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**Exposing the Conflicting Cultural Narratives of  
Downtown Springdale**

Jennifer Sandoval-Salinas  
Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design  
University of Arkansas

May 2024

A capstone project submitted for the degree of  
*Bachelor of Interior Architecture and Design*

# DECLARATION OF COMMITTEE

**Name:**

Jennifer Sandoval-Salinas

**Degree:**

Bachelor of Interior Architecture and Design

**Capstone Title:**

Exposing the Conflicting Cultural Narratives of Downtown Springdale

**Committee:**

**Gabriel Díaz Montemayor, *Chair***

Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Associate Professor, Landscape Architecture

**Jennifer Webb, *Committee Member***

Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies

Associate Professor, Interior Architecture and Design

**Torrey Tracy, *Committee Member***

Assistant Professor, Interior Architecture and Design

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## **ABSTRACT**

This capstone project examines the relationship between seen and unseen acts of gentrification, displacement, and cultural preservation during the revitalization of the downtown area of Springdale, Arkansas. Gentrification and displacement are social issues of concern in the Northwest Arkansas region as it is experiencing economic growth and population increase. By means of a creative and artistic inquiry the study uncovers the traditions and identities that continue to shape Springdale's unique cultural heritage through a multifaceted approach. The study includes a demographic analysis, historical examination, community engagement, and case studies which all collectively inform a comprehensive graphic analysis that interprets current redevelopment efforts.

As downtown Springdale continues to evolve through revitalization critical questions and concerns about the city's intentions are rising – questions and concerns regarding the process of gentrification and the displacement of its existing minority-majority community. Using all aspects of the multifaceted approach along with personal background and experiences as a Springdale native, the study reveals how downtown Springdale is contributing to historical patterns of gentrification and displacement through its revitalization efforts.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

The inspiration and motivation behind this project stems from being a first-generation Hispanic American woman and Springdale native. I am a daughter of immigrants from Guanajuato, Mexico and Santa Ana, El Salvador who abandoned their previous lives in pursuit of opportunity. It wasn't until my sophomore year at the University of Arkansas that I realized the rare experience I obtained from living in Springdale and attending the Springdale School District. Growing up I was surrounded by children who were navigating the world through two different languages, vibrant cultures, and parents who also gave up everything they knew to contribute to the poultry industry in Springdale. Students from underrepresented communities often seek representation and commonality amongst their peers – something I experienced and didn't learn to be rare until transitioning from Springdale High School to the University of Arkansas. It is my hope with this project to use my voice and unique perspective to honor all Hispanic's and Latino's who established their lives in Springdale and to influence critical thinking and decision making during ongoing revitalization efforts of downtown Springdale.

## INTRODUCTION

Springdale is the most diverse city in the state of Arkansas with a demographic composition characterized by a diverse minority majority who form 51.6% of the city's population. The Hispanic and Latino community currently comprises 38.8% of the city's demographic.<sup>1</sup> For the past several decades Springdale has become home to individuals from multiple different countries in the act of fleeing lack of opportunity and violence while seeking entrepreneurial and economic opportunities, safety and security, and an overall better quality of life. The rapid establishment of Hispanics and Latinos in the downtown area of Springdale from the 1980s to the 2000s has contributed to the development of an urban center that displays the characteristics and traits of Hispanic and Latino culture. The rise of local services that catered to this community such as panaderias, taquerias, carnicerias, and supermercados reactivated a semi-abandoned city center and have all created a sense of cultural vibrancy and dynamism in a historic predominately white city.

Historically, neighborhoods with a similar urban fabric and cultural presence to Springdale have become susceptible to acts of gentrification followed by direct, indirect, and cultural displacement. Gentrification is the process of change in a neighborhood where more affluent individuals move into historically marginalized communities and physically transform the neighborhood leading to the disruption of a previously established cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, we have seen a rapidly growing number of cities in the U.S. undergo revitalization processes that ultimately contribute to these patterns. As identified in the research for this study, some of these cities and neighborhoods include the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Shaw Neighborhood of Washington D.C., and the city of Lynn, Massachusetts. Indicators for communities vulnerable to gentrification include persons of color, low-income households, and centrally located neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup> Gentrification-induced displacement refers to the acts of forced and implied demographic change in response to the redevelopment of

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts*: Springdale City, Arkansas. (n.d.).  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/springdalecityarkansas>

<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic (School of Law) and the Community and Regional Planning Program (School of Architecture). (n.d.-b). *Tools for Texas Communities*. The Uprooted Project.  
<https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/understanding-gentrification-and-displacement/>

<sup>3</sup> Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic (School of Law) and the Community and Regional Planning Program (School of Architecture). (n.d.-b). *Tools for Texas Communities*. The Uprooted Project.  
<https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/understanding-gentrification-and-displacement/>

urban areas. Although not always a direct response to gentrification, history proves that demographic shifts often proceed with revitalization efforts.

This capstone project aims to observe and analyze current redevelopment efforts in downtown Springdale through a graphic exploration informed by historical examination, demographic analysis, and case studies. The graphic analysis of this study comprises a series of data visualizations and illustrative maps that better inform and depict the seen and unseen acts of gentrification, displacement, and cultural preservation in the downtown area of Springdale.



# RESEARCH QUESTION AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The development of this project began in the spring of 2023 under the instruction of Kimberly Furlong, Patty Folan, and Brian Holland in the Methods of Design Inquiry course. Visualized to become a study of the intersection of color, architecture, and culture through Mexican vernacular architecture and concepts of Mexican Modern Architect Luis Barragan, the capstone project ultimately evolved into analyzing and better understanding the complex tensions of cultural preservation, gentrification, and displacement specific to the area of downtown Springdale in Arkansas. Using the research and findings from the spring of 2023 the study was able to address similar and complex issues in a more manageable study.

In collaboration with Gabriel Díaz Montemayor, capstone project chairman, the following research question was established: **Is the redevelopment of downtown Springdale contributing to patterns of gentrification and displacement or is it preserving its cultural heritage and identity as expressed in the physical transformations or cultural persistence of its built environment?** The overall objective of the capstone project is to qualitatively assess the impacts of revitalization efforts on gentrification, displacement, and cultural preservation through the production of a graphic analysis that responds to current tensions in downtown Springdale.

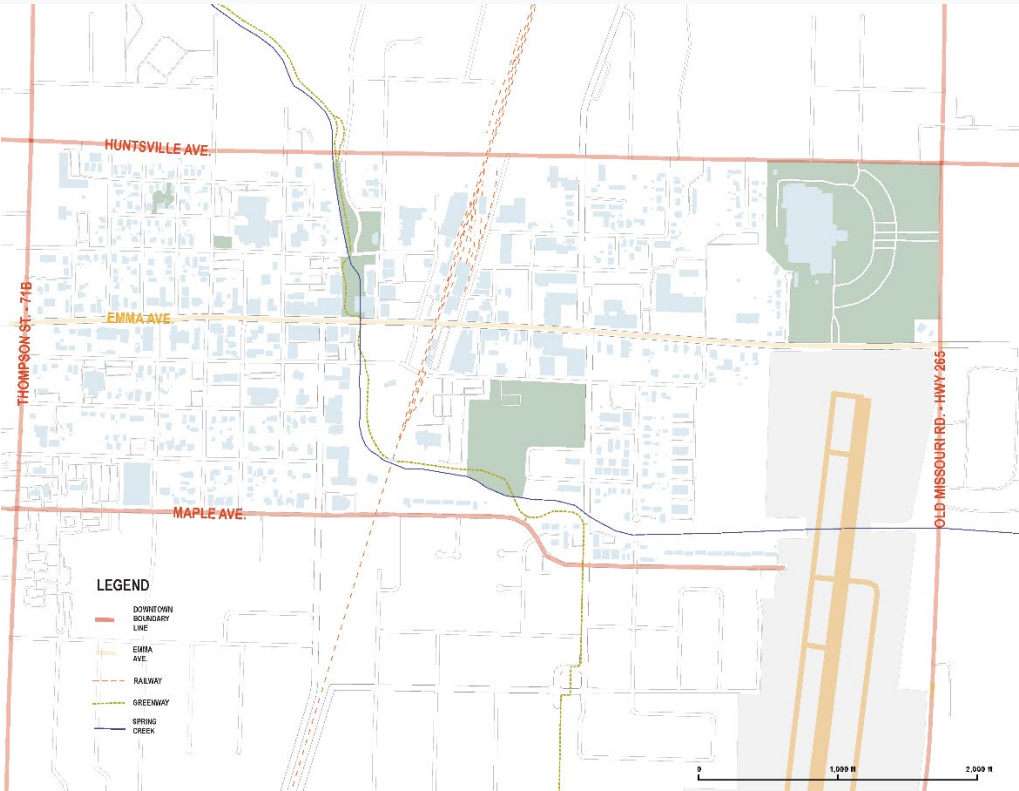


Figure 1. Diagram by Author – Map illustrating the boundaries that define downtown Springdale for the purpose of this project.

As an Interior Architecture and Design student, the intention of this project is about the importance of understanding larger social issues and concepts that should be considered in design approaches and solutions. The project's scope prioritizes concepts of urban planning and development to address issues of social equity and community disconnection. The interior architecture and design profession is human-centered. As students, we develop an understanding of the importance of designing for anyone and everyone and the importance of inclusive and accessible design strategies. Ultimately, the project is an exploration of the holistic approach that should be taken in interior architecture and design at a larger scale – an approach that is built on empathy and awareness and focused on the connection between space and people. The project examines the value of gaining interdisciplinary insight to better understand the social responsibility and cultural sensitivity that should dictate all projects and initiatives.

Upon the refinement of the overall goal and research question, theoretical frameworks and topics were decided to establish a healthy research base that better informed project objectives. These topics included: Latino urbanism, gentrification, displacement, and the history of Springdale. The understanding of these topics was primarily informed through existing literature including, but not limited to, *Springdale the Courage of Shiloh* by Velda Brotherton, *Emma, We Love You* by Bruce Vaughan, and *Latino Placemaking and Planning Cultural Resilience and Strategies for Reurbanization* by Jesus J. Lara.

To further understand the influence and impact of Latino presence in Springdale a demographic study was produced for every ten years from 1970 to 2020. This allowed for a visual representation of the shifts and rapid growth of minorities within recent decades in Springdale. It was also important to analyze case studies of other cities and neighborhoods that shared comparable populations and demographic compositions as well as those that fell victim to severe patterns of gentrification and displacement. The project development also included meetings with community leaders and stakeholders to better inform an understanding of the community, observations and challenges with revitalization efforts, and the motives behind previous and upcoming projects.

Ultimately, the theoretical and conceptual development of the capstone led to the production of a graphic analysis that aims to interpret a qualitative response to the transformations of downtown Springdale through a collection of maps, diagrams, photographs, and text. This graphic approach directly highlights the complex tensions and concepts that follow urban revitalization through a hybrid exploration of data-based information.

## RESEARCH METHODS

To conduct a proper analysis of the revitalization of downtown Springdale a comprehensive range of methodologies were developed to gain a diverse perspective on these efforts and investments. The multifaceted approach included both quantitative and qualitative data through means of graphic analysis, community engagement, demographic analysis, and case studies to ensure a well-rounded understanding of Springdale's transformation.

## GRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The primary method of this study was the production of a graphic analysis as a qualitative assessment that explored the seen and unseen acts of gentrification and displacement in downtown Springdale. A total of ten individual graphics were produced based on the interpretation of hybrid methods such as diagrams, maps, statistics, and art through the discoveries made during the study. The series of graphics is titled "Springdale, ¡Te Queremos!" in reference to the book *Emma, We Love You* written by Bruce Vaughn as a collection of Springdale information. The data visuals aim to address and raise awareness of the complex tensions surrounding the revitalization of downtown Springdale.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An engagement with several community members was vital for the success of this study. Unstructured interviews with community leaders and stakeholders were conducted to understand their positions on current redevelopment efforts, to better inform an understanding of the community, and to understand the challenges and motives behind previous and upcoming projects.

The following community leaders and stakeholders participated in interviews:

- Patsy Christie – Springdale Planning Department, Director
- Jill Dabbs – Downtown Springdale Alliance, Executive Director
- Margarita Solorzano – Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas, Executive Director
- Heather Chilson – Tyson Foods, Senior Director of Corporate Services

From these interviews, the following community members and stakeholders were identified and engaged in conversation:

- Nate Cole – Springdale Planning Department, Planning Technician
- Octavio Logo – Muralist and Artist
- Kevin Maestri – Real Estate Executive Broker
- Meredith Bergstrom – Walton Family Foundation, Senior Program Officer
- Ana Aguayo – Walton Family Foundation, Associate Program Officer

Discussions often catered to their observations in redevelopment efforts of downtown Springdale. The interviews were organized informally and thus were relaxed conversations as opposed to a typical structured interview with a question-and-answer system. The questions listed below were used to begin the conversation or to aid in redirecting:

1. Are there any observations that you've made with recent developments on Emma Ave and the area around?
2. In your opinion, do you believe that the redevelopment of Springdale is an act of gentrification, or do you believe that there is a more inclusive approach being taken to ensure that all residents benefit from the change?
3. Being involved in the community, have there already been any community-based challenges that you've observed?
4. If any, in what ways have you observed development plans focus on human experience and interaction rather than just the transformation of the urban image?

