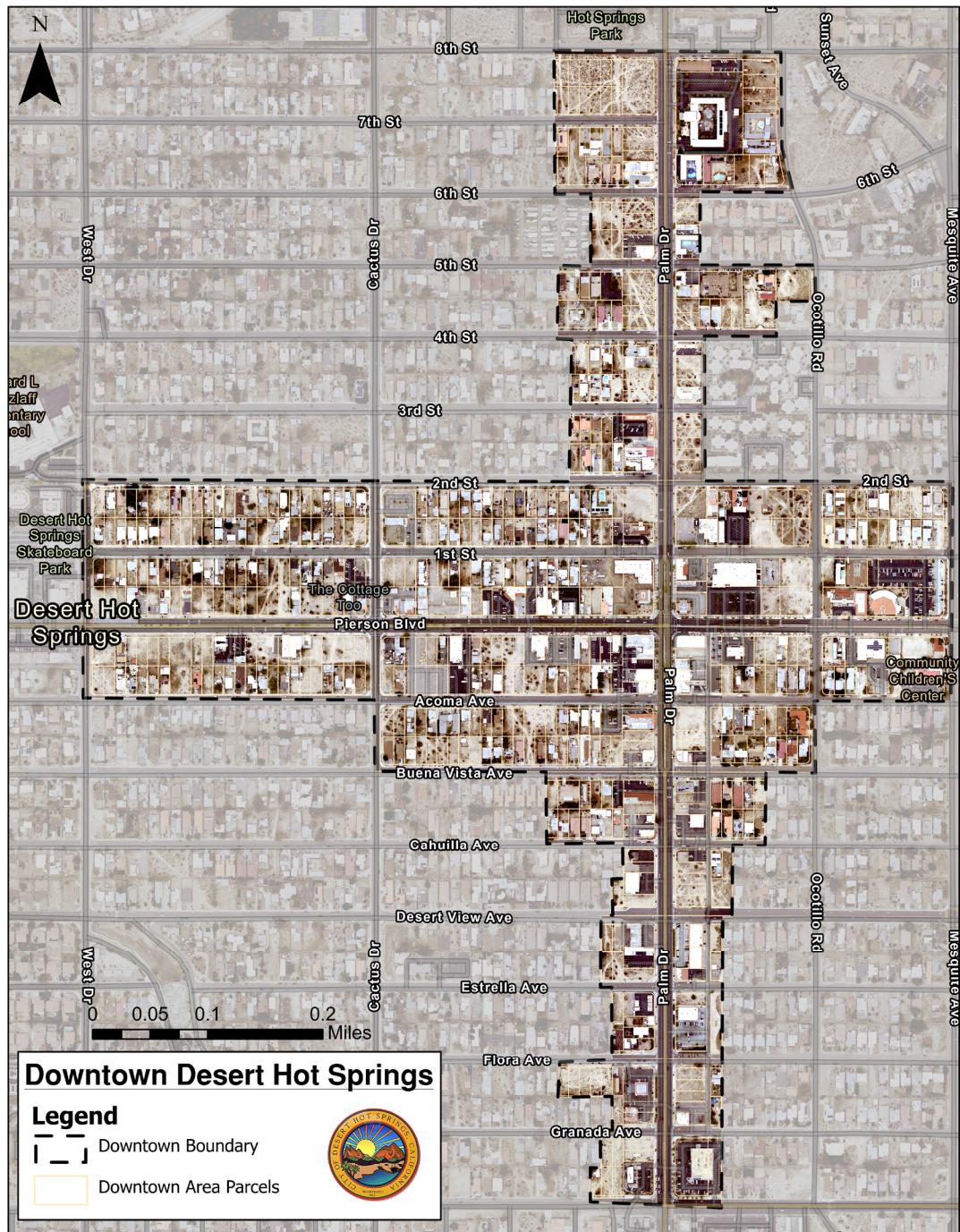


Figure 2. Downtown Desert Hot Springs project area.

INTRODUCTION

what originally drew development to the area.

Today, Desert Hot Springs is home to several boutique mineral spring resorts that draw visitors globally. The city is composed of predominately low-density residential development, with commercial centers at key intersections, a downtown with mostly resident-serving businesses, and light industrial activities on the periphery. Since its incorporation in 1963, the city has experienced surges in growth – particularly between 1980 and 2010. However, the Great Recession in 2007 all but halted this activity. As such, many properties within the city were left undeveloped or abandoned and left in disrepair. A key theme heard throughout community outreach conducted for this project indicates a strong need for economic development strategies that begin to alleviate this issue.

PLANNING AREA

For purposes of this study, the downtown area is defined as the areas around the intersection of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard (see figure 2). The downtown core primarily includes areas within one block north of 1st Street and one block south of Pierson Boulevard, with extensions to 8th Street and Hacienda Avenue along Palm Drive. The planning area reaches approximately 0.5 miles north, west, and south of the Palm Drive-Pierson Boulevard

intersection and 0.25 miles east of the intersection.

Currently, the downtown planning area is primarily composed of shops and restaurants. Many businesses provide some on-site parking and additional street parking is available. The planning area includes some single-family residential homes. There are many vacant properties that present opportunities to invest in new entertainment options and communal gathering spaces.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The studio, in partnership with the City of Desert Hot Springs, hosted four outreach events during the development of this Plan: (1) Community Tabling, (2) Community Workshop, (4) High School Outreach, and (4) Virtual Community Forum. These events are summarized below.

COMMUNITY TABLING

On November 11th, 2023, the studio tabled at four different locations in Desert Hot Springs to spread awareness about the Desert Hot Springs Downtown Concept Plan and to gain understanding of community values and public perception of Downtown Desert Hot Springs. The four tabling stations were Rancho Grande Market, Von's Grocery, Builder's Supply, and Veteran's Park. Each station had three different poster activities designed to gather opinions from participants. There was also a sign-up sheet to subscribe to an email list for those who wished to be informed about the project's progress and future outreach events, and flyers for the project's website were distributed. The number of participants varied from each location, however, all groups received feedback.

The first poster activity prompted participants to share their thoughts about downtown by asking four questions: 1) What do you do downtown? 2) How do you get around and to downtown? 3) What do you love about downtown? 4) What do you

think could be improved downtown? Grocery shopping and eating at local restaurants were the top two activities respondents like to do downtown. Most respondents drive downtown, but many expressed a desire to walk more if there was safer infrastructure. Many respondents love the downtown local businesses, such as Farmer in the Dale, Casa Blanca, and the cannabis dispensaries. However, the last question about potential improvements received the most responses – more options for shopping, entertainment, and dining was the most common response.

The second poster activity asked participants to rank their top three most valued city improvements from a list of nine options related to land use, transportation, and urban design. Some examples of listed improvements include parks and open space, bike lanes, public art, and crosswalks. The top five improvements most valued among respondents were: 1) parks and open space, 2) outdoor restaurants, plazas, or parklets, 3) painted crosswalks, 4) pedestrian-scale lighting, and 5) diverse housing options.

The last activity was a mapping activity that collected information about specific community assets or locations that need improvement within the downtown area. Participants used stickers to identify specific locations on a map of downtown placed on the table. Most assets identified were local businesses and restaurants, City Hall, and

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

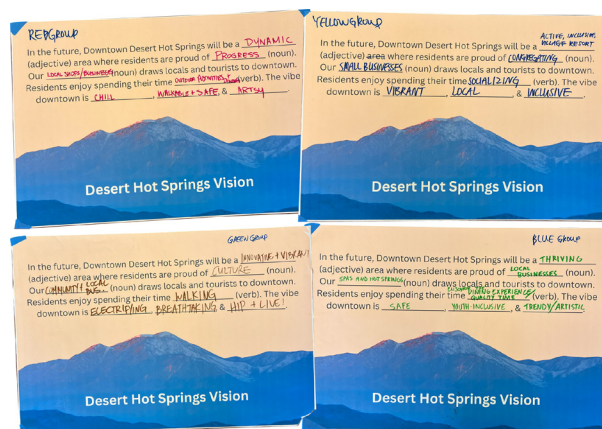
local religious establishments that serve as gathering spaces. Many locations downtown were identified as needing improvement. Many participants expressed feeling unsafe around downtown due to the vacant lots and buildings, lack of lighting and crosswalks, and shootings. There was also a clear desire for more amenities downtown like coffee shops, boutiques, and a wider variety of restaurants.

Through the tabling outreach conducted in November, the studio learned about Desert Hot Springs' community character, important assets in the downtown, community concerns, and community members' desires for downtown. Many feel that Desert Hot Springs currently does not have a "traditional" downtown that serves as a central business district. An important takeaway from tabling was that residents care deeply about their tight-knit community and its future. There is a strong desire to have more things to do downtown for all ages, to make it safer for pedestrians, and to create more community spaces with programming.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

On the evening of January 19, 2023, the studio facilitated a community meeting with a variety of interactive activities. Approximately 20 community members were in attendance. Upon arrival participants in attendance were divided into four groups

to provide an opportunity for small group discussions. Each group had a set of assigned student facilitators to guide them through the evening's activities. Activities included collaboratively writing a vision statement for the downtown and feedback gathering on eight proposed concepts for the downtown.



For the visioning activity participants were provided a "Mad Libs" template to develop a visioning statement that embodies their collective aspirations for Downtown Desert Hot Springs. Participants were asked to brainstorm together and to contribute their ideas to fill in the blanks provided on the template, and then form a consensus on the word that best represented the group's ideas for each blank. All responses were recorded by student facilitators on posters so participants could reference and visualize their ideas. After consensus was reached, each group consolidated their chosen words

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



in a “final” vision statement and presented it to the larger group. A total of four vision statements were drafted. For the final vision statement, the studio compiled all responses and identified the most common themes and values shared across all groups’ vision statements to create one unifying and representative vision: “In the future, downtown Desert Hot Springs will be a vibrant and innovative place where residents are proud of their community culture. Our small businesses draw locals and tourists to downtown. Residents enjoy spending their time shopping, dining, and socializing. The vibe downtown is artistic, inclusive, and safe.”

During the feedback session participants were asked to contribute their likes and/

or dislikes pertaining to the presented concepts. Dialogues were facilitated per theme allowing participants to provide feedback on two concepts at a time. The first theme was economic development, and its accompanying concepts were incubator and pop-up spaces and live/workspaces and front yard businesses. Workshop participants generally favored the idea of adding pop-up vendors to downtown and reducing barriers for local entrepreneurs to get their business off the ground. They suggested modifications, such as locating pop-up shops at community events or near popular businesses rather than in empty storefronts as proposed. Other considerations included ensuring that these pop-up spaces have low barriers to entry, remain affordable to up-and-coming

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

entrepreneurs, and, if located outdoors, are prepared for high winds. Comments about live/workspaces and front yard businesses were mixed. Many expressed concerns about negative side effects like traffic and parking availability and proximity to their own single-family homes. A proposed alternative to this concept was a set market space that emulates something like the Liberty Public Market in San Diego, which is a large, open space with many different stalls for food, bar, and craft vendors.

The second theme was public spaces/ placemaking and its accompanying concepts were shipping container parks and plazas, parks, and paseos. The idea of installing shipping container parks in the downtown area was generally welcomed by the community. Residents are particularly excited at the opportunity to use shipping container parks to improve walkability downtown. They may be used to increase walking traffic for downtown travelers and, if designed effectively, may become walking destinations for residents. The execution of a shipping container park was of concern to residents as they have seen failed attempts in the city. In promoting this idea in the future, residents want us to consider how to ensure project development is fully executed. For continued success, the shipping container developments will need to account for wind and heat.

The third theme was social infrastructure, and its accompanying concepts were entertainment spaces and youth activities/ maker spaces. Workshop participants expressed a high desire to have entertainment spaces in the downtown area. These suggested spaces included permanent active recreation facilities and pop-up seasonal activities. Ideas included an ice skating/roller rink, trampoline park, a splash pad, a rock-climbing facility, and a billiards venue. In general, workshop participants responded positively to creating a space for youth activity. Participants recommended taking advantage of existing spaces to create the youth maker-space. Since this concept is directly targeted at the youth population, workshop participants expressed concerns around safety.

The fourth theme was vacant lots and unoccupied buildings, and its accompanying concepts were vacant lot/ building fee and a vacant lot revitalization program. Most community members responded positively to the idea of a fee, saying that it would encourage property owners to fill the space with something that would contribute to the local economy. Some members expressed concern regarding the fee not being high enough to counter tax system benefits received by property owners when their buildings are kept vacant. Community members suggested a more frequent fee that would be twice a year or monthly, and others

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suggested a compounding fee where every year the fee doubles.

Community members provided mixed feedback on the policy program ideas. Those who responded positively voiced their agreement to the expedited building process and reduced process requirements. It was suggested that there should be a process that doesn't cut design standards, keeps planning commission involved, but still expedites the process. It was also mentioned that the city should focus on filling existing buildings first rather than building new structures.

The workshop allowed the studio to present downtown improvement ideas on pedestrian experience, design guidelines and land use changes for downtown. Simultaneously, it allowed the studio to better understand the community's preferences and concerns and guide the development of the project plan.

HIGH SCHOOL OUTREACH

On January 20, 2023, the studio visited Desert Hot Springs High School and facilitated five drop-in tabling activities during zero period. Approximately 50 students participated in the morning activities. Each tabling group had three facilitators from the studio. The five tabling groups were tasked with different questions and given a poster to display the student answers.

Group one asked students to answer the question, if you were mayor for a day, how would you improve downtown? Students contributed their responses on an easel and their answers can be categorized into two main categories: entertainment and public safety. Overall, students voiced a strong need for more activities within the downtown area and city-wide, as currently many students go elsewhere for leisure, shopping, and entertainment.

Group two asked students to get creative and draw what they would like to see in downtown Desert Hot Springs 20 years from now. Ideas and drawings mostly centered on places to eat and things to do in the area, but there were also some suggestions for improved infrastructure. Very similar to group one an increase in activities and infrastructure were priorities for the students.

Group three prompted the students to share their thoughts about downtown by asking four questions: 1) What do you do downtown? 2) How do you get around and to downtown? 3) What do you love about downtown? 4) What do you think could be improved downtown? Discussions with high school students revealed that the youth of Desert Hot Springs did not know the city had a downtown or they did not typically visit the downtown area because the facilities and uses are not geared towards them. Students

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reported using active transportation and mass transit to move around the city. Because of a lack of vehicles, and their parents being too busy to drive them around, many students noted that some of the streets felt unsafe for biking and walking due to the high speeds of vehicles, wide street widths, lack of sidewalks, lack of mid-block crosswalks, and the lack of bike lanes. Most high school students did not identify anything they loved about downtown. A few students discussed that they liked downtown's proximity to their high school, the variety of parks present, and that it was generally quiet. Like the prior activities students voiced improvements to be an increase in activities and infrastructure. In

addition, the students advocated for a place downtown that provides apprenticeship training and community service opportunities for the youth.

Group four asked participants to rank their top three most valued city improvements from a list of nine options related to land use, transportation, and urban design. The most important amenities chosen by the high school participants were Parks and Open space (23 votes), Outdoor Plaza or Parklet (19 votes), and Painted Crosswalks (17 votes).

Lastly, group five was a mapping activity that asked participants to use stickers to

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identify the location of specific community assets or locations that need improvement within the downtown area. The few assets and areas of improvement mapped by students were not within the project area and are therefore not within the scope of this project.

The high school outreach activity was similar to the first at-large community tabling event. The event provided the studio with an opportunity to spread awareness of the project and the information collected from the high school students provides a fresh perspective to the data collected thus far.

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FORUM

On March 2nd, the studio hosted a virtual community forum to gather input on the five overarching topics that anchor the Plan. Under each of these topics, specific policies, programs, and actions have been drafted to achieve each topic goal. The topic areas included vacancy reductions, outdoor heat mitigation, public event programming, pedestrian and bike improvements, and community safety. Due to low attendance at the forum, the format became less structured to allow for an open conversation between participants, studio members, and city staff.

Overall, participants generally liked the topics presented. The conversation focused

on public events, vacancy reductions, and connections to the spa industry. There was discussion regarding the need for more downtown activity, specifically night life activity. Due to the high summertime temperatures, downtown activity in the summer is limited to hours after the sun goes down. There was a general agreement that there is a need for more clubs, restaurants, and pop-up events that offer vibrant nightlife. Furthermore, there was a desire for more public events such as food truck nights or farmers markets. Many expressed interests in a public space that could host such events.

Participants agreed that a program discouraging property owners from keeping their properties vacant would be beneficial for downtown. However, there were concerns about parking downtown. Currently, many participants feel that there is not enough parking downtown and more development would only exacerbate the issue. Participants liked the image of a street reconfiguration in Lancaster, California where parking was shifted to the center median of a major street. Many felt this would be a strong solution for Pierson Boulevard and center-parking could also act as a public space for a farmer's market.

There was discussion regarding the spa industry. Currently, many visitors that come to Desert Hot Springs are there to

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

experience the mineral water hot springs. There is little to no connection between the Spa Zone and downtown. Participants encouraged the studio to conduct outreach and include the spas in discussions for the future of downtown. Once downtown has increased the nightlife offerings, a shuttle service was suggested to connect spa visitors to downtown for dining and entertainment. The mineral hot water plays a significant role in the character of Desert Hot Springs. Many felt that a stronger relationship between downtown and the spas would benefit the community and tourism.

CONCLUSION

The four outreach events detailed above generated an abundance of information on the Desert Hot Springs community, as well as how Downtown Desert Hot Springs can be improved. Starting with the first outreach event, community feedback guided the planning process every step of the way. The initial input gathered from the community tabling event on November 11th was used to develop the first round of development concepts, which were presented to participants at the community workshop for further feedback on January 19th. Feedback from the community workshop and the high school outreach events was used to refine and rework the first round of development concepts into fully developed policies and programs. On March 2nd, the studio presented a draft set of key policies

to the public at a virtual community forum to collect final thoughts and input from the community.

Input from outreach participants was used to develop a Plan that can address the needs and desires of the Desert Hot Springs community. While a concerted effort to engage the community was made, travel constraints limited the studio's ability to conduct a truly exhaustive community engagement campaign. As a result, the studio recommends the City conduct continued community engagement during the implementation of the Plan to enable new voices and ideas to be heard and incorporated into the transformation of Downtown Desert Hot Springs.

1

LAND USE

LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use planning plays an essential role in shaping successful, vibrant places where people can live, work, shop, and recreate. These recommendations serve to set the foundation for a development framework for revitalization and growth that is aligned with visions communicated by community members of Desert Hot Springs.

The proposed goals, policies, and programs establish the foundational changes in development activity and use that will support desired community growth and innovation specifically in the downtown area. Coupled with community design goals and policies, recommended land use policies will help guide the future physical conditions in the downtown area. These recommendations have been split into four themes: zoning, housing, parks, and vacant lots.

Land Use/Zoning

Downtown Desert Hot Springs (Downtown) currently encompasses 174 acres of land centered around the intersection of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard. As depicted in table 1, parcels within the project boundary are currently zoned for either Downtown Commercial (C-D), Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MU-N), Public and Institutional (P), Residential-Low (R-L), Residential-Mixed (R-M), or Visitor-Serving Mixed (VS-M). Table 1 shows how

much land area each zone occupies in the downtown area, including right-of-way. While the area does contain a mix of uses, much of the development potential has not yet been realized. The area contains mostly low-density single-family homes, single-story retail buildings, and a high number

ZONING	AREA IN ACRES	PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA
R-M (Residential Medium Density)	17.53	10.1%
MU-N (Mixed-Use Neighborhood)	18.65	10.7%
C-G (Commercial General)	15.76	9.1%
C-D (Downtown Commercial)	19.29	11.1%
MU-C (Mixed-Use Corridor)	10.76	6.2%
R-L (Residential Low)	14.64	8.4%
VS-C (Visitor Serving Commercial)	6.12	3.5%
VS-M (Visitor Serving Mixed)	21.94	12.6%
P (Public Use)	2.51	1.4%
RPW (Right of Way)	46.62	26.8%
Total without RoW	127.17	

Table 1. Downtown Zoning by Acreage

LAND USE

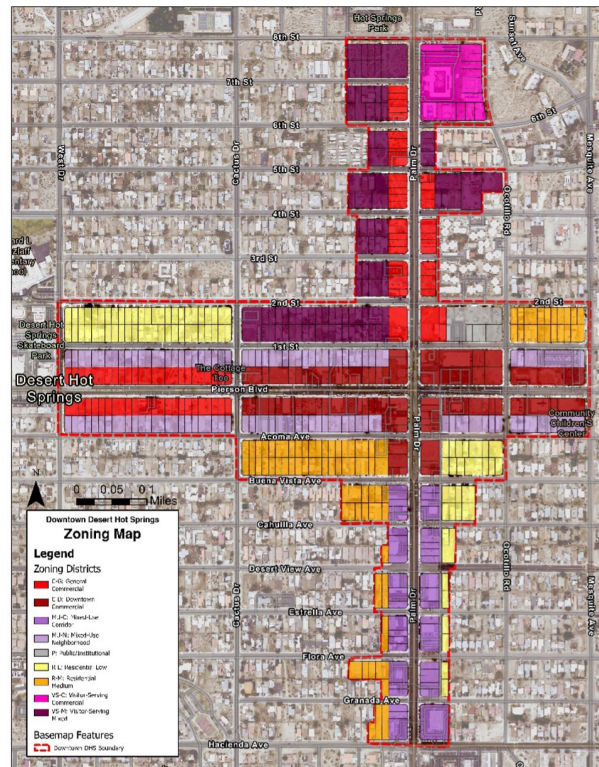
of underdeveloped parcels situated along the main streets of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Existing buildings on parcels designated for commercial, retail, and public uses include several cannabis dispensaries, churches, spas, local grocers, big box grocery stores, automotive repair shops, restaurants, and City facilities. In areas designated for mixed-use, most parcels are currently being utilized for either residential or commercial uses. Additionally, in Downtown specifically, the establishments on these parcels are mainly repair shops, liquor stores, restaurants and single-family homes. There are no parcels in these zones that contain a mix of uses on the parcel, or mixed-use buildings.

Proposed zoning and land use changes featured in this element will help maximize the potential for development types that will help create a stable and varied economic tax base, provide more dense mixed-use housing opportunities and establish a thriving Downtown.

