



2024 - 2034 La Junta Urban Renewal

STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted February, 2024

Letter from the La Junta Urban Renewal Board

It is our pleasure to present the La Junta Urban Renewal Strategic plan. This plan reflects the input of the engaged community and business partners, the Urban Renewal Board and staff, and many others. The effort represents the first district-wide issues based strategic plan in our history.

We identified four Key Areas of Focus: Community Investment; Strong Collaborative Partnerships; Modern Sustainable Infrastructure; and Attractive, Safe and Fully Activated Buildings. The team developed the Strategic Goals and Objectives in each Key Area of Focus through an extensive process of feedback and meetings, where we examined local and national trends, and reviewed information provided by experts. Our strong commitment to prevent blight and improve safety underlies every strategic objective. These objectives will guide the work we do to create prosperity in La Junta.

The Strategic Plan is a tool that clearly captures the most important priorities and will direct the development of our budget and resource allocation. We are confident that this year's planning process will lead to a comprehensive and responsive budget that balances the diverse needs of our community through its emphasis on accountability, partnership, innovation, and efficiency.

We want to convey our appreciation to the residents who provided their time and input to the process, to the staff for their commitment, and to the partners and agencies throughout the City who will continue to work on this plan. As a living, document, it is our commitment to update the strategic plan on a regular basis so we can measure our success in coming years.

Sincerely,

La Junta Urban Renewal Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the La Junta Urban Renewal Board	2
What is Urban Renewal?	4
Quick Facts about La Junta Urban Renewal	6
History	8
La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Plan	9
The Process of Strategic Planning	11
Engagement and Outreach Insights	12
Strategic Plan Framework	14
Values	15
Vision and Mission	16
Key Areas of Focus	17
Attractive, Safe, and Fully Activated Buildings	18
Community Investment	19
Modern Sustainable Infrastructure	20
Strong Collaborative Partnerships	21
The Path Forward	22
Appendix A: Authority Powers and Undertakings	23
Appendix B: Plan Area Map	24
Appendix C: LJURA Key Definitions	25
Appendix D: Documents Reviewed	30

What is Urban Renewal?

Urban renewal is a process specifically authorized under the Colorado Urban Renewal Law to assist local governments throughout the state in revitalizing their communities. The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority (LJURA) is an urban renewal authority that serves as the City of La Junta's redevelopment agency. The LJURA is a separate legal entity under the state statute and has very specific operating abilities and powers under the law. LJURA is governed by a 9-member board of commissioners appointed and confirmed by the City Council for staggered terms. LJURA's primary function is to assist the city and property owners in elimination and prevention of slums and blighted areas through creative redevelopment.

Before the authority may get involved in a project, the area first must be found to be blighted. A blighted area means an area which, in its present condition and use, has substantially and adversely affected or slowed the reasonable growth of the community, hindered the provision of decent housing, or constitutes a social liability to the community, and therefore is detrimental to the well-being of the citizens. The Colorado Urban Renewal Law (C.R.S. 31-25-101) governs LJURA and all of the state's urban renewal authorities. It identifies the criteria under which an area can be found to be blighted and thus eligible for redevelopment using Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Under the law, urban renewal authorities can use TIF funds only when the blight criteria contained in the law are met.

To accomplish this strategic plan, the board works in close partnership with the City of La Junta and City Council and a variety of public and community entities. Rather than specifying particular types of projects and activities, the law allows and encourages LJURA and other urban renewal authorities in Colorado to maintain flexibility and exercise judgment in determining which projects and activities best achieve its goals.

While the LJURA is a legal Authority, throughout this document it may also be referred to as the Board or as Urban Renewal.



“

Loans or grants to private owners in smaller increments have a visible effect on the downtown area.

”



“

Funding for commercial buildings has led to grants, property use, removal of blight, and helping business owners recover, grow, and renovate.

”

“

The La Junta community is very positive and welcoming!

”



“

A true sense of community.

”

Quick Facts about La Junta Urban Renewal



Population of La Junta:

7,152

as of July 1, 2022



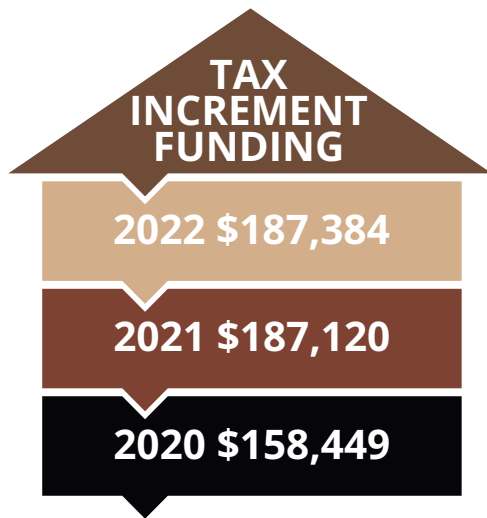
Median household
income:

\$48,929

Source <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lajuntacitycolorado/PST045222>



Vacant Buildings in the Plan Area: **70**



PROJECTS

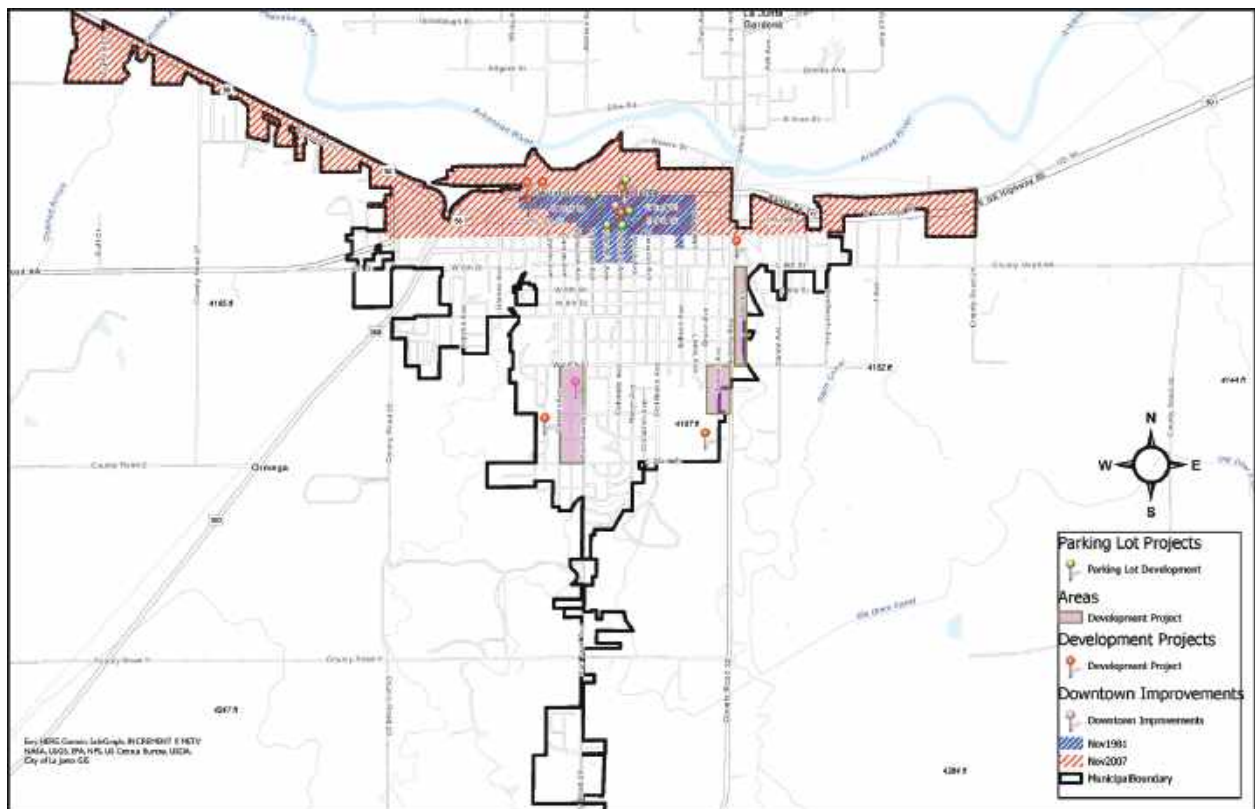
PLAZA BUILDING

FOX THEATER

SUTHERLANDS

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/la-junta-co-population>

Map of the Urban Renewal District



History

The area surrounding the Arkansas River was a popular corridor for nomads, Spanish explorers, and Native peoples for thousands of years. It was aptly named after the Spanish word for “junction” because of its ideal location at the intersection of the Santa Fe Trail and the river.

In the 1830s, the Bent brothers established a riverside fort that acted as a trading post for buffalo robe producers and local Native peoples. It became an icon on the Santa Fe trail that provided not only a place to trade, but to rest, restock supplies, and socialize with other travelers.

This small town eventually grew into a community full of camaraderie and many residents began setting up homesteads. In 1881, La Junta was officially incorporated and more permanent brick buildings started filling out the landscape of the town. Today it still serves as a junction point between many major highways and offers a peaceful spot to visit in Colorado’s outback.

This information was created in part by:
<https://www.uncovercolorado.com/towns/la-junta/>





La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Plan

The LJURA is governed by a Plan that established the Authority as a legal entity, established the powers of the Authority, and established the Area (by map) that the Authority covers.

In 2007, La Junta Urban Renewal adopted a Plan as required by state statute.

The Urban Renewal Plan incorporates many other plans for the City of La Junta including the Comprehensive Plan, the zoning code and the subdivision code. The Plan also adopts a Plan Area within which Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be collected and spent to remove blight and improve safety. The boundaries of this Plan Area are included in Appendix A.

The Plan also discusses the state statutes addressing blight, a description of an urban renewal project, what types of project activities can be undertaken by the LJURA, and how financing within the District is accomplished.



DID YOU KNOW?

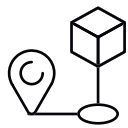
The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority is governed by an independent Board.

There is a matching grant and loan application process for projects within the District.

All the tax revenue generated within created as TIF within the District must be spent within the District.

The Process of Strategic Planning

This plan was created over six (6) months and included five main phases:



Phase 1: Logistics and Planning



Phase 2: Research and Review



Phase 3: Outreach and Engagement



Phase 4: Facilitated Retreat and Meetings



Phase 5: Document Creation and Adoption

The community was invited to offer their insights and feedback through both surveys and interviews.

Engagement and Outreach Insights

To develop this strategic plan, the LJURA Board reached out to the community for feedback and thoughts. Interviews and surveys were conducted, work sessions, public meetings and retreat were facilitated.

The community was asked to provide feedback on these questions:

1. Thinking about the community, which commercial buildings and public facilities do you want to KEEP or SAVE no matter what happens in the future?
2. In your opinion, where has the URA been the most effective? What projects have been the most successful, where do you think the most positive outcomes have been?
3. Tell us why you felt your #1 answer above was the MOST EFFECTIVE?
4. What are the three things you would like to improve about the work of the URA?
5. What are the trends (positive or negative) in the community, the region, the state, or the nation that you think the URA can plan for?
6. Strategic planning focuses on creating a better future. What would be your top three priorities for the URA to focus on in our strategic planning efforts?
7. Thinking about what you want to achieve above, what are the challenges or obstacles standing in the way of success?
8. What are the positive descriptions you have to share about La Junta? Think about how it feels, why you live or work here, what you see that is positive.
9. What are the most effective ways you receive information about the community right now?

THE THREE THINGS TO IMPROVE



Revitalization of
Downtown and
Support for
Local Businesses



Infrastructure
Improvement
(Sidewalks, Streets,
Appearance)



Transparency,
Communication,
and Better
Decision-Making

Top Three Priorities for the LJURA

Transparency and Communication:

Increasing public awareness of the work of the LJURA, more community involvement, and correcting misconceptions about the URA's role and capabilities would all contribute to future success.

Financial Resources and Funding Allocation:

This includes the availability and allocation of funds, as well as issues related to high interest rates for loans and the need for proper funding to support various initiatives.

Economic Development and Small Business Support:

The challenges faced by small businesses were the focus of this priority. The need for community buy-in, and the importance of supporting viable local businesses through grants and loans were strong themes.

Three trends to consider

**Community
Development
and Revitalization**

**Homelessness
and Social Issues**

**Environmental
Concerns and
Sustainability**

Strategic Plan Framework

LJURA Vision

We are a partner with our community to support a welcoming, vibrant, and safe district.



LJURA Mission

Our Mission is to address blight and safety issues in the district by creating public and private partnerships and leveraging funding sources.



Values
Collaborative

Values
Creative

Values
Ethical

Values
Inclusive

Values
Professional

Values
Transparent



Attractive,
Safe, and
Fully Activated
Buildings

Community
Investment

Modern
Sustainable
Infrastructure

Strong
Collaborative
Partnerships

Values



Collaborative

We collaborate with our community and our public and private partners to achieve the best possible outcomes.



Creative

We encourage creativity in development, in ideas, and in partnerships to drive a better outcome for the community.



Ethical

We are truthful, fair and honest. We fully disclose any information that would be important with relationships, knowledge or communication that might be perceived as favoritism.



Inclusive

We welcome input and engagement from interested parties.



Professional

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism which we define as competence, knowledge, conscientiousness, integrity, respect, emotional intelligence, and appropriateness.



Transparent

We conduct the business of the LJURA in open public settings, publish the minutes and recordings of our meetings, and respond to public comments with complete disclosure.



Vision and Mission

Vision

We are a partner with our community to support a welcoming, vibrant, and safe district.

Mission

Our Mission is to address blight and safety issues in the district by creating public and private partnerships and leveraging funding sources.



Key Areas of Focus

There are four Key Focus Areas for La Junta Urban Renewal. These are the most important areas for future success of the district and the business owners, tenants and residents. Each focus area is defined and has specific Outcomes and Strategic Goals.



Attractive, Safe and Fully Activated Buildings

Buildings that are well maintained and meet the current code are also vibrant and safe. They are versatile buildings that are functional and compatible with the surrounding improvements, and are fully occupied and activated, improving the value and aesthetics.

Community Investment

This key focus area focused on partnership and leveraging assets and funding to support a vibrant community. Adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, preserving and restoring historic buildings and downtown housing can all be a result of community investment which includes time, volunteering, funding and services.



Modern Sustainable Infrastructure

The work of the Urban Renewal Authority focuses on blight and safety and that would include infrastructure to include utilities, sidewalks, public lighting, parking lots, streets, and curb and gutter. Creating safe, modernized and sustainable infrastructure can be a critical part of removing blight and increasing safety in the district.

Strong Collaborative Partnerships

The business community, service groups, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, public agencies, developers, private sector investors and other partners will work together on a common goal of supporting awareness, increasing communication, and building capacity to achieve success in the district.



Attractive, Safe, and Fully Activated Buildings



OUTCOMES

Reactivation Increased Tax High Occupancy Revenue Vibrancy Legacy More Enjoyment Increased Business Opportunities	Quality of Life Increased Tourism Nationally Renowned Growth Destination Positive reflection of community Inspiring Others
--	--

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Ensure appropriate guidelines policies and codes are in place and enforced

Objective: Create easy to read resource

Objective: Develop design guidelines

Objective: Enforce codes in our applications

Objective: Contractual requirements for attractive development in applications

Objective: Georgetown program example

Goal 2: Inspire the community to reinvest

Objective: Award for redevelopment (\$)

Objective: Recognition

Objective: Classes on blight

Goal 3: Adopt incentive program to address attractiveness, fully activated, safe, buildings

Objective: Mason Building is an example

Goal 4: Strategically enhance curb appeal

Community Investment



OUTCOMES

Eliminate left over business signs
Increase in

- Volunteerism
 - Leveraged dollars
 - Housing
 - Preserved buildings
 - Grants
 - Business growth
 - Number of permits
 - Sale tax/property tax
- No more broken windows

Longer business hours
Safer sidewalks
Policies/regulations regarding owner investment
Buildings look better
Investment per square inch
Fewer complaints/change in attitude
People value/appreciate our work
Improved infrastructure
Better lighting
More local investment

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Provide resources and services to support creative redevelopment
Objective: Partner with Otero College
Objective: Actively recruit professionals to support creative redevelopment

Goal 2: Leverage financial resources for projects
Objective: Projects
Objective: Partners
Objective: Banks
Objective: Fundraising
Objective: Grants

Goal 3: Involve and collaborate with community partners to achieve identified goals in the TIF district (Rotary, Chamber, landscapers, events)
Objective: Implement program to support local educational programs

Modern Sustainable Infrastructure



OUTCOMES

More buildings able to host businesses Long lasting Accessible Surplus capacity Walkability Forecasting for future	Functioning Smart planning Safety Sustainability Usability
---	--

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Build the infrastructure to address safety

Objective: Determine highest priority infrastructure needs in the district

Objective: Meet with the city

Objective: Develop criteria

Objective: Target funding and projects and make commitments

Objective: Adopt a budget

Goal 2: Adopt criteria, guidelines, and policies for financial and environmental sustainability

Goal 3: Improve accessibility for all

Objective: Adopt a sidewalk plan

Strong Collaborative Partnerships



PARTNERSHIPS

- Business leaders
- Public agencies
- Community members
- Educational institutions
- Government and nonprofit organizations

OUTCOMES

Developing relationships with partners based on similar goals
Education component
Respectful, honest partnerships working toward a common goal
Partnering with application
Nonfinancial relationship
Increased trust of the LJURA

Good communication creating public buy-in to open up new partnerships
Improved positive, good reputation
Form mutually beneficial opportunities measured by both number applications submitted or approved
Increased awareness of UR work, purpose, education

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Implement a communications campaign about the work of the LJURA
Objective: Create presentations, web content and written materials that educate the public about LJURA goals

Goal 2: Increase transparency and trust
Objective: Review current process and applications for improvement
Objective: Routinely communicate

Goal 3: Identify partnership opportunities
Objective: Build 5 partners for the LJURA by 2026
Objective: Focus on developing non-financial partners

The background of the page is a collage of two photographs. The top half shows a street scene with a building that has a blue awning and a sign that says "CAFE". To the left, there is a sign that says "ential & ercial" and a display board with many small photos. The bottom half shows a colorful mural on a wall with the word "LAND" in large, stylized letters. A "PARKING ONLY" sign is visible in front of the mural.

The Path Forward

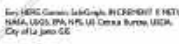
This strategic plan is a living document. It is our commitment to collaboratively update the strategic plan on a regular basis so we make sound and strategic financial investments, be transparent, and improve blight and safety in our district. Our plan will need to be adjusted based on community feedback, changes in the economy, or unforeseen circumstances and is designed to be flexible and adaptable.

The Board will use guidance and vision from this strategic plan to make decisions about policies, programs, and services. Through various paths such as the budget and financial assistance, this plan will be implemented and used to measure future success. As we move into the future, we look forward to achieving our vision of a welcoming, vibrant and safe district.

Appendix A:

Authority Powers and Undertakings

- **Prepare and Modify Plans for the Plan Area:** Work with public bodies and retain consultants and other advisors to assist with the planning of properties in connection with redevelopment of the Plan Area.
- **Complete Public Improvements and Facilities:** May, or may cooperate with others to, finance, install, construct and reconstruct public improvements in accordance with the Act, and necessary to promote the objectives.
- **Enter into Agreements:** May enter into Redevelopment and Development Agreements and contracts with developers, property owners, individuals and other entities determined to be necessary to carry out the purposes of a plan.
- **Adopt Standards:** May work with public bodies, and retain consultants and other advisors to assist with zoning and rezoning properties in the Plan Area.
- **Provide Relocation Assistance:** Adopt a relocation plan in conformance with the Act, if relocation of individuals, families or business concerns is required because of acquisition activities of the Authority.
- **Incur Debt and Issue Bonds:** Borrow money and apply for and accept advances, loans, grants and contributions from all lending sources, private and public, for purposes identified herein and authorized by the Act.
- **Sales Tax Increment Financing:** Urban renewal plan may contain a provision for allocation of certain tax revenues in an urban renewal area; including incremental sales tax revenues of the municipality in excess of a Base Amount and when collected and deposited in a Special Fund of the Authority.



Appendix C:

LJURA Key Definitions

Act

Means the Urban Renewal Law of the State of Colorado, Part 1 of Article 25 of Title 31, Colorado Revised Statutes, as amended.

Action Steps

Action Steps are very specific tasks that need to be completed to achieve the SMART Objectives and Strategic Goals. They are very short term (no longer than 90 – 180 days to complete).

Adaptive Strategies

Strategies are methods or overarching concepts used to accomplish a goal. They can be thought of as a broader tool or technique that will allow your organization to have success more quickly or efficiently. More than one strategy may be used concurrently, but too many different strategies all at once would probably be confusing. As a result, we recommend that a strategic plan identify just a few (4 - 6) strategies to work on at any one time. Think of strategies the high-level tools or techniques needed to accomplish the outcomes, factored into the everyday work of the city.

Authority

Means the La Junta Urban Renewal Authority.

Big Picture Outcomes (for each Key Focus Area)

The Outcomes are bigger picture and longer term – what is the organization trying to achieve by focusing on the Priorities? What is the end result if we are successful? The Outcomes are usually explained without specific numbers or data because they are explained in terms of what the organization wants or needs to achieve. An outcome is the change/difference that happens as a result of implementing your strategic plan.

Blight

Is a legal term used solely for the purpose of determining whether a neighborhood or commercial area can qualify for redevelopment through urban renewal. Not every home or building in an urban renewal area is considered blighted. Some areas that qualify for redevelopment may have well-maintained homes or businesses interspersed among deteriorating structures and other conditions of blight. If a property is included in an urban renewal area, it means TIF may be used in the area to stimulate redevelopment. State statute requires that, for an area to be considered blighted, it must not only contain a certain minimum number of undesirable conditions, or factors to determine blight, but it must be shown that the presence of those factors in the area substantially and negatively impacts the surrounding areas and community as a whole, preventing feasible private redevelopment. There are 11 factors of blight identified in the law, and four of them must be found to be hindering redevelopment efforts for an area to be declared an urban renewal area, unless there is no objection by the property owner(s) and tenants, in which case only one factor of blight hindering redevelopment efforts must be present. If eminent domain is used, although rare, five factors of blight must be found to hinder redevelopment for an area to be declared an urban renewal area.

The following factors are used to determine if an area is blighted:

- Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures;
- Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;
- Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- Deterioration of site or other improvements on the site.
- Unusual topography;
- Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title unmarketable;
- The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;
- Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities;
- Environmental contamination of buildings or property; or
- Inadequate public improvements or utilities.
- LJURA must determine how much area will be included in an urban renewal area, but it is required by state law to draw the boundaries of the area as narrowly as possible to achieve the objectives of the redevelopment plan.

Diversity

Diversity means any element or dimension that differentiates an individual or group from another. For an organization or community to be diverse, it should have people that differ in caste, sex, religion, ethnicity, nationality, age, education, marital status, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and identification etc., working and living there. Workplace diversity implies accepting these differences and treating each individual equally and fairly.

Diversity of Uses

Diversity of uses in the Plan Area refers to a difference in uses of buildings. It can mean a new and unique retail or commercial business; a restaurant that does not currently exist or offers a different type of food; multi-family housing; or activation of a vacant building.

Equity

In simple terms, equity means “to be fair.” In the workplace, equity means treating all employees equally and providing them equal opportunities to learn and grow. Equity is about ensuring that the organization’s processes and programs are impartial and it offers equal possible results for all employees.

Historically Underserved or Underrepresented

Underserved, vulnerable, and special needs populations in communities can include members of minority populations or individuals who have experienced disparities and discrimination in how they are treated, in access to programs and services, or in opportunities such as jobs.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is a spreadsheet or tracking document for the strategic plan that is based on the Priorities, Strategic Goals and Outcomes.

The Implementation Plan tracks several key issues: the SMART Objectives to accomplish the Goal, the Action Steps that will accomplish the SMART Objective, and the KPI’s that will measure success for the Outcomes. Included will be who is responsible, specific timelines, and any resources needed to accomplish the work.

Inclusion

It is the practice of making people with different identities feel welcomed in an organization or a process. Inclusion is all about the sense of belongingness, encouraging equal participation from everyone, and providing them with an

equitable opportunity to contribute to the company and advance their skillset. Inclusion means diverse people can be themselves at work and still feel respected and valued.

Key Focus Areas

Priorities are the most important issues, opportunities or trends facing your organization over the next 5 – 10 years. They are usually broad areas of service that will have the most positive impact on your community. Traditionally, they don't change over the course of several years.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators are measurable values that demonstrate how effectively the organization is achieving Strategic Goals and Outcomes. KPIs are used to evaluate success at reaching targets metrics in budget, strategic planning, master plans, and more. A great KPI measures not just numbers – it measures what is most important. A short example: if your desired Outcome is to increase community engagement, don't measure the number of people that attend meetings. Instead, measure how engaged they are.

Mission

A Mission Statement is a practical, tangible tool you can use to make decisions about priorities, actions, and responsibilities. A mission describes the purpose of your organization - the reason why it exists. It converts your broad dreams and visions into more specific, action-oriented terms. A mission can explain your goals in a clear and easy to understand manner. It creates focus for your work and accountability to stay on track. Because a Mission Statement is the purpose of the organization (why the organization exists) there should not be much change over the years.

Plan Area

Means the La Junta Urban Renewal Plan Area as depicted in Figure 1 of the Plan Document and defined in Appendix B. The Plan Area is the same in the Original Plan and this Amended Plan.

Redevelopment / Development Agreement

Means one or more agreements between the Authority and -- developers, property owners, business interests, individuals, or entities; as may be determined to be necessary or desirable to carry out the purpose of the Amended Plan.

SMART Objectives

SMART Objectives are milestones along the road to achieving your bigger picture Strategic Goals. They are accomplishments that can be defined in quantifiable and measurable terms. SMART means Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Timebound. Objectives are specific, actionable targets that need to be achieved within a smaller time frame to accomplish your Strategic Goals. SMART Objectives typically take between 1 – 3 years to complete.

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals are the larger, broader, often intangible concepts that will need to be accomplished to address the Focus Areas and be successful in the coming years. Strategic Goals are typically longer term (3 – 5 years) in nature and have milestones along the way to measure success. Goals are big, broad statements that, when accomplished, significantly move the needle on your Priorities. If you are successful at achieving your Goals, you will achieve your Priorities and realize your Vision.

Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is a working, living document that reflects the policy direction from the elected body, sets the Vision for the organization, and drives and informs an Implementation Plan which the staff will create to ensure progress and measurable results. The strategic plan will be updated regularly by the team and reported quarterly by the city staff. The key components of a plan for the elected body to discuss include:

Tax Increment Finance (or Financing) (TIF)

For this Plan, means a financing mechanism which uses future sales tax incremental revenues resulting from private investment within an established area, as well as other resources obtained by the Authority, to fund improvements authorized by the Act.

Vision

A vision statement is your dream of the future. It is a clear, aspirational statement that inspires long term change. The vision leads your organization - it guides your Strategic Goals, Outcomes, Adaptive Strategies and Work Plans.

Appendix D:

Documents Reviewed

Re Imagine La Junta
La Junta LJURA Plan
La Junta URA Bylaws
Historic Survey



LA JUNTA
URBAN RENEWAL