

DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF VISION & ACTION PLAN



A joint planning effort of:



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with gratitude that we express thanks to the over 2,000 individuals, groups, institutions, organizations, City/County staff, and appointed/elected officials who helped inform the development of the Downtown Vision and Action Plan. The Plan was funded through a partnership between the Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance, City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A CALL TO ACTION

The **Downtown Flagstaff Vision and Action Plan** has been created during the most disruptive period of our lifetimes. Coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, a nationwide awakening to support racial justice and a severe economic recession, the Plan offers not only a long-term vision and game plan for downtown, but also strategies to guide downtown and focus on its continued economic health.

The pandemic has accelerated background trends in demographics and lifestyles that were already influencing the growth of Flagstaff and its downtown. Examples of these trends include households relocating from large urban areas to smaller second-tier cities, consumer preferences favoring a unique and specialized shopping and dining experience, and innovations in the use of public space by closing streets, activating alleys, and enlivening plazas for increased outdoor seating options. These trends are favoring cities such as Flagstaff that offer a welcoming small town atmosphere and access to extraordinary natural recreational assets.

Moving beyond the pandemic, growth pressures are likely to increase as more people adopt remote work, and the quality of life degrades in nearby West Coast and desert cities. More existing second home owners are likely to make Flagstaff their primary residence. This is a mixed bag for Flagstaff – on one hand, the city should expect continued in-migration of skilled and more affluent households, while on the other hand the city confronts rising housing costs, the threat of business and residential displacement and further dilution of both its Native and working class roots. Flagstaff will not only be fighting to save what makes it unique, but for its civic soul.

Downtown Flagstaff can and should be the center of what makes the city unique and be a portal of opportunity for existing and new residents alike. To that end, this Plan is a call to action to the city's leadership, citizens and businesses to act boldly and take steps now that will allow Downtown Flagstaff to evolve.

Key policy recommendations within this plan include:

- » Promote Downtown Flagstaff to be the **hub of economic activity and innovation** for the region.
- » **Preserve and protect the historic core** of Downtown Flagstaff to strengthen its identity and overall vitality.
- » **Integrate and implement the City's Carbon Neutrality Plan** by encouraging a compact and mixed-use downtown where more people can live, work, support local business, and have walkable/rollable, bikeable, and sustainable lifestyle options.
- » **Allow for change, including density** that features mixed-use parking structures with residential development at a variety of price points around the periphery of the historic core.
- » **Add parking supply** to attract employment, residential investment, and mixed-use development; and **manage existing parking supply** to enhance customers' experience.
- » **Ensure local arts, culture and Native expression** flourish throughout downtown.
- » Create a **downtown experience that welcomes and celebrates everyone** that has been part of Flagstaff's past, present and future.

PLAN OVERVIEW

In February 2020, the Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance (FDBA), City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line initiated the Downtown Flagstaff Vision & Action Plan. This is not an update to previous plans but is a standalone document that will guide public and private investments over the next 10 years to elevate Downtown Flagstaff as the center of the region.

After a competitive bid and selection process, the FDBA engaged a Denver-based consulting team that included: Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), a firm specializing in downtown organizational and strategic planning; Studio Seed, an urban design firm to provide design and planning expertise including short-term public right of way expansion design; and Charlier Associates to provide national transportation planning expertise.

The P.U.M.A. Team, FDBA, the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line staff worked collaboratively to chart and complete a downtown planning process with the following major components:

- » **Review and build upon prior plans**
- » **Conduct community outreach** – including numerous virtual interviews with downtown business, property owners, stakeholders, elected offices, and a variety of public staff members, a public open house, and an online survey
- » **Prepare a market assessment**
- » **Prepare Action Plan and Catalytic Projects Recommendations and Priorities**
- » **Provide Implementation and Funding Strategies**

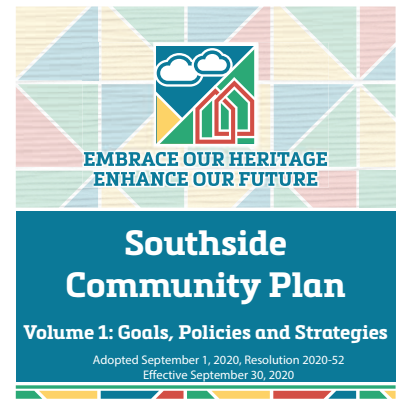
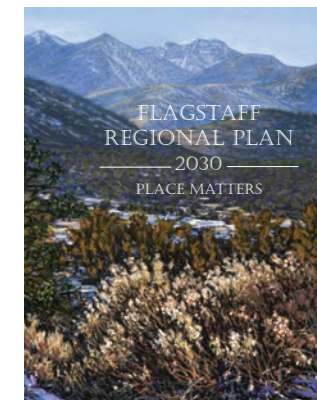


REVIEW & BUILD UPON PRIOR PLANS

The consultant team reviewed all prior and evolving planning efforts made available in order to ensure this process would build upon such efforts. Four of the most important plans this plan builds on are:

- » **Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030**
- » **Carbon Neutrality Plan**
- » **10-Year Housing Plan**
- » **2020 Southside Community Plan**
- » **2009 Central Business District Downtown Parking Study**

The citywide plans offer a high-level framework to guide and influence decisions that affect the future of the city. They are used as a foundation for the more specific vision, recommendations and strategies contained in this Downtown Vision & Action Plan, which will be considered while planning the Regional Plan 2045 to provide additional direction for certain topics or areas. Priority recommendations from the recently adopted 2020 Southside Community Plan are incorporated into this Downtown Vision & Action Plan.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The COVID-19 Pandemic raised several challenges for community outreach during the planning process. However, this transition opened a new set of opportunities for engaging the public. Virtual meetings enabled individuals who could not attend meetings to engage at the comfort of their own homes. In total, approximately 2,000 community members engaged in the formation of the plan.

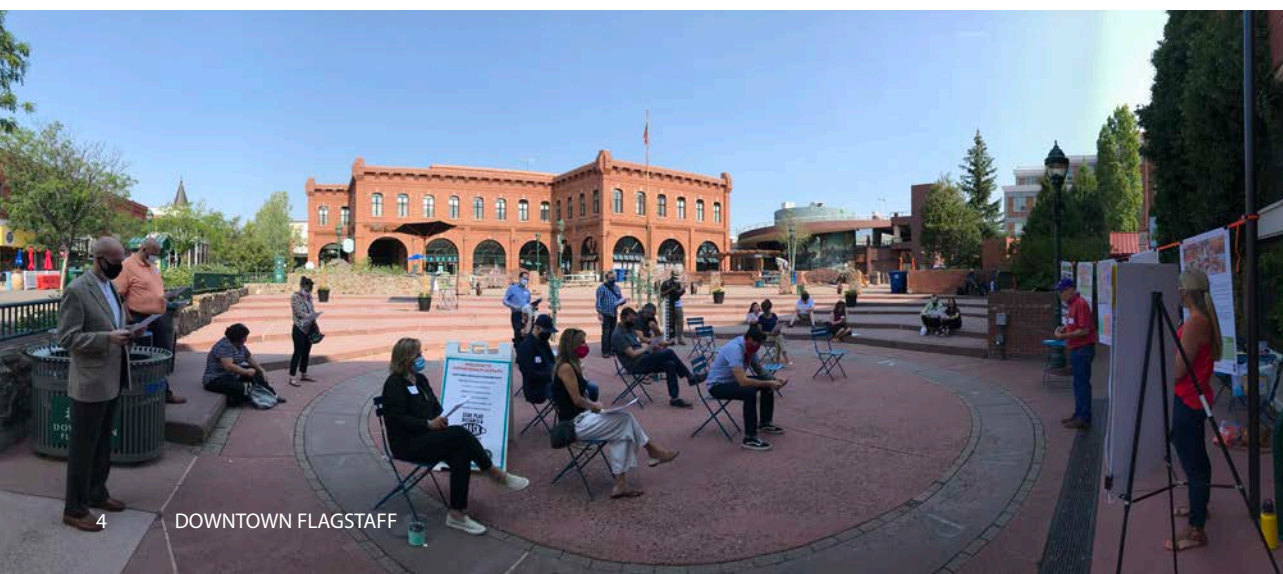
The consultant team was able to engage the community early in the 10-month process, conducting several dozen virtual meetings and presentations with the following:

- » **Project Management Team** - comprised of the four project funding partners: Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance Board of Directors (FDBA), City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line
- » **Community Advisory Committee** - comprised of a range of 23 stakeholders to serve as public representation that ensures findings and direction of the Downtown Vision and Action Plan are meeting the needs of the downtown community and the Flagstaff community at large
- » **Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance Board** representing the property and business owner leadership of downtown
- » **Downtown business/property owners and downtown employees** including several dozen one-on-one interviews
- » **Working Groups** - groups made up of downtown stakeholders convened by expertise areas that included: Economic Vitality, Downtown Experience, and Urban Design & Built Environment
- » **County Board of Supervisors**
- » **City Council**



A virtual kickoff meeting held via Zoom in May 2020

The P.U.M.A. team visited Flagstaff in August 2020 for a week of study area tours, outdoor meetings and workshops. An all-day open house was held in the "Aspen Alley" that was visited by over 100 residents. Additional inter-active meetings were held with the Project Management Team, Community Advisory Committee and Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance. In 2023, after making final updates to the plan, an additional site visit was held in October to present the updated final draft plan to City and FDBA leadership.



A physically-distanced, Community Advisory Committee meeting was held at Heritage Square during the August site visit

In addition, an **online survey** was conducted that gathered over 1,250 participants. Full results from the online survey are provided in the plan appendix.

From the online survey responses, the common themes and highest rated priorities for improving Downtown Flagstaff were:

- #1 Maintain Historic Character
- #2 Make downtown more walkable and bikeable
- #3 Redevelop and repurpose unused and vacant buildings and lots
- #4 Provide additional beautification
- #5 Improve the parking experience



Respondents were asked for three words that best describe their long-term vision for downtown. The word cloud shows words that were most frequently used – the larger the word, the more times it was listed.

During the August site visit, an all-day Open House was held in the "Aspen Alley," while several interactive Working Group meetings convened in various locations downtown.



MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

The Plan includes a Market Assessment that is divided into four main topic areas:

- LIVE
- WORK
- SHOP & DINE
- VISIT & STAY

By understanding downtown's market opportunities and challenges, the Downtown Vision is informed by economic reality and assumptions to guide planning through the next investment cycle. (Note: *The Market Assessment was conducted in 2020.*) Key economic findings and opportunities include:

DOWNTOWN'S IMPACT ON FLAGSTAFF*

| |
|--|
| 0.28 square miles → 0.4% of the city |
| MEANWHILE, DOWNTOWN HAS... |
| 1,064 residents → 1.4% of the city's |
| 4,819 employees → 11% of the city's |
| 135 restaurants, bars, shops → 18% of the city's |
| \$41.4 M in assessed value → 4% of the city's |

* Reflects 2020 data



- » **Housing is a strong market for downtown moving forward.** There is high demand for more units citywide at all price points, but especially those at lower, more affordable levels. While downtown cannot solve the city's affordability crisis, it can, and should, play an important role in diversifying the city's housing stock and adding new units to a strained market.
- » **Downtown's strongest age segment is 25-34 year olds** – the "young professional" and graduate student bracket that downtowns and walkable neighborhoods with plentiful amenities are well-positioned to attract. This is also at the core of who lives in Flagstaff – a city with the youngest median age (28) amongst its peer cities.
- » **Downtown (and the city) is challenged when introducing density.** Flagstaff is by far the lowest density market amongst its peer cities.



- » **Tourism, education, and government** are the foundations of the Flagstaff economy.
- » **Downtown is bookended by the city's two largest employers** – NAU to the south, and the Flagstaff Medical Center to the north.
- » Compared to peer cities, **downtown has a below-average number of downtown workers.** This illustrates the lack of major primary employers in downtown (outside of the County and City), but also an opportunity for downtown to evolve into a greater economic engine for the local economy.
- » Downtown's office space has a vacancy rate of roughly 1%, pre-COVID. Available space is nearly non-existent (an ideal vacancy rate is roughly 10%), and doesn't allow for much movement in the market or the ability to house new office tenants in available space. **The commercial office sector is a relatively untapped sector in downtown.**

The Market Assessment includes **peer city comparisons** on many different topics throughout. Below is a sampling of how Flagstaff and downtown stacks up compared to its western state peers.

CITYWIDE

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Population Growth (2010-19) | Bend 24% | Ft. Collins 17% | Flagstaff 14% | Missoula 12% | Bellingham 12% | Boulder 10% | Corvallis 8% |
| Housing Density (units/square mile) | Boulder 1,810 | Corvallis 1,742 | Bellingham 1,340 | Bend 1,308 | Ft. Collins 1,219 | Missoula 1,190 | Flagstaff 447 |
| Housing & Transportation Costs (Share of Income) | Boulder 44% | Ft. Collins 48% | Bellingham 51% | Corvallis 52% | Missoula 53% | Bend 56% | Flagstaff 56% |

DOWNTOWN

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Downtown Employment | Ft. Collins 12,449 | Boulder 11,348 | Missoula 10,465 | Bellingham 7,242 | Flagstaff 4,819 | Corvallis 4,691 | Bend 4,269 |
| Employment Density (workers/acre) | Boulder 81 | Missoula 55 | Ft. Collins 40 | Bellingham 39 | Bend 37 | Corvallis 37 | Flagstaff 27 |
| Knowledge Sector Share of Jobs | Missoula 53% | Bend 40% | Bellingham 37% | Boulder 27% | Corvallis 25% | Flagstaff 22% | Ft. Collins 19% |



- » The retail, food and beverage sector is **Flagstaff's largest industry** in terms of employment.
- » Downtown's storefront economy is critical to its success, driving foot traffic, attracting visitors, and helping maintain vibrancy throughout the day and into the night. In total, **there are 223 street level businesses in the Downtown Study Area.**
- » Local independent businesses dominate the Downtown scene. **87% of Downtown's storefront businesses are local independents**, offering distinct character and sense of place.
- » Despite all its storefront businesses, Downtown **still lacks some critical retail elements that would help serve residents' daily needs**, namely groceries and drugstores, and make Downtown a more appealing place to live.



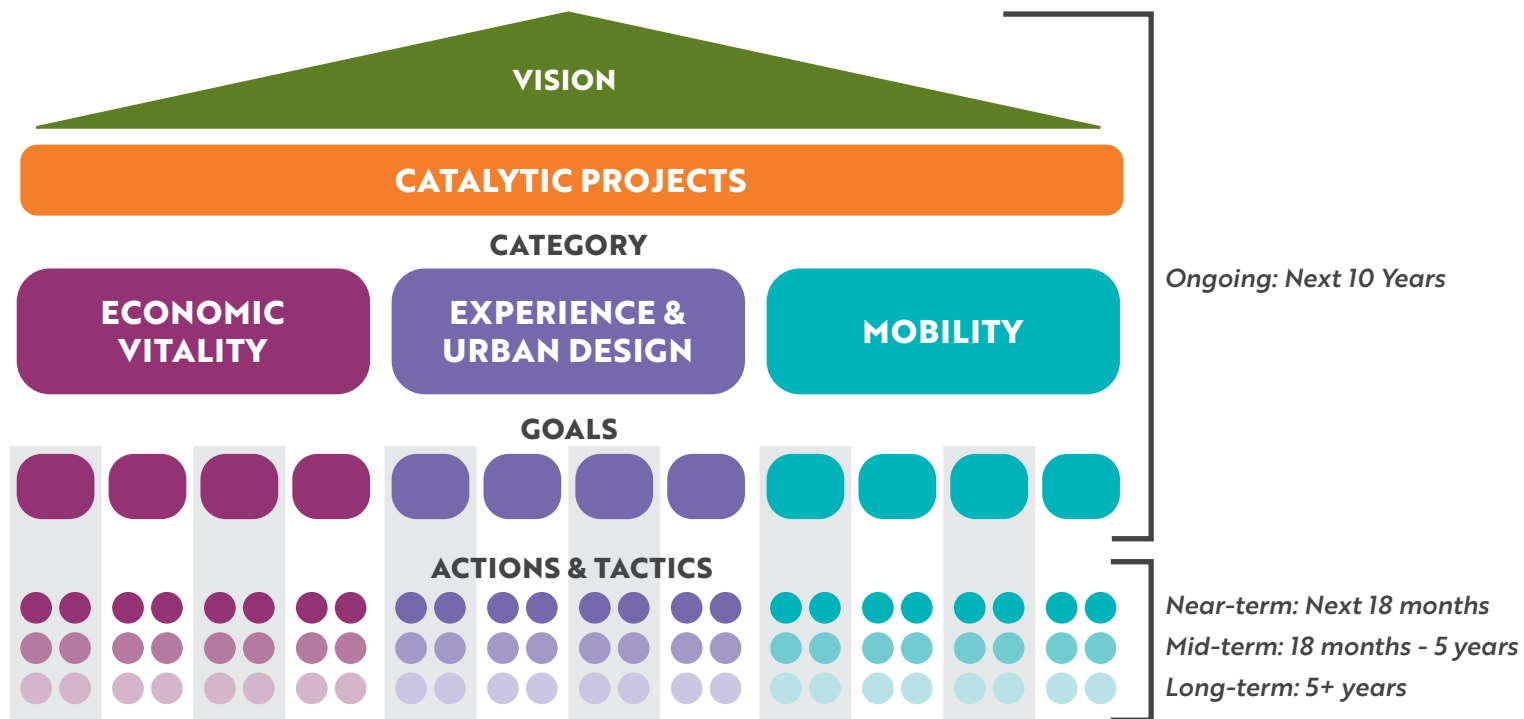
- » **Tourism is Flagstaff's top industry.** The city sees over 5 million visitors annually, and the industry supports over 8,000 local employees.
- » Downtown hosts **a variety of events** annually that attract both locals and visitors. A majority of these take place at Heritage Square.
- » **Downtown is more about what's around it, than what's in it.** The Lowell Observatory, the city's two largest art museums, and the region's main performance arts hall are all located outside of downtown.
- » **Downtown's proximity to the Lowell Observatory & Mars Hill is an asset to build upon.** Already a destination, Lowell is underway with expansion.
- » **A strong short-term rental market** plays an important role in housing a portion of the visitor market, but also can erode the hotel visitor base and reduce the permanent housing stock.

VISION

Drawing on the input from the community outreach, market assessment and review of prior plans, the consultant team worked closely with the FDBA, PMT, CAC, and elected officials to synthesize all this information into the following **vision** that forms the basis for the Action Plan recommendations described and illustrated throughout this document.

The vision for downtown is to enhance and create a downtown that is
VIBRANT,
WALKABLE/ROLLABLE,
HISTORIC AND ADAPTABLE,
THRIVING,
WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE,
AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

The **Action Plan** is constructed as follows. The Goals within each category are provided on the following page. The specific actions and tactics can be found in the full plan.



The team developed immediate, short- and mid-term actions for downtown physical improvements, catalyst developments, and policies to guide the FDBA and City of Flagstaff, the development community, and downtown stakeholders for the next ten-year investment cycle. Responsible parties are identified to implement each of the actions and tactics in the full plan. The City should consider relationships and tradeoffs between goals as necessary. Additionally, sequencing of goals may shift as resources such as funding and staffing become available or as priorities evolve.

ACTION PLAN

The **Action Plan** is organized into three categories, with supporting goal statements, as follows:

ECONOMIC VITALITY:

Retain downtown as one of the key engines of the Flagstaff economy

1. Guide downtown's economic future
2. Bring more jobs into downtown
3. Cultivate local arts and culture as foundational to downtown
4. Bolster downtown's storefront economy
5. Create a larger, and more diverse, residential base in downtown

EXPERIENCE & URBAN DESIGN:

Downtown can prosper even more by creating a lively environment that is easily accessed by traditional visitors, but also serves downtown residents too

1. Preserve the historic character and charm of downtown
2. Direct new growth responsibly and in a way that adds to the vibrancy of downtown
3. Activate downtown in creative ways that attract locals as well as visitors
4. Enhance the downtown experience by implementing gateway features, streetscape enhancements, signage and wayfinding, and public art to create a sense of arrival and direction
5. Embrace sustainability as a core value in how downtown is managed, improved, and developed

MOBILITY:

Transportation – personal mobility, circulation and access, plus freight service and delivery

1. Enhance downtown to be more walkable
2. Improve parking management and supply
3. Improve public transit access and ridership
4. Improve bicycle access and circulation
5. Manage curb space allocation and use



CATALYTIC PROJECTS

A catalytic project is one that has the potential to have lasting positive impacts on downtown and encourage improvements around them. Based on an assessment of downtown land, property ownership, property conditions, surrounding economic activity, and interviews with downtown citizens and stakeholders, ten catalytic projects were identified, split across two types, **Redevelopment & Parking Catalysts** and **Placemaking Catalysts**. The Redevelopment & Parking Catalysts are illustrated on the map below.

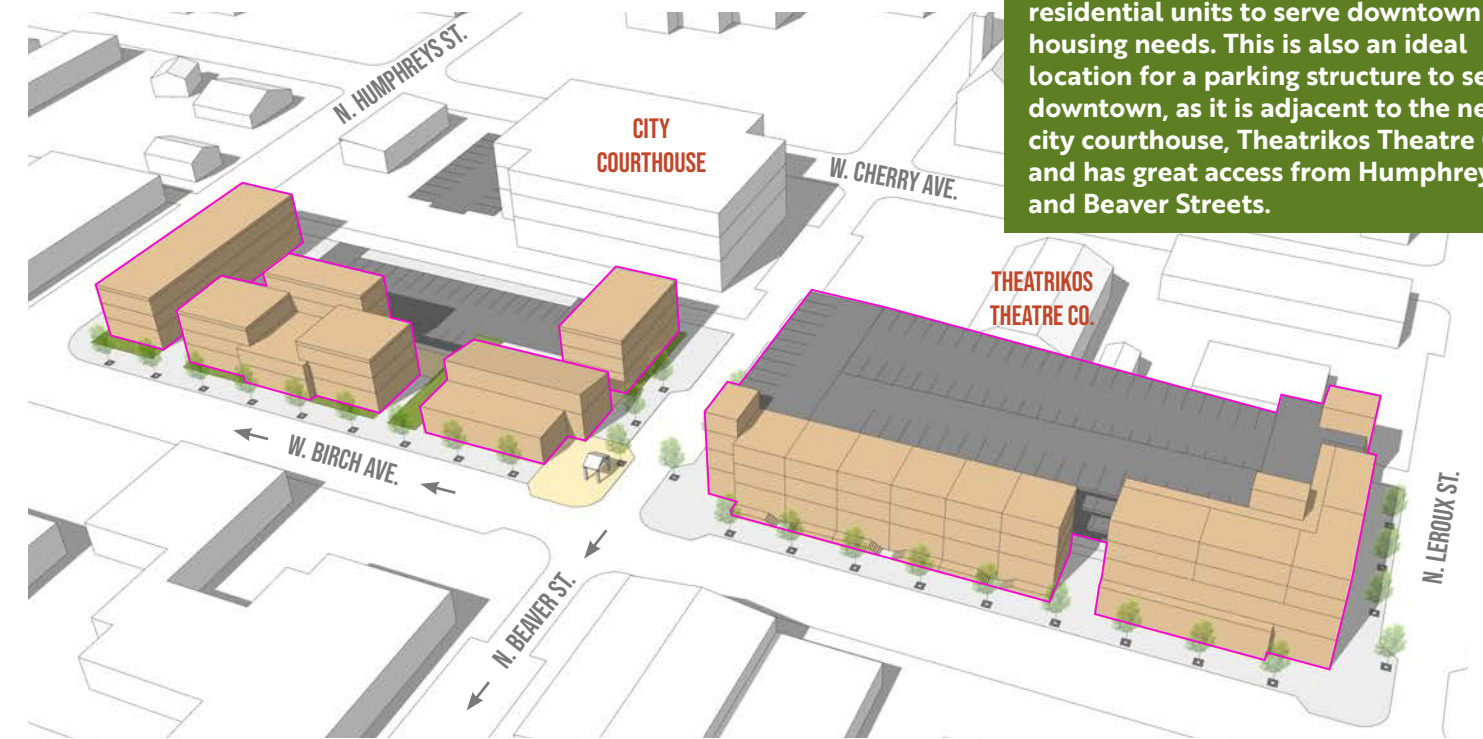
REDEVELOPMENT & PARKING

- Old City Courthouse (A)
- Coconino County Properties (B)
- Birch Avenue Infill (C)
- Eastside Gateway (D)
- Cottage Avenue Infill (E)

PLACEMAKING

- Downtown Connection Center
- Leroux Festival Street
- Heritage Square Activation
- Alley Activation
- Streetscapes, Gateways & Wayfinding

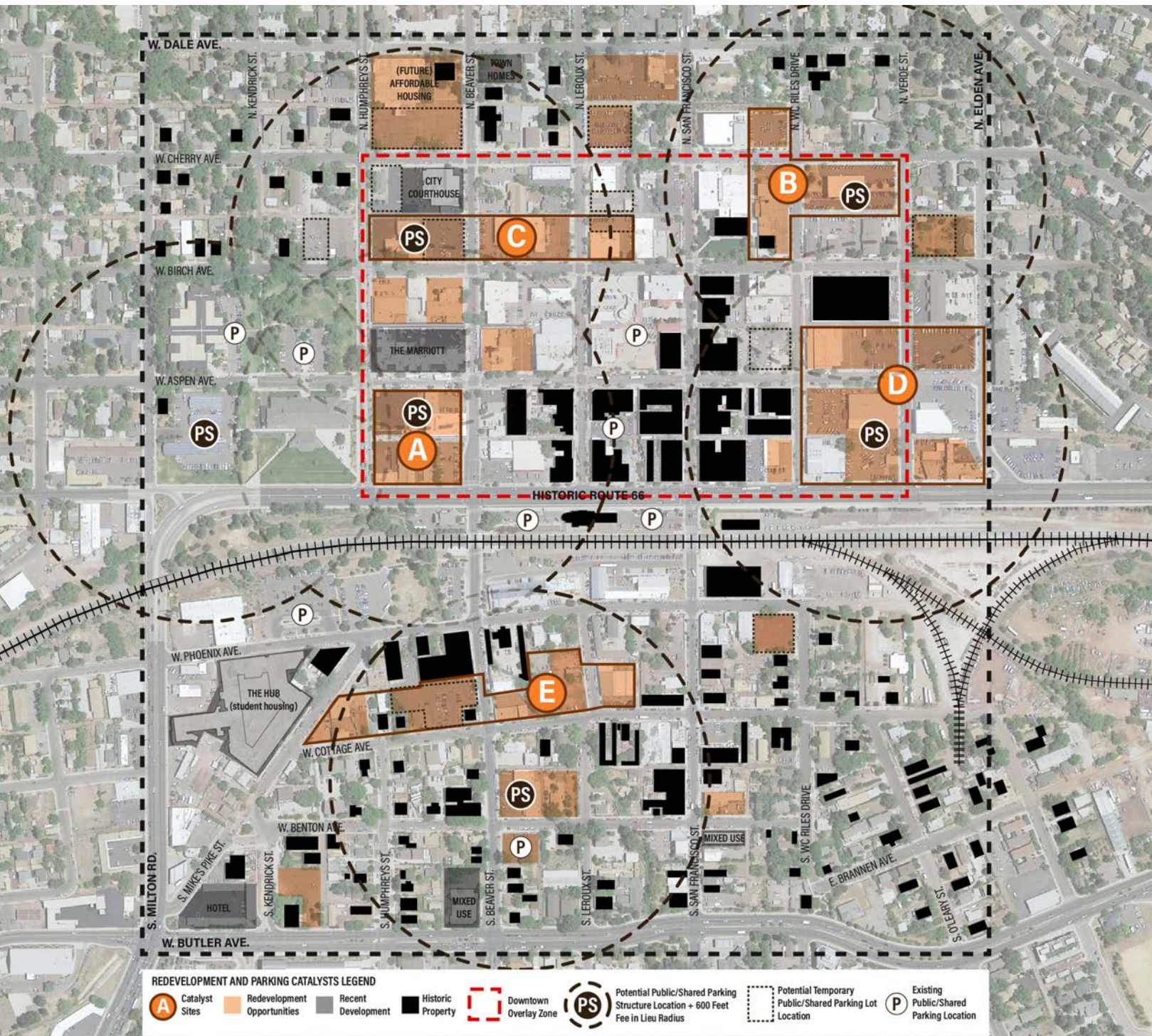
BIRCH AVENUE INFILL



IMPLEMENTATION

This plan encompasses the community of Flagstaff's vision for downtown's next phase. Chapter 4 offers sequencing for all of the prior chapters' recommendations. Recommendations are divided into near-term priorities, including quick wins, to be implemented over the next 18 months, and mid- and longer-term recommendations that are more appropriate once the pandemic is fully behind us. Implementation of these varied recommendations will take dedicated leadership, staff, and revenue. Chapter 5 looks at how the FDDBA and the City of Flagstaff can bring this plan to life and is organized into the following sections:

- » **Partners & Responsibilities:** An effective implementation model relies on teamwork and collaboration. Roles and responsibilities are identified for each recommendation. The FDDBA, City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and other partners, both public and private, will all have important roles to play moving forward.
- » **Create a Clear Path Through the Regulatory Process:** To encourage and accommodate the types of development and public realm enhancement envisioned in the plan.
- » **New FDDBA Operating Structure:** Empower and diversify funding for the Downtown Business Alliance to lead, partner and manage the evolution of downtown's economy, experience and mobility.
- » **Measuring Progress:** To understand what is working and what needs adapting during implementation, it is important for the FDDBA and the City to provide frequent updates to partners and to track progress. This section discusses how this can be done efficiently and effectively, by identifying key metrics and indicators of success.
- » **Funding Sources and Supportive Policies:** Implementation will require dedicated effort and resources. Chapter 5 includes explanations of the varied funding sources and policies to utilize for the Plan's actions, and as illustrated in the Chapter 4 matrices, whether these are initiated by the FDDBA, City, or other partners.