Housing

The total existing housing stock in Desert Hot Springs is roughly 12,000 housing units. Detached single-family units make up 63.5%, more than two-units make up 27.4%, and mobile homes comprise 7.5% of total homes. The city's share of regional housing needs is 3,873 housing units during



their current Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) cycle. While in 2020, the city boasted a population of 29,660, by 2029 the city is estimated to accommodate an additional 10,500 people if its RHNA housing allocation is met. The City's current RHNA cycle allocates 28% of all units (1,517 units) for extremely low, very low and low income tiers, 17.8% (1,473 units) for the moderate income level tier, and 53.8% (2,035 units) for the above moderate income tier. Currently, High Residential (R-H)

LAND USE

and Mixed-Use Corridor (MU-C) land use zones are the best candidate areas within which the 1,517 units for extremely low to low income tier housing could be built.. At the moment, there are no High Residential zones in the downtown. The MU-C designation exists only in Downtown.

Based on public outreach conducted by the City Council, community members want mixed-use development, expanded affordable housing opportunities for all economic segments, higher densities in some residential neighborhoods, repurposing of abandoned hotels as housing, and tiny house concepts.

Parks and Public Space

Downtown currently does not have parks, greenspaces, or public square areas. The current parks in the city provide many benefits to the people that live nearby. These

parks include, but are not limited to, Guy J. Tedesco Park, Wardman Park, Mission Springs Park, and Veterans Park. These parks provide large green spaces with trees and room for children to run around and play. They are general open space and not in the style of plazas or downtown squares.

Plazas and public squares located in downtown areas can provide economic and social benefits. Economic benefits include attracting visitors and residents to the area, which can help support local businesses and encourage more businesses to locate to the downtown area. Socially, plazas located in downtown areas can serve as spaces for community events, festivals, and other activities that bring people together and foster a sense of community.

Since we know that sustainability is specifically called out in the general plan,



Figure 2: Mixed-use development, 250 Columbine St., Denver, CO, including first floor retail and residential upper floors. Source: Zillow



Figure 3. Guy J Tedesco Park just outside of Downtown
DHS Source: Flickrriver

LAND USE

incorporating sustainable policies in future park development could help lead to more sustainable park developments in the city. This set of recommendations introduces policies that will allow a new public space to open in the downtown area. This will provide benefits to the economy as well as benefits to the health and lives of the people who live near it and use the park.

Vacant Lots

There is an oversaturation in Downtown of vacant lots that leaves nearly 24% of the land area undeveloped and unused (Figure 4). There are over 220 vacant parcels in the downtown area, not including vacant buildings. Most are aggregated along the main throughfares of Pierson Blvd. and Palm Drive adjacent to existing businesses and residences. Many of these empty lots are dilapidated and neglected, collecting litter and other debris. Due to the number of vacant lots, there are many gaps in the landscape of the downtown area. These inconsistent gaps create an atmosphere that is rather unappealing, unwelcoming, or unsafe for residents or visitors.

Undeveloped land presents unique economic challenges and opportunities for the City. Undeveloped and unused parcels represent not only lack of activity on that piece of land, but also a loss of tax revenue that can instead be generated by more productive uses such as commercial businesses,

eateries, or housing units. High vacancies may also negatively impact property values in the surrounding area and compromise public health and safety. On the other hand, it provides a blank slate for the City to bring in development that serves the community's diverse needs and aspirations. Revitalizing these vacancies with more productive uses that residents, employees, and visitors can all enjoy poses an exciting challenge to reshape the future of Downtown.

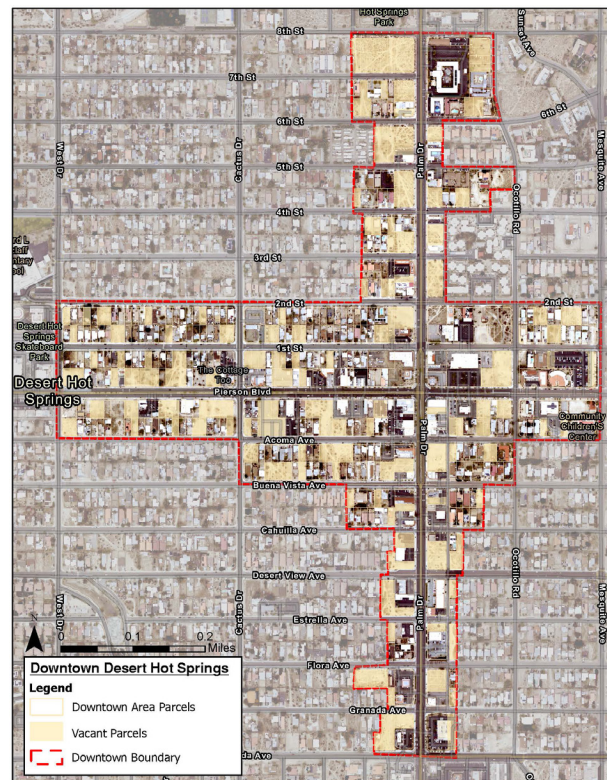


Figure 4. Map of vacant parcels within the downtown boundary. Source: Generated by MCRP Student

LAND USE

Proposed policies and programs addressing vacant lots in this element aim to fill these lots with more productive uses and allowing for professional uses will give Desert Hot Springs residents to play a role in rejuvenating these empty lots to create a livelier and more prosperous Downtown.

Recommendations

This set of recommendations provides five goals for the city to incorporate into their General Plan and act upon to improve the downtown area of the city. These goals are focused on the four themes discussed above – land use, housing, parks, and vacant lots.

The proposed policies and actions detailed under Goals LU-1 and LU-2 are intended to help create well-balanced neighborhoods with diverse housing options and accessible places of work, leisure, and tourism. These final goals, policies, and actions established in this plan took various forms, shaped repeatedly in response to conversations and work sessions involving city staff and Desert Hot Springs residents. A multitude of land use options for Downtown parcels were developed, but the land use configuration depicted in Figure 5 was ultimately chosen. It was selected because of its ability to provide diverse and well-fitting land uses that allows for a wide variety of residential, employment, and entertainment opportunities that will help revitalize Downtown.

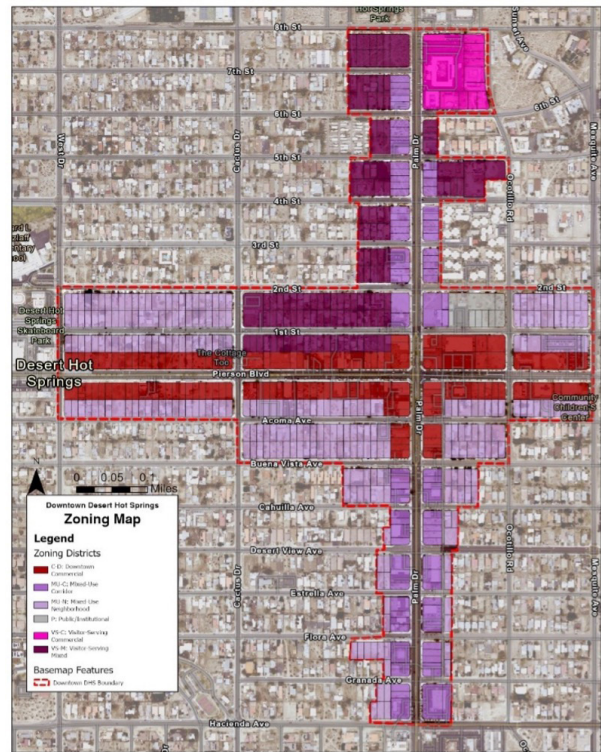


Figure 5. Proposed Zoning Map. Source: Generated by MCRP Student

In addition to the changes in zoning, alterations to allowed land use under Desert Hot Spring's municipal zoning code have been incorporated. Current land use designations limit the ability for prime retail and commercial development and may also prevent potential developers from exploring investment opportunities in the downtown area. Through outreach, it was also discovered that many residents desired types of developments that were not currently allowed or were limited under

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existing land-use guidelines. In response, these alterations were developed to support the revitalization of Downtown and an expansion of development opportunities.

The policies and programs under Goal LU-3 serve to foster balanced development that promotes integration between commercial and residential uses in the downtown area so that housing is built (especially in MU-C zones). As housing and household require public goods and amenities, it is important that commercial uses be included near housing to bolster the Downtown economy and meet public needs. The City of Desert Hot Springs uses two specific residential zoning designations with which they solely allow for housing development: Residential Low (R-L) and Residential Medium (R-M). However, housing can be developed in the Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MU-N) zone, which serves residential uses combined with commercial uses in mixed-use developments. To allow for optimum density and help the city meet its RHNA capacity for Extremely Low to Low Income Categories, Program LU 3.1 is suggested so that General Commercial and Mixed-Use Neighborhood change to Mixed-Use Commercial. Then, RHNA allocation can be met with more ease. General Commercial uses can still be accommodated only on ground floors while housing goes above it with required setbacks.

Mixed-Use Commercial (MU-C) zones already exist within the downtown boundary and allow for housing, though not exclusively as other commercial uses can take its place entirely. Per Program LU3.1, MU-C can have development requirements that allow for first floor office or retail + second floor multi-family apartment with setback, and/or first floor retail + second floor office. With this, these zones in Downtown make enticing options for housing and mid- to high-density residential-type uses. Per Program LU3.2, building area minimum square footage for MU-C is changed to 10,000 square feet, while MU-N minimum is changed to 7,000 square feet. This would lower the existing minimum requirements to a more accessible entry point as well as allow for diversity in building envelopes.

Lastly, per Program LU3.3, existing residential development can be allowed to add second story residential uses approved ministerially if they meet the following requirements: second floor setbacks of at least 10 feet from front of first floor and building height that does not exceed 32 feet, including pitched roof.

The policies and programs under Goal LU-4 serve to reduce the number of vacant lots in Downtown and encourage infill development on these parcels. Infill development refers

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to new construction on vacant or underused land within an existing developed area.

This can include farmer's markets, temporary pop-up spaces, more eateries, retail, or housing. Additionally, land bank programs across the country have empowered residents to play a catalyzing role in revitalizing dilapidated land. These recommended policies may assist the City in filling undeveloped land to generate more economic and social activity in the downtown area.

In the proposed goal LU-5, the policies focus the city to develop a public park and open space in Downtown that both residents, businesses and patrons can use. The goal here was to provide appropriate language for the construction of a public park in the downtown area that could bring the community together and help liven the City.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Zoning

Goal LU 1: Promote growth and development that will make Downtown a vibrant and attractive destination for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Policy LU 1.1: Create new opportunities for mixed-use developments that mix high quality housing with commercial, retail, and office by making changes to the municipal zoning code.

Policy LU 1.2: Encourage high-quality commercial development along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.

Policy LU2 1.3: Encourage new developments to locate near or adjacent to other buildings with compatible uses

Policy LU2 1.4: Focus growth along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard corridors to establish a dual set of prime Downtown corridors.

Goal LU-2: Establish a diverse mix of land uses to maximize the potential for pedestrian scale office, retail, and residential developments.

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Policy LU 2.1: Create incentives and standards that encourage development of land uses that provide public amenities and desirable facilities.

Policy LU 2.2: Encourage the replacement of non-conforming uses to achieve desirable groupings of compatible uses along the outer edges of Downtown.

Policy LU 2.3: Encourage new mixed-use developments to limit the number of commercial driveways, minimize buildings setbacks, and provide public ground floor spaces.

Policy LU 2.4: Update existing municipal zoning codes to provide more flexibility and greater diversity in allowed land-uses.

Housing

Goal LU 3: Encourage development that promotes balanced integration between commercial, office and residential uses in the downtown area.

Policy LU 3.1: Allow for a larger diversity in housing options by zoning for mixed-use development in designated downtown areas, while maintaining such existing zones.

Policy LU 3.2: Allow for denser housing options by removing barriers to development in existing mixed-use zoned areas.

Policy LU 3.3: Encourage the adaptation of currently existing residential units to support higher density residential capacities.

Vacant Lots

Goal LU 4: Reduce vacant and undeveloped lots in the downtown area.

Policy LU 4.1: Identify key sites for commercial, mixed-use, or residential infill development.

Policy LU 4.2: Pursue federal, state, or regional funding to acquire key priority sites that are privately-owned and undeveloped.

Policy LU 4.3: Incentivize and facilitate infill development on undeveloped land.

Public Space

Goal LU-5: Expand pedestrian friendly areas within the downtown area.

Policy LU 7.1: Establish new public parks in Downtown.

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
LU 1.1.1	Mixed-Use Neighborhood Rezone. The Community Development Department will prepare an amending ordinance that will rezone all downtown parcels designated as Residential Low (R-L) and Residential Medium (R-M) to Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MU-N).	Community Development & Code Enforcement	Short
LU 1.1.2	Downtown Commercial Rezone. The Community Development Department will prepare an amending ordinance that rezones all parcels designated as General Commercial (C-G) along Pierson Boulevard to Downtown Commercial (C-D).	Community Development & Code Enforcement	Short
LU 1.1.3	Mixed-Use Corridor Rezone. The Community Development Department will prepare an amending ordinance that rezones all parcels designated as General Commercial (C-G) along Palm Drive to Mixed-Use Corridor (MU-C).	Community Development & Code Enforcement	Short
LU 1.1.4	C-D Zoning Update. The Community Development Department will prepare an amending ordinance that modifies the existing zoning code to permit 'Businesses financial, and professional office, 'Arcades', and 'Animal Care Services' developments by right in the Downtown Commercial Zone.	Community Development	Medium
LU 1.1.5	MU-N Zoning Update. The Community Development Department will prepare an amending ordinance that modifies the existing zoning code to permit 'Business, Financial, and Professional Office' and 'Accessory Dwelling Unit' developments by right in the Mixed-Use Neighborhood zone.	Community Development	Medium

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
LU 1.1.6	VS-M Zoning Update. The Community Development Department will prepare an amending ordinance that modifies the existing zoning code to permit 'Art Gallery', 'Commercial Recreation – Indoor', 'Commercial Recreation', and 'Live/Work Unit' developments by right in the Visitor Serving Mixed-Use Zone.	Community Development	Medium
LU 1.1.7	First-floor Commercial Standards. Maintain Downtown Commercial (C-D) development standards for first floor so that new development does not vary much from existing building ground level floors.	Community Development	Short
LU 1.1.8	Building height and setback for MU-C. Building height allowed in Mixed-Use Corridor (MU-C) zones will be two floors. Second story setbacks would be required only in cases where residential use is developed on the second floor.	Community Development	Short
LU 1.1.9	Minimum floor area for MU-C & MU-N. MU-C building area minimum square footage is changed to 10,000 square feet, while MU-N minimum is changed to 7,000 square feet. This would lower the existing minimum requirements to a more accessible entry point as well as allow for diversity in building envelopes.	Community Development	Short

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
LU 1.1.10	Setbacks for additions to existing development. Existing residential development allowed to add second story residential uses approved ministerially if meets requirements: second floor setbacks of at least 10 feet from front of first floor, building height does not exceed 32 feet, including pitched roof.	Community Development	Short
LU 3.3.1	<p>Create a Downtown Land Bank for vacant properties identified as key priority sites in the downtown area. The Downtown Land Bank will include city-owned property and properties acquired from the vacant property registration ordinance and tax foreclosures. Properties in the land bank inventory may be sold at a drastically reduced market price to eligible developers with projects that align with the land use goals of each property and downtown as a whole. Lots must be developed within 2 years of purchase.</p> <p>Develop a list of allowable desired uses for lots that will be prioritized under the program including housing, incubator spaces, retail, dining, community and entertainment spaces, and offices.</p>	Community development	Medium

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Economic development is the growth of a local economy toward community-defined goals for economic well-being. Supporting economic development in Downtown Desert Hot Springs will provide a foundation for growth and prosperity for the entire city. The City can transform Downtown into a fiscal ecosystem that provides resiliency and opportunity for residents, tourists, entrepreneurs, and business owners. The goals within the Economic Development Element work to establish a sense of place and culture in Downtown, while increasing access and opportunities for existing and new businesses to thrive. Currently, Desert Hot Springs residents tend to leave the city for work, shopping, and entertainment. Downtown can eventually serve the needs of the community and keep resident dollars circulating within the city lines while also attracting tourism from the greater region, state, and country.

EXISTING BUSINESS & BUSINESS SUPPORT

There is a sense of scarcity when it comes to the businesses in downtown Desert Hot Springs, as active businesses are separated by vacant storefronts and empty lots. However, the existing businesses are dynamic community assets. The strong core of existing businesses will create the foundation for the future of business development downtown.

Desert Hot Springs is a friendly environment for all kinds of business ventures. Between 2019 and 2021, the city approved more than 2 million square feet for commercial development. The city offers significantly lower commercial real estate prices than neighboring valley cities. This creates a forgiving setting for those opening their first brick-and-mortar establishment or seasoned business owners looking to expand to new locations. What's missing is clear information and support through the provision of financial and organizational resources and programming.

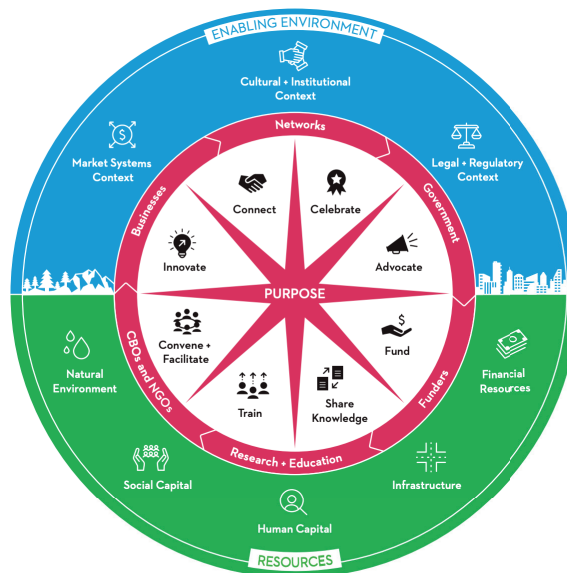


Figure 1: Innovation Ecosystem Model
(Source: MIT D-Lab)

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To attract and maintain businesses in Downtown, the City must nurture an environment that provides context, connections, and advocacy for new and existing businesses. The Innovation Ecosystem Model, as shown in Figure 1 defines the framework that can strengthen local economies. In this model, organizations, entities, and individuals collectively create, support, and enable innovation through their activities and interactions. This includes community organizations, businesses, and start-ups. The model also outlines resources that the ecosystem needs to function, such as infrastructure, financial resources, and social capital. The city needs to engage with these two parts to create an enabling environment, which will influence the system's ability to produce and scale innovation.

Currently, there are several economic development organizations within Coachella Valley, including Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, who provide resources and expertise to support existing and starting businesses. However, a strong distribution of those resources to local businesses and entrepreneurs through the City is missing. Stronger programming, such as incubator programs, can increase chances of success when starting businesses. It is estimated that 87% of incubator-supported startups survive after five years, nearly double

the success rate of startups that are on their own. Additionally, 84% of incubated startups stay in the same community as the incubator. These kinds of programs can be essential to the development of a healthy economic ecosystem.

VACANCIES & NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT

Downtown currently suffers from a high frequency of vacant lots and vacant storefronts. Within the Downtown boundary alone, approximately 24% of the total land area is vacant, as shown in Figure 2. This fragments the flow of Downtown, leaving it unappealing to pedestrians and causing a disconnect between businesses. Vacant properties can contribute to an overall decline and disinvestment of a community due to their association with crime, an increased risk to health and welfare, and reduction of property values. Additionally, the vacant lots in Downtown have been susceptible to blight and litter.

There are innumerable benefits from businesses establishing themselves closer together, including a “spillover” effect. This means that wealth and knowledge can spillover from one business to another by sharing customers, attracting potential employees, and learning from each other's experiences. They can also share infrastructure such as parking, public transport, and other amenities.

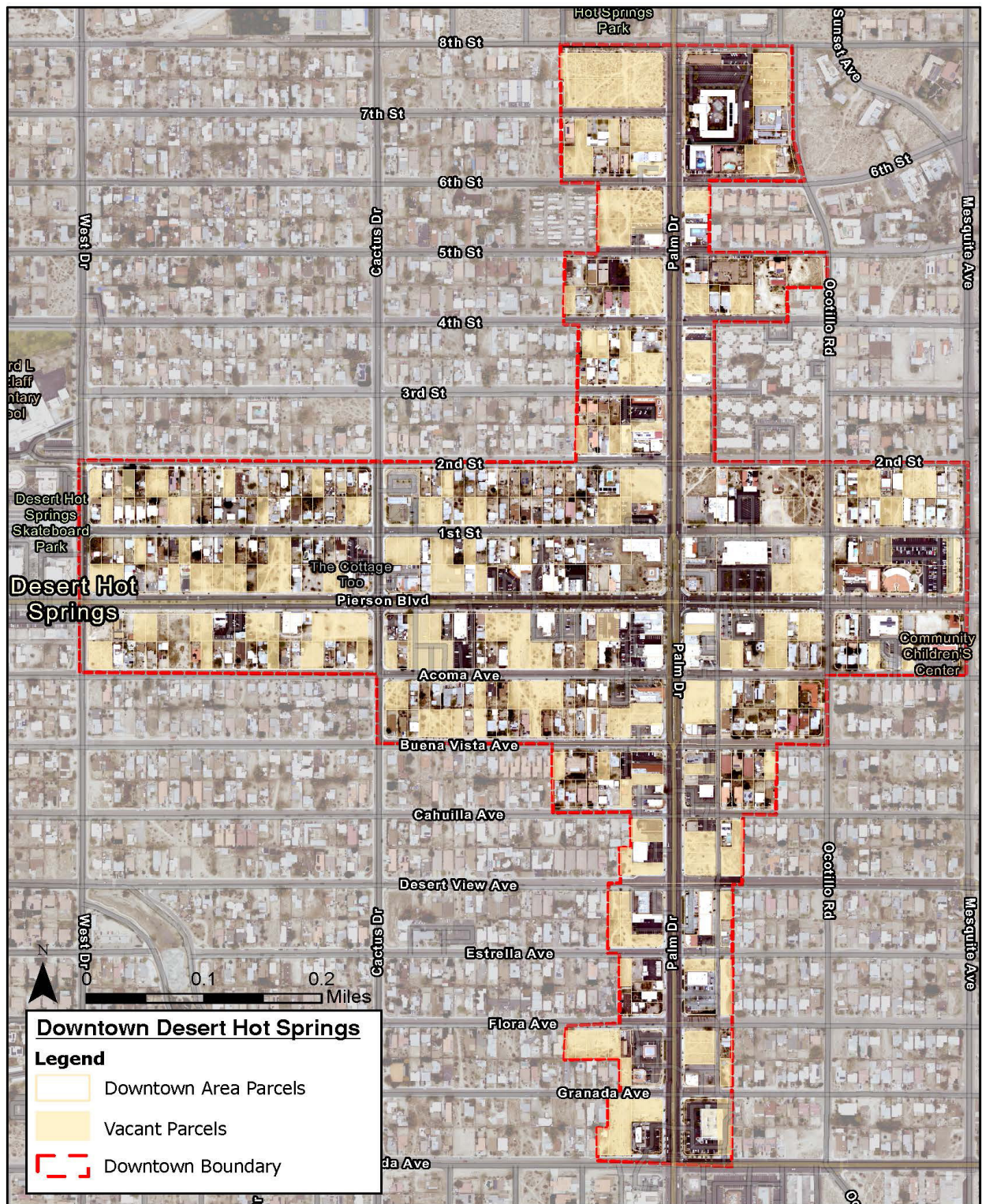


Figure 2: Downtown Vacancy Map

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local government officials, community organizations, and residents have been increasingly viewing vacant properties as opportunities for reuse. Vacant properties can become assets if they are redeveloped into uses that are important to the community; stabilizing and revitalizing entire neighborhoods. With proper programming and management, vacant properties can be used to activate spaces. Strategies to activate these spaces will be specific to each parcel and depend on: the size of the space, what is in proximity of the space, and what the surrounding community will benefit the most from. Temporary-use programming, such as farmer's markets, night markets, events, festivals, and pop-up shops act as productive uses in vacant spaces and buildings. The creation of a Downtown Association can contribute and assist in the facilitation of programming.

