

A nighttime photograph of a city street in Norfolk, Virginia. The scene is illuminated by warm yellow streetlights and a long string of white LED lights hanging across the street. In the background, a multi-story building features a prominent red 'D' logo on its upper facade. The street is lined with trees and parked cars, creating a vibrant urban atmosphere.

# Downtown Norfolk

## Final Strategic Work Plan

11/10/21

Prepared by

streetsense.



# About the Work Plan

This document summarizes four priority initiatives developed following the adoption of the retail strategy plan and in collaboration with DNC staff and the Board of Directors.

Priority projects were culled from 18 project recommendations, and each was subject to additional due diligence, including conversations with impacted stakeholders, assessment of resource availability, that led to further refinements as outlined in this document.





# What principles hold these priority projects together?

- Projects with **potential for engagement with willing partners**/stakeholders
- Projects that offer **high probability of success** and tangible impacts that will grow DNC's credibility
- Projects that offer **timely opportunities for short-term resource allocation**, particularly related to COVID recovery
- Projects that raise the profile of existing assets to **tell a story that serves to counterbalance** prevailing narratives





# Objectives

**Additional due diligence and work plan refinement were developed for the following four priority items:**

1. Implement tenant **Signage** along priority streets
2. Update **Ground Floor Zoning** by redefining primary streets throughout downtown
3. Improve the holistic **Parking** experience from arrival in downtown to departure
4. Advance targeted **Public Realm improvements and activation** that brings family-friendly activity to downtown

**Additionally, we recommend continued focus on the following recommendations:**

1. Simplify and streamline **Outdoor Dining** application process under a single agency with a clear set of rules and enforcement mechanisms
2. Establish a **Media Vault** with high quality imagery for promotion and marketing purposes



# Signage



# Challenge

- Inconsistent mix of tenant signage along primary streets
- Lack in texture and interest along Street
- Lack of signage also means lack of visibility for pedestrians



Freemason St



Granby St – 400 Block



Granby St – 100 Block



W Main St



# Solution

Incorporate a wide variety of signage throughout downtown, including:

- Blade signage program
- Distribution of branded A-frame signs to businesses along Granby
- Installation of a large temporary semi-transparent banner sign at Selden Market





# Solution

## Selden Market

Adding a large semi-transparent banner sign will attract visitors from the waterfront to Selden Market and act as a beacon for downtown.



*Temporary signs can not block more than 1/3 of the window*

<https://www.norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20108/Temporary-signs-Brochure?bidId=>



Chicago History Museum



# Execution – Blade Sign Program

## Step 1

In partnership with ARB, develop program guidelines, eligible participants, match required, amount of award, application forms, etc.

## Step 2

Identify fabricators, designers, installers

Develop budget estimates per business

## Step 3

Announce program and market to eligible businesses

Sign MOU's with participating businesses

## Step 4

Coordinate design and prepare ARB submission package

## Step 5

Celebrate success with Ribbon Cutting Event



# Ground Floor Zoning



# Challenge

Current zoning requirements for “active” ground floor space further exacerbate retail oversupply which will result in higher vacancies over time.

“Active” ground floor requirements do not necessarily mean activated streets. In some cases, commercial properties present blank facades to pedestrians and in others residential properties provide welcome engagement with the street. See examples from East/West Freemason.





# Solution

Redefine a selection of "primary streets" and remove active ground floor use requirements.

