



COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN

January 17, 2023



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AGENDA

PROJECT TEAM



Wendy Shabay Bonneau, FAICP
*Principal-in-Charge
Senior Advisor
Quality Control and Assurance*



Shery Cheng, PLA
*Project Manager
Landscape Architect*



Alan Hendrix, P.E.
*Client Representative
Transportation Engineer*



Christopher Sison
Project Planner



Henry Hartshorn, PLA
*Landscape Architect
Senior Advisor & Quality Control*



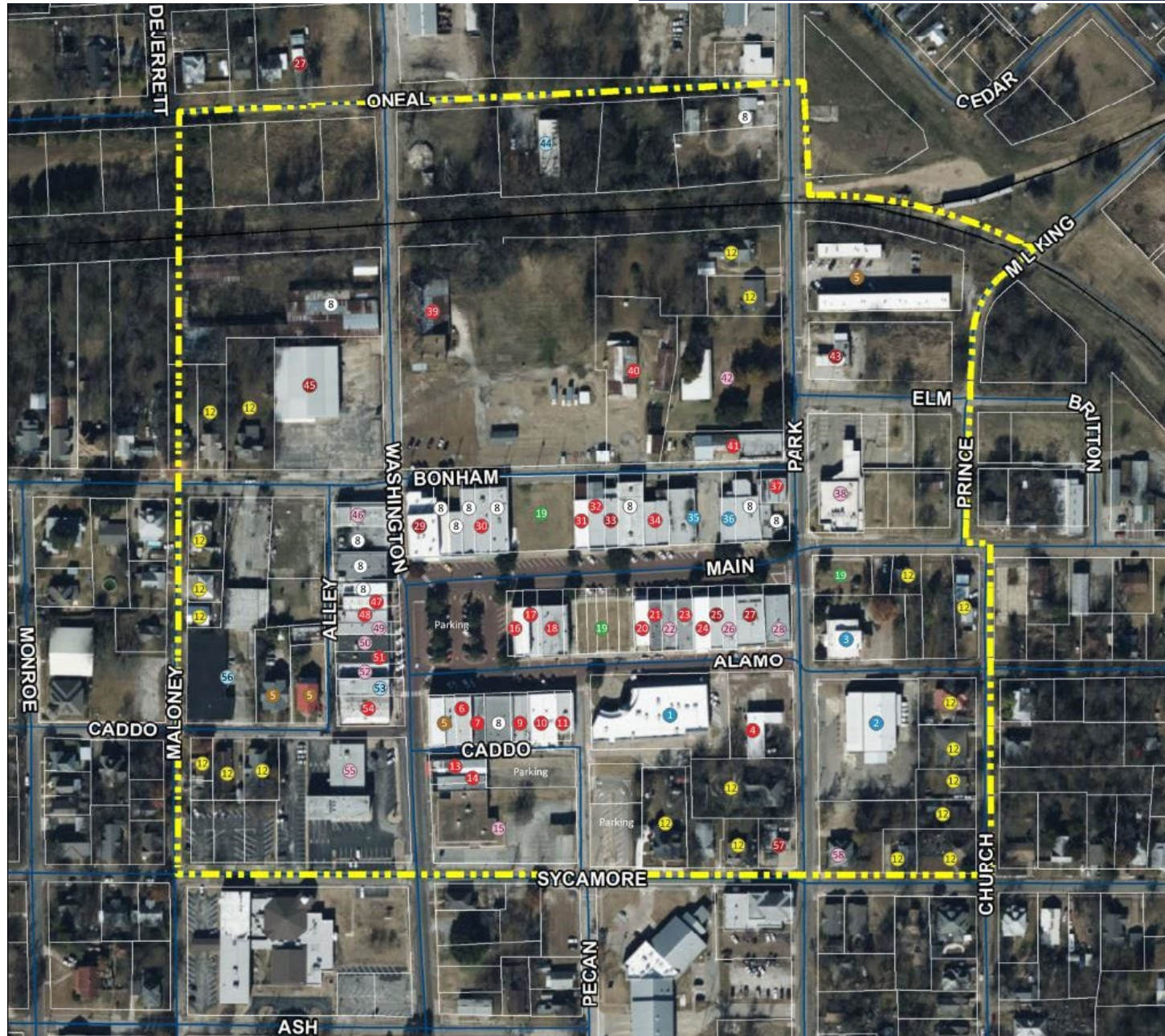
Kevin St. Jacques, P.E.
*Traffic Engineer
Transportation Planning*

RECAP

COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN



STUDY AREA



PURPOSE

- *Undertaking a downtown plan to focus on development, redevelopment and space activation to create a vibrant downtown*
- *Focus on a few key sites including city-owned land, vacant parcels and the Farmers Market site*
- *Develop conceptual master plan and revitalization approach*
- *Identify physical, cultural and economic strategies and actions*



