CREATING VIBRANT SPACES

THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

PRESERVING HISTORIC CHARM

Draft – October 8, 2024

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Fire
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Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Police
Public Works
Wake Forest Power
Wake Forest Renaissance Centre

Thanks to Those Who Participated

A special thank you goes to everyone who participated in the planning process for the Wake Forest Downtown Plan. This Plan was made possible by the contributions and insights of the residents, business owners, property owners, developers, and representatives from various groups and organizations.

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WAKE FOREST
DOWNTOWN

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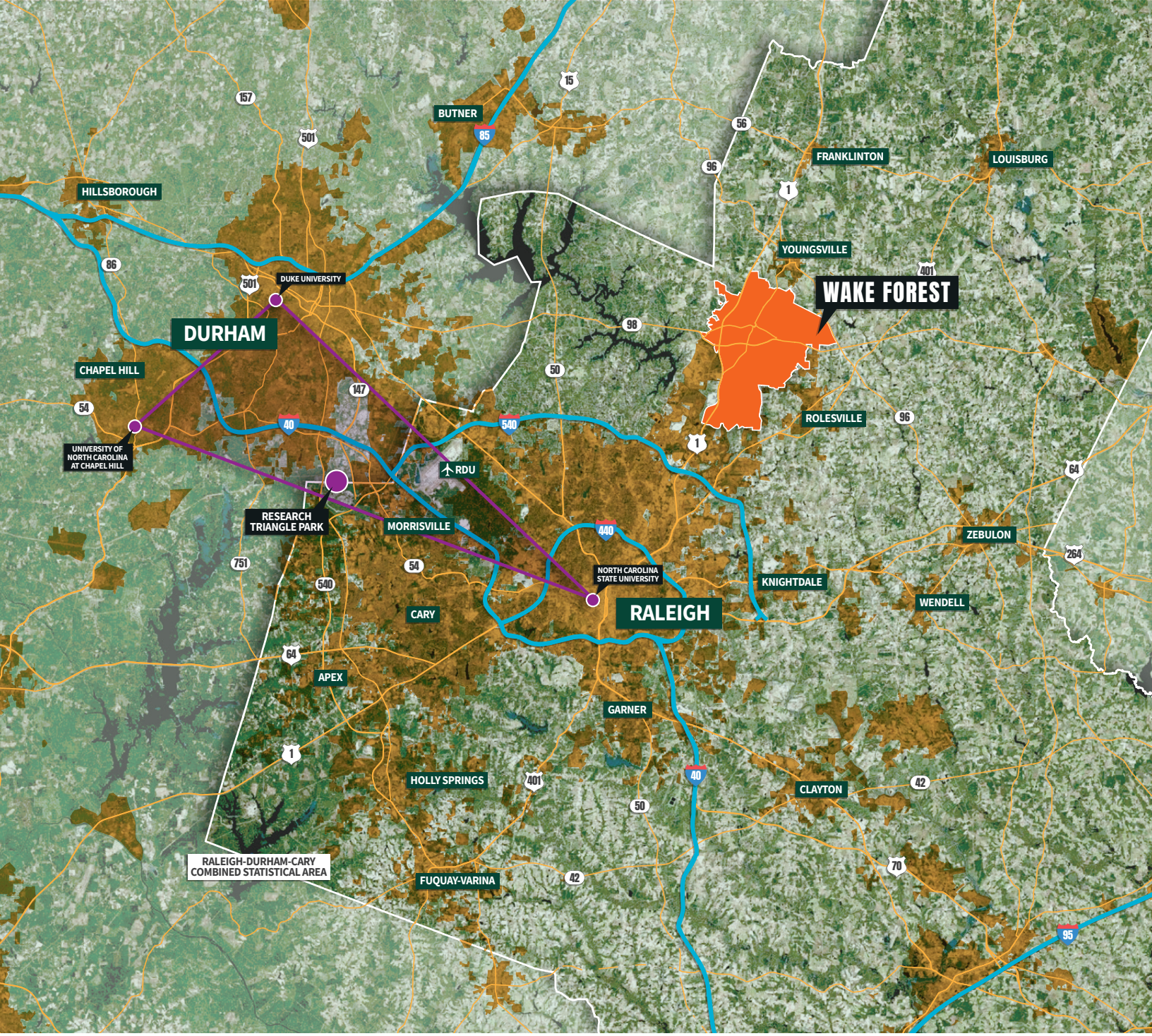
Introduction & Plan Context

Wake Forest is faced with a unique opportunity to bring about significant and positive change Downtown. The 2017 Renaissance Plan was strong and insightful in its direction, but Downtown is faced with new issues and opportunities that were unforeseen in 2017. Paramount among these is the S-Line project and the development and redevelopment anticipated with a new Downtown passenger rail station. The Town's plans and regulations have also evolved, with new plans adopted for transportation, the Northeast Community, and overall growth and development-and with a newly updated Unified Development Ordinance. This Downtown Plan continues that evolution to set a new vision and policy framework for Downtown, in order to fully meet the issues and opportunities Wake Forest faces today.

The Downtown Plan serves as the Town's official guide to direct growth, investment, improvement, and development within Downtown Wake Forest. It provides a decision-making framework for staff, appointed officials, and elected officials. Presenting a vision for the year 2035, the Downtown Plan also provides goals and other recommendations of action to be undertaken by the Town to maintain Downtown as an attractive and vibrant Town center.

In addition, the Downtown Plan provides property owners and the development community with the Town's expectation for private development and improvement. The Plan's recommendations and policies, along with the development guidelines, set a standard for new development and indicate the types of uses and desirable character and built form throughout Downtown.



Regional Setting

The Town of Wake Forest is in Central North Carolina, about fifteen miles northeast of Downtown Raleigh. The Town's position, on the periphery of North Carolina's Research Triangle Park, gives access to one of the fastest-growing research and development hubs in the country. Downtown is advantageously located along the historic Raleigh and Gaston Railroad which will serve as the location for the highly anticipated passenger rail.

Due to this advantageous position, Wake Forest enjoys rapid population growth and is currently one of the fastest growing municipalities in the state. The community is connected to the surrounding region by the major routes US 1, NC Hwy 98, I-540, and US 401, with access to destinations across the world via the Raleigh-Durham International (RDU) Airport located just 17 miles away.

Downtown Planning Area

The Downtown Wake Forest planning area is bounded by railroad tracks to the west, E. Holding Avenue to the south, S. Franklin Street to the east, and E. Roosevelt Avenue and Wait Avenue to the north. The planning area includes the Downtown Wake Forest Historic District, Town Hall, and a variety of businesses, civic and institutional uses, and residential uses.

Past Plans & Studies

Creating new plans requires a comprehensive understanding of previous planning efforts and documents. The Town of Wake Forest developed numerous plans in the previous decade that cover a range of topics including growth management, historic preservation, transportation, parks and recreation, and important neighborhoods. The following section contains many plans previously created for Wake Forest as well as the NCDOT S-Line TOD Study. The summaries compiled here provide background which inform the Wake Forest Downtown Plan.

Town of Wake Forest Community Plan (2022)

The Wake Forest Community Plan establishes a comprehensive long-term vision for planning and development around Wake Forest for the next 10 to 20 years. Community engagement for the Plan reveals the community's desire to preserve and enhance the Town's current small-town character while accommodating projected population growth in a strategic and sustainable manner. It covers an array of topics including land use designations, urban design, greenspace management, transit, and more. All other plans should refer to the Community Plan to understand the overarching vision of Wake Forest.

Wake Forest Public Transit Plan (2023)

The Town of Wake Forest is seeking to expand its transit service. The Wake Forest Loop (WFL) circulator and the Wake Forest-Raleigh Express (WRX) have served the Town since 2008. The circulator service provides residents access to public services, medical facilities, and commercial destinations in Wake Forest and the Wakefield neighborhood in Raleigh. The express service provides commuter access to downtown Raleigh. The Town conducted the Wake Forest Public Transit Plan (Transit Plan) to explore the options to expand transit to serve growing parts of the Town and connect to key activity centers. The Transit Plan summarizes the evaluation of existing transit services in Wake Forest, discusses the viability of different transit expansion alternatives, and recommends a preferred option to expand transit – including the service type, cost of the service expansion, and steps to implement the service.

S-Line Transit Oriented Development Study (2023)

The S-Line Transit-Oriented Development Study is a wide-ranging plan that studies the feasibility of designing and implementing transit-oriented developments (TOD) within communities along the proposed S-Line rail corridor. The Study was conducted by NCDOT and focused on S-Line potential station locations in Wake Forest, which included Burlington Mills, Old Forestville, and Downtown. Proposed developments are intended to provide new housing units, commercial space, and transportation infrastructure in accordance with projected population and employment growth over the next 20 years. The Study acknowledges that all developments will be conducted under the priorities of current area plans, such as the Wake Forest Renaissance Plan. The Study Area Vision for Downtown Wake Forest is to support existing successes in Downtown with regional transit connections and targeted TOD development that preserves the existing character of the downtown.

Wake Forest Housing Affordability Plan (2022)

The Wake Forest Housing Affordability Plan highlights current challenges to maintaining and developing affordable housing given the region's rapid population growth. According to the Housing Affordability Plan Public Survey, 35 percent of white respondents and 63 percent of black respondents struggle to find housing in a neighborhood they want to live in. Special emphasis was given to senior residents who find themselves cost-burdened, as their ability to move to new housing is limited. The Plan recommends a variety of strategies and actions that could be employed to help keep existing residents in their homes and provide new, affordable housing to those who need it.

Town of Wake Forest Historic Preservation Plan (2022)

The Historic Preservation Plan was adopted in 2022 and provides an overview of the current funding, programs, and processes of the Town's Historic Preservation Commission. The current inventory of historic districts and certain properties within them are highlighted in addition to the development requirements indicated by the overlays of certain historic districts. Wake Forest's Downtown is covered by the Downtown Wake Forest NRHP Historic District. It was established in 2002 and encompasses the buildings on S. White Street constructed between 1890 and 1951. The Plan recommends implementation items that will strengthen the historic preservation program; maintain historic character; increase diversity, equity, and inclusion; and encourage community learning opportunities within the historic preservation program in Wake Forest.

Northeast Community Plan (2021)

The Northeast Community Plan recommends policies and actions to address the current and future needs of the Northeast Community in Wake Forest. Community members voiced concerns that developments around the Northeast Community could lead to current residents being priced out and the loss of the unique community culture. The Plan aims to help preserve the history, diversity, and affordability of the area while addressing issues of growth, economic health, public infrastructure, and preservation.

Wake Forest Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2019)

The 2019 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is a long-range plan that provides recommendations to address the Town's multimodal transportation needs for the next 25 to 30 years. This includes improvements to highways and streets, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit that will steer the Town toward providing a safe, efficient, flexible, innovative, and inclusive transportation system with a multitude of options for residents and visitors. Recommendations include specific locations for new multi-use paths, bicycle lanes and sharrows, rail service, and a "reverse route" of the existing Wake Forest Loop bus service.

Renaissance Plan for Downtown Wake Forest (2017)

The 2017 Renaissance Plan, which is based upon the original 2004 Renaissance Plan, establishes recommendations for the revitalization of Wake Forest's historic Downtown. The Plan aims to create a vibrant core for the community that provides a place to live, work, and play for both locals and visitors. It also identifies key new development and redevelopment opportunities for mixed-use, housing, retail, office, and dining. Mobility is a major theme carried throughout the Plan, with recommendations for enhancing the pedestrian environment, bikeability, and access to transit from within the Downtown. The Plan sets the framework for urban design enhancements that promote a high quality of life, such as appropriate building height standards, continuous frontages, spatial enclosure, and gateway improvements.

Wake Forest Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan (2015)

The 2015 Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan guides the Town in meeting the needs of current and future residents by enhancing and expanding on the community's unique parks, recreation, and cultural assets. The Plan includes a facility inventory, GRASP (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process) Level of Service Analysis, needs assessment, and operational and marketing analysis that inform recommendations how to enhance existing facilities while pursuing opportunities for new facilities and improvements. Issues identified include the need for better circulation systems within parks, increased connectivity to the trail system, enhanced open space integration into parks, and better provision of park facilities west of Capital Boulevard and south of Dr. Calvin Jones Highway (Hwy 98). The Plan describes ways to enhance the level of service and the quality of life through improvements, increased programming, improved safety, and potential partnerships. It also promotes better connectivity to all recreational resources, and ensures ADA accessibility. The Plan is currently in the process of being updated and the anticipated 2024 adoption date.

Public Engagement

As part of the planning process, community outreach was conducted to gain input from residents, local businesses, the development community, Town staff, and key stakeholders. Outreach garnered 1,018 points of engagement through a combination of in-person and online community outreach tools and exercises throughout the planning process.

In-Person

In-person outreach provided participants the opportunity to discuss issues, opportunities, potential projects, and strengths regarding Downtown. It also offered stakeholders the opportunity to hear ideas and engage with other participants. The following were in-person participation opportunities.

- Department Heads Workshop
- Business Workshop
- Board of Commissioners Workshop
- Advisory Group Workshop
- Planning Board Workshop
- Downtown Visioning Workshop and Visual Preference Boards
- Draft Downtown Plan Community Open House

Online Outreach

In addition to the various forms of in-person outreach, there were opportunities for online participation.

- Online Downtown Survey
- Service Provider Survey

Additional Outreach

Additional outreach was conducted to capture insight into the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, from more specific groups. DIY (Do-It-Yourself) kits and key stakeholder meetings offered more focused discussions with specific groups.

Visioning Workshop

On November 8, 2023, the Town of Wake Forest hosted two Visioning Workshops at the Wake Forest Fire Department Station #1 to discuss the Downtown Plan. The workshops allowed residents, business owners and operators, and other key stakeholders to discuss the future of the community and provide visioning input for the Downtown Plan. The workshops were designed to allow participants to voice their thoughts on the Downtown before plan recommendations were crafted. In addition to offering feedback regarding the vision for Downtown, participants were encouraged to provide feedback on potential urban design elements using a visual preference survey.

Key Takeaways from Public Engagement

The following is a summary of commonly discussed issues and opportunities organized by topic. These themes informed the vision, goals, and recommendations found in the Plan.

Downtown Identity

Many respondents remarked that the defining features of Wake Forest are its small-town, historic character and its natural areas. However, many are concerned that these two aspects of the Town are disappearing with rapid population growth. Participants mentioned that the defining physical elements of Downtown's identity are the historic buildings along S. White Street. They are beloved for their historic architecture and scale, yet it was consistently mentioned that ways to encourage property owners to maintain and rent their vacant buildings are essential to preserving the character of the historic downtown.

Note on Summary Context: The items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant. They represent feedback and comments received from those who participated in the various workshops, interviews, and survey.

Supporting Affordable Housing and Housing Downtown

Some respondents felt that Downtown should not see residential development as it may worsen the availability of parking and detract from the area's current small-town charm and natural beauty. However, many participants indicated that Downtown needs more affordable housing. It was mentioned that the newly constructed single-family and multifamily housing stock is not considered affordable for residents earning below the area's median income. While participants mentioned that affordable housing options are needed, many survey respondents were concerned about the Town's current pace of development.

Addressing Transportation and Parking Issues

Traffic congestion and parking were common topics of discussion in all forms of community outreach. Many respondents felt that the Town is growing too quickly for current infrastructure to handle, causing traffic in and around Downtown. Several respondents cited S. White Street as an example of the traffic issues in Downtown, particularly during special events, like Friday Night on White.

Intersections around Downtown, particularly the intersection at S. White Street and Elm Avenue, were cited as dangerous. Respondents mentioned that there is a desire to walk into Downtown but current conditions do not provide a safe and comfortable environment to do so. Several participants mentioned that Elm Avenue and E. Roosevelt Avenue need street improvements to increase safety and visibility, particularly Elm Avenue because of its width.

With much of Wake Forest's traffic converging Downtown, parking is a big issue amongst respondents. Some respondents did not like that visitors would sometimes park in spots designated for Downtown residents or businesses. In addition, respondents pointed out that the lack of available parking becomes more of an issue during Downtown events.

Streetscape, Gateways, and Signage

Feedback from respondents noted that street trees, lighting, and other public amenities on S. White Street provided a great atmosphere Downtown. Many individuals noted that in comparison to S. White Street, the "feel" of Downtown disappears and walking becomes less pleasant on other Downtown streets (like Wait Avenue, E. Jones Street, Brooks Street). Participants felt that streets should receive streetscape improvements to improve the walking experience throughout Downtown. During the visioning workshop, groups mentioned the need for more public art and signage. Groups suggested that more public art should be added to current parks and public spaces to add to the identity of Downtown.

Many respondents liked the idea of installing gateways into Downtown and pointed to the railroad overpass as the only significant gateway into Downtown. Participants said that improvements need to be made to the railroad bridge along with the road and sidewalk passing under it.

Economic Development

Respondents expressed satisfaction with the current commercial stock in Downtown. However, when asked what could attract more customers and visitors Downtown, respondents overwhelmingly responded with a desire for a greater number and diversity of restaurants. The reasoning for this response came from a desire for more social spaces Downtown and activating more rooftops and/or outdoor spaces. Apart from restaurants, respondents wanted new "quality" shopping options, such as grocery stores, bakeries, or clothing stores. Multiple groups emphasized the desire for a locally owned and operated Downtown and wanted to ensure that new development does not include chains.

Greenspace and Gathering Spaces

Natural space in and around Downtown is highly valued and residents are concerned that it may be lost if new development occurs. More green space in Downtown, especially along streets, was a common comment from survey respondents. Several participants noted the wooded site at the corner of E. Holding Avenue and Brooks Street as a location for future park amenities or gathering spaces. P Participants expressed a desire for more recreational and gathering spaces in Downtown to enjoy the Town's favorable climate, while also highlighting H.L. Miller Park as an underutilized asset that could be better leveraged.

Development and Redevelopment

Respondents noted that many buildings are currently vacant. Outreach participants cited uncooperative landowners, uncharacteristic businesses, lack of cooperation from business owners, and historic preservation challenges as issues contributing to underdeveloped and underutilized properties. During the visioning workshop, participants identified possible development or redevelopment sites. These areas included the Renaissance Plaza, Franklin Academy, and properties between S. White Street and Brooks Street.

While these areas were specifically highlighted, there was excitement around the development potential contained within Downtown. Outreach participants envisioned mixed-use structures as the primary example of redevelopment in Downtown. E. Jones Avenue, E. Owen Avenue, S. White Street, and Brooks Street were identified as streets for future mixed-use development. Emphasis was placed on preserving the existing historic structures while respondents felt that new mixed-use development should be constructed as infill on vacant or underutilized lots.

Demographics

The Demographic Snapshot summarizes existing characteristics within the Town's current population. Understanding Wake Forest's demographics enables the Town to respond to the community's needs, predict future demands, and support appropriate future land uses with adequate developments. The following snapshot was used to guide the Downtown Wake Forest Plan by uncovering existing trends, issues, and opportunities. Where appropriate, the Town of Wake Forest has been compared to Wake County and the State of North Carolina. Data was collected from the 2021: ACS 5- Year Estimates as well as the U.S. Census Bureau data source OnTheMap.

760%

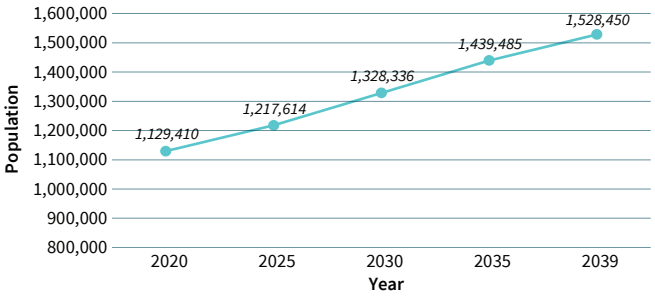
Population Increase Between 1990 - 2022

Population

Since the 1990s, Wake Forest has experienced significant growth, with its population increasing by almost eight times.

The Town of Wake Forest has a current population of 49,657. Between 1990 and 2022, the Town experienced a 760 percent increase in population, or a total 43,888 new residents. This is over four times greater than Wake County's population growth (177.5 percent) and over twelve times greater than North Carolina's growth (61.4 percent) within the same period. The Town's significant increase in population is reflective of the major growth occurring in municipalities across the Research Triangle Region and is most likely associated with the availability of lower cost land and housing compared to that of the City of Raleigh. Over the next two decades, Wake County's population is projected to increase by 35.3 percent, reaching 1,528,450 in 2039. The Town is poised to capture some of the County's projected growth and continue its recent growth trends.

Population Projection
Wake County, 2020-2039

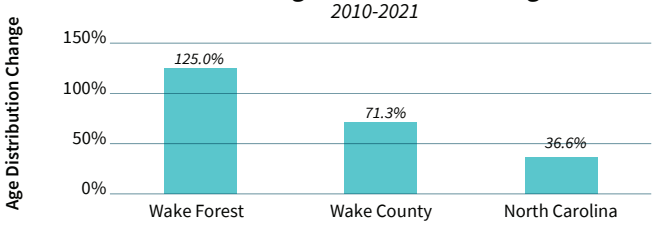


Age

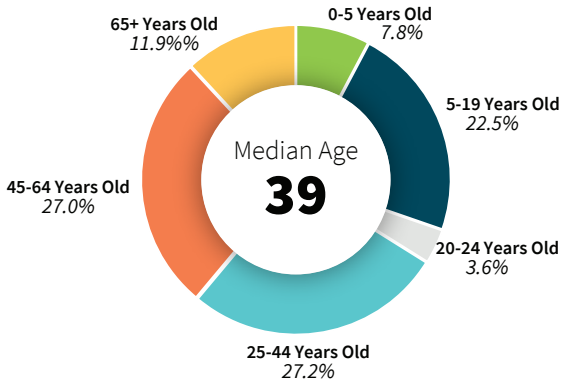
Wake Forest's senior population is increasing, which is in line with county, state, and national trends.

Wake Forest's largest age groups are residents aged five to 19, 25 to 44, and 45 to 64, making up 22.5 percent, 27.2 percent, and 27 percent of the population, respectively. According to the American Community Survey, the Town saw a substantial 125 percent increase in residents aged 65 and older over the past decade, marking the fastest-growing demographic. The second largest increase, 94.6 percent, occurred in the 45 to 65 age group, indicating an aging population. Wake County and North Carolina reflect a similar trend, though less pronounced, with growth in the 65+ age group at 71.3 percent and 36.6 percent, respectively, mirroring national patterns driven by the aging baby boomer generation.

Senior Age Distribution Change
2010-2021



Age Distribution
Wake Forest, 2021

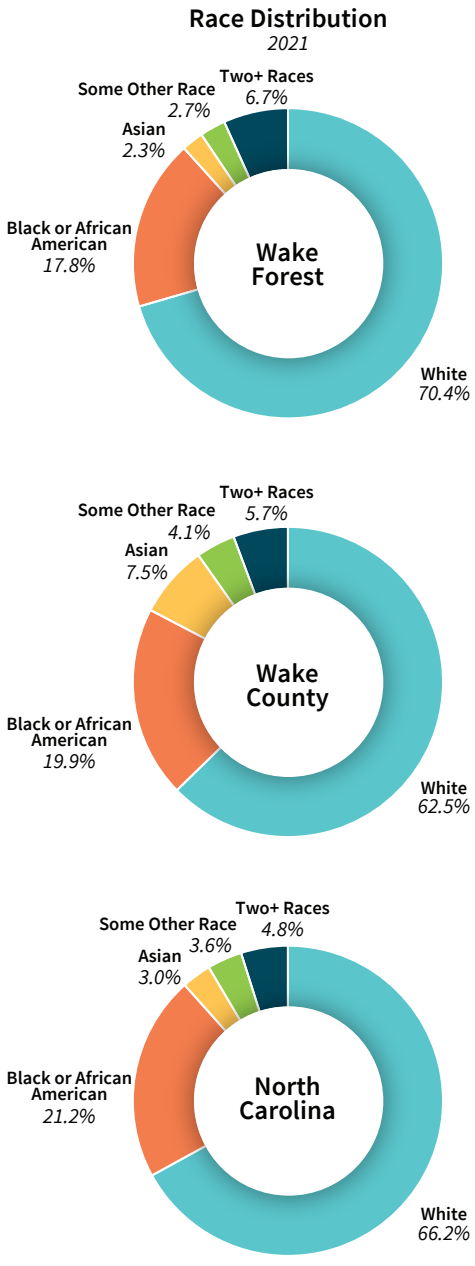


Source: ACS 2021 5 Year-Estimates and U.S. Census Bureau data source OnTheMap.

Race & Ethnicity

Wake Forest is less diverse than Wake County and North Carolina.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, most of Wake Forest identifies as White (70.4 percent). Black or African American is the second largest racial group (17.8 percent). The Town is less diverse than Wake County, which is comparatively composed of a population that is 62.5 percent White and 19.9 percent Black or African American. This coincides with North Carolina which shows a similar racial composition to the County at 66.2 percent White and 21.2 percent Black or African American. Wake Forest also has a lower proportion of people who identify as Hispanic (an ethnicity which can be made up of any race) at 7 percent, compared to 10.1 percent (Wake County) and 10.1 percent (North Carolina). However, the Hispanic and racial minority population is increasing as a percentage of the total population in Wake Forest, albeit at a minimal rate.



Source: ACS 2021 5 Year-Estimates

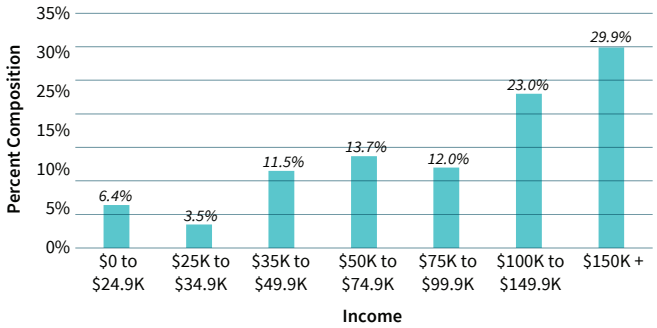
Income

Like Wake County and North Carolina, Wake Forest's higher income households have grown over the last eight years while lower income households have decreased.

Currently, Wake Forest's largest household income group is the $150,000 and over group at 29.9 percent, followed by the $100,000 to $149,000 group at 23 percent. Between 2010 and 2021, the $150,000 and over household income group experienced the largest increases in Wake Forest, Wake County, and North Carolina. The group with the second largest increase was the $100,000 to $149,000 group. Households earning $74,999 or less decreased for all locations, with the largest percentage decrease occurring in the lowest income group. Overall, all three geographies show similar trends displaying a growing high income population and a simultaneously shrinking lower income population.

Household Income

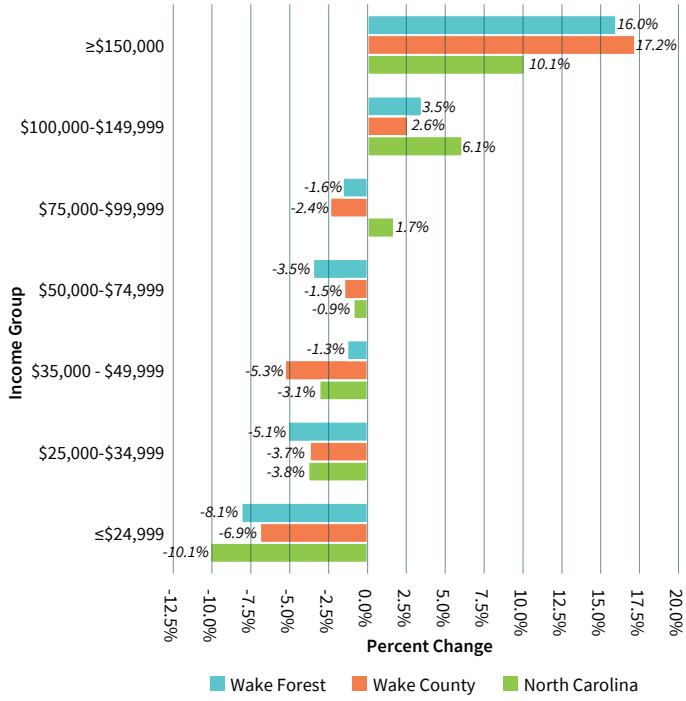
Wake Forest, 2021



Source: ACS 2021 5 Year-Estimates

Change in Household Income

2010-2021



Source: ACS 2021 5 Year-Estimates

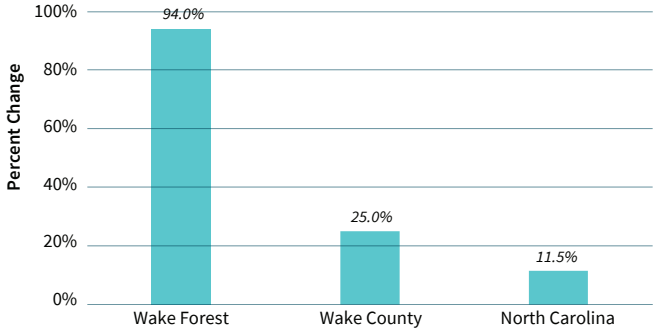
Primary Employment Sectors

Wake Forest's largest industry is Retail Trade, which has experienced the largest increase in jobs over the last eight years.

Wake Forest's corporate community and expanding business environment has created a variety of local job opportunities since 2007. The Town has experienced a 94 percent increase in total primary jobs between 2013 and 2021, reflective of the fast-paced economic development occurring throughout the Triangle Region. Presently, the Town's largest industry is Retail Trade, which makes up 24.7 percent of its employment base with 3,621 employees. Accommodation and Food Services (16.8 percent or 2,461 employees) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (11.6 percent or 1,695 employees) are the Town's second and third largest industries by employment. Retail Trade experienced the largest growth between 2013 and 2021 (2,043 new jobs), followed by Accommodation and Food Services (1,476 new jobs) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (922 new jobs).

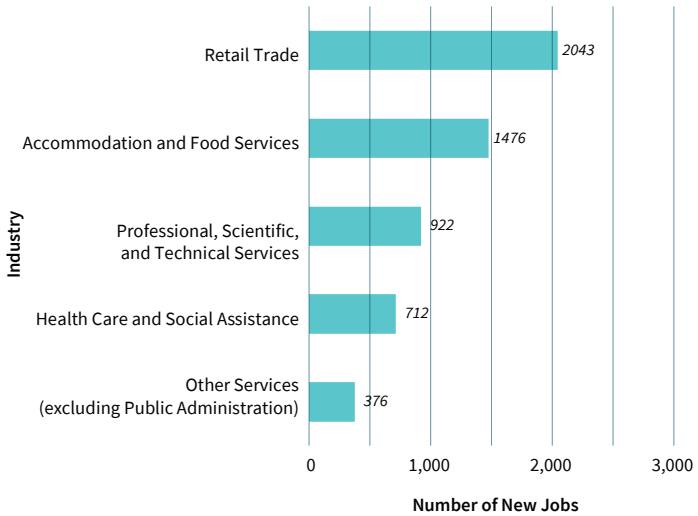
In contrast, Wake County's largest industry is currently Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, accounting for 12.1 percent of the workforce (74,194 employees), followed by Public Administration at 11.9 percent (73,369 employees) and Health Care and Social Assistance at 11.1 percent (68,007 employees). Over the past five years, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services has seen the most significant growth, adding 25,828 new jobs. North Carolina's largest industry is Healthcare and Social Assistance (14.1 percent or 581,266 employees), followed by Retail Trade (11.6 percent or 478,383 employees) and Manufacturing (10.9 percent or 453,292 employees). Like Wake County, the State's fastest growing industry is Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services with 74,110 new jobs between 2013 and 2021.

Change in Total Primary Jobs
2007-2017



Source: ACS 2021 5 Year-Estimates

Job Growth
2013-2017



Source: ACS 2021 5 Year-Estimates

Existing Land Use

Downtown land uses were reviewed to identify existing patterns of development as a base level for planning. Field reconnaissance, research, and available data sources informed the review. Ultimately, 15 unique land designations were chosen to represent all uses found in Downtown Wake Forest

Context

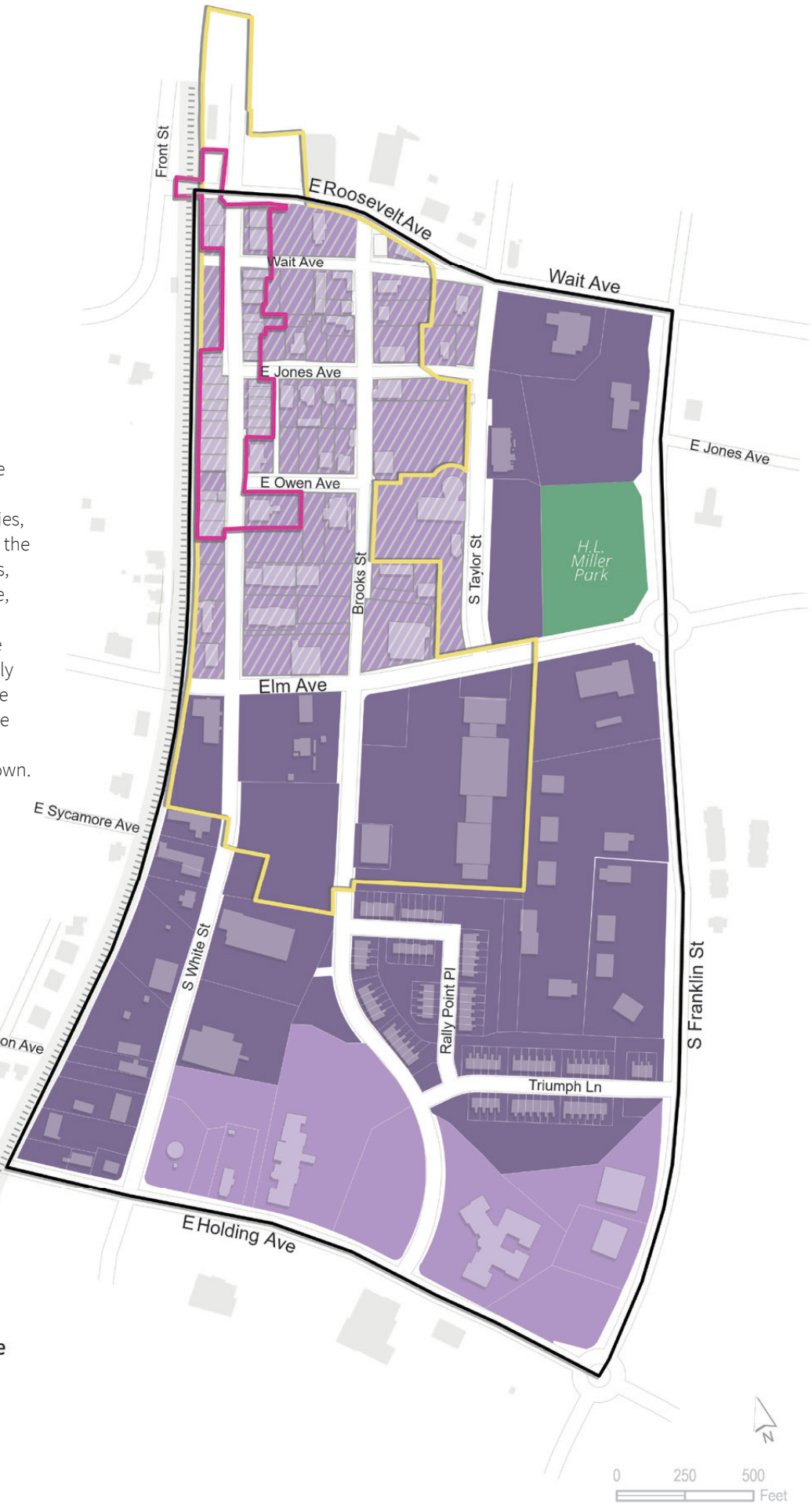
- Planning Area
- Railroad

Land Use

- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Attached
- Multifamily
- Mixed-Use
- Commercial (Retail and Service)
- Restaurant/Bar
- Auto Service
- Bank
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Parks/Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Parking
- Utility/Transportation
- Vacant

Current Zoning

The Wake Forest Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) consolidates the Town's zoning, subdivision, land use, grading, stormwater management, and historic preservation regulations into one comprehensive document. It defines the requirements for all development activities, including permitted land uses, as well as the density, intensity, and scale of those uses, along with standards for parking, signage, and other on-site improvements. These regulations play a key role in shaping the community by guiding growth in a visually appealing and appropriate way and serve as the primary tools for implementing the Downtown Plan. The following are the current zoning classifications for Downtown.



