INTRODUCTION

The Community
The Bessemer, Eilers Heights/Bojon Town and Grove neighborhoods grew up around the steel-works industry in the late 1800s, attracting diverse immigrants from all over the world, including Italy, Slovenia and Mexico. Many remnants of a former factory town are present today including the small Minnequa Town Company cottage housing, churches, family restaurants, neighborhood bars, historic buildings, and a rich collection of ethnically diverse cultures. Despite these neighborhood treasures, the area currently suffers from a significant lack of investment in housing, infrastructure, services and economic development. In 1950, the construction of I-25 divided the neighborhood. Decades of smelting also resulted in contaminated soil throughout the area. Challenges include concerns about crime, small and aging housing stock, sidewalks in disrepair and a partially vacant commercial district. The community is eager for reinvestment to revive resident quality of life, celebrate their rich cultural heritage and support the local economy. In addition, the City of Pueblo will coordinate with the Colorado Coalition for Homeless to provide continued care and address the needs of homeless populations.

The Colorado Smelter Revitalization Project
In 2014, the EPA designated the Colorado Smelter Superfund site due to high levels of arsenic and lead at the former Smelter Facility and slag pile (Operable Unit 2), and in soils throughout much of the surrounding community properties (Operable Unit 1). While residential soil cleanup has been progressing, EPA sponsored the Colorado Smelter Revitalization Project (CSRP), a collaboration of local, state and federal agencies to support revitalization of the area. The CSRP, with support from EPA’s Superfund Redevelopment Initiative, sponsored a community planning process resulting in a collaborative vision to guide future investment and revitalization. CSRP goals include:

- Support neighborhood revitalization around the Colorado Smelter area.
- Coordinate and leverage investments among local, state and federal agencies.
- Build on earlier planning efforts including outcomes from the 2016 Superfund Community Visioning Workshop and the 2017 Building Blocks Workshop for Equitable Development.
- Inform EPA cleanup, the City’s neighborhood plan update and the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDHE) health disparities grant for an improved built environment, and future neighborhood planning.

Revitalization Themes
On October 30, 2018, the CSRP hosted a community visioning workshop to identify revitalization strategies around the following three themes:
1. Connectivity and Cultural Heritage
2. Thriving Neighborhoods
3. Vibrant Commercial

This report summarizes the outcomes of the visioning session including revitalization goals, strategies, implementation examples and resources.

Funded by EPA Region 8 and the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative
**GOALS**

- Improve streetscapes by designating commercial and residential traffic corridors with enhanced aesthetic, user treatments, and neighborhood gateways.
- Connect the neighborhoods to recreation, amenities and downtown with additional on-street & off-street pedestrian facilities.
- Designate a history trail connecting neighborhood heritage sites with wayfinding street signage.
- Establish neighborhood plazas for cultural events.

**STRATEGIES**

1. **Create Greenway Connector Trail**

   The neighborhoods are ideally situated between and adjacent to Downtown Pueblo, new recreational amenities at Runyon Lake, the Arkansas River trail system and Lake Minnequa. The anticipated clean up of the slag piles and I-25 re-alignments offer a strategic opportunity to create a north-south trail connection from Eilers to the Arkansas River. Creating an additional connection on the west side of Eilers would create a loop connecting many of Pueblo’s recreational amenities. The Bessemer Ditch Company canal offers an opportunity to extend a bike trail west to the community college.

   - **A. LEVEE TRAIL THROUGH GROVE TO RUNYON LAKE**
   - **B. ARKANSAS RIVER MULTI-USE TRAIL EXTENSION TO BENEDICT PARK**
   - **C. MULTI-USE TRAIL FROM BENEDICT PARK TO STEELWORKS MUSEUM**
   - **D. BESSEMER DITCH MULTI-USE TRAIL FROM STEELWORKS MUSEUM TO LAKE AVE**
   - **E. ADDITIONAL ON-STREET BIKE LANE FROM THE CRSP AREA TO ARKANSAS RIVER TRAIL AND DOWNTOWN**
   - **F. CONNECTION FROM BESSEMER TO ARKANSAS RIVER TRAIL**
   - **G. MULTI-USE TRAIL FROM MESA TO SANTA FE DRIVE AND ARKANSAS RIVER TRAIL.**
2. Improve Streetscapes

