



MONROE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

& PARKING STUDY

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Contents



5 BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

11 EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

43 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

61 PLANNING VISION

91 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

121 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES





BACKGROUND &

INTRODUCTION

This section reviews the public planning process that formed the backbone of the Downtown Master Plan. It explains the overall process and summarizes the information gathered from previous planning efforts.

Introduction

A DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The City of Monroe and the Monroe Downtown Development Authority partnered to develop this Master Plan to provide a blueprint for the next generation of revitalization in downtown. This plan integrates previous planning efforts, builds upon existing downtown assets, and leverages planned and future investments within and adjacent to downtown. This plan includes six sections:

1. Background and Introduction

This section reviews the public planning process that formed the backbone of the Downtown Master Plan. It explains the overall process and summarizes the information gathered from previous planning efforts.

2. Existing Conditions

This section documents the physical and regulatory conditions that shape the present and future of downtown Monroe. From transportation and parking to market conditions, zoning regulations, and public space, these building blocks of the downtown environment are examined to understand both opportunities and constraints.

3. Community Engagement

This section summarizes the input that the planning team received from the Study Group, key project stakeholders, and members of the community. This effort resulted in a cohesive vision for the future of downtown Monroe and seven Planning Principles to follow as investment and additional planning occur.

4. Planning Vision

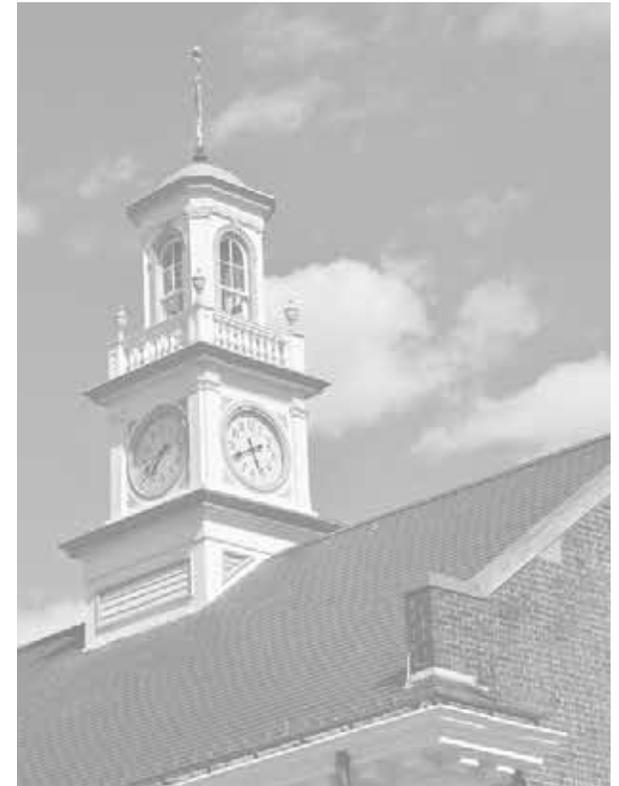
This section combines the information gathered from the existing conditions assessment with the input collected from the stakeholder and community engagement process to create a vision for the future of downtown Monroe. This vision is based on the seven Planning Principles developed as a result of the engagement process and includes a series of strategies and recommendations to address the issues and opportunities identified in the existing conditions chapter.

5. Development Opportunities

This section highlights the key opportunity sites that were identified through the planning process. Shaped by stakeholder and community input, as well as the existing conditions assessment, the planning team developed concepts for each opportunity site that demonstrate potential private development and public space improvements that could be implemented over time.

6. Implementation Strategies

This section provides a framework for the implementation of the Master Plan. The strategic recommendations, project phasing, additional organizational capacity and planning partners needed to implement the plan are outlined and explained.





Planning Process

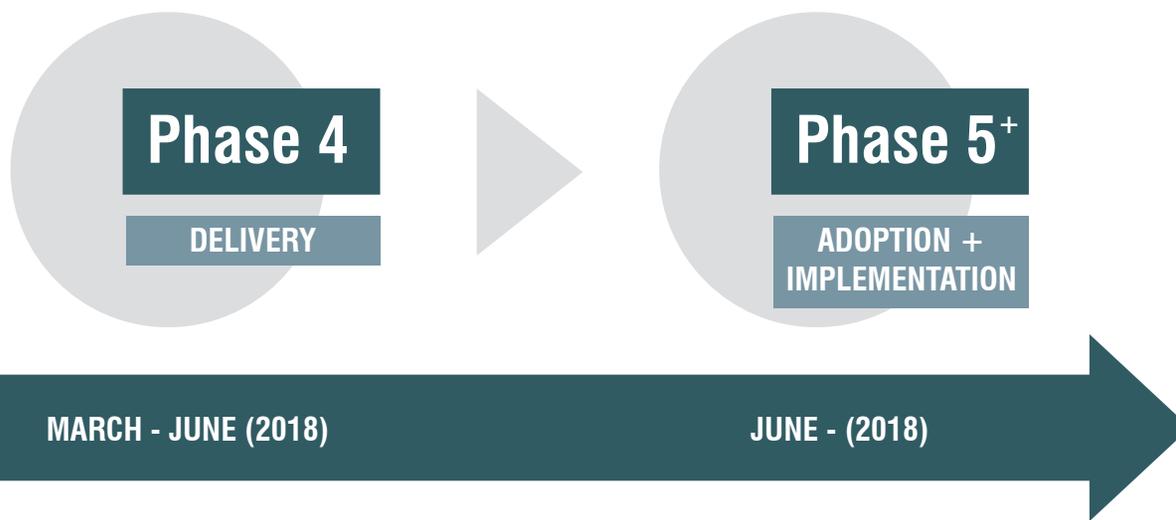
PROJECT TIMELINE & PHASES



During Phase 1, the planning team conducted an existing conditions assessment that included review of previous planning efforts, planned improvements, the current built environment, existing regulations, and current transportation conditions. This assessment also included a downtown walking tour with City staff and key stakeholders, as well as a series of parking counts to document current supply and demand. A project webpage was launched during this phase, along with the first online survey, which collected public input regarding parking in downtown.

The information gathered during Phase 1 was summarized and presented to staff, stakeholders, and community members during Phase 2 as part of a two-day workshop. This workshop was held December 7-8, 2017 and included focus group meetings with key project stakeholders, as well as two separate public meetings. These meetings were used to gain additional insight into downtown conditions, as well as being discussions about potential solutions and strategies for the challenges and opportunities that were identified in Phase 1.

Following the initial discussions in Phase 2 regarding potential solutions and strategies, the planning team refined those ideas into concepts and recommendations. This process incorporated public feedback that was collected through a series of pop-up events held around downtown, as well as an additional online survey focused on downtown character. Draft recommendations were presented at a public meeting on March 21, 2018 and a third online survey was launched to collect public feedback on the draft recommendations.



Phase 4

DELIVERY

MARCH - JUNE (2018)

Phase 5⁺

ADOPTION +
IMPLEMENTATION

JUNE - (2018)

Feedback gathered from the public, City staff, and project stakeholders was used to further refine the recommendations and develop a draft plan. This included development of an implementation strategy to help guide City staff through implementation of the recommendations.

The draft plan was presented to City staff and project stakeholders on May 9, 2018 and taken to Council on June 4th, 2018.

(text to be filled in)

Implementation of the plan will be carried forward by the City of Monroe and Monroe Downtown Development Authority. Continued public and stakeholder involvement will be critical to ensuring the success of the plan.





EXISTING CONDITIONS

ASSESSMENT

This section documents the physical and regulatory conditions that shape the present and future of downtown Monroe. From market conditions to transportation and parking, zoning regulations, and public space, these building blocks of the downtown environment are examined to understand both opportunities and constraints.

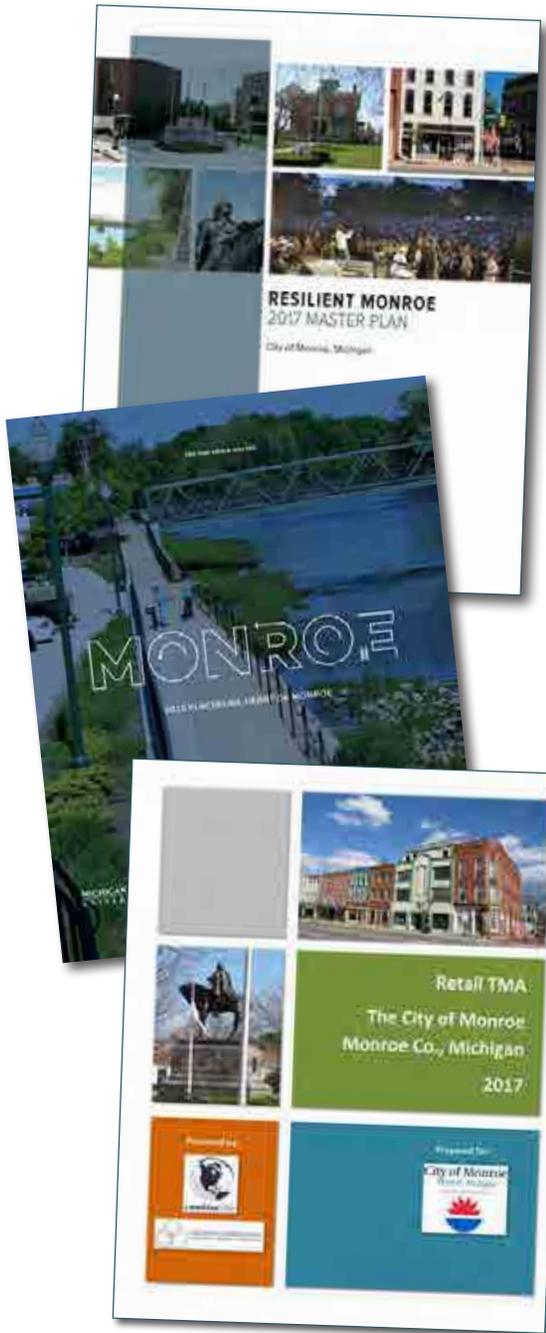
Previous Planning

PLAN DOCUMENT REVIEW

An initial review of existing plan documents was conducted to inform the existing conditions assessment and gather all relevant material regarding past recommendations, project goals, and visions.

The goals and recommendations from the reviewed plans all followed a similar theme - there was a significant focus in each of the plans on revitalizing downtown, and making it a more significant place for the City, County, and beyond. This theme of revitalizing downtown guided the development of recommendations for not only economic development, but also for programming in downtown, as well as for providing enhanced access and connectivity from a more multimodal perspective.

Plan/Document/Study	Year Completed	Study Area
Resilient Monroe City Master Plan	2017	City of Monroe
Monroe DDA Strategic Plan	2017	Downtown Monroe
DDA Downtown Reinvestment Grant Program	2017	Downtown Monroe
Target Market Analyses (TMAs)	2017	City of Monroe
Monroe County LINK	2017	Monroe County
Monroe PlacePlan	2015	Alley west of Monroe between Front Street and Third Street
South Monroe Street Traffic Study	2014	Monroe Street between Elm Avenue and Third Street
Resilient Monroe Resource Atlas	2013	City of Monroe, Monroe & Frenchtown TWPs
River Raisin East Master Plan	2013	River Raisin National Battlefield Park
DDA Tax Increment Financing Plan	2006	Downtown Monroe
City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan	2003	Citywide and Downtown Focus Area
Downtown Monroe Façade Study	1981	Downtown Monroe
Workshops Concept Plan	1977	Downtown Monroe & City-County Government Complex



Goals	Recommendations
Make downtown Monroe a state- and nationally-recognized vibrant and walkable downtown	» Increase retail space in existing vacancies or when office leases turn over
Adapt the downtown's valuable historic resources to meet contemporary needs	» Promote "cross-shopping" through increased number of retail store adjacencies
Continue the revitalization of downtown Monroe	» Encourage retail development near existing parking
Encourage private investment in downtown	» Encourage a mix of housing and complementary retail and services
Ensure economic viability of the downtown	» Renovate buildings along river to create river frontage
Create a hub of community activity in downtown	» Increase downtown high-density residential » Increase number of downtown events/festivals » Concentrate events within the downtown
Create efficient movement of people, goods, & services	» Extend the Riverwalk and connect it to the citywide greenway system
Promote and enhance the variety of transportation options	» Reduce the barrier of Monroe Street
Create a pedestrian scaled downtown that is compatible with vehicular traffic	» Improve parking on the west side of Monroe Street » Work with Lake Erie Transit to expand and enhance transit services

Downtown Market Study Findings

LANDUSE USA TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS

An in-depth review of the 2017 Landuse USA Target Market Analysis (TMA) was conducted in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of current market conditions, as well as market-related recommendations for downtown Monroe.

Prepared in September 2017, the TMA made the following observations and recommendations regarding downtown Monroe's retail market demand:

Recommended Business Mix: The TMA found a near-term market demand of 40,000 total square feet including the following businesses:

- » Microbrewery with food
- » Restaurants
- » Small Grocery
- » Apparel
- » Office Supply
- » Kitchen Supply
- » Home Décor
- » Artisan Gallery
- » Picture Framing
- » Toys & Games
- » Novelty & Collectibles
- » Party Supplies
- » Florist



Source: LandUse USA Retail TMA for the City of Monroe

Cautions: Avoid national chains in the downtown due to market volatility. As new chains enter the market, they should be encouraged to deploy in existing vacant spaces, rather than build new stores.

Opportunities: As area national chains downsize or close, their market voids could be met with downtown Monroe businesses.

Small Events: The TMA recommends small events along riverfront to drive business for local retailers and restaurants.

Target Market Demographic Groups: The following primary demographic lifestyle groups were defined in the study:

- » No Place Like Home: Upper middle-class multi-generational households in exurban areas
- » Blue Collar Comfort: Middle-class families in smaller cities and towns with solid blue-collar jobs
- » Aging in Place: Middle-class seniors living solid, suburban lifestyles

Trade Area: The study concludes most of downtown Monroe's retail trade area includes Frenchtown and Monroe Townships. The study did not provide a map of the downtown's estimated primary and secondary trade areas.

Clustering: The study recommends clustering restaurants along the river.

Market Demand: Monroe County is estimated to be underperforming in home furnishings, food and beverage and apparel market share relative to other Michigan counties with similar levels of income. Monroe County performs well relative to other counties in sporting goods, hobby and book stores.

Competing Retail Centers: The TMA identified the following competitive shopping centers/districts:

- » The Mall of Monroe
- » Monroe Factory Shops
- » The Telegraph Road commercial corridor

Marketing: The study recommends the following marketing actions for the downtown:

- » Engage – attract visitors from I-75, the Michigan Welcome Center and the River Raisin National Battlefield site.
- » Co-market with nearby hotels and motels.
- » Incubate new retailers in the downtown.

Placemaking: The study recommends the following placemaking measures for the downtown:

- » North and south gateway enhancements
- » Completing the PlacePlan
- » Public art
- » Improve commercial signage
- » Expand or relocate the farmers market
- » Implement a Form Based Code

Place Score: The study finds downtown Monroe has a Place Score of 22 out of 30. This represents a measure of the quality of place in comparison to similar sized cities in Michigan.

The study recommends the following to improve its Place Score and commerce:

- » Implement a Form Based Code
- » Participate in the Main Street program
- » Complete an updated downtown master plan
- » Expand the downtown website and include maps of existing businesses
- » Improve the WalkScore
- » Improve cross-walks
- » Replace one-way streets with two-way streets

Business Practices: The study recommends downtown retailers and restaurants implement the following businesses practices:

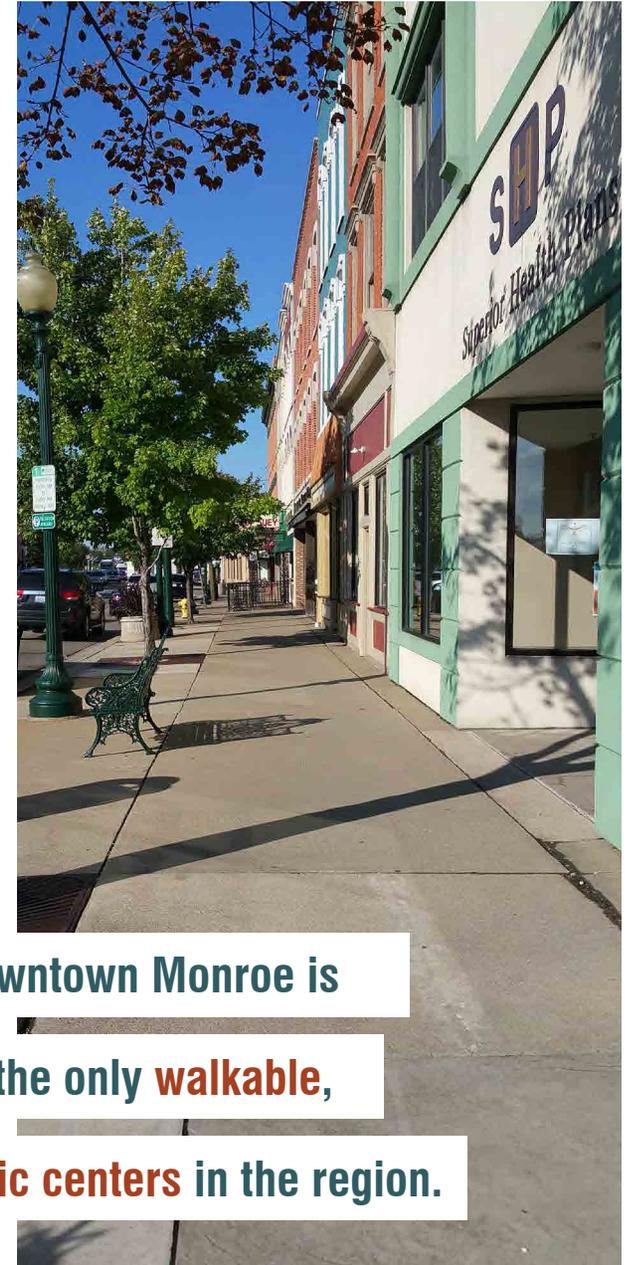
- » Improve window displays
- » Improve store lighting
- » Cluster with similar businesses
- » Expand business hours
- » Maximize sales

Downtown Market Study Findings

DOWNTOWN TOUR - RELATED FINDINGS

A downtown walking tour was conducted by the project team and attended by City staff as well as key project stakeholders. The following were market related findings from the study area walking tour:

- » **Employment:** The downtown has a strong employment base with the Monroe County Courthouse, County offices and several major private employment centers.
- » **Architectural Character:** The downtown has an appealing character with numerous historic buildings. Many of the historic buildings and storefronts are in need of restoration.
- » **Public Realm:** The existing public realm, streetscape, parking, waterfront, etc. are in good condition, but have opportunities for improvement to enhance the visitor experience.
- » **Riverfront:** The City has started a successful Riverwalk, but the system could be expanded. The river divides the downtown from some popular businesses and restaurants. The river pedestrian linkages could be improved.
- » **Private Investment:** The downtown has experienced limited recent investment in building restoration. One recent investor has halted construction due to perceived un-fair building code requirements.
- » **Existing Business Mix:** The downtown has numerous successful retailers and restaurants including: apparel, banks, gifts and restaurants.
- » **Historic Courthouse Square:** The existing Courthouse Square is presently divided into four quadrants and may have originally been combined as one larger square with the streets surrounding its edges, rather than cutting through the park. It is possible that an earlier County Courthouse was located in the middle of the square, rather than on the edge.
- » **Market Demand:** The TMA may be conservative in its estimates for future market demand. Downtown Monroe is one of the only walkable historic centers in the region and should be able to attract considerably more private sector development and shopper traffic.



Downtown Monroe is

one of the only walkable,

historic centers in the region.

- » **Office Storefronts:** Many of the storefronts are occupied by professional offices, limiting the critical mass of retailers and restaurants. Many of the offices own their buildings and are likely long-term users.
- » **Farmers Market:** The existing farmers market is privately owned and could potentially expand. An adjacent historic building could potentially house an expanded market or food hall. The building was recently sold and is not presently on the market for sale.
- » **Neighborhoods:** The downtown is surrounded by numerous stable neighborhoods, whom frequent its businesses.
- » **Monroe Street – M 125:** The downtown is divided in half by Monroe Street, a major five-lane highway. The highway limits cross shopping between the east and west halves of the downtown. The lack of parking along the highway’s west side negatively impacts adjacent retailers.
- » **One-way Streets:** Front and First Street are presently one-way and should be converted into two-way streets to improve access for visitors and shoppers. The existing system was implemented years ago by MDOT and is apparently no longer necessary.
- » **Parking:** The downtown does not have an apparent existing parking shortage. The west riverfront has long-term parking lots that are utilized by employees. However, much of the on-street parking is filled all day with employees, limiting convenient parking for shoppers.



