

Las Vegas

Downtown Action Plan

A Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan



Final Draft July 2010

Prepared for:
City of Las Vegas
MainStreet Las Vegas
Las Vegas Arts and Cultural District



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1. Introduction



The Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan (LVDAP) and Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan defines the community's vision for the downtown and identifies priority projects and programs to revitalize the downtown area. The Action Plan examines existing conditions and assets, recommends redevelopment projects and implementation strategies and identifies funding sources for downtown's future improvements. The recommendations and strategies are intended to help achieve the following vision and goals developed by the community through an extensive participatory planning process:

The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) provides cities in New Mexico with the powers to correct conditions in areas or neighborhoods within municipalities which “substantially inflict or arrest the sound and orderly development” within the city. These powers can help reverse and area’s decline and stagnation; however, the City may only use these powers within designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas (MRA). Designation of an MRA is based on findings of blighted conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (3-60S-8), which include physical as well as economic conditions.

In June, 2010 the City Council approved the Las Vegas Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation Report. This report concluded that this area demonstrated existing conditions within the downtown Las Vegas that met the criteria for the underutilized and low performing area designation as defined by the NM Metropolitan Redevelopment Code statute. The conditions existing in the downtown “substantially impair the sound growth and economic health and well being” of the Las Vegas area.

The designation of the Las Vegas Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area will assist the community in achieving the following goals:

- Elimination of detrimental public health and welfare conditions.
- Conservation, improvement and expansion of commercial building stock.
- Expansion of commercial activity
- Improvement and expansion of available housing.
- Improvement of economic conditions through coordinated public and private investments.

The Las Vegas Downtown MRA Designation Report is included in the Appendix of this plan.

Downtown Las Vegas Vision Statement:

Historic downtown unites Las Vegas and continues to be the cultural heart of our diverse community. Our heritage and traditions have spanned the centuries and sustain our multicultural identity. It is the place where the community lives, works and gathers for creative expression, entertainment and enterprise. Our youth, elders and families keep the downtown streets, plaza and river walk alive with music festivals and cultural activities. The acequias flow and the train brings friends and visitors here with a sense of coming home. The community and visitors contribute to the success of our eclectic shops, artistic and entertainment venues, museums and historic buildings.

Downtown Action Plan Goals:

- Encourage the restoration and renovation of existing buildings for adaptive reuses while maintaining the character of the original building.
- Encourage through-traffic to visit downtown.
- Create a vibrant street life.
- Create a transportation network (walking, biking, trolleys, buses and horse-drawn carriages) that provide interconnected linkages through downtown from the Depot to the Plaza Park.
- Celebrate our cultural heritage and history in a way that benefits the community economically and involves the residents and visitors.
- Revitalize downtown as an attractive, sustainable and walkable destination that serves the needs of the community.
- Create vibrant and attractive gathering places that encourage people to hang out and socialize.
- Incorporate sustainability as a guiding principal through the innovative use of our resources.
- Encourage residential living in the historic commercial corridor.

Downtown Action Plan and MRA Plan Boundary

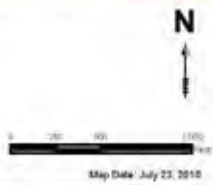
The Downtown Action Plan focuses on the historic commercial areas of Las Vegas including the Historic Plaza District, Railroad Avenue Historic District, Bridge Street Historic District, and the Douglas-Sixth Street Historic District. The Plan boundary is based on the market area of MainStreet Las Vegas and opportunity sites identified during the community planning process.

The Downtown MRA plan boundary is contained within the DAP boundary and is the area that meets the criteria as defined in the NM redevelopment Code.



Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan

- Downtown Action Plan Boundary
- Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area



2. Existing Conditions and Asset Inventory

A. History and Settlement



While Las Vegas, New Mexico is known as a gritty town that played a central role in many wild west adventures, its real story is the history of trade, and the rise and fall of various modes of trade and transportation. Las Vegas has two major periods of history: an early era as a stopping point for traders heading west on the Santa Fe Trail, and a later period as a major stopping point on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway.

These multiple narratives can be seen in the physical layout of the town itself: major portions of Las Vegas adhere to traditional Spanish colonial planning while newer areas use the American “grid” system. Founded in 1835 along the west bank of the Gallinas River, Las Vegas’ location was picked according to the Law of the Indies, which specified that:

...a town must be in an elevated and healthy location; with means of fortification; have fertile soil and with plenty of land for farming and pasturage; have fuel, timber, and resources; fresh water, a native population, ease of transport, access and exit; and be open to the north wind.

Meeting all these criteria, the city layout was dictated by these laws as well, with a central plaza surrounded by simple one-story adobe buildings. In early years, the buildings around the plaza were connected, and served both a residential and commercial purpose. Merchants lived and worked along the international trade route linking the United States and Mexico. This modest adobe town continued to flourish in a traditionally Spanish settlement pattern, with narrow streets winding away from the Plaza to form the first (mostly) residential neighborhood, Distrito de las Escuelas.

For nearly the next fifty years, commerce along the Santa Fe Trail would flourish in Las Vegas, eventually becoming a million-dollar-per-year business. The trail through Las Vegas followed what is now a path up National Street to Bridge Street, around the Plaza and out of town on South Pacific Avenue, a route still traceable today.

Everything changed in Las Vegas on July 4, 1879, with the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. European influences took hold, resulting in new settlement patterns, and new styles of architecture, new social and political institutions, and more cultural diversification. The tracks went in a mile east of the Plaza, a decision that permanently altered the physical and social character of this small western outpost and would eventually split the city in two.

After a few years as a shantytown, the first masonry building was erected along Railroad Avenue in 1881, the beginnings of a “New Town” in Las Vegas. This “New Town” was new in every sense of the word compared to the original settlement of Las Vegas: streets were wider and laid out on a grid system, buildings were of multiple stories and mostly Victorian in their style, a far cry from the simple adobes that had previously flourished. The residences built on the new, east side of Vegas were different as well: freestanding, single-family homes laid out around civic conveniences such as a park or library (now the historic districts of Library and Lincoln Park). All commercial conveniences were available in the new Las Vegas: dry goods, grocery, lumber, a foundry, a hotel, and a restaurant.

This growth and change heralded by the railroad affected old Las Vegas as well. While major Santa Fe Trail merchants remained on the Plaza, the early adobe and territorial construction was discarded in favor of more elaborate buildings, designed to compete with the new, more sophisticated Railroad district. A state hospital was founded in 1893, as well as Highlands University.

Bridge Street quickly became the link between these two settlements, eventually connected by electric streetcars. But two separate identities had already been created, and the divide became official in 1884 when the Territorial Legislature split the town into East and West Las Vegas. East Las Vegas incorporated in 1888 while West Las Vegas incorporated in 1903, and the two would not officially become one city until 1970.

While the impact of the railroad on Las Vegas cannot be underestimated, this prosperity was to be short lived. Beginning in 1908, the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe rerouted much of its freight traffic to the Belen cut-off. While commercial businesses in “New Town” were already firmly established by this point, this bypass was the death knell for the Railroad Avenue commercial district. New development would take a turn west onto Douglas Avenue, where a third commercial district would develop through the 1920s.

This neighborhood was the beginning of an “urban” Las Vegas, with buildings of similar style, materials, and proportions, linked together by a modern streetscape. This new district also featured many more civic buildings, reflecting the severely diminished trade market in Las Vegas.

The twentieth century was not kind to Las Vegas: the great depression exacted a toll, as did a severe drought in the 1950s, the development of the trucking industries, and the closing of the AT&SF headquarters in 1959. While other communities throughout New Mexico and the Southwest experienced exponential growth at times, Las Vegas' population has held steady at approximately 15,000 since 1900.

While this stagnant condition has been detrimental to the economy of Las Vegas, it has allowed for the preservation of many historic buildings that elsewhere would have been destroyed by development. This "frozen in time" quality not only tells the story of Las Vegas, but has cemented its' uniqueness in the annals of American history. Very few places in the western United States retain and reflect our national history more than Las Vegas, New Mexico. This small southwestern town has many assets, but few are more important than its cultural and social history. Unlike many other communities, Las Vegas does not lack for an historic identity or an architectural heritage. With nine National Register Historic Districts and over nine hundred buildings individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Las Vegas has one of the highest numbers of historic buildings (per capita) in the United States. Even the least of the historic structures in Las Vegas would be considered immeasurably valuable in most other communities.

The main struggle Las Vegas faces is the breadth of its cultural heritage, the overwhelming number of historic resources, and the responsibilities associated with such a legacy. Trying to spread financial resources and development opportunities over such a wide field is an exceptional challenge. There is a saying that the support for Historic Preservation is a mile wide but only an inch deep; in Las Vegas, it has to stretch even further to cover a couple of miles.

Selected redevelopment, such as the Plaza Hotel and the Railroad Depot, has proved to be successful in Las Vegas, with many more projects proposed or attempted. Unfortunately with projects scattered throughout the three districts, a cohesive commercial core or critical mass has been difficult to attain.

Today, Las Vegas is a more unified community than at any time in its history. The city no longer struggles with an East vs. West identity. Numerous valuable historic properties have already been protected and preserved, and many more are waiting for an opportunity for enhancement. The local historic preservation ordinance (Cultural Historic Overlay Zone) was recently revised and potentially could be extended to include a larger number of properties.

There are numerous depositories of community history that serve as an invaluable resource for designation and planning, including the collections of the Citizen's Committee for Historic Preservation (CCHP) and vast amount of architectural documentation done in the 1970s and 80s. With research and input from the community, the Downtown Action Plan will attempt to prioritize these resources, in terms of historic value as well as feasibility for redevelopment.

The following historic districts have been nationally designated, and fall within the boundaries of the Downtown Action Plan (in entirety or the greater part thereof). While the majority of historic structures are located within these districts, important individual resources exist outside of their borders and will be evaluated and referenced. For general organizational purposes though, the historic structures/resources have been grouped as follow:

Las Vegas Plaza Historic District

- Primarily commercial in use: shops, galleries, restaurants, municipal and professional offices
- Mostly Italianate in style, dating from mid to late 1800's
- Handful of adobe structures, some pre-1850
- Plaza Hotel is anchor business and most significant structure (230 Plaza)
- Plaza itself is still used for community functions
- Connects directly to Bridge Street District
- Other significant structures include the Ilfeld Building(s), the Romero Building, the Dice Apartments, and the First National Bank Building.
- Does retain some mixed-use (offices and residences on second floor)
- Zoned C-H

Railroad Avenue Historic District

- Original mercantile and hospitality center of East Las Vegas
- Primarily still commercial and mostly unoccupied
- Selected rehabilitation including Railroad Depot and Gross Kelly Building
- Most in danger of demolition by neglect
- Significant structures include the Castaneda Hotel and the Wells Fargo Building (612 East Lincoln).
- Partially zoned C-H

Bridge Street Historic District

- Primarily commercial, connects directly to Plaza District
- Variety of uses including restaurants, galleries, offices, retail stores
- Does retain some mixed-use (offices and residences on second floor)
- Majority of buildings have been rehabilitated in some fashion
- Has always served as commercial link between East and West Las Vegas
- More similar to other American (historic) commercial streets than the Plaza or Railroad Districts
- Zoned C-H

Douglas-Sixth Street Historic District

- Primarily commercial in use: restaurants, retail, and banks
- Later development period: 1890s through 1920s
- Historically had more of a civic presence than other two commercial districts

- Significant structures include the Bank of Las Vegas (622 Douglas), the Crockett Building (600 Douglas), and the El Fidel Hotel (500 Douglas).
- Selected buildings have been zoned C-H

El Distrito de las Escuelas

- Primarily residential, just south of the Plaza
- Original Spanish residential district.
- More modest than later residential districts
- Winding streets a contrast to American style grid
- Zoned C-H

Lincoln Park Historic District

- Primarily residential, similar in nature to Library Park District
- Traditional grid system
- South of Douglas Avenue, earliest residential neighborhood in East Las Vegas
- Zoned C-H

Library Park Historic District

- Primarily residential, similar in nature to Lincoln Park District but developed slightly later
- Traditional grid system
- Carnegie Library with surrounding park takes up full city block, mostly residences on all sides
- North of Douglas Avenue
- Church/School on south end of District
- Zoned C-H

Other significant resources that lie within the DAP boundaries and should be taken into consideration include Lion Park (with its drinking fountain dating to 1886), the Acequia Madre that runs along South Pacific Avenue, and the Rough Rider Museum & Collection (727 Grand Avenue). Both the North New Town Historic District and the Old Town Residential Historic District fall (mostly) outside the boundaries of the Downtown Action Plan.

