

Grants BioPark

Economic Feasibility Study



WILSON
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Grants BioPark Economic Feasibility Study

Completed by

Wilson & Company, Inc., Engineers & Architects

for the

City of Grants, New Mexico

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Appendix A – Grants BioPark Economic Feasibility Study Survey and Survey Results

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Executive Summary

The Study team was tasked with analyzing the feasibility of recreational facilities and economic development in the Rio San Jose corridor to the southeast of Mesa View Elementary School, and to create a development vision based on that analysis. Due to several factors, the area is viewed as a potential focus area for outdoor recreation-focused economic development that would support and harness the growing momentum in the Grants region related to the outdoor recreation economy, which other planning efforts have identified as a major opportunity for the community. The term “BioPark” is used in the Study to refer to the potential recreational facilities and development in the Study Area.

The Study Area is currently mostly vacant because of historic flooding issues that have made development challenging there. However, drainage improvements in recent decades have significantly improved drainage conditions in the area, and as result, enhanced the area’s developability. In addition, the area is of interest to the City of Grants because of its proximity to the alignment of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT). The trail, which runs along Historic Route 66 through the Study Area, extends 3,100-miles along the Continental Divide from Mexico to Canada. The trail is still in development, and along much of its length, exists mostly as lines on a map, including in Grants. However, to leaders and stakeholders in Grants, the trail is viewed as a major opportunity for the city to expand its visibility as an outdoor recreation destination. As the trail continues to develop, it promises to become a major attraction, and it therefore offers the communities along its route a number of possibilities for recreation, tourism, and more general economic development. With its location along the CDT route and its good access to Interstate 40, the Study Area is viewed as a possible prime location for development opportunities related to the CDT and to outdoor recreation. Currently there are limited outdoor recreation options within the Study Area.

Analysis of the Grants outdoor recreation economy shows that the industry contributes a small part to the overall local economy. However, the analysis also supports assessments from previous planning efforts that substantial opportunity exists in Grants for outdoor-related economic development.

The preliminary analysis of the Study Area indicates that notable opportunities exist there for projects that could support the Grants community’s goal of growing its outdoor recreation economy. The Study identifies a development vision that includes creation of an urban recreational corridor. This corridor would follow the Rio San Jose, connecting the Continental Divide Trail to Downtown Grants. It would provide for outdoor recreation opportunities in an urban setting and catalyze other types of development. With the new recreational facility and the nearby Continental Divide Trail, opportunity would be created for outdoor recreation-supportive businesses, and for more general commercial and residential development.

The Study does not identify any major barriers to development in the Study Area. Additional review of drainage and water quality issues in the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo is recommended, but these issues are not thought to be insurmountable.

The Study provides a list of projects that the City and private developers can undertake to implement the development vision, as well as an estimate of costs for these projects.

Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map

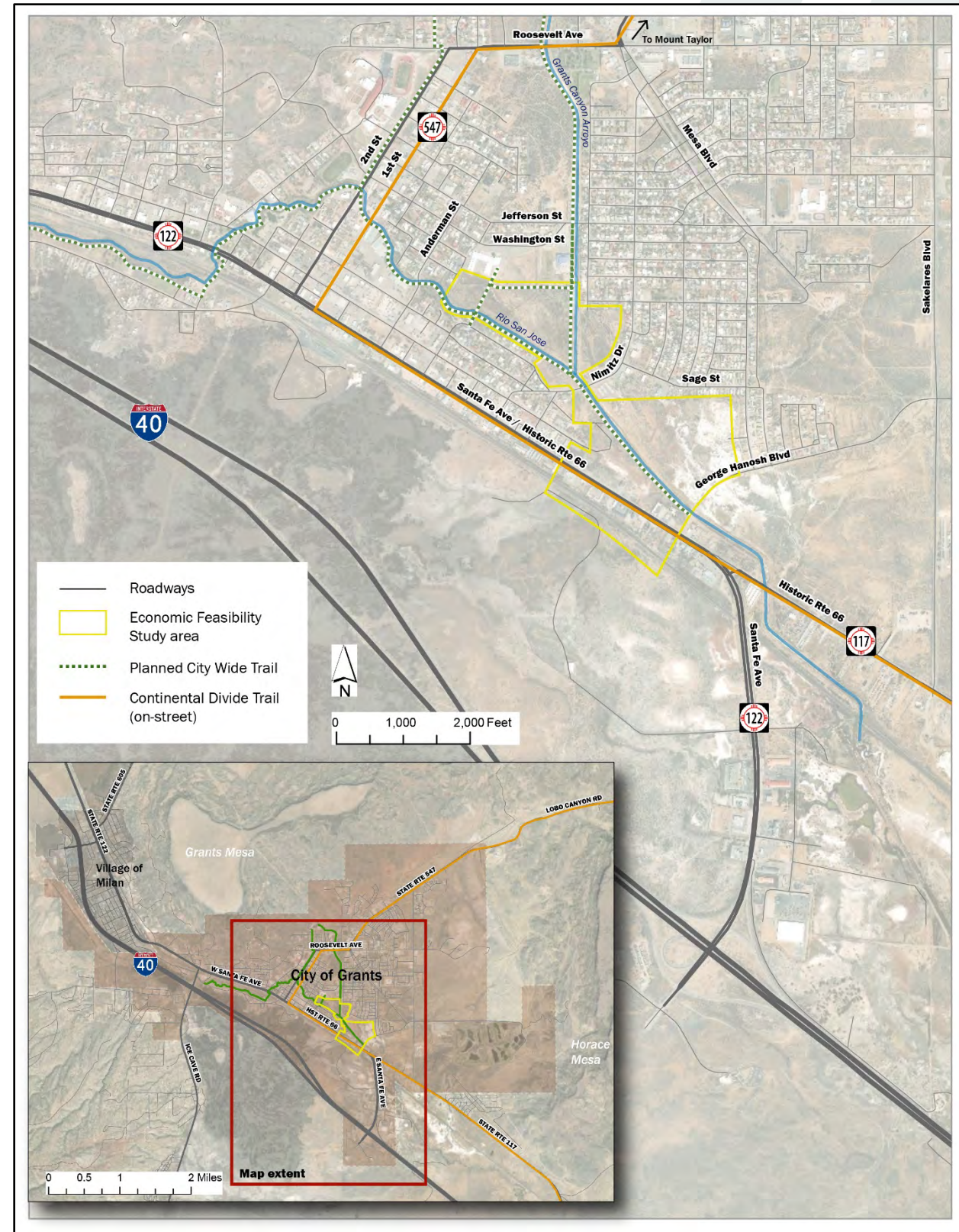
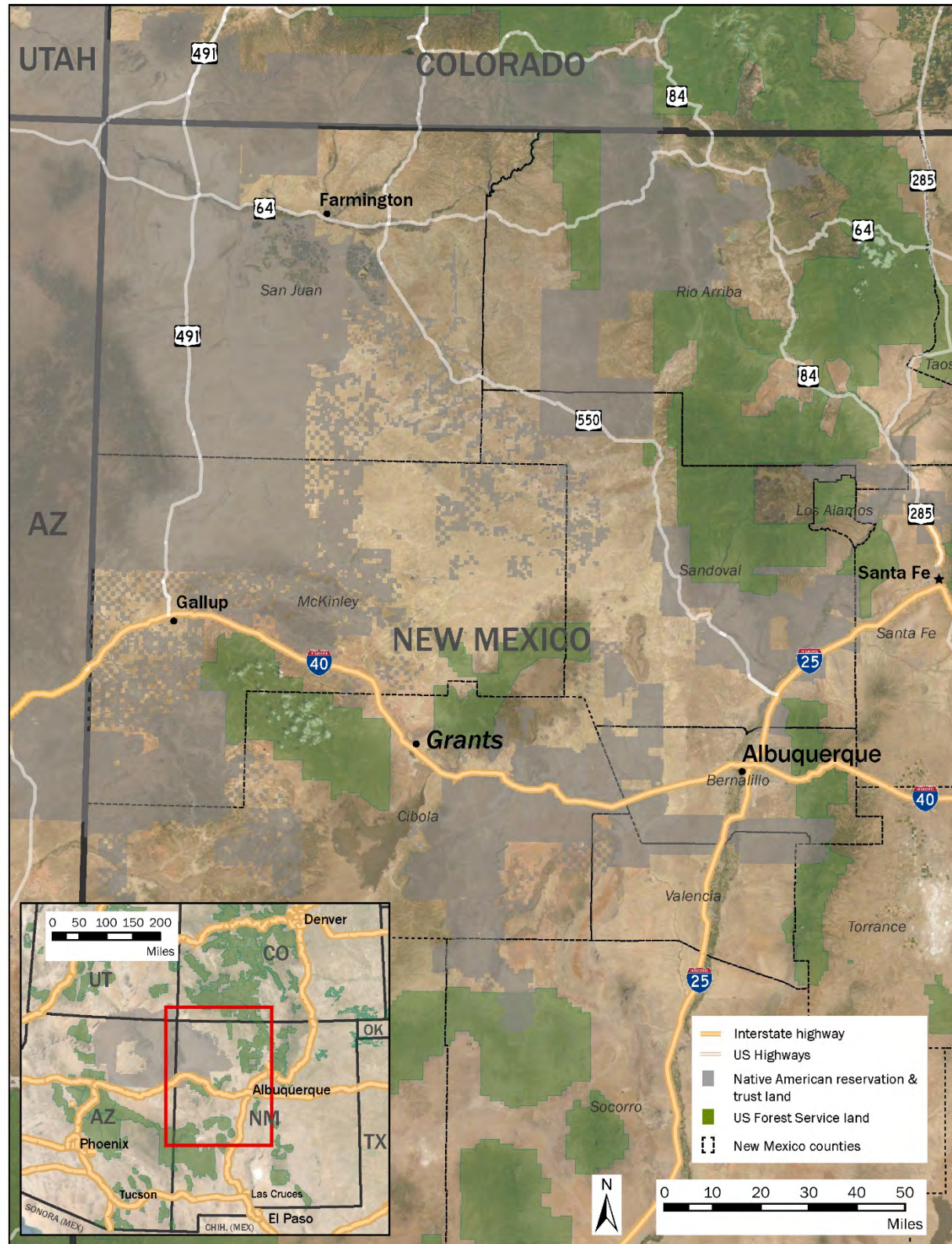


Figure 2. Regional Vicinity Map



1. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

1.1 Description and Purpose

The City of Grants is geographically positioned along Interstate 40, along the historic Route 66, and along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Significant investments in the City are being made to understand and advance the City's economic position in the outdoor recreation market. The Grants BioPark Economic Feasibility Study analyzes the feasibility of outdoor-recreation focused development within the Study Area. This development would help the City capture the growing outdoor recreation market while tying into regional momentum around outdoor recreation as well. This Study will assist the City of Grants to properly plan future infrastructure and investments in the project area.

1.2 Study Area

Roughly an hour west of Albuquerque is the Cibola county seat, Grants, New Mexico, shown in **Figure 2** The Study Area (see **Figure 3**) for this project consists of 160 acres or 0.25 square miles within Grants, New Mexico, and is located between Santa Fe Avenue (also referred to as Historic Route 66) on the south, Washington Avenue to the north, Anderman Street to the west, and George Hanosh Boulevard to the east. The majority of the Study Area is currently undeveloped land that is surrounded by primarily residential land use, discussed further in **Section 2.1**.

1.3 Vision, Goals, and Objectives

1.3.1 Community Goals

The analysis and recommendations within this Study support a number of previously established goals that the Grants community has identified in planning documents such as the 2017 Comprehensive Plan and the 2020 *Recreation Economy for Rural Economies Community Action Plan*. The larger vision that this Study aims to support is that of establishing Grants as a destination for outdoor recreation. Specific goals that have been identified to implement that vision include:

- Improving infrastructure for outdoor recreation activities in Grants and the surrounding area
- Expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation-supportive businesses in the city
- Enhance the visibility of Grants as an outdoor recreation destination

Other community goals that this Study aim to support include, but are not limited to:

- Extending the Legacy Trail and close "missing link" gaps in sidewalk and trail infrastructure
- Working to develop the Continental Divide Trail through Grants
- Mitigating flooding issues in the city, including in the Study Area
- Supporting development of new housing options in the city

1.3.2 Goals/Objectives of the Study

The goals of the Study process include the following:

- Identify existing conditions within Grants and within the Study Area, with a focus on identifying opportunities around outdoor recreation and economic development
- Evaluate the local economy market conditions for gaps and opportunities, especially related to outdoor recreation
- Gather resident and stakeholder input regarding outdoor recreation opportunities and economic development, particularly within the Study Area
- Establish a concept for development in the Study Area and evaluate the feasibility of the concept
- Provide a high-level cost estimate and implementation plan for the development concept

Figure 3. Study Area Map



1.4 Community Participation Process

This Study included a community participation process to assess resident and other stakeholder sentiment regarding development in the Study Area.

The participation process for this Economic Feasibility Study included a stakeholder group of eight members who participated in two stakeholder meetings throughout the project. These stakeholders helped to identify issues in the Study Area; and provided input on the project vision, goals, and development concept.

A virtual public meeting was held on April 20th, 2021. The meeting presentation was streamed on the City of Grants Facebook page, and a recording of the presentation was posted to the City website for two weeks. Meeting attendees were invited to share input or questions as comments to the video, although no public input was received this way.

The public survey was introduced and launched at the public meeting, and was available to anyone interested in sharing their opinions about the project. The survey was available for input for two weeks' time. This survey was distributed through several outlets including the City website and Facebook group, in-person surveys were located at the Grants City Hall, and individuals could access the survey via their mobile devices using a Quick Response (QR) code. Questions on the public survey addressed concerns such as what recreational amenities individuals would like to see in the Study Area, what opportunities are available to foster economic development, commercial development opportunities, and more. A copy of the public survey and survey responses can be seen in **Appendix A**.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS and ASSET INVENTORY

2.1 Land Use and Zoning

The City of Grants last updated its existing land use map for the City of Grants Comprehensive Plan in 2017. This was an update to the 2012 land use code, which the City updated with ARC and Wilson & Company.

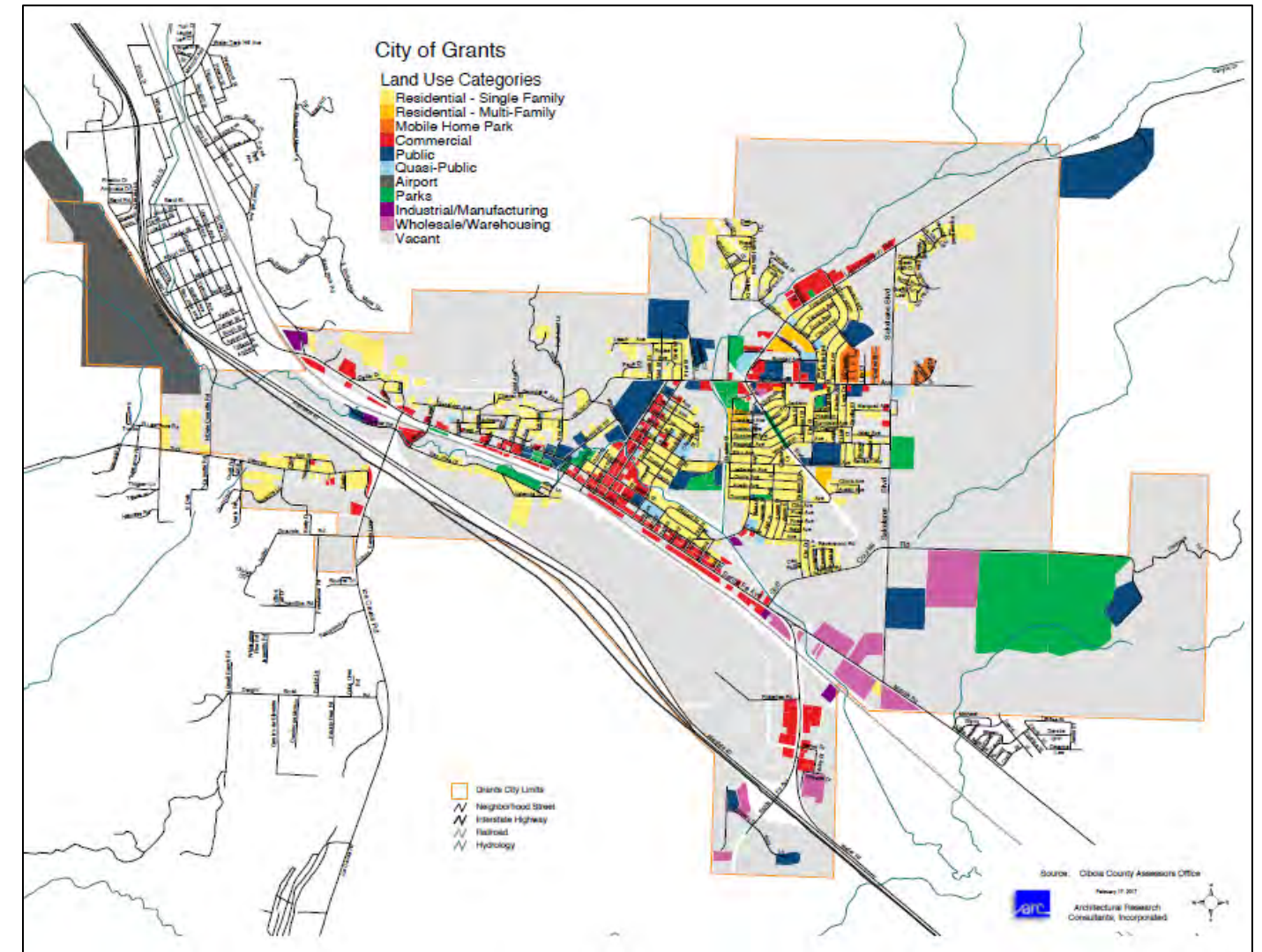
According to the Comprehensive Plan, Grants is approximately 9,583 acres or 15.0 square miles and consists of predominantly vacant land use (64%), followed by single-family residential land use (8%), shown in **Table 1**. There are approximately 1,400 vacant parcels, and the majority of those parcels surround developed areas and offer close proximity to existing utilities and roadway infrastructure. This existing infrastructure provides incentive for potential development where desired. Because Grants is surrounded by large mesas and mountains, this creates an obstacle for expansion to the west. As a result of these physical constraints, Grants has historically grown in a northeastern direction (Comp. Plan, III-3). Existing Land Uses from the latest Comprehensive Plan are shown in **Figure 4**.

While natural features that surround Grants create certain obstacles to growth, the several lakes, mesas, and mountain ranges, also provide ample opportunity to foster the rapidly growing outdoor recreation market in the region.

Table 1. Existing Land Use

Land Use	Percent of Total Land Use
Single Family Residential	8.3
Multi-Family Residential	0.3
Mobile Home Parks	0.3
Commercial	2.4
Public	2.7
Quasi-Public	0.4
Airport	3.2
Park	4.3
Industrial/Manufacturing	0.2
Wholesale/Warehouse	1.8
Vacant	63.6
Right-of-Way	12.5
Total	100

Figure 4. Existing Land Use

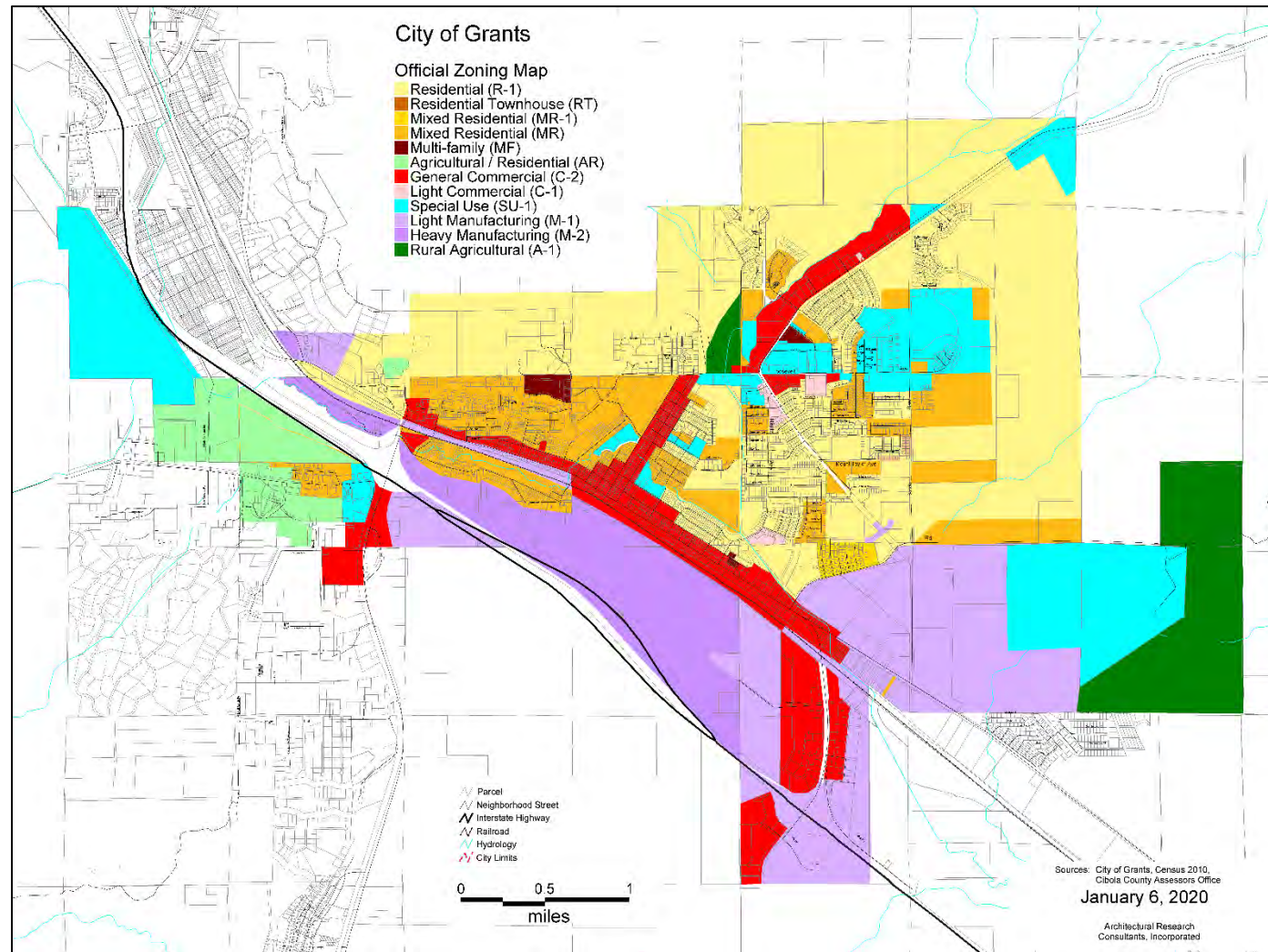


As the city continues to grow, the need for additional housing rises. According to Comprehensive Plan population projections, Grants is projected to need anywhere from 275 to 785 housing units in total before the year 2040. Fortunately, the existing undeveloped land in Grants would be more than sufficient for these housing estimates, depending on desired density. The 2019 US Census estimates show that the City of Grants owner-occupied housing unit rate is 56.9 percent, nearly 12 percent below that of Cibola County as a whole (68.7%). Recommendations for this Economic Feasibility Study (discussed in more detail in **Section 4.5**) include additional housing units to the northeast of the Study Area, consistent with the future land use map in the Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Grants zoning map was last updated on January 6, 2020, and is shown in **Figure 5**. Zoning in Grants consists of predominantly manufacturing to the south of the I-40, residential to the northeast, commercial along Santa Fe Avenue and Second Street, and special use zones dispersed throughout the City.