Existing Conditions

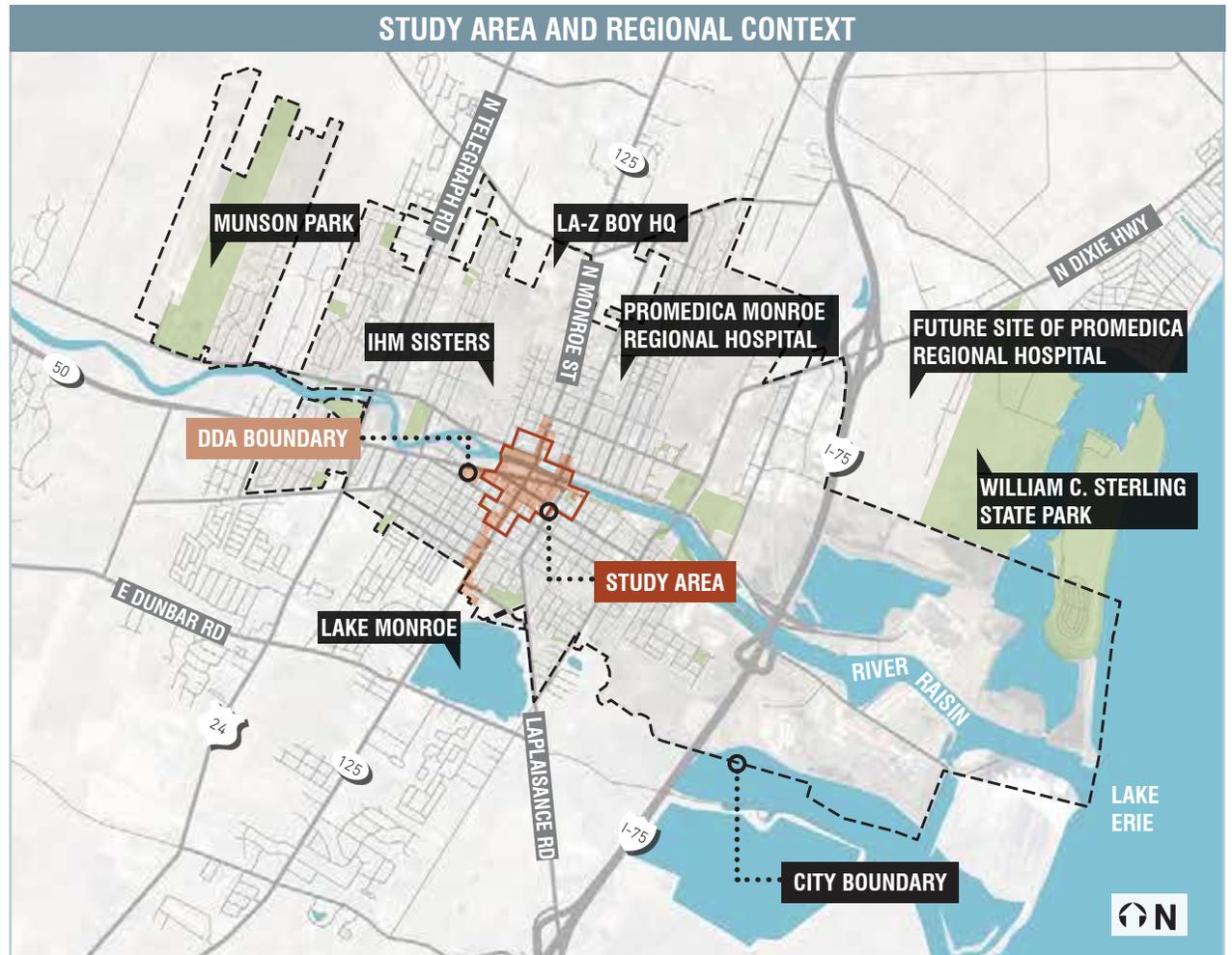
STUDY AREA & REGIONAL CONTEXT

There are many regionally significant sites in proximity to downtown Monroe, including the River Raisin Battlefield Park, the La-Z Boy Headquarters, and the Promedica Monroe Regional Hospital, among others. Multiple direct access points to I-75 (Dixie Highway, Elm Avenue, First Street, and LaPlaisance Road) provide downtown with a greater level of connectivity to these assets and others throughout the region. In addition to I-75, two major state routes (M-50 and M-125) also connect into/pass through downtown Monroe, and U.S. Route 24 provides an alternative route just outside of downtown.

All of these routes provide critical access to the City of Monroe and serve as key gateways into downtown Monroe. An important aspect of this study will be looking at how downtown Monroe can capitalize on its regional connectivity and proximity to regional assets.

The project study area echoes the boundary for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), but focuses more specifically around the core downtown. The study area boundary generally extends north to Willow Street, east to Murray Street, south to 5th Street, and west to Smith Street.

The DDA boundary extends farther south to the City's edge, and slightly farther north across the river, but does not include every property within the project study area.



PROJECT STUDY AREA

-  PROPERTY WITHIN DDA
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Existing Conditions

REGIONAL GATEWAYS

The regional gateways into downtown are primarily established by the major highways surrounding and running through Monroe. These gateways serve as key connections into downtown, as well as the first impression of Monroe for any visitors driving into downtown.

Potential adjustments to the I-75 access points into downtown are currently being studied as part of the Monroe County LINK plan, and may impact one of the primary regional gateways into downtown. This will be a key consideration going forward for any investments in these gateways or for future corridor improvements connecting to downtown.

The primary and secondary regional gateways that serve as connections to downtown Monroe include:

Primary Regional Gateways

- » Dixie Hwy at I-75
- » Elm Avenue at I-75
- » Front Street at I-75
- » Laplaisance Road at I-75
- » M-50 at City Boundary/Telegraph Road
- » Telegraph Road at Stewart Road
- » Monroe Street at Stewart/Cole Road

Secondary Regional Gateways

- » Monroe Street at Noble Street
- » Elm Avenue at Dixie Hwy
- » First Street at Winchester Street
- » Laplaisance Road at 6th Street
- » Monroe Street at 6th Street
- » Front Street at Union Street and 3rd Street

Few of these gateways provide an appealing entrance to downtown or offer any notification to visitors that they are approaching downtown.



REGIONAL GATEWAYS TO DOWNTOWN

-  REGIONAL GATEWAY
-  GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Existing Conditions

DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS

In addition to the regional gateways established by the major highways surrounding Monroe, there are several significant gateways leading into and within the downtown area that really define downtown Monroe. These gateways help to establish “entrances” to downtown, signaling to visitors that they have entered a unique place. The following locations serve as key downtown gateways:

Primary Gateways

- » Monroe Street and Elm Avenue
- » Front Street and First Street
- » Monroe Street and Fifth Street
- » Monroe Street and Front Street
- » Macomb Street and First Street

Secondary Gateways

- » Monroe Street and Willow Street
- » Monroe Street and Third Street
- » Macomb Street and Front Street
- » Macomb Street and Elm Avenue

These locations currently do not have any consistent design elements, and the City does not have a formal policy for such, to help tie them together as “Downtown Gateways.”

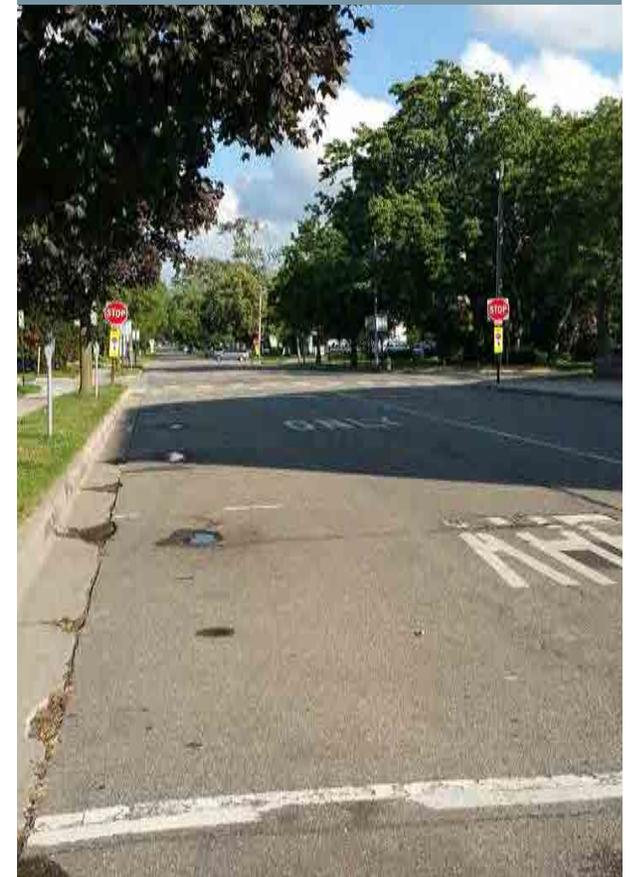
MONROE ST & FRONT ST INTERSECTION



FRONT ST APPROACH AT MACOMB ST



FIRST ST EASTBOUND TO MACOMB ST



DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS



GATEWAY



STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Existing Conditions

EXISTING PUBLIC ASSETS & GREENSPACE

The existing amenities and assets are what attract people downtown today, such as St. Mary's Park with the annual Jazz Festival that attracts thousands of visitors to downtown each year. However, there are many assets downtown that have not yet met their full potential.

In addition to the existing attractions, there are opportunity sites throughout downtown that have potential for redevelopment in the future. This includes a number of City- and County-owned properties that are used for surface parking today, and other underutilized or vacant sites. One potential opportunity site is the property where the City of Monroe Fire Department is currently located. The Fire Department will be relocating out of downtown, opening up the site for potential redevelopment.

Other potential sites include properties along the Riverwalk that are not currently taking advantage of their proximity to this amenity, particularly the empty greenspaces directly abutting the trail with views of the river, like Altrusa Park. These access points are un-inviting today, and only one of the many buildings along the river is currently capitalizing on this valuable frontage. The Riverwalk itself lacks appeal as a result.

RIVERWALK AND RIVER FRONTAGE



ALTRUSA PARK



RIVERFRONT PARKING LOT WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN CORE



PUBLIC ASSETS & GREENSPACE



RIVERWALK ACCESS



RIVERWALK



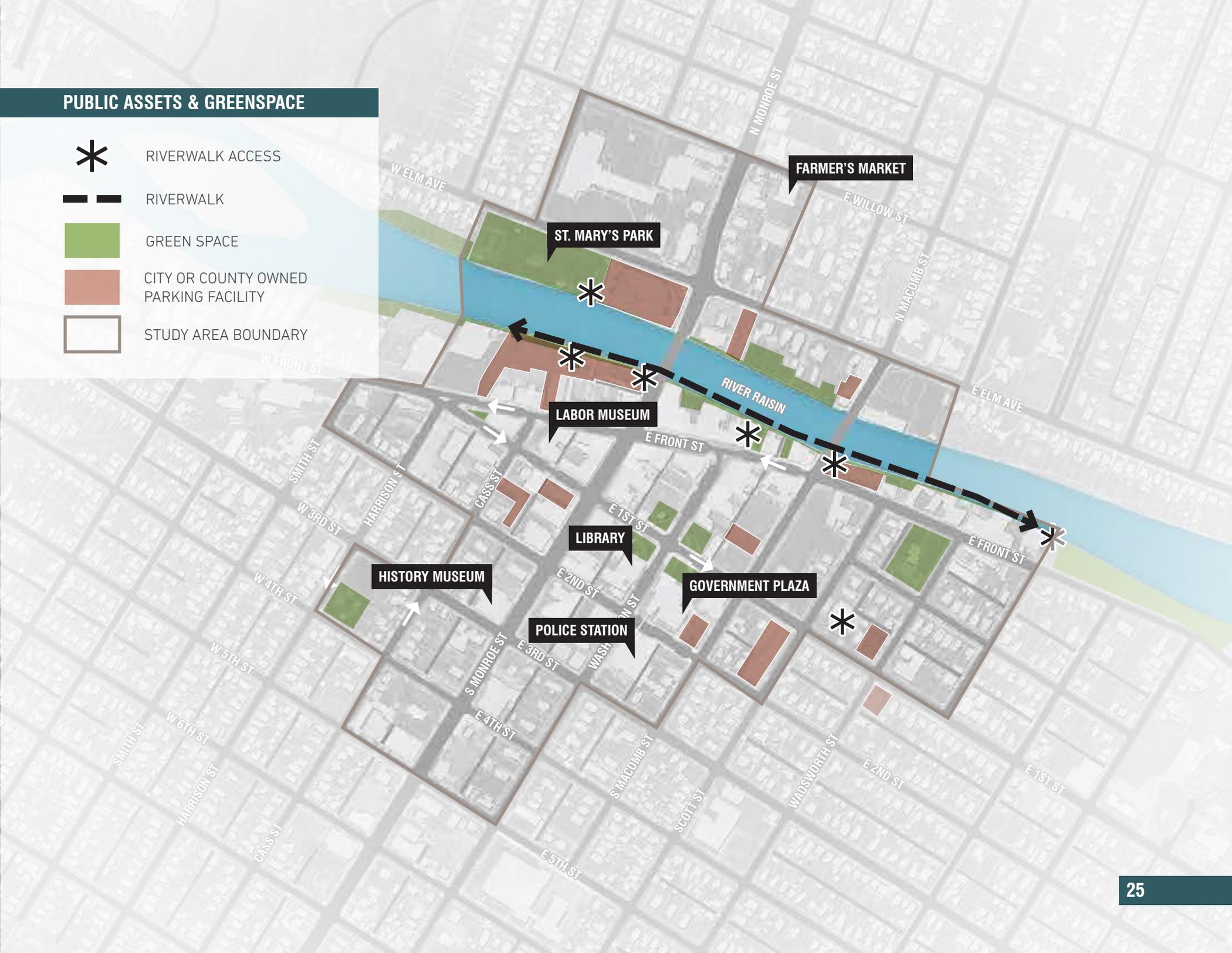
GREEN SPACE



CITY OR COUNTY OWNED
PARKING FACILITY



STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Existing Conditions

STREET NETWORK CIRCULATION

One-way streets in downtowns are often a source of confusion for visitors and can be detrimental to business downtown. The one-way streets in downtown Monroe create confusing intersections, particularly where the one-way traffic patterns intersect with two-way traffic. The intersection of First Street and Macomb Street is a primary example of this.

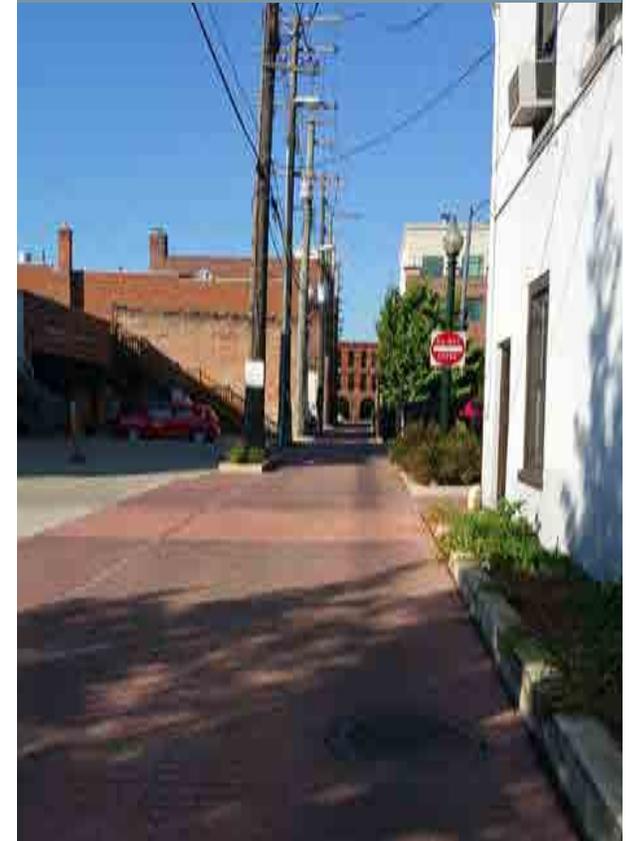
Front Street and First Street are the primary one-way pair within downtown Monroe (between Harrison and Macomb Streets), and serve the core business area of downtown. Both of these streets are currently configured with two travel lanes and on-street parking, and in some locations the streets widen out to accommodate angled parking. The remaining one-way pairs within the study area are primarily residential, with on-street parking on one or both sides depending on the width of the street.

Alleys are an underutilized resource downtown, as they provide additional connectivity through almost every block in the study area, establishing back-door access to businesses and interior parking facilities. Alleys can also be used as alternative connections for bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly when the parallel routes have high traffic volumes or are otherwise not ideal for walking and bicycling.

FIRST STREET



RENOVATED ALLEY



STREET NETWORK CIRCULATION

-  CONFUSING INTERSECTION
-  ALLEY
-  ONE-WAY STREET
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Existing Conditions

TRAFFIC & CRASHES

A critical factor to consider when evaluating the street network circulation is traffic volumes. Traffic volume data was obtained through the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) online data portal, consisting of average daily traffic (ADT) counts conducted primarily between 2012-2016.

Monroe Street serves as the main artery through both downtown and the City of Monroe, which results in a high level of traffic. According to the SEMCOG data, more than 20,000 vehicles per day travel on Monroe Street through the core of downtown (between Elm Avenue and Third Street). All other streets within the study area exhibited traffic volumes of less than 15,000 vehicles per day, with many below 7,500 vehicles per day. Typically, a two-way street with a single travel lane in each direction and a center turn lane can handle up to 20,000 vehicles per day.

A traffic study was conducted in 2014 for the segment of Monroe Street through downtown, and evaluated the potential for reducing the lane configuration from 5 lanes down to 3 lanes. The results of this study indicated that the reconfiguration could be done, but would require adjustments to the signal timing at intersections along the corridor, as well as reconfiguration of the left-turn lanes at the intersection of Monroe and Front Streets.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crash Data

Crash data from 2014-2016 was also obtained through the SEMCOG portal to identify potential hazard sites for crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. During this time period, the total number of crashes involving both pedestrians and bicyclists decreased slightly, but often these types of crashes go unreported and are not recorded in the data. Both types of crashes occurred in locations throughout downtown, but many of the crashes (8 in total) occurred at intersections along Monroe Street.

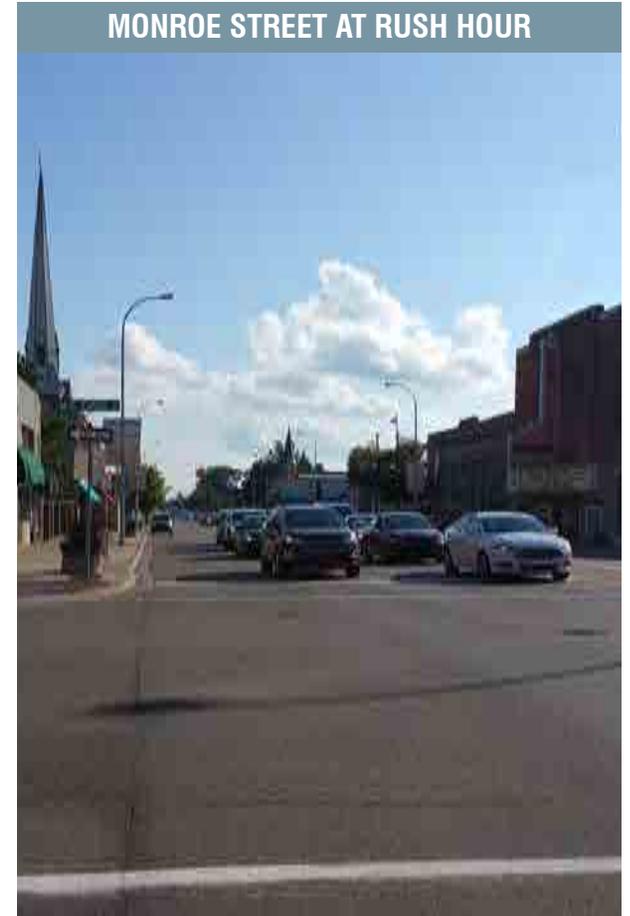
The data listed in the chart below represent the crashes illustrated in the map on the following page.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crashes in Study Area

Type of Crash	2014	2015	2016
Bicycle	7	9	6
Pedestrian	3	2	1

Source: semcog.org/Traffic-Crash-Data

MONROE STREET AT RUSH HOUR



TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND CRASHES

- BIKE CRASH
- PEDESTRIAN CRASH

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

- ▲ UP TO 7500 vehicles per day
- ▲ 7501-15000 vehicles per day
- ▲ 15001-20000 vehicles per day
- ▲ 20000+ vehicles per day



Existing Conditions

WALKING & BICYCLING

Downtown Monroe is very walkable in terms of its size. It is possible to park in any of the City-owned, free, long-term parking lots and walk to most downtown destinations within 5 minutes. Sidewalks through most of the core downtown are generally wide and in good condition, with crosswalks and even automatic pedestrian signals at many intersections. Downtown Monroe scores an 81 out of 100 on Walkscore.com, indicating that the downtown is “very walkable.”

However, for many pedestrians, only portions of downtown are truly accessible. Monroe Street serves as a substantial barrier for pedestrians. At more than 60 feet wide, with high traffic speeds and volumes, Monroe Street is not only intimidating to cross on foot, but it is also an unpleasant environment to walk along. While there are pedestrian crosswalks at most of the intersections along Monroe Street through downtown, there are some locations where pedestrians cross mid-block without a signal.

Between Third Street and Sixth Street on the south end of downtown, there are no traffic lights and, thus, no crosswalks across Monroe Street. This is a distance of more than 1,000 feet that pedestrians are required to walk in order to get to the nearest crosswalk. In locations where there are crosswalks at un-signalized intersections (such as the intersection of Monroe and Willow Streets), the crossings are not well marked, or lack signage alerting drivers to potential pedestrians.

PEDESTRIANS CROSSING MID-BLOCK



BICYCLIST ON THE SIDEWALK



BIKE LOCKED TO LIGHT POLE



Bicyclists in downtown are not allowed to ride on the sidewalks, but many still do. The speeds and traffic volumes on Monroe Street are not comfortable for bicycling, and the one-way streets are confusing to navigate. There are currently no bicycle facilities within downtown, but many of the streets have low enough speeds and volumes that they could be suitable for travel on bicycle. Bicyclists are also not currently allowed on the Riverwalk.

There are few places within downtown to securely lock and leave a bicycle – limiting the ability for anyone to ride a bicycle downtown. Some bicyclists have resorted to locking bikes to lamp posts and other street furnishings, but this often impedes the path of pedestrians on the sidewalk.

WALKING DOWNTOWN

● FREE PUBLIC PARKING

○ 5-MINUTE WALK

□ STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Existing Conditions

ZONING REGULATIONS

Based on the current zoning code, downtown consists mainly of the Central Business District (CBD) zone, but the project study area also includes the zones outlined in the chart to the right.