The following reports and/or background information exist on preservation and historic architecture in Las Vegas and are valuable resources for the community:

- Las Vegas Arts & Cultural District Cultural Plan, June 2009
- Architecture & Preservation in Las Vegas, Volume I, June 1977 (Chris Wilson)
- Architecture & Preservation in Las Vegas, Volume II, 1982 (Chris Wilson et al)
- Architecture & Preservation in Las Vegas, Volume I, 1984 (Chris Wilson et al)
- Las Vegas and the Santa Fe Trail, 1995 (Michael L. Olsen)
- Historic Las Vegas, New Mexico: Along the Santa Fe Trail (CCHP)



Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan

- Cultural Historic Overlay Zoning Districts
- Historic Districts



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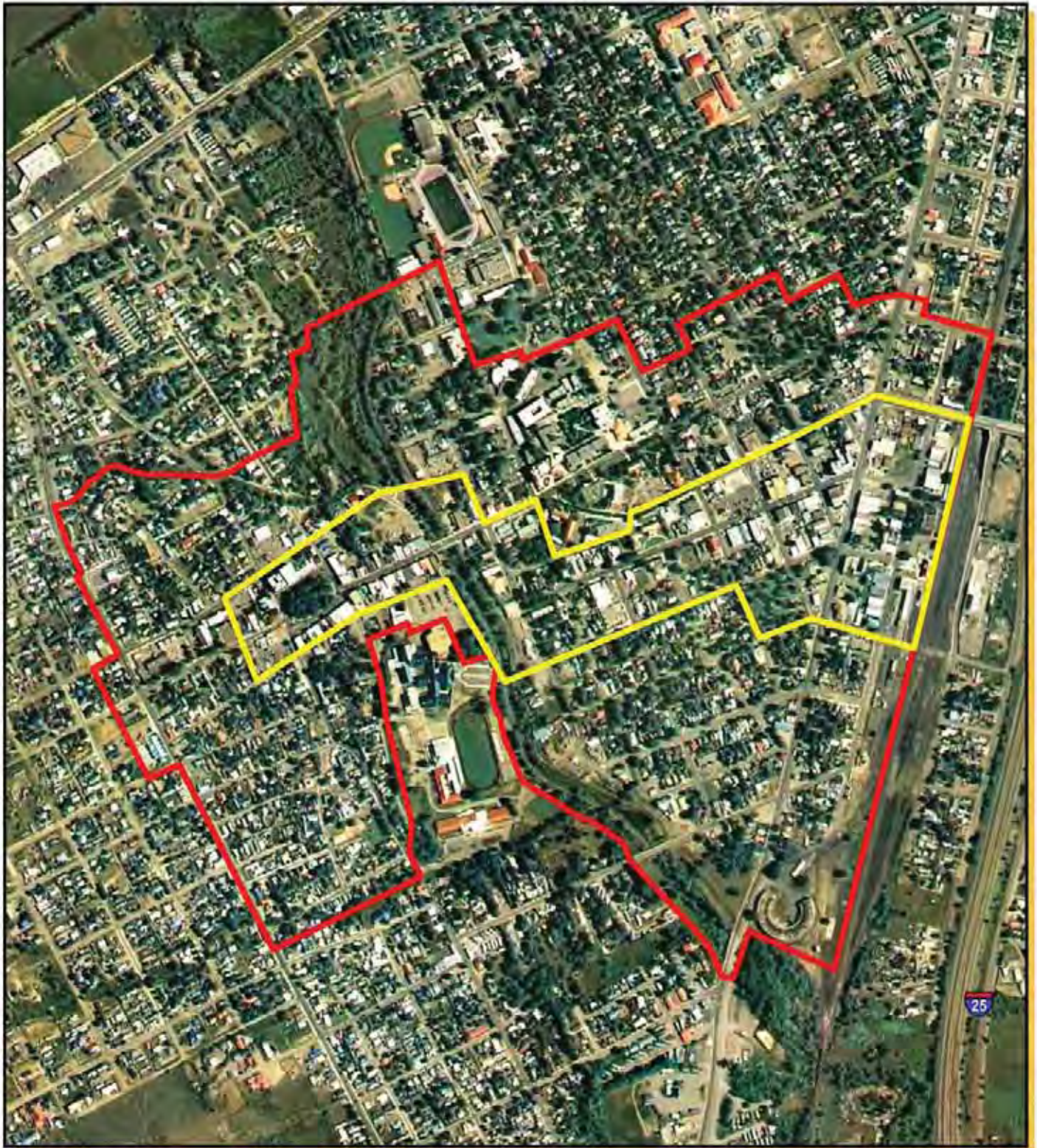
Map Date: February 17, 2010

B. Planning Framework



During the development of the Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan (LVDAP) previous and current city plans, policies, codes and programs should be taken into consideration. This subsection identifies and summarizes plans and related policies, public projects, and codes that impact the LVDAP Area, Vision Statement and Goals. As new information is gathered or new goals and objectives are identified further research on the planning framework may be necessary. The goals identified in the various plans, projects, policies and codes as well as many of the strategies, provide important support for the LVDAP vision and goals and sound direction for achieving them.

MainStreet Las Vegas

The City of Las Vegas became a certified MainStreet community with the New Mexico Mainstreet Division in 2005. This certification allowed the MainStreet Las Vegas organization to access resources and technical assistance from the State of NM. The MainStreet Las Vegas District is a corridor comprised of the Old Plaza area, Bridge Street, a segment of 12th St to Douglas Ave and then the segment of Grand Ave between University and Tilden and East Lincoln to the Historic Railroad Depot. As can be seen on the following exhibit, this 1.2 mile corridor encompasses many of the historic architectural treasures of Las Vegas, as well as the historic commercial center of the city.



Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan

-  Downtown Action Plan Boundary
-  MainStreet de Las Vegas Boundary



Map Date: July 22, 2018

Las Vegas Arts & Cultural District

Over the last decade Downtown Las Vegas has been through several planning efforts. Most recently, during 2008 and 2009, the downtown area was the focus of the New Mexico Main Street Arts and Cultural District Cultural Plan and Strategic Plan for an Arts & Culture Environment (SPACE). As a result of these planning efforts Las Vegas was named as one of two New Mexico municipalities approved as pilot cities under the New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Act. The act promotes implementation of a "...cohesive strategy with place-based arts and culture as an economic niche." Its intent is the enhancement of economies through local and state partnerships offering incentives and expertise necessary for the development of sustainable Arts and Cultural Districts.

Key findings and recommendations relevant to LVDAP:

Strategies:

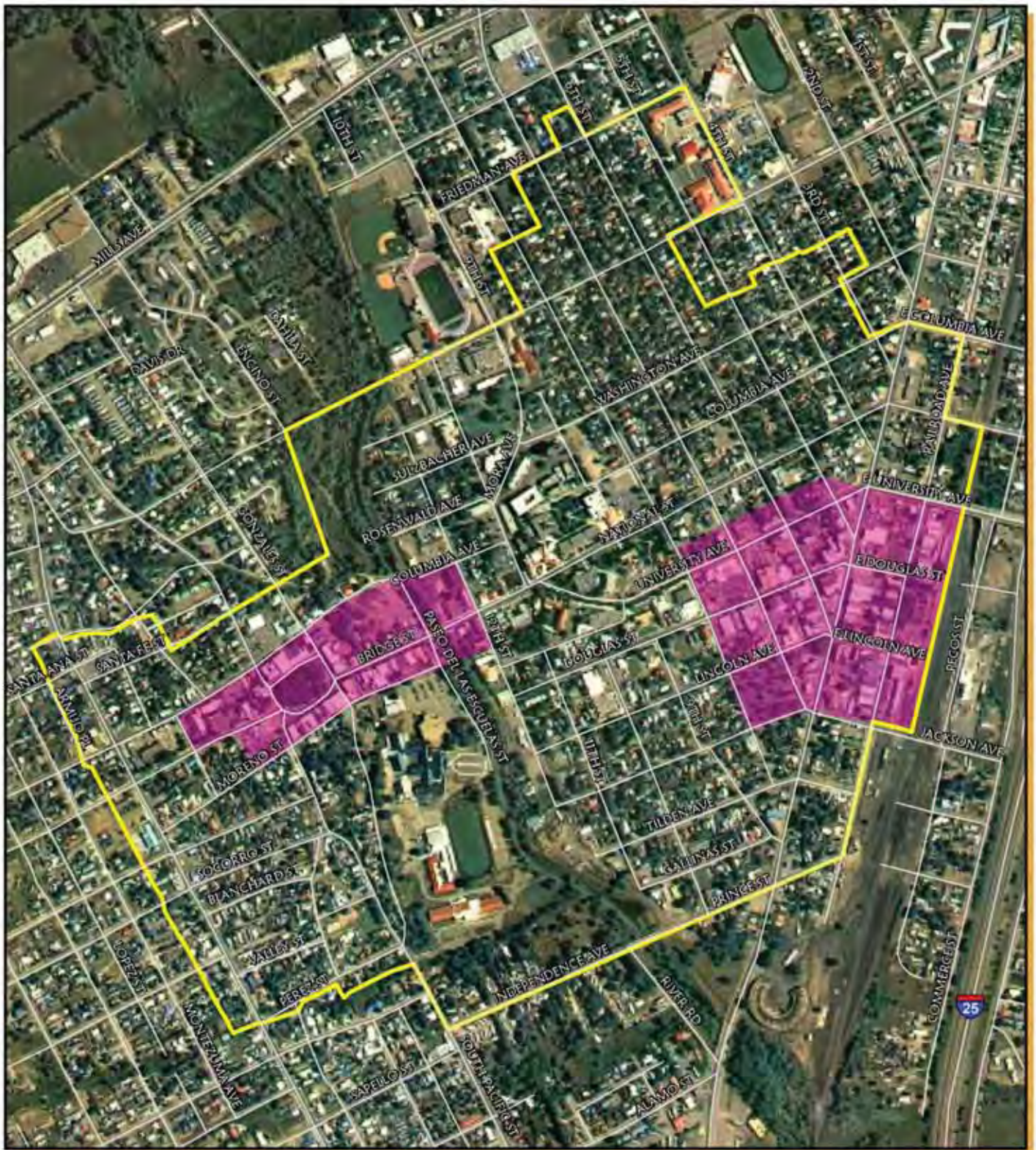
- Preserve, protect and promote our multiplicity of authentic cultural and artistic traditions.
- Celebrate the various histories and peoples of Las Vegas and the surrounding region.
- Build bridges between East and West, sacred and secular, traditional and contemporary, past and future.
- Develop rich artistic, cultural and economic opportunities for Las Vegas and its residents.
- Put Las Vegas on the map as a unique American cultural treasure.

Approaches and Tactics:

- Provide affordable physical and digital infrastructure to the local creative community
- Identify and implement working space and opportunities for exhibiting and/or performing work
- Develop an enterprise-zone style / general business environment
- Encourage and enable local property ownership
- Infrastructure Development
- Develop physical Infrastructure
- Initiate adaptive-reuse building renovations to create residential artist lofts
- Invest in the development of individual and co-op art studios

Funding mechanisms:

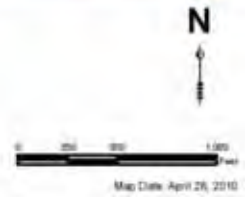
- Institute measures such as a Local Option Gross Receipts Tax increment (LOGRT) to support the district's development, a doubling of the state tax credit for rehabilitation of historic structures, and Quality of Life Tax to fund the district's ongoing operations.



Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan



- Arts and Cultural District Boundary
- ACD Phase 1 Service Areas



Railroad and Downtown Districts Initiative 2003-2005

In 2003, the City of Las Vegas launched the Railroad and Downtown Districts Initiative. The initiative was community-based planning effort to set the course for revitalizing the Grand Avenue corridor between East University and East Jackson Avenues, and the districts on each side of Grand – Downtown and the Railroad District. A graphic poster illustrates several key projects and identifies actions and partners for implementation. Many of the goals and recommendations that came out of this initiative are reiterated in the Vision Statement and Initial Goals of the LVDAP.

Key Findings and Recommendations relevant to LVDAP:

- Initiate a Grand Avenue street improvements project that includes traffic management, pedestrian, beautification and sign elements.
- Promote exterior and interior building rehabilitations.
- Stimulate in-fill development to fill the gaps along street fronts.
- Provide streetscape improvements that add beauty and function to the public space.
- Enhance parks and open space.
- Designate and reinforce a primary auto / pedestrian / transit route to link Railroad / Downtown to Old Town and NM Highlands University.
- Define gateways on and near Grand Avenue to serve as entryways to the Railroad and Downtown Districts, Las Vegas' historic core commercial areas and neighborhoods, and the greater community.
- Determine Las Vegas' housing priorities and pursue housing development in the Railroad and Downtown Districts to help fulfill University and community housing needs.
- Increase the supply of parking and improve the management of existing parking.
- Promote the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings to build the local economy.
- Ensure that the City zoning code encourages private property investment that fulfills the vision and goals of this plan.
- Use catalytic rehabilitation projects to boost the economy and stimulate further investment in the historic center.

The Railroad and Downtown Districts Initiative also proposed the following catalytic projects:

- Center Block

The Center Block provides the opportunity to reclaim landmark buildings and integrate them with new buildings to form a comprehensive block that connects Grand Avenue to the multi-modal transportation center. The block could incubate digital designers and other small businesses that capitalize on Las Vegas' wireless Internet technology.

- **Lincoln Avenue Live Work Building**

The modest building on the northeast corner of Lincoln and Railroad Avenues enjoys a great location across from Las Vegas' rehabilitated Depot. It could be converted into creative, affordable, live-work housing targeted to artists, artisans, designers and craftspeople who like the stimulation of a thriving, transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood.

- **City Hall**

The new City Hall at the former Safeway site will anchor the revitalization of downtown and solidify community identity and civic pride. City Hall employees and visitors will enjoy the productive and inspiring environment and will inject daily customer demand into the historic core. In addition to housing many key city departments, project plans include ample parking and for-lease office and retail space that complement the existing commercial mix.

- **Sixth Street Station**

The triangular site at the foot of Sixth Street offers strong potential for an inviting gateway that links Sixth Street to East Lincoln and Grand Avenues. A concept for reusing the old gas station as a café with outdoor seating illustrates how inexpensive reinvestment could turn an eyesore into an asset that the entire community could enjoy. Alternatively, this opportunity site could accommodate a more intensive restaurant or mixed-use development.

Douglas and Railroad Housing

Vacant lots, such as the 3/4-acre property at the northeast corner of Douglas and Railroad Avenues, provide infill sites for beautiful, mixed-income housing in walkable, traditional neighborhoods close to transit, and cultural, commercial, open space and civic uses.

Railroad Depot Rehabilitation

The City of Las Vegas realized an impressive rehabilitation of the historic (1899) Santa Fe Railroad depot several years ago at a cost of over \$1 million. The depot is multi-purpose facility that is the cornerstone of plans to revitalize the railroad district.

City of Las Vegas Community Master Plan 1997

The community master plan provides background on existing conditions, understanding of issues and recommends policies to enhance the quality of life, economic development, historic preservation and the provision of infrastructure for the entire city of Las Vegas. It acts as a framework for decision-makers and provides proactive tools to manage change and implement the community's vision for its future. It recognizes the DAP plan area as the heart of the community where all aspects of history have evolved in the presence of truly unique and rich architectural resources and urban development patterns.

Key Findings and Recommendations relevant to LVDP

Several policies and recommendations that deal with historic preservation, promotion and funding to provide improvements to the LVDAP area:

- Identifies and maps Gallinas River frontage, including portion that runs through the downtown, as a key open space area that can be used by developers to meet park dedication requirements.
- Explores potential amendments to the zoning ordinance that will contribute toward neighborhood protection and integrity.
- Amends C-2 zone to allow second story apartments above commercial or office stores.
- Inventory all city owned property to see where future potential housing development can take place. As part of inventory prioritize infill properties for housing.