PROJECT PURPOSE

In February 2020, the Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance (FDBA), City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line initiated the Downtown Flagstaff Vision & Action Plan. This is not an update to previous plans but is a standalone document that will guide public and private investments over the next 10-years to elevate Downtown Flagstaff as the center of the City and region.

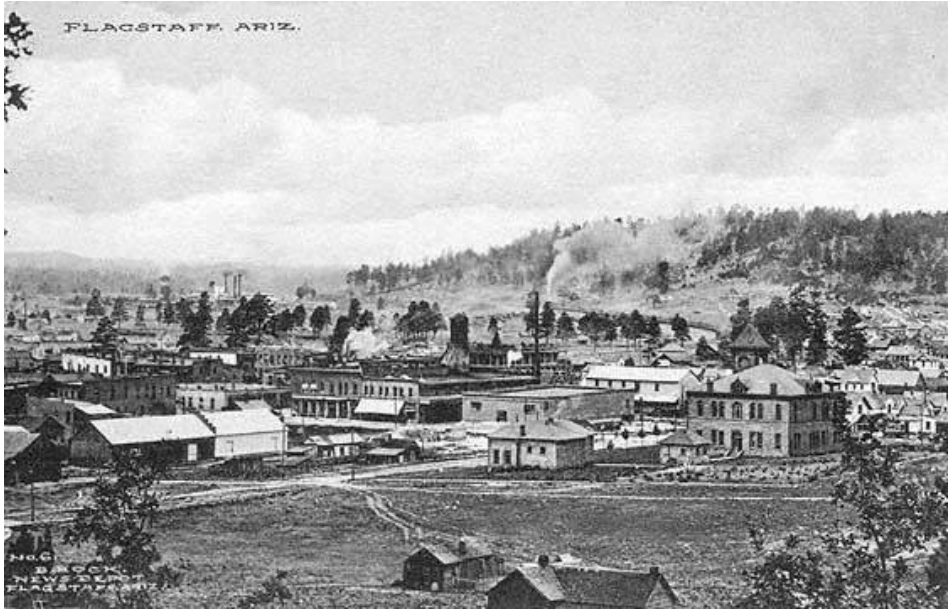
After a competitive bid and selection process, the FDBA engaged Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), a Denver-based consulting firm specializing in downtown organizational and strategic planning, and community outreach. Additionally, Studio Seed, a Denver-based urban design firm was part of the team to provide design and planning expertise including short-term public right of way expansion design. Denver-based Charlier Associates provided parking management and multimodal transportation planning expertise.

Upon starting this planning process, COVID-19 became a global pandemic, severely impacting the health and economy of downtowns across the country. The FDBA and the City of Flagstaff realized the importance and necessity of this downtown plan and continued to move forward with urgency.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Humans lived in present-day Arizona for nearly 12,000 years as nomadic hunter-gathers before shifting to agricultural communities less than 2000 years ago. Anasazi and Puebloans are often used interchangeably to describe the broad grouping of native cultures in what is now the Four Corners region, including the Navajo, Hopi, Havasupai, Kaibab-Paiute, and Hualapai. Evidence of early native cliff dwellers is visible at Walnut Canyon and Wupatki National Monuments, located just outside of Flagstaff.

Each Indigenous nation has their origin or emergence beliefs, and most do not believe they migrated from elsewhere. These beliefs are important for all to understand. The Navajo, Hopi and Pueblo cultures are the largest Native American groups in the Flagstaff area, and are crucial to the history, present and future of this community. These Indigenous nations are intrinsically tied to the Flagstaff area, and continue to help shape its arts, culture, heritage and economy.



Native Americans lived in relative peace until the arrival of Spanish Conquistadors in the 1500s, which ushered in centuries of war and devastation at the hands of Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. invaders. Conflicts intensified in the 1800s. During the 1805 massacre at Canyon de Chelly (120 miles northeast of Flagstaff), Spaniards killed more than 100 Navajo women and children. Between 1848 and 1868, the Navajo and Apache peoples fought to protect their land from U.S. invaders. The 1868 Treaty of Bosque Redondo created the Navajo Reservation, which today consists of 17 million acres.

BACKGROUND

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- » [Historical Context](#)
- » [Study Area](#)
- » [Process](#)
- » [How to Use this Plan](#)
- » [Past Downtown Planning Studies Summary](#)

NATIVE AMERICAN POPULATIONS TODAY

The 17-million-acre Navajo reservation (known as Navajo Nation) spans across northern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, and southern Utah, and is the largest Native American tribe within the United States by geography and population. Around 28% of Navajo Nation is located within Coconino County.¹ Its largest town is Tuba City, located 78 miles north of Flagstaff.

Navajo Nation enrolled members are at 399,494 as of 2021 according to the Navajo Times. At least 50% if not more live off their homelands.

Located partly in northeastern Coconino County, the 1.5 million-acre Hopi reservation has roughly 9,227 and is entirely surrounded by Navajo Nation. Two other smaller tribes in the region include the Havasupai and the Hualapai. The Havasupai reservation (population: 640) is located entirely within Coconino County at the southwest corner of Grand Canyon National Park. The Hualapai reservation (population: 1,590) is located within three counties, including Coconino, and spans 100 miles along the Colorado River.



FLAGSTAFF'S ORIGINS

Beginning in 1882, the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad (later known as the Santa Fe) carried waves of white migrants to Flagstaff, which had only been loosely settled since 1876. The City of Flagstaff was established in 1881, and officially incorporated in 1891. Lumber and ranching emerged as dominant industries. In 1926, Route 66 was completed and with it came subsequent waves of new residents, beginning with 1930s dust bowl refugees.

There are several historic districts in the downtown area. According to the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona, Flagstaff has the largest inventory of original Route 66 buildings and signage out of any other city along the route.

Science is woven into so many aspects of Flagstaff's identity, beginning in 1894 with the founding of the Lowell Observatory. The US Naval Observatory was

relocated in 1955 from Washington, D.C. to Flagstaff, which continues to be used for dark-sky defense monitoring. In 1965, the USGS established its Flagstaff headquarters, where research helped make the 1969 Apollo moon mission possible.

In 1899, the Northern Arizona Normal School was established just south of Downtown Flagstaff in the Old Main building, primarily serving as a teaching college in its first few decades. The institution's name changed to Northern Arizona University (NAU) in 1966. Annual enrollment fluctuated during the first half of the 20th century, particularly during the Great Depression and World War II. It wasn't until the 1950s that the university would really grow its enrollment and educational offerings. A range of new specialist degrees and master's programs helped the school gain recognition, most notably the Forestry program that was launched in 1958.

¹ Coconino.az.gov "Places of Coconino County."

HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SOUTHSIDE¹

The Southside community is the best representation of the ethnic diversity that evolved in Flagstaff from the early 20th century through the 1960's. It contains the largest neighborhoods associated with the historic Hispanic and African American populations of Flagstaff.

This historic architecture of Flagstaff's Southside is a vivid illustration of the cultural diversity of the community. The buildings reflect the area's evolution from its beginnings as small enclaves settled by middle-class Angelos, to its emergence in the early 20th century as the predominant neighborhood of Flagstaff's Hispanic and African American populations. Unlike the more prestigious historic residential areas north of the railroad tracks, the architectural character of the Southside is distinguished by a large number of modest Bungalow-style and Cottage residences, which also help illustrate the neighborhood's growth and development in the 1920s.

African American, Basque, Hispanic, and to a lesser extent, Asian communities and businesses were established and grew to serve this community. Boundaries were enforced with an understanding of your place within the Southside, which became defined by the schools' children attended/were permitted to attend, and by churches established for worship. Most employment was either in the lumber mills, such as the one that existed in the Southside by 1910, with the railroad, or was generated with the community with small retail shops (official or not) and in "garage manufacturing" – making and selling items from one's residence. Hard work from ethnic groups was the norm with determined children working at an early age selling papers or finding other means to support their families.

¹ Southside Community Plan, September 2020



PLAN GOALS

Downtown Flagstaff is a unique destination in the region that has a strong connection to education, high quality of life, and history. A strong desire of the community who provided input to this plan is for downtown to become a livable neighborhood to complement its role as a destination. This plan includes recommendations to achieve this desire by supporting the right daily services, housing types, price points, family-friendly spaces, job opportunities, and adequate parking supply to accommodate visitors and residents alike.

Enhancing downtown to become more of a neighborhood than it is today is consistent with the following goals of the **Carbon Neutrality Plan** and the **2030 Flagstaff Regional Plan**:

- » Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2030, compared to the 2016 emissions baseline.
- » Prepare the city's neighborhoods, systems, and resources to be more resilient to climate change impacts
- » Promote growth that protects our scenic beauty and unique ecosystem
- » Encourage efficient transportation modes and better connectivity, with housing and job opportunities
- » Grow our businesses by making the most of our educated, entrepreneurial, and creative citizens

Improvements to downtown described in this plan can contribute to accomplishing these goals by creating a more climate-resilient downtown neighborhood. Providing more opportunities for people to live and work near transit in a walkable and bikeable neighborhood will reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, **downtown's small footprint is set up well to grow in a more compact manner on underdeveloped land versus sprawling on the edge of the city's undeveloped land.**

The 2023 Downtown Vision & Action Plan identifies short- and long-term priorities for downtown physical improvements, catalyst developments, and policies to guide the FDBA and City of Flagstaff, the development community, and downtown stakeholders for the next ten-year investment cycle.

PLAN GOALS INCLUDE:

- » Develop a **market-based strategic vision** through a collaborative process
 - » Identify **economic development opportunities**, and local business development and support
 - » Identify **zoning impacts on land use and development opportunities** to provide more certainty and predictability on downtown development
- » Identify opportunities to **expand art and beautification in public spaces**, building design and new facilities
- » Identify **potential redevelopment sites** and desired outcomes for the built environment including historic preservation
 - » Assess **public infrastructure needs** for walking/rolling, cycling, parking, and transit
- » Explore opportunities for short- and long-term **activation of civic and community spaces**, including alleyways
 - » Develop tactical and measurable **implementation strategies** to support the vision

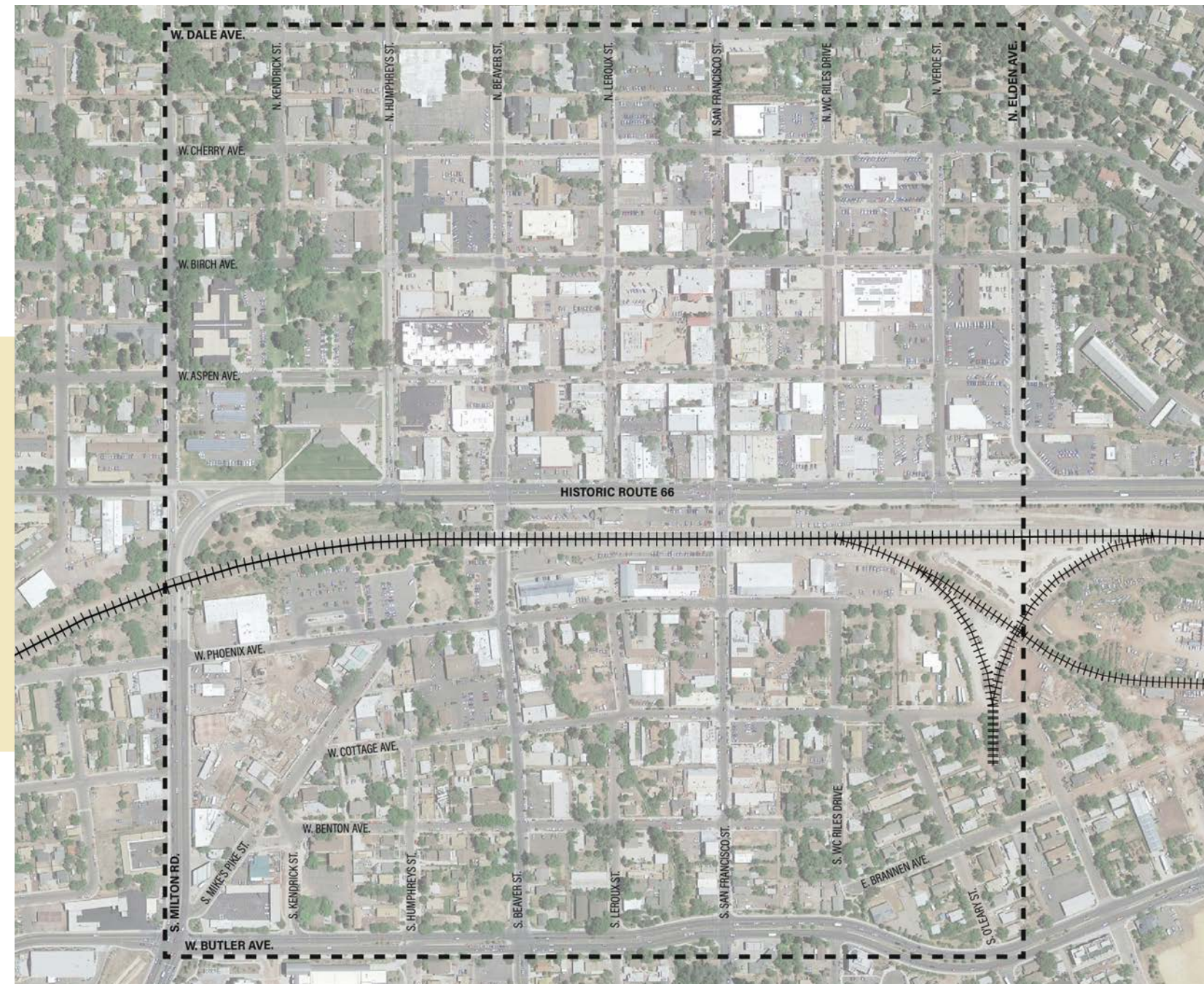
The primary methods to accomplish these goals are described throughout the document:

- » **PROMOTE** increased synergy between the downtown core, surrounding neighborhoods, and Northern Arizona University.
- » **BUILD ON** prior planning efforts, engage the City's and FDBA's leadership, civic and neighborhood partners and other downtown stakeholders in a participatory process to develop a Downtown Vision & Action Plan.
- » **ALIGN** the City's and FDBA's resources, programs and structure with the priorities of the plan to advance implementation.

STUDY AREA

Traditionally, downtown has been thought of as the historic core north of the railroad tracks ("north side" which offers an abundance of locally-owned shops, galleries, clothing stores, adventure outfitters, restaurants and lively nightlife and well as City and County facilities. The "south side" borders an expanding university, contains rich history, and has an eclectic arts, restaurant and business scene. The south side also has residents whose families have lived in the same home for generations, mixed with new student housing developments. The Downtown Vision and Action Plan study area includes a large portion of the Southside neighborhood and this plan builds on the vision and strategies identified in the recently adopted 2020 Southside Community Specific Plan.

The study area as illustrated below is bound by Milton Road/N. Sitgreaves Street to the west, W. Dale Avenue to the north, N. Elden to the east, and W Butler Avenue to the south. The study area and its context and relationship with adjacent neighborhoods is also acknowledged with this plan.



PROCESS

The P.U.M.A. Team, FDBA, the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line staff worked collaboratively to chart and complete a downtown planning process with the following major components:

REVIEW PRIOR PLANS

The FDBA and City of Flagstaff provided the consultant team with all prior and evolving planning efforts. The consultant team reviewed all the plans made available in order to ensure that this process would build upon such efforts. A list of prior plans and planning projects is included on the following pages, and summaries are included in the appendix.

The Flagstaff citywide plans offer a high-level framework to guide and influence decisions that affect the future of the city. They are used as a foundation for the more specific vision, recommendations and strategies contained in the Downtown Vision & Action Plan. The Downtown Vision & Action Plan will be approved by City Council to provide additional direction for certain topics or areas. In addition, priority recommendations from the recently adopted 2020 Southside Community Plan are incorporated into the Downtown Vision & Action Plan

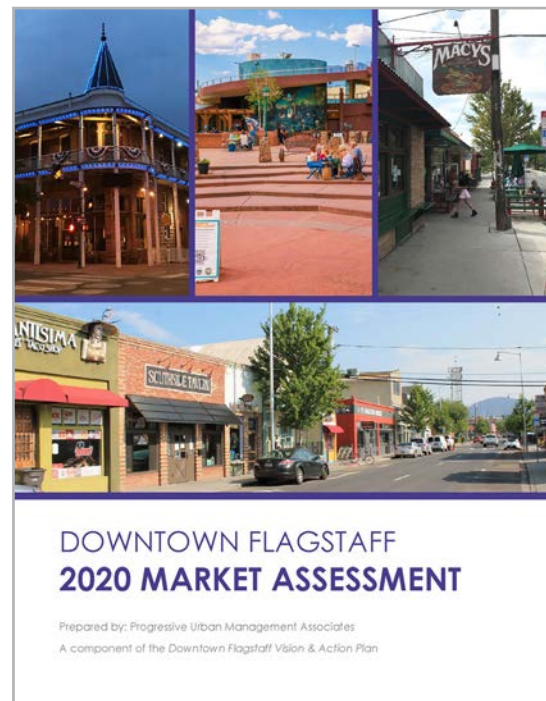
The Downtown Vision & Action Plan is consistent with and furthers the policies and recommendations of Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030, refining the citywide guidance for a smaller area. Adoption of the Downtown Vision & Action Plan by Flagstaff City Council updates the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 recommendations for this part of the city. Any future updates to citywide plans should incorporate and refine recommendations for the Downtown Vision & Action Plan.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

P.U.M.A. conducted a broad-reaching market assessment with a wide range of data inputs, including primary and secondary sources. Of important note, this market assessment was conducted in mid-2020. However, given the lag time in data availabilities, much of the information presents conditions pre-COVID. Therefore, the market assessment is intended to provide baseline data for Downtown Flagstaff, prior to the pandemic, which will inform the community as it continues to evolve post-pandemic.

Conditions and trends in Flagstaff were compared to P.U.M.A.'s global trends research. Key findings of the market assessment determined the direction and order-of-magnitude opportunities, as well as niche opportunities, within various market sectors. Forecasts for the next ten years are included for residential, office, hospitality, and retail development.

A summary of the market assessment and development forecast is included in this plan in Chapter 2 Market Assessment Summary, while the full document is located in the appendix.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A robust community outreach process was envisioned prior to COVID-19. While the consultant team was unable to engage the community early in the process, they did conduct more than 40 virtual meetings with downtown business and property owners, stakeholders, elected officials, and a variety of public staff members. An online survey was conducted that gathered over 1,200 participants.

The COVID-19 Pandemic raised several challenges for community outreach during the planning process. However, this transition opened a new set of opportunities for engaging the public. Virtual meetings enabled individuals who could not attend meetings to engage at the comfort of their own homes. In total, approximately 2,000 community members engaged in the formation of the plan.

The P.U.M.A. team was able to make one visit to Flagstaff in August 2020 for three days of walking tours, outdoor meetings and workshops. An all-day open house was held in the "Aspen Alley" that was visited by over 100 residents. Also, during this visit, the team met with several working groups made up of a variety of downtown stakeholders convened by interest areas that included:

- » **Economic Vitality**
- » **Downtown Experience**
- » **Urban Design & Built Environment**

A summary of the community engagement, including key themes that emerged, is included in this document in Chapter 3 Community Engagement Summary.



DOWNTOWN VISION & ACTION PLAN OPPORTUNITIES

Drawing on the above inputs, the consultant team developed a physical planning framework for investments in the public realm that support and enhance market opportunities in downtown and deliver a downtown environment that is in sync with community values. The development framework maps and strategies are a key component of this Plan. Suggested physical framework enhancements are closely tied to the six core values which represent the community's vision for Downtown Flagstaff:

- VIBRANT**
- WALKABLE**
- HISTORIC AND ADAPTABLE**
- PROSPEROUS**
- WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE**
- ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

IMPLEMENTATION

Finally, P.U.M.A. worked with the FDBA and the City of Flagstaff to consider the organizational implications for both entities, such as how to align staffing, resources and committees to fit with the plan priorities. Financing options and leadership priorities are also identified. Implementation is the final section of this plan.



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Both public and private agencies will use the 2023 Downtown Flagstaff Vision & Action Plan to guide decisions and actions that affect the form and function of Downtown. The plan provides a basis for citywide decision-making and strengthening downtown's role as the heart of the region. It also educates the general public about downtown's importance to the Flagstaff community and the people of Arizona.

The **Downtown Vision & Action Plan** section provides an overall framework for the entire downtown that describes opportunities for catalyst projects, urban design and public realm, added parking supply and mobility, economic development, and arts and culture.

The final section, **Implementation**, includes a variety of funding sources to advance the initiatives and supporting projects outlined in the Catalyst Projects and Sites section.

At the back of this document, appendices are provided consisting of the full market assessment and detailed community survey results.



PAST DOWNTOWN PLANNING STUDIES

The 2023 Downtown Flagstaff Vision & Action Plan was informed by many previous planning studies. The following documents were reviewed and summarized during the first few months of the project process. Brief summaries of those studies can be found in the appendix.

Planning, Zoning, and Urban Design

- » Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030
- » Flagstaff Zoning Code
- » Downtown Historic Overlay District Design Standards
- » Southside Community Plan (2020)
- » Workforce Housing Attainability (2017)
- » High Occupancy Housing Plan (2018)
- » Carbon Neutrality Plan
- » 10-Year Housing Plan
- » Rio de Flag Flood Control Project (Current)

Transportation and Parking

- » Downtown Comprehensive Parking Management Program (2017)
 - » Parking Management Plan
 - » ParkFlag Paid Parking, Parking Permits, Time Limits
 - » ParkFlag Operations
 - » Parking Studies
- » 2009 Central Business District Parking Study
- » BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)
 - » Background – Mountain Link
 - » BRT Spine Corridor Project
- » NAIPTA Five-Year Transit Plan – 2017 Update
- » Downtown Connection Center
- » Milton Road Corridor Master Plan (current)
- » US 180 Corridor Master Plan (current)
- » Mountain Line Transit Guidelines (2019)
- » Blueprint 2040: Regional Transportation Plan (2017)
- » 2018 Trip Diary Survey
- » Active Transportation-FUTS Master Plans
- » Flagstaff Regional Freight Study (2014)

Downtown and Revitalization District

- » Downtown Management Plan (2008)
- » Concept Downtown Management Plan (2009)
- » Flagstaff Downtown Business Improvement and Revitalization District Enabling Legislation (2014)
- » Management Services Contract with Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance, renegotiated in 2019
- » Flagstaff Redevelopment Area Designation and Redevelopment Plan (1993)



MARKET ASSESSMENT

- » Purpose
- » Market Areas
- » Key Market Findings
- » Peer Cities

PURPOSE

The Market Assessment was completed in Q2/Q3 2020 to help inform the Flagstaff Downtown Vision and Action Plan. Data was compiled using primary and secondary sources, including the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, real estate research, Esri Business Analyst, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other available sources.

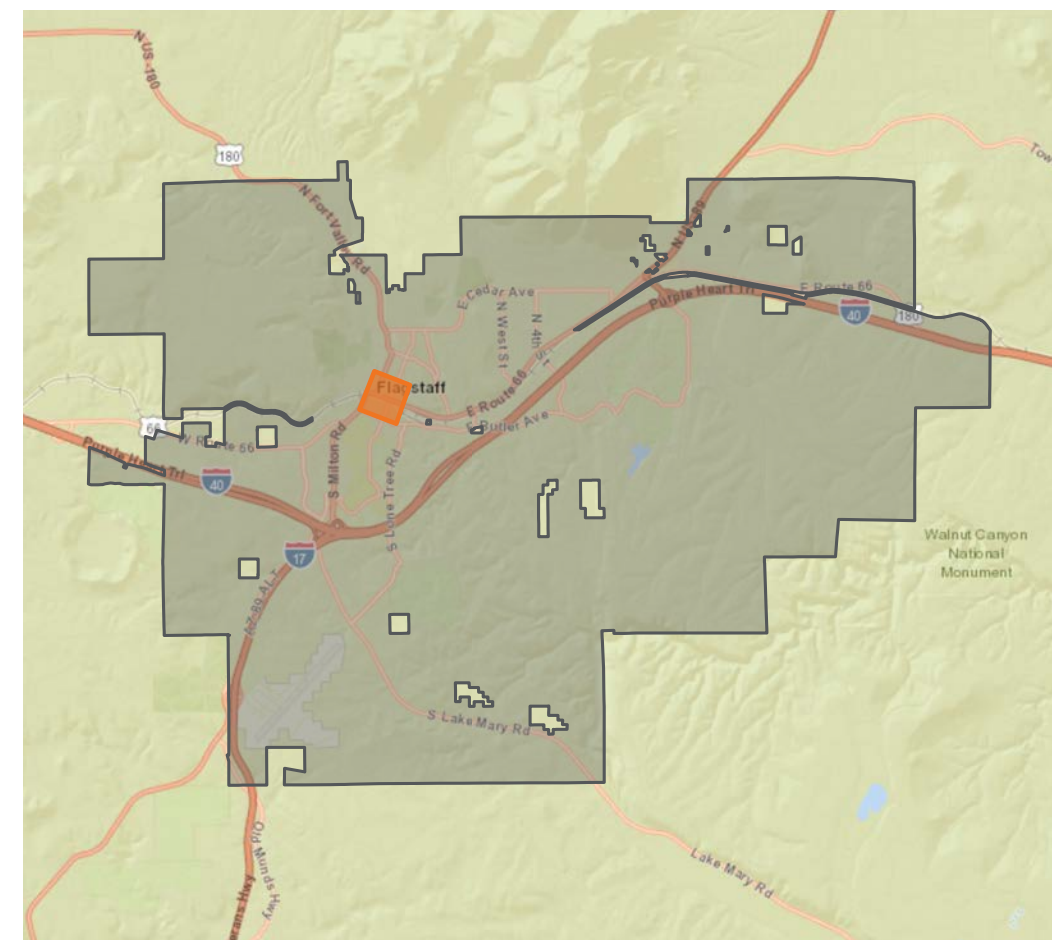
One resource that was of particular use was the Mountain Line DCC Market Analysis. This Market Analysis, completed by Mountain Line and the consulting firm AECOM, was completed in early 2020 as part of an evaluation of potential complementary uses alongside the development of the future Downtown Connection Center (DCC). Given its recency and similar area of focus, P.U.M.A. utilized this resource as much as possible, when relevant, in an effort to not duplicate efforts.

Of important note, this Market Assessment was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, given the lag time in data availabilities, much of the information that follows presents conditions pre-pandemic. Therefore, this Market Assessment is intended to provide baseline data for Downtown Flagstaff, prior to COVID, which can inform the community as it continues to evolve post-pandemic.

MARKET AREAS

Data was collected, when available, for the Downtown Flagstaff Study Area and the City of Flagstaff. The Downtown Study Area is a 0.28-square mile, 8-by-8 block area illustrated in the prior chapter. Downtown includes areas both north and south of historic Route 66 and is divided by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) Line, extending partially into the Southside neighborhood towards the Northern Arizona University (NAU) campus. Downtown is bound by Dale Avenue to the north, Elden Street to the east, Butler Avenue to the south, and Sitgreaves Street/ Milton Road to the west.

The City of Flagstaff is approximately 65 square miles, and is a key market and point of comparison for downtown data. It also offers a wider array of data than the customized, downtown boundary. Both market areas, in relation to each other are shown in the map to the right.



KEY MARKET FINDINGS

The following summary provides an overview of key findings for each of the Market Assessment’s four main topic areas: **Live, Work, Shop & Dine, and Visit & Stay**. It provides a snapshot of existing conditions – in both Flagstaff and downtown – and then an assessment of the relevant real estate sector’s conditions, strengths, and vulnerabilities. While the bulk of the Market Assessment focuses on pre-pandemic conditions, the following summary offers brief snapshots into what the future may hold for various segments impacted by the pandemic.

