



City of

ADOPTED

SEPTEMBER 2021

RUIDOSO DOWNS

NEW MEXICO



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**CITY OF RUIDOSO DOWNS
RESOLUTION 2021-19**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING CITY OF RUIDOSO DOWNS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City of Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan has been developed with the general purpose of guiding, accomplishing, coordinating, adjusting, and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in anticipation for future and existing needs, best promote health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, and general; welfare in the process of community development; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the City of Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan is dependent on available funding and resources, as well as the authority of elected and appointed officials of the City of Ruidoso Downs; and

WHEREAS, due to the long-range nature of the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Ruidoso Downs Governing Body may amend, extend, or add to the City of Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan or carry any part of its subject matter into greater detail; and

WHEREAS, City of Ruidoso Downs staff, as well as Consensus Planning, have based the Comprehensive Plan on careful and comprehensive studies of existing conditions, probable future growth of the City of Ruidoso Downs and extensive and diverse citizen input from area residents; and

WHEREAS, the City believes that the City of Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan is a direct reflection of existing conditions and culminates the accurate consensus of the City of Ruidoso Downs community and wills and wishes for the city's future; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ruidoso Downs staff recommended to the City of Ruidoso Downs Governing Body that the Comprehensive Plan be adopted to include all sections of said plan, together with accompanying maps, charts, descriptive and explanatory matter.

NOW, THEREFORE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the City of Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico that the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Ruidoso Downs is hereby adopted.

ADOPTED, SIGNED AND APPROVED THIS 13th day of September 2021.



Dean Holman

Dean Holman, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alejandra L. Giron
Alejandra L. Giron, City Clerk/Treasurer

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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RUIDOSO DOWNS VISION

Ruidoso Downs is a close-knit community within the Ruidoso Valley in southeast New Mexico. The Rio Ruidoso flows through our City and the Sierra Blanca and Sacramento Mountains provide scenic vistas and abundant outdoor recreation experiences.

Ruidoso Downs is blessed with an affordable cost of living and a variety of housing choices and neighborhoods that encourage young families, working adults, and retirees to establish their roots in our community. We celebrate our history and unique identity by regularly hosting family-oriented events at our new Town Center along US 70, close to the Ruidoso Downs Race Track. Instead of just passing through, Ruidoso Downs has become a destination for travelers that stay overnight at the recently opened hotels and RV parks.

We have created a more walkable community by focusing our efforts on building a multi-use trail system and sidewalks that connect our neighborhoods to community destinations. A new elementary school has opened in Ruidoso Downs, which has fostered a strong sense of community building and pride for our residents.

New businesses have been popping up along our commercial corridors, encouraging our residents to purchase retail goods and services within Ruidoso Downs. The small business incubator has nurtured the growth of locally-owned businesses.

Our residents are engaged and continue to work together on making Ruidoso Downs a place where all feel welcomed and at home in our community.



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CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

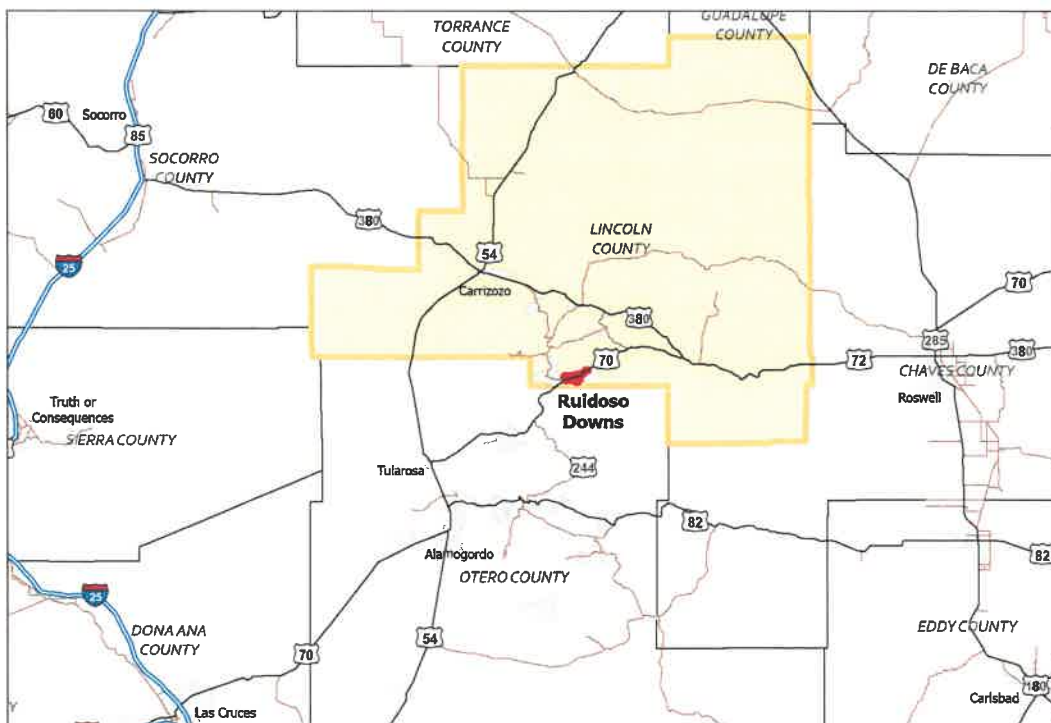


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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan is the City’s primary policy document and “road map” to guide decision-making concerning the location, character, and rate of growth and development in Ruidoso Downs. The Comprehensive Plan represents the community’s vision for the physical development, economic health, and social well being of Ruidoso Downs over the next 20 years. It is intended to be a living document that is used and referenced by elected officials and the citizens of Ruidoso Downs. It is understood that adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is not the end of the planning process; rather, it should be seen as the launchpad to implementation of the community’s vision.

The City of Ruidoso Downs determined that an update to the Comprehensive Plan (last completed in 2004) was needed as the community conditions and demographics had changed significantly and the prior Comprehensive Plan was no longer useful. The planning process to update the Comprehensive Plan began in July 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and proceeded until its adoption in September 2021.



Vicinity map.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is not the end of the planning process; rather, it is just the beginning of the City and community's efforts to implement the vision expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The following guiding principles are intended to ensure the successful implementation and relevancy of the Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan:

- ◀ Utilize and look for guidance from the Comprehensive Plan when creating new and revising existing City policies and regulations.
- ◀ Reference the Comprehensive Plan when making decisions related to growth, development, and investments in capital improvements.
- ◀ Review the Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis and update it every five years to ensure it remains relevant and useful to elected officials and the Ruidoso Downs community.
- ◀ Keep citizens engaged in the planning process so they become advocates for good planning and stewards of the community.
- ◀ Link the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) to the priorities and implementation strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ◀ Keep abreast of available funding sources and programs and based future grant applications on the implementation strategies contained in the various elements in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ◀ Establish and maintain partnerships with other local, regional, and state entities to address community needs and to assist in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.
- ◀ Utilized the Comprehensive Plan as a tool to benchmark and measure progress in improving the community conditions.

1.2 KEY PLANNING THEMES

There are key planning themes that run throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The planning themes are based on issues identified during the planning process and have been expressed through the goals, objectives, and strategies presented in the Comprehensive Plan. The result is an integrated policy document expresses the community's shared vision.

- ◀ ***Promote and celebrate Ruidoso Downs' character and identity.*** Ruidoso Downs struggles with being overshadowed by the adjacent community of the Village of Ruidoso, as well as frequently being confused with the Ruidoso Downs Race Track, the City's namesake. This is further exacerbated by the lack of community gateway markers on US 70 that communicate to travelers they have entered Ruidoso Downs. The City of Ruidoso Downs should address this challenge by initiating a branding effort that draws upon the community's unique identity and assets, and



then incorporates the brand into signage, community gateways, and print and social media outlets.

- ◀ **Strive to diversify and grow the local economy.** The lack of a diversified economy and available jobs means the majority of working adults leave Ruidoso Downs every day for their jobs. In addition, there is a high rate of gross receipts revenue that Ruidoso Downs is not capturing. The City of Ruidoso Downs and the Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce should continue to pursue new and complementary industries that build upon hospitality services, outdoor recreation, cultural tourism, forest products, community health and wellness, etc.
- ◀ **Diversify and grow Ruidoso Downs' housing stock.** The current type and overall supply of housing does not adequately meet the needs of the community. There are very few multi-family units available and there is a greater than average rate of mobile homes in Ruidoso Downs, which provides a level of affordability, but is a depreciating asset. The City of Ruidoso Downs should promote a greater supply and variety of housing types through the development of an affordable housing plan, and subsequently, work with private and non-profit housing providers on building both new and rehabilitating existing owner- and renter-occupied housing units.
- ◀ **Emphasize the importance of public education and services for Ruidoso Downs youth.** Ruidoso Downs lacks a number of typical public services, including public schools, a library, indoor recreation facilities for youth, etc., forcing residents to go outside the community to meet their family's education and recreation needs. Schools are a strong community builder and lacking any public schools in Ruidoso Downs, particularly elementary schools, takes away from the sense of community in Ruidoso Downs. The City should address this issue by initiating discussions with Ruidoso Municipal Schools and the New Mexico Public School Financing Authority on locating an elementary school within the municipal boundary of Ruidoso Downs. The development of a teen center is already on the City's radar and a community priority.
- ◀ **Invest in making the community more walkable.** The only sidewalks in Ruidoso Downs are along US 70, an NMDOT facility. The lack of sidewalks and multi-use trails in Ruidoso Downs means residents and visitors must get in their vehicles for nearly every trip they make, which is particularly challenging for people with mobility issues. The lack of walkability also manifests in a less healthy lifestyle for residents. The City of Ruidoso should prioritize the construction of sidewalks and off-street trails, and work with state agencies on funding these improvements.



1.3 PLAN ELEMENTS

In addition to the Executive Summary and Community Profile, the Comprehensive Plan contains seven major elements, including Land Use, Economic Development, Housing & Neighborhoods, Community Services & Facilities, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Hazard Mitigation. Each of these planning elements includes a profile of existing conditions, a discussion of issues and opportunities, and goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving the community's vision and aspirations. The Implementation chapter lists each of the strategies identified by planning element and lists a time frame and responsible lead entity (and support entities, as appropriate) for achieving the strategy.



The Executive Summary, Chapter 1, introduces the intent and guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan, describes plan themes, and summarizes each of the seven major plan elements. Chapter 2, Community Profile, describes the history of Ruidoso Downs, demographic characteristics and trends, population projections, and educational attainment. A more detailed description for each of the subsequent chapters follows below:

CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

The Land Use chapter is intended to be the City's road map for growth and development over time. The chapter describes existing land use and development patterns; existing zoning and land use development regulations; challenges with short-term rentals; annexation procedures; land use and zoning issues; and presents a Future Land Use Scenario that graphically depicts how Ruidoso Downs should grow over the next 20 years. The Land Use goals, objectives, and strategies address the following:

- ◀ **Create a sense of community character and identity unique to Ruidoso Downs** through a branding initiative that subsequently incorporates the brand into signage, gateway markers on US 70, and marketing materials; and master planning the development of a new town center/community focus area.



- ◀ **Grow Ruidoso Downs through infill development and annexation** by creating an inventory of vacant properties appropriate for infill development; creating incentives for redevelopment of commercial properties; and establishing an annexation evaluation process that includes a cost-benefit analysis.
- ◀ **Improve the appearance of the built environment along commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods** by updating the City's existing Zoning Ordinance; submitting grant applications to the NM Tourism Department's Clean and Beautiful Program; sponsoring community clean-up events and beautification initiatives; establishing a "House/Yard of the Month" program; and providing adequate staffing level for code enforcement and GIS mapping.

CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development element provides an economic profile of Ruidoso Downs, including industries, occupations, income, tax revenues, retail market, etc. It also includes descriptions of existing economic development organizations; economic initiatives; existing assets and attractions; and emerging opportunities for growth of the local economy. A brief synopsis of the Economic Development goals, objectives, and strategies follows:

- ◀ **Diversify and grow the local economy** by supporting small business development, retention, and expansion through the development of a small business incubator; promoting services provided by the SBDC at ENMU-Ruidoso; working with regional partners on implementation of the SET Economic Development Plan; creating a LEDA ordinance; and seeking assistance from the NM Broadband Program.
- ◀ **Capture a greater share of the tourism and outdoor recreation industries** by coordinating with the NM Tourism Department, NM Outdoor Recreation Division, Ruidoso Chamber, and Ruidoso Downs Race Track on marketing the local and regional destinations; promoting Ruidoso Downs as a community with an unmet demand for restaurants, arts and entertainment venues, outdoor recreation-related services, RV parks, and hotels; and promoting Ruidoso Downs as an equestrian community.
- ◀ **Create a well-trained and educated workforce** by working with local employers on applications for JTIP funding; coordinating with Ruidoso Municipal Schools and ENMU-Ruidoso on workforce training and dual credit programs; and providing information about existing certificate and associate degree programs at ENMU-Ruidoso.
- ◀ **Expand and recruit new commercial and industrial development** by identifying potential candidates related to the community's unmet needs; working with SNMEDD/COG on pursuing grant and loan applications to business and industry programs, and broadband access programs; and establishing an economic development committee of the City Council that would be tasked with prioritizing target industries, reviewing potential



development opportunities, assisting with marketing, and providing recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

The Housing & Neighborhoods element provides guidance on growing and diversifying the housing stock in Ruidoso Downs and advocates for safe and stable neighborhoods. The chapter provides a housing profile, describes general housing conditions, discusses challenges for housing special populations, and identifies housing issues and opportunities. A brief summary of the goals, objectives, and strategies is as follows:

- ◀ **Expand the available housing stock and support equal access to a diverse range of safe and affordable housing types** by applying for a grant from the NM Mortgage Finance Authority to fund the creation of an Affordable Housing Plan; identifying City-owned land appropriate and available for donation to an affordable housing program; working with residential builders on identifying incentives to encourage the build-out of existing vacant lots and subdivisions; amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow a greater variety of housing types; and working with SNMEDD/COG and NM Mortgage Finance Authority on developing an educational program on affordable housing programs, rehab programs and maintenance assistance for seniors and veterans, down payment and closing cost assistance, and referrals to local MFA-approved lenders.
- ◀ **Promote community building and neighborhood stability** through the rehabilitation of blighted housing conditions and neighborhoods in partnership with private builders or housing providers; establishing a “Yard/House of the Month” program; creating regulations for short-term rentals; and installing sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, and improved street conditions within residential neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

The Community Services & Facilities element highlights a wide array of quality of life services that residents depend on for safety and security, enjoyment during leisure time, and facilities and programs that support socialization, lifelong learning opportunities, and community health and wellness. The Community Services & Facilities goals, objectives, and strategies are briefly described below:

- ◀ **Deliver and maintain a high level of public safety services** by developing a public safety needs assessment that identifies priorities and pursues funding; and hosting and participating in community events and meetings with residents.
- ◀ **Build a health community through an integrated system of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and activities** by developing an on-going preventative maintenance program for the City’s park facilities; securing funding for the construction of a new teen center; acquiring property for the development of a new public park south of US 70; coordinating with local volunteers on creating and hosting community events; and working



with regional partners on expanding access to outdoor recreation experiences.

- ◀ ***Provide and expand access to community facilities to meet the community's social and educational needs*** by completing a facility needs assessment of the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center; developing an on-going preventative maintenance and replacement program for the Senior Center; securing funding for the construction of a new City Hall facility; and continuing to financially support the Boys & Girls Club.
- ◀ ***Improve and expand access to health care services*** by collaborating with Lincoln County Medical Center and other providers on disseminating information on community health care services; advocating for and pursuing the development of an urgent care center in Ruidoso Downs; participating with Lincoln County Medical Center on developing strategies to improve health outcomes and increase access; and recruiting a senior care provider that offers assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing services.
- ◀ ***Support equal access to quality education and learning opportunities for all ages*** by initiating and participating in a dialogue with Ruidoso Municipal Schools, ENMU-Ruidoso, and Lincoln County on educational initiatives, online courses, dual credit programs, workforce training, and expanding opportunities; supporting and pursuing funding for adult education programs and classes; and collaborating with Ruidoso Municipal Schools and the NM Public Schools Facility Authority on determining the feasibility of a new elementary school in Ruidoso Downs.

CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation element emphasizes the creation of multi-modal system that will better accommodate the transportation needs of Ruidoso Downs residents. Current conditions indicate an unbalanced transportation system highlighted by the lack of sidewalks and bike lanes. The chapter includes a description of the existing street network, functional classifications, and street conditions by roadway type; existing transit services; pedestrian accessibility and bike facilities; regional aviation services; current ICIP; and an overview of transportation issues and challenges. The Transportation goals, objectives, and strategies are briefly summarized below:

- ◀ ***Establish an integrated, multi-modal transportation system*** by submitting a grant application to the NM Finance Authority for a Transportation Asset Management Plan; preparing and implementing a sidewalk construction phasing plan; conducting a traffic analysis to determine revisions to functional classification of local streets; creating an off-street trails and bikeways plan; coordinating with NMDOT on a phased streetscape improvement plan for US 70; and pursuing funding for transportation projects through NMDOT programs.
- ◀ ***Maintain and improve street conditions and connectivity of local roads*** by creating a preventative street maintenance plan; developing traffic



control standards; and implementing a policy that requires a traffic impact analysis for new development.

- ◀ **Expand access to transit services** by coordinating with ZTrans and the Village of Ruidoso on creating a Transit Action Plan; determining the feasibility of expanding transit services to regional attractions; and working with SERTPO and regional partners on improving and maintaining intercity transit service to Ruidoso, Roswell, and Alamogordo.

CHAPTER 8: INFRASTRUCTURE

The Infrastructure element describes the basic municipal services of the water supply and distribution system, wastewater collection system, and the stormwater drainage system. It also describes electric and natural gas services, telecommunications, solid waste collection and recycling, colonias designation and available funding programs, and Ruidoso Downs current ICIP. The Infrastructure element works in concert with the Land Use element to ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to serve existing development and future growth. The Infrastructure goals, objectives, and strategies are briefly described below:

- ◀ **Maintain, upgrade, and optimize the City's water production and distribution system** by creating a 40-Year Water Plan; prioritizing and implementing the projects identified in the Water System Asset Management Plan; securing funding for and implementing water distribution line, drainage system, and water tank replacements as identified in the ICIP; securing funding for installing additional fire hydrants on the east side of Ruidoso Downs; applying for and securing funding for replacement of aging and undersized water distribution lines.
- ◀ **Promote the sustainable and efficient management of water resources through conservation** by continuing to educate water customers on the community benefits of conservation; and implementing a Water Loss Control Program.
- ◀ **Maintain, upgrade, and optimize the City's wastewater collection treatment system** by preparing a Preliminary Engineering Report or Asset Management Plan; providing public education on preventative maintenance for septic systems; securing funding for the design, expansion, and connection to the municipal sewer system for currently unserved properties; applying for and securing funding from the Colonias Infrastructure Fund for wastewater system projects; and continuing to work with the Village of Ruidoso on maintaining and improving the WWTP.
- ◀ **Maintain an adequate level of stormwater detention and retention capacity** by developing and implementing a comprehensive Drainage Master Plan; securing funding for recommended stormwater drainage improvements; incorporating LID standards in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances; and working with Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and the Village of Ruidoso on mitigating stormwater impediments in the Rio Ruidoso watershed.



- ◀ **Expand access to affordable, high-speed broadband services** by developing a “Dig Once” policy; working with the Village of Ruidoso on forming a telecommunications planning committee; and working with the NM Broadband Program.
- ◀ **Promote and increase waste reduction, reuse, and recycling** by continuing to participate with and support efforts by the Greentree Solid Waste Authority; and developing a public education program that promotes the benefits of reduce, reuse, and recycling.

CHAPTER 9: HAZARD MITIGATION

The Hazard Mitigation element describes approaches and strategies to help eliminate short and long-term risks caused by hazards or disasters. The chapter describes emergency preparedness planning by the Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services and existing hazard mitigation plans that cover Ruidoso Downs; describes specific hazards with the potential to impact Ruidoso Downs; and provides a synopsis of mitigation strategies and tools, including best practices in mitigation strategies and tools as identified by FEMA and the American Planning Association. The Hazard Mitigation goals, objectives, and strategies are briefly summarized below:

- ◀ **Improve the community’s ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made hazards** by coordinating with the Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services (LCOES) to improve notification services; working with LCOES, Greater Ruidoso Working Group, and regional partners on an on-going public education program; and providing accommodations during hazard events.
- ◀ **Reduce the risk of wildfire** by completing the implementation actions from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan; performing a wildfire hazard analysis for public buildings and critical facilities; becoming a member of the Fire Adapted New Mexico Learning Network; and evaluating and adopting provisions of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code.
- ◀ **Minimize vulnerability to flooding and dam failure** by improving culverts, low water crossings, and bridges; adopting development regulations addressing impacts of development within the Rio Ruidoso floodplain; working with Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso, and the US Army Corp of Engineers to reduce obstructions and overgrowth in the Rio Ruidoso floodplain; engaging with the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the BIA in making improvements to Lake Mescalero Dam; and supporting Lincoln County and the Village of Ruidoso on improving the Grindstone Dam.

CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation chapter repeats each strategy contained in the Comprehensive Plan and sorts them by plan element, and identifies time frames, responsible lead entity, and community partners, if applicable. Time frames include 2022-2024 (short); 2025-2027 (medium); 2028-2035 (long); and on-going (actions with no end date). The implementation schedule is



intended to assist the City in benchmarking progress made towards improving the community.

1.4 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Comprehensive Plan is more than facts and data on a page. It is a process for the public to engage in the future, providing the opportunity to take part in conversations, and to learn and work with other residents in creating a better place for their families and future generations.

The City of Ruidoso Downs staff provided information and direction to the consultants throughout the planning process. An initial online meeting took place on August 21, 2020 due to public health restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The consultants also met with staff individually on September 14, 2020, in Ruidoso Downs.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

As part of the public engagement process, Consensus Planning conducted a Community Survey online and in-print from September 21 through November 2, 2020. A total of 103 surveys were completed (see Appendix B for full results). The typical profile of the survey participants showed a majority were female (54%); between the ages of 65 to 74 (30%); with some college/associate degree/vocational certificate (45%); an annual household income of less than \$30,000 (42%); with a white racial identity (77%); and non-Hispanic (63%).

General Questions

Most respondents, 93%, live in Ruidoso Downs, while 4% live in the Village of Ruidoso, and 1% live in unincorporated Lincoln County. Of those that live in Ruidoso Downs, 51% have lived in there for more than 20 years. When asked the main reason why they lived in Ruidoso Downs, the largest number of respondents, 30%, said because they like the location. The next most common reason was employment.

When asked how likely they were to live in Ruidoso Downs for the next 2 to 5 years, 95% said they are very likely or likely. For those that said they were unlikely to continue living in Ruidoso Downs, the two most common responses were higher quality of life elsewhere (50%) and family living elsewhere (44%).

Quality of Life

When asked to rate the quality of life in Ruidoso Downs, 52% said good and 28% said fair. The three most favorite aspects of Ruidoso Downs cited by the participants included:

- ◀ Small town atmosphere (59%);
- ◀ Natural environment (57%); and
- ◀ Affordability (43%).



Participants' favorite local amenities included:

- ◀ Lincoln National Forest (66%);
- ◀ City parks (56%); and
- ◀ Ruidoso Downs Race Track (46%).

Asked what City services or facilities should be improved or expanded, the three most common options chosen were:

- ◀ Improved landscaping and street trees (54%);
- ◀ Add dog park (41%); and
- ◀ River trail development (37%).

Most respondents indicated their support for improving the visual appearance of the City; 90% said they agreed or strongly agreed.

Health Care

When asked where they go for health care services, respondents said:

- ◀ Village of Ruidoso (75%);
- ◀ Alamogordo (34%); and
- ◀ Roswell (25%).

When asked what types of health services are missing in Ruidoso Downs, the three most common responses included:

- ◀ General health care practices (77%);
- ◀ Dentistry (71%); and
- ◀ Specialty health care (57%).

Economic Development

When asked about employment, 51% of the respondents said they were not employed and 49% said they were employed. For those with employment, the most common response at 22% was "other", followed by:

- ◀ Retail services (15%)
- ◀ Hospitality (11%); and
- ◀ Professional, scientific, management, administration (9%).

Of those that are not employed, 87% said they were retired and 9% said they were stay-at-home parents or caregivers. Of those that said they were unemployed because they need more job training, 83% said they need computer technology training to gain employment.

Asked what areas of economic development Ruidoso Downs should focus on expanding, the three most common options chosen were:

- ◀ Outdoor recreation (65%);
- ◀ Restaurants (49%); and
- ◀ Tourism (44%).



Growth & Development

Of those with an opinion, 42% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that Ruidoso Downs has adequate commercial retail/business services. However, 40% stated they don't know. When asked what types of commercial services are needed in Ruidoso Downs, the most common options chosen were:

- ◀ Restaurants (56%);
- ◀ General retail (53%); and
- ◀ Grocery stores (50%).

Asked where they go to shop or utilize commercial services if Ruidoso Downs does not have what they need, the most common destinations were:

- ◀ Alamogordo (82%);
- ◀ Village of Ruidoso (76%); and
- ◀ Roswell (64%).

Regarding the future types of development the City should encourage, 61% agreed or strongly agreed that the City should encourage infill development and 41% agreed or strongly agreed the City should encourage mixed-use development.

Tourism

Asked how important tourism is to Ruidoso Downs, 68% said very important. Asked what the City's most important tourism opportunities are, the three most common options chosen included:

- ◀ Ruidoso Downs Race Track (93%);
- ◀ Lincoln National Forest (73%); and
- ◀ Ski Apache (60%).

Transportation & Infrastructure

Nearly all the participants indicated that they drive a personal car or truck for transportation; however, 21% walk and 8% use bicycles. Asked what types of transportation and infrastructure improvements the City should focus on, the three most common choices included:

- ◀ Improve/maintain streets (80%);
- ◀ Improve/add sidewalks (55%); and
- ◀ Improve/maintain landscaping (48%).

Housing

Asked if Ruidoso Downs should increase its supply of affordable housing, 65% agreed or strongly agreed. Asked if they rent or own their home, 85% said they own or are purchasing their home. Of those who said they are renters, a follow-up question asked why they have not purchased a home in Ruidoso Downs; the most common reasons cited were:

- ◀ Cannot afford the down payment (44%); and
- ◀ Cannot afford the mortgage (31%).



Asked what types of housing are needed, the three most common choices were:

- ◀ Single-family detached homes (63%);
- ◀ Senior housing (51%); and
- ◀ Apartments (40%).

PUBLIC MEETINGS

November 19, 2020

The first public meeting with the Ruidoso Downs community was held using an online platform with the capability for participants to ask questions and provide input in writing or by speaking. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project; review the Community Survey results; facilitate a listening session on the issues in Ruidoso Downs; and discuss the community's vision for the future.

Jackie Fishman (Principal, Consensus Planning) made a presentation on the planning process and time frame and gave an overview of the key takeaways from the results of the Community Survey. Participants were then asked a series of questions developed by Consensus Planning to draw out the participants' opinions about Ruidoso Downs at present and the community's vision for the future of Ruidoso Downs. The visioning questions and a summary of responses are as follows:

Question 1: How would you describe Ruidoso Downs to someone who has never been here and was thinking about moving to Ruidoso Downs this year?

- ◀ Affordable proximity to a beautiful natural area
- ◀ Quiet, quaint, alternative to Ruidoso
- ◀ A great small town
- ◀ Community-oriented City
- ◀ The parks and other amenities are being improved, which is benefiting the community

Question 2: What are the top three special things about Ruidoso Downs that should be preserved for the future?

- ◀ The Race Track is the most important economic development driver for Ruidoso Downs
- ◀ The horse monument
- ◀ Our beautiful parks!
- ◀ Improving the senior center needs to be a top priority
- ◀ Small town feeling
- ◀ Green spaces
- ◀ Connections to the outdoors and Lincoln Forest



Question 3: What are the top three aspects of Ruidoso Downs that should be changed or improved?

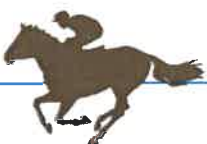
- ◀ Increase community involvement
- ◀ Code enforcement needs to address dilapidated buildings
- ◀ Clean up the City
- ◀ Codes need to be rewritten
- ◀ Improve roads
- ◀ Increase jobs with good wages
- ◀ More community events
- ◀ Expand businesses. Ruidoso Downs has two big advantages to expanding businesses in the area: location along US 70 and land with room to grow.
- ◀ Up-skill workers and improve salaries
- ◀ City sponsored events to bring the community together
- ◀ Youth/teen center
- ◀ Most people think that the low-income people live in Ruidoso Downs and the others live in Ruidoso Village
- ◀ More general practitioner physicians; takes several weeks to get an appointment with a doctor

April 30, 2021

Consensus Planning facilitated a second public meeting online on April 30, 2021. Jackie Fishman began the meeting with a review of the planning process and the progress made since the last public meeting. She then gave a summary of the draft goals and objectives that were developed for each Comprehensive Plan element. She explained how they were linked to the vision expressed by the Ruidoso Downs community in the first public meeting and the Community Survey. After each set of draft goals and objectives, Ms. Fishman asked the participants for feedback.

The second part of the meeting involved a presentation on the two draft alternative Land Use Scenarios developed by Consensus Planning. Ms. Fishman explained that the draft Land Use Scenarios are a graphic representation of how Ruidoso Downs could grow over the next 20 years. She reviewed the commonalities between the two draft Land Use Scenarios and then highlighted the differences. She explained that the draft Land Use Scenarios were based on existing land use, existing zoning, community priorities, and best practices in land use planning. Meeting participants were asked to provide feedback on their preferred Land Use Scenario. All the materials presented at the public meeting were later posted to the project website for additional feedback.

Subsequent to this meeting, Consensus Planning developed the Future Land Use Scenario, which is primarily based on Alternative Land Use Scenario 1, but



also incorporates aspects of alternative Land Use Scenario 2. The Future Land Use Scenario is provided in Chapter 3, Land Use.

City Council Workshop - August 16, 2021

The Ruidoso Downs City Council held a workshop on August 16, 2021 to review the draft Comprehensive Plan and get feedback from the Councilors. Jackie Fishman gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Plan and an overview of each chapter. She also summarized the goals, objectives, and strategies for each major plan element. A question and answer session followed the presentation and the Councilors agreed to move the Comprehensive Plan forward towards adoption.

Plan Adoption - September 13, 2021

The Comprehensive Plan was presented at the Ruidoso Downs City Council meeting on September 13, 2021. Jackie Fishman gave a brief overview of the Comprehensive Plan and answered questions from the City Councilors. The motion to adopt the Comprehensive Plan was seconded and the Councilors voted unanimously for adoption.



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CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE



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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ruidoso Downs is a scenic oasis at an elevation of 6,420 feet in the Sierra Blanca and Sacramento Mountains in southeast New Mexico. The Rio Ruidoso, a tributary of the Pecos River, provides a pleasant respite from the hot dry plains to the east and desert to the west. The City of Ruidoso Downs has a mix of long-term residents and seasonal visitors, with retail, services, and destination attractions that provide a small town experience unique in this part of the state.

This chapter provides a summary of the history of Ruidoso Downs and the region, the geographical context of the community in Southeast New Mexico, and demographic trends affecting the City. Resources used included the US Census Bureau and its American Community Survey, University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER), and the University of New Mexico Institute for Geospatial and Population Studies (GPS).

2.2 RUIDOSO DOWNS HISTORY

The City of Ruidoso Downs, population 2,631, takes its name from the Ruidoso Downs Race Track, which was established along the Rio Ruidoso after World War II. The Rio Ruidoso, Spanish for “noisy river”, flows down the rocky slopes of 12,000-foot Sierra Blanca Mountain and rushes eastward to join the Rio Bonita and become the Hondo River. The Hondo River crosses the high plains and joins the Pecos River near Roswell.

The surrounding area has a long history of human habitation. Stellar observatories, such as the Wizard’s Roost historic site high in the mountains, are estimated by archaeological evidence to have been constructed 1,500 to 2,000 years ago during the Late Archaic - Early Mogollon period.

Ruidoso Downs is located in Lincoln County, which was created in 1869 and named for President Abraham Lincoln. At the time, Lincoln County stretched to the Texas border and was the largest county in the United States. According Dr. Cynthia E. Orozco (local historian), Hispanic settlers first arrived in the Rio Ruidoso valley in the late 1840s and early 1850s, calling the area “San Juanito” (*“The colorful history of Ruidoso Downs”*, Ruidoso News, March 14, 2014).

After the Civil War, Texas cattle ranchers drove herds of cattle into the Pecos Basin up the Goodnight-Loving Trail to supply the military and settlers. The Old Dowlin Mill was built on the Rio Ruidoso in 1868 as the river valley became a common route between the settlements at Tularosa and the town of Lincoln. Eventually a stagecoach ran along this route between Roswell and Tularosa. In the late 1870s, Lincoln County became nationally prominent during the Lincoln County War conflict between territorial politicians, merchants and cattle ranchers, including the infamous Billy the Kid. US Highway 70 through Ruidoso



Downs, first paved after World War II, is now part of the Billy the Kid Trail National Scenic Byway.

The Lincoln National Forest's Smokey Bear Ranger District covers the land north and south of Ruidoso Downs. Fort Stanton was established in 1855, 20 miles north of Ruidoso Downs in what is now the National Forest, as part of the Mescalero Apache Reservation and government center during settlement of New Mexico Territory. The Reservation boundaries were moved in 1883 to the mountains south of Ruidoso Downs, in the present area of Otero County. Fort Stanton became a state monument and museum that is now a popular tourist attraction.



US Forest Service Smokey Bear poster.

The Herrera, Hale, and Miller families were among the early settlers in the Rio Ruidoso Valley, growing alfalfa, corn, and apples, and raising horses and cattle for eastern markets. In 1892, the Hales donated property for a schoolhouse. About 1910, Dr. S.M. Johnson of Chicago bought a house and opened the White Mountain Inn, a sanatorium and later a lodging establishment. In 1933, Dr. Johnson's son H.V. "Heck" Johnson, developed the Palo Verde townsite near Hale Springs, downriver from the Hollywood post office that was established in 1926. Dr. Orozco notes that by the late 1930s, the community was home for a population of approximately 500, with farms, gardens, orchards, two sawmills, and several businesses.

In 1941, a flood covered the Miller family farm with three feet of rock and sand, and their field became the site of informal horse racing. In 1947, the Ruidoso Downs Race Track began operations with a four-horse gate and straightway hosting a 10-day horse racing event. In 1949, a canvas covered grandstand was added to the 5/8th mile oval. Then in 1958, a new steel and concrete grandstand was constructed, which the next year hosted the All American Futurity quarter horse race. About this time, the 120-room Chaparral Hotel, convention center and dance hall was built by El Paso and Dallas investors, east of the Race Track on the highway. The Chaparral hosted movie stars and major entertainers attracting patrons from across the Southwest.

On October 9, 1947, the Village of Green Tree was incorporated including portions of the Palo Verde and Hollywood areas after the Village of Ruidoso was incorporated upstream in 1945. The US Postal Service translated the name of the new post office from Palo Verde to Green Tree, and it was apparently easier to change the name of the Village than the post office. The Village changed its name to Ruidoso Downs by special election in 1958 and became the City of Ruidoso Downs in 2002.



2.3 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

US 70 serves as the five-lane main street for Ruidoso Downs, running east-west across southern New Mexico. US Highway 380 runs west from US 70 at Hondo to Interstate 25 through Lincoln, Capitan, and Carrizozo. US Highway 54 runs north-south across the western side of Lincoln County through Carrizozo and Corona. NM Highway 48 connects Capitan with the Village of Ruidoso through the mountains just west of Ruidoso Downs. Respondents to the Community Survey cited the location of the City (30%), employment (20%), and small town atmosphere (17%) as their main reasons for living in Ruidoso Downs.

Lincoln County, population 19,939, makes up the Ruidoso Micropolitan Statistical Area. The Lincoln County seat was moved to the town of Carrizozo in 1909 after arrival of the El Paso and Northeastern Railway (now the Union Pacific railroad) in 1899. Lincoln County originally included most of southeast New Mexico. In 1889, Chaves and Eddy counties were created from the east side of Lincoln County, and in 1899, Otero County was created from the south side. Sierra and Socorro counties are located to the west. Torrance, Guadalupe, and De Baca counties are located to the north and northeast.

Much of Lincoln County is public land. The US Forest Service (USFS) accounts for approximately 11.7% of Lincoln County's area. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages an additional 16% of the County. The Lincoln National Forest covers over 1.1 million acres across four counties with elevation ranging from 4,000 to almost 12,000 feet.

The original Smokey Bear was rescued from the 1951 Capitan Gap fire north of Ruidoso Downs in the Lincoln National Forest. Timber harvest played an important part of the early development of the Ruidoso Valley. Today, the Lincoln National Forest offers ample opportunities for outdoor recreation experiences.

SOUTHEAST NEW MEXICO

Southeast New Mexico offers large skies and wide-open spaces. The region has snowy mountain peaks, high plains of the Pecos Basin, and the badlands of the Tularosa Basin. Alamogordo and Holloman Air Force Base are located southwest of Ruidoso Downs on Highway 70, which has a junction with Interstate 10 and Interstate 25 at Las Cruces. To the east are the cities of Roswell, Artesia, and Carlsbad. The region is also a convenient drive to Albuquerque north along Interstate 25 or by way of Interstate 40.

- ◀ The City's major attractions, Ruidoso Downs Race Track and the Hubbard Museum of the American West, draw visitors from across the United States and abroad.
- ◀ Both national parks in New Mexico are located in the region. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, southeast of Ruidoso Downs, draws tourists from



across the United States and the world. White Sands National Park, southwest of Ruidoso Downs, is located in the largest gypsum dune field in the world.

- ◀ The Trinity Site National Historic Landmark, the location of the first atomic test detonation, is approximately 50 miles north of White Sands National Park on the White Sands Missile Range.
- ◀ Ski Apache outside Ruidoso and Ski Cloudcroft further south near Alamogordo are among the southernmost ski resorts in the United States.

MOUNTAINS ECOREGION

Ruidoso Downs is located in the New Mexico Mountains ecoregion, with lower elevations and a drier, warmer climate than more northern ranges of the Rocky Mountains. The Madrean Lower Montane Woodlands ecoregion covers the slopes of the mountains, with juniper, pinon pine, and oak. Winters are generally milder and summers are wetter than higher elevation ranges. The Rocky Mountain Conifer Forests ecoregion breaks east near Ruidoso Downs, covering the eastern Sacramento Mountains and the Rio Ruidoso Valley down to the Hondo River. These forests are generally made up of ponderosa pine, gambel oak, and mountain mahogany, and have been shaped by fire and fire suppression.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Services' Soil Survey for Lincoln County (1983) mapped soils in the Rio Ruidoso Valley. Soil types in Ruidoso Downs generally include Paco loam, Paco-Penapon complex, and Penapon-Tortugas very cobbly loams. Top soils throughout the area tend to be poor with potential for erosion.

2.4 DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

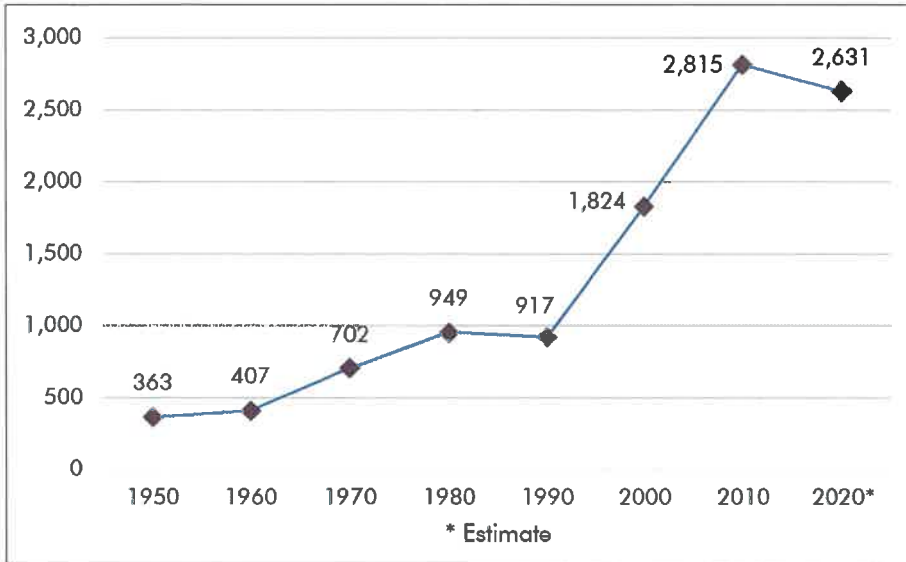
The City of Ruidoso Downs grew steadily from 1950 to 1980, then after a period of stability grew rapidly from 1990 to 2010. Ruidoso Downs' population almost doubled in the 1990s. By 2010, there were 2,815 residents in the City of Ruidoso Downs (see *Figure 2.1*). Lincoln County's population grew steadily from 7,560 residents in 1970 to 20,497 in 2010, though at a more moderate rate than Ruidoso Downs.

The US Census Bureau initially estimated the population of Ruidoso Downs in 2020 at 2,631 residents and Lincoln County at 19,939 residents. The City of Ruidoso Downs currently ranks as 43rd largest among 105 incorporated municipalities in New Mexico.

The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that in the 2014-2018 time period, Lincoln County had the largest net in-migration from Henderson County (+198) in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas, attracting more residents than it lost. Lincoln County had the largest net out-migration to Valencia County (-64) and Doña Ana County (-96) in New Mexico.



FIGURE 2.1 HISTORIC POPULATION



Source: UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research, US Census Bureau.

AGE, GENDER, and BIRTH RATES

The population of Ruidoso Downs contracted by approximately 8.5% from 2010 to 2019 (see Table 2.1). Residents were 58% female and 42% male.

In 2019, the median age in Ruidoso Downs was 40.1 years old, up from 38.6 in 2010. The 2019 median age was considerably older than the New Mexico median age of 37.8 years.

In 2019, the largest age cohort in Ruidoso Downs consisted of residents aged 30 to 34 years old. Ruidoso Downs saw a large increase in population 65 to 74 years old, with the largest decrease in the under 5 years cohort.

TABLE 2.1: RUIDOSO DOWNS POPULATION			
Population	2010	2019	Change*
Total Population	2,815	2,573	-8.5%
Male	1,367	1,092	-20.1%
Female	1,446	1,481	2.4%
Age			
Under 5 years	9.6%	4.0%	-61.9%
5 to 9 years	4.0%	5.8%	32.7%
10 to 14 years	7.4%	5.4%	-33.5%
15 to 19 years	8.1%	8.9%	1.3%
20 to 24 years	7.6%	4.0%	-52.6%
25 to 34 years	9.4%	15.2%	48.5%
35 to 44 years	10.6%	14.0%	20.1%
45 to 54 years	16.8%	8.2%	-55.3%
55 to 59 years	8.5%	7.7%	-16.4%
60 to 64 years	5.0%	4.1%	-25.0%
65 to 74 years	6.7%	16.0%	117.5%
75 to 84 years	5.0%	4.7%	-14.8%
85 years and over	1.2%	2.0%	45.7%
Median Age	38.6	40.1	--

*Change calculated based on raw data.

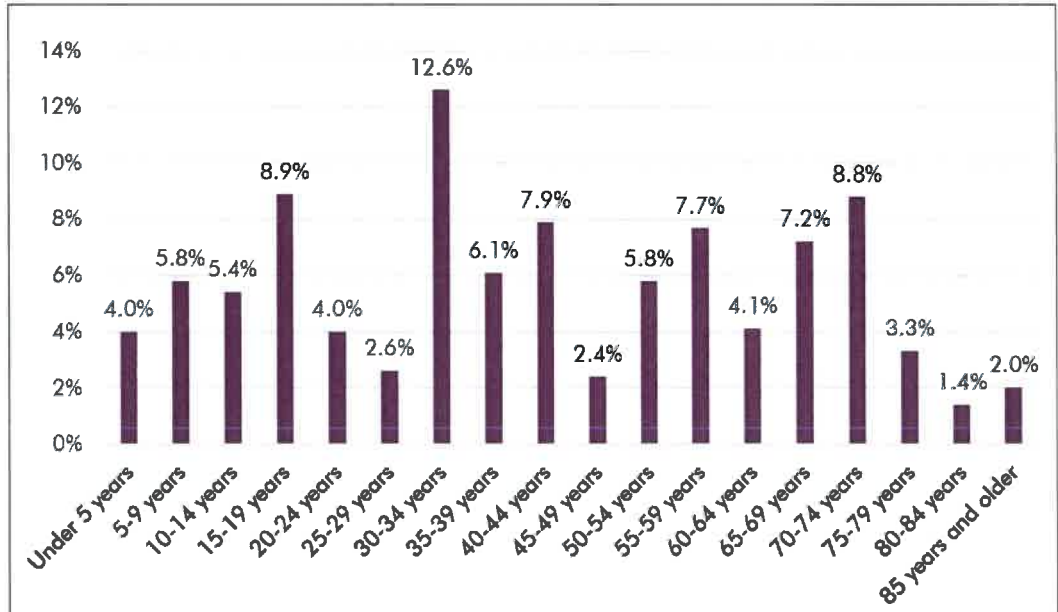
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 & 2015-2019.

According to the New Mexico Department of Health, there

were 45 births to women who resided in Ruidoso Downs in 2018 (New Mexico Selected Health Statistics Annual Report). This was down from 50 in 2010. Ruidoso Downs' birth rate of 17.3 per 1,000 persons is considerably higher than the birth rate of 11.0 per 1,000 persons in New Mexico overall.



FIGURE 2.2 RUIDOSO DOWNS AGE DISTRIBUTION, 2019



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

RACE and ETHNICITY

The Census Bureau defines race as a person’s self-identification with one or more social groups. These categories are not prescribed, but are chosen by the respondent in correspondence with their chosen identity, and people can choose more than one race. Ethnicity is different than race - a person may consider themselves Hispanic or Latino, and White, Black, or another race. In New Mexico, the majority of Hispanics define their race as “White”.

In 2019, over 98% of the population of Ruidoso Downs identified as White alone (see Table 2.2). This compares to approximately 75% in New Mexico statewide. While 1.4% of the population identified as Black or African American alone, no one in the ACS identified as another race or two or more races. Among all residents, 46% identified as Hispanic or Latino, slightly less than New Mexico as a whole, which was 49%.

TABLE 2.2: RACE & ETHNICITY, 2019

Population	Ruidoso Downs	New Mexico
Total Population	2,573	2,092,454
White alone	98.6%	74.8%
Black or African American	1.4%	2.1%
American Indian	0%	9.6%
Asian	0%	1.6%
Some other race	0%	8.6%
Two or more races	0%	3.3%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	45.5%	48.8%
Not Hispanic or Latino	54.5%	51.2%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In 2019, 475 Ruidoso Downs residents identified as having a disability, comprising 18.5% of the non-institutionalized population (residents living in households). This compares to 15.3% in New Mexico statewide. A greater



share of women (23%) identified as having a disability than men (12%). Approximately 75% of residents 75 years and over in Ruidoso Downs considered themselves disabled, compared to 54% in New Mexico. Difficulty with independent living, ambulatory difficulty, and cognitive difficulty were the most common disabilities in the survey. Statewide, ambulatory difficulty is the most common disability.

TABLE 2.3: DISABILITY CHARACTERISTICS, 2019

	Total	With a Disability	Share of Total
Total Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	2,573	475	18.5%
Male	1,092	133	12.2%
Female	1,481	342	23.1%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

VETERANS

Only 4% of Ruidoso Downs residents 18 years and over are veterans, significantly lower than Lincoln County (12%) or New Mexico (9%). Approximately 79% of veterans reported that they served in the Gulf War era (since 1990), and 21% served in the Vietnam era. None of the veterans identified as having served in World War II or the Korean War. All veterans identified as having a disability.

2.5 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The US Census Bureau estimated that Lincoln County’s population contracted by 4.5% from 2010 to 2019 after growing continuously since 1970. The University of New Mexico Institute for Geospatial and Population Studies (GPS) projects that this short-term trend will continue with Lincoln County’s population decreasing to 16,514 by 2040, a 15% decrease from the estimated 2020 population (see Table 2.4).

TABLE 2.4: COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change
LINCOLN COUNTY	19,397	18,788	18,105	17,337	16,514	-15%
Chaves County	64,670	64,016	63,132	61,960	60,586	-6%
De Baca County	1,721	1,658	1,527	1,388	1,245	-28%
Guadalupe County	4,330	4,141	3,934	3,709	3,472	-20%
Otero County	67,278	68,918	70,341	71,459	72,340	8%
Sierra County	10,898	10,337	9,733	9,081	8,400	-23%
Socorro County	16,969	16,460	15,887	15,240	14,544	-14%
Torrance County	15,531	15,076	14,563	13,982	13,356	-14%

Source: UNM Geospatial and Population Studies.

Otero County (Alamogordo Micropolitan Statistical Area), south of Ruidoso Downs, is expected to grow by 8% over the next 20 years. However, the



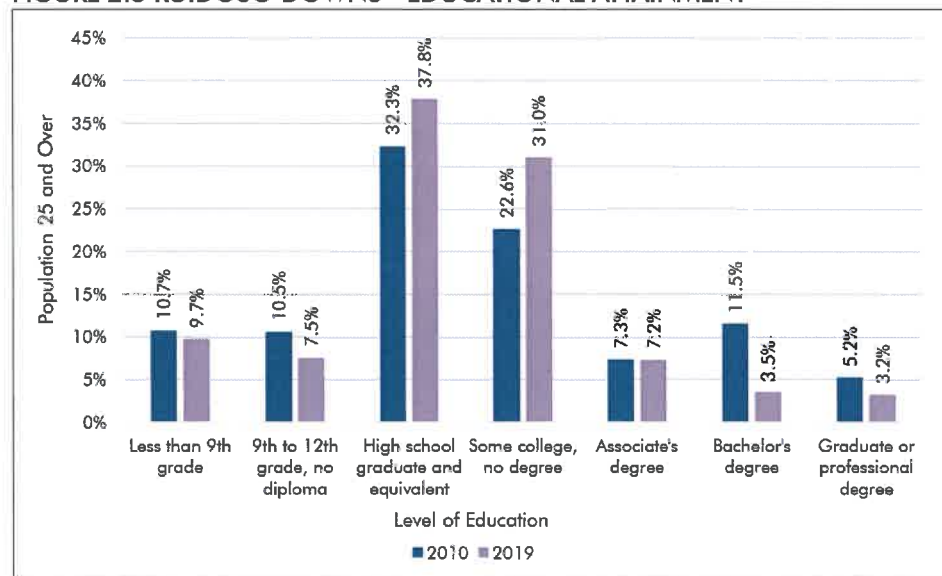
population of the remaining counties adjacent to Lincoln County are expected to decline between 6% and 28% from 2020 to 2040.

