Montrose, CO
February 5-6, 2009

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PARTNERSHIP

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO DOWNTOWNS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND TOWN CENTERS IN COLORADO THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION
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Focus Groups Participants

CRP TEAM MEMBERS

• Bob Kunkel, Durango
• Kim Grant, Arvada
• Jesse Silverstein, Colorado Brownfields Foundation
• Clint Cresawn, STRIDES
• Pattie Snidow, USDA
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2008, the City of Montrose requested a Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) team visit from Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) for February 5-6, 2009. The purpose of a CRP visit is to bring a team of consultants specializing in downtown and community revitalization to provide tools, insights, and direction to help the host community with its downtown revitalization goals. In anticipation of this visit, the City of Montrose conducted surveys, planned focus groups, and provided extensive background information about the history and status of Montrose's downtown revitalization efforts and the issues facing the community.

Upon arrival in the community, team members were given a presentation of the history of downtown and then toured the City. Afterward, the team met with the city staff for lunch, and then held four well-attended focus group sessions with community stakeholders and interested citizens. The purpose of the focus groups was to hear directly from citizens about the issues facing the downtown and the community as a whole; and to answer questions team members may have about the perceptions, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that relate to the downtown.

On day two, team members gathered to discuss their observations and formulate recommendations. That evening, team members presented their findings in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and question and answer session open to the community at-large. The report which follows provides an overview of the CRP visit, identifies partners and resources to help the community, includes observations from the visit, identifies issue areas, and makes recommendations for actions the community can take to strengthen the downtown.

OVERVIEW AND HISTORIC CONTEXT

Montrose's downtown was the core of retail development in the City for many years. Roughly twenty years ago, a new commercial corridor emerged on the south end of town which attracted big box stores, car dealerships, chain restaurants and other high dollar establishments. Various strip malls were also constructed in the area which drew a portion of the main street businesses south of town. The south of town commercial corridor has been extremely successful, but its success has drawn much of the local and regional shopping away from the downtown corridor, thus leaving the downtown depressed and stagnant.

A Downtown Improvement District (DID) was formed in 1974 and immediately issued $375,000 of bonds for construction of beautification projects, landscaping, off-street parking and additional on-street parking. In 1982 the DID board created an improvement plan with a study of design and economic options for the downtown area. However, twenty years after its inception, the members within the district narrowly voted to dissolve the district, thus ending the DID.

After the dissolution of the DID, various organizations have tried to rescue the downtown from its current situation. The City of Montrose has a traditional central business core that was formerly a Colorado Main Street, indicating a strong focus on keeping the downtown attractive and economically viable. Since this program ended in 2005, the organization and promotion of the downtown core has declined.

Since mid-2008, five businesses have left the downtown, and four more businesses have announced that they will be going out of business in the next few months. Compounding the issue is the fact that Main Street is a state highway and is very congested. Although the city and state have worked well together to promote walkability in the downtown, the city is very limited in what it can do with Main Street while it continues to function as a state highway.

The City hopes that this assessment will identify concrete ways to bring confidence, vision and focus back to the downtown. Specifically, is a BID or DDA appropriate for downtown Montrose, and if so, how can support for such a program be garnered? Should the City develop targeted programs (i.e. façade improvement funds, downtown events, entertainment district, mixed-use promotion, etc.) as a part of revitalization efforts? How can organizations dedicated to revitalizing the downtown assist in this effort?
PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Stakeholders involved in the CRP and visit included non-profit organizations, town government, elected officials, property owners downtown, business owners downtown, economic development groups downtown, including: Downtown Heart of the City Committee, Main in Motion Committee, MAMA, Chamber of Commerce, and the Visitors and Convention Bureau.

Resources considered for use in implementing the recommendations of the report (see attachments for full details) include: The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Colorado Center for Community Development, private contractual services, Colorado Department of Transportation, Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI), Colorado Municipal League, Colorado City/County Managers Association, United States Department of Agriculture and other local governments and chambers.