## Recommended Ground Floor Priority Uses

### Commercial Priority

- Primary ground floor uses will remain commercial (shops, offices, theatres, restaurants)
- Ground floor active use requirements will remain in place

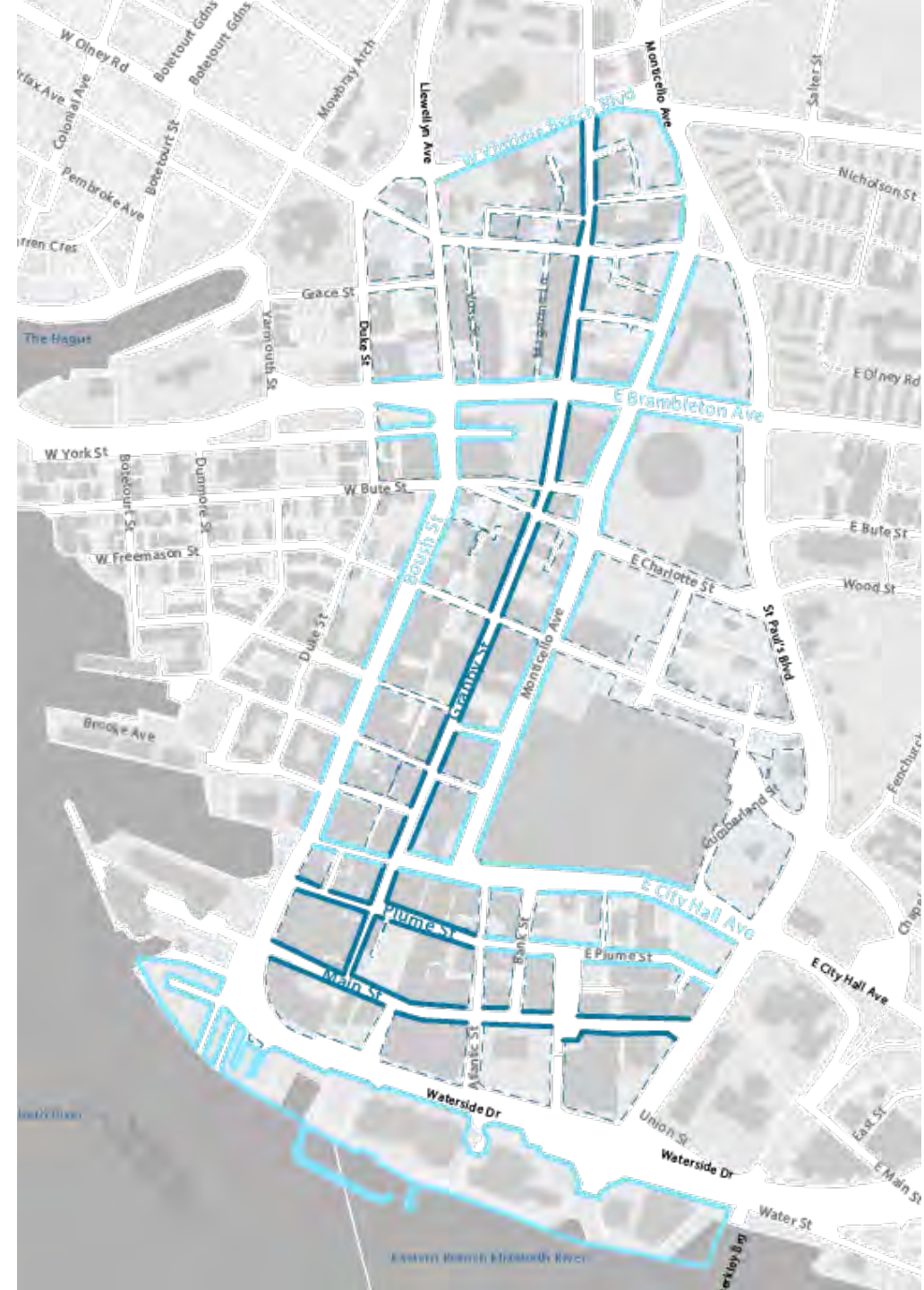
### Residential/Commercial Priority

- Ground floor active use requirement will be removed
- Primary ground floor uses may be residential or commercial

### Residential Priority

- Ground floor active use requirement will be removed
- Primary ground floor uses will be residential, with some allowances for services (i.e., doctors, attorneys, etc.)
- Additional design guidelines for residential development will be required

*At full build out, "Commercial Priority" streets would result in approx. 450k sf of commercial activity. (Assuming a 65% active ground floor use requirement)*





# Solution

## Recommendations for Ground Floor Design Guidelines for Residential

- Requirements for “real” doors and windows
- Restrictions on blank facades
- Elevated entrances to address flood elevation and privacy needs of first floor residents
- 2-3 ft landscaping and screening to provide permeable surface and an additional layer of privacy





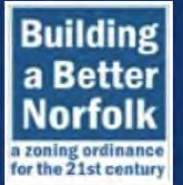
# Solution

## Incorporate Landscaping into the current resiliency quotient system (ZDM19-0001) for residential

- Allowing landscaping in front of buildings as a permeable surface to count towards the resiliency quotient requirements

### Norfolk's Zoning Ordinance Executive Summary

Norfolk's new zoning ordinance was unanimously adopted by City Council on January 23, 2018 and takes effect March 1, 2018. The ordinance was rewritten to strengthen the City's commitment to vibrant neighborhoods, economic diversity, and coastal resilience.



The new zoning ordinance encourages and supports development that makes Norfolk more resilient, both physically and economically, recognizes the four established character districts, is user-friendly and supports streamlined development processes. It allows us to take a proactive and innovative approach to address flooding and position the mermaid city as the coastal community of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and a model for other coastal communities to follow.

#### Resilience

The Ordinance contains a number of pioneering approaches in response to the long-term challenges posed by sea level rise, one of which requires all development within the City to meet a resilience quotient. The requirement is measured on a points system covering three



separate resilience elements: risk reduction, stormwater management, and energy resilience. This innovative points system ensures that new development will be more resilient and environmentally-friendly while providing flexibility to builders by allowing them to choose which measures to include in the development. Additionally, new or

expanding development must meet minimum requirements for first floor elevations 1.5 – 3 feet above flood level.

The ordinance allows for easier mixing of use in commercial corridors to encourage more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly communities, whether one walks, bikes or drives. Increasing



# Execution – Rezoning

## Step 1

In partnership  
City Planning,  
redefine priority  
street  
designations

## Step 2

City Planning  
to take lead in  
advancing  
zoning  
modifications  
(approx. 6  
months)

## Step 3

Develop  
residential  
design  
guidelines for  
non-commercial  
streets



Parking



# Challenge

- Approximately 19,000 + downtown parking spaces (including surface parking) - supply is not the issue
- Visitors can become disoriented entering and exiting downtown garages
- Limited visibility and navigability to/from parking garages owing to unclear pedestrian entrances
- Opportunities for aesthetic improvements that address safety concerns







Bank Street Garage



MacArthur Center Garage



Boush Street Garage



The Main Garage

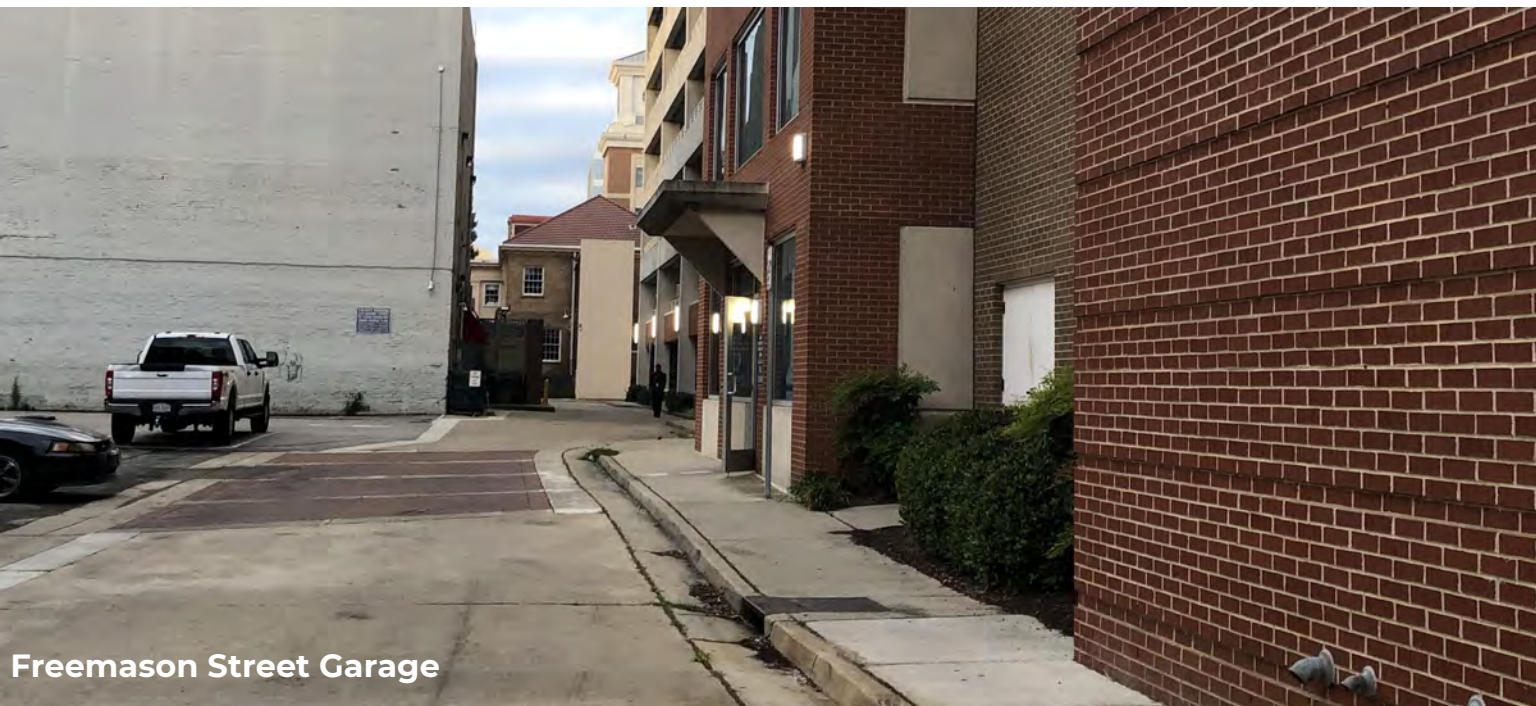


Main Street Garage





Freemason Street Garage



Freemason Street Garage



Fountain Park Garage



# Solutions



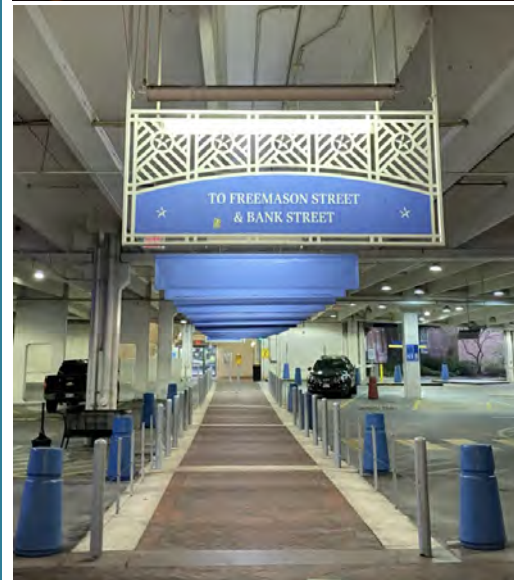
- Branded garage wayfinding
- Electronic parking garage signs with real-time information





# Solutions

- Clear names for each parking garage/lot
- Pedestrian wayfinding indicating street name exits

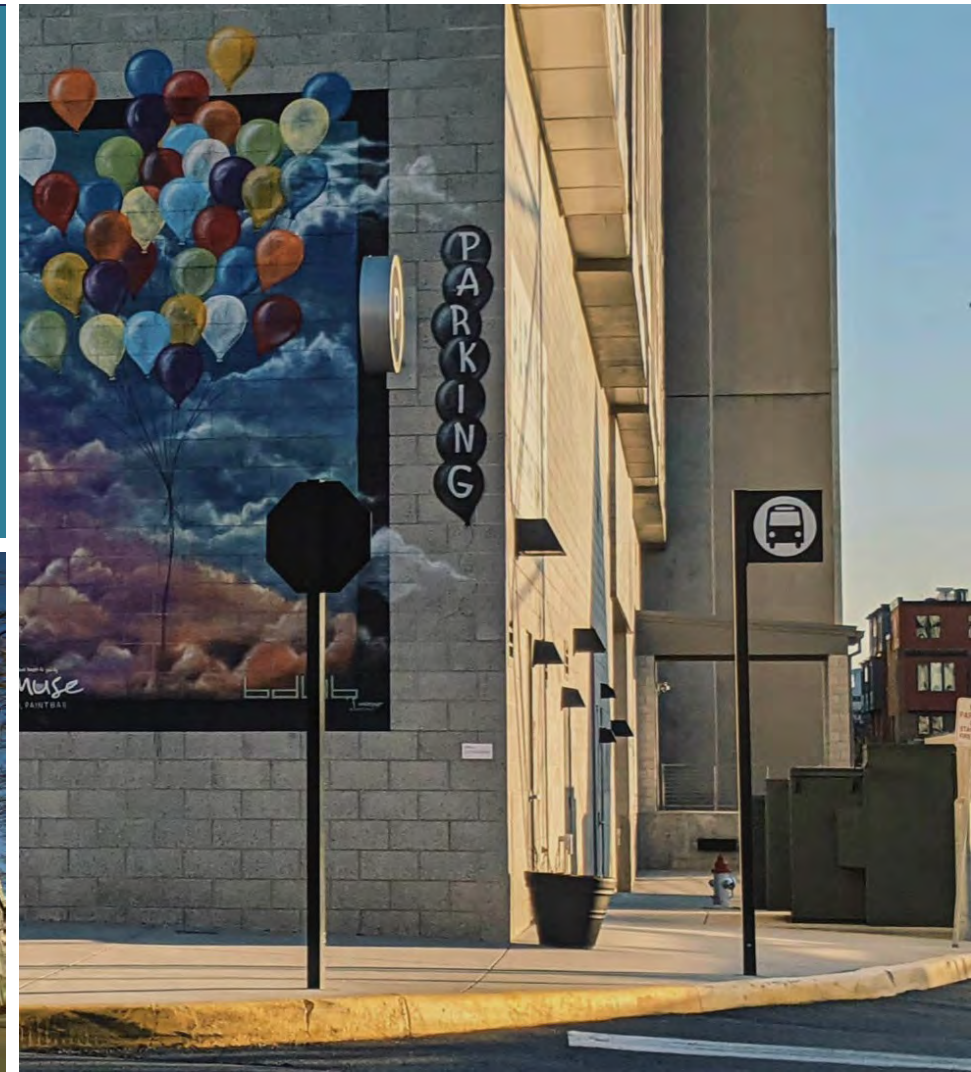




# Solutions



- Themed murals





# Solutions



- Interior lighting/painting
- Exterior lighting



# Solutions

Parking Authority

A comprehensive solution to downtown parking will require partnership with the Norfolk Parking Authority

**Downtown Norfolk  
Council**

Parking  
wayfinding signs  
on City streets

- **Marketing/promotion:** parking savings/passport with deals & discounts
- **Branded wayfinding signage**
- **Parking garage lighting**
- **Countdown signage** at every garage
- **Graphics & art/branding** on exterior of lots and interior hallways

**(RFP Issued on 6/17/2021)**

- Hardware, software, event management
- Installation, configuration, testing, training, activation
- Support for a Payment Data Industry Data Security
- Standard (PCI DSS)
- Payment Application DSS (PA DSS) compliant PARCS at all specific locations



# Execution

## Step 1

Establish a parking task force that includes DNC, Parking Authority, & other stakeholders

## Step 2

Develop comprehensive strategy and reach consensus on recommendations

Estimate costs

Identify funding opportunities

## Step 3

Pursue and secure funding

## Step 4

RFP/Project Execution

# Public Realm Enhancements



# Challenges

- Limited opportunities for small- and large-scale public realm activations along Granby
- Limited connectivity to Granby Street from surrounding offerings/public spaces
- Inconvenient and unclear entrance to Macarthur Center Green



Market Street

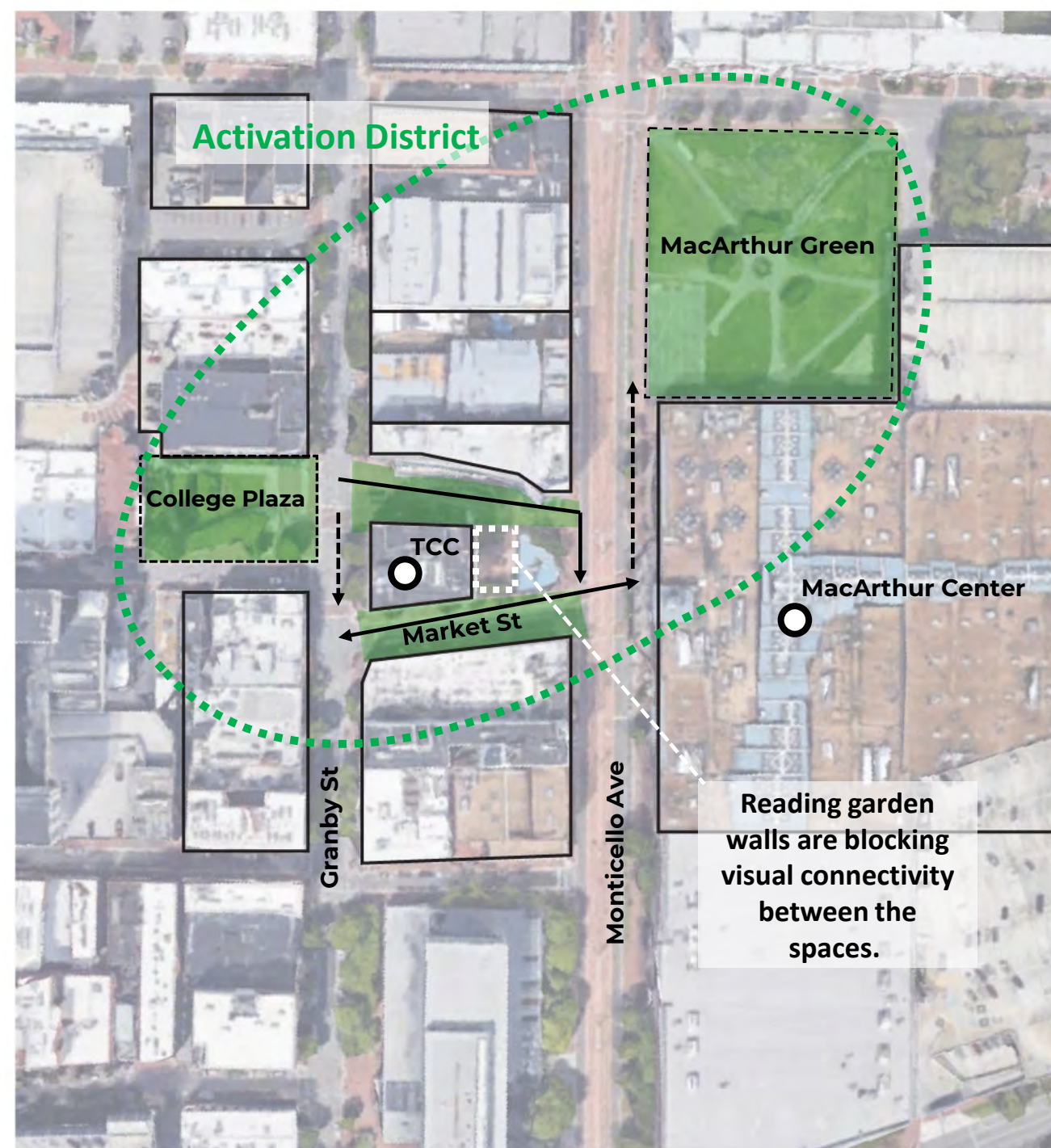






# Solutions

- Provide linkages between existing and new public spaces within a focused area
- Temporary recurrent closure of Market Street to improved connectivity to MacArthur Green
- Build on existing public space by encouraging connectivity to Monticello Ave and MacArthur Green through TCC
- Increase activation of MacArthur Green and College Plaza
  - Develop activation plan with MacArthur Center Management
  - Engage residents in determining uses
  - Focus on low-cost, fun activities





# Engage Community (MacArthur Green)

- Incorporate creative and fun ways to engage community residents in deciding what kinds of uses they want to see on MacArthur Green
- This builds a captive audience and can be folded into a “feel good” PR effort when the park opens with new activities

















# Solutions

- Define and reorient the park entrance to encourage connectivity to Market Street and visibility to Granby Street
- Open-up entrance closest to Market Street with gateway signage





# Execution

## MacArthur Green

- 
- A vertical white line with four circular markers at each step, serving as a timeline for the MacArthur Green execution process.
- Step 1** Collaborate with MacArthur Center to explore placemaking activities on MacArthur Green
  - Step 2** Engage community in idea generation
  - Step 3** Program execution
  - Step 4** Marketing and promotion of activation

## Activation District

- 
