

SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

GSO35

**DOWNTOWN
IN A DECADE
STRATEGIC PLAN**



Greensboro, this is our time.

What does it look like when a city dreams together?

Over the past year, we've asked that question in living rooms, local businesses, community centers, and surveys. We've listened as more than 2,500 of you, our neighbors, shared your hopes and your vision for the future of our downtown. Out of those conversations, GSO35 was born: a ten-year roadmap for Downtown Greensboro. Shaped not by a few, but by many. Authored by the people who know and love this city best.

And what perfect timing for a shared vision.

Greensboro is experiencing extraordinary momentum. Even beyond Downtown, the region is booming. JetZero's 14,500+ job announcement at Piedmont Triad International Airport and Toyota's historic \$13.9 billion investment in nearby Liberty are just two of the major commitments putting the Carolina Core region on the national map. These are more than headlines; they are signals that Greensboro's time is now.

But with growth comes responsibility. **Downtown is the cultural, social, and economic heart of our community.** In just the past year, Downtown saw more than 9.4 million visits — a record number that reminds us how vital and alive our center city truly is. How we shape it, how we honor its history while designing for its future, will define the character of our city for generations to come.

GSO35 is your answer. It's a **bold, community-driven plan powered by your voices**, grounded in real data, and crafted by a multidisciplinary steering committee of local leaders. It offers both vision and strategy—a clear path toward a Downtown that is vibrant, inclusive, and prepared to meet the moment.

GSO35 is not just a plan. It's a promise. A promise to keep building a Greensboro where everyone can belong, contribute, and flourish. A promise to lead with vision and to listen with humility. A promise to write our next chapter with intent, together.

Thank you for dreaming with us, and for helping turn that dream into a future we can all be proud of.

Let's thrive, together.

Evan Durant Bell
Vice Chairman, Bell Partners
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Zack Matheny
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Acknowledgments

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Thank you to each and every community member that took the time to provide input on your vision for Downtown Greensboro. This Plan would not be possible without you.

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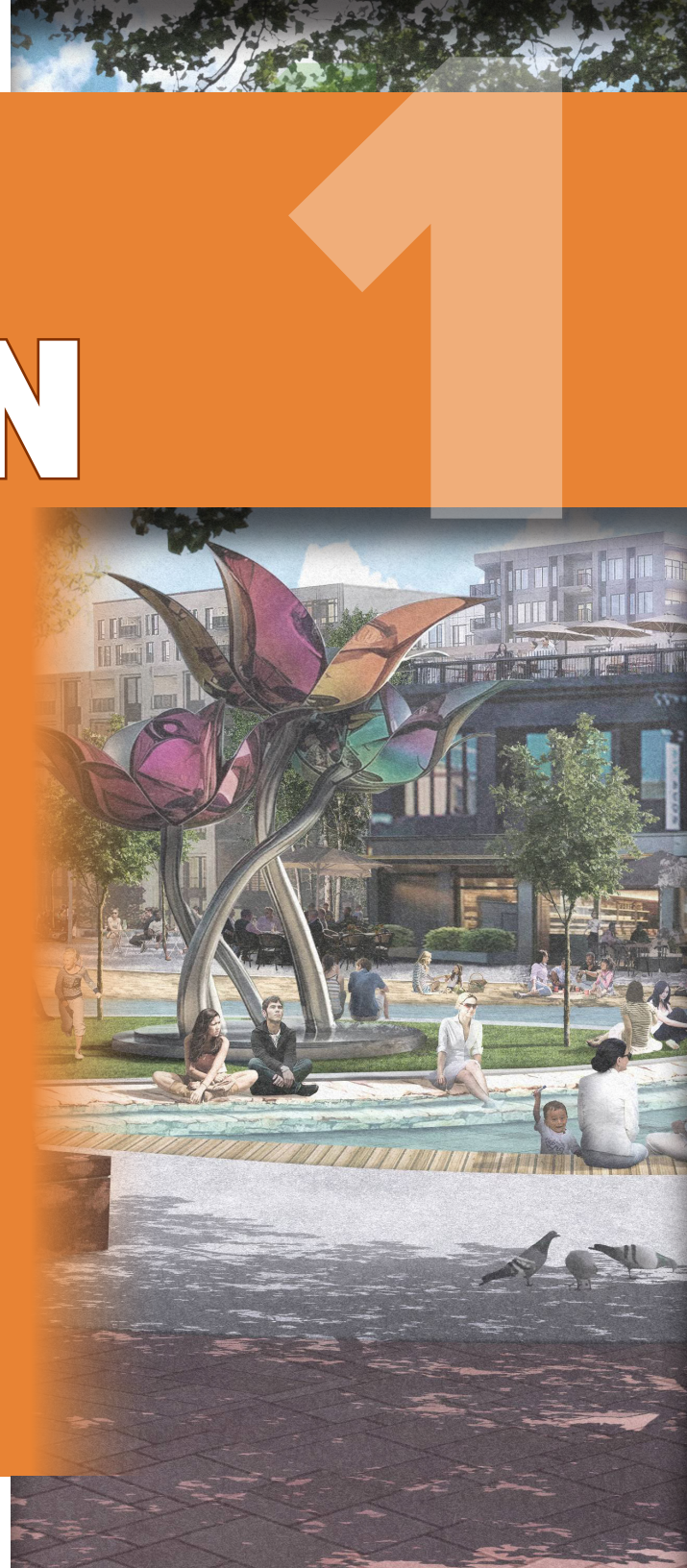
INTRODUCTION

Reclaiming Downtown's Potential: Why This Plan and Why Now?

Civic leadership is strengthening, institutional partners are aligning, and public interest in Downtown's future and development is growing. Today, the opportunity, and the charge is clear: **to move forward with focus, coordination, and a renewed sense of purpose.**

GSO35: Downtown in a Decade Strategic Plan offers a strategy for re-centering Downtown as the civic, cultural, and economic heart of the City of Greensboro, Guilford County, and the greater region. This forward-thinking Plan responds to the context and events of the past five years, while advancing a range of **exciting, transformational opportunities.** This is a moment of both reflection and bold possibility.

GSO35 aims to convert recent and significant momentum into measurable results: **more housing choices, good jobs, thriving small businesses, a more connected public realm, and a Downtown that is welcoming and vibrant for all.** GSO35 does not start from scratch, but it does mark a new chapter and a clear call from Downtown residents, businesses, and champions that it is time to move with clarity, shared goals, and a commitment to follow-through.





WHAT'S CHANGED — AND WHY IT MATTERS

Across the country, downtowns are experiencing significant transformation, including:

- A fundamental reset in how people live, work, and experience public space.
- A softened office and retail market, coupled with rising demand for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and entertainment destinations.
- The growing need for stronger civic energy, clearer City management, more engaged business and foundation leadership, and better alignment among anchor institutions.
- A renewed focus on feasibility: not just imagining what downtowns could become, but understanding what is realistic and what will drive impact now.

These shifts are also unfolding in Downtown Greensboro and they create an opening to grow differently with greater clarity, alignment, and impact.

New Momentum

- In 2023, Downtown added 31 new businesses, including 15 new restaurants and bars—with 63% led by women- and minority-owned entrepreneurs.
- Arts and culture are emerging as economic engines: \$235.3 million in local creative economy impact; 3,629 jobs; and \$33.3 million in tax revenue.
- Cross-sector engagement has deepened, with local institutions, foundations, and business leaders coalescing around Downtown's future.
- Greensboro's density of higher educational institutions is relatively unmatched in the region, and partners are demonstrating increased interest and willingness to be present in Downtown's future growth.

These trends are encouraging, but they require sustained investment and coordinated strategy to fully take hold.

Emerging Site and Infrastructure Activity

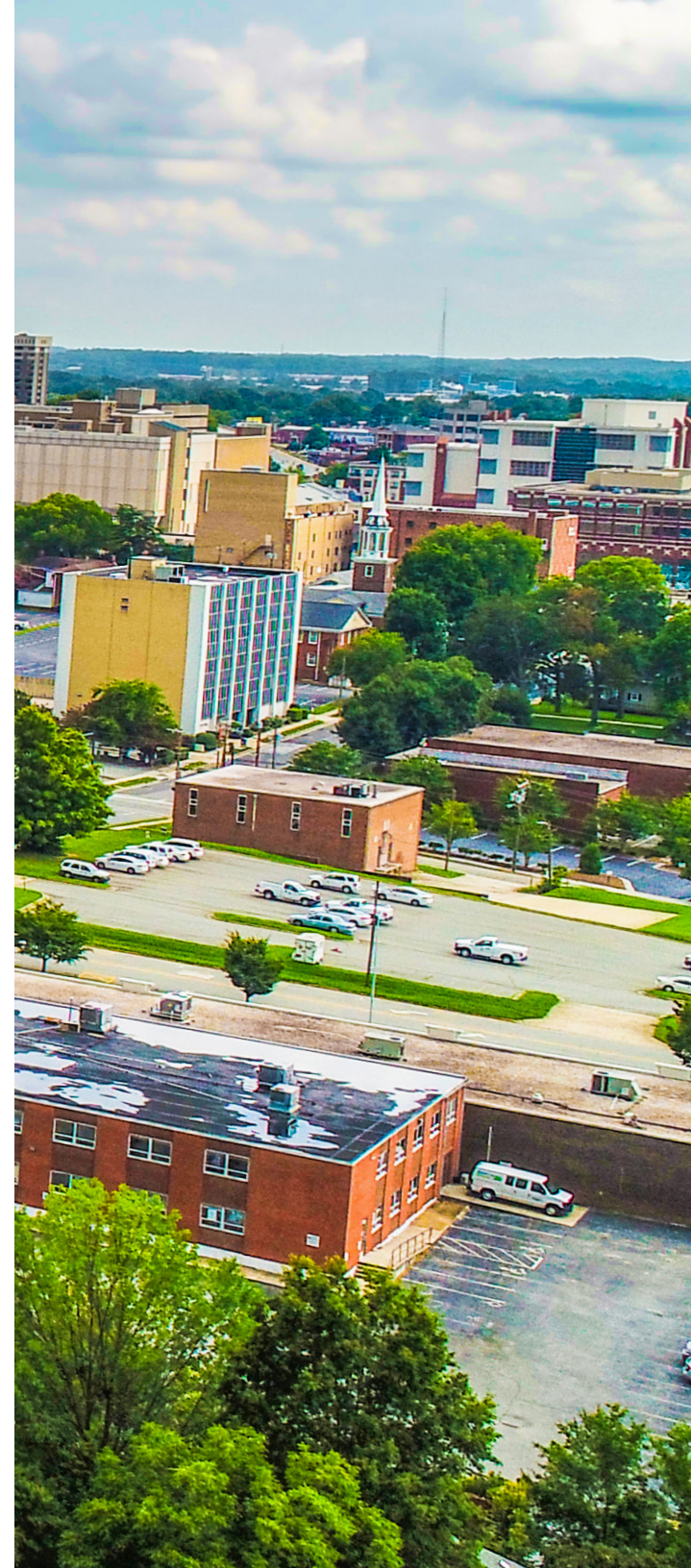
- Major transit and open space enhancements, such as the Downtown Greenway expansion and the activation of the Galyon Depot multimodal hub, are beginning to shift development patterns and connect new market demand to city assets.
- Key redevelopment sites—including the News & Record, Gate City, and multiple South End parcels—have attracted fresh interest; though all will require coordinated investment, entitlements, and infrastructure assistance to move forward.