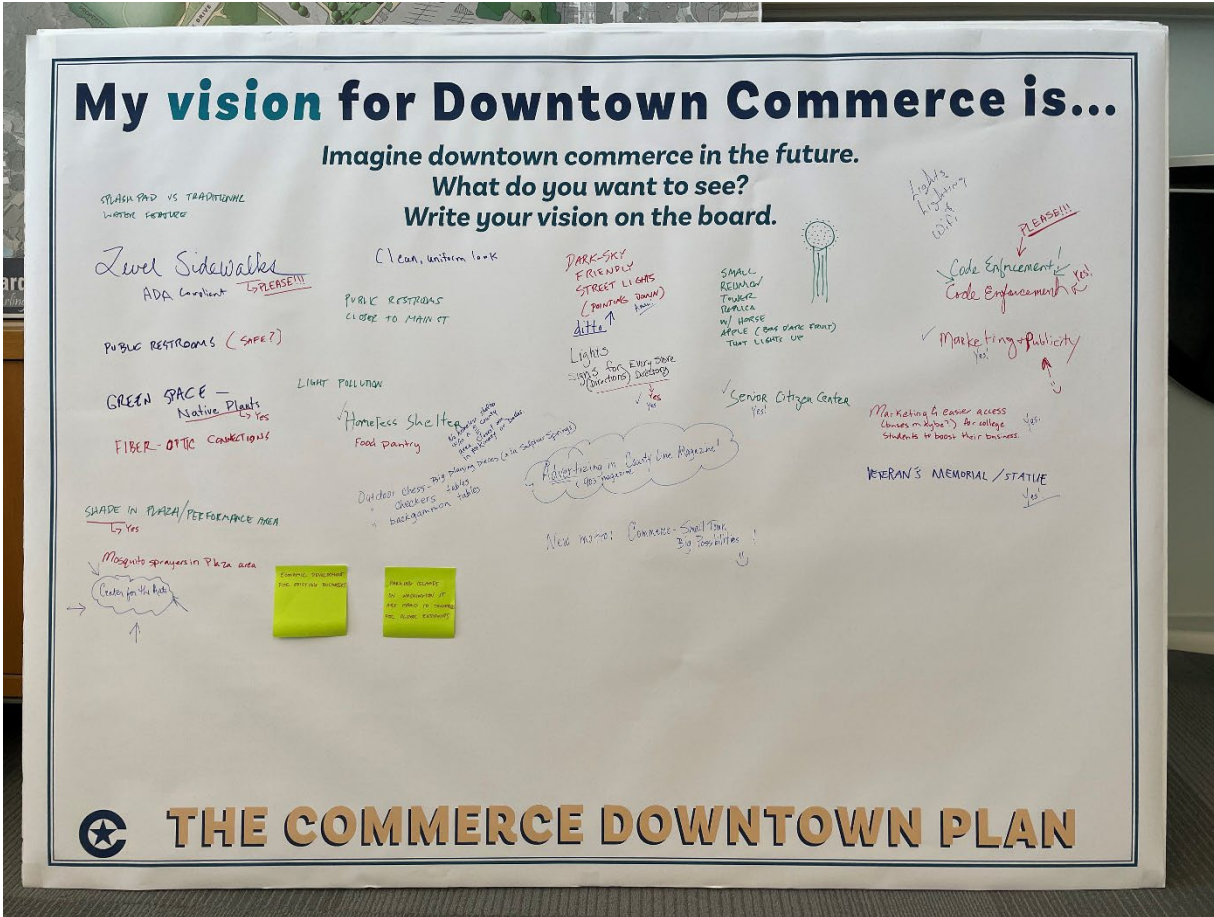
ENGAGEMENT

■ MEETINGS & EVENTS

- 1 VIRTUAL KICKOFF MEETING – (MARCH 2022)**
- 2 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1 – (APRIL 2022)**
- 3 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS – (APRIL 2022)**
- 4 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2 – (JUNE 2022)**
- 5 PUBLIC MEETING #1 – (JUNE 2022)**
- 6 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3 – (OCTOBER 2022)**
- 7 PUBLIC MEETING #2 – (OCTOBER 2022)**
- 8 ADOPTION MEETING – (JANUARY 2023)**



VISION BOARD



Infrastructure and Street Improvements

- *Improve sidewalk accessibility*
- *Improve the aesthetic of Downtown*

Park and Plaza

- *Provide shade*
- *Green space*

Branding

- *Iconic Downtown monument*
- *Improved signage and marketing*

CONCEPT BOARDS



- *Improve sidewalk accessibility*
- *Want steps and handrails*
- *Add murals to buildings*
- *Ramps for handicap spaces*
- *Make wayfinding iconic to Commerce*

CONCEPT BOARDS



- *Prefer angled parking on Washington St.*
- *Intersection (Washington St and Bonham Alley) needs geometric improvements for safety*
- *Don't make streets as narrow as Sulphur Springs*
- *Hard to make left turns off Main St and Alamo St*
- *More handicap spaces*

CONCEPT BOARDS

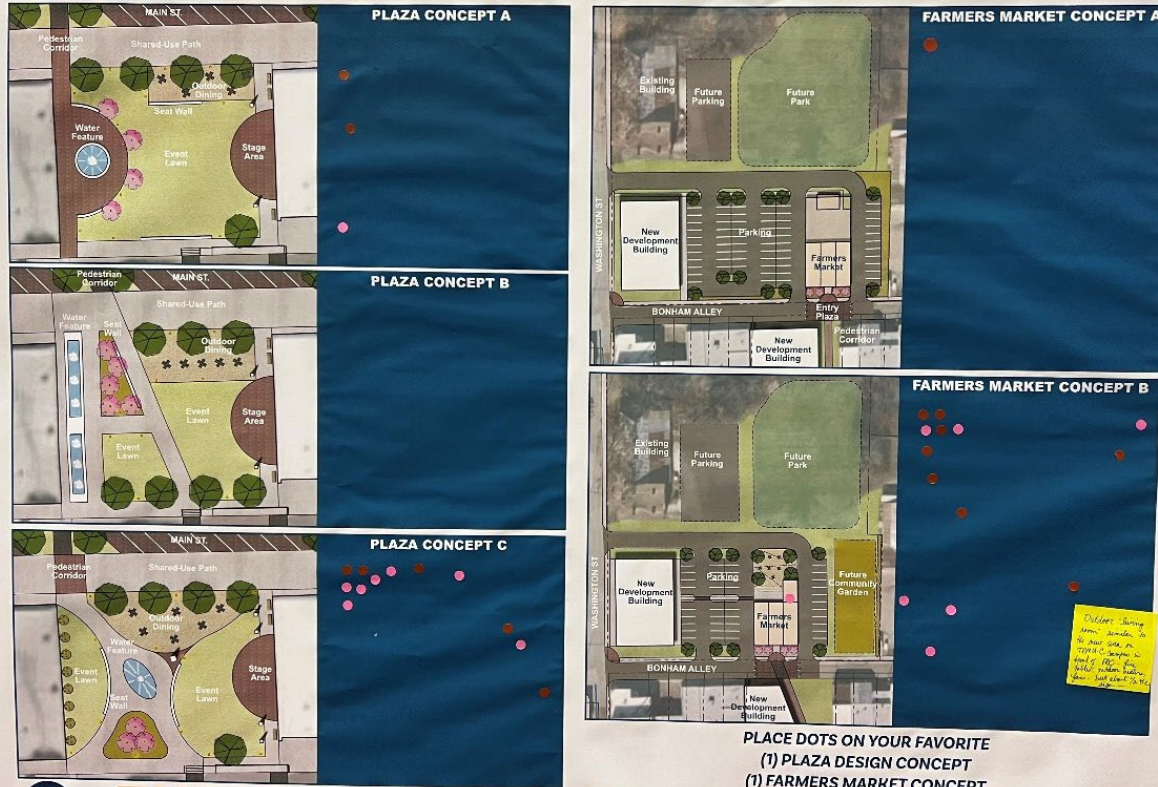


High Priority program items

- *Shade Structures*
- *Water Feature*
- *Landscaping*
- *Lighting*
- *Flexible Seating*