Most of the core downtown (consisting of CBD or C-2) is directly adjacent to some form of residential, but primarily transitional single family (R-2). There is a maximum building height of 40 feet within the CBD, and the zoning code also requires that building design meet criteria set by the City of Monroe Downtown Facade Study. The CBD zone currently does not require provision of off-street parking.

Code	Zone	Description
CBD	Central Business District	Mixed-use zone intended to serve as the business center for Monroe; allows single-family homes, but considers multiple-family a special use; parking lots as a principal use are also considered a special use
C-1	Local Commercial	Intended to serve neighborhood commercial needs
C-2	General Commercial	Wider variety of commercial services than Local Commercial (C-1) with higher traffic generation
R-1B / R-1C	Single Family Residential	Moderate density zone that prohibits any use not in character with the single-family neighborhood; R1-C allows for neighborhood commercial uses
R-2	Single Family Residential	Moderate density zone that allows for two-family dwellings, and is intended to be used to transition between single-family and the CBD
R-M	Multiple Family Residential	Higher density zone that is typically adjacent to major streets and allows for multiple-family dwellings
PROS	Parks / Open Space / Natural Preserves	Exclusive zone for natural, open spaces

ZONING REGULATIONS

- R-1A Single Family Residential
- R-1B Single Family Residential
- R-1C Single Family Residential
- R-2 Single Family Residential
- R-M Multiple Family Residential
- C-1 Local Commercial
- C-2 General Commercial
- C-O Office
- CBD Central Business District
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 General Industrial
- P-1 Vehicular Parking
- PROS Public Rec & Open Space
- PUD Planned Unit Development



Existing Conditions

LARGE DOWNTOWN PROPERTY OWNERS

City and County owned properties make up a significant portion of land in downtown, and much of it currently consists of surface parking lots. Other large land owners downtown include the Monroe Bank and Trust, and a few different churches, all of which also have large parking supplies.

Large areas of aggregated property like this can present significant opportunities for redevelopment, particularly when it is under the ownership of the City and/or County, and serves a temporary use, such as parking.

MONROE BANK & TRUST PARKING



CITY OF MONROE PARKING



CITY OF MONROE PUBLIC PARKING LOT ON NORTH SIDE OF RIVER RAISIN



Parking Assessment

PARKING SUPPLY AND OCCUPANCY

Existing Parking Supply

There are more than 3,000 total parking spaces in the project study area, including all surface parking lots and on-street parking. The following is a breakdown of those 3,000 spaces:

Off-Street Surface Parking Lots

2,346 off-street parking spaces

- » 1,737 spaces are in private parking lots (74% of total off-street parking supply)
- » 371 spaces are in free, long-term, public lots (16% of total off-street parking supply)
- » 132 spaces are in metered parking lots (6% of total off-street parking supply)
- » 106 spaces are designated handicap parking (5% of total off-street parking supply)

On-Street, Curbside Parking Spaces

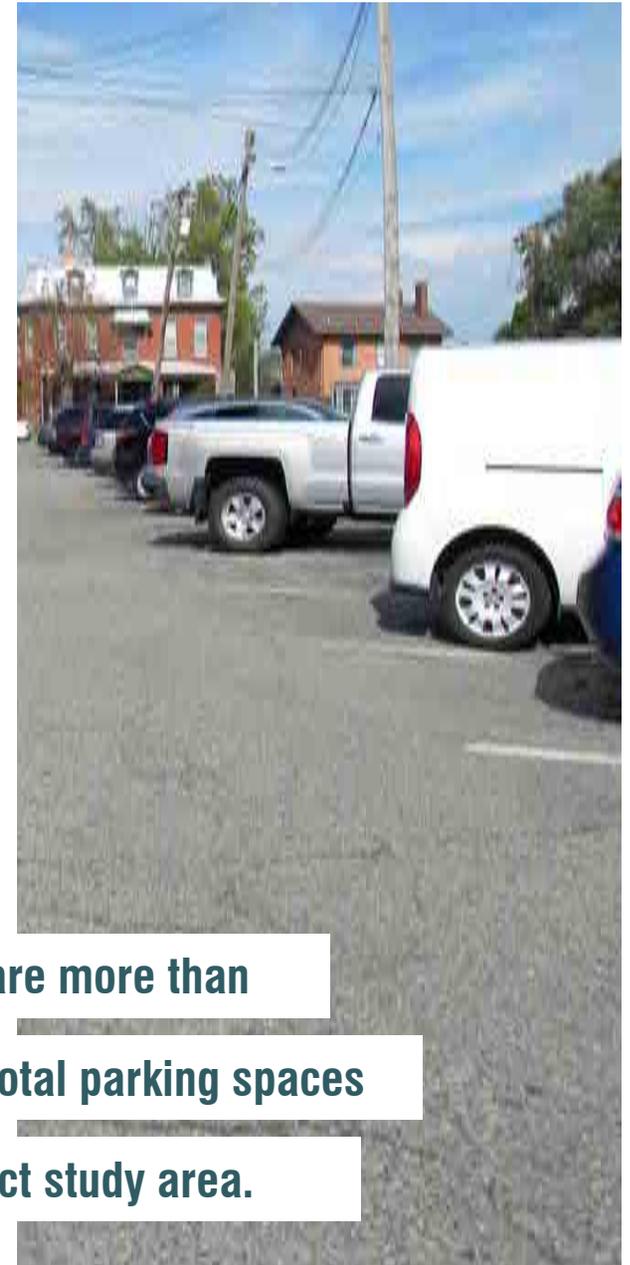
898 on-street parking spaces

- » 776 spaces are free, but time limited (up to 1 or 2 hours, or permit-only)
- » 110 spaces are metered

Parking Occupancy Counts

Parking occupancy counts were conducted on two separate occasions to help understand how and where parking is used within downtown. These occupancy counts included counting vehicles parked in every off-street facility and on-street parking space with the study area. The two time periods that were selected represent typical demand periods for parking in downtown Monroe:

- » **Friday Evening from 5 - 7 pm**
This time period represents a high-traffic period for downtown, when many visitors, residents, and employees are downtown for dinner or other evening events.
- » **Thursday Mid-Day from 12 - 2 pm**
This time period represents a high-traffic period for downtown, when employees are all downtown, and visitors and residents come downtown for lunch.



**There are more than
3,000 total parking spaces
in the project study area.**

EXISTING PARKING SUPPLY

ON-STREET PARKING

- UNMETERED PARKING
- METERED PARKING
- NO PARKING
- RESTRICTED PARKING

OFF-STREET PARKING

- FREE PARKING
- METERED PARKING
- PRIVATE PARKING

1,737

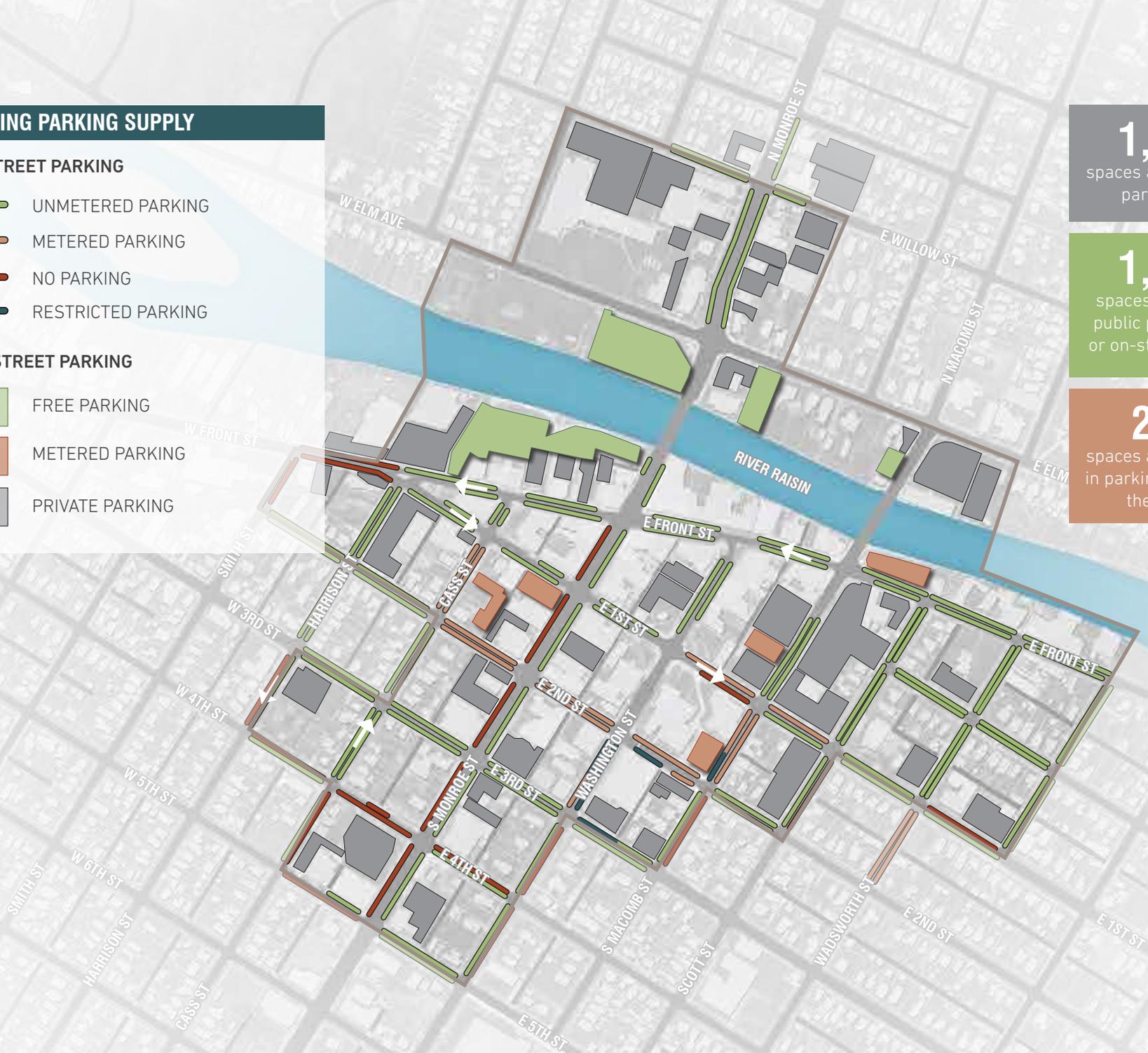
spaces are in private parking lots

1,147

spaces are in free, public parking lots, or on-street parking

232

spaces are metered in parking lots or on the street



Parking Assessment

PARKING SUPPLY AND OCCUPANCY

Parking occupancy counts were conducted for two distinct periods of parking demand downtown: Friday evening and weekday lunch. Between the two periods, the overall utilization of parking within the study area remained below 40% systemwide. This percentage includes all facility types (public and private, metered and free), but does not include any restricted spaces, such as designated handicap parking or police vehicles only.

Parking Occupancy on Friday Evening

Parking Type	Total Spaces	Total Cars	Percent Occupied
Off-Street	2,240	504	23%
On-Street	886	175	20%
TOTAL	3,126	679	22%

Note: these numbers do not include designated handicap parking or other restricted spaces.

PARKING OCCUPANCY LEGEND

Percent of Parking Occupied at Time of Count



FRIDAY EVENING PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

Note: St Mary's parking lots were being used for festival setup during this time period.



PARKING OCCUPANCY RESULTS

The count conducted during the weekday lunch period indicated higher parking demand than during the Friday evening period. A greater percentage of the off-street parking was occupied during this period, likely due to the greater number of employees downtown during the weekday, but the total percentage of occupied off-street spaces remained below 50%. Occupancy below 60% is considered highly underutilized, and 81-90% is considered ideal.

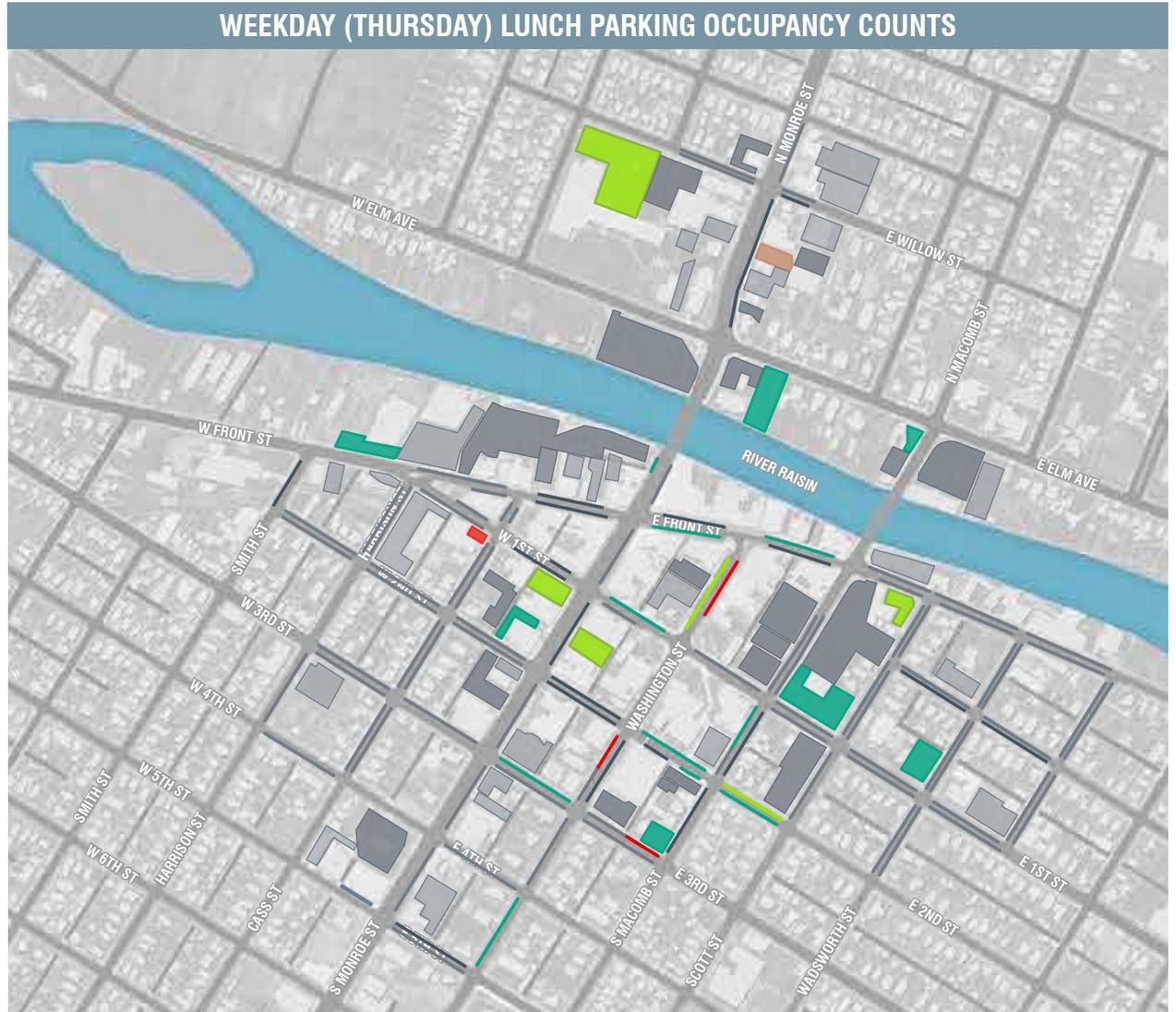
Parking Occupancy during Weekday Lunch

Parking Type	Total Spaces	Total Cars	Percent Occupied
Off-Street	2,240	963	43%
On-Street	898	214	24%
TOTAL	3,138	1,177	38%

Note: these numbers do not include designated handicap parking or other restricted spaces.

PARKING OCCUPANCY LEGEND

Percent of Parking Occupied at Time of Count



Parking Assessment

CURRENT PARKING REGULATIONS

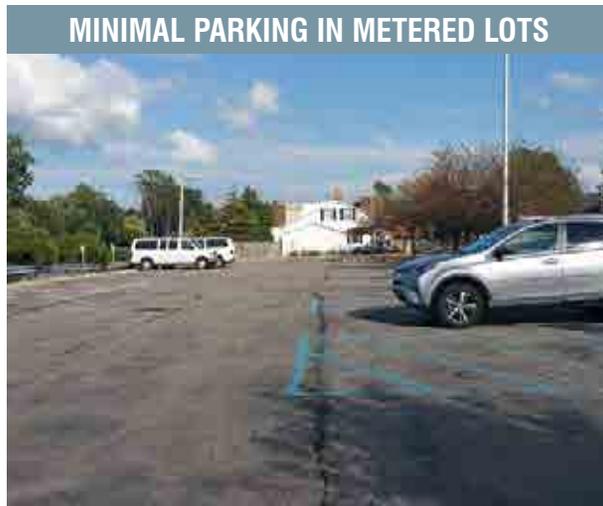
The existing array of restrictions, time limits, and meter rates likely creates confusion and generates excess “search” traffic among visitors, despite consistent availability among most parking options, most of the time. Drivers like to know that the option they have chosen is the best available option. The multitude of options, suggested by meter colors and regulatory signage, will encourage drivers to explore several blocks of parking options to assess their options, undermining a key benefit of consistent space availability – traffic reduction.

The following parking conditions were found in the project study area:

Metered Curbside Parking Far from Core

Destinations - Where metered parking exists, it consists of single meters that require coin payment. This is primarily in locations on the edges of downtown, where pricing (and outdated technology) is likely reducing occupancy below desirable levels, and increasing pressure on alternative parking locations.

Metered Off-Street Parking – Off-street, surface parking lots consisting of coin-operated single meters; most of these spaces appear to be used by employees with permits, if at all.



Residential Permit Parking – Residential permit-only zones currently provide on-street parking for residents, and 2-hour parking for visitors without permits. These curbsides offer significant capacity to accommodate additional parking demand (like employees), potentially reducing the need to maintain employee surface lots.

Validation Program – Operated by merchants that are members of the Downtown Business Network. Even if this is working well in terms of generating turnover and maintaining availability among primary on-street parking spaces, it adds to the complexity of the downtown regulatory environment. This is particularly true, as not all merchants can provide validation for “overtime” parking violations.

FREE RIVERFRONT PARKING



Free Riverfront Parking Lots - The lot on the south side of the river appears to be more popular, presumably attracting significant employee parking demand on weekdays. Many of the spaces toward Monroe Street are full by mid-morning, with remaining capacity mostly limited to the western portions of this lot. These spaces are likely not very attractive to visitors, rendering this lot effectively full in terms of accommodating visitor demand.

Shared Parking Opportunities - Excess capacity within several City-owned parking lots, particularly during evenings and weekends, can be used to support increased residential growth downtown, without requiring new parking supplies.

TIME LIMITATIONS IN LOTS



Free & Unlimited Parking - The modest number of free, unlimited parking spaces on the downtown periphery appear to be quite popular; and likely mostly used by area employees. Mapping and promoting these spaces can encourage more visitors to use these spaces, creating more walking activity on more downtown streets, and freeing up core-downtown parking options for those who most prioritize convenience.

Time-Limited Off-Street Parking - Consistent availability among on-street spaces should reduce or eliminate the need to maintain time limits in off-street lots. Not having to worry about overtime violations is the primary incentive to use off-street facilities, as opposed to on-street parking. Placing time limits on these spaces reduces their appeal.

HIDDEN CONNECTIONS - RIVERWALK



Parking Access

Hidden Pedestrian Connections - Maps and wayfinding should highlight pedestrian connections between parking and popular downtown destinations. One example is the Riverwalk passage that connects the Riverfront Lot to the east side of downtown, and the pedestrian bridge that connects the lot to the north side of downtown.

One-way Circulation - There are several benefits to minimizing or eliminating one-way streets, and simplifying parking searches is one of them. The current dominance of one-way vehicle circulation in much of downtown creates challenges for those searching for a parking space, particularly for those who pass an available space and want to return to it.





COMMUNITY

ENGAGEMENT

This section summarizes the input that the planning team received from the Study Group, key project stakeholders, and members of the community. This effort resulted in a cohesive vision for the future of downtown Monroe and seven Planning Principles to follow as investment and additional planning occur.

