



Green River Strategic Plan Phase I: Visioning

Green River, Utah

June, 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Introduction

Recognizing the need for additional economic activity and community development investment, the City of Green River (the “City” or “Community” when also referring to the immediately surrounding area) commissioned a Strategic Plan (the “Plan”) in the Spring of 2017. The goal of the Plan is to orient City leadership and the community at large to key, catalytic projects that have the potential of generating new vibrancy, responsible population growth, and economic prosperity. Unlike many rural communities, Green River benefits from key strategic advantages, including transportation infrastructure, natural assets including world-renowned scenery and the Green River. The challenge the City faces is how to prioritize potential investment and growth opportunities, given the limited resources and tax base that the Community currently has.

The appearance of many potential investment opportunities, combined with the limited resources of the City and a risk-averse population, have created a dynamic sometimes referred to as “paralysis by analysis.” In other words, the uncertainty of which option will prove most successful, has prevented proactive investments from occurring. As a result, few strategic investments have occurred in recent decades and the built environment reflects the lack of investment and many properties along the main corridors of the community are vacant and blighted. However, with a galvanizing vision, an actionable detailed strategic plan of action, and implementation follow-through, Green River has a tremendous future.

Community Assessment

A community assessment was undertaken to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Community in context of undertaking catalytic projects and making investments to improve the quality of life of residents. The assessment process included private interviews with forty-five local residents and stakeholders, two public meetings, two separate visits to the community, and a review of prior reports and assessments conducted by the City by local non-profits.

Interview Results

Local stakeholders were interviewed and asked to provide their ideas and opinions regarding the strengths of the Community and what they would like to see happen in terms of future growth and development. Transcripts from the interviews were analyzed, and key topics were identified and quantified. Results of the interviews are summarized in a word cloud. The most frequently discussed topics include outdoor recreation, tourism, Moab, agriculture, and the power plant. The context and discussion surrounding these topics is included within the body of this section. The overwhelming perception and sentiment that was expressed in the interview process is that the City is not living up to its potential, and there are lots of opportunities for growth. While the individuals that participated in the interview process expressed that there is a group of people that don’t want to see the community grow, nearly everyone that was interviewed expressed a desire to see growth occur. There were varying opinions regarding which types of growth are preferred, and these differences are discussed in greater detail below.

Impact of Prior Economic Development Attempts

Over the last several decades, a number of large industrial projects have almost come to Green River, only to wind up in other locations. These near-misses appear to have caused the Community to lose some degree of confidence in itself as evidenced by the slow decline of the population and economic activity in spite of the abundant local opportunities. The painful memories of past attempts will make future attempts more difficult, but can be overcome if there is a shared vision amongst the Community regarding the future of the City.

Key Assets

Through the interview process, local residents identified the key assets of the Community that they would like to see developed in a more comprehensive way. The assets highlighted within this section is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of assets, but is directed toward the key assets and strengths that make the Community unique, and serve as the foundation of future development efforts. The assets highlighted and discussed include outdoor recreation opportunities such as National and State Parks, scenic vistas, and the Green River. Transportation infrastructure, and the remote, rural location of the Community are also highlighted.

Key Goals and Desired Outcomes

Through the interviews and visioning process, trends were identified as they relate to key goals, or desired outcomes that local stakeholders would like to see accomplished through the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Although it was not intended to turn out this way, each of the key goals can be described with a word that starts with the letter “A”.

The First A – Aspiration

Many local stakeholders shared stories, or anecdotal evidence of how residents, and alarmingly the youth, seem satisfied with the status quo and are not actively seeking ways of improving the City or their own financial circumstances. There appears to be an aspiration gap, thereby reducing the number of residents that are investing in new businesses, or that are proactively trying to improve the Community.

The second A – Appearance

The appearance of a community is often the things that visitors remember, and in that regard, visitors currently do not get a great impression of the City. There is an overabundance of abandoned, or nearly abandoned blighted properties that paint a negative picture for visitors, which includes potential investors and business owners. Before a new industrial employer comes to a community, the plant manager will often visit and one of the last questions before a final decision is made is “Do I want to relocate myself and my family to this community?” If the answer is no, then the plant will likely go somewhere else. The appearance issues need to be addressed before the City will be able to truly compete for private investment.

The Third A – Awareness

Green River has many of the same assets and opportunities as Moab, yet the City largely only receives overflow traffic from travelers on their way to other places because of a lack of awareness. A cohesive strategy of communicating the potential and strengths of Green River will help overcome the awareness gap.

The Fourth A – Assimilation

35% of the City’s population is Hispanic, yet this subsection of the population is largely absent from civic engagement, and business

ownership. Efforts and initiatives are needed to be able to bridge barriers and create a cultural dynamic that is inclusive and supportive to minorities.

The Fifth A – Attachment

Multiple stakeholders that were interviewed expressed a desire to see balanced economic growth. One of the most effective strategies to grow industry and commercial opportunities in conjunction with tourism and outdoor recreation is to create opportunities for memorable experiences that create an attachment to the Community. There are several examples of communities that have leveraged their outdoor recreation assets to attract employers and private investment. With a targeted focus on using outdoor recreation as a means to attract additional economic activity, Green River can grow its economy in a balanced manner.

The Sixth A – Acquisitions

A surprising number of business owners in Green River are approaching retirement age without a clear plan in place to transition the business to a new owner. Circumstances vary, but one of the evidences of the previously described aspiration gap is that there are few qualified, motivated individuals in the Community that are in a position to be able to acquire businesses from owners that are ready to retire. Increasing the entrepreneurial and business support services in the Community will help train up qualified owners. Additional concepts and solutions are outlined.

Catalytic Projects and Recommendations

The findings of the interviews and knowledge regarding market trends within the broader economy were combined and resulted in the identification of eight catalytic projects that have the potential of addressing the concerns and accomplishing the goals highlighted by local stakeholders. Each of these projects is designed

around one of three areas of focus, which include 1.) Community Development; 2.) Economic Development; and 3.) Workforce Development. The eight recommendations are outlined within the body of this section, including the context of why each recommendation is a compelling solution for the City.