In 2019, the City of Ruidoso Downs accounted for approximately 13% of Lincoln County’s population. Assuming the City maintains a steady share of the County’s residents, Ruidoso Downs’ population would be projected to decrease to approximately 2,150 by 2040. However, there are also ample opportunities to attract a greater share of the regional population with implementation of the strategies in the Comprehensive Plan.

2.6 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In 2019, 82.8% of Ruidoso Downs’ residents 25 years of age and older had attained a high school diploma or higher, which lags behind the New Mexico overall rate of 85.6%. Of Ruidoso Downs residents 25 and older, 6.7% had attained a bachelor’s degree or higher as compared to 27.3% state-wide. While the number of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher decreased between 2010 and 2019, the number with an associate’s degree remained stable. These metrics showing a lower level of educational attainment in Ruidoso Downs suggests there may be a gap in access to education in the community and should be addressed by the City, Ruidoso Municipal Schools, and other community partners (see Section 6.6, *Public Education for more information*).

FIGURE 2.3 RUIDOSO DOWNS - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2015-2019.



CHAPTER 3
LAND USE



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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Land use is the foundation to help guide decision-making regarding the growth and development of the City. Providing and maintaining the appropriate mix of land uses will enhance the livability of Ruidoso Downs while maintaining the aspects of the community that residents cherish. Land use provides the necessary framework for other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, in particular planning for infrastructure, housing and neighborhoods, and community services.

This chapter describes existing land use, existing zoning and land use regulations, emerging concerns with vacation rentals, potential annexation areas, and identifies land use issues. It also includes a Future Land Use Scenario, which is a graphic representation of how Ruidoso Downs will grow in the next 20 years through preferred land uses.

3.2 EXISTING LAND USE

The City of Ruidoso Downs began as smaller settlements at Hale Springs and near the Hollywood post office that were incorporated as Palo Verde (Green Tree). Ruidoso Downs, taking its name from the Race Track, grew up along the valley of the Rio Ruidoso and either side of US 70, approximately four miles east to west. Local residents rate highly the small town atmosphere, natural environment, and affordability of the community.

EXISTING LAND USE SURVEY

In September 2020, the planning consultants conducted a windshield survey of existing land use in Ruidoso Downs. The windshield survey provides an inventory of the uses of land as a snapshot in time, which helped form the basis for the land use recommendations contained in this chapter.

The growth and development pattern in Ruidoso Downs is generally centered on US 70, which is lined with commercial and light industrial development. The Rio Ruidoso is small stream running through Ruidoso Downs on the north side of the highway, a ribbon of green in the dry mountain landscape. The Ruidoso Downs Race Track is a prominent landmark on the north side of US 70. The rest of Ruidoso Downs is predominately single-family residential, with several higher density multi-family developments interspersed.

Residential

Approximately 37% of land in Ruidoso Downs is in residential land use, divided between rural residential, medium residential, high-density residential, and mobile home park use (see *Table 3.1*). Most residential neighborhoods in Ruidoso Downs are comprised of traditional single-family lots. Areas in the center of the City, near All-American Park, US Post Office, and City Hall, have been developed as quarter-acre lots or smaller. These lots have a variety of traditional single-family construction, mobile homes, and manufactured



homes. Larger lot rural residential areas have developed north of the Rio Ruidoso, and in the southwest area of Ruidoso Downs. According to the ACS, approximately 11% of homes are used seasonally.

There are a few high density residential developments with apartments or condominiums. There are also several mobile home parks. Mobile and manufactured homes provide an affordable source of housing for many people in the community (see Chapter 5, *Housing and Neighborhoods for more discussion on affordable housing*).

TABLE 3.1: EXISTING LAND USE		
Land Use	Acres	Share
Rural Residential	363	17.6%
Medium Density Residential	310	15.0%
High Density Residential	19	0.9%
Mobile Home Park	70	3.4%
RV Park	15	0.7%
Commercial	123	5.9%
Special Commercial (Race Track)	247	11.9%
Industrial	129	6.3%
Institutional	150	7.3%
Park	23	1.1%
Open Space	21	1.0%
Agriculture	37	1.8%
Vacant	560	27.1%
Total Area*	2,067	100.0%

*Excludes rights-of-way.

Source: Consensus Planning, September 2020.

Commercial and RV Parks

Commercial and special commercial land uses occupy approximately 19% of the City’s area. Ruidoso Downs has a variety of commercial uses, from a big box store (Walmart) to local personal services, hotels, and other retail and services. There are several recreational vehicle (RV) parks on the east end of US 70, as well as motels and mobile home parks that also accommodate recreational vehicles. Ruidoso Downs Race Track, including the grandstands, Billy the Kid Casino, parking, stables, and the horse sales barn accounts for much of commercial land use in Ruidoso Downs.

Almost all the commercial land use is developed in a strip along and with direct access to US 70. Commercial development closer to the center of Ruidoso Downs tends to be on smaller lots with older buildings. There are a mix of commercial lots and buildings on the east side of the City, including a large nursery. On the west side of the City, there are larger lots with newer buildings on both sides of US 70, including hotels, restaurants, a new car dealership, and Walmart. There are vacant lots in each area available for new commercial development (see *Existing Land Use map, page 33*).

Industrial

Industrial land use occupies approximately 6.3% of the City’s area. There are areas along US 70 and near All-American Park used for construction materials and contractors’ yards, and a small parcel on the west end of the City used for industrial purposes.



Institutional

Institutional use accounts for approximately 7.3% of the City's land area. This is a broad category and includes property owned or operated by the City, Village of Ruidoso (Visitors Center), Lincoln County, State of New Mexico, US Federal Government, and local non-profit organizations. Institutional uses also include churches, lodges, and cemeteries. Typically, this category would include public schools; however, the local school district does not have any facilities in Ruidoso Downs. City Hall is located on Downs Drive south of US 70.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space account for approximately 2.1% of Ruidoso Downs. Public parks offer active recreation locations for local residents, while open space provides the opportunity for passive recreation. Existing parks include All-American Park across US 70 from City Hall, Riverside Park on the Rio Ruidoso at Joe Welch Drive, and a small neighborhood park on Circle Drive.

Agriculture

Agriculture accounts for approximately 1.8% of Ruidoso Downs. There are several parcels near the Ruidoso Downs Race Track that support the horse industry, such as breeding and training that include large barns and paddocks. There are also a few lots on the east side of Ruidoso Downs used for small scale agriculture.

Vacant

Vacant land and buildings account for approximately 27% of the City's land. There are a limited number of vacant lots in residential subdivisions with infrastructure in place. Outside of areas with steep slopes or unstable soils, vacant property provides opportunities for new development with extension of infrastructure, including roads, water, and sewer.

3.3 EXISTING ZONING

The City of Ruidoso Downs' Zoning Ordinance is defined in Title XV, Chapter 155, of the City's codes, titled "Land Usage". State statutes (Chapter 3 Articles 19-21, NMSA 1978) require that local regulations must "be in accordance" with the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 155 includes definitions of terms, administration and permitting, annexation, development standards, home occupations, and requirements for signs. This chapter also establishes the five-member volunteer Planning Commission.

ZONING DISTRICTS

Chapter 155 Zoning defines zoning districts and provides for the Official Zoning District Map. There are 14 zoning districts defined in the Zoning Ordinance, and 11 zoning districts shown on the Official Zoning Map. Table 3.2 provides a list of the mapped zoning districts by size and relative percentage.



AR-1 Agricultural/ Residential District

The purpose of the AR-1 District is “to allow agricultural uses such as farming and ranching and single-family detached dwellings and related complementary uses. The district is intended to be rural in character.” The only livestock allowed are horses, up to two horses per acre, and nanny goats in conjunction with horses. Farms and ranches, and single-family residences, are the only permitted uses.

Conditional uses include churches and schools, utilities, public buildings, and radio towers less than 35 feet in height. The minimum lot size for farming and ranching, or residential single-family use, is two acres. A minimum lot size of one acre is set for churches, schools and public buildings. The AR-1 District covers approximately 13.3% of Ruidoso Downs.

TABLE 3.2: EXISTING ZONING		
Districts	Acres	Share
AR-1 Agricultural/Residential	274	13.3%
AR-2 Agricultural/Medium Density	38	1.9%
R-1 Single-Family Residential	777	37.6%
R-4 High-Density Residential	15	0.7%
M-1 Low Density Mobile Home	47	2.3%
C-1 Neighborhood Commercial	54	2.6%
C-2 Community Commercial	627	30.3%
C-4 Heavy Commercial	5	0.2%
I-1 Industrial	60	2.9%
PU Planned Unit Development	79	3.8%
GN General	91	4.4%
TOTAL ZONED AREA*	2,067	100.0%

*Excludes rights-of-way.
 Source: City of Ruidoso Downs.

AR-2 Agricultural/Medium Density District

The purpose of the AR-2 District is the same as the AR-1 District. Smaller minimum lot sizes than A-1 are allowed, but up to eight horses per acre are also permitted. Permitted and conditional uses are the same as in the AR-1 District. The minimum lot size for farming and ranching, or residential single-family use, is one acre, the same as for churches, schools and public buildings. The AR-2 District covers less than 2% of Ruidoso Downs.

R-1 Single-Family Residential District

The R-1 District is intended for “development, at a low density, of single-family detached dwellings”. Density should not exceed four dwellings per acre, and no livestock, including horses, are permitted. Single-family dwellings and public parks are the only permitted uses. Conditional uses include day care centers, utilities, public buildings, churches, schools, and bed and breakfast homes (with restrictions). The minimum lot size requirement is 10,000 square feet. The R-1 District has the largest area of any zoning district, covering 37.6% of Ruidoso Downs.

R-2 Two-Family Residential District

The R-2 District is intended for “development, at a low density, of single-family detached dwellings, two-family dwellings and directly complementary uses”. Density cannot exceed seven dwellings per acre, with a minimum lot size of 7,000 or 9,000 square feet. The R-2 District is not currently mapped or utilized in Ruidoso Downs.



R-3 Multiple-Family Residential District

The R-3 District is intended for “high-density housing in multiple-family structures” at gross residential densities up to 14 units per acre. Minimum lot size requirements are specified by dwelling unit, ranging from 2,000 to 7,000 square feet. The R-3 District is not currently mapped or utilized in Ruidoso Downs.

R-4 High-Density Residential District

The R-4 District is intended for “high-density housing in multiple-family structures” with gross residential densities up to 20 units per acre. Permitted uses are limited to multiple-family structures containing four or more units, and townhouse/condominium clusters of 4 units less than 170 feet in length. Conditional uses are the same as in the R-1 district, with the addition of group homes. Minimum lot area per unit ranges from 1,500 to 2,000 square feet. There are currently two sites zoned R-4: Ladera Apartments on Dipaolo Hill Drive, and Champion’s Run Condominiums north of the Bill the Kid Scenic Byway Visitor Center. Less than 1% of Ruidoso Downs is zoned for High-Density Residential.

M-1 Low-Density Mobile Home District

The M-1 District is intended “to promote affordable housing and to make economical use of the land” for mobile home subdivisions at gross densities no more than four units per acre. Permitted uses include mobile homes and single-family detached dwellings. It should be noted that Chapter 152 and Chapter 155 of the City’s codes have different definitions of the term “mobile home”. Conditional uses are the same as in the R-1 district. Minimum lot area is 10,000 square feet for mobile and single-family detached homes, while for other uses “shall be determined by buildings, required lot dimensions and required setbacks”. The M-1 District covers approximately 2.3% of Ruidoso Downs.

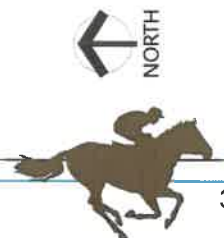
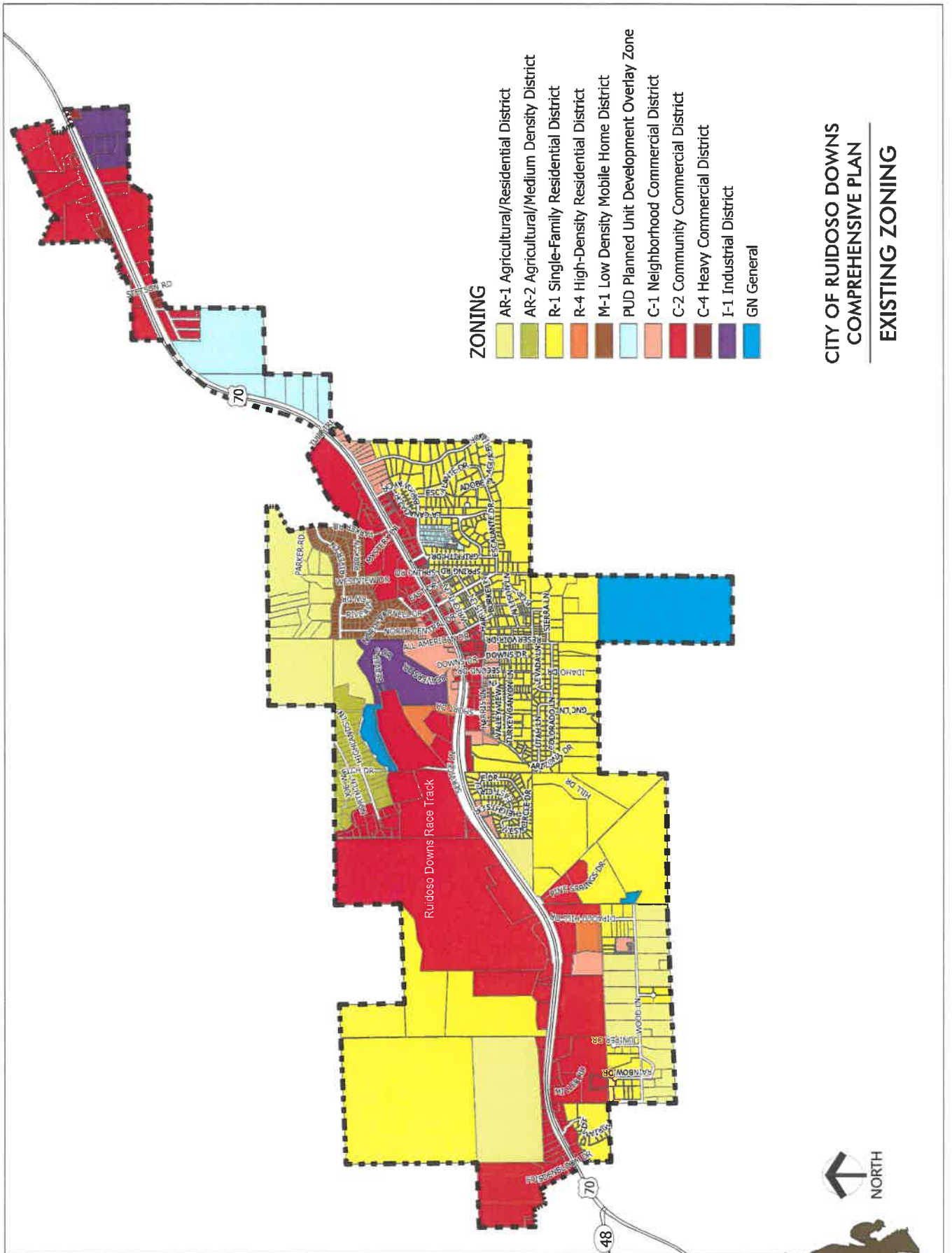
M-2 Medium-Density Mobile Home District

The M-2 District is intended for the same uses as for the M-1 District, at densities of up to ten units per acre. Minimum lot area ranges from 4,000 to 5,000 square feet. The M-2 District is not currently mapped or utilized in Ruidoso Downs.

C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District

The purpose of the C-1 District is for “local centers for convenient retail outlets... These centers are located in predominately residential areas...” Permitted uses cover a variety of neighborhood retail and services, including convenience stores and professional offices up to 2,000 square feet, as well as restaurants, and hotels and motels up to 50 units. Conditional uses include the permitted and conditional uses in R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 districts, convenience stores with up to four gas pumps, resident health care facilities, hotels and motels over 50 units, mini-warehouses, commercial stables and outfitters, and mobile home parks. The C-1 District comprises only 2.6% of Ruidoso Downs. These areas mostly provide a buffer between residential zones and the higher intensity C-2 District.





C-2 Community Commercial District

The purpose of the C-2 District is for “low-intensity retail or service outlets... on a community market scale” including all permitted uses in the C-1 District. Section 155.050 lists a number of uses under principal permitted uses subject to the provisions for conditional uses, and then lists other uses as specific conditional uses, including all uses permitted in residential districts. Approximately 30.3% of Ruidoso Downs is designated as C-2. Ruidoso Downs Race Track and Casino include several large parcels in the C-2 District. These areas are mostly located in a strip along US 70.

C-3 Midtown Commercial District

The purpose of the C-2 District is for “commercial retail and service establishments with carefully integrated multiple-family residential, entertainment and public parking facilities”. Permitted uses are the same as in the C-2 District. Certain residential and other uses are permitted as Conditional uses. The C-3 District is not currently in use.

C-4 Heavy Commercial District

The purpose of the C-2 District is for “construction-oriented businesses and service operations that are necessary to complement the economy of the City and in a manner consistent with the resort character of the City.” Permitted uses include contractors’ offices, warehousing, and a variety of other uses more typical of a light industrial designation. Conditional uses include kennels and stables, RV parks, and permitted uses in the C-2 district, among others. There are four parcels zoned C-4, all on the east end of US 70, making up 0.2% of the City’s area.

I-1 Industrial District

The I-1 District is intended for “storage, warehousing, industrial and office facilities”. Uses allowed should take place entirely within enclosed buildings or areas not visible off-site, with little off-site emissions. Permitted uses include those permitted in the C-4 district, and a variety of other retail, service and light industrial uses. Conditional uses cover a broad range, including permitted uses in the C-2 district except for any residential use. Like the C-2 District, this section should be updated to clarify these requirements. The I-1 District covers 2.9% of Ruidoso Downs.

PUD Planned Unit Development District

The PUD Planned Unit Development Overlay Zone is an overlay district, intended to permit design flexibility and creative approaches to land development. Section 155.055 also provides for special mixed use PUDs, to permit flexibility of land use. While the PUD is designated as an overlay district, on top of the base zoning district, the Official Zoning Map shows the PUD as a stand alone district, accounting for 3.8% of Ruidoso Downs.

Other Zoning Districts

Several parcels owned by the City of Ruidoso Downs, including Riverside Park, are shown as “GN” or General on the Official Zoning Map, although this



district is not listed in the Zoning Ordinance. The area mapped as GN covers 4.4% of Ruidoso Downs.

Development Standards

Chapter 155 provides development performance standards for more specific land use guidance. Provisions are included for terrain management to preserve hillsides and protect natural features; forest management; screening; landscaping; accessory buildings; fences; retaining walls; encroachments; off-street loading; nonconforming uses and structures; noise; addressing; architectural design standards, and several other requirements.

Section 155.076 sets provisions for off-street parking facilities, including detailed requirements for the minimum number of off-street parking spaces required for different uses. Many communities are moving away from overly detailed and prescriptive minimum parking requirements, to minimize impervious surfaces that lead to excess storm water runoff and to provide more flexibility for business development.

Section 155.082 requires state approval to develop lots not served by public water or sewer. Section 155.083 provides requirements for RV Parks. Section 155.086 restricts domestic water wells.

Signage

Section 155.095 *et seq.* is a part of Chapter 155 regulating signs and signage. The section regulates signs by type and sets maximum sign sizes by specific use of the property. Billboards are prohibited if not related to a businesses within five miles of the City limits. Chapter 153 Signs and Outdoor Displays also regulates signs such as billboards. While political signs are listed among signs not requiring a permit, time and size restrictions may not meet current legal standards. These sections should be reviewed and amended to be more clear and ensure conformance with the latest First Amendment case law.

3.4 OTHER LAND USE REGULATIONS

In addition to the Zoning Ordinance, Title XV, Chapters 150 – 156, address building regulations, manufactured housing regulations, signs and outdoor displays, flood hazard regulations, and subdivisions. Chapter 150 General Provisions establishes the building addressing system and responsibilities. Chapter 151 Building Regulations; Construction; adopts the State building codes by reference and provides for local building inspections. Chapter 152 Manufactured Housing Regulations defines “Mobile Home” and “Manufactured Home” and sets requirements for Manufactured Homes. Chapter 153 Signs and Outdoor Displays defines Outdoor Advertising Sign as off-premise advertising typical of a billboard, and references the Outdoor Advertising Rules and Regulations of the State Highway Commission, which would apply along US 70.



SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

Chapter 156 Subdivisions is the final section of the City's Title XV: Land Usage. The Subdivision Ordinance applies to division of land within the City and within three miles of the City limits commonly known as a 'Planning and Platting Jurisdiction' (PPJ). Platting procedures include pre-application meetings, sketch plat review by the Planning Commission, and preliminary and final plat review by the Planning Commission and City Council, with provisions for alternate summary review for certain minor subdivisions. Design standards set provisions for lots and improvements; streets and roads; drainage and storm sewers; water and sewer facilities; sidewalks, curb and gutter; utilities and easements; and requirements for dedication of land for parks and open space. These standards and procedures should be reviewed and potentially simplified in line with development best practices, legal precedent, and changing expectations of the community.

Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction

The City of Ruidoso Downs adopted a three-mile Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) for review and approval of subdivision plats. Ruidoso Downs would be permitted to exercise a one-mile Extra-Territorial Zone (ETZ) as well.

The Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan (Sites Southwest, 2007) suggested "making better use and enforcement of zoning in extraterritorial zoning districts" as a growth management solution in the Ruidoso Downs area, identified as Private Land Use Goal 1, Strategy 8. State statutes allow municipalities to regulate zoning and review plats in an extra-territorial jurisdiction extending outside the municipality's boundaries. While the City's western boundary is adjacent to the Village of Ruidoso, ETZ provisions could help reduce future land use conflicts on any gaps between the City and US Forest Service on the north and south, and extending down the Ruidoso Valley to the east.

FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

Chapter 154 Flood Hazard Regulations in Title XV was updated in 2009 (Ordinance 2009-002). Adopting standards and permits for development in mapped floodplains is a requirement via state and federal law for any community participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The original Flood Hazard Boundary Map for Ruidoso Downs was adopted on May 31, 1974, and the City entered the NFIP on July 5, 1982. The current Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) was effective November 5, 2014. The Ordinance provides the basis for regulating special flood hazard areas, designates the Planning Officer as the Floodplain Administrator, and establishes permits and standards for development in the designated floodplain.

The definition of "development" in this chapter is slightly different than the definition in the Zoning Ordinance, to maintain accordance with FEMA requirements. FEMA and the state regularly update rules, regulations, and guidance for development in flood hazard areas. FEMA also encourages



communities to adopt higher standards than the NFIP minimum requirements (such as higher freeboards), rigorously enforce the ordinance, and protect open space along floodplain areas (see Chapter 9, Hazard Mitigation, for a more detailed discussion of flood hazards).

NUISANCE ORDINANCE

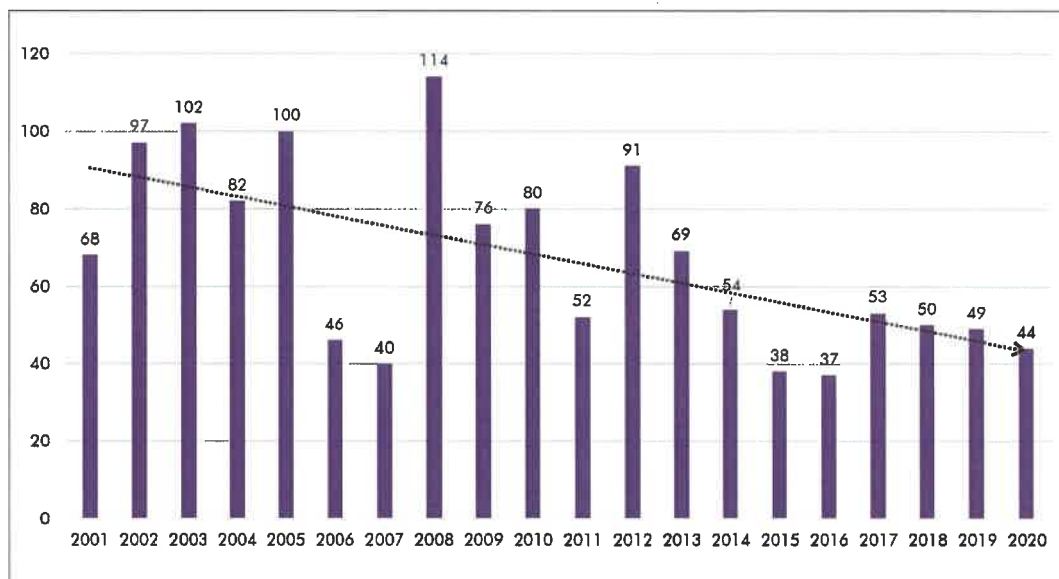
Chapter 92 General Nuisances regulates public nuisances, such as weeds, rubbish, outdoor storage, non-operating vehicles, and fences in disrepair. This chapter also addresses “ruined, damaged or dilapidated” buildings or structures, with provisions for a Code Enforcement Officer or a municipal police officer to issue a notice to the owner of record, and if not remediated, file a complaint with the Municipal Court. The Department of Public Safety Director or Planning Director may petition for injunction against a nuisance.

BUILDING PERMITS

The Planning Services Department issues building permits in the City of Ruidoso Downs. There were 49 permits approved in 2019 and 44 in 2020. Over the last 20 years, the number of permits has varied with regional and national building trends, but overall has been on a downward trend (see Figure 3.1).

In 2020, the Planning Services Department issued one permit for a new dwelling, 36 residential additions/alterations, four commercial additions/alterations, and four demolition permits. Total valuation of all building permits in 2020 amounted to over \$400,000.

FIGURE 3.1 CITY OF RUIDOSO DOWNS BUILDING PERMITS



Source: City of Ruidoso Downs Planning Services Department.



3.5 SHORT TERM RENTALS

Short term rental of individual homes and condominiums has become an increasingly popular option for tourist lodging. At the same time, the desire to regulate short term rentals has been a concern for many communities in New Mexico and throughout the country. Short term rental of a dwelling unit for 29 or less consecutive days is considered a commercial use of property. Like hotels, short term rentals are subject to local lodgers tax where in effect, as well as New Mexico Gross Receipts Tax (GRT).

Short term rentals provide a desirable option for seasonal visitors. However, they can also impact residential neighborhoods with noise and traffic, divert demand from existing hotels and motels, and displace long-term rental of a limited number of existing housing units.

According to the ACS, there are approximately 147 seasonal or occasional use housing units in Ruidoso Downs. As of Spring 2021, there were approximately 10 short-term rentals listed in Ruidoso Downs on popular websites, such as AirBnB and VRBO, and hundreds of listings in Lincoln County. These included units at Champion's Run Condominiums and single-family homes in different zoning districts throughout the community.

Regulating Short Term Rentals

There may be interest in regulating short term rentals in Ruidoso Downs. However, short term rentals are not currently defined in Section 155.006 of the City of Ruidoso Zoning Ordinance. This use fits the current definition of "hotel and motel" as a building in which lodging is provided but hotels are not a permitted use in the residential zone districts where most short term rentals are located.

A number of New Mexico communities have adopted specific short term rental regulations for the purpose of protecting residential neighborhoods, ensuring accountability from the operator, collection of lodgers' taxes, and for some communities, to address the concern to maintain affordable housing in the community. Some examples from New Mexico communities follow below:

- ◀ The Town of Taos adopted an annual short term rental license and overlay zone with requirements for a maximum number of occupants, on-site parking, noise restrictions, storage of trash, and complaint resolution procedures. There is also a cap on the total number of licenses available.
- ◀ The Village of Ruidoso adopted a short term rental ordinance and overlay zone with requirements for an annual permit, maximum occupancy based on building codes, and other performance standards including a local contact person available on call to resolve concerns or complaints.
- ◀ Larger cities, such as Albuquerque and Santa Fe, have also adopted short term rental regulations. Albuquerque's ordinance went into effect in 2021 and requires registration of short term rentals, a business license,



collection and remittance of lodgers' taxes, compliance with other city ordinances, limitation of overnight occupancy to two adults per bedroom, requirement that gatherings at the short term rental be dispersed by 10:00 p.m., etc.

3.6 ANNEXATION

The City of Ruidoso Downs has historically grown in a linear development pattern along US 70 and the Rio Ruidoso. In 2003, the City annexed approximately 590 acres of land on its east end, including the Agua Fria subdivision, commercial highway frontage, and agricultural properties. As noted in Section 8.2: Water, the City anticipates annexing additional residential property on the east end, south of US 70, after municipal water service is extended to the area.

Chapter 155 Zoning includes a policy on annexation of land stating that it "shall not impose an economic burden on the City or result in an indirect subsidy of services by the City." Newly annexed areas are zoned R-1 unless a different zoning designation is requested with the annexation petition.

ANNEXATION LEGISLATION

Municipalities in the State of New Mexico are granted the authority to annex territory by Section 3, Article 7 of the New Mexico State statutes. There are three methods for a city to include adjacent unincorporated land. Annexation can be used as a growth management tool to ensure that land use and development standards in adjoining areas are consistent with land use within the municipality, as well as with the goals and objectives of the community as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Areas to be considered for annexation must be contiguous with the municipal boundary and the municipality must be able to demonstrate the ability to provide services.

Each of the following three methods is based on specific goals and illustrates different degrees of legislative delegation of power to municipalities:

- ◀ Arbitration Method (Sections 3-7-5 through 3-7-10 NMSA 1978): This method allows a municipality to annex contiguous territory if the municipality can declare that the benefits of annexation can be made within a reasonable time frame to the desired territory.
- ◀ Municipal Boundary Commission Method (Sections 3-7-11 through 3-7-16 NMSA 1978): This method establishes an independent commission to determine annexation of a territory to the municipality. The Municipal Boundary Commission will meet whenever a municipality petitions to annex a territory or if a majority of the landowners of a territory petition the Commission to annex the territory into the municipality.
- ◀ Petition Method (Section 3-7-17, NMSA 1978): This method requires a petition signed by the majority of property owners in a contiguous territory supporting annexation into a municipality.



3.7 LAND USE and ZONING ISSUES

CREATING A SENSE OF IDENTITY

Many communities decide to rebrand themselves as they grow and mature, trying to stake out an individual identity that will build upon and market the community's quality of life and enhance the appeal to visitors. The City of Ruidoso Downs is challenged by being directly identified with its namesake, the Ruidoso Downs Race Track, as well as sharing the name with its neighboring municipality, the Village of Ruidoso. Creating a coordinated program of logo design, signage, and wayfinding is a good way of building on the community's unique identity and creating a lasting positive impression on visitors.

Corridor and Gateways

US 70 is the major commercial corridor at the center of Ruidoso Downs. Typically, a City would have gateway signs at the edges of the community to mark the arrival for visitors and residents. Gateway signs establish the first impression of the community and can set an expectation for the community's look and feel. There is an opportunity for large gateway signs to be installed at the entries to Ruidoso Downs that incorporate the City's brand (logo).

Many communities are investing in street improvements that include sidewalks, landscape strips, bike lanes, and medians to slow traffic, increase safety, and enhance the experience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. The City of Ruidoso Downs can be proactive by working with NMDOT on future improvements to US 70 within the municipal boundary and with local property owners to make improvements their properties along the corridor.

Town Center

Ruidoso Downs does not have a traditional downtown area where people can gather, work, or shop. Drivers passing through Ruidoso Downs on US 70 have no sense for where the community core is located. Buildings sit far back from the primary commercial corridor of US 70 behind large parking lots, which discourages pedestrian activity. This form of development encourages customers to get in their cars and enter and exit each business along the busy 5-lane highway.

Ruidoso Downs City Hall, Fire Department, US Post Office, and All-American Park are clustered together in a node at the intersection of US 70 and Downs Drive. The City has discussed consolidating public offices in the area of the Hubbard Museum of the American West and the Billy the Kid Scenic Byway Visitors Center. These public uses could form the core of a town center and anchor mixed-use development with retail businesses and higher density residential. A town center with public and private anchors would provide an excellent vehicle for encouraging new investment in the community.

Most participants in the Community Survey agreed or strongly agreed that the City should encourage mixed-use development, with residential and non-residential uses in the same building or on the same site. The C-3 Midtown



Commercial District zoning district would be appropriate for this type of redevelopment effort.

ZONING CONCERNS

Zoning standards and district maps should be regularly reviewed and updated to keep the Zoning Ordinance current. For example, minimum parking and access requirements may not have kept pace with recent changes in retail and office development. Best practices in development, legal precedent, and community expectations are constantly changing and evolving. Streamlining zoning requirements not only can encourage property owners to redevelop property, but eases regulatory review for City staff, Planning Commission members, and the City Council.

Zoning Districts and Zoning Map

Fourteen zoning districts may be more than the City of Ruidoso Downs needs or can effectively administer. As noted previously, out of the fourteen zoning districts, only eleven districts are mapped on the Official Zoning Map. The “GN” District shown on the Official Zoning Map is not described in the current Zoning Ordinance, but is designated for some parks and utilities.

Zoning districts should be consolidated and simplified to be more clear and concise:

- ◀ **Residential:** There are currently four residential districts, with only two in use. The uses and development standards of the R-2 Two-Family (duplex) zone and R-3 Multiple-Family zone could be consolidated into the other zones.
- ◀ **Commercial:** There are currently four commercial districts, with three in use. The C-3 Midtown Commercial District uses and standards could be consolidated into the other zones.

Mobile and Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes are an important source of affordable housing. A “Manufactured Home” is a residential dwelling built to the HUD Code since 1976, but is often still referred to as a “Mobile Home”. Mobile homes are listed as a permitted use in the M-1 and M-2 Districts. Mobile home parks are listed as a conditional use in the C-1 and C-2 Districts. It appears that manufactured homes meeting the HUD Code are intended to be considered as single-family dwellings when placed on a permanent foundation; however, this should be made more clear in the Zoning Ordinance. The current definition of manufactured home contained in the Zoning Ordinance exceeds the HUD minimum of 400 square feet in area and should be reviewed, as smaller units have become more common as an affordable housing option.

Sign Regulations

Sign regulations are an increasing source of litigation since the US Supreme Court’s Reed vs. Town of Gilbert, Arizona (2015) landmark decision. The Court ruled that it should not be necessary to read a sign’s text to determine if the sign conforms to zoning regulations. Generally, classification of permanent or



temporary signs by types such as provided by Section 155.105 of the Zoning Ordinance is permissible; however, provisions for civic signs, political signs, and other temporary signs should be reviewed and updated.

Cell Towers

Cellular communications towers are not clearly defined in the zoning ordinance. Generally, “radio, television or microwave transmitting towers, not to exceed 35 feet in height,” are listed as a Conditional use in the AR-1 and AR-2 Districts. Transmitting towers (without a specific height limitation) are listed as Conditional uses in the C-3 and C-4 Districts. Television and radio towers are permitted uses in the I-1 District. Increasingly, households and businesses are relying on cellular data or fixed wireless facilities for broadband internet, in addition to or instead of traditional wireline service. Wireless communication facilities standards should be reviewed regularly for conformance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations and recent case law.

Short Term Rentals

The City of Ruidoso Downs should consider adopting regulations to specifically allow short term rental of housing units and provide performance standards that are fair to property owners and existing residential neighbors. Short term rentals can affect affordability as the limited number of housing units in the community are taken off the market for the residents who live and work in Ruidoso Downs. To reduce impacts on staff workload, there are third-party service providers who offer rental registration and complaint management services to assist with implementing short-term rental regulations.

Code Enforcement

While most buildings in Ruidoso Downs have been built relatively recently, there are aging structures that are in obvious need of maintenance and repair. There are also properties where discarded materials or junk has accumulated over time, which become a nuisance to adjacent properties and cause public safety concerns.

The Code Compliance Department has worked hard to address these issues. In 2020, the Department reported removing 135 bags of trash and dozens of larger items, including appliances and furniture. Approximately 90% of respondents to the Community Survey agreed or strongly agreed that the visual appearance of the City should be improved.

3.8 FUTURE LAND USE SCENARIO

The Future Land Use Scenario provides a graphic representation of how the community would like to see growth and development occur in Ruidoso Downs over the next 20 years. Development of the Scenario was based on existing conditions, community aspirations, and best planning practices. The Future Land Use Scenario combines the preferred features of alternative land use scenarios as identified during the public input process and discussions with Ruidoso Downs staff and elected officials.



Land use categories and features of the Future Land Use Scenario are intended to provide guidance on future decisions regarding land use and zoning. Appropriate land uses are identified on underdeveloped and vacant property. Some areas of the community will remain stable over time while others are expected to develop or redevelop in response to changing conditions and market demand. The Future Land Use Scenario is provided on pages 49-50 and described below.

LAND USE

Rural Residential (Light Yellow)

Rural Residential use is intended for home sites on larger lots. These areas are typically on the edge of the City closer to mountainous forest terrain where building sites may be more constrained and infrastructure is more challenging to construct. The Future Land Use Scenario increases this land use from 17.6% to 36.0% of land within Ruidoso Downs.

Medium Density Residential (Dark Yellow)

Medium Density Residential use (typical single-family lots) is found throughout Ruidoso Downs. There are vacant lots with infrastructure in place that are available for new single-family homes. An area suitable for new medium-density residential development is located south of US 70, between Pine Springs Drive and Hill Drive. The existing subdivision on Stetson Road, planned for annexation on the east side of the City, accounts for much of the additional future residential area. The Future Land Use Scenario shows this land use expanding from 15.0% to 22.5% of the City's area.

Land Use	Existing		Future	
	Acres	Share	Acres	Share
Rural Residential	363	17.6%	813	36.0%
Medium-Density Residential	310	15.0%	508	22.5%
High-Density Residential	19	0.9%	31	1.4%
Mobile Home Park	70	3.4%	70	3.1%
RV Park	15	0.7%	22	1.0%
Commercial	123	5.9%	226	10.0%
Special Commercial (Race Track)	247	11.9%	247	10.9%
Industrial	129	6.3%	110	4.8%
Institutional	150	7.3%	70	3.1%
Park	23	1.1%	27	1.2%
Open Space	21	1.0%	101	4.5%
Agriculture	37	1.8%	35	1.5%
Vacant	560	27.1%	-	-
TOTAL AREA*	2,067	100.0%	2,260	100.0%

*Excludes rights-of-way.

High-Density Residential (Orange)

High-density residential includes duplexes, townhouses, condominiums,



and apartments. Additional area is provided for incremental growth near existing high-density residential development and on larger vacant lots with infrastructure in place for infill development. The area available for high-density residential development increases slightly from 0.9% to 1.4% of the Future Land Use Scenario. While this is a small area, community members indicated a need for a greater mix of housing options, including affordable housing and apartments.

Mobile Home Park (Brown)

Mobile home park use remains unchanged under the Future Land Use Scenario. Mobile home parks provide an important affordable housing option. Owners of mobile homes and manufactured homes can find it difficult to move existing units, so it is important to protect these areas and provide incentives for property owners to maintain and improve existing mobile home parks. The Mobile Home Park category encompasses 3.1% of the City land area.

RV Park (Dark Brown)

RV parks are an important amenity for tourists and visitors to Ruidoso Downs. In addition to existing locations at the east side of the City, the Future Land Use Scenario provides an area for a new RV Park along the Rio Ruidoso near Ruidoso Downs Race Track. RV Park use is 1.0% of the City land area.

Commercial (Red)

Commercial land use changes constantly in response to market trends and conditions, and evolution of consumer expectations. Mostly located on or near US 70, a large portion of the expanded commercial area would be infill development on currently vacant lots along the highway. There are also opportunities to redevelop underutilized property along the US 70 corridor that already has infrastructure available, including roads, water, and sewer service. Currently, only 6% of the City's land area is Commercial; the Future Land Use Scenario expands it to 10%.

Special Commercial (Pink)

The Special Commercial category encompasses the Ruidoso Downs Race Track and recognizes the important role this facility plays. These parcels cover approximately 11% of the City's land area.

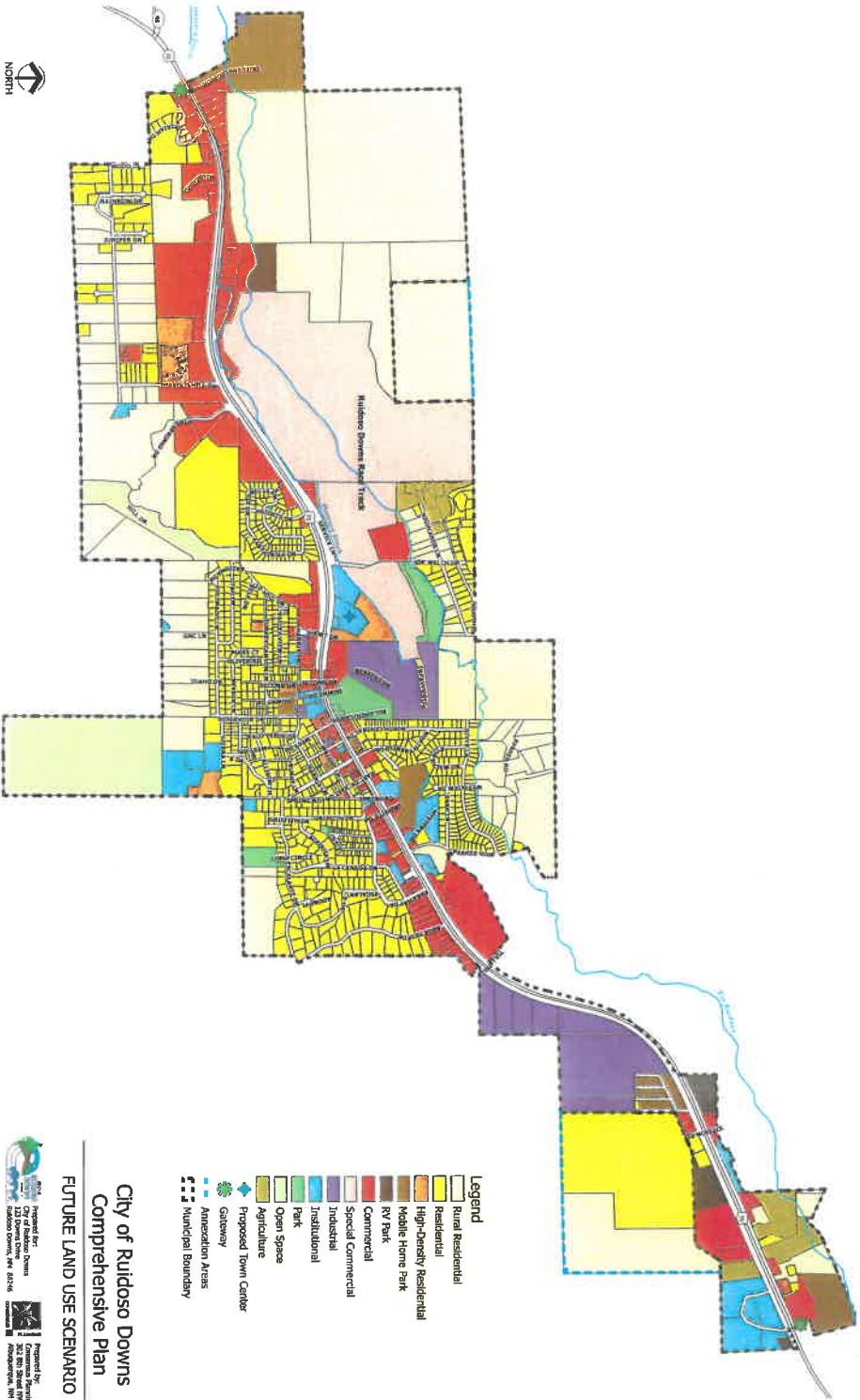
Industrial (Purple)

The Future Land Use Scenario maintains most of the current industrial land use areas along US 70. With mitigation of environmental impacts, some light industrial uses may be appropriate in commercial areas. Industrial land use covers approximately 5% of the City's land area.

Institutional (Blue)

Institutional use tends to remain stable over time. Public input supported moving a City-owned area on the south side of Ruidoso Downs from this category to Open Space with public access. With this change of the Future Land Use Scenario, Institutional land use covers approximately 3% of the City's land area.





**City of Ruidoso Downs
Comprehensive Plan
FUTURE LAND USE SCENARIO**

Prepared for:
City of Ruidoso Downs
Ruidoso Downs, NM 87146

Prepared by:
Sustainable Planning, Inc.
10000 1st Street, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Park (Dark Green)

Park use is currently limited to two areas that are both north of US 70, comprising 1% of the City's land area. The Future Land Use Scenario identifies a new, approximately 4-acre area on the south side of US 70 as park land, which slightly increases this use to 1.2%.

Open Space (Light Green)

Open space can serve as a buffer between more active uses as well function as an amenity for passive recreation. Residents suggested designating an 80-acre, City-owned parcel south of the municipal water facilities as open space, which increases this land use from 1.0% to 4.5% of the City's land area.

Agriculture (Olive)

Currently, agriculture use is limited to areas of the City with acreage available to pasture horses and to raise crops. The Ruidoso Downs Race Track and local interest in equestrian activities is a unique aspect of the community. Agriculture areas are clustered near the Race Track and on the east side of the City near the Rio Ruidoso. With this area expected to remain mostly stable on the Future Land Use Scenario, Agriculture use would be 1.5% of the City's land area.

TOWN CENTER

The Future Land Use Scenario identifies the general location for a Town Center near the Hubbard Museum of the American West and Billy the Kid Visitors Center. The Town Center would provide a visible focus area along US 70, and include a new City Hall, commercial development, and a public gathering space for community events.

COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

There are community gateways identified on US 70 at the east and west ends of Ruidoso Downs. The gateways are intended to provide a distinct location to welcome residents and visitors to the City with entry monuments and signage. The gateways can also function to anchor future streetscape improvements on this major commercial corridor.

ANNEXATION AREAS

Given the existing constraints of US Forest Service lands to the north and south and the Village of Ruidoso to the west of the City, the Future Land Use Scenario includes only two annexation areas. This includes an area of approximately 134 acres on Stetson Road where the City is planning to extend water lines and an area north of Ruidoso Downs Race Track that is adjacent to the City on three sides. The two annexation areas would be annexed once a cost-benefit analysis was completed and in conjunction with consent of the property owners.



3.9 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

LAND USE GOAL 1

Create a sense of community character and identity unique to Ruidoso Downs.

Objectives

- ◀ *To encourage community building and pride amongst the residents of Ruidoso Downs.*
- ◀ *To establish a sense of arrival at the east and west gateways on US 70.*
- ◀ *To foster the development of a community focus area within Ruidoso Downs.*

Land Use Strategy 1.1

Undertake a branding initiative that draws upon and promotes the unique character of Ruidoso Downs and results in unified message for communications, marketing, and signage.

Land Use Strategy 1.2

Design, construct, and install gateway signage at the east and west entries to Ruidoso Downs along US 70, as identified on the Future Land Use Scenario. Utilize the new brand for Ruidoso Downs in the design of the gateways.

Land Use Strategy 1.3

Secure funding for the master plan and phased construction of a new town center adjacent to the Hubbard Museum of the American West. The master plan should include space programming, allocation and appropriate mix of uses, parking needs, phasing, cost estimating, and potential funding sources.

LAND USE GOAL 2

Provide for the growth of Ruidoso Downs through a balance of infill development and annexation of areas that can be efficiently served by municipal services.

Objectives

- ◀ *To increase the supply of properties that are available for new residential and commercial development.*
- ◀ *To increase the utilization and productive use of existing vacant land.*
- ◀ *To encourage development that enhances the quality of life for residents.*
- ◀ *To determine the feasibility of annexing land adjacent to the City of Ruidoso Downs.*

Land Use Strategy 2.1

Create an inventory of existing vacant properties that are appropriate for infill residential or commercial development. Promote the inventory on the City's website to help generate interest from local and regional developers.



Land Use Strategy 2.2

Create incentives for the redevelopment of commercial properties along the US 70 corridor. This may include, but not be limited to, reductions or waivers in utility extensions, shared parking agreements, and expedited approval processes.

Land Use Strategy 2.3

Establish an evaluation process for future annexation areas (as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario) that considers the capacity, cost, and benefit of providing infrastructure and public services, in concurrence with property owners.

LAND USE GOAL 3

Improve the appearance of the built environment along commercial corridors and in residential neighborhoods.

Objectives

- ◀ *To foster the productive reuse and redevelopment of deteriorated residential and commercial structures and properties.*
- ◀ *To ensure clear and consistent land use regulations that meet the needs of the community.*
- ◀ *To provide adequate enforcement of land use regulations.*

Land Use Strategy 3.1

Review and update the existing Zoning Ordinance with amendments that include, but are not limited to:

- ◀ Consolidation or removal of unused or redundant zone districts;
- ◀ Clarification of the definition of “Mobile Home” and “Manufactured Home” to be in conformance with HUD standards;
- ◀ Review and update sign regulations to ensure content-neutral provisions for permanent and temporary commercial signage, and better integrate on-site and off-site sign provisions;
- ◀ Provide specific conditional use provisions for wireless communication facilities (cell towers and antennas) to ensure conformance with FCC regulations;
- ◀ Create regulations for short term rentals and provide standards to minimize impacts on existing neighborhoods. This may include, but not be limited to, registration, insurance requirements, maximum occupancy standards, short term rental cap, a good neighbor agreement, etc.; and
- ◀ Low Impact Development standards for on-site stormwater retention and water harvesting.

Land Use Strategy 3.2

Submit grant applications for education and promotion, equipment purchase, youth employment, and cleanup and solid waste diversion projects to the New Mexico Tourism Department’s Clean and Beautiful Program.



Land Use Strategy 3.3

Sponsor community clean-up events and beautification initiatives. Involve Ruidoso Downs youth groups in these events.

Land Use Strategy 3.4

Work with the City Council to establish a “House/Yard of the Month” program that recognizes the efforts by property owners to improve the appearance of their properties.