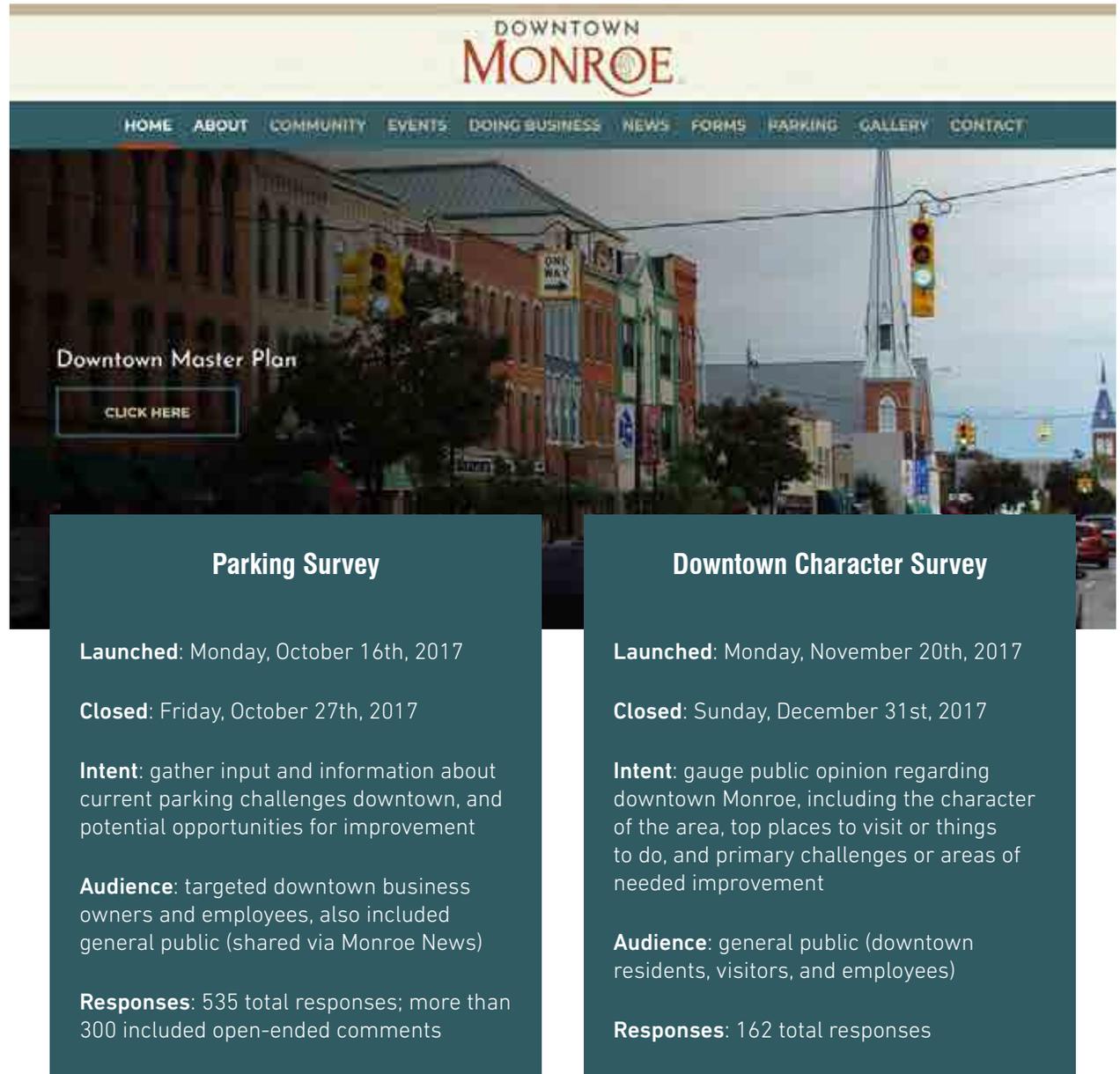
Online Engagement

PROJECT WEBPAGE

In order to reach as many downtown residents, employers, and visitors as possible, the planning team made all meeting materials available through a project webpage hosted by the Monroe Downtown Development Authority. The project webpage linked visitors to information about the project and opportunities to provide feedback. Web users were directed to two online surveys, which were conducted at key phases in the planning process:

- » **Discovery Phase:**
Parking Survey
- » **Visualization Phase:**
Downtown Character Survey

The resulting feedback from this engagement is summarized in the “What We Heard” section of this chapter, and provides a glimpse at how the Monroe community experiences their downtown, what features they find unique and special, and what strategies they think are most feasible and critical for the future of downtown.



The image shows a screenshot of the Downtown Monroe website. At the top, the logo reads "DOWNTOWN MONROE". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: HOME, ABOUT, COMMUNITY, EVENTS, DOING BUSINESS, NEWS, FORMS, PARKING, GALLERY, CONTACT. The main content area features a photograph of a downtown street scene with a church steeple in the background. Overlaid on the image is a "Downtown Master Plan" link with a "CLICK HERE" button. Two dark teal callout boxes are positioned in the foreground, each containing details for a specific survey.

Survey Name	Launched	Closed	Intent	Audience	Responses
Parking Survey	Monday, October 16th, 2017	Friday, October 27th, 2017	gather input and information about current parking challenges downtown, and potential opportunities for improvement	targeted downtown business owners and employees, also included general public (shared via Monroe News)	535 total responses; more than 300 included open-ended comments
Downtown Character Survey	Monday, November 20th, 2017	Sunday, December 31st, 2017	gauge public opinion regarding downtown Monroe, including the character of the area, top places to visit or things to do, and primary challenges or areas of needed improvement	general public (downtown residents, visitors, and employees)	162 total responses

Pop-Up Events

ACTIVITY STATIONS

The Monroe Downtown Development Authority held a series of pop-up stations throughout downtown to collect additional input, which included the same exercises as the best practices sessions above. They collected input at the following times and locations:

- » Monday, November 27, from 8:30-10:30am at Agua Dulce
- » Thursday, November 30, from 11:30am-1:30pm at Public House
- » Friday, December 1, from 6-9pm at Serendipitous

During each of these pop-up events, attendees were invited to share their thoughts about downtown Monroe through the following activity stations:

Comment Cards – participants were asked to respond to the same questions in the online downtown character survey, and the feedback was incorporated into the survey results.

Dot Maps – participants were also asked to place stickers on boards to help identify key opportunities and challenges downtown.

The results of these activities are summarized in the “What We Heard” section of this chapter.



Best Practices Summit

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The planning team met for a two-day period (December 7-8, 2017) in downtown Monroe to conduct focus group sessions with key stakeholders. The purpose of these meetings was to speak with local stakeholders and gather their input on what they see as the primary challenges and opportunities in downtown Monroe.

The following stakeholders were engaged through this process:

Downtown Business and Property Owners

- » Retail owners
- » Restaurant owners
- » Office owners
- » Downtown Monroe Business Network (DMBN)

Downtown Cultural Attractions

- » Monroe County Convention & Tourism Bureau
- » Monroe Art Guild
- » City of Monroe Parks & Recreation
- » River Raisin National Battlefield Park
- » River Raisin Center for the Arts
- » Monroe County Museum
- » Dorsch Memorial Library

Residents and Neighborhood Civic Leaders

- » Historic District Commission (HDC)
- » Citizens Planning Commission (CPC)

Economic Development Experts

- » Downtown Development Authority (DDA) - Business Development
- » City of Monroe Community Development
- » Monroe County Chamber of Commerce
- » Business Development Corporation
- » Real Estate Brokers/Agents

Transportation Agency Representatives

- » Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- » Lake Erie Transit (LET)
- » City of Monroe
- » Monroe County Road Commission

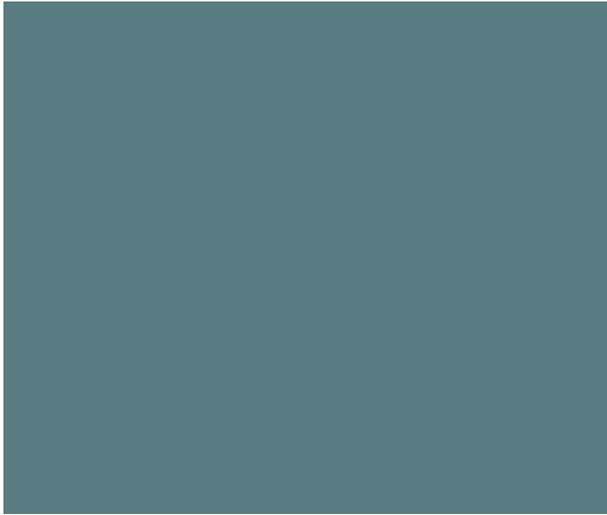
Parking Enforcement Officials

- » City of Monroe Police Department
- » Downtown Monroe Business Network (DMBN)

Public Meetings

During the same two-day period during which the consultant team held the focus group sessions, two additional meetings were held that were open to the general public. The first open public session was held on Thursday, December 7th at 6pm and included a presentation and discussion on parking and transportation best practices that were tailored for downtown Monroe. The second session was held on Friday, December 8th at 12pm and included a presentation and discussion on new trends in urban retail planning and development.

During each of these best practices sessions, attendees were invited to provide their input through the same comment cards and dot maps activities that were provided at the pop-up activity stations.



What We Heard

535
RESPONSES

PARKING SURVEY

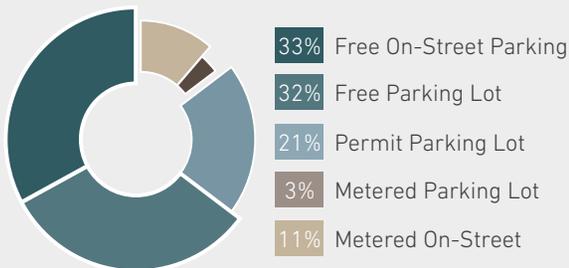
The results of the parking survey indicate that overall, the community is generally satisfied with parking downtown. Most respondents indicated that they are able to park **within a block of their final destination**, which equates to less than a 5-minute walk.

The most dissatisfaction was indicated with:

- » the ease of finding a parking space
- » the cost to park
- » the proximity of parking to destinations

Additionally, the majority (65%) of respondents indicated that they typically park in free on-street or off-street parking when they travel downtown. Another 21% indicated that they park in permit parking, which is often provided for free through employers. **Only 14% of respondents** indicated that they **typically pay for parking** downtown.

WHERE DO YOU TYPICALLY PARK?



HOW CLOSE TO YOUR DESTINATION DO YOU USUALLY PARK?



HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR DOWNTOWN PARKING EXPERIENCE?



PARKING SURVEY - COMMENTS

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments regarding parking in downtown to explain any issues in more detail, or provide insight into any areas not covered by survey questions. The most common responses are summarized in the chart to the right.

Based on the existing conditions assessment, as well as the input received through this survey, the planning team was able to identify key factors resulting in the issues that respondents are experiencing when parking downtown. These factors are also summarized in the chart, and provided a framework for the development of strategies for parking improvements.

Primary Issues Identified	Underlying Factors
The 1-hour time limit is too short	Validation program is not user-friendly
There's not enough free parking / daytime employee parking / parking close to destinations	Wayfinding for parking is minimal and unclear; public parking options are not well-distributed around downtown
Plenty of parking but don't want to walk / walking is dangerous	Crossing Monroe Street from the primary free / public parking options is unpleasant
It's too easy to get a parking ticket	Regulations vary too much, are hard to follow
Too many meters / difficult to use	Meters are coin-operated and outdated

“Who is going to shop or spend money downtown when you have to worry about getting a parking ticket.”

“The current parking regulations are too hard to understand.”



What We Heard

300+
COMMENTS

PARKING SURVEY - ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

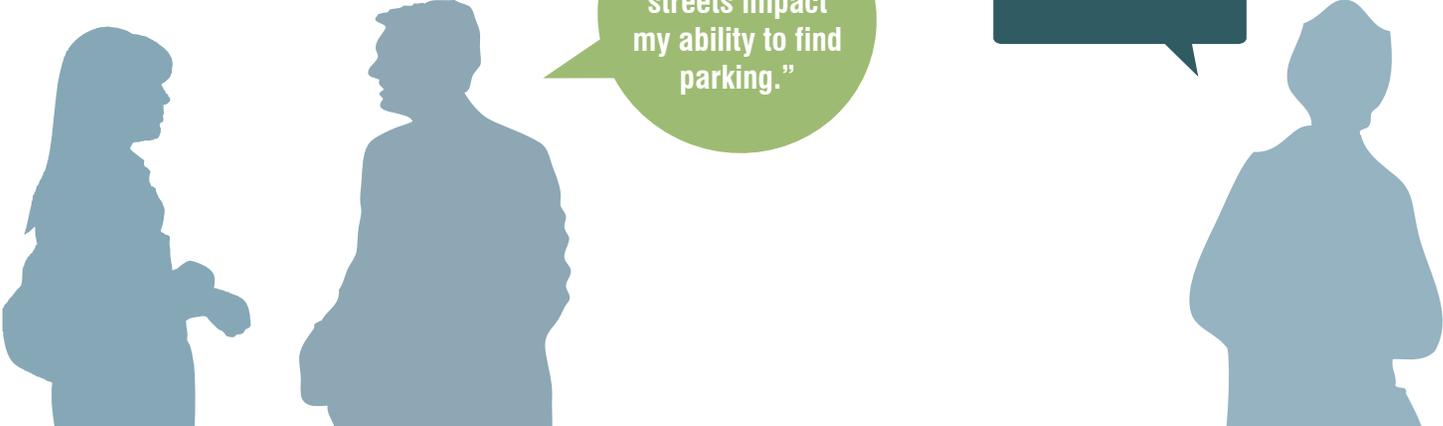
While the survey was primarily focused around parking downtown, many of the open-ended responses identified issues beyond just challenges with parking, introducing more general transportation challenges downtown. In addition to transportation-related comments, respondents also indicated that parking is not of concern to them, because they have little reason to travel downtown. Key issues identified through the open-ended survey responses are summarized in the chart to the right. The comments most commonly repeated in regard to each issue are also included in the chart, and served as an initial guide for development of recommendations.

Primary Issues Identified	Related Comments
Not many reasons to visit downtown	Fill in/activate vacant storefront spaces
	People want more shops, restaurants, and attractions
	Parking along the riverfront is not the best use
One-way streets are confusing	One-ways add to the difficulty of finding parking
No viable alternative to driving	Improve pedestrian facilities/connections and crossings
	Desire for bike lanes
	Buses don't come often enough and service ends too early in the evening
Monroe Street is a barrier	Speed of traffic on Monroe is concerning for pedestrians
Wayfinding is an issue	Parking isn't easy to find/understand

“Downtown has so much potential; more should be done to bring in new stores and restaurants.”

“The one-way streets impact my ability to find parking.”

“Slow down the traffic.”

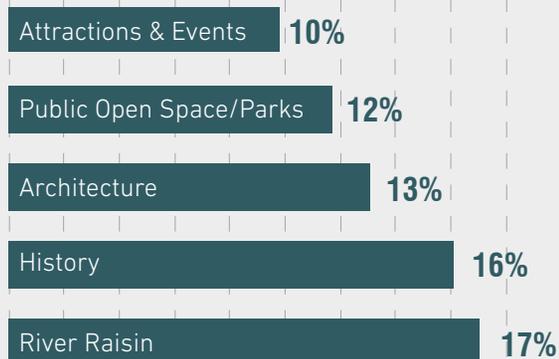


DOWNTOWN CHARACTER SURVEY

The results of the downtown character survey indicate that the River Raisin is a defining feature and significant attraction for downtown Monroe, and general upgrades to the riverfront as well as surrounding public spaces are highly desired. A large portion of respondents also indicated that the primary attraction downtown is simply the shopping and dining experience. Many respondents indicated that they would like to see more retail and restaurants downtown to increase the number and diversity of options to visit.

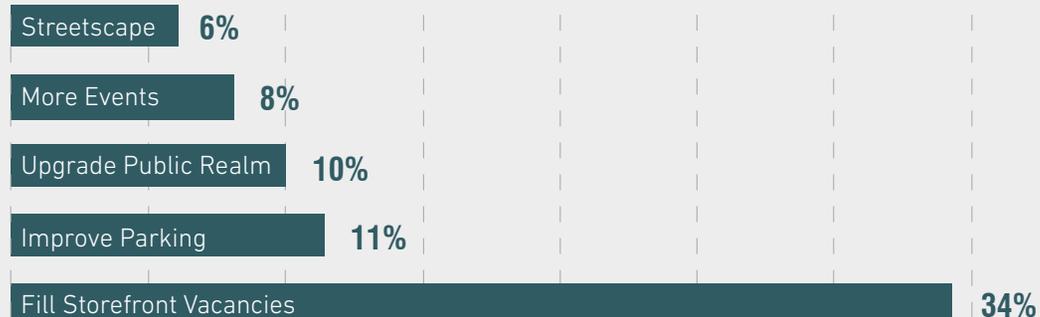
WHAT ARE THREE THINGS THAT DEFINE THE CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN?

Top 5 Responses



WHAT ARE THREE THINGS THAT COULD IMPROVE THE CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN?

Top 5 Responses



WHAT ARE YOUR THREE FAVORITE PLACES TO VISIT OR THINGS TO DO DOWNTOWN?

Top 5 Responses



What We Heard

DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIONS

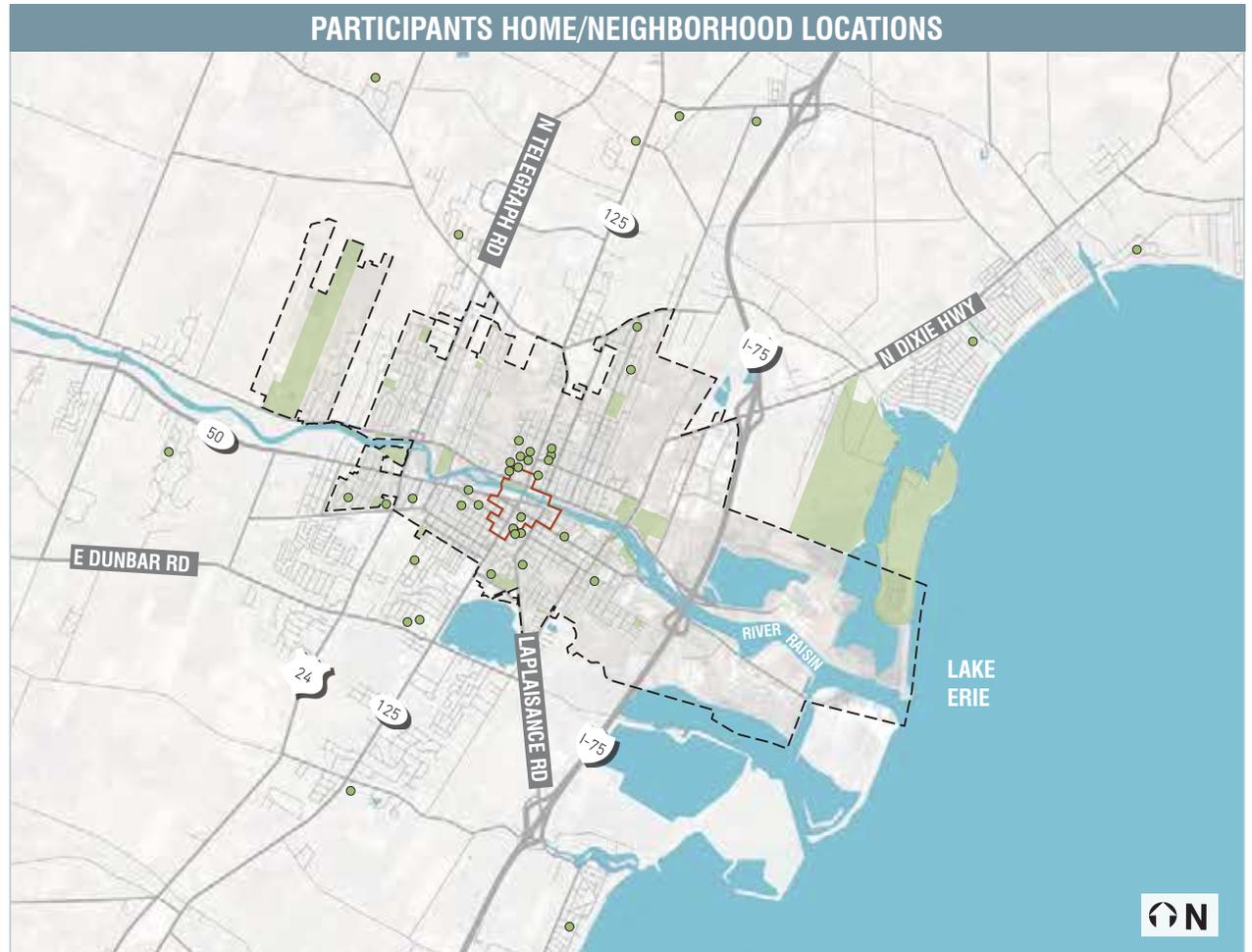
Pop-up event and public meeting participants were asked to place dots on maps of downtown to identify the following:

- » Participant Home Locations: Place a dot near your home or neighborhood
- » Key Opportunities & Challenges: Place a dot near locations that you visit or avoid downtown
- » Potential Redevelopment Sites: Place a dot on sites downtown you see as opportunities

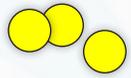
The dots that were placed on the maps were tabulated and geo-located using Geographic Information System (GIS) software, which generated the maps on the following pages.

The participant home locations, illustrated in the map to the right, indicated that participants included a variety of downtown residents, visitors, and employees. The input that was received from this group suggested that downtown is already seen as a central hub for the city, but they would like to see downtown become more of a destination for the region.

As shown in the map on the following page, participants tend to visit specific downtown destinations, such as St. Mary's Park, the Farmer's Market, and Agua Dulce. The small yellow dots represent specific input locations and the larger color areas represent the density of smaller dots.