With the CRP visit, the community is setting the stage for an ongoing and strengthened relationship with the DCI, DOLA, other local governmental agencies and the local business sector. During the two day visit, the community interactions with the CRP team members resulted in a strong, consensus building foundation. This foundation will be increasingly important for the many efforts that may result from the visit.

OBSERVATIONS

- Two great hardware stores that are valued by the community
- Good service is something associated with downtown
- Better quality of goods and product knowledge are expected downtown
- Specialty needs, niche items, and boutique retail are found downtown
- The Post office, Hospital, Library, County buildings, and City buildings draw people
- There is a loyalty and sense of place
- Movies are a huge downtown asset
- Independent coffee houses are a draw
- The whole community likes Main in Motion

- Downtown could be a real gathering place
- Failure to focus on drawing locals to downtown
- Great new brand— it would be great to use a variation for downtown
- Perception of parking is bad
- Independence
- Community events are needed – especially a signature event
- No need to drive when using the downtown
- Farmers’ Market shows potential
- Lack of leadership due to competing groups that have failed to develop downtown objectives
- There is a feeling that needs are ignored
- Need to diversify activities
- Need to attract businesses … no one doing it
- Perception of unsafe or unclean environment where vandalism is an issue
- Dependence on city funding has led to ineffective organizations
- Need to utilize existing downtown anchors

RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANIZATION

Organization is the vehicle by which people come together to identify areas of common interest and decide strategies for moving forward.
Determine a boundary for your downtown that will incorporate the elements you deem important. The City should define the boundaries of downtown with consideration to geography, politics, and marketing; with preference to commonality of issues, problems, and opportunities. Create both the perception and reality that being located “in downtown” has benefits and privileges…a “preferred” place to invest, live, open a business, and visit. Downtown should represent opportunity and enjoyment.

The downtown boundary should make the connection between the river and the downtown by establishing visibility, natural amenities, and a sense of nature for downtown. Look at connecting South west quadrant of Townsend and Main, including the market, library, and Mesa State in everything downtown. A suggested boundary should consider the possibility of shifting the downtown boundary to include a smaller area ½ block along West Main Street between North Rio Grand Ave. and Willerup.

Downtown should be managed, developed, promoted, and utilized as an arts/entertainment destination. Montrose is lucky to have so many entertainment assets downtown, for example: a movie theater, a library, restaurants, and public art that provide more of a night life. There is a need to capitalize on the current establishments that exist in Montrose downtown and focus on developing a broader array of establishments and offerings for the visitor or downtown employee.

The CRP Team members recommend the City take the lead in setting a course for downtown based on the City’s “desired outcomes.” These objectives should include areas of “hardscape” (pedestrian orientation, street furniture, access, wayfinding signage, off-Main parking), and “softscape” (providing retail friendly downtown management and parking plans, special event coordination, clean and safe programs, and liaison communication with downtown stakeholder groups such as Chamber, retailers, tourism).

Determine that a single entity, supported by City, will be the Downtown promotional source. That entity could be an agency, an organization, or an individual. With City funding comes public confidence and municipal demonstration that the health of downtown is important enough to deserve full time, focused, single source attention and resources. While financial support will be necessary in the initial stages, this entity must eventually become self-sustaining. Past efforts by the City to fund organizations have demonstrated the need for a sustainability plan from the outset. It would be useful to look to a self-funded entity like a Downtown Development Authority, or if this will be a non-profit, develop a requirement for diverse funding streams, and a cap on the percentage of administrative costs allowable as a requirement for City funds.

A healthy and vibrant downtown attracts business interests by appealing to both the local and the visitor. Establish a leadership position or organization that has the ability to sustain itself in order to build confidence, credibility, consistency, and continuity. Many resources and best practice models are available for guidance in the arena of professional downtown management.

Explore ways to house and staff a downtown organization. Property owners have come forth and said that office space can be donated. The city is looking at forming a downtown organization. In the shorter term, consider an intern to provide office support to begin networking, coordinating efforts, planning events, and identifying other sources of funds.