Land within the Study Area is zoned C-2 General Commercial along Santa Avenue and south of the Rio San Jose. The remainder of the Study Area is zoned R-1 Residential (single-family residential), except for the land to the south of Mesa View Elementary and between the waterways, which is zoned MR-1 Mixed Residential (mixed density residential). Light industrial zoning exists to the east of George Hanosh Blvd.

Figure 5. City of Grants Zoning Map



In addition to the many mountains surrounding Grants, the Rio San Jose meanders south of the City, and Grants Canyon Arroyo joins the Rio San Jose west of Nimitz Drive. The Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo contribute to a regulatory floodway and a 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard within City limits. FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL), which was updated in October 2020, is shown below in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6. FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer



2.2 Land Ownership

The majority of the land in Grants is privately owned, however the surrounding areas include several public and tribal land holdings. These holdings include Cibola National Forest, the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Acoma Pueblo Tribal Lands, and State Land Office. Land Ownership is shown below in **Figure 7**.

The Study Area is almost entirely privately owned, except for roadway right-of-way, easements related to the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo, and a handful of agency-owned parcels. Notably, the right-of-way for an unbuilt extension of Aspen Street extends through the Study Area, from Sage Street, across the Rio San Jose, to Santa Fe Avenue.

2.3 Lodging Near I-40

Lodging near the Study Area vicinity includes motels and hotels conveniently located along Santa Fe Avenue, also known as US Route 66. Visitors to Grants, as well as those traveling along the US Route 66 can stay at the Sands Motel, and Southwest Motel, and a little further south, the Quality Inn & Suites, Days Inn, Motel 6, Holiday Inn Express, Best Western, and the Super 8. These options are in close proximity for those visiting the City, the El Malpais National Monument Center, and those looking for rest alongside the I-40. Three recreational vehicle (RV) parks are also located near Grants, all within city limits: one near the Study Area just south of exit 85, and two just south of Interstate 40 near exit 81. The Coal Mine Campground, ten miles north of downtown Grants on NM 547, provides sites for tent camping.

Figure 7. Land Ownership Map



2.4 Topography and Viewsheds

Within Grants terrain slopes to the southeast and south away from Grants Mesa and Horace Mesa. This topography is reflected in the vicinity of the Study Area, where the ground slopes gently to the southeast. As described in 2.1, virtually the entire Study Area is located within the FEMA floodplain associated with the Rio San Jose and the Grants Canyon Arroyo. Though development has occurred within the floodplain, the hazard presented by flooding is understood to be one of the key reasons that much of the land within the Study Area is undeveloped.

Although the Rio San Jose is the primary stream through the community, it is not the lowest point within the Study Area. West of Nimitz Drive, the terrain continues to slope to the south or southwest south of the Rio San Jose. East of Nimitz Drive, the degree of this slope diminishes, and closer to George Hanosh Blvd the terrain becomes essentially flat. This flatness contributes standing water that often occurs after flood events, as evidenced by white-ish alkaline soil in this area that is associated mine tailings that enter the Grants Canyon Arroyo and then flow into Rio San Jose (see **Figure 8**).

Figure 8. Alkali Soil Deposits near George Hanosh Boulevard Showing Evidence of Flooding

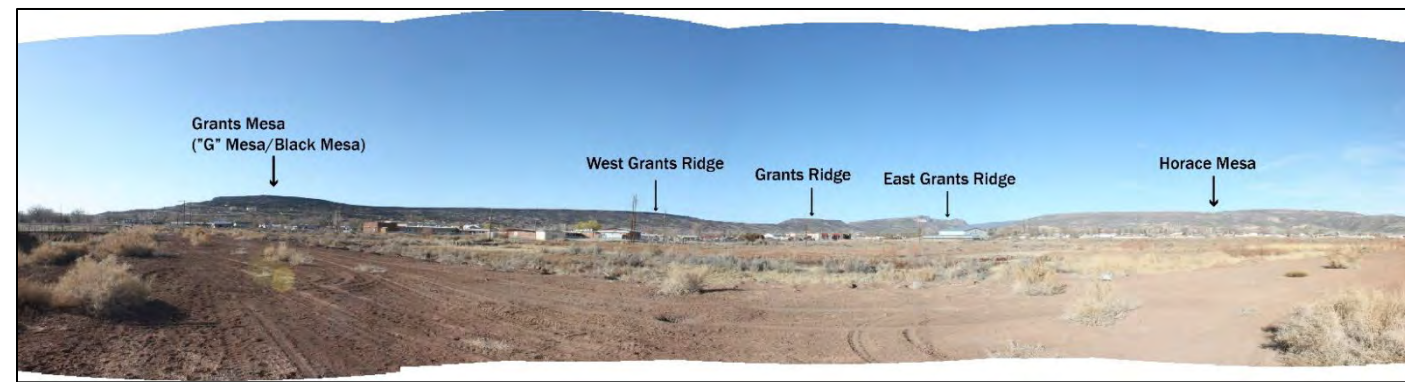


Views are a distinctive characteristic of the Study Area, and the topography and undeveloped state of the land appear to contribute to this. As described in previous sections, Grants is partially encircled by mesas and other land formations located to the north of the city. Within developed areas of the city, buildings and other structures often obstruct views of these features. However, several locations within the Study Area, including the site south of Mesa View Elementary and the corridor along the Rio San Jose corridor,

offer the opportunity to view all of these formations at once (see **Figure 9**). The peak of Mount Taylor is also visible at times.

From certain points within the Study Area, engaging views are available to the south. From east of Nimitz Drive, passing trains on the BNSF tracks south of Santa Ave can be seen. This view may be possible because of the lack of buildings and signage along Santa Fe Avenue.

Figure 9. Partial Panorama View of Mesas from Confluence of Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo



2.5 Mobility Networks

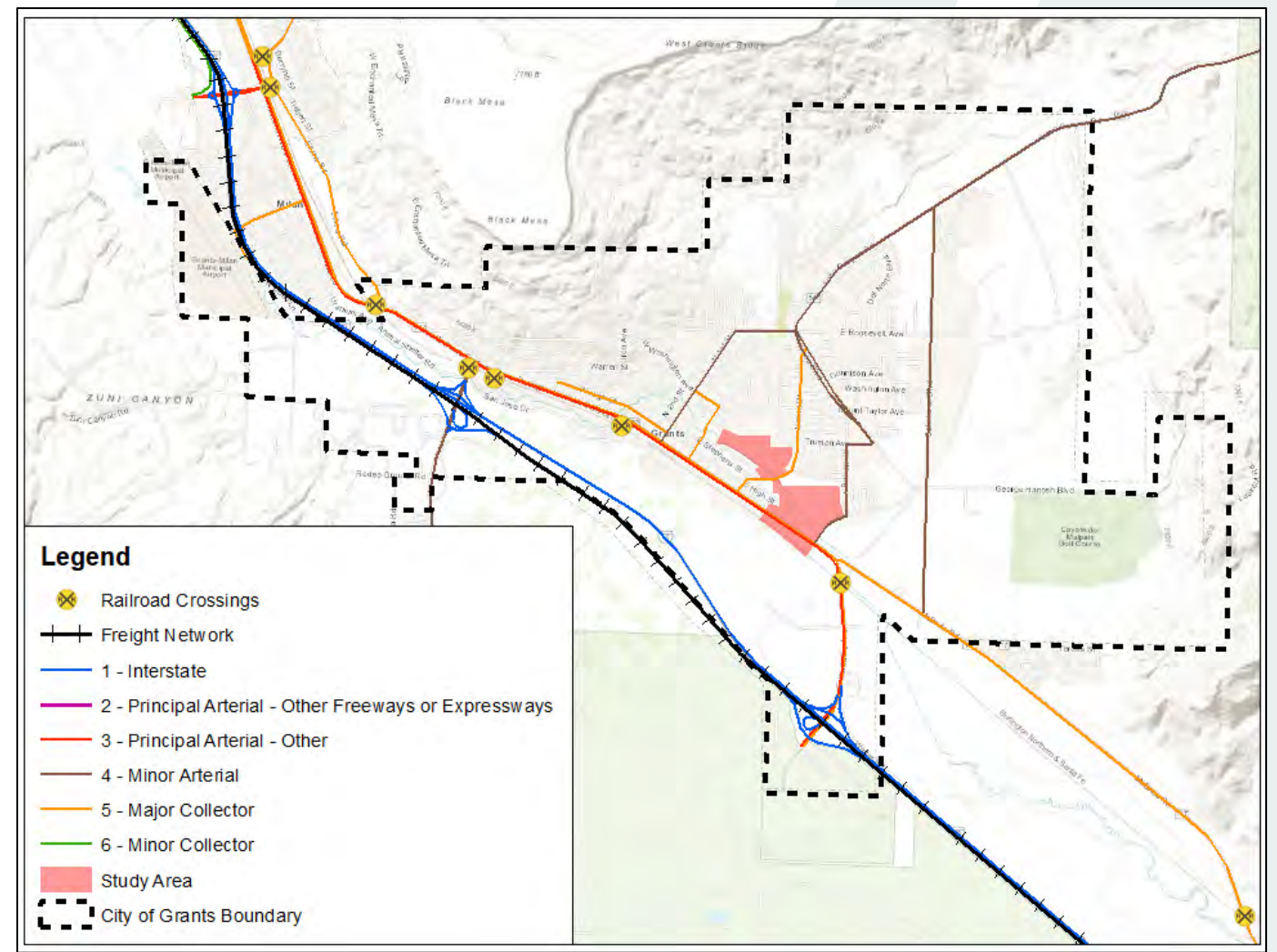
The roadway network in Grants consists of approximately 60 miles of roadway. Perhaps the most notable roadway in the City is Santa Fe Avenue. Santa Fe Avenue is also designated as State Highway 122, and Historic US Route 66 until the two split at State Highway 117 (Figure 10). Many of the roadways within the City serve both travel and commercial uses, including Santa Fe Avenue, First Street, Second Street, and Roosevelt Avenue

Figure 10. Grants, New Mexico Route 66 Neon Drive Thru Entrance



(Comp. Plan X-7). The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Roadway Functional Classification map defines Santa Fe Avenue as the only principal arterial within City limits, however the City of Grants also defines Second Street as a principal arterial. West High Street, Anderman Street, and Nimitz Drive are defined by NMDOT as major collectors. First Street, Roosevelt Avenue, Lobo Canyon Road, Mesa Boulevard, and Balsam Street are defined as minor arterials. NMDOT Functional Classifications are shown below in Figure 11.

Figure 11. NMDOT Functional Classification in the City of Grants



Parallel to US Route 66/Santa Fe Avenue is BNSF railroad. This Transcon line runs through the City and carries a large volume of freight traffic; however, BNSF does not provide freight service within Grants. In addition to the BNSF railroad, the Southwest Chief Amtrak route runs on the BNSF line in each direction once a day; however, there are currently no Amtrak stations within Grants. The nearest Amtrak stops are located approximately one hour east in Albuquerque and one hour west in Gallup.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the City are in need of expansion and improvement as shown in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan. Many of the existing facilities are narrow or non-existent, and the majority are not ADA accessible (see Figure 12). The City of Grants Pedestrian Trails Map can be seen in Figure 14, and the Bike Trails Map can be seen in Figure 15. The 2017 Comprehensive Plan has several recommendations for additional bike and pedestrian facilities and connections in Grants.

Some of these recommendations include the following:

- Create multi-use paths
- Sidewalk redesign and rebuild in several areas
- Incorporate bicycle lanes along existing roadways
- Designate specific roadways as bicycle routes
- New street development in grid pattern to ensure route choices, increase bicycle and pedestrian friendly opportunities, and reduce traffic
- ADA compliant crossings
- Safe Routes to Schools Program

Figure 12. Non-ADA Accessible Sidewalk

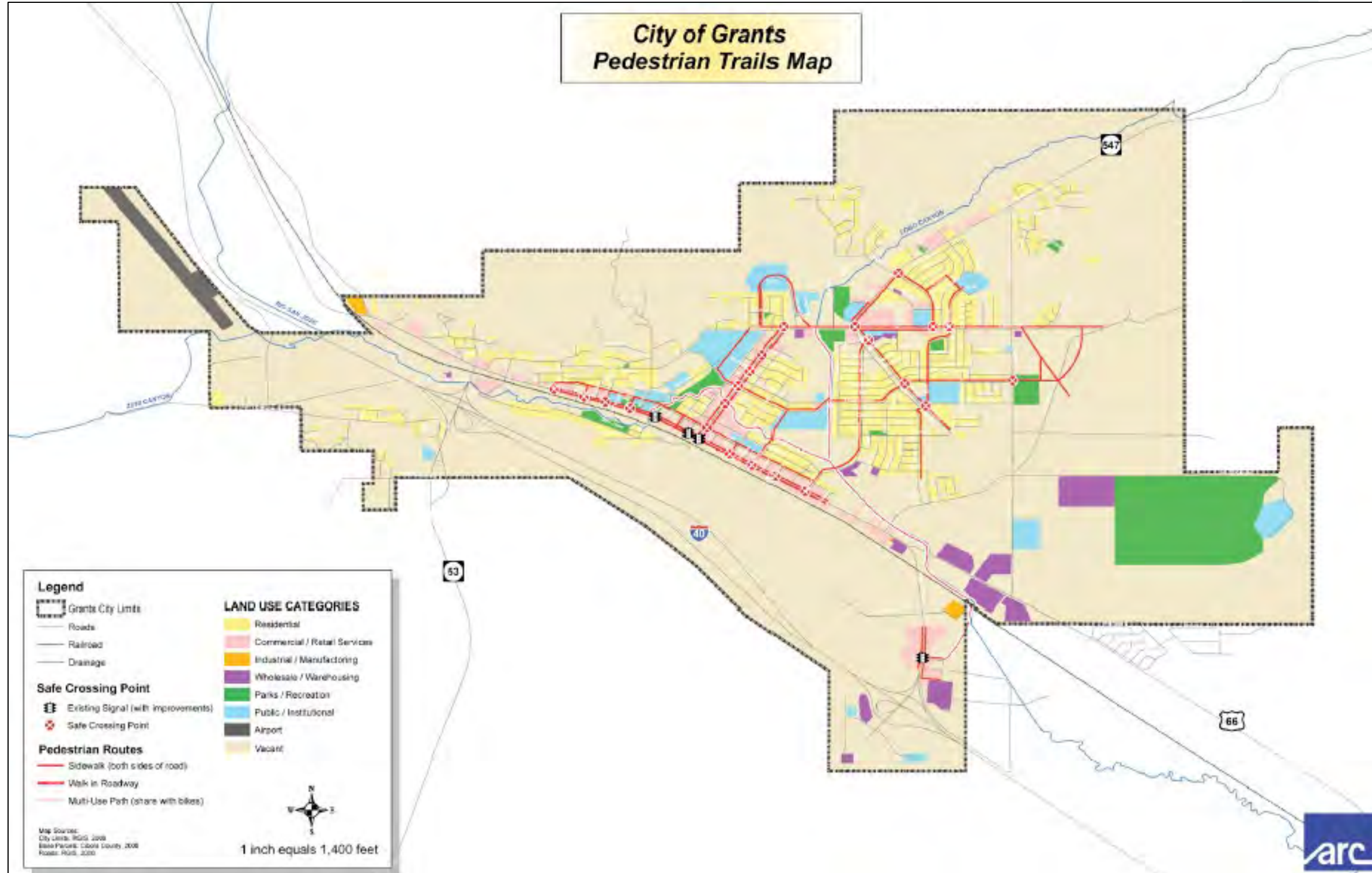


Within the Study Area, sidewalk along key routes, such as George Hanosh Boulevard, Nimitz Drive, and Santa Fe Avenue, generally appears to have been recently built and is in good condition, although sidewalk is not always present. For example, sidewalk along George Hanosh Boulevard does not extend north of the bridge across the Rio San Jose (see **Figure 13** below).

Figure 13. Terminating Sidewalk Example

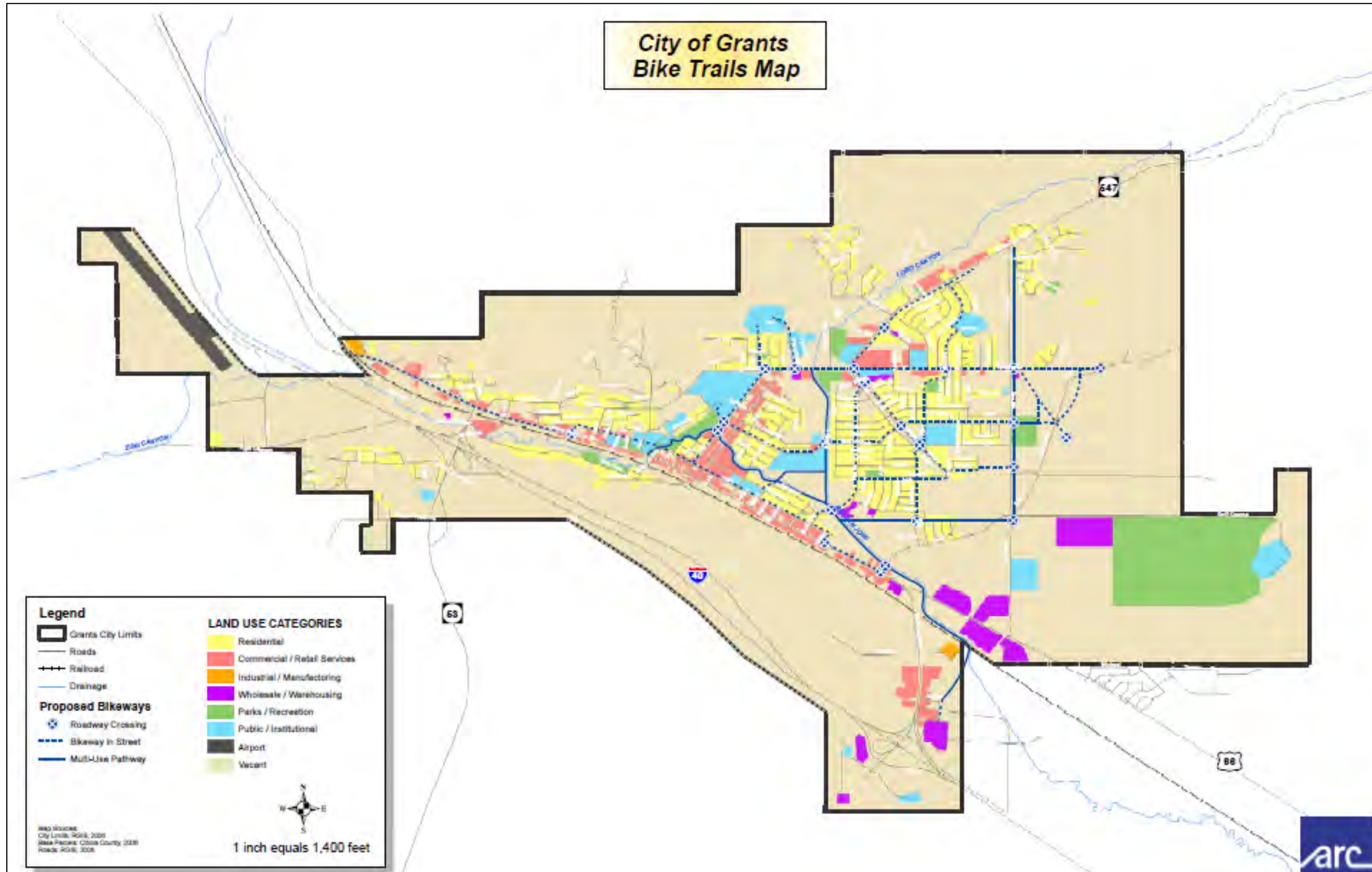


Figure 14. City of Grants Pedestrian Trails Map



Source: 2017 City of Grants Comprehensive Plan

Figure 15. City of Grants Bike Trails Map



Source: 2017 City of Grants Comprehensive Plan

2.6 Transportation Infrastructure Ownership

New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) owns and operates several roadways within the City boundaries. These roadways are listed below in **Table 2**. All remaining roadways are owned and operated by the City of Grants.