Turning interest into built projects—which is the focus of GSO35’s place-based strategies—will depend upon strategic policy alignment, entitlement fast-tracking, and investment readiness.

A State, Region, and City on the Rise

- North Carolina is poised to become the 7th most populous state in the U.S. by 2030, with major implications for Downtown’s competitive position in the Triad and beyond.
- Greensboro is projected to grow by 60,000 residents by 2045.
- The City’s Road to 10,000 initiative aims to deliver 10,000 new housing units by 2030.

The question isn’t whether Downtown will grow. It’s how that growth is shaped, where it happens, and who it ultimately serves.



Where We Stand and Where We're Headed: Targets for 2035

Downtown Greensboro is where investment can make the greatest impact by tackling challenges and unlocking opportunities for the entire city and region. Setting clear targets is essential because they give partners a shared benchmark, help direct resources, and ensure progress is measurable rather than incremental. Greensboro already has momentum, with \$800M+ in projects completed, planned, or underway, but to compete with peers and meet community aspirations, Downtown must now commit to bold yet achievable goals for 2035.

Each focus area includes:

- A snapshot of **current** conditions.
- A **benchmark** from similar downtowns, drawn from peer cities based on size, institutional anchors, walkability, and revitalization goals.
- A GSO35 **target** that is both ambitious and achievable.

Residential Growth

- **Current:** ~3,800 residents live in Downtown Greensboro today. Downtown has added more than 1,000 residents since 2010—a sign of renewed demand, but still modest compared to similar cities.

- **Benchmark:** Vibrant peer downtowns average 10–15 residents per acre. Greensboro currently has approximately 7.5 residents per acre, meaning there is room to grow while maintaining quality of life.
- **Target:** **Add 5,000 residents by 2035**, reaching ~8,500–9,000 total. This requires roughly 2,500–3,000 new housing units. More residents translates to more customers, greater vibrancy, and a safer, livelier Downtown. It also strengthens the case for amenities, transit, retail, and talent attraction.

Employment and Economic Activity

- **Current:** ~17,000 jobs are based in Downtown Greensboro. This includes government, higher education, healthcare, and growing tech and creative industries.
- **Benchmark:** Peer downtowns hold 20–25% of citywide jobs. Greensboro's Downtown currently accounts for less than 10%, showing potential for stronger job concentration.
- **Target:** **Add 3,000 new jobs**, especially in anchor sectors like healthcare, tech, and education. Job density drives daytime foot traffic and supports local businesses. Concentrating growth Downtown improves transit efficiency,

builds a stronger tax base, and helps attract and retain top talent.

Small Business and Street-Level Activation

- **Current:** 31 new businesses opened in 2023; 63% were minority- or women-owned. This surge demonstrates that Downtown is a launchpad for inclusive entrepreneurship.
- **Benchmark:** Peer cities like Durham and Providence support 30–50% Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) participation in new small businesses. Downtown Greensboro is already exceeding that mark, which is an achievement to build on.
- **Target:** **Add at least 100 new or expanded ground-floor businesses**, with 40%+ small business, in coordination with the Office of Business Opportunity. A vibrant small business scene is essential to Downtown's identity. It supports wealth-building, promotes economic inclusion, and creates the kind of unique, local character that attracts residents and visitors alike.

Vibrancy and Foot Traffic

- **Current:** ~9.2 million annual visits; average stay of 2.5 hours; ~1.8 million unique visitors annually. Downtown

activity is growing again, but still has headroom compared to other cities.

- **Benchmark:** Downtowns such as Madison and Chattanooga see 10–12 million annual visits. These cities show how arts, housing, events, and public spaces can drive people to the city center.
- **Target:** **Surpass 12 million visits annually** and boost weekday and nighttime activity. More people on the street means a safer, more attractive Downtown. Foot traffic drives spending at restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues, which in turn supports jobs and encourages new business investment.

Catalytic Development Sites

- **Current:** Over \$800M in completed, planned, or in-progress investment Downtown; major opportunity sites remain. Projects like the AC Hotel and Tanger Center have set the stage for a new wave of growth.
- **Benchmark:** Cities like Durham and Providence have completed 4–6 major catalytic projects over the past decade. These include large mixed-use districts, civic spaces, and innovation hubs.
- **Target:** **Launch at least 10 catalytic redevelopment projects** by 2030,

unlocking new housing, jobs, and destinations. These sites are big levers. Catalytic projects can unlock hundreds of jobs and housing units, shape public perception, and spur adjacent investment. Getting them right sets the tone for the next generation of Downtown growth.

Private Investment Contributions

- **Current:** Significant momentum underway—\$800M+ already completed, planned, or in progress Downtown over the last decade.
- **Benchmark:** Peer mid-sized downtowns often see \$500M–\$1B in private downtown investment over a decade.
- **Target:** **Leverage at least \$1 billion in new private investment** over the next 10 years, building on development opportunities identified through GSO35. This level of commitment reflects confidence in Downtown Greensboro, catalyzes public-private partnerships, and helps fund infrastructure, housing, and cultural anchors.

Together, these six growth areas reflect a Downtown Greensboro that will ultimately be more lived in, economically active, inclusive, and visible.



GS035 GROWTH TARGETS



5,000
new residents



12 million
annual visits



3,000
new jobs



10 catalytic
redevelopment
projects



100+
new/expanded
ground-floor
businesses



1 billion
private investment
dollars

Key Inputs Shaping the Plan

GSO35 is built on input from those who know Downtown best, including residents, business and property owners, workers, artists, advocates, developers, institutional partners, and many more. Nearly 2,500 community members participated in the formation of GSO35! Key engagement opportunities during the eight-month planning process included:



8 Executive Committee and Steering Committee Meetings

1,625
Online Survey Responses

2 Greensboro City Council Meetings



1 Community Open House



6 Community Charrettes

1 Guilford County Commissioner Meeting



10 Focus Group Meetings

Project Launch

Strategy Development

Plan Development

Plan Adoption

← **Community Outreach and Engagement** →

February 2025

March

April

May

June

July

August

September 2025

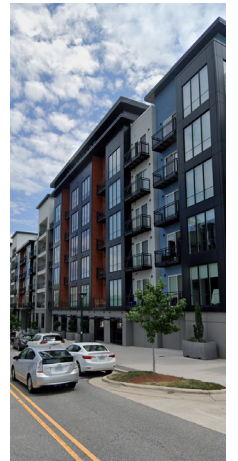
Turning Input into Action

Across the numerous engagement activities, key themes began to emerge. These ranged from opportunities to celebrate Greensboro's history and culture to advancing bold new development projects. Major community input themes are illustrated below.

GSO35 is a community-driven strategy. While not every idea made it into the final Plan, every voice helped shape its priorities and can be seen in the Vision Elements, Big Moves, and Foundational Strategies outlined on the following pages. The result is not a static plan. It is a flexible, grounded roadmap to guide the next decade of growth, starting now.

Key Community Themes

- **Recognize and celebrate the history and identity of the community**
- **Ensure Downtown is safe, clean, and welcoming for all**
- **Construct a range of housing options Downtown**
- **Support small businesses and expand retail opportunities**
- **Attract new businesses—large and small—to Downtown**
- **Activate, repurpose, or redevelop vacant and underutilized buildings and sites**
- **Partner with higher education institutions to bring university development to Downtown**
- **Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle routes to get to and through Downtown**
- **Complete the Greenway and construct adjacent new development**
- **Continue existing and consider new opportunities for entertainment venues, arts and cultural events, programming, and institutions**



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2

Where Are We Going?

The Strategic Framework sets the foundation for the GSO35. It outlines each of the key elements that work together to propel the city center forward for the next 10 years and beyond. The Strategy Framework was shaped through extensive community outreach and input from project partners and community members who care deeply about Downtown Greensboro.

Four key components—the **Vision Elements, Big Moves, Foundational Strategies, and Implementation Toolbox**—comprise the Strategy Framework and offer clear direction for the future of Downtown. Each of the five **VISION ELEMENTS** to the right reflect community voices describing how Downtown Greensboro should grow and evolve over the next 10 years.



WELCOMING

An inclusive and inviting Downtown Greensboro that offers something for all residents, workers, and visitors—where everyone feels a sense of belonging.



VIBRANT

A dynamic, surprising, and active destination that celebrates its history, and includes modern features and unique experiences.



LIVABLE

An attractive Downtown Greensboro that offers a high quality of life for all community members by including a range of housing types, amenities, and services to support a healthy lifestyle, and events and activities that appeal to residents at all stages of life.



CONNECTED

A Downtown Greensboro that functions as a hub of connections and balances a range of transportation modes that are safe, accessible, and easily navigable for all.



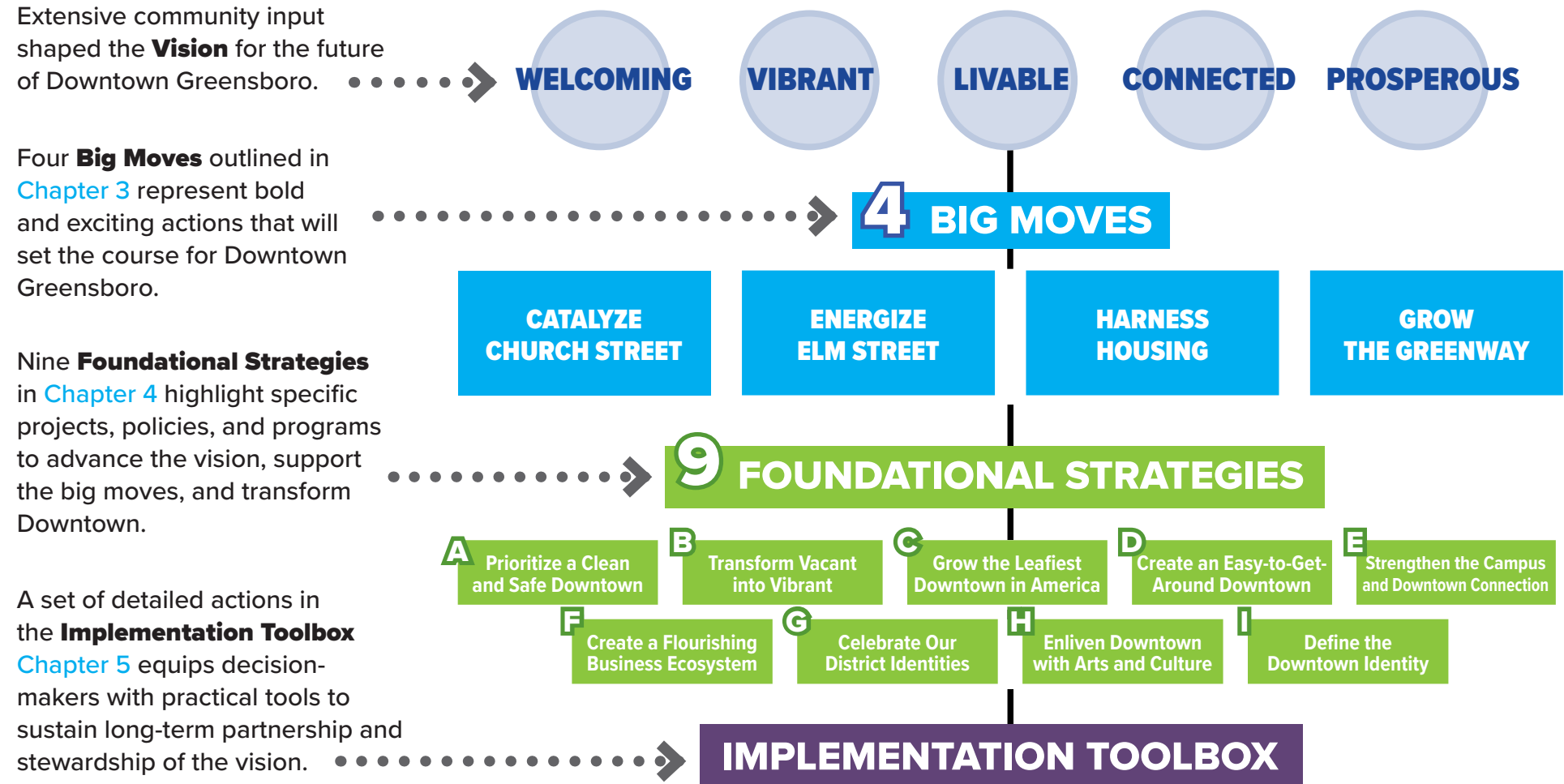
PROSPEROUS

A thriving Downtown of robust economic activity and innovation that supports businesses, enterprises, and higher education institutions of all sizes.