LEGEND



PLACES YOU VISIT



CONCENTRATION OF DOTS



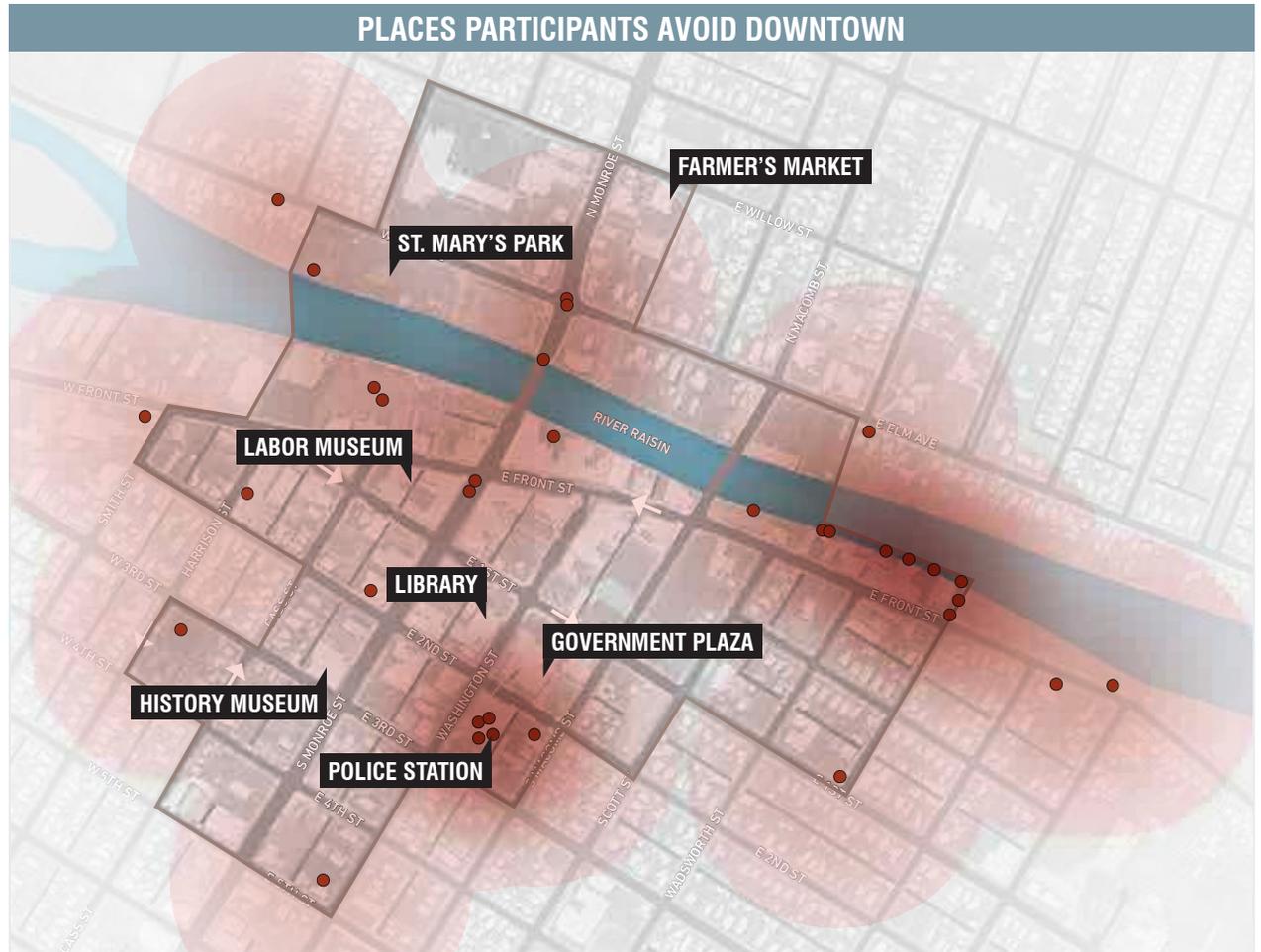
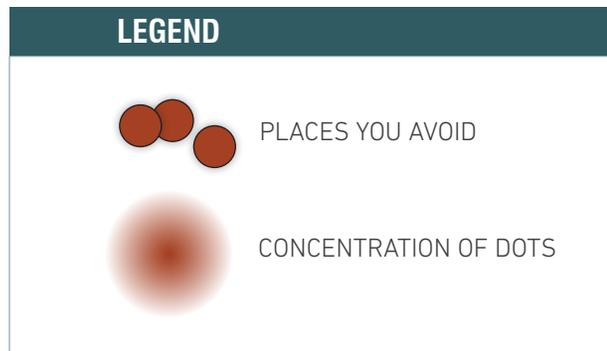
What We Heard

OPPORTUNITY SITES

The map to the right illustrates the locations identified as places that participants avoid, which includes the Police Station, large, often empty parking lots, Monroe Street, and even certain segments of the Riverwalk that are more hidden and underutilized.

The map on the following page illustrates the sites within downtown that participants identified as potential opportunities for improvements or redevelopment. This included some sites that are currently surface parking lots, but also some existing attractions downtown, such as the Farmer's Market and the riverfront, that many would like to see expanded and enhanced.

All of this data helped to guide the recommendations and strategies developed in the next chapter.



LEGEND

 OPPORTUNITY SITES

 CONCENTRATION OF DOTS



Planning Principles

HOW YOUR INPUT INFLUENCED THE PLAN

The following seven principles were developed based on the input received from project stakeholders and community members through the engagement methods previously discussed. These principles synthesize the priorities, strengths, and opportunities that have been identified for downtown Monroe. Throughout the remainder of the planning process, these principles were used as a guide in developing concepts and refining the strategic recommendations for implementation.

These principles are the key to unlocking the true potential of downtown. Investing in the public spaces along the riverfront and other key areas will help to spur private investment and future development downtown; complete streets that enable all modes of transportation will make downtown a more attractive place to live, work, and play; and investment that responds to and enhances the character and history of downtown Monroe will be the critical link.



1. CALM DOWNTOWN STREETS AND INCREASE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

- The one-way streets are confusing
- Monroe Street is a barrier
- Improvements are needed to encourage more walking



2. MAKE PARKING EASIER FOR VISITORS, RESIDENTS, AND WORKERS

- It's too easy to get a parking ticket
- The regulations are too confusing
- Parking options are not well-distributed throughout downtown



3. UPGRADE THE PUBLIC REALM

- Improve the aesthetics of downtown
- Establish consistent streetscape standards for improvements



4. ACTIVATE STOREFRONTS

- Fill the empty storefronts
- Renovate and restore buildings
- Minimize the impact of ground floor office spaces



5. IMPROVE ACCESS TO, AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF, THE RIVERWALK

- Develop and restore the riverfront
- Increase access and utilization
- Encourage adjacent buildings to activate their river frontage



6. INFILL VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED LOTS

- Create more destinations downtown
- Fill in downtown with more shops, restaurants, and things to do



7. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF UNIQUE HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

- Invest in the character of downtown
- Highlight and improve existing historic buildings

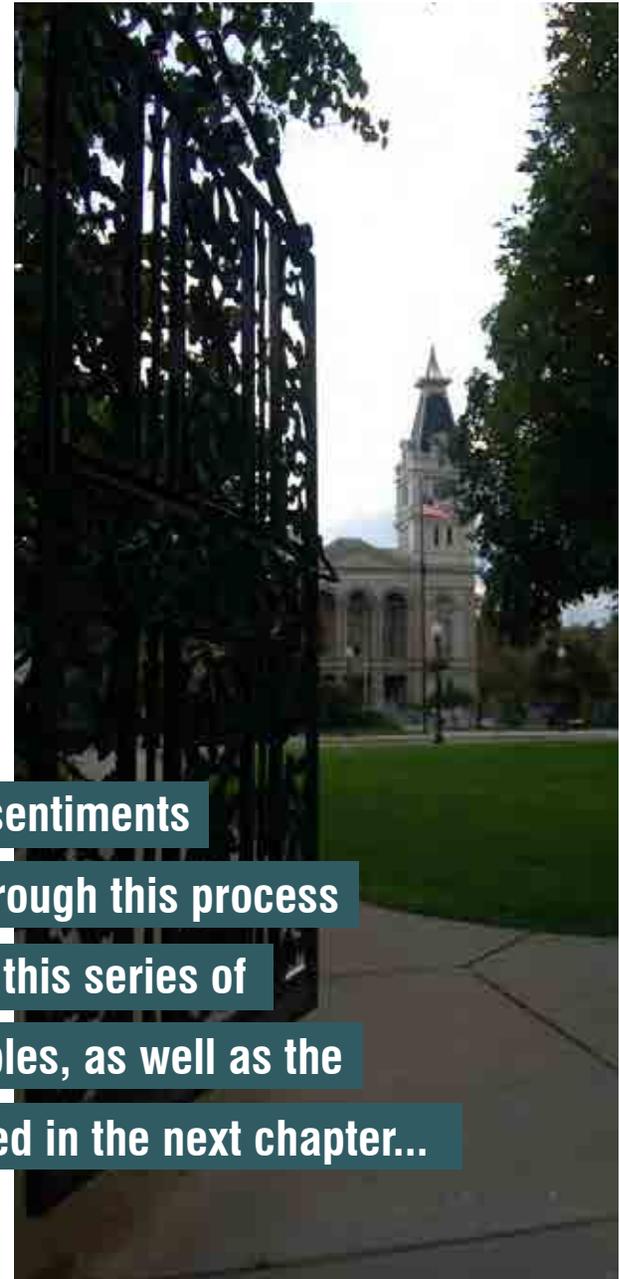
The community sentiments

identified through this process

are the basis for this series of

project principles, as well as the

strategies outlined in the next chapter...



Public Open House

60+
ATTENDEES

FEEDBACK ON STRATEGIES

A public open house was held on Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at McGeady's Pub on Monroe Street. The meeting was attended by more than 60 members of the community, including many local leaders. The format of the meeting included illustrative boards posted around the room for attendees to review and provide feedback. The planning team was present to explain and discuss any material and answer questions from community members.

The material presented on the boards included draft recommendations and strategies for downtown, based on all of the previous input that was collected. Attendees were provided comment sheets with specific questions regarding the recommendations, as well as an opportunity to provide general feedback. The majority of attendees expressed excitement over the ideas that were presented, and interest in seeing implementation of the final plan.

After the meeting, an online survey was launched with the same questions provided to meeting attendees. The online survey also included links to all of the materials presented at the open house for review. More than 140 responses to the survey were received. Results of this survey are discussed in more detail in the Planning Vision chapter.









PLANNING

VISION

This section combines the information gathered from the existing conditions assessment with the input collected from the stakeholder and community engagement to create a vision for the future of downtown Monroe. This vision is based on the seven Planning Principles developed as a result of the engagement process and includes a series of strategies and recommendations to address the issues and opportunities identified in the existing conditions chapter.

Developing a Vision

KEY TO THIS CHAPTER

The following is a brief guide to the elements of this chapter:

- » Each page title indicates the planning principle being discussed on the page.
- » Existing conditions and relevant background information is provided to explain why the strategies have been developed.
- » Comment bubbles throughout the chapter represent actual comments received from the community through public meetings, pop-up events, and online surveys.
- » The charts and graphs represent summaries of the data collected through the final online survey regarding the draft recommendations presented at the public open house on March 21, 2018.
- » Photos are representative of the strategies discussed, but may not be the exact form of the implemented strategy.
- » The Implementation chapter includes an action matrix that indicates potential timelines for implementation of each strategy.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a summary of the challenges and opportunities identified through the existing conditions assessment and community engagement process. This information helped to inform the visioning process, and guided the development of recommendations described in this chapter.

The map on the following page illustrates some of these key opportunities that will be discussed in further detail in this chapter, as well as in the Development Opportunities chapter.

Challenges

- » Lack of downtown retail
- » Uninviting downtown
- » Lack of consistent/clear wayfinding
- » Buildings show their back to the river
- » Hidden/underutilized Riverwalk
- » One-way traffic patterns are confusing
- » Complex parking regulations
- » Perception of a parking problem
- » Monroe Street is a barrier
- » Lack of accommodations for bicyclists

Opportunities

- » Proximity to regional assets
- » Infill development sites
- » Empty spaces to activate
- » Parking lots along the river
- » Overall parking surplus
- » Alley connections and public space
- » Street network with low traffic volumes
- » Compact, walkable center
- » Activity clusters throughout downtown
- » Large areas of aggregated property

LEGEND

-  ENHANCED RIVERWALK ACCESS
-  IMPROVEMENTS TO BRIDGES OVER THE RIVERWALK
-  MARKET AREA ENHANCEMENTS
-  OPPORTUNITY SITES
-  GREEN SPACE ENHANCEMENTS
-  RIVERWALK ENHANCEMENTS
-  PLACEPLAN ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS
-  TWO-WAY CONVERSION
-  MONROE STREET RECONFIGURATION





CONVERTING ONE-WAY STREETS TO TWO-WAY

Previous Plans

The Monroe Citywide Master Plan and the River Raisin Heritage Corridor East Master Plan both identify one-way streets in downtown as a significant barrier to connectivity and propose converting key one-way streets to two-way to improve access.

Pros and Cons

The primary purpose of one-way streets is to move as much traffic through an area as quickly as possible. For this reason, one-way streets often exhibit higher traffic speeds and more crashes. These conditions are not conducive for downtown retail environments.

Benefits of converting one-way streets to two-way can include the following:

- » Safer traffic speeds
- » Less confusion for drivers
- » More vibrant retail environment
- » Easier access and wayfinding to parking, businesses, and destinations
- » Fewer vehicle miles traveled by eliminating indirect routes to destinations
- » Safer pedestrian conditions and more livable, flexible streets

Potential negative impacts of converting one-way streets to two-way can include the following:

- » Increased wait time for motorists stopped at traffic signals
- » Less space within the right-of-way for other uses (bike lanes, on-street parking, etc.)
- » Possible loss of *some* existing on-street parking spaces

Strategies

Key streets in downtown Monroe that have been identified for conversion from one-way to two-way include the following:

- » **Front and First Streets** - this one-way pair was originally designed to move traffic through downtown. These streets no longer serve this purpose, but remain key connections into, through, and out of downtown. Converting them to two-way will help reduce confusion for everyone trying to drive downtown.
- » **Harrison and Cass Streets** - this one-way pair is primarily residential in context, sitting on the western edge of downtown. The right-of-way is wide enough throughout most of each corridor to continue to accommodate on-street parking, as well as two-way travel.

“One-way streets can pose a challenge to those unfamiliar with the area.”

“The one-way streets impact my ability to find parking.”



Case Studies

PREVIOUS PLANS



The Citywide Master Plan proposes converting a series of one-way street pairs back to two-way to help improve connectivity downtown:

- » Cass Street and Harrison Street
- » Front Street and 1st Street
- » Godfroy Avenue and Borgess Avenue
- » Willow Street and Vine Street
- » 7th Street and 8th Street

The River Raisin Heritage Corridor East Master Plan proposes converting Front and First to two-way to improve access to downtown from the National Battlefield Park.

GAY STREET | COLUMBUS, OH



In 2008, an 11-block length of Gay Street in downtown Columbus became the inaugural project for converting car-oriented, one-way roads into two-way pedestrian-friendly neighborhood streets. Since 2008, the improved Gay Street corridor has spurred \$140 million in private investment including 11 new restaurants and bars, 300+ residential units, a 126-room hotel, and downtown's first urban grocery store.

In addition to the economic benefits, expanded sidewalks provide a buffer for the many outdoor seating areas being opened by local restaurants, and the raised urban median that bursts to life each spring with flowering trees slows traffic speeds and increases pedestrian safety.



Public Input

More than half (61%) of survey respondents indicated that they would either support the two-way conversions, or don't feel strongly about it either way. Another 19% of respondents stated they would like to learn more about the potential impacts before supporting the conversions.

About 20% of respondents do not support converting these streets, and provided comments citing concerns about loss of on-street parking and increases in congestion. Further study and modeling of the proposed circulation changes would help to understand the potential impacts.

Next Steps

The steps toward implementing these two-way conversions are as follows:

- » Study the feasibility of the conversions in combination with any other changes to the street network (build a traffic model for the downtown street network).
- » Determine if the traffic impacts of these changes are worth the benefits to safety, livability, and access.
- » Work with MDOT to convert the necessary traffic signals and restripe the roads.

HOW MUCH WOULD YOU SUPPORT THE CONVERSION OF THE IDENTIFIED ONE-WAY STREETS TO TWO-WAY?



Public Survey Responses

- 37% **I would support** converting the one-way streets to two-way
- 24% **I don't feel strongly** about it either way
- 19% **I would like to learn more** about the potential impacts before deciding
- 20% **I don't support** converting one-way streets to two-way

"I would rather see the extra space re-purposed for other uses."

"I think this would be great. I live on Harrison Street and at least once a week we see people driving the wrong way."



IMPROVING STREET CIRCULATION



ENHANCED INTERSECTION



TWO-WAY CONVERSION



MONROE STREET RECONFIGURATION





RECONFIGURING MONROE STREET

Previous Plans

Previous planning efforts have evaluated the feasibility of reconfiguring the lanes on Monroe Street through downtown. A traffic analysis was conducted in 2014 and found that a road diet to reduce Monroe Street (between Third and Front Streets) from two lanes in each direction to only one lane in each direction was feasible with some adjustments to the traffic signal timing.

Pros and Cons

Monroe Street is a state highway and primary arterial serving not only downtown, but the City of Monroe and beyond. While Monroe Street serves as an important regional connector, it also serves as a significant barrier through the core of downtown in its current form, limiting walkability and negatively impacting the potential for a successful retail district along Monroe Street.

The street is approximately 65 feet wide from curb to curb, with five vehicular lanes and one on-street parking lane. Traffic moves quickly along Monroe Street through downtown, and motorists often pay little attention to pedestrians crossing the street. The street environment is generally uninviting for anyone who is not driving through Monroe.

A reconfiguration of the existing right-of-way could result in a much-improved experience along the street through downtown. Benefits of implementing a road diet on Monroe Street could include:

- » Safer traffic speeds
- » Increased safety for all users (motorists, pedestrians, etc.)
- » Reduction in number and severity of crashes
- » Additional space within the right-of-way for other uses (such as on-street parking, bike lanes, wider sidewalks, etc.)
- » Reduction in the overall crossing distance for pedestrians
- » Street environment supportive of a quality retail street

Potential negative impacts of implementing a road diet on Monroe Street could include:

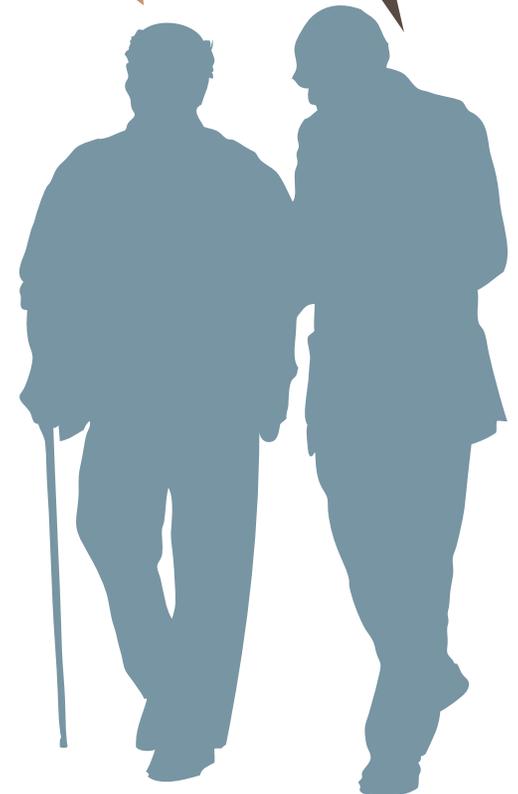
- » Increased delay to motorists traveling *through* downtown Monroe

Best Practices

Traffic volumes on Monroe Street through downtown vary between 17,000 - 21,000 vehicles per day (vpd). Road diets are typically implemented on streets with fewer than 20,000 vpd, but have been implemented successfully on streets with volumes up to 24,000.

“Drivers are not paying attention to people trying to cross the street.”

“The speed limit on Monroe Street needs to be lower.”



Case Studies

INDIANOLA AVENUE | COLUMBUS, OH

» 15,000 - 20,000 Vehicles per Day

BEFORE



AFTER



Indianola Avenue in Columbus, OH

Indianola Avenue is located north of downtown Columbus in a primarily residential neighborhood, but serves as a key arterial and north-south connection. It runs parallel to I-71, the primary north-south expressway connecting the suburbs to downtown, and often serves as a relief route.

The corridor is residential to the west, and a mix of industrial and commercial on the east side. After years of study and community engagement, the street was reconfigured from four lanes to three lanes with bike lanes on each side. After the road diet was implemented, a series of new mixed-use buildings were constructed along the corridor. While peak hour traffic sometimes experiences delay on the corridor, the road diet has not significantly impacted traffic flow along the corridor.

LANE AVENUE | UPPER ARLINGTON, OH

» 17,000 - 21,000 Vehicles per Day

BEFORE



AFTER



Lane Avenue in Upper Arlington, OH

Upper Arlington is a suburb of Columbus, Ohio with a slightly larger population than Monroe. Lane Avenue serves as one of the key east-west arterials running through the city, providing a connection to two major state highways, as well as the Ohio State University and surrounding University District.

The street was converted from four lanes to three lanes with on-street parking on one side. After the road diet was implemented, property along the corridor was redeveloped into medium density mixed-used with residential and retail.

Calm Downtown Streets



RECONFIGURING MONROE STREET

Strategies

The following options were presented to the community for reconfiguration of Monroe Street through downtown.

No Changes

This option would leave the existing configuration of Monroe Street as it is, with two travel lanes in each direction, a center two-way left-turn lane, and a parking lane on one side.

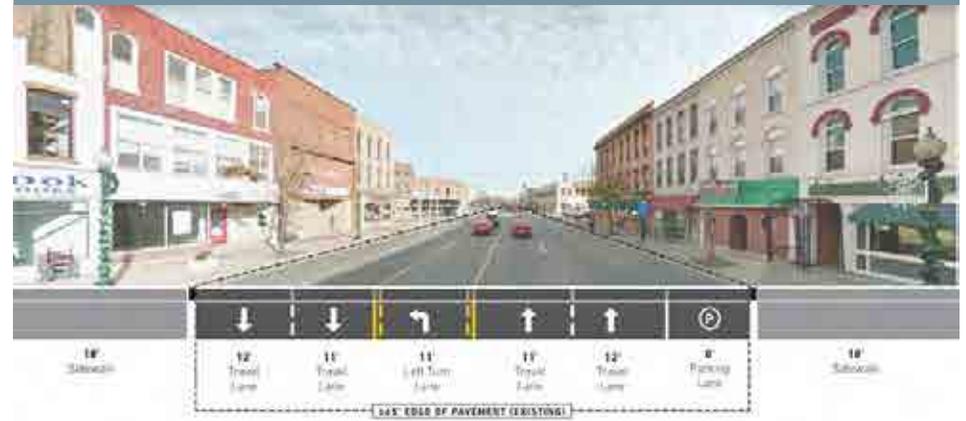
Enhance Existing

This option would also leave the existing configuration of Monroe Street primarily as it is, with two travel lanes in each direction, a center left-turn lane, and a parking lane on one side. However, it would include the installation of a landscaped median within the center turn lane where feasible, and the turn lane would only exist at the intersection rather than running the entire block. In addition to a median, this option would also include the installation of bump-outs in the parking lane at each corner. These bump-outs would not impact parking and would narrow the crossing distance for pedestrians, increasing safety and visibility for crossing the street.