Create a plan for downtown businesses to develop collaborative partnerships, tap into potential volunteer pools, sponsorship possibilities, and long term community planning activities.

Harnessing the energy of business/property owners, students, and seniors would benefit the downtown tremendously in terms of increasing outreach and support. Identifying volunteers from the community to focus on downtown will assist in meeting downtown objectives.

Marketing is an often misunderstood umbrella concept with wide ranging interpretation. What marketing is not, is a substitute for content. The content (the downtown Montrose experience) needs some improving. Our
recommendation is that retail enhancement funds (marketing) be carefully allocated to various marketing activities without eliminating the possibility of spending some marketing dollars to enhance the product. In the long run, a better product is an easier product to promote.

An established downtown is the heart and soul of any community. To a great extent, the perception of a city as a great place or just another place depends on a vibrant downtown. Being vibrant means being lively, a place to go, a place to do things. Downtown Montrose is in a position to be the after-hours entertainment center of Montrose and the region. But, it takes work. Core restaurants and retail have to be willing to stay open later. The suitability of existing buildings for live theater and film should be catalogued. Evening classes could be offered downtown. The immediate need is for organization – someone to focus on the existing resources, the entertainment needs of the community, and to put together a program that works for Montrose.

Part of creating a vibrant downtown involves having people in downtown both day and night. This can be accomplished by allowing and encouraging mixed use development and redevelopment in the downtown area. The City should review its land use regulations with an eye toward removing barriers (if any) and possibly providing no cost incentives (such as density bonuses) to encourage mixed residential and commercial projects.

The plan for Downtown Montrose should include a plan for attracting retailers to downtown that serve both the local clientele and the visiting public. Downtown spaces can house unique retailers, specialty stores, service-oriented retail, and others that are missing from the big box or national chain retailers. Downtown needs an entity to focus on retail attraction (possibly together with other duties).

The image of downtown Montrose is being molded more by the increasingly strong presence of north and south Montrose than by downtown. The downtown needs a branded image that it can control and promote with unwavering consistency. This brand must reflect what downtown was, is, and will be --the heart and soul of the community.

With a vision in mind, the city should bring downtown constituent parties back together to craft a direction and work plan that ideally would involve the dedicated resources of others. At the core of the plan is the city’s resolve and long-term commitment to invest in downtown. However, the plan will need to be prepared to move forward with--or without--constituent group support.

As the agent in perpetuity, the city must recognize modern trends to play a leading role to preserve, rebuild, and revitalize the downtown core. There are many tools available to the city to gain grants, reset policy, create incentives, and partner with the public sector to improve the downtown. Long-term funding mechanisms are available in Colorado to address specific capital and promotional needs.

DOWNTOWN MONTROSE: DDA OR BID?

Colorado allows downtowns to use several types of public entities to help them get organized, finance improvements and services, and help businesses. The CRP Team recommends that Downtown Montrose investigate and seriously consider the creation of a downtown development authority (“DDA”) and/or a business improvement district (“BID”).

If selected, a DDA would be created by a city ordinance after the approval of eligible downtown voters in an election. The DDA would have the power to create and implement a “plan of development” that could include plans for physical improvements to the downtown environment, and plans for economic improvements such as marketing and educational promotions. A “plan of development” can be very flexible and allow the DDA to perform any of the services and provide any of the improvements of a BID and more. If approved by the voters in a TABOR election, the DDA’s funding could come from a property tax of up to 5 mills and/or tax increment financing from growth in the existing sales tax and/or property tax that is already collected in downtown. The DDA Board of Directors would be appointed by the city. DDAs exist in downtown Ft. Collins, Greeley, Longmont and Colorado Springs (among others).