The interviews were able to inform the graphic analysis by providing different perspectives on current revitalization efforts. The ability to gain an understanding of the Springdale Planning Department's position in contrast to Margarita Solorzano, a resident, and voice of Hispanics and Latinos in Springdale, was reflected in the graphic analysis portion of the study as there is an obvious gap between the intentions and consequences of current redevelopment efforts. By interviewing community leaders and stakeholders who held different positions and demographics, the community engagement portion of the study led to the discovery of the limitations in revitalization approaches and the lack of representation from minority groups in legislative positions that may contribute to the awareness of gentrification and displacement in downtown Springdale.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

A demographic analysis of Springdale was carefully curated and analyzed to understand dramatic shifts and changes in Latino and overall minority presence. The analysis used information provided by the Census Bureau observing overall population and demographic composition by decade from 1990 to 2020. The demographic analysis was interpreted as a growth chart in part of the graphic analysis to depict the rapid growth and shifts that the Hispanic and Latino communities contributed to Springdale within the allotted decades. Understanding these historical records and census data allowed for measurable data and statistical evidence that represent the rapid and meaningful impact that the Hispanic and Latino communities provide to Springdale.

## **CASE STUDIES**

From the beginning of project development, it was important to use case studies of cities and neighborhoods that had undergone similar revitalization efforts and identify common challenges, best approaches, overall takeaways, and possible risks. Three relevant case studies identified through research included the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Shaw Neighborhood of Washington D.C., and the city of Lynn, Massachusetts. Although not all these cities and neighborhoods share similar population size and demographic characteristics, they each provide a different perspective informing current redevelopment efforts in downtown Springdale.

# BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

## GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Gentrification and Displacement are both complex issues that relate to discussions of development and urban revitalization. Gentrification can be described as the process of more affluent individuals and households moving into historically marginalized areas. The acts are typically followed by the rise of housing costs, physical urban transformations, and sudden investment in historically disinvested communities. Although gentrification is not always the leading factor, the most common problem associated with it is following acts of displacement. Displacement which can occur in many different forms can be understood as the involuntary or coerced removal of established people often from lower-income or marginalized communities due to socio-economic shifts in neighborhoods and regions.<sup>4</sup> These two concepts are better understood when analyzed together due to the push-pull relationship to one another.

Historically, neighborhoods that have previously seen disinvestment and are composed of marginalized communities including lower-income households, persons of color, and households with lower education levels are more susceptible to acts of gentrification.<sup>5</sup> This is directly related to the motives behind gentrification. In recent years there has been a growing demand for central city living by higher-income and higher-educated individuals. As stated previously through the analysis of revitalization efforts in downtown Springdale there is a desire for a strong sense of community, walkability, and social cohesion among most individuals.<sup>6</sup> However, these same desires are the reason for an influx in gentrification in many urban areas. When affluent individuals seek out areas that offer these qualities, they become more willing to pay and participate in redevelopment efforts.<sup>7</sup> Although this can lead to benefits within the community such as improvements in infrastructure and new services and amenities, it can also

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<sup>4</sup> *Gentrification and neighborhood revitalization: What's the difference?* National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2019, April 5). <https://nlihc.org/resource/gentrification-and-neighborhood-revitalization-whats-difference>

<sup>5</sup> Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic (School of Law) and the Community and Regional Planning Program (School of Architecture). (n.d.-b). *Tools for Texas Communities*. The Uprooted Project. <https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/understanding-gentrification-and-displacement/>

<sup>6</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

<sup>7</sup> Urban Displacement Project. (n.d.). *What are gentrification and displacement*. Urban Displacement. <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/about/what-are-gentrification-and-displacement/>

lead to the displacement of long-term residents who are left incapable of affording the rising costs of living. Both gentrification and displacement collectively lead to the disruption of neighborhood dynamics, established social cohesion, and cultural presence.<sup>8</sup>

While the motives behind gentrification may stem from growing desires for dynamic urban living and lifestyles, the consequences can be detrimental to existing communities. These concepts don't only affect the pushing out of people but also the upbringing of new commerce and services that are meant to improve the economic growth of the community, however, it is no longer the existing residents that can benefit from such improvements but rather the incoming residents. Gentrification statistically leads to diversifying communities and lessening during the process but ultimately contributes to increased economic inequality as an outcome.<sup>9</sup>

Gentrification-infused displacement can be used as an umbrella term to understand the relationship between both concepts, but displacement can be further analyzed through three different sectors: direct displacement, indirect displacement, and cultural displacement. All three types of displacement can occur in gentrifying neighborhoods and can often lead from one to another over time.

Direct displacement refers to the forced removal of residents. This can be seen through acts of lease non-renewals, eviction, eminent domain, or other physical acts such as demolition on residents who are incapable of continuing to afford their homes.<sup>10</sup> This type of displacement is the most visible and tangible consequence of gentrification. People are physically removed and forced to relocate. Often these same historically marginalized communities readapt to new physical locations where they are left to build up their social and economic lives again.<sup>11</sup> Not only does this type of displacement directly affect their day-to-day lives but it also leads these individuals to feelings of isolation, disconnection, and susceptibility of psychological discomfort and trauma.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Gentrification and neighborhood revitalization: What's the difference?* National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2019, April 5). <https://nlihc.org/resource/gentrification-and-neighborhood-revitalization-whats-difference>

<sup>9</sup> *Gentrification and neighborhood revitalization: What's the difference?* National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2019, April 5). <https://nlihc.org/resource/gentrification-and-neighborhood-revitalization-whats-difference>

<sup>10</sup> Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic (School of Law) and the Community and Regional Planning Program (School of Architecture). (n.d.-a). *Tools for Texas Communities*. The Uprooted Project. <https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/understanding-gentrification-and-displacement/>

<sup>11</sup> *Gentrification and neighborhood revitalization: What's the difference?* National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2019, April 5). <https://nlihc.org/resource/gentrification-and-neighborhood-revitalization-whats-difference>

<sup>12</sup> *Palm Springs Section 14 survivors*. Palm Springs Section 14 Survivors. (2023, May 19). <https://section14survivors.com/>

Indirect displacement is closely related to direct displacement but is rather centered around economic and social changes that make it increasingly difficult for long-term residents to remain in their neighborhoods. This can include general rising costs of living, rising cost of property taxes, gentrification-induced changes in the job market, or shifts in neighborhood services and amenities, but limited to non-physical removal.<sup>13</sup> Indirect displacement is more closely related to the relationship between the residents who move out and those who begin to fill in, wealthier individuals who can afford rising housing costs.

Cultural displacement more broadly encompasses the erasure of the cultural fabric and identity of a community because of gentrification. This type of displacement can be manifested through the means of new shops and services catering to new residents or getting rid of long-term or existing services that cater to established diverse communities.<sup>14</sup> Although sometimes less tangible or observable than direct and indirect displacement, it is equally as harmful. It undermines the sense of belonging and community that was previously established and disrupts the social cohesion and unique identity of previously established residential areas. Cultural displacement indirectly aims at marginalizing practices, traditions, and languages that once were embraced and celebrated by the community.

Understanding the relationship between the concepts of gentrification and displacement is crucial as the U.S. is witnessing evolving and growing social, economic, and personal lifestyle desires and needs. Recognizing the complex challenges that can stem from revitalization efforts is crucial for creating inclusive and sustainable responses to reinvestment. Revitalization efforts are often advertised as holistic approaches to balance existing economic growth and social cohesion; however, history proves that these efforts can lead to continued cycles of inequality and marginalization.

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<sup>13</sup> Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic (School of Law) and the Community and Regional Planning Program (School of Architecture). (n.d.-a). *Tools for Texas Communities*. The Uprooted Project. <https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/understanding-gentrification-and-displacement/>

<sup>14</sup> Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic (School of Law) and the Community and Regional Planning Program (School of Architecture). (n.d.-a). *Tools for Texas Communities*. The Uprooted Project. <https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/understanding-gentrification-and-displacement/>



## **GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT IN SPRINGDALE**

Currently, the downtown area of Springdale is witnessing gentrification and becoming highly susceptible to patterns of displacement. Within the past seven years, there has been a rise in development along the central corridor of Emma Avenue and extended subdistricts. The demand for central city living is influencing the development of new projects such as mixed-use apartment complexes and upscale retail and hospitality establishments which cater to a more affluent demographic.<sup>15</sup> While these developments contribute to economic growth and urban revitalization in the city of Springdale, there are also concerns about the displacement of long-term residents including the Latino community which has played a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of Springdale. As property values continue to rise and rents increase, there is also a risk for low-income residents to find themselves incapable of maintaining their homes or businesses. There are many challenges associated with gentrification and its impact on the social fabric of downtown Springdale. Whether direct or indirect, there is a threat to the cultural richness and diversity that has characterized Springdale for the past decades.

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<sup>15</sup> *Current Projects* . Downtown Springdale Master Plan. (n.d.). <https://www.dsupdate.org/current>

## LATINO URBANISM

Latino Urbanism, a term coined in 1991 by James Rojas, an urban planner, and community activist, refers to the way in which Latinos shape and interact with urban spaces. The term encompasses how Latinos reappropriate space in the US for their use in relation to their customs and lifestyles in their native countries. It analyzes how Latinos use their yards, adapt their neighborhoods, and convert public spaces into vibrant and dynamic gathering destinations.

Over 15% of the US population was born in a foreign country.<sup>16</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau has projected that minorities will become the majority in the US by 2042, with minorities currently comprising one-third of the population. According to the same census data, Latinos are the second largest ethnic group in the US and are estimated to become one-third of the country's total population by the year 2050, a total of approximately 133 million. The magnitude of numbers and demographic composition is large and continues to grow, but it is also important to analyze geographic shifts occurring within the Latino population in the US. Latino presence in the US is no longer limited to the more common landing destinations of the 80's and 90's such as larger cities including Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Miami. Other common landing destinations include border states and former Mexican territories.<sup>17</sup> Latino communities are now found all over the country even in smaller more rural areas such as Springdale and Lynn, Massachusetts. Latinos are also no longer just filling in downtown and central locations of cities but have now begun to establish themselves in traditional American suburbs and town outskirts which have been historically viewed as predominately white and middle-class residential areas.<sup>18</sup> These geographic transitions and distributions are important to understand when considering the key features that Latinos contribute to urban space and urban renewal.

Latino Urbanism is changing lifestyles in American neighborhoods. The cultural, social, and economic dynamics of Latino communities are directly influencing design and development plans in all regions of the US. Two large components of Latino Urbanism include street life and cultural expression. During his grad school years, James Rojas quickly realized that American urban planners often focused on designing for automobiles rather than human interaction and

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<sup>16</sup> *Immigration by Country 2024*. World Population Review. (n.d.). <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/immigration-by-country>

<sup>17</sup> The Economist Newspaper. (2014, February 14). *Old Mexico lives on*. The Economist. <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2014/02/01/old-mexico-lives-on>

<sup>18</sup> Lara, J. J. (2018). *Latino placemaking and planning: Cultural resilience and strategies for reurbanization*. The University of Arizona Press.

social cohesion.<sup>19</sup> Traditionally, Latino neighborhoods tend to be lively and vibrant communal environments due to the focus and value of human interaction. It is often that outdoor space is used for social activities and to observe nature while public spaces usually cater to the use of gatherings like celebrations and other festive events. The way in which Latinos adapt their neighborhoods to their needs is heavily influencing how Americans, urban planners, and downtown areas are catering to their communities.<sup>20</sup> As expressed by residents of smaller communities like Springdale, a strong sense of community is desired.<sup>21</sup> Often, Latino-dominated communities express a strong identity through assorted forms of artistic expressions that communicate their cultural heritage. People are united through traditions, music, dance, and art all of which create that strong sense of community that Americans are in search of as their lifestyles have evolved.

Neighborhoods that express qualities of Latino Urbanism equally contribute to economic growth in their regions. Much of the social cohesion attributed to these communities lies in the commerce and services provided for Latinos. These neighborhoods are often composed of mixed-use developments that create a seamless transition from dwellings to commercial spaces such as panaderias, carnicerias, taquerias, and supermercados. As Latinos repurpose space for their traditional needs many carry the custom of shopping locally in their native countries to their adopted neighborhoods in America.<sup>22</sup> Some exclusively or for the most part shop and consume at Latino-owned businesses contributing to the overall success of their neighborhoods. In a study completed on immigrant entrepreneurs, it was found that neighborhoods revitalized with a large minority and immigrant presence are often successful due to the strong sense of place and identity that has previously been established.<sup>23</sup>

Latino urbanism is currently emerging as a transformative influence on the shaping of the urban fabric of the US. The term defines and captures how Latino communities engage and adapt their urban environments according to their customs and lifestyles from their countries of origin. As the Latino population in the US continues to shift demographically and

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<sup>19</sup> Merck, A. (2020, November 6). *James Rojas: How latino urbanism is changing life in American neighborhoods*. Salud America. <https://salud-america.org/james-rojas-how-latino-urbanism-is-changing-life-in-american-neighborhoods/>

<sup>20</sup> Lara, J. J. (2018). *Latino placemaking and planning: Cultural resilience and strategies for reurbanization*. The University of Arizona Press.

<sup>21</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). *Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update*. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

<sup>22</sup> Lara, J. J. (2018). *Latino placemaking and planning: Cultural resilience and strategies for reurbanization*. The University of Arizona Press.

<sup>23</sup> Aronson, D. (1997). *Research Perspectives on Migration*.

geographically, their influence is beginning to extend beyond central locations and into rural areas alike. Through dynamic lifestyles, cultural expressions, and collective efforts, Latino communities have mastered fostering social cohesion and economic vitality. As planners, policy makers, and community activists begin to acknowledge the significance of Latino urbanism there is a growing need in understanding and integrating principles into development strategies nationwide.

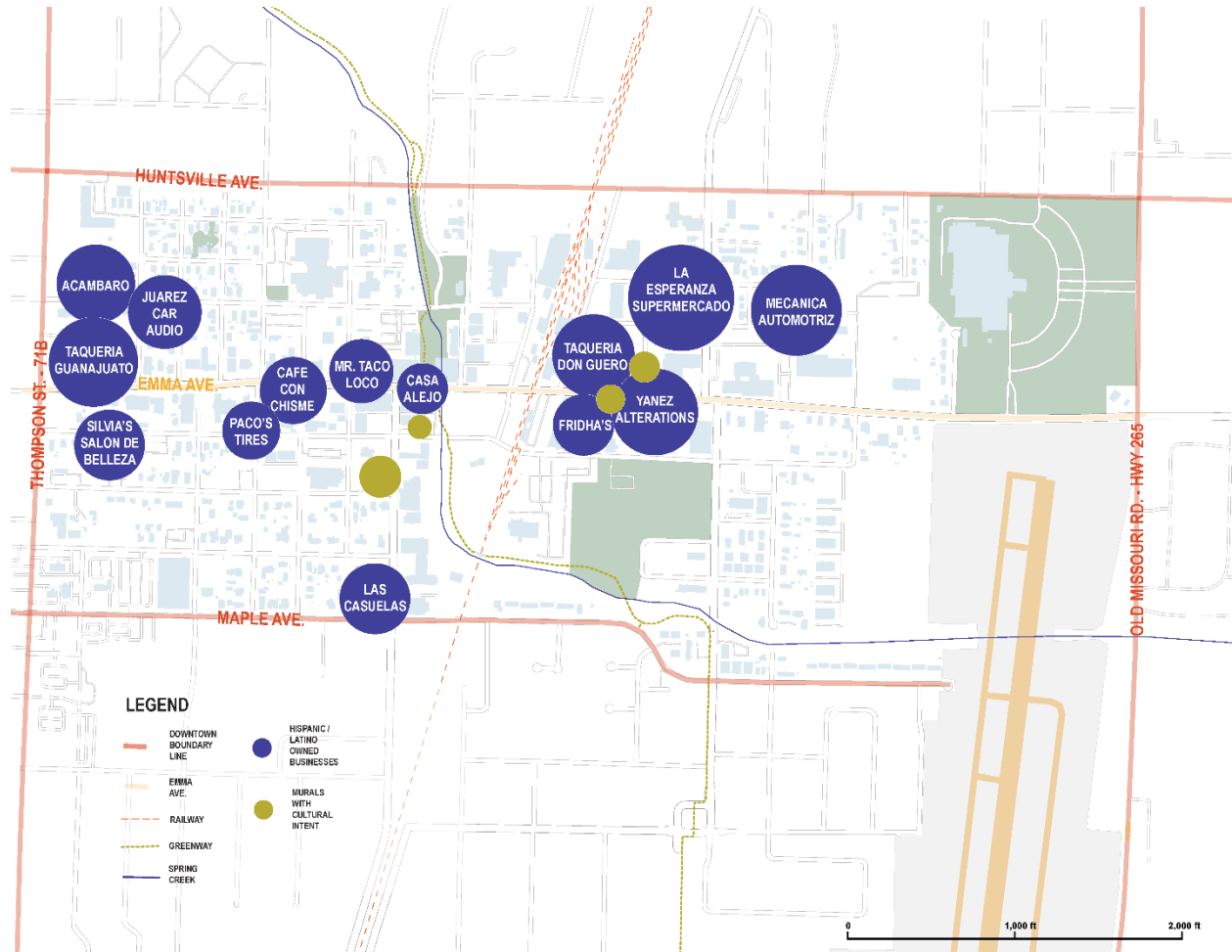


Figure 2. Diagram by Author with information from the Downtown Springdale Alliance Website – Map illustrating the cultural identity that is defined in downtown Springdale through Hispanic/Latino owned businesses and cultural intent murals. Part of graphic analysis series.

## **LATINO URBANISM IN SPRINGDALE**

Springdale has naturally developed characteristics of Latino Urbanism through its demographic transformation via immigration patterns. Since the 1990s there has been an influx of Hispanic and Latino-owned businesses that serve the local community throughout Northwest Arkansas. Although the large Latino population is not currently represented in city governance and stakeholder positions, they continue to shape the built environment and influence social patterns, community events, and the overall vibrancy of downtown Springdale.<sup>24</sup> There are nearly ten Hispanic and Latino-owned businesses along Emma Ave. and about four murals designed with cultural intent. The redevelopment of the Shiloh Square and Walter Turnbow Park has provided the Latino community of Springdale a new way in which to interact with the urban environment; the space has been utilized by Hispanic and Latino music groups during community events such as the “Dia de Los Muertos,” “Cinco de Mayo,” and the “Live at Turnbow!” celebrations and for charity fairs and bazaars. These initiatives not only foster social cohesion, but they also add to the cultural vibrancy of the area which displays how Latinos have organically shaped and animated the cultural fabric of downtown Springdale.

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<sup>24</sup> Sandoval Salinas, J. (2024, March 12). Conversation with Springdale Planning Department Director, Patsy Christie. personal.

## THE HISTORY OF SPRINGDALE AND LATINOS IN ARKANSAS

The history of Springdale can be traced back to the early 1800's. Land that was originally occupied by the Osage and Cherokee tribes during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw significant European-American settlement following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 which led to continued transformation and establishment due to the plenty of natural resources and fertile land.<sup>25</sup>

Established in 1838 and founded by John Holcombe, Springdale, named after its surrounding freshwater springs, remains known for its dynamic social and economic history. The small town slowly grew in population and maintenance, but it wasn't until the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway made its appearance in 1881 that Springdale began to flourish. The introduction of the railway through the town caused inhabitants to reevaluate its previously established center around the current-day Shiloh Museum to what we know today as Emma Avenue.<sup>26</sup> The crossing of the railway through Springdale and the relocation of the downtown center prompted rapid growth in the city. It led to becoming a transportation hub for agricultural products and eventually also took part in founding the 1986 Orphan Train Heritage Society of America.<sup>27</sup> An estimated 200,000 homeless and orphaned children were transported along the railway from eastern cities in hopes of being adopted by local families.<sup>28</sup> Children were relocated in this manner for seventy-five years, including a group who were brought to Springdale in 1912; many people native to Washington and Benton counties of Arkansas can still trace their roots to family members who were part of this group of children.<sup>29</sup>

Up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Springdale experienced steady growth and development. The town's economy primarily relied on the agricultural industry up until 1921 when the poultry industry emerged and established itself as a path to success for the city. Springdale is known to be home to Tyson Foods Inc and George's Inc; two of the most well-known names in the poultry industry. It was originally Jeff Brown, raised in Benton Country Arkansas, who used his prior

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<sup>25</sup> The Encyclopedia of Arkansas. (2023c, August 28). *Springdale (Washington and Benton counties)*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/springdale-washington-and-benton-counties-1010/>

<sup>26</sup> The Encyclopedia of Arkansas. (2023c, August 28). *Springdale (Washington and Benton counties)*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/springdale-washington-and-benton-counties-1010/>

<sup>27</sup> The Encyclopedia of Arkansas. (2023b, August 19). *Orphan Train Heritage Society of America, Inc. (OTHSA)*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/orphan-train-heritage-society-of-america-inc-2400/>

<sup>28</sup> The Encyclopedia of Arkansas. (2023c, August 28). *Springdale (Washington and Benton counties)*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/springdale-washington-and-benton-counties-1010/>

<sup>29</sup> The Encyclopedia of Arkansas. (2023b, August 19). *Orphan Train Heritage Society of America, Inc. (OTHSA)*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/orphan-train-heritage-society-of-america-inc-2400/>

knowledge of farming livestock to start the first commercial chicken hatchery on Emma Avenue.<sup>30</sup> As the industry grew there was also a growing demand for hard labor and unskilled workers in the poultry processing plants. Although this provided a wide variety of employment opportunities and significant economic growth for the area beginning in the 1970s, the specific jobs provided for these underrepresented communities of minorities and migrants were dangerous and unethical.<sup>31</sup> Springdale is currently home to the largest population of Marshallese outside of the Marshall Islands and Hawaii contributing to a total of 7.6% of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander demographic in Springdale.<sup>32</sup> Over 15,000 Marshallese live in the Northwest Arkansas region and nearby states.<sup>33</sup> Northwest Arkansas also accounts for more than half of the state's Hispanic and Latino population.<sup>34</sup> In correspondence to the economic success and rise in job demand Springdale began to see a rapid shift in demographic composition from the late 1900s into the 2000s.

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<sup>30</sup> The Encyclopedia of Arkansas. (2023a, June 16). *Springdale Poultry Industry Historic District*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/springdale-poultry-industry-historic-district-7525/#:~:text=In%201921%2C%20Brown%20started%20the,as%20the%20organization's%20first%20president.>

<sup>31</sup> Lakhani, N. (2021, August 11). *"they rake in profits – everyone else suffers": US workers lose out as Big Chicken gets bigger*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/11/tyson-chicken-industry-arkansas-poultry-monopoly>

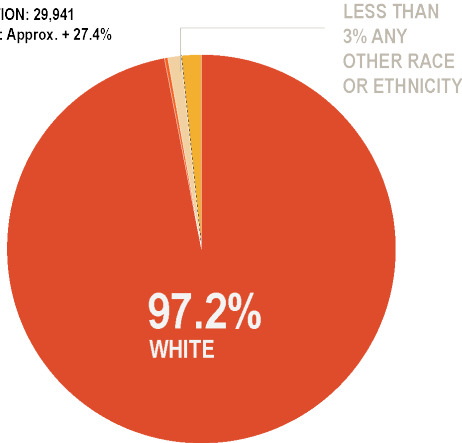
<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts*: Springdale City, Arkansas. (n.d.). <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/springdalecityarkansas>

<sup>33</sup> Brown, A. L. (n.d.). *Marshallese in Arkansas*. MEI website. <https://www.mei.ngo/marshallese-in-arkansas>

<sup>34</sup> Leidermann, M. (2024, February 21). *Latinos*. Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/latinos-2733/>

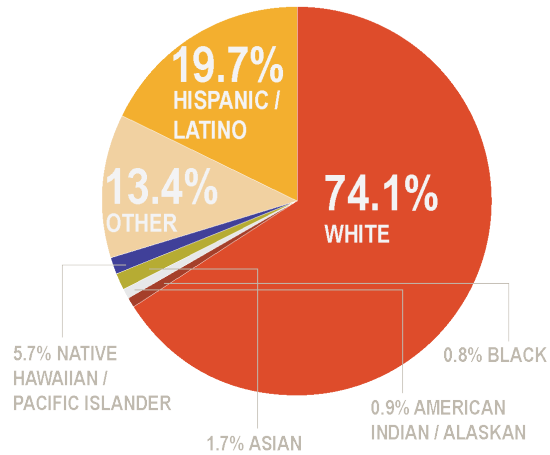
### 1990 SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

POPULATION: 29,941  
GROWTH: Approx. + 27.4%



### 2000 SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

POPULATION: 45,798  
GROWTH: + 52.9%



**Figure 3. Diagram by Author – Charts illustrating the significant demographic shifts from 1990 to 2000 in Springdale supported by data from the U.S Census Bureau.**

As of 2022, Hispanics and Latinos accounted for 38.8% of the population in Springdale.<sup>35</sup> Not only have Latinos and other minorities changed numbers in Springdale, but they have also contributed to the overall atmosphere and unique identity of the city. With consistent growth in recent decades, Latinos have been able to integrate their culture, values, and day-to-day customs into a historically predominately white region. Since the early 2000's there has been a swell in the amount of taquerias, carnicerias, panaderias, supermercados, and other businesses and services that cater to Latinos in the area. All of these have contributed to both the urban and cultural fabric of the area and have ultimately bridged the gap between previous and current populations.

Today, Springdale is recognized as the most diverse city in Arkansas.<sup>36</sup> It is often recognized as a vibrant and dynamic city that holds a unique identity compared to the rest of Northwest Arkansas. It remains home to Springdale natives, it is home to the second largest population of Marshallese in the nation, and it is composed of a 38.8% demographic

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts*: Springdale City, Arkansas. (n.d.). <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/springdalecityarkansas>

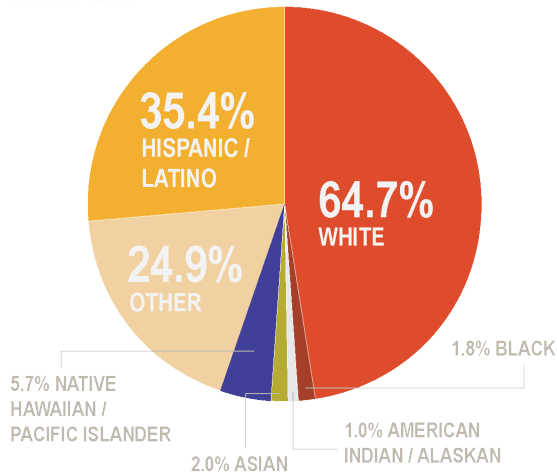
<sup>36</sup> U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts*: Springdale City, Arkansas. (n.d.). <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/springdalecityarkansas>



composition of Hispanic and Latino individuals.<sup>37</sup> The distinctive blend of cultures, traditions, and perspectives provides the city of Springdale with an opportunity for transformation that correctly addresses its history and evolved community.

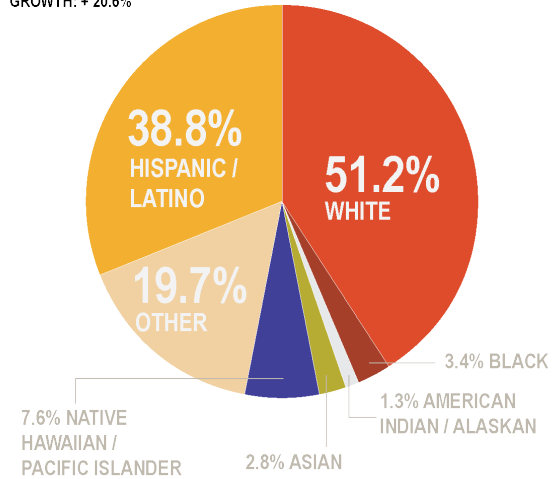
### 2010 SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

POPULATION: 69,797  
GROWTH: + 52.4%



### 2020 SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

POPULATION: 84,161  
GROWTH: + 20.6%



**Figure 4. Diagram by Author – Charts illustrating the continued demographic shifts from 2010 to 2020 in Springdale supported by data from the U.S Census Bureau.**

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts*: Springdale City, Arkansas. (n.d.). <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/springdalecityarkansas>

## **CASE STUDIES**

To develop a better understanding of theoretical concepts and frameworks for this project, brief case studies on three comparable communities were conducted. The three selected areas include the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Lynn, Massachusetts, and the Shaw neighborhood of Washington D.C. These selected areas were chosen based on mentions in literature reviews and conversations with Springdale planning department director Patsy Christie and Springdale planning department planning technician Nate Cole. The three case studies share different factors in common with downtown Springdale. Some are comprised of a relatively similar population density and demographic composition while others highlight concepts of gentrification, displacement, and the severity of prejudice and discrimination faced by historically marginalized groups. Each case study provided valuable information into the complexities of how communities respond to social changes, urban development, and economic shifts.

**Greenwood District – Tulsa Oklahoma**



Historic Greenwood District. (2023, October 3). *Historic Greenwood District*. Historic Greenwood District. <https://www.historicgreenwooddistrict.com/>

**Shaw Neighborhood – Washington D.C.**



Washington DC. (n.d.). *Shaw: Washington DC*. Neighborhood in Washington, DC | Washington DC. <https://washington.org/dc-neighborhoods/shaw>

**Lynn, Massachusetts**



*In Lynn, Massachusetts, a public art and lighting initiative enlivens a former industrial city center.* Metropolis. (2021, August 26). <https://metropolismag.com/projects/lynn-massachusetts-beyond-walls/>

## GREENWOOD DISTRICT – TULSA, OKLAHOMA

The Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma is located just two hours away from Emma Avenue, famously known as “Black Wall Street” and recognized for the extreme acts of violence the Black community underwent over a century ago. Although not comparable in population size, 413,000 (Tulsa, OK) in comparison to 84,000 (Springdale, AR) as of 2020, there are some aspects in which the two regions may be compared.<sup>38</sup> The Greenwood district is often referred to as “Tulsa’s heartbeat” much like Springdale is referred to as “the heart of NWA” given its geographic position. The metropolitan area of Northwest Arkansas is comparable to Tulsa with a population of 576, 403 as of 2022. The history of the Greenwood district looks back to the early 1900s when it established itself as a center for African American businesses and culture.<sup>39</sup> In the year of 1921 a racially motivated attack, the Greenwood Massacre, led to the burning down of thirty-five city blocks.<sup>40</sup> At the time, Greenwood was one of the country’s fastest-growing cities in the nation.<sup>41</sup> It was a vibrant and dynamic neighborhood that served as a testimony of Black economic entrepreneurship and identity. The massacre began with a gun battle and ultimately led to the burning of 1,256 homes and the destruction of hotels, churches, Black hospitals, and other businesses and community institutions by white mobs.<sup>42</sup> Although an extreme act of public disturbance and racial violence, the resilience of the Greenwood community has endured through the decades.

Following the Greenwood Massacre, the community faced many challenges in rebuilding. They faced systemic barriers and racial injustices, but the people of its neighborhood remained determined to rebuild the previously established cultural identity that

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<sup>38</sup> U.S. Census Bureau . (n.d.-b). *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: Tulsa City, Oklahoma*. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/tulsacityoklahoma/PST045222>

<sup>39</sup> Historic Greenwood District. (n.d.). *Historic Greenwood District: A Legacy of Resilience, Unity, and Renaissance*. Historic Greenwood District. <https://www.historicgreenwooddistrict.com/>

<sup>40</sup> Crowe, K. L., Lewis, T., Hindley, M., Close, S., & Suisman, D. (2021, Winter). *The 1921 Tulsa Massacre*. The National Endowment for the Humanities. <https://www.neh.gov/article/1921-tulsa-massacre#:~:text=Tulsa's%20Greenwood%20Cultural%20Center%20tabulates,in%20Greenwood%20were%20left%20homeless.>

<sup>41</sup> Crowe, K. L., Lewis, T., Hindley, M., Close, S., & Suisman, D. (2021, Winter). *The 1921 Tulsa Massacre*. The National Endowment for the Humanities. <https://www.neh.gov/article/1921-tulsa-massacre#:~:text=Tulsa's%20Greenwood%20Cultural%20Center%20tabulates,in%20Greenwood%20were%20left%20homeless.>

<sup>42</sup> Crowe, K. L., Lewis, T., Hindley, M., Close, S., & Suisman, D. (2021, Winter). *The 1921 Tulsa Massacre*. The National Endowment for the Humanities. <https://www.neh.gov/article/1921-tulsa-massacre#:~:text=Tulsa's%20Greenwood%20Cultural%20Center%20tabulates,in%20Greenwood%20were%20left%20homeless.>

the district once held. While the history of downtown Springdale vastly differs from that of Greenwood, there are still challenges that present themselves within the community. Challenges adhering to seen and unseen acts of racial prejudice, lack of minority representation within city governance and stakeholder positionings, and challenges within current revitalization efforts.

## SHAW NEIGHBORHOOD – WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Shaw neighborhood of Washington D.C. is a prime example of all types of displacement: direct and indirect, cultural, and gentrification-infused displacement. It is a centrally located neighborhood that is attributed to a rich and complex history. The neighborhood was initially home to a diverse mix of residents including African Americans, European immigrants, and working-class families. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Shaw began to see the rise in the development of rowhouses and commercial buildings in correspondence to its significant growth.<sup>43</sup> It became a vibrant hub for African American culture and commerce. The neighborhood was lined with black-owned businesses that catered to its community, like those Latino-owned businesses that cater to downtown Springdale.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, there was a period of disinvestment in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century which then led to revitalization efforts in coming years. Efforts, such as historic preservation initiatives were made, however, the community who lived through the period of disinvestment began to see signs of gentrification and displacement.<sup>45</sup> There has been significant demographic and physical change. Although there were some initiatives to preserve low-income housing, concerns over rising property values and the availability of affordable housing were rising. In 1980 Shaw was 78% Black and by 2010 the Black population had dropped to a total of 44%.<sup>46</sup>

These initial acts of indirect displacement are comparable to the activity of downtown Springdale. Like Shaw, downtown Springdale has undergone significant periods of change including growth and decline. Both communities seem to aim at attracting re-investment and although these efforts bring economic growth and positive changes, the question of who these efforts are benefiting is left unanswered. The parallels between the experiences of Shaw in Washington D.C. and downtown Springdale highlight the complex dynamics of urban change, gentrification, and displacement. Both communities are in a back-and-forth exchange between economic development and cultural preservation.

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<sup>43</sup> Washington City Paper. (2021, November 24). *An oral history of gentrification in Shaw and U Street NW*.  
<https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/1820/an-oral-history-of-gentrification-in-shaw-and-u-street-nw/>

<sup>44</sup> Washington City Paper. (2021, November 24). *An oral history of gentrification in Shaw and U Street NW*.  
<https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/1820/an-oral-history-of-gentrification-in-shaw-and-u-street-nw/>

<sup>45</sup> Gringlas, S. (2017, January 16). *Old confronts new in a gentrifying D.C. Neighborhood*. NPR.  
<https://www.npr.org/2017/01/16/505606317/d-c-s-gentrifying-neighborhoods-a-careful-mix-of-newcomers-and-old-timers#:~:text=In%201980%2C%20Shaw%20was%2078,down%20the%20neighborhood's%20black%20majority.>

<sup>46</sup> Gringlas, S. (2017, January 16). *Old confronts new in a gentrifying D.C. Neighborhood*. NPR.  
<https://www.npr.org/2017/01/16/505606317/d-c-s-gentrifying-neighborhoods-a-careful-mix-of-newcomers-and-old-timers#:~:text=In%201980%2C%20Shaw%20was%2078,down%20the%20neighborhood's%20black%20majority.>

## LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS

Very similar to Springdale, Lynn, Massachusetts currently has a thriving Latino community. The city had a population of 101,000 as of 2020 and has a 42.9% Hispanic/Latino demographic composition.<sup>47</sup> In the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a wave of Latin American immigrants primarily from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia who established themselves in the city of Lynn.<sup>48</sup> Most of these immigrants moved to Lynn for economic opportunities within the manufacturing and service industries, family networks, and overall better opportunities much like those who moved to Springdale.

Revitalization efforts for Lynn, Massachusetts were established in 2021. Much like Springdale, they are focused on their historic downtown, the Downtown Lynn Cultural District. Currently, the demographic composition of Lynn is a minority-majority population, approximately 59% persons of color.<sup>49</sup> The idea of bettering and supporting their existing community is listed as their number one goal in their master plan, however, there are concerns from residents about affordable housing, rising rent costs, and toxic gentrification.<sup>50</sup> A lot of these concerns and tensions were sparked by a recent large private investment, an 850-unit mixed-use development on the waterfront. This is the city's largest private investment in history.<sup>51</sup>

In response to these challenges, community leaders and stakeholders in Lynn are actively working on developing strategies that promote inclusive growth and equitable development. A response that has also been present in the revitalization efforts of downtown Springdale. Both cities have made efforts to increase affordable housing, support local businesses, and engage residents in the planning and decision-making process. Although the efforts of both cities are scripted to address concerns of gentrification and displacement, the

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<sup>47</sup> U.S. Census Bureau . (n.d.-a). *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: Lynn City, Massachusetts*. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lynncitymassachusetts/PST045223>

<sup>48</sup> Vasquez, D. W. (2003, January). *Latinos in Lynn, Massachusetts* . Boston; Gaston Institute Publications.

<sup>49</sup> City of Lynn. (n.d.). *Downtown Lynn cultural district recovery plan*. Lynn In Common. <https://lynnincommon.com/dtlcd-recovery-plan>

<sup>50</sup> Lavery, T. (2023, December 12). *Largest development in Lynn history will bring new housing. not everyone is happy*. Largest Development in Lynn History will Bring New Housing. Not Everyone is Happy. <https://www.masslive.com/news/2023/12/largest-development-in-lynn-history-will-bring-new-housing-not-everyone-is-happy.html>

<sup>51</sup> Lavery, T. (2023, December 12). *Largest development in Lynn history will bring new housing. not everyone is happy*. Largest Development in Lynn History will Bring New Housing. Not Everyone is Happy. <https://www.masslive.com/news/2023/12/largest-development-in-lynn-history-will-bring-new-housing-not-everyone-is-happy.html>

reality is that these concepts are multifaceted and require full transparency and community collaboration throughout the entire development process.



## THE CURRENT PLAN FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN SPRINGDALE

The downtown Springdale area is currently redeveloping its infrastructure and land use in accordance with the 2022 Downtown Springdale Master Plan Updates. The purpose of the revitalization is to strengthen the historic corridor of Emma Avenue in response to economic growth, housing needs, and social aspects of the community. The push for redevelopment in the downtown area of Springdale can be attributed to the 2015 realignment of the Razorback Greenway and its direct passage through the downtown area. Other factors contributing to the redevelopment efforts include historical patterns such as past disinvestment, negative perceptions of communities primarily composed of migrants and minorities, a new community vision for brand identity, and the idea of improving and maintaining economic development.

In 2015 an original master plan for the city of Springdale was developed and adopted. Just a few years ago, in 2022, the master plan was updated and adopted again.<sup>52</sup> The master plan comprehensively details a plan of action, objectives, and principles that the city is in the process of integrating with revitalization efforts. According to the Downtown Springdale Master Plan Updates, many of the redevelopment efforts derive from the needs of two large demographics in the area around downtown Springdale who surprisingly expressed similar wants and needs: millennials and seniors. As expressed by these large groups of the city's population, this means establishing a strong sense of community, smaller housing units at lower costs, access to nature and recreation, amenities within a walkable or bikeable distance, and the ability to age-in-place.<sup>53</sup> Although the overall objective for the master plan and updates is to create an environment that correctly responds to the conditions of the population for the next 30 years there was no implicit mention of the wants and needs of minority groups who continue to display rapid growth rates and make up over 50% of the demographic composition of Springdale.<sup>54</sup>

The initial process of the master plan updates started with a consultant and community leaders and stakeholders drafting key issues in the downtown area. These were then reviewed

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<sup>52</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

<sup>53</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

<sup>54</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

and added to during public meetings.<sup>55</sup> Demographic trends were considerably analyzed, and community outreach was implemented throughout the process of updating the master plan. The city of Springdale also made efforts in conducting online surveys made available in English, Spanish, and Marshallese, to understand the needs of residents, visitors, and business owners in the area.<sup>56</sup> However, less than 1,500 individuals contributed to the planning process in a city with a population of over 87,000.<sup>57</sup> Using data from the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), Springdale acknowledged that it is the second largest city in Northwest Arkansas and has the second highest growth rate, second to Bentonville. The master plan carefully details the 16.2% growth rate from 2015 to 2022 and analyzes growth projections for the coming years. By 2030, Springdale is on track to reach over 105,000 people.<sup>58</sup> As of 2020, Springdale was also the second lowest-income city in Northwest Arkansas, behind Fayetteville. This led to the direct addressing of housing affordability issues that could arise during revitalization efforts.

As of December 22, 2022, the master plan update included thirteen comprehensive design and development principles that addressed downtown Springdale’s position locally and regionally, subdistricts, the growth of service institutions, arts and cultural organizations, diverse housing, interconnected systems of public space, accessibility, employment and cultural entrepreneurship, and social impact and partnerships. These principles aim to be place-based strategies that achieve a strong sense of community through urban frameworks.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, the thirteen design and development principles informed what would become the true projects that would shape the renewed urban fabric of downtown Springdale. These include streetscape improvements, Jones Center Campus master plan, Shiloh Museum expansion, Luther George

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<sup>55</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

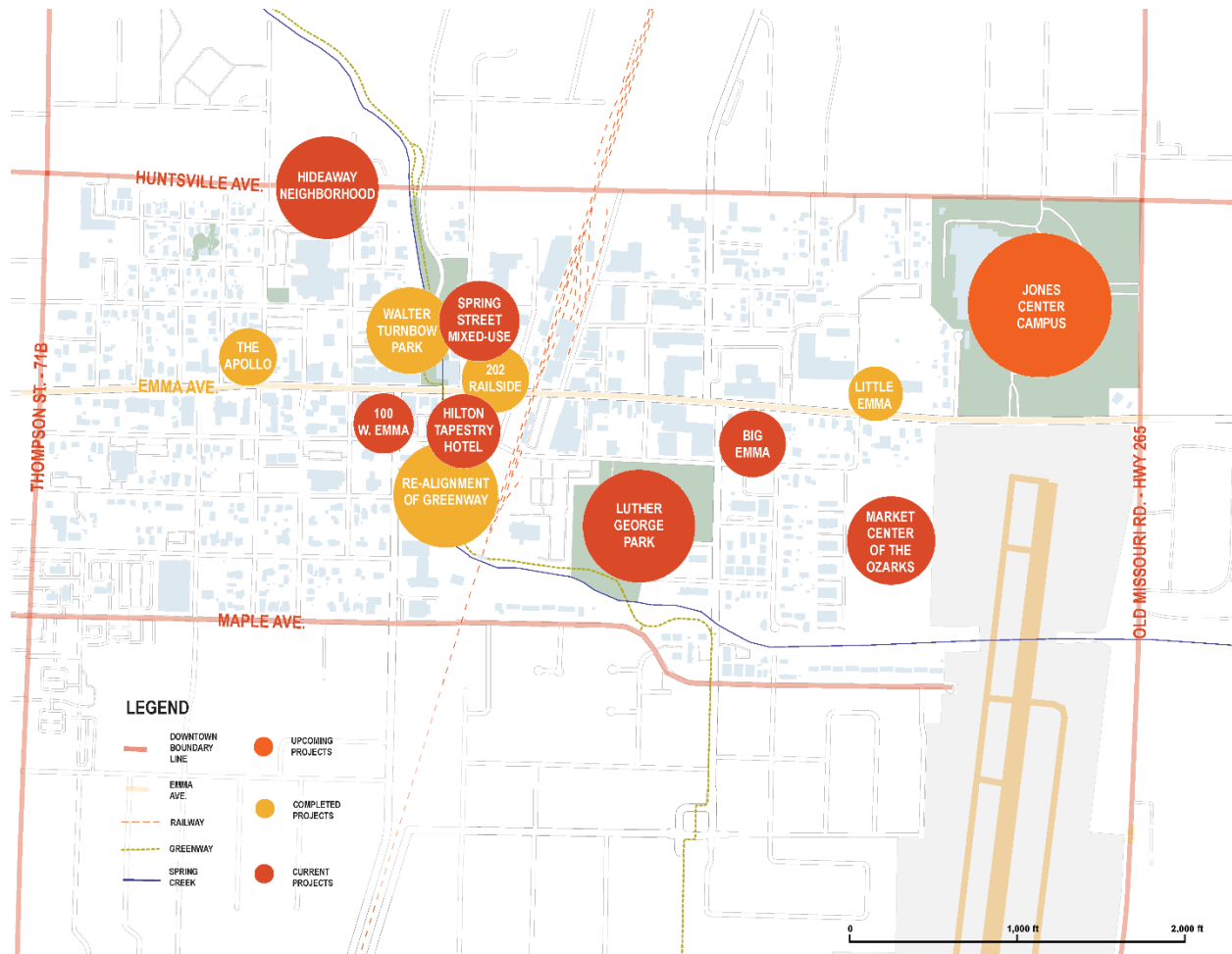
<sup>56</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts*: Springdale City, Arkansas. (n.d.). <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/springdalecityarkansas>

<sup>58</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

<sup>59</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

Park expansion, Market Center of the Ozarks, artist housing, mixed-use development, Spring Creek public space, and downtown housing stabilization.<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 5. Diagram by Author – Map illustrating the redevelopment project within established boundaries. With information from the Downtown Springdale Alliance website and Downtown Springdale Master Plan updates.**

Although an ambitious plan, the motives, principles, and projects individually and holistically contribute to community-driven placemaking. The plan at large aims to create a seamless connection throughout the downtown area of Springdale while providing opportunities for regional establishment, economic growth, and community development. The plan in detail addresses issues of affordable housing, private and public investment, and social cohesion. Overall, the downtown Springdale master plan presents itself as an opportunity to further showcase the possibilities of revitalizing a unique and authentic center of commerce and arts in Northwest Arkansas.

<sup>60</sup> H3 Studio. (2022, December 2). Downtown Springdale Master Plan Update. Springdale; City of Springdale & Downtown Springdale Alliance.

## RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The Downtown Springdale Master Plan has been in the process of implementation for seven years. Throughout this time there have been many changes, opportunities, and challenges that raise concern about overall intentions and impact. This study comprised of a historical analysis, demographic analysis, case studies, community engagement, and a graphic analysis reveals that revitalization efforts in downtown Springdale are following historical patterns of gentrification and leading to the displacement of the Hispanic and Latino communities in the area.

The historical analysis of this study revealed parallels between past transformations and current redevelopment efforts in downtown Springdale. In 1881 the introduction of the St. Louis – San Francisco Railway created drastic infrastructural shifts much like the realignment of the Razorback Greenway in 2015. These physical changes ignited economic growth in the area which led to the re-establishment of Emma Avenue as a central corridor for new business and services. During conversations with Patsy Christie, Director of the Springdale Planning Department, and Jill Dabbs, Executive Director of the Downtown Springdale Alliance, a point was made to attribute redevelopment efforts to the realignment of the Razorback Greenway. Since the realignment in 2015, we have seen a diverse range of new businesses and services appear along Emma Avenue including Homegrown, Casa Alejo, Black Apple Tap Room, Café con Chisme, and Rein Sushi and Hibachi. Within the next year, Emma Avenue is also expecting to become home to Onyx Coffee and Gaskins Steakhouse. Although the central corridor is becoming more diverse in amenities, cuisines, visitors, and consumers, it is in return leaning into economic inequality and gaps. For example, a leading destination point on Emma Avenue is Taqueria Don Guerra; a stand-alone traditional Mexican taqueria that offers authentic food with an estimated average cost of \$10 per person. In contrast, Rein Sushi and Hibachi, and Gaskins Steakhouse may offer meals at a possible estimated average of over \$20 per person. When analyzing existing businesses and services in comparison to new and upcoming commerce it becomes evident that there is an aim to provide for newer more affluent individuals and families rather than the existing lower-income households in the area.

The study highlights recent and rapid demographic shifts in Springdale. Hispanic and Latino presence wasn't notable in the area until the 1990s and into the early 2000s. However, the cultural identity that was established in the downtown area mirrored their rapid growth. The lifestyles of Latinos and the way that they interact with space are very observable in downtown Springdale. Vibrant street art fills the streets, Shiloh Square continues to be used as a gathering space for cultural events, and up until the closure for the renewal of Luther George Park it has always remained occupied by children of subdistrict neighborhoods. Since revitalization efforts began and according to Jill Dabbs, there's more movement in the

downtown area, “there’s more people, different kinds of people.” It is important to understand that diversifying may also lead to shifts and changes, including displacement. During a conversation with Margarita Solorzano, Executive Director of the Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas, and downtown Springdale resident, it is of concern to her the consequences that the existing community will face with respect to the broader impacts of the revitalization. Margarita expressed her uncomfortable feelings of constantly being sought out with cash offers for her home although her home is not up for sale. Further analysis of this discussion led to the uncovering of a disconnect between incoming more affluent households seeking a lifestyle of those who already obtain it. This conversation raised the question of whether the city and community stakeholders are working to help the existing community thrive through the redevelopment, or if the intent is primarily monetary based and bringing in new people is of priority. The realization of these efforts was the primary source of personal interpretation in the production of the graphic analysis.

Although downtown Springdale is not currently being affected by direct displacement, the findings and observations of the study reveal that downtown Springdale is witnessing acts of indirect and cultural displacement as a consequence of the gentrification process. According to housing and demographic data from Point2, 48.65% of housing units in Springdale are occupied by renters.<sup>61</sup> From the previous understanding of the different types of displacement, we can properly attribute the rise of housing costs and rents to indirect displacement. This means 48.65% of Springdale’s housing units, some of which reside in the downtown Springdale area, are susceptible to becoming incapable of affording their rent. Although the study didn’t prioritize analyzing housing affordability, it is understood that with market shifts in the Northwest Arkansas region, some households in the studied area may have already found themselves victims of these acts. During the development of this study Big Emma, a mixed-income housing development that aims to address affordable housing by offering thirty living units below the median range income in Northwest Arkansas, broke ground. The project in collaboration with investment from Groundwork Workforce Housing for Northwest Arkansas is a great initiative to address housing inaccessibility, but it also directly implies the fact that there are housing affordability issues in downtown Springdale. As affordability becomes increasingly tense, Springdale’s Hispanic and Latino communities also find themselves at risk of being culturally displaced. Through the study’s findings and observations, the main sources of cultural preservation from an economic standpoint are the appearance of Hispanic and Latino-owned businesses such as Casa Alejo, Café con Chisme, and Fridha’s. From a community standpoint, there continues to be efforts in hosting cultural community events through organizations such

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<sup>61</sup> Point2. (n.d.). *Springdale, ar household income, population & demographics | point2*. Springdale, AR Demographics. <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/AR/Springdale-Demographics.html>

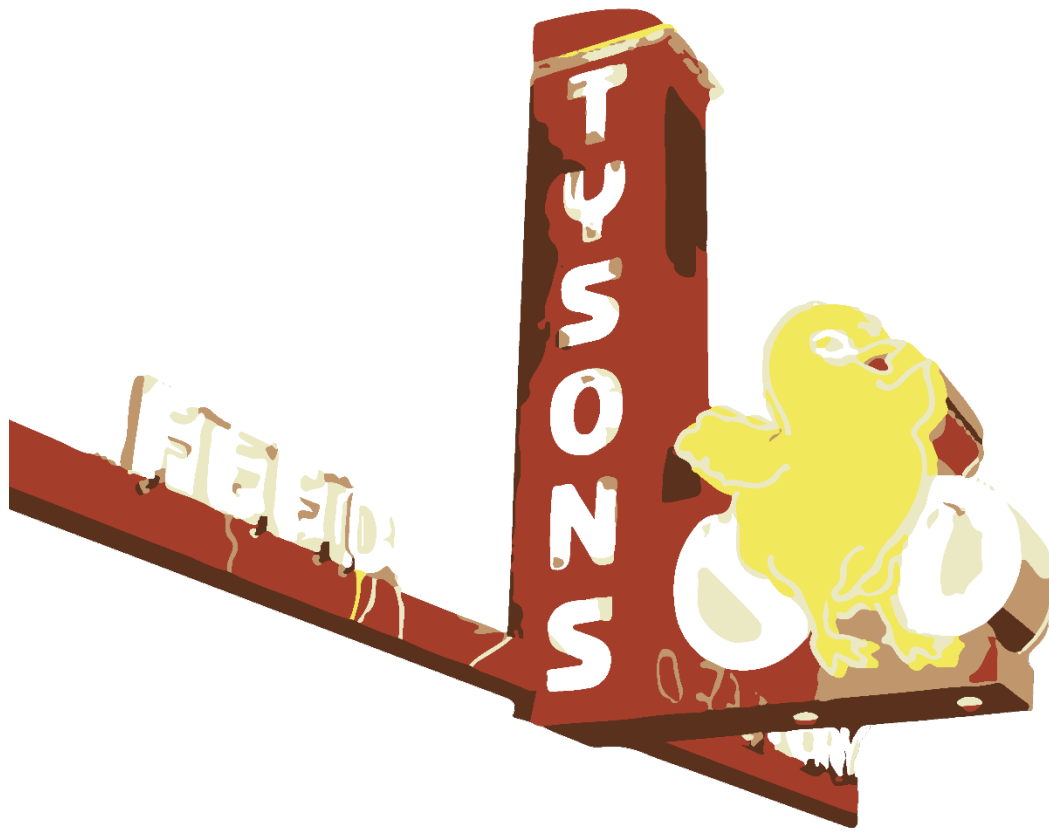
as the Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas and the Downtown Springdale Alliance. However, the effects of cultural displacement are more actively visible through the businesses and services that are appearing along Emma Avenue, such as those previously mentioned and attributed to economic inequality.

The findings of this study emphasize the power that community leaders, stakeholders, and policymakers have in implementing and prioritizing inclusive development strategies. Revitalization efforts often initiate with the idea of economic growth and social cohesion; however, these initial ideas and goals quickly begin to encounter severe consequences. To revitalize downtown Springdale properly and equitably it is important to acknowledge existing neighbors and enforce inclusive development practices that ensure the unique cultural identity of Springdale remains.

## GRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The purpose of the graphic analysis in this study is to visually depict and analyze the spatial relationship between the built environment and the community of Springdale. Through mapping and illustrative techniques, this analysis aims to highlight tensions of gentrification, displacement, representation, and cultural preservation in response to revitalization efforts in downtown Springdale. Hybridizing a range of graphic analysis and mapping techniques from Giambattista Nolli's Map of Rome to Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City*, through a cartographic and photographic collage technique, including graphic explorations where the qualitative and quantitative intersect, such as the work of James Corner, Lazar Markovich, and Raoul Bunschoten. The graphics produced intend to provide insight into the seen and unseen cultural dynamics in Springdale. The series serves as a tool for understanding community values and priorities while also demonstrating concrete evidence of how the built environment can both reflect and influence social structures and community empowerment through development processes.

The series of graphics is titled "Springdale, ¡Te Queremos!" translating to "Springdale, We Love You!" It is directly related to the title of the book *Emma, We Love You* by Bruce Vaughn. The series in its own way is a new collection of Springdale information; a collection that addresses the history of Hispanics and Latinos in Springdale, their growth, and their impact on the community. The graphic analysis draws from both experiences of the author as a daughter, niece, and cousin of immigrants, and data-based information gained through the study of downtown Springdale. The series is intended to raise awareness of current revitalization efforts and to influence critical thinking and cultural sensitivity in future decision-making for Springdale. It is encouraged to question the intent of redevelopment, to acknowledge the presence of the Hispanic and Latino community, and to understand that they too love Springdale.



# SPRINGDALE, *¡TE QUEREMOS!*

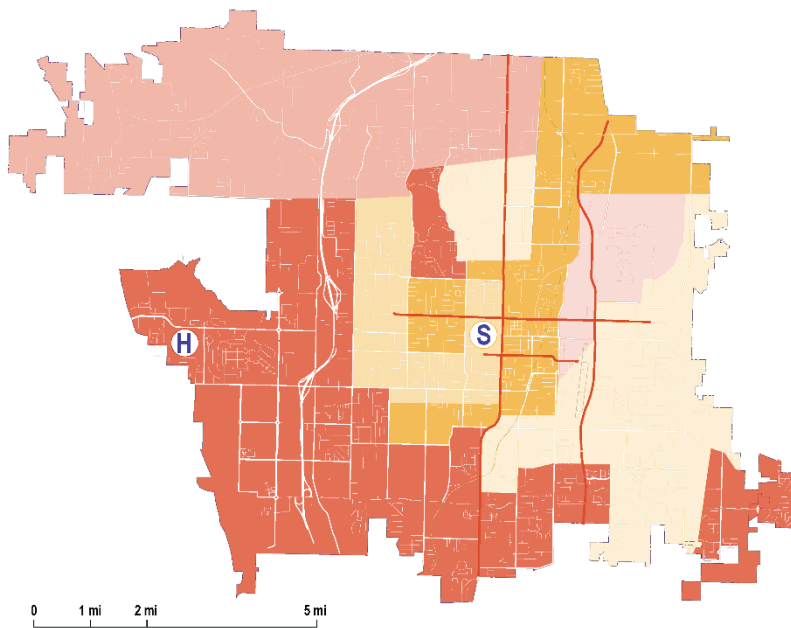
Springdale is currently the most diverse city in the state of Arkansas. The Hispanic and Latino community currently comprise 38.8% of the demographic composition. The following series of analytical graphics highlight demonstrate the current tensions surrounding the revitalization of downtown Springdale; tensions regarding the gentrification process of the city and the displacement of its existing minority-majority community. For the past four decades Hispanics and Latinos along with other underrepresented communities have been establishing their lives in the heart of Northwest Arkansas in response to the job opportunities provided by the poultry industry in Springdale. Parents and families just as mine abandoned their previous lives in their native countries in search of a safer, healthier, and overall better future for themselves and their children. Since 1980, the Hispanic and Latino community have significantly transformed the cultural identity of Springdale, Arkansas. They have made themselves vulnerable, have shared their ways of

life, their traditions and customs, contributing to the Springdale we know today. The series is titled "Springdale, ¡Te Queremos!" translating to "Springdale, We Love You!" It is directly related to the title of the book Emma, We Love You! by Bruce Vaughn. The series in its own way is a new collection of Springdale information; a collection which addresses the history of Hispanics and Latinos in Springdale, their growth, and their impact on the community. The series of graphics draw from personal experiences as a daughter, niece, and cousin of immigrants, and data-based information gained through my study of downtown Springdale. It is my hope as a first-generation Hispanic American and Springdale native to raise awareness on current revitalization efforts and to influence critical thinking and cultural sensitivity in future decision making for Springdale. I encourage you to question the intent of redevelopment, to acknowledge the presence of my community, and to understand that they too love Springdale.

**Figure 6. Diagram by Author – Graphic illustrating the title of the series, project statement, and a drawing of the Tyson Foods sign at the headquarters office in Springdale.**



**THERE'S  
TWO SIDES  
TO EVERY  
STORY..  
SPRINGDALE  
INCLUDED.**



- Hispanic / Latino Distribution
- White Distribution
- Downtown Boundaries
- H Har-Ber High School
- S Springdale High School

Everyone knows there are two sides to Springdale. East Springdale and West Springdale. Springdale High School and Har-Ber High School. Dogs and cats – plain and simple. The map above shows the demographic distribution within Springdale using data provided by City Data. This map directly exposes the division between the white side of Springdale and the Hispanic and Latino side of Springdale. These areas are not defined by enforced boundaries. Higher demographic density areas are highlighted in higher opacity. Lower demographic density areas are highlighted in lower opacity.

It is important to note that the boundaries defining downtown Springdale for the purpose of this study frame around a Hispanic and Latino dominated region, including Emma Avenue. The cultural dominance within the downtown area should be significantly contributing to revitalization efforts, however, through the conducted study there appears to be a disconnect between redevelopment projects and the existing community. Many of the households in the area qualify as low-income. Are new businesses catering to the existing community? If they're not, then who are they intended for?

**Figure 7. Diagram by Author – Map diagram illustrating the demographic distribution of Whites and Hispanics / Latinos across Springdale.**

# ¿PARA QUIEN?

The revitalization of downtown Springdale is stated to be a community-based effort. But, for which community? "For Whom?" Springdale is home to a minority-majority population. A significant portion of the population also accounts for low-income. Through this study, there are small efforts being made to address the existing community in the downtown area compared to efforts of bringing in new businesses and services that cater to a different social bracket. Historically, gentrification is a result of sudden re-investment and economic growth in areas like downtown Springdale to attract new and more affluent individuals.

Springdale is already known to be vibrant and dynamic. My family, along with many others moved here and began writing the cultural narrative of downtown Springdale. Downtown Springdale is different than downtown Fayetteville, Bentonville, and Rogers, all nearby cities in the Northwest Arkansas region. These unique characteristics are directly related to the people of Springdale and to the cultural presence along Emma Avenue. Hispanics and Latinos are a part of Springdale's evolution, and their story is being erased before it's even told.



**Figure 8. Diagram by Author – Graphic illustrating author's parents, family, and Taqueria Don Guero in statement questioning the audience and intent behind revitalization efforts.**

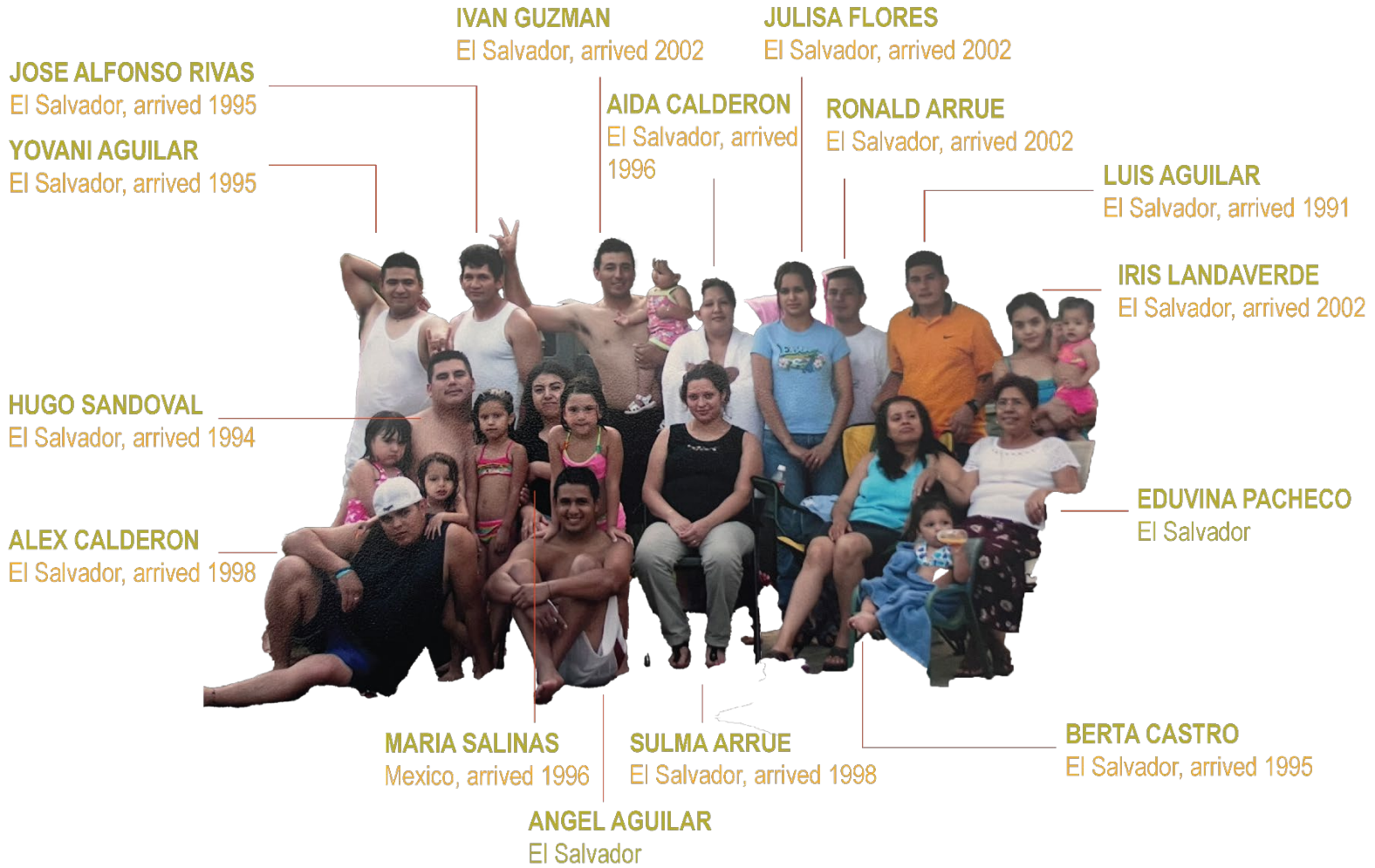


Figure 9. Diagram by Author – Graphic illustrating the names, native countries, and arrival dates to Springdale of those in the family photo used in Figure 8.

# MORE LATINO PRESENCE

Latino presence continues to grow in Springdale, Arkansas. In the 1990's we some of the first Latino-owned businesses included Super Mercado El Ranchito, Yanez Alterations, and Tienda La Salvadoreña. These three businesses continue to thrive and cater to its' community today.

Within the past two years Springdale has welcomed new Latino-owned businesses and concepts. Springdale welcomed the first Honduran restaurant in the area, Sabor Catracho, one of twenty-eight Salvadoran consulate's in the U.S., and the first Latino-owned coffee shop in Northwest Arkansas.



Super Mercado El Ranchito. Photo by author. 2023. Photo.

**SUPER MERCADO EL RANCHITO**  
Est. 1995



Yanez Alterations. Photo by author. 2023. Photo.

**YANEZ ALTERATIONS**  
Est. 1998



Tienda La Salvadoreña. Photo by author. 2023. Photo.

**TIENDA LA SALVADOREÑA**  
Est. 1996



Sabor Catracho. Photo by author. 2024. Photo.

**SABOR CATRACHO**  
Est. 2023



Consulado de El Salvador. Photo by author. 2022. Photo.

**CONSULADO DE EL SALVADOR**  
Est. 2022



Cafe Con Chisme. Photo by author. 2024. Photo.

**CAFE CON CHISME**  
Est. 2024

**Figure 10. Diagram by Author using sourced images – Graphic illustrating the continued growth of Latino presence in Springdale. Graphic is comprised of some of the first established Hispanic / Latino owned businesses along with more recent business openings.**

During the decade between 1990 and 2000 Springdale saw record-breaking growth in population. In 1990 the population was 29,941 and by 2000 the population was 45,798, a 52.9% growth rate. The growth during the 1990's was fueled by the incoming of immigrants in response to the demand for unspecialized workers in the poultry industry.

My family members were all a part of this demographic shift. They all came from their native countries of El Salvador and Mexico to work low paying and grueling jobs, because even then the situation was better than back home. All but a few members in the family photo have worked within the poultry industry in Springdale, the processing end. In fact, that is how my parents met. A true Springdale love story.

Immigrants changed the face of Springdale. Their vibrant and dynamic lifestyles are the vibrant and dynamic characteristics that flourish all throughout Springdale. Immigrants in Springdale are true examples of self-made individuals. They have turned Springdale into a welcoming community that celebrates diversity and have also made it a home to their dreams and ambitions.

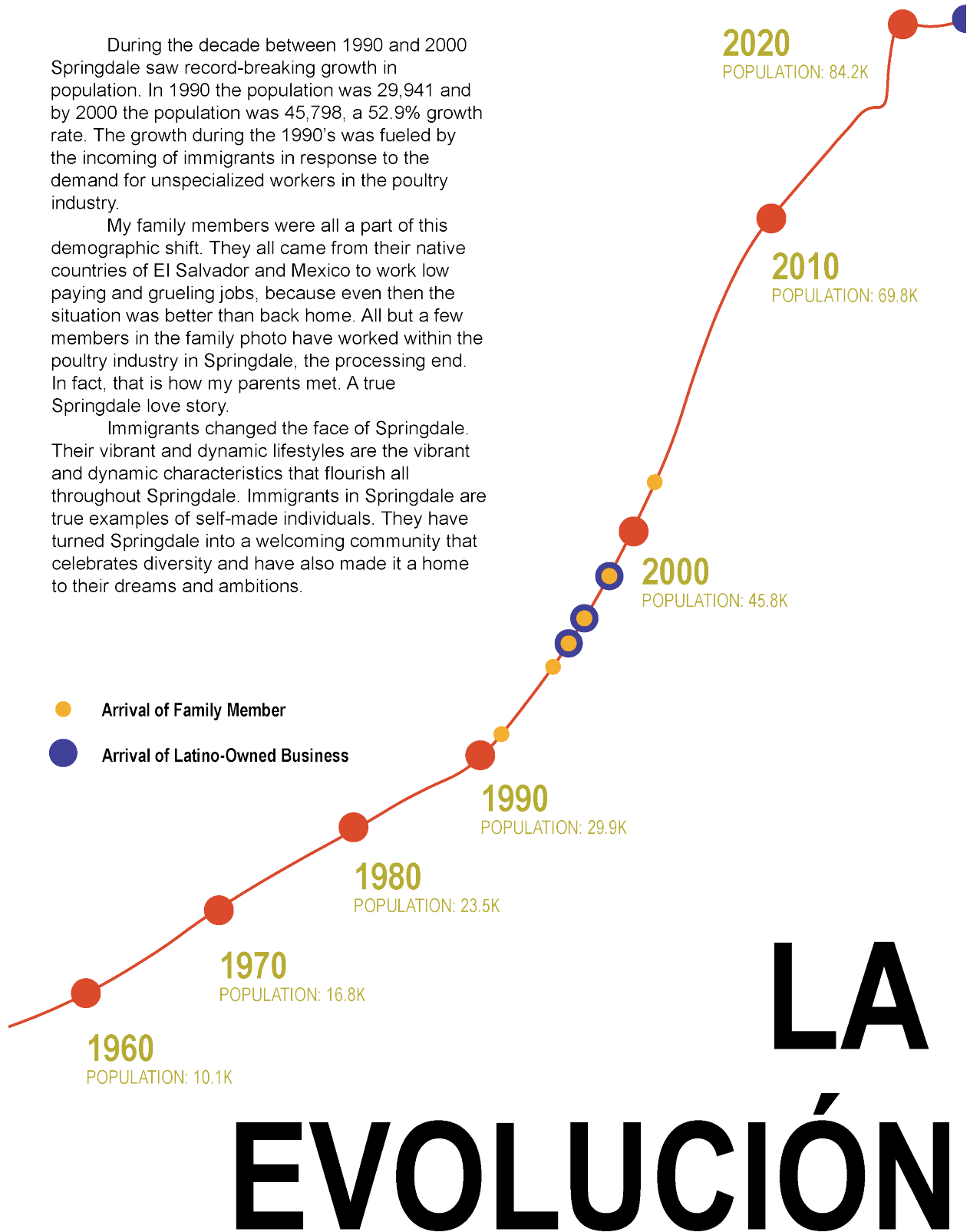


Figure 11. Diagram by Author – Line Chart illustrating population growth in Springdale between decades and recognizing the jump in the 1990's being due to immigration. Related to figures 9 and 10.

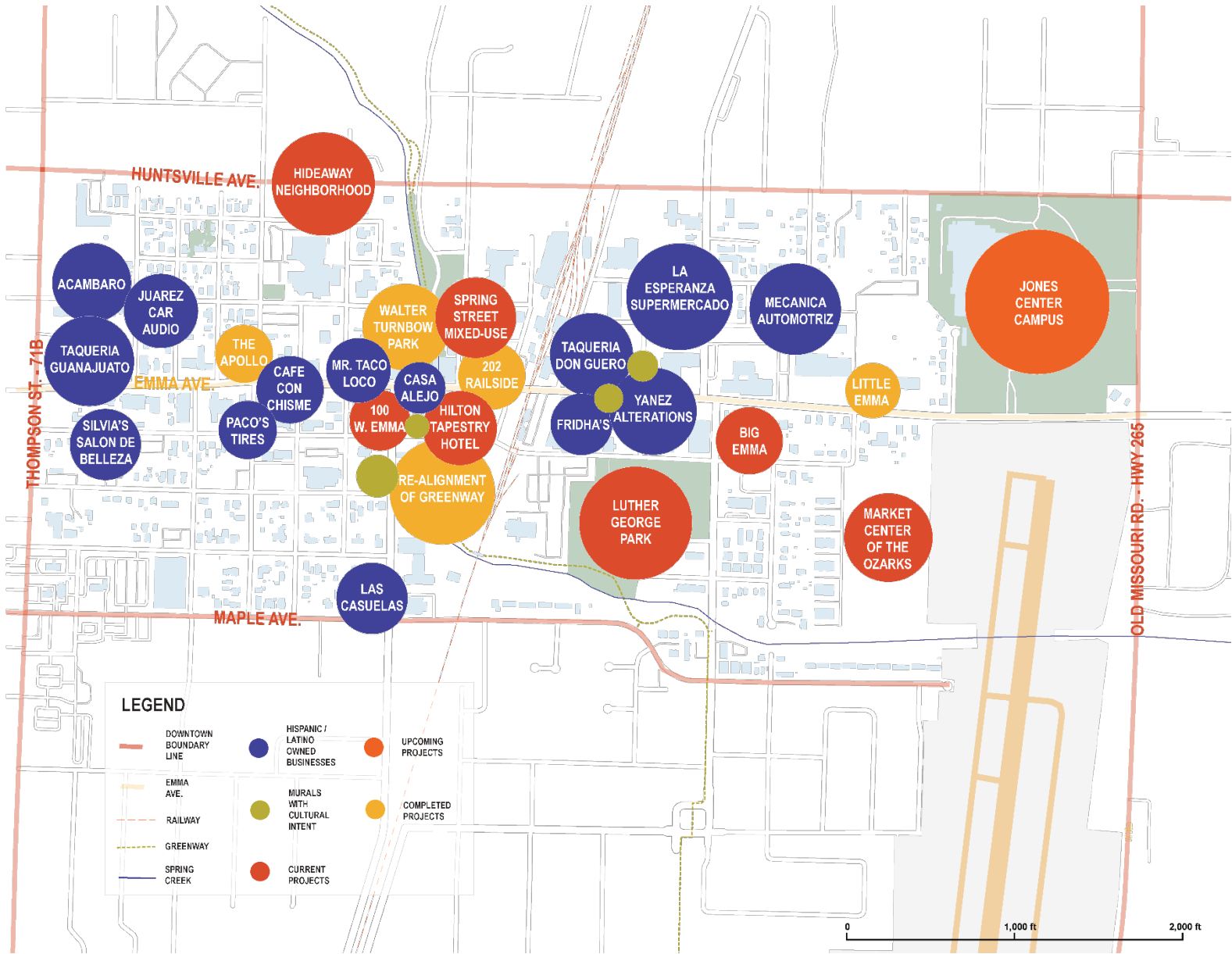


Figure 12. Diagram by Author – Map illustrating the cultural identity that is defined in downtown Springdale through Hispanic/Latino-owned businesses and cultural intent murals.