BALANCING TOURISM & COMMUNITY NEEDS

Tourism plays a leading role in the economy of the greater Palm Desert. The Greater Palm Springs area includes nine cities: Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Indio, and Coachella. One case study estimates that the region draws 14 million tourists annually, with 6.4 million staying in the region overnight. Regionally, 25% of all jobs are within the hospitality industry. It is estimated that the total

economic impact of tourism for the Greater Palm Springs area is \$7.5 billion annually.

Desert Hot Springs distinguishes itself from other cities in the Coachella Valley with its unique tourism opportunities. The city is home to world-renowned mineral water springs, both hot and cold. Many boutique resorts offer access to hot springs and spa amenities, creating an industry of wellness tourism. The cold-water springs are known for their award-winning taste, adding to the health focus of tourism in Desert Hot Springs. Currently, the city has a designated "Spa Zone" east of downtown, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: The Spa Zone in Desert Hot Springs
(Source: Realty World Coachella Valley)

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This area includes resorts and spas offering access to hot mineral water. However, there is currently little connection between the Spa Zone and downtown. There is an untapped opportunity for partnerships and connections between these two community assets that would provide co-benefits for both and stimulate the local economy.

Desert Hot Springs is in a prime location, offering abundant recreation options. Surrounded by scenic mountains, The Sand to Snow National Monument, and Joshua Tree National Park, Desert Hot Springs is equipped to be the ecotourism hub of the Coachella Valley. There are 18 different hiking trails in Desert Hot Springs alone. By expanding the business and public event offerings of downtown Desert Hot Springs, visitors and residents will have a vibrant central business district to start and end their day's adventure. By expanding the tourism experiences downtown, the city can promote and complement the wellness and ecotourism industries.

There is a rich culture and sense of pride among residents in Desert Hot Springs. Planning for tourism is not just for the tourists. The tourism industry and the future of downtown must also support the residents. Celebrating the community through parades, community festivals, markets, and heritage events is celebrating what it means to be a Desert Hot Springs

local. This creates community character and passion that tourists want to experience for themselves. Together, the spas, the outdoor recreation opportunities, and the strong community pride can grow and flourish. But it all begins with creating a vibrant and lively downtown that will act as the economic and tourism anchor of the community.

IMPROVING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Cities and towns that fail to retain and attract businesses are prone to decline, distress, and poverty. The City's lack of diversity in employment and the available number of jobs drives residents to seek employment opportunities in neighboring cities. According to On the Map 90.2% of Desert Hot Spring residents commute out of the city for employment opportunities. Designing downtown Desert Hot Springs as the City's employment hub has the potential to assist the city in creating a thriving and healthy economy.

The most common employment sectors for those who live in Desert Hot Springs are Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Accommodation & Food Services. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the primary industries for residents in 2020, though the majority of these residents live in Desert Hot Springs and work outside city limits. Note, the data set does not include

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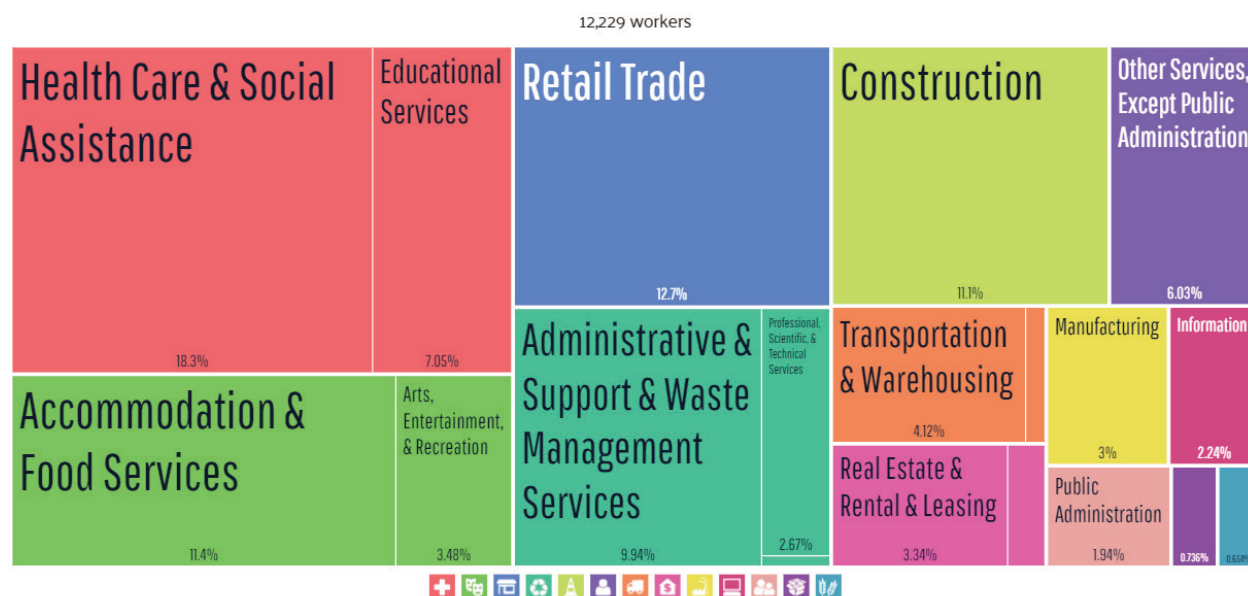


Figure 4: Desert Hot Springs share of residents by industry sector (Source: Data USA)

cannabis employment opportunities that were made available with the passing of recent cannabis measures.

There is a lack of employment diversity, and the city can benefit from incentivizing a variety of uses in the downtown area. Increasing the number of employment opportunities in Downtown would increase foot traffic and the demand for commercial and retail businesses (food, drink, recreation) to provide services to the employees of the direct area.

The city can diversify employment opportunities by prioritizing the development of coworking spaces. In 2019,

22.2% of Desert Hot Springs residents worked from their place of residence (Data USA). The work-from-home rates remained high through 2020 (21.5%) and 2021 (21.2%) during the COVID-19 crisis (Data USA). No significant increase or decrease was noted due to COVID-19 and the subsequent shift to remote working options observed nationwide. The data demonstrates the number of residents that work from home has remained consistent since prior to changes caused by COVID-19. Providing physical alternative spaces in the downtown area for those residents to work has the potential to increase the usage of downtown as previously noted with new employees in the area.

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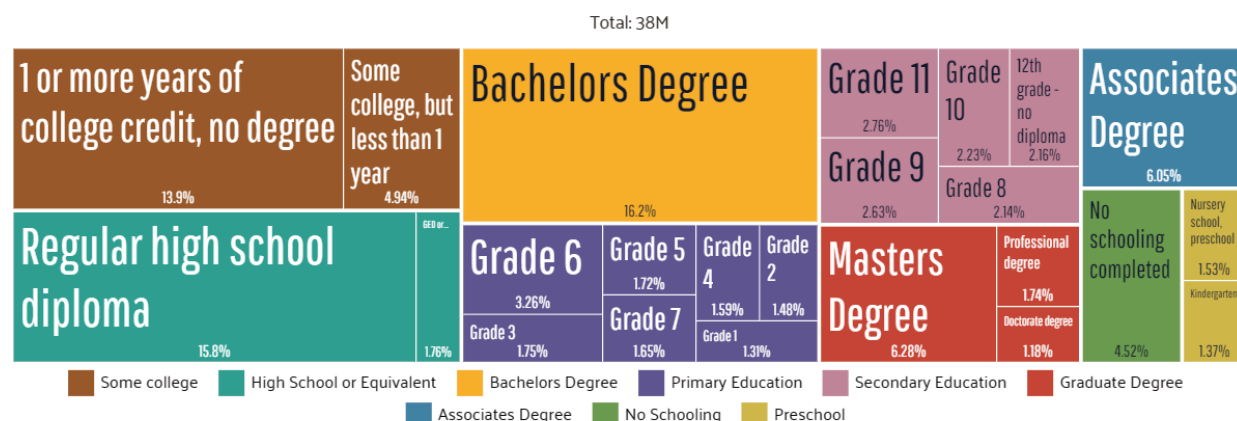


Figure 5: State of California educational attainment (Source: Data USA)

Data for year 2021 shows that 14.5% of Desert Hot Springs residents have a bachelor's degree or higher (Census). In comparison 23.04% of California residents have a bachelor's degree or higher (Data USA). The most common educational levels obtained by the working population in 2020 were Some college, High School or Equivalent, and bachelor's degree. Figure 5 illustrates educational attainment for the state of California. The difference in educational attainment is roughly 10% with residents of Desert Hot Springs having lower educational attainment.

that does not have a college degree. Both facts highlight the need for a program that assists residents of all ages to achieve their educational and vocational goals. This can be achieved by providing a variety of specialized services such as career coaching, employment preparation, and assistance. The services provided can also be helpful for residents attempting to acquire job training for career advancement. Local community colleges should be considered as potential partners to help achieve a stronger and more diverse workforce.

Staff members of Desert Hot Springs High School informed us of the lack of diverse employment opportunities faced by youth that decide to stay local after graduation. In addition, the data shows that there is a significant amount of the population

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOALS AND POLICIES

To establish a strong economic ecosystem within Downtown Desert Hot Springs, the City must focus on expanding opportunities for locals, existing business owners, and entrepreneurs.

Business

Goal ED-1: Enhance commercial activity as a driver for downtown's economic vitality and growth.

Policy ED-1.1: Diversify experiences in Downtown that benefits residents and tourists.

Policy ED-1.2: Increase quantity and variety of businesses downtown.

Policy ED-1.3: Support existing businesses through city programs.

Policy ED-1.4: Establish a city identity to promote the local arts and culture and express the unique Desert Hot Springs identity.

Policy ED-1.5: Create a healthy balance of local and chain businesses that serve the community's needs.

Development

Goal ED-2: Encourage the development of vacant space downtown.

Policy ED-2.1: Encourage property owners to fill vacant land and storefronts to return vacant properties back to productive uses.

Policy ED-2.2: Discourage irresponsible vacant property management to promote a clean and safe downtown.

Policy ED-2.3: Use affordable, low risk development strategies to activate empty lot spaces, such as shipping container buildings or outdoor fitness parks.

Tourism and Residents

Goal ED-3: Cultivate a vibrant and livable Downtown environment that balances the needs of residents and visitors.

Policy ED-3.1: Cultivate a downtown identity that offers a broad range of experiences.

Policy ED-3.2: Encourage uses that foster 18-hour downtown that is vibrant during day and evening.

Policy ED-3.3: Invest in new and established businesses and the introduction of new uses and activities that strengthen Downtown's appeal as a tourism and entertainment destination.

Policy ED-3.4: Strive to make Downtown the location of choice within the region for annual events, cultural celebrations, and other community gatherings.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Development and Jobs

Goal ED-4: Make Downtown Desert Hot Springs a major employment hub.

Policy ED-4.1: Expand the diversity and quality of employment options downtown to contribute to a healthy city economy.

Policy ED 4.2: Increase the number of high-quality jobs available to residents of Desert Hot Springs.

Policy ED-4.3: Encourage the development of co-working spaces for small businesses and start-ups.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
ED-1.2.1	Hire a consultant to develop a comprehensive Market Analysis to determine the flow of capital, growing industries, and key missing markets within the downtown area.	Department of Economic Development, private consultant (TBD)	Short
ED-1.3.1	Develop an Incubator Program to help startups grow and develop their businesses. Connect businesses with funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities, as well as office space and other resources.	Department of Economic Development, Coachella Valley Economic Partnership	Mid
ED-1.3.2	Establish a Downtown Business Association that benefits the business community and strengthens the identity of Downtown. Actions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File for association status • Draft mission statement and governing documents • Elect board • Hire staff • Host a variety of community large scale events. • Annual dues paid from existing businesses in the Downtown boundary 	Community Development Department, Department of Economic Development, Existing Downtown Businesses	Short

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
ED-1.3.3	Expand the economic development tab of the City's website to include resources for entrepreneurs, business owners, and job seekers. Additions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development resources and capacity targeting small business development • Community-specific web resources on how to start a business • Media features on small business and new business announcements • "Shop Small" campaigns 	Department of Economic Development	Short
ED-2.1.1	Establish a Commercial Vacant Property Registration Ordinance. Measures would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define vacant property as a unit, building, or lot that is unoccupied for more than 182 days (nonconsecutively) within a year. • Require a management monthly fee that doubles with every year of vacancy. • Use revenue from fees to fund small business assistance through a future Downtown Business Association 	Department of Economic Development	Short
ED-3.1.1	Hire a consultant to construct a Strategic Tourism Plan for Downtown Desert Hot Springs.	Department of Economic Development, private consultant	Short
ED-3.1.2	Approve and Deploy Desert Hot Springs branding, creating a cohesive branding strategy for all city media with consistent tone and appearance.	Department of Economic Development	Short

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TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Transportation touches every aspect of our daily lives. It connects us to one another and allows us to access resources, work, education, and entertainment. It is critical to the functioning of society and has played a key role in shaping the urban form. In Desert Hot Springs, there is an abundance of opportunity to create a transportation network that can effectively serve the current and future residents of the city, employers, and the large number of visitors it entertains each year. A well-connected downtown can become the catalyst for a thriving city that ensures its residents and visitors can access all amenities and services.

MULTIMODALITY

Creating spaces for a variety of transportation options is essential to ensuring that all travelers can reach their destination. A “multimodal” approach to transportation refers to an effort to create safe, reliable, and convenient options for all transportation modes including private vehicles, bikes, walking, buses, trains, carpool, and ridesharing services. By diversifying the transportation system, travelers of all ages, income levels, and physical abilities may be able to reach essential goods and services.

There are many approaches to promoting multimodal transportation. Infrastructure

improvements, such as installing bike paths or widening sidewalks, create safer environments for smaller-scale transportation options. Urban design elements may also use the physical environment to reflect the values of the community. For example, a street lined with trees, benches, and overhanging string lights welcomes people to walk through and appreciate local neighborhoods, while a wide road with towering light poles and large advertising signage is less inviting to non-vehicular traffic (see figure 1).

Multimodal transportation may also be promoted through programming. Transit fare programs that reduce the cost of travel on buses and trains make public transportation more accessible for low-income individuals. Parking fees in city centers, such as parking garages or parking meters, are also a common method to reduce the number of vehicles travelling through densely populated areas, thereby improving the safety and enjoyability of the streets. Effective programming can provide enough incentive or disincentive to change the way people choose to travel.

Desert Hot Springs has started to embrace multimodal solutions by upgrading its streets to include infrastructure for all modes of transportation. Despite these changes, vehicles still dominate the roadways. More work is needed to encourage

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Figure 1: A car-oriented design (top) prioritizes the throughput of vehicles, whereas a person-oriented design (bottom) prioritizes the comfort and safety of all users.

TRANSPORTATION

greater rates of walking and bicycling to and within Downtown Desert Hot Springs.

PEDESTRIANS

The downtown pedestrian network is not complete. The overall built environment is not scaled for pedestrians in a way that encourages walkability and is generally car centric. Within the downtown core, pedestrian scale lighting was only effective in small areas. There were neighborhoods that lacked proper sidewalks. There were painted lane stripes as sidewalks and disconnected sidewalks. In many places there were missing pedestrian crossings and there were frequent, long disconnected blocks which disjointes the walking experience. This forces pedestrians to walk long distances to cross the street. Improvements such as midblock crossings are suggested to assist in providing a better pedestrian environment that will make downtown more walkable. Creating a pedestrian friendly environment will foster a more vibrant and safer Downtown.

BICYCLES

A “connected bicycle network” is a transportation system that integrates a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities from bicycle routes to bike racks. It provides a safe and comfortable transportation experience travelling from one destination to another, enabling people of all ages and

abilities to get where they want to go. Roads in the U.S. serve as an example of such a network. When drivers go somewhere, they rarely give much thought to whether the road network for motor vehicles in the U.S. connects to the places people need to go in a consistent and reliable way.

A “connected bicycle network” can include a variety of facilities, from a protected bike lane or a quiet neighborhood street to a shared use path. High-stress facilities such as a conventional bike lane on a 45-mph speed limit road may not meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities may therefore not be considered part of a connected bike network. Ideally, a connected bike network gets people where they want to go and offers a comfortable way to get there.

Desert Hot Springs does not have a connected bike network. The current conditions of the road result in cars going 45-mph down Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive, making it very dangerous for cyclists to safely use the bike lanes on these roads. There are currently striped bike lanes (Class II) and shared street facilities (Class III). There are currently no separate bike facilities that cyclists can safely use separate from cars.

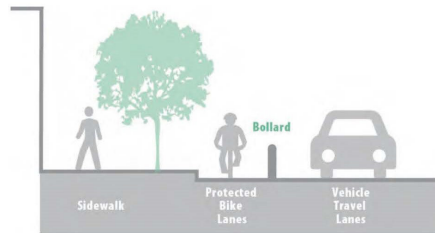
TRANSPORTATION



Off-Street Bike Path (Class I)

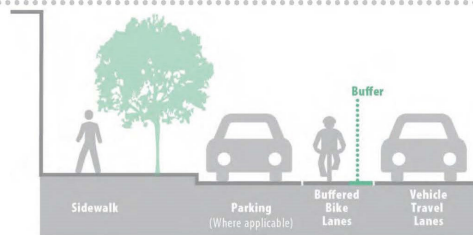
Off-street bicycle facilities include open space, shared use paths (i.e., Caltrans Class I facilities) and roadside shared use paved paths or "urban trails." These facilities are recommended where a recreational experience is desired, where a route is desired and no street exists, and where exceedingly high speed and volume vehicular traffic warrants substantial separation.

Figure 2: Off-Street Bike Facilities. Source: Desert Hot Springs General Plan 2020.



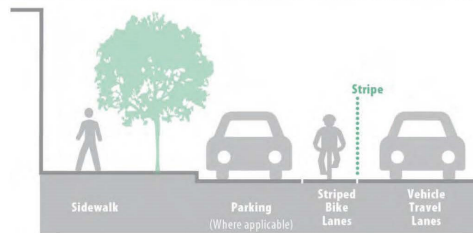
Protected Bike Lanes (Class II)

These bike lanes, also called "cycle tracks," are separated from vehicle lanes by planters, bollards, curbs, parked cars, or posted notices.



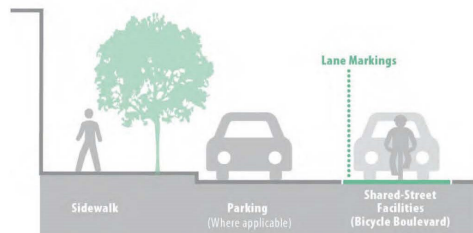
Buffered Bike Lanes (Class II)

Buffered bike lanes are separated from vehicles lanes with designated buffer space.



Striped Bike Lanes (Class II)

These lanes are striped with white paint and are often located on the far-right side of the road. They may be painted a separate color to draw more attention.



Shared-Street Facilities (Class III)

Shared-street facilities include bicycle routes and bicycle boulevards or "neighborhood greenways." These facilities, marked with "sharrows," are recommended only where vehicle speeds and volumes are low enough for bicyclists and motorists to truly share the road. Sharrows are shared-lane markings on the streets or signage intended to serve as a visual reminder that space on the road is meant to be shared by bikes and cars.



Figure 3: Types of Bicycle Lane Facilities. Source: Desert Hot Springs General Plan 2020.

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Bicycle Classifications

In planning and designing bicycle facilities, there are two types called “off street bike facilities (see Figure 2)” and “on-street bike facilities (see Figure 3)” with distinctive design standards for both. Off street bike facilities, referred to as “Class I,” include open space and roadside shared use paths for pedestrians and cyclists. These facilities are recommended where exceedingly high speed and volume vehicular traffic warrants separation.

SAFETY

Safety is a crucial component to the serviceability, dependability, and enjoyability of transportation systems. Although discussions of roadway safety typically focus on vehicle-related collisions, it can include how safe someone feels walking at night and bike or vehicle theft risk. Transportation systems are complex, and they require complex solutions. A multi-pronged approach that addresses these different risks is necessary to improve roadway safety.

Infrastructure

Improvements in the physical environment are the most effective means to prevent collisions. For example, narrow roadways signal to drivers to slow down and be alert for potential hazards. Constructing a bike

path completely separated from vehicular traffic drastically reduces the potential for collisions. Additionally, more cost-effective implementation measures may provide significant safety improvements without necessitating larger construction efforts. These may include installing flashing signs at mid-block pedestrian crossings or bollards along bike lanes to separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic.