How Do We Get There?

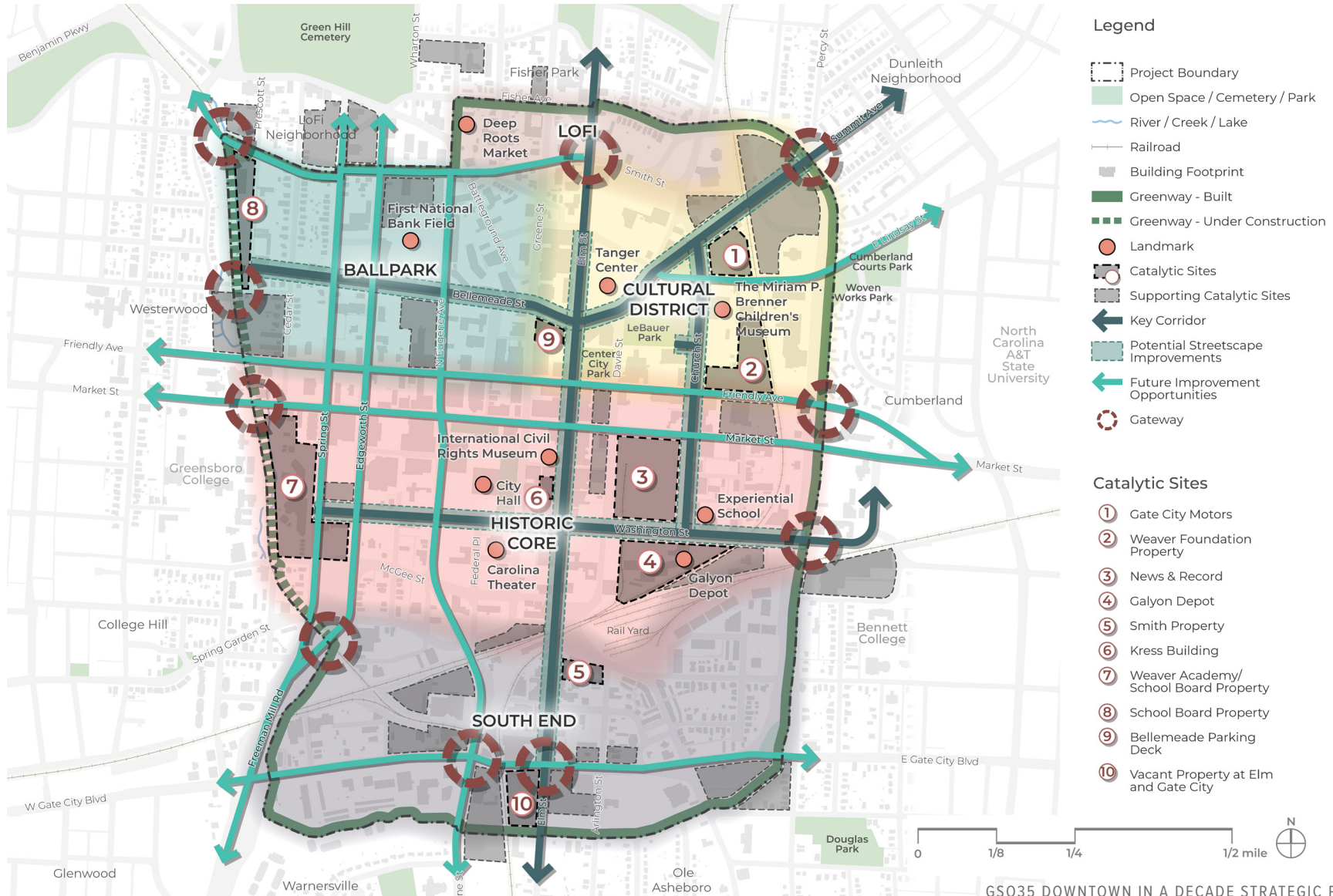
The **Strategic Framework Diagram** illustrates the key components of the GSO35 Downtown in a Decade Strategic Plan, and how they shape the structure of this document. Each component was crafted through conversation with community members, key stakeholders, City staff, and Downtown Greensboro, Inc. (DGI) representatives.

GSO35 Strategy Framework



What Will It Look Like?

This **Physical Strategy Diagram** captures the key physical elements described in the Big Moves and Foundational Strategies that will advance Downtown Greensboro over the next 10 years. These include streetscape connections, memorable gateways, a mosaic of districts, and the activation of catalytic sites. This work is geographically bound by the Greenway, which offers a distinct border for Downtown while providing connectivity to the vibrant surrounding neighborhoods.



BIG MOVES

3

Four Big Moves represent bold and exciting actions that will set the course for Downtown Greensboro. Critically, the Big Moves reflect input received from community members and align with the Vision Elements that guide this Plan. Each Big Move capitalizes on a key opportunity that, once realized, will have a **transformative impact on Downtown**. Investments proposed in this chapter will lead to visible, tangible, and multi-dimensional changes that will **take advantage of existing assets, build upon and enhance the identity of Downtown, strengthen the economy, and create opportunities for new attractions and experiences**.

Big Moves also link key public realm investments with private-sector development opportunities and directly support at least four of the six growth targets described in Chapter 1. The introduction to each Big Move includes the icons of the growth targets that Big Move supports.

While dreaming big is exciting, it is essential to root these plans in reality and ensure that each Big Move is implementable. Actions necessary to implement each Big Move is included in Appendix A: Implementation Plan. Actions include a wide array of strategies that may consist of regulatory changes, financial incentives, and partnerships and programming. These collective actions recognize that **collaboration—between the non-profit sector, public sector, private developers, and other Downtown partners—is essential** to realize the potential of each Big Move.

CATALYZE CHURCH STREET:
ANCHOR DOWNTOWN'S NEXT ERA

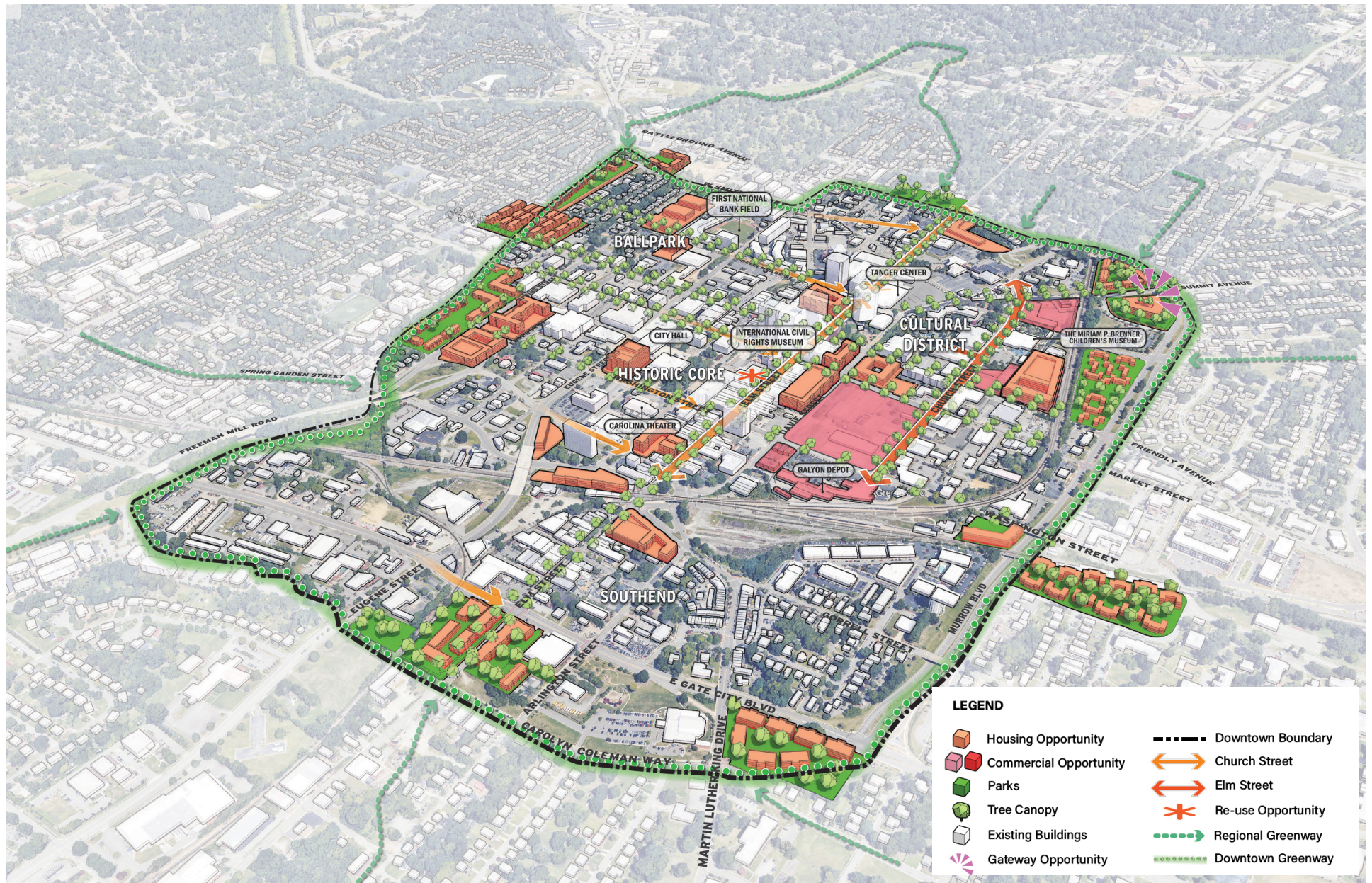
ENERGIZE ELM STREET:
STRENGTHEN GREENSBORO'S HISTORIC CORE

HARNESS HOUSING:
DRIVE INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GROW THE GREENWAY:
LINK PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PROSPERITY

Where Will the Big Moves Take Us?