If selected, a BID would be started by a petition signed by the owners of taxable commercial property representing over 50% of the assessed value and 50% of the acreage in downtown. The BID would be created after a public hearing and adoption of a city ordinance. After approval by the BID’s voters in a TABOR election, the BID could be empowered to collect property taxes and/or special assessments in the amounts that were approved in the election. The BID would have the
power to furnish any public improvements and provide marketing, security services, and a wide range of other business-related services as outlined in an operating plan and budget that would be proposed each year by the BID's Board of Directors and approved by City Council. Depending on Montrose's preference, the BID's Board of Directors can either be elected by the eligible voters in the BID or appointed by City Council. BIDs exist in downtown Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Black Hawk, and about 30 other locations in Colorado.

As was emphasized at the conclusion of the CRP Team presentation, “getting organized” is the single most important next step in implementing a downtown plan to improve the competitive position of downtown Montrose. The issues in Montrose are bigger than a single business can handle, but there is strength in numbers and strength in working together. A DDA or a BID can give a method to get organized, structure activities, and give downtown the same advantage of common management that is enjoyed by single-owner shopping centers and large discount retailers.

Due to the availability of tax increment financing and the wide flexibility allowed in a Plan of Development, a DDA is the recommended choice for Montrose. The Plan of Development should address items such as the physical public improvements and façade improvements discussed in this report as well as economic plans addressing:

1. Consulting with respect to planning or managing development activities;
2. Maintenance of improvements, by contract, if it is determined to be the most cost-efficient;
3. Promotion or marketing of DDA activity;
4. Organization, promotion, marketing, and management of public events;
5. Activities in support of business recruitment, management, and development;
6. Security for businesses and public areas located within the DDA;
7. Snow removal or refuse collection, by contract, if it is determined to be the most cost-efficient;
8. Providing design assistance;
9. Attracting local and tourism oriented retail;
10. Review and recommendations for ordinances to promote mixed use development, historic preservation, energy efficiency, signs that work, and efficient use of parking;
11. Research and, if appropriate, implement an entertainment concept in downtown.

In general, it is best to incorporate a wide range of ideas into the Plan of Development to allow the DDA Board to have flexibility to respond to the changing needs of Downtown.

**ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING**

**OBSERVATION:** There is a need for consistency in appearance in Downtown Montrose. Economic Restructuring is the acknowledgment that the market for downtown has changed and we need to understand the forces of change and what that means for future development.

Continue to support the Air Guarantee program. This program brings in huge benefits with relatively minor costs to the city. It is important to understand the full benefit of this program. Create a catchy campaign to inform the public of the contribution and benefits that the Air Guarantee Program has for Montrose.

Begin discussion with the main Black Canyon visitor’s center and the National Parks to develop a plan to open a Black Canyon Visitors’ Center on Main. This will allow the downtown to capture more traffic and promote the huge natural resource that is Montrose’s neighbor. Be sure that the Center has adequate directional signage and parking appropriate for large vehicles.
Develop greater opportunities for downtown employees to interact downtown (e.g. Main on Monday). Ask local artisans or performers to create a schedule, the school choir or drama club to perform, or the library to have a sale of gently used books. Consider asking downtown or south of town restaurants to provide vendor carts in Centennial Plaza.

Create a template to assist downtown businesses to access USDA Rural Development grant funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades.

**LAND USE**

The assessment team undertook an evaluation of Montrose’s site renewal opportunities. Site renewal opportunities arise from aging and former economic uses (commercial, retail, industrial) that are now obsolescing, idle or abandoned. Underutilized sites are often prime locations awaiting a higher and better use. Renewing sites within or near the Main Street district can improve demographics that support the district.

Site opportunities were evaluated in three general categories: (1) vacant buildings and underutilized sites in the Main Street district (a site where reuse would not dislocate existing businesses, but would fill a physical or economic gap, or remove an eyesore); (2) gateway sites that tend to identify an entry point to the district; and (3) sites that offer opportunities for primary jobs development, may be in or out of the district, and would bolster the district’s daytime demographics.

