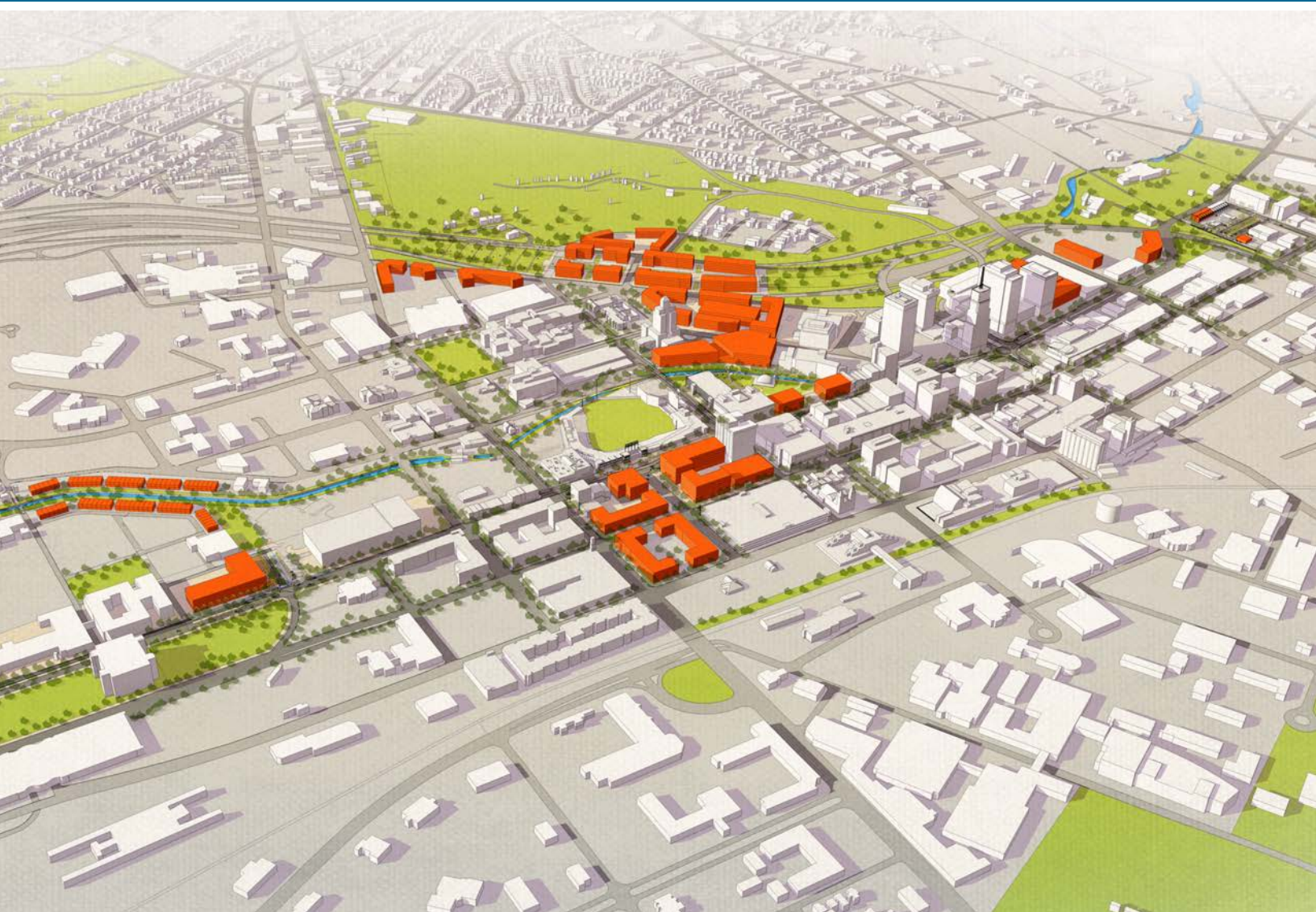


DOWNTOWN AKRON VISION + REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Endorsed by Akron City Council on March 12, 2018.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

STEERING COMMITTEE

Dan Horrigan
Mayor, City of Akron

Steve Abdenour
Cleveland Clinic Akron General

Sarah Benn
Shivering Timbers

Nicholas Browning
Huntington Bank

Chris Burnham
Development Finance Authority of
Summit County

Robert DeJournet
Summa Health

Jason Dodson
County of Summit

Richard Enty
METRO RTA

Jennifer Fox
PNC Bank

John Garafalo
Akron Community Foundation

Suzie Graham
Downtown Akron Partnership

David James
Akron Public Schools

Halle Jones Capers
G. Stephens Inc.

Patrick Kelly
FirstEnergy

Cory Kendrick
Summit County Public Health

Kyle Kutuchief
John S. & James L. Knight Foundation

Dave Lieberth
Lieberth Consulting Group

Christine Mayer
GAR Foundation

Annie McFadden
City of Akron

Marc Merklin
Brouse McDowell

Gregg Mervis
Akron-Summit Convention & Visitors
Bureau

Brian Moore
Roetzel & Andress

Nicole Mullet
ArtsNow

Dick Norton
Greater Akron Chamber

Tony O'Leary
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Howard Parr
Akron Civic Theatre

Ryan Pritt
Pritt Entertainment Group

Dan Rice
Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Gary Rickel
CB Richard Ellis

Scott Riley
Akron RubberDucks

Heather Roszczyk
Fund for Our Economic Future

Jason Segedy
City of Akron

Margo Sommerville
Akron City Council

Don Taylor
Welty Building Company

Joel Testa
Testa Companies

Tony Troppe
Everett Group

Srini Venkatesh
GOJO Industries

Julie Wesel
Chemstress Consultant Company

Frank Williams
Akron Fraternal Order of Police

Matthew Wilson
University of Akron

Katie Wright
Cuyahoga Valley Environmental
Education Center

Tim Ziga
Akron Children's Hospital

DOWNTOWN AKRON PARTNERSHIP (DAP)

Suzie Graham
President & CEO

Kimberly Beckett
Director of Business Relations

Kelli Fetter
Director of Engagement and Events

Sharon Gillberg
Communications Director

PLANNING TEAM

MKSK
Development Strategies

THE DOWNTOWN AKRON VISION AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN SETS A 10- YEAR ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF THE CITY'S URBAN CORE.