Table 2. NMDOT Owned and Operated Roadways

NMDOT Owned and Operated Roadways	Functional Classification
Interstate 40 (I-40)	Interstate
Historic Route 66	Principal Arterial - Other
Horizon Boulevard	Principal Arterial - Other
Bell Road	Minor Collector
Elkins Road	Major Collector
N 605	Major Collector
Airport Road	Major Collector
High Street	Major Collector
Santa Fe Avenue	Principal Arterial - Other
Anderman Street	Major Collector
1st Street	Minor Arterial
Roosevelt Avenue	Minor Arterial
Lobo Canyon Road	Minor Arterial
Mesa Boulevard	Minor Arterial
Nimitz Drive	Major Collector
Balsam Street	Minor Arterial
Parts of George Hanosh Boulevard	Minor Arterial

2.7 Community and Regional Anchors

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), community and regional anchors are defined as “schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, community colleges, and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, the unemployed, and the aged” (Federal Communications Commission).

There are currently eight schools within the Grants city border, but Mesa View Elementary is the closest school to the Study Area, located southwest of Washington Avenue and Sage Street. Mesa View Elementary is a public school open for kindergarten through sixth grade. Currently there are 458 students enrolled at Mesa View Elementary, of which all students qualified for free and reduced lunch (NMSchools.com).

There are numerous healthcare facilities in Grants, with services ranging from primary care to emergency care. Healthcare and social services was the strongest non-government sector in 2014 with 1,411 jobs, and again in 2018 with 40 percent of all jobs in Grants being attributed to Health Care and Social Assistance. While retail jobs decreased by 158 from 2008 to 2014, health care jobs increased by 225 during that same time period (U.S. Census’ Bureau’s OnTheMap). While there are currently no healthcare facilities within the direct Study Area, there are numerous facilities to the west and north of the Study Area. Located to the north of the Study Area is the Cibola General Hospital, on the northeast corner of Roosevelt Avenue and Bonita Avenue. The Cibola General Hospital is a Non-Profit facility that was established in 1959 with the intent of serving not only the City, but the entire Cibola County. This hospital has 25 beds, is nearly 50,000 square feet, and provides a range of services from general surgery, emergency care, intensive care, internal medicine, obstetrics, pathology, pediatric dentistry, podiatry, primary care, radiology, and more (Cibola General Hospital, Inc.).

In addition to the several healthcare facilities in the City, the Future Foundations Family Center was founded in 1996 and is located between Washington Avenue and Sage Street. The Future Foundations Family Center is focused on “promoting and facilitating collaboration between governments, business, non-profit, health and educational entities toward planning, development and implementation of youth/family development programs” (centerfor nonprofit excellence.org). The Center offers several programs for the residents of Grants as well as those of Cibola County. These programs include after school and summer programs for youth, youth workforce development, tobacco, alcohol, teen pregnancy and obesity prevention, recreation and fitness, health council facilitation, Big Brother Big Sister youth mentoring, sun safety, and more. The Future Foundations Family Center serves children and youth, disabled, elderly, families, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, Latino/Hispanic, low income, Native American, rural, and women and girls.

There are several neighborhood, community, and special-use parks within Grants. According to the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, a neighborhood park is defined as a smaller park that serves the immediate community with a variety of amenities and is within a ten-minute walk of neighborhood residences. A community park serves recreationists from the entire city and offers public facilities that serve larger populations. A special-use Park focuses on a particular use or identity. Within the City, there are seven neighborhood parks, six community parks, and five special-use parks, all of which are in reasonable walking distances. While most of the parks are in good condition, the smaller parks are in need of maintenance or seem to have been abandoned. Currently there are no parks within the Study Area, which provides great opportunity for additional community places such as those recommended in **Section 4.5**.

2.8 Existing Plans

2.8.1 Recreational Economy for Rural Communities Action Plan

In 2019 Grants was among ten inaugural communities selected for the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) program.

This plan was one of ten finalists selected from more than 170 applicants for the program across the nation. The program, administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency, provides planning and technical assistance to communities to “develop strategies and an action plan to revitalize their Main Streets through outdoor recreation”. The planning effort by Grants area stakeholders identified the following goals for the community:

1. Shape our identity as an outdoor recreation destination: Improve branding, marketing, and promotion of Grants as an outdoor recreation destination and a great place to visit and live. Build on existing branding and marketing efforts to become an escape destination for outdoor and adventure recreation.
2. Improve connectivity: Plan for and improve trail connectivity and walkability, considering near-term “low hanging fruit” as well as longer-term aspirational goals and projects.
3. Increase attractions, amenities, and infrastructure for staying power: Capitalize on existing opportunities and resources in downtown Grants and identify opportunities for, and work to attract more in-town amenities, businesses, and shops for tourists and residents.
4. Improve local coordination: Strengthen and sustain local/regional coordination and communication efforts to carry forward implementation of the RERC action plan.

These goals in coordination with the plan are intended to assist the City to “diversify its economy, become a more environmentally sustainable community, and become an outdoor recreation destination” (2020 RERC 4). The strategies identified in the RERC will likely be included in the 2021-2026 update of the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) as well. The *Viva New Mexico 2016-2020 Strategic Plan* was published in December 2015.

2.8.2 Legacy Trail

The Rio San Jose Riverwalk “Legacy Trail” Plan was published in September of 2013 by the New Mexico Economic Development Department in coordination with the MainStreet Program, the New Mexico Department of Health and Healthy Communities Initiative. The City of Grants Rio San Jose Riverwalk “Legacy Trail” project proposed the development of 1.5 miles of pathway along the Rio San Jose within the City. This portion of the Legacy Trail would be the first phase of a longer trail and bikeway system and would connect downtown Grants to New Mexico State University/Grants campus and the Continental Divide Trail. The Legacy Trail will provide several benefits to the community, including fitness and wellness opportunities, family resiliency, economic development, increase in property values, and an increase in safety. The

proposed trail alignments from the 2013 report are shown in **Figure 16**, and the currently completed sections can be seen in **Figure 17**.

Figure 16. Proposed Legacy Trail Alignments

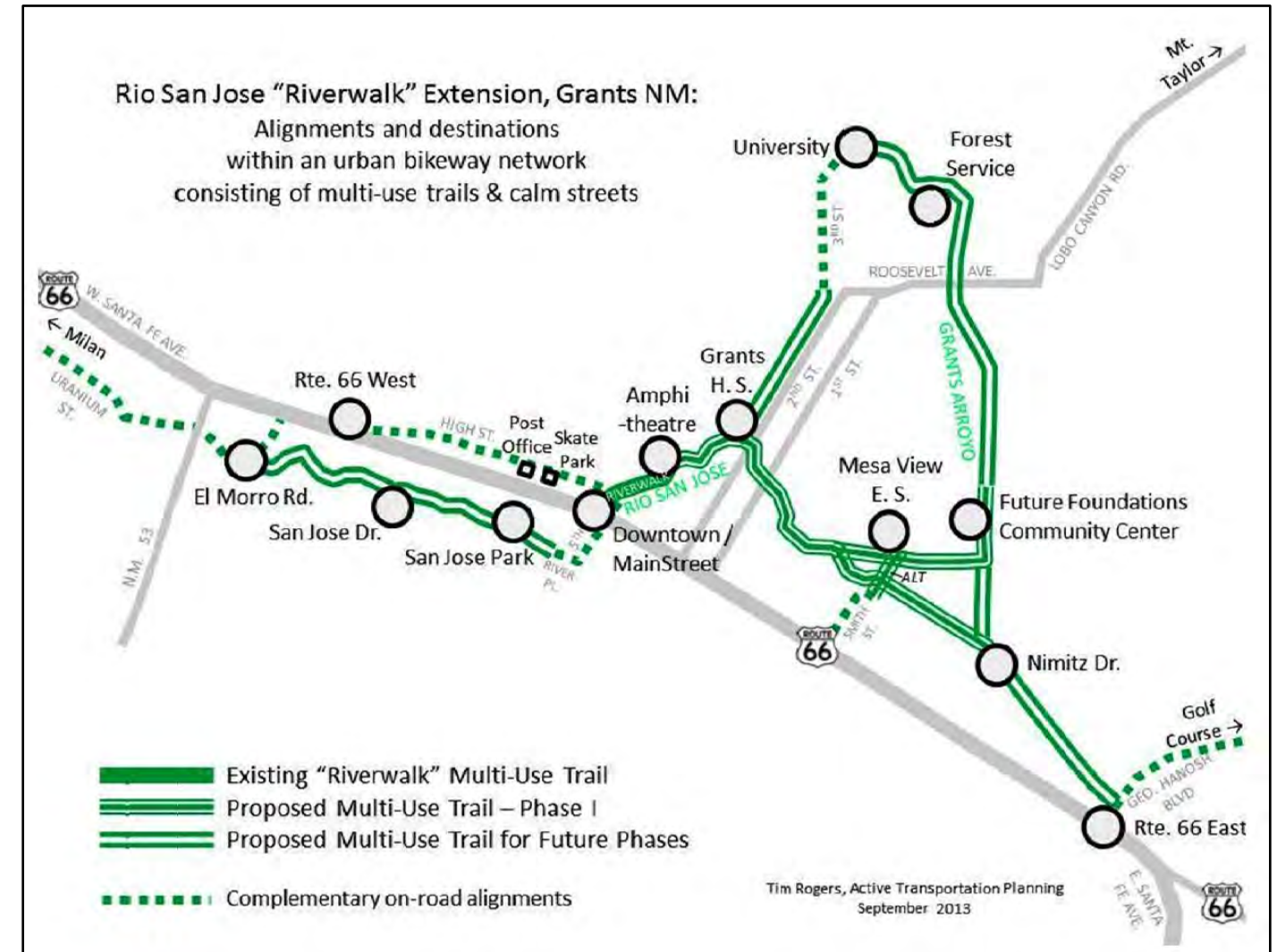


Figure 17. Completed Sections of the Legacy Trail



2.8.3 Mesa View Elementary School Reconstruction

Mesa View Elementary School is one of the two district elementary schools located in the City of Grants. The original building for Mesa View ES was constructed in 1958 and has had several additions after that. The district's Facilities Master Plan 2017-2022 determined that the original building and some of the additions need major renovations and building systems upgrades. Most of the issues at this school are facility renewal items that are related to building systems that are past their useful life. The school district decided to construct a new school building on the same school property which is approximately 15 acres. The new building will be located just east of the existing school; this will allow the current building to be occupied until the new building is completed, and then the existing building will be demolished. The new school will serve approximately 474 students from Pre-K thru 6th grade.

2.8.4 Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan

The City of Grants Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) was designated by the City Council in February 2015. The Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Master Plan was prepared by Consensus Planning, Inc. and was approved in May of 2017. The purpose of the Plan is to "guide the

revitalization of the downtown Grants area" through the following ten years. The Plan intends to remedy both "physical and economic factors that were contributing to blight and hindering development in the area." Five goals were developed as part of this Plan, listed below.

1. Downtown Grants is a destination that attracts both residents and visitors to shop, work, live, and play. Downtown buildings have been preserved through redevelopment and adaptive reuse.
2. Downtown Grants reflects and celebrates the area's unique history and culture, character, and physical beauty. Vintage Route 66 neon signs and motels have been restored and street amenities display a connection to the local vernacular.
3. Downtown Grants provides a multitude of opportunities for safe and memorable community interaction. Community events are promoted and occur on a regular basis, which attracts local residents and visitors from near and far.
4. Downtown Grants provides a myriad of opportunities for investment by current and future property and business owners and developers. New, locally owned retail shops, services, galleries, small motels, bed and breakfasts, and housing are springing up along the main corridors of Santa Fe Avenue, High Street, First Street, and Second Street.
5. Downtown Grants encourages and nurtures pedestrian activity, while accommodating day-to-day vehicular traffic. Santa Fe Avenue is alive with day and night activity; people are strolling, window shopping, and riding their bicycles, while the vehicular traffic flows at a safe speed.

Recommendations from the MRA Plan range from public sector investment priorities to support actions, and include transportation improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, wayfinding, land use and zoning revisions, business attraction, housing, and more.

2.9 Existing Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

The network of water supply lines and wastewater collection lines is built out underneath existing roads surrounding the Study Area. Meanwhile, two major lines cross the Study Area. The 12-inch Grants-Milan trunk sewer line extends southeast from Washington Avenue across the Study Area to roughly 1,500 feet east of where Santa Fe Avenue and Historic Route 66 diverge. At this point, the 12-inch line turns south towards the motels near I-40. A 12-inch water main extends along the Rio San Jose, south of Nimitz Drive until the intersection of the River and Route 66. At this point, the line begins to follow Route 66 for 0.9 miles until the City limits. The existing water and wastewater facilities can be seen in **Figure 18**. For new development within the Study Area, water and wastewater lines would be built out as roadways serving the Study Area are expanded.

Water production is over 1.53 million gallons per day, with a 2040 projected usage of 1.1 million gallons, this leaves an additional 430,000 gallons of reserve. Given existing capacity and projected needs, the capacity exists in the City's water and wastewater infrastructure to support the development envisioned in the proposed concepts described in **Section 5**.

Figure 18. Existing Water and Wastewater in BioPark Vicinity



3. GAPS and MARKET ANALYSIS

3.1 Commercial Outdoor Recreation Market Conditions

The outdoor recreation economy is an important sector for New Mexico. Although the sector is smaller in the state than in neighboring states, it is showing growth and is receiving fresh attention and support from government. The state’s extensive outdoor assets show that there is significant room for growth, and Grants is very well positioned to take advantage of this opportunity.

3.1.1 The Outdoor Recreation Economy

Outdoor recreation is big business in the United States, with \$460 billion in value-added contribution¹ to national gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (2020 ORSA). Although this is just 2.1% of GDP, the industry contributes twice as much to GDP as oil & gas exploration and five times more than the air travel industry, according to the State Outdoor Business Alliance network (SOBAN p. 3). Meanwhile, research has shown that the industry can be resilient to economic downturns, with the industry-related spending increasing in the wake of the Great Recession, although the industry suffered during the recent coronavirus pandemic (OIA, p. 10; ORR).

Table 3 lists activities considered to be outdoor recreation, based on information from the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) and the BEA. Much of the economic activity related to outdoor recreation comes from consumer spending, but spending extends well beyond purchases directly related to engaging in an outdoor activity. According to the OIA, spending occurs in two forms: “the purchase of gear and vehicles, and dollars spent on trips and travel” (2012, p. 6). Approximately 20% of spending is on equipment; 80% is on activities associated with travel, including dining, transportation, entertainment, lodging, and souvenirs. As the OIA states, this means that for every dollar spent on the equipment needed for outdoor recreation activities, another four are spent on a wide variety of other supporting activities or products. This consumer demand subsequently drives a number of other supporting activities throughout the economy, including product development, marketing, wholesale sales, warehousing and logistics, and construction (p. 7).

Table 3. Outdoor Recreation Activities

Bicycling	Motorcycle riding	Trail
Paved-road Off-road	On-road Off-road	Trail running, unpaved Day hiking, unpaved Backpacking Rock climbing Horseback riding
Camping	Off-roading	Watersports
RV campground Tent campground Rustic lodging	ATV OHV Dune buggies Jeeping	Kayaking Stand-up paddling Rafting Canoeing Boating (motorized)
Fishing	Snow sports	Wildlife viewing
Recreational fly Recreational non-fly Fishing from a boat	Downhill skiing Snowboarding Cross-country skiing or Nordic skiing Snowshoeing Snowmobiling	Bird watching Other wildlife watching
Hunting	Other	
Shotgun Rifle Bow	Festivals/Sporting events/Concerts GuidedTours/Outfitted Travel Golf Tennis	

3.1.2 Outdoor Recreation in New Mexico

Outdoor recreation in New Mexico directly supports 33,500 jobs and supports the economy with roughly \$1.2 billion in spending. Around 65% of state residents participate in outdoor recreation, according to the state’s Outdoor Recreation Division (2020) RVing, equestrian, and snow activities were the activities that saw the largest related spending in 2019 (BEA ORSA).

Although New Mexico is to some extent known for its outdoor spaces and recreation opportunities, reflected prominently in the state’s marketing materials and in no less than its “Land of Enchantment” state motto, outdoor recreation is a smaller part of New Mexico’s economy than the sector is in some neighboring states. In 2015, spending on outdoor recreation contributed to 2.2% of the state’s total gross domestic product

¹Value-added contribution: Gross receipts minus the cost of goods and services purchased from other firms. Value added is summed for all firms/industries to determine national gross domestic product (GDP).

(GDP), which is approximately the national average, according to the BEA (2020 ORSA; NM State Parks 2015). This is the lowest rate among Four Corners states, and is notably lower than Wyoming and Montana, where the outdoor recreation economy accounted for 4.2 and 4.7% of state GDP, respectively, among the highest rates in the United States. The per capita contribution of outdoor recreation spending to the state’s economy puts New Mexico at 21st in the United States, higher than Colorado (22nd) and Arizona (44th), though still in the middle of the pack nationally (NM State Parks 2015).

Part of the reasoning for why New Mexico rates lower in terms of its outdoor recreation economy is that the state has a less-developed infrastructure for outdoor recreation than its neighboring states (Hamway 2021).

In Grants, the gap between the outdoor amenities available and the community’s outdoor industry appears to mirror the pattern at the state level. Although statistics are harder to come by for a rural community such as Grants, a review of gross receipts by New Mexico community reveals that recreation-related spending accounts for a smaller part of local economic activity in Grants than the industry contributes to the state economy. The Study team compared gross receipts in the “Arts, Entertainment and Recreation” industry at the state level and within Grants at regular intervals dating back to April 2019 (pre-pandemic). (Gross receipts within this category does not include all recreation-related spending that may occur in other industries, such food service and accommodation, or retail sales.) The analysis revealed that 0.3% of total gross receipts across the state were in the “Arts, Entertainment and Recreation” industry on average. In Grants, this percentage averaged just 0.04%, or roughly one-tenth of the rate at the state level, over the period analyzed (Taxation and Revenue New Mexico).

3.1.3 Opportunities From the Outdoor Recreation Economy

The “gap” referenced in the previous section may well represent an “opportunity gap” for the Grants business community and the City to bridge with new economic development. Recent statistics show that growth towards closing this gap may already be occurring at the state level. The outdoor recreation economy in the state is growing faster than the overall state economy and has grown 11 percent between 2012 and 2017 (ORD 2020). In 2019, the value-added growth of the outdoor industry in New Mexico ranked just 5th nationally, according to the BEA (ORSA). Since 2018, the industry in the state has grown 5.9%, versus 3.7% nationally. Similar patterns are seen in outdoor industry employment and compensation: New Mexico ranks low nationally in the total, but its recent growth in these areas has been notably higher than growth nationally.

The continued and growing popularity of recreational sites in Colorado and Utah may present an opportunity to New Mexico’s outdoor economy, as tourist search for new, less congested outdoor destinations (Hamway 2021).

² The “recreation dependent” definition is determined from three components: the share of employment in entertainment and recreation, accommodations, eating and drinking places, and real estate; the share of personal income from these same categories; and the share of vacant housing units that is for seasonal use.

The Grants *RERC Community Action Plan* (EPA 2020) describes what a successful local outdoor economy looks like, touching on some of the key opportunities that may be available for a city like Grants:

“In order for Grants to successfully market itself as an ‘outdoor town’, it will need to grow its offering of product and service suppliers to address related demand. Hallmarks of a vibrant outdoor recreation destination include options for outfitting activities, buying or renting gear, guide services, resupply and repair shops, knowledge centers to help research and execute excursions, and options for dining, cultural immersion, and rejuvenation” (p. 18).