Steep Slopes

Downtown Wake Forest sits on a gentle hill sloping downwards from the railroad tracks on the west side of the planning area to the Smith Creek channel on the east side of the planning area. The commercial core along S. White Street rests on flat ground, but the blocks east of S. White Street feature slopes from 0 to 10 degrees. The map shows the steepest slopes along the railroad embankments on the western boundary and the creek channel on the eastern boundary. The map also shows the man-made slopes and retaining walls constructed around newer developments south of Elm Avenue.

Ownership

Downtown's planning area contains 221 parcels with a total of 98.5 deeded acres. Approximately 33 percent of the land area is owned by the Town of Wake Forest, which includes land around Town Hall, H.L. Miller Park, the fire station, and the Northern Wake Senior Center. Privately owned parcels are split between private individuals, businesses, non-profits, and utilities. Of the remaining land area in Downtown, 41 percent is owned by a corporate entity, 11 percent is owned by private individuals, 7 percent is owned by utilities, 4 percent is owned by the Retreat at Renaissance Homeowner's Association, and 4 percent is owned by a nonprofit.

Downtown's historic core contains a greater diversity of owners, with many properties along S. White Street alternating among ween public, individual, and corporate ownership. Most of the land area south of Elm Avenue is consolidated into fewer larger parcels owned by corporate entities (56 percent), but much of this land consists of landscaping, open space, or parking.

2 Vision & Goals

The Vision Statement and Goals for Downtown Wake Forest describe its future in 2035 and provide a detailed, actionable blueprint outlining the projects, improvements, and developments needed to achieve the community's desired outcome.

Vision Statement. The Vision Statement paints a picture of what the Town of Wake Forest can achieve after adopting the Downtown Plan. The Vision Statement was developed from input expressed by participants during the community outreach process and depicts the community's collective desires and aspirations for Downtown Wake Forest.

Goals. The Goals are broad and long-range desired outcomes. The Town's planning efforts should work to support these goals. They are ambitious and will require the execution of many policies, recommendations, and actions in the Downtown Plan to be fully achieved.

Vision Statement

Downtown Wake Forest will continue to be known as the heart and soul of the Town, serving as the central business district, civic and cultural hub, historical center, and vibrant focal point for both residents and visitors alike.

Downtown will be "the place to be." *Downtown is already known as the charming and stylish center of Wake Forest. Investments in public spaces and gathering places, and improvements to the public realm – the streets, sidewalks, public benches, art, outdoor dining areas, and more – will strengthen Downtown as a destination. These improvements will create a vibrant energy that makes Downtown a regional draw for residents and visitors alike to shop, eat, work, and spend time.*

Downtown will continue to grow and prosper. *Expansion and reinvestment will attract new and returning visitors and residents to Downtown. New multifamily and mixed-use buildings will provide increased living opportunities Downtown, including attainable and affordable housing choices. The increase in housing options Downtown will support economic vitality, livability, and vibrancy. The Downtown economy will be strengthened with more diverse businesses, attracting a wider range of clientele, yet maintaining the local-business charm. As a result, Downtown will develop as an amenity-rich destination that draws residents and visitors 365 days a year, not only on prominent festival days.*

Visiting Downtown will be an all-day experience. *Residents and visitors, friends, and family – all will enjoy being in the Downtown any time, from morning to evening, spending time in cafes, restaurants, boutiques, and bars. Increased walking and biking connections to surrounding neighborhoods will make it easy to get Downtown. Traffic and parking will be addressed with a strategic, safe, and efficient system that supports the current and future needs of Wake Forest. People will find it easy to "park once" and spend the day perusing multiple Downtown destinations during the same trip.*

The heart of Wake Forest will remain the quaint, walkable, and friendly core of the Town that is already appreciated today while expanding its reputation as one of the best places to live or visit in the region.

Goals

Encourage Business Variety

Encourage diverse businesses such as restaurants, shops, and boutiques to enliven the area to encourage people to spend the whole day or evening Downtown.

Improve Transportation, Pedestrian, and Bicycling Experience

Cultivate a safe, efficient, and enjoyable transportation system which improves the way pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers move in and out of Downtown through new roadway and building design, crosswalk and sidewalk improvements, and dedicated paths and connections.

Preserve Historic Charm

Preserve and protect Downtown's historic character while accommodating development that is context sensitive and aligns with the established character of the Town.

Improve Streetscape

Update and expand the current streetscape to include more trees, parklets, sidewalk amenities, and outdoor dining opportunities.

Shift Development Patterns

Accommodate more mixed-use development in appropriate locations. Leverage redevelopment opportunities between the built form and evolving streetscape to improve the pedestrian experience throughout Downtown.

Enrich Placemaking

Develop more interesting and effective placemaking elements in Downtown utilizing more public art, signage, and wayfinding.

Balance Redevelopment Opportunities

Ensure new development fits within the established context of Downtown to enhance the "quality and feel" while ensuring that the charm and character of Wake Forest is not lost.

Expand Greenspace and Increase Gathering Space Options

Enrich and strategically expand the current green spaces to offer a respite for those spending time Downtown. Provide more options where people can gather to eat, talk, and spend time in flexible spaces such as pocket parks or other programmed small spaces.

Incentivize Housing Options and Affordability

Ensure that attainable housing is developed in appropriate locations to accommodate a range of potential residents in all stages of life.

3 Land Use & Development

Downtown Wake Forest is the Town's historic core that serves as the vibrant heart of the community. Historically, ground-floor commercial uses occupy storefronts along S. White Street and civic buildings, emergency services, a senior center, and H.L. Miller Park are conveniently located attracting a variety of users.

Throughout the planning process, residents, local business owners and operators, community stakeholders, and Town staff voiced a strong desire to maintain and strengthen Downtown as a thriving center with a critical mass of retail, entertainment, civic, cultural, and residential activity. By embracing traditional planning principles such as walkability, density, mixed-use environments, and design quality, Downtown Wake Forest can be positioned for decades of continued success. To this end, the Downtown Plan seeks to activate and better utilize Downtown's redevelopment potential of the surrounding areas of historic S. White Street to accommodate future mixed-use and residential opportunities.

This chapter outlines an approach for future land use and Functional Subarea development within Downtown in a manner that harmonizes its existing charm and character with opportunities for reinvestment and growth. The recommendations presented in this chapter are based on an assessment of existing conditions and market potential, previous planning efforts, input from residents and business owners, and best planning practices.

Land Use

Downtowns are best described as areas with a mix of different land uses within a walkable environment. A combination of appropriate land uses is essential for establishing Downtown as a self-sustaining, vibrant destination full of activity. Downtown should continue to be strengthened and improved as a "mixed use" area, unique to the Town and the region. By remaining flexible and promoting a variety of uses, the Town can diversify redevelopment options and continue to support the desired character and intensity expected in Downtown. This section provides an overview of land uses within Downtown Wake Forest and how they could be classified as either a primary land use or a secondary land use, making each functional subareas unique and active. Specific recommendations relative to land use, intensity, and location are included in the Functional Subareas.

Mix of Uses vs. Mixed Use

Mix of uses describes the distribution of uses and buildings across a single site. Mixed use describes buildings that stack uses vertically within the same structure, with retail, restaurant, service, small-format grocery store, or office space on the ground-floor and office or residential uses on the upper-floors(s).

Residential

A residential population provides a consumer base for Downtown businesses and leads to greater pedestrian activity and foot traffic, making the area more vibrant. These uses can be built as standalone multifamily buildings or be incorporated into upper-floor uses with retail, restaurant/bar, entertainment/culture, service and/or office uses on the ground-floor.

Retail

Retail is an essential element in positioning Downtown as a shopping destination for residents and visitors. Retail uses within Downtown Wake Forest should provide reasons for individuals to spend time and contribute to the Town's local economy. Downtown is currently home to a wide variety of retail establishments ranging from traditional clothing and hardware stores to experience-based niche retailers.

Restaurant & Bar

Restaurants, bars, and breweries contribute to a lively Downtown for both residents and visitors, significantly contributing to the overall character, appeal, and experience of the area. A mix of cuisines and restaurant/bar environments should be encouraged to ensure Downtown has something to offer to everyone. Drive-thrus are not compatible with the development pattern in Downtown and should not be allowed.

Entertainment & Culture

Entertainment uses include businesses that offer unique experiences and make Downtown a destination. These types of "experience-driven" uses generate foot traffic and activity and create a unique experience that is generally difficult to replicate in other areas of the community.

Service

Service uses, such as hair salons, spas, yoga studios, dry cleaners, and banks, generate activity Downtown and support the day-to-day needs of Downtown residents, employees, and visitors. The operating hours of many service uses are often limited to the daytime and can lead to a lack of vibrancy at night if there is too great a concentration in a compressed area. Drive-thrus are not compatible with the development pattern in Downtown and should not be allowed.

Office

Office uses, including professional firms and medical practitioners, provide important services and employment opportunities. Office uses increase the daytime population of Downtown Wake Forest and support retail, restaurant, and service businesses, particularly during lunch and after work hours. Office uses can take different forms, including free-standing multi-story spaces or as part of mixed-use buildings.

Civic

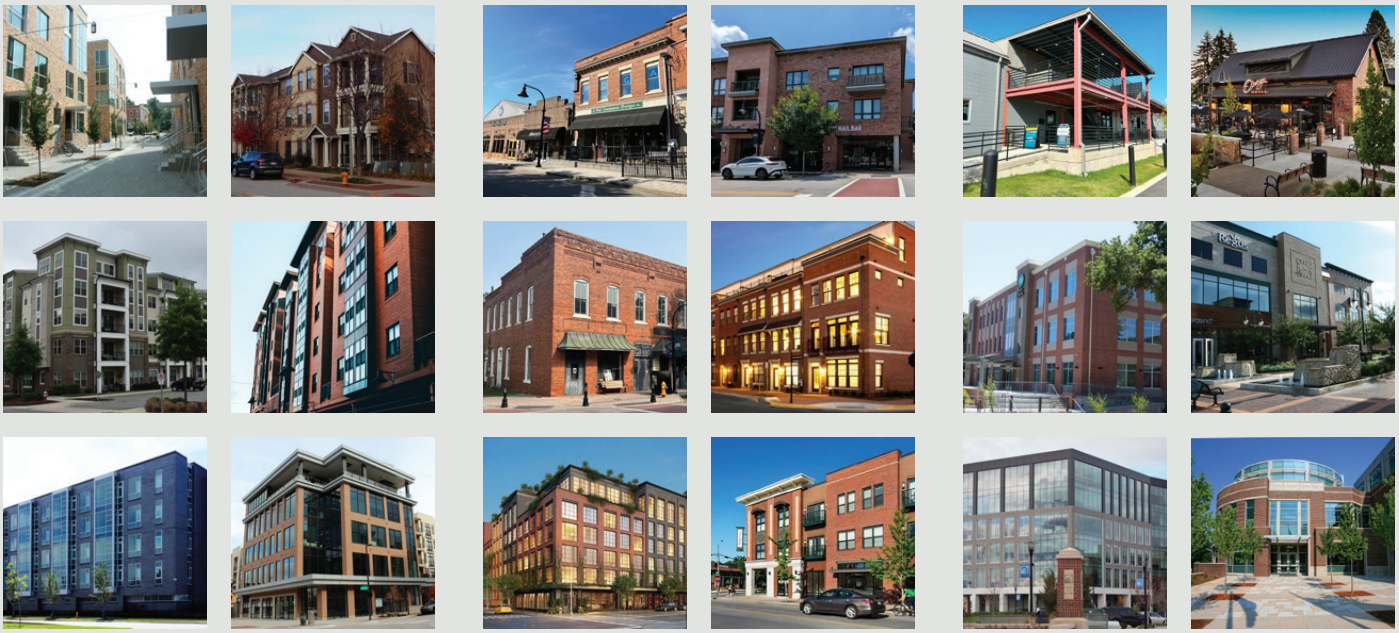
Downtown serves as the civic heart of Wake Forest and is home to Town Hall, the police department, Fire Station #1, and other Town facilities. Town Hall is a major employer and helps to drive Downtown business activity. These civic uses remain stable over time and help Downtown remain a community focal point.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and open space provide essential public gathering spaces and green spaces that differentiates Downtown from other commercial areas in the Town. H.L. Miller Park is a significant asset for the Downtown area. Future parks and open spaces should be located alongside other uses, such as residential uses.

Building Types

A diverse range of building types are crucial to shaping the character, functionality, and vibrancy of any downtown. The following section describes key building types necessary to contribute to the future development of Downtown Wake Forest. Each building type serves a distinct purpose, contributing to the overall intensity and cohesiveness of Downtown.



Multifamily Building Type

Multifamily buildings are structures that include multiple residential units within a single building. Multifamily buildings in Downtown Wake Forest will likely range between four to six stories and may include elevators. They contain numerous units per floor and offer shared amenities such as lobbies, fitness centers, rooftop terraces, swimming pools, and parking garages. Multifamily buildings provide high-density residential housing options critical to serving Wake Forest's expanding workforce and housing needs. Multifamily building types should incorporate pedestrian amenities, sidewalks, pocket parks, and public gathering spaces.

Supported Uses: *Residential*

Mixed-Use Building Type

Mixed-use buildings stack uses vertically within the same structure, with retail, restaurant, service, small-format grocery store, or office space on the ground-floor and office or residential uses on the upper-floors(s). Constructing mixed-use buildings maximizes land efficiency, expands the urban streetwall, and creates a more vibrant and attractive Downtown. Surface parking should be discouraged. Parking decks should be considered to accommodate desired building height and density. Mixed-use buildings should be the predominant building type considered for future development.

Supported Uses: *Residential; Retail; Restaurant & Bar; Entertainment & Culture; Service; Office*

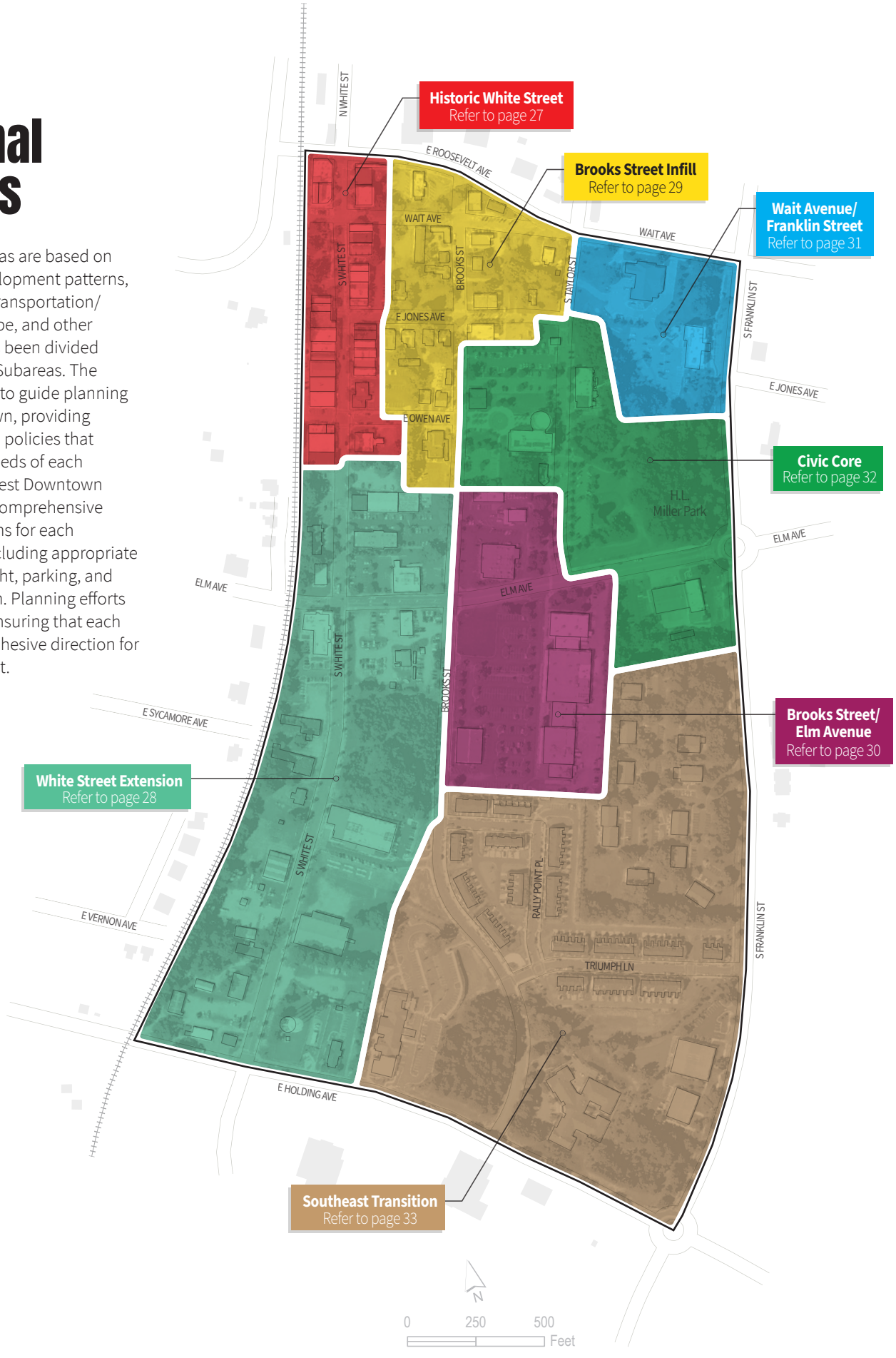
Single-Use Non-Residential Building Type

Single-use non-residential buildings are structures intended for a single, specific purpose. They are dedicated to one primary function and do not incorporate other uses, such as residential or additional non-residential activities. Examples include office buildings, retail stores, and institutional buildings like schools or Town facilities.

Supported Uses: *Retail; Restaurant & Bar; Entertainment & Culture; Service; Office; Civic*

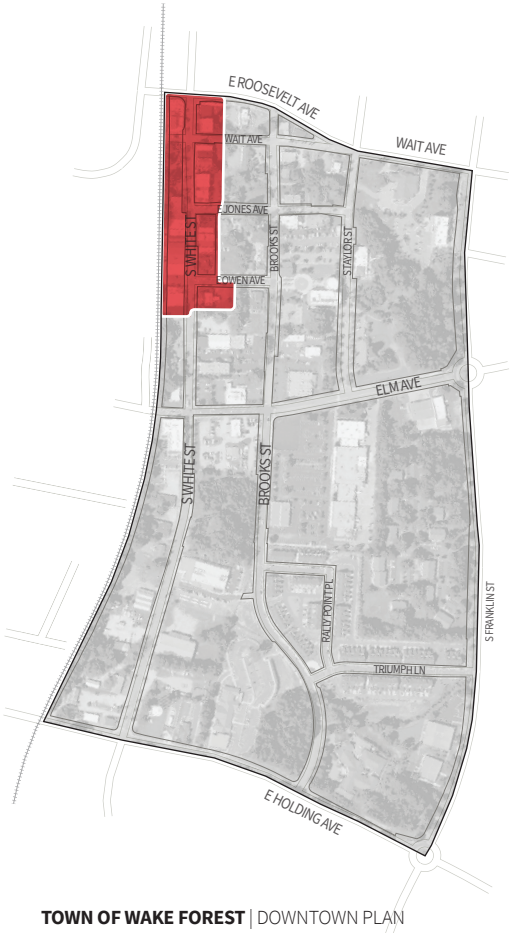
Functional Subareas

The Functional Subareas are based on existing land use, development patterns, built form, character, transportation/ connectivity, streetscape, and other factors. Downtown has been divided into seven Functional Subareas. The subareas are intended to guide planning efforts within Downtown, providing recommendations and policies that address the specific needs of each subarea. The Wake Forest Downtown Plan includes a more comprehensive set of recommendations for each Functional Subarea including appropriate land use, building height, parking, and redevelopment pattern. Planning efforts are context sensitive ensuring that each subarea promotes a cohesive direction for Downtown Wake Forest.



Historic White Street

This subarea holds importance as the heart of Wake Forest's downtown commercial history, preserving its charm and historic character. Redevelopment in this area is envisioned to complement and enhance the character of existing historically significant structures. The functional subarea should support a wide variety of commercial and entertainment uses that encourage activity both during the day and in the evening. The Town should remain flexible to accommodate the potential S-Line station and complementary uses to support transit-oriented development.



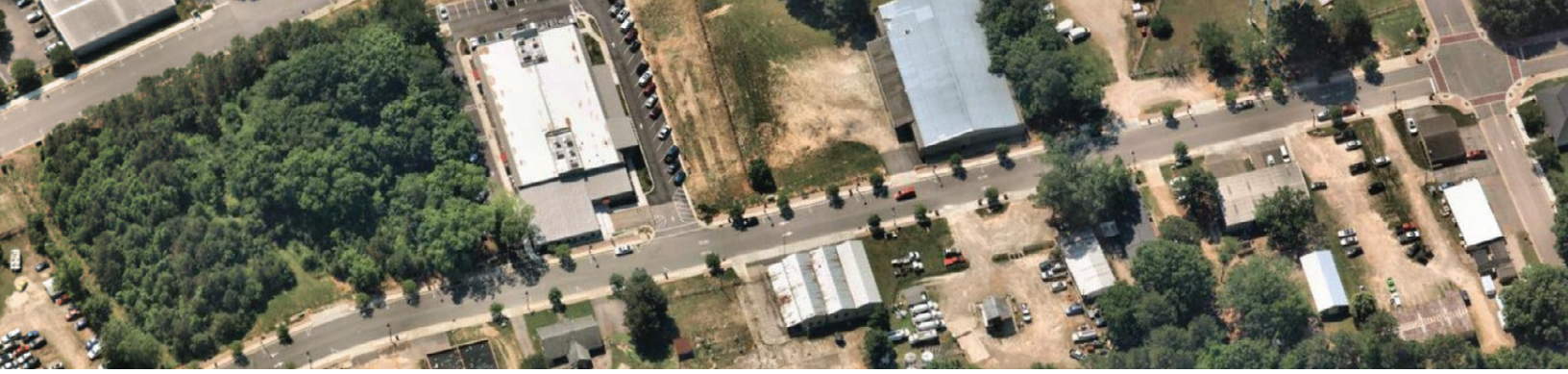
Development Considerations:

- Include the densest cluster of mixed-use structures in Downtown
- Maintain a consistent streetwall along S. White Street to continue to foster a walkable environment
- Build off the development momentum of the future S-Line Station to promote redevelopment throughout Downtown
- Allow for flexibility in development proposals with the future S-Line Station to create a market-viable mobility hub

Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

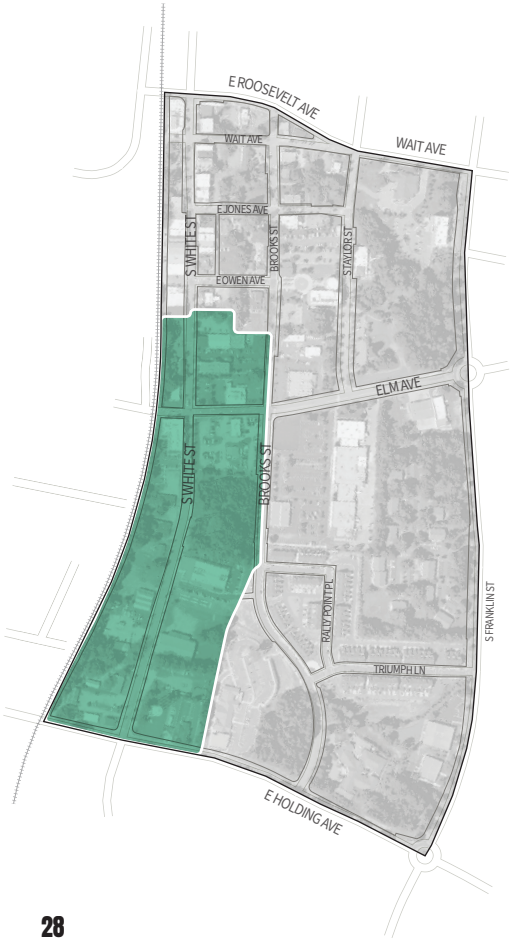
- ***Land Use:*** Residential, Retail, Restaurant, Service, Office
  - Ground floor: Retail, Restaurant, Service (Personal Service, Professional Service)
  - Upper floor: Office (Professional Service), Residential
- ***Building Type:*** Mixed Use; Single-Use Non-Residential
- ***Building Height:*** 2-3 stories
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 0' front yard; 0' side yard
- ***Parking:*** Should primarily consist of on-street parking; Additional support should come from parking decks built in adjacent functional subareas areas as redevelopment and infill occurs; Tuck-under parking (partially or wholly located underneath a building) may be appropriate for shallow lots

Example Photos



White Street Extension

This subarea contains a mix of vacant lots, residential, commercial, office, light industrial businesses, and auto-oriented uses. Several redevelopment projects, such as The Loading Dock co-working space and the new mixed-use at Elm Avenue and S. White Street, have contributed to creating a welcoming and vibrant Downtown atmosphere. Looking ahead, future infill development should be prioritized and complement the existing development in the area.



Development Considerations:

- Encourage mixed-use infill development that fronts S. White Street and Elm Avenue to better define the streetwall
- Support redevelopment of underperforming buildings, vacant lots, and incompatible uses
- Incentivize affordable housing and include in all new residential development
- Consider adaptive reuse, building off of recent successes (i.e. the Loading Dock and the newly converted historic Welsh building)
- Improve streetscape and walkability along Elm Avenue (complement Historic White Street subarea)
- Provide gateway and connection to uses and development along S. White Street to the north

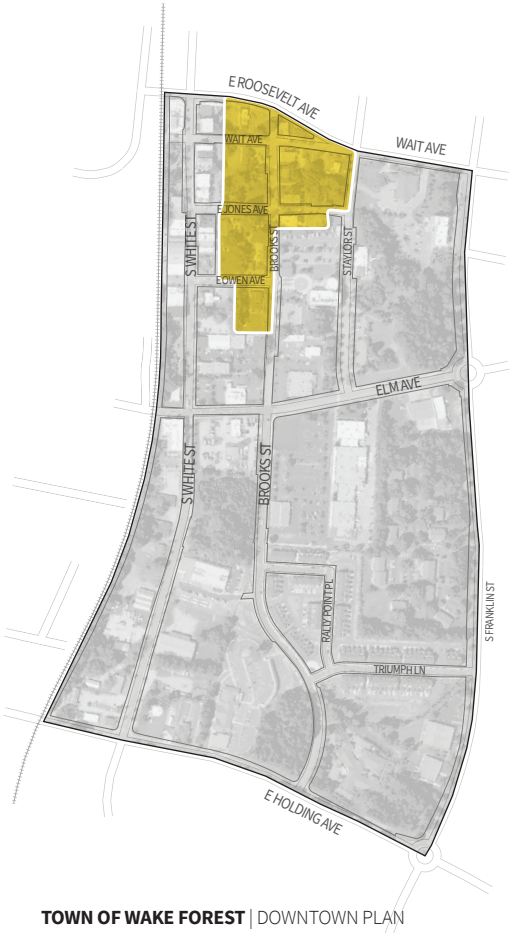
Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

- ***Land Use:*** Residential, Retail, Restaurant, Service, Office
  - Ground floor: Retail, Restaurant, Service (Personal Service, Professional Service)
  - Upper floor: Office (Professional Service), Residential
- ***Building Type:*** Multifamily; Mixed Use; Single-Use Non-Residential
- ***Building Height:*** 2-6 stories; Consider upper-floor step-backs
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 0'-10' front yard build-to-zone (BTZ); 10' side yard
- ***Parking:*** On-street parking; on-site surface parking and/or parking decks (minimize visibility from the public right-of-way); Tuck-under parking may be appropriate for shallow lots

Example Photos

Brooks Street Infill

This subarea includes retrofitted buildings and a mix of uses including residential, offices, a bank, parking uses, and vacant lots. Adjacent to the Historic White Street subarea, this area presents an opportunity to incorporate supporting parking infrastructure for visitors while improving its streetscape and architectural style. Its proximity also makes it an excellent location for higher-residential options, fostering a symbiotic relationship with local businesses and enriching Downtown's vitality.



Development Considerations:

- Locate higher-density residential options that support Historic White Street subarea businesses
- Use the natural topography to ensure new development is sensitive to the character of the adjacent Historic White Street
- Incorporate parking that serves new development and overflow for Historic White Street subarea businesses
- Incentivize affordable housing and include in all new residential development
- Direct restaurant and services businesses to parcels fronting Roosevelt Avenue
- Improve the streetscape to better reflect character and style of the Historic White Street subarea

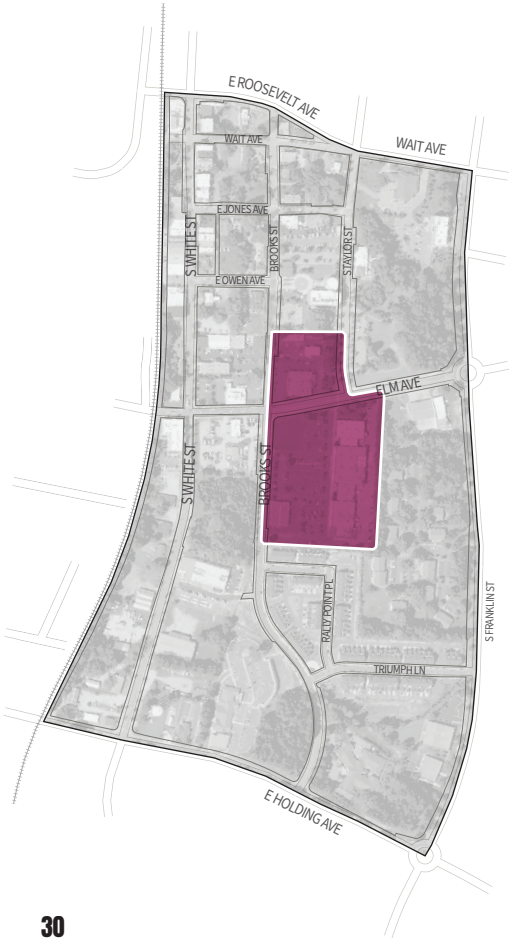
Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

- ***Land Use:*** Residential, Restaurant, Service, Mixed-Use
- ***Building Type:*** Multifamily; Mixed Use; Single-Use Non-Residential
- ***Building Height:*** 2-6 stories
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 5'-10' front yard build-to-zone (BTZ); 10' side yard
- ***Parking:*** On-street parking; on-site parking decks (minimize visibility from the public right-of-way)

Example Photos

Brooks Street/Elm Avenue

This subarea contains the Renaissance Plaza and properties north of Elm Avenue. The large in-line building in the Renaissance Plaza includes several businesses like the Wake Forest Renaissance Centre For the Arts, Strike & Barrel, Page 158 Books, Destiny Dance Studio, and Over the Falls. The two outlots include a Dollar General and a vacant lot. North of Elm Avenue, the subarea contains Forks Cafeteria & Catering and two Town-owned public facilities buildings. This subarea has significant redevelopment potential. The Elm Avenue & Brooks Street Catalyst Site (see pg 99) provides guidance for how this area could redevelop in the future.



Development Considerations:

- Explore options to improve or redevelop suburban-style strip malls
- Incentivize affordable housing and include in all new residential development
- Provide a better connection to existing uses in Historic White Street subarea and proposed improvements in White Street Extension subarea

Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

- ***Land Use:*** Residential, Retail, Restaurant, Service, Office, Parks/ Open Space
- ***Building Type:*** Multifamily; Mixed Use; Single-Use Non-Residential
- ***Building Height:*** 2-6 stories
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 0'-10' front yard build-to-zone (BTZ); 10' side yard
- ***Parking:*** On-street parking; On-site parking decks (minimize visibility from the public right-of-way)

Example Photos

Wait Avenue/Franklin Street

This subarea contains the Wake Electric Membership Corporation office building and a bank and feels detached from other areas of Downtown Wake Forest. This subarea will likely be one of the last areas of the Downtown to experience redevelopment pressure over the lifespan of the Downtown Plan. Town leaders and staff should use the following development, land use, and built form considerations if market conditions change and this area becomes a priority for future redevelopment.