Over the past 18 months, the planning team has worked with the City of Akron, Downtown Akron Partnership, and a Steering Committee to develop a shared vision for the future of downtown.

Through an extensive public process, the planning team worked with the community to develop five focus areas that, when taken together, will help to reinvigorate downtown. From Canal Place at Southside to the decommissioning of Route 59, each focus area leverages a key asset to create a mixed-use node of activity. Perhaps the most important component of the plan is the emphasis on improving Main Street. Main Street is not only the primary commercial corridor of the city, it is the common thread that links each of the five focus areas together.

The Main Street edge of each focus area is prioritized for initial investment. With a strong, cohesive and activated Main Street in place, redevelopment opportunities will begin to radiate to other parts of downtown.

The Downtown Akron Vision and Redevelopment Plan has already made progress advancing downtown Akron. First, it has pulled the community together and built consensus for moving forward. Second, it has created a broad framework for various efforts to work together around a common vision. Third, it has established specific recommendations for where to focus energy and attention. Finally, it has generated excitement and support for making downtown Akron better for everyone. **Now is the time for action.**

BUILDING
MOMENTUM



IT STARTS WITH
MAIN STREET



A COMMITMENT TO
IMPLEMENTATION

10 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The following principles synthesize priorities, strengths, and opportunities for downtown, and were used as a guide in developing focus area concepts, analyzing community feedback, and drafting and refining strategic recommendations for implementation.

1

It starts with **Main Street**

2

Vitality starts with **Residential**

3

Address business **vacancy**

4

Create a coordinated **incentive** package

5

Make great **public spaces**

6

Continue to **program** downtown

7

Prioritize **street design** that enhances health and safety

8

Expand on successful **nodes** of activity

9

Build on Akron's rich **history**

10

Strengthen downtown **connections** with surrounding neighborhoods and institutions

WHAT WE HEARD

COMMUNITY INPUT WAS CRITICAL TO ESTABLISHING THE PLAN'S VISION. THE PROCESS INCLUDED INTERVIEWS WITH 150 STAKEHOLDERS, THREE PUBLIC MEETINGS, WARD MEETINGS, ONLINE SURVEYS, AND A PROJECT WEBSITE.

The engagement process resulted in nearly 600 individual comments and ideas were generated that shaped the planning process and helped to set priorities. Prior to engaging the greater Akron community, the planning team met with more than 150 stakeholders representing a wide spectrum of Akron's business, arts, education and transportation sectors. From this feedback, the planning team drafted 10 Planning Principles to guide the remainder of the process.

The planning team then hosted three public meetings at the Akron Civic Theatre, which was attended by more than 500 members of the community. In order to reach as many downtown residents, employers, and visitors as possible, the

planning team made all meeting materials available through a project website hosted by Downtown Akron Partnership.

One question the planning team asked was: **"My Vision for Downtown Akron is..."** which challenged participants to succinctly express how they see downtown's future. The more than 230 responses received were diverse and varied in tone, focus, and breadth. Nonetheless, they generally fit into four categories, listed in the graphic below. With overwhelming positivity and armed with potential solutions, Akronites expressed a vision for a downtown that is vibrant with more things to do; livable with neighborhoods for everyone; connected with better mobility; and proactive in reaching goals.

OVER 230 VISION STATEMENTS

AKRONITES WANT A DOWNTOWN THAT IS...



VIBRANT, with more things to do



LIVABLE, with neighborhoods for everyone



CONNECTED, with better mobility



PROACTIVE in reaching our goals



**WHAT
WE
HEARD**

42

STEERING COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

150

STAKEHOLDERS
INTERVIEWED

1,800

WEBSITE
VISITS

200

SURVEY
RESPONSES

505

PUBLIC MEETING
ATTENDEES

592

TOTAL COMMENTS
RECEIVED

58

WARD MEETING
ATTENDEES



MARKET STRATEGY & ANALYSIS

THE MARKET STUDY CONDUCTED AS PART OF THIS PLAN IDENTIFIED THE DEMAND FOR 1,500 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND 500 TO 600 HOTEL ROOMS OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS IN DOWNTOWN AKRON.



DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS AT A GLANCE

48% Are between 18 and 34 years old

35% Are 35 to 54

47% Part of a one-person household

92% Have 0 children living in their household

84% Have a Bachelor's degree or higher

53% Work outside downtown

33% Moved from outside the MSA

Momentum is already abundant in downtown Akron. Private and institutional investment is slated to take place with building expansions and renovations. Residential housing units and hotel rooms are in the pipeline. Streetscape and placemaking projects that will enliven and better connect downtown are in the final design and implementation phases. The city is investing in major above and below ground infrastructure that will change the face of the downtown. This plan seeks to both harness community energy and passion and leverage existing and planned investment to advance downtown Akron.