In Montrose, Main Street was observed to function as such primarily between Townsend Avenue and San Juan Avenue, and extending along North First Street between Townsend and Park. Government and higher education uses form a loosely-knit, informal campus around Main, Townsend, South First and South Second. West Main Street extends past Townsend where retail and industrial uses blend and transition to heavier industrial around Grand Avenue and along the riverfront.

There are several sites located on Main between Townsend and San Juan that are likely ready for redevelopment. In some instances, several sites could be assembled with adjacent parcels to create more utility for redevelopment. For example, a former auto service station at Main and Lot could be assembled with adjacent vacant lots to accommodate a larger development such as a hotel, community center, multi-family housing, or commercial building. Some prime corners downtown are set back from the street with low intensity use and there may be an opportunity to renovate/revitalize these corners as commercial anchors for the block. There are still other sites that could be assembled, renovated and brought out to the street as a continuation of a consistent downtown streetscape and feel, such as the cigarette store site.

Montrose has grown large enough for retailers to follow growing populations out to the edges of town; the ease of suburban retail tends to keep these outlying households from shopping downtown. Creating additional downtown housing will enable more people to live downtown and bring renewed vitality. Currently, there seems to be much underutilized second story space which could accommodate second story residences for singles, young couples, and empty nesters that will bring evening and weekend population to downtown. College students and resort workers are likely to find a downtown location desirable. A first-time home buyer program may support condominium development for this age demographic as well.

There is much opportunity to develop primary businesses near downtown that will bring additional daytime populations. The west side of Main Street is ripe for business park redevelopment around Grand Avenue and to the river. The planned redevelopment of the railroad right-of-way (along Grand Avenue) into parkway and transit corridor will make the Grand Avenue route a prime business/industrial redevelopment corridor. In particular, the area on the north side of Main and east of Grand seems ripe for a single large-site user; or even more so for assemblage and devel-
development of a small multi-user business park. A variety of historic buildings brings a character to the area which can be captured and reflected in new development, perhaps through the implementation of architectural standards. New business development is expected to follow the new transit corridor south from Main along the river as the railroad tracks make way for new access. Similarly, the North San Juan corridor provides ample business and industrial park development opportunities. Main, east of downtown, is an area that could also accommodate new growth; however, cautious planning should occur so as to not create yet another retail area that competes with downtown and the areas south of town.

While renewal sites offer opportunity, there is a need to address physical and market issues to enable reuse. Renovation and redevelopment present physical challenges of meeting modern business amenities, utilities, communications, and other functionality. Structural engineers and architects may be needed to fully evaluate renovation and redevelopment plans. From an environmental standpoint, there may be lingering remnants of former uses including gas stations, dry cleaners, plating operations, machine shops, and other businesses that operated before many substances were known to be pollutants. In terms of marketing site renewal opportunities, it is desirable to catalogue available sites, provide information on known issues, and continue to provide public support to overcome reuse hurdles.

The river makes a natural anchor for the west side of Main Street. Keeping a consistent architectural design to buildings and streetscape will enable Main Street to grow towards being a critical mass as a destination. A Main Street extended to the river will tie downtown into this natural asset and enable a wider variety of uses, support businesses, and marketing opportunities. Redevelopment of the Grand Avenue rail right-of-way into a new transit corridor will open up areas south of Main Street for new business, industrial, and passive recreational and open space use. Rather than impose Main Street zoning and building code standards, development areas south of the river would better serve downtown through business/commercial type zoning and allowed to bring new primary employers and daytime population to downtown. The City may want to consider the creation of a River Corridor Master Plan.

**DESIGN & STREETSCAPE**

Design represents the physical image as well as the manner in which downtown functions, both publicly and privately.

Downtown Montrose has many significant assets to build on to enhance its aesthetic and physical environment, and to attract more visitors and better serve local residents. In the final analysis, design recommendations are all about preserving authenticity and creating a unique sense of place that serves as a destination and focal point for the community. Appearance and safety are key concepts in attracting customers and increasing retail sales. Consider the use of retail sales enhancement funds for maintaining some of the facades, appearance, and security of downtown.