Next Steps

This report is the first phase of a three-phase Strategic Planning process. Subsequent phases will gather additional demographic data, analyze the institutional capacity of the City to take on catalytic projects, and an implementation plan on how to approach each recommendation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals and groups provided insight in the preparation of the Green River Strategic Plan, and their contributions were critical to its development:

The City of Green River Staff, Mayor and City Council
Emery County Tourism
Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments
Blue Castle Holdings, Inc. – Aaron Tilton
Aaron Farmer
Allen Burns
Amy Wilmarth
Ben Coomer
Bryan Meadows
Cathy Gardner
Chris Dunham
Chris Lezama
Cindy Bowerman

Commissioner Keith Brady
Conae Black
Don Meadows
Doug Moreno
Ethan Migilori
Gary and Kelly Orona
Greg Vetere
Jackie Nelson
Jeremy Jukes
Joanna Ecker
Jordan Lenard
JR Jones
Julie Steuer
Justin Queen
Kacey Fluckey
Kathy Brady
Kathy Ryan
Kunal Sah
Kerry Goldman
Kim McFarlane
Kirk Dunham
Lamar Guymon
Lee Thayn
Maria Sykes
Mayor Pat Brady
Michael Bryant
Paula Dunham
Penney Riches
Royd Hatch

Scott Banasky
Steph Crabtree
Stuart Morris
Tim Glen
Tina Carter
Travis Bacon
Walt Maldonado

Better City will continue to interview additional stakeholders and community members as more come forward to participate in the strategic planning process. Better City will also hold additional roundtable discussions and public meetings in future project phases.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

BRIEF COMMUNITY HISTORY

The City's most recent General Plan (adopted in 2014), provides a great detailed history of the Community. It will be helpful to review a few key elements of the City's history to set the context of the Plan.

Green River traces its modern roots back to the Spanish Trail, and the community served as a critical river crossing point for travelers and explorers on their trek further West. Agriculture played a role in the early days of the City, and some of the local irrigation canals that are still in use today were reportedly dug in the mid-1800's.

The City, which was officially incorporated in 1906, has been plagued by several economic booms and busts, including a short-lived boom induced by the railroad, a fruit boom, a series of Uranium booms, and another boom induced by the creation of the Green River Launch Complex (the USAF experimental missile base). These economic booms brought with them periods of economic prosperity, population growth, and stories of how a few lucky individuals cashed out big and made a great fortune. But each boom also brought with it a significant bust that has tested local resources and fighting spirit. The history of economic booms and busts is an important factor in the City's history, and has far reaching implications for why the City finds itself in its current state.

It is interesting to note that as of the time of this writing, 101 years after Green River was incorporated and nearly 200 years after the area was explored by modern society, the City is still known for the two things that it was originally settled for: as a stopping point

for travelers, and agriculture. The modes of transportation and type of agriculture have both changed over the years, but the community has consistently reverted back to these two items whenever one of the resource booms subsided. However, the past doesn't necessarily have to be a prologue moving forward, and Green River has the potential to build new economic drivers to establish a new identity that is independent of the boom and bust cycles of the past.

METHODOLOGY

The community assessment portion of the strategic plan was carried out through a series of interviews with Community stakeholders, business owners, civic leaders, elected officials, non-profit organizations, and long-time residents. During each of these interviews, individuals were asked to provide their ideas and opinions regarding the strengths of the Community, the opportunities for growth, and priorities for economic and community development. In total, forty-five individuals were interviewed and their names are included in the acknowledgements.

Better City also hosted a public meeting on March 29th, 2017 where participants were invited to participate in a visioning discussion, including live polling to help prioritize potential projects and investments. A round-table discussion was also held on the evening of March 30th, 2017 with stakeholders to take a deeper dive into the interview results, and discuss potential areas of focus to be included within the Plan.

In addition, previous studies and reports provided by the City were reviewed, including the City's 2014 General Plan, branding assessment, secret shopper assessment, and various assessments and analyses completed by the local community development focused non-profit organization, Epicenter. These prior documents provided additional context, and in many cases, the suggestions

an interest in seeing new businesses within the tourism industry, including guides and outfitters for bicycles, ATV's, etc. and properties designated for vacation rentals. Many residents expressed that the Community has the potential to establish itself as a recreation hub, and were very hopeful and optimistic that it would become such.

However, there were other individuals that mentioned outdoor recreation and tourism in a negative light, not wanting the Community to become overrun by visitors. One sentiment expressed frequently was "We don't want to become another Moab." In digging deeper, individuals with this sentiment specifically referenced the congestion and commercialization that has changed the cultural identity of Moab. Also, individuals pointed out that the tourism industry is often associated with low-income wages.

The solution to these differing opinions is balanced growth. An economy based entirely on tourism is not healthy, and brings with it many of the negative issues observed in Moab. At the same time, tourism can be a source of exposure to investors and business owners which can in turn lead to private investment within the City. By focusing on balanced growth through strategies that will be outlined later in this document, the Community can grow outdoor recreation and tourism while also growing other sectors of the economy.

Similarly, polarized discussions occurred surrounding industrial development, and especially the nuclear power plant and oil refinery projects. These projects are outside the control of the local residents because they are now almost wholly reliant upon global market forces. Therefore, an in-depth discussion regarding these projects will not be included in this Phase of the Plan, except to state that tourism and industrial developments are not necessarily mutually exclusive. While some types of heavy industrial

activity may limit certain types of outdoor recreation, there are other industrial developments that can occur within the region without detracting from the tourism industry. These types of industrial projects should be prioritized.

Natural gas was mentioned quite frequently, in the context that it is a major detriment to the ability of the Community to attract new industrial growth. The City has invested significant time and resources in exploring the best options of bringing natural gas to the Community. At the time of this writing, the City recently secured a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to fund a feasibility study that will identify the most cost effective strategy in bringing this important element of infrastructure to the Community.

IMPACT OF PRIOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ATTEMPTS

One of the topics that was mentioned repeatedly throughout the interview process was the many potential industrial projects that are in various stages of development. The City, and its contracted industrial development consultant, have made great strides in preparing a mega-industrial park, and the site has received interest from various industrial users. The largest, and by far most visible of these potential investments is the Blue Castle Energy project, the 1.5+ gigawatt nuclear power plant that has been under development for the better part of the last decade. The project has support from key groups, including some environmental advocates who see nuclear as the only viable option to replace the nation's reliance upon fossil fuels. Yet the project has been under constant attack from other groups that oppose nuclear development. At the time of this writing, every major legal battle that has been raised has been successfully defeated by the Blue Castle Energy team, but local residents still expressed a great deal of uncer-

tainty concerning the project. The nuclear power plant, its implications, and potential impacts will be discussed in greater detail later in the Plan.

Additional economic development projects mentioned during the community outreach efforts include two different oil refineries, and rumors of additional major investments. In addition to the current projects that are reported to be under development, residents were quick to cite a list of various projects that were planned for, anticipated, but ultimately failed to come, or left shortly after an initial investment.

The unfortunate outcome of many of these previous attempts at economic development projects in the region has placed a cloud of skepticism over many residents regarding the ability of the community to close a deal with a large project. At the same time, the possibility that a big project will come has other residents holding out on making investments, improvements, or selling land at reasonable prices due to the possibility that if by chance the power plant or a similar project were to come, their holdings would instantly appreciate by a substantial margin. It was summed up by one local individual that the Community is “...being held hostage...” by the possibility of a large project. Despite the challenges and differences in perception, nearly everyone who participated in the interviews and public meetings wanted to see growth happen in one form or another. Due to the painful memories of the projects that weren’t successful, future attempts are going to be more challenging because there will be a segment of the population that will doubt and downplay progress right up to the point that a project is fully operational.