The community prioritized specific streets (shown in adjacent figure) for near-term improvements that include lighting, sidewalks, pedestrian safety, parking, signage, landscaping, bike racks and bus shelters. The cross-sections below illustrate how to make better use of the right of way and differentiate neighborhood collectors (such as Mesa) and commercial arterial streets (such as Northern and Santa Fe) through different approaches to parking, bike lanes, landscaping and pedestrian safety features. In addition, sidewalk improvements are needed throughout the neighborhood as well as street trees for shade and bus stops with benches. Street improvements can extend over I-25 with enhanced pedestrian safety and cultural art features. Street improvements can be coordinated with extending high-speed internet to commercial areas. Funding sources could include Community Development Block Grants (CBDG), a Business Improvement District and federal transportation grants.

A. Gateway Treatment: “The Grove”
B. Bessemer Village District Streetscape Standards
C. Enhance on-street bike and pedestrian route
D. Gateway Treatment “Bojon Town”
E. Installation of pedestrian art, signage and safety features
F. Establish heritage-themed bike route

Northern Avenue commercial street with a landscape median and pedestrian bump-outs

Mesa Avenue residential street with bike lanes and a landscape sidewalk buffer
3. Create Heritage Trail with Landmarks and Signage

The community would like to celebrate its diverse cultural and industrial heritage by adding wayfinding signage and landmarks throughout the neighborhood. Signage along the primary bike, pedestrian and vehicular routes could designate neighborhood gateways, retail centers and directions to the Steelworks Museum and other heritage sites. The Pueblo Historic Preservation Commission, the Steelworks Museum and others could collaborate on developing a signage network and design options. Signs could be installed as part of streetscape improvements outlined in strategy 2.

4. Invest in Culture and Community Spaces

The community would like to invest in civic gathering spaces to celebrate cultural heritage and bring the neighborhoods together for events. Bessemer Park could be enhanced by creating a plaza for farmers markets and other gatherings. Locating a regional recreational facility (climbing gym, indoor rec facility) with easy Interstate access would reinvigorate the neighborhood with a desirable amenity.

In addition, the community recommended installing memorials including:

- After slag pile clean-up, install a neighborhood monument at the new greenway trail
- Light up the steel mill stacks to showcase the industrial skyline
- Install a steelworker’s mural wall along Northern Ave
- Wrap utility boxes or vacant shop windows with historical photos.

These features could be designed and installed through the city’s art program and other funding sources to bolster local pride and promote the neighborhood as a destination for enjoying the rich industrial and cultural heritage.

IMPLEMENTATION

Potential Partners and Resources

- Business Improvement District
- Historic Landmark Status
- Colorado Health Foundation
- Colorado Trust
- Packard Foundation of Colorado (Packard from Pueblo)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds
- City’s 1/2% tax to attract jobs
- City’s Frontier Pathway signage plan
- Pueblo Conservancy Trust
- Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority (PURA)
- Extend Call Yourself Creative Program into neighborhoods
- Department of Local Affairs
- Chamber of Commerce - Destination Pueblo
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Greater Outdoors Colorado
- Community/State Foundations

The Pueblo Downtown Association has commissioned local artists to transform utility boxes with murals that reflect Pueblo’s rich history of commerce, diversity, and architecture.
Complete Streets

A complete streets approach utilizes the entire street right of way to enable safe access for users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete streets are designed based on the community and transportation needs and incorporate latest design practices to ensure safety. Strategies can include sidewalks, bike lanes, safe crossings, medians, curb extensions, narrow travel lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, public art, and street trees and plantings.

Promoting complete streets can help improve car/pedestrian connectivity.

Taste of the Neighborhood

Events and activities to celebrate local culture and locally-owned businesses could include an annual Taste of the Neighborhood event to showcase the diverse range of local ethnic restaurants and pubs.