Beyond the business opportunities available to community, there are a number of wider economic benefits that fostering a local outdoor recreation economy presents. A recent report by the State Outdoor Business Alliance Network (SOBAN 2021) highlights potential benefits of outdoor recreation for communities, including:

- Investments in outdoor recreation bring significant returns
 - Numerous case studies show that public investments in recreation bring multifold returns to local economies
 - The report cites several case studies, including one from Montana, where the state spent \$50 million improving access to its waterways. While some consumer spending took place before the state’s investment, the investment is credited with helping to grow total spending on angling to \$900 million statewide annually.
- Recreation-dependent counties² attract (and may retain) new residents.
 - A 2019 study by Headwaters Economics shows that, in the wake of the Great Recession, between 2010-2016, rural counties with non-recreation based economies lost 20% of their populations, while those with recreation-based economies grew by 1.3%. Cibola County is not considered a recreation-dependent county.
 - The report states that many new residents in these counties first visited as tourists.
- Outdoor recreation attracts new business
 - For many localities access to outdoor recreation can help attract new business. The report references a survey of the fastest-growing businesses in Utah in which many stated that the state’s outdoor recreation economy was a major factor when they considered locating or expanding their business in the state.
 - Other areas may be able to attract outdoor gear manufacturers with outdoor areas that serve as proving grounds for products. This appears to be true most in areas with skilled labor forces and manufacturing infrastructure. (pp. 9-12)

Meanwhile closer to home, a study for the state’s Outdoor Recreation Division by Headwaters Economics details some of the recent benefits of outdoor recreation to New Mexico:

- “In 2013, anglers spent \$267.7 million” and “[h]unters spent \$342.4 million” in the state
- “Trail networks in Gallup, New Mexico, and associated events have brought \$17 million in new spending to the area. Running and biking events bring an estimated \$45,000 per event to the community” (2020, p. 7).

3.1.4 Challenges

A number of barriers to expansion of the outdoor recreation economy in Grants exist, though many of these have already been identified, including in the recent RERC Action Plan, with solutions proposed. Chief among these challenges may be that Grants, for all of its outdoor assets, is not perceived as an outdoor recreation destination. These challenges need to be addressed in order for Grants to become recognized for its outdoor recreation assets, for the community to attract more visitors to its outdoor attractions, for its residents to be better connected to the area’s outdoor amenities, and for the community to build its outdoor recreation economy. Among the other key challenges Grants face include:

- **Lack of existing outdoor recreation infrastructure:** This is wide-ranging issue. Among the specific challenges include the lack of dedicated trail facilities, such as along the Continental Divide Trail alignment. The City is addressing this with expansion of the planned Legacy Trail system, but more work is needed. No facilities exist to safely access the mesas for hiking. Wayfinding or facilities to access nearby Mount Taylor or the Malpais are limited, though the Malpais National Monument Visitors Center does provide information, restrooms, and other facilities.
- **Lack of business support:** An issue identified in the RERC Action Plan is the need for information and resources for local small business to build their capacity to capture outdoor recreation related business. Among the recommendations of the plan is for a “business boot camp to incubate downtown businesses that could enable locals and visitors to enjoy local trails” (RERC p. 10).
- **Lack of marketing and visibility of Grants as a “outdoor recreation destination”:** The RERC Action Plan describes how the recreational assets around Grants and throughout Cibola County are not well known beyond residents. Residents themselves might not even perceive Grants as a jumping off point for exploring the area’s recreational amenities. The plan recommends a marketing strategy for reaching these audiences to help brand the community as recreation destination and attract visitors (RERC pp. 10-12).
- **Lack of manufacturing infrastructure or workforce training:** These assets have been shown to help attract outdoor recreation equipment manufacturers. Few residents are employed in manufacturing today, and vocational training programs for these skillsets is limited. Addressing this barrier could help Grants attract a new type of outdoor recreation business; however, building the skillset and infrastructure needed for manufacturing would likely be a longer term process that would require intensive collaboration with regional partners and funding agencies. The state of New Mexico’s Job Training Incentive Program could be a useful tool to attract individual outdoor recreation manufacturers in the short term. (See **Section 5.3.2.1** for more information.)

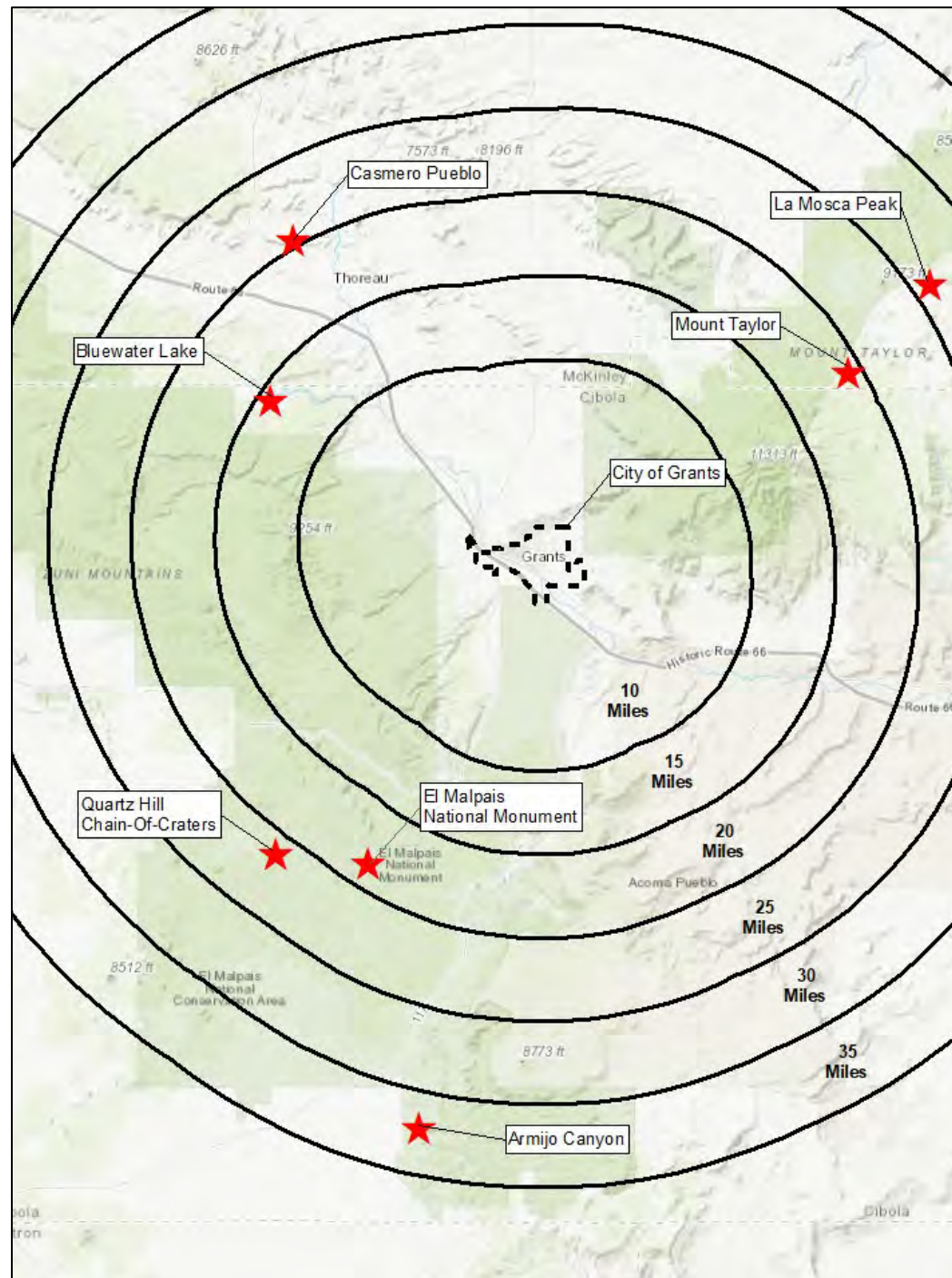
- **Barriers to broadband internet connectivity:** Internet service is essential today for recreation and business alike. Internet is important for communication, commerce, and socializing. The 2017 Comprehensive Plan notes that broadband service within the City of Grants is limited, and this may be a barrier to attracting businesses and visitors.

3.1.5 Existing Outdoor Assets

As discussed in **Section 2.8**, in November 2020 the City of Grants, in partnership with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), published a Community Action Plan, entitled *Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC)*. Shown in **Figure 19** and included in the RERC are local outdoor assets in the Grants area, including the following:

- Casamero Pueblo McGaffey Lake
- Bluewater Lake SP Mt. Sedgwick
- Quartz Hill Chain of Craters
- El Morro N.M. El Malpais N.M
- Armijo Canyon La Ventana Arch
- Lobo Canyon Mount Taylor
- La Mosca Peak Acoma Sky City
- Continental Divide Trail
- New Mexico Backcountry Discovery Route

Figure 19. RERC Local Outdoor Assets



Directly south of Grants is the El Malpais National Monument. This monument is home to wild rock formations, hidden caves, El Calderon, and the La Ventana Arch, which is the second largest natural arch in New Mexico (Visit USA Parks).

Figure 20. El Malpais National Monument



Photo Credit: Visit USA Parks

Not far from El Malpais National Monument is the Land of Fire and Ice, a series of natural features including the Ice Cave and the Bandera Volcano. The Ice Cave is a unique natural feature that has been attracting visitors for hundreds of years. Visitors to the Land of Fire and Ice come from all over to hike and see the many landmarks, including the oldest known living Douglas Fir tree in the state of New Mexico.

Figure 21. Land of Fire and Ice



Photo Credit: Four Corners GeoTourism

North of Grants is Mount Taylor, a dormant stratovolcano and the highest point in the Cibola National Forest (11,301 feet). This natural landmark is a pilgrimage site for nearly 30 Native American tribes, including the Navajo Nation, the Hopi, the Zuni, and others. The geography of the area attracts wildlife such as elk, black bears, wild turkeys, diverse bird species and more. Because the mountain is peak to the Grants Uranium Belt, it is estimated that the Mount Taylor mine contains over 100 million pounds of uranium and was excessively mined back in the late 1900s. The mountain is now a common hiking and sight-seeing location for locals and tourists alike.

Figure 22. Mount Taylor Volcanic Field



Photo Credit: L. Crumpler

3.2 Socioeconomic and Demographic Data

According to the U.S. Census demographic data, 2019 population estimates for Cibola County were 26,675, and 8,942 for Grants, New Mexico. Roughly 47 percent of the population in Grants is female, and 53 percent male, on par with that of Cibola County as a whole. White is the predominant race in the City, followed by Hispanic or Latino, and then White alone (not Hispanic or Latino), shown in **Table 4**.

The median household income (in 2019 dollars) for Grants was \$41,475, up \$2,000 from the Cibola County median household income of \$39,413, however the percent of persons in poverty was almost identical at 25.4 and 25.5, respectively.

Housing characteristics in Grants to those across Cibola County. Owner-occupied housing unit rates in the City are 56.9 percent compared to 68.7 percent in Cibola County and 67.7 percent in the State of New Mexico. The median value of owner-occupied housing units ranged from \$84,400 in Cibola County, to \$101,900 in Grants, and \$171,400 in New Mexico. The median gross rent in the City is \$686.00, \$660.00 for the County, and nearly \$850 in the State. There are approximately 3,200 households in Grants and an average of 2.52 persons per household. Of those 3,200 households, 33.1 percent of individuals over the age of five speak a language other than English at home.

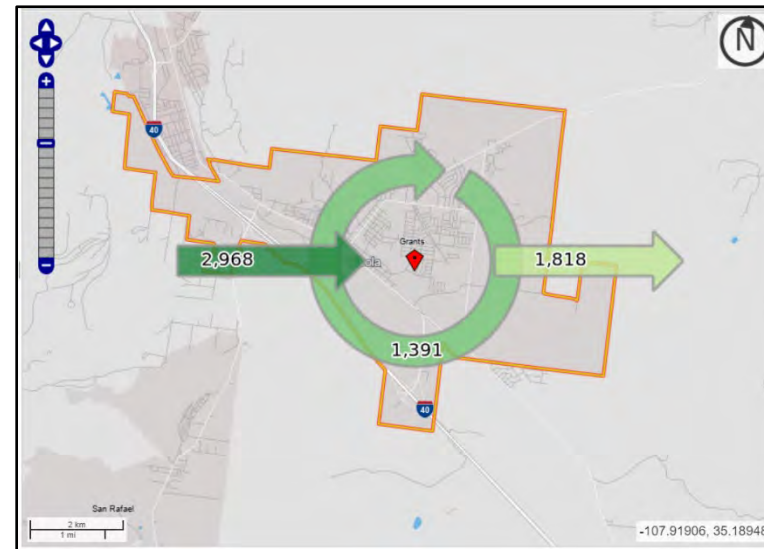
Table 4. Race and Hispanic Origin

Race and Hispanic Origin	Grants Percent	Cibola County Percent	New Mexico Percent
White alone	64.7	51.7	81.9
Hispanic or Latino	48.8	38.5	49.3
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	28.0	18.9	36.8
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	20.8	43.9	11.0
Two or More Races	3.7	2.2	2.6
Black or African American alone	1.6	1.5	2.6
Asian alone	0.3	0.6	1.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0	0.1	0.2

3.3 Employment & Available Skill Base

The United States Census Bureau’s On The Map 2018 statistics show that there were 4,359 jobs in 2018 in Grants. Of those that work in Grants, 2,968 are employed in Grants and live outside Grants, 1,818 live in Grants and are employed outside Grants, and 1,391 are employed and live in Grants, shown in **Figure 23** to the right.

Figure 23. Employment Estimates



Approximately 20.1 percent of workers in Grants were age 29 or younger, 49.8 percent were ages 30 to 54, and 30.1 percent were 55 or older. 1,591 (36.5%) workers are male, and nearly double, 2,768 (65.5%) workers are female. **Table 5** below shows the breakdown of workers in the City by race. Of these races, 57 percent identify as not Hispanic or Latino, and 43 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino.

81.6 percent of adults aged 25 and older living in Grants are a High School graduate or higher, compared to 83 percent in Cibola County as a whole. However, 15.4 percent have a Bachelor’s Degree or higher, while only 14.2 percent hold the same in Cibola County. 81.4 percent of households in Grants have a computer, but only 67.7 percent of those have a broadband internet subscription. **Figure 24** depicts the density of jobs within the City, and shows that the majority of jobs are located along 1st Street. Jobs in Grants vary from public administration to retail trade, to educational services.

The breakdown of jobs by NAICS code from the US Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data is shown in *Error! Reference source not found.*. This data shows that 2.4% of Grants workers are employed in the “Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation” industry. (This is the main industry for recreation employment, though it also includes other non-recreation employment and does not comprise all recreation-related jobs that may be categorized in industries like retail trade or real estate.) This rate is higher than the state’s average of 2.0% of workers employed in the same industry. Although this difference would seem to indicate a an above-average outdoor recreation sector in Grants, a comparison of the LEHD data with Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data suggests that many of the local jobs in this industry are associated with museum and the golf course facilities, likely the New Mexico Mining Museum and the Coyote Del Malpais Golf Course in Grants. According to QCEW data, the vast majority of jobs in this industry are in the public sector.

At the county level, employment in the “Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation” industry is 6.7%. Many of these jobs appear to be associated with the casinos in Acoma and Laguna pueblos.

New Mexico’s outdoor recreation economy as a whole supports 33,500 jobs as of 2017. The fastest growing sectors related to outdoor recreation in New Mexico include real estate with 31 percent growth, followed by arts, entertainments, and recreation with 28 percent growth, and educational services and non-durable goods manufacturing tied with 24 percent growth (ORD 2020).

Conclusions from this data include the following:

- Many workers travel from outside Grants to jobs within the City, meaning the available force extends beyond the city limits. Future analyses of the potential for outdoor economy growth should evaluate the characteristics of this wider labor force.
- Four out of five adults in Grants have a high school diploma, meaning they have basic skills for business and for more advanced training.
- Half of workers in Grants are middle-aged (ages 30- 54). This is most economically active group, meaning workers in this age range are often most willing to work or to be entrepreneurs. At the same time, younger workers (aged 16-29) are more likely to be trained in new skills. Overall, 80% of workers are aged 30 and up.
- While recreation-related employment data may appear to show the industry employs a greater share of workers in Grants than at the state as a whole, other data suggests these workers are concentrated in a small handful of establishments, such as the local museum and golf course. This underscores the fact that Grants does not yet have a robust outdoor economy and that private employment and establishments in this industry are very few.

Table 5. Jobs by Worker Race

Jobs by Worker Race	Percent of Grants	Percent of Cibola County	Percent of New Mexico
White Alone	67.1	57.9	83.3
Black or African American Alone	2.5	1.8	2.9
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	26.2	36.9	9.3
Asian Alone	1.9	1.4	2.2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone	0.1	0.1	0.2
Two or More Race Groups	2.2	1.9	2.1

Figure 24. Jobs per Square Mile

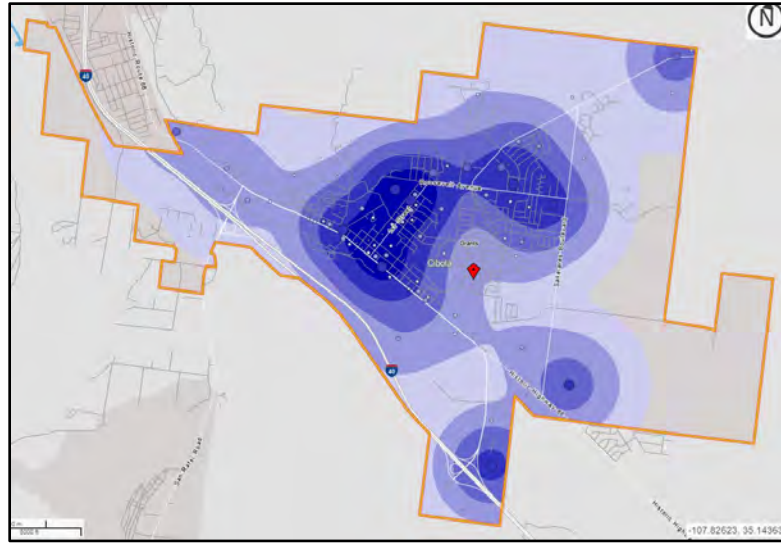


Table 6. NAICS Industry Sector Jobs

Jobs in Grants by NAICS Industry Sector (2018)	Percent in Grants	Percent in Cibola County	Percent in New Mexico
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.1	0.4	1.3
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	4.3	2.9
Utilities	1.4	1.1	0.8
Construction	1.0	2.8	6.3
Manufacturing	0.7	1.2	3.4
Wholesale Trade	2.0	1.4	2.6
Retail Trade	12.0	9.9	11.5
Transportation and Warehousing	0.4	0.5	2.6
Information	0.7	0.4	1.8
Finance and Insurance	2.0	1.6	2.9
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.3	0.5	1.3
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0.8	0.6	7.2
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.2	0.1	0.8
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	6.1	6.4	5.6
Educational Services	9.5	8.7	9.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	40.0	25.4	17.3
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.4	6.7	2.0
Accommodation and Food Services	9.0	7.0	11.3
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	1.2	1.1	2.6
Public Administration	10.0	19.8	6.3

3.4 Regional Influences

3.4.1 History of Area Services and Businesses

The City of Grants, New Mexico has grown significantly since its start in the late 1870s. As shown in **Figure 25** through **Figure 27**, created by the U.S. Geographical Survey (USGS), residential development, commercial development, roadways, and more have expanded through the years. The USGS figures show new changes in purple, from years 1957 to 1971 and 1981. Seen below, residential housing development grew in eastern Grants in 1971 and continued to expand through 1981. The I-40 and NM 53 intersection was constructed by 1981, providing increased opportunity for growth and economic development within the City, including additional motels located along Route 66.