Development Considerations:

- Consider development limitations due to significant grade change and ravine that divides the subarea
- Future redevelopment should consider the northeast corner of the subarea as a key transition between Magnolia Square and the Northeast Neighborhood which sits to the north, across Wait Avenue
- Address concerns that this area functions more like a suburban office development and is disconnected from the rest of Downtown despite its close proximity to Downtown

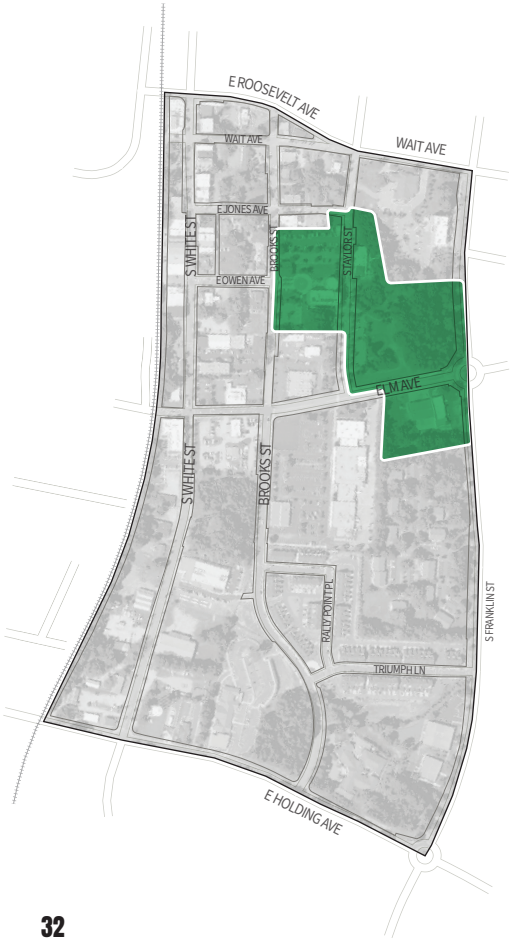
Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

- ***Land Use:*** Service, Office, Residential
- ***Building Type:*** Multifamily; Single-Use Non-Residential
- ***Building Height:*** 2-6 stories
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 0'-10' front yard build-to-zone (BTZ); 10' side yard
- ***Parking:*** On-street parking; On-site surface parking and/or parking decks (minimize visibility from the public right-of-way)

Example Photos

Civic Core

This subarea contains civic buildings including the Town Hall, H.L. Miller Park, Fire Station #1, Police Department, and the Old Town Hall. Residents and local business owners are regularly drawn to Downtown Wake Forest for various purposes from public meetings to recreational activities, making it a dynamic focal point of civic life. This area provides services, amenities and employment that brings individuals to Downtown, not just on the weekends, but throughout the week.



Development Considerations:

- Improve access to the underutilized H.L. Miller Park (currently serves as the only green park space Downtown)
- Continue to serve as the civic core of the Downtown and community

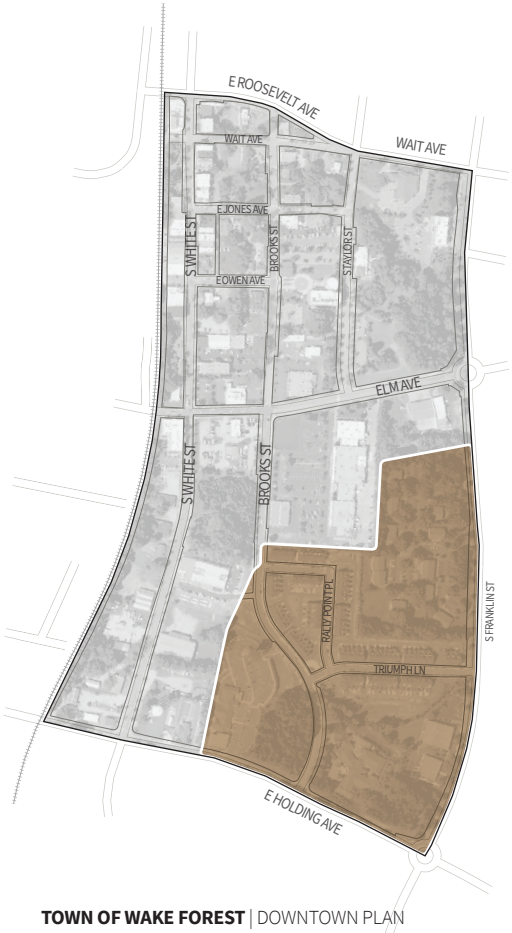
Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

- ***Land Use:*** Civic, Parks/Open Space, Residential, Retail, Restaurant, Service, Office
- ***Building Type:*** Single-Use Non-Residential; Multifamily; Mixed Use
- ***Building Height:*** 2-6 stories
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 0'-10' front yard build-to-zone (BTZ); 10' side yard
- ***Parking:*** On-street parking; On-site surface parking and/or parking decks (minimize visibility from the public right-of-way)

Example Photos

Southeast Transition

This subarea is the largest within the Study Area. This subarea has an assortment of uses including townhomes, apartments, senior housing, child care, and vacant or under developed parcels. The development pattern fits more closely with the residential areas south of Downtown near Dr. Calvin Jones Highway, which provide a residential feel on the edges of the Study Area. The area should also serve as a transition between the active Downtown areas and the quieter residential areas to the east and south.



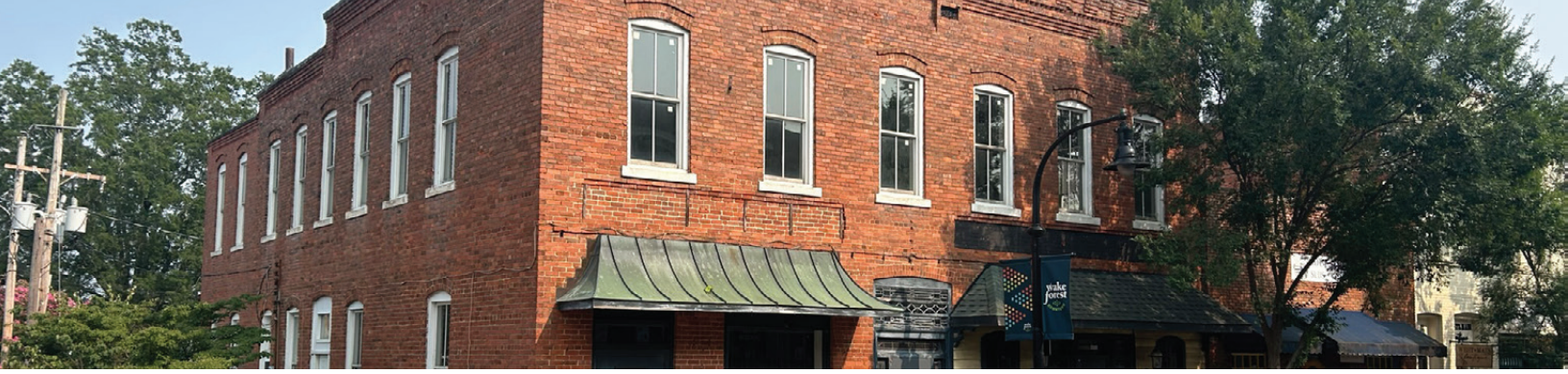
Development Considerations:

- Increase density if the Forest Ridge Apartments are redeveloped
- Incentivize affordable housing and include in all new residential development
- Bolster the gateway and wayfinding to announce and direct residents and visitors
- Connect this subarea, and the residential uses around it, to Brooks Street and S. White Street
- Provide options for undeveloped and vacant properties (e.g. the recently considered skate park)
- Continue to enhance connections to civic uses south of E. Holding Avenue (post office, Wake Forest Library, Wake County Northern Regional Center, and Kiwanis Park)

Land Use / Built Form Considerations:

- ***Land Use:*** Residential, Office, Parks/ Open Space
- ***Building Type:*** Single-Use Non-Residential; Multifamily
- ***Building Height:*** 1-5 stories
- ***Building Setbacks:*** 10'-25' front yard build-to-zone (BTZ); 15' side yard setback
- ***Parking:*** On-site surface parking and/ or parking decks (minimize visibility from the public right-of-way)

Example Photos



Historic Resources

Designating historic districts helps the Town protect its heritage and preserve areas of historical, cultural, and architectural significance. These districts also stabilize and improve property values and strengthen the local economy by attracting tourism.

The Town has four historic districts including a local historic district and three districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Of the three National Register historic districts, only the Downtown Historic District is within the study area. Listing in the National Register does not require approval for exterior changes; however, the Town has a Demolition of Historic Structures Ordinance that requires Historic Preservation Commission review of proposed demolition of National Register individually listed properties or structures contributing to a historic district.

Recommendations:

- Continue to utilize the Demolition of Historic Structure Ordinance to review demolition permits and ensure that the historic character and charm of Downtown is maintained.
- Consider hosting yearly historic property owner workshops to inform and educate property owners in the Downtown Historic District of the Historic Tax Credit Program and Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The Town should work to limit incompatible development and prevent "demolition by neglect," where due to a failure to maintain historic buildings they are threatened by demolition.
- Consider designating the Downtown Wake Forest Historic District to provide additional protections for the Downtown buildings under the Historic Property Handbook and Design Standards
- Implement ordinances that are sensitive to historic context to ensure new construction within and around the Downtown historic district is compatible with the character of the district.

Strategies for Reinvestment / Improvements

While opportunities for large-scale redevelopment of vacant or underutilized lots will be discussed later in the Plan, it is important to offer strategies that will reinvigorate deficient buildings that currently exist to maintain the allure of Historic White Street. A number of underperforming buildings have been identified for strategic investment as they are in need of interior or exterior rehabilitation. These properties should not be considered for complete redevelopment because of historic significance or key architectural elements. The structure, and often use, of the existing property is worth maintaining if significant improvements are made to better match the character of adjacent buildings and support the overall function. Identified properties require some combination of adaptive reuse, activation of vacant storefronts, façade enhancements, or creative temporary uses to complete the rehabilitation process. Buildings within the Downtown Wake Forest Historic District should be prioritized for preservation.

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse is defined by the National Park Service (NPS) as a way to preserve historic properties by improving or restoring them for new uses. Adaptive reuse of Downtown buildings would likely only require interior renovation to meet the needs of the new use, rather than a rehabilitation of the entire structure.

Façade Improvements

Several buildings within the study area have significant architectural features, but are affected by damaged or altered façades which detract from Downtown's overall aesthetic appeal. These buildings/ structures require "facelifts" to improve the overall character and feel of Downtown.

Storefront Activation

Activating vacant storefronts is critical to enhancing the pedestrian experience, reducing visual eye sores, and improving the streetscape. Though it can be challenging to work with owners to improve a vacant storefront, utilizing the following strategies could help mitigate the effects of vacancies.

Pop-up Shops

Pop-up shops provide property owners alternative options to combat vacancies. As a win-win scenario, small businesses can access prime retail space without long-term financial commitments while landlords fill vacant properties, generating revenue and enhancing the vibrancy of urban commercial areas.

Redevelop

A number of buildings and properties within Downtown present redevelopment opportunities due to the underutilization of the space. The impacts of the S-Line station locating in Downtown are significant not only in increasing property values, but also creating a market that was previously absent from the area. Strategies are needed to encourage property sales, incentivize property owners, and guide Town acquisitions to ensure that any redevelopment has a positive impact on Downtown and the community.

Recommendations:

- Transform existing buildings into mixed-use spaces.
- Transform underutilized commercial buildings into residential apartments, attracting more residents to Downtown and increasing vitality.
- Retrofit buildings to be more energy-efficient and eco-friendly, aligning with sustainability goals and attracting eco-conscious tenants.
- Vacant buildings can be revitalized by decorating the windows with public art or signs, creating a more inviting and livelier atmosphere.
- Consider implementing a pop-up shop program where the Town facilitates short-term leases with property owners to fill vacant spaces.
- Engage and incentivize property owners to improve their properties or consider selling.
- Consider acquiring parcels to better guide future redevelopment.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4 Mobility

Amidst the current conditions and growth in Wake Forest, improved multimodal connectivity emerges as a key opportunity in Downtown. While pedestrians benefit from a consistent sidewalk network, there are places in Downtown where there is limited access to public space amenities that promote safety and comfort. Bicyclists encounter limited infrastructure, with only two streets offering formal bikeways. Motorists navigate well-connected streets with ample parking, suggesting there are opportunities for repurposing space. By addressing disparities in mobility options and building on existing strengths, Downtown can become more inclusive where all users can safely access destinations and comfortably move around.

Mobility is at a turning point in Downtown, shaped by a variety of community needs and opportunities that can be addressed to improve the experiences of travelers while prioritizing:

Safety. Reducing the likelihood of incidents between roadway users, especially the most vulnerable, so all can move throughout Downtown freely.

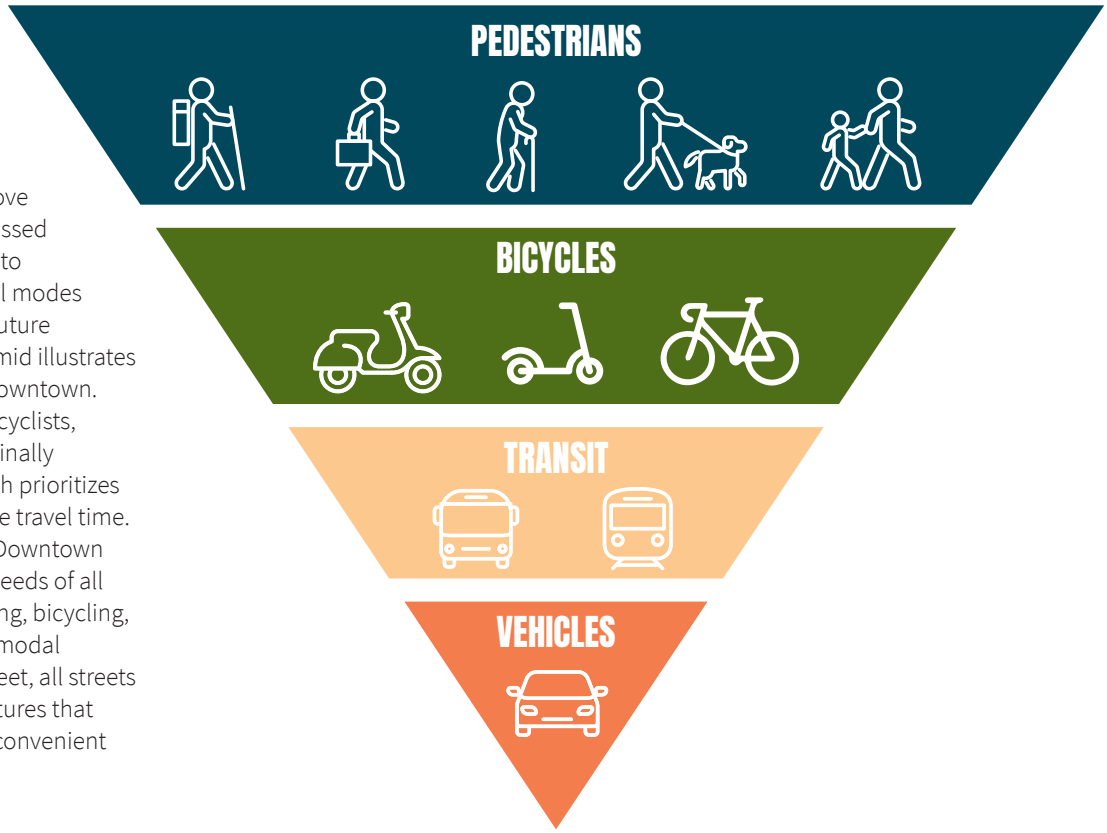
Access. Prioritizing multi-modal access throughout Downtown removes barriers for vulnerable users and ensures a more equitable Downtown.

Comfort. Individuals have a variety of mode choices in Downtown Wake Forest with adequate supporting amenities to create a dynamic public realm that strengthens Downtown as a destination.

Convenience. Creating a more efficient use of roadway space provides all with easy access to Downtown destinations.

Mobility Pyramid

As the ways in which people move throughout Downtown are assessed and planned for, it is important to establish priorities for individual modes to guide decision-making and future investments. The mobility pyramid illustrates a hierarchy of user modes for Downtown. Starting with pedestrians, then cyclists, transit users and vehicles, and finally personal vehicles. This approach prioritizes the most vulnerable users above travel time. Utilizing the mobility pyramid, Downtown streets can accommodate the needs of all travelers, whether walking, rolling, bicycling, taking transit, or driving. While modal priorities may differ for each street, all streets should include accessibility features that foster a safe, comfortable, and convenient experience.



Mobility Design Elements

Certain design elements should be prioritized when considering opportunities for public realm investments that will improve mobility in Downtown.

Street Trees

Street trees provide a wide range of environmental, social, and economic benefits. Street trees are valuable resources that contribute to the character and ambiance of the public realm and provide much-needed shade for pedestrians. Street trees can enhance outdoor seating and dining areas, and can significantly transform streets into memorable corridors.

Curb Extensions

Extending the curb beyond the sidewalk or buffer edge shortens crosswalk length, reduces pedestrian exposure to motor vehicles, and increases visibility of people walking and rolling, particularly where there is on-street parking. This element can formalize on-street parking locations, maintaining adequate sight lines for users. Curb extensions are effective tools for narrowing streets or tightening intersections to reduce motor vehicle turning speeds. Additionally, extensions offer more flexible planting and vegetation opportunities.

Crosswalks

Well-designed crosswalks are important to create pedestrian-friendly environments. Safety for all pedestrians, especially for those with limited mobility or people using mobility assistance devices, is a key criterion informing crosswalk design. Marked crosswalks indicate a designated path for people walking and rolling through intersections, mid-block crossings, and high-volume driveways. Consistent application should be applied throughout Downtown Wake Forest to provide clear expectations and to promote a sense of place. Downtown Wake Forest has already implemented decorative crossings that could be used throughout the study area. However, at minimum, a ladder style crosswalk that is high visibility should be used to align with best safety practices.

Street Furniture

Street furniture includes an array of elements, including benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bollards, transit stops and shelters, decorative planters, and more.

- Seating is an essential component of each street and includes temporary and permanent fixtures such as chairs, benches, seat walls, steps, public art, and raised planters. The location and type of seating element should respond to adjacent land uses, available shade from either buildings or street trees, and the width of the amenity zone.
- Trash and recycling receptacles are important to keep active, busy public realms clean and free of litter. Receptacles should be located in areas with high volumes of pedestrian and bicycle travel and at all transit stops.
- Other street furniture such as bollards, transit stops and shelters, and decorative planters are important for comfortable travel on many types of streets. Site-specific conditions will dictate where these elements are most appropriate. Street furniture should not impede mobility or impair sight distance for street users.

Pedestrian

Prioritizing a high-quality pedestrian experience is central to creating a safe, welcoming and vibrant Downtown Wake Forest. The relationship of the pedestrian realm to the street and buildings correlates directly to the user experience. The Pedestrian Mobility recommendations categorizes downtown Wake Forest corridors by pedestrian use, experience, and design elements. Each street type identified on the map serves pedestrians in different ways, and the street element compatibility spectrum identifies design elements appropriate for each street type that will improve pedestrian mobility.

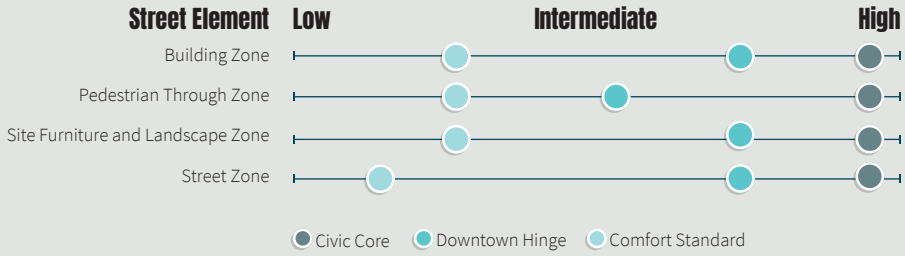
Downtown Wake Forest should prioritize pedestrian mobility on every street to ensure that people walking and rolling are safe, comfortable, and willing to explore. Essential to pedestrian comfort is adequate space between the building frontage and the street. While much of the development has concentrated along S. White Street, there are opportunities to enhance the pedestrian experience on Brooks Street, Elm Avenue, E. Owen Avenue, and Wait Avenue. This can be achieved by allocating space for wider sidewalks, adding street amenities like benches, trees, lighting, and intuitive crossings, particularly around the Downtown edges.

Map Key

- Downtown Study Area
- Civic Core
- Downtown Hinge
- Comfort Standard
- New Connection

Compatibility Spectrum

The compatibility spectrum prioritizes the quality and functionality of the pedestrian network based on the streetscape zones. Streetscape zones refer to different segments or areas along a street that are designated for specific functions and activities. These zones are discussed further in the Building Fabric and Public Realm chapter.



Civic Core

Civic Core Streets are characterized by a density of activities and uses, people lingering in addition to traveling, and a high level of pedestrian comfort.

Recommendations:

- **Building Zone.** High-quality, engaging storefronts and outdoor seating.
- **Pedestrian Through Zone.** Wide, unobstructed paths in the Civic Core for maximum safety and mobility
- **Site Furniture and Landscape Zone.** Amenities are abundant and high-quality.

Downtown Hinge

Downtown Hinge Streets enable pedestrians to get to where they want to go. These streets act as transition zones between areas of Downtown and beyond.

Recommendations:

- **Building Zone.** Moderately engaging.
- **Pedestrian Through Zone.** Sufficiently clear paths.
- **Site Furniture and Landscape Zone.** Amenities are moderate.

Comfort Standard

Comfort Standard Streets represent a more conventional pedestrian experience, but include elements and amenities to elevate the experience beyond typical conditions.

Recommendations:

- **Building Zone.** Basic but functional.
- **Pedestrian Through Zone.** Narrowed but safe paths, ensuring accessible mobility throughout.
- **Site Furniture and Landscape Zone.** Minimal but functional, contributing to varying levels of pedestrian comfort.

Bicycle

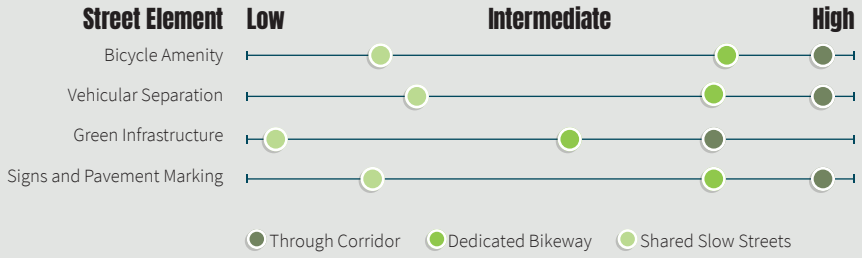
Providing separation between modes, including both horizontal and vertical separation, contributes to improved user safety and accessibility, while increasing bicycle mobility options Downtown. The Bicycle Mobility recommendations differentiate corridors by their function, not necessarily by their facility type. The street element compatibility spectrum identifies opportunities to incorporate various elements to support safe bicycle movement into and throughout downtown.

Not every street in Wake Forest needs a dedicated and separated bikeway; however, the environment throughout Downtown must be inviting and safe for people of all ages and abilities to use a bicycle for Downtown trips. Both Brooks Street and Elm Avenue create connections across Downtown and can serve as internal connections where bike parking can be accessed. These parking areas allow people arriving by bike to park once and explore as a pedestrian. Dedicating space for bicycle facilities on these corridors highlight the multimodal character that is necessary for Downtown Wake Forest.

Edge streets such as E. Holding Avenue and S. Franklin Street should have a more distinct and separated bikeway to allow people to move around Downtown at a higher speed and with fewer conflicts.

Compatibility Spectrum

The compatibility spectrum considers the effectiveness and suitability of the bike network by focusing on factors such as the provision of Bike Amenities along routes, the degree of Vehicular Separation, the integration of Green Infrastructure to enhance environmental sustainability, and the clarity and visibility of Signs and Pavement Markings for guiding bicyclists.



Through Corridors

Through Corridors are streets with a high volume of bicycle traffic that move along the edge of Downtown, not necessarily into it. They act as segments of larger bicycle corridors and connect to other greenways and bikeways outside of Downtown.

Recommendations:

- **Bike Amenities.** Bicycle amenities are high-quality and abundant, providing excellent support and convenience for cyclists.
- **Separated Bike Paths.** Vehicular separation is high, reducing interactions with motor vehicles through dedicated bike lanes that are physically separated from vehicular traffic by barriers or markings.
- **Green Infrastructure.** Green Infrastructure is slightly above intermediate importance, providing benefits like enhancing safety by creating natural barriers between bicyclists and vehicular traffic.
- **Signage.** Highly necessary with high bicycle traffic volume for clear guidance through marked lanes with symbols painted to indicate designated areas for bicyclists.

Dedicated Bikeway

Dedicated Bikeway Streets act as connection for bicyclists to enter or exit Downtown, or to move through it. These streets connect to neighborhoods outside Downtown and to key areas within it. Bicycle parking along these corridors occurs adjacent to major destinations and at intersections with Through Corridors.

Recommendations:

- **Bike Amenities.** Bike amenities are above intermediate, offering good but not extensive amenities.
- **Separated Bike Paths.** Separation is more than intermediate, enhancing protection for bicyclists through dedicated bike lanes that are marked with painted lines.
- **Green Infrastructure.** Intermediate, offering moderate green features.
- **Signage.** Signs such as shared lane markings (sharrows), are of substantial importance in Dedicated Bikeway streets because they remind bicyclists and drivers to share the road safely in areas without dedicated bike lanes.

Shared Slow Streets

Shared Slow Streets are slow spaces where people bicycling ride the final portion of their journey. They have a density of destinations and bike parking. These streets are the most likely candidates for restricting access to bicycles, which would require adequate bike storage at the intersections of other street types.

Recommendations:

- **Bike Amenities.** Present but more basic, ensuring essential support for cyclists.
- **Separated Bike Paths.** Separation is sufficient but less robust, offering safety from traffic.
- **Green Infrastructure.** Green infrastructure is minimal, contributing to a more pleasant environment for bicyclists completing their journeys.
- **Signage.** Moderate requirement to provide basic navigation support through warning signs, directional signs, and intersection markings.

Parking

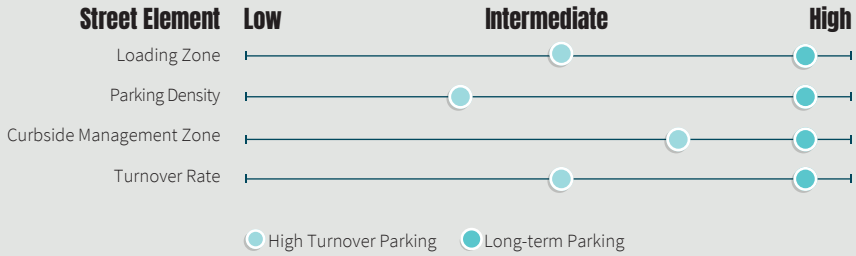
In Downtown, access to the curb should be managed to ensure equity and efficiency. The accommodation of street parking in Downtown should be different based on the location, the surrounding land uses, and the different travel modes. Street space dedicated to vehicular parking is highly valuable in Downtown and should be utilized for increasing opportunities for the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Off-street parking (both surface and the potential of structured parking), should be available for people that work Downtown, use transit for commuting, live downtown, or for events. Parking is an important consideration as the community continues to grow and new development is introduced.

Recommendations:

- Off-street parking, including parking decks, should be considered to allow for the reallocation of space to create an inviting public realm and increase mobility options.
- Areas of increased density and pedestrian activity may warrant the removal of on-street parking to increase sidewalk widths and improve accessibility for non-vehicular modes.
- Ensure that both on and off-street parking includes designated ADA accessible spaces.
- Bicycle parking hubs should be located across Downtown to increase capacity and encourage downtown travel by other modes.

Compatibility Spectrum

The spectrum emphasizes the effectiveness and suitability of parking by focusing on the provision and management of Loading Zones to facilitate efficient goods delivery, the Parking Density to accommodate varying levels of demand, the designation and regulation of Curbside Management Zones to balance competing needs, and the Turnover Rate to ensure optimal utilization of parking spaces based on the surrounding uses and travel patterns.



High Turnover

High Turnover Streets are places where parking is encouraged to be shorter term to enable a lively and active downtown character.

Recommendations:

- **Loading Zones.** Ensure quick turnover and provide accessibility for deliveries and pickups, catering to public and private parking needs.
- **Parking Density.** Feature dense parking arrangements to maximize short-term availability and support frequent turnover.
- **Curbside Managements.** Regulated to optimize space and facilitate efficient parking turnover. They are designed to balance the needs of businesses and residents, providing clear guidelines for parking duration and accessibility.
- **Turnover Rates.** Maintain high turnover rates to support active business environments and enhance customer accessibility, especially on S. White Street, E. Jones Avenue, S. Taylor Street, and evaluate the potential for metered parking.

Long-Term Parking

Long-Term Parking Streets are corridors further away from businesses or active areas. These are areas where parking is not scarce, either because there is less demand for parking or a greater supply because of surface lots or private parking.

Recommendations:

- **Loading Zones.** Strategically located to support business operations and provide accessibility for deliveries and pickups, catering to public and private parking needs.
- **Parking Density.** Prioritize lower density parking to accommodate longer-term parking needs and reduce congestion.
- **Curbside Managements.** Regulated to optimize space and facilitate efficient parking turnover. They are designed to balance the needs of businesses and residents, providing clear guidelines for parking duration and accessibility.
- **Turnover Rates.** More relaxed turnover rates to accommodate extended stays and needs.

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle Parking and parking for micromobility devices are key end-of-trip features.

Recommendations:

- Install structures for people to securely lock their bicycles or micromobility devices on or off the street.
- Locate parking near transit stops as well as in the amenity zone, provided there is adequate width to maintain an unobstructed path of travel for people walking and using assistive mobility devices.
- Locate bike parking corrals in the curbside lane of streets or in daylighting areas (areas with no visual obstructions) at street corners where there is high parking demand and little available sidewalk space.

Vehicle

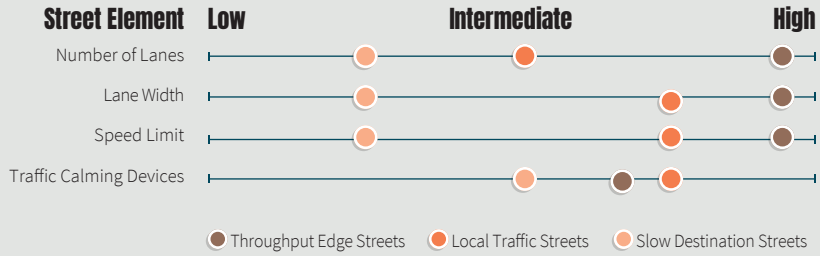
Vehicle capacity on Downtown streets should be highest along the edges and gradually decrease as users approach the most active, dense internal areas. Lane widths and speed limits should be decreased to facilitate safe movement of all users. Travel lanes may be reconfigured, or removed via a road diet, to repurpose street space to accommodate all users, prioritizing comfort and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

The three categories of streets recommended for Downtown Wake Forest respond to local context and complement the mobility recommendations for pedestrians, people bicycling, transit users, and parking. Critical to the success of Downtown Wake Forest is to design each street for slower vehicle speeds. Additionally, street characteristics should reinforce that Downtown is not an area to go through but a destination that is filled with pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users that are sharing space safely.

Two of the key long term recommendations are closing a portion of Elm Avenue adjacent to the railroad crossing and a portion of Wait Avenue to vehicles. The local traffic streets (e.g, S. Taylor Street, Elm Avenue, Triumph Lane) correspond with longer-term on-street parking while slow destinations streets (e.g, S. White Street, E. Owen Avenue, etc.) reflect the higher-turnover parking streets that can further reduce speeds and increase safety.

Compatibility Spectrum

The spectrum prioritizes the efficiency and functionality of the motor vehicle network by considering the Number of Lanes, the Lane Width, appropriate Speed Limit to balance vehicular flow and pedestrian safety, and the presence of Traffic Calming Devices to manage speeds and enhance the pedestrian experience in downtown areas.



Throughput Edge

Throughput Edge Streets have the highest volume of traffic and are for people who are driving past Downtown. They generally have fewer stops and signals and will have the least amount of interaction with other modes of transportation. Signage and traffic calming elements will be present at key locations, such as school zones or railway crossings.

Recommendations:

- **Number of Lanes.** Multiple lanes to ensure efficient vehicular flow.
- **Lane Width.** Wider lanes are used to accommodate high traffic volumes and larger vehicles, ensuring safe passage.
- **Speed Limit.** Higher speed limits to facilitate efficient traffic movement through Downtown.
- **Traffic Calming.** Fewer to maintain flow, but strategically placed signals, signage, and bollards, along with chicanes to help manage speeds.

Local Traffic

Local Traffic Streets are used by people traveling to Downtown destinations, whether that is home, work, a business, or just Downtown itself. These streets will support a moderate amount of traffic, but trips are likely to either start or end on these streets. These streets will be mixing areas for multiple transportation modes and will require a density of signage, stops, and traffic calming measures.

Recommendations:

- **Number of Lanes.** Fewer lanes to support access to Downtown destinations without excessive congestion.
- **Lane Width.** Moderately wide lanes to balance vehicle flow and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Speed Limit.** Use devices like curb extensions and roundabouts to moderate traffic flow.
- **Traffic Calming.** Moderate speed limits to ensure safety while accommodating access to Downtown destinations.

Slow Destination

Slow Destination Streets have a density of activity and are the focus for multiple types of users and trips. These streets are generally narrower and facilitate slower speeds by design, which aligns with the goal of having the lightest amount of traffic on these streets. This can be elevated through signage, stops, and other traffic calming measures.

Recommendations:

- **Number of Lanes.** Least number of lanes, prioritizing pedestrian activity and minimizing vehicular traffic.
- **Lane Width.** Narrow lanes to calm traffic and promote a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- **Speed Limit.** Frequent crosswalks and raised intersections, and to slow traffic. Rail crossings along E. Roosevelt Avenue and Front Street, Elm Avenue, and E. Holding Avenue are managed with appropriate signals and safety measures to ensure safe crossings for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Traffic Calming.** Lowest speed limits to protect pedestrians and create a safe, slow-paced environment.