Downtown’s impact on the Flagstaff community is briefly characterized in the table to the right. It provides the number of residents, workers, and shops and restaurants that call downtown home, but also shows that acre-for-acre, downtown is one of the most productive and valuable neighborhoods of the community. As the table shows, downtown’s core strength is in its dining, drinking, and shopping options. Adding to the significance of downtown’s robust service industry – 87% of these establishments are locally-owned and operated, creating a unique advantage for downtown Flagstaff.

| DOWNTOWN’S IMPACT ON FLAGSTAFF | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 0.28 square miles | → 0.4% of the city |
| MEANWHILE, DOWNTOWN HAS... | |
| 1,064 residents | → 1.4% of the city/s |
| 4,819 employees | → 11% of the city’s |
| 135 restaurants, bars, shops | → 18% of the city’s |
| \$41.4 M in assessed value | → 4% of the city’s |

LIVE

FLAGSTAFF OVERVIEW

- » **Flagstaff has approximately 76,000 residents.** The city’s population has boomed during the 2000s, growing 43% between 2000 and 2019. A majority of this growth occurred prior to 2010.
- » Flagstaff, and downtown in turn, has a **very young average resident** (median age is 28). This is the youngest amongst its peer cities. This is due to NAU’s presence, an elevation of 7,000 ft., and an array of recreational amenities that attract more younger and active residents than retirees compared to elsewhere in Arizona.
- » With an enrollment of 22,000, **nearly a third of Flagstaff residents are NAU students.** While NAU’s rapid growth over the last 15 years has contributed to population growth and housing market woes, there are signs that this has slowed – the undergraduate enrollment on the Flagstaff campus decreased in 2019, the first time this has happened since 2005. (2023 UPDATE NOTE: Enrollment has rebounded, to 23,000+ and 2023 saw the largest freshman class ever.)

DOWNTOWN

- » **The Downtown Study Area has just over 1,000 residents**, representing 1.4% of Flagstaff’s total population. (The Downtown study area is bound by Dale Avenue to the north, Elden Street to the east, Butler Avenue to the south, and Sitgreaves Street/Milton Road to the west.)
- » Compared to citywide demographics, downtown has **smaller households on average, fewer families with children, a large proportion of male residents, and lower income and educational attainment levels.** More than 60% of downtown households earn less than \$50,000 annually – presumably due in part to the presence of NAU students.
- » It is important to make a **distinction between downtown’s two natural districts** – the historic core and the Southside district, separated by the BNSF railroad that cuts through downtown. Southside is where nearly three-quarters of the Downtown Study Area’s residents currently reside. It is an area with more renters, lower

income and education levels on average, and a more diverse population than the historic core of downtown.

FLAGSTAFF HOUSING MARKET

- » **Housing is Flagstaff’s strongest real estate sector.** Housing prices have risen to record highs and in turn, the city is now faced with an affordability crisis. In early 2020, Flagstaff’s median home value was \$388,000 and its median rent was \$1,900.
- » **Market dynamics contributing to the city’s affordability woes include:**
 - **A constrained supply of developable land** – Flagstaff is surrounded by protected forest lands.
 - **A lower density development pattern** – Peer city research shows Flagstaff with the lowest housing density by far amongst peers.
 - **Demand exceeding supply of new build** – Flagstaff’s seen strong population growth (noted above), but construction is slow, piecemeal, and not able to keep pace.
 - **Rising construction costs** – Construction has become much more expensive in the last decade, both in Flagstaff and nationally. Nationally, the chief driver of this has been increasing labor costs, while locally in Flagstaff, many remaining undeveloped lots are located on challenging terrain and steep grades that increases the cost of building.
 - **Lack of inventory available** – There is very little turnover of inventory available for ownership, especially in starter-home price ranges. Flagstaff is a nearly unattainable market to buy into for households at or below the average income level.
 - **Second-home market** – This is estimated to account for roughly a quarter of all of Flagstaff’s housing stock.
 - **Short-term rental market** – Flagstaff has the 14th most Airbnb rentals per capita in the country.
 - **An over-stressed rental market** – Due to a lack of ownership opportunities and an increase in NAU enrollment over the last 15 years, there are more people who remain in the rental market that would typically have transitioned to homeownership.



Downtown housing of varied scales and character

DOWNTOWN HOUSING MARKET

- » **The above dynamics and strains on the market also apply to downtown’s housing, by some metrics in a heightened sense.**
- » **Downtown has roughly 500 units**, 72% are renter-occupied, and the housing stock is roughly split between detached and multifamily types. Inventory of houses in and adjacent to downtown that is for sale is usually low, and when properties do come on the market, they typically sell at a high price point – at or above citywide averages.
- » The **downtown rental market is strong**, carrying a premium over citywide rents, and with a sub-2% vacancy rate. Average asking rents per unit are roughly \$2,000.

Global Trends Affecting Downtowns

Since 2007, P.U.M.A. has conducted research on trends impacting downtowns across the country. The boxes found throughout this chapter offer insights from the Global Trends research that are pertinent to Flagstaff.

HOUSING SECTOR

Younger demographics will continue to fuel demand for downtown living. Affordability is more important than ever, as housing costs nationally, including in Flagstaff, have skyrocketed in the last several years. Younger generations predisposed to urban living were impacted by the pandemic's economic disruption, and many simply haven't built up equity to afford highly-priced housing with rising interest rates, and/or are burdened by high monthly rental rates that hinder spending in other sectors in the downtown economy such as dining and entertainment. The pandemic and remote-work environment have also shifted preferences for housing unit types. There is greater interest in larger one-plus bedroom units that have ample space for working from home. **Alternative ownership and rental types may need to emerge, including group living options, cooperatives, and live-work formats. Other real estate segments and/or outdated buildings that have become obsolete could offer housing conversion opportunities, such as office and hotels/motels – especially in communities experiencing a housing shortage like Flagstaff.**

» The **short-term rental market** has impacted downtown housing. Existing residential units have been converted to short-term rentals, and some new development that could have become housing for residents has been built solely for short-term rental units instead.

STRENGTHS

» **Flagstaff's overall desirability** – People want to move to Flagstaff, for the variety of reasons stated earlier. People are also wanting to live downtown, which carries slight premiums over citywide housing.

» **Housing is a strong market for downtown moving forward.** There is high demand for more units citywide at all price points, but especially those at lower, more affordable levels. Downtown's housing is also likely to be attractive to varied users, including second-home owners looking for a "lock-and-leave" setup, NAU graduate students, as well as short-term rental units. **While downtown can't solve the city's affordability crisis, it can play an important role in diversifying the city's housing stock and adding new units to a strained market.**

» **Downtown's strongest age segment is 25-34 year olds** – the "young professional" and graduate student bracket that downtowns and walkable neighborhoods with plentiful amenities are well-positioned to attract. This is also at the core of who lives in Flagstaff – a city with the youngest median age (28) amongst its peer cities.

» **There are signs that NAU's contribution to Flagstaff's housing crisis may have peaked in the 2010s.** The university has built new on-campus housing in the last several years as well.

VULNERABILITIES

- » **A lack of inventory** – a citywide problem, not just a downtown one – that has dramatically driven up costs. Downtown's housing growth has lagged that of the city's over the last 20 years, during a time when downtowns have boomed as residential neighborhoods.
- » **Housing prices that aren't attainable for households at or below median income levels**, including many of those that work in hospitality and service-based jobs that make up a large portion of downtown's employment base.
- » **Downtown (and the city) is challenged when introducing density.** Flagstaff is by far the lowest density market amongst its peer cities. In the few occasions over recent years when downtown (or its surroundings) has introduced larger multifamily housing it has largely been absorbed by NAU students.
- » **Shortage of Off-Street Parking Supply.** In some locations within Downtown, a shortage of off-street parking opportunities limits future residential options of scale.

WORK

FLAGSTAFF OVERVIEW

- » **Tourism, education, and government are the foundations of the Flagstaff economy**, which is the county seat for Coconino County and the regional hub for northern Arizona.
- » **Flagstaff's employment sector can be characterized as "top-heavy," as it heavily relies on its six largest employers** – NAU, Flagstaff Medical Center, W.L. Gore, the Flagstaff Unified School District, Coconino County, and City of Flagstaff. NAU is not only the city's largest employer, but an anchor of the local economy – with 20,000+ students supporting businesses around town, some of which work part-time as well, and a regular infusion of talent into the local economy through its graduates.
- » Regarding talent, Flagstaff has the **best-educated workforce in Arizona**, with more than 45% of its residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher. More and more in today's economy, jobs and companies follow talent, and educational attainment has become one of the best predictors of economic success for communities.
- » Outside of the handful of major employers noted above, Flagstaff's economy is predominately **tourism-driven**. The two industry sectors with the highest number of total jobs in the city are (1) retail and (2) accommodation and food service.

DOWNTOWN

- » There are approximately **4,800 employees in Downtown Flagstaff**, representing 11% of the city's workers.
- » Compared to peer cities, downtown has a **below-average number of downtown workers**, and the lowest employment density by a significant margin. This illustrates the lack of major primary employers in downtown (outside of the County and City), but also an opportunity for downtown to evolve into a greater economic engine for the local economy.
- » The downtown employment sector is **anchored by government, dining, and shopping**. Together, these industries account for approximately 60% of downtown's jobs. Given this, downtown has a relatively low percentage of knowledge-based jobs (22%; second lowest amongst its peer cities) – which includes industries that are predominately private sector-based, fast-growing, well-paying, and a magnet for talented workers. In short, these are the industries that drive economic growth in today's economy.
- » Flagstaff's two largest employers – **NAU and the Flagstaff Medical Center** – each bookend downtown to the south and north, respectively – but sit outside the study area boundaries. There is the possibility that FMC will relocate in the future, and Downtown should monitor this decision and engage in any potential redevelopment process (depending on the outcome).



Global Trends Affecting Downtowns: OFFICE SECTOR

The nature of work was already methodically changing before the pandemic completely disrupted it. The pandemic accelerated the need to rethink the office real estate market that is often the centerpiece of downtowns. Knowledge-based workers continue to seek flexible work arrangements. Hybrid work, remote work, and the erosion of the five-day work week are all here to stay, but that doesn't mean the traditional office space is going away entirely. However, as much as a quarter of traditional office space that exists today may never be used in the same way again. Office buildings will need to invest in new amenities, convert to alternative uses, or be demolished and replaced. Some, but not all, may be appropriate for residential conversion. Flagstaff is significantly less impacted by this disruption compared to traditional CBD, office-centric downtowns. This sector is largely untapped in downtown Flagstaff, and there isn't an abundance of conventional office space that many other downtowns are currently struggling to keep leased and occupied.

OFFICE MARKET

- » **The commercial office sector is a relatively untapped sector in downtown.** A majority of downtown's workforce is in non-office-based jobs, and furthermore, a majority of the employment that is office-based is made up of County and City workers.
- » **Downtown has approximately 329,000 square feet of commercial office space and a vacancy rate of roughly 1%.** Available space is nearly non-existent (an ideal vacancy rate is roughly 10%), and doesn't allow for much movement in the market or the ability to house new office tenants in available space. Anecdotally, there have been businesses in search of office space in Flagstaff that would have liked to locate downtown, but weren't able to find the right space.

STRENGTHS

- » **A location bookended by the city's two largest employers** – NAU to the south, and the Flagstaff Medical Center to the north.
- » **A strong government sector**, with both a City and County presence. These sectors offer quality jobs and are typically steadier across different economic times, with less vulnerability during downturns. The courts, in particular, also help maintain legal-related services in downtown that attract professional jobs and create demand for commercial office space.
- » **A talented and well-educated citywide workforce from which to pull.** Flagstaff is Arizona's best-educated workforce, and NAU is regularly churning out new graduates looking for quality jobs.

VULNERABILITIES

- » **Little primary employment**, and little employment in knowledge-based sectors with high growth potential.
- » **Nearly no commercial office space available for new or expanding businesses to locate in downtown.** Downtown's office vacancy rate is roughly 1%, meaning it can't capitalize when prospective tenants want to locate downtown.

- » Downtown (and the city as a whole, for that matter) is **heavily dependent on the retail and dining sectors.** Purely from an employment perspective, these sectors are highly dependent on the visitor market, vulnerable to economic conditions, and generally do not offer jobs that pay enough for Flagstaff's housing market.
- » **In some locations downtown, limited parking supply** impacts the ability to attract new employers.

SHOP & DINE

FLAGSTAFF OVERVIEW

- » **The retail, food and beverage sector is Flagstaff's largest industry** in terms of employment. Together these industries employ over 12,000 workers, at approximately 750 businesses throughout the city.
- » This sector is **bolstered by the tourism economy**, and the 5 million people that visit Flagstaff annually.
- » Countywide, both retail and restaurant/bar sectors have experienced **strong sales growth over the last decade.** Between 2010 and 2019, restaurant/bar gross sales grew 79% and retail gross sales grew 55%. Growth was particularly strong from 2013-16 in both sectors.

DOWNTOWN

- » Downtown's storefront economy is critical to its success, driving foot traffic, attracting visitors, and helping maintain vibrancy throughout the day and into the night. In total, there are **223 street level businesses** in the Downtown Study Area.
- » Downtown has a strong mix of street level businesses and services, in large part bolstered by the strength of Flagstaff's tourism economy. Downtown's storefront economy is **driven by dining and shopping.** There are 81 eating and drinking establishments in downtown, including restaurants, bars, cafes, coffee shops, and



**Global Trends Affecting Downtowns:
RETAIL SECTOR**

Retail has always been one of the most disruptive and fastest evolving real estate sectors, something that was only accelerated by the pandemic. COVID-19 euthanized outdated retail formats that were already declining, including some outdated malls, department stores, and several legacy brands. While there was a bump in online sales during the height of the pandemic, the preference for physical stores remains, and e-commerce continues to only represent a slice of overall retail spending. Furthermore, strong post-pandemic “revenge” spending trends continue, especially in visitor-driven markets like Flagstaff. Downtowns are well-positioned to take advantage. Local independents and experiential retail once again distinguish downtowns. Opportunity for community-driven retail is a growing niche, with a newfound desire to connect with neighbors, demonstrate social impact and influence change amongst retail businesses and entrepreneurs – especially from younger demographics. Downtown Flagstaff has been driven by experiential retail and local independents; however, it has been reliant on the visitor market. There is an opportunity to reconnect with the local community (supported even further by new residential development), and possibly diversify small business ownership in downtown.



30 DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF

breweries. This accounts for more than a third of all of downtown’s storefronts. There are 54 retail establishments in downtown, accounting for one-fourth of downtown’s storefronts.

- » Other strong categories include beauty and personal care (17 establishments), banks and financial services (7 establishments), and fitness (7 establishments).
- » Based on a May 2020 count, **87% of downtown’s storefront businesses are local independents**, which is what makes downtown unique and part of the attraction.

RETAIL MARKET

- » The retail market (which includes food and beverage space) is **the centerpiece of Downtown Flagstaff’s real estate portfolio**. There is over 370,000 square feet of space in downtown, the most privately held square footage amongst the three primary real estate sectors (housing and commercial office).
- » Downtown had a **retail vacancy rate (pre-COVID) of approximately 5%**, higher than citywide rates, but still within a healthy range (less than 10%).
- » **Downtown retail space rents at a premium compared to citywide averages**. The average rate in downtown is approximately \$20 per square foot. Anecdotally, downtown rates vary widely, from \$12 per square foot for under-market leases, into the mid-\$30s per square foot on the high end.

STRENGTHS

- » **Downtown’s storefront economy punches above its weight**. This is in large part due to the impact (and spending power) of the tourism economy, discussed in more detail in the following section.
- » **Local independent businesses dominate the downtown scene**. This offers distinct character and sense of place, amongst downtowns nationally that have lost some of their local vibe in recent years.
- » **A strong food and beverage market** – Nationally, food and beverage has been expanding while retail has remained stagnant or even contracted in some downtown markets. Downtown Flagstaff is consistent with these trends, and food and beverage has become the sector’s anchor.

VULNERABILITIES

- » **Downtown’s retail sector primarily serves tourists, not the local community**. There is an overall struggle to get locals to come downtown, and the shopping, eating and drinking scene is a part of this equation.
- » Tied to the above, despite all its storefront businesses, **downtown still lacks some critical retail elements that would help serve residents’ daily needs**, namely groceries and drugstores, and make Downtown a more appealing place to live.
- » A consideration to the overall health of downtown’s storefront economy is **having adequate and convenient parking supply for patrons**. Downtown is already short on options for customer parking, further challenging retail and dining establishments.



VISIT & STAY

FLAGSTAFF OVERVIEW

- » **Tourism is Flagstaff’s top industry**. The city sees over 5 million visitors annually, and the industry supports over 8,000 local employees. Furthermore, non-city residents provide an estimated 50% of the city’s sales tax revenues.
- » **Flagstaff has grown into a nearly four-season destination**. Visitors are attracted to Flagstaff because of its setting, climate, natural beauty and surrounding amenities, and as a gateway to the Grand Canyon and Sedona. It sits at an elevation of 7,000 ft., making Flagstaff a summer respite for those in the greater Phoenix area. In the winter, it serves as Arizona’s playground with over 100” of snowfall annually, surrounded by the largest contiguous Ponderosa pine forest in the world and the San Francisco Peaks.
- » The **overall portrait of a visitor** to Flagstaff is one that is high-income, often a repeat visitor, and most likely from neighboring states or the Phoenix area, arriving by car. The average overnight length-of-stay in Flagstaff is 3 days.
- » The **Grand Canyon** is the central attraction for those visiting Flagstaff. Other core attractions also exist though, and include Route 66 nostalgia and the Lowell Observatory. Annual visitors to the Grand Canyon (roughly 6 million) increased every year between 2014 and 2018, before dipping in 2019.
- » **The arts and culture sector is another important piece of the Flagstaff economy and visitor market**, supporting approximately 3,000 jobs locally. According to a recent visitor survey conducted by the City and NAU, nearly half of Flagstaff’s visitors indicated that museums and observatories were important to their visit. Major art and cultural venues include the Museum of Northern Arizona and Coconino Center for the Arts (both north of Downtown), the Pepsi Amphitheater (several miles south of downtown), and several performance venues on NAU’s campus adjacent to downtown.

Global Trends Affecting Downtowns: VISITOR MARKET

The pandemic forced outside-the-box thinking, a result of which was the creative use of outdoor spaces to expand dining and retail options and to provide healthy places for people to gather. Many pandemic-era outdoor innovations should become permanent. Downtowns should advance new parks and gathering spaces that offer a break from hardscapes. The greening of downtowns creates a more attractive living and working environment, plus offers the benefit of moderating urban heat islands. Thinking outside the box shouldn't just be a last resort, but part of the downtown ethos moving forward. Downtown programming and events are also evolving. Many downtowns are augmenting large festivals with frequent, smaller-scale, community-oriented programming that showcases local music, arts, and culture. Celebrating and inviting a community's creative DNA into downtown can provide a multitude of benefits, from engaging local talent to curating unique experiences and activating storefronts and public spaces.



- » The **Lowell Observatory** – located on Mars Hill which overlooks downtown – is the centerpiece of Flagstaff's lunar legacy. Lowell's telescopes, open deck observatories, and numerous exhibits have engaged the public through interactive learning experiences. In addition to hands-on discovery and guided tours, the observatory hosts summer camps, research programs, lectures, and special events throughout the year.

DOWNTOWN

- » Downtown is home to **six private art galleries, the Orpheum Theater, and the Doris Harper-White Community Playhouse, home to Theatrikos.**
- » Downtown hosts **a variety of events** annually that attract both locals and visitors. A majority of these take place at Heritage Square, downtown's "living room" and central public plaza. These include the Summer Concert Series, Movies on the Square, Halloween Harvest, amongst others. Downtown also offers a full holiday calendar, with regular themed events and promotions throughout December.
- » There are several city-funded **public artworks** throughout downtown, including Among Trees at the Municipal Courthouse, Touch Home Reach Sky at the library, murals, and vinyl-wrap art on utility boxes, amongst others
- » While not located within downtown, **several major cultural destinations are located within close proximity** including the Lowell Observatory and several performing arts venues on the NAU campus.

LODGING MARKET

- » **Flagstaff has a large concentration of hotels** – more rooms per capita than Las Vegas. Several clusters of these are within close proximity to downtown, but outside the district.
- » **Downtown has five hotels, one B&B, and one hostel.** The Residence Inn by Marriott is downtown's newest hotel, and largest by far with 110 rooms. All the rest have 51 or fewer rooms. In total, downtown has fewer than 300 hotel rooms, and therefore the sub-market is too small to get industry metrics for, such as daily and occupancy rates. If citywide metrics are any indication, then downtown's hotels likely have high above-average occupancies but lower average daily rates.

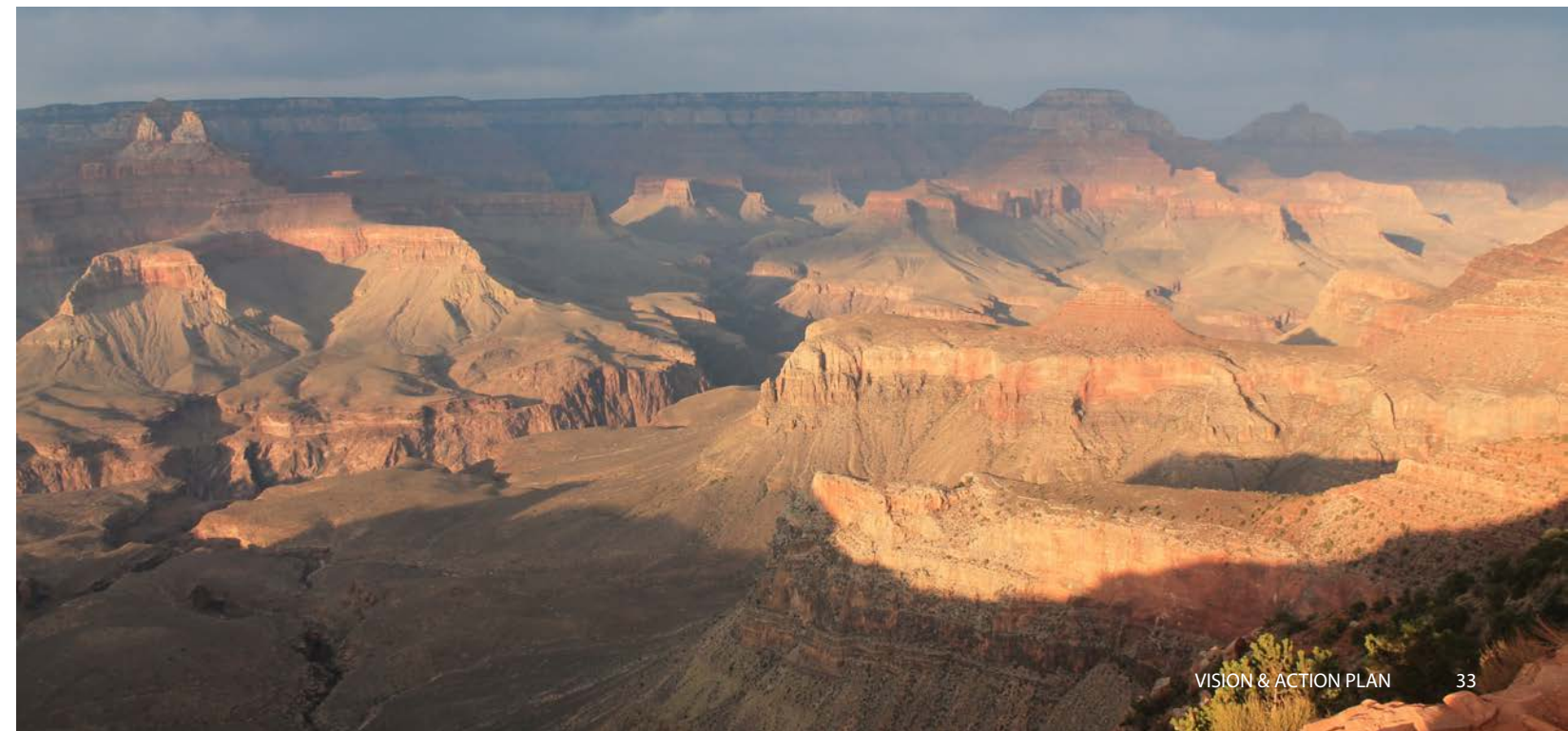
- » Downtown lodging market is also **increasingly impacted by the short-term rental market** which has seen explosive growth in Flagstaff over the last six years. Flagstaff has the 14th most Airbnb listings per capita in the country.

STRENGTHS

- » **There is a real depth to the tourism experience in Flagstaff and northern Arizona.** Downtown doesn't need to be the main attraction, and is working from a position of strength thanks to the region's assets – but should strive to play a more integral role in this market. Its lodging, restaurants, retail, and art and cultural destinations are central to this mission.
- » **Downtown's proximity to the Lowell Observatory & Mars Hill is a real asset to build upon.** Already a destination, Lowell is underway with a capital improvement and expansion plan that will allow it to serve 250,000 visitors per year, up from 100,000 currently.
- » **A strong short-term rental market** – A supplement to downtown's hotel/motel market, attracting visitors likely to spend money at downtown's businesses. Indicators point to this as a healthy, growing sector throughout Flagstaff. Most of the short-term rentals are single-family homes, with high rates (nearly \$200 per night on average), and strong occupancy rates (59% on average).

VULNERABILITIES

- » **Downtown is more about what's around it, than what's in it.** The Lowell Observatory, the city's two largest art museums, and the region's main performance arts hall are all located outside of downtown. This is unusual amongst downtowns nationally which are often homes to major cultural destination and the center of the city's art community.
- » **A competitive regional lodging market.** Downtown hotels compete with the city's number of other lodging options, larger corporate brands located closer to highways, roadside hotels/motels that offer budget options for those traveling by car to the Grand Canyon and on Historic Route 66, and lastly, with an increasing number of short-term rental options.
- » **A strong short-term rental market** – While these rental units play an important role in housing a portion of the visitor market, they can also erode the hotel visitor base and reduce the permanent housing stock in an already-strained residential market.



PEER CITIES

Peer cities and their downtowns are used as comparisons throughout the Market Assessment. Peer cities include Bellingham, WA; Bend, OR; Boulder, CO; Corvallis, OR; Fort Collins, CO; and Missoula, MT.

These were selected based on their prevalence in recently-completed City of Flagstaff reports and studies. P.U.M.A. then selected peer communities for this study that are located in the Western U.S., have a similar-sized city, downtown, and university, and have a strong tourism-based economy. On the whole, these peer cities share many of the same market dynamics that exist in Flagstaff today.

| CITY | POPULATION | UNIVERSITY | ENROLLMENT | TOURISM/REC. DRAW | DOWNTOWN SIZE |
|-------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|---|---------------------|
| Flagstaff, AZ | 75,653 | Northern Arizona University | 22,390 | Grand Canyon National Park, Coconino National Forest | 0.28 sq. mi. |
| Bellingham, WA | 91,219 | Western Washington University | 16,142 | San Juan Islands; Mt. Baker | 0.29 sq. mi. |
| Bend, OR | 94,911 | Central Oregon Community College; OSU-Cascades | 16,814 | Cascade Mountains, Deschutes River | 0.18 sq. mi. |
| Boulder, CO | 108,179 | University of Colorado | 33,246 | Colorado Rocky Mountains | 0.22 sq. mi. |
| Corvallis, OR | 58,977 | Oregon State University | 24,290 | Cascade Mountains, Willamette Valley wine region | 0.20 sq. mi. |
| Fort Collins, CO | 168,623 | Colorado State University | 28,600 | Colorado Rocky Mountains | 0.49 sq. mi. |
| Missoula, MT | 75,034 | University of Montana | 10,962 | Glacier National Park; Lolo & Flathead National Forests | 0.30 sq. mi. |

Note: Along with the full market assessment, the data points in the table above were collected in 2020. These peer city comparisons should continue to be utilized to provide context for downtown Flagstaff's evolution, and numbers should be updated as needed moving forward by FDBA.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- » The Community's Top Priorities
- » Committees and Stakeholders
- » Community Survey

THE COMMUNITY'S TOP PRIORITIES

As part of the Flagstaff Vision and Action Plan planning process, the FDBA, City of Flagstaff, and the P.U.M.A. team undertook a significant community engagement effort during the COVID-19 pandemic. This section summarizes the main activities and outcomes of that process.

The list below is a compilation of the feedback from all community and stakeholder engagement efforts. Understanding community priorities can help the City of Flagstaff align their efforts and select actions that fit both the community-wide values and the City's capacity. These themes and priorities form the basis for the Downtown Vision and Action Plan and the subsequent opportunities described and illustrated in the following chapter. The common themes and highest rated priorities for improving Downtown Flagstaff are outlined below:

VIBRANT AND LIVABLE

- » Recognize the Southside BIPOC community
- » Provide more day-to-day retail for residents (i.e. grocery, pharmacy, hardware, medical/dental, etc.)
- » Attract a variety of new housing types and price points (particularly for families and working class), including affordable, market rate, senior, for sale, townhomes, and condominiums
- » Encourage retail to expand their hours of operation to improve evening vibrancy
- » Strengthen Flagstaff's storefront economy, including strategies to support and attract retail, restaurants, and other active uses to better attract residents.
- » Guide downtown's emergence from pandemic closures, preserving local businesses, avoiding long-term closures, and supporting a return to economic vitality.
- » Nurture and cultivate local arts and culture as foundational to downtown including visual arts, performing arts, and live music.

CONNECTIONS

- » Walkable – improve key streets for pedestrians and transit users
- » Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to NAU and surrounding neighborhoods
- » Improve pedestrian crossings of Route 66
- » Explore innovative ways to activate alleys and other underutilized spaces as well as existing open space.
- » Implement the Downtown Mile Project to improve multimodal safety and connections for people traveling in and around downtown.