Grand Ave. Improvements & MainStreet Las Vegas Streetscape Renovation Project

Based on the historic trolley route which ran from the depot to the Plaza Park, this project aims to provide economic growth and stability for the 102 businesses on the Corridor by welcoming travelers and directing them with signage and a cohesive streetscape plan. Phase One is the renovation of Grand Avenue, a state highway, between National and Tilden Avenues as a welcoming entry by calming traffic, adding xeric landscaping and period street furniture. New Mexico Department of Transportation District 4, has committed \$2.5 million dollars and scheduled major infrastructure and beautification improvements beginning Spring of 2009. MainStreet Las Vegas and the City of Las Vegas have hired an engineer and landscape architect to begin the design and planning process for the entire Corridor which includes Railroad, New Town/Douglas and OldTown/Plaza Park. The ultimate goal is to restore Las Vegas' Historic Downtown Corridor to a walkable, beautiful and unique destination.

New Mexico Highlands University Campus Master Plan Update 2010

NMHU recently drafted a campus master plan to assess existing facilities, maximize utilization of campus buildings, project future growth, and develop recommendations for phasing of future campus development. In addition to campus improvements, the master plan addresses the historic, cultural, economic and social aspirations of the surrounding community. The master plan shows a campus presence on Douglas Street by proposing property acquisition and collaborative redevelopment projects with private and public partners. It envisions mixed use development on the east of the bridge both north and south of the intersection of Douglas Avenue and 12th street, including parking and residential uses. Additionally, it seeks a connection between the campus and the Gallinas River and proposes a river recreation trail as well as transitional landscaping that enhance the natural landform and drainage of the river corridor.

Draft Las Vegas Commercial Design Guidelines

The City of Las Vegas in collaboration with Mainstreet has recently completed draft design guidelines to guide commercial redevelopment projects in the historic commercial areas. The central purpose for Commercial Building Design Guidelines is to facilitate the creation of more pedestrian oriented shopping districts and to help encourage restoration and rehabilitation of Las Vegas's historic building stock. The guidelines strive to maintain and enhance Las Vegas' unique architecture while balancing the needs of new development initiatives. It's anticipated that the Commercial Building Design Guidelines will assist Las Vegas in the development of financial incentives will be used more formally in buildings that are undergoing design review.

City of Las Vegas Zoning Ordinance 2008

The LVDAP area currently has seven separate zoning categories that regulate permitted uses, uses requiring Special Use Permit and specific development standards with respect to setback, building heights, density, etc. Most of the commercial development in the plan area is regulated under the C-2 Central Business District Zone with a few sub- areas and scattered lots regulated under the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone and C-3 General Commercial Zone. Most residential development in the plan area is regulated under the R-2 Multi-Family Residential Zone or R-3 Mixed Residential Zone. There are a few parcels with M-1 Light industrial Zoning located along the Gallinas River and adjacent to the railroad. In addition to the zoning districts mentioned above much of the planning area is also covered by the Cultural /Historical Overlay Zone. This zoning overlay requires proposed changes to the exterior of a building to be reviewed by the Design Review Board for compliance with design guidelines based on various architectural styles associated with a particular neighborhood or historic period.



×× **LVDAP General Zoning Districts*** ××

*For illustrative purposes only; this is not an official Zone Map.

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
|  M-1 Light Industrial Zone |  C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone |  C-3 General Commercial Zone |  M-3 Mixed Residential Zone |
|  M-2 Heavy Manufacturing Zone |  C-2 Central Business District Zone |  C-4 Mid-Density Residential Zone |  W-4 Residential Agricultural Zone |



C. Transportation

Transportation is the means by which we move people and goods within a community. Within the Las Vegas downtown area, numerous modes of transportation are utilized. The primary movers to and from the downtown area are passenger vehicles and trucks, though the local transit system helps with circulation and visitors may arrive via Amtrak at the railroad depot. Pedestrians and cyclists are numerous within central Las Vegas, and these modes provide destination mobility.

Roadways

The roadways facilitate transportation in the downtown area. These streets have wide driving lanes, and most have parking along each side of the road. The roadways have asphalt surfaces with curb, gutter and sidewalk, and most of the streets include a landscape buffer between the curb and the sidewalk. Some roadways, such as National Ave, have a raised median separating the two travel directions and the old town plaza area has one-way circulation around a large central plaza. While the wide roadways provide a good environment for motor vehicles and bicycles, they can be seen as impediments to pedestrians, especially at unsignalized intersections and crossings.

Traffic circulation within central Las Vegas can be problematic. The area with the greatest concern is Grand Ave between Lincoln Ave and National Ave. Each street intersecting Grand Ave within this 4-block area has alternating directional significance. Lincoln Ave primarily provides access to the Railroad Station east of Grand Ave. Douglas Ave provides access to the principal commercial area west of Grand Ave. University Ave provides access to I-25 east of Grand Ave and National Ave is the principal route to Highlands University and the Old Town Plaza west of Grand Ave. Each subsequent block provides access in alternate directions, and improvements in guide signing or wayfinding are required to provide positive guidance for community visitors.

Guide signing within the study area is poor in central Las Vegas. Guide signs are infrequent, and occasionally not placed to maximize their effectiveness. For instance, visitors exiting from I-25 wishing to explore Las Vegas, may have difficulty finding the numerous landmarks and interesting destinations in the city. A few examples of signing deficiencies include:

- There are no guide signs at any of the three interchanges that direct a motorist toward central Las Vegas and the plaza area. There are signs on the freeway, but no additional direction is provided as you approach the freeway ramp terminals.
- The University Ave interchange is indicated as the I-25 exit for Highlands University. At the end of each off ramp, no guide signing indicates which direction to turn, and when reaching Grand Ave (if the correct turn was made), there is no information on which way to proceed. In fact, though the interchange is called the “University Ave Interchange”, there are no street name signs that indicate the street being travelled is University Ave until a motorist has passed Grand Ave.
- The guide sign directing drivers to Highland University and the Old Town Plaza on southbound Grand Ave is located on the left side of Grand Ave where a driver must turn right at National Ave.

- New Mexico Ave has an informational sign that states “Historic Old Town Plaza” located approximately 3400 feet south of National Ave. An out-of-town visitor could be confused because there is no indication that this does not mark the location of the plaza. A directional arrow would help clarify that you must proceed north toward the plaza. A system of wayfinding signs should be developed to assist visitors and area residents in finding the many interesting destinations within the Las Vegas downtown area

Pedestrian Facilities

Most streets within the Downtown study area have sidewalks for pedestrians. Generally the sidewalk condition is good, though some deficiencies with cracking and heaving were noted. Many intersection deficiencies exist as curb ramps are infrequent outside of the commercial areas, and some ramps are missing within the commercial zones. The city has a walking/cycling trail along the Gallinas River which provides north-south mobility between Mills Ave and Prince St. The Old Town Plaza has a large central island with numerous sidewalks bisecting the area.

Bicycle Facilities

The Las Vegas downtown study area includes Highlands University, and this area experiences a significant amount of cycling traffic. Currently, there are no striped bicycle lanes on the streets and no bicycle route signs were noted within the study area. The Highlands University draft Master Plan has identified a number of bicycle routes for implementation. The width of downtown Las Vegas streets should facilitate the creation of bicycle lanes or signed bicycle routes on most of the roads if identified as strategic bicycle facilities.

Transit

Meadow City Express is a demand responsive service for the City of Las Vegas and the immediate surrounding area. The service is first come-first served. It is requested that service is ordered 24 hours in advance and the cost per trip is \$ 0.75 per boarding (\$ 1.50 per round trip), and multi-trip discount passes are available. Recurring rides may be scheduled in advance, and a schedule established. The transit service will accommodate disabled patrons. The service logs approximately 125,000 miles per year.

Transportation to Las Vegas from outside the local area is available via Amtrak rail service. Las Vegas is a stop on the “Southwest Chief” route with service between Chicago, IL and Los Angeles, CA. New Mexican cities served by this line include Albuquerque, Gallup and Raton. The train depot is located at the east end of Lincoln Ave, a short walk from Grand Ave and the Douglas Ave commercial areas. Amtrak provides one train daily in each direction to serve the Las Vegas area.

D. Market Study Assessment

Introduction

The following report reviews recent Las Vegas, NM market studies, and supplements them with current market conditions, and incorporates site visits and interviews with local businesses as an input into the Las Vegas, NM Downtown Action Plan. This market study assessment may be supplemented with additional information from prime and sub-consultants and revised for final publication in consultation with local steering committee to be approved by Las Vegas, NM city council, as appropriate, for the final Downtown Action plan. Information contained in this memorandum report may be incorporated into design charrette workshop on February 19-20 in Las Vegas, NM.

The City of Las Vegas, NM is currently undergoing a master planning process for its downtown, which was recently designated one of the first two pilot New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts in the state. The Las Vegas, NM Downtown Action plan will define the boundaries of the Arts and Cultural District, as well as authorize a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. These state designated areas bring several benefits, including financial support for local community-based planning, statewide co-operative marketing opportunities with other arts and cultural districts, and enhanced historic and redevelopment tax incentives for economic development. Based on the market study assessment and the master plan community planning process, the Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan will include strategic recommendations for plan implementation. This market study assessment and recommendations outlined in this report should be seen as a work in progress that will be informed by future community research and strategy development at the public design charrette in February 2010.

This report contains the following sections

- **Regional and Downtown Context**, including overview of housing and economic trends affecting the downtown
- **Downtown Business Profile**, including mix of downtown businesses and competitive context
- **Resident Market**, including population, educational attainment and occupational profile
- **Visitor Market**, including overnight, pass-through and day trip visitors and profile of local attractions
- **Downtown Analysis and Preliminary Recommendations**

Assumptions

This study is based on estimates, assumptions and other information developed by ConsultEcon, Inc. from their independent research efforts, general knowledge of the industry, and consultations with the client and community stakeholders. No responsibility is assumed for inaccuracies in reporting by the client, its agents and representatives, or any other data source used in the preparation of this study. Outputs of computer models used in this report may be rounded. These outputs may therefore slightly affect totals and summaries. This report was prepared during the period September 2009 through February 2010. It represents data available at that time.

Regional and Downtown Context

Las Vegas is located in New Mexico, approximately a 60-minute drive east of Santa Fe, the state capitol. **Figure 1** is a map of New Mexico and identifies the location of Las Vegas. Las Vegas has a population of 13,700 and is the county seat of San Miguel County. San Miguel County is largely rural, with significant amount of natural lands. Las Vegas is a gateway community to the Santa Fe national forest, which offers numerous outdoor recreational opportunities. Las Vegas is located near Santa Fe Scenic Trail, one of New Mexico's many scenic routes, and close to the Highway 66 Scenic Trail. Storrie Lake State Park is located near Las Vegas and offers fishing, wildlife and picnicking recreation. Las Vegas is an eastern gateway to the Santa Fe National Forest, which had an estimated 1.3 million forest visits in 2006. There is also the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge near the City.

Transportation and Accessibility

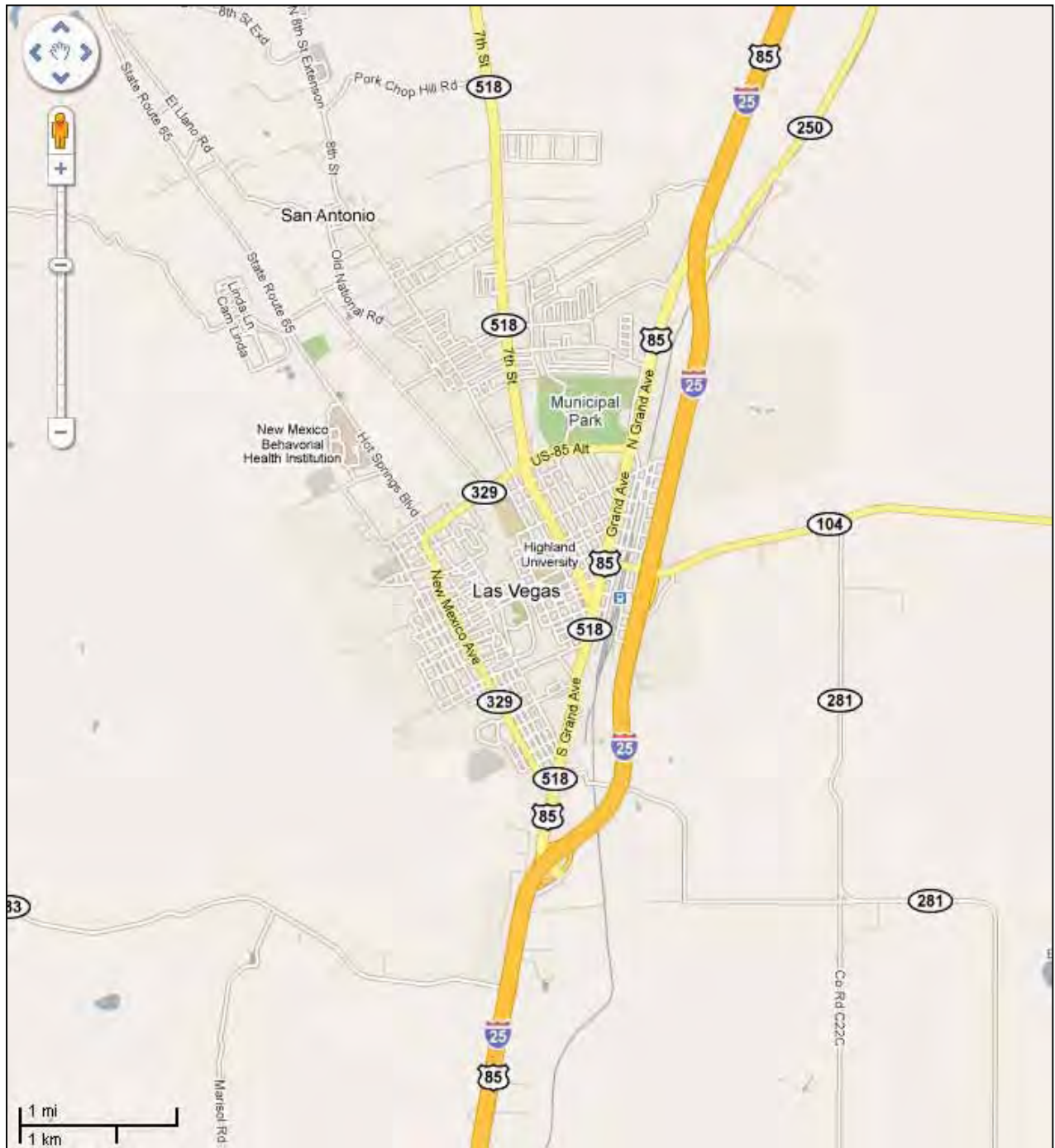
Las Vegas is located along U.S. Interstate 25 and therefore is exposed to pass through traffic. **Figure 2** is a road map of Las Vegas. **Figure 3** is a map that identifies the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on various roadways through Las Vegas. There were approximately 6,000 AADT on Interstate 25 and up to 13,700 AADT on segments of Grand Ave., which parallels the interstate. There are a number of important gateways into the downtown, but access is largely through commercial corridors, such as Grand Ave. Las Vegas is highly walkable and there are opportunities for development of pedestrian trails, especially along the river. River related development would help build literal bridges between a long-term physical and community divide.