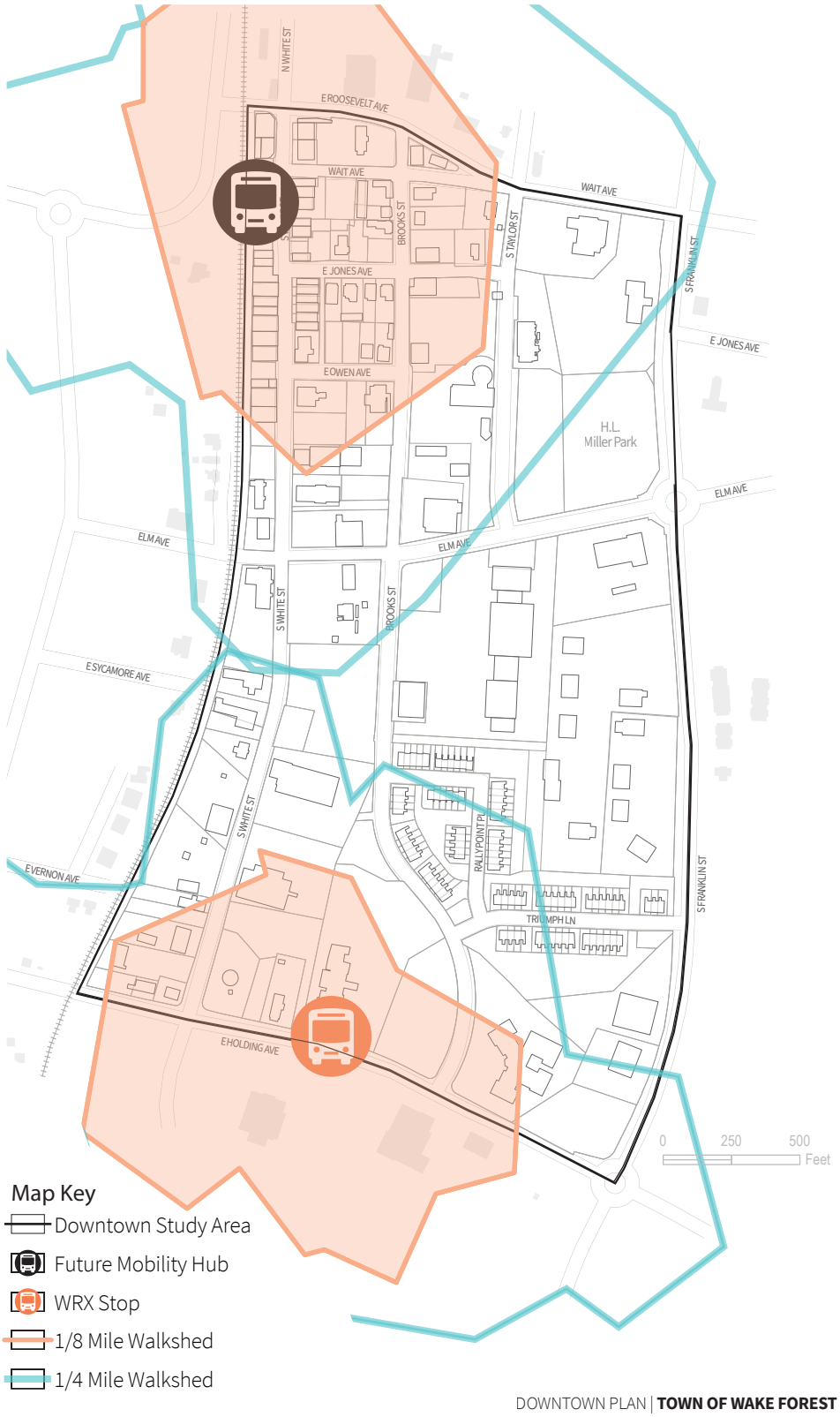
Transit

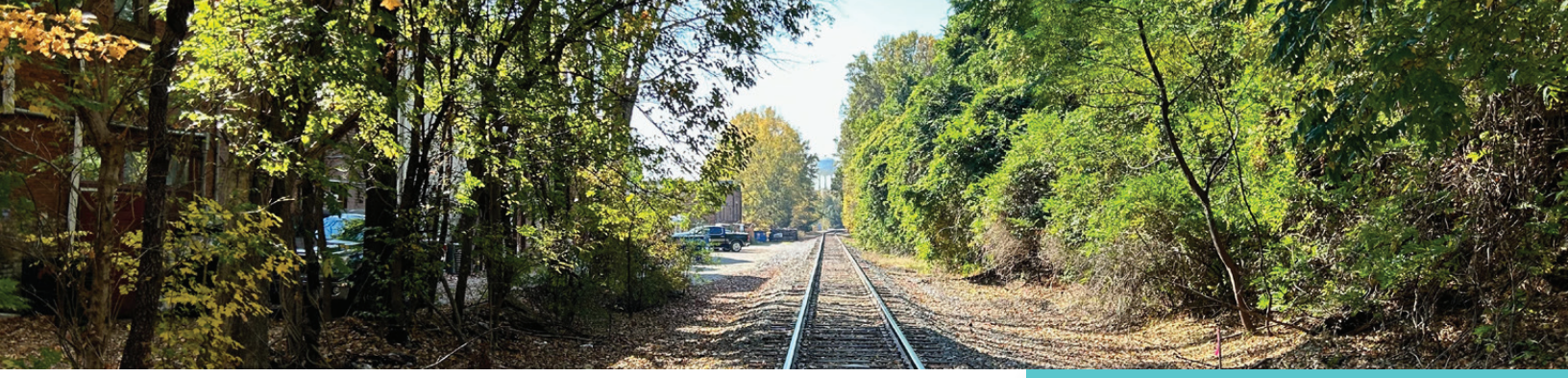
Transit is a key part of the mobility story for Downtown Wake Forest. Current and proposed transit routes allow for residents across the community to access Downtown without a car, reinforcing the need for a high quality pedestrian environment that allows convenient travel between transit stops and local destinations and services.

The following recommendations highlight essential elements needed to create a complete transit system Downtown.

Recommendations:

- **Proximity to Bus Stops.** Bus stops should be easily accessible with a short walking distance (within 1/4 mile or 5 minute walk), ensuring convenience for daily commuters.
- **Signage and Wayfinding.** Signage should be frequent and clear, helping users navigate to stops from various directions.
- **Shelters and Seating.** Basic shelters and seating to enhance the comfort of waiting passengers, especially in areas with moderate transit use.
- **Accessibility.** Bus stops should be ADA-compliant with basic features such as ramps, tactile paving, boarding and alighting clearance, and accessible routes to support a wide range of users.





Microtransit

Starting on Tuesday, October 1, the Town introduced "Go Wake Forest," a microtransit pilot program offering on-demand, door-to-door rides similar to Uber and Lyft. While the Wake Forest Loop (WFL) Bus Service will be temporarily suspended during this pilot, the WRX Express route to Triangle Town Center and Downtown Raleigh will continue its regular service. This pilot, in partnership with Via (a transportation tech company), seeks to enhance transit options and resolve service issues. This flexible, point-to-point service will allow the Wake Forest community the opportunity to explore Downtown without having to drive. Those choosing to live Downtown could potentially do so without a car.

Recommendations:

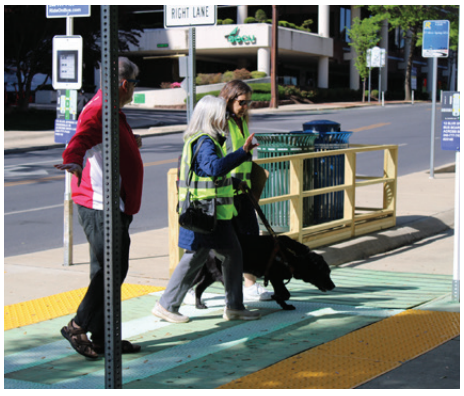
- Collect ridership data and conduct user surveys to continually improve the service based on evolving community needs.
- Implement a marketing campaign to raise awareness about microtransit.
- Implement a system for collecting real-time feedback from riders.

Mobility Hub

The Wake Forest Mobility Hub could be open by 2030, with 30% design anticipated for May 2025. As Wake Forest considers the impact of the S-Line, the experience of transit users must be considered.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that adequate connections are made to allow residents in neighborhoods surrounding Downtown the ability to safely and easily walk or bike to the new mobility hub.
- Utilize wayfinding and signage to guide visitors and residents to the proposed mobility hub.
- A mobility hub should seek to integrate passenger rail service with transit, microtransit, bicycling, dockless vehicles, and other multimodal options.
- Ensure that commuters and visitors have easy access to and from supplemental parking structures.



S-Line Considerations

The S-Line R2R project is a proposed passenger rail line that would run from Richmond, VA to Raleigh, NC. It would connect to existing rail lines to reduce costs and take advantage of existing infrastructure. The proposed rail service is a part of a larger effort to connect cities across the United States to respond to population growth and employment opportunities in areas underserved by transit.

The potential implications associated with a new passenger rail line running through Downtown Wake Forest are significant. It presents both the opportunity for redevelopment and increased density within Downtown but also could change the existing built form and fabric of Downtown.

- Commuter and S-Line users should anticipate parking in nearby lots and walking to the station, with accommodations available for individuals with mobility challenges.
- Development surrounding the mobility hub should both meet the parking needs of potential commuters but also utilize TOD -style developments to increase residential development Downtown.
- Future developers should consider the affects of a passenger rail station within Downtown and the potential market implications.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5 Building Fabric & Public Realm

A successful Downtown focuses on creating a cohesive building fabric and engaging public realm. This integration of architectural form, street life, public spaces, and overall appearance is important for fostering pedestrian-friendly environments. Thoughtful design encourages people to gather, enhancing the Town's livability and appeal while supporting economic growth with thriving local businesses. Wake Forest, with its historic S. White Street, traditional grid pattern, charming spaces, and redevelopment opportunities, provides an ideal setting for innovative urban design and placemaking. This chapter offers general recommendations for strategies that strengthen the building fabric and activate the public realm.

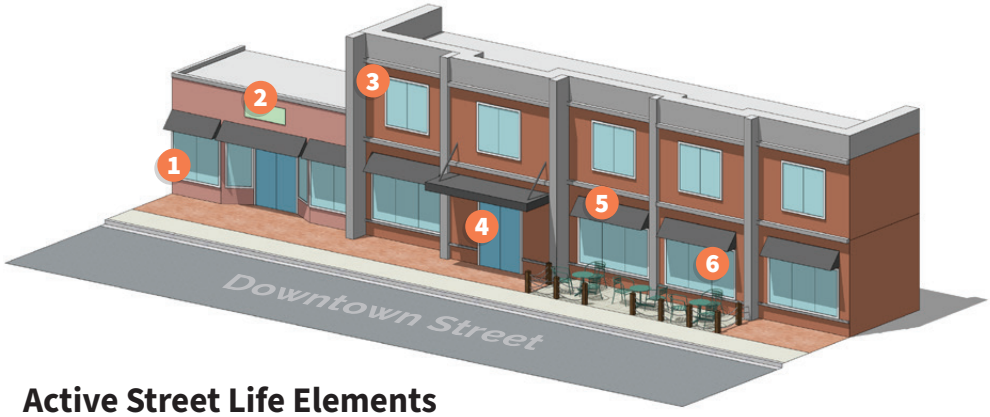
Built Form

Built form refers to the physical characteristics and layout of buildings and structures within a particular urban or rural setting. It encompasses factors such as building heights, architectural style, density, setbacks, and the arrangement of streets and public spaces. The built form significantly shapes the identity and functionality of a place, influencing how people interact with their surroundings and experience the urban environment.

Human-scale built form refers to designing buildings and blocks that are proportionate to the size and movement of people, creating spaces that feel comfortable and accessible. This involves breaking down building masses into smaller elements, varying heights, setbacks, and architectural details to avoid overwhelming pedestrians and to promote visual interest.

Recommendations:

- Promote development patterns similar to buildings along S. White Street.
- Promote compact, human-scale blocks to avoid superblocks such as the block between Elm Avenue, E. Holding Avenue, S. White Street, and Brooks Street.
- Mix building scale, configurations, and heights across Downtown to encourage variety.
- Ensure that new buildings are built along the perimeter of blocks rather than encroaching into the interior of the blocks.



Active Street Life Elements

This diagram shows some of the elements that can contribute to a more active street life Downtown

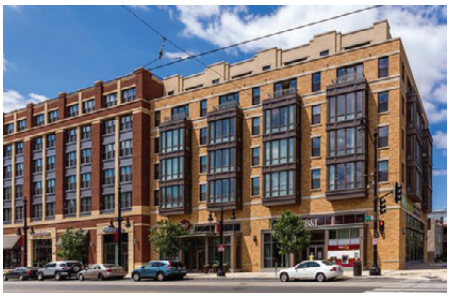
1. Human Scale Building Mass
2. Building Signage
3. Facade Articulation
4. Entries
5. Awnings and Canopies
6. Street Level Transparency

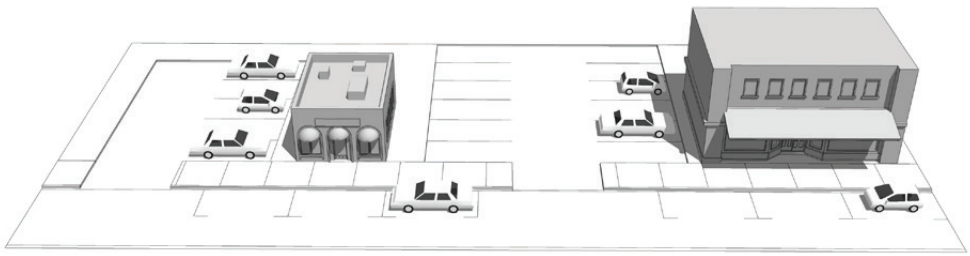
Streetwall

A streetwall is the collective alignment of building façades along a street. A consistent streetwall provides a sense of enclosure while an inconsistent streetwall may contain breaks for parking lots or spaces, driveways, or yards. While a consistent streetwall is important to provide comfort to pedestrians, streetwall articulation and breaks are important to create an interesting pedestrian experience. All functional subareas, aside from Southeast Transition, should have a continuous street wall, where buildings are aligned with minimal gaps, enhancing the sense of enclosure and making the street feel more like an outdoor room.

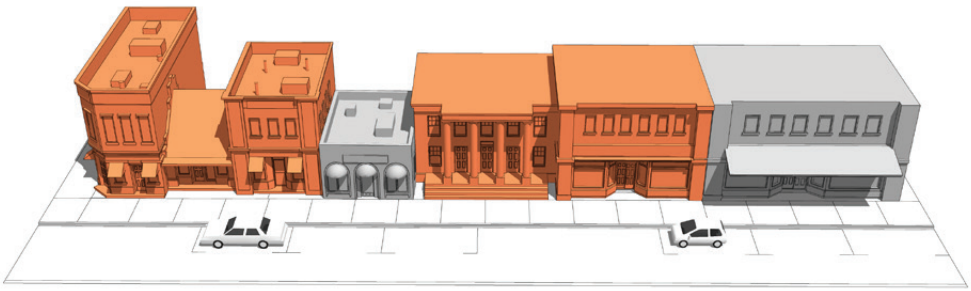
Recommendations:

- In areas where there are gaps in the streetwall, landscaping, plazas and pocket parks should be incorporated to give the illusion of a continuous streetwall, especially along the existing streetwall found on S. White Street.
- The height and design of the streetwall should be proportional to the width of the street to maintain a human scale.
- Variations in building heights should be used add visual interest, but too much disparity can disrupt the cohesion of the streetwall.
- New construction should have a more traditional facade design along S. White Street while more contemporary design can be included along Elm Avenue and Brooks Street.





Non-Continuous Streetwall



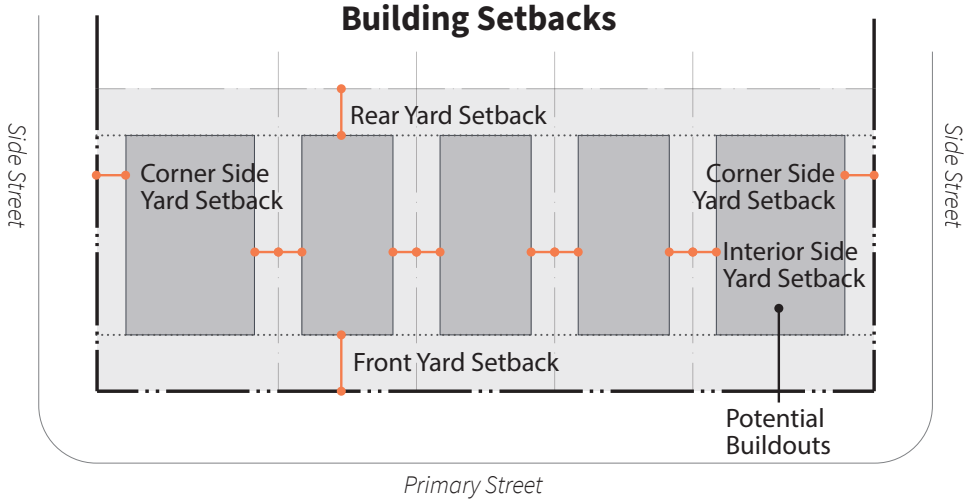
Continuous Streetwall

Building Location

Building location provides guidance on where structures should be placed on a property. Downtown buildings should have a strong orientation to the primary street frontage.

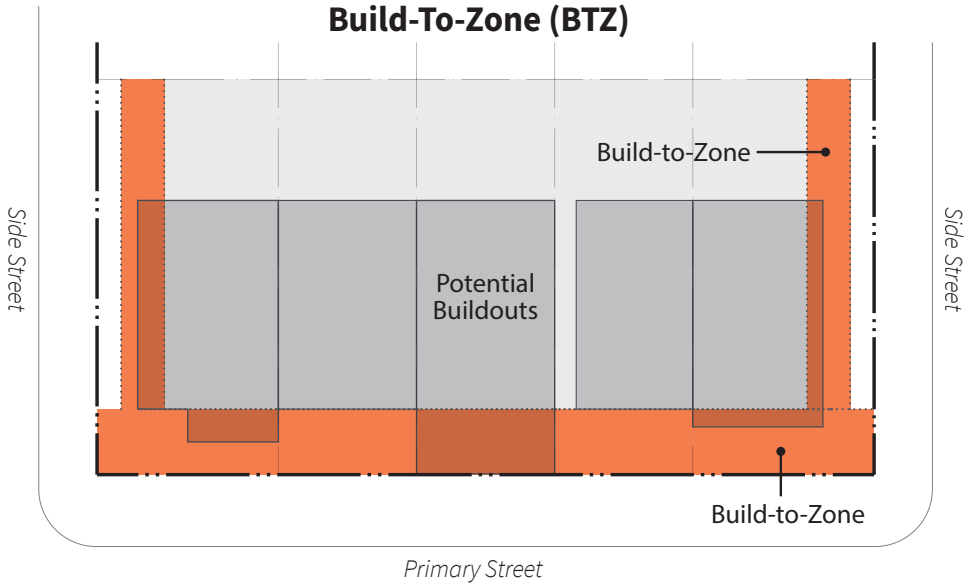
Building Setbacks

A setback is the minimum distance a building or structure should be separated from the right-of-way or lot line. Building setbacks should be minimal to provide a seamless transition between the building zone and pedestrian through zone.



Build-to-Zone

Build-to zones refer to specific areas or lines where buildings are encouraged or required to be positioned in relation to the property line and/or street edge. Establishing consistent setbacks and build-to zones will help create a cohesive streetwall that enhances walkability, supports active street frontages, and contributes to a sense of place.



Recommendations:

- Building location within Downtown should be such that a consistent streetwall is maintained along its main street and Downtown approach streets.
- Require 0' front and corner side yard setbacks on S. White Street within the Historic White Street Functional Subarea.
- Permit more flexible setbacks on Brooks Street south of Elm Avenue, S. Taylor Street, E. Holding Avenue, and S. Franklin Street.
- Require strict build-to-zones along S. White Street, Elm Avenue, Brooks Street, and Roosevelt Avenue to promote active streetscapes.

Building Heights

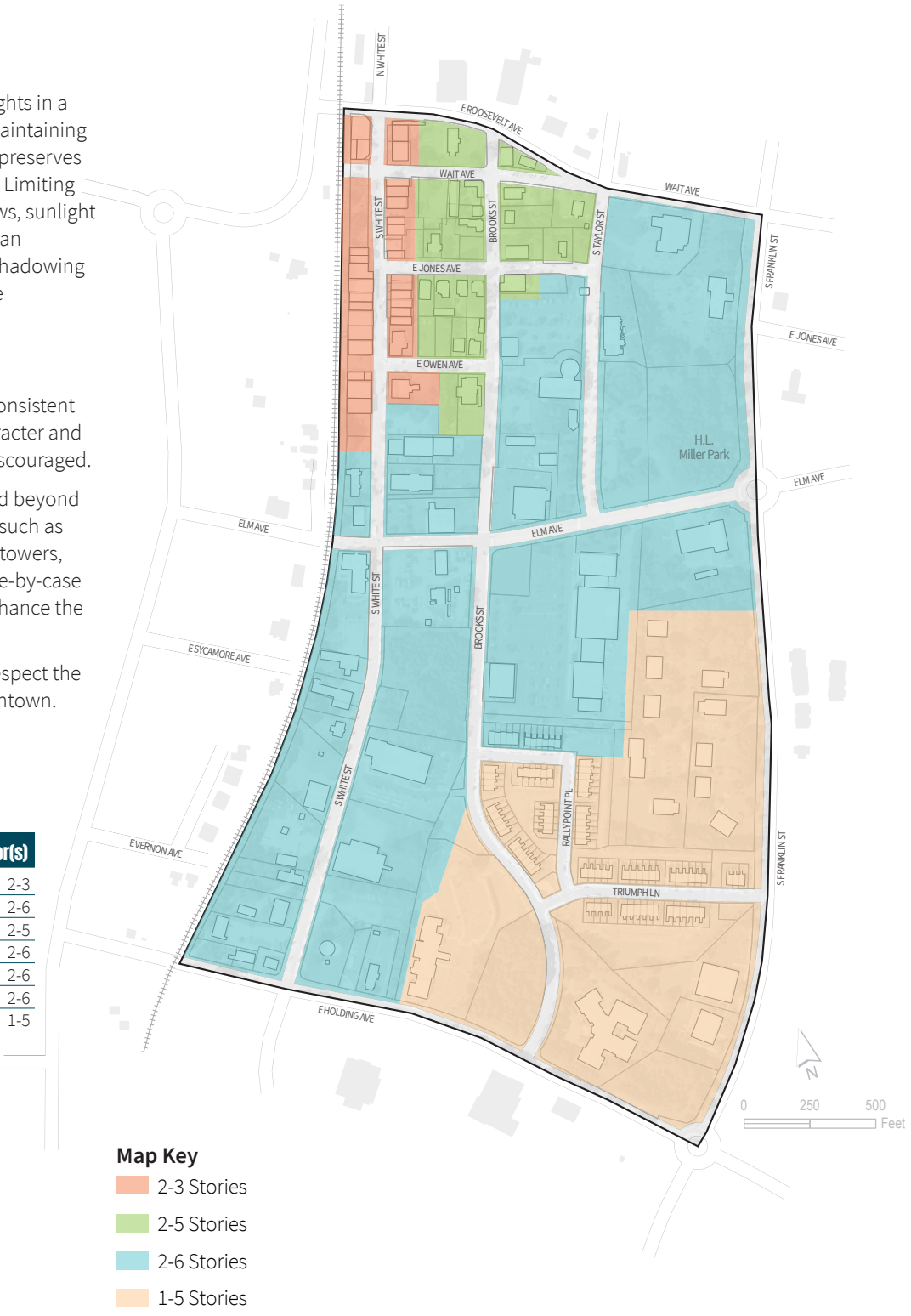
The importance of building heights in a small-town downtown lies in maintaining a harmonious urban scale that preserves the area's charm and character. Limiting heights also helps preserve views, sunlight access, and the overall pedestrian experience by preventing overshadowing and maintaining a human-scale environment.

Recommendations:

- One-story buildings are inconsistent with the desired urban character and streetwall and should be discouraged.
- Design elements that extend beyond the typical building height, such as chimneys, spires and clock towers, should be allowed on a case-by-case basis provided that they enhance the character of Downtown.
- New construction should respect the scale and character of Downtown.

Building Heights by Functional Subarea

Functional Subarea	Floor(s)
Historic White Street	2-3
White Street Extension	2-6
Brooks Street Infill	2-5
Brooks Street/Elm Avenue	2-6
Wait Avenue/Franklin Street	2-6
Civic Core	2-6
Southeast Transition	1-5

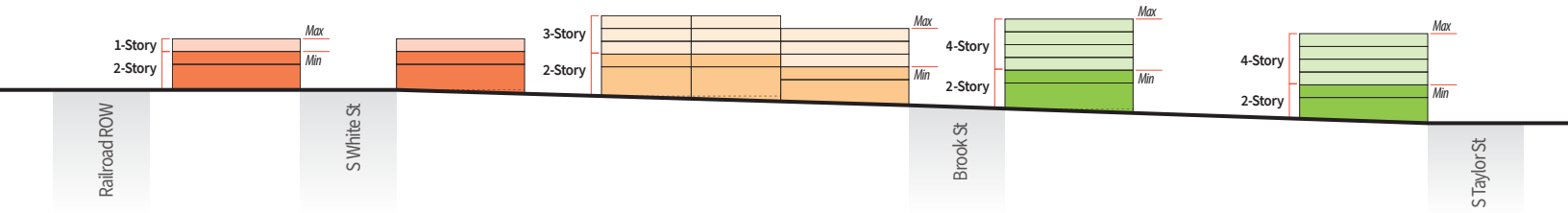


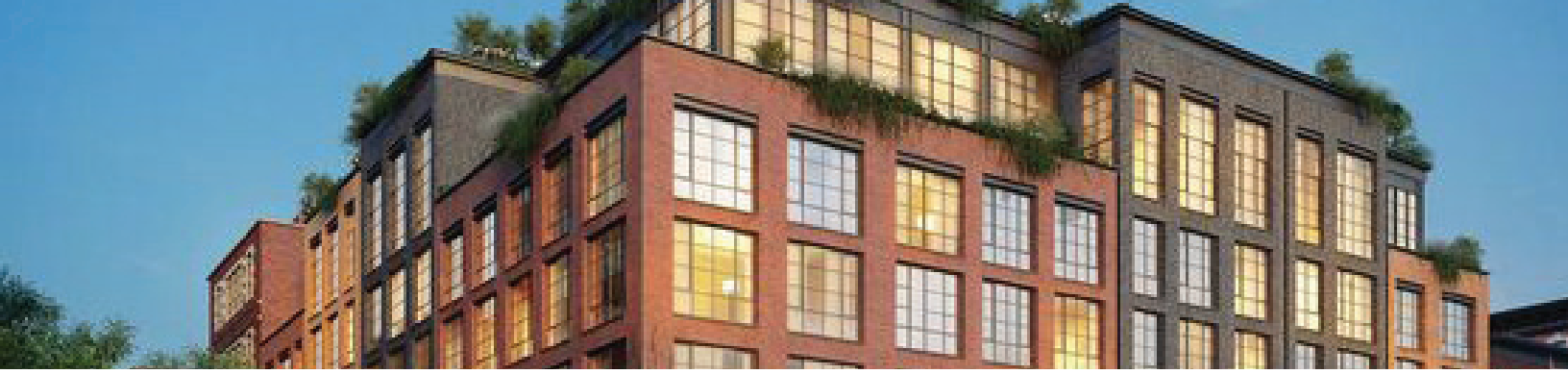
Stepped Down & Terraced Buildings

As redevelopment occurs, it is important to adapt building heights to the contours of the terrain. This approach minimizes visual disruption, preserves sightlines, and enhances aesthetic appeal.

Recommendations:

- Introduce buildings with taller heights on the lowest topography to balance with the higher topographies on S. White Street.
- Utilize stepped or terraced designs for new development which follow the slope and shape of the terrain.



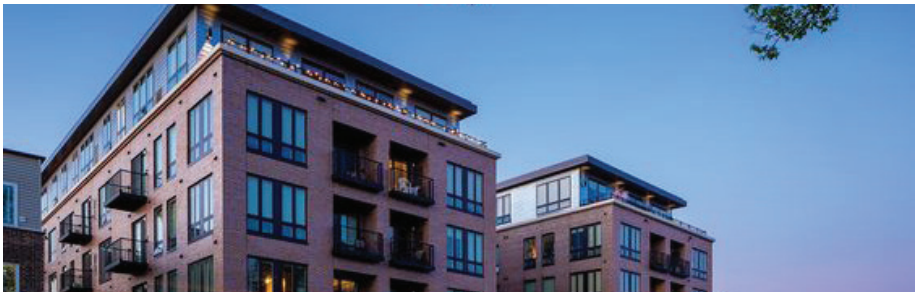


Upper-Floor Step Back

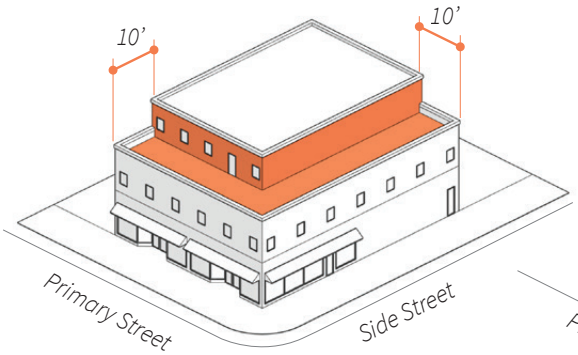
Upper-Floor step backs are architectural elements used to reduce the scale of taller buildings. They can be used to allow sunlight to reach the ground, eliminating a cavern effect. They can also create usable outdoor spaces and allows better air circulation.

Recommendations:

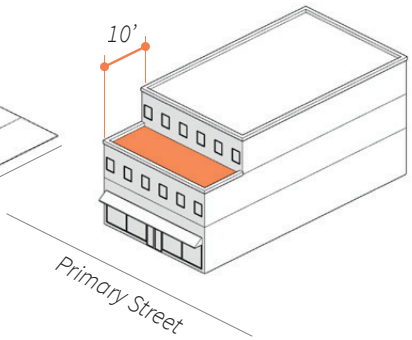
- Step backs should be utilized in new developments to transition to adjacent low-density neighborhoods such as the Northeast Neighborhood, Cardinal Hills, and Deacons Ridge.
- Step backs should be used to minimize visual impacts along S. White Street.
- Upper-floor step backs should be used to maintain a consistent, context-sensitive streetwall while also promoting additional building height.



Cornerfront Step Back



Mid-Block Step Back



ADA Access and Accessibility Considerations

Topography and grade challenges present accessibility challenges for those with disabilities. The Town has ensured that building entrances are ADA accessible through the use of ramps. However, improvements can be made to the design of both public right-of-way areas and private properties to appeal to all users by incorporating Universal Design and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Design with the Terrain

Downtown sits on a gentle hill sloping downwards from the railroad tracks on the west side of the planning area to the Smith Creek channel on the east side of the planning area. The commercial core along S. White Street rests on flat around, but the blocks east of S. White Street features slopes from 0 to 10 degrees. Challenging topography creates issues for building entries, sidewalks, ADA standards, and future development.

Building Entries

Building entrances should remain at grade to ensure easy access in and out. However, some of the opportunity sites identified present redevelopment challenges due to the grade changes. To remain at grade, building entrances may vary from the lower level to the first floor. An example is Town Hall. The entrance facing Brooks Street is classified as the first floor while the entrance on S. Taylor Street is classified as the lower level. To maintain active storefronts on Downtown streets, all entrances should have active and engaging storefronts with high transparency. All entrances should act as the primary entrance.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks within Downtown are affected by topography and grade changes. S. White Street has several instances where sidewalks diverge creating two levels to provide access to building entrances. This limits the accessibility and functionality of the sidewalk as the landscape and furniture zone must then accommodate additional pedestrians.

Recommendations:

- Consideration should be given to the practicality of adding additional ramps to existing building entrances (as needed).
- The design and construction of existing ramps should be evaluated to improve or provide alternative solutions.
- Design both public right-of-way areas and private properties to appeal to all users by incorporating Universal Design and ADA standards.
- Ensure that all improvements to publicly accessible areas, such as streets, sidewalks, and parking lots, include ADA upgrades, and that all sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks in Downtown meet current ADA and Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) standards.
- If the minimum design standards cannot be met, provide ADA compliance to the maximum extent feasible.
- Ramps longer than six feet should have handrails on both sides, and these should extend beyond the top and bottom of the ramp for additional support.
- Ramps should have flat landing areas at the top and bottom to provide a resting place and allow for easier maneuvering.
- Crosswalks should be clearly marked, ideally with audible signals to assist those with visual impairments.

Quality Architectural Design

The quality of architectural design is foundational to shaping the physical, social, and economic aspects of communities. Architectural quality encompasses not only the aesthetic appeal of buildings but also their functionality, sustainability, and cultural relevance within the urban context. Well-designed architecture considers the scale and character of surrounding structures, integrating harmoniously into the fabric of the Town while contributing to its identity and sense of place. As new development and redevelopment happens in Downtown, developers should be encouraged to follow a prescribed quality of architectural design.

Building Entries

Building entries in Downtown should be prominent and in prime locations with features that welcome pedestrians along the street include awnings, signage and lighting. These features should be integrated into the design of the building with the highest levels of design attention and texture.

Recommendations:

- To the extent possible, doors should be at grade with the public sidewalk at the point of entry to the building to accommodate those with mobility issues.
- Entrances should be clearly identified and emphasized with address numbers and attractive doorway detailing.
- Front doors should reflect the doorway placements and proportions of existing buildings.
- Property owners should be encouraged to beautify their doors with interesting design elements.
- Entrances should be recessed from the front lot line in order to accommodate out-swinging doors that do not interfere with pedestrian movement on the public sidewalk.