MAINTAIN HISTORIC CHARACTER

- » Preserve historic buildings while sensitively developing new buildings
- » Embrace sustainability as a core value in how downtown is managed, improved and developed.
- » Create a clear path through regulatory processes to accommodate the types of development and public realm enhancement envisioned in the plan.

EMPLOYMENT

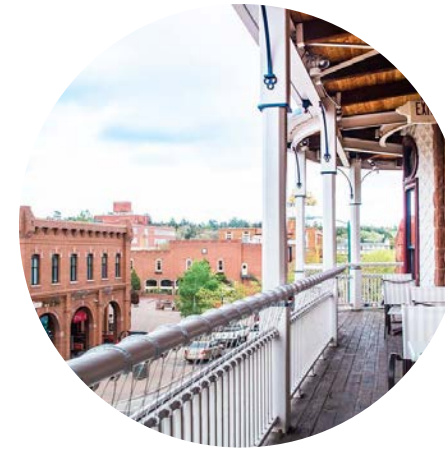
- » Create and promote new jobs and innovation
- » Identify economic linkages to support primary job growth, including strong ties to NAU and other large area employers while increasing opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- » Build upon and embrace the Lowell Observatory and Flagstaff's long astronomical history

WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

- » Develop a public space improvement and activation strategy that engages locals and visitors and celebrates the creativity and culture of Flagstaff, including Native/Indigenous traditions.
- » Improve the cleanliness, safety, and the perception of safety in downtown

PARKING

- » Address parking management and supply, including new parking facilities for employees and visitors throughout downtown
- » Work with County and City to provide parking for employees and visitors
- » Work with transit for employees and strengthening use of ecoPASS program
- » Increase efforts to grow bike and walking amenities downtown



COMMITTEES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance assembled two committees and working groups to oversee the project that met with the consultant team numerous times virtually and during the August site visit to Flagstaff. In addition, they met regularly on their own throughout the project.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM (PMT)

The PMT was comprised of the four project funding partners: Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance (FDBA), City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Mountain Line.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The CAC was comprised of a range of 23 stakeholders to serve as public representation that ensures findings and direction of the Downtown Vision and Action Plan are meeting the needs of the downtown community and the Flagstaff community at large. This group included professionals in the following fields: City and County staff, design, real estate/development, small business owners, NAU, Chamber of Commerce, restaurateurs, and hospitality. This committee met several times on-line during the project process, and their vision was consistent with the other stakeholder groups and the community at large.

STAKEHOLDER AND FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS/INTERVIEWS

In addition to several meetings with the PMT and CAC, P.U.M.A. held numerous on-line stakeholder and focus group interviews/discussions between March – August 2020. More than 100 stakeholders participated, representing the following downtown groups:

- » Elected officials
- » Business owners
- » Developers/Builders
- » Commercial and residential real estate brokers
- » Historical Resources Commission
- » Norther Arizona University
- » Gore
- » City and County Staff
- » Residents
- » Southside residents and stakeholders

FLAGSTAFF DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ALLIANCE BOARD (FDBA)

The P.U.M.A. team met frequently on-line with the FDBA as well as in-person during the August site visit. The FDBA board assisted in prioritizing the emerging downtown vision and strategies for this plan.

WORKING GROUPS

Working Group meetings with approximately 30 participants were held in August and September 2020. Group topics included: 1) Economic Vitality, 2) Downtown Experience, 3) Urban Design & Built Environment. The highest rated improvements of each of the groups are listed below.

Economic Vitality (including office, retail, education, residential, hospitality, medical, and other sectors)

- » Identify economic linkages to support primary job growth, including strong ties to NAU and other large area employers
- » Retain existing restaurants
- » Provide a variety of housing types and price points throughout downtown
- » Educate city leadership to adapt to the post COVID growth that Flagstaff will face

Urban Design & Built Environment (including zoning, land use, historic preservation, and public space activation)

- » Provide a clear path to adaptive reuse while preserving historic character
- » Alley activation – accessibility for pedestrians while still accommodating deliveries
- » Pedestrian wayfinding and interpretation (i.e. identify destinations)
- » Resident activation, housing, daily needs for residents (grocery, medical/pharmacy, hardware, etc.)
- » Welcoming to all
- » Keep downtown clean – sidewalks, parking area, etc.
- » Parking supply and management

Downtown Experience (including marketing, branding, events, arts and culture, safety and social services)

- » Fill storefronts (retail, restaurants, etc.)
- » Boost November to March visitation through creative marketing, activities
- » Improve marketing and information to locals regarding arts & culture
- » Boost Events, particularly related to science and art
- » Build a parking public parking structure(s) as part of a PPP/shared structure with other on site uses



38 DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF



VISION & ACTION PLAN 39

COMMUNITY ONLINE SURVEY

As part of the Downtown Vision and Action Plan, an online survey was available August-September 2020 to collect broad stakeholder and community input about their experience and desires for Downtown Flagstaff as well as priorities and improvements to over the next 5 to 10 years. A total of **1,239 responses** were recorded. The following presents the survey's key findings and results.

Since the survey ran during the COVID-19 pandemic, several questions were integrated to account for this crisis.

Demographics: Survey respondents represented a strong cross-section of Flagstaff residents. Respondents were particularly well-distributed by age and income brackets. 75% of respondents identified as Caucasian, while 65% were female. Most respondents (72%) were residents of the greater Flagstaff region, living outside of Downtown.

THE PANDEMIC IMPACT

A majority of survey respondents (59%) indicated that they were in Downtown Flagstaff at least once a week prior to the pandemic. By a large margin, "restaurants and bars" most often brought respondents to Downtown prior to the pandemic (83% of respondents). "Shopping" (46%) and "events and festivals" (43%) were also popular answer choices.

Overall, more than half of respondents indicated that they will be either cautious/hesitant or not comfortable visiting Downtown for various services/activities while COVID remains a threat. Stores, outdoor festivals and events, and work have the best outlook, while respondents expect to be most cautious with bars and nightlife venues.

SETTING A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN BEYOND RECOVERY

The five most common words used to describe respondents' vision for Downtown Flagstaff in the year 2030 were **local, friendly, vibrant, parking,** and **fun**. The word cloud represents the words respondents most frequently used to describe their vision.

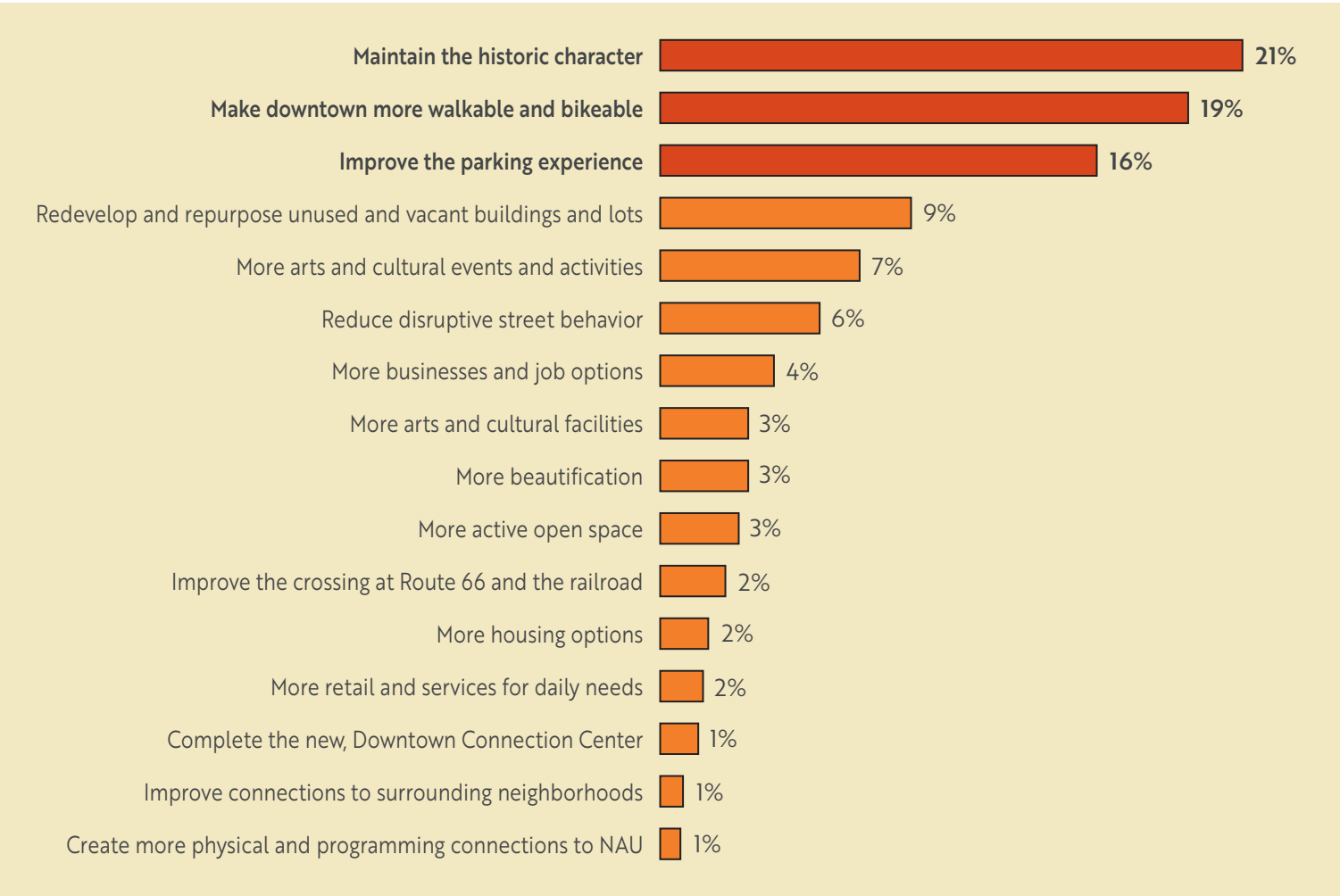
A majority of respondents rated the following five actions as "very important" for achieving their vision for Downtown Flagstaff:

1. **Maintain the historic character** (77%) – the top choice by a significant margin
2. **Make Downtown more walkable and bikeable** (59%)
3. Redevelop and repurpose unused and vacant buildings and lots (57%)
4. More beautification (public art, alleyway enhancements, etc.) (54%)
5. Improve the parking experience (53%)



When asked to choose the one action from the list of 16 that will be most important to achieve their vision for Downtown, a clear top three stood out significantly from the rest, as the following graph shows:

- #1 Maintain the Historic Character
- #2 Make downtown more walkable and bikeable
- #3 Improve the parking experience



Respondents were also given the chance to provide additional ideas for improvements to Downtown Flagstaff in an open-ended format. The most common themes amongst these answers both related to how outdoor spaces are utilized:

- » **More outdoor uses and activation** – outdoor seating, outdoor dining, patios, gardens, more trees, and additional places to congregate
- » **Desire for making pandemic-related changes permanent or seasonal** – keep street closures, sidewalk dining, and parklets in place, at least during summer months; widen sidewalks; permanent pedestrian-only street (mostly in reference to Aspen and Leroux)

When asked what type of housing is most appealing if they were to consider living Downtown, the most popular answer was **single-family unit** (28%). There were also a significant number of respondents who would never consider living Downtown (27%). There is generally more desire for ownership units over rental units.

Improved sidewalks and bike routes (46%) are the most desired amenity that respondents feel will make Downtown a more attractive neighborhood to live in. Other popular selections include additional parking (40%), full-service grocery store (35%), more art and cultural options (34%), and parks and playgrounds (33%).



VISION & ACTION PLAN

- » Vision
- » Catalytic Projects
- » Economic Vitality
- » Downtown Experience & Urban Design
- » Mobility Framework

VISION

All of the community input from the committees, working groups, stakeholder meetings, public open houses, and the online survey was collected and synthesized into the community's vision for Downtown Flagstaff. Each of the six vision elements below is interwoven into each section of the Downtown Vision & Action Plan.

VIBRANT

Downtown Flagstaff should continue to expand on its entertainment, events, and multicultural offerings. It should become a more regional artistic and cultural hub and a national destination for a range of creative and social offerings. Culture is essential to downtown's sustainability and should be incorporated throughout downtown. Active social spaces, unique events and experiences, creative businesses, and state-of-the-art cultural assets should enrich the lives of residents, the economic health of the downtown area and the experiences of visitors.



WALKABLE & CONNECTED

Downtown Flagstaff should continue to be a place that is easy for people of all ages to move around whether by foot or mobility device, bicycle, transit, or car. Downtown Flagstaff should be connected to destinations with and across downtown as well as to the adjacent neighborhoods. Convenient parking options should exist so patrons, employees and residents can park once, and walk to their destination.



HISTORIC & ADAPTABLE

Downtown Flagstaff should embrace its rich heritage of design by preserving existing historic structures and creating new buildings/additions of architectural merit.

PROSPEROUS

Downtown should be a diverse employment center where retail, finance, technology, government and services thrive. Downtown should be a center for creativity featuring a wide variety of local retail shops, high-quality dining and entertainment options, and a strong local business community. Additional amenities should be provided to meet the daily needs of current and future downtown residents. A broad range of housing types should be available to meet the needs of diverse age groups, lifestyles, and incomes as well.



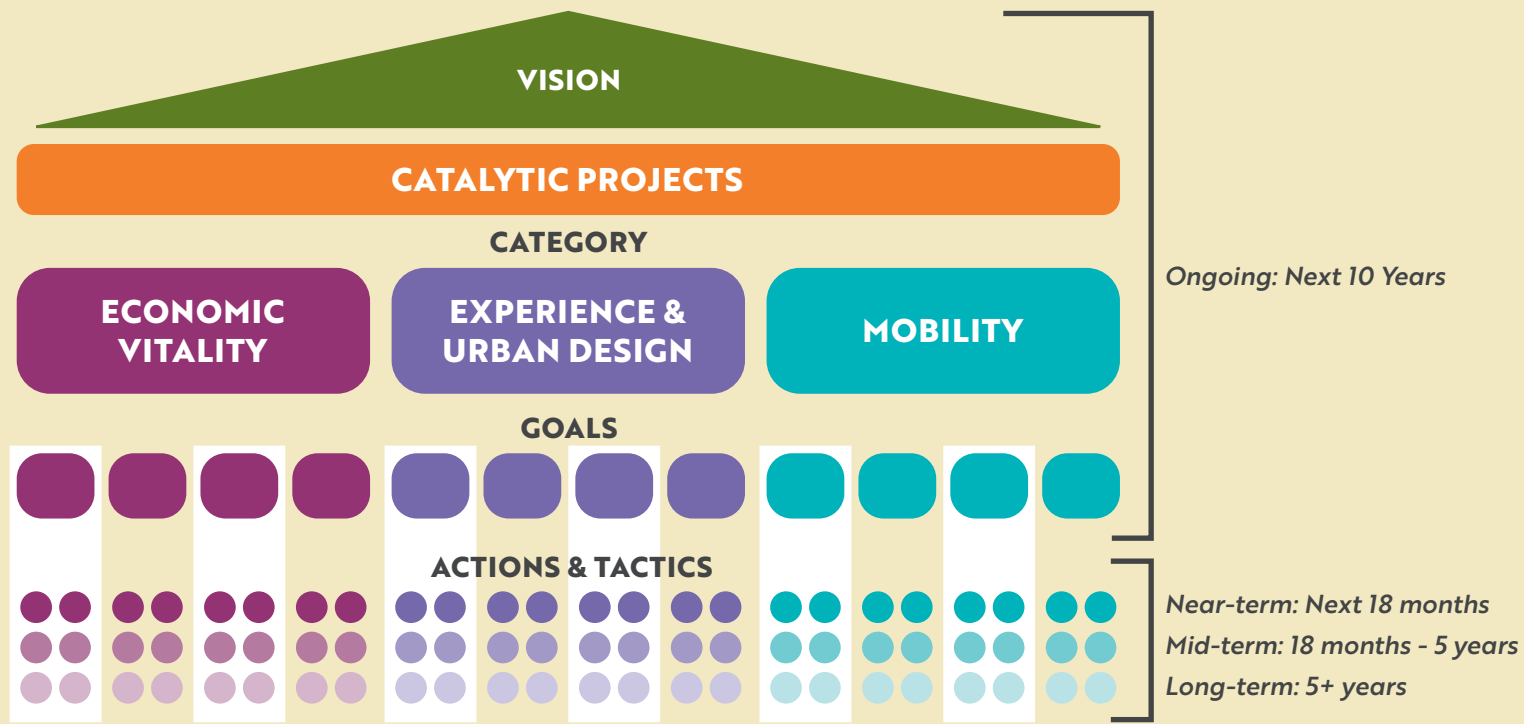
WELCOMING & INCLUSIVE

Flagstaff should celebrate its diversity of cultures, particularly its indigenous roots. It should build upon the strengths of diversity to create a place that is welcoming to everyone.

ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Downtown Flagstaff should be an inclusive, welcoming place for people of all ages and backgrounds to use and enjoy.

The **Action Plan** is constructed as follows. The plan identifies catalytic projects as well as immediate, short- and mid-term actions for downtown physical improvements and policies, to guide the FDBA and City of Flagstaff, the development community, and downtown stakeholders for the next ten-year investment cycle. **Catalytic projects** are discussed first. Second, goals and actions are divided into three main categories – **economic vitality**, **experience and urban design**, and **mobility**. For actions and tactics within each of these categories, timelines and responsible parties are identified to aid in implementation.



CATALYTIC PROJECTS

A catalytic project is one that has the potential to have lasting positive impacts on downtown and encourage improvements around them. Most of downtown property is owned by private entities and improvements are dependent on multiple factors, such as one's willingness and financial means to redevelop, access to capital, partnerships, existing leases, and more. However, there is publicly owned land downtown as well – some parcels are owned by the City of Flagstaff or Coconino County, and streets, sidewalks, and parks may also offer catalytic opportunities. Based on an assessment of downtown land, property ownership, property conditions, surrounding economic activity, and interviews with downtown citizens and stakeholders, a list of catalytic projects was developed. This list, along with ideas and recommendations, should serve as preliminary guidance to get conversations started and hopefully generate excitement about possibilities for the future.

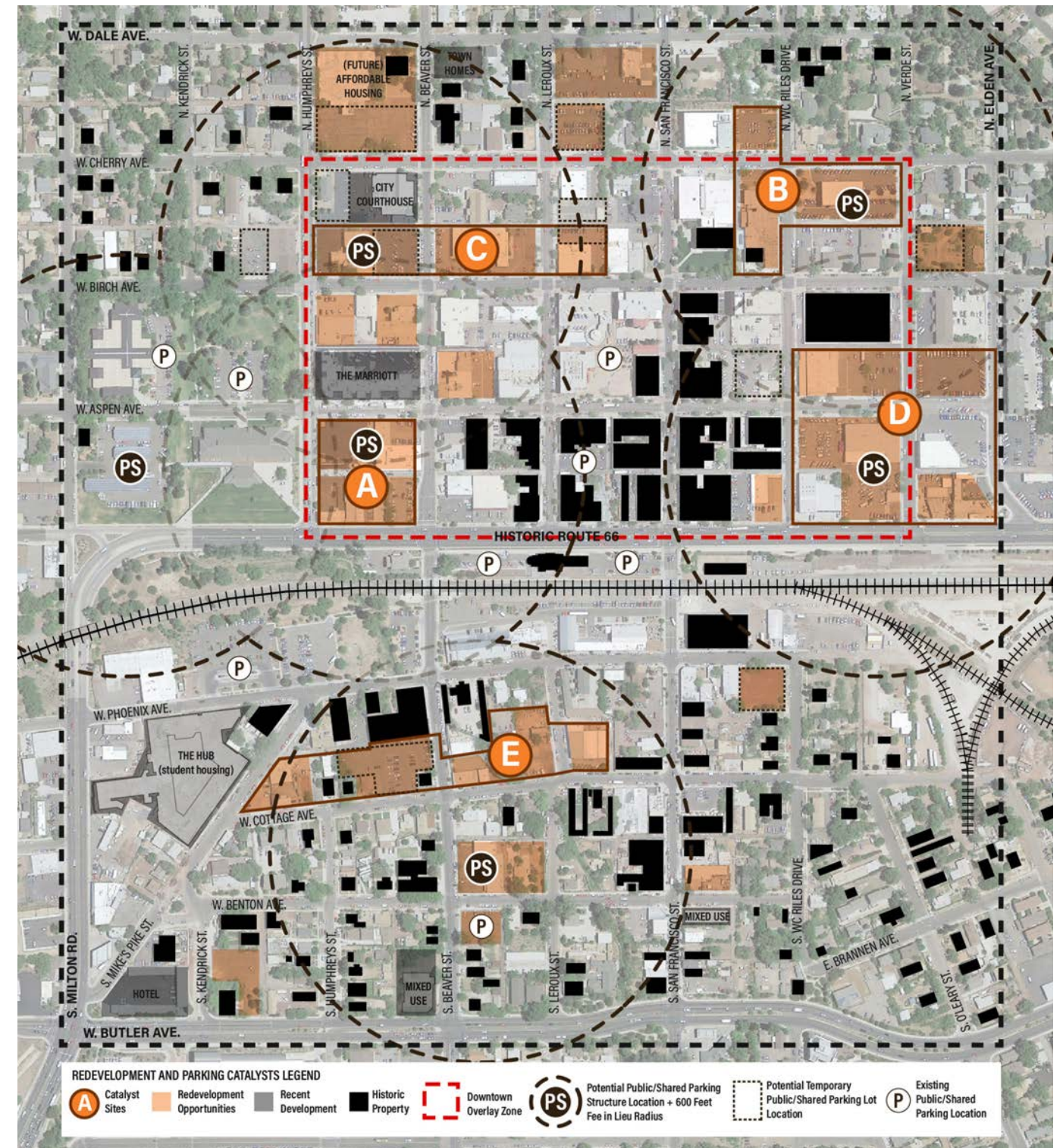
REDEVELOPMENT & PARKING CATALYSTS:

- A - Old City Courthouse
- B - Coconino County Properties
- C - Birch Avenue Infill
- D - Eastside Gateway
- E - Cottage Avenue Infill

PLACEMAKING CATALYSTS:

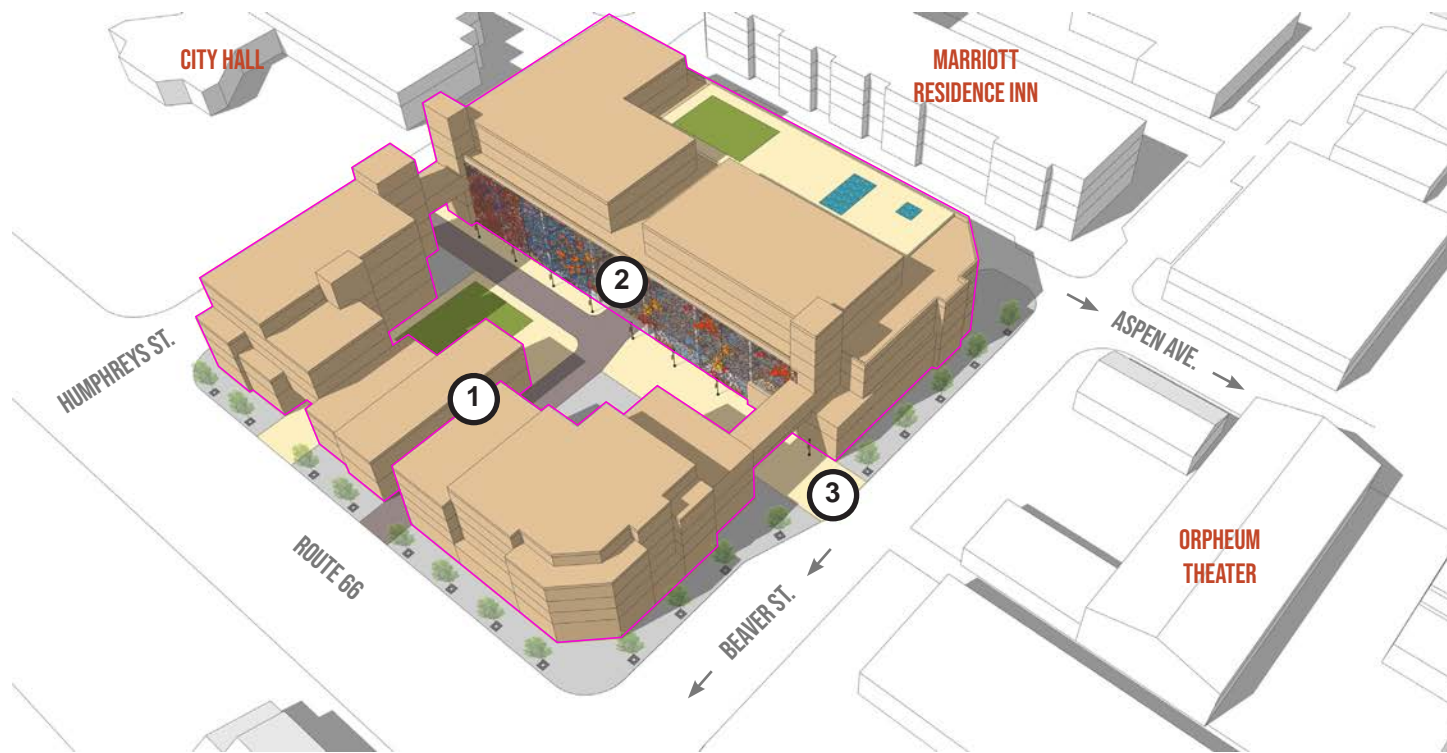
- A - Downtown Connection Center
- B - Leroux Festival Street
- C - Heritage Square Activation
- D - Alley Activation
- E - Streetscapes, Gateways, Connectivity & Wayfinding

REDEVELOPMENT & PARKING CATALYSTS



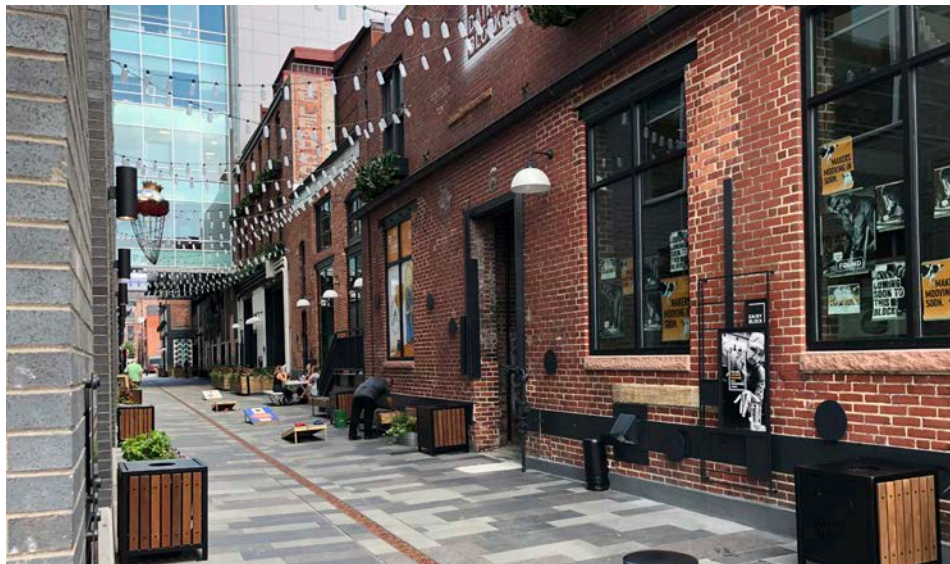
The following pages illustrate the potential for five redevelopment catalysts in downtown. These are for illustrative purposes only - they are not actual development proposals. These catalysts encourage the city to work with a developer(s) to provide public parking in conjunction with other uses that serve the Downtown Vision. Potential public/private parking structure locations are identified but not all are necessary as project are developed. Refer to page 83 Mobility Framework for more detail on parking recommendations.