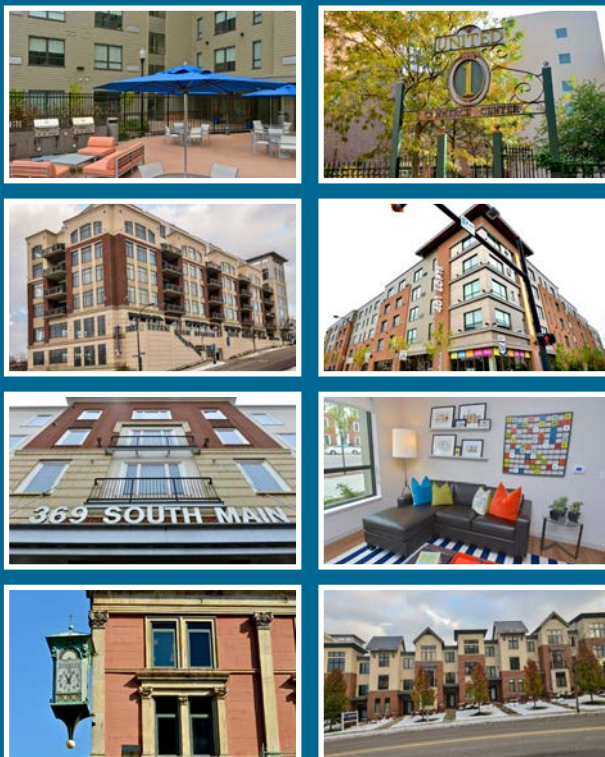
Downtown already attracts millions of visitors a year to visit destinations such as the Akron Art Museum, Canal Park, the Towpath Trail, and the John S. Knight Center. The University of Akron, the City of Akron, and County of Summit draw students, employees and visitors to downtown. What is missing in downtown is the 24/7 activity that comes with a diverse mix of residents, employees, students and visitors. The market study conducted as part of this Plan identified the demand for 1,500 residential units and 500 to 600 hotel rooms over the next ten years in downtown Akron. Coupled with a continued focus from the City on developing a culture of entrepreneurship to create new jobs and attract talent, downtown Akron is well positioned for revitalization.

Sources: Development Strategies based on data from Partnership for Downtown St. Louis, Nashville Downtown Partnership, and Downtown Council of Kansas City.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



Based on the demand analyses performed, a mix of residential products in downtown Akron would be successful and could fit the needs of a variety of demographic groups in the metro area. Using reasonable capture rates for the existing market, there is likely support for up to 300 for-sale housing products over the next ten years, split between attached townhomes and condominiums. Additionally, there is support for approximately 1,200 upscale rental apartments. Market conditions suggest that these products would be absorbed over approximately ten years.

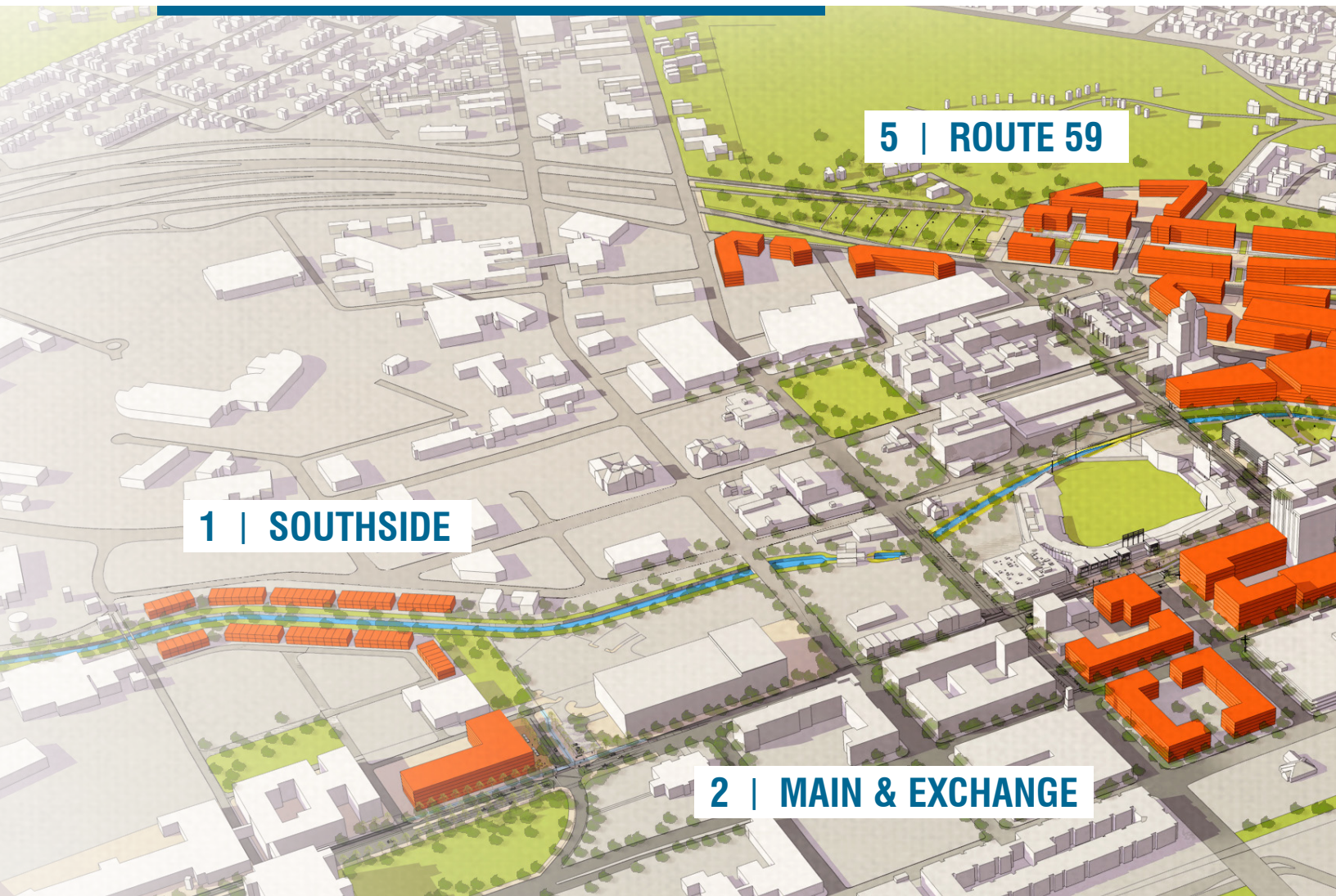


OPPORTUNITY FOR HOSPITALITY GROWTH



Downtown anchors could support 450 rooms, along with 300 additional rooms supported by convention activity. Deducting the existing supply of 146 rooms and future supply of 65 rooms with the development of Blutique Hotel Akron, downtown Akron could support between 500 and 600 additional rooms.

FIVE FOCUS AREAS



1 | SOUTHSIDE

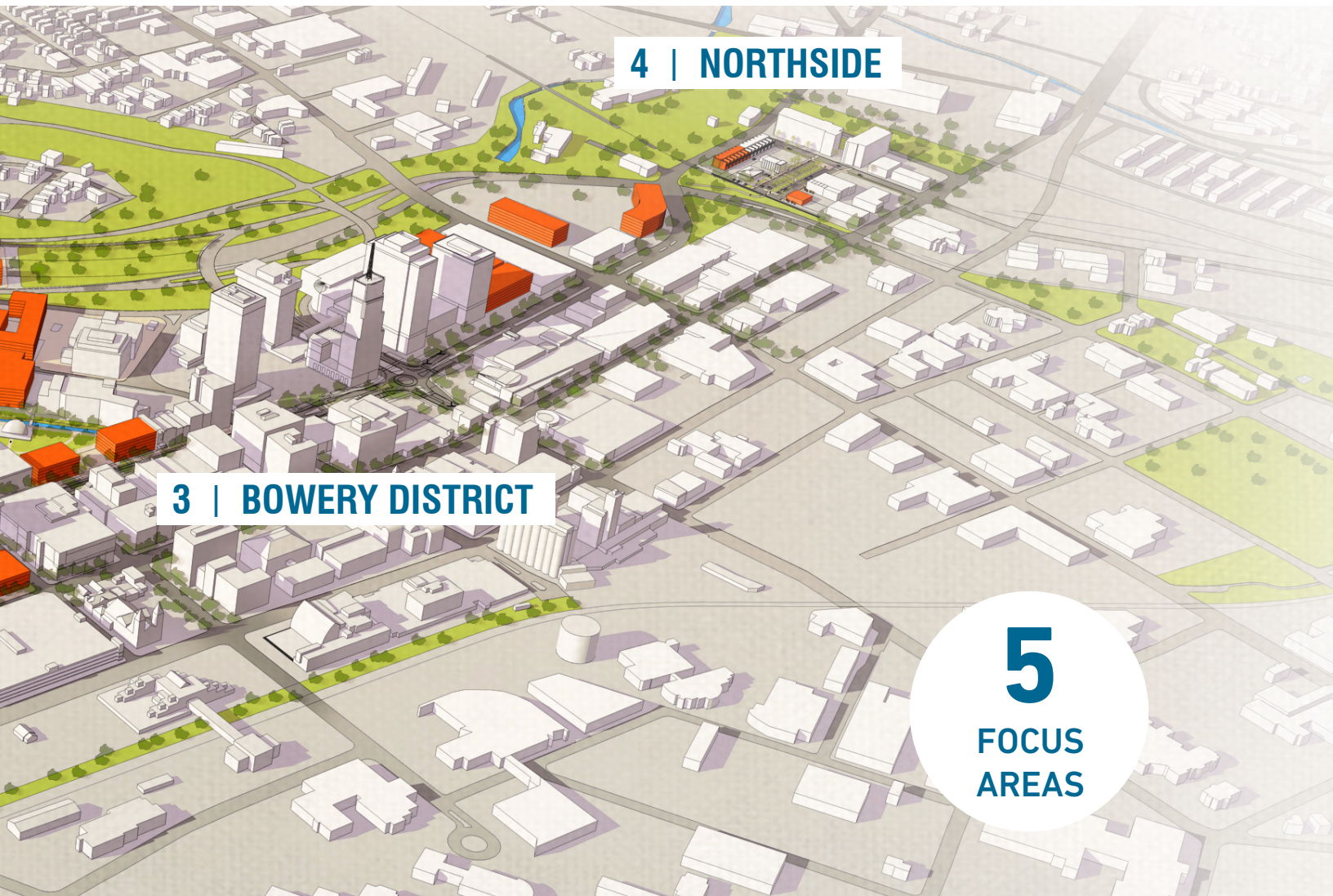


2 | MAIN & EXCHANGE



3 | BOWERY DISTRICT





4 | NORTHSIDE

3 | BOWERY DISTRICT

5
FOCUS
AREAS

4 | NORTHSIDE

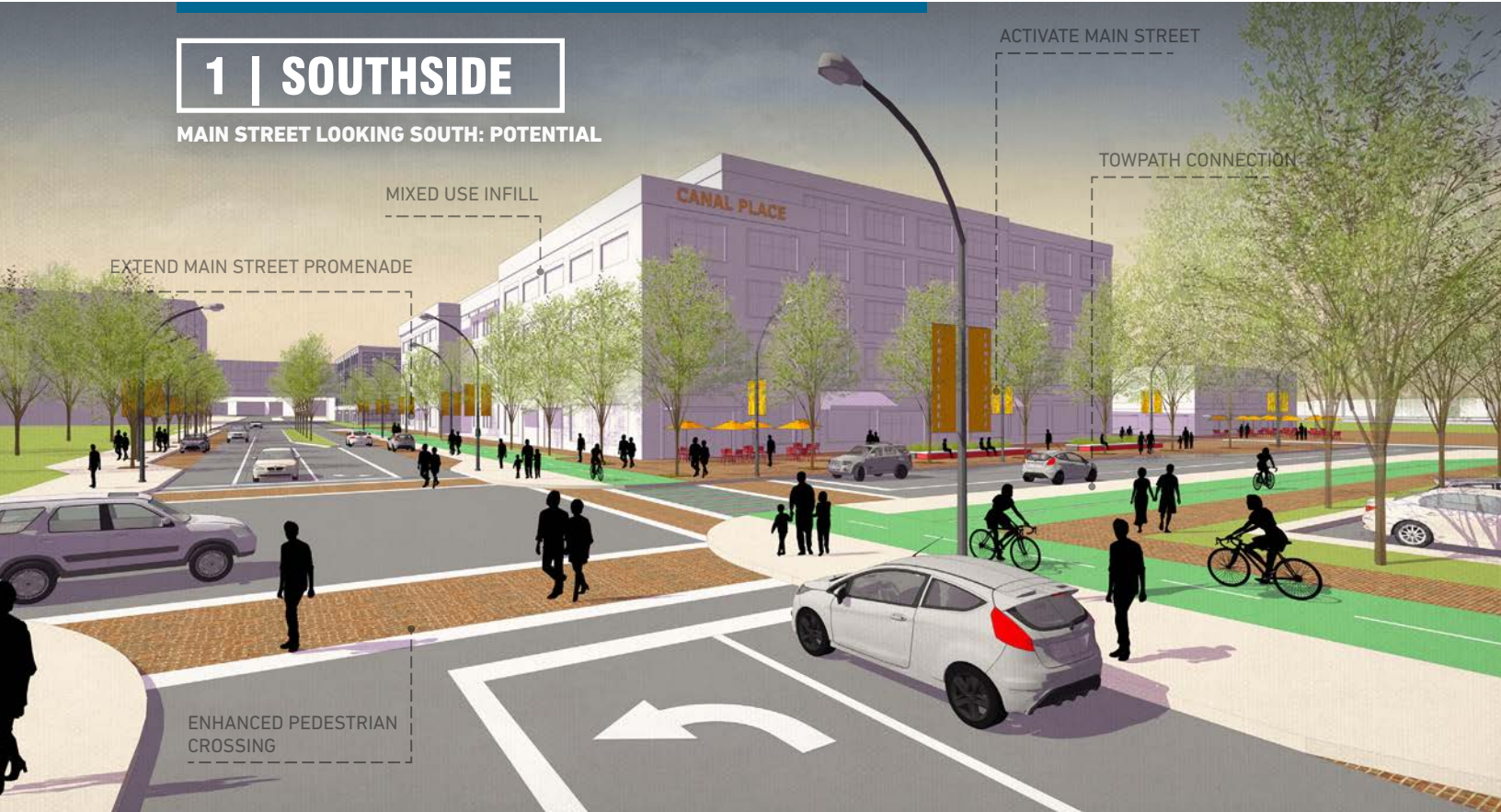
5 | ROUTE 59



FOCUS AREAS

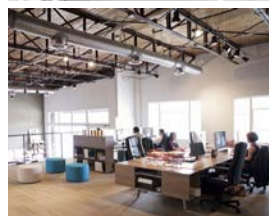
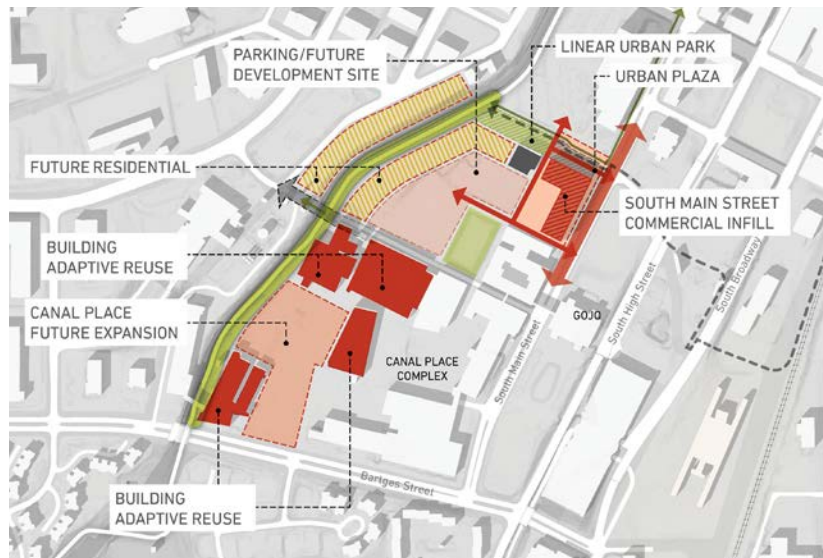
1 | SOUTHSIDE

MAIN STREET LOOKING SOUTH: POTENTIAL



DOWNTOWN'S CENTER FOR INNOVATION

- GOJO headquarters
- Bounce Innovation Hub
- Creative historic reuse of Industrial warehouse buildings
- Craft breweries and sand volleyball courts enhance start up culture at Canal Place
- Canal-side development opportunities
- Connectivity to Towpath Trail



Adaptive-reuse



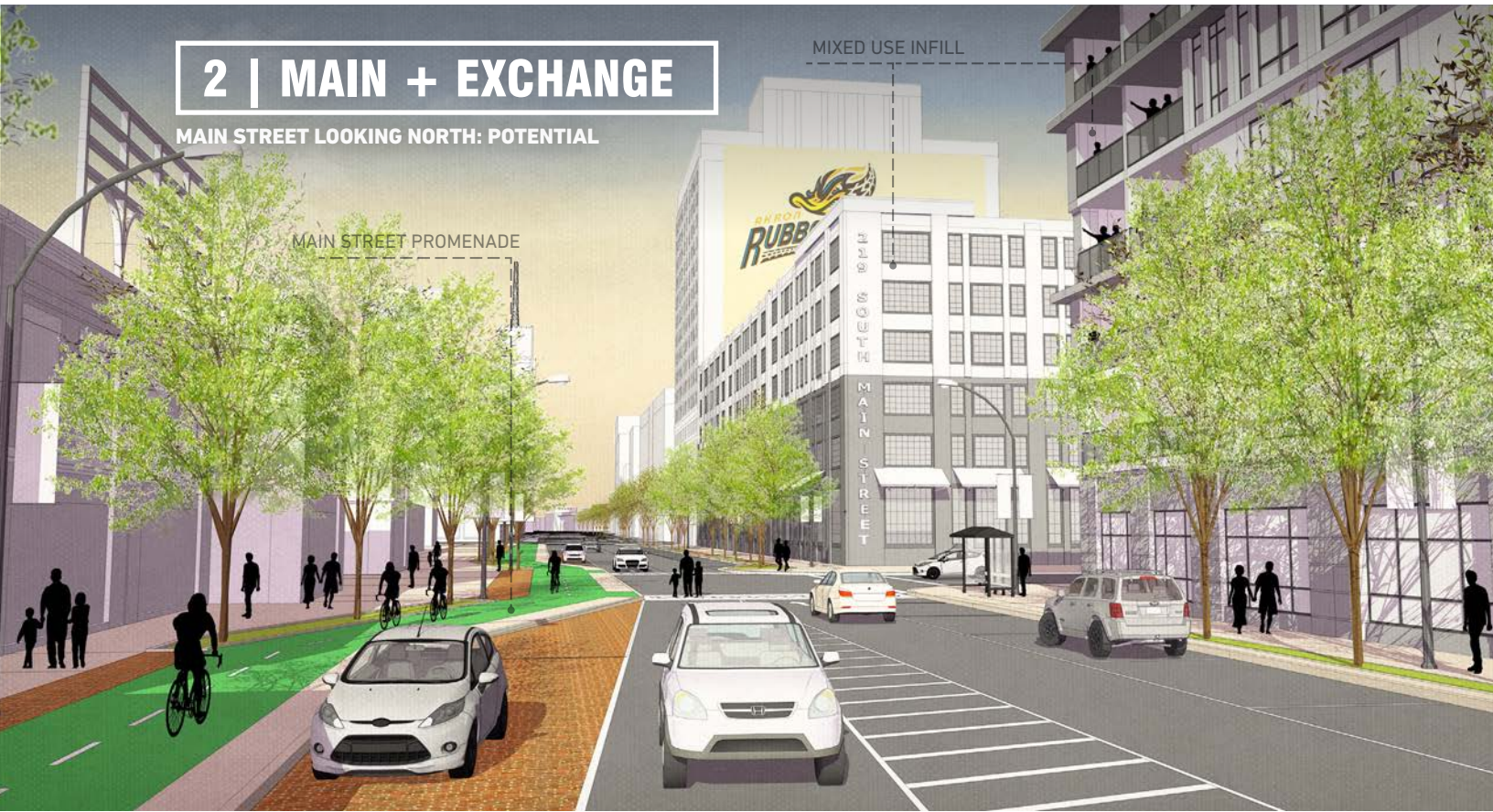
Main Street office



Linear plaza

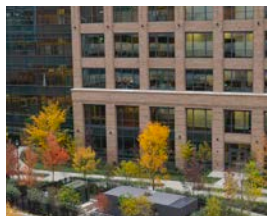
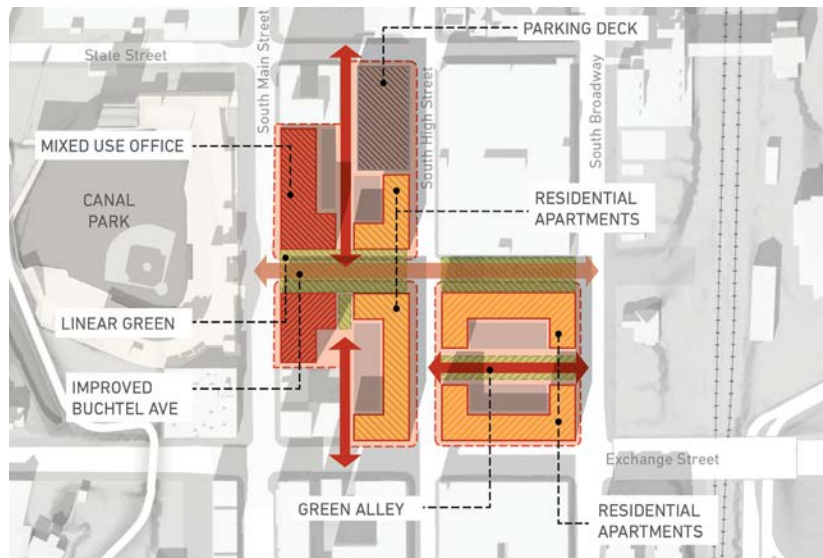
2 | MAIN + EXCHANGE

MAIN STREET LOOKING NORTH: POTENTIAL



CROSSROADS OF THE CITY

- Significant development opportunity adjacent to RubberDucks Stadium on Main Street
- Room for large scale new mixed use development
- Connectivity to The University of Akron
- Walkable proximity to Akron Children's Hospital and Cleveland Clinic Akron General