Façade Articulation

Façade articulation is a technique in architecture which uses edges and corners to break up building facades which eliminate large expanses of blank walls. While streetwalls are essential in a Downtown, expansive walls without interesting features are sterile and dull. Building facades in Downtown are currently divided into sections that range between 25 feet to 30 feet. This articulation is appropriate for a Downtown and should be incorporated in new developments.

Recommendations:

- Facade articulations in Downtown should incorporate architectural details such as pilasters, cornices, and varied materials.
- Facades should be broken up into visually appealing sections that reflect the area's historical context and create a cohesive streetscape using minor wall offsets, wall setbacks, accent lines, and upper-floor step-backs.

Building Signage

Building signage provides information and enhances the visual appeal of streetscapes. Different types of building signage include wall signs, projecting or blade signs, awning signs, and window signs, which are placed inside or on windows. Each type of signage plays a specific role in wayfinding, branding, and contributing to the overall character and vibrancy of urban environments.

Recommendations:

- Exterior signs should be limited to business identification and description.
- The size, material, color, and shape of signs should complement the architectural style and scale of the building.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts, signage for all businesses should be consistent in design and placement.
- Illuminated box signs are not appropriate Downtown.
- Small signs, graphics, and logos applied directly on windows and doors should be encouraged.
- The use of temporary sidewalk "sandwich boards" signs should be considered, subject to strict control for safety and accessibility.
- Temporary signs for special promotions, sales, products, and advertising should be discouraged.






Awnings & Canopies

Awnings and canopies provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians, outdoor seating areas, and storefronts, contributing to comfort and usability year-round. They can serve as branding opportunities for businesses, create a sense of enclosure that defines public spaces, and contribute to the overall charm and character of small-town streets.

Recommendations:

- Awnings and canopies should be in character with the architectural style of the building.
- Awnings should fit within the frame of the storefront- they should not hide the building's facade, distort its proportions, or cover architectural features. Awnings should be mounted above the transom window above the front entrance or storefront.
- Where several storefronts were developed as a single building, they should have awnings of a similar style and similar color.
- Adjacent buildings developed at different times should have awnings of a compatible style and color scheme.
- Awnings should be made of a canvas or durable fabric material that can be easily cleaned; vinyl awnings should be discouraged.
- Shingle, mansard, and arch-profiled canopies should be discouraged.

Street-Level Transparency

Street-level transparency refers to the design principle of incorporating large windows, glass facades, or open storefronts at ground level of buildings facing the street. On S. White Street nearly all the storefronts have some level of transparency. New development in other areas of Downtown should maintain or improve the level of transparency.

Recommendations:

- Transparency should be focused on retail stores, cafes, or offices on streets such as S. White Street, Elm Avenue, and portions of Brooks Street.
- Blank walls should be avoided along frontages facing sidewalks.
- Ground-floor display windows are encouraged in storefronts to create more interesting street interactions.
- Tall ground floors with high levels of transparency should be encouraged in areas where a consistent streetwall is recommended.
- Transparent materials shall occupy at least 70 percent of the surface area of such ground floor level street wall between a height of two feet and 12 feet, or the height of the ground floor ceiling, whichever is higher, as measured from the adjoining sidewalk.

Alleys

Alleys are narrow passageways typically found between buildings or at the rear of properties, often used for service access, deliveries, and utilities. Alleys can be revitalized to enhance the functionality and aesthetic appeal of a town. Transforming alleys into vibrant public spaces can involve adding lighting, greenery, art installations, and seating areas, making them safe and inviting for pedestrians. Even in contemporary planning, alleys are a functional approach to separating the public front of buildings and the back-of-house necessities.

Recommendations:

- Buildings should be encouraged to have side and/or rear entrances when alley access is possible.
- Side and/or rear entrances should be clearly identified and design should be similar to the front entrance.
- Alleys should be utilized for creative placemaking elements such as lighting, public art, temporary pop-ups, and outdoor dining.
- Ensure that alleys are properly paved using materials that can withstand deliveries, parking, and service trucks.
- Consider expanding the streetscape into the alleys to encourage activation and utilization.
- Ensure that alleys are well-lit to encourage usage, promote safety, and discourage crime.

Streetscape

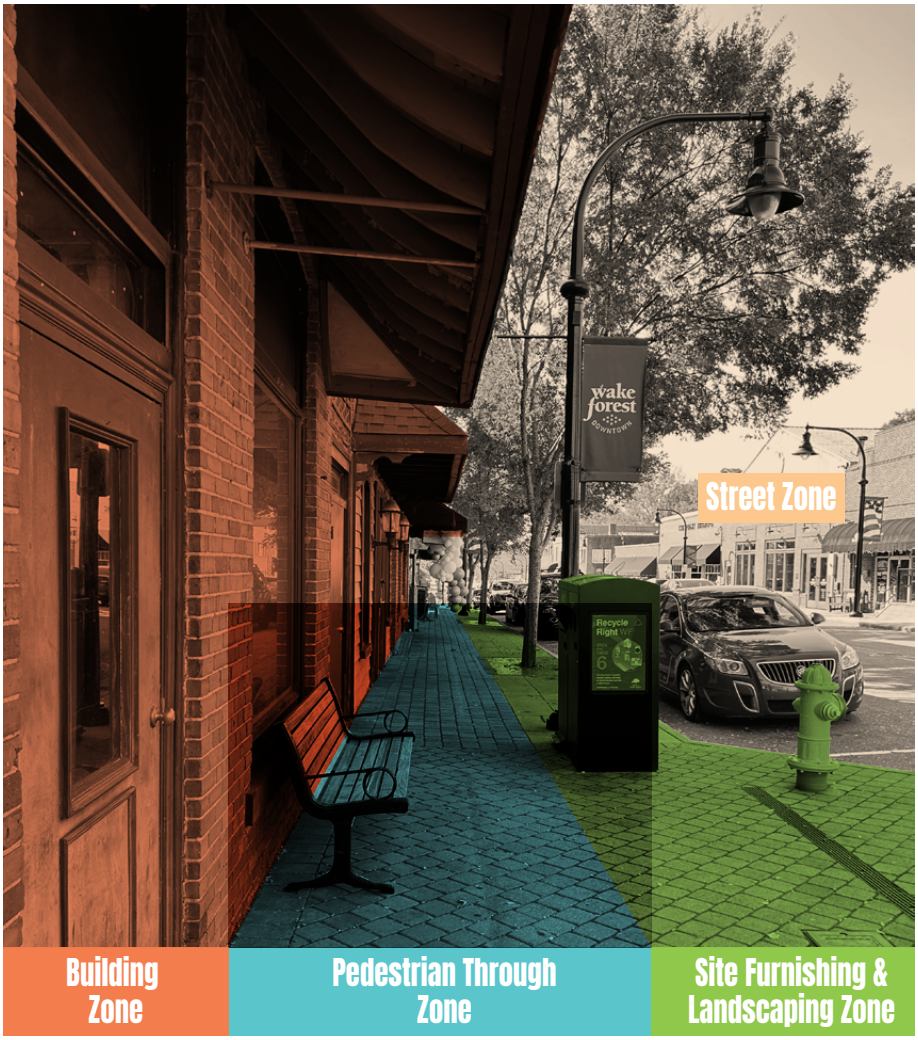
Streetscape zones refer to different areas along a street that are designated for specific functions and activities. These zones are typically categorized to optimize the use of public space and enhance the overall urban experience. Effective planning and design of streetscape zones contribute to the safety, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal of urban environments, promoting a balanced and enjoyable experience for all users.

Building Zone. The building zone typically includes the frontage of buildings along a street, encompassing elements such as entrances, windows, architectural features, and building materials that contribute to the character and visual diversity of the urban environment.

Pedestrian Through Zone. The pedestrian through zone is designed to prioritize safe and comfortable passage for pedestrians, often featuring wide sidewalks, minimal obstructions, and amenities like seating or pedestrian-scale lighting.

Site Furnishing & Landscape Zone. The site furniture and landscape zone includes elements such as benches, planters, trees, and other greenery strategically placed to enhance the aesthetic appeal and functionality of public spaces.

Street Zone. The street zone encompasses the area designated for vehicular traffic flow, parking spaces, and may include features like bike lanes and public transit stops to optimize urban mobility and accessibility.



Streetscape Types

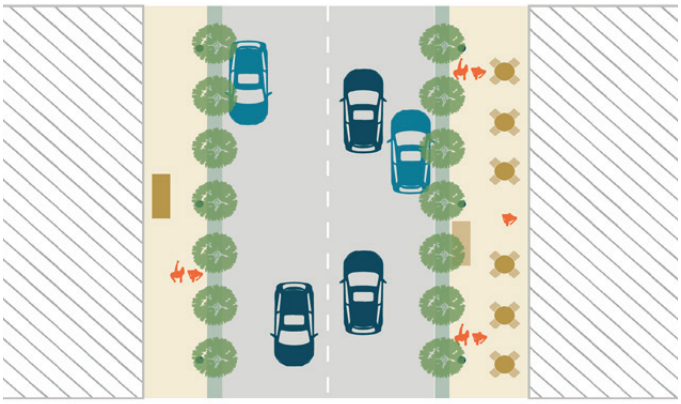
Streetscape types refer to the different design approaches and configurations used to enhance the visual, functional, and experiential qualities of urban streets. Downtown is broken up into four streetscape types: Main Street, Downtown Approach, Neighborhood Transition, and Neighborhood Street. These streetscape types are distinct in their function to Downtown and therefore consist of various urban design elements, some overlapping, some unique.

Recommendations:

- Main Street should include a minimum of minimum of five-foot Pedestrian Through Zone and a minimum five-foot Site Furnishing & Landscape Zone to accommodate outdoor dining and additional seating where possible, traditional styles of lighting and signage, wayfinding, and street trees.
- Downtown Approach should include minimum of five-foot Pedestrian Through Zone and a minimum five-foot Site Furnishing & Landscape Zone to accommodate breaks for plazas and pocket parks, bike lanes, street trees, outdoor dining, contemporary lighting and wayfinding, and more modern building designs.
- Neighborhood Transition should include a minimum of five-foot-wide sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, outdoor dining, contemporary lighting and wayfinding, more modern building designs along with smaller scale retail and stoops for housing.
- Neighborhood Street should include a minimum of five-foot-wide sidewalks, parallel parking, traditional lighting, and street trees.

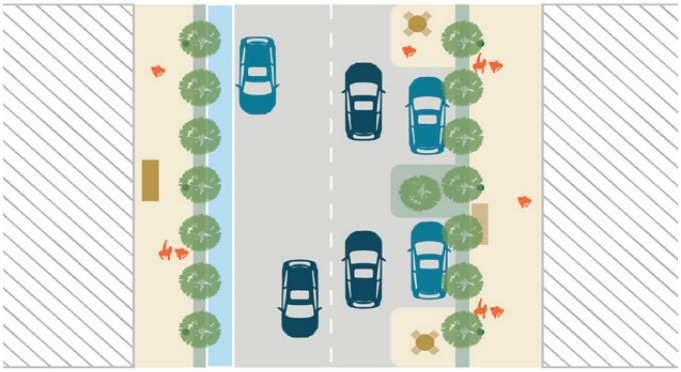
Main Street

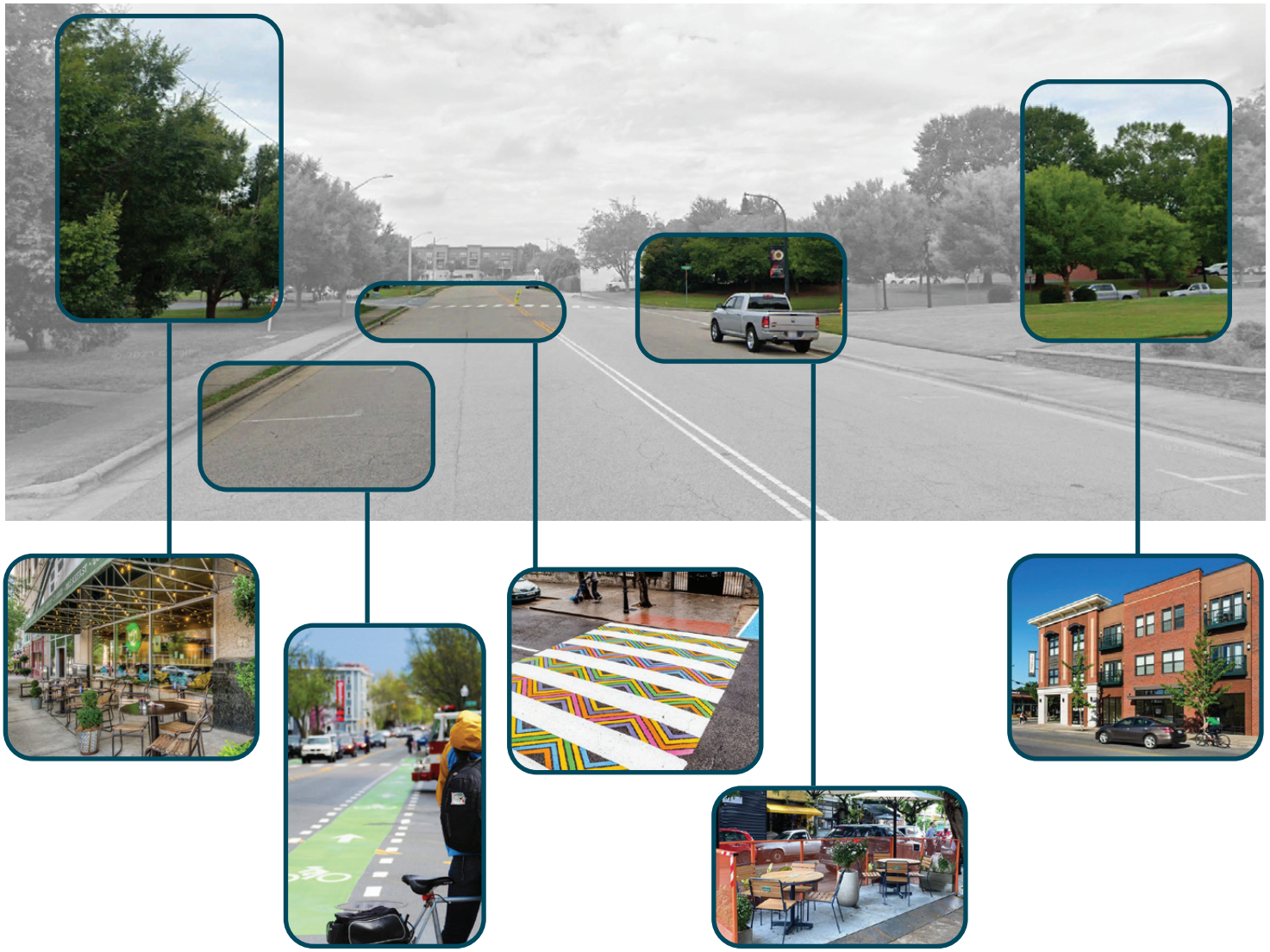
Main Street exhibits strong urban design with its public art, uniform street furniture, pedestrian-level lighting, and wide sidewalks for seating and street trees. It should incorporate more seating than other streetscapes, retail spill out, and additional street trees. The historical brick facades enhance the streetscape's character, and pedestrian-friendly crosswalks ensure safety. While sidewalks north of Elm Avenue are consistently 10 feet wide, those to the south should be widened as redevelopment occurs to create a more cohesive streetscape.



Downtown Approach

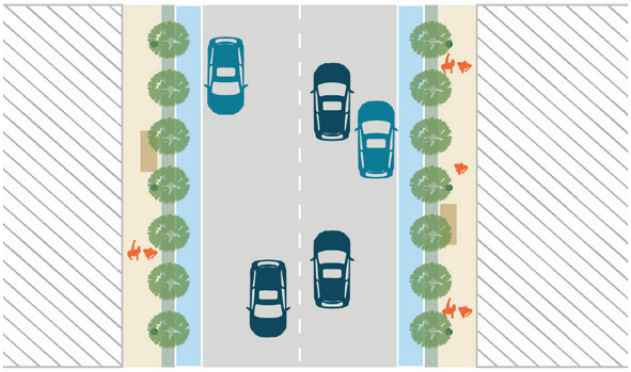
Downtown Approach streets should introduce wider sidewalks, allowing for more space for outdoor seating as well as bicycle lanes to encourage alternative modes of transportation. A number of streetscape elements are also needed, such as brick pavers, pedestrian-level street lighting, consistent crosswalks, and cohesive street furniture to improve the current conditions.





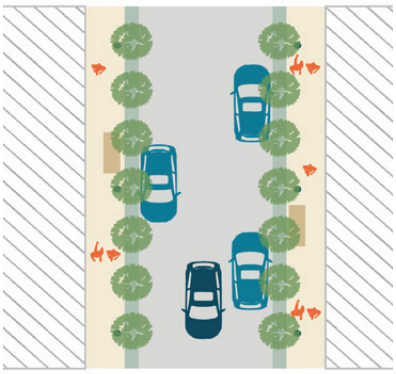
Neighborhood Transition

Neighborhood Transition streets should accommodate both vehicular and bicycle traffic, characterized by their inclusion of a planted median which adds greenery to the urban landscape. Streetscape elements should include public art, a uniform style of street furniture, attractive sidewalk treatments, and wider sidewalks. Bicycle lanes should also be accommodated on these streets.



Neighborhood Street

Neighborhood Street streets should include more public art, cohesive street furniture, and visually appealing sidewalks, which would enhance the pedestrian experience. Additional streetscape elements should include pedestrian-level street lighting, street trees and plantings, street light banners, and pedestrian-friendly crosswalks.



Street Furniture & People Infrastructure

Well-designed street furniture, such as benches, seating areas, trash receptacles, and bike racks, provide amenities that support pedestrian activities and encourage people to spend time outdoors. Street furniture offers places for rest and social interaction, contributing to a sense of community and belonging. People infrastructure such as outdoor power units, charging stations, Wi-Fi hubs, informal workstations, and pay stations, bring connectivity to outdoor working, studying, socializing, relaxing and traveling. Utilizing creative elements that make Downtown more people-oriented are strongly encouraged.

Recommendations:

- Street furniture should not obstruct pedestrians utilizing the sidewalk; therefore, a 9 ft path should be maintained on all sidewalks.
- The installation of street furniture and other permanent objects on streets that may restrict pedestrian circulation and degrade the visual quality of the street is discouraged.
- Consistent design in street furniture (benches, garbage bins, bike racks, shelters, etc.) is encouraged.
- Furniture should be designed to accommodate as wide a range of potential users as possible.

Street Trees & Plantings

Street trees provide shade, reducing the heat island effect and creating more comfortable pedestrian environments, particularly during hot summer months. Street trees also help to improve air quality by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen, contributing to a healthier and more sustainable urban environment. Plantings reduce impervious area, treat stormwater, add aesthetic value and promote community stewardship, and provide a buffer between the active pedestrian area of sidewalks and the street, enhancing pedestrian comfort. Plantings coupled with street trees should be found along all major street types.

Recommendations:

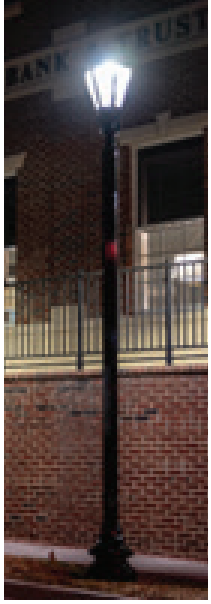
- Street trees should be planted 40'-50' on-center along all street types.
- Explore the possibility of diversifying the tree species Downtown to reduce the heavy reliance on the American Elm, Chinese Elm, Willow Oak, and Common Crepe Myrtle.
- Ensure that all plants are well-maintained including seasonal planting, trimming, and litter control.
- Incorporate additional plantings and furnishings such as hanging baskets on street lights, street light wraparounds, and other creative options.
- Explore the possibility of introducing green infrastructure such as rain gardens and bioswales to improve resiliency.

Traffic Signs

Traffic signage plays a crucial role in ensuring safety, order, and efficiency within the public realm. These signs provide essential information and guidance to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, helping them navigate the urban environment and understand the rules and regulations that govern it. By clearly communicating expectations and standards, traffic signage helps create a predictable and orderly public realm, enhancing the overall quality of life and facilitating smooth movement and interactions for everyone in the community.

Recommendations:

- Traffic signs should be on all streets in Downtown and in accordance with any required regulations.
- Place signs at an appropriate height and distance from the roadway, with consideration for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic.
- Position signs for maximum visibility, taking into account sight lines, road curvature, and potential obstructions like trees or buildings.
- Signs should be well-lit or reflective to ensure readability in low-light conditions.
- Consider using flashing beacons or pedestrian-activated signals at high-traffic crosswalks.




Lighting

Lighting plays a crucial role in creating a vibrant and inviting public realm. Effective lighting enhances safety and security, especially during evening hours, making pedestrians feel comfortable and secure as they navigate the streets and public spaces. Good quality lighting can also boost an area's night-time use and commercial viability. Lighting consists of exterior building lighting and streetscape lighting. Exterior building lighting could include lanterns, canisters, sconces, domes, floodlights to name a few. Streetscape lighting includes the streetlights, streetlamps, bollard lighting, festoon lights, string lights, or other decorative lights. Lighting can also be used in unique ways to enhance placemaking. Exploring creative ways to incorporate lighting throughout Downtown should be considered.

Recommendations:

- Lighting shall be placed at all street intersections in accordance with the Unified Development Ordinance.
- Pedestrian-scaled street lighting (no taller than 18 feet) shall be required using decorative fixtures.
- Replace streetlights on Brooks Street, Elm Avenue, E. Holding Avenue, and Roosevelt Avenue.
- Encourage property owners to illuminate front entryway, recessed entryways, walkways, garage areas, and building addresses so they are clearly visible from the street at night.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining, sidewalk patios, on-street patios, and other creative seating options, benefit local businesses and residents and promote pedestrian friendliness, active streetscapes, and visual distinctiveness. Even narrow sidewalks can accommodate café-style seating.

Recommendations:

- Outdoor dining should be permitted in areas where sidewalks can maintain the necessary sidewalk clearances with designated access/exit to ensure accessibility and ease of circulation.
- Outdoor dining should maintain a cohesive design with colors, textures, and decor.
- Outdoor dining and retail display areas should be enclosed by a high-quality decorative fence or corral compatible with the Downtown character.
- Furniture should use materials that are weatherproof and easy to clean.
- Outdoor dining should consider different seating options such as benches, chairs, or booths, depending on space and ambiance.
- Outdoor dining layouts should ensure pathways and seating areas are accessible to all, including those with mobility aids.
- It is encouraged that furniture be consistent between each dining areas and adjacent properties.

Parklets

A temporary seating installation in the furnishing zone or parking lane that creates an inviting location for eating, reading, working, meeting a friend, or taking a rest during the warm-weather months. Parklets are typically created by repurposing on-street parking spaces or other underutilized urban areas.

Recommendations:

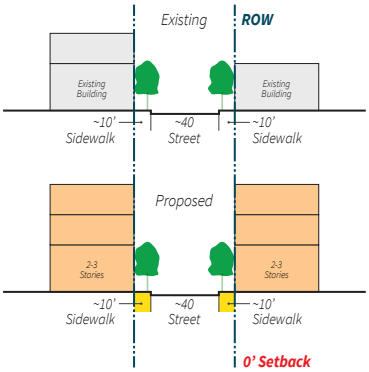
- Consider converting parking spaces into parklets along S. White Street in front of storefronts with businesses such as bars, restaurants, coffee shops, etc.
- A parklet pilot program should be considered to gauge public reaction, assess their impact, and refine the concept based on feedback before committing to permanent installations.

Sidewalk Widths

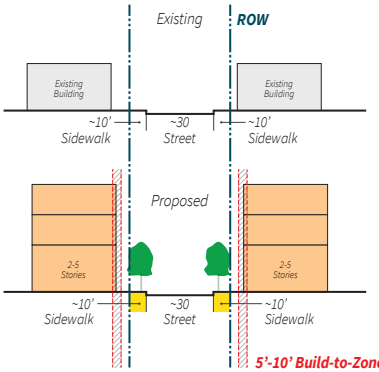
The minimum width for sidewalks (Pedestrian Through Zone) should be five-feet. The minimum width for the space between the sidewalk and the street (Site Furnishing & Landscape Zone) should be five-feet. Wider sidewalks should be considered when taller buildings are proposed. The Functional Subareas recommend setbacks and build-to-zones to allow for additional sidewalk space and gathering areas.

The diagrams on the following page provide some guidance on where additional sidewalk space and gathering area could be incorporated based on the existing right-or-way and recommendations provided for each Functional Subarea.

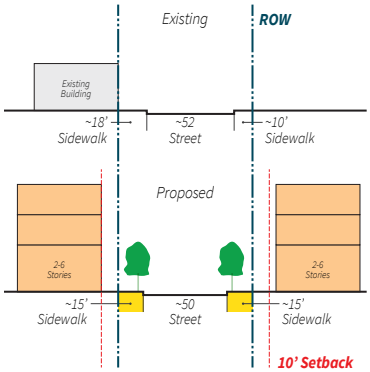
S White St (1)



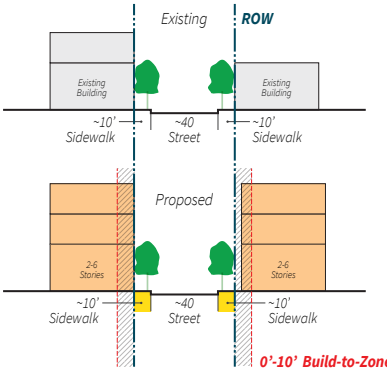
Brooks St (5)



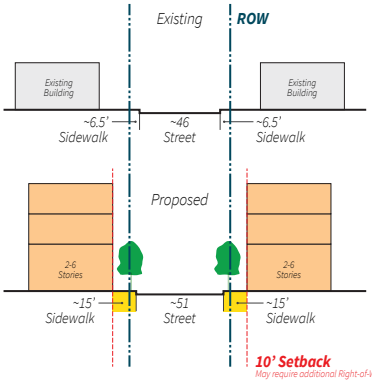
S Taylor St (9)



S White St (2)



Brooks St (6)



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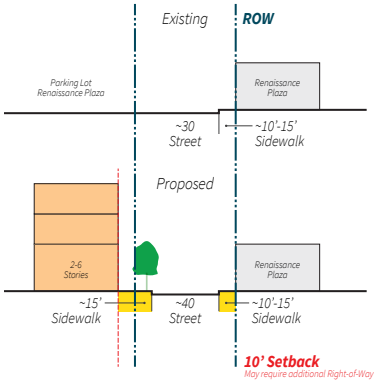
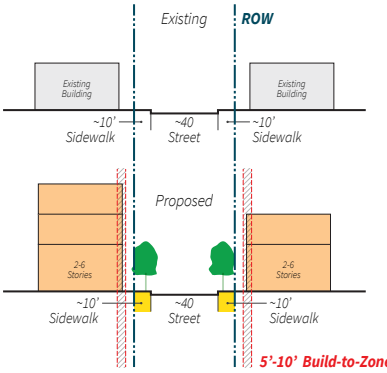
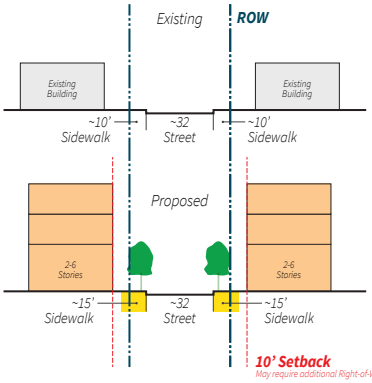


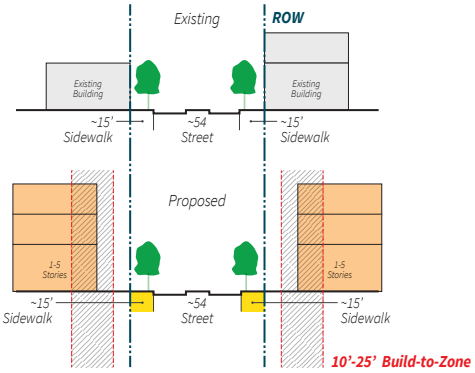
E Roosevelt Ave (3)



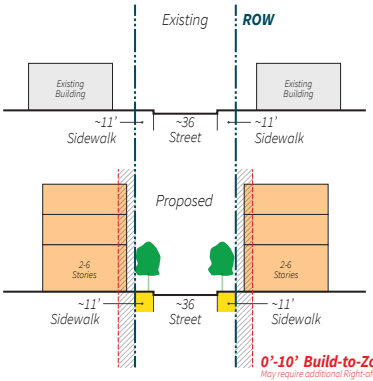
Elm Ave (7)



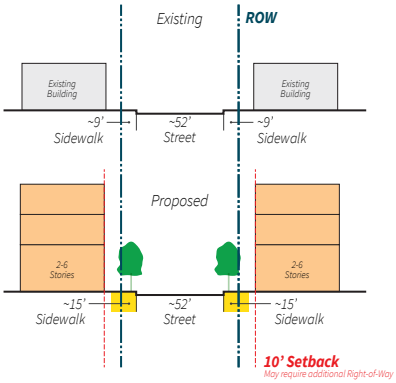
S Franklin St (11)



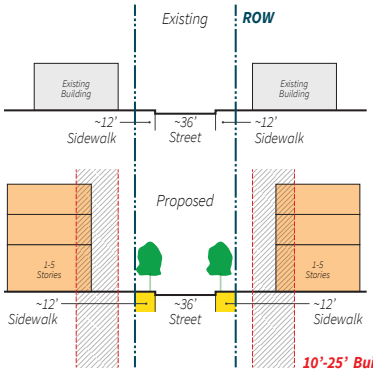
Wait Ave (4)



Elm Ave (8)



E Holding Ave (12)



DRAFT
FOR ADOPTION

Intersection Improvements

Pedestrian intersection improvements play a pivotal role in shaping the safety, accessibility, and vitality of urban environments. By prioritizing the needs of pedestrians and implementing targeted improvements, Downtown can create safer, more inclusive, and more vibrant intersections that promote active transportation, support economic vitality, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

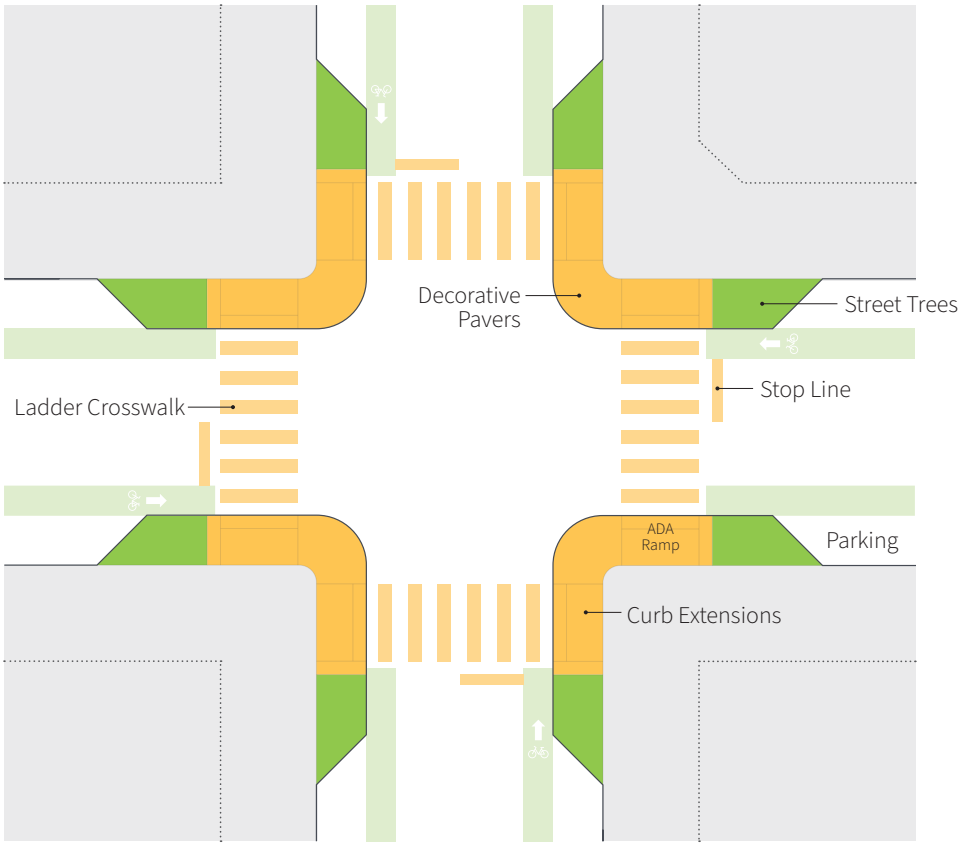
Intersections

Crossing infrastructure at major intersections should be equipped with extensive crossing features such as hawk signals, refuge islands, and advanced stop lines to handle high volumes of traffic and ensure safe passage. Minor intersections should have basic yet effective crossing features including curb extensions, yield lines, and sidewalk ramps to facilitate safe crossings.

Recommendations:

- Use clearly delineated crosswalks with consistent patterns on all four sides of the intersection at all intersections in Downtown.
- Minimize turning speeds from the major street to the minor street.
- Use the combination of signage, crosswalks, and design elements so that drivers on more prominent streets such as Elm Avenue, E. Holding Avenue, and Franklin Street yield to people in the crosswalk.

Preferred Intersection Layout



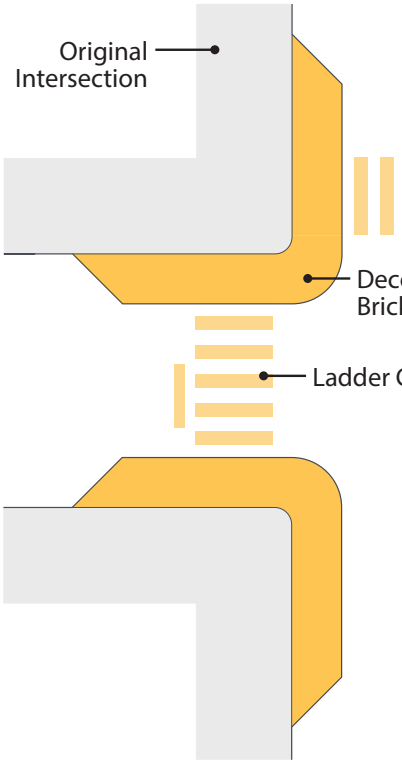
Curb Extensions

Curb extensions extend the sidewalk into the roadway at intersections to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, increase visibility at crosswalks, and create opportunities for landscaping and/or street furniture. Curb extensions should include a pedestrian-friendly turning radii to create a tighter, more compact intersection. This slows down turning vehicles, enhancing safety for pedestrians by reducing crossing distances and making pedestrians more visible to drivers. Curb extensions exist at the intersection of E. Owen Avenue and Brooks Street, E. Owen Avenue and S. White Street, and throughout Retreat at Renaissance.