- A vertical white line with three circular markers at each step, serving as a timeline for the Activation District execution process.
- Step 1** Engage TCC, NORVA, MacArthur Center and other stakeholders to develop an activation strategy for a connected series of open spaces
  - Step 2** Temporary and reoccurring street closure on Market Street
  - Step 3** Marketing and promotion of activation



Additional Items:

Outdoor Dining  
Media Vault



# Outdoor Dining

## Challenge

- OpenNorfolk will sunset streateries in 2022
- There is no permanence to the process
- Allow more opportunities for outdoor dining in the public right-of-way



## Solutions

- Simplify and streamline outdoor dining application process under a single agency with a clear set of rules and enforcement mechanisms
- Develop a fee structure that results in a revenue neutral solution
- Establish design guidelines for temporary structures in the public right-of-way
- Develop seasonal guidelines for structures





# Media Vault

## Challenge

- Limited high-quality photography available for marketing and social media
- Positive imagery helps counterbalance negative stories about downtown

## Solutions

- Hire a professional photographer to begin a publicly accessible media database of images for use by businesses, social media influencers, etc.
- Explore other options for creating a database of high-quality digital images, including engaging a digital photography class or holding a photography competition





# Priority Item Overview

## Signage

- Blade signs along first two blocks of Granby
- A-Frame signs along Granby St from Main to NEON
- Large visible banner for Selden Market

## Ground Floor Zoning

- Eliminate streets from priority street designation
- Develop design guidelines for ground floor residential uses
- Incorporate landscaping for ground floor residential into resiliency quotient system

## Parking

- Work with Parking Authority to develop a strategy and identify funding to improve parking visibility, wayfinding and marketing of garages

## Public Realm Enhancements

- Activate Macarthur Green with recreation and placemaking activities
- Collaborate with partners to increase Connectivity from Granby St to Monticello Ave through existing public space (Market St, TCC Plaza)





# Thank You

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