Mixed-use office



Linear plaza



Residential apartments

FOCUS AREAS

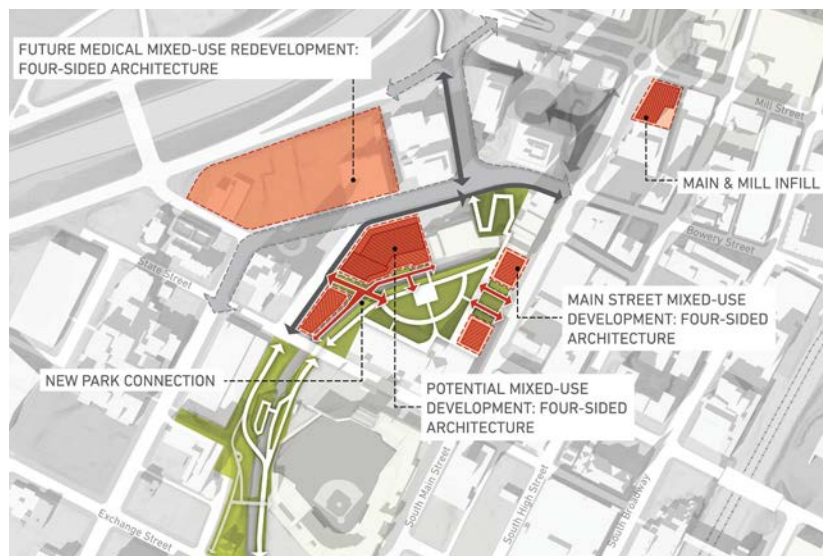
3 | BOWERY DISTRICT

STATE STREET LOOKING NORTH: POTENTIAL



DOWNTOWN'S CENTER OF GRAVITY

- Akron's community gathering space
- Residential growth opportunity
- Canal-side development opportunities
- Connectivity to walkable downtown blocks and Bowery district
- Connectivity to Towpath Trail



Park Expansion



Mixed-use



Arts and performance uses

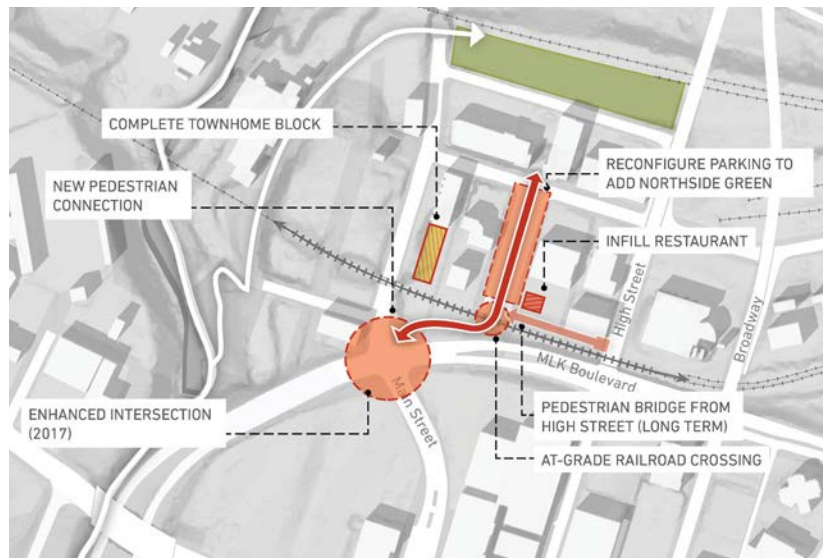
4 | NORTHSIDE

POTENTIAL

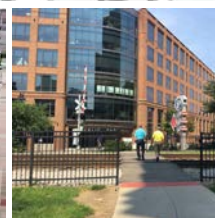


WALKABLE CLUSTER OF NICHE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL RETAIL

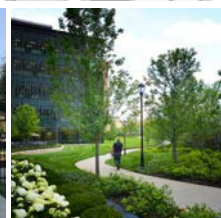
- Courtyard by Marriott Hotel servicing weekday and weekend visitors
- Connection to Cuyahoga Valley National Park - 2.2 Million Annual Visitors
- Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway
- Connectivity to Towpath Trail



