Town of Clayton
Downtown Development Association Advisory Board Agenda
Monday, February 13, 2023 @ 6:00 PM
Wooten - Town Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER

a. *Presenter:* Christi Thompson, Chair

2. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approval of Jan 9, 2023 Minutes
Presenter: Christi Thompson, Chair
Downtown Development Association Advisory Board - Jan 09 2023 - Minutes - Pdf

4. STAFF REPORTS

a. Downtown Master Plan Input Session - Feb. 28 at Town Hall from5:30-8:30pm floating
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist

b. Update on Open Board Seat
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Strategic Plan Final Draft Review
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist
Clayton_NC_Downtown_Strategic_Plan_DRAFT_v3

b. String Lights Code Recommendation
Presenter: Christi Thompson, Board Chair
String Lights Recommendation Letter

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. 2023 Downtown Events Sponsorship Guide
Presenter: Matt Kagel, Organization Committee Chair & Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist
DDA 2023 Draft Sponsorship Guide

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Economic Vitality
- Note about Committee Meetings: Switched from Last Wednesday at 6pm to Last Tuesday at 6pm, Now at Deep River

Presenter: Paul Auclair, Chair

b. Design
- Note about Committee Meeting: Switched from Last Tuesday at 6pm to Last Wednesday at 6pm at First Street Tavern
- Will not have a meeting on scheduled date in February and instead committee

members will be attending Downtown Master Plan input session on 2.28

Presenter: David Millican, Chair

c. Organization

- Relocate to Deep River due to meeting directly before?

Presenter: Matt Kagel, Chair

d. Promotions

Presenter: Erin Belcher, Chair

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

9. ADJOURN

Town of Clayton
Downtown Development Association Advisory
Board Minutes
Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Wooten - Town Hall

Board Members Present: Christi Thompson, Chair Jasmeen Calhoun Erin Belcher Greg Adamson Katie Spalding Dan Barbour David Millican Paul Auclair Lila Reiber - Late Stephanie Matos - Late **Board Members Absent:** Matt Kagel	**Staff Present:** Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist Patrick Pierce, Economic Development Director Porter Casey, Town Council Member

1 CALL TO ORDER

a) Call to Order
Presenter: Christi Thompson, Chair

Meeting was called to order at 6:05pm

2 ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

a) Addition of 6d - Year of the Trail Proclamation
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Approval of Nov 14th DDA Minutes
Presenter: Christi Thompson, Chair

The Nov. 14, 2022 Minutes were approved as written.

Motion made by: Jasmeen
Seconded by: David Millican

4 OLD BUSINESS

a) 2023 Reminders & Requirements
Presenter: Christi Thompson, Chair

Board Chair, Thompson, led the group through a reminder of meeting attendance requirements, goals, committee engagement and expectations.

5 STAFF REPORTS

a) Downtown Strategic Plan Progress Update
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist

Davis gave on overview of current progress for the Downtown Strategic Plan. Finalized draft will be presented at the next DDA Board Meeting.

At this meeting, Patrick Pierce (Economic Development Director) gave a quick overview presentation summarizing the draft executive summary of the plan.

6 NEW BUSINESS

a) Structuring and Level Setting for Committees
- Committee group prep
- Readying committees for Action Planning

Presenter: Christi Thompson, Chair

Thompson charge committee chairs with facilitating recruitment of new committee members and to work with committee members to develop a structure that works for prioritization between existing annual duties and new projects coming from the strategic plan.

b) 2023 Events
- Concert Lineup - May 12 is first date
- Sponsorships
- Volunteers
- Beer/Wine Sales
- Family Shows/Movie Nights

Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist & Christi Thompson, Chair

General overview of upcoming events:
- Concert Dates for 2023 - May 12, June 2, Aug 10, Sept 8, Oct 5
- Sponsorships - May be restructured slightly, but similar in procing to last year. Organization committee will be owning sponsorships this year.
- Beer/wine - Organization committee to discuss whether it makes sense to continue doing this, or to outsource/sell sponsorships for this opportunity.

- Family Shows vs. Movie Nights - General feelings of board were that going back to just movie nights provides just as much value as a full Family Night with concert. This could allow budgetary opportunities to explore new attractions at movie nights on a smaller scale than a concert. Examples included hosting a kids yoga class before movie.

c) Downtown String Light discussion
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist

This was an informational note about the potential issue related to string lights in Downtown. As of now, they are not allowed via code with the exception being holiday time, which is ending soon.

DDA decided they would like to explore opportunities to present a new code amendment recommendation to council in March. Design committee to write letter and present to Board in next meeting.

d) Year of the Trail
Presenter: Lydia Davis, Economic Development Specialist

The National Park Service has declared 2023 as the "Year of the Trail" - throughout the year, various Town Departments and advisory boards will be collaborating to produce a marketing campaign related to trails. DDA's role in this is to encourage usage of greenways as a gateway into Downtown (as mentioned in Strategic Plan) and enhancing bike/walk networks in downtown.

Collaborative group will be presenting a proclamation to council in February to request May be deemed Clayton's specific "Month of the Trail" during which the heaviest push of the campaign will happen at all events that month (potential 5k, concert, Square 2 Square, etc.).

DDA Board voted to support the proclamation
Motion made by: Greg Adamson
Seconded by: Jasmeen Calhoun

7 COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Committees did not meet in December - No Reports

8 PUBLIC COMMENTS

9 ADJOURN

a) Adjourned
Presenter: Christi Thompson, Chair

Meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm
Motion was made by Erin Belcher

Seconded by Lila Reiber

downtown strategies

JANUARY
2023

Downtown Strategic Vision

Strictly Private & Confidential



Prepared for:

CLAYTON, NORTH CAROLINA

In partnership with:

ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc

retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0386 | info@retailstrategies.com
2200 Magnolia Ave South, Suite 100 Birmingham, AL

downtown strategies

Who We Are

Downtown Strategies, a division of Retail Strategies, exists to provide realistic, implementable strategies to communities for revitalizing their downtowns. Led by a team of former downtown revitalization practitioners and real estate experts, our combination of real-world experience, plus expertise in real estate and retail uniquely qualify us to assist communities with backfilling vacancies, increasing tourism, and enhancing the sense of place in their downtowns. Serving rural communities in 22 states, Downtown Strategies is the leading national firm for downtown revitalization planning with an emphasis on real estate and retail.

5-Year Plan

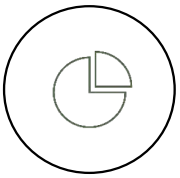
At Downtown Strategies, we believe that action and implementation are more important than a flashy 20-year vision. Our process is based on our team's experience as practitioners. Our team members have been in your shoes as community leaders in their own hometowns and know what it is like to manage downtown revitalization efforts.

Most communities do not suffer from a lack of ideas, they struggle with knowing where to start when it comes to implementing their ideas. Rather than brainstorming everything that you could ever potentially do to your downtown, we focus on a five-year timeframe. This plan is designed to help you identify where your community should focus its energy and effort in the near-term. Implementing these short-term, doable strategies will incrementally shift the trajectory of your downtown and create the spark that you desire.

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5 Pillars

Through our Downtown Strategic Visioning process, we assess the **five pillars** of your downtown's mix to provide a true road map to revitalization. Each pillar includes strategies for enhancing the current state of the downtown area.



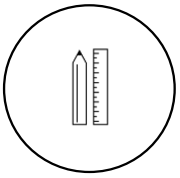
market analysis

we help you uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area



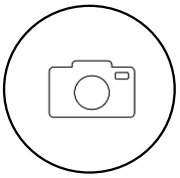
policy & administration

set the foundation for smart growth



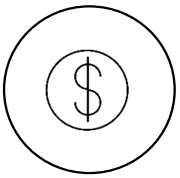
design

thoughtful design supports a community's transformation



tourism & promotion

power your economic engine



economic vitality

creating opportunity for investment



LETTER TO OUR PARTNER



Dear Clayton Team,

Through our *Downtown Strategic Visioning* process, we assessed the five pillars of Downtown Clayton: **Market Analysis, Policy & Administration, Design, Tourism & Promotion, and Economic Vitality**, to provide a true roadmap to revitalization.

For Downtown Clayton, we identified and created a tailored strategy to enhance, revitalize, and mobilize your community's efforts. When properly fueled, your Downtown can be a powerful economic, tourism, and quality of life engine and our team of professionals was honored to help you define this potential and empower this community to achieve it.

Downtown Strategies exists to assist communities in taking the next, or first, step in their Downtown's journey.

Downtown Strategies' Strategic Visioning process operates on **three key tenets**: utilizing asset-based methodology based on the community's existing strengths and potentials, holistically evaluating the community's Downtown, and creating implementable strategies for continued success.

The holistic approach utilized in our process included varying degrees of emphasis on the five pillars:

- **Market Analysis** to uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area
- **Policy & Administration** to ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality by creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort
- **Design** to support a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart,
- **Tourism and Promotion** to position your downtown as the center of the community and hub of economic activity,
- **Economic Vitality** to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.



Jenn Gregory, President
Downtown Strategies
Retail Strategies

We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you and your team, and we look forward to continuing a strong and productive relationship as you all embark on this revitalization journey.

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CLAYTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Your Team



Jenn Gregory

President
Downtown Strategies

Jenn is the president of Downtown Strategies, where her focus is on community development for our client communities. Through her Downtown Strategic Visioning Workshop process, Jenn advises communities on market analysis, tourism, economic vitality, and design updates for downtown areas. She also directly assists small businesses in client communities with elevating their digital presence, enhancing their omni-channel marketing strategies, and understanding market challenges in a post-COVID world.

jgregory@retailstrategies.com | [662] 617-1711



Jeremy Murdock

Community Development Specialist
Downtown Strategies

As community development specialist, Jeremy will assist Jenn and our clients with writing strategic plans, hosting community workshops, writing content, and managing implementation clients.

Prior to joining our team, Jeremy was a Research Associate III with the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development at Mississippi State University. He was heavily involved in ground-level community development issues, especially those related to design, planning, and revitalization.

jmurdock@retailstrategies.coml [662] 312-9243



Elliott Cook

Director of Real Estate
Downtown Strategies

As Director of Real Estate, Elliott specializes in retail recruitment and focuses on the identification of companies to fill the product and service gaps within each city's trade area.

elliott@retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0384



Laura Marinos

Director of Client Services
Downtown Strategies

As the Director of Client Services, Laura specializes and assists in market research, market development plans, project coordination, client communication, event management, and team operations.

laura.marinos@retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0386

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CLAYTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Partnership

This strategic planning initiative was made possible through a partnership between the Town of Clayton and ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc. (electricities.com). We thank ElectriCities for their support throughout this project.

ELECTRICITIES of NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

About ElectriCities

ElectriCities is a not-for-profit membership organization of municipally owned electric utilities that are spread across North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. They advocate for public power communities at the state and federal levels, and provide a number of administrative, technical, legal, and legislative services to support their members.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

Our Partnership

In the summer of 2022, the Town of Clayton and ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc. partnered with Downtown Strategies to develop a short-term strategic vision for Downtown Clayton.

The focus of the vision was to enhance and accelerate the current revitalization efforts occurring downtown; provide a shared vision for the multiple downtown organizations and stakeholder groups; and provide short-term strategies to complement the Codify Clayton code rewrite and Downtown Master Plan currently being developed.

Partnership Began	June 2022
Strategic Visioning Workshop	September 2022
Market Analysis Delivered	November 2022
Draft Strategic Plan Delivered	November 2022
Implementation Year 1 Jumpstart Begins	January 2023
Final Strategic Plan Delivered	January 2023

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CLAYTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Two Plans Occurring Simultaneously

The Town of Clayton began two planning processes simultaneously in 2022. The efforts included a long-term Downtown Master Plan as well as a short-term Downtown Strategic Plan.

Downtown Master Plan:

The Downtown Master Plan, led by **McAdams** (mcadamsco.com), is an update to the 2010 Master Plan. The update includes evaluating land uses, transportation infrastructure, and streetscapes in the downtown area. The goal of the Master Plan is to provide the Town of Clayton with comprehensive goals, plans, and a long-term vision for the overall downtown district. For the Master Plan Update, the downtown area is defined as the area between US 70 Business and the First/Stallings Street corridor, and between NC 42 and the Stallings/Main Street intersection (these areas are also shown in the 2045 Growth Plan as Downtown Core, Downtown Support and Downtown Neighborhood). The Master Plan process includes multiple input sessions with community leaders and stakeholders as well as a digital input survey.

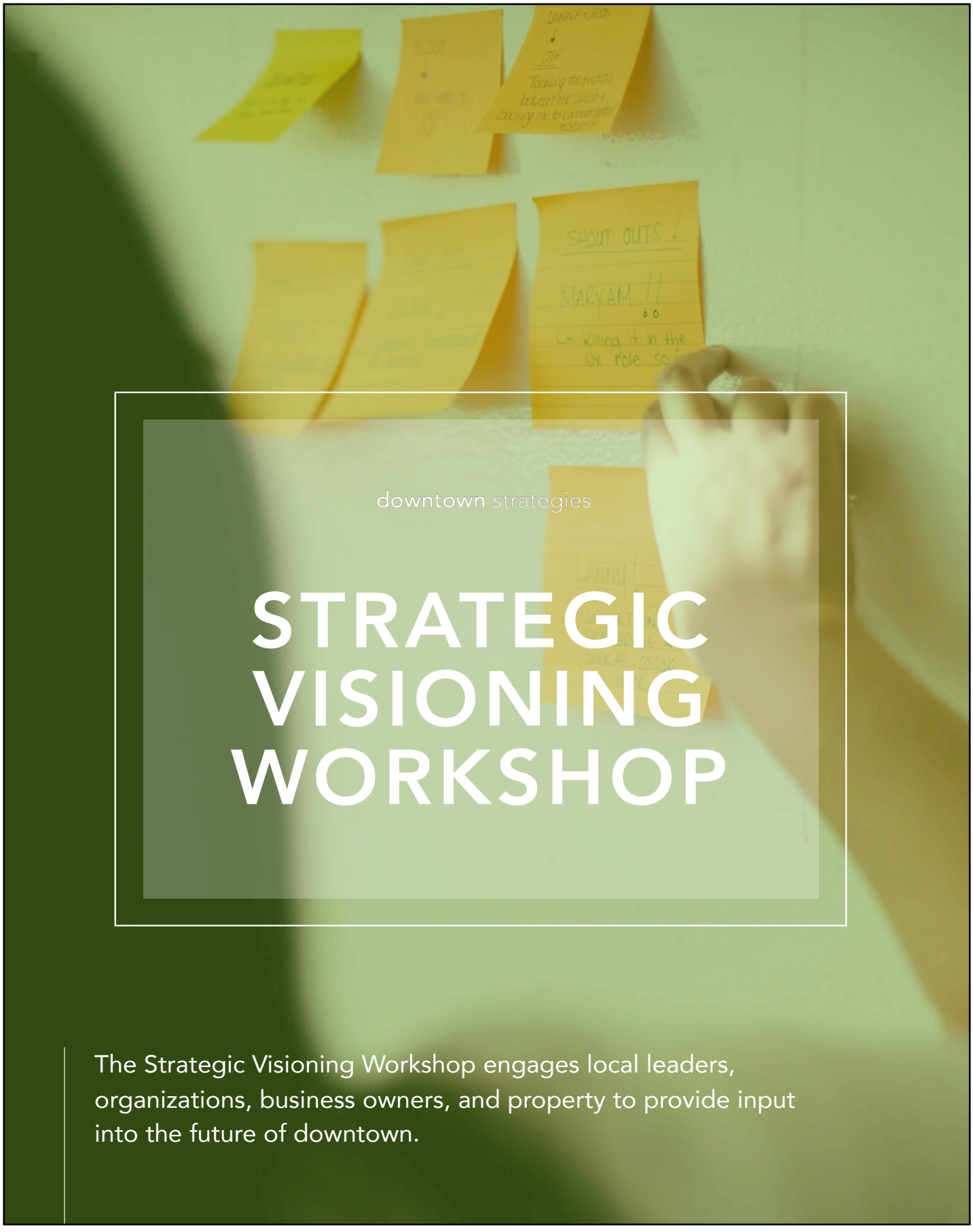
- Local Lead: Town of Clayton staff and elected officials
- Scope: 5 to 20-year timeframe – greater downtown district and surrounding neighborhoods
- Recommendations: Short-term as well as long-term strategies
- Market Analysis Focus: Future demand for housing and commercial uses

Downtown Strategic Plan:

The Town of Clayton will also be partnering with **Downtown Strategies** (retailstrategies.com) to develop a 5-Year Downtown Strategic Plan. The goal of the Strategic Plan is to identify actionable items within the short-to-medium time range for the core of Downtown Clayton. The Strategic Plan process includes a Strategic Visioning Workshop, stakeholder input session, and digital input survey. The Downtown Development Advisory Board and DDA will be relying heavily on this plan to guide their work in the coming years. The partnership with Downtown Strategies includes an Implementation Support phase following the completion of the Strategic Plan. During this phase Downtown Strategies will assist the DDA with the implementation of select strategies outlined in the plan in order to take action and show an immediate return on the investment.

- Local Lead: Clayton Downtown Development Association
- Scope: 5-year timeframe – core downtown area
- Recommendations: short-term strategies (immediate to 5 years)
- Market Analysis Focus: Retail trade areas and gaps

Downtown Strategies and McAdams took steps to coordinate efforts in order to limit duplication of material and align strategies.



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STRATEGIC VISIONING WORKSHOP

The Strategic Visioning Workshop engages local leaders, organizations, business owners, and property to provide input into the future of downtown.

CLAYTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Stakeholder Input Sessions

In an effort to gather input from the community, Downtown Strategies hosted multiple Stakeholder Input Sessions at Clayton Town Hall as part of the Strategic Visioning Workshop. The sessions were held in coordination with team members from McAdams as part of their Downtown Master Plan process.

On September 12, 2022, Downtown Strategies team members held two evening input sessions. First the team met with members of the Clayton Downtown Development Association (CDDA) board and Town of Clayton staff members. The following session included board members and volunteers from a variety of community organizations and committees including the CDDA, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Library Board, Public Art Advisory Board, and the Parking Task Force among others. On September 13, 2022, team members held two additional input sessions. One was focused on gathering input from business owners and the second was focused on engaging downtown property owners.

Throughout the input sessions multiple topics were discussed including beautification, walkability, business growth, property maintenance, property management, parking, public art, and retail needs among other topics. Several themes arose through the various input sessions.

What we heard

Parking

As with every downtown, parking is a concern for business owners, property owners, and citizens. Most discussions focused on the need to balance the parking needs of employees with the parking needs of customers. The discussion of various short-term and long-term solutions was also a common topic.

Connectivity

It was apparent that stakeholders were concerned with the connectivity of the downtown core with the surrounding areas. Deep River Brewing Brewing Company was seen as an asset for Clayton as a whole but also Downtown Clayton. Stakeholders identified the need to connect the downtown core with Deep River through pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Connections to local and regional trail systems and greenways was also a priority.

Balancing Needs

A sense of frustration was common amongst the various stakeholder groups. Many felt that property owners often filled their spaces with a "quick fix" tenant rather than working to find a business that filled a need in the downtown area. The theme of balancing the needs of the property owners with the overall needs for Downtown Clayton arose.

Meeting Expectations

Clayton's proximity to Raleigh and the Research Triangle region is an undeniable asset. Obviously, Clayton cannot compete with larger metro cities, so most stakeholders realized that the community should rely on offering something different. Many stakeholders felt that Clayton needed to capitalize on its small-town lifestyle and high quality of life within a larger metro area. However, many participants felt that improving the aesthetics and amenities of the downtown area should be a priority in order to meet the "Cute Town" expectations.

CLAYTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Stakeholder Input Sessions

What we heard (continued…)

Relationships and Perceptions

It was obvious that many business owners and property owners had negative experiences with the town government in the past. Unclear processes, code enforcement, and outdated policies created a cumbersome experience in the development and business community. While the current administration has made great strides in streamlining processes and improving the experience for applicants, the perceptions of the past remain. The need to educate the public and change the perception of the town government was a clear theme.

Coordinated Effort

Clayton is blessed with engaged citizens and a town that is fully supportive of downtown efforts. In addition to the town, multiple organizations, boards, task forces, committees, and civic groups are involved in downtown projects. It was clear throughout the various input sessions that communication and coordination between the various groups is lacking. Often one groups does not know what the other groups are doing, and efforts overlap or conflict. Better coordination, collaboration, and communication between the groups is needed for Downtown Clayton to meet its full potential.









MARKET ANALYSIS

Downtown Community Input Survey

Summary

In addition to the Stakeholder Input Session, Downtown Strategies utilized a digital survey to gather input from the community. The Town of Clayton staff disseminated links to the survey throughout the community in an effort to gather input from a diverse and wide range of citizens. The survey resulted in **277 respondents**.

While the responses varied, certain themes arose related to the citizens' views about the future of Downtown Clayton.

More Variety

Overall respondents were complementary of the existing businesses and retail options, but desired to see a more diverse mixture of retail and restaurant options in the future. Specifically higher-end retail products and more diverse ethnic cuisine options were mentioned.

Specialty Foods

The desire for more diverse specialty food options were also mentioned regularly. Specialty foods such as wine, butcher shops, bagels, etc. This is reinforced by the GAP analysis which showed a leakage of $12.9 million in "Specialty Food Services."

Health and Wellness

Survey participants also outlined the desire for more diverse health and wellness options downtown. This would include spas, salons, beauty supplies, etc. This desire is also reinforced by the GAP analysis which showed a leakage of $85.7 million in "Health & Personal Care Stores." This Leakage Category also includes uses such as healthcare, clinics, gyms, etc. in addition to uses mentioned by participants, but represents a large opportunity for downtown business growth.

Connectivity and Walkability

All downtown areas thrive by being pedestrian oriented, walkable, and connected. This was highlighted by survey participants who mentioned the need for better connectivity and walkability throughout the downtown and into adjacent neighborhoods.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Downtown Community Input Survey

PARTICIPANTS: 277

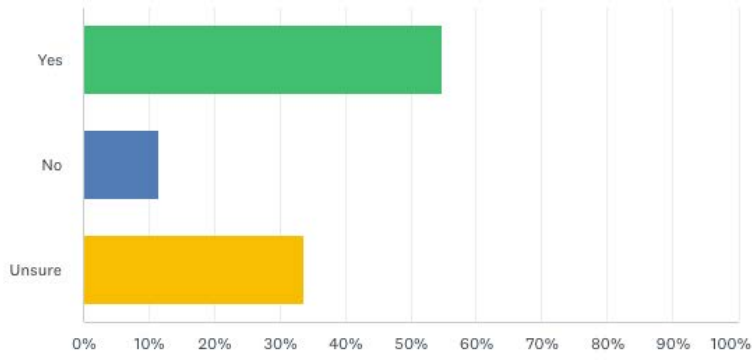
Full Survey Results: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-Zi1Uqww5vP55_2F2uATORQ_2BA_3D_3D/

The following provides a few sample responses from the survey:

How old are you?

Under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	1.47%	4
25-34	17.95%	49
35-44	33.33%	91
45-54	19.41%	53
55-64	13.19%	36
65-75	11.36%	31
75+	1.83%	5
Prefer Not to Answer	1.47%	4
TOTAL		**273**

Do you feel that Downtown Clayton is headed in the right direction?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	54.71%	151
No	11.59%	32
Unsure	33.70%	93
TOTAL		**276**

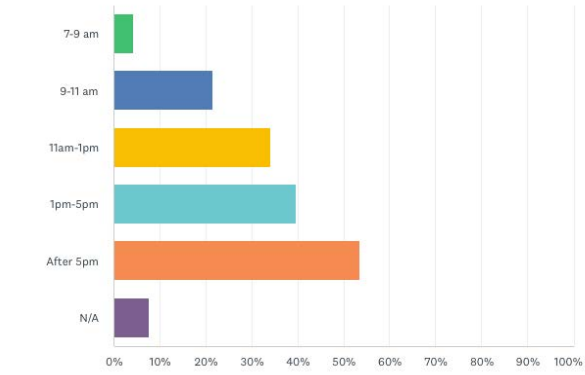
MARKET ANALYSIS

Downtown Community Input Survey

Shopping

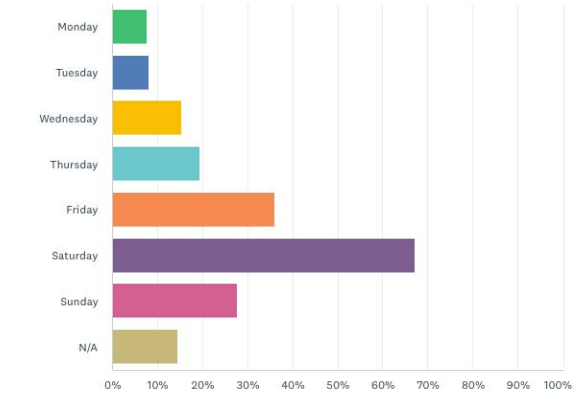
What time of day do you typically shop in Downtown Clayton?

Answered: 275 Skipped: 2



What day of the week do you most frequently shop in Downtown Clayton?

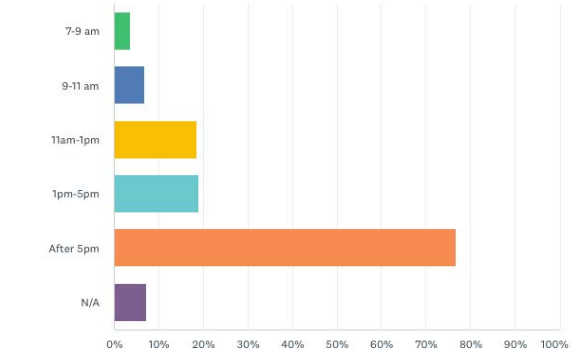
Answered: 274 Skipped: 3



Dining

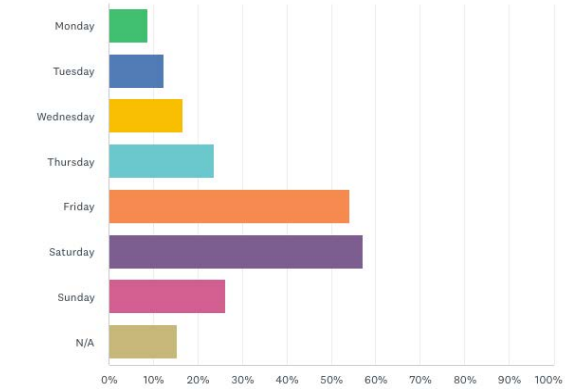
What time of day do you typically dine in Downtown Clayton?

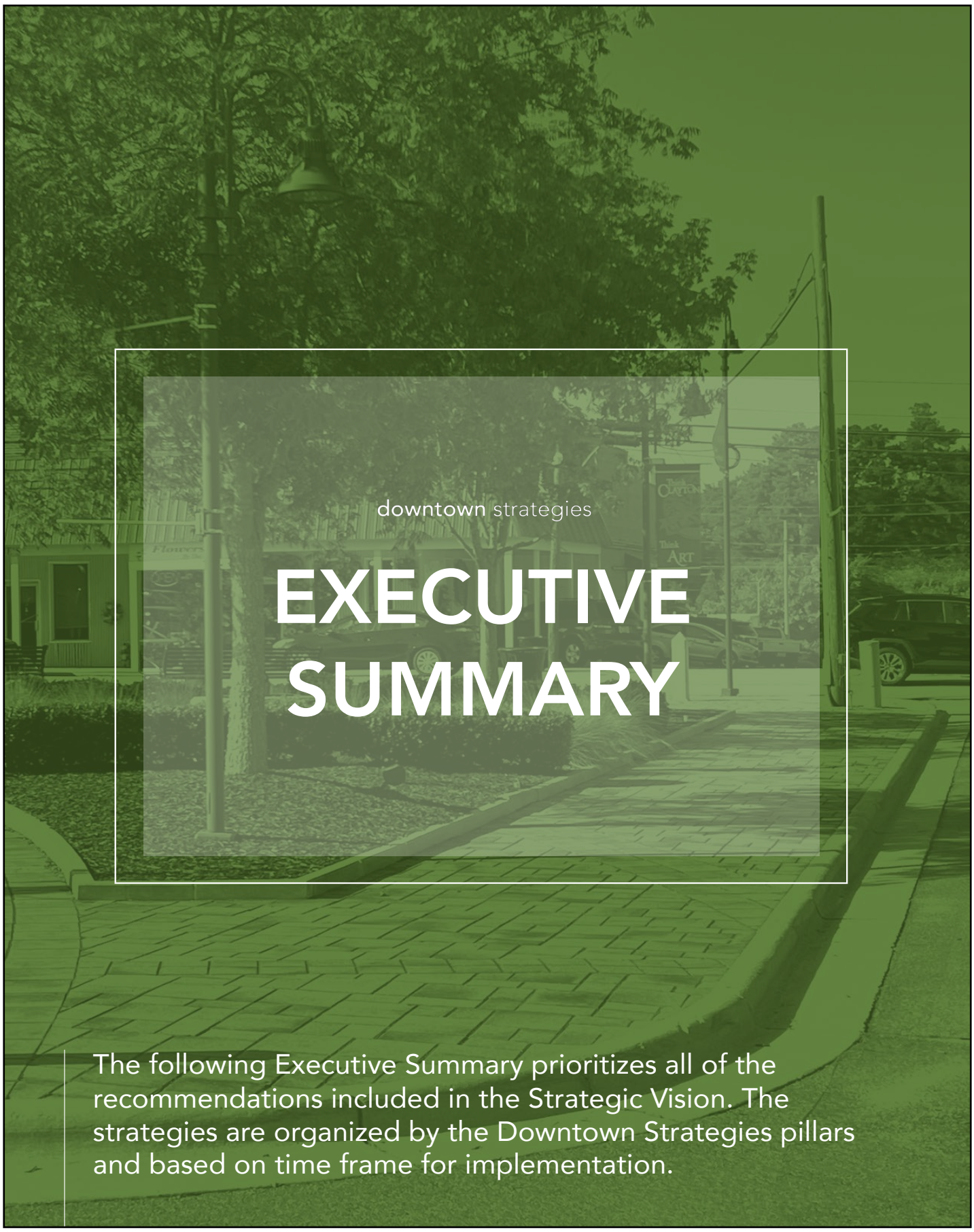
Answered: 275 Skipped: 2



What day of the week do you most frequently dine in Downtown Clayton?

Answered: 275 Skipped: 2





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following Executive Summary prioritizes all of the recommendations included in the Strategic Vision. The strategies are organized by the Downtown Strategies pillars and based on time frame for implementation.

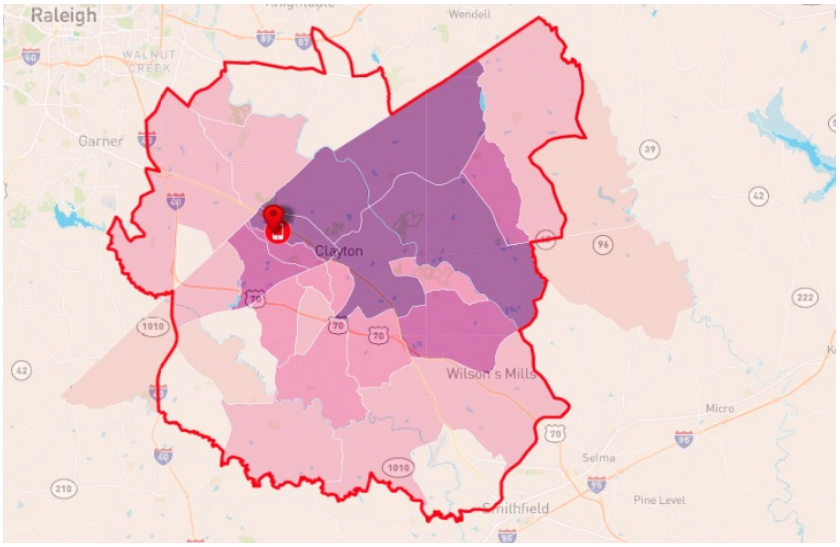
Market Analysis

We begin by assessing your consumers from multiple geographies. Using our advanced analytics, proprietary tools, and cell phone data, we uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area based on a custom trade area derived from mobile data tracking.

Custom Trade Area Demographics

Using our advanced analytics and proprietary tools, we uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area based on a custom trade area derived from mobile data tracking.

The custom trade area identifies consumers who are **already** traveling to your community on a regular basis to purchase goods and services.



28,188
City population

143,095
Custom Trade Area Population

105,772
Daytime population

10.9%
Projected Growth 2021-2026

$72,835
Median Household Income

38 Avg. Age
2.79 Avg. Household

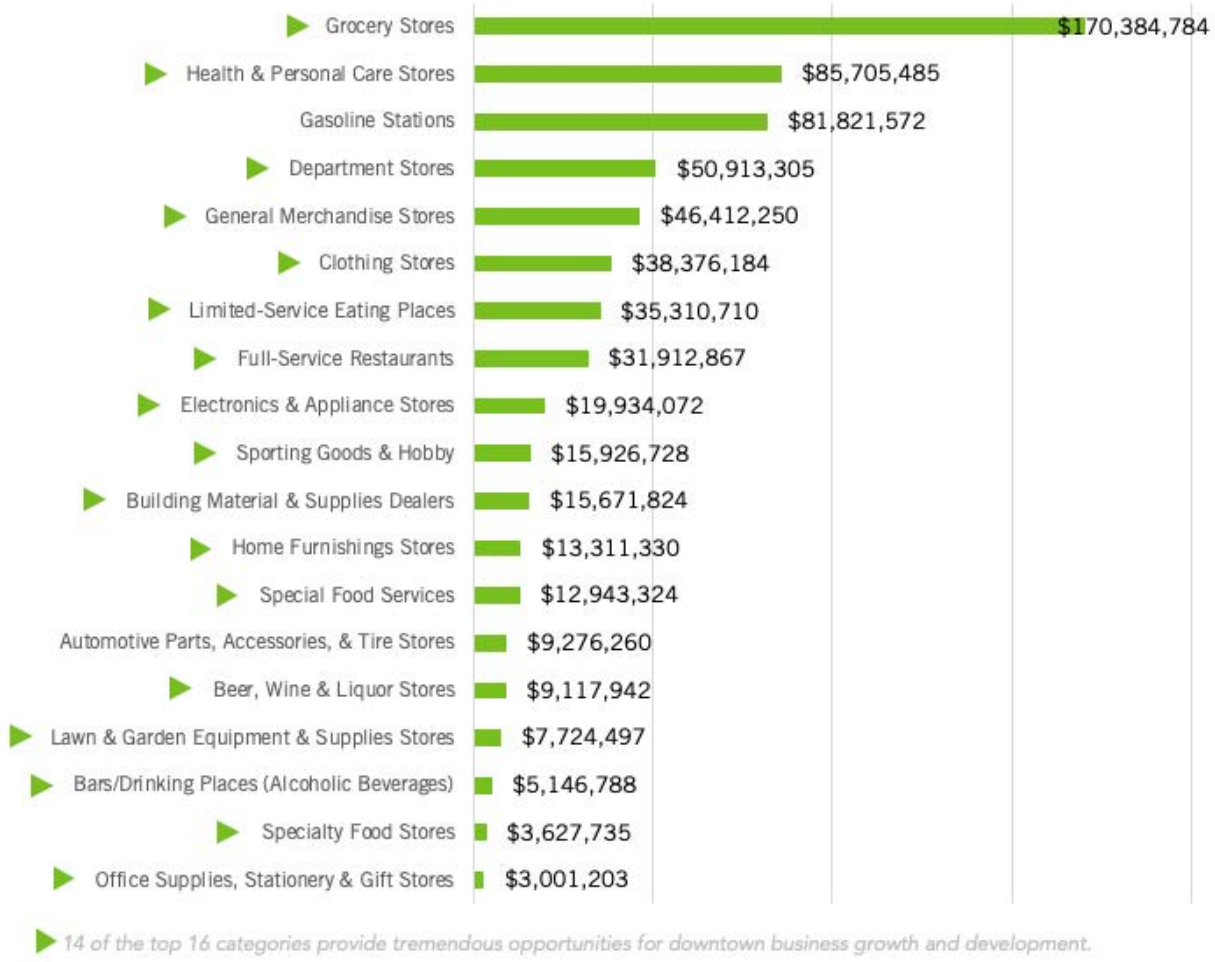
64% White
21% Black
11% Latino

GAP Analysis

When customers leave the trade area and purchase goods and services, that creates what is called leakage. Money is leaving the trade area creating a gap in the market.

Communities can attempt to reduce the leakage by recruiting businesses and entrepreneurs within the top categories.

Top Leakage Categories



14 of the top 16 categories provide tremendous opportunities for downtown business growth and development.

Policy & Administration

Policy & Administration involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.



1. In order to strengthen the relationship between organizations and foster a culture of collaboration, implement and host a monthly Community Roundtable event focused on Downtown Clayton. Participants should include the mayor, town economic development staff, chamber of commerce director, CDDA chair, visitor's bureau president, and a representative from the various downtown-related boards (Public Art Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Parking Task Force, etc.).
    - Quarterly editions can be expanded to bring together a broader mix of community leaders and board members for enhanced communication, strategic direction, and productivity.

2. Create a Vibrancy Grant Program to incentivize and encourage business owners to add elements to the sidewalk in order to create an active and vibrant downtown environment. This can be added to the existing façade grant program or become a new stand-alone program.

3. Through the current Codify Clayton code update process, explore opportunities to encourage and remove barriers for the development of infill development of missing middle housing, and the renovations of historic homes. This includes exploring options and removing barriers for the development of upper floor housing in downtown properties.

4. Explore options for incorporating Form Based Codes for Downtown Clayton through the current Codify Clayton code update process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

$ 1-3 Years
moderate investment

1. The Town of Clayton should employ an incentive program similar to a tax abatement that would incentivize the renovation and improvement of downtown properties. Since the State of North Carolina does not allow a typical tax abatement program, some communities have employed a program that refunds the increased assessed value back to the property owner following the renovations.

2. Establish a social district in Downtown Clayton using Downtown Raleigh's recently enacted social district ordinance as a guide.

