

BUILD DOWN TOWN

The Downtown Memphis Master Plan



12/22/2020


DOWNTOWNMEMPHIS
THE SOUL OF THE CITY

DOWNTOWN
THE SOUL

IS FOR EVERYONE.
DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS

ROYAL

PARBOL CHILLI



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS MEMPHIS DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN WAS PREPARED BY STANTEC'S URBAN PLACES

Without the support of many dedicated individuals and organizations this plan would not be possible. We want to thank them for their hard work, expertise, and encouragement throughout the planning process.



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CHAPTER 1

The Vision

Aspiring to Downtown's Potential

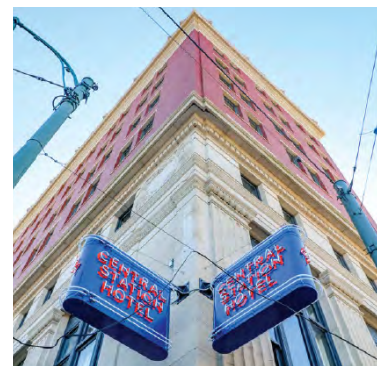
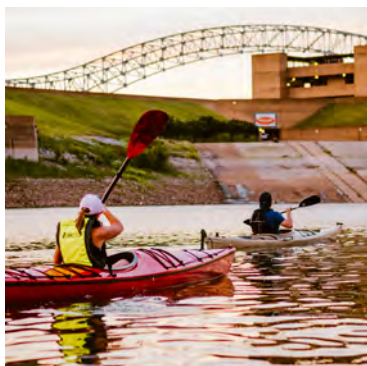
MISSION

WHY DO WE NEED BUILDDOWNTOWN NOW?

The global economy is changing and Memphis is changing along with it. The new economy is increasingly driven by knowledge industries and services tech, healthcare, and higher education. Traditional sectors like manufacturing are still vital, but increasingly rely on a smaller, more educated workforce.

In this new economic landscape, cities increasingly compete for top talent. This talent, in turn, is drawn to cities with livable urban neighborhoods, which means neighborhoods that are walkable, diverse, and offer amenities like local restaurants and well-maintained public spaces—neighborhoods that look a lot like Downtown Memphis.

There is already strong evidence of a renaissance in Downtown Memphis resulting from these cultural and economic shifts. The population of Downtown has grown by over 4,000 residents since 2000 and companies like ServiceMaster/Terminex and FedEx Logistics have relocated Downtown in their quest to attract talent. Entrepreneurial Memphians are creating new places for locals to eat, share a cup of coffee, and hang out with friends over a beer. In many ways, Downtown is becoming a more attractive place to live, work, and play than it has been in decades past.



However, as positive as trends are for Downtown Memphis, there is still work to be done. If market forces are left alone, the benefits of Downtown’s growth may not be shared by everyone. Momentum is undeniably a good thing – but it needs to be guided. Now is the time to plan for Downtown’s future, to ensure that Downtown Memphis remains a shared space for all Memphians in the decades to come.

OUR APPROACH

This Plan is not about reinventing Downtown or putting the needs of the global economy ahead of the Memphis community. This is a community-based plan that continues Downtown’s renaissance by enhancing its strengths. This approach will both help us build upon a Downtown to represent a more equitable common ground for our community as well as a more powerful economic engine for the region.

THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION

In 1977, the City of Memphis and Shelby County governments established the Center City Commission (later renamed the Downtown Memphis Commission) to revitalize a struggling Downtown. Since then, Downtown has steadily grown, aided by the support and leadership of the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC). The DMC’s mission is to continually improve Downtown Memphis based on two key metrics: people and property values. The DMC accomplishes this mission by providing development incentives, marketing support security, and Clean & Green services throughout the Central Business Improvement District (CBID).



MISSION STATEMENT:

**A PERIOD OF UNPARALLELED
DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND
TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE HAS UNLOCKED
AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY
FOR DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS TO LEAD
THE CITY AND THE REGION TOWARD A
MORE **ECONOMICALLY COMPETITIVE,
EQUITABLE, LIVABLE, AND RESILIENT
FUTURE.****



VISION:

DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS IS ALREADY THE INCLUSIVE HEART OF OUR REGION – BUT IT CAN BE EVEN BETTER. WE WILL BUILD ON DOWNTOWN’S EXISTING STRENGTHS TO LEAD MEMPHIS INTO A NEW ERA OF SHARED OPPORTUNITY. DOWNTOWN WILL BE A PLACE THAT INVITES EVERYONE TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND INNOVATE TOGETHER.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, WE WILL: BUILD UP, CELEBRATE WALKABILITY, AND WELCOME EVERYONE.

THE PATH FORWARD

The steady growth of Downtown’s residential population since 2000 is strong evidence of a growing demand for walkable urban living in Memphis. Fundamental demographic trends in Memphis and across the country suggest that this demand will continue to grow. However, demand does not automatically translate into the right kind of investment in the right places without strategic planning and management. Translating demand into equitable change for Downtown will require targeted strategies:

BUILD UP

- **Promote compact critical mass.** Concentrate development within a five-minute walk of Signature Streets and Public Spaces (as defined on page 46). This will guide the density needed to attract retail and create a vibrant public realm.
- **Use robust public/private partnerships and incentives to unlock development feasibility.** Continue to incentivize Downtown development with existing incentives like Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) and explore the creation of innovative new tools and public/private partnerships to fill additional gaps.
- **Implement Downtown-wide design standards and design review.** Enforce consistent design standards to ensure that new development creates visually appealing and experientially cohesive spaces.



Conversion of a portion of Court Avenue to a “shared street” for flexible use and pedestrian-first orientation

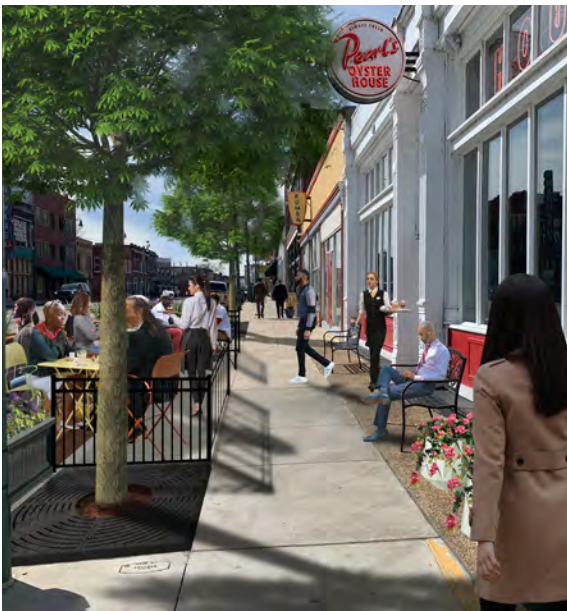


CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- **Create a more vibrant public realm.** Enhance the pedestrian environment by creating a cohesive network of tree-lined Signature Streets that link revitalized Signature Public Spaces, including the new riverfront park system.
- **Promote investments that support the full spectrum of the visitor industry.** Capitalize on the broad range of visitor activities that can take place Downtown, including cultural programming, meetings and conventions, sports, and other events attracting locals and out-of-towners alike.
- **Enhance mobility to and across Downtown.** Increase mobility options with a focus on pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, shared parking, and emerging transportation technologies.

WELCOME EVERYONE

- **Build equity into every implementation strategy.** Consider the equity impacts of every Downtown program and policy, and implement concrete programs to increase affordable housing, provide workforce training, and grow small businesses.
- **Ensure that Downtown grows more inclusive as it becomes more successful.** Make sure that Downtown's public spaces reflect the diversity of Memphis through inclusive programming and design.
- **Promote Downtown's authenticity.** Support the growth of Memphis' authentic culture, including its music, food, art, and history.



Introduction of street trees, outdoor seating, and additional street furniture along South Main Street



Reinvigoration of the Main Street Mall with ground level activity and compact critical mass





**I AM
A MAN**

**THE
MEMPHIS
BLUES**

**Lorraine
MOTEL**

THE LEGENDARY
SUN
Studio
MEMPHIS TENNESSEE

PIGGLY WICGLY
The Original
SELF SERVICE

BEALE ST

**STAY
MOTEL**

RESPECT



CHAPTER 2

Setting the Stage

Defining Downtown's Potential

“GREAT CITIES AND REGIONS START DOWNTOWN. NO CITY OR REGION CAN SUCCEED WITHOUT A STRONG DOWNTOWN, THE PLACE WHERE COMPACTNESS AND DENSITY BRING PEOPLE, CAPITAL, AND IDEAS INTO THE KIND OF PROXIMITY THAT BUILDS ECONOMIES, OPPORTUNITY, AND IDENTITY. DESPITE A RELATIVELY SMALL SHARE OF A CITY’S OVERALL GEOGRAPHY, DOWNTOWNS DELIVER SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS ACROSS BOTH CITY AND REGION. DOWNTOWNS SERVE AS THE EPICENTER OF COMMERCE, CAPITAL INVESTMENT, DIVERSITY, PUBLIC DISCOURSE, AND KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION...”

“U.S. DOWNTOWNS STAND POISED TO CONTINUE BUILDING THEIR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROMINENCE TO MATCH THEIR CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE.”

- THE VALUE OF US DOWNTOWNS AND CENTER CITIES (2019),
INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION



INTRODUCTION

BuildDowntown is optimistic about the future of Downtown Memphis because Downtown already has a strong foundation to build on. Downtown is home to well-known institutions like St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, and the University of Memphis Law School as well as anchors like the Orpheum, AutoZone Park, and the Peabody. Historic Beale Street and the National Civil Rights Museum are iconic destinations for cultural tourism. The FedExForum draws frequent crowds to the Grizzlies and Tigers basketball games, concerts and other events. Downtown’s riverfront is planned to undergo an extensive renovation that will result in world-class outdoor amenities.

Among Downtown’s strengths, there are also many challenges. After decades of regional sprawl, Downtown’s office real estate market has struggled relative to the downtowns of peer cities. Vacant storefronts and office buildings are still frequently visible along the Main Street corridors. And while significant residential growth has improved Downtown neighborhoods, the growth is focused away from active retail, which fails to build the

critical mass needed for small businesses to succeed along the Main Street corridor.

To build on Downtown’s strengths, and address its challenges, BuildDowntown offers recommendations based on three key sets of data:

- **National Trends**
Long-term national trends in demographics, transportation, and the economy that most accurately predict the future trends and changes the city will experience.
- **Downtown Market Demand**
Data showing current demand for Downtown housing, retail, and office space, and how it could change in the near future.
- **Community Feedback**
What members of the Downtown community—residents, workers, and visitors—told us about what they want to see in Downtown Memphis.



NATIONAL TRENDS

THE DEMOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITY

Evolving lifestyle and household trends promise new growth and unique challenges for the future of Downtown.

After decades in which households with children dominated US housing markets, fueling the move from cities to suburbs, North America's underlying demographics took a dramatic turn in the early 2000s. The amount of households with children has declined to less than one-quarter of all households across North America, fueling a rapid resurgence in downtowns and nearby urban neighborhoods. This trend will accelerate sharply over the next two decades—suggesting that many cities like Memphis have only witnessed the beginning of downtown revival driven by spiking demand for denser urban housing.

Housing markets are shaped by changes in household composition. Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies reported in 2019 that through 2028 more than 80% of net new households will be singles and couples—a figure projected to remain steady across North America for the next two decades. For at least the next two decades, US housing demand will favor more urban choices than at any point since before the Great Depression—sharply accelerating trends that have been increasingly visible over the past two decades.

Data also reveals a correlation between income and a preference for urban living. For example, 25- to 49-year-olds with a college education are now far more likely to move into cities — particularly downtowns and other walkable urban neighborhoods — than their peers with less education. Households in the top 40% by income have been moving into urban centers in growing numbers while those in the bottom 60% by income have

been moving away from the same urban centers. These trends are driven in part by housing values, which have been rising much faster in cities than suburbs across the US since 2000.

Key lessons:

- With residential demand for downtowns on the rise, Memphis has an opportunity to adapt housing development strategies to capture demand forecasted by current and future market trends. New housing should be concentrated in locations and at densities that will create a walkable, vibrant core.
- The increasing preference of affluent residents for urban living implies that affordable and mixed-income housing needs to be proactively included in Downtown's development strategies to ensure there is housing available across income levels.

A CHANGING ECONOMY

In the tomorrow's economy, Downtown will become even more critical to regional economic health.

US census data indicates that workforce growth has decreased by roughly 50% in comparison to the decade before 2010, and the US workforce is expected to grow even more slowly leading up to 2040. This labor shortage is sharply increasing competition between regions for skilled, creative and educated workers. According to research from the International Downtown Association (IDA), a vibrant downtown is one of the most potent tools a region can wield in the competition to attract and retain talent. This fact has also been underscored by the Brookings Institution, which notes that jobs and investment are increasingly flowing to cities with vibrant downtown cores and lively urban neighborhoods.



As the largest walkable urban neighborhood in the Memphis region, Downtown Memphis is an asset to the entire region's economic competitiveness. Without a strong Downtown, Memphis will face an increasingly difficult struggle to attract top talent in industries that define the new economy. Attracting talent in professional, scientific, and technical service industries will have a large impact on the economy going forward. A 2019 study by the Economic Policy Institute shows that jobs in these fields have a high “multiplier” – each job generated in a knowledge field spins off employment in other sectors. For example, the City of Buffalo, New York estimates that each new knowledge industry job produces five additional jobs in other fields – many of which provide a strong chance for upward mobility.

Key lessons:

- Recruiting key knowledge industry jobs to Downtown will be vital to the growth and success of Downtown.
- Success in attracting top talent in knowledge industries will have powerful spin-off effects, and boost employment in other fields.

MOBILITY DISRUPTION

Utilizing new and innovative modes of transportation will change American cities – and benefit Downtown.

In the 20th century, American cities were fundamentally reshaped by the widespread adoption of the private automobile. Now, our cities are on the cusp of adopting new transportation technologies that promise to be equally disruptive. The first wave of change has already arrived in the form of mobility-on-demand, which encompasses ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft, and micro-mobility services like e-scooters and bike

share. Mobility-on-demand is already steadily increasing the convenience and decreasing the cost of living and working in dense downtown areas.

The next waves of transportation technology promise even larger benefits for downtowns. First, over the next ten to twelve years, experts predict will be the rise of connected vehicles. Connected vehicles won't drive themselves, but they will self-park far more efficiently than human drivers – potentially increasing capacity in current garages by 20% to 30%. In the next decade, truly autonomous vehicles will likely be widely adopted. With the rise of autonomous vehicles, residents of dense downtown areas will be able to benefit from shared autonomous vehicles (SAVs), which could save residents roughly \$5,000 annually compared to private vehicle ownership.

Key lessons:

- Minimizing investment in new parking facilities by using existing facilities more efficiently has always made sense—and will make even more sense as connected and autonomous vehicles become the new normal.
- Self-parking cars that require less storage space and the rise of SAVs displacing personal car ownership will reduce the need for additional parking facilities over the next two decades (a key finding of the DMC's recently commissioned *Downtown Memphis Parking Study*), coupled with the availability of existing facilities for redevelopment, will offer an unprecedented opportunity to increase Downtown's development density and achieve compact critical mass.



DOWNTOWN MARKET DEMAND

HOUSING

Demand for Downtown housing is strong, and, if planned properly, could help transform Downtown.

Downtown Memphis has experienced significant housing growth since 2000, with around 4,000 new units added and consistently high multi-family occupancy rates. An analysis of future housing demand for Downtown Memphis conducted by Zimmerman / Volk Associates (ZVA) reveals that Downtown residential demand will continue to be robust. Based on regional household growth, mobility, and other market trends, ZVA projects that Downtown has the potential to absorb between 6,000 – 7,000 market-rate housing units in the next decade. Due to the high need in the Memphis region, demand for affordable housing units Downtown is extremely high. That said, available land and the public incentives needed to help underwrite affordable units are constrained resources in Memphis.

If 30% of new housing units are made affordable – which would require significant public investment – up to 10,000 new housing units (7,000 market-rate and 3,000 affordable) could be absorbed by the end of 2030. This is over twice the total units added since 2000—holding the potential to dramatically reshape Downtown.

However, strong potential market demand does not automatically translate to a commensurate increase in housing units. Producing market-rate units will still require public incentives, such as the existing PILOT program. Affordable units will require even more public support, from local, state, and federal sources.

Equally as important as the number of units built is the location of these units. If a large number of new housing units are spread out across the CBID, there will be little benefit to core activity areas. However, concentrating the influx of new units in select areas will provide the density required to fill vacant storefronts, and activate streets throughout the year. Achieving this new level of density will be a challenge for both developers and public sector partners, requiring more innovative design, and the creative application of incentives.

Key lessons:

- Focusing 10,000 housing units over the next decade within a five-minute walk of Main Street especially but also other existing retail centers (such as the “retail nodes” indicated on the district diagrams in Chapter 3) will play a critical role in unlocking Downtown’s full potential as an economically vibrant urban center.
- Over the next 20 years, the pace of residential development will not be constrained by demand but by the availability of easily developed land, adaptable buildings and public incentives.

OFFICE

Despite strong challenges, Downtown’s office market has a vital role to play in the future of Memphis.