CONCEPT BOARDS

PLAZA AND FARMERS MARKET CONCEPTS



THE COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN

Preferred Concepts

- Plaza – Option C
- Farmers Market – Concept B

SURVEY



THE COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN

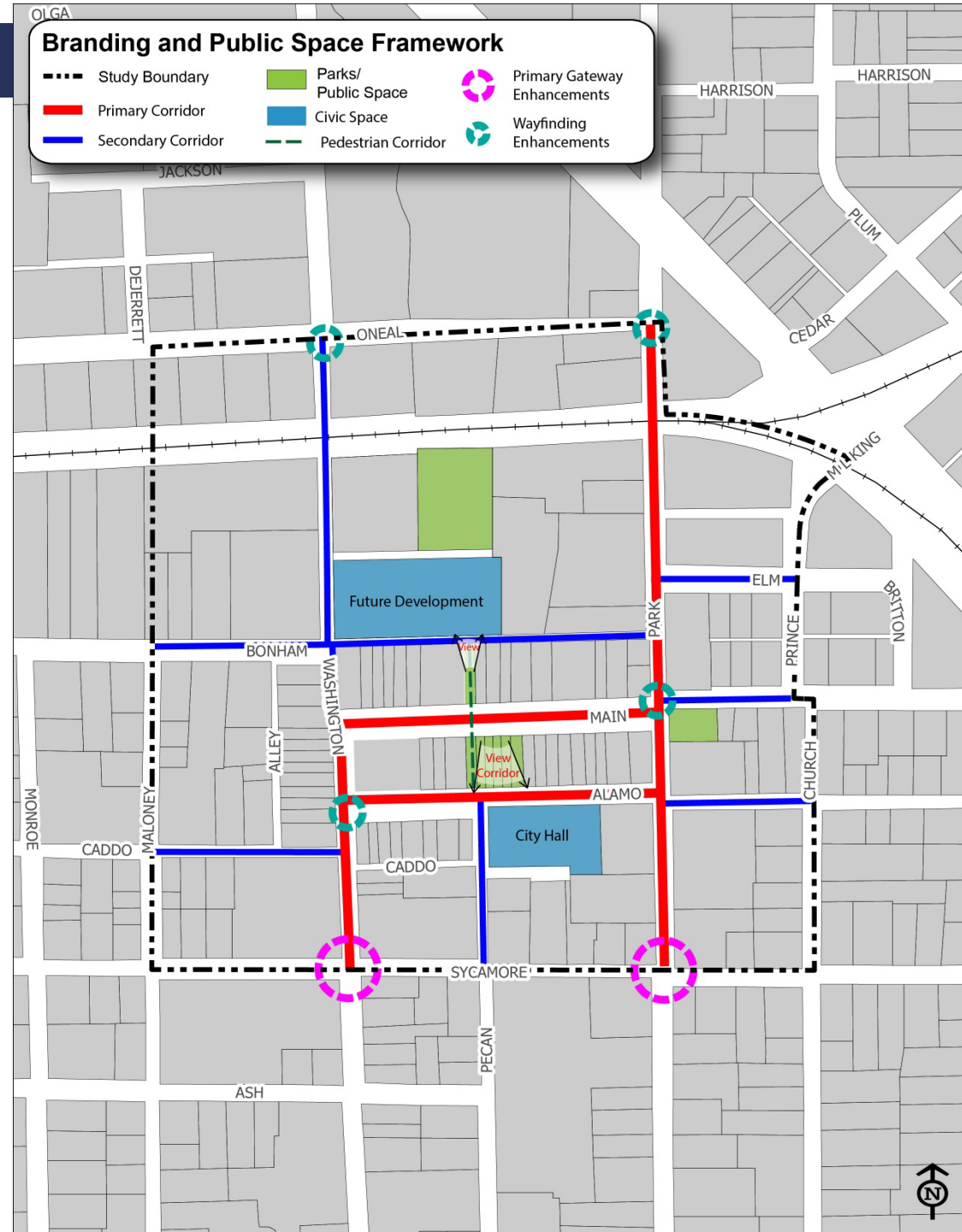
What features are important to you in Downtown Commerce? Please rank these projects in terms of your priority.

- ☐ Farmers Market Design
- ☐ Plaza Design Improvements
- ☐ Main Street Streetscape
- ☐ Alamo Street Streetscape
- ☐ Washington Street Streetscape
- ☐ Bonham Alley
- ☐ Washington Street and Park Street Primary Gateways
- ☐ Others: _____

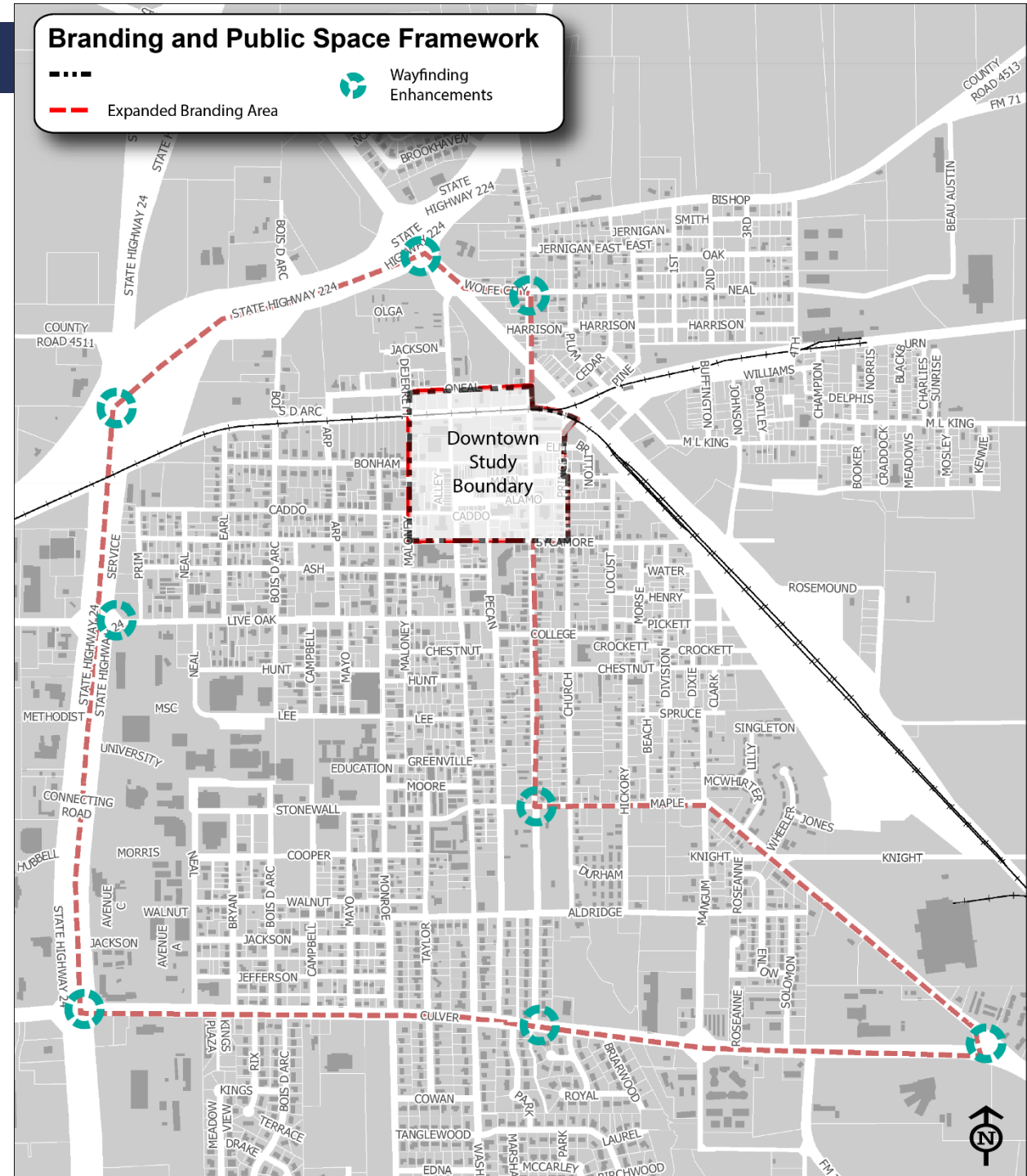
Additional Comments:



BRANDING AND PUBLIC SPACE FRAMEWORK



BRANDING AND PUBLIC SPACE FRAMEWORK



VISION & GOALS

COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN



VISION STATEMENT

“DOWNTOWN COMMERCE IS A REGIONAL DESTINATION FOR HISTORY, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY. LOCALS AND VISITORS ARE DRAWN TO ITS UNIQUE BLEND OF BUSINESSES, ENTERTAINMENT, AND PUBLIC SPACES. CHARACTERIZED BY WALKABLE STREETS, INVITING OUTDOOR SPACES, AND WELL-ESTABLISHED ARCHITECTURE, DOWNTOWN COMMERCE FUNCTIONS AS THE HEART OF THIS CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY.”