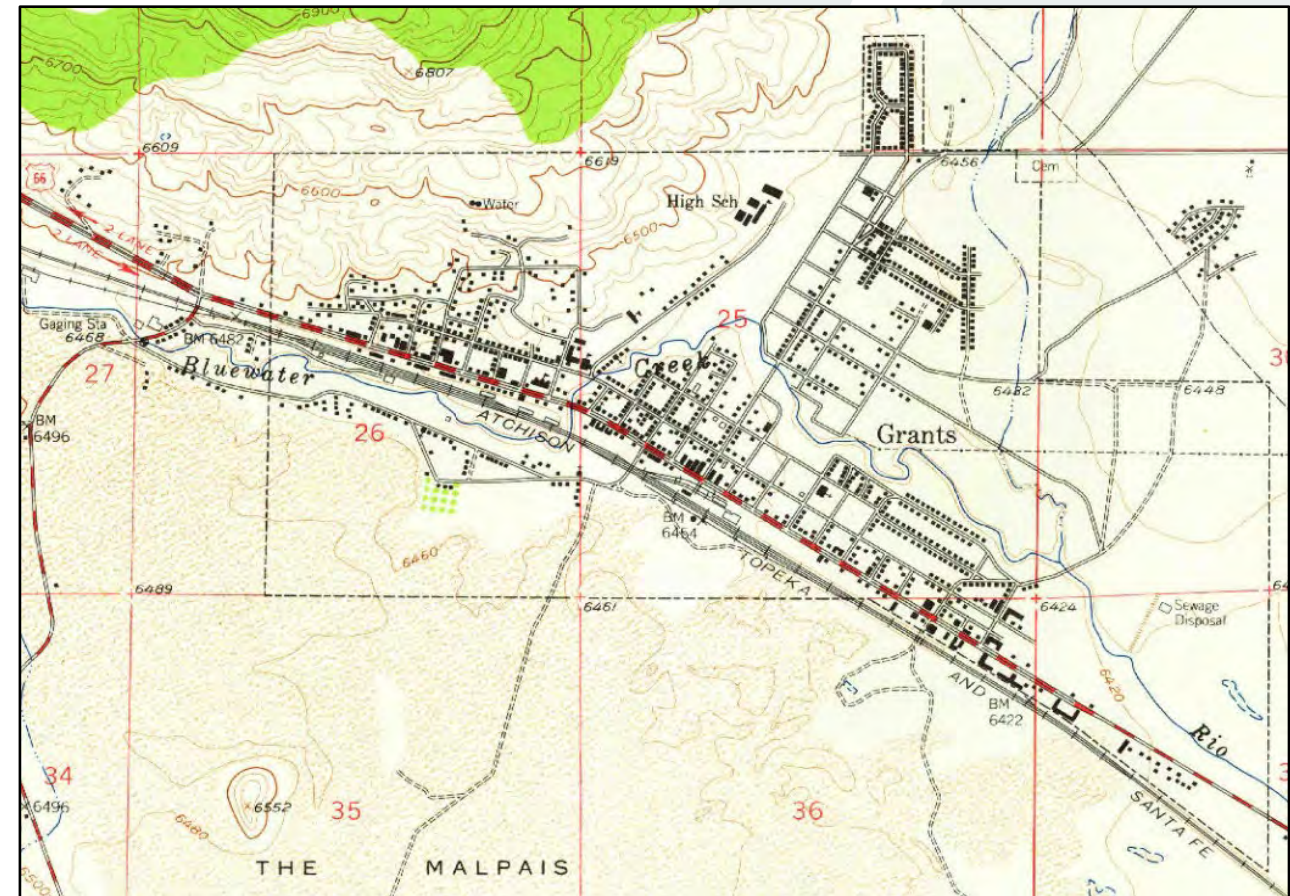


Figure 25. City of Grants, 1957

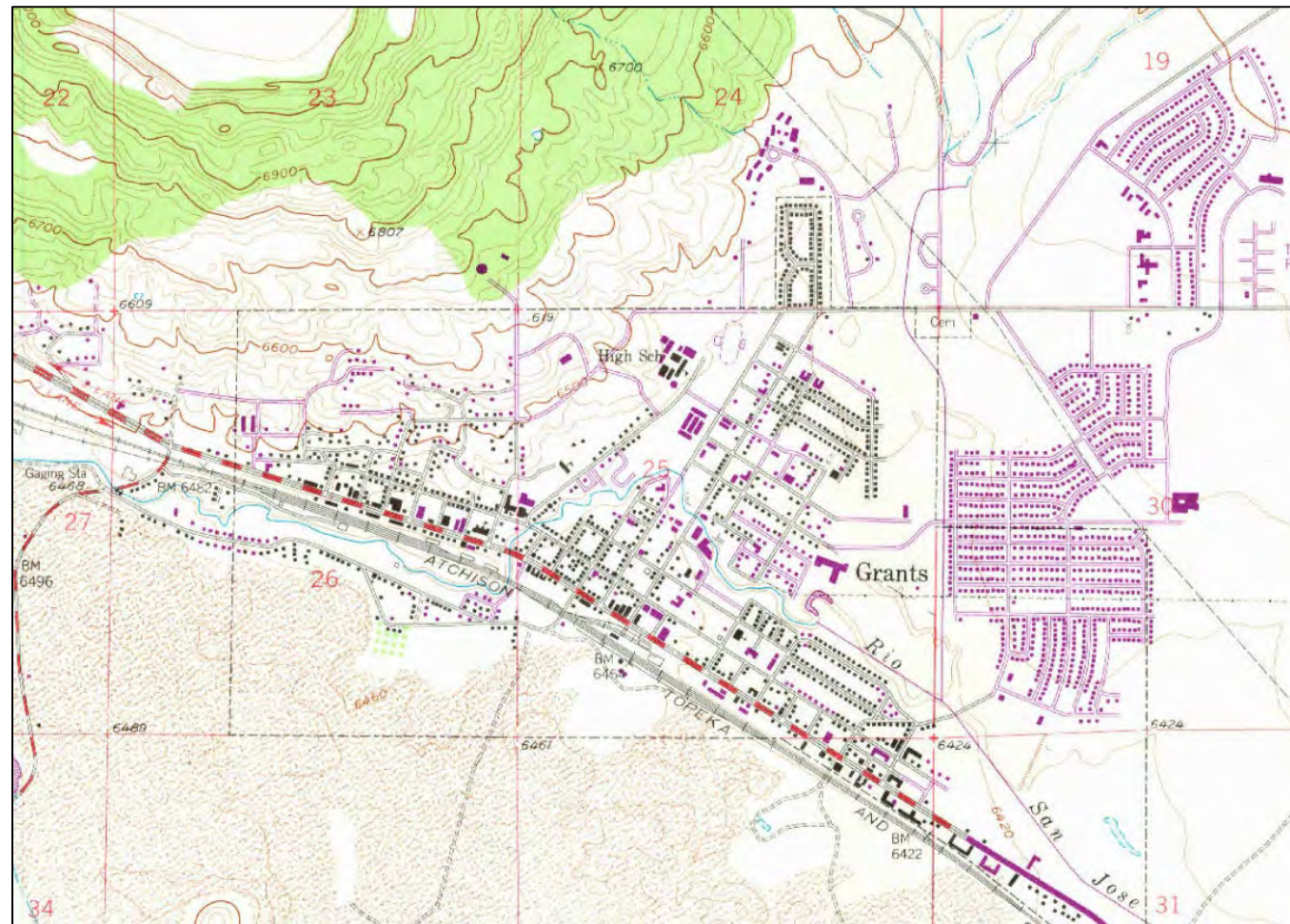


Figure 26. City of Grants, 1971

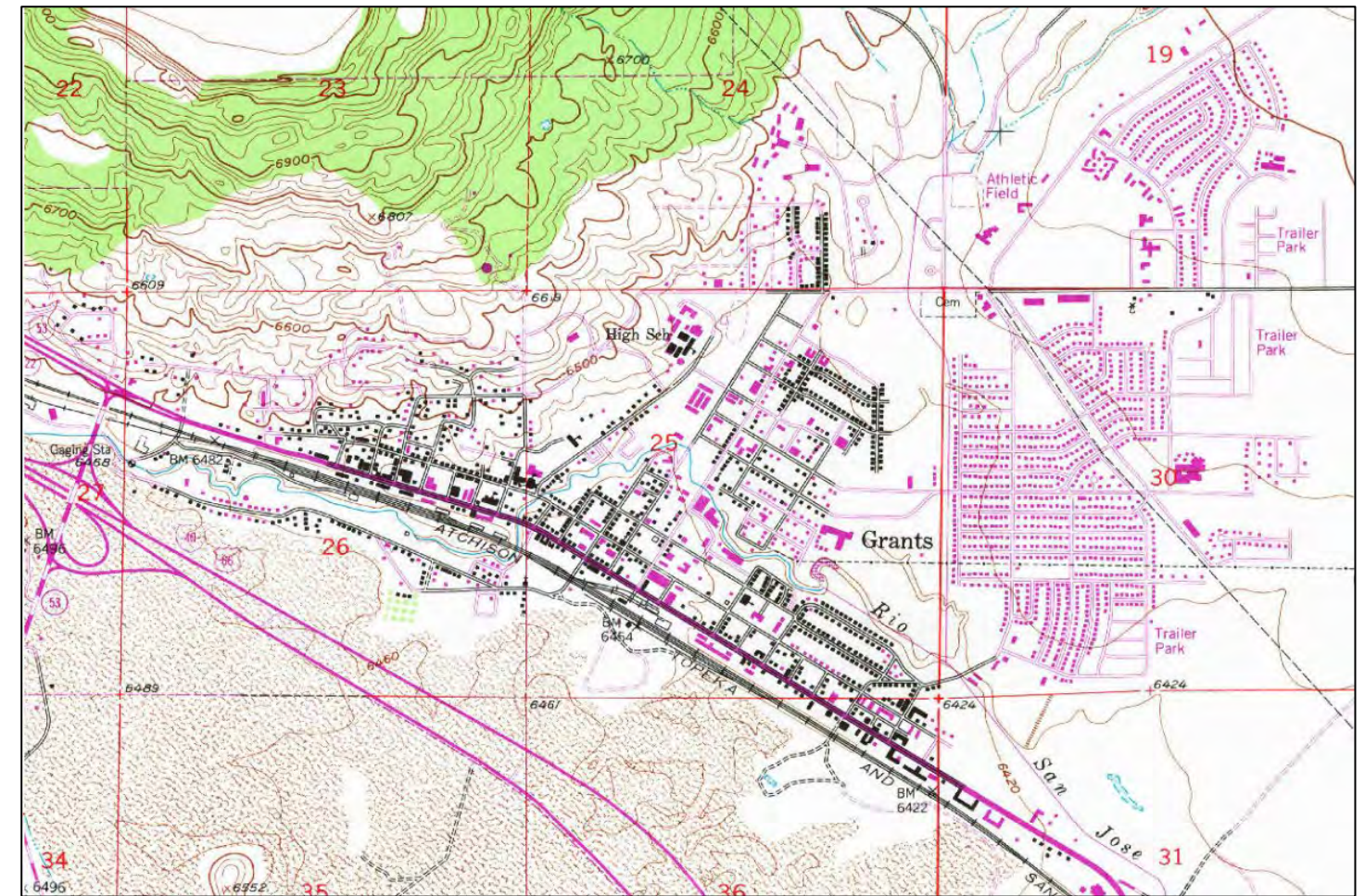


Figure 27. City of Grants, 1981

3.4.2 History of Related Markets

Similar to Grants, New Mexico, Moab, Utah experienced a population surge of 1,275 to 4,682 individuals from 1950 to 1960 due to the uranium boom. Mining along the Colorado River and in the La Sal Mountains was not uncommon; however, Moab's economy was based on farming, ranching, and fruit growing until the uranium boom in the 60s. This uranium boom attracted countless prospectors, miners, and workers, and provided the City with development opportunities such as retail, schools, housing, cafes, and other businesses. The demand for uranium began to decline in the 1960s, causing potash (various mined salts) to be the most recent boom industry in Moab. A potash plant was built in 1963, spurring a new railroad line to be constructed from Denver and the Rio Grande Western Railroad at Crescent Junction to the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company mill outside Moab. Today, Moab is known as the "Outdoor Capital of Utah" and is known to attract tourists from around the United States. Tourists come to view the scenic Arches National Monument and Canyonlands National Park, and for the countless outdoor recreation opportunities in the area. Tourists and locals participate in countless outdoor recreation activities such as whitewater rafting and

kayaking along the Colorado River, mountain biking on numerous trails, ATV riding, rock climbing, hiking, and more (TravelMoab).

4. FEASIBILITY

This Study was commissioned to examine the feasibility of economic development within the Study Area that would support outdoor recreation. The process to understand feasibility included planning, preliminary engineering analysis summarized in previous sections, as high-level input of local and regional stakeholders and of residents (described below).

As a result of this analysis, the Study does not identify any fatal flaw obstacles to economic development within the Study Area. The Study finds that there are notable opportunities for economic development that harness and support the momentum related to the Grants outdoor recreation economy. These are discussed further starting in **Section 4.3** below. Several issues relating to the waterways that flow through the area may need to be addressed before significant investment takes place; however, these are not thought to be insurmountable.

The Study team has developed a concept that shows a vision for economic development in the Study Area. The concept, although preliminary, provides recommendations for projects and strategies that would harness the opportunities available in the Study Area and improve overall economic development outcomes there and for the city overall. The concept is presented in **Section 4.4**.

4.1 Results of Public Participation

No input was received at the virtual public meeting. However, 18 responses to the public survey were received. The survey asked four multiple-choice questions to gauge respondents' preferences about potential recreational uses within the Study and possible commercial and residential in the area. The full results are provided in **Appendix A**. A summary of the key results is provided below (note: in general, respondents were asked to "choose all that apply", so totals may not add to 18):

- Walking trail loops and bicycle paths were the recreational facilities that respondents wanted to see most, with 14 and 11 votes, respectively. Beach-type facilities, educational features, and wildlife view were the next-most popular responses, each receiving 7 or 8 votes.
- Slightly more respondents (11) favored seeing additional development besides recreational facilities within the Study Area than did not (7). This is a 61-39% split.
- With regards to types of development respondents would want to see, retail commercial, outdoor-supportive commercial, and restaurant-/bar-type development received most support (receiving 7, 7, and 6 votes, respectively). Residential development and "other" received two votes each.
- Specific to the Santa Fe Avenue corridor, commercial retail and restaurants/bars were easily the most popular response, with 13 and 10 votes. No other type of development, including lodging and residential, received more than three votes.
- An open-ended question asked respondents to share any other thoughts about development in the Study Area. Five responses were received. None opposed the idea of improvements in the Study Area, although several cautioned that such work should not come before other priorities in the city.

4.2 Areas for Additional Study

There are two topics – both of which relate to the streams that run through the Study Area – that should receive further analysis before economic development investment is undertaken. These topics are 1) drainage issues and 2) water quality. These do not appear to present insurmountable challenges to development, but further review should be done to confirm this.

In the past, the major obstacle to development has been the risk of damage to new development from flooding. Virtually the entire Study Area lies within the floodplain associated with Rio San Jose and the Grants Canyon Arroyo. Improvements to the streams over the past several decades have diminished the flood hazard. Much of the risk of flooding may already have been addressed, although recent observations continue to indicate flooding and drainage issues near George Hanosh Boulevard and farther south along the Rio San Jose. Meanwhile, the FEMA floodplain map has not been updated to reflect the drainage improvements. However, at this preliminary stage, Study team engineers do not believe the remaining drainage issues present a major obstacle to economic development in the Study Area. In fact, as described in the following sections, drainage solutions could be easily worked into the economic development concept for the area.

A holistic examination of drainage conditions is recommended. This could be accomplished with an update to the city's drainage master plan. This would allow the FEMA floodplain map to be amended, removing a formal obstacle to development in the Study Area.

Additional understanding of water quality in the Rio San Jose and the Grants Canyon Arroyo. In addition to regular runoff from adjacent built-up areas, both streams are known to carry tailings from mines in the Grants area. The Grants Canyon Arroyo is thought to be of the most concern in this respect. Contaminated water presents a health and safety hazard to people near the water and can affect investments along the stream – contaminants would, for instance, pose a threat to vegetation in the recreational spaces proposed in the concept.

4.3 Land Use Vision

This Study presents a concept for development within the Study. The concept represents the "vision" or a preliminary recommendation that should be refined with further technical analysis and continued engagement of residents and other stakeholders. Altogether, the proposed concepts would support the City's vision of becoming an outdoor recreation destination.

4.3.1 Trails and Park Space

At the heart of several of the concepts proposed is expansion and integration of trails, most notably the Legacy Trail and the Continental Divide Trail. The Study Team believes that there may be significant recreational economic development opportunity to be gained from expanding on the trail network in Grants.

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) illustrates the value of trails to New Mexico communities:

“The needs assessment in the 2010 New Mexico Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan found that ‘a connected trail system was the #1 amenity to expand and improve.’ This is no surprise: survey after survey demonstrates that trails are the #1 outdoor recreation priority for New Mexicans. Today, trails are seen less as an amenity (i.e., an enhancement) and more as a basic building block of community infrastructure” (SCORP Appendix A, pp. 28-29).

The concepts described in the following section also include recommendations for new park space. A park space in the Study Area would likely be feasible, meeting the criteria for effective parks. The New Mexico *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) describes some of the principles for creating effective parks, citing research from the state of Oregon’s SCORP:

“Parks must:

- Offer a mixture of uses that appeal to different ages and abilities.
- Provide ample numbers and types of programs.
- Be accessible to the greatest number of people possible.

The closer the park or natural area, and the easier it is to get to, the more likely people will use the park. People are more likely to use outdoor places that are close to where they live and where they spend time: restaurants, shopping districts, libraries, gyms, work, and other meeting areas” (New Mexico State Parks, SCORP Appendix A, pp. 15-16).

The Study concept recommends that development in the area be oriented around an open space recreational facility that would follow the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo. The Study Area’s central location to both existing neighborhood and proposed development areas make it an excellent location for a park facility.

The park space would serve several purposes, including:

- It would establish a recreational and non-motorized transportation corridor along the Rio San Jose that serve as a safe and inviting connection between Downtown Grants and the Continental Divide Trail
- It would provide space for solutions to flooding and drainage issues in the Study Area. These solutions, such as retention ponds, constructed wetlands, bioswales, can also function as recreational facilities.
- It would establish an axis for organizing different types of development that are proposed in the area, including residential, commercial, and light industrial, and provide for synergistic relationships with this development (for example, by creating a recreational amenity for new residential areas). Although not clearly an economic development project in itself, the recreational facility would help promote economic development within this area of the city

- It would create a dedicated facilities for outdoor recreation activities, such as a walking, hiking, bicycling, and wildlife viewing

4.3.2 Development Principles

The recommendations of the development concepts follow three principles defined below:

- 1) Emphasize recreational uses and facilities at core of the concept and maintain open space
 - a) This Study Area has characteristics, such as uninterrupted open space and good views, that would lend well to it being a recreational facility. Some parts of the Study Area are challenging to develop for more intensive land uses, given the potential for drainage issues. Meanwhile, the Study Area is centrally located among existing neighborhoods, offering residents easy access to any future recreational facility located there.
 - b) Maintaining the “open space” character of future recreational facilities may be a more appropriate approach than introducing more activity-intensive facilities. For instance, covering the area with structures or athletic fields would likely exacerbate drainage issues. Such uses could create the potential for traffic issues, for example when sports events were held at the athletic fields. The existing land use surrounding much of the Study Area is residential, which is not well suited to high volumes of traffic (nearby residential roadways such as Truman Street and Washington Street already elevated levels of non-residential traffic at times).
 - c) A recreational corridor creates a buffer between commercial development closer to Santa Fe Avenue and residential areas to the north. High-activity commercial land uses can have detrimental impacts on adjacent residential areas, through traffic, noise, or other impacts. Recreational land uses can offer a way to transition between these uses without seeing impacts on residential areas or by reducing the restrictions on commercial development in question.
 - d) A recreational facility within the Rio San Jose corridor would present an excellent opportunity to interface the city’s recreational facilities with the Continental Divide Trail. The 3,100-mile trail – extending from Mexico to Canada – passes through Grants along Santa Fe Avenue and 1st and 2nd streets, and Grants is an official CDT Gateway Community. The CDT may be one of the best examples of how the Grants community can benefit directly from the outdoor recreation economy. Because of its location near the trail’s alignment, the Study Area is in an excellent position to host of many of the facilities that would support the trail, including parking/trailheads; lodging or camping; restaurants and retail; and more. Meanwhile, the trail facilities, such as the Legacy Trail, that are proposed within the Study Area would offer CDT users a safe, comfortable off-street route (the CDT currently follows existing sidewalks or roadways within the city, rather than any dedicated trail facility).
 - e) Views are a defining feature of the Study Area. Low-intensity recreational land use is a good way to maintain these views.
- 2) Maintain opportunities for residential and commercial development

- a) While much of the Study Area is well suited for recreational land use, the area also includes prime areas for development, being located in a central area of Grants with good access to services, amenities, schools, and Interstate 40.
 - b) These development areas largely are reflected in the City’s existing zoning districts. The Study largely recommends no changes to existing zoning.
 - c) Converting all vacant land within the Study Area to a publicly maintained open space or recreational facility would increase the City’s cost burden to build and maintain these facilities. Allowing some private development within the Study Area can reduce those costs and help bring in revenue that supports city-wide services, such as road maintenance, schools, and emergency services.
 - d) If done conscientiously, private development mixed with recreational investment can create positive synergies. For instance, the proposed recreational facilities can add value to new private development, and adding new development near the park can improve access to the park and create an enhanced sense of safety for park users by introducing nearby flows of traffic and people. Some of the strategies that would achieve these positive outcomes are discussed in **Section 4.4.3**.
 - e) The development shown in the concept shows a balanced level of development
- 3) Improve drainage conditions and water quality for residents and businesses along the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo
- a) This is no less important than the previous goals, and in fact, the success of any recreational facility or private development will depend on drainage and water quality issues within the Study being addressed.

4.4 Development Concepts

The following sections describe recommended projects for the Study Area. The projects should extend beyond the initially defined Study Area, past George Hanosh Blvd, to a new trailhead for the Continental Divide Trail located east of Santa Fe Avenue.

The major opportunity provided by the proposed concepts is to establish a recreational corridor connecting the Continental Divide Trail to Downtown along the Rio San Jose. This corridor will create a new outdoor recreation amenity to add to the list of outdoor assets in the Grants and will help catalyze new private development, including in areas that would be welcoming to recreation-supportive businesses. The key concepts are illustrated in **Figure 28**.

4.4.1 Arroyo Park

The space located between the Mesa View Elementary School, Rio San Jose, and Grants Canyon Arroyo is well suited to host a park facility. Though surrounded by established neighborhoods on every side, the area would be challenging to develop due to access issues and drainage concerns. However, its undisturbed, undeveloped character makes it a quiet, aesthetically pleasing space with impressive and obstructed views of the geological features that sit north of the city. These characteristics could easily be fostered to create a centrally located recreational space with trails, wildlife viewing decks, and constructed water features.