A - OLD CITY COURTHOUSE

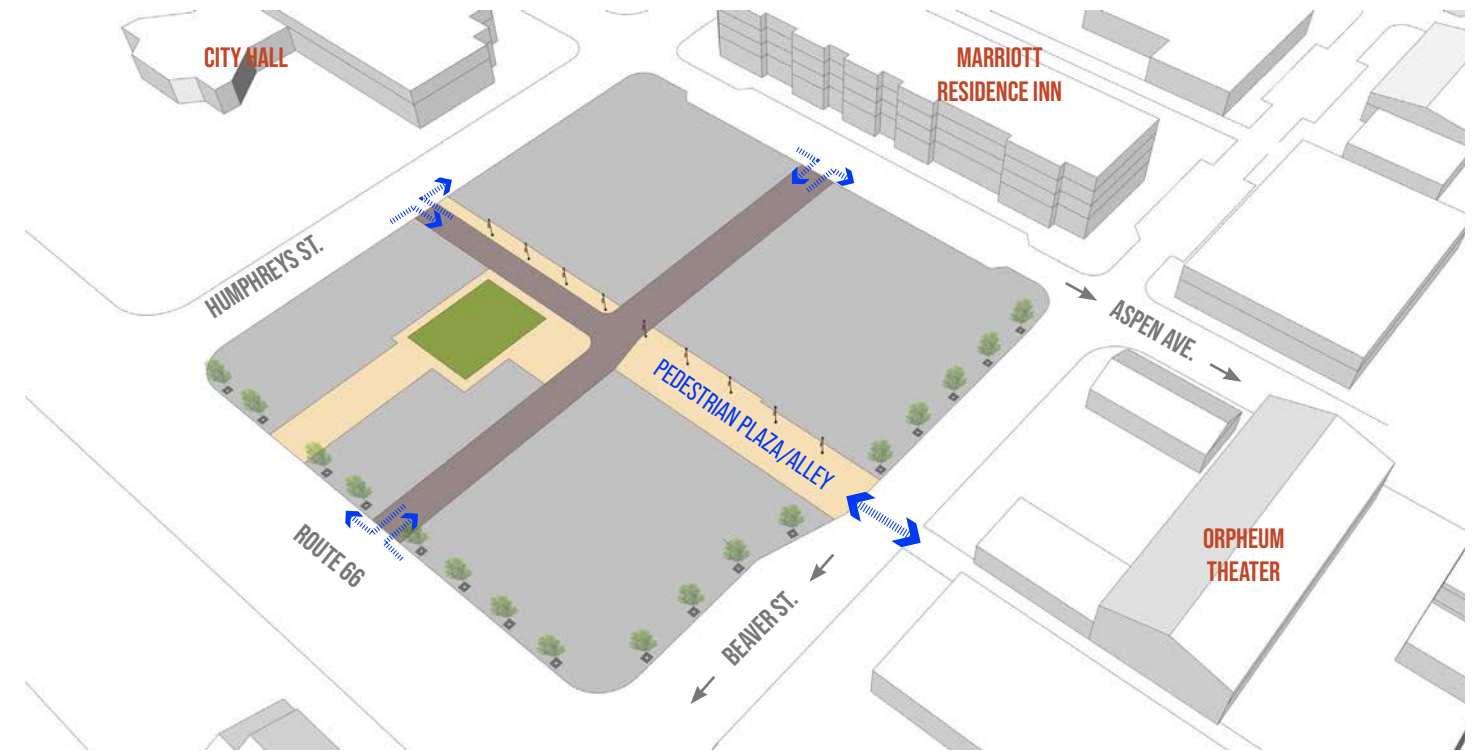


This concept shows the entire block redeveloping into a mixed use gateway to downtown. This catalyst project envisions a public-private partnership to redevelop into a mixed use block with a public parking component. The program is to be determined, but any project on this site should give back to the community with public parking and public space. This location would also be ideal to contribute downtown housing and a small grocery/market.

- 1 City should issue Request for Proposals for development on this block. Scenario shown would include the entire block redeveloping at once. This scenario shows three primary structures with massing broken up to fit into the context of downtown. Uses should include residential units and ground floor retail. Office and hotel uses may also be appropriate. A small corner market to support downtown residents is also desired.
- 2 Any future development proposal should include some amount of public parking (exact number to be negotiated) to serve downtown businesses.
- 3 Maintaining alleys is desired. This scenario shows a wide pedestrian-only alley and plaza for a half block at Beaver Street that would be activated with adjacent uses and connected across Beaver to the downtown core alleys. The parking structure could include a thru-drive passage to enhance connectivity and options for entering and exiting to avoid congestion (see next page.)



The Dairy Block in Denver, CO is a public amenity with art, games, lighting, and seating areas. A boutique hotel and lobby bar is one use that activates the space.



The diagram above shows how site circulation to parking could work. All entries/exits would be right in, right out due to Aspen being a one-way street and Route 66 and Humphreys being busy streets. This concept envisions a pedestrian-only alley for a half-block at Beaver Street with a safe mid-block pedestrian crossing to allow pedestrians a safe and interesting walk that connects to the downtown core and activated alleys.

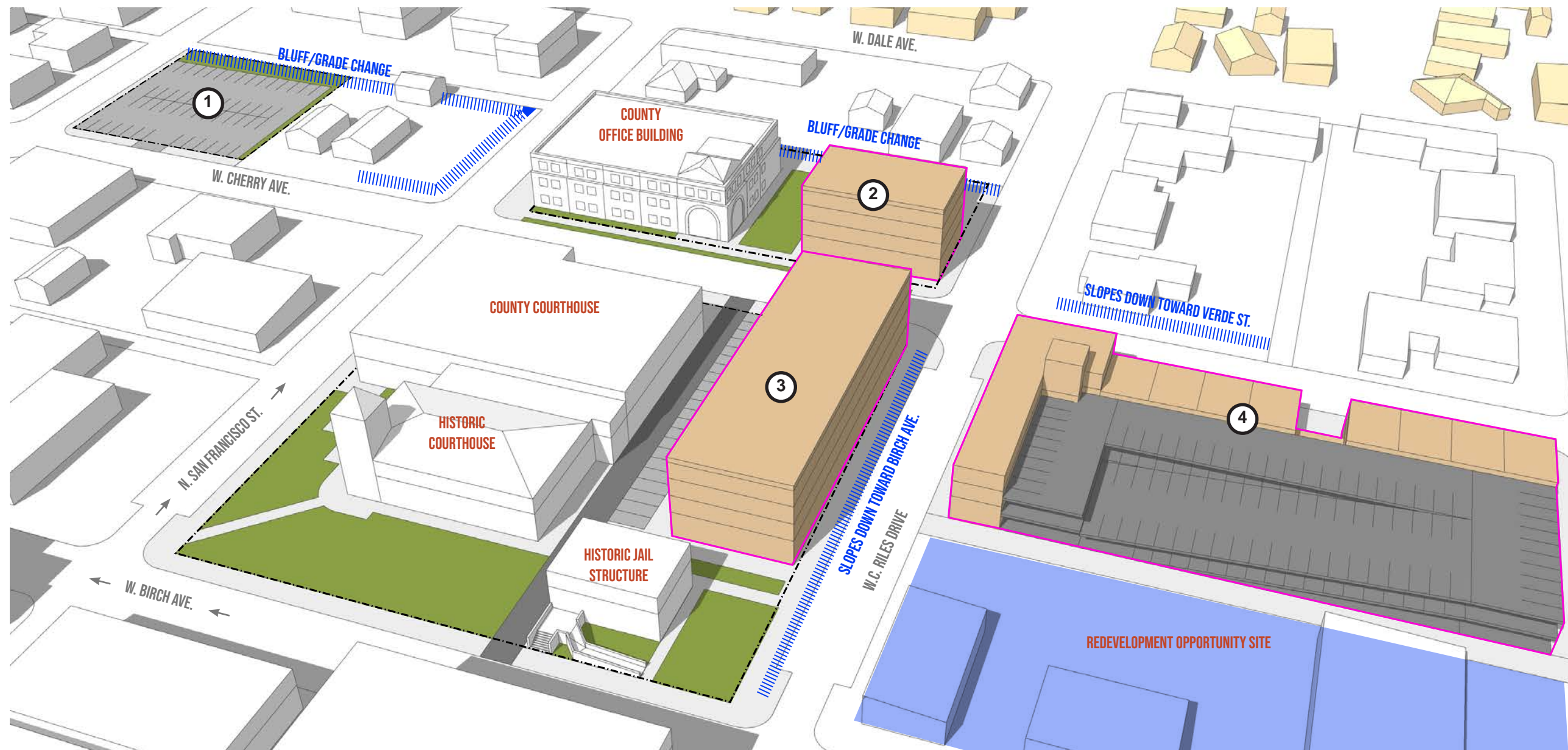


A pedestrian alley in Rapid City, SD that is similar to the concept shown, with parking structure on one side (with flat floors and high ceilings for future adaptive reuse) and businesses activating the other side. Ample pedestrian-scaled lighting, flowers, and other amenities keep the space looking nice and feeling safe.



Parking areas should be screened from public view. When facing a public street, design the edges with active building uses, when feasible, or design to look like a building with similar bay rhythm and materiality. When facing an alley, use creative screening techniques, such as mesh, screens, green walls, or design to look like a building.

B - COCONINO COUNTY PROPERTIES



- 1 Maintain surface parking lot at Cherry and Leroux. Use for county offices during the daytime and for public parking on nights and weekends.
 - 50 parking spaces
 - Future infill development
- 2 Infill parking lot at the corner of W.C. Riles Dr. and Cherry with potential mixed use building. This could hold county or private offices. Transition to neighborhood.
 - Approximately 20,000 SF building shown (4-stories)
 - Some surface parking behind building.
 - Central "lawn" aligns with alley to south
- 3 Replace the old county jail along W.C. Riles Dr. with a new office building to accommodate county office/justice space with potential for mixed use.
 - Approximately 52,000 SF building shown (4-stories)
 - Maintain alley and provide secured off-street parking for judges behind building.
 - Maintain/restore historic structure at W.C. Riles Dr. and Birch.
- 4 Redevelop half-block of existing county office building into a shared parking structure wrapped with townhomes and/or apartments.
 - 8 townhomes shown facing Cherry Street.
 - 10 apartments with ground floor retail/restaurant uses facing W.C. Riles Dr.
 - Approximately 280-space shared parking structure.

This concept shows the how Coconino County properties in downtown could redevelop overtime to serve the Downtown Vision. This illustration envisions demolishing the old jail and office building at W.C. Riles Dr. and Cherry Ave. and potentially redeveloping into a mixed use "node" with a shared public/county parking component. A potential new mixed use office building finishes out the new county administrative lot and the existing surface parking lot at Cherry and Leroux remains.



The historic county courthouse is an iconic structure in downtown. Future development should respond to and respect the integrity of this structure.



Public/private parking structure wrapped with office and apartments in Boulder, CO



Four-story mixed use office and residential building in Missoula, MT



Civic open space in Englewood, CO

C - BIRCH AVENUE INFILL



This concept shows how the two banks at Birch and Beaver, with large surface parking lots, could reimagine into residential units to serve downtown housing needs. This is also an ideal location for a parking structure to serve downtown, as it is adjacent to the new city courthouse, Theatrikos Theatre Co., and has great access from Humphreys and Beaver Streets.



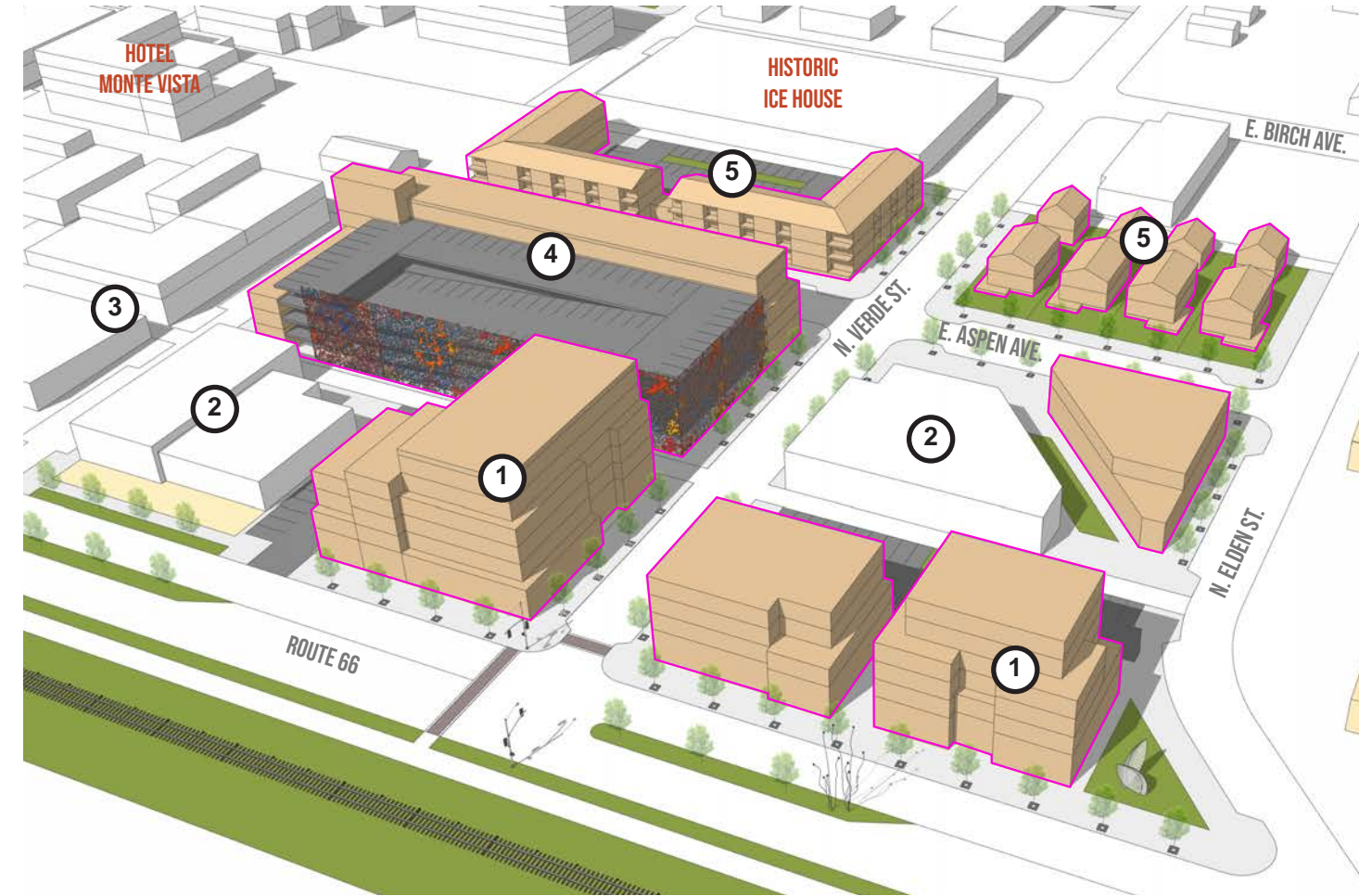
Add to downtown's housing supply with diverse unit types that serve a variety of incomes and that include context-sensitive architecture and shared open spaces. (photo: Issaquah Highlands, WA)



Two to four story residential buildings that are surface parked, or able to share parking in a nearby structure, would help provide affordable housing in downtown. (photo: online - Olympia, WA)

- ① Replace existing bank and surface parking lot with mixed income residential units with amenities that serve the downtown housing dweller, such as grilling areas, dog run, small plaza/lawn area(s), recreation and fitness room, etc.
- ② Replace existing bank and surface parking lot with a half-block parking structure wrapped with apartments. The bank could relocate into the ground floor and parking could serve the new development, as well as provide some additional parking for public uses, like the new courthouse, Theatrikos, and downtown businesses and festivals.

D - EASTSIDE GATEWAY



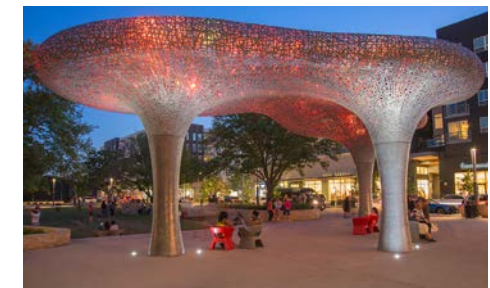
- ① Create an iconic gateway into downtown from Route 66 with new, large-scale, mixed use buildings.
- ② Reuse some existing buildings to maintain history and character.
- ③ Proposed activated pedestrian alley would provide very brief and interesting walk to the core of downtown from parking structure.
- ④ Shared parking structure would provide public parking for downtown visitors and patrons, as well as serve parking demand for new development. Parking structure would be wrapped with active uses facing downtown.
- ⑤ A variety of denser housing types provide housing for downtown, as well as provide a transition to nearby neighborhoods and less intense uses. These could also be mixed use or live-work units.



An eye-catching, mixed use building at the corner of Elden and Route 66 could serve as a gateway to downtown.



An active ground floor environment would provide a welcoming experience along Route 66.



A unique sculpture and plaza could be located at the intersection of Elden with Route 66 and serve as a gateway.

E - COTTAGE AVENUE INFILL



- 1 Live/work units or artist lofts could add full-time residents and jobs to the area. This illustration shows potential for 9 units that would have ground floor activation and living quarters above. They could be site-parked in courtyard.
- 2 A variety of “gentle density” housing forms, such as alley houses and cottage clusters, could be added along Cottage Avenue to fit the surrounding character while providing affordable housing options.
- 3 Maintain surface parking for Southside. Perhaps activate with a dedicated area for food trucks to park. Could also be used for festivals and events, if parking is provided elsewhere.
- 4 The Downtown Vision Plan highlights the intersections of Beaver and Phoenix and San Francisco and Cottage as “secondary gateways.” These nodes include a mix of uses and serve as a destination as well as a decision point for passersby.
- 5 South Humphreys Street is listed as a proposed bike route in the Active Transportation Master Plan to connect NAU to the future Downtown Connection Center.
- 6 The Southside Community Plan highlights Cottage Avenue as a proposed bike boulevard street.
- 7 Beaver Street has an existing bike lane on the west side of the street.
- 8 Refer to the Southside Community Plan that shows potential for an infill mixed use project and parking facility.
- 9 The Rio de Flag cuts through the Southside Neighborhood. This could be one location where it could be activated with adjacent uses.
- 10 The Downtown Vision Plan highlights potential for alley activation and beautification on the Southside between Cottage and Benton where multiple businesses could use the space.

The Southside Community Plan highlights Cottage Avenue as a “Southside Main Street” and calls for a mix of old and new, where some buildings are reused and repurposed and also where infill redevelopment of compatible scale and architectural style is appropriate. This plan builds on the Southside plan by envisioning Cottage Avenue as a catalyst opportunity for adding a variety of housing types and mix of uses around the existing eclectic fabric. This location is within walking distance of the Southside’s many breweries and restaurants, as well as a short walk to the downtown core via Beaver, San Francisco, or (future connection) Leroux Streets. It is also strategically located in close proximity to Northern Arizona University campus.



Live-work lofts provide active uses on the sidewalk and full-time residents that live, work and shop in the neighborhood.

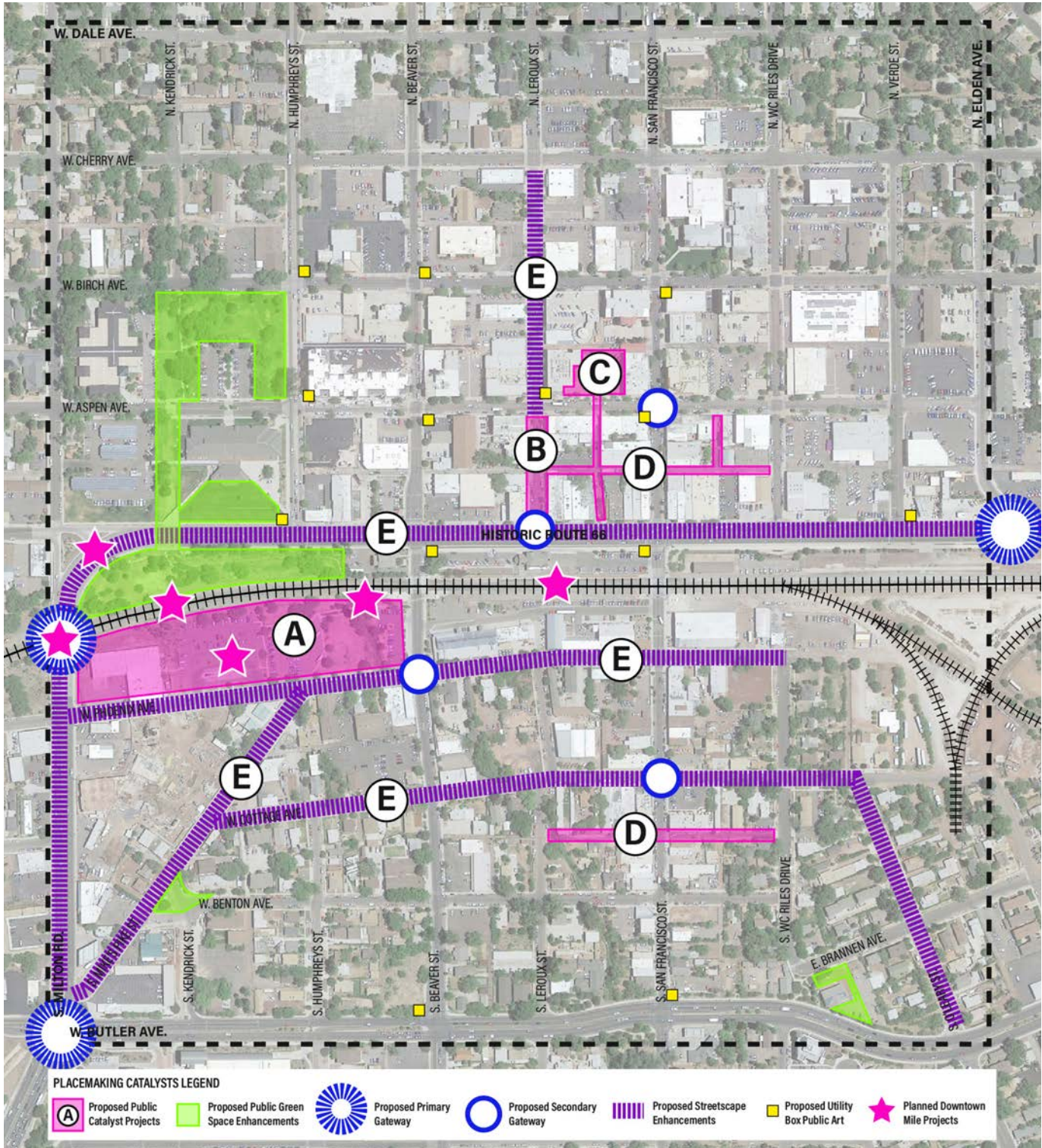


Architecturally, the Southside is very diverse. New infill can reflect and honor this diversity with unique materiality and forms.



A neighborhood-scale mixed use building could add vibrancy to Cottage Avenue with sidewalk cafes and full-time residents above.

PLACEMAKING CATALYSTS



The following pages illustrate the potential for five placemaking catalysts in downtown. These are primarily public projects that could spur private redevelopment. They include short-term, “quick wins” as well as longer-term, more visionary items.

A - DOWNTOWN CONNECTION CENTER



Mountain Line’s Downtown Connection Center (DCC) is currently under construction and will include a new administration building with restrooms and ticket operations, bus bays, public parking structure, and a plaza. Alongside the DCC redevelopment is the “Downtown Mile” project which includes a series of multi-modal improvements to better connect to the DCC and the larger community including:

- BNSF Rail Realignment
- Florence-Walnut Pedestrian Underpass
- Milton Roadway Improvements
- Milton Avenue Bridge Reconstruction and Underpass
- Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) Underpass
- BNSF/Rio de Flag Drainage Crossing; and
- Amtrack Platform Improvements

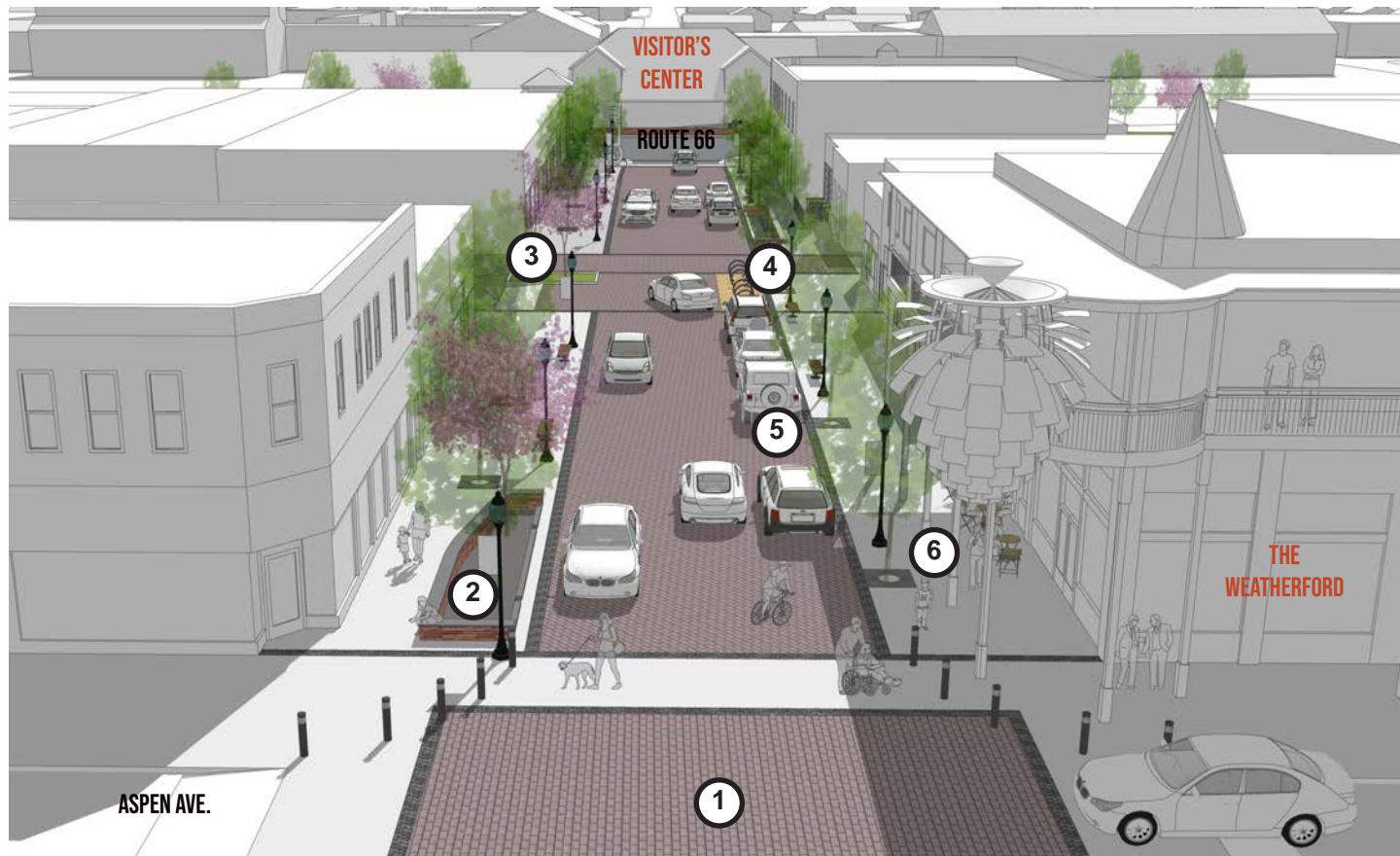


Transit center bicycle connection to regional trail system in Fort Collins, CO



A public plaza space will provide much needed open space on the Southside. Rapid City, SD

B - LEROUX FESTIVAL STREET



Leroux Festival Street is a long-term concept for redesigning one block of Leroux Street from Aspen Avenue to Route 66 as a flexible “festival street.” This concept envisions a curb-less street that expands pedestrian space adjacent to businesses and provides a narrow roadway that can accommodate thru travel and parking. During special events or seasons, the street can easily be closed to vehicular traffic, providing additional space for pedestrians. This would be ideal for events like The Great Pinecone Drop. The concept includes a new pedestrian crosswalk across Route 66 to the Visitor’s Center. This concept could be phased over-time with temporary improvements.

- ① Curb-less/raised street and intersection with stamped concrete vs. brick
- ② Stormwater planters take runoff from the street and naturally filter it in planters before entering storm pipes.
- ③ Alley access is maintained
- ④ Pedestrian amenities and placemaking features such as: bike racks, benches, lighting, banners, flower pots, and more provide for a pleasant shopping and dining experience.
- ⑤ On-street parking is provided on one side of the street.
- ⑥ A narrower roadway provides wider sidewalks adjacent to the businesses for cafe seating, sidewalk sales, and other activation.



Bell Street in Seattle, WA includes similar design features and is shown above during a festival where vehicular travel is restricted.



Feedback from stakeholder and community engagement concluded that Route 66 can feel like a barrier and deter people from crossing between the downtown core and the Southside. Adding a safe, pedestrian-activated signal at the intersection of Leroux and Route 66 would provide an additional, safer crossing location. This concept removes the left turn lane at Leroux to shorten the crossing distance and gain additional space to provide ramps and stairs down to the Visitor’s Center main entrance.



Fillmore Plaza in Denver, CO - shown above with cars and below during a festival - includes similar design features, including a safe pedestrian crossing of a major street at the terminus.



C - HERITAGE SQUARE ACTIVATION

Temporary modifications should be made to Heritage Square to better activate it in the short-term, such as: additional seating and shade, games to play (ping pong, giant chess board, or board game rentals), and more landscaping and flowers.

In the mid-term, Heritage Square should be updated to better suit the needs for downtown in the next 20-30 years. Consider the following: add a play area for children, more seating options, better visibility from Aspen and integrated connections to alleys, space for and ability to add temporary activation uses such as buskers or carts to sell food and goods. Structural capacity for near and mid-term improvements should be assessed to ensure that no negative impacts will occur to the parking structure under the plaza.



Continue to activate Heritage Square with music and entertainment events.