GOALS

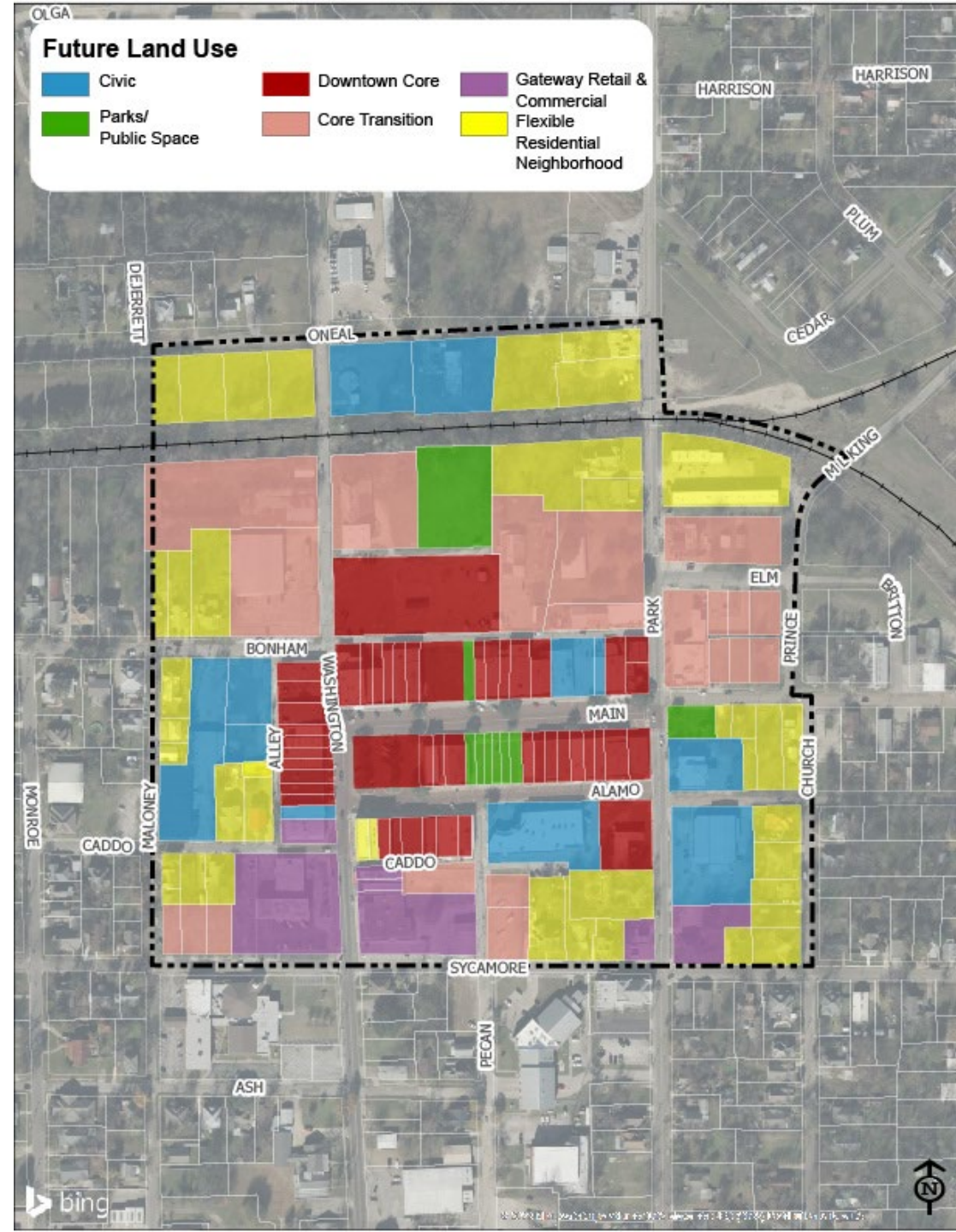
- *Support existing points of interest and develop new destinations to attract people to Downtown.*
- *Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation as well as parking throughout Downtown.*
- *Attract and retain retail, restaurants, and entertainment businesses that appeal to Commerce residents and visitors.*
- *Develop a year-round calendar of events for Downtown.*

MASTER PLAN

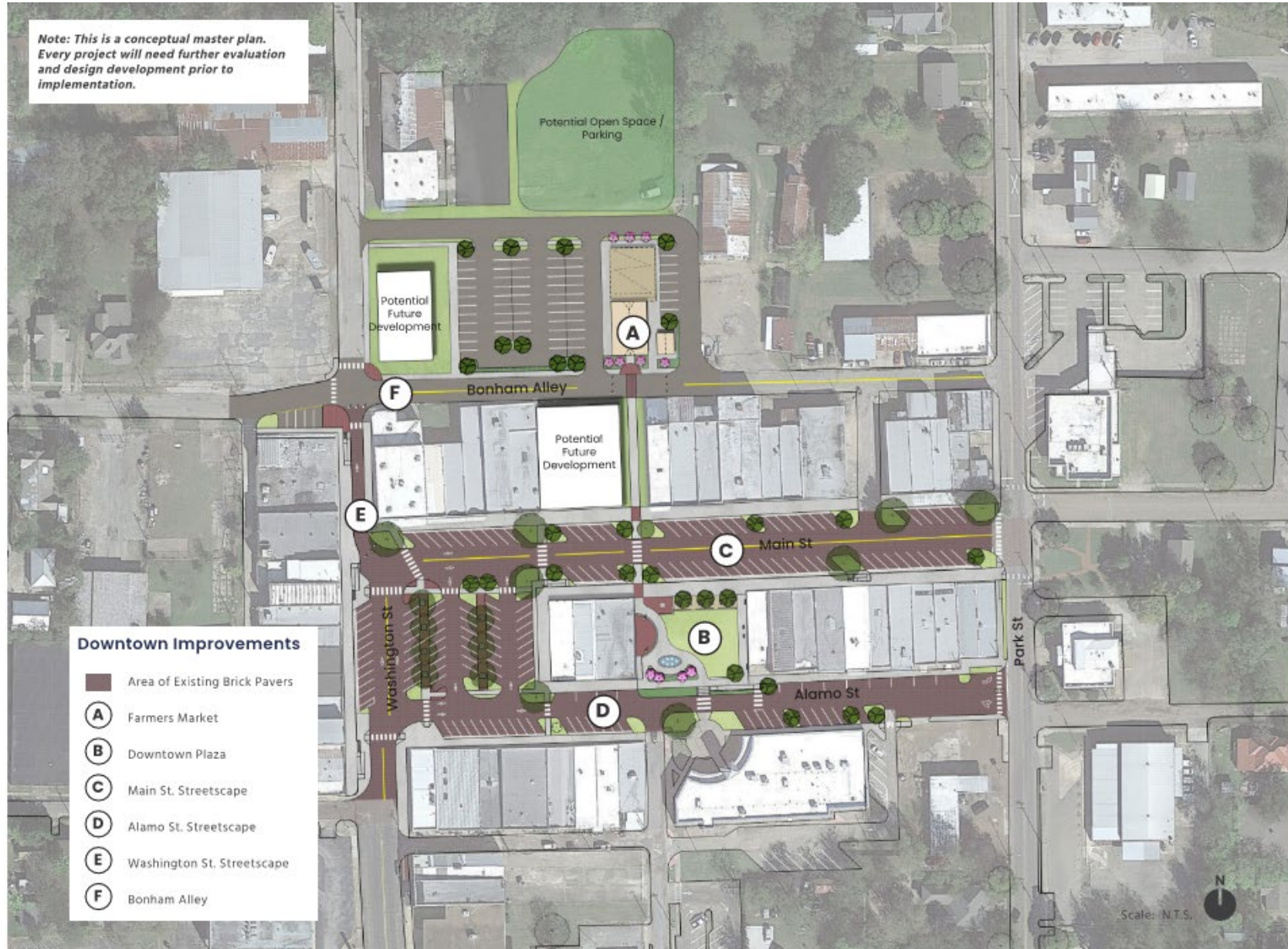
COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN



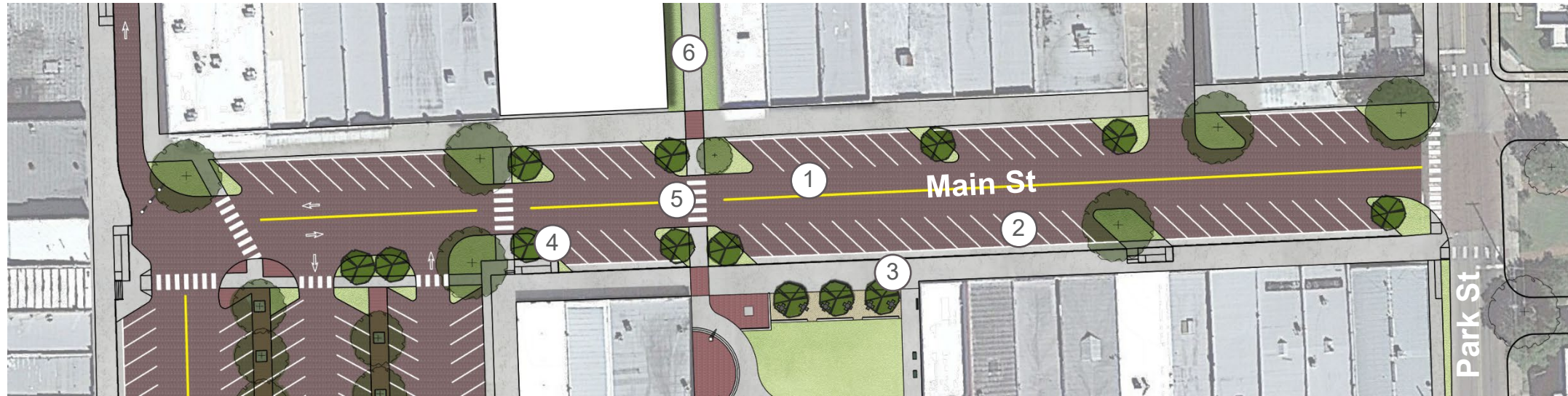
CONCEPTUAL FUTURE LAND USE MAP



ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLAN



MAIN STREET



Conceptual rendering of Main Street

Legend

- ① Narrow Travel Lanes
- ② Angled Parking
- ③ Shared-Use Path
- ④ Stairway and Ramp Improvements
- ⑤ Crosswalk Improvements
- ⑥ Pedestrian / View Corridor

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT

- Stairway and Ramp Improvements



LANDSCAPED LONG STEPS WITH
NARROW WALK



TERRACED WALK

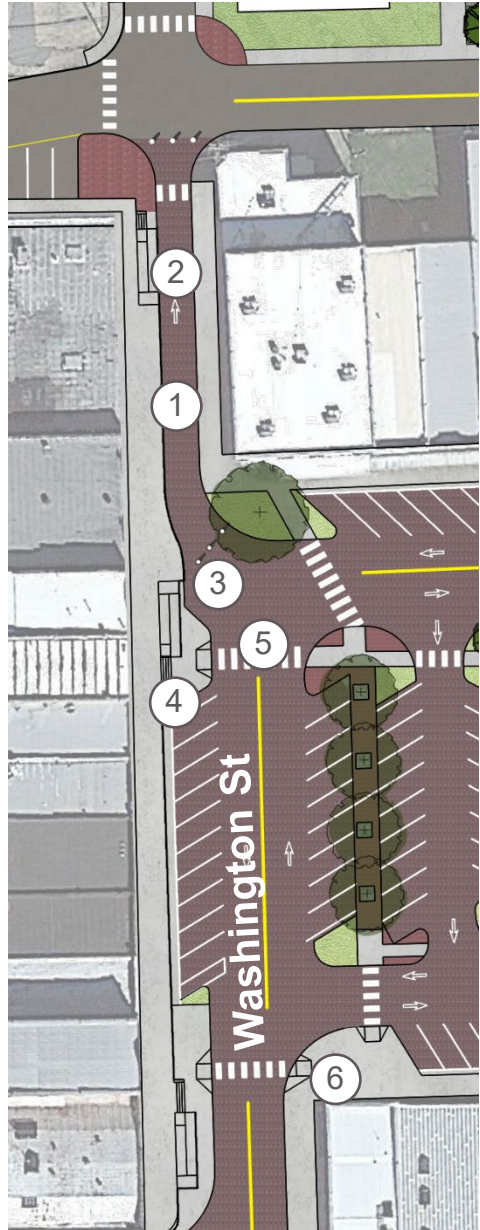


PEDESTRIAN RAMP



TERRACED WALK WITH LONG RAMP

WASHINGTON STREET



WAYFINDING FOR DOWNTOWN

Legend

- ① Convert to One-Way
- ② String lights
- ③ Removable bollards
- ④ Stairway and Ramp Improvements
- ⑤ Crosswalk Improvements
- ⑥ Wayfinding signage



CROSSWALK



REMOVABLE BOLLARDS

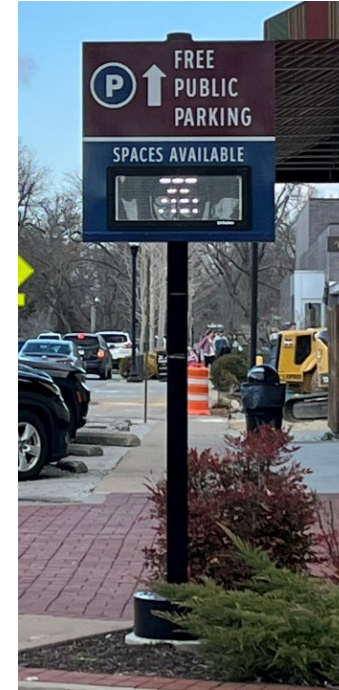
DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT



STRING LIGHTS

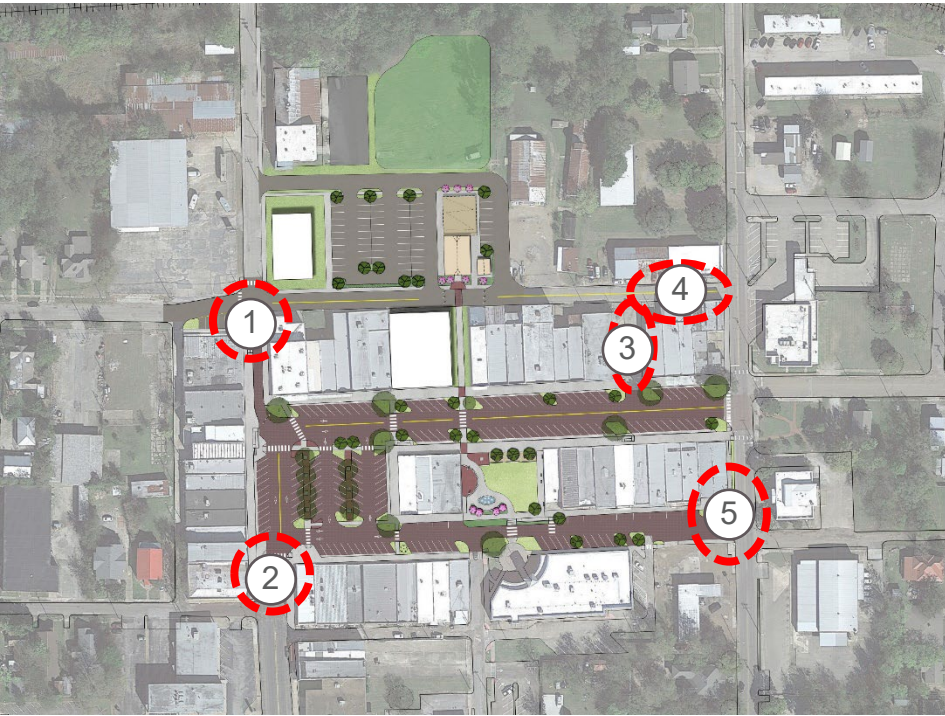


DOWNTOWN GATEWAY / MONUMENT



WAYFINDING INSIDE DOWNTOWN

PEDESTRIAN / VEHICULAR CONFLICTS



ALAMO STREET



Conceptual rendering of Alamo Street

Legend

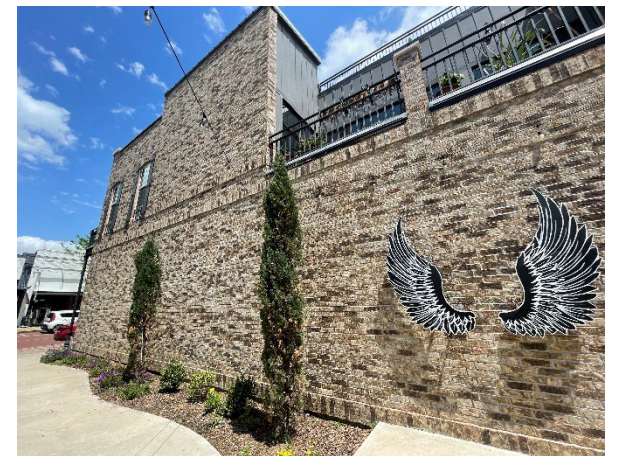
- ① Narrowed Travel Lane
- ② Parallel Parking
- ③ Sidewalk

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT

- PEDESTRIAN SAFETY



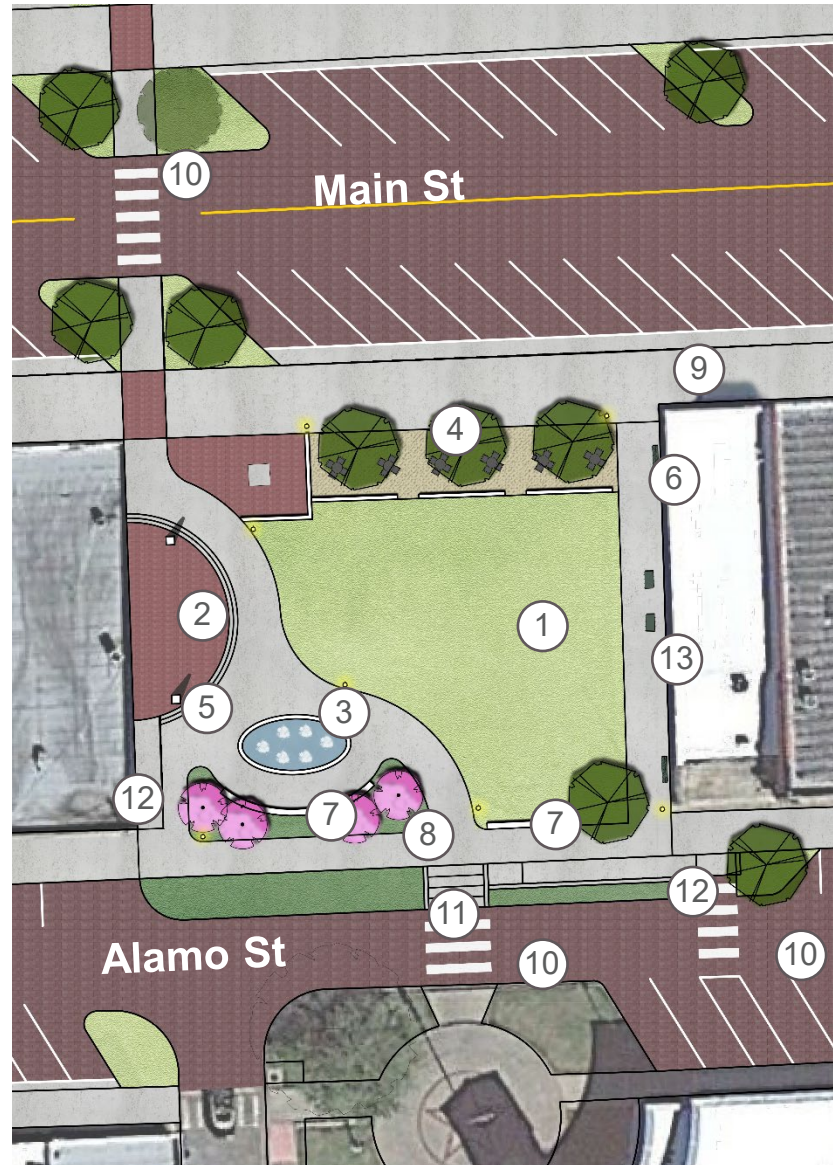
PEDESTRIAN / VIEW CORRIDOR



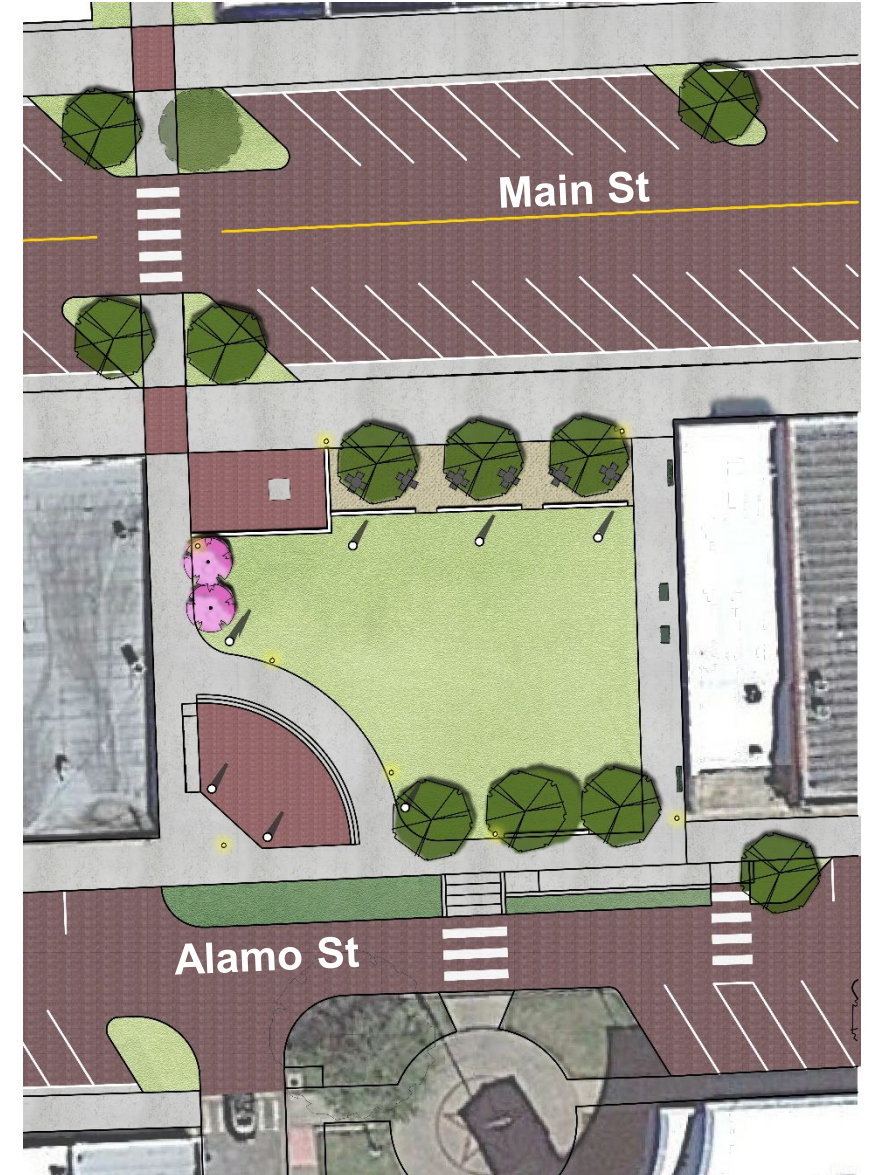
PLAZA DESIGN

Legend

- ① Event Lawn
- ② Performance Area w/ Special Paving
- ③ Fountain
- ④ Decomposed Granite Outdoor Dining Area
- ⑤ Limestone Columns
- ⑥ Benches
- ⑦ Limestone Seat Wall (18" Ht)
- ⑧ Planting Area w/ Ornamental Trees
- ⑨ Shared-Use Path
- ⑩ Crosswalk
- ⑪ Concrete Stairs w/ Railing
- ⑫ Concrete Ramp w/ Railing
- ⑬ Outdoor Table Games



Concept Alternative 1



Concept Alternative 2

PLAZA DESIGN



PLAZA DESIGN



PLAZA DESIGN

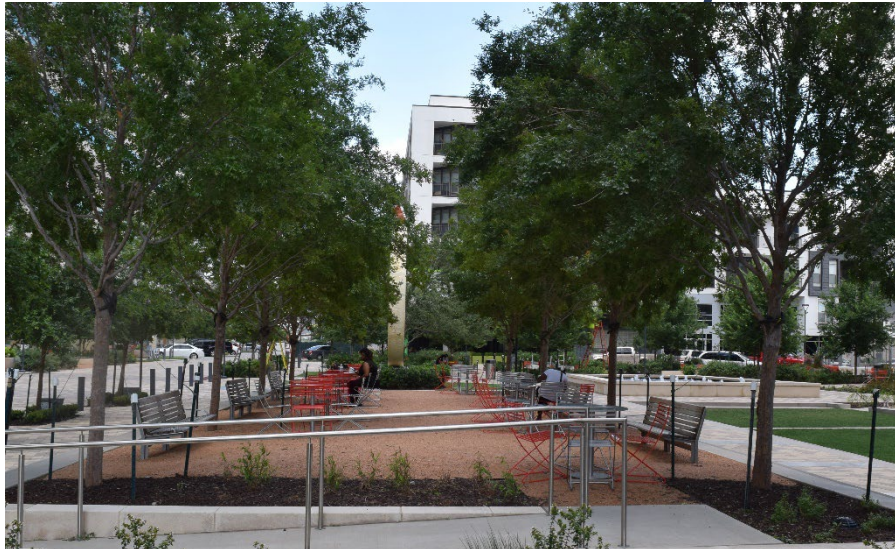


PLAZA PROGRAM

- WATER FEATURE



- SEATING OPPORTUNITIES / OUTDOOR DINING



PLAZA PROGRAM

- EVENT LAWN / FLEXIBLE SPACES

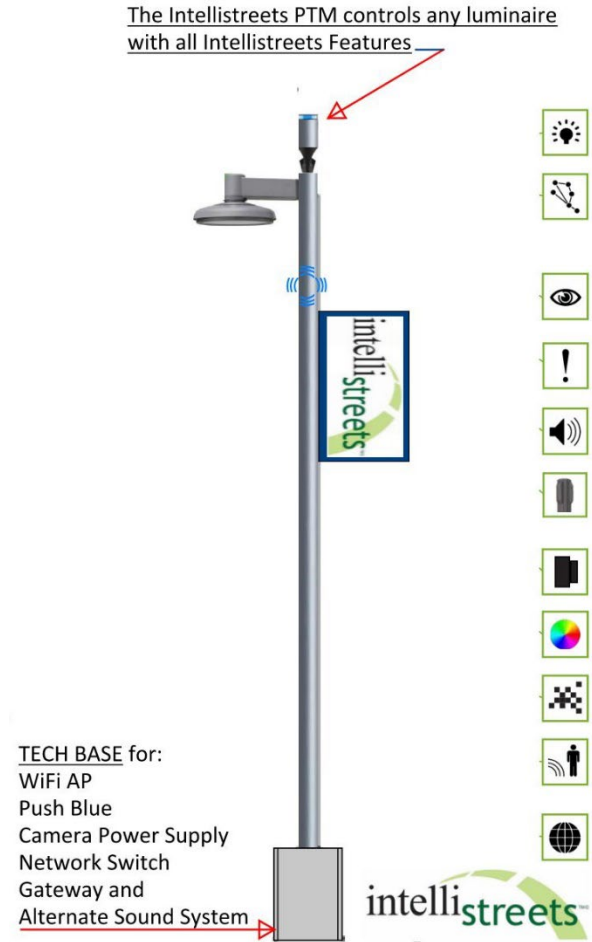


- STAGE AREA



PLAZA PROGRAM

- LIGHTING / MULTI-MEDIA DEVICES IMPROVEMENT



5



FARMERS MARKET



Legend

- ① Pavilion
- ② Restroom Building
- ③ Outdoor Event & Dining Area
- ④ Entry Plaza
- ⑤ Crosswalk w/ Special Paving
- ⑥ Removable Bollards

FARMERS MARKET



FARMERS MARKET



FARMERS MARKET



FARMERS MARKET PROGRAM



IMPLEMENTATION

COMMERCE DOWNTOWN PLAN



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

Ref. #	Action Items	Project	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing	
1	Construct a Farmers Market Design and construct a farmers market located on Bonham Alley, next to Huffman's Farm Supply. This could include a pavilion, outdoor seating, public restroom, and community garden. This project could be divided into phases. Parking improvements could be done within years 3, while the pavilion and public restrooms could be completed in years 6.	A	◆	◆			\$1,700,000 - \$2,000,000
2	Activate Plaza Across from City Hall Design and construct the Downtown Plaza expansion. For budgetary purposes this includes an event lawn, performance area, unique surface textures, outdoor dining area, and improved landscape areas.	B	◆				\$550,000 - \$900,000
3	Construct Main Street Streetscape and Improvements Design and construct the Main Street streetscape between Washington Street and Park Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve on-street parking.	C	◆				\$1,800,000 - \$2,000,000
4	Construct Alamo Street Streetscape and Improvements Design and construct the Alamo Street streetscape between Washington Street and Park Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve on-street parking.	D		◆			\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000
5	Construct Washington Street Streetscape and Improvements Design and construct the Washington Street streetscape between Bonham Alley and Caddo Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, improve on-street parking, and address significant elevation change from street level to sidewalk.	E		◆			\$610,000 - \$700,000
6	Convert Part of Washington Street to One-Way Convert Washington Street between Bonham Alley and Main Street to one-way in order to address vehicular circulation issues. Street improvements can also include temporary bollards and string lighting.	E			◆		\$200,000 - \$250,000
7	Construct Bonham Alley Improvements Design and construct Bonham Alley to address safety concerns at the intersection of Bonham Alley and Washington Street. Improve the pedestrian experience by adding sidewalks on the north side of the street and crosswalks to connect the farmers market to the rest of Downtown.	F			◆		\$300,000 - \$500,000
8	Develop Washington Street Downtown Gateway Signage Design and construct gateway signage at Washington Street and Sycamore Street. This feature will create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from the south (one of the primary arrival paths for most local residents).	Map 17			◆		\$250,000 - \$550,000
9	Develop Park Street Downtown Gateway Signage Design and construct gateway signage at Park Street and Alamo Street and Park Street and Main Street. This feature will create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from either the south or north ends of Park Street.	Map 17			◆		\$250,000 - \$550,000
10	Develop Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Develop and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage, primarily at pedestrian scale, to direct pedestrians to key locations throughout Downtown. The location of signage should be strategic and considerate of walk times to key locations.	Map 17		◆			\$50,000