Land Use Strategy 3.5

Provide adequate staffing levels for code enforcement and remediation of nuisance properties, and GIS mapping services.



CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a process to improve the quality of life for local residents by encouraging new business start-ups, existing business retention and expansion, and business relocation. Small businesses create most of the new jobs and can give a community a sustainable competitive advantage that is responsive to economic trends. Ruidoso Downs provides goods and services to its community members, residents of the Rio Ruidoso Valley, and tourists coming to Lincoln County for rest, relaxation, and outdoor recreation.

A more diversified economic base helps keep the local economy more resilient to the expansions and contractions of the regional and national economy. Primary sector industries bring new income into the community by growing products, making products, or providing services that are sold elsewhere. This chapter presents a description of the local business climate and economic trends, including key business sectors and opportunities for growth, and challenges facing the Ruidoso Downs economy.



Commercial development on US 70.

4.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE

Ruidoso Downs' economic base began with providing goods and services to area farmers and ranchers, and the timber industry. After World War II, the Ruidoso Downs Race Track and other attractions drew travelers from across the country. Today, the community has a growing outdoor recreation and tourism industry, with new opportunities emerging across the region.

EMPLOYMENT

The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that the employed labor force in Ruidoso Downs decreased by 25% from 2010 to 2019 (see Table 4.1). The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services sector was the largest type of employment with 291 jobs in 2019, 27.1% of the total employment in Ruidoso Downs.



Employment in Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services grew by over 200% between 2010 and 2019, from 63 to 191 jobs. In several categories, the ACS survey samples did not include representative employment in Ruidoso Downs and reported no jobs in those industries.

Ruidoso Downs has 13.1% of the population in Lincoln County and 14.3% of the labor force. Compared to other cities of similar size in New Mexico, Ruidoso Downs has more employment in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Construction sectors; and less employment in the Public Administration; Educational Services; and Health Care sectors.

TABLE 4.1: RUIDOSO DOWNS EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

	2010	2019	Change*
Employed Civilian Labor Force	1,437	1,074	-25%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	6.0%	3.3%	-59%
Construction	15.5%	14.9%	-28%
Wholesale Trade	1.8%	0%	n/a
Retail Trade	18.5%	12.4%	-50%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	3.5%	6.3%	36%
Information	1.9%	0%	n/a
Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7.8%	5.6%	-46%
Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services	4.4%	17.8%	203%
Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance	11.3%	12.7%	-16%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services	19.5%	27.1%	4%
Other Services, except Public Administration	6.3%	0%	n/a
Public Administration	3.5%	0%	n/a

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2015-2019. *Change calculated based on raw data.

Lincoln County

Ruidoso Downs is part of a regional economy. According to the ACS, 71% of the Ruidoso Downs workforce commutes to work outside the City. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) provides more detailed employment data, available at the county level, with more specific categories than the ACS.

Total employment in Lincoln County, as measured by the BEA, contracted 0.1% from 2010 to 2019. Accommodation and Food Services is the largest employer in Lincoln County with 1,575 jobs in 2019, an increase of 16.2% from 2010 (see Table 4.2). Retail Trade is the second largest industry with 1,564 jobs, down 17.2% from 2010. Government rounds out the top three industries with 1,260 jobs, down 5.8%. In several categories, the BEA does not disclose employment data where there are only a small number of firms.

The US Census Bureau also publishes the annual County Business Patterns report. Comparing statistics for Lincoln County and the State of New Mexico,



the County had a Location Quotient of 4.47 for employment in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry in the most recent report. This indicates that there were more than four times as many local jobs in this industry as compared to other counties in New Mexico.

TABLE 4.2: LINCOLN COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Industry	2010	2019	Change
Total Employment	10,807	10,792	-0.1%
Farm Employment	357	382	7.0%
Forestry and Fishing	154	(D)	n/a
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction	300	(D)	n/a
Utilities	84	80	-4.8%
Construction	773	706	-8.7%
Manufacturing	151	238	57.6%
Wholesale Trade	81	65	-19.8%
Retail Trade	1,889	1,564	-17.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	168	102	-39.3%
Information	114	107	-6.1%
Finance and Insurance	401	382	-4.7%
Real Estate	705	741	5.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	535	(D)	n/a
Management	42	(D)	n/a
Administrative and Support	403	477	18.4%
Educational Services	94	78	-17.0%
Health Care	742	746	0.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	831	778	-6.4%
Accommodation and Food Service	1,355	1,575	16.2%
Other Services	621	690	11.1%
Government	1,337	1,260	-5.8%

(D) Not Disclosed, n/a-Not Available. Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.



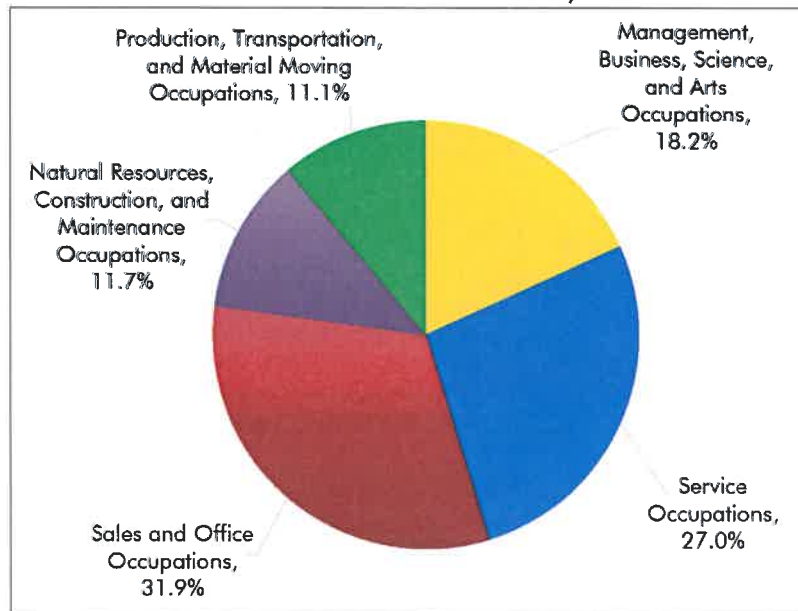
Santa Fe Furniture and Gifts on US 70.



OCCUPATIONS

While industry is the type of activity at a person’s place of work, occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living. As reported by the ACS, the Sales and Office occupations, with 32% of all jobs for Ruidoso Downs residents, account for the largest group of occupations. The Services occupations, with 27% of jobs, is the second largest group. Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations grew by 92% from 2010 to 2019, while the Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance occupations contracted the most, with a 54% decline.

FIGURE 4.1 RUIDOSO DOWNS OCCUPATIONS, 2019



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

Approximately 58% of all workers are private wage and salary employees, and 19% are government employees. Almost 23% of people employed in Ruidoso Downs are self-employed, compared to 17% in Lincoln County, and 6.4% in New Mexico overall, indicating local entrepreneurial spirit.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

The Walmart Supercenter located on US 70 is the largest single employer in Ruidoso Downs and Lincoln County, according to the New Mexico Partnership. Ruidoso Downs Race Track and Casino is an important seasonal and year-round employer. The following are the major employers in Ruidoso Downs and Lincoln County:

- ◀ Walmart (Retail)
- ◀ Lincoln County Medical Center (Medical)
- ◀ State of New Mexico (Government)
- ◀ Village of Ruidoso (Government)
- ◀ Ruidoso Downs Race Track (Recreation)
- ◀ Lincoln County (Government)
- ◀ US Government (Government)
- ◀ City of Ruidoso Downs (Government)



LABOR FORCE and UNEMPLOYMENT

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) compiles comprehensive labor force data at the county and state levels. According to the BLS, Lincoln County's labor force contracted by 4.3% between 2010 and 2019. All of the counties adjacent to Lincoln County also experienced a declining labor force at the same time. New Mexico's labor force rose by 2.0%.

Lincoln County's Average Annual Unemployment Rate in 2019 was 4.6%, compared to 4.9% for New Mexico. The unemployment rate in Lincoln County and adjacent counties in the area decreased between 2010 and 2019.

County	2010	2019	Change
LINCOLN COUNTY	9,386	8,984	-4.3%
Chaves County	28,042	27,165	-3.1%
Otero County	24,984	24,798	-0.7%
Socorro County	6,876	6,446	-6.3%
Torrance County	6,028	5,699	-5.5%
New Mexico	936,088	954,596	2.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

County	2010	2019
LINCOLN COUNTY	7.5	4.6
Chaves County	7.5	4.9
Otero County	7.3	4.9
Socorro County	7.8	5.8
Torrance County	11.6	6.8
New Mexico	8.1	4.9

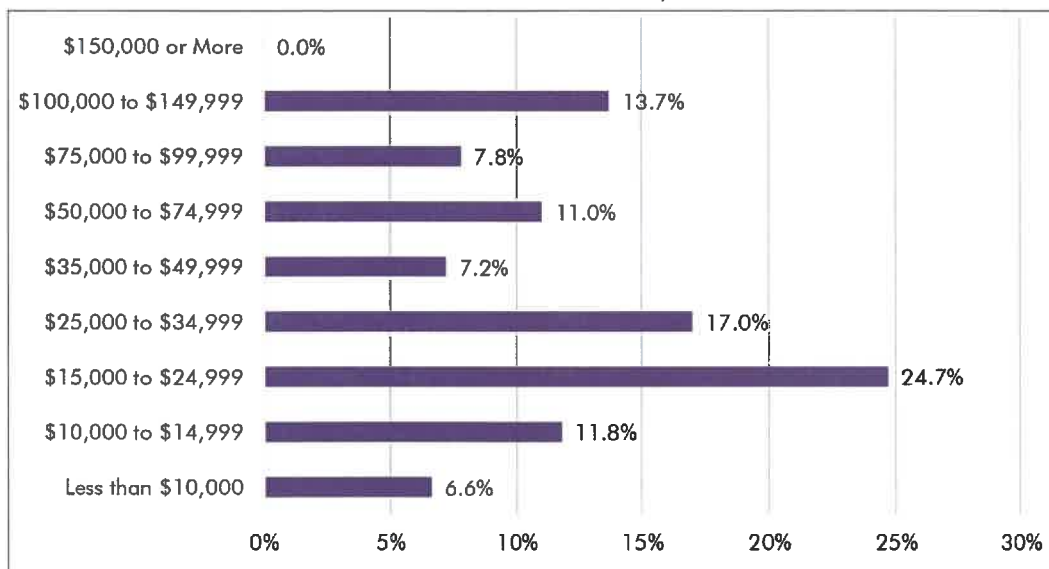
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

INCOME

Median Household Income

The median household income in Ruidoso Downs fell between 2010 and 2019, from \$32,781 to \$28,646, a 13% decrease. In contrast, the median household income increased from \$43,750 to \$46,216 in Lincoln County, for 6% growth from 2010 to 2019. The median household income increased in New Mexico statewide, from \$43,820 to \$49,754, a 14% improvement during the same time period.

FIGURE 4.2 RUIDOSO DOWNS HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2019



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

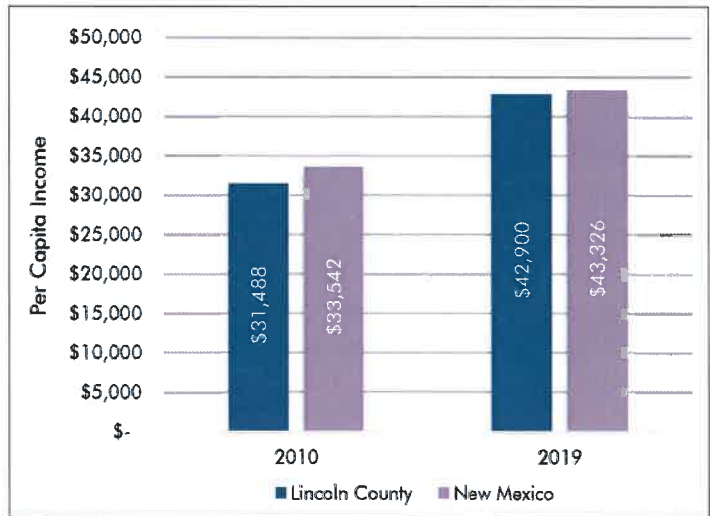


Households earning \$15,000 to \$24,999 is the largest cohort in Ruidoso Downs (see Figure 4.2). However, Ruidoso Downs experienced the largest growth in households earning \$100,000 to \$149,000.

Personal Income

Total personal income in Lincoln County grew from \$644,032,000 in 2010 to \$839,647,000 in 2019. In Lincoln County, only 42% of personal income is from earnings, compared to 57% in New Mexico overall. Dividends, interest and rent contribute 26% of personal income; the remaining 30% is in transfer payments.

FIGURE 4.3 PER CAPITA INCOME



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

In 2019, per capita income was \$42,900 in Lincoln County, according to the US BEA. In comparison, per capita income was \$43,326 in the state of New Mexico (see Figure 4.3). Per capita income rose by 39% in Lincoln County from 2010 to 2019, above the New Mexico average increase of 36%.

TABLE 4.5: AVERAGE WAGES, 2019		
	Weekly	Annual
LINCOLN COUNTY	\$633	\$32,928
Chaves County	\$721	\$37,480
Otero County	\$753	\$39,178
Socorro County	\$746	\$38,806
Torrance County	\$690	\$35,864
New Mexico	\$905	\$47,043

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Weekly and Annual Wages

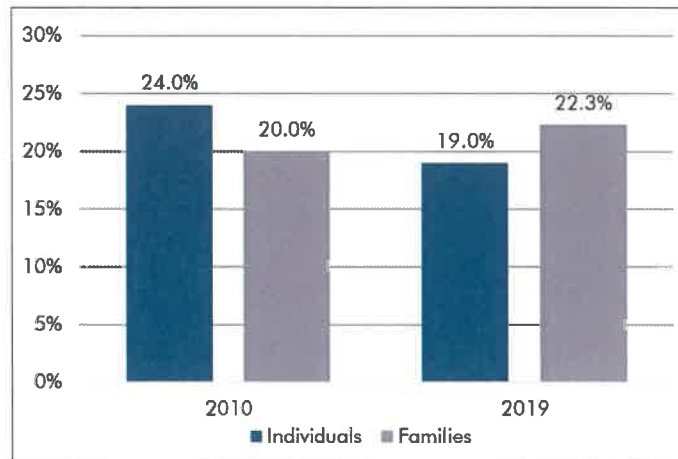
In 2019, the Average Weekly Wage (\$633) and Annual Average Wages (\$32,928) in Lincoln County were substantially lower than in New Mexico overall (\$905 and \$47,043), as reported by the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Adjacent counties tend to offer higher wages. Low average wages indicate a need to diversify local employment opportunities with higher-paying jobs.



POVERTY

The share of families in Ruidoso Downs experiencing poverty increased from 20% to 22% from 2010 to 2019. The share of individuals in poverty decreased from 24% to 19%. In contrast, New Mexico poverty rates were 19% for individuals and 15% for families.

FIGURE 4.4 POVERTY LEVEL



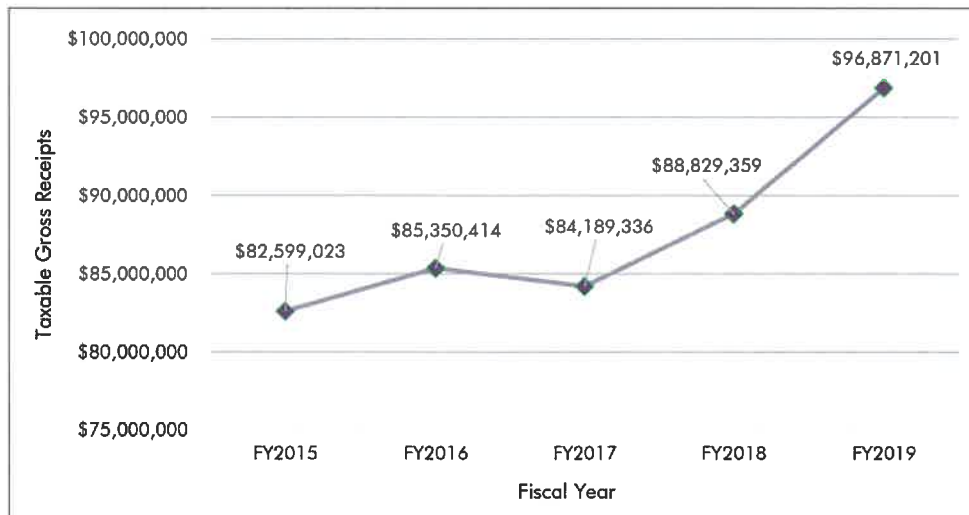
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2015-2019.

GROSS RECEIPTS and LODGERS TAX

New Mexico's gross receipts tax (GRT) is similar to a sales tax but applied broadly on sources of commercial revenue at a state-wide rate. New Mexico cities and counties also have the opportunity to assess local option taxes.

Taxable Gross Receipts - all revenue upon which the gross receipts tax is assessed - have increased in the City of Ruidoso Downs since FY2015. Receipts increased slightly in FY2018, and fell again in FY2019 (see Figure 4.5). Grocery stores (NAICS 4451) generated the largest amount of gross receipts in Ruidoso Downs, followed by Racetracks (NAICS 711212) and Miscellaneous Store Retailers (NAICS 453).

FIGURE 4.5 RUIDOSO DOWNS TAXABLE GROSS RECEIPTS



Source: New Mexico Taxation & Revenue Department, Tax Summary Tables.

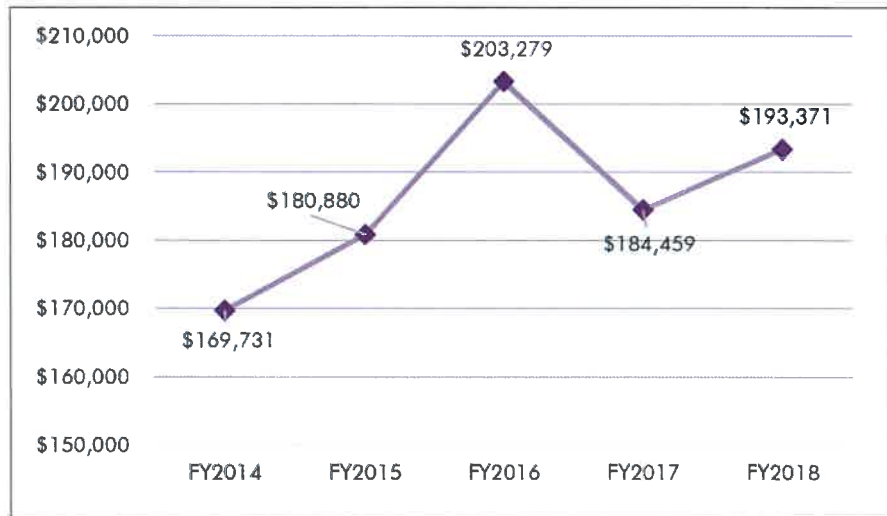
The gross receipts tax rate in the City of Ruidoso Downs is currently 7.4375%. Gross receipts tax revenue for the Ruidoso Downs totaled \$7,204,272 in FY2019.

Lodgers' tax is available as a local option to assess on commercial lodging accommodations, providing revenue for tourism-related activities. The City



of Ruidoso Downs assesses a 5% lodgers' tax. Total lodgers' tax revenue increased from FY2014 to FY2016, decreased in FY2017, then increased to \$193,371 in FY2018. A contracting trend in lodgers' tax may indicate that local hotels are facing increased competition for visitor nights.

FIGURE 4.6 CITY OF RUIDOSO DOWNS LODGERS' TAX



Source: NM Dept. of Finance & Administration, Fiscal Distributions.

4.3 RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

A healthy retail sector not only provides places for residents to shop, but also income for business owners and employees, and tax revenue to pay for public services. A retail market analysis looks at the balance of retail supply and demand in a community.

The ESRI Business Analyst database was used to analyze the retail market potential for the City of Ruidoso Downs. This national data source provides information on annual demand for goods and services ("retail potential") and annual supply of goods and services ("retail sales"), based on private data sources as well as the US Census of Retail Trade and Consumer Expenditure Surveys. When a retail market industry has a surplus, it is drawing customers in from other geographic areas to spend money in that city. If a market is experiencing leakage, customers are leaving the city to spend their dollars elsewhere. The retail gap represents the difference between retail demand and supply.

The City of Ruidoso Downs has a retail surplus of \$40,068,867, with demand of \$22,883,820 and supply of \$62,952,687 (Table 4.7). The City of Ruidoso Downs has a large surplus in General Merchandise Stores (\$39 million), since the Walmart store serves customers from a large area in southeast New Mexico. However, this also makes the City of Ruidoso Downs highly reliant on one source of gross receipts tax.



Ruidoso Downs has a surplus in Gasoline Stations, and Furniture and Home Furnishings sectors. There is also a surplus in the general category for Building Materials, Garden Equipment and Supply Stores; however, the entire surplus is in Lawn and Garden Equipment and Supply, with a large gap in Building Materials and Supplies.

Communities with healthy tourism traffic often have a surplus in goods and services for travelers. While Ruidoso Downs has a surplus in gasoline sales, Ruidoso Downs has a gap in Food and Beverage sales.

The largest retail gaps in Ruidoso Downs are in Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers, Food and Beverage Stores, and Health & Personal Care Stores. While there are automobile dealers and auto parts stores in Ruidoso Downs, the ESRI analysis indicates additional unmet demand. The analysis also indicated unmet demand for restaurants and eating places, as well as pharmacies and drug stores. The gap in Building Materials is consistent with trends of industry consolidation with competition from large national retailers, such as Lowes and Home Depot, located within an hour's drive of Ruidoso Downs at Roswell or Alamogordo.

Only 21% of respondents to the Community Survey agreed or strongly agreed that Ruidoso Downs has adequate commercial retail and business services. They showed the greatest support for adding new restaurants (56%), general retail (53%), and grocery stores (50%). The Community Survey results confirmed that respondents are traveling to other communities for shopping and services; 82% go to Alamogordo, 76% go to the Village of Ruidoso, and 62% go to Roswell.

TABLE 4.6: RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS, 2017

NAICS Categories	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap / Surplus
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$4,568,151	\$2,746,225	-\$1,821,926
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$599,239	\$2,047,430	\$1,448,191
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$479,658	\$226,952	-\$252,706
Building Materials, Garden Equipment & Supply Stores	\$1,440,880	\$2,915,076	\$1,474,196
Food & Beverage Stores	\$3,290,735	\$1,939,092	-\$1,351,643
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,259,438	N/A	-\$1,259,643
Gasoline Stations	\$2,545,423	\$4,394,964	\$1,849,541
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$744,886	\$533,921	-\$210,965
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$548,493	\$734,909	\$186,416
General Merchandise Stores	\$4,294,298	\$44,230,896	\$39,936,598
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$708,974	\$1,295,401	\$586,427
Non-Store Retailers	\$296,755	\$134,765	-\$161,990
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$2,106,890	\$1,753,056	-\$353,834
TOTAL Retail Trade, Food and Drink	\$22,883,820	\$62,952,687	\$40,068,867

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017. N/A-Not Available.



4.4 ORGANIZATIONS

RUIDOSO VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary membership organization that was incorporated in 1941. The Chamber works to improve the business climate and quality of life in Lincoln County, including Ruidoso Downs. The Chamber promotes tourism, arts, and recreation resources in the area, and works on a wide range of issues from affordable housing to improving broadband service. It also operates and manages the Billy the Kid Scenic Byway Visitors Center.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC)

Ruidoso Downs is served by the New Mexico Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at New Mexico State University-Alamogordo and Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso. The SBDC offers no-cost management consulting, small business training, and government procurement assistance.

SOUTHEASTERN NEW MEXICO EDD/COG

The Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District and Council of Governments (SNMEDD/COG) provides planning and development assistance to 26 local units of government in five counties covering over 26,000 square miles, with offices in Roswell. The COG enters into partnerships for major capital improvements projects, procuring state and federal aid, and assists with capacity building and technical assistance.

The SENM Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a locally-developed plan that is updated about every five years, providing coordination of local economic development efforts. The CEDS is used by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to guide federal investments in local economic development, including grant and loan programs. In 2017, the CEDS identified priority strategies for regional economic growth, such as improving marketing and branding for the region, encouraging regional cooperation, and recognizing local strengths and opportunities. The CEDS' goals include:

- ◀ Strengthen, expand, and diversify the existing economic base.
- ◀ Improve the economic climate and economic development capability of the district.
- ◀ Enhance educational and workforce training opportunities.
- ◀ Develop quality infrastructure for greater economic development.
- ◀ Promote and expand "experience industry" activities in the region.



4.5 ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

NEW MEXICO STRONGER ECONOMIES TOGETHER (SET)

The US Department of Agriculture's Stronger Economies Together (SET) program is a strategic planning process for rural communities. In 2016, the City of Ruidoso Downs participated in the SET Economic Development Plan, in a process organized by the New Mexico State University (NMSU) College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, USDA Rural Development and the Western Regional Rural Development Center (WRDC) at Utah State University. The South Central Mountain Economic Development Association (SCMEDA), City of Ruidoso Downs, Village of Ruidoso, Carrizozo Works, Inc., and the Mescalero Apache Tribe were local sponsors of the project. The Village of Cloudcroft, City of Alamogordo, and Otero County also participated.

The participants recognized regional challenges with changes in the tourism industries affecting horse racing, skiing, golf, and gaming, as well as deficiencies in infrastructure for broadband and water systems. While the SET Plan designated responsible parties for identified strategies, the City of Ruidoso Downs would need to determine who would do the work and how it would fund the implementation of action items. The SET Plan identified four targeted sectors for economic diversification in the region:

- ◀ Tourism, recreation and cultural heritage;
- ◀ Agriculture, forest and wood products, and energy production;
- ◀ Light industry development;
- ◀ Biomedical and biotechnical services.

Tourism, Recreation, and Cultural Heritage

Tourism and outdoor recreation have provided the economic base of the region around Ruidoso Downs since the 1950s. The national and regional economy is changing, and the tourism industry is changing also. The SET plan identified strategies for tourism, recreation, and cultural heritage, including support to market the Billy the Kid Scenic Byway and other regional attractions, developing new festival events, expanding outdoor recreation facilities, and recruiting conventions and corporate retreats. This sector has been important to Ruidoso Downs since the City was founded.

Agriculture, Forest and Wood Products, and Energy Production

Lincoln County has historically relied on livestock agriculture, although the mountain area had a healthy timber industry into the early 20th century. Both sectors offer opportunities for new value-added industry retaining more value in production chains. For example, the mountain climate could support viticulture, including both grape growing and wineries. The wood industry also offers benefits to wildfire mitigation and improving forest health. Identified strategies include working with NMSU to create value-added agricultural products, forest restoration, forest industry development, and workforce development for renewable energy (solar and wind power) industries.



Light Industry

Diversification of the region's economic base is important to support local economic development, while minimizing impacts on the mountain region's fragile environment. Proposed strategies include incentives for recreation technology, remote work, and high-altitude training; establish tribal business development; initiate facility construction such as RV parks or housing to stimulate construction; and pursue professional service providers and other small entrepreneurs for relocation.

Biomedical and Biotechnical Services

While biomedical and biotechnology are booming industries nationwide, the SET plan addresses this industry from the perspective of local health care and quality of life. Improving the wellness of the community will result in a more vibrant and reliable workforce. The strategies focus on improving access to health care and education services in the region.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT (LEDA)

New Mexico's Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) is a tool to encourage job creation. Adoption and implementation of a local LEDA ordinance allows public support for economic development projects that would otherwise be prohibited by the New Mexico Constitution's anti-donation clause.

A LEDA ordinance provides the ability to assist qualified firms with infrastructure, site improvements, and job creation. Regional projects can also be supported with a Joint Powers Agreement between municipalities and counties. Qualifying entities under the state legislation include:

- ◀ Manufacturing, processing or assembling of agricultural or manufactured products;
- ◀ Warehousing, distributing or selling agriculture, mining, or manufactured products; or
- ◀ An "Economic Base Employer" eligible for the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) Job Training Incentive Program.

Retail business are considered qualifying entities for state and local funding in a municipality with a population according to the most recent federal decennial census of 15,000 or less, or in an unincorporated area of a county. Retail businesses may qualify for local funding in a municipality of over 15,000 population.

Regional representatives of the NMEDD are available to assist the City of Ruidoso Downs in creating an LEDA ordinance. The NMEDD targets projects that demonstrate community impact and support, benefit rural and underserved areas of New Mexico, increase jobs and wages, have significant capital investment, and demonstrate environmentally sustainable outcomes.



4.6 ASSETS and ATTRACTIONS

Ruidoso Downs benefits from local and regional attractions and amenities. Tourism and outdoor recreation, and services that support that sector, are the largest sources of employment in Ruidoso Downs. Approximately 90% of respondents to the Community Survey indicated their belief that the tourist economy is important or very important to Ruidoso Downs. Local residents use Lincoln National Forest (66%), City Parks (56%), Ruidoso Downs Race Track (46%), Billy the Kid Casino (36%), Spencer Theater (34%), Fort Stanton (32%), etc.

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

Ruidoso Downs Race Track and Casino

Ruidoso Downs Race Track is a Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing facility located north of US 70 on the Rio Ruidoso. Starting in the 1940s, the Race Track grew to host the All American Futurity, the “World’s Richest Quarter Horse Race™” and other events throughout the horse racing season. In 1988, Texas investor R.D. Hubbard acquired a majority share of the Race Track and began a series of improvements, including the construction of a sales pavilion and sports theater. In 1999, Mr. Hubbard opened the Billy the Kid Casino at the Race Track.



Ruidoso Downs Race Track and Casino.

The Ruidoso Downs Race Track and Casino is currently owned and operated by All American Ruidoso Downs, LLC. Over 93% of respondents to the Community Survey indicated that Ruidoso Downs Race Track is the most important tourism opportunity for Ruidoso Downs.



Hubbard Museum of the American West

The Hubbard Museum of the American West was established by R.D. Hubbard in 1992. The Museum has an extensive collection of western art and artifacts, including holdings of the former Anne C. Stradling Museum of the Horse. According to historian Dr. Cynthia Orozco, the building started out as the Ice-o-Matic Skating Ring in the 1950s, then became a convention center for the Chaparral Hotel and Restaurant. R.D. and Joan Hubbard, then owners of the Ruidoso Downs Race Track, remodeled the 55,000 square foot facility in 1990 and opened the Museum on US 70. In 1995, the Hubbards commissioned "Free Spirits at Noisy Water," a series of seven sculptured horses by artist Dave McGary set in a garden at the Museum's front gate. In 2000, the Museum became an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute, which offers local members reciprocal benefits.



Free Spirits at Noisy Water.

In 2005, the Hubbards donated the Museum to the City of Ruidoso Downs, which operates the facility today. Prior to the COVID pandemic, there were four employees on staff. Although there have been more employees in the past, the Museum relies heavily on volunteers. The Hubbard Museum was closed for most of 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID public health emergency.

Billy the Kid National Scenic Byway and Visitors Center

In 1995, the Federal Highway Commission designated the Billy the Kid Trail Scenic Historic Byway. Subsequently, in 1998, it was upgraded to National Scenic Byway status. The 84-mile Byway loops across US 380 through the Village of Capitan and Lincoln State Historic Site, NM 48 through the Village of Ruidoso or NM 220 by way of Fort Stanton State Monument, and US 70 through Ruidoso Downs.

The Billy the Kid Scenic Byway Visitors Center was built in 1997 east of the Hubbard Museum of the American West. The Visitors Center is a regional



facility, owned by the Village of Ruidoso and operated by the Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Visitors Center offers information to tourists on a variety of attractions in Lincoln County and southeast New Mexico.



Billy the Kid Scenic Byway Visitors Center. Upper right: General Pershing mosaic at the Visitors Center.

All American CowboyFest

Since 1989, Ruidoso Downs has hosted the annual Lincoln County Cowboy Symposium each summer. The weekend event featured storytellers, artists, poets, and musicians; chuck wagon cook-offs, cowboy competitions, and horse demonstrations; and kids rodeo, educational activities, and western swing dancing. The event was rebranded as the All American CowboyFest, adding rough stock rodeo and additional country music concerts. The event is scheduled to take place at the Ruidoso Downs Race Track and Casino in September 2021.

REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Lincoln National Forest

Lincoln National Forest was established in 1902 and now covers 1.1 million acres of public lands in southeast New Mexico. The Forest headquarters are in Alamogordo with district offices in Ruidoso, Cloudcroft, and Carlsbad. National Forest lands are located immediately adjacent to the City of Ruidoso Downs municipal boundary; however, there are not any developed trailheads nearby and access is somewhat limited to public lands north and east of the City (see Section 6.3 Parks and Outdoor Recreation, page 100, for more information on outdoor recreation opportunities at the Lincoln National Forest).

Ski Apache

Ski Apache opened in 1961 on the Sierra Blanca mountain northwest of the Village of Ruidoso. The Ski Area has been owned and operated by the Mescalero Apache Tribe since 1963. Ski Apache is the southernmost major ski destination in the United States with over 750 ski-able acres featured by a vertical drop of 1,900 feet and a top elevation of 11,500 feet. There are





Ski lift at Ski Apache.

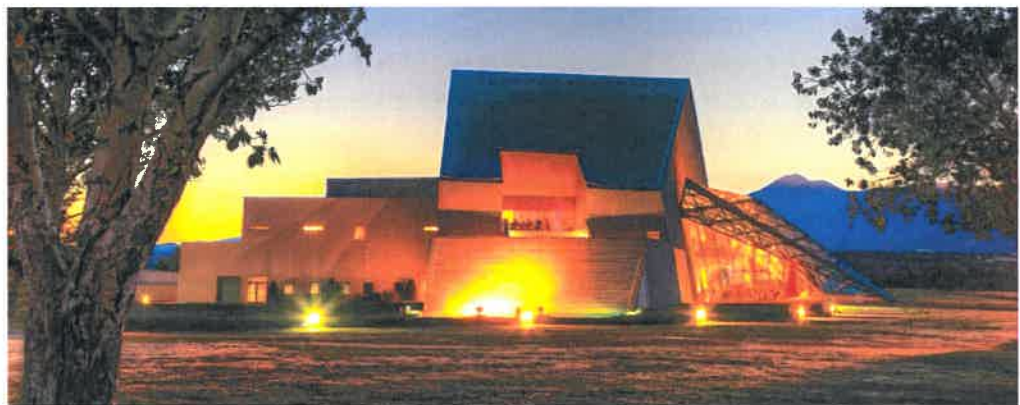
55 runs served by 11 lifts. The resort also offers ziplining, gondola rides, and mountain biking in warmer months.

Inn of the Mountain Gods

The Inn of the Mountain Gods is located southwest of Ruidoso Downs, approximately three miles north of US 70 on Mescalero Lake. It is owned and operated by the Mescalero Apache Tribe. The resort features luxury rooms and suites, several restaurants, meeting space, spa, casino, and an 18-hole championship golf course. Guests can participate in big game hunting, skeet shooting, horseback riding, fishing, and other outdoor activities, as well as concerts headlined by national and regional entertainers. The Mescalero Apache Tribe also owns and operates the Casino Apache Travel Center on US 70.

Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts

The Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts is a non-profit venue for world-class performances in theater, music, and dance. It is located between Alto and Fort Stanton approximately 16 miles north of Ruidoso Downs. The \$22 million modernist structure was designed by New Mexico architect Antoine Predock and opened in 1997. The Spencer Theater features a 514-seat hall and a crystal lobby with 300 individual panes of glass.



Spencer Theater of the Performing Arts.



Fort Stanton State Monument

Fort Stanton is located on 240 acres and surrounded by 25,000 acres of BLM land. It is described as one of the most intact 19th-century military forts in the United States. It is located outside the Town of Lincoln and is surrounded by the Lincoln National Forest.

Fort Stanton was established in 1855 as a western military post following the establishment of the New Mexico Territory in the United States and the addition of the Gadsden Purchase. It was abandoned to Confederate forces in 1861, restored by Union forces in 1862 under the command of Kit Carson, then rebuilt following the Civil War. Soldiers stationed at Fort Stanton played a role in the Lincoln County War and conflicts with Native Americans in the late 19th century. After the Army retired the post in 1896, Fort Stanton served as a Merchant Marine tuberculosis hospital, World War II internment camp, training school for people with mental illness, and as a low-security women's prison.

The State of New Mexico assumed ownership of Fort Stanton in 1953 and later became a State Monument in 2007 and managed by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. In addition to the historic military camp, there are 73 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails on lands managed by the BLM at the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area.

Lincoln Historic Site

The community of Lincoln was the county seat of Lincoln County until 1913, and is known as the center of the historic Lincoln County War. The Lincoln Historic Site has become the most widely visited state monument in New Mexico, featuring 17 adobe and territorial style structures owned and managed by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. The Old Lincoln County Courthouse and Murphy Store, Tunstall Mercantile, El Torreon tower, and other structures appear much as they did in the late 1870s and early 1880s when Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, and other characters rode through the community. Seven buildings are open to visitors year-round.

Regional Golf Courses

In addition to the Inn of the Mountain Gods golf course, there are four other golf courses near Ruidoso Downs. The Links at Sierra Blanca is an 18-hole Scottish style golf course located in Ruidoso, open to the public year-round, weather permitting. Cree Meadows Country Club is a public 18-hole golf course and clubhouse located in Ruidoso. Alto Lakes Golf & Country Club is a 36-hole golf course and clubhouse, located at Alto north of Ruidoso. Rainmakers Golf and Lifestyle Community is a private golf club located on NM 200 at Alto with an 18-hole golf course and clubhouse.



4.7 EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Tourism is the primary industry in Ruidoso Downs. There are opportunities to grow and diversify tourism and outdoor recreation so that the industry can remain resilient to changing markets. There are also a number of emerging opportunities for the Ruidoso Downs and southeast New Mexico that can help create jobs, increase income, and improve the quality of life in the community. The biggest challenge for Ruidoso Downs taking advantage of these opportunities is the need to identify local staff, volunteers, and financial resources to implement economic development action items.

Tourism, Recreation, and Cultural Heritage

As noted in the SET Economic Development Plan (see *Section 4.5 Economic Initiatives, New Mexico Stronger Economies Together, page 67*), tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural heritage are growing and changing markets. The US BEA estimates that outdoor recreation contributed \$2.4 billion to New Mexico's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019, employing 35,065 people and contributing \$1.2 billion in total income. New Mexico's outdoor economy is growing faster than the nation's overall, with employment growing 5.3% from 2018 to 2019, and income increasing by 7.6%. In 2019, RVing, equestrian activity, and snow sports were the top three contributors to the New Mexico outdoor economy. There are RV parks in Ruidoso Downs currently; however, there may be opportunities to provide parking for day trips, sanitary dump stations, and other ways to encourage the traveling public to make Ruidoso Downs their tourism and outdoor recreation destination.

Agriculture, Forest Products, and Renewable Energy

Lincoln County is the 4th largest sheep producing county in New Mexico, 13th largest for cattle, and 13th for horses. There are ample opportunities for value-added agriculture in Ruidoso Downs. The SET Plan identified vineyards and wineries, as well as renewable energy and forest products as opportunities for economic development in this region.

New enterprises that harvest and process wood and forest products would require available industrial sites. A survey by the University of Montana in 2012 found a cluster of activity in the forest products industry in Lincoln County and Otero County operating on public, tribal, and private lands. Traditionally, this industry has included sawmills, log home and furniture manufacturing, and in New Mexico, producers of vigas and latillas. However, sales have been growing for non-traditional products, such as wood shavings, fuel pellets, erosion control products, animal bedding, and other niche markets.

Mitigation of wildfire hazards is a critical activity in urban-rural interface areas. Utilizing the byproducts of wildfire mitigation projects, such as thinned trees for fence rails, processing biomass for architectural features, or converting biomass as renewable energy, are becoming more common across the country and could be explored in Ruidoso Downs and Lincoln County. The New Mexico



Forest Industry Association is a resource to support community-based economic development in this industry.

Small-Scale Manufacturing

Manufacturing and exported services provide primary sector jobs and create new wealth in a community. Small-scale manufacturing, light industry, and professional services involve businesses that operate with a small number of employees and utilize local materials, which strengthens the local supply chain and reinvests in the community. The SET Plan encouraged expansion of light industry in the region that minimizes impacts on the local environment.

Small-scale manufacturers and exported services in creative industries can be ideally suited for and add to redevelopment efforts of commercial corridors, such as US 70. These enterprises can utilize spaces that are not ideal for traditional retail, or occupy vacant and underutilized commercial spaces with established infrastructure in place. Reliable broadband service can be particularly important in design, production, and sales.

Types of small-scale manufacturing and services may include:

- ◀ **Artisan:** outdoor recreation goods, jewelery, food production, pottery, textiles, breweries and distilleries, bakeries, outdoor guides, etc.
- ◀ **Small batch production:** 3-D printing, architecture and design, components for larger machinery, herbal products, body supplies, etc.
- ◀ **Scaling:** businesses that start small and plan to grow into larger spaces or locations.

Digital Workforce

According to the Brookings Institution, 48% of all jobs require medium digital skills and 23% require a high level of digital skills. These are not necessarily traditional “high-tech” jobs; rather, these are skills that are required across most industries and occupations. Supporting digital workers requires expanding access to broadband technology, increasing efforts towards building the marketable skills of the community, and developing public-private partnerships that support a well-skilled workforce. Flexible workforce training through partnerships with institutions, such as ENMU-Ruidoso, will be especially important for workers that need to increase their digital skills.

Remote Work

With increased digitalization and growth in creative industries, many jobs can be undertaken any place with a good, reliable broadband connection. According to the American Community Survey, more workers in Ruidoso Downs worked from home in 2019 as compared to New Mexico as a whole and the United States; 5.6% in Ruidoso Downs versus 4.9% in New Mexico and 5.2% in the United States. Surveys by the Pew Research Center indicate that approximately 38% of employed adults in the United States could perform their job duties from home. Many employers have become more flexible with remote-work options to retain professional employees who would rather work at home or in flexible co-working sites in smaller communities like Ruidoso Downs.



4.8 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1

Diversify and grow the local economy to meet the employment, service, and shopping needs of the community.

Objectives

- ◀ *To maximize the potential for the development, retention, and expansion of small businesses in Ruidoso Downs.*
- ◀ *To encourage growth in value-added industries with identified regional impacts.*
- ◀ *To fill unmet needs in the local retail market and stem the leakage of consumer spending to other communities.*
- ◀ *To ensure increased access to broadband and grow a digitally literate workforce.*
- ◀ *To encourage young families to remain in or locate to Ruidoso Downs.*

Economic Development Strategy 1.1

Determine the feasibility and interest from the community in developing a small business incubator that utilizes locally grown, created, or manufactured products and services.

Economic Development Strategy 1.2

Promote the services offered by the Small Business Development Center at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)-Ruidoso to existing and potential small business owners in Ruidoso Downs.

Economic Development Strategy 1.3

Work with the regional partners on implementing actions identified in the SET Economic Development Plan, including encouraging location of renewable forest products processing, small-scale manufacturing, and exported services employers.

Economic Development Strategy 1.4

Create a Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) ordinance that allows public funding for economic development projects that demonstrate the capacity to provide more jobs in Ruidoso Downs. This strategy should include coordination with and assistance from the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD).

Economic Development Strategy 1.5

Seek assistance from the New Mexico Broadband Program on collecting and processing broadband availability and technology type for the National Broadband Availability Map and the New Mexico Broadband Map.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2

Capture a greater share of the tourism and outdoor recreation industries.

Objectives

- ◀ *To make tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural tourism an enduring driver of the local economy of Ruidoso Downs.*
- ◀ *To capture more tourism revenue from visitors to local and regional outdoor recreation and cultural attractions.*
- ◀ *To expand opportunities for equestrian recreation and services.*
- ◀ *To ensure there are an ample number of lodging and hospitality amenities to serve tourists.*

Economic Development Strategy 2.1

Coordinate with the New Mexico Tourism Department, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Ruidoso Downs Race Track on marketing Ruidoso Downs' local and regional tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural heritage destinations. This should include Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Billy the Kid Scenic Byway, Hubbard Museum of the American West, All American CowboyFest event, and regional opportunities for skiing, hiking, horseback riding, and camping.

Economic Development Strategy 2.2

Promote Ruidoso Downs as a community with an unmet demand for restaurants and eating places, arts and entertainment venues, outdoor tourism related services, RV parks, and hotels. Utilize the brand created for Ruidoso Downs in marketing materials, as identified in Land Use Strategy 1.1.

Economic Development Strategy 2.3

Promote Ruidoso Downs as an equestrian community with the need for large animal clinics, boarding stables and irrigated pasture land, equestrian adventure companies and guided tours, etc.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3

Create a well-trained and educated workforce that can meet the needs of local employers and growing industries.

Objective

- ◀ *To increase median household income and improve the quality of life for Ruidoso Downs residents.*
- ◀ *To ensure the Ruidoso Downs workforce can attain meaningful and productive employment.*

Economic Development Strategy 3.1

Work with local employers on seeking workforce investment funding from the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) overseen by the New Mexico Economic Development Department.



Economic Development Strategy 3.2

Coordinate with Ruidoso Municipal Schools, and ENMU-Ruidoso on developing and expanding workforce training programs and dual credit programs for high school students related to existing and future business clusters in the region, including hotel, restaurant, and tourism management; breweries, distilleries, and viticulture; health care and veterinary medicine; outdoor recreation management; technology and cybersecurity; etc.

Economic Development Strategy 3.3

Provide information about existing certificate and associate degree programs both online and in-person offered at ENMU-Ruidoso, including on the City's website and at City Hall.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

Expand and recruit new commercial and industrial development in Ruidoso Downs.

Objective

- ◀ *To diversify local industries and bring in new income from outside the community.*
- ◀ *To foster alliances with regional economic development organizations and build local capacity for technical assistance and funding.*
- ◀ *To encourage and accommodate new businesses and industries that are interested in relocating or expanding facilities in the area.*

Economic Development Strategy 4.1

Identify potential business recruitment and expansion candidates, including commercial retailers and service providers; hotels; RV park and storage facility operators; breweries and distilleries; forestry products manufacturers; etc.

Economic Development Strategy 4.2

Work with the Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/ Council of Governments (SNMEDD/COG) on pursuing grant and loan applications to business and industry programs and broadband access programs administered by the USDA Rural Development.

Economic Development Strategy 4.3

Establish an economic development committee of the City Council that would be tasked with prioritizing target industries; reviewing potential commercial and industrial development opportunities; assisting with marketing initiatives; and providing recommendations. Members should be representative of local and regional economic development agencies, such as SNMEDD; Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce; private business owners; and the general public.



CHAPTER 5

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS



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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Safe and affordable housing is a basic human need and is the foundation for ensuring a high quality of life for all ages. Each type of housing, from single family homes to duplexes, townhouses, apartments, and condominiums, fit the changing needs of individuals and families throughout their lifetimes. A diverse mix of housing types, and choices to own or rent, provides a range of options to people who want to live in Ruidoso Downs.

Stable housing supply and demand is also supported by livable and attractive neighborhoods. This chapter provides a housing profile, describes housing conditions and issues, discusses challenges for housing special populations, and highlights opportunities for expanding the housing stock in Ruidoso Downs.

5.2 HOUSING PROFILE

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), there were significant changes in household characteristics in Ruidoso Downs between 2010 and 2019. There was a steep decline of 33.5% in the number of households; from 1,131 to 752. During the same time period, the average household size increased by 37.3% from 2.5 to 3.4 (see Table 5.1; note that the percentage of change shown in the table is based on actual numbers).

TABLE 5.1: HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Household Types	2010	2019	Change*
Total households	1,131	752	-33.5%
Average household size	2.5	3.4	37.3%
Family households	65.8%	65.7%	-33.6%
Average family size	3.0	4.3	42.8%
Non-Family households	34.2%	34.3%	-33.3%
Households with one or more people under 18	39.9%	33.8%	-43.7%
Households with one or more people 60 years and over	30.5%	46.8%	2.0%
Householder living alone	30.9%	29.4%	-36.7%
65 years and older	9.1%	11.0%	19.6%

*Change calculated based on actual numbers.
 Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2015-2019.

Significant shifts also occurred during this time period relative to the type of households. In 2019, family households represented 65.7% (494) and non-family households, those in which members are not related or individuals living alone, represented 34.3% (258) of all households in Ruidoso Downs. These metrics showed a decrease of 33.6% in family households and 33.3% in non-family households.

Households with one or more members under 18 years old also decreased by 43.7% during this time period to 33.8% of all households in Ruidoso



Downs. However, due to an aging population in Ruidoso Downs, households with one or more members 60 years and over increased by 2.0% to 46.8% of all households. In comparison, 29.9% of New Mexico households had a household member that was under 18 years and 42.4% had a household member that was 60 years or older.

While householders living alone decreased significantly by 36.7% to 29.4% in 2019, those that were 65 years and older increased by 19.6%, which is similar to statewide trends. These metrics indicate an increasing need for housing that specifically meets the needs of an aging population.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Relative to housing occupancy, there were also significant changes between 2010 and 2019. There was an overall decline in the total number of housing units, from 1,550 in 2010 to 1,245 housing units in 2019, a 19.7% decrease (see Table 5.2). The number of occupied housing units decreased by 33.5% from 1,131 in 2010 to 752 in 2019. This shows only 60.4% of all housing units were occupied in 2019.

In comparison, occupied housing units in New Mexico as a whole comprised 83.2% of total housing units.

Shifts also occurred in the type of occupancy between 2010 and 2019. The 2019 ACS estimates for occupied housing units showed that 46.8% were owner-occupied and 53.2% were renter-occupied. This is a relatively low rate of owner-occupancy and is a concerning trend for Ruidoso Downs.

There was a relatively steep increase of 17.7% in the share of vacant housing units between 2010 and 2019. In 2019, there were 143 homes in Ruidoso Downs (11.5% of all housing units) listed as vacant for seasonal use, down from 255 in 2010.

This may be indicative of the seasonal nature of the regional economy in Lincoln County where the vacant seasonal housing units in 2019 represented 41.1% of the total housing units. However, high overall vacancy rates may also indicate the poor condition of existing housing, low demand, or that the existing housing supply is not

TABLE 5.2: HOUSING OCCUPANCY

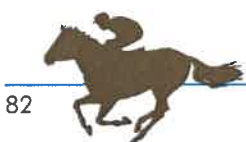
	2010	2019	Change*
Total housing units	1,550	1,245	-19.7%
Occupied housing units	73.0%	60.4%	-33.5%
Owner-occupied	66.0%	46.8%	-52.9%
Renter-occupied	34.0%	53.2%	4.2%
Vacant housing units	27.0%	39.6%	17.7%

*Change calculated based on actual numbers.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2015-2019.



Ladera Apartments.



matched well to current demand. Vacancy rates may also indicate that units used for short term rentals may be reported to ACS as vacant.

HOUSING TYPE and AGE

Housing Type

The most common housing type in Ruidoso Downs is mobile home, which represented 37.7% of the housing units in 2019 (see Table 5.3). Only 25.9% of Ruidoso Downs' housing stock was one-unit, single-family detached homes. These metrics are in steep contrast to the New Mexico average where mobile homes comprised 17.1% of the housing stock and single family detached homes were 64.2% of all housing units in 2019. Multi-family housing of three units or more comprised 30.7% of the housing units in 2019.

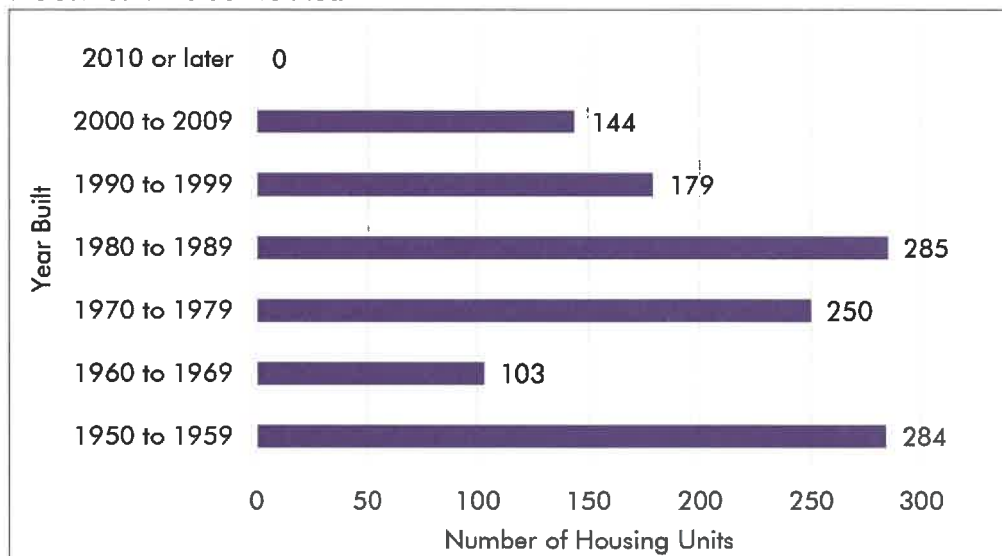
	2010	2019	Change*
Total Housing Units	1,550	1,245	-19.7%
1-unit, detached	32.8%	25.9%	-36.7%
1-unit, attached	1.6%	2.9%	44.0%
2 units	4.1%	2.9%	-43.8%
3 or 4 units	1.0%	6.6%	412.5%
5 to 9 units	5.2%	12.1%	88.8%
10 to 19 units	6.1%	1.7%	-77.9%
20 or more units	2.0%	10.3%	312.9%
Mobile home	46.3%	37.7%	-34.6%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.8%	0.0%	-

*Change calculated based on actual numbers.
 Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 & 2015-2019.

Housing Age

Understanding when housing was built is another indicator for the general condition of the housing stock. For Ruidoso Downs, the ACS estimates showed no housing units built before 1950. However, the time period between 1950 and 1959 showed 22.8% (284 units) of the housing stock built, only slightly second to the time period between 1980 and 1989 where 22.9% (285 units) was built. The metrics showed a substantial slow down in housing construction in Ruidoso Downs starting in 1990.

FIGURE 5.1: HOUSING AGE



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

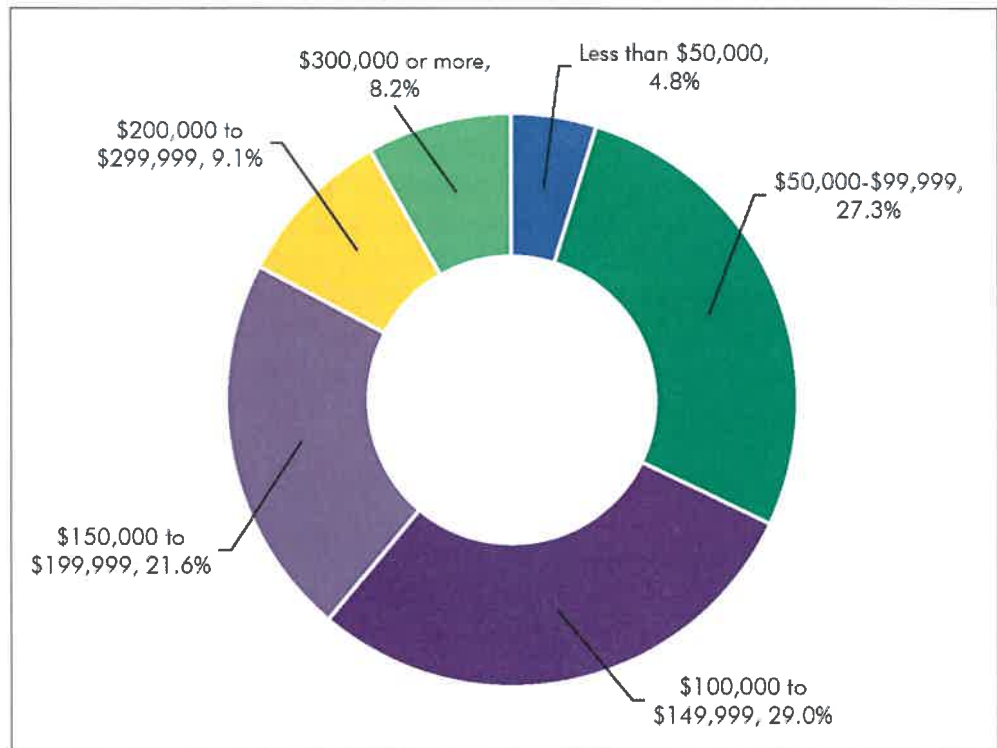


HOUSING MARKET

Housing in Ruidoso Downs is relatively inexpensive for the New Mexico market. In 2019, ACS estimates showed that 32.1% of owner-occupied housing units in Ruidoso Downs cost less than \$100,000 (see Figure 5.2). This compares to 19.0% in Lincoln County, and 24.3% in New Mexico statewide. In Ruidoso Downs, 29.0% were valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and 21.6% were valued between \$150,000 and \$199,999. Only 8.2% of housing units were valued at \$300,000 or more, compared to 27.8% in Lincoln County and 19.7% for New Mexico statewide. The median home value was \$130,900 in Ruidoso Downs; it was \$193,900 in Lincoln County and \$171,400 in New Mexico.

According to the real estate website Realtor.com, there were 33 residential listings in Ruidoso Downs in March 2021. Asking prices for homes ranged from \$125,000 to \$575,000. Building sites were listed between \$27,000 for a 0.35-acre lot and \$460,000 for a 10-acre forested lot, as well as some larger parcels for development purposes. The median listing home price in 2020 was \$196,000, an increase from \$132,000 in 2017, including single family homes, condominiums, and townhomes.

FIGURE 5.2: HOUSING VALUES, 2019



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.



COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

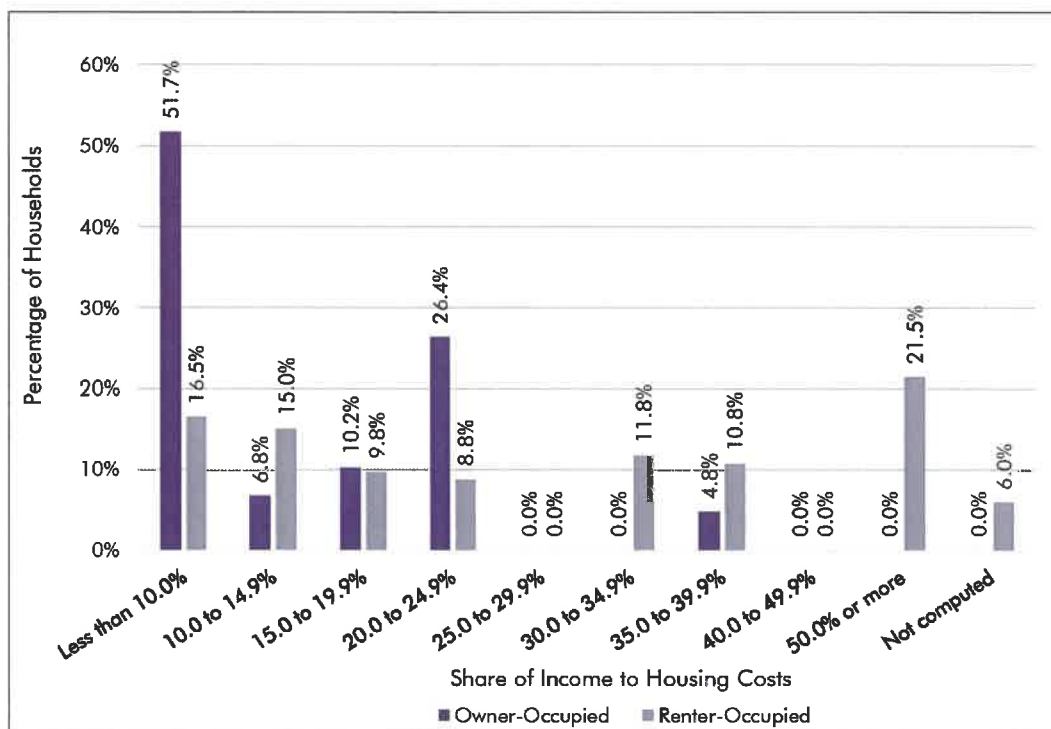
Housing costs, such as rent or mortgage and utilities, are typically the largest monthly expenses for most households. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers a household “cost-burdened” when 30% of monthly gross income is dedicated to housing costs including utilities. Households with 50% of monthly gross income dedicated to housing and utility costs are considered “severely cost-burdened”.

Of renter-occupied households in Ruidoso Downs, 44.0% were cost-burdened; with 21.5% considered severely cost-burdened (see Figure 5.3). These rates are similar to renter-occupied households in New Mexico, 43.0% and 21.4% respectively.

Owner-occupied households tend to be less cost-burdened than renter-occupied households. In Ruidoso Downs, only 4.8% of owner-occupied households were cost-burdened and none were considered severely cost burdened. In New Mexico, the rate for owner-occupied households is 20.8% and 8.9%, respectively.

Taken as a whole, in 2019, approximately 25.7% of all households in Ruidoso Downs were considered cost-burdened and 11.4% were considered severely cost-burdened. Residents have registered their concern; approximately 65% of respondents to the Community Survey agreed or strongly agreed that the City should increase its supply of affordable housing.

FIGURE 5.3: COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.



Affordable Housing

There are two affordable housing developments in Ruidoso Downs. Inspiration Heights is a six-building apartment complex containing 48 rental units on Sierra Lane. Ladera Apartments is the newest multi-family development in Ruidoso, with 60 rental units and a community center on Dipaolo Hill Drive. This project received \$416,734 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in 2000 and currently accepts housing vouchers. The Eastern Regional Housing Authority in Roswell administers HUD Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers for the region including Ruidoso Downs; however, there are seldom vouchers available.

There are a number of funding programs available to support housing in New Mexico. The Colonias Infrastructure Fund, adopted in 2010 by the New Mexico Legislature, offers financial assistance to designated communities lacking basic infrastructure for water and wastewater, solid waste disposal, flood and drainage control, roads, and housing (see Section 8.8). Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District (SNMEDD) provides assistance with applications to the Colonias Infrastructure Fund. With the adoption of an Affordable Housing Plan and Affordable Housing Ordinance, the City of Ruidoso Downs could also assist new affordable housing development and/or housing rehabilitation projects.

MOBILE HOME PARKS (MANUFACTURED HOME COMMUNITIES)

There are six designated mobile home parks in Ruidoso Downs and several areas with mobile home lots managed as mobile home parks. Although 37.7% of the housing units in Ruidoso Downs are classified by ACS as mobile homes, the total number of mobile homes decreased from 717 in 2010 to 469 in 2019.

Mobile home parks are more currently known as manufactured home communities and provide a safe and secure source of affordable housing for many people. According to the American Planning Association, there are approximately 45,000 manufactured home communities across the United States (PAS Memo: Preserving Manufactured Home Communities, 2020). In the typical manufactured home community, residents own their homes and rent their lot. These owners value their affordability and the privacy of individual lots, as well as the accessibility of single-story construction.

Growth and rising land costs are putting pressure on owners manufactured home communities to suspend maintenance or redevelop properties, displacing long-term homeowners. The American Planning Association suggests that cities can help protect the long-term viability of manufactured home communities by preserving mobile home zoning, recognizing the importance of manufactured housing as an affordable housing option, and working with property owners to facilitate on-going maintenance of infrastructure. In some communities, the municipality or non-profit organizations, such as a land trust, have purchased properties to prevent displacement of residents.



5.3 GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS

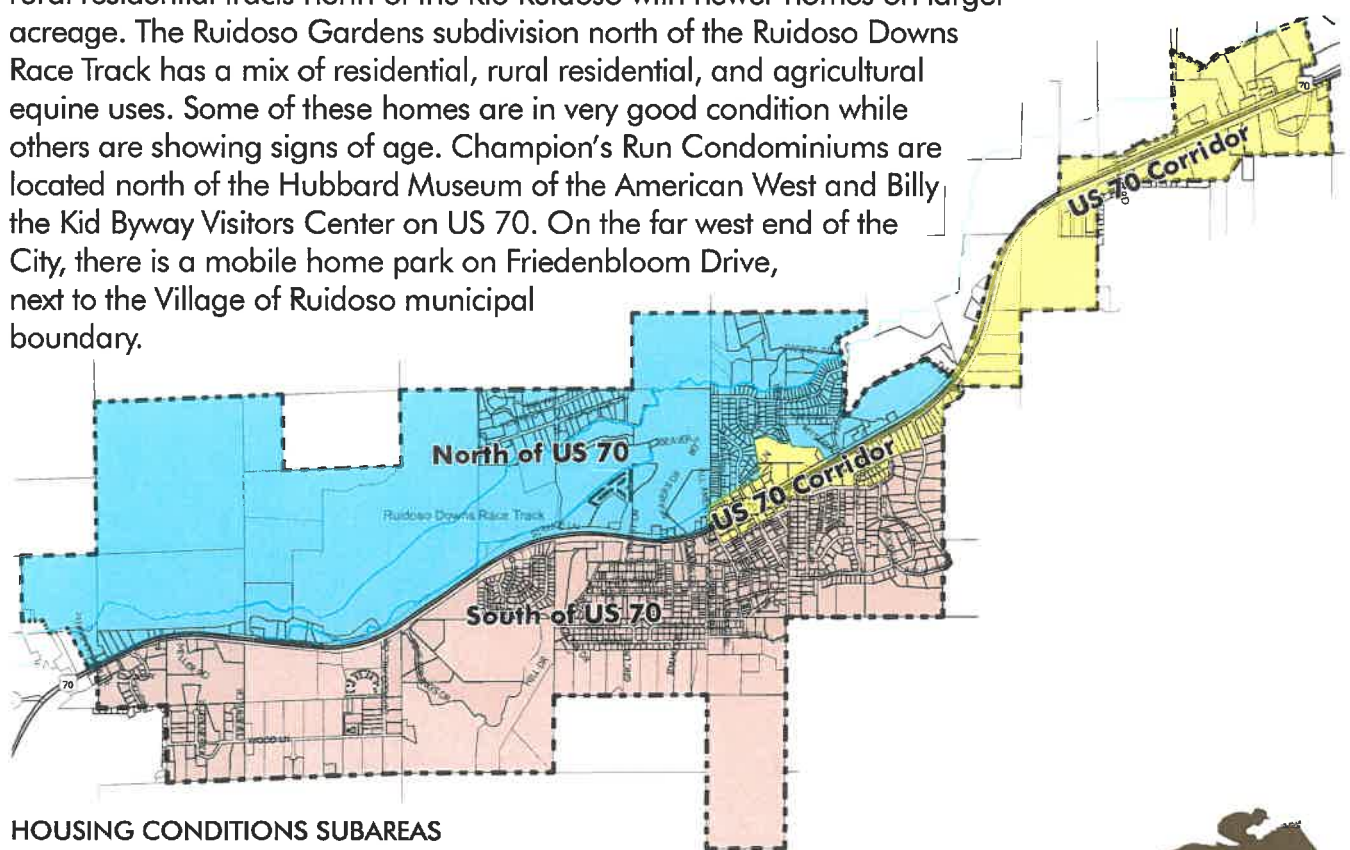
A general housing conditions assessment was conducted by Consensus Planning as part of the land use windshield survey conducted early in the planning process. For the purpose of this assessment, Ruidoso Downs was divided into subareas to assist in describing the existing housing conditions. Overall, many of the older mobile homes are near the end of their depreciated life cycle and are in need of rehabilitation and repair.

US 70 CORRIDOR

There are a mix of commercial and single-family residential lots and mobile home parks with direct access to US 70 in the center of the City, such as in the Palo Verde Subdivision along Central Drive. This is one of the first subdivisions developed in the City with some of the oldest homes in the poorest condition. On the east end of the City near Stetson Road, there are commercial, residential, and rural residential lots, several vacant lots, and two mobile home parks with direct access to US 70. Many homes in the eastern part of the City do not have municipal sewer service and must rely on individual septic systems.

NORTH OF US 70

On the north side of US 70, the River Park subdivision, on North Central Drive and River Lane, has a mix of single family homes, mobile homes, and manufactured homes on fee simple lots and in mobile home parks. Some of these homes are aging and in need of rehabilitation and repair. There are rural residential tracts north of the Rio Ruidoso with newer homes on larger acreage. The Ruidoso Gardens subdivision north of the Ruidoso Downs Race Track has a mix of residential, rural residential, and agricultural equine uses. Some of these homes are in very good condition while others are showing signs of age. Champion's Run Condominiums are located north of the Hubbard Museum of the American West and Billy the Kid Byway Visitors Center on US 70. On the far west end of the City, there is a mobile home park on Friedenbloom Drive, next to the Village of Ruidoso municipal boundary.



HOUSING CONDITIONS SUBAREAS



SOUTH OF US 70

On the south side of US 70, there are residential and rural residential lots on Miriam Drive behind the commercial strip and along Dipaolo Hill Drive and Wood Lane. The Ladera Apartments are located on Dipaolo Hill Drive. Homes are newer and generally in good condition. The Ruidoso Downs Heights subdivision is located south of the Ruidoso Downs Race Track with a single point of access to US 70 (Heights Drive). There is a mix of single-family, manufactured homes, and mobile homes (on lots and in mobile home parks) in the south central area of Ruidoso

Downs. The Inspiration Heights apartment complex is located at the east end of Sierra Lane. Homes in this area tend to be older structures, many of which may have been built as seasonal units. Maintenance and rehabilitation needs have increased as these homes have aged. Streets in this area have steeper slopes and are in need of maintenance and paving.

The Agua Fria subdivision in the east central area south of US 70 was originally developed in the 1940s, and subsequent phases have filled in over time with larger homes on larger lots. Homes in this area are typically well maintained and in good condition. There are vacant lots with infrastructure in this area available for new homes. There are also larger lots with rural residential uses along the City's southern boundary where slopes increase towards US Forest Service lands.



Champion's Run Condominiums on the north side of US 70.



Single-family home south of US 70.



5.4 SPECIAL POPULATIONS

ELDERLY and DISABLED

As previously mentioned, 22.7% of the population of Ruidoso Downs was aged 65 and over in 2019, as compared to 17.0% in New Mexico as a whole. In addition, 53.0% of those aged 65 and over and all veterans in Ruidoso Downs identified as having a disability.

Disabilities often impact housing needs from accessibility to group housing with assistance or support. Currently, Ruidoso Downs residents must leave the community for senior housing or housing for people with disabilities. In addition to typical long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities have become a popular housing option, providing services and activities with private rooms and/or apartments.

HOMELESS PERSONS

A “point-in-time” count is a HUD defined term that measures the number of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. While there is no “point-in-time” count for the unhoused population in Ruidoso Downs or Lincoln County, there are likely some individuals who are experiencing housing insecurity at any given time. Some non-profit organizations in Lincoln County provide emergency housing assistance.

High Mountain Youth Project

The High Mountain Youth Project provides a comprehensive safety net for students experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Located at 700 Mechem Drive in Ruidoso, the High Mountain Youth Project provides drop-in study centers where students can relax and study in a safe environment. Snacks, meals, laundry, and showers are also provided.

HEAL and the Nest Shelter

Help End Abuse for Life (HEAL) is an organization that is dedicated to stopping domestic violence and to provide a safe place for women and children whose lives are impacted by domestic abuse. The Nest Shelter is located in the Village of Ruidoso and is open to residents of Lincoln County. The shelter has a capacity of 43 women and children and provides bedrooms, meals, counseling, and other support services.

5.5 HOUSING ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES

HOUSING MIX

As noted in Chapter 3: Land Use, approximately 33% of Ruidoso Downs’ land area is devoted to medium and rural residential land use, primarily single-family homes, manufactured homes, and older mobile homes. Mobile home parks occupy 70 acres or an additional 3.4% of the City’s area. There are indications that a growing demand for seasonal and short-term rental homes



in Lincoln County is squeezing the supply of workforce housing for local workers. Higher density housing options provide homes for people who may not be able to afford or would rather not maintain a single-family home.

Duplex, tri-plex, or four-plex units are often designed to blend into single-family neighborhoods and can be designed to be almost indistinguishable from single family homes. Townhouses, cottage courts, or live-work space can provide a transition between lower density neighborhoods and busier commercial areas. When asked what types of housing are needed in Ruidoso Downs in the Community Survey, single-family detached homes were the most popular choice (63%), but the need for other types of housing was identified, including senior housing (52%), apartments (41%), and townhouses/duplexes (25%).

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

A single-family residential property designed to include a secondary, independent residence within the existing home or on the same property is known as an accessory dwelling unit (commonly called a “mother-in-law quarters”). Allowing accessory dwelling units is another method of providing affordable housing while helping householders with limited income keep their homes.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN and AGING IN PLACE

Housing opportunities are created when housing design and choice accommodates the ordinary changes that people experience over their lives due to aging and life circumstances. The City of Ruidoso Downs should be encouraging housing options, programs, and services that support independence and choices for seniors who want to remain in their homes or neighborhoods regardless of age or ability.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

Housing is one of the biggest challenges facing the Ruidoso Downs community. As previously mentioned, an important tool for addressing affordable housing needs in New Mexico communities is an affordable housing plan. The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) provides grants to communities that demonstrate unmet housing needs for owner-occupied units and rental units for households at 80% or below of the area median income for Lincoln County. Applying for and completing an affordable housing plan and associated affordable housing ordinance would allow the City of Ruidoso Downs to participate in and contribute public resources to affordable housing projects.

HOUSING REHABILITATION

Ruidoso Downs is a relatively young community and the housing stock is not as old as in many places in New Mexico. However, over 50% of homes were constructed before 1980 and many homes of that age are starting to require major maintenance and rehabilitation. This is particularly the case for pre-1976 mobile homes constructed prior to adoption of HUD codes for manufactured housing. Approximately 29% of the respondents to the



Community Survey indicated they believe housing rehabilitation is needed in Ruidoso Downs.

Many of the homes with the greatest rehabilitation needs are located in the earliest developed areas, close to City Hall, Post Office, and All American Park. While many homes are well-maintained, others are deteriorating and in need of repairs. Repairs to homes may go unaddressed due to lack of financial resources, difficulty finding skilled labor, or seasonal occupancy. Typical types of repairs range from simple paint and window repairs to energy-related improvements or major roof or structural rehabilitation. In the past, regional agencies, such as the Southwest Regional Housing & Community Development Corporation from Las Cruces, have provided housing rehabilitation and weatherization assistance to Lincoln County homeowners.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Neighborhoods are building blocks of strong and vibrant communities, and set the tone for creating a sense of place and identity within the community. Creating a neighborhood identity initiative would help Ruidoso Downs create a stronger community fabric, encourage housing maintenance and rehabilitation, and build community pride and quality of life for residents.

SEASONAL HOUSING and SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Seasonal housing units are an important facet of the tourism-oriented economy in the Ruidoso Downs area. Residents of other communities buy into the local economy when they purchase real estate for their own seasonal use. Online home-sharing platforms, like AirBnB and VRBO, have expanded quickly in part to serve seasonal homeowners who rely on short-term rentals to help pay for their second homes.

As previously mentioned, 11% of all housing units in Ruidoso Downs were reported to the ACS as vacant for seasonal use. Seasonal housing and short-term rentals remove housing units from long-term owner- or renter-occupancy and may drive up housing costs for permanent, year-round residents. In addition, seasonal housing and short-term rentals can also hurt neighborhood vitality by having an unregulated commercial use within a residentially-zoned area. Regulating short-term rentals would be important for ensuring neighborhood integrity and character.



5.6 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS GOAL 1

Expand the available housing stock and support equal access to a diverse range of safe and affordable housing types.

Objectives

- ◀ *To increase the supply of market rate and affordable renter- and owner-occupied housing units for all household income levels.*
- ◀ *To encourage the expansion of workforce housing for residents primarily working in the public safety, health care, and hospitality industries.*
- ◀ *To foster the ability of seniors to age-in-place within the community.*

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 1.1

Complete and submit an application to the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to fund the creation of an Affordable Housing Plan that complies with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, as amended. The Affordable Housing Plan should be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Ordinance. As part of this strategy, determine the feasibility of developing a joint Affordable Housing Plan with Lincoln County.

The Affordable Housing Plan should contain at a minimum:

- ◀ A comprehensive community and housing profile that includes demographic characteristics, household characteristics, economic profile, and local housing market conditions;
- ◀ Assessment of existing and projected housing needs by Average Median Income (AMI) levels, including for-sale housing, rental housing, and housing for special needs populations;
- ◀ Assessment of existing housing conditions and quantification of the existing housing stock that is vacant and/or have major rehabilitation needs;
- ◀ Analysis and proposed solutions to the regulatory (zoning and land use development codes), non-regulatory (fees, infrastructure capacity, environmental, land availability, financial), and policy constraints to affordable housing;
- ◀ Goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives to meet affordable housing needs (rental and owner-occupied) within a planning horizon of five years; and
- ◀ Public participation and input.

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 1.2

Identify land owned by the City of Ruidoso Downs that would be appropriate and available for donation to an affordable housing program. The inventory should be completed in conjunction with the development of an Affordable



Housing Plan and utilized as an incentive for encouraging private developers/builders to construct affordable housing in Ruidoso Downs.

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 1.3

Work with residential builders on identifying incentives that will encourage the build-out of existing vacant residentially-zoned lots and subdivisions in Ruidoso Downs. This may include, but not be limited to, allowing an increase in residential density or waivers for fees and/or utility extensions.

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 1.4

In coordination with Land Use Strategy 3.1, amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow a wider variety of housing types, including accessory dwelling units, in residential zone districts.

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 1.5

Work with the Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/Council of Governments and the New Mexico Mortgage Authority on developing an educational program that provides information on:

- ◀ Available affordable housing programs, credit counseling, first time home buyer programs;
- ◀ Rehabilitation and maintenance assistance programs for seniors and veterans;
- ◀ Down payment and closing cost assistance; and
- ◀ Referrals to local MFA-approved lenders.

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS GOAL 2

Promote community building and neighborhood stability through the rehabilitation of blighted housing conditions and neighborhoods.

Objectives

- ◀ *To address the negative impact of blighted properties on existing neighborhoods.*
- ◀ *To upgrade the living conditions for households in single-family and multi-family units, manufactured and mobile homes, and mobile home parks.*
- ◀ *To balance the need for housing with the provision of short-term rentals within residential neighborhoods.*
- ◀ *To foster community pride through the on-going maintenance and repair of local residential streets and the provision of sidewalks.*

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 2.1

Once an Affordable Housing Plan has been completed by the City of Ruidoso Downs, seek partnerships with private builders or housing providers to rehabilitate vacant and/or dilapidated housing units in Ruidoso Downs.



Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 2.2

As identified in Land Use Strategy 3.4, establish a “Yard/House of the Month” program that recognizes the efforts by property owners to improve the appearance of their properties.

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 2.3

As part of the update to the Zoning Ordinance, create regulations for short-term rentals. This may include, but not be limited to, registration and annual fees, insurance requirements, good neighbor guidelines, identification of the zone districts where this use would be permitted, occupancy requirements, etc.

Housing & Neighborhoods Strategy 2.4

Evaluate, prioritize, and systematically install sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, and improve street conditions within existing residential neighborhoods.



CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



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6.1 INTRODUCTION

Providing for the delivery of community services and facilities is a core function of municipal government. This includes public safety services and facilities; parks and recreation; and services and facilities geared towards youth, adults, and seniors. Complementing those are community services and facilities that are owned and managed by other entities, such as the Ruidoso Public Schools and Lincoln County Medical Center, that together help meet the social, recreational, educational, health, and safety needs of the Ruidoso Downs community.

Making decisions about the level of service provided and how to improve existing facilities, and determining how to fund and maintain needed services and facilities, is the path to realizing the community's vision for Ruidoso Downs. This chapter discusses how the City of Ruidoso Downs and regional providers have established and continue to maintain essential services and facilities to the community, including public safety, parks and outdoor recreation, community facilities, community health, and public education.

6.2 PUBLIC SAFETY

RUIDOSO DOWNS POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Ruidoso Downs Police Department is located in City Hall at 123 Downs Drive on the south side of US 70. There are currently seven patrol officers, a Community Service Officer who serves as the code enforcement and animal control staff, one Deputy Chief, and the Chief of Police employed in the Department; however, the staffing level is currently short by five officers.



Ruidoso Downs City Hall and Police Department.

The Police Department has implemented several strategies to update policies and hire more officers, and would like to offer higher pay and tiered promotions as a means to attract additional officers. New initiatives include creating a canine officer position in the next year and recruitment of a Field Training Officer (FTO) for training and evaluating new recruits prior to field duty. Officers handle and manage evidence, which currently requires updated computer software to administer this process efficiently.

The Police Department fleet consists of 10 to 12 vehicles rotated and replaced on a yearly or bi-yearly basis. The Police Department relies on grants, loans,



and capital outlay to replace vehicles. In-car cameras and updated computer systems are needed on all vehicles.

Dispatch and Response Times

Emergency service providers in the region recently merged all municipal dispatch services to one centralized location in the Village of Ruidoso to allow communities to share resources more efficiently. Due to the mountainous terrain surrounding Ruidoso Downs, radio communications are unreliable in some areas. The Ruidoso area has a digital repeater radio system with a combined receiver and transmitter that is connected by a controller and located at optimal reception and transmission sites. The repeater system coverage is dependent on geography and terrain.

The Ruidoso Area Communications Group is considering adding a “voter” system, which works within the repeater system by automatically selecting the best signal and transmits the information over a larger area. Adding a voter system in the area could stabilize communications and decrease response times for emergencies.

The Police Department’s response time within its jurisdiction of Ruidoso Downs is approximately 3 minutes. Much of the law enforcement efforts are along the US 70 corridor. Tourism causes dramatic increases in population, adding traffic during weekends and holidays, which requires a flexible police force that can respond to these changes.

Detention Center

The Lincoln County Detention Center is located in Carrizozo, which is approximately 35 miles west of Ruidoso Downs. Using the county-wide facility requires longer transport times for detainees and keeps police officers away from the City for extended periods. The Police Department would like to determine the feasibility of a law enforcement complex in Ruidoso Downs that would serve the area, which would contain the jail, offices, and training areas.

Community Outreach

Outreach is an essential component of increasing trust between law enforcement and the community. The Ruidoso Downs Police Department does not hold many community events due to a lack of resources.

There are several activities the Police Department can engage in to build community relations, including visiting City parks and community facilities, coordinating events such as National Night Out, or holding regularly scheduled community hours “Coffee with the Chief” at a local restaurant. These actions help engage community members and create on-going dialogues about improving public safety.

RUIDOSO DOWNS FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Ruidoso Downs Fire Department is a volunteer department with one station located at 122 Downs Drive across from City Hall. There are two paid staff - the Fire Chief and the Assistant Fire Chief - and eleven volunteers, three of whom



are EMTs. The staffing levels are acceptable, but as an all-volunteer department, more volunteers are always needed. The Fire Department's response time is five minutes within the City limits or nearby areas.

The Ruidoso Downs Fire Department provides the following services:

- ◀ Firefighting;
- ◀ Hazardous Material Response;
- ◀ Intermediate Life Support Emergency Medical Service;
- ◀ Vehicle Rescue (Extrication);
- ◀ Search and Rescue; and
- ◀ Other Technical and Specialized Rescue.

The Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with the Village of Ruidoso, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and the Glencoe fire departments. It also assists the New Mexico Forestry and US Forest Service when needed for forest fire suppression.

ISO Rating and Needed Improvements

Fire departments are rated by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the best score and 10 being the worst. The score is intended to indicate how



Ruidoso Downs Fire Station.

well protected the community is by the local fire department, which impacts homeowners' insurance rates. The Ruidoso Downs Fire Department's latest ISO Rating is 6. Recommendations from the ISO Report to improve this rating included adding a new substation and installing fire hydrants on the City's east side.

The City has strong hydrant coverage in the central area of the community. The Fire Department recommends the addition of 20 to 30 hydrants on the east side of the City. Hydrants will be installed as part of the East Distribution System Expansion project that will add water service in this area.



6.3 PARKS and OUTDOOR RECREATION

Community park facilities encourage active lifestyles, increase community engagement, and provide vital spaces to recreate. The City of Ruidoso Downs manages two park facilities, including All American Park and Riverside Park, where residents can engage in passive and active recreation activities.

Over 55% of participants in the Community Survey identified city parks as an important community amenity. Outdoor recreation in the Lincoln National Forest was the most used recreational amenity, chosen by 66% of survey participants. A summary of the parks, outdoor recreation, and recreational programs available to residents follows on the next page.

ALL AMERICAN PARK

All American Park is approximately 12.8 acres and is located along US 70 near the heart of Ruidoso Downs. The Park contains a ball field, skate park, four basketball courts, playground, and a perimeter walking trail. All American Park contains the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center, which is located south of the ball field.



All American Park.

The central location and the amenities available at All American Park make it a popular gathering spot for Ruidoso Downs residents. This area would be ideal for the teen center (identified as a priority project by the City) to provide a safe place for that age group to gather and engage in wholesome social activities.

RIVERSIDE PARK

Scenic Riverside Park is located on Joe Welch Drive. The northern edge of Riverside Park is buttressed by the tree-lined Rio Ruidoso. The 9.4-acre park contains an improved river trail where visitors can enjoy a shaded walk along the Rio Ruidoso and listen to the running water for which the "Noisy Water" is named. Riverside Park contains turf areas, a walking trail, benches, picnic tables, restrooms, and large covered areas



Riverside Park.



for gatherings. It is recommended that new playground equipment be added to the first field at Riverside Park.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Ruidoso Downs residents have access to recreation programs that are managed by the Village of Ruidoso Parks and Recreation Department and non-profit organizations. Activities are held primarily in Village of Ruidoso facilities, but some also utilize parks and sports fields in Ruidoso Downs.

- ◀ Ruidoso Little League provides youth baseball in Lincoln County. Teams play at fields in the Village of Ruidoso, Capitan, Mescalero, and at the All American Park in Ruidoso Downs.
- ◀ Lincoln County Youth Soccer League provides soccer opportunities for ages 4 to 14. The League utilizes the White Mountain Sports Complex located on the west side of the Village of Ruidoso.
- ◀ Ruidoso Little League Basketball is available to youth in first through eighth grade. Games are held at Horton Gym at the Ruidoso Municipal Schools Complex.
- ◀ Sport leagues are available for adults and youth and include flag football, volleyball, and basketball. All games are held at the Horton Gym and the White Mountain Sports Complex.
- ◀ The Village of Ruidoso Municipal Swimming Pool provides swim lessons for infants through intermediate swimmers. Season passes and individual daily admission are available.
- ◀ The Village of Ruidoso Community Center offers a variety of games, exercise programs, language lessons, art classes, breakfasts and weekly potluck lunches, and other activities. The Community Center also provides free exercise equipment, pool tables, shuffleboard courts, ping-pong tables, public computers, and wifi access, and is available to rent for private events.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Ruidoso Downs is surrounded by the Lincoln National Forest, which is comprised of 1.1 million acres and contains three mountain ranges – Sacramento, Guadalupe, and Capitan. It also passes through five life zones from the Chihuahuan Desert to the Alpine Forest. The region, widely known for its superior year-round outdoor recreation activities, includes Ruidoso Downs, Ruidoso, White Mountain Wilderness, and the Mescalero Apache tribal land. Much of the area, except for tribal lands, is within the Smokey Bear Ranger District.

Camping

Dispersed camping is allowed around Ruidoso Downs, including several areas to the east of the City. Dispersed camping is a rustic experience where campers are allowed to drive up to 300 feet off an open public road onto US Forest Service land to camp. No permits are needed and there are no amenities associated with these areas.



The Smokey Bear Ranger District contains several developed campgrounds in close proximity to Ruidoso Downs, including:

- ◀ **Cedar Creek Campground and Picnic Area:** Amenities include ADA accessibility, picnic tables, toilets, drinking water, and parking.
- ◀ **Oak Grove Campground:** Amenities include ADA accessibility, 30 tent camping sites, trailer camping, picnic tables, toilets, drinking water, and parking.
- ◀ **Skyline Campground:** Amenities include tent camping sites, picnic tables, toilets, and parking.
- ◀ **Southfork Campground:** Amenities include ADA accessibility, 53 tent camping sites, RV and trailer camping, fishing at Bonito Lake, access to White Mountain Wilderness area, access to South Fork Trail, picnic tables, toilets, drinking water, and parking.
- ◀ **Three Rivers Campground:** Amenities include ADA accessibility, 12 tent camping sites, RV and trailer camping, access to White Mountain Wilderness, Three Rivers trailhead, picnic tables, toilets, drinking water, and parking.

Hiking and Backpacking

There are 79 hiking and backpacking trails in the Smokey Bear Ranger District surrounding Ruidoso Downs. All trails are considered day-hiking trails. Many of the trails are suitable for backpacking, with areas situated along the trail for overnight camping.

There are eight designated trails in the Smokey Bear Ranger District that allow mountain biking. Trails that allow mountain biking are multi-use and shared with pedestrians, horseback riders, and sometimes off-road-vehicles and motorcycles.

Horseback Riding

There are a wide variety of horseback riding opportunities near Ruidoso Downs. The Smokey Bear Ranger District has 67 trails that are accessible on horseback. The trails range from short and easily accessible for all riders to rugged backcountry trails for the experienced rider. Shorter horseback riding trips are also available through area stables, such as Grindstone Lake Stables and the Inn of the Mountain Gods.

Skiing

Ski Apache is owned and operated by the Mescalero Apache Tribe. The resort offers a broad mix of slopes, runs, and a terrain park with jumps, tubes, and rails. There are over 750 ski-able acres and 55 runs and trails in the resort. The mountain ski area contains 11 lifts to various slopes reaching the Sierra Blanca Peak. A scenic gondola ride is available to the Sierra Blanca Peak, which offers a spectacular view of the surrounding area.



HALE LAKE PROJECT

The Ruidoso area is experiencing increases in the quantity and diversity of users visiting the Lincoln National Forest. Motorized recreational activities have become more popular, and the Lincoln National Forest is responding to demand by developing forest areas suitable for these activities.

The Hale Lake area, located east of Ruidoso Downs and south of US 70, was identified by the US Forest Service as an area suitable for revising the travel system. The Hale Lake Area Management Project covers approximately 35,500 acres of forest land in the Smokey Bear Ranger District. The area will include recreational opportunities for Off Highway Vehicles (OHV), including ATVs, motorcycles, and 4x4 vehicles. This development will stem illegal motorized use in the area, begin restoration efforts, and provide a safe area for motorized recreation (see the *Hale Lake Area Management Decision map showing proposed trails and use areas, page 104*).

The Hale Lake Project Environmental Assessment Report proposed actions and alternatives developed from assessments and public input, including:

- ◀ Addition of five 4x4 motorized trails;
- ◀ Elimination and restoration of unauthorized routes;
- ◀ Restricting the use of administration use only roads;
- ◀ Construction of two new single-track trails, one for non-motorized and pedal assist e-bike use and one for non-motorized and motorcycle use;
- ◀ Construction of three parking areas;
- ◀ Construction of a short non-motorized trail to the Tunstall murder site, the infamous incident that started the Lincoln County War; and
- ◀ Other smaller projects, including wayfinding, signage, and kiosk; prevention of conflict usage; cattle guards; remediation of soils; and construction of two helipads for emergency medical and fire operations.

The Hale Lake Project is several years out from full implementation. The goal is to authorize the 4x4 trails and begin the closure of unauthorized routes to motor vehicles as soon as is feasible. The project will provide the opportunity for the City of Ruidoso Downs to benefit from expanded outdoor recreation activities for residents and visitors alike.



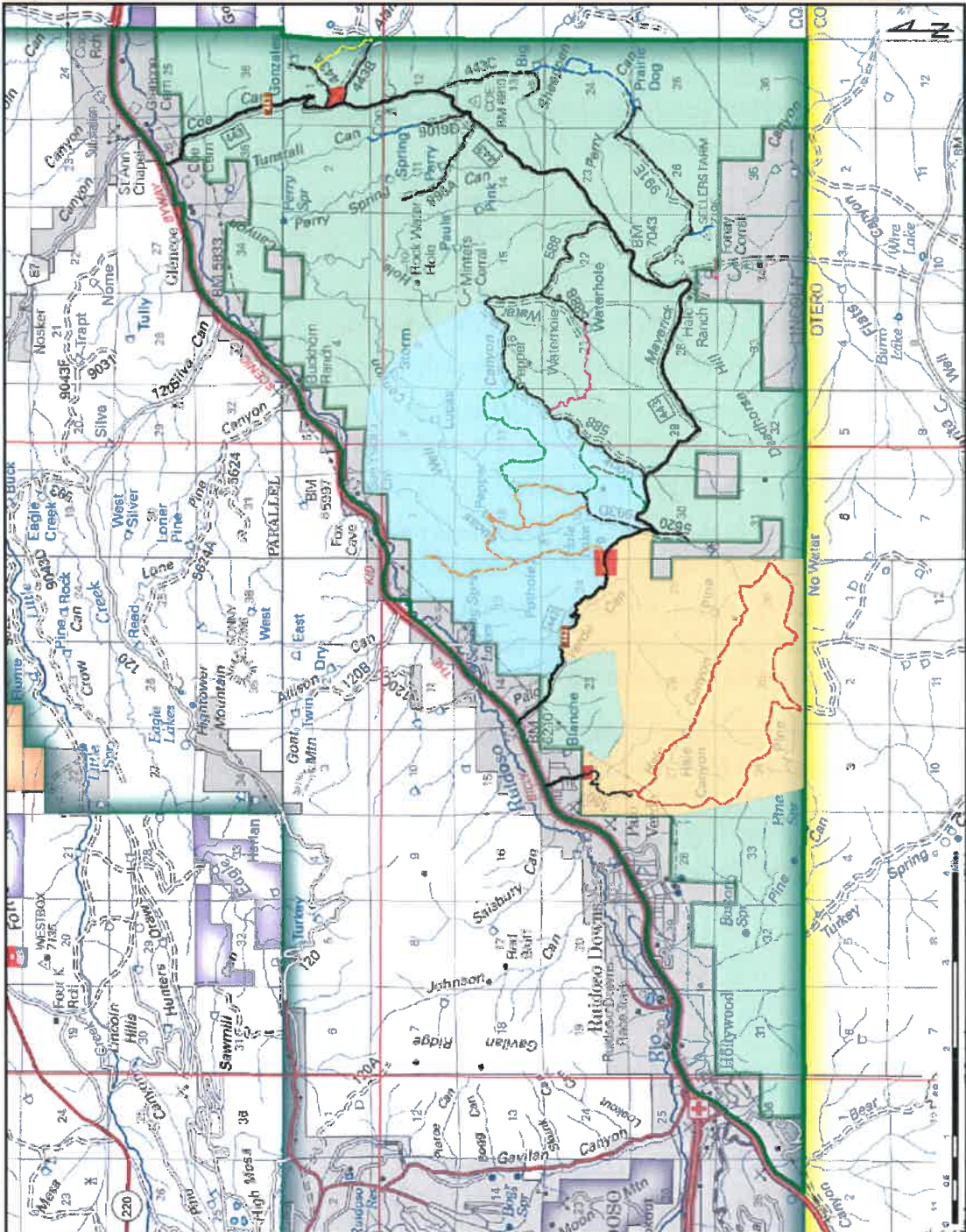
**Lincoln National Forest
 Smokey Bear
 Ranger District**

**Hale Lake Area Management
 Decision**



Legend

- Proposed Trails
 - Blue Trail
 - Green Trail
 - Orange Trail
 - Purple Trail
 - Yellow Trail
- Red Loop Under 60 inches with Seasonal Closure
- Roads Currently Open to Motorized Travel
 - High Clearance Vehicles
 - Suitable for Passenger Cars
- Proposed Use Areas
 - Single-Track Trail Area #1 - Non Motorized
 - Single-Track Trail Area #2 - Motorcycles Allowed
 - Parking Area
 - Project Area
 - Private Land



Source: USDA and US Lincoln National Forest Service.



RECREATION NEEDS

Recreation is an important quality of life aspect to the Ruidoso Downs community. Expanding recreation programming for adults and youth would help create a stronger sense of community and provide recreation opportunities closer to where residents of Ruidoso Downs live. Prioritizing the development of the long-planned teen center and working with area non-profit organizations on associated recreation programs would be an excellent step in the right direction.

In addition to organized recreation programs, over 44% of the participants in the Community Survey specifically identified local community events as important to Ruidoso Downs. Residents want to see and participate in more local outdoor events and festivals. Riverside Park and All American Park are both capable of holding large community events that cover a wide range of activities and interests. This could include festivals, concerts with local musicians, community theater, outdoor movies, car shows, arts and craft shows, farmers' markets, culture heritage days, Billy the Kid / Lincoln County War events, etc.

Community events provide an avenue to increase community pride, participation, volunteerism, and visitors to Ruidoso Downs that spend money in the community. Events and festivals have the greatest impact on a community when they can utilize local vendors, artisans, craftspeople, and restaurateurs.

6.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities provide spaces for residents to come together to socialize, learn, and grow, and are an important component in supporting a high quality of life in the community. Ruidoso Downs has a limited number of community facilities for its residents, which means they often go to Ruidoso for programs and services unavailable in their own community. The following is an overview of the facilities located in Ruidoso Downs or regional facilities that receive City funding.

RUIDOSO DOWNS SENIOR CENTER

The Lincoln County Senior Centers, a service provided by Lincoln County, operates the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center. The City of Ruidoso Downs owns the building, which is located at All American Park. The Senior Center offers a range of services and programs to Ruidoso Downs' seniors, including congregate lunch for approximately 80-90 seniors and approximately 70 home delivery meals on weekdays. Staffing includes a director, one part time staff, two cooks, and two drivers.

The Senior Center offers several programs aimed at socialization and community building, including arts and crafts, dancing, games, movies, billiards, and knitting. Seniors participate in a billiards tournament on the fourth Friday of the month. Seniors can also utilize free transportation to medical appointments and for shopping trips on an appointment only basis.



The City recently completed a comprehensive renovation of the Senior Center facility. Renovations included roof replacement, re-tiled floors throughout the building, paint, kitchen renovation, and new dining room furniture.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need for outdoor space, especially for seniors who are at high risk for negative impacts. Providing a shade structure in All American Park would be a positive improvement that would allow seniors to socialize more safely.



Boot Scootin line dancers from the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center at the Lincoln County Senior Olympics dance event.

RUIDOSO DOWNS CITY HALL

Ruidoso Downs City Hall is located at 123 Downs Drive on the south side of US 70. City Hall contains the Mayor's Office, Finance and Purchasing, Personnel, Planning and Zoning, Municipal Court, and the Police Department.

The City Hall building is aging and has been identified for replacement. One option currently being explored by the City is to move City Hall to the Hubbard Museum parking lot or to the upper wing of the Museum as a more affordable option. Moving City Hall to that location, which is also close to the Visitors Center, could jump start the creation of a centrally-located town center/ community focus area that would be more visible along US 70 and be an excellent opportunity to start the rebranding effort for Ruidoso Downs.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF CHAVES and LINCOLN COUNTIES

The Boys & Girls Club of Chaves and Lincoln Counties, established in 2012, serves about 360 children per year in grades K-12. The local facility is located in the Village of Ruidoso at 134 Reese Drive and is supported financially in part by the City of Ruidoso Downs. The programming at the Boys & Girls Club focuses on five core areas:

- ◀ Arts and cooking skills;
- ◀ Homework help and tutoring;
- ◀ Sports, fitness, and recreation;
- ◀ Health and life skills; and
- ◀ Character and leadership.

The Boys & Girls Club is open after school hours during the school year and from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm on non-school days and in the summer months. Registration and membership is on a first come, first served basis. Annual membership fees are \$20 per year; after school program is \$25 per month; non-school day program is \$12 per day; and the summer program is \$60 per week.



COMMUNITY FACILITY NEEDS

Replacement and Relocation of Ruidoso Downs City Hall

The Ruidoso Downs City Hall is an aging building that contains most of the City government offices. The replacement and relocation of the City Hall building to a centrally-located area near the Hubbard Museum would be advantageous because it will increase visibility and complement existing community amenities, creating a “town center.” A new building will provide the City with the opportunity to modernize government offices and reconfigure City Hall to serve residents more efficiently.

New Teen Center

Ruidoso Downs relies heavily on outside entities to provide recreation programs. Youth in the community have no place to socialize or engage in activities within Ruidoso Downs. The City of Ruidoso Downs identified a Teen Center as a priority capital project on its FY2021-2025 ICIP. The Teen Center would provide organized activities and opportunities for socializing in a safe environment without having to travel to Ruidoso. The Teen Center should include a range of spaces, including but not limited to:

- ◀ Computer room;
- ◀ Multipurpose room/gymnasium;
- ◀ Flexible activity/game rooms;
- ◀ Reception area and office space; and
- ◀ Snack bar.