Meanwhile, the space’s location at the confluence of the city’s two main streams makes it good site for natural biofiltration facilities that could naturally and passively treat water that runs through the streams, which is known to contain contaminants. Finally, using the land for recreational purposes provide the adjacent school and Future Foundations Family Center a facility that they could use for some of their activities.

Figure 28. Development Concepts



The following strategies are recommended for the Arroyo Park space. More detailed and specific project recommendations are listed in **Section 4.5**.

1. Activate the space into a welcoming recreational facility for residents and visitors.

Currently, the Arroyo Park site is an open space and is already enjoyed for recreational activities by some residents. However, because the property is privately owned and does not have facilities such as trails or seating, many residents may be discouraged from using it (even though hundreds of residents live immediately surrounding the site), and the site will largely remain an unused, vacant lot. Creating a City-owned facility with convenient access, parking, and some dedicated recreational facilities will unlock the usefulness of the space to the wider community and create an attractive destination for visitors. The concept graphic illustrates some of these changes, including:

- Improved access to the site: Extension of Gunderson and Davis streets, and addition of pedestrian bridges crossing the Rio San Jose and the Grants Canyon Arroyo, providing access from the south and east. New parking areas are identified surrounding the proposed park. Extension of the Legacy Trail will also facilitate easier access to the site.
- Lake feature: A body of water is proposed as a key feature of the new park. This would create a habitat for waterfowl that are often seen in the area and an attractive and interesting feature for park visitors. The water feature would also function as a biofiltration facility for water running through the arroyos. The feature would be fed, in part, by water from the Rio San Jose and the Grants Canyon and runoff from adjacent streets. Arroyo water would enter the lake via constructed wetlands on either end of the park site before entering the lake, and then ultimately being reintroduced to the Rio San Jose. Further analysis is needed to understand the design of the lake and biofiltration features.
- Walking trail loop: A defined path/trail encircles the site, providing a safe, level surface for users to explore the site and to be physically active.
- View opportunities: Small viewing decks at the confluence of the streams and along the lake space and constructed wetlands would allow park visitors to take advantage of unique views of wildlife and of water feature at these locations.
- Shade structures and seating: These features would provide a place for park users to rest and to enjoy the view. Seating might make sense along the edge of the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo. Because shade structures may obstruct views out of the park, they might be best placed along the edge of the park.
- Maps and interpretive signage: Maps could display the walking trail loop; nearby restroom facilities; available connections to other other trails, such as the Legacy Trail; and the location of and distance to other nearby destinations. Topics for interpretive signage could include: The common wildlife that appears within the Study Area; how the biofiltration process works and improves water quality in the arroyos; geological features, such as Grants Mesa, visible from the park; and more.

2. Preserve the natural character of the park site and Rio San Jose corridor

While certain changes to the park site are important to making it an accessible recreational asset to the community, these changes should maintain many of the current characteristics that make the site unique, including its natural/“undisturbed” character, its unobstructed views, and its relative lack of noise and traffic. The following approaches are proposed:

- Maintain current landscape: The current mix of natural grass, occasional sagebrush, and other natural vegetation should be maintained. Formal landscaping should be kept out to a minimum, as should grass lawns.
- Keep hard surfaces within the park to a minimum. Trails within the park would be composed of crushed rock or other surfaces that avoid asphalt but that are still compliant with standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Some deck-type structures might be appropriate at the proposed viewing areas. Otherwise, gathering spaces could be built with similar crushed rock. Overall, these surfaces may promote a slower pace of walking or encourage faster bicycle “through-travel” to stay on the paved Legacy Trail.
- Although trees might be useful to create shade, trees might also obstruct views. The placement and type of vegetation planted within the park should be carefully considered. Likewise, structures, such as picnic shelters or shade structures, could block views, and should be carefully placed.

3. Reinforce flood control measures and introduce biofiltration opportunities

Although investments have reduced flooding risks within the Study Area, additional projects within and near the Study Area should aim to improve drainage and minimize flooding risk. Full buildout of the Study Area concepts would entail construction of many new structures and impervious surfaces that could impact drainage flows. The new Mesa View elementary school and improvements to Washington Street will also impact drainage. While additional analysis is needed to understand future drainage patterns, the Arroyo Park can serve an important role in addressing wider drainage challenges. For example, the proposed lake/constructed wetlands can function as a catchment facility for runoff.

Meanwhile, mine tailings from former mines to the north of Grants and roadway runoff contribute to poor water quality in the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo. Establishing methods to improve water quality in the streams will be important to safeguarding the health and safety of future park users and the viability of private development proposed within the Study. Methods could include constructed wetlands within the park or a water treatment facility upstream from the park.

4.4.2 Recreational Corridor

This would be an open space recreational corridor through Study Area that would extend from Arroyo Park to meet the Continental Divide Trail. The land directly along the Rio San Jose to the south of Nimitz Drive is also well suited for recreational uses. Extending recreational uses with a trail and open space along the Rio San Jose would create a direct and visible recreational corridor between several existing and potential

recreational destinations: The existing Riverwalk Park, future Arroyo Park, and a future Continental Divide Trail trailhead (described below) located near where the Rio San Jose crosses under Route 66 east of Santa Fe Avenue. Through approaches such as well-designed wayfinding and a trail connection to the Exit 85 hotel area, this recreational corridor could provide visitors with a new and engaging way to explore Grants.

- Extend recreational amenities along Rio San Jose: A recreational corridor should be extended beyond the main park site along the Rio San Jose. As stated previously recreational land use can be used to provide residents a space for outdoor activity but also function as a flood control facility. Drainage challenges exist along the length of the Rio San Jose within Grants. A “green ribbon” of flood control facilities is proposed; this could include retention ponds, rain gardens, water features that would serve as recreational amenities, and remove some the hazard to and burden for addressing drainage from future private development nearby. These facilities could use an open space located on the north bank of the Rio San Jose (described below) The recreational corridor could extend far enough to the southeast to meet the Continental Divide Trail, providing an excellent opportunity to connect to that trail to the City’s recreational and trail system.
- Extend Legacy Trail south of main park site: As currently planned, the Legacy Trail would connect most areas of the city with a quality shared use path, offering residents and visitors alike the chance to travel throughout the city via active, healthy modes of travel. Just as the trail would help provide access to the main park site, the Legacy Trail is a great way to connect residents to a Rio San Jose recreational corridor and adjacent commercial and residential development. The trail could extend beyond where it is currently planned to terminate at George Hanosh Blvd. Building the trail farther along the Rio San Jose would allow to connect directly with the Continental Divide Trail route on Route 66/NM 11 and support development of a trailhead complex along Route 66. Meanwhile, extending a new branch of the trail along Santa Fe Avenue towards Exit 85 would directly connect the several hotels there to the city’s trail network. There is not currently a safe and dedicated pedestrian path from the hotels to the rest of Grants.
- Create an open space area on the north side of the Rio San Jose: An open space area here would maintain the “open” feel found in the Arroyo Park site, create space for drainage facilities, and help visitors interpret the Rio San Jose corridor as a continuous recreational space. The open space would also help preserve the good views to the north and south of the Study Area. For instance, visitors to the boardwalk on the south side of the Rio San Jose would continue to enjoy views of the geological features to the north of the city. Finally, the space would establish a buffer between the proposed residential land uses to the north of the Rio San Jose from commercial/entertainment land uses to the south.
- Stitch together different types of development: While the recreational corridor could be viewed as an approach to prevent development along the Rio San Jose, the corridor is better viewed as an opportunity to stitch together commercial, residential, and industrial development – development types that are all essential to continued growth for a city but that are sometimes incompatible with each other. Another land use that would be present is that which is focused

on trail-oriented activity, including a trailhead and campground. These can be difficult to locate among other kinds of development. The recreational uses proposed by the concept would provide a neutral space that does not generate significant traffic, or noise, air or light pollution but that is still usable by residents for its recreational amenities.

4.4.3 Commercial and Residential Development

Commercial and residential development should be promoted outside of the recreational corridor and along Santa Fe Avenue. The commercial development in particular can play host to another aspect of the outdoor recreation economy: outdoor recreation supportive businesses. The proximity of the recreational opportunities within Arroyo Park, the recreational corridor, and the Continental Divide Trail trailhead make this a good location for these types of businesses.

Beyond the areas identified in this Study as well suited for recreational uses, notable opportunities for commercial and residential development exist within the Study Area. These opportunities are identified in a general way on the City’s zoning map (see **Figure 5**), which shows commercial zoning between Santa Fe Avenue and the Rio San Jose and single-family residential zoning north of Rio San Jose. (The Study team was not made aware of any specific existing development plans.) The proposed areas are also shown in **Figure 29**.

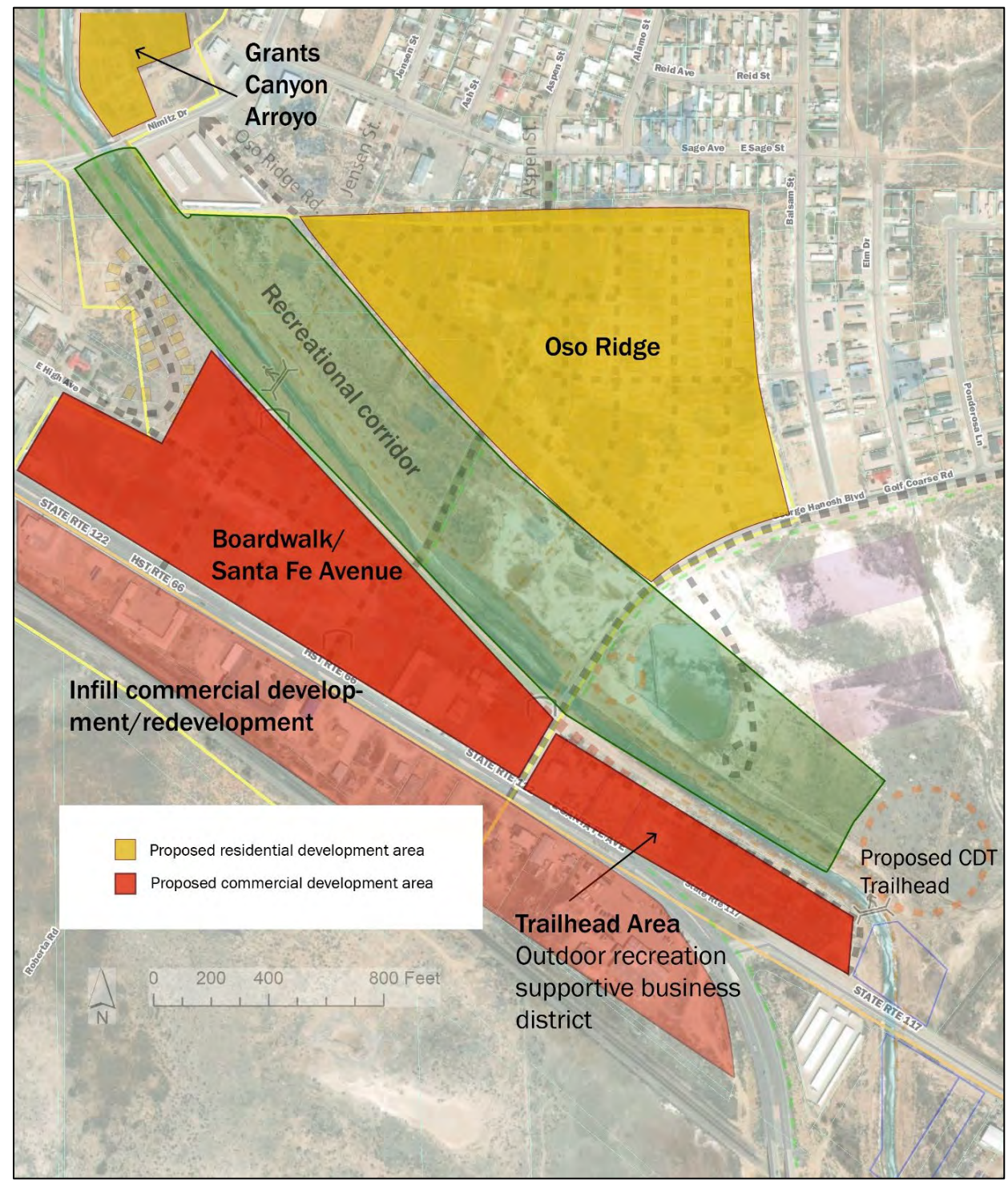
Opportunities exist for redevelopment of abandoned commercial and residential properties, such as several former motels along Santa Fe Avenue.

Currently, properties within the Study Area face major obstacles to being developed. For most parcels, the most notable challenge is the flooding concerns associated with the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo. Although improvements to the streams have addressed much of the drainage issues, the official FEMA floodplain map has not been amended to reflect to actual extent off the flood area. The FEMA map is used to determine eligibility for financing: development within the floodplain may be required to have flood insurance.

Because much of the area has not yet been developed, new developers might face a dilemma, concerned that their development might not benefit from visibility, traffic, or infrastructure that would be associated with a more built-out or established area. However, the recreational facilities identified by this Study could be an important catalyst for private development. Those facilities represent an attractive amenity for new

developments, and the public spending associated with the recreational facilities would signal to private developers that the city is willing to invest in the area.

Figure 29. Proposed Commercial and Development Areas



In a survey of residents for the city’s 2017 comprehensive plan, “new business developments” received the second highest number of votes to a question asking what residents felt was the city’s highest development priority (p. II-10). The potential development highlighted in this Study would provide substantial space for new commercial establishments.

This future development area represents a major opportunity for outdoor recreation-supportive establishments, those that offer products and services such as outfitting, camping supplies, hiking and biking equipment, and more. Though these types of establishments could be successful anywhere within the commercial areas of Study Area, given the good location near Santa Fe Avenue, they might be most successful and appropriate east of George Hanosh Blvd, where they would be in closest proximity to the proposed CDT trailhead. In fact, the co-location of CDT trail infrastructure and outdoor recreation businesses could allow creation of a branded district built around outdoor recreation, allowing for easier marketing of the businesses and the CDT.

While the design and layout of commercial development would be completed by private sector developers, this Study does recommend several projects or strategies that the City could implement or support in order to foster the success of commercial development.

Perhaps the most notable of these projects is a boardwalk-type space along the south bank of the Rio San Jose. This would be a segment of the Legacy Trail that would be built wider to accommodate more pedestrians, seating, lighting, and viewing decks along the Rio San Jose. An example of this type of space is shown in **Figure 30**. This may be a useful approach to transition from the recreational facilities along the Rio San Jose to the commercial uses south of the arroyo. While development closer to Santa Fe Avenue could easily reflect Route 66 development patterns, the appropriate scale or style of development along the Rio San Jose might be less clear. The boardwalk space would provide developers a solution to this. Similar spaces in other communities provide commercial establishments a way to engage with water features. These spaces inspire business such as restaurants and cafes that construct patios or porches oriented to the water. This combination of public space and creative private spaces create an attractive destination for residents and visitors alike. The proposed location of the boardwalk is shown in **Figure 31**.

Figure 30. Boardwalk-type space with adjacent commercial development: Boardwalk at Granite Park, Plano, TX (Google Streetview)



Additional recommendations for commercial development include suggestions regarding the following:

- Roadway design and layout:
- Extension of shared use paths: Segments of path that extend from the main Legacy Trail alignment into the adjacent commercial and residential areas will allow for safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel beyond the Legacy Trail.
- Wayfinding and gateway signage


4.5 Recommended Projects

The following section describes specific projects that the Study team has identified as enhancing the outdoor recreation market and economic development in Grants. For the purposes of more clearly describing the location of the projects, the overall Study Area is divided into two areas, a north and a south area, divided by Nimitz Drive. For each area, a schematic layout is presented (**Figure 31** and **Figure 32**). The numbers on the layout correspond to a project list that immediately follows the graphic.


4.5.1 North Area (North of Nimitz Drive)

Figure 31. North Area Recommended Projects



Project 1	Extension of Legacy Trail
	<p>The proposed Arroyo Park site is located where two future segments of the Legacy Trail will join. The trail connection will provide residents and visitors the ability to conveniently access the proposed park on foot or by bicycle from many other points within the city. A pedestrian bridge will connect the trail's Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo segments. Community feedback in the City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan indicated a desire for shaded public spaces. Shade trees and/or shade structures are recommended along the length of the trail extension.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Existing Legacy Trail west of Anderman Street in Grants</i></p>
Project 2	Walking trail loop
	<p>A walking trail loop would be a key feature of the main park site, separate from the Legacy Trail. This trail, built with crushed rock or gravel, would provide a comfortable, leisurely facility for park visitors. Interpretive exhibits, seating, lighting, and wayfinding would accompany the trail. The trail would also help reinforce the natural character of the main park site. ATVs, dirt bikes, and bicycles may need to be prohibited to ensure safety of trails users. Though final design of the facility is needed, the walking trail loop, illustrated in Figure 31, measures approximately one mile in length. The trail could be accessed from surrounding areas via the Davis Street trailhead, another connection to Davis Street to the west, and via several crossings of the Rio San Jose and the Grants Canyon Arroyo.</p>
Project 3	Lake/marsh (Biofiltration)
	<p>This facility would be designed to provide habitat for wildlife - and thereby offer opportunities for wildlife viewing for visitors. The facility, in conjunction with adjacent constructed wetlands, would also function as a biotreatment facility, improving the quality of water from the nearby streams and from runoff from roadways north of the proposed park site. Further engineering analysis is needed to understand the design of the facility. This analysis would aim to understand the feasibility of maintaining water within the facility year-round, and/or how the facility would be incorporated into surrounding drainage infrastructure.</p>

Project 4	Wildlife lookout
	<p>This small island near center of lake (described above) would provide a location for viewing wildlife. The space would be connected to the wider Study Area by small pedestrian bridges, and could contain seating, railings, and interpretive exhibits describing local wildlife.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Rendering of Carpio Sanguinette Park pond overlook, Denver, CO</i></p>
Project 5	Outdoor classroom
	<p>Adjacent to the future site of the new Mesa View Elementary building, this area could include an outdoor amphitheater for presentations, a teaching garden, shade structure/picnic shelter, educational exhibits, and other features identified in collaboration with Mesa View Elementary staff. While designed to be used by elementary school students, the outdoor classroom space could be used by community groups for meetings, presentations, and other events, in a similar way to how school facilities are sometimes used by the public.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Garden space, Explora Science Center, Albuquerque</i></p>
Project 6	Lookout at river confluence
	<p>Located where the Rio San Jose and Grants Canyon Arroyo meet, this area could include a viewing deck, seating, and interpretive signage, capitalizing on the unique view of the confluence of the two streams. The lookout would be easily accessible from two segments of the Legacy Trail.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Snake River Overlook, Wyoming. Photo: US Nat'l. Park Service</i></p>

Project 7	Neighborhood node/Pocket park (Sargent Street)
	<p>A path to Mesa View elementary school extends through this parcel, which faces Sargent Street and is owned by Grants-Cibola Schools. The path connects with a metal bridge that crosses the Rio San Jose and permits students to then cross the main park site to reach the south side of the school. Within the parcel, dirt has been graded to create the path, but the path is otherwise unimproved. Tall vegetation lines both sides of the path. The path through this parcel should be improved to similar specifications as the Legacy Trail in order to provide students a more comfortable path, and to provide a connection to the Legacy Trail from the adjacent neighborhood, from which reaching the trail would otherwise require a longer, indirect trip. The parcel could also be developed into a small “pocket” park serving the neighborhood and Legacy Trail users with seating, landscaped open space, small play equipment, and picnic structures. Because it is recommended that equipment & structures be kept to a minimum within the Arroyo Park site, placing these within the Sargent Street parcel might be more appropriate.</p>  <p><i>Current view of the lot, facing south toward Sargent Street</i></p>
Project 8	Picnic Area (Sage Street west of Nimitz Drive)
	<p>Picnic pavilions would be built along the Grants Canyon Arroyo and extended Sage Street. This feature would be designed to provide a view of the main park site, while maintaining activity associated with larger gatherings outside of the main park park in order to preserve its intended natural character.</p>
Project 9	New residential development
	<p>This space offers an opportunity for private residential infill development. Though the area is currently within the FEMA floodplain, continued flood control improvements will improve the development potential of the area. Additional housing is needed within the City, and single-family residential may be most appropriate for this area, given the roadway access available to the site. Fifty-one single-family units are illustrated in the graphic, though the actual layout of a development would need to be determined at a later stage. Future residents would benefit from quick access to the main park site and the Legacy Trail via pedestrian bridges across the Grants Canyon Arroyo.</p>
Project 10	Neighborhood connection to Legacy Trail
	<p>Similar to #7 this feature would include a short segment of trail connecting the adjacent neighborhood to the main alignment of the Legacy Trail, thereby providing a shortcut to nearby residents. Lighting and seating could also be installed. This</p>


	<p>parcel is owned by the City of Grants, who had acquired it to install drainage infrastructure.</p>
Project 11	Limited commercial & residential infill development: Sargent Street and Nimitz Drive
	<p>Parcels along Nimitz Drive on either side of the Rio San Jose offer opportunities for neighborhood-scale commercial development. Residential development may be appropriate along Sargent Street. Similar to other proposed development in the Study Area, the design of the development should be sensitive to the intended natural/recreational character of the Arroyo Park and Rio San Jose/Legacy Trail corridor. Commercial developers may be encouraged, for instance, to build their main parking areas towards the Nimitz Drive side of their properties rather than oriented to the trail or Rio San Jose. Another approach to this end, as shown in the graphic, could be to maintain an open space buffer between new development and the Rio San Jose.</p>