Street Activity

Increasing street activity increases the visibility of what is happening on the streets. With more eyes scanning the roadways, there are more residents, business owners, and workers able to watch for crime and nuisances. Improving the visibility of the streets by creating more transparency between businesses and the roadways or improving street lighting are simple ways to make streets safer.

Education

Roadway injuries can be prevented by offering safety initiatives that encourage safe travel and increasing awareness of vulnerable road users. To promote bike safety, outreach is essential to educate the community about the importance of bicycle safety, such as the rules of the road, safely equipping one’s bicycle, and wearing a bicycle helmet for every ride. Bike education programs can come in the form of bicycle

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safety classes or webinars, bicycle safety stations, repair stands, helmet promotions, and communications. Additionally, awareness campaigns can improve the visibility of bicyclists and pedestrians on the roadways, which may encourage drivers to adopt cautious driving habits. Education programs for all modes will encourage roadway users to view the streets as shared spaces and reduce safety hazards.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure improvements are a priority to help make the streets of Desert Hot Springs safer and more enjoyable for all users. People are less likely to use modes of transportation that are perceived to be less safe. The perception of safety is often closely affiliated with the available infrastructure. Investing in infrastructure is key to ensuring that travelers feel safe on their way to their destinations.

The City recognizes the need for safety improvements on its roadways. Primary goals of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan focus on providing adequate infrastructure and public services to support the relationship between land use and equity. The City has already invested in infrastructure to accommodate a variety of modes through its downtown core and plans to continue upgrading the streets to improve safety.



*Figure 4: Missing sidewalks along Cahuilla Avenue (top). Disconnected sidewalk network on Second Street (bottom)
Source: City of Desert Hot Springs Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan (February 2016).*

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities in Downtown Desert Hot Springs were evaluated for quality and continuity (see Figure 4). The current state of all pedestrian facilities is summarized in the Existing Conditions Report. By prioritizing improvements regarding the cleanliness and maintenance of sidewalks, the City will provide a safer and more enjoyable experience walking downtown. Creative solutions to improve pedestrian

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infrastructure, such as crosswalk paintings, are recommended to reflect the character of Desert Hot Springs in its streets.

Automobile Facilities

An evaluation of roadway conditions highlighted that automobiles are the largest mode share for transportation. Upon analysis of counts conducted at roads within the city, it is evident that the downtown area (most notably the intersection of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard), sees some of the highest average daily traffic counts in Desert Hot Springs. The city has also seen increased commercial goods movement within city boundaries due to the increase in population, demand for goods, and exportation of cannabis and wellness products. Semi-trucks damage and put more stress on roads than the average commuter vehicle. To preserve the condition and prevent accelerated degradation of roads within city boundaries, commercial truck use has been limited to certain streets. However, Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard are included as streets where commercial goods truck access is permitted. To remedy the damage caused by commercial vehicles, it is essential to perform regular audits of street conditions to ensure that street markings are visible and potholes are fixed.

POLICIES

Multimodal

Goal M-1: Reduce people's use of their cars by supporting and promoting walking, riding buses and bicycles.

Policy M-1.1: Promote multimodal transportation options by providing sufficient resources for cars, bikes, and pedestrians.

Policy M-1.2: Improve access and convenience from neighborhoods to downtown destinations for a diversity of modes.

Policy M-1.3: Support transportation options for all ages and abilities.

Pedestrians

Goal M-2: Increase pedestrian activity in the downtown.

Policy M-2.1: Make the downtown safe and enjoyable for pedestrians.

Policy M-2.2: Provide easy access to parking for downtown visitors.

Policy M-2.3: Develop pedestrian-scale streetscapes that will make walking more comfortable and attractive.

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Policy M-2.4: Improve pedestrian connectivity to points of interest that will encourage walking as a mode of transport.

Policy M-2.5: Create spaces for pedestrian interaction that will bring the community together in a fun and safe environment.

Bicycles

Goal M-3: Create safe and comfortable bicycle facilities for all to enjoy.

Policy M-3.1: Build a safe and well-connected bicycle network to and within downtown.

Policy M-3.2: Provide bike parking throughout downtown for cyclists to safely store their bikes.

Policy M-3.3: Initiate a campaign to increase bike education and awareness.

Policy M-3.4: Consider adding wayfinding signage for major destinations.

Safety

Goal M-4: Ensure safety of all road users.

Policy M-4.1: Construct traffic calming measures such as speed tables, central medians, or bulb-outs.

Policy M-4.2: Improve comfort and safety at downtown transit stops.

Policy M-4.3: Upgrade sidewalk continuity to increase accessibility for all users.

Policy M-4.4: Use technology to ensure safe speeds along roadways.

Policy M-4.5: Enhance intersections and street crossings to improve visibility of vulnerable road users.

Infrastructure

Goal M-5: Improve the quality of road infrastructure.

Policy M-5.1: Maintain clean and safe pathways and community spaces free of debris.

Policy M-5.2: Develop a procedure for infrastructure improvement planning and programming.

Policy M-5.3: Establish a way to improve communication between residents and city staff to suggest improvements or request maintenance requests.

Policy M-5.4: Integrate creative solutions and beautification projects during infrastructure improvement processes that reflect the character of Desert Hot Springs.

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IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
M-1.1.1	Communicate information on bike and pedestrian paths and other facilities through an easily accessible platform (app/website/paper map).	CDD, CVAG	Short-term
M-2.1.1	<p>Redesign Pierson Boulevard to be a safe and functional place for all road users. Improvements can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruct the roadway from 4 lanes to 2 lanes (one in each direction). • Place on-street parking as a buffer from the sidewalks. • Create a central median in which cars may park diagonally. • Build the central median to accommodate pedestrian use/plaza space for festivals, street fairs, etc. when cars are not present. • Plant street trees in the central median to ensure shading for pedestrians and protection for vehicles (see figure 5). 	CDD, PW	Long-term
M-2.4.1	Implement mid-block crossings along Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive (see figure 6).	PW	Long-term
M-3.1.1	Extend the proposed protected bike lane from the bike/ped plan for all of Pierson Boulevard.	PW	Mid-term
M-3.1.2	Build a buffered bike lane along Palm from 8th Street to Ironwood Drive.	PW	Long-term

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
M-3.3.1	Build a bicycle kitchen to create an accessible and affordable method for community members to own their own bike and host educational workshops on bike safety. A Bike Kitchen is a program that can provide tools, resources, and mechanics knowledge to help people learn to repair or build-up used bicycles. By offering these skills and affordable recycled bicycles, it can improve transportation security and foster a sense of community.	CDD	Mid-term
M-4.1.1	Incorporate speed management measures such as bulb-outs/curb extensions and speed tables (see Figure 7).	PW	Long-term
M-4.3.1	Implement a pedestrian signal policy that prioritizes pedestrian safety, such as incorporating rapid flashing beacons for pedestrian crossings.	PW	Short-term
M-4.5.1	Implement a Safe Routes to School program to improve pedestrian and bicycle access from the local high school to Downtown.	CDD, CVAG	Short-term
M-5.1.1	The city shall maintain the quality and cleanliness of streets.	PW	Long-term
M-5.1.2	Ensure maintenance of painted street markings.	PW	Long-term
M-5.4.1	Create unique pedestrian crossings with paintings that showcase local community artists.	CDD, PW	Short-term

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Figure 5: Transformation of Lancaster Boulevard. Lancaster, California. Source: CNU.org

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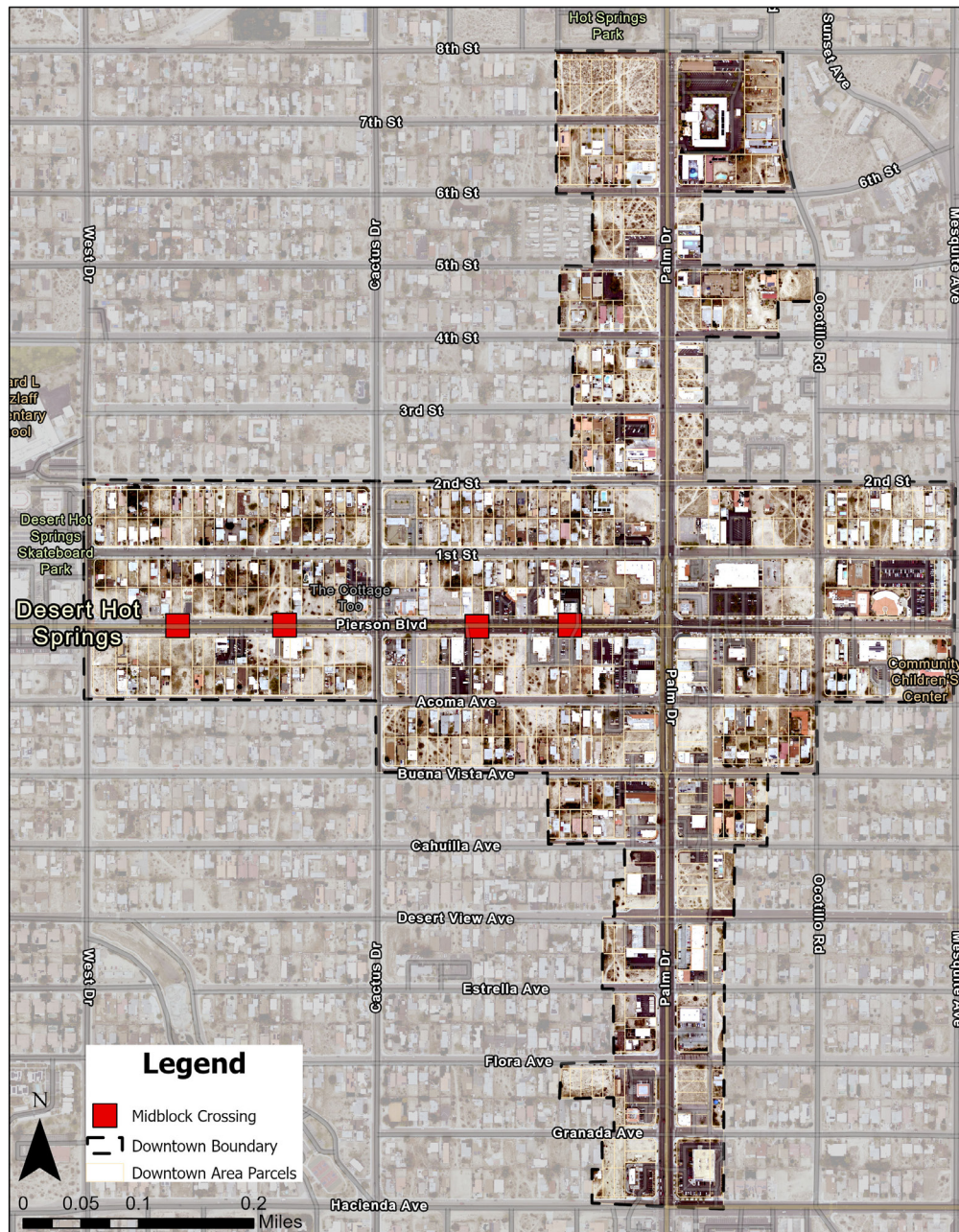


Figure 6: Proposed Mid-Block Crossings.

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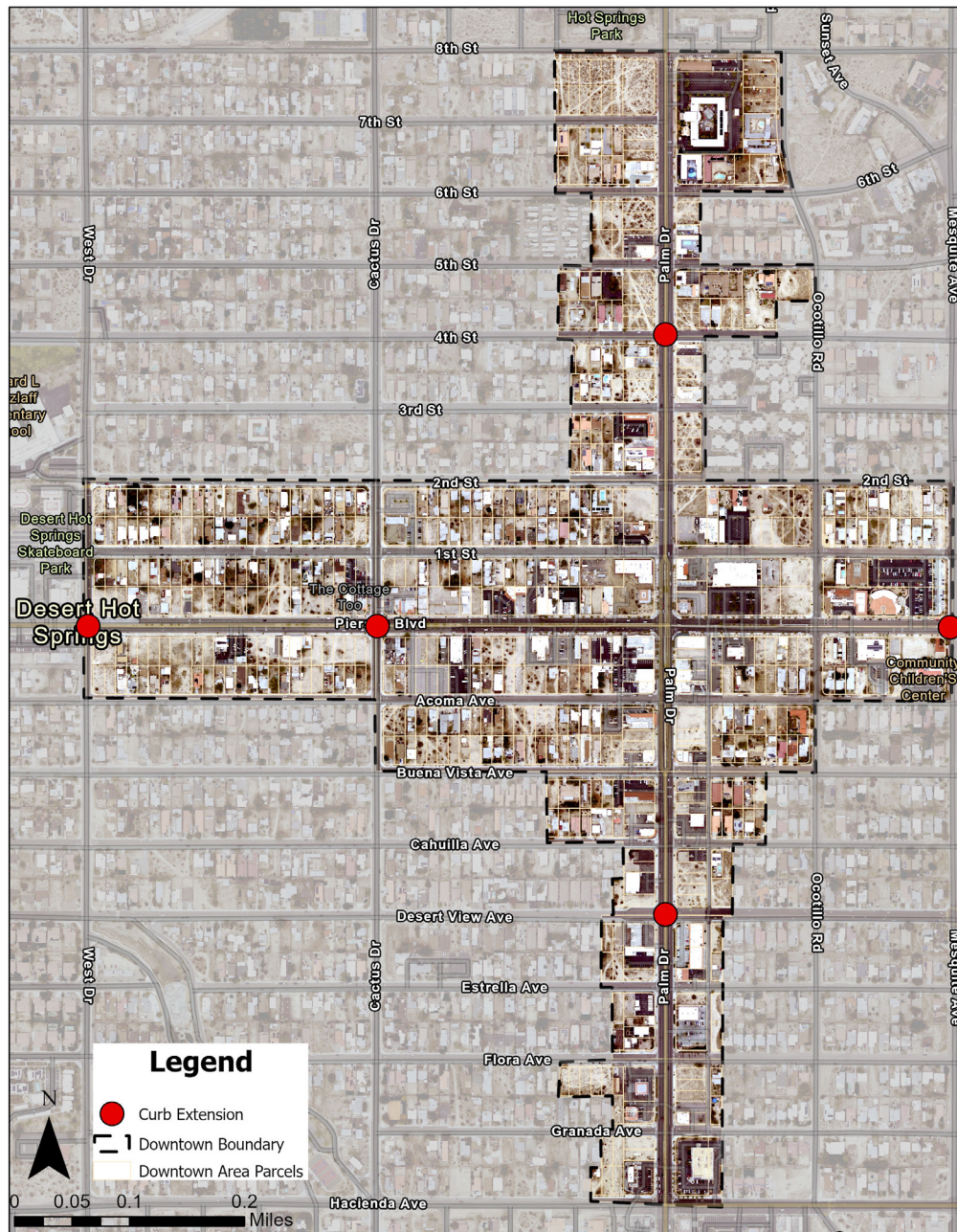


Figure 7: Proposed Curb Extensions.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Desert Hot Springs has a number of needs for their Downtown, some of which relate to its unique social and physical atmosphere and character. Currently, the city has specific cultural and demographic statistics of note that influenced the content of this section of the plan:

- **59.1%** of the community identifies as Hispanic or Latino.
- **47.9%** of the community are people of color.
- **24.8%** of the community was born in a foreign country.
- **46.8%** of the community speaks a language other than English at home.
- The city has a prominent youth population, with **26.7%** of the community being 18 years old or younger (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Throughout public outreach efforts, Desert Hot Spring's residents emphasized the city's pride in their community culture and a desire for the entire Downtown to be vibrant and inclusive. These sentiments were incorporated into the vision statement for this plan and prompted many conversations around the main issues and needs of residents and their youth, including a need for more cultural resources, local public

spaces, safety, and sustainability. As a result of these conversations, four main themes have been determined that shape all the subsequent goals, policies, and programs within this section.

These four main themes are as follows:

1. **Appearance & Atmosphere:** Creating a distinct sense of place and character and places for social interaction that foster relationships.
2. **Safety & Wellbeing:** Shaping a safer and more comfortable downtown for all.
3. **Sustainability & Resilience:** Supporting healthy and resilient communities through sustainable design.
4. **Diversity & Culture:** Celebrating community and culture through placemaking and public art.

This section establishes goals, policies, and programs that fulfill residents' needs for future developments in the downtown area, shape the character in a way that better aligns with that of the community and its history and aims to create well-designed and safe public and private spaces.

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APPEARANCE & ATMOSPHERE

The appearance and atmosphere of Downtown encompasses several overlapping themes – functional aspects of buildings and space, safety and accessibility, aesthetics and public art, land use and spatial programming. The objective in establishing goals and policies for the downtown is to create an attractive district that reflects the unique qualities of Desert Hot Springs – its rich health and wellness history, access to and views of the natural landscape, and small business community for example. Thoughtful design enhances the public realm and includes physical improvements, community partnerships, and programming that activates space. This serves as a basis for economic development by creating an attractive physical environment that is welcoming to residents and visitors, that businesses want to invest in.

To establish a distinct sense of place – both for the downtown and the city’s place within the greater Coachella Valley – Desert Hot Springs has several key features it can draw on. The community values its small-town character and business community, and the downtown boasts sweeping views of the surrounding San Jacinto Mountains. There is a rich history in the health and wellness industry, with award-winning water quality. More recently, the cannabis industry has brought economic growth to the community and there exists opportunity to establish

its presence more coherently within the downtown. Spaces scaled to pedestrians and strategies that mitigate the harsh desert climate create an environment that is comfortable for year-round use. The city can draw on these – and a myriad of additional assets – to be incorporated into unique architecture, public art, and streetscape elements that can serve to reinforce the Downtown’s character and attract future development.

During public outreach, participants envisioned Downtown as a safe and inviting place where everyone is welcome. Achieving this will rely on a network of public spaces and programming. Treating sidewalks and paseos as urbanized “parks” invites a variety of uses – formal and informal – and carves out space for a diversity of users and businesses as the Downtown grows. Encouraging a network of parks, plazas, and paseos improves pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods and enhances the experience of shopping and dining downtown. In addition to public space improvements, this section also calls to offer programming that can serve to enhance the Downtown’s character. Policies geared towards youth coordinate resources to support a diverse mix of uses and activities, inclusive to all members of the community.

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SAFETY & WELLBEING



Figure 1. Clean and Safe Program, Downtown SLO

Over the past several years, DHS has made great strides in improving the well-being of their residents. The local crime rate has decreased considerably due to their policies on safety and police force. The General Plan has outlined various goals and programs that will increase safety for their community. For example, a major theme in the Safety and Noise element is public safety and crime prevention planning. Their Pedestrian Plan outlines a safety enhancement zone to protect pedestrians along Palm Drive. The Safety and Noise element also describes the sponsorship of community safety initiatives like community watch groups and citizen patrol programs. Safety in public spaces and ideas to reduce crime were highly discussed throughout the community engagement process. Community members have a strong desire to have a protected experience in the downtown area. The perception of the lack

of safety represents a potential obstacle for Desert Hot Springs visitors to visit and spend their money at local downtown businesses. The vision for this section is to improve downtown to be a safer and more comfortable environment to visit, where visitors will be able to feel at ease using the public space, dining, and shopping at the local Downtown businesses.

The Downtown Revitalization Plan will include programs and policies that will promote the well-being of visitors, residents, and businesses. These goals aim to help the city in attaining proper safety measures in the existing and planned built environment. This means buildings and public spaces will incorporate specific designs that increase safety for their visitors and businesses. For example, an efficient and pedestrian scale lighting system in Downtown will promote visibility during the night. Visitors will feel more comfortable walking to and from their destination. This policy will provide enhanced security



Figure 2. CPTED Landscape Installation by City of Fairfield, CA

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because lighting improves visibility which will increase the opportunity to deter crime. Another program that will help the city improve safety in Downtown is a public art program. This community safety initiative involves painting murals on vacant buildings that will help deter vandalism. The city can enlist local artists and showcase their art on vacant storefronts. This safety measure also helps improve the aesthetics of Downtown along with increasing community engagement. Using crime prevention through environmental design on the existing and planned landscape in the public right-of-way will help improve visibility for visitors and businesses. These proposed safety measures will create a more comfortable environment for visitors and increase the overall attractiveness. Downtown should encourage community-based initiatives that will further the connection between the city and community. Safety ambassador program will incorporate local community members, where they will serve as the eyes of Downtown by helping visitors, spotting out potential dangers and coordinating with local law enforcement. The following set of policies and programs will help increase safety and the wellbeing of the Downtown area.

SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE

Desert Hot Springs has a desert climate with sweltering, dry summers and cool, mild winters. The city's current climate

and climate change are critical to consider when creating a downtown area that is safe, comfortable, and enjoyable year-round. Additionally, the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan Land Use and Community Design Element (2022) prioritizes sustainable design in new development and defines it as “public and private realm structures and site planning that help assist in reducing energy usage,



Figure 3. Sidewalks lined with trees provide shade to pedestrians while providing cooling benefits to the surrounding area

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water consumption, water pollution, and solid waste generation.” In pursuit of this goal, the Sustainability & Resilience theme incorporates sustainable design in Downtown Desert Hot Springs to build community resilience to natural and human-induced climate hazards.

The climate hazard of greatest concern for Desert Hot Springs is extreme heat. From June through September, Desert Hot Springs has an average daily high temperature above 95°F. In July, the hottest month of the year, Desert Hot Springs has an average daily high temperature of 103°F and low of 76°F. With three months of extreme heat, it is critical to incorporate heat mitigation strategies into Downtown Desert Hot Springs to ensure a safe and comfortable experience for Downtown visitors, residents, and employees. While the present-day climate

of Desert Hot Springs necessitates heat mitigation strategies, these interventions become even more crucial when considering how climate change is projected to exacerbate extreme heat conditions in the coming decades. For example, the Cal-Adapt climate projection tool forecasts the number of extreme heat days (meaning over 109.5°F) in Desert Hot Springs to increase from the historical average of 4 days per year to 22 days per year by 2035. Additionally, the duration of consecutive extreme heat days is also projected to increase from the historical average of 3 consecutive days to an average of 7 consecutive days by 2035. As a result, it is imperative that Downtown Desert Hot Springs is designed to reduce potential public health and safety impacts associated with extreme heat conditions. The strategies outlined below are intended to create a cooler micro-climate within



Figure 4. Bioswales with drought tolerant plants help to reduce stormwater runoff, filter pollution, and provide cooling benefits to the surrounding area



Figure 5. Solar photovoltaic carports help to keep parking lots cool while also generating renewable energy

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Downtown Desert Hot Springs to provide the community with a refuge during periods of extreme heat.