# EMMA AVENUE

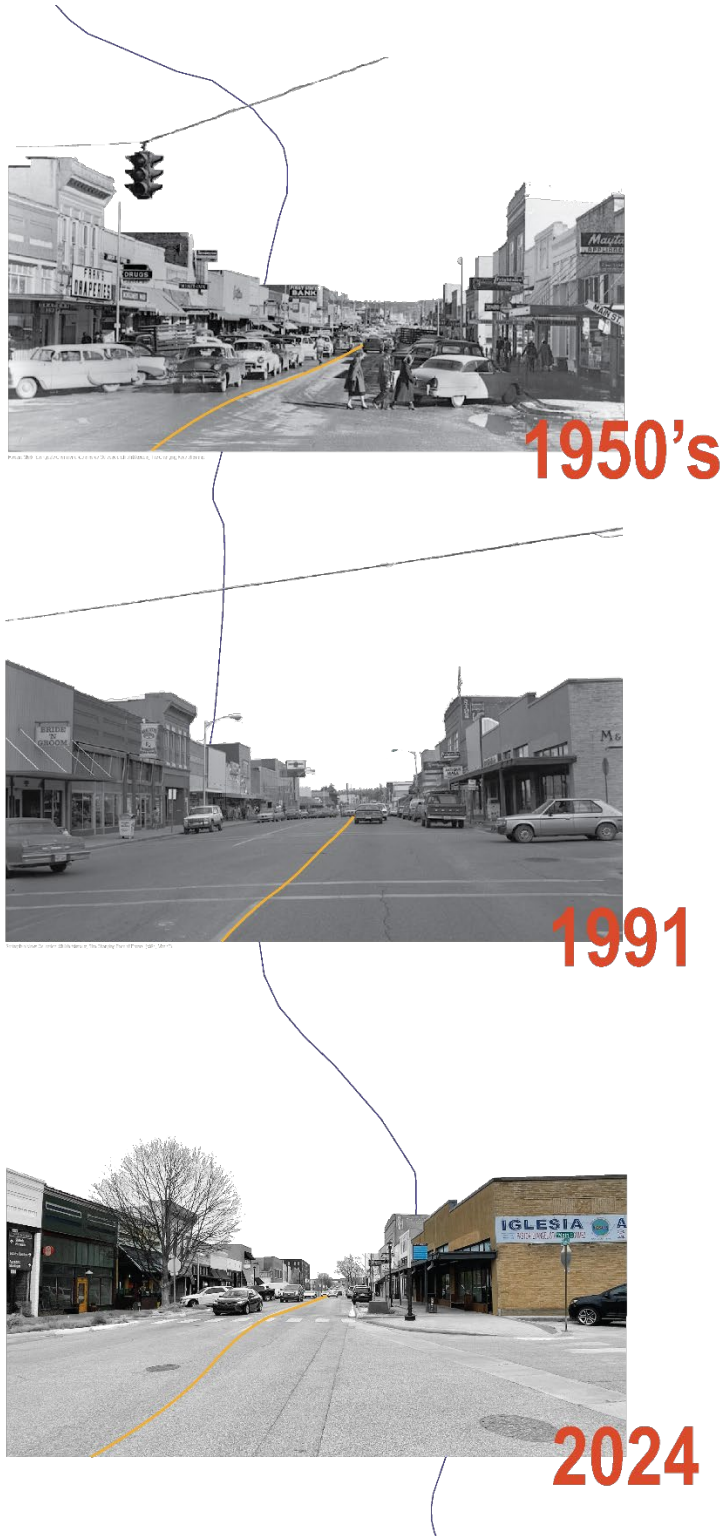
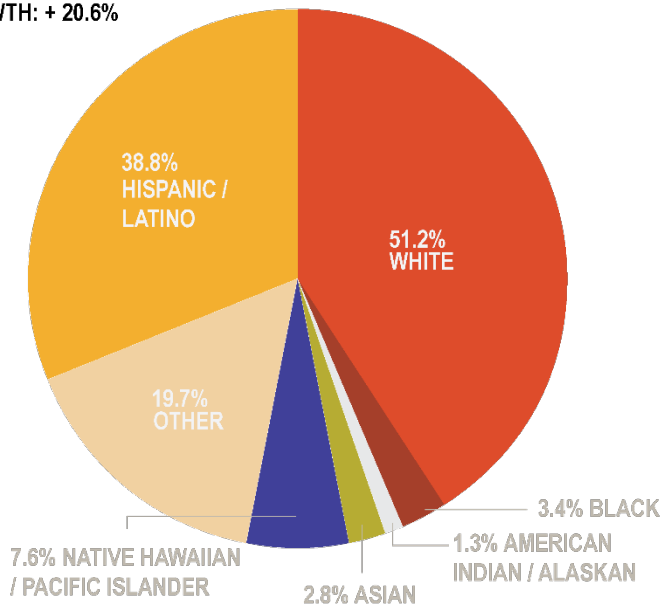


Figure 13. Diagram by Author using two sourced images – Graphic illustrating Emma Avenue through the years. Pictures were taken decades apart at the same intersection between Emma Avenue and Main Street. The 2024 image was taken by the author and overlaid with color illustrating Hispanic / Latino presence. The blue and yellow lines are representative of Spring Creek and Emma Avenue in related maps.

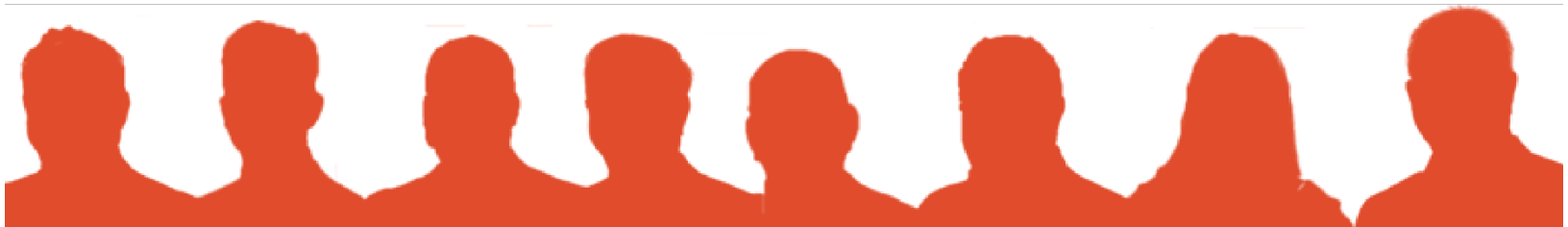
# 2020 SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

POPULATION: 84,161  
GROWTH: + 20.6%



## ***YOU CAN'T SEE SPRINGDALE WITHOUT ITS COLOR AND CULTURAL IDENTITY!***

There is a lack of representation in city governance and stakeholder positionings in the city of Springdale. As the most diverse city in the state, our government does not correctly correspond to all the different minority groups that make up our community. Currently all city council positions in Springdale are held by white individuals. Representing the thoughts, ideas, and customs of only half of our population. However, you can't see Springdale without its color and cultural identity. The lack of representation is an issue that raises concern over the inclusivity and equity of our city. Increasing diversity amongst city governance and stakeholders is about creating a more responsive and effective government. It is about fostering an environment that values and accounts for diverse needs, priorities, and experiences in decision making processes for our community. Through conducting this study, it was understood that there is a gap between lack of representation and not knowing that representation is needed. Many Hispanic and/or Latino individuals are unaware of the statistical presence they hold in Springdale. It is up to my generation to bridge these gaps and to now provide them with a continued equitable lifestyle just as they provided for us.



**Figure 14. Diagram by Author – Chart illustrating the demographic composition of Springdale as of 2020 and recognizing the lack of representation in city governance and stakeholder positionings. Council members are depicted along the bottom and outlined in respective demographic make-up.**





Figure 15. Diagram by Author – In relation to Figure 14, this graphic serves as an exploration of the statement “You can’t see the Springdale without its color and cultural identity.” If the collaged background of Latino identity was not present, you would not be able to navigate the city as the white lines would disappear.

## DISCUSSION

The Springdale that we refer to today as vibrant and dynamic is attributed to the presence of minority groups, including the Hispanic and Latino community who shaped the city's cultural fabric and economic landscape. Springdale would not be the city it is today without the demographic shifts that occurred during the 1990's. Immigrants and the existing community in the downtown area paved the way for current revitalization efforts occurring since 2022.

Since moving and starting a new life in the United States, immigrants have become role models of resilient, self-determined, and hardworking individuals. Many immigrants who started their lives in Springdale working in Tyson, George's, and Cargill processing factories are now business owners providing equal opportunities for employment within their growing community. They came to the US in search of a better future and overall better quality of life, but it wasn't handed to them. Immigrants were the ones to respond to the demand of intense and low-paying jobs, but now that the initial generation is making it out of the factories and into the community there seems to be reluctance about their growth in the area.

One of the most concerning factors that revealed itself throughout this study was the lack of representation within city governance and stakeholder positionings. Currently, the city council comprises a 100% white demographic composition.<sup>62</sup> This council does not reflect the diversity that is present in Springdale and raises questions about the inclusivity and equity of our community. Increasing the diversity in the council and leadership positions is not just about having a familiar face that represents Hispanics and Latinos, or other underrepresented communities, but it is about having a voice listened to and valued through decision-making processes such as revitalization efforts.

Likewise, there is a spatial representation of the diversity that make up the community of Springdale in the built environment. This demonstrated representation through the mapping and graphic analysis of this study is not present in the local political structures. The built environment is not neutral but rather reflective of the diverse community through the distribution of public space and the application of art. There are multiple Hispanic and Latino-owned businesses along Emma Avenue and its subdistricts as well as several murals that demonstrate cultural meanings – all of which contribute to the values and priorities of the people who make up the existing community. The lack of representation within the local political structures may be attributed to historical decisions and power dynamics. The exclusion

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.springdalear.gov/page/city-council>

of certain groups in the local government creates a disconnect between the needs of diverse community members and the policies that govern the built environment.

Embracing the diversity and vibrancy of Springdale at an executive level is not about fairness but it is rather essential as Springdale and its existing community in the downtown area are being gentrified and displaced. The history of Hispanics and Latinos in Springdale is dynamic yet reflective of the history of many immigrants in the US. They have shared their lifestyles, have contributed to the success of larger corporations, and have shaped the economy of historically disinvested towns, but they are still in debt of recognition and are now looking to be turned away.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

While this study examined and informed key factors in accordance with completing the study in the allotted time frame, it is important to account for both practical applications and considerations if further investigation on the topic is conducted.

The observed limitations within community engagement underscore the need for a more comprehensive examination within the community. The study was limited to conversations with a few individuals holding leader and stakeholder positions within the defined boundaries of the studied area, so the study may be improved by including Hispanic and Latino low-income households in the area to get a true sense of their experience during revitalization efforts. The feedback provided by these individuals and families may not be generalized, but they would pertain truth to the overall community atmosphere. This addition to the study could be done through the process of surveying or interviewing.

Future studies may also consider the examination of long-term economic impacts, social consequences on marginalized communities, and the efficiency of interventions that aim to ease and mitigate displacement. While this study represents an exploration of revitalization dynamics in downtown Springdale, it allows for broader implications and initiatives to continue exploring inclusive approaches to urban development.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to observe and analyze current revitalization efforts in downtown Springdale through a graphic analysis informed by historical examination, demographic analysis, mapping, case studies, and personal background and experiences. The objective of the study is to create a detailed depiction of the dynamics of gentrification, displacement, cultural preservation, and representation within the downtown area of Springdale. Through a comprehensive exploration of statistics, demographics, history, and current times, the study led to an understanding of complex tensions and concepts surrounding the revitalization of downtown Springdale.

As an interior architecture and design student, this project intends to challenge the boundaries of the profession and begin the exploration of an interdisciplinary approach. As designers, it is of high priority to not only be inspired by the world around us but to also address complex matters through our work – whether it happens through urban planning and land use, architecture, or interior architecture and design.

The graphic analysis of this study comprises a series of data visualizations and illustrative maps that intend to inform and depict the seen and unseen acts of gentrification, displacement, and cultural preservation in the downtown area of Springdale. The integrative approach to combining statistical data, demographic trends, historical context, and real-time observations provides a unique exploration of the intersection between cultural presence, community identity, and economic development. The graphic analysis conducted in this study serves as a focal tool to communicate the ongoing revitalization efforts of downtown Springdale through the combination of sources that reveal a complex narrative about downtown Springdale, its leaders, and its undefined community.

The findings of this study can serve as a precedent for the need for inclusive and equitable development strategies. The evolving demographic composition of Springdale, noting the growing presence of Hispanics and Latinos in the community, exposes challenges and vulnerabilities of revitalization efforts as much as they also enrich the area's cultural landscape. Ultimately, the comprehensive data gathered through the multifaceted approach led to the discovery of downtown Springdale finding itself a victim of gentrification, indirect displacement, cultural displacement, and susceptibility to direct displacement.

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