“Trying to park on Monroe Street is kind of scary.”



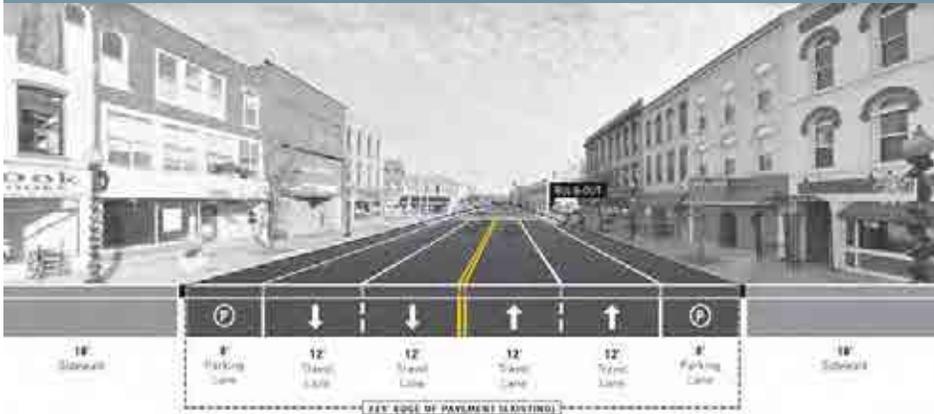
EXISTING CONDITIONS - NO CHANGES



ENHANCE EXISTING CONFIGURATION



PROHIBIT LEFT TURNS



MOVE THE CURBS

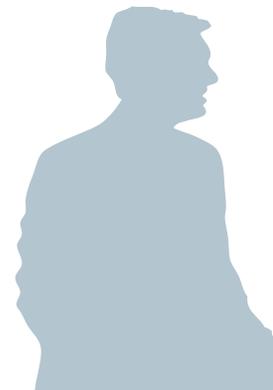


Prohibit Left Turns

This option would remove the left-turn lane completely and prohibit left-turns at the intersections. This would allow for the addition of a parking lane on the west side of the street, as well as bump-outs on both sides of the street. If Front Street and 1st Street remain one-way, circulation downtown could become more complicated with the restriction of left-turns from Monroe Street. Ideally, this would be implemented in combination with the two-way conversion of Front Street and 1st Street.

Move the Curbs

This option would leave the existing configuration of Monroe Street, with two travel lanes in each direction and a center two-way left-turn lane, but would cut into the existing sidewalk on the west side to add another parking lane. The existing sidewalk is approximately 18 feet wide, which is an appropriate width for a downtown retail street. Cutting 5 feet out of this sidewalk would allow for the addition of a parking lane and leave around 13 feet for the sidewalk. However, this would also require narrowing the existing travel lanes slightly to gain the additional 3 feet needed for the parking lane. The narrower travel lanes would help to reduce traffic speeds through downtown, while still providing adequate space for safe and efficient traffic flow. This option, however, would increase the crossing distance for pedestrians.



“There are so many bicyclists downtown. Let’s make it safe for them to ride.”

Calm Downtown Streets



RECONFIGURING MONROE STREET

Road Diet with Bike Lanes

This option would alter the existing configuration of Monroe Street by removing a single travel lane in each direction. This would allow for the addition of a parking lane on the west side of the street, as well as buffered bike lanes on each side of the street. This arrangement could be alternatively configured with the bike lanes at the curbside, and “floating” parking lanes between the bike lane and the adjacent travel lane. Both of these configurations have been successful in cities throughout the United States.

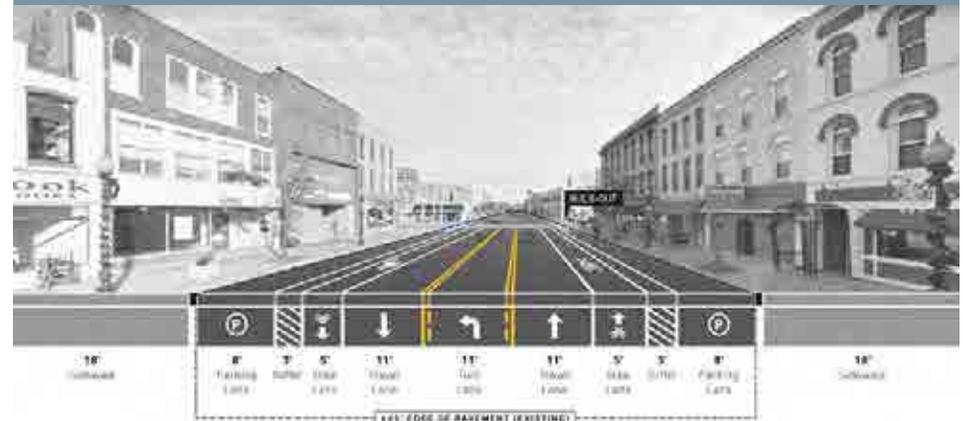
Road Diet with Pedestrian Improvements

This option would also alter the existing configuration of Monroe Street by removing a single travel lane in each direction. This would allow for the addition of a parking lane on the west side of the street, but instead of adding bike lanes, it would increase the width of the existing sidewalks on each side of the street. This would allow for significantly improved pedestrian and streetscape amenities, including street trees, outdoor dining, sidewalk shopping, and all of the high-quality elements that contribute to a successful retail environment.

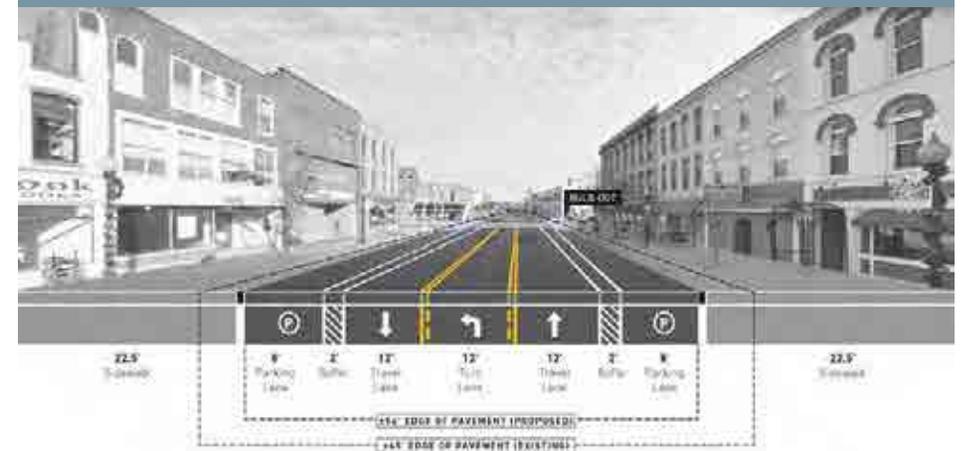
“Make the street easier to cross without losing parking so that people can shop and hang out at restaurants that will hopefully open.”



ROAD DIET WITH BIKE LANES

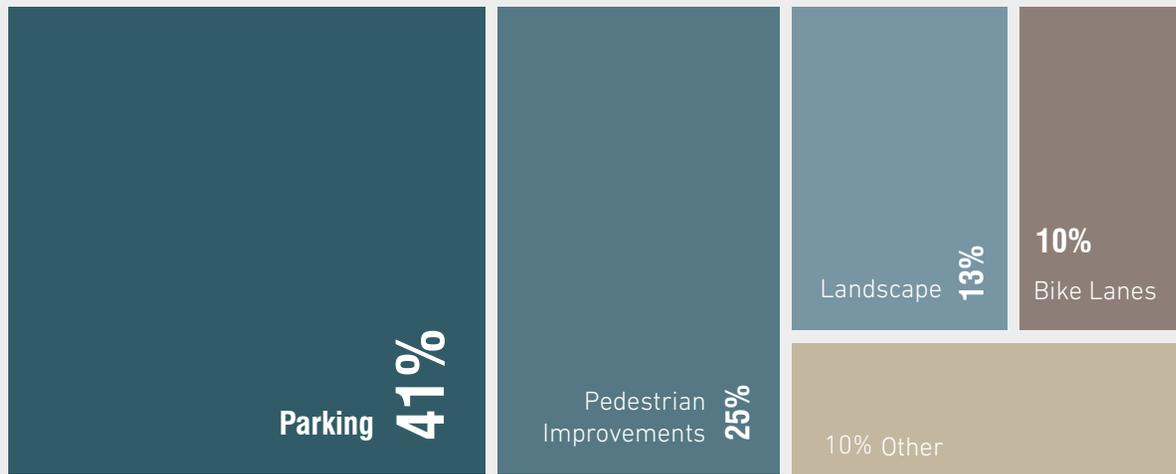


ROAD DIET WITH PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



WHAT SHOULD BE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR MONROE STREET?

Public Survey Responses



Public Input

Survey respondents indicated that the highest priority for the reconfiguration of Monroe Street is making sure the west side of the street gets a parking lane. Comments indicated that respondents are divided as to how the parking lane is added, as some would also like to see wider sidewalks or bike lanes, while others would rather keep two lanes of traffic in each direction.

The second highest priority for respondents was pedestrian improvements. Many of the respondents who selected "parking" and "other" as their response also indicated in their comments that pedestrian improvements are equally as important. Landscaping and bike lanes were the lowest priorities for respondents, and traffic flow was listed as a concern for many who chose "other" as their priority.

Next Steps

The steps toward implementing a reconfiguration of Monroe Street are as follows:

- » Study the feasibility of each Monroe Street configuration in combination with one-way to two-way conversions (traffic modeling).
- » Determine if the traffic impacts of the changes are worth the benefits to safety and livability.
- » Work with MDOT to coordinate any changes to the roadway.

"The center median with larger trees with left turn breakouts would considerably improve the appearance of Monroe street"



"The street is fine as it is. Speeds need to be reduced to 25 and strongly enforced."

Make Parking Easier



PARKING STRATEGIES

Current Parking Conditions

As shown in the Existing Conditions chapter, the current parking system downtown is underutilized, and has much more capacity than current demand. While this is the case system-wide, there are certain locations downtown that experience higher demand than others, and thus create a perception of a parking problem. Additionally, the engagement process identified issues with the current parking regulations and pricing system. Some reorganization and implementation of a few key management strategies can help to relieve many of these identified issues and improve the overall parking experience.

Strategies

Simplify the Regulations:

- » Create and clearly identify three, basic on-street parking options across downtown:
 - Unlimited parking
 - 2-hour parking
 - 1-hour parking
- » Make all options free, for now and until demand begins to constrain availability.
- » Where 2-hour spaces remain under-utilized, consider creating employee permits that provide exemption from time limits.

Use Pricing to Maintain Availability:

- » If the loss of meter revenue is a concern, the existing outdated meters should be replaced with new, modern meters placed in the locations with the highest demand.
- » Where and when availability becomes constrained over time, modern meters with a pay-by-phone option should be installed and set at a rate of at least \$1.00 per hour.

Update the Validation Program:

- » Enforce time limits consistently, and with the use of 1st-Time Forgiveness tickets – informational “warning” tickets for the first overtime violations – combined with a progressive fine structure, such as:
 - The first ticket within any 12-month period is free, consists of a warning note;
 - A second violation within 12 months incurs a normative fine; and
 - Fines for subsequent violations go up substantially, perhaps doubling each time.
- » This can accomplish the same ends, with less processing, as the current program, and can be applied to all drivers, irrespective of which businesses they patronize.
- » Phase out the current Validation program, by continuing it for six months, after the new enforcement program is put into place.

EXAMPLE WARNING TICKET



SIMPLIFY THE REGULATIONS

- 1 HR LIMIT PARKING
- 2 HR LIMIT PARKING
- UNLIMITED PARKING
- RESTRICTED / NO PARKING
- OFF-STREET PARKING LOTS



Make Parking Easier



PARKING STRATEGIES

Organize Commercial Loading:

- » Provide loading zones for commercial deliveries in place of on-street parking during early morning periods (between 6-10am)
- » Designated loading zones can vary by day of week and can also allow for valet parking, as well as general pickup and dropoff.

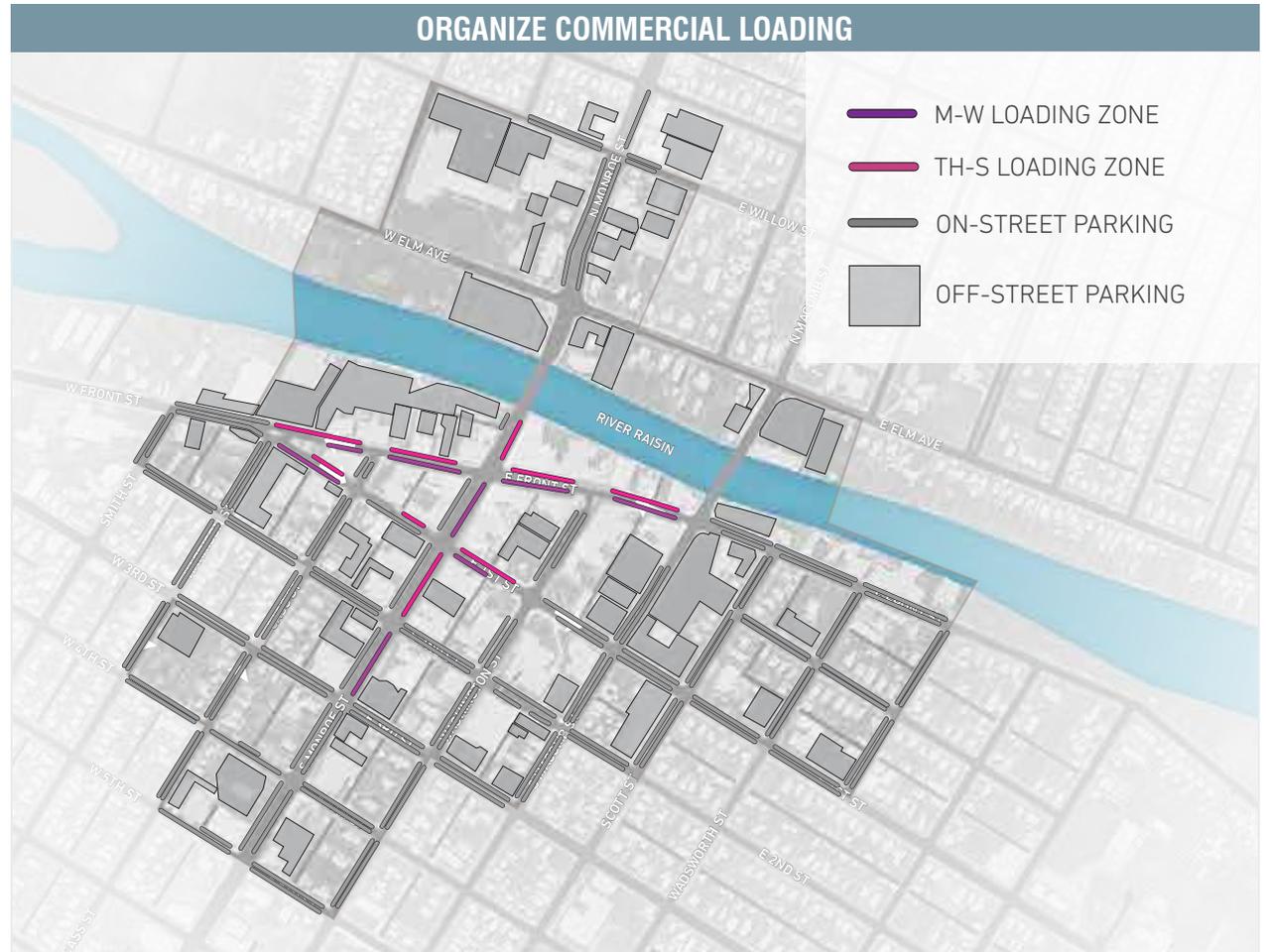
Create Visitor Priority Parking Lots:

- » Prohibit parking until 10am to help preserve availability until after the morning commute peak is over, and most employees have parked.
- » Visitors who need parking before 10am can use secondary lots or on-street parking.

Remove Time Limits:

- » Consistent availability among on-street spaces should reduce or eliminate the need to maintain time limits in off-street lots.
- » Not having to worry about overtime violations is the primary incentive to use these facilities, relative to the appeal of on-street parking. Placing time limits on these spaces reduces their appeal.
- » Within mixed-use lots (visitors and employees), visitor-priority spaces can be set aside until 10am to maintain availability.

ORGANIZE COMMERCIAL LOADING



VISITOR PARKING OPTIONS

- ON-STREET PARKING
- SECONDARY VISITOR LOTS
- VISITOR PRIORITY LOTS
- OTHER PARKING LOTS



Make Parking Easier



PARKING STRATEGIES

Create Employee Permits for On-Street Parking

- » Create permits for downtown employees to use underutilized blocks of curbside parking, exempt from time limits.
- » This can be the same or similar to the permit offered to exempt vehicles from time limits in several lots today.
- » This can also include daytime-only permits for use on streets that have Residential Permit Parking and are currently underutilized.
- » On-street employee permits could help to reduce the demand on employee parking lots and provide an additional source of revenue for the parking fund.

Create Resident Permits for Overnight Parking

- » Create residential permits for use in underutilized parking lots to support increased residential growth downtown, without requiring new parking supplies.
- » Allow long-term parking in parking lots prioritized for visitor parking, which tend to experience excess parking capacity outside of weekday, mid-day peaks.
- » Permit parking in high demand lots and on-street spaces can be restricted to evening and overnight use (4pm to 10am) to ensure this does not reduce availability for employee and visitor parking.

Use License Plate Recognition to Discourage Employee Parking in Prime On-Street Spaces:

- » Enforcing time limits via License-Plate Recognition technology can be particularly effective for reducing employees parking in time-limited on-street spaces.
- » This technology captures overtime violations more consistently, including vehicles that move from one side of the street to the other (a common means by which employees can evade manual enforcement practices).

Enable Shared Parking for Private Parking Lots

- » Expand effective capacities by making more existing parking supply publicly accessible.
- » Work with private facility owners to negotiate terms for allowing employee-permit and/or public parking during set days and times.
- » Pay-by-phone systems can make it easy for owners to monetize this access, something that has proven an effective shared-parking incentive in many cities across the U.S.

“As long as the parking strategies are clear, simple, and easy to understand, I think that all of the strategies could be beneficial.”

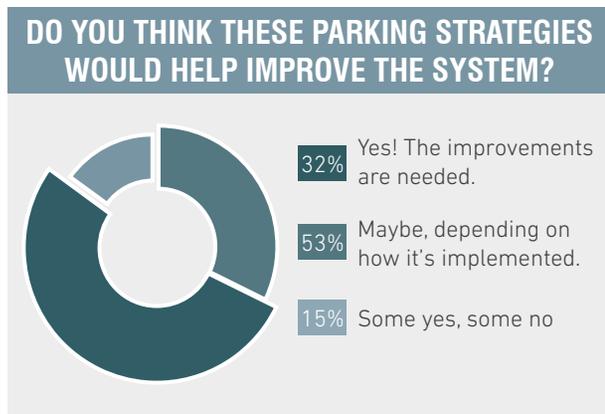
“It would be great if it were free, but I would also be happy with options that don’t require me to actually carry around coins.”



Public Input

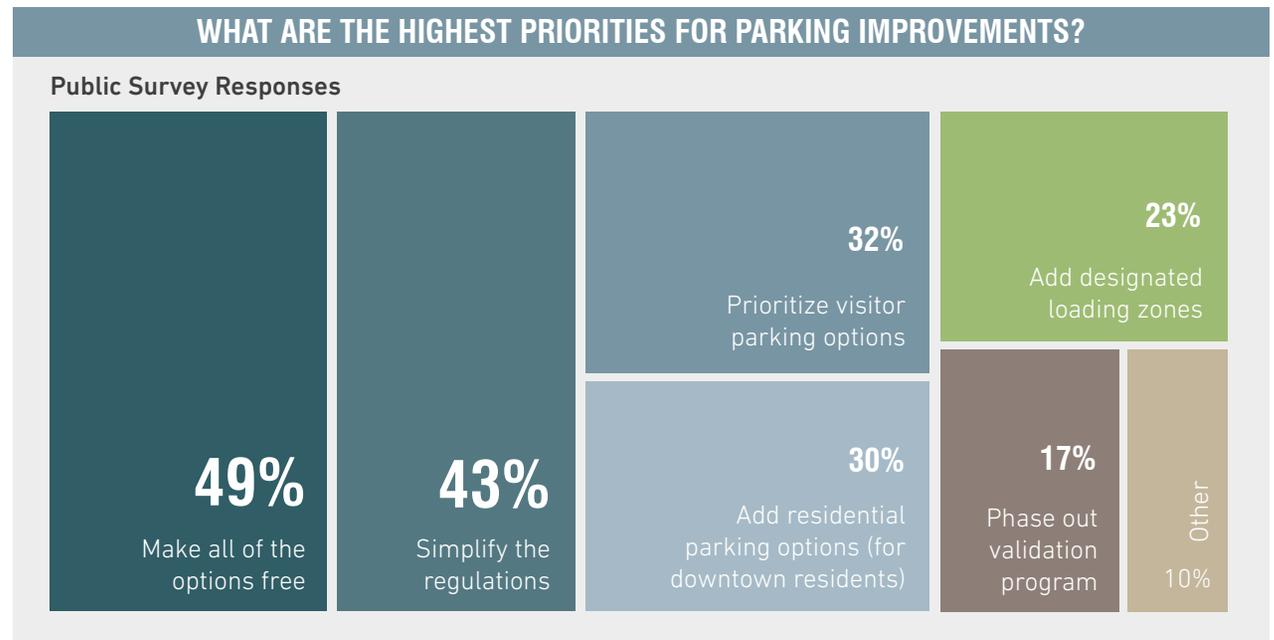
Nearly all (85%) of survey respondents indicated that they think the parking strategies would improve the system, or might improve the system, depending on how they are implemented. Many of the respondents who selected “maybe” indicated in their comments that they agree with the strategies, but either did not see a problem with parking downtown or are indifferent about the situation.