Another climate-related concern is water supply and management. Desert Hot Springs receives just 5 inches of rain per year, on average, and is located in a desert environment with limited water resources. Natural water supply constraints will be compounded by periods of prolonged drought, climate change impacts, and the increasing costs and unpredictability of importing water from other regions. Sustainable design measures are needed to avoid exacerbating water supply and quality issues as Downtown Desert Hot Springs evolves over time.

The *Sustainability & Resilience theme* seeks to (1) minimize the negative environmental impacts of downtown development; (2) protect downtown residents, visitors, and employees from extreme heat; and (3) build community resilience to climate hazards and resource supply constraints. By addressing areas of environmental concern, as well as prioritizing innovative and sustainable design, Downtown Desert Hot Springs can become a community space that thrives despite its harsh climate.

DIVERSITY & CULTURE

Desert Hot Springs has a rich history that originates with the native Cahuilla people,

who are some of the first known residents of the Coachella Valley. In the early 1900s, settlers travelling west to California began to arrive in the area and establish their new life. By the early 1930s, the naturally occurring underground hot and cold springs became known by the settlers, which



Figure 6. Historic photos of Desert Hot Springs

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prompted the creation of bath houses and hot springs for visitors. By 1963, Desert Hot Springs was established as a city. At its peak, the city hosted around 200 operational spas and hot spring locations. Today, Desert Hot Springs has 19 operational spa locations, although most are outside of the downtown project boundary. All of the commercial and cultural amenities within the city support wellness and tourist services.

Based on respondent feedback from community outreach events, there are specific cultural and demographic subgroups that have prominent influence in the community. These groups include but are not limited to the Hispanic and Latino community, people of color, immigrants, and the youth. However, not all of these groups' cultural needs are met through the city's public spaces, nor is their cultural

heritage celebrated as much as it could be. Public artwork including median and park sculptures, murals, and painted utility and traffic boxes can be found throughout the city and its downtown area, but the addition of more artwork that reflects the area's cultural groups and their histories would aesthetically enhance the downtown and celebrate the city's unique heritage (see figure 7). Additionally public downtown spaces could be used to celebrate local culture by providing comfortable and safe spaces for community events and art programs. Finally, while the built environment of the city is relatively young, there are still certain buildings, murals, and other areas that could showcase the history of the city, both before and after incorporation.



Figure 7. Sculpture by Simi Dabah

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GOALS, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

Appearance & Atmosphere

Goal CC-1: Establish a distinct sense of place and character that is reflective of the community's values.

Policy CC-1.1. Foster and economically and culturally diverse downtown by encouraging various uses and activities.

Policy CC-1.2. Use public spaces, streetscape enhancements, architecture, and public art to distinguish the downtown area.

Policy CC-1.3. Develop programming to clean up vacant lots and establish occupancy in empty storefronts.

Policy CC-1.4. To better incorporate the cannabis industry into the downtown, establish a “Green Light District” on Pierson Avenue between Palm Drive and Ocotillo Road that allows for outdoor consumption of cannabis and can serve as a draw for tourism.

Policy CC-1.5. Develop standards for street orientation; height and scale; façade design; materials and architectural details; and public spaces, plazas, and courtyards to ensure streetscape continuity within the downtown.

Goal CC-2: Provide opportunities for positive social interaction where everyone feels safe and welcome.

Policy CC-2.1. Treat sidewalks and paseos as wide and inviting urbanized parks with ample room for movement and gathering using street trees, seating, bike parking, lighting, public art, and other street furniture.

Policy CC-2.2. Encourage mid-block paseos for improved pedestrian access, shopping, outdoor dining, and informal gathering places, and to promote connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy CC-2.3. Support youth development and well-being by offering programming and facilities catered to the needs of children, teens, and young adults.

Safety & Wellbeing

Goal CC-3: Make downtown a safe and comfortable environment to visit.

Policy CC-3.1. Incorporate safety measures into the existing and planned built environment.

Policy CC-3.2. Provide pedestrian scale lighting to increase visibility for visitors and residents.

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Policy CC-3.3. Develop a public art program for vacant buildings to deter vandalism and improve appearance.

Policy CC-3.4. Encourage community-based safety initiatives for the downtown area.

Policy CC-3.5. Develop partnerships with non-profit organizations and other government agencies to provide supportive services to the unhoused population.

Sustainability & Resilience

Goal CC-4: Downtown supports community health and resilience.

Policy CC-4.1. Provide public amenities and urban design features to help visitors cope with extreme heat conditions in Downtown.

Policy CC-4.2. Reduce the land area of exposed dark roofs, streets, sidewalks, asphalt, and other hot surfaces.

Policy CC-4.3. Consider replacing existing pavement with cool pavement materials on street and sidewalk surfaces in Downtown. For best practices, case studies, and supporting research, refer to the Global Cool Cities Alliance's A Practical Guide to Cool Roofs and Cool Pavements.

Goal CC-5: Downtown uses sustainable designs, policies, and programming to reduce environmental impacts.

Policy CC-5.1. Conserve water and reduce stormwater runoff in Downtown.

Policy CC-5.2. Consider the feasibility of greywater irrigation system use in stormwater bioswales.

Policy CC-5.3. Reduce street litter and divert waste from the landfill.

Policy CC-5.4. Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy generation in Downtown infrastructure.

Policy CC-5.5. Explore the feasibility of solar photovoltaic and solar thermal energy generation on Downtown building rooftops, parking lot carports, and shade structures.

Diversity & Culture

Goal CC-6: Use urban design to reflect local character and a high quality of place.

Policy CC-6.1. Encourage placemaking in public spaces that help create an inclusive and attractive space that showcases cultural identity.

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Policy CC-6.2. Showcase amenities of community significance in the downtown area that help shape the character of Desert Hot Springs.

Policy CC-6.3. Establish new landmarks that will attract visitors to the downtown area by creating and facilitating public-private partnerships with developers.

Goal CC-7: Use downtown public art to foster a sense of place.

Policy CC-7.1. Promote Public Art that celebrates community culture, diversity, and history.

Policy CC-7.2. Work closely with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and arts groups to develop, fund, and implement public art that celebrates local history and culture.

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IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-2.3.1	Develop a Youth Master Plan to coordinate resources and establish a comprehensive vision for youth-oriented spaces and programs downtown. This can include partnerships with private businesses and non-profits	CDD	Short-Mid
CC-3.1.1	Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for existing and planned landscapes in the public ROW to increase visibility along pedestrian pathways.	PW, CDD	Mid
CC-3.3.1	Engage with vacant building owners that are interested in participating in the public art program.	CDD	Short
CC-3.4.1	Coordinate with local business owners and organizations to create a safety ambassador program. The safety ambassadors will provide hospitality and safety services to visitors and downtown businesses.	CDD	Mid
CC-3.5.1	Implement a program where a social outreach worker directly works with the unhoused and offer supportive services.	CDD	Ongoing

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-4.1.1	Install water fountains and hydration stations throughout the Downtown area, particularly along frequently traveled pedestrian walkways and in locations that support public transportation.	PW	Short
CC-4.1.2	Establish a cooling center in an existing public building in the Downtown area to provide visitors with refuge during extreme heat conditions.	PW	Short
CC-4.1.3	Develop a Downtown Shade Plan to increase tree canopy and pedestrian shade amenities, particularly along frequently traveled pedestrian walkways and in locations that support public transportation in Downtown Desert Hot Springs. A Downtown Shade Plan may include the following Actions:	PW, CDD	Mid
CC-4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an inventory of shade and other cooling amenities along prioritized walking routes in Downtown Desert Hot Springs. Create specific targets for shade coverage for key pedestrian corridors and a framework for tracking progress toward meeting shade targets. 	PW, CDD	Mid

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase shade provisioning along sidewalks and at public water fountains, seating, and bicycle racks for pedestrians and bicyclists. • Remove palm trees along Palm Dr. and Pierson Blvd. and replant with trees that provide adequate shade. • Develop a comprehensive urban forestry master plan, allocating sufficient budget and personnel resources to engage residents and other stakeholders in the planning process, plant and maintain new trees, implement necessary enforcement and compliance mechanisms, and provide other necessary auxiliary services (tree education, tree removal, infrastructure upgrades, etc.). Engagement with city staff in Palm Springs and Twentynine Palms could help identify successes and challenges encountered with similar programs. • Create new recommendations, incentives, and/or requirements for tree planting and preservation in Downtown Desert Hot Springs. 	PW, CDD	Mid

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Capital Improvement Plan to identify opportunities for infrastructure upgrades and modifications necessary to increase tree canopy in the city (e.g., relocating utility lines, adding water access to unirrigated landscape areas). Designate responsibility for increasing tree canopy in Downtown Desert Hot Springs to one or more city staff members, departments, and/or programs. Explore the feasibility of installing daytime shade structures with solar-powered nighttime lighting (e.g. LumiWeave). 	PW, CDD	Mid
CC-4.2.1	Implement policies to promote the use of cool roofing materials and/or green roofs and walls on Downtown buildings. Policies for the City to consider include: a Density/Floor Area Bonus to encourage installation; funding in the form of a grant, rebate,	PW, CDD	Short
CC-4.2.1	or subsidy to cover installation costs; a tax credit to offset installation costs; and a mandate to require green/cool roof installation on new buildings. For best practices, case studies, and supporting research, refer to the Green Roof and Wall Policy in North America.	PW, CDD	Short

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-4.3.1	Update the City's building code to require cool pavement materials in new development. For best practices, case studies, and supporting research, refer to the Global Cool Cities Alliance's A Practical Guide to Cool Roofs and Cool Pavements.	PW, CDD	Short
CC-5.1.1	Incorporate stormwater management features, including but not limited to bioswales with native plant landscaping, permeable surfaces, and water retention areas, into Downtown streetscapes to the extent feasible as determined by the City.	PW	Ongoing
CC-5.1.2	Develop native plant and drought-tolerant landscaping guidelines that include irrigation recommendations for public and private development.	PW	Short
CC-5.3.1	Increase the number of public waste receptacles for trash, recycling, and compost Downtown. Pair educational signage with each waste receptacle to encourage proper use and waste sorting.	PW	Short
CC-5.3.2	Launch anti-litter initiatives and public awareness campaigns around plastic bags, disposable coffee cups, food containers, cigarette butts as well as proper recycling and composting practices.	PW	Short

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-5.4.1	Conduct an audit of the municipal code to determine any opportunities to require increased energy efficiency in new development. If necessary, establish updated development requirements and/or incentives for highly energy efficient new buildings through design and construction techniques including: green roofs, super insulated walls, windows, and doors; daylighting interiors; passive solar heating; natural ventilation; efficient appliances and equipment and reclaimed content wherever possible.	PW	Short
CC-5.5.1	Propose capital projects and systems upgrades that increase the use and availability of renewable sources of energy, such as solar photovoltaic and solar thermal energy generation and electric vehicle charging stations.	PW	Mid
CC-6.1.1	Encourage the use of public spaces by local groups, artists, and performers.	CDD	Ongoing
CC-6.1.2	Create a public art program that commissions public art from local artists. The art should be located in places such as sidewalks, parks, alleyways, construction fences, and soon-to-be-demolished buildings that showcase the community's culture.	CDD	Ongoing

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
CC-6.2.1	Identify buildings of community significance in the downtown area that help shape the character of Desert Hot Springs.	CDD	Short
CC-6.2.2	Implement a historic and cultural buildings program that highlights the building's impact on the community of Desert Hot Springs through physical infrastructure such as the following: informational plaque, outdoor museum signage, mural, or another appropriate method of communicating historic and cultural information.	CDD	Ongoing
CC-7.2.1	Consider and evaluate funding options for public art collaborations, including but not limited to the city's general fund, grants, and/or other funding methods	CDD	Ongoing
CC-7.2.2	Create an expedited permit process for public art projects that prioritizes local artists and reduces financial barriers.	CDD	Ongoing
CC-7.2.3	Create a storefront painted window program for downtown storefronts that benefits used storefronts, vacant storefronts, and marijuana storefronts	CDD	Ongoing

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APPENDIX 1: ALTERING ZONING & LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

ALTERING ZONING

Proposed changes to Downtown Desert Hot Springs zoning designations were developed after extensive research into similar examples of proposed changes have fared in other cities. The main features of the proposed changes include upzoning 'Residential Low (R-L)' and 'Residential-Medium (R-M)' to Mixed-Use Neighborhood (Mixed-Use Neighborhood) and changing existing General Commercial (C-G) to Downtown Commercial (C-D) along Pierson Boulevard and to Mixed-Use Corridor (MU-C) along Palm Drive, north of 1st Street.

Upzoning to Mixed-Use Neighborhood along the outer western, southern, and eastern edges of Downtown will help to facilitate activity centers around the denser downtown corridor areas. These zones will provide the chance to have primarily commercial retail and dining uses on the ground floor, with personal office and residential uses integrated into the floors above. to their proximity to the Downtown's core, these zones will provide easy walkable access for residents, workers, and visitors who are wanting to shop, dine, or relax. In addition, this will help establish a reasonable density gradient that stems in Downtown's core and becomes established towards current areas zoned for lower-density residential and commercial. However, of greater importance is how smaller-scale mixed-use development can provide economic benefits

to the city of Desert Hot Springs. Mixed-use developments create more economic value than single-family developments in that they use land more efficiently to generate more revenue, both private and public, per acre of land. Additionally, re-development and infill in previously underutilized areas can increase surrounding property values and enhance the tax base and public revenue. Furthermore, modeling research has shown that a doubling of density increases economic productivity by 2 to 4 percent. Aside from the economic benefits, mixed-use developments have also been shown to enable greater walkability and promote healthier lifestyles through ease of access to goods. (EPA, 2012).

This idea was, in part influenced by strategies established in other similar sized cities across California and the United States. A study of 57 smaller cities' downtowns revealed that downtowns that include the widest variety of functions and activities have attracted the greatest volume and range of users at different times of the day and week. 10 cities with declining vitality were surveyed and 9 indicated that attracting people on evenings/weekends was a major problem suggesting that greater diversity in housing, entertainment, and working opportunities were most likely lacking. (Robertson, 2007). Statistical models have shown similar results when attempting to identify relationships between downtown

APPENDIX 1: ALTERING ZONING & LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

success and zoning types. For instance, one study's regression analysis demonstrated that the amount of mixed-use zoning in a downtown area was a significant factor in determining the success of revitalization and re-development efforts (Bias, 2010). While new potential for development will help to bolster downtown's economy, current residential property owners residing within the non-downtown area will feel the effects as well. Research has shown that housing values near areas zoned for mixed-use may see an increase in values of up to 6 percent when compared to homes located in monofunctional areas. This provides greater tax opportunities for the City of Desert Hot Springs, while also giving long-term residents with the potential to gain increased capital in the form of greater home equity (Koster et. al, 2012). Vacant parcels within the newly up-zoned areas may see increased developer interest and attraction it may not have received if the parcel's use remained single-family home use.

Outside of academia, real-world efforts to revitalize downtowns through similar proposed changes have proved successful in a variety of cities. In smaller scale cities such as Galveston, efforts to 'bring back the main street' have yielded positive results. Changes to zoning downtown have enabled greater economic vitality and have generated greater activity throughout the

day. Changes have additional new residents such as retirees, empty nesters, and young professionals who desired downtown living (H-GAC, n.d.). A more local example, Emeryville's downtown has undergone a significant transformation by making relatively small changes to zoning. In the early 80s, the city's downtown was anchored by vacant sites, industrial sites, and "was literally dying" according to the head of the Emeryville Redevelopment Agency. To combat this, the city encouraged and allowed for mixed-use zoning in most of the downtown region. They attracted developers through greater opportunity for mixed-use options and brought in businesses who could afford cheaper leases that anchored the first floor of new mixed-use developments. In doing so, the city also helped bolster the character and identity of the downtown area. Developers, with newfound interest, began filling in previously empty and underutilized residential lots – indicating to all that Emeryville was changing for the better (Burnett, 2008).

ALTERING LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

While changing the zoning is a major step forward, the alteration of allowed land-uses in the downtown zones would go even further to allow for greater opportunity for residents, developers, and tourists alike. Most of the proposed changes to land use occur within the Downtown Commercial (C-D) zone, which under the new zoning

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would be the land use designation across the entire downtown Palm Street Corridor. Changes include allowing arcades and offices by right, spa resorts and multi-family as CUP, and recording studios and clinics as AUP. All alterations have been recommended as a means of creating a corridor that can support a work-play balance, while giving greater options and flexibility to residents and developers. These suggestions are, in part, influenced by so-called Entertainment Zones that have appeared in downtowns across the country that are in a similar process of revitalizing their downtowns. Places like Milwaukee have seen success on the outer rims of their central downtowns where commercial frontage is not entirely entertainment-related and independent businesses reside in most establishments. Popular entertainment destinations include things like bars, nightclubs, hotels, and arcades (Campo & Ryan, 2008). These mix of land-uses under one designation are the beating heart of many cities and can help revive Downtown Desert Hot Springs.

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APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC PARK SPACES

SUBJECT

Background research on adding public space or a park to the DHS downtown area

GOAL

justify and show how other cities of a similar size have incorporated new public spaces into their downtown area. Use this process to show how DHS might go about incorporating a public space into their downtown.

CITIES WITH NEW PARKS

- Portland, Oregon, pop. 654,741:
 - Pioneer Courthouse Square – 1984
 - Tom McCall Waterfront Park – 1978
- Austin, Texas, pop. 964,254:
 - Butler Metro Park – 1992
- Savannah, Georgia, pop. 145,862:
 - Ellis Square – 2010
- Hood River, Oregon, pop. 7,608:
 - Riverfront Park – 2013
- Chattanooga, Tennessee, pop. 182,799:
 - Renaissance Park – 2014

CITIES WITH URBAN PARKS

- Hoboken: Madison Street Park
- Las Vegas: Baker Park
- Albuquerque: Fred Calkins Park
- Palm Springs: Frances Stevens Park
- Mesa: Arroyo Park

CASE STUDIES

Portland Pioneer Courthouse Square

There was a design competition for the park's final design where 160 entities participated. The locals who donated to the construction had their names engraved on bricks laid in the park itself. The park also has an area for food trucks to pull up to and use. Although there may not be demand immediately for a food truck in the downtown area. Building a space like that early could be helpful. The design of this park also allows for programming instead of just having passive green space. This allows the space to be activated for necessary events. The space is also near a major transit hub. Although DHS does not have a transit hub, locating a bus stop near it could be nice.

Portland Tom McCall Waterfront Park

This was created through a task force that was given the task of creating a public space in the waterfront area. This park was created through a redevelopment where the city

APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC PARK SPACES

worked with developers to create a park with many new developments around it. There may be potential for DHS to do something similar at a smaller scale. There is space available for the hosting of events. There is local art incorporated into the park. The park has become a place of civic pride for the city due to its success.

Austin Butler Metro Park

Created through pushes by the local parks foundation, this park provides a green space in a city without much green. This is done through the collection and use of non-potable water. If DHS is able to collect non-potable water to use, this could be a way to bring literal green space into the city.

Savannah Ellis Square

After 50 years of being a parking garage, this was restored to a park in 2004. This features spaces for public events. This public space acts more as a plaza than it does a green space. The city is proud of the fact that they have returned this used to be parking lot to its park glory, this time meeting the needs that the city has.

Hood River Riverfront Park

This newly created park has native plantings as part of the features of the park. There are many different spaces that the park offers that meet the needs of many different people. Families are able to reserve the picnic spaces in advance. This park also

highlights the natural elements of the environment around it. This could present an opportunity to the city to highlight the natural desert environment, or a similar one from the region.

Chattanooga Renaissance Park

This park features many amenities. There is public art, event space for programming, and open green space for people to gather. There are sustainable practices that improve the environmental landscape of the area including renewed wetland and flood water capacity. Before they began construction, they had to remove a significant amount of contaminated soil from the site.

Hoboken Madison Street Park

This park is used frequently by nearby residents. It is a smaller park that includes a playground. It includes water features for local children to play in to keep cool in summer. The park also features many bright colors that warm up the area from a visual point of view.

Las Vegas Baker Park

This medium sized park includes a playground and a restroom. There is some room for programming. The aim was to create a space that activates the community.

Albuquerque Fred Calkins Park

There is very little information available about this park, however it does have a small

APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC PARK SPACES

playground and fits into a single lot size.

Palm Springs Frances Stevens Park

This park is also a smaller park. It features local art and does allow for programming and reservations. It is located near the downtown area. It is large enough to host events.

Mesa Desert Arroyo Park

This park is on the larger side and features sit-down areas. It also features information about local nature.

LESSONS LEARNED

There are many lessons that can be gained from the examples above. The following are the ones that appear most applicable to Desert Hot Springs and their downtown area.

Develop a plan to own or have a trusted party own the property. Many of the example cities teamed up with local activist organizations to help pay for their properties. Some do not own the properties but have a local trusted organization own the property – this is common in PPPs, but that is unlikely to happen at this point in the city's development.

Once the property is owned, develop a plan for the designing of the park. This could easily use feedback and input from the community. This could also be a time to highlight that the downtown area is getting

an upgrade and that the city is taking concrete actions to improve the landscape for the downtown area.

When designing the park, there are a few things to consider.

Food trucks

including space for food trucks can allow the space to be activated during lunch time and meal times.

Local Art

Incorporating local art has two benefits – Including local art can increase public art in the city which should increase the public's interest in the space. The second benefit could be that the city can take advantage of art related grant funding if local or certain art is included in the design of the park.

Space for programming

including space for programming can allow the space to be activated at appropriate times and allows the downtown area to have yet another reason why people are coming and doing stuff downtown.

Plants

Including native or drought resistant plants – Many drought resistant varieties can provide beauty year around, consider using these varieties. Including these varieties can provide benefits for the long term and can benefit the local environment to boot.

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Smaller sized park – Park does not have to be large for residents to enjoy it and find it valuable.