4.5.2 South Area (South of Nimitz Drive)

Figure 32. South Area Recommended Projects



Project 12	Extension of Legacy Trail
	The Legacy Trail would be extended from current terminus at Anderman Street along the south side of Rio San Jose and along the west side of Grants Canyon Arroyo. Extending the trail through the Rio San Jose corridor would connect this area with the main park facility via a high-quality multimodal facility. The currently planned extension of the Legacy Trail calls for the path to end at George Hanosh Boulevard; however, this Study has determined that it may be useful to extend the trail further east and then along east side of Santa Fe Avenue across BNSF tracks and to hotel area near Exit 85. This would connect the recreational facilities and related development to the visitors staying in these hotels.
Project 13	Open space/linear park on north bank of Rio San Jose
	In order to maintain a corridor of “natural character”/open space extending from the main proposed park, a wide open space area on the north side of the Rio San Jose is proposed. This open space would also buffer the proposed residential land uses to the north of the Rio San Jose from commercial/entertainment land uses to the south.
Project 14	Boardwalk segment of trail (not including adjacent commercial development)
	Along this two-block segment of the Legacy Trail, the proposed trail would widen along river-oriented businesses into a “boardwalk” or “riverwalk” type space. This would create a unique, attractive, and pedestrian-oriented space for commercial development to transition to the Rio San Jose. This boardwalk could include viewing decks to view wildlife and the stream environment. The boardwalk would be constructed with an environmentally friendly material for ecologically sensitive environments.
Project 15a	Santa Fe Avenue Corridor development
	Commercial development may be feasible in the Santa Fe Avenue corridor and up to the proposed boardwalk along the Rio San Jose. Santa Fe Avenue offers good access and visibility to potential businesses within the area. Meanwhile, the proximity of the Arroyo Park/Rio San Jose corridor could boost traffic within this commercial area, and vice versa. While the final design and layout of commercial development would be determined by developers later, three “spines” are proposed to which development could be oriented: Santa Fe Avenue (Route 66-style development, more automobile-oriented and low density); Aspen Street (downtown or traditional business district

	scale, higher density, pedestrian-oriented); and Rio San Jose/Boardwalk (patio restaurants and oriented to Rio San Jose).
Project 15b	Gateway signage, wayfinding
	<p>Branded gateway or monument signage or wayfinding signage can help improve the visibility of future development and help visitors “read” the area as an attractive destination. Gateway signage, similar to what has been built at Grants Memorial Park and Grants High School, is proposed at the entrance to Aspen Street from Santa Fe Avenue, entrances to the boardwalk and/or Legacy Trail, and at the Continental Divide Trail trailhead.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Similar gateway signage at Grants High School</i></p>
Project 15c	Water impoundment
	Construction of a small dam near George Hanosh Blvd could create an area of pooled water within the Rio San Jose along the proposed boardwalk space. This would help maintain water levels in this area (a dam is used in Riverwalk Park) and improve the aesthetic quality of the river. Additional analysis is needed to understand how the dam would safely manage stormwater and whether adequate water volumes would still flow to downstream users of the Rio San Jose.
Project 16	Residential development
	Single family and some multifamily residential development north of the Rio San Jose is proposed. Currently, the area is already zoned for residential development, so there would be no need for a rezone. New housing has been identified as a need for the city by previous planning efforts. Infill housing in this central location of the city would provide residents with easy access to services and amenities, including the Rio San Jose open space and the proposed Arroyo Park.

Project 17	Extension of Aspen Street
	Extension of Aspen Street (north-south) and Oso Ridge Road (east-west) are important in order to provide access to Santa Fe Ave corridor, new residential development, and to balance volumes on existing roadways. The right-of-way for extending Aspen Street appears to exist already, though a new bridge across the Rio San Jose is recommended. Aspen Street would serve as the main north-south roadway through the commercial development on the south side of the RSJ, and consequently should be constructed relatively early compared with other new roadways in this area. Aspen Street should be built to support higher levels of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the area with wider sidewalks, trees, and lighting, which could transition to a multiuse trail north of Rio San Jose. Roundabouts are recommended as a traffic calming technique.
Project 18	Extension of Jensen and Ash streets
	Jensen Street would be extended from Santa Fe Avenue south of the Rio San Jose, and north of the stream, south of Sage Avenue. If desired, a bridge crossing could be installed for pedestrians and cyclists only, or for motor vehicles as well. These roadways could be completed by private developers who wish to develop the surrounding land.
Project 19	Lake/Beach
	Similar to Tingley Beach in Albuquerque, this space would have a pond or small lake that could support fishing or sailing of radio-controlled boats. As with Tingley Beach, the facility could also have a flood control function. Additional analysis is needed from an aquatic specialist to understand how the facility would need to be designed to support activities such as fishing. As with other water features proposed within the Study Area, further analysis is also needed to understand water quality issues.
Project 20	George Hanosh Boulevard Widening
	At a future time, George Hanosh Boulevard will need to be widened from two lanes. This change is not crucial to the success of the Arroyo Park project; rather, widening the roadway could provide opportunities to enhance the park area with a new Rio San Jose bridge crossing, streetscape and multimodal facilities. A permanent Continental Divide Trail segment, connecting Santa Fe Avenue towards Lobo Canyon Road, could be a part of the widening project.

Project 21	Future light industrial
	Per current zoning, certain types of light industrial development – such as those that create noise at all hours – could be incompatible with uses proposed within the Study Area, such as the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) campground. The City should work with developers to mitigate these impacts during its development review process. Many uses, however, could create synergies with the nearby recreational uses with outdoor recreation-focused establishments.
Project 22a	Continental Divide Trail (CDT) Trailhead: Welcome center/information kiosk
	This trailhead would consist of a complex of facilities along the Rio San Jose that would connect the Legacy Trail and other proposed recreational facilities with the Continental Divide Trail, forming an urban trailhead for the CDT. Concept 21a would include an information kiosk, small plaza, services such as concessions or bike rental, limited parking, and restrooms. This would serve as a welcome center for CDT trail users and other visitors to Grants.
Project 22b	Continental Divide Trail (CDT) Trailhead: Campground
	The Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) has indicated there is demand for campgrounds along the CDT route. The CDTC recommends that these campgrounds include showers and laundry facilities. This site at Concept 20b is an option because it is near a potential trailhead site just to the south, but is otherwise removed from existing or planned residential or commercial areas, which may be incompatible with a campground.
Project 22c	Continental Divide Trail (CDT) Trailhead: Main Trailhead/Parking
	This would include a medium-sized (60 standard spaces, plus 10 recreational vehicle spaces) parking lot, and public restrooms at the location where the trail would shift from being entirely on-street, to include an off-street option, provided by an extended Legacy Trail. Concept 20c would include additional parking and may include services described in Concept 11 that would also serve the proposed campground. Parking for this trailhead would be provided.
Project 23	Outdoor recreation supportive retail and development
	Located near the proposed CDT trailhead, this commercially zoned land would make excellent location for outdoor-supportive commercial, such as equipment providers and eating/drinking establishments. Because automobile access to these parcels from

	Route 66 is limited by the Santa Fe Avenue interchange, a roadway along the north side of the properties (accessed by George Hanosh Boulevard and by US 66 east of the interchange) would be needed. See the discussion in Section 4.9.1 for more opportunities in this area.
Project 25	Pedestrian link from Legacy Trail to hotels near I-40 interchange
	This would be an extension of the Legacy Trail is proposed from George Hanosh Boulevard along Santa Fe Avenue toward Exit 85. The new facilities and development within the Study Area will be an attraction for visitors, including those staying at existing hotels near the I-40 interchange. Currently, there are not many activities near the hotels, and the proposed recreational facilities and any associated development could attract these lodgers. At this time, there are no safe pedestrian facilities between the hotel area and the BioPark. A pedestrian bridge across the BNSF tracks would be needed: there is currently not adequate space on the Santa Fe Avenue bridge, and the bridge is too low for improvements to be approved by the railroad.

4.6 Cost Estimate and Value of Development

Detailed costs are provided in Appendix B. The preliminary construction cost estimate puts the total cost for the improvements described above at \$3 million for the North Area and \$15-17.5 million for the South Area. This does not include private development costs, such as commercial development near the Boardwalk, or the campground near the proposed Continental Divide Trail trailhead. This also does not include operation & maintenance (O&M) costs.

The value of potential private development was not determined, but the proposed concepts include development of approximately 200 single-family homes, 96 multifamily units, and 500,000 square feet of commercial development (including a mix of retail and office) throughout the area illustrated in the previous section. This degree of development is a long-term projection. These unit and square-footage totals represent what is buildable based on available land, development regulations and the current low-density scale of development throughout Grants, with slightly higher density development assumed in a handful of locations, for instance Aspen Street south of the Rio San Jose. While full development of the area will require factors such as time and population growth, in the short term, more limited development in the Study Area – especially that focused on outdoor recreation – can be successful. Success of this development may depend on improved marketing of the City and Study Area as outdoor recreation destinations, investment in the recreation and other public infrastructure described in this Study, further development of the Continental Divide Trail, and some private sector initiative.

4.7 Zoning and Code Analysis

None of existing zoning designations in the Study Area or its vicinity would be incompatible with the key goals of the development concept, such as creating a quality recreational facility, outdoor-recreation supportive economic development, and catalyzing new residential development. In fact, the development concept was designed to incorporate existing zoning designations as much as possible, since these designations can be viewed as reflecting the community's existing development goals.

While extensive rezoning would not be required, the following steps may be needed. The Arroyo Park site and the recreational corridor are currently zoned for residential use. Public, non-profit recreational uses are conditionally permitted in these zoning districts. (Recreational uses are permitted in a range of residential, commercial, and industrial districts, and there is no zoning district for civic or recreational uses.) A conditional use permit is required in these districts for recreational facilities. A permit can be issued following a process defined in the city's Land Use Code, which involves a public hearing and other steps.

A provision exists in the City's code for planned unit development (PUD) zoning, though it has not yet been used in the city to date. PUD allows the city broad flexibility to define development standards on a development-by-development basis, though PUD developments usually encompass a large, master planned area of mixed uses. The development review process for a PUD-zoned area allows the city to work with a developer to define standards for elements such as setback, height, and stylistic elements that differ from a standard zoning district's requirements. These exceptions would be established in many jurisdictions through design overlay zoning; however, establishing design overlay requires detailed changes to a city's land use or zoning code. PUD zoning is sometimes criticized for allowing the regular development review process to be circumvented, but it can be a useful and more efficient approach to achieving urban design outcomes when major code revisions are not desired or otherwise justified. PUD zoning, therefore, may be appropriate for key parts of the commercial development discussed in this Study, such as in the vicinity of the boardwalk or near the CDT trailhead, where unique or innovative development designs would be appropriate.

4.8 Utility Capacity

The City of Grants has adequate water and sewer capacity for years beyond 2040. Water production is over 1.53 million gallons per day, with a 2040 projected usage of 1.1 million gallons, this leaves an additional 430,000 gallons of reserve. The 200 residential homes and 500,000 square feet of commercial development is estimated to use 40,000 gallons per day. The City of Grants Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP) is designed for 1.5 million gallons a day. At 80% of the 2040 water demand, the sewage flow would be 880,000 gallons per day, and with the Milan flow of 350,000 gallons per day, total estimated flow for year 2040 is 1.23 million gallons per day with a reserve of 270,000 gallons per day. The 200 residential homes and 500,000 square feet of commercial is estimated to use 32,000 gallons per day.

4.9 Urban Design Recommendations

This Study does not recommend specific urban design standards, but does recommend the following strategies and approaches to be implemented by the City and developers.

New development should take care to preserve the views available from the Study Area, especially those to the north (described in **Section 2.4**). This means that new development -- particularly residential development to the north of the Rio San Jose -- should be evaluated to see whether proposed building heights would inhibit these views. At this time the City does not have provisions to enforce height restrictions outside of requirements associated with zoning districts, so developer compliance would be voluntary. Given the current zoning designations in the Study Area (see **Section 2.1**), residential development cannot exceed 35 feet in height, and commercial and light industrial structures cannot exceed 45 feet. While further analysis is needed, buildings at these heights would likely infringe on existing views.

Urban design of the commercial areas should foster a pedestrian-friendly environment that engages with the nearby recreational corridor. A design challenge within the Study Area will be to transition from the recreational facilities along the Rio San Jose, which may generate higher volumes of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, to Santa Fe Avenue, with higher levels of automobile traffic. Commercial uses that require better automobile access or larger amounts of parking (fast-food restaurants, hotels, or larger retail stores) should be located along or near Santa Fe Avenue, while smaller scale, lower-turnover uses (sit-down restaurants, boutique-type retail) would be more appropriate farther back from Santa Fe Avenue and towards the Rio San Jose and boardwalk

A possible urban design approach to help facilitate this transition would be an Aspen Street commercial street. This would be a pedestrian-friendly spine to connect Santa Fe Avenue to the Rio San Jose recreational corridor. This segment of Aspen Street would be designed with wider sidewalks, trees, and on-street parking to be inviting to those on foot and to slow automobile traffic. Structure frontages along the street would be built to the lot line or sidewalk, with any off-street parking along the side or rear. Along this street, larger-footprint, higher-traffic uses near Santa Fe Avenue could transition to smaller structures towards the Rio San Jose, ultimately terminating at a traffic circle in front of the boardwalk, which would create an interesting and inviting visual bookend on the north end of the street.

The City should help facilitate commercial development that avoids generic styles, which would undermine the goal of creating a distinct destination within the area. Luckily, the city need only look at its own Route 66 corridor for styles that can be referenced in new development. A community that has found recent success in taking this approach is Albuquerque, where several new projects along the city's Central Avenue (Historic Route 66) corridor have been successful in adapting old Route 66-era structures into new uses that have good automobile access, are aesthetically interesting, and that are engaging for pedestrians.

4.9.1 East Santa Fe Avenue area

The East Santa Fe Avenue area, described in **Figure 32**, is where more innovative architectural and urban design approaches would be appropriate. These would attract attention from drivers approaching from the south from I-40 and would allow for a variety of spaces or designs associated outdoor recreation supportive businesses. These are reflected in the stores of large-market outdoor recreation retailers like Bass Pro Shops, Cabela’s, Scheels or REI, which usually feature distinctive architecture, high ceilings, large showrooms, or even space for activities such as rock-climbing. Although Grants may not attract one of these specific retailers, the design elements they employ could very easily be seen in outdoor recreation-related business in this part of the Study Area.

Tin Can Alley is a new development in Albuquerque that provides an example of a possible development in the East Santa Fe Avenue Area. Tin Can Alley is a food hall with small restaurants and breweries organized around a central courtyard. The structure is constructed in part with shipping containers, creating a visually striking facilities full of interesting spaces. Across from the food hall structure is a climbing gym. The combined development has become a very popular destination and is helping to anchor new residential development in the surrounding area. The development is shown in **Figure 33**.



Figure 33. Tin Can Alley in Albuquerque

4.9.2 Transportation Recommendations

Within the main Arroyo Park and Rio San Jose recreational corridor, roadway facilities should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain natural character of the facility.

Within proposed commercial and residential areas, a continuation of the roadway grid may be favorable. Grid-type roadway layouts create predictability for both residents and visitors. This type of layout is also typically associated with more pedestrian-friendly environment because it creates smaller blocks, which facilitates more direct travel for those on foot.

Although a road diet was initially envisioned for Santa Fe Avenue in order to calm traffic and create a more pedestrian-friendly roadway, the roadway is considered by NMDOT to be an important alternative route to Interstate 40 should any incidents block traffic on the freeway. Santa Fe Avenue, therefore, needs to continue to accommodate high volumes of traffic and larger vehicles, and a road diet may conflict with these uses. Other approaches may be possible along Santa Fe Avenue, however, including improved crosswalks and enhanced crossings like shown in **Figure 34**.



Figure 34. Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing in Tucson, AZ
www.pedbikeimages.org / Sree Gajula

Given the possibility that bicycle traffic could increase with expansion of the Legacy Trail, bicycle parking will be an important type of facility to build out as the Study Area is developed.

Electric vehicles are expected to become more popular in the coming years, and with that, demand for charging facilities will become important, especially in places like Grants, where the community hopes to attract visitors traveling on a key corridor like Interstate 40. The proposed CDT trailhead is an ideal location for such infrastructure, but other areas for charging stations should be identified as the Study Area is developed.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5.1 Prioritization

The recommended prioritization approach for the implementation the project (detailed in the previous section) is described below:

5.1.1 Short-Term Projects

In general, the highest priority (most short term, 0-5 years out) projects are those that have been previously identified by the City or partners or that are key to setting the groundwork for additional implementation of the recommended concept.

Projects that have already been identified include extension of the Legacy Trail and further improvements to the Rio San Jose and Grants Arroyo, and construction of Gunderson Street. Also of high priority is additional planning and study for specific parts of the development concept. This includes study of the biofiltration facility within the Arroyo Park site. Another important study would be of drainage within the Study Area. The City is considering an update to its citywide drainage master plan. Completing this plan would establish an understanding of drainage issues in the area and allow the City to petition for a change to the FEMA floodplain map that would reflect the impact of previous improvements to the Rio San Jose and Grants Arroyo. Preliminary design for the recreational facilities described in this Study should be pursued in the near term. Land acquisition of further City-owned areas is another high-priority/near-term effort, though this may occur after preliminary design is completed and a better understanding of space requirements is established.

Also in the short term, the City should work with local and regional economic development partners to communicate and refined the concept for development of the Study Area. A key partner in this effort is any group that is formed to implement recommendations of the Recreational Economy for Rural Communities initiative. Advocacy for the concept should also take place with private landowners and potential funding partners. Collaboration with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition around implementation of trailhead and other trail-oriented facilities described in this Study should begin in the short term as well.

Projects discussed in this Study that are associated with Mesa Elementary should be pursued in the short term. These include the neighborhood pocket park (Project #7 in **Section 4.5**), which would improve the pathway connection towards the school from Sargent Street. Replacement of the nearby pedestrian bridge over the Rio San Jose could be completed as well. An improved pathway through the Arroyo Park site to the school could be completed sooner than other park improvements.

5.1.2 Medium-Term Projects

The key medium priority/term (5-10 years) project is implementation of the recreational facilities described in this Study. These facilities would be the key publicly funded catalysts for broader, longer-term

development of the Study Area. The extension of the Legacy Trail beyond George Hanosh Boulevard and toward Exit 85 should be completed once a major anchor-type development begins within the Study, or once the Legacy Trail is connected to the CDT.

Another medium-term effort is promotion of commercial and residential development opportunities to the private sector. The City should, in collaboration with its economic development partners, begin to actively market the development concept to private developers, or solicit a master developer for part of the commercial developer. If the City elects to develop or own part of the commercial uses in the area, it should complete design and begin implementation of the project in this term. Construction of Continental Divide Trail-oriented facilities should occur in this timeframe, after planning is completed with the CDT Coalition and other partners.

5.1.3 Long-Term Projects

With the groundwork set by public projects in the short and medium terms, the responsibility of implementing the development vision will shift to the private sector in long-term (11+ years). The City's role will be supporting continued development through efforts such as streetscaping, trail connections to adjacent neighborhoods, and widening of George Hanosh Boulevard.

5.2 Potential Partnerships

The **New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD)** has established an Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) dedicated to promoting the outdoor recreation economy throughout New Mexico. The division could be an important partner for implementing the Study Area vision. Among the activities of the ORD is to issue \$50,000 grants to early-stage, outdoor recreation-focused businesses. The ORD is also working with NM Mainstreet to create an atlas of outdoor recreation assets in five initial counties in the state (not including Cibola County). As ORD states, "Outdoor recreation development, when connected to MainStreet community downtowns, has great potential to support local, asset-based economic development". Grants is among the New Mexico communities with a MainStreet downtown, and although it is located west of the Study Area, the recommendations of the Study would help connect outdoor recreation assets such as the Legacy Trail system and Continental Divide Trail to Grants' downtown. The ORD has worked with outdoor recreation business community to create endeavOR New Mexico, the first OR business alliance in the state (NMEDD 2021; ORD "Our Work").

NM Partnership is a state-designated organization dedicated to providing business assistance to prospective businesses interested in locating in the state. The organization promotes site development through site visits, trade show marketing, and other efforts.

The **Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC)** is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is working to implement improvements along the 3,100-mile route of the Continental Divide Trail National Scenic Trail. The CDTC designates Gateway Communities along the route of the trail. These towns and cities have dedicated to become welcoming places for trail users and to help complete trail improvements.

5.3 Financing Options

There are a variety of financing tools and incentives that local governments in New Mexico can use to support local economic development. The appropriate resources will depend on the types of businesses that are seeking to locate in the industrial park. The State of New Mexico offers incentives targeted to certain industries, and there are a variety of local, state and Federal sources of low interest loans and grants for public infrastructure and private businesses. In addition, state law enables public contributions to public-private partnerships that provide a public benefit, such as job creation, increased wages, private capital investment and environmentally sustainable economic growth in rural areas.

5.3.1 Great American Outdoor Act

On August 4, 2020, former President Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act which is a bill that uses revenues from energy development to provide up to \$1.9 billion a year for five years to provide needed maintenance for critical facilities and infrastructure in our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, recreation areas, and American Indian schools.