This **Big Moves Compilation Diagram** highlights the major elements of this chapter, illustrating the major opportunities, connections, and investments that will transform Downtown Greensboro in the coming years.

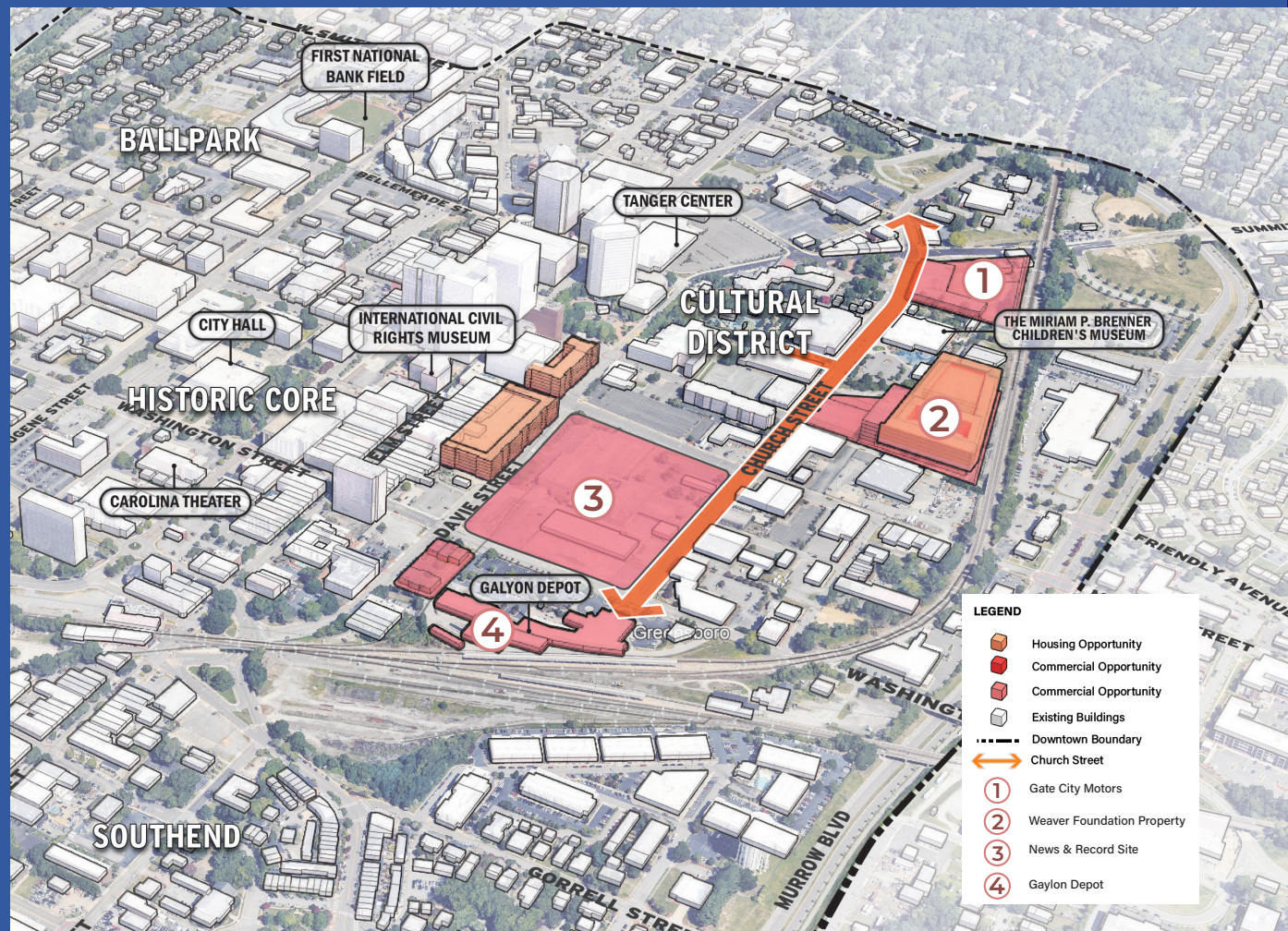


CATALYZE CHURCH STREET: ANCHOR DOWNTOWN'S NEXT ERA

At the center of the Church Street corridor sits the former News & Record site. The development and activation of this site with a mix of uses could **catalyze over \$250 million in new investment**. Additional sites along Church Street—including the Galyon Depot, Weaver Foundation Property, and Gate City Motors site—are ripe for activation or redevelopment.

Together, the transformation of these catalytic sites could **activate more than 25 acres of underutilized land**. Adaptive reuse, mixed-use development, and open space investments could bring **more than 1,000 new housing units and hundreds of new jobs while serving as a model for development partnerships**. To do this, a range of incentives and programs, such as Opportunity Zones, will need to be considered.

Connecting these investments is key. With thoughtful placemaking, Church Street can become a vibrant front door, a connector to east Greensboro, and a hub of housing, employment, and civic life—Downtown Greensboro's next great destination.



Growth
Targets
Supported



CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

News & Record Site

This 10-acre property along Church Street and at the heart of Downtown Greensboro offers an unparalleled opportunity for a truly transformational downtown project. A site of this size presents many development opportunities such as a large-scale entertainment and sports destination, housing, retail, an innovation hub, STEM campus, food hall, amphitheater, hotel, conference center, and more. A vibrant mix of to-be-determined uses will be ideal for this site. Selecting a mix of uses that contribute to achieving the Growth Targets is key, while also considering strategies to create meaningful public space and a public realm designed for pedestrians. This could include pedestrian-only corridors; design flexibility for streets to be closed to vehicles during events and programming; and activated street-facing ground floors. A transformational development of this size is unprecedented and exciting but will require strategic partnerships to structure incentives, deliver a clear Request for Proposals, and consider Tax Increment Financing Opportunities. The images below illustrate a range of potential uses, activities, and design inspiration for the News & Record Site.



News & Record Site POTENTIAL USES



CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Galyon Depot

The Galyon Depot welcomes visitors to Downtown Greensboro and connects community members to the region through bus and train services, including the Piedmont service from Raleigh to Charlotte. While transportation has always been its key function, additional businesses—such as a barbershop—once provided a broader range of functions for the building. Portions of the facility are now largely unused, reducing the vibrancy it once provided to Downtown. As the 100th anniversary of the Galyon Depot approaches, the opportunity to rejuvenate the building to bring it back to the community hub it once was is ripe.

While the Galyon Depot will remain a transit hub for the region, infusing new uses and design will re-activate this storied building. Enhancements will include a marketplace, food hall, flexible indoor and outdoor public spaces, an African American Entrepreneurial Hub, and an improved streetscape with active ground-floor uses.

These planned physical changes recognize the importance of maintaining the Galyon Depot's role as a transit hub, while recognizing its potential to support local businesses, activate existing features, and incorporate new public spaces along Church Street.

FUTURE VISION



Galyon Depot

FUTURE VISION



Graphic courtesy of Revington | Reaves

Galyon Depot

FUTURE VISION



Graphic courtesy of Ravington | Reaves

CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Weaver Foundation Property

Located at the northeast corner of Church Street and East Friendly Avenue sits a vacant five-acre site primarily used for parking and storage. Ripe for redevelopment, this property provides an opportunity to incorporate a unique feature to draw visitors to the Church Street corridor and connect to nearby regional attractions such as The Miriam P. Brenner Children's Museum and LeBauer Park. In this potential re-envisioning of the site, the "Weaver Beach" development features the culmination of a linear water feature along Church Street that ends in a shallow pool that offers a place of play for kids, relaxation for families, and community gathering place for all. The water elements provide cleansing infrastructure on the site and, coupled with the leafiness of the tree canopy, create a sense of rejuvenation and activation. Adjacent private development and public facilities are crucial to the financial feasibility and overall success of the development.

Weaver Foundation Property

FUTURE VISION



Existing

Weaver Foundation Property

FUTURE VISION





CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

The Miriam P. Brenner Children's Museum

Adjacent to the Weaver Foundation Property, The Miriam P. Brenner Children's Museum (MBCM) is an interactive museum that serves over 100,000 visitors per year. In a concurrent strategic planning process, Museum leadership identified the priority to transform the Museum space. As part of this strategic planning component, visualizing a museum for the future—which could include a reimagining of the existing space, construction of new space(s), or both—is being considered. The model to the right illustrates one such example of a museum addition just south of the existing facility. While this particular site is not identified as one of the eight catalytic project opportunities, the additional activation complements the Church Street corridor enhancements.

Gate City Motors

Uniquely positioned as the gateway site to the north end of Church Street, the Gate City Motors site sits at the intersection of Church Street, East Lindsay Street, and Summit Avenue. This three-and-a-half-acre vacant property provides a crucial opportunity to welcome residents and visitors to Downtown. Current plans show GCMC Properties intending to develop up to 250 multi family residential units and six stories of office space. With its proximity to North Carolina A&T, it also provides a potential partner with higher education to create a Downtown anchor location.

The Miriam P. Brenner Children's Museum

FUTURE VISION



Graphic courtesy of Stitch Design Shop

Gate City Motors Property

FUTURE VISION



Graphic courtesy of LS3P

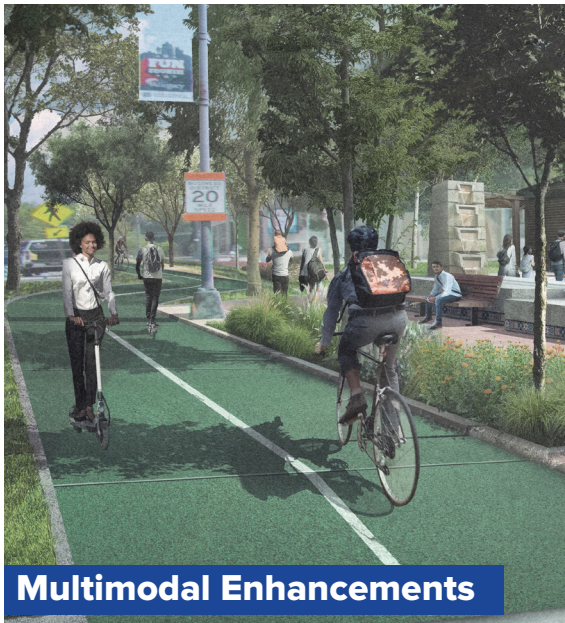
ADDITIONAL PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

While the Galyon Depot, Weaver Foundation Property, News & Record Site, The Miriam P. Brenner Children's Museum (MBCM), and Gate City Motors Property all present transformative project opportunities along the Church Street corridor, additional project work will contribute to strengthening this key Downtown corridor. Potential project considerations range from re-investing in and renovating or redeveloping the Cultural Arts Center, tying together Science-Center USA with the MBCM, and establishing an "Innovation Corridor" with a focus on office-use. These projects offer an opportunity to coalesce the vision for Church Street as a cultural corridor and key destination in Downtown Greensboro.