3. Use education, policy, incentives, or guidelines to encourage business owners to install signage that reflects their unique identify and enhances the character of the downtown area. Professionally hand-painted, three-dimensional, and custom shaped should be encouraged.

4. Explore opportunities for creating a special taxing district for the downtown district to serve as a stable funding source for the CDDA to conduct future downtown improvements and grow the organization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

$ 3-5 Years
long-term investment

1. Develop a cheat sheet or guide designed to illustrate the town's recent efforts to streamline the development regulations and processes. The cheat sheet can be used as a tool to help local business and property owners navigate issues related to codes, permits, processes, and ordinance violations commonly occurring in the downtown area

2. Develop a grant program focused on incentivizing projects related to overall building preservation and renovation. In addition to exterior façade improvements allowed with the existing Downtown Rehabilitation Grant Program, the program would financially support projects related to building stabilization and interior renovations.

3. The CDDA should plan for the addition of a full-time staff member to manage downtown efforts such as promotion, event planning, business development, marketing, etc.

Design

Thoughtful design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the downtown district apart.



NOW
minimal cost

1. Explore opportunities for a simple Clayton-themed (Think Clayton) selfie-wall or "Welcome" mural in a highly visible location in the downtown area. Partner with local artisans with experience painting exterior murals to ensure the design and execution of the project is high quality.
2. Use vacant or underutilized storefronts to display art, creative displays, or promotional material that tell the story of downtown. Work with property owners to implement short-term improvement strategies in vacant storefronts. Partner with the Public Art Advisory Board to organize displays of local artwork in downtown storefronts.
3. Expand and enhance the gateway entry experience between Highway 70 and the downtown core.
    - Work with the property owners along major downtown entry corridors to explore options for relocating, cleaning, organizing, or screening unsightly storage and equipment areas.
4. Begin upgrading the streetscape environment of Downtown Clayton by adding streetscape elements incrementally while working toward the long-term vision outlined in the Downtown Master Plan.
    - Add a bicycle repair stand to Horne Square
5. Install short-term intersection enhancements and street paintings to calm vehicular traffic, create safer environment for pedestrians, and visually break up the distance between intersections. These strategies could include street paintings, intersection treatments, and creative crosswalks.
    - First Phase: Main Street / Church Street intersection and the Main Street / Lombard Street intersection

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

$ 1-3 Years
moderate investment

1. Ensure that all sidewalks with adequate width in the downtown area accommodate the 3 activity zones. Encourage business owners to activate the Frontage Zone with vibrancy elements in an effort to show activity throughout downtown. The town should continue to add appropriate streetscape elements to the Furnishing Zone as resources allow.
    - Educate downtown business owners about the importance of sidewalk vibrancy elements such as outdoor seating, planters, potted plants, exterior lighting, sandwich board signs, etc.
    - Add standard streetscape elements along the Furnishing Zone. This should include seating, trash receptacles near each intersection, etc.
2. Organize a task force with representatives from each local utility provider to inventory existing lines and identify strategies for reducing the visual clutter throughout the downtown core. Specifically explore options for removing duplicate and unused lines and relocating lines to create a more organized appearance.
3. Expand and enhance the gateway entry experience between Highway 70 and the downtown core.
    - Add flags or banners to utility poles along East Main Street beginning at the Highway 70 intersection.
    - Add "Historic Downtown Clayton" directional signage at the intersection of Highway 70 and Lombard Street.
4. The Town of Clayton should begin exploring options for NC DOT to release control of Main Street to provide opportunities for long-term streetscape enhancements.
5. Install short-term intersection enhancements and street paintings to calm vehicular traffic, create safer environment for pedestrians, and visually break up the distance between intersections. These strategies could include street paintings, intersection treatments, and creative crosswalks.
    - Second Phase: Main Street / O'Neil Street intersection and the Main Street / Fayetteville Street intersection
6. Begin upgrading the streetscape environment of Downtown Clayton by adding streetscape elements incrementally while working toward the long-term vision outlined in the Downtown Master Plan.
    - Continue the use of the multi-colored custom banners throughout downtown area.
    - Partner with a local downtown restaurant to pilot a parklet project.
7. Utilize principles of Tactical Urbanism and Better Block to test concepts outlined in the Downtown Strategies Strategic Plan and the Downtown Clayton Master Plan by utilizing short-term tactics.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

$ 1-3 Years (Continued)
moderate investment

8. Highlight the presence of greenways and trails and expand the bicycle network throughout the community into Downtown Clayton.
    - Add shared lane "sharrows" to appropriate streets throughout Clayton to expand the bicycle network and connect existing paths, trails, parks, and greenways to the Downtown Clayton. Connecting the NC Mountains to Sea trail at Municipal Park with the downtown core along Stallings Street, O'Neil Street, Main Street, Front Street, and Central Street should be a short-term focus.
    - Ensure bike racks are located in Horne Square and throughout downtown.
9. Explore opportunities for the town or CDDA to utilize string lights as a short-term strategy to activate an underutilized area downtown.

$ 3-5 Years
long-term investment

1. Highlight the presence of greenways and trails and expand the bicycle network throughout the community into Downtown Clayton.
    - Develop a downtown trailhead entry to the trail system.
    - Add a dedicated bike path along First Street adjacent to the railroad corridor leading to Horne Square.
2. Install short-term intersection enhancements and street paintings to calm vehicular traffic, create safer environment for pedestrians, and visually break up the distance between intersections. These strategies could include street paintings, intersection treatments, and creative crosswalks.
    - Third Phase: Main Street / Robertson Street intersection and the Main Street / Smith Street intersection.
    - Minor street paintings should be installed at non-controlled intersections such as East First Street, Barbour Street, and South Ellington Street.
3. Expand and enhance the gateway entry experience between Highway 70 and the downtown core.
    - Consider painting (artistic mural or "Clayton" welcome mural) and landscaping the Highway 70 overpass bridge along the Lombard Street corridor.
    - Add flags or banners to utility poles along the Lombard Street corridor beginning at the Highway 70 intersection to Main Street.
4. Upgrade the streetscape environment of Downtown Clayton by adding streetscape elements incrementally while working toward the long-term vision outlined in the Downtown Master Plan.
    - Add free mobile device charging stations to Horne Square.
    - Expand the use of the decorative streetlights used at Horne Square throughout downtown as resources allow.
5. Utilize incentives to install EV charging stations in a centrally-located and highly-visible location in downtown (preferably Horne Square). Add wayfinding signage to direct visitors to downtown attractions. Also add EV icons to wayfinding signage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

* On Going
continued improvement

1. Encourage business and property owners to:
    - Remove mirrored, reflective, or tinted glass treatments on storefront windows and doors.
    - Remove blinds, shades, or curtains from storefront windows.
    - Update storefronts to include historically appropriate windows, doors, and materials.
    - Install creative, interesting, and vibrant window displays.
    - Work with business owners to properly light their storefront displays to create a nighttime atmosphere downtown.

2. Install street trees that will provide a canopy throughout the downtown streetscape. Trees should be placed at regular intervals to create repetition along the streets and sidewalks wherever possible.
    - Identify species that will create a canopy, but remail below the utility lines.
    - Replace existing shrub-like trees with appropriate species.
    - Utilize curb extensions as planting areas to reduce the impact of the overhead utility lines.
    - Add additional street trees and landscaping as long-term streetscape and infrastructure enhancements occur.

Tourism & Promotion

Smart promotion initiatives position your Downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.



1. The CDDA should be empowered to market, promote, and plan downtown events and activities.

2. Continue to expand the number of small-scale targeted retail promotions focused on linking customers with local downtown retailers and restaurants.

3. Establish a group text with all downtown retail business owners. Host monthly (or quarterly) meetings with retailers to discuss upcoming and past events, promotions, or other relevant topics.

$ 1-3 Years
moderate investment

1. Encourage the use of the "Think Clayton" wordmark on promotional material created by the town and partnering organizations. This should be the community-wide brand for Clayton. Consider creating a simple "Clayton" version of the wordmark for various uses. All town, CDDA, tourism, and chamber of commerce activities should be promoted under the unified "Clayton" brand.

2. Aggressively implement your brand and brand story, utilizing strategies for each phase of the place branding process. Specifically highlight:
    - Quaint small-town atmosphere within the Research Triangle region
    - Easy excursion from larger metro area
    - High quality of life and outdoors lifestyle

3. Incorporate additional retail promotion strategies into the downtown program of work to encourage activity throughout the day, especially in the evenings. Groups identified in the Market Analysis should be specifically targeted.

4. Host a Farm to Table dinner in Horne Square or along Main Street to highlight the unique culinary attractions of the community and county. Recruit chefs knowledgeable about utilizing local ingredients to create special, unique dishes.

5. Employ a variety of parking management strategies throughout Downtown Clayton.
    - Add 2-hour parking along the core blocks of Main Street. Timed parking must be consistently and fairly enforced.
    - Add on-street parking striping to side streets throughout downtown.
    - Launch an educational campaign focused on encouraging downtown employees to park on side streets and accessory parking areas.
    - Execute shared-use parking agreements with private property owners with underutilized surface parking lots.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

$ 3-5 Years
moderate investment

1. Expand the existing wayfinding signage system to include custom street signs and public parking directional signage.

2. Employ a variety of parking management strategies throughout Downtown Clayton.
   - Add directional signs to direct visitors to other parking options.
   - Add formalize parking areas along First Street.
   - Utilize the buffer area along the railroad corridor to expand the greenway and trail systems into the downtown core.

Economic Vitality

Economic Vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

Any business recruitment strategy, effort, or incentive should prioritize the top retail categories identified through the Gap Analysis: Grocery General Merchandise, Health & Personal Care, Clothing, Full-service Restaurants, and Limited-service Restaurants.



NOW
minimal cost

1. Modify the existing "Doing Business in Clayton Guide" by adding downtown-specific information and resources.

2. Host monthly/quarterly meet-up events for existing and potential entrepreneurs. These should begin as simple meet-and-greet events and can grow into opportunities for gathering input and hosting guest speakers on specific topics.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

$ 1-3 Years
moderate investment

1. Work with property owners to understand current retail trends and encourage the development of entrepreneur-ready shell space in ground floor of vacant properties. Determine opportunities for local incentives from the Town of Clayton to accompany this effort.

2. Work with existing property owners with vacancies and underutilized storefronts to explore creative strategies for activating the space and supporting entrepreneurship.

$ 3-5 Years
moderate investment

1. Encourage property owners to utilize demising walls to create small footprint retail/start-up spaces. This low-cost strategy can be used to modify a large vacant building, add flexibility to an existing space, or add retail space to an existing office building while generating revenue for the property owner.



1

downtown strategies

MARKET ANALYSIS

We begin by assessing your consumers from multiple geographies. Using our advanced analytics and proprietary tools, we uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area based on a custom trade area derived from mobile data tracking.

downtown strategies

MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

Memberships, Subscriptions & Customized Reports

Crittenden Research

Nation's Restaurant News

near

LANDVISION Real Estate Mapping Software

RLT Retail Lease Trac

salesgenie

SN Supermarket News

PlainVanillaShell

SiteSeer

Downtown Strategies is proud to be a member of **Main Street America** and the **International Downtown Association.**

MAIN STREET AMERICA 2022 Allied Member

A PROUD MEMBER OF IDA INSPIRED LEADERS SHAPING CITIES

Research Partners & Geographic Information Systems

TETRAD sitewise

CCIM STDB

SitesUSA

REGIS online

ChainXY Location Matters.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

Where does all this information come from?

Here are a few of the demographic data sources used:



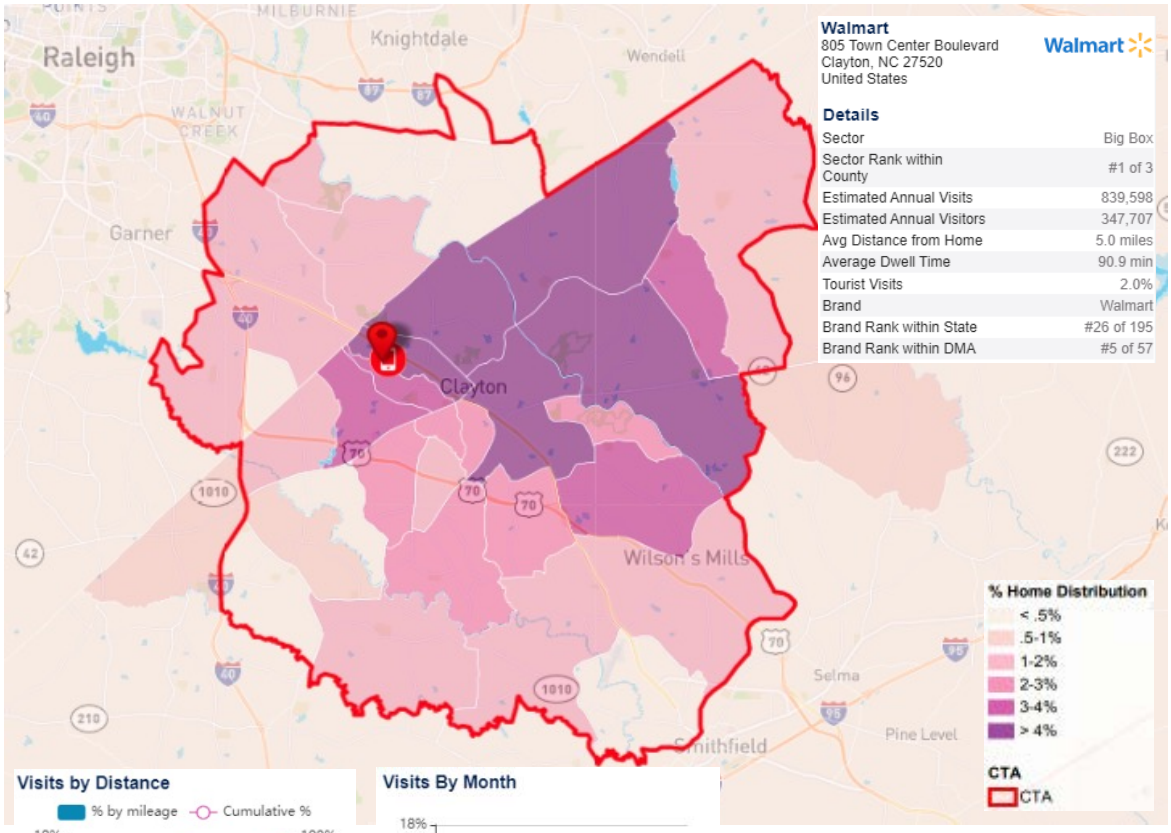
MARKET ANALYSIS

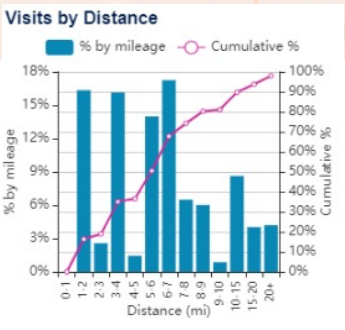
Mobile Data Tracking

Mobile data tracking uses **data collected from mobile phone users** who have agreed within their apps and phone settings to enable location information. This technology includes mobile phone data with **latitude and longitude points** that are accurate to approximately 20 feet. Data inputs are updated as quickly as every 24-hours.

The data shown **includes shoppers who visited the defined location** during a 1-year time period. This tool allows us to identify where consumers are actually coming from to shop in your market (Custom Trade Area) using actual data. This information is used to optimize your trade area, analyze business locations, compare frequency of visitors, and more **accurately predict business success**.

This data is intended to support the trade area but does not solely define the trade area.

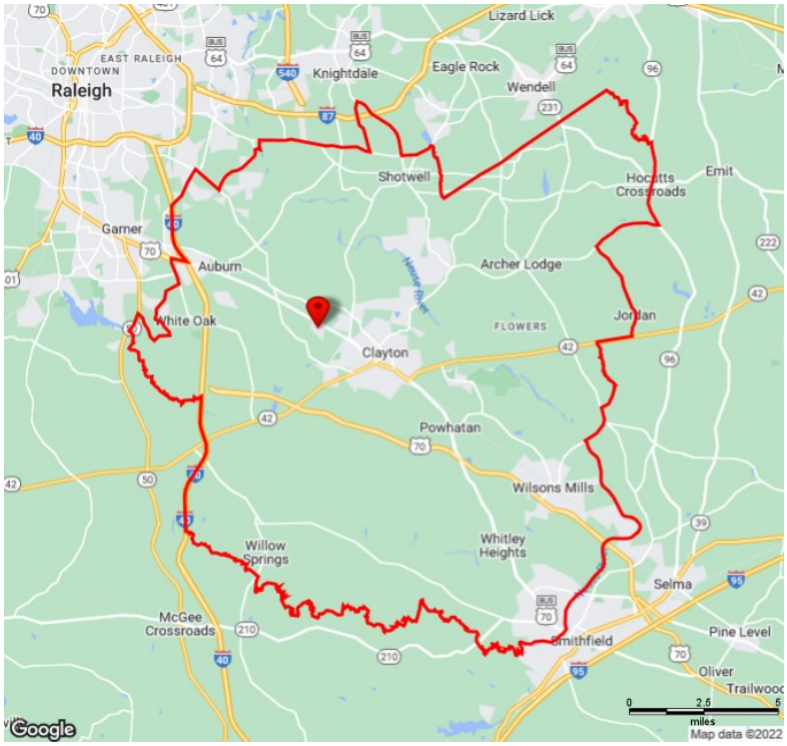






Our Research

CUSTOM TRADE AREA



Clayton, NC Custom Trade Area

Population – 143,095

Each retailer has a specific set of site selection criteria they use to determine if they will have a profitable store. Municipal boundaries, radius rings and drive time areas are a start.

A customized trade area is the next step to analyzing a market. A trade area defines a core customer base of consumers highly likely to shop and eat in the market at least once a month.

Your trade area has been created by combining a series of drive times, mobile data analysis, geographic boundaries and proximity to neighboring shopping destinations.

Each retailer will analyze their own trade area based on their existing stores, their competition and site selection criteria.

***The following demographics reflect the Custom Trade Area (CTA) and not geographic community boundaries.**

MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

POPULATION

143,095

2021 estimated population



37

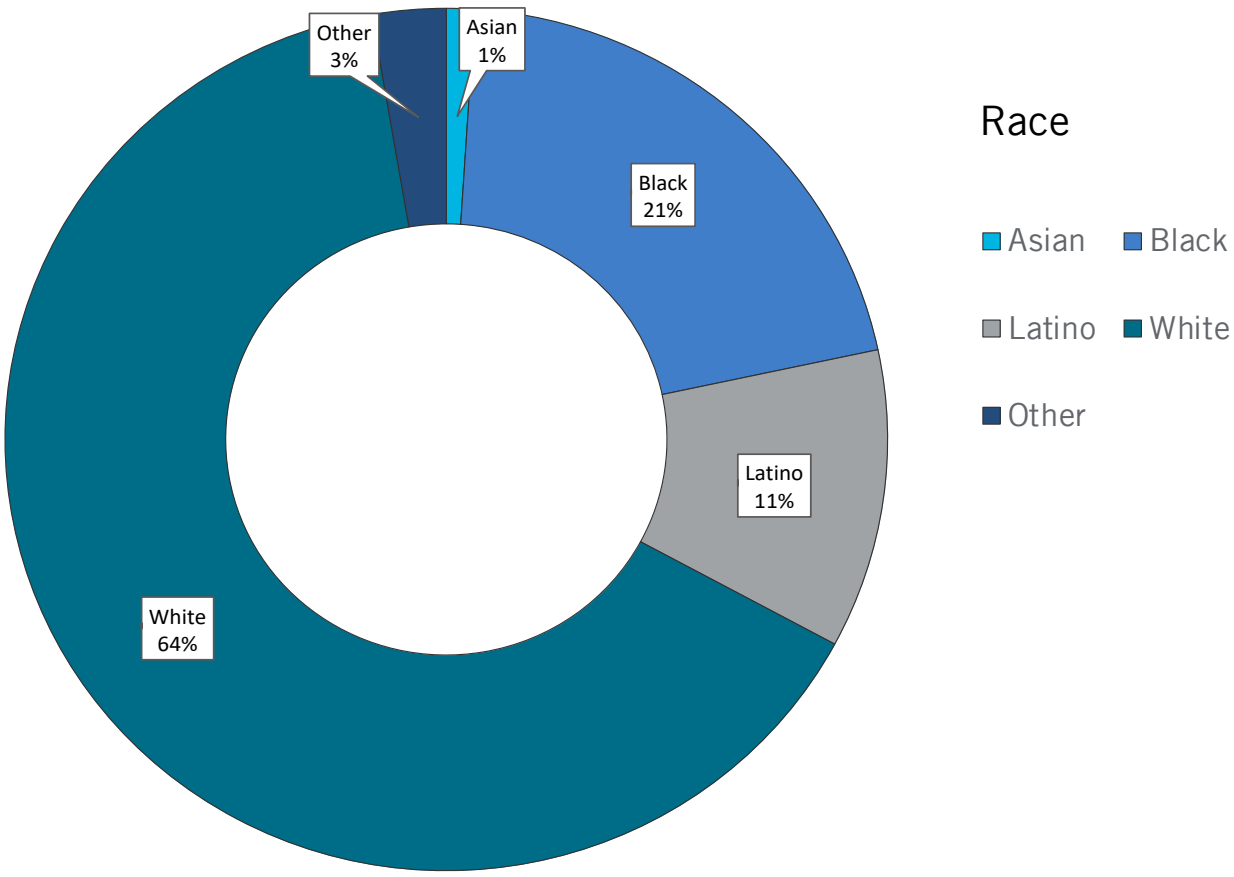
male avg. age

39

female avg. age

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION BY RACE



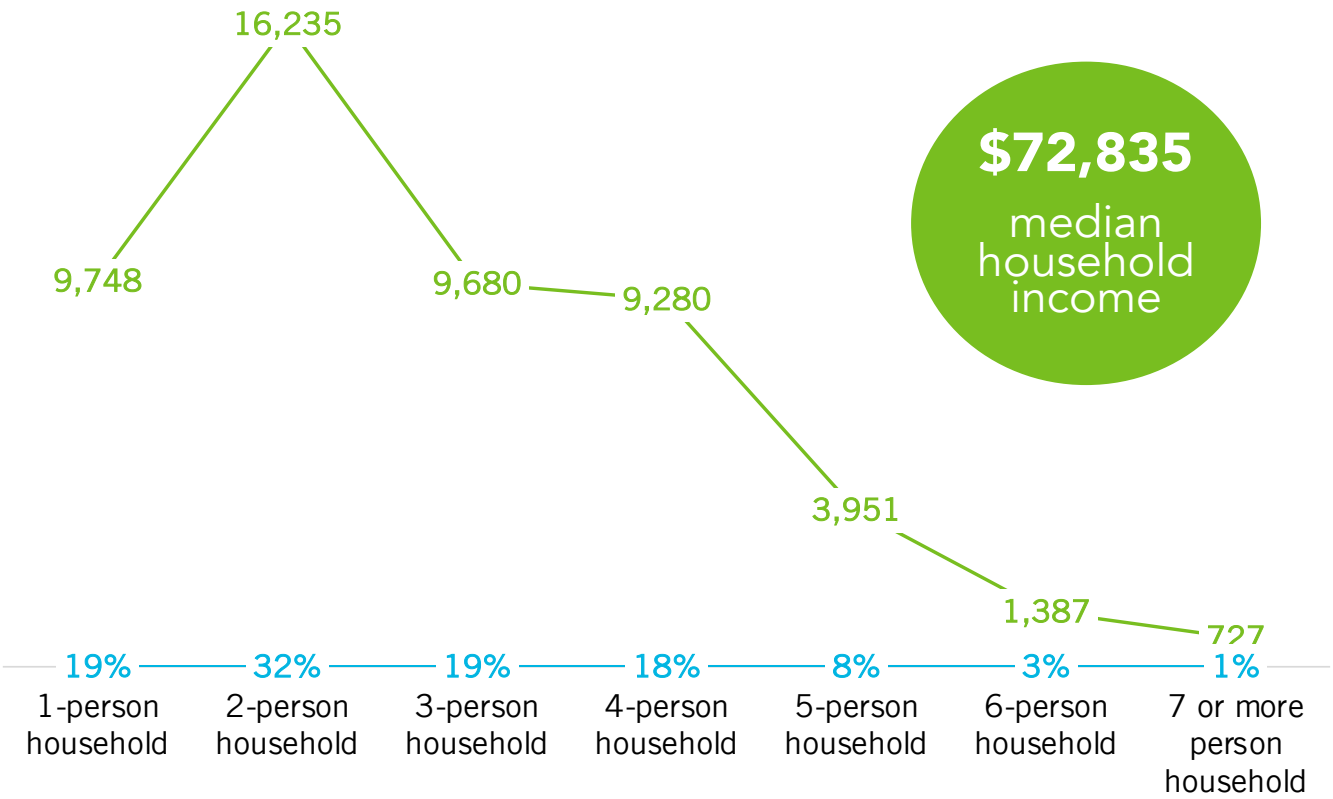
MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE

54,056
number of households

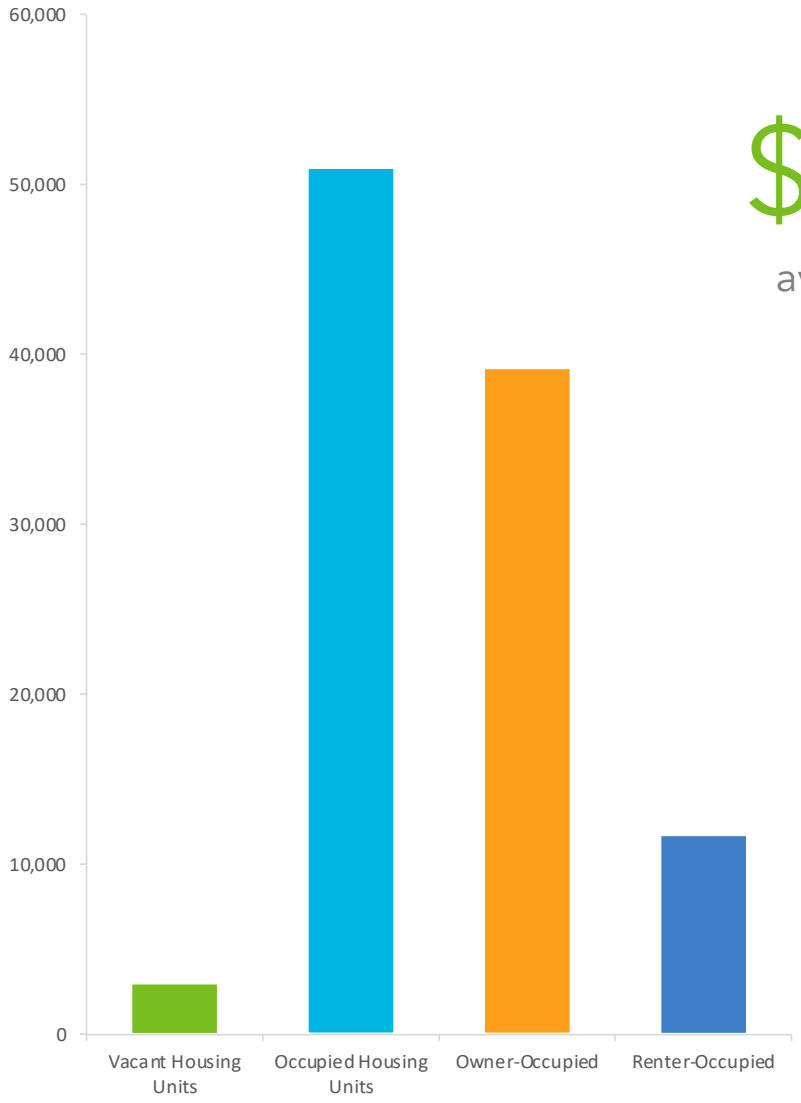
$72,835
median household income



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE



$277,333

average housing unit value

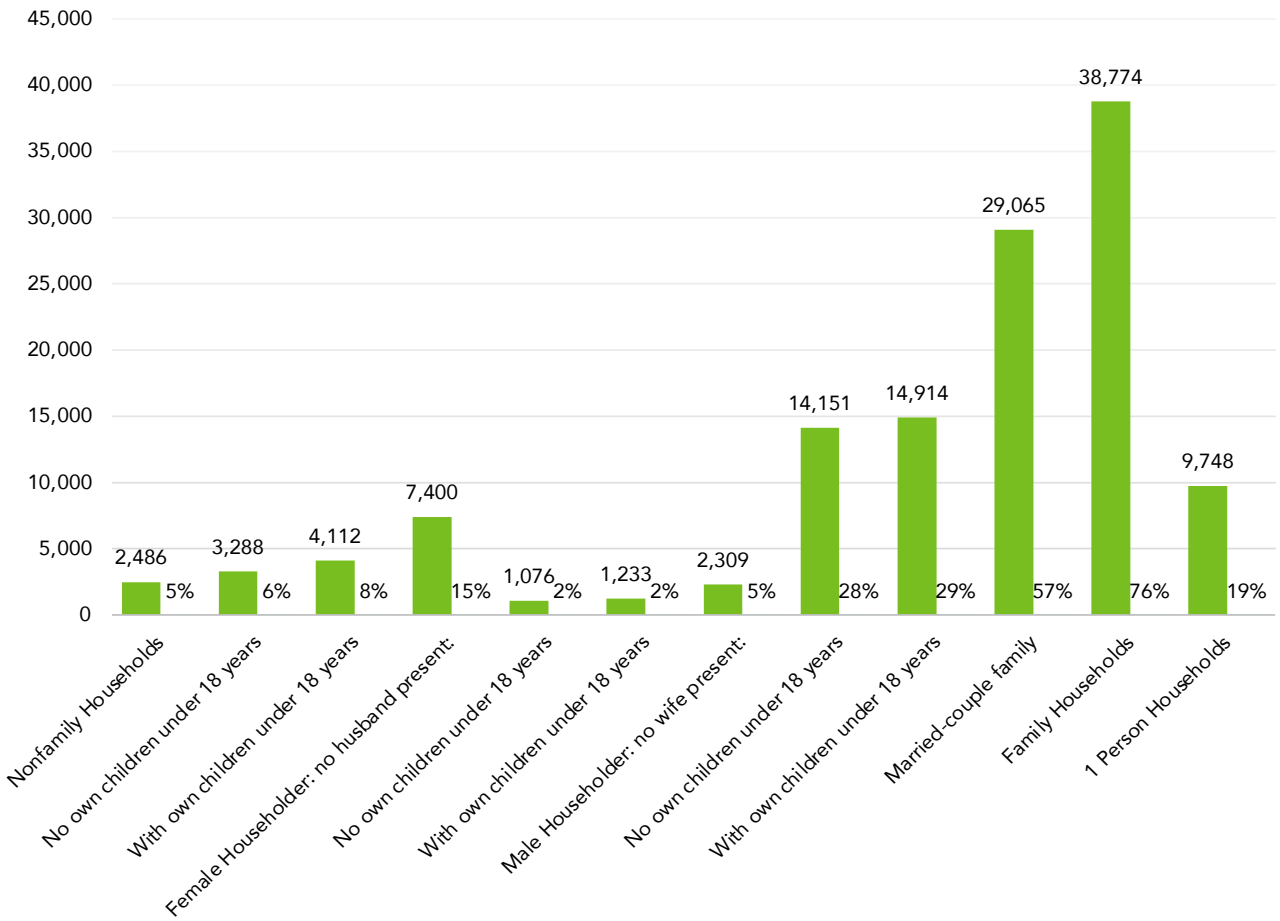
MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE

2.79

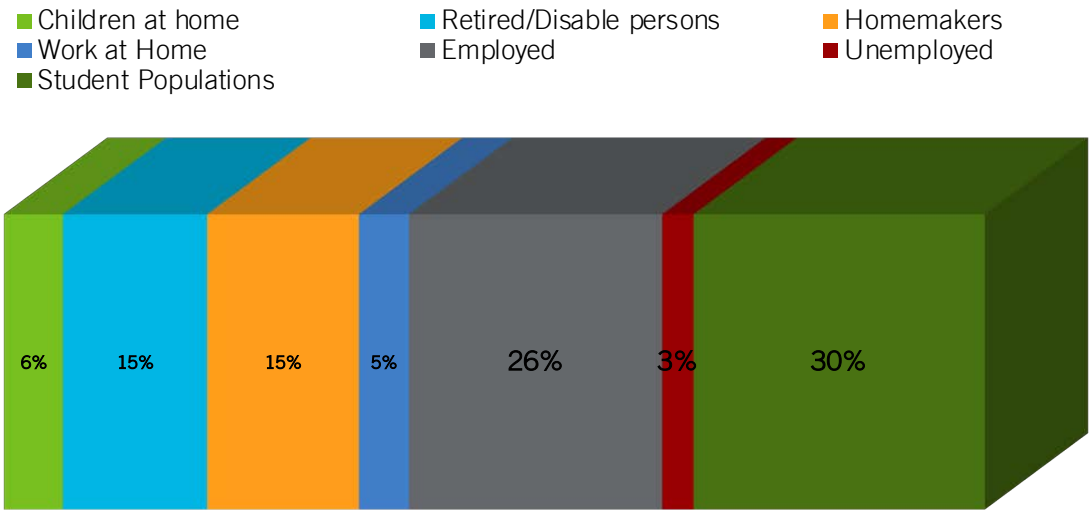
Average people per household



Our Research

DAYTIME POPULATION

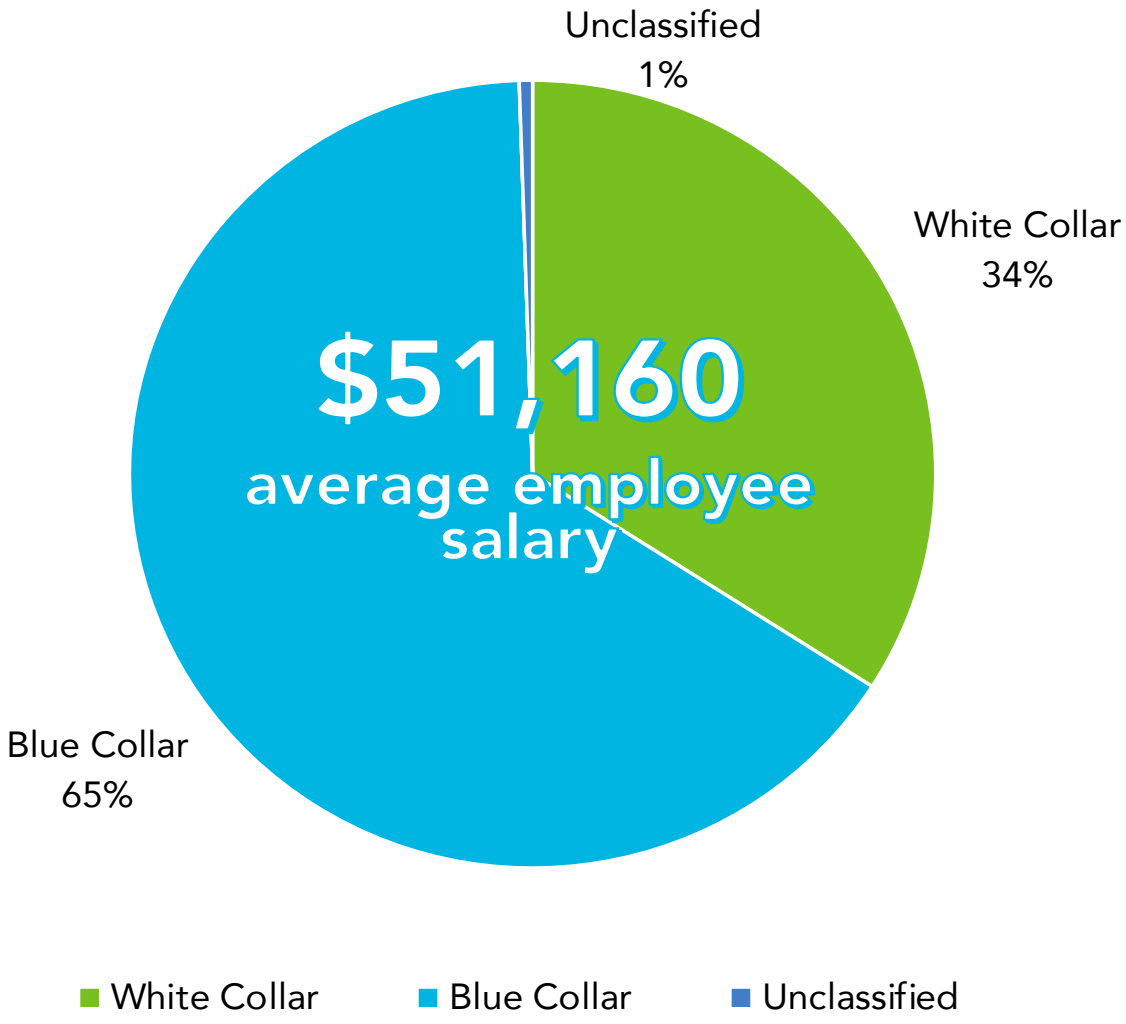
105,772 daytime population



MARKET ANALYSIS

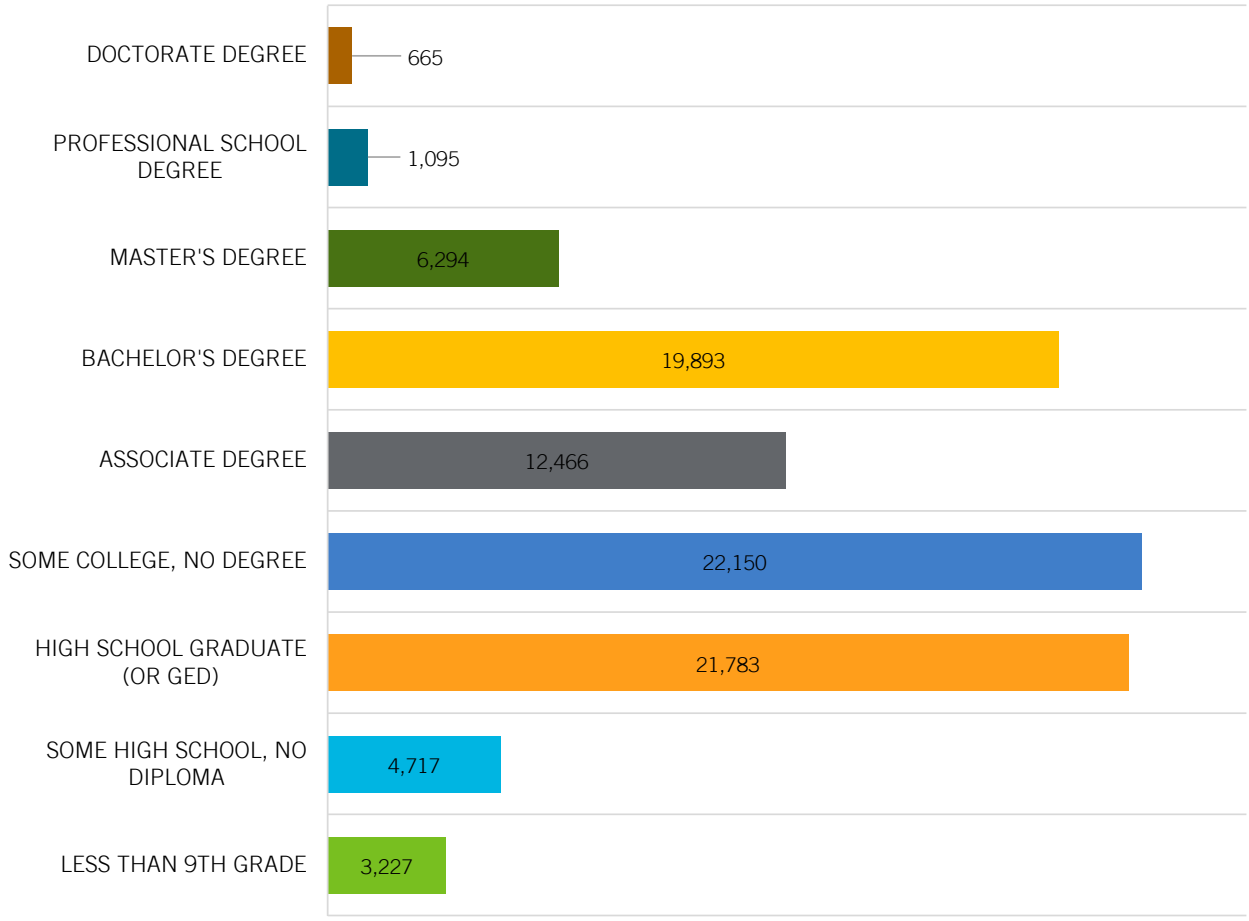
Our Research

EMPLOYMENT TYPE



Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION AGE 25+ BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

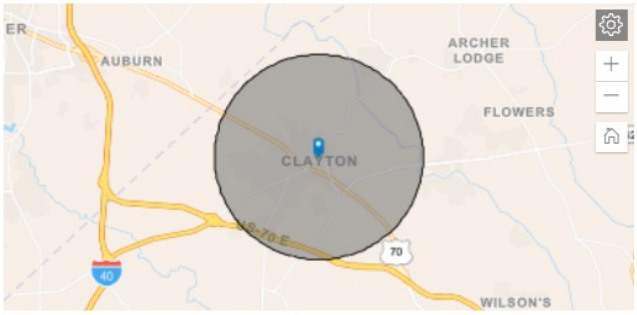
OPPORTUNITY GAP & RETAIL PROSPECTS



14 of the top 16 categories provide tremendous opportunities for downtown business growth and development.