About \$6.5 billion of the bill's new fund will be spent in the 419 national park sites—the NPS currently has a \$12 billion maintenance backlog—to repair damaged and worn-out roads, restrooms, trails, and campgrounds, and other areas that have fallen into disrepair. The remaining money will be split between the Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Indian Education schools for similar projects.

It will also use royalties from offshore oil and natural gas to permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) with \$900 million a year to invest in conservation and recreation opportunities across the country.

The Great American Outdoors Act has economic benefits as well as environmental ones. Supporters positioned it as being both a stimulus and a conservation package. The communities that surround many parks and public lands are dependent on their tourism and outdoor recreation industries, resulting in high unemployment rates during the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2018 analysis by the Pew Research Center suggests that if the National Park Service's \$12 million backlog were to be addressed, it would create roughly 100,000 jobs.

5.3.2 New Mexico State Incentives

The State of New Mexico has provisions for a wide range of tax and other incentives, including those related to high-wage jobs, technology research and development, manufacturing, renewable energy, businesses located on the border, and aviation.

Incentive programs that may be appropriate for businesses in the industrial park include:

- Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), described below
- Manufacturers Investment Tax Credit
- Rural Jobs Tax Credit
- High Wage Jobs Tax Credit
- Technology Jobs Tax Credit
- Agricultural Business Tax Deductions and Exemptions

The New Mexico Economic Development Department has a comprehensive list of business incentives by type of business.

5.3.2.1 Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)

This state program funds a portion of wages for individuals being trained for newly created jobs. JTIP reimburses 50-75% of worker wages for up to six months, for both classroom training and on-the-job training. Companies that receive JTIP funds must produce a product in New Mexico or provide services and export at least half of their services (based on revenue or customer base) outside of the state. Businesses in certain green industries also qualify. Since the program's establishment in 1972, it has helped create 47,000 jobs across the state.

5.3.3 US Small Business Administration, HUB Zone

The SBA HUBZone program applies to small companies that operate and employ people in Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones). The purpose is to help small businesses located in distressed areas gain preferential access to federal procurement. The HUBZone program functions at the company level. Eligible areas are designated by the SBA. The federal government has a goal of awarding 3% of all dollars for federal prime contracts to HUBZone-certified small business concerns. A business located within the park may be eligible for certification if it meets all SBA criteria for certification.

To qualify for the program, a business (except tribally owned concerns) must meet the following criteria:

- It must be a small business by SBA standards
- It must be owned and controlled at least 51% by U.S. citizens, or a Community Development Corporation, an agricultural cooperative, or an Indian Tribe
- Its principal office must be located within a "Historically Underutilized Business Zone," which includes lands considered "Indian Country" and military facilities closed by the Base Realignment and Closure Act
- At least 35% of its employees must reside in a HUBZone

A business located in Grants that employ at least 35% of its workers from the county and/or other HUBZone designated areas of the region can apply to qualify for the program.

A private non-profit organization, the HUBZone Contractors National Council, provides information and support to companies that participate in the HUBZone program.

Financing options include grants and loans that can help pay for infrastructure improvements, incentives to attract businesses, financing for the businesses themselves, and the potential to capture revenue from the increase in economic activity in the industrial park.

5.3.4 Local Financing

Municipal Local Option GRT

The City of Grants has the ability to designate a portion of local gross receipts tax revenue for economic development projects. Through its LEDA ordinance, a municipality in New Mexico can earmark proceeds from a 1/8 percent local-option gross receipts tax for publicly beneficial infrastructure that benefits privately sponsored economic development initiatives.

LEDA

The New Mexico Local Economic Development Act (“LEDA”) allows local governments, such as the City of Grants, to create new job opportunities by providing land, buildings or infrastructure for facilities to support new or expanding businesses. The LEDA program assists local economic development goals by stimulating capital investment in the community, creating jobs, and encouraging the development of new businesses or expanding existing businesses. A qualifying business entity may submit a project application for consideration based on the process and criteria in the City LEDA ordinance. The City or its designee reviews the application based on the provisions of its economic development plan, the financial and management stability of the qualifying entity, the demonstrated commitment of the qualifying entity to the community and a cost-benefit analysis of the project, among other things. Following the application review process, the City Trustees may elect to adopt an ordinance approving the project. After the project has been approved, the City and the qualifying entity enter into a project participation agreement. The participation agreement must describe the contributions to be made by each party, the security provided to the City by the qualifying entity and a schedule for project development and completion.

Recipients of LEDA funds must report certain economic indicators, such as new capital investment, job growth and increased wages, to allow the City to monitor performance and ensure the goals of the program are served. The focus of LEDA projects has historically been on economic-base employers – those that export products outside of the community, thereby growing the local economy. Recent changes to the state act allow small communities to target retail and cultural facilities (in designated Arts and Cultural Districts).

The state augments local efforts using money appropriated by the state Legislature and managed by the Economic Development Department. The state determines project eligibility, feasibility, the expected level of private investment vs public funds, and the appropriate funding amount. The state consigns money for an approved project to a local government body that acts as the fiscal agent.

LEDA funds should be considered as gap financing for projects that benefit the community but need supplemental funding. State and local funds should not be the only source of financing for a project. The state and local ordinances now have “claw back” provisions that safeguard public investment in projects that do not meet performance expectations.

5.3.5 Other Federal Financing

USDA

USDA has several loan and grant programs for local governments as well as loan programs to support small businesses. For local governments, USDA Rural Development has loan and grant programs for essential community facilities, public infrastructure and strategic planning and training. For rural small businesses, USDA provides funding opportunities through loans, loan guarantees, and grants. The appropriate programs will vary by the type of business or infrastructure project and the local, state or other resources to be committed to the project.

5.3.6 Private Sector Financing

SBA Loans

The SBA works with lenders to provide loans to small businesses. The agency does not lend money directly to small business owners. Instead, it sets guidelines for loans made by its partnering lenders, community development organizations, and micro-lending institutions. The SBA reduces risk for lenders and makes it easier for them to access capital. That makes it easier for small businesses to get loans. SBA-guaranteed loans generally have rates and fees that are comparable to non-guaranteed loans. Some loans have lower down payments, flexible overhead requirements and no collateral requirement.

5.3.7 Revenue Capture

The state of New Mexico has several methods by which tax revenue increased or special assessments associated with development and redevelopment can be captured to help pay for infrastructure improvements within a designated district. The applicability of these districts depends on the ownership of land and improvements, timing of development, and the scale of the project.

Public Improvement District

The governing body may create a Public Improvement District (PID) to finance on-site and off-site public infrastructure improvements constructed by a developer such as water and sewer systems, drainage and flood control, streets, trails and parks, public buildings, equipment and related soft costs. Following formation, the PID typically imposes a special assessment on real property located within the PID boundaries. The PID uses special assessment revenues to finance, through the issuance of bonds or otherwise, its administrative costs, as well as public infrastructure or enhanced services that benefit the real property in the PID and are contemplated in the City comprehensive plan. A PID is applicable to privately

owned property and improvements where a special assessment can be imposed. PIDs have typically been used to help finance infrastructure in privately developed large scale mixed-use projects. would not be appropriate where the City maintains ownership of land and/or buildings or where the scale of the project is too small to generate the revenue needed for infrastructure improvements.

Tax Increment Financing District

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, enabled through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act, capture a portion of the increase in property tax revenue collected by a local jurisdiction in a district that has been designated as slum or blighted because of growth of the property tax base due to a redevelopment project. Through a TIF, a local government can designate the increment of the increase above a base year for infrastructure improvements within the district. This means of designating revenue for improvements during a finite length of time would not be packaged with incentives that waive property taxes or with incentives where the property owner is a tax-exempt entity. The municipal governing body can elect to set aside the increase in its share of property tax revenues but would have to have agreements with other property tax collecting entities to capture funds from county, state, school district and other taxing entities.

Tax Increment Development District

A tax increment development district differs from a TIF in that local governments can benefit from both the increase in property values and the increase in gross receipts that result from development projects. The TIDD is not restricted to areas that have been declared slum and blighted. The City may create a Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) to finance public infrastructure improvements. A TIDD uses a portion of gross receipt taxes (GRT), or property tax increment (less than 75%) dedicated to it by the County as a source of repayment for TIDD bonds, the proceeds of which can be used to reimburse a developer for public infrastructure constructed by the developer and dedicated to a governmental unit. The TIDD bonds are secured by property taxes on the incremental increase in property values within the district over a base year amount and/or on increases in gross receipts tax collections within the district. As with other options for revenue capture, a TIDD is applied to properties developed by a private entity.

5.4 Naming and Branding

This Study uses the term “BioPark” to describe the potential future recreational facilities and economic development within the Study Area. “BioPark” is a working name for the purposes of this Study and was associated with the grant from New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) that partially funded the Study. This Study did not evaluate the community’s sentiments about use of this name or other names (such as “Arroyo Park”) to identify the park facility or any other projects proposed within the Study. As the project advances to further planning stages, the City may choose to go through a process to identify a name or branding for the future facilities that are built within the Study Area.

While additional planning and research is recommended, the name “biopark” (short for “biological park”) may cause confusion for potential visitors. First, the term is often used to describe a more formal facility

than is being proposed within the Study Area. According to the online dictionary Wiktionary, a biopark is “[a]ny place where biological organisms are exhibited to the public, such as a zoo, botanical garden, or aquarium.” The recreational facilities proposed by this Study are much less formal than a zoo or aquarium; however, an online search of facilities using the name showed that they are almost always the more formal type of facility. Meanwhile, use of the name for any proposed facility could confuse visitors who might associate it with the ABQ BioPark, the complex in central Albuquerque that includes a botanical garden, aquarium, zoo, and other attractions.

6. REFERENCES

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Appendix A

Public participation results

Grants BioPark Economic Feasibility Study Survey

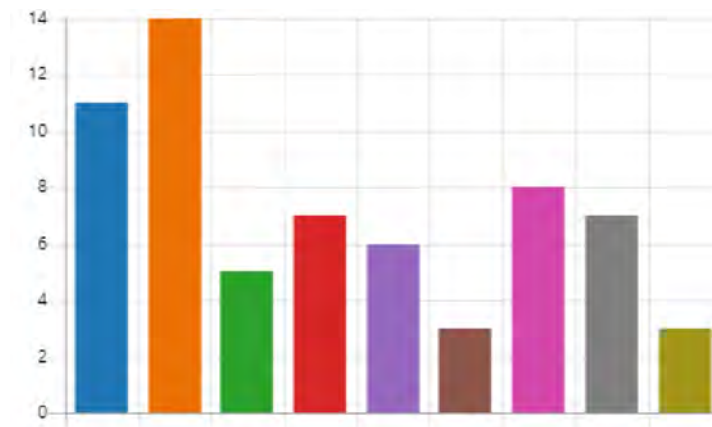
18
Responses

06:41
Average time to complete

Active
Status

1. What recreational activities or amenities would you like to see within the study area? [Choose all that apply]

- Bike/pedestrian paths 11
- Walking trail loops 14
- Fishing spots 5
- Beach (similar to Tingley Beac... 7
- Continental Divide Trail trailhe... 6
- Lake/impoundments 3
- Educational features/placards 8
- Wildlife viewing 7
- Other 3



2. Besides recreational amenities, would you like to see other development in the study area? [Choose one]

- Yes, I would like to see other d... 11
- No, no other type of develop... 7



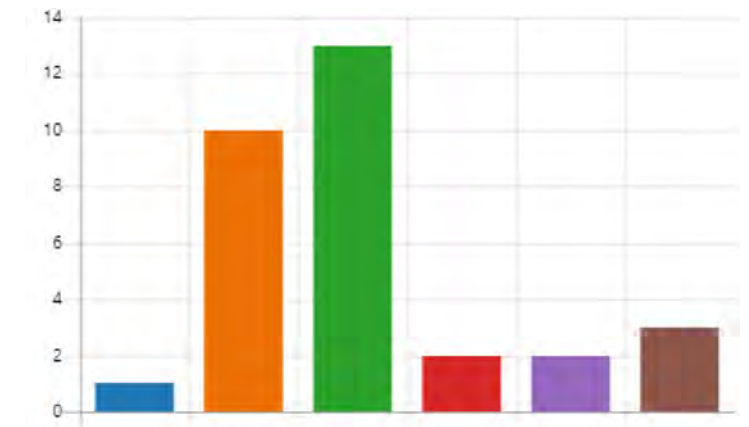
3. What other development would you like to see in the study area? [Choose all that apply]

- Residential development 2
- Restaurants/bars 6
- Commercial (retail sales) 7
- Outdoor recreation supportiv... 7
- Other 2



4. Specific to the Santa Fe Avenue corridor, what types of development would you like to see?

- Residential development 1
- Restaurants/bars 10
- Commercial (retail sales) 13
- Hotel/motel 2
- Campground 2
- No other type of developmen... 3



5. Please share any other comments you have about the project below

5
Responses

Latest Responses

See reponses on following page.

5. Please share any other comments you have about the project below

People are fleeing Grants and Cibola because there is nothing fun to do. It turns students into drug addicts because no one wants to change anything; that lack of change is what's killing the community.

Give them splash pads, a graffiti art wall, art to look at it, and empower non-profits to hold more events, instead of what has the case these last few years where the city steals every thought or idea the nonprofits have while complaining that the nonprofits do nothing - they can't do anything when the city undermines them.

This proposed project should be viewed as community development, not economic development. It's not going to attract the level of tourists necessary to create sustainable, high-wage jobs. Without population and income growth, sustainable shopping and dining options cannot occur. Same with residential development. This proposed project should be viewed as community development, not economic development. It's not going to attract the level of tourists necessary to create sustainable, high-wage jobs. Without population and income growth, sustainable shopping and dining options cannot occur. Same with residential development.

Please fix the roads first and not just the roads visitors use most. Fix the back roads citizens use on a daily basis.

Your plans for a park/nature area are beautiful -also interesting and educational.

The City of Grants has been proactive at building trails, walking and nature. The City has concentrated on cleanliness, which has added greatly to the beautification of our community. More residential areas are coming. We need to carefully plan and prepare for them. Commercial development is happening also. We will want to plan for beautification of these areas. All those things will enhance our economic development and curb appeal.

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Appendix B

Planning-level cost estimates

North Area

Project # (corresponds to concept maps)	Project description	Item description	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Est. cost (2021 dollars)	Notes
0a	Land acquisition of BioPark property						
			acres		36	\$15,270	
	Subtotal					\$15,270	
1	Extension of Legacy Trail						
		Anderman to Nimitz	LF		3000	\$65	\$195,000
		Grants Canyon Arroyo segment	LF		5000	\$65	\$325,000
		Pedestrian bridges	Each		4	\$115,200	\$460,800
	Subtotal					\$980,800	
2	Lake/marsh						
		Lake	Each		1	650,000	\$650,000 6-acre lake
	Subtotal					\$650,000	
3	Walking trail loop						
		Gravel parking area	SF		9000	\$8	\$72,000
		Unpaved trail	LF		5280	\$27	\$142,560
		Pavilion/picnic structures	Each		4	\$35,000	\$140,000
	Subtotal					\$214,560	
4	Wildlife lookout/Island						
		Deck with railing	Each		1	\$24,000	\$24,000
		Bridge/boardwalk structure	Each		1	\$115,200	\$115,200
		Interpretive exhibit	Each		3	\$3,500	\$10,500
	Subtotal					\$139,200	
5	Outdoor classroom						
		Amphitheater	Each		1	\$150,000	\$150,000
		Garden	Each		1	\$10,000	\$10,000
		Pavilion	Each		1	\$35,000	\$35,000
		Fencing	LF		80	\$30	\$2,400
	Subtotal					\$197,400	
6	Lookout of arroyo/RSJ confluence						
		Crushed rock surface	SF		800	\$8	\$6,400

Project # (corresponds to concept maps)	Project description	Item description	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Est. cost (2021 dollars)	Notes
		Benches	Each		1	\$1,760	\$1,760
		Railing	Each		200	\$117	\$23,400
		Interpretive exhibit	Each		2	\$3,500	\$7,000
	Subtotal						\$38,560
7	Neighborhood node/Pocket Park (Sargent Street)						
		Improved path through district-owned parcel	LF		180	\$65	\$11,700
		Play equipment	Each				\$15,000
	Subtotal						\$26,700
8	Picnic Area (Sage Street west of Nimitz Drive)						
		Pavilion	Each		4	\$35,000	\$140,000
		Gravel parking area	SF		4500	\$8	\$36,000
	Subtotal						\$176,000
9	New residential development						
		Private (costs not included)					
10	Neighborhood connection to Legacy Trail						
		Trail	LF		200	\$65	\$13,000
		Crosswalk	Each		1	\$3,000	\$3,000
	Subtotal						\$16,000
11	Limited commercial & residential infill development: Sargent Street and Nimitz Drive						
		Private (costs not included)					
	NORTH AREA SUBTOTAL						\$2,454,490
	Contingency	(20% of estimated costs)					\$490,898
	Total construction costs						\$2,945,388
	Professional services (6% of construction)						\$176,723.28
	North area total						\$3,122,111

South Area

Project # (corresponds to concept maps)	Project description	Item description	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Est. cost (2021 dollars)	Notes
12	Extension of Legacy Trail						
		Construction of trail - Nimitz to boardwalk	LF	\$65	1000	\$65,000	
		Construction of trail - George Hanosh to Rte. 66 Trailhead	LF	\$65	1400	\$91,000	
		Pedestrian bridge to CDT trailhead	Each	\$115,200	1	\$115,200	
		Subtotal				\$271,200	
13	Open space/linear park on north bank						
		Land acquisition	Acres	\$4,784	15	\$71,765.39	
		Walking trail loop	LF	\$27	4000	\$108,000.00	
		Subtotal				\$179,765.39	
14	Boardwalk segment of trail (not including adjacent commercial development)						
		Boardwalk trail	LF	\$492	1460	\$718,320	
		Electrical: Lighting fixtures	Each	\$5,720	30	\$171,600	
		Seating	Each	\$1,760	6	\$10,560	
		Waste receptacles	Each	\$1,665	6	\$9,990	
		Railing	LF	\$117	1460	\$170,820	
		Small gateway signage	Each	\$50,000	4	\$200,000	
		Subtotal				\$1,281,290	
15	Santa Fe Avenue Corridor development						
		Private development (not included)					
		Pedestrian-scale lighting	Each	\$5,720	20	\$114,400	
		High visibility crosswalks	Each	\$3,000	9	\$27,000	
		Subtotal				\$1,422,690	
16	Residential development						
		Private development (not included)					
17	Extension of Jensen Street						
		Segment north of RSJ	LF	\$568	900	\$511,200	This could be developer funded
		Segment south of RSJ	LF	\$568	660	\$374,880	This could be developer funded

Project # (corresponds to concept maps)	Project description	Item description	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Est. cost (2021 dollars)	Notes
		Pedestrian bridge	Each	\$115,200	1	\$115,200	
		Subtotal				\$1,001,280	
18	Road extensions						
		Aspen Street	LF	\$568	2200	\$1,249,600	
		Apsen Street bridge	Each	\$850,000	1	\$850,000	
		Oso Ridge Road	LF	\$568	2300	\$1,306,400	This could be developer funded
		Subtotal				\$3,406,000	
19	Lake/Beach						
		Excavation	Each			\$325,000	Estimate for 3-acre facility at 5 feet in depth. Equipment required to support activities such as fishing would mean additional cost.
		Subtotal				\$325,000	
20	George Hanosh widening to Sakelares Blvd						
		Roadway	LF	\$568	4500	\$2,556,000	
		Trail	LF	\$65	4500	\$292,500	
		Subtotal				\$2,848,500	
21	Future light industrial						
		Private development (cost not included)					
22a	Continental Divide Trail information kiosk						
		Information kiosk	Each	\$18,800	1	\$18,800	
		Concrete plaza	SF	\$12,000	1	\$12,000	
		Public restroom structure (small)	Each	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	
		Paved parking lot	SF	\$24	8,775	\$210,600	
		Subtotal				\$291,400	
22b	Continental Divide Trail campsite						
		Private development (cost not included)					
22c	Continental Divide Trail trailhead						
		Public restroom structure (small)	Each	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	
		Gravel parking lot	SF	\$8	60,000	\$480,000	

Project # (corresponds to concept maps)	Project description	Item description	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Est. cost (2021 dollars)	Notes
		Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations	Each	\$6,000	4	\$24,000	Does not include cost to extend power to the site.
		Subtotal				\$530,000	
22	Outdoor recreation supportive retail and development						
		Private development: See separate cost estimate					
		Access road	LF	\$568	1,500	\$852,000	
		Public parking	SF	\$24	20,000	\$480,000	This could be developer funded
		Subtotal				\$1,332,000	
23	Pedestrian link from Legacy Trail to hotels near I-40 interchange						
		Path	LF	\$10	4,500	\$45,000	
		High visibility crosswalks	Each	\$5,000	2	\$10,000	
		Pedestrian bridge	Each	\$504,000	1	\$504,000	
		Subtotal				\$565,000	
		SOUTH AREA SUBTOTAL				\$13,691,625	
		Contingency				\$2,738,325	
		Total construction costs				\$16,429,950	
		Professional services (6% of construction)				\$985,797.03	
		South area total				\$17,415,747	
		If some elements identified are developer funded				\$14,743,267	