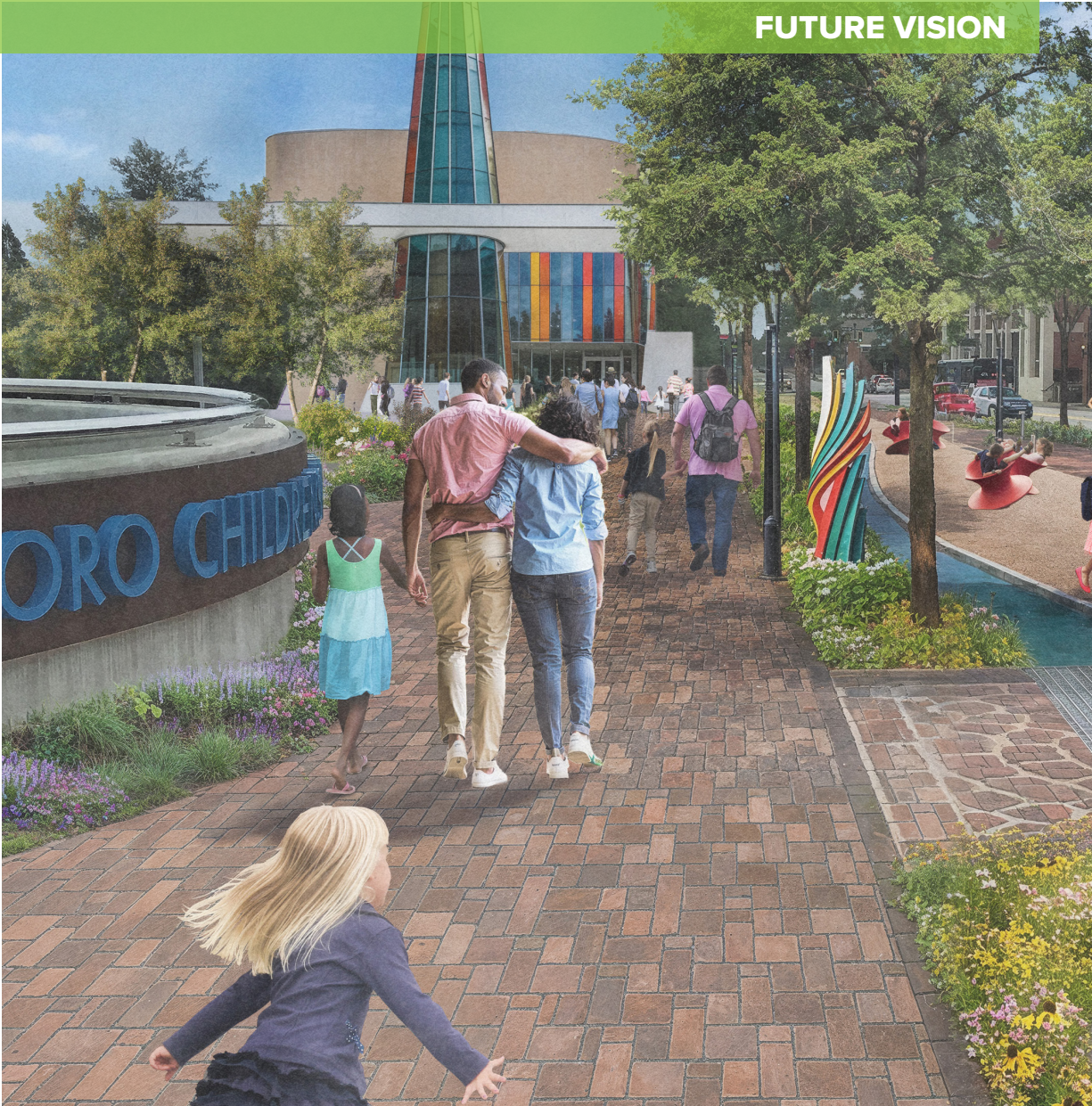
KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Connecting the exciting and transformative catalytic projects along Church Street requires weaving together a range of public realm enhancements. The images below and the example on the following page illustrate key elements that can make Church Street safer, more inviting, and a more vibrant destination in Downtown Greensboro.



Church Street Enhancements

FUTURE VISION



Existing



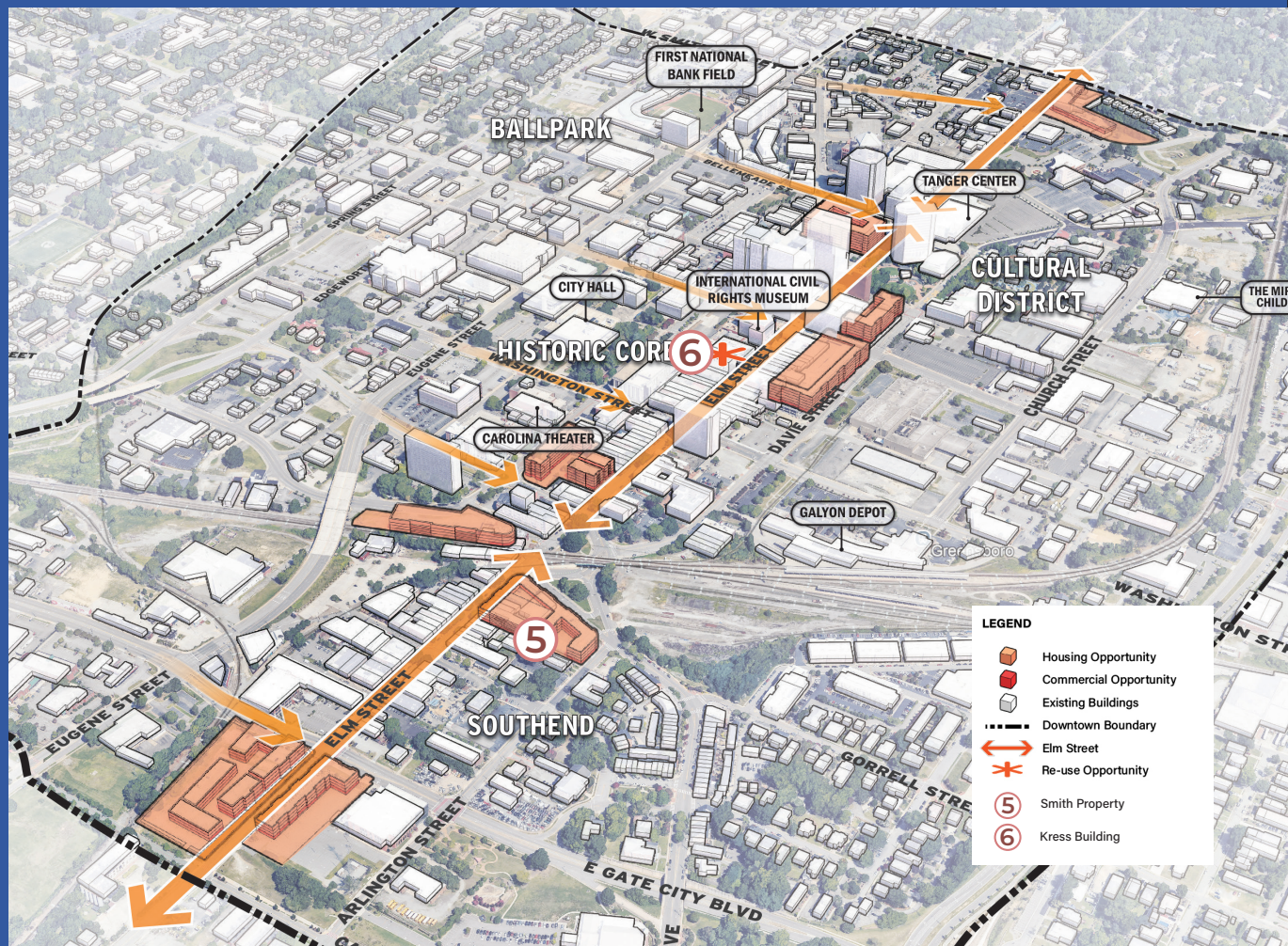
ENERGIZE ELM STREET: STRENGTHEN GREENSBORO'S HISTORIC CORE

A strengthened Elm Street has the potential to re-anchor the entire Downtown experience. This corridor could expand the area's walkable "core," better connect anchor destinations such as LeBauer Park and South End, and reinforce Elm Street as the City's main street. Streetscape modernization and business support must work together to boost storefront occupancy, reduce retail churn, and enhance safety and visibility for small businesses.

If fully realized, **this Big Move could result in up to 100 new businesses, increase average foot traffic by 25%, and double the active commercial frontage** along Elm Street within a decade.

These improvements will also support growing residential density Downtown by ensuring the pedestrian environment and amenities meet residents' daily needs.

Public realm upgrades like those envisioned along Elm Street have been shown in peer cities to generate \$4–6 in private investment for every \$1 in public funding, making this a high-impact, cost-effective investment.



**Growth
Targets
Supported**



KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

While sections of Elm Street currently incorporate design elements to enhance and unite the public realm—including special materials on crosswalks—opportunities remain to apply a more consistent design treatment along the entire corridor. A more consistent palette of design options will strengthen Elm Street and contribute to a unique pedestrian experience along the established spine of Downtown Greensboro.



Flexible Street Closure



Buffered Bike Lanes



Enhanced Tree Canopy



Pedestrian-Oriented Improvements



Unique Branding

Elm Street

FUTURE VISION / SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS



Existing

FUTURE VISION / FLEXIBLE STREET CLOSURE



"Florence After 5" event in downtown Florence, SC



Lower Summer Street Block Party in Stamford, CT

CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Improvements to the Elm Street public realm must be matched by catalytic projects on adjacent sites to truly activate the street. This means that vacant sites and underutilized buildings must be evaluated for new uses and the right project partners must be assembled to bring new life to each space.

Kress Building

Located at 200 South Elm Street, the Kress Building is an iconic Art Deco building located in the core of Downtown Greensboro. Its strategic location and historic value make this a unique opportunity for the incorporation of a mix of uses including a Downtown welcome center, a small business incubator hub, a restaurant or retail showcase, and upper-story office or residential space.

Smith Property

Located just south of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and steps from Elm Street, the vacant Smith Property site offers a chance to shape the Elm Street corridor south of the railroad. Creative space, a small business hub, or another use to activate this corner of Downtown would support the diversification of the city center's economy and housing options. Activating this site and linking it to extended streetscape improvements would also enhance the Elm Street experience.



The Kress Building



The Smith Property

CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

The Pyrlle Theater

Following the closure of the Triad Stage in 2023, a group of new owners purchased the theater in 2024. As avid supporters of Downtown Greensboro's cultural scene, the new owners are working to renovate the building to ensure it stays an active venue along Elm Street.