Our Research

COMMUTE PROFILE: 3 MILES



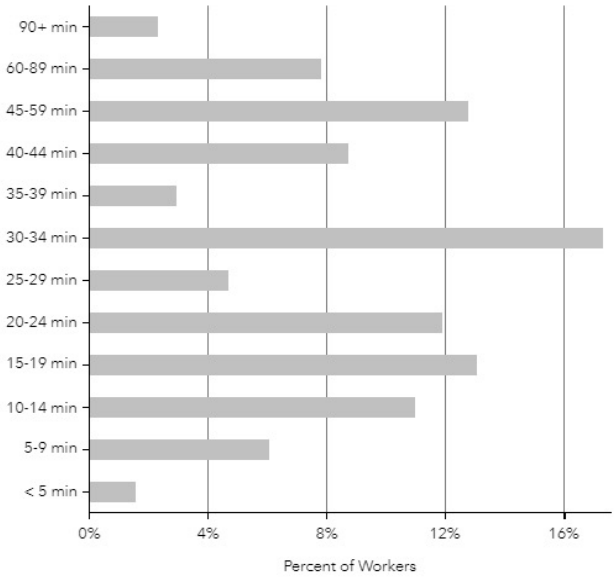
WORKERS

12,941	82.6%	812
ACS Workers Age 16+	Drove Alone to Work	2020 Workers 16+ Worked at Home (ACS 5-Yr)

TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

0.3%	8.9%	1.7%	0.0%
Took Public Transportation	Carpooled	Walked to Work	Bike to Work

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



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

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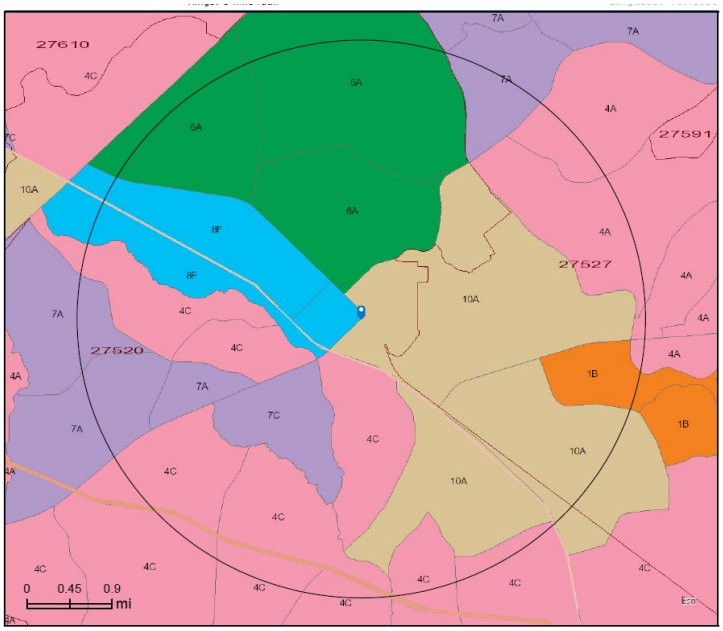
MARKET ANALYSIS

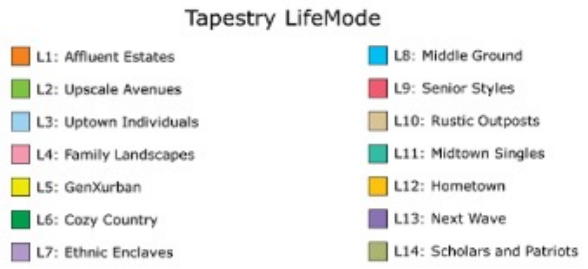
Tapestry Segmentation Profile

3 MILE RADIUS

Tapestry Segmentation classifies neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based not only on demographics but also socioeconomic characteristics. It describes US neighborhoods in easy-to-visualize terms, ranging from Soccer Moms to Heartland Communities.

Tapestry gives you insights to help you identify your best customers, optimal sites, and underserved markets by understanding customers' lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time.









esri

Rank	Tapestry Segment	2022 Households Percent	2022 Households Cumulative Percent	2022 U.S. Households Percent	2022 U.S. Households Cumulative Percent	Index
1	Middleburg (4C)	34.7%	34.7%	3.1%	3.1%	1137
2	Southern Satellites (10A)	19.2%	53.9%	3.1%	6.1%	621
3	Green Acres (6A)	14.5%	68.4%	3.3%	9.4%	446
4	Old and Newcomers (8F)	10.0%	78.4%	2.3%	11.7%	437
5	Urban Edge Families (7C)	8.7%	87.1%	1.5%	13.2%	576
	Subtotal	**87.1%**		**13.3%**		

MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





LifeMode Group: Family Landscapes

Middleburg

4C

Households: 3,511,200

Average Household Size: 2.75

Median Age: 36.1

Median Household Income: $59,800

WHO ARE WE?

Middleburg neighborhoods transformed from the easy pace of country living to semirural subdivisions in the last decade, when the housing boom reached out. Residents are conservative, family-oriented consumers. Still more country than rock and roll, they are thrifty but willing to carry some debt and are already investing in their futures. They rely on their smartphones and mobile devices to stay in touch and pride themselves on their expertise. They prefer to buy American and travel in the US. This market is younger but growing in size and assets.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Semirural locales within metropolitan areas.
- Neighborhoods changed rapidly in the previous decade with the addition of new single-family homes.
- Include a number of mobile homes (Index 150).
- Affordable housing, median value of $175,000 (Index 84) with a low vacancy rate.
- Young couples, many with children; average household size is 2.75.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 65% with a high school diploma or some college.
- Unemployment rate lower at 4.7% (Index 86).
- Labor force participation typical of a younger population at 66.7% (Index 107).
- Traditional values are the norm here—faith, country, and family.
- Prefer to buy American and for a good price.
- Comfortable with the latest in technology, for convenience (online banking or saving money on landlines) and entertainment.

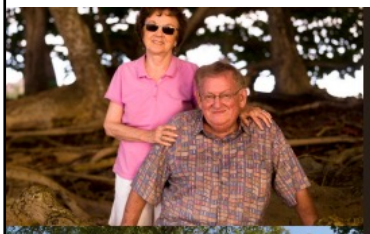
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

Southern Satellites

10A

Households: 3,856,800

Average Household Size: 2.67

Median Age: 40.3

Median Household Income: $47,800

WHO ARE WE?

Southern Satellites is the second largest market found in rural settlements but within metropolitan areas located primarily in the South. This market is typically nondiverse, slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Two-thirds of the homes are single-family structures; almost a third are mobile homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- About 78% of households are owned.
- Married couples with no children are the dominant household type, with a number of multigenerational households (Index 112).
- Most are single-family homes (67%), with a number of mobile homes (Index 509).
- Most housing units were built in 1970 or later.
- Most households own 1 or 2 vehicles, but owning 3+ vehicles is common (Index 144).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: almost 40% have a high school diploma only (Index 140); 45% have college education (Index 73).
- Unemployment rate is 6%, slightly higher than the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.1%, slightly lower than the US.
- These consumers are more concerned about cost rather than quality or brand loyalty.
- They tend to be somewhat late in adapting to technology.
- They obtain a disproportionate amount of their information from TV, compared to other media.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI.

downtown strategies

MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

Green Acres

6A

Households: 3,923,400

Average Household Size: 2.70

Median Age: 43.9

Median Household Income: $76,800

WHO ARE WE?

The *Green Acres* lifestyle features country living and self-reliance. They are avid do-it-yourselfers, maintaining and remodeling their homes, with all the necessary power tools to accomplish the jobs. Gardening, especially growing vegetables, is also a priority, again with the right tools, tillers, tractors, and riding mowers. Outdoor living also features a variety of sports: hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking and camping, and even golf. Self-described conservatives, residents of *Green Acres* remain pessimistic about the near future yet are heavily invested in it.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Rural enclaves in metropolitan areas, primarily (not exclusively) older homes with acreage; new housing growth in the past 15 years.
- Single-family, owner-occupied housing, with a median value of $235,500.
- An older market, primarily married couples, most with no children.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: More than 60% are college educated.
- Unemployment is low at 3.8% (Index 70); labor force participation rate is high at 66.8% (Index 107).
- Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and increasingly, from retirement.
- They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability.
- Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the Internet is not viewed as entertainment.
- Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investments.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

Old and Newcomers

8F

Households: 2,859,200

Average Household Size: 2.12

Median Age: 39.4

Median Household Income: $44,900

WHO ARE WE?

This market features singles' lifestyles, on a budget. The focus is more on convenience than consumerism, economy over acquisition. *Old and Newcomers* is composed of neighborhoods in transition, populated by renters who are just beginning their careers or retiring. Some are still in college; some are taking adult education classes. They support charity causes and are environmentally conscious. Age is not always obvious from their choices.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Metropolitan city dwellers.
- Predominantly single households (Index 148), with a mix of married couples (no children); average household size lower at 2.12.
- 55% renter occupied; average rent, $880, (Index 85).
- 45% of housing units are single-family dwellings; 45% are multiunit buildings in older neighborhoods, built before 1980.
- Average vacancy rate at 11%.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Unemployment is lower at 5.1% (Index 93), with an average labor force participation rate of 62.6%, despite the increasing number of retired workers.
- 32% of households are currently receiving Social Security.
- 31% have a college degree (Index 99), 33% have some college education, 9% are still enrolled in college (Index 121).
- Consumers are price aware and coupon clippers, but open to impulse buys.
- They are attentive to environmental concerns.
- They are more comfortable with the latest technology than buying a car.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





7C

LifeMode Group: Sprouting Explorers

Urban Edge Families

Households: 1,824,900

Average Household Size: 3.19

Median Age: 32.5

Median Household Income: $50,900

WHO ARE WE?

Located throughout the South and West, most *Urban Edge Families* residents own their own homes, primarily single-family housing—out of the city, where housing is more affordable. Median household income is slightly below average (Index 91). The majority of households include younger married-couple families with children and, frequently, grandparents. Many residents are foreign born. Spending is focused more on the members of the household than the home. Entertainment includes multiple televisions, movie rentals, and video games at home or visits to theme parks and zoos. This market is connected and adept at accessing what they want from the internet.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- *Urban Edge Families* residents residents are family-centric. Most are married couples with children of all ages or single parents; multi-generational homes are common (Index 201).
- Average household size is higher at 3.19 (Index 123).
- Residents tend to live farther out from urban centers—more affordable single-family homes and more elbow room.
- Tenure is slightly above average with 64% owner occupancy; primarily single-family homes with more mortgages (Index 114) and slightly higher monthly costs (Index 115).
- Three quarters of all housing were built 1970 or later.
- Many neighborhoods are located in the urban periphery of the largest metropolitan areas across the South and West.
- Most households have one or two vehicles available and a longer commute to work.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Nearly 17% have earned a college degree, and 63% hold a high school diploma only or have spent some time at a college or university.
- Labor force participation is higher at 66%.
- Most *Urban Edge Families* residents derive income from wages or salaries.
- They tend to spend money carefully and focus more on necessities.
- They are captivated by new technology, particularly feature-rich smartphones.
- Connected: They use the internet primarily for socializing but also for convenience, like paying bills online.

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

MARKET ANALYSIS

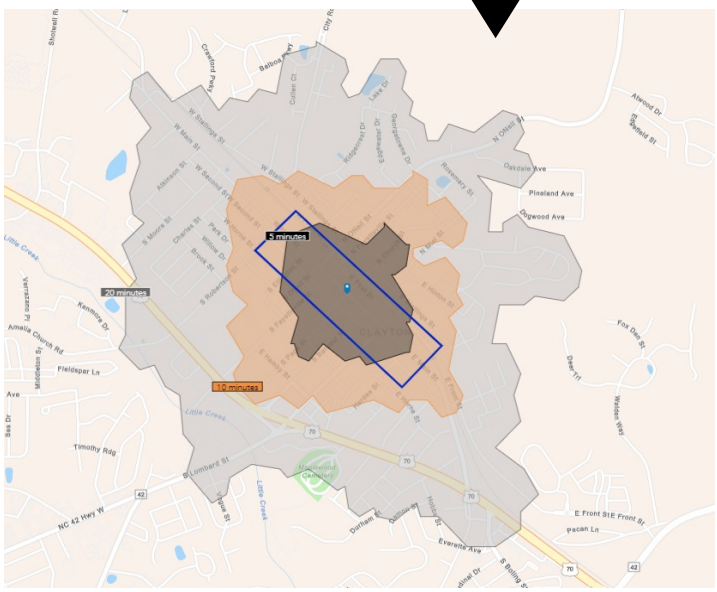
Walkability Assessment

75

What's your Community's Walk Score?

A community's walk score is determined by analyzing 3 factors: **walkable distance** between boundaries, presence of a **comprehensive network of pathways** designed for pedestrians and cyclists, and variety of restaurants, retailers, and service providers **necessary for regular life.**

This assessment shows your Downtown with boundaries notating a **5, 10,** and **20-minute walk**. A walk time from one Downtown boundary to the next that exceeds 20 minutes is not considered walkable.



KEY FACTS

3,953	40.4	2.3	5,467
Population	Median Age	Ang. Household Size	Daytime Population

INCOME

$60,115	$50,399	$84,622
Median HH Income	Median Disposable Income	Avg. HH Income

EMPLOYMENT

69%	20%	11%	4.7%
White Collar	Blue Collar	Services	Unemployment Rate

EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESSES

420	3,229	4.7%
Total Businesses	Total Employees	Unemployment Rate

EDUCATION

8%	25%	42%	26%
No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	Bachelor's/Grad/ Prof Degree

HOUSING STATS

$225,000	$811	60%
Median Home Value	Median Contract Rent	Owner Households with a Mortgage

90–100	**Walker's Paradise** Daily errands do not require a car
70–89	**Very Walkable** Most errands can be accomplished on foot
50–69	**Somewhat Walkable** Some errands can be accomplished on foot
25–49	**Car-Dependent** Most errands require a car
0–24	**Car-Dependent** Almost all errands require a car

The following demographics represent the **population of residents** within a **20-minute walk time** of the Downtown Study Area.

Keep these figures in mind when imagining the possible economic impacts of developing your Downtown into a walkable destination.



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downtown strategies

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Policy & Administration involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

Community Roundtable

Communication in community development focuses on enhancing the interaction between the people promoting change that will impact positively on improving the living conditions of members of the participating communities and the people with whom they work to actualize their ideal quality of life.

Monthly & Quarterly Editions

With multiple organizations and entities focused on community and economic development, there is an opportunity for enhanced communication and strategic visioning through a Community Roundtable program.

Each month, leaders of key community organizations should gather, with no formal agenda, to discuss current projects, opportunities for partnerships, shared resources, and visioning and planning.

Each quarter, additional members of these organizations should gather in a public setting for benchmark updates, providing an opportunity for the press to report on positive happenings within the community.

Recommendation

In order to strengthen the relationship between organizations and foster a culture of collaboration, implement and host a monthly Community Roundtable event focused on Downtown Clayton. Participants should include the mayor, town economic development staff, chamber of commerce director, CDDA chair, visitor's bureau president, and a representative from the various downtown-related boards (Public Art Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Parking Task Force, etc.).

Quarterly editions can be expanded to bring together a broader mix of community leaders and board members for enhanced communication, strategic direction, and productivity.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

downtown strategies

Cheat Sheet for Codes & Regulations

Recommendation

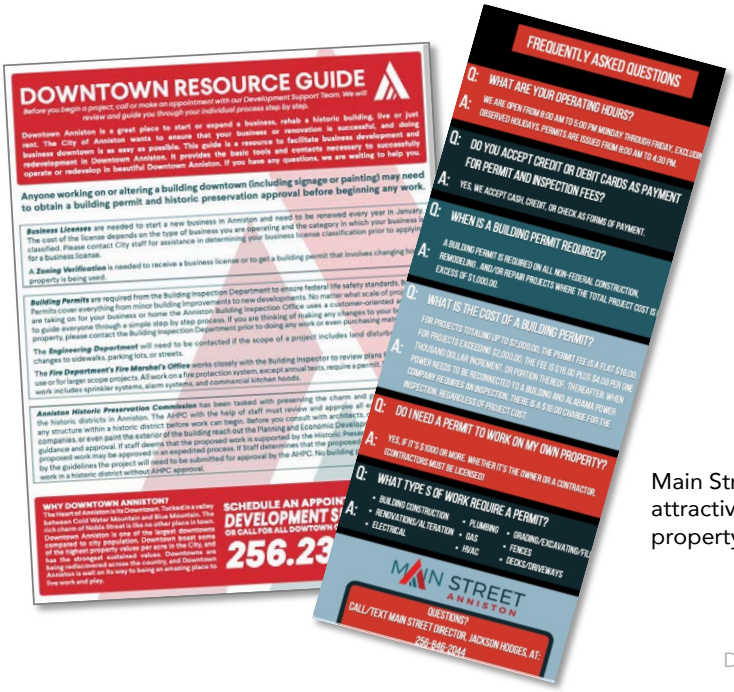
Develop a cheat sheet or guide designed to illustrate the town's recent efforts to streamline the development regulations and processes. The cheat sheet can be used as a tool to help local business and property owners navigate issues related to codes, permits, processes, and ordinance violations commonly occurring in the downtown area

A Guide for Locals

While national brands, large development firms, and experienced developers are familiar with navigating municipal codes, ordinances, and zoning regulations, the process can seem overwhelming for an owner of a small business or local property owner.

Oftentimes their properties fall out of compliance due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of local standards. Code enforcement can seem heavy handed to someone involved in this type of circumstance.

It is important for the city to clearly communicate codes, standards, expectations, and the development process. Creating an easy-to-follow guide or "cheat sheet" of local guidelines can help a new business owner or developer navigate the process or serve as a more appropriate first step in the code enforcement process.



Main Street Anniston, Alabama created a very attractive, easy-to-follow guide for businesses, property owners, and developers.

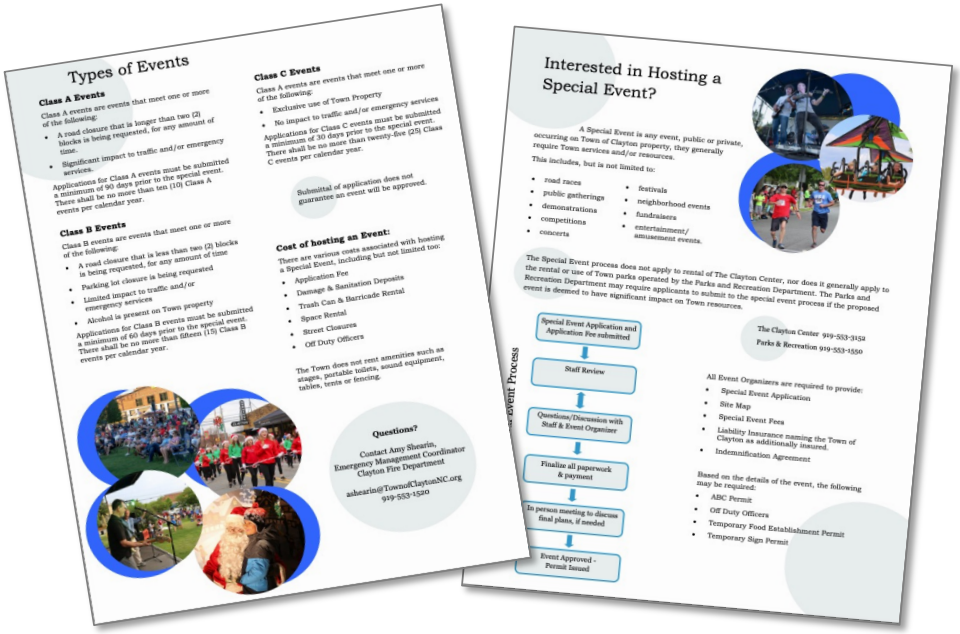
downtown strategies

Cheat Sheet for Codes & Regulations

Clayton Special Events Guide

Clayton has already developed a guide for anyone interested in hosting a special event. This guide is welcoming and easy to follow. It is succinct and includes a basic overview of the approval process and key contact information.

A similar guide should be created to assist with any process related to opening a business in Downtown Clayton. The goal is to make a good first impression, make opening a business as streamlined as possible, and clarify the approval process.



The existing guide for special events provides a good template for a "cheat sheet" guide for various topics.



The existing "Doing Business in Clayton Guide" is also a great resource and provides a template for other resources.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

downtown strategies

Create an Incentives Package for Property Renovations

Downtown Clayton's stock of historic buildings could benefit from renovations ranging from small-scale cosmetic updates to more expansive renovations. In addition to the existing Façade Grant Program, a package of financial incentives should be created.

The incentive package could include policies and programs such as:

- Additional Grant Programs
- Tax Abatement Program (or similar program)
- Historic Tax Credits
- Business Improvement District



Historic Preservation

We all know where Main Street is, but do we know why it matters?

Main Street is the core of the community. It tells us who we are, who we were, and how the past has shaped us. Our Main Street is a place of shared memories where people still come together to live, work, and play. That's why the Town of Clayton is working hard to preserve its history and character.

Historic District

The Clayton Historic District includes portions of the downtown commercial district and residential neighborhoods north and south of the railroad, including almost 300 historic homes and buildings. It's bounded by Mulberry Street, W Barnes Street, Mill Street, Lombard Street, and Blanche Street. The Town created an historic district because we support efforts to preserve our history and architecture, yet s Select Language encourage use of our historic commercial and residential buildings. See the

Recommendation

Create and promote a package of incentive programs for the renovation of historic buildings in Downtown Clayton. Educate property owners and business owners on available incentive programs.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Create an Incentives Package for Building Stabilization & Renovation

Recommendation

Develop a grant program focused on incentivizing projects related to overall building preservation and renovation. In addition to exterior façade improvements allowed with the existing Downtown Rehabilitation Grant Program, the program would financially support projects related to building stabilization and interior renovations.

Downtown Clayton has a great stock of historic buildings along Main Street and throughout the Downtown Overlay District. The exteriors of most buildings are in good condition; however, the interiors of many buildings are dated or in disrepair. The downtown area lacks quality, modernized, up-to-date, retail-ready storefront space and upper floor commercial and residential space.

A package of incentives should be developed in order to spark the renovation and revitalization of downtown properties. Clayton has an existing Downtown Façade/Site Elements Improvement Grant managed by the Clayton Downtown Development Association and the city economic development staff that provides a $2,500 matching grant to eligible projects.

The existing Façade Grant Program provides financial incentives for exterior building renovations and updates such as façade improvements, awning replacement, signage updates, window/door replacement, and other enhancements.

This program is much needed to address the exterior condition of the buildings in the downtown area, but many downtown buildings need interior improvements. A complimentary rehabilitation program should be developed to incentivize interior renovations and building stabilization projects to enhance the quality of available retail and residential space.

Case Study: "Catalyst Grant Program" - Albemarle, North Carolina

As with many downtowns, several buildings had been ignored for decades and the effect of the deferred maintenance made investing in properties challenging. City leaders realized that incentives needed to address more than basic exterior façade improvements. Albemarle launched the "Catalyst Grant Program" in 2022, which is a comprehensive incentive program which funds exterior and interior renovation projects. The program is focused on the preservation, stabilization, and renovation of historic downtown buildings.

The public-private partnership between the City of Albemarle, Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation (ADDC), and the local Uwharrie Bank provides 50/50 matching grant funds to property owners and business owners within the designated downtown boundary. Eligible improvements range from basic façade enhancements like exterior paint, awnings, and signage to building stabilization projects such as roofs, structural repairs, and building systems repairs (plumbing, electrical, etc.). The program also funds initiatives that will improve the building or help the business better serve their customers. These include interior walls, sprinkler systems, equipment, or anything that improves the productivity of the building.

Create an Incentives Package for Rehabilitation

Case Study: "Catalyst Grant Program" - Albemarle, North Carolina (continued)

Eligible improvements include items such as:

Exterior Façade Rehabilitation

- Painting
- Removal of non-contributing false facades
- Building *cleaning (non-sandblasting)*
- Stucco restoration
- Tuck pointing masonry
- Replacement or reconstructive woodwork
- New exterior doors and windows on existing structure
- Restoration of historically appropriate doors, windows, or building features
- Signs, awnings, murals, and canopies
- Exterior lighting
- Hardscape improvements that are visible from the right-of-way

Building Stabilization

(Must be compliant with City Code and State of North Carolina Building Code)

- Roof repair and/or replacement
- Interior structural improvements *(floor joists, ceiling repairs)*
- Interior Life Safety Improvements *(fire walls, sprinklers, egress, fire alarm, exit signs, and automatic lights)*
- Building systems improvements *(plumbing, electric, HVAC)*
- Furniture, fixtures, and equipment used in the day-to-day operation of the business

Interior Improvements and/or Furniture, Fixture and Equipment Installation

- Interior ceiling, wall, flooring, plumbing, kitchen, bar, or other portions of the building that require improvements to increase sales, productivity, and appearance of the facility.
- Installation or replacement of furniture, fixtures, and equipment that will increase productivity and improve the appearance and sales of the business.
- Life Safety and other interior safety improvements.
- Lighting, electrical, mechanical, and other improvements that improve the building and ability to serve customers.

This comprehensive grant program serves as a great model of a city, community development organization, and the private sector partnering to create a funding opportunity for important downtown properties.

With a program such as this, it is important to have clear criteria for eligible projects and properties as well as an extensive review process for applications. Awarded projects should enhance the economic viability of the property and the downtown district and add high quality space for business development.

Property Tax Abatement

What is Property Tax Abatement?

As authorized by most state laws, the city may provide a property tax abatement incentive to encourage the renovation and restoration of historic properties within the city. In basic terms, the assessed value of the property is locked at the pre-renovation value for a period of time up to 10 years. At that point, the property may be reassessed at the post-renovation value. The property owner is not "penalized" for improving their property, and the historic properties are preserved. Note: Most states do not allow school taxes to be abated.

This type of program allows a city to offer an incentive to property owners without creating the need for additional funding for the program. Once the property has been improved, the city does not collect the additional tax revenue created by the improved asset. However, the city does gain an improved property which can spark additional revitalization efforts in the neighborhood leading to longer term financial impacts and increased tax revenue.

North Carolina

Unfortunately, the State of North Carolina does not allow municipalities to establish tax abatement programs. However, some cities, such as Rocky Mount and Smithfield, North Carolina, have created grant programs that act similar to a tax abatement in order to incentivize the renovation of properties within certain districts.

With these programs, the property owner pays the full post-renovation property tax but is then "granted" back the difference in the pre- and post- renovation assessment. This reimbursement-style process is lengthier and is not as streamlined as a traditional tax abatement program but allows municipalities to offer a similar incentive in an effort to spark the revitalization of properties and districts.

Additional information about Rocky Mount and Smithfield's grant programs are included in the "Additional Resources" section of this plan.

Recommendation

The Town of Clayton should employ an incentive program similar to a tax abatement that would incentivize the renovation and improvement of downtown properties. Since the State of North Carolina does not allow a typical tax abatement program, some communities have employed a grant program that refunds the increased assessed value back to the property owner following the renovations.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

downtown strategies

Vibrancy Grant Program

Incentivize the addition of vibrancy elements

Façade grant programs are a tool commonly used by cities and community development organizations to incentivize the preservation and enhancement of historic downtown buildings. These programs provide financial assistance for exterior paint, storefront repairs, awnings, signs, etc. Improving the facades throughout downtown is an important step in improving the aesthetics and character of the district.

In addition to improving the appearance of the buildings, many downtowns struggle with creating the feeling of life and activity along downtown streets. A successful streetscape has quality sidewalks, attractive storefronts, and elements such as street trees, banners, streetlights, etc. However, what breathes life into a streetscape are the businesses and people. Seeing people walking, outdoor seating, merchandise displays, and activities are what create a vibrant downtown.

Many communities are creating Vibrancy Grant Programs to incentivize downtown businesses to add vibrancy elements to their sidewalk. As each business adds potted plants, sandwich board signs, outdoor seating, outdoor merchandise displays, and begins to spill activity from their store onto the sidewalk, it begins to add vibrancy to the entire downtown area.

Eligible projects may include:

- Planters (pots)
- Landscaping/potted plants
- Sandwich board signage
- Hand-painted business signage
- Custom business signage
- Merchandise displays
- Outdoor dining
- Outdoor seating
- Exterior lighting enhancements
- Storefront display lighting (interior)
- Public art (murals or sculpture – designs would need to be approved)
- Activities (cornhole, oversized outdoor games, etc.)

Vibrancy elements are relatively low cost compared to projects typically funded by façade grant programs so a small amount of funding can create a significant impact. A vibrancy grant program can be a stand-alone program or be added to an existing grant.

A stand-alone Vibrancy Grant allows a community or downtown organization to place specific emphasis on the importance of adding vibrancy elements to the downtown area. These programs should inspire business owners and property owners to implement creative and innovative elements to enliven their storefronts and add life to the adjacent sidewalk.

Norfolk, Virginia's "Vibrant Spaces" program is an excellent example of a vibrancy grant program: https://vibrantspaces.com/vibrancy-grants/

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Vibrancy Grant Program







Recommendation

Create a Vibrancy Grant Program to incentivize and encourage business owners to add elements to the sidewalk in order to create an active and vibrant downtown environment. This can be added to the existing façade grant program or become a new stand-alone program.

Creative Business Signage

Unique & Interesting

Businesses should install signage that reflects their unique identify and enhances the character of the downtown area. Three-dimensional, custom shaped, and individually lettered signs are appropriate. Properly illuminated signs, hanging and blade signs, painted signs, as well as hand-painted storefront widows should be encouraged.

Simple, two-dimensional signs should be discouraged as they do not enhance the character of downtown. Existing business signs should be properly maintained. Any broken or missing signs should be removed and replaced immediately as to not detract from surrounding properties, serve as an eyesore, and negatively impact a visitor's impression of the downtown.















Recommendation

Use education, policy, incentives, or guidelines to encourage business owners to install signage that reflects their unique identify and enhances the character of the downtown area. Professionally hand-painted, three-dimensional, and custom shaped should be encouraged. Short-term efforts should be focused on repairing and replacing broken/missing signage throughout the downtown area.

"To-Go Cup" Zone or Social District

What's a To Go-Cup Ordinance?

Many states have enacted legislation that allows municipalities to designate "To-Go Cup Zones" or "Social Districts," which allows open containers of alcoholic beverages in a certain area. This is ideal for downtowns because it allows visitors and customers to visit multiple restaurants and destinations while enjoying a beverage. Similar to the French Quarter in New Orleans or other large cities, small towns can begin to offer a similar experience with regards to entertainment.

The **State of North Carolina** enacted legislation to allow municipalities to designate "social districts." Downtown Raleigh, North Carolina launched their first social district (promoted as a "Sip n' Stroll" district) in August 2022. A great guide to Raleigh's social district may be found here: https://tinyurl.com/3apvzrh6

How Does it Work?

Most ordinances feature a framework that includes provisions such as:

- Patrons are required to go inside of a restaurant or bar to purchase a beverage. Leaving the site with a drink in hand is allowed, if it is done within the boundaries of the entertainment district.
- To-go cups are issued at the discretion of the individual establishments. The owner, manager, or bartender has the right to refuse a to-go cup to any individual they believe may be in danger of being over-served.
- Only one (plastic, 16 oz. or less) container will be issued per guest over the age of 21. You may not enter licensed premises with an alcoholic beverage.
- Unless otherwise permitted by the property owner, citizens electing to take their beverage "to go" must stay within the public sidewalks and not private property.



Recommendation

Establish a social district in Downtown Clayton using Downtown Raleigh's recently enacted social district ordinance as a guide.

Downtown Special Taxing District

Funding source for downtown improvement

The Clayton Downtown Development Association (CDDA) has the potential of becoming the lead organization for downtown efforts. Currently the CDDA organizes various events, manages promotional efforts, and has a similar structure to Main Street associations.

The CDDA was organized by the City of Clayton as an official advisory board to manage downtown revitalization efforts. The city has invested a tremendous amount of resources into the downtown area including various planning exercises, beautification projects, incentive programs, and other resources.

Adding a funding component to the CDDA will allow the organization to grow and expand the capacity for larger downtown initiatives. Creating a special taxing district for the downtown area will generate revenue specifically for improvements and initiatives within the district.

Many downtowns begin with establishing a special taxing district (commonly referred to as a Business Improvement District or BID) for the downtown area. The extra tax millage generates revenue for improvements within the downtown area. The funds generated may be used to fund streetscape enhancements, incentive programs, landscaping, or other improvement efforts.

What is a Business Improvement District (BID?)

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are special economic development tools that enable local businesses and property owners to work together to improve the economic competitiveness of their downtown district. The BID typically is funded through a special assessment on businesses and property owners within the BID boundaries. The funds are used to promote economic development activities and services such as marketing and promotion, public safety and security, public spaces, and public events.

BIDs can be used to help spur redevelopment in downtown districts by providing resources to help attract potential businesses and investors. BIDs can also help improve the public infrastructure and provide necessary services to help create a vibrant and sustainable downtown district. Additionally, the funds collected through a BID can be used to create a dedicated downtown revitalization organization (DRO) to coordinate and manage the efforts of downtown redevelopment. DROs typically provide technical assistance and resources to businesses and property owners to help them become successful and competitive in the downtown district.

Downtown Special Taxing District

Funding source for downtown improvement

BID Quick Facts

- A BID is a geographically defined district in which commercial property owners choose (by a vote) to impose a self-tax.
- BIDs are considered a powerful public-private partnership. They have been used successfully throughout the country to revitalize downtowns
- BIDs can directly enhance property values by allowing property owners to decide how funds are spent in their area.
- BID funds can add to existing services, such as public safety, and they can be used to leverage additional public and private funds.
- BIDs can make improvements to a variety of areas in a community, including water, public transportation, street and road construction and maintenance, parks and recreational areas and facilities, storm water and sewage, parking areas and more.
- BIDs can also be used to implement placemaking improvements such as sidewalks; public facilities; downtown marketing and promotion; events; business support; and street maintenance.

North Carolina BIDs

Examples of cities in North Carolina that have implemented BIDs to help encourage redevelopment in their downtown districts include Asheville, Durham, and Wilmington. Through the implementation of BIDs, these cities have seen a significant increase in economic activity and investment, leading to the revitalization of their downtown districts.