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APPENDIX 3: VACANT LOTS

INTRODUCTION

Desert Hot Springs currently has an oversaturation of vacant lots within the downtown area that leaves almost half of the land area undeveloped and unused. The “hypervacancy”, in which blocks and buildings with vacant lots and buildings make up 20 percent or more of the building stock, can have various negative economic and public impacts for the city such as depressed real estate values for surrounding properties, millions in lost property tax revenue, and compromised public safety and health (Sisson, 2018). Revitalizing these vacancies with more productive uses poses an exciting challenge to reshape the future of this area. Many other cities across the country, especially cities in the Rust Belt, have faced a similar challenge and have implemented programs to fill the empty lots with better uses. While some have been more successful than others, these programs discussed below can serve as examples for Desert Hot Springs to model within the downtown area to gradually introduce better uses on vacant lots.

SIDE YARD/ \$1 LOT PROGRAMS

The City of Chicago launched its Large Lot program in 2014 to address reuse of city-owned vacant parcels and to promote greening of city-owned residential vacant properties. Prior to the Large Lot program, the city faced a challenge of more than 11,000 city-owned vacant parcels. A key

goal of this program was to fill vacant land by promoting urban greening in the city’s west side and south side neighborhoods which have the biggest communities of low-income Black residents and highest proportion of land vacancies. Through the Large Lot Program, the city sells city-owned residential vacant lots for a prices as low as one dollar to property owners who own land on the same block. The lots must have residential zoning. After purchasing a lot, owners can use these properties for certain uses approved and regulated by the city such as extending private yards, start community gardens and playgrounds, or build housing. There are requirements of the program that owners must adhere to such as paying property taxes for the lot, maintain a minimum level of cleanliness and care, and must retain ownership of the lot for at least five years. By 2019, the city conducted seven rounds of sales of ‘Large Lots’, totaling more than 1200 lot sales. Studies of the program (Rigolon et al., 2020; Stewart and Lester, 2020) found that the Large Lot Program sparked resident-led efforts that have led to the beautification and greening of many previously dilapidated vacant lots. High demand and many sales of vacant lots were also more frequent near central business districts (Rigolon et al., 2020). Although a study conducted after the first two years the program did not see an increase in building coverage of land or development permits on vacant lots from before the program, there

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was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of lots with gardens between the year after the program launch and the year before (Rigolon et al., 2020). Additionally, another study focused on the Large Lot's impact on crime rates in neighborhoods where they are high and found that Large Lot sales generally reduced block-level crime by 3.5 percent while sales to neighborhood residents specifically reduced crime rates by up to 6.8 percent (Stewart and Lester, 2020). The lack of development in the early stages of the program may likely be attributed to the long timeline for permit processing and development review before tangible buildings are constructed on vacant land.

PROGRAM

The City of Desert Hot Springs can create a local land bank program where vacant lots acquired by the city can be inventoried and sold to DHS community members at a reduced market price that is tiered based on buyer's income. To do so, the city must first create an accurate inventory of vacant lots within the downtown area and along with updated records of ownership, differentiating Ideally, the city should look to acquire any lots that are currently privately owned. Through a new ordinance, the city can regulate the allowed uses on land bank lots to promote the development of certain desired uses by waiving certain development requirements such as setbacks, minimum lot sizes, parking and

by streamlining the review and permitting process. The regulations can also include an inclusionary housing component for lots on certain streets where affordable housing may be ideal.

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APPENDIX 4: HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

The consideration to implement denser housing in the downtown core of Desert Hot Springs is an important one as it can allow for varied housing options in and around the core to meet housing cost demands of various classes; concentration of the population at the core so that commercial uses – an equally important and connected use – can thrive economically; and opportunities for community-building so that the core has a vibrant, active identity. All of this can make great use of the available, unified energy vortex in which the core can be served by natural mineral hot spring water, efficient electrical energy from windmill farms, and efficient use of existing, established infrastructure.

For the scope of this report, the focus will be on drafting a goal and policies that aim to accomplish that goal based on the city's expressed needs for the downtown. In the conclusion below, with the support of successful case studies, program or action suggestions will be expressed that can potentially serve the goals and policies drafted here and meet the needs of the city.

GOAL & POLICIES

The City of Desert Hot Springs stated that one of its main goals is to create a downtown that is rich with commercial and public activity. To address this, land uses should promote and provide opportunities for

development of relevant commercial spaces that the public wants, but at once provide varied housing opportunities to help the public have easier access to commercial and other city amenities. This can prove to be a self-sufficient cycle in which the public has access to commercial uses, and in turn commerce thrives economically, all while the city experiences a lively downtown rebirth.

To make this possible, our draft goal and complimentary policies are as follows:

Goal LU 1.0: Foster balanced development that promotes integration between commercial and residential uses in the downtown area.

Policy LU 1.1: Allow for a larger diversity in housing options by zoning for mixed use in specific downtown areas. First floor office/retail, second floor setback with residential apartment options. This could require reviewing their municipal code to remove barriers. maintains downtown commercial zoning for first floor but expands options for residential uses specific to 2nd floor.

Policy LU 1.2: Allow for a larger diversity in housing options by removing barriers to development in existing mix-use zoned areas. Allow 2nd floor development with 2nd floor setbacks.

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Notably, our first policy to foster balanced development that promotes both commercial and residential uses in downtown states that actions be taken to allow for diversity in housing options. This can occur especially by promoting more sustainable development supported by mixed-use zoning implemented in specific, designated areas. As noted by Bunting et al. (2000), “One of downtown’s assured niches is its role as retail and service centre for surrounding neighbourhoods. According to this thinking, the more populous core neighbourhoods are, the better the CBD will perform economically.” By zoning for mixed-uses, downtown areas can then allow commercial uses alongside housing, and this will create populous pockets that demand goods and help businesses thrive. Our second policy suggestion addresses removing barriers for development in existing mixed-use zone areas so that developers are either incentivized or encouraged to carry out the city’s goals. Bunting et al. state that “...a foremost argument for promoting core area housing stems from a combination of environmental and economic needs. In terms of sustainability and infrastructure cost control, it makes most sense to refurbish and rebuild at relatively high density rather than build anew on greenfield sites at contemporary low density standards.” Building at high density (or refurbishing whatever is available) makes economic sense, and this could be an idea to present

to developers. The possibility, backed by research, of dense populations near commercial uses in downtown Desert Hot Springs to bring high return on investment is one to entice developers.

CASE STUDIES

There have been and are countless cities that have implemented mixed-use joint residential and commercial development in downtown cores. Cases of successful implementation can be found domestically across the country as well as abroad; for this report, we will look at three cases: downtown Kitchener in Ontario, Canada; Media Village in Burbank, CA; and Colony Square in Atascadero, CA.

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

Bunting et al. note that “smaller metropolitan areas are distinctly different in that because of attenuated size, accessibility is relatively even across the entire built-up city system. In these places there is little locational advantage to centrally concentrated development... also generally an absence of the downtown growth engines associated with larger cities, such as financial community and clusters of high-order cultural activities and professional employment.” They found in Kitchener that implementing mixed-use development of commercial and residential uses brought “...more people to locales in

APPENDIX 4: HOUSING

and around downtown [and] would translate into increased demand for retail goods, entertainment facilities and all kinds of personal and household services... retailing would serve to bolster downtown's existing role as primary service centre for inner-city residents...".

Kitchener primarily provided single-family housing with very few variations (some developments offering duplexes), so proposing and offering mixed-use, denser multi-family options was a new, intriguing idea. Bunting et al. found from a community survey that "Interest in downtown and core neighbourhood living remains significant even when core residents are excluded... Eight percent of respondents from outlying areas would like to live downtown and 32 percent in a neighbourhood near downtown... This points to the existence of a very strong latent demand for core area living." This strong interest signaled for a desire for activity in downtown, and potential for diverse housing options. "Those who prefer condominiums are over-represented among young adults, between 18 and 24 years, and within the 45-54 age category and are over-represented within high income and educational categories. Individuals who prefer apartments are mostly found among higher age groups (67.4 percent are over 45 years old and 41.3 percent over 65), lower income categories (82.9 percent

under \$60,000 and 57.2 percent under \$40,000) with lower education attainment (82.9 percent in the "grade school or some high school"...). Finally, those preferring lofts are over-represented among young adults (85.7 percent under 44 years old and 54.3 percent under 34 years old), under-represented among high income categories and over-represented in the high education categories." In Kitchener, it is clear that youth from 18 to 24 years old, highly educated individuals especially of 45-54 years of age, and elderly prefer varied housing options from condos to apartments and lofts. This demand justifies supplying the community with viable, even market- or above-market-rate options that will end up densifying downtown. As Desert Hot Springs continues to attract young remote workers, higher-educated workers and elderly, this model could work for its downtown.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

Based on information gained from the case studies in both Burbank and Atascadero, the following programs, actions or strategies can prove effective and fruitful for Desert Hot Springs goal to foster residential and commercial uses in the downtown. Specifically, these two programs worked in both Burbank and Atascadero, and they can work for mixed-uses in Desert Hot Springs designated areas.

APPENDIX 4: HOUSING

Strategy II: Improving Downtown for a Residential Population

“... convenient access to services as an attractive feature and others stressed their enjoyment of some downtown activities... Recommended strategies... include the creation of specialized clusters of stores selling neighbourhood and community level goods... need to provide easy vehicular access... should not take place at the expense of pedestrian movement” (Nicholas 2005).

Strategy IV: Improving the Climate for Developers of Core Area Housing

“... the City should consider waiving development charges for new housing in the core area. This initiative could be justified on the ground that municipal infrastructures and services are already in place in these sectors.”

“The City should also more generally adopt a flexible approach to residential use on former industrial properties, leaving it to developers to select forms of housing and layout most likely to appeal to clients. This would bring core area development planning conditions closer to the suburban norm where such flexibility already exists. The City would continue to assure that, overall, the redevelopment of vacant core area sites yields a variety of housing forms suitable to different socioeconomic groups” (Nicholas 2005).

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APPENDIX 5: MAIN STREET REDESIGN

Traffic calming measures can take place in many ways to ensure the safety of all road users. Cars will remain on our roads; however, cities have reclaimed street life for people outside of their cars as well. As streets comprise more than 80% of public space in cities, many cities are considering or have already reconstructed downtown streets to make the space more pleasant to walk, bike, and hang out (Ink, 2017; Steuteville, 2022).

One case study in Lancaster, California is a successful example (see Figure 1). A portion of W. Lancaster Boulevard was transformed into a more accommodating roadway for users. A 0.6-mile stretch of road that had two travel lanes and a center turn lane was converted to diagonal parking and plaza space in the center of the street. This new median includes street trees, benches, and landscaping. Sidewalks were also improved with the inclusion of these elements. The project was led by the City of Lancaster and The BLVD. It took eight months to complete and cost \$11.5 million, which is \$1.27 million per block. Construction was phased out so businesses could remain open and not be severely impacted (Schlossberg et al., 2013).

The political purpose for this project came from the need to boost the economy. W. Lancaster Boulevard was experiencing an increase in vacant storefronts due to the economic recession in the late 2000s. Since

construction, 800 permanent jobs were created with the attraction of 49 new locally owned businesses. New businesses included a nightclub, movie theater, and bowling alley. The project not only attracted new businesses, but it also attracted private developers who built nine new housing complexes. This equated to 800 units of low to moderate income apartments and condominiums on the stretch of roadway. The activation of the central parking area allowed vendors to take over the corridor during festivals (Schlossberg et al., 2013).

Another important aspect of this project was its contribution to making the roadway safer. Speed limits were reduced from 35 miles per hour to 15 miles per hour. Two years after the project's completion data showed that the number of overall traffic collisions was reduced by half. Injury-related collisions decreased by 85% (Schlossberg et al., 2013). The new streetscape and traffic pattern helped in prioritizing pedestrians. Pedestrians and businesses thrive where sidewalks have been well designed with safety in mind and amenities provided. Many studies have shown that good pedestrian network connectivity and walkability have a positive impact on land values (Ink, 2017).

Several other case studies support the redesign of downtown streets. In San Diego, five lanes of traffic on La Jolla Boulevard

APPENDIX 5: MAIN STREET REDESIGN



Figure 1: Lancaster Boulevard before and after (CNU.org)

were reduced to one lane each. Sidewalks, landscaping, and on-street parking were added. The political purpose for this project was the desire to have easier access to the beach and to revitalize businesses along the corridor. There was an increase in walking, biking, and transit use after the project was completed. Retail sales also rose significantly. This project also included other traffic calming measures such as roundabouts along the section of the thoroughfare. The reduction in travel lanes and speed reduction through the roundabouts helped reduce traffic crashes by 90%. This is a significant statistic since traffic volume in the area remained the same (Steuteville, 2022).

Madison Road in Cincinnati had a small park in its central median that was cut

down throughout the years in which the roads continued to widen (see Figure 2). Now, the park has doubled in size to make it usable again. The travel lanes were reduced to only two travel lanes in both directions and lanes were narrowed. This change in roadway geometry reduced vehicle speeds and decreased crashes by 44% (Steuteville, 2022).

In the Village of Hamburg, New York, the state Department of Transportation implemented traffic calming on the U.S. highway that runs through the core of the village. The main purpose of this redesign was to reduce travel speed. However, many other benefits came from this project. Although bicycle lanes were not constructed, bicycle activity increased because of the

APPENDIX 5: MAIN STREET REDESIGN



Figure 2: Madison Road in Cincinnati before and after. (Steuteville, 2022).

APPENDIX 5: MAIN STREET REDESIGN

slower traffic. Injury crashes also reduced significantly after the project was built in 2009. The local economy also flourished as commercial building permits rose by 500% (Steuteville, 2022).

In Dallas, Texas on lower Greenville Avenue, four travel lanes were reduced to two. Sidewalks were widened, bulb-outs and brick pavers were installed in the intersection, on-street parking was doubled, and landscaping was put in place. The main purpose for this redesign came from the concerns about the character of the corridor, which had a strong nightlife. Crime and intoxication late into the night began to diminish the character and use of the space. The redesign and increased police protection reduced crime by almost 90%. The new Greenville Avenue reduced vehicle speeds and increased property values. Dallas favored this redesign and similar redesigns are now happening in other areas (Steuteville, 2022).

In Raleigh, North Carolina, a suburban arterial was transformed (see Figure 3). Four travel lanes were reduced to two and were narrowed. On-street parking was placed on both sides of the street instead of one. Bicycle lanes were added, and sidewalks were widened. This street was listed as one of the most dangerous in the state for pedestrians by the state Department of

Transportation. The street separates the North Carolina State University from city neighborhoods and needed to be improved. Other traffic calming measures including two roundabouts and curb extensions helped reduce vehicle crashes by 23% (Steuteville, 2022).

The final case study is in South Miami, Florida. Dorn Avenue was a one-way side street that was converted to brick. The single 23-foot-wide lane was reduced to eleven feet. The political purpose came from a desire to revitalize the town center. The main thoroughfare, Sunset Drive, was also reduced from five lanes to three lanes. The redesign has created a main street with character where pedestrians feel comfortable. The streets previously had no shade and high traffic. Although traffic volume remains high, the reduction in speeds, on-street parking, and trees make it a safer place for pedestrians to be and enjoy. The transformation includes active pedestrian corridors with café tables. This part of South Miami has now become a destination for locals and tourists (Steuteville, 2022).

APPENDIX 5: MAIN STREET REDESIGN



Figure 3: Raleigh, North Carolina street redesign. (Steuteville, 2022).

APPENDIX 5: MAIN STREET REDESIGN

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APPENDIX 6: BUILDING BIKE FACILITIES IN HOT CLIMATES FOR ECONOMIC BENEFIT

The purpose of this report is to identify how the City of Desert Hot Springs can benefit from new bike facilities. The first article, “Assessing Walkability in Hot Arid Regions: The Case of Downtown Abu Dhabi,” is relevant to the current weather patterns of Desert Hot Springs. Abu Dhabi is classified as having a hot, arid desert climate, similar to Desert Hot Springs. Its weather is warm throughout the year, with temperatures averaging about 100F. In Desert Hot Springs, the summers are sweltering, arid, and mostly clear. Over the course of the year, the temperatures vary from 43F to 103F. The hot season lasts for 3.4 months, from June 8 to September 20, with an average daily high temperature above 95F. In this article, walkability is connected to bike ability in terms of environmental factors and needs. The article proposes a socioecological model where walking needs are hierarchically categorized in these levels: feasibility, accessibility, safety, comfort, and pleasurable. Some factors that make people’s perception of walking are also useful, such as the ability of the environment to serve basic needs, create place attachments, and sense of belonging created by these community spaces. Environmental factors including weather and seasons also influence travel behaviors and non-motorized modes of transport. The survey sample from this article had responded to reasons for their walking behaviors which ranged from leisure and

utilitarian purposes. There was a 50/50 split for leisure activities and utilitarian purposes. Leisure activities included leisure/fun, exercise/fitness, and enjoying the outdoors. Utilitarian purposes involved going to bus stops, going to a specific place (store, post office, grocery store), visiting neighbors, and going with children to destinations like schools, and going to work.

The impact of the built environment and climate conditions are highlighted by the respondents’ perceptions of neighborhood quality and their level of satisfaction with neighborhood characteristics, including accessibility, and micro urban design. Participants were asked what they would suggest enhancing their walking experience and 24% of people stated more trees or parks, 11% stated more shading, 5% mentioned water fountains, 3% suggested adding benches, 9% suggested increasing the number of air-conditioned bus stops as a resting place, and 38% of people suggested adding more parks or green spaces.

The study hints that a mere presence of a park can promote walking despite hot temperatures being a hindrance to walking. The conversion of existing surface parking and underused spaces within blocks into green spaces could promote walking. Respondents reported heat as a major barrier to walking so design interventions that use shading structures or natural landscaping

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could enhance pedestrian's thermal comfort. Passive cooling systems such as shading are crucial but not sufficient. An integrated system is necessary to increase air movement and reduce sensible heat in the peak summer. Utilities such as electrical fans, air ducts, and water misting devices can be installed in shaded walkways to increase wind velocity and reduce sensible heat. Natural shading creates microclimates for greater thermal comfort. While trees increase maintenance costs, consume water, and sometimes increase humidity, a careful choice of native plants that can withstand the extreme temperatures and provide shade during summer months are possible choices. These improvements can increase pedestrian mobility and comfort and alleviate the extreme climate effects.

Bike lanes can bring an economic benefit such as improving store sales. The article, "Measuring the Local Economic Impacts of Replacing on Street Parking with Bike Lanes," is a study on a bike lane project on a retail street in Toronto, Canada. Bike lanes have proved to be contentious among merchant associations especially when they reduce street parking. The survey utilizes two groups, merchants and shoppers, to understand the impacts of bike lanes on economic activities. There were no negative economic impacts associated with bike lanes. The study shows that monthly customer spending and the number of customers

served by merchants increased during the pilot.

With the increase of bike lane projects, some local merchants in affected streets have expressed concerns about potential reductions in customers because of associated on street parking losses. It is the opposite as increases in cycling traffic have had a positive impact despite the associated loss of parking. The article also mentioned that cyclists might be particularly inclined to spend money on local serving businesses like restaurants and neighborhood shops. Overall, the existing literature suggests bike lanes have a neutral to positive impact on commercial activity even when some on street parking is lost.

The sidewalk visitor survey captured estimated customer spending, visit frequency, visitor travel patterns, and attitudes toward the bike lane. Monthly spending was a prime variable because of its stability compared to daily spending which could fluctuate depending on day of the week or time of day. The results indicated that the business environment on the retail street improved during the time of the study, visitor spending rose, visit frequency increased, estimated customer counts show growth in the number of customers, and vacancy rates held steady. The study shows that cycling infrastructure is unlikely to constrain local economic activity.

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Prospective parking losses can be expressed as a potential impact on only a share of visitors that arrive by car as a proportion of local available spots in the neighborhoods. Merchant concerns on car parking loss may reflect the overestimations in car mode share among the customers. The study shows the evidence that downtown corridors lined with retail are strong candidates to benefit from the inclusion of bike lanes.

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APPENDIX 7: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal program to promote walking and bicycling to school through infrastructure improvements, enforcement, education, and incentives. Increasing the safety and convenience for walking or cycling to school may relieve traffic, reduce pollution, improve safety, increase physical activity, and bolster children's independence. Implementing an SRTS program also has the added benefit of introducing children to alternative modes of transportation at an early age, which normalizes and increases awareness of non-motorized modes of transportation as they enter adulthood.

The SRTS initiative is flexible and adaptable to a wide array of contexts. Over several decades, schools and communities have implemented a variety of strategies to increase walking and cycling to schools in urban, suburban, and rural environments for children of all ages. Such strategies have included installing high-visibility street crossings, introducing school crossing guards at busy intersections, and hosting bike education workshops, among others.

SRTS programs have been implemented in schools nationwide, each with varying levels of investment and complexity. For example, the C.P. Smith Elementary School in Burlington, VT encouraged walking and biking to school by starting a "walking school bus," in which volunteer parents

would walk children to school along a defined route every Wednesday. Students could gather at a specified starting point with their guide, or they could join the bus as it progressed on its journey toward the school. The walking school bus provides kids a physically active way of travelling to school with supervision without necessitating that each kid is accompanied by a parent or guardian. Since the implementation of the walking school bus in Burlington, the number of students who walked along that route to school increased from 6 students to over 25 students every Wednesday (SRTS Guide, 2005).

Alternatively, the Lincoln Elementary School in Elmhurst, IL has started a "frequent walker/rider program" in which students receive a stamp card to record their participation in Walk to School days and receive prizes for walking or biking to school (SRTS Guide, 2005). Despite having more limited resources compared to the Burlington walking school bus, the program successfully incentivized the use of alternative modes of transportation for children traveling to school.

Initiating SRTS programs has been shown to increase walking and bicycling to schools. A study looked at how SRTS initiatives impacted walking and cycling rates at 801 schools across Florida, Oregon, Texas, and Washington DC. It found that engineering

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improvements accounted for an 18% increase in walking and cycling rates (Noreen et al, 2014). Another multi-state evaluation of 53 schools found that overall active transportation rates increased from 12.9% to 17.6% after implementing SRTS programs (Stewart et al, 2014).

Safety poses a particularly large barrier to greater rates of walking and cycling to schools. However, SRTS initiatives have been shown to have a significant reduction in pedestrian and bicyclist collisions. One 2016 study that reviewed pedestrian and bicyclist collision data for school-aged children from 18 states found that SRTS was associated with a 23% reduction in injuries over the 16-year period (DiMaggio et al, 2016). At the same time, there was a 20% reduction in pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities for school-aged children.