In general, Las Vegas is highly visible, given its location on the interstate and state highway. Improvements in signage to and through important destinations and corridors will enhance community / downtown / arts and cultural district identity.

Figure 1: Road Map of New Mexico

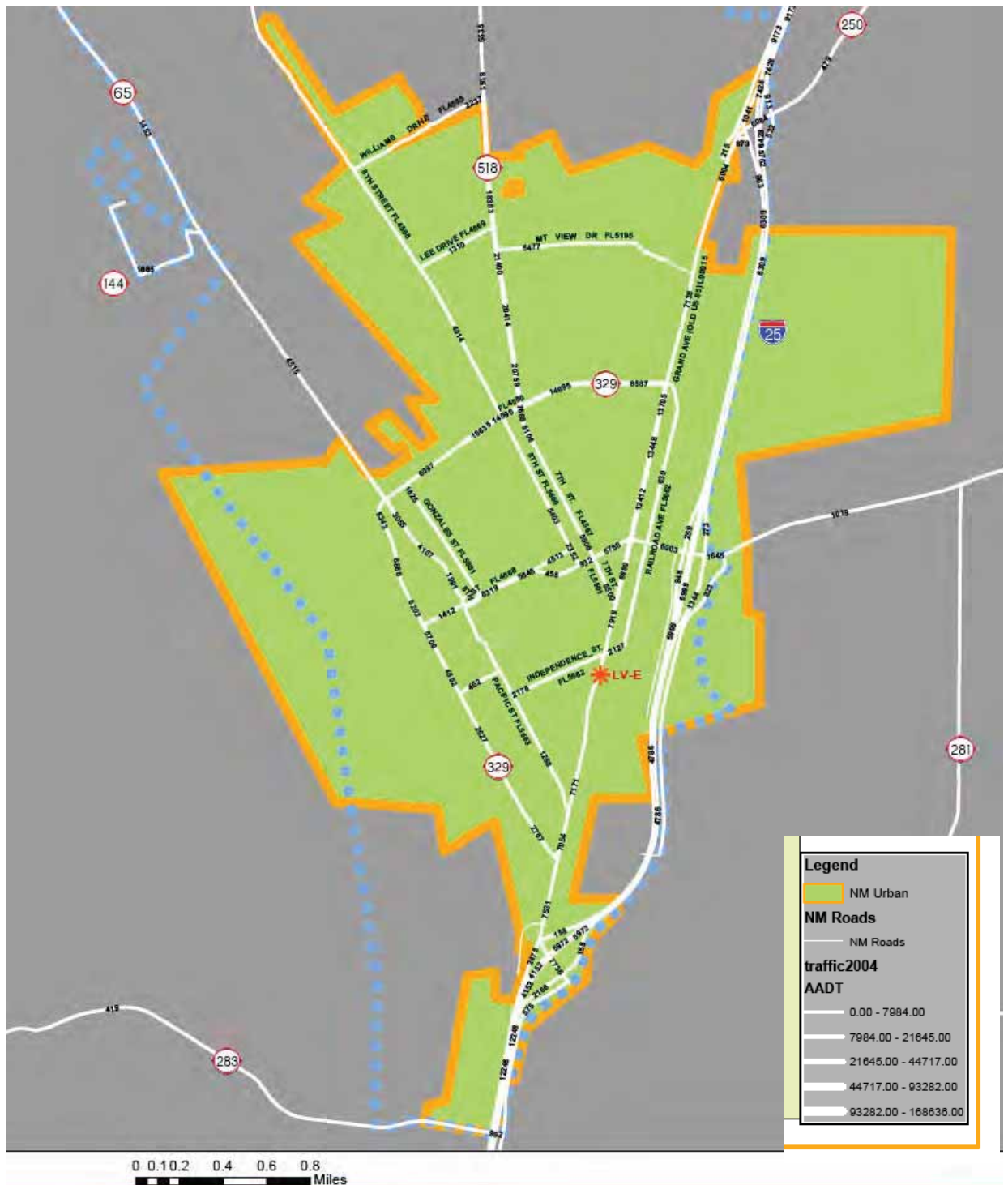


Figure 2: Road Map of Las Vegas, NM



Source: Google Maps.

Figure 3: Las Vegas, NM 2004 AADT Map



Source: New Mexico Department of Transportation.

Regional and Downtown Economic Trends

The most recent economic report in Las Vegas was completed in 2006. The current economic recession that began in late 2007 has translated to a higher unemployment rate in the U.S., New Mexico, and Las Vegas. Most regular consumer expenditures occur at the Wal-Mart, which generates more automobile trips outside Las Vegas. New development has occurred primarily on corridors outside downtown. New development is more suburban-style, strip development. According to a local real estate broker, new retail development is achieving lease rates up to \$18 per square foot in new developments outside of downtown compared to \$4 to \$7 downtown. As the central place in the region, retail and service businesses attract a significant share of consumer spending.

According to Main Street Las Vegas, several property owners and businesses have made an estimated \$7.6 million in capital improvements in the downtown, in addition to \$5.5 million in property acquisition. However, there are signs of persistent building neglect that create a difficult business environment for neighboring businesses. A vacant building recently fell down in the Douglas district, creating a potential public hazard.

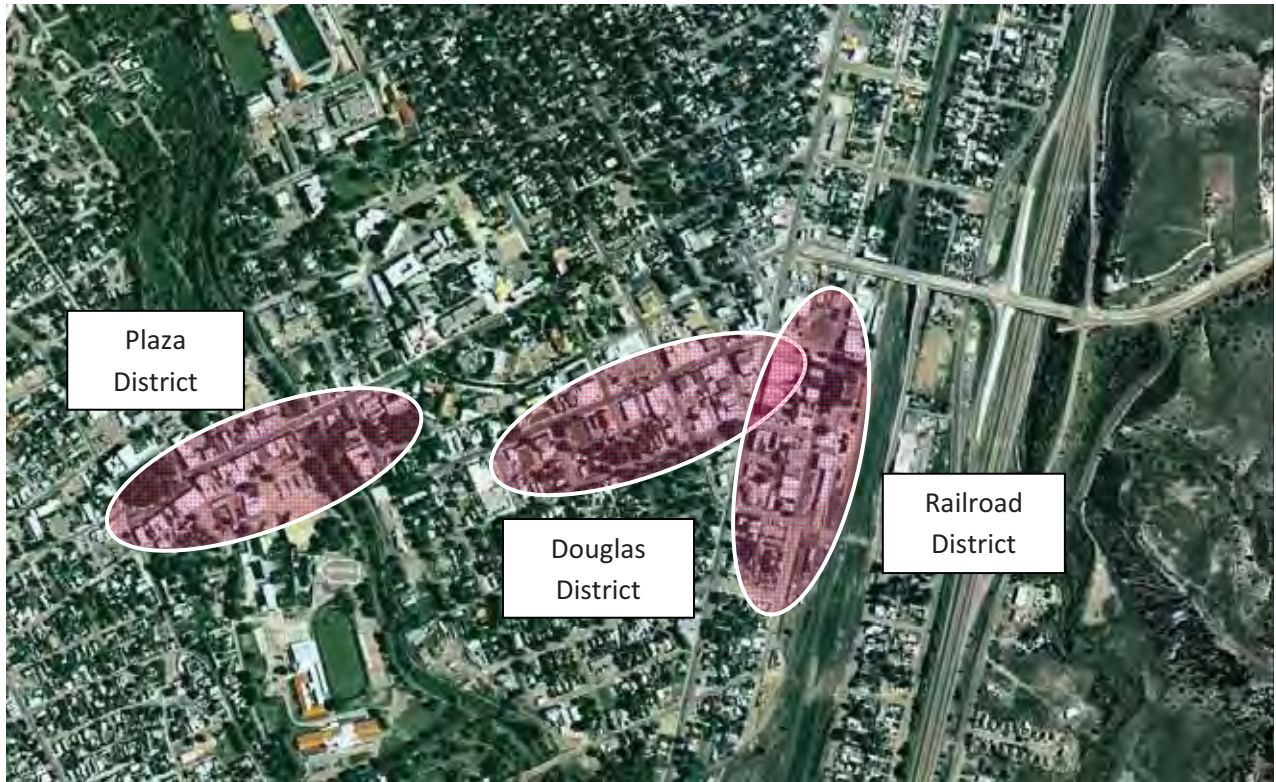
Downtown Anchors

While located in a rural setting, like many New Mexico cities, Las Vegas' historic building stock, mix of residential and commercial uses, and dense urban fabric create a unique setting, as several recent films have showcased. Several City and County administration agencies and Highlands University are located in downtown Las Vegas. These major employers generate daytime activity through employment of downtown workers.

Main Street Corridor

Las Vegas, NM contains three general commercial areas within the Main Streets area. Main Street Las Vegas, a non-profit downtown revitalization organization that follows National Trust of Historic Preservation's Main Street Program. For the purposes of this evaluation, these areas are referred to as the Plaza District, Douglas District and Railroad District. **Figure 4** is an aerial photograph that identifies each of the downtown districts.

Figure 4: Aerial Photograph of Downtown Las Vegas, NM



Source: Google Maps.

Plaza District

The Plaza District is an important tourism magnet in Las Vegas. The Plaza Hotel recently expanded from 36 to 72 rooms and added an event facility with that can accommodate up to 300 for a sit-down dinner. This expansion and recent redevelopment of adjacent buildings, which are not as yet occupied, will enliven the public space and enhance the Plaza’s business environment. The Plaza district includes restaurants and a theater, important elements of an entertainment area. One potential opportunity site is to create an outdoor marketplace and festival area adjacent to the district and the river park. There are some vacant storefronts in the district; however, most vacant buildings are secure and do not appear to pose a public hazard.

Douglas District

The Douglas District has a vibrant daytime business community and is a key community destination for retail and services. There are multiple bank branches, Charlie’s Spic and Span restaurant, furniture, home furnishings, paint, carpeting, and antiques stores, among others. The district, however, faces vacancy challenges. The Safeway site is an important parking lot, as well as development opportunity. A new development opportunity is presented by the emerging U7 coalition that has focused on developing a community arts and education center at a vacant church in the Douglas District.

Railroad District

The Railroad District is across from Grand Ave. from the Douglas District. (Grand Ave. is slated for redevelopment by the New Mexico Department of Transportation). Railroad Street forms the spine of the district and is parallel to Grand Ave. The Las Vegas visitor center is located in the recently restored, historic depot building. Amtrak stops at the station twice daily. The district contains several restaurants, antiques and gift stores, and a number of services, including automotive and appliance repair shops. The Las Vegas Museum is also located in the District.

Housing

According to the BBER report, which was based primarily on Census data, the housing market in Las Vegas was under intense speculative pressure between 1990 and 2000, with large increases in price, and a reduction in the proportion of owner-occupied housing. Since 2000, the nation has experienced an unprecedented rise in housing prices followed by severe price declines that has been coupled with an economic recession beginning in late 2007. While the economy and housing market are showing signs of recovery, housing prices are still declining nationwide.

Data in **Table 1** profile housing units in Las Vegas and downtown, including occupied and vacant units and owner- and renter-occupied units. Data in **Table 2** show the value of owner-occupied housing units. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of housing units increased 1.9 percent to 6,488 units in Las Vegas and 4.1 percent to 736 units in the downtown. Downtown contained 11 percent of the housing stock citywide. Over the same period, the number of vacant housing units increased from 778 to 976 in the City and from 103 to 163 downtown. Downtown contained 16.7 percent of the city's vacant units. An estimated 22 percent of units were vacant downtown compared to 15 percent in the city and 7.9 percent in the county and 16.4 percent statewide. In 2009, 56 percent of downtown units were owner occupied, a rate lower than comparable city, county, and state levels. This reflects young adult population downtown driven by Highlands University. In 2000, most contract rents were below \$400 per month. In 2009, the median value of owner-occupied housing was estimated at \$126,000, 57 percent increase from 2000. The median value rose more citywide than in the downtown.