> *G.S. Ch. 160A, Art. 23 (Municipal Service District Act), implements Section 2(4) of Article 5 of the North Carolina Constitution, which authorizes a local government to define special areas (districts) in order to assess additional ad valorem property taxes on properties located within the districts to fund projects and services in the districts. Specifically, the Municipal Service District Act allows North Carolina municipalities to establish special taxing districts to fund, among a handful of other services or functions, downtown revitalization projects.*
>
> *"A Guide to Business Improvement Districts in North Carolina"*
> *by Kara Millonzi*
> *University of North Carolina School of Law*

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

downtown strategies

Downtown Special Taxing District

Funding source for downtown improvement

Case Study: Durham, NC

Since its establishment, the Durham Business Improvement District (BID) has been a driving force in the revitalization of downtown Durham, North Carolina. Through the BID, the city has been able to attract private investment and increase economic activity by providing infrastructure improvements, marketing and promotions, crime prevention, and other services and programming. In 2012, a 501(c)6 organization named Downtown Durham, Inc. (DDI - https://downtowndurham.com) became the entity responsible for managing the Durham BID.

DDI has been instrumental in encouraging redevelopment in downtown Durham. The organization focuses on providing services within focus areas such as Economic Growth; Strategy and Policy; Cultural Vibrancy; and Community Engagement.

Additional resources related to BIDs in North Carolina are included in the "Additional Resources" section of this plan.

Recommendation

Explore opportunities for creating a special taxing district for the downtown district to serve as a stable funding source for the CDDA to conduct future downtown improvements and grow the organization.

downtown strategies

Dedicated Downtown Development Responsibilities

Recommendation

The CDDA should plan for the addition of a full-time staff member to manage downtown efforts such as promotion, event planning, business development, marketing, etc.

Downtown Staff Member

Communities that have successfully revitalized their downtown and continue to enjoy a vibrant downtown district have a staff member who continuously manage downtown efforts. Someone whose job is to constantly identify strategies for improving the downtown area.

This staff member can be an employee of the local government, a Main Street director, or someone within a community development or economic development organization. Numerous structures exist.

Currently Clayton has dedicated a portion of a town employee's role to downtown-focused initiatives. The town's support of Downtown Clayton is a tremendous first step toward creating a vibrant district. The town's formation of the Downtown Development Advisory Board and Clayton Downtown Development Association (CDDA) also signifies the town's dedication to the future of downtown.

As Clayton as a whole and the downtown area grows, the role of the CDDA will also expand. Planning for the growth of the organization in order to fully capitalize on the downtown's potential should be a priority of the town. Identifying funding and structure to support a full-time downtown development staff member would allow the CDDA to efficiently manage the growth of downtown.

It is possible that the CDDA could eventually grow into a certified Main Street Association, which would connect Clayton with a state-wide and nationwide network of downtown practitioners and resources.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

downtown strategies

Encourage & Incentivize Downtown Residential Development

Provide a variety of housing types

Recommendation

Through the current Codify Clayton code update process, explore opportunities to encourage and remove barriers for the development of infill development of missing middle housing, and the renovations of historic homes. This includes exploring options and removing barriers for the development of upper floor housing in downtown properties.

Initially downtowns should place an emphasis on creating the 18-hour downtown ("Coffee to Cocktails") through a variety of activities, attractions, and destinations. As these initiatives grow, communities should expand their efforts to establish 24-hour activity with people living throughout the downtown area.

Prior to WWII downtowns functioned as a mixed-use district with residents reaching their daily needs within a walkable distance of the downtown core. Downtowns housed commercial uses such as attorneys, doctors, and dentists; retail uses such as shoe stores, clothing stores, and general stores; service providers such as hair salons and barber shops; and food-related businesses such as bakeries, butcher shops, and restaurants. The ground floor was reserved for commercial and retail use and the upper floors housed office space and residential uses. Oftentimes the store owner lived above their business, a practice that is still common in larger cities around the world.

Residential neighborhoods grew around the downtown core with well-connected networks of streets and sidewalks and street cars provided convenient public transit for the citizens. The downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods created a diverse fabric of uses that functioned as a cohesive system for decades.

After WWII, commercial development began to spread to the highway corridors and residential areas moved to the outskirts. In an attempt to compete with the suburban style of development, downtowns demolished buildings to make way for parking lots. Streets were widened, sidewalks fell into disrepair, and upper floor spaces were converted to storage space. Unfortunately, this was the trend until the 2000s.

Current trends show a return to the historic pattern. **Millennials, the largest consumer group in the United States, prefer walkable, historic neighborhoods.** They tend to prefer historic fixer-upper houses opposed to cul-de-sac subdivisions. Millennials have an entrepreneurial spirit and are locating start-up businesses in downtowns around the country. Technology allows them to live virtually anywhere they want, and they are often choosing small towns rather than other options. Retiring Baby Boomers are also choosing to downsize and locate in walkable cities as well creating an even larger demand for this style of living.

Encourage & Incentivize Downtown Residential Development

Provide a variety of housing types

Downtowns are perfectly positioned to capitalize on current livability trends if a variety of housing opportunities are present. This should include utilizing upper floors for residential uses, medium density infill development, and connections to adjacent historic neighborhoods. Millennials are not as financially stable as previous generations, so many prefer to rent. This creates the need for rental property, which could include upper floor apartments downtown or multi-family options adjacent to downtown.

Historic neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown core are positioned to capitalize on modern trends. Although the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are likely in need of repair, these neighborhoods are walkable, provide easy access to the downtown and other amenities, and offer lower-budget fixer-upper housing opportunities. **Cities should place a high priority on projects that improve the connection between the downtown core and the adjacent neighborhoods.** Establishing historic districts provide opportunities for homeowners to utilize historic tax credits to offset the costs of renovations in some states.







Downtown Clayton is blessed with an exceptional stock of historic homes (top left) and neighborhoods directly adjacent to the core of the district. These neighborhoods should be preserved and embraced. Ensure that the transitions from these neighborhoods are walkable, attractive, and pedestrian-oriented. Currently some connecting streetscapes are dominated by parking lots (top right), underdeveloped properties, and unattractive service entrances to commercial buildings (left).

Encourage & Incentivize Downtown Residential Development

Provide a variety of housing types

These vacant or underutilized properties provide an excellent opportunity for what many urban planners refer to as the "missing middle" type of housing. Organizations such as the Incremental Development Alliance (https://www.incrementaldevelopment.org/) and Opticos (https://opticosdesign.com/missing-middle-housing/), a leading urban planning firm, have identified the missing middle as a style of housing that is in high demand in cities around the country. Prior to WWII, downtowns offered a mixture of housing styles that included small-scale multi-family options in addition to single-family houses. These multi-family uses included duplexes, fourplexes, courtyard apartments, townhomes, multiplexes, and live/work properties.

Rather than large-scale apartment complexes, these uses were scattered throughout existing neighborhoods and provided a transition from the dense downtown core to the single-family neighborhoods. These housing styles represent a tremendous need in nearly every community. **Missing middle housing fills a demand for more diverse housing alternatives, makes wiser use of existing infrastructure as infill development, and increases the tax base for the city.**

Cities should explore options for updating codes, ordinances, and land use regulations to allow for the development of upper floor housing, development of missing middle housing, and the renovation of homes in historic neighborhoods. Memphis, Tennessee recently updated their building code to remove polices that were restricting this type of development. For example, the City of Memphis updated their code to allow structures of 3 to 6 dwelling units to be reviewed under the residential building code rather than the commercial building code. This minor change drastically reduces the requirements for a small-scale developer looking to build missing middle housing styles. More potential changes cities can explore were outlined in a Strong Towns (strongtowns.org) article on January 26, 2022, entitled "A Trailblazing Reform Supports Small-scale Development in Memphis (https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2022/1/26/a-trailblazing-reform-supports-small-scale-development-in-memphis).



Encourage & Incentivize Downtown Residential Development

Provide a variety of housing types

Historically, downtowns have offered a variety of housing types ranging from an upper floor apartment to a single-family detached home. The key is offering small increments of each housing type rather than large-scale developments or apartment complexes. Multi-family housing opportunities contribute greatly to a downtown area if done tastefully and in a manner that is cohesive with the surrounding neighborhood.











Examples of various housing types appropriate for a downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods. These examples include an upper floor apartment (top left); mid-rise apartment building adjacent to a historic downtown square (top right); townhomes (right center); high density single-family detached houses accessed via a rear alley (bottom right); and a small duplex located in a historic neighborhood (bottom left).

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Form-Based Codes

downtown strategies

Recommendation

Explore options for incorporating Form Based Codes for Downtown Clayton through the current Codify Clayton code update process. The CDDA should serve as advocates for implementing this type of code in the downtown district and educate property owners on the value of the change.

A **form-based code** is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A **form-based code** is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.

Form-based codes address the **relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks.** The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types.

This approach contrasts with conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS), to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism.

Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes depends on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements.

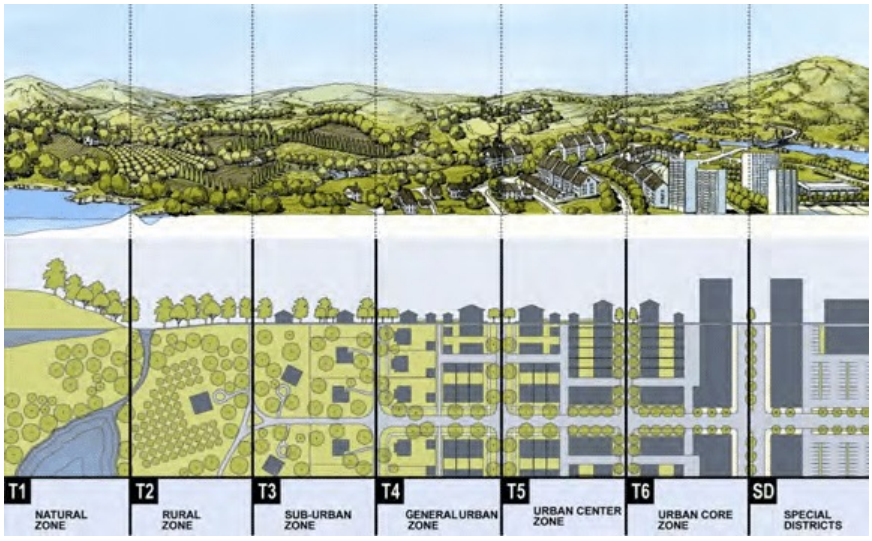
Form-Based Codes

downtown strategies

Principles of Form Based Codes

Form-based codes support the creation of people-focused streets because they:

- Encourage signage that is pedestrian-oriented and human-scale.
- Control the shape and density of new buildings and other development.
- Control car and bicycle parking requirements to make preservation projects and transit-oriented development more feasible.
- Govern building setback, rear, and side-lot requirements, which often dictate the continuity and rhythm of a Main Street's facades.
- Set requirements for minimum lot coverage and floor area ratios (F.A.R.)
- Permit a variety of uses on upper floors, like housing and small-scale manufacturing.
- Incentivize active uses on the ground floor, which prevent retail gaps and supports retail concentration in key district areas.



Form-Based Codes

Time-tested Development Pattern

For centuries downtowns followed a similar template that can be found in cities such as Pompeii, Italy; Paris, France; New York City; and even small towns across America. Basically, any city that was built before World War II (WWII) followed this same pattern.

Buildings were located directly adjacent to the street. Streets were laid out in a connected grid or network. Downtown neighborhoods contained a mix of uses where people lived, worked, shopped, dined, and socialized in the same area. The overall size of neighborhoods were contained to an area based on a reasonable walking distance for people to reach all of their daily needs. This typically occurred within a ¼-mile to ½-mile radius. Residents lived above their businesses or in nearby residential neighborhoods. Key civic buildings, religious facilities, and landmarks were placed in prominent locations that allowed them to serve as focal points. Common greens, parks, plazas, and markets allowed people to gather and socialize.



Pompeii, Italy



Paris, France



New York City, New York



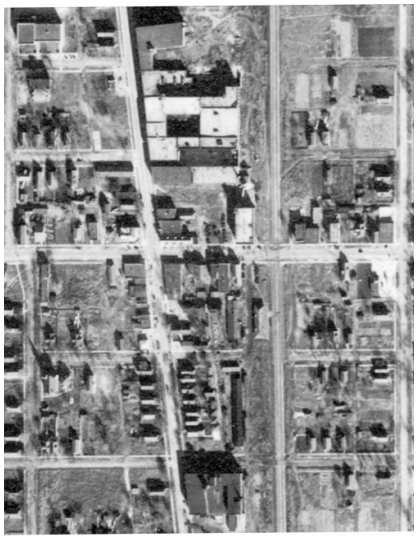
Albemarle, North Carolina

Form-Based Codes

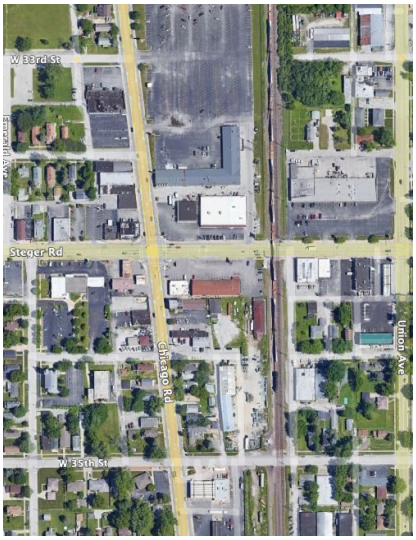
Time-tested Development Pattern

After WWII, like many American cities, commercial development began to relocate along major highways and downtown areas began taking steps to compete with the new automobile-centered lifestyle. Unfortunately, in many cases that transition involved the demolition of historic buildings and addition of parking lots and shopping centers. The result is that once urban, walkable downtown areas are now dominated by parking lots, wide roadways, and fast-moving automobile traffic.

Studying historic aerial images illustrate the shift that took place in many downtowns. Figure-ground illustrations show building footprints in black and are a useful tool used by urban planners to demonstrate the impact the auto-centric development pattern has had on downtowns.



1938 Historic Aerial Image



2018 Google Earth Aerial Image

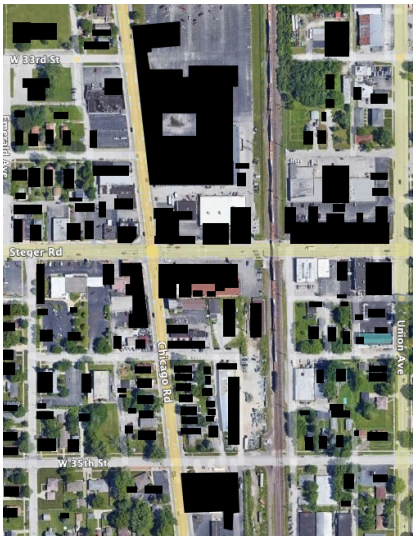


Figure-Ground Illustration

Post-WWII development has damaged the fabric of downtowns across the country. Sometimes this occurs on a few parcels, and other times entire blocks were redeveloped. Strategies can be taken to begin stitching the fabric back together, but the only way to truly repair the integrity of the downtown is through proper building form and development. Updating the city's zoning, codes, and ordinances ensures that development follows the correct pattern moving forward.

In order to reverse the current trajectory and return to a walkable, urban downtown, the city should implement policies such as Form-Based Codes to guide future development in the district.



A suburban-style convenience store was built in the center the traditional downtown. Form-Based Codes would have ensured the development was built in a manner that complemented the surrounding context.

3

downtown strategies

DESIGN



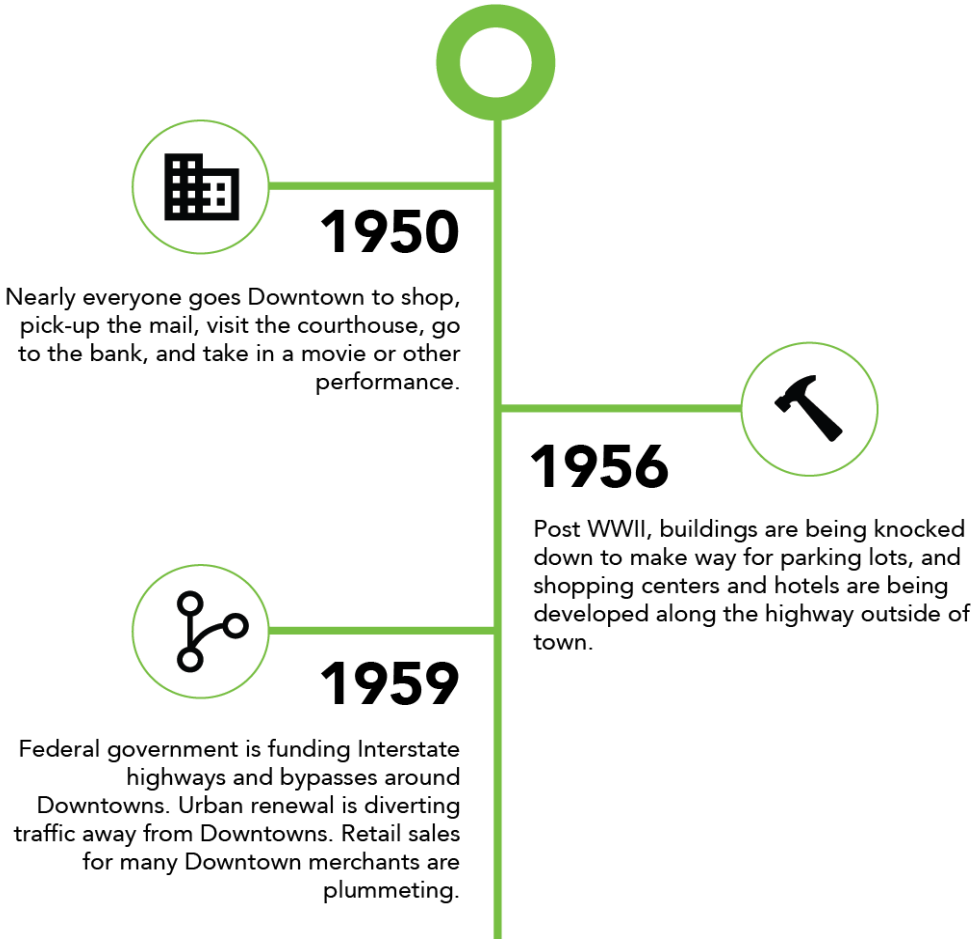
Thoughtful design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

DESIGN

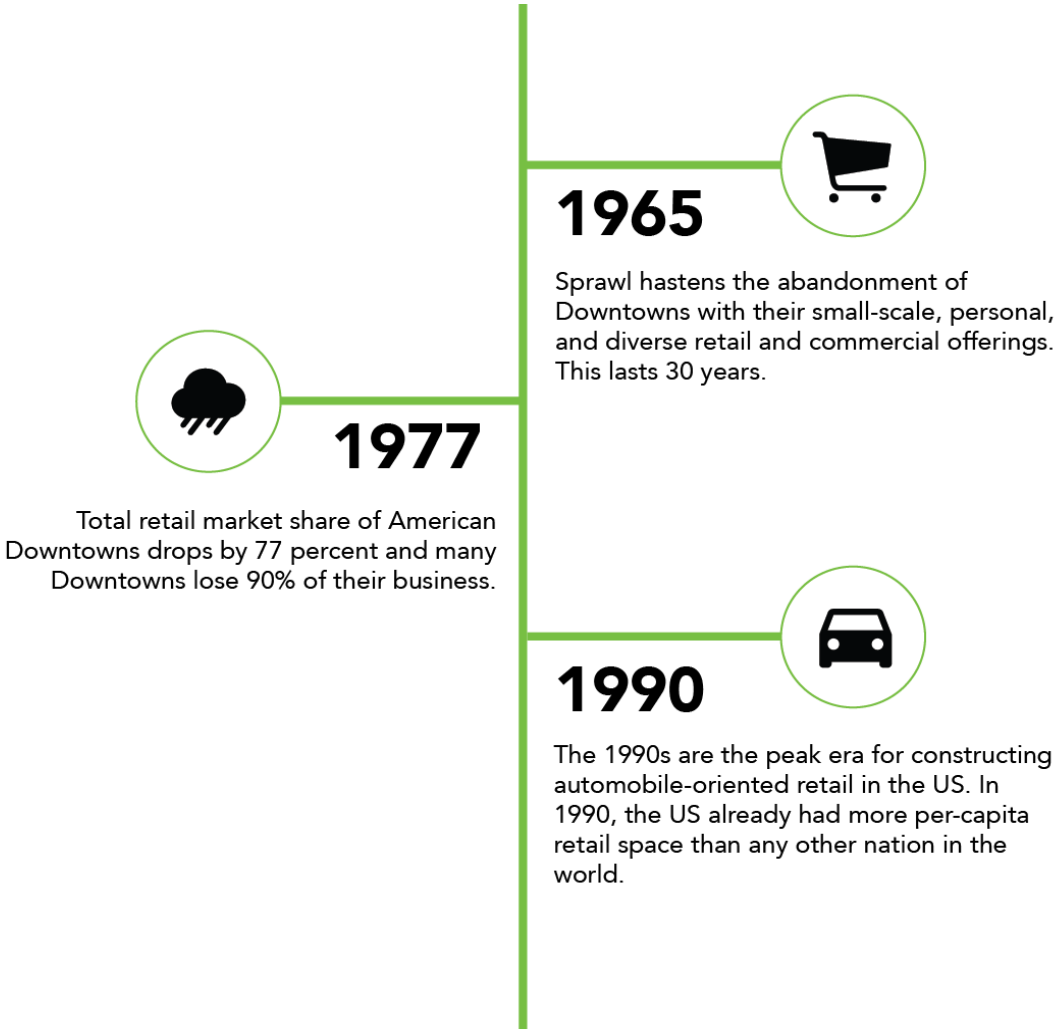
downtown strategies

History of America's Downtowns

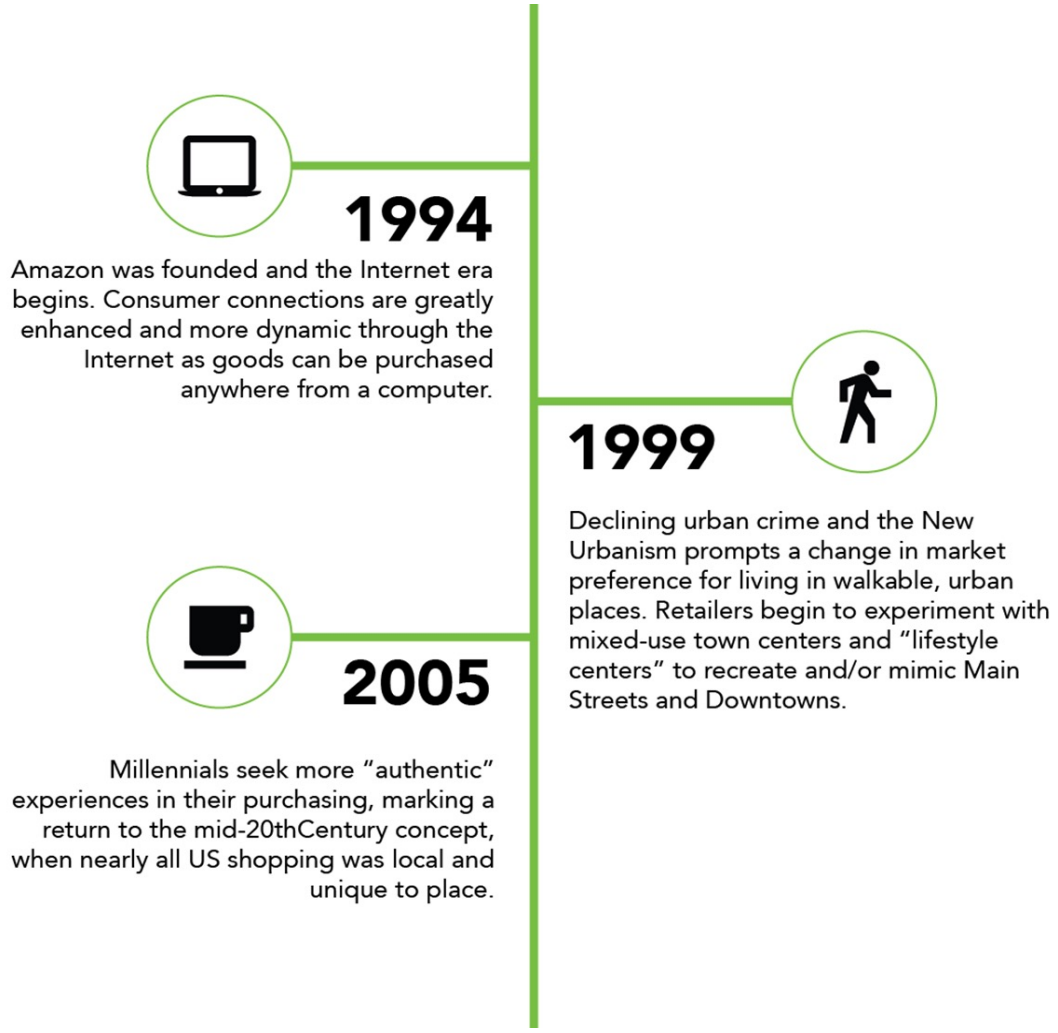
As we seek to redevelop and revitalize our Downtowns to their original vitality and significance, it's important to recognize how Downtowns functioned decades away, and how we got to this shift in perspective and priority.



History of America's Downtowns



History of America's Downtowns



History of America's Downtowns

2008

Nation's economy goes into a tailspin and banks stop lending for new construction. Consumers change their shopping patterns and take pride in finding bargains and being "thrifty."

2015

E-commerce amounts to 7% of total retail sales and is increasing. Value shopping is the new norm rather than the exception, and many national brands that overbuilt in the 21st century are closing stores.

2019

Consumers expect convenience, Millennials still seek experiential retail and authenticity and prioritize walkability and connectivity, and retiring Boomers with buying power are moving back to city cores, paving the way for Downtowns to support independent retailers and take back market share.

History of America's Downtowns

2020

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted everyday life around the world. In the beginning lockdowns and quarantines forced a new way of life working from home through virtual platforms and focusing on locally owned businesses. Shop local campaigns became a survival tactic as citizens rallied to support mom-and-pop businesses in their own neighborhoods and communities.

Downtowns adapted to the ever-changing shopping habits of consumers. Curbside pickup, outdoor dining, omni-channel retail, adoption of technology, and other trends helped businesses survive the early days of the pandemic.

Post Pandemic

As life begins to return to the new-normal following the height of the pandemic, some trends and habits remain. Customers continue to value convenience, which includes mobile ordering, curbside pickup, delivery services, as well as quick service and casual dining restaurants. Both national retailers and local businesses are adopting these once temporary strategies as long-term shopping trends.

The pandemic brought a renewed sense of community pride and appreciation for supporting local. Citizens of all generations now value a high quality of life in all aspects of their lives, which is causing a shift toward small towns.

Gateways & Corridors

Enhancing Downtown Gateways

Gateways define the edge and entryways into a city or Downtown and create a theme or signature element to notify travelers of this change.

Gateway elements should **identify key entries into the Downtown**, convey a sense of identity for the community, and provide information to the public.

Gateway treatments can be provided in a variety of styles and can vary at each entry point. **Large monuments or signage** can be used to indicate entry into the Downtown, or treatments as simple as signage or **changes to the roadbed**, such as stained and stamped crosswalks, street art, or a road diet.

Landscaping and plantings, structures, or lighting can also be used to provide visual transition points within the Downtown as well as with adjacent or interior districts.





Often the treatments begin with simple elements and increase the elements as visitors arrive closer to the downtown core.

A great short-term enhancement is to install banners on existing utility poles. Banners are often seen in the downtown area, but strategically placing them along major corridors can expand the downtown brand and entice visitors to continue along the corridor into downtown.

As visitors arrive into the downtown area, key gateways can be created at major intersections and thresholds in the district. Gateways announce key nodes along the downtown boundary. Short-term treatments can include landscaping, banners, sculpture/public art, murals, and signage. Over time larger investments can be made in roadway enhancements, public art, entry signage, gateway structures, and other treatments.

Gateways & Corridors

Downtown Clayton Gateways, Corridors, & Nodes





Clayton has created an attractive and inviting entry along the Main Street corridor with American flags placed at regular intervals and colorful custom "Think Clayton" banners along utility poles. These treatments should serve as a template for major corridors connecting Highway 70 and the downtown core





Views such as this along major gateway corridors into the downtown area should be screened from view. Work with the property owners to explore options for relocating, cleaning, organizing, or screening storage and equipment areas.

Gateways & Corridors

Downtown Clayton Gateways, Corridors, & Nodes

Recommendation

Expand and enhance the gateway entry experience between Highway 70 and the downtown core.

- Add flags or banners to utility poles along East Main Street beginning at the Highway 70 intersection.
- Add "Historic Downtown Clayton" directional signage at the intersection of Highway 70 and Lombard Street.
- Consider painting and landscaping the Highway 70 overpass bridge along the Lombard Street corridor.
- Add flags or banners to utility poles along the Lombard Street corridor beginning at the Highway 70 intersection to Main Street.
- Work with the property owners along major downtown entry corridors to explore options for relocating, cleaning, organizing, or screening unsightly storage and equipment areas.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Main Street

NCDOT or Local Control?

Downtown Clayton is a linear downtown with a strong core oriented along Main Street. The Main Street corridor is relatively narrow which creates a quaint, small-scale environment, but creates challenges with streetscape enhancements needed to improve the aesthetics, function, and vibrancy of the downtown area.

Currently Main Street is managed by NC DOT with an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of only 9,000 vehicles. While Main Street continues to be a major corridor for local traffic and activity, most regional traffic occurs on the Highway 70 corridor to the south.

Main Street being managed by the NC DOT limits the local community's ability to improve and enhance the downtown streetscape. Creating a vibrant, walkable environment downtown is difficult without local control of the street design.

The City of Clayton should explore options for working with NC DOT to release control of Main Street to the city. Adding the maintenance responsibilities and costs to the city could be challenging but would allow much greater flexibility and create opportunities for improved streetscape design downtown. One benefit is that Main Street was resurfaced in 2022 which allows the city to adopt a newly updated street surface.

Downtown Clayton desperately needs streetscape enhancements such as curb extensions, improved crosswalks, intersection enhancements, street trees, outdoor dining areas, and other interventions. These interventions are extremely difficult while Main Street is within NC DOT control. Downtown Clayton has the potential to become an economic engine for the city and a hub for small business development and growth. The long-term economic development potential of the downtown area far outweighs the benefits of NC DOT street maintenance.

Recommendation

The City of Clayton should explore options for NC DOT to release control of Main Street to provide opportunities for long-term streetscape enhancements.

DESIGN

Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Sidewalks in an urban environment should incorporate different zones for various streetscape elements and activities. Understanding the zones along a downtown sidewalk allows community leaders to design and create an attractive streetscape and provide a safe, comfortable, and interesting experience for pedestrians.

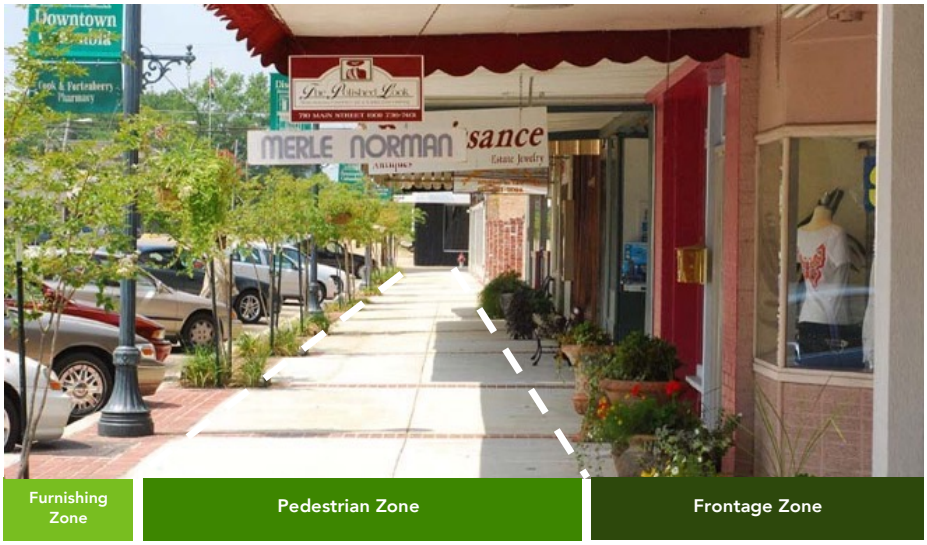
Downtowns are dependent on pedestrian activity and pedestrians experience the downtown along the sidewalk. Ensuring the layout of the sidewalk area is properly designed is an important step to creating an inviting environment for people.

A properly designed downtown sidewalk contains three zones between the building and the street. An additional zone that greatly influences the success of a pedestrian environment is the Parking Zone. This area is between the sidewalk and the traffic lanes along the street.

The three sidewalk zones include:

1. **Frontage Zone:** Area closest to the building
2. **Pedestrian Zone:** Clear area allowing unobstructed pedestrian traffic
3. **Furnishing Zone:** Area closest to the street

** The width of each zone varies depending on the available space.*



DESIGN

downtown strategies

Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Downtown Clayton





The images above illustrate how some business owners in Downtown Clayton are adding vibrancy elements to the sidewalk. The planters and potted plants add activity to the sidewalk and allow the business to express their unique character to visitors.





While the narrow sidewalks limit the area for vibrancy elements, there is tremendous opportunity to add elements such as potted plants, planters, merchandise displays, creative hanging signs, and other items that would add visual interest and activity to the sidewalks.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Frontage Zone

The Frontage Zone is closest to the building along the storefront. This area should be viewed as an outdoor extension of the adjacent business and allow the business owner to add elements and adorn their storefronts. This is a great area for potted plants, sandwich board signs, seating for outdoor dining, and merchandise displays. Occasionally public benches and seating are also located in this zone. This zone adds visual interest and activates the sidewalk.











Pedestrian Zone

The Pedestrian Zone is a clear walkway for pedestrians. This area should be clear of any obstructions and allow pedestrians to easily travel through the downtown area. While the width of the zone will vary, minimum standards exist in order to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A minimum width of 3 feet is standard for a basic sidewalk, however, that width will only accommodate one person walking. Pedestrian Zones in urban environments need a minimum of 5-7 feet and preferably 8-12 feet to provide a comfortable through zone in addition to the overall sidewalk width. A good rule of thumb is to accommodate at least 3 feet per person in the pedestrian zone. So, two sets of couples in a downtown area would need approximately 12 feet to comfortable pass each other.



DESIGN

downtown strategies

Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Furnishing Zone

The Furnishing Zone is adjacent to the curb where additional streetscape elements are located. These elements include items such as street trees, landscape planters, bike racks, trash and recycling receptacles, benches, and lighting. This zone is where the downtown streetscape really comes to life with multiple layers of details and amenities.





Parking Zone

This area is located between the street and the curb and provides an important buffer between the pedestrian activity along the sidewalk and the automobile traffic along the street. Pedestrians do not feel safe when walking directly adjacent to moving automobile traffic so providing a single row of on-street parking (parallel or angled) as a buffer is important.

Recommendation

Ensure that all sidewalks with adequate width in the downtown area accommodate the 3 activity zones. Encourage business owners to activate the Frontage Zone with vibrancy elements in an effort to show activity throughout downtown. The city should continue to add appropriate streetscape elements to the Furnishing Zone.

- Consider creating a Vibrancy Grant Program to incentivize the addition of sidewalk vibrancy elements. These could include outdoor seating, planters, potted plants, exterior lighting, sandwich board signs, etc.
- Add standard streetscape elements along the Furnishing Zone. This should include street trees, decorative streetlights, seating, trash receptacles, etc..

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Curb Extensions

Intersection Enhancement Strategies

Many downtowns have an excessive amount of hardscape and pavement, which has created a very harsh and unattractive environment for pedestrians. While completely redesigning the entire streetscape is likely a long-term strategy, certain areas should be prioritized in the short-term.

Excessive Pavement

Street intersections often represent key nodes for activity in a downtown district. From a safety standpoint, intersections are where pedestrians and cars interact, which can create some concerns. Intersections also present a tremendous opportunity to create a sense of arrival into the downtown area.

While redesigning a street can take careful engineering, interventions for intersections oftentimes involves reclaiming unused space and converting it into planters for landscaping. Curb extensions, sometimes referred to as bulb outs, are landscape planters installed at the corners of intersections. They extend the curb into the street to provide space for softscape elements and street trees.

Curb extensions provide a wide variety of advantages, which include:

- Providing areas for adding green space and landscaping into the downtown area
- Calming and slowing automobile traffic creating a safer environment for pedestrians
- Shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians
- Providing visual cues for drivers to signal the arrival into a special district

The long list of long-term streetscape modifications needed in a downtown can be daunting, but addressing the wasted, unused space at the intersections is a great starting point. The installation of curb extensions should be a prioritized as one of the first modifications to the streets.



Hint: Look for areas of the street that are striped off to limit automobile access or not intended to be used by drivers. These areas are found at intersections and at the end of parking rows.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Curb Extensions

Intersection Enhancement Strategies

Downtown Clayton



Conceptually there are several opportunities to incorporate curb extensions at the end of parking rows and curb cuts along Main Street and the adjacent streets throughout Downtown Clayton. The Master Plan team will likely include design concepts for similar streetscape enhancements.