Temporary shade and seating areas should be made permanent as well as the addition of movable planters



Movable outdoor games to activate public space in Denver, CO

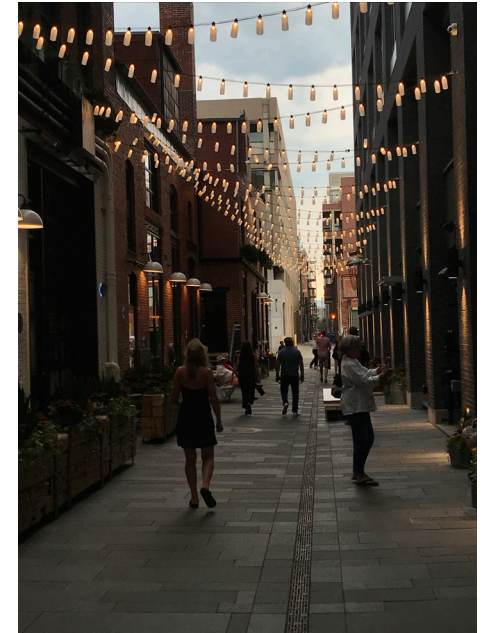


Temporary public art installations can activate public space. Pasadena, CA

D - ALLEY ACTIVATION



Enhanced alley with pedestrian access while still accommodating deliveries Longmont, CO



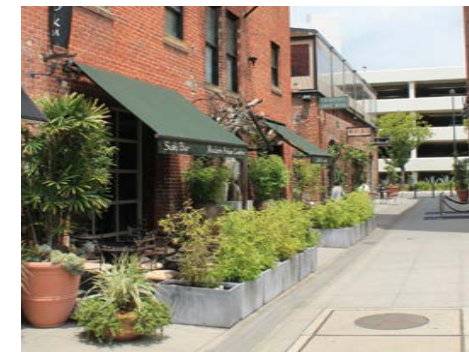
A highly enhanced alley with outdoor dining in Denver, CO

A Downtown Alley Activation Master Plan and Program should be created that considers the following:

1. Build on the BAS programming and grant opportunities for flowers, murals, and art wraps.
2. Redesign and construct improvements to Aspen Alley, as planned in the capital project funding for fiscal year 2025.
3. Focus generally on the blocks between Route 66 and Birch Avenue.
4. Encourage private property owners and businesses adjacent to alleys to improve and activate them by adding landscaping, outdoor dining, and public art/murals.
5. Generally, east-west alleys should be designated flexible use alleys, allowing for deliveries and services. Co-locate shared downtown trash dumpsters and compactors and work with a single trash operator on a downtown alley pick up schedule.
6. North-south alleys may have potential to be converted completely to improved pedestrian pathways.



A highly enhanced alley with pedestrian lighting and planter in Ft. Collins, CO



Alley outdoor seating and planters in Pasadena, CA



Aspen Alley should be the first alley to receive permanent improvements

E - STREETSAPES, GATEWAYS, CONNECTIVITY, & WAYFINDING

Enhance the downtown experience by implementing gateway features and wayfinding signage to create a sense of arrival in downtown and provide direction for visitors. Wayfinding signage should also include directional signage for bicyclists and pedestrians using the FUTS regional trail network.

Work to enhance streetscapes downtown by replacing sidewalks, adding pedestrian-scale lighting (fully shielded Amber) in high use areas, and increasing the urban tree canopy. The city should continue to study the best solution for tree species and growth in an urban condition and create best practices streetscape standards for downtown.



Improved crosswalks, wayfinding signage, and plantings enhance the downtown experience. Denver, CO



Gateway features and wayfinding signage can also be a forms of public art. Denver, CO



Enhance sidewalks and replace broken tree grates for a consistent streetscape. Boulder, CO



Additional planters and hanging flowers should be implemented throughout downtown. Lakewood, CO





ECONOMIC VITALITY

GOAL

Downtown is one of the key engines of the Flagstaff economy. It is the historic center of the city's tourism and retail activity, offering an array of dining, shopping, and arts and cultural attractions. Located mid-way between Northern Arizona University and the Flagstaff Medical Center, downtown has roughly 5,000 employees and is positioned to grow primary jobs that help diversify the regional economy. Additionally, with approximately 1,000 residents, there is opportunity for downtown to grow its residential base and play an important role in offering new and varied housing types in a market that is experiencing very high demand. This plan aims to:

- A. **Guide downtown's economic future**
- B. **Bring more jobs into downtown**
- C. **Cultivate local arts and culture as foundational to downtown**
- D. **Bolster downtown's storefront economy**
- E. **Create a larger, and more diverse, residential base in downtown**

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Flagstaff has the natural beauty, amenities, and lifestyle appeal that is expected to keep it in high demand. In a town of this size, with some development constraints that are out of its control, downtown can play an impactful role in how the community deals with these pressures and high demand. Downtown needs to provide a wider mix of diverse housing types at scales other parts of the community are not equipped to. While critical, growth is not just needed in the residential realm. **Downtown should be the economic engine for the Flagstaff region. The most vital downtowns in the country, large and small, are employment, cultural, and entertainment centers for their communities.** Downtown Flagstaff's entertainment, dining and shopping scene is its current strength, but this sector will need dedicated support as we recover from an unprecedented pandemic crisis that continues to erode the retail sector. There is room for improvement when it comes to both employment options and cultural offerings, in order to become a more complete downtown for residents and visitors alike.

STRATEGIES & ACTION ITEMS

Timeline: Ongoing, Near: 0-18 months; Mid: 18 months - 5 years; Long: 5+ years

GOAL A: Guide downtown's economic future

Before taking on more ambitious goals, this plan first and foremost aims to guide downtown's continued evolution following the disruption and change of the last three years.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|--|----------|---|
| 1 | Maintain a user-friendly, up-to-date online inventory that offers information on downtown's open businesses to help inform and attract visitors. Work with partners, like Discover Flagstaff, the City's Economic Vitality team, and the County's Economic Development team to help promote information to visitors and residents. | Near | FDBA |
| 2 | Fill vacant and/or closed storefronts with temporary exhibits, art installations, and pop-ups. | Near | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality, Beautification, Arts & Sciences) |
| 3 | Track data on downtown activity – monitoring pedestrian counts, automobile counts, and parking utilization – to understand how people are utilizing downtown. | Near | FDBA, ParkFlag |
| 4 | Take care of the public realm in downtown to help support downtown businesses – through enhanced cleaning standards, added seating and pedestrian spaces, and beautification efforts (such as banners, flowers, greenery, and temporary lighting). | Near | FDBA, City (Public Works), PROSE |
| 5 | Help funnel any economic recovery grant funds that are made available to downtown businesses in need. | Near | FDBA |
| 6 | Maintain an up-to-date inventory of vacant real estate in downtown that can quickly serve as a resource for prospective tenants. | Near | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality) |
| 7 | Educate property and business owners on the development review and permitting process. | Near | City (Planning & Development Services) |

GOAL B: Bring more jobs into downtown

As the Market Assessment pointed out, downtown has fewer than 5,000 employees, which is below-average compared to its peer cities throughout the country. Furthermore, many of downtown's jobs are in government and the hospitality sector. Attracting and cultivating more quality full-time, private-sector jobs is a key opportunity area for Downtown Flagstaff. Downtown should be viewed as one of the city's employment hubs, not just as a visitor attraction and entertainment destination.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Work with major regional employers to identify new opportunities for establishing a presence in downtown. | Mid | FDBA, ECoNA, City (Economic Vitality), County |
| 2 | Encourage better economic linkages between NAU and downtown. Identify appropriate NAU programming/innovations that can be located in downtown, occupy office space, and help spur new jobs. | Mid | FDBA, NAU |
| 3 | Create a comprehensive business retention and attraction strategy for downtown that aligns with citywide/regional economic development strategies of the City and Chamber. Identify target sectors that downtown can play a central role in helping attract to the region. | Near | FDBA, ECoNA, City (Economic Vitality), Chamber |
| 4 | Grow downtown's small-scale manufacturing and maker economy. | Mid | FDBA |
| 5 | Encourage mixed-use – in new and existing buildings – with adaptable ground floor spaces that can accommodate a range of tenant types. Identify appropriate locations for ground floor office or small-scale manufacturing use (i.e., non-retail). This will require modifications to the zoning and land uses and may require building code changes. | Near | City (Community Development), FDBA |
| 6 | Encourage new flexible and non-traditional office formats, such as coworking, incubators, accelerators, and makerspaces. (Of note, Flagstaff already has an accelerator and incubator with lab and maker space – but like many other things – it is located north of downtown.) This may require updates to zoning and land uses. | Mid | FDBA |
| 7 | Develop a strategy for publicly-owned property to serve downtown economic development goals and add new workspace capacity. | Near | City (Economic Vitality), County, FDBA |
| 8 | Maintain an inventory of all available office space throughout downtown. Use the inventory to better market existing downtown spaces and to identify and fill gaps in the office space environment/continuum. | Near | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality) |

GOAL C: Cultivate local arts and culture as foundational to downtown

Downtown has an opportunity to build upon Flagstaff's unique heritage and history, and its strength as a tourism magnet. While the Grand Canyon will always be the market's keystone, there are several art and cultural anchors located within close proximity to downtown. This plan aims to strengthen those connections, while also helping downtown make more of a name for itself as an arts and cultural destination in the area. A large part of this is creating the right places for the artists and cultural professionals, themselves.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|----|--|----------|--|
| 1 | Continue to incorporate art wherever possible throughout downtown, including permanent and temporary installations. | Near | FDBA, City (Beautification, Arts & Sciences) |
| 2 | Allow and encourage street performers/buskers to activate and enliven the public realm. This may require modifications to zoning code and licensing. | Near | FDBA |
| 3 | Retain and expand arts, cultural, and entertainment venues in downtown. | Mid | FDBA, FAC, City (Economic Vitality) |
| 4 | Bring more of Flagstaff's major annual and one-time events to downtown. | Mid | FDBA, City (Parks & Recreation) |
| 5 | Curate and promote events and programming that showcase Northern Arizona's Native American heritage and have multi-cultural appeal. | Mid | FDBA, FAC |
| 6 | Maximize the potential of downtown's main public space for events, Heritage Square. | Mid | FDBA, City (Parks & Recreation) |
| 7 | Identify other public spaces – including streets and alleyways – that can help downtown host a wider range of events, large and small. | Near | FDBA |
| 8 | Create buildings and spaces that are affordable to artists and creative professionals. | Mid | FDBA |
| 9 | Offer vacant storefronts in the short-term, at low/no costs to local artists as studio and gallery space (model in Boulder, see next page). | Near | FDBA |
| 10 | Build physical and programmatic connectivity to Mars Hill and the Lowell Observatory and explore opportunities to build on the area's unique science and astronomy niche. | Mid | FDBA, Lowell, City (Economic Vitality) |
| 11 | Work with Creative Flagstaff to identify a new location for an expanded Coconino Center for the Arts in downtown, and growth of additional arts-related events and activities. | Mid | FDBA, FAC |

GOAL D: Bolster downtown's storefront economy

While the storefront economy has long been downtown's strength, there remains some area for improvement – there are several (some longstanding) vacancies in prime locations downtown, and stakeholders have also pointed out that too much of the storefront economy is directed to tourists and not enough towards locals.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Be intentional and focused to promote downtown as the region's hub for locally-owned (and/or managed) and community-serving small businesses. Consider the following: a. Provide a gentle density bonus in return for the community benefit of providing small, divisible, and affordable retail spaces. | Near | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality) |
| 2 | Encourage (and recruit as needed) businesses that diversify downtown's storefront mix and fill important gaps. | Mid | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality) |
| 3 | Target businesses that offer everyday goods and services to make downtown a more complete residential neighborhood. | Mid | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality) |
| 4 | Celebrate the region's diversity, and build a storefront mix that is culturally- and age-diverse. | Near | FDBA |
| 5 | Consider sub-dividing or shared spaces for underutilized large street level spaces. | Near | FDBA |
| 6 | Ensure downtown's parking supply increases and management is friendly to storefront businesses making it more convenient for people to patronize downtown. | Near | FDBA, ParkFlag |
| 7 | Maintain up-to-date information on downtown properties and businesses to understand gaps, identify businesses that are at risk, offer timely assistance, and help market available spaces for rent or sale. | Near | FDBA, City (Economic Vitality) |



CASE STUDY: The Downtown Boulder Partnership has partnered with a local arts non-profit to temporarily activate empty downtown storefronts. The spaces were primarily used as shared gallery space for local artists, but also as spaces where artists could work and host classes. The Partnership negotiated with property owners to get the spaces for low/no rent, acted as a master lessor, and helped promote the new, temporary use. The program has been considered a win-win-win for the property owners, the local arts community, and downtown as a whole.

GOAL E: Create a larger, and more diverse, residential base in downtown

Perhaps the largest area for impact, given the housing shortage and affordability crisis currently challenging the Flagstaff community, downtown can play a key role in offering new and varied housing options.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|--|----------|--|
| 1 | Encourage development of infill housing to achieve a mix of housing types at a range of price points, including higher density residential buildings and upper story residential uses. | Near | City (Community Development) |
| 2 | Amend zoning code to allow and encourage a diversity of housing types including apartments/condominiums, townhouses, du/tri/quadplexes, and ADUs. | Near | City (Planning & Development Services) |
| 3 | Encourage additional density by adjusting the allowable density and/or FAR in downtown zone districts or through increasing the density bonus percentages for downtown. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services) |
| 4 | Develop a strategy for publicly-owned property to serve downtown economic development goals and add new housing capacity. Require an affordable component in any residential developments on disposed public property. | Near | City (Economic Vitality), County |
| 5 | Support the development of live-work spaces that help increase both downtown's residential and employment base. | Mid | City (Economic Vitality) |
| 6 | Invest in amenities and land uses that increase the desirability of downtown as a neighborhood to live in. | Mid | City (Economic Vitality) |



The images on this page illustrate examples of a variety of mixed use and housing types from other communities



Examples of a variety of mixed use and housing types from other communities



DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE & URBAN DESIGN

GOAL

Experience is in the eye of the beholder, and Downtown Flagstaff has many audiences to appeal to: college students, tourists, downtown employees, retirees, and all other city residents. Downtown is known for its historic architecture and charm, but hip new restaurants and brewpubs have added to the vibrancy of downtown and tend to draw in a younger population. Most people come into downtown from somewhere else – nearby or outlying neighborhoods, the university, or other communities altogether. With new investment in transit, parking facilities and multimodal infrastructure, and a focus to provide more housing options downtown, it can prosper even more by creating a lively environment that is easily accessed by traditional visitors, but also serves downtown residents too! The next generation of the Downtown Flagstaff Experience seeks to:

- A. **Preserve the historic character and charm of downtown.**
- B. **Direct new growth responsibly and in a way that adds to the vibrancy of downtown.**
- C. **Activate downtown in creative ways that attract locals as well as visitors.**
- D. **Enhance the downtown experience by implementing gateway features, streetscape enhancements, signage and wayfinding, and public art to create a sense of arrival and direction.**
- E. **Embrace sustainability as a core value in how downtown is managed, improved, and developed.**

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Historic downtowns like Flagstaff demand vision, innovation, and flexibility. We must protect what people love while allowing it to evolve to serve everchanging times. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us a lot about the necessity to shift when met with unforeseen challenges. Perhaps just as challenging is figuring out how downtown Flagstaff can thrive and grow in a sustainable way – remaining a place that is equitable and affordable to all. This requires flexibility, trying new things and swiftly removing barriers that prevent necessary innovation. It also requires partnerships and open minds – city departments and developers working collaboratively, with a process that works for everyone, toward a common goal (see above). Downtown Flagstaff is doing a lot of things right. The following strategies seek to bolster its success – to create a more vibrant, 24/7/365 environment - while balancing associated risks such as increased costs, affordability, and gentrification.

STRATEGIES & ACTION ITEMS

Timeline: Ongoing, Near: 0-18 months; Mid: 18 months - 5 years; Long: 5+ years

GOAL A: Preserve the historic character and charm of downtown

Preserving the historic character of Downtown Flagstaff is the highest priority of the community members that participated in the outreach. The historic charm is what residents and visitors identify as downtown.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|------------------|---|
| 1 | Create an educational brochure to educate property owners about existing benefits of restoring their properties such as Historic Facades and Signs Grant Program and state and federal tax incentives. Request funding in city budget for Historic Preservation Officer to create. | Near/mid/ongoing | City (Beautification, Arts & Sciences, Heritage Preservation) |
| 2 | Utilize and educate property owners and contractors on the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) methods and standards within Flagstaff Historic Districts and Overlays to incentivize adaptive reuse of existing buildings whenever feasible. | Mid | City (Community Development, Heritage Preservation) |
| 3 | Provide incentives in zoning code for small-parcel redevelopment, such as parking measures tailored to lots below a certain size, to help replicate historic development patterns. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services) |
| 4 | Update zoning south of the railroad to be consistent with recommendations in the Southside Community Plan. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services) |
| 5 | Update the Design Handbook for downtown to be more up-to-date and user-friendly. Work with the Historic Preservation Officer, Heritage Commission and Planning and Development Services to prioritize this action. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services + Heritage Preservation), FDDBA |
| 6 | Ensure that all public improvements and private redevelopments take into consideration Flagstaff's International Dark Sky City status and adhere to current code standards. Prioritize modifying non-conforming lighting in the Downtown to meet current standards. Work with the City, Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition, Lowell Observatory, and other applicable sources for input concerning the best dark sky lighting technologies and practices, and to seek out grants and other funding mechanisms. | Mid | FDDBA, City (Engineering, Planning & Development Services) |

GOAL B: Promote and direct new development responsibly and in a way that adds to the vibrancy and historic character of downtown

Flagstaff will continue to grow therefore it should grow responsibly with compact mixed-use development where more people can live, work, support local businesses, and have walkable/rollable, bikeable, and sustainable lifestyle options.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|-----------------|
| 1 | Encourage infill development of underutilized (non-historic buildings past their useful life and/or buildings that are not contributing to downtown needs) and vacant properties. | Near | FDDBA |
| 2 | Ensure that new development that occurs on City and County owned land benefits the community. Examples of community benefits include, but are not limited to: publicly accessible open space, public bicycle and vehicle parking, affordable housing, affordable retail space, a grocery store, and public programming (recreation, senior services, performing arts, etc.). While already underway, the DCC should lead by example here, incorporating numerous community benefits such as the examples above. | Near | City and County |
| 3 | Establish "public utility" parking facilities at strategic locations in downtown that may be used by private development to achieve desired urban forms and uses. Refer to parking recommendations for more detail. | Near | ParkFlag |

Historic office building with 2 stories of new residential development above in San Diego, CA



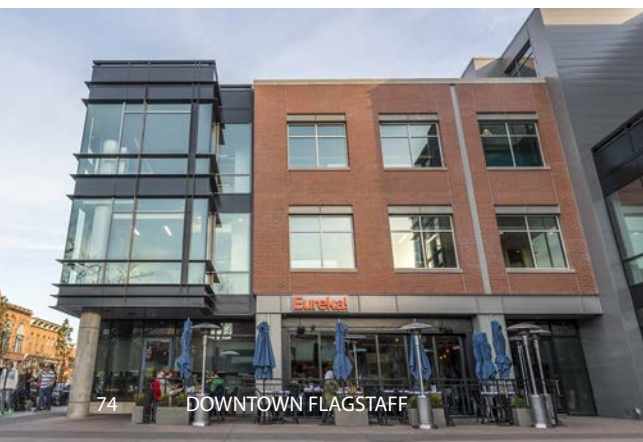
Parking structure with ground floor retail and roof top solar panels in Lakewood, CO



| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|--|
| 4 | Update the Downtown Design Handbook and zoning code's Architectural and Landscaping Standards to provide guidelines and standards for new development in downtown. Guidelines and standards should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Avoid monolithic structures by including guidelines that consider the historic lot and building patterns. b. Encourage variation in building mass and heights, including requiring taller buildings to step down in scale to historic buildings. c. Ensure high quality design on all sides of a building. d. Activate the ground floor of buildings with high-quality pedestrian-scaled design and active uses such as retail/restaurant uses when feasible. e. When residential uses are allowed on the ground floor, encourage greater setbacks to provide space for additional landscaping buffers and front stoops/porches/balconies to engage with the street. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services) |
| 5 | Continue to work with property owners and the DBA on solutions to achieve goals of increasing density and housing options downtown while respecting the historic scale of existing buildings and context. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services) |



Examples of mixed use development in Boulder, CO



Enhanced alley in Longmont, CO (see Goal C, next page)



GOAL C: Activate downtown in creative ways that attract locals as well as visitors

Downtown has many events and attractions that should be expanded. The recent temporary lane closure of Aspen Avenue is one example of a highly successful method in attracting locals and visitors to downtown. Existing public spaces and streets should be activated with a variety of programming elements so they can be enjoyed by all.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|--|----------|--|
| 1 | Create a Downtown Alley Activation Master Plan and Program. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to implement alley activation improvements like in Aspen Alley with expanded flower program, planters, and utility art wraps. b. Continue to apply for grants to assist with alley activation projects c. Focus generally on the blocks between Route 66 and Birch Avenue. d. Encourage private property owners and businesses adjacent to alleys to improve and activate them by adding landscaping, outdoor dining, and public art/murals. e. Generally, east-west alleys should be designated flexible use alleys, allowing for deliveries and services. Co-locate shared downtown trash dumpsters and compactors and work with a single trash operator on a downtown alley pick up schedule. f. North-south alleys may have potential to be converted completely to improved pedestrian pathways. | Near | City (Public Works, Beautification, Arts & Sciences), FDDBA |
| 2 | Add short-term, lightweight activation strategies such as: moveable seating, planters, telescopes for nighttime viewing, and games to play (ping pong, giant chess board, or board game rental kiosk). Encourage active uses in buildings that front onto Heritage Square such as restaurants and retail. | Near | City (Public Works, Parks, Beautification, Arts & Sciences, Discover Flagstaff,) FDDBA |
| 3 | Create a parklet program that allows businesses to apply for temporary conversion of parking spaces for outdoor dining or other use to aid in business expansion and activation of downtown streets. Refer to Curb Space Management for more detail. | Near | City (Planning & Development Services), FDDBA |
| 4 | Complete, either for temporary or long-term use, the Expanded Use of Right of Way (EUROW) concept for a shared street along Cottage at the intersection of San Francisco between the brewery and Tourist Home, and activation of the east-west alley between Cottage and Benton from Leroux to W.C. Riles Dr. | Near | City (Engineering, Public Works, Beautification, Arts & Sciences), FDDBA |

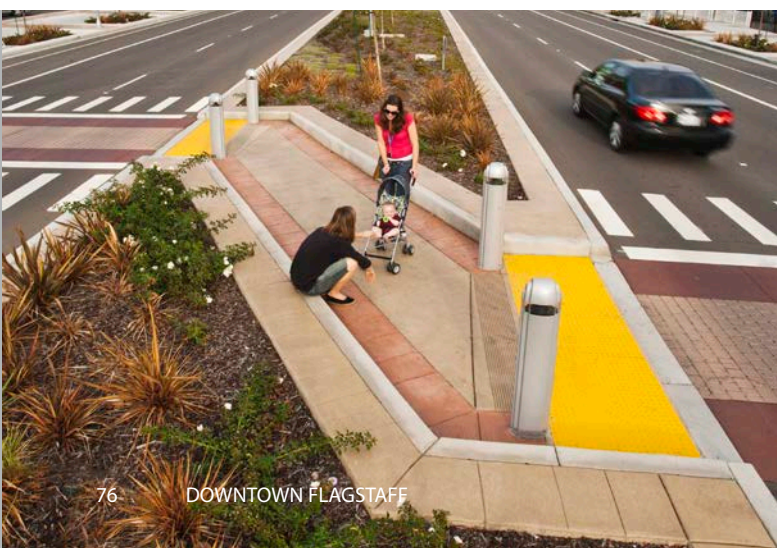
| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Leroux Street design from Aspen Avenue to Route 66 with a pedestrian-activated signal and crosswalk to the Visitor's Center/Amtrak Station. Preliminary design concept in this plan envisions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A shared, curb-less festival street concept on Leroux from Aspen to Route 66 that could accommodate two-way auto travel and parking on one side of the street that could easily be closed to automobiles during special events. A pedestrian-activated crossing on Route 66 to the Visitor's Center. A multi-level plaza with ramp(s) down to the grade level of the Visitor's Center/Amtrak Station/FUTS connection which can be accommodated by slight shifts in lanes on Route 66 to provide more space. Ensure that Beaver and San Francisco Streets remain open for north/south bound traffic while Leroux Street is closed during events. | Near (planning and concept design) Mid (pilot - tactical urbanism project) Long – final design and construction | City (Engineering, Public Works, Beautification, Arts & Sciences), FDDB, ADOT |
| 6 | Consider adding a seasonal "pop up" pavilion and picnic tables to Wheeler Park or a downtown parking lot for a beer garden. | Near | City (Public Works), FDDB |
| 7 | Assess the structural capacity of Heritage Square and the underground parking structure and develop a long-term plan for the square that better suits the needs of downtown in the next 20-30 years. Consider the following: play area for children, flexible seating options, better visibility from Aspen Avenue, seamless connection from mid-block crossing at Aspen Alley, ability to add temporary activation uses such as buskers and carts to sell food and goods, and other uses as determined by the community. | Mid (planning and concept design) Long (final design and construction) | City (Public Works, Parks, Beautification, Arts & Sciences), FDDB |

GOAL D: Enhance the downtown experience by implementing gateway features, streetscape enhancements, signage and wayfinding, and public art to create a sense of arrival and direction

Public investment in the form of streetscape, gateways, wayfinding, and public art improvements are necessary to spur private investment. The public improvements are intended to create a more people friendly downtown environment as most people experience downtown on foot to get to their destination, no matter what mode is used to arrive downtown.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Continue to enhance public art downtown. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize public art to create a sense of arrival at key gateway points, like the new bridge that will be part of the Downtown Mile project. Implement custom artistic wraps for electric boxes at signalized intersections. Refer to the Placemaking Catalysts diagram for locations. Adopt practices and processes that create public art that is reflective of the Flagstaff community and culture, and affords opportunities to local artists. | Near | City (Beautification, Arts & Sciences), FDDB |
| 2 | Create a wayfinding master plan for downtown that identifies locations and messaging and enhances the Downtown Flagstaff brand. Refer to the Placemaking Catalysts diagram for preliminary locations. | Mid | FDDB |
| 3 | Work with ADOT to create landscaped medians and other vertical features at critical gateway locations to reduce vehicle speeds, improve traffic safety, beautify the corridor, and provide places for future signage and public art. | Mid | City (Public Works), ADOT |
| 4 | Work to enhance streetscapes by replacing sidewalks, repairing tree grates, and adding (and replace existing) pedestrian scale lighting that is dark sky compliant in key areas. | Mid | City (Public Works) |

Safe pedestrian crossing in Sacramento, CA



Kid-friendly "pop-up" plaza in Denver, CO



Artistic wayfinding signage in Denver, CO



Enhanced streetscape and public art in Ft. Collins, CO



GOAL E: Embrace sustainability as a core value in how downtown is managed, improved, and developed

The Carbon Neutrality Plan encourages adaptive re-use of older existing buildings which is typically the most sustainable approach to accommodating changing purposes and functions of downtown buildings. A mixed-use environment also contributes to a sustainable downtown with more people walking, cycling, and using transit.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|--|----------|--|
| 1 | Establish goals specific to downtown and with specific timelines that seek to achieve a more sustainable environment. Start by pulling direct policies from the Carbon Neutrality Plan that relate to downtown and add into it more specific policies, as needed, to achieve goals in: energy, water, transportation and land use. | Near | City (Sustainability Program), City Council |
| 2 | Create sustainability or "green" site and building standards for new development to raise the bar in addressing the city's Carbon Neutrality Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. This could be done citywide via the zoning code, such as through an amendment to Chapter 10.30, perhaps with a pilot program for downtown, or a sustainability chapter in the updated Downtown Design Handbook to provide standards and guidelines for new developments in downtown to follow to raise the bar. Consider revisions to the building code for any building-specific standards. | Mid | City (Planning & Development Services, Sustainability Program) |



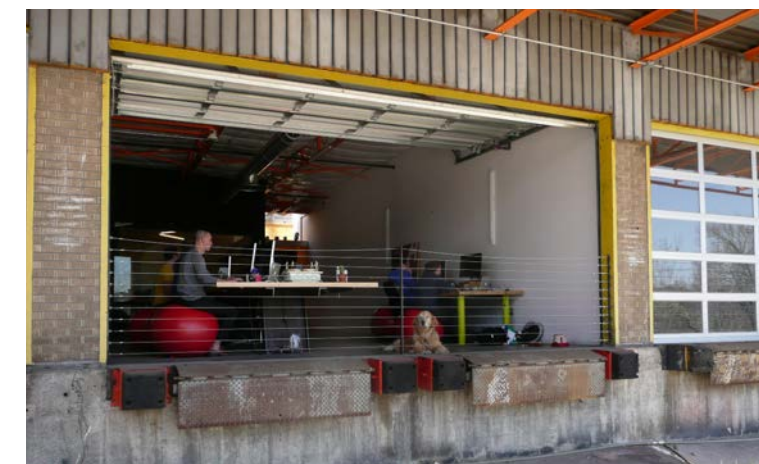
Successful examples of adaptive re-use of existing buildings in Flagstaff (above and below left)

Successful examples of adaptive re-use of existing buildings in Denver, CO (below)

Reuse of historic building in Flagstaff



Community garden in Denver, CO





MOBILITY

GOAL

Transportation – personal mobility, circulation and access plus freight service and delivery – is a means to achievement of the community’s goals, not a goal in itself. Strategic investments in and management of transportation assets and services will be essential to achievement of a downtown that is vibrant, walkable, historic and adaptable, prosperous, welcoming and inclusive, and that is accessible to all.

As the heart of the community, downtown is also the place to push early and hard for progress on the community’s broader objectives, including climate action, adaptation and resilience through reduced carbon emissions. Downtown is the place in Flagstaff where a balanced, multimodal approach to transportation is most feasible and where reductions in motor vehicle dependency can start and spread to the rest of the city. The primary mobility goals for Downtown Flagstaff include:

- A. **Enhance downtown to be more walkable**
- B. **Improve parking management and supply**
- C. **Improve public transit access and ridership**
- D. **Improve bicycle access and circulation**
- E. **Manage curb space allocation and use**

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT

Multimodal Balance. Downtown should play a central role in achieving the City’s vision for a better multimodal balance through a shift away from reliance on single-occupant vehicles. If the percentage of daily trips made by transit, walking and bicycling are to increase significantly in Flagstaff, downtown must serve as the leading edge of that effort. Downtown should be the most walkable, bike-able and transit-oriented place in the city. Having said that, approximately 90% of visitors arrive downtown via automobile, and to grow the residential and office base, increased parking supply is critical. Parking should be viewed as an economic development tool, intertwined with investments of various types downtown. In sum, downtown streets should be safe and convenient for all modes of travel.

Managing Change. Like all US cities, Flagstaff has entered an era characterized by rapid and fundamental changes in personal mobility. Even before the pandemic, the growing popularity of micro-mobility (e-bikes, skates, one-wheels, long boards, etc.), and the introduction of for-hire services (Uber and Lyft) were changing how we manage curb space along streets and increasing the urgency of making streets safe for low speed travel modes. The pandemic has magnified these trends and presented us with the opportunity – and the need – to manage change by reimagining how we should support downtown economic viability and vitality in this new environment through strategic mobility, circulation and access measures.

Pedestrian Environment. One of Downtown Flagstaff's greatest assets is its existing pedestrian-friendly environment. The small-block grid, narrow streets and intimate, human scale encourage walking in all its forms: from leisurely strolling to purposeful striding. In most cases, the sidewalks are adequate and street crossings are reasonably safe. But, the inherited legacy of a walkable downtown will not be enough to keep pace with economic realities, challenges and opportunities. Flagstaff should continue to enhance its downtown as a pedestrian place: a "pedestrian first" environment where walking is comfortable, fun and safe; where universal accessibility for all is assured; and, where the presence of people is a defining feature of the landscape. To help achieve a "pedestrian first" environment, Flagstaff needs to identify a schedule to replace the uneven brick and heaving tree wells on sidewalks with materials that withstand weather and require less maintenance.

Parking. Motor vehicle parking in downtown is governed by Division 10-50.80 of the Zoning Code, by the Comprehensive Parking Management Program (CPMP) adopted by City Council in November, 2015, and by the City's related Administrative Guidelines, adopted in June, 2017. The City is partway through Phase 2 of implementing the CPMP. Going forward, it will be important to: refine the ParkFlag management systems and contractual relationships; gradually increase the supply of off-street surface parking; and, begin setting the stage for public-private partnership projects that reinvigorate the market for downtown redevelopment and begin transitioning off-street parking supply into structured parking.

Transit. Downtowns need public transit and public transit needs downtowns. This symbiotic relationship is especially important in Downtown Flagstaff, which benefits from a more robust fixed route transit system than most cities its size. Mountain Line, operated by NAIPTA, connect downtown directly with the NAU campus, the Flagstaff Medical Center and the rest of the city. The Mountain Link project, now Route 10, has demonstrated the potential benefits that can accrue from high levels of convenient transit service. Further improvements in service levels, coupled with development of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Spine corridor and the Downtown Connection Center site hold promise for a more resilient, more accessible, less car-dependent downtown.

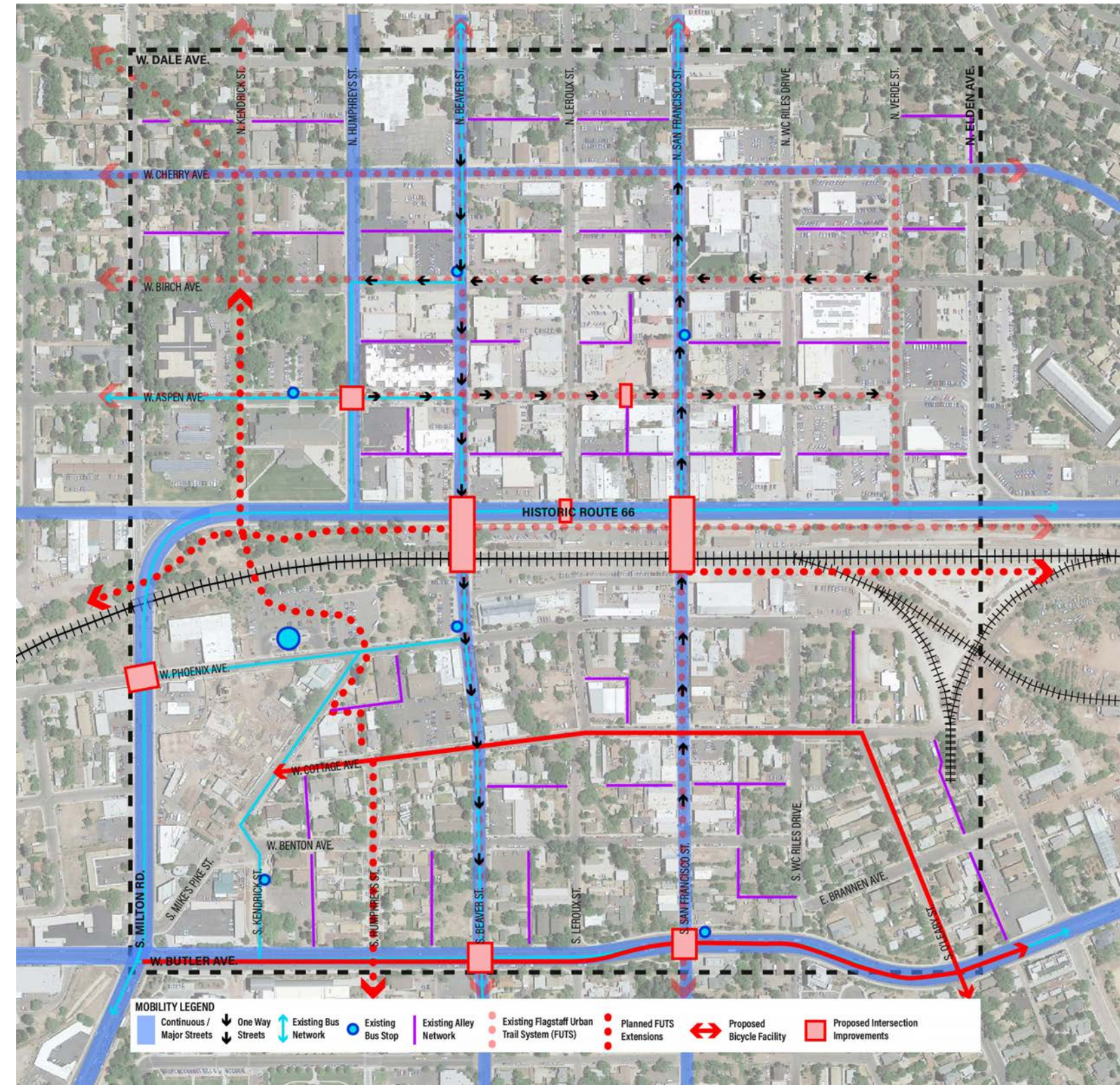
Bicycling. Flagstaff has been a bicycling city for decades. Bicycle access and circulation to and within downtown should be a priority strategy for strengthening and enhancing downtown as a destination. Nationally, bicycling is booming, as the pandemic has encouraged rediscovery of the bicycle as a convenient mode of travel and a practical way to improve personal and public health. This surge in popularity has brought a renaissance in bicycle facility design that is changing urban public space landscapes. In addition, a bike share program should be established. This represents a key opportunity for Downtown Flagstaff to increase economic vibrancy. Improving safety and convenience of bicycling in downtown also offers significant collateral benefits in opening up the downtown to micro-mobility users.

Curbspace Management. The curbs along downtown streets are where "movement meets access" and also where essential commercial area functions occur: vehicle parking and loading, outdoor dining, transit boarding and alighting, freight and parcel deliveries and pickup, take out dining pickup, ride hailing boarding and alighting, and trash collection. Curbspace is one of downtown's most valuable assets and should be managed to optimize use of this valuable and flexible public resource.

Traffic Safety. Safety for all travelers is an overarching objective for downtown transportation programs and projects. The key strategy underlying modern traffic safety programs is ensuring that when crashes occur, impact energies remain low enough to prevent serious injuries or death. This recognizes that drivers and other road users will continue to be fallible and some crashes will occur. Improvements in vehicle design – including semi-autonomous features like automatic braking systems, crash avoidance and lane keeping – will play a role in improving safety, as will continued improvements in emergency management systems and medical procedures. But, the most important strategy for reducing the likelihood of serious injury or death in downtown is to work with state and local partners to apply modern street design and operation principles. This includes managing traffic speeds through street design, physically separating travel modes where possible, and enforcing traffic laws.

MOBILITY FRAMEWORK MAP

The map below illustrates existing conditions for the transit system, urban trail systems (FUTS), and street network. In addition, it illustrates recommendations for future FUTS and on street bicycle improvements as well as priority intersections for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Specific details are provided in the strategies and actions on the following pages.



STRATEGIES & ACTION ITEMS

Timeline: Ongoing, Near: 0-18 months; Mid: 18 months - 5 years; Long: 5+ years

GOAL A: Create and enhance downtown to be more walkable

Flagstaff should continue to enhance its downtown as a pedestrian place: a “pedestrian first” environment where walking is comfortable, fun and safe; where universal accessibility for all is assured; and, where the presence of people is a defining feature of the landscape.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Work with state and local partners to prioritize continued improvements in the downtown pedestrian environment over traffic flow, speed and volume. a. Identify a schedule to replace the uneven brick and heaving tree wells on sidewalks with materials that withstand weather and require less maintenance. | Near/ongoing | All Partners |
| 2 | Monitor crash report data to identify locations in downtown where the design and condition of streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure should be addressed to improve safety. | Near | City (Engineering) |
| 3 | Undertake a planning and concept design process for N. Leroux Street between Route 66 and Aspen Avenue (see Downtown Experience C.5.). | Near (planning and concept design) Mid (final design and construction) | City (Engineering, Beautification, Arts & Sciences), ADOT, FDDBA |
| 4 | Working with Arizona DOT, undertake a planning and concept design process for safer, more convenient, pedestrian crossings of Route 66 in the downtown area (between N. Humphreys and W.C. Riles Dr.). Consider: a. Improving safety and convenience for pedestrians at the intersections with San Francisco and Beaver Streets. b. Providing a walk/bike pathway undercrossing of Route 66 as part of the Rio de Flag project. c. Rebuilding the intersection at North Leroux Street to provide a traffic signal, curb extensions and pavement finishes based on the features of a redesigned, reconstructed Leroux Street (see 3 above), along with a new median barrier to prevent left turns to or from Leroux at Route 66. d. Implementing a lane shift on Route 66 between Beaver and San Francisco. | Near (planning and concept design) Mid (final design and construction) | City (Engineering), ADOT |
| 5 | Conduct a self-assessment of accessibility (ADA and Universal Access) in downtown. Identify barriers that prevent persons with disabilities and others from access to facilities, programs, services, and activities. | Near | City (Public Works) |

GOAL B: Improve parking management and supply

Going forward, it will be important to: refine the ParkFlag management systems and contractual relationships; gradually increase the supply of off-street surface parking; and, begin setting the stage for public-private partnership projects that reinvigorate the market for downtown redevelopment and begin transitioning off-street parking supply into structured parking, relying in part on a Fee-In-Lieu program as authorized by Division 10-50.80.070.B of the Zoning Code. Parking should be viewed as an economic development tool moving forward.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|--------------|----------------|
| 1 | Continue working within the framework established by the Comprehensive Parking Management Plan: demand reduction, parking permits, pay-to-park, time limits, compliance and enforcement, asset management and financial management. Proceed with implementation of Phase 2 and set the stage for Phase 3 – specifically planning for increases in off-street parking supply. | Near/ongoing | City, ParkFlag |
| 2 | Improve performance monitoring and reporting. Monitor changes in supply, demand and turnover using the 2009 Central Business District Parking Study as the baseline. Increase transparency in downtown parking system performance and improve public access to information about system performance to build credibility and stakeholder awareness of parking management system operations and conditions. Regular (3 times per year – July, December and March) monitoring and reporting should include: parking utilization, net revenue status of the parking fees “lock box set-aside,” and other relevant management objectives. In monitoring utilization, conduct three seasonal counts each year: July tourist season, December shopping season and March off-season, counting on a consecutive Thursday, Friday and Saturday, hourly from 9am through 8pm. Each seasonal count should include: updated parking space inventory; hourly utilization (% full) for each block face and each off-street parking facility; and duration/turnover for a subset sample of on-street spaces along key block faces. | Near | City, ParkFlag |
| 3 | Conduct annual reviews of the ParkFlag pay-to-park system, including the kiosks, the supporting communication systems, the mobile app and any third party services. In future contracting set and use contractor performance standards to ensure responsiveness and functionality. Be prepared to change partners when warranted. | Ongoing | City, ParkFlag |
| 4 | Actively seek out and secure ownership and/or use of existing off-street surface parking supply or land that could be developed as surface parking supply as an interim strategy to increase long-term parking space availability and to reduce commuter use of on-street parking spaces. Such surface parking sites should be understood and managed as temporary land uses. Such sites should be regarded as fungible in the sense that they could in the future be used as development sites or might be traded as part of transactions that would increase overall downtown parking supply. | Near | City, ParkFlag |

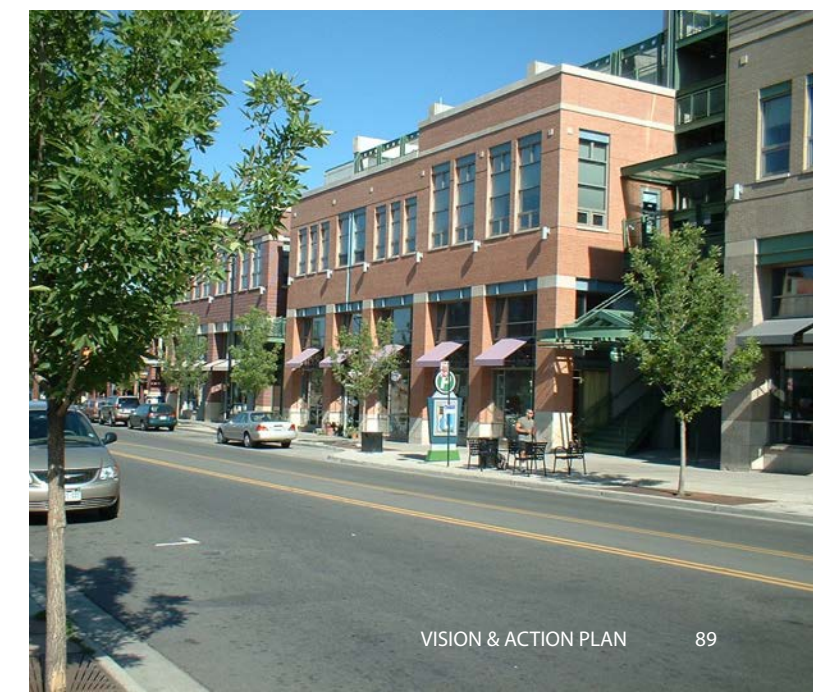
| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------|
| 5 | Establish two business models for achieving future increases in publicly-owned, publicly-controlled parking supply. The "Public Utility" business model should serve as the base model. The "PPP" business model (public-private partnership) should be available as an alternative, should a "Qualifying PPP Opportunity" be presented (see vii. and viii, below). | Mid | City, ParkFlag, Private Sector |
| 6 | To be considered, both Public Utility and PPP parking facility projects should be guided by downtown parking facility investment objectives. These should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To meet a parking supply need (shortage) documented through the City's performance management system (see 2, above). b. To provide long-term (> 2 hours) off-street parking for use by employees, business and property owners and managers, and downtown residents. c. To protect the City from general financial liability for debt service costs of parking facilities that fail to perform as planned. d. To maintain a fair and level playing field for competing private sector investors. | Mid | City, ParkFlag |
| 7 | Minimum requirements and guiding principles of a Public Utility facility should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The downtown land area within a 600' radius (straight line) around the potential facility site location is under-served by existing off-street parking supply. b. The facility site is large enough to support reasonable efficiencies of scale in construction cost per finished parking space. This should be assumed to require a site that is at least 140' by 140' or a site that could support an equivalent average floor plate of 45 parking spaces, taking into account setbacks and other site design criteria. c. Parking facilities should be wrapped with residential or commercial uses (retail, office, etc.) on external walls that face public streets. The commercial space wrap should meet City urban design requirements and be of sufficient depth to ensure feasibility of market rate business use of that space. Note: this commercial space wrap will increase the minimum site dimensions in b, above. d. Bicycle parking requirements and ADA/accessibility requirements pursuant to Division 10-50.80 of the Zoning Code should be met within (inside) related parking facilities. e. A professional feasibility analysis (cost and revenue forecast) should be prepared that indicates the project would generate sufficient net income (after facility maintenance and operations expenses) to adequately cover debt service requirements. | Mid | City, ParkFlag, Private Sector |

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---------|---|----------|--------------------------------|
| 7 cont. | f. Cash contributions to lower debt service requirements may be included in the feasibility analysis if the commitment to provide such contribution is firm. Eligible sources of cash contributions should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funds held in the ParkFlag "lockbox set-aside." 2. Payments from downtown businesses, developers, land owners and residents to purchase rights to parking spaces in the project structure. 3. Payments from Fee-In-Lieu deposits made by developers and held in trust by the City (see 9, below). 4. Payments from contractually-committed Fee-In-Lieu deposits to be made by developers within the planning – design – construction timeframe. | | |
| | g. The provision of land for use as all or part of a parking facility site should be allowed to be credited against the financial obligations of a PPP partner providing such land. This may include the City, another public entity (such as the County) or a future special district, or a private land owner or developer with future parking needs pursuant to Division 10-50.80 of the Zoning Code. | | |
| | h. Other eligible capital contributions should be eligible to be credited against the financial obligations of a PPP partner, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utility capital investments made to prepare the site for a parking facility. 2. Actual construction of a parking facility, provided that cost amounts credited are subject to audit. 3. Transfer of ownership of condominium space in the commercial wrap space to another PPP partner. 4. Air rights should not be an eligible capital contribution. | | |
| 8 | A Qualifying PPP Opportunity parking facility should be defined as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Meets the City's parking facility investment objectives (see 6, above). b. Meets the requirements and guiding principles established for a Public Utility project (see 7 above). c. Does not include any current and planned single family dwelling ownerships, which should be ineligible to serve as partners in a PPP project. d. Includes only those public and private sector partners that have demonstrated the bona fides and financial capacity to meet their obligations under the PPP agreement. e. Fully satisfies rules adopted by the City establishing the minimum bona fides and financial capacities required for entities to participate in a PPP Opportunity project. | Mid | City, ParkFlag, Private Sector |

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|----|---|----------|--|
| 9 | Ownership models for a Qualifying PPP Opportunity parking facility could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fee simple ownership of the land and improvements by the City. b. A condominium or similar common interest development, where the City and other Partners have defined ownership of certain elements of the facility and shared ownership of certain common elements. c. A parking facility owned by a public or private partner(s) other than the City, with long term leases governing use of public and private parking spaces. | Mid | City, ParkFlag, Private Sector |
| 10 | Detailed provisions should be developed implement and guide the Fee-In-Lieu (FIL) system created by Division 10-50.80.070.B of the Zoning Code. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FIL payments should be an alternative to on-site provision of parking supply required pursuant to the Zoning Code. This alternative could be a choice the City allows a developer to opt in to, or could be imposed by the City as a condition in the development approval process. b. In the early stage of implementation, the City's FIL program may fulfill parking space commitments by providing parking spaces in surface lots leased, acquired or built by the City for this purpose. Over the life of the program, the City may use parking space supply in either surface lots or in vertical parking structures to meet its FIL commitments at its discretion. c. The amount of FIL per parking space to be paid and credited against the zoning code off-street parking space requirements should be the estimated, fully-allocated costs (land + design + construction) of parking spaces in planned or potential new off-street vertical parking structures in Downtown Flagstaff, based on annually updated land values and construction unit costs. The City should publish an annual amount of the official FIL per space cost in January, based on average actual construction unit and land costs from the prior calendar year. That annual FIL amount should then be used for any development approval involving FIL that is filed for approval that year, regardless of the project location or site details. d. FIL amounts should not be discounted to encourage or facilitate desired development projects. e. Revenues from FIL payments should be held in trust by the City for exclusive use in increasing the actual amount of parking in downtown or in increasing the public availability of parking through acquisition or dedication of existing parking supply. f. If the City is able to increase the public availability of parking through acquisition or dedication of existing parking supply, such potentially lower actual per space costs should not contradict or affect the calculation of current FIL amounts to be required of developers choosing to opt into the FIL system. | Near | City (Community Development), ParkFlag |

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---------|---|----------|--|
| 10 cont | 1. The City should be aware that case law on impact fees, which fee-in-lieu payments are generally regarded as being, has led state courts in some instances to force repayment of money paid in by developers if that money has been held and not invested for 7 years or longer. | | |
| 11 | Provisions should be developed to guide Joint Parking and Shared Use Parking agreements that land owners, building owners and developers may enter into to fulfill the off-street parking supply requirements of Division 10-50.80 of the Zoning Code. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Downtown developers, land owners and building owners should be allowed to meet off-street parking supply requirements of Division 10-50.80 in off-site parking facilities within 600' that are jointly owned with others. b. Downtown developers, land owners and building owners should be allowed to meet off-street parking supply requirements of Division 10-50.80 through lease of off-site parking spaces in shared use parking facilities within 600'. c. Shared parking leases that are used to meet parking requirements should be binding commitments that are conditions of the development approval. The developer and subsequent owners should be required to report annually on the status of such leases. | Near | City (Planning & Development Services), ParkFlag |
| 12 | Whenever possible, parking structures should be designed and constructed with flat floors and adequate floor to ceiling heights so they can be converted to office or housing uses in the future. | Long | City, ParkFlag, Private Sector |

Public/private parking structures wrapped with office and apartments in Boulder, CO



GOAL C: Improve Public Transit Access

Further improvements in service levels, coupled with development of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Spine corridor and the Downtown Connection Center site hold promise for a more resilient, more accessible, less car-dependent downtown.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Work with Mountain Line to actively support implementation of the BRT (bus rapid transit) project documented in Mountain Line's Spine Study Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Report, which identified the need for this high capacity transit corridor. | Near | City (Engineering), Mountain Line |
| 2 | Work with Mountain Line to increase the visibility and brand recognition of the Mountain Line corridors through downtown on Beaver and San Francisco Streets. Consider design themes, pavement marking concepts, and improved wayfinding to increase ridership to and from downtown origins and destinations. | Near | City (Engineering), Mountain Line |
| 3 | Work actively with Mountain Line on a plan for improvement and completion of the "Downtown Connection Center" (DCC), located south of US 66 between Milton Road and Beaver Street along East Phoenix Avenue. | Near | City (Community Development), Mountain Line |
| 4 | Work together to improve messaging, marketing, and promotion of transit use in downtown, particularly for employers and employees. | Near | FDBA, City, Mountain Line |
| 5 | Increase the number of downtown employers who buy ecoPASSES for their employees. Consider working with state and local partners to apply for federal grants (such as TIGER, BUILD, and RAISE grants) to boost the ecoPASS penetration in downtown. | Near | City (Engineering), Mountain Line |
| 6 | Work with Arizona DOT and Mountain Line to ensure construction of the Rio de Flag pathway connection from west of City Hall, under Route 66 and the BNSF line, and through the eastern part of the DCC site. | Near -design Mid - implementation | City (Engineering), Mountain Line, ADOT |
| 7 | Work with Arizona DOT and Mountain Line to strengthen the connection between the north side of downtown and the DCC site. Key corridors should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> West Phoenix Avenue from San Francisco Street and South Beaver Street to the DCC – sidewalks and wayfinding. West Cottage Avenue from San Francisco Street and South Beaver Street to the DCC – sidewalks, wayfinding and bike boulevard (see Bicycle Access and Circulation below). The Historic Route 66 and Milton corridors through the curve and under the BNSF rail line – sidewalks and wayfinding. | Near | City (Engineering), Mountain Line, ADOT |

GOAL D: Improve bicycle access and circulation

Bicycle access and circulation to and within downtown should be a priority strategy for strengthening and enhancing downtown as a destination. Improving safety and convenience of bicycling in downtown also offers significant collateral benefits in opening up the downtown to micro-mobility users.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Support continued improvement and upkeep of the Flagstaff Urban Trails Network (FUTS), with particular attention to those routes and corridors that connect the downtown with the rest of the city. | Ongoing | City (FUTS) |
| 2 | Develop a new, major north-south FUTS corridor through the core area of Flagstaff, connecting neighborhoods north of downtown, the downtown, the Downtown Connection Center (DCC) and the NAU campus, in a manner that's consistent with the Downtown Mile Project: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the Karen Cooper Trail south through the City Hall block, under Route 66 and under the BNSF railroad as part of the Rio de Flag project. Connect this trail into the on-site circulation system at the DCC, providing ample sheltered bike parking and a safe connection to E. Cottage Ave. Implement the improvements shown in the Southside Community Plan connecting the DCC via W. Cottage and S. Mike's Pike Street to S. Humphreys St. | Near - concept plan Mid - implementation | City (FUTS) |
| 3 | Develop wayfinding signage that helps bicyclists and other FUTS users find their way to downtown and helps them find their way to the regional network from downtown. | Near | City (FUTS) |
| 4 | Develop online resources that help bicyclists and others use the FUTS network to access downtown. Consider encouraging Flagstaff residents, students and visitors to use one of the popular wayfinding and trip tracking apps (recommended: STRAVA). Use data from the app provider to learn about use patterns and issues related to bike travel to, from, within and around downtown. | Near | City (FUTS) |
| 5 | Sponsor and participate in bicycling events and bicycle advocacy programs with the objective of increasing awareness of downtown as a bicycling destination. | Near | City (MetroPlan) |
| 6 | Conduct annual counts of available bicycle parking in downtown. Evaluate adequacy and location of existing bike parking and work with the City to improve and increase the supply of downtown bicycle parking. | Near | City (Engineering) |
| 7 | Redesign a more functional but still iconic downtown Flagstaff bicycle parking rack and work with the City to identify one or more contractors to build these unique bike racks. Ensure that the City, downtown land owners, businesses and developers, use these racks in all new installations. | Near | City (Engineering) |

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|--------------------|
| 8 | Identify issues and opportunities in the safety and convenience of internal, on-street downtown bicycle circulation and develop and implement appropriate capital improvements. | Mid | City (Engineering) |
| 9 | Consider merging bicycle parking (including the above measures) into the Downtown Parking Management Program. | Mid | City (Engineering) |

GOAL E: Manage curb space allocation and use

The curbs along downtown streets are where “movement meets access” and also where essential commercial area functions occur: vehicle parking and loading, outdoor dining, transit boarding and alighting, freight and parcel deliveries and pickup, take out dining pickup, ride hailing boarding and alighting, and trash collection. Curb space is one of downtown’s most valuable assets and should be managed to optimize use of this valuable and flexible public resource.

| # | ACTION ITEM | TIMELINE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|----------|---|
| 1 | Develop a curb space allocation policy and management program that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An inventory of existing curb space and current use in downtown. b. A set of measurable performance objectives for use in guiding and monitoring the curb space management program. c. A list of allowed curb space uses and basis for setting allocation priorities. d. Required implementation measures, both capital and operational. | Near | City (Engineering) |
| 2 | The curb space management program should be designed to be flexible, accommodate seasonal changes in allowable use of curb space in downtown (such as parklets and restaurant seating), and able to adapt to changing requirements over time. | Near | City (Engineering, Planning & Development Services) |

Seasonal parklet for dining in Louisville, CO



The Aspen Avenue temporary outdoor seating and bicycle/pedestrian space was highly successful during summer 2020

Examples below illustrate curb space use for bike parking and restaurant seating





IMPLEMENTATION

- » Partners and Responsibilities
- » Create a Clear Path Through the Regulatory Process
- » New FDBA Operating Structure
- » Measuring Progress
- » Funding Sources & Supporting Policies

This plan encompasses the Flagstaff Community's vision for downtown's next phase of growth and transformation. Chapter 4 identifies short, medium, and long-term recommendations for improvements, investment, activation, and programming throughout downtown. Implementation of these varied recommendations will take dedicated leadership, staff, and revenue. This final chapter looks at how Downtown Flagstaff can bring this plan to life and is organized into the following sections:

Partners and Responsibilities:

Many of the Plan's recommendations and actions require partnerships to move forward. This section identifies responsibilities for the variety of partners that were involved in the planning process and will be needed moving into implementation.