The recommendations explained below are divided into short-term and long-term action steps.

**SHORT-TERM**

**Historic Survey/Designation:** The City of Montrose should apply for a State Historical Fund grant to survey the downtown area (utilizing the boundaries delineated in other sections of this report) to identify and document historic buildings and structures and to determine the potential for either individual listing of properties on the State or National Register of Historic Places, or designation of a
historic district. The latter possibility would center on the historic core commercial area within a one or two block area of Main Street. This baseline survey would provide updated information on the significance, characteristics, and integrity of key structures and open up the possibility of additional funding sources for façade renovations, tax credits and grants.

**Keep Store Windows Clean and Attractive:** A volunteer brigade of business and property owners should initiate a regular protocol of cleaning store windows and developing temporary window displays in vacant storefronts. The cleaning could be done on a bi-weekly basis while temporary window displays could be done on a monthly or quarterly basis. High school or community college students with an interest in art and design could be recruited to help in the effort.

**Clarify Responsibility for Cleanliness of Sidewalks and Public Right of Way:** Generally speaking, merchants and property owners are responsible for cleaning and maintaining the sidewalks in front of their buildings, while the city is responsible for street cleaning. These responsibilities should be clarified and formalized if necessary to ensure a cleaner appearance of these elements downtown.

**Don’t Tear Down any More Historic Buildings!** Until the historic survey is completed, the city should consider a moratorium prohibiting the demolition of downtown buildings for a certain period of time that allows the community to seek alternatives to this destructive tendency that has led to the loss of historic buildings at corner intersections. Once the survey is completed, the moratorium should be extended to all historically designated structures.

**Provide Restoration Incentives for Historic Buildings/Enhance Appearance of Backs of Buildings and Alleys:** A revolving loan fund using retail sales enhancement funds should be developed to use in façade renovation activities, focusing initially on storefront and upper floors of the main façades of key downtown buildings. A goal should be set to accomplish 3-4 façade restorations over 2-3 years to serve as a catalyst for other business and property owners to follow suit. In many cases, new paint and removal of inappropriate materials covering transom windows or poorly scaled awnings would make a significant difference. Secondary and rear entrances to downtown buildings should be studied to see if their appearance can be enhanced, or if niche opportunities exist for outside patios or courtyards off alleyways. The south side of Main Street may offer the best opportunity, from a visual and access standpoint, for these opportunities when approached from the governmental complex along South 1st and 2nd streets.

**Review Sign Code and Ensure that it is Retail Friendly and Consistent with Architectural Character and Materials:** The “lost art of sign making” is returning to those downtowns that have successfully re-introduced more pedestrian friendly amenities and specialty retailing. Montrose should examine its sign code to ensure that opportunities exist to introduce high quality hand-painted signs that are of appropriate scale to their buildings compatible with historic building facades. This is especially true if Main Street’s highway status is swapped with the newly completed San Juan Parkway via the city’s negotiations with the Colorado Department of Transportation (see Long-Term recommendations below). This will afford an opportunity to move from an auto oriented, highway-scaled signage to more intimate, pedestrian friendly signage.

**Look Closely at Which Blocks**
Would be Converted to One-Way Streets: The effort to designate several existing two-way streets downtown as one-way only should be re-examined. It may be appropriate to consider a one-way loop in front of the Post Office, but generally speaking, the effort to designate other one-way streets downtown runs counter to national trends recognizing that two-way streets slow traffic, encourage scanning of retail businesses on both sides of the street while driving, and support more pedestrian friendly amenities.

Add Grass & Greenery to the Park at Townsend & Main: The current corner pocket-park at Townsend & Main may attract more spontaneous usage by the public if its appearance were softened a little to accommodate some green grass & planting. Other opportunities to introduce green elements to downtown should be explored.