Table 1: Housing Units and Occupancy, 2000 Census and 2009 Estimates

	Downtown Las Vegas			City of Las Vegas			San Miguel County			State of New Mexico		
	2000	2009	% Change, 2000-2009	2000	2009	% Change, 2000-2009	2000	2009	% Change, 2000-2009	2000	2009	% Change, 2000-2009
Total Housing Units	707	736	4.1%	6,366	6,488	1.9%	14,254	15,016	5.3%	780,579	905,330	16.0%
Total Occupied	604	573	-5.1%	5,588	5,512	-1.4%	11,134	11,649	4.6%	677,971	785,869	15.9%
Owner Occupied	340	321	-5.6%	3,554	3,586	0.9%	8,142	8,485	4.2%	474,445	549,681	15.9%
Percent Owner Occupied	56.3%	56.0%	-0.5%	63.6%	65.1%	2.3%	73.1%	72.8%	-0.4%	70.0%	69.9%	0.0%
Renter Occupied	264	252	-4.5%	2,034	1,926	-5.3%	2,992	3,164	5.7%	203,526	236,188	16.0%
Percent Renter Occupied	43.7%	44.0%	0.6%	36.4%	34.9%	-4.0%	26.9%	27.2%	1.1%	30.0%	30.1%	0.1%
Total Vacant	103	163	58.3%	778	976	25.4%	3,120	3,367	7.9%	102,608	119,461	16.4%
Percent Vacant	14.6%	22.1%	52.0%	12.2%	15.0%	23.1%	21.9%	22.4%	2.4%	13.1%	13.2%	0.4%

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing, 2009 ESRI forecasts, and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Table 2: Housing Values, 2000 Census and 2009 Estimates

	Downtown Las Vegas			City of Las Vegas		
	2000	2009	% Change	2000	2009	% Change
Total Owner Occupied Housing Unit	340	321	-5.6%	3,554	3,586	0.9%
Median Value	\$79,878	\$125,915	57.6%	\$80,460	\$128,952	60.3%
Average Value	\$86,008	\$135,164	57.2%	\$80,137	\$137,494	71.6%
<i>Percent of Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value</i>						
Less than \$50,000	24.3%	9.7%		26.1%	14.7%	
\$50,000 to \$99,999	58.0%	25.9%		53.1%	18.6%	
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5.5%	39.1%		12.4%	35.4%	
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6.7%	11.9%		6.7%	16.4%	
\$200,000 to \$249,999	1.4%	3.4%		0.3%	6.9%	
\$250,000 to \$499,000	4.1%	9.7%		1.4%	6.8%	
\$500,000 and above	0.0%	0.3%		0.0%	1.1%	

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing, 2009 ESRI forecasts, and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Downtown Business Profile

Data in **Table 3** and **Table 4** profile downtown business mix, as well as sub-sectors accommodations, food service, retail and other services in Main Street Las Vegas directory. BBER estimated 25 percent of businesses located in downtown in 2004. There were a total of 97 establishments in downtown, a decline from 106 in 1995. According to Main Street Las Vegas, there were 97 businesses in the district in 2004, the same number of businesses as in the BBER report. In 2008, there were 46 retailers (47% of total), 19 services (20%), 17 restaurants (18%) and 2 hotels. Between 2004 and 2008, the number of service businesses increased from 4 to 19. Over the same period, the number of retailers doubled. This business mix reflects the consumer-orientation of the business directory. Additional businesses may be present in professional, scientific and technical services, educational services, health services and wholesale trade, as indicated by 2004 business mix in the BBER report.

Table 3: Main Streets Business Mix, 2008 Downtown Las Vegas, NM

NAICS	Sector	Downtown							
		1995	% to Total	2004	% to Total	2008	% to Total	% change. 1995-2008	% change. 2004-2008
44-45	Retail trade	15	14.2%	23	23.7%	46	47.4%	206.7%	100.0%
72	Accommodations & Food Services	7	6.6%	11	11.3%	19	19.6%	171.4%	72.7%
61	<i>Educational Services</i>	3	2.8%	9	9.3%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	5	4.7%	9	9.3%	2	2.1%	-60.0%	-77.8%
42	<i>Wholesale trade</i>	2	1.9%	7	7.2%	1	1.0%	-50.0%	-85.7%
54	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	14	13.2%	7	7.2%	1	1.0%	-92.9%	-85.7%
52	Finance & Insurance	3	2.8%	4	4.1%	4	4.1%	33.3%	0.0%
81	Other Services	11	10.4%	4	4.1%	19	19.6%	72.7%	375.0%
23	Construction	20	18.9%	3	3.1%	1	1.0%	-95.0%	-66.7%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	1	0.9%	3	3.1%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%
51	<i>Information</i>	3	2.8%	3	3.1%	1	1.0%	-66.7%	-66.7%
71	<i>Arts, Entertainment and Recreation</i>	0	0.0%	3	3.1%	1	1.0%	NC	-66.7%
22	<i>Utilities</i>	2	1.9%	2	2.1%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%
31-33	Manufacturing	2	1.9%	2	2.1%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%
53	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	1	0.9%	2	2.1%	1	1.0%	0.0%	-50.0%
55	<i>Mgt of Companies</i>	2	1.9%	2	2.1%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%
56	Administrative & Support Services	7	6.6%	2	2.1%	1	1.0%	-85.7%	-50.0%
92	Public Administration	7	6.6%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	NC	NC
21	Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	NC	NC
99	Other	1	0.9%		0.0%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	NC
	Total	106	100.0%	97	100.0%	97	100.0%	-8.5%	0.0%

Source: UNM-BBER and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Table 4: Mix of Accommodations, Restaurants, Retail and Services, 2008
Downtown Las Vegas, NM

NAICS Sector	Establishments	Percent to Total
722 Food services and drinking places	17	17.5%
721 Accommodation	2	2.1%
Total Accommodations and Food	19	19.6%
453 Miscellaneous store retailers	20	20.6%
448 Clothing and clothing accessories stores	8	8.2%
444 Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	4	4.1%
446 Health and personal care stores	3	3.1%
451 Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores	3	3.1%
445 Food and beverage stores	2	2.1%
443 Electronics and appliance stores	2	2.1%
442 Furniture and home furnishings stores	2	2.1%
441 Motor vehicle and parts dealers	1	1.0%
452 General merchandise stores	1	1.0%
447 Gasoline stations	0	0.0%
454 Nonstore retailers	0	0.0%
Total Retail	46	47.4%
812 Personal & laundry services	11	11.3%
811 Repair & maintenance	5	5.2%
813 Religious / grantmaking / civic / professional & similar org	3	3.1%
Total Services	19	19.6%
Other Sectors	13	13.4%
Total	97	100.0%

Source: Las Vegas Main Streets and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Residential Market

Data in **Table 5** present population and demographic information. In 2009, the City's population was estimated at 13,700 persons, a decline since 2000. As a whole, San Miguel County contained an estimated 29,900 persons in 2009. The Downtown has an estimated 1,600 residents, or approximately 12 percent of the City population. In general the population downtown is younger and lives in smaller households, earns more per capita than the remainder of the City's population and those living in the county outside of the City.

Table 5: Selected Population and Demographic Indicators, 2009
Downtown Las Vegas, City of Las Vegas, San Miguel County and State of New Mexico

Indicator	Downtown	Remainder Las Vegas	Remainder County	City	County	State
Population	1,594	12,080	16,253	13,674	29,927	2,058,296
Median Age	28.2	NC	NC	34.9	36.1	35.5
Total under 20	419	3,290	4,711	3,709	8,420	419
Percent under 18	26.3%	27.2%	29.0%	27.1%	28.1%	0.0%
Total over 65	194	1,678	1,793	1,872	3,665	249,548
Percent over 65	12.2%	13.9%	11.0%	13.7%	12.2%	12.1%
Households	573	4,939	6,137	5,512	11,649	785,869
Average Household Size	2.08	NC	NC	2.33	2.46	2.56
Families	303	3,074	4,176	3,377	7,553	519,050
% Families	52.9%	62.2%	68.0%	61.3%	64.8%	66.0%
Median Household Income	\$32,826	NC	NC	\$31,927	\$34,009	\$44,681
Average Household Income	\$41,333	\$41,042	\$45,812	\$41,072	\$43,569	\$58,045
Per Capita Income	\$18,050	\$16,780	\$17,298	\$17,221	\$17,590	\$22,470
Aggregate Household Income	\$23,683,809	\$202,705,055	\$281,146,417	\$226,388,864	\$507,535,281	\$45,615,766,105

NC = Not Calculated.

Source: ESRI and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Educational Attainment

Data in **Table 6** show population by educational attainment in 2009. One third of city population has received an associate’s degree or higher, which is slightly higher than the statewide percentage. The rate of advanced education is even higher among downtown residents.

Table 6: Population 25+ by Educational Attainment, 2009
Downtown Las Vegas, City of Las Vegas, San Miguel County and State of New Mexico

	Downtown	Remainder Las Vegas	Remainder County	City	County	State
Total	881	7,849	10,526	8,730	19,256	1,317,379
Less than 9th Grade	7.8%	10.5%	11.3%	10.2%	10.8%	8.3%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	10.2%	11.5%	11.9%	11.4%	11.7%	10.1%
High School Graduate	24.0%	25.7%	28.6%	25.5%	27.2%	28.0%
Some College, No Degree	15.9%	20.7%	20.4%	20.2%	20.3%	21.6%
Associate Degree	8.7%	8.1%	7.1%	8.2%	7.6%	7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	19.9%	13.4%	11.7%	14.1%	12.8%	14.3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	13.5%	10.2%	9.0%	10.5%	9.7%	10.6%

Source: ESRI and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Labor Force

Data in **Table 7** show the occupational profile of the downtown, city, county and state. Approximately 67 percent of employed Downtown resident population over 16 was employed in the services, higher than state percentage of 52 percent. The second highest employing industry is retail trade at 16 percent of the employed Downtown resident population. The city contains a greater proportion of retail workers than the state as a whole, which indicates that Las Vegas is the central place in the region and is an important destination for the provision of goods and services. By occupation, the City of Las Vegas has a greater proportion of “White Collar” and services workers than the state and the county.

Table 7: Employed Population 16+ by Industry and by Occupation, 2009
Downtown Las Vegas, City of Las Vegas, San Miguel County and State of New Mexico

Indicator	Downtown	Remainder Las Vegas	Remainder County	City	County	State
<i>2009 Employed Population 16+ by Industry</i>						
Total	692	5,033	7,107	5,725	12,832	883,176
Agriculture/Mining	2.2%	0.8%	3.0%	1.0%	2.1%	2.9%
Construction	4.6%	7.2%	10.3%	6.9%	8.8%	8.5%
Manufacturing	0.4%	0.9%	1.5%	0.8%	1.2%	3.9%
Wholesale Trade	0.4%	1.0%	1.8%	0.9%	1.4%	2.4%
Retail Trade	16.0%	13.2%	9.3%	13.5%	11.2%	11.0%
Transportation/Utilities	0.9%	2.3%	3.4%	2.1%	2.8%	4.3%
Information	0.0%	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%	0.9%	1.9%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	3.6%	3.6%	3.8%	3.6%	3.7%	5.2%
Services	66.8%	61.5%	55.1%	62.1%	58.2%	52.0%
Public Administration	5.1%	8.6%	10.7%	8.2%	9.6%	7.9%
<i>2009 Employed Population 16+ by Occupation</i>						
Total	694	5,028	7,110	5,722	12,832	883,176
White Collar	67.9%	62.8%	56.4%	63.4%	59.5%	60.3%
Management/Business/Financial	6.5%	8.4%	10.5%	8.2%	9.5%	11.0%
Professional	35.4%	30.3%	25.3%	30.9%	27.8%	25.6%
Sales	10.5%	10.6%	8.3%	10.6%	9.3%	10.6%
Administrative Support	15.4%	13.4%	12.3%	13.6%	12.9%	13.1%
Services	20.2%	23.3%	24.7%	22.9%	23.9%	19.2%
Blue Collar	12.0%	14.0%	18.9%	13.8%	16.6%	20.5%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.4%	0.2%	1.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.9%
Construction/Extraction	3.2%	6.0%	8.4%	5.7%	7.2%	7.3%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	3.5%	3.8%	2.9%	3.8%	3.3%	3.9%
Production	0.0%	1.4%	2.5%	1.2%	1.9%	3.5%
Transportation/Material Moving	4.9%	2.6%	3.8%	2.9%	3.4%	4.8%

Source: ESRI and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Consumer Expenditures

Data in **Table 8** show estimated consumer expenditures by downtown, city and county residents. In 2009, total spending in retail category by residents in county total \$184 million.

Table 8: Consumer Expenditures by Category, 2009
Ranked by Total by City Category

Category	Downtown	Remainder Las Vegas	Remainder County	City	County
Retail Goods	\$8,452,661	\$72,544,845	\$103,273,659	\$80,997,506	\$184,271,165
Shelter	\$5,079,983	\$43,668,442	\$57,504,292	\$48,748,425	\$106,252,717
Food at Home	\$1,612,668	\$13,755,441	\$18,715,131	\$15,368,109	\$34,083,240
Health Care	\$1,356,985	\$11,339,806	\$16,523,502	\$12,696,791	\$29,220,293
Food Away from Home	\$1,156,977	\$9,777,856	\$13,325,438	\$10,934,833	\$24,260,271
Entertainment/Recreation	\$1,095,024	\$9,141,115	\$13,433,211	\$10,236,139	\$23,669,350
Household Furnishings & Equip	\$629,776	\$5,450,601	\$7,689,586	\$6,080,377	\$13,769,963
Apparel & Services	\$605,009	\$5,130,153	\$6,832,279	\$5,735,162	\$12,567,441
Travel	\$576,375	\$4,868,813	\$7,023,550	\$5,445,188	\$12,468,738
TV/Video/Sound Equipment	\$431,918	\$3,614,147	\$4,926,960	\$4,046,065	\$8,973,025
Investments	\$426,691	\$3,473,911	\$6,244,157	\$3,900,602	\$10,144,759
Education	\$443,903	\$3,396,739	\$4,285,238	\$3,840,642	\$8,125,880
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs	\$324,888	\$2,753,135	\$3,897,695	\$3,078,023	\$6,975,718
Computers & Accessories	\$79,716	\$647,298	\$887,242	\$727,014	\$1,614,256

Note: Categories not mutually exclusive.

Source: ESRI and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Downtown Workers

The BBER report indicates that downtown contained 33 percent of City employment in 2004. City employment was estimated at 5,725 employed in 2009. If same proportion holds true today, there would be an estimated 1,888 downtown workers. Downtown workers are largely residents of the City and County, though there is some indication that workers, especially at Highlands University, may be commuting from other areas, such as Santa Fe. These workers represent a daytime market for downtown businesses.

Visitor Market

Las Vegas has day trip and overnight visitors, of which a large share is likely from other parts of New Mexico and adjacent states. The United World College, an international preparatory school located outside of Las Vegas, draws young people and other visitors from international places.

Day Trips and Pass-Through Tourists

Las Vegas is close to New Mexico's largest population centers and highly accessible from Interstate 25. Albuquerque, the largest New Mexico metropolitan area, is 2-hour drive time and the Santa Fe the state capitol is 1-hour drive time. Pass through visitors often need just services, but rely on local wayfinding and signage to navigate to interesting sites if time is permitting. The Las Vegas Visitor Center had an estimated 5,800 walk-in visitors in FY 2009, a decline from an estimated 11,200 visitors in FY 2008. It is unclear what led to the decline in the number of walk-in visitors at the visitor center.

Overnight Visitors

Many overnight visitors will be visiting friends and relatives that live in Las Vegas and San Miguel County. Other overnight visitors stay in Las Vegas' hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, RV/mobile parks and campgrounds. There are a reported 500 rooms within Las Vegas Area. There are 2 hotel properties in the downtown. The Plaza Hotel recently expanded from 36 to 72 rooms and added an event space for up to 300. The other downtown hotel, El Fidel has 7 rooms for overnight stays (most rooms are for long-term rentals) and is located in the Douglas District.