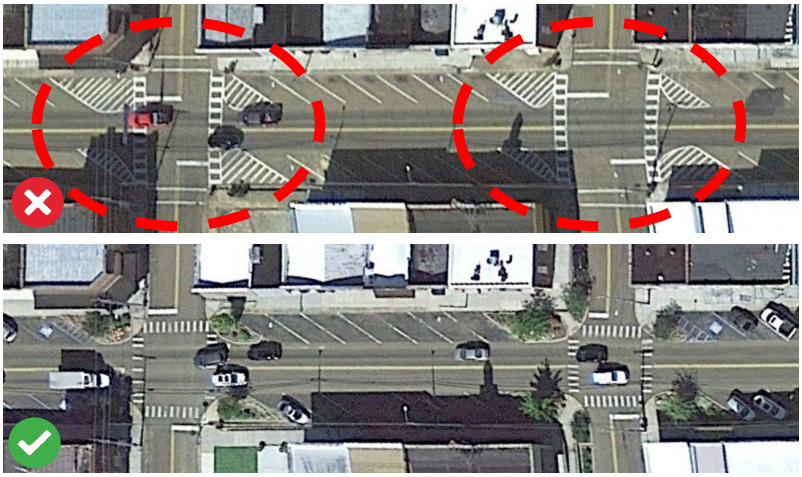
More detailed design is necessary, but the images above illustrate potential areas for reclaiming unused hardscape space at the ends of parking rows, curb cuts, and intersections. Many of these areas are bordered by a yellow curb and are unusable by automobiles. These spaces provide opportunities for curb extension treatments for streetscape elements or the addition of street trees and landscaping.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Curb Extensions

Intersection Enhancement Strategies



Senatobia, Mississippi, like many downtowns, had a tremendous amount of excess pavement. Large amounts of pavement near the intersections were striped not to be used for any purpose. This wasted space served no purpose and created a harsh environment in the downtown area.

The striped areas were converted into curb extensions which provided space for landscaping and street trees, while calming vehicular traffic and shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians.



Before (top): The excessive amount of pavement, lack of landscaping and street trees created a harsh environment.

After (bottom): Removing the unused areas of pavement near the intersections provided space for landscaping and street trees. The curb extensions provide visual cues to drivers as they approach the intersections and create a gateway into the downtown area.



By recapturing unused space at the intersection, Downtown Gulfport, Mississippi was able to add furnishings such as benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles in the area provided by the curb extensions. This additional area for amenities and landscaping can be extremely helpful in downtowns with narrow sidewalks and limited space.

Recommendation

Incrementally reclaim areas with excess, unused pavement by adding curb extensions with green space and softscape. These areas can also provide opportunities for outdoor seating and the placement of streetscape amenities.

Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Given the amount of pedestrian traffic present in a downtown area, it is important that intersections are treated as special spaces since they are where pedestrians and vehicular traffic interact.

A variety of treatments can be installed to ensure that intersections are clearly visible to automobiles, provide a safe crossing area for pedestrians, and create an attractive node for the downtown area. Intersection treatments can range from basic striping to more advanced custom paver designs. All levels of treatments are acceptable and will work to enhance the safety and sense of place of the downtown.

At a minimum, ensure that all intersections in the downtown area are properly striped with crosswalks and signage where necessary. This is important to alert pedestrians and drivers that special attention should be paid to this area.

Basic Striped Crosswalks

A basic crosswalk is completely acceptable. White street paint should be used because it is more aesthetically pleasing than yellow "caution" paint. Basic street paint can be an immediate, low-cost option, but thermoplastic road marking material will have a much longer lifespan.





Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Painted and Interactive Art Crosswalks

A common trend is to use crosswalks as an opportunity to incorporate public art and creative displays into the downtown area. These can range from a mural-type project to creative 3D optical illusion treatments. Painted crosswalks can have a tremendous impact with a modest budget. The lifespan of painted crosswalks will likely be less than 5 years depending on traffic volume.



Photograph via Hattiesburg (Mississippi) Pocket Museum





Photograph by Rafael Perez Martinez

Stamped Asphalt or Paver Crosswalks

Advancements with stamped asphalt techniques have provide a variety of cost-effective options for crosswalk and intersection treatments. While not a long-term material, this treatment can provide the look of pavers at a fraction of the cost. Be aware that the lifespan for stamped asphalt is likely less than 10 years depending on the volume of traffic.

While paver crosswalks are more costly, they are a long-term material, make a visual impact on the downtown, and create a quaint sense of place. A simple white border painted along the edges provide contrast making the pavers more visible.







Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Raised Crosswalks

In order to clearly signal to drivers that pedestrians are prioritized in the area, raised crosswalks are an appropriate alternative. These crosswalks are raised to the same level as the sidewalk creating a level crossing for pedestrians. This forces automobiles to slowly drive up and over the pedestrian crossing, causing them to slow to a safe speed, rather than pedestrians stepping down into the automobile-focused street.





Intersection Treatments

More advanced treatments expand into the entire intersection rather than simply focusing on the crosswalks. Intersection treatments range from short-term, low budget options to advanced, higher cost alternatives.

Painted Intersection

Some communities have used street paint to create bold statements throughout their downtown intersections. Similar to the painted crosswalks, the entire intersection can be used as a canvas for public art. With paint, the possibilities are endless and can range from a simple logo to a large mural. The lifespan of painted intersections will likely be less than 5 years depending on traffic volume.





Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Stamped Asphalt or Paver Intersections

Creative treatments with pavers have become more popular in recent years. Pavers mimic historic materials commonly found in downtown streets and create an appealing visual character. Paver treatments can vary from simple pavers to patterns and inlayed logos. These treatments are costly but provide visitors with a very high-quality impression of the downtown area. Pavers are a long-lasting material, but costly. Stamped asphalt can be used as an alternative but will likely have a lifespan of less than 10 years.





DESIGN

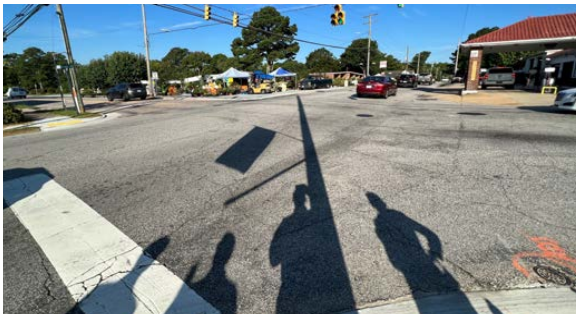
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Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

The linear nature of Downtown Clayton creates the need for traffic calming interventions and creating a better sense of connection between the western and eastern boundaries of the downtown area. Currently the only Main Street intersections fully painted with crosswalks are the Fayetteville Street, Church Street, and Lombard Street intersections. Long distances between marked intersections make the blocks seem much longer for pedestrians and encourage vehicular traffic to travel at higher speeds.

Using street paintings and crosswalks to create the illusion of shorter downtown blocks will greatly enhance the aesthetics of Main Street and create a more walkable environment.





Recommendation

Install short-term intersection enhancements and street paintings to calm vehicular traffic, create safer environment for pedestrians, and visually break up the distance between intersections. These strategies could include street paintings, intersection treatments, and creative crosswalks.

- Full intersection enhancements should be installed at the major downtown intersections along Main Street.
  - First Phase
    - Church Street and Lombard Street
  - Second Phase
    - O'Neil Street, Fayetteville Street
  - Third Phase
    - Robertson Street and Smith Street
- Minor street paintings should be installed at non-controlled intersections such as East First Street, Barbour Street, and South Ellington Street.
- Explore options for adding pedestrian crossing signals to major intersections.

Key Streetscape Amenities

Downtown Clayton must plan for the addition of various streetscape elements as resources allow. Streetscape elements can begin small and simple such as a few benches, but other features can be layered in over time. The layers of streetscape elements create an interesting and comfortable environment for people creating a vibrant downtown. Examples of streetscape elements are included below.





Existing Conditions in Clayton, North Carolina

Key Streetscape Amenities

Narrow Streets and Sidewalks

The narrow width of Main Street and the adjacent sidewalks create challenges for adding streetscape elements such as outdoor seating, street trees, and other amenities. Downtowns around the country face similar challenges but use small-scale interventions to create an attractive and inviting downtown streetscape. The use of textured paving, curb extensions, planters, hanging baskets, and other elements combine to create a quaint, welcoming environment.



Breckenridge, Colorado



Del Ray Beach, Florida

Key Streetscape Amenities

Utility Lines

The overhead utility lines in Downtown Clayton present a significant challenge for improving the aesthetics of Main Street. The lines give the downtown a cluttered appearance and limit improvements such as street trees. The cost of relocating lines underground or to side streets is extreme. Occasionally utility companies can consolidate lines, remove unused lines, and work to reduce the overall number of overhead lines.

Seating

Benches and other outdoor seating options not only provide resting places for people in your commercial district while they socialize or wait, but also offer a visual cue to drivers and potential pedestrians alike that a street puts people first. Bench placement is as important as design—locate them at regular intervals in places where people will feel comfortable sitting on them (e.g. not next to a trash receptacle). Moveable seating options, on the other hand, make it easier for people to find their own perfect placement, creating impromptu gathering spaces in plazas or parks.

Street Lighting

Street lighting is a key organizing streetscape element that defines the nighttime visual environment in urban settings. Street lighting includes roadway and pedestrian lighting in the public right-of-way. Streetlight poles and fixtures can also create a defining visual characteristic during daylight hours.

The existing streetlights have a simple, industrial style and do not add to the character of the downtown area. As resources allow, streetlights should be converted to the streetlights used at Horne Square.





Banners

Banners create visual interest in the streetscape, help support the district's image and events, and promote community pride. Banner design should be consistent with the Main Street brand and the overall design vision for the commercial district to create a consistent and cohesive visual. To create an opportunity for public engagement, install temporary banners that have been designed locally or voted on by community members.

The existing banners placed throughout the downtown area are an excellent example of using banners to add color and succinctly promote the downtown brand.



Key Streetscape Amenities

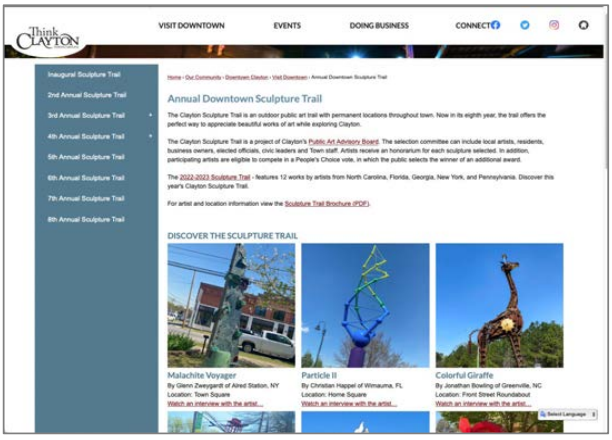
Trash Receptacles

Well-maintained and well-placed trash receptacles are essential to a clean and attractive Main Street. If people have to walk more than half a block to throw away trash, most will not do it. Trash bags should be simple for sanitation workers to remove yet be secure and resistant to vandalism and wind.

Public Art

Artwork in public spaces can help create a distinct sense of place and offer an excellent opportunity to engage the community and support local artists. In some cases, they can even be a traffic calming measure or "mental speed bump," as placemaking expert David Engwicht describes them. The Clayton Sculpture Trail is an excellent example of incorporating 3D artwork into the downtown streetscape.





Water Features

Fountains and other water features can add interesting and engaging visual elements to a public space. They not only add a calming auditory element to your streetscape but can actually mask or cover up unwanted noise.

Charging Stations & Public Wi-Fi

Offering free charging stations and free WiFi is a good way to get people to come and spend time in your community's public spaces. Providing WiFi as an amenity can facilitate social interaction during some solitary activities, support communities during disasters, promote tourism throughout the town, and allow users to easily research Main Street destinations and access online services at all times.

Key Streetscape Amenities

Planters and Hanging Baskets

Plants add color and vibrancy to a streetscape, create insect habitats, and help mitigate stormwater runoff. Incorporating edible plants can also make the planters a source of fresh fruits and vegetables for local restaurants or residents. Consult with botanists and gardeners in your community to help identify the plants that will thrive in your climate and setting. Before planting, be sure to have a maintenance plan in place and a dedicated agency or volunteer group who will take care of the plants and flowers on schedule.

Family-friendly Amenities

Providing family-friendly amenities, such as recreational facilities, playgrounds, and splash pads, can make your commercial district a fun and engaging place for all ages. Providing pet-friendly amenities, such as water bowls and connections to dog parks or dog runs, can also encourage people to stay and hang out.



Outdoor Dining

One of the easiest ways the private sector can contribute to creating a more vibrant commercial district is by providing outdoor dining options. Outdoor seating, tables, and advertising (e.g. sandwich boards) give the impression that something is going on in the district, while providing an additional safety measure by adding more eyes on the street. When outdoor seating is allowed, seating areas need to be wide enough to be comfortable, while at the same time not hindering the flow of pedestrian traffic.



Small outdoor dining at in Albemarle, North Carolina



Example of outdoor dining activating the sidewalk in Williamsburg, Virginia

Key Streetscape Amenities

Parklets

Outdoor dining is a critical element in creating a vibrant downtown, but some sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate seating areas. Converting an on-street parking space into a parklet allows the restaurant to expand their capacity and add activity to the streetscape. Parklets are being used around the country to create unique outdoor spaces and create a sense of place that attracts visitors to the downtown area. The loss of a single parking space is a small sacrifice for the added amenity.

Parklets range from temporary installations to semi-permanent structures that can be moved and relocated to different areas.







Key Streetscape Amenities

Bicycle Infrastructure

As the greenway and trail system is expanded to the downtown core, bicycle infrastructure should be added throughout the area. In addition to bike racks, a bicycle repair station should be added in a central location. These stations include a pump and tools needed for basic bicycle repair.





Recommendation

Begin upgrading the streetscape environment of Downtown Clayton by adding streetscape elements incrementally while working toward the long-term vision outlined in the Downtown Master Plan.

- Continue adding street furniture such as benches and trash receptacles throughout downtown. Trash receptacles should be located at each intersection. Benches should be placed on each block at a minimum.
- Continue the use of the multi-colored custom banners throughout downtown area.
- Add free mobile device charging stations to Horne Square.
- Add a bicycle repair stand to Horne Square
- Partner with a local downtown restaurant to pilot a parklet project.
- Work with the local utility providers to develop a plan for consolidating utility lines, opportunities for relocating lines, removing unused lines, and adding order to the downtown network.
- Expand the use of the decorative streetlights used at Horne Square throughout downtown as resources allow.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Placemaking through Ambient Lighting

Appropriate ambient lighting enhances safety and visibility in a Downtown area but also provides a welcoming environment that attracts visitors and residents and begins to establish the area as a destination.

Process of installing ambient lighting

Typically, property owners must provide an easement, or sign a waiver, allowing the City or community organization access to their roof or fascia to install the equipment. LED lights are ideal, and metal brackets and clips can be fashioned for longevity to hold string lights. Lights should be tied into the street lighting system for automatic activation each evening.







Recommendation

Explore opportunities for the town or CDDA to utilize string lights as a short-term strategy to activate an underutilized area downtown.

Street Trees

Street trees are a crucial streetscape element in downtown districts and serve a multitude of purposes. Most importantly they provide shade during the summer months and soften the appearance of urban areas.

Street Tree Characteristics

In addition to shade, visually street trees provide a vertical element which helps create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians. Other benefits include a reduction of stormwater runoff and the impact heat island effect in urban environments. It is critical that the correct species of street trees are selected so they do not negatively impact downtown businesses and pedestrians.

Characteristics of appropriate street trees include:

- *Once mature, canopies should remain above the storefronts*
- *Species should be medium/large-sized, single-trunk, and deciduous*
- *Should not produce undesirable fruit (Example: female Ginko)*
- *Mature canopies should not interfere with adjacent buildings, utility lines, lighting, etc.*
- *Some species can provide seasonal color through their foliage*



Mature street trees in Alexandria, Virginia tower above the storefronts to provide shade and a tremendous pedestrian-scale atmosphere in downtown area.

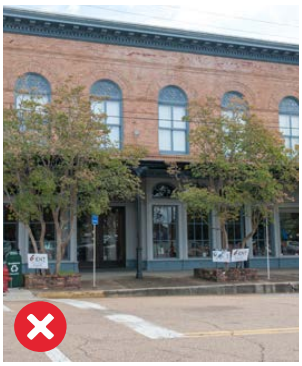
While the characteristics of appropriate street trees are universal, recommendations for specific species will vary depending on site conditions and the location within the hardiness zones. (USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map: https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov)

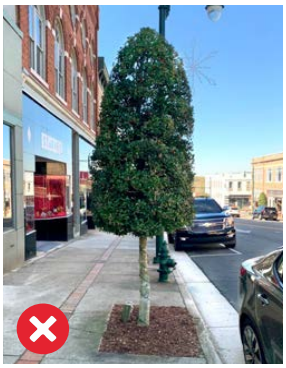
DESIGN

downtown strategies

Street Trees

Appropriate vs Inappropriate Species





Inappropriate street tree species have low canopies that block views to storefronts and provide little or no shade for the area.



Appropriate species of street trees should have a mature canopy that rise above storefronts in order to provide shade to pedestrians and frame views to the buildings.



Certain tree species provide additional benefits of seasonal color through their foliage or flowers.



No matter what tree species is chosen, placing trees at regular intervals to create repetition is key to creating a place that is inviting for people.

Recommendation

Install street trees that will provide a canopy throughout the downtown streetscape. Trees should be placed at regular intervals to create repetition along the streets and sidewalks wherever possible.

- Identify species that will create a canopy, but remail below the utility lines.
- Replace existing shrub-like trees with appropriate species.
- Utilize curb extensions as planting areas to reduce the impact of the overhead utility lines.
- Add additional street trees and landscaping as long-term streetscape and infrastructure enhancements occur.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Street Trees

Starkville, MS

In 2010, Downtown Starkville, Mississippi made the seemingly controversial decision to replace the undersized Holly trees with a more appropriate species of Maple. After over ten years of growth, the trees have grown to provide an attractive canopy and seasonal color which softens the large amount of hardscape in the area. While it was a difficult decision to remove established plant material, the long-term benefits of the appropriate replacement tree species outweighed the challenges.

The new species have a canopy that is above the storefronts, provide shade to the sidewalk and parking areas, and provide seasonal color through the foliage. Due to limitations with the existing planters, the trees must be replaced occasionally, but the results provide a positive return on that investment.



The Holly shrubs added much needed "green" to the downtown but provided no additional benefits to the district.



While still maturing, appropriate tree species offer a much larger canopy and provide numerous benefits to the streetscape.



In 2010, the mature Holly shrubs provided no visual impact or benefits to the downtown area.



After 10 years of growth, the new trees have grown to provide shade, overhead canopy, and a dramatic visual impact along Main Street.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Test Before You Invest

Utilize short-term and temporary design strategies

The Downtown Clayton Master Plan currently being produced will establish a long-term vision for Downtown Clayton. Many of the infrastructure and streetscape recommendations will require tremendous resources and take time to implement. While funding sources are being identified and more detailed designs are being considered, the city should explore various design alternatives utilizing the principles of Tactical Urbanism (http://tacticalurbanismguide.com) and Better Block (https://www.betterblock.org).

These organizations utilize temporary and short-term strategies to test infrastructure changes, streetscape enhancements, and other ideas before making long-term (and permanent) changes. The concept of "Test before you invest," allows the city, organizations, and volunteer groups to quickly test ideas in low-risk, low-cost situations.

Painted crosswalks and intersections; temporary landscaping; outdoor dining areas; parklets; on-street parking; vacant lot activation; and pop-up retail shops are components of Tactical Urbanism and Better Block principles.





Examples of utilizing short-term materials such as hay bales, paint, and temporary landscaping to test streetscape enhancements.

Recommendation

Utilize principles of Tactical Urbanism and Better Block to test concepts outlined in the Downtown Strategies Strategic Plan and the Downtown Clayton Master Plan.

Selfie Wall

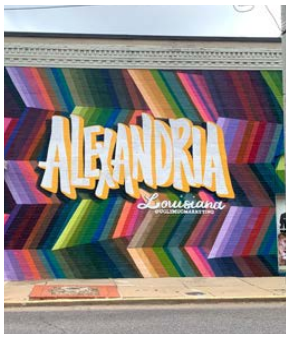
Engagement Art

"Selfie walls" are an exciting trend in communities around the country. Aimed at engaging people, particularly the younger generations, and generating traffic via social media, selfie walls are murals that encourage visitors to take selfie photos. Often, they are very simple in design and display the community or district name or an inspirational message. These installations can generate a buzz on social media and serve as a destination for visitors traveling nearby.

Corinth, Mississippi enlisted the services of a local artist to design an interactive mural in a prominent location downtown in order to attract and encourage engagement from visitors. The mural featured a Coca Cola theme which is a nod to Corinth's history as one of the first bottling locations in Mississippi. The pouring of the bottle encourages visitors to interact with the mural in photographs. The artist also included a hashtag message "#enjoycorinth" which encourages visitors to include that hashtag in their social media posts. This allows community leaders to easily monitor social media traffic related to the mural which gives them insight into the typical audience visiting the location.









Examples of Selfie Walls or "Welcome" murals in other communities. These types of murals encourage engagement from visitors, evoke community pride, and illustrate that downtown is a special place.

Recommendation

Explore opportunities for a simple Clayton-themed (Think Clayton) selfie-wall or "Welcome" mural in a highly visible location in the downtown area.

Partner with local artisans with experience painting exterior murals to ensure the design and execution of the project is high quality.

DESIGN

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Appropriate Storefront Design

Create a Welcoming Front Door

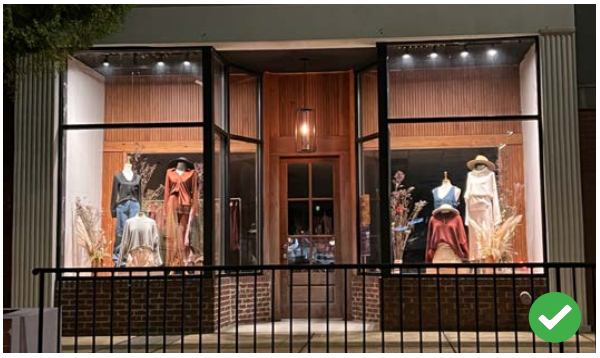
It is important for downtown sidewalks to appear active and vibrant. As discussed in the "Sidewalk Zones" recommendation, the activation of the **Furnishing Zone** is typically managed by the city or community development organization. The activation of the **Frontage Zone** is typically the responsibility of the business owners. Adding potted plants, sandwich board signs, merchandise displays, outdoor seating, etc. create an active and vibrant sidewalk.

Another critical component of creating a vibrant and active sidewalk experience are the business storefronts. As visitors walk the sidewalks of downtown, their attention is kept by "window shopping" in the various storefront windows. Every storefront should be transparent allowing visitors to view inside the business. This visibility increases the comfort of visitors, makes them feel safe, and allows them to explore what is inside each building. Being able to view inside the business adds some predictability and trust which works to entice them to enter the building. People want to have a clue as to what is inside before entering.

Solid, mirrored, and tinted windows and closed storefronts do not allow visitors to see inside the businesses which creates a negative experience for pedestrians. Storefronts should have doors and display windows that are transparent and styles that are appropriate for a historic downtown area.

Storefronts should include characteristics such as:

- Utilize historically appropriate design styles, materials, and character
- Transparent windows and doors
- Historically appropriate doors
- Interesting and visually interesting storefront displays
- Identifiable signage and hours of operation



Despite being after hours, this storefront is well lit and creates an inviting atmosphere. The display is simple, but well organized with elements at varying heights.



The stationary store, Merrymaker, in the Carytown neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia, created a simple but attractive storefront display along with a sandwich board sign.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Appropriate Storefront Design

Create a Welcoming Front Door



Even non-retail businesses such as this real estate office provides a well-lit view into the space along with an inviting storefront, potted plants, seasonal decorations, and seating.



The storefront of this coffeeshop opens to create an indoor-outdoor experience for customers. This also allures people passing by providing a view into the interior space.



This bookstore uses an interesting paint palette on the historically accurate storefront along with a creative window display to attract customers.



Service industries such as a hair salon can also create an interesting window display that adds to the character and appeal of the downtown area.



The addition of outdoor seating is one of the best ways to activate the sidewalk and create an interesting experience along the storefront.



This storefront is well lit, has an interesting window display, pedestrian scale signage, and added vibrancy to the sidewalk with planters.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Appropriate Storefront Design

Create a Welcoming Front Door



Curtains covering the storefront windows creates an uninviting environment downtown. Moving the curtain back 2-3' could shade the interior but provide a backdrop for a window display.



Curtains should not block views into the interior space. If curtains are necessary, they should be used as a background for a window display.



Solid security doors are not appropriate in downtown storefronts.



Downtown storefront windows should not be tinted. Views into the interior space should be encouraged and highlighted with a window display.



Doors and windows should not be blocked with posters or signage in a downtown area. These types of posters do not add to the character of downtown.



The tremendous amount of merchandise displayed in this storefront appears chaotic and cluttered. Displays should be organized and curated to show a sampling of merchandise.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Appropriate Storefront Design

Create a Welcoming Front Door



This storefront display contains a tremendous amount of merchandise but does not appear cluttered. The well curated display uses seasonally themed elements and colors to unify the display.



This retail storefront creates an interesting display using balloons and merchandise.



Curtains or a temporary wall can create privacy or shade while serving as a backdrop for window displays.



Streamers or ribbon can be an inexpensive strategy for creating a background for window displays and adding separation from the interior space.

Recommendation

Encourage business and property owners to:

- Remove mirrored, reflective, or tinted glass treatments on storefront windows and doors.
- Remove blinds, shades, or curtains from storefront windows.
- Update storefronts to include historically appropriate windows, doors, and materials.
- Install creative, interesting, and vibrant window displays.
- Work with business owners to properly light their storefront displays to create a nighttime atmosphere downtown.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Rather than viewing vacant storefronts as a negative, use them as a canvas for public art or other creative displays. These displays can distract visitors from the vacancy, create an attraction, and provide an opportunity to highlight something unique about your community.



Vacant storefronts are an inevitable challenge in every downtown. Some are only vacant for a short period of time while others seem to linger for decades. While storefront vacancies provide a great opportunity for a new business, visually they create challenges for the downtown areas and quickly turn into an eyesore.

It is important for community leaders to take an active role in managing downtown vacancies and working with property owners to ensure they are constantly attempting to promote and fill their storefronts. In the meantime, however, it is critical for communities to develop short-term strategies for maintaining vacant storefronts so they do not detract from the character of the downtown or negatively impact surrounding properties.

Short-term strategies that can lessen the impact of storefront vacancies could include:

- "Opportunity" listing posters
- Paint Boarded Storefronts and Upper Floor Windows
- Temporary Gallery Displays
- Know the Locals Posters
- Large-scale Banner Displays

Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

"Opportunity" Listing Posters

Rather than a simple "For Sale" or "For Lease" sign purchased at the local hardware store, a coordinated effort to market the vacant buildings can create a totally different perception of the downtown. Custom, branded posters advertising the vacant properties as "Full of Opportunity" will provide a great alternative to standard sale or lease signs. This message shifts the narrative from a negative empty storefront to a story in the making. What could happen in this space? Who will be the next entrepreneur to start a new adventure here? When visitors see these signs throughout the downtown area, it is apparent that there is an organized effort to generate activity in the downtown area and provides a totally different impression than seeing for sale signs throughout the downtown.



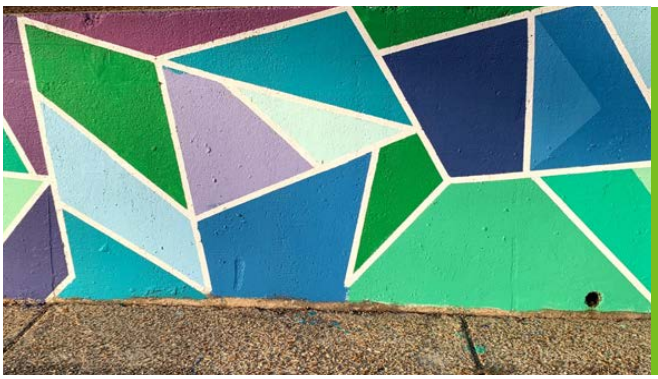
Paint Boarded Storefronts and Upper-floor Windows

Nothing gives the impression of a dying downtown worse than boarded up storefronts and windows. Visitors assume this is indicative of a struggling community with issues related to vandalism and crime. Short-term action can be taken to prevent that type of impression on visitors. Use the plywood as a canvas to create a public art project. Oftentimes local art teachers or artist can be engaged in this short-term strategy. Rather than painting upper floor windows beige, use solid black to mimic an actual window. Light colors often bring attention to the boarded-up or bricked windows while black is not as noticeable. Of course, artwork is welcome on the upper floor windows as well when possible.









Hint: If you do not have access to an artist, use painters' tape, 3-4 paint colors, and a paint-by-number approach to create a geometric mosaic. Add a public engagement component by engaging children who can easily participate in this type of artwork.

Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Temporary Gallery Displays

Work with the property owners to use the vacant storefront as a temporary gallery space. Use easels to display artwork from local artists or students. Students will love seeing their artwork displayed and the display may also attract family members to the downtown area.

Another option is to print oversized historic photographs of the town and display them in the storefront. This will allow people to appreciate the beauty of the downtown area and the buildings. Pipe-and-drape systems or simple drop cloths can be used as a backdrop for the displays and screen the rest of the vacant property from view.





Know the Locals Posters

Another creative strategy is to use the vacant storefronts as a canvas for telling the story of your community. What is the history of the building? Who are the interesting characters in your community? Who are the business owners that are an important piece of the downtown fabric? Develop custom posters that tell those stories and display them in the vacant storefront windows. These could feature local residents, business owners, or other interesting stories. The posters should include a photograph and a brief quote.

This type of campaign could utilize a theme of "Did you Know?" or "My Why." A poster could include a historic photograph and tell the story of the building such as,

> *"Did you know that 100 Main Street was originally a hospital? The Washington County Hospital was located on this site from 1879-1923…"*

Another poster could include a portrait and tell the story of why a local business owner chose to locate in your downtown:

> *"I have been baking since I was a kid and have always dreamed of opening a bakery. My 'why' is because downtown is the heart of this community and I want to be a part of the next chapter of this community's story."*

Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Large-scale Banner Displays

A longer-term strategy is to install custom billboard-type signage across the storefronts. This is particularly useful in situations where the building is in a state of extreme disrepair. Laurel, Mississippi created large display banners celebrating famous members from the community. The banners disguise the dilapidated building and provide an opportunity to create a tourism attraction by promoting the unique stories of the community.


Before


Detail



After

Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Downtown Clayton





Recommendation

Use vacant storefronts to display art, creative displays, or promotional material that tell the story of downtown. Work with property owners to implement short-term improvement strategies in vacant storefronts. Partner with the local arts organization to organize displays of local artwork in vacant storefronts.

Connecting the Trail Systems

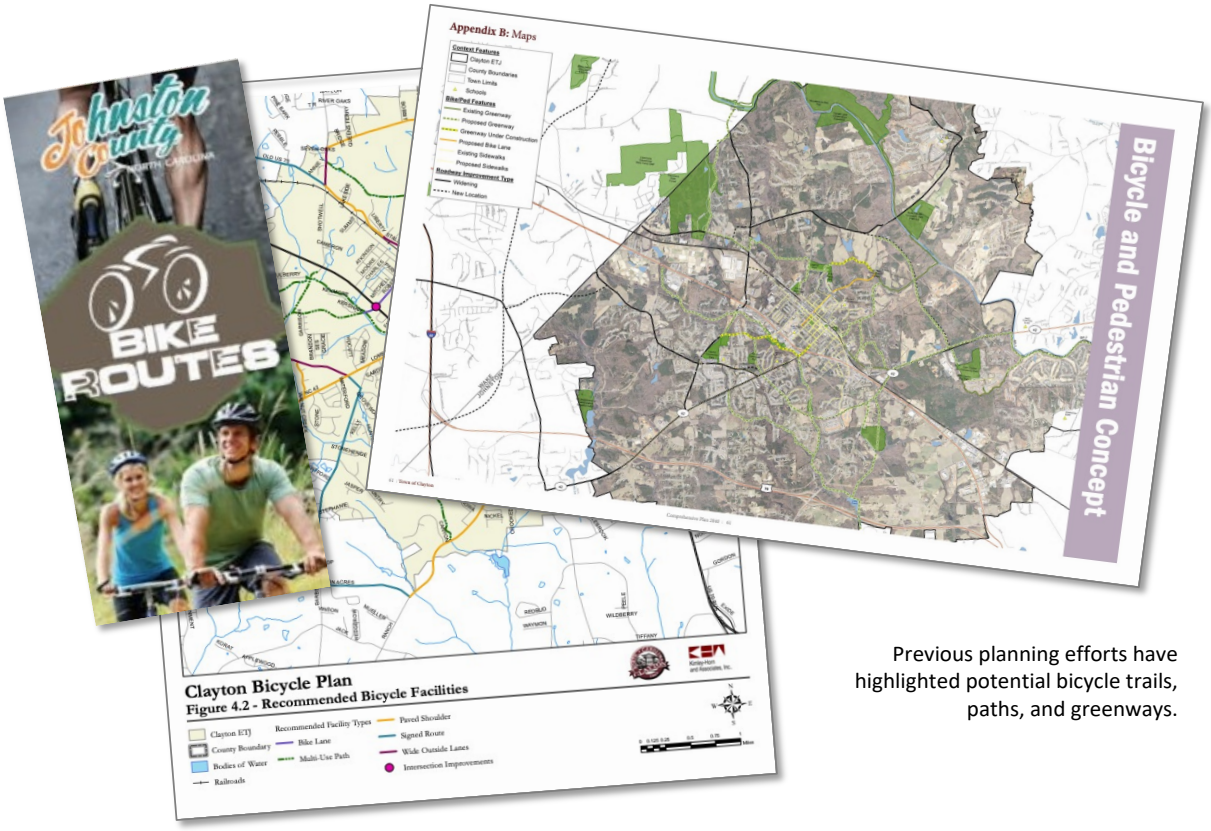
Connecting Assets

Johnston County proudly embraces outdoor recreation and specifically cycling activity. The county is home to several bike routes that connect large portions of the area and link to regional trail systems. These routes are highlighted on the Johnston County web page (johnstoncountync.org).

Clayton is home to small, local trails as well as the county-wide system. Johnston County promotes the "Clayton, Archer Lodge, and Wilson's Mill Loop" as well as the Clayton River Walk Greenway, which is part of the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail.

Clayton has also invested in professional planning exercises to create a comprehensive master plan for pedestrian and bicycle trails. These plans highlight existing networks as well as potential future trails, greenways, and connections.

Downtown Clayton is centrally-located and provides tremendous opportunities for becoming a key node within the greenways and trail systems. Currently a major greenway that connects to the Mountains to Sea Trail ends at the Clayton Municipal Park, which is approximately ¾-mile from Horne Square. Connecting downtown with the local and regional trail and greenway systems should be a priority in the coming years. Capitalizing on outdoor recreation amenities allows Clayton to connect to similar attractions in the region.



Previous planning efforts have highlighted potential bicycle trails, paths, and greenways.

Connecting the Trail Systems

Connecting Assets

Case Study: New Albany, Mississippi

Downtown New Albany, Mississippi is home to the trailhead of the 44-mile Tanglefoot Trail regional rails-to-trails system. The downtown area realized the opportunity the tail presented for the community and fully capitalized on the attraction. A plaza area with an attractive gateway sign was added to the trailhead. Bike racks, benches, and bike-themed public art has been placed throughout the downtown. The trail has become an economic engine for the downtown area resulting in the addition of new businesses adjacent to the trail (middle right photograph).













Connecting the Trail Systems

Connecting Assets

Case Study: New Albany, Mississippi (continued)



2012: The initial phase of the Tanglefoot Trail trailhead was a basic path connecting to the downtown area. .



2018: The trailhead is completely developed with a plaza, gateway signage, seating, bike racks, and trees. Embracing the trail as a true asset and economic generator for the downtown has resulted in the addition of new businesses located adjacent to the trail.

Connecting the Trail Systems

Connecting Assets

Case Study: Fillmore, California





Fillmore, California has capitalized on their downtown railroad corridor by adding a rails-with-trails system. The photographs above show the path in the downtown core. The high-quality railroad crossing in the left photograph illustrates a safe, walkable railroad crossing.





The photographs above show the combination of an active railroad track, buffer zone, structured row of canopy trees, a simple fence, and multi-use path..

Connecting the Trail Systems

Connecting Assets

Short-term Strategy

Creating dedicated bike lanes and paths require resources that may require long-term planning. However, short-term strategies can be implemented to establish a bicycle path network. Utilizing shared lane or "sharrow" symbols to alert automobile traffic of potential cyclists in the area can expand the cycling network without dedicated paths and trails.

Clayton should explore using sharrows to link the existing network of bicycle paths, trails, and greenways to Downtown Clayton.



Example of a shared lane "sharrow" symbol. This is a short-term strategy for expanding the cycling network prior to the creation of dedicated bike lanes.

Recommendation

Highlight the presence of greenways and trails and expand the bicycle network throughout the community into Downtown Clayton.

- Add shared lane "sharrows" to appropriate streets throughout Clayton to expand the bicycle network and connect existing paths, trails, parks, and greenways to the Downtown Clayton.
    - Connecting the NC Mountains to Sea trail at Municipal Park with the downtown core along Stallings Street, O'Neil Street, Main Street, Front Street, and Central Street should be a short-term focus.
- Ensure bike racks are located in Horne Square and throughout downtown.
- Long-term strategies could include:
    - The development of a downtown trailhead entry to the trail system.
    - The addition of a dedicated bike path along First Street adjacent to the railroad corridor leading to Horne Square.

DESIGN

downtown strategies

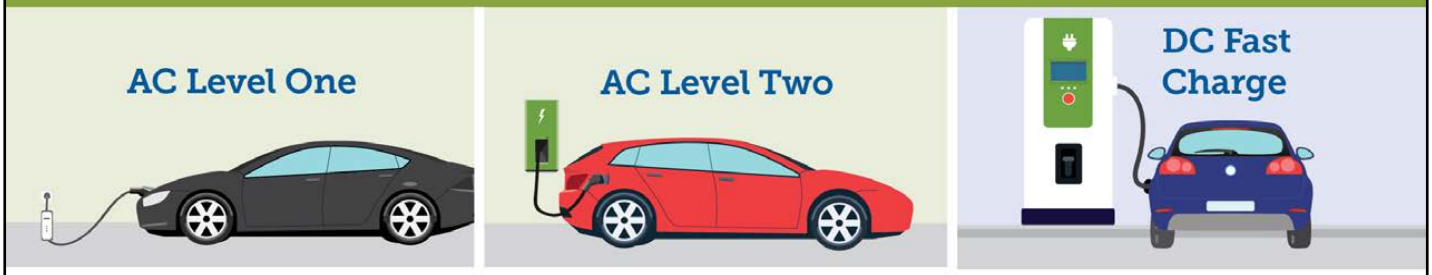
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

As the popularity of electric vehicles grow, public charging stations provide drivers an incentive to visit downtown where they can easily charge up while shopping, sightseeing or dining - and ultimately drive longer distances.