The challenging reality of economic development is that not every effort will become a success, and many opportunities need to be pursued, often simultaneously, in order to secure one project. The

City and its residents would benefit from additional educational outreach to inform them of economic development initiatives, timelines, etc. Most importantly, the public should be better informed via clear communication of expectations and challenges of ongoing projects, as well as the benefits of continued efforts. With a strong, shared vision regarding the future of the City, the negative memories of previous attempts can be overcome.

KEY ASSETS

Economic development is most impactful if it builds on opportunities and resources that already exist within the City and the region. For example, building or expanding on an existing industry or market opportunity is much easier than attempting to recruit or start a venture within an entirely new industry that doesn’t have a history, or natural advantage with the location. Economic growth and development is inherently difficult, but results are more achievable, and sustainable when investments are natural progressions from existing resources. The following examination of the key assets of Green River is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every asset of the Community, but rather is focused on the critical assets that will play a critical role in the long-term development of the City in terms of economic and community development.

Outdoor Assets

Green River benefits from close proximity to some of the most recognizable landscapes in all of North America. Arches, Canyonlands, and Capitol Reef, three of the “Mighty Five” National Parks within Southern Utah, are located within 80 miles of Green River. These National Parks receive millions of visitors each year, many of whom pass through Green River on their way to or from one of the Parks. Yet the City has historically served as overflow

capacity for other communities, such as Moab, that have more effectively capitalized on National Park traffic.

Although less known, the City is also ideally located near several State Parks and other natural features that have the potential of drawing more visitors. Specifically, Goblin Valley State Park, the San Rafael Swell, and the Green River itself are under-utilized assets that suffer from a lack of awareness due to the difficulty of competing with marketing momentum that has built up surrounding Moab.

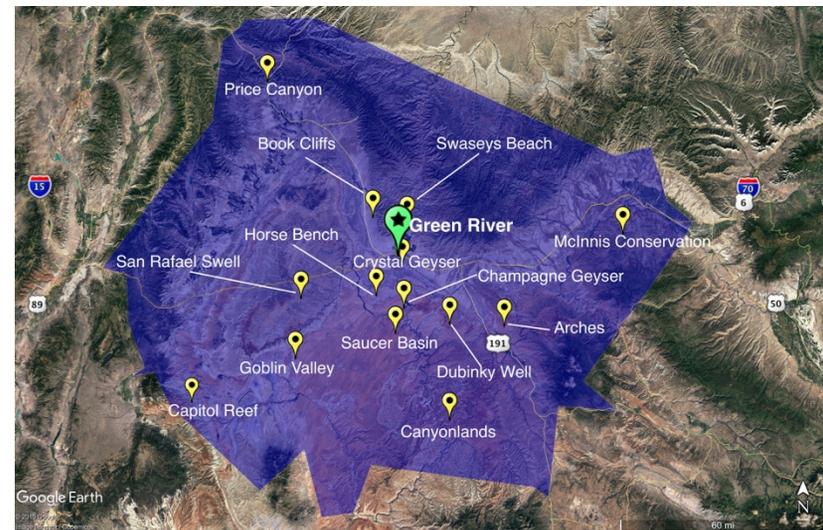
The importance of the Green River itself cannot be overemphasized. It is a critical source of water (for consumption, agriculture, and industry), cultural identity, recreation, and is the lifeline of the Community. A generation ago, development and improvements adjacent to the banks of a river was often viewed as a liability. As a result, many communities neglected their waterways, letting the banks become overgrown and inaccessible.

Today, with improvements in erosion control, water storage, flood mitigation, engineering, and a shift in development priorities, river-front property is now one of the most sought after development opportunities. There are many examples of successful development and redevelopment projects across the country of the last 25 years that have been focused on water and rivers. Examples include Pueblo, CO, the Riverwalk District in Reno, NV, and the Ogden River restoration project in downtown Ogden, UT. These developments have revitalized communities, contributed to the health and ecology of the rivers, and most importantly have created economic drivers that have attracted additional investment.

The stretch of the Green River that runs through the City has largely been neglected, and much of it is overgrown and inaccessible.

While many challenges for development exist, including diverse ownership, the Emery-Grand County line, and environmental considerations, the development of the River corridor is one of the most important priorities for the City to undertake. Specific concepts and development initiatives will be explored later in the Plan.

Map 1 highlights the ideal position of the City relative to outdoor recreation activities and its potential to serve as a basecamp for regional activity. The blue shape represents that area that is accessible within an 80-mile drive from the City.



Map 1: Green River - Basecamp for Adventure

Infrastructure

Lack of transportation infrastructure is typically one of the most challenging obstacles for a rural community to overcome in terms of developing new opportunities for economic growth. Whether it is shipping raw goods in, or finished products out, railroad and the

Interstate highway system play a critical role in economic opportunity. In this regard, the City has a tremendous advantage over similarly sized rural communities because it has access to rail, and I-70. The City is currently involved in recruiting industrial users that would be able to take advantage of the transportation infrastructure.

Remote Location

While some view the remote location of the community as a weakness or liability, it also has the potential to be a strength. The remote location of the City has played a significant role in the current economic ecosystem as there are many businesses that capitalize on travelers that are gearing up for the 100+ mile journey along the Interstate to get to the next gas station or restroom.

The remote location of the City also allows for lots of exploring within the adjacent public lands. The success of the National Parks to the southeast of the City have largely pulled attention away from the tremendous assets that are in the immediate proximity of Green River. As was pointed out in the City and County's recent branding initiative conducted by Hub Collective, the City has the potential to appeal to a significant subsection of the tourism industry that is looking to explore in solitude, rather than mingle with large crowds.

KEY GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

The results of the interviews and initial public meetings were reviewed, analyzed, and distilled into six key goals, or desired outcomes that will result from the successful implementation of the new Strategic Plan. Although the initial intention wasn't to fit the

key goals into a box of easily remembered words, it just so happened that the key goals can all be described by a series of words that all begin with the letter "A". These six key goals or outcomes form the basis of recommended catalytic projects.

THE FIRST A – ASPIRATION

In a recent survey administered to grade-school aged students in Green River, students were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up. Such an exercise is common among grade schools, and often brings with it a glimpse of the aspirational goals of children who are dreaming of the big things they hope to accomplish in life. "Astronaut," "Firefighter," "Police officer," "Teacher," "Scientist" or "Millionaire" are the responses that you would expect from this age group. While not usually interpreted as a formal declaration of an intended course of post-secondary educational pursuits, these responses provide an opportunity for students to dream big, and for educators and parents to foster discussions of reaching for the stars and making a difference in the world. Local educators that participated in the survey, or who observed the outcome, were alarmed that a surprising number of responses came back with low-paying service jobs: "Dish-washer," "Waitress," "Restaurant Cook," etc. The last several decades of economic stagnation among the adults of the community has trickled down to the rising generation. Rather than aspiring to break the trend of generational poverty, some students appeared to have bought into the idea that their future is limited by the current status quo, and that they would be working the same types of jobs that their parents are involved in.