Visiting Family and Relatives (VFR)

People visiting friends and relatives often stay in family and friend homes, but sometimes in paid overnight accommodations. The number of tourists visiting friends and family are generally in a range of ratios between 0.5 and 2 persons per local resident annually. A conservative assumption is that there is one VFR per local resident, indicating approximately 30,000 VFR's in San Miguel County every year. The downtown should be a place that local residents want to bring friends and family who may be visiting them.

Local Attractions and Events

Las Vegas has several local attractions in addition to the Storrie Lake State Park, Fort Union National Monument and the Santa Fe National Forest that are in the greater Las Vegas area. Located in the downtown, the Las Vegas Museum receives an estimated 3,200 annual visitors. The Second Saturday Artwalk initiated through Las Vegas' designation as a State of New Mexico Arts & Cultural District, occurs each month sponsored by MainStreet Las Vegas, and has an estimated 100 to 150 participants including shops, galleries and restaurants on the MSLV Corridor as well as artist studios throughout town. The most attended local event is the Rough Rider Motorcycle Rally, which draws an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 attendees. The Las Vegas Arts Council hosts a number of events in the Las Vegas area that draw anywhere from 50 to 600 attendees.

Synthesis and Preliminary Recommendations

As a destination, the Las Vegas downtown has both resident markets and tourist markets. The downtown competes for spending in the resident market with other shopping centers in the Las Vegas area. The downtown competes for tourist market spending with other local market areas with tourists, including Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and other destinations in New Mexico. Following is an evaluation of the competitive context for Las Vegas downtown businesses by market segment.

- **Competition for local retail and services expenditures** - Downtown retail businesses compete with businesses in newer and larger buildings, with parking lots outside of downtown for local resident and tourist expenditures. Las Vegas is projected to have a stable population over the next 5 years. Therefore, local businesses compete for the same customer base of expenditures. There is some churn in the resident market due to new students and employees of Highlands University.
- **Competition for pass-through expenditures** - New Mexico scenic byways are an important tourism activity generator in New Mexico. Las Vegas competes with Santa Fe, Pecos, and Raton for visitors passing through New Mexico on the Interstate. In addition, Las Vegas is on the Santa Fe Heritage Trail Scenic Byway, an important tourism asset.
- **Competition for New Mexico resident tourism expenditures** - New Mexico's growing population creates a larger market from tourist expenditures. Most of New Mexico's population is located in Albuquerque and Santa Fe metropolitan areas, both of which are within an easy day trip of Las Vegas. Unlike Las Vegas, these areas of New Mexico are projected to grow in population between 2009 and 2014. Competition for day-trip market (mostly New Mexico residents) will require visitors to come for a half-day or longer. Events are a good day trip opportunity if adequately marketed to appropriate audiences in other cities in New Mexico.
- **Competition for other U.S. domestic and international tourism expenditures** - Tourists take scenic byways to explore New Mexico's unique natural and cultural heritage through national parks, monuments, forests, tribal lands, varied rural Main Street communities that offer them authentic experiences. Tourist volume is down nationwide and the same is true in New Mexico.

Based on a review of downtown economic trends, business mix, resident and visitor market context, a SWOT analysis was prepared.

Strengths

- Well-educated resident population with three educational institutions: Highlands University, Luna Community College, and United World College
- Central place for county and region
- Historical authenticity and integrity of downtown building stock
- Vibrant daytime worker population and educational campus
- Tourist destination, primarily the Plaza and pass-through traffic
- Local convenience and destination goods center at Grant and Douglas

Weaknesses

- Stable resident population
- High level of residential and commercial vacancy
- Economic recession creates difficult business environment

Opportunities

- Momentum around opportunity site, especially U7 project
- Historic preservation and redevelopment of other key sites
- Arts and cultural district designation and Metropolitan Redevelopment Area creation

Threats

- Economic recession affecting state and local government revenues and budgets
- Grand Avenue transportation improvements create unfriendly pedestrian crossings and potential to divide downtown neighborhoods
- Continued suburbanization of housing, institutions, and commerce out of downtown

Gaps and Business Opportunities

Industrial and business gaps are difficult to deduce due to data source inconsistencies. While more population is employed in professional occupations compared to the state, there are few professional businesses listed in the Main Street directory. Compared to the state, the city has a smaller proportion of employees in the financial, insurance and real estate industries. In general, Las Vegas' population has attained a higher level of education, which is typically required in these industries. However, this professional industry may also be subject to growth constraints if focused on a local market to sell its goods and services.

Las Vegas is in need of entrepreneurial businesses that bring outside dollars into the community. Most entrepreneurial businesses are small, like Las Vegas' existing downtown businesses. The smaller spaces in downtown would appeal to smaller businesses. Existing businesses in Las Vegas downtown are competing with similar businesses throughout the region for a greater share of local consumer expenditures, which are growing at inflation. Therefore, businesses that sell goods and services outside of Las Vegas are a potential gap that will achieve a large economic impact in the community. The film industry activity in Las Vegas and New Mexico is an example of outside dollars coming into the community and may offer new development opportunities.

The City of Las Vegas is designated as an Arts and Cultural District by the State of New Mexico. An important feature of the emerging arts and cultural district in Las Vegas is the regular Arts Walk event in Las Vegas, which has grown in popularity. It is held seasonally during the spring, summer and fall during the peak tourist periods. Additional signature events would bookend seasonal visitation and create opportunities for authentic community events. Emerging opportunity sites, such as the market/festival area proposed in the Plaza District and the U7 community arts facility will enhance Las Vegas' profile as an arts and cultural destination.

3. Community Participation

The Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan is the result of an exciting collaborative effort by the City of Las Vegas, MainStreet Las Vegas and Las Vegas Arts and Cultural District working cooperatively with the community and facilitated by CommunityByDesign. The community participation process occurred through a number of ways. A diverse group of residents, representatives of community organizations, City staff, local business owners and other stakeholders in downtown Las Vegas all contributed to the planning process. Citizen involvement, an essential element of the process, was gathered through working group meetings and open houses and community workshops.

There were also opportunities for the neighborhood to keep track of the project and provide comments through the project’s website, www.lasvegasplan.com. Drafts of the Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan were available on the project’s webpage for review.



STEERING COMMITTEE

A 12 member Steering Committee was the principle means of community input, assisting the consultants in creating the plan.

Representatives from business, government, not-for-profits, arts and cultural organizations, hospitality industry and the neighborhood were included in the group. 10 meetings were conducted with the Steering Committee during the planning process. Their insights into the community and their investment in creating a vibrant downtown were significant contributions to the planning process.

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

One on one interviews were conducted with individuals who are stakeholders or could influence the planning and implementation of the Downtown Action/MRA plan as developers, employers or investors. The list of individuals interviewed was determined by the staff and Steering Committee members.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

In addition to the monthly Steering Committee meetings, three Community meetings were offered for community input and feedback. These meetings included a Community Workshop, a Business owners and resident meeting, and a Community Open House at the Railroad Depot to present the draft plan. The Steering Committee met several times to work on goals and strategies to implement them for each of these meetings. A Community Workshop, conducted over two days in February of 2010 at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Hall, provided the approximately 70 neighborhood residents and property owners an opportunity to discuss the

Downtown Action Plan vision, and identify revitalization projects for the plan. The advertisement describing the workshop is included in the appendix.

In June, a final community open house workshop was conducted at the Railroad Depot that presented the Plan's recommendations and projects. The 60 residents who attended had an opportunity to provide comments on the plan as well as prioritize the projects that they would like to see implemented as the next steps in the plan. The results of the project prioritization are in the Implementation Chapter. Among the comments made at the open house on the draft plan were:

- *We need affordable mixed housing in the downtown area.*
- *U-7 to stay in the control of the UWC, NMHU, Luna, and Robertson/West LV High*
- *How about revitalizing the existing historic movie theaters*
- *I worry a lot about gentrification. The community needs to guide every project decision.*
- *Safeway lot- love the plan but parking only no labyrinth (long term space for farmers market)*
- *Community kitchen/commercial licensed similar to Taos model maybe tied to Farmers Mkt.*
- *Safeway lot- no buildings*
- *Where ever the lay of the land permits, provide cuts in the curbs so storm water can flow into the spaces between roads and sidewalks. This makes possible growing flowers, shrubbery, tree, fruit trees, creating mini oases. It would require removing some sidewalks.*
- *More trees, replace old dying trees with new ones especially in our parks. Plant trees on Bridge St.*
- *Luna plan for performing arts center is in competition with arts and cultural plan utilizing the Baptist Church (U-7) and a waste of taxpayer money.*
- *Las Vegas Art Council should be a main part of this planning group.*
- *I want to see Casa de Cultura involved*
- *Integrate moderate income housing.*
- *Better access to the Gallinas River; every cross street should reach the river or it is too late?*
- *Bike lanes, paths, and bicycle parking*



4. Recommendations and Redevelopment Projects

Market Study Recommendations

Following are preliminary recommendations based on market analysis as inputs in the master planning process. These recommendations will be refined as planning process advances.

Business Development

- Develop entrepreneurship curriculum in schools that engages Las Vegas' colleges, banks, large employers, and public and non-profit agencies in business education, technical assistance, mentorship, and small-scale financing.
- Develop clearinghouse of information on how to start and grow an Internet business or other non-store business.
- Create business networking and mentoring sessions between entrepreneurs focused on markets outside Las Vegas.
- Leverage new redevelopment programs, including Arts and Cultural District, Business Improvement District, Tax Increment Financing, Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, etc. – prioritize projects in workshop and subsequent meetings.

Market Development

- Develop “buy local” campaign.
- Develop discount program regular and/or student customers throughout Main Street business.
- More regular markets, festivals and events. Focus on growing visitor day trip traffic from Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

District Design and Identity

- Address vacancy issue through City inspection process and potential and land bank.
- Focus on opportunity sites where there is organizational momentum.
- Abandon notion of continuous corridor, rather embrace downtown fabric.

Downtown Land Uses/Entertainment Programs

- Housing
 - artist live/work studios
 - student housing
 - faculty housing
 - senior housing
 - community land trust
 - rehab program for existing downtown residences
- Building Craft Incubator with restoration/rehabilitation focus
- Municipal issues:

- vacant buildings ordinance – inspection and enforcement
- vagrancy
- public restrooms

- Non-profit incubator/center/space to coordinate services

- Expansion of service hours: library, restaurants, stores

- Entertainment/Retail
 - Bowling alley
 - Billiards
 - Multi-screen theater
 - Music venue/dance hall/performing arts
 - Skating/roller rink
 - Grocer
 - Retail
 - Grocery
 - Department store
 - Bike/skate store
 - Outdoor cafés
 - 24 hour/late night coffee/wi-fi spot
 - Sound studios/other support uses for film industry



Downtown Redevelopment Project Recommendations

The following projects were identified based on the community input and ideas at the workshops and refined by the consultant team. The projects are identified on the Redevelopment Plan as opportunity sites, followed by a listing of conceptual designs for each of the individual projects. The conceptual designs of the projects are organized as Visionary projects and Interim projects. The Visionary projects are those that are longer term and require higher levels of funding and resources to be implemented. The Interim projects are can be implemented using existing funding and resources. The following projects are not listed in priority here but were prioritized by the community at the open house and the results are in the Implementation Chapter.

LAS VEGAS DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN
 PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



----- DAP BOUNDARY
 KEY GATEWAYS

 KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES & HISTORIC BUILDINGS
 SHARED PARKING OPPORTUNITIES

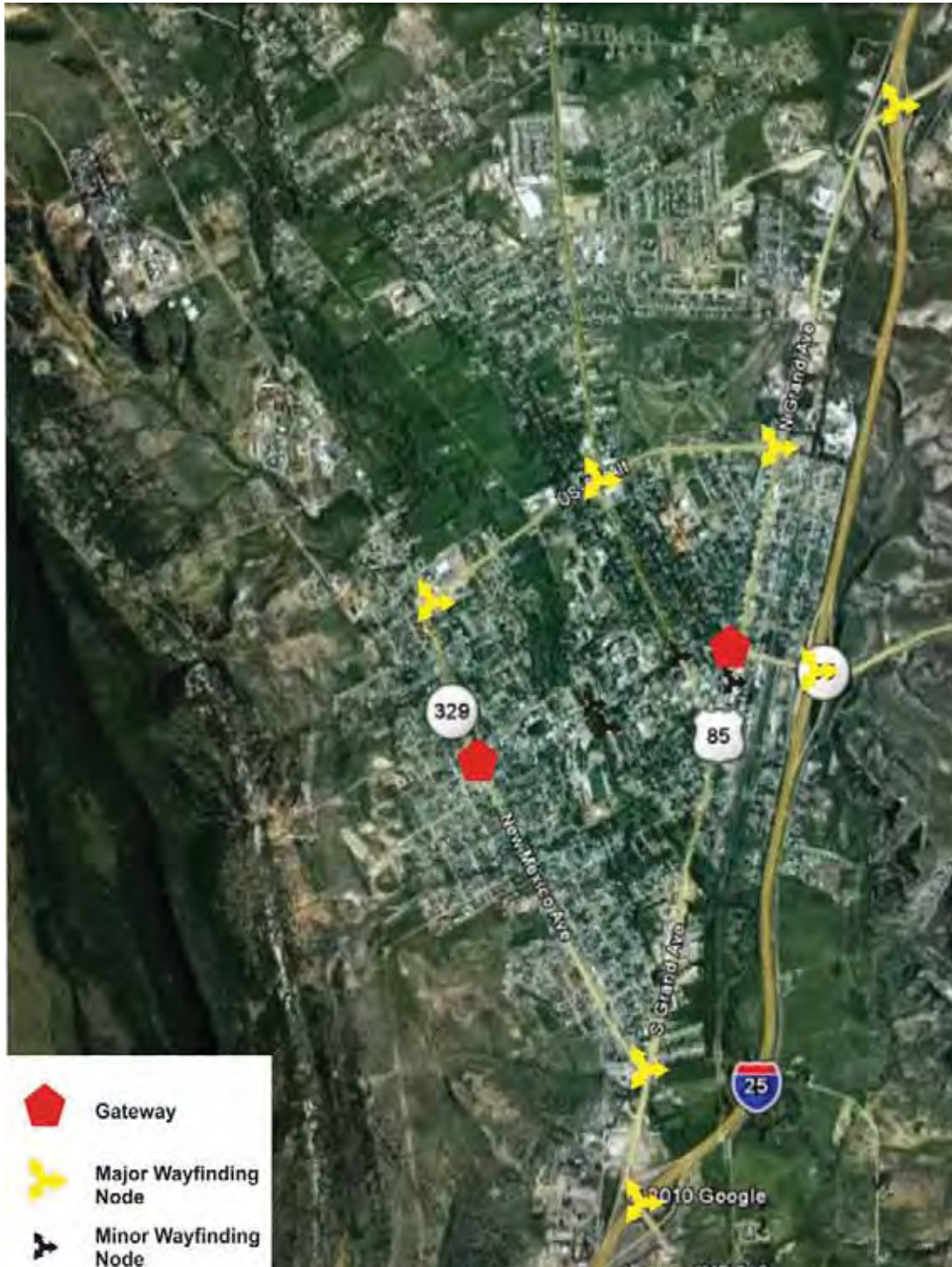
 WAY FINDING ELEMENTS
 PUBLIC ART
 MAINSTREET STREETScape IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS
 BULB OUTS
 RAISED INTERSECTIONS
 PAVED CROSSWALKS