Continue to Pursue Grant Opportunities to Improve Trail Systems and their Linkages to Downtown: The city and its downtown partners should continue to access grants from sources like Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Colorado State Trails Program, and the Colorado Health Foundation Healthy Living grants to improve access to downtown via local trails systems and facilitate linkages with broader regional systems. This would create even more ways to access the downtown area.

LONG-TERM

Support the San Juan/Main Street Swap with CDOT: Downtown business and property owners should support the city’s efforts to swap the jurisdiction of Main Street and the new San Juan Parkway. This would help divert most truck and heavy vehicle traffic from Main Street to the bypass and begin to limit the negative impacts of highway designation on Main Street. Efforts to plan for this transition should begin in earnest, with an eye toward slowing traffic on Main Street in order to introduce more pedestrian friendly amenities to the downtown commercial core.

Analyze the Pros & Cons of Widening the Sidewalks on Main Street. If the Main Street/San Juan swap occurs, the city should study the benefits of widening the sidewalks on Main Street in order to accommodate new streetscape elements (decorative pavers, benches, planters and period streetlights, etc.), outdoor patio dining, and additional curb bulb-outs that accommodate greenery and the wonderful public art on display downtown. It may also be possible to introduce diagonal parking on Main Street, which would eliminate more dangerous parallel parking (see below).

Conduct a Parking and Traffic Flow Audit Downtown: A thorough parking and traffic flow analysis should be undertaken to quantify the actual number, location and usage of parking spaces in the downtown area (both curbside parking and parking lots). This study could also help determine barriers to accessing businesses from existing parking, the need for improved directional signage, and help improve public understanding of available parking options. The study could also determine the net parking gain associated with re-introducing diagonal parking downtown (see sidewalk widening recommendation).

PROMOTION

Promotion involves defining an image for the downtown and marketing that to people within and beyond the community.

Downtown Montrose must be promoted as the heart of the city. When you say ‘Downtown Montrose,’ people think quality service, unique niche stores, and a sense of place. Highlight your downtown and the businesses and amenities that exist. Develop downtown event objectives and review new events to determine what objectives are being met. Complete the Strategic Events Matrix provided in Appendices as a community building event for businesses, property...
owners, downtown employees, and residents.

Develop a downtown directory of stores and the products that they specialize in. Add a map to help people find the library, city and county buildings, stores they need, and the closest parking lots. Sell advertising space to all downtown businesses to pay for maps and signage, and/or use a portion of the Retail Sales Enhancement funds. Include a calendar of downtown events, store hours, special offers, and “coming soon” events.

Meet with the Black Canyon park rangers and discuss the option of having a guided historic tour downtown that ties into events that happened in Montrose and the Black Canyon. Seek National Parks funding to support your efforts.

Plan a beer garden fundraiser in Centennial Plaza. Ask local artisans to show work, local performers to perform, and invite the whole community downtown once a week.

Plan for low-cost events downtown to build on momentum – Start today! Continue to build on the use of student participation in decorating/cleaning up downtown. Develop some community building events like a “What is Montrose” scavenger hunt searching store windows for the best drawing/representation of Montrose; or "Montrose Clean Up Day" where each high school class cleans a block and the class with the cleanest block is given an award of some kind.

Montrose businesses are lucky to have a city that is willing to contribute to the promotion, attraction, and retention of businesses. While financial support from the city has historically been strong, it is not guaranteed and should be considered provisional. By broadening the pool of funding sources while reducing operating costs, business support organizations will increase substantially and reduce reliance on any one source.

Businesses, industries, institutions, and residents represent a significant source of potential revenue for business support organizations. Don’t let a membership organization fail due to business dependence on funds from the city. If Montrose businesses have paid memberships in the past to support the work of an organization, it is important to understand what the services are that the businesses are willing to pay for. The city should support business services that businesses themselves deem valuable enough to pay for. Develop a list of potential donors and their contribution/membership level. Develop an informational piece tailored to them, describing the contributions downtown Montrose makes to the community and reasons that those non-downtown entities should support downtown.