Community events can also be an opportunity for pop-up demonstrations, such as temporary bike lanes and wayfinding.

Cultural Heritage

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs can direct people to points of interest and highlight local history and cultural resources.

Signs can provide visual cues for drivers to key areas, such as commercial and entertainment districts and also include detailed maps to guide pedestrians.

Historic photos and information about the area’s history can be integrated into the signage.
CURRENT CONDITIONS

Many homes in the neighborhood were built before 1918 and may lack the size and comforts of contemporary housing. There is a higher percentage of rental housing than other parts of the city. Current zoning designates some of the area as non-conforming due to small lots. In some cases, property owners must apply for a variance to build new or an addition due to current zoning constraints. The city is currently working on zoning improvements to address these obstacles. Additional barriers to home improvement and maintenance include low land value and costly upgrades needed to comply with current building codes. The community would like to remove barriers to redevelopment, reduce litter and crime and increase local services including a grocery store.

GOALS

• Provide residents with home buying assistance.
• Increase affordable and accessible housing options.
• Amend zoning code further increase small lot infill development.
• Increase and diversify recreation and service amenities.
• Beatification through streetscape improvements to residential and commercial corridors
• Increase sense of place in areas effected by I-25
• Repairs and maintenance to existing asphalt streets and concrete sidewalks

STRATEGIES

1. Adopt Allowances for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
Currently the single family residential zone code prohibits more than one dwelling per parcel. However external pressure for infill development, increased density in the city core, affordable and accessible housing needs, has led the City to reevaluate it's stance on the use of these structures. Currently the City is exploring a text amendment City of Pueblo Zoning Code to address this issue.

2. Increase home buying and improvement
Often homes can fall into disrepair by neglecting simple maintenance such as maintaining gutters, roofs, plumbing fixtures and porches. Landlords may be unwilling to invest the resources or owners may not have the knowledge and resources to ensure upkeep. Home buying assistance programs can also help low income families secure a home that may not otherwise qualify through traditional lending sources. Promoting a home maintenance program for renters and landlords and home buying assistance to local tenants in all three neighborhoods can help retain and restore housing quality and increase neighborhood stability, pride and ownership. Furthermore, Pueblo Housing & Citizen Services has several resources available including: The Minor Repairs Program, The Rehabilitation Program, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) Loans, The Home investment Partnership Fund, and Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

3. Commit to safety and stewardship
Opportunity to collaborate between community and police to expand neighborhood watch programs and increase community policing, such as foot and bike patrol around hot spots to reduce crime. Improve lighting. Provide trash receptacles in the parks and public spaces and host trash cleanup days.

4. Sponsor a catalyst mixed-use project
Identify an underutilized site for a catalyst public-private project that combines investment in civic space, workforce housing, neighborhood services and streetscape improvements.
5. **Increase Affordable Housing Options**

Include more affordable housing options for workforce, senior and family housing. Identify under-utilized areas for increased density to support local retail and commercial areas.

Currently, the City of Pueblo is looking at serval catalytic development projects along Mesa and Evans Avenue. As well as enhancements along the I-25 Corridor to increase a sense of place for residences adjacent to the Interstate. As indicated on the maps.

Over the past year the City has been awarded five million dollars in recent grants including: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, Brownfield Assessments, The Arkansas Levee trail, funding for Prairie Avenue rehabilitation, Bessemer Academy Play yard, and more. These funds will play a valuable role.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is working through amendments to the city’s municipal code to streamline mix-use and multi-family structures, and allowances for light manufacturing activities in additional zone districts. Provisions for parking, and incentives for low income and accessible development.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Potential Partners and Resources