RAILROAD/ WAREHOUSE ARTS DISTRICT
 SCATTERED SITE REDEVELOPMENT
 ARTISTS STUDIOS & LIVE WORK

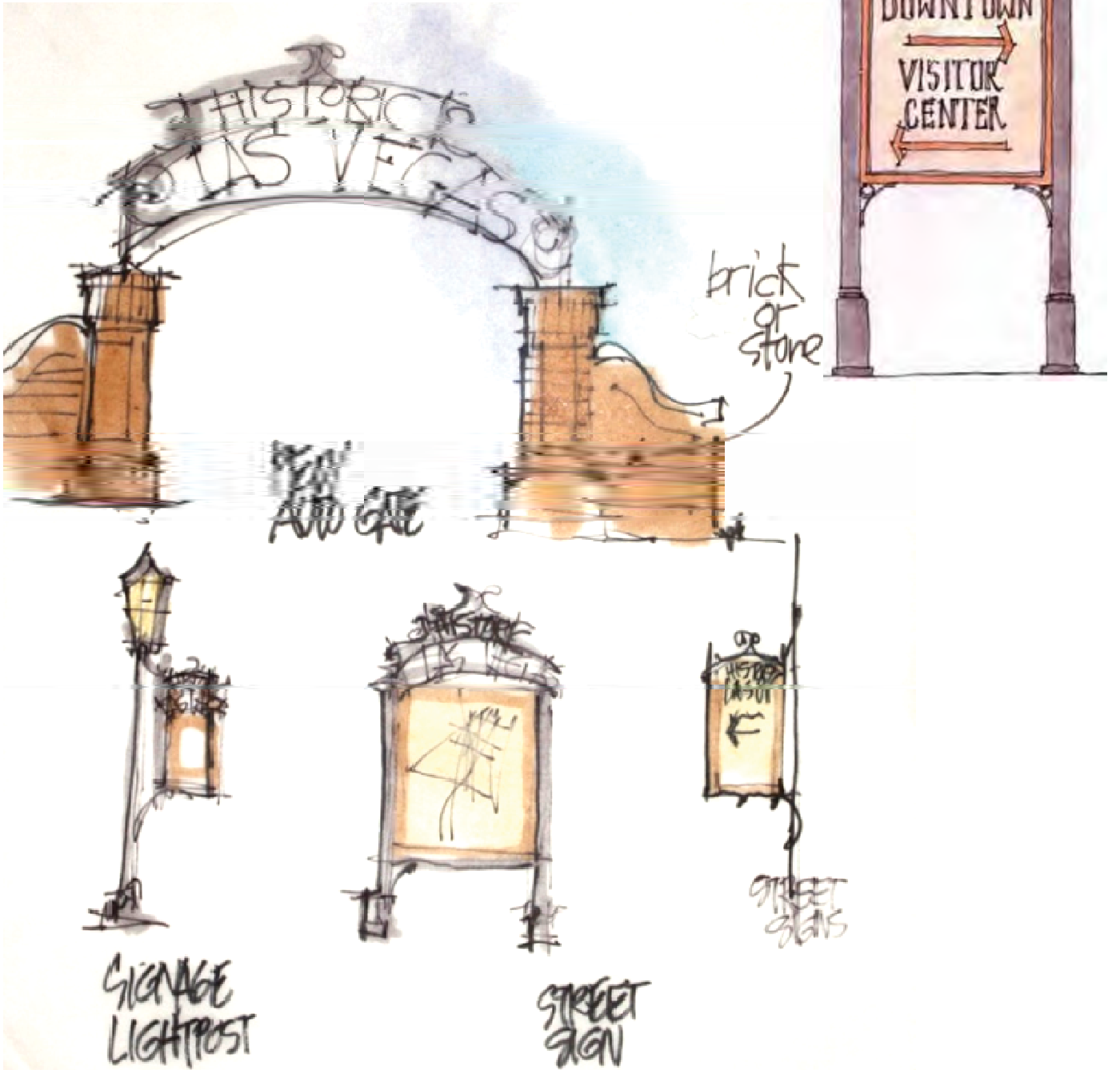
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT
 COMMERCIAL RETAIL ENTERTAINMENT
 LIVE WORK STUDIOS

Visionary Projects:

1. **Gateway/wayfinding signage for downtown and the arts and cultural district.**
Proposed locations of wayfinding signage into the downtown area.

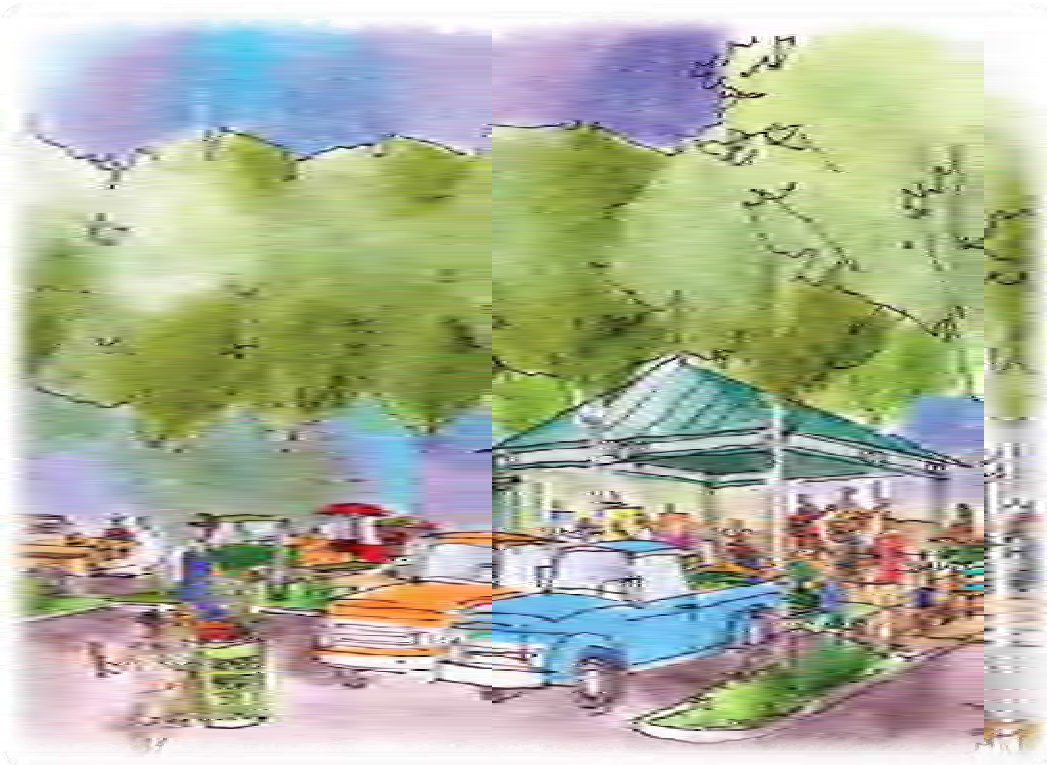


Signage concepts for wayfinding



2. Valencia Square Site Improvements

(Site plan by Baker Morrow and Reardon, ASLA)



3. Arts and Entertainment District near 12th St and Bridge St



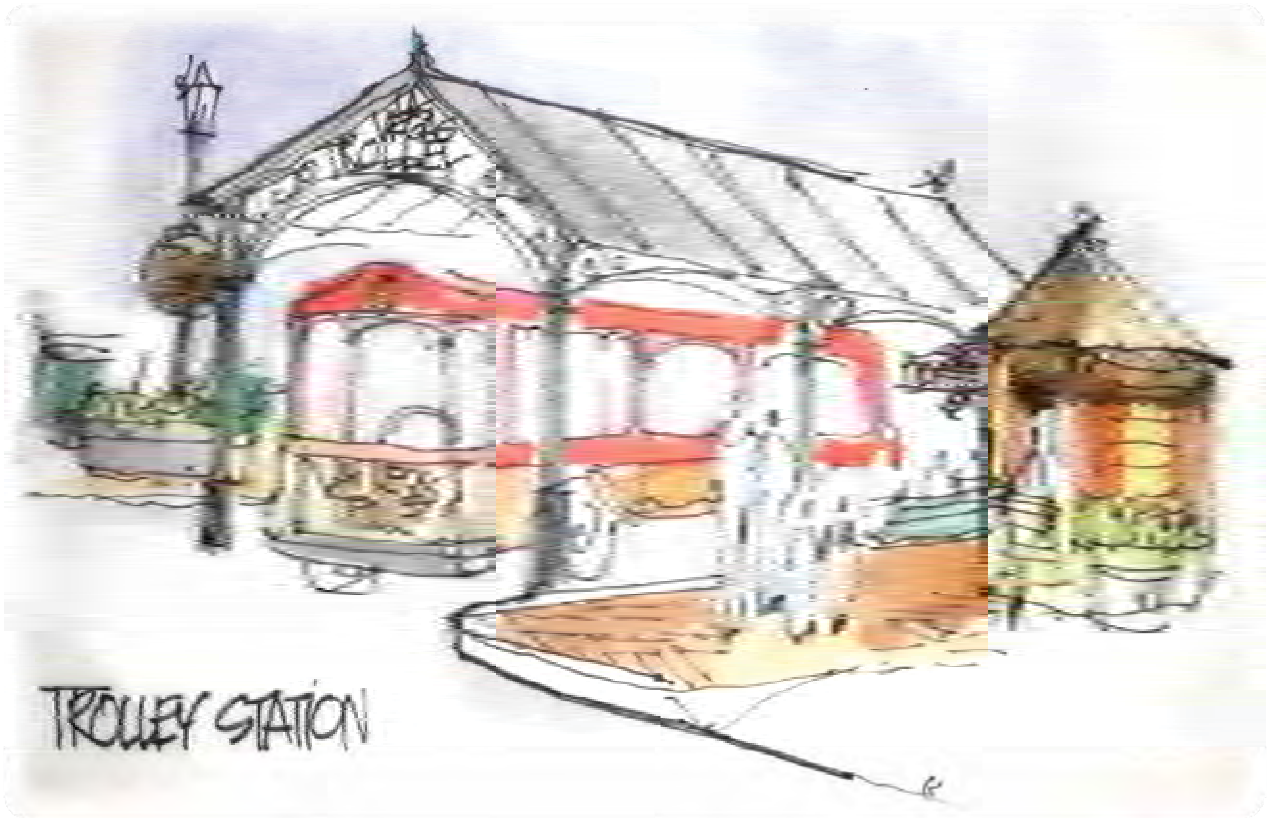
4. River Park Improvements



5. 12th St Extension to Grand Ave

This extension of 12th St from Jackson to Grand Ave will require acquisition of approximately 2,000 feet of right of way from private properties.

6. Rubber-Tire Trolley Shuttle



7. Lincoln Park Limestone Lion Restoration



8. Artists Studio/Housing in the Railroad District



9. U-7 Youth Arts Center project



10. MainStreet Las Vegas Corridor Street Improvements



11. Old City Hall as a Multi-Community Services Facility

Community Services building that housed agencies and organizations such as the City’s Community Development Department, MainStreet Las Vegas, Economic Development Commission, etc.



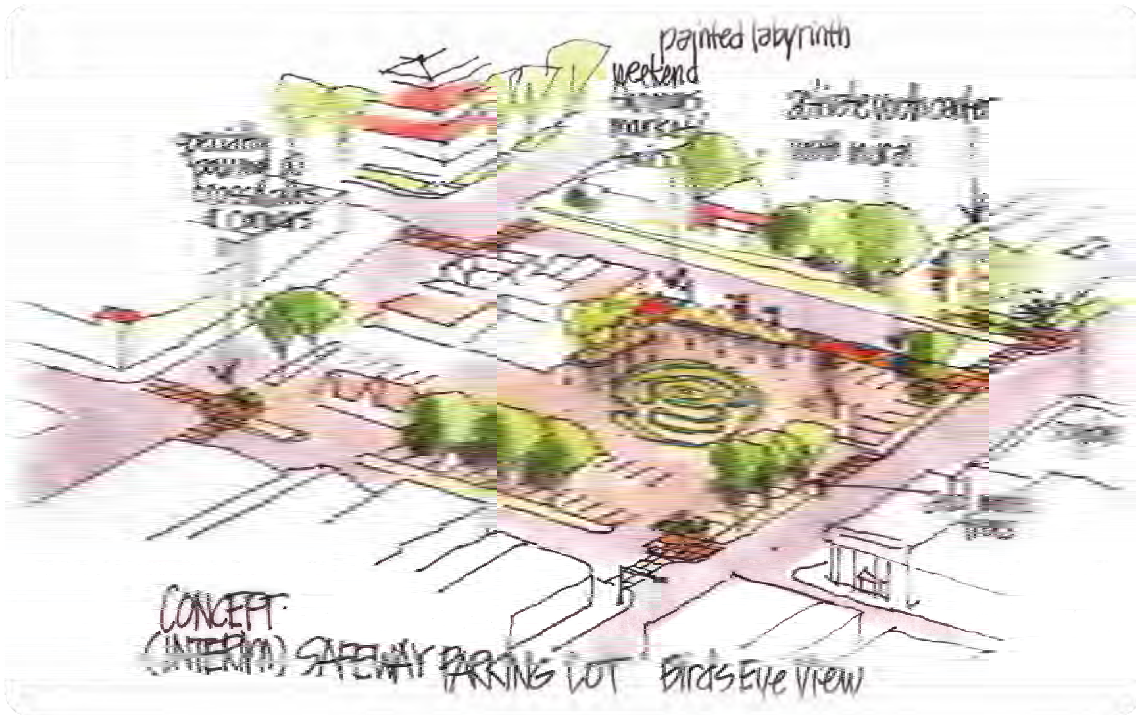
12. Municipal Services Building and Public Parking on City-owned former Safeway Site (Ortega-Romero-Rodriguez, Architects)



Interim Projects

1. Old Safeway Site Parking Lot Interim Use

- public parking lot/event venue space/amenities (striping, landscape)/outdoor youth space/activities.