The real estate consulting firm W-ZHA analyzed the Downtown office market in the context of the broader regional office market, and the types of jobs that the region is currently attracting and likely to attract over the next decade. Their analysis found both weaknesses and opportunities in Downtown’s office market.

As the Memphis region sprawled in the mid-20th century, Downtown Memphis gradually lost its position as the center of the Memphis office market. The Downtown office sub-market currently contains approximately 3 million square feet of multi-tenant office space, with about 2 million square feet of Class A space (Class A being the standard most corporate tenants seek). By comparison, the East Memphis sub-market contains over 9 million square feet of office space, with over 3 million square feet of Class A space. Class A rents in Downtown are significantly lower than rents in East Memphis, and vacancies are higher.

Despite no longer being Memphis’s dominant office market, Downtown is still strongly competitive in many sectors. Downtown’s value as a mixed-use, live-work-play environment is important to companies that are competing for knowledge workers who prefer such environments. The “buzz” created by Downtown’s



revitalization is also a valuable branding opportunity for companies that locate Downtown, as evidenced by recent relocations like ServiceMaster/Terminex and FedEx Logistics.

Downtown also plays an increasingly important role in the regional economy as best suited to attract knowledge workers to the region. Job growth in Memphis for the last seven years has been largely concentrated in sectors like warehousing, transportation, healthcare, hospitality, and medical device manufacturing. Fostering new growth in high-earning fields like technology, advertising, and information will be the key to a more diverse and sustainable regional economy – and Downtown will likely be where much of this growth takes place.

Given current market dynamics, W-ZHA projects that Downtown could support an additional 315,000 square feet of multi-tenant office space in the next ten years. Furthermore, if Downtown increases its level of regional office capture to 15%, and additional companies move Downtown, this number could increase by an additional 770,000 square feet. Increasing Downtown’s capture rate will depend on enhancing Downtown’s existing strengths as an office campus, providing an even more attractive environment by concentrating amenities and activity in the Downtown core.

Key lessons:

- A healthy Downtown office market can serve the entire region by attracting and retaining talent in knowledge industries.
- Downtown’s office market has modest growth potential, but this potential can be enhanced by investments that concentrate more population and amenities in the core along with improved multimodal access to downtown from surrounding areas and communities.

RETAIL

The health of Downtown’s retail market will depend on concentrating investment wisely.

In 2018, the DMC commissioned Larisa Ortiz Associates (LOA) to create the Downtown Memphis Retail Market Study and Action Plan. The plan projects that a modest

amount of new retail—approximately 60,000 – 90,000 square feet—can be absorbed Downtown in the near future. Additional square footage beyond this, as LOA notes, depends on the ability to attract significant new housing to the core and other parts of downtown. To increase the impact of this retail space, the Plan recommended concentrating incentives for new retail in targeted nodes — including the Main Street Mall, South Main, and the Edge District — to support the critical mass needed to create a viable local retail markets. Importantly, retail nodes in different parts of downtown should be cultivated and fostered to compliment one another rather than competing. Each unique retail area warrants its own strategy tailored to what makes it distinct.

Based on a recent DMC assessment, the Main Street Mall includes roughly 100,000+ sf of vacant retail space. The first priority for new retail investment should be to refill vacant space along the Main Street Mall. Note: focusing substantial new housing development within a 5-minute walking radius of the Mall will significantly improve its chances of successful revitalization.

Growing the amount of retail demanded Downtown will also depend on growing Downtown’s residential base. Although Downtown retail benefits from the presence of employees and tourists, residents provide a more sustainable market base to help businesses survive. According to the Plan, households spend approximately \$35,000 on nearby retail -- roughly five times the amount spent by a typical office worker.

Key lessons:

- The health of Downtown retail is closely linked to the continued growth of Downtown’s residential base.
- Investment in Downtown retail should be concentrated in targeted nodes, rather than spread across the CBID.
- A one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice: different sets of strategies might be warranted for distinct retail areas that are tailored to what makes them unique.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

1,000+

TOTAL POP-UP ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

200+

TOTAL DESIGN STUDIO PARTICIPANTS



300

TOTAL ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

24

PUBLIC INPUT TIP JARS IN DOWNTOWN, MIDTOWN, EAST MEMPHIS & THE SUBURBS

15

OUTREACH EVENTS AT COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

8

PUBLIC INPUT STATIONS AT LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC CENTERS



57,540

ESTIMATED POPULATION REACH OF MATERIALS AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES



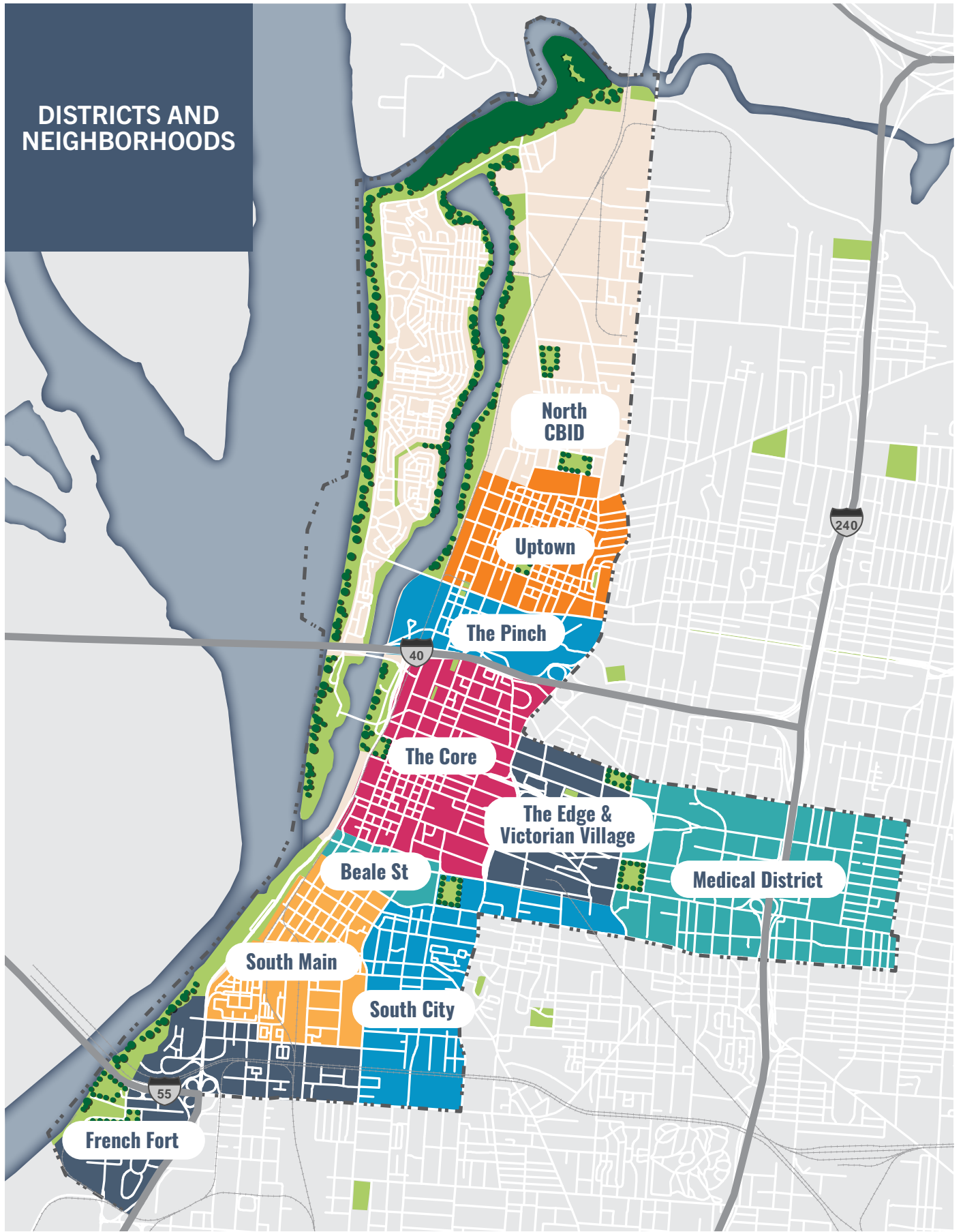


CHAPTER 3

Recommendations

Unlocking Downtown's Potential

DISTRICTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS



Downtown Districts





OVERVIEW

Planning for Downtown’s future starts with the Vision...

Downtown Memphis is already the inclusive heart of our region – but it can be even better. We will build on Downtown’s existing strengths to lead Memphis into a new era of shared opportunity. Downtown will be a place that invites everyone to live, work, play, and innovate together.

To accomplish this, we will: build up, celebrate walkability, and welcome everyone.

The following pages describe recommended changes for every Downtown district, demonstrating how the next decade will offer transformative opportunities for Downtown—and for Memphis and the region. Over the next decade, developed space Downtown could increase from roughly 15 million square feet to more than 25 million square feet. While the most dramatic growth is likely to occur in the Core and South Main districts, every part of Downtown will benefit. Housing will likely represent most of this growth, but Downtown’s supply of office and retail could also rise by roughly 25%.

The increases in housing and office space will boost demand for innovative restaurants, cafés, breweries, unique retail, and entertainment. These amenities will not only draw even more people to live and work Downtown, but also increase the Memphis region’s ability to grow its knowledge economy. At the same time, a strong commitment to equity and inclusion will ensure that Downtown Memphis continues to be a source of economic opportunity for everyone.

But the changes to Downtown will go beyond commercial development and economic growth. Downtown is everyone’s neighborhood and the shared public living room for all of Memphis—our public spaces should reflect this. A network of walkable, tree-lined Signature Streets will connect a series of re-imagined parks and public spaces, including the dramatically transformed Mississippi riverfront. Improved transit will connect all of Memphis to Downtown and make it a place where residents can live “car-light” or “car-free” if they wish. These improvements will reinvigorate Downtown’s role as the heart of the region—and make it a true common ground for Memphis’s diverse community.

Unlocking these opportunities begins with leveraging the trends and market data outlined in Chapter 2 to translate the Vision described in Chapter 1 into specific planning recommendations for every part of Downtown. Additionally, recommendations should be applied across Downtown districts to create complementarity rather than competition between districts.

LEVERAGING MEMPHIS’ CIVIL RIGHTS HERITAGE

The South Main and other districts include several sites important to Memphis’ role in the Civil Rights Movement such as those included on the Memphis Heritage Trail. Local leaders should build on this history and consider partnering with one or more national institutions to help elevate the city’s prominence while complementing and extending rather than competing with existing institutions and organizations.



TRANSLATING THE VISION INTO A PLANNING FRAMEWORK					
Vision Principles	Framework Objectives	District Recommendations			
		Downtown-Wide	The Core and Beale	Pinch, Uptown, North CBID	
<p>BUILD UP by concentrating a critical mass of development within a five-minute walk of Main Street and other retail centers.</p>	<p>1. Concentrate new housing and other development within a 5-minute walk of Main Street and other retail and employment nodes</p>	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8,500-10,000 housing units 375,000-1,075,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4,000-4,800 housing units 150-440,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,000-1,200 housing units 20-65,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	
	<p>2. Promote infill, reuse and preservation, and catalytic redevelopment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share parking to minimize/avoid investment in new parking facilities Prioritize redevelopment of vacant and underutilized buildings and parking lots Emphasize preservation and reuse of historic buildings Prioritize incubators, shared workspaces, and similar strategies that draw entrepreneurs and emerging businesses to Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate the Main Street Mall —fully develop all vacant and underutilized property, prioritizing storefront spaces Redevelop the parking lots and MLGW site at Beale and Main into a 6.1-acre high density, mixed-use redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue the redevelopment initiatives recommended in the Memphis Uptown Community Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pinch District » Bayou + Mill Redevelopment » Greyhound Redevelopment » Warehouse District » Manassas Market » Chelsea 	
	<p>3. Require all projects to follow Downtown Design Guidelines and go through design review. Create additional design standards, as appropriate, for all projects that define and shape the public realm—public and private development, public spaces, streets and other infrastructure</p>	<p>Continue to promote...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public spaces that are programmed and designed to foster interaction and community Active, transparent frontages along Signature Streets instead of parking and blank walls facing these streets or blank walls or parking facing any streets Design, scale and massing that demonstrate respect for existing context and history, even if in areas like the Core and the Medical District new buildings introduce greater height to achieve density that supports life on the street and achieves economic development goals 			



District Recommendations (con't)				
South Main	South City	The Edge	South End and French Fort	Medical District
<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000-1,200 housing units • 45-130,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000-1,200 housing units • 20-65,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500-600 housing units • 45-130,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500-600 housing units • 10-30,000 sq. ft. office and retail space 	<p>Over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500-600 housing units • 75-215,000 sq. ft. office and retail space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize incentives for retail, creative office, artists, and artisanal manufacturing tenants along South Main • Support redevelopment of the Second Street corridor between Dr. Martin Luther King Avenue and Talbot Avenue • Support adaptive reuse of Film Row as an incubator for retail, art studios, and workspaces • Build on the neighborhood's rich Civil Rights heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote neighborhood-scale infill development in the numerous vacant lots and buildings across the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage resurgence of interest in the historic Sun Studio to promote mixed-use redevelopment of auto-oriented businesses and surface parking lots across the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote neighborhood-scale infill development across the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage future medical facility growth to integrate into the neighborhood • Support significant mixed-use/housing infill around Health Sciences Park and along Madison and Union Avenues
<p>Continue to promote...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public spaces that are programmed and designed to foster interaction and community • Active, transparent frontages along Signature Streets instead of parking and blank walls facing these streets or blank walls or parking facing any streets • Design, scale and massing that demonstrate respect for existing context and history, even if in areas like the Core and the Medical District new buildings introduce greater height to achieve density that supports life on the street and achieves economic development goals 				



TRANSLATING THE VISION INTO A PLANNING FRAMEWORK				
Vision Principles	Framework Objectives	District Recommendations		
		Downtown-Wide	The Core and Beale	Pinch, Uptown, North CBID
<p>CELEBRATE WALKABILITY by bringing Downtown’s streets to life and making Downtown more accessible to residents, visitors, and workers without a car.</p>	4. Create a more vibrant public realm distinguished by a network of tree-lined, connected Signature Streets and Public Spaces and the new riverfront park system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund exhibitions/performances and “tactical urbanism” through micro-grants or similar programs • Celebrate Signature Streets as lively public spaces for every district • Expand public space programming—ranging from small neighborhood events to the Main Street Sounds busking program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Main Street » Beale Street » Union Avenue » Madison Avenue » Second Street » B.B. King Boulevard • Re-imagine Civic Plaza and add food and other amenity uses—or consider redevelopment with uses that animate Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Main Street » North Second Street » North Third Street » Jackson Avenue » A.W. Willis Avenue » Chelsea Avenue • Implement the Riverfront Multi-use Trail and Chelsea Greenline initiatives
	5. Promote investments that support the full spectrum of the visitor industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand programs that support “culture bearers”—buskers, musicians, artists, chefs • Enhance and expand Beale Street activity • Manage parking availability and event traffic • Support innovative restaurant, retail, and related businesses • Ensure that the convention center remains competitive • Monitor Downtown’s hotel supply and demand relative to room types and counts 		
	6. Enhance mobility networks and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and grow the Downtown Mobility Authority • Explore converting the Main Street trolley into an automated (driverless) service • Implement network improvements such as road diets and two-way to one-way conversions along with advanced signalization enhancements • Improve pedestrian, cycling, transit, and micro-transit networks and connections • Expand shared parking organization and management 		
<p>WELCOME EVERYONE by offering economic and residential opportunities to all Memphians and creating public spaces and experiences that reflect the full diversity of the city.</p>	7. Promote equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that 30% of new housing is affordable for families earning 60-80% of area median income • Provide access to new downtown jobs by expanding workforce readiness and training programs • Offer entrepreneurs access to new business opportunities including participation in development and construction 		
	8. Promote inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use streetscape to celebrate diversity and foster interaction such as through widespread introduction of interactive public art along streets and in public spaces • Program and design parks and public spaces with activities that invite the full spectrum of the Memphis community to come together to enjoy these spaces together • Introduce public art that tells everyone’s stories to make Downtown a place that everyone calls their own 		
	9. Promote authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Memphis’ music, food, and art culture along signature streets and other public places • Encourage musicians, performers and other “culture bearers” to re-energize Beale Street, and expand offerings towards S. Fourth Street and around W.C. Handy Park • Expand the availability of affordable spaces for start-ups, artists, and other creative professionals 		



District Recommendations (con't)				
South Main	South City	The Edge	South End and French Fort	Medical District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » South Main Street » South Second Street » B.B. King Boulevard » Vance Avenue • Emphasize connections to the Riverfront as the district’s neighborhood park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Vance Avenue » B.B. King Boulevard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Union Avenue » Madison Avenue » Monroe Avenue » Marshall Avenue • Implement the vision for the Ravine as a central public space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Riverfront serves as a Signature Street • ...and as the district’s primary public space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Union Avenue » Madison Avenue • Re-imagine Health Sciences Park as a more active public space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand programs that support “culture bearers”—buskers, musicians, artists, chefs • Enhance and expand Beale Street activity • Manage parking availability and event traffic • Support innovative restaurant, retail, and related businesses • Ensure that the convention center remains competitive • Monitor Downtown’s hotel supply and demand relative to room types and counts 				
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THE CORE AND BEALE

PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
4,000-4,800 HOUSING UNITS
150-440,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE

The epicenter of Downtown life, the Core will attract significantly more housing, jobs, and investment to build a critical mass of activity that feeds surrounding neighborhoods and benefits the city and region. More people living and working Downtown will support street-animating retail and dining that complements its character and energy. Greater investment here will continue to build value and increase the city’s tax base—and will be essential to transforming Downtown into a regional economic engine.