The Pyrlle Theater

FUTURE VISION



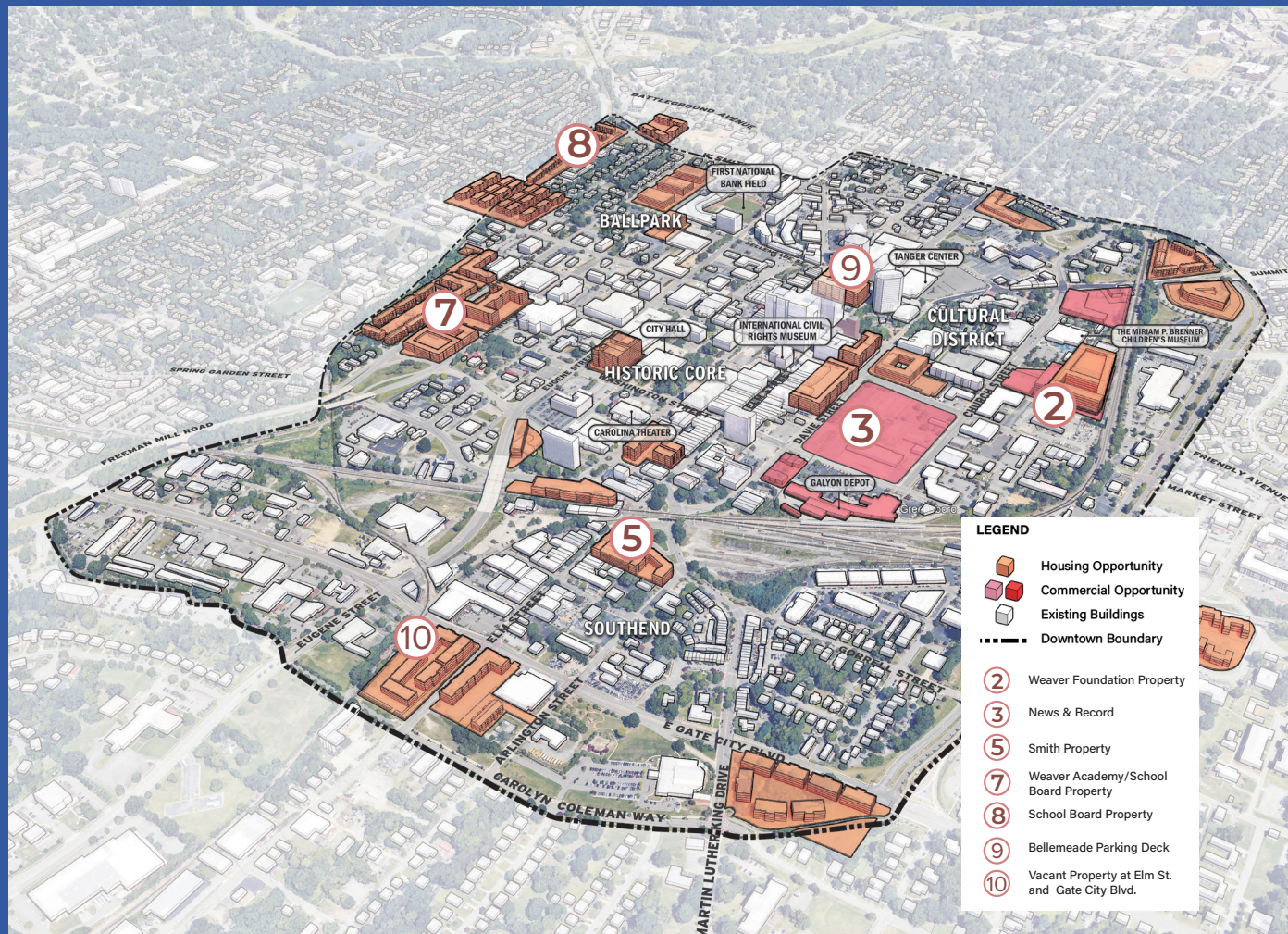
HARNESS HOUSING: DRIVE INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Housing is the foundation of a 24/7 downtown.

Today, Downtown Greensboro houses just 2% of the city's population, but over 10% of small business growth is occurring here. Unlocking a broader range of housing options Downtown can **meet rising demand from students, young professionals, and older adults**. It can also **support the success of local businesses** by creating a stronger resident customer base.

If the GSO35 housing targets are achieved (5,000 new residents), it will support up to 75,000 additional square feet of retail, fill in existing development gaps, and expand the city's tax base.

A housing strategy that mixes affordability levels and product types—and offers a range of supporting financial incentives — can reduce displacement pressure, attract new residents, and activate underutilized sites. Coupled with reforms to parking, zoning, and financing, Downtown Greensboro can grow into a more inclusive, economically diverse neighborhood core.



**Growth
Targets
Supported**



KEY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Providing a range of housing options in Downtown Greensboro—at a range of price points and unit types to accommodate all phases of life—is crucial to increase the Downtown population and create a more vibrant, 24/7 city center.



EXAMPLE PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES



The Bellemeade parking deck



Union Square Campus, just east of the vacant property

The Bellemeade Parking Deck

The parking deck located at the southwest corner of Bellemeade and Elm streets has reached the end of its serviceable life. Built in 1989, the parking deck has several cost prohibitive structural issues that have resulted in its scheduled demolition. Given its proximity to both the Tanger Center as well as Center City Park, the location is ideal for housing, providing an infusion of activity and energy to the area. Age-targeted housings, such as for seniors or graduate students, could be considered as well.

Vacant Property at Elm Street and Gate City Boulevard

On the south edge of the South End, there are a number of vacant, underutilized, or surface-parked parcels that could better serve Greensboro's Downtown community through new uses. At the southwest corner of Elm Street and Gate City Boulevard, there is a nearly three-acre site currently serving nearby and overflow parking needs. Given its adjacency to Union Square Campus and access to Gate City Boulevard, connecting this site to UNC-G to the east, this location would be ideal for all types of higher-education-associated housing—students, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, this location offers quick access to the thriving food and nightlife scene further into South End, just north of the site and the Greenway.

PROGRAMS IN PROGRESS

National Housing Accelerator Supply Program

As part of the joint initiative between the National League of Cities and the American Planning Association, the City of Greensboro was selected as one of 16 communities nationwide to participate in the National Housing Supply Accelerator Program. This program provides opportunities for virtual workshops, tailored technical assistance, and access to best practices, tools, and housing supply experts to support the accelerated implementation of innovative, proven housing strategies that expand the City's housing stock.

Selection as part of this Program directly support's the City's "Road to 10,000 Initiative", an effort to increase the City's housing stock, and ensuring safe, accessible, and diverse housing for all residents.



GROW THE GREENWAY: LINK PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PROSPERITY

Greensboro's Downtown Greenway is a \$650-million asset, 90% complete and poised to become a signature destination that links recreation, development, and identity. Though a differentiator for Greensboro, it is currently underleveraged. Trail-oriented development along the Greenway could transform it from an amenity into a growth engine.

Peer cities like Indianapolis and Atlanta have shown that **greenways can spur dozens of private projects and lift nearby property values by 10–30%**, which creates potential funding for more public benefits and new districts around walkability, wellness, and local business.

In Greensboro, activating parcels along the Greenway, such as the school board sites or edge locations near Morehead Foundry, could yield new housing, maker spaces, food and drink clusters, and regional draw.

The last mile of the Greenway is underway. With targeted investment, it can become a cultural connector and a visible, accessible loop that defines Greensboro's brand of creative, green, and inclusive growth.



**Growth
Targets
Supported**



KEY GREENWAY OPPORTUNITIES

With the forthcoming completion of the Downtown Greensboro Greenway, advancing projects and improvements adjacent to the facility must be the focus. Identifying opportunities for new development; ensuring site and building design that prioritizes active ground-floor uses and pedestrian-oriented design; and providing access to key amenities adjacent to the Greenway are all key design priorities.



Trail-Oriented Mixed-Use and Commercial Development



Trail-Oriented Residential Development



Amenity Zones and Wayfinding



Trail-Oriented Development Standards and Guidelines

CASE STUDY

Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Programming, and Catalytic Development

Constructed as a linear park and greenway, with the goals of spurring economic development and cultural placemaking, the development of the Indianapolis Cultural Trail began in 2000 and was completed in 2012. The eight-mile trail system connects cultural districts, neighborhoods, and extends beyond to connect to the city's greenway system. Since its completion, the Trail has had a profound impact on the surrounding area. According to a study completed by the Indiana University Public Policy Institute, the following impacts could be measured:

- An increase in nearby property values by \$1 billion from 2008—2014
- A return on investment of up to \$16 in value for every \$1 spent on trail construction
- Over \$300 million in new mixed-use and multifamily residential developments constructed along the Trail
- The relocation of businesses and organizations to be closer to the Trail
- Significant increases in pedestrian and bicycle traffic to Downtown Indianapolis

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail serves as a great success story of the economic impact a greenway trail system can provide. With the incorporation of comfortable, safe, and shaded pathways, visitors have flocked to the Trail. Since its completion, the impact on adjacent businesses and new development is unmistakable.



Various design elements and building interfaces along the Indianapolis Cultural Trail

CATALYTIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Weaver Academy/School Board Property

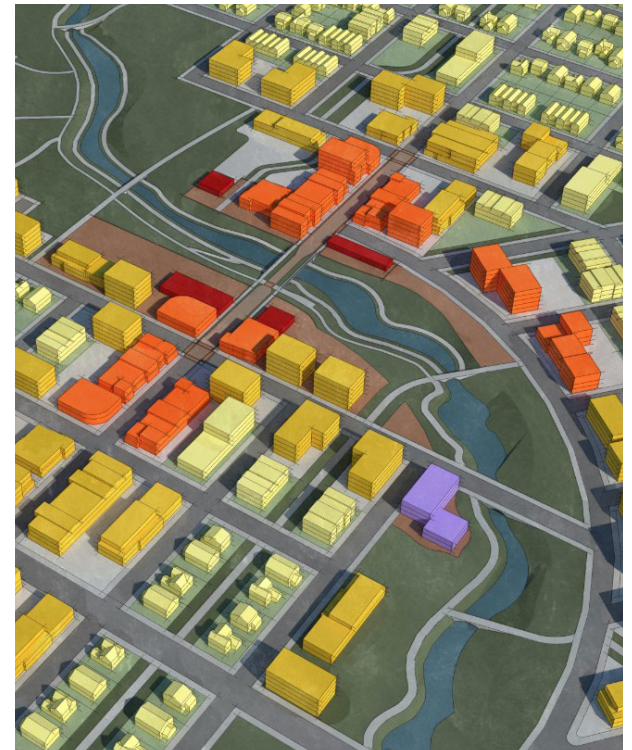
With its longest edge directly adjacent to the Greenway, this site provides a unique opportunity for Greenway-oriented development. Redevelopment of this site would likely include a mix of uses such as workforce/attainable housing, market rate housing, and an education or innovation anchor (given its proximity to Greensboro College and the University of North Carolina Greensboro), as well as opportunities to locate additional civic uses near the County Courthouse, City Building, and other civic features directly east. The design of the development should incorporate trail-facing ground-floor activation, clear pedestrian and bicycle connections, and upper-story building step backs to reduce the building scale directly adjacent to the trail.

School Board Property

Just north of the Weaver Academy property is another site owned by the Guilford County School Board. While this triangle-shaped lot provides just under five acres, its location adjacent to completed and nearly completed sections of the Greenway, as well as a northern entry point into Downtown, make this a crucial site to welcome people into Downtown from the Greenway and from West Smith Street. A mix of uses should be considered for this site, including greenway-oriented housing products, neighborhood serving retail, and public space. Carefully designed connections should also be incorporated at key intersections linking the Greenway and Downtown.