This discussion is not intended to downgrade or belittle those that are involved in these service jobs, because they are necessary in many regards and have been a critical form of economic activity within the Community. However, a healthy economy is reliant

upon new growth, new business startups, and entrepreneurs willing to take risks that fuel that growth. It is unrealistic to expect outside entrepreneurs to swoop in with projects that they want to carry out in Green River. Those may come, and the Community needs to seek opportunities to attract those projects, but sustainable economic growth requires home-grown entrepreneurship. It starts with local residents seeing an opportunity, and then having the confidence to invest. Skills can be learned, and mentors can help new entrepreneurs avoid a lot of mistakes, but the critical component that appears to be missing in Green River is the aspiration of creating a brighter and more economically satisfying future, and the attendant qualities of confidence and hope that the aspiration is feasible.

The local school system has taken steps to inspire the rising generation, and has recently started programs where students are taken on field trips to institutions of higher learning to gain exposure to new potential careers. The proactive approach of the school system is an important component, but to truly make an impact and increase the aspirational desires of the Community, the City leadership, current business owners, and especially parents need to become more heavily invested in inspiring the rising generation to dream big.

THE SECOND A – APPEARANCE

No matter how wonderful the outdoor or scenic assets of a community are, visitors and potential new residents often remember and characterize a community by the appearance of its downtown. In a sense, the downtown serves as the signature of the city, something that is easily recognized and reflects on the Community as a whole. On that note, Green River's signature needs some work. Many outside factors and poor planning decisions decades ago have led to the current situation, which collectively can be

summed up by stating that the development momentum of the City has been transferred from the downtown area and Main Street to the west freeway interchange and hotel district. Main Street, and the downtown area including the intersection of Main Street and Broadway, have not reinvented themselves sufficiently enough to draw traffic and economic activity.

As economic activity has decreased, property owners have had less flexibility to invest in their properties. Years of accumulated deferred maintenance, along with unexpected events such as fires, have left buildings vacant and property owners little incentive to reinvest. This in turn decreases the vibrancy of the Main Street corridor, and the downward spiral continues to perpetuate. Several local businesses, including the Tamarisk Restaurant, Ray's Tavern, Savage Territory Art Gallery, The Melon Vine, and a few others have made significant and visible improvements. However, business owners, including those that have made recent improvements, will be uneasy to make significant investments unless they are reassured that the actions (or inactions) of their neighbors won't negatively impact their own property. It is unrealistic to expect new entrepreneurs, or even current business owners, to take on big projects without more efforts from the community as a whole to improve the appearance of the City.

This applies not only to businesses along the main commercial corridor, but to properties throughout the Community. As junk accumulates and property owners aren't required to remedy the situation, the bar is lowered inch-by-inch until it becomes nearly impossible to enforce City codes because "So-and-so hasn't been required to comply, so why should I?"

It not only impacts commercial developments, but it has an impact on industrial projects as well. Green River has been on the short

list on several occasions over the last several decades of large industrial projects that if they would have come to fruition, would have significantly altered the trajectory of the Community. However, most of them failed to come at the last minute, despite the best efforts of City staff and consultants. While landing an industrial user is a complex decision with many moving parts, the final decision is often an emotional one. Inevitably, the newly assigned plant manager who will be taking responsibility of the new facility will visit the finalist communities and sometimes spouses and families are brought along with. The final decision becomes one of “Is this where I would want to move my family?” If the appearance, amenities, or overall appeal of the community is lacking, the plant manager, and therefore the plant, will go somewhere else. It is very likely that Green River has missed out on some of the past industrial opportunities because the City wasn’t showcasing its true potential.

THE THIRD A – AWARENESS

The City is negatively impacted by a lack of awareness of all the incredible things that it has to offer. As was pointed out previously, the City is ideally located to serve as a basecamp to tremendous outdoor exploration and recreation opportunities, but Moab is so successful it has sucked the oxygen out of the region and captures most of the economic value. Several concepts of how to position Green River as another basecamp for the region will be explored in the recommendations section of this report.

THE FOURTH A - ASSIMILATION

The 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) administered through the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 35% of the City’s population is Hispanic. Yet, stakeholders reported, and the con-

sultants observed, that this group is not proportionally represented in civic activities. During each conversation or interview where this was brought up, local residents were quick to praise the immigrant population, and stated how the City would not be able to survive without them. The Schools, as well as the Green River CHEEER Coalition have made an emphasis of trying to increase participation of the Hispanic population in activities, and have seen moderate success. In order for the Community to thrive, additional investments need to be made to create a culture where all ethnicities are represented in business, civic, and educational activities.

It is a complex and challenging issue to tackle. Federal policies obviously have an impact, and the ideal scenario may not play out depending on national immigration policy reform. But in the meantime, creating opportunities for the Hispanic population to become more active and engaged within the legal framework that is currently available is a key goal that is necessary for the long-term sustainability of the Community.

THE FIFTH A – ATTACHMENT

In a global economy where the Internet allows you to work from anywhere in the world, how do people choose where to live? While individual responses may vary, including items such as “family and friends” or “convenience,” it boils down to attachment. Individuals choose to live and raise families in a particular area because they have formed a special attachment to the community and what it offers.

Green River is no different. Several business owners and residents that were interviewed reported that they initially did not intend to stay in Green River, but after coming to the City for one reason or another, they formed an attachment that has kept them here. Specific names will not be shared to respect privacy, but some of

the most important businesses in Town are owned and/or operated by individuals that are not originally from Green River. And if you go back as few as two or three generations, even more prominent businesses and families were transplants.

The challenge, and the key goal, is to create opportunities for visitors and potential residents to form strong attachments with the Community, leading them to relocate themselves, and their businesses, to the City. Outdoor recreation is an important and powerful tool in creating attachments. There are several high-profile examples of cities in the region that have leveraged outdoor recreation opportunities to attract permanent residents and businesses. Notable examples include Park City, UT; Steamboat Springs, CO; and Buena Vista, CO. These communities reinvented themselves as recreation destinations, and commercial development has followed because business owners and their employees want to live in a community that allows them to play and do the things they love. Green River is positioned to follow a similar trajectory.

A note on tourism and outdoor recreation – tourism and outdoor recreation are emphasized a lot in this portion of the Plan. The consultants acknowledge that tourism is not the end-all, and an economy based entirely on tourism is not ideal because most of the jobs are low-paying and seasonal. However, many of the things that attract tourists are the same things that appeal to permanent residents and business owners. By leveraging outdoor recreation and tourism, communities can use other people’s money to expand the tax base and create quality of life assets that attract commercial and industrial growth. A healthy economy is diverse, and tourism and outdoor recreation is a means to an end of improving the appeal of a community for investment. The key is to leverage improvements in tourism assets to attract diversified economic growth. This may

not occur on its own, and the Community will need to be proactive in recruiting diversified economic drivers.