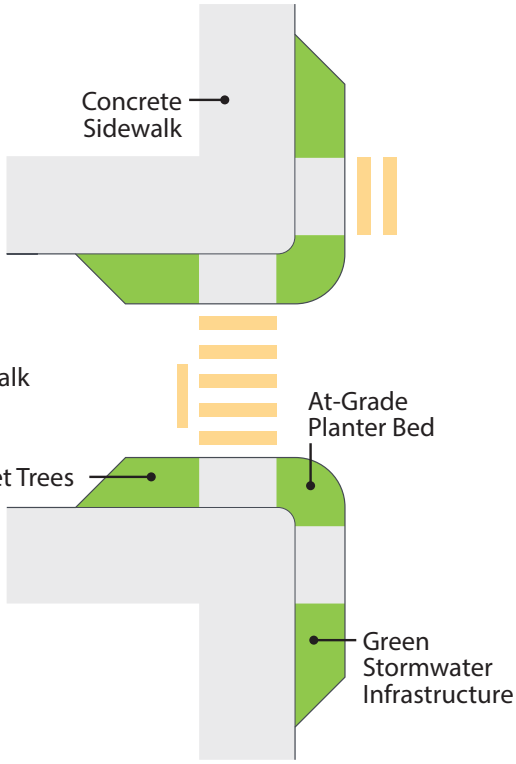
Recommendations:

- Curb extensions should be explored at intersections along Elm Avenue and S. White Street to improve the pedestrian environment.
- Curb extensions should be long enough to "daylight" the crossing, i.e, provide open sight-lines to the pedestrian crossing for approaching motorists at crossings that have low pedestrian visibility.
- Curb extension width is typically two feet less than the width of the parking lane and length is typically equal to the full width of the crosswalk.
- Smaller corner radii are preferred and actual corner radii exceeding 15 feet should be the exception.
- Unsafe intersections such as Elm Avenue and Brooks Street and Elm Avenue and S. White Street should be retrofitted with temporary materials such as epoxied gravel, planters, and bollards to define the curb radius until funding is available for a permanent solution.

Decorative Curb Extension



Landscaped Curb Extension

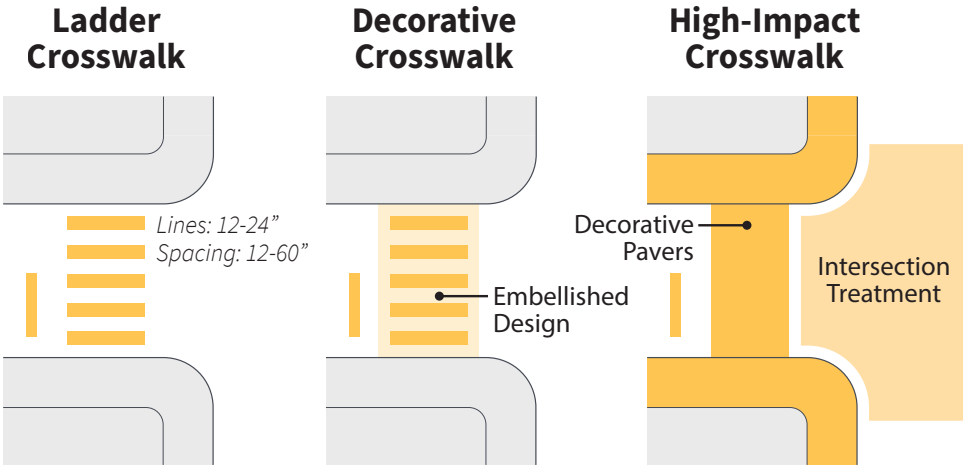


Crosswalks

Clearly marked crosswalks improve pedestrian visibility and safety by signaling designated crossing points. High-visibility crosswalk markings, such as ladder or zebra stripes, increase pedestrian awareness and driver compliance, especially at night or in low-light conditions.

Recommendations:

- Install "high-visibility" crosswalks throughout Downtown.
- Crosswalks should be outfitted to remain ADA compliant.

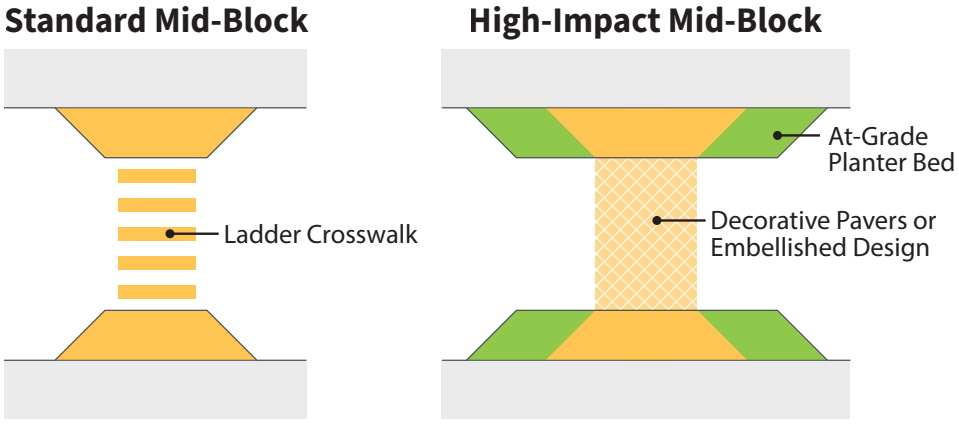


Mid-Block Crossings

Mid-block crossings are pedestrian crosswalks located between intersections, providing a safe way for pedestrians to cross streets at convenient locations. Mid-block crossings are particularly beneficial in areas with long distances between intersections or where there is significant pedestrian traffic, enhancing walkability and reducing the risk of accidents by clearly designating safe crossing points.

Recommendations:

- Install where there is a significant pedestrian desire line (path that pedestrians naturally prefer to take).
- Stripe the crosswalk, regardless of the paving pattern or material, to increase visibility to drivers.
- Unsignalized mid-block crosswalks should be installed at locations with low pedestrian demand.



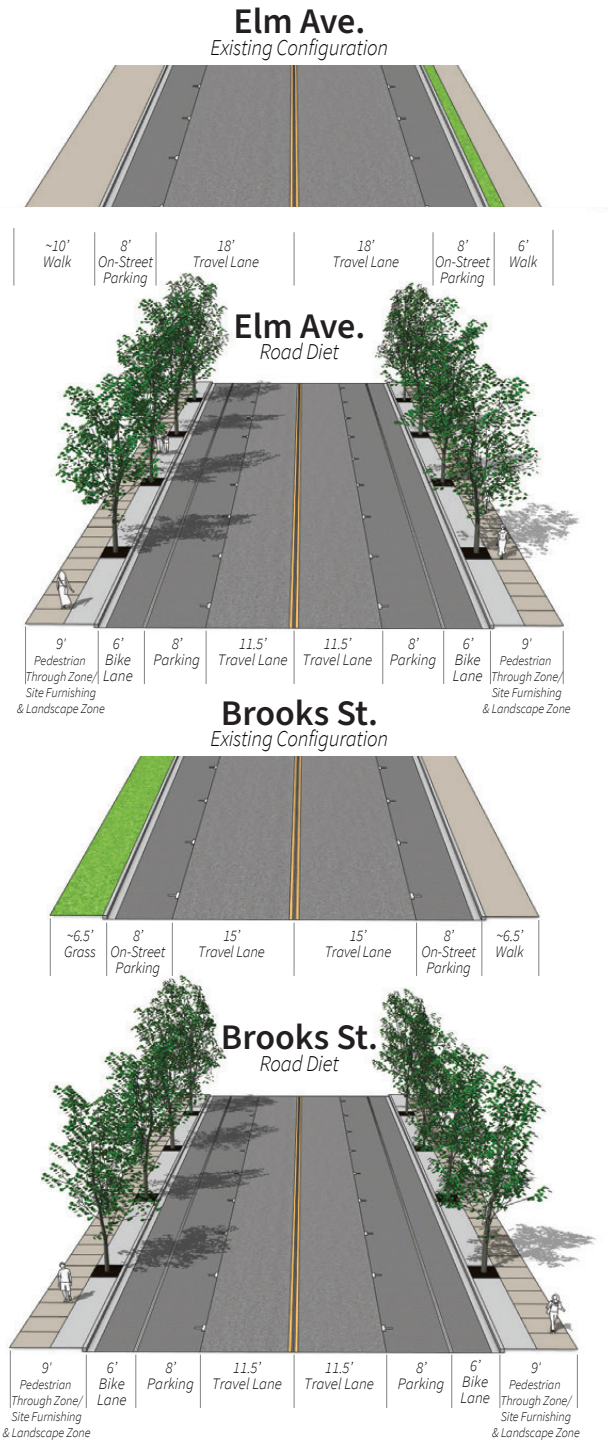
Road Diet

A road diet is a traffic calming strategy that involves reducing the number of drive lanes and/or roadway widths to accommodate additional streetscape elements. Road diets provide additional space for on-street parking, bike lanes, street trees, and increased sidewalk space, improving multimodal access and connectivity.

Elm Avenue & Brooks Street Road Diet

The current configuration of Elm Avenue and Brooks Street include excessively wide travel lanes, narrow sidewalks, minimal pedestrian amenities, and intersections that prioritize vehicular traffic flow. Elm Avenue is a vehicle-focused corridor with approximately 20-foot-wide travel lanes with narrow sidewalks. Brooks Street is a vehicle-focused corridor with approximately 13-foot-wide travel lanes south of Elm Avenue and approximately 11-foot-wide travel lanes north of Elm Avenue. Sidewalks are inconsistently designed and located on one side of the street. The road diets should optimize the existing rights-of-way to enhance pedestrian safety by incorporating traffic calming measures, reducing vehicle speeds, and minimizing vehicular-to-pedestrian conflict points.

Elm Avenue and Brooks Street should be reconfigured to accommodate wider sidewalks, street trees, bike lanes, on-street parallel parking, and appropriate vehicular travel lanes. A roundabout should be considered at the intersection of Elm Avenue and S. Taylor Street (realigned). The reconfigured streets will create a more vibrant, walkable environments, which can attract more visitors and boost pedestrian activity for local businesses.



Convert One-Way to Two-Way

Converting a one-way street to a two-way street offers several benefits. This reconfiguration enhances traffic flow and safety by reducing confusion and conflicts at intersections. It also improves accessibility for all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, making streets more welcoming.

E. Jones Avenue & Wait Avenue Roadway Improvement

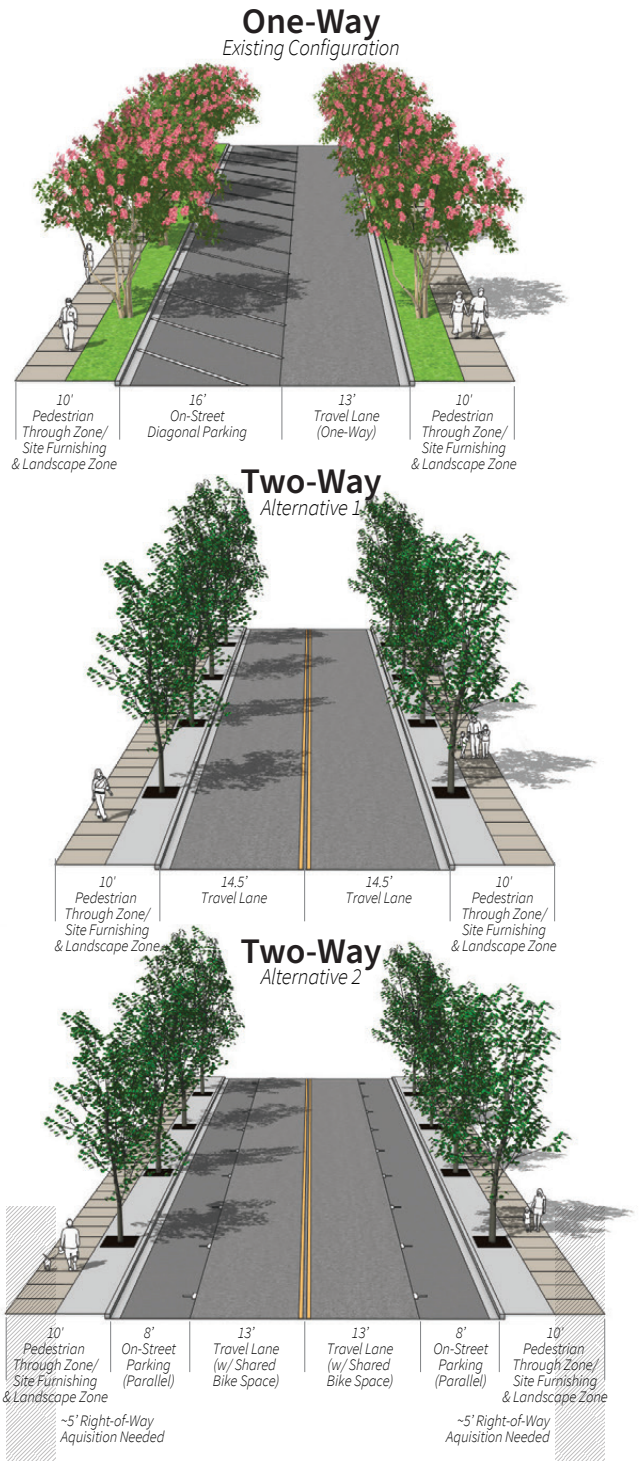
The existing one-way circulation pattern for E. Jones Avenue and Wait Avenue should be reconfigured to better facilitate Downtown traffic patterns along S. White Street and for future development. Reconfiguration can occur in two ways.

Alternative 1

Convert the streets into a two-way pattern. This alternative would not require substantial changes to current road dimensions or impact the existing property lines.

Alternative 2

Convert the streets to two-way, increase the sidewalk width, and incorporate on-street parallel parking. This alternative would require right-of-way acquisition to accommodate all the elements identified in the graphic to the right.



Placemaking

Placemaking refers to the process of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. It involves designing and managing spaces that are not only functional, but also engaging, vibrant, and reflective of the community's identity and values. Placemaking emphasizes the importance of the human experience in the built environment, aiming to create places where people want to live, work, and spend time.

Environmental Graphics

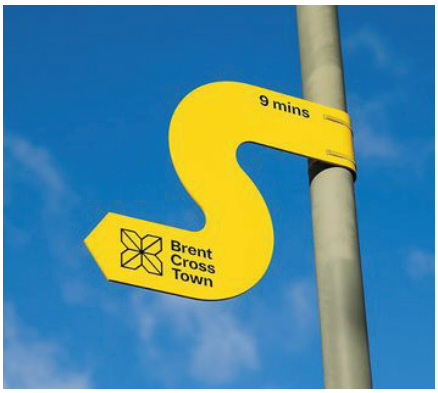
Environmental graphic design — sometimes known as experiential graphic design — incorporates branding and signage to enhance placemaking and create a physical space that people can connect to.

Branding

Branding is the strategic process of developing a unique identity and image for a town. The unique brand helps to distinguish a town from other places; attract tourists, residents and businesses; and foster local pride This involves creating a cohesive visual and narrative identity that reflects the town's unique characteristics, culture, history, and aspirations. Elements of town branding can include logos, slogans, marketing campaigns, and consistent messaging across various platforms. Effective Town branding enhances a town's visibility, supports economic development, and strengthens community engagement by highlighting what makes the town special and attractive to visit and locate a business.

Recommendations:

- Continue to encourage local businesses to adopt and reinforce the Downtown brand in their own marketing efforts by providing branding toolkits with logos, color schemes, and messaging guidelines to ensure consistency.



Approach Routes

Approach routes are how residents, visitors, and commuters navigate major arterials, collectors, local streets, and public transit lines to converge toward Downtown. Effective approach routes not only facilitate smooth transportation, but also set the tone for the Downtown experience, contributing to its economic vitality and overall appeal. Approach routes should implement clear signage, attractive landscaping, and well-maintained infrastructure to create a welcoming entry experience.

Recommendations:

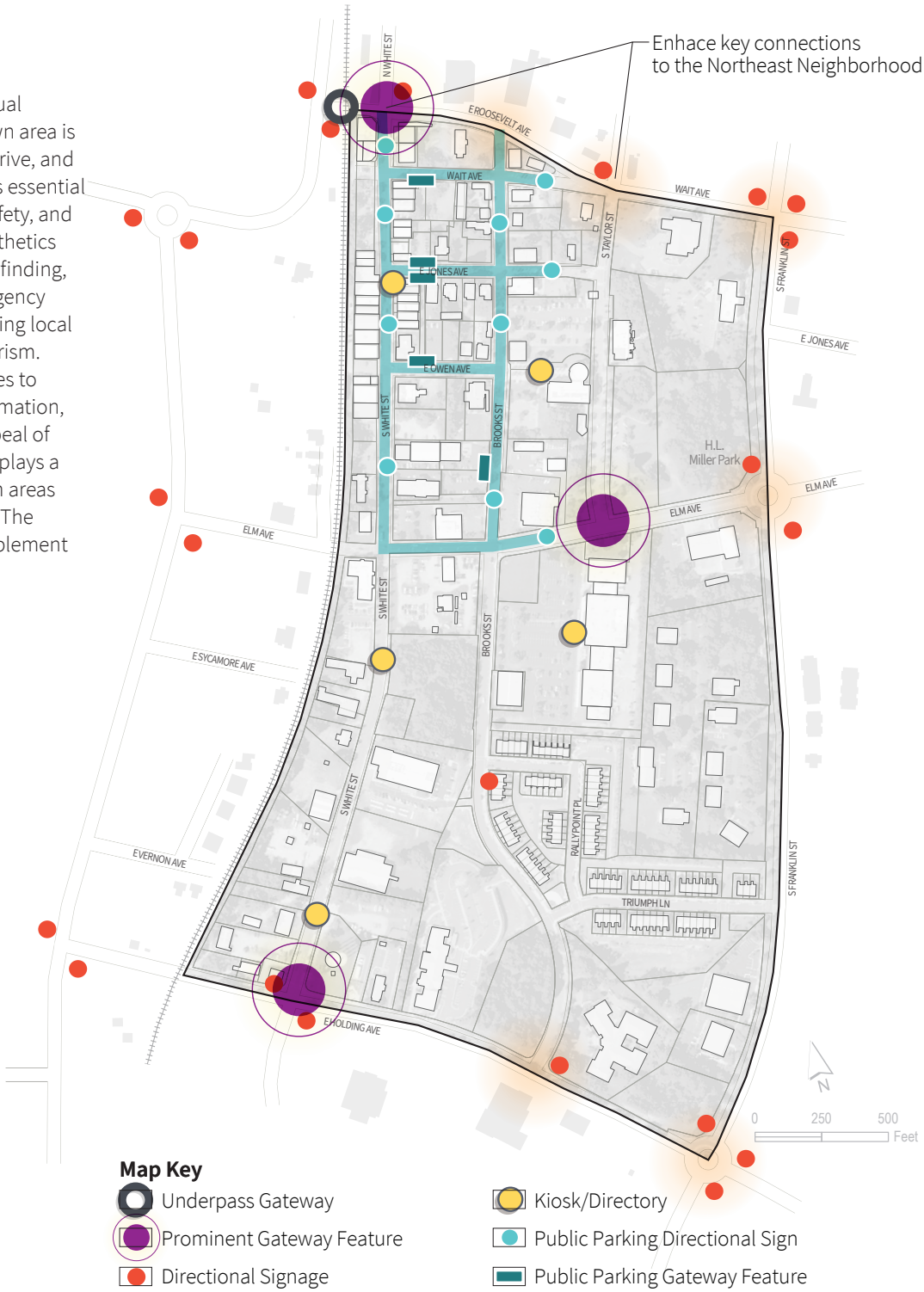
- Directional signage should be placed on the major corridors such as Dr. Calvin Jones Highway, US Route 1, Durham Road, and N. White Street.
- Directional signage should be placed on the collector/local streets such as Franklin Street, Wait Avenue, Main Street, and N. White Street.
- Directional signage should be placed within nearby neighborhoods to direct people to and from Downtown.

Map Key

- Arterial Road Approach Route
- Collector Road Approach Route
- Key Intersection
- Downtown Signage

Signage

Signage should provide the visual confirmation that the Downtown area is a great place to walk, bicycle, drive, and use transit. Adequate signage is essential for guiding people, ensuring safety, and enhancing the identity and aesthetics of Downtown. It helps with wayfinding, traffic management, and emergency information, while also promoting local businesses and supporting tourism. Additionally, signage contributes to branding, provides public information, and can improve the visual appeal of public spaces. Overall, signage plays a significant role in making urban areas functional, safe, and attractive. The adjacent map is meant to complement the Town's Wayfinding Plan.



Gateways

Gateways can signify to users that they are entering a vibrant downtown and encourage people to explore. Gateways vary in size based on their proximity to hubs of activity in downtown and connections outside downtown. Gateways should be incorporated at strategic locations, establishing downtown Wake Forest as a distinct destination. Wake Forest can enhance Downtown connectivity by establishing a Southern Gateway and revitalizing the existing north and east gateways. These underperforming entrances hold great potential for improvement. Upgrading them, along with adding the Southern Gateway, will create a more balanced and inviting access system, strengthening Downtown's cohesion and accessibility. This initiative aims to welcome visitors from surrounding neighborhoods and link to key thoroughfares, transforming entry points into vibrant spaces that reflect the Town's character and reinforce Downtown as a bustling community hub.

Directional Signage

Directional signage offers guidance to drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians pointing towards Downtown. Existing directional signage is limited, and community members noted the difficulty in finding Downtown without prior knowledge of its location. As people enter Downtown, directional signage is needed again to provide clear guidance by indicating routes, locations, or points of interest, helping pedestrians and drivers navigate efficiently within urban areas.

Public Parking

Clear signage is necessary for parking lots and future public parking structures to indicate they are open to the public. Additionally, it is worth considering the use of parking counters to display the number of available parking spots.

Regulatory Signage

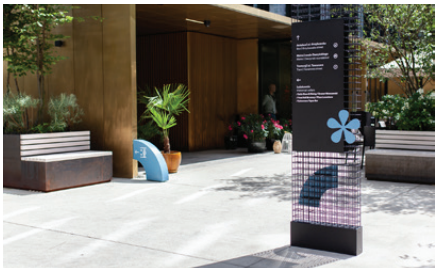
Regulatory signage is a proactive form of wayfinding. It is focused on safety and liability concerns and sets boundaries — what is and is not acceptable in local facilities. It establishes and reinforces rules, safety standards, and privacy expectations. Signage should be consistent, easily accessible, and clearly visible.

Kiosks & Directories

Kiosks and directories convey information, advertisements, or public messages, enhancing communication and visual appeal in urban environments. Kiosks and directories should be strategically located throughout Downtown to assist pedestrians. Kiosks and directories should be consistent with branding efforts.

Recommendations:

- Consider developing specialized street name blades for Downtown with the Downtown logo and colors scheme.
- Utilize signage to direct drivers to future parking structures consistent with the Wayfinding Plan's style and recommendations.
- Kiosks/directories should be placed in strategic areas of Downtown to promote walkability and support pedestrians.
- Parking counters should be utilized in future parking structures.



Public Art

Public art enriches the cultural and aesthetic appeal of communities. It turns ordinary spaces into dynamic, engaging environments, helping to build a strong sense of identity and pride among residents. Public art can spark thought, inspire creativity, and mirror the community's history and values. Additionally, it encourages social interaction and boosts tourism, contributing to the local economy. Various forms of public art include murals, sculptures, installations, street art, functional art, interactive art, digital and light art, performance art, and memorials and monuments. Recommended locations for public art in Downtown include S. White Street, the northern half of Brooks Street, and Elm Avenue.

Recommendations:

- Encourage capital improvement and development projects to integrate public art into the design of public streetscape elements (e.g. paving, street furniture, transit shelters, lighting, etc.)
- Locate public art in areas where it can be viewed and enjoyed by a large number of people, including sidewalks, intersections, plazas, and medians.
- Three-dimensional installations that occur within the public right-of-way should not obstruct pedestrian circulation, and should be considered in the same manner as other street furnishings.
- Engage local Wake Forest artists in the creation of public art installations.

Railroad Viaduct

Throughout outreach, community members consistently referenced the unattractiveness of the viaduct. Participants wanted to see improvement of the design and appearance of the underpass. The railroad viaduct presents a unique gateway and placemaking opportunity. As a main entrance into Downtown it should be improved to provide an inviting entrance to Downtown.

Recommendations:

- Commission murals that reflect the cultural heritage, natural beauty, and community values of Wake Forest.
- Consider commissioning a rotating mural program where the underpass is repainted throughout the year to feature multiple designs and exhibits.
- Engage local artists to create works that resonate with residents and visitors alike, celebrating the Town's history and identity.
- Consider incorporating interactive elements, such as QR codes that link to information about the art or historical context, enhancing the educational and cultural value of the murals.
- Install energy-efficient LED lighting that highlights architectural features of the viaduct, creating a striking visual effect at night.
- Incorporate historical plaques or interpretive signage that tells the story of the viaducts and their role in Wake Forest's development.

Hamburger Square Railroad Bridge Beautification Project

The Hamburger Square railroad bridge in Greensboro, NC, is undergoing a beautification project. The bridge is being painted Greensboro Green with gold and tan accents to match the City's logo and highlight its architectural elements. The project is a collaboration between the City of Greensboro and the nonprofit Greensboro Beautiful, which contributed $6,000 for the accents. The City is also planning a $344,000 beautification project for Hamburger Square. The rejuvenation aims to enhance safety, promote pedestrian crossing, and support Downtown development.

Public Gathering Places

Public gathering places are designed for social, cultural, or recreational activities, including parks, plazas, town squares, and community centers. These spaces foster community interaction and engagement by providing accessible, welcoming areas equipped with amenities like seating, greenery, and lighting. They serve as venues for events, promote social cohesion, and enhance quality of life by offering spaces for relaxation, entertainment, and connection.

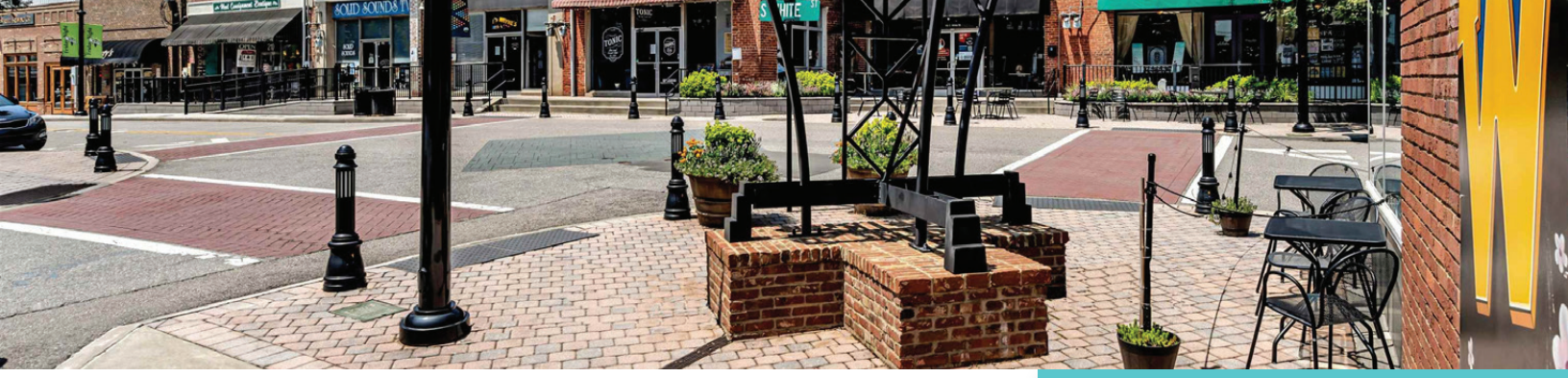
Public gathering places also benefit communities through social interaction, cultural expression, recreation, economic boosts, civic engagement, aesthetic appeal, environmental advantages, and improved health and wellness.

Places for Gathering

Creating gathering spaces such as central squares, fountains, intimate courtyards, and urban parks is useful for fostering social connections and enhancing urban life. These spaces can serve as focal points for community interaction, offering a break from continuous street corridors and dense architecture, while providing a sense of openness. Gathering places also support public events and casual leisure, attracting visitors and increasing foot traffic, which benefits local businesses. The Town should encourage developers to integrate vibrant public spaces into future developments, enhancing the connection between private properties and the streetscape for a more cohesive Downtown experience.

Pocket Plazas & Informal Seating

Pocket plazas play a crucial role in enriching the urban landscape. Positioned strategically at activity centers, major pedestrian circulation routes, and as part of new development, these small spaces encourage community engagement and social interaction. They are designed primarily for passive gathering, civic purposes, and commercial activities, often characterized by a mix of hardscape and green space. Pocket plazas provide venues for public events, art displays, or simply spaces for relaxation and people-watching. Pocket plazas break up the urban density, offering accessible and inviting areas that can foster a sense of community and enhance the overall quality of urban life.



Places for Movement

Places for movement are spaces intentionally designed to accommodate pedestrian movement and connection. Strategically placed, places for movement can enhance the overall walkability and connectivity of Downtown. Thoughtful placement of these places for movement can enrich the pedestrian experience, making key spaces Downtown more functional and enjoyable. Examples of this concept include the proposed pedestrian cut-through from the mobility hub to the future parking deck in the Brook Street and E. Jones Avenue catalyst site which can be found in the subsequent chapter.

Spaces for Play

Play areas are components of a great public realm, especially for families and children. These spaces offer opportunities for recreation, physical activity, and socialization, contributing to the overall health and well-being of residents and visitors. Play areas provide children with safe and engaging environments where they can develop physical skills, creativity, and social connections. Play areas should be programmed to offer activities to adults as well, be it a cafe/bar, comfortable seating or free Wi-Fi.

H.L. Miller Park

H.L. Miller Park is the only park space that is currently existing in Downtown Wake Forest. It is a two-acre wooded park located at the northwest corner of Elm Avenue and S. Franklin Street, behind the Wake Forest Town Hall.

There is an opportunity to enhance the park by upgrading playground equipment, adding or refurbishing walking and biking trails, installing new seating and picnic areas, and improving landscaping with trees, gardens, and green spaces. Lighting and security measures can be enhanced to improve safety, while amenities like restrooms, water fountains, and sports facilities can be updated or added.

Events

The Town has pride in the events and attractions that bring people to Downtown. The Town calendar and the website news and updates page are regularly updated to promote and market the various concerts, festivals, celebrations, markets, and other outdoor events that take place throughout the Town. Some of the largest community events take place Downtown, including Friday Night on White and Meet in the Street, drawing thousands of people to Downtown every year.

During outreach, participants were complimentary of the many events held Downtown. However, participants expressed a desire for more events throughout the year. Building off the success of the Lighting of Wake Forest, activities such as holiday lights on buildings, illuminated art walks, ice skating, or winter-themed pop-up bars and restaurants could be utilized to bring more people Downtown during the winter months.

24 Hour Town

A 24-hour town revitalizes downtowns by promoting mixed-use developments and continuous activity beyond traditional business hours. This approach boosts the nighttime economy, enhances safety, and creates a more inclusive environment. Greenville, SC, employed this concept by increasing downtown housing, hosting round-the-clock events, improving lighting, expanding sidewalks, and enhancing public transportation. These strategies have transformed Greenville into a lively, 24-hour city, improving residents' quality of life and attracting visitors.

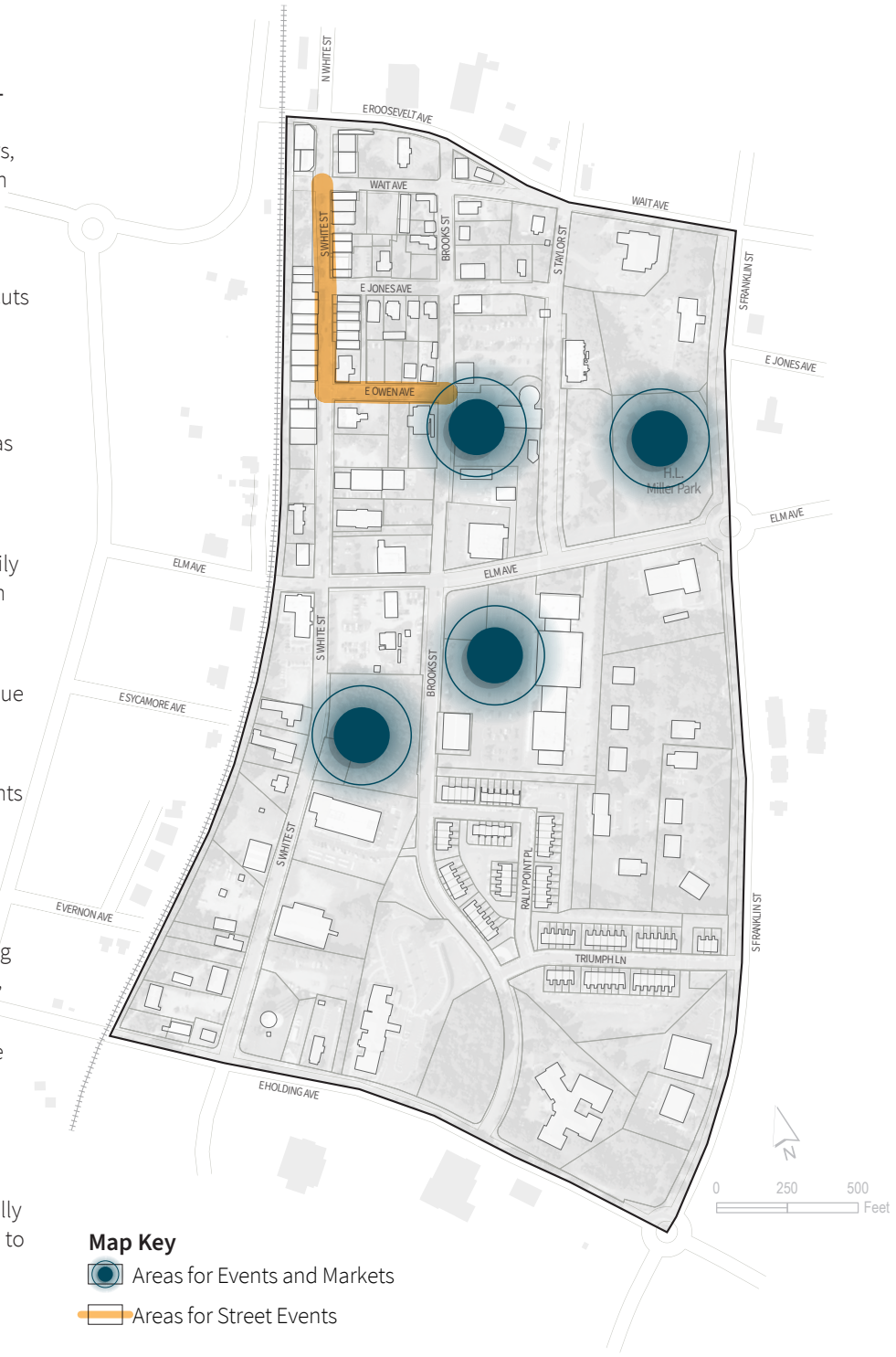
E. Owen Avenue

DOWNTOWN EVENT STREET

To accommodate foot traffic and vendors, the Town utilizes S. White Street, E. Owen Avenue, and Brooks Street for booths, stages, food trucks, and other event activities. Cited as the "event street," E. Owen Avenue was retrofitted with curb cuts and additional outlets to accommodate vendors during these events. While the updates are useful for the various celebrations, the streetscape should be constructed to accommodate daily use as well.

Recommendations:

- Implement clear signage to help easily navigate the area reducing confusion and improving the overall event experience.
- Host street-wide events on Elm Avenue and utilize H.L. Miller Park for other gatherings.
- Incorporate streetscape improvements discussed earlier in this chapter to ensure E. Owen Avenue matches the streetscape throughout Downtown.
- Conduct regular public surveys to identify and address issues impacting the operation of events and festivals, ensuring continuous improvement.
- Explore opportunities to create more year-round outdoor events to take advantage of the region's agreeable climate.
- Enhance safety and security by providing adequate lighting, especially in areas where events occur at night, to make attendees feel comfortable.
- Explore the possibility of installing stand-alone public restrooms.



6 Redevelopment Opportunities

This chapter identifies redevelopment opportunities throughout Downtown. The Town should use the following recommendations to evaluate development proposals to ensure they align with the vision and goals of the Downtown Plan.

Redevelopment Opportunities

There are several approaches to improve the development pattern in Downtown Wake Forest, including investing in storefronts and building facades, transforming underutilized surface parking lots, developing vacant wooded lots, and reimagining distressed buildings and properties. The following section has been divided into four categories including strategic investment, parking lot redevelopment, vacant lot development, and underperforming building and/or lot redevelopment.

The following section identifies several redevelopment opportunities comprised of vacant parcels, underutilized properties, and/or surface parking lots where redevelopment would have a significant positive effect on the appearance and functionality of the surrounding area. The Town should actively work with property owners and developers to position these identified sites for new development.

Anticipate Redevelopment

It is important to note that redevelopment may occur at any time on properties not identified on the opportunity sites map or discussed in this section. The recommendations included in this section reflect desired redevelopment outcomes at the time of Plan adoption. The recommendations are flexible and should be considered in part with all other Plan goals and objectives.

Strategic Investment

These properties offer opportunities for redevelopment and investment due to their aesthetic appeal, architectural significance, and/or functionality. The Town should work with property owners and business operators to activate vacant storefronts, enhance outdated or deteriorating façades, and explore adaptive reuse where feasible.

Parking Lot Redevelopment

Surface parking lots in Downtown represent potential redevelopment opportunities and should be planned for accordingly. Redevelopment should only be considered if parking spaces can be accommodated elsewhere or if it is determined that they are no longer needed.

Vacant Lot Development

These properties include parcels were no development has occurred. These greenfield opportunities are rare in Downtown. The Town should work with property owners to encourage development consistent with the recommendations found in the Opportunity Site section of the Plan.

Underperforming Building and/or Lot Redevelopment

These sites include underperforming buildings and/or lots that are likely to redevelop to better leverage their value and contribution to Downtown. The Town should work with property owners and developers as proposals come forward to position these sites for redevelopment.

Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Site

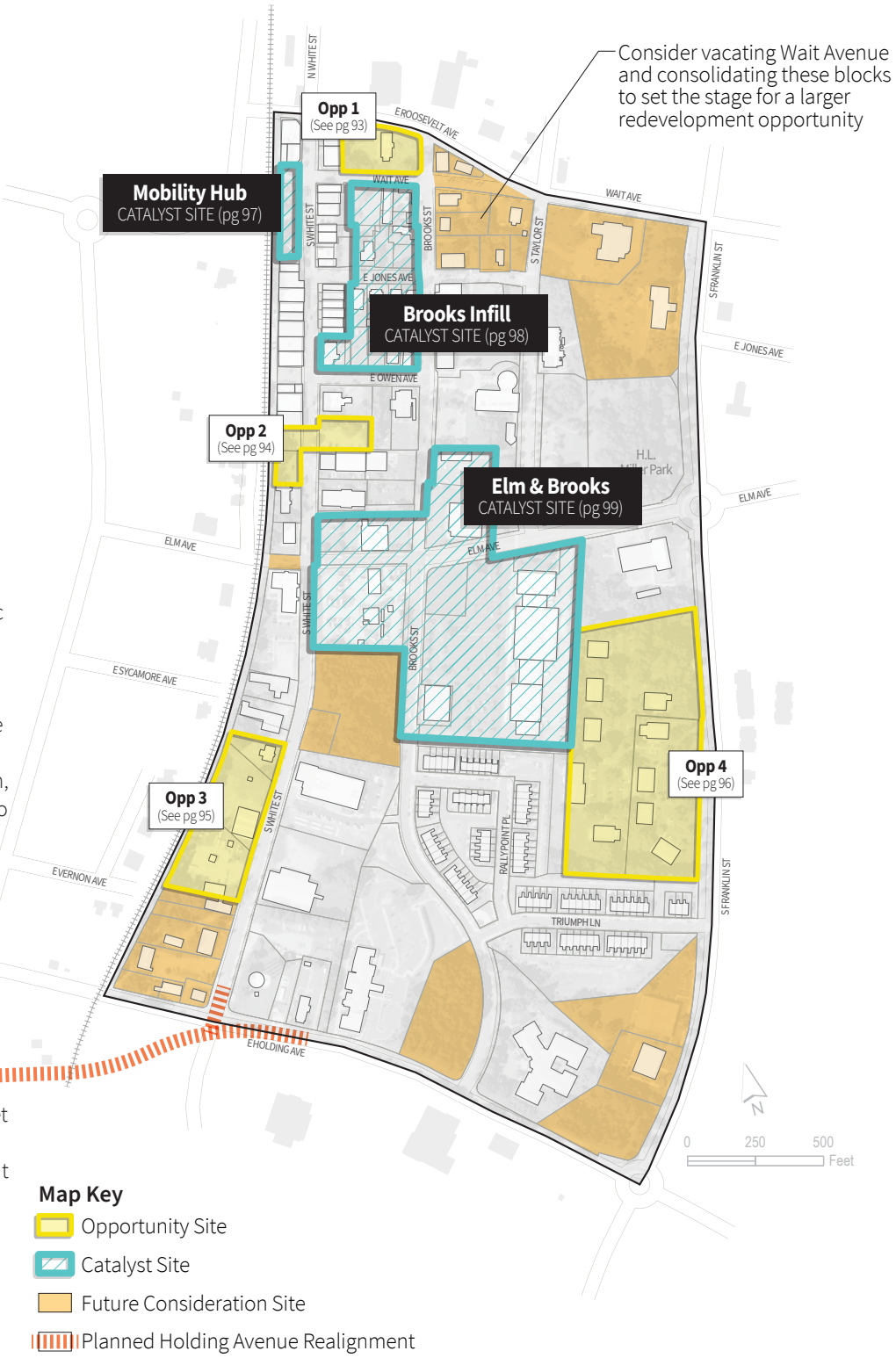
Opportunity sites are comprised of vacant parcels, underutilized properties, and/or surface parking lots where redevelopment would have a significant positive effect on the appearance and functionality of the surrounding area. New development on these properties should align with the recommendations outlined in the Functional Subarea section (see pg 26).

Catalyst Site

Catalyst sites highlight Downtown Wake Forest's most significant opportunities for redevelopment. The transformation of these properties could have a catalytic impact on surrounding development—spurring future reinvestment and enhancement. The identified catalyst sites should serve as a "model" for future redevelopment throughout Downtown, taking into consideration uses, built form, parking, connectivity, and transitions into surrounding neighborhoods.

Future Consideration Site

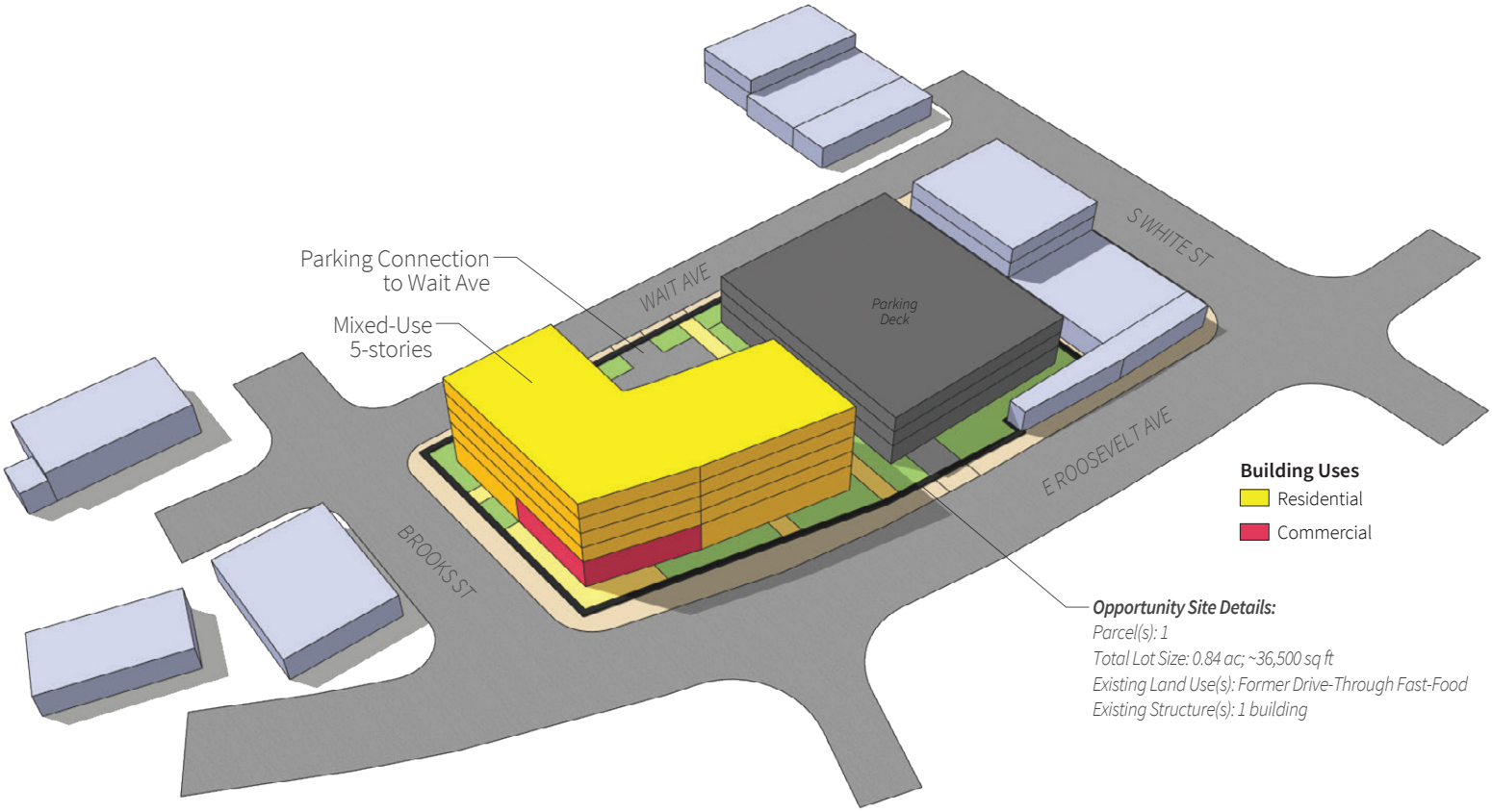
Future consideration sites include properties not likely to be redeveloped within the lifespan of the current Downtown Plan. These sites may currently be occupied by long-standing businesses, under long-term ownership, or simply not aligned with current market trends. These sites should remain on the Town's radar for potential redevelopment opportunities if circumstances change through shifts in market demand, changes in property ownership, and/or broader economic trends.



Downtown Immersive 3D Model

As part of the Downtown planning process, the project team developed an immersive digital twin of Downtown Wake Forest to visualize and assess potential Plan recommendations. The immersive digital twin was developed to visualize potential changes to design standards and building heights within the defined study area—spanning Roosevelt Avenue to Taylor Street, and Elm Avenue to the railroad. Leveraging the Town's existing GIS information, the team's approach incorporated tools including ArcGIS Pro, ArcGIS CityEngine, Epic's Unreal Gaming Engine, and other advanced 3D modeling applications, to construct a detailed digital representation of the Downtown terrain and topography.

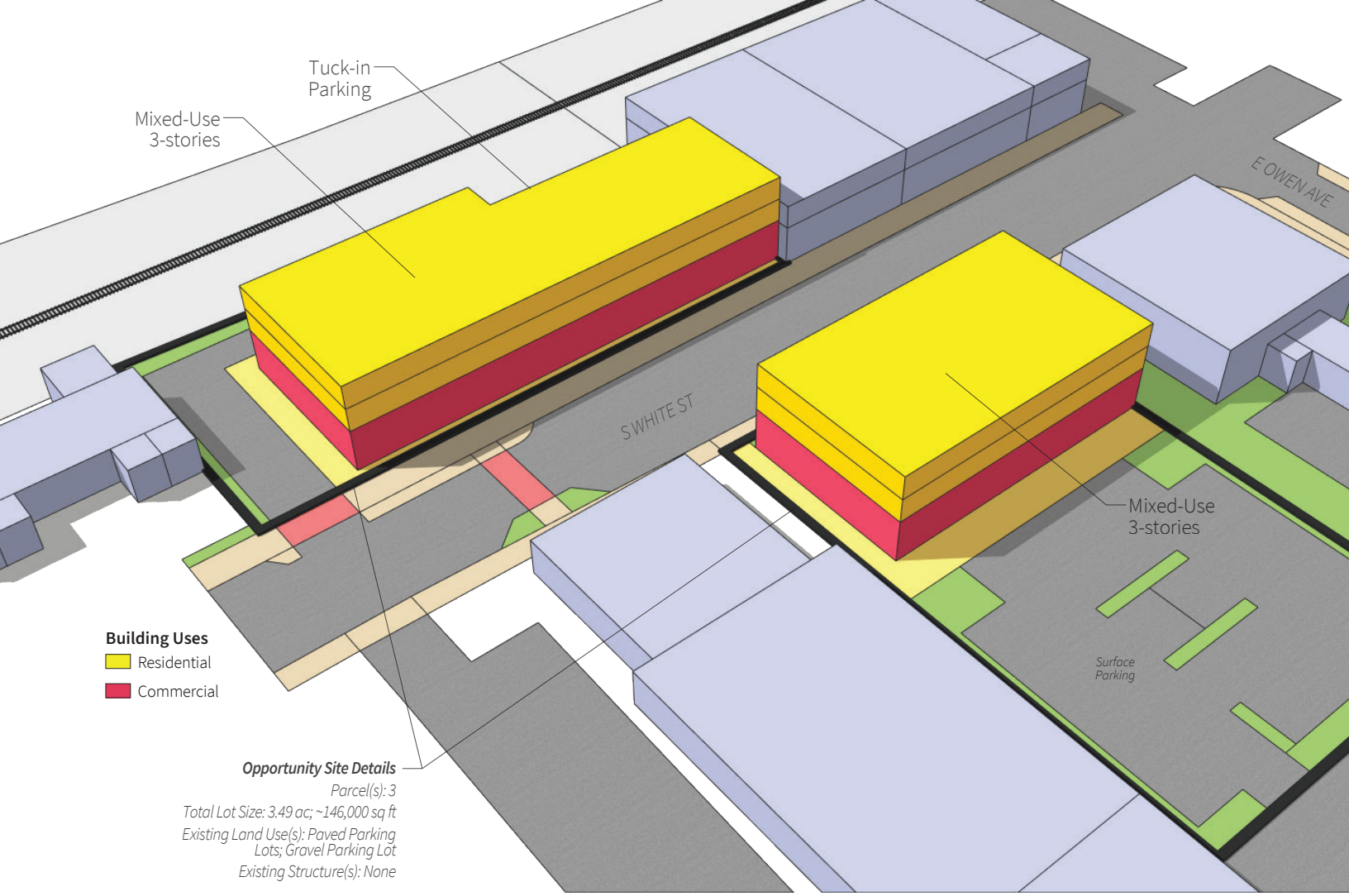
This tool was used during the Community Open House to allow users to navigate the digital environment in a third-person view, offering a tangible sense of scale and immersion. Participants were able to interact with the model, toggle redevelopment options and building heights, and provide feedback directly with the project team.



216 E. Roosevelt Avenue

OPPORTUNITY SITE #1

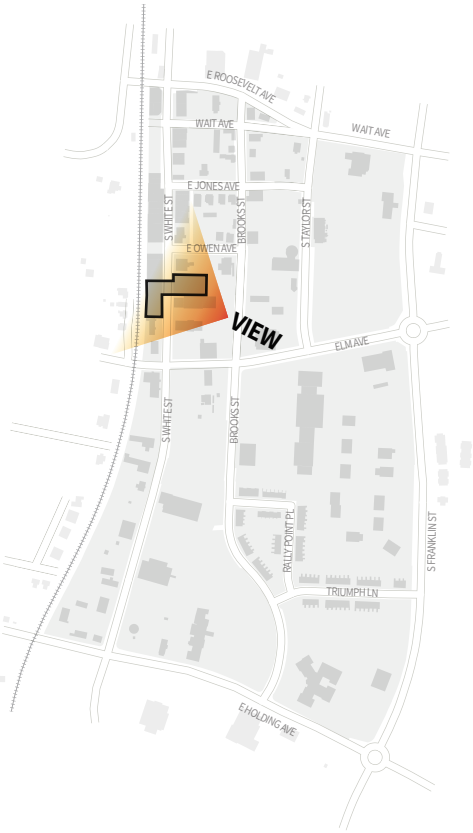
This site is located in the **Brooks Street Infill** functional subarea. Formerly a drive-through fast-food restaurant, this site presents challenges due to significant grade changes between Roosevelt Avenue and Wait Avenue. The recommended redevelopment for this site is a single mixed-use building with ground-floor retail, restaurant, or service uses fronting Roosevelt Avenue and residential units on the upper floors. To enhance connectivity and accessibility, Wait Avenue should be converted from a one-way to a two-way street, with angled on-street parking converted to parallel parking as part of a comprehensive streetscape redesign. This redesign should incorporate wider sidewalks, enhanced landscaping, and improved traffic calming measures such as mid-block crossings, curb extensions, and crosswalks. Surface parking should be provided on-site.

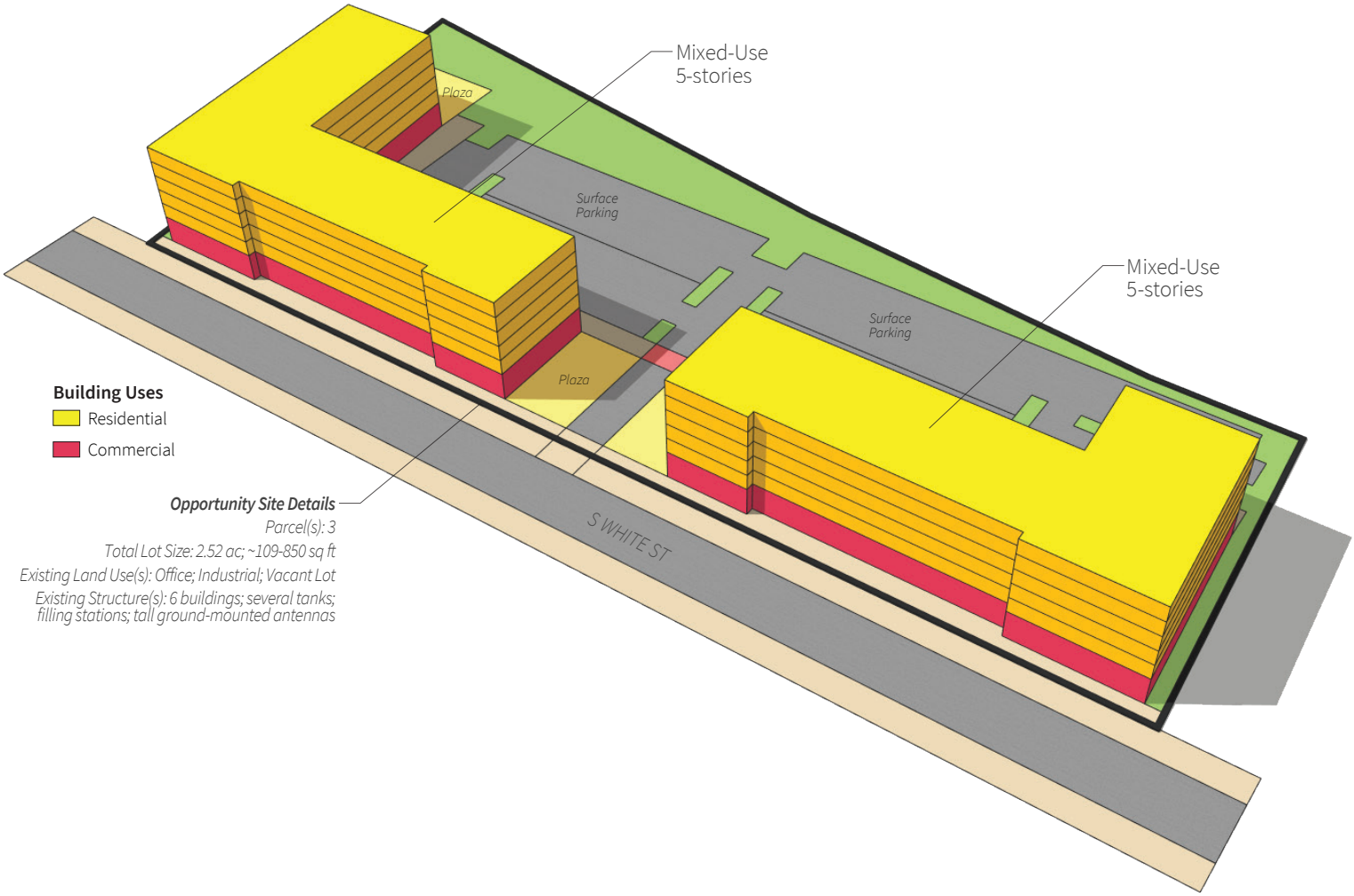


310-352 S. White Street

OPPORTUNITY SITE #2

This site is located in the **Brooks Street Infill** and **White Street Extension** functional subareas. This site is an ideal opportunity for infill development aimed at restoring the continuity of the building streetwall along S. White Street. Redevelopment should incorporate retail, restaurant/bar, and service uses on the ground-floor, with residential and/or office spaces on the upper-floors, ensuring a vibrant mix of activities that contribute to the area's vitality. New construction should be designed to complement the architectural character of buildings within the Historic White Street functional subarea, preserving the historic integrity and enhancing the cohesive aesthetic of the downtown environment. Given the shallow lot depth along the railroad, creative solutions for on-site parking are essential, such as tuck-under parking, rear-access parking, and shared parking agreements.

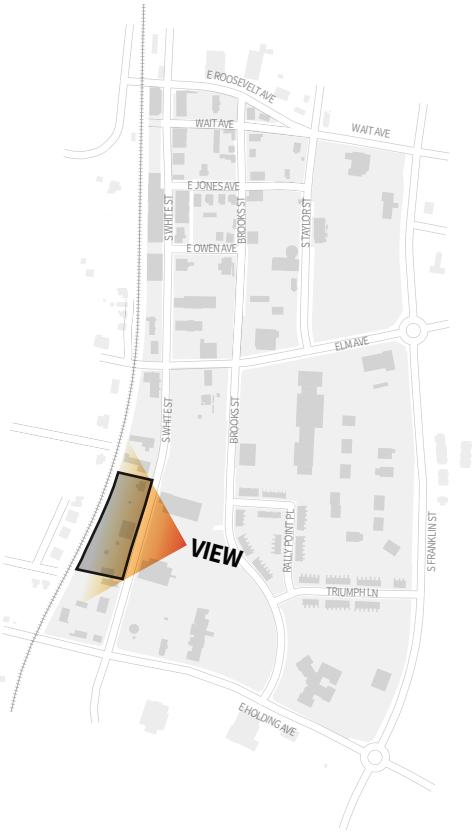


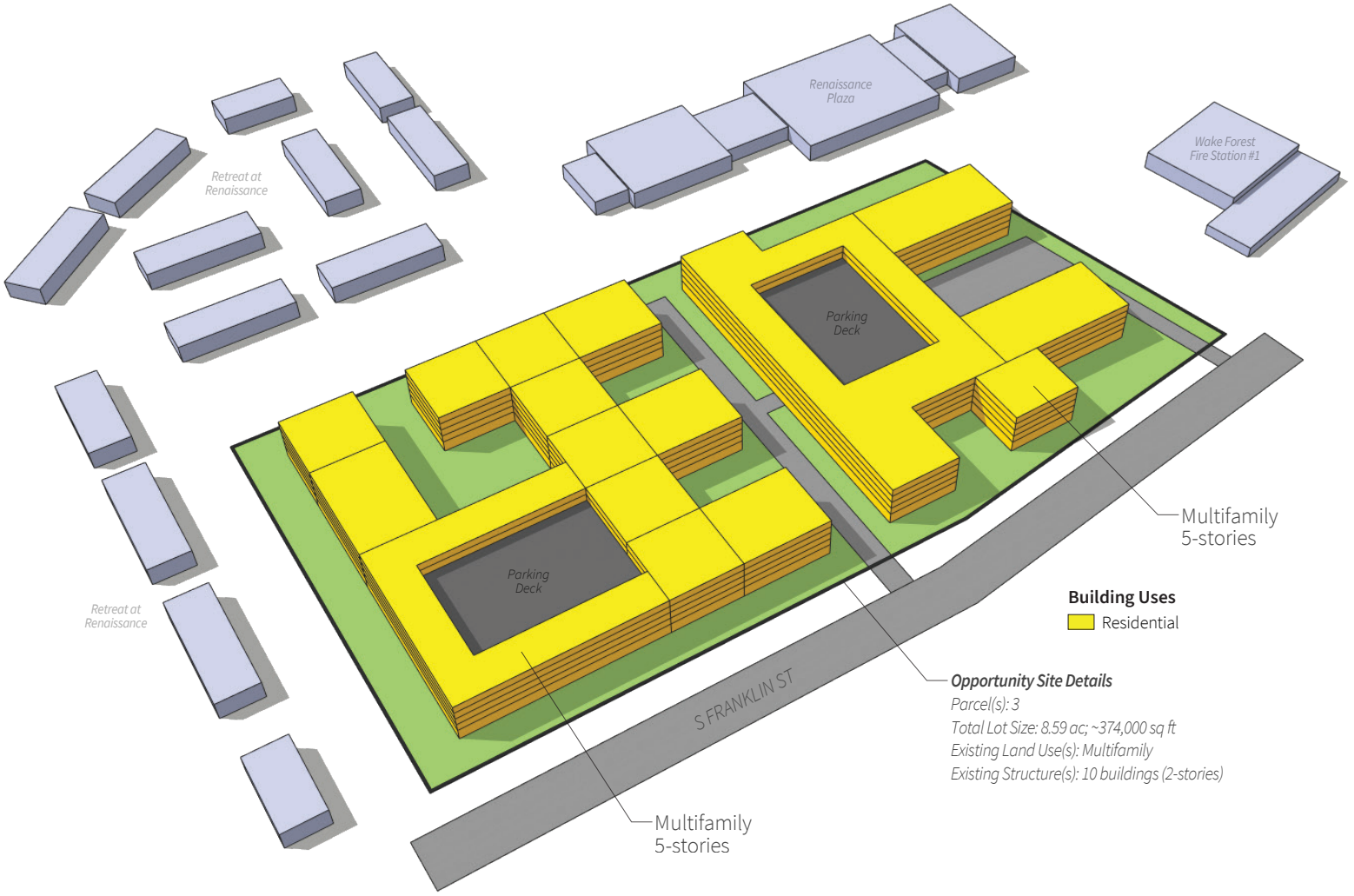


508 - 534 S. White Street

OPPORTUNITY SITE #3

This site is located in the **White Street Extension** functional subarea. This site currently includes a mix of office and industrial buildings, storage tanks, filling stations, and ground-mounted antennas, and has been occupied by long-standing establishments adjacent to the "traditional main street area" of Downtown Wake Forest. As development pressures and market trends have expanded south along S. White Street, these properties have become prime candidates for redevelopment. This shift presents an ideal chance to transform this site into uses and buildings more compatible with the **Historic White Street** functional subarea. Redevelopment should incorporate a mix of retail, restaurant/bar, entertainment, and service uses on the ground-floor, complemented by residential units on the upper-floors. This could revitalize the area and integrating it more cohesively with Historic White Street.

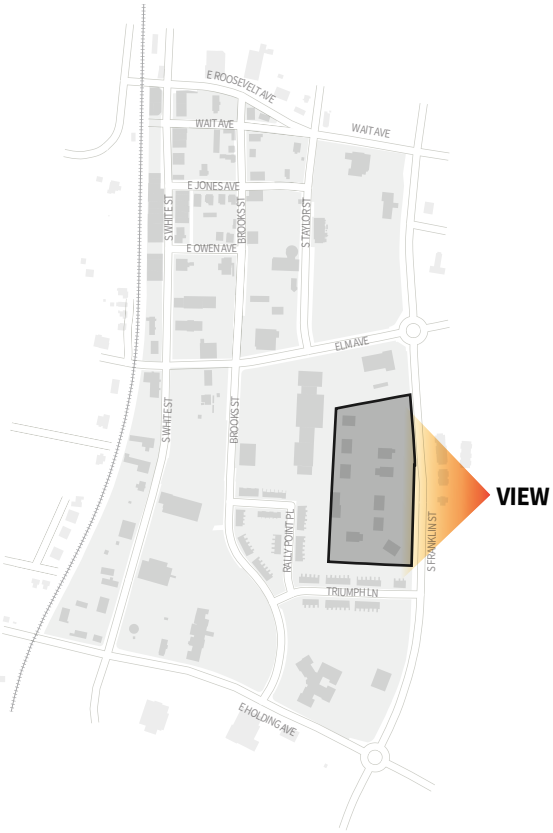


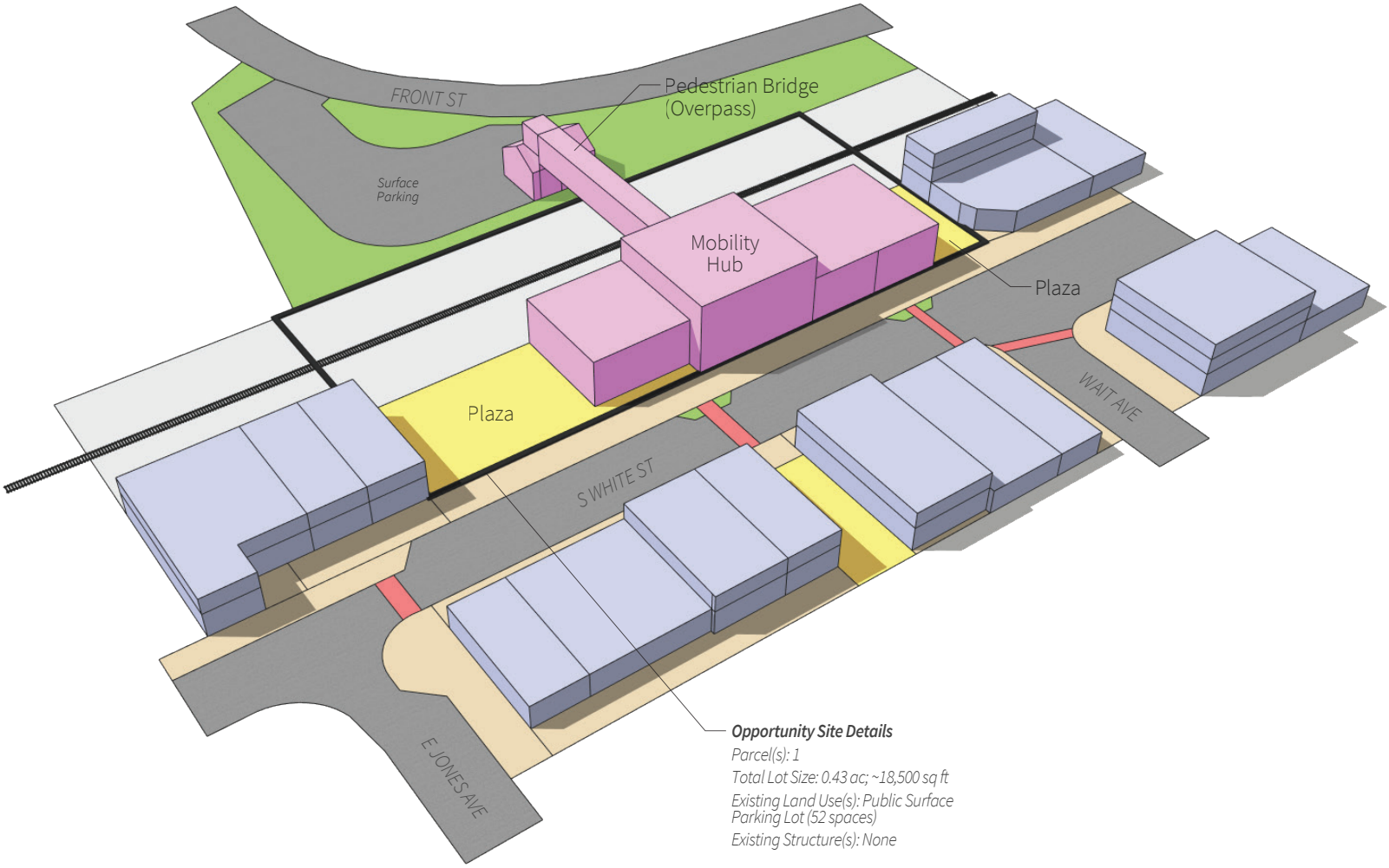


320 & 352 S. Franklin Street

OPPORTUNITY SITE #4

This site is located in the **Southeast Transition** functional subarea. The Forest Ridge apartments, constructed in 1981, includes 88 garden-style apartment units on an 8.59-acre site. The existing suburban-style design includes 2-story buildings with large setbacks and excessive surface parking lots. This low-density multifamily type is not consistent with the housing options needed to support a growing and thriving Downtown. Presently, the site's density is roughly 10 dwelling units per acre. To support increased density, new multifamily buildings could be up to 5-stories with a range of 25-40 dwelling units per acre. While this area may not see redevelopment within the lifespan of the current Downtown Plan, should market conditions evolve to make this site a viable candidate for redevelopment, the Town should advocate for multifamily development that aligns with the denser, transit-supportive development types recommended in other redevelopment sites throughout Downtown.