Weaver Academy



Prototypical trail-oriented development conceptual massing

CASE STUDY

Atlanta Beltline Partnerships, Metrics, and Reporting

Constructed with the goal of transforming Atlanta's abandoned freight rail corridors into publicly accessible and usable space, the Atlanta BeltLine consists of a 33-mile trail network and 22 miles of transit. While just over half of the mainline trail (11.7 of 22 miles) is complete and other segments remain in the design, construction, or shovel-ready phases, the economic impacts of the BeltLine can already be measured. From the start of construction in 2005 to data measured at the end of 2023, the BeltLine has attracted \$9 billion in private investment. The Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD) was established as the primary source of public funding for the project, but has gone beyond supporting the construction of the BeltLine and has focused on the development of workforce and affordable housing.

This funding is also supported by requirements that developers incorporate percentages of affordable housing through inclusionary zoning adopted by the Atlanta City Council. Homeowners within the Westside and Southside BeltLine neighborhoods can also utilize the Legacy Resident Retention Program, which covers property taxes for a set period of time to ensure residents will not be priced out of the neighborhood as these neighborhoods change. To date, the BeltLine has delivered 4,126 of the original 5,600 affordable housing unit goal (by 2030), through the development or preservation of affordable units for families earning 60% Area Median Income. While the economic impact of the BeltLine can already be felt before the completion of the trail, the trail has notable success through its intentional TAD and programs to develop and preserve affordable housing to ensure the trail is a resource to all community members.



Various design elements and building interfaces along the Atlanta BeltLine

FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES

4

While Big Moves describe transformational opportunities necessary to help Downtown grow and evolve over the next 10 years, the Foundational Strategies represent essential work that will connect each component. Foundational Strategies include **policies, projects, and programs necessary to achieve the Vision Elements expressed by community members** described in Chapter 2. Each of the nine Foundational Strategies reflects input collected from community members regarding existing Downtown assets, challenges, and opportunities.

Actions necessary to support the implementation of each Foundational Strategy are included in **Appendix A: Implementation Plan**.

A Prioritize a Clean and Safe Downtown

B Transform Vacant into Vibrant

C Grow the Leafiest Downtown in America

D Create an Easy-to-Get-Around Downtown

E Strengthen the Campus and Downtown Connection

F Create a Flourishing Business Ecosystem

G Celebrate Our District Identities

H Enliven Downtown with Arts and Culture

I Define the Downtown Identity

A Prioritize a Clean and Safe Downtown

Growth Targets Supported



Hands On NWNC's Clean-a-Creek program



Downtown Greensboro Inc.'s Ambassadors

What is the Opportunity?

Downtown Greensboro's Ambassadors team has proven to be a tremendous success, providing hospitality escorts, connecting those in need to social services, checking in with businesses and residents, addressing panhandling and suspicious activity, and picking up litter, among other things. Despite this success, community input throughout this process continued to stress safety concerns with the unhoused Downtown. In addition to addressing the social concerns, the **condition of physical infrastructure, cleanliness of Downtown, and features to increase the comfort of visitors** must be a priority to ensure a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experience.

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to ensure a clean and safe Downtown includes:

- Organize the Downtown Ambassadors to provide a range of services including hospitality assistance, safety escorts, and litter pickup, as well as outreach and assistance for the unhoused.

- Partner with the City's Clean and Green Team to ensure Downtown streets and public spaces remain well-maintained.
- Collaborate with the Greensboro Police Department to install safety cameras in high-traffic areas of Downtown.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Reexamine the efficacy of current efforts to convene organizations working to help the unhoused to coordinate response efforts.
- Conduct a safety assessment of Downtown Greensboro's streets.
- Analyze the existing clean-up partnerships and program to advance efforts for public space maintenance.
- Work with the City to strengthen existing ordinance regarding graffiti and blight to ensure an accepted standard and approach to enforcement and penalties for non-compliance.

B Transform Vacant into Vibrant

Growth Targets Supported



Vacant building example



Weaver property, currently used as parking

What is the Opportunity?

While key catalytic project opportunities are identified as part of the Big Moves, numerous smaller sites present additional opportunities to improve the built environment. These opportunities include fully vacant to underutilized sites and existing buildings. Approximately 36% of Downtown today consists of private parking, public parking, or temporary public parking lots, as described in the Greensboro Downtown Parking Plan. Additionally, vacant sites and underutilized buildings contribute to the underutilization of the built environment. Addressing this vacancy and low utilization includes **identifying new development opportunities, re-activating existing resources, and providing increased square footage** for residential, retail, office, and other uses.

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to activate vacant sites and buildings includes:

- Recruiting businesses to activate storefronts by connecting entrepreneurs with available spaces to meet their needs.
- Maintaining a property inventory to monitor openings, closings, and trends.

- Providing a listing of Downtown vacancies on the DGI website to attract tenants.
- Collaborating with brokers and owners.
- Offering Catalyst and Facade grants to assist in Downtown investment.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Expand the existing database of vacant and underutilized sites and buildings.
- Collaborate with business owners of underutilized spaces to determine opportunities to activate ground-floor spaces with events or pop-up opportunities and upper floors with residential or office opportunities.
- Continue to work with the City to update development standards to allow more development of a range of types and to ensure lower parking requirements.
- Explore other high-impact strategies and regulations including blight ordinances, vacant-use taxes, and so forth.
- Enhance existing facade grant programs.

Grow the Leafiest Downtown in America

Growth Targets Supported



GSO35 “Grow the Greenway” Diagram



Tree canopy in Greenville, SC

What is the Opportunity?

Great downtowns often include a unifying feature for which they are known regionally and nationally. For instance, downtown Greenville, SC, is known for its central falls water feature; Asheville, NC, is known as an arts community; and San Antonio, TX, is connected by its riverwalk. Community input captured the desire for a similar element to be the unifying feature of Downtown Greensboro, to which a clear direction emerged.

Making Downtown Greensboro the leafiest urban center in America emerged as the opportunity to build on the City’s status as a Tree City USA and set Downtown apart through **an intentional and immense tree canopy connecting the public realm across Downtown.**

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to grow the leafiest Downtown in America includes:

- Partnering with the City’s Clean and Green Team to guide Downtown beautification efforts and help shape the selection and placement of plantings.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Select one or two pilot streets to enhance the tree canopy and connect community members through Downtown and to the Greenway.
- Celebrate the installation of trees through organized events.

Create an Easy-To-Get-Around Downtown

Growth Targets Supported



Downtown crosswalk in Greensboro



Greensboro Hopper Trolley

What is the Opportunity?

Creating a seamless mobility network that factors in all modes of transportation—from driving to cycling, walking to taking the trolley, and public transit to micro-mobility—makes it **convenient and affordable for all community members to navigate to and through Downtown**. Importantly, a robust transportation network does not just mean transportation around Downtown, but means residents, workers, and visitors must be able to navigate through the community to reach Downtown.

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to create an easy-to-get-around Downtown includes:

- Partnering with the City to launch a free Downtown trolley service and introduce Bird scooters with parking zones.
- Collaborating with NC A&T to establish an autonomous shuttle service linking the University with Downtown.
- Updating wayfinding signage for legibility and a cohesive visual identity.
- Providing resources to visitors to explore Downtown through Ambassadors,

Downtown guides, the DGI website, and social media.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Collaborate with the City, Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other local transit agencies to analyze existing service and determine opportunities to advance service, especially for public transportation options and the Hopper Trolley.
- Develop a network of bicycle facilities that connect to the Greenway.
- Partner with the City, Action Greensboro, and Visit Greensboro to promote non-vehicular access to Downtown, as well as regional access to Downtown through train travel.
- Explore a range of transportation options—including light rail and autonomous vehicles—to connect Downtown with the Coliseum, universities, and other local destinations.

Strengthen the Campus and Downtown Connection

Growth Targets Supported



North Carolina A&T State University Campus



Greensboro College Main Building

What is the Opportunity?

Downtown Greensboro is privileged to be surrounded by numerous prestigious colleges and universities, including Greensboro College, University of North Carolina Greensboro, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and Bennett College. However, the Downtown university presence is currently limited, including the Elon University School of Law, Union Square Campus, and UNCG's downtown office. Tremendous opportunity remains to **strengthen the presence of higher education institutions Downtown through physical and social connections** between Downtown and university students.

What are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to strengthen the connection between local higher education institutions and Downtown includes:

- Partnering with university departments to give students experiential learning projects with real-world applications.
- Connecting students with local professionals to introduce them to potential career paths and job opportunities.

- Working with students and university communication teams in community outreach efforts.
- Ensuring representation of university leaders on the DGI Board of Directors.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Coordinate with higher education leadership at nearby colleges and universities to explore development opportunities for the expansion of offices and facilities into Downtown.
- Connect private developers to higher education leadership to explore off-campus housing opportunities Downtown.
- Collaborate with student leadership to enhance opportunities for students to experience Downtown—through internships, jobs, programming, and events.
- Attract the greater university population—students, faculty, staff—Downtown through new uses (such as new housing and office space) or targeted events.

Cultivate a Flourishing Business Ecosystem

Growth Targets Supported



Ribbon cutting at Bump.Baby.Bliss Doula



Greensboro Chamber's Launch Greensboro program

What is the Opportunity?

In March 2025, *Business to Business Reviews* ranked Greensboro the best city in North Carolina for small business. Downtown Greensboro must continue this reputation as the best place for small businesses by continuing to support existing businesses and attract new small businesses. At the same time, as Downtown Greensboro continues to grow through an increase in resident numbers, attracting larger businesses and corporate headquarters to diversify employment opportunities will be crucial. Ultimately, Downtown Greensboro must **attract, support, and retain its diverse business** offerings that contribute to the vibrancy of Downtown.

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to create a vibrant business environment includes:

- Hosting monthly business owner meetings to share current activity and upcoming opportunities.
- Providing grants to support new businesses and pursuing external funding to strengthen Downtown initiatives.

- Promote Downtown businesses' events through DGI community channels.
- Coordinate with the City to address ordinances, timelines, and concerns.
- Create programs to drive customer traffic.

What is Next?