THE SIXTH A – ACQUISITIONS

The sixth and final key goal has to do with the transition of existing businesses into the next generation of owners, or in another word, the acquisition of existing businesses by aspiring entrepreneurs. In discussions and interviews with local farmers and business owners, a surprising number of owners are approaching retirement years, yet don’t have a clear plan in place for transitioning the business to a new owner. In some cases, the initial plan was to transfer the business to a son or daughter, but the children have chosen a different career path and are not interested in taking on the family business.

The goal and desired outcome would be to cultivate entrepreneurs within the local population to help them gain the necessary experience and vision to be able to acquire ownership in these iconic local businesses. These deals may require creative structuring and non-traditional financing that may result in a slower transition for existing owners, but the risk of not proactively structuring these acquisitions is that more non-resident owners will acquire ownership. If this occurs, even more profits from local economic activity will leave the community, placing a strain on local resources. To the extent possible, business owners and schools need to work together to prepare and mentor a new generation of entrepreneurs.

CATALYTIC PROJECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As has been highlighted within this phase of the Plan, the City’s greatest challenge is not a lack of opportunities. In fact, it is quite

the opposite. The plethora of potential opportunities, and the cultural history of being acted upon by outside forces through economic booms has created an economic dynamic where minimal investment is occurring in new startups or business expansions. It is as though many potential entrepreneurs and residents have sub-consciously relegated their economic status to being reliant upon an outside force to make a major investment, and in the meantime, the status quo persists. At the core of the Strategic Plan vision is the need to identify a variety of tangible, exciting, and powerful projects that can be carried out in a proactive manner using local partnerships, coalitions, and talent. In this regard, the Community can rally around a vision that can be accomplished independent of an outside force making a once-in-a-generation sized investment.

The key catalytic projects also need to be structured in such a way that each success creates momentum and Community appetite for an additional investment. Community and economic development are never complete, and City leadership and residents need to constantly be investing, adapting, and reinventing themselves for the Community to remain relevant. To increase the likelihood of implementation, the Plan will focus on fewer, more impactful projects rather than a laundry list of potential topics that need to be addressed. As such, there may be some topics that were of interest to individuals that participated in the community engagement portion of the project, but that will not be highlighted as a catalytic project due to the need for the Community to prioritize and focus its limited resources on investments that will increase its tax base and institutional capacity to take on additional projects.

There are three main categories of possible projects, including 1.) Economic Development; 2.) Community Development; and 3.) Workforce Development. Each of the recommended catalytic pro-

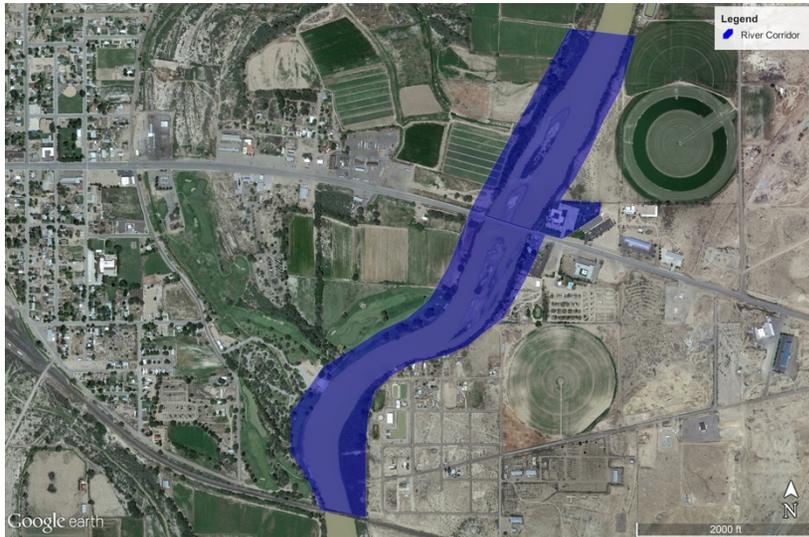
jects will focus on one of the key areas and is designed to accomplish one or more of the key goals and desired outcomes highlighted previously.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Riverfront Activation

As was discussed previously, the riverfront property of the Green River presents a powerful redevelopment opportunity that has the potential of changing the perception of the community from being an overflow for Moab, to a Community that is relevant, inviting, and confident. The primary goal of the riverfront development project is to better leverage the riverfront property within the municipal boundaries to create a powerful driver of economic activity.

Currently with few exceptions, the riverfront corridor through the City is overgrown, and inaccessible due to access, ownership, and other challenges (see Map 2).



Map 2: River Development Corridor

The Green River State Park has done an excellent job in beautifying their portion of the river, but the primary activity of the waterfront sections of the park is golfing, which only appeals to a small number of the overall visitor population that passes through the City every day during the busy season. Ideally, walkable and bikeable trails should be developed that stretch north and south along the river, including the State Park area. These trails should be designed to incorporate the commercial districts that include the City’s hospitality properties so that visitors can easily access the trails and the river. The corridor should also include waterfront access features, including beaches, a second boat ramp, and permanent water features such as a man-made kayak park. See Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 for examples of the types of improvements that should be considered. Ease of access will be a critical consideration, as this improvement will have the greatest impact if it is visible and accessible by visitors.



Source: Meridith112. www.flickr.com; used under Creative Commons license

Figure 2: River Development Concepts - Riverfront Park Benches



Source: Tony Kent. www.flickr.com; used under Creative Commons license

Figure 3: River Development Concepts - Walkable Trails



Source: Don Hankins. www.flickr.com; used under Creative Commons license

Figure 4: River Development Concepts – Walkable Trails

New, official meeting space should be included as part of the riverfront development efforts. The City is centrally located within southeastern Utah and is a natural meeting location for Federal and State government organizations, and business groups. The Museum currently hosts dozens of groups each year utilizing space that is intended for other purposes. The appeal of Green River as a meeting location would be even greater if a small conference center were built to specifically accommodate these types of groups and utilized a location along the river with access trails to the riverfront. Such a location and design would have the potential to be a competitive location for industry and commercial conferences. The conference space should be viewed and utilized as a way to help stabilize the seasonality of the community. For this to occur, groups and organizations will need to be targeted and recruited to hold meetings and events during non-peak times of the year.

Meeting spaces by themselves, especially in rural settings, are not self-sustaining ventures. Even in large cities, conference centers are usually subsidized; still, cities are willing to do so because of the positive externalities associated with being able to attract conference goers that spend money throughout the local economy. The most successful model of sustainable conference spaces, is through a public-private partnership. While the details vary case-by-case, the basic model is that the public and private sector invest together to build the conference space, but operations are turned over to a private operator for operations.