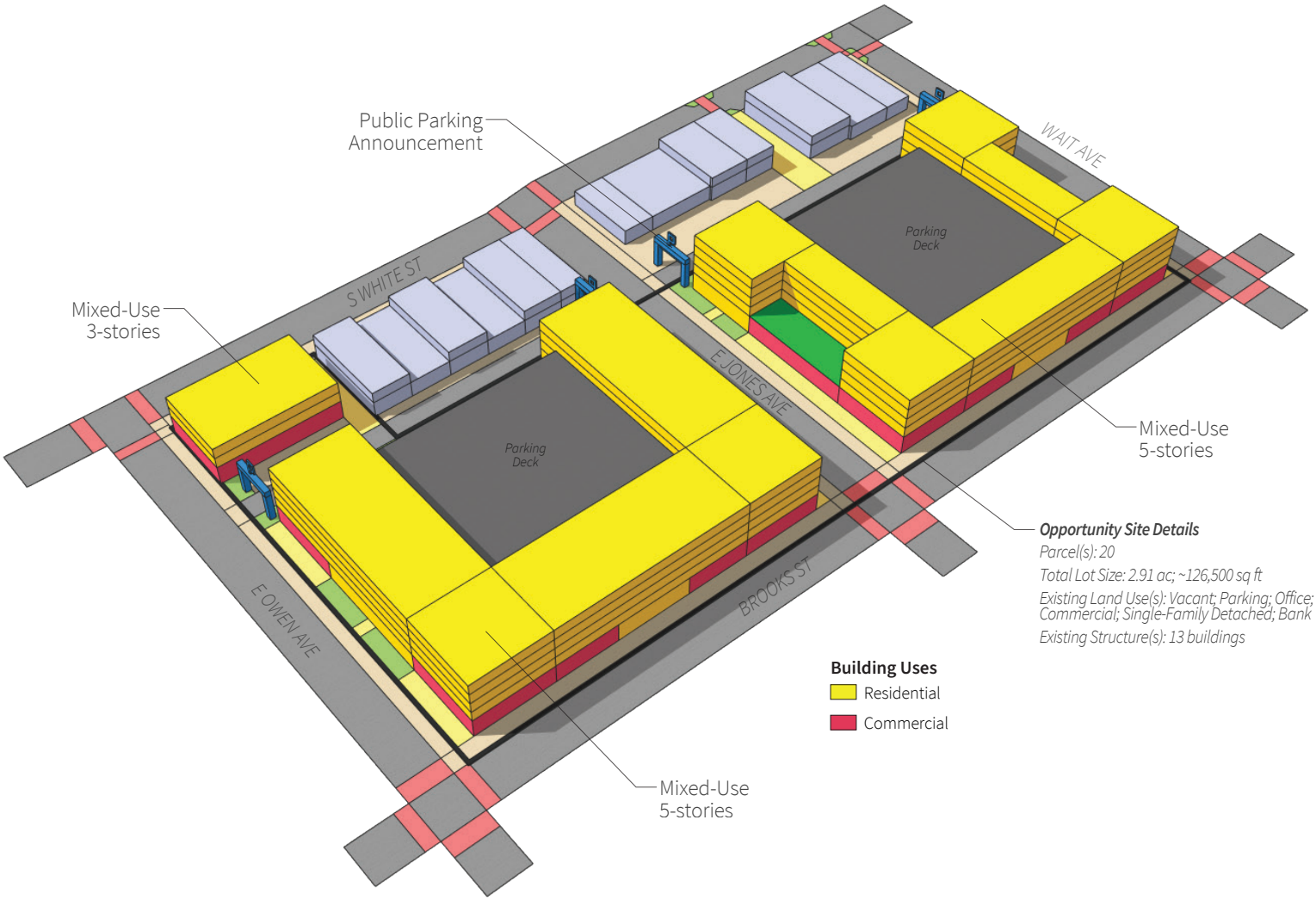




Future Mobility Hub
120 S. White Street

CATALYST SITE

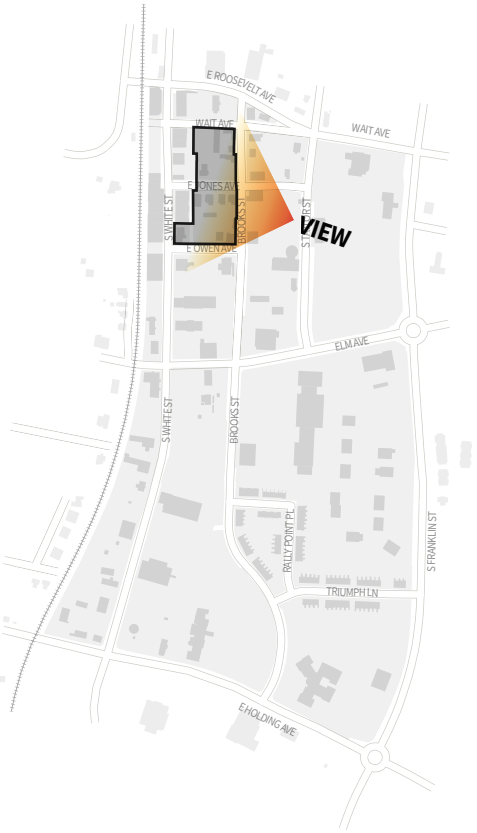
This catalyst site is located in the **Historic White Street** functional subarea. This site includes the Town-owned public surface parking lot. This surface parking lot has been identified by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) as the preferred future location to construct a new mobility hub. NCDOT has hosted a series of open houses and design workshops to solicit feedback from the public on how this new mobility hub should look to ensure the proposed design and programming fit well into the surrounding area. The public provided input on potential parking and drop-off strategies to maximize accessibility and convenience, while balancing considerations for the historic area's integrity. The Town should continue to advocate for the construction of the S-Line Mobility Hub to support the growth of freight and passenger rail services between Richmond, VA, and Raleigh, NC. Town staff will continue to update the Downtown Plan's polices and recommendations as more information is provided by additional studies and reports. Redevelopment of the site should integrate various transit-supportive elements, including bicycle, electric vehicle charging stations, a mini park or plaza for waiting areas, and designated pick-up and drop-off locations for ride-share services.

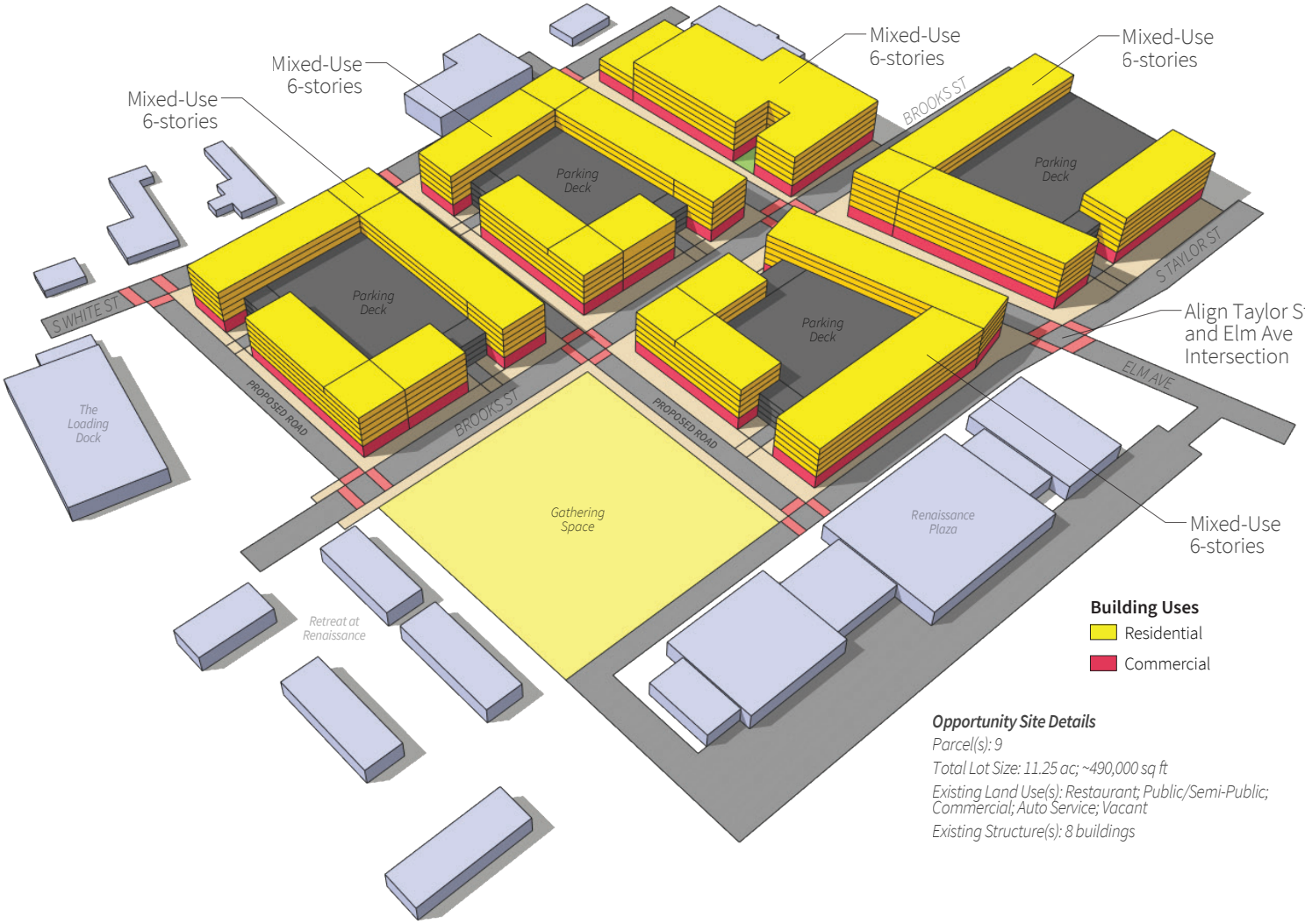


Brooks Street & E. Jones Avenue

CATALYST SITE

This catalyst site is located in the **Brooks Street Infill** functional subarea. This catalyst site is well positioned for multifamily development designed to complement the character and style of buildings along S. White Street while growing the residential population of Downtown Wake Forest. The catalyst site should predominantly feature multifamily residential uses with opportunities to integrate retail, restaurant/bar, and service uses on the ground-floor at strategic intersections. The multifamily buildings should be designed to step down with the existing topography, utilizing the natural grade change to minimize their visibility from S. White Street. Parking should be integrated into the building's design, ensuring minimal visibility from the public right-of-way. Additionally, the multi-story parking deck should accommodate public parking spaces to support businesses in the Historic White Street functional subarea. To ensure easy navigation, directional signage should be prominently placed, directing shoppers and visitors to the conveniently located public parking within these structures.





Opportunity Site Details

Parcel(s): 9

Total Lot Size: 11.25 ac; ~490,000 sq ft

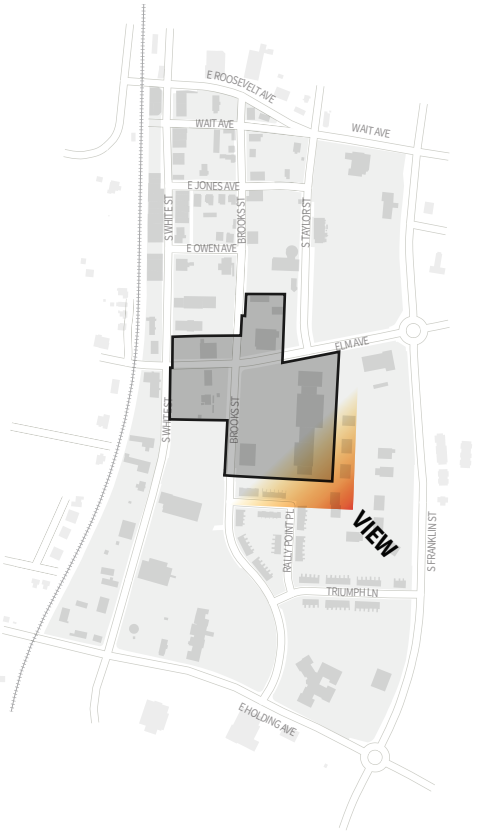
Existing Land Use(s): Restaurant; Public/Semi-Public; Commercial; Auto Service; Vacant

Existing Structure(s): 8 buildings

Elm Avenue & Brooks Street

CATALYST SITE

This catalyst site is located in the **Brooks Street Infill**, **Civic Core**, **Brooks Street/Elm Avenue**, and **White Street Extension** functional subareas. This site embodies the concept of a catalytic opportunity with the potential to transition a once auto-centric node into a walkable, urban mixed-use district. This area offers significant potential to evolve into a walkable, urban mixed-use district with a variety of housing options and increased densities that support a thriving Downtown. Positioned at the base of the hill from the historic core, the site can comfortably accommodate mixed-use buildings and high-density multifamily that complement the existing buildings along S. White Street. Redevelopment should incorporate retail, restaurant/bar, and service uses on the ground-floor, with high-density residential and/or flex office spaces on the upper-floors. This catalyst site is poised to replace the suburban-style model, that is typically not appropriate for downtowns, in a way that is contextually respectful with surrounding uses.




BETTER
TOGETHER
The
LOADING DOCK
COWORKING
OFFICE SUITES
MEETING &
EVENT SPACE

7 Implementation

The implementation process for Downtown Wake Forest has just begun. In many ways, formal adoption of the Wake Forest Downtown Plan is only the first step, not the last. Without continuing action to implement and update the Plan, Town efforts up to this point will have minimal lasting impact. The Wake Forest Downtown Plan sets forth an agreed-upon "road map" for the next twenty years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of Downtown partners, Town staff, business leaders, community organizations, and residents.

Communication with the Public

The Town should continue to regularly communicate development and business activity Downtown to the greater Wake Forest community.

The planning process for the Downtown Plan involved a considerable amount of public outreach and communication. Members of the Wake Forest community remained involved through outreach events, the project website, and interactive tools. Building on these efforts, the Town should ensure that the Plan's major recommendations and overall vision continue to be conveyed to the entire community. This should include regular updates, coverage of major milestones, and providing additional opportunities for residents to voice their opinion. This should be communicated through a variety of outlets including the Town website, newsletter, and social media.

The Town should further develop avenues by which community members can receive information about planning and development, and communicate with local government. This should include methods for residents to supply questions and concerns, with timely Town resolutions or responses. In addition, the Town should continue to provide accessible materials, both online and in print, that simplify and explain regular civic functions. These include informational materials that provide guidance on applying for zoning, building, subdivision, or other development-related permits and approvals.

Daily Use

It is essential that the Downtown Plan be utilized by Town staff, elected officials, and commissions regularly to review and evaluate proposals for improvement and development within the study area.

The Downtown Plan should be used on a regular basis, acting as the official policy guide for land use, development, and reinvestment in Downtown Wake Forest. The Downtown Plan should be regularly consulted by Town staff, the Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and other Advisory Boards to review and evaluate proposals for improvement and development within the study area. It should also be accessible for residents, business owners, and developers to review and utilize as a guide. To further educate the community about the Downtown Plan, the Town should:

- Make the Downtown Plan available online.
- Aid the public in understanding the intent of the Downtown Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other Town proposals, as appropriate.
- Assist the Board of Commissioners and various advisory boards in the administration, interpretation, and application of the Downtown Plan.
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs that may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from the Downtown Plan.

Regular Review and Update

The Downtown Plan itself should be subjected to a monitoring process and be updated periodically to continually reflect local aspirations and opportunities.

The Downtown Plan is not meant to be a static document; it should be monitored and updated on a regular basis. The need for plan updates is the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes, emerging needs, or market shifts since the time of Downtown Plan adoption.

Although a proposal to update the Downtown Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the Town should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Downtown Plan. While an annual review is desirable, the Town should initiate a review of the Downtown Plan at least every two to three years. Ideally, this review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget and Capital Improvement Program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the upcoming commitments for the fiscal year. Routine examination of the Downtown Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Partnerships

For the Downtown Plan to be successful, there must be strong and steady leadership from the Town of Wake Forest supported by partnerships with other public agencies, local institutions, community groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector. Wake Forest already has a wide variety of partnerships, which should be maintained in the future.

Possibilities for new partnerships with organizations and agencies should be identified by the Town to aid implementation. This could include neighboring municipalities, regional and state agencies, neighborhood groups, the local business community, and other groups with a vested interest in Wake Forest.

Town's partners could include:

- **Other governmental and service districts:** depending on site or issue (e.g., North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Wake County)
- **Local Economic Development and Advocacy Organizations:** Engage with local entities like the Greater Wake Forest Area Chamber of Commerce, which are dedicated to economic development and community advocacy.
- **Builders and Developers:** Engage Wake Forest developers in projects aligned with the Downtown Plan's objectives and contribute to the overall enhancement of the study area.
- **Educational Institutions:** Work with the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to facilitate cooperation and coordination for future improvements in and around Downtown.
- **Property Owners and Businesses:** Encourage property owners and businesses in Downtown Wake Forest to invest in property improvements or redevelopment projects that are in harmony with the Downtown Plan's vision and goals.

Strong partnerships among these stakeholders will facilitate the successful implementation of the Plan and the creation of a thriving, vibrant Downtown.

Action Matrix

The Downtown Plan includes numerous policy, project, and strategy recommendations. The following Action Matrix summarizes the key actions the Town can undertake to achieve the community vision. It also establishes the goal alignment and associated time frame. The Town should use the Action Matrix to explore strategic partnerships.

Action Item

Key actions include capital projects, policy or regulatory amendments, or strategies that should be prioritized to lay the foundation for long-term Downtown Plan implementation.

Goal Alignment

Each action item is paired with thematic icons that identify the Plan's goals that it supports. See pg 21 for descriptions of each goal.

Time Frame

Each action has been assigned a general time frame for estimated completion:

- Short-Term = 0-2 years
- Mid-Term = 2-5 years
- Long-Term = 5 years+
- Ongoing

#	Action Item	Goal Alignment	Time Frame
Chapter 3: Land Use & Development			
3-1	Continue to utilize the Demolition of Historic Structure Ordinance to review demolition permits.		Ongoing
3-2	Host yearly historic property owner workshops to inform and educate property owners in the Downtown Historic District of the Historic Tax Credit Program and Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation.		Ongoing
3-3	Consider designating the Downtown Wake Forest Historic District as a local district to provide additional protections for the Downtown buildings.		Mid-Term
3-4	Implement ordinances that are sensitive to historic context to ensure new construction within and around the Downtown historic district is compatible with the character of the district.		Short-Term
3-5	Encourage adaptive reuse practices to transform existing buildings into mixed-use spaces.		Ongoing
3-6	Encourage developers to redevelop vacant or underutilized properties into mixed-use or multifamily uses.		Ongoing
3-7	Incentivize property owners to retrofit buildings to be more energy-efficient and eco-friendly.		Ongoing
3-8	Explore a vacant and neglected nonresidential commercial registry policy and ordinance to discourage vacant buildings and storefronts.		Short-Term
3-9	Utilize updated policies to approve facade grants for empty buildings and storefronts only with an active lease and tenant or actively listed for sale with a broker.		Short-Term
3-10	Encourage property owners to revitalize vacant buildings by utilizing public art or signs to decorate storefront windows.		Ongoing
3-11	Consider implementing a pop-up shop program where the Town facilitates short-term leases with property owners to fill vacant spaces.		Mid-Term
3-12	Pursue strategic acquisitions to advance the Downtown Plan vision and promote redevelopment.		Ongoing
3-13	Update the UDO to incentivize affordable housing for future development in the Brooks Street Infill, Brooks Street/Elm Avenue, White Street Extension, and Southeast Transition Functional Subareas. Incentives should allow an additional story of building height if at least 40 percent of units resulting from the increase in building height are deed restricted affordable to households making 80 percent or less than the Wake County area median income or that 20 percent of units resulting from the increase in building height are deed restricted affordable to households making 60 percent or less of Wake County area median income for a minimum of 30 years.		Short-Term
3-14	Pursue recommendations from feasibility study for arts center, if recommended Downtown.		Long-Term
3-15	Explore need for mobile command center.		Long-Term
3-16	Expand Town municipal facilities and services concurrently with new growth.		Long-Term
3-17	Annually review the Town's Work Management Plan, Staffing, and Budget to reflect current needs and priorities.		Ongoing
3-18	Explore subsidy upfit programs for enticing desired businesses.		Mid-Term

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#	Action Item	Goal Alignment	Time Frame
3-19	Research policy proposals that would advance mixed-use developments and encourage redevelopment Downtown.		Mid-Term
3-20	Conduct stormwater study identifying areas for possible attentuation system or enlargement.		Mid-Term
3-21	Perform a traffic analysis to identify possible Capital Improvements around Downtown.		Long-Term
3-22	Implement the H.L. Miller Park Master Plan.		Long-Term
Chapter 4: Mobility			
4-1	Partner with new development to construct parking decks to support public parking and the mobility hub in Downtown		Mid-Term
4-2	Provide ADA accessible spaces in future on-street parking and require ADA accessible parking spaces in future off-street parking lots.		Mid-Term
4-3	Require bicycle parking hubs as part of any new parking garages and consider constructing additional parking based on locations identified in the Downtown Plan.		Long-Term
4-4	Utilize the recommendations in the Wayfinding Plan to construct frequent and clear signage which directs cars, cyclists, and pedestrians to the mobility hub.		Long-Term
4-5	Require that bus stops are ADA-compliant with basic features such as ramps, tactile paving, boarding and alighting clearance, and accessible routes to support a wide range of users.		Short-Term
4-6	Collect ridership data and conduct user surveys to continually improve the service of the Go Wake Forest microtransit pilot based on evolving community needs.		Ongoing
4-7	Implement a marketing campaign to raise awareness about microtransit.		Ongoing
4-8	Ensure that safe connections are made to allow residents in neighborhoods surrounding Downtown the ability to safely and easily walk or bike to the new mobility hub.		Long-Term
4-9	Encourage NCDOT to integrate passenger rail service with transit, microtransit, bicycling, dockless vehicles, and other multimodal options at the mobility hub.		Long-Term
4-10	Ensure that commuters and visitors have clear and easy access to and from supplemental parking structures.		Long-Term
4-11	Ensure that any improvements to publicly accessible areas, including streets, sidewalks, and parking lots, are ADA compliant.		Ongoing
4-12	Ensure all sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks in Downtown meet current ADA and Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) standards.		Ongoing
4-13	Clearly mark crosswalks ideally with audible signals to assist those with visual impairments.		Long-Term
4-14	Standardize crosswalks using consistent patterns on all four sides of the intersection at all intersections in Downtown.		Long-Term
4-15	Extend curbs at intersections along Elm Avenue and S. White Street to improve the pedestrian environment.		Long-Term
4-16	Explore retrofitting unsafe intersections such as Elm Avenue and Brooks Street and Elm Avenue and S. White Street.		Long-Term

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#	Action Item	Goal Alignment	Time Frame
Chapter 5: Building Fabric & Public Realm			
5-1	Require developers or property owners to utilize compact, human-scale blocks to avoid superblocks such as the block between Elm Avenue, E. Holding Avenue, S. White Street, and Brooks Street when developing or redeveloping property.		Short-Term
5-2	Encourage a mix of building scale, configurations, and heights across Downtown to promote variety.		Ongoing
5-3	Require the utilization of the minimum and maximum front and street side yard setback requirements to ensure that new buildings are built along the perimeter of lots rather than encroach into the interior of the lots.		Short-Term
5-4	Require that landscaping, plazas, and pocket parks are utilized where gaps or natural breaks in the streetwall exist.		Short-Term
5-5	Encourage developers or property owners to use variations in building heights to add visual interest without disrupting the cohesion of the streetwall when developing or redeveloping property.		Ongoing
5-6	Require 0' front and street side yard setbacks within the Historic White Street Functional Subarea.		Short-Term
5-7	Permit more flexible setbacks on Brooks Street south of Elm Avenue, S. Taylor Street, E. Holding Avenue, and S. Franklin Street.		Short-Term
5-8	Require strict front and street side yard minimum and maximum along S. White Street, Elm Avenue, Brooks Street, and Roosevelt Avenue to promote active streetscapes.		Short-Term
5-9	Require a minimum building height of two stories to ensure new buildings are consistent with the desired urban character and street wall.		Short-Term
5-10	Require that developers or property owners utilize height transition standards for new development which follow the slope and shape of the terrain when building heights exceed the recommended heights in the respective functional subarea.		Short-Term
5-11	Evaluate the design and construction of existing ramps along S. White Street to improve or provide alternative solutions.		
5-12	Design both public right-of-way areas and private properties to appeal to all users by incorporating Universal Design and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.		Ongoing
5-13	Require that doors to be at grade with the public sidewalk at the point of entry to the building to accommodate those with mobility issues.		Ongoing
5-14	Establish building entryway design standards to ensure building entrances are clearly defined and attractive.		Short-Term
5-15	Require the use of recessed entrance building entryway design standards when buildings are constructed at the front or street side lot lines to accommodate out-swinging doors that do not interfere with pedestrian movement on the public sidewalk.		Short-Term
5-16	Require property owners to incorporate architectural details such as pilasters, cornices, and varied materials in facade articulations in the Historic White Street subarea.		Short-Term

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#	Action Item	Goal Alignment	Time Frame
5-17	Break up facades into visually appealing sections that reflect the historical context and create a cohesive streetscape using minor wall offsets, wall setbacks, accent lines, and upper-floor step-backs.		Short-Term
5-18	Require that the size, material, color, and shape of signs complement the architectural style and scale of the building.		Short-Term
5-19	Require that signs on multi-tenant buildings are consistent in design and placement.		Short-Term
5-20	Allow for the use of temporary sidewalk "sandwich board" signs and applied vinyl sidewalk signs, subject to strict control for safety and accessibility.		Short-Term
5-21	Encourage that the design of awnings and canopies be in character with the architectural style of the building.		Short-Term
5-22	Require that awnings fit within the frame of the storefront without hiding the building's facade, distorting its proportions, or covering architectural features.		Short-Term
5-23	Require that awnings are mounted above the transom window above the front entrance or storefront.		Short-Term
5-24	Require that awnings are of similar style and complementary color for storefronts developed as a single building.		Short-Term
5-25	Encourage property owners of adjacent buildings developed at different times to have awnings of compatible styles and color schemes.		Short-Term
5-26	Require canvas or durable fabric materials for awnings; discourage the use of vinyl.		Short-Term
5-27	Discourage the use of shingle, mansard, and arch-profiled canopies.		Short-Term
5-28	Encourage the inclusion of ground-floor display windows in storefronts to foster interesting street interactions.		Short-Term
5-29	Promote the use of tall ground floors with high levels of transparency in design.		Short-Term
5-30	Require that 70 percent of ground floor principal front and street side building facades consist of transparent glazing.		Short-Term
5-31	Encourage developers or property owners to clearly identify side and/or rear entrances, ensuring their design is consistent with the front entrance.		Short-Term
5-32	Utilize public alleys for placemaking elements such as lighting, public art, pop-up spaces, and outdoor dining.		Long-Term
5-33	Ensure public alleys are paved with durable materials that can support deliveries, parking, and service trucks.		Long-Term
5-34	Provide proper lighting in public alleys to ensure safety, promote usage, and deter crime.		Long-Term
5-35	Require that street furniture does not obstruct pedestrian movement on sidewalks or degrade visual quality.		Ongoing
5-36	Require that a 9-foot clear path on all sidewalks is maintained to ensure pedestrian accessibility.		Long-Term
5-37	Promote consistent design in street furniture, including benches, bins, bike racks, and shelters.		Ongoing

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#	Action Item	Goal Alignment	Time Frame
5-38	Explore tree species diversification in Downtown to reduce reliance on American Elm, Chinese Elm, Willow Oak, and Crepe Myrtle.		Ongoing
5-39	Include plantings and street trees along all street types to enhance greenery.		Short-Term
5-40	Incorporate additional plantings such as hanging baskets and street light wraparounds.		Long-Term
5-41	Explore green infrastructure options like rain gardens to improve environmental resilience especially at redesigned intersections.		Long-Term
5-42	Consider flashing beacons or pedestrian-activated signals at high-traffic crosswalks.		Long-Term
5-43	Install street lighting , where missing, in accordance with the Unified Development Ordinance.		Long-Term
5-44	Replace streetlights on Brooks Street, Elm Avenue, E. Holding Avenue, and Roosevelt Avenue to ensure consistency with streetlights on S. White Street.		Long-Term
5-45	Encourage property owners to illuminate entryways, walkways, garages, and addresses for visibility at night.		Ongoing
5-46	Permit outdoor dining on sidewalks with sufficient clearance and designated access/exit points.		Ongoing
5-47	Require that parklet dining areas are protected with high-quality decorative fences or corrals compatible with Downtown character.		Mid-Term
5-48	Encourage property or business owners to use weatherproof and easy-to-clean materials for outdoor dining furniture.		Ongoing
5-49	Explore a pilot program to convert parking spaces into parklets in front of storefronts with businesses such as bars, restaurants, coffee shops, etc.		Mid-Term
5-50	Extend curbs at intersections along Elm Avenue and S. White Street to improve the pedestrian environment.		Long-Term
5-51	Explore retrofitting unsafe intersections such as Elm Avenue and Brooks Street and Elm Avenue and S. White Street.		Long-Term
5-52	Explore adding misters in plant structures		Long-Term
5-53	Evaluate if a water feature Downtown, like alternating jets, would be appropriate.		Long-Term
5-54	Evaluate delivery loading and unloading times and procedures on S. White Street to ensure safe traffic movements.		Long-Term
5-55	Place directional signage on the major corridors such as Dr. Calvin Jones Highway, US Route 1, Durham Road, and N. White Street in accordance with the Wayfinding Plan.		Mid-Term
5-56	Place directional signage on the collector/local streets such as S. Franklin Street, Wait Avenue, Main Street, and N. White Street in accordance with the Wayfinding Plan.		Mid-Term

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#	Action Item	Goal Alignment	Time Frame
5-57	Evaluate Wayfinding Plan and identify locations in nearby neighborhoods for potential directional signage to direct people to and from Downtown.		Long-Term
5-58	Evaluate pedestrian and cyclist routes into Downtown and determine if wayfinding signage should be added along those routes.		Long-Term
5-59	Develop and install specialized street name blades for Downtown with the Downtown logo and color scheme.		Long-Term
5-60	Encourage all capital improvement and development projects to integrate public art into the design of public streetscape elements (e.g. paving, street furniture, transit shelters, lighting, etc.).		Ongoing
5-61	Continue to locate public art in areas where it can be viewed and enjoyed by a large number of people, including sidewalks, intersections, plazas, and medians.		Ongoing
5-62	Coordinate with the Public Arts Commission in the creation of public art installations.		Ongoing
5-63	Continue discussions with property owner to seek permission and consider commissioning a rotating mural program where the underpass is repainted throughout the year to feature multiple designs and exhibits.		Long-Term
5-64	Consider incorporating interactive elements, such as QR codes that link to information about the art or historical context, enhancing the educational and cultural value of the murals.		Mid-Term
5-65	Pursue installing energy-efficient LED lighting that highlights architectural features of the viaduct, creating a striking visual effect at night.		Long-Term
5-66	Incorporate historical plaques or interpretive signage that tells the story of the viaducts and their role in Wake Forest's development.		Long-Term
5-67	Explore the creation of a social district, where customers can carry and consume food and drinks purchased from businesses outside in a designated zone.		Mid-Term
5-68	Continue to utilize and evaluate surveys regularly to identify and address issues impacting the operation of events and festivals, ensuring continuous improvement.		Ongoing
5-69	Investigate hiring consultants to provide a comprehensive evaluation of Town events and provide recommendations for improved programs.		Mid-Term
5-70	Explore creative lighting opportunities such as utilizing festoon lighting on Downtown streets during events and pathway lighting.		Mid-Term
5-71	Conduct a feasibility study to identify appropriate locations to install stand-alone public restrooms.		Mid-Term
5-72	Research parking options to allow to turn over in specific areas in Downtown.		Mid-Term
5-73	Incorporate smart technology into street furniture and infrastructure.		Ongoing
5-74	Install conduit in right-of-way with handholds to accommodate fiber and avoid retrofits.		Short-Term
5-75	Explore possibility of requiring wireless easements on buildings for utilities.		Mid-Term
5-76	Develop standard Downtown streetscape and materials list, addressing ADA and long term maintenance.		Mid-Term

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