

## What Have We Learned? (Survey Results)

**Project Title:** Historic Downtown Pueblo Intensive Survey, Context, and Outreach, Part 2

**Survey Title:** Our Project for Historic Downtown Pueblo: What Have We Learned?

**Deployment:** June 18, 2020 – August 20, 2020

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PuebloDTProject>

**Data:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-D9JJSF2G7/>

**Method:** Survey questions were based on previous surveys to stakeholders. Those surveys asked:

- Downtown Association members about the buildings they own;
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of Downtown Pueblo; and,
- What does Historic Downtown Pueblo mean to them.

**Author:** Alan Lamberg, grant recipient contact, Senior Planner for City Planning & Community Development Department, and Staff liaison to Historic Preservation Commission.

**Technician:** Bobby Cuomo, media systems administrator for the City of Pueblo Information Technology Department.

## Survey Results

### Question 1: About the Respondents (22)

|                          | Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Citizen of Pueblo</i> | 19          | 87%        |
| <i>Property owner</i>    | 12          | 52%        |
| <i>Business owner</i>    | 6           | 26%        |
| <i>Other</i>             | 3           | 13%        |

### Question 2: Respondent Occupation (22)

Admin, Artist, Business Owner, Consultant, Coordinator of Pueblo Heritage Museum, Department of Corrections, Developer, Executive Director of Downtown Association, Executive Director of HARP, Financial Services, Government Employee (retired), Legal Assistant (retired), Museum Director, Night Custodian, Personal Care Assistant, Photographer, Preventative Maintenance Mechanic (retired), Realtor, Real Estate Broker, Retail, and a University Employee.

**Question 3: Shared Interest (23)**

|   | Respondents | Percentage |
|---|-------------|------------|
| <i>Preserving a sense of place and history</i>                              | 21          | 91%        |
| <i>Economic redevelopment</i>   | 21          | 91%        |
| <i>Tourism</i>  | 17          | 74%        |
| <i>Building improvements or restoration</i>                                 | 17          | 74%        |
| <i>Other:</i>   | 4           |            |
| <i>Improving quality of life, quality of environment, arts and culture.</i> |             |            |
| <i>Instilling a sense of place, unique to Pueblo.</i>                       |             |            |
| <i>Making Union Avenue a thriving place.</i>                                |             |            |
| <i>Casinos (gambling as entertainment).</i>                                 |             |            |

**Question 4: What was the most interesting thing you learned (5)**

How many buildings had lower levels for businesses.

That the economic hardship of earlier days saved a lot of wonderful historic buildings from "urban renewal" projects of the second half of the 20th century. Yay!

The history of the downtown area is good fun--except maybe the unfortunate "ladies of the night."

The vitality that was here 100 years ago.

Since I have written history pieces for much of the area during the past 10+ years, I knew much of what was presented. However, the sense of purpose and determination by the people who created buildings and businesses is inspiring.

**Question 5: A vital historic area was identified around the downtown core, generally between Santa Fe Avenue and Court Street and between City Center Drive and 7th Street. What can Pueblo history organizations do to further our community's understanding of Historic Downtown Pueblo? (5)**

Place it on the National Register of Historic Places.

Walking tours! Get property owners to restore buildings and get rid of ugly renovations and spotlight the history.

I like the walking tours, including Ghost Walk and the ones Heritage Museum is doing. Visitors will do walking tours of downtown when they stay in the Marriott, I think, and it's a good thing to do with family from out of town. Reopen the dig at El Pueblo.

Celebrate the historic resources and encourage dialogue around the importance of variety in building type and age. Encourage maintenance or historic buildings.

Be sure to include the community spirit of those who built the area.

**Question 6: Downtown Pueblo has a variety of businesses, including offices, schools, restaurants, cafes, bars, retail shops, services, and more. Using what we learned, what can current businesses do to celebrate Pueblo's historic character? (6)**

Restore false fronts to the original architecture.

Include info about their building's history on their website and as part of the business, so that customers can feel the history when they are doing business there. Maybe some kind of cool shop/dine/learn/do 21st century business in a historic setting event.

Better integration of the past and the present. Signs about "Here stood the opera house which burned in 19XX." "Here is where telephone operators worked feverishly to notify those downstream about the 1921 flood." A train washed through the front window of this business". Mack's saddlery was here and (about the saddles, and the horse and the flood, and where the horse is now.)." Maybe ask restaurants or current businesses to consider the history and incorporate the building's past into its present. Find ways to showcase prohibition era tunnels. Name dishes in restaurants for the gambling halls, other fun historical events.

Block off union Ave to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

Maintain buildings, restore using historically accurate techniques and methods, restore/renovate any buildings/storefronts that need upkeep. Involve downtown businesses/residents in events that celebrate historic architecture, walking tours, special celebrations, etc.

Keep in mind that the area is historic. Be willing and able to share that with customers and visitors alike.

**Question 7: Using what we learned, what can we do to program events and festivals in Downtown? (6)**

Create some 21st century events that are fun for today's population but still spotlight the history of Pueblo. And also maybe a chance for some "reenactment" stuff so people can check out the history that way too.

I think Ghost Walk already has much of this in place, but it only runs a couple of weekends, and is all-volunteer. With paid actors and serious advertising, it could go 3-5 weekends. Or something could be organized to run it through the summer, splitting the proceeds among several nonprofits who cooperate.

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

Consider an open-house style event...guests get to go inside buildings that are typically closed, or get a special tour/talk on historic buildings. Encourage historic building owners to participate in events and festivals.

Much of that is already being done. It takes a lot of people to mount such things and the area is does not have a lot of people available.

**Question 8: Using what we learned, what can we do to stimulate a vibrant Downtown nightlife? (6)**

Market more to students and young couples.

Light the buildings to highlight the historic architecture.

More walking tours, with coupons or other encouragement to stop in at various businesses. Brues Alehouse history! Before the pandemic they were doing awesome work--support them and develop new ideas with them.

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

Encourage occupancy of downtown buildings that are empty. More stores, restaurants, social spaces, rather than static places that aren't open at night.

That is up to business owners and attractions.

**Question 9: Using what we learned, what can we do to Downtown a destination (Get Off I-25)? (6)**

Signage!!

Provide economic support to get empty buildings filled with destination type businesses and also to help building owners renovate in a historic way.

What has PBR done for downtown lately? Answer: Not much. Ask them how they can help, and hold their feet to the fire! Bull riding is exciting, and part of the history of the west!

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

Destination shops, restaurants, and events.

Be sure that other parts of the state and nation are aware of what downtown Pueblo has to offer.

**Question 10: Using what we learned, what can we do to collaborate with the Riverwalk? (So that tourists and citizens have a complete experience of the Riverwalk and Downtown.) (6)**

Create a walking tour including both locations.

Trolley? Suggest a couple of ways to experience each area in half a day and in a whole day.

Have a big name concert at the Chile Festival. Cant you see Chris Stapleton singing Tennessee Whiskey during the Chile Festival, over at that bandshell, with people sitting on the grass and with speakers and screens throughout the area, from Brues to Angelo's to PBR? Work with Ryan McWilliams to develop the old electric plant and the meatpacking plant, who plans a GONDOLA from one to the other, with stops between!

Historic Riverwalk walking tour or boat tour (collaborate with Riverwalk to update their boat tours). Create a self-guided walking tour highlighting historic buildings.

Tie-in with the Riverwalk where possible. It has developed into the gem of the area.

Cross promotion.

**Question 11: Using what we learned, what can we do to encourage temporary and long-term usage of underutilized or vacant buildings? (6)**

Market the beauty and usefulness of the original architecture and get rid of the stucco and false fronts.

Support artists of all kinds - visual, music, culinary, performance to do things in these buildings to bring people to them. Pop up cafes, theaters, galleries, concerts etc.

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

Incentivize renting unoccupied buildings for creative clients, those that are open in evening hours, or offer something more social for citizens and visitors.

The number one thing in my view is to find some way to get the State Land Board to sell all the parcels it owns downtown as a result of abandoned railroad tracks. It's hard to get people to invest in building a business when they can only rent the land.

Government should look at temporary tax breaks for those owners who wish to create living space on upper floors.

**Question 12: Using what we learned, what can we do to develop new housing in and around Downtown? (7)**

Once the allure is there, lofts will be very popular.

Lofts?

Questions 11 and 12 may be related. Turn those buildings into nice apartments with character. Put grocery stores or other useful businesses in the bottom floor, and "cool" affordable apartments over top.

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

When downtown is a pleasant place to live, people will come.

Government should look at temporary tax breaks for those owners who wish to create living space on upper floors.

**Question 13: Using what we learned, what can we do to encourage a grocery store or locally-sourced, fresh-food market to locate Downtown? (6)**

This will take the citizens of the area to make some noise on this.

Wow ... that's a good idea ... free transportation for people to get there? A trolley? A bus?

NeighborWorks was talking about this for the old Clarks Western Wear building. Work with them; I'm sure they'd appreciate it.

Somehow show the grocery store or specialty market that they will get enough business to sustain themselves. Offer incentives for the first year or so to give time to test the water and bring in customers.

Retail comes where population is there to support it.

**Question 14: Using what we learned, what can we do to help Historic Downtown buildings get a “face lift”? (6)**

Get rid of the stucco!

I wish I knew.

This is where Chris Nicoll's idea of a grantwriting team for the city would come in. The team would help seek out historic grants and other grants to do any facelifts. I do think you want to make sure that any buildings that get a facelift do so with the original building in mind. Maybe a historic building commission or something. No more 60s flat-roofed junk, or glass front skyscrapers, anything else out of character.

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

Grants and workshops on restoring historic buildings so owners can get the money or knowledge they need to do the face lift.

Financial incentives for improvements (Urban renewal used to do so; I am not sure they still are able to do that).

**Question 15: Using what we learned, what can we do to preserve the unique character of Historic Downtown Pueblo? (5)**

Once again, get rid of the stucco and false fronts.

Get building owners help with insurance and renovation costs to make and keep their buildings historic.

Block off union street to traffic. Make it a walking mall.

No more parking lots. Expect high standards of your architect/designer/historic restoration specialist.

discourage demolition of historic buildings and encourage preservation of them.

**Question 16: Using what we learned, what can we do to celebrate Pueblo's multicultural history so we can celebrate it with diverse ethnicities?<sup>1</sup> (4)**

Market local museums.

Teach language and history classes. Have events throughout the year promoting each ethnic group with a festival of food, music, dance, literature, art, culture etc. Historic walking tours pointing out sites where these ethnic groups lived, worked etc.

Allow, encourage and help with promotion for any ethnic group that wants to have a celebration of their heritage downtown. Work with El Pueblo to get these going.

Encourage a diversity of business owners along the Riverwalk and downtown.

Pueblo is still ethnically diverse and does a reasonably good job. (I the Historical Society figure is 30 foreign language papers.

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<sup>1</sup> Pueblo was the most ethnically diverse city in the USA not on a shoreline. At the turn of the 20th Century Pueblo had 26 daily foreign-language newspapers.

**Project Summary:** In 2017, the City of Pueblo completed part 1, which documented 154 buildings on 149 sites. It resulted in 124 reconnaissance surveys and 25 intensive surveys. Also available is the 84-page historic narrative of Downtown Pueblo, which indicated a core historic area, but further research about the commercial development was necessary to complete the picture. The part 2 project occurred during 2019-2020, which included 15 more properties featured with an intensive level survey. An additional contextual report focused on the commercial development of downtown, with histories for influential persons, events, and changes to significant buildings. We cultivated an understanding of Historic Downtown Pueblo in ways important to property and business owners. We will continue to involve them by promoting ways historic preservation can be a tool for economic development.

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**Contact:** Visit the project portal at <https://Pueblo.us/HistoricDowntown> or e-mail [HPC@Pueblo.us](mailto:HPC@Pueblo.us) or call 719-553-2259.