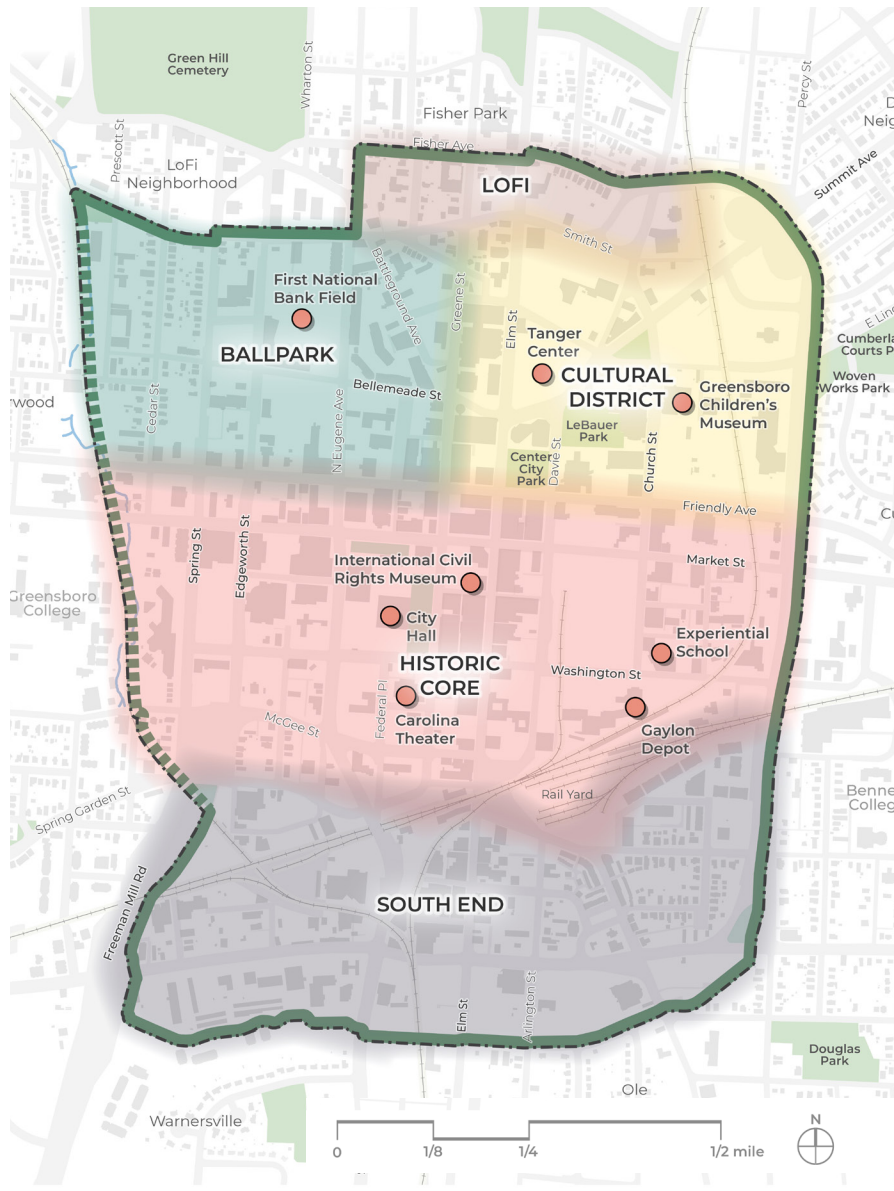
A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Foster the development of a range of employment spaces.
- Conduct a needs assessment for existing Downtown small businesses.
- Work with existing small businesses throughout Greensboro to determine if relocating Downtown, or to a Downtown location, would serve their needs.
- Partner with the City to create a more efficient and business-friendly zoning and building permit process, including exploring a "business advocate" position.



Celebrate Our District Identities

Growth Targets Supported



What is the Opportunity?

This Strategy presents an opportunity to capitalize on the unique geographic areas of Downtown. Districts will **highlight existing assets and provide an opportunity to focus efforts for programming, infrastructure improvements, and business development strategies**. While districts evolve over time, the five recommended districts are identified here for initial identification, prioritization, and implementation.

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to celebrate Downtown districts includes:

- Incorporating organically developed districts—including LoFi, South End Cultural, and Ballpark—into current marketing materials.
- Collaborating with local arts organizations—including Creative Greensboro and the Arts Council of Greater Greensboro—to strengthen branding of the Cultural District.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Develop communications materials specific to each district.
- Organize collaborative efforts within each district by convening businesses, property owners, key organizations, and other entities.
- Consider opportunities for aesthetic consistency—in streetscape design, storefront activation, and more—to unify the district visually.

Enliven Downtown with Arts and Culture

Growth Targets Supported



Greensboro Cultural Center



Le Bauer Park's Spring Blooming event



NC Folk Fest music event

What is the Opportunity?

Each year, Downtown Greensboro, Inc., the City, Action Greensboro, Visit Greensboro, and numerous organizations and businesses utilize Downtown as a key space for diverse and exciting programming opportunities. With over 1.6 million visits to over 20 major Downtown events and over nine million visits to Downtown in 2024, Downtown Greensboro is well-versed in providing a range of offerings to attract people year-round. But there is always room for growth. To bolster Downtown as a regional and national destination, enhancing program opportunities requires **creativity and collaboration that expands beyond traditional event offerings.**

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to enliven Downtown with arts and culture includes:

- Collaboration with community groups to host events and provide support through sponsorships and marketing.
- Launch of Elm Streets Stroll initiative to build on First Friday efforts to create more opportunities for public engagement and cultural experiences.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Update the City's Land Development Ordinance and licensing standards to provide more flexibility and opportunity for food, beverage, and entertainment uses.
- Consider the development of an event attraction fund and tourism tax reinvestment.
- Continue to collaborate with Downtown organizations and businesses to implement a marketing campaign for Downtown's many events and offerings.
- Develop a district-based visitor experience.
- Expand existing working relationships with Downtown cultural institutions to coordinate and enhance existing and new event offerings.
- Consider expanded support of the Greensboro Cultural Center as part of the Catalyze Church Street Big Move.
- Conduct an entertainment venue market and feasibility study.

Define the Downtown Identity

Growth Targets Supported



What is the Opportunity?

Establishing a **recognizable, unified visual and perceptual identity for Downtown Greensboro** is crucial to link all projects, events, and initiatives. This branding directly reflects the way the community sees, feels, and experiences Downtown and will pass directly onto visitors as they explore Downtown Greensboro.

What Are We Doing Now?

Ongoing work to define the Downtown Greensboro identity includes:

- Continued promotion of unique spaces, places, and events Downtown—highlighted through the “See for Yourself” marketing campaign.
- Sponsor, promote, and support “shop local” throughout the year.
- Offer maps with shopping, restaurants, and entertainment venues, and distribute them throughout Downtown hotels, businesses, and organizations.
- Maintain the DGI website, microsite, newsletter, and social media.

What is Next?

A range of specific actions will be necessary to achieve this Foundational Strategy. At a high level, these include:

- Collaborate with other large destinations in the area to expand marketing opportunities throughout the region.
- Partner with marketing agencies, and local businesses and organizations to adopt a singular voice and brand standards and ensure marketing materials are available to all that visit.
- Enhance signage along the interstate to direct visitors to Downtown.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

GSO35 is a bold vision, but the impact will only be realized through coordinated and sustained action. This chapter lays out the **framework for delivery**: how Greensboro can move from ideas to implementation; how to use the right mix of regulatory and financial tools; and how to structure leadership and accountability.

Implementation requires more than individual projects. It requires the **alignment of tools, partners, and sequencing**. Three key components are needed for this strategic implementation framework.

- **Regulatory Tools:** Fixing inefficiencies that add cost and delay, while making targeted updates to zoning and design standards.
- **Financial Tools:** Incentivizing investment with purpose by shifting from grants to lending, sharing costs of structured parking, and by supporting

the Office of Business Opportunity through targeted support for small businesses.

- **Governance and Partnerships:** A delivery structure that brings City, DGI, Redevelopment Commission, anchor institutions, and philanthropy together around catalytic sites and Big Moves.

The framework is grounded in best practices from other downtowns but customized to Downtown Greensboro's needs and capacity.

This chapter provides the scaffolding: what must be done, who should do it, and how to organize delivery. **Appendix A contains the detailed Implementation Matrices**, which provide step-by-step guidance on actions, timing, and responsibilities for each Big Move and Foundational Strategy. Used together, the narrative and matrices give Downtown Greensboro both the inspiration and the playbook to move forward.



Implementation Pathway: Building the Downtown Implementation Coalition

Downtown Greensboro’s Big Moves will not happen by accident. They require an **Implementation Coalition**—a coordinating body to align resources, unblock challenges, and keep focus on catalytic sites.

The Coalition should:

- Convene **City leadership and agency reps, DGI, the Redevelopment Commission, major institutions, and private/philanthropic partners**
- Focus on priority **Big Moves and Foundational Strategies**, sequencing actions around catalytic sites
- Serve as an **accountability structure**: setting timelines, tracking progress, and ensuring public commitments are matched with private investment

This is not about creating another layer of bureaucracy, but about building a **practical table for collaboration**, one that can accelerate delivery and sustain momentum.

Implementation Pathway for GSO35 Implementation Coalition	
Timing	Approach
Months 1–3	Convene core partners (City, County, DGI, anchor institutions, developers, community organizations) to define roles, draft a coalition charter, and pass a City Council resolution to formalize the structure.
Months 4–8	Launch pilot catalytic site teams focused on 1–2 Big Moves or Foundational Strategies. Develop Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) to test coordination, clarify responsibilities, and demonstrate early wins.
By Month 6	Assign or hire dedicated project management capacity, either within the City or through a partner like DGI, to drive site readiness and partner coordination.
Months 9–15	Build out a data and evaluation system with transparent reporting, equity tracking, and regular updates to City/County leadership and stakeholders.
Ongoing	Expand and refine the coalition based on lessons learned, adding additional sites and strategies, and strengthening governance as implementation scales.

Growth Targets and Performance Metrics

Near-Term Action Plan (2025–2027):

Quick Wins and Catalytic Moves

The first two years of implementation are about focus and momentum. Quick wins that align with and accelerate GSO35's Big Moves will set the tone, demonstrating that Greensboro is serious about unlocking Downtown's potential through targeted action, clear coordination, and visible results.

The following locations are best positioned to support both immediate progress and long-term transformation:

- **Catalytic project opportunities that anchor Big Moves** such as the News & Record block, Galyon Depot, and Weaver Foundation Property;
- **The development of Greenway adjacent parcels** that support multiple Big Moves and are ripe for trail-oriented housing, institutional partnerships, and layered public/private investment; and
- **Focusing on core activation zones** like Elm Street to focus on business support, pedestrian improvements, and cultural activation.

Quick Wins to Deliver in the First 12–24 Months

Actions in this window should support one or more Big Moves while demonstrating real, tangible progress:

Site Readiness and Coordination

- Establish MOUs and cross-sector delivery teams for two or three catalytic sites.
- Begin site planning and pre-development support for News & Record and South End parcels.

Incentive Launches

- Roll out facade and signage improvement grants for Elm Street
- Pilot lease subsidies and pop-up-to-permanent support for small businesses.

Zoning and Regulatory Progress

- Complete targeted zoning updates along the Greenway and Church Street to unlock trail-oriented housing.
- Pilot expedited permitting for catalytic sites and mixed-use infill.

Public Space and Activation

- Launch seasonal “Open Streets” on Elm.
- Coordinate cultural programming with institutional partners on Church Street.
- Plan and fund early enhancements to the Square and surrounding blocks.

Phasing and Sequencing (2025–2035): Building Toward the Big Moves

GSO35's vision cannot be realized all at once. Phasing provides a realistic structure for aligning capacity, funding, and political support, while ensuring every step taken builds toward the delivery of the Big Moves and their foundational strategies.

Years 1–2: Mobilize and Demonstrate

Deliver early wins tied to Big Moves; set the foundation for long-term delivery, initial updates and programs; and establish the Implementation Coalition.

Years 3–5: Deliver and Expand

Begin construction on at least two catalytic sites, expand incentives, and begin delivering key infrastructure improvements.

Years 6–10: Institutionalize and Sustain

Scale delivery, deepen impact, and embed governance and accountability to steward long-term transformation.

This phasing strategy responds directly to the priorities surfaced by the GSO35 engagement process: prioritize catalytic investment, streamline public processes, and ensure more inclusive access to opportunity. Each phase reinforces equity, coordination, and momentum.

GSO35
DOWNTOWN
IN A DECADE
STRATEGIC PLAN



DOWNTOWN
GREENSBORO