The remaining 15% of respondents had very specific concerns and were only interested in seeing one or two of the strategies implemented. The concerns and priorities varied significantly amongst those respondents.



The highest priorities for parking improvements amongst all respondents were to make all of the parking downtown free, and to simplify the regulations. The second highest priorities included prioritizing visitor parking options and adding residential parking options. Adding designated loading zones and phasing out the validation program were less of a priority for respondents.

The respondents who selected “other” as a priority had varied responses, some indicating again that they do not see a parking problem downtown, while others noted a need for a parking structure. Many simply restated their desire to see simplified regulations and free parking.





CREATE DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

Current Conditions and Strategies

While the downtown area itself is fairly small, there are a few clusters of activity within the downtown that have begun to form their own unique identity. This can help to guide investment downtown in things like wayfinding, streetscape improvements, etc. The following are potential “districts” that could be established within the project study area:

Market District – the Market District is the area north of the river, immediately adjacent to Monroe Street and primarily on the east side between Vine Street and Elm Avenue. This district is centered around the existing Farmer’s Market, and the new restaurants that have opened on the east side of Monroe Street.

Riverfront District – the Riverfront District runs the length of the study area from east to west, directly along the River Raisin. This includes St. Mary’s Park and the riverfront parking lots, which have the potential to be redeveloped in the future to become even more of a key destination for Monroe. The Riverfront District also includes the entirety of the Riverwalk, as well as the edges of the properties that connect to the Riverwalk. This district is prime territory for taking advantage of the river as an amenity, and establishing it as more of a destination.

Creative District – the Creative District includes the variety of cultural amenities that already exist within the western portion of downtown. This includes the Monroe County Museum, the River Raisin Center for the Arts, and other unique and artistic attractions.

Commercial Core – the Commercial Core is the center of downtown Monroe. This area represents the core business district, with the highest density of retail, restaurants, and shops in downtown.

Civic District – the Civic District is the civic core of downtown, centered around City Hall and including the Dorsch Memorial Library, the Monroe County Courthouse, and City and County Police Departments.

While these areas represent unique districts within downtown, the downtown itself should remain a singular, unified district. It will be important to ensure that the individual districts are identified in a manner that is consistent throughout downtown and falls within a larger framework of downtown identity.

RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

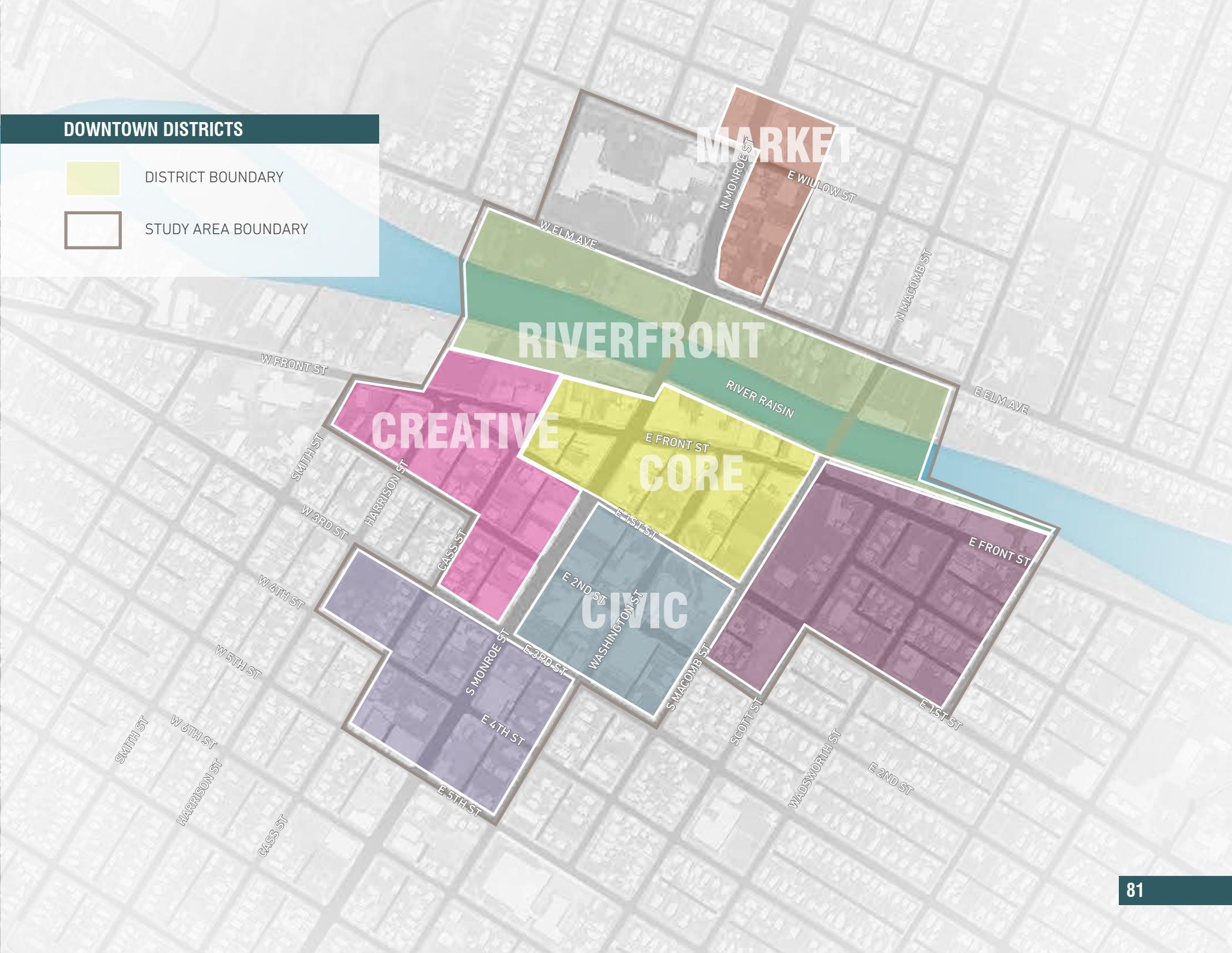


CORE DISTRICT - MONROE ST



DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Upgrade the Public Realm



CREATE SAFE, PLEASANT STREETS

Current Conditions and Strategies

Streetscape and alley improvements have been made in some sections of downtown in recent years, but there has been no consistent approach to design throughout the district. Bump-outs have been installed in many locations, increasing sidewalk widths and narrowing pedestrian crossings, and marked crosswalks are fairly frequent in much of downtown, but even the design of these features is inconsistent.

It is recommended that Monroe develop streetscape design standards for downtown to help create a more cohesive streetscape throughout downtown. These standards should reflect and complement downtown Monroe's unique historic character.

Key considerations for the development of downtown streetscape standards include:

- » Street trees are important elements, particularly on retail streets, but should be high canopy trees and be spaced appropriately so as to not block storefront signage or entries.

- » Outdoor dining can enhance the streetscape by activating the building edge, but it should be designed to allow for appropriate dining space while not interfering with pedestrian travel along the sidewalk.
- » Additional streetscape amenities, such as lighting, benches, and trash receptacles, should be located outside of the pedestrian travel way in a designated amenity zone.
- » Alleys are a critical component in the street network and also provide opportunities for enhanced pedestrian connectivity. They should be designed with similar streetscape standards as a typical street, but should be designed to prioritize pedestrian travel.
- » Alleys can also be designed as public spaces, with programmatic features such as outdoor dining and moveable furniture, overhead lighting, and art installations. Alleys are also easy places to install green infrastructure, such as permeable pavement material, to better manage stormwater runoff.
- » Wayfinding signage and art installations can come in many forms, but it is critical to have a cohesive system to make it easier to use and to ensure it adds to the aesthetic of downtown.

KEY COMPONENTS OF STREETScape



OUTDOOR DINING



ACTIVATED ALLEYS



WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



Pedestrian wayfinding is an opportunity to make a statement about downtown, and even the districts within downtown. Wayfinding signage can have an interpretive component that shares interesting or historical information about downtown, or it might just include maps and walking times to destinations.

Wayfinding can include light pole banners, sign posts, free-standing signs, and even information kiosks, but can also be as simple as paint on a wall or other surface pointing in the direction of a nearby destination. Often these signs and materials include some type of branding that establishes a unified identity for downtown or individual districts.

Next Steps

The steps toward upgrading the public realm include:

- » Establish streetscape design standards to improve the pedestrian realm
- » Work with existing businesses to promote sidewalk shopping and outdoor seating
- » Implement wayfinding downtown that highlights walk times to popular destinations (and parking)
- » Implement the alley improvements recommended in the Heart of Monroe Plan

“Post some ‘You Are Here’ maps showing retail shopping and eating locations, and keep them updated.”

“Bring back the flower pots downtown!”



Beyond the quality of the streetscape, another critical component of walkability is wayfinding. People are more likely to walk, and walk longer distances, when they know exactly where they are headed or have signage and directions to follow. Wayfinding signage is also key to providing an accessible and more interesting visitor experience. Wayfinding in downtown Monroe today is fairly minimal, and is more oriented toward motorists than to pedestrians.

Activate Storefronts



POP-UPS FILL VACANT STOREFRONTS



STOREFRONT ART DISPLAYS



DESIGN STANDARDS AND POP-UPS

Current Conditions and Strategies

Many of downtown Monroe's first-floor spaces (around 34%) are presently occupied with professional offices rather than retailers. These offices can limit cross-shopping between businesses and limit its necessary critical mass of shopping. Window-less first-floor offices can be especially negative for urban shopping districts. However, offices can generate visitors to downtown and their employees help to support downtown restaurants and shops.

Rather than requiring first-floor retail uses, it is recommended that Monroe require all first-floor spaces be designed with high ceilings, large clear windows, operating doors, sign bands, etc. to allow for both retail and office uses, while creating more appealing storefronts.

Approximately 15% of downtown storefronts are currently vacant, which is higher than the typical vacancy rate for thriving downtowns (less than 10%). Empty or inactive storefronts, as well as blank facades, add to a perception of inactivity and deter people from walking through downtown. A long-term tenanting strategy that retains and nurtures local businesses will, with time, bring back life to some of these vacant buildings.

TRANSPARENT, INVITING STOREFRONTS



FARMER'S MARKET PROGRAMMING



Downtown Retail Assessment

DOWNTOWN MONROE

Gibbs Planning Group made the following assessment of downtown Monroe:

- » Downtown Monroe has one of southeast Michigan's most complete historic districts, creating an opportunity to develop a unique and highly desirable shopping district.
- » The downtown area has great architectural character, however many of the buildings are in need of new/enhanced storefronts.
- » Many of the first floor spaces are occupied with professional offices that create unappealing storefronts. These spaces should be retrofitted to reflect vibrant storefronts to help create a more unified district, even if the use inside is not retail.
- » A grocery store or public market could also provide needed goods and services for downtown residents, as well as promote additional residential development downtown. Ideally, a public market would be located in the core commercial district.

In the shorter term, these empty structures or facades can be activated with temporary solutions, such as pop-up retail, artistic displays, and interactive installations. Another trend for filling vacant commercial spaces in downtowns is creating shared office spaces, or "co-working" spaces, where users pay a daily, weekly, or monthly fee for a desk or office, an internet connection, and basic amenities.

A full business incubator would add several elements to this co-working concept, including counseling, mentorship, and educational programs that enable business growth and expansion. The ultimate goal for these incubator spaces would be for businesses to outgrow that space and "graduate" into their own storefront or other location downtown. Supporting this type of business incubation downtown brings some new activity into otherwise vacant storefronts and also serves as an economic development tool that catalyzes future investment.

A similar concept explored in the *Resilient Monroe* plan was the idea of a food hub, or an organization that actively manages the distribution of locally sourced food. This strategy could be integrated with efforts to expand the Monroe Farmer's Market, and potentially grow the market across the river into the core downtown area.

The expansion and enhancement of the existing Farmer's Market is discussed in more detail in the Development Opportunities chapter, but at a minimum should include programming that helps to enhance the existing space it occupies. This could include moveable seating and other features that allow people to gather and spend time rather than simply parking, shopping, and then leaving. The programming should enable the market to extend the hours and days of operation.

"Nicer storefronts would improve the look of downtown."

"Find a way to fill the empty buildings!"



Activate Storefronts



Public Input

Nearly all (84%) of survey respondents indicated that they would prioritize filling the vacant storefronts downtown over any other strategy to activate downtown. Even the respondents who selected “other” as a response indicated in their comments that the most important action for downtown was getting rid of the empty and blank storefronts.

The second priority for survey respondents was adding outdoor dining and sidewalk shopping to activate the streetscape in front of the stores. Improving pedestrian conditions and establishing storefront design standards were less of a priority, but still important to respondents.

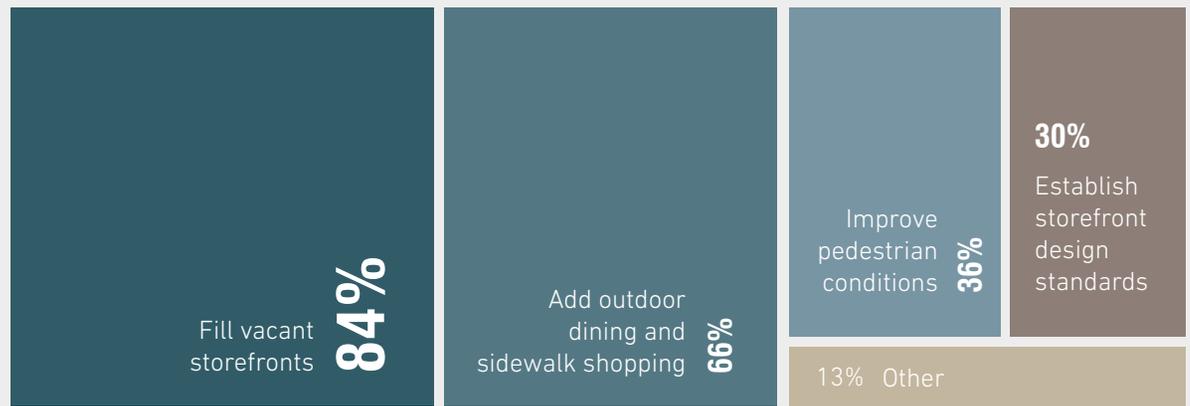
Next Steps

The steps toward activating storefronts include:

- » Animate empty storefronts with pop-up events, temporary art installations, incubator spaces
- » Work with existing businesses to support and encourage more lively window displays
- » Coordinate with the Farmer’s Market to enhance the overall market experience; work with adjacent property owners to expand the market activities and parking
- » Establish storefront design standards

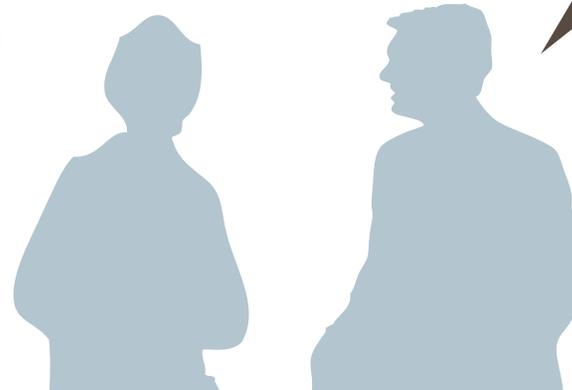
WHAT ARE THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR ACTIVATING DOWNTOWN?

Public Survey Responses



“There shouldn’t be any empty storefronts. The offices should be required to have something on their facades.”

“Encourage more events downtown that would bring in people of all ages.”



Enhance the Riverwalk



IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE RIVER

Current Conditions and Strategies

The riverfront throughout downtown is currently underutilized and not as celebrated as it should be. The Riverwalk is a significant amenity that lacks appeal in its current condition. The space itself feels somewhat constricted, bound by a retaining wall on one side in many locations. Access to the Riverwalk can also be difficult to find, though is marked by unique, overhead signage.

Where possible, the City should explore expanding the riverfront and Riverwalk. This could include a wider pathway, as well as park space, and could be completed in combination with redevelopment of riverfront sites. Opening up the Riverwalk would help to increase the appeal of the space. The Riverwalk should also be extended eastward through Soldier & Sailor's Park.

Wayfinding to and along the Riverwalk today is minimal and should be improved. This can include basic signage, or artistic wayfinding painted onto walls or other surfaces, such as the Riverwalk itself. Wayfinding should attract attention and include the walking time or distance to popular destinations that are within walking distance of the Riverwalk.

INSTALL ART AND LIGHTING



ADD INVITING FEATURES



INSTALL ACTIVE WAYFINDING



EXPAND THE RIVERWALK



Enhance the Riverwalk



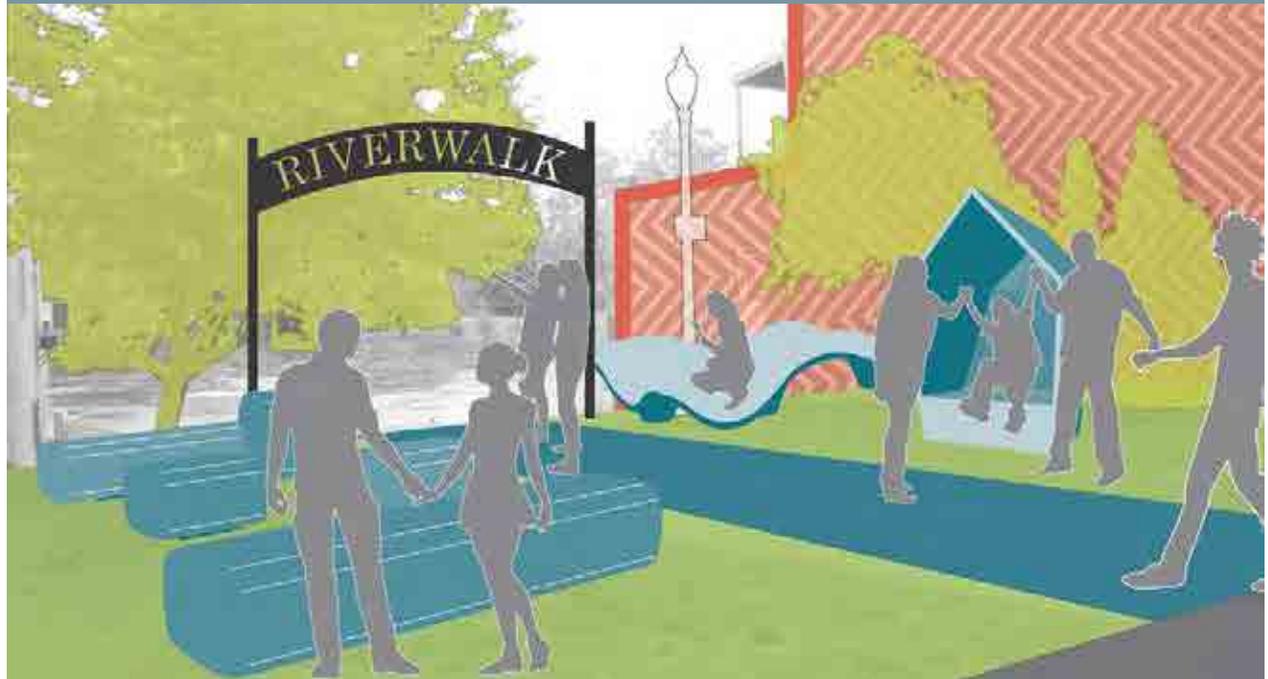
ALTRUSA PARK TODAY



Art, and even artistic lighting, installations can be used for the purpose of wayfinding, but also to brighten up otherwise dim spaces. There are a number of places along the Riverwalk today that could be enhanced through the use of active lighting or artwork. The spaces underneath Monroe Street and Macomb Street are examples of locations along the Riverwalk that would be ideal for interesting lighting and art installations.

Improving existing access points by installing inviting features can also help to activate the Riverwalk. Spaces like Altrusa Park should be designed with furnishings that attract visitors and encourage people to sit and experienced the space.

ALTRUSA PARK WITH ACTIVE FEATURES



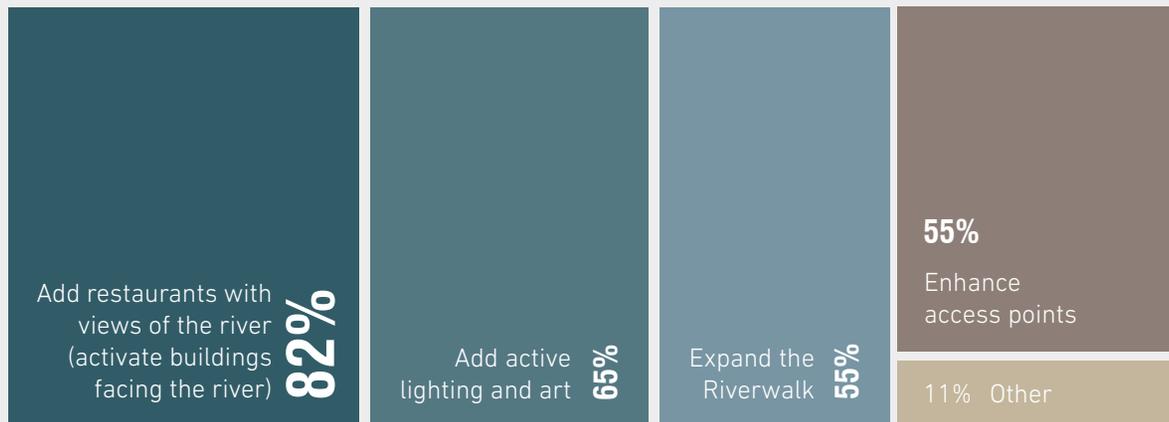
It should also emphasize its direct connection to the Riverwalk through the use of the same entryway signage and other artistic wayfinding elements. Blank walls of adjacent buildings can be dressed up with murals and other art installations, and site furnishings can be artistic features as well.