BUILD UP

- Concentrate development within a five-minute walk of Main Street to support existing retail and attract new shops and restaurants. Study unique retail strategies for each of the Core’s unique neighborhoods. Leverage catalyst sites like the MLGW site at Main and Beale Streets to transform underused land and parking lots into an active mix of housing, employment, dining, and shopping. On and around Beale Street in particular, build on Memphis’ arts and music performance culture to foster new investment and redevelopment.
- Prioritize adaptive reuse of buildings when feasible to maintain Downtown’s historic character while providing new space for contemporary uses.

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

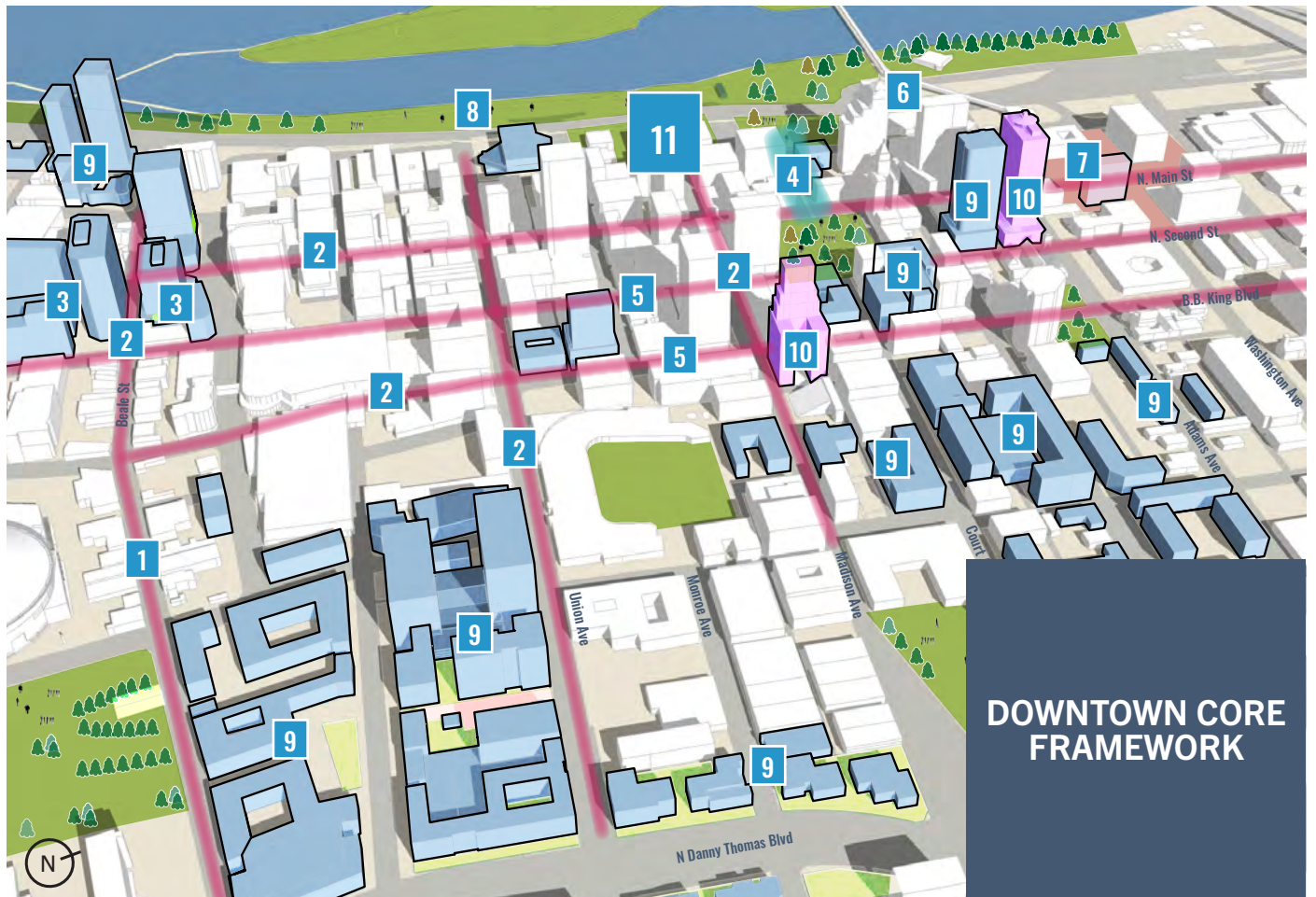
- Invest in pedestrian and visual improvements along signature streets including Main, Beale, Madison, and Union to better connect downtown to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Leverage future bus rapid transit (BRT) service along the “Innovation Corridor” from Downtown to the University of Memphis to catalyze transit-oriented development along B.B. King Boulevard and Second Street.

- Implement active curbside management and shared parking policies to encourage shared mobility and reduce the burden of parking.
- Signature streets—South Main Street and Main Street Mall, B.B. King Boulevard, Second Street, Madison Avenue, Union Avenue.
- Signature public spaces—Main Street Mall, Civic Plaza, Riverfront.

WELCOME EVERYONE

- Celebrate Memphis’s culture of music, food, performance, and art throughout the district.
- Transform the riverfront between Court Avenue and Beale Street into a welcoming public space.
- Convert a portion of Court Avenue between Court Square and the riverfront into a flexible shared street that hosts a variety of public events.
- Expand and promote a public art network that tells the story of the city and its residents along streets and in public spaces.





KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Expand Beale Street activity area by fostering redevelopment which leverages a living blues heritage (address further in follow-up planning study)
- 2** Invest in the Core’s Signature Streets including Main Street, Beale Street, Second Street, B.B. King Boulevard, Madison Avenue, and Union Avenue with pedestrian improvements for safety and beauty
- 3** Redevelop existing parking lots and MLGW site at Beale and Main
- 4** Convert a portion of Court Avenue into a shared street
- 5** Upgrade Second Street/B.B. King Boulevard BRT corridors to prioritize pedestrian amenities on B.B. King and transit on Second
- 6** Reconsider north and south access to Riverside Drive
- 7** Renovate Civic Plaza and infill with mixed-use development
- 8** Enhance riverfront area
- 9** New development/redevelopment
- 10** Prioritized adaptive re-use opportunities
- 11** Additional redevelopment of under-utilized sites and vacant upper floors (applicable throughout district)

FRAMEWORK LEGEND

- Development Opportunity
- Adaptive Re-use Opportunity
- Public Spaces





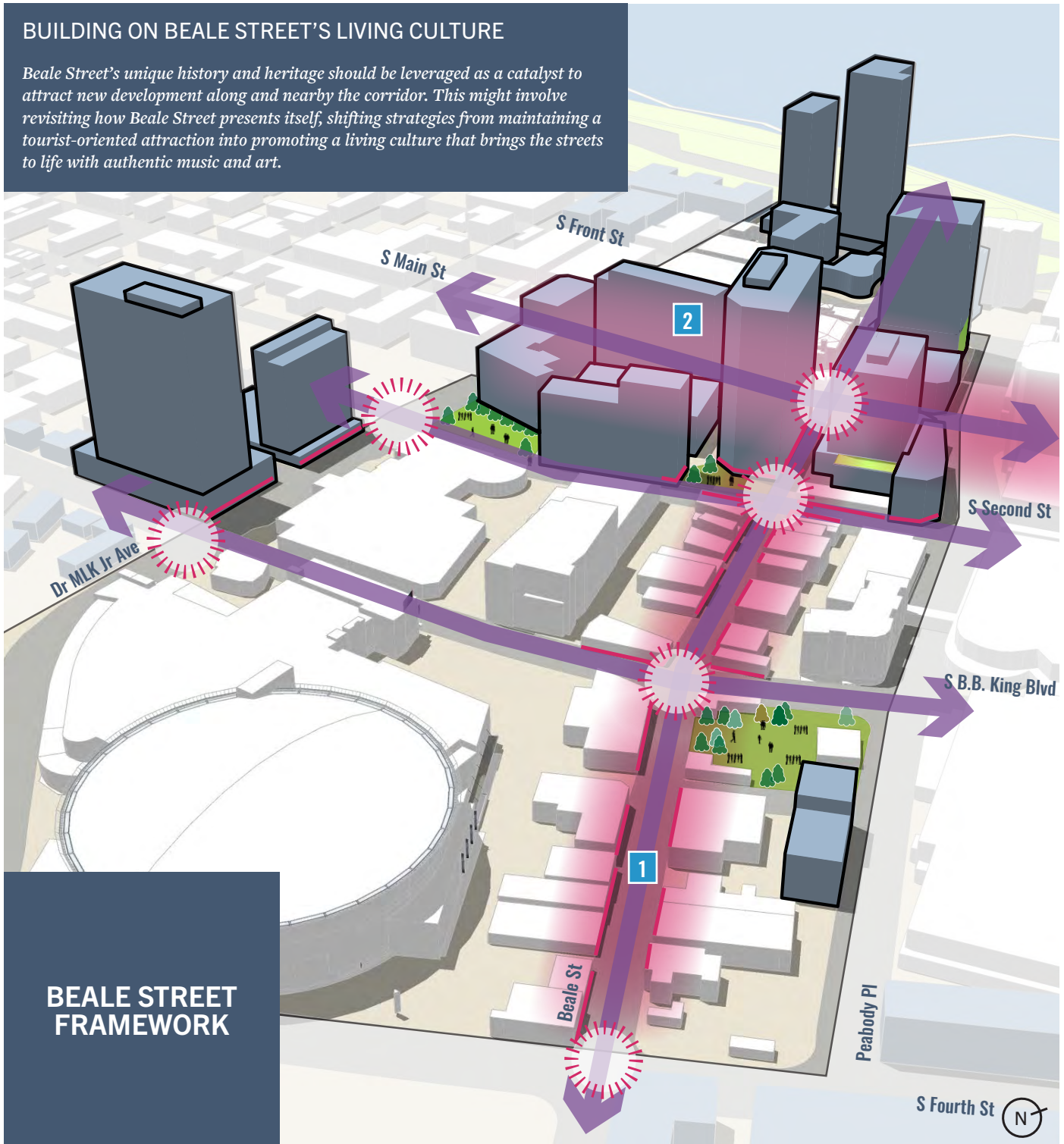
FRAMEWORK LEGEND

-  BRT Route
-  BRT Stops
-  Signature Street
-  Intersection Improvement
-  Development Opportunity
-  Signature Public Space
-  Main Street Mall (Signature Street)
-  Shared Street



BUILDING ON BEALE STREET'S LIVING CULTURE

Beale Street's unique history and heritage should be leveraged as a catalyst to attract new development along and nearby the corridor. This might involve revisiting how Beale Street presents itself, shifting strategies from maintaining a tourist-oriented attraction into promoting a living culture that brings the streets to life with authentic music and art.



BEALE STREET FRAMEWORK

FRAMEWORK LEGEND

- Signature Street
- Development Opportunity
- Intersection Improvement
- Park Improvement
- Active Frontage
- Retail Node

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Enhance and expand Beale Street activity
- 2 Combine Belz parking lot, city parking lot, and MLGW Building for a 6.1 acre developer RFP





The vibrancy of Beale Street will expand to other parts of the Beale District and Downtown Core



Adaptive reuse will bring new life to old buildings, enlivening sidewalks by offering space to entrepreneurs and others



MEMPHIS LIGHT GAS & WATER SITE CONCEPT

Main and Beale Streets are two of the most memorable streets in Downtown Memphis, if not the entire region. The intersection of these key community assets and adjacent lands presents significant opportunities to re-imagine a key gateway and accomplish several priority initiatives of this plan.

The Memphis Light Gas & Water site, approximately five acres, is the largest contiguous tract adjacent to this gateway. Re-imagining properties around this intersection could connect the activity along historic Beale Street and the FedExForum to the Main Street Mall, as well as provide vibrant streetscape connections to the river.

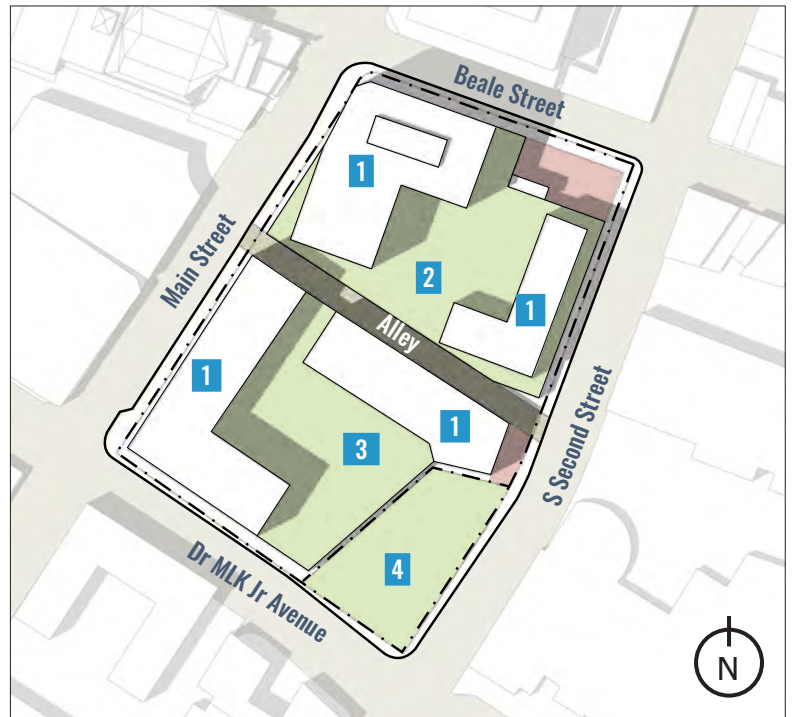
Parcel ID #: 002127 00002

Owner: Memphis Light Gas & Water Division



DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 1** Up to 1 million sf of mixed-use development
- 2** Structured parking
- 3** Open space
- 4** MLK Reflection Park (Existing)



Top: Plan view of existing site. Bottom: Plan view of concept.



SURFACE PARKING LOTS AT BEALE & MAIN CONCEPT

Two surface parking lots occupy the northeastern and northwestern corners of this key intersection. The following concepts propose adding several hundred housing units and ground floor retail to this area of Downtown. Retail would be concentrated along Beale and Main Street frontages to provide maximum vibrancy.

- A** Parcel ID #: 002048 00007C
Owner: City of Memphis
- B1** Parcel ID #: 002049 00013
Owner: One Eighty South Main LLC
- B2** Parcel ID #: 002050 00009C
Owner: BJHA LLC



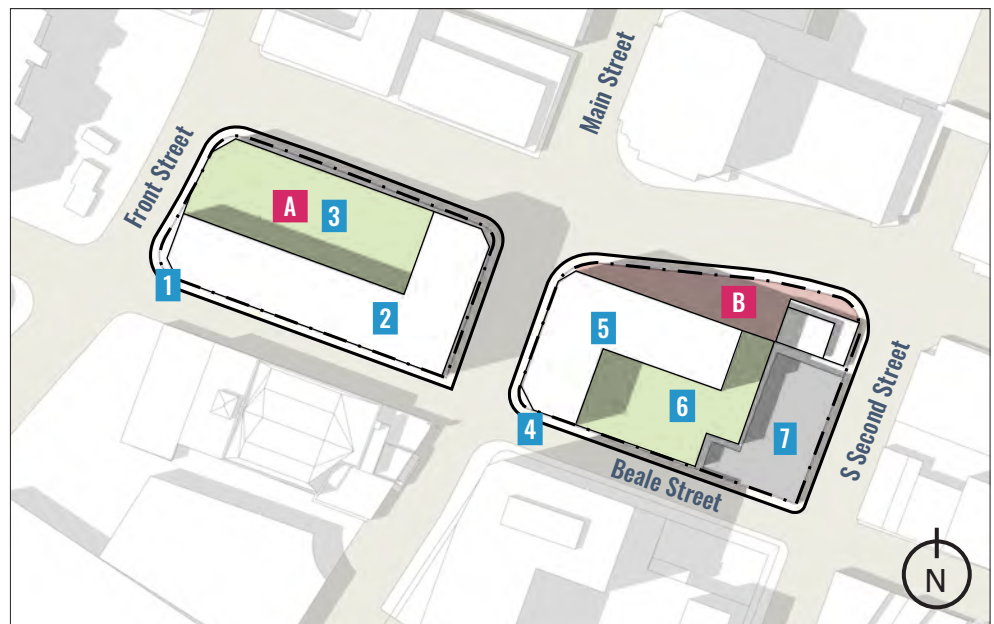
DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

Block **A**

- 1** Retail: 20,000 sq. ft.
- 2** Multifamily: 400 units
- 3** Parking deck lined with retail and multifamily: 520 spaces + 13 on-street spaces

Block **B**

- 4** Retail: 29,000 sq. ft.
- 5** Multifamily: 275 units
- 6** Parking deck with ground floor active uses: 385 spaces + 20 on-street spaces
- 7** Memphis Music Hall of Fame Building (Existing)



Top: Aerial view of existing site. Bottom: Plan view of concept.



THE PINCH, UPTOWN, AND NORTH CBID

PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
1,000-1,200 HOUSING UNITS
20-65,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE

The Pinch, Uptown, and the North CBID neighborhoods will implement the Memphis Uptown Community Plan to “create stable neighborhoods of choice that promote a mix of incomes, protect single-family homes, create vibrant community anchors, and that strengthen connections to Downtown.”

- The Pinch will evolve into a lively walkable neighborhood linking the Core, Uptown, and St Jude, as one of nine anchors identified in the Uptown Community Plan.
- Uptown will stabilize and grow as a diverse, welcoming neighborhood and transform Gayoso Bayou into an attractive, usable public space and residential area.
- The North CBID will develop around community anchors like Burkle Park and the Slave Haven Museum, Washington Square Park, and the proposed Snuff District.

BUILD UP

- Develop the Pinch with a mix of adaptive reuse and new construction along Main Street and adjacent streets that leverages proximity to St. Jude, the river, and the William Hudson Transit Center. Manage height to focus density around areas of highest activity.
- Tackle blight and vacancy throughout the neighborhoods with strategic infill development, including a diverse mix of neighborhood-scale housing types, shared community spaces, and productive/creative uses of vacant land such as urban agriculture or public art where appropriate.

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- Invest in pedestrian and visual improvements along signature streets including Main Street and A.W. Willis Avenue to better connect Uptown to Downtown and nearby neighborhoods.
- Construct the riverfront multi-use trail along Wolf River Harbor to enhance public walkable access to the River, potentially leveraging public-private partnerships to support implementation.

- Implement the Chelsea Avenue Greenline to provide enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist connections from Washington Square Park east to McLean Boulevard and south to Front Street.
- Signature streets—North Main Street, North Second Street, North Third Street, Jackson Avenue, A.W. Willis Avenue, Chelsea Avenue
- Signature public spaces—implement the Riverfront Multi-use Trail and Chelsea Greenline initiatives.

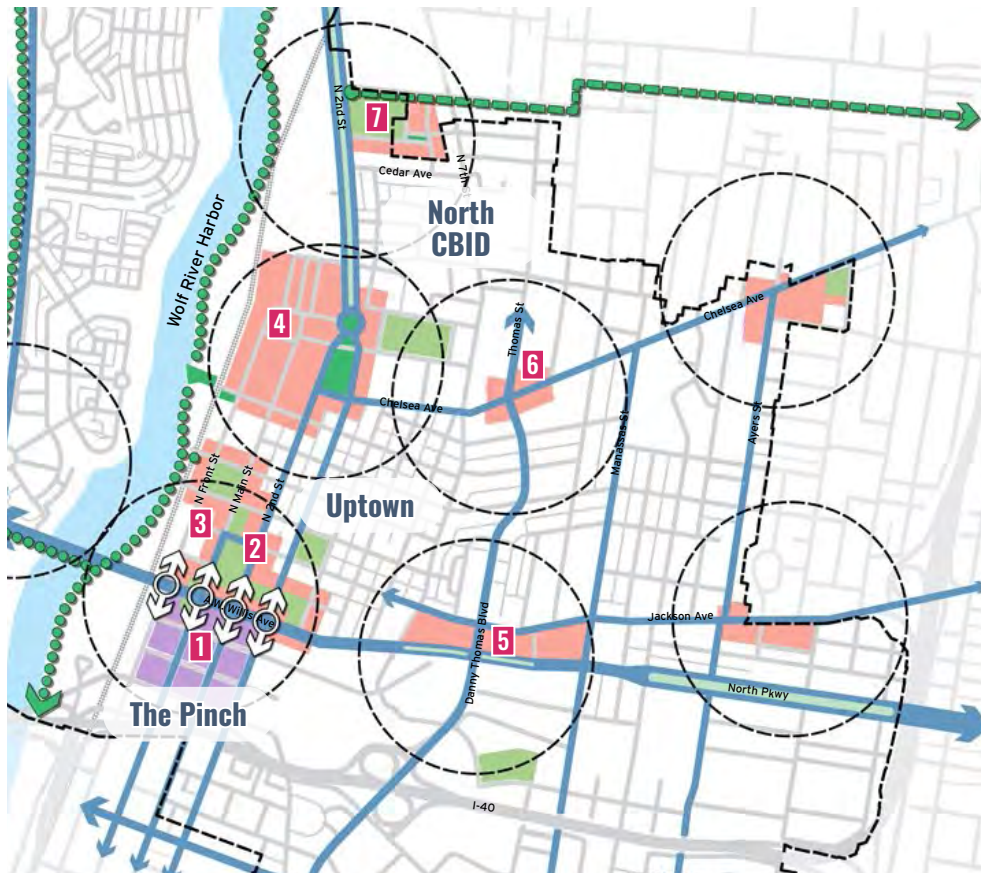
WELCOME EVERYONE

- Support mixed-income housing development throughout the neighborhoods.
- Expand job training and workforce readiness to match residents with available jobs in Downtown, the Medical District, and in skilled industries.
- Transform Gayoso Bayou into an active, usable park space using green infrastructure to mitigate flood hazards.
- Improve Washington Square Park and extend the Wolf River Greenway to better support community use for gatherings, recreation, and enjoyment of nature.





Conceptual rendering of potential redevelopment between St. Jude's and Bass Pro Shops (Source: Pinch District Concept Study, 2016)



PRIORITY INITIATIVES

1. Pinch District
2. Bayou + Mill Redevelopment
3. Greyhound Redevelopment
4. Warehouse District
5. Manassas Market District
6. Chelsea Neighborhood Center
7. Washington Square

LEGEND

- Community Anchors
- Pinch District
- Major Framework Street
- Riverfront Multi-use Trail
- Chelsea Avenue Greenline
- Connections

Uptown Framework (Source: Memphis Uptown Community Plan, 2018)



SOUTH MAIN

PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
1,000-1,200 HOUSING UNITS
45-130,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE

South Main will continue to enhance and expand its livability, growing north and east toward Dr. MLK Jr Avenue and Second Street with a mix of adaptive reuse and new construction that adds housing and street-level activity.

BUILD UP

- Support redevelopment along the Second Street corridor to extend the life of the district east toward South City.
- Build on and expand South Main’s livability by encouraging new housing, active ground floor uses, and other activators such as sidewalk vendors, especially along and adjacent to Main Street itself.

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- Invest in pedestrian and visual improvements along signature streets Main Street, Second Street, and Vance Avenue.
- Improve pedestrian connections west to Tom Lee Park and the Riverwalk to provide better access to the waterfront

- Implement active curbside management and shared parking policies to encourage shared mobility and reduce the burden of parking.
- Signature streets—South Main and South Second Streets.
- Signature public spaces—the Riverfront and South Main Street.

WELCOME EVERYONE

- Encourage adaptive reuse of Film Row as an incubator for art studios, makerspaces, and retail.
- Direct incentives toward artisanal manufacturing, artists, creative office space, and retail tenants along South Main, especially those that commit to recruit and train nearby residents.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Install street trees along South Main Street
- 2 Support South Main Street as a retail corridor
- 3 Encourage the redevelopment of the Second Street corridor between Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Talbot Avenue
- 4 Encourage adaptive re-use of Film Row as an incubator for retail, art studios, and workspaces
- 5 Convert Second Street and B.B. King Boulevard to two-way streets south of Vance or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and move US Route 70 over to B.B. King Boulevard
- 6 Consider installing a shared street in Film Row in the blocks between Huling Avenue and GE Patterson Avenue

FRAMEWORK LEGEND

- Signature Street
- Festival Street
- Intersection Improvement
- Development Opportunity
- Active Frontage
- Retail Node
- Signature Public Space
- Rail





CONVERT SECOND STREET TO TWO-WAY IN FILM ROW

Currently, traffic blows through Film Row on a wide, one-way street. The roadway is ripe for a diet and a streetscape re-design in this segment; converting it to two-way traffic would kick-start reinvestment in the area. Street trees provide welcome shade and soften the urban edges. Experimental parklets provide outdoor seating where limited sidewalk space exists and adaptive reuse of older buildings provides a fresh start for local small businesses.



SOUTH MAIN FRAMEWORK

CELEBRATING SOUTH MAIN'S CIVIL RIGHTS HERITAGE

This neighborhood contains a high concentration of critical landmarks from Memphis' history and America's Civil Rights story. These cultural and historic landmarks could be reinforced with additional institutions and partners, particularly national institutions that help elevate the neighborhood's profile and contribute new resources. It would not be desirable to relocate institutions from other parts of Memphis to this area because they are valuable resources in their own neighborhoods and districts.



For key recommendations and legend, see previous page



SOUTH CITY

**PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
1,000-1,200 HOUSING UNITS
20-65,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE**

South City will re-establish itself as a welcoming mixed-income community, building on its legacy as a center for African American life in Memphis. Improved public spaces and new development will improve livability for residents who have been there for years while attracting new residents with its quality of life.

BUILD UP

- Complete the South City Memphis mixed-income redevelopment to provide healthy, safe, modern housing for current and new residents on the site of the former Foote Homes.
- Encourage neighborhood-scale development of other vacant lots throughout the neighborhood, focusing investment around South City Memphis to extend its positive impact.

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- Invest in pedestrian improvements to make B.B. King Boulevard a more attractive place to walk and bike, better linking South City to South Main.
- Improve Vance Avenue and South Fourth Street as multimodal streets welcoming to pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, and drivers. More broadly, enhance pedestrian, bike, and transit connectivity with the rest of Downtown.

- Signature streets—Vance Avenue and B.B. King Boulevard.

WELCOME EVERYONE

- Support entrepreneurs and small businesses that bring commercial activity to meet local needs in the neighborhood.
- Expand job training and workforce readiness to match residents with available jobs in Downtown, the Medical District, and in skilled industries.
- Develop a public art program that tells the story of the neighborhood and its residents along streets and in public spaces, such as by building off the success of the “I AM A MAN” plaza. In particular, establish symbolic and circulation links among the neighborhood’s Civil Rights landmarks and other historic sites.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Enhance existing public space
- 2 Encourage privately-owned public space
- 3 Convert B.B. King Boulevard to two-way operations

FRAMEWORK LEGEND

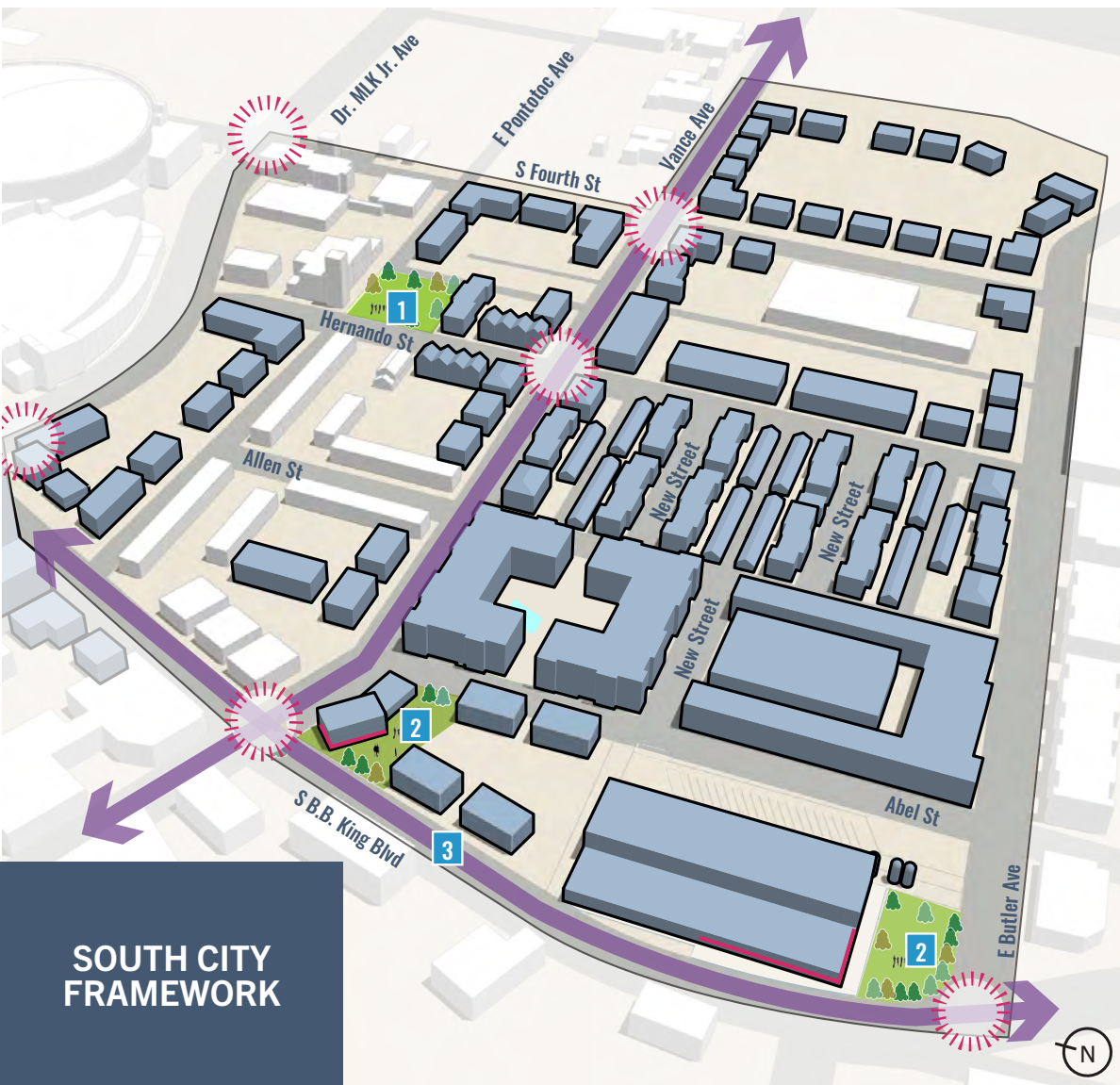
- Signature Street
- ⊙ Intersection Improvement
- Development Opportunity
- Signature Public Space
- Active Frontage
- Retail Node





A NEW SOUTH CITY

Large tracts of vacant land can be planned and coordinated to create to a mixed-income, mixed-housing type neighborhood.



SOUTH CITY FRAMEWORK

For key recommendations and legend, see previous page



THE EDGE

**PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
500-600 HOUSING UNITS
45-130,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE**

The Edge District will grow while maintaining its funky, art- and culture-based vibe. Anchored by Sun Studio, “the birthplace of rock n’ roll”, and driven by artistic energy and creativity, the Edge will continue to be a unique destination for residents and visitors alike.

BUILD UP

- Promote mixed-use redevelopment of surface parking lots and auto-oriented businesses to extend the energy of the district.
- Reinforce the intersection of Marshall and Monroe Avenues as the district’s retail core (a compliment to rather than competitor with Main Street and other Downtown retail nodes).

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- Invest in pedestrian and visual improvements along signature streets Union and Madison Avenues, especially walking and biking connections across Danny Thomas Boulevard, to improve access between the Edge, Downtown, and the Medical District.

- Implement active curbside management and shared parking policies to encourage shared mobility and reduce the burden of parking.
- Signature streets—Union, Madison, Monroe, Marshall Avenues.
- Signature public spaces—implement the vision for the Ravine as a central public space.

WELCOME EVERYONE

- Transform the Ravine into an inviting public space that provides an additional venue for diverse programming and reflects the character of the district.
- Support artists, musicians, makers, and all creative and industrial types who give this district its identity and energy that appeal to residents and visitors.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Implement the vision for the Ravine as a central public space
- 2** Reinforce the intersection of Marshall and Monroe Avenues as the retail core of the district
- 3** Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections across Danny Thomas Boulevard

FRAMEWORK LEGEND

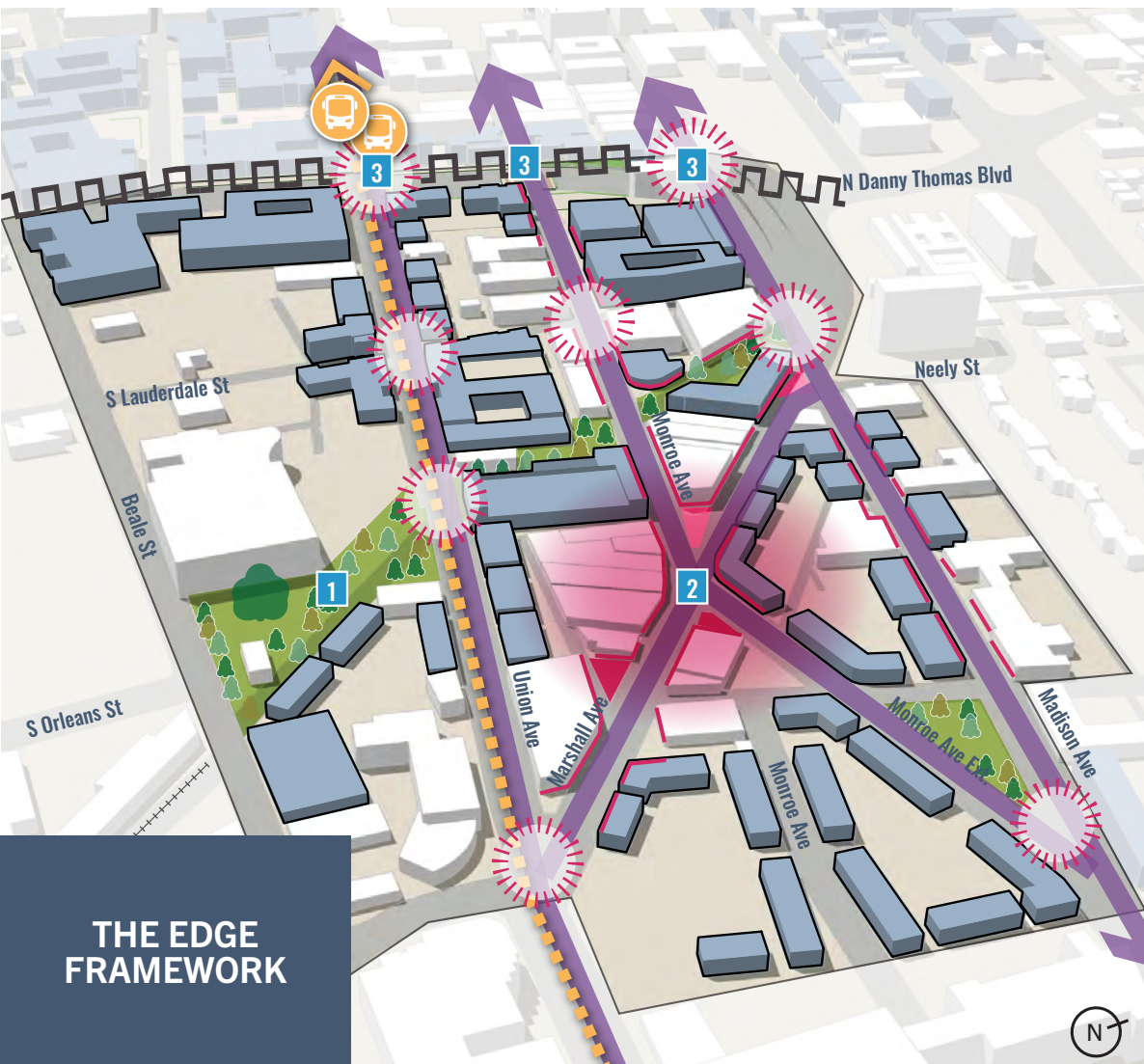
-  BRT Route
-  BRT Stops
-  Signature Street
-  Intersection Improvement
-  Development Opportunity
-  Signature Public Space
-  Active Frontage
-  Retail Node
-  Major Barrier
-  Rail





ENHANCING THE EDGE

The vision for this area is to accommodate new development that helps to bring compact critical mass along side the adaptive reuse of the character-defining existing structures.



THE EDGE FRAMEWORK

For key recommendations and legend, see previous page



SOUTH END & FRENCH FORT

PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
500-600 HOUSING UNITS
10-30,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE

These neighborhoods will accommodate infill development along the Mississippi River South Main Arts District. Improved connections to these public spaces will enhance access, support physical activity, and foster appreciation for the majesty of the “Mighty Mississippi”.

BUILD UP

- Promote neighborhood-scale infill on vacant and underused lots in the district, especially along Carolina Avenue.

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- Enhance convenient, safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the riverfront park and trail system from neighborhood streets.

- Improve underpasses connecting these areas to South Main and beyond, especially Carolina Avenue.
- Signature street and public space—the Riverfront

WELCOME EVERYONE

- Expand wayfinding and signage, lighting, and public art along multi-use trails and in parks.



Big River Crossing entrance



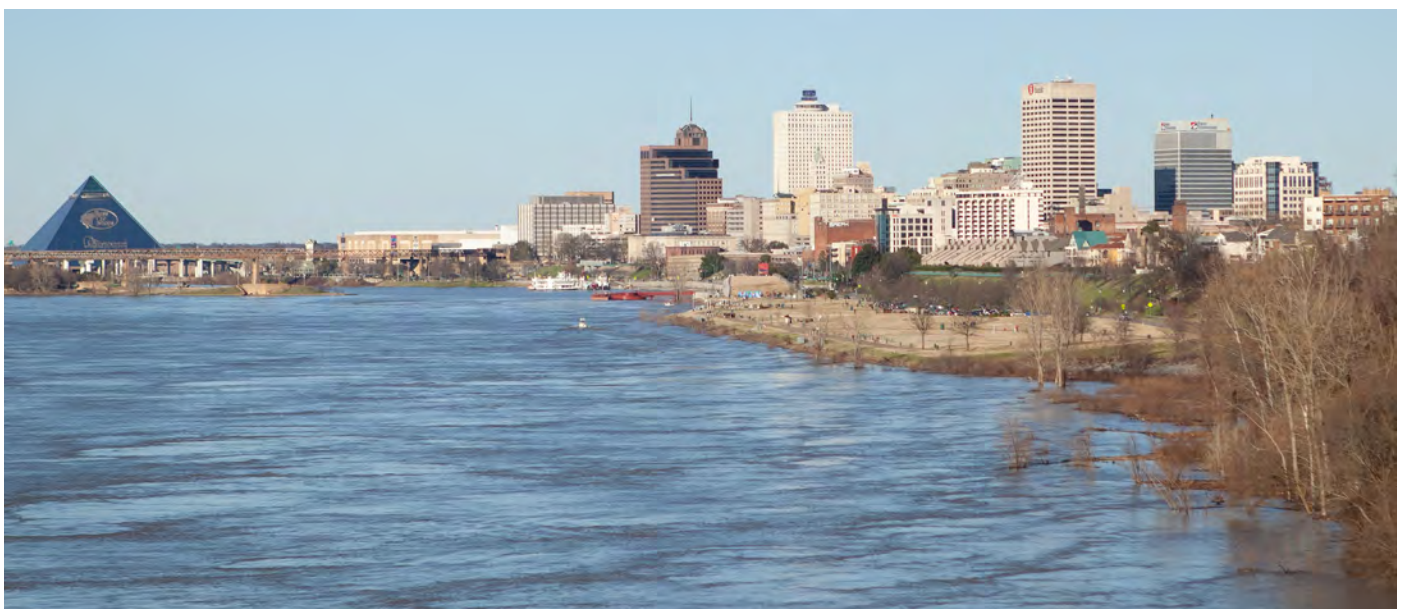


KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Create a safe connection between the Big River Crossing and the riverfront
- 2** Complete the underpass pedestrian/bicycle connection between French Fort, Big River Crossing, and the Riverwalk
- 3** Continue the pedestrian/bicycle connection southward to MLK Jr Riverside Park

LEGEND

-  Existing Shared-use Paths
-  Future Pedestrian/Bicycle
-  Signature Public Space



View of the Downtown skyline from Big River Crossing



MEDICAL DISTRICT

**PROJECTED DEMAND THROUGH 2030:
500-600 HOUSING UNITS
75-215,000 SQ FT RETAIL AND OFFICE**

The Medical District will continue to allow institutional growth while also welcoming more housing. New residents attracted by proximity to jobs, the Downtown Core and Edge District, and a re-animated Health Sciences Park, will provide more sidewalk activity throughout the evenings and weekends, continuing this area’s transformation into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

BUILD UP

- Promote mixed-use and residential development around Health Sciences Park to provide more evening and weekend activation of this central public space.
- Preserve space for future institutional growth that will support more jobs and improve the built environment, while implementing interim uses and/or design strategies to ensure these sites do not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood and public realm in the meantime.

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY

- Invest in pedestrian and visual improvements along signature streets Union and Madison Avenues to better connect the Medical District to the Edge and Downtown Core.
- Implement Vision Zero policies to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety through a focus on: engineering, enforcement, education, equity, and engagement.

- Signature streets—Union Avenue, Madison Avenue.
- Signature public spaces—Re-imagine Health Sciences Park into a lively gathering place.

WELCOME EVERYONE

- Improve Health Sciences Park with active programming, new amenities, and lighting to make it a more attractive public space for the growing number of residents and employees in the district.
- Expand job training and workforce readiness to match nearby residents with available jobs in the Medical District.
- Continue implementing other public space improvement recommendations from the Medical District Streetscape Improvements Playbook to create welcoming spaces for everyone throughout the district.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Renovate Health Sciences Park
- 2 Facilitate mixed use/housing infill around the park along Madison and Union Avenues

FRAMEWORK LEGEND

- BRT Route
- BRT Stops
- Signature Street
- Intersection Improvement
- Development Opportunity
- Signature Public Space
- Active Frontage
- Retail Node



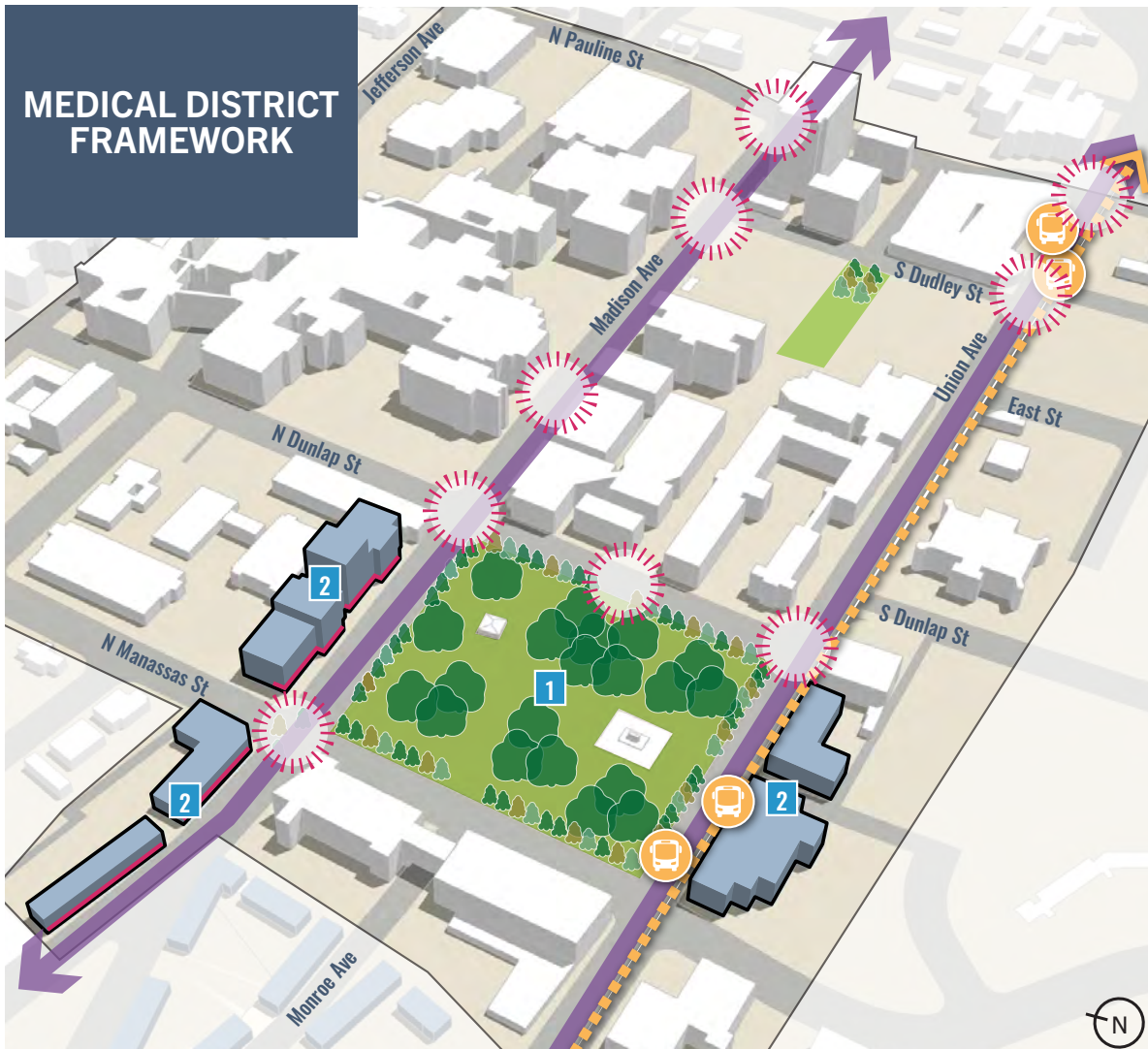


HEALTH SCIENCES PARK

Health Sciences Park, surrounded by University of Tennessee buildings and big box retail, is a passive park featuring mature trees and walking paths. With a new owner as of 2017, now is the time to draw more energy and life into the park with additional programming that can take advantage of its flexible layout. New infill housing around the park will bring people and windows closer to the park, offering more safety and interested users.



MEDICAL DISTRICT FRAMEWORK



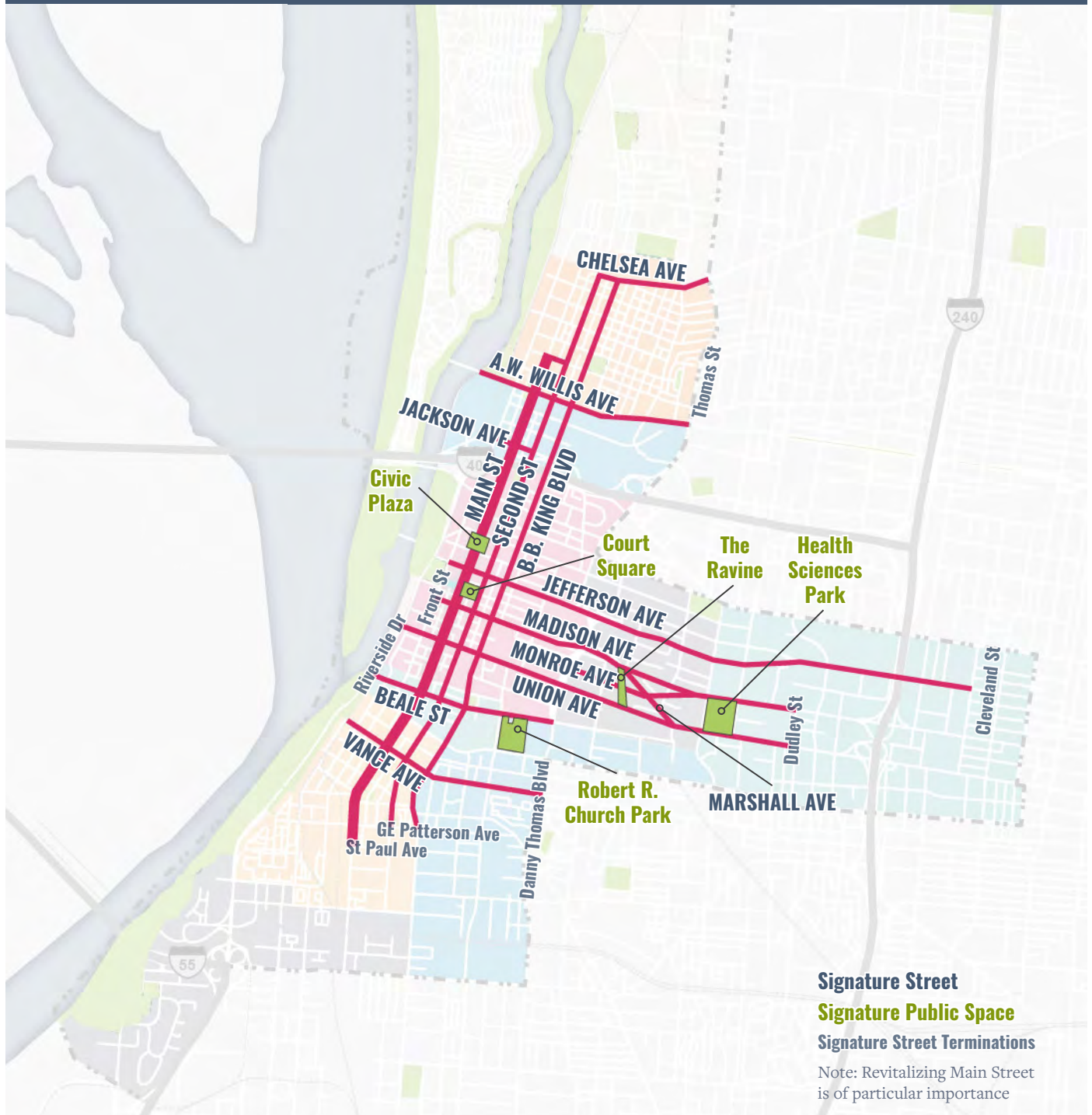
For key recommendations and legend, see previous page



SIGNATURE STREETS AND SPACES

The plan recommends strategic improvements to a network of Signature Streets and Signature Public Spaces as shown in the diagram below. These improvements combine placemaking and multimodal enhancements to help Downtown:

- **BUILD UP** by attracting redevelopment along strategic corridors and at strategic nodes
- **CELEBRATE WALKABILITY** by layering pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and micro-transit facilities for safer, more convenient, and connected mobility choices
- **WELCOME EVERYONE** by emphasizing and enlivening the streets, spaces, and places that make Memphis unique and where its diverse residents and visitors can gather and express themselves



DOWNTOWN-WIDE PARKING AND MOBILITY STRATEGIES

STREET NETWORK OPPORTUNITIES

This plan recommends a broad set of street network repurposing projects, with a combination of road diets/lane reductions, two-way conversions, and repurposing projects. Because the Downtown street network is so well connected and complete, most of these strategic projects are relatively low-cost efforts that work within the existing right-of-way and make simple changes through marking and striping. None of these projects would involve substantial reconstruction, curb relocations, or utility relocations. Two-way conversion projects will involve retrofitting or replacing signals to control two directions of traffic. For this reason, development of these projects should include more detailed traffic data collection and warrant studies to remove any existing signals no longer needed to support the traffic volumes—a strategy to reduce project cost and vehicle-related emissions due to idling while stopped at signals. These strategies should be coupled with strategic improvements to operations such as enhanced signalization technology that help increase circulation efficiency across Downtown’s limited transportation infrastructure.

ROAD DIETS

A number of Downtown Memphis’s streets are too large given their traffic volumes. Reducing the number of lanes would pave the way for public realm improvements while maintaining traffic flow. Space would be used for wider sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, and other amenities designed to make streets safer for everyone that are more enjoyable to walk. Some streets that should be evaluated and considered for a road diet include:

- South Fourth Street
- North Manassas Street
- North Dunlap Street

- Riverside Drive
- Monroe Avenue

Intersection improvements are recommended as part of road diets to make them safer for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. Dedicated, protected right-turn lanes should be removed at A.W. Willis Avenue and Front Street. Removing center turn lanes elsewhere on A.W. Willis Avenue would create space for planted medians that would both improve the streetscape and provide pedestrian refuges at street crossings.

TWO-WAY ROAD CONVERSIONS

To facilitate easier implementation, conversions to two-way streets can be implemented on an incremental basis, starting in areas with key civic, cultural, or economic value. South Second Street and the southern portion of B.B. King Boulevard south of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue are prime candidates for conversion.

Danny Thomas Boulevard is a candidate for another type of road conversion. This freeway-style road is larger than necessary given its average traffic volumes. Converting this road to an at-grade boulevard would help unlock the area’s economic potential. See the inset box on the following page for more information.

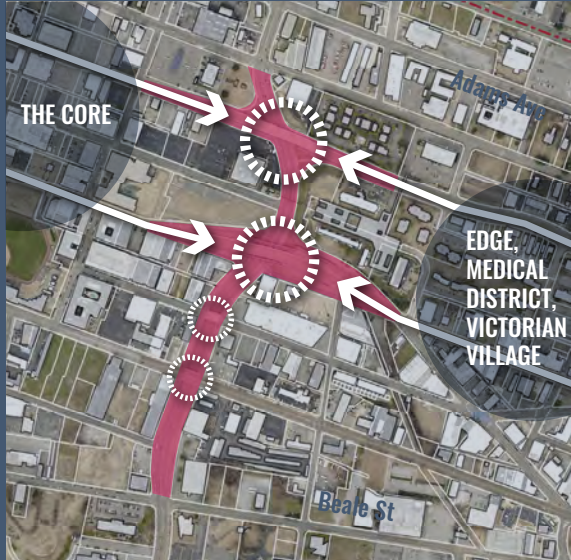
REPURPOSING

Second Street and B.B. King Boulevard are prime examples of the ability to transform streets into transit-oriented streets by adding Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes. In addition to this, and on streets that will not include BRT, existing space can be reused to increase bicycle connections, add to the on-street parking supply, and/or provide additional space for transit vehicles. The rise of new and emerging mobility services such as ridesharing and bike sharing could also take advantage of repurposed right-of-way and stronger curbside management.

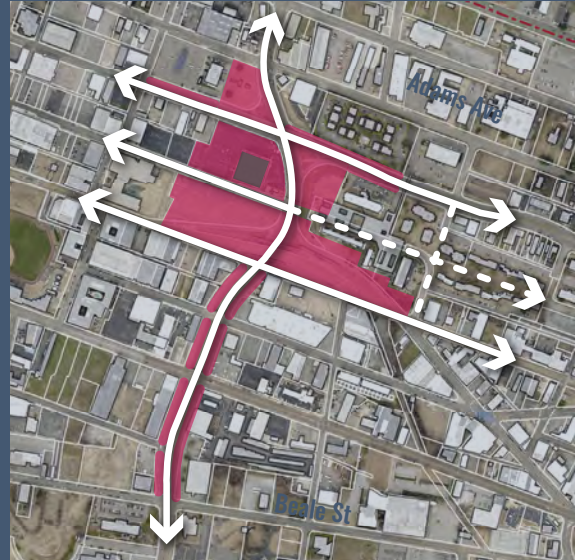


TRANSFORMING DANNY THOMAS BOULEVARD

Danny Thomas Boulevard is a significant barrier to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the Edge/Medical District/Victorian Village to the east and the Downtown Core to the west. Not only that, it disrupts the traditional urban form on streets like Madison and Union, resulting in vacant and underutilized buildings facing retaining walls. As investment and activity continue to grow in the neighborhoods on either side of Danny Thomas, leaders should re-think this corridor. A corridor redesign could unlock development and connectivity opportunities that turn a barrier into a connective spine. Though potentially impactful, this project would be expensive and should not be considered a top priority until current bridges need replacement anyway and reinvestment is unavoidable.



Ped/bike connectivity barriers across Danny Thomas



Development and connectivity opportunities

MULTI-MODAL MOBILITY OPTIONS

WALKABILITY

Ensuring walkability is vital for maintaining a vibrant, welcoming Downtown. A number of best practices can be used to ensure that walking is an appealing option for people who live in, work in, and visit the area. Strategies include:

- Make the pedestrian experience more inviting: plant trees, install benches, and add street art.
- Promote walking for short trips: use wayfinding to advertise routes to and from remote parking areas, attractions, and the riverfront.
- Increase safety: improve crosswalks on streets such as Riverside Drive and A.W. Willis Avenue. Install more lighting, particularly under I-40.
- Increase connectivity: prioritize connections between key destinations such as the Bass Pro pedestrian bridge connection to the Riverfront.

Key streets for targeted improvements are important connectors to and through Downtown, such as Second Street and Union Avenue. Connectors to the river, such as Front Street and Riverside Drive, are also prime candidates for improvements to increase walkability and safety. Improvements to walkability, transit, and the bicycle network can give Memphians more transportation options.

Intersection density is related to walkability: high intersection density means shorter blocks that are more appealing to pedestrians. While the Downtown Core has relatively high intersection density, areas on the study area periphery—in South Main, the Medical District, and Uptown—have a low intersection density. Any future infill should take this into consideration and develop smaller, more pedestrian-friendly blocks in addition to the other pedestrian improvements mentioned above.

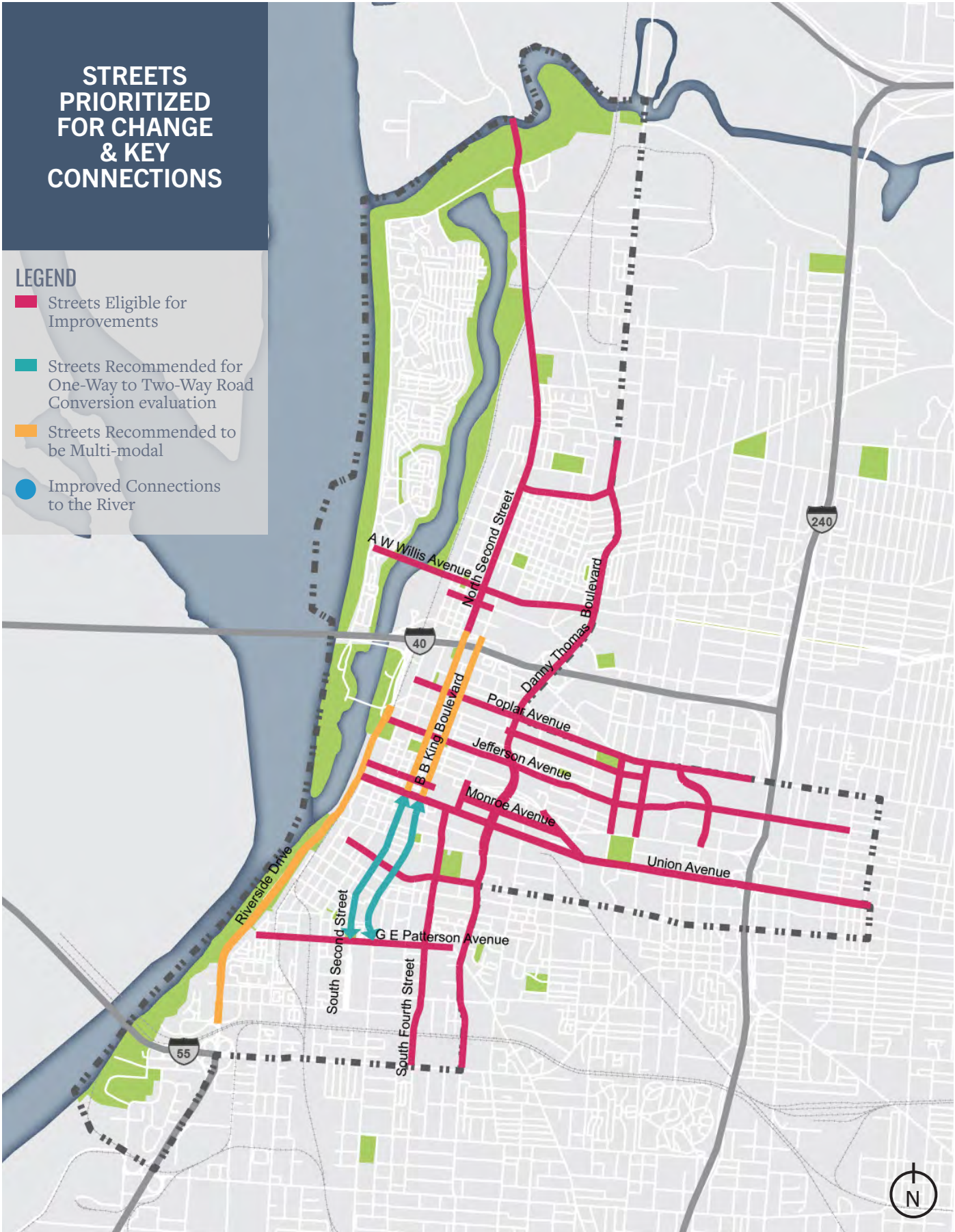
Another place for improvement is part of the BRT route that runs along Second Street until turning east on Union Avenue. The majority of this mile-long, one-way segment is void of any pedestrian activity. The street has inactive building frontages and a high density of



STREETS PRIORITIZED FOR CHANGE & KEY CONNECTIONS

LEGEND

- Streets Eligible for Improvements
- Streets Recommended for One-Way to Two-Way Road Conversion evaluation
- Streets Recommended to be Multi-modal
- Improved Connections to the River



parking garages and surface parking lots, with numerous driveways interrupting the sidewalk. This segment of Second Street north of Union Avenue should be studied for opportunities to make it more transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly. Streetscape and sidewalk improvements will help this area better accommodate transit riders, and infill development re-activating vacant storefronts will attract more pedestrians throughout the day and evening.

BICYCLE NETWORK

The Memphis 2014 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan lays out a number of programmed and recommended bicycle facilities to increase bicycle access to Downtown. These proposed routes connect the Medical Center to the rest of Downtown and fill other north-south and east-west connectivity gaps. These should be implemented where applicable, with priority places on the network segments that overlap with the recommendations of the Street Network Opportunities section of this document.

These overlapping routes include:

- Riverside Drive
- South Second Street
- North Dunlap Street
- North Manassas Street
- South Bellevue Boulevard

Bicycle improvements on North Second Street and B.B. King Boulevard will need to be reconciled with BRT access on those streets.

The “Better Jefferson” project, currently in the engineering phase, will transform two miles of Jefferson Avenue from Front Street downtown through the Medical District to Cleveland Street. Complete Streets improvements will include protected cycle tracks and enhanced pedestrian crossings.

Enhancements to connections between French Fort, Big River Crossing, and the Riverwalk will make cycling to these destinations safer and more enjoyable. Other bicycle infrastructure additions, such as bicycle parking, should be implemented along with network improvements.

MICRO-MOBILITY OPTIONS

With the summer 2019 additions of Bolt and Spin to existing Bird and Lime options, there were an average of 2,300 scooters in the city. Electric scooters and the Explore Bike Share program are important for last-mile connections and short trips around Downtown. Placement of bike share stations near transit lines will facilitate easy connections for travelers.

It has become standard for cities to charge a small per-scooter fee to the private companies that use public roads. Bird company has agreed to pay the City \$50 per scooter to fund any City costs due to improper usage of the scooters. Additionally, they will pay \$1 per scooter per day. These funds can be used for the construction of new shared mobility infrastructure, promotion of safe driving and maintenance of the shared infrastructure. The generated revenue could also be used to improve street design and support affordable housing in the area.

Since stand-up electric scooters should be ridden in bike lanes and bike paths where available, expansion of the existing bicycle network will make trips using these services safer, more appealing, and less disruptive of vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

TRANSIT

Memphis’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system will run from the University of Memphis campus to the William Hudson Transit Center along Union Avenue, Second Street, and B.B. King Boulevard. Downtown stops include:

- Union Avenue
- Madison Avenue
- Jefferson Avenue
- Poplar Avenue
- Jackson Avenue

The proposed BRT route will serve numerous activity centers such as AutoZone Park in Downtown Memphis, Southwest Tennessee Community College, FedEx Forum, Methodist University Hospital, Overton Square, Benjamin Hooks Central Library, and the University of Memphis. The BRT has the potential to improve downtown access not just for Memphians but also tourists and other visitors.





ACTIVATED B.B. KING AND SECOND STREET CORRIDORS LEVERAGING BRT INVESTMENT

Capitalize on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project proposed along B.B. King Boulevard to activate ground-floor uses, enhance sidewalks, add colorful plants, public art, and pedestrian lighting that prioritize pedestrian comfort. (Top view looking north along B.B. King Boulevard; Bottom view looking south along Second Street)



The existing trolley service can supplement the BRT by increasing headways and extending hours to increase Downtown access. Smart mobility expansions could be implemented in lieu of trolley extensions, for example north into Uptown and east to the Edge along Madison Avenue.

The implementation of the BRT project will impact streetscapes. Any improvements for the routes should also consider better access for pedestrians and cyclists at bus stops. Last-mile connections will further increase access to Downtown Memphis via transit. Strategic placement of Explore Bike Share stations and electric scooters near transit stops would serve as important connectors to final destinations. Park-and-Rides or circulator shuttles would improve connections and access to remote parking.

PARKING DEMAND DOWNTOWN

As the consultant team was completing the first draft of BuildDowntown: The Downtown Memphis Master Plan for the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) in late 2019, the Commission completed its Downtown Memphis Parking Study, working with Nelson Nygaard as the lead consultant. The Parking Study represents a highly detailed, well-researched analysis of Downtown parking needs, by subdistrict, for the foreseeable future. The BuildDowntown consultant team reviewed the report's methodology and findings and found both to be fully credible and to provide a solid context for assessing current and future Downtown parking needs. The following analysis reinforces the statement that introduces the Parking Study's Summary of Key Findings:

“Overall, Downtown Memphis does not currently face a critical shortage of parking across the entire study area or within any single subarea. There are, however, local hotspots of demand in the Downtown Core generated by large employers and growing residential communities.” (page 3)

Taken as a whole, Downtown today hosts sufficient parking to accommodate the full measure of parking required to meet 2030 development demand projected in BuildDowntown (assuming implementation of shared

parking strategies), as well as the higher development projections envisioned in the Parking Study (which assumes shared parking strategies). This said, parking availability varies significantly across Downtown and strategic parking investments may be required in the Downtown Core and South Main to meet the needs of development projected in BuildDowntown as well as possible current very localized parking shortages. Providing structured parking is very expensive, for example adding 15-25% or more to construction costs for housing and office development. These costs will require public investment, which may compete with other public investments in Downtown. Further, it is likely that parking requirements will start to decline in roughly a decade as autonomous mobility and other mobility innovations become the mobility paradigm. It is unlikely that it will be cost effective to retrofit redundant downtown parking facilities into other uses. Investment in additional parking facilities should be based on a Mobility and Parking Study that examines the costs and benefits of specific parking proposals and other options for meeting demonstrated parking needs. Both the Parking Study and BuildDowntown recommend strongly that the Downtown Mobility Authority proposed by the Parking Study or the DMC if necessary, develop and control any additional parking to ensure that it will be made available on a shared basis to multiple users.

DOWNTOWN SHARED PARKING STRATEGY

To maximize utilization of the abundant parking spaces in Downtown, the Downtown Mobility Authority (DMA) should engage willing property owners to develop shared parking agreements. Through these agreements, owners can offer their unused spaces to DMA at specified times of the day. A shared mobile payment system with private parking facility owners will encourage off-peak usage. This will make it easier for the customer to pay for parking and owners get paid directly for their excess parking spaces without having to set-up new payment systems. Guidance and technical assistance should be provided to the owners to provide understanding of inventory, regulations and payment options.



RESTRUCTURE EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES

- Re-orient One Commerce Square garage access (or at least egress) from Union to Second
- Long-term big idea: Beale and Main – Combine Belz parking lot, city parking lot, and MLGW Building for a 6.1-acre development RFP

CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT

Short-term on-street parking should be convenient and easily accessible. Create a database/tool to enable dynamic understanding of inventory and regulations. This will include:

- Canvassing Downtown to digitally record parking inventory, signage and regulations.
- An online interface to easily access and update parking information.
- Staff training and understanding to be able to update and maintain the database in the field.
- Integration with existing work order processes so that changes update automatically.
- Integration into complementary platforms providing real-time parking availability information.
- Sharing of non-proprietary data to facilitate third-party use and dissemination of parking data.

The City should review and calibrate loading zone distribution as well. It should use the updated inventory to determine what percentage of businesses have access to an on-street loading zone by time of the day. The City can update on-street regulations to ensure equal distribution and mitigate loading hot spots.

The City should also encourage curbside valet parking and pickup/dropoff zones for Transportation Network Companies (TNC) like Uber and Lyft. Incorporating ride-hailing drop-off zones at the curb will minimize conflict with on-street parkers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TMA)

A transportation management association (TMA) serving the Medical District and/or Core will help address mobility and parking issues in these districts. A TMA can add further efficiency and expertise to strategies that promote mode choice and reduce drive-alone demand.

TMA's are typically independent, non-profit organizations that operate from member dues, external grant funding, or sometimes direct assistance from their partner local governments. They offer services and promotional capabilities for reducing drive-alone commute trips. These services include strategies such as carpool/vanpool services (and the rideshare matching programs needed to make them successful), discounted transit pass programs, shuttle and circulator service to achieve last-mile connections from transit, and telework or telecommuting programs. They often emphasize incentive programs to encourage driving commuters to switch to other travel modes for at least some of their commuting, and in many cases these have included cash or reward incentive programs for regular participants.

TMA's can be useful interfaces between public sector agencies charged with implementing public policy and the many private organizations, especially employers, that make up most of a downtown's or business district's body of commuters. They are sometimes better positioned than government agencies to work directly with employers to create customized plans and strategies, and they maintain databases of comprehensive information on participants in their programs.

Downtown Memphis would be one of a few TMA organizations in Tennessee—Franklin's TMA Group and Chattanooga's Green Trips program provide similar services, focusing on behavior-changing, incentive-based programs to encourage non-driving-alone commuting.





CHAPTER 4

Implementation

How to Get to Where We Want to End Up

THE TOOLKIT

The DMC has a strong track record of using a significant array of tools already available to advance Downtown development and vitality.

The tools identified in this chapter are intended to expand the DMC’s ability to unlock development during a period in which demand for living, working, playing, and innovating in urban settings is growing rapidly. These tools represent critical investments that will pay rich dividends to Memphis for decades to come.

These tools are intended to remove obstacles to project feasibility, enhance Downtown’s competitive position for desirable development, and ensure that this development contributes to the maximum extent to Downtown’s vitality—and its ability to help Memphis build a stronger and more diverse economy while also serving as the center of the city’s civic life and most important common ground.

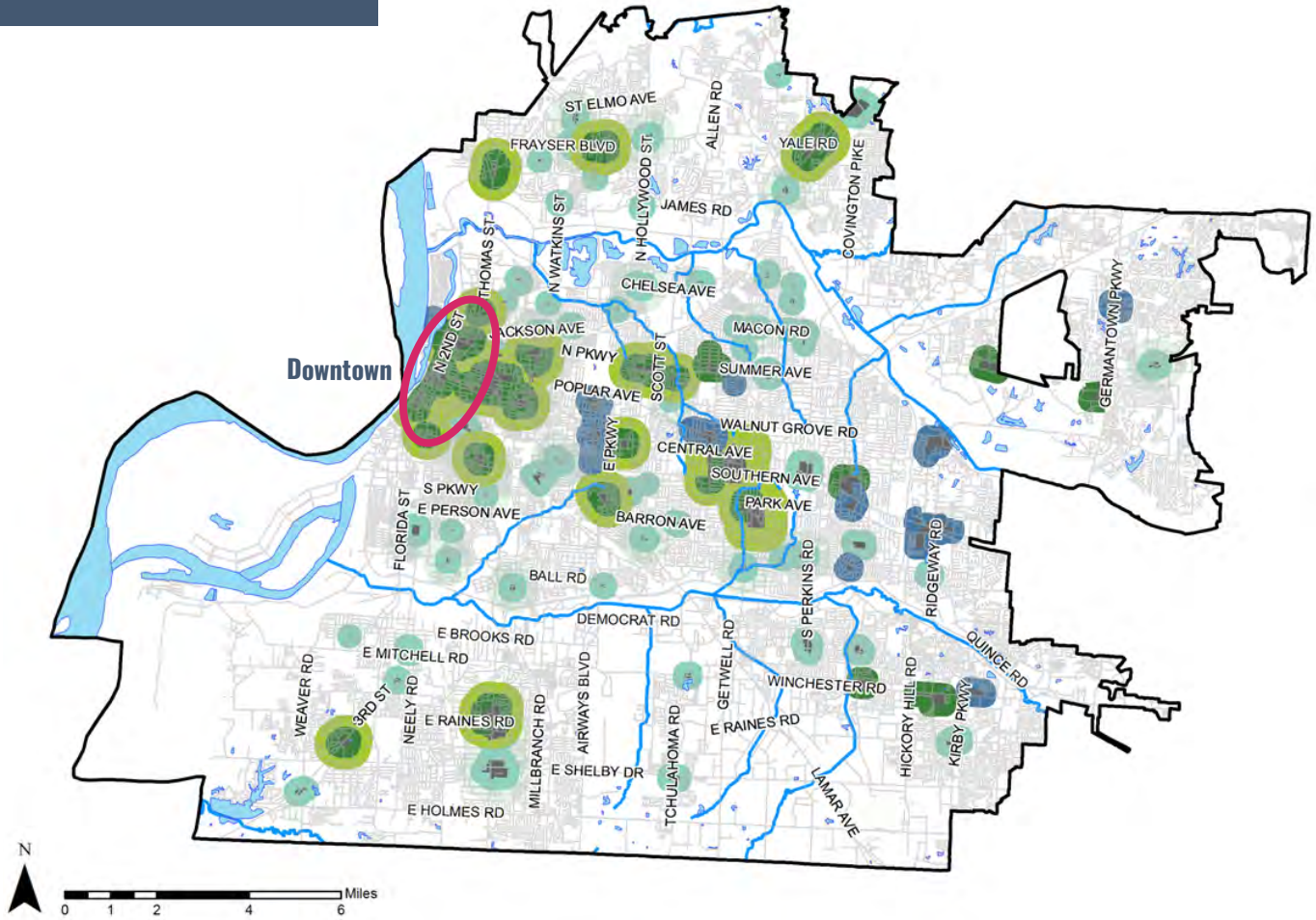
The following framework presents the toolkit with individual initiatives organized within seven strategies serving three overarching policies.

- **POLICIES:** All strategies and initiatives are designed to serve and help accomplish the plan’s guiding principles: Build Up, Celebrate Walkability, and Welcome Everyone.
- **STRATEGIES:** Each strategy focuses on a critically important objective to help realize the plan’s vision through achievable implementation initiatives.
- **INITIATIVES:** Emphasizing a clear path toward implementation, each initiative describes a specific task that can yield meaningful progress along with the funding mechanism(s) necessary to make it happen.



MEMPHIS 3.0 CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Anchors
- Accelerate
- Nurture
- Sustain



Planning and implementation for BuildDowntown complements Memphis 3.0’s focus on promoting positive change, the essential need for compact critical mass, and the importance of Downtown for Memphis’s future.



Implementation Framework

BUILD UP by concentrating a critical mass of development within a five-minute walk of Main Street and other retail centers.

Build more than 10 million square feet of new and rehabilitated mixed-use development that enhances the quality and character of every Downtown district and strengthens Downtown as the economic engine for Memphis and the entire region.

Strategy 1. Promote Compact Critical Mass with Additional Resources and an Expanded Toolkit

Focus public investment and financial incentive programs to build density and thus vibrancy within a 5-minute walk of Main Street and designated retail and employment nodes.

Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>1.1. Create a five-year Downtown Development Priorities Plan that provides the basis for incentivizing the right development in the right place—and update every year. In addition to proximity to retail and employment nodes, consider redevelopment and public-private partnership initiatives that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unlock catalytic sites ● Balance land use mix ● Fight blight ● Promote mixed-income housing ● Foster local businesses and entrepreneurship 	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>1.2. Expand the DMC’s ability to implement the five-year Downtown Development Priorities Plan—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the Development Priorities Plan as a basis for scoring projects for PILOTs, project-based TIFs, and all other forms of assistance—for example projects within a 5-minute walk of retail or employment nodes would receive a PILOT or project-based TIF with a longer duration period relative to other projects. ● Facilitate the DMC’s ability to gain control of strategic sites by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Partnering with the Mobility Authority to promote shared parking and landbank future development sites that further Downtown Development Priorities. » Identifying strategic surface parking lots and existing garages for potential acquisition. 	<p>It will be critical to be able to focus DMC development tools in ways that effectively promote compact critical mass in order to achieve the full benefits for Downtown, Memphis, and the region.</p> <p>Extend PILOT and TIF durations for mixed-income developments.</p> <p>Fund via parking revenues on an interim basis.</p>



Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>1.3. Explore increasing the DMC development fund (CCDC) to support redevelopment activities that would make a significant difference in unlocking or accelerating Downtown Development Priorities—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land assembly. • Address pre-development issues to attract the right developer, confirm the value to Downtown, determine likely PILOT or other support required (e.g., determining development capacity, resolving abutter concerns, confirming a shared parking strategy with neighboring uses, etc.). • Expand the DMC’s ability to fill street-facing spaces with pop-up retail, artists, makers, and other users that animate the street and contribute to the vitality of retail and employment nodes when building owners are unable to secure tenants. 	<p>Fund via parking revenues on an interim basis.</p> <p>Consider extending CBID assessments to all property owners who benefit from its programs (including institutions, government offices, non-commercial development—e.g., condominiums).</p>
<p>1.4. Assist Downtown property owners and developers in accessing additional financing— for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Zone funding. • New Market Tax Credits. 	<p>This assistance will be of particular value for smaller, infill projects.</p>
<p>1.5. Expand the DMC’s partnership with the City to reduce blight through a combination of increasing the DMC and City’s ability to take advantage of the Blight Ordinance or direct DMC initiatives—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand DMC’s capacity for acquiring options on strategic properties and shopping these properties to interested developers. • Update targeted property selection criteria to coincide with master plan’s priority areas (the nodes, corridors and corridors identified herein) and those identified by the Downtown Development Priorities Plan described above. • Encourage the Office of Construction Code Enforcement to exercise full flexibility enabled by building code to unlock redevelopment potential of upstairs building areas. • Add anti-blight capacity, including legal staff, enforcement capacity, and caseload management. 	<p>Both DMC and the City have noted that this already very effective program could be of greater value in furthering the DMC and City’s goals for Downtown.</p>



Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>1.6. Strengthen the DMC’s ability to decrease the cost burden of providing parking for new development—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage Downtown parking supply and sponsor shared parking strategies. • Establish a shared parking brokerage to reduce development costs and unlock density potential. • Utilize DMC-owned parking sites as an incentive to attract and incentivize redevelopment proposals that incorporate DMC development priorities for strategic sites. • Explore new parking production in limited cases where sharing options are not sufficient to meet demand. 	<p>Fund via parking revenues on an interim basis.</p> <p>This strategy will be critical both to reduce Downtown development costs and in recognition of declining parking demand over the next two decades.</p> <p>The growing popularity of shared mobility (Uber, Lyft, Via) and micromobility (e-scooters, shared bikes, Car to Go) is already reducing downtown parking requirements across North America. The advent of connected mobility over this decade, which will permit cars to self-park, will significantly increase the capacity of all existing parking facilities. The advent of shared autonomous mobility in urban cores over the following decade will mean that Downtown Memphis parking requirements by 2040 will be considerably lower than 2020 levels. Unfortunately, even parking garages designed to be convertible to other uses cannot be redeveloped cost effectively to compete with purpose-built new development.</p>
<p>1.7. Explore the feasibility of expanding Downtown home ownership (primarily condominiums), but not at the expense of rapidly expanding Downtown’s rental population.</p>	<p>Rental units represent a much faster way to build Downtown’s population and in turn support the vitality that over time raises values and builds a viable ownership market.</p>
<p>1.8. Continue to lobby for a robust State Historic Credit program to encourage reinvestment in existing properties.</p>	<p>State Historic Tax Credits have proven to provide a powerful incentive for accelerating downtown redevelopment in cities across the US, including traditionally fiscally conservative states.</p>
<p>Strategy 2. Strive for Excellence in Design by Requiring that All Development Projects Downtown Follow the City’s Design Guidelines.</p> <p>Expand the role and ability of the Downtown Design Guidelines to enhance specific projects</p>	
<p>2.1. Expand the applicability of design guidelines and review to all development projects to raise the bar on design Downtown, regardless of public involvement and the DMC should consider additional specific guidelines when appropriate.</p>	<p>The Design Review Board (DRB) of the Downtown Memphis Commission already reviews private development projects that receive DMC incentives, as well as public projects.</p>
<p>2.2. Develop additional planning and design guidelines to achieve maximum public benefit and contribution to enhancing local character and quality when appropriate</p>	<p>Include response to additional guidelines in scoring projects for PILOT, project-based TIF, or other DMC assistance.</p>

CELEBRATE WALKABILITY by bringing Downtown’s streets to life and making Downtown more accessible to residents, visitors, and workers without a car.

Create approximately 10 miles of Signature Streets connecting nearly 20 acres of Signature Public Places that define Downtown as one of America’s most animated—and distinctive—urban centers.

Strategy 3. Identify, Design, and Fund Signature Streets and Signature Public Spaces.

Chapter 3 (page 46) identifies a network of Signature Streets and Signature Public Spaces for each neighborhood district where new public realm investment would help catalyze latent redevelopment potential and promote the vibrant, walkable downtown environment envisioned in this plan.

Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>3.1. Prepare Design Standards for Signature Streets and conceptual design plans for Signature Public Spaces to ensure a coordinated visual character throughout these streets and places and confirm costs. These standards should reflect Memphis’ unique cultural heritage and enable its artists, makers, and performers opportunities for personal expression. This plan projects the costs for Signature Street improvements at approx. \$50 million and Signature Public Spaces at approx. \$25 million.</p>	<p>While project-based PILOTs and TIFs support individual development projects, the DMC and City will need a Downtown-wide tool to support public realm and other non-project specific initiatives to achieve Downtown’s full potential for redevelopment and as an economic, fiscal, and equity engine for Memphis.</p>
<p>3.2. Prioritize redevelopment along Signature Streets and around Signature Public Spaces in the Downtown Development Priorities Plan.</p>	<p>A Downtown-wide TIF which captures the tax increment related to the value of new Downtown development projected in this plan should support a \$125- \$150 million fund, after discounting for anticipated PILOTs and project-based TIFs.</p>
<p>3.3. Support street life, events, and “culture bearers” that celebrate our diversity (see also Strategy 7)</p>	<p>This fund would support the costs of Signature Streets and Public Spaces, affordable housing, and other Downtown public benefits proposed in this plan not covered by other funding strategies. Signature Streets and Public Spaces should receive first priority because this fund might be one of or the only opportunities to finance them - the other candidates on the list could also be financed by other means if TIF funds are not available.</p> <p>Other funding and sources of assistance should also be identified and explored, especially in the event a new TIF is not created as envisioned above.</p>



Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>Strategy 4. Explore Additional High-Impact Pedestrian Improvements. A wide variety of incremental improvements would work together to enhance walkability across Downtown.</p>	
<p>4.1. Study and evaluate incremental improvements across Downtown that would significantly enhance walkability— for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore reducing the number of lanes and adding multimodal improvements including wider sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, and other human-scaled amenities for South Fourth Street, North Manassas Street, North Dunlap Street, Riverside Drive, and Monroe Avenue. ● Eliminate dedicated, protected right-turn lanes to reduce pedestrian crossing time and vehicle speeds where possible (e.g., A.W. Willis Avenue and Front Street). ● Evaluate the installation of a planted median for a portion of A.W. Willis Avenue. ● Convert South Second Street and South B.B. King Boulevard back to two-way operations south of Vance Street, prioritizing pedestrian amenities. ● Continue Riverwalk/Channel 3 Drive near Martyrs Park to access the riverfront on the mainland and to provide access from South City/South End/South Main. ● Improve key intersections with Riverside Drive at Beale, Union, Monroe, Court, and Jefferson Streets as high-quality pedestrian intersections with high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, pedestrian crossing signals, and signage. 	<p>See 3.1 Downtown TIF.</p> <p>Note: The accelerating mobility innovations addressed in the note to initiative 1.6 will also steadily reduce right-of-way requirements for moving traffic to and through Downtown over the next two decades.</p>
<p>4.2. Promote access to the riverfront—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce public art that tells the story of Memphis’ Mississippi River history along streets leading to the riverfront. ● Prioritize development sites that support connectivity from areas of activity to the riverfront. ● Launch comprehensive tree planting—enhancing comfort and attractiveness of walking activity to the riverfront. ● Enhance the four southern access points to Tom Lee Park to be ADA compliant. 	<p>See 3.1 Downtown TIF.</p> <p>See 1.1 Create a five-year Downtown Development Priorities Plan above.</p>
<p>4.3. Study converting Danny Thomas Boulevard into an at-grade boulevard as a future priority.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p> <p>As Downtown matures, Danny Thomas Blvd offers the opportunity to support a future retail and employment node.</p>

Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>Strategy 5. Expand Mobility Options</p> <p>Downtown can become more walkable, bikeable, and transit-ready. Where applicable, these improvements should be informed by and coordinated with recent bike and pedestrian plans as well as planned BRT investments (e.g., the Innovation Corridor).</p>	
<p>5.1. Study the potential and timing for converting the Main Street trolley into an automated (driverless) service to decrease operating costs and increase convenience by reducing headway times between vehicles.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p> <p>Technology exists today. Automated vehicles are projected to decrease operating costs by roughly 40-50%.</p>
<p>5.2. Reinforce the planned BRT system by advocating for “last mile” public realm and roadway improvements around stations that enhance bike and pedestrian connections to transit.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>5.3. Support implementation of 2014 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan’s recommended bike routes including along Riverside Drive, South Second Street, North Dunlap Street, North Manassas Street, and South Bellevue Boulevard.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>5.4. Study and evaluate the re-purposing of Riverside Drive for enhanced multi-modal functionality working with the City and MRPP.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>5.5. Anticipate rapid mobility innovations—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasize shared parking strategies over construction of new parking facilities. ● Looking forward, begin developing a curbside management strategy that gradually replaces curbside parking along commercial streets with curbside space for pick up/drop off and delivery. 	<p>See 1.6 (Strengthen the DMC’s ability to decrease the cost burden of providing parking for new development) and 4.1 (Study and evaluate improvements across Downtown that would significantly enhance walkability) above.</p> <p>This trend will also redefine the role of curbs from parking to pick-up/drop-off and deliveries.</p>



WELCOME EVERYONE by offering economic and residential opportunities to all Memphians and creating public spaces and experiences that reflect the full diversity of the city.