Pedestrian connection



Railroad crossing

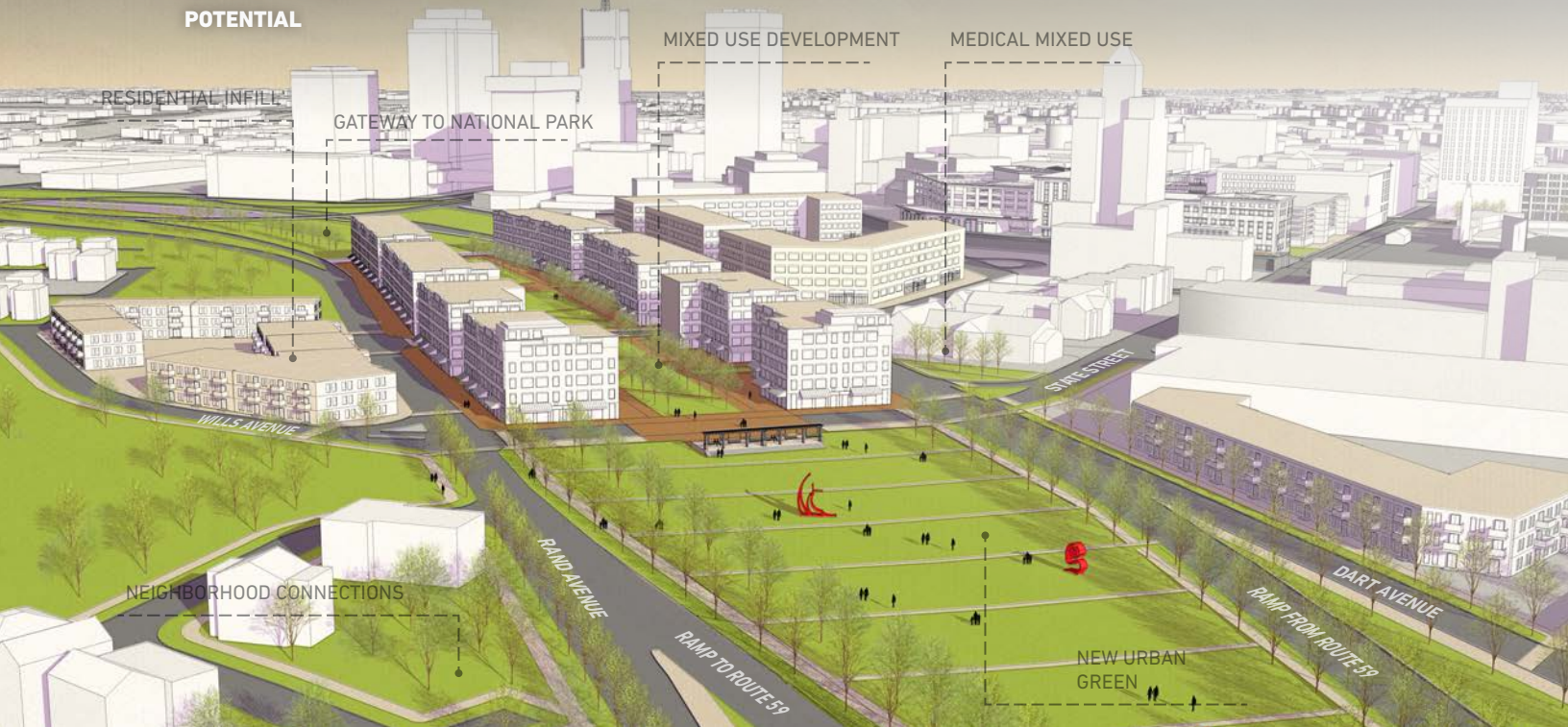


Pedestrian walk

FOCUS AREAS

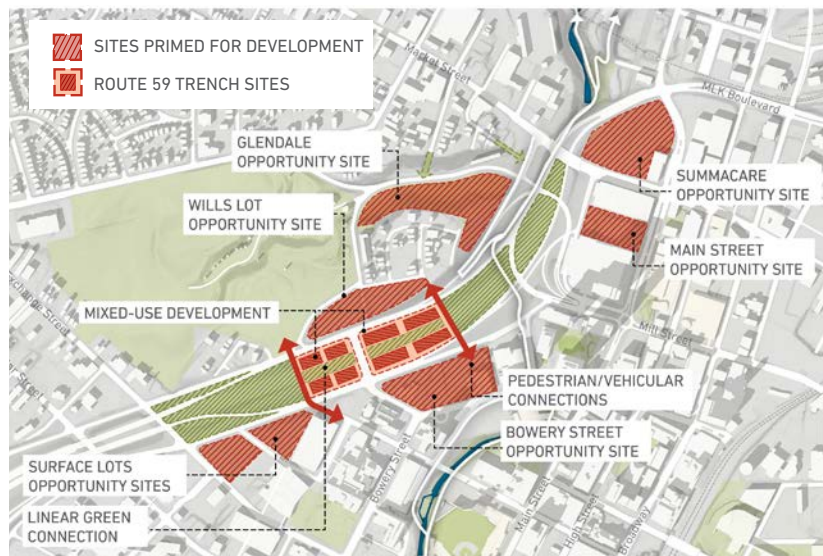
5 | ROUTE 59

POTENTIAL



31.5 ACRES OF DEVELOPABLE LAND

- Connection to downtown and near west neighborhood
- Skyline view
- Connection to Cuyahoga Valley National Park
- Connectivity to Towpath Trail
- Recommendations for integrated greenspace



Residential along park



Development at grade



Pedestrian connection

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

**SUCCESSFUL
IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE VISION AND
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
WILL REQUIRE DILIGENT
FOCUS FROM THE CITY
OF AKRON, DOWNTOWN
AKRON PARTNERSHIP,
AND OTHER STRATEGIC
PARTNERS.**

There are three important steps in this implementation process.

1. Achieve and adhere to a set of Strategic Recommendations.

These recommendations are the foundation of the plan and suggest the various incentives, policy changes, improvements and other actions that can be taken to enable and support Focus Area development and other revitalization efforts.

2. Phase in redevelopment of the five Focus Areas. Each Focus Area is broken down into three potential phases to both identify initial priorities and provide a guide to the long-term build out. For each of these first two steps, these recommendations and plan components are summarized in a matrix that identifies necessary partners and timelines. This is meant to be a flexible tool

to monitor success and to reorder priorities should some opportunities arise before others.

3. Empower an Implementation Entity. The City of Akron and Downtown Akron Partnership have committed to working together to increase capacity and funding and to identify a lead entity that will have a singular focus on revitalizing downtown Akron. This organization, which will act as the lead facilitator in implementing this plan, follows a model that has proven to be effective in the resurgence of urban cores across the Midwest.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Building from the ten Planning Principles established at the beginning of the planning process, the following strategic recommendations provide a framework for the continued revitalization of downtown Akron.

1

CONCENTRATE ON THE CORE

4

FACILITATE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWN

2

CREATE A RESIDENTIAL DOWNTOWN

5

INVEST IN A WELCOMING, MULTIMODAL AND CONNECTED DOWNTOWN

3

FOSTER AN ENTREPRENEURIAL DOWNTOWN

6

ACTIVATE DOWNTOWN



THE DOWNTOWN AKRON VISION & REDEVELOPMENT
PLAN IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:



For more information, please visit downtownakron.com