- Sustainability Plan Action Team (SPAT) (county led)
- Neighborhood Associations
- NeighborWorks of Southern Colorado/FINCAP support
- Opportunity Zone
- Current and proposed historic building assessments
- Local elementary schools
- Southern Colorado Renter’s Association
- Catholic Charities
- Posada
- Pueblo Community Health Center
- NAMI/mental health support
- Pueblo Garden Heroes
- Pueblo Regional Building Department
- City of Pueblo Housing & Citizen Services
CURRENT CONDITIONS
Many family-owned businesses add cultural vitality throughout the neighborhoods. However, there are many underutilized properties in the designated commercial zones. Once the “main street” of the neighborhood, Northern Avenue retains many of the historic buildings which could be redeveloped. Northern Avenue supports high traffic volumes which can be an asset for commercial visibility if the traffic is buffered with landscaping and pedestrian safety features. The community would like to attract retail stores and entertainment destinations, such as a brewery, to activate the commercial areas. The community also envisions an event calendar and walking tour map to attract visitors and support local businesses.

GOALS
• Invest in a more walkable, active Northern Avenue & Santa Fe corridor.
• Support development of neighborhood food co-op(s) and local-serving markets.
• Partner with the Chambers of Commerce to promote locally owned businesses, support business retention, and to attract new businesses and jobs.

STRATEGIES
1. Support Commercial Infill & Adaptive Reuse
   Identify funding and address code barriers for adaptive reuse and improvement of existing buildings. Create sense of place (such as a Bessemer Village District along Northern Avenue) with signage, landscape and pedestrian safety features. Identify convenient parking that maintains building facades along street frontage.

2. Develop Destination Programming
   Invest in local businesses by marketing a local restaurant district that celebrates local eateries and multicultural cuisine by creating a walking tour map of neighborhood restaurants and pubs. Create an event plan to promote a city-wide or regional destination such as taste-of-the-neighborhood events, concerts in the park, food trucks and farmers markets in Bessemer Park.

3. Attract Neighborhood Commercial Anchors
   Attract and support anchor stores that provide neighborhood services such as a grocery store. Locating a brewery or regional recreational facility (climbing gym, indoor rec center) or other entertainment will bring new energy and dollars into the commercial zone.
(A) Northern Avenue

Attract and support anchor stores that provide neighborhood services (grocery) and a destination (brewery or theatre). Identify funding and address code barriers for adaptive reuse and improvement of existing buildings. Create sense of place (Bessemer Village) with signage, landscape, and pedestrian safety and traffic speed reduction features. Identify convenient parking that maintains building facades along street frontage. Invest in local businesses by marketing a local restaurant district that celebrates local eateries and multicultural cuisine by creating a walking tour map of neighborhood restaurants and pubs. Create an event plan that promotes a city-wide or regional destination such as taste-of-the-neighborhood events, concerts in the park, food trucks and farmers markets in Bessemer Park.

Guiding Principles of the Colorado Main Street Program

- Plan beyond one project to a series of initiatives.
- Small projects make a big difference and demonstrate that “things are happening.”
- Only local leadership can initiate long-term success.
- Enlist the expertise of both the public and private sector.
- Leverage unique local assets.
- Ensure quality in design and programming.
- Shift public perceptions and practices.
- Plan frequent, visible changes including small but dramatic improvements.

Colorado Main Street Program: [https://cdola.colorado.gov/colorado-main-street-program](https://cdola.colorado.gov/colorado-main-street-program)

Commercial anchor strategies illustrate how anchor stores can be integrated within the existing fabric. The bottom image shows how a midblock walkway can provide additional outdoor gathering areas and connect to parking located behind the buildings. Actual redevelopment will need to respond to specific building conditions and property owner goals.
(C) Santa Fe Drive along Eilers Neighborhood

With views and access to the river, Santa Fe Drive offers an opportunity for mixed-use infill development providing live, work and play options. This important crossroads with high visibility could support an incubator hub, entertainment and outdoor recreation businesses to leverage access to I-25, Downtown and the River Trail.

Commercial areas may be adjusted based on potential I-25 realignment. For example, the proposed highway interchange at Santa Fe Drive may limit development in this area while a new commercial area may be created west as Santa Fe Drive extends to Abriendo.

Smart Growth and Economic Success: Investing in Infill Development

As part of a four-part series on economic development for small towns, EPA developed this guidance on investing in infill development. The framework outlines how to overcome infill barriers including land assembly, environmental contamination, capital costs, financing and the regulatory approval process. The guidance also includes strategies to increase demand for residential and office infill development and describes the economic benefits of infill development including lower infrastructure costs and greater economic returns.