CLOSING REMARKS

After the CRP presentation on Friday night, one of the presenters remarked: “That was amazing. We had the City Council, the Board of County Commissioners, and about 100 people come down on a Friday night to hear about ways to improve downtown Montrose. If they can keep up that level of interest, this will be the best city in Colorado.”

The key is “If they can keep up that level of interest.” To do that, downtown needs to get organized. A DDA can help with that. A Plan of Development can help with that, and this report can be a major part of the Plan.
THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS POSSIBLE

- City of Montrose
- Mayor and City Council
- Montrose Chamber and VCB
- Mesa State College
- Montrose County Planning
- Business & Property Owners
- Hospital
- Residents
- Library district
- Seniors, residents
- Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Real Estate Professionals
- Montrose Improvement Team
- Downtown Heart of the City Committee
- Main in Motion Committee
- MAMA
- Montrose Economic Development Commission

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APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF FUNDS/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Colorado Municipal League (CML) disseminates a wide variety of publications that might be of interest to Montrose.

Additionally, the contact at the DOLA Office of Smart Growth is: Andy Hill, 1313 Sherman St., Rm. 521, Denver, CO 80203, (303) 866-3785, phone (303) 866-4819, fax andy.hill@state.co.us, www.dola.colorado.gov/osg, A financing mechanism matrix can be found at http://dola.colorado.gov/dlg/resources/publications.html. Scroll down to the Special Districts section and click on “Districts and Alternate Financing Mechanisms.”

GENERAL INFORMATION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, FUNDING

American Institute of Architects (AIA), publications, architects, etc.
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), Landscape Architecture magazine
- Colorado Brownfields Association – Environmental assessments and grants
- Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI), technical assistance, Colorado Main Street program
- Colorado Historical Society (historic surveys, preservation, tax credits, etc.)
- Colorado Preservation Inc. (advocacy, state preservation awards, etc.)
- Department of Local Affairs (technical assistance, Energy Impacts Assistance grants, Community Development Block grants, etc.)
- Downtown Idea Exchange/Downtown Promotion Reporter publications
- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Trust Fund (parks, trails, recreation, open space grants)
- US Department of Housing & Urban Development (Housing development, HUD Economic Development Initiative grants, etc.)
- Historic Georgetown, Historic Boulder, Historic Denver, Inc. (organizational development for advocacy, building restoration projects)
- International Downtown Association (IDA)
- League of Historic American Theaters (successful preservation, adaptive re-use projects, national conferences & workshops)
- Market Analysis (many good private consultants)
- National Main Street Center (National Town Meeting on Main Street-Baltimore; publications on Organization, Design, Promotions, & Economic Restructuring)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation (small grants, Preservation magazine)
- RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship www.rupri.org Support practice-driven research and evaluation and facilitate shared learning among practitioners, researchers and policy makers.
- State Historical Fund (grants for surveys and historic preservation)
- TEA-21 Enhancements (grants for trails, transportation corridors, adaptive re-use of bridges, rail corridors, etc.)
- Traditional Building magazine
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)

Visit:
- Littleton (gateways, maintenance of civic functions downtown, facade loans, signage, maintenance & cleanliness, etc.);
- Loveland (historic theater, public art, compact similar-size downtown); Lamar (authentic prairie downtown, new businesses serving emerging Hispanic markets, etc.);
- Gunnison (arts center, retail mix, Main Street as highway, etc.),
- Montrose (special events, bookstores, restaurants, etc.),
- Grand Junction (wayfinding signage, parking solutions, theater(s), public art, DDA, etc.); Longmont (wayfinding signage, streetscaping, etc.);
- Greeley (building restorations, civic uses, design guidelines);
- Durango (heritage tourism, design guidelines, riverfront uses); Arvada (design guidelines, special events, streetscape, etc.)
APPENDIX 2: MAP OF PROPOSED DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY