2025 Community Forest Management Plan

CITY OF LORDSBURG

DRAFT

Photo shows local art on a dead tree in Hurley, another CFN community. The project team has dubbed him Tree Rex. He has become a bit of a mascot for the project. Cover photo: Veterans Park.

Acknowledgments

City of Lordsburg Leadership

Mayor: Glenda F. Greene

City Council: Irene Galvan, Julie V. Montenegro, Manuel D.V. Saucedo, Martin Neave, Rodney Plowman, Sean Lindsay

City Clerk: Irma Saenz

Chief of Police: Rodney Plowman

Fire Chief: Riley Allen

Maintenance Supervisor: Boaz Salinas

Municipal Judge: David Arredondo

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Photo shows a partially shaded walkway in front of Lordsburg Civic Center, which could be extended with more street-side tree plantings along 4th Street.

Summary

Welcome to Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan! This plan contains helpful information about Lordsburg's community forest, with specific recommendations for its growth and care. The plan is just one part of a greater effort to increase tree equity in southwestern New Mexico. **Lordsburg, along with Santa Clara, Deming, Hurley, Bayard, and Silver City, is part of the Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network (CFN),** a regional coalition that is designed to help coordinate efforts that advance urban forestry practices and share information between the six communities and project partners.

Definitions of Important Terms

Before getting started, here are **definitions for some important terms** that are used throughout this plan.

Community Forest: The word "forest" might suggest an area up in the mountains that is dense with trees. Just as a wildland forest is made up of all the trees and vegetation within a specific area, Lordsburg's community forest (also known as an "urban forest") is made up of all the trees and plants within the town's municipal boundaries. Viewed together as a whole, all the trees and other vegetation in parks and public spaces, residential and business lots, and open and undeveloped space compose Lordsburg's community forest.

Wildland foresters take a landscape-scale approach to evaluating and managing threats to forest health and productivity. The same principle applies to community forestry. Urban forests are managed by examining all of a town's trees and vegetation as a whole to assess the trends, patterns and priorities that emerge. This approach allows managers to respond with informed strategies to improve and protect the overall community forest, while still addressing the health needs of individual trees.

Wildland foresters manage forests to provide wood products, natural resources, ecosystem services, and public recreation opportunities. Similarly, Lordsburg's community forest can be strategically managed to provide multiple environmental, economic, and social benefits to the community.

Urban forests, and the individual trees they are comprised of, play a crucial role in enhancing the livability, sustainability, and resilience of our communities, particularly in the arid Southwest. Trees provide a wide variety of social, environmental and economic benefits that can be maintained or even enhanced through best management practices.

Urban: The term urban might not be particularly relatable for Lordsburg, but in the context of this plan, urban simply means an area that has a higher density of developed land for residential, industrial, commercial, and institutional uses.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI): Green Stormwater Infrastructure, or GSI, is an approach to stormwater management that creates many small, distributed green spaces that soak up rainwater where it falls, reducing stormwater runoff that carries pollution to waterways. GSI captures rainwater and recharges soil moisture, bringing much needed water to plants and trees that create shade for people and habitat for wildlife.

GSI features are designed to leverage the power of living, natural systems to provide the community with many benefits. By directing rainwater from roadways and other impervious surfaces to landscaped areas, GSI can reduce nuisance flooding and support irrigation of trees and other plants, which helps to grow more green space while conserving Lordsburg's drinking water supply.

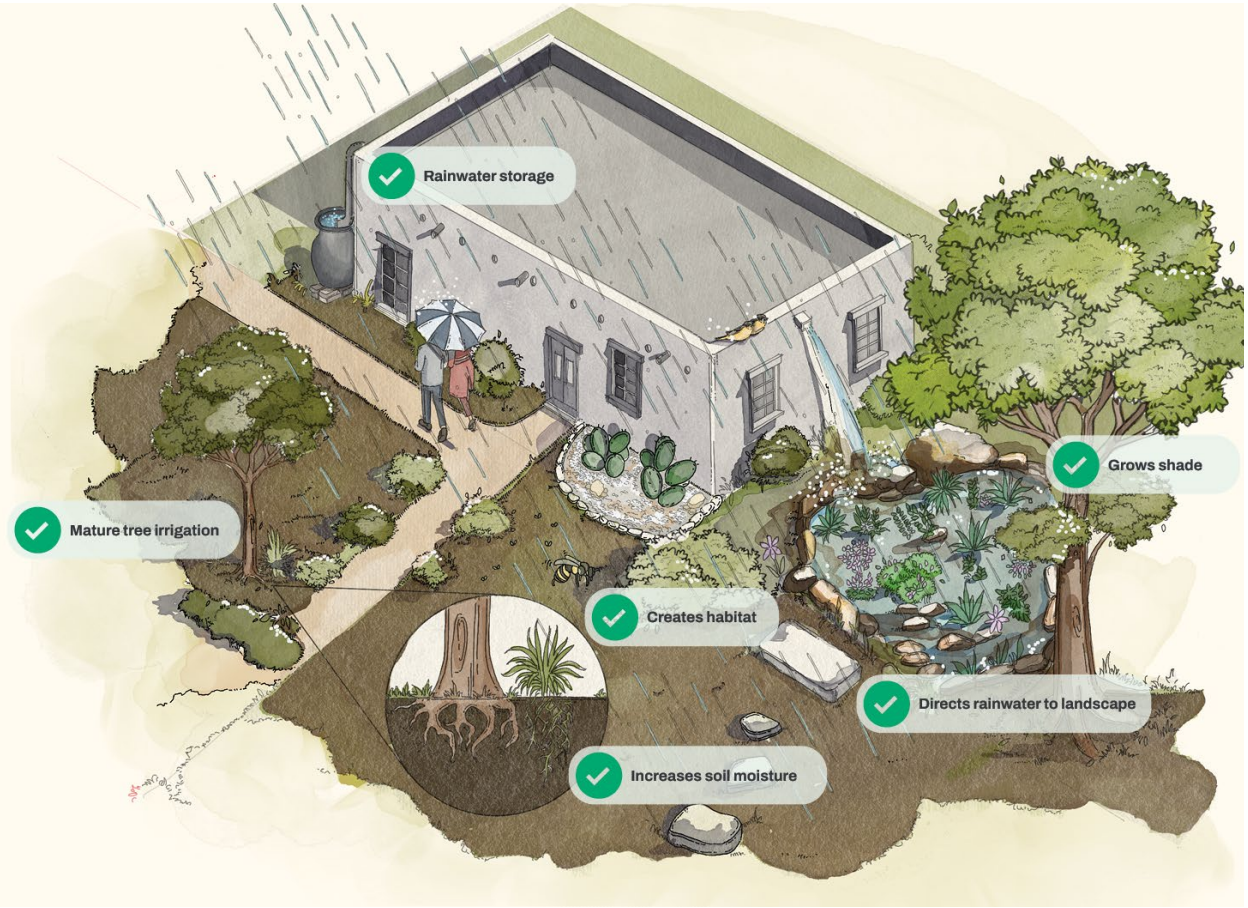


Image credit: Arid Low Impact Development (LID) Coalition

"Trees are so very beautiful for the community, they make a place good for mental health and wellbeing."

- Lordsburg Resident

Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network

The USDA Forest Service awarded Western New Mexico University (WNMU) a 5-year grant to increase tree equity in six small, rural communities in southwestern New Mexico: Bayard, Deming, Hurley, Lordsburg, Santa Clara, and Silver City. While WNMU is the grant lead, Gila Resources Information Project (GRIP) and Integrated Biological Solutions (IBIS) serve together with WNMU as the project team.

As part of the project, IBIS developed Community Forestry Management Plans for Lordsburg and each of the five other communities. **These management plans serve as the foundation to guide all project work in each community during the remainder of the project,** including tree planting and tree maintenance (e.g., tree pruning, irrigation, pest management). The project team is guiding the implementation of these plans by providing technical and capacity building support. GRIP is leading the planting of 1,000 trees across all six communities, and providing at least one week of tree maintenance work annually in each community, for the remaining years of the project. Prioritization of project work is informed by the assessments and recommendations in the Community Forest Management Plans.

One of the key outcomes of the project is the formation of the Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network (CFN), which is facilitated by the project team and includes all six communities. The CFN was designed to help coordinate efforts and share information between communities and project partners. The CFN website, swnmforestry.org, includes links to additional resources that are referenced in this management plan and a curated list of other useful resources. The network and the project team will continue producing tools and materials as needed to help the communities put their Community Forest Management Plans into action.

Community Forestry Network (CFN) partners attending the Think Trees Conference in Albuquerque, February 2025.

The CFN's work is focused on:

- Providing guidance and on-the-ground support for tree planting and maintenance.
- Sharing educational resources for a variety of audiences, from community members to tree care professionals.
- Encouraging collaboration between communities in the region.
- Supporting municipalities to engage community members in the care and development of their urban forest.
- Connecting southwest New Mexico communities to statewide resources and other networks.
- Supporting communities to leverage the Community Forest Management Plans to obtain additional funding for implementation.
- Assisting communities to address resource shortfalls.
- Building municipal staffing capacity through training and program development.

Southwest New Mexico COMMUNITY FORESTRY NETWORK

Purpose of the Plan

At first glance, it might seem as though a community forest management plan would only need one sentence: Plant more trees! As wonderful as they are, trees and other public green spaces require an investment of both money and time to make sure they produce maximum benefits without posing unnecessary risk, such as falling limbs and infrastructure interference. And in New Mexico's desert communities, the water requirements for planting additional trees must also be carefully considered and budgeted for.

A well-managed community forest can provide multiple benefits that support Lordsburg's long-term development goals. However, just like any infrastructure, urban trees require an ongoing investment of both time and money to ensure they remain healthy to provide these services that the community values. This plan strives to balance costs and benefits of urban trees within Lordsburg's unique community context, and identify opportunities for the CFN to support efficient community forest management.

This plan is designed to be a practical guide for the City of Lordsburg, outlining specific implementation strategies for the planting, care, and general management of the community forest. It reflects the community's stated values, plays to the town's strengths, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and charts a path toward achieving Lordsburg's goals for the development of both the urban forest and the city at large.

"Biking and walking along trails or streets with trees gives me a sense of calmness and beauty. This is much needed in this community."

- Lordsburg Resident

Purpose of the Plan:

Practical Guidance

Educational Resource

Community Planning Reference

Scope of the Plan

This plan defines Lordsburg's community forest as all trees and vegetation within its municipal boundaries, but **the focus of the plan is on trees, shrubs, and other woody perennial plants.** The reason for this is that these plants have a long-term presence and therefore represent the highest potential benefit to Lordsburg. However, they can also represent the highest cost and risk due to their size, requiring long-term planning and specialized management. Other vegetation, like grasses and flowers, are recognized as important components of a community forest and are often included in this plan's discussion, but they are not the primary focus.

For this plan, the area of analysis was limited to the densely populated or urbanized portion within the boundary of the city. While this plan considers Lordsburg's entire community forest, much of **the emphasis of the plan will be on assessing public spaces and providing municipal recommendations.** Due to Lordsburg's smaller size, this allows the plan to make some very specific recommendations, down to individual trees.

Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan cannot be static if it is to be successful. This plan must be a dynamic document that encourages the application of adaptive management practices (plan-do-check-fix) in order to respond to changing conditions and shifting priorities. **This plan was written with a five-year lifespan in mind (i.e., 2025-2030),** at which time it should be updated and adjusted based upon progress made and lessons learned over the coming years. Throughout the remainder of the project, the project team will develop supplemental, action-oriented resources that are designed to support Lordsburg staff with the implementation of the goals and strategies recommended in this plan. Additionally, the newly formed Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network (CFN), and the recently expanded New Mexico Tree Alliance can serve as community educational resources and technical or logistical support for Lordsburg's priority projects. As Lordsburg continues to work to strengthen its approach to community forest management, there is no shortage of resources available to aid in this effort.

"We need trees in Lordsburg, and any plants. Trees help me to relax and feel good."

- Lordsburg Resident

Photo shows generally healthy trees in need of basic maintenance around the perimeter of Short Park, Lordsburgs largest multi-use recreation area.

How to Use This Plan

Basis for the Plan

This section provides background information on how this plan was developed, including community context, analytical data regarding Lordsburg's urban forest, and methodologies for identifying key priorities and strategies. This section can help grant writers and project planners to **provide justification for proposed projects and budgets** and may be of interest to those actively engaged in Lordsburg and its community forest. However, it is not necessary to read this section to understand and implement the *Action Plan*.

Action Plan

This section identifies three broad goals for Lordsburg's community forest, strategies within each of these goals, and specific actions to achieve these goals. It provides tailored recommendations for the physical care of trees as well as recommendations on policy, funding, community planning, training, and municipal and volunteer support. **Lordsburg's *Action Plan* is meant to be a working "to do" list.**

Additional Resources

This section is an appendix to the plan and provides guidance and templates to support the implementation of activities identified within the *Action Plan.* It is meant to serve as an **educational resource** for anyone actively involved in Lordsburg's community forest. Many of these resources are linked on the CFN website **(swnmforestry.org),** which will continue to be updated as more resources are created and collected by the CFN.

"For me, trees represent life. Anytime you see a town with trees, you see people gathered underneath for shade. You see a sense of pride and beautification."

- Lordsburg Resident

Recommended Goals and Strategies

Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan sets **three primary goals that support a vision of a healthy community forest** in Lordsburg and organize the work ahead. **Strategies** within each goal set actionable and measurable tasks to help realize those goals. The *Action Plan* near the end of this document expands upon these goals to recommend **actions** within each strategy, including timelines, partners and collaborators, and available resources.

Goal 1

Lordsburg's community forest enhances public health, community pride, and quality of life for residents.

Strategies:

1A. Focus resources on improving landscapes at existing parks and recreation areas, community gathering spaces and schools.

1B. Employ best management practices to foster a resilient community forest that improves air quality, mitigates heat, and conserves water resources.

1C. Engage residents in the development and care of the community forest.

Goal 2

Lordsburg's community forest contributes to city beautification and economic development.

Strategies:

2A. Collaborate with NM DOT to develop cohesive streetscaping on Main Street and Motel Drive to improve community safety, livability, and aesthetics.

2B. Promote landscaping at businesses and government buildings to enhance connectivity and walkability in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

2C. Integrate the community forest into Lordsburg's broader tourism, revitalization and development initiatives.

Goal 3

Lordsburg fosters a healthy community forest through proactive management, staff support, and collaboration.

Strategies:

3A. Invest in building staff expertise and support to strengthen Lordsburg's community forest management.

3B. Develop and streamline a strategic landscape irrigation and maintenance program that balances tree health with water conservation goals.

3C. Establish municipal policies and plans that support Lordsburg's community forest goals.

Community Forest Best Management Practices for Lordsburg

The assessments and recommendations presented in Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan are rooted in science-based best management practices in the field of urban forestry. To produce the goals, strategies, and actions featured in the *Action Plan,* the following best management practices were considered in the context of Lordsburg's vision, capacity, strengths and ongoing challenges.

Planning

- Select a wide variety of tree and plant species adapted to thrive in local conditions to conserve water, increase biodiversity, and improve forest health.
- Establish and implement an irrigation plan for all new plantings.
- Select the right tree for the right place, considering both plant and site characteristics.
- Stagger tree plantings over time to grow a resilient, community forest with a distributed age structure.
- Prioritize planting in underserved neighborhoods and high-use pedestrian spaces.
- Incorporate trees and irrigation into public infrastructure projects whenever possible to maximize opportunities for greening public spaces.
- Integrate Green Stormwater Infrastructure with community forestry projects to reduce flooding, provide trees with supplemental irrigation, and promote water conservation.

Plants

- Prioritize the maintenance and health of mature trees to retain canopy and maximize tree benefits.
- Create and maintain an urban tree inventory to actively monitor tree health and prioritize work.
- Support soil health by using organic mulch and reducing soil compaction.
- Use correct pruning techniques, eliminating tree “topping” (a harmful pruning practice where the tops of trees or large branches are indiscriminately cut off, often leaving stubs behind) and other common mistakes.
- Address public safety concerns by proactively identifying and mitigating high risk trees through trimming or removal.

People

- Engage and empower community members to support community forest goals on both public and private property.
- Invest in workforce development and ensure tree care workers are trained in proper maintenance, monitoring and integrated pest management techniques.
- Establish city policies, ordinances, programmatic workflows, and budgets that support the goals of sustainable community forest management.
- Collaborate with regional and statewide forestry programs and networks to leverage resources, expertise, and funding opportunities.

"Caring for a tree that will in turn care for you is a cleansing experience."

- Lordsburg Resident

Lordsburg's Priority Community Forest Project Locations

1 Short Park
Create sheltered, shaded areas within the larger park with tree, groundcover, organic mulch. Irrigation improvements.

2 Veterans Park
Tree pruning and removal of dead trees. Improved irrigation. Landscaping and GSI at park entrance, CDT trail on Main Street.

3 North Park
Tree replacement, pruning, new shade trees, organic mulch, groundcover near play and picnic areas. Improved irrigation.

4 4th Street Walking Corridor (+ Pyramid Street)
Irrigated street trees & landscaping at publicly owned sites (Civic Center, County Building, Library, Post Office Park etc).

5 School Campuses
Shade trees & living ground cover at drop-offs, walking paths, play areas; support new outdoor learning areas.

6 West Wabash Street
Irrigated streetscapes for enhanced walkability.

7 Hidalgo County Museum
Possible native plant arboretum, seating areas, public art.

REQUIRES NM DOT COORDINATION

8 Main Street Streetscaping
Street trees, irrigation infrastructure, business district landscaping, with murals and other public art.

9 Motel Drive Streetscaping + DOT Park
Irrigated street trees on south side, DOT Park maintenance.

Basis for the Plan

To develop Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan, the project team gathered information in multiple ways:

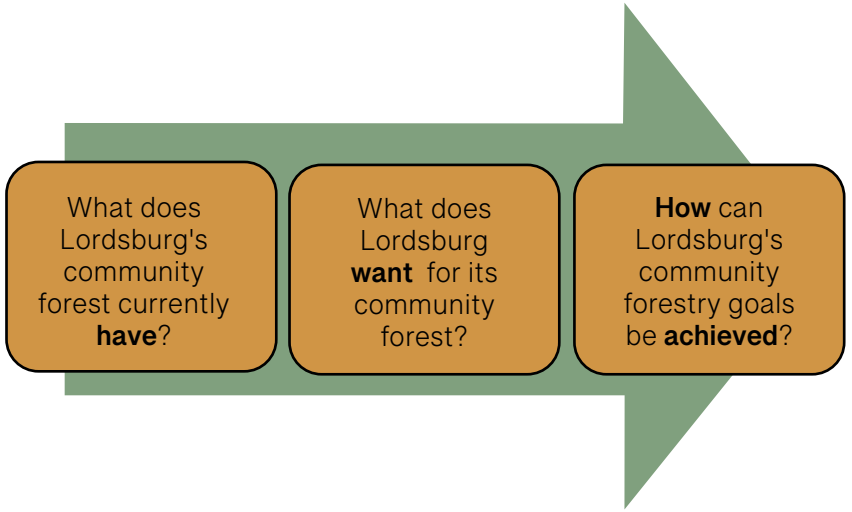
- Conducted multiple interviews with City of Lordsburg officials, staff, and local experts to introduce them to the project, get initial input on priority areas, and understand the basics of the City's current approach to landscape management.
- Reviewed the Lordsburg Comprehensive Plan Update (2024), Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP), and other available planning documents to identify community goals and opportunities to integrate with upcoming community forestry projects.
- Reviewed and analyzed data regarding Lordsburg's community forest such as climate conditions, natural vegetation types, socioeconomic measures, and existing policies and ordinances.
- Met with partners frequently between September 2024 and August 2025 to conduct a broad assessment of existing trees, irrigation and public spaces to identify opportunities and challenges for planting and maintenance.
- Worked closely with the project team to glean local knowledge and incorporate their implementation and training experiences to help shape goals, strategies, and actions.

Public Survey for Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan

One of the key community engagement strategies used by the project team was a public survey open to all Lordsburg residents. Twenty eight Lordsburg residents responded to the public survey, which was open for a period of three months. To ensure that all community members in Lordsburg had an opportunity to contribute, the team used a range of outreach strategies. The public surveys were made available in both English and Spanish.

The survey requested information about potential priority tree planting locations, tree maintenance locations, and locations with flooding that could benefit from green stormwater infrastructure. Participants also had the opportunity to share which benefits of trees are most important to them, to give opinions about their preferred plant palettes for community forest projects, and to share their personal "Tree Stories". Responses to the survey questions highlighted that **Lordsburg residents deeply value their existing trees and strongly believe the city will benefit from having more.** The survey revealed general support from the community for this initiative, with many expressing the need for more trees in Lordsburg while also stressing the importance of sustained efforts to ensure the long-term success of the project. Lordsburg residents were most interested in community forestry projects that prioritize shade trees, native and drought tolerant plants, and trees that add color and beauty to the city. Lordsburg residents were also particularly interested in utilizing trees to help mitigate heat in town and to help foster community pride and wellbeing.

Community input in these various forms was integrated into a broader assessment of the City of Lordsburg, which is discussed in the following sections: the **Community Profile**, the **Community Forest** and the **Community Vision**. This assessment was guided by three key questions:



Community Profile

Located in southwestern New Mexico, the area that is now known as the City of Lordsburg was inhabited by the Mimbres people of the Mogollon culture from 150 AD to approximately 1450 AD. After the decline of the Mimbres, the territory was home to many generations of Chiricahua Apache Indians.

The City of Lordsburg was originally established in the late 1800s as a stopping point along the Southern Pacific Railroad. The railroad brought miners, ranchers, merchants, business developers, and many others through the city. Originally located at the intersection of New Mexico State Highways 70 and 80, Lordsburg became known as the "Broadway of America's Highway". The city was a popular travel stop as the largest gas, food, and lodging hub between Arizona and Texas. While that distinction has since been lost, the establishment of Interstate 10 to replace State Highway 80 cemented the focus of Lordsburg's economy on creating a pleasant stop for travelers and cargo transport, and the city's economy continues to be defined by transportation. State Highways 70 and 90 bring local travel through on the way to Silver City, the Gila and Coronado National Forests, the Chiricahua National Monument, and other nearby tourist destinations. The railroad remains active through the city, carrying both cargo and people to the east and west.

The City of Lordsburg has an area of 8.38 square miles with around 2,300 residents. It is the largest community in Hidalgo County, which has a total population of around 4,100 residents. Lordsburg is trisected by Interstate 10 and the railroad tracks running east-west, and bisected by New Mexico State Highway 70 running north-south. Glen Acres, a census designated area of unincorporated Hidalgo County with a population of about 300 people, is a residential area located to the far north of the city that is also served by Lordsburg.

Lordsburg's community services are centered in three locations:

- The densely developed area between I-10 and the railroad tracks contains Lordsburg High School and R.V. Traylor Elementary School, the Lordsburg Hidalgo County Library, Lordsburg City Hall and various other city and county offices, the Hidalgo County Fairgrounds, the James H. Baxter Civic Center, and the largest grocery store in the city. Parks and recreation facilities in this area include Short Park, Lordsburg Special Event Center and Lordsburg Pool, as well as a few small pocket parks and the Hidalgo County Museum. This area is the heart of the Lordsburg Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, a focus of the Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project (LEAP), with many commercial locations along Main Street and Motel Drive.
- The area south of the Interstate contains Dugan-Tarango Middle School, the Medical Clinic, the Ena Mitchell Senior Center, the County Fire Department, the Lordsburg Animal Shelter, the Todd Bensley Shooting Range, and the Lordsburg Housing Authority development. Veterans Park and the Shakespeare Cemetery are located further south of the city.
- The small residential area north of the railroad tracks has several businesses, an affordable housing development, and North Park.

Shakespeare Ghost Town.
Photo credit: City of Lordsburg.

Lordsburg's traveler services are located along two arterials:

- Main Street is Exit 22 off I-10, and has traveler services in both north and south directions, including several dining and lodging operations as well as gas station/convenience stores. West Wabash Street, directly to the north off the Interstate exit, has national hotel chains and a fast-food restaurant. The KOA campground is south of Interstate 10, just off Main Street.
- Motel Drive is the business loop for I-10, and runs parallel to the railroad tracks. The Lordsburg Welcome Center, a large truck stop, and the Lordsburg RV Park are at the western end of the city at I-10 Exit 20. The Amtrak train stop and several motels are located near the intersection with Main Street and Highway 70 North. Two travel centers are located at the eastern end of the city at I-10 Exit 24.

Photo shows a tree planting event at Lordsburg City Hall in January 2025, led by GRIP, one of many government-owned properties with opportunities to plant trees to increase community forest benefits in Lordsburg.

Lordsburg Governance and Landscape Management

The City of Lordsburg is led by a Mayor and six City Councilors. The City Clerk provides administration and is the primary contact for Lordsburg community members. Lordsburg is also the county seat for Hidalgo County, and the majority of the county's population lives in Lordsburg. Hidalgo County has elected county commissioners, clerk, treasurer, and assessor. The Hidalgo County Manager is the administrative officer and serves as a liaison between elected officials and county employees.

The City of Lordsburg currently has a team of staff who oversee all maintenance needs for the community, including parks and other landscaping maintenance. Two staff are primarily assigned to landscaping work, and seasonally work full-time on landscaping. All tree work is handled by maintenance staff without contractor support, unless trees conflict with utility lines. Hidalgo County has their own maintenance staff, who care for landscaping at the courthouse, library, and museum, as well as county office buildings. Lordsburg maintenance staff currently do not receive any training specific to tree care, and they expressed an interest in building knowledge and skills in community forestry through participation in the CFN. **Active participation in the CFN is a good investment of Lordsburg staff time and will support the implementation of this Community Forest Management Plan.**

Lordsburg has a set of municipal ordinances, but none that directly govern vegetation or irrigation. **The adoption of landscaping policies and ordinances can also contribute to effective and proactive management of urban trees.**

The Lordsburg Economic Development Advancement Project (LEAP) is a community organization that has led the City's placemaking projects since 2014, filling the role of Lordsburg's Main Street partner. LEAP has been recognized as a Frontier Community twice under the New Mexico Main Street Division. The first Frontier Community project award funded a "Streetscaping Plan" that led to a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan. The MRA Plan allows for public/private partnerships within the planned district. The second Frontier Community award has helped LEAP become an official nonprofit and build capacity to revitalize the MRA district. **Future LEAP projects could incorporate street trees, GSI and efficient irrigation to leverage the strategies in this plan and contribute to economic development projects.**

"Fraggle Rock". Photo credit: Hidalgo County.

Climate and Geography

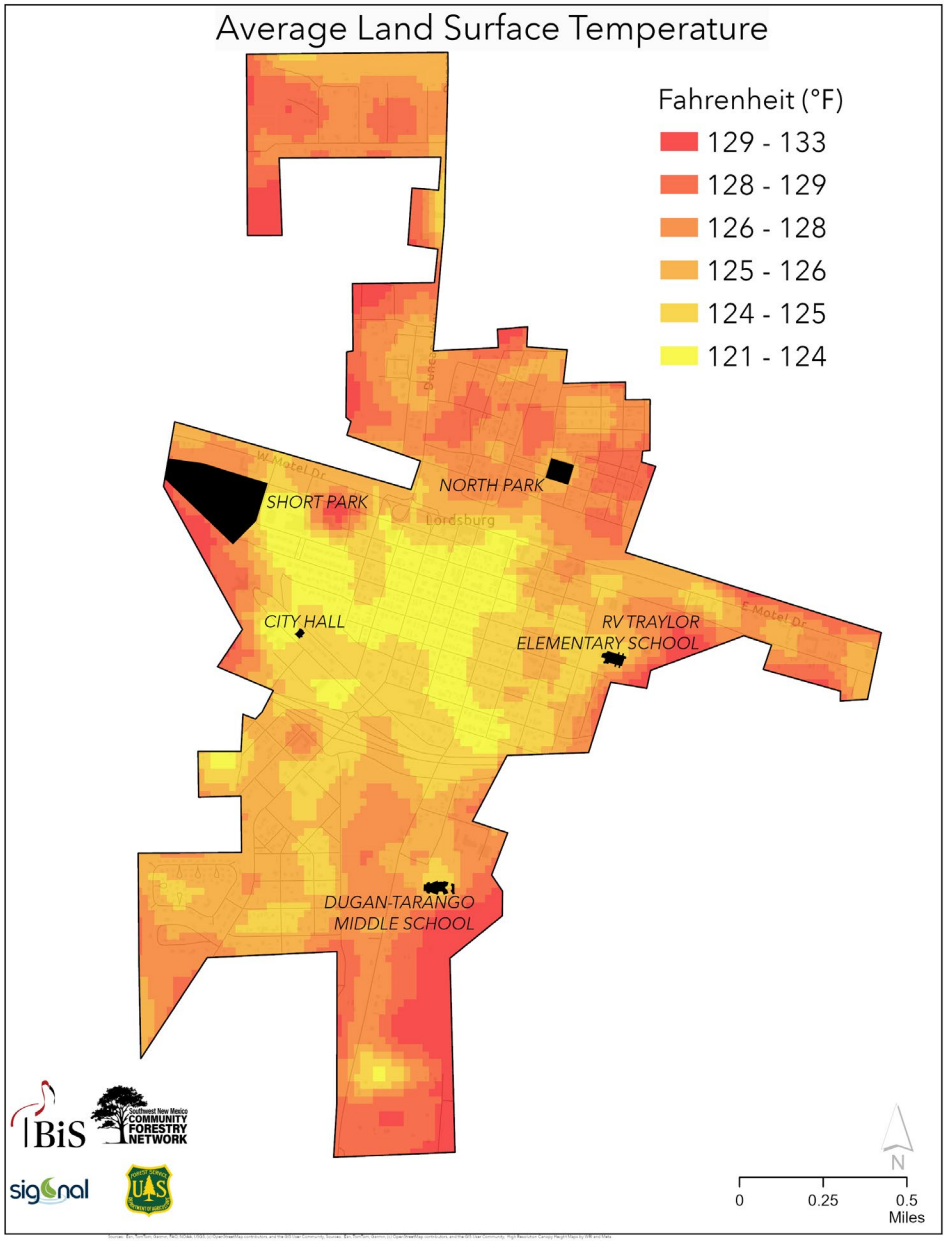
Lordsburg sits in a large basin, west of the Rio Grande Rift and south of the Mogollon-Datil Volcanic Field. The Pyramid Mountains extend from the western edge of the city and continue into the southern part of New Mexico. At an elevation of 4,269 feet, and situated in the northern reaches of the Chihuahuan Desert, the landscape and habitat surrounding the city is characterized by the intersection of semi-desert grasslands with Chihuahuan desert scrub. This biome is dominated by creosote bush, tarbush and whitethorn acacia, along with a wide variety of woody shrubs and cacti interspersed with perennial grasses and bare ground.

Winter temperatures are mild in Lordsburg with short freezes and rare snow. Summers are increasingly getting warmer, with temperatures consistently in the 90s and close to triple digits from May through September. Like many southwestern communities, Lordsburg's precipitation primarily comes in the winter and during summer monsoonal rain events. Winter and spring rain events appear to be declining in recent years, leading to earlier and more intense seasonal drought periods. The monsoon rains help cool ambient temperatures during the heat of summer. Generally, monsoon weather patterns are active in this region between July and September, but these patterns are becoming more variable as is the amount of rain that falls during each event. This trend of hotter summers with inconsistent rain, and the decreasing availability of water in general, influences the tree species that are a good fit for planting in Lordsburg.

Lordsburg isn't the only community experiencing these changes. Average temperatures across New Mexico have increased by an average of 2°F since the beginning of the 20th century, a significant shift that has caused many communities to reexamine what types of vegetation are sustainable choices for new planting projects. The annual number of days reaching 100°F in New Mexico has increased from an average of 12 days (1900 - 2020) to nearly 20 days per year (2015-2021). This same pattern is seen in increasingly warm evening temperatures, with the number of nights above 70°F nearly doubling in recent decades compared to the previous century.

To plan for a long-lived, resilient urban forest, tree species selected for planting in Lordsburg must be drought tolerant and must also be adapted to withstand the range of temperatures in the area - both summer highs and winter lows. The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone designations help guide the selection of trees and plants that will have the best chance of succeeding in Lordsburg throughout their lifespan. Each zone designation is based on the 30-year average of recorded temperatures, with an emphasis on the lower threshold of temperatures. The 2023 Hardiness Zone map classifies Lordsburg within Zone 7b, but outlying areas of the city are identified as a warmer zone, 8a. Trees have a multi-decade lifespan, and because the temperature is projected to increase substantially over the next several decades, it is prudent to prioritize planting tree species that function in the current zone designation but will also be able to thrive under the projected zone designation of the future: 9b.

Developing and using a diverse, regionally native-focused plant palette that is well adapted for Lordsburg's specific climate and geography will help prepare Lordsburg's community forest for a resilient future as summers become hotter and drier.



This map of land surface temperatures during the summer months (May through September, 2019–2024 mean values) illustrates how hot it can get in Lordsburg. Extreme heat can have significant human health impacts. Image credit: SIG-NAL.

Land Surface Temperature

Land surface temperature refers to how hot the "surface" of the Earth feels to the touch, as opposed to the ambient air temperature. This data is collected by satellite, so the "surface" from the satellite's perspective could be pavement, rooftops, plant leaves, bare ground, or other surfaces.

Land surface temperature data demonstrates how hot Lordsburg can get, with mean surface temperatures in many parts of town reaching 129-133 degrees Fahrenheit. More importantly, the minimum summertime surface temperatures across the entire town are greater than 120 ºF. **This level of heat can have serious human health impacts, particularly for vulnerable populations.** Heat is the number one weather-related cause of death in the United States. New Mexico's Department of Health estimates that heat related deaths will double between 2020 and 2030, based on climate models that project an increase up to 111 days of extreme heat per year (90 ºF or higher).

Dark surfaces absorb heat from the sun and radiate it back out into the atmosphere at night. This is evident on Lordsburg's land surface temperature map where dark colored surfaces are the hottest areas of the city, appearing on the map as red or dark orange. For example, Maverick Stadium's dark artificial turf field has a mean temperature of 8 to 12 degrees hotter than the stadium's light-colored parking lot. Similarly, the white roof of Durango-Turan Middle School is significantly cooler than the adjacent dark turf baseball field. Generally, the coolest surface temperature areas in

"Trees are just so beautiful to look at, and they provide much needed shade in our area."

- Lordsburg Resident

Lordsburg are those that have more light-colored surfaces such as roofs, driveways, and parking areas. This is apparent on the map in the dense residential area between I-10 and the railroad tracks, the housing authority development, and the KOA campground. These areas also have a relatively greater number of trees and plants that provide shade and help mitigate high temperatures.

While the land surface temperature map gives a good picture of where Lordsburg's "hotspots" are located, the scale of currently available satellite data is not a fine enough resolution to prioritize specific tree planting locations. However, knowing that areas with a multitude of heat absorbing surfaces (like roadways, sidewalks, and buildings) will have higher surface temperatures indicates that **recreation areas, pedestrian walkways and bike paths should be prioritized for tree planting to help lower harmful heat levels in high-use areas.**

Trees and plants can help combat heat, but heat can also be extremely detrimental to tree health. Trees planted near roads, sidewalks, and other heat absorbing surfaces must survive both ambient heat and additional heat reflected from the pavement. Using light-colored, organic mulch materials and/or planting living ground cover around trees, and providing adequate irrigation, are key to helping trees survive heat stress.

Research has shown that deciduous street trees (those that shed their leaves in winter) can lower sidewalk pavement temperatures significantly, sometimes more than 50 degrees , because they transpire more readily than evergreens and provide a greater amount of shade. However, deciduous trees generally need a much higher volume of water for irrigation than established evergreens. Evergreen tree species, despite absorbing more heat due to their dark color, also provide valuable benefits such as wind blocking, shade and wildlife habitat. A balanced approach in deciding where to place deciduous trees and where to plant evergreens will be key to growing a cooler Lordsburg. It is recommended to prioritize the planting and irrigation of higher water use deciduous trees in areas that are used the most by residents, such as parks and community gathering spaces.

Tree canopy at Short Park is very sparse, and conditions can be very hot and dusty for park visitors. Adding drought-tolerant trees, ground cover, and organic mulch in targeted clusters within the park, such as near playgrounds and seating areas, will provide cooling shade where people need it the most.

Water Sources

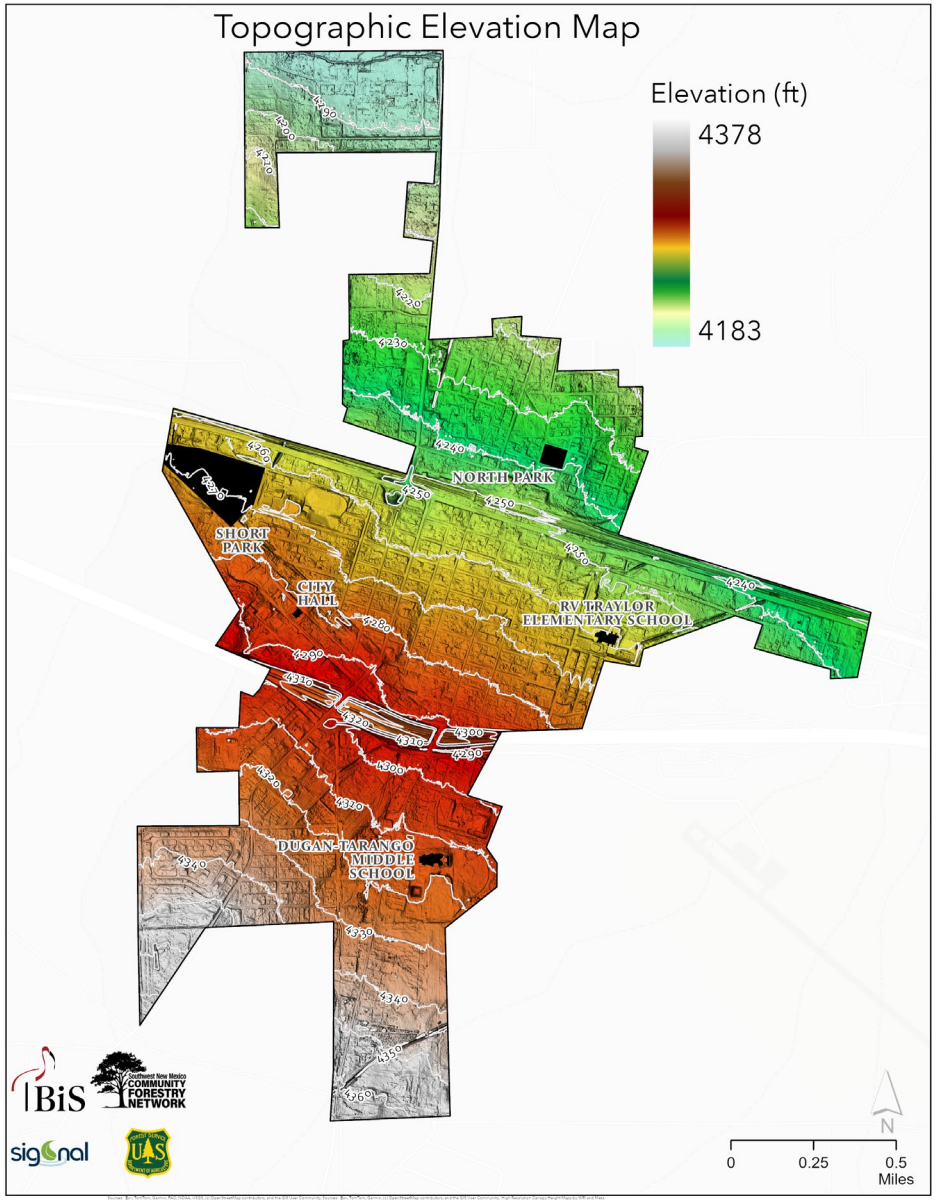
Lordsburg's only source of water is from subsurface groundwater aquifers within the Lordsburg Basin, which is supplied from three City-managed groundwater wells northeast of the city. Frequent and persistent drought conditions have led to increased drawdown of the underground water supply to meet residential and commercial water demands. Lordsburg is located within a Critical Management Area designated by the Office of the State Engineer in 2019, meaning restrictions are in place to limit drawdown of groundwater resources. The city is actively investigating additional water conservation measures, including the reuse of gray water.

Water supply is a long-term concern for all communities in the Hidalgo County area, and the City of Lordsburg cites efficient use and management of water resources as a top priority in its Comprehensive Plan. While significant improvements have been made to date and additional water infrastructure projects are planned, Lordsburg has little water to spare. This requires careful planning when considering planting additional trees and plants that will require irrigation, both at a municipal and residential scale.

In addition to persistent drought conditions, residents are experiencing more frequent flooding during heavy storms, as stormwater runoff flows through streets and ponds inconveniently at low points in the city. The map of surface elevations in Lordsburg shows that there is over 250-foot of elevation change in the city, sloping downward from south to north. Participants of the public survey indicated that areas of flooding in the city are most prevalent near the railroad tracks, in the Glen Acres residential development, as well as along Wabash Street which drains stormwater into Short Park.

As new development is charted, the increase of impervious surfaces from buildings, sidewalks and streets will only add to the problem of ponding in the streets. Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) practices are an increasingly common solution in this region to mitigate nuisance ponding from runoff and provide other community benefits. GSI can repurpose this underutilized water resource to irrigate trees and plants, creating a more vibrant and beautiful city while helping to address flooding problems.

All trees and landscaping planted in Lordsburg will need irrigation throughout their lives, especially during the first 3-5 years of establishment and during periods of drought. Water conservation is another benefit of co-locating GSI with tree plantings, which can reduce the use of drinking water for landscaping irrigation as Lordsburg works to expand its tree canopy.



The elevation map for Lordsburg clearly shows how stormwater flows from high elevation (red) to low elevation (green), resulting in flooding in the northern area of town. Using GSI practices can help alleviate flooding and irrigate plants. Image credit: SIG-NAL

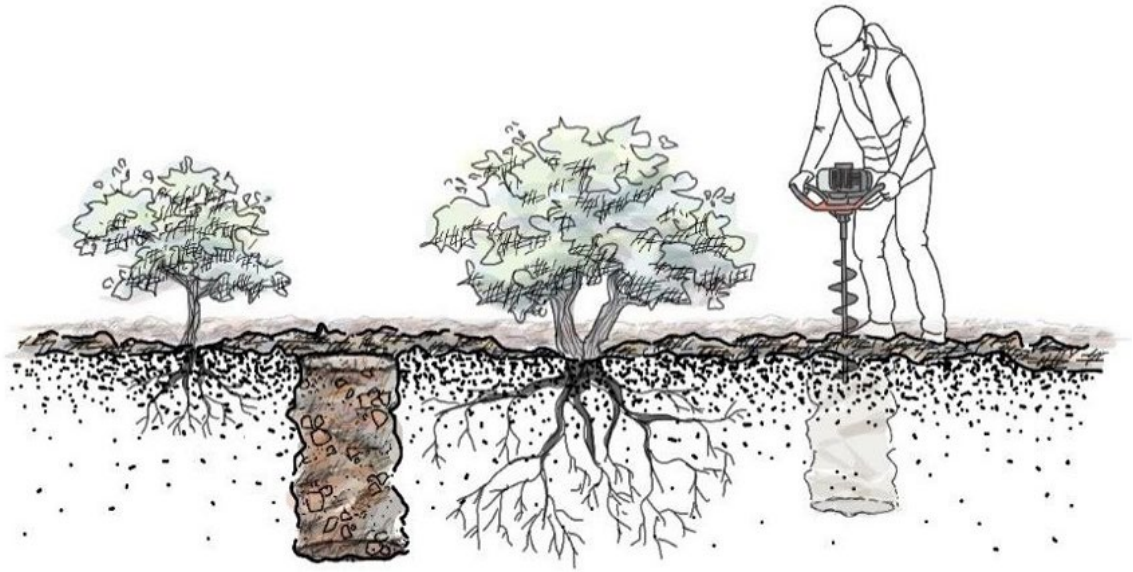
Soils

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey provides complex geo-referenced information about soils. The data is not precise at small municipal scales, and urban soils are often very different compared to surrounding natural areas. However, the soil survey provides useful insight into potential challenges with soils related to community forest management in Lordsburg.

The commercial and residential areas of Lordsburg are mainly comprised of shallow, well-drained gravelly clay loam. Loamy, well-drained soils are generally good for tree planting. However, large trees need at least two feet of soil to establish structural roots, and roots will not travel through the hard, underlying rock layer that can sometimes be found in this region.

During tree planting in the commercial and residential areas of Lordsburg, extra care may be needed to ensure there is adequate soil volume available for the tree, considering the expected mature size of the tree species being planted. Roots generally extend several feet beyond the canopy drip line of the tree (see page 26), and these fine root tips are where the tree pulls in most of its water from the soil. Soil sponges, an excavated hole filled with a particular mix of pumice, compost, and wood chips, should be considered to improve infiltration and support tree health by storing water in the soil.

Lordsburg's soil has low organic matter content. Organic matter is critical to plant growth and also helps stop soil degradation and erosion. It is possible to add organic matter to soil, such as manure and compost. However, because organic matter will decompose at a faster rate than the surrounding soil, too much organic matter can eventually cause destabilized soils. **Using organic mulch around trees and plants allows nutrients and water to seep into the soil slowly and be held longer where they are available for uptake by roots.**



Soil sponges, shown here in a graphic from the NM DOT GSI Maintenance Manual, can help improve water infiltration and storage.

"I have a tree in my front yard that has been a part of family photos and celebrations for decades."

- Lordsburg Resident

Community Forest

With Lordsburg's location in the desert plains, and no surface water to support a riparian forest, Lordsburg's trees are almost entirely human-introduced. Trees are most prevalent in the residential areas, in the parks, on the grounds of city and county buildings, and at the schools.

A significant number of trees were planted as windbreaks in the 1990s and early 2000s, including at the elementary and middle schools and in Short Park. Other trees and shrubs have been recently planted as part of community infrastructure projects such as the new Lordsburg High School and the Lordsburg Senior Center. Many of the national chains with hotel, fast food, and travel center locations in Lordsburg maintain landscaping on their properties, which also contributes to Lordsburg's community forest.

"Evergreen trees bring me peace and comfort. It reminds me of being in the forest and being connected to nature."

- Lordsburg Resident

Photo of healthy trees behind Lordsburg City Hall.

Tree Canopy Cover

One way to assess the overall condition of an urban forest is to review canopy cover data. The total canopy cover of a community is the percentage of land area that is covered by the leaves, branches, and stems of trees and plants when viewed from above. Larger tree height and a more dense tree canopy are generally associated with greater benefits, such as providing more shade and heat mitigation.

The satellite imagery available provides both total canopy cover and data to assess the range in height of vegetation in Lordsburg. A total canopy analysis includes all trees and plants greater than one meter tall (3.3 feet) across the whole community, in both public and private spaces. The section of Lordsburg between the Interstate and the railroad tracks has the highest canopy cover, reflective of a higher density of residential plantings.

The satellite imagery analysis shows Lordsburg's total canopy cover (plants and trees greater than 3 feet tall) is 1.1%. Lordsburg's tree canopy (taller than 10 feet) is 0.4%, while smaller understory plants (between 3 and 10 feet tall) contribute an additional 0.7% to the total canopy. While Lordsburg's tree planting efforts have certainly increased these values, the tree canopy is still extremely sparse.

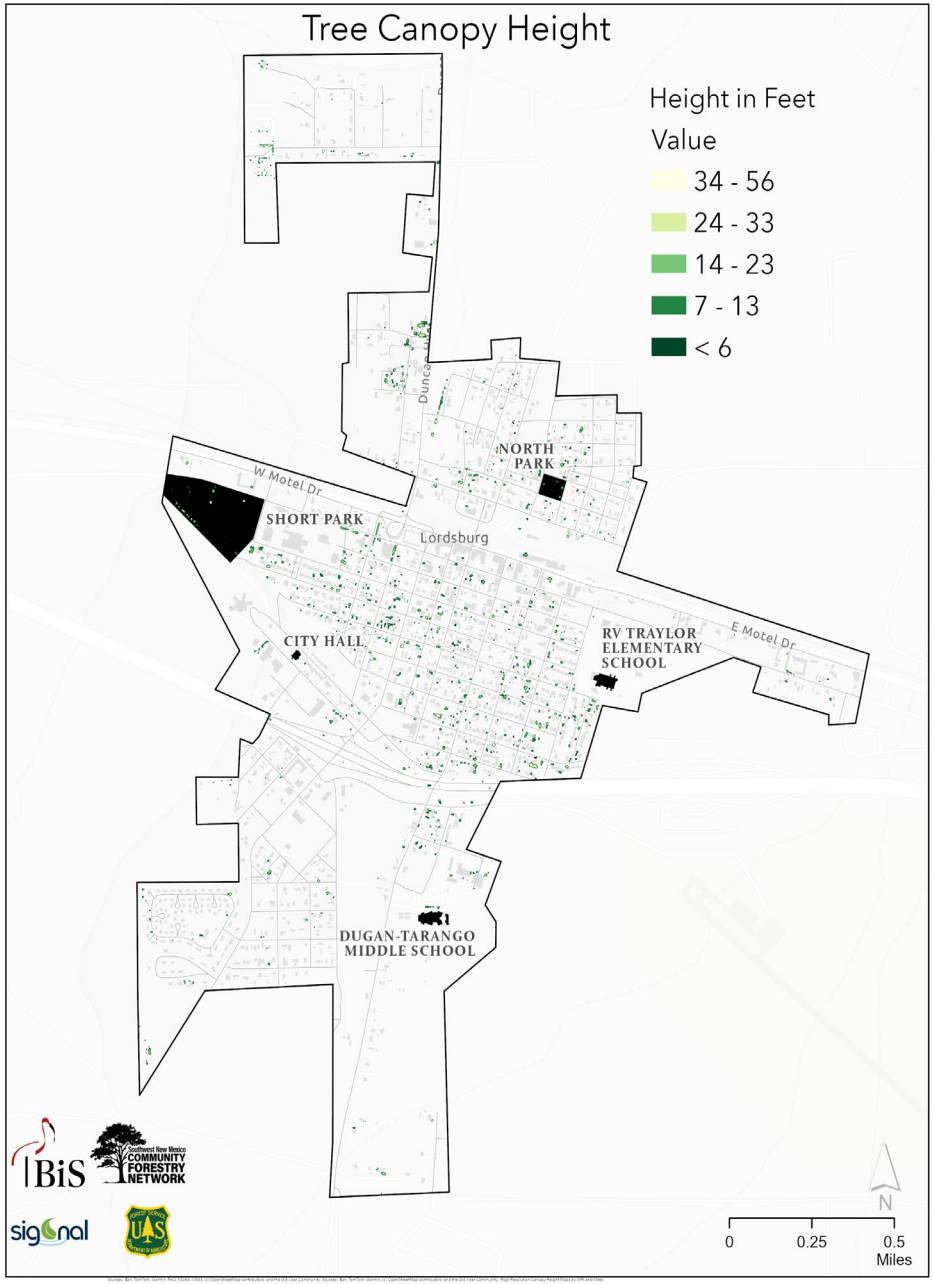
Large Trees

0.4%

Small Trees & Shrubs

0.7%

In Lordsburg, 1.1% of the land area is covered by the leaves, branches and stems of the trees and plants over 3 feet tall, when viewed from above. 0.4% of Lordsburg's canopy cover comes from trees over 10 feet tall, while 0.7% comes from trees and plants between 3 and 10 feet tall.

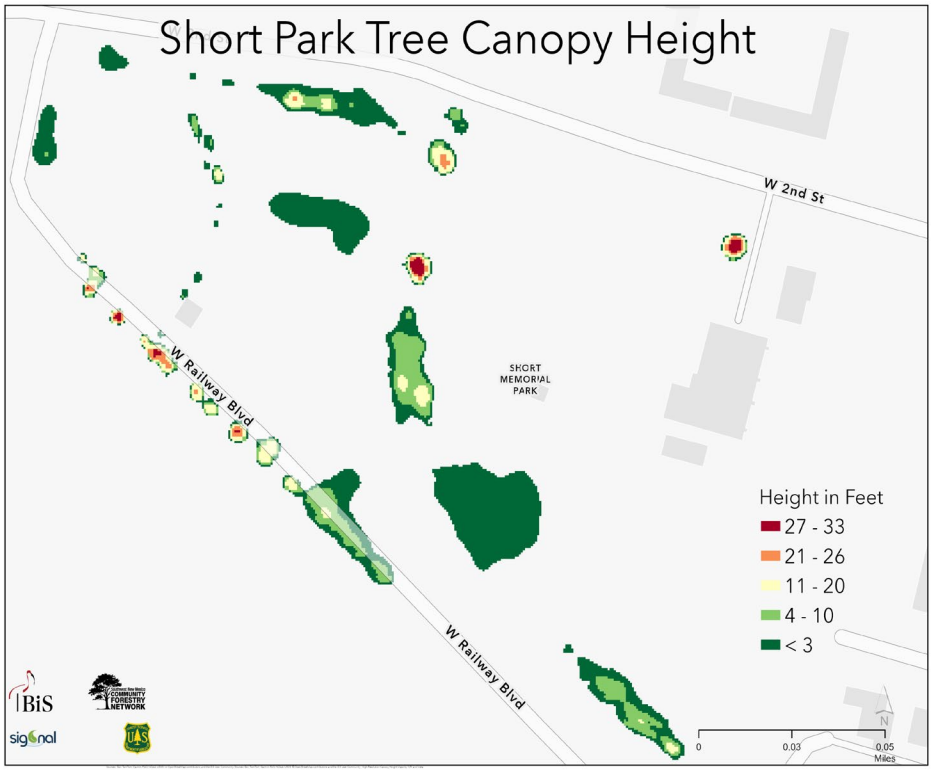


Map of total canopy cover in Lordsburg, including all trees and plants in the city that are more than one meter (approximately three feet) tall.

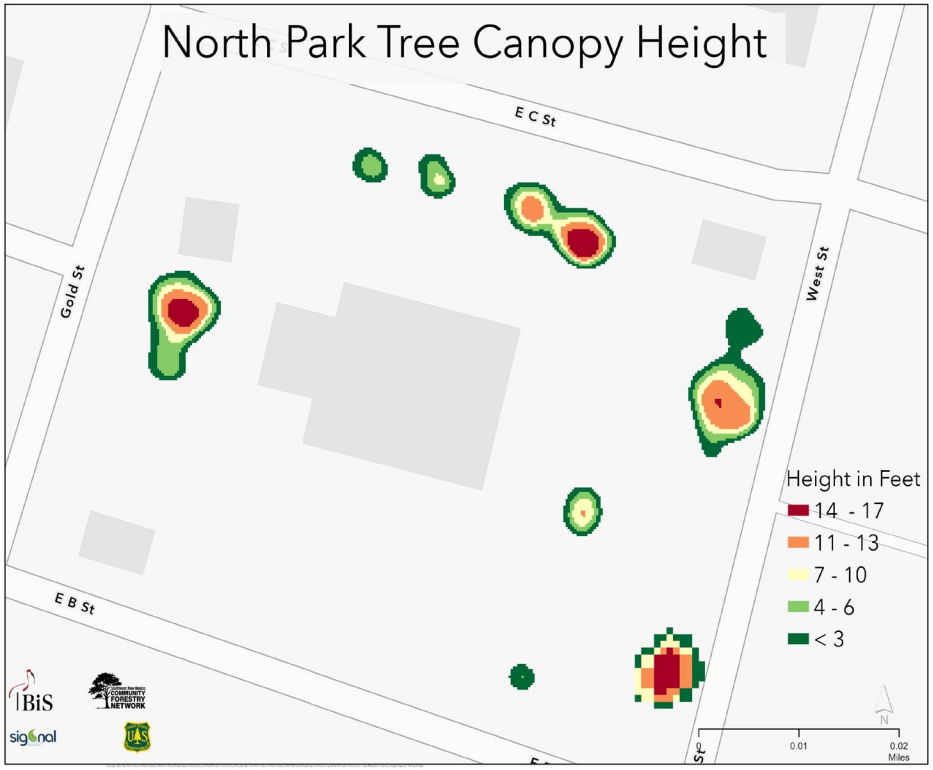
USDA Forest Service guidance states that in a desert community, a tree canopy of 15% is a realistic goal. While it can be motivational for a community to set tree canopy goals, and it's clear that it would be beneficial to increase Lordsburg's tree canopy from its current rate of 1.1%, it is important to consider this goal in the context of the region's limited water availability. To conserve water resources while increasing tree canopy for maximum community benefit, it is recommended to **concentrate on increasing canopy in high use areas where people need shade the most,** rather than aiming to reach a 15% tree canopy cover across the entire city.

As an example, additional tree canopy analyses were done for North Park and Short Park. The satellite imagery analysis shows that North Parks's total canopy cover is 5.53%, and Short Park's total canopy is 4.53%. While the trees in both parks are mainly concentrated around the perimeter, **planting treesin clusters around park infrastructure like tables, benches or layground equipment would maximize tree benefits and contribute toward a 15% tree canopy goal for these public outdoor recreation areas.**

It is important to consider that much of Lordsburg's land area is privately owned, and is a significant portion of the city's overall canopy cover. Engaging Lordsburg residents in planting, growing, and caring for trees on their property can play a critical role in enhancing the overall health and function of Lordsburg's community forest. The CFN will provide resources to help Lordsburg engage with residents, such as educational resources on drought-tolerant plant selection and irrigation recommendations. The CFN can also provide guidance on community engagement strategies, such as establishing a volunteer program for tree planting and maintenance and establishing a Tree Board to lend expertise to community forest initiatives.



Map of tree canopy height in Lordsburg's Short Park, including all trees and plants more than one meter (approximately three feet) tall. Buildings and ballfields were excluded from this analysis.



Map of tree canopy height in Lordsburg's North Park, including all trees and plants more than one meter (approximately three feet) tall. Buildings and other infrastructure were excluded from this analysis.

Tree Inventory

While tree canopy cover data is useful, it does not tell us much about the health of individual trees in Lordsburg's community forest. For example, Veterans Park appears on the tree canopy map as an area of higher tree density, but many of these trees are dead or in poor health condition, as a result of inconsistent irrigation. Conducting a tree inventory is a common management technique that provides more detailed information about the overall health of the community forest and helps to inform decision making by managers and maintenance staff.

Tree inventory efforts can be scaled to the resources available and the information most needed for urban forest management. In Lordsburg a tree inventory was conducted as part of a New Mexico State Forestry project in 2018, including portions of Short Park, the high school, DOT park, Post Office park, the downtown area, and a few additional public spaces. In September 2024 and early 2025, the CFN project team conducted basic cursory tree inventories in North Park, Veterans Park, additional areas of Short Park, the middle and elementary schools, the Hidalgo County Museum, Hidalgo County Fairgrounds, Main Street, Motel Drive, the Lordsburg City building complex on West Wabash Street, and a few other public spaces. These inventories provided the ability to make general community forest health assessments and informed the management recommendations for these priority community areas presented in this plan.

The tree inventory data collected during these cursory inventories was entered into Tree Plotter, an online tool for urban forest asset management. The New Mexico Forestry Division has supplied a license for communities within the state who wish to use this software as a tool to map, manage and enhance the care of their urban forest. **It is recommended that the City of Lordsburg develops and maintains its tree inventory data to support effective and efficient management of the community forest.**

For each tree that was inventoried in Lordsburg, the following data was collected:

- **Tree genus/species**
- **Tree height**
- **Tree health condition**
- **Tree risk**

Image shows a view of Lordsburg's North Park in Tree Plotter, an online software available to New Mexico communities to support tree inventory efforts. A tree inventory is a common management technique that provides urban forest health information and informs decision making.

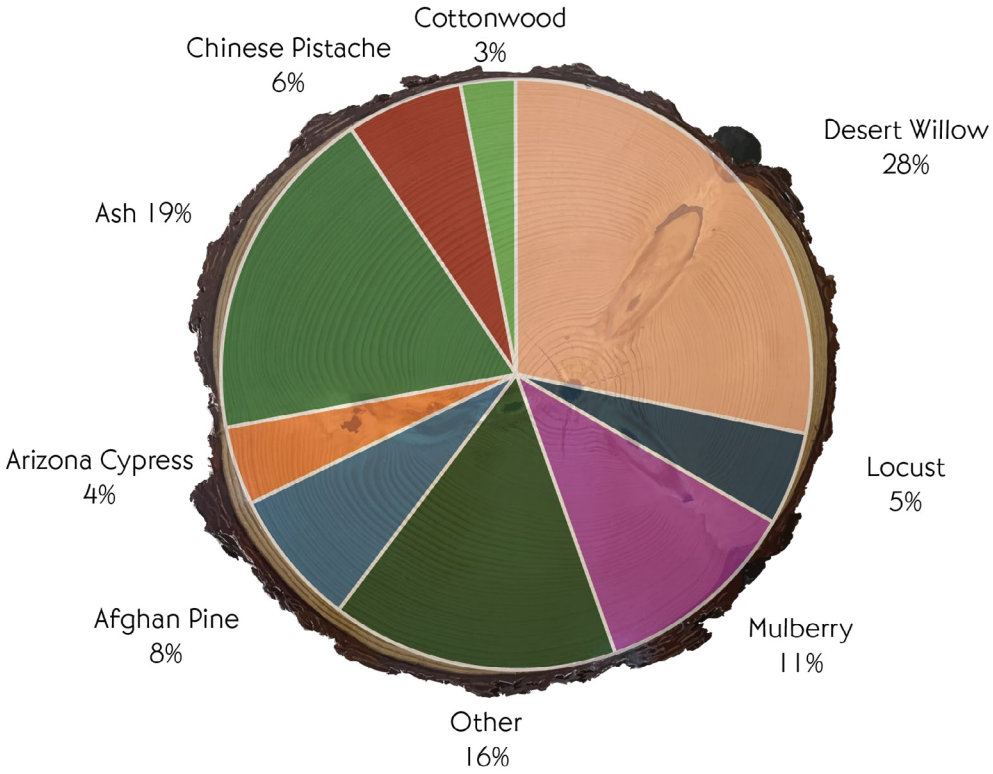
Photo shows lack of species diversity in windbreak trees near Elementary School.

Tree genus or species. A diverse community forest is considered healthier compared to a forest dominated by just a few species. **Increased biodiversity allows an ecosystem to better adapt to changing environmental conditions**, maintain ecosystem functions, and provide a wide range of ecosystem services and habitat for wildlife.

Tree pests generally target trees by genus or species, and therefore a community forest with low diversity makes it particularly vulnerable to outbreaks that could cause wide-spread tree mortality. In the field of urban forestry, the standard for a healthy urban forest should have no more than 10% of any one species, 20% of any one genus, or 30% of any family of trees. In Lordsburg, only two tree species exceed the 10% species goal (desert willow and white mulberry). However these species, together with trees from the ash genus, make up over half of the total trees, indicating low tree species diversity in Lordsburg.

The emerging goal for tree diversity is that in any given group of urban trees, there should be three or more species present. Most of Lordsburg's public spaces meet this goal, but many locations contain long lines or groupings of the same tree species. For example, Short Park contains long lines of desert willow, the windbreaks at the middle school are all Texas live oak, and the windbreak trees at the elementary schools are all Arizona cypress. The risk with this planting approach is that if pests, diseases, or environmental conditions impact that particular species of tree, there can be a huge loss of tree canopy at one time.

As new planting projects are developed for Lordsburg's public spaces, it will be important to diversify the tree species used, prioritizing regionally native trees and incorporating new tree cultivars that provide new options for large, low water, and drought tolerant shade trees.



The trees in Lordsburgs public spaces are dominated by just a few species, especially desert willow and ash. Increasing species diversity will increase the health and resilience of the community forest.

Trees of varying ages, heights,and health in Post Office Park.

Tree height. Tree height data provides two pieces of information - the risk posed by a tree if it were to fail (larger trees can impart more damage), and an approximation for the age of a tree or group of trees. If an urban forest has a large proportion of trees in a similar age range, those trees are likely to die within the same range of time. Just as a lack of species diversity can cause problems for a community forest, a lack of age diversity can result in inconsistent canopy coverage over time when mature trees die off without the presence of slightly younger trees to replace them.

Satellite data shows that tree height in Lordsburg is skewed heavily to shorter stature trees, with very few exceeding 12 feet in height. This is partially because of the higher presence of desert willow, vitex, and other relatively short species, but also reflects that many of the trees in Lordsburg's public spaces are young and may have been planted around the same time.

To ensure future generations can consistently enjoy the benefits of a robust community forest, Lordsburg should employ the concept of succession planting. This requires long term planning to space out planting projects over time to cultivate a diverse age range of trees in key areas of town. The CFN project, for example, will result in a surge of tree planting in Lordsburg in a relatively short period of time. Planning for the future, Lordsburg managers should monitor these landscapes and supplement them with new plantings in the coming decades to avoid a single generation community forest.

"The trees in my yard make me feel a deep joy and peace. Trees make me feel safe."

- Lordsburg Resident

Photo shows drought stressed trees near the entrance to Veterans Park, where many trees are exhibiting poor health due to insufficient irrigation.

Tree health condition. An assessment of the health condition of individual trees gives an idea of the overall health of Lordsburg's urban forest. During the basic tree inventory conducted by the CFN team, tree health conditions were assigned using a simple scale:

- *Excellent* - nothing is apparently wrong with the tree
- *Good* - the tree has minor issues, routine monitoring and maintenance needed, with no need for immediate care
- *Fair* - the tree has issues which will require maintenance to bring it back to good health and form
- *Poor* - the tree has issues that will likely not be able to be corrected to bring it back to good health and form
- *Dying/Dead*

It is important to note that in Lordsburg, tree condition was evaluated by a cursory visual assessment without tree health assessment tools. Assigned conditions may not accurately reflect the actual health of individual trees. Additionally, the 2018 tree inventory conditions have not all been updated. As the tree inventory is being completed, a **thorough tree health assessment should be conducted to gain a more accurate understanding of Lordsburg's overall tree canopy health.** This information should inform the development of a maintenance schedule, and prioritization of a tree replacement or succession plan. Tree Plotter can be used to keep track of specific trees in priority locations for this purpose.

The trees in areas that have been inventoried in Lordsburg show a distributed mix of tree health conditions from "Dying" to "Good". Out of 532 trees currently inventoried in Tree Plotter, about 28% are reported to be in "Poor" or "Dying/Dead" condition, 40% are in "Fair" condition, and 31.5% are in "Good" condition. This relatively even distribution of conditions also applies to most species, indicating that s**ite conditions (such as lack of irrigation) are having more impact on tree health than species selection.** However, ash species are consistently struggling across the city. Arizona ash (*Fraxinus velutina*) trees are native to the area, but they are riparian species and need a significant amount of water to thrive. It is not recommended that the City plant riparian species going forward, as they will continue to struggle with heat and water limitations.

As part of the project, the CFN hosts workshops for maintenance staff to teach proper tree pruning techniques in CFN communities, which includes Lordsburg. Featured in photo: April 2024 Bayard workshop.

Tree risk. Assessing tree risk is a good approach to help prioritize the maintenance work that needs to be done in Lordsburg's community forest. Tree risk is a combination of tree condition, tree height/size, and potential consequences should the tree fail (such as causing injury to people or damage to utility lines, buildings/infrastructure, vehicles, etc). Accurate and individual tree risk assessment is most reliably done by qualified professionals who are trained in tree health assessment and in understanding site conditions. **Training Lordsburg landscape maintenance staff on basic tree risk assessment principles will allow them to provide risk management recommendations, proactively plan the city's tree maintenance needs into the future, and identify when the help of a professional arborist may be needed.**

Because of the relatively short stature of the tree canopy in Lordsburg's public spaces, there are few identified maintenance needs that would be considered urgent due to tree risk. However, there are dead trees requiring removal in almost all of the public spaces. Priority for tree removal should be given to taller trees in more high-use areas, such as those in Short and North Parks and in the downtown area. Furthermore, **all trees in Lordsburg's parks and community gathering spaces should be considered higher priority for maintenance due to their potential to impact people should they fail.**

"The trees around Short Park need trimming, and the playground there would benefit greatly from low shrubs & colorful plants."

- Lordsburg Resident

Irrigation Infrastructure

All trees and landscaping will need irrigation throughout their lives. Therefore, understanding the existing irrigation infrastructure is an important indicator of the sustainability of Lordsburg's community forest. Insufficient irrigation is a very common cause for poor tree health in urban areas. Irrigation infrastructure in Lordsburg is very limited. Existing systems can be found at North Park, DOT Park, the entrance to Veterans Park, select areas within Short Park, and around some public buildings, though the condition of these systems vary widely. It is recommended that Lordsburg employ strategies to increase irrigation efficiency in areas with trees to improve plant health and decrease the use of drinking water for irrigation.

Drip emitter irrigation can be a very efficient and effective way of watering trees in arid climates, as they deliver slow and targeted water to tree root systems while minimizing water loss to evaporation. However, the only tree roots that are effective at taking up water are the fine roots that grow away from the trunk near the canopy drip line, within the top 1-2 feet of soil. If a tree only has drip emitters close to the tree trunk, that means the tree cannot take up water effectively. Each tree should have a minimum of three drip emitters positioned along the canopy drip line, and these emitters need to be adjusted outward as the tree grows. The most effective configuration is a spiral encircling the trunk, allowing the system to meet the needs of both newly planted and maturing trees, with additional emitters added or realigned over time. For trees and larger plants, drip emitter systems paired with mulch rings of at least six feet in diameter provide the greatest efficiency and flexibility.

Flood irrigation is being used to water the tree around the perimeter of Short Park and the trees within Veterans Park, and was likely used to establish the windbreak trees around the schools. Flood irrigation can be an effective irrigation technique for species of trees that are equipped to withstand alternating periods of flood and drought, but are not appropriate for all species. Soil moisture levels must be monitored very closely and trees should be monitored for any stress response to ensure adequate irrigation.

There are many great irrigation resources available including the Bernalillo County guidelines and instructions on how to build an efficient watering system for mature trees. See the additional resources section of this plan for links to this and other resources.

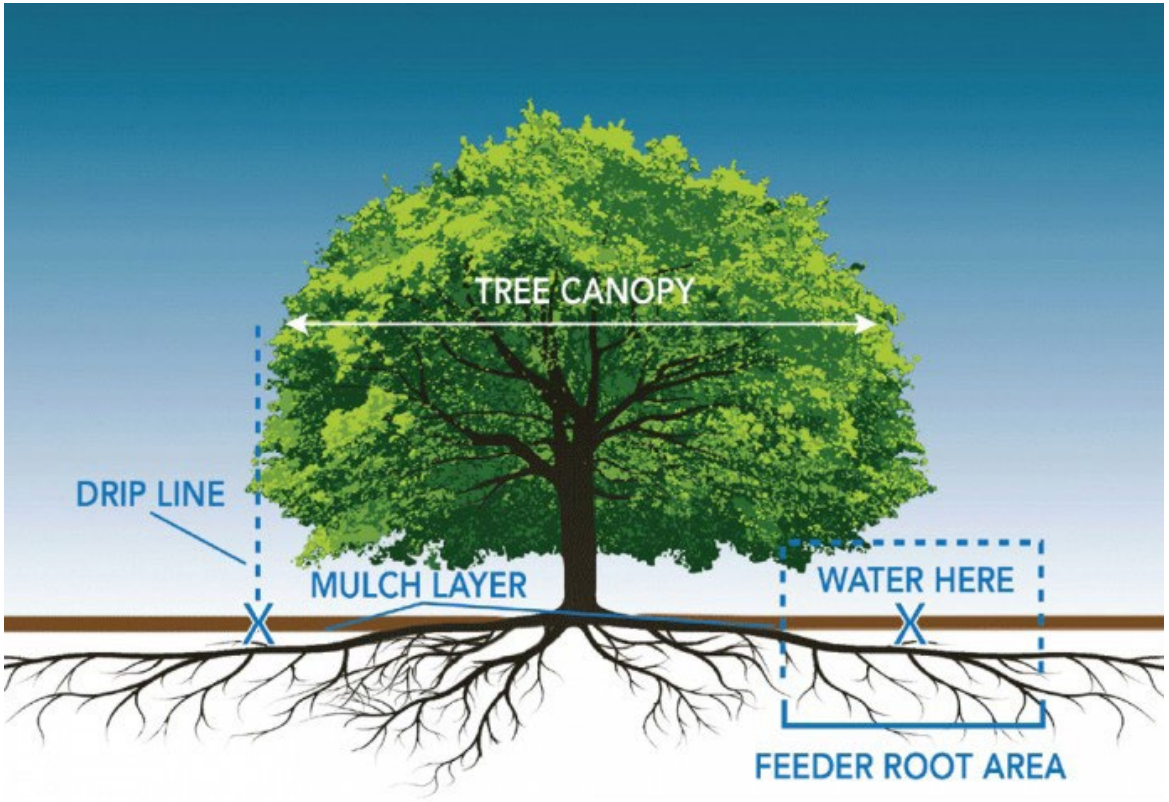
The current lack of automatic irrigation systems results in a huge burden on Lordsburg municipal staff time, and when other maintenance issues take precedence, tree health will inevitably suffer. **Investing in automatic irrigation will save time and money and deliver the most benefit to Lordsburg's residents.** It is recommended that Lordsburg begin transitioning away from manual irrigation, and prioritize installing drip emitter systems in high use areas.

Until automated irrigation systems can be installed, an option to improve ease and effectiveness of tree irrigation is to pursue purchasing or renting a water truck or a water trailer. This approach allows targeted watering where it is most needed, rather than broadly flooding areas, and could potentially use gray water instead of drinking water. The use of a water truck would support water conservation goals in Lordsburg while ensuring the city's trees receive sufficient irrigation.

As Lordsburg continues to develop, maximizing irrigation efficiency should be a priority. This includes evaluating existing systems, addressing maintenance needs, and incorporating efficient irrigation into all new planting projects. Planned street or utility improvement projects provide strategic opportunities to install additional irrigation infrastructure. Finally, **it is recommended that Lordsburg establish irrigation standards in their community forest management program so that all irrigation infrastructure is the same, simplifying irrigation system maintenance and minimizing staff time required.**

"I feel such an incredible adoration and love for trees. Being amongst them is special, particularly in Southwest New Mexico."

- Lordsburg Resident



Trees take up most of their water using fine roots located near the tree canopy drip line Image credit: Denver Water.

Curb cut, bioswale and basin complex in Silver City constructed by Asher Gelbart, Green Energy Now, that will allow stormwater to irrigate the landscape and reduce flooding in streets during storm events.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

With such limited water resources in the Lordsburg Basin, green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) features can be a critical tool to help irrigate native plantings with stormwater while reducing the use of drinking water. GSI can include features such as curb cuts, bioswales, and stormwater harvesting basins and can be implemented alongside tree planting projects to catch stormwater and repurpose it for irrigation. GSI mitigates nuisance ponding during storms while also improving watershed health, supporting water conservation and providing a range of other benefits to the community.

The elevation map of Lordsburg shows that the city is on a slope, with the lowest elevation areas located to the north, near the railroad tracks. Residents who participated in the community survey identified a few locations that experience significant ponding during storms and would benefit from the addition of GSI, such as along Motel Drive, along the cemetery road, near the museum, north of the railroad tracks, and on the numbered residential streets to the east of Main Street. Wabash Street also functions as a drainage way, where stormwater is directed towards Short Park. There may be opportunities to install GSI in these areas and along major roads within the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area to direct stormwater into streetside landscape areas where this water can provide supplemental irrigation for trees and plants. As rainfall patterns continue to change bringing more rain in fewer storm events, the use of GSI alongside traditional storm-sewer systems will become increasingly important.

Rainwater can also be harvested off the roofs of buildings and other impervious surfaces to help water trees and plants at Lordsburg parks and public facilities. Short Park and North Park both have roof structures that provide a source of stormwater for supplemental irrigation. Downspouts on the buildings at the library, the museum and other public buildings can be directed into landscaped areas to put this water to beneficial use. As streetscapes and public facilities in Lordsburg are revitalized, look for opportunities to incorporate GSI into the landscape design..

"Trees hold so much value not only for visual purposes but for overall physical and mental well-being.

- Lordsburg Resident

Rendering of the County Managers Building imagining streetscapes with trees, GSI and public art. Renderings by Anthropopulus Design + Planning.

Community Vision

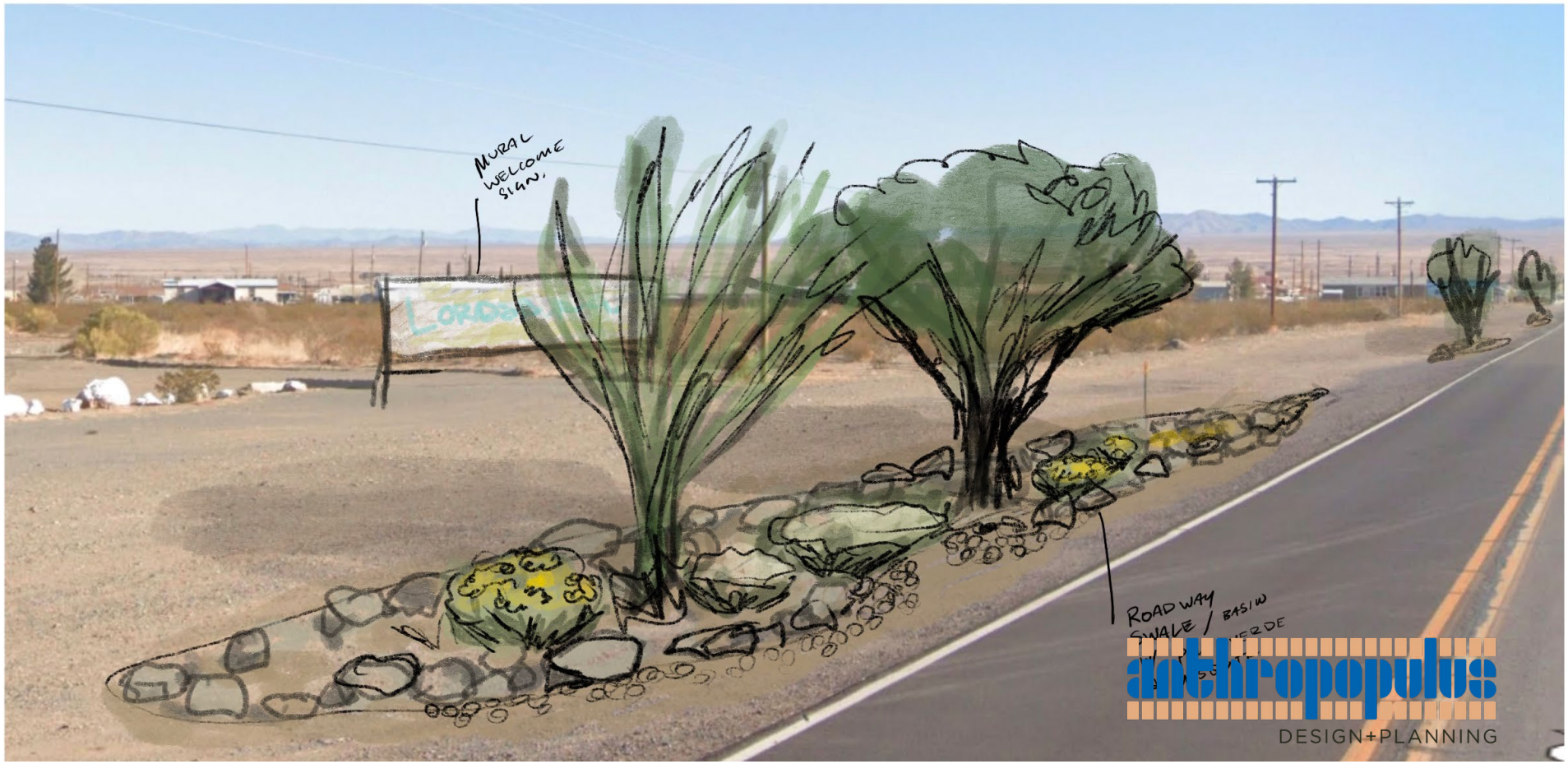
The City of Lordsburg's community vision is set forth in the 2024 Lordsburg Comprehensive Plan Update and the annual Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP). Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan is built upon strategies that advance many of the goals in these complementary plans, including improving city beautification and maintenance, revitalizing Lordsburg's business districts, bolstering tourism, developing outdoor recreation assets, and increasing walkability in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA). Lordsburg is striving to grow beyond its role as a highway and railroad stop, transforming into a vibrant community that enhances residents' quality of life while supporting diverse economic opportunities. The community forest can be a key component in achieving these goals and further developing Lordsburg's small-town character and identity, helping to make it a pleasant place to live and visit.

During the community engagement process in Lordsburg, a consistent, concerning perception emerged that no one cares about the community forest. Municipal staff indicated that it was difficult to engage residents in community projects, and residents reported that they are discouraged by poor tree health on city grounds and by past community greening efforts that were unsuccessful. There seems to be a shared feeling that improvements in the community forest will not be valued by the community or properly maintained by the city. **However, both residents and municipal staff also**

expressed a strong desire to improve the community forest in Lordsburg, and make the community a nicer place to live.

The CFN project team can help Lordsburg to set realistic goals, create sustainable processes, and implement successful community forestry projects that can promote a sense of community pride. As a starting point for building long-term engagement and support for the Lordsburg community forest, **it is recommended that Lordsburg first focus on implementing simple but effective public landscape projects and maintaining clear and consistent community messaging.** The CFN will provide resources to help Lordsburg municipal staff to re-engage residents, including educational resources on plant and irrigation recommendations, establishing a volunteer program for tree maintenance and planting, and establishing a Tree Board. This new investment by the CFN in partnership with the City can help set a new tone with residents and inspire them to plant trees on their own property.

This Community Forest Management plan aims to chart a realistic, sustainable path for growing a greener Lordsburg. The following sections expand on Lordsburg's vision for its community and the current conditions in the community forest, and discusses how these considerations were integrated with urban forestry best practices to produce the tailored recommendations featured in Lordsburg's *Action Plan.*



Rendering of the planned Continental Divide Trail along Main Street north of Veterans Park, imagining shaded walkways, public art, and GSI basins that capture stormwater runoff from the street to support native, drought tolerant plants. Renderings by Anthropopulus Design + Planning.

Economic Development and Revitalization

Lordsburg was built around transportation and continues to rely on it as the backbone of the local economy. The Comprehensive Plan clearly outlines a desire to revitalize the city and develop additional economic opportunities. T**he presence of trees in business districts has been demonstrated to have economic benefits for communities** by attracting more visitors, encouraging them to stay longer, and ultimately increasing foot traffic for local businesses. This approach is already visible at national chains along the I-10 business loop, such as McDonald's, travel centers, and the KOA campground, where managers maintain landscaping to attract customers.

By planting trees and developing landscapes at public facilities and right-of-way within Lordsburg's business districts, the City can lead by example and demonstrate how community forestry supports economic revitalization. Lordsburg hosts numerous Hidalgo County facilities and several buildings owned by other government agencies. With support from the CFN, the City can coordinate with the County and other agencies to install irrigated trees and cohesive landscapes on public property to support Lordsburg's long-term goals for the community.

Many of the local businesses and churches in Lordsburg are working to implement attractive landscaping projects, though some may be finding it challenging to maintain these landscapes successfully on their own. To support these efforts, **Lordsburg could explore developing a landscaping incentive program** to provide local businesses with trained landscapers, plants and mulch in partnership with the Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project. The CFN can support the City to provide guidance

"I know our community can benefit from trees."

- Lordsburg Resident

Lordsburg' s Vision Statement

"The City of Lordsburg is an attractive place where families and community are valued through quality education, employment opportunities, and service while visitors can enjoy the quality of place through experiencing Lordsburg culture and history in a logistic haven."

Historic photo of Lordsburg's Main Street, when the city was known as the "Broadway of America's Highways. Photo credit: City of Lordsburg.

on recommended plant palettes for common planting sites – such as planters, bare lots, GSI features, sidewalk strips – to give every business at least one landscaping option and contribute to a cohesive aesthetic throughout the business district. A Chamber of Commerce recognition program could further encourage participation, celebrating businesses that invest in beautification.

In addition to incentive programs, **the City may also consider enacting a policy that establishes baseline landscaping requirements for new large-scale developments and national retailers**. By encouraging and investing in well-designed landscaping along key corridors, Lordsburg can create a more inviting atmosphere that appeals to both entrepreneurs and national chains who are considering doing business in the area.

Lordsburg's Comprehensive Plan also includes plans to develop an Industrial Park near the airport to expand opportunities for economic activity. This is an example of a project that offers an opportunity to integrate tree plantings and irrigation infrastructure to support the development of the community forest to support economic goals. **As Lordsburg continues to plan for the future, including modest landscaping in all new development projects will go a long way to support the City's goals for economic development and beautification.**

"Greetings from Lordsburg" postcard artwork. Photo credit: New Mexico Tourism Department.

"Trees help to provide a sense of natural beauty and calmness. They just make everything prettier!"

- Lordsburg Resident

Beautification and Placemaking

Trees and vegetation contribute to the beauty, identity, and spirit of a place. Their colors, textures, and seasonal changes bring visual interest to otherwise plain areas and soften the appearance of less attractive urban infrastructure. **For 82% of Lordsburg residents surveyed, city beautification was identified as a top motivation for enhancing the city's community forest,** the most popular response by far. Additionally, 64% of survey respondents said that promoting community pride was a highly valued benefit of new community forest initiatives.

Lordsburg residents want their community forest to help beautify their city and provide outdoor spaces where people can relax, recreate, spend time with friends and loved ones, and connect with nature. Studies show that trees and green spaces not only enhance neighborhood character but also encourage people to spend more time in public areas. By drawing people outside and encouraging positive interactions, the community forest can promote social cohesion, strengthen relationships among neighbors and foster a sense of neighborhood safety. **As future projects are planned, it will be important to prioritize aesthetics and embrace the concept of 'placemaking' to ensure that the community forest continues to enrich quality of life in Lordsburg.**

Developing cohesive plant palettes for different types of community forest planting spaces (such as parks, streets and medians, commercial landscapes, GSI locations, planters, etc.) will help Lordsburg to develop a distinct visual aesthetic. When combined with thoughtful elements like wayfinding signage, art, benches, and walking paths, landscaping can promote cultural expression and create more pleasant outdoor spaces for both residents and visitors.

In desert communities where the capacity to support trees is limited due to water conservation measures, it can be effective to supplement community forestry initiatives with murals, sculptures and other forms of public art. Community art projects make a significant impact on enhancing community character and revitalizing key areas of town by adding color and visual interest to complement landscapes.

Currently, much of Lordsburg's undeveloped land within the city limits is barren. The vegetation that naturally moves into these spaces are scrub grasses and mesquite. Maintenance staff report that they spend a large portion of their time on weed removal and herbicide application in these vacant lots to keep them from being an eye-sore. **Developing and adopting an integrated weed management program,** in combination with actively planting areas with drought-tolerant native grasses and shrubs in problem areas, will lead to reduced maintenance and a more beautiful city with the added benefit of reducing wind-borne dust and sand.

Mexican Sycamore
Platanus mexicana

Western Soapberry
Sapindus drummondii

Escarpment Live Oak
Quercus fusiformis

Texas Sage
Leucophyllum frutescens

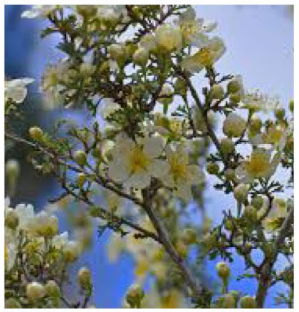
Arizona Cypress
Cupressus arizonica

Desert Mules Ear
Scabrethia scabra

Desert Willow
Chilopsis linearis

Screwbean Mesquite
Prosopis pubescens

Desert Fernbush
Chamaebatiaria millefolium



Cliffrose
Purshia mexicana

Parry's Agave
Agave parryi

Flame Acanthus
Anisacanthus quadrifidus var wrightii

Example of a regionally appropriate plant palette for Lordsburg.

Dust storms are common in the Lordsburg area. Trees can improve air quality by filtering out dust and absorbing other airborne pollutants, creating better environmental conditions in urban areas. Photo credit: NM DOT.

Air Quality, Urban Heat and Public Health

Lordsburg residents highly value trees for their ability to enhance public health by improving environmental conditions. For example, 54% of survey participants in Lordsburg cited improved air quality as one of the most critical benefits provided by the urban forest. **Urban trees act as natural air filters by absorbing pollutants such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ground level ozone, and airborne particulate matter when placed in close proximity to pollution sources.** They also release oxygen and improve the overall air quality. This is particularly important in communities like Lordsburg where air pollution can be a major health concern, especially for the most vulnerable populations. Prioritizing tree plantings in areas that serve vulnerable populations is a strategic way to provide equitable access to the human health benefits of trees.

Extreme heat is another major concern for Lordsburg residents, with 68% of survey respondents citing heat mitigation as a highly important urban forest benefit. The American Public Health Association identifies heat-related illness as a leading cause of death nationally due to weather and environmental events. This is particularly acute in desert communities like Lordsburg, where hot summer temperatures can be made more extreme in areas with a higher concentration of heat-absorbing surfaces like buildings, roads, and pavement.

Trees play a key role in mitigating urban heat and the associated human health impacts. By providing shade and releasing moisture into the air through the process of transpiration, urban trees provide a cooling effect that increases pedestrian comfort and reduces urban heat. **Prioritizing tree plantings in high-use pedestrian spaces like walkways, outdoor recreation spaces, and community parks is an efficient way to provide the cooling benefits of trees where people need it the most.**

"Trees help filter the air and make a community more inviting."

- Lordsburg Resident

Rendering of the Lordsburg Civic Center, imagining streetscaping to promote walkability and beautification in the heart of Lordsburg. Renderings by Anthropopulus Design + Planning.

Walkability and Connectivity

Lordsburg's Comprehensive Plan indicates that improving walkability is a high priority, and identifies a number of upcoming projects. The City is working to create and improve pedestrian paths in coordination with the Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project and their Downtown Walking Tour initiative. Hidalgo County-Lordsburg Chamber of Commerce is also collaborating with the City of Lordsburg to create new pedestrian and bicycle routes as part of the Outdoor Recreation campaign. Community forestry projects will be important components of these exciting new walkability initiatives, both to beautify routes and to create more comfortable conditions to encourage public use. Trees and landscaping not only provide shade for pedestrians, but also help create a sense of connectivity in Lordsburg by visually linking key areas and softening the highways' impacts such as noise and poor air quality. **Implementing strategic streetside plantings can help connect business districts, community services, neighborhoods, and schools to create a network of walkable streets.**

Focusing community forestry efforts in a few key places can make a significant impact. For example, **Lordsburg can use trees and plants to develop a pedestrian-friendly walking corridor along 4th Street,** which spans from the elementary school on the east side of town to Short park on the west side. This route connects a large number of community amenities and services including the Hidalgo County Museum, Memorial Park, the High School, a dollar store, a pharmacy and the intersection with Main Street. The intersection of 4th Street and Pyramid Street is a particular hub of community services and Hidalgo County facilities, including the Lordsburg Hidalgo County Library, the Post Office and Post Office Park, the County Manager's Office and other county administrative offices, Lordsburg Hidalgo Senior Center, the County Courthouse and the Civic Center. This hub is already a focus area for current revitalization efforts in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, which presents an excellent opportunity to **leverage existing initiatives to advance goals for community forestry.** It

is recommended that Lordsburg collaborate with community partners like LEAP and Hidalgo County to increase tree canopy in this high-use area and bring the vision of a walking corridor along 4th Street to life.

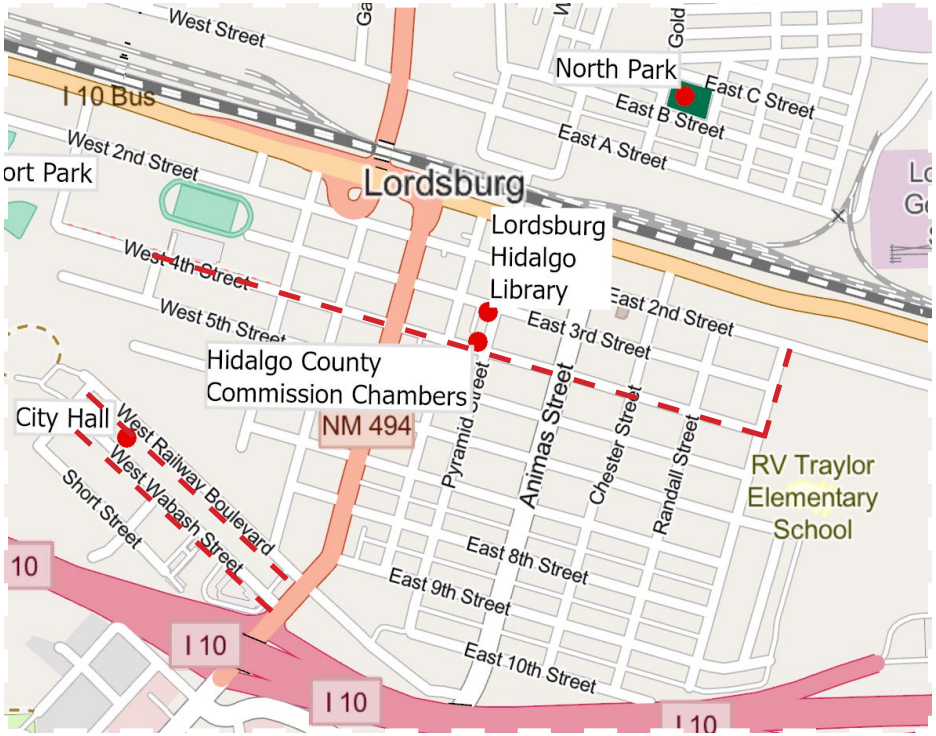
As discussed in the Economic Development section, **Lordsburg can lead by example in these efforts by investing in trees and irrigated landscapes at government owned properties and rights-of-way adjacent to the 4th street walking corridor**. This can include the intermittent buffer strips along the sidewalk on 4th Street, which are generally wide, unpaved and empty, making them an ideal site for adding trees and landscaping. If this project is pursued, a formal crosswalk on the 4th Street crossing of Main Street is recommended. Since much of this neighborhood is residential, **Lordsburg can also explore a program to encourage residents to plant and care for trees along 4th Street, and other walking corridors in this neighborhood,** potentially by providing free trees and planting support from project partners. This sort of initiative promotes civic pride and community building, and is a positive way to engage residents in revitalizing Lordsburg.

Post Office Park, located along the 4th Street walking corridor, is a small pocket park across from the Post Office that is maintained by Hidalgo County. This park boasts a rare instance of high tree density in Lordsburg and is an important site for supporting walkability and urban greening in Lordsburg. A small amount of maintenance is needed, including pruning, improved irrigation, and replacement of dead and dying trees with new, regional appropriate plantings. These efforts would go a long way to further enhance this community asset. Across from Post Office Park, there is also an opportunity to collaborate with Hidalgo County to plant shade trees and other landscaping in front of the County Managers Office and near the Civic Center building and parking lot, creating a cluster of green space in a key area of the city.

Memorial Park is also located along the 4th Street corridor. There is no opportunity for tree planting, as the entire area is covered in impervious surfaces. However, there are two small planters on the site which can be re-planted with small, heat-tolerant flowering plants to bring some color and life to this urban landscape and tie in with other beautification efforts in this area. These planters would need to be hand watered on a seasonal schedule to keep the plants alive and healthy.

In addition to the 4th Street corridor, **West Wabash Street and West Railway Boulevard** is another opportunity to expand existing streetscaping to create a walkable landscape corridor that connects essential community services. There are three national businesses and a rehabilitation clinic along West Wabash Street, which already have some streetscaping. City Hall also has landscaped grounds and an adjacent pocket park. The Bus Terminal, Police Department, and Magistrate Court are publicly-owned properties along this corridor that could invest in landscaping and contribute to a shaded streetscape that creates a sense of connectivity. With additional trees and plants, as well as maintenance to existing landscapes, this could become another attractive walking corridor for the City of Lordsburg.

It can be challenging to make a small community like Lordsburg feel cohesive and pedestrian-friendly when it is divided into segments by the interstate, state highways, and the railroad track. By implementing a visually cohesive string of urban forestry projects along key corridors, residents and visitors can enjoy attractive, shaded pedestrian routes that connect the majority of Lordsburg's community services and recreation areas.



A pedestrian corridor along 4th Street could be formalized with trees and plants to promote walkability and connect community services in Lordsburg.

Rendering of Short Park imagining clusters of drought tolerant trees and plants with organic groundcover to mitigate heat and dust. Renderings by Anthropopulus Design + Planning.

Parks and Community Gathering Spaces

The 2024 Lordsburg Comprehensive Plan establishes a goal to improve and expand outdoor recreation opportunities for the benefit of both residents and travelers. The city has two large parks (Short Park and Veterans Park), a smaller recreational park (North Park), as well as three pocket parks (DOT Park, Post Office Park, and Memorial Park).

Research shows that residents who live in areas with more green space are three times more likely to exercise regularly, which may reduce risk of chronic illnesses like heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Daily exposure to nature has also been shown to have positive effects on peoples' mental health and overall wellbeing. Of the residents who participated in the public survey, 43% reported that providing spaces for outdoor recreation was one of their top priorities for improving Lordsburg's community forest, and 57% emphasized the mental health benefits of trees.

Lordsburg's parks do not have turf grass, and many of the park spaces are without any form of automated irrigation. As a result, most of Lordsburg's recreation spaces feel hot, dry, and dusty and as a result are rarely used during the summer. **Many Lordsburg residents who responded to the public survey expressed a strong desire for park improvements,** and commented that more trees would help increase public use of these spaces by making them more comfortable to spend time in, especially during the hotter months. Urban forestry projects that utilize best management practices for desert communities can help enhance Lordsburg's existing parks and community gathering spaces, and even create additional recreation opportunities.

Short Park is a large multi-use recreation area where Lordsburg has centered most of its outdoor recreation resources. Short Park contains multiple baseball fields, picnic areas, a skate park, a disc golf course, and a playground area. It is also adjacent to the Lordsburg Special Events Center, the pool, and Lordsburg High School. The existing trees and shrubs in Short Park are for the most part placed around the perimeter of the park or on

the edges of the baseball fields, often planted in linear strips. Generally, the existing trees are not located in areas that are most used by park visitors, and therefore do not provide shade where it is most needed. Short Park is a large area, and it is likely not realistic to increase the tree canopy across the entire site. However, strategically placed clusters of trees and shrubs with organic mulch and groundcover can create small, cooler "oases" within the larger park that offer more comfortable and sheltered spaces for visitors. Potential priority locations for these oases include the areas near the playground, next to the Lordsburg Special Event Center, the picnic area in front of the pool; and the seating areas around the Skate Park and the baseball fields. Ideally, these new community forestry projects in Short Park would be installed along with an automatic irrigation system.

Veterans Park, located off Main Street to the south of the city, has a gated entrance and two long lines of picnic shelters. It is primarily used by residents as a walking area, and is also used by travelers as a picnic and camping area. For hikers of the Continental Divide Trail coming in from the south, this is their first stop on the way through Lordsburg. There are over 150 existing trees planted at this park, primarily along the picnic shelter lines. These trees are periodically flood irrigated from water standpipes, but many are currently in poor health and are likely not receiving enough water to thrive. This area will benefit from tree maintenance and thinning, including removal of dead and dying trees. Installing automatic drip irrigation lines would be the ideal solution to provide consistent irrigation and would greatly improve the health of the trees in Veterans Park. At the very least, more intensive hand watering and the addition of organic mulch around these trees is recommended, especially for the larger, non-native trees like Chinese pistache.

The trees at the entrance to Veterans Park are also struggling, showing signs of heat stress, wind stress, and lack of water. To improve aesthetics at the

Rendering of Short Park imagining shaded, sheltered areas for visitors to enjoy near seating and play areas. Renderings by Anthropopulus Design + Planning.

Photo shows sparse tree canopy near the playground and picnic area in North Park.

entrance to the park, it is recommended that Lordsburg re-landscape this area with low, native shrubs that are attractive and easy to maintain, and reserve the use of trees for areas of the park where shade is most needed by park visitors. This work could be done in coordination with the upcoming initiative to improve the entrance to Veterans Park, where there are plans to add bathroom facilities, a kiosk, a roadside trail with a few shade trees, and other amenities for CDT hikers and other travelers. There may also be an opportunity to incorporate GSI features that capture stormwater runoff from NM-494 to support irrigation of this landscape.

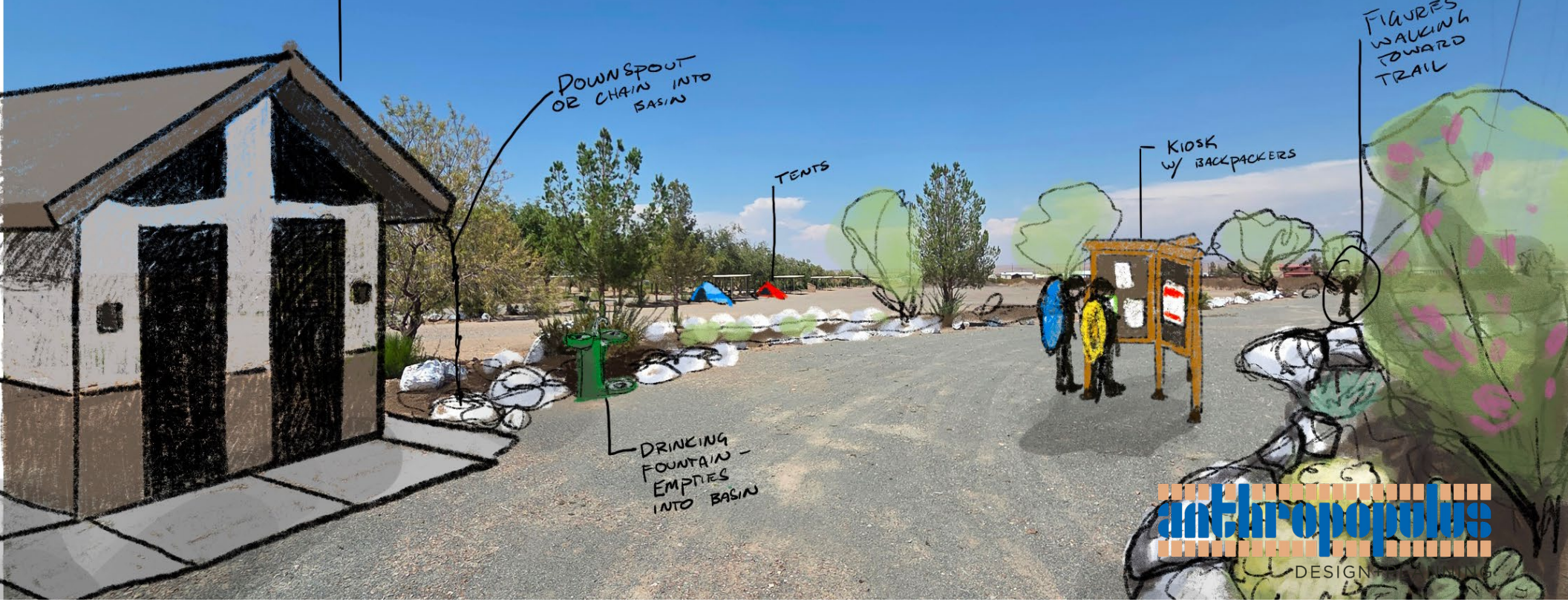
North Park, located north of the railroad tracks, is a small park with a large shade structure and picnic tables, an event stage, and a playground area. Trees line the perimeter of the park, but there is very little ground cover present to mitigate dust. The existing line of trees would benefit from the addition of a continuous band of organic mulch (8-12 feet wide) to reduce wind erosion and help maintain soil moisture near tree roots. It is also recommended that Lordsburg expand the automated drip irrigation system in North Park to provide adequate irrigation for these trees and support any new plantings. The ash trees in the park in particular are struggling with insufficient irrigation and may need to be replaced with a species that is better adapted to the conditions of the site. Irrigation improvements can also be leveraged to create a small area of drought tolerant living ground cover in targeted areas of the park, such as around the playground, to help cool the area and mitigate dust.

There are two cemeteries in Lordsburg that serve as community gathering spaces for residents as well as surrounding rural communities. **Mountain View Cemetery**, managed by the City of Lordsburg, has many established evergreens scattered throughout and deciduous trees lining several of the interior roads. The publicly managed trees in this cemetery are flood irrigated using standpipe hydrants. A tree inventory should be completed at Mountain View Cemetery and evaluated to prioritize maintenance and irrigation needs. The deciduous trees in particular appear to be struggling due to limited water and harsh site conditions. There are also grasses and small plants that have been planted at grave sites by visitors who are responsible for their irrigation, resulting in a variety of health conditions. It may be necessary for the City of Lordsburg to consider establishing a cemetery plant policy that includes irrigation guidelines and limits future planting to help ensure that cemetery plants and trees are cared for appropriately and are aligned with the city's water conservation goals.

Shakespeare Cemetery, located south of the city, is managed by Hidalgo County. Deciduous trees line the road at the northern entrance, which are flood irrigated with standpipe hydrants. Evergreens and palm trees have been planted over time at individual grave sites, many of which are well established, but are not being consistently irrigated. All trees at the cemetery should be inventoried and evaluated for maintenance and irrigation needs, and **a cemetery planting and irrigation policy should be considered.**

"North Park needs bigger trees that you can sit under and enjoy the park."

- Lordsburg Resident



Rendering of the Veterans Park entrance imagining new tourist infrastructure and enhanced landscaping. Renderings by Anthropopulus Design + Planning.

Tourism

The City of Lordsburg is working to invest in tourism initiatives that attract more travelers and visitors and contribute to economic development. The City has already started working on developing tourist infrastructure such as lodging, dining, specialty shops and visitor centers, and is collaborating with the New Mexico Tourism Department to promote Lordsburg as a tourist destination. **Community forestry projects are an important part of tourism infrastructure, enhancing beautification, providing more shade in business districts, and helping to create a distinctive and charming sense of place.**

Lordsburg has the unique distinction of being directly on the **Continental Divide Trail**, a 3,100-mile National Scenic Trail that connects the Mexican border to the Canadian border along the spine of the Rocky Mountains. The trail connects to Highway 70 to the north of the city, and continues along Main Street and past Veterans Park to the far south of town before extending out into the wildlands again near Shakespeare Cemetery. The CDT brings hundreds of visitors per year to Lordsburg, and it is a unique tourist attraction that can be emphasized as a point of community pride and part of what makes Lordsburg special. The existing Continental Divide kiosk near Shakespeare Cemetery, would benefit from a few native plants, grasses and cacti to make this marker appear more formal and attractive, and could be included in regular cemetery maintenance.

The **Lordsburg Special Events Center** is located between Short Park and the High School, adjacent to the Lordsburg City Pool. Additional landscaping and trees will enhance the center as a tourism attraction and a popular spot for residents. Cohesive landscaping can help connect this facility to Short Park and further develop this key recreational and gathering area. Shade trees and landscaping along the sidewalk that borders the parking lot would not only beautify the space, but also provide shade and cooling for the playground area to the west. Small stature plants and ground cover around the covered picnic areas in front of the event center and Lordsburg pool would also play a dual role of beautification and cooling.

The **Hidalgo County Fairgrounds**, located to the far east of town, is home to the annual County Fair and New Mexico State University's Extension Program and is also used for agricultural programs, mud bogs, rodeos and other community events. The fairgrounds currently have very little landscaping. Native trees and shrubs focused around picnic areas, walkways and entrances, would bring much needed shade and add attractive character to this community site.

The **Hidalgo County Museum,** located at the east of the city near the Elementary School, is another tourist attraction that would be improved by an investment in trees and landscaping. The museum already has a few trees on its grounds, which could benefit from additional watering to help them grow into healthy, mature trees. Additional landscaping in the front of the building with native shrubs and trees, potentially along with small educational signs to identify the tree species, would add visual interest at the museum's entrance. In time, this could serve as a small arboretum to showcase a diversity of native or desert-adapted species. With the addition of a picnic area and a shade structure, this can become a favorite outdoor gathering space in the community.

The **Lordsburg Hidalgo County Library** is in a historic building, and may attract travelers who are interested in browsing a collection of books on southwest history and culture, including local authors and biographies. The small lot has a good number of established trees, though many are in need of maintenance and additional irrigation. A few small improvements to this landscape would give visitors a visual cue that the library would be a nice place to stop.

"I like to go for walks. Trees provide shade and beauty on my walks and for my home."

- Lordsburg Resident

Public Art

To complement these community forestry projects and support tourism goals, **Lordsburg can collaborate with LEAP and local artists to add murals on buildings, signs and underpasses along Main Street** for the enjoyment of CDT hikers, tourists and residents alike. Murals could feature culturally significant images, locally historic figures or events, and artistic renderings of native plants and wildlife. These mural projects would also provide an opportunity to engage the community in a positive manner, by allowing the public to give input on the mural designs. Integrating art and color into Lordsburg's public spaces would support goals for tourism, economic development, beautification and community pride.

Hidalgo County Museum is one of many tourism facilities in Lordsburg that would be enhanced by native trees, landscaping and public art.

Streetscapes

Streetscaping projects, while often a good investment, can also be extremely challenging, particularly in areas where multiple jurisdictions are at play. This is certainly the case in Lordsburg where **the most impactful projects for supporting economic revitalization will be streetscaping along Main Street and Motel Drive, both of which are state highways**. Making any changes to streetscapes on Main Street and Motel Drive will necessitate direct coordination with the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NM DOT) and will require a more complex planning process than many of the other recommendations in this plan. However, **these streetscape improvements are certainly an attainable long-term goal for Lordsburg, and the CFN can offer support to get this collaborative process moving.**

Modifying existing streetscapes to include trees often requires removal of pavement, new irrigation infrastructure, and treatment of compacted soils. **Adequate irrigation is paramount for plant survival in streetscapes,** where large areas of heat-absorbing surfaces like pavement increase the risk of heat stress for trees. If done carefully and well, adding trees and plants to key streetscapes in Lordsburg would be transformative for the city and provide many benefits for both Lordsburg residents and travelers, improving environmental conditions, enhancing aesthetics and ultimately supporting the city's economic growth.

Photos on this page show examples of drought-tolerant streetscapes in Las Cruses, illustrating how adding trees and cohesive landscaping can enhance urban areas land beautify business districts, like Lordsburg's Main Street.

Photo shows an example of streetscaping on Wabash Street in Lordsburg.

Main Street

Main Street (I10 Exit 22, NM Highway 494) is a wide-lane road lined with sidewalks on both sides that serves as Lordsburg's major north-south artery. It connects to the downtown streets and Motel Drive, and is lined with numerous businesses and a few government offices. Main Street is also a segment of the Continental Divide Trail. Although the speed limit is reduced throughout the city, the width and openness of the road contributes to ongoing challenges with speeding vehicles, and poses a safety hazard for pedestrians and cyclists. **Community forestry projects along Main Street's streetscapes will support traffic calming measures while also revitalizing this business district by providing shade and beautification.** Main Street was the most requested place for tree planting projects by residents who participated in the community survey that informed this plan.

The CFN can support Lordsburg in taking a comprehensive approach to the design, engineering, and installation of streetscaping with automatic irrigation and/or GSI along Main Street, spanning from Motel Drive to Poplar Street. Possible community forestry projects on Main Street might include features such as sidewalk buffer strips, median turn lane curbing and plantings, and the creation of dedicated bike lanes separated by curbing. All of this projects would include a diverse mix of regionally native, drought-tolerant trees and plants that are adapted to withstand high levels of heat in these urban conditions.

This vision of transforming Lordsburg's Main Street is a long term goal that will require dedicated planning, budget, time and effort to implement. While the City of Lordsburg is in the process of collaborating with NM DOT, LEAP and the CFN on the planning of this large-scale project, **there are also some smaller-scale projects that can be initiated in the interim to deliver more immediate improvements to Main Street's streetscapes.**

The existing landscape features and plantings on the embankments of Exit 22 on I-10 can be improved through some basic maintenance and potentially additional plantings. This landscaped area is owned by NM DOT but the City of Lordsburg contributes to maintaining this site. Lordsburg can coordinate with NM DOT to develop and implement maintenance specifications, assess for any necessary irrigation improvements, and replant or reseed the area as necessary.

At the four corners of the I-10 Exit 22 on and off ramps, there is an opportunity to coordinate with NM DOT to implement GSI features with native low-growing, hardy, and drought-tolerant plants. Stormwater retention basins appear to be present already at two of the corners, and these features could be modified in alignment with GSI best practices. Even modest native landscapes would provide an aesthetic improvement to make a positive first impression on travelers exiting the interstate, while supporting biodiversity and air pollution mitigation in Lordsburg.

Many of the **storefronts within the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area** on Main Street are surrounded by pavement, such as Western Bank, Saucedo's Market, and Dollar General. In the interim, while a larger streetscaping project may be in development, Lordsburg can collaborate with property owners and LEAP on a campaign to install some form of landscaping at every business location along Main Street. These projects could take various forms, from raised planters to replacing areas of rock or pavement with native plantings and/or GSI features.

The intersection of Main Street and Motel Drive is a good location for a shorter term community forestry project, working in collaboration with the Economy Inn and the owner of the old Western Auto building. The addition of regionally-native flowering shrubs and a few drought-tolerant trees would make a significant and immediate impact to a high traffic intersection. Irrigation infrastructure would need to be installed, and the landscape would include organic mulch to pressure soil moisture and keep dust down.

Memorial Park, on 4th Street and Main Street. Adding street trees along these corridors would increase pedestrian comfort and beautify the downtown area.

The two empty lots at the intersection of Main Street and East Railway present a short-term opportunity to add street trees, groundcover plants and organic mulch. These lots are not owned by the City of Lordsburg, but the city can coordinate with property owners to complete the project. These trees might eventually need to be removed if a comprehensive Main Street project is accomplished in the future. However, this would make a significant visual impact at an major intersection and would provide the community with immediate benefits.

Lordsburg may consider exploring alternatives to the gravel that is currently in the median strip on Main Street, which looks harsh and may be difficult for maintenance staff to keep free from weeds. A landscaped median of native ground cover, wildflowers, and grasses with aesthetic rock gardens would support Lordsburg's goals for beautification and economic development along this corridor. Curb cuts would be added to allow stormwater to irrigate the medians. This may even reduce the maintenance requirement once the vegetation is established, because any weed would not stand out as much as they do on bare gravel.

"Main Street could definitely use some trees to help with wind and beautify the town."

- Lordsburg Resident

Photo shows good quality tree canopy in "DOT Park" on Motel Drive.

Motel Drive

Motel Drive (also known as the I-10 Business Loop) is a four-lane road running parallel to the railroad track to the north, with a sidewalk and middle turn lane that extends nearly its entire length. Motel Drive is a significant part of Lordsburg's history as a travel stop. There are travel centers at each end at the interstate exits, and a number of motels and RV Parks are located along the road. At its intersection with Main Street, Motel Drive becomes part of one of the densest areas of Lordsburg's business district. The City of Lordsburg has a desire to revitalize the buildings along Motel Drive to attract visitors and new businesses. Motel Drive was also one of the most requested planting sites by residents who participated in the public survey.

Within the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, most of the historic building storefronts along the south side of Motel Drive directly abut the sidewalk, with no space for planting. The north side of Motel Drive is largely undeveloped. **In the interim while a larger-scale NM DOT streetscaping project may be in development with support from the CFN, there are a few considerations for plantings along the Motel Drive corridor.**

DOT Park, located on Motel Drive, was installed by NM DOT as a highway landscaping project on a slope overlooking Hwy 70. The space is well planted and connects pedestrians from Motel Drive to two tree-lined blocks surrounding former school buildings, near Lordsburg High School and Short Park. Improved maintenance and irrigation is needed to enhance DOT Park as an asset that beautifies the entrance to Lordsburg's downtown. The addition or organic mulch and a few flowering shrubs may also be appropriate.

The Lordsburg Historic Marker at the west end of Motel Drive has a small pull-off area for passing vehicles. While irrigation infrastructure at this site is not recommended, a few small drought-hardy desert plants – such as yucca, chamisa, and cacti – would add aesthetic value, attract attention to the sign and serve as a warm welcome to Lordsburg. These plantings could be supported by simple GSI features, after an establishment period of manual watering.

Similarly, the **Amtrak train stop at Motel Drive and Center Street** would benefit from landscaping on both sides of this intersection, around the structures and near the parking areas. A few small desert shrubs and cacti with GSI features at this location would draw attention to the historic train station and contribute to beautification of Motel Drive.

Motel Drive is one of the main routes to connect visitors to Short Park and the Lordsburg Special Events Center, one of the City's main attractions and recreation areas. **There is an opportunity to use plants in combination with additional signage and public art to direct vehicles and beautify the route to the Short Park complex.** For example, highlighting the Maverick Lane intersection with plants and signage would lead visitors driving along Motel Drive directly to these community assets.

There are several large trees on the north side of Motel Drive, just off the railroad embankment, in an area that does not receive irrigation. This is a low elevation point for the city that seems to be naturally capturing enough stormwater to keep the trees alive. While not much work is needed here, Lordsburg can monitor the health of these trees and schedule maintenance tasks as needed to keep them looking nice.

School Landscapes

Lordsburg's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the value of their school system to the community, and declares a strong commitment to support their students. Previous investments in community forest initiatives reflect that commitment, as many past tree planting projects centered around the schools, such as the windbreaks planted at both the elementary and middle schools.

Lordsburg High School, which is relatively new, had trees planted immediately after construction. Because of its close proximity to Short Park, no additional landscaping or trees are recommended here. However, ongoing maintenance of these trees and adjustments to the irrigation systems must be scheduled and performed for these trees to remain healthy and grow into maturity. **Lordsburg can coordinate with school maintenance staff to encourage and support ongoing landscape assessment and maintenance, and share CFN trainings and resources.** It may be efficient for Lordsburg maintenance staff to incorporate tree checks at the high school into their regular maintenance schedule for Short Park.

Both the Elementary and Middle School provide important outdoor recreational spaces for children. The front entrances have some landscaping and trees, however the playgrounds and outdoor learning areas behind the schools do not have many shade trees or ground cover, other than on athletic fields. Shade trees in the most active areas of school campuses enable more pleasant play and outdoor learning for students, provide sun protection, and allow outdoor activities to extend across all seasons. Additionally, re**search shows that children who can see trees and plants outside their school windows have better focus and score higher on standardized tests.** Lordsburg can coordinate and share resources with elementary and middle school leadership to ensure that schools are maintaining and irrigating existing trees, and can support the coordination of new planting projects for playgrounds and outdoor learning areas.

All schools and grounds in Lordsburg are under the jurisdiction of the New Mexico Public Schools Facility Authority (NMPSFA). **Before any planting projects are planned at schools, close coordination with the school district is needed t**o understand any anticipated landscaping or building expansion projects. Where projects are planned but funding is not expected soon, Lordsburg or community groups may partner with CFN to implement planting projects that provide immediate benefits to students, with the understanding that trees may later be replaced during future school improvements.

"All kids love trees."

- Lordsburg Resident

Photo shows a few trees at the R.V. Taylor Elementary School drop-off.

Residential Landscapes

A majority of Lordsburg's land area is residential, meaning residential trees are a significant contributor to the community forest and the overall benefits it can provide. **Encouraging and incentivizing residents to plant trees will beautify the community and create a network of walkable streets that all community members can enjoy.** Trees in the front yards of residential homes benefit everyone by providing shade and cooler temperatures for pedestrians and improving air quality near sidewalks and roads. Targeted outreach to residents who live along walking corridors such as 4th Street or near schools helps enhance walkability and connectivity in key areas that have been identified in this plan. Residents should also be encouraged and supported to install rainwater harvesting features on their properties to help reduce stormwater runoff and provide supplemental irrigation for residential landscapes to support water conservation.

Neighborwoods tree planting program in Albuquerque. This program is currently working to expand statewide. Image Credit: Tree New Mexico.

Partnering with organizations who support neighborhood tree planting programs, like Tree New Mexico and others, and encouraging residents to maintain and plant trees on their property will expand Lordsburg's community forest much more than the City can do on its own.

The Lordsburg Western Regional Housing Authority Complex south of I-10 would also greatly benefit from tree planting projects. The park and playground area has no ground cover and very few trees, and planting here would benefit some of Lordsburg's most vulnerable residents. This complex is also an excellent opportunity to **integrate residential-scale GSI features to harvest rainwater from the roofs of the housing units to help irrigate trees and other landscaping.** There are plans to develop a new park adjacent to this housing authority complex, which offers an excellent opportunity to implement the urban forestry best practices discussed in this plan.

Lordsburg also has a few apartment complexes that are maintaining trees and landscapes with varying health conditions. For example, the affordable housing development located north of the railroad tracks on Ted White Street has several large shade trees that appear to be in significant decline, likely due to lack of irrigation. **The City is encouraged to coordinate with property owners of private housing complexes to provide guidance, CFN resources, and support for tree care to promote healthy trees and help foster attractive, well-maintained residential landscapes across the city.**

Green spaces are powerful tools for bringing neighborhoods together, strengthening community connections, and fostering local pride. Although Lordsburg has faced challenges with engagement, creating opportunities for residents to partner with CFN on tree plantings and landscaping projects can provide valuable educational experiences and hands-on volunteer opportunities. Over time, this community engagement could help build a dedicated volunteer network to support the care of city landscapes and guide the future growth of Lordsburg's community forest.

Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity

Supporting urban wildlife habitat and enhancing biodiversity is important to residents in Lordsburg, with 50% of public survey participants indicating that this is one of the benefits of the urban forest that they most value. Urban trees not only enhance the quality of life for humans but also serve as vital habitats for diverse native wildlife including birds, beneficial insects, and small mammals. Planning for a community forest with an abundance and wide variety of regionally native species will support biodiversity in Lordsburg by creating nesting sites, food sources, and corridors for wildlife to thrive.

Selecting native trees and plants for landscaping projects also supports water conservation efforts. These desert-adapted plants are drought tolerant and well suited to prosper in Lordsburg's local climatic conditions and will therefore require less irrigation, helping to conserve water resources. The presence of tree and plant roots also helps water infiltrate better where it can be stored in the soil, which contributes to improved water quality, soil health and overall watershed health.

The CFN can support Lordsburg to publish a regionally native-focused plant list that is well adapted for Lordsburg's specific climate and geography and promotes increased diversity of tree species in the city. **Not only does an urban forest with a wide variety of species hold more visual interest, it is also more resilient to pests, disease and changing environmental conditions.** To grow a resilient community forest, it is recommended that Lordsburg model this approach by planting a variety of species in municipal planting projects and promoting biodiversity in public messaging to support residential tree planting initiatives.

"Trees are an important part of our well being. Shade and food for wildlife and humans alike."

- Lordsburg Resident

Oleander is prevalent in Lordsburg's residential areas, and for good reason: it grows well, and has beautiful leaves and flowers. However, oleander is not recommended in this plan because of its strong toxicity to humans and pets, and its invasive properties. Photo credit: Guzman Greenhouse.

Maintenance Staff Support

Proper maintenance of trees and landscapes is essential to revitalization efforts in the City of Lordsburg. Over the remaining years of this project, the CFN will make a significant investment in expanding Lordsburg's community forest, including the addition of trees, irrigated landscapes and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). One of the primary objectives for the CFN is to support municipal staff with landscape maintenance to help ensure the long term success of this investment. Lordsburg staff will have the opportunity to engage with the CFN, which will offer additional access to training, resources and strategies that can help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the community forestry program. **Active participation in the CFN is a good investment of Lordsburg staff time and will support the implementation of the recommendations in this Community Forest Management Plan.**

Several additional large-scale projects are being pursued in the coming years which could include extensive landscaping. **As Lordsburg's community forest continues to develop, it is recommended to establish internal processes that streamline landscape maintenance while ensuring that these responsibilities do not exceed available human and financial resources.** The CFN can support Lordsburg in creating these processes, such as establishing a strategic maintenance and irrigation schedule, creating a prioritized list of tree removal, developing an integrated weed management program and distributing specialized training among staff. These are all strategies that are achievable within Lordsburg's current capacity, and can support the city's goals for community forest management.

Tree and plant maintenance and irrigation are specialized fields with regionally-based best management practices that are evolving based on emerging science. Some of the existing maintenance and irrigation practices in place in Lordsburg need to be updated in order to protect tree health and support a thriving urban forest. During interviews, Lordsburg staff agreed that they would benefit from additional training, mentorship and opportunities to engage with regional experts. **To further strengthen Lordsburg's ability to manage its community forest, investment in annual staff training in tree care, irrigation, and GSI is recommended.**

Tree care sometimes requires highly specific expertise and can be dangerous work, especially when working at heights in large, mature trees - either by climbing or using bucket trucks. Working with arborists is valuable,

WNMU and GRIP host trainings for maintenance staff in CFN communities, including Lordsburg. Featured: Bayard tree pruning workshop, April 2025.

but it is usually not cost-effective to have this level of expertise on staff full-time. It is prudent to **proactively establish a mechanism to access tree care expertise when needed,** either via an on-call contractor or by sharing regional personnel resources. Additionally, Lordsburg may explore the formation of a **Tree Board,** a group of residents who are dedicated to enhancing the well-being of trees in a community and may be called upon for consultation and support.

The adoption of landscaping policies and ordinances can also contribute to effective and proactive management of urban trees. **Establishing a basic vegetation ordinance gives Lordsburg municipal staff the authority to address community forest issues effectively,** such as vandalism, tree risks, invasives, and pest management. In the future, the city may also want to explore more complex ordinances that define residential and commercial responsibilities for landscapes and set landscaping requirements for new development.

The project team and CFN will continue to support the City of Lordsburg to implement the recommendations featured in this plan.

Future Plans and Projects

The City of Lordsburg is continuing its revitalization efforts through several exciting initiatives. As Lordsburg continues to prosper and grow, the community forest should keep pace. The goals, strategies and actions included in Lordsburg's Community Forest Management Plan help embed urban forestry best practices into the city's ongoing development and future initiatives. In developing Lordsburg's urban forest, the City should also incorporate the principles of tree equity by prioritizing tree planting and maintenance in underserved neighborhoods and ensuring that all residents have access to the benefits provided by a healthy community forest.
As new projects are planned to advance the city's broader community goals, look for opportunities to integrate trees and landscaping to simultaneously advance the city's goals for economic development, beautification, public health, and community pride.

Upcoming projects that present opportunities to enhance Lordsburg's community forest include:

- Walking and cycling paths mentioned in the Comp Plan?
- Development of a new Industrial Park
- Beautification project at Exit 22
- Special Events Center Improvements
- Short Park Improvements
- Street and Drainage Improvements
- Continental Divide Trail facilities at Veterans Park
- County Fairgrounds RV Park and Facilities Improvement
- Development of a recreational pond with walking paths

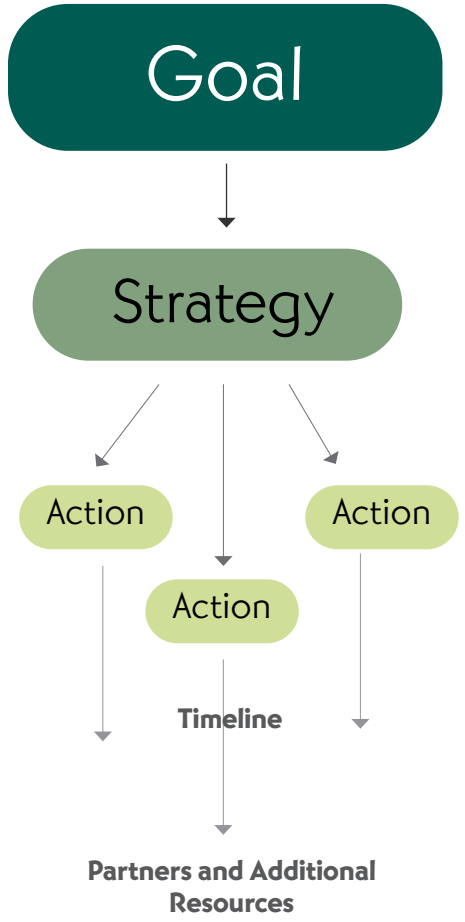
Once known as the "Broadway of America's Highway", the City o Lordsburg is preparing for a strong future with goals for economic development, enhanced public and environmental health, and the revitalization of community spaces. The community forest can be a key component in achieving these goals, helping to make Lordsburg a pleasant place to live, work, and visit.

Action Plan

Throughout the remaining years of the project, a significant investment is being made to enhance Lordsburg's community forest through the Southwest New Mexico Community Forest Network (CFN) project. This *Action Plan* outlines the foundational steps necessary to guide, support, and sustain this effort.

The *Action Plan* sets three primary goals that establish a vision of a healthy and resilient community forest in Lordsburg Each goal is supported by targeted, actionable strategies that work together to help Lordsburg make progress towards this vision. The strategies are further broken down into a series of specific actions with defined timelines for completion, which are outlined in the tables below. Additionally, each strategy is presented with a list of potential partner organizations and available supporting resources.

The goals, strategies and actions were informed through engagement with Lordsburg leadership, staff, and community members, Hidalgo County staff leadership, and local experts. The project team also carefully reviewed Lordsburg's 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update and other available planning resources like the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP). The results of this engagement and the analyses that informed the *Action Plan* are discussed in the previous section, *The Basis for the Plan.*



Goals are the foundation for any Strategic Plan. They are a collective vision for the city to aspire to. They organize strategies and actions to help fully realize the plan.

Strategies are measurable approaches of "how" to achieve a given goal.

Actions are individual steps or sets of steps to be taken to support a strategic approach to achieving the goal.

Timeline proposes a time frame for an action. This plan proposes Short Term actions (1-2 years), Mid Term (2-5 years), and Long Term (5+ years).

Partners and Additional Resources are vital to completing the *Action Plan.* Partners can support municipal staff with ongoing training, implementation of actions, and the creation of additional resources. Additional Resources can provide the specific guidance to help residents and municipal staff carry out the actions identified in the plan.

Action Plan

Goal 1

Lordsburg's community forest enhances public health, community pride, and quality of life for residents.

Strategy 1A

Focus resources on improving landscapes at existing parks and recreation areas, community gathering spaces and schools.

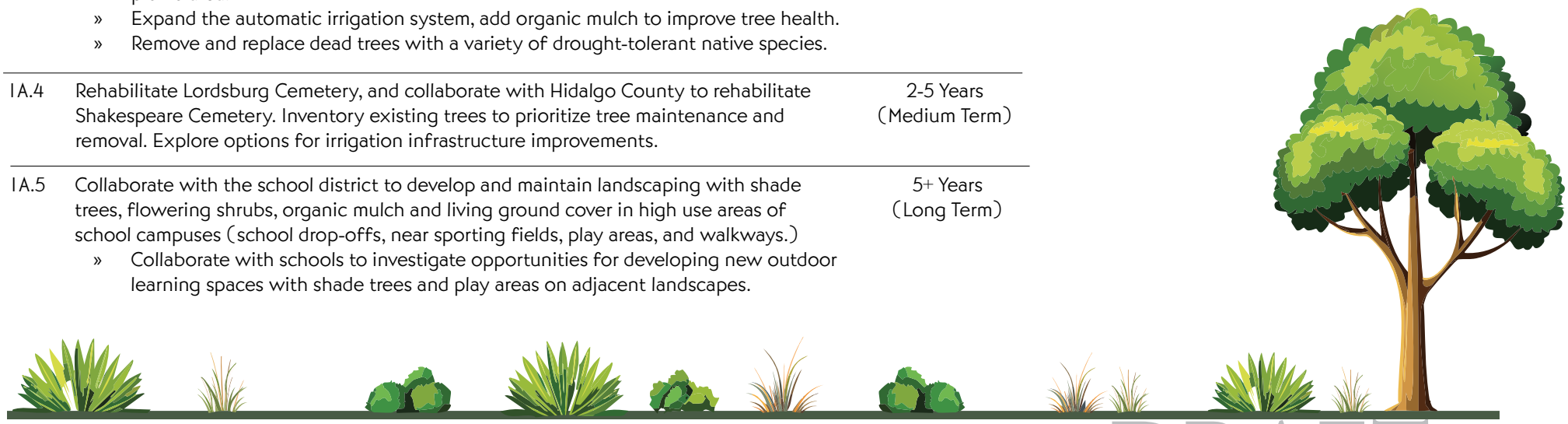
Actions		Timeline
1A.1	Rehabilitate Veterans Park. Priority activities: » Install automatic irrigation and add organic mulch to improve tree health. » Perform regular maintenance, including thinning and removal of dead trees. » Re-landscape park entrance to replace struggling trees with desert shrubs. » Integrate shade trees, shrubs, grasses, cacti and GSI features along the new walking path adjacent to NM-494.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
1A.2	Increase tree canopy in targeted areas within Short Park. Priority activities: » Plant clusters of trees, shrubs, grasses, cacti and groundcover to create more intimate, sheltered spaces within the large park area. » Install automatic irrigation and add organic mulch to improve tree health. » Remove and replace dead trees with a variety of drought-tolerant native species.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
1A.3	Rehabilitate North Park. Priority activities: » Plant clusters of trees, shrubs, grasses, cacti and groundcover near playground and picnic area. » Expand the automatic irrigation system, add organic mulch to improve tree health. » Remove and replace dead trees with a variety of drought-tolerant native species.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
1A.4	Rehabilitate Lordsburg Cemetery, and collaborate with Hidalgo County to rehabilitate Shakespeare Cemetery. Inventory existing trees to prioritize tree maintenance and removal. Explore options for irrigation infrastructure improvements.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
1A.5	Collaborate with the school district to develop and maintain landscaping with shade trees, flowering shrubs, organic mulch and living ground cover in high use areas of school campuses (school drop-offs, near sporting fields, play areas, and walkways.) » Collaborate with schools to investigate opportunities for developing new outdoor learning spaces with shade trees and play areas on adjacent landscapes.	5+ Years (Long Term)

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- New Mexico Public Schools Facility Authority (NMPSFA)
- NM Public Schools Facilities Authority

Resources include:

- Recommended Tree and Plant List for Lordsburg
- Guide to Planning and Implementing Community Forestry Projects
- Irrigation Guide



Action Plan

Goal 1

Lordsburg's community forest enhances public health, community pride, and quality of life for residents.

Strategy 1B

Employ best management practices to foster a resilient community forest that improves air quality, mitigates heat, and conserves water resources.

Actions		Timeline
1B.1	Publish a regionally appropriate tree list and plant palette focused on native, drought-tolerant plants to promote cohesive landscaping that enhances community character. » Promote increased species diversity in tree planting projects city-wide.	1-2 Years (Short Term)/ Ongoing
1B.2	Practice succession planting by phasing new trees and plants into Lordsburg's public landscapes over time to avoid having a single generation urban forest and secure the community benefits of trees for generations to come..	Ongoing
1B.3	Proactively identify opportunities to co-locate GSI and tree plantings to supplement irrigation with stormwater to conserve drinking water, mitigate ponding, and support watershed health.	Ongoing
1B.4	Prioritize the planting and irrigation of higher water use deciduous trees in high-use areas, such as parks and community gathering spaces, to increase tree canopy while supporting water conservation goals.	Ongoing
1B.5	Prioritize use of understory plantings (like grasses and shrubs), ground cover and organic mulch over use of rock mulch in streetscapes to mitigate heat and dust, and improve both pedestrian comfort and tree health.	Ongoing
1B.6	Regularly monitor tree heath and irrigation infrastructure to ensure trees are adequately watered, allowing then them to grow into healthy, mature trees and provide maximum community benefit.	Ongoing

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project
- Hidalgo County
- Business and property owners

Resources include:

- Recommended Tree and Plant List for Lordsburg
- Guide to Planning and Implementing Community Forestry Projects
- Irrigation Guide

Action Plan

Goal 1

Lordsburg's community forest enhances public health, community pride, and quality of life for residents.

Strategy 1C

Engage residents in the development and care of the community forest.

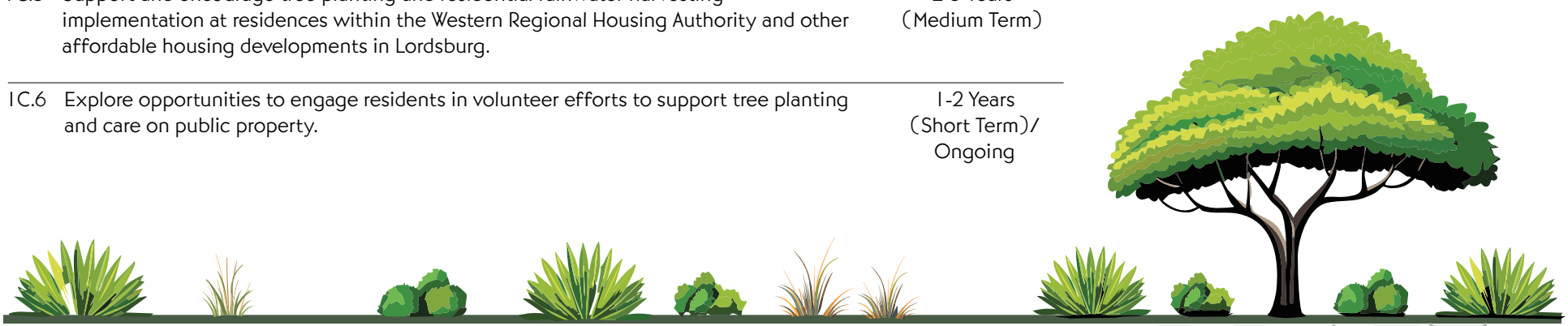
Actions		Timeline
1C.1	Maintain clear, consistent, and positive public messaging about urban forestry efforts in Lordsburg to build community support and engagement.	1-2 Years (Short Term)/ Ongoing
1C.2	Increase tree canopy in neighborhoods by promoting tree planting and rainwater harvesting in residential areas. » Provide residents with educational resources » Educate residents on their tree and landscaping responsibilities adjacent to ROWs.	Ongoing
1C.3	Educate and encourage residents to select a range of diverse plant species for their property that are regionally appropriate, drought-tolerant, and support pollinator and native wildlife habitat. » Provide watering guidelines to ensure adequate and efficient irrigation of residential trees.	1-2 Years (Short Term)/ Ongoing
1C.4	Partner with organizations that support residential tree planting programs » Focus first of residential tree planting near schools, walking corridors, and other high-use public areas and facilities to promote walkability.	1-2 Years (Short Term)/ Ongoing
1C.5	Support and encourage tree planting and residential rainwater harvesting implementation at residences within the Western Regional Housing Authority and other affordable housing developments in Lordsburg.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
1C.6	Explore opportunities to engage residents in volunteer efforts to support tree planting and care on public property.	1-2 Years (Short Term)/ Ongoing

Partners include:

- » SWNM Community Forestry Network
- » Tree New Mexico Neighborwoods Program
- » NM Tree Alliance
- » NMSU Cooperative Extension
- » Western Regional Housing Authority
- » Affordable housing complex managers

Resources include:

- » Recommended Tree and Plant List for Lordsburg
- » Guide to Planning and Implementing Community Forestry Projects
- » Bernalillo County Passive Rainwater Harvesting Guide



Action Plan

Goal 2

Lordsburg's community forest contributes to city beautification and economic development.

Strategy 2A

Collaborate with NM DOT to develop cohesive streetscaping on Main Street and Motel Drive to improve community safety, livability, and aesthetics.

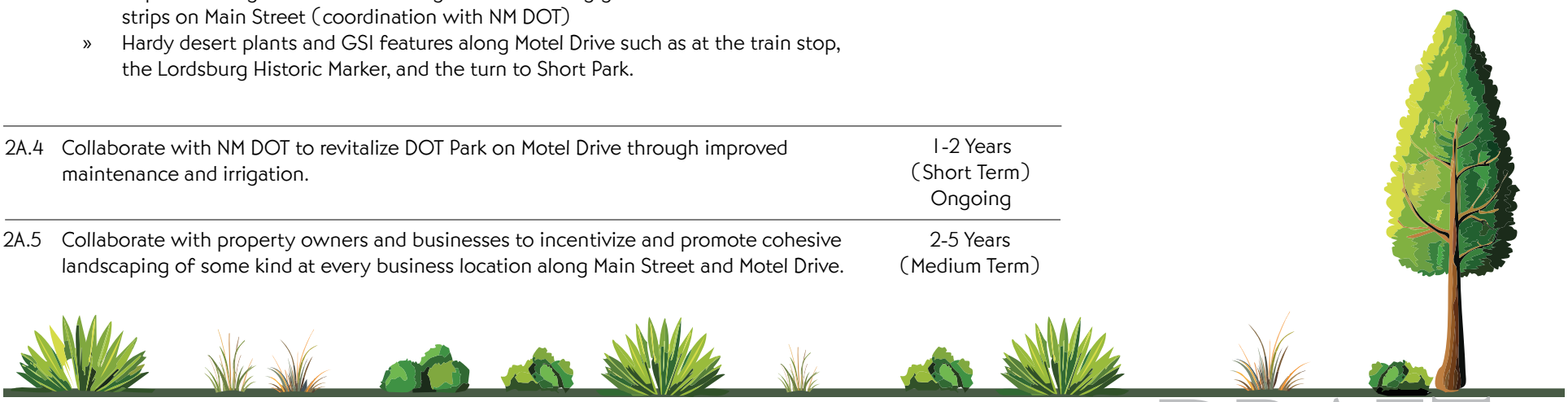
Actions		Timeline
2A.1	Collaborate with NM DOT to design, engineer, and install comprehensive streetscaping with automatic irrigation along Main Street to create an attractive business district and promote traffic calming, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, beautification, tourism and economic development.	5+ Years (Long Term)
2A.2	Collaborate with NM DOT to design, engineer, and install comprehensive streetscaping with automatic irrigation along Motel Drive.	5+ Years (Long Term)
2A.3	Build momentum by focusing first on completing small streetscaping projects along Main Street and Motel Drive, including: » Tree maintenance and additional plantings on embankments of Exit 22 on I-10 (coordination with NM DOT) » Low-growing drought hardy plants and GSI on four corners of the I-10 Exit 22 on and off ramps (coordination with NM DOT) » Landscaping on either side of the intersection of Main Street and Motel Drive (coordination with property owners) » Explore adding curb cuts and drought-tolerant living groundcover in median strips on Main Street (coordination with NM DOT) » Hardy desert plants and GSI features along Motel Drive such as at the train stop, the Lordsburg Historic Marker, and the turn to Short Park.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
2A.4	Collaborate with NM DOT to revitalize DOT Park on Motel Drive through improved maintenance and irrigation.	1-2 Years (Short Term) Ongoing
2A.5	Collaborate with property owners and businesses to incentivize and promote cohesive landscaping of some kind at every business location along Main Street and Motel Drive.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Property and Business Owners
- Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project (LEAP)

Resources include:

- Recommended Tree and Plant List for Lordsburg
- Guide to Planning and Implementing Community Forestry Projects
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Implementation Guide
- NM DOT Design Manual



Action Plan

Goal 2

Lordsburg's community forest contributes to city beautification and economic development.

Strategy 2B

Promote landscaping at businesses and government buildings to enhance connectivity and walkability in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

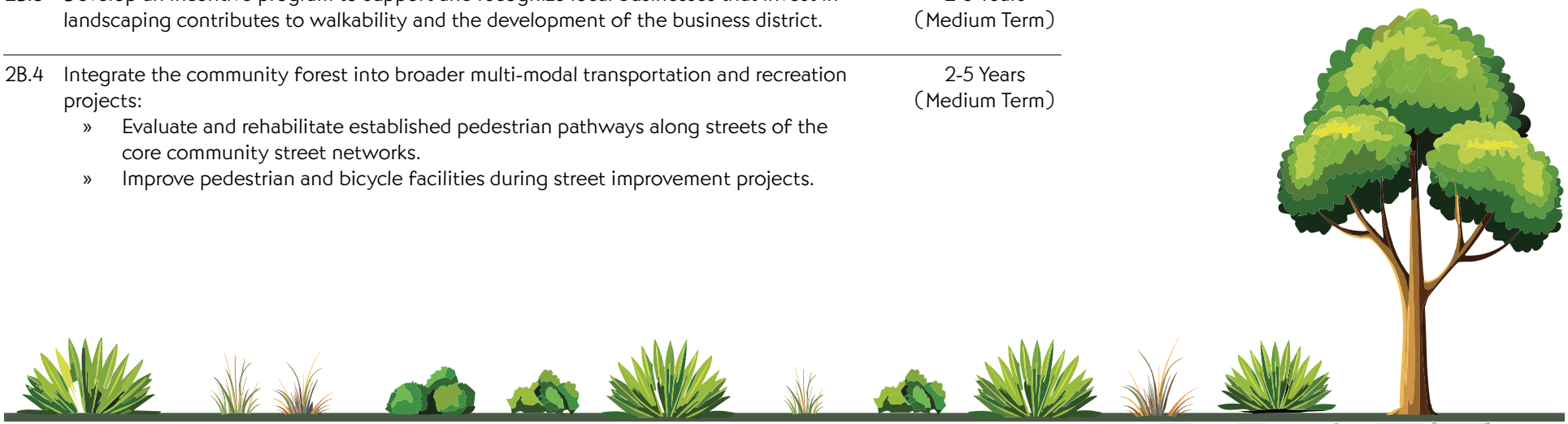
Actions		Timeline
2B.1	Collaborate with government agencies, businesses, property owners and LEAP to implement cohesive, drought-tolerant landscaping projects with irrigation infrastructure and/or GSI in the MRA. Focus on developing a walking corridor along 4th Street to connect community services, particularly at the intersection of Pyramid Street. Priority sites: » Post Office and Post Office Park. » Lordsburg Hidalgo County Library. » Hidalgo County Manager's Office and County Courthouse. » Lordsburg Civic Center. » Lordsburg Hidalgo Senior Center. » 4th Street buffer strips.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
2B.2	Collaborate with government agencies, businesses and property owners to implement streetside landscaping to promote walkability along other West Wabash Street.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
2B.3	Develop an incentive program to support and recognize local businesses that invest in landscaping contributes to walkability and the development of the business district.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
2B.4	Integrate the community forest into broader multi-modal transportation and recreation projects: » Evaluate and rehabilitate established pedestrian pathways along streets of the core community street networks. » Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities during street improvement projects.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)

Partners include:

- » SWNM Community Forestry Network
- » Hidalgo County
- » Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project (LEAP)
- » Business and Property Owners

Resources include:

- » Recommended Tree and Plant List for Lordsburg
- » Guide to Planning and Implementing Community Forestry Projects
- » Green Stormwater Infrastructure Implementation Guide
- » Irrigation Guide



Action Plan

Goal 2

Lordsburg's community forest contributes to city beautification and economic development.

Strategy 2C

Integrate the community forest into Lordsburg's broader tourism, revitalization and development initiatives.

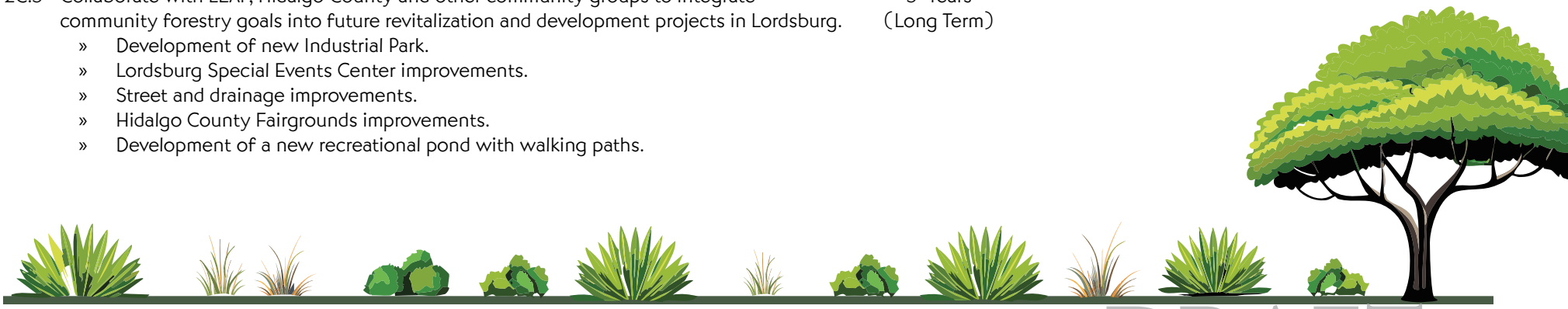
Actions		Timeline
2C.1	Focus on implementing simple but effective public landscape projects to build community support and engagement for community forestry initiatives.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
2C.2	Improve landscaping at Hidalgo County Museum » Improve existing irrigation; maintenance of existing trees; tree replacement. » Additional landscaping in front of building; option to add educational plaques to identify native species and create an arboretum as another attraction. » Explore the addition of a picnic area, shade structure, and a few shade trees.	5+ Years (Long Term)
2C.3	Integrate native trees and plants with planned Continental Divide Trail tourism infrastructure improvements at Veteran's Park. » Planting near kiosks and signage » Trees and plants to beautify the trail's path down Main Street.	5+ Years (Long Term)
2C.4	Integrate public art projects with community forestry and revitalization initiatives to add color and visual interest to the city, building community character. » Mural project along Main Street.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
2C.5	Collaborate with LEAP, Hidalgo County and other community groups to integrate community forestry goals into future revitalization and development projects in Lordsburg. » Development of new Industrial Park. » Lordsburg Special Events Center improvements. » Street and drainage improvements. » Hidalgo County Fairgrounds improvements. » Development of a new recreational pond with walking paths.	5+Years (Long Term)

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- Lordsburg Economic Advancement Project (LEAP)
- Hidalgo County
- New Mexico Tourism Department

Resources include:

- Recommended Tree and Plant List for Lordsburg
- Guide to Planning and Implementing Community Forestry Projects
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Implementation Guide
- Irrigation Guide



Action Plan

Goal 3

Lordsburg fosters a healthy community forest through proactive management, skilled staff, and collaboration.

Strategy 3A

Invest in building staff expertise and support to strengthen Lordsburg's community forest management.

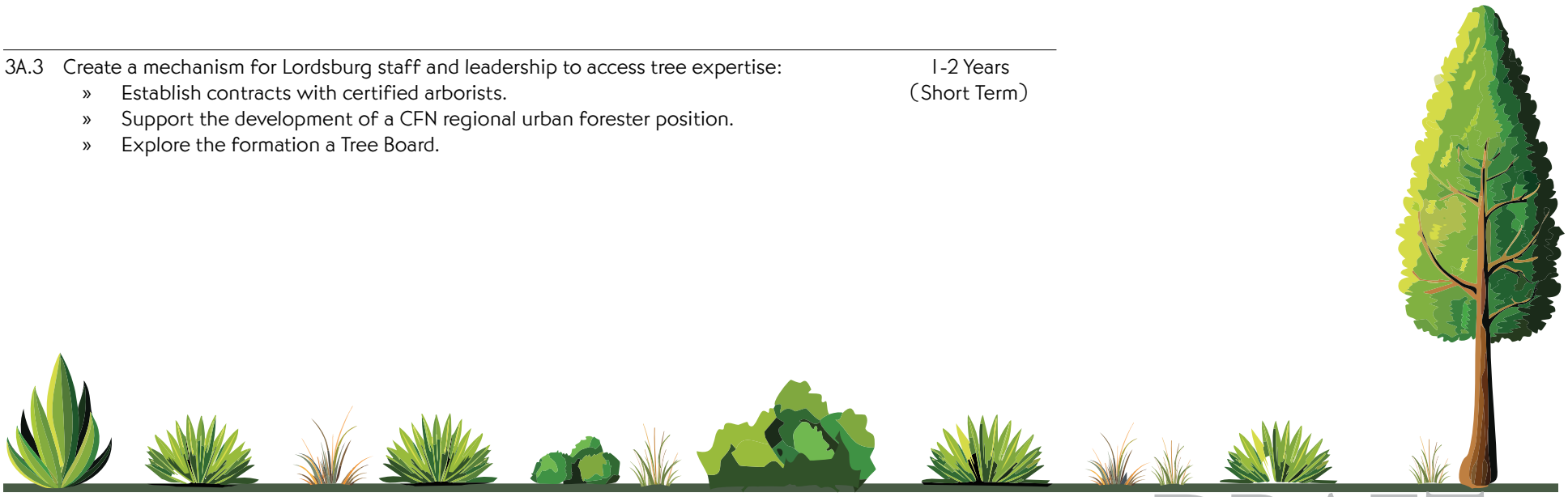
Actions		Timeline
3A.1	Support Lordsburg staff to actively participate in the SWNM Community Forestry Network (CFN), where they can connect to educational resources and events to further their skills in urban forestry and GSI implementation and maintenance.	Immediate and Ongoing
3A.2	Invest in staff training for tree care, tree risk assessment, irrigation standard installation guidelines and maintenance, integrated pest management, and GSI maintenance. » Include Lordsburg school maintenance staff in CFN tree care training events.	1-2 Years (Short Term) Ongoing
3A.3	Create a mechanism for Lordsburg staff and leadership to access tree expertise: » Establish contracts with certified arborists. » Support the development of a CFN regional urban forester position. » Explore the formation a Tree Board.	1-2 Years (Short Term)

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- NM Tree Alliance
- New Mexico Urban & Community Forestry Program

Resources include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network Website and Printed Materials
- Arborist Contract Template



Action Plan

Goal 3

Lordsburg fosters a healthy community forest through proactive management, skilled staff, and collaboration.

Strategy 3B

Develop and streamline a strategic landscape irrigation and maintenance program that balances tree health with water conservation goals.

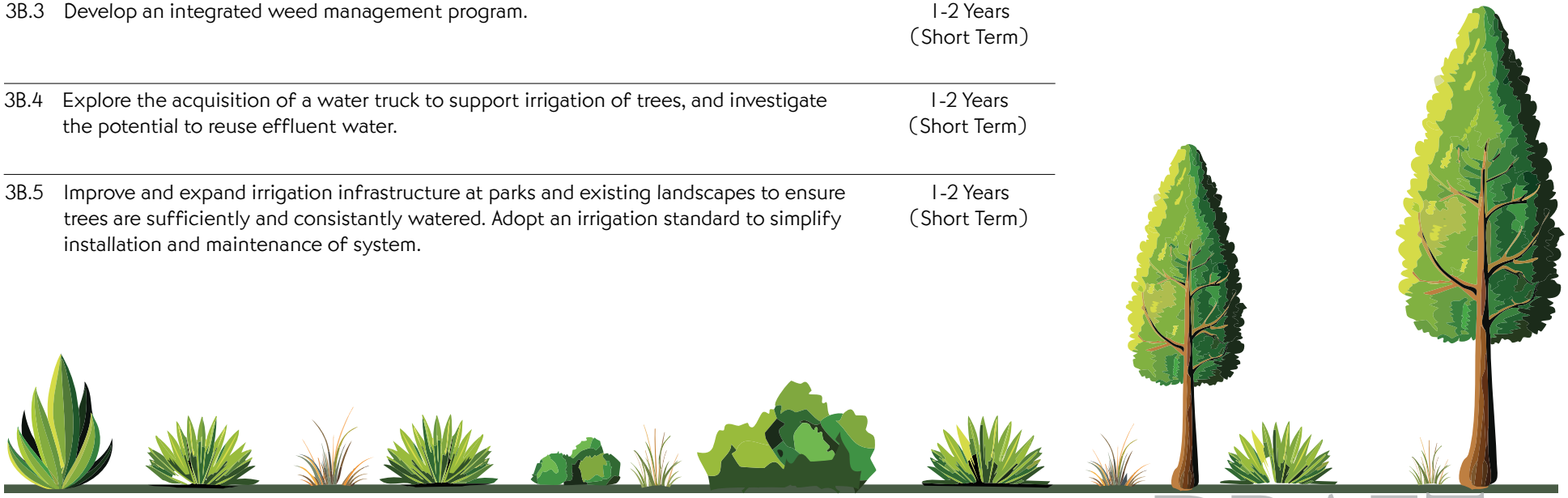
Actions		Timeline
3B.1	Complete the existing Lordsburg tree inventory in Tree Plotter and periodically update the data set to inform priorities for maintenance and high risk trees.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
3B.2	Establish and adhere to a tree maintenance schedule, to include: » Tree pruning/removal. » Irrigation checks. » Mulch and understory planting maintenance. » Insect and disease checks.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
3B.3	Develop an integrated weed management program.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
3B.4	Explore the acquisition of a water truck to support irrigation of trees, and investigate the potential to reuse effluent water.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
3B.5	Improve and expand irrigation infrastructure at parks and existing landscapes to ensure trees are sufficiently and consistantly watered. Adopt an irrigation standard to simplify installation and maintenance of system.	1-2 Years (Short Term)

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- NM Tree Alliance
- New Mexico Urban & Community Forestry Program

Resources include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network Website and Printed Materials
- Example Maintenance Schedule
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Implementation Guide
- Irrigation Resource



Action Plan

Goal 3

Lordsburg fosters a healthy community forest through proactive management, skilled staff, and collaboration.

Strategy 3C

Establish municipal policies that support Lordsburg's community forest goals.

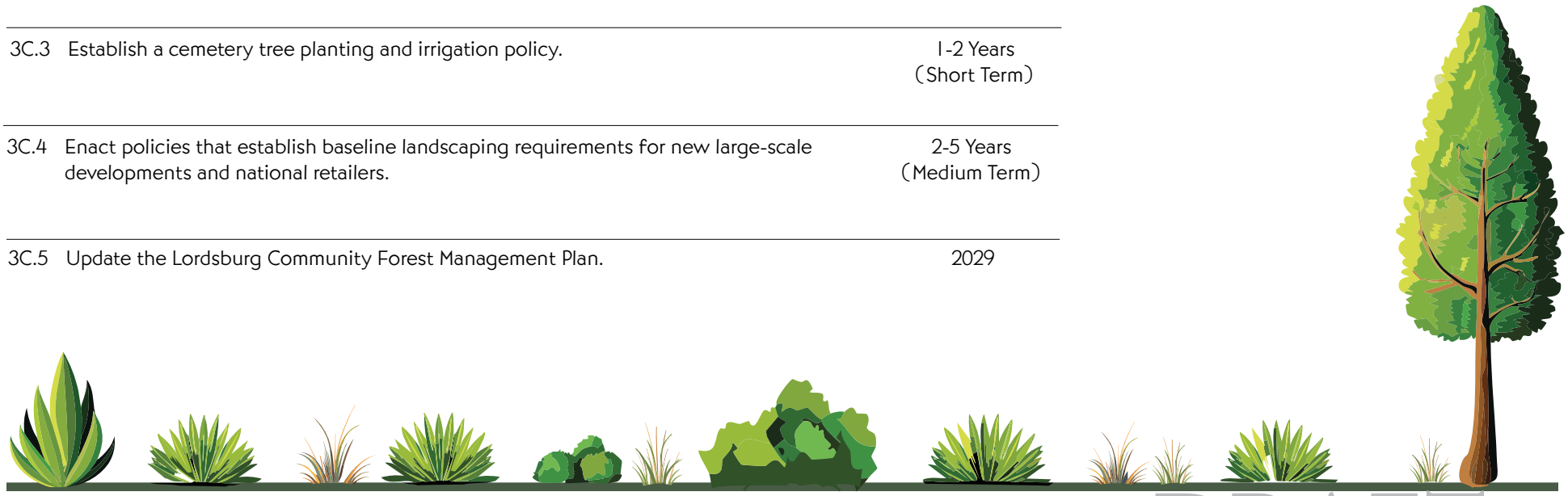
Actions		Timeline
3C.1	Establish a vegetation ordinance that formalizes the authority of city staff and includes: » Protection and preservation of healthy mature trees. » Irrigation and water conservation policy. » Designated responsibilities in ROWs and buffer strips - municipal, private, and public. » New development landscaping requirements.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
3C.2	Establish and update an annual budget for landscaping projects, including irrigation and maintenance.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
3C.3	Establish a cemetery tree planting and irrigation policy.	1-2 Years (Short Term)
3C.4	Enact policies that establish baseline landscaping requirements for new large-scale developments and national retailers.	2-5 Years (Medium Term)
3C.5	Update the Lordsburg Community Forest Management Plan.	2029

Partners include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network
- NM Tree Alliance
- New Mexico Urban & Community Forestry Program

Resources include:

- SWNM Community Forestry Network Website and Printed Materials
- Example Maintenance Schedule
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Implementation Guide
- Irrigation Resource



Additional Resources

Supporting Documents

The Southwest Community Forestry Network (CFN) website, swnmforestry.org, was designed to help coordinate efforts and share information between communities and project partners, including links to additional resources that are referenced in this management plan. The network and the project team will continue producing and curating tools as needed to help the towns put their plans into action, such as:

- Examples of seasonal maintenance schedules and checklists.
- Guides to planning and implementing community forest projects.
- Guides to planning and implementing green stormwater infrastructure projects.
- Templates for recommended policies, such as a Vegetation Ordinance, a Complete Streets Ordinance and/or a Cemetery Tree Policy.
- Templates for contracts to enlist the support and specialized skills of a Certified Arborist, and a list of recommended questions to ask when selecting a practitioner to hire.
- Example landscape maintenance and irrigation budgets.
- Landscape irrigation guides and other resources.
- Guide to connecting with regional resources and groups, such as the NM Tree Alliance and the SW Directory of Tree Care Practitioners.
- Resources for soil testing and promoting soil health.
- Resources for engaging residents and exploring neighborhood tree planting programs.

Supporting Networks & Organizations

Gila Resources Information Project (GRIP)

Integrated Biological Solutions (IBIS)

Western New Mexico University (WNMU)

Grant County Cooperative Extension

New Mexico Tree Alliance

New Mexico Urban Forest Council

New Mexico Forestry Division

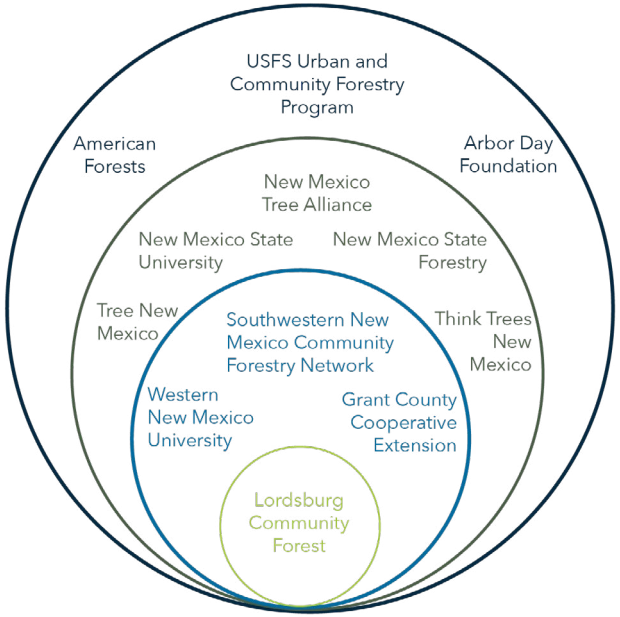
Arid LID (Low Impact Development) Coalition

Tree New Mexico

Arbor Day Foundation (Partners in Community Forestry; Trees are Good; TreeCity USA)

American Forests

US Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program



The CFN Community Engagement Roadmap

Public input and local knowledge are critical components to any community planning effort. In September 2024 the project team produced the Community Engagement Roadmap, which can be found on the CFN project website. This document outlined the project's approach to engaging various audiences in the development of the Community Forestry Management Plans. The project team employed a unique set of strategies tailored specifically to each of the six community's needs and public practices.

The Roadmap includes actionable engagement strategies that can be adapted and applied to a variety of future projects in Lordsburg that have a public outreach component, such as:

- Using different approaches to reach a variety of community audiences in a way that best suits their needs and interests.
- Informing, consulting, involving, collaborating with, or empowering the engagement audiences at strategic points in the project (Source: Spectrum for Public Participation, International Association for Public Participation).
- Establishing clear objectives for community engagement.
- Employing a variety of engagement techniques to "meet people where they are," such as: community surveys, outreach booths at well-attended events, presentations, informational handouts, consultations with community groups and municipal leaders, use of social media and traditional media, fliers and door hangers, providing access to translation services, mailings, and creation of "Info Hubs" and a project website.

As Lordsburg works to champion projects featured in this plan, the Comprehensive Plan, the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) or other plans, **this Community Engagement Roadmap can serve as a useful resource to help project planners conduct meaningful community engagement**.

Local residents completing a survey at the Salsa Showdown in Hurley, another CFN community, to provide input for the development of the Community Forest Management Plans.

Recommended Tree List for Lordsburg

LARGE SHADE TREES

Common Name	Latin Name	Water Needs	Local Expert Notes
Persian Silk Tree/ Mimosa	*Albizia julibrissin*	Medium	Susceptible to freeze damage when young.
Common Hackberry	*Celtis occidentalis*	Medium	Prairie Sentinel(R) is a good cultivar for a more columnar look.
Netleaf Hackberry	*Celtis reticulata*	Low	Great native tree, not a good street tree.
Coolibah Tree	*Eucalyptus microtheca*	Low	Minimally known in thisarea by experts, but adapted to the climate.
Kentucky Coffee Tree	*Gymnocladus dioicus*	Medium	May experiment with this species, mixed results in other areas of NM.
Osage Orange	*Maclura pomifera*	Medium	Great tree, seedless and thornless varieties available.
White Mulberry	*Morus alba*	Medium	Very tolerant tree for urban conditions. High invasive potential.
Chinese Pistache	*Pistacia chinensis*	Medium	Performing very well. Very popular; beware of overplanting.
Mexican Sycamore	*Platanus mexicana*	High	Requires careful site selection, may be sensitive to drought conditions.
Honey Mesquite	*Prosopis glandulosa*	Low	Look for Texas variety that are thornless and more tree like in form.
Shumard Oak	*Quercus shumardii*	Medium	
Southern Live Oak	*Quercus virginiana*	Medium	Doing well in many locations.
Western Soapberry	*Sapindus saponaria var. drummondii*	Low	Can form thickets, and have toxic properties.
American Elm	*Ulmus americana*	Medium	Gorgeous old specimens in area. Mostly sold as hybrid cultivars.
Cedar Elm	*Ulmus crassifolia*	Medium	
Lacebark/Chinese Elm	*Ulmus parvifolia*	Medium	Prolific seeds in fall - concern about invasiveness. Note: this is a different species than the Siberian elm commonly, but incorrecty refered to as the Chinese elm.

Recommended Tree List for Lordsburg

EVERGREEN TREES

Common Name	Latin Name	Water Needs	Local Expert Notes
Deodar Cedar	*Cedrus deodar*	Medium	Best for large spaces that get plenty of water.
Arizona Cypress	*Cupressus arizonica*	Medium	Great tree with good hybrids available.
Yaupon Holly	*Ilex vomitoria*	Medium	Not a lot of familiarity locally, but doing well in other areas of NM.
Alligator Juniper	*Juniperus deppeana*	Low	Exhibiting some dieback locally. Does need supplemental irrigation.
Rocky Mountain Juniper	*Juniperus scopulorum*	Low	
Eastern Red Cedar	*Juniperus virginiana*	Low	
Aleppo Pine	*Pinus halepensis*	Low	Few examples locally, but seem to be doing well.
Single leaf pinyon pine	*Pinus monophylla*	Low	Small, but grows well locally.
Italian Stone Pine	*Pinus pinea*	Medium	Few examples locally, but seem to be doing well.
Arizona White Oak	*Quercus arizonica*	Low	Evergreen oaks generally do well locally.
Emory Oak	*Quercus emoryi*	Medium	
Escarpment Live Oak	*Quercus fusiformis*	Medium	
Mexican Elder	*Sambucus mexicana*	Medium	High performer in urban environments. Fast growing, but needs pruning to maintain its tree form.
Texas Mountain Laurel	*Sophora secundiflora (*SEE *Dermatophyllum secundiflorum)*	Low	Struggling with cold hardiness.

Recommended Tree List for Lordsburg

SMALL/MEDIUM TREES

Common Name	Latin Name	Water Needs	Local Expert Notes
Mexican Redbud	*Cercis mexicana*	Medium	Redbuds are doing well locally. Texas and Mexican species are doing particularly well. Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is not generally recommended due to its intolerance to wind, but 'Forest pansy' varietal has grown well. Redbuds greatly benefit from good pruning.
Western Redbud	*Cercis occidentalis*	Medium	
Oklahoma Redbud	*Cercis reniformis*	Medium	
Texas Redbud	*Cercis texicana*	Medium	
Desert Willow	*Chilopsis linearis*	Low	Highly recommended.
Texas Persimmon	*Diospyros texana*	Low	Not much local experience with this species.
New Mexico Olive	*Forestiera neomexicana*	Medium	Highly recommended.
Golden-ball Leadtree	*Leucaena retusa*	Low	Good tree, but currently difficult to find.
Southern Wax Myrtle	*Morella cerifera*	High	No local experience with this species.
Texas/Little Leaf Mulberry	*Morus microphylla*	Low	Highly recommended.
Fruitless Olive	*Olea europaea*	Low	Experimental, but matches cliamte zone.
Blue Palo Verde	*Parkinsonia florida*	Low	Experimental, may be sensitive to cold spells.
Palo Verde 'Desert Museum'	*Parkinsonia x Cercidium*	Low	Little experieince, but some good examples in town.
Hoptree (Wafer Ash)	*Ptelia trifolata*	Low	Recommended by local experts. Drought tolerant.
Screwbean Mesquite	*Prosopis pubescens*	Low	Thorny. Concerns about their ability to handle local soil conditions.
Texas Red Oak	*Quercus buckleyi*	Low	Highly recommended.
Chaste Tree	*Vitex agnus-castus*	Low Medium	Performing well locally, and can achieve small tree size in right conditions.


Thank you Lordsburg, for planting the next generation of trees!