Strategy 6. Promote Equity.

Ensure that Downtown is everyone’s common ground—invest in housing that contributes to economic diversity across Downtown by maintaining at least 30% of the housing in every Downtown district as affordable (across a full income spectrum) and support robust programs that unlock the ability of all Memphians to share in Downtown’s economic success through the ability to get better jobs and participate in business opportunities.

Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>6.1. Create, and update annually, an affordable housing strategy as an integral part of the Downtown Priorities Plan that addresses financing, available sites and buildings, and income mixes including households earning 80% of AMI and below and to maintain a long-term goals of 30% share of housing in every Downtown district. Each year specify a minimum affordable housing threshold for projects that include more than 51 units for PILOT or project-based TIF assistance.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>6.2. Prioritize projects of more than 51 units that include more than 30% affordable units for PILOTs and project-based TIFs—for example, extending duration relative to other projects.</p>	<p>Exempt affordable housing units from BID assessments.</p>
<p>6.3. Support affordable housing advocates and others in achieving state and city policies that support affordable housing—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lobby Tennessee Housing Development Agency to make mixed-income projects more competitive for tax credit funding. ● Lobby the City to stabilize real estate tax increases based on income. ● Mitigate displacement of existing/established residents by lobbying the City to stabilize real estate taxes for households below a set income. 	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>6.4. Work with the City’s Housing Trust Fund and Catalyst Fund to encourage focus toward fewer, higher impact awards with emphasis on affordability.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind.</p>
<p>6.5. Partner with the City to ensure that affordable housing conditions attached to PILOTs and project-based TIFs continue to be met.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind</p>

Initiatives	Funding and Notes
<p>6.6. Produce a Downtown Affordable Housing report every three years that documents Downtown’s affordable housing supply by district.</p>	<p>DMC in-kind</p>
<p>Strategy 7. Support Authentic Street Life, Events, and “Culture Bearers” That Celebrate Our Diversity</p> <p>Draw on and celebrate Memphis’ diverse living culture to create lively public spaces programmed and designed to invite people from every neighborhood and walk of life to make Downtown authentic.</p>	
<p>7.1. Introduce public art along Signature Streets and in Signature Public Spaces that promotes a sense of shared community—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Installations (murals, sculpture) that tells the stories of Memphis’ diverse communities. ● Interactive public art that invites interaction (the ability for groups of people to collective design colored light patterns at night or music in a park). ● Play fountains that invite children of all ages to interact. ● Digital, interactive public art—e.g. lighting and music—that bring Memphis’ blues culture into the heart of its public realm. 	<p>Seek corporate and institutional sponsorships.</p>
<p>7.2. Support Memphis’ “culture bearers”—artists, musicians, makers, chefs, etc.—by expanding their presence in and ability to enrich Downtown’s Signature Streets and Public Spaces—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand Main Street Sounds busking program. ● Expand access to Events and Activation Grants. ● Seek sponsors for frequent cultural programming along Signature Streets and in Signature Public Spaces. 	<p>Seek corporate and institutional sponsorships.</p>
<p>7.3. Encourage spontaneous creativity through “tactical urbanism” to animate Downtown’s Signature Streets and Public Spaces (e.g., artistic crosswalks, rocking chair deployment, public bench painting) through micro-grants or similar programs.</p>	<p>Seek corporate and institutional sponsorships.</p>
<p>7.4. Re-energize Beale Street—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visually improve the connection between Beale Street and Main Street with wider sidewalks, interpretative elements, lighting and art and eventually with development frontage. ● Expand the current Beale Street entertainment offerings towards South Fourth Street and Danny Thomas. ● Explore ways to catalyze redevelopment in and around Beale Street that leverage a vibrant, living blues culture (including conducting a follow-up study dedicated to these questions.) 	<p>See 3.1 Downtown TIF.</p>

Implementation Framework Summary

BUILD UP by concentrating a critical mass of development within a 5-minute walk of Main Street and other retail centers.	Strategy 1. Promote Compact Critical Mass with Additional Resources and an Expanded Toolkit.	
	1.1. Create a five-year Downtown Development Priorities Plan	DMC in-kind
	1.2. Expand the DMC’s ability to implement the five-year Downtown Development Priorities Plan	Parking revenues (on interim basis)
	1.3. Explore increasing the DMC development fund (CCDC) to support redevelopment activities	Parking revenues (on interim basis), extended CBID assessment
	1.4. Assist Downtown property owners and developers in accessing additional financing	Opportunity Zones, New Markets Tax Credits
	1.5. Expand the DMC’s partnership with the City to reduce blight	DMC in-kind
	1.6. Strengthen the DMC’s ability to decrease the cost burden of providing parking for new development	Parking revenues (on interim basis)
	1.7. Explore the feasibility of expanding Downtown home ownership (primarily condos)	DMC in-kind
	1.8. Continue to lobby for a robust State Historic Credit program	DMC in-kind
	Strategy 2. Strive for Excellence in Design For All Development Projects Downtown	
	2.1. Expand the applicability of design guidelines and review to all development projects	DMC in-kind
	2.2. Develop additional planning and design guidelines	DMC in-kind
CELEBRATE WALKABILITY by bringing Downtown’s streets to life and making Downtown more accessible to residents, visitors, and workers without a car.	Strategy 3. Identify, Design, and Fund Signature Streets and Signature Public Spaces.	
	3.1. Prepare Design Standards for Signature Streets and conceptual design plans for Signature Public Spaces	Downtown-wide TIF
	3.2. Prioritize redevelopment along Signature Streets and near Signature Public Spaces	Downtown-wide TIF
	3.3. Support street life, events, and “culture bearers”	Downtown-wide TIF
	Strategy 4. Explore Additional High-Impact Pedestrian Improvements.	
	4.1. Study and evaluate incremental improvements across Downtown that would significantly enhance walkability	Downtown-wide TIF
	4.2. Promote access to the riverfront	Downtown-wide TIF
	4.3. Study converting Danny Thomas Boulevard into an at-grade boulevard	DMC in-kind
	Strategy 5. Expand Mobility Options.	
	5.1. Study the potential and timing for converting the Main Street trolley into an automated (driverless) service	DMC in-kind
	5.2. Reinforce the planned BRT system	DMC in-kind
	5.3. Support implementation of 2014 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan’s recommended bike routes	DMC in-kind
	5.4. Evaluate the re-purposing of Riverside Drive for enhanced multi-modal functionality	DMC in-kind
	5.5. Anticipate rapid mobility innovations	DMC in-kind
	WELCOME EVERYONE by offering economic and residential opportunities to all Memphians and creating public spaces and experiences that reflect the full diversity of the city.	Strategy 6. Promote Equity.
6.1. Create, and update annually, an affordable housing strategy		DMC in-kind
6.2. Prioritize projects of more than 51 units that include more than 30% affordable units for PILOTs and project-based TIFs		DMC in-kind
6.3. Support affordable housing advocates and others in achieving State and City policies that support affordable housing		DMC in-kind
6.4. Work with the City’s Housing Trust Fund and Catalyst Fund to encourage focus toward fewer, higher impact awards		DMC in-kind
6.5. Partner with the City to ensure that affordable housing conditions attached to PILOTs and project-based TIFs continue to be met		DMC in-kind
6.6. Produce a Downtown Affordable Housing report every three years		DMC in-kind
Strategy 7. Support Authentic Street Life, Events, and “Culture Bearers” That Celebrate Our Diversity.		
7.1. Introduce public art along Signature Streets and in Signature Public Spaces		Sponsorships
7.2. Support Memphis’ “culture bearers”		Sponsorships
7.3. Encourage spontaneous creativity through “tactical urbanism” to animate Downtown’s Signature Streets and Public Spaces		Sponsorships
7.4. Re-energize Beale Street		Downtown-wide TIF

DRAFT PLAN: ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The BuildDowntown planning team published a draft of this document for public comment. The team also hosted a series of live community webinars to review key recommendations and established an interactive webpage where residents and stakeholders could share their comments and ideas in numerous ways.

The team responded to comments through numerous channels, including verbally during the webinars, in writing via email correspondence, through follow-up phone conversations, and by compiling and analyzing feedback collected on the website. Additionally, the document was revised as needed to reflect additional voices, clarify findings and recommendations, and generally improve the deliverable to best serve the DMC’s mission and goals.

2,000+
TOTAL WEBSITE VISITS

725+
UNIQUE WEBSITE USERS

Join us for two BuildDowntown live webinars!

We will host two live webinars in June to walk the community through the plan, answer questions, and facilitate dialogue around it's ideas, recommendations, and next steps.

See Zoom links for each meeting below. We will record and post videos of each webinar to this website after the live events take place.

Downtown Memphis Master Plan

Welcome to the Downtown Memphis Commission's online forum for review and dialogue on the complete (but not completely final) draft of BuildDowntown, the Downtown Memphis Master Plan.

This Plan is not about reinventing Downtown - this is a community-based plan that celebrates Downtown's renaissance by enhancing its very real strengths. This approach will both help us build a Downtown that represents a more equitable common ground for our community as well as a more powerful economic engine for the region.

Please review the document, participate in the interactive activities and discussion, and share your thoughts and energy as we finalize the plan.

Download and review the latest draft of the plan

BuildDowntown_Memphis_Master_Plan_060320.pdf & documents

Tell us what you think!

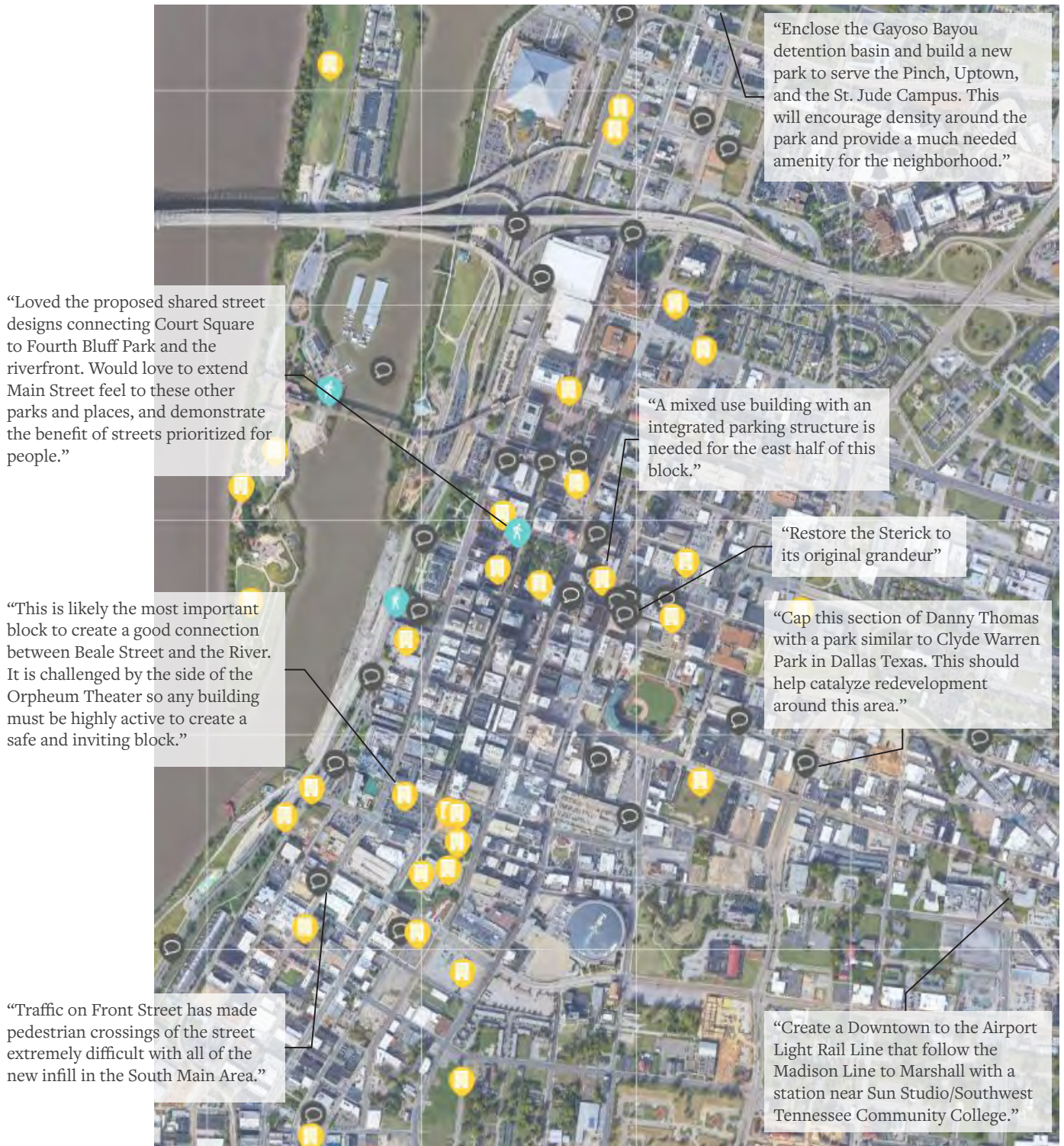
Using the tools below, share your feedback and comments to help us wrap up the final draft.

Give us your ideas and feedback!

These tools help us gather important ideas and feedback as we wrap up the planning process.

- Share your ideas**
Did we miss anything? Let us know what else we should include.
[Add your ideas](#)
- Map anything we missed**
Did we miss anything important in the plan? Show us where on a map and tell us about it.
[Add to the map](#)
- Prioritize objectives**
Help us prioritize the plan's Framework objectives.
[Take This Survey](#)





“Loved the proposed shared street designs connecting Court Square to Fourth Bluff Park and the riverfront. Would love to extend Main Street feel to these other parks and places, and demonstrate the benefit of streets prioritized for people.”

“Enclose the Gayoso Bayou detention basin and build a new park to serve the Pinch, Uptown, and the St. Jude Campus. This will encourage density around the park and provide a much needed amenity for the neighborhood.”

“A mixed use building with an integrated parking structure is needed for the east half of this block.”

“Restore the Sterick to its original grandeur”

“This is likely the most important block to create a good connection between Beale Street and the River. It is challenged by the side of the Orpheum Theater so any building must be highly active to create a safe and inviting block.”

“Cap this section of Danny Thomas with a park similar to Clyde Warren Park in Dallas Texas. This should help catalyze redevelopment around this area.”

“Traffic on Front Street has made pedestrian crossings of the street extremely difficult with all of the new infill in the South Main Area.”

“Create a Downtown to the Airport Light Rail Line that follow the Madison Line to Marshall with a station near Sun Studio/Southwest Tennessee Community College.”

The project’s website included an interactive map allowing participants to comment on the project in terms of specific areas or places within downtown and according to the project’s three key themes: build up, celebrate walkability, and welcome everyone.