Public Input

Nearly all (82%) of survey respondents indicated that they would prioritize improvements to the buildings along the riverfront over any other strategy to enhance the Riverwalk. Respondents want to see more businesses and restaurants facing the river.

WHAT ARE THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR ENHANCING THE RIVERWALK?

Public Survey Responses



The second priority identified by respondents was adding active lighting and art to the Riverwalk. Expanding the Riverwalk and enhancing existing access points were less of a priority, but still important to respondents. Many respondents who selected “other” as a response indicated that they would like to see active use of the river itself, with access to drop in paddle boards and canoes.

Next Steps

The steps toward enhancing the Riverwalk include:

- » Activate the Riverwalk with artistic lighting and other art installations
- » Implement wayfinding along the Riverwalk and throughout downtown that highlights walk times to and from popular destinations
- » Extend the Riverwalk to the east through Soldier & Sailor’s Park
- » Enhance access points like Altrusa Park
- » Explore reconstruction and expansion of the Riverwalk in combination with redevelopment to improve access along the river

“Create more park area along the river.”

“More businesses should take advantage of their views along the river.”





DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITIES

This section highlights the key opportunity sites that were identified through the planning process. Shaped by stakeholder and community input, as well as the existing conditions assessment, the planning team developed concepts for each opportunity site that demonstrate potential private development and public space improvements that could be implemented over time.

Development Opportunities

MARKET FEASIBILITY

Landuse USA prepared a Targeted Market Analysis (TMA) for Monroe in September 2017. The TMA found a near-term market demand of 40,000 total square feet of additional retail development. However, some of this demand is being suppressed downtown due to local restrictions, high development costs, limited walkability, and other non-market factors.

Residential Market Demand

In addition to the retail demand, the TMA also estimated that 240 new households move into Monroe annually. City-wide there is a net demand for 200 new housing units per year (adjusted for outflow migration). Most of this demand is for what is classified as Missing Middle housing typologies. Within these households, 83 percent are renters and 17 percent are owners of detached dwellings. The city has a demand for 67 new rental units per year. The city's median residential rental rate is \$625 per month and the median single-family home value is \$110,000.

Monroe currently has 8,100 households and a total population of 20,600. The median household income in the city of Monroe is \$44,500. The city's annual median household income for renters is only \$24,600 and the median household income for homeowners is \$56,600.

Landuse USA advises that housing units facing the River Raisin will command higher rents and values, with some river view apartments presently achieving \$900 per month in rents. The 200-net annual increase for Monroe households combined could support approximately 1,000 square feet of demand for new retail space or higher retail sales for existing businesses.

Infill Development

The DDA Strategic Plan established an objective to infill underutilized parking lots and parcels downtown to encourage higher and better uses of properties downtown. This plan aims to address that objective and encourage additional investment (both public and private) in downtown.

Potential opportunity sites for infill development and other investments were identified through the engagement process, as discussed in the Community Engagement chapter. The potential sites were then evaluated based on the market feasibility discussed here, as well as the selection criteria shown to the right. The key opportunity sites selected through this process are illustrated on the following page, and discussed in more detail throughout this chapter.

Methodology

for Selecting Opportunity Sites

Take advantage of riverfront sites

Sites with views of and access to the river are prime opportunities for development.

Activate and enhance the Riverwalk

Any development along the Riverwalk should create new opportunities for the public to enjoy the Riverwalk.

Take advantage of city-owned lots

City-owned lots are easier for the City to propose for new development than privately owned properties.

Leverage planned investments

Sites already planned for investment are ideal because of existing momentum.

Enhance existing assets

Opportunity sites should be selected based on potential to enhance existing assets, such as the Riverwalk or Loranger Square.

Public input and previous plans

Previous planning efforts and input received from the public should help to prioritize opportunities.



SITE 6: MARKET

SITE 3: RIVERFRONT

SITE 2: RIVERFRONT AT MACOMB ST

SITE 4: MONROE AND FIRST

SITE 1: FIRE DEPARTMENT

SITE 5: LORANGER SQUARE

KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Fire Department site is currently owned by the City of Monroe, and the fire station will be relocating out of downtown. This opens up opportunity for a new use on the site.

The Macomb Street riverfront site is currently a City-owned parking lot that is underutilized, and a prime riverfront location. This would be an ideal site from a development perspective.

The Monroe Street riverfront site has previously been identified for redevelopment, most recently

in the DDA Strategic Plan. This site is prime real estate and would provide more value to the community as development than as parking.

The Monroe and First Street site and the Loranger Square site represent key opportunities to fill gaps in the core downtown fabric, and invest in already existing public green space.

The Farmer's Market site is outside of the core downtown, but is a significant feature of downtown that has a lot of potential.



SITE 1: FIRE DEPARTMENT

The existing fire station at the corner of Scott Street and 1st Street will be relocating out of downtown, and leaving the existing site as a potential opportunity for attractive infill development that provides downtown housing.

The parking lot on the opposite end of the block is owned by Monroe County, and the home between the two properties is City-owned and scheduled for demolition. Through collaboration between the City and the County, the entire block could potentially open up for a unified redevelopment.

A potential site design for these properties is illustrated on the following page, and details about the design are described on the following pages.



POTENTIAL SITE DESIGN FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

+/- 18 PARKING SPACES
FOR RESIDENTS & GUESTS

NEW APARTMENTS

NEW TOWNHOMES



SITE 1: DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

There are two primary components to the site design option illustrated in this plan:

- » Multi-Family Apartments
- » Townhomes

The images on this page represent the type of development that could be feasible for the site.

Multi-Family Apartments

A mid-sized residential building on the fire station site could include several internally-accessed apartment flats between 600 and 1200 square feet in size. The building would be 2-3 stories in height to complement the surrounding neighborhood context.

The first floor of the development could include parking for the residential units above. This parking level should be placed a half-story below grade, similar in design to the development proposed for the Macomb Street site.

TOWNHOMES WITH FIRST FLOOR PARKING



CONTEMPORARY FACADES



TRADITIONAL FACADES



SITE 1: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

Townhomes

Multi-story townhouses provide relatively high development densities while minimizing the need for surface parking. These units will provide desirable housing while also providing architectural compatibility with adjacent residential uses.

The townhouse units should be architecturally compatible with the adjacent residential structures. The front of the unit should have a front door, porch or stoop, and other architectural features to provide a relationship with the street. Setbacks, rooflines, buildings heights, and materiality should match adjacent structures to the extent possible.

Parking for the townhouses should be provided on the first floor of each unit in rear garages.

If the building in the center of block is demolished, the townhome development could be extended to add two additional units, as well as a small park space in behind the parking.



ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Townhomes	+/-7	3-story structures, first floor includes garage
Residential Apartments	+/-18	Floors 2 & 3 of Scott St building
Parking Spaces	+/- 57	Parking in garages of first floor townhomes, in first floor garage of residential building, or on surface lots



SITE 2: RIVERFRONT AT MACOMB STREET

The existing parking lot at the northeast corner of Macomb Street and Front Street is located at a critical riverfront access point and downtown gateway. The existing access ramp to the Riverwalk provides the minimum required access for disabled users, but the ramp itself serves as somewhat of a barrier to use of that segment of the Riverwalk. Additionally, the existing parking lot on the site does not currently enhance the riverfront experience.

The site, while relatively small, could support a small residential development with enhanced access to the Riverwalk that opens up the entranceway and provides more appropriate access for disabled users.

A potential site design is illustrated on the following page, and details about the design are described on the following pages.



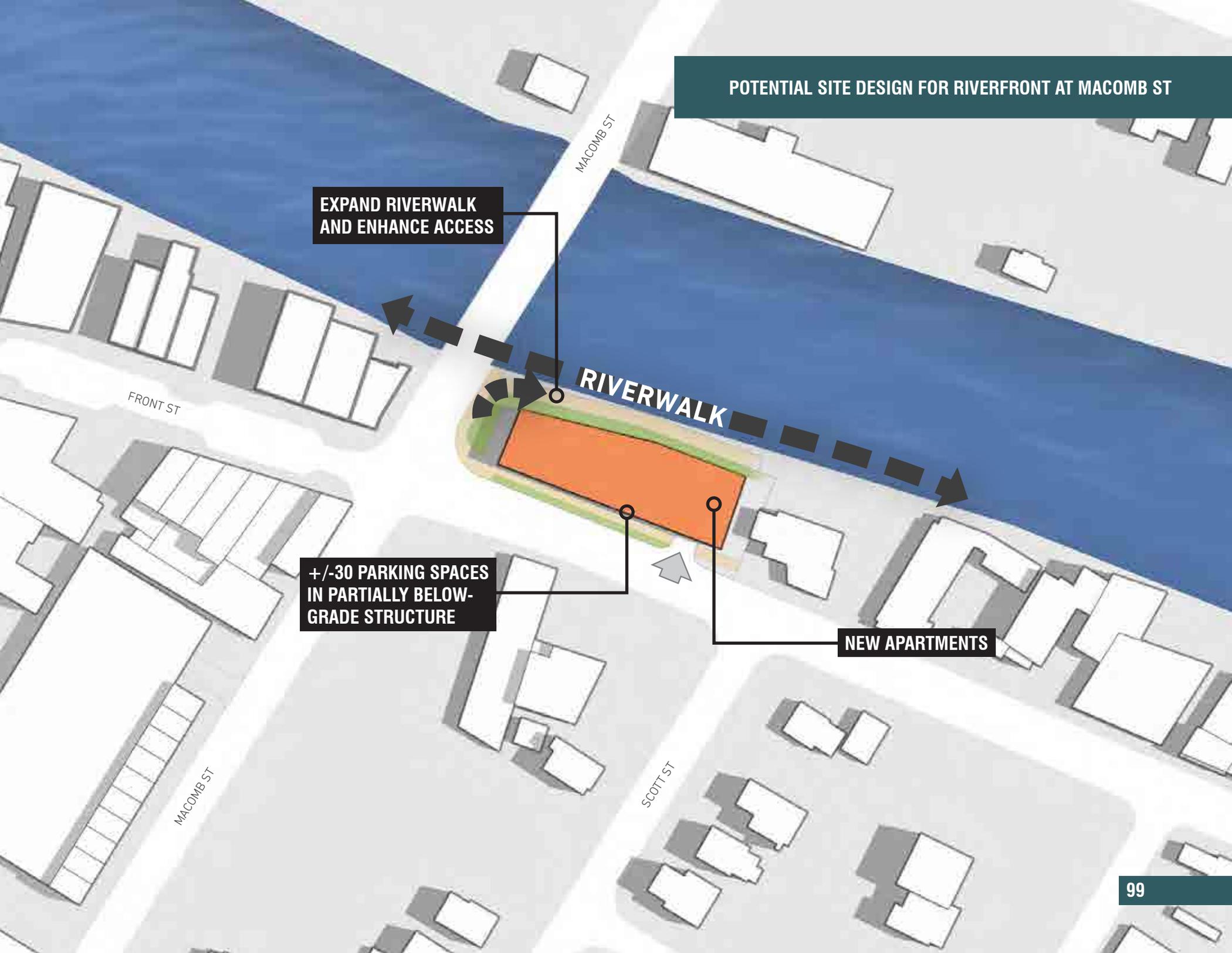
POTENTIAL SITE DESIGN FOR RIVERFRONT AT MACOMB ST

EXPAND RIVERWALK
AND ENHANCE ACCESS

RIVERWALK

+/-30 PARKING SPACES
IN PARTIALLY BELOW-
GRADE STRUCTURE

NEW APARTMENTS



SITE 2: DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

There are three primary components to the site design option illustrated in this plan:

- » Riverfront Access
- » Below-Grade Parking
- » Upper-Story Residential

The images on this page represent the type of development and public space enhancements recommended for the site.

Riverfront Access

The existing ramp access to the Riverwalk should be removed and replaced with a straight or slightly curved ramp to provide a more open entranceway. The running slope of this path should be less than 5% to meet ADA requirements without the need for railings and landings.

RIVERFRONT SEATING



RIVERFRONT TOWNHOMES



SCREENED BASEMENT PARKING



RIVERFRONT PROMENADE



SITE 2: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

The Riverwalk access and pathway should be properly lit and public art or other placemaking elements should be included in the design of new riverfront park space.

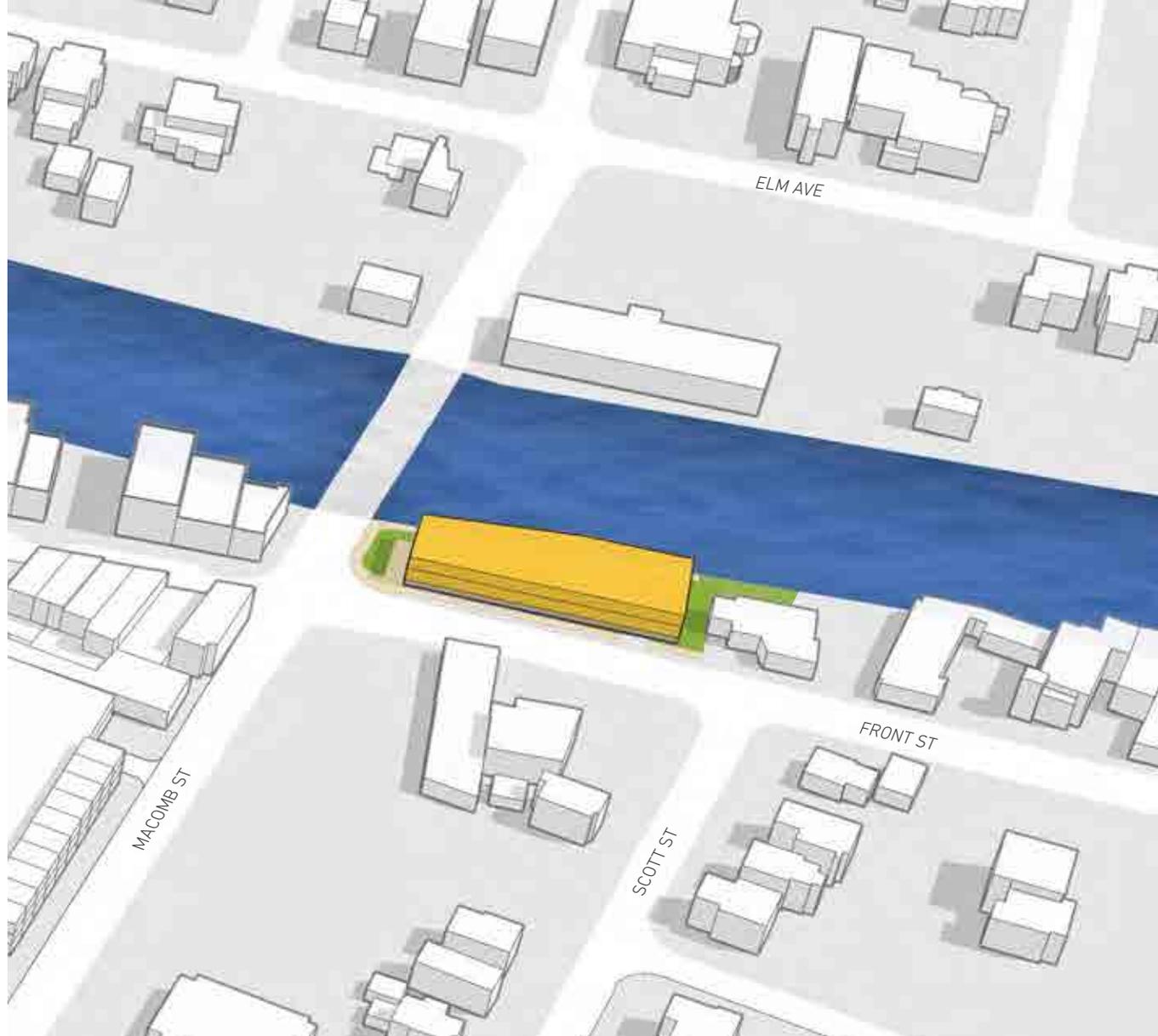
Below-Grade Parking

The first floor of the new development could include parking for residential units above, at approximately 1.5 parking spaces per unit. Additional parking could be accommodated through the use of permits that allow overnight on-street parking. This parking level should be placed a half-story below grade, minimizing its visual appearance from the street while avoiding the expense of mechanical ventilation.

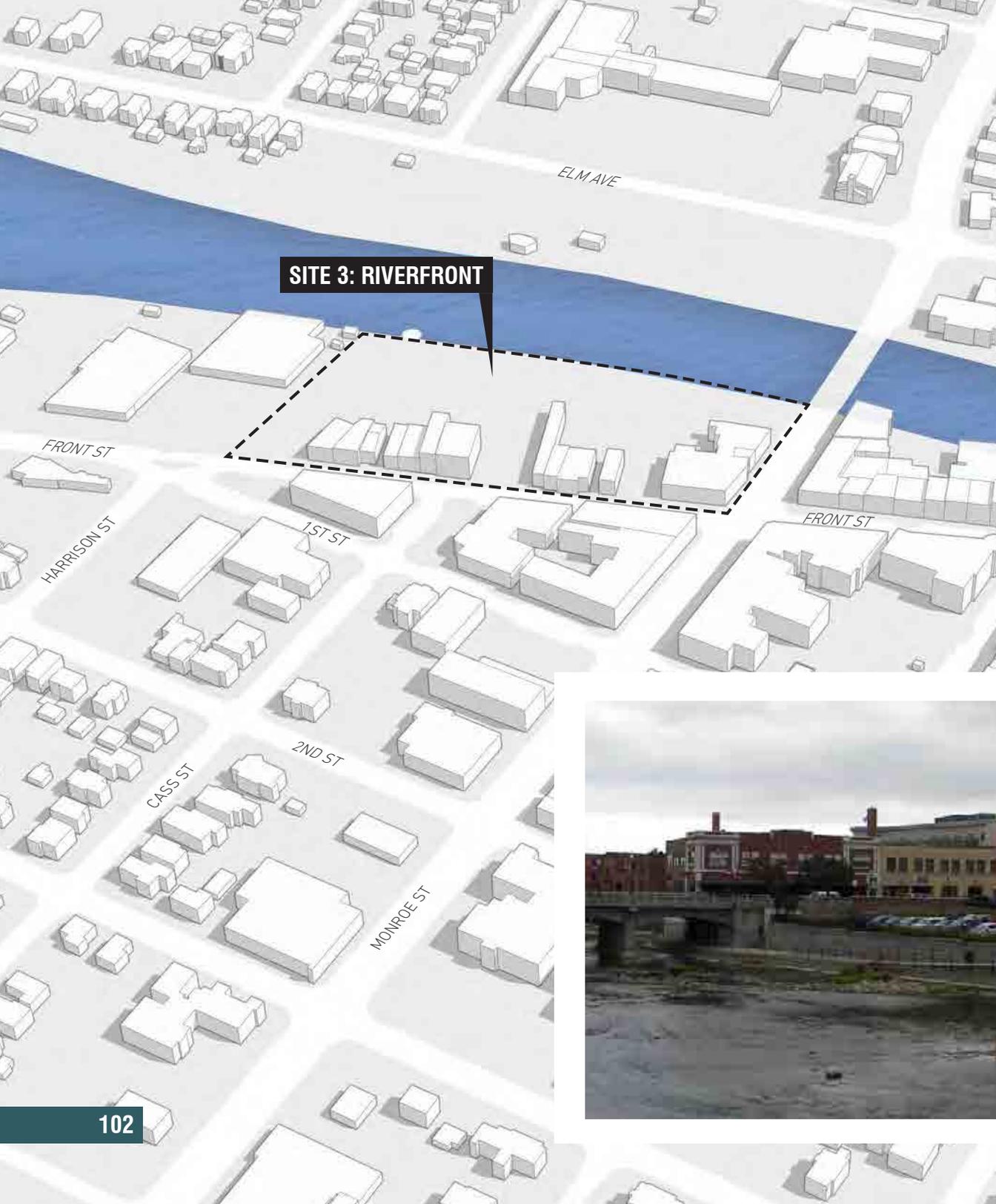
The parking floor could be further screened with architectural louvers, landscaping, and other elements. This will reduce its overall visual impact on adjacent streets and public spaces.

Upper-Story Residential

The location of this site affords excellent access to green space, the Riverwalk, and other downtown amenities, while also supplying impressive vistas of River Raisin. This provides a prime opportunity for residential development. The context of the site would allow for a 2-3 story building that would complement surrounding uses.



ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Residential Apartments	+/-20	Floors 2 & 3, accessed from interior hallways. All residential units are above base flood elevation
Parking Spaces	+/-30	Parking in first floor garage



SITE 3: RIVERFRONT PARKING LOT

The Riverfront Parking Lot site currently has mixed use buildings along Front Street and Monroe Street, with a large, public parking lot in behind. While the parking assists in supporting downtown businesses, it is generally underutilized and does not create attractive or functional public space along the river. This area of downtown has potential to support additional infill development, including residential housing as well as small-scale retail and office uses.

The prominent location of the site along River Raisin also creates an opportunity to construct new riverfront parks, promenades, and trails. Along the riverfront edge of this site is the Riverwalk and a pedestrian/bike bridge connecting to St. Mary's Park across the river.

A potential site design has been developed based on input from project stakeholders and is illustrated on the following page. Details about the design are described on the following pages.



POTENTIAL SITE DESIGN FOR RIVERFRONT