After decades of car-dependency, increasing active travel to schools may require overcoming parental attitudes toward their kids walking and cycling. Parents follow the mentality of “safety in numbers.” So, when more students walk and bike to school, parents perceive that the greater number of children on the roads collectively increases awareness, and therefore safety (Ross et al, 2017).

Children are also more likely to walk or bike to school when it is normalized. Many SRTS programs focus on overcoming these attitudes by providing supervision or group travel options.

The proven success of SRTS programs has led to dedicated support from communities. The Safe Routes Partnership, a national nonprofit organization which has historically focused on advancing safe walking and cycling to schools, is now expanding its program to include Safe Routes to Parks and Safe Routes to Healthy Food. As cities continue to embrace active modes of travel to destinations, youth-oriented programs like Safe Routes to School have been critical in changing the cultural attitudes toward active travel.

APPENDIX 7: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

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APPENDIX 8: PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The case for creating a more walkable city has been discussed at length in books like *Walkable City: How Downtown can Save America, One Step at a Time*, and other literature. Before the automobile walking was essential, and the design of cities reflected the need for a walkable environment. However, with the creation of automobiles our cities, through many efforts such as the lobbying of the car industry, government subsidies such as the Federal Highway Act of 1956, and simply from the wide adoption of automobiles, have become car centric. This is true throughout most American cities including Desert Hot Springs.

When discussing downtown people often talk about the feeling that is felt when there. Many surveys show how people and especially millennials – who are approaching prime earning years – prefer communities with a street life (Speck, Pg. 17). This street life naturally comes from the feeling of a bustling street where there are people walking around not confined to their cars. Vibrant street life downtown stimulates the local economy by creating more opportunities for economic exchange. The walkability of a city is often centered around downtown, and if the downtown Desert Hot Springs became walkable it would become the catalyst for a walkable city.

Beyond the economic value of creating a walkable city there are also the health advantages that come from it. This car centric lifestyle we find ourselves in creates a habit of driving everywhere instead of walking anywhere making many American cities unhealthy.

One effort found that for every additional five minutes Atlanta-area residents drove each day, they were 3 percent more likely to be obese. [Furthermore], in San Diego... 60 percent of residents in a “low-walkable” neighborhood were overweight, compared to only 35 percent in a “high-walkable” neighborhood.

By creating a more walkable downtown, Desert Hot Springs will take the first steps towards a walkable healthier city (Speck, Pg. 14).

Another reason for creating a walkable city is to create an environmentally resilient city that mitigates emissions in the hopes of preventing climate change. The draft Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the Coachella Valley shows that transportation in the city of Desert Hot Springs accounts for 39% of emissions in 2020 while, in 2005 transportation was 80% of emissions (South, E13-E18). This represents a clear need to get people out of vehicles to reduce emissions. Furthermore, 3,687 people work in the city (OnTheMap). If commuting

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behavior of community members moved towards walkability this would represent 26% of the city's workforce.

Lastly, creating a more walkable downtown makes it safer. People in the area create a sense of safety where people are policing each other. Jane Jacobs would refer to this as "eyes on the street (Jacobs)." By having more eyes on the street there are more people observing an individual dissuading them from committing a crime.

SAFETY COUNTERMEASURE

Mid-Block Crossings

One of the key observations from when Cal Poly graduate students completed their pedestrian audit of the downtown area was a lack of connectivity. The area had few pedestrian crossings, and some crossings were made hazardously with no crossing device due to crossings at intersections being too far. Therefore, there is a need to implement pedestrian facilities that increase connectivity, but also prioritize safety. However, determining the effectiveness of crosswalks – otherwise known as countermeasures – from a safety standpoint can take years so many studies have opted to use measures of effectiveness. These include pedestrian and driver behavior such as vehicle speeds, percentage of driver yielding, and percentage of illegal crossings.

The Federal Highway Administration completed a study of the effectiveness of pedestrian facilities in three cities: Las Vegas, Miami, and San Francisco. By studying the measures of effectiveness, they seven highly effective countermeasures: leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian countdown signals, instreet pedestrian signs, activated flashing beacons, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, call buttons that confirm the press, and Danish offsets combined with high-visibility crosswalks, advance yield markings, and "Yield Here to Pedestrians" signs (Redmon, 2023). Bolded are those that can be implemented at midwalk crossings.

Another study evaluated behaviors at crossing 1 which had a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) crossing with a median refuge. Crossing 2 had another RRFB with the addition of the Danish offset (z-crossing) median. The RRFB creates higher visibility without restricting traffic flow, while the Danish offset encourages pedestrians to look at oncoming traffic. Additionally, this will discourage unsafe jaywalking across the wide roads found in Downtown Desert Hot Springs.

The study found that average driver yield rates at both sites were slightly greater than 90% when the RRFB was activated, consistent with previous studies. RRFB actuation rates ranged from 83% to more

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than 90%. The results also showed that approximately 52% of all crossings at the marked crosswalk at the second location were made by diverted pedestrians and that the enhanced crossing captured about 82% of all crossings near the crosswalk. Finally, approximately 52% of the pedestrians who used the crosswalk followed the Z-crossing pattern through the median (Foster, 2014).

With this evidence the Cal Poly graduate team suggests implementing mid-block crossings that utilize an RRFB along with a Danish offset median where needed.

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APPENDIX 9: HEAT MITIGATION

DESERT HOT SPRINGS CLIMATE

Desert Hot Springs has a desert climate with sweltering, dry summers and cool, mild winters (City of Desert Hot Spring, 2020). From June through September, Desert Hot Springs has an average daily high temperature above 95°F. During July, the hottest month of the year, the average daily temperature In July, the hottest month of the year, Desert Hot Springs has an average daily high temperature of 103°F and low of 76°F. With three months of extreme heat, it is critical that heat mitigation strategies are incorporated into Downtown Desert Hot Springs to ensure a safe and comfortable experience for Downtown visitors, residents, and employees.

While the present day climate of Desert Hot Springs necessitates heat mitigation strategies, these interventions become even more critical when considering how climate change is projected to exacerbate extreme heat conditions. For example, the Cal-Adapt climate projection tool forecasts the number of extreme heat days (meaning over 109.5°F) in Desert Hot Springs to increase from the historical average of 4 days per year to 22 days per year by 2035. Additionally, the duration of consecutive extreme heat days is also projected to increase from the historical average of 3 consecutive days to an average of 7 consecutive days by 2035. In other words, Desert Hot Springs can expect to see temperatures, extreme heat days,

and extreme heat duration increase in the coming years. As a result, it is imperative that Downtown Desert Hot Springs is designed to reduce potential public health and safety impacts associated with extreme heat conditions.

URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

While the climate of Desert Hot Springs is naturally hot, poorly designed urban areas can exacerbate the already harsh climate. Urban areas (even in small cities and towns) are typically warmer than rural and open space areas due to a phenomenon known as the “urban heat island effect.”

This phenomenon occurs when the development of urban areas results in the loss of vegetation and covering of surfaces with pavement and buildings. The process of removing vegetation often causes a loss of shade and moisture, both of which keep areas cool (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008). When urban streets and buildings are covered with dark and impermeable surfaces, they evaporate less water and reflect less and absorb more sunlight, all of which result in elevated surface and air temperatures. Urban heat island effects paired with the hot climate of Desert Hot Springs can negatively impact communities by increasing heat-related illness and mortality, air conditioning costs, summertime peak energy demand, and air and water pollution (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008).

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NEED FOR HEAT MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Through community outreach, we know that residents of Desert Hot Springs avoid spending time outdoors during the summer months due to the harsh weather. To make Downtown Desert Hot Springs a comfortable and attractive place to visit during summer, it is imperative to incorporate heat mitigation strategies into the Downtown landscape.

COMMON HEAT MITIGATION STRATEGIES

There are a few commonly used strategies for urban heat mitigation:

- 1. Shade Trees & Structures:** Planting trees and installing shade structures lower surface air temperatures by providing shade. Trees and other types of vegetation also provide surface air cooling through evapotranspiration. In addition to lowering surface air temperatures, planting vegetation in urban areas produces co-benefits such as improved air and water quality, as well as reduced stormwater runoff (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008). Studies show that planting trees is the most effective way to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- 2. Cool Roofs & Green Roofs:** Conventional rooftops made from traditional materials

tend to reflect less and absorb more of the sun's energy, which increases surface temperatures in urban areas. Cool and green roofs are both strategies that can be used to reduce the heat island effect of the built environment. A green roof, or a rooftop garden, is a layer of vegetation grown on a rooftop, which can provide shade and lower air temperatures through evapotranspiration. A cool roof, also known as a reflective roof, is made of highly reflective and emissive materials to reflect sunlight and heat away from a building, which reduces roof temperatures. Research shows that cool roofs are approximately 50 to 60°F cooler than conventional roofs during peak summer weather (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008). Both roof types have the potential to reduce surface air temperatures while also producing energy savings.

- 3. Cool Streets & Pavements:** Conventional pavements are made of concrete and asphalt, which transfer heat downward and store it in the pavement subsurface, where it is often re-released at night. Cool pavements use emerging technologies to store less heat than conventional pavement materials. Cool pavements are still an evolving technology, but often refer to pavements with reflective materials and/or permeable surfaces (U.S. Environmental

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Protection Agency, 2008).

DOWNTOWN DESERT HOT SPRINGS SHADE PROGRAM

While there are several heat mitigation strategies that will be incorporated into the Downtown Desert Hot Springs Revitalization Plan, this report focuses narrowly on shade as a solution and outlines a program to accomplish the following program:

Program: Develop a Downtown Shade Plan to increase tree canopy and pedestrian shade amenities, particularly along frequently traveled pedestrian walkways and in locations that support public transportation in Downtown Desert Hot Springs.

A Downtown Shade Plan may include the following actions:

1. Conduct an inventory of shade and other cooling amenities along prioritized walking routes in Downtown Desert Hot Springs.
2. Create specific targets for shade coverage for key pedestrian corridors and a framework for tracking progress toward meeting shade targets.
3. Increase shade provisioning along sidewalks and at public water fountains, seating, and bicycle racks for pedestrians and bicyclists.
4. Remove palm trees along Palm Dr. and Pierson Blvd. and replant with trees that provide adequate shade.
5. Develop a comprehensive urban forestry master plan, allocating sufficient budget and personnel resources to engage residents and other stakeholders in the planning process, plant and maintain new trees, implement necessary enforcement and compliance mechanisms, and provide other necessary auxiliary services (tree education, tree removal, infrastructure upgrades, etc.). Engagement with city staff in Palm Springs and Twentynine Palms could help identify successes and challenges encountered with similar programs.
6. Create new recommendations, incentives, and/or requirements for tree planting and preservation in Downtown Desert Hot Springs.
7. Review the Capital Improvement Plan to identify opportunities for infrastructure upgrades and modifications necessary to increase tree canopy in the city (e.g., relocating utility lines, adding water access to unirrigated landscape areas).
8. Designate responsibility for increasing tree canopy in Downtown Desert Hot Springs to one or more city

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staff members, departments, and/or programs.

9. Explore the feasibility of installing daytime shade structures with solar-powered nighttime lighting (e.g. LumiWeave).

Supporting Research

A literature review of 150 studies found the best heat mitigation strategy to be planting vegetation, specifically trees (Nasrollahi et al., 2020). While planting trees is well-known to be the most effective urban heat mitigation strategy, it is imperative to consider the feasibility of planting trees in a desert climate due to the challenges associated with a lack of water and extreme heat. Fortunately, a 2018 study by Wheeler et al. assesses the phenomenon of mitigating urban heat in dryland cities. Wheeler et al. (2018) found that the most effective cooling strategy for dryland cities is to combine low-water tree species with dense shade-producing built form (i.e., building shadows and shade structures) and high-albedo (or reflective) materials (i.e., light-colored paint). The study also recommends conducting research to determine the tree species best suited to arid climates and provides a number of online resources, such as the Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute at Cal Poly's SelectTree guide and iTree. Initial searches suggest that the following shade trees may do well in Desert Hot Springs:

Purple-leaf Acacia, Indian Rosewood, and Chilean Mesquite.

Another study evaluated the impact of tree planting and cool roofs on urban heat in Phoenix, Arizona, which found that increasing tree coverage in Phoenix neighborhoods from 10% to 25% reduces air temperatures, but not enough to offset the projected increased temperatures due to climate change (Middel et al., 2015). The study suggests that while trees alone may not be enough, they can be one component of a comprehensive heat mitigation strategy (Middel et al., 2015).

CASE STUDIES

- City of Phoenix Tree and Shade Master Plan (Phoenix, AZ)
- Identifying Strategies for a Cooler Scottsdale (Scottsdale, AZ)
- A Vision for a Greener, Healthier, Cooler Gowanus (Brooklyn, NY)

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Program Ideas: Integration of Public Art into the Design of Parks and Public Spaces
Background
Desert Hot Springs already hosts some

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public artworks, such as the abstract metal sculptures by local artist Simi Dabah, which can be found in some city parks and street medians along Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive (Farhang, 2016). Some murals are scattered throughout the city as well, although many are outside of the downtown area. Efforts have also been made to paint some of the electrical boxes around town to further beautify the city with art (Visit Greater Palm Springs, 2023b).

The Art Foundation of Desert Hot Springs has recently come into funding for implementing more public art placemaking in the region, part of which could be allocated to projects in the city of Desert Hot Springs itself (Art Foundation of Desert Hot, 2023). Enhancing and adding public art can help promote economic development as well as positive social impacts (Zitcer, 2020). The economic development approach focuses on bringing business and investments to the area, and the social impacts approach celebrates community culture and art and improves social dynamics. This report looks into research and cases studies from other cities to help make informed, educated decisions about potential public art programs for downtown Desert Hot Springs.

PUBLIC ART STRATEGIES: CASE STUDIES Sacramento, CA

In 2018, Sacramento released the “Sacramento Arts, Culture, & Creative

Economy Plan,” which aims to showcase Sacramento’s story and celebrate its unique character in an equitable and accessible way (City of Sacramento, 2018). Similarly to Desert Hot Springs, Sacramento describes its character as being culturally rich, but not well known outside of the region. Already, just a few years after publishing the plan, Sacramento has been successful in implementing a variety of public art programs that add murals and other artwork to the city (Estes, 2021). Some goals, policies and programs from this plan that could be applicable to Desert Hot Springs are as follows:

Goal 5: Celebrate and infuse all Sacramento neighborhoods and districts with arts and culture.

5.1. Support and expand neighborhood based programming and placemaking.

5.1.1. Community- and Artist-initiated Projects: Develop a program supporting community or artist-initiated projects for neighborhoods throughout Sacramento. Encourage projects that engage the community and/or youth, reflect or celebrate local heritage and culture, tell historic stories, enliven the cityscape, and increase the availability of cultural resources in neighborhoods with fewer cultural assets. Projects can include temporary and pop-up activities.

APPENDIX 10: DOWNTOWN PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

5.2. Enhance the use of public art in creative placemaking.

5.2.1. Neighborhood Art Program: Develop a neighborhood art program engaging stakeholders such as residents, businesses, youth and community groups, in developing art projects. Consider creation of neighborhood based public art allocations.

5.3. Identify and pursue opportunities to advance creative placemaking within identified districts in Sacramento. Actively engage City partners as well as private developers to assure timely action on opportunities.

5.3.5. Creative Zoning Overlays: Consider the use of zoning overlays in specific areas or districts to facilitate arts uses and events. Consider also the use of form-based/illustrated development code approaches for specific areas identified for creative placemaking.

Fairfield, CA

The “Heart of Fairfield Specific Plan” lays out the development of a public art program for their downtown (City of Fairfield, 2017). Chapter 5 has a section on “Branding and Public Art,” that could be applicable to Desert Hot Springs. Local artists have created murals downtown, and the city is working on ongoing public sculptures

and metalwork projects, as well as art along streetscapes and utility boxes (Daily Republic, 2021).

Goal: Celebrate the rich and diverse history of Downtown and promote a new, energized “Heart of Fairfield” brand that creates a unique theme and desired image for the Plan Area.

5.33. Encourage and expand public art throughout the Heart of Fairfield in order to highlight the City’s rich history and unique businesses through the following:

b. Promote utility box wrapping, fire hydrant painting, and other public art installations that create interest and energy while also reducing the visual impact of infrastructure

e. Prioritize AB1600 urban design funds for public art in the Heart of Fairfield project area

f. Integrate public art, landscape elements, and seating to soften and enliven the underutilized plaza space at the Fairfield Community Theater

j. Work with property owners, the Fairfield Suisun School District, the Fairfield Main Street Association, and local arts groups to implement temporary window art for vacant storefronts

APPENDIX 10: DOWNTOWN PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

o. Integrate public art into infrastructure design.

p. Work closely with local businesses and the Air Force to develop and implement public art that celebrates local history and industry

5.34. Encourage the integration of public art into new multi-family residential and commercial projects during project design

5.35. Coordinate with local nonprofit organizations and private companies who may want to partner with the City on developing appropriate public art tied to their products and services.

Additional Case Study: Ely, NV

Ely does not have a public planning department plan related to public art; public art projects are mainly done by Ely Renaissance Society. Although specific policies and programs cannot be taken from this city, the scale and need for public art in public spaces is more similar to Desert Hot Springs than the Sacramento and Fairfield examples. The town used an extensive mural program and park sculptures to celebrate the town's culture and history

PROGRAM PROPOSAL

This program will help advance the goals & policies of the Community Character section of the Desert Hot Springs Downtown Improvement Plan. Specifically, it will help

advance policy 4.2.1:

Goal 4.2: Downtown use of art to foster a sense of place.

Policy 4.2.1: Promote Public Art that celebrates community culture, diversity, and history.

CITY PROGRAM IDEAS:

Develop a program supporting community or artist-initiated projects for neighborhoods throughout Desert Hot Springs. Encourage projects that engage the community and youth, celebrate local history and culture and increase the availability of cultural resources in the downtown. Projects can include temporary and pop-up activities.

Develop a neighborhood art program that engages stakeholders such as residents, businesses, youth and community groups, in developing art projects. Consider creation of neighborhood based public art allocations.

Consider also the use of form-based/illustrated development code approaches for specific areas identified for creative placemaking

Promote utility box wrapping, fire hydrant painting, and other public art installations that improve the visual impact of infrastructure

APPENDIX 10: DOWNTOWN PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

Prioritize AB1600 Development Impact Fees for public art in the Downtown Desert Hot Springs project area

Integrate public art, landscape elements, and other urban design elements to enhance underused park and plaza spaces

Work with property owners and local arts groups to implement temporary window art for storefronts, particularly vacant ones.

Integrate public art into infrastructure design.

Work closely with local businesses and arts groups to develop and implement public art that celebrates local history and culture

The city already has existing programs for mural and electric and traffic box artworks, so options for programs that integrate public art into the preliminary design of new parks and open spaces would be most beneficial to the city at this time. The city has two main options for public art policies. The first would be to directly manage all public art projects through city employees and funding, and the second would be to outsource some or all of the public art project efforts to local art and other nonprofit organizations.

The following programs are proposed for use in the Downtown Plan if the city wishes to

directly manage all public art projects:

Program 4.2.1.1: Integrate public art, landscape elements, and other urban design elements to enhance underused park and plaza spaces.

Program 4.2.1.2: Integrate public art into infrastructure design.

Program 4.2.1.3: Work closely with local businesses and arts groups to develop and implement public art that celebrates local history and culture.

The following policies are proposed if the city wishes to outsource public art project efforts:

Program 4.2.2: Work closely with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and arts groups to develop, fund, and implement public art that celebrates local history and culture.

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APPENDIX 11: SAFETY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

An important goal for the City of Desert Hot Spring is to prioritize the safety of their residents, visitors, and workers in the downtown area. When people feel safe, they are likely to spend money and time at their downtown which in return will help their local economy. The city should implement policies and programs that address the issue of safety and crime perception in as were discussed in the community engagement process. The use of safety ambassadors or a community-based safety organization in the downtown area is a useful solution to help alleviate concerns of safety and crime for residents and visitors.

BACKGROUND

The overall goal for the Safety Ambassador Program decreasing the perception of crime and help fortify safety culture in the downtown area through hospitality and presence. Ambassador programs that are generally bid funded programs that employ workers who patrol public spaces within business districts providing security and hospitality services (Again, 2006). Safety ambassadors are usually resident volunteers or individuals who are familiar with the city and interested in making sure their downtown space is safe and comfortable. These safety ambassadors are hired by an outside organization that is partnered with the city to help fulfil their security goals. The safety ambassadors encourage safe behavior for all visitors and residents in the

downtown area.

PROGRAM COST

According to the City of Bellingham and Downtown Bellingham Partnership the initial cost for the safety ambassador program is approximately 400K for a two-year pilot program. The proposed cost will cover 2-3 full-time ambassadors. The cost is split between the city and business group organizations. There are business grants available for this program initiative.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Provide safety escorts for downtown residents and visitors.
- Interacts with community members on neighborhood policing.
- Are not affiliated with police but collaborates with on key safety issues.
- Provides directions and recommend restaurants to patrons.
- Increased trust and credibility.
- Help reduce number of accidents and incidents.
- Overall, promotes safety culture.

APPENDIX 11: SAFETY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

PROGRAM CRITIQUES

- Additional resources required to fund these safety ambassador programs.
- Since there not police, only have a limited impact on security.
- Very difficult in measuring the impact safety ambassador program has on crime.
- Potential harassment on unhoused residents/visitors.