Create a Clear Path Through the Regulatory Process:

To encourage and accommodate the types of development and public realm enhancement envisioned in the plan.

New FDBA Operating Structure:

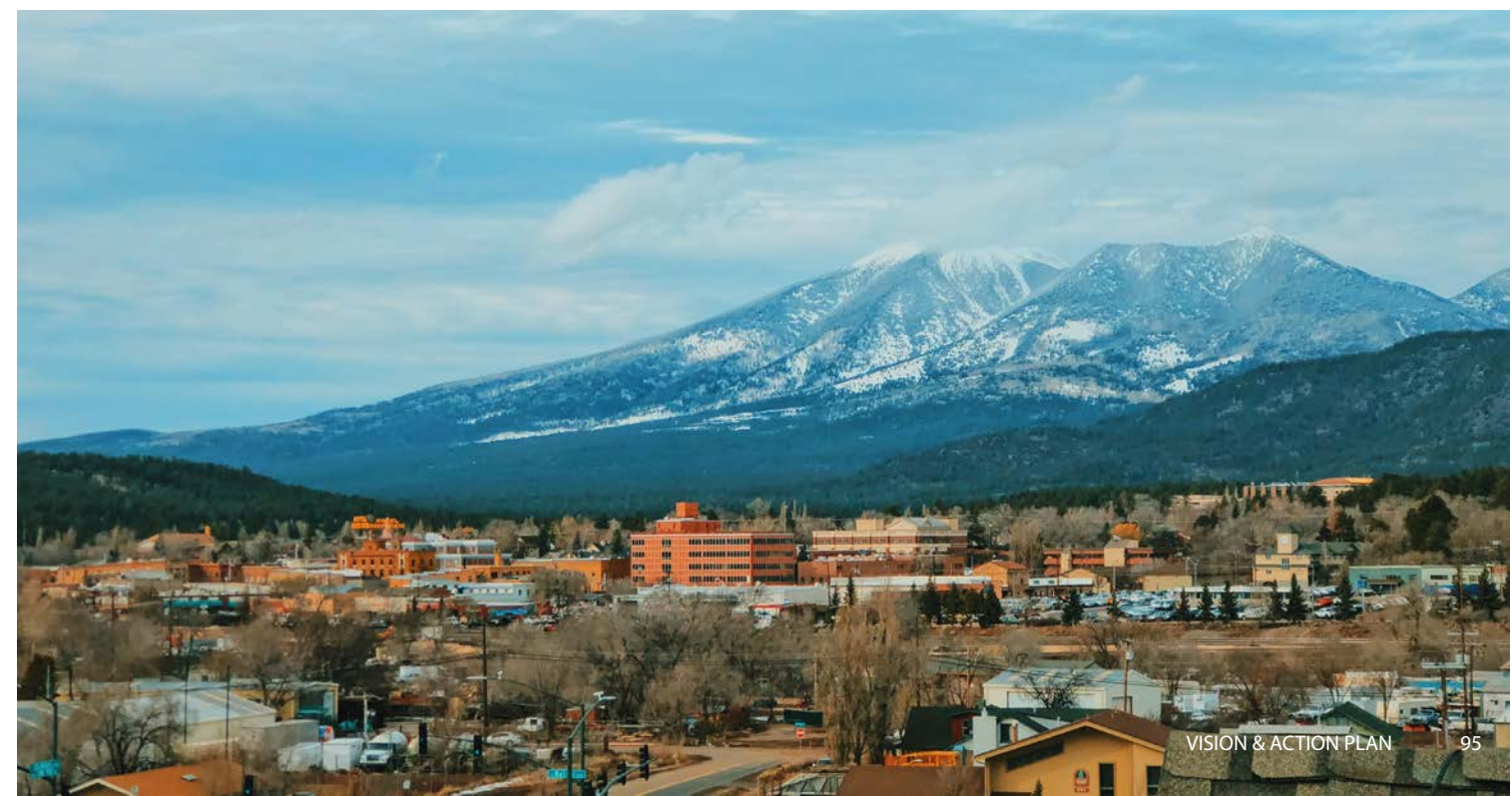
Empower and diversify funding for the Downtown Business Alliance to lead, partner and manage the evolution of downtown's economy, experience and mobility.

Measuring Progress:

To understand what is working and what needs adapting during implementation, it is important for the FDBA and the City to track progress. This section discusses how this can be done efficiently and effectively.

Funding Sources and Supportive Policies:

Implementation will require dedicated effort and resources. This section includes explanations of the varied funding sources and policies to utilize for the Plan's actions, and as illustrated in the Chapter 4 matrices, whether these are initiated by the FDBA, City, or other partners.



PARTNERS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Goal: Ensure collaboration between the public and private sectors to support downtown vitality and growth – also need to enlist major employers outside of downtown to invest in downtown.

There is an array of partners who were involved in this plan, and they will be integral in turning its recommendations into realities. Many of the plan's recommendations require partnerships to move forward. Key partners are sorted into three categories:



Primary Partners

Responsibilities: Primary partners are the funders of this plan that were involved throughout the planning process and the keepers of the new vision for Downtown Flagstaff. They work in close coordination with each other as the primary implementers and funders for plan projects. They regularly measure progress during implementation, communicate success with downtown stakeholders and are nimble in adapting to changes in downtown as needed.

- » FDBA
- » City of Flagstaff
- » Coconino County
- » Mountain Line



Major Anchor Institutions & Influencers

Responsibilities: Major anchor institutions and influencers are partners in many policies and programs identified throughout the Plan. They also serve as funding contributors, and given their influence community-wide, advocates for the continued growth of Downtown Flagstaff.

- » Northern Arizona University
- » State of Arizona/Arizona Department of Transportation
- » Major Private sector partners

Supporting Partners

Responsibilities: Supporting partners are integrally involved in policies and programs within their specific niche.

- » Creative Flagstaff
- » Chamber of Commerce
- » Development Partners
- » Downtown Hotels
- » MetroPlan
- » Local First Arizona
- » ECoNA
- » Theatrikos
- » Discover Flagstaff



CREATE A CLEAR PATH THROUGH THE REGULATORY PROCESS

Goal: Modify the zoning code and regulatory process to simplify downtown redevelopment

Specific recommendations to modify the zoning code are provided in Chapter 4.4 Downtown Experience: Urban Design Strategy & Frameworks. The recommendations are summarized below. For details, see Chapter 4.4.

- A1.** Create an educational brochure to educate property owners about existing benefits of restoring their properties.
- A2.** Utilize and educate property owners and contractors on the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) methods and standards within Flagstaff Historic Districts and Overlays.
- A3.** Provide incentives for small-parcel redevelopment, such as parking measures tailored to lots below a certain size, to help replicate historic development patterns.
- A4.** Update zoning south of the railroad to be consistent with recommendations in the Southside Community Plan.
- A5.** Update the Design Handbook for downtown to be more up-to-date and user-friendly.
- B1.** Hire an additional planner that is responsible for reviewing downtown projects. This could expedite the plan review process and improve relationships with downtown developers. Consider other modifications to the site development review process to streamline development applications and incentivize development in the downtown core.
- B5.** Update the Downtown Design Handbook and zoning code's Architectural and Landscaping Standards to provide guidelines and standards for new development in downtown.
- B6.** Continue to work with property owners and the DBA on solutions to achieve goals of increasing density and housing options downtown while respecting the historic scale of existing buildings and context.

Goal: Create a planning position to oversee downtown projects envisioned in the plan.

An additional strategy to simplify the regulatory process is for the City of Flagstaff to create a position within the City Manager's office with a focus to oversee the implementation of the Flagstaff Vision and Action Plan over the next five to seven years. The Downtown Planner/Ombudsman would be the point person at the City for advancing all of the city-oriented recommendations from the Plan. Many of the recommendations in the plan will require multi-departmental coordination. In addition, many recommendations require ongoing partnerships with agencies that can leverage City resources and energy to advance implementation. While a full time Downtown Planner/Ombudsman is envisioned, this position could share other downtown-related functions, such as historic preservation, public space programming, storefront economy, etc. A team approach is recommended in which the Planner/Ombudsman convene representatives from multiple departments to meet with a developer at the beginning of a proposed project to assist with next steps. The expanded use of public space process used in 2020 during the COVID pandemic is a good example of how this review process can work successfully. Two complimentary approaches are suggested to measure progress in achieving the goals and strategies of the market-based Vision and Action Plan: quarterly implementation reports and an annual key indicators assessment.

NEW FDBA OPERATING STRUCTURE

Goal: Empower and diversify funding for the Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance to lead, partner and manage the evolution of downtown’s economy, experience and mobility.

Existing Conditions Overview

The **Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance** (FDBA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Historic Downtown Flagstaff. FDBA sponsors free family events to encourage visitation to downtown businesses. Through these activities, FDBA adds to the economic viability of the area, and the community in general. FDBA advocates for important business issues, providing education to the public and a strong voice to our City regarding the health of our economy.

The FDBA also operates a **Clean Team** within downtown. The Clean Team started in 2016. Clean Team Ambassador services include sweeping sidewalks and alleys, cleaning the tops of the city trash and recycling bins, collecting micro-trash, and collaborating on special event clean-ups with community partners. Ambassadors answer questions and provide assistance to residents and visitors of downtown Flagstaff.

The FDBA has several key revenue sources. The Flagstaff Downtown Business Improvement & Revitalization District (FDBIRD) is a 20-block taxing district approved and funded by property owners within the FDBIRD boundaries to protect and enhance the vitality of our historic district. The assessment rate in 2020 was 1.5795% (or 0.015795 per \$1 of assessed value); and the total revenue from these assessments was \$155,934. The FDBIRD contracts with the Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance (FDBA) to deliver enhanced services in downtown. 53% of FDBA’s income comes from the FDBIRD.

The second is **City and County contributions**. Both the City & County contribute payments-in-lieu of assessments into the FDBIRD. The City’s contribution is \$9,895. The County’s contribution is \$25,722. The City also contributes a Fee-For-Service of \$70,000. Of this, \$50,000 is for the Clean Team, while the other \$20,000 is allocated to holiday lighting. All of this funding comes from Discover Flagstaff (CVB) via tourism-related revenue, and therefore, importantly, does not draw from the City’s General Fund. The \$50,000 for Clean Team was set approximately three years ago, based primarily on personnel and hours needed. An important factor though in setting this amount was staying below the dollar threshold that would require Council approval.

From the assessment of the FDBA’s existing operations, the organization currently has inadequate staff resources and funding. It is not yet equipped to take on more responsibility in order to most-effectively “lead, partner, and manage the evolution of downtown” as this plan envisions.

New Operating Structure for FDBA

FDBA’s budget, work program, and operating structure should be reimagined and realigned to match the framework of the new Downtown Vision and Action Plan.

This would frame the organization around four new activity centers – Economy, Experience, Mobility, & Advocacy. The FDBA budget would then be centered around activity centers, rather than payroll, as it is currently. The following matrix illustrates how this new structure could be organized, with new staffing and additional revenue sources discussed on the following pages.

| ACTIVITY CENTER | CURRENT STAFFING | NEW STAFFING STRUCTURE | NEW REVENUE SOURCES |
|---|--|--|---|
| ECONOMY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Business retention/recruitment » Storefront economy » Primary job growth » Housing | None | Economic Development Mgr (NEW) | City/County and/or FDBIRD rates |
| EXPERIENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Events & Activation » Marketing & Promotions » Arts & Culture Expansion » Clean & Safe » Beautification » Stakeholder Communications | Exec. Director + Marketing & Events Mgr + Clean Team | Program Mgr + Marketing & Events Mgr + Clean Team (EXPANDED) | Southside BID and/or City/County and/or 501(c)3 and/or FDBIRD rates |
| MOBILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Parking Marketing & Promotions » Parking Management & Supply » Advance Ped & Bike network » Support Transit and Connectivity | Exec. Director | Program Mgr + Clean Team (EXPANDED) | ParkFlag |
| ADVOCACY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » City/County Relations » Unified Voice » Influence Investment » Catalytic Projects | Exec. Director | Exec. Director (while also overseeing three Activity Centers above) | n/a (needs Exec. Director capacity rather than \$) |

Pathways to Establish New Revenue & Organizational Capacity:

Goal: To fulfill expectations set by this plan, FDBA needs an operating budget of \$500,000 - \$550,000 annually. This requires adding \$150,000 - \$200,000 to FDBA's revenue stream.

1 Receive more significant contributions from City and County, totaling \$50,000 more than existing contributions, for economic development and clean and safe services provided downtown.

Historically, the City has had economic development staffing to help with the city's growth, but these positions aren't focused exclusively on downtown. Full-time attention is needed on downtown, given its unique conditions and importance to the city and region, especially to aid in recovery from COVID-19.

Create a new "Economic Development Manager" position: Currently FDBA doesn't do any work in this realm, including maintaining a detailed and up-to-date inventory of downtown space, helping fill vacant properties, activating empty storefronts, and working with property owners and commercial real estate professionals. It is recommended that both the City and FDBA contribute to fund this position. With this goal in mind, FDBA and the City should have ongoing discussion about partnering with one another on an economic development position, as the need is there.

An additional payment-in-lieu of assessments is also suggested, for the new Courthouse building. This amount is estimated to be **\$15,000**. This would be allocated towards expanding the Clean Team's services in downtown. County participation via a formalized partnership with the Workforce Development program should be considered to expand efforts in the clean and safe realm. Currently the County pays a payment-in-lieu of assessments, but no fee-for-service.

2 Receive a contribution of 6% after debt service and fixed expenses from ParkFlag; and in the long-term (5+ years), consider appropriate models for FDBA to actively manage parking in the downtown area.

ParkFlag has been in operation for three years. Prior to COVID-19 ParkFlag brought in roughly \$1.5 million annually in parking revenue. A minimum of 20% of revenue is required to be set aside in a lockbox reserve fund for future supply. While a program within the City, parking revenues and expenditures are managed in a separate Special Revenue Fund, established by ordinance to formally separate accounting for the parking system from other City operations.

ParkFlag staffs a Parking Manager and Parking Aides who are hourly employees. ParkFlag also currently co-locates with the FDBA.

Once ParkFlag recovers from COVID-19 impacts, returns to generating healthy revenue and has secured a sufficient lockbox – parking management functions should be considered for transition to FDBA.

There are several valid reasons to do this: (1) this would build efficiencies in the parking management, coordination, and communication realm; (2) FDBA is best equipped to integrate parking into the overall downtown experience; (3) in the future, there will be far more residents/resident owners in the district; (4) FDBA is already allocating approximately 0.5 FTE of time to parking functions; and (5) there are multiple precedents of downtown management organizations around the country who excel in parking management, Tempe being the closest example.

In the near-term, the FDBA should secure revenue from ParkFlag to boost functions it is already undertaking, including clean and safe parking services, communications with businesses and Flagstaff residents, and promotions programs. FDBA also has the potential to provide other parking support services for ParkFlag that it can be compensated for (such as website hosting, development and management, marketing, and graphic design). The suggested amount is **6% after debt service and fixed expenses**; less than 10% of ParkFlag revenue (based on pre-COVID numbers). Providing any ParkFlag funds to the FDBA would require a change to the City

ordinance. It is understood that any money from ParkFlag allocated to FDBA would have to be used for clean and safe parking services, parking management, marketing or parking-related expenses.

3 Spin-off a 501c3 affiliate organization that would be managed by the FDBA, creating opportunities for new revenue and downtown services and special projects.

While the FDBA is currently a 501c6 nonprofit organization, a separate 501c3 organization could be established to raise funds for any combination of the following:

- » Public art
- » Arts and cultural programming (including finding ways to engage Native populations)
- » Activation
- » Planning efforts and catalytic projects

In particular, activation of public space is something that business owners in the district had stated a desire for. This would be different from one-off or occasional special events which FDBA already produces, and rather is about ongoing programming and activations – at a minimum, all summer long – throughout downtown where they best fit.

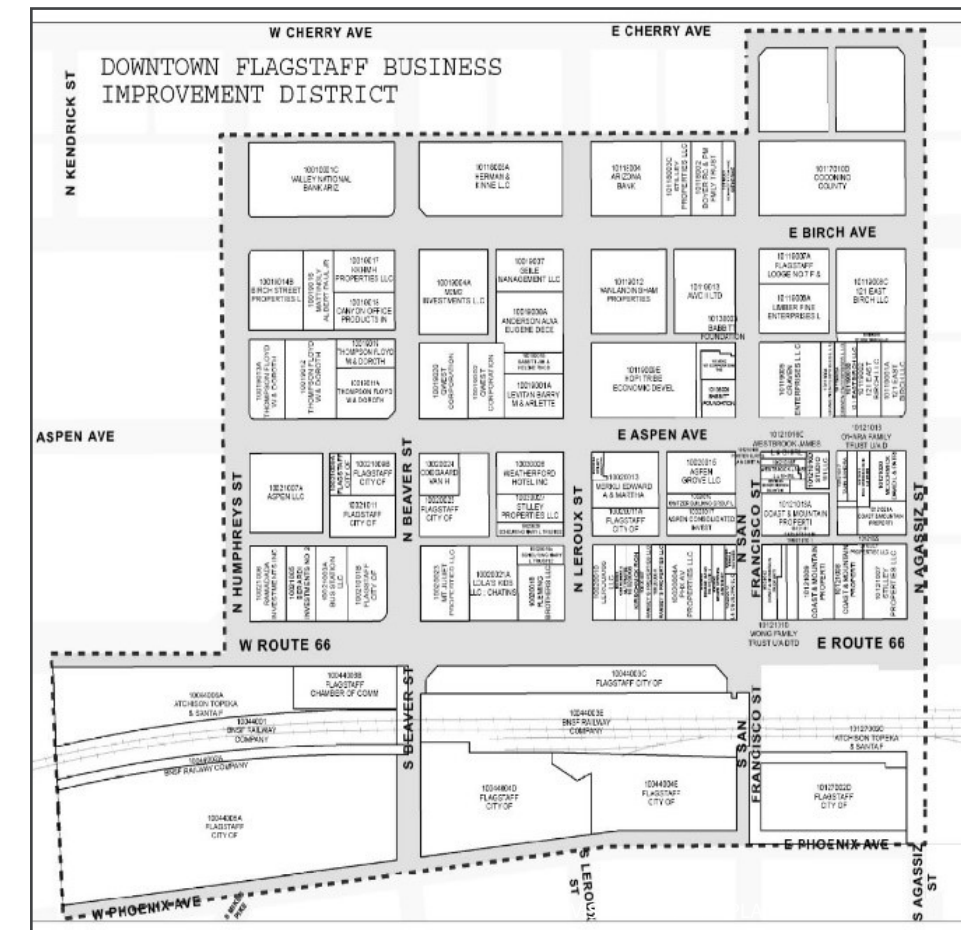
There is an existing 501c3 organization, called *Heritage Square Trust*. This small organization's mission is to create free artistic and musical programming in Downtown's Heritage Square. If feasible, this organization could be turned over to the FDBA for management, allowing it to expand its mission into the areas noted above.

Another opportunity area and focus of a new 501c3 organization could be increased engagement and contributions from major Flagstaff institutions. As the market assessment points out, many of these do not have a downtown presence which is unusual for a downtown environment. However, several are immediately adjacent to the district, namely NAU and the Medical Center. This points to an opportunity to establish more involvement – financially and physically – in downtown. One example is working with Gore to activate a storefront visitor destination component in downtown, that would be unique from their other locations throughout town.

4 Creation of a new Business Improvement District on the Southside.

The FDBIRD currently encompasses the historic core of downtown, as the following map shows, with a southern boundary along Phoenix Ave just past the railroad. The establishment of a BID in the Southside portion of downtown – part of this plan's study area, and an area that continues to evolve into an important retail and dining destination – has been considered in the past. Given Southside's evolution, this should be evaluated again. Revenue potential of a Southside district should be estimated, focusing primarily on the San Francisco and Beaver corridors, down to Butler Avenue.

This would create a new revenue source that could be used predominately



for expanding clean and safe services within the Southside district and integrating this area into downtown marketing efforts. While it would be a new and separate BID from the FDBIRD, it could also be managed by the FDBA, creating efficiencies in the delivery of clean and safe benefits. A single Clean Team – with more staffing than it has currently – would be recommended to service both districts.

5 Changes to FDBIRD assessment rates.

Adjustment to FDBIRD property assessment rates should be considered once the Flagstaff economy and downtown property owners recover from the impacts of COVID-19. At times, the assessment rate has gone down year-over-year; happening when overall assessed values in the district increase at a faster rate than the FDBIRD’s budget.

Increasing assessment rates should be considered to (1) bolster clean and safe services on the street, and (2) help fund roughly third-to-half of the Economic Development Manager position (with the City/County to fund the remaining, as discussed earlier).

Importantly, FDBA cannot meet clean and safe expectations with 1.5 FTE allocated to the Clean Team. More resources will allow FDBA to put additional Clean Team Ambassadors on the street to more effectively meet the needs of downtown property owners and businesses.

MEASURING PROGRESS

To understand what is working and what needs adapting during implementation, it is important for the FDBA and the City to track progress. This section discusses how this can be done efficiently and effectively.

Two complimentary approaches are suggested to measure progress in achieving the goals and strategies of the market-based Downtown Vision and Action Plan: quarterly implementation reports and an annual key indicators assessment.

Quarterly Reports

Progress to implement the Downtown Flagstaff Vision and Action Plan will be overseen by the FDBA and the City. To track progress in implementing the action steps of the plan, a quarterly progress report should be prepared by the FDBA indicating what activities have been taken within each of the four activity areas.

Annual Key Indicator Tracking

Annual Key Indicator Tracking will be used to measure progress on implementation. Progress tracking on the implementation of the Vision and Action Plan will be overseen by the FDBA and the City. Strategies, action items, and catalyst projects have been identified to move Downtown Flagstaff forward toward the community’s vision for downtown. In order to connect the specific activities to the larger vision, the FDBA and the City can track measurable indicators annually that offer information about how closely downtown resembles the desired core values of **Vibrant, Walkable and Connected, Historic and Adaptable, Prosperous, Welcoming and Inclusive, and Accessible to All**. The City and FDBA should establish a baseline upon adoption of the plan and then use a variety of the suggested key indicators below to measure progress toward the vision:

VIBRANT

- » Number of retail, dining, and entertainment establishments
- » Street level vacancy rate
- » Number of events held downtown annually
- » Annual attendees at downtown events & key attractions
- » Number of outdoor seats
- » Hotel room average daily rates and occupancy
- » Number of downtown residents
- » Public art installation counts

WALKABLE & CONNECTED

- » Pedestrian and bicycle counts at a variety of locations at 3:00 PM on weekday/weekend
- » Linear feet of new sidewalks & bike lanes
- » Parking occupancies
- » Number of added off-street parking spaces
- » Transit ridership for downtown routes
- » Improved connectivity index from FHWA
- » Autonomous vehicle ridership
- » Number of people crossing improved intersections on Route 66

HISTORIC & ADAPTABLE

- » Number of existing historic buildings
- » Number of historic buildings adapted for new or additional uses

PROSPEROUS

- » Total number of downtown jobs, by category
- » Number of downtown businesses, by category
- » Number of new businesses
- » Job growth, total and in target sectors
- » Office vacancy rates
- » Percentage of businesses that are locally-owned
- » Number of residents employed in downtown
- » Wages for downtown workers

WELCOMING & INCLUSIVE

- » Feedback from downtown visitors via a Downtown Perception Survey
- » Return customers, both local and out of town
- » Number of minority-owned businesses
- » Racial/ethnic mix of pedestrian and park user counts, and event attendance
- » Count of police calls
- » Measurements of Ambassador activities
- » Website vanity statistics and social media activity

ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

- » Number of affordable housing units
- » Downtown resident demographics
- » Lease rates for all sectors – residential, retail, office – compared to citywide averages

The FDBA should also utilize these metrics and indicators to create a “Downtown Scorecard” that can be used to promote downtown and also be provided to the development and business community in its economic development efforts.



SOURCES OF FUNDING & SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

Implementation of the plan will require dedicated effort, partnerships, and resources. Potential funding sources are sorted into two broader categories – funding that can be initiated by the FDDBA or the City and funding that will require commitments from other partners. Additionally, supportive policies identified throughout the Vision and Action Plan are listed in more detail here.

CITY OF FLAGSTAFF AND/OR FDDBA

City Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The City should consider prioritization within its CIP to implement Catalyst Projects and other capital recommendations from the Vision and Action Plan. This funding source could be appropriate for elements of each of the Catalyst Projects and many other recommendations throughout Chapter 4 of the plan, including enhancements to key streets and installation of connections and gateways for a variety of transportation modes.

City General Fund

The City's General Fund is a primary funding source for many City programs and general operating expenses. Funds are allocated during the City's biennial budgeting process. The flexibility of the General Fund makes it ideal to plug gaps or provide matching funds for a variety of public benefit investments (i.e., public realm improvements).

Citywide Bond Issue

Other cities have clustered several downtown improvement projects together as part of a citywide bond issue. Examples include Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Denver, and Dallas. In Flagstaff, there is a potential that several of the Catalytic Infrastructure Projects could be combined as part of a citywide bond offering.

Business Improvement District (BID)

While BID revenue is limited, the Downtown Vision and Action Plan may provide new options and priorities on how BID funds are expended. In addition, downtown property owners should consider future increases in rates and/or bonding BID funds as investment is attracted and values grow.

PARTNER FUNDING OPTIONS

Tax Abatement

Coconino County, the City, and State could jointly explore and implement a pilot tax abatement initiative. This could be offered during a three-year pilot period and provide a multi-year abatement (5 to 10 years) in which developers and owners of new residential and/or residential mixed-use development pay taxes on an escalating scale. This could be a way to jump start new housing developments and may only be needed for the first couple projects until comparable projects are created so future developers are able to obtain financing. A tax abatement structure also offers many advantages over Tax Increment Financing (TIF) which is not legal in Arizona. To the governing agencies, new tax revenue is recouped quickly in a much shorter term than TIF. For the residential developer or owner, the abatement provides relief when needed most during the initial lease-up or sales period for new units. The City and County should work together in concert with the State to adopt a tax abatement program.

Crowd-Sourcing

Crowd-sourcing platforms, where funds are secured through localized online appeals, could provide resources for

low-cost capital and programming ideas that benefit downtown residents and workers, such as the Leroux festival street or Heritage Square activation/redesign. Recent examples include crowd-sourcing to create new downtown dog parks in Cleveland and Reno, or crowdsourcing to secure funding for dedicated bicycle lanes in Downtown Denver. In each case, downtown residents and businesses matched funds that were put forth by the BID and/or City.

Foundation/Corporate Grants and Sponsorships

Many of the Action Plan capital and programming recommendations may be appropriate for securing foundation or corporate grants and sponsorships. Improvements such as creating a bike share program, the Leroux festival street, or Heritage Square activation/redesign may be well matched for foundation or corporate sponsorships. Special events will remain a top opportunity for sponsorship.

Historic Property Development Incentives

Federal Tax Incentives: There is a 20% tax credit program on the qualified expenditure of a substantial rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The tax credit applies to the building owner's federal income tax for the year in which the project is completed and approved. The 10% tax credit program is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use.

Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, created by Congress in 1986, has been one of the most successful resources for creating affordable housing across the nation. The LIHTC, rather than a direct subsidy, encourages investment of private capital in the development of rental housing by providing a dollar-for-dollar credit to offset an investor's federal income tax liability. LIHTCs are used to finance the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing for low-income households. Rent restriction requirements are placed on the property for no less than 30 years, creating a reliable supply of affordable units.

Credit Enhancements from Large Employers

This is a method whereby large regional employers provide a credit enhancement (or guaranty) to a development company to improve its debt or credit worthiness and help jump-start new projects. Through credit enhancement, the lender is provided with reassurance that the borrower (developer) will honor the obligation through additional collateral, insurance, leasing commitments or a third-party guarantee. Credit enhancement provides leverage to developers creating housing that achieves Flagstaff's housing goals. For the large regional employers, the return is in the form of helping to recruit skilled employees that may choose to live in new downtown housing.

SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

Community Land Trust (CLT)

CLTs are nonprofit, community-based organizations whose mission is to provide affordable housing in perpetuity by owning land and leasing it to those who live in houses built on that land. CLTs are a common tool used nationwide to maintain affordability. While CLTs typically focus on the development and stewardship of owner-occupied housing, some are now broadening their focus to opportunities in non-residential development.

Commercial Façade Improvement Program

The revitalization of a neglected building or storefront has multiple benefits. It creates a more attractive streetscape for the community and signals positive change that can spur improvements to nearby buildings, while also creating a more effective real estate asset for the owner. Many times, façade improvements are cost-prohibitive to building owners. A commercial façade improvement program can incentivize action by providing funding to private property owners to redesign, renovate, or restore commercial (or industrial) building façades. Often, façade improvement programs provide matching funds to owners, with minimum and maximum caps establishing limits. Successful façade improvement programs typically are restricted to downtowns and adjacent targeted neighborhoods in need of a revitalization boost.

DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF VISION & ACTION PLAN



Prepared by:

