

CITY OF PERU, NEBRASKA

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

APRIL 2023



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City of Peru, Nebraska Downtown Revitalization Plan

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CITY OF PERU DOWNTOWN PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



WELCOME TO THE
CITY OF PERU
HOME OF PERU STATE COLLEGE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to thank everyone who offered their time and assistance with this project. Your wisdom, advice, and feedback can be found on every page of this plan. A special thank you is deserved for the individuals who dedicated their time and expertise to making the City of Peru a better place for all those who live, work, study, and play there.

Special thanks to Dr. Abigail Cochran and Dr. Zhenghong Tang for their guidance to the team throughout the planning process.

City Council Members

Mayor - Dave Pease

Councilmember - Spencer Vogt

Councilmember - Cate Wyckoff

Councilmember - Quentin Kieler

Councilmember - Marty Peregoy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Downtown Revitalization Improvement Plan and associated Design Guidelines were prepared by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Community and Regional Planning Capstone Studio group and faculty. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for leaders and residents of the City of Peru as they establish a direction for Peru's short-, medium-, and long-range downtown revitalization efforts and initiatives. As a first step, this plan will help the city of Peru apply for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds which could be applied to improvements for the downtown area. As other grants are applied for, and funds are obtained, this plan can be referenced and utilized to guide decision-making about which improvements the City could qualify for and what should be funded and developed. This plan will help downtown Peru support current and future business owners and budding entrepreneurs by envisioning creative economic development strategies. The purpose of this plan is to offer policy recommendations for downtown Peru's physical development and outlines implementation strategies that address land issues, community spaces, the local economy, and the environment. This document is not law; it acts as a policy guide and provides a framework for decision-making when projects are proposed, and funding decisions need to be made. The Peru Downtown Revitalization Plan is intended to be reviewed and adapted periodically, so it can be responsive to the community's economic cycles and challenges.

SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This plan will assess current conditions of the downtown area in Peru and will identify opportunities which will help to rehabilitate and revitalize the downtown. The planning team of students has documented survey results, field study observations, and all other work throughout the development of this plan. The team has met with stakeholders on multiple occasions, updating them with plan progress and soliciting additional feedback along the way. Input from community members has been sought in multiple ways and incorporated into the overall plans.

A list of recommendations for the revitalization of the downtown will be provided to the Peru along with suggestions for other potential funding sources for these improvements. It offers recommendations for ways to meet the community's retail, commercial, and service needs, and host a variety of enriching opportunities and activities resulting in regular patronage from members of the community, recreational trail users, and surrounding areas.

The plan in its entirety will be a useful tool for the City as they work to secure a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) among other external funding opportunities to implement their vision.

KEY GOALS

The residents and employees working in Peru, NE provided input to the planning team about what they want for their town. They were asked to consider their vision for the downtown area in the next 10 years. Upon review of all input, the following were identified by the planning team as their key goals:

- 1. Exhibit pride in ownership of businesses and residences.
- 2. Revitalize buildings on the downtown stretch.
- 3. Expand downtown business offerings.
- 4. Increase collaboration and connectedness in the community and its physical spaces.
- 5. Provide opportunities for recreation and social gatherings.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the community's goals and after careful consideration of all feedback received from the community of Peru, NE, the planning team has developed the following key recommendations for this plan.

Recommendation 1: Address Vacant, Dilapidated and Blighted Properties

The downtown area has multiple buildings, many of which are vacant and, in some cases, unusable due to their state of disrepair. The condition of the buildings is prohibitive to additional businesses establishing themselves in the downtown area. It is recommended that Peru develop a framework tailored specifically to their needs and particular circumstances for addressing vacant and blighted properties in downtown and the surrounding housing areas. The solution to this challenge should be multifaceted. The solution may include incentives to keep space occupied, funding for renovating properties, innovative approaches to code enforcement and an exploration of regulatory options that could be supported by the community.

Recommendation 2: Economic Development Strategies

Anchor institutions can be key engines of growth for small, rural towns and so the main recommendations to develop economic growth in Peru involve maintaining and building up these institutions through a few approaches. First, the city must address the vacant and blighted properties. This is

a necessary step to free up available commercial space for prospective businesses and budding entrepreneurs. Second, increase business to existing anchor institutions such as The Market and the local restaurant to further enable the circulation of money locally. Additionally, invest additional people and time resources into the college-community partnership with Peru State College. The proximity of the college to the city of Peru is a unique benefit to the community. By matching faculty expertise and resources with the challenges and needs of the town, they can build a long-term strategy together for a downtown business core, which will uniquely serve the needs of the Peru community and residents in surrounding towns. Lastly, develop a "temporary use" survey to collect more detailed information about what temporary uses residents and students may be most interested in and to collect information about potential businesses that may be interested in participating in a "pop-up" program.

Recommendation 3: Community Enrichment Opportunities

Community enrichment opportunities provide a wide range of benefits to communities, including personal growth and development, improved social connections, elevated health and well-being, and enhanced vitality and vibrancy of communities. Key enrichment opportunities for Peru include creating parks or open space in the floodplain, promoting existing outdoor recreational resources, and connecting the Town Center to the community via a multi-use trail. Promoting existing community recreation assets is an important driver

of local tourism and the economy. The goal of promoting outdoor recreational opportunities to outdoor enthusiasts is to bring a new revenue stream to Peru businesses. Creating new recreational activities in the community is also important. The city is currently attempting to purchase 5.6 acres of land located within the 100-year floodplain with the goal of turning that land into open space. This land could then be used to bring several new recreational opportunities to the city by transforming the property into a city park. Several improvements that may draw visitors to town could be included such as building an open-air theatre for concerts or performances, picnic shelters, an outdoor movie theater, and/or a small outdoor primitive or non-electric campground. Additionally physical activities could be implemented such as frisbee golf courses, public playgrounds, or small sports fields could attract locals and visitors to the area. Multi-use trails provide many benefits that contribute to the well-being and prosperity of communities. The benefits of multi-use trails include improving connectivity and accessibility, boosting economic development, promoting physical activity, enhancing transportation options, supporting social interaction, providing opportunities for education and learning, improving mental health, and preserving natural resources. It is recommended that Peru develops a trail system connecting the Steamboat Trace Trail and Peru State College to the Town Center. By connecting community assets and providing safe and accessible routes for people to move around, trails can promote healthy lifestyles, build a sense of community, and improve quality of life.

Recommendation 4: Improve Connectivity through Design

Community is key to the revitalization of the Peru downtown. The City of Peru and Peru State College have envisioned a future in which they continue to improve together, and yet the current design of the spaces connecting town and college offer little function and connectivity. Likewise, Peru has much to offer the southeast Nebraska region, and yet its placement “off the beaten path” of the highway can lead passersby to question whether a town is there at all. Wayfinding improvements and design features such as strategically placed signage could inform people of the presence of a downtown and draw in customers for its businesses. Well-designed sidewalks and pathways will offer safe, clean, and inviting access to the local businesses and encourage people to visit the community open spaces. Incentive programs to boost sidewalk improvements and maintenance are good ways to promote walking, appearance, and to add to the overall new design aesthetic that will be found in downtown Peru, Nebraska.

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CITY OF PERU DOWNTOWN PLAN PLANNING PROCESS



PLANNING PROCESS

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

The Peru Downtown Revitalization Plan was developed by Community and Regional Planning Program students from the College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln. The impetus for the plan was to provide a community-based project for students who enrolled in the Studio Capstone course during the Spring semester of 2023. In January of 2023, Professor Zhenghong Tang, Director of the Community and Regional Planning Program at UNL, and Professor Abigail Cochran, began the first phase of the planning process by meeting with representatives from Peru to discuss working together to develop a plan.

DEFINING THE PLANNING AREA

Before seeking input from the community, the planning team needed to establish the boundaries of the planning area to be researched. The team leveraged earlier planning documents which had been utilized in Peru, NE, to identify the downtown area and its boundaries. After defining the streets, blocks, and properties which encompass the downtown, the planning team worked with Peru City to share a survey with residents to gather their feedback about the planning area. This survey sought input on strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats to the downtown, as perceived by residents.



Figure 1: City Limits

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The community survey distributed by the planning team sought clarity on the vision Peru City residents have for their community and asked a variety of other questions aimed at helping the planning team clarify their goals. The survey yielded 77 responses from residents, students, and community stakeholders.

While analyzing the survey responses, it was discovered that more than 40% of the survey respondents were not living in Peru City, and over 25% of the respondents live in Peru but were not working there. This was an early indication that the community of Peru is unique in terms of the mix of residences and employment. The survey provided valuable insights into the community's perceptions and priorities while also addressing some of the strengths and opportunities for the downtown area and city-wide economy. In terms of strengths, the residents and visitors of Peru celebrated the re-opening of a grocery store in the town, The Market. The survey also indicated satisfaction with the street width and parking in the downtown area and the presence of Peru State College near to the community is viewed as an asset by most respondents. However, based on the survey there are several opportunities for Peru city. Respondents indicated a desire for old buildings to be redeveloped and for new business opportunities to fill these spaces and provide residents and college students with a better downtown experience.

There are some weakness and threats which were identified by respondents that could affect the downtown area and city-wide economy, such as: inadequate housing, business development,

walkability/streets, property maintenance/pride of ownership, community, food options, population fluctuations, place-making, employment, and infrastructure or flood concerns.

The survey asked respondents to consider their vision for the downtown area in the next 10 years. A prevailing theme was a desire for the town of Peru downtown area to be cleaned up, with a greater sense of ownership and pride for both homeowners and business owners. Additional revitalization of the buildings to bring in new businesses is also desired, such as additional restaurants, bars, barbershop/hair salon, or auto-body shops.

In terms of how community members can help to make the downtown and city of Peru what they see in their 10-year vision, respondents gave a variety of responses that were divided into five parts: renovations, city ordinances, responsibility and accountability, new businesses, and collaboration.

Respondents also believe that the city of Peru should learn from other nearby, peer cities in terms of downtown and greater economic revitalization, beautification, and pride in community. Some of the cities that Peru citizens have visited that may have approaches to draw on are:

- Brownville – Good example of nice coffee places and shops.
- Nebraska City – Murals on buildings, artwork, flags along streets, etc.
- Auburn – Critical mass of stores, nice parks, nice athletic fields, and better water.

Top ranked critical priorities for the Peru Downtown Revitalization and related economic development (based on survey results):

1. Downtown economic/business development. 53.9%
2. Downtown beautification: town clean up. 43.4%
3. Downtown street improvements, maintenance, and safety. 40.7%
4. Community activities and facilities. 36.8%
5. Building improvements to avoid demolition. 35.5%
6. Planning for downtown growth sustainably including infrastructure, schools, housing, and recreation (e.g., parks). 32.8%
7. Downtown residential housing improvement. 26.3%
8. Downtown pedestrian-friendly development. 23.6%
9. Downtown parking improvements. 22.3%
10. Develop downtown connections to trailheads and other recreational facilities. 19.7%

Survey respondents were asked who should be engaged in this planning process for the Peru, NE, downtown revitalization and economic development plan. Results indicated that a variety of entities should be engaged, such as City Council, residents, downtown businesses, non-downtown businesses, Peru State College, and community organizations. The highest percentage of respondents agreed that residents, City Council members, downtown businesses, and Peru State College should be engaged in the planning process. Additional respondents thought that other entities could be included in the planning process, such as, Nemaha County Economic Development, Peru Community Impact Group, churches, college students, and volunteers.

FIELD ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY MEETING

On January 30, 2023, the planning team held a community meeting at Peru City Hall. The team provided an analysis of the community survey results, sharing perceived strengths and opportunities for downtown Peru. In discussing the strengths of the downtown Peru area, a few themes emerged:

- The proximity to, and partnership with, Peru College is a unique asset for a small-town community.
- Access to fresh food and grocery items at The Market, which opened in 2022 in the downtown building which was previously home to Decker's Food Mart.
- The area has potential for walkability. The downtown area has open, wide streets.
- Nearby outdoor recreational amenities are available. The Steamboat Trace trail, maintained by Nemaha Nebraska Resources District (NRD), is just north of town and runs 22 miles along an abandoned railroad corridor which parallels the Missouri River and runs from Nebraska City, through Peru, south to Brownville. (citation: <https://www.nemahanrd.org/recreation/steamboat-trace>) The Duck Creek Recreation Area is approximately 5 miles northwest of Peru and features a 62-acre lake popular for fishing and camping. (citation: <https://www.nemahanrd.org/recreation/duck-creek-recreation-area>)

www.nemahanrd.org/recreation/duck-creek-recreation-area)

- Events such as Old Man River Days, Halloween Trunk or Treat, and plant exchanges recently supported by the Peru Community Impact Group have generated interest and seen success in the community.

In addition to the strengths identified, some themes emerged around areas for improvement in downtown Peru:

- Property maintenance is an area of concern for residents, with many of the downtown storefronts and buildings appearing to be in very poor condition. Code enforcement has either not been pursued or has been deemed insufficient to handle the town's crumbling buildings.
- Inadequate housing is present throughout the town, with 83% of the houses having been built in 1939 or earlier and very few new homes (fewer than twenty) constructed after 1990. One housing challenge, related to property maintenance, is that 31 percent of the homes are not owner-occupied. There are 95 residences for rent, many occupied by college students, but community members shared concern about the living conditions present in the residences given

the condition of the homes on the outside. In addition to the rented units, there are 43 vacant residences, accounting for 14% of the residences in Peru. (citation: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey)

- Business development and employment are insufficient to employ the members of the community. Most people living in Peru work in towns other than Peru. Since Peru is not a “drive through town,” the concern is that people visiting nearby communities or Peru College do not realize that there is a downtown business strip in Peru. The perception is that businesses will not establish themselves in the town because there are not enough people to sustain those businesses, especially in the summer months when the population of college student residents in the town declines.
- Connectivity to the campus is lacking. There is no clear walking path with sidewalks or lighting for students or visitors to walk from the college to downtown Peru.
- Amenities which would offer opportunities for community members to interact and build social capital are lacking. There is one restaurant in town with sporadic operating hours and which does not meet the needs of all community members in terms of socialization.
- Infrastructure and flooding concerns became more prevalent with community members after flooding and water infrastructure issues encountered after 2019.

During the community meeting on January 30, 2023, the community was able to confirm that the results of the community survey are, in fact, representative of the opportunities and challenges that the community sees for downtown Peru.

Project Timeline

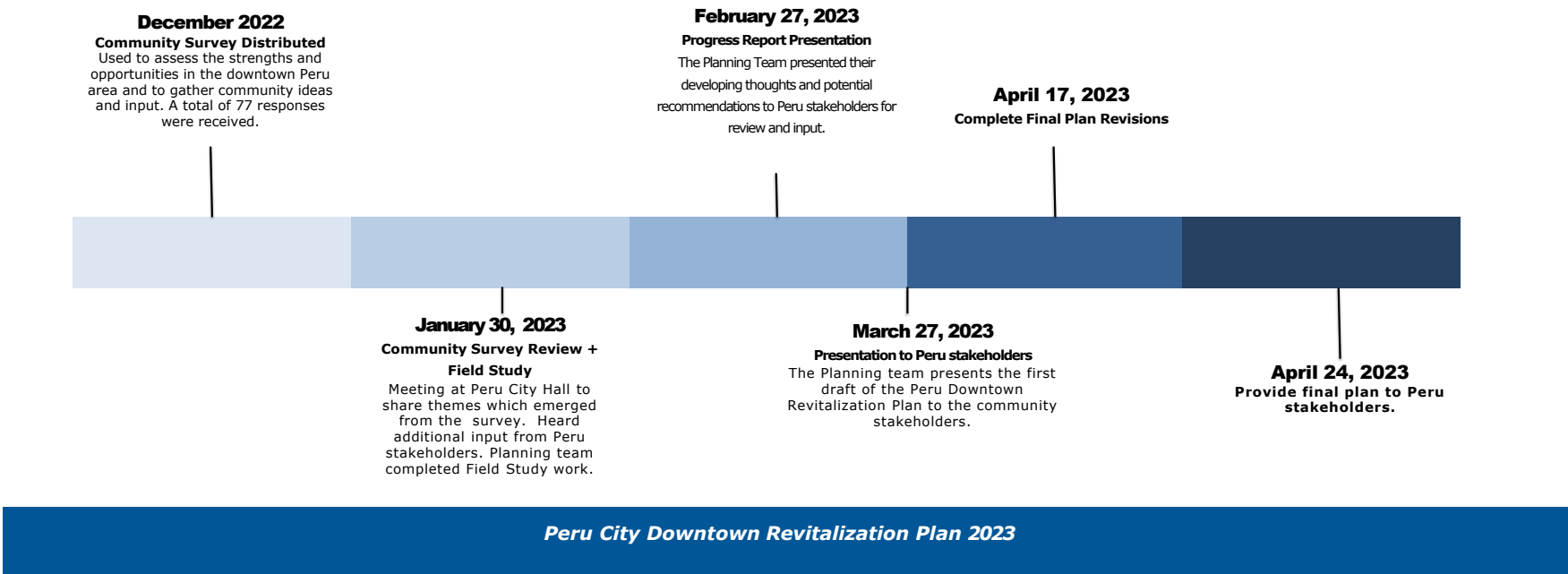


Figure 2: Project Timeline

STAKEHOLDER REVIEW

Following the review with the community members, the planning team created a draft plan based on the information that they had gathered during the first months of research. The team met with the stakeholders for the Peru Downtown Revitalization Plan on Monday, February 27th, 2023. This meeting was conducted over Zoom, with the planning team presenting their initial draft plan and recommendations to the stakeholders who were dialed in for the discussion. This included members of the community, including Mayor Dave Pease. Stakeholders provided their initial thoughts around the recommendations and offered additional questions and feedback for the planning team to consider and incorporate into the overall plan.

FINAL PUBLIC COMMUNITY MEETING

The final public community meeting was held on March 27th, 2023, at the Peru City Hall. There was further discussion of the recommendations that would serve as the backbone of the final document's content. The meeting began with an overview of the demographic research that was conducted; the spending habits, commuting habits, poverty and racial consistency, among other elements, were presented. The main recommendations, which consist of addressing vacant and dilapidated properties, economic development strategies, community enrichment opportunities, and the improvement of connectivity through design, were then introduced, followed by an in-depth review of each and the different strategies that are recommended to address each element.

During this meeting, several posters were constructed that outlined the primary recommendations and topics that were proposed to be adopted in the final document. These posters were placed around the meeting room and the participants were given six stickers each to place next to the topics that they viewed as the highest priority or that most reflected the needs of downtown Peru. Many of the leading topics found to be most important were to 'create and utilize a vacant property registry,' 'beautification and open spaces' improvements, city parks with playgrounds, open-air theaters, picnic tables, grills, and a potential frisbee golf course, farmers markets, and the addition of a coffee shop to the downtown cityscape. Photographs of these finalized posters are shown in figures 3-8.

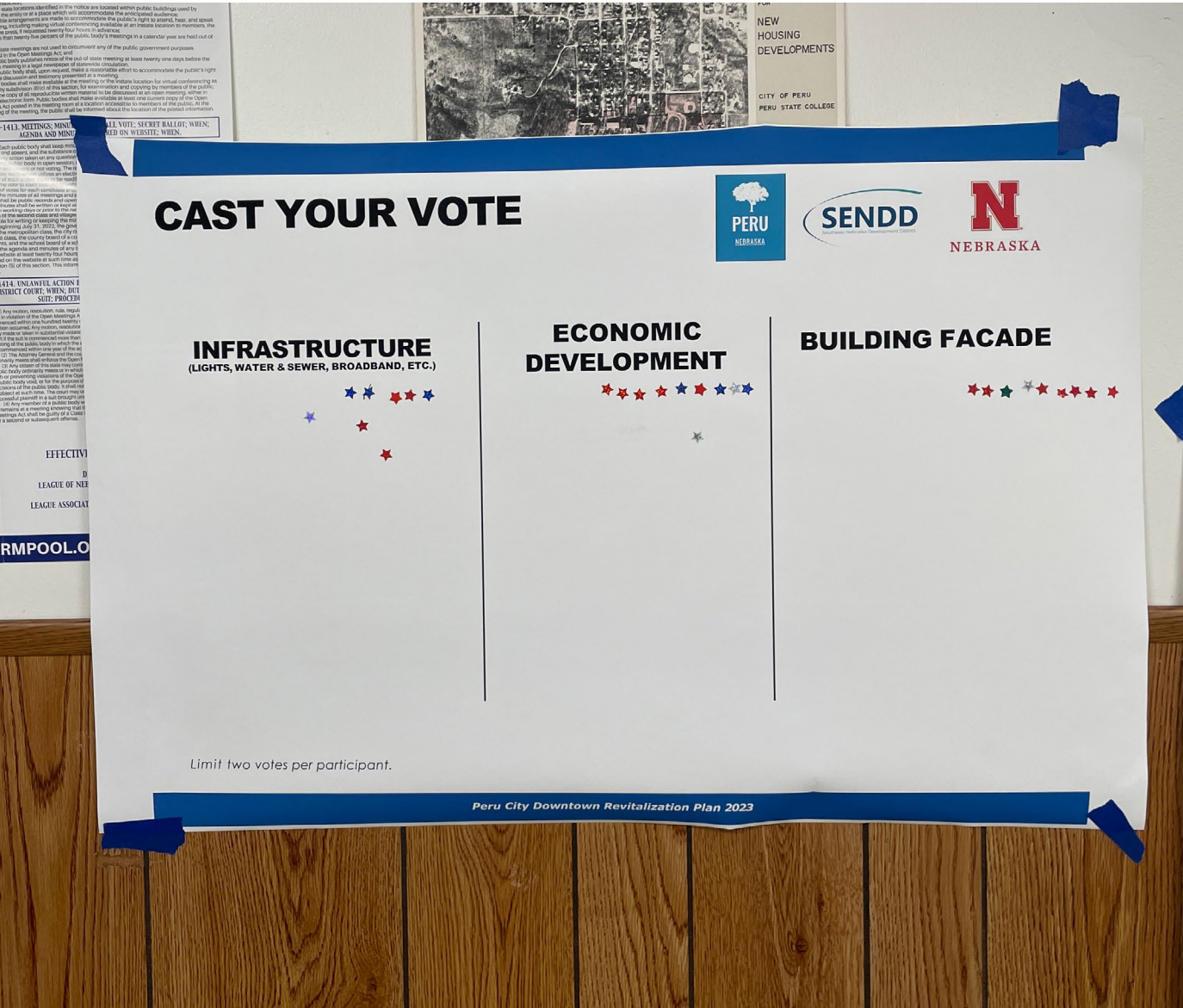


Figure 3: Categories for Improvements Poster

Stakeholders voted on their priorities for one of three areas

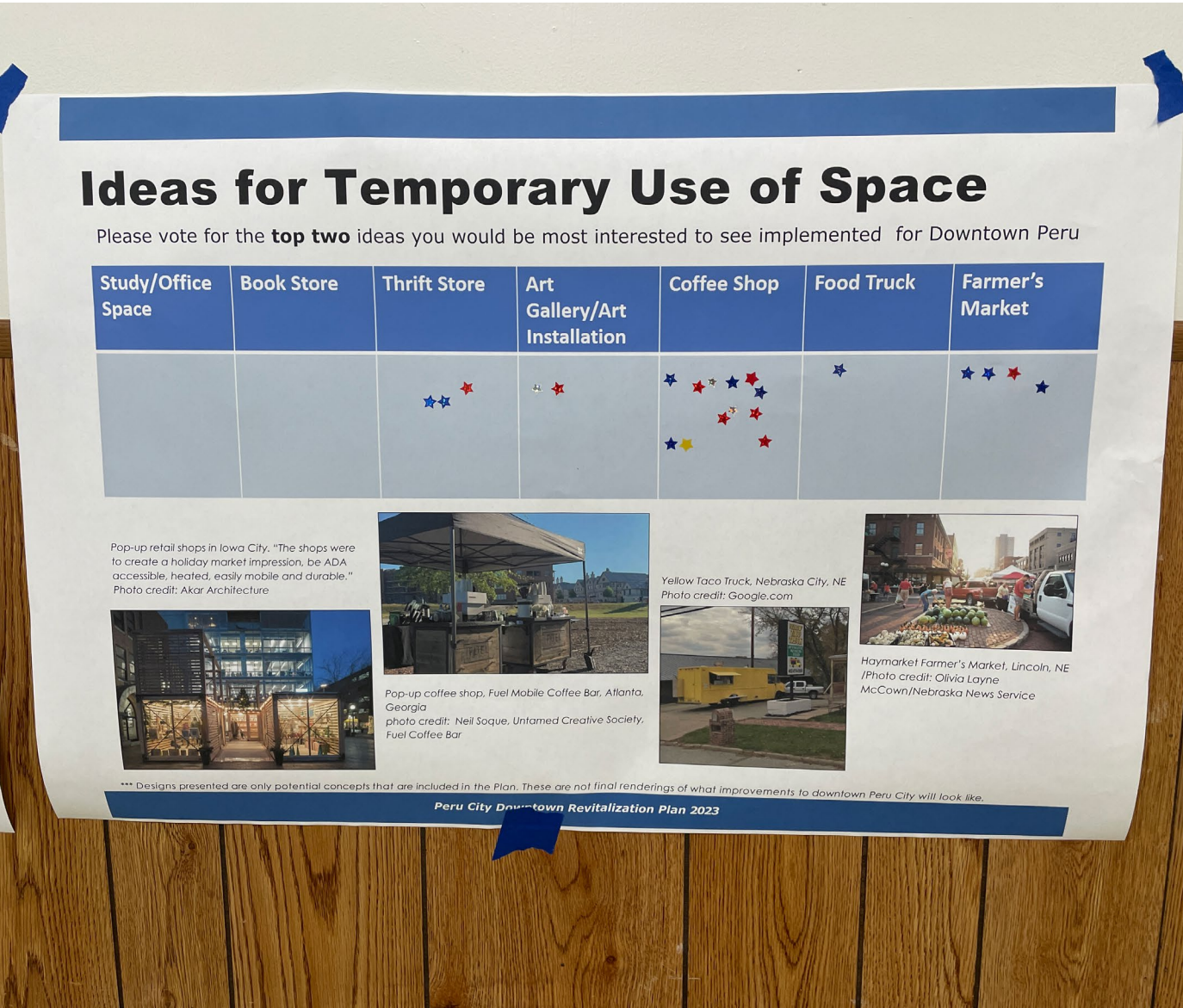


Figure 4: Ideas for Temporary Use of Space Poster

Stakeholders voted for their top two ideas that they would be most interested to see implemented in downtown Peru



Figure 5: Open Space Opportunity Poster

Stakeholders placed stars next to components of an open space feature they deemed to be positive



Figure 6: Categories for Improvements Poster

Stakeholders voted on their priorities for one of three areas



Figure 7: Plan Implementation of Wayfinding Poster

This poster was used to display the potential elements of wayfinding that are recommended to improve navigation to downtown



Figure 8: Plan Recommendations Poster

This poster was used to display the plan recommendations and the general means recommended to accomplish these goals. Stakeholders placed stars next to the components they found important

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

The River Country Heritage Tourism Plan (1993)

RDG's Martin Shukert prepared the River Country Heritage Tourism Plan. The plan aims to increase tourism by promoting the historic heritage and character of the region, including the City of Peru, Nebraska.

The Peru Plan – A Comprehensive Development Plan for Peru, NE (2001)

The Peru Comprehensive Development Plan was completed in 2001 by the citizens of Peru along with RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, and addressed many of the pressing issues that faced the City of Peru at that time, many of which still face the city today. This comprehensive plan was also created for legal reasons. In Nebraska, a city must have an adopted comprehensive plan to adopt zoning ordinances. This plan identified numerous short, medium, and long-term recommendations to guide the City of Peru through 2020. The issues and recommendations addressed in this plan were formulated through extensive meetings, background research and deliberation with leaders in the community.

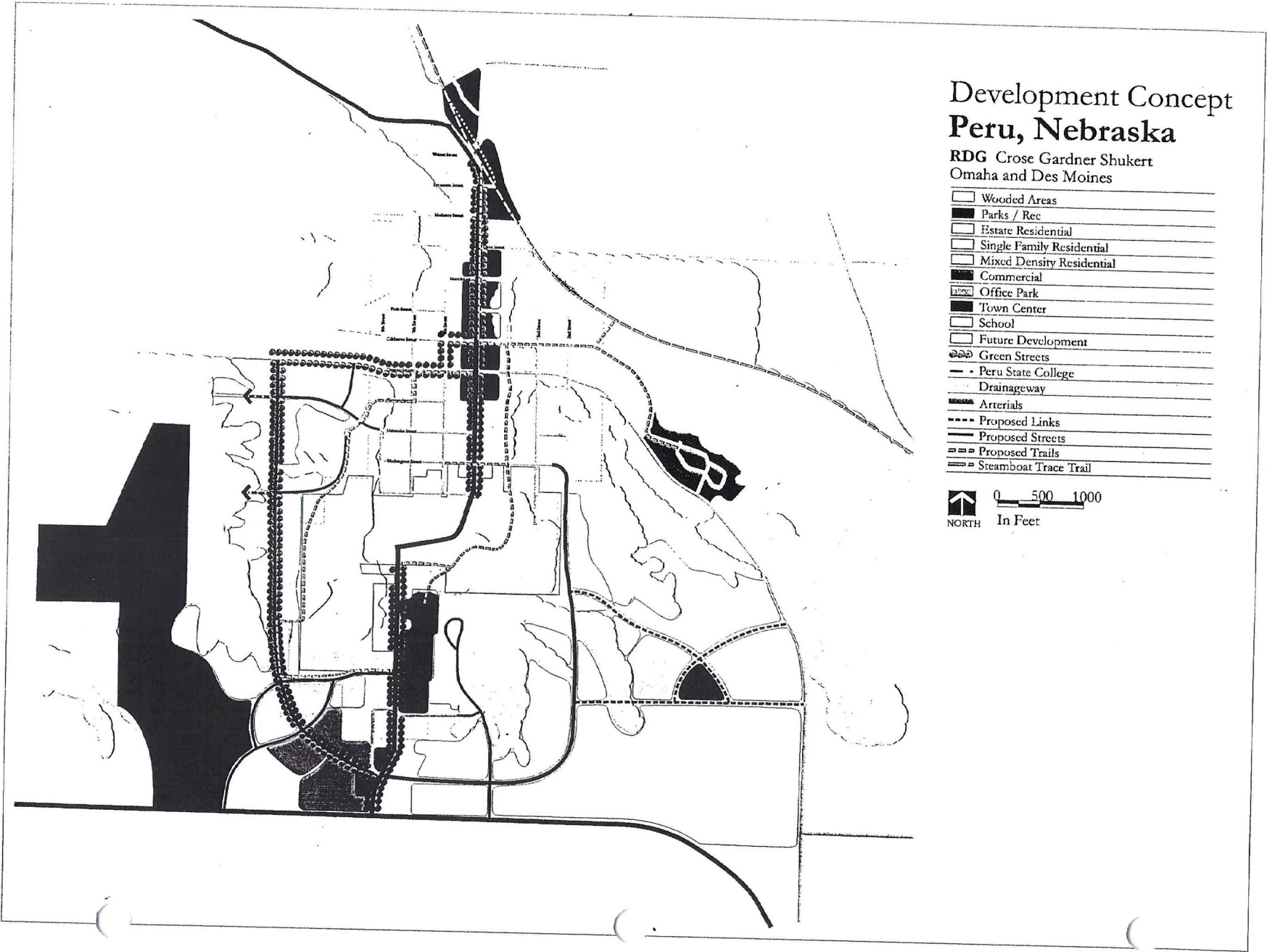


Figure 9: Map of Study Area from 2001 Comprehensive Development Plan
Source: The Peru Plan – A Comprehensive Development Plan for Peru, NE (2001)

Pertinent Community Goals from the Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Peru and the Downtown Revitalization

- Construct enhanced features using landscaping, banners, pylons and other special features to mark the entrance to the Town Center
- Market the Town Center and businesses and promote special events to regional customers
- Implement a streetscape improvement program along 5th street in the Town Center
- Construct a north-south trail extending south from the Peru depot along 5th street, through the downtown, to Oregon Street.
- Developing additional commercial uses to strengthen the Town Center

A Land Development Ordinance for the City of Peru (2001)

RDG's Crose, Gardner, and Shukert prepared a Land Development Ordinance for the City of Peru. These ordinances establish the rules governing how the land will be developed within Peru.

ImPERUving as oNE – Community Conversations Summary (2018)

In an effort to engage its citizens and stakeholders in discussing the future of Peru, the community hired a team from the University of Nebraska as facilitators. With 35 individuals in attendance representing Peru throughout the week of October 21st, many recommendations and areas for improvement were found.

Pertinent Ideas Formulated as a Result of the ImPERUving and One Conversations that Relate to Downtown

- Forming Investment groups to help with downtown
- Invest in coffee shop for Peru students downtown
- Focus on capitalizing on the small-town experience by investing in downtown
- Capitalize on the history of Peru in all revitalization efforts

Nemaha NRD Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)

The Nemaha County Natural Resources Department (NRD) and JEO Consulting Group collaborated to author the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Section Seven (7) of the plan related directly to Peru and focuses on important hazard elements such as floodplain proximity, critical facilities, and likewise the prioritization of such hazards that relate most closely to these elements. The plan then outlines a mitigation strategy for these hazards and lists the actions that should be taken to do so.

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CITY OF PERU DOWNTOWN PLAN COMMUNITY PROFILE



HISTORY

Even before settlers began laying roots in the land, which is today considered the City of Peru, the nearby Missouri river catalyzed industry. A sawmill and grist (cereal grain) mill as well as the burgeoning technology associated with the riverboat were some of the original activities that instilled an interest in potential settlers. The first permanent settlement of the area took place in 1857, naming the City after Peru, Illinois, the city where many of the settlers originated. Previous attempts to settle were unsuccessful due to the territory's ownership by the Otoe tribe. This land was also at one point settled by the Sioux, Cherokee and Iriquois tribes. The Burlington Railroad also brought settlers to the region, as the many agricultural products churned out by Peru were transported across the nation using the line.



Figure 10: Peru, NE Main Street around 1900
Source: https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nenemaha/new_peru_page/peru_photographs/1900_peru_main_street.jpg

Early in the Town's history, the town was known well for its wooded landscape and fertile farmland. Many orchards producing apples flourished in the region, until an unseasonal freeze in 1940 saw the demise of a vast majority of this industry. In 1861 the burgeoning city opened Mount Vernon Academy, the first iteration of what would become known as Peru State College, Nebraska's first college. The city's Missouri riverfront location also meant floods were a persistent problem, particularly in the 1860s, during which the settlement moved nearly a mile back from the river, although flooding still presented a persistent problem for Peru throughout its history. This constant struggle with the forces of the river and the city's persistence and resilient against it led to the annual celebration, "Old Man River Days," their biggest celebration. Peru has had a long and storied legacy of industry, of which have at one time included a canning factory, a brick mill, an ice plant, a box factory, and a flourmill.



Figure 11: Riverboat on the Missouri River near Peru around 1900
Source: https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nenemaha/new_peru_page/peru_photographs/1900_peru_main_street.jpg

KEY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Each city has key anchor institutions that provide value in attracting and retaining residents through providing necessary services such as education, healthcare, recreation, and governance. For Peru, NE, a key anchor institution is Peru State College. The college, once a school primarily known for its education of teachers and education personnel but now specializing in Business Administration and Management Degrees, is located at the southern edge of town, and is one of the first landmarks seen by travelers entering the city from the south, or highway 67. The college brings several facilities to the town, including a day care, a recreation center, and a health center. In addition to the college, other institutions in Peru include Peru state field house and the town hall in addition to the Peru fire hall, the local Bar and Grill, The Market grocery store, Western National Bank, Saint Clara's Catholic Church, and the Steamboat Trace Peru Trailhead. The trail loosely follows the Missouri river north to Nebraska City and south to just past the village of Brownville.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

Based on the U.S. Census data, Peru had 845 individuals in 2020. The total population decreased by 15.3% from 2010-2020. The total population throughout the past 40 years has been relatively inconsistent. A significant decline of nearly half the population was measured in the year 2000, followed by a rapid increase. Out of the past four decades, the population in 1990 had the highest number of 1,106. The largest change occurred from 1990-2000 with a decrease of 537 people. Figure 12 shows the total population, population change, and percent change (%) during 1980-2020. Figure 13 shows the total population numbers in 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020.



Figure 12: Peru City Historical Population Change
Sources: US census Bureau, DP05, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020

Population Projection

Based on the Data from ESRI, in 2027, the population within a 5-mile radius of Peru, NE, is projected to be 1,053. The annual rate for the population changes from 2022 to 2027 is expected to decrease by 0.36%.

The population from 2022 to 2027 is expected to decrease from 819 to 803 within a 1-mile radius in Peru City, NE, from 957 to 939 within a 3-miles radius, and from 1,072 to 1,053 within a 5-mile radius.

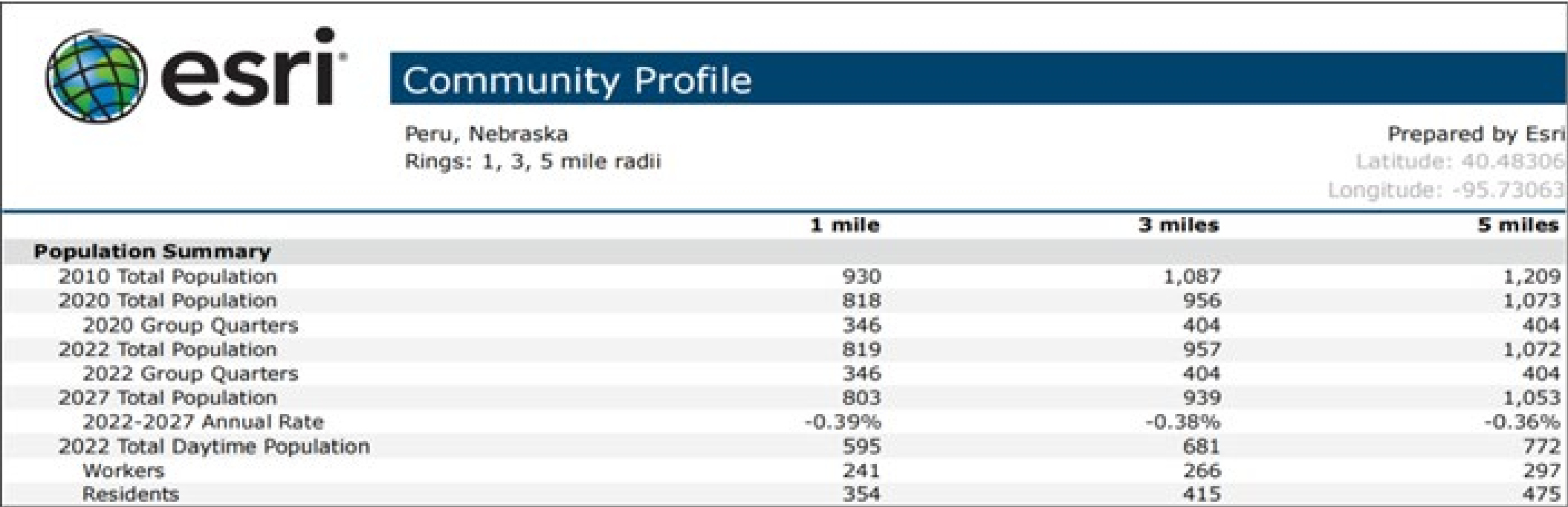


Figure 13: ESRI Community Profile
Source: Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

Sex

An analysis of Peru's demographics shows a population and age cohort trend. The population of Peru has kept decreasing since 2010. According to the data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Peru decreased by 250 residents in the last eleven years from 2010-2021, an average of about 22 residents per year. The overall male population was higher than female population in the last eleven years, except in 2011, the female population was 38 higher than the male population. The overall population change for Peru, NE had a decrease trend from 2010 to 2021.

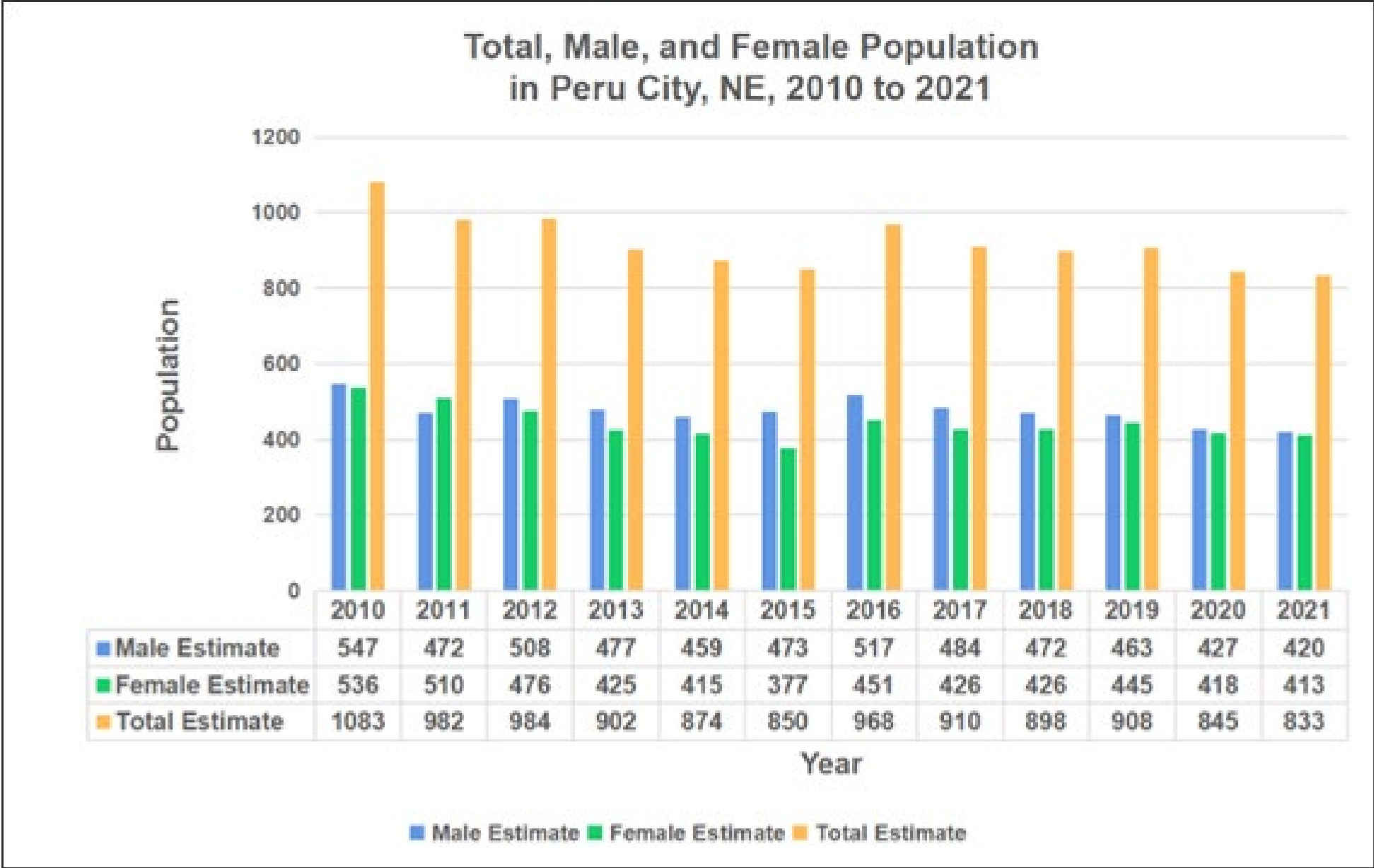


Figure 14: Total Male and Female Populations in Peru City, NE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, DP05, ACS 5-year Estimates Data Profiles, 2010 to 2021

At-Risk Population

According to the Census data from the Esri, based on the Zip code location, there were about 201 people considered as part of the at-risk population (households with disability, people 65+ and households without at vehicle) in Peru, NE. Of these people, there were about 95 households with a disability, 93 people with age above 65, and 13 households without a vehicle. About 25% of households are below the poverty level. More details about poverty will be discussed in the poverty and income section.

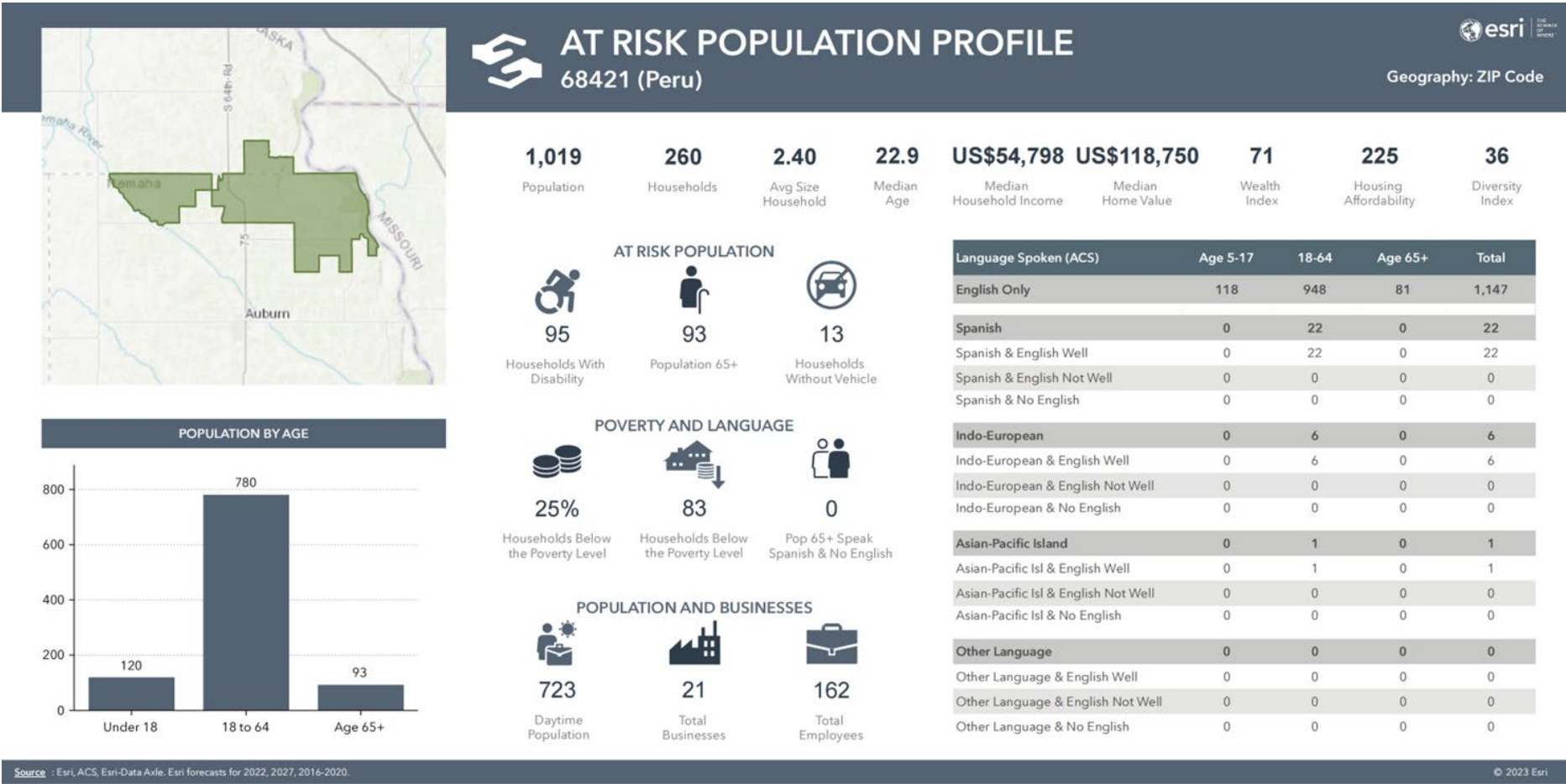


Figure 15: At-Risk Population Profile

Source: Esri, ACS, Esri-Data Axle. Esri forecasts for 2022, 2027, 2016-2020. Identify Peru, NE population with a disability, over 65, and without a vehicle. It also includes the rate and number of households below the poverty level and what languages the population speaks.

Population Structure: Sex, Race & Ethnicity

The male/female split was about half and half in 2021. This number is consistent with the statewide average in Nebraska. Caucasian is by far the majority race in Peru, NE, at 79% of the total population. This was about 1% higher than the rate in Nebraska, 78%. Hispanics comprise 10% of the population, while Black, Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, and “other” represent about 7%. Those of two or more races represent about 3% of the population. The population is less than 1% Asian.

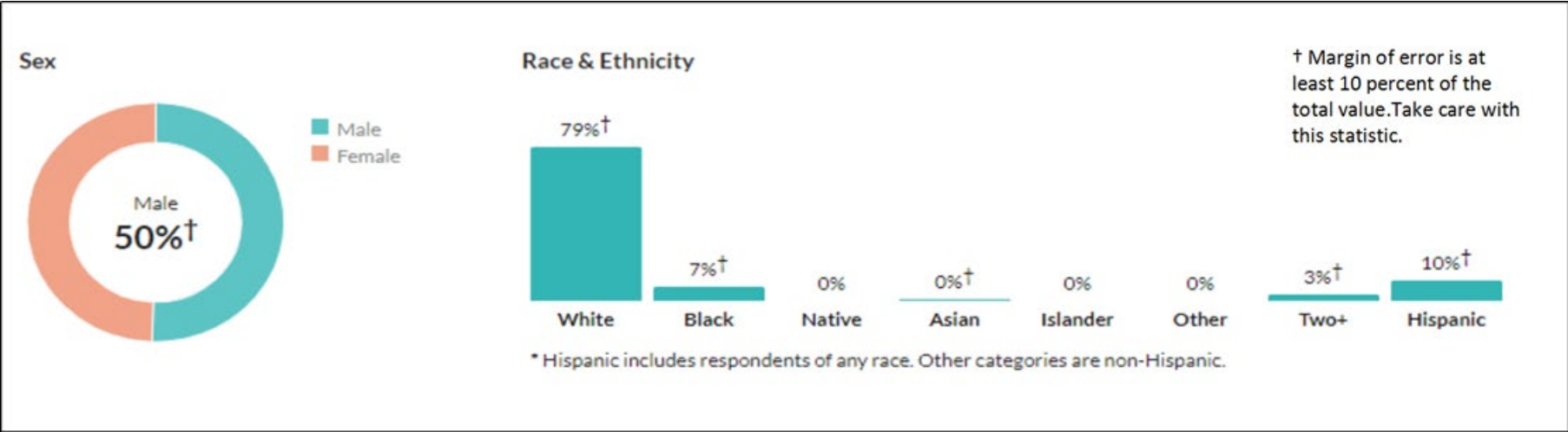


Figure 16: Race and Ethnicity
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2017-2021). B01001, Sex by Age American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

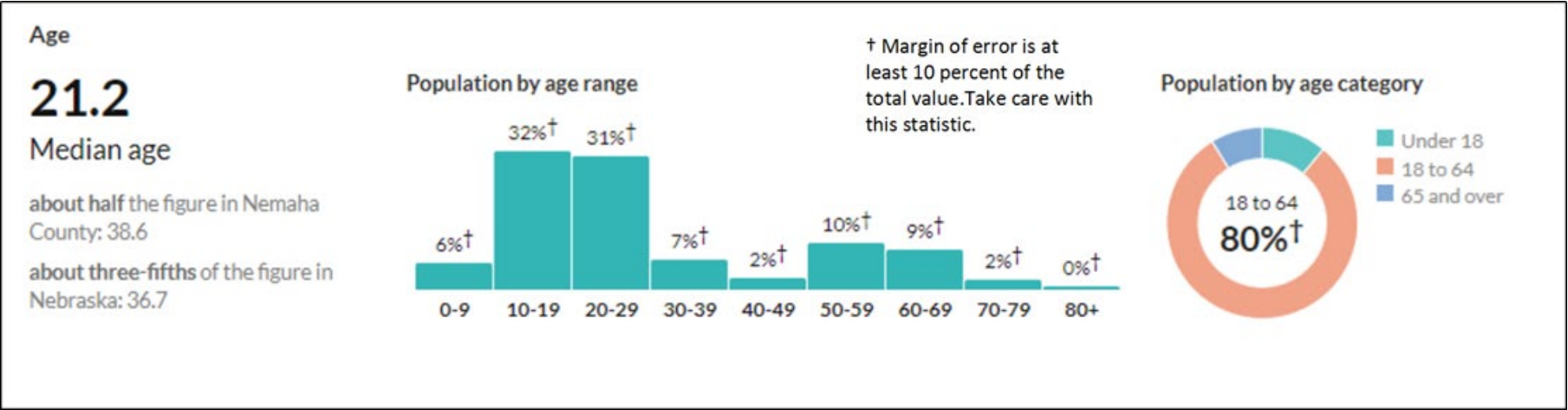


Figure 17: Age
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2017-2021). B01001, Sex by Age American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

Age

The median age for residents in Peru in 2021 was approximately 21.2, which was about 42.2% (due to the margin of error) less than the statewide median age 36.7. The total population of Peru in 2021 was 3,941 residents. The cohort of age 10-to-19-year-olds had the largest population in 2021, with around 32% of the total population. The cohorts of age 20-to-29-year-olds had the second largest population in 2021, approximately 31% of the total population. In 2021, 80% of the population was between the ages of 18 and 64, 11% were 18 or younger, and 9% were at least 65 years old.

Industrial Overview

Table 1 represents the distribution of those employed in Peru, NE among various industries. Of the 424 individuals employed in Peru, the highest employed industry was education, representing 33.3% of the population. The following highest employed industries were entertainment and retail trade with 13.7% and 13.4% respectively. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing together assumed 13%, while transportation, warehousing, and utilities assumed 10.8%. The industries with the least number of individuals employed were manufacturing, construction, and wholesale trade.

Table 1: Industry Distribution

INDUSTRY	ESTIMATE	PERCENT (%)
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	424	100
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	55	13
Construction	21	5
Manufacturing	25	5.9
Wholesale trade	8	1.9
Retail trade	57	13.4
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	46	10.8
Information	0	0
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4	0.9
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	3	0.7
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	141	33.3
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	58	13.7
Other services, except public administration	4	0.9
Public administration	2	0.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, DP03, ACS 5-year Estimates Data Profiles, 2021

Poverty and Income

In Peru, Nebraska, there were an estimated 26.5% of people who lived below the poverty line in 2021. This was nearly double the rate of people in Nemaha County, NE (13.7%) and more than double that of the state of Nebraska (10.3%). The rate of children living below the poverty line was 7%, which was about half of the county and state rate, while the rate of seniors living below the poverty line was 5%, which was a little lower than the county and state rates. The poverty rate of both children and seniors was significantly lower than the overall poverty rate of Peru.

The median household income in Peru, NE was \$36,326 in 2021. This was approximately two-thirds the amount in Nemaha County, and about half of the state of Nebraska. Most households (61%) in Peru, NE made under \$50k. The per capita income in Peru, NE was \$14,508 in 2021, which was only about half of the Nemaha County, NE, and about two-fifths of the state of Nebraska.

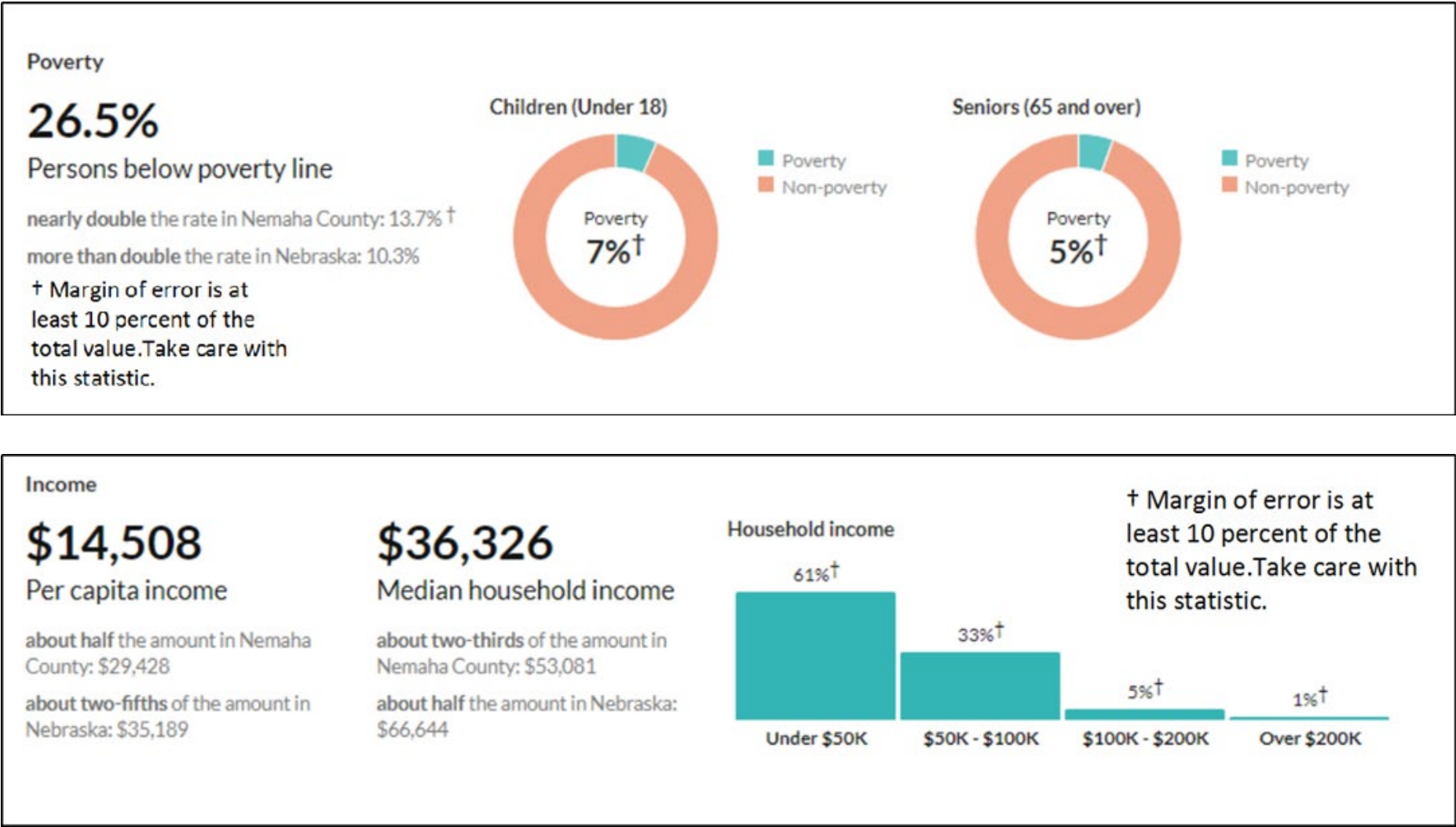


Figure 18: Poverty and Income
Source: US Census Bureau, B17001, B19001, American Community Survey, 2017-2021

Housing

There were 300 housing units in Peru, NE in 2021. Nemaha County had about 3,339 housing units and Nebraska had about 840,802 housing units. An estimated 84% of housing units in Peru, NE were occupied. An estimated 16% of housing units were vacant. This vacancy rate is comparable to the neighboring city of Auburn (16.5%), although relatively higher than that of Nebraska City (11.3%). An estimated 65% of housing units in Peru, NE area were owner-occupied. An estimated 35% of housing units were renter occupied.

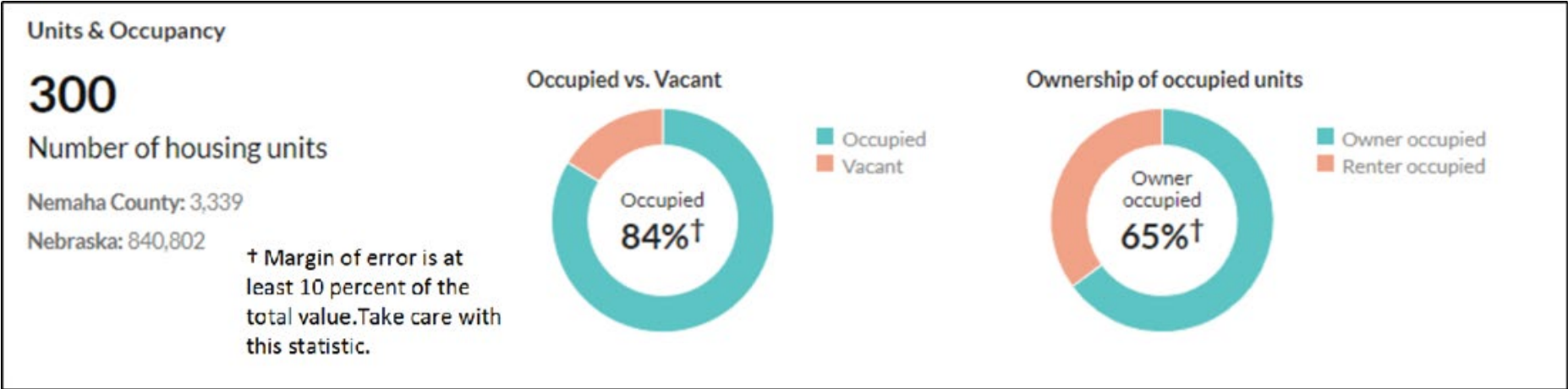


Figure 19: Units and Occupancy
Source: US Census Bureau, B17001, B19001, S2501 American Community Survey, 2017-2021

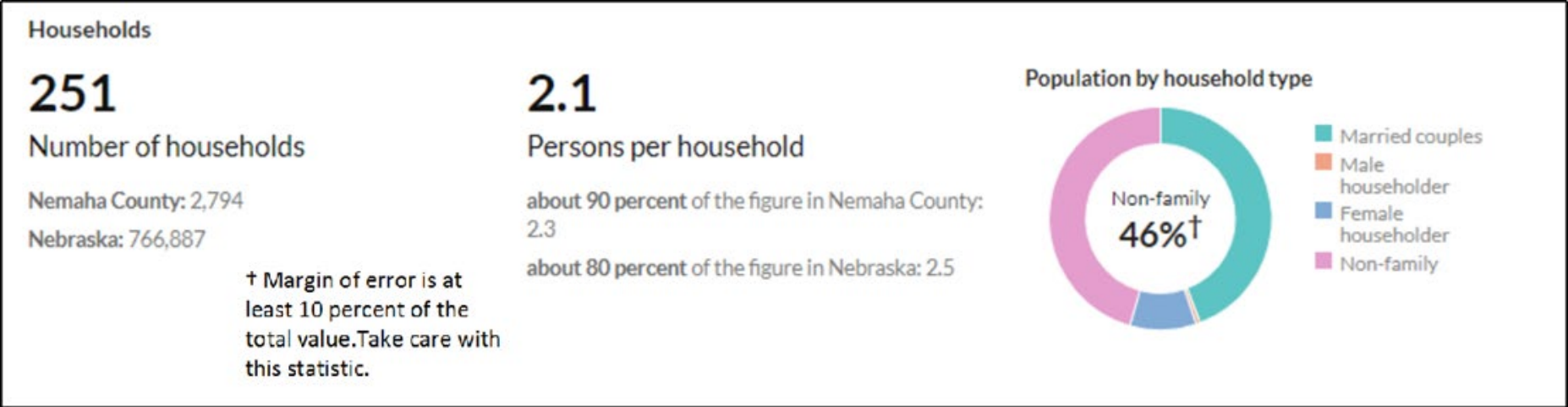


Figure 20: People per Household
Source: US Census Bureau, B17001, B19001, S2501 American Community Survey, 2017-2021

The total number of households in Peru, NE, was 251 in 2021. This was much less than the county and state. The state of Nebraska overall had about 766,887 households in 2021. Most households in Peru, NE were occupied by non-families. The average household had 2.1 persons, which is also very similar to the average number of people per household in nearby cities, such as Auburn which had an average of 2.19 people per household, and Nebraska City, which sits at 2.29 for the year 2021 Nemaha County had about 2.3 and Nebraska had about 2.5 persons per household in 2021.

Health Care and Insurance

According to the Census data from the Esri, based on the Zip code location and population of Peru, NE, the population by health insurance coverage for residents aged 19-34 was about 43.8 percent during 2015-2019. At the same time, the population below 19 was about 20.7 percent, 16.2 percent for ages 35-64, and 1.7 percent for the population above 65. The population aged 19-34 also had the highest rate of no health insurance, about 5.8 percent. The population above 65 all had their insurance. In this population, about 46.5 percent of adults exercise at home more than two times a week, and about 15.3 percent exercise at the club more than two times a week. Compared with Auburn, NE, they had about 24.8 percent of insurance coverage for residents aged below 19 based on the population during 2015-2019, which was the highest than Peru, NE, with ages between 19-34. Auburn, NE, had 6.4 percent insurance coverage for residents aged above 65. Compared with Nebraska City, NE, they had the highest insurance coverage for ages 35-64, 29.2 percent. And they had 5.5 percent insurance coverage for residents aged above 65.

The annual health insurance expenditures in Peru, NE, is about 3,810 U.S. dollars, lower than Auburn, NE, with 4,814 dollars, and a little higher than Nebraska City, NE, with 3,763 dollars. The annual medical care spending for Peru, NE, is about 2,032 U.S. dollars, which was also lower than the 2,687 dollars of Auburn, and a little higher than Nebraska city with 1,996 dollars.

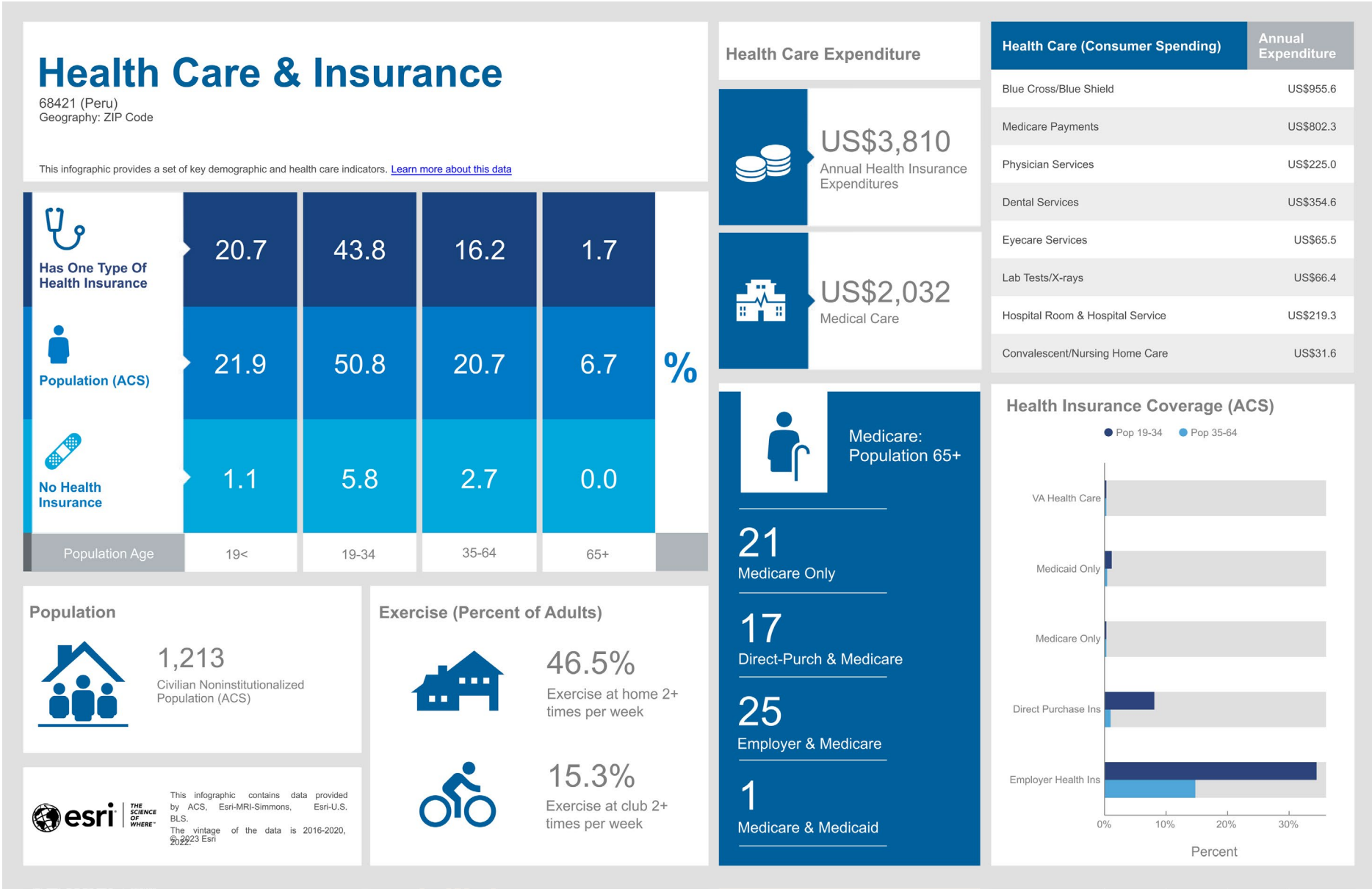


Figure 21: Health Care and Insurance

Source: This infographic contains data provided by ACS, Esri-MRI-Simmons, and Esri-U.S. BLS. The vintage of the data is 2016-2020, 2022. Identifies the insurance coverage of residents in Peru has one type of health insurance or no health insurance and includes percent of exercise rate for adults and health care expenditure of residents.

Commuting

In Peru, NE, there were an average of 278 workers employed in the city in 2020, according to the American Community Survey 2020. 266 of them were employed in the city but living outside of the city. 12 of them were both employed and living in the city. There also were about 265 workers living in Peru City, NE, in 2020. 253 of them were living in the city but employed outside. 12 of them live and are employed in the city.

Table 2: Inflow and Outflow Job Counts

PERU, NE, INFLOW AND OUTFLOW JOB COUNTS - ALL JOBS IN 2020		
Inflow	Count	Share
Employed in Peru city, NE	278	100.0%
Employed in Peru city, NE, but Living Outside	266	95.7%
Employed and Living in Peru city, NE	12	4.3%
Outflow		
Living in Peru city, NE	265	100.0%
Living in Peru city, NE, but Employed Outside	253	95.5%
Living and Employed in Peru city, NE	12	4.5%

Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

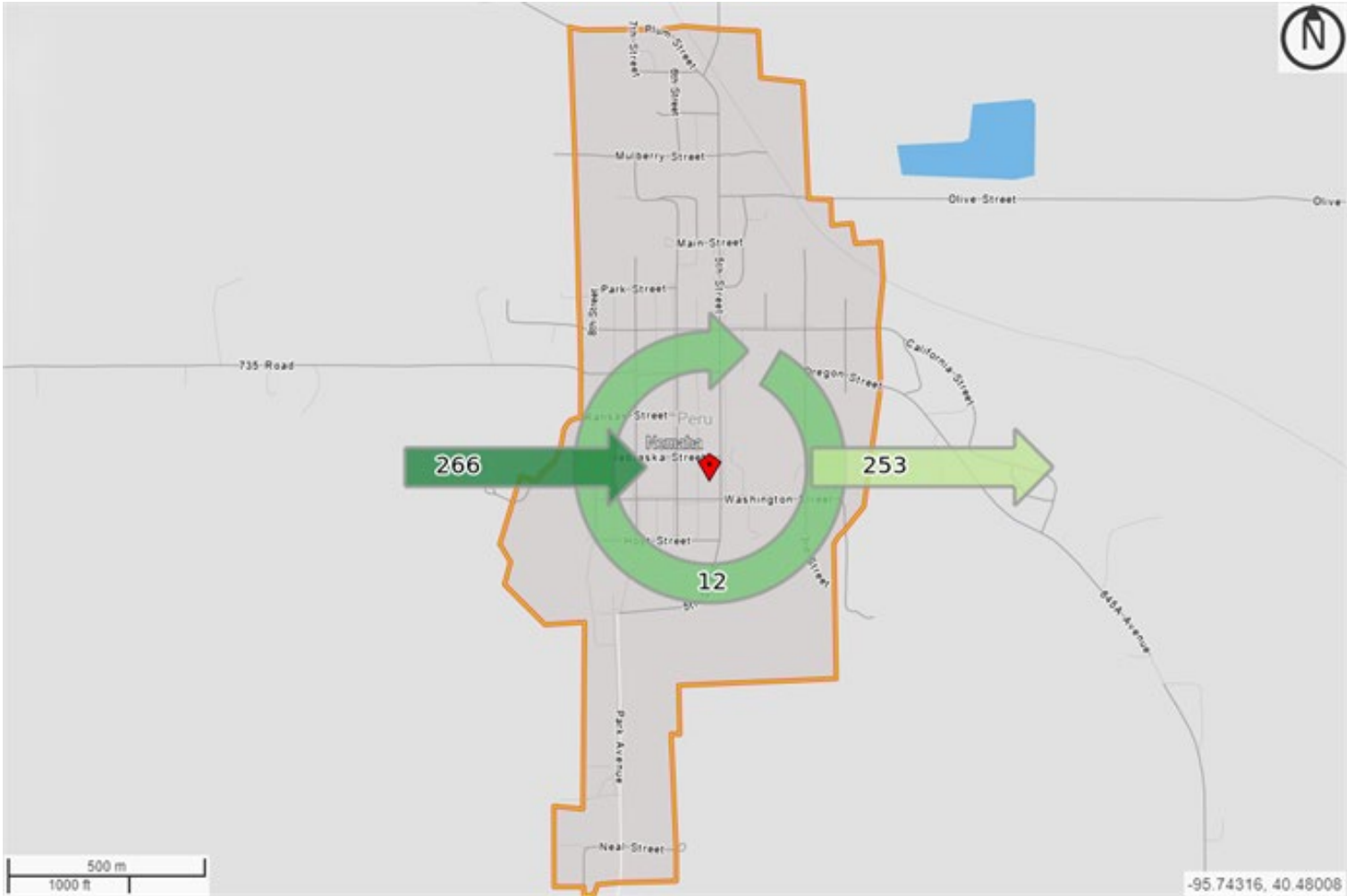


Figure 22: Peru Inflow and Outflow

Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

The commute inflow and outflow map above shows the population movement for jobs in Peru City, NE. The green arrows on the map show the worker flow dynamics. Workers employed in Peru, NE, but who live elsewhere are represented by the arrow entering the city to the left. Workers employed outside the city but who live in Peru are represented by the arrow leaving the city. Finally, the circular arrow around the city center represents workers who live and work in Peru City, NE.

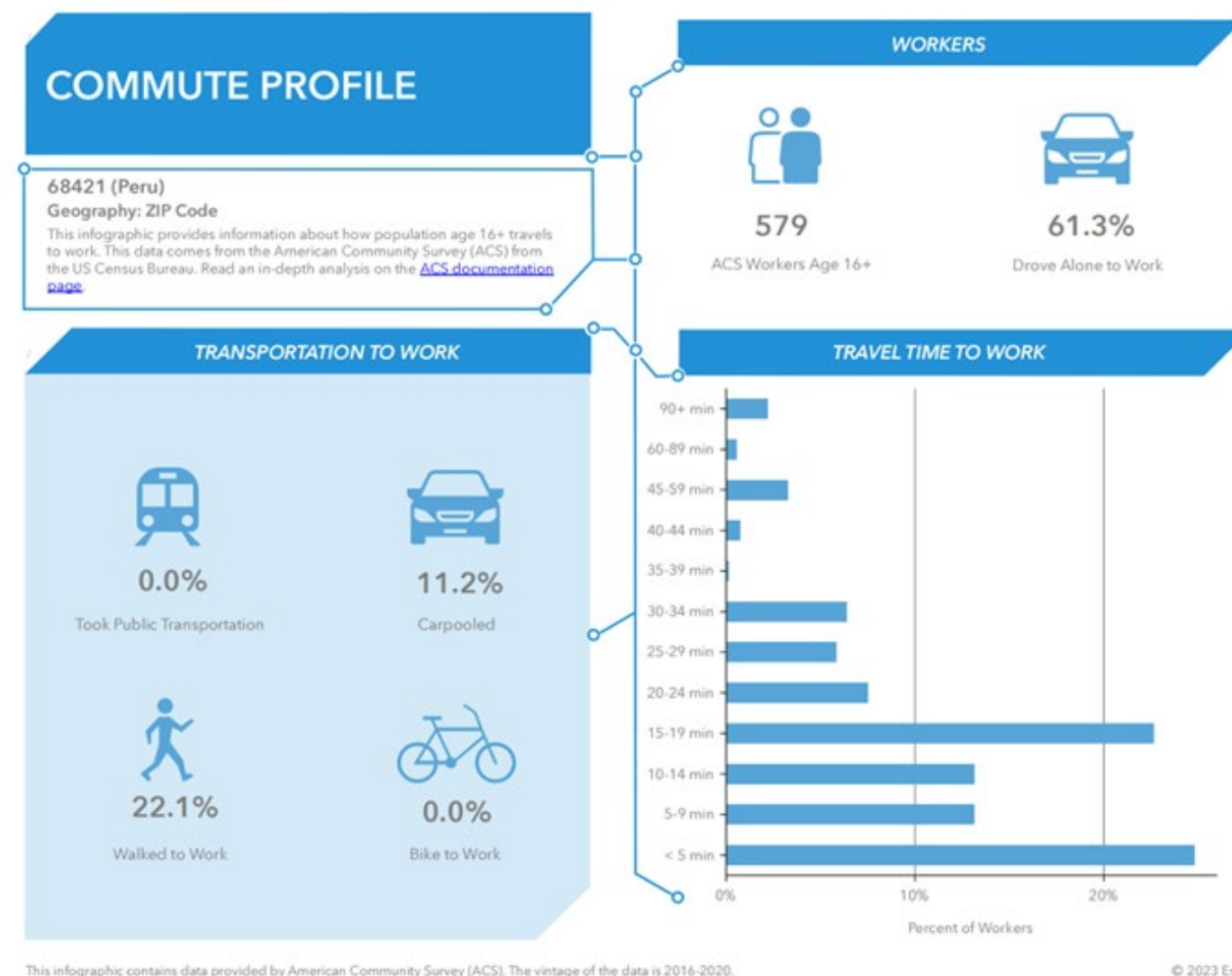


Figure 23: Commute Profile

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

Table 3: PERU JOB COUNTS BY PLACES (CITIES, CDPS, ETC.) WHERE WORK-ERS LIVE - ALL JOBS IN 2020		
Location	Count	Share
All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)	278	100.0%
Auburn city, NE	39	14.0%
Nebraska City, NE	20	7.2%
Lincoln City, NE	12	4.3%
Peru city, NE	12	4.3%
Omaha City, NE	9	3.2%
Johnson village, NE	7	2.5%
Tecumseh City, NE	6	2.2%
Bellevue City, NE	4	1.4%
Brock Village, NE	4	1.4%
Fremont City, NE	4	1.4%
All Other Locations	161	57.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

The OnTheMap tool provided by the US Census Bureau can show where people who live in a particular census tract, zip code or city typically commute to work, or where workers in a particular area commute from. In Peru, NE, there were about 278 workers who commuted to work in 2020. About 12 of them worked inside

the city range. About 39 of them worked in Auburn City, NE, which was about 14 percent. Approximately 20 people worked in Nebraska City, NE, and 12 worked in Lincoln City, NE. There were also about 161 workers who worked at other locations, which was about 57.9 percent.

Workplace and Employment Summary
Table 4: Workplace and Employment Summary

Peru, NE, Workplace and Employment Summary				
Retail Trade	Total Establishments	% of Establishments	Total Employees	% of Employees
Total Businesses	22	100	186	100
Retail Trade Total	5	22.7	44	23.7
Home Improvement	0	0	0	0
General Merchandise	0	0	0	0
Food Stores	2	9.1	11	5.9
Auto Dealers, Gas Station, Auto Parts	0	0	0	0
Apparel & Accessory	0	0	0	0
Furniture & Home Furnishings	0	0	0	0
Eating & Drinking Places	2	9.1	32	17.2
Miscellaneous Retail	1	4.5	0	0
Finance, Insurance Real Estate Total	1	4.5	5	2.7
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions	1	4.5	5	2.7
Securities Brokers	0	0	0	0
Insurance Carriers & Agents	0	0	0	0
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment Offices	0	0	0	0
Services Total	9	40.9	75	40.3
Hotels & Lodging	0	0	0	0
Automotive Services	0	0	0	0
Motion Pictures & Amusements	1	4.5	4	2.2
Health Services	3	13.6	14	7.5
Legal Services	0	0	0	0
Educational Institutions & Libraries	3	13.6	49	26.3
Other Services	2	9.1	9	4.8
Ag, Mining, Construction, Manufacturing, Utility, Wholesale	3	13.5	36	19.4
Government	2	9.1	25	13.4
Unclassified Establishments	1	4.5	0	0

Source: Copyright 2022 Data Axle, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2022.

Shown here is Peru City’s business and employment distribution. Based on ESRI 2022 data, Peru City, NE, had about 22 total businesses with approximately 186 employees. There were 5 retail trade businesses; 1 finance, insurance, and real estate business;, and 9 services businesses, including government and other services. The other services included agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, utility, wholesale trade, government, and unclassified. All these businesses and services classifications were based on National SIC Codes. According to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes indicate a company’s business type. The SIC code list can be found on the SEC website: <https://www.sec.gov/corpfin/division-of-corporation-finance-standard-industrial-classification-sic-code-list>.

About 64 percent of Peru City, NE employees were employed in the retail trade and service industries. The retail trade was 23.7 percent, and the services were 40.3 percent. In the

services working area, the education institutions and libraries were the top services, which had about 49 total employees and 26.3 percent of the share. Other services included agriculture, mining, construction, etc. at about 36 total employees and 19.4 percent. Of the total 44 retail trade employees, eating and drinking was the largest section, with 32 employees, about 17.2 percent. The second was also related to food; the food stores had 11 total employees, about 5.9 percent in Peru City, NE.

Consumer Spending Patterns

Table 5: Consumer Spending Patterns

Consumer Spending Patterns, SPI Index	
Retail Goods and Services	SPI
Men's Apparel and Services	89
Women's Apparel and Services	85
Children's Apparel and Services	85
Footwater	87
Watches & Jewelry	89
Clubs Membership	76
Tickets to Movies	85
TV/Video/Audio	88
Video Game Software	124
Pets	95
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	100
Food at Home	85
Food Away from Home	86
Gasoline and Motor Oil	90
Smoking Products	108
School Books and Supplies	98

Source: Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2018 and 2019 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Based on the reports and infographics from Community Analysis on Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2022, Table 5 shows the Spending Potential Index (SPI) that compares the average amount spent locally for a product to the average amount spent nationally (ESRI, 2020). An index of 100 reflects the average. For example, the 120 SPI means the average spending by local consumers is 20 percent above the national average (ESRI, 2020).

Based on data from ESRI 2022, most of Peru's SPI is below the 100 average except the video game software, sports, recreation, exercise equipment, and smoking products. The top spending potential retail goods and services are video game software. Peru, NE, residents are also likely to spend more on smoking products. The sports, recreation, and exercise equipment are at the national average SPI. Below the national average, schoolbooks and supplies are the top retail goods and services with 98 SPI, which is a little less than the national average.

CURRENT ZONING AND LAND USE

The study area resides within the Town Center District. This district is intended to provide appropriate development regulations for downtown Peru. Mixed uses are encouraged, and the grouping of uses is designed to strengthen the Town Center's role as the center for trade, service, and civic life. Current land uses include city hall, fire station, bank, post office, grocery store, bar and grill, and poultry production. The tables below summarize the permitted uses by type in the Peru's Town Center zone.

Table 6 – Permitted Agricultural Uses by Type.

PERMITTED AGRICULTURAL USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Agricultural Uses			X

Table 7 – Permitted Residential Uses by Type.

PERMITTED RESIDENTIAL USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Downtown Residential	X		
Single Family Detached		X	
Single Family Attached		X	
Duplex		X	
Two Family		X	
Townhouse		X	
Multi-Family		X	
Manufactured Housing		X	
Retirement Residential		X	

Table 8 – Permitted Civic Uses by Type.

PERMITTED CIVIC USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Administration	X		
Clubs	X		
College/University	X		
Cultural Services	X		
Daycare	X		
Emergency Residential	X		
Guidance Services	X		
Health Care	X		
Parks and Recreation	X		
Postal Facilities	X		
Public Assembly	X		
Religious Assembly	X		
Safety Services	X		
Utilities	X		
Convalescent Services		X	
Group Care Facility		X	
Group Home		X	
Primary Education		X	
Secondary Education		X	

Table 9 – Permitted Office Uses by Type.

PERMITTED OFFICE USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
General Offices	X		
Ag Sales Service		X	
Auto Rental		X	
Auto Services		X	
Equipment Repair		X	
Vehicle Storage		X	
Construction Sales/Service		X	
Convenience Storage		X	

Table 10 – Permitted Commercial Uses by Type.

PERMITTED COMMERCIAL USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Body Repair	X		
Bed and Breakfast	X		
Business Support Services	X		
business Trade School	X		
Cocktail Lounge	X		
Commercial Recreation	X		
Communication Service	X		
Consumer Service	X		

Food Sales	X		
funeral Service	X		
General Retail Service	X		
Liquor Sales	X		
Lodging	X		
Personal Improvement	X		
Personal Services	X		
Pet Services	X		
Research Services	X		
Restaurants	X		
Surplus Sales	X		
Trade Services	X		
Drive-in Restaurants		X	
Veterinary Services		X	
Gaming Facilities		X	

Table 11– Permitted Industrial Uses by Type.

PERMITTED INDUSTRIAL USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Light Industry	X		
Custom Manufacturing		X	
Warehouse		X	
Construction Yard		X	
Recycling Collection		X	

Table 12 – Permitted Miscellaneous Uses by Type.

PERMITTED MISCELLANEOUS USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Amateur Radio Tower	X		

Table 13 – Permitted Parking Uses by Type.

PERMITTED PARKING USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Off-Street Parking	X		

Table 14 – Permitted Transportation Uses by Type.

PERMITTED TRANSPORTATION USES BY TYPE			
Uses Types	Permitted	Special Permit	Not Permitted
Transportation Terminal	X		

A summary of site development regulations for the Town Center District include:

- Minimum lot size – none
- Minimum lot width – N/A
- Site area per housing unit
 - Single-family – 7,500 SF
 - Two-family, duplex – 3,850 SF
 - Other – 2,000 SF
- Minimum Yards
 - Front yard – 0 FT
 - Street side yard – 0 FT
 - Interior side yard – 0 FT
 - Rear yard – 0 FT
- Maximum height – no limit
- Maximum building coverage – 100%
- Maximum impervious coverage – 100%

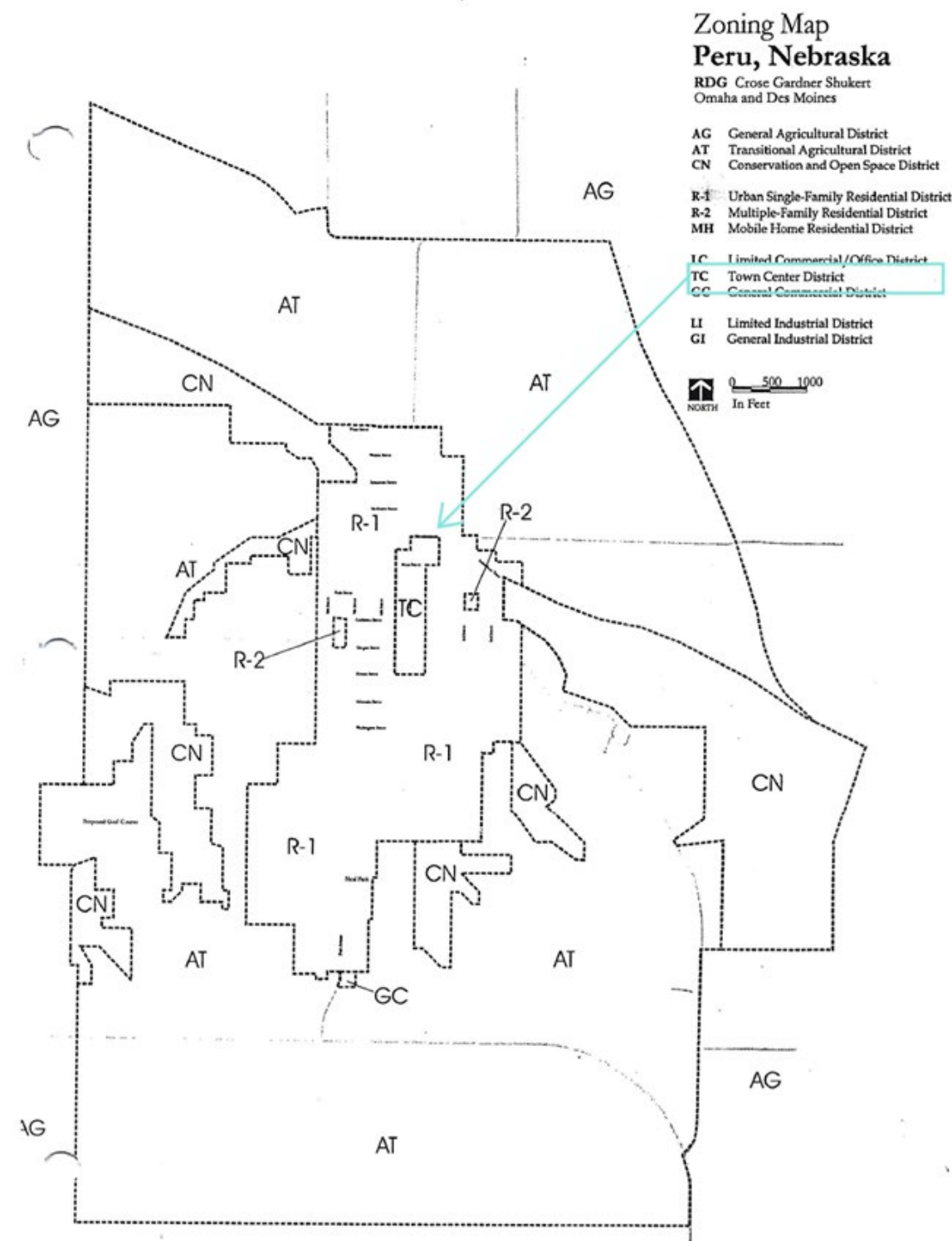


Figure 24: Peru Nebraska Zoning Map.

Floodplain

The location of the city creates a high risk of flooding. The Missouri River is located roughly 1.77 miles east of Peru's downtown and Buck's Creek runs around the northeastern portion of the city. These geographic features create a large floodplain that covers a total of 23.74 acres of the city's northern boundary. These 23.74 acres are split across 32 land parcels. In 2020 the city received Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant (HMAG) funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the purpose of purchasing land within the floodplain to reduce the number of repetitive loss properties within the city and increase benefits received from the National Flood Insurance Program. Of the 32 parcels, the city is pursuing the acquisition of 13 parcels that total roughly 5.6 acres of land. Once purchased, structures on the land would be demolished and the property maintained as open space in perpetuity. Under this grant, the land will be subject to restricted uses, but may be used for the following: parks for outdoor recreation activities, nature reserves, cultivation, grazing, camping, or unimproved, unpaved parking lots. No walled buildings or paving, landfills, or storage sites may be located on the properties once designated as 'open space'. Suggestions for the use of these properties can be found in the 'Recommendations' section of this plan.

Vacancy of Downtown Structures

There are currently eight structures located downtown that are vacant. These vacant properties hinder the community's opportunity for growth and development. These properties are as follows:

Table 15: Vacancy of Downtown Structures

ADDRESS	PARCEL #	OWNER	LAND USE	OCCUPANCY CONDI-TION	SECOND STORY	ACRES
619 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640036228	LRDH Company LLC	Commercial	Vacant	Vacant	0.08
612 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640036562	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant	NA	0.08
608 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640036376	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant	Vacant	0.04
604 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640036325	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant	Vacant	0.08
600 Main St, Peru, NE 68421	640036333	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant	NA	0.4
517 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640036147	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant	NA	0.15
607 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640036317	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant	Vacant	0.8
517 5th St, Peru, NE 68421	640042708	Z Reeves Enterprises Inc.	Commercial	Vacant	NA	0.15

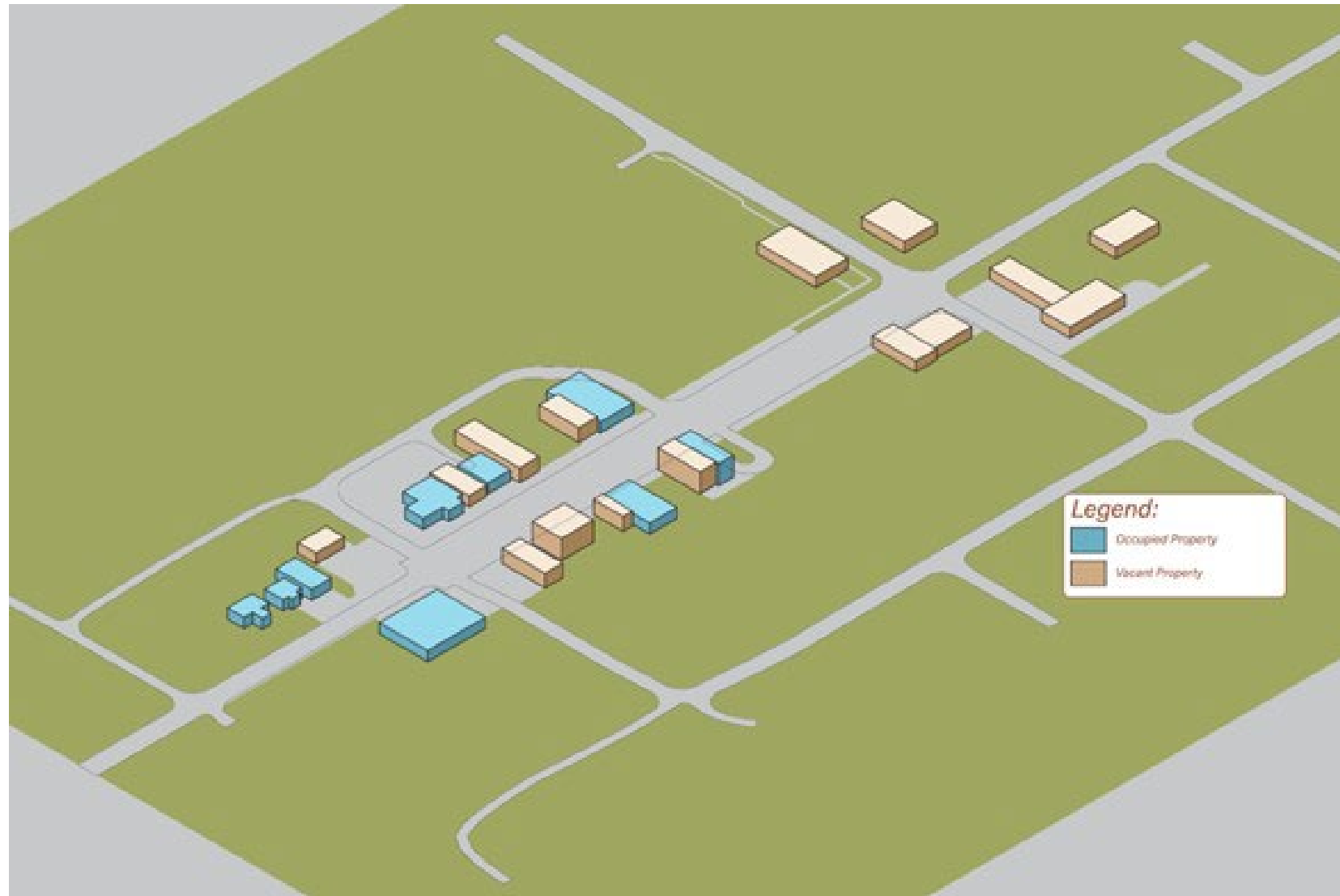


Figure 25: Building Typology Downtown

This image shows occupied properties in the Town Center area in blue, and vacant properties are colored in tan.

Existing Infrastructure Conditions

Building Typology Inventory

This section summarizes an inventory of building typologies that currently exist within the Town Center District of Peru.

Vacant Lot

This denotes parcels of land that are undeveloped. Most of these lots are grass with minimal landscaping or maintenance, although a couple have paving/gravel conditions. The most notable exception are the parcels owned by Farmers Bank of Cook directly south of the bank, which appear to have been developed as park land. Several lots also have small shed-type buildings that have fallen into significant disrepair and will need to be torn down and demolished before future development can occur. Several lots exist between long existing buildings within the Town Center district, which appears to be due to a structure being torn down between buildings, sometimes with a shared party wall becoming an exterior wall.

Storefront

Buildings within this typology closely resemble the characteristics of buildings typically found on Main Street in a rural community. These buildings are typically brick masonry construction and, in Peru, are two stories, with a flat roof and parapet. Overall, the building has a strong vertical profile. The main street-facing facade of these buildings typically has one of two arrangements: a central entry door with large store-front glazing on both sides, or a side-offset door, with large glazing across the rest of the facade. Often, the parapet of the building has some type of brickwork detailing, as does the storefront. In Peru, the storefronts also typically delineate windowpanes with a decorative pilaster. Within the Town Center, the Bank building is the clearest example of this typology.

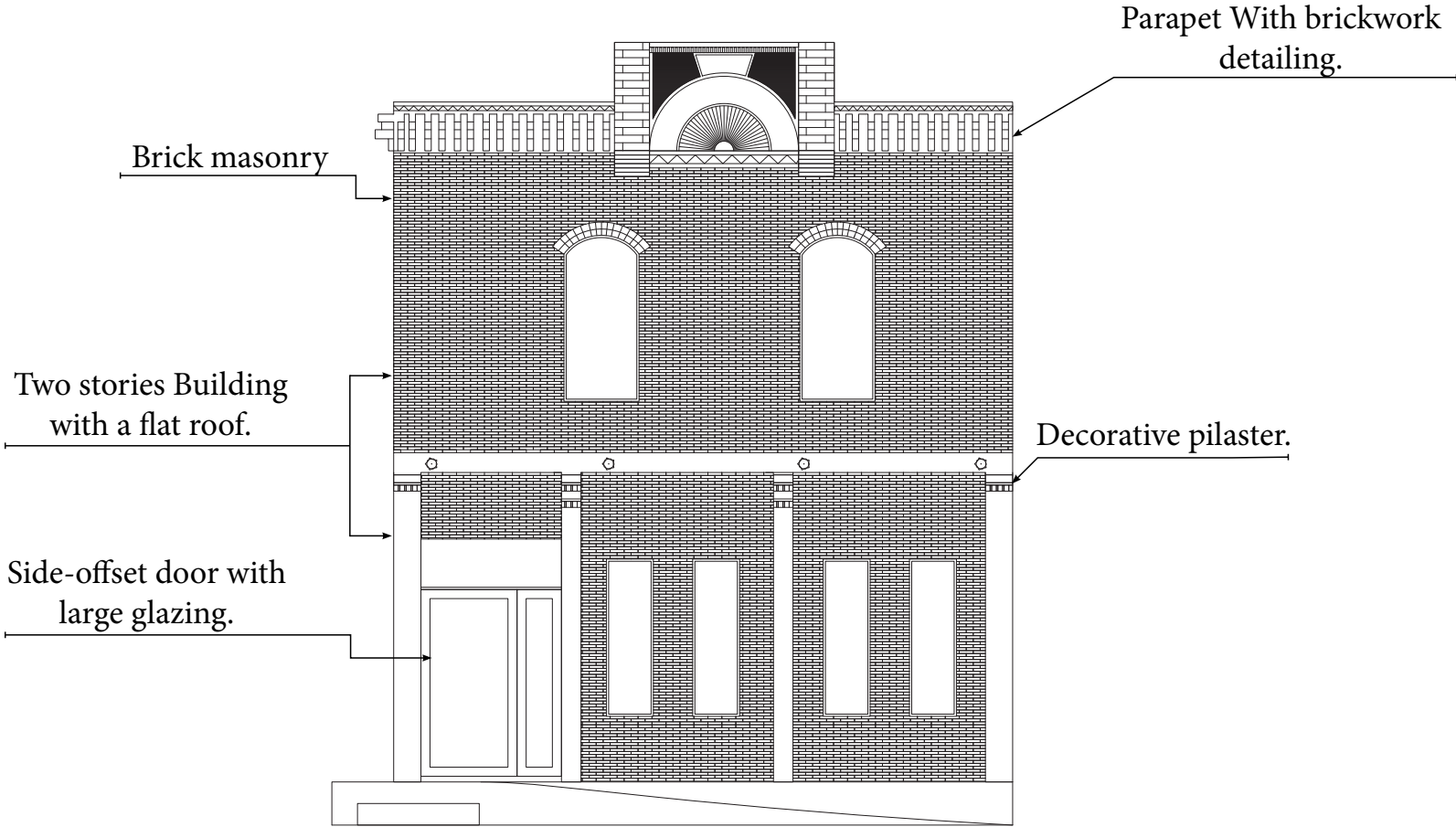


Figure 26: Storefront Typology

This diagram highlights key features of the storefront typology, using the existing bank building as an example.

Gabled

Buildings within this typology closely resemble characteristics typically seen in residential construction, with a gabled roof as a unifying element between them. In addition, these buildings are typically only a single story, which gives them a horizontal profile. The main street-facing facade of these buildings typically has one of two arrangements: a central entry door with windows arranged semi-symmetrically on either side; or a side-offset door, with a large window condition proportionally filling the rest of the facade. The gabled front of the roof typically faces the street facade, which can hold signage for the property, although examples do exist of a side gable. The most paradigmatic example of this typology is the City Hall Building, as outlined in the diagram below.

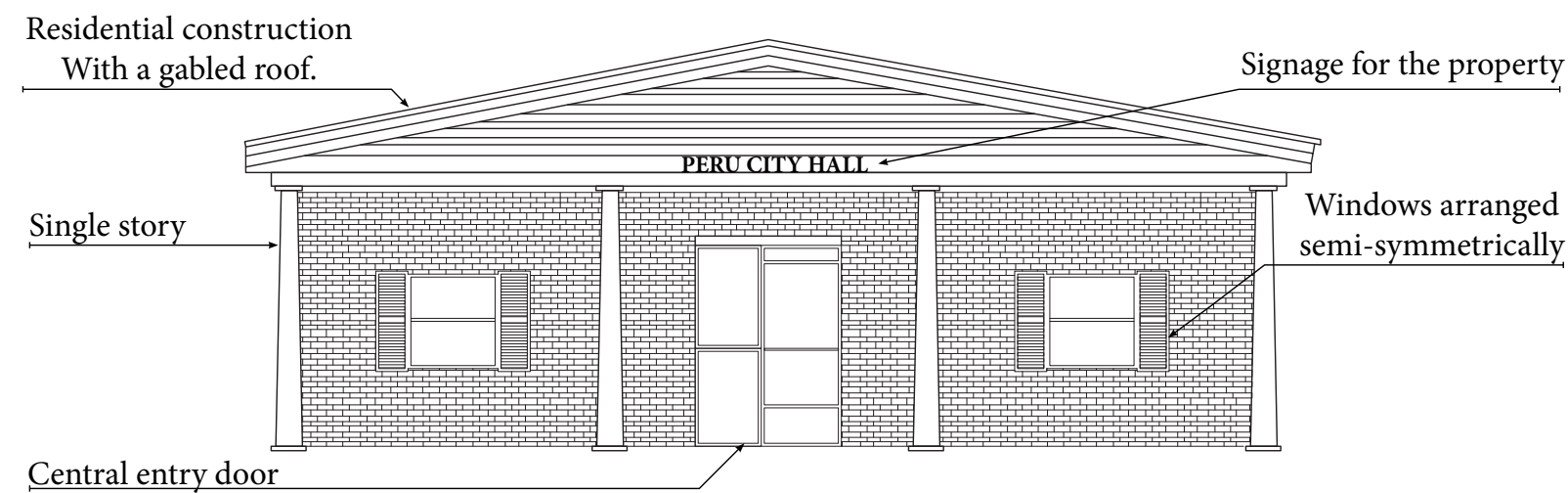


Figure 27: Gabled Typology

This diagram highlights key features of the gabled typology, using the existing city hall building as an example.

Hybrid

These buildings take elements from both storefront and gabled type properties. Both properties classified under this typology have gabled roofs and lean more towards the gabled type. All or part of the building has the horizontal profile typical of the gabled type, but also hold enough elements of the storefront type to justify a separate classification. For rehabilitation purposes, standards from either the gabled or storefront type can be taken.

Existing Conditions Inventory and Rehabilitation Needs in the Town Center

Rehabilitation Needs Analysis is non-binding, and does not consider structural, mechanical, or interior conditions. Needs are based on aesthetic and exterior conditions to maintain a cohesive, pleasant Town Center District.

This section serves as an inventory of the commercial and exempt properties within the Town Center District (including the Steamboat Trace Trailhead Shelter north of the district). Within this section, current building/lot conditions are outlined, including photos of the property, functionality of the spaces, property typology, and options for rehabilitation.

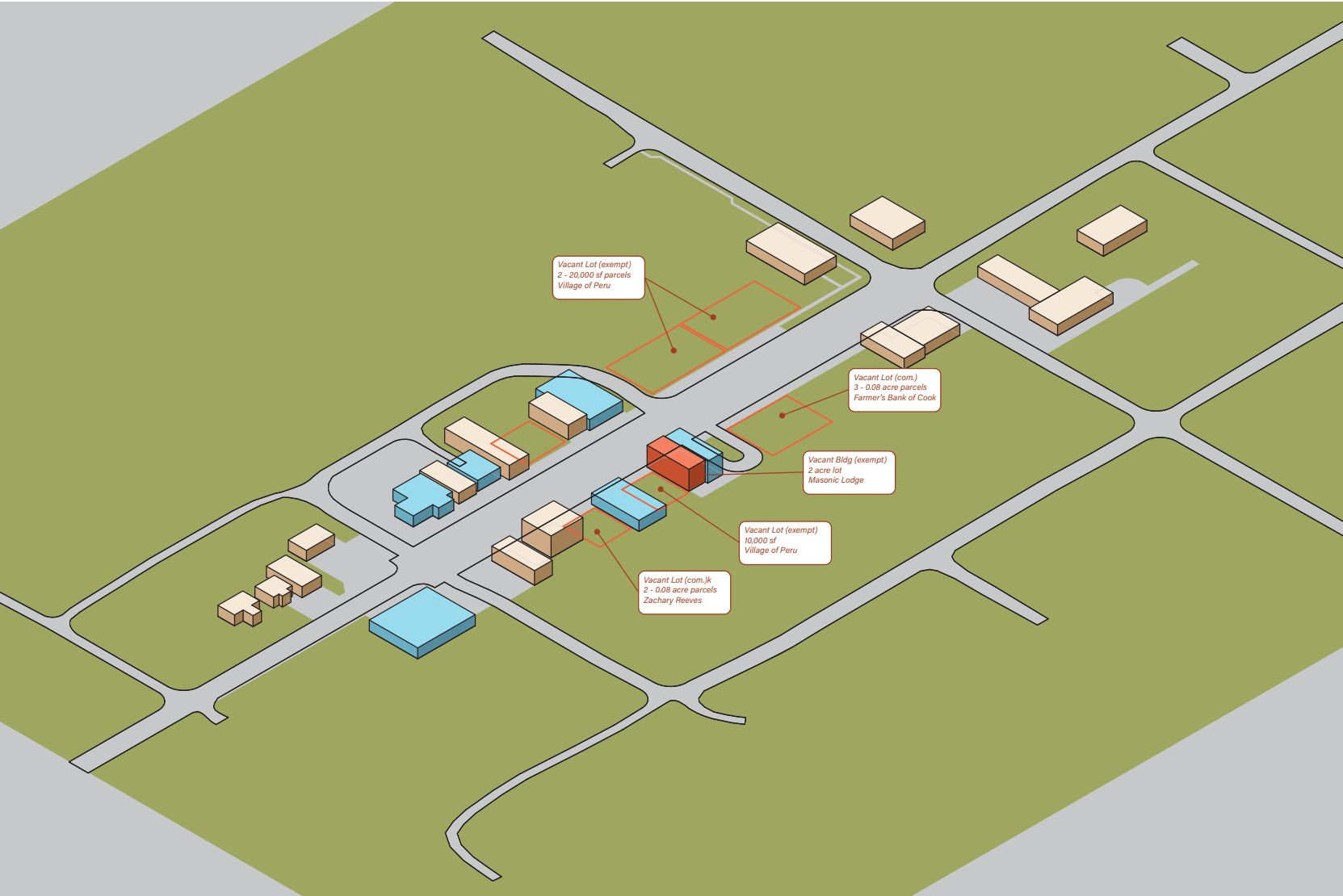


Figure 28: Revitalization Opportunities
This diagram outlines various development opportunities within the Town Center district.

Streetscape and Greenery

Overall, the streets' paving conditions (Figure 29) and sidewalks within the Town Center district are in adequate condition; however, several sections need repair (Figure 30). The sidewalk's steps need fresh paint, and several areas of it are cracked or otherwise in disrepair. These sections are noted under the building inventory as part of the streetscape for each individual land parcel.

Overall, the streets' paving conditions (Figure 29) and sidewalks within the Town Center district are in adequate condition; however, several sections need repair (Figure 30). The sidewalk's steps need fresh paint, and several areas of it are cracked or otherwise in disrepair. These sections are noted under the building inventory as part of the streetscape for each individual land parcel.

Landscaping is minimal within the district and lacks a consistent character. The Town Center District has several small, embedded landscape beds on the sidewalk on either side of 5th street. Some of these have mature trees, but several are empty. These beds appear to be mulched, but lack groundcover or shrubbery, and keeping mulch inside the beds appears to be an issue. Several large potted plants also exist along the sidewalk but are inconsistent and somewhat generic. Only a few buildings in the district have greenspace for landscaping and are generally well-landscaped. An exception are the vacant parcels owned by Farmers Bank of Cook, which are well-landscaped and present a clear aesthetic; most vacant lots are grass, with minimal aesthetic or maintenance considerations.



Figure 29: Street paving conditions in Peru's Town Center District.



Figure 30: Sidewalk conditions throughout Peru's Town Center District.





Building and Landscape Inventory

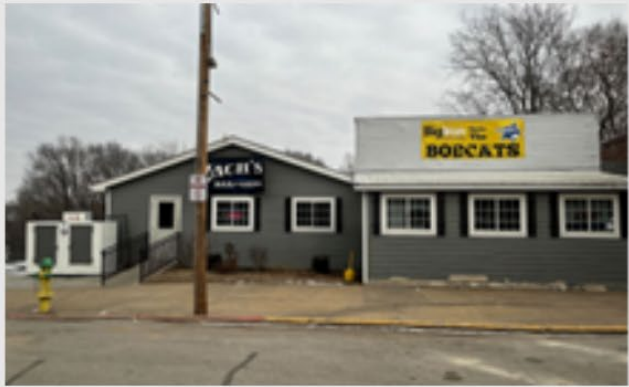

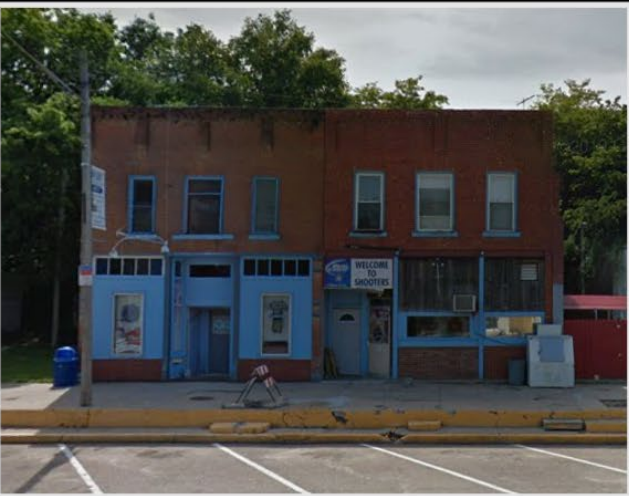

A detailed building and landscape inventory was performed on the land parcels within the City of Peru's downtown city center. This inventory identified the building typology, class of building, owner of the building, and assumed rehabilitation actions that may need to be performed to bring the revive the building. The rehabilitation needs are simple suggestions and are not the result of any architectural study or inspection. It is recommended a contractor and housing inspector perform assessments on any building before construction or rehabilitation is performed.

The table following summarizes the information for each building within downtown Peru. For more detailed property description and a list of suggested rehabilitation actions, please see this document's Appendix.




Table 16: Building and Landscape Inventory





PICTURE	ADDRESS	OWNER	CLASS	TYPE	REHAB NEEDS
	306 5th Street	Nemaha NRD	Exempt	Gabled	Minor-Moderate
	515 5th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Gabled	Moderate
	517 5th Street	Z Reeves Enterprises, Inc.	Commercial	Gabled	Severe, possible demolition

	518 5th Street	Village of Peru	Exempt	Gabled	Minimal
	600 5th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Storefront	Severe, possible demolition
	602 Main Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant Lot	Moderate
	604 5th Street	Private Citizen	Commerical	Storefront	Severe

	605 5 th Street	Z Reeves Enterprises, Inc	Commercial	Gabled	Minimal
	607 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Storefront	Moderate
	608 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Storefront + Vacant Lot	Moderate
	609 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Gabled	Minimal

	611 5 th Street	<u>Putza</u> , LLC	Commercial	Gabled	Moderate
	612 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Gabled	Severe
	613 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Vacant Lot	Minimal
	614 5 th Street	City of Peru	Exempt	Gabled	Minimal

	616 5 th Street	City of Peru	Exempt	Gabled + Vacant Lot	Minimal
	615-617 5 th Street	LRDH Company, LLC	Commercial	Vacant Lot	Moderate
	619 5 th Street	LRDH Company, LLC	Commercial	Storefront	Severe, Needs Demolition
	620 5 th Street	Masonic Lodge	Exempt	Storefront	Moderate-Severe

	622 5 th Street	Farmers Bank of Cook	Commerical	Storefront	Minimal
	623 5 th Street	LRDH Company, LLC	Commercial	Storefront/ Gabled Hybrid	None
	701-703 5 th Street	City of Peru	Exempt	Vacant Lot	Minimal-Moderate
	702-706 5 th Street	Farmers Bank of Cook	Commercial	Vacant Lot	None

	714 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Single Family	Gabled	None
	720 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Storefront	Moderate-Severe
	721 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Storefront/ Gabled Hybris	Moderate

	801 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Gabled	Minimal- Moderate
	802 5 th Street	Private Citizen	Commercial	Gabled	Minimal

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CITY OF PERU DOWNTOWN PLAN

VISION, GOALS, AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



VISION

It is fitting that the most popular event which Peru holds each year is the Old Man River Days celebration. Every June, the community reflects on the challenges it faced in 1943 when the rising flood waters of the Missouri River threatened the town. The values of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and sense of community were tapped into 80 years ago to fight the flooding of the Missouri River. They were needed again in March 2019 when the Missouri River raised to unprecedented levels, leaving Peru with a broken levee, flooded farmland, and homes destroyed.

Resourcefulness and ingenuity led to solutions that brought clean water to the town when it was impacted by the floods. A sense of community brought people together to move furniture from flooded homes and help families move to higher ground. The enduring values of Nebraska's Peruvians



Figure 31: A look at the floodwaters in Peru, March 17, 2019

Photo credits: Kayla Wolf, Lincoln Journal Star

have held them in good stead for more than 160 years and are just what is needed now and in the future.

The vision for Peru comes directly from the hearts and minds of the community members, past and present. Many residents have deep family roots in the community. Some are new to Peru but have seen pictures hanging from the walls of Peru State College of what downtown used to look like. A clean and open main street was freckled with ornamental streetlamps. Grassy rights-of-way and sidewalks beckoned people to head downtown. Cars parked along the entire stretch of main street to visit the numerous businesses that were open.

These recollections envisage Peru's future, one which sees college students riding their bicycles along the tree-lined bike path to downtown to pick up a shift at the local market, and employees at the college stopping by the local coffee shop for some pastries before heading up the street to campus. Local church members gather in the open, community green space to plan their next event. Local business owners prepare their store front windows with posters and signs showing support for the upcoming football game.



Figure 32: Downtown Looking North

Downtown looking north. Photo credits: city of Peru: perunebraska.org

The vision is for the City of Peru and Peru State College to continue to ImPERUve as oNE.

GOALS

For the community-developed Vision to become a reality, it is of vital importance that the community be engaged in discussions, planning, and implementation. Members of the community were asked questions (in the survey) about what changes and improvements they would like to see in their town, specifically thinking about what they want to see happen in the next 10 years. The priorities of the residents covered themes such as renovations, city ordinances, responsibility and accountability, new businesses, and collaboration. They valued neighboring towns of Brownville, Nebraska City, and Auburn for their abundance of stores and dining options as well as their community appreciation of artwork and town aesthetics.

Upon review of all input, the following were identified by the planning team as their key goals for the Peru Downtown Revitalization:

- 1. Exhibit a pride in ownership of businesses and residences
- 2. Revitalize buildings on the downtown stretch
- 3. Expand downtown business offerings
- 4. Increase collaboration and connectedness in the community and its physical spaces
- 5. Provide opportunities for recreation and social gatherings

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning team took all input from the community into consideration when researching recommendations. The recommendations and associated approaches provided in this plan come directly from the vision and key goals for the City of Peru as communicated by survey respondents and community meeting participants.

RECOMMENDATION 1: ADDRESS VACANT, DILAPIDATED AND BLIGHTED PROPERTIES

Approach 1: Create and Utilize a Vacant Property Registry

In 2018, the Nebraska legislature passed the Vacant Property Restriction Act. This state law gives authority to local governments to create registries for vacant properties within their boundaries. According to the law, vacant properties represent “unrealized growth” for Nebraska communities and hinder economic development. The city of Peru can identify and register vacant properties, collect fees to compensate for the public costs of vacant properties, plan for the rehabilitation of vacant properties,

and encourage the occupancy of vacant properties (Nebraska Legislature, 2023). The law states that:

“The purposes of the Vacant Property Registration Act are to promote the health, safety, and welfare of Nebraska residents by providing Authority for municipalities to enact vacant property registration ordinances. Such ordinances will allow communities to identify and register vacant properties, collect fees to compensate for the public costs of vacant properties, plan for the rehabilitation of vacant properties and encourage the occupancy of vacant properties.”

How it Works

These ordinances require owners of vacant properties to register their property with the local government. There is sometimes a registration fee and a subsequent re-registration fee (if the vacancy has not been remedied) associated with these ordinances.

Money collected from these fees and potential penalties can be used by the town to purchase buildings, renovate facilities, and otherwise improve the downtown area.

There may also be maintenance requirements for the property, such as keeping the property up to code and keeping up the appearance of the landscaping and façade. If those requirements are not met, it is not uncommon for towns to issue a fine to the property owner as a penalty.

These ordinances may also require owners of vacant property to submit to the City a plan for

marketing and finding tenants or buyers that includes a timeline. Additionally, these ordinances could create an incentive to remain occupied by allowing an exemption from the law if owners use these properties for temporary purposes, such as office space, community centers, and hosting events.

Exemptions and fees vary from ordinance to ordinance. The definition of the term “vacancy” also varies. Each town needs to tailor their iteration of this ordinance to fit their needs and goals. It may be beneficial for Peru to focus a potential vacant property registration ordinance on only commercial properties in the downtown area. Properties owned by the town, state or federal government are exempt from these ordinances, according to the law.

Nebraska Towns with Vacant Property Registries

Many small towns in Nebraska have adopted vacant property registration ordinances. Sterling, Plainview, Petersburg, Hebron, Nebraska City and Falls City have ordinances addressing vacant properties. These ordinances define a vacant property as “a property that has been vacant for 180 days (about 6 months) or longer and has continuously exhibited signs of vacancy.” Signs of vacancy include the following: “overgrown or dead vegetation, including grass, shrubbery, and other plantings, an accumulation of abandoned personal property, trash or other waste, visible deterioration or lack of maintenance of any building or structure on the property, graffiti or other defacement of any building or structure on the property, or any other condition or circumstance reasonably indicating that the property is not occupied for residential purposes or being used for the operation of a lawful business.”

If a property meets the requirements for registration, the owner will typically have about 30 days to register after being notified. Registration requires general information about the property, including the name of the owner and the address. Sterling, Hebron and Petersburg require owners to submit a plan or timetable detailing when they expect the property to be occupied.

Fee structures vary from town to town. In Sterling, NE, the fees are different for residential and commercial property, with fees for commercial property being higher. Below is a description of their fee structure:

Residential: No fee for initial registration of vacant residential property. If the vacant property is not occupied within 180 days (about 6 months) of initial registration, then the owner shall be assessed a fee of \$250.00. A supplemental fee of \$500.00 will be assessed for every 180 period thereafter until the vacant property is removed from the registration list.

Commercial Property: There is no fee for initial registration of vacant commercial property. If the property is not removed from the registry within 180-days of initial registration, the owner shall be assessed a fee of \$500.00. A supplemental fee of \$1000.00 will be assessed to the owner of the vacant property for every 180-day period thereafter.

There are exemptions in every ordinance that was reviewed for this project, and they are all quite consistent. Generally speaking, the exemptions are as follows: “property only considered to be a seasonal residence, property of an owner who is temporarily absent, property damaged by fire, weather and act of God or vandalism, property under construction or renovation pursuant to a valid buildings permit issued by the Village

of Sterling, property subject to divorce, probate or estate proceedings, property of an owner who is absent and cannot occupy the property due to medical reasons, property that is for sale, rent or lease and where the owner can produce sufficient good faith evidence of active marketing of sale, rent or lease and property owned by the federal government, State of Nebraska or any political subdivision thereof.” For a property to be removed from the registration list, the owner typically would need to demonstrate that it no longer meets the definition of a vacant property or that it meets the conditions for an exemption.

Peru, NE may be a good candidate for adopting a vacant property registration ordinance. These ordinances can be very flexible and do not require a registry fee. They should not be financial burdensome to property owners, nor should they impede sincere efforts to improve, renovate or maintain the property. At a minimum, these ordinances can provide town leadership and the community with a plan from property owners to maintain and occupy the vacant properties. These ordinances could also be structured for property owners to opt in and be eligible for future funding that could assist the owner in renovating the property.

Approach 2: Improve Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is important for all cities, regardless of size. Ensuring local codes are enforced has many benefits, including the improvement of the appearance of the town, protecting public health and safety, and protecting the value of property. Code enforcement requires villages and towns to have a system in place for routine inspections, assessing violations and that requires money and staff. For some small towns and villages, the capacity for code enforcement is not robust enough. In the 2001 Comprehensive Development Plan, the Village of Peru lists code enforcement as an item that it would like to improve upon.

The following paragraphs provide a step-by-step process for improving code enforcement.

Step 1: Represent code enforcement goals in Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan provides a foundation for the direction in which a community would like to grow. It outlines important policy, programming and growth initiatives. This plan should highlight any long-term goals established by the community. If there are code enforcement policies or goals that have been identified by the community, then those should be discussed in the comprehensive plan. In some cases, communities have a solid foundation for code enforcement goals and policies in the plan already, as well as sufficient local regulations. If this is the case, then this initial step may not be necessary.

Any necessary changes in local land use regulations should be supported by the policies established in the comprehensive plan. It is always good to assess the current land use and buildings codes to determine if changes need to be made. This will provide the regulatory authority needed to enforce the desired changes.

Step 2: Identify code enforcement representatives

Code enforcement requires people to assess compliance and issue notices of violation. Some communities do not have local staff that can take on those responsibilities. Therefore, it is important for a community

that struggles with code enforcement to assess the resources it has to bring building owners into compliance. These resources include money, staff, and time.

Step 3: Develop a code enforcement plan

Once the resources, regulations and potential need to update the comprehensive plan have been established, the next step is to develop a code enforcement plan. This plan should discuss the code enforcement issues, goals, resources and regulatory framework. In some cases, there may not be enough resources to address all code enforcement issues. In this case, towns must identify which issues they want to prioritize.

Step 4: Community Outreach

Once the code enforcement plan has been developed, give everyone in the community an opportunity to review the plan and comment. Hold meetings to discuss the new initiative for code enforcement and discuss which elements of the code will be prioritized. This allows community members to be informed and gives them warning about the recent changes.

Step four requires the development of a plan and part of that plan should include actions that can lead to improved code enforcement. These can be as simple as prioritizing inspections and assessing fines for property owners that are not in compliance, and they can be more innovative, such as creating incentives for bringing properties into compliance.

Strategies for Improving Code Enforcement:

1. Create incentives for community members to comply with local laws

Sometimes, it is best to lure people toward improved maintenance of their property rather than issue fines. An example of this approach could be the sponsorship of a community-wide “best yard” or “best storefront” contest.

2. Create an event such as community clean-up day

These events can be a great way to get the community involved in improving the landscape. This can involve picking up trash, helping beautify public spaces and helping neighbors with yard work and repairs.

3. Assistance and education programs

Assistance programs are a great way to help those who struggle to comply with local regulations learn more about what they need to do to come into compliance. Sometimes, residents and business owners are not aware of the local laws and simply need support to assist them with making the necessary changes. Set up a community-wide meeting that educates on building codes.

4. Fine structures

Fine structures are often necessary to

encourage compliance, however these must balance economic development and growth with the need to ensure buildings are safe. Fines should not be overly punitive but should also motivate residents to get into compliance sooner rather than later. It is common to keep fines lower for residential violations than for commercial violations. It is also important to consider opportunities to have fines waived if appropriate.

5. Collaborate with neighboring communities

Sometimes, small towns do not have the resources to hire staff that can investigate code enforcement issues to the extent that is needed. One option in this case is for neighboring communities to develop a partnership for code enforcement. This could be in the form of the towns jointly hiring a contractor that can routinely assess compliance in every municipality that is part of the partnership. The benefit of contracting code enforcement is that small towns would not need to hire full time staff to work on code enforcement issues.

Existing Building Rehabilitation Guidelines

Recommendations for this section take inspiration from the Standards for Rehabilitation and Standards for Reconstruction sections of the US Department of the Interior 2017 Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. For additional information on ways to renovate structures within the Town Center area and general historic building information, please refer to this document.

For existing buildings in the Town Center district, the priority for renovation is to bring buildings to a safe, functional standard of construction while maintaining the character of the individual building and the Town Center district. Several buildings in the district have noticeable damage to their exterior. Repairing this damage appropriately should be the main priority of rehabilitation. As buildings fall into dilapidation, making repairs using materials and techniques consistent with existing construction methodology should be prioritized. This section of the report is not legally binding nor intended as regulatory language. These recommendations are general guidelines for property owners looking to rehabilitate the buildings on their property. Any changes in regulation that may emerge from these guidelines should be drafted by city officials and brought before the City Council.

Brickwork

Many of the masonry buildings have brickwork that is damaged or crumbling. As it currently stands, many of these buildings have holes or other damage covered with plywood or siding; this should be avoided, instead focusing on repairing brickwork where possible, or redeveloping a facade that falls in line with the character of the building, rather than simply patching flaws. Where possible, red brick should be maintained, as it is a defining character point of the Town Center area. Repaired brick may need repainting, but paint colors should be consistent with the color palette outlined within this document. For existing painted brick buildings, many need a fresh coat of paint.

Apertures and Facade Conditions

The town Center district once had a consistent language of storefront facades across the buildings within it, but over time, many windows and doors that make up these facades have been changed or covered. Where possible, the filling/covering of windows and doors should be avoided at all costs. Covering apertures in the facades often loses character details of the buildings. Windows and doors will likely need replacement, but care should be taken to maintain details within the framework and choose windows or doors with a character consistent to the existing building. When filling or covering an aperture is unavoidable, materials or paint should be chosen that fit the character of the facade (Figure 33).

Beyond the apertures within the facade, the details present in the street-facing facade of a building are often most critical in maintaining the historic value of the building. As mentioned in other subsections within these rehabilitation guidelines, things like parapet detailing, window and door frames, storefront ornamentation like columns, entablature design, and more define the character of the buildings. Designed front columns are a key feature of many buildings in Peru and should not be removed. Many of these other details have already been covered or destroyed on buildings within the Town Center district, and preserving those that remain is paramount to the rehabilitation

of the district. Where possible, contemporary detailing could be added to buildings that have lost character details in the rehabilitation process, and details that have been covered could be re-exposed and restored.

Roof Conditions

For many of the storefront typologies, the roof is hidden behind a parapet; the priority for these buildings is to maintain a clean parapet condition, and to preserve parapet ornamentation.

For gabled type buildings and a few storefront type buildings with a secondary pitched roof that serves as a canopy over the entrance, roofs are typically shingled in a warm mid tone brown or gray with asphalt shingles (Figure 34). Many of these roofs need repair or replacement and should be replaced in colors consistent with other roofs in the Town Center area. Metal roofs do also exist within the Town Center but should be avoided in future rehabilitation because it changes the character of the building. Likewise, wood shingles also appear in the district, but should be avoided because of their higher maintenance needs.



Figure 33: Building Conditions

In the left example, windows on the second story have been filled, then painted to match existing conditions. Additionally, light fixtures have been added to give the filled apertures purpose on the facade. In the right two examples, siding has been added that is incongruous with the character of the building, character details have been covered, and functionality of the facade is diminished.



Figure 34: Roof Types

Examples of Asphalt Shingle Colors

Other Materials and Formal Considerations

Several buildings within the Town Center district use alternative materials and styles than those typically found in the area. For these buildings that are currently functional, they should be maintained in line with their current style, but when future renovation opportunities arise, examine if it is possible to incorporate materials or details to tie into the defined character elements of the district. This could include things like changing a paint color, roof type (once replacement is needed), adding decorative ornamentation, etc. For buildings with unique character elements, like metal paneling, wood shingles, etc., if these elements can be properly maintained, it is beneficial to keep them, however, a lack of maintenance detracts from the aesthetics of the district and therefore should be changed. For rehabilitation and maintenance, industrial type materials and aesthetics like corrugated or ribbed metal paneling or windowless facades should be avoided.

Landscaping and Greenery

The Town Center District has several small, embedded landscape beds, which are a prime opportunity for increasing the area's aesthetic appeal. Switching from mulched beds to a hardy, easy to maintain ground cover plant will help to minimize the spreading of mulch from the beds. If pedestrian traffic is a potential issue, consider

a walkable groundcover or taller shrub. In addition to existing beds, larger free-standing beds could be a good opportunity to increase the landscaping in the district. The sidewalk on both sides of 5th Street is wide enough to support sizable planter beds consistently down the street. Making a clear plan for choosing plants within these beds will help them appear purposeful. We recommend emulating the planting strategies used for the drive-through lane of the bank (Figure 35).

Finally, we recommend creating a standard for vacant lots within the Town Center District, so that these properties can contribute to the aesthetics of the area, rather than highlighting empty properties. Most vacant properties have no or minimal landscaping beyond grass. Adding simple landscaping to these lots creates a pleasant atmosphere until they can eventually be developed. This landscaping does not need to be



Figure 35: Clear Landscaping In Peru

Example of a clear landscaping strategy

elaborate but will add significant aesthetic value to the district. Again, the vacant lots owned by Farmers Bank of Cook are a good example of this. While these lots do contain recreational structures (a gazebo and pergola), even without them, the landscaping gives them clear pertinence in the district.

We especially recommend designing a landscape strategy for the two city-owned vacant lots across the street from the bank lots (Figure 36). These lots already have a certain kind of natural character, so supplementing that with native plantings and intentional landscaping will increase the aesthetic value of those lots, while creating synergy with the lots across the street.



Figure 36: City Owned Lot
City-owned lot with high potential for landscape interventions

New Construction Guidelines

Recommendations within this section are not meant as design or construction advice, and appropriate professionals should be consulted with any new construction or rehabilitation project. This section of the report is not legally binding nor intended as regulatory language. These recommendations are general guidelines for property owners looking to construct new buildings on their property, while keeping a character consistent with the existing Town Center area. A review of city ordinances to add formal-based language may be appropriate for future development for the city, but any changes in regulation emerging from these guidelines should be properly

drafted by city officials and brought before City Council for consideration.

In addition to the guidelines outlined in the Rehabilitation section of this code, the creation of aesthetic guidelines for new construction will help maintain and develop a distinct character for the Town Center district. These guidelines are based in part on the Standards for Reconstruction section of the US Department of the Interior 2017 Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, but mostly are from characteristics pulled from existing buildings within the district.

Materials

Materials that are aesthetically consistent with the character of the Town center district should be prioritized, like those mentioned in the Rehabilitation section. There are two main material types that should be encouraged within the district: brick and siding.

For a brick facade, red or red-orange brick should be prioritized, to remain consistent with the district, and to tie in the aesthetics used across Peru State College (Figure 37). Ornamentation and detailing of brickwork can be emulated from these two places too.

Where red brick is not possible or appropriate, brick may be painted, either red, tan, white, or a red-toned brown (Figure 38).



Figure 37: Examples of red brick and brick ornamentation styles.



Figure 38: Examples of paint colors (red, tan, white or red-toned brown) for brick painting.

For a facade with siding, it is appropriate to use wood, or vinyl siding, with either vertical or lap (horizontal) orientation. Care should be taken when utilizing siding, especially vinyl, next to an existing structure so that the buildings feel consistent, without an obvious difference in material quality. Consider using siding in tandem with other materials, a common practice in the Town Center district. When using multiple materials, the connections between them are especially important in creating intentional design details and moments for character for the building. Colors for siding may include white, tan, brick red, or brown (Figure 39).



Figure 39: Examples of Siding Colors and Types within the Town Center District.

Storefront Typology

For the storefront typology, construction techniques should give an appearance consistent with the masonry buildings present in the Town Center. Where possible, party walls (walls shared between two adjoining properties) should be used to create a row of continuous storefronts. This building type is more appropriate in deeper, more narrow lots, especially those with existing storefront type buildings on one or both sides.

Buildings should be two stories, with ornamental masonry parapet detailing, and a maximum height of 65 feet. Where possible, facades should be designed to match the 24-foot span present in many storefront type buildings in the district. Overall, the street facing facade should be proportionally larger vertically than horizontally. The second story of the building should have two or three apertures, although variation is possible if consistent with the typical second story aperture proportions. On the first floor, the storefront can have either a centered entry or side offset entry, with large windows filling the rest of the facade on this floor. Between aperture elements in the storefront, column-type detailing should be present where possible. Doors may be inset or flush to the facade. Entry conditions should remain level with the sidewalk or have a minimal grade change for accessibility, rather than having stairs or a larger ramp into the building. An attached angled canopy over the entry is appropriate where needed and should be either metal or asphalt shingles for the roof. Space should be made on the second story of the building for signage that runs perpendicular to the front facade, while the first floor should have signage either on the storefront glazing, or elsewhere wall-mounted on the facade.

See Figure 40 for visualization of these standards.

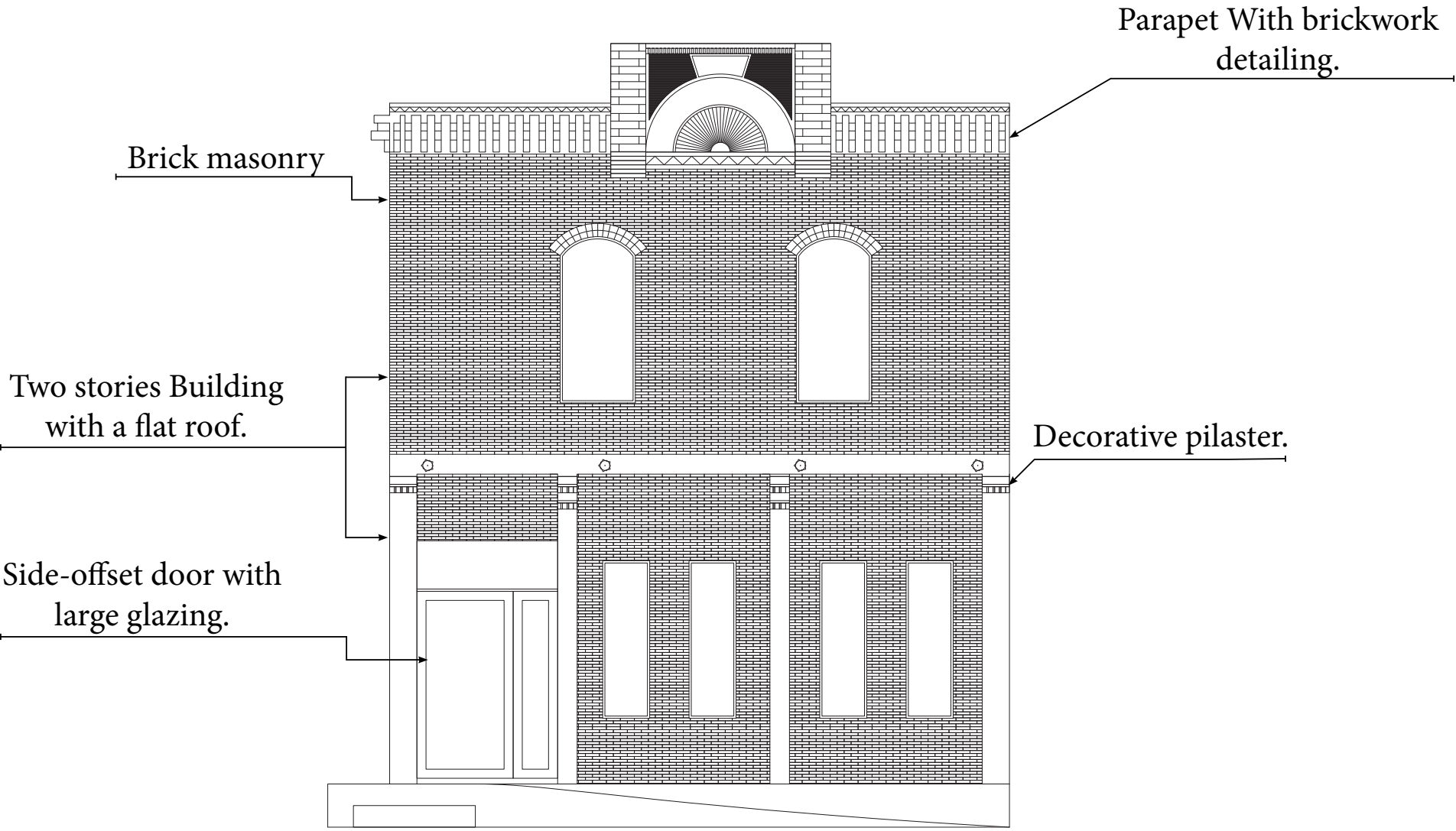


Figure 40: Visualization of Storefront Typology Standards

Gabled Typology

For the gabled typology, more flexibility is available in construction techniques, either CMU masonry or frame construction with a more elaborate street facade are acceptable but should give an appearance consistent with gabled buildings within the Town Center district. Buildings should be free standing structures, with a surrounding yard area with opportunities for landscaping. This building type is more appropriate on wider lots but can be utilized on any lot dimensions.

Buildings should be a single story, with a gabled roof and a maximum roof height of 25 feet. The street facing facade should be proportionally larger horizontally than vertically. The facade can have an entry condition that is either a centered entry or side offset entry, with isolated windows on both sides when the door is centered, or a single larger isolated window for a side entry. Where appropriate, the roof may overhang the walls of the building to create a canopy condition. In these instances, the fascia becomes an opportunity for signage. Additionally, the gabled front of the roof can hold either perpendicular or wall-mounted signage.

See figure 41 for visualization of these standards.

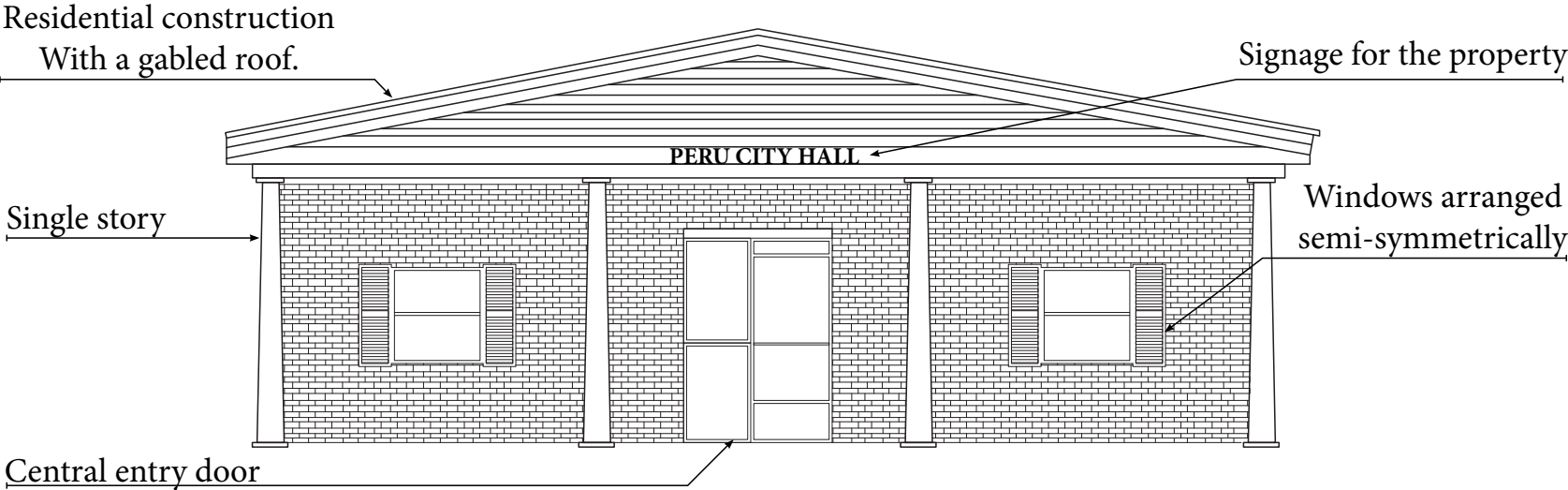


Figure 41: Visualization of gabled typology standards.

RECOMMENDATION 2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Address Vacant Properties

As outlined in Recommendation 1, addressing the vacant and dilapidated properties in the downtown area is necessary for the growth of the city of Peru. At a minimum, presenting vacant lots ready for development is more likely to attract prospective businesses than the existing, dilapidated structures are. Few structures along the downtown corridor are currently habitable for businesses.

Build the Buy Local Movement in Peru

The multiplier effect of local spending refers to the idea that when money is spent locally, it tends to circulate within the local economy, generating additional economic activity and supporting job creation. This happens because when money is spent at a local business, that business is likely to use a portion of that money to purchase goods and services from other local businesses, who in turn will use a portion of that money to purchase goods and services from other local businesses, and so on. The more times money changes hands within a local economy, the greater the economic impact of each dollar spent.

For example, let's say a member of the Peru community were to spend \$100 at The Market, the local grocery store. The grocery owner might use \$50 of that money to pay their employees, who will then use a portion of their wages to buy dinner at the local bar & grill. The bar & grill owner might then use some of that money to purchase supplies from the local grocer, who will then use some of that money to pay their employees, who will then spend some of their wages at local restaurants, and so on. In this way, each dollar spent at the local grocery store can have a ripple effect throughout the local economy.

The multiplier effect of local spending is one reason why supporting local businesses and organizations can be so important for the health and vitality of a community. By choosing to spend your money locally, you can help to support the local economy, create jobs, and build a stronger, more resilient community.

The city of Peru has operated for some time without several amenities in the community, and so residents have formed habits for securing the goods which they need. For example, the grocery store in town prior to The Market was a stressed business for some time before closing and as a result many residents of Peru began to source their groceries elsewhere. With the reopening of the grocery store in town in September of 2022, residents have been given local access

to grocery amenities again but have yet to change their shopping habits to utilize The Market first and with priority over other options. For downtown Peru to thrive, the businesses need both residents and visitors to Peru to frequent their establishments.

Invest in Internships

One of the challenges facing the business owners in the city of Peru is the lack of employees interested in employment. While census data suggests that the city of Peru does have a population of residents that work in the retail industry, they are mostly employed in other surrounding towns. Currently only 12 residents living in Peru are also employed in Peru.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development notes that more than half of young people that participate in an internship become full-time employees where they intern. Through the Intern Nebraska Grant Program (InternNE), financial assistance is provided to businesses that create new internships in Nebraska. Businesses with fewer than 50 full-time employees can be reimbursed for 50% (up to \$7500) of their expenses such as wages, tuition reimbursement, and transportation expenses when the internship contributes to work on a short-term objective or project. (Intern Nebraska. (2023). Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Retrieved April 10, 2023, from <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/business/intern-nebraska/>)

The Market, the local grocery store in the city of Peru needs both part-time and full-time employees, including a store manager. The existing owners are often required to fill in shifts at the store when unable

to find staffing but are also busy with running the business, completing activities such as marketing and management of the store's systems and inventories. With the addition of regular, rotating internships, the owners of The Market could leverage the education of Marketing, Advertising, or Business Administration students from Peru State College to help with business objectives, such as building employee-recruiting strategies or developing strategies to reduce food product waste, for example. Activities such as these could help to strengthen the business and its partnership with the college while also showing student interns that their knowledge can be applied to help their own communities.

Approach 2: Build upon the College-Community Partnership

Formal partnerships between towns and nearby colleges or universities are nationally recognized for their ability to revitalize communities by matching faculty expertise and resources with the challenges and needs of the town. In doing so, they can build a long-term strategy together for a downtown business core which will uniquely serve the needs of the Peru community and residents in surrounding towns.

The pandemic in 2020 has brought some considerable challenges to colleges and universities in terms of enrollment and funding. It should be stressed

that a partnership approach such as the one recommended here is not meant to build a model of financial benevolence from the college to the town. The approach, instead, should build a long-term model partnership which uses the people and knowledge resources of the community and the college to build a better future for them both. The city of Peru and the college have had a harmonious working relationship for many years. This plan recommendation is intended to strengthen that relationship so that it brings more benefits to both the town and college.

How it Could Work:

1. Build a Partnership Committee.

Seek out interested residents and employees at the college. Recruit faculty with expertise in areas such as Business Administration, Advertising, Marketing, Graphic Design, Arts and Music, and Rural Health (not an exhaustive list). City leadership and college leadership are encouraged to remain involved with a seat at the table, as well. This ensures that the longer-term goals of the college and the town are kept front-of-mind and will help speed up prioritization and decision-making.

The committee's operating rhythms and frequency of meetings can be determined by the committee. Recommendations would be to have a series of meetings to maintain momentum. These would include annual discussions to align goals and priorities for the year as well as regular check-ins to discuss progress and share results.

2. Develop a mission statement and strategy.

For example, a mission statement could read: "The College-Community Partnership between the City of Peru and Peru State will improve the quality of life for its residents, the economic prospects for its businesses, and the opportunities for enjoyment for current residents and visitors. By helping each other improve, together we will imPERUve as oNE."

There are numerous strategies that the partnership committee could employ to benefit the city of Peru and the college, and all can be generated by identifying common needs and interests. For example:

- Faculty in **Business Administration** could integrate curriculum which focuses on rural entrepreneurship. This would allow project work to emerge between faculty and local business owners, such as Western National Bank, which focuses on supporting prospective entrepreneurs with business plan development.
- The **Marketing and Advertising** faculty could incorporate project work which focuses on helping local, rural business owners identify strategies to increase their customer base. This could include conducting research into local food preferences and pricing strategies for the local grocery store and restaurant owners to utilize.
- **Graphic Design** faculty could encourage student work which would support local businesses and the town for any design needs, including maintenance of the city of Peru's website.

- The **Arts** department could establish an annual “Peru of the Future: Student Arts Project” in which students envision a positive future for the city of Peru. This could consist of student sculpture art being displayed in front of local businesses or recreational landmarks and student paintings being displayed in front windows of businesses. Projects such as this can encourage outside visitors to the town and further build a sense of community.

- Build upon the “**Rural Health Opportunities Program**” (RHOP) partnership between Peru State and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) which prioritizes recruitment and education of students from rural communities who want to enter the field of medicine and plan to return to rural areas to practice. The College-Community partnership could envision a 15-year strategy to build a local health community hub in Peru, Nebraska, consisting of local health businesses such as a pharmacy, mental health practitioners, or other fields which the regional community identifies as a need.

3. Unified Events Calendars

The city of Peru can increase visitors to the downtown area by hosting regular events and capitalizing on the various events which the college is hosting. Any events which are planned should focus on the multiplier effect of local spending. For example, hosting a “Trunk or Treat” Halloween event in the fall may drive visitors to the town, but the

economic benefit of the event is diminished if, for example, a food truck from a neighboring city is the primary business selling food and refreshments. Any events hosted should prioritize spurring economic activity to existing businesses. Some examples are:

- Sports events being hosted at Peru College offer opportunities to draw people toward the downtown corridor. When the local businesses advertise events in support of Peru Bobcats athletics, they could drive increased sports viewership at games. The increase in activities would be mutually beneficial for college and community.
- The local bar & grill could host “Burgers for Bobcats” on game days, offering pre-game or post-game specials. “Burgers, Brats, and Bobcats” specials at The Market.
- “Tailgates & Tailpipes” events. Advertise with local or regional car and motorcycle enthusiasts/car clubs that the downtown strip of Peru is perfect for parking and tailgating before a Peru College football game in the fall. The Market (local grocery) could advertise specials on football tailgate food items such as chips, hot dogs, hamburger patties, and beverages.
- “Bowling Away Hunger” event which would benefit the Food Bank of Lincoln and Feeding 44, a monthly mobile food distribution initiative which has been hosting monthly food distributions at Peru State College for the past ten years. The bowling tournament would be set up in downtown Peru vacant space, and could utilize outdoor, oversized bowling sets which could be purchased, donated, or handmade. Community members would be encouraged to purchase the non-perishable food items for donation at The Market, Peru’s local grocer. Admission

to the bowling tournament would be in the form of food donations. The college bowling team could get involved in driving participation, as well.

- Baseball, basketball, softball, and volleyball are some of the other sports which are played at Peru State College throughout the year.
- Peru State College Research and Creativity Expo, hosted in Spring (April 2023). The expo provides students with the opportunity to present their original research to their peers, faculty, staff and community members. Student research is a high impact practice that has been shown to increase student engagement and learning. The Expo is a key part of the college’s strategic plan, “Engaging the Future.” The city of Peru could expand upon the event by working with the college to encourage students to conduct research which relates to or is intended to help the local community.
- The Annual Easter Egg Hunt is held at Peru State College campus and sponsored by the Rotaract Club and the Black Student Union. Hundreds of adults and children have attended the event in the past. Local businesses could advertise events in downtown Peru so that visitors to the campus egg hunt could continue their fun in downtown Peru afterward. That could include a visit and pictures with the Easter Bunny at The Market, or an Easter brunch buffet at the local bar & grill.

Approach 3: Expand Business Offerings

The local leadership in the city of Peru play a crucial role in increasing business opportunities and economic development in their community. They can create a welcoming environment for businesses, attract new investments, and promote growth. This can involve the implementation of policies that support local entrepreneurship, improving infrastructure to support business growth, and encouraging community engagement to foster a strong local economy. Additionally, they must be proactive in identifying potential business opportunities and working with local stakeholders to create a comprehensive plan for economic development. By working together, the mayor and city council can create an environment that encourages business growth, creates new job opportunities, and improves the overall economic well-being of the community.

Since the downtown corridor of Peru contains multiple vacant properties with various owners, it would be beneficial for city leadership to intentionally partner with the owners to find opportunities for the best use for the properties. Numerous resources are available to help generate business leads for the city of Peru through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, specifically partnering with the Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND). For example, the current owners of The

Market (local grocer) were alerted to the investment opportunity in Peru in 2021 through an informal network, not because the store was listed for sale in any channels that would have generated attention. Utilizing a combination of formal and informal networks to search for prospective business owners could increase potential leads.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development hosts LOIS (Location One Information System), which is designed to help entrepreneurs find the best location for their businesses by advertising existing sites and buildings for sale (Location One Information System (LOIS)). (2023). Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Retrieved April 10, 2023, from <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/business/lois/>. As the city of Peru develops a strategy with current owners for the existing, vacant properties they can work to advertise the sites and buildings through LOIS and other resources, including their own website for the city of Peru. The existing sites along the downtown corridor are most likely to appeal to retail business investors, including restaurant sales or a coffee shop.

Approach 4: Promote Downtown Activity through Temporary Use of Space

For the purpose revitalizing the Town Center in Peru, the community may want to consider temporary use of space in the form of food trucks, pop-up retailers and event programming. Vacant buildings, empty lots and even parking spots could be used temporarily for various activities. This is a very flexible approach to increasing economic and social activity downtown and it can be tailored to the town's

needs and interests. About 50% of the downtown area in Peru is vacant, so there is ample opportunity to promote temporary uses. Permanent, long-term use of buildings and lots is always ideal, however in the absence of permanent uses, temporary uses can fill the gap and help promote the Town Center in the interim.

According to the current land use regulations for the City of Peru, temporary use of space for events is allowed. The current regulations indicate that temporary uses can be in the form of, but not limited to, public assemblies, displays, exhibits, and outdoor art shows. It is possible that some activities may require a permit.

Some benefits of pop-ups, food trucks and event programming are as follows:

- Provides an opportunity for businesses to test out new locations without the cost of building out retail space
- Attracts residents to the downtown area
- Creates attractive and inviting storefronts and spaces in the interim

The community survey that was conducted by the UNL community and regional planning students for this project shows that town residents may be most interested in the following temporary uses:

- Study/office space
- Coffee shop
- Book store
- Thrift store
- Art gallery
- Event space
- Rec center
- Farmer's market

A food truck on certain days of the week in downtown Peru could encourage college students and residents to travel downtown for lunch or dinner. A temporary art gallery or art installation in one of the vacant buildings or lots could attract people to downtown Peru. A farmer's market in the summer and fall could also be an attraction for the residents. A coffee truck or temporary pop-up coffee shop has a high chance of being successful, based off the community survey results.

A successful temporary use in downtown Peru should achieve at least one of the following: boost economic activity, increase social interaction within the community, increase the attractiveness of the downtown area or inspire a more permanent use of space.

RECOMMENDATION 3: COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Approach 1: Connect the Town Center to Community Assets with a Multi-Use Trail

Multi-use trails can connect different parts of town, making it easier for residents to access key destinations, such as schools, parks, shops, and restaurants. As a result, multi-use trails can help to improve overall accessibility and reduce dependence on cars. In addition, multi-use trails can attract visitors to an area, which can benefit local businesses by increasing foot traffic and sales. Property values can also increase in areas near multi-use trails, benefiting homeowners and the local tax base.

In recent years Beatrice, Nebraska, has completed several segments of multi-use trails to connect the Homestead Trail on the north side of town to the Standing Bear Trail on the south side. The multi-use trail is routed

through downtown Beatrice, allowing trail users to socialize and patronize downtown businesses. Multi-use trails in Beatrice have provided opportunities for community building and social connections. Events such as group bike rides and community clean-up efforts have brought residents together to help foster a sense of community.

Connecting community assets by multi-use trail is essential for several reasons:

- Promotes physical activity

Multi-use trails provide a safe and accessible environment for people to engage in physical activities such as walking, running, cycling, and rollerblading, which helps to promote a healthier lifestyle.

- Enhances transportation options

Trails can serve as an alternative mode of transportation, especially for those who do not have access to a car or public transportation. In addition, by connecting community assets such as schools, parks, shopping centers, and residential areas, trails can provide convenient and low-cost transportation.

- Improves connectivity and accessibility

Multi-use trails provide a safe and accessible route for people to move around their community, improving connectivity and accessibility. In addition, by linking various

community assets, people can easily access services and amenities, which can help to build a sense of community and improve quality of life.

- Boosts economic development

Multi-use trails can attract tourists and visitors to a community, stimulating economic development by increasing spending on local businesses and services.

- Preserves natural resources

Trails can be designed to preserve and protect natural resources such as wetlands, forests, and wildlife habitats, creating a sustainable environment for future generations.

- Supports social interaction

Multi-use trails can provide a space for people to gather and socialize, enhancing social interaction and community engagement, which can be particularly important for older adults at risk for social isolation.

- Encourages environmental conservation

Trails can serve as a tool to raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainability. By promoting eco-friendly modes of transportation and preserving natural resources, trails can help to foster a sense of environmental

stewardship in the community.

- Provides opportunities for education and learning

Multi-use trails can serve as a platform for educational programs and activities, such as nature walks, guided tours, and interpretive signage. This can provide opportunities for people to learn about local history, culture, and natural resources.

- Improves mental health

Access to green spaces and outdoor activities has been shown to improve mental health and wellbeing. Multi-use trails can provide a peaceful and relaxing environment for people to unwind, reduce stress, and improve overall mental health.

- Enhances safety and security

Multi-use trails can help to enhance safety and security in the community by providing a well-lit and monitored public space for people to use. This can help to reduce crime and increase community safety.

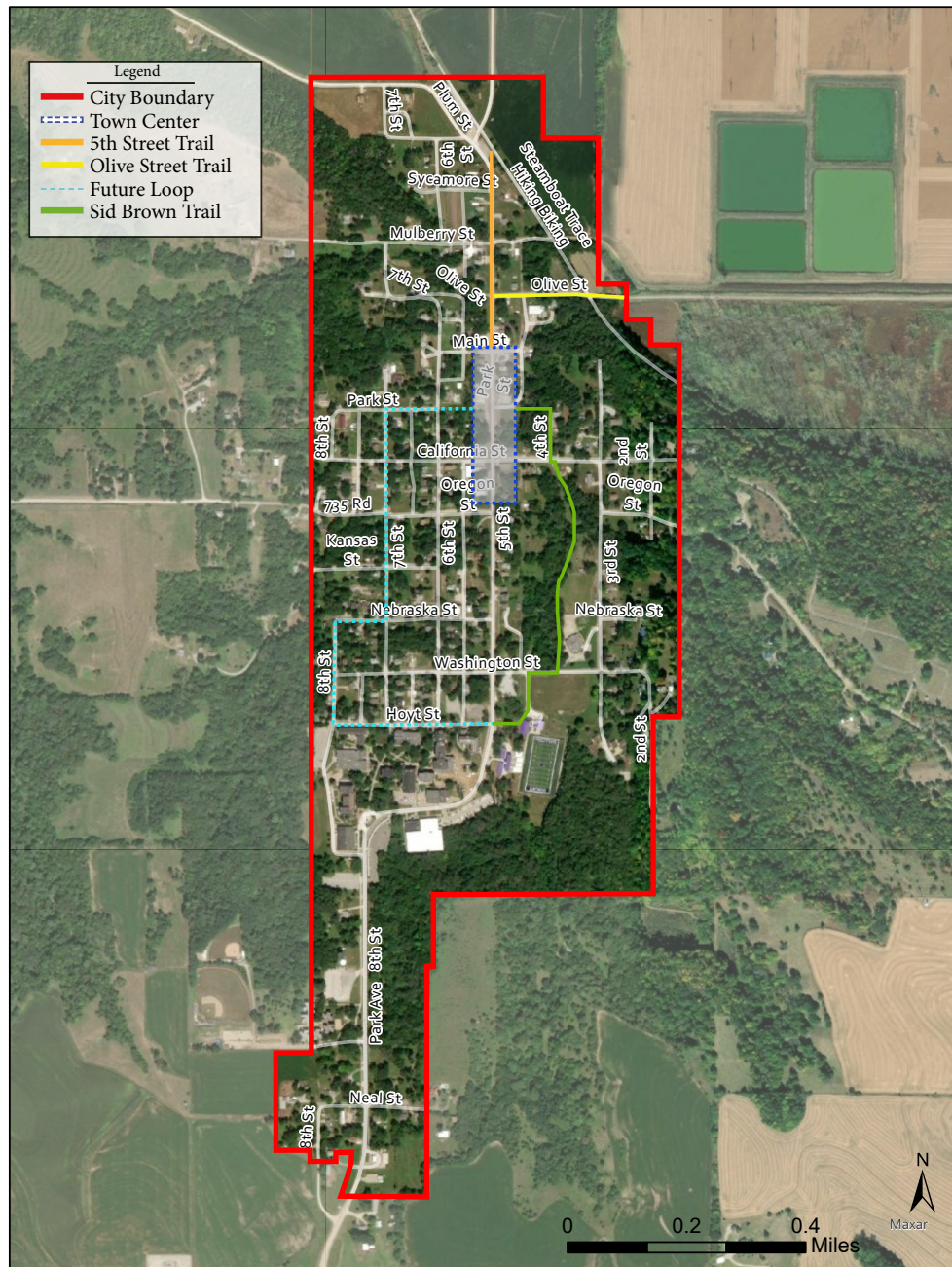


Figure 42: Connecting community assets via a multi-use trail network.

Connect the Town Center to Peru State College Campus

Connecting the Peru Town Center District to the Peru State College (PSC) campus is essential to build a sense of community and connectivity for all residents of Peru. The 5th Street corridor that links the Town Center to the campus primarily serves automobile traffic. This corridor lacks continuous sidewalks, which puts pedestrians and cyclists at risk. The 5th Street corridor from the Town Center south to PSC seems like the logical route for a multi-use trail. However, assessing the street corridor, the location of existing street trees, topography, and the width of the corridor may prohibit the construction of a trail here.



Figure 43: Obstacles of the 5th Street corridor from the Town Center to PSC.



Figure 44: Obstacles of the 5th Street corridor from the Town Center to PSC.

An alternative to 5th Street may be utilizing Sid Brown Park and Peru right-of-way (ROW) to develop a multi-use trail between the Town Center and PSC. This alternative provides an opportunity to incorporate the conservation of the drainage way by trail design. In addition, this approach offers a more significant benefit to the community by transforming neglected space into recreational space while incorporating best management practices to mitigate future degradation. Broad approaches that benefit the community and which combine conservation and trail design are often more competitive when applying for external funding and otherwise going after grant opportunities.

The Sid Brown multi-use trail route (Figure 45) uses the existing ROW along Park Street, from 5th Street to 4th Street, then south into Sid Brown Park. In Sid Brown Park, the trail provides access to the splash pad and follows the drainage corridor south to Washington Street. South of Washington Street, the trail enters PSC and terminates at 5th and Hoyt Streets. This trail also serves for access to the PSC athletic facilities for the community. The parklike natural setting of this trail route serves several purposes, including preserving natural resources, environmental conservation, opportunities for education, opportunities for social interaction, and improving the community's mental and physical health.



Figure 45: Family walking on trail. (Photo by Riley Crawford, Unsplash)

Regarding trail planning, consider future opportunities to connect to the larger community. The Future Loop trail alternative provides an example of completing a loop with the trail system that connects more of the community to important assets within Peru.

There are several forms of funding to assist with the design, construction, maintenance, and education related to the multi-use trails. Those funding sources include the Recreational Trails Program administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Transportation Alternative Program administered by the Nebraska Department of Transportation, and Community Development and Block Grants administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Connect Town Center to Steamboat Trace Trail

The Steamboat Trace Trail (STT) is an important asset to Peru. The STT attracts cyclists, hikers, bird-watchers, and nature lovers to Peru. Connecting STT users to the Town Center is vital to promoting economic activity. Through wayfinding and a designated trail, users of the STT are invited into the community, where they can rest, relax, and contribute to the local economy.

The 5th Street corridor (Figure 46 and 47), north of the Town Center, should be considered the primary route linking the Town Center to the SST. This corridor is 4 blocks in length and has no sidewalks. It is a wide corridor free from obstacles that would prohibit trail construction. The 5th Street corridor could easily accommodate a separated multi-use path along the street. Another alternative to a multi-use path could be a designated bike route. However, this would only serve cyclists.



Figure 46: 5th Street looking south from Peru’s STT Trailhead.



Figure 47: 5th Street looking south from Peru’s STT Trailhead.

Approach 2: Use purchased Floodplain Properties as a City Park

Peru's plan to acquire roughly 5.6 acres of floodplain is based in the purpose of turning the land into open space. Under the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant, the land will be subject to restricted uses. It is recommended that the land be used for outdoor recreation or camping to provide economic benefit to the city. Under the restrictions, no walled buildings or paving may be located on the properties once designated as 'open space', but several options are still possible. A public restroom building is the only walled building allowed by the open space restrictions. Naming the park could be an opportunity to bring the community together to decide a name or draw donors to support the creation of the park for the opportunity to name it.

Turning the properties into a city park may create an area for residents to gather and events to be hosted. Due to the open space restrictions, it is recommended that non-walled structures such as playgrounds, picnic tables, grills, or an open-air theater be built to create interest. An open-air theatre or picnic shelter with dirt floor would be reasonable additions to a city park that would fall within the open space restrictions. Building a raised stage with bench seating or picnic tables surrounding it may help draw people into Peru during big events by providing a platform for musicians or acting troupes to perform and

entertain crowds. The stage could be used to host outdoor concerts or theater productions.

Interest may be gained at the College by local students with bands or theater groups trying to build their experience. Outdoor movie nights may also be of interest depending on the backdrop of the stage. One examples of a raised stage can be seen below in the pictures of the stage at East City Park in Moscow, Idaho. A second example of an outdoor campground's amphitheater can be found at Chisos Basin Campground, which shows an option for more structured seating facing a stage that could be used for events and have a projection screen for events such as outdoor movie nights.



Figure 48: Outdoor Stage/Shelter
Above: Example of an open air raised outdoor stage located at the East City Park in Moscow, Idaho.



Figure 49: Outdoor Amphitheater

Example of an outdoor amphitheater/movie theater located at Chisos Basin Campground in Big Bend National Park.

Both types of stage would not require paving or concrete and would not be a walled building, allowing it to fall within the open space restrictions, however confirmation with the authorized representative of the HMA grant should be sought.

Other recommended improvements to the open space may help bolster interest in a city park. These include the installation of the frisbee golf course, a sport that is increasingly popular with college age and young adults and could draw young people to the town. Picnic areas or resting spots for people traveling the Steamboat Trace Trail will allow people to stop in town during their hiking, biking, runs, and potentially purchase items at the Market or the local Bar and Grill. Park amenities such as a hammock park, new playground equipment, or small sport fields for club sports such as soccer, football, baseba-

ll, kickball, or others that are too small for the college's facilities, are draws to a wide variety of age groups and hit novel and familiar recreational interests.

Hammock Parks have been quickly growing in popularity and are inexpensive and easy to set up. These parks consist of poles secured in the ground with hooks on them set approximately 13 to 17 feet apart. The posts can be placed in various positions, most commonly squares or a circle with one post in the center, as shown in figure 50. Users bring their own hammocks and hang them off the hooks, allowing them a place to relax without needing to wait for trees to grow. If camping is desired to be implemented within the open space, the city cannot place any concrete pads, but picnic tables and fire pits can be installed to identify camping areas.



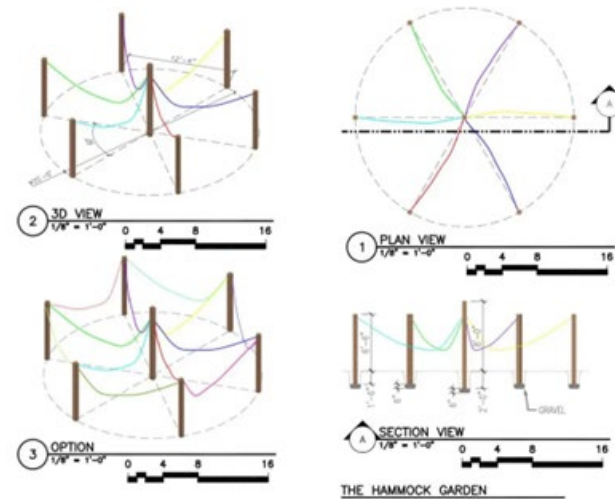
Figure 50: Frisbee Basket

Example of a frisbee golf basket that could be implemented across a new city park to create a Frisbee Golf Course.



Figure 51: Hammock parks

(Left: Example of a hammock park at Woodruff Riverfront Park in Columbus, GA. Right: Example of post setup for a hammock park from *The Ultimate Hang*)



can be made from, and it is recommended that the city research the different options available to compare prices and aesthetics. The raised garden beds can be built by the community from raw materials, or prebuilt options can be bought from manufacturing companies. An example of a manufacturer is Durable GreenBed which sells raised garden beds of various heights made with non-toxic materials in the USA that will last 25 years with no rot or breakdown and are easy to assemble.

Possible Use: Build a Community Garden

Additionally, it is recommended the city use the open space to implement a community garden. It is suggested that the city turn a large swath of open space into a community garden that is open to the residents of Peru and Peru State College. The garden could consist of either supported or containerized raised garden beds or in ground garden beds depending on the approval of the authorized representative of the HMA grant. The most recommended version is a supported or containerized raised bed garden as it allows for less maintenance and removes the need for large equipment to till the ground for residents. A supported raised bed has an edge or frame surrounding a mound of soil and is typically made of wood, stone, plastic, or metal. Supported raised garden beds

are well suited for sloped or uneven yards and they give gardens an attractive, finished appearance. A containerized raised bed has taller sides (10 inches or more). Containerized raised beds can be placed just about anywhere, including lawns, walkways, or decks. Examples of these two garden beds are shown below. While these garden beds take more soil to fill, they are more versatile, and their ease of use makes them ideal for high-traffic areas and people with accessibility issues. Either option, or a combination of both, will provide an elevated platform, allowing gardeners to avoid long durations bent over and straining their backs. Depending on the rental price the city charges, proceeds could be used to pay off the installation of the garden before ultimately providing additional revenue to the city. There are a variety of materials raised garden beds



Figure 52: Left: Supported raised garden bed, Right: containerized

Approach 3: Improve Tourism with Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

Peru's proximity to the Missouri River and adjacent floodplains provides many opportunities for outdoor recreational activities, including boating, fishing, hunting, camping, bird watching, cycling, and hiking. Important assets to the City of Peru (Figure 53) include the Steamboat Trace Trail, Peru Bottoms Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Kansas Bend USACOE, Peru Boat Ramp WMA, and Duck Creek Recreation Area.

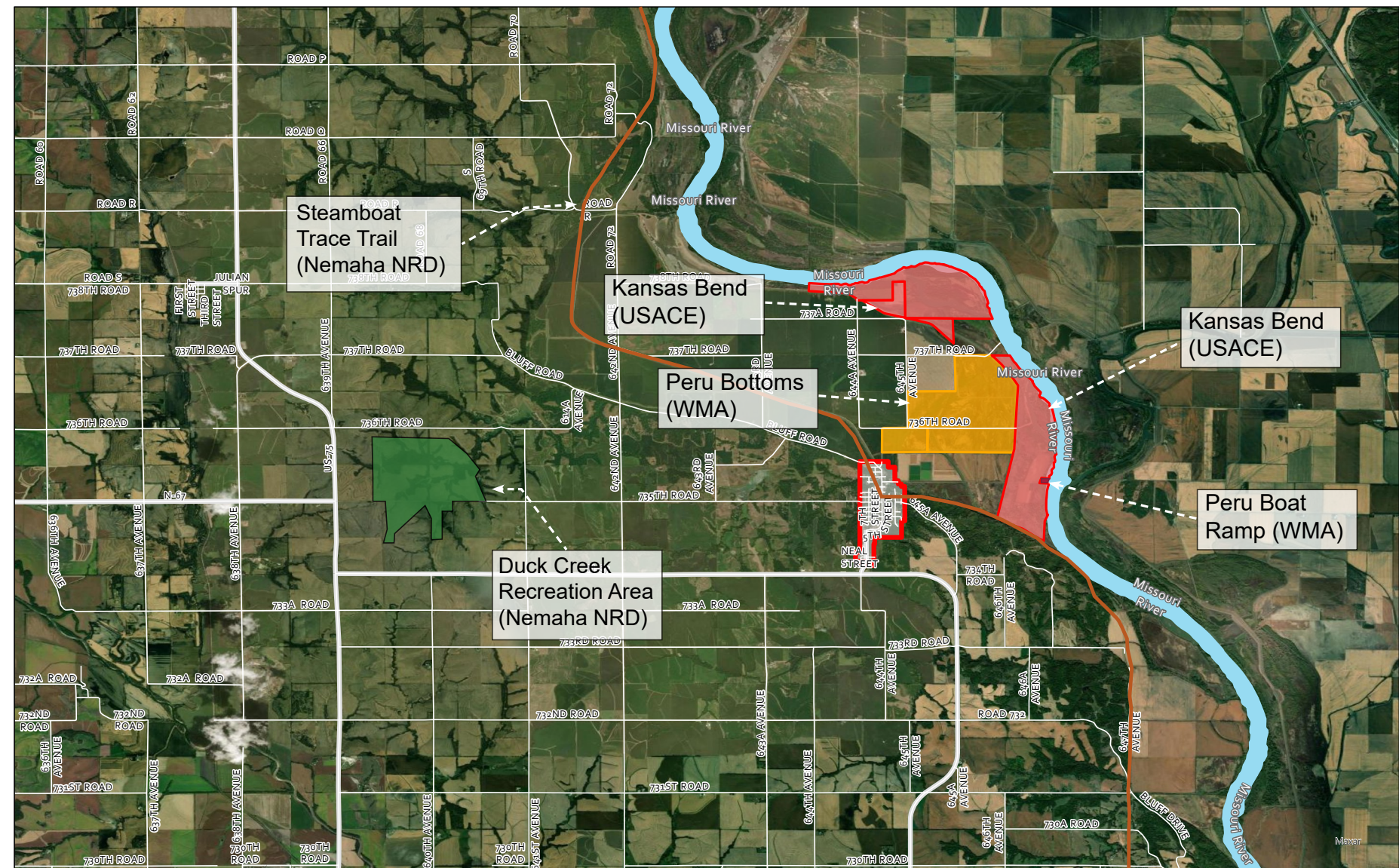


Figure 53: Outdoor Recreation

Steamboat Trace Trail

The Steamboat Trace Trail is owned by the Nemaha Natural Resources District. This 22-mile-long scenic trail follows an abandoned railroad corridor along the Missouri River from 6 miles south of Nebraska City to Brownville. The City of Peru has an established trailhead just a few blocks north of the Town Center.

Peru Bottoms WMA

The Peru Bottoms WMA is owned and managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Peru Bottom WMA offers 854.04 acres of wildlife habitat open to the public for activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, nature study, horseback riding, and primitive camping.

Kansas Bend USACOE

Kansas Bend is owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Kansas Bend sits on 1,175 acres along the Missouri River and is open to the public. Access is limited to foot traffic and is available for bird watching, hiking, fishing, and hunting (under special regulations).

Peru Boat Ramp WMA

The Peru Boat Ramp WMA is owned and managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The Peru Boat Ramp WMA is a 4-acre site primarily used as public

access for the Missouri River, but other activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, nature study, horseback riding, and primitive camping are permitted.

Duck Creek Recreation Area

Located just 5 miles northwest of Peru, Duck Creek Recreation Area is owned by the Nemaha Natural Resources District and was opened in 2018. Duck Creek Recreation area is a 200-acre park with a 62-acre lake. An NNRD permit is required. This park features free tent camping, 28 RV pads with 50-amp electric service, drinking water access, nature trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters and tables, grills, fire rings, primitive restrooms, and a sand beach and swimming area.

Promoting these assets attracts tourism to the area, together with a strong wayfinding campaign to promote the services the City of Peru has to offer visitors. In addition, the community benefits of promoting outdoor recreational opportunities include increasing the length of visitors' stay, providing opportunities for businesses to offer goods and services supporting recreational activities, and increasing repeat visitors. Finally, promoting the community's recreational opportunities and business services helps distinguish your community and create a unique identity. Promoting outdoor recreational opportunities aims to create an attractive destination with a unique and memorable experience that encourages visitors to Peru to return, spend more time, and support the local economy.

RECOMMENDATION 4. IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY THROUGH DESIGN

Approach 1: Wayfinding

A wayfinding system is a comprehensive network of signs, monuments, and markings that provide information about destinations and routes in a community. Wayfinding helps visitors and residents easily find important commercial, employment, and recreation destinations in a community. A wayfinding system will be particularly important for the city's downtown district as it will help facilitate connections for visitors who wish to explore local assets, routes and destinations while at the same time helping to establish downtown's unique identity and sense of place.

A comprehensive wayfinding system (unified through consistent branding and design) will make it easier for residents, commuters, and visitors to find destinations, amenities, and attractions in downtown Peru and nearby destinations. This coordinated system of informational signs and structures will improve the movement of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists by providing a mode-specific system that improves ease of circulation, offers efficient connection with desired destinations, and works as part of an integrated effort to develop a unique and recognizable identity for downtown. The Peru comprehensive wayfinding signage system

will work in concert with other initiatives described in this downtown plan to foster a sense of place in the downtown area, enhancing the experience for residents, commuters, and visitors while efficiently connecting its users to the destinations, the seek and supporting their discovery of new ones. The goals and idea recommendations explore what Peru can choose to implement.

Goals:

- Develop a wayfinding system for the district that invites multi-modal transportation, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian foot traffic.
- Develop a wayfinding system that will respond to and contribute to the overall identity of the city of Peru.
- Provide signage that will direct visitors and residents to Peru's downtown district, and with this, key institutions and destinations.
- Promote walking and bicycling and “park once” strategies as the preferred ways for navigating and enjoying downtown Peru.

Signage should incorporate the city's ideals and overall themes some ideas to consider are to incorporate design standards outlined by Peru State College, to better fit the overall design and aesthetic already laid out by the college. This includes fonts, color schemes, and sizes. Another recommendation is to incorporate an oak tree in the design as a complement to the town and its abundance of oak trees and surrounding natural beauty. Implementing different signage can boost interest

and overall attractiveness of the downtown area. It is recommended that the city of Peru implement three directional signs, and a district entrance sign, or monument sign, to let people know how to find key destinations in the city.

To enhance visitors' experiences and commerce downtown, location signs help both residents and visitors alike to easily find the destination they would need, or want, to go to daily. These potential downtown destinations include city hall, the bank, post office, grocery store, restaurant, and the potential to leave space for future businesses.

Design Mock-Up:



Figure 54: Potential signage and wayfinding for David City downtown.

Proposed Downtown Peru Wayfinding Signs

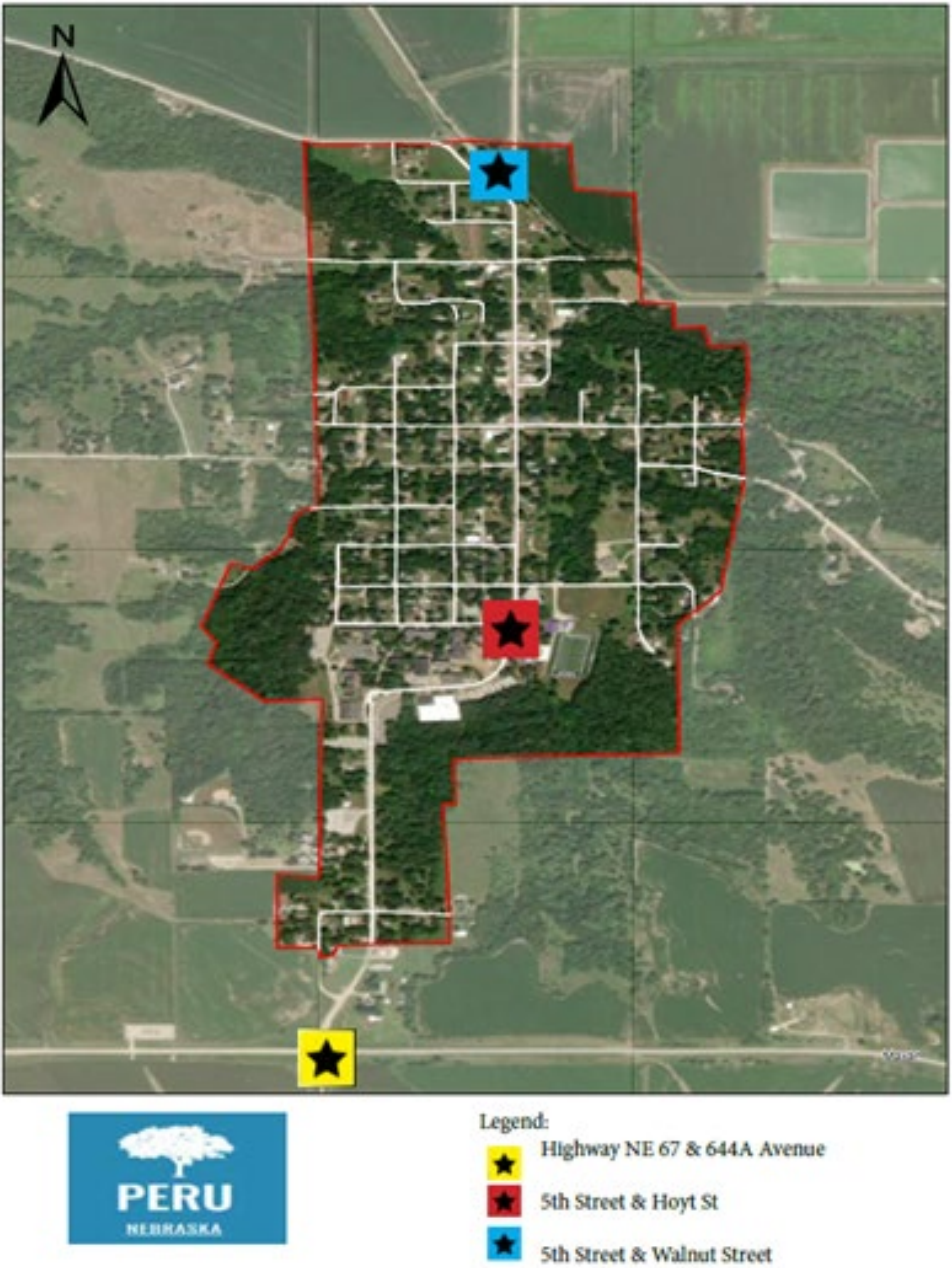


Figure 55: An aerial map view of Peru shows where potential wayfinding signage is recommended.

Approach 2: Sidewalk Improvement Plan:

Implementing sidewalk improvements and keeping those sidewalks maintained or building new sidewalks where none exist is something that can be a challenge for small towns who wonder how the improvements will be paid for. A city-wide sidewalk improvement program is an option that Peru could implement. What follows is an example of what this program could look like and how it could be implemented.

City of Peru Sidewalk Improvement Program (Suggested Text)

Purpose

The City of Peru is initiating a Sidewalk Improvement Program to assist in repairing hazardous sidewalks and provide for the installation of new sidewalks in areas currently without them. While property owners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalks adjacent to their property, this program is intended to assist in providing pedestrian safety, improving the appearance of neighborhoods, and increasing property values.

Eligibility

This program is available for all properties (residential, commercial, and industrial) located in the City of Peru. A project funded by this program must be for the repair, replacement, or installation of a minimum of sixteen (12) linear feet to be eligible. New construction where sidewalks are required is not eligible. Owners of undeveloped properties are eligible to receive funding under this program so long as the property remains undeveloped

for the next calendar year, commencing upon completion of the sidewalk project. Should such property be developed within this specified one-year period, then the recipient of funds from this project shall reimburse the City for the full amount of funds received as a grant; and where the recipient received funds in the form of a loan, the entire loan amount shall become due and payable. Driveway approaches and aprons are not eligible. For a sidewalk repair or installation to be eligible for this program, all necessary permits must be obtained, and the work must be completed in accordance with all City, State, and Federal codes and regulations, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). A project funded by this program must be completed within six (6) months of applying to the program. Application for this program must be filed within six (6) months after completion of the project for reimbursement.

Funding

The City of Peru will fund this program through the City Budget. The city could pay up to 25% of the cost up to a maximum of \$1,500.00 for grants, or \$5,000.00 for loans pursuant to this program. Such total is based on the following maximum prices per square foot as follows:

The City shall pay no more than \$2.50 per square foot for 4-inch concrete sidewalk removal; and no more than \$5.50 per square foot for 4-inch sidewalk 47B-3500 installation, with total reimbursement not to exceed \$8.00 per square foot.

Description of Program

A property owner or tenant may participate in this

sidewalk improvement program in one of two ways; partial cost reimbursement or a loan. The cost below isn't final, if the City of Peru wants to implement a sidewalk incentive program it can do so in accordance with the Peru City budget.

Partial Cost Reimbursement

A property owner or tenant hires their own contractor to repair or install the sidewalk. Upon completion, the property owner or tenant submits all their invoices for the sidewalk repair or installation to the City, including labor and materials, for reimbursement up to 25% of the cost up to a maximum of \$1,500.

Loan

A property owner or tenant can make an application to the City for a loan to assist in the replacement or installation of sidewalks. The loan will be required to be paid back within four (4) years of issuance, require monthly payments, be an interest-bearing loan, and no single loan shall exceed \$5,000.

Participation

All properties located in the City of Peru shall be eligible for participation in this program. Participation in this program will be based upon the order in which requests are made, first received, first funded basis. A property is only eligible for funding under this program once per calendar year.

A mock-up of the application form Peru can implement can be found in this document's Appendix 1.

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CITY OF PERU DOWNTOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

Grant Options

Community Development Block Grant Program

The goal of the CDBG program is to strengthen communities by helping fund economic development projects, infrastructure improvements and access to services. Eligible applicants consist of incorporated towns with a population of less than 50,000 people and are not classified as an “entitlement community” as defined by the CDBG programs. The program requires that small rural villages like Peru must submit CDBG applications to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development to receive funds.

Municipalities must submit applications that fund projects within the administrative boundary of the town. Priority funding is given to projects that meet the national objective, which is to benefit low- and middle-income people. The definition of low- and middle-income persons is dependent on current Census data and is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Nebraska CDBG program focuses on the following goals:

- 1. Provide suitable living environments
- 2. Provide decent housing

- 3. Expand economic opportunities

Following are some examples of eligible activities:

- 1. Clearance and demolition
- 2. Acquisition of real property
- 3. Neighborhood facilities
- 4. Street improvements
- 5. Sidewalk improvements

USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 CFR Part 4280 Subpart E) authorizes this grant program, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture administers the program. The program’s main goal is to assist small businesses in rural communities by providing technical assistance and training. For this grant, small businesses are defined as having less than 50 workers and less than one million dollars in yearly revenue.

Grantees can be local non-profits, towns, and institutions of higher education. The eligible area, according to the USDA website, includes projects for rural areas and towns that have fewer than 50,000 people in areas outside the urban periphery of towns with 50,000 people or more. The USDA website provides a map of eligible areas for those looking to explore this grant option.

There are two subgroups for funding: opportunity grants and enterprise grants. Opportunity grants cannot equal more than 10 percent of the total funding available for the program and they may be used for community economic

development, training, rural business incubators, feasibility studies, and business plans. The rest of the funds are reserved for enterprise grants, which may be used for training and technical assistance, rural transportation improvement, pollution control and abatement, acquisition and development of land, and also many of the same uses that opportunity grants cover.

Applications are evaluated based on a set of criteria that includes but is not limited to the following: potential for creating new jobs at local establishments, experiences of the grantee with similar efforts and economic need. A more complete list regarding evaluation criteria can be found on the USDA website.

In Hayes County, NE, the Hayes County Economic Development Corporation provided a loan to a local business owner for the purpose of buying a local grocery store. In May 2018, the grocery store was purchased in Hayes Center, NE.

USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. To be considered essential, a facility must provide an essential service to the community and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Some projects include the construction of healthcare facilities, town halls, street improvements, childcare centers, and local food systems such as food banks, pantries, and gardens.

Eligible borrowers are public entities, non-profits that serve the community and tribal governments. Eligible areas are rural communities with less than 20,000 residents. Eligible uses include building or purchasing facilities or equipment for community use or benefit. Small towns with less than 5,500 people and low-income communities having a median household income below 80% of the state nonmetropolitan median household income are given priority. This program offers grants and low interest direct loans.

After the storm and flooding events of March 2019, many FEMA declared disaster counties used funds issued through the Community Facilities Loan and Grant Program. These funds helped pay for resources for public works, like utility trucks, dump trucks and police vehicles. They also helped pay for new auditorium equipment and renovations to essential community facilities.

USDA Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans and Grants

This program serves agricultural producers and rural small businesses by assisting with the funding of renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements.

Applicants are people who produce agricultural products to generate at least 50 percent of their income and small businesses

in rural areas. Eligible areas are those that are rural with less than 50,000 residents. Agricultural producers can be in rural or non-rural areas.

There are several ways in which these funds maybe be used. The uses are separated into two categories: development of renewable energy systems and the purchase, installation and construction of energy efficiency improvements. Renewable energy systems include but are not limited to wind generation, solar generation, and hydropower. Energy efficiency includes but is not limited to insulation, high efficiency heating, ventilation & air conditioning systems and replacement of energy inefficient equipment.

This program offers both grants and loans. Grants may cover up to 40% of the total cost for a project. Loans may cover up to 75% percent of the total cost for a project. There are additional terms and requirements that must be evaluated when seeking funds from this program.

In Emerson, NE, a small business called The Buzz was able to benefit from this grant program. The Buzz owns over 100 beehives and produces honey and honey derived products. This small, rural business applied for a grant to help acquire solar panels to the roof of their retail spaces. They now have a 5.64-kilowatt solar array that helps provide energy to their store.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The goal of the program is to enhance

recreational opportunities, expand trail access, and promote healthy lifestyles for Nebraska residents and visitors. This is an 80/20 Grant, where the federal share is 80% and the local match is 20%. Minimum of 5% cash in local match. There is a minimum of \$50,000 and maximum of \$250,000 for the 80% match.

To be eligible for funding the recreational trail or related facility, such as trailheads, parking lots, restrooms, and interpretive signs must be:

- Must open to the public and have public access
- Must be consistent with the RTP program's goals and objectives
- must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Eligible activities for the funding include:

- Trail construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance
- Trailhead and parking lot construction and improvement
- Acquisition of easements or property for trail development
- Environmental assessments and mitigation
- Trail-related signage and interpretive exhibits
- Trail-related educational programs and materials
- Safety and trail-related training for trail managers and users

- Trail-related assessment and planning studies

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Recreational Trails Program is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT). The goal of the program is to promote safety, mobility, and accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized transportation modes. The program also aims to enhance the quality of life in communities and promote economic development. This is an 80/20 Grant, where the federal share is 80% and the local match is 20%. The project must seek a minimum of \$500,000 of Federal reimbursement.

Eligibility requirements include:

- Construction, rehabilitation, or expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks
- Safe routes to school programs, including infrastructure improvements and educational activities
- Scenic and historic highway programs, including scenic overlooks, interpretive signage, and historic preservation
- Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails for non-motorized transportation
- Environmental mitigation activities related to transportation infrastructure

- Planning and design activities related to eligible projects

Eligible project activities include:

- Construction, rehabilitation, or expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks
- Safe routes to school programs, including infrastructure improvements and educational activities
- Scenic and historic highway programs, including scenic overlooks, interpretive signage, and historic preservation
- Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails for non-motorized transportation
- Environmental mitigation activities related to transportation infrastructure
- Planning and design activities related to eligible projects

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CITY OF PERU DOWNTOWN PLAN APPENDIX



BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT



306 5th Street
PIN: 640109438
Owner: Nemaha Natural Resource District
Class: Exempt
Type: Gabled
This property serves as a trailhead and shelter for the Streamboat Trace Trail. Property is approximately 10,000-20,000 sf and includes a single structure: a building with small bathrooms, and a picnic overhang.

Rehabilitation Needs: Minor-Moderate

- Gutter is missing/falling off roofline; potential roof improvements needed.
- Building needs minor cosmetic improvements.
- New paint and repairs to walls, trim, doors, and picnic tables.
- Signage updated to be consistent with city standards.



515 5th Street
PIN: 640036147
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial
Type: Gabled
This property is a 6,528sf lot with a 1,300sf building that serves as a garage. The building is currently unoccupied.
Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate
• Wood Siding and doors on the eastern front facade are damaged.
• The building needs fresh paint.
• Several windows appear damaged and/or boarded up, and frames are

- damaged.
- Roof appears in need of significant repair or replacement and is rusted.
 - Rear western facade is poorly maintained.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT



517 5th Street
PIN: 640042708
Owner: Z Reeves Enterprises, Inc.
Class: Commercial
Type: Storefront
This property is an approximately 6,528sf lot with a vacant 1,120sf building and a 72sf shed. The building is currently unoccupied, but as of February 2023, it is being used to house chickens.
Rehabilitation Needs: Severe, possible demolition

- Concrete lot is cracked and damaged, with weeds growing through it.
- Yard is not consistently maintained.
- Paint is inconsistent/chipping.
- Windows and doors are cracked or missing and boarded up.
- Wood siding is damaged, inconsistently painted, and damaged.



518 5th Street
PIN: 640042740
Owner: City of Peru
Class: Exempt
Type: Gabled
This property is an approximately 10,000sf lot with a 4-stall commercial garage that serves as the town's fire department. Majority of the lot is paved around the building.
Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal

- Building lacks architectural character consistent with goals for the Town Center but is well-maintained.
- Needs minimal maintenance, like cleaning siding, keeping grass trimmed, etc.



600 5th Street
PIN: 640036333
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial
Type: Storefront
This property is an approximately 6,153sf lot with a 1,632sf brick building. The western facade holds a storefront entrance on 5th street and is paved consistently with the rest of the sidewalk. The northern facade holds a secondary egress point and the lot in front is dirt/gravel. The southern facade abuts a vacant lot, and the rear yard is lightly wooded. The building is unoccupied.
Rehabilitation Needs: Severe, possible demolition

- Building is in severe disrepair; brick is deteriorating; northern facade is very damaged, with exposed holes in the brickwork.
- Many windows are broken and/or damaged.
- Storefront and front door are boarded up and damaged. Storefront siding is also damaged and inconsistent.
- Northern side yard material is eroding, and concrete has significant damage.
- Concrete on the sidewalk in the western side yard is in adequate condition but needs fresh paint on the steps.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

- Greenery beds and planters could be landscaped more consistently with the goals of town.

602 Main Street



PIN: 640042899

Owner: Private Citizen

Class: Commercial

Type: Vacant Lot

This property is an approximately 3,264sf semi-paved vacant lot in between two storefront-style brick buildings.

Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate

- Paving of the lot is inconsistent, with cracks in the main concrete pad, some unpaved areas, and uneven surfaces.
- Sidewalk on 5th street is in poor condition, with very uneven condition, and is in need of fresh paint on the steps.
- Sidewalk has two embedded landscape beds, which are empty.

604 5th Street



PIN: 640036325

Owner: Private Citizen

Class: Commercial

Type: Storefront

This property is an approximately 3,264sf lot with the western half of the lot filled with a two-story storefront building, connected via party wall to the southern abutting property. Lot has no side setbacks, but the rear yard is approximately 24'x86'. The building is unoccupied, but some renovation work appears to be happening.

Rehabilitation Needs: Severe

- Condition of brickwork on the building has significantly deteriorated with many missing bricks and holes on the northern facade.
- Storefront has been sided over, but there is little aesthetic consistency between the siding, doors, windows, and original brickwork.
- Building is primarily red brick but does have some painted patches.
- Center window on the second story on the western facade has been filled but may need further work.
- At last appraisal photograph, the rear of the building was in dilapidated condition.
- Sidewalk has recently been redone but lacks consistency of paint with the rest of the sidewalk on the west side of 5th street.
- Wooden drink rail/fence on sidewalk should be removed/repaired.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

605 5th Street



PIN: 640036481
Owner: Z Reeves Enterprises. Inc.
Class: Commercial
Type: Gabled
This property is an approximately 6,528sf lot, with several interconnected buildings equaling a total of approximately 1,909sf of building space, with several fenced patio/seating areas. These buildings and lot make up consist of Bar and Grill. Property has been recently renovated and appears in adequate condition.
Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal

- Building front appears to be missing paint or siding towards the foundation on the eastern facade, but damage is minimal.
- Sidewalk on the eastern side shows some minor cracking and unevenness and needs fresh paint on the steps.

607 5th Street



PIN: 640036317
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial
Type: Storefront
This property is an approximately 3,264sf lot with a 1,416sf two-story storefront building, which is designated as a small retail space (336sf) and apartment (1080sf). The retail portion is unoccupied, and it is unclear if the apartment is occupied. The rear of the building has a wooden deck on the second story. The property neighbors the Bar and Grill to the north and the post office to the south.
Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate

- Brickwork appears to be in adequate condition, with minimal maintenance needed.
- Rear of the building and yard needs some improvements, but the extent of condition is unclear.
- Storefront is a mix of windows, brick, and cream siding, which appear to be mostly in adequate condition, but could be improved aesthetically with minor rehabilitation, and/or more significant renovation of the facade.
- Storefront canopy may need repair or replacement. Above the canopy is a small section of siding covered with wood boarding which needs replacement.
- Front step entry condition is damaged and in need of repair.
- Sidewalk is in adequate condition with minimal cracks but does need repainting on the step. It has a small, embedded landscape bed with a mature tree.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

608 5th Street



PIN: 640036376
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial
Type: Storefront + Vacant Lot
This property is an approximately 1,824sf lot with a two-story storefront building, with a small, attached warehouse building in the back. It is connected via party wall to the northern abutting property. Lot has no side setbacks, approximately 24'x19' rear yard, fenced by a retaining wall on the western side. The building is unoccupied. Address includes a second parcel of land, a 3,264sf vacant grass lot to the south of the building.
Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate

- Bricks missing or damaged on the eastern and southern facades. Given the condition of the abutting property, more extensive damage is possible.
- Window frames, especially on the southern facade, are severely damaged, with pieces breaking off or rotting away. Windowpanes may be damaged, but some appear to have been replaced.
- Paint on storefront siding is inconsistent with the color palette of the Town Center, and chipping.
- Rear of the building may be in disrepair, but rehabilitation needs are unclear.
- Vacant lot is in adequate condition if grass and weeds stay maintained.
- Brick retaining wall behind both parcels of land appears to be damaged, and in need of significant repair.
- Sidewalk appears to be in adequate condition, but only part of the step is painted to be consistent with the rest of the Town Center.
- It has a loose planter pot, which is empty, and is not consistent with the aesthetic goals of the Town Center.

609 5th Street



- PIN: 640042880
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial
Type: Gabled
This property is an approximately 6,528sf lot with a single-story, 828sf building that serves as post office for the community. Both the north and south abutting properties are two-story storefront-type buildings.
Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal
- Wood siding appears to be in good condition. Roof appears to be fairly recently replaced.
 - Lot has landscaping and is well maintained.
 - Rear loading dock and gravel drive appear well-maintained.
 - Sidewalk is in adequate condition with no visible cracking.
 - Sidewalk does have a single embedded landscaping bed with a mature tree, and tarps for ground cover, but no low plantings or mulching. Pipe rail surrounding the bed on two sides is damaged and has chipping paint, which needs repair.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

611 5th Street



PIN: 640036309
Owner: Putza, LLC
Class: Commercial
Type: Gabled
This property is an approximately 3,264sf lot with a 2,160sf building on it. The building is subdivided into apartments (1440sf) and a warehouse/garage in back (720sf). The western facade falling 5th street has no apertures, and the building lacks a clear entry point, but does have doors off the eastern and southern facades, with the eastern facade also containing a garage door. The northern facade has windows. The facades are a mixture of red brick and wood siding.
Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate

- Brick shows minor signs of disrepair, and western facade shows damage/rust. Northern facade shows damage and potential roofing of wood siding on the rear of the building, needing potential replacement.
- Western facade could have minor aesthetic improvements to increase cohesion to the downtown area.
- Western side of the lot has an entry curb, despite lacking a storefront, which could be repurposed as a raised bed or other streetscape improvement opportunity.
- Sidewalk has a single planter pot but is not consistent with the aesthetic goals of the community.
- Sidewalk is in adequate condition but does show minor cracks and signs of wear. Curb needs to be repainted.

612 5th Street




PIN: 640036562
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial
Type: Gabled
This property is an approximately 3,264sf lot with a 660sf building on it. The building is unoccupied. The northern adjacent lot is vacant, while the southern parcel houses city Hall. The rear yard appears mostly inaccessible, with a retaining wall bisecting the parcel.
Rehabilitation Needs: Severe

- The front facade appears to be stucco or a similar building material, painted pink. The stucco shows cracking, peeling, fading and other disrepair, and needs improvement. The color is also out of line with the community's aesthetic goals.
- The windows and doors appear to be in adequate condition, although framing trim and shutters show significant wear and may need to be replaced or at least repainted.
- Roof condition is unclear but appears to have holes and gapping in the shingles and may need to be replaced.
- The pediment of the roof is in severe disrepair, showing aging, fading, and chipping of material.
- The pediment and entry have defunct signage that needs to be removed or repaired.
- The southern facade has a large hole in the wall along the roofline which has been crudely patched and will need more permanent repairs.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

6 / 3 5th Street



 PIN: 640042872
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Commercial

Type: Vacant Lot

This property is an approximately 3,264sf vacant lot. This lot abuts the apartment building at 611 5th street to the south and serves as a yard of sorts for the property. The front and south sides of the lot are partially fenced.

Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal

- Yard and fence appear adequately maintained, but the fence may need fresh paint.
- Sidewalk has an embedded landscape bed with a mature tree and seems adequately maintained.
- Sidewalk shows minimal cracks and damage, but the step needs to be repainted.

6 / 4 5th Street



PIN: 640042902
Owner: City of Peru
Class: Exempt
Type: Gabled

This property is about 3,000 sf lots with a building serving as the city Hall for the community.

Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal

- Building is well-maintained and shows a clear character.
- Sidewalk has minimal damage, but the steps need to be repainted.
- Railing on steps appears bent and rusting and could need repairs.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

616 5th Street



PIN: 640042902 + 640042910

Owner: City of Peru

Class: Exempt

Type: Gabled + Vacant Lot

This property is an approximately 3,264sf vacant lot that abuts City Hall to the north and the Masonic Lodge building to the south.

Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal

- Retaining wall on the rear end of the property appears damaged and in need of repair.
- Sidewalk is in adequate condition, but the steps need to be repainted.
- The lot is adequately maintained as is but could be an opportunity for temporary use to generate economic or civic stimulation within the community.

615-617 5th Street



PIN: 640036244 + 640036236

Owner: LRDH Company, LLC

Class: Commercial

Type: Vacant Lot

This property consists of two approximately 3,264sf (total 6,528sf) vacant parcels of land. On the rear of the southern parcel is a 224sf warehouse-type structure.

Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate

- Property is well maintained as a vacant lot but could be an opportunity for more landscaping.
- Building on the eastern edge of the property appears in severe disrepair and will need to be removed.

619 5th Street



PIN: 640036228

Owner: LRDH Company, LLC
Class: Commercial
Type: Storefront

This property is an approximately 3,264sf lot with a 1,200sf storefront style building that is unoccupied. To the south is the grocery store and to the north is a vacant lot with a small outbuilding. This property and abutting properties on either side have the same owner.

Rehabilitation Needs: Severe, needs demolition

- According to the property owner, a structural engineer has assessed the property and it is in need of demolition.
- Building is in severe disrepair; brick is deteriorating; northern facade is very damaged, with holes in the brickwork.
- Storefront windows and doors appear in adequate condition. Storefront siding is damaged and appears to be deteriorating at the foundation. Building may have structural issues, as the foundation seems to be damaged.
- Concrete on the sidewalk on the western side yard is in acceptable condition with some minor cracks and unevenness but needs fresh paint on steps.
- Greenery bed is well-landscaped with groundcover and could serve as a good example for the rest of the embedded planters.

620 5th Street



PIN: 640036392


Owner: Masonic Lodge
Class: Exempt
Type: Storefront

This property is about 3,264sf with a 1,728sf building attached via a party wall to the building directly south of the lot and abutting a vacant lot owned by the city to the north. This building formerly held the Masonic Lodge but is unoccupied, with the owners looking to sell.

Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate-Severe

- Brickwork appears damaged and is deteriorating, especially on the northern facade. Paint on the facade is chipped and needs a fresh coat.
- Windows on the second story have been boarded up, and so have parts of the storefront. These could be uncovered during a renovation to give better access to natural light.
- Sidewalk is in adequate condition, but the steps need to be repainted.
- Building Signage would need to be changed for a new purpose.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

622 5th Street		<p>PIN: 640032923 Owner: Farmers Bank of Cook Class: Commercial Type: Storefront This property is an approximately 3,264sf lot with a 1,728sf building, which is attached via a party wall to the building on the property directly north of the lot, and abutting a vacant lot also owned by the same company to the south. This building houses a bank.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building appears to be in adequate condition and is well-maintained.• Paint is chipping in a few places, like on the parapet, but it is minor.• Sidewalk is in adequate condition, but the steps need to be repainted.
623 5th Street		<p>PIN: 640036139 Owner: LRDH company, LLC Class: Commercial Type: Storefront/Gabled Hybrid This property is about 6,528sf lot with a 3,497sf building which serves as The Market Grocery Store. This building has been renovated within the past two years and appears in good condition.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Needs: None</p>
701-703 5th Street		<p>PIN: 640036422 + 640043119 Owner: City of Peru Class: Exempt Type: Vacant Lot This property encompasses two vacant lots, approximately 20,000-40,000sf. There are several mature trees along the heavily sloped lot, and a small sidewalk meets with the larger 5th street sidewalk on the northern edge of the property.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal-Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existing grass, trees, and sidewalk appear well-maintained, but would be a prime opportunity for further landscaping.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

702-706 5th Street



PIN: 640036406 + 640043011 + 640043003
Owner: Farmers Bank of Cook
Class: Commercial
Type: Vacant Lot
This property comprises three vacant lots, totaling approximately 9,792sf of land. Within these parcels are a pergola and gazebo, and the land is landscaped as a park. To the north is a bank with a drive-thru, also owned by the same company, and to the south is a large lot single family home.
Rehabilitation Needs: None

- These lots appear well-maintained as park land within the district, within clear landscaping strategies and pergola and gazebo structures for recreation/leisure.



714 5th Street
PIN: 640019331
Owner: Private Citizen
Class: Single Family
Type: Gabled
This property is an approximately 16,320sf lot with a 2,302sf single-family home within it. It is included here for reference of buildings within the district.
Rehabilitation Needs: None (Not in Scope)

720 5th Street



PIN: 640036554

Owner: Private Citizen

Class: Commercial


Type: Storefront

This property is an approximately 6,336sf corner lot with two conjoined structures, totaling approximately 3,582sf, with several garage door openings. To the north is a large lot single family home, and to the south across the street is a garage-style property. The building is unoccupied.

Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate-Severe


- Building masonry seems to be in adequate condition, but facade materials, especially on the building's northern part, are damaged and need repair and repainting.
- Most apertures on the building are covered, except two garage doors, but it seems as if existing window and door framing is still present underneath.
- Paving/gravel is inconsistent, and vehicles also park on the grass lawn.
- Sidewalk ends in front of this property but is continuous on the other side of the street.
- Property lacks any kind of curb condition.

BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE INVENTORY – DETAILED REPORT

	<p>721 5th Street PIN: 640036414 Owner: Private Citizen Class: Commercial Type: Storefront/Gabled Hybrid This property is an approximately 13,056sf corner lot with a 2,902sf building, which houses the 5th St Post as an event venue. To the north are two vacant lots owned by the city, and to the south, across the street is the museum building. Rehabilitation Needs: Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building siding is missing or damaged in several places.• Roof gutters and trim are inconsistent, damaged, or missing in several places.• Fence on northern side of property may be missing a section <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sidewalk on the southern side of the property is cracked and very uneven, but the western side is in adequate condition.• Landscaping is minimal and grass is patchy in places.
	<p>801 5th Street PIN: 640036457 Owner: Private Citizen Class: Commercial Type: Gabled This property is about 6,120sf corner lot with a 3,000sf building used to house a museum. The building is unoccupied. This building marks the southern edge of the Town Center district. Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal-Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building appears in adequate condition, with only minor cosmetic improvements visibly needed, like repainting trim, some minor patchwork to the brick, etc.• Landscaping is a major opportunity for potential improvement, especially on the north side of the property where stepped landscape beds appear overgrown. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paving in front of the building is very cracked and damaged, with an uneven surface and weeds growing between the pavements. The sidewalk ends shortly after this property.
	<p>802 5th Street PIN: 640043240 Owner: Private Citizen Class: Commercial Type: Gabled This property is an approximately 6,152sf corner lot with a 2,408sf garage building. This property marks the southern edge of the Town Center district. Rehabilitation Needs: Minimal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building appears to be in adequate working condition, and garage doors have been replaced semi-recently.• Building could use a fresh coat of paint.• Building has minimal landscaping but efforts for improvement in this area could be better spent elsewhere. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paving in front of the building is inconsistent and uneven, and the yard is semi-pavement, semi-gravel.

APPENDIX

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION EXAMPLE



CITY OF PERU, NEBRASKA SIDEWALK
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

CONTACT NUMBER:

APPLYING FOR: ☐ Loan ☐ Grant

The City of Peru will fund this program through the City Budget. The City shall pay up to 25% of the cost up to a maximum of \$1,500.00 for grants, or \$5,000.00 for loans pursuant to this program. Such total is based on the following maximum prices per square foot as follows:

The City shall pay no more than \$2.50 per square foot for 4-inch concrete sidewalk *removal*; and no more than \$5.50 per square foot for 4-inch sidewalk 47B-3500 *installation*, with total reimbursement not to exceed \$8.00 per square foot.

A project funded by this program must be for the repair, replacement, or installation of a minimum of sixteen (16) linear feet in order to be eligible. New construction where sidewalks are required are not eligible.

LOAN ONLY

GRANT ONLY

Amount Requested (Up to \$5,000):

Amount Requested (25% up to \$1,500):

Loan Repayment Period (Up to 4 Years):

Signed:

Date:

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date Submitted:

Permits Obtained: ☐ Yes ☐ No

W9 Submitted: ☐ Yes ☐ No

LOAN ONLY

GRANT ONLY

Amount Requested:

Invoice Total:

Monthly Payment:

Amount Reimbursed:

Interest Rate:

Approved By:

Date:

APPENDIX

Data Sources

Decennial Census

The Decennial census is a nationwide effort to count every person in the country every five years. The survey is mandatory to complete and determines the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. In addition to citizenship, the survey also collects data on a number of topics such as gender, age and race. However, the survey does not focus on a community's economic condition, making it an unreliable source for informing related metrics. It is also important to note that the 2020 Census operations were delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the full results were released in August 2021.

American Community Survey

Another federally conducted survey, the American Community Survey (ACS) is intended to provide supplementary information for the Decennial Census and focuses on topics such as employment, education, internet access, and transportation. Unlike the Decennial Census, the ACS is conducted yearly. This Plan utilizes the post recent data provided by the ACS, which most often is the 2019 5-year estimates, which is a summation of the data collected between 2015-2019.

SOURCES

1. ArcGIS Pro Basemap

2. (Source: https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nenemaha/new_peru_page/peru_photographs/1900_peru_main_street.jpg)

3. (Source: https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nenemaha/new_peru_page/peru_photographs/1900_peru_main_street.jpg)

4. Sources: US census Bureau, DP05, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020

5. Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

6. U.S. Census Bureau, DP05, ACS 5-year Estimates Data Profiles, 2010 to 2021

7. U.S. Census Bureau (2017-2021). B01001, Sex by Age American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

8. U.S. Census Bureau (2017-2021). B01001, Sex by Age American Community Survey

5-year estimates.

9. ESRI, ACS, Esri-Data Axle. Esri forecasts for 2022, 2027, 2016-2020

10.U.S. Census Bureau, DP03, ACS 5-year Estimates Data Profiles, 2021

11.US Census Bureau, B17001, B19001, American Community Survey, 2017-2021

12.US Census Bureau, B17001, B19001, S2501 American Community Survey, 2017-2021

13.US Census Bureau, B17001, B19001, S2501 American Community Survey, 2017-2021

14.US Census Bureau, B25024, B25026, B25075, American Community Survey, 2017-2021

15.US Census Bureau, B25024, B25026, B25075, American Community Survey, 2017-2021

16.This infographic contains data provided by ACS, Esri-MRI-Simmons, and Esri-U.S. BLS. The vintage of the data is 2016-2020, 2022. Identifies the

insurance coverage of residents in Peru has one type of health insurance or no health insurance and includes percent of exercise rate for adults and health care expenditure of residents.

17.U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

18.This infographic contains data provided by American Community Survey (ACS). The vintage of the data is 2016-2020

19.U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

20.Copyright 2022 Data Axle, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2022.

21.Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2018 and 2019 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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