PROGRAM EXAMPLES

Downtown SLO Clean & Safe Program

Downtown SLO Ambassadors are active daily to ensure the downtown area is clean, safe, and provides a welcoming environment to residents and visitors. Their cleaning service includes trash pick-up, graffiti & sticker removal along with cleaning unsanitary clutter like feces. These services are provided to sidewalks and alleys within the boundaries of the 24-block service area. The ambassadors goal is to connect with the community and establish trust by providing directions, recommending restaurants, answering questions from visitors, or giving resources to unhoused individuals (Downtown SLO, n.d). Downtown Ambassadors will try to report potential dangers and active emergency situations to the necessary authorities. They partner with the local community organizations

like CAPSLO to ensure that individuals are given the proper care (Downtown SLO, n.d). They provide these services to downtown businesses at no charge. Between July 2021 to June 2022, Downtown SLO Ambassadors help removed approximately 1,894lbs of trash, 1,422 graffiti/sticker removals, and assisted over 684 unhoused individuals (Downtown SLO, n.d). They accept donations to their Friends of Downtown SLO 501c3 to help fund supplies to meet their goals of promoting a safer and cleaner environment. Downtown San Diego Safety Ambassadors Program Downtown Partnership Clean & Safe program provides services that will help maintain the clean and safe environment for Downtown San Diego neighborhoods. This program has been going for over 20 years. Clean & Safe program will perform safety checks, visit businesses, provide directions, perform trash pickup, and unhoused outreach (Downtown San Diego Partnership, n.d). The goal for safety ambassadors is to provide an extra set of eyes & ears for the downtown community (Downtown San Diego Partnership, n.d). The safety ambassadors work with the unhoused care team to connect people with resources they need, and expert assistance should they be experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis (Downtown San Diego Partnership, n.d). The safety ambassadors are not affiliated with law enforcement but collaborate on neighborhood policing on the behalf of Downtown's neighborhoods,

APPENDIX 11: SAFETY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

businesses, and residents (Downtown San Diego Partnership, n.d). According to their website, they have completed 811 security checks, 4,623 safety walk homes, and 942 directional assistances in 2021.

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE HOSPITALITY PROGRAM

Hospitality is very important for Baltimore Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Downtown Baltimore Guides (DBGs) provides hospitality services, unhoused outreach services, and helps integrate security services throughout Downtown area (Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, 2022). The ambassadors also work daily by maintaining the built infrastructure and public parks, providing landscaping services, and assisting with snow response. The program has a partnership with DPW they also, collect trash, clean alleyways, sweep streets, and remove graffiti from businesses and historic facades (Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The ambassador program will be a great opportunity for the city to improve the safety culture in downtown. There's an element of crime perception that may inhibit people visiting the downtown area. By offering a security and hospitality downtown service, visitors will grow accustomed to a safe and friendly environment. This feeling will increase spending and foot traffic

in downtown. The ambassador team will provide escorts to patrons who request the service. This additional safety measure will help visitors feel secure as they travel back to their parked car location. They'll even answer any questions the visitors may have about restaurant recommendations. The ambassador program will also help maintain the cleanliness of downtown by picking up litter. The major critique of the program is allocation of resources. The city will have to spend financial resources to organize local businesses and begin the process of creating the ambassador program. Another major critique is to make sure the ambassador program does not harass the unhoused visitors. The goal for this program is to make sure safety ambassadors treat every member of the community with respect. Overall, the program is popular nationwide and will help address any safety concerns the visitors and residents may have.

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APPENDIX 12: DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATIONS

While small in physical size, downtowns are immensely valuable, diverse, efficient, inclusive, and resilient on multiple levels (International Downtown Association). From driving tax revenue and business activity to hosting a concentration of resources, amenities, and social infrastructure, downtowns play a pivotal role in the long-term health of a region (International Downtown Association).

In 2018 Desert Hot Springs became the fourth local chamber to join the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce (Greater Coachella Valley Chamber). The Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce has over 1,100 members and it is the largest and most diverse chamber in the Coachella Valley (Greater Coachella Valley Chamber). It currently offers education, legislative and networking seminars designed to inform, connect and enhance individual businesses (Greater Coachella Valley Chamber).

The City of Desert Hot Springs does not have an existing downtown organization to help foster and direct the growth of the downtown area. Litman suggests that downtowns can be strengthened by:

- Locating activities downtown
- Supporting downtown businesses and cultural activities

- Creating efficient, multi-modal transportation systems
- Improving walkability
- Managing parking
- Encouraging downtown housing
- Addressing security concerns

Many cities across the country have adopted Downtown Organizations to successfully achieve a vibrant and thriving downtown.

CASE STUDY: MORGAN HILL DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

Founded in 2002, the Morgan Hill Downtown Association (MHDA) was incorporated as a not-for-profit entity with the mission to make Downtown Morgan Hill the “Heart of the Community” (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). MHDA’s vision is “To make Downtown Morgan Hill the “Heart of the Community” by creating a vibrant place to shop, dine, work and play, where the downtown is showcased as a destination that brings people together, and lends economic opportunity for businesses, enabling them to establish new customer relationships.” (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). MHDA hosts events, and advocates for the needs of businesses at the city level (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). MHDA is a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt corporation and has no

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political affiliation (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). A 501(C)(6) organization is formed to serve their members and is often called a nonprofit membership organization (Internal Revenue Service, 2023). With funding from membership dues, event revenues and support from the City of Morgan Hill the MHDA provides its members' advertising opportunities, events, and inclusion in the MHDA website while keeping merchants, residents and property owners informed of issues affecting the downtown (Morgan Hill Downtown Association).

GOVERNING BOARD

MHDA is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors responsible for providing vision and leadership to its staff and downtown stakeholders (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). The Board includes downtown business owners and residents chosen for their business acumen and dedication to the improvement of Downtown (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). Their objective is to organize and support events, initiatives, and activities that showcase downtown Morgan Hill as a destination that brings families and people together and lends the opportunity to establish new relationships (Morgan Hill Downtown Association).

MEMBERSHIP & RESOURCES

MHDA currently has 35 members (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). Their

membership packet has three tiers, business members, association members and resident members.

The Business Member tier has a year due of \$159 (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). The membership includes networking opportunities with other small business owners, opportunity to shape the future of the city, features on social media and website, opportunities to take part in MHDA events, and updates on news and changes in the city (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). The Association Member tier has a yearly due of \$159 and has the same benefits as the Business Member tier (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). The Resident Member tier has a yearly due of \$59 (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). The membership includes networking opportunities with small business owners and involvement in signature events (Morgan Hill Downtown Association).

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Every year MHDA hosts four large scale community events. In the springtime they host the Wine Stroll, in the fall they host the Beer Crawl and Safe Trick or Treat event and, in the winter, they host the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony (Morgan Hill Downtown Association). In addition, they host a variety of smaller scale events like Ladies Night Out and Off the Menu (Morgan Hill Downtown Association).

APPENDIX 12: DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATIONS

Events are certainly the cornerstone for bringing new faces to Downtown Morgan Hill, but it's the variety of delicious dining options, unique shopping, and amazing wineries that keep locals faithful to Downtown Morgan Hill and continue to bring out-of-towners back (Morgan Hill Downtown Association).

RESOURCES

California Main Street

California Main Street (CAMS) is a diverse network of communities supported by Main Street Approach practitioners, working to revitalize historic commercial districts through a place-based model that fosters inclusive transformation strategies (California Main Street). CAMS achieves this by providing training, access to resources, partnership opportunities, and best practices to their members and affiliates (California Main Street). California Main Street currently has 31 members across the state of California (California Main Street). Since its start over 30 years ago, California Main Street has worked with communities across the state to revitalize downtowns and commercial districts through place-based economic development (California Main Street). California Main Street programs have collectively secured over \$7.4 billion in public and private reinvestment, added 31,979 jobs, created 6,666 new businesses, and rehabilitated over 1,500 buildings since 1986 (California Main Street).

International Downtown Association

The International Downtown Association (IDA) empowers place management leaders with knowledge, research and public policies for creating prosperous city centers, commercial neighborhoods and livable urban places for all (International Downtown Association). IDA is the only international organization that represents urban place managers who bridge the gap between public, private and community needs on a global scale, and brings together small, medium and large sized organizations to share best practices, collaborate on research and advocate proven strategies (International Downtown Association). IDA's current membership includes over 3,500 practitioners (International Downtown Association).

PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Although the City of Desert Hot Springs is part of the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, the city needs a specific organization that dedicates itself to developing the downtown area. The city currently has a limited number of businesses in the downtown area and does not have the proper resources to incorporate a downtown association.

First, the city should take inventory of existing downtown businesses and poll their interest in creating a Downtown Association. When engaging with business owners it

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would be important to highlight how the Downtown Association would differ from the Chamber of Commerce. If sufficient interest is gathered the group would have to draft the organization's mission, vision and governing documents. All this information would be needed to file for 501c (6) status. A governing board shall also be elected to ensure commitment and transparency with the association's creation. As new business move into town downtown it is imperative to have a membership program created that includes membership fees and dues. Create an application process for businesses

Financial expenses include filing fees for 501c (6) status, staff salaries, event costs and much more. During fiscal year 2021-2022 the City of Desert Hot Springs received \$5,500,153 in Cannabis Tax Revenue (Dispensary and Cultivation Taxes). The city should explore if funds from the cannabis tax revenue can be used to cover initial costs of the downtown association.

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APPENDIX 13: VACANT LOT REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

Vacant properties can contribute to an overall decline and disinvestment of a community due to their association with crime, an increased risk to health and welfare, reducing property values, and escalating municipal costs. However, local government officials, community organizations, and residents have been increasingly viewing vacant properties as opportunities for reuse. Vacant properties can become assets if they are turned into uses that are important to the community, with the potential to stabilize and revitalize entire neighborhoods (HUD, 2014).

VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION ORDINANCES

Information regarding possible vacancies is often spread among several agencies and records of ownership and responsibility for a property can be difficult to acquire. To identify the number, location, and ownership of vacant properties, some jurisdictions have implemented a vacancy property registration ordinance (VPRO) that requires owners to register their properties and, typically, pay a fee. VPROs work to reduce the harms and costs associated with vacant properties, provide better data on the extent and nature of vacant and foreclosed properties, and have detailed and reliable contact information for property owners and managers. As of May 2012, there were more than 550 local VPROs in the United States (Lee, et al., 2013). These ordinances allow

for jurisdictions to have the most up-to-date information on all vacant properties, providing the community with strong information on the problems they may face and informing decision-making in policy.

VPROs often require owners of the registered properties to pay a periodic registration fee, which may escalate the longer a property remains vacant, and to maintain properties in specified ways. They may also oblige property owners to carry a minimum amount of insurance or, in some cases, to provide a minimum bond or deposit. If requirements are not met, most VPROs specify fines or even potential criminal penalties (Lee, et al., 2013). The fees and potential fines create a disincentive for owners to keep properties deactivated and encourage them to return the properties to productive uses. The revenue from the fees can also offset the costs associated with vacant properties (HUD, 2014). Ultimately, proponents of VPROs hope to discourage irresponsible investment by internalizing some of the social costs of vacant properties and holding owners accountable for not maintaining properties in a responsible manner (Lee, et al., 2013).

Case Study: Battle Creek, MI

The city of Battle Creek requires registration of vacant structures, defined as residential structures that have been vacant for more than 60 days and commercial structures that

APPENDIX 13: VACANT LOT REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

have been vacant for more than 180 days, to register and pay a monthly monitoring fee. The ordinance specifically targets vacant structures that is the site of loitering, trespassing, lack of upkeep, is under notice for existing violations, or a hazard. The fee to register a vacant or abandoned structure is \$25, then each month the structure is vacant, Code Compliance officers monitor all vacant buildings for a monthly monitoring fee of \$40. A person who violates or fails to register their vacant properties will be fined no more than \$100 per day of each offense (City of Battle Creek, n.d.).

Case Study: Frederick, MD

The city of Frederick maintains a registration requirement applies to all nonresidential buildings and mixed-use buildings that have been vacant for at least one year. The ordinance targets vacant structures that are in zoned mixed-use areas, where more than fifty percent of the occupiable square footage of the portion of the first floor that is immediately adjacent to a public right-of-way is vacant.

Failure to register when required or to comply with inspection requirements or maintenance standards is considered a municipal infraction punishable by a fine of \$1,000.00. Each day a violation continues will be deemed a separate offense and can additionally be fined (City of Frederick, n.d.).

Case Study: San Francisco, CA

The city of San Francisco initiated a Commercial Vacancy Tax to disincentivize empty commercial spaces in certain areas of the city. For purposes of the Commercial Vacancy Tax, “Taxable Commercial Space” means the ground floor of any building or structure, or the ground floor of any portion of a building or structure, where such ground floor (1) is adjacent or tangent to a Public Right of Way, (2) is located in one of the Named Neighborhood Commercial Districts or Named Neighborhood Commercial Transit Districts, and (3) is not Residential Real Estate. The city considers a Taxable Commercial Space as vacant if it’s unoccupied, uninhabited, or unused for more than 182 days, whether consecutive or nonconsecutive, in a tax year.

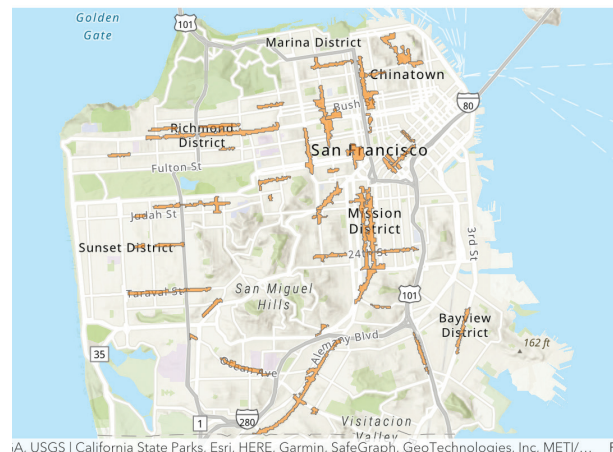


Figure 1: Named Neighborhood Commercial Districts or Named Neighborhood Commercial Transit Districts in San Francisco, CA.

APPENDIX 13: VACANT LOT REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

All owners, lessees/tenants, and sublessees/subtenants of Taxable Commercial Space must file a Return, even if the spaces are in the same building. The city will send out notices to properties that would be required to file and require a response. If the recipient believes they are not required to file, they must complete the Non-Filer Certification Form. The tax is \$250 per linear foot of frontage, defined as the total length of Taxable Commercial Space that is adjacent or tangent to the Public Right of Ways.

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APPENDIX 14: TOURISM MARKETING

Tourism plays a leading role in the economy of the greater Palm Desert. According to the Near case study titled “Understanding Visitor Origins and Visitation Patterns”, the Greater Palm Springs area includes nine cities: Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Indio, and Coachella. The Greater Palm Springs area draws 14 million tourists annually, with 6.4 million staying in the region overnight. Regionally, 25% of all jobs are within the hospitality industry. It is estimated that the total economic impact of tourism for the Greater Palm Springs area is 7.5 billion dollars annually (Near, n.d.). Developing a Strategic Tourism Plan will be a key action

in drawing a portion of this regional tourism to downtown Desert Hot Springs. The action will draw guidance from the Community-Based Tourism Planning Model developed by David P. Pinel and the Oregon City Strategic Tourism Plan.

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM PLANNING

The Community-Based Tourism Planning (CBTP) model is based on the idea that all travel is linked to communities, both urban and remote (Pinel, 1998). Communities have the power to define their own role in this system that draws visitors and supports residents. The model begins with an initial inventory to gather stakeholders’

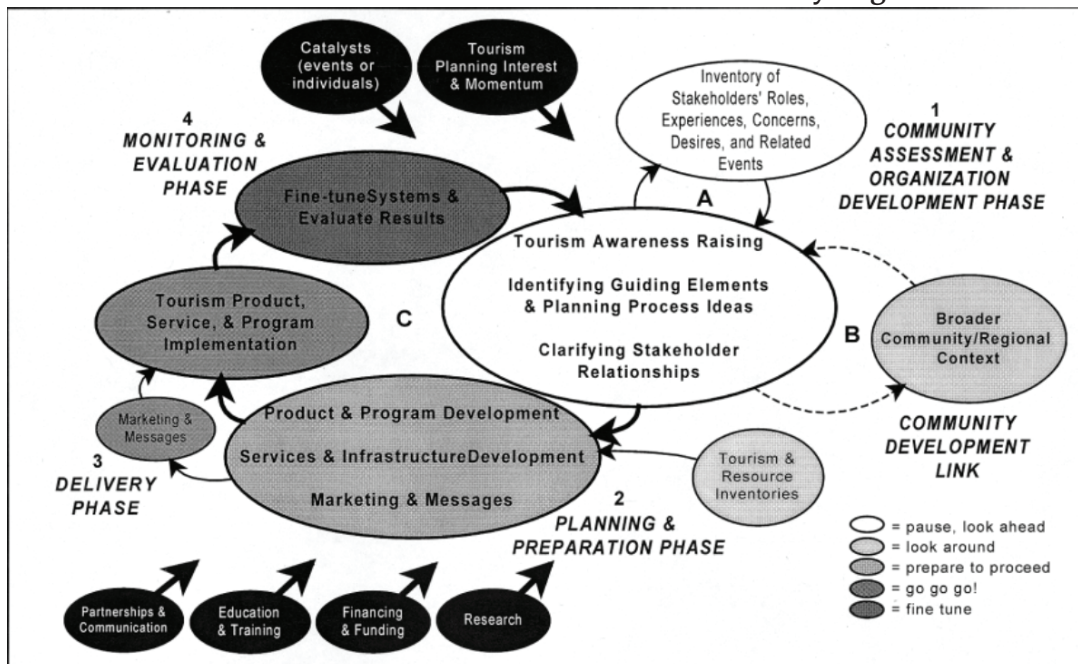


Figure 1. The Community-Based Tourism Planning Model.

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perceptions about tourism (Figure 1). Experiences, concerns, hopes, and dreams related to tourism are all needed to learn from those who know the community best and to inform the direction of tourism development. Key questions for stakeholders include “what matters to us?,” “what can we offer?,” and “how do we want tourism to affect our home/community/area?” (Pinel, 1998). The stakeholder discussions should produce themes that will inform guiding principles for tourism planning. By forming guiding principles through in-depth stakeholder outreach, this process tailors the plan to the distinct community. Instead of prescribing a set of “cookie-cutter” tourism guiding principles, the CBTP model taps into stakeholder wisdom to create a tourism plan with community buy-in, a sense of pride and meaning, and accountability to meet goals. After the stakeholder guiding principles have been formed, the rest of the planning process works to support the guiding principles. This includes conducting resource and infrastructure inventories, developing specific programs and policies, creating a consistent marketing and messaging framework, and implementation (Figure 1). Throughout the subsequent process, stakeholder feedback is present in every step. It is critical to gather input from stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that tourism continues to positively serve both the visitors and residents.

While the CBTP model provides guidance for stakeholder engagement, the Oregon City Strategic Tourism (OCST) plan shows evidence of an established tourism plan in a community with similar opportunities and challenges. Like Desert Hot Springs, Oregon City had a modest population at 37,572 residents as of 2020 (World Population Review, n.d.). The city is surrounded by scenic natural resources, contributing to community character and pride. The Oregon City Economic Development Department has identified tourism development as one of five priority areas. The OCST plan was created in 2018 to address high vacancy rates, the minimal 4–8 hour daytime downtown activity, and the need for a distinct Oregon City brand and a unified sense of place (City of Oregon City, 2017). Since the implementation of the tourism plan, the vacancy rate of commercial properties in Oregon city has dropped from nearly 8% to approximately 4% (Oregon City Department of Economic Development, 2020). It is difficult to identify other tangible plan outcomes due to the pandemic affecting tourism in Oregon City for much of the duration of this first plan. However, the OCST plan provides a framework for the City of Desert Hot Springs to form a clear and attainable plan as a growing tourism destination.

The structure and actions within the OCST plan will be explored for their potential to

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While the CBTP model provides guidance for stakeholder engagement, the Oregon City Strategic Tourism (OCST) plan shows evidence of an established tourism plan in a community with similar opportunities and challenges. Like Desert Hot Springs, Oregon City had a modest population at 37,572 residents as of 2020 (World Population Review, n.d.). The city is surrounded by scenic natural resources, contributing to community character and pride. The Oregon City Economic Development Department has identified tourism development as one of five priority areas. The OCST plan was created in 2018 to address high vacancy rates, the minimal 4–8 hour daytime downtown activity, and the need for a distinct Oregon City brand and a unified sense of place (City of Oregon City, 2017). Since the implementation of the tourism plan, the vacancy rate of commercial properties in Oregon city has dropped from nearly 8% to approximately 4% (Oregon City Department of Economic Development, 2020). It is difficult to identify other tangible plan outcomes due to the pandemic affecting tourism in Oregon City for much of the duration of this first plan. However, the OCST plan provides a framework for the City of Desert Hot Springs to form a clear and attainable plan as a growing tourism destination.

The structure and actions within the OCST plan will be explored for their potential to

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succeed in Desert Hot Springs. To begin, the OCST plan has five “strategic anchors” (City of Oregon City, 2017). These anchors include their vision, missions, position (within the regional context), reputation, and initiatives. The first four anchors are based on visioning for the future of Oregon City tourism. The initiatives anchor presents the goals for the plan. The initiatives in the OCST plan are: 1) build tourism leadership capabilities, 2) enhance the brand, 3) coordinate tourism assets through collaboration, and 4) cultivate and curate a portfolio of experiences (City of Oregon City, 2017). Each initiative is supported by several sequential actions, all of which have clearly described background information and purpose. Furthermore, each initiative has objectives that let the city clearly measure the success of the associated actions.

To demonstrate the initiative structure in the OCST plan, initiative two will be analyzed. The second initiative (“enhance the brand”) involves three actions. First, develop, approve and deploy Oregon City branding. This action establishes a cohesive branding strategy with tonality and target personas (City of Oregon City, 2017). Second, activate a city-wide branding campaign to strengthen brand connection among local assets and businesses. Once the initial brand has been approved, the city will begin using the branding through all communication channels to create a unified

sense of place (City of Oregon City, 2017). Third, research and define the Oregon City visitor. As the last step for this initiative, this action reassesses the target audience now that the city brand has been deployed. As the brand becomes more established, it is vital to understand how the branding is affecting the original target audiences and what kinds of visitors are being drawn to Oregon City. There are two objectives for the “enhance the brand” initiative. Oregon City will measure success based on whether 1) brand guidelines were established and 2) baseline and increase brand awareness (City of Oregon City, 2017).

For our purposes in creating the economic development element for the downtown Desert Hot Springs plan, creating a strategic tourism plan is an essential action. The Community-Based Tourism Planning model and the Oregon City Strategic Tourism Plan both demonstrated successful tourism planning and present the City of Desert Hot Springs with valuable guidance for creating their own tourism plan.

APPENDIX 14: TOURISM MARKETING

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