All American Park is an ideal location for the Teen Center and would further the goal of creating a centralized town center/community focus area. The City should focus its efforts on identifying funding sources for this important community facility.

6.5 COMMUNITY HEALTH

Communities that provide adequate public and community health expand life expectancy, reduce inequalities, and are more resilient to public health emergencies. This section provides an overview of the Lincoln County Health Outcomes report and the Lincoln County Health Assessment. It also includes brief descriptions of health care providers that serve Ruidoso Downs.

LINCOLN COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT, 2020

As part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Presbyterian Healthcare Services completes a Community Health Assessment every three years to identify community health priorities and create implementation strategies. The Lincoln County Medical Center partnered with the Lincoln County Community Health Council to identify significant community health needs and develop a Community Health Assessment for 2020-2022.



The Community Health Assessment identified facilitators and barriers to good health in Lincoln County, including:

- ◀ Low prevalence of pneumococcal vaccination;
- ◀ Low prevalence of breast cancer screening;
- ◀ Low prevalence of fruit and vegetable consumption among adults;
- ◀ High prevalence of hypertension; and
- ◀ High prevalence of tobacco use.

Lincoln County is similar to New Mexico in:

- ◀ Ratio of primary care providers to population;
- ◀ Uninsured people;
- ◀ Prevalence of flu vaccine;
- ◀ Homelessness among youth;
- ◀ Fruit and vegetable consumption among youth;
- ◀ Physical activity, obesity, heavy drinking; and
- ◀ Number of poor mental health days.

Lincoln County ranked higher than New Mexico for:

- ◀ Number of mental health providers per population;
- ◀ Unemployment rate;
- ◀ Cervical cancer screening; and
- ◀ Binge drinking and alcohol consumption among youth.

The Community Health Assessment identified the following four health priorities:

- ◀ Priority 1: Increase Behavioral Health
- ◀ Priority 2: Address Social Determinants of Health
- ◀ Priority 3: Increase Access to Care
- ◀ Priority 4: Support and Promote Health Eating and Active Living

In cooperation with the Lincoln County Community Health Council, the Lincoln County Medical Center will update the community on the progress on the health care priorities through public meetings and community events.

LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS

The Annual County Health Rankings report (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Program, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2020) was consulted to understand community health in Ruidoso Downs and Lincoln County. The report illustrates how place affects wellness and longevity by measuring a variety of health indicators. It serves as a tool for pinpointing opportunities for improving overall community health. The report ranks and groups a variety of factors for each county into two summary reports categorized under Health Outcomes and Health Factors. The following



summary can assist Ruidoso Downs and public health agencies in determining priorities for expanding and improving community health.

Health Outcomes

Out of the 32 counties in New Mexico (Harding County is not counted), Lincoln County ranked 21st in overall Health Outcomes.

Comparing Lincoln County to adjacent counties, Lincoln County ranks lower than Otero (8) and Chaves (16) counties, but higher than Socorro (24) and Torrance (22) counties. Health Outcomes are measured by the following two factors:

TABLE 6.1: HEALTH OUTCOMES, 2020		
Years of Potential Life Lost	Lincoln County	New Mexico
Premature Death YPLL*	11,800	8,900
Quality of Life		
Poor or fair health	12%	21%
Poor mental health days	3.4	4.5
Low birthweight	6%	9%

*Years of Potential Life Lost. Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2020.

◀ Length of Life/

Premature Death ('Years of Potential Life Lost' before age 75 per 100,000 population): Lincoln County ranked 28th in the Length of Life/Premature Death health factor (see Table 6.1). Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) is a widely used measure of the rate and distribution of premature mortality. Measuring premature mortality, rather than overall mortality, reflects the County Health Rankings' intent to focus attention on deaths that could have been prevented. Premature death is age-adjusted; YPLL emphasizes deaths of younger persons, whereas statistics that include all mortality are dominated by deaths of the elderly. For example, using YPLL-75, a death at age 55 counts twice as much as a death at age 65, and a death at age 35 counts eight times as much as a death at age 70.

◀ **Quality of Life (self-evaluation measure based on how survey participants perceive their quality of life):** Lincoln County ranked 9th in the Quality of Life health factor. This includes metrics regarding how residents rated overall health, physical health, mental health, as well as metrics on infant mortality and low birthweight.

Health Factors

Lincoln County ranked 6th in overall Health Factors, higher than Otero (21), Chaves (22), Socorro (25), and Torrance (28) counties. Health Factors measures and Lincoln County's ranking include:

- ◀ **Health Behaviors (6th):** Food insecurity; limited access to healthy foods; drug overdose deaths; motor vehicle deaths; and insufficient sleep.
- ◀ **Clinical Care (22nd):** Uninsured adults; uninsured children; and other primary care providers.
- ◀ **Social and Economic Factors (8th):** Disconnected youth; median household income; children eligible for free or reduced price lunch; residential segregation; homicides; and firearm fatalities.



- ◀ **Physical Environment (17th):** Homeownership and severe housing cost burden.

Table 6.2 provides a summary of Health Factor measures for Lincoln County and compares them to New Mexico. Notable health metrics include:

- ◀ **Health Behaviors:** Lincoln County had a lower rate in adult smoking and adult obesity, as compared to the state-wide average. The County had a higher rate in the food environment index (0-best and 10-worst), which estimates access to healthy foods and food insecurity. However, the County had a higher rate of physical inactivity and a lower rate of access to exercise opportunities.
- ◀ **Clinical Care:** Lincoln County had a higher rate of uninsured residents and a much higher ratio of patients per physician than the state-wide average. This correlates to the higher number of preventable hospital stays in Lincoln County. Lincoln County also had a much higher ratio of residents per dentist and lower rate of flu vaccinations.

TABLE 6.2: HEALTH FACTORS, 2020		
Health Behaviors	Lincoln County	New Mexico
Adult smoking	16%	17%
Adult Obesity	23%	27%
Food environment index	6.3	4.1
Physical inactivity	25%	20%
Access to exercise opportunities	85%	77%
Clinical Care		
Uninsured	13%	11%
Primary care physicians	1,490:1	1,340:1
Dentists	2,790:1	1,490:1
Mental health providers	190:1	260:1
Preventable hospital stays	3,392	3,094
Mammography screening	32%	34%
Flu vaccinations	37%	40%
Social & Economic Factors		
High school graduation	82%	71%
Some college	56%	60%
Unemployment	4.6%	4.9%
Children in poverty	29%	25%
Income inequality	5.2	5.2
Social associations	16.0	8.3
Physical Environment		
Air pollution-particulate matter	5.6	5.9
Severe housing problems	19%	18%
Long commute-driving alone	21%	26%

Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2020.

- ◀ **Social and Economic Factors:** Lincoln County had a higher than average high school graduation rate and a lower percentage of individuals with some college. Unemployment was lower than the state-wide average and children in poverty was higher. Lincoln County residents are involved in social associations at nearly double the state-wide average.
- ◀ **Physical Environment:** Lincoln County had a lower rate of air pollution and slightly higher rate of severe housing problems, as compared to the state-wide average. Lincoln County also had a lower rate of long commute times.



HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Health care providers play a significant role in a rural community’s health, economy, and social fabric. As indicated in the Community Survey, 75% of respondents receive health care services in the Village of Ruidoso, followed by 34% in Alamogordo and 25% in Roswell. The type of health care services that most survey respondents identified as missing included general health care (78%), dentistry (71%), and specialty health care (57%).

Lincoln County Medical Center

The Lincoln County Medical Center is a Critical Access Hospital located at 211 Sudderth Drive in the Village of Ruidoso. It is the primary hospital and medical facility providing care to the residents of Ruidoso Downs. Lincoln County owns the facility and Presbyterian Healthcare Services has leased and managed the facility since 1972.



Lincoln County Medical Center Physicians Office.

The Medical Center has been recognized as one of the ‘Top Overall Hospitals’ by the New Mexico Hospital Association. In 2020, the Lincoln County Medical Center earned the Quest for Excellence Critical Access-Rural Hospital Award for improving the quality of care of patients, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The facility offers 25 private patient rooms and provides space for a wide range of medical services, including:

- ◀ Cardiology;
- ◀ Family medicine;
- ◀ General surgery;
- ◀ Internal medicine;
- ◀ Laboratory;
- ◀ Orthopedics;
- ◀ Orthopedic surgery;
- ◀ Pediatrics;
- ◀ Radiology;
- ◀ Physical and Occupational Therapy; and
- ◀ Women’s Care.

Presbyterian Medical Services Behavioral Health

Located in the Village of Ruidoso, Presbyterian Medical Services provides a variety of behavioral health services in the Ruidoso area. It serves youth and adults in individual and group settings. Specialized therapies, such as jail diversion and outpatient substance abuse treatment, are available through Presbyterian Medical Services and can be dispatched based on community need.

Lincoln County Community Assistance Program

The Lincoln County Community Assistance Program provides emotional and mental health support at no-cost to Lincoln County residents. The program includes a 24-hour, seven days a week telephone hotline staffed by professionally-licensed behavioral health specialists. Families and individuals



can have up to five sessions at no cost. Resources are also available to help defuse, assess, and address challenging mental health situations.

The Heritage Program

The Heritage Program offers individualized behavioral health to elder adults, including conflict resolution, stress management, assertiveness training, and positive living skills. The Lincoln County Medical Center administers the program.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS

Participants at the public meetings identified the lack of general practice physicians in Ruidoso Downs and the area as a concern. They cited difficulty to find a provider and long waits for appointments.

Another suggestion from the community was the development of a small urgent care center that could be located in one of the commercially-zoned parcels along US 70. An urgent care center would provide convenient services for residents and travelers within Ruidoso Downs.

6.6 PUBLIC EDUCATION

Small school districts often act as the center of social, recreational, and cultural life. Ruidoso Downs is within the Ruidoso Municipal Schools District boundary. All of the school and district facilities are located in the Village of Ruidoso, which detracts from Ruidoso Downs community life, particularly for elementary school aged children and their families.

RUIDOSO MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

The Ruidoso Municipal School District has four schools, including two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The District provides daily bus service for students from Ruidoso Downs. Table 6.3 contains enrollment statistics for each school and the number of students and relative portion from Ruidoso Downs that attend each school. In total, 25% of the school enrollment is comprised of students that live in Ruidoso Downs.

School	Grade Levels	Address	Total Enrollment	Ruidoso Downs Students	% of Total
Sierra Vista Primary School	Pre-K-2nd	199 White Mountain Drive	523	140	27%
White Mountain Elementary School	3rd-5th	203 White Mountain Drive	466	110	24%
Ruidoso Middle School	6th-8th	124 Warrior Drive	474	128	27%
Ruidoso High School	9th-12th	125 Warrior Drive	588	135	23%
TOTAL ENROLLMENT			2,051	513	25%

Source: New Mexico Public Education Department.





Ruidoso Middle School.

Academic Programming

Ruidoso Municipal Schools is dedicated to providing a well-rounded education to all students from Pre-K to 12th grade. The Pre-K program at Sierra Vista Elementary School incorporates the Region IX Head Start, which provides early learning and development to those children who qualify. The District prides itself on offering a variety of academic options in addition to the standard core of study. These include advanced placement classes and electives in the arts, trades, and languages. Students can also participate in clubs, organizations, and athletics. The District works closely with the surrounding communities and the Mescalero Apache Tribe to ensure equity to all students. The District encourages students to explore avenues to post-secondary education through online dual credit courses offered by ENMU and in person at the ENMU-Ruidoso campus.

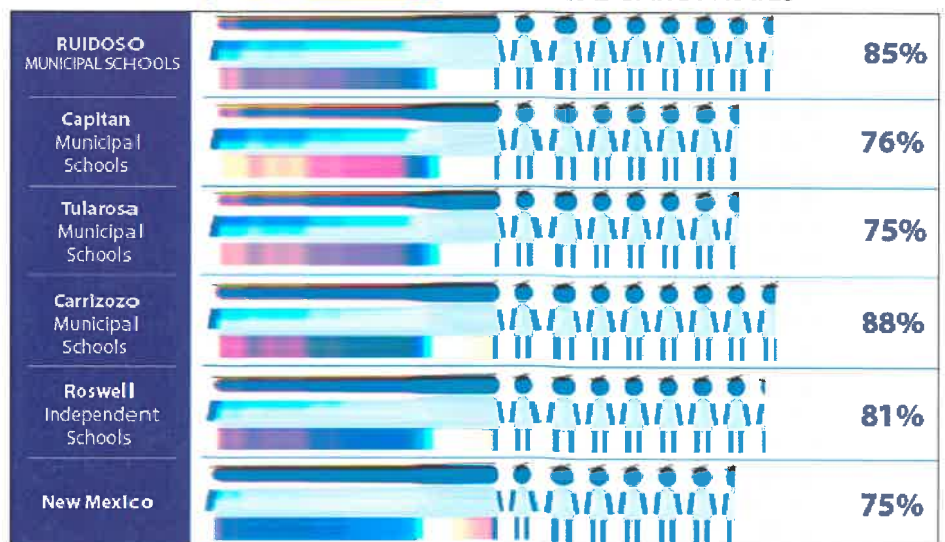
District Facilities

The Ruidoso Municipal Schools Facility Master Plan, 2016-2021 (Greer Stafford Architecture) identified several facility needs for the District, including construction of a single elementary school campus for Pre-K through 5th grade in the Village of Ruidoso. In 2018, the District constructed a major addition to Sierra Vista Primary School, which provided classroom space for Pre-K instruction. Sierra Vista Primary and White Mountain Elementary are located adjacent to each other on the same campus. In addition to school facilities, the District has a joint use agreement with the Village of Ruidoso for the community use of its athletic fields, Performing Arts Center and the Horton Gym at Ruidoso High School.

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are a good indicator of the success of a school district. In 2019, the 4-year graduation rate at Ruidoso Municipal Schools was 85%, slightly second to Carrizozo Municipal Schools, and an impressive increase from the 2010 graduation rate of 75%. In comparison, the average graduation rate for all school districts in New Mexico was 75%.

FIGURE 6.1: 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES



Source: NM Public Education Department.



POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso

The ENMU-Ruidoso campus is located at 709 Mechem Drive in the Village of Ruidoso. ENMU-Ruidoso offers certificate programs, associate degrees, and the first two years of a bachelor's degree online and in-person.

ENMU-Ruidoso features an online cybersecurity program that was designated by the National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security as a National Center of Academic Excellence. The University also offers free adult education classes, such as High School Equivalency Diploma Preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL), and tutoring services.

6.7 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 1

Deliver and maintain a high level of police, fire, and emergency services to the community.

Objectives

- ◀ *To maintain a sense of safety and security for all residents, businesses, and visitors.*
- ◀ *To achieve shorter response times to calls for police, fire, and emergency services.*
- ◀ *To ensure the Ruidoso Downs Police Department and Fire Department are adequately staffed, equipped, and receive on-going training.*
- ◀ *To build positive relationships with community members through engagement and outreach.*

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 1.1

Develop a public safety needs assessment that identifies priorities and pursues funding based on:

- ◀ Data collection on the number of past calls for non-emergency and emergency services in Ruidoso Downs over the past five years and sorted by type;
- ◀ Training and certification needs, including training related to legalized cannabis, DWI, domestic abuse, and wildfires;
- ◀ Communications technology, equipment, and vehicle needs;
- ◀ Facility needs, including a new fire substation and new fire hydrants on the east side of Ruidoso Downs to ensure adequate fire suppression coverage;
- ◀ Adequate staffing levels needed improve and maintain a higher level of response times; and
- ◀ Strategies for recruiting more officers.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 1.2

Host and participate in community events and informal meetings to solicit feedback on concerns from residents and business owners in regard to public safety services in Ruidoso Downs.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 2

Build a healthy community through an integrated system of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and activities.

Objectives

- ◀ *To meet the recreation and fitness needs of youth, adults, and seniors in Ruidoso Downs.*
- ◀ *To promote equal access to outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities.*
- ◀ *To promote community pride and identity through hosting family-oriented community events.*

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 2.1

Develop and administer an on-going preventative maintenance program and prioritize improvements at the City's park facilities that include:

- ◀ Regular safety inspections and installation or replacement of playground equipment as needed;
- ◀ Maintenance and replacement of irrigation systems, turf and plant materials, and ball field equipment;
- ◀ Installation of shade structures;
- ◀ Installation of playground equipment and outdoor fitness equipment at Riverside Park;
- ◀ ADA upgrades; and
- ◀ Water conservation through xeriscape principles of design and irrigation best practices.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 2.2

Identify and secure funding for the programming, design, and construction of a new teen center. This strategy should include:

- ◀ A needs gap analysis determined in part by talking directly to Ruidoso Downs youth about what types of programs they believe should be offered at the teen center;
- ◀ Analysis of the types of programs and activities that are currently available through Ruidoso Municipal Schools;
- ◀ Determination of what types of services and facilities by private and non-profits that are currently available to Ruidoso Downs' youth;
- ◀ Potential locations where a teen center could be located, including but not limited to, All American Park; and
- ◀ Estimated cost and potential funding sources.



Community Services & Facilities Strategy 2.3

Acquire property for the development of a new public park that serves the neighborhood areas south of US 70, as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario. The park design should include an access point to adjacent forest land.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 2.4

Coordinate with local volunteer groups to identify, establish, and co-host new community events in Ruidoso Downs, such as concerts, car shows, arts and crafts shows, community theater, movies in the park, farmers' markets, etc.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 2.5

Work with regional partners, such as Lincoln National Forest, Village of Ruidoso, Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Tribe, on expanding access to outdoor recreation experiences, including camping, hiking, horseback riding, and skiing in proximity to Ruidoso Downs.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 3

Provide and expand access to community facilities to meet the social and educational needs of the community.

Objectives

- ◀ *To ensure community facility needs of residents are being met through acquisition and capital improvements to existing facilities.*
- ◀ *To support the ability of seniors to remain active and maintain meaningful social connections.*

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 3.1

Complete a needs assessment that determines existing and future facility needs of the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center. This strategy should include securing funding to meet the identified facility needs.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 3.2

Develop an on-going preventative maintenance and replacement program for the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 3.3

Secure funding to program, design, and construct a new City Hall facility that provides adequate accommodations and space for the efficient delivery of municipal services and a public meeting space.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 3.4

Continue providing financial support to the Boys & Girls Club of Chaves and Lincoln Counties. This strategy should also include working with the organization on expanding programming in Ruidoso Downs, including at the future teen center.



COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 4

Improve and expand access to health care services to meet the needs of the community.

Objectives

- ◀ *To ensure Ruidoso Downs residents have access to a full range of health care services.*
- ◀ *To ensure there are an adequate number of health care professionals to serve the community.*
- ◀ *To coordinate with local and regional health care providers on strategies for increasing access to health care services in Ruidoso Downs.*

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 4.1

Collaborate with Lincoln County Medical Center and other health care providers on disseminating information on community health care services available to the Ruidoso Downs community.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 4.2

Advocate for and pursue the development of an urgent care center in Ruidoso Downs that would serve the medical needs of the Ruidoso Downs community. This could include Presbyterian Healthcare Services or a different medical provider.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 4.3

Participate with Lincoln County Medical Center and regional partners on developing strategies to improve health outcomes, increase access to general health care, vaccinations and breast cancer screening, dental services, and behavioral health services for Ruidoso Downs' residents.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 4.4

Recruit a senior care provider that offers assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing services to allow Ruidoso Downs seniors to age in place.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 5

Support equal access to quality education and learning opportunities for residents of all ages.

Objectives

- ◀ *To ensure educational programming and opportunities are available to all Ruidoso Downs residents.*
- ◀ *To promote the attainment of a higher level of education as a means for residents to improve their quality of life.*
- ◀ *To increase community access to education and dual credit programs.*

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 5.1

Initiate and participate in a dialogue between the City of Ruidoso Downs, Ruidoso Municipal Schools, ENMU-Ruidoso, and Lincoln County on



educational initiatives, online course offerings, dual credit programs, workforce training programs, and expanding career opportunities for high school students and graduates.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 5.2

Support and pursue funding for adult education programs and classes, including GED preparation, ESL, computer literacy, and career training, in collaboration with ENMU-Ruidoso, New Mexico Workforce Connection, and Lincoln County.

Community Services & Facilities Strategy 5.3

Collaborate with Ruidoso Municipal Schools and New Mexico Public Schools Facility Authority (PSFA) on determining the feasibility of a new elementary school to be located within Ruidoso Downs. The feasibility study should include, but not be limited to:

- ◀ Enrollment projections;
- ◀ Programming and capacity needs;
- ◀ Design and construction costs;
- ◀ Cost savings related to reduction in bus transportation; and
- ◀ Public input.



CHAPTER 7

TRANSPORTATION



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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Transportation mobility ensures community members can get to where they need to go with a variety of options. A multi-modal approach is needed to balance the mobility needs of the community through streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, off-street trails, and transit. This is inclusive of community members who drive vehicles and those who do not drive either by choice or because of age, ability, or financial reasons.

The Transportation element provides policy direction to guide programs, priorities, and investments in maintenance and long-term capital improvements. It provides a description and analysis of the conditions of the current transportation system in the City of Ruidoso Downs, and needs for the future. A general assessment of the local/government street network is provided along with recommendations for improvements of these systems.

7.2 STREET NETWORK

The local street network within Ruidoso Downs consists of approximately 17 miles of roadways. The majority of the streets are paved asphalt. A single arterial, US 70, runs east to west and is maintained by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). The section of US 70 through Ruidoso Downs is designated as a New Mexico Priority Freight Corridor and serves regional truck traffic in addition to local and regional passenger vehicles. Residential streets connect to the highway from the north and south.



Eastbound on the US 70 corridor.

In 2019, the American Community Survey (ACS) found that over 90% of the residents of Ruidoso Downs in the workforce commuted to work by car, truck, or van. Of these commuters, 71% worked outside Ruidoso Downs and 6% worked outside Lincoln County. Only 4% of workers walked to work and 6% worked at home. The mean travel time to work was 14 minutes, below the statewide average of 22 minutes.



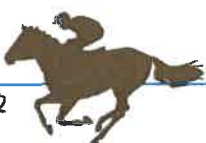
The *FHWA Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria and Procedures Manual* (2013) and the *NMDOT Functional Classification Guidance Manual* (2013) describe the functional classification of roads, which are sorted in to seven groups. The classifications are determined separately from the area, which is designated as urban or rural. Classifications 1-3 are similar for urban and rural areas.

The following descriptions refer to the rural classification that pertains to the City of Ruidoso Downs:

- ◀ **Principal Arterial:** Principal Arterials serve as the major roadway system and are designed to carry the largest amount of vehicular traffic, provide a high degree of mobility, and serve the major population and commercial centers of the community. Principal Arterials should have limited access at on and off ramp locations or at a limited number of at-grade intersections. US 70 is designated as a Principal Arterial; therefore, it is maintained by the NMDOT and is eligible to receive federal transportation funds.
- ◀ **Minor Arterial:** Minor Arterials serve as secondary major routes that provide service for trips of moderate length, serve smaller geographic areas than Principal Arterials, and generally have lower posted speed limits and less traffic. There are no roadways in Ruidoso Downs classified as a Minor Arterial.
- ◀ **Major and Minor Collector:** Major Collectors serve to gather and direct traffic from local roads to arterial roadways. The differences between Major and Minor Collectors are sometimes small. Generally, Major Collectors routes are longer, higher speed limits, are spaced at greater intervals, and have higher traffic volumes than Minor Collectors. There are no roadways in Ruidoso Downs classified as a Major or Minor Collector.
- ◀ **Local:** Local roads account for the most number of miles in a roadway system. With the exception of US 70, all of the roadways in Ruidoso Downs are classified as Local roads. Local roads provide direct access to residences and are designed to discourage through traffic, have lower speed limits, and support a lower level of traffic volume.

POTENTIAL RECLASSIFICATIONS

As mentioned above, with the exception of US 70, all streets in Ruidoso Downs except for US 70 are local roads. However, there are a number of streets that appear to be functioning as major roadways, Collectors or above, that would benefit from reclassification (see *list below and Functional Classification map, page 124*). In order to reclassify streets in Ruidoso Downs, a traffic analysis should be conducted in consultation with the Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO), that determines traffic volumes, function, access, and speed.



Some of the streets that appear to be functioning above a local road, include:

- ◀ Short Drive
- ◀ 2nd Street
- ◀ Downs Drive
- ◀ Spring Road
- ◀ Griffith Drive
- ◀ Agua Fria Drive
- ◀ N. Central Drive
- ◀ Parker Road
- ◀ Heights Drive
- ◀ Dipaolo Hill Drive
- ◀ Miriam Drive

7.3 STREET CONDITIONS

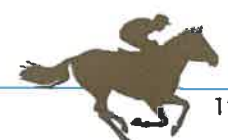
The NMDOT maintains US 70, which is a four-lane, divided US Highway with sidewalks along both sides and relatively frequent at-grade intersections. Approximately 17 miles of local streets connect to the north and south of US 70. Some streets have curb and gutter installed, although many streets include roadside ditches. Table 7.1 provides ratings for existing street conditions, which was determined by the City of Ruidoso Downs in 2017. Approximately 41% of the streets were characterized as “good”, 25% were characterized as “fair”, and 34% were in poor condition. Improving existing street conditions is a top priority for the City of Ruidoso Downs. This need was reinforced by the Community Survey results that showed when given a choice of ten transportation and infrastructure related options that the City of Ruidoso Downs should focus on, 79.8% of the Community Survey participants said improving and maintaining streets.

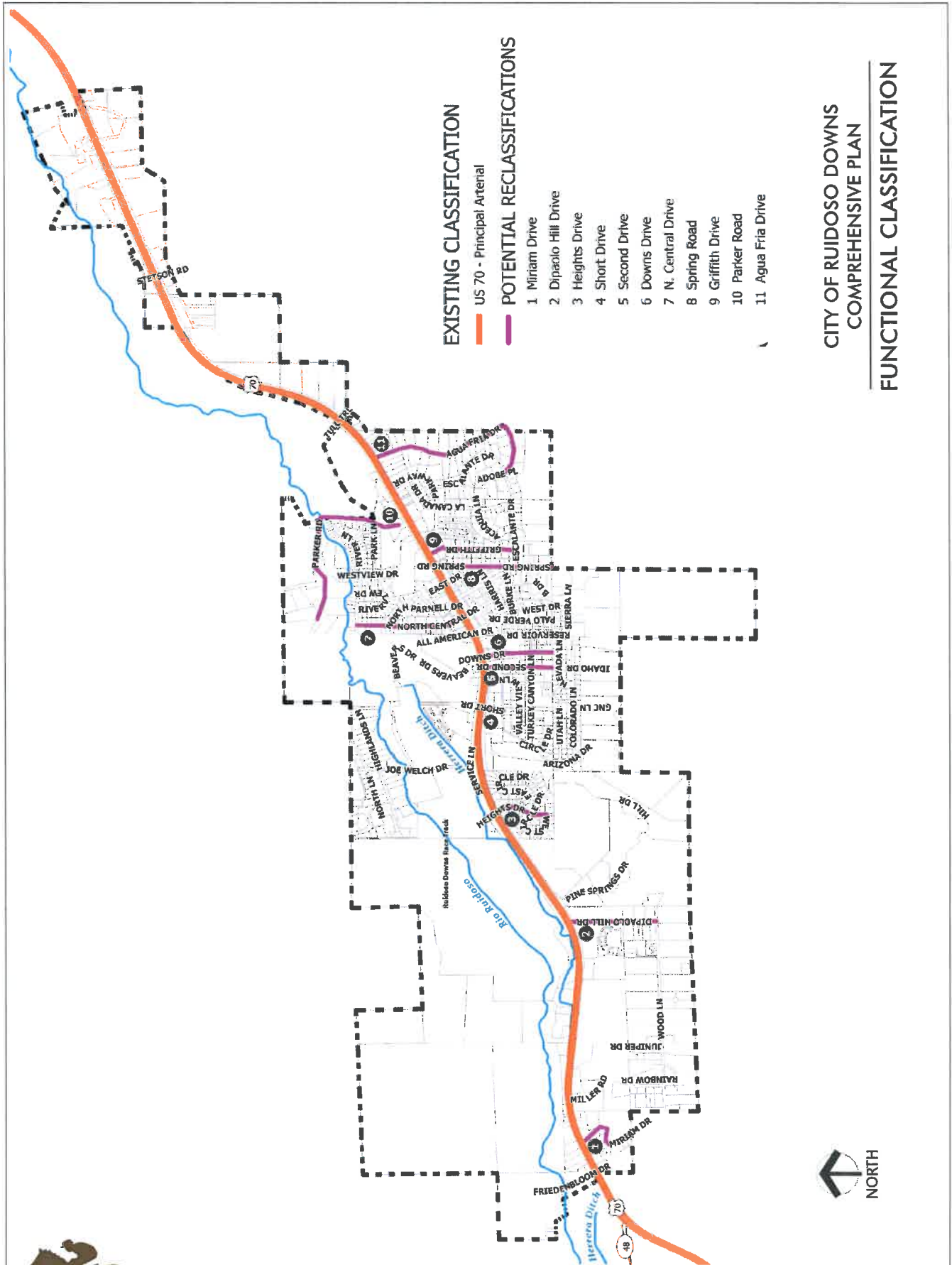
	Feet	Miles	Share
Good	32,934	6.24	37%
Good/Gravel	1,784	0.34	2%
Fair	16,701	3.16	19%
Fair/Gravel	1,470	0.28	2%
Fair Base/Gravel	4,163	0.79	5%
Poor	31,101	5.89	35%
TOTAL	88,153	16.70	100%

Source: Dennis Engineering, 2017.



New pavement, curb, and gutter on Dipaolo Hill Drive.



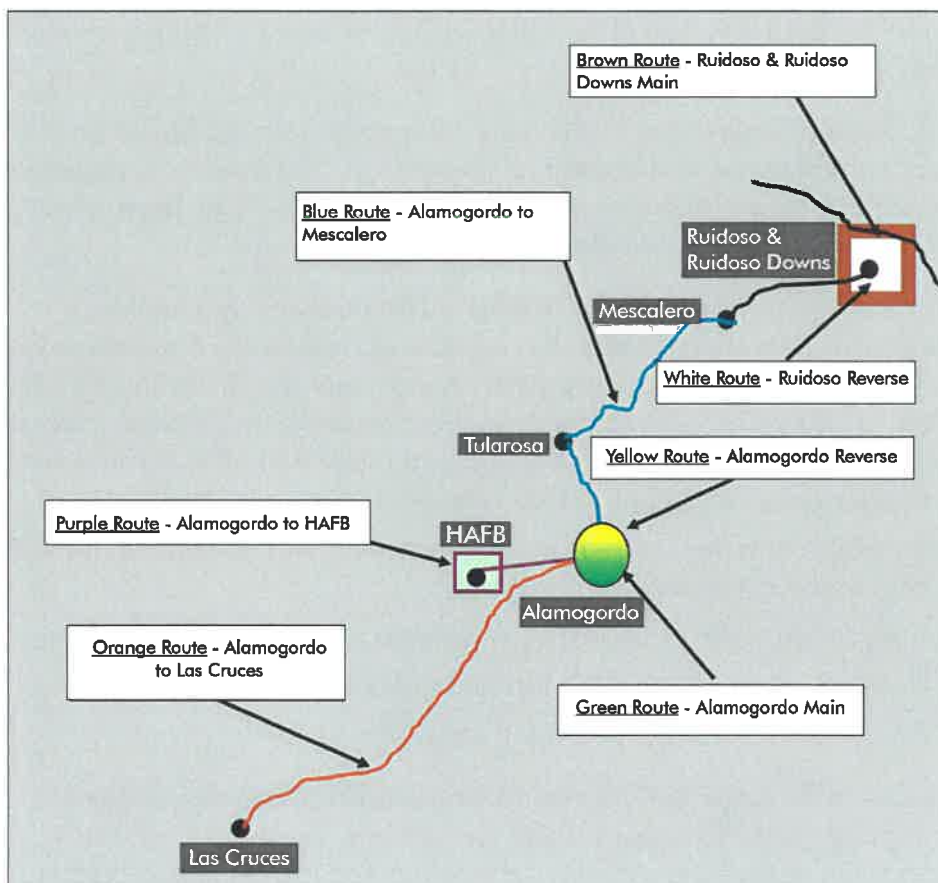


7.4 TRANSIT

Public transportation is provided in Ruidoso Downs by Zia Transportation (ZTrans), as a service of Zia Therapy Center in Alamogordo. ZTrans serves Ruidoso and Ruidoso Downs with paratransit and Senior Dial-a-Ride transit service, in addition to fixed routes. Only 4% of participants in the Community Survey reported that they use ZTrans. The following routes are provided in the region:

- ◀ Brown Route: Serving Ruidoso Downs and Ruidoso
- ◀ White Route: Ruidoso to Mescalero
- ◀ Blue Route: Alamogordo to Mescalero by way of Tularosa
- ◀ Orange Route: Alamogordo to Las Cruces
- ◀ Purple Route: Alamogordo to Holloman Air Force Base
- ◀ Green Route and Yellow Route: Serving Alamogordo

Greyhound Lines also provides intercity bus service to Ruidoso Downs on US 70 between Amarillo and Las Cruces. As of Spring 2021, the Greyhound bus runs four days a week in each direction with a stop at the Shamrock gas station.



ZTRANS ROUTES



7.5 PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY and BIKE FACILITIES

A healthy community supports an accessible multi-modal transportation system. The only public sidewalk in Ruidoso Downs is along US 70 and consists of two sections. The first section starts at approximately Griffith Drive and goes west to approximately 577 feet past Short Drive. The second section starts at approximately 584 feet west of Heights Drive and goes west to the municipal boundary, and then continues further west into the Village of Ruidoso. The local streets in Ruidoso Downs do not include sidewalks and there are no designated bike lanes within the City. Riverside Park contains a walking trail along the Rio Ruidoso. Adding a new walking trail at the 80-acre open space (as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario) on the south side of the Ruidoso Downs would provide additional walking amenities for residents.



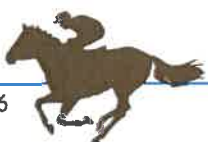
Riverside Park walking trail.

A Walk Score measures the “walkability” of a neighborhood based on distance to nearby destinations and pedestrian friendliness. The website Walkscore.com rated Ruidoso Downs with a very low Walk Score of 15 (“Car-Dependent”) out of 100 possible points, since almost all trips require a car.

While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require that municipalities provide sidewalks, it is intended to guarantee that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else, including mobility. The lack of sidewalks, ADA ramps, and other accessibility elements makes it difficult for people with mobility challenges to move within the community. The ADA standards for wheelchair ramps require:

- ◀ A ramp with a minimum of 36 inches in width, running slope of 8.33% or less, and a cross slope of 2% or less;
- ◀ A minimum width of 36 inches in clear space at the top of the ramp;
- ◀ Flush transition points at the top and bottom of the ramp; and
- ◀ Flared sides or vertical (returned) edges.

The results of the Community Survey further underscore the deep need for improving pedestrian access in Ruidoso Downs. The most common transportation related choices (after “improving and maintaining streets”) included “improving/adding sidewalks” and “improving/adding multi-use trails”.



7.6 AVIATION

The Sierra Blanca Regional Airport is the nearest public use airport. It is located approximately 20 miles northeast of Ruidoso Downs near Fort Stanton at an altitude of 6,813.5 feet. The Village of Ruidoso owns and operates the Airport, which is classified by the FAA as a “general aviation” airport. The Community Survey revealed very few residents in Ruidoso Downs are currently utilizing the Sierra Blanca Regional Airport.

The Sierra Blanca Regional Airport supports approximately 14,000 annual operations. There are two runways, including Runway 6/24 (8,120 feet long by 100 feet wide) and Runway 12/30 (6,309 feet by 75 feet wide). For the 12-month period ending December 31, 2019, the Airport averaged 39 aircraft operations per day, with 55% being transient general aviation, 24% military, 13% local general aviation, 7% air taxi, and less than 1% commercial. Airport services include fueling, airfield inspections and maintenance, leasing, staffing airport rescue firefighting, and terminal services.

7.7 INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Due to limited funding from the NMDOT’s Local Government Road Fund (LGRF), the City of Ruidoso Downs can only accomplish small portions of roadway improvements per year. Compounding this problem is that little local funding is available for roadway improvements. A continued effort in mapping the conditions of the roads is a priority. Using a pavement management system to prioritize road reconstruction and rehabilitation would help plan the improvements and most effectively utilize the limited funds available.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Municipal Arterial Program (MAP), and Transportation Project Fund grants are potential funding sources. These programs allow for roadway, water, and sewer improvements to be constructed at the same time to avoid future problems if the sewer or water system beneath a roadway fails shortly after a road is replaced.

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

The Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO) identified regional transportation conditions, goals, priorities, strategies, and implementation steps for NMDOT in the Southeast Regional Transportation Plan (2017). Regional issues include road maintenance, recreational opportunities, connectivity, freight, safety, transit, and water availability. Goals identified in the Plan include:

- ◀ Operate with transparency and accountability;
- ◀ Improve safety and public health for all system users;



- ◀ Preserve and maintain the transportation system over the long term;
- ◀ Enhance multi-modal mobility, connectivity, and accessibility; and
- ◀ Respect New Mexico’s culture, history, environment and quality of life.

The Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District (SNMEDD) jointly manages the SERTPO, in cooperation with the Eastern Plains Council of Government (EPCOG). The City of Ruidoso Downs has a representative on the Policy and Technical Committees, which can help the City stay apprised of regional projects, and state and federal funding sources. The SERTPO coordinates with NMDOT District staff to review and approve projects for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), which is necessary for federal funding.

7.8 TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

DETERIORATED STREET CONDITIONS

Approximately 60% of streets in Ruidoso Downs have been rated as being in fair to poor condition. Street conditions are a major concern for residents, with the majority indicating maintaining and improving streets should be a primary focus of the City of Ruidoso Downs. Street conditions will continue to deteriorate if this issue does not get addressed.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The City could more effectively plan for future improvements by completing a traffic analysis that evaluates streets for potential reclassification to Collector or above. This should be done in coordination with SERTPO.

STREET, SIDEWALK, & BIKE IMPROVEMENTS

Improving the safety of streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers is needed in Ruidoso Downs. Traffic calming, such as curb extensions at intersections, pedestrian crosswalks, roundabouts, or street narrowing, would help slow traffic and make conditions safer for all. Adding sidewalks within rights-of-way and off-street trails would give pedestrians and bicyclists safer options and provide a means of linking residential areas with the City Center.



7.9 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1

Establish an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that is safe, efficient, and well-planned.

Objective

- ◀ *To address and balance the mobility needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.*
- ◀ *To establish a well-defined hierarchy of roadway classifications including arterials, collectors, and local roadways.*
- ◀ *To provide roadway facilities to meet the needs of residents and businesses without detracting from the small town character of Ruidoso Downs.*
- ◀ *To provide more walkable streets through the installation and maintenance of sidewalks, ADA improvements and ramps, and streetlights.*

Transportation Strategy 1.1

Submit a grant application to the New Mexico Finance Authority for a Transportation Asset Management Plan that contains:

- ◀ A Pavement Management Program that identifies all roadway and bridge assets and existing conditions;
- ◀ Cost projections for future needs and improvements to the roadway system;
- ◀ Funding strategies;
- ◀ Phased list of prioritized projects according to existing condition, traffic volume served, support for public services and tax base, and leveraging potential; and
- ◀ Coordination of projects with the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP).

Transportation Strategy 1.2

Prepare and implement a sidewalk construction phasing plan that includes priorities, conformance with the American Disabilities Act, and construction cost estimates. The plan should prioritize roadways in high activity areas with heavier traffic volumes.

Transportation Strategy 1.3

Conduct a traffic analysis that determines traffic volumes, function, access, and speed to determine which local streets would be appropriate for functional reclassification. This strategy should include coordination with and support from SERTPO for changes to functional classification.

Transportation Strategy 1.4

Create an off-street trails and bikeways plan that is designed to provide linkages between residential neighborhoods and to commercial areas and



destinations. Utilize best practices and the most recent American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities standards. As part of this strategy, construct a walking trail at the 80-acre open space parcel, as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario.

Transportation Strategy 1.5

Coordinate with NMDOT on a phased streetscape improvement plan for US 70 that includes widened sidewalks, ADA compliant ramps, pedestrian crossings, landscaping, lighting, and bike lanes. Determine the feasibility of adding bicycle lanes within US 70 right-of-way.

Transportation Strategy 1.6

Pursue funding for transportation projects through NMDOT programs, as applicable, including the Local Government Road Fund; Municipal Arterial Program (MAP); Cooperative Projects; Safety Project; Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Program; Transportation Alternatives; and Recreational Trails Program.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2

Maintain and improve street conditions and connectivity of local roadways in Ruidoso Downs.

Objective

- ◀ *To provide on-going monitoring of the existing conditions of local roads, including surface condition, drainage facilities, and traffic control.*
- ◀ *To ensure new roadways associated with development are built to adopted standards and minimize the impact on the natural terrain.*

Transportation Strategy 2.1

Create a preventative street maintenance plan that prioritizes and secures funding for resurfacing and reconstruction of deteriorated streets, and annual maintenance activities, including resurfacing, paving, crack sealing, and pavement marking.

Transportation Strategy 2.2

Develop traffic control standards, such as curb extensions, access policies, and traffic control signage, to promote traffic safety along the US 70 corridor and in residential neighborhoods.

Transportation Strategy 2.3

Implement a policy that requires a traffic impact analysis for new development that is projected to cause a significant increase in traffic volume. This strategy should include a requirement that where improvements to the roadway system are necessary to mitigate impacts, the private developer is financially responsible for the improvements.



TRANSPORTATION GOAL 3

Expand access to transit services for residents of Ruidoso Downs.

Objective

- ◀ *To ensure that residents with mobility, medical, or financial challenges have access to medical appointments, shopping, and other services.*
- ◀ *To provide intercity transportation services to Ruidoso, Alamogordo, and Roswell.*

Transportation Strategy 3.1

Coordinate with Zia Transportation (ZTrans) and the Village of Ruidoso to create a Transit Action Plan to improve and maintain local fixed route, paratransit, and Senior Dial-a-Ride transit service.

Transportation Strategy 3.2

Determine the feasibility of expanding transit service to regional attractions, such as Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Hubbard Museum of the American West, Billy the Kid National Scenic Byway Visitors Center, and other points of interest in the region.

Transportation Strategy 3.3

Work with the SERTPO and regional partners to improve and maintain intercity transit service to Ruidoso, Roswell, and Alamogordo.



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CHAPTER 8
INFRASTRUCTURE



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8.1 INTRODUCTION

Infrastructure refers to the fundamental systems of water supply and delivery, wastewater collection and treatment, and stormwater management that form the basic building blocks of urban living typically managed by municipal government. These are accompanied by other essential services often managed by private entities that make living in urban areas possible and desirable.

The Infrastructure element describes each of these infrastructure and utility systems and works in concert with the Land Use element to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to serve Ruidoso Downs' existing development and future growth. This chapter describes the infrastructure systems serving Ruidoso Downs, including water, wastewater, stormwater, electric and natural gas service, telecommunications, and solid waste. The chapter also discusses the Colonias Infrastructure Fund and programs, and capital improvements.

8.2 WATER

The *Ruidoso Downs Water System Preliminary Engineering Report* (Dennis Engineering Company, 2018) provides much of the existing conditions information presented in this section. It includes an overview of Ruidoso Downs' water supply, water distribution system, water quality, and water conservation efforts.



Griffith Spring House.

WATER SUPPLY

The City of Ruidoso Downs' primary source of water is supplied by a natural spring. The City also operates two wells that draw water from the Permian Yeso Formation of the regional aquifer. The natural spring, known as Griffith Spring, is located adjacent to the intersection of B Street and Sierra Lane in the south-central area of Ruidoso Downs. The spring water is piped from the Griffith Spring House to a clear well, then to a disinfection facility near the spring. The water is then pumped from the clear well into one of three storage tanks: 1) 1,000,000-gallon tank (Spring Reservoir); 2) 250,000-gallon tank (Spring Tank #1); or 3) 118,000-gallon tank (Spring Tank #2). All three tanks are located adjacent to the Griffith Spring House.

In addition to these options, spring water may also be pumped directly into the City's water distribution system. If the three tanks are full, and water does





Spring Reservoir, Spring Tank #2 and Spring Tank #1.

not need to be pumped directly into the water system, the water will overflow into a 6-inch steel waterline and fill the 100,000-gallon Agua Fria Tank. This tank is located approximately 1/10-mile northeast of the spring at the south end of Spring Road. In addition, water from any of these tanks (Spring Reservoir, Spring Tank #1, or Spring

Tank #2) can also fill the 500,000-gallon Redman Tank. A project to replace the 118,000 gallon and 250,000-gallon tanks with a 750,000 gallon tank is currently under construction.

The City of Ruidoso Downs operates two wells, including the Denton Well located next to All American Park and the Riverside Well located on the east side of Joe Welch Drive. The Denton Well delivers water via a submersible pump to a disinfection facility, then to the 100,000-gallon Denton Tank adjacent to the pump house. The water is then delivered to the distribution system through a booster station. The Riverside Well has a submersible pump that pumps water to a disinfection facility and then directly into the water distribution system.

The condition of the tanks varies; some are in good to fair condition and others are recommended for substantial rehabilitation or replacement. In total, the City has five storage reservoirs having a combined total capacity of 2.45 million gallons.

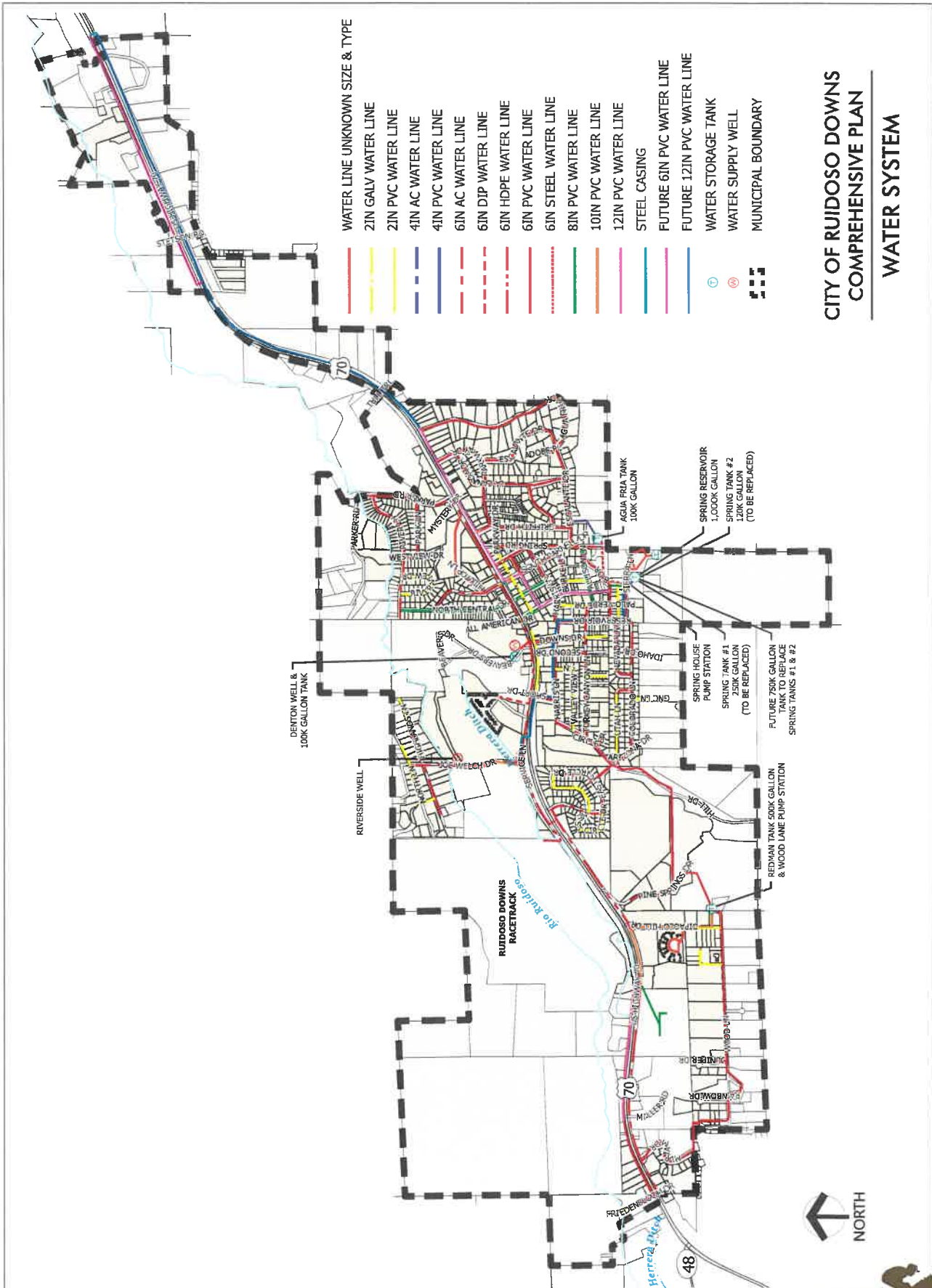
WATER DISTRIBUTION

The City's Water System Asset Management Plan was completed in March 2019. The water distribution system is a mix of PVC, galvanized steel, steel, ductile iron pipe, HDPE, and asbestos cement that range in size from 2-inches to 12-inches. In total, there are approximately 118,817 linear feet of water distribution lines, including:

- ◀ Approximately 17,254 linear feet of 2-inch lines and lines of unknown size;
- ◀ 746 linear feet of 4-inch lines;
- ◀ 82,900 linear feet of 6-inch lines;
- ◀ 4,841 linear feet of 8-inch lines;
- ◀ 4,548 of 10-inch lines; and
- ◀ 8,528 linear feet of 12-inch lines.

Out of the ten transportation and infrastructure improvement options listed in the Community Survey, over 41% of the respondents said the City should focus on expanding and maintaining the water system.





Past records have indicated the amount of water pumped from wells and piped from the Spring was substantially higher than the amount of water sold. This difference is known as unaccounted-for water (UFW). The UFW averaged 31% per month and at one point was as high as 54% for the 2016-2017 time period. Data for subsequent years was unclear; therefore, a UFW for more recent time periods cannot be calculated. In order to obtain reliable and an accurate UFW percentage, an accounting system accurately tracking what is pumped/obtained from the Spring versus what is sold should be implemented.

TABLE 8.1: UNACCOUNTED WATER SUMMARY 2016-2017			
	Source Water (gallons)	Water Sold (gallons)	% Unaccounted for Water
January 2016	12,148,999	8,725,910	28%
February 2016	10,858,984	7,295,078	33%
March 2016	11,447,984	6,534,580	43%
April 2016	11,034,865	6,027,557	45%
May 2016	11,501,090	10,095,215	12%
June 2016	9,659,254	7,259,412	25%
July 2016	11,242,300	10,996,053	2%
August 2016	11,297,946	7,256,335	36%
September 2016	11,160,000	7,948,430	29%
October 2016	11,160,000	5,612,110	50%
November 2016	10,465,700	7,503,980	28%
December 2016	10,019,540	4,606,750	45%
January 2017	8,781,447	7,126,060	19%
February 2017	9,774,013	7,293,780	25%
March 2017	10,677,843	5,490,299	49%
April 2017	10,306,739	5,256,582	49%
May 2017	10,655,273	8,354,760	22%
June 2017	10,955,720	7,985,860	27%
July 2017	11,694,928	8,503,927	27%
August 2017	10,846,212	8,329,801	23%
September 2017	11,352,438	8,939,707	21%
October 2017	8,030,606	6,461,607	20%
November 2017	9,668,345	5,698,440	41%
December 2017	10,629,398	6,162,863	42%

Source: Dennis Engineering.

There are approximately 1,000 water meters in Ruidoso Downs. All of the meters are read remotely using electronic radio-read meters. The revenue collected from monthly water utility charges helps fund the City of Ruidoso Downs' operation and maintenance costs for the Water Department.

The City of Ruidoso Downs has several billing categories for the water system, including residential and commercial, and each category has its own base rate and billing rate depending on the amount of water consumed. A review



of the billing software identified inconsistent patterns as to how water is billed. Based on this review, a rate study should be performed to provide a clear and concise methodology of determining how and why rates will be modified to keep up with the Water Department needs (i.e. maintenance, matching funds for various funding programs).

In 2021, the City of Ruidoso Downs completed design of the *East Distribution System Expansion* project and began construction to provide water to the east part of the community, including installation of fire hydrants. In addition, the City is planning to annex the area in the northeast part of the City south of US 70, accessed by Stetson Road. This new annexation area will receive water service as part of this project.

Fire suppression is provided throughout Ruidoso Downs through approximately 150 fire hydrants. For the most part, the City's fire hydrants are spaced at intervals of 350 feet to 600 feet as is recommended by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). As noted in the PER, locations along Wood Lane, Turkey Canyon Lane, Highlands Lane, and North Lane lack adequate fire protection and there are fire hydrants throughout the system that are in need of repair or replacement.

WATER QUALITY

According to the Annual Water Quality report from 2016 on the City's website, no levels of contaminants were found to be in violation of government standards. As mentioned above, some portions of the City are still supplied water through asbestos cement water lines (approximately 41,200 linear feet) the majority of which was installed in the 1960s. The American Water Works Association states that exposure of humans to inhalation of asbestos is associated with specific types of cancer. This is especially dangerous when cutting or repairing asbestos cement water lines. Asbestos fibers are typically not found in drinking water in dangerous amounts unless there is corrosion to the pipe wall. The City last tested for asbestos in May 2013, and the result was "Not Detected at the Reporting Limit".

WATER CONSERVATION

The City of Ruidoso Downs adopted a Drought Contingency Plan that uses a system of Stage 1-5 water rationing, with Stage 5 being the most restrictive. The stages are primarily based on the flow of Griffith Spring, which provides anywhere from 95-99% of the City's water supply but could be put into place based on the state's limitations or impairments to the system. The goal of Stages 1, 2, 3, and 4 is to reduce daily water demand by 20%, 30%, 40%, and 50%, respectively. Stage 5 rationing occurs with a major line break, system contamination, or other condition that disrupts the capability of the City to provide water service.



8.3 WASTEWATER

The City's wastewater collection system is comprised of a series of gravity sewer lines, manholes, and lift stations. This service is provided to most of the developed areas in the City of Ruidoso Downs; however, some lots are still served by individual septic systems. The wastewater from the community drains into a trunk interceptor that follows the Rio Ruidoso to a regional wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) northeast of the City. The WWTP treats an average 1.5 million gallons of sewage per day. The City owns and maintains all of the sewer lines within its boundary, except for the trunk interceptor line. Out of the ten transportation and infrastructure improvement options listed in the Community Survey, over 35% of the respondents said the City should focus on expanding and maintaining the water system.

The trunk interceptor is owned by the Ruidoso-Ruidoso Downs Regional WWTP Joint Use Board (RRDRJUB). The RRDRJUB is a partnership between the Village of Ruidoso and the City of Ruidoso Downs formed in the late 1970's to operate the trunk interceptor line and the WWTP. The cost for operation and maintenance of the interceptor line and WWTP is split 85/15, with the City of Ruidoso Downs paying 15%. The split was determined by comparing the amount of flow contributed by the two municipalities at a flow metering station located between the boundaries of the Village and the City. As majority partner on the Board, the Village of Ruidoso has the responsibility of operating and maintaining the trunk interceptor line and the WWTP.

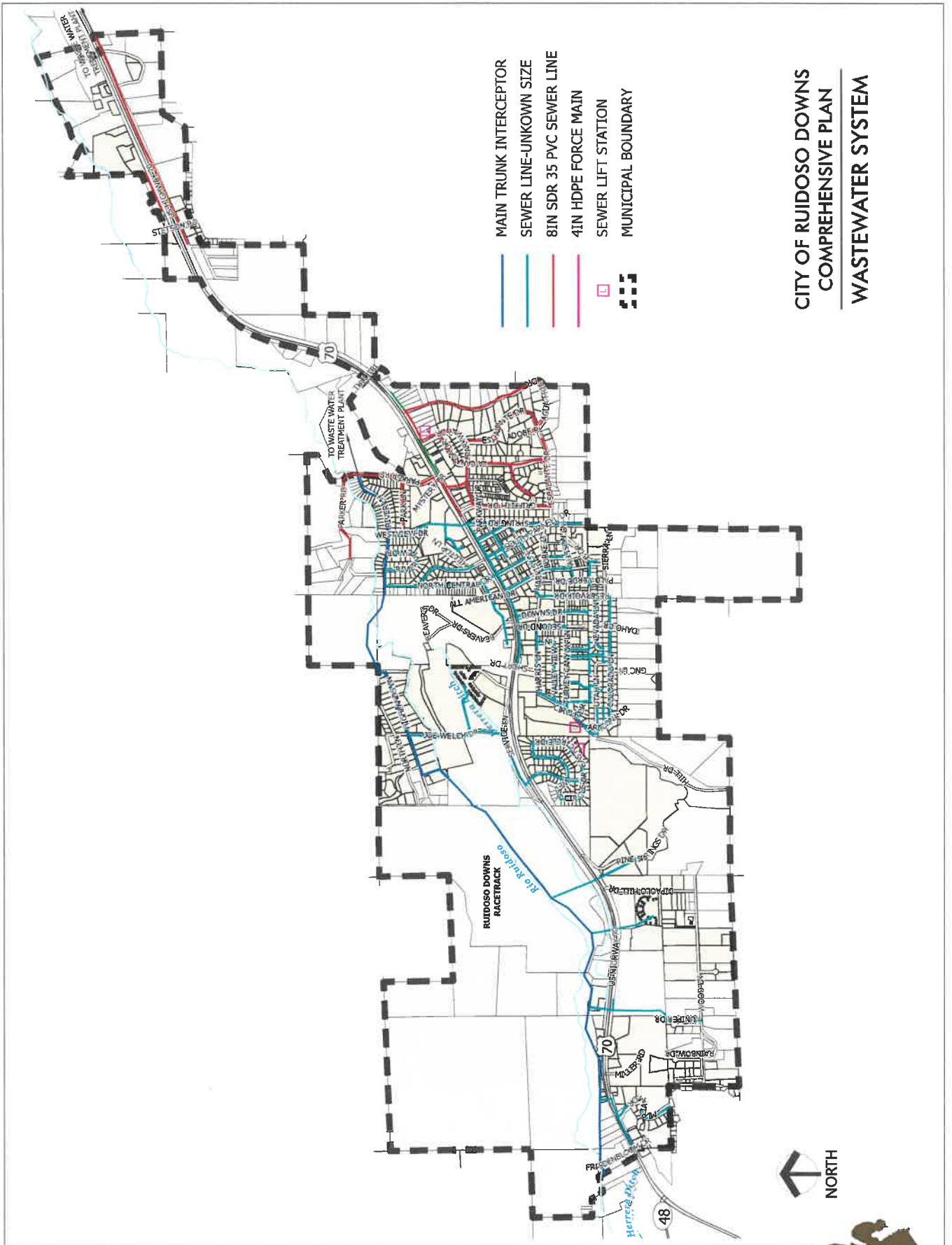
The interceptor line has been in service since the early 1980s and is constructed from vitrified clay pipe. The line is suspected to have suffered structural damage in several locations.

The City of Ruidoso Downs should consider extension of sewer services to the proposed annexation area in the northeast part of the City south of US 70, accessed by Stetson Road. Residents in this subdivision are currently on septic systems. Sewer service is available near US 70, which would allow the residents in this area to connect.

8.4 STORMWATER

The majority of stormwater run-off in Ruidoso Downs is conveyed to the Rio Ruidoso. Essentially all drainage is conveyed on the surface. Any existing underground storm drainage is limited to those near US 70. There is a small storm drain and several culverts located in the US 70 right-of-way that allow run-off to go from the steep terrain south of US 70 under the road and northward to the Rio Ruidoso. Out of the ten transportation and infrastructure improvement options listed in the Community Survey, over 45% of the respondents said the City should focus on expanding and maintaining the water system.





CITY OF RUIDOSO DOWNS
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 WASTEWATER SYSTEM



Ruidoso Downs is subject to intense, brief thunderstorms, as well as longer general storms that can last significant periods of time. The average annual rainfall is approximately 23 inches. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the 24-hour storm event/100-year storm is 4.47 inches; the 50-year storm is 4.00 inches; the 10-year storm is 2.97 inches; and the 1-year storm is 1.61 inches. The City participates in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) (see Section 9.3 for more information on flood hazards in Ruidoso Downs).

Low Impact Development (LID) is an excellent approach to mitigating stormwater runoff using more natural methods. Common LID techniques include bioretention or rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration trenches, and pervious pavement. This type of green infrastructure is better for the environment, less costly, and typically more attractive than traditional stormwater facilities.

Responses to the Community Survey indicated a need for stormwater system improvements, in particular at the intersection of Colorado Lane and Arizona Drive and the Circle Drive area. This issue should be studied and addressed along with street improvements to prevent damage from stormwater run-off.

UPSTREAM RESERVOIRS

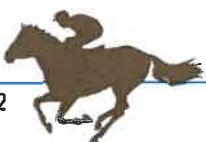
Two reservoirs impounded by the Lake Mescalero Dam and Grindstone Dam are located on tributaries to the Rio Ruidoso upstream from Ruidoso Downs. These dams and reservoirs help control stormwater runoff in the watershed.

- ◀ **Lake Mescalero Dam:** Located on Carrizo Creek at the Inn of the Mountain Gods, approximately seven miles upriver from Ruidoso Downs (see Section 9.3). The Mescalero Apache Tribe owns the earthen dam, constructed in the 1970s, and currently managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- ◀ **Grindstone Dam:** Located on a tributary to Carrizo Creek, approximately six miles upriver from Ruidoso Downs. The Village of Ruidoso owns the roller compacted concrete dam, constructed in 1988, and can store approximately 1,500 acre feet of water.

8.5 ELECTRIC and NATURAL GAS SERVICES

Electric utility service is provided in Ruidoso Downs by PNM (Public Service Company of New Mexico). The investor-owned utility is the largest electricity provider in New Mexico. Holding company PNM Resources is undergoing a merger with Avangrid Inc., an energy and utility company with operations in 24 states operating as a subsidiary of Spanish firm Iberdrola, S.A. This is not anticipated to have an impact on the delivery of electric services to the City of Ruidoso Downs.

Zia Natural Gas Company provides natural gas service in Ruidoso Downs. The investor-owned utility serves approximately 35,000 customers in Lea, Eddy,



Lincoln, Doña Ana, and Colfax counties, with its headquarters located at the corner of Short Drive and US 70 in Ruidoso Downs.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

The US Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy estimated that as of 2016, per capita expenditure on residential electricity in the City of Ruidoso Downs was about half the average as compared to other cities across the United States. It also estimated approximately twice the average per capita expenditure for natural gas consumption. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) models projected that residential and commercial energy consumption in Ruidoso Downs will decline by approximately 13% between 2020 and 2050.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

New Mexico's geography, sunlight, and wind make it an excellent location for renewable energy generation. The State of New Mexico's Energy Transition Act (Senate Bill 489, codified as §62-18-1 *et seq.* NMSA 2019) requires investor-owned utilities to generate 100% of their electricity from carbon-free resources by 2045. The City should consider how it can facilitate installation of solar power for its facilities and by residential and commercial property owners.

8.6 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Windstream Communications, formerly Valor Communications, is the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC) providing telephone and broadband internet service to Ruidoso Downs. The New Mexico Broadband Map shows that Windstream provides competitive Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service, with fiber optic service in portions of the City, while TDS Broadband Service, a subsidiary of Telephone and Data Systems, Inc., provides cable broadband service.

Installing conduit during road construction projects is one way to reduce costs of providing broadband fiber optic service. Many cities adopt a "Dig Once" policy to reduce excavation costs, minimize disruption in public rights-of-way, and encourage broadband deployment. "Dig Once" requires installation of conduit whenever a trench is opened in a public right-of-way. The conduit is then available later when providers are ready to extend fiber optic lines.

8.7 SOLID WASTE

Greentree Solid Waste Authority is a regional solid waste disposal service located along US 70 on the east side of Ruidoso Downs. Greentree, which was organized in 1991, serves the City of Ruidoso Downs, Village of Capitan, Village of Corona, and Town of Carrizozo. It also provides basic information and education to the public on solid waste and recycling. Approximately 17% of waste collected is currently recycled and the remainder deposited at the regional landfill south of Alamogordo.



The Otero-Greentree Regional Landfill is jointly owned by Otero County and Lincoln County and is used by the municipalities within those jurisdictions. The City of Alamogordo is the managing agency for the Landfill, which is located 24 miles south of Alamogordo. The 640-acre Landfill was incorporated in January 1994 and was designed for a life span of 99 years.

8.8 COLONIAS

Colonias are communities in the United States-Mexico border region that lack adequate water, sewer, or housing, or a combination of all three. The City of Ruidoso Downs is one of 14 incorporated municipalities amongst the approximately 150 colonias designated by the State of New Mexico. The designations were originally determined pursuant to Section 916 of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 to establish eligibility for federal infrastructure funding from agencies, including the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). For example, in addition to standard rural utility loan programs, USDA Rural Development offers grant funding to alleviate health risks in colonias.

As part of a joint initiative of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) documented the state of water and wastewater availability in colonias in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and California, and made recommendations to address remaining needs including impacts of drought (Source: RCAP U.S.- Mexico Border Needs Assessment and Support Project: Phase II Assessment Report, 2015). While the report did not include Lincoln County, it did note the significant progress that has been made in addressing water and wastewater needs in colonias across the country.

The New Mexico Legislature passed the Colonias Infrastructure Act to assist colonias that lack basic infrastructure for water and wastewater, solid waste disposal, flood and drainage control, roads, and housing. The Act is intended to accomplish the following:

- ◀ Ensure adequate financial resources for infrastructure development for Colonia-recognized communities;
- ◀ Provide for the planning and development of infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner; and
- ◀ Develop infrastructure projects to improve quality of life and encourage economic development.

Colonias Infrastructure Fund projects are funded as 90% grant, 10% loan, with provisions for loan waivers. The loans have terms of up to 20 years at 0% interest. Projects are selected on an annual application cycle by the Colonias Infrastructure Board and recommended to the New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) for funding. As defined in the Colonias Infrastructure Act, a “qualified



project” is a capital outlay project that is primarily intended to develop Colonias infrastructure and may include:

- ◀ Water system;
- ◀ Wastewater system;
- ◀ Solid waste disposal facilities;
- ◀ Flood and drainage control;
- ◀ Road infrastructure; or
- ◀ Housing infrastructure.

Since 2013, the City of Ruidoso Downs has received seven Colonias Infrastructure Fund awards for various water, wastewater, and road infrastructure projects:

- ◀ **Colonias Funding 2781:** This project involved the development of preliminary design drawings for infrastructure improvements in the Aqua Fria Subdivision. The proposed project was a result of a lawsuit from the Forest Guardians against the City and stipulated that houses within 500 feet of the Rio Ruidoso had to be on a sewer collection system.
- ◀ **Colonias Funding 2975, 3358, 3514 and 4922:** These projects provided waterlines, wastewater collection system, and road infrastructure restoration to disturbed areas.
- ◀ **Colonias Funding 4628:** This project involved the installation of approximately 1,800 linear feet of sewer line in North Parker Road and serviced an area that did not have a sewer collection system.
- ◀ **Colonias Funding 5185:** This project will involve the installation of approximately 4,819 linear feet of waterline and related appurtenances to an area not currently serviced by the City. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2021.

There are additional requirements for housing infrastructure applications. The State of New Mexico has a number of other public funding sources to finance infrastructure improvements, including the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Rural Infrastructure Program, NMED Clean Water State Revolving Fund, New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, NMFA Water Project Fund, NMFA Public Project Revolving Fund, NMFA Local Government Planning Fund, and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) through the NM Department of Finance and Administration.



8.9 ICIP FY2020-2024

The City of Ruidoso Downs' Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) for FY2020-2024 lists the following infrastructure-related items:

- ◀ Riverside Distribution Line (2020 – currently being designed)
- ◀ Drainage System Improvements – Harris Lane (2021)
- ◀ Spring Tank Replacement (2021 – currently being designed)

8.10 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 1

Maintain, upgrade, and optimize the City's water production and distribution system.

Objectives

- ◀ *To meet current demand and accommodate future growth and development through the continued use of production wells, Griffith Spring, and water storage tanks.*
- ◀ *To provide redundancy in the water system to avoid the interruption of water services during emergencies.*
- ◀ *To plan for the replacement of aging water infrastructure components, distribution lines, and fire hydrants.*
- ◀ *To plan for the extension of the water distribution system to currently unserved properties in Ruidoso Downs.*

Infrastructure Strategy 1.1

Create a 40-Year Water Plan that addresses:

- ◀ Quantification of the existing water supply and protection of water rights;
- ◀ Existing water demand and projections of future water demand;
- ◀ Water conservation and reduction of water waste; and
- ◀ Recommendations for meeting water demand resulting from future growth and development.

Infrastructure Strategy 1.2

Prioritize the improvement projects identified in the Water System Asset Management Plan. This strategy should include an annual review of the Water System Asset Management Plan and updates, as necessary.

Infrastructure Strategy 1.3

Secure funding for and implement the projects identified in the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) FY2020-2024, including:

- ◀ Riverside Distribution Line
- ◀ Drainage System Improvements – Harris Lane



◀ Spring Tank Replacement 2021

Continue to identify needed infrastructure improvements in future ICIPs.

Infrastructure Strategy 1.4

In coordination with Community Services & Facilities Strategy 1.4, secure funding for additional fire hydrants on the east side of Ruidoso Downs as recommended by the most recent ISO report.

Infrastructure Strategy 1.5

Apply and secure funding for replacement of aging, undersized water distribution lines as needed, including replacement of asbestos cement water lines.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 2

Promote the sustainable and efficient management of water resources through community conservation efforts and education.

Objectives

- ◀ *To ensure the water supply can meet the community's current and future water demand during drought conditions.*
- ◀ *To decrease water losses caused by leaking water distribution lines.*

Infrastructure Strategy 2.1

Continue educating residential and commercial water customers on the community benefits associated with voluntary conservation methods. This should include, but not be limited to, creating a schedule for landscape irrigation, xeriscape principles of design, irrigation best practices, low flow fixtures and appliances, and other means of reducing water use.

Infrastructure Strategy 2.2

Implement a Water Loss Control Program that consists of three major components:

- ◀ Water audit to identify and quantify water uses and losses from the existing wells, water storage tanks, and water distribution system;
- ◀ Intervention process to implement the controls to reduce the water losses, and repair and replace the leaking areas of the system; and
- ◀ Evaluation to determine the success of the intervention process.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 3

Maintain, upgrade, and optimize the City's wastewater collection treatment system.

Objectives

- ◀ *To meet current demand and accommodate future growth and development.*
- ◀ *To protect the City's groundwater supply from contamination.*



- ◀ *To plan for the replacement of aging clay lines and improvements to lift stations and manholes.*
- ◀ *To plan for the extension of the sewer lines to currently unserved properties in Ruidoso Downs.*

Infrastructure Strategy 3.1

Prepare a Preliminary Engineering Report and/or an Asset Management Plan for the wastewater system, including identification of wastewater lines and manholes, assessment of conditions of the system. The report/plan should schedule:

- ◀ Replacement of existing aging clay pipe with PVC pipe;
- ◀ Location and elevation of manhole lids to current grades; and
- ◀ Upgrades to lift stations with more reliable components (pumps, valves, piping, etc.).

Infrastructure Strategy 3.2

Provide public education on preventative maintenance for septic systems. As part of this strategy, engage with service providers, such as Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), to provide reliable technical assistance geared specifically to rural communities like Ruidoso Downs.

Infrastructure Strategy 3.3

Secure funding for the design and expansion of sewer lines to properties within the City of Ruidoso Downs that are not connected to the municipal sewer system, including the east side of the City.

Infrastructure Strategy 3.4

Continue to apply and secure funding from the Colonias Infrastructure Fund for eligible wastewater system projects, including rehabilitation, replacement, and/or expansion of wastewater collection lines, force mains, and pump stations.

Infrastructure Strategy 3.5

Continue to work with the Village of Ruidoso on maintaining and improving the wastewater treatment plant operated by the Ruidoso-Ruidoso Downs Regional Joint Use Board.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 4

Maintain an adequate level of stormwater detention and retention capacity.

Objectives

- ◀ *To protect the community from flooding during major storm events.*
- ◀ *To lower property owners' flood insurance rates.*
- ◀ *To provide regular maintenance of surface drainage systems and flood control structures.*
- ◀ *To allow for water harvesting and on-site retention of stormwater.*



Infrastructure Strategy 4.1

Develop and implement a comprehensive Drainage Master Plan that includes, but is not limited to:

- ◀ Assessment of the existing watershed conditions and stormwater flows and structures;
- ◀ Determination of the areas at risk of flooding;
- ◀ Recommendations for drainage improvements in those areas; and
- ◀ Preliminary cost estimates for the drainage improvements.

The Drainage Master Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis as funding becomes available and projects are completed, and coordinated with the City's capital outlay program and other potential funding sources.

Infrastructure Strategy 4.2

Prioritize and secure funding for stormwater drainage improvements per the recommendations in the Drainage Master Plan.

Infrastructure Strategy 4.3

In coordination with Land Use Strategy 3.1, incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) standards in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances for on-site stormwater retention and water harvesting, including water harvesting, bioretention, cisterns, rain gardens, permeable pavement, etc.

Infrastructure Strategy 4.4

Work with Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and the Village of Ruidoso to mitigate potential stormwater impediments in the Rio Ruidoso watershed.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 5

Expand access to affordable, high-speed broadband services.

Objectives

- ◀ To provide sufficient bandwidth for residents and visitors to work from home.
- ◀ To ensure higher quality data transmission.
- ◀ To enhance the City's economic development competitiveness.

Infrastructure Strategy 5.1

Develop and implement a "Dig Once" policy that requires excavators to install fiber conduit during construction within public rights-of-way.

Infrastructure Strategy 5.2

Work with the Village of Ruidoso on the formation of a telecommunications planning committee that is tasked with working to improve wireline and wireless high-speed broadband service in the City of Ruidoso Downs and the Village of Ruidoso. The committee should include representatives from the City and Village, active telecommunication providers in the region, and the general public.



Infrastructure Strategy 5.3

In coordination with Economic Development Strategy 1.5, work with the New Mexico Broadband Program to provide data to the National Broadband Availability Map and the New Mexico Broadband Map.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 6

Promote and increase waste reduction, reuse, and recycling activities.

Objectives

- ◀ *To encourage residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and recycle, where feasible.*
- ◀ *To support Greentree Solid Waste Authority recycling efforts.*
- ◀ *To extend the useful life of the regional landfill.*

Infrastructure Strategy 6.1

Continue to participate with and support efforts by the Greentree Solid Waste Authority on waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.

Infrastructure Strategy 6.2

Develop a public education program that promotes the benefits of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, and encourages higher levels of community participation.



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CHAPTER 9

HAZARD MITIGATION



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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Hazard mitigation describes approaches and strategies that help eliminate short and long-term risks caused by hazards or disasters. As communities plan for new development, hazard mitigation should be an essential consideration in the planning and design of the project. The greatest value of hazard mitigation is the implementation of mitigation measures that remove vulnerabilities, and reduce or eliminate risk to life and property.

This chapter describes emergency preparedness planning by the City of Ruidoso Downs and its partners in Lincoln County, discusses specific hazards with the potential to affect Ruidoso Downs, and offers a brief synopsis of mitigation strategies and tools.

9.2 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hazard mitigation planning is part of the emergency management process of Preparedness, Response, Recovery, Prevention, and Mitigation. The Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services (LCOES) provides emergency management for Ruidoso Downs. The LCOES primarily works with communities in the unincorporated areas of Lincoln County and supports emergency preparedness efforts in the incorporated communities. The LCOES worked closely with Ruidoso Downs to address the City's needs in the *Lincoln County All Hazard Mitigation Plan* and the *Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan*.

The Office of Emergency Services has indicated its desire to work closer with Ruidoso Downs on identifying areas where it can assist with mitigation efforts, such as assisting property owners in establishing wildfire defensive barriers around private homes and businesses in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The Office of Emergency Services recommends thinning areas around the populated areas of Ruidoso Downs as nearly the entire community is in the WUI.

The federally-funded Firewise Program provides inspections and recommendations for wildfire mitigation efforts around private and public properties. For private property owners, the US Forest Service takes on 70% of the cost for thinning around structures.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

The *Lincoln County Emergency Operations Plan* (2019) identifies a range of natural, technical, and human/social hazards in Lincoln County. The Plan contains a detailed breakdown of how Lincoln County will handle emergency situations and disasters by identifying potential hazards, vulnerable and emergency facilities, and operational recommendations. It also identifies the responsibilities of County departments for coordinating emergency response activities before, during, and after emergencies or disasters. The Emergency



Operations Plan outlines a graduated response strategy with four Emergency Actions Levels that identify the activating resources necessary that are proportional to the scope and severity of the emergency event.

LINCOLN COUNTY ALL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The purpose of the *Lincoln County All Hazard Mitigation Plan* (2012) is to identify community policies, actions, and tools for implementation in the long-term that reduce risk and potential for future losses of property and life. The Plan draws upon the *New Mexico Hazard Mitigation Plan* for guidance to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazards that affect Lincoln County and establishes goals, strategies, and specific measures designed to reduce the occurrence or severity of these identified hazards.

As part of the planning process, Lincoln County held public meetings in several communities, as well as special meetings with representatives from fire, law enforcement, health care, school districts, municipal governments, industry, and public utilities to identify the potential hazards. Through public input and coordination with County officials and local jurisdictions, a plan was developed that identified the risks and presented mitigation strategies to protect the population from potential hazards in Lincoln County.

Risk Assessment

The *All Hazard Mitigation Plan* included a risk assessment of the hazards that can affect Lincoln County and its vulnerability to those hazards. The Risk assessment had four major steps: Hazard Identification, Hazard Profiling, Vulnerability Assessment, and Loss Estimation.

Hazard identification is the review of historical occurrences and various hazards within Lincoln County over the past several decades. Information about hazardous events was obtained from a review of past state and federal declarations of disasters, research, and stakeholder interviews. Lincoln County contains plains, deserts, mountains, and forest areas with very different potential hazards. The eleven natural hazards with potential significant impact on Lincoln County are prioritized in Table 9.1, followed by descriptions of hazards specific to Ruidoso Downs.

Rank	Hazard	Risk
1	Wildfire	High
2	Windstorms	High
3	Flood	Medium
4	Drought	High
5	Thunderstorms	Medium
6	Severe Winter Storms	Medium
7	Dam Failure	Medium
8	Earthquake	Medium
9	Tornadoes	High
10	Hazardous Materials	Low
11	Extreme Heat	Medium

Source: *Lincoln County Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2012.*



9.3 RUIDOSO DOWNS HAZARDS

WILDFIRE

Wildland fire is defined as any fire burning wildland fuels, including prescribed fires planned and managed to improve natural resources; from natural causes; and from unwanted and unplanned fires resulting from natural ignition, unauthorized human-caused fire, or escaped prescribed fires. The *Lincoln County All Hazard Mitigation Plan* identified wildfire as the number one hazard with a “high” ranking. Wildfire is of particular concern around the southern and eastern portions of Lincoln County near Ruidoso Downs. The area around Ruidoso Downs has a heavy fuels classification with surrounding juniper, ponderosa pine, shrubs, grasses, and weeds.

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) are areas where community structures and other vital infrastructure intermix with wildland vegetation (fuels). Decades of fire suppression and the growth of people living further in woodland areas have increased the potential of catastrophic structure and human losses. The communities define the areas of WUI within their jurisdictions.

The Lincoln National Forest surrounds several communities and private holdings in Lincoln County. The Community Wildfire Protection Plan Team determined that the WUI is composed of both interface and intermix communities where human habitation and development meet or intermix with wildland fuels. Interface areas include housing developments that meet or are within 1.5 miles of continuous vegetation. Intermix areas are those where structures or vital community infrastructure are scattered throughout a wildland area.



Three Rivers Fire, April 2021.



Ruidoso Downs meets the criteria for interface directly along US 70 and intermixed areas in the surrounding hills. Ruidoso Downs is particularly susceptible to destruction from wildfire due to the City's alignment with heavy fuel and population density in WUI areas. The highest population density in Ruidoso Downs is along US 70, which is most at risk for high wildfire destruction.

Greater Ruidoso Area WUI Working Group

The Greater Ruidoso Area WUI Working Group was formed in 2001 from local, state, and federal agencies in Lincoln County. The group meets bi-monthly to discuss current efforts and initiatives on fuel mitigation planning around the County. Representatives from Lincoln County agencies report to the Greater Ruidoso Area WUI Working Group on current and future projects and keep the community informed on agency efforts, initiatives, and opportunities for mitigation efforts.

The outreach committee of the Greater Ruidoso Area WUI Working Group works with Lincoln County, land management agencies, community groups, and ENMU-R on outreach and education on wildfire risks. Outreach initiatives include the WUI speaker series, student art contests, defensible space volunteer days, radio and news stories, community workshops, and displays and presentations at local community events from wildfire education resource specialists, such as Firewise, Ready Set Go, and others. These efforts provide a coordinated approach to educate and protect the area from wildfires.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Lincoln County and the Greater Ruidoso Area WUI Working Group, along with other cooperating agencies, updated the *Lincoln County Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP) in 2019. The CWPP allows communities to take advantage of grants offered under the federal Healthy Forest Restoration Act. The CWPP states that the accumulation of hazardous fuels, such as grasslands, weedy fields, shrublands, pinion-juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine, and mixed conifer forests around settlements, increase the risk for the leading cause of wildfires – humans. The CWPP is a policy document that assesses and provides guidance on future community protection and mitigation efforts.

The Risk Assessment provided a list of critical assets at risk, relative risk for wildfire occurrence, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1144 Hazard Rating, contributing factors to NFPA Ratings, and the firefighting capacity of each community within Lincoln County (see *Table 9.2*). Wildfire behavior and severity are dependent on fuel type, weather conditions, and topography. Fuel is the only one of these that can be controlled; therefore, it is the focus of mitigation efforts. The CWPP recommended vegetation-fuels migration measures to reduce wildfire risk. Hazardous fuels reduction includes creating defensible space around homes, mowing along highways and roads, weed abatement, and fuel breaks.



TABLE 9.2: RUIDOSO DOWNS WILDFIRE RISKS, 2019

Assets at Risk	Wildfire Risk of Occurrence	NFPA 1144 Hazard Rating	Contributing Factors to NFPA 1144 Ratings	Firefighting Capacity
Homes	High	High	Heavy vegetation fuel loads	Ruidoso Downs Fire Department
Businesses	High	High	Defensible space less than 30 feet around structures	Hydrants
Tourism	High	High	Terrain conducive to unfavorable fire behavior	
Historic Buildings	High	High	Lack of structure sprinkler system	
Recreation	High	High	Utilities above ground	

Source: Lincoln County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2019.

Recent Wildfire Events

Wildfire events in Lincoln County are common. The most common areas for wildfires are the Nogal-Alto-Lincoln WUI and Highways 54, 70, 285, and 380. Three major fire events have affected Ruidoso Downs in the past 10 years:

- ◀ The Three Rivers Fire, located west of Ruidoso Downs, burned over 8,000 acres in April and May 2021.
- ◀ The Little Bear Fire in June 2012 burned 44,330 acres and 250 structures just west of the Village of Ruidoso.
- ◀ The White Fire in April 2011 burned 10,341 acres and twelve structures.

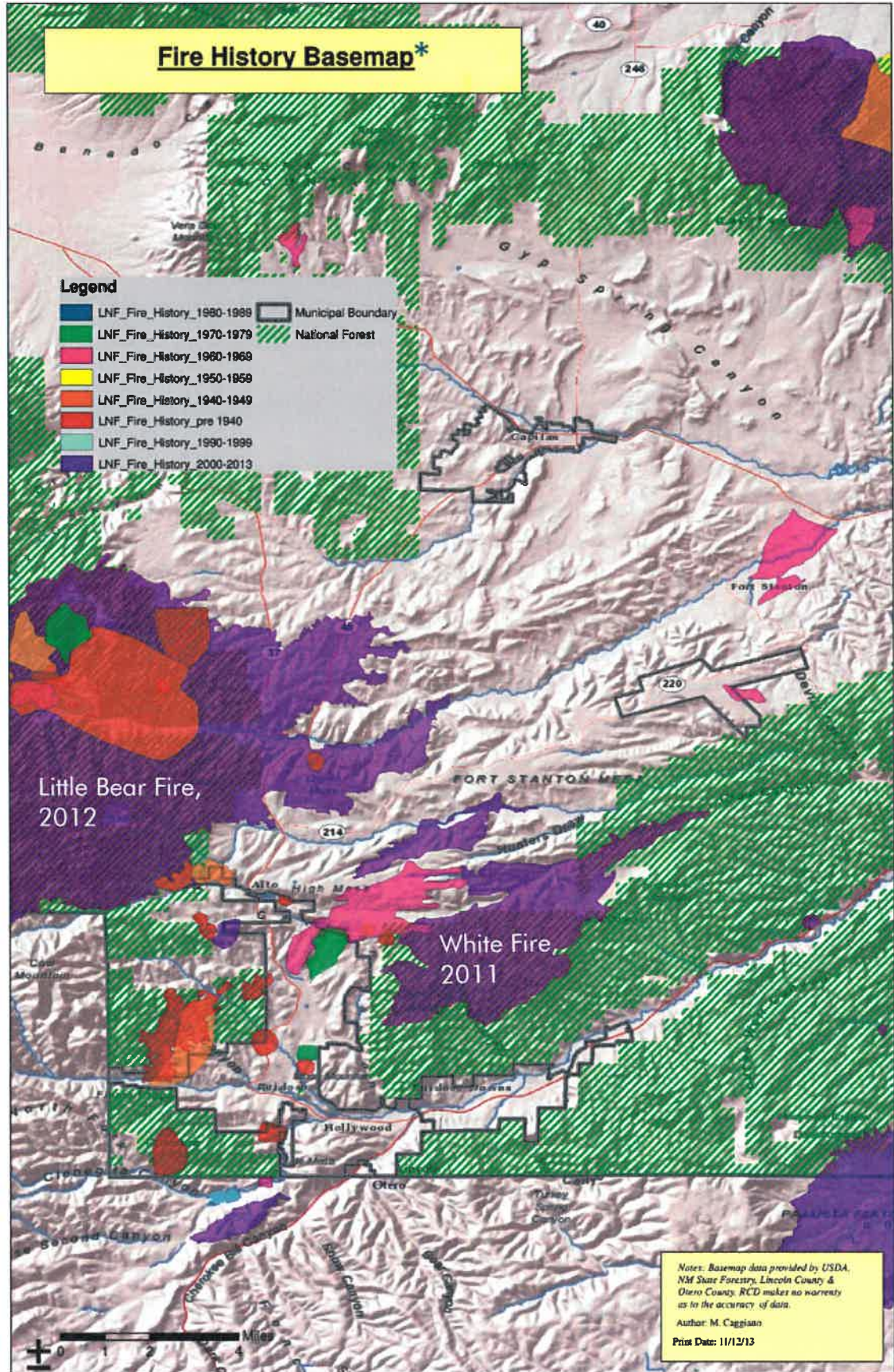
Wildfire Mitigation Opportunities

Public Outreach and Education: As Ruidoso Downs has many residential and commercial structures in the WUI, public outreach and education to inform residents of the wildfire mitigation strategies they can undertake to prevent wildfire damage are crucial. The CWPP identified the following strategies for community education and outreach:

- ◀ Creation of community oversight groups for implementation of the CWPP and grant funding;
- ◀ Introduction of defensible space and construction principles;
- ◀ Promote and collaborate on developing defensible space around structures;
- ◀ Increase awareness on improving forest and rangeland to reduce wildfire risk; and
- ◀ Identify and map evacuation routes.

Ruidoso Downs can work closely with the Greater Ruidoso Working Group to inform the community of the need to create safe wildfire defensive areas. This effort would include Ruidoso Downs stakeholders, including the Ruidoso Downs Fire Department, Lincoln County Emergency Management, and the US Forestry Service.





*This map was produced in 2013; therefore, the Three Rivers Fire is not shown. Source: Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2019.



Funding for Wildfire Mitigation Efforts: Most wildfire mitigation funding comes from the federal government, but these funds are uncertain and change from year to year. The CWPP recommended that Lincoln County review the possibility of a sales tax or local long-term bond to create a sustainable funding source for wildfire mitigation efforts. A reliable funding source may encourage private and public investment in mitigation strategies.

International Wildland Urban Interface Code: The International Wildland Urban Interface Code is a model code intended to supplement a jurisdiction’s building and fire codes. Its objective is to set minimum regulations for the safety of life and property from wildland fires and fires from adjacent structures to wildland fuels. The CWPP recommended adopting the Code to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition in and around areas of wildland urban interface, such as Ruidoso Downs. To date, neither Lincoln County nor Ruidoso Downs have adopted the Code.

FLOODS

The *Lincoln County All Hazard Mitigation Plan* identified flash flooding as the flood event most likely to occur in Ruidoso Downs. Ruidoso Downs is classified as a Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone AE) along the Rio Ruidoso. Flash floods in Ruidoso Downs are a concern during summer monsoon seasons and in the spring when winter snow melts and flows through the Rio Ruidoso. After fire events, floods have a more severe impact due to unstable soils caused by fires. The FEMA 100-year flood event for the Rio Ruidoso is approximately 20 feet. The worst-case scenario flooding for Ruidoso Downs would result from failure of the Lake Mescalero or Grindstone dams, which could result in water flow increasing to 40 feet above the streambed in Ruidoso Downs.

The City of Ruidoso Downs joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 1982. FEMA updated the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Ruidoso Downs in 2014. As of July 2019, there were only eight flood insurance policies in effect in Ruidoso Downs with \$1.2 million in coverage.

DAM FAILURE

Dam failure is characterized by a sudden, rapid, and uncontrolled release of impounded water. The threat of dam failure increases as dams get older. The *All Hazard Mitigation Plan* ranked Lake Mescalero Dam as “high hazard” due to the threat that dam failure poses to Ruidoso Downs and Ruidoso. The Mescalero Apache Tribe owns the earthen dam, which is managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Routine inspections are conducted by the BIA Southwest Regional Office. There is an Emergency Action Plan in place that identifies defensive action to prevent or minimize property damage, injury, or loss of life in case of dam failure.

SEVERE WINTER STORMS

Severe winter storms are possible in all of Lincoln County; however, the possibility of occurrence is more likely in the high-altitude mountainous regions, such as Ruidoso Downs. Severe winter weather can contain heavy snowfall, blizzard, ice storm, freezing drizzle/freezing rain, sleet, and wind chill.



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates show Ruidoso Downs as having an average annual snowfall of 80 to 100 inches and an average of 10 to 20 snowfall days annually.

PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the need for communities to prepare for widespread infectious diseases. The Lincoln County Medical Center has taken the lead in pandemic response in Lincoln County, including testing, hospitalizations, and providing an intensive care unit. As the primary ambulance transport for Lincoln County, the Medical Center has taken steps to ensure that response times and safety measures are in place to protect patients and the community. The Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services provides support to the Medical Center when needed.

9.4 MITIGATION STRATEGIES and TOOLS

FEMA and the American Planning Association (APA) work together to provide resources to communities for hazard mitigation planning. The 2010 report *Hazard Mitigation: Integrating Best Practices into Planning* identified effective, multi-jurisdictional, hazard mitigation strategies and tools based on a series of case studies for large, intermediate, small town, or rural jurisdictions across the United States. The following list of best practices, derived from those case studies, offers guidance when updating hazard mitigation and emergency management plans:

- ◀ Clearly state the goals and objectives of hazard mitigation efforts and their relationship to the Comprehensive Plan. Hazard mitigation goals in the Comprehensive Plan should mirror those found in other plans and vice-versa.
- ◀ Integrate local government budgets and development regulations in hazard mitigation implementation efforts. The Comprehensive Plan should identify the policies and actions needed to implement hazard mitigation efforts and available funding. Create multi-purpose projects for hazard mitigation to solve multiple goals. Land use regulations can also be used to implement mitigation measures.
- ◀ Document existing and predicted future conditions through a hazard mitigation assessment. Hazard mitigation assessments should provide a snapshot of historical hazards and specific events, as well as predict impacts for future hazards.
- ◀ Raise public awareness of hazards experienced in and around the area and mitigation measures being taken. Stakeholder values must be accounted for in hazard mitigation, and the public should be informed and included in the hazard mitigation planning process. Public participation assists with the identification of all known hazards and the development of effective strategies.



- ◀ Sustain leadership across areas of expertise for hazard mitigation. Seize opportunities for community or political advocates to move the community towards embracing hazard mitigation objectively.
- ◀ Use external drivers and regulations as an impetus for change. Adhering to state and federal laws and programs can help drive the implementation of hazard mitigation efforts.
- ◀ Develop tools to proactively address implementation of strategies and evaluate the mitigation measures over time.

9.5 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 1

Improve the community's ability to prepare, respond, and recover from natural and man-made hazards by utilizing an all-hazards approach to mitigation.

Objectives

- ◀ *To increase public awareness of risk from flooding, wildfires, and severe weather.*
- ◀ *To foster emergency preparedness and response during major hazard events.*
- ◀ *To experience shorter recovery times from major hazard events.*

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.1

Coordinate and work with the Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services to improve notification systems (including capacity for reverse 911) before and throughout the duration of a wildfire, severe storm, flooding, or other major events.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.2

Work with Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services, Greater Ruidoso Working Group, and regional partners on developing an on-going public education program that includes:

- ◀ Description of the type of potential hazards likely to occur in Ruidoso Downs and the region;
- ◀ Methods for protecting property from the impacts of hazard events;
- ◀ Creating an emergency supply kit (e.g., water, food, basic sanitary supplies, batteries, flashlights, first aid kit, phone chargers, etc.).

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.3

Provide adequate accommodations, including food and water, basic health care, and generator hook-ups and generators, at shelter facilities during hazard events. This should also include accommodations for domestic animals.



HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 2

Reduce the risk of wildfire to Ruidoso Downs and the regional watershed.

Objectives

- ◀ *To support fuel reduction activities and restoration of the regional watershed.*
- ◀ *To reduce the risk of mudslides and environmental damage caused by unstable soils resulting from wildfires.*
- ◀ *To encourage on-going participation in Wildland-Urban interface programs.*

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 2.1

In collaboration with the Greater Ruidoso Working Group, complete the implementation actions identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

- ◀ Create a community oversight group for implementation of the CWWP and assistance with grant applications, including but not limited to the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfires program;
- ◀ Provide information to the public on defensible space and construction principles;
- ◀ Increase public awareness of forest and rangeland health; and
- ◀ Identify and map emergency routing and evacuation routes.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 2.2

Perform a wildfire hazard analysis for public buildings and critical facilities in Ruidoso Downs and create defensible space in areas at risk for wildfires.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 2.3

Become a member of the Fire Adapted New Mexico Learning Network and utilize the knowledge and resources available to reduce the risk of wildfires in Ruidoso Downs and the surrounding watershed.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 2.4

Evaluate and consider the adoption of relevant provisions of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code to supplement the adopted building code for Ruidoso Downs.



HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 3

Minimize Ruidoso Downs' vulnerability to flooding and dam failure.

Objectives

- ◀ *To build greater capacity to mitigate flooding and flash floods.*
- ◀ *To limit development in the mapped floodplain areas along the Rio Ruidoso.*
- ◀ *To preserve water quality in the Rio Ruidoso watershed.*
- ◀ *To work with other jurisdictions within Lincoln County on actions and strategies to reduce the risk of flooding.*

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.1

Improve culverts, low water crossings, and bridges to prevent washouts, debris obstructions, and bank erosion during flood events.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.2

Adopt development regulations that address mitigating the impact of development within the Rio Ruidoso floodplain.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.3

Continue the City of Ruidoso Downs' participation in and compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.4

Work with Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso, and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to reduce obstructions and overgrowth that impede the free flow of floodwater in the floodplain of the Rio Ruidoso and major tributaries.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.5

Engage with and support the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in making improvements to the Lake Mescalero Dam.

Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.6

Support the efforts of Lincoln County and the Village of Ruidoso to improve and maintain the Grindstone Dam.



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CHAPTER 10

IMPLEMENTATION



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10.1 INTRODUCTION

The seven major elements of the Ruidoso Downs Comprehensive Plan - Land Use, Economic Development, Housing and Neighborhoods, Community Services and Facilities, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Hazard Mitigation - each contain a series of goals, objectives, and strategies that were developed through public engagement and the planning process. The strategies are action-oriented tasks that are repeated and categorized in this chapter by Comprehensive Plan element, and supplemented with a projected completion time frame and identification of the lead party responsible for implementation. The implementation time frames are generally identified as follows:

- ◀ 2022-2024 (short);
- ◀ 2025-2027 (medium);
- ◀ 2028-2035 (long);
- ◀ On-going (no end date).

The implementation schedule is intended to assist the City of Ruidoso Downs in planning, securing funding, and allocating administrative resources. The implementation schedule is not binding; instead it relies upon available funding sources, staff resources, and the ability of the City to engage in meaningful partnerships with other local and regional entities. Appendix C continues a relatively comprehensive list of local, state, and federal funding sources that address the type of capital projects identified in the various chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

10.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan is contained in a series of tables that list all the strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan. They are sorted by Comprehensive Plan element and are organized as follows:

- ◀ Land Use (page 170)
- ◀ Economic Development (pages 171-172)
- ◀ Housing and Neighborhoods (pages 172-173)
- ◀ Community Services and Facilities (pages 173-175)
- ◀ Transportation (pages 175-176)
- ◀ Infrastructure (pages 176-178)
- ◀ Hazard Mitigation (pages 178-179)

Refer to the specific Comprehensive Plan element for more background information and to understand the planning context and development of the strategies.



CHAPTER 3: LAND USE - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 3.1.1: Undertake a branding initiative that draws upon and promotes the unique character of Ruidoso Downs and results in unified message for communications, marketing, and signage.	2022-2024	City Clerk
Strategy 3.1.2: Design, construct, and install gateway signage at the east and west entries to Ruidoso Downs along US 70, as identified on the Future Land Use Scenario. Utilize the new brand for Ruidoso Downs in the design of the gateways.	2022-2024	Public Works Dept
Strategy 3.1.3: Secure funding for the master plan and phased construction of a new town center adjacent to the Hubbard Museum of the American West. The master plan should include space programming, allocation and appropriate mix of uses, parking needs, phasing, cost estimating, and potential funding sources.	2025-2027	City Council, Public Works Dept
Strategy 3.2.1: Create an inventory of existing vacant properties that are appropriate for infill residential or commercial development. Promote the inventory on the City’s website to help generate interest from local and regional developers.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office
Strategy 3.2.2: Create incentives for the redevelopment of commercial properties along the US 70 corridor. This may include, but not be limited to, reductions or waivers in utility extensions, shared parking agreements, and expedited approval processes.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office, Planning & Zoning Commission
Strategy 3.2.3: Establish an evaluation process for future annexation areas (as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario) that considers the capacity, cost, and benefit of providing infrastructure and public services, in concurrence with property owners.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office, Planning & Zoning Commission
Strategy 3.3.1: Review and update the existing Zoning Ordinance with amendments that include, but are not limited to: 1) Consolidation or removal of unused or redundant zone districts; 2) Clarification of the definition of “Mobile Home” and “Manufactured Home” to be in conformance with HUD standards; 3) Review and update sign regulations to ensure content-neutral provisions for permanent and temporary commercial signage, and better integrate on-site and off-site sign provisions; 4) Provide specific conditional use provisions for wireless communication facilities (cell towers and antennas) to ensure conformance with FCC regulations; and 5) Create regulations for short term rentals and provide standards to minimize impacts on existing neighborhoods. This may include, but not be limited to, registration, insurance requirements, maximum occupancy standards, short term rental cap, a good neighbor agreement, etc.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office, Planning & Zoning Commission
Strategy 3.3.2: Submit grant applications for education and promotion, equipment purchase, youth employment, and cleanup and solid waste diversion projects to the New Mexico Tourism Department’s Clean and Beautiful Program.	On-going	Public Works Dept, Finance Director
Strategy 3.3.3: Sponsor community clean-up events and beautification initiatives. Involve Ruidoso Downs youth groups in these events.	On-going	Public Works Dept, Planning & Zoning Office
Strategy 3.3.4: Work with the City Council to establish a “House/Yard of the Month” program that recognizes the efforts by property owners to improve the appearance of their properties.	On-going	Planning & Zoning Office
Strategy 3.3.5: Provide adequate staffing levels for code enforcement and remediation of nuisance properties, and GIS mapping services.	2025-2027	Planning & Zoning Office, Planning & Zoning Commission



CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 4.1.1: Determine the feasibility and interest from the community in developing a small business incubator that utilizes locally grown, created, or manufactured products and services.	2025-2027	City Council
Strategy 4.1.2: Promote the services offered by the Small Business Development Center at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)-Ruidoso to existing and potential small business owners in Ruidoso Downs.	On-going	Planning & Zoning Director
Strategy 4.1.3: Work with the regional partners on implementing actions identified in the SET Economic Development Plan, including encouraging location of renewable forest products processing, small-scale manufacturing, and exported services employers.	On-going	City Council, Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso
Strategy 4.1.4: Create a Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) ordinance that allows public funding for economic development projects that demonstrate the capacity to provide more jobs in Ruidoso Downs. This strategy should include coordination with and assistance from the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD).	2022-2024	City Council, City Attorney, City Clerk
Strategy 4.1.5: Seek assistance from the New Mexico Broadband Program on collecting and processing broadband availability and technology type for the National Broadband Availability Map and the New Mexico Broadband Map.	2022-2024	Finance Director
Strategy 4.2.1: Coordinate with the New Mexico Tourism Department, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Ruidoso Downs Race Track on marketing Ruidoso Downs' local and regional tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural heritage destinations. This should include Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Billy the Kid Scenic Byway, Hubbard Museum of the American West, All American CowboyFest event, and regional opportunities for skiing, hiking, horseback riding, and camping.	On-going	City Council
Strategy 4.2.2: Promote Ruidoso Downs as a community with an unmet demand for restaurants and eating places, arts and entertainment venues, outdoor tourism related services, RV parks, and hotels. Utilize the brand created for Ruidoso Downs in marketing materials, as identified in Land Use Strategy 1.1.	On-going	Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/COG
Strategy 4.2.3: Promote Ruidoso Downs as an equestrian community with the need for large animal clinics, boarding stables and pasture land, equestrian adventure companies and guided tours, etc.	On-going	Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/COG
Strategy 4.3.1: Work with local employers on seeking workforce investment funding from the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) overseen by the New Mexico Economic Development Department.	On-going	Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/COG
Strategy 4.3.2: Coordinate with Ruidoso Municipal Schools and ENMU-Ruidoso on developing and expanding workforce training programs and dual credit programs for high school students related to existing and future business clusters in the region, including hotel, restaurant, and tourism management; breweries, distilleries, and viticulture; health care and veterinary medicine; outdoor recreation management; technology and cybersecurity; etc.	2022-2024	City Council
Strategy 4.3.3: Provide information about existing certificate and associate degree programs both online and in-person offered at ENMU-Ruidoso, including on the City's website and at City Hall.	On-going	City Clerk



CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 4.4.1: Identify potential business recruitment and expansion candidates, including commercial retailers and service providers; hotels; RV park and storage facility operators; breweries and distilleries; forestry products manufacturers; etc.	2022-2024	Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/COG
Strategy 4.4.2: Work with the Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/Council of Governments (SNMEDD/COG) on pursuing grant and loan applications to business and industry programs and broadband access programs administered by the USDA Rural Development.	2025-2027	Finance Director, Public Works Dept.
Strategy 4.4.3: Establish an economic development committee of the City Council that would be tasked with prioritizing target industries; reviewing potential commercial and industrial development opportunities; assisting with marketing initiatives; and providing recommendations. Members should be representative of local and regional economic development agencies, such as SNMEDD; Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce; private business owners; and the general public.	2022-2024	City Council

CHAPTER 5: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 5.1.1: Complete and submit an application to the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to fund the creation of an Affordable Housing Plan that complies with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, as amended. The Affordable Housing Plan should be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Ordinance. As part of this strategy, determine the feasibility of developing a joint Affordable Housing Plan with Lincoln County. The Affordable Housing Plan should contain at a minimum: 1) A comprehensive community and housing profile that includes demographic characteristics, household characteristics, economic profile, and local housing market conditions; 2) Assessment of existing and projected housing needs by Average Median Income (AMI) levels, including for-sale housing, rental housing, and housing for special needs populations; 3) Assessment of existing housing conditions and quantification of the existing housing stock that is vacant and/or have major rehabilitation needs; 4) Analysis and proposed solutions to the regulatory (zoning and land use development codes), non-regulatory (fees, infrastructure capacity, environmental, land availability, financial), and policy constraints to affordable housing; 5) Goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives to meet affordable housing needs (rental and owner-occupied) within a planning horizon of five years; and 6) Public participation and input.	2022-2024	Finance Director
Strategy 5.1.2: Identify land owned by the City of Ruidoso Downs that would be appropriate and available for donation to an affordable housing program. The inventory should be completed in conjunction with the development of an Affordable Housing Plan and utilized as an incentive for encouraging private developers/builders to construct affordable housing in Ruidoso Downs.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office, City Council
Strategy 5.1.3: Work with residential builders on identifying incentives that will encourage the build-out of existing vacant residentially-zoned lots and subdivisions in Ruidoso Downs. This may include, but not be limited to, allowing an increase in residential density or waivers for fees and/or utility extensions.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office
Strategy 5.1.4: In coordination with Land Use Strategy 3.1, amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow a wider variety of housing types, including accessory dwelling units, in residential zone districts.	2025-2027	Planning & Zoning Office, Planning & Zoning Commission



CHAPTER 5: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<p>Strategy 5.1.5: Work with the Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/Council of Governments and the New Mexico Mortgage Authority on developing an educational program that provides information on: 1) Available affordable housing programs, credit counseling, first time home buyer programs; 2) Rehabilitation and maintenance assistance programs for seniors and veterans; 3) Down payment and closing cost assistance; and 4) Referrals to local MFA-approved lenders.</p>	2025-2027	Finance Director, SNMEDD/COG, NM Mortgage Finance Authority
<p>Strategy 5.2.1: Once an Affordable Housing Plan has been completed by the City of Ruidoso Downs, seek partnerships with private builders or housing providers to rehabilitate vacant and/or dilapidated housing units in Ruidoso Downs.</p>	2025-2027	City Council, Planning & Zoning Office
<p>Strategy 5.2.2: As identified in Land Use Strategy 3.4, establish a “House/Yard of the Month” program that recognizes the efforts by property owners to improve the appearance of their properties.</p>	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office, City Council
<p>Strategy 5.2.3: As part of the update to the Zoning Ordinance, create regulations for short-term rentals. This may include, but not be limited to, registration and annual fees, insurance requirements, good neighbor guidelines, identification of the zone districts where this use would be permitted, occupancy requirements, etc.</p>	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office
<p>Strategy 5.2.4: Evaluate, prioritize, and systematically install sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, and improve street conditions within existing residential neighborhoods.</p>	On-going	Public Works

CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<p>Strategy 6.1.1: Develop a public safety needs assessment that identifies priorities and pursues funding based on: 1) Data collection on the number of past calls for non-emergency and emergency services in Ruidoso Downs over the past five years and sorted by type; 2) Training and certification needs, including training related to legalized cannabis, DWI, domestic abuse, and wildfires; 3) Communications technology, equipment, and vehicle needs; 4) Facility needs, including a new fire substation and new fire hydrants on the east side of Ruidoso Downs to ensure adequate fire suppression coverage; 5) Adequate staffing levels needed improve and maintain a higher level of response times; and 6) Strategies for recruiting more officers.</p>	2022-2024	Ruidoso Downs Police & Fire Depts
<p>Strategy 6.1.2: Host and participate in community events and informal meetings to solicit feedback on concerns from residents and business owners in regard to public safety services in Ruidoso Downs.</p>	On-going	Ruidoso Downs Police Dept
<p>Strategy 6.2.1: Develop and administer an on-going preventative maintenance program and prioritize improvements at the City’s park facilities that include: 1) Regular safety inspections and installation or replacement of playground equipment as needed; 2) Maintenance and replacement of irrigation systems, turf and plant materials, and ball field equipment; 3) Installation of shade structures; 4) Installation of playground equipment and outdoor fitness equipment at Riverside Park; 5) ADA upgrades; and 6) Water conservation through xeriscape principles of design and irrigation best practices.</p>	2022-2024	Public Works



CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<p>Strategy 6.2.2: Identify and secure funding for the programming, design, and construction of a new teen center. This strategy should include: 1) A needs gap analysis determined in part by talking directly to Ruidoso Downs youth about what types of programs they believe should be offered at the teen center; 2) Analysis of the types of programs and activities that are currently available through Ruidoso Municipal Schools; 3) Determination of what types of services and facilities by private and non-profits that are currently available to Ruidoso Downs' youth; 4) Potential locations where a teen center could be located, including but not limited to, All American Park; 5) Estimated cost and potential funding sources.</p>	2022-2024	Finance Director, City Council
<p>Strategy 6.2.3: Acquire property for the development of a new public park that serves the neighborhood areas south of US 70, as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario. The park design should include an access point to adjacent forest land.</p>	2025-2027	City Council, Public Works Dept
<p>Strategy 6.2.4: Coordinate with local volunteer groups to identify, establish, and co-host new community events in Ruidoso Downs, such as concerts, car shows, arts and crafts shows, community theater, movies in the park, farmers' markets, etc.</p>	On-going	City Clerk
<p>Strategy 6.2.5: Work with regional partners, such as Lincoln National Forest, Village of Ruidoso, Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Tribe, on expanding access to outdoor recreation experiences, including camping, hiking, horseback riding, and skiing in proximity to Ruidoso Downs.</p>	On-going	City Council
<p>Strategy 6.3.1: Complete a needs assessment that determines existing and future facility needs of the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center. This strategy should include securing funding to meet the identified facility needs.</p>	2025-2027	Public Works, Lincoln County Senior Centers
<p>Strategy 6.3.2: Develop an on-going preventative maintenance and replacement program for the Ruidoso Downs Senior Center.</p>	2022-2024	Public Works, Lincoln County Senior Centers
<p>Strategy 6.3.3: Secure funding to program, design, and construct a new City Hall facility that provides adequate accommodations and space for the efficient delivery of municipal services and a public meeting space.</p>	2025-2027	City Council, City Clerk, Finance Director
<p>Strategy 6.3.4: Continue providing financial support to the Boys & Girls Club of Chaves and Lincoln Counties. This strategy should also include working with the organization on expanding programming in Ruidoso Downs, including at the future teen center.</p>	On-going	City Council
<p>Strategy 6.4.1: Collaborate with Lincoln County Medical Center and other health care providers on disseminating information on community health care services available to the Ruidoso Downs community.</p>	On-going	City Clerk, Finance Director
<p>Strategy 6.4.2: Advocate for and pursue the development of an urgent care center in Ruidoso Downs that would serve the medical needs of the Ruidoso Downs community. This could include Presbyterian Healthcare Services or a different medical provider.</p>	2022-2024	City Council
<p>Strategy 6.4.3: Participate with Lincoln County Medical Center and regional partners on developing strategies to improve health outcomes, increase access to general health care, vaccinations and breast cancer screening, dental services, and behavioral health services for Ruidoso Downs' residents.</p>	2025-2027	City Council
<p>Strategy 6.4.4: Recruit a senior care provider that offers assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing services to allow Ruidoso Downs seniors to age in place.</p>	2025-2027	SNMEDD/COG

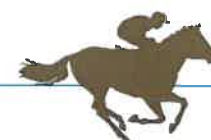


CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 6.5.2: Support and pursue funding for adult education programs and classes, including GED preparation, ESL, computer literacy, and career training, in collaboration with ENMU-Ruidoso, New Mexico Workforce Connection, and Lincoln County.	On-going	City Council, Human Resources
Strategy 6.5.1: Initiate and participate in a dialogue between the City of Ruidoso Downs, Ruidoso Municipal Schools, ENMU-Ruidoso, and Lincoln County on educational initiatives, online course offerings, dual credit programs, workforce training programs, and expanding career opportunities for high school students and graduates.	On-going	City Council
Strategy 6.5.3: Collaborate with Ruidoso Municipal Schools and New Mexico Public Schools Facility Authority (PSFA) on determining the feasibility of a new elementary school to be located within Ruidoso Downs. The feasibility study should include, but not be limited to: 1) Enrollment projections; 2) Programming and capacity needs; 3) Design and construction costs; 4) Cost savings related to reduction in bus transportation; and 5) Public input.	2025-2027	City Council, Ruidoso Municipal Schools, NM PSFA

CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 7.1.1: Submit a grant application to the New Mexico Finance Authority for a Transportation Asset Management Plan that contains: 1) A Pavement Management Program that identifies all roadway and bridge assets and existing conditions; 2) Cost projections for future needs and improvements to the roadway system; 3) Funding strategies; 4) Phased list of prioritized projects according to existing condition, traffic volume served, support for public services and tax base, and leveraging potential; and 5) Coordination of projects with the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP).	2025-2027	Public Works Dept, Finance Director
Strategy 7.1.2: Prepare and implement a sidewalk construction phasing plan that includes priorities, conformance with the American Disabilities Act, and construction cost estimates. The plan should prioritize roadways in high activity areas with heavier traffic volumes.	2022-2024	Public Works Dept
Strategy 7.1.3: Conduct a traffic analysis that determines traffic volumes, function, access, and speed to determine which local streets would be appropriate for functional reclassification. This strategy should include coordination with and support from SERTPO for changes to functional classification.	2025-2027	Public Works Dept
Strategy 7.1.4: Create an off-street trails and bikeways plan that is designed to provide linkages between residential neighborhoods and to commercial areas and destinations. Utilize best practices and the most recent American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities standards. As part of this strategy, construct a walking trail at the 80-acre open space parcel, as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario.	2025-2027	Public Works Dept
Strategy 7.1.5: Coordinate with NMDOT on a phased streetscape improvement plan for US 70 that includes widened sidewalks, ADA compliant ramps, pedestrian crossings, landscaping, lighting, and bike lanes. Determine the feasibility of adding bicycle lanes within US 70 right-of-way.	2025-2027	Public Works Dept, NMDOT
Strategy 7.1.6: Pursue funding for transportation projects through NMDOT programs, including the Local Government Road Fund; Municipal Arterial Program (MAP); Cooperative Projects; Safety Project; Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Program; Transportation Alternatives; and Recreational Trails Program.	On-going	Public Works Dept, SNMEDD/COG



CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

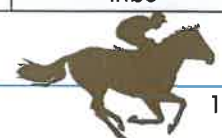
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 7.2.1: Create a preventative street maintenance plan that prioritizes and secures funding for resurfacing and reconstruction of deteriorated streets, and annual maintenance activities, including resurfacing, paving, crack sealing, and pavement marking.	2022-2024	Public Works Dept
Strategy 7.2.2: Develop traffic control standards, such as curb extensions, access policies, and traffic control signage, to promote traffic safety along the US 70 corridor and in residential neighborhoods.	2025-2027	Public Works Dept
Strategy 7.2.3: Implement a policy that requires a traffic impact analysis for new development that is projected to cause a significant increase in traffic volume. This strategy should include a requirement that where improvements to the roadway system are necessary to mitigate impacts, the private developer is financially responsible for the improvements.	2022-2024	Public Works Dept, Planning & Zoning Office
Strategy 7.3.1: Coordinate with Zia Transportation (ZTrans) and the Village of Ruidoso to create a Transit Action Plan to improve and maintain local fixed route, paratransit, and Senior Dial-a-Ride transit service.	2025-2027	City Council, Finance Director
Strategy 7.3.2: Determine the feasibility of expanding transit service to regional attractions, such as Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Hubbard Museum of the American West, Billy the Kid National Scenic Byway Visitors Center, and other points of interest in the region.	2025-2027	City Council, Public Works Dept, Finance Director
Strategy 7.3.3: Work with the SERTPO and regional partners to improve and maintain intercity transit service to Ruidoso, Roswell, and Alamogordo.	2028-2035	City Council, Finance Director

CHAPTER 8: INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 8.1.1: Create a 40-Year Water Plan that addresses: 1) Quantification of the existing water supply and protection of water rights; 2) Existing water demand and projections of future water demand; 3) Water conservation and reduction of water waste; and 4) Recommendations for meeting water demand resulting from future growth and development.	2025-2027	Utilities Dept
Strategy 8.1.2: Prioritize the improvement projects identified in the Water System Asset Management Plan. This strategy should include an annual review of the Water System Asset Management Plan and updates, as necessary.	2022-2024	Utilities Dept
Strategy 8.1.3: Secure funding for and implement the projects identified in the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) FY 2020-2024, including: 1) Riverside Distribution Line; 2) Drainage System Improvements – Dipalo Hill Drive; 3) Drainage System Improvements – Harris Lane; and Spring Tank Replacement 2021 (currently in design). Continue to identify needed infrastructure improvements in future ICIPs.	2022-2024	Utilities Dept, Public Works Dept
Strategy 8.1.4: In coordination with Community Services & Facilities Strategy 1.4, secure funding for additional fire hydrants on the east side of Ruidoso Downs as recommended by the most recent ISO report.	2022-2024	Fire Dept
Strategy 8.1.5: Apply and secure funding for replacement of aging, undersized water distribution lines as needed, including replacement of asbestos cement water lines.	On-going	Utilities Dept



CHAPTER 8: INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<p>Strategy 8.2.1: Continue educating residential and commercial water customers on the community benefits associated with voluntary conservation methods. This should include, but not be limited to, creating a schedule for landscape irrigation, xeriscape principles of design, irrigation best practices, low flow fixtures and appliances, and other means of reducing water use.</p>	On-going	Utilities Dept
<p>Strategy 8.2.2: Implement a Water Loss Control Program that consists of three major components: 1) Water audit to identify and quantify water uses and losses from the existing wells, water storage tanks, and water distribution system; 2) Intervention process to implement the controls to reduce the water losses, and repair and replace the leaking areas of the system; and 3) Evaluation to determine the success of the intervention process.</p>	2022-2024	Utilities Dept
<p>Strategy 8.3.1: Prepare a Preliminary Engineering Report and/or an Asset Management Plan for the wastewater system, including identification of wastewater lines and manholes, assessment of conditions of the system. The report/plan should schedule: 1) Replacement of existing aging clay pipe with PVC pipe; 2) Location and elevation of manhole lids to current grades; and 3) Upgrades to lift stations with more reliable components (pumps, valves, piping, etc.).</p>	2025-2027	Utilities Dept
<p>Strategy 8.3.2: Provide public education on preventative maintenance for septic systems. As part of this strategy, engage with service providers, such as Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), to provide reliable technical assistance geared specifically to rural communities like Ruidoso Downs.</p>	On-going	Utilities Dept
<p>Strategy 8.3.3: Secure funding for the design and expansion of sewer lines to properties within the City of Ruidoso Downs that are not connected to the municipal sewer system, including the east side of the City.</p>	2022-2024	Utilities Dept, Public Works Dept, Finance Director
<p>Strategy 8.3.4: Continue to apply and secure funding from the Colonias Infrastructure Fund for eligible wastewater system projects, including rehabilitation, replacement, and/or expansion of wastewater collection lines, force mains, and pump stations.</p>	On-going	Utilities Dept, Public Works Dept, Finance Director
<p>Strategy 8.3.5: Continue to work with the Village of Ruidoso on maintaining and improving the wastewater treatment plant operated by the Ruidoso-Ruidoso Downs Regional Joint Use Board.</p>	On-going	City Council
<p>Strategy 8.4.1: Develop and implement a comprehensive Drainage Master Plan that includes, but is not limited to: 1) Assessment of the existing watershed conditions and stormwater flows and structures; 2) Determination of the areas at risk of flooding; 3) Recommendations for drainage improvements in those areas; and 4) Preliminary cost estimates for the drainage improvements. The Drainage Master Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis as funding becomes available and projects are completed, and coordinated with the City's capital outlay program and other potential funding sources.</p>	2022-2024	Public Works
<p>Strategy 8.4.2: Prioritize and secure funding for stormwater drainage improvements per the recommendations in the Drainage Master Plan.</p>	2025-2027	Public Works, Finance Director
<p>Strategy 8.4.3: In coordination with Land Use Strategy 3.1, incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) standards in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances for on-site stormwater retention and water harvesting, including water harvesting, bioretention, cisterns, rain gardens, permeable pavement, etc.</p>	2022-2024	Public Works, Planning & Zoning Office
<p>Strategy 8.4.4: Work with Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and the Village of Ruidoso on mitigating potential stormwater impediments in the Rio Ruidoso watershed.</p>	On-going	Public Works, Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Tribe

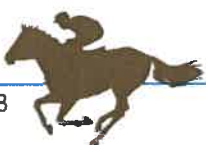


CHAPTER 8: INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 8.5.1: Develop and implement a “Dig Once” policy that requires excavators to install fiber conduit during construction within public rights-of-way.	2022-2024	Public Works Dept
Strategy 8.5.2: Work with the Village of Ruidoso on the formation of a telecommunications planning committee that is tasked with working to improve wireline and wireless high-speed broadband service in the City of Ruidoso Downs and the Village of Ruidoso. The committee should include representatives from the City and Village, active telecommunication providers in the region, and the general public.	2022-2024	City Council, Ruidoso Village Council
Strategy 8.5.3: In coordination with Economic Development Strategy 1.5, work with the New Mexico Broadband Program to provide data to the National Broadband Availability Map and the New Mexico Broadband Map.	2022-2024	Public Works Dept, Finance Director, SNMEDD/COG
Strategy 8.6.1: Continue to participate with and support efforts by the Greentree Solid Waste Authority on waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.	On-going	Public Works, Greentree Solid Waste Authority
Strategy 8.6.2: Develop a public education program that promotes the benefits of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, and encourages higher levels of community participation.	2025-2027	Public Works, Greentree Solid Waste Authority

CHAPTER 9: HAZARD MITIGATION - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 9.1.1: Coordinate and work with Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services to improve notification systems (including capacity for reverse 911) before and throughout the duration of a wildfire, severe storm, flooding, or other major events.	2022-2024	City Council, Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services
Strategy 9.1.2: Work with Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services, Greater Ruidoso Working Group, and regional partners on developing an on-going public education program that includes: 1) Description of the type of potential hazards likely to occur in Ruidoso Downs and the region; 2) Methods for protecting property from the impacts of hazard events; 3) Creating an emergency supply kit (e.g., water, food, basic sanitary supplies, batteries, flashlights, first aid kit, phone chargers, etc.).	2025-2027	Fire Dept, Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services, Greater Ruidoso Working Group
Strategy 9.1.3: Provide adequate accommodations, including food and water, basic health care, and generator hook-ups and generators, at shelter facilities during hazard events. This should also include accommodations for domestic animals.	2022-2024	Fire Dept, Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services
Strategy 9.2.1: In collaboration with the Greater Ruidoso Working Group, complete the implementation actions identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan: 1) Create a community oversight group for implementation of the CWWP and assistance with grant applications, including but not limited to the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfires program; 2) Provide information to the public on defensible space and construction principles; 3) Increase public awareness of forest and rangeland health; and 4) Identify and map emergency routing and evacuation routes.	2025-2027	Fire Dept, Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services, Greater Ruidoso Working Group
Strategy 9.2.2: Perform a wildfire hazard analysis for public buildings and critical facilities in Ruidoso Downs and create defensible space in areas at risk for wildfires.	2025-2027	Fire Dept



CHAPTER 9: HAZARD MITIGATION - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
Strategy 9.2.3: Become a member of the Fire Adapted New Mexico Learning Network and utilize the knowledge and resources available to reduce the risk of wildfires in Ruidoso Downs and the surrounding watershed.	2022-2024	Fire Dept
Strategy 9.2.4: Evaluate and consider the adoption of relevant provisions of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code to supplement the adopted building code for Ruidoso Downs.	2025-2027	Fire Dept
Strategy 9.3.1: Improve culverts, low water crossings, and bridges to prevent washouts, debris obstructions, and bank erosion during flood events.	2025-2027	Public Works Dept
Strategy 9.3.2: Adopt development regulations in the Subdivision Ordinance that address mitigating the impact of development within the Rio Ruidoso floodplain.	2022-2024	Planning & Zoning Office, Public Works Dept
Strategy 9.3.3: Continue the City of Ruidoso Downs' participation in and compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).	On-going	Public Works Dept
Strategy 9.3.4: Work with Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso, and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to reduce obstructions and overgrowth that impede the free flow of floodwater in the floodplain of the Rio Ruidoso and major tributaries.	On-going	Public Works Dept, Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso, US Army Corp
Strategy 9.3.5: Engage with and support the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in making improvements to the Lake Mescalero Dam.	2025-2027	City Council
Strategy 9.3.6: Support the efforts of Lincoln County and the Village of Ruidoso to improve and maintain the Grindstone Dam.	2022-2024	City Council, Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso



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APPENDICES



A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

B: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

C: FUNDING SOURCES



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Affordable Housing - Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as rental or ownership housing and utilities whose monthly cost burden represents no more than 30% of the gross income of an individual or a family. Affordable housing is supported and incentivized by many programs administered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Annexation - The process that a municipality undertakes to incorporate new territories into its existing boundaries, per Article 3-7-1 through 3-7-18 NMSA 1995.

Buffering - The use of walls, fencing, plant materials, and/or setbacks to minimize the potentially adverse impact of one land use on another.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - The BLM is tasked with managing public lands for a variety of uses such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvesting while ensuring natural, cultural, and historic resources are maintained for present and future use.

Community Facility - A building or structure owned and operated by a governmental agency to provide service to the public. A community center, school, senior center, and police station are examples.

Density, Net - The number of residential dwelling units per the total developable acreage of land, excluding public rights-of-way, open space, and utilities.

Density, Gross - The number of residential dwelling units per the total acreage of land.

Development Standards - Standards that control the size of structures and the relationships of structures and uses to each other and to open areas and lot lines. Development standards include regulations controlling maximum height, minimum lot area, minimum lot frontage, minimum size of yards and setbacks, etc.

Easement - A "non-possessory" property interest that allows the beneficiary to use property that he or she does not own or possess. The beneficiary cannot occupy the land or to exclude others from the land, unless they interfere with the beneficiary's use.

Economic Development - The process by which a community improves the local economy and social well-being of the people. This could include an improvement in the number of jobs, incomes, education levels, organization capacity or other forms of capital.

Economic Base Job - A job in which services or goods provided are exported outside the local economy (i.e., sold to outside customers) and bring new money into the economy. Economic Base jobs are the key to a community's economic growth and support a strong retail sector.



Extraterritorial Jurisdiction - An established area outside of a town, city, etc. to exercise zoning and subdivision powers outside of their boundaries. It is intended to protect the use of land on the edge of communities from being encroached on by incompatible activities that might degrade adjoining property or cause a nuisance.

Flood Zone - A flood hazard area as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, categorized by the likelihood and depth of flooding expected annually.

Gateway - A monument, signage, and/or landscape feature that provides a sense of entry and arrival to a community.

Geographic Information System (GIS) - A computer based system for generating maps comprised of different informational elements such as topographical data, roadways, property lines, land use, etc.

Gross Receipts - The gross amounts realized on the sale or exchange of property, the performance of services, or the use of property or capital (including rents, royalties, interest and dividends) in a transaction which produces business income.

Groundwater - The supply of freshwater under the surface in an aquifer or geologic formation that forms the natural reservoir for potable water.

Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program (ICIP) - The multi-year scheduling of public physical improvements for the community that is typically prepared five-years in advance with a clear priority of what is needed most by the city or county, and including a cost estimate.

Infill - The development of vacant or partially developed parcels that are surrounded by or in close proximity to areas that are substantially or fully developed. For example, the construction of a new home on an empty lot within an existing developed residential subdivision.

Infrastructure - The underlying foundation or basic framework of a town including streets, water, sewer, storm drainage, parks, bridges, and street lights.

Land Use - Denotes how a parcel of land is currently used, what activities are or are not permitted on a parcel of land, and the possible requirements for future uses.

Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) - Legislation that allows for the public support of economic development to foster, promote, and enhance local economic development efforts while continuing to protect against the unauthorized use of public money and other public resources (i.e., Anti-Donation Clause in the New Mexico Constitution). Public entities use LEDA to enter into a "public/private partnership" for an economic benefit. LEDA can be used to support 3 types of projects, including Infrastructure/Improvement, Economic Development (Job Creator), and Retail.



Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) - Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA), LEPCs develop an emergency response plan, review the plan at least annually, and provide information about chemicals in the community to citizens.

Light Industry/Industrial - The assembly, fabrication, or processing of goods and materials, including growing food or plants in an indoor structure, using processes that ordinarily do not create noise, smoke, fumes, odors, glare, or health or safety hazards outside of the building or lot where such assembly, fabrication, or processing takes place, where such processes are housed entirely within a building.

Lot - A parcel of land occupied or intended to be occupied by a main building or group of main buildings and accessory buildings, together with such yards, open spaces, lot width and lot areas, as recorded on a plat of record or described by metes and bounds.

Manufactured Home - A movable or portable housing structure over 32 feet in length or over 8 feet in width constructed to be towed on its own chassis and designed to be installed with or without a permanent foundation for human occupancy as a residence and that may include one or more components that can be retracted for towing purposes and subsequently expanded for additional capacity or may be two or more units separately tow-able, but designed to be joined into one integral unit, as well as a single unit. "Manufactured home" includes any movable or portable housing structure over 12 feet in width and 40 feet in length that is used for residential purposes.

Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) - A designated area within a New Mexico municipality that has been targeted for reinvestment and public improvements due to the presence of "blighted" conditions that arrest the orderly development of the municipality. Municipalities may contribute public funds to private projects as well as public improvements. Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas are regulated by the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (Article 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978).

Mobile Home - A single-family dwelling built on a permanent chassis designed for long-term residential occupancy and containing completed electrical, plumbing and sanitary facilities designed to be installed in a permanent or semi-permanent manner with or without a permanent foundation, which dwelling is capable of being drawn over public highways as a unit or in sections by special permit.

Mobile Home Park (MHP) - A parcel of land used for the continuous accommodation of 12 or more occupied mobile homes and operated for the pecuniary benefit of the owner of the parcel of land, his agents, lessees or assignees.



Multi-modal - Transportation infrastructure that allows for the safe and effective travel of all users by providing multiple transportation choices, including options for motor vehicles, public transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and other users.

Net Metering - A utility billing mechanism available in New Mexico that offers a credit to residential and business customers who are making excess electricity with their solar panel systems and sending it back to the grid.

New Mexico Construction Industries and Manufactured Housing Division - A division of the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department. CID protects consumers by licensing and regulating the state's industry. The CID is responsible for ensuring construction is performed in a safe manner; licensing contractors and enforcing licensing laws; required licensure for any person practicing or offering to practice constructing contracting; enforcing the laws, regulations, and standards governing construction contracting; and providing resolution to disputes that arise from construction activities.

New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) - NMEDD houses a variety of economic development programs that provide direct assistance to New Mexico businesses and support community development. NMEDD administers programs such as Local Economic Development Act, Job Training Incentive Program, FUNDIT, MainStreet Program, Rural and Economic Development Council, and Business Incubator Certification, among others.

New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) - The NMFA assists qualified governmental entities in the financing of capital equipment and infrastructure projects at any stage of completion- from pre-planning through construction - by providing low-cost funds and technical assistance through a variety of financing resources.

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) - The MFA provides financing for housing and other related services to low- to moderate-income New Mexicans. There are 37 state and federal programs administered by the MFA that provide financing for housing, including low interest mortgage loans and down payment assistance, weatherization, green building and rehabilitation, and tax credit programs. The MFA partners with lenders, Realtors, non-profit, local governments, and developers. All state and federal housing programs are administered by the MFA, including Section 8 housing funds and other HUD projects.

Nonconforming Structure - A structure that was lawfully established but that no longer complies with applicable zoning regulations because of the adoption or amendment of zoning regulations after the structure was established.

Nonconforming Use - A nonconforming use is a use that was lawfully established in accordance with all zoning regulations in effect at the time of



its establishment but that is no longer allowed by the use regulations of the zoning district in which the use is located. Lawfully established uses that do not comply with separation distance (spacing) requirements are also deemed to be nonconforming uses.

Nuisance - The use of property or land that creates unusual, unnecessary, or undue problems or situations for persons in the vicinity that would not have normally occurred otherwise.

Ordinance - A municipal statute or legislative action adopted by a local government that has the force of law.

Overlay District - Supplemental regulations that have been tailored to a specific area of the community, such as an historic district. The regulations are applied in conjunction with a general or base zone to address specific issues.

Outdoor Recreation - Outdoor recreation includes activities that occur outdoors in natural environments and in outdoor urban man-made environments. They include such activities such as: Hiking and camping; hunting and fishing; canoing, kayaking, and rafting; sailing and motor-boating; biking; rock climbing; horseback riding; skiing; and restoration and conservation activities.

Planning and Platting Jurisdiction (PPJ) - Per Section 3-19-5(A) of NMSA 1978, each municipality shall have a planning and platting jurisdiction within its municipal boundary. Except as provided in Subsection B of this section, the planning and platting jurisdiction of a municipality: having a population of 25,000 or more persons including all territory within five miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality; or having a population of fewer than 25,000 persons including all territory within three miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality.

Plat - A plan or a map of a plot of land, containing a description of the property and everything on it, including roads, boundaries, and real property

Public Health - The study and promotion of the overall health of a population, as opposed to looking at the health of individuals alone. Public health includes efforts to improve health outcomes in a community by addressing factors that may impact many residents, such as pollution, disease exposure, access to clean water, access to health facilities, etc.

Redevelopment - The process of renovating, replacing, and improving the built environment through reinvestment, new construction, and reuse. Redevelopment usually involves occupation and habitation of vacant buildings, rehabilitation of older buildings, construction of new facilities, public investment in infrastructure, and other economic development activities.

Renewable Energy - An energy resource that is rapidly replaced by a natural process, such as power generated from the sun or from wind. Includes



biomass resources, such as agriculture, animal waste, or small diameter timber, but does not include energy generated by the use of fossil or nuclear energy.

Resolution - A formal expression of the opinion or will of an official municipal body adopted by a majority vote. Unlike ordinances, resolutions do not have the force of law.

Streetscape - A design term referring to all the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character including building frontage, street paving, street furniture, landscaping (trees and other plantings), awnings and marquees, signs, and lighting.

Subdivision - The division of land, lot, tract, or parcel into two or more lots, tracts, parcels, plats, or sites, or other divisions of land.

Subdivision Ordinance - A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county, to control the division of land by requiring development according to design standards and procedures.

Substandard Building - Any building or portion thereof, including any dwelling unit, guest room or suite of rooms, or the premises on which the same is located, in which there exists conditions to an extent that endangers the life, limb, health, property, safety or welfare of the public or the occupants.

Vacant Building - A dwelling, dwelling unit, efficiency dwelling unit, habitable space, residential building, or structure lacking the continuous habitual presence of human beings who have a legal right to be on the premises for a period of 90 days or longer but excluding property under a listing agreement with a real estate agent licensed in New Mexico.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) - An area where human made structures and infrastructure are in or adjacent to areas prone to wildfire.

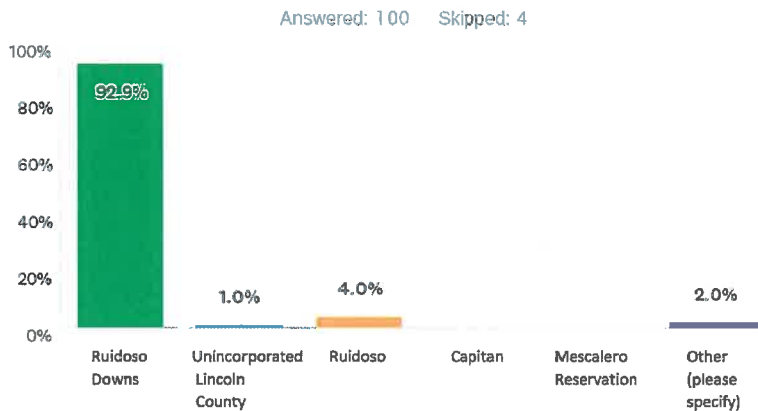
Zoning - The division of a municipality into different districts or zones, in which specific land uses are permitted, allowed conditionally, or prohibited.



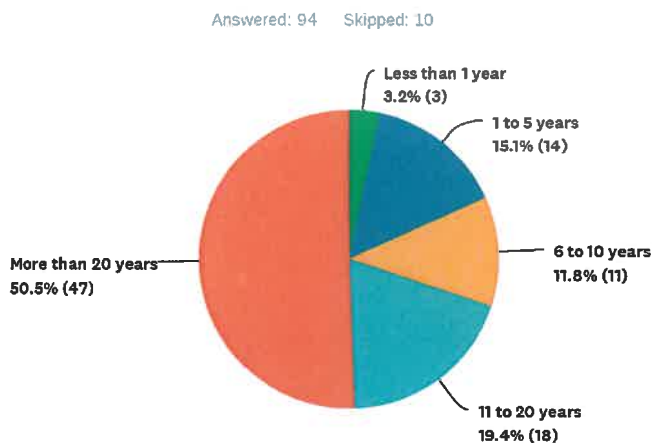
INTRODUCTION

As part of the planning process to update the Comprehensive Plan, Consensus Planning designed and administered a community survey to gain public input on a wide range of community issues. Responses were collected between September 28 and November 1, 2020. The Community Survey was available in English and Spanish electronically via Survey Monkey and printed versions were distributed door-to-door to residents in Ruidoso Downs. A total of 103 people responded to the English version and 1 person responded to the Spanish version. The Comprehensive Plan incorporates key takeaways from the Community Survey, as applicable. The full survey results are shown below in the charts below. Responses to open ended questions are available at the Ruidoso Downs City Hall.

Q1 Where is your primary residence located? (If Ruidoso Downs is not your primary residence, please skip to Question #6)

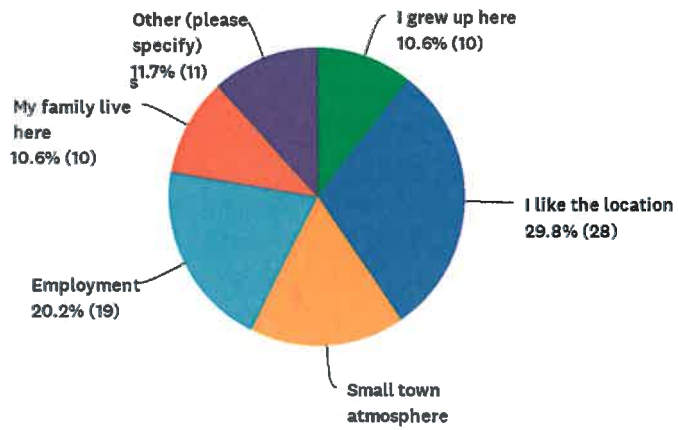


Q2 If Ruidoso Downs is your primary residence, how long have you lived in Ruidoso Downs?



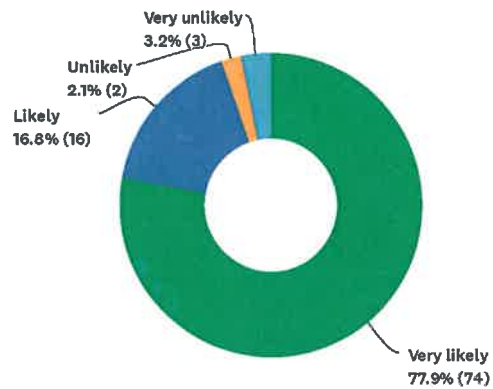
Q3 What is the main reason why you live in Ruidoso Downs?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 9



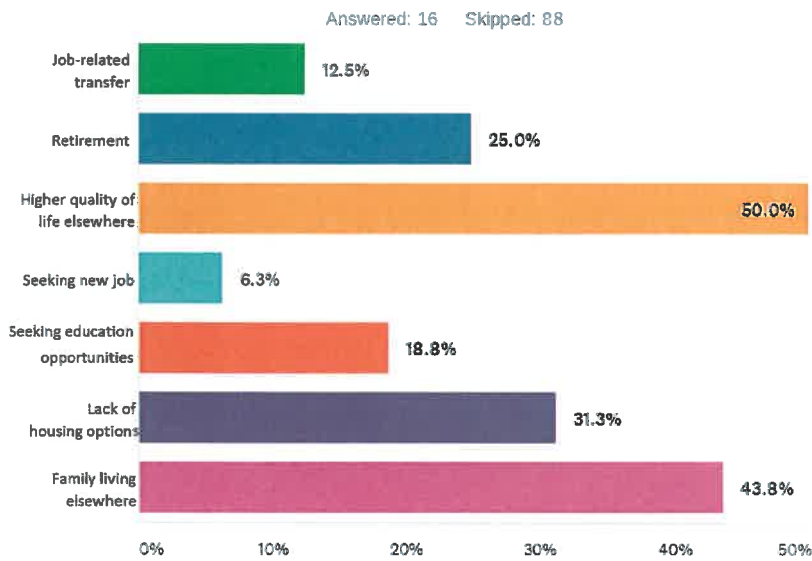
Q4 How likely are you to live in Ruidoso Downs for the next 2 to 5 years?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 8



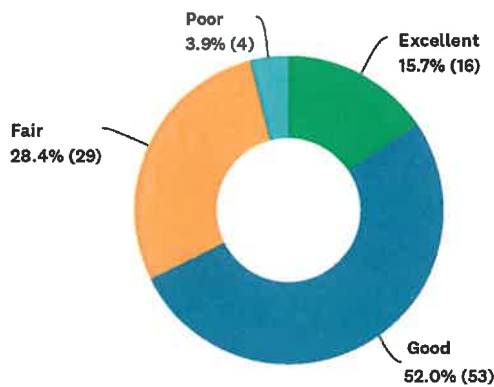
Q5 If you answered "Unlikely or Very unlikely" to Question 4, which of the following reasons would cause you to leave Ruidoso Downs?

(choose all that apply)



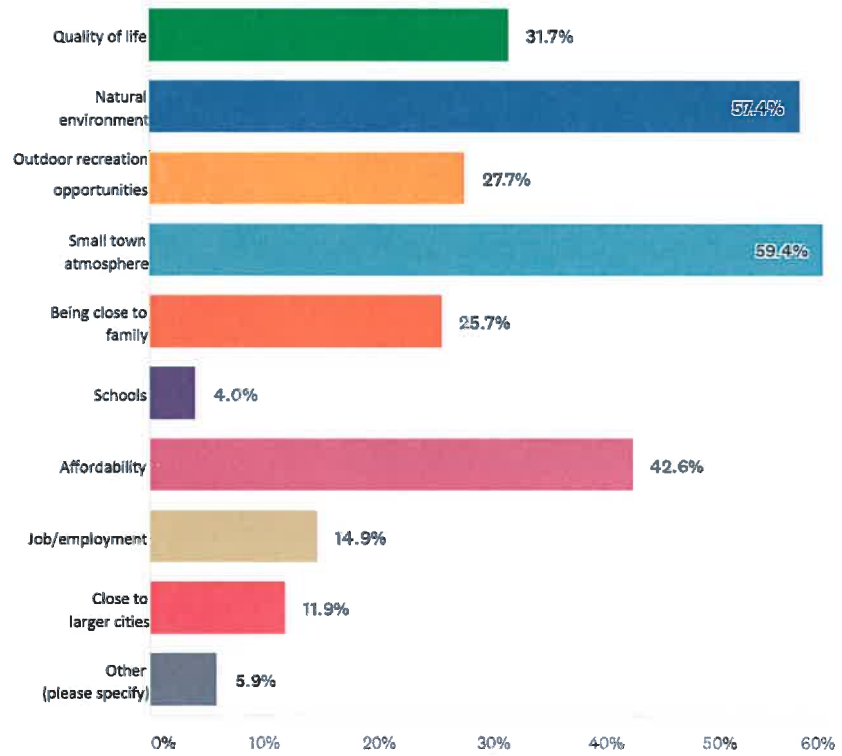
Q6 How would you rate the quality of life in Ruidoso Downs?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 1

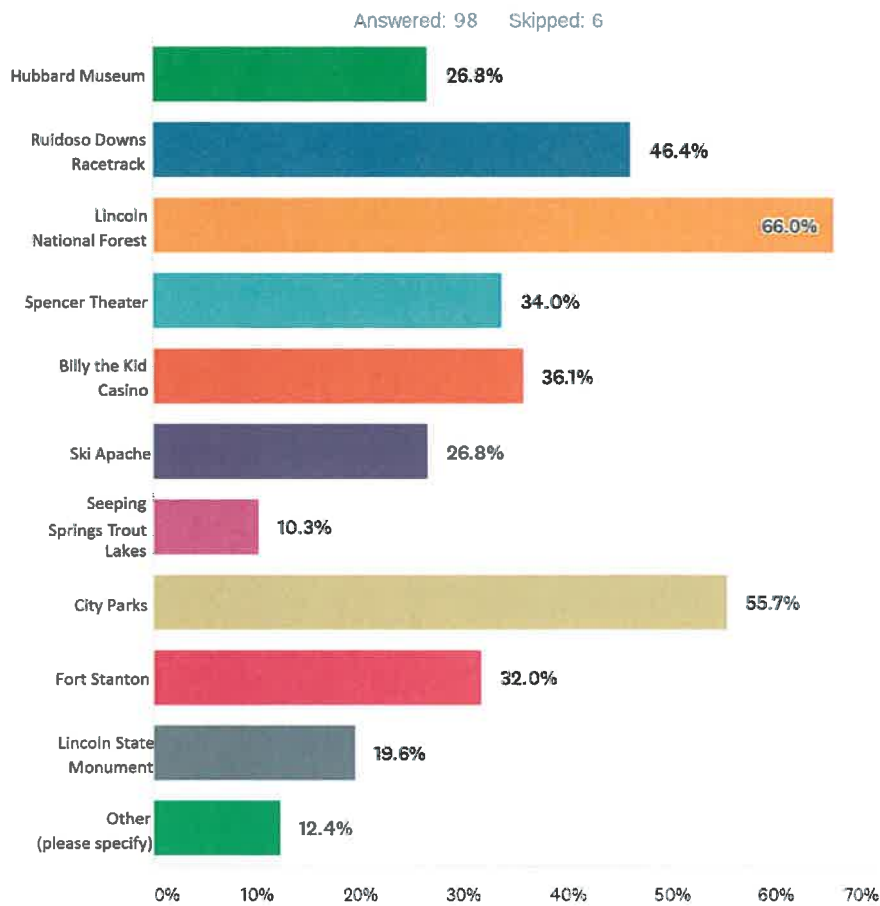


Q7 What are your favorite aspects about Ruidoso Downs? (choose all that apply)

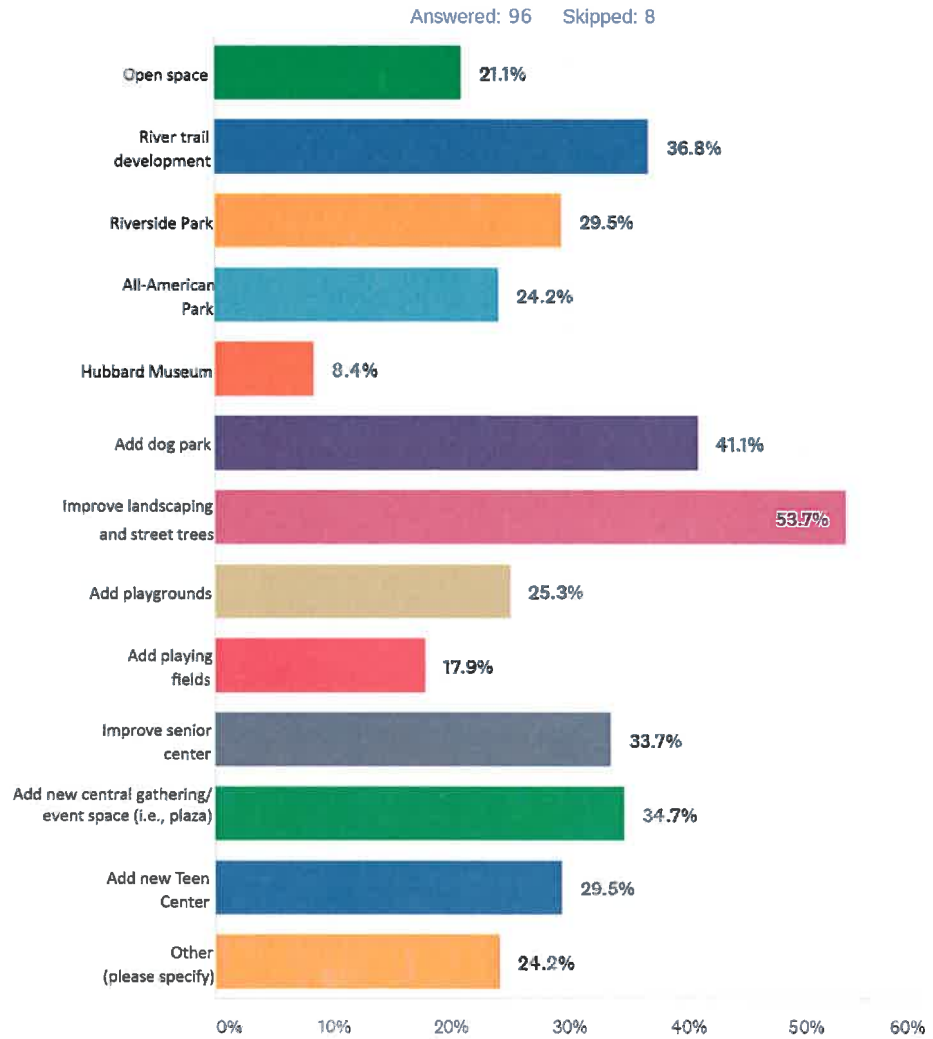
Answered: 102 Skipped: 2



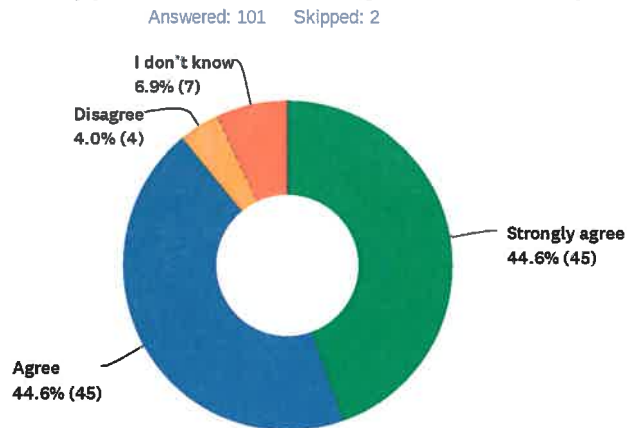
Q8 Please indicate the area amenities that you or members of your family currently use (choose all that apply).



Q9 What City services or facilities should be improved or expanded?(choose all that apply)

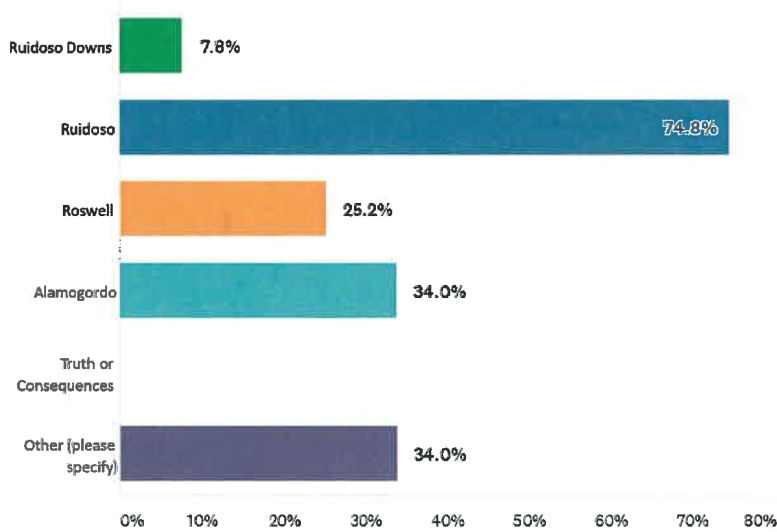


Q10 The visual appearance of the City should be improved.



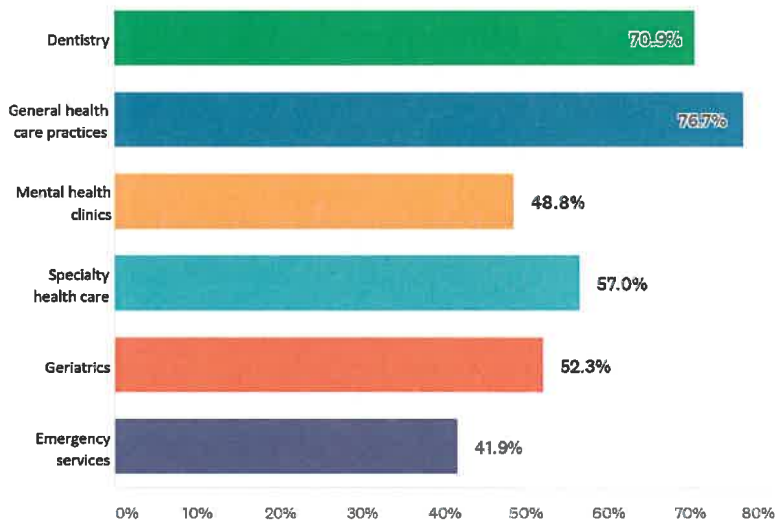
Q11 Where do you currently go for health care services? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



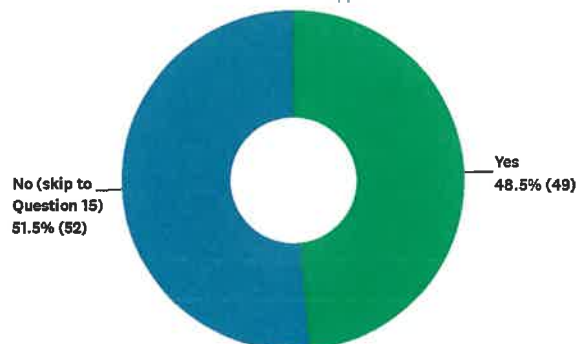
Q12 What type of health care services are missing in Ruidoso Downs?(choose all that apply)

Answered: 87 Skipped: 17

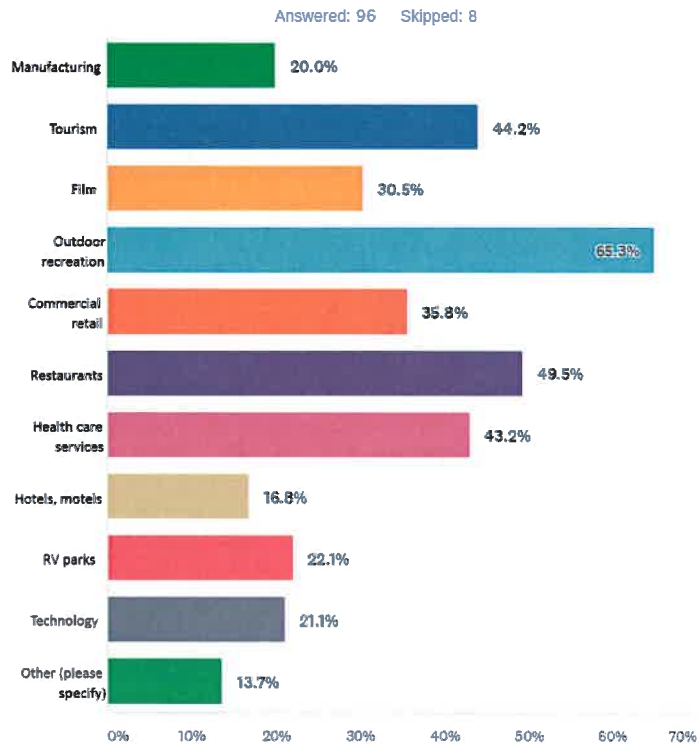


Q13 Are you currently employed?

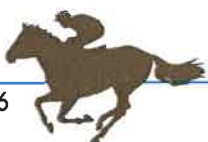
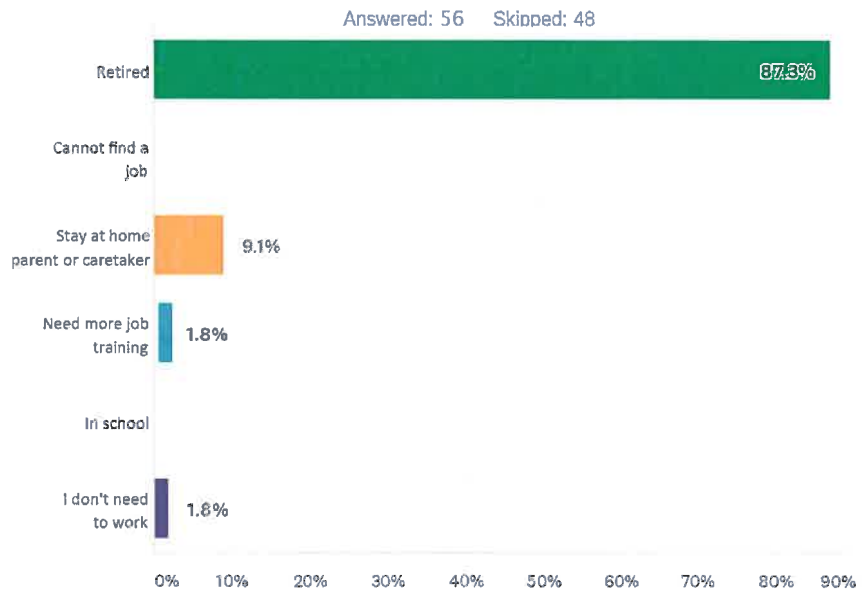
Answered: 102 Skipped: 2



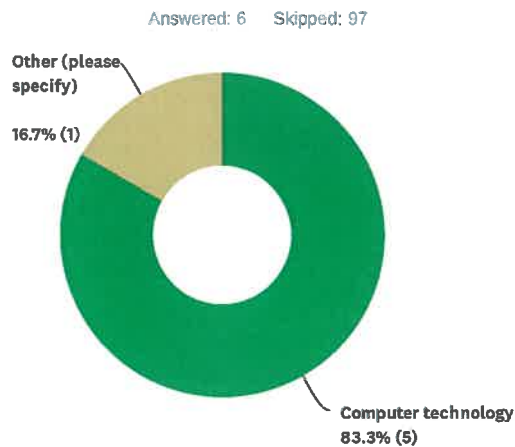
Q17 What areas of economic development should the City focus on expanding? (choose all that apply)



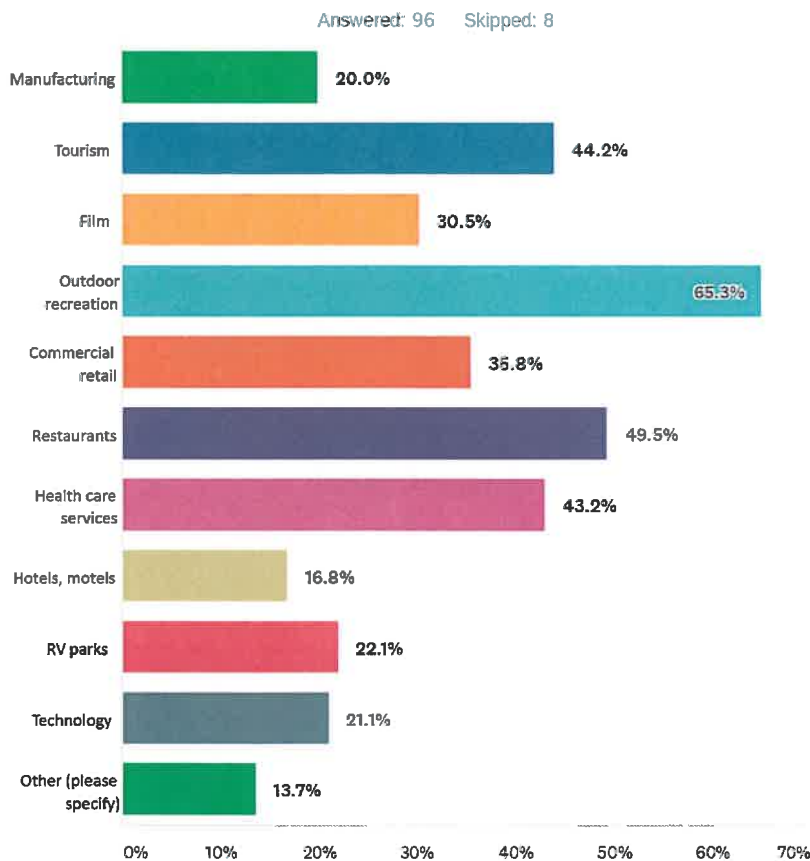
Q15 If your answer to Question 13 was "No", why aren't you employed?



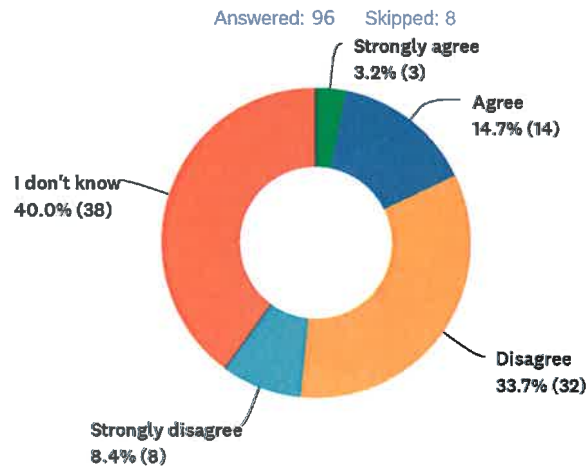
Q16 If your answer to Question 15 was "Need more job training" what type of training or education do you need to get a job?



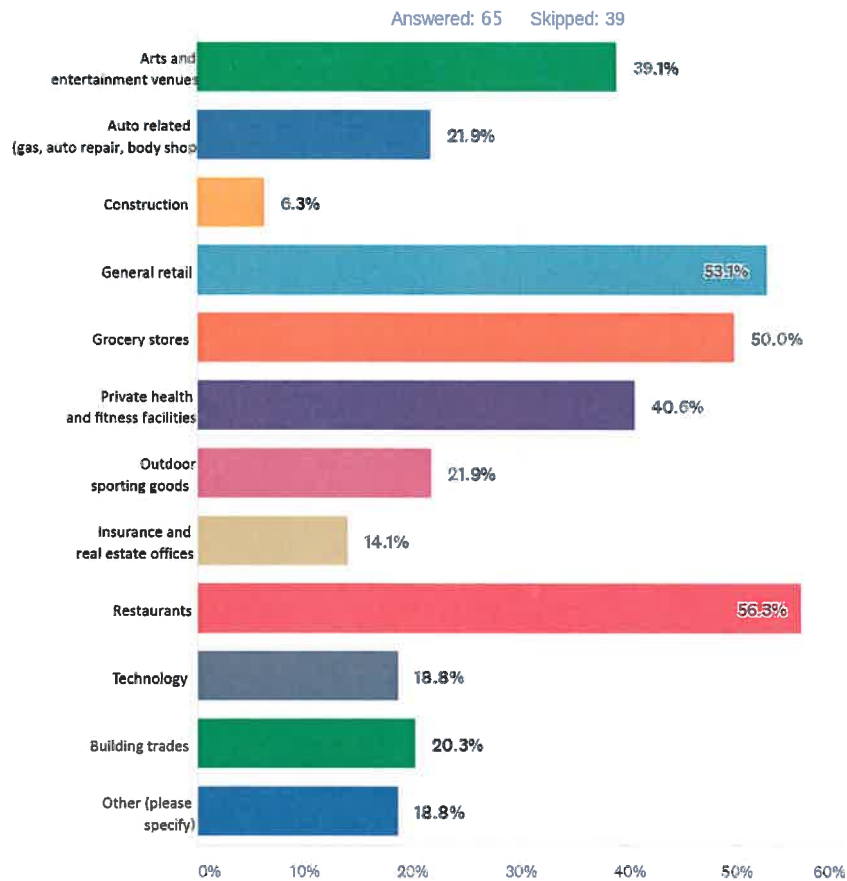
Q17 What areas of economic development should the City focus on expanding? (choose all that apply)



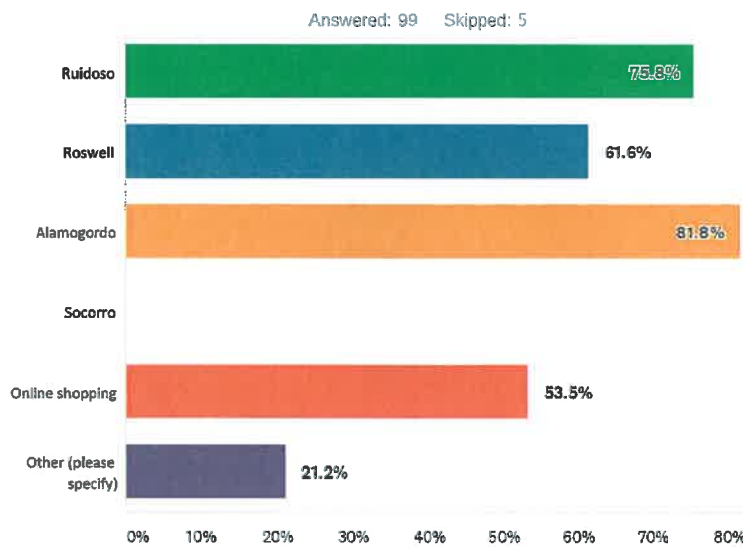
Q18 There are adequate commercial retail and business services in Ruidoso Downs.



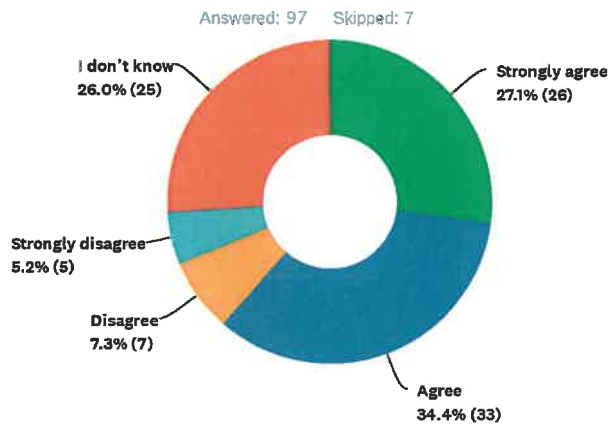
Q19 If your answer to Question 18 was "Disagree or Strongly disagree", what types of commercial services are needed in Ruidoso Downs? (choose all that apply)



Q20 If Ruidoso Downs doesn't have what you need, where do you go for shopping or commercial services? (choose all that apply).

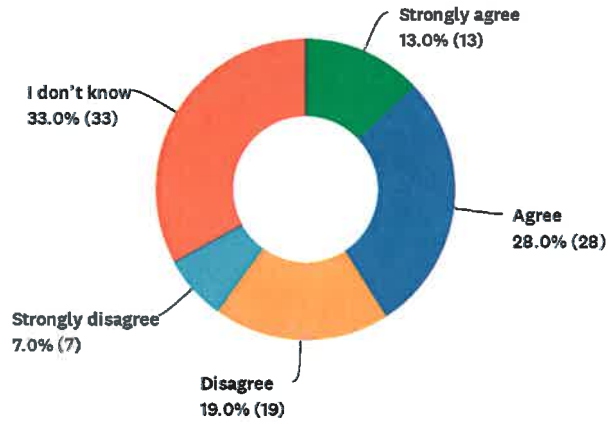


Q21 The City should encourage infill development (development of vacant or underutilized parcels in areas that are already largely developed).



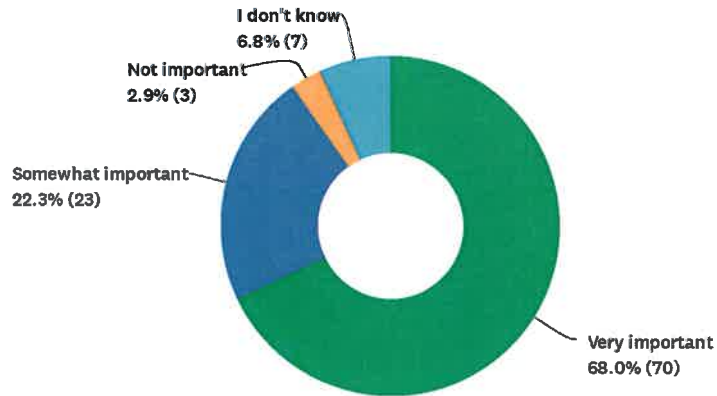
Q22 The City should encourage mixed-use development (development that includes residential and non-residential, either in the same building or on the same site).

Answered: 101 Skipped: 3



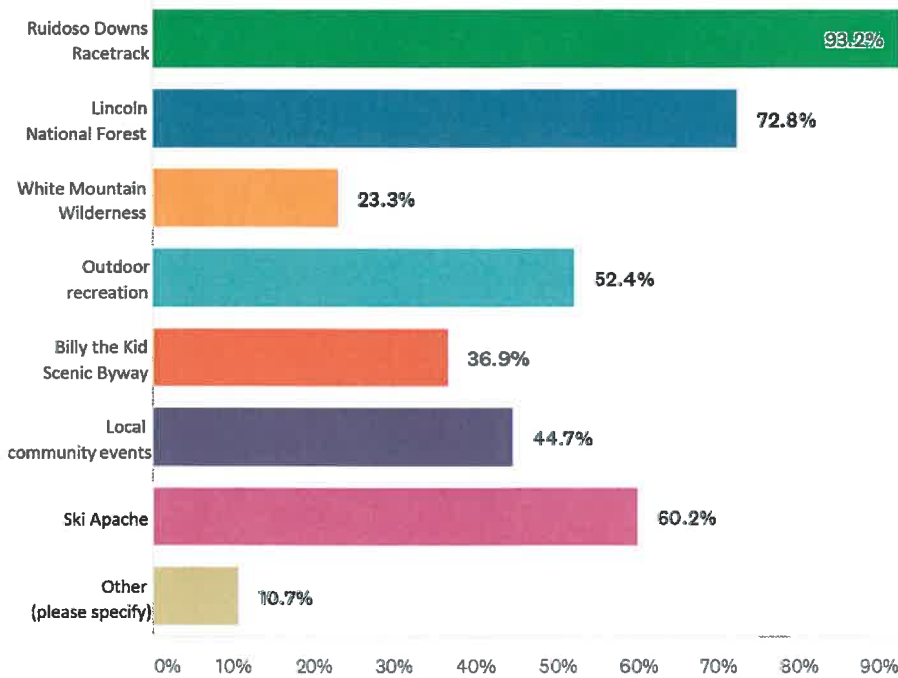
Q23 How important is the tourist economy to the City of Ruidoso Downs?

Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



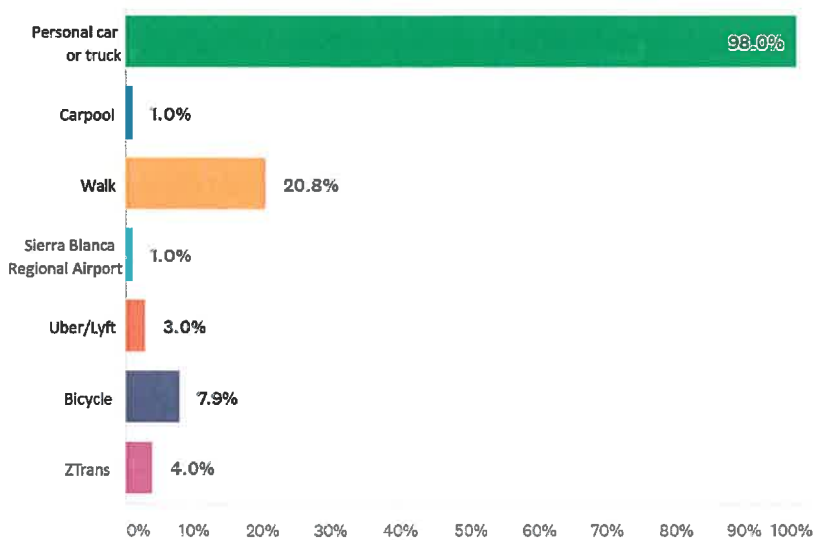
Q24 What are the tourism opportunities that are most important to Ruidoso Downs? (choose all that apply).

Answered: 104 Skipped: 0

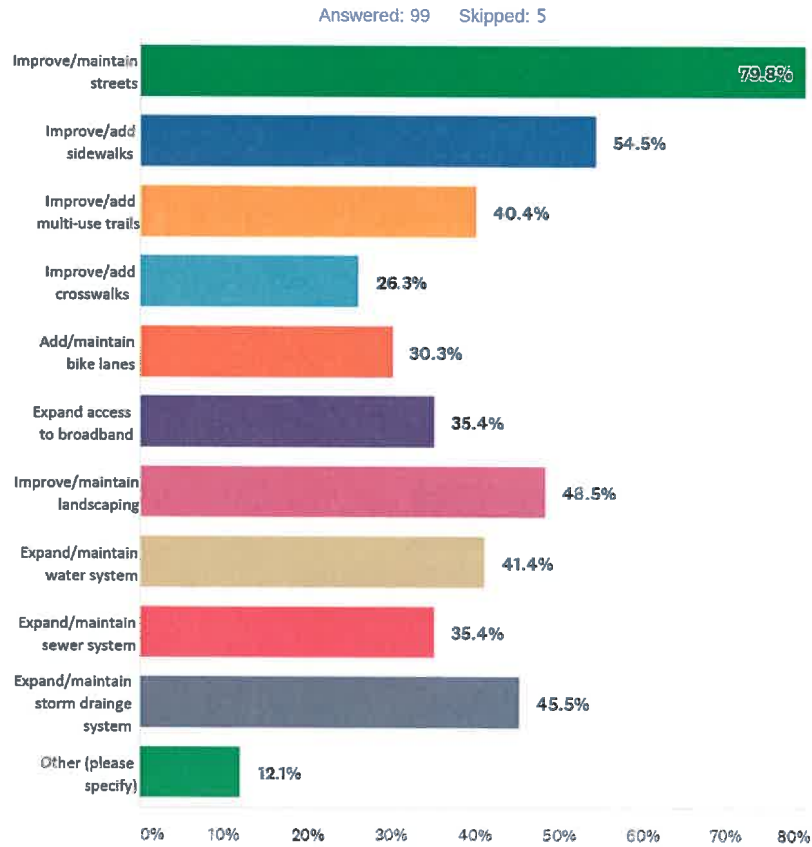


Q25 Please indicate the transportation modes that you currently use (choose all that apply).

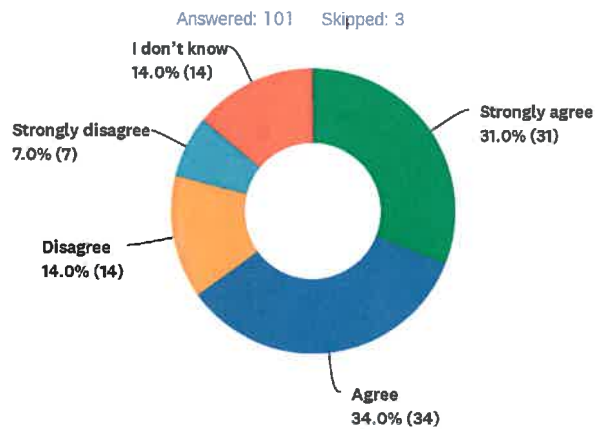
Answered: 102 Skipped: 2



Q26 The City should focus on the following transportation and infrastructure improvements (choose all that apply).

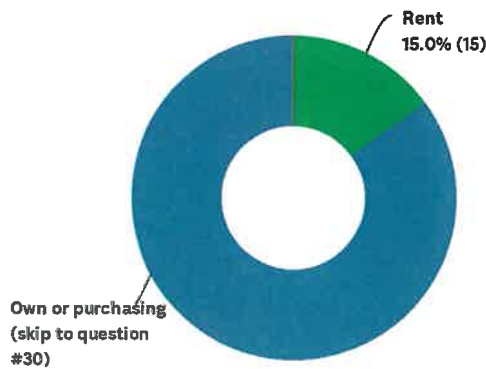


Q27 The City should increase its supply of affordable housing (defined as housing for which occupants are paying no more than 30% of income on housing and utilities).



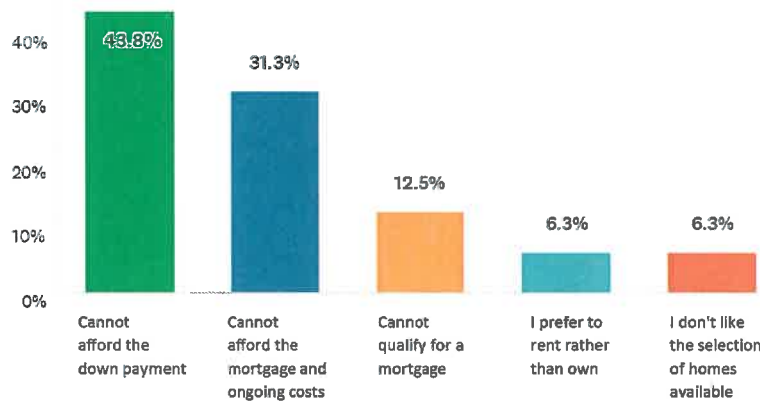
Q28 Do you rent or own your home?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 3



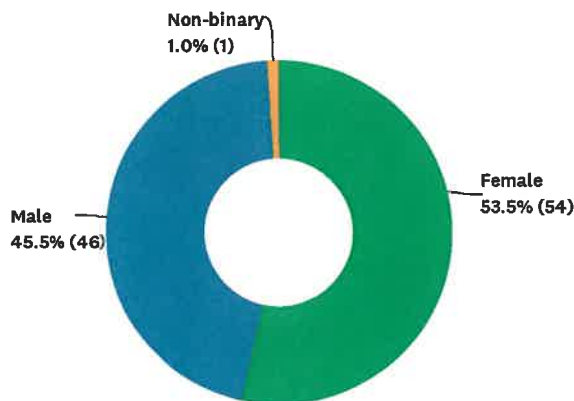
Q29 If your answer to Question 28 was "Rent", why have you not purchased a home in Ruidoso Downs?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 88



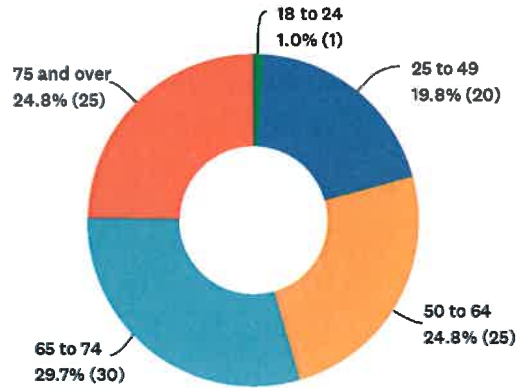
Q31 What is your gender?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 2



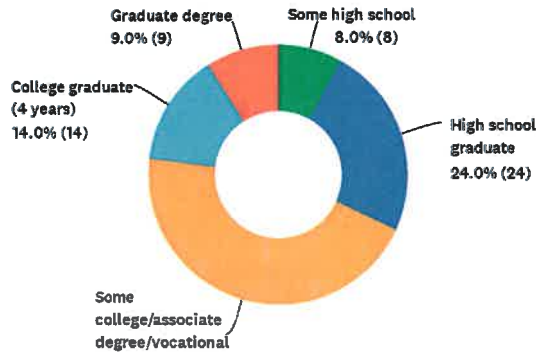
Q32 What is your age category?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 2



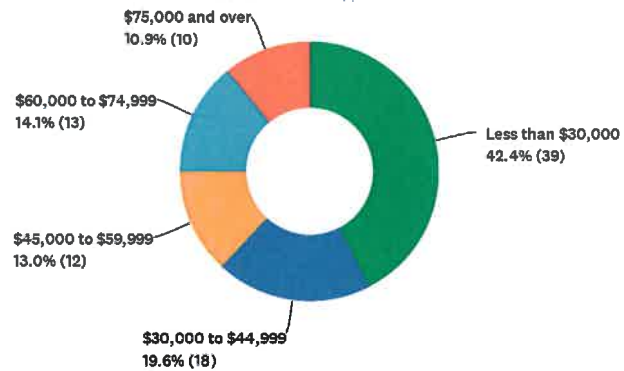
Q33 What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 3



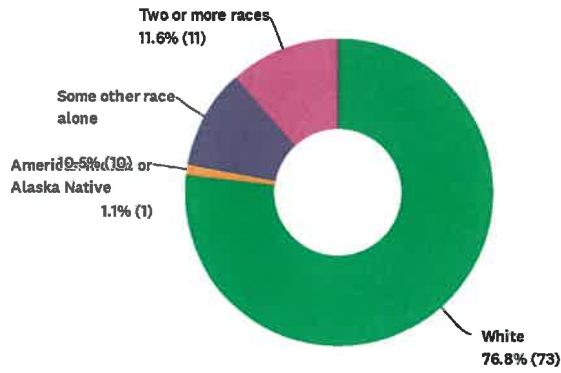
Q34 Which of the following categories best describes your total household income?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 11



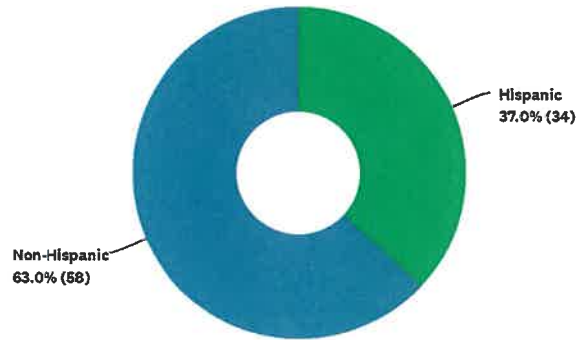
Q35 What is your racial identity?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 8



Q36 What is your ethnic identity?

Answered: 92 Skipped: 11



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INTRODUCTION

This section includes a brief list of federal and state economic, business, infrastructure development, and housing resources available to both local governments and people interested in redevelopment, business development, in need of a small business loan, historic preservation, housing assistance, etc. Each of these programs require applicants to meet certain qualifications in order to be eligible for funding. Contact information is provided for each program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund

The program assists local governments and other public entities to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets and public parking lots. Funds must be used for the construction, maintenance, repair, and the improvements of public highways, streets, and parking lots. The local match is 40% and awards range from \$9,000 to \$192,000. Funds are made available at the beginning of the fiscal year and must be encumbered and spent no later than the end of the fiscal year.

Contact: NMDOT, Engineer Maintenance Section
1120 Cerrillos Road
P.O. Box 1149
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: (505) 827-5498
Website: dot.state.nm.us

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This federal program is administered by the National Park Service. The state side of the LWCF provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The New Mexico State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department administers the state program. New Mexico has received millions of dollars from the LWCF program since its inception 40 years ago and funded hundreds of projects around the State from baseball and soccer fields to trails, playgrounds, and picnic areas. State agencies, municipalities, counties, schools, and tribes have developed and improved over 1,000 close to home outdoor recreation areas in response to the needs of its citizens and visitors by providing a permanent legacy of parks, facilities, and open space.

Contact: National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW, Org-2225
Washington, D.C. 20240
Website: nps.gov



Local Government Planning Fund

This fund provides up-front capital necessary to allow for proper planning of vital water and wastewater projects. The 2005 Legislature (HB 304, Sandoval) broadened project eligibility to include comprehensive or master plans, conservation plans, and economic development plans and to allow NMFA to “forgive” the loan if the entity finances the project through NMFA.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority
207 Shelby Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 984-1454
Toll Free: (877) ASK-NMFA
Website: nmfa.net

Municipal Arterial Program (MAP) Local Government Road Fund

This program assists municipalities construct and reconstruct streets which are principal extensions of the rural highway system and other streets which qualify under New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) criteria. Municipalities are required to contribute 25% to the cost of the project. There is no set limit to the amount of awards, but the state share typically ranges from \$50,000 to \$1.1 million per project. Applications must be received by March 15th for funding to be considered by the fiscal year beginning July 1. Municipalities must submit applications provided by the NMDOT Transportation Planning Division.

Contact: NMDOT, Engineer Maintenance Section
1120 Cerrillos Road
PO Box 1149
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: (505) 827-5498
Website: dot.state.nm.us

Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)

The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF) offers many examples of NMFA’s investment of time, expertise, and capital. The PPRF has provided the means for unusual projects to receive financing. The PPRF is being looked at to provide an increasing array of public projects. Many of these projects have less proven revenue streams but do not have other viable sources of financing. Created in 1994, the PPRF program assists a wide range of public credits in accessing the capital markets with advantage of offering to all borrowers (regardless of their credit worthiness) fixed ‘AAA’ - insured interest rates.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority
Address: 207 Shelby Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 992-9639
Toll Free: (877) ASK-NMFA
Website: nmfa.net



Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

This program is administered by the State of New Mexico through the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance and Administration for communities with populations under 50,000. Funds can be applied towards planning projects, economic development activities, emergency activities, construction or improvement of public buildings, and rehabilitation or repair of housing units. CDBG funds can be used for towns engaged in downtown revitalization including redevelopment of streets and fund facade improvement programs. There is a \$500,000 grant limit per applicant (\$50,000 maximum for planning efforts) and a 5% cash match by the applicant is required.

Contact: State of NM Local Government Division
131 S. Capitol
Bataan Memorial Bldg., Suite 201
Santa Fe, NM 87503
Phone: (505) 827-8053
Website: nmdfa.state.nm.us

USDA Rural Development Programs

The USDA provides assistance to rural communities including loan and grant programs that address small businesses and rural businesses, rural housing, rural community facilities, and rural utilities. The USDA provides loan programs such as the Business and Industry Loan. USDA rural development grants can be made directly to small businesses that are accomplishing innovative economic development work or energy efficiency installations, but must flow through a non-profit or local government intermediary. The Carrizozo Service Center is the nearest to Ruidoso Downs. Assistance is available through the following programs:

- ◀ Business and Industry Loan Guarantees
- ◀ Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans
- ◀ Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program
- ◀ Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program
- ◀ Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants
- ◀ Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program

Contact: USDA Rural Development
Carrizozo Office
307 12th Street
Carrizozo, NM 88301
Phone: (575) 648-2941
Fax: (855) 538-6003
Website: rd.usda.gov/nm



NMDOT Transportation Alternatives Program

The NMDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a Federal Aid funding program authorized through the FAST Act as part of the new Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program. TAP funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities. Each state's DOT administers the program using its own competitive process, in accordance with the law. Approximately every two years, NMDOT coordinates with the state's seven RTPOs and five MPOs on soliciting TAP applications.

Contact: NMDOT District 2 Office
4505 West Second Street
Roswell, New Mexico 88201
Phone: (575) 840-3035
Website: dot.state.nm.us

NMDOT Transportation Project Fund (TPF)

The NMDOT Project Oversight Division has solicited applications for the Department's Transportation Project Fund (TPF), formally known as Local Government Transportation Project Fund (LGTPF), for FY2022. It is anticipated that this program will continue. Local and tribal governments in New Mexico are eligible to apply for state funded grants in the following categories:

- ◀ Environmental and other studies;
- ◀ Planning;
- ◀ Design;
- ◀ Construction; and
- ◀ Acquisition of rights of way necessary for the development of transportation infrastructure, which includes highways, streets, roadways, bridges, crossing structures and parking facilities, including all areas for vehicular, transit, bicycle or pedestrian use for travel, ingress, egress and parking.

Contact: NMDOT
1120 Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: (505) 699-9946
Website: dot.state.nm.us

OUTDOOR RECREATION

New Mexico Outdoor Recreation

In 2019, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation (NMOR) was created as a division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD). NMOR was created to grow and champion the New Mexico outdoor recreation as an powerful economic engine to grow wealth and job opportunities. The following three funding programs are available:

Outdoor Equity Fund - This grant aims to support transformative outdoor experiences for New Mexico youth that foster stewardship and respect for New Mexico lands, waters, and cultural heritage. Applicants must be



from an area that serves a population where at least 40% of youth are low income. Awards range from \$1,500 to \$15,000.

Outdoor Recreation Incubators - This grant program is awarded to business incubators that propose the best programs to assist early stage outdoor recreation companies. These awards are \$50,000 and eligible programs can include those that support startups in service, retail, and manufacturing.

Special Projects and Infrastructure Fund - This grant program supports projects that enhance communities' trails, river parks, wildlife viewing areas, and other infrastructure projects that enhance outdoor recreation primarily in rural, tribal, and traditional land-grant communities. Awards are between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for projects that are shovel ready and can be completed within 24 months of the awarding.

Contact: New Mexico Economic Development
Outdoor Recreation Division
1100 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 827-0300
Website: nmoutside.com

EndeavOR New Mexico

endeavOR is the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance and is the first outdoor recreation (OR) business alliance in New Mexico which strives to provide a unified voice to advocate for the Outdoor Recreation economy. The organization has three overarching goals: Expand the OR economy; Engage the OR community; and Enhance the OR experience. Memberships are available for outdoor recreation businesses and organizations; supporting businesses and organizations; friends; and students. Members can take advantage of networking opportunities, contribute to advocacy efforts, marketing and promotion efforts, alerts on the latest news and trends, and workforce training assistance.

Contact: endeavOR New Mexico
Address: 4301 E. Main Street
Farmington, New Mexico
Phone: (505) 501-1330
Website: nps.gov

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

ACCION New Mexico

ACCION New Mexico makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for bank loans, and also provides business support services.

Contact: ACCION New Mexico
20 First Plaza NW, Suite 417
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 243-8844
Website: accionnm.org



New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)

The NMDA is a constitutional agency organized under the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU). The Department administers the Agricultural Development and Promotion Funds Program (ADPPF), which was created to promote agricultural growth and rural stability, maintain and increase markets for new products, and develop value-added products. The ADPPF may be used to promote and market specialty crops and livestock.

Contact: New Mexico Department of
Agriculture
MSC 5600
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8005
Phone: (575) 646-4929
Website: nmda.nmsu.edu

High Wage Jobs Tax Credit

A taxpayer who is an eligible employer may apply for and receive a tax credit for each new high-wage economic-base job. The credit amount equals 8.5% of the wages and benefits paid for each new economic-base job created, up to \$12,750 per job. Qualified employers can take the credit for four years. The credit may only be claimed for up to one year after the end of the four qualifying periods. The credit can be applied to the state portion of the gross receipts tax, compensating tax, and withholding tax. Any excess credit will be refunded to the taxpayer.

Contact: NM Taxation and Revenue
Department
1100 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: (505) 827-0700
Website: gonm.biz

Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)

The Job Training Incentive Program is one of the most valuable incentives offered to new employers in New Mexico, and can be used effectively in recruitment packages. This program reimburses 50 to 70% of employee wages and required travel expenses during an extended training period for new hires for new and expanding companies in New Mexico. The JTIP must be applied for and approved prior to reimbursable wages being paid.

Contact: Joseph M. Montoya Building
1100 S. St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505-4147
Phone: (505) 827-0249
Website: gonm.biz

New Mexico Clean Energy Incentives

The State of New Mexico offers programs and several tax incentives for clean energy development through the Energy Conservation and Management



Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department. The following are available:

Clean Energy Performance Financing - The Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) is a process that facilitates facility improvements without the need for up front capital funding from the agency.

New Mexico State Tax Incentives for Renewable Energy - Tax incentives are available for the development of sustainable and renewable energy projects. Tax credits are available for the following: Sustainable buildings; Agricultural Biomass; Geothermal Heat Pump; Biodiesel Facilities; Renewable Energy Production; and Solar Market. New Mexico also provides a Gross Receipts Tax Exemption for Wind and Solar Systems. The federal government also provides tax credits, rebates, and savings for renewable energy projects.

Contact: New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and
Natural Resources Department
Energy Conservation and Management Division
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 476-3200
Website: emnrd.state.nm.us

Small Business Development Center

New Mexico State University-Alamogordo has a satellite Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the ENMU-Ruidoso campus in the Village of Ruidoso. The SBDC provides assistance to both new and existing businesses. Professional business counselors are available provide the following services:

- ◀ Business consultations;
- ◀ Small business workshops;
- ◀ Access to traditional and alternative lenders;
- ◀ Market research assistance;
- ◀ Referrals to other business assistance providers;
- ◀ International trade;
- ◀ World-class technical assistance partners: Sandia Labs, Los Alamos Labs, and others.

Contact: SBDC ENMU-Ruidoso
709 Mechem Drive
Ruidoso, NM 88345
Phone: (575) 439-3660
Website: nmsbdc.org/alamogordo



SBA 7A Loan Program

SBA 7A Loan Program is the standard SBA loan guarantee program. Up to 80% of a bank loan to a private business can be guaranteed. Banks still accomplish normal due diligence, but may be willing to accept slightly more risk. This program increases the aggregate amount of funds available to small business in the banking system. It can also serve to extend term.

Contact: U.S. Small Business Administration,
New Mexico
625 Silver Avenue SW, Suite 320
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 248-8225
Website: sba.gov

New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a non-profit organization that helps increase profitability and competitiveness through lean concepts. The MEP brings together experts in government, industry, and non-profits through workshops, on-site training, and systems analyses. Ruidoso Downs is served by the Southeast Region MEP located in Las Cruces.

Contact: New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership
8600 San Mateo Boulevard, #100
Albuquerque, NM 87113
Phone: (575) 649-4529 (Las Cruces)
Website: newmexicomep.org

New Mexico Partnership

The New Mexico Partnership is a private, non-profit organization that offers assistance to businesses looking to expand or relocate to New Mexico. It can assist businesses on a variety of business initiatives including:

- ◀ Initiate real estate searches;
- ◀ Coordinate site-selection trips;
- ◀ Personalize briefings and orientations;
- ◀ Assist in evaluating and applying for incentives;
- ◀ Facilitate the permitting process;
- ◀ Organize strategic meetings with key government and community officials;
- ◀ Collaborate on media and public relations; and
- ◀ Provide data on key business factors.
- ◀ NM Partnership can also assist with agri-business tax credits.

Contact: New Mexico Partnership
1720 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 312
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Phone: (505) 247-8500
Website: nmpartnership.com



SMART Money Loan Participation Program

This program is administered by the New Mexico Finance Authority and intended to leverage funds provided by local New Mexico banks for businesses that create quality jobs. The program provides bank participation loans, direct loans, and loan and bond guarantees on behalf of private for-profit and non-profit entities. The program is designed to create greater access to capital for businesses throughout New Mexico, lower the cost for the borrower, and share the risk with the bank creating a benefit to both the bank and borrower. Business loans must result in job creation and economic benefit and carry a minimum of risk.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority
207 Shelby Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 992-9638
Website: nmfa.net

The Loan Fund

The Loan Fund provides loans, training, and business consulting to small businesses that do not qualify for a bank loan, but still have a viable need for a loan and the ability to pay it back. This program started out as a micro-lending organization, but can now make loans up to \$200,000 in exceptional circumstances. Loans carry a higher than market rate to compensate for risk.

SBA 504 Loan Program - SBA 504 Loan Program is a cooperative loan program between the SBA, a bank, and a certified development corporation. An SBA 504 loan is a participation loan in which the SBA loans money directly to a business in participation with a bank. This loan can only be used for fixed asset financing. The primary benefit to borrowers is that it allows for minimal equity (10%) and it can also serve to extend the term.

SBA Microloan Program - Loans to small businesses up to \$50,000. Loans can be used for working capital, inventory or supplies, furniture or fixtures, machinery or equipment. Loans less than \$10,000 carry interest rates of 8.7%. Loans above \$10,000 carry interest rates of 7.875%. All loans can have up to 6 years.

Contact: The Loan Fund
423 Iron Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102-3821
(505) 243-3196
Website: loanfund.org

WESST

The WESST's Roswell office serves emerging and existing small business owners (men and women) in seven New Mexico counties. The WBC Program offers a variety of training and consulting services geared to but not limited to women. WESST assists clients with their loan packages, financial projections,



and provide information about various loan sources within the community. WESST also participates in the SBA microloan program.

Contact: WESST - Roswell
Roswell Training Center
500 N. Main Street
Roswell, NM 88201
Phone: (575) 624-9850
Website: wesst.org

REDEVELOPMENT

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities offered funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience through 12 eligible TE activities related to surface transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety programs, scenic and historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation. TE projects must relate to surface transportation and must qualify under one or more of the 12 eligible categories.

Contact: USDOT Federal Highway Administration, New Mexico Division
4001 Office Court Dr., Suite 801
Santa Fe, NM 87507
Phone: (505) 820-2021
Website: fhwa.dot.gov

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program

The EPA's Brownfields Program provides direct funding for brownfields assessment, cleanup, revolving loans, and environmental job training. To facilitate the leveraging of public resources, EPA's Brownfields Program collaborates with other EPA programs, other federal partners, and state agencies to identify and make available resources that can be used for brownfields activities. In addition to direct brownfields funding, EPA also provides technical information on brownfields financing matters.

EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants - Assessment grants provide funding to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfields sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 to assess a site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum) and up to \$200,000 to address a site contaminated by petroleum. Applicants may seek a waiver of the \$200,000 limit and request up to \$350,000 for a site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants and up to \$350,000 to assess a site contaminated by petroleum. Such waivers must be based on the anticipated level of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum) at a single site. A coalition of three or more eligible applicants can submit one grant proposal



under the name of one of the coalition members for up to \$1,000,000. The performance period for these grants is three years.

EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grants - Cleanup grants provide funding for cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 per site. Due to budget limitations, no entity can apply for funding cleanup activities at more than three sites. These funds may be used to address sites contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum). Cleanup grants require a 20% cost share, which may be in the form of a contribution of money, labor, material, or services, and must be for eligible and allowable costs. The match must equal 20% of the amount of funding provided by EPA and cannot include administrative costs. A cleanup grant applicant may request a waiver of the 20% cost share requirement based on hardship. An applicant must own the subject site at the time of application. The performance period for these grants is three years.

Contact: Environmental Protection Agency
Fountain Place 12th Floor, Suite 1200
1445 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
Phone: (214) 665-2200
Website: epa.gov

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA)

The MFA provides financing for housing and other related services to low- to moderate-income New Mexicans. There are 37 state and federal programs administered by the MFA that provide financing for housing, including low interest mortgage loans and down payment assistance, weatherization, green building and rehabilitation, and tax credit programs. The MFA partners with lenders, Realtors, non-profit, local governments, and developers. All state and federal housing programs are administered by the MFA, including Section 8 housing funds and other HUD projects. Some of the primary rental and homeownership programs administered by MFA include:

HOME Investment Partnerships Program - Assistance is provided to income qualified homeowners who lack the resources to make necessary repairs to their homes. Assistance can be used for reimbursement of costs for rehabilitation, including applicable codes, standards or ordinances, rehabilitation standards, essential improvements, energy-related improvements, lead-based paint hazard reduction, accessibility for disabled persons, repair or replacement of major housing systems, incipient repairs and general property improvements of a non-luxury nature, site improvements and utility connections. Non-profits, housing authorities, and local governments administer the homeowner rehabilitation program. Funds are awarded through a RFP/Application process. MFA has also



reserved funds for the Reservation Rehabilitation program to provide loans to homeowners on a house-by-house, first-come, first-served basis.

New Mexico Housing Trust Fund - Provides flexible funding for affordable housing initiatives for persons or households of low or moderate income served by nonprofit and for-profit organizations, governmental housing agencies and entities, regional housing authorities, tribal governments and housing agencies, etc. Interest rates are approximately 1 to 5% per annum. Construction is up to three years (current maximum \$1,500,000). Long term amortizing up to 30 years (current maximum: \$500,000). Requirements for rental households are those earning 60% or less AMI, and for single family households, at or less than 80% AMI.

New Mexico Affordable Housing Tax Credit - This program encourages private investment in affordable housing by providing donors to qualified housing developments with a credit on their state taxes. The donation must be made to an affordable housing development that has been approved by MFA. Donors receive investment vouchers for up to 50 percent of the value of the donation, which they can use towards a tax deduction on their New Mexico state taxes. Eligible projects include the development of single family homes and multifamily rental housing throughout New Mexico.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) - This program provides federal income tax credits to individuals or organizations that develop affordable housing through either new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation. The tax credits provide a dollar for dollar reduction in the developer's tax liability for a ten year period. Tax credits can also be used by nonprofit or public developers to attract investment to an affordable housing project by syndicating, or selling, the tax credit to investors. In order to receive tax credits, a developer must set-aside and rent restrict a number of units for occupancy by households below 60% of area median income and the units must remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years. In addition to tax credits, the financing "gap" for certain LIHTC projects may be filled with a below market rate HOME loan. Tax credits and rental HOME loans are awarded annually through a competitive application process according to the state's Qualified Allocation Plan.

Contact: New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority
344 Fourth Street SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 843-6880
Website: housing.org