2. Police Building

- parking lot improvements
- façade improvements
- public restrooms/parking signage



The Buffalo Hall was the building that previously occupied this site and is a possible façade theme for the façade improvements to the Police Building.

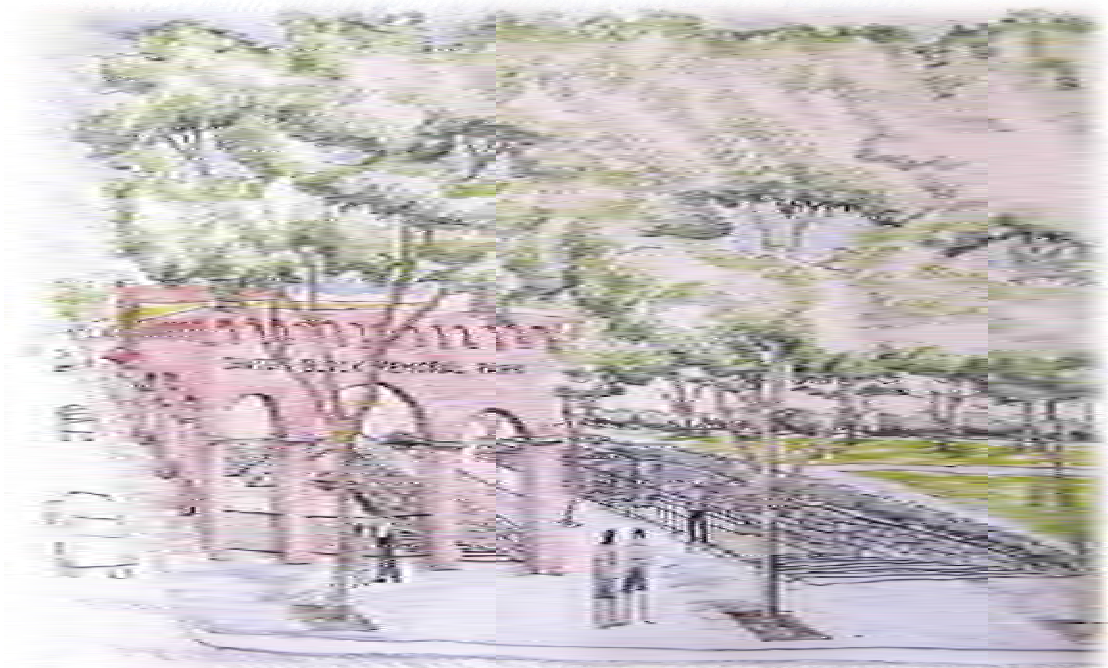
3. Old Fire Station

- Fire Museum
- public restrooms



4. Center Block Building Site

- reuse of the site as an interpretive/memorial park



City Zoning Code Revisions

The following zoning code revision is for the City’s existing Vacant Building ordinance in order to make it more enforceable as well as provide incentives for compliance by tying the ordinance area of applicability to the proposed Las Vegas Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF **LAS VEGAS VACANT BUILDING ORDINANCE NO. 05-06** OF THE REVISED ORDINANCES OF LAS VEGAS NEW MEXICO ADOPTING PROVISIONS FOR GOVERNING VACANT BUILDINGS LOCATED IN THE COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN, (DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS; SEE EXHIBIT A).

Section 2 FINDINGS AND INTENT of the Vacant Building Ordinance NO. 05-06 is hereby amended by replacing paragraph (A) and (B) to read as follows:

Section 2 FINDINGS AND INTENT.

(A) Vacant Buildings throughout the city located in the commercial zoning districts within the boundaries of Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan, (Downtown Las Vegas; see attached exhibit A MRA Boundary Map), are being neglected and are not being cleaned up or maintained for years by owners or agents in control of the properties, which are significantly reducing the attractiveness of the city area creating public nuisances and having a negative effect on the surrounding area. in business and family neighborhoods around Las Vegas

(B) Vacant buildings throughout the downtown area city are resulting in negative community impacts contributing to neighborhood deterioration, reducing property values and are contrary to providing safe, clean, livable and healthy communities for families and businesses.



5. Funding Sources

A number of funding sources from local, State and Federal agencies have been identified as potential opportunities to finance the implementation of the Las Vegas Downtown Action Plan.

1. Public/Non-profit/Private Partnerships

There are a number of opportunities for partnerships to occur between various entities. Partnerships hold the highest potential for redevelopment opportunities to occur in the Downtown Las Vegas area. The City can provide incentives through public financing, land holdings, or eminent domain authority, to serve as incentive/collateral for groups such as the NM Community Development Loan Fund, Accion; Westcorp, Small Business Association, and private developers.

2. NM MainStreet Capital Outlay Fund

The NM State legislature has allocated between \$1.5 and \$2 million the two past years for MainStreet communities in NM. Although with the recent downturn in the economy, it is unlikely that there will be CO funds available for the next few years. When these funds become available again, they can be used for master planning, design, engineering and construction purposes for projects that have been identified in a community-based downtown master planning process. These are typically competitive grants awarded in October.

3. New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund

The New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund is a private, non-profit organization that provides loans, training and technical assistance to business owners and non-profit organizations. Their services support the efforts of low-income individuals and communities to achieve self-reliance and control over their economic destinies. Loans to new and existing small businesses for such needs as equipment, inventory, building renovations and operating capital. They provide loans to non-profits for such needs as bridge financing against awarded private and public contracts, capital improvements and equipment, and loans to non-profits that develop affordable housing.

4. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts and Tax Increment Development Districts (TIDD)

Tax increment financing is created through a local government's property tax assessments increments and in the case of TIDDs, gross receipt tax increments. The incremental difference in tax is used to finance the improvements within the district. In New Mexico, tax increment financing is enabled in forms through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, Enterprise Zone Act and the Urban Development Law. The City of Las Vegas has not yet used tax increment financing. A Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) is scheduled to be designated in July 2010. Creating a TIF District of the Downtown Las Vegas MRA would be beneficial to the downtown area and provide an incentive for private sector reinvestment. Given the low tax base in the area, it would be advantageous if both City and County would participate in contributing their respective increments to the TIF district.

5. Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan

The City of Las Vegas' Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program (ICIP) is to enhance the physical and

cultural development of the City by implementing the Las Vegas Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans and policies. Through a multi-year schedule of public physical improvements, ICIP administers approved Capital Expenditures for systematically acquiring, constructing, replacing, upgrading and rehabilitating Las Vegas' built environment. In practice, the ICIP develops, and sometimes directly implements, diverse projects and improvements to public safety and rehabilitation of aging infrastructure such as roads, drainage systems and the water and wastewater network, public art projects, libraries, museums, athletic facilities, parks and trails, and Senior, Community and Multi-service Centers.

6. Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB)

An IRB is a form of tax-exempt municipal bond issued by a state or local government entity to finance the acquisition, construction or equipping of a facility. IRB tax-exempt financing for manufacturing projects has been restored under the federal Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993 on a permanent basis. Today, IRBs continue to provide companies with an important alternative to conventional financing of manufacturing projects. Cities, public agencies, development authorities, and similar entities can issue tax-exempt, private-activity, industrial revenue bonds for manufacturing projects. All issuances are subject to state-wide volume caps. Some states offer umbrella programs to finance several smaller projects from a single issue; where revenue bonds could promote local economic development through encouraging local businesses and hiring a higher wage local work force as a priority.

7. Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA)

Federal SAFETEA Enhancement funds, in excess of \$200 billion, have been allocated to integrate transportation projects with environmental and community revitalization goals over a period of six years ending in December, 2010. They are applicable beyond highways, road and transit maintenance and may also be used for relevant environmental restoration, pollution abatement, historic preservation, trails, bike paths and pedestrian infrastructure including aesthetic enhancements.

8. Equity Capital

SBA's Small Business Investment Companies (SBIC) licensed and regulated by the SBA, SBIC's are privately owned and managed investment firms that make capital available to small businesses through investments or loans. They use their own funds plus funds obtained at favorable rates with SBA guarantees and/or by selling their preferred stock to the SBA.

9. Tax incentives and tax-exempt financing

a. Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Investors can receive a credit against their total income taken for the year in which a rehabilitated building is put into service. Rehabilitation of certified historic structures qualifies for a credit equal to 20 percent of the cost of the work; rehabilitation work on non-historic structures built before 1936 qualifies for ten percent.

b. New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC)

The NMTC Program permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making

qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities. The credit provided to the investor totals 39 percent of the cost of the investment and is claimed over a seven-year credit allowance period. In each of the first three years, the investor receives a credit equal to five percent of the total amount paid for the stock or capital interest at the time of purchase. For the final four years, the value of the credit is six percent annually. Investors may not redeem their investments in CDEs prior to the conclusion of the seven-year period.

c. Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

Ten year credit for owners of newly constructed or renovated rental housing that sets aside a percentage for low-income individuals for a minimum of 15 years. The amount of the credit varies for new construction and renovation. The project must receive allocation of New Mexico State's annual credit ceiling or use multifamily housing tax-exempt bonds that receive allocation of New Mexico State's bond volume cap. Allocations are made on the basis of the New Mexico State Qualified Allocation Plan.

10. Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)

The Local Option Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT) of the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) provides a means of financing improvements in the downtown through an increase in gross receipts tax that is earmarked for downtown public improvements and arts and cultural facilities.

11. Main Street Hope VI Housing Grant

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers grants to qualifying Main Street organizations to rehabilitate older commercial buildings for affordable housing uses. Program goal is to convert unused commercial space to residential affordable housing to support Main Street redevelopment and historic properties rehabilitation. Communities are to have less than 50,000 population and fewer than 100 public housing units (local authority). Total funds available are \$4 million. There is a significant need for housing in Las Vegas' downtown area; this program makes grants specifically to support the creation of affordable housing in Main Street settings. Learn more about this program at www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/grants/mainstreet/

12. Housing Maintenance Assistance Program

Funds from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can be used to establish a revolving loan fund that can be used for home maintenance for low income residents.

13. Low Income Housing Initiative

As demand warrants, the City should purchase or dedicate existing land to providing additional units of Section 8 housing and apply for the necessary funding to promote its development.

14. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

HUD funds may be available for local Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) loans and "floats." CDBGs are used to finance locally determined activities and can include coping with contamination and

financing site preparation or infrastructure development. Eligible activities include planning for redevelopment, site acquisition, environmental site assessment, site clearance, demolition, rehabilitation, contamination removal and construction. Also, when a grant recipient can show that previously awarded CDBG funds will not be needed in the near term, it may tap its block grant account on an interim basis, using a "float" to obtain short-term, low interest financing for projects that create jobs. Money borrowed from grants in this way may pay for the purchase of land, buildings and equipment, site and structural rehabilitation (including environmental remediation) or new construction.

15. Business Improvement District (BID)

The City could consider establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) as a means to improve the safety and maintenance of the downtown. A BID is created by the City Council and must be approved by a majority of the property owners within the district. Revenues are collected annually by the City and returned to a BID management agency to support business development and management services such as staffing, maintenance and clean-up programs, hospitality services, public safety campaigns, transportation services (trolleys, bike racks, after hours rides), and other important neighborhood improvement services.

6. Implementation

The Master Plan outlines numerous strategies and recommendations that the City of Las Vegas should follow to provide for effective and efficient community development in Downtown Las Vegas. The key to utilizing this Master Plan is to review it on a regular (annual) basis and revise as needed to reflect the implementation steps accomplished.

This Implementation Chapter describes a Project Prioritization table, which is a summary of the projects outlined in the Master Plan, and assigns responsibility, time frame, and specific tasks for implementation.

The following projects were prioritized by the residents at the community open house meeting conducted in June 2010 at the Railroad Depot. These priorities represent the residents' opinions on what their top projects were for implementation for revitalization of the downtown area. The priorities were determined through the residents placing one of five dots on one of the 17 projects graphics exhibited at the open house (the graphics are shown in Chapter 4: Recommendations and Redevelopment Projects). These priorities do not limit the city or other organizations from pursuing funding or implementation in this strict order; it only serves as guidance based on the residents preferences of what they would like to see occur when projects are discussed within the decision making and funding process. Both the visionary and interim projects were presented at the open house.

Project Prioritization	Responsible Entity	Funding Sources
1. Valencia Square	City, MSLV	#1, 2, 4, 9, 14
2. Old Fire Station Museum	City, Private sector, MSLV	#1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 14
3. U7 Youth Art Center	UWC, LVSD, MSLV, City	#1, 3, 4, 9, 14
4. Arts and Entertainment District	Private sector, City (riverpark)	#1, 4, 8, 9
5. Gateway/Signage	City, MSLV, NMDOT	#2, 4, 5, 7, 15
6. Police Building Façade/Parking	City, MSLV	#2, 4, 5
7. Old Safeway Site Improvements	City	#2, 4, 5, 10, 15
8. Artists Studio/Housing in RR District	City, Housing Authority, MSLV	#1, 4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14
9. Center Block Building Memorial Park	City, Private sector, MSLV	#1, 2, 4, 5
10. Old City Hall Multiservice Center	City, MSLV, EDC	#1, 4, 5, 9
11. Rubber Tire Trolley	City, NMDOT	#1, 7, 15
12. River Park Improvements	City	#4, 5, 7
13. Municipal Services Building	City	#1, 5
14. Lion Sculpture Restoration	MSLV, City	#1, 2, 4
15. MainStreet Corridor Improvements	City, MSLV, NMDOT	#2, 4, 5, 7
16. Bike Lanes/Paths	City, NMDOT	#5, 7
17. 12 th Street Extension	City	#5, 7

7. Appendix

1. Downtown Las Vegas MRA Designation Report
2. Community Workshop Display Ads