Types of Electric Vehicle Chargers

There are three types of electric vehicle chargers, which are classified by the rate at which the batteries are charged.

KNOW YOUR EV CHARGING STATIONS



AC Level One	AC Level Two	DC Fast Charge
VOLTAGE 120v 1-Phase AC	**VOLTAGE** 208V or 240V 1-Phase AC	**VOLTAGE** 208V or 480V 3-Phase AC
AMPS 12–16 Amps	**AMPS** 12–80 Amps (Typ. 32 Amps)	**AMPS** <125 Amps (Typ. 60 Amps)
CHARGING LOADS 1.4 to 1.9 KW	**CHARGING LOADS** 2.5 to 19.2 kW (Typ. 7 kW)	**CHARGING LOADS** <90 kW (Typ. 50 kW)
CHARGE TIME FOR VEHICLE 3–5 Miles of Range Per Hour	**CHARGE TIME FOR VEHICLE** 10–20 Miles of Range Per Hour	**CHARGE TIME FOR VEHICLE** 80% Charge in 20–30 Minutes

More than 15% of public U.S. charging ports in 2020 were the highest level, commonly referred to as direct-current (DC) fast charging. These can provide between 60 and 80 miles of range with only 20 minutes of charging.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Why Downtown?

Because of limited charging options outside of Metro areas, communities are opting to install electric vehicle charging stations in key points of interest, such as downtowns. Providing a charge opportunity downtown not only gives residents and potential visitors the ability to shop and dine while their vehicle is charging, but it also puts the downtown on the map of electric vehicle charging apps, such as ChargePoint and PlugShare, where travelers identify charging stations near them geographically.







Cost and Incentives

The cost of installing an electric vehicle charging station is approximately $10,000 - $25,000, depending on location, charge level, and existing infrastructure.

Many states, including North Carolina, offer incentives and grants to assist in the cost and installation. Additionally, utility providers are increasingly covering the cost or providing grants to enable the expansion of charging inventory in their service area.

Signage

While listing your newly installed community electric vehicle charging station on popular mapping apps is critical, physical signage in the community is necessary to alert drivers of the location of stations. The universal EV symbol can be added to your wayfinding signage system in addition to installing signs at the charging location.

Recommendation

Utilize incentives to install EV charging stations in a centrally-located and highly-visible location in downtown (preferably Horne Square). Add wayfinding signage to direct visitors to downtown attractions. Also add EV icons to wayfinding signage.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

What's Next?

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2022

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also referred to as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which contains $7.5 billion in new funding for EV charging stations, makes EV charging infrastructure eligible for additional Federal funding programs, and provides funding for numerous other EV-related initiatives. This funding will benefit rural communities across the country by providing a ready source of capital for EV infrastructure projects. This toolkit is intended for a variety of rural stakeholders, including States, local communities, Tribes, transportation providers, nonprofits, businesses, and individuals.

Partnership Success Story: Customer Spending at a California Retail Store

As part of a pilot study, ChargePoint and a major retail chain installed six, free-to-use Level 2 charging stations at the retail chain's new California location. After nine months, based on the charging session lengths, the retailer saw that the average EV-driver was spending 72 minutes at the retail site, which was 50 minutes longer than the average customer. Additionally, the chain saw increased revenue of $56,000 while spending only $430 on electricity. On average, the shoppers spent about one dollar for every minute they were in the store.



Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Clayton, North Carolina

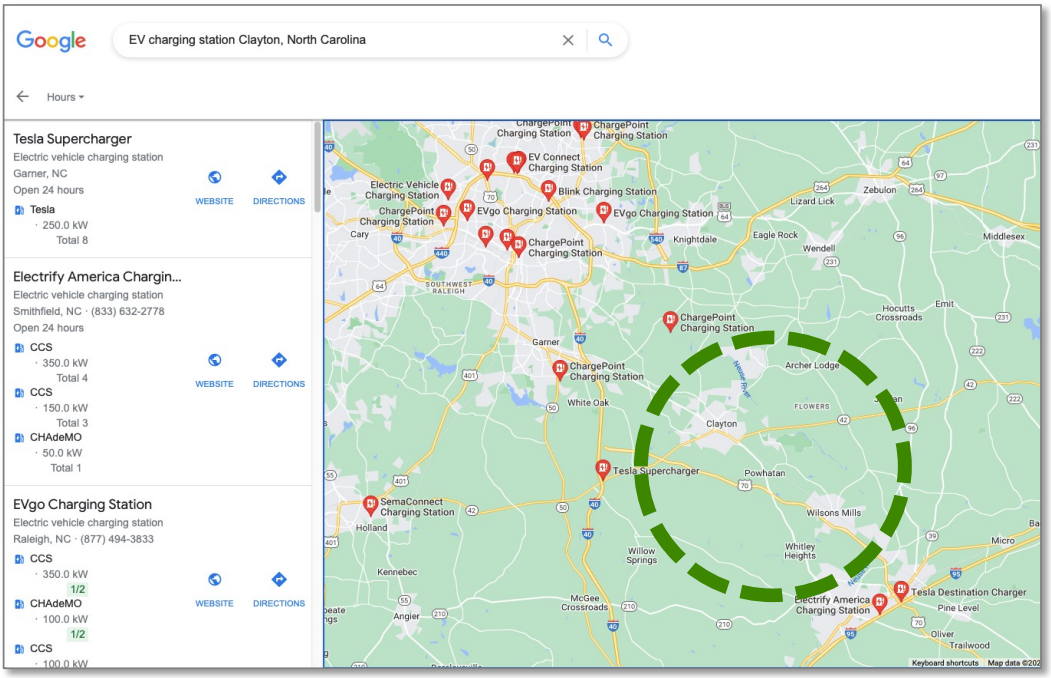
Clayton does not currently offer an EV charging station. As seen in the map below, several stations exist in neighboring communities, but not in Clayton. The growth of the Research Triangle region will likely result in increased investment in EV infrastructure in the area. Clayton should capitalize on this shift and become a potential charging location for visitors to the area.

Downtown Clayton should be the home to the first EV charging station. A centrally located public parking area near the downtown core should be selected so that visitors are located near local retailers and restaurants while charging their vehicle.

Potential locations include:

- Horne Square
- Town Square Green
- Clayton Community Center

Horne Square is the preferred location due to its central location in the downtown core. The other options are acceptable, but their location on the periphery does not immediately connect visitors with the downtown core.



The current locations of EV charging stations in the region illustrate the opportunity for Clayton to fill a gap in the area.

Consolidate Overhead Utilities

Order vs Visual Clutter

Views throughout Downtown Clayton are negatively impacted by the visual clutter created by overhead utility lines. Burying the lines is cost prohibitive at this time so other strategies must be identified.

Some communities have been able to reduce the impact of overhead lines through various strategies including:

- Removing unused or duplicate lines
- Relocating lines to create a more organized and structured appearance
- Relocating the lines to side streets rather than the main corridor
- Installing taller power poles in order to raise the lines above regular viewsheds

Clayton should work with the local utility providers to inventory existing lines and identify techniques for reducing the visual clutter caused by overhead utility lines.



The "post card view" of the Downtown Clayton sign is marred by the excessive amount of overhead utility lines. The visual clutter created by the lines is distracting.

Recommendation

Organize a task force with representatives from each local utility provider to inventory existing lines and identify strategies for reducing the visual clutter throughout the downtown core. Specifically explore options for removing duplicate and unused lines and relocating lines to create a more organized appearance.



4

downtown strategies

TOURISM & PROMOTION

Smart promotion initiatives position your Downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

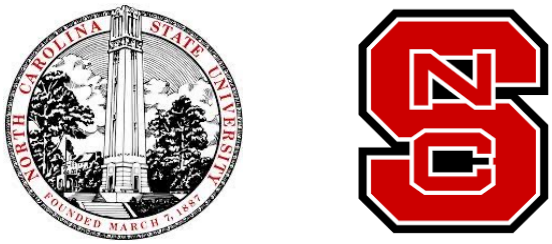
TOURISM & PROMOTION

Messaging & Branding

Creating a Brand

The city should have a unique brand that tells the story of the community. The first step in creating the community brand is updating or creating a logo for the community. Oftentimes cities fail to recognize the difference between a logo and a seal. The city seal is acceptable for official government documents, but should not be used as a primary logo for marketing, branding, promotion, tourism, etc.

Universities are a great example. Universities have an official seal or crest that is used for official business or formal occasions. In addition to the seal, universities have a logo and brand that is used for all external communications. The logo appears on advertisements, promotions, merchandise, athletic gear, etc. An attractive and modern logo can set the community apart from others in the region.



The formal seal for NC State (left) is very different than the "brand" logo (right). The seal is appropriate for official, formal applications and the logo is used for external communications and serves as the brand for the university.

Each organization within the community has a different role, but the brand and message of "Clayton" should be consistent and identifiable. Utilizing the same fonts, complimentary color palettes, and messaging can help unify the efforts of the various organizations and allow the community to have a larger footprint.

In Starkville, Mississippi, the brand "Starkville: Mississippi's College Town" was developed. Over time the city and major community organizations (chamber of commerce, Main Street Association, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, etc.) adopted the logo and brand. Even though each entity performed different tasks in the community, outsiders saw the same logo and brand on everything. Consistent messaging and branding allowed Starkville to seem vibrant and active even though different groups were leading various initiatives.



The existing seal for the City of Clayton is attractive but should be used solely for official city business.

TOURISM & PROMOTION

Messaging & Branding

Example Community and Regional Brands















All of the above examples were developed by
Arnett Muldrow & Associates
arnettmuldrow.com

TOURISM & PROMOTION

Messaging & Branding

Clayton

The existing logo and brand for "Think Clayton" is a very strong, modern, and clear wordmark. This logo should be adopted by the city and partner organizations. The new logo will serve as the primary "voice" for external promotions for the community regardless of the host organization. The custom streetlight banners with the "Think Parks," "Think Arts," etc. messaging is an excellent example of a brand extension strategy.











Recommendation

Encourage the use of the "Think Clayton" wordmark on promotional material created by the town and partnering organizations. This should be the community-wide brand for Clayton. Consider creating a simple "Clayton" version of the wordmark for various uses. All town, CDDA, tourism, and chamber of commerce activities should be promoted under the unified "Clayton" brand.

TOURISM & PROMOTION

Place Branding

downtown strategies

A place brand is the totality of thoughts, feelings, and expectations that people hold about a location. It's the character, reputation and the enduring essence of the place and represents its distinctive promise of value and sense of place. Most importantly, it's a valued promise that must be grounded in truth and reality.

Three Stages of Place Branding

A city's image typically evolves in three sequential stages displayed below. It's easy to underestimate the importance of each stage. For example, the third-party credibility that comes with media coverage in the first stage can make or break a place brand.

Similarly, while some places may skip the second stage, no place can avoid the third. Sustaining a positive organic or marketing induced image, calls for the place to live up to its promises or expectations in the experiential phase.

Organic Image

- General awareness of the place
- Place history
- Natural resources
- Population
- Media coverage

Marketing Induced Image

- Advertisements
- Public Relations
- Websites
- Social Media
- Brochures
- Video

Experiential Image

- First-hand interactions people have with the place, events, stores, people, and the environment

Place Branding

Managing each stage of Place Branding

Organic Image

Managing the organic image of your community, or specifically your downtown, can be the most challenging. Perception equals reality, and many times, the community isn't aware of the great work being done to revitalize your downtown.

- **Ensure your downtown is clean.** Park in a public parking lot and walk to your Main Street each workday morning. Are there weeds popping out of the sidewalk cracks? Are lights burned out? Is there trash and empty bottles lying around? These little things contribute to negative perception that can be perpetuated throughout a community and beyond.

- **Build relationships with reporters.** News reports, articles, and videos live on the internet far beyond the average news cycle. Building relationships with local reporters gives you the opportunity to have more control of the message being portrayed. Give local reporters a heads up when something good happens. Put press releases together, include high resolution photos, and give local reports exclusives when possible. This may help you craft the message when something not so great happens.

- **Make annual presentations to civic organizations.** No one can tell your story better than you. Request to make a presentation to Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, the Chamber Board, and the City Council annually to share progress, accolades, and results of your revitalization work. This will keep negativity at bay and will provide positive news coverage for your downtown. Create a leave-behind of bulleted talking points so the memberships will start perpetuating your message.

Place Branding

Managing each stage of Place Branding

Marketing Induced Image

The marketing induced image phase is when you get to determine the future and brand of your city. In this phase, city or downtown leadership in in the driver's seat, and an aggressive, strategic and consistent approach to messaging and imagery is imperative to shifting the narrative.

- **Determine your brand.** A brand is not a logo or a tagline. Those are tools in the toolkit, but an overall brand tells a story of who you are as a community, or who you want to be. Once the brand is created, it must be adopted by multiple entities in the community. Brands can cross entity or organizational lines; in fact, they should.

- **Implement the brand across every visual platform.** Your brand kit should also include a style guide which lists 2-3 fonts, colors, and brand marks/icons/logos that are acceptable for use. Utilize only these elements. Event promotions can have their own look, while still incorporating the brand fonts. The brand marks should be on every piece of visual collateral that goes out. This includes social media graphics, videos, posters, etc.

- **Create a strategic plan for furthering your brand.** Every local event that is hosted under your umbrella should strategically further the brand. Every dollar spent on advertising should strategically enhance the brand. Sticking to the playbook strengthens the messaging and ultimately ensures that the third phase is another layer of your brand.

Case Study: "Starkville, Mississippi's College Town"

Starkville, Mississippi experienced a re-branding with the new image of "Mississippi's College Town." The successful implementation of the brand story into multiple strategic aspects of programming, messaging, and Town and Gown relations, led to a significant revitalization in Downtown Starkville. Since then, more than $150 million in private investment has been dedicated in new developments, adaptive re-use projects, and businesses.

Case Study: Starkville, Mississippi's College Town







ECONOMIC VITALITY

Place Branding

downtown strategies

Case Study: Starkville, Mississippi's College Town







Case Study: Starkville, Mississippi's College Town







Place Branding

Managing each stage of Place Branding

Experiential Image

The experiential image phase requires city and community leaders to create opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the aspects of the brand story that the place is touting.

- **Plan events that further your brand.** If your brand centers around the historic nature of your community, your events should shine a light on the historical assets of your community. If you brand centers around the natural resources present in your community, events should capitalize on those resources and require the visitor to experience them. Events should be strategic marketing tools, not just an opportunity for people to have fun in your downtown.

- **Make it easy for the visitor or resident to know remember your brand.** Messaging is key in the experiential image phase. Tell your visitors what you want them to repeat. Talking points should be tight and memorable. Use them over and over in event promotions, on signage, in advertisements, and in event collateral. It's all about creating an experience that tells your story. Your control the narrative.

- **Tie it all together in person and in digital.** Live tweet your events using photos and video along with your brand talking points. Align with power social media users and influencers to amplify your story and talking points. Follow-up events or big weekends with a Facebook album of photos. The caption should highlight your brand talking points.

Finally, listen to the feedback on social media. Engage positively with users. Perception equals reality, so keeping a pulse on the narrative being portrayed is critical for success.

Recommendation

Aggressively implement your brand and brand story, utilizing these strategies for each phase of the place branding process. Specific potential in telling the stories about:

- Quaint small-town atmosphere
- Easy excursion from larger metro area
- High quality of life and outdoors lifestyle

Promote Downtown

Targeted Initiatives for Downtown

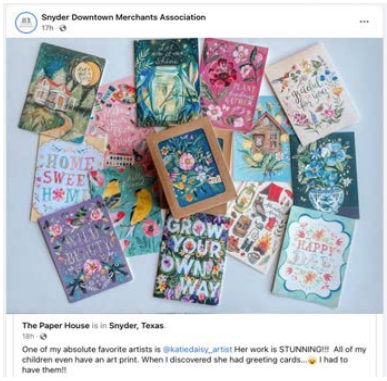
Branding

Many downtown revitalization success stories began with utilizing creative, but simple marketing and branding strategies. Social media opens the door to free and inexpensive outlets for promoting events, stories, businesses, etc. Promoting a clear brand repeatedly and consistently can quickly build brand awareness, excitement, and momentum. Every new business that opens, ribbon cutting event, streetscape improvement project, or other "win" must be promoted on social media under the downtown brand.

Targeted Retail Events

Arguably the most important aspect of tourism and promotion efforts is connecting the dots between customers and businesses. That can be achieved through a vast number of strategies and initiatives. Many community development organizations focus their tourism efforts on large events and festivals that bring thousands of people into the community. While large scale events are important, oftentimes the highest return on investment come from small, targeted retail events and promotions. Events such as wine tastings, ladies' night out shopping events, scavenger hunts, etc. are commonly used to attract shoppers and diners downtown. These types of events require much less planning, time, and resources to organize and promote. Many can be done simply through free social media/web marketing and organization with the retailers.





The Snyder Downtown Merchants Association in Snyder, Texas (SDMA) is a small grassroots organization focused on promoting the downtown area. The SDMA utilizes social media to promote local businesses. They also plan a number of downtown events such as the "Snyder Downtown Nights" focused on attracting customers to the downtown area.



Starkville Main Street Association in Starkville, Mississippi package existing events into seasonal collections for more concise promotions and messaging.

Promote Downtown

Targeted Initiatives for Downtown

Existing Promotions

Currently Clayton hosts a collection of festivals, events, and promotions designed to attract visitors to Downtown Clayton. Large festivals and events often require extensive planning and resources and have limited economic impact on downtown retailers. Clayton should focus on adding small-scale promotions throughout the year specifically focused on driving activity to downtown retailers and restaurants.

Strategies could include packaging activities for visitors. Promote a season of activities; package multiple attractions into a sample itinerary; or create a weekend collection of activities. For example, additional events could be added to the existing concert series, or a sample itinerary could be promoted to encourage visitors to dine at local restaurants, shop at local retailers, and visit local attractions.





Posters for existing events and promotions are clearly displayed in multiple downtown storefronts. Explore opportunities for better connecting the dots between participants and downtown businesses. “Last Friday in Clayton” is a great example of targeted promotional events not focused on a specific holiday.

Recommendation

The CDDA should be empowered to market, promote, and plan downtown events and activities. All activities should be promoted under the unified “Clayton” brand.

Retail Promotion Strategies

Recommendation

Incorporate additional retail promotion strategies into Downtown Clayton's program of work to encourage activity throughout the day, especially in the evenings. Groups identified in the Market Analysis should be specifically targeted.

In simple terms, tourism involves connecting downtown visitors with retailers and restaurants. This can take place through large community-wide events and festivals or small-scale retail promotional events such as farm-to-table dinners, ladies shopping nights, and arts events among others.

Data outlined in the Market Analysis outlines the profile of locals and regular visitors to the community. These people shop for their daily needs in Clayton on a regular basis. This group should be the focus of local promotional events since they are already in the community and simply need to be enticed to visit the downtown area.

After 5 Events

One of the biggest ongoing complaints from the public about small-town downtowns is that stores close at or before 5:00 pm, making it difficult for working patrons to shop locally. Create a Facebook 'event' for an After 5 Shopping Night. Hold these event nights when stores are typically not open after 5 pm. By creating a Facebook Event, you'll also see "who's going" which can help you build a list of local shopping supporters. A key benefit of Facebook Events is that when a "friend" says they are "going" to an event, their friends will also learn about it too. Facebook Events are simple ways to crowd source for events.

Versatile Signage

Work with local retailers to install professionally branded sandwich board signs in front of their business. These signs are extremely adaptable: they can feature specials, words of humor, social media promotions, and most importantly, they provide readable content at sidewalk-level for pedestrians who don't always look left or right in a storefront window. They also give visual evidence that there is vitality and commerce in the business district.



Consistent sandwich board signs with the community logo can create a unified appearance and add activity to the sidewalk in downtown.

Retail Promotion Strategies

Cooperative Promotion

Focus on the comparative aspects of retailing in the district, clustering stores that are in the same category and can be promoted together. Whether it's a wine tasting event for ladies' night, where participants can pop-in to each participating store to taste a unique wine and do a little shopping while they're there, or a seasonal event like Christmas Open House, promoting retailers together within the Downtown District begins to brand downtown as a retail destination.

Quarterly Retail Promotional Events

Develop simple, quarterly events designed to engage local residents. These could be shopping events, food events, live music, or a combination. These events should not be large festivals. Rather they should be coordinated with the local retailers and restaurants to provide a special experience for the students.



An example of this type of event is an UnWine Downtown event in Starkville, Mississippi, which is a wine tasting retail event organized by the Main Street Association. Downtown retailers are provided with different brands of wine purchased at a discount from a local provider by the Main Street Association. Some retailers also include hors d'oeuvres. The Main Street Association promotes the event on social media. Tickets cost $20-25 and retailers offer a 20% discount to participants. Participants meet at the Main Street office at the beginning of the event and receive a plastic custom branded wine glass. They then spend several hours visiting the participating retailers where they shop and sample various wines. Although the event only attracts 175-200 participants, retailers routinely state that this is one of their biggest sales nights.

Wine tasting may not fit the targeted demographic, but the concept of specifically connecting the target audience with the retailers and restaurants downtown should be explored.

Existing events such as the farmers' market, Harvest Festival, Family Nights, Concert Series, Small Business Saturday, Christmas Village, and Last Fridays are great examples of events that attract people to the downtown area. Helping retailers capitalize on that increased traffic is key. Small-scale events that are targeted for certain segments of downtown should be prioritized over large-scale events that exhaust organizational resources and time.

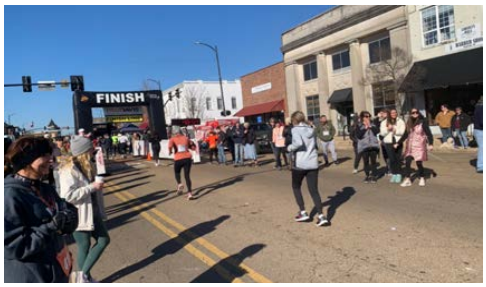
Retail Promotion Strategies

Add-on Events

Rather than adding to the current workload of the chamber of commerce or the downtown organization, connecting the dots between existing events and promotions can be a successful strategy for enhancing existing efforts.

Oftentimes organizations, businesses, or other groups host events and promotions in order to benefit their respective interests. These types of events could be fundraiser events, races, or other activities which are small events with limited impact on the overall downtown. However, coordinating and combining those efforts can greatly enhance the visibility and impact of those individual events. The downtown organizations should play a role in connecting the dots between existing efforts taking place downtown.

For example, in one community an organization hosts a race (5K, 10K, and half marathon) every January. Another group hosts a soup competition fundraiser called the Souper Bowl every February. In order to increase the impact of both events, the two groups collaborated and coordinated their efforts. Now the races begin and end in the core of downtown, ensuring that the runners and their audience are drawn into the downtown area. Following the race, the runners enjoy a creative lunch at the Souper Bowl which involves unique dishes prepared by local restaurants. Providing opportunities to hold the audience downtown for an extended period of time allows other retailers, restaurants, and businesses to capitalize on the large number of visitors.





What events are currently happening in your community that could be combined? A chili cookoff, burger competition, beer tasting, shopping event? Coordinating existing events or planning small, simple events can really enhance the experience for visitors and allow the downtown to capitalize on the increased traffic.

Incorporate Public Wi-Fi Zone Downtown

As Downtowns move to positioning themselves as destinations, rather than just an attractive place to drive-through, the need for a dedicated, public, free wi-fi zone becomes more prevalent. A free wi-fi zone encourages residents and visitors to stay in the Downtown area longer, and it allows them to search for restaurants and boutiques nearby, and better yet, gives them a strong connection to post photos or comments about their experience in your community, which furthers efforts of marketing of messaging. In addition, the zone can be set-up such that a landing page featuring a Downtown map and list of businesses is the first page that pops-up on connected devices.

Retail Promotion Strategies

Weekend Experience – Packaged Promotions

Organize Starkville, Mississippi realized the need to better capitalize on traffic generated by home football games at Mississippi State University. For years, community organizations avoided home game weekends because they knew it was impossible to compete with the "main event." While attempting to compete with the Saturday football game is not a successful strategy, there were tremendous opportunities for creating a weekend experience for visitors.

In 2011, Starkville launched "New South Weekends" as a concerted effort to enhance the weekend experience by creating a collection of events designed to highlight local businesses and assets. The promotion "packaged" the weekend for visitors and allowed local businesses to take part.

One component of New South Weekends was the addition of a Friday night event, which encouraged fans to come to Starkville on Friday rather than arriving on gameday. These events ranged from a retail and art market to a family-friendly fall festival on Main Street.

Opportunities on Saturday were limited, but fans were encouraged to eat at local restaurants before and/or after the game. Restaurants were able to capitalize on the weekend promotions and attract a new weekend audience.

Before New South Weekends downtown restaurants and retailers were closed which did not allow visitors an opportunity to shop or dine while they were in town. "Bulldog Brunch n' Browse" was created as a Sunday promotion. Downtown retailers and restaurants were asked to pilot the idea by opening on the 6 home game weekends. In return the event was heavily promoted, and all participating businesses were included in the marketing material. The Sunday event was wildly successful. Many businesses saw their highest sales on Sunday due to this effort.

By creating a weekend of activities and packaging the experience for visitors, Starkville was able to connect the gameday visitors to downtown businesses.

Starkville saw a need to better capitalize on gameday visitors. What attraction, event, or destination could you better capitalize on in your downtown?



Creative, Simple Retail Promotions

Targeted Promotions for Downtown Businesses

Many downtown revitalization success stories began with utilizing creative, but simple marketing and branding strategies. Social media opens the door to free and inexpensive outlets for promoting events, stories, businesses, etc. Promoting a clear brand repeatedly and consistently can quickly build brand awareness, excitement, and momentum. Every new business that opens, ribbon cutting event, streetscape improvement project, or other "win" must be promoted on social media under the downtown brand.

Grassroots downtown business associations and newly formed Main Street Associations were typically formed with the core mission to promote local businesses. In early phases, these types of organizations often struggle to secure financial resources needed to grow the organization and lead large scale promotional initiatives.

Rather than large events and festivals that require extensive planning and resources, the largest return on investment can often come from simple but targeted promotional events. Coordinating with retailers and restaurants to create an experience for customers can drive activity into the downtown area and have a financial impact the businesses. Some strategies employed by downtown organizations serve as a fundraiser in addition to promoting local businesses. The following are examples of simple, fun, small scale retail promotions that communities around the country have used to promote business and attract customers to downtown.

Creative Holiday Fundraisers

The holiday seasons are critical times for retailers and restaurants. Community development organizations can help bring attention to downtown businesses during these times through fun, engaging promotions.

Utilize characters such as skeletons, the Grinch, snowmen, etc. depending on the appropriate holiday season. Businesses pay a sponsorship ($100 +/-) to "host" the character. As hosts, the businesses display the character in a variety of ways that can promote their work. In return, the community development organization promotes the business on social media and web-based outlets throughout the day. Posts with the character in a variety of situations and comical setups create an engaging post and drive traffic to the business.

These types of promotions are relatively easy to plan, require little resources to establish, and utilize low cost/free social media platforms. In return, the promotion can generate funds for the organization. For example, one community organized an event and quickly sold 20 $100 sponsorships for a seasonal promotion like described above. The event generated $2,000 for the organization in a short amount of time.

Creative, Simple Retail Promotions

Targeted Promotions for Downtown Businesses

Skully

Organize a Halloween season promotional fundraising event for your downtown. Purchase a life-sized posable skeleton for less than $100. Give your new friend a creative name such as "Scully" or "Bones." Charge downtown businesses a fee to sponsor a day during the event. In return they adopt "Skully" for day. They place the character in a number of positions and situations throughout the day. The community development organization promotes the business throughout the day and shares the photographs submitted by the business. Posts should contain the name and location of the business, what the business offers, and silly photographs of Skully in action.

This is a fun way to engage the business community, provide them a creative outlet for educating the public about their business, and generate revenue for the organization.





"Skully" spends a day with downtown businesses in return for a sponsorship. The community development organization promotes Skully's crazy adventures as a creative way to showcase local businesses.

Winter Holidays

The winter holidays provide a great opportunity for a similar promotion. Characters such as the Grinch or Frosty the Snowman can visit businesses for a day similar to the Halloween promotion described above. Posts can begin with "Where is Frosty today?"

Creative, Simple Retail Promotions

Targeted Promotions for Downtown Businesses

Cupid Shuffle

The song "The Cupid Shuffle" by Cupid is a popular tune at wedding receptions around the country, but it also provides an opportunity for a creative retail promotion. During the Valentine's Day season, the Starkville Main Street Association in Starkville, Mississippi organized a "Cupid Shuffle" retail promotion.

Downtown retailers who chose to participate were part of a social media promotional campaign for the week leading up to Valentine's Day. Customers visiting participating retailers approached the register. The store employee shuffles a deck of playing cards and deals one card to the customer.

The card corresponds with a sale.

- 2-5 = 5% discount
- 6-10 = 10% discount
- Jack, Queen, and King = 15% discount
- Ace = 20% discount
- Joker = Retailer's choice

This is a simple, but fun way to promote businesses and engage customers during a short holiday season.



Railroad Themed Promotions

Clayton's rich railroad history creates tremendous potential for railroad-themed promotions. One potential promotion could involve a "train ticket" or "passport" which would be punched or stamped at various downtown locations. A QR code could easily be incorporated as an alternative. This would encourage the visitors to shop and dine at local businesses to fill their ticket or passport. Those with filled tickets could be entered into a drawing for a prize.



The holiday season also presents an opportunity for a Polar Express-themed promotion. Train tickets, hot chocolate, etc. could be involved in a creative way to encourage shopping local throughout the holidays while relating to local history.

Thomas the Tank Engine is also a potential theme.

Recommendation

Pilot 4 (one per season) small-scale retail promotions focused on linking customers with local downtown retailers and restaurants.

Farm to Table Special Event

Recommendation

Host a Farm to Table dinner in Horne Square or along Main Street to highlight the unique culinary attractions of the community and county. Recruit chefs knowledgeable about utilizing local ingredients to create special, unique dishes.

A Farm to Table event is an all-local meal event designed to facilitate relationships and inspire community conversation in a delicious, fun, and healthy way by pairing locally grown produce and meat with local chefs who prepare the ingredients for attendees. These events are intended to benefit your local community as well as contribute to the larger local food system conversation.

Farm to Table events are ticketed events with limited capacity. These types of events are great fundraising opportunities and allow the community to showcase local chefs, farmers, and culinary specialties. This event can be marketed to locals as well as a unique regional attraction.







TOURISM & PROMOTION

Farm to Table Special Event



Farm to Table Tour

Tour several area farms or locally produced products from corn meal from Atkinson's Mill that makes tasty hush puppies to Broadslab Distillery where they grow the corn that makes the moonshine. See first hand where our food is grown, and craft beverages are being made here in Johnston County. Make it an overnight stay for your group, and visit some local chefs that source food right from the farms you visited!

It doesn't get any more local than that!

Suggested Itinerary:

9am	Atkinson Milling Company
10:30am	Hinnant Family Vineyards
12N	Lunch at Parkside Café
1:30pm	Broadslab Distillery - Dirt to Bottle tour
3pm	Smith's Strawberry Farm
5pm	Check-in to hotel in Smithfield/Selma area
7pm	Dinner at Simple Twist







Johnson County's collection of local culinary destinations and Clayton's mix of local restauranteurs can combine for a unique culinary experience.

Monthly Retailer Meetings

Communication is Key

Communication is key within the network of downtown businesses. Gathering regular feedback regarding the successes and challenges within the downtown is critical. This is especially true with downtown events and promotions.

The goal of most tourism initiatives is to bring activity into the downtown area in order to connect customers with local businesses. Ideally retailers and restaurants are able to capitalize on the increased traffic from the event and increase sales during that time.

Retailer Text Group

The appropriate downtown organization (Main Street Association, Downtown Business Association, chamber of commerce, etc.) should organize a text group for downtown retailers. This allows for easy communication between the organization and retail group as well as communication from retailers. Text-based communication allows for fast engagement and response.

Retailer Meetings

In addition to the text group, regular meetings with retailers should be held monthly or quarterly to discuss topics relevant to downtown. This allows for organizations to explain upcoming events; notify them of disruptions such as street closures; outline upcoming policy changes or political affairs; and gather feedback from previous events and promotions.

Regular communication with the retailers can improve the relationship between the various business owners as well as with the partnering organization. The organization can utilize the feedback from the meetings to determine what worked, what did not work, and what can be modified with future events to ensure that the return on investment is maximized. These meetings should be brief, focused, and productive.

Note: A similar, but less-frequent structure should be established with downtown restauranteurs.

Recommendation

Establish a group text with all downtown retail business owners. Host monthly (or quarterly) meetings with retailers to discuss upcoming and past events, promotions, or other relevant topics.

Wayfinding Signage

downtown strategies

Wayfinding in downtown landscapes proves to be critical beyond basic navigation. Identification and information represented in elements such as monuments, directional systems, directories, interpretive and even regulatory signs enrich our experiences with downtown environments.

In order to create a successful wayfinding system, even in an age of smartphones and GPS, physical wayfinding elements and systems strengthen brands by improving the legibility, navigation, understanding, and accessibility of the environment.

Wayfinding Signage Systems

- Reinforce an area's defining history, architecture, and landmarks
- Help the public find parking, improve traffic flow and ease the transition between car, pedestrian and transit use
- Reduce visual clutter with clear, consolidated and on-brand information and identity



The existing directional signs are components of a comprehensive wayfinding system.



Sample wayfinding signage system developed by Downtown Strategies

Recommendation

Expand the existing wayfinding signage system to include custom street signs and public parking directional signage.

Parking Management

Parking is one of the primary shapers of US communities and has been for a century. The walkability of a city or town is often determined by how much parking dominates the public realm. Additionally, parking minimums are local laws that require private businesses and residences to provide at least a certain number of off-street parking spaces. These requirements are also significant factors shaping how our cities are built and laid out.

Parking is one of the primary shapers of US communities and has been for a century. The walkability of a city or town is often determined by how much parking dominates the public realm.

The primary goal of parking management is to ensure the shopper is able to find convenient parking near their destination.

A well-calibrated parking plan will leave approximately 10 percent of on-street stalls available with turnover of 15 to 20 times per day, while off-street or garage parking should always be readily available with turnover of three to five times per day.

While there is a large supply of available parking on the main thoroughfare, merchants and employees should park in nearby sub-prime public parking to leave more availability for customers.

Properly signing these areas and incorporating into a comprehensive wayfinding signage system is also critically important.



Examples of public parking signage systems.

Parking Management

The Downtown Master Plan will likely include a comprehensive, long-term parking plan for Downtown Clayton. However, Downtown Strategies identified opportunities for short and long-term solutions to begin addressing parking issues.

Short-Term

If desired, the city could explore implementing 2-hour parking along the prime blocks of the core downtown along Main Street. It is critical that the time limit is consistently and fairly enforced in order to be effective. Visitors needing longer time periods should be directed to other parking areas.

Side streets with adequate widths should be striped to include on-street parking. For now, side streets should not include time limits.

Signage should be added throughout downtown to direct visitors to surface parking lots available for public parking.

The city should explore opportunities for executing shared-use parking agreements with property owners who own large surface parking lots. Churches, banks, and other private property owners often have underutilized parking areas or parking lots that are only used for certain hours throughout the week. Shared-use agreements can be used to allow those spaces to be better utilized. Oftentimes downtown employees are the cause of parking issues because they take up prime parking areas along Main Street from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Encouraging employees to park in accessory lots and side streets will open prime spaces for customers.

Additionally, the CDDA should launch an educational campaigned focused on encouraging downtown employees to park along the railroad corridor, side streets, or accessory surface parking lots. Explain the value of reserving Main Street parking for customers and visitors rather than employees.

The combination of free surface parking lots, available on-street parking on side streets, and limited time parking in the core should adequately address any parking issues.

Long-Term

The First Street corridor along the railroad tracks provides a tremendous opportunity for accessory parking areas. Some areas along the corridor are currently used as informal parking areas, but there is tremendous opportunities for expansion and formalized parking areas. Although railroad companies are challenging to work with at times, there are numerous precedents along corridor in Clayton to serve as templates.

The paved parking area on the north side of the railroad tracks along West Front Street between O'Neil Street and Fayetteville Street provides a perfect template for the First Street corridor. This area includes an approximately 30-foot buffer between the railroad tracks and the parking area. This buffer zone includes a short row of canopy trees, which greatly enhances the corridor. The on-street parking area adds approximately 23 paved parking spaces. The addition of curb extensions at the end of each parking row would further define the area and shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians.

The buffer zone can be used to expand the greenway and trail systems into the downtown core.

Parking Management





Areas along First Street are currently being used as informal parking areas. The corridor provides tremendous opportunities for adding additional public parking areas within the downtown core.

Parking Management





There is some precedent for parking areas and private structures being located along the railroad corridor adjacent to the ROW.

TOURISM & PROMOTION

Parking Management



The existing parking area along Front Street provides an excellent template and sets a precedent for adding on-street parking and canopy trees along the railroad corridor along First Street.

Recommendation

Employ a variety of short-term parking management strategies throughout Downtown Clayton.

Short-term

- Add 2-hour parking along the core blocks of Main Street. Timed parking must be consistently and fairly enforced.
- Add directional signs to direct visitors to other parking options.
- Add on-street parking striping to side streets throughout downtown.
- Launch an educational campaign focused on encouraging downtown employees to park on side streets and accessory parking areas.

Mid-term

- Execute shared-use parking agreements with private property owners with underutilized surface parking lots.

Long-term

- Add formalize parking areas along First Street.
- Utilize the buffer area along the railroad corridor to expand the greenway and trail systems into the downtown core.



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downtown strategies

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Economic Vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

downtown strategies

Targeted Industries for Downtown

TERMS:

Custom Trade Area: Who is currently spending money on general merchandise in the community. Who are they and where do they live?

Gap Analysis: What do the people living within the Custom Trade Area spend money on outside of the Custom Trade Area? Where is money "leaking" out of the community?

Market Analysis

When recruiting national retail to a community, an extensive Market Analysis is used to identify current consumer trends, a profile of current consumers, Custom Trade Area (who is currently shopping in the community), and a Gap Analysis (Leakage Report).

Community leaders should utilize the same data to inform decisions about business growth, development, and recruitment for the downtown area. The Market Analysis chapter of this Strategic Plan identified this information based on the Custom Trade Area from a major general merchandise store within the community.

Customers who are regularly shopping in the community for general merchandise, are a great target audience for downtown businesses. The Gap Analysis identified which retail categories people within the Custom Trade Area are currently leaving the trade area to buy. In other words, what are these people spending money on outside of the community? Since local customers are currently spending money on goods and services outside of the community, it is reasonable that they would spend that money locally if those needs were offered. **The top retail categories identified in the Gap Analysis that would be excellent targets for downtown are listed to the right.**



grocery



General merchandise & department stores



clothing



health & personal care



Full-service & Limited-service restaurants

Recommendation

Any business recruitment strategy, effort, or incentive should prioritize the top retail categories identified through the Gap Analysis.

Recruiting Retail Downtown

Communities can attempt to reduce the leakage by recruiting businesses and entrepreneurs within the top categories. Downtown areas can provide the perfect "nest" for new businesses within the focus categories. Business recruitment for a downtown typically employs one of the following four tactics:

1 Existing Businesses within or near the business district

Often the best leads are found near home. Leads might include existing businesses seeking more space or a better location in the business district. The district's business owner survey as well as ongoing conversations and personal contacts of the recruitment team, chamber of commerce and other economic development professionals can help identify these leads.

2 Emerging Entrepreneurs

Downtowns and business districts are often attractive to independent businesses. Accordingly, leads might include home-based or garage-based businesses seeking more fitting space and a convenient location for their customers. These leads might include managers of existing businesses wishing to go into business on their own. Commercial lenders, business schools, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counselors, Main Street program business specialists, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), chamber of commerce and other public or private small business professionals should be asked to help identify these leads.

3 Existing Local or Regional Businesses

Local or regional businesses, particularly those that have branch stores and are ready to expand, are often excellent prospects. These business operators typically have a good knowledge of the market area and may already have multiple stores. They are often interested in expansion as a way to improve their penetration of the market. These leads can be identified through your team's knowledge of the business mix in other communities in the region and information collected from your local consumer research. In addition, realtors, commercial brokers, sales representatives and supplies that work within the region can be helpful. Sometimes ads in regional business, real estate and regional lifestyle periodicals can generate leads.

4 National Chains *(only applies to certain situations)*

If local or regional businesses are not interested in expanding, larger national chains can be contacted. It is important to be realistic about the kinds of chains that might be interested in a small community as their market, store size and parking requirements may preclude them from considering your district. Leads can be identified through directories and private databases listing chain site selection criteria and contacts. In addition, leads can also come from commercial brokers, trade shows, "deal making forums," and conferences such as those offered by the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Recommendation

Recruit businesses within top retail focus categories to fill vacant or underutilized downtown properties by employing an appropriate combination of the four retail recruitment strategies.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

downtown strategies

Business Recruitment Packet

Downtown Economic Development

Almost every downtown desires to have more retailers, restaurants, and other businesses. Ideally this growth would happen organically as the perception and reputation of the downtown shifts to become a destination. Building a strong sense of place within the downtown is important. The downtown should be clean, inviting, safe, and attractive. The properties and buildings should be well maintained and ready for tenants. The area should be active and frequently used for events. While all of these elements are important pieces of the puzzle, communities can also take an active role in recruiting businesses to the downtown.

Many communities have successfully targeted specific businesses in nearby cities or regions and recruited them. This could be a relocation, convincing the business to open a second location, or convincing them to open another concept in the new community.

Successfully pitching the community to this business requires a structured and organized presentation of data. The new business doe not just need to hear the feel-good stories about your community, they need to know if their concept can financially survive and thrive in your community. When recruiting national retailers to a community, they focus on the market data including the custom trade area (who is currently spending money in your community), demographics, community profiles, real estate analysis, and available properties. A similar approach can be taken when attempting to recruit a local business to your downtown.

A Business Recruitment Packet contains information relevant to recruiting a potential business in an easy-to-follow format. The packet could include:

- Market analysis data summary
- Map of the downtown district
- List of available properties with real estate information
- Guide to necessary approval processes
- Guide to available incentives and programs
- Point of contact information

Recommendation

Create a custom Business Recruitment packet that can be distributed to targeted retailers, restaurants, and other businesses. The packet can be used to personally recruit specific businesses from the region or elsewhere in the community.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

downtown strategies

Entrepreneur Meet-Up Events

Fostering Entrepreneurial Networks

Downtowns serve as a great "nest" for entrepreneurs to test concepts and grow over time. A common question for many communities is how to identify entrepreneurs and foster their growth?

A short-term strategy is to tap into the existing entrepreneurs in the community. Citizens who recently took a risk and opened a new downtown business. These types of people are often connected with other like-minded individuals in the community. They likely know others who are operating an at-home business, striving to become a start-up, exploring options for brick-and-mortar locations.

Florence, Alabama has placed an emphasis on growing tech-related businesses in the community. As a starting point a local volunteer group hosted monthly Tech Meetups. They invited tech-related business owners to attend a meet and greet event at a downtown location. These meetups had no structured agenda in the beginning. The only goal was to gather like-minded individuals in the same space in order to spark conversation. These gatherings started small but grew over time as they attracted more attendees. The typical audience was a mixture of established business owners, new start-ups, and future entrepreneurs, all with a similar interest in tech.

This allowed the like-minded businesspeople to meet, establish relationships, and foster the growth of an entrepreneurial network in the community. The relationships allowed participants to connect to resources throughout the community they would not have known about otherwise. Florence identified tech companies as a focus, but meetups could focus on a variety of sectors such as retail, restaurants, and art; or they could target a broad audience centered on sparking business activity downtown.

Hosting regular meetups focused on identifying existing and potential entrepreneurs is a great first step in cultivating an entrepreneurial network and spark growth in the downtown area. The goal is to provide a space for these people to meet, establish a relationship with one another, discuss challenges they are facing, and learn about resources available to them in the community.

These events should be informal and take place in a comfortable, neutral location in the downtown area such as a coffeeshop, restaurant, or meeting space. Government facilities or chamber of commerce offices are not good locations for these types of gatherings. Lunchtime or happy hour are great time frames for these events.

Recommendation

Host monthly/quarterly meet-up events for existing and potential entrepreneurs. These should begin as simple meet-and-greet events and can grow into opportunities for gathering input and hosting guest speakers on specific topics.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Creating Retail-Ready Space

downtown strategies

Recommendation

Work with property owners to encourage development of entrepreneur ready shell space in ground floor of underutilized spaces and vacant properties. Determine opportunities for local incentives from the City of Clayton to accompany this effort.

Expectations have changed

Many property owners are unaware of the changing trends in downtown real estate. In the past, the tenant was responsible for all upgrades and modifications needed to adapt the space for their business needs. However, that trend has flipped. Many small businesses, especially entrepreneurs and start-ups, do not have the financial capital available to fund renovations and improvements to a property. Additionally, they need to open their business as soon as possible and do not have time to wait for costly and time-consuming renovations.

Property owners must be prepared to invest in their buildings and get them ready for a quality tenant. Updated infrastructure (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, etc.) is a necessity in addition to more modern needs such as high speed or fiber internet. Cosmetic updates, such as the "vanilla shell" concept, are the responsibility of the property owner in order to attract a quality tenant. As a rule of thumb, a prospective business should be able to open in a new space within 90 days. Property owners must understand that the days of holding property until a tenant is willing to update the property are over and they must have tenable space ready for potential tenants.



Properties in this type of condition do not allow for a potential tenant to open their business in the next 90 days. Property owners must make their properties tenable in order to recruit high quality tenants.

Creating Retail-Ready Space

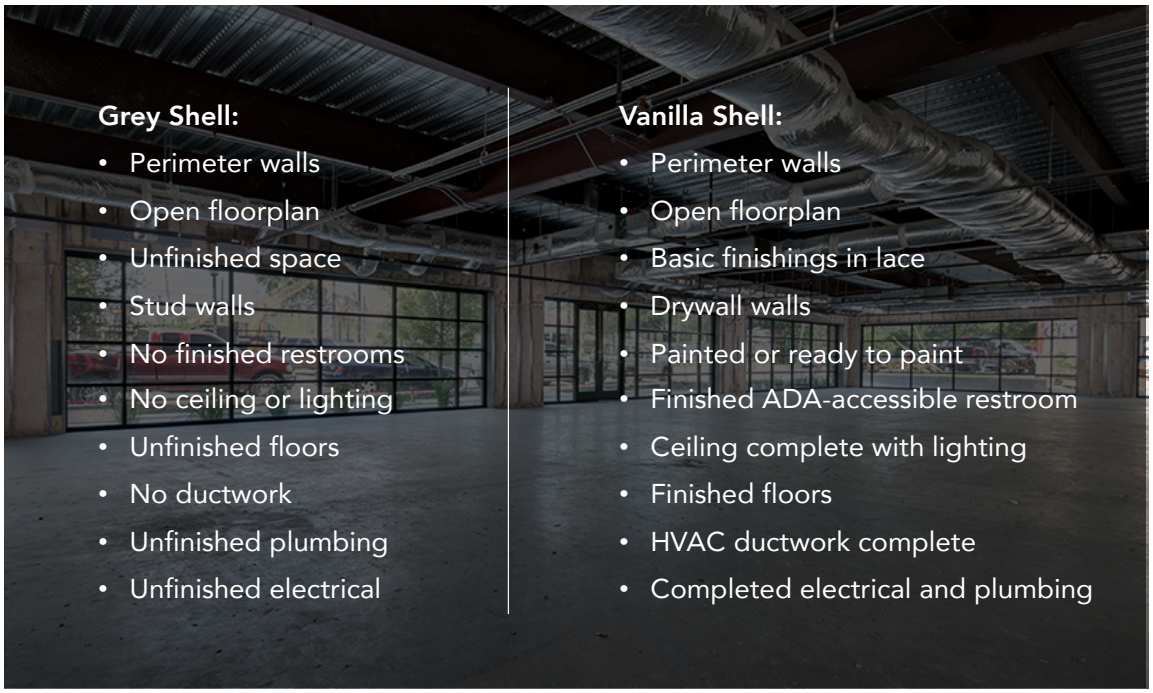
What is Shell Space?

Shell space refers to a suite or floor within a building that has floor, walls, windows and a roof, but no interior improvements. It may also have some basic HVAC, plumbing and electrical.

Types of Shell Space

Downtown property owners must take steps to improve their properties and offer move-in ready or easily customizable spaces in order to attract quality tenants. A **"Grey Shell"** space has basic improvements (structurally sound, sealed roof, appropriate storefront, etc.), but has a relatively raw interior space. This allows the tenant to install or direct the installation of electrical systems, lighting, plumbing, etc. to fit their needs. For example, a restaurant could direct the installation of such systems to fit their seating plan, kitchen, etc.

A **"Vanilla Shell"** is basically a turn-key, move-in-ready space. This property would have all the basics covered as well as an updated interior space. This allows a tenant to move in quickly with limited effort. The tenant contributions are mainly cosmetic and stylistic choices to fit their brand. While Vanilla Shell space limits customization, it allows for a very fast return on investment since tenants are able to move in and open quickly.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

downtown strategies

Almost every downtown wants more retail space but struggles with a lack of available properties. This is typically due to either untenantable spaces, oversized vacant properties, or an overabundance of service industries (attorneys, office space, etc.). Could adding a simple wall solve some of those challenges?

Oversized Spaces

Most pre-WWII buildings in historic downtowns were built using a similar pattern. Average storefronts are typically 25-35' wide and the buildings are 75'-125' deep resulting in an overall square footage of 1,800-4,300 square feet. While these large spaces met the needs of retailers in the past, they are much too large for current retail trends.

Entrepreneurs, start-ups, retailers, and other small business ventures need a much smaller footprint than what has been desired over the past several decades. Larger space equates to larger rent costs and the lack of start-up capital is a barrier to entry for many small businesses. This creates a major challenge for many downtown areas experiencing vacancies or a lack of retail space. As odd as it sounds, downtown properties often have too much space to attract retailers and small businesses.

Current businesses are desperately searching for spaces of less than 1,000 square feet in order to keep their overhead and startup expenses low, but the available downtown building stock is comprised of large spaces, often in need of extensive renovations.





The buildings in Downtown Chewelah, Washington (left), and Sandersville, Georgia (right), both show examples of the typical downtown building footprint. Typical buildings have an average storefront width of 25' and a 100' depth.

Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

How can community leaders combat this challenge of having spaces that are too large to meet current retail trends? A successful short-term strategy that many communities are implementing is using demising walls to break up the large building footprints into a more manageable space for small businesses.

A demising wall is a specially constructed wall that separates two different uses or occupancies. Community leaders can work with property owners to add demising walls to their oversized spaces to create a smaller storefront unit.

There are several benefits to this approach.

- Allow property owners to renovate a small portion of the building rather than expansive renovations.
- Provide small spaces for start-ups and allow for expansion over time.
- Activate vacant storefronts adding vibrancy to the downtown area
- Provide low-cost units for start-up businesses



A typical storefront vacancy in a building that is too large for many modern-day retailers or start-ups.

Storefront Office Space

Many downtowns, especially county seats, struggle with a lack of retail space due to the overabundance of storefront office space. Attorneys, real estate agents, doctors, and other offices are a valuable piece of the downtown fabric because they bring people downtown and add 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. customers. However, they often dominate the storefronts of downtown making it difficult to add retail businesses.

Oftentimes these service industry businesses do not need the large square footage they currently occupy. Some communities have encouraged these businesses to reduce the square footage of their office and add a demising wall to create a small storefront space. This small square footage space adds much needed retail space to the downtown and generates additional revenue for the property owner.

Main Street Alabama worked with several member communities to create a sample pro forma showing the potential revenue that could be generated for the property owners by adding the additional storefront unit. Other incentives such as grant program to fund the addition of demising walls could be implemented to spark to addition of retail space downtown.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

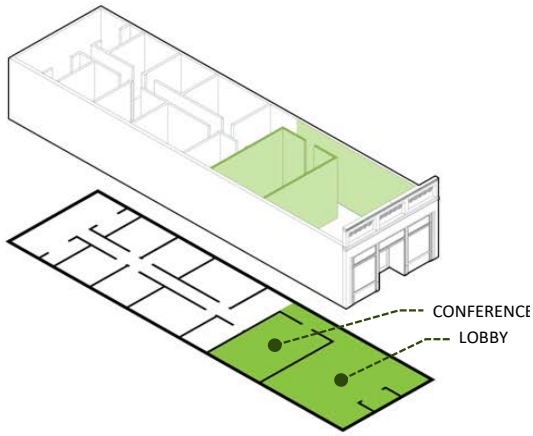
downtown strategies

Example Demising Wall Modifications

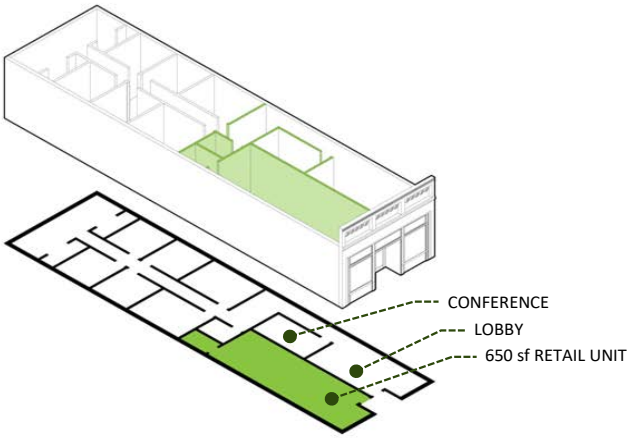
The graphic below illustrates how a demising wall can be used to modify existing building footprints. Two scenarios are shown. **Scenario 1** is an existing office building that occupies the entire building footprint including the storefront. By modifying the underutilized lobby and conference room area with a demising wall, an additional small footprint retail space is created. This additional unit provides revenue for the property owner, offers much needed retail space, and activates the storefront and sidewalk downtown.

Scenario 2 illustrates how a large, vacant building can be modified into a small storefront unit by adding a demising wall. This provides a more affordable space along the storefront and activates a vacant building. This approach allows property owners to phase renovations rather than renovating the entire building at once.

SCENARIO 1

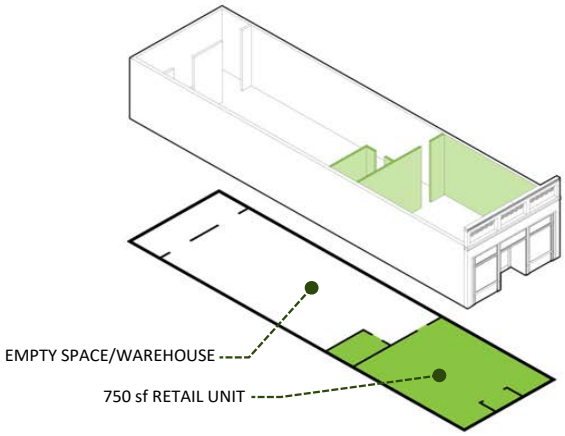


Original Layout: A typical downtown office space with an underutilized lobby area and conference room provides an opportunity to add additional retail space.



Modified Layout: Adding a demising wall to reduce the size of the lobby and conference room adds an additional retail space to the downtown and provides additional income for the property owner.

SCENARIO 2



Oversized Building: An oversized (2,500+ sf) "shell" of a building which is too large for a start-up retail business. A smaller (<1,000 sf) retail space can be added along the storefront.

Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

Micro-Retail

Another trend in downtown areas is the addition of micro-retail space. Micro-retail includes spaces of 50-200 square feet. These spaces offer a very low cost of entry for start-up businesses and can spark activity in downtown areas.

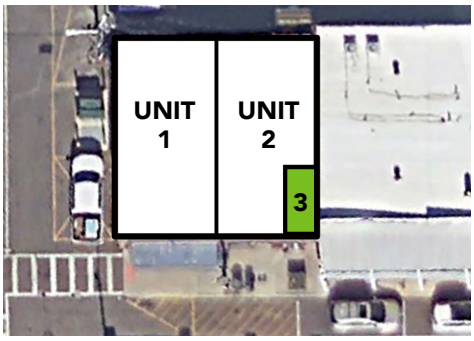
The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a wave of home-based businesses and start-ups, many of which would love to test a brick-and-mortar concept. However, the rent and utility costs of a 1,000+ square foot space is a huge barrier. Adding demising walls to create micro-retail spaces creates units that could attract these types of entrepreneurs.

Where can you find these entrepreneurs? Your local farmers' market or crafts fair often has vendors who make jewelry, clothing, food-based items, etc. and operate in a 10'x10' tent or booth space. They are accustomed to the small square footage and could transition nicely into a permanent space.

Buffalove Development in Buffalo, New York, converted a large downtown building into multiple micro-retail units in order to attract entrepreneurs, makers, and crafters. This concept makes wise use of a large downtown building by utilizing demising walls to create multiple, small units. This adds needed retail space with affordable rents and diversifies the tenants for the property owner. Rather than searching for a single large tenant, the property owner recruits multiple small tenants. (https://www.buffalovedevelopment.com/523-main-street)



A glasses store in Oxford, Mississippi also utilizes a small square footage retail space downtown.







Fresh Ink, a local stationery and paper gifts store in Oxford, Mississippi, occupies a less than 100 sf space. The space was created using a demising wall and divided storefront with the adjacent salon.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

downtown strategies

Recommendation

Encourage property owners to utilize demising walls to create small footprint retail/start-up spaces. This low-cost strategy can be used to modify a large vacant/underutilized building, add flexibility to an existing space, or add retail space to an existing office building while generating revenue for the property owner.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

downtown strategies

Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

The good news about tough economic times is that they breed ingenuity. Property owners and City Leaders need to think "inside the box" –- the vacant storefront, the empty warehouse, or the small office building abandoned by the busted start-up firm.

By thinking short-term instead of long-term lease, entertainment instead of shopping, farmers market instead of vacant lot, that space –- particularly in well located areas –- may be suited to new opportunities.

Short-term Leases

A short-term lease program activates vacant properties by introducing new, creative, and temporary retail locations with visual aesthetic. These programs can create an environment that engages customers and authenticates downtown as a vibrant space, ready for long-term investment.

Pop-ups

One type of short-term lease is a pop-up, featuring leases that usually last between six weeks and a year, with many non-seasonal retailers willing to sign month-to-month leases that could result in long-term tenancy. Rents for pop-up shops tend to be less expensive than those secured by traditional leases, sometimes by as much as 50% below lease value.

Of course, this concept works best when there is little or no space modification necessary. Generally, just adding desks and chairs or some type of display shelving or fixtures is all that is required. These simple additions/changes can be easily implemented or erected and then quickly removed. Modifications are usually not a stumbling block because the tenant wants an easy move-in/move-out phase, and the landlord wants little or no refit between tenants.

Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

Event Space

If the vacant space is located in a central area, property owners can rent the commercial space for private events, until a suitable more permanent tenant is located. In many communities, there's a consistent demand for well-appointed venues for parties and corporate events, and commercial space owners can meet that demand. From fundraisers to art sales to parties to corporate events, vacant commercial property landlords can market their space for a variety of purposes.

Subdividing Ground Floor Storefronts into Smaller Parcels

A smaller retail space means lower overhead costs and allows retailers to quickly move inventory in and out of the store. It also ensures retailers keep their displays fresh and continually try new merchandising tactics. With an initial build-out investment, property owners can reimagine their existing storefront footprint, and subdivide into more, lower square footage spaces, increasing the vitality of the corridor, but also lessening the burden for entrepreneurs.

Reimagining Design of Vacant Space

A smaller retail space means lower overhead costs and allows retailers to quickly Walk-up window restaurants feature no indoor dining space and facilitate a pedestrian-focused grab-and-go style experience. Locating a walk-up window restaurant adjacent to a parklet or a shared outdoor dining space is ideal for using public space in a collaborative way. This technique also backfills vacant space on a micro-level, while preserving non-storefront space for office space or other uses.

Vacancy Taxes/Registries

Local governments, wary of landlords who choose to keep their properties empty — sometimes for months and years in the hopes of landing a deep-pocketed tenant — can respond by enacting financial penalties against these proprietors. Arlington, Massachusetts began its measure in early 2017. It requires landlords to register with the city and charges them $400 annually for each vacant storefront. When the fees were first levied, there were 17 empty storefronts in Arlington Center. Only six remained by the end of the year.

Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

Next Steps

The lack of open stores in neighborhoods decreases property values, which has a trickle effect of less foot traffic and even more vacancies. By keeping your storefront active, even through a short-term commitment, the surrounding area (and rents) will benefit as well.

Remember, recruiting new restaurants and retailers requires a holistic approach to Downtown revitalization and placemaking. Entrepreneurs and expanding businesses want to locate in neighborhoods with vitality and foot traffic. Residents and visitors don't often think to shop or dine in an area with shuttered retail and vacant storefronts. Which comes first and where should community leaders begin?

It begins with a strategic vision to not only identify new prospects for your Downtown, but to also address opportunities for expanding the aesthetic, vitality and vibrancy of the area.

Recommendation

Work with existing property owners with vacancies and underutilized spaces to explore these creative strategies for activating vacant space and supporting entrepreneurship.



6

downtown strategies

Additional Resources

downtown strategies

A Guide to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

The following is an article found while researching BIDs in North Carolina written by Kara Millonzi at the University of North Carolina School of Government. This resources is included as a supplement to the strategy outlined in the Policy and Administration chapter.

UNC SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Coates' Canons NC Local Government Law

A Guide to Business Improvement Districts in North Carolina

Published: 04/01/10

Author Name: Kara Millonzi



A city's governing board wishes to support and promote its downtown area. It wants to install sidewalks and street lighting. It wants to renovate the storefronts that line its main street. It wants to hire personnel to provide additional security in the area. It wants to invest in downtown art initiatives and other beautification projects. It wants to sponsor a series of festivals and markets in the city center. Finally, it wants to aggressively market its downtown area and local businesses. But how can the city pay for it all?

The city can use its property tax proceeds or other unrestricted revenue sources to fund most, if not all, of these activities in its downtown area. The city also can accept voluntary donations from the commercial entities located in its downtown area to support these expenditures. But, can the city compel the commercial and other entities located within the downtown area to fund all of these activities? The answer to this question is yes. And the mechanism for doing so is to establish a special taxing district.

G.S. Ch. 160A, Art. 23 (Municipal Service District Act), implements **Section 2(4) of Article 5 of the North Carolina Constitution**, which authorizes a local government to define special areas (districts) in order to assess additional *ad valorem* property taxes on properties located within the districts to fund projects and services in the districts. Specifically, the Municipal Service District Act allows North Carolina municipalities to establish special taxing districts to fund, among a handful of other services or functions, *downtown revitalization projects*. (Note that counties have **similar authority** to establish special taxing districts to fund certain services

or functions, but that authority does not include downtown revitalization projects.) When a city establishes a special taxing district for the purpose of financing downtown revitalization projects, it is commonly referred to as a Business Improvement District or BID.

The following are answers to frequently asked questions about setting up, financing, and providing services within a BID.

1. What services or projects may be provided within a BID?

G.S. 160A-536(b) defines *downtown revitalization* by providing a non-exclusive list of projects that can be supported with the special tax revenue in a city's downtown area. In practice, downtown revitalization projects include a wide variety of activities—including enhanced maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and other public facilities; downtown marketing and promotion; presentation of special downtown events; management of downtown parking; promotion of downtown business location and expansion; and construction of capital improvements.

2. How are a BID's boundaries established?

A city's governing board has broad discretion to draw BID boundaries within its downtown area. As a general rule of thumb, however, BIDs should include only properties that will benefit from the additional services provided in the district. There are a series of procedural steps a governing board must follow to establish a BID (**outlined here**), which include certain notice provisions and a public hearing. There is no petition or referendum requirement, though.

3. How is a BIDs financed?

In North Carolina a municipal service district is a property tax district. The city may levy an *ad valorem* (property) tax within the BID in addition to the citywide *ad valorem* property tax, the proceeds of which finance additional services or projects provided in the district.

The BID property tax (BID tax) is levied on the same tax base, within the district, on which the citywide property tax is levied. The property tax base includes real and personal property. The same exemptions apply to assessing a BID property tax as apply to the citywide property tax.

In addition to the BID tax proceeds, a city may allocate to a BID any other unrestricted revenue.

4. May the city levy different BID tax rates within a BID?

No. The BID tax rate must be uniform throughout a BID. If differential rates are desired for different parts of the downtown, different BIDs must be established.

5. May the city exempt certain property in a BID from the BID tax (for example, residential property)?

No. Only the General Assembly may exempt or otherwise classify property subject to the *ad valorem* property tax.

The same exemptions apply to a BID tax as apply to the citywide *ad valorem* property tax. For example, government property and property held for educational, scientific, literary, cultural, charitable, or religious purposes are exempt from the citywide property tax and, therefore, are exempt from a BID tax. Additionally, the personal property of any public service corporation is exempt from a BID tax.

Note that, to the extent possible, many cities draw BID boundary lines so as to exclude residential property because the units may not exempt these properties from a BID tax.

6. Are there any limits on a BID tax rate?

The BID tax rate, combined with the property tax rate(s) levied citywide, may not exceed $1.50 per $100 valuation, unless approved by a majority of the qualified voters residing in the district. (For more information on levying *ad valorem* property taxes, click **here**.)

7. Once a BID is established and becomes effective, when must services be provided in the district?

Pursuant to **G.S. 160A-540**, once a BID becomes effective, the city must "provide, maintain, or let contracts for the services for which the residents of the district are being taxed within a reasonable time, not to exceed one year."

8. May a city create a BID that does not take effect until a future fiscal year?

Likely yes. **G.S. 160A-537** states that "[t]he resolution defining a service district shall take effect at the beginning of a fiscal year commencing after its passage, as determined by the city council . . . ." Thus, the governing board likely may specify in the resolution creating the BID that it will take effect in a future fiscal year. The BID must take effect at the beginning of a fiscal year, though.

9. Does the BID have borrowing authority?

No. A BID is a special taxing district only. It does not have borrowing authority.

A city may issue bonds or financing instruments, the proceeds of which are used solely to finance services within a BID. However, if the city proposes to issue General Obligation bonds to provide services solely within a BID (and the bonds are going to be retired with BID tax revenue), the bond issuance must be approved by the majority of citizens in the city *and* by a majority of the citizens within the existing or proposed BID.

10. May a city contract with a private organization or entity to manage a BID?

Yes. A city may provide services within the BID itself, or it may contract with another governmental agency or a private agency to provide the services.

Contracts with other governmental or private agencies must specify the purposes for which the funds must be used and require an accounting for the expenditure of the funds.

11. May a city appoint a citizen advisory board for a BID?

Yes. A city may appoint a citizen advisory board for a BID. The city may grant the advisory board some powers; however, the city must maintain final authority over the use of a BID's funds. The city's governing board is not legally bound by an advisory board's recommendations.

12. Once it is established and becomes effective, may a city's governing board extend the boundaries of a BID to include additional property?

Yes. The city's governing board may add territory to an existing BID if the area to be added is contiguous to the district and the new area requires the services that are provided in the district. (At least one eighth of the new area's aggregate external boundary must be coincident with the existing boundary of the BID.)

The city's governing board also may extend the boundaries of a BID if it receives a petition signed by 100 percent of the real property owners of the area to be added to the BID.

13. Once a BID is established and becomes effective, may property be removed from the district?

Yes. The city's governing board may adopt a resolution to redefine a BID by removing property that no longer needs the services provided in the BID.

14. Once a BID is established and becomes effective, may it be abolished?

Yes. The city's governing board may adopt a resolution abolishing a BID if it finds that it is no longer needed. If a BID is abolished, any unexpended BID tax proceeds must be expended for the purposes for which the BID was established. The BID tax proceeds may not be transferred to the general fund or expended for any other purpose.

15. What about commercial areas outside a city's downtown area, may a city establish one or more BIDs in these areas to support increased services or special projects?

Yes, under certain circumstances. **G.S. 160A-536** lists all the purposes for which a municipal service district may be established. In addition to downtown revitalization projects, the statute includes *urban area revitalization projects. Urban area* is defined to include an area that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- It is the central business district of the city.
- It consists primarily of existing or redeveloping concentrations of industrial, retail, wholesale, office, or significant employment-generating uses, or any combination of these uses.
- It is located in or along a major transportation corridor and does not include any residential parcels that are not, at their closest point, within 150 feet of the major transportation corridor right-of-way or any nonresidentially zoned parcels that are not, at their closest point, within 1,500 feet of the major transportation corridor right-of-way.
- It has as its center and focus a major concentration of public or institutional uses, such as airports, seaports, colleges or universities, hospitals and health care facilities, or governmental facilities.

If an area within the city meets one or more of these criteria, the city's governing board may establish a municipal service district and provide in the urban area district any service or facility that may be provided in a downtown area as a downtown revitalization project. (Note that the General Assembly expanded this authority to apply to all municipalities in 2009. *See* **S.L. 2009-385**.)

For information on funding capital projects in a BID, click **here**.

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Samples of Tax Abatement Grant Programs in North Carolina

Smithfield, North Carolina and **Rocky Mount, North Carolina** have employed a grant program designed similar to a traditional tax abatement program. Copies of their program guidelines and policies are included as a resource related to the recommendation included in the Policy and Administration chapter.

Smithfield Historic Area Revitalization Plan
SHARP Grant

Initiative

The purpose of the Smithfield Historic Area Revitalization Plan SHARP Grant is to encourage the rehabilitation of older buildings and/or promote infill growth with new commercial development in Downtown Smithfield Municipal Service/Historic District

1. Proposed development plans are presented to the Town of Smithfield Planning Department, the office of the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation, Smithfield Historic Commission.
2. If approved, documentation from the developer is signed stated project would not have been considered had it not been for the SHARP Grant.
3. Appraised tax value of site or building is determined by Johnston County Tax Office before renovation/construction begins (current).
4. Appraised tax value of site or building is determined by the Johnston County Tax Office after renovations/construction is completed.
5. Developer pays full amount of newly appraised tax value of property annually.
6. Johnston County, Town of Smithfield, and Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation "grant" property owner the amount of property taxes paid, minus the original tax value payment before the renovation/construction began.
7. 5 years is the proposed grant time period.
8. On 6th year, developer will pay full amount of the newly appraised tax value of the property without grant.

Example:

Empty 1 acre of land or vacant building - $50,000 tax value
.78 = $390 Annual Johnston County Tax
.57 = $285 Annual Town of Smithfield Tax
.19 = $95 Annual Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation MSD Tax
$770 Total Annual Tax (Before Development)

Completed development - $1,000,000 Construction/Development - $750,000 tax value
.78 = $5,850 Annual Johnston County Tax
.57 = $4,275 Annual Town of Smithfield Tax
.19 = $1,425 Annual Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation (DSDC) MSD Tax
$11,550 Total Annual Tax (After Development)

Grant Proposal
Under above example, owner pays $11,550 annually in County, Town and MSD Taxes
Owner is then "granted" back annually $10,780 ($11,550-$770) for 5 years. = **$53,900 Total Grant**

Please submit all inquiries regarding the SHARP Grant to:

Sarah Edwards
Executive Director
200 S. Front Street
Smithfield, NC 27577
(919) 934-0887
sarah@downtownsmithfield.com

ROCKY MOUNT, NC
THE CENTER OF IT ALL

ROCKY MOUNT DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GRANT

POLICY GUIDELINES

Purpose

The purpose of the Rocky Mount Downtown Development Incentive Grant (DIG) is to encourage reinvestment in Downtown Rocky Mount. The program covers substantial rehabilitation[1] of older buildings and new infill development. The initiative covers the shaded area on the attached map, which is roughly bounded by Church Street, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue, South Washington Street and Hammond Street. Incentive grants are given yearly for five (5) years.

Grant Incentive

The grant is available over five years, representing a percentage of the difference of the parcel(s) improved assessed value and previous, unimproved assessed value. The Development Incentive Grant (DIG) amount per year will be a percentage of this formula as follows: Year 1: 100%, Year 2: 80%, Year 3: 60%, Year 4: 40% and Year 5: 20%. Where applicable, the amount paid for the Municipal Services District (MSD) of $.20 per $100 in property valuation is also included in the DIG. Since the tax rate and/or property valuation may change during the five year grant period, the base grant amount will be recalculated each year. The percentage of the base grant amount, which steps down from 100% to 20%, is fixed.

Nash County
For the 2018-19 Fiscal Year, the tax rate established by Nash County is $0.67 per $100 property valuation.

Rocky Mount
For the 2018-19 Fiscal Year, the tax rate established by the City of Rocky Mount is $0.685 per $100 property valuation, and $0.20 per $100 property valuation for the Municipal Service District (MSD,) where applicable.

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[1] Substantial rehabilitation is defined as a rehabilitation that will cost at minimum $40 per square foot, make habitable/usable at least one floor of the building and at least triple the predevelopment tax value.

Edgecombe County

For the 2018-19 Fiscal Year, the tax rate established by Edgecombe County is $0.95 per $100 property valuation.

Development Incentive Grant (DIG)

1. Proposed development/rehabilitation plans and a program pre-application are submitted to the City of Rocky Mount Downtown Development Manager. The Downtown Development Manager will circulate the plans and pre-application to other City departments, including the Planning Department and the City Manager's Office, for an initial review. Once the pre-application is conditionally approved, architectural and/or site plans and/or Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application must be submitted with all costs paid.

2. The appraised tax value of the site(s) or building(s) will be certified by the corresponding County's tax office. This is referred to as the "unimproved assessed value".

3. At the same time of issuance of the building permit by the City of Rocky Mount Inspections Division, the DIG application will be formally approved by way of a letter of acceptance into the program transmitted by the City for the City and the corresponding County.
4. Construction must be completed and a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) received within 24 months of the date of the building permit/program acceptance letter. Failure to receive the CO by this date will terminate program participation.

5. The appraised tax value of site or building is determined by the corresponding County's tax office after renovations/construction is completed. This is also referred to as the "improved assessed value".

6. Annually the developer/owner pays the full amount of the newly appraised tax value on the property/development. Payment must be received no later than January 6 of any given year. Failure to pay by this date will terminate program participation.

7. The corresponding County and the City will make Incentive Grant payments to the property owner for the tax amount paid, minus the original, predevelopment tax value. Development Incentive Grant checks will be issued within ninety (90) days of receipt of the full tax payment by the City and the corresponding County. One check will be made by the City and the other by the corresponding County.

8. In the event that there is a county property revaluation, as currently occurs every eight years, during a property's five year DIG period, the subsequent

years in the grant program will be increased or lowered according to the new tax value. The constant will continue to be the pre-development tax value.

9. On the sixth year, the owner will pay the full amount of the newly appraised tax value of the property without the benefit of the grant.

10. Program parameters will be revisited yearly and are subject to change for new participants in the program.

DIG Program Requirements

The following requirements apply to the program:

1. The property must be within the DIG Area as defined on the attached map.

2. Any residential, commercial or mixed-use property within the project area is eligible to apply.

3. The applicant must be the property owner and taxpayer for the property.

4. Projects must undergo substantial rehabilitation: *Defined as rehabilitation that will cost at minimum $40 per square foot, make habitable/usable at least one floor of the building and at least triple the predevelopment tax value.*

5. The grant is also available for new construction deemed to be in character and consistent with requirements in the City of Rocky Mount Land Development Code (LDC) and with the approval of the HPC if located within the Central City Local Historic District.

6. Any project that has not already received a building permit will be eligible to make application to the City of Rocky Mount to participate in the DIG program once adopted.

7. Structures must meet North Carolina and local building codes as approved by the local building inspector and obtain out all required permits from the City of Rocky Mount Inspections Division.

8. To receive the DIG, the property must be current on both City and County taxes from the time that the pre-application is made until all grant funds are paid. If any tax payments are missed or received late (after January 6, when interest begins) for the property, program participation will be terminated.

9. Applications will be administered by the City of Rocky Mount and must be in full compliance with the requirements of the DIG.

10. The project must be completed and receive a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) within 24 months of approval/acceptance into the program. If it is not completed within this timeframe, program participation will be terminated.

11. If the property is sold, in order to receive the remaining years of incentive grants in the program, per the original agreement, the new owner must submit in writing to the Downtown Development Manager to request the remaining grant payments. The new owner must also include the following with the request letter: a current list of owners/partners; a copy of the deed of sale and the settlement statement (HUD 1) from the closing.

12. Note: the term of the grant will not restart. The new owner is entitled to grant payments for the balance of years as approved for the property in the original application.

13. The DIG amount will be recalculated yearly and will reflect any valuation changes to the property through damage, further improvement and/or areawide re-assessment. The constants of the program will remain the term and percentage of the base grant amount and the preconstruction unimproved assessed value.

14. If the property is located in Nash County and the owner pays the County portion of the taxes before September 1st., and receives the 1% discount for paying early, the grant amount will be formulated by using the actual amount paid, not the full amount due after September 1st.

DIG Example

Note: Below tax rates and amounts represent 2018-19 figures. The tax rate, and consequently the yearly tax amount, may change in future years. The constant will be the pre-development tax value. After Year 1, regardless of the change in valuation, the DIG amount will be a percentage (80%, 60%, 40% and 20%) of the current tax payment less the pre-development tax amount.

Example: Located in Nash County and in the Municipal Services District (MSD), an unrenovated two story building with a $50,000 tax value:

$0.670 =$335.00 annual county tax
$0.685 =$342.50 annual city tax
$0.200 =$100.00 annual MSD tax
$777.50 Total Annual Tax (Before Development)

Proposed development – Construction/Development – $350,000 Tax Value

$0.670 =$2,345.00 annual county tax
$0.685 =$2,397.50 annual city tax
$0.200 =$ 700.00 annual MSD tax
$5,442.50 Total Annual Tax (After Development)

Grant Formula, Example

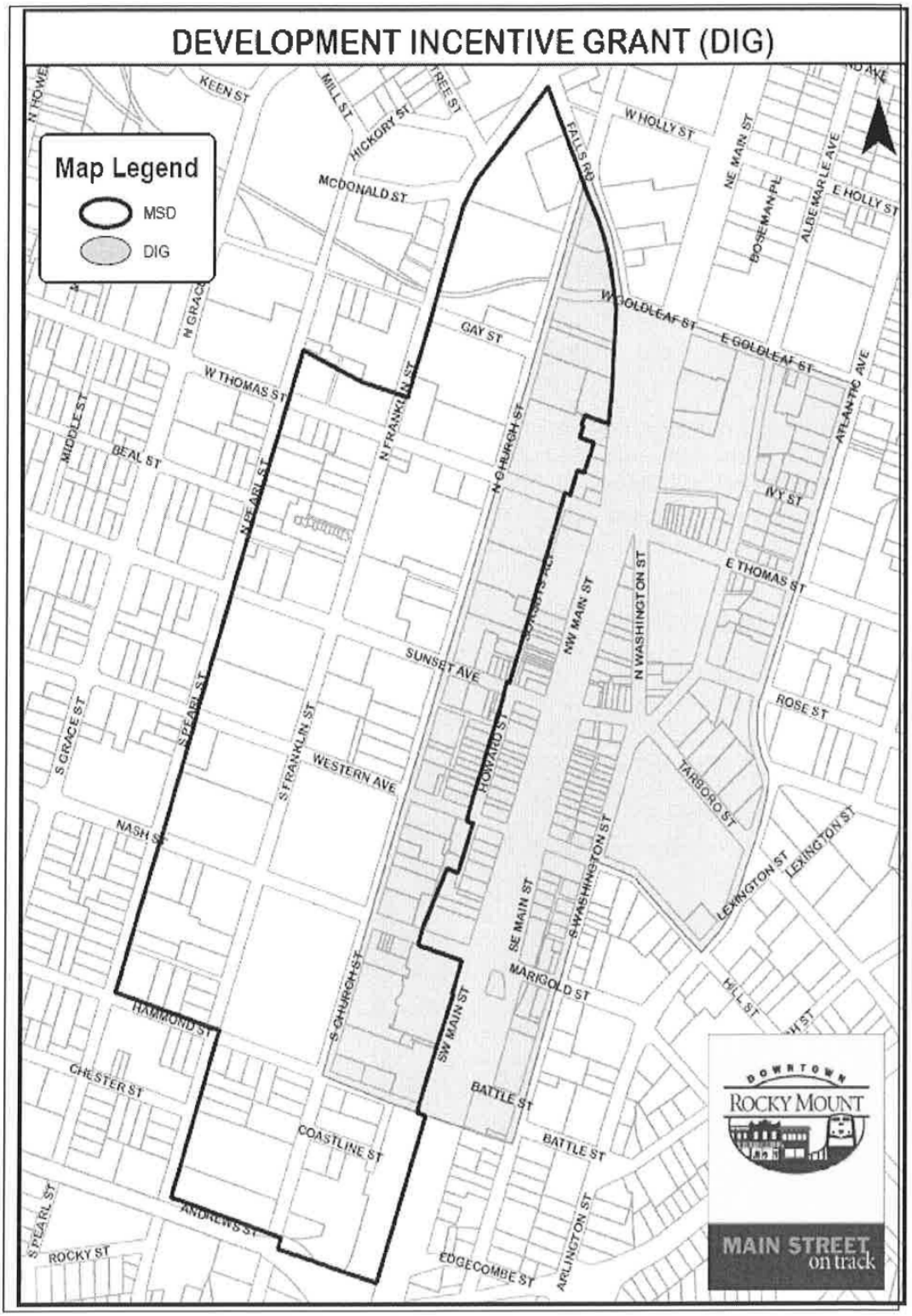
Under above example, owner pays $5,442.50 annually in both City and County Taxes and owner is given a Year One grant of $4,665.00.

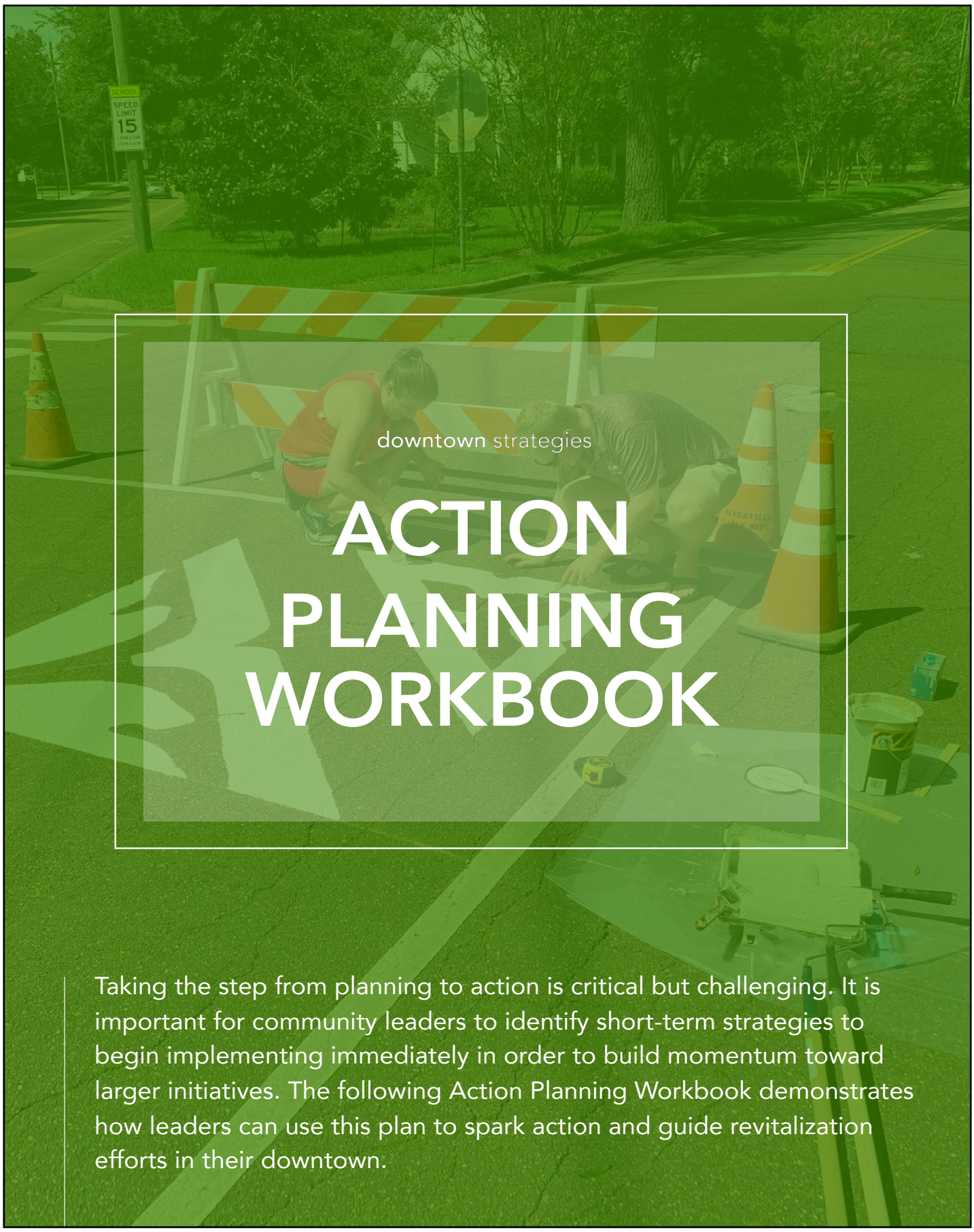
$5,442.50 new tax amount
- $777.50 pre-development tax amount
$4,665.00 Year One Incentive Grant Amount

The grant is available over five years, representing a percentage of the difference of the property's improved assessed value and previous, unimproved assessed value. The property tax incentive grant amount would be as follows: Year 1: 100% or $4,665.00; Year 2: 80% or $3,732.00; Year 3: 60% or $2,799.00; Year 4: 40% or $1,866.00, and Year 5: 20% or $931.00.

Program Benefits to the City of Rocky Mount and Twin Counties:

- Immediate Water/Sewer/Electric/Gas sales
- Reducing "White Elephant" buildings or blight
- Supporting locally owned businesses/citizens
- Supporting "Smart Growth"
- Utilizing existing Infrastructure
- Increased property values of neighboring buildings
- Counties and Cities commonly have this available for industrial development


DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GRANT (DIG)
Map Legend
MSD
DIG
KEEN ST
MILL ST
HICKORY ST
MCDONALD ST
FALLS RD
W HOLLY ST
NE MAIN ST
E HOLLY ST
ALBEMARLE AVE
BOSEMAN PL
W GOLDLEAF ST
E GOLDLEAF ST
GAY ST
ATLANTIC AVE
W THOMAS ST
MIDDLE ST
BEAL ST
N FRANKLIN ST
N CHURCH ST
IVY ST
E THOMAS ST
NW MAIN ST
N WASHINGTON ST
SUNSET AVE
ROSE ST
S GRACE ST
S PEARL ST
S FRANKLIN ST
WESTERN AVE
HOWARD ST
TARBORO ST
NASH ST
LEXINGTON ST
SE MAIN ST
S WASHINGTON ST
MARIGOLD ST
S CHURCH ST
SW MAIN ST
HAMMOND ST
CHESTER ST
BATTLE ST
COASTLINE ST
ANDREWS ST
ROCKY ST
EDGECOMBE ST
ARLINGTON ST
DOWNTOWN ROCKY MOUNT
MAIN STREET on track



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ACTION PLANNING WORKBOOK

Taking the step from planning to action is critical but challenging. It is important for community leaders to identify short-term strategies to begin implementing immediately in order to build momentum toward larger initiatives. The following Action Planning Workbook demonstrates how leaders can use this plan to spark action and guide revitalization efforts in their downtown.



From Ideas to Action

Downtown Strategies strives to provide realistic, implementable strategies to communities for revitalizing their downtowns. Our process is based on our team's experience as former downtown revitalization practitioners and real estate experts. Our combination of real-world experience, plus expertise in real estate and retail uniquely qualify us to assist communities with backfilling vacancies, increasing tourism, and enhancing the sense of place in their downtowns.

At Downtown Strategies, we believe that action and implementation are more important than a flashy 20-year vision. Our team members have been in your shoes as community leaders in their own hometowns and know what it is like to manage downtown revitalization efforts.

Most communities do not suffer from a lack of ideas, they struggle with knowing where to start when it comes to implementing those ideas. Rather than brainstorming everything that you could ever potentially do to your downtown, we focus on a five-year timeframe. This plan is designed to help you identify where your community should focus its energy and effort in the near-term. Implementing these short-term, doable strategies will incrementally shift the trajectory of your downtown and create the spark that you desire.

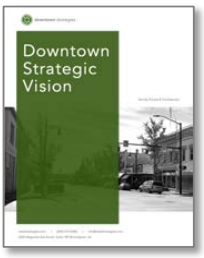


Downtown Strategies developed the Action Planning Workbook to assist community leaders make the link between planning and action. Follow the steps below to activate your plan and bring the ideas to life. If you and your team focuses on relentlessly "doing the doable," you will see a dramatic change over the next five years.

Downtown Strategic Vision fo

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Where to Start?



Now that you have received the 5-Year Strategic Vision from Downtown Strategies, it is time to get to work! While brainstorming ideas is fun, the real excitement comes from taking action and making improvements in your downtown. Communities who have had success revitalizing their downtown began by organizing and mobilizing a team of volunteers and empowering them to lead various initiatives. Follow the following steps to organize and mobilize your team!

1

FORM ACTION TEAMS centered around 4 Pillars (4-8 core members per team):

- Policy & Administration
- Design
- Tourism & Promotion
- Economic Vitality

2

Each team member should **REVIEW THE STRATEGIES** in their chapter of the plan.

- Executive Summary provides a bulleted list of recommendations organized by timeline (immediate, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, 5 years+)
- Rec Sheets within the document provide a more detailed overview of the topic and additional resources

3

RANK THE STRATEGIES

- Rank which strategies are the most attainable based on the team's current access to resources (not a "wish list")
- First, each Action Team member should rank the strategies themselves
- Then tally the rankings for all Action Team members to create a collaborative ranking for the team

4

Each Action Team should **SELECT 1 STRATEGY** to implement over the next 12 months

- Many teams attempt to tackle multiple initiatives at once, quickly get overwhelmed, and struggle to accomplish their goals
- It is important to start small and have immediate success which will build momentum toward larger initiatives
- Select a strategy that will be the easiest to implement based on the team members' capacity, skills, expertise, and resources
- Team members should vote on what they feel is the best recommendation that meets the criteria then simply tally the votes to identify the top selection

5

MAP THE PROJECT

- As a team, map the major steps, timeline, additional partnerships, and resources needed to complete the project using the Downtown Strategies Project Mapping Worksheet

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Each Action Team should work together to map the project that they selected from the Strategic Plan. The following Project Mapping process is a step-by-step exercise to create a thorough outline for the project and appropriate action steps to move the team forward immediately.

Task Force Focus: (circle)

Policy & Administration **Design** **Tourism & Promotion** **Economic Vitality**

Step 1: Identify Challenges & Solutions

1.1 Current Challenge: What challenge is your downtown currently facing that are you attempting to address?
(1-3 sentences)

1.2 Project Idea: How do you plan to address this challenge? What is your project idea?
(1-2 sentences)

1.3 Deadline: When will you achieve your target?
(specific date as a deadline)

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 2: Market & Promote Your Efforts

2.1 Project Name: There is power in a name. A creative project name can create energy and catch the attention of potential partners and volunteers. A creative name can help tell your story and market your project. Be fun and creative!

2.2 Elevator Pitch: As you begin downtown revitalization efforts, it is important to efficiently communicate your plans to prospective partners and volunteers. You should be able to explain the need for your project and your idea quickly and effectively. A common exercise is to pretend you are on an elevator with a prospective partner. You should be able to explain your entire project during that 30-second elevator ride.

Use the information from this worksheet to fill in the blanks and create your 30-second "Elevator Pitch."

Downtown Community Name **is facing the challenge of**

Current challenge listed in 1.1

We are working to address this challenge through a project called

Project name listed in 2.1 **which is**

Project description listed in 1.2

We are working to complete this initiative by Project deadline from 1.3

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 3: Identify Resources & Partners

3.1 What do we have? | What do we need? Briefly listing the resources that you currently have access to that will move this project forward allows the team to gauge how attainable the project is at this time. If the "What do we need?" column is longer than the list of current resources, the team may need to regroup and select a project that can be accomplished with the list of existing resources.

	What we **have**:
Materials:	
People:	
Funding:	
Other:	

	What we **need**:	Cost:
Materials:		
People:		
Funding:		
Other:		

3.2 Community Partners: In addition to your team members, you may need assistance from other people, groups, or institutions in the community that have specific knowledge, skills, or abilities to advance your project. Having an idea of the different resources available to you within your community is important as you work to successfully complete your project.

Please use the following table to list some of the different resources in your community that could potentially assist the team with their project. The list should include a specific point of contact if possible.

Only list resources not currently represented on your Action Team.

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 3: Identify Resources & Partners

3.2 Community Partners (continued)

People

You may need to enlist the assistance of other people in the community who have a particular skill that is not available on your current team. For example, you may need a graphics designer to assist with designing a pamphlet or the city engineer to assist with a permit.

Name	Resources they bring - How they will help

Civic Groups & Associations

Civic Groups & Associations are volunteer groups that work to improve the community in some way. Examples of associations are Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, Garden Clubs, and the Rotary Club among others.

Name	Resources they bring - How they will help

Community Institutions

Community Institutions are formalized and structured organizations or non-profit that serve the needs of the community. Examples of institutions are the chamber of commerce, Main Street organization, Economic Development organization, government agencies, schools, churches, and foundations.

Name	Resources they bring - How they will help

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 4: Develop an Action Plan

4.1 Key Steps: List 5 key steps that need to be achieved in order to stay on track and complete the project. This is not a list of detailed items, rather a few big-picture milestone steps that need to be accomplished.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4.2 Action Plans: Action Plans allow teams to clearly communicate tasks, build accountability among the group, and create a manageable bite-sized road map for implementing projects. In an action plan, members of the group take responsibility for specific "to-do" items. It is important for each team member to play a role in the process rather than a couple of people doing all the work. A small step together is more impactful in the long term than a couple of individuals running the entire race. Each team member should commit to completing at least one task over the next 30 days.

Successful teams constantly communicate with each other and stay in contact throughout the project. Typically, teams meet at least every 30 days to discuss what has been done over the past 30 days and then look ahead to what needs to be done over the next 30 days. During each meeting, the team should discuss what needs to be done to move the project forward over the next 30 days and every team members should commit to new action steps each time.

Use the following Action Plan table to outline the tasks that each team member will complete over the next month.

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 4: Develop an Action Plan

4.2 Action Plans (continued)

Name	Task	Deliverable	Deadline
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

TIP: You can use this table to guide each Action Team meeting. At the beginning of each meeting review the table from the last meeting. Then use a blank table to assign tasks that should be completed prior to the next meeting.

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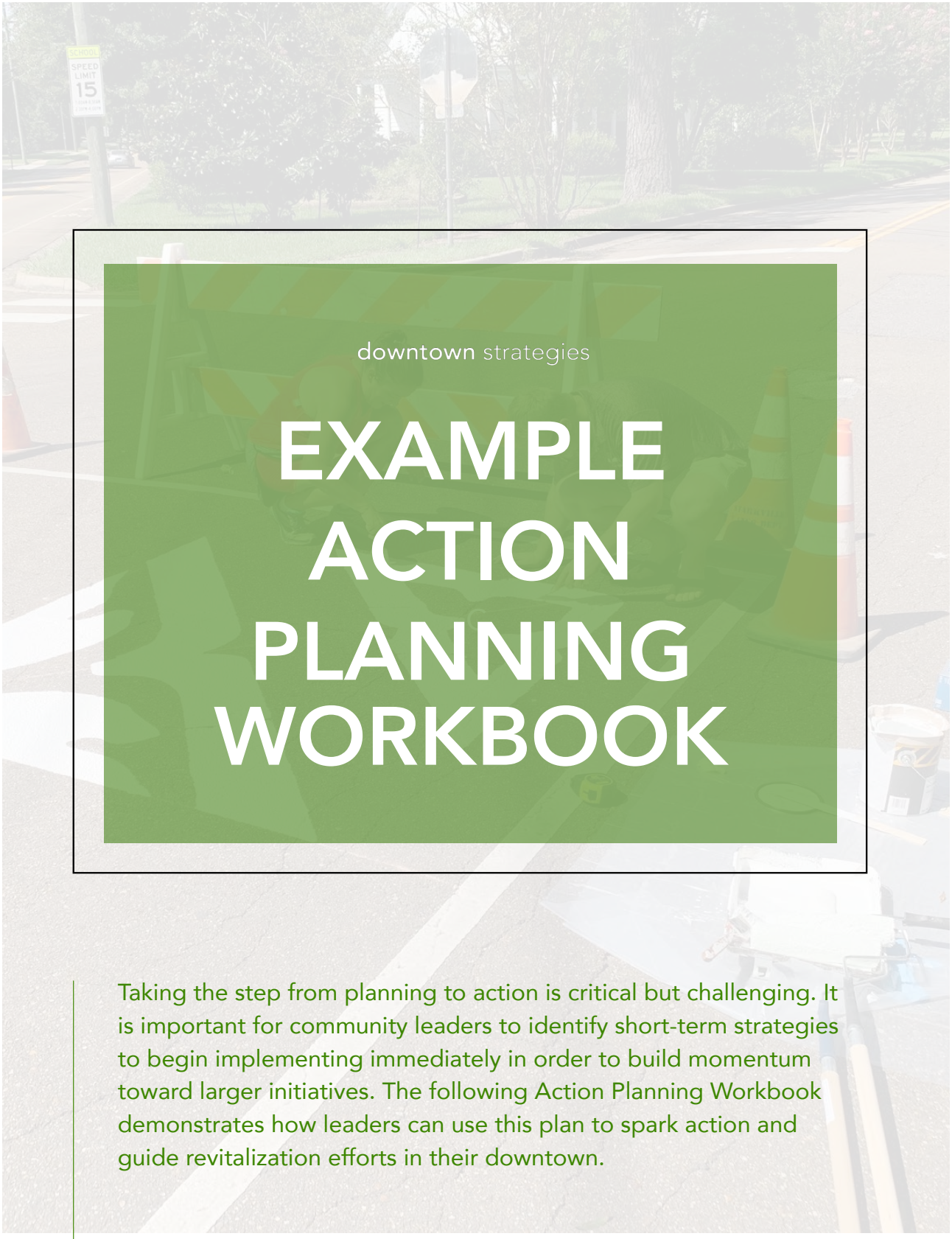
Project Mapping Summary

Task Force:

Project Name:

Elevator Pitch:

Team Members:



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EXAMPLE ACTION PLANNING WORKBOOK

Taking the step from planning to action is critical but challenging. It is important for community leaders to identify short-term strategies to begin implementing immediately in order to build momentum toward larger initiatives. The following Action Planning Workbook demonstrates how leaders can use this plan to spark action and guide revitalization efforts in their downtown.

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Each Action Team should work together to map the project that they selected from the Strategic Plan. The following Project Mapping process is a step-by-step exercise to create a thorough outline for the project and appropriate action steps to move the team forward immediately.

Task Force Focus: (circle)

Policy & Administration **Design** **Tourism & Promotion** **Economic Vitality**

Step 1: Identify Challenges & Solutions

1.1 Current Challenge: What challenge is your downtown currently facing that are you attempting to address?
(1-3 sentences)

We need to recruit new businesses to our vacant downtown storefronts and buildings.

1.2 Project Idea: How do you plan to address this challenge? What is your project idea?
(1-2 sentences)

Develop a business recruitment packet designed to provide a snapshot of all incentives and resources available to entrepreneurs and businesses owners wanting to locate downtown.

1.3 Deadline: When will you achieve your target?
(specific date as a deadline)

January 2023

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 2: Market & Promote Your Efforts

2.1 Project Name: There is power in a name. A creative project name can create energy and catch the attention of potential partners and volunteers. A creative name can help tell your story and market your project. Be fun and creative!

Open for Business!

2.2 Elevator Pitch: As you begin downtown revitalization efforts, it is important to efficiently communicate your plans to prospective partners and volunteers. You should be able to explain the need for your project and your idea quickly and effectively. A common exercise is to pretend you are on an elevator with a prospective partner. You should be able to explain your entire project during that 30-second elevator ride.

Use the information from this worksheet to fill in the blanks and create your 30-second "Elevator Pitch." You can wordsmith and fine-tune the paragraph later.

Downtown Columbus **is facing the challenge of**

needing to recruit new businesses to our vacant downtown storefronts and buildings.

We are working to address this challenge through a project called

"Open for Business!" **which is**

A business recruitment packet designed to provide a snapshot of all incentives and resources available to entrepreneurs and businesses owners wanting to locate downtown.

We are working to complete this initiative by January 2023

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 3: Identify Resources & Partners

3.1 What do we have? | What do we need? Briefly listing the resources that you currently have access to that will move this project forward allows the team to gauge how attainable the project is at this time. If the "What do we need?" column is longer than the list of current resources, the team may need to regroup and select a project that can be accomplished with the list of existing resources.

	What we **have**:
Materials:	
People:	• Jane, Chamber board president • Jim, Bank One • Jamie, Entrepreneur
Funding:	$800 Chamber funding
Other:	

	What we **need**:	Cost:
Materials:	• Folders • Flash Drives • Professional printing?	• $100 • $200 • ? Quote needed
People:	• Ann, City Administrator • Betsy, Graphic Designer	• N/A • TBD
Funding:	• Professional printing costs	• TBD
Other:		

3.2 Community Partners: In addition to your team members, you may need assistance from other people, groups, or institutions in the community that have specific knowledge, skills, or abilities to advance your project. Having an idea of the different resources available to you within your community is important as you work to successfully complete your project.

Please use the following table to list some of the different resources in your community that could potentially assist the team with their project. The list should include a specific point of contact if possible.

Only list resources not currently represented on your Action Team.

downtown strategies

Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 3: Identify Resources & Partners

3.2 Community Partners (continued)

People

You may need to enlist the assistance of other people in the community who have a particular skill that is not available on your current team. For example, you may need a graphics designer to assist with designing a pamphlet or the city engineer to assist with a permit.

Name	Resources they bring - How they will help
Ann, City Administrator	List of existing city incentives
Bob, Small Business Development Center	List of resources commonly needed by entrepreneurs
Judy, East Community College Entrepreneurship Center	List of resources offered by E-center
Betsy, Graphic Designer	Design layout of the packet

Civic Groups & Associations

Civic Groups & Associations are volunteer groups that work to improve the community in some way. Examples of associations are Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, Garden Clubs, and the Rotary Club among others.

Name	Resources they bring - How they will help
Rotary Club (Bill F, president)	Network of business owners (experience)

Community Institutions

Community Institutions are formalized and structured organizations or non-profit that serve the needs of the community. Examples of institutions are the chamber of commerce, Main Street organization, Economic Development organization, government agencies, schools, churches, and foundations.

Name	Resources they bring - How they will help
Main Street Association (Allie, Director)	Network of local businesses & available property

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 4: Develop an Action Plan

4.1 Key Steps: List 5 key steps that need to be achieved in order to stay on track and complete the project. This is not a list of detailed items, rather a few big-picture milestone steps that need to be accomplished.

1. Schedule listening sessions with 3 newly opened businesses to learn what they wish they had known before opening in our community.
2. Outline content needed for the packet
3. Research options, costs, and design criteria of professional printers for the hard copy packets
4. Review draft packet document
5. Host entrepreneur Lunch & Learn session to introduce and launch the packet as a resource

4.2 Action Plans: Action Plans allow teams to clearly communicate tasks, build accountability among the group, and create a manageable bite-sized road map for implementing projects. In an action plan, members of the group take responsibility for specific "to-do" items. It is important for each team member to play a role in the process rather than a couple of people doing all the work. A small step together is more impactful in the long term than a couple of individuals running the entire race. Each team member should commit to completing at least one task over the next 30 days.

Successful teams constantly communicate with each other and stay in contact throughout the project. Typically, teams meet at least every 30 days to discuss what has been done over the past 30 days and then look ahead to what needs to be done over the next 30 days. During each meeting, the team should discuss what needs to be done to move the project forward over the next 30 days and every team members should commit to new action steps each time.

Use the following Action Plan table to outline the tasks that each team member will complete over the next month.

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Project Mapping Worksheet

Step 4: Develop an Action Plan

4.2 Action Plans (continued)

	Name	Task	Deliverable	Deadline
1	Michelle	Create GroupMe and email group for the Action Team	Introductory email and GroupMe invite	September 5
2	James	Request list of existing incentives from city admin	List of incentives and summary of each	September 12
3	Loren	Research print options for hard copy packets	List of company options and websites	September 12
4	Marty	Research costs of custom printed folders	List of options including cost estimates and timeframes	September 12
5	Francisco	Research costs of custom flash drives	List of options including cost estimates and storage options	September 12
6	Andre	Contact Betsy regarding graphic design services	Brief summary of her services and costs (if any)	September 12
7				
8				
9				
10				

TIP: You can use this table to guide each Action Team meeting. At the beginning of each meeting review the table from the last meeting. Then use a blank table to assign tasks that should be completed prior to the next meeting.

downtown strategies

Project Mapping Summary

Task Force: Economic Vitality

Project Name: Open for Business!

Elevator Pitch:

Downtown Columbus desperately needs to recruit new businesses to our vacant downtown storefronts.

We are working to address this challenge through "Open for Business," which is a business recruitment packet designed to provide a snapshot of all incentives and resources available to entrepreneurs and businesses owners wanting to locate downtown.

We would really love for you to join us in this effort by...

Team Members:

Michelle – (123) 456-7891	michelle@email.com
James – (123) 234-5678	james@email.com
Loren – (123) 910-1234	loren@email.com
Marty – (123) 567-8910	marty@email.com
Francisco – (123) 111-2345	Francisco@email.com
Andre – (123) 678-9101	Andre@email.com



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TOWN MANAGER
Richard D. Cappola, Jr.

TOWN ATTORNEY
Cauley Pridgen, P.A.

MAYOR PRO TEM
Jason Thompson

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Andria Archer
Porter Casey
Avery Everett
Michael Sims

To: Town of Clayton, NC Council

From: Downtown Development Advisory Board

Subject: Proposed Code Amendment _Section 155.403

In January 2023, the Downtown Development Association was given the direction to provide alternative code requirements regarding string lighting and holiday lighting requirements for commercial structures within the Downtown District. After compiling feedback from local businesses, our Design Committee, and other sources, we are proposing changes to the current code to allow these lighting options with requirements that meet our Downtown standards.

Feedback from community members in addition to local businesses encourages the use of these lighting options to assist with beautification, additional outdoor lighting and creating an enhanced experience within Downtown.

On February 13, 2023, the Downtown Development Advisory Board met and approved the following recommended amendments to section 155.403 of the current UDO:

Decorative Lighting Standards should be amended to allow for String Lighting.

- The String lights shall consist of single strands and run in any of the following configurations:

  - Following the architectural features of a building including doors, windows, awnings, or rooflines;
  - Sting lights may only be hung parallel or perpendicular to the architectural feature
  - Wrapped around columns, posts, or pillars on the building;
  - Strung overhead in activated public and private alleys;
  - Wrapped around existing on-site features like trees, palms or posts.
  - Placed around or across outdoor dining or outdoor seating areas.

- All decorative lighting shall be designed to create a constant glow and prevent glare.

- String Lighting can be used to define the outdoor seating or dining space

- The color of the string lighting to be used for all commercial buildings shall be white light in the color temperature range of not less than 2,700 K and not exceeding 4,200 K.

- The lighting must be maintained in proper working order and must be replaced, turned off or removed entirely if a portion of the lighting is not in proper working order.

- The lighting must be permanently affixed to the structure and not temporarily attached to the structure.

- Suggestions of movement such as flashing, blinking, flickering, neon or scrolling string lights or string lights that change in the intensity or color are not permitted

Exceptions:

- Specifically define “Holiday Time” as November 1 – January 31
- During this time period, other colors beyond white are allowed, but suggestions of movement such as flashing, blinking, flickering, neon or scrolling string lights or string lights that change in the intensity or color are not permitted.





Downtown Clayton Concert Series

Presenting Sponsor*

- Event signage with your company logo at each 2023 Concert (5)
- Event signage at the DDA tent at each concert
- Company logo on Concert Series Beverage cups
- Top Billing recognition on Facebook event posted in advance of each concert date
- Opportunity to attach company banner to stage at each concert (banner provided by sponsor)
- Company recognition in the social media posts leading up to the event (from the Downtown Clayton Page which has over 15,000 followers).
- Company logo on all concert marketing materials (ads, signage, etc.)
- Company recognition by Emcee at the beginning of each concert and during intermissions
- Option to set up a 10x10 booth at each Town Square Concert

Exclusive Beer Sponsor $3,500

- All benefits of presenting sponsor + exclusive opportunity to sell beer at each concert

Supporting Sponsor $1,500

- Company name on Facebook event posted in advance of each concert date
- Company recognition by CDDA representative at the beginning of the sponsored concert and during intermissions & on all event signage
- Option to set up a 10x10 booth at each Town Square Concert

Friend of Downtown Sponsor $900*

- Company recognition on Facebook event, social media posts, and webpage while promoting event
- Company Recognition on event signage on the day of event

Downtown Clayton Movie Nights

Presenting Sponsor*

- Event signage with your company logo at both 2023 Movie nights (April & September)
- Top Billing recognition on Facebook event and social media posts leading up to the event
- Exclusive company logo on all Movie night marketing materials (ads, signage, etc.)
- Company recognition by emcee at the beginning of the event
- Option to set up a 10x10 booth at each Movie Night event
- 3+ hours worth of exposure at this community wide event
- Movie Nights in 2023 will be hosted at the newly renovated Municipal Park

Supporting Sponsor $900

- Company name on Facebook event posted in advance of each Movie Night date
- Recognition on all event signage
- Company recognition by emcee at the beginning of the event
- Option to set up a 10x10 booth at each Movie

Friend of Downtown Sponsor $400*

- Company recognition on Facebook event, social media posts, and webpage while promoting event
- Company Recognition on event signage on the day of event

Will add event statistics soon!

CLAYTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION INC
Think CLAYTON Think Downtown

Your Partners in Downtown Development

The Clayton Downtown Development Association (CDDA) is a 501-c-3 not-for-profit dedicated to improving downtown. CDDA works closely with the Downtown Development advisory board that advises the Town Council on issues that impact the Downtown District, including preserving and enhancing the character of Clayton's Downtown District; protecting the historic significance of the buildings, facilities, and spaces within the Downtown District; educating citizens and business people about the value of the Downtown District; promoting the Downtown District as a place to invest; serving as a review and advisory committee to the Town of Clayton Town Council; and implementing projects that enhance and protect the Downtown District.

Want to be connected to all events in 2023?

Become the Presenting Partner

$10,000 investment for top billing at all 9 events

or

Friend of Downtown Member

$1,200 investment for basic sponsorship at all 9 events



Square to Square Festival

Presenting Sponsor*

- Logo on top of Square to Square webpage
- Top Billing Logo recognition on event signage day of
- Logo on flyers and promotional material, including any merchandise produced for the event.
- Most frequent recognition by DJ and staff throughout event over loud speaker
- Mentions on all Social Media posts while promoting event
- Company name on Facebook Event promoted leading up to the event
- Opportunity for 10 x10 promotional space at event

Activity Sponsor $750

- Sponsorship will go towards 1 specific activity at the event day of (ex. face painting station, snow cones, etc.)
- Signage, provided by sponsor, will be on display at the specific activity.
- Recognition by DJ and staff throughout event over loud speaker
- Company recognition on social media and webpage while promoting event
- Logo included on event signage on the day of event
- 10 x10 promotional space at event

Friend of Downtown Sponsor $200*

- Company recognition on Facebook event, social media posts, and webpage while promoting event
- Company Recognition on event signage on the day of event



Christmas Village & Tree Lighting

Presenting Sponsor*

- Logo on top of Christmas Village Webpage
- Event signage with your company logo (top billing) throughout the Christmas Village Footprint
- Company logo on event program (approximately 750 distributed night of event)
- Company recognition on the Facebook event and all social media posts leading up to the event
- Logo on flyers and promotional material, including any merchandise produced for the event.
- Company recognition from the Emcee on stage during the Tree Lighting
- Opportunity to provide banner to put on stage at the tree lighting

Activity Sponsor $750

- Event signage with your company logo at one sponsored attraction (such as Santa Station, Trackless Train, Horse and Carriage or Photo Booth)
- Company recognition on event program (approximately 750 distributed night of event)
- Company logo on Webpage promoting the event (next to specific activity)
- Company recognition on Facebook event
- Recognition on social media posts leading up to the event when discussing the individual activity you sponsored
- Company recognition from the Emcee on stage during the Tree Lighting
- When applicable, sponsored activity can be placed in front of sponsors storefront

Friend of Downtown Sponsor $200*

- Company recognition on Facebook event, social media posts, and webpage while promoting event
- Company Recognition on event signage on the day of event

2023 Downtown Clayton Event Sponsorships

April 28 - Movie Night

May 12 - Concert

Chatham Rabbits

May 20 - Square to Square

June 2 - Concert

North Tower Band

August 10 - Concert

Cash UnChained

Sept. 8 - Concert

Shoot to Thrill

Sept. 29 - Movie Night

Oct. 5 - Concert

Nu-Blu

Nov. 30 - Christmas Village

CLAYTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION INC
Think CLAYTON Think Downtown

Email Address