(B) Evans/Abriendo

Evans currently has a number of viable local businesses that can be supported and complemented with infill development. Both Evans and Abriendo have good visibility and access from the highway that could be ideal for a mixed-use neighborhood service development (grocery, pet store, pharmacy) or a regional civic use, such as an indoor recreation center.

An example from Berkeley, CA of adding a new building (infill development) within an existing commercial corridor that provides a new neighborhood commercial anchor while preserving the “main street” character.

A new recreation center could provide a community amenity and fill a gap created when YMCA relocated.
(D) Santa Fe Avenue along Grove Neighborhood

Flooded in 1921 and isolated by the rail lines, the Grove is now an up-and-coming neighborhood. A new levee trail is being constructed that will connect Grove to Downtown and Runyon Park. This quiet neighborhood boasts an eclectic collection of businesses along Santa Fe Avenue including industrial, commercial, pubs and eateries. Consider infill mixed-use zoning to support incubator hubs, live-work areas and small-scale production.

VALUE CAPTURE IN REVITALIZATION INVESTMENTS

Reimagining the Civic Commons developed a toolkit of community investment strategies that capture value that can be reinvested back into the community in a manner that benefits local residents.

“The Value Capture in the Commons toolkit serves as a resource for neighborhoods, municipalities, non-profits, and philanthropic organizations grappling with how to sustain operations, reinvest in communities, and ensure equitable access for all through investment in the civic commons.”

Strategies highlighted in the toolkit include:

• Special District Assessments - apply an additional tax on properties within a defined geographic area in order to fund a specific public improvement project.

• Tax Increment Financing - a tool municipalities use to spur development in economically distressed or underdeveloped areas.

• Land Control - through a mission-based community development organization (CDO) that can acquire and maintain ownership of land can be used as a tool to advance community objectives, such as ensuring long-term housing affordability, providing affordable retail or office space for local businesses, and programming and maintaining civic spaces.

• Sale or Lease of Public Land - Cities can capture value by ceding control of public land to private developers through a ground lease or outright sale, with the condition that civic space be integrated into the development plan, along with other community benefits.

• Land Value Taxation – provides a disincentive for vacant lot holders by structuring the tax so that all or a large portion of the property tax applies only to the value of the land, not the improvements.


Map Sources
Maps in this document are included for planning purposes only and include data provided by City of Pueblo and Pueblo County. The City of Pueblo, Colorado does not guarantee nor provide any warranty, expressed or implied, as to the representative completeness or accuracy of maps and data provided herein.
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<td>“Bessemer Village District” Streetscape</td>
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<td>Connect the neighborhoods to recreation, amenities and downtown with additional on-street &amp; off-street pedestrian facilities.</td>
<td>Arkansas River Levee multi-use trail extension from 4th Street to Runyon Lake</td>
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<td>Additional on-street bike lane from the CRSP Area to Arkansas River Trail and Downtown</td>
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<td>Multi-use Trail from Mesa to Santa Fe Drive and Arkansas River Trail.</td>
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<td>Establish neighborhood public spaces for cultural activities.</td>
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<td><strong>II. Thriving Neighborhoods</strong></td>
<td>Provide residents with home buying assistance.</td>
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<td>Increase and diversify recreation and service amenities.</td>
<td>Upgrade existing park facilities and implement strategies from &quot;Connectivity and Cultural Heritage&quot; section</td>
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Representatives from the following organizations participated in the Colorado Smelter Visioning Workshop.

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<td>Neighborworks</td>
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<td>Fran Costanzi, Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pueblo Cathedral Church/Pueblo Diocese</td>
<td>Elected Officials</td>
<td>P: 303-312-6571 or 800-227-8917 ext. 312-6571 and E: <a href="mailto:costanzi.frances@epa.gov">costanzi.frances@epa.gov</a></td>
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**U.S. EPA Region 8 Contact Information**

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