Ref. #	Action Items	Project	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing	
11	Develop Vehicular Wayfinding Signage Design and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage targeting vehicular traffic to direct drivers to key locations throughout Downtown including destinations and public parking. Consider expanding this into a City-wide wayfinding program that includes special efforts directing vehicles into Downtown from SH 24, SH 11E, Maple Street, and Culver Street. Part of this effort should include the design and installation of public parking signage for public lots.	Map 18		◆			<\$10,000 for simple wayfinding
12	Provide Improved Street Lighting Replace existing street lighting with architectural poles and luminaires that maintain the decorative, historic character of Downtown.	ALL	◆			◆	\$600,000 - \$1,000,000

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMMING ACTIONS

Ref. #	Action Items	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)			
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing
1	Update Ordinances Review and consider any ordinance or regulatory improvements that need to be made to achieve the Downtown Master Plan.	◆			◆
2	Enhance Storefront Appearance Establish storefront programs to create visual interest in vacant or underutilized spaces, through the use of public art, business displays, and similar efforts. For example, a vacant storefront could have a mural on the windows, vinyls applied with unique/quirky aspects of history, or even have a display for another business in Downtown, etc. Existing businesses should develop creative displays that entice customers and change with seasons. They can highlight holidays and community events, such as homecoming (high school pride), etc.	◆			
3	Develop a Downtown Commerce Website and Social Media Presence Develop a standalone Downtown website independent of the City and tourism websites. This establishes an accessible source of information about Downtown-specific events, sales, and promotions. These efforts should crossover with a social media presence for both Downtown and the City. Seek social media content to promote interaction - historic photos and short videos are particularly effective.	◆			◆
4	Develop a Downtown Commerce Brand Develop a unique brand for Downtown Commerce. This should include a district name, logo, and tag line that conveys activity. Consider building a product line, including items for sale (e.g., t-shirts, hats), to promote tourism, retail, and employment Downtown.	◆			◆
5	Develop a Downtown Events and Promotion Calendar Develop a Downtown-specific events and promotions calendar featuring City-sponsored events, business events like live music, and special sales/promotions. This should be prominently featured on the Downtown website. The City should also regularly assess Downtown events, including surveys of stakeholders regarding impact, income, and staff impact; best organizations to lead each event; and purpose/intent of the events.	◆			◆

Ref. #	Action Items	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)			
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing
6	Continue Pop-Up Events for Entrepreneurs Continue to use existing businesses and/or vacant buildings as pop-up space for entrepreneurs to “test the waters” on a new business concept at reduced risk.	◆			◆
7	Collaborate with Higher Education Institutions Collaborate with local higher education facilities (e.g., business support/education, intern programs, entrepreneurship-focused degrees) to identify opportunities to support Downtown, support academic efforts, and support opportunities for students.		◆		
8	Downtown Sponsorship Program Develop a sponsorship program for Downtown, expanding the base of support beyond the Downtown area to include other local industries. This could include sponsorship packages for particular events or Downtown improvements, among other things. Doing so helps provide financial resources and emphasizes that a strong Downtown benefits all, even businesses outside of Downtown.	◆			◆
9	Establish/Strengthen Monthly Activation Develop standing monthly events targeting arts and culture, with extended business hours (1st Friday, etc.). Holding monthly events shifts Downtown higher in consideration for local residents—a set monthly “date” where they know something will be happening.	◆			◆
10	Create Public and Mural Arts Program Establish a mural arts program for Downtown Commerce. This could include commissioning murals as well as providing grants and/or design assistance to artists, residents, and business owners interested in placing murals on private property. San Marcos provides an excellent example of a diverse mural arts program with several years of success.	◆			
11	Allocate Downtown Staffing Resources As need arises, consider allocating Downtown staffing resources to effectively implement this Plan and support Downtown Commerce.			◆	
12	Establish a Commerce Main Street Program Establish a Main Street Program and gain access to the Main Street America network of resources and framework to implementing Downtown improvements.		◆		
13	Explore Historic District Designation for Downtown Explore the potential of defining a historic district to assist with regulating building materials of future developments, renovations, and facade preservation.		◆		

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

FINANCE ACTIONS – PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Ref. #	Action Items	Project	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)			
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing
1	Develop a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) Designate a Downtown TIRZ to capture incremental property tax growth. The City should lead this initiative, but request the County, school district, and potentially the university to join the TIRZ. The tax increment would be used to help fund the projects in the Downtown Master Plan over the next 20 years.	ALL	◆			◆
2	Pursue TxDOT Funding TxDOT administers Transportation Alternative (TA) funds for locally sponsored bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects in communities across the state. Up to \$250 million will be made available statewide for projects during FY 22-FY 25.	ALL	◆			◆

FUNDING OPTIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY TOOLS

Funding strategies that can be evaluated:

- general fund sources within the municipal budget
- impact fee eligible projects within downtown
- municipal management rebates
- sales tax sharing
- tax exempt financing
- facade maintenance loan program
- community development block grant
- corporate donations and sponsorship
- texas property assessed clean energy (pace) programs
- economic development sales tax (edc)
- local hotel occupancy tax
- property tax abatement
- public improvement district (pid)
- municipal management districts (mmd)
- special purpose district
- matching funds/loans
- federal historic preservation tax incentive
- neighborhood empowerment zone
- enterprise zone

HIGH IMPACT PROJECTS

- *Main Street Streetscape (\$1.8-2M)*
- *Plaza Design Improvements (\$600-900k)*
- *Washington Street Streetscape (\$600-700k)*
- *Alamo Street Streetscape (\$1-1.5M)*
- *Farmers Market Design Improvements (\$1.7-2M)*
- *Bonham Alley*
- *Washington Street and Park Street Gateways*

EASY WINS

- *Code Enforcement*
- *Update Ordinances*
- *Enhance Storefront Appearance*
- *Develop a Downtown Commerce Brand*
- *Downtown a Downtown Events and Promotion Calendar*
- *Continue Pop-Up Events for Entrepreneurs*
- *Establish/Strengthen Monthly Activation*
- *Create Public and Mural Arts Programs*

NEXT STEPS

1

PLAN ADOPTION



THANK YOU!!!

WENDY SHABAY BONNEAU, PRINCIPAL, FAICP
ALAN HENDRIX, CLIENT REPRESENTATIVE, P.E.
SHERRY CHENG, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, P.L.A.
CHRISTOPHER SISON, PLANNER



**FREESE
AND
NICHOLS**