Under this model, the public-sector transfers operational risk to the private sector, whose profit motivations are necessarily to fully leverage and utilize the space. Under most circumstances, the private operator is also the operator of a hotel that is co-located with the new conference space. The hotel operator benefits from recruiting and hosting events at the conference space because they capture room revenue, which helps to subsidize the operators of the actual meeting space. Various forms of tax incentives will most likely be required to create a project structure that is enticing to the private sector partner. By investing together, the public sector gets what they are looking for, meeting space that can be leverage to attract events, and the private sector operator receives a financial structure that allows him or her to succeed. When properly structured, these public-private partners provide transparency, accountability, and align interests.

The detailed next steps to explore the riverfront activation will be outlined in a later phase of the Plan. However, as a basic framework, the creation of a new conference center would likely be initiated by the City through a request for qualifications (RFQ) process. The City will refine its goals, vision, and solicit qualifications from hospitality operators that are interested in taking on operations of the Center. The RFQ structure opens the doors for local

groups and businesses to respond, and the municipality can ultimately select the group that is the best fit for the City.

Specific sites for the riverfront development, including possible locations for a new conference center and hospitality product, will not be discussed at this point in the strategic planning process. Speculation regarding sites can be detrimental to the process, and at this point the goal is to adopt a shared vision, and the specifics of locations and sites will be worked out at a future date.

Community Cleanup

As highlighted in the Key Goals section of this phase of the Plan, the City is hindered by an overabundance of poorly maintained properties. Fires, business closures, and various other unplanned events have contributed to this dynamic. But part of it is also a result of a frugal mindset and not wanting to part with something that may come in handy later on, such as storing broken-down farm equipment for spare parts. There are multiple examples of properties within the City's commercial corridor that have been acquired at a steep discount, and are now being used as storage. Owners have minimal holding costs, and it is less expensive to use a main street property as an extra storage unit, than it would be to build something in a more appropriate location.

While much more could be said about the causes and the current condition, the bottom line is that it will be extremely difficult to sustain any concerted economic and community development investment strategy unless the appearance of the community is improved. The City has taken some important recent steps, such as hiring a new code enforcement officer who has taken a more proactive approach in resolving code violation issues. However, it appears that the City's current code and practices regarding enforcement have limited the impact that the code enforcement officer

could be having. These policies will be reviewed and recommendations will be provided as part of Phase II of this Plan.

Several stakeholders who participated in the interview process, including some that are among the biggest offenders of appearance code violations, offered the following suggestions on how they would like the City to approach a community-wide cleanup effort. It is important that this framework is the idea of the residents who will be impacted by it, because it increases the likelihood of it being accepted and sustainable.

1. **Start with the City's properties.** The City should allocate its resources first to ensure that all City-owned properties meet the code in an exemplary fashion.
2. **Assist those in need.** Have the Code Enforcement Officer approach property owners that are ill-equipped to remedy code violations due to age, poverty, lack of equipment etc. Determine what resources are necessary to accomplish the cleanup, e.g. heavy machinery, hauling equipment, manpower etc. Allocate City resources and personnel as available, and solicit volunteers to clean up the property. When possible, these cleanup efforts should be scheduled for the slow seasons (late fall and winter), when farmers and other equipment owners will have the ability to allocate resources and help in the cleanup.
3. **Expand efforts to the rest of the Community.** Approach remaining property owners and seek creative solutions using positive incentives, rather than negative ones.

It is important that the City pursue this type of framework, so that it has credibility in approaching property owners. While some may be reluctant at first to volunteer, or to see City resources allocated to help private owners, it is important to understand that if this issue remains unresolved it negatively impacts the entire community. Waiting for the problem to fix itself will not work. A

proactive solution is needed, and that means that the City is going to have to take a leading role until cultural norms and pressures shift.

The City should also consider designating quarterly “City Cleanup” days. Currently, residents reported being aware of an annual cleanup in conjunction with the Melon Days celebration. With the current backlog of appearance issues within the City, an annual event is not sufficient and more cleanup days should be organized.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Value-Added Food Manufacturing

One of the most sustainable methods of increasing economic activity within a region is to focus on expanding existing value chains. This means looking at businesses and industries that are already within the economy, and looking for additional upstream or downstream business opportunities that build upon the existing industry. When this approach is utilized effectively, relationships and expertise that are already present within the local economy can be leveraged to create new jobs and additional market activity.

Phase II of the Plan will include a more thorough demographic and industry analysis and may reveal additional insights, however, an obvious opportunity that warrants exploration is expanding the local agriculture value chain. The Community currently exports several types of agricultural products, including alfalfa, corn, and

livestock, but the area is most famous for melons. “Green River Melons” is a household name within Utah and surrounding states and the industry is important both economically as well as culturally. Currently, nearly all the melons that are sold by local growers are shipped out whole, with minimal processing. Because whole, unprocessed melons are sold, the local melon industry is completely reliant upon fresh melon market demand which hasn’t been as reliable in recent years as it was in decades past. Consumer preferences are also placing additional pressures on local growers, such as a push for seedless varieties and earlier harvest times.

One of the ways to create more value from the melon industry within the City, and to stabilize demand, is to extend the value chain, meaning, to use existing products as inputs for value-added processing. Melons, and watermelon in particular are known to have value beyond their use as a fresh product that is eaten during summer parties. Watermelon is high in lycopene, citrulline, and vitamins A and C. Watermelon, and watermelon extract have numerous documented health benefits including heart health,¹ muscle recovery for athletes², and decreased symptoms during menopause³.

Additional value-added products that already have commercial demand include watermelon seeds, (sprouted, shelled, and sold in bags like sunflower seeds) which have higher nutritional and protein content than almonds, and watermelon seed butter. Both of these products are available in online marketplaces such as Amazon, where watermelon seed butter has a retail price of greater

¹ Citrullus lanatus ‘sentinel’ (watermelon) extract reduces atherosclerosis in LDL receptor-deficient mice. Poduri, Aruna et al. Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry, Volume 24, Issue 5, 882 – 886.

² Watermelon Juice: Potential Functional Drink for Sore Muscle Relief in Athletes. Martha P. Tarazona-Díaz, Fernando Alacid, María Carrasco, Ignacio Martínez, and Encarna Aguayo. Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry 2013 61 (31), 7522-7528

DOI: 10.1021/jf400964r

³ Effects of watermelon supplementation on arterial stiffness and wave reflection amplitude in postmenopausal women. Figueroa A, Wong A, Hooshmand S, Sanchez-Gonzalez MA. Menopause. 2013 May;20(5):573-7. doi: 10.1097/GME.0b013e3182733794.

than \$2.40/oz., and sprouted seeds retail at approximately \$1.00/oz. at the time of this writing. Seed-based products are especially compelling, because local growers report that the seeded varieties appear to grow better in the Green River climate and are easier to maintain than their seedless cousins.

The rinds of the watermelon, which account for up to 30% of the weight of the melon, also have value. The rind is high in nutrients for use in extracts, but has also been used in food products including pickled rinds, which are popular in the American South, and fruit butter. In a peer-reviewed article appearing within the International Journal of Engineering Research and Technology, a research team reported that a fruit butter made entirely of watermelon rinds scored better in taste tests than the more traditional apple butter⁴.

Juices and wines are perhaps the most compelling value-added product that could be produced from Green River Melons. All three major growers within the Community reported that lots of melons go to waste every year because the peak harvest season often extends beyond the seasonal market demand. One grower estimated that in any given year, at least 1,000 tons of their melons go to waste, which is why the growers are willing to give so many away during the annual Melon Days celebration.

For illustration purposes, some rough high-level calculations were performed to see what the revenue potential would be for local value-added processing, starting with one grower's excess produce⁵. Assuming that the average melon weighs about 15 lbs., the 1,000 tons of wasted melons equates to approximately

130,000 melons that are unsold each year per grower. Using wine recipes found online, the unsold melons from one grower would be able to generate over 40,000 gallons of wine. Retail price for watermelon wine is approximately \$0.72/oz. and whole watermelon juice retails as high as \$0.48/oz.⁶ If the wasted melons were processed into wine and sold at retail prices, it would represent over \$12,000,000 of top-line revenue, or approximately \$6,000,000 at wholesale. For juice, there is less loss of product due to decreased processing, but the revenue per ounce isn't as high. Overall, the revenue potential at retail prices for juice is still significant, and is estimated at just under \$11,000,000, or wholesale revenue of approximately \$5,000,000. Estimating a conservative profit margin of 3% of gross sales, the value-added processing opportunity in Green River is tremendous.

To illustrate the power of value-added processing, the average whole watermelon often sells for approximately \$0.55/lb. at retail price, or as low as \$0.25/lb. on sale⁷. At the regular retail price, a 15 lb. watermelon would cost a consumer about \$8.25. Using the assumptions outlined above, if that same 15 lb. watermelon was processed into juice, it would have a retail price of approximately \$80.64, or \$90.85 as wine, not including the revenue from selling seeds or processed rinds.

It is unrealistic to assume that the market will instantly absorb as much melon juice and wine as Green River can produce, and growers should not attempt to swing the pendulum from fresh produce to 100% processed product. However, by starting with the excess or wasted produce first, the market can be built up over time.

⁴ Development of Watermelon rind incorporated Fruit Butter. Yadla, Aruna et al. International Journal of Engineering Research and Technology. ISSN: 2278-0181. Oct. 2013.

⁵ The analysis presented herein is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the business opportunity or a pro forma. Rather, it is presenting a business opportunity to set the table for additional analysis and due diligence.

⁶ Prices found on online retail shops, May 2017.

⁷ Prices based on historic prices of grocery markets in northern Utah.

The seasonality of the melon growing and harvesting season will be a challenge for a processing facility that will need to be addressed. One possible solution is to diversify the products to include other types of fruit and vegetable inputs from the surrounding region. Green River is ideally located for such an operation due to the transportation infrastructure that makes it easy to get raw goods in, and finished products back out.

It is not likely that this opportunity could be adequately pursued by one of the existing growers. The expertise needed to run a manufacturing, production and logistics facility is different than the expertise that it takes to grow world-class melons. Therefore, the value-added production facility should be operated by a third party in close collaboration with the growers. Ideally, relationships would be established with the existing growers where profits of the value-added processing could be shared with the growers in exchange for favorable raw input prices. That way the growers can benefit in the upside of the industry, without committing more capital and taking on more risk by investing in the production equipment.

This final point is critical. Several of the growers interviewed described dabbling in value-added processing to varying degrees, but ultimately none of them are currently participating in it directly due to the risk involved in investing in new equipment, and the complexity of operating the production facility in conjunction with the complicated nature of growing melons. If the Community collectively waits for the producers to capitalize on this opportunity, it will likely never occur. It needs to be undertaken by an ambitious entrepreneur, with full support of the City and Community. The strategy and approach of starting such a venture will be outlined in Phase III of the Plan.

Film Post-Production Studio

More than 800 films and TV shows have been filmed in Utah, and many of those have been filmed in south, and southeast Utah⁸. The iconic scenery of southern Utah draws in filmmakers for feature films, music videos, documentaries, and TV series. The Moab and Monuments Film Commission located in Moab and operated by Moab City currently captures a lot of regional market activity in terms of supporting film crews and providing limited working space. There appears to be enough interest and market activity to justify a film-focused business within Green River. While a more thorough market analysis is needed, one opportunity may be to establish a post-production studio where film producers and editors can have a centrally-located facility with the latest technology in terms of video editing, sound recording, etc. In an interview with local residents who have great film credentials and ties to the industry, additional needs within the industry were pointed out, including craft services (food and beverage on filming sets), equipment rentals, and general support staff. Green River residents have many potential resources readily available, such as land, horses, heavy machinery, and a strong work ethic that can help producers save costs.

Ideally the post-production studio would be located in downtown, in the Main Street and Broadway corridor where it can add vibrancy and help clean up a critical area of the Community. As a side note, many professionals in Hollywood as well as recording artists throughout the Country are often looking for places where they can “get away” yet still have access to recording and production studios if desired. Green River is off the beaten path enough to appeal to these professionals that are seeking an escape, but it

⁸ Visit Utah. <https://www.visitutah.com/things-to-do/arts-museums/filmed-in-utah>

would require a nice working location such as the one described in the preceding paragraphs.

Utah State University currently has a limited film production program, and if a film production studio is developed in Green River, USU should be approached regarding partnerships, or the possibility of establishing a satellite campus where film education courses could be taught in Green River, and the location could serve as a landing spot for students that are working on projects in the area.

Outdoor Adventure Outfitting

As described in the interview results section of the Plan, the residents of Green River love the outdoors. From river rafting, to hiking, biking, and motorbike/ATV adventures, the local crowd loves the thrill of living in one of the most diverse outdoor landscapes in the Country. Apart from river rafting offered by Holiday River Adventures and Colorado River and Trail Expeditions, there is minimal commercial activity surrounding the recreational opportunities that are available near the City. Within a few miles of the City, you can find slick-rock, beautiful canyons, and incredible scenic vistas. There is an opportunity for additional outdoor adventure businesses, which could include paddle boarding, bicycle rentals and guiding, ATV/UHV rentals and guiding, and hiking.

Almost everyone interviewed mentioned these assets, and opined that they would like to see businesses in the City that cater to these opportunities. However, those that have the experience or the ability to pull off the business in a way that will be successful, are often the same people that are busy operating other businesses in the City. Mentoring and partnering to assist new entrepreneurs is needed, as well as greater market awareness of the potential of the area. To that end, Gary and Kelly Orona, local res-

idents and proprietors of the Savage Territory art gallery have accumulated thousands of hours of B-reel footage, and thousands of images of outdoor and scenic treasures that would be excellent in promoting the area. Gary and Kelly mentioned that they have previously offered the City access to all of these visual assets for free to be used for promotion. The City should take them up on the offer, and package the footage and photos into promotional videos that will help drive traffic and establish Green River as a destination.

Broadway and Main Development

The corner of Broadway and Main Street is a critical focal point for the Community, and as such it needs to be developed in a memorable fashion. As it currently stands, all four corners are empty parking lots or abandoned and blighted buildings. As was highlighted in the interview results section, the Community would like to see the historic downtown thrive, and this most visible corner is the highest priority for redevelopment (see Map 3). This corner also features one of the most historic and recognizable buildings in town, the Bank Building on the northwest corner of the intersection. The Bank Building, although currently vacant, is a gem of the Community and many residents expressed a desire to see it redeveloped and occupied.



Map 3: Broadway Development Area

The challenge facing the historic downtown is that development momentum, and vehicle traffic, is concentrated on either end of the City near the freeway interchanges. The commercial activity that formerly anchored the downtown has shifted, leaving only a small version of what used to stand. However, there are some positive things in the downtown which will serve as the building blocks for new development. Specifically, Ray's brings a steady stream of visitors to the corner, and the addition of the Savage Territory art gallery creates additional vibrancy while the Melon Vine grocery store ensures consistent traffic from local residents. In order for a redevelopment effort within the historic downtown to succeed in the long run, it needs to focus on offering an experience that is unique from the commercial activity that is occurring at the freeway interchanges.

Another element that needs to be included in the historic downtown redevelopment is new housing. One of the best ways to ensure activity and foot traffic within a downtown environment is to create mixed-use developments where people are living and working in the downtown. For this reason, the proposed film post-production studio would need to be located within the downtown.

While the specifics would need to be determined through a more in depth feasibility study, the basic elements of the downtown redevelopment project would include:

- A phased approach, where a redevelopment project is undertaken on each of the corners of the Broadway and Main Street intersection, one at a time
- Begin with an analysis of the Bank Building to determine whether the building is a candidate for a historic preservation project
- Each building would ideally be two or three stories, built using architectural design and materials that are consistent with existing structures to maintain the historic feel of the area (see figure)
- The ground floor should feature commercial space, including retail and office as the market demand justifies
- Possible initial projects for the ground floor could include a small and minority business support center to encourage entrepreneurship, niche and tourism focused retail, or a micro-brewery/restaurant
- Second and third floors should be reserved for housing
- Subsequent phases should be undertaken as the prior phase becomes stabilized



Source: The City of Anthony, Kansas

Figure 5: Example of rural downtown development

These redevelopment projects will be complicated, and will likely require leveraging as many grants, foundations, tax credits, and non-traditional financing tools as possible. One possible way of financing the housing portion of the projects will be through low-income housing tax credits. This tax credit program can help housing projects to pencil that otherwise would not be feasible. The Consultants are not typically proponents of low-income housing tax credits because in some circumstances they can lead to the perpetuation of the problem they are attempting to solve. However, in communities with the low income and quality housing shortages that Green River has, there may be little difference between what qualifies as low-income housing rates, and what is considered the market rate. The closer these rates are to one an-

other, the less likely it is that the new development will cause unintended consequences on the free market's ability to respond to supply and demand.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Expand the High School's Alumni Mentorship Program

For a small Community, Green River does not lack when it comes to alumni that have gone on to accomplish impressive things. Through the interview process, local residents described numerous success stories, including individuals who have gone on to become famous musicians, successful business owners, and State-level public officials. Many of these bright and aspiring individuals left the Community several decades ago due to a lack of opportunity within the City, and have applied the values and skills they learned in a rural setting to great success. In an attempt to inspire a new generation of aspiring success stories, administrators and teachers at Green River High School are starting an alumni mentoring program where prominent alumni are invited back to the school to interact with students, tell their stories, and encourage local students to dream big. The program is still in its infancy, but it is a great concept and has the potential to address the aspiration gap described previously within this phase of the Plan. To help the program grow, the City and local residents should assist the school in identifying and recruiting alumni to participate.

In addition to home-grown success stories, Green River also has the potential to benefit from a network of prominent Utah officials and business owners that visit the City to utilize a local hunting ranch. The ranch owner, who was born and raised in the City, will host as many as forty CEOs a month during some parts of the year. These individuals are the "who's who" of Utah, and lead some of the most successful businesses and organizations in the region. As

reported by the local business owner, these visiting executives often fall in love with the community, and many of them come back year after year and frequent local restaurants.

This group of individuals should be approached about the possibility of establishing a program, or “club” wherein participants volunteer a few hours each year to take budding Green River students and entrepreneurs under their wing, providing mentorship and business advice. If structured the right way, this group of successful executives, who could be referred to as the “Green River Society” or something similar, could establish an even stronger attachment to the Community and their contribution would help address and eliminate the aspiration gap. There are other examples of similar programs, such as SCORE, which was founded as the Service Corps of Retired Executives. The SCORE Association as it is now called, has a worldwide network of experts that provide free business support and counseling to new entrepreneurs. A Green River version that utilizes individuals with local ties and visitors will have a tremendous impact on the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Community.

Business Owner and Startup Support Center

To encourage a new generation of entrepreneurs within the City, additional resources are needed to provide education, mentorship, and instill the entrepreneurial spirit within the Community. A business owner support and startup center could take many forms, such as a traditional Small Business Development Center administered through the SBA, or a Center of Excellence that is focused on a particular industry. One of the first items of business in establishing an entrepreneurial center in Green River will be to determine the structure and format that will best serve the Community. The Epicenter and other existing local non-profits may be

able to partner with the business support/entrepreneurial center to help provide insights into the types of businesses within the Community that will be able to address market needs and capitalize on existing opportunities.

One key area of focus for the business owner and startup center will be providing outreach and assistance to the Hispanic population. As stated previously, approximately 35% of the City’s population is Hispanic. This segment of the population is vitally important to the economy and culture of Green River, yet this group doesn’t proportionally participate in civic activities. One of the methods of creating more integration and collaboration between this population and the overall culture and economy of the City is to provide additional support for future Hispanic entrepreneurs. According to statistics provided by the US Census Bureau, the number of Hispanic-owned businesses in Utah grew from 9,238 in 2007 to 13,735 in 2012 which represents a 49% increase. For reference, over the same period of time, the total number of businesses within the State of Utah grew by 2%⁹. These Hispanic-owned firms create a lot of economic value for the State. Total revenue from Utah Hispanic-owned firms grew by 67%, or from \$1.3B to nearly \$2.2B from 2007 to 2012. With the right support, vision, and resources, the local Hispanic population has the potential to contribute more economically to the success of Green River.

⁹ American Fact Finder. US Census Bureau. Accessed May 2017.

NEXT STEPS

This document represents the first phase of a three-phase Strategic Planning process. Subsequent phases of the Plan will include an analysis on the City itself, including examining budgets, revenue sources, and institutional capacity to take on the initiatives outlined herein. Phase three is the implementation action plan, which will outline the pathway forward to take the vision from its current form as a concept, to actual projects on the ground that are benefiting the Community. The real value of this process is not the actual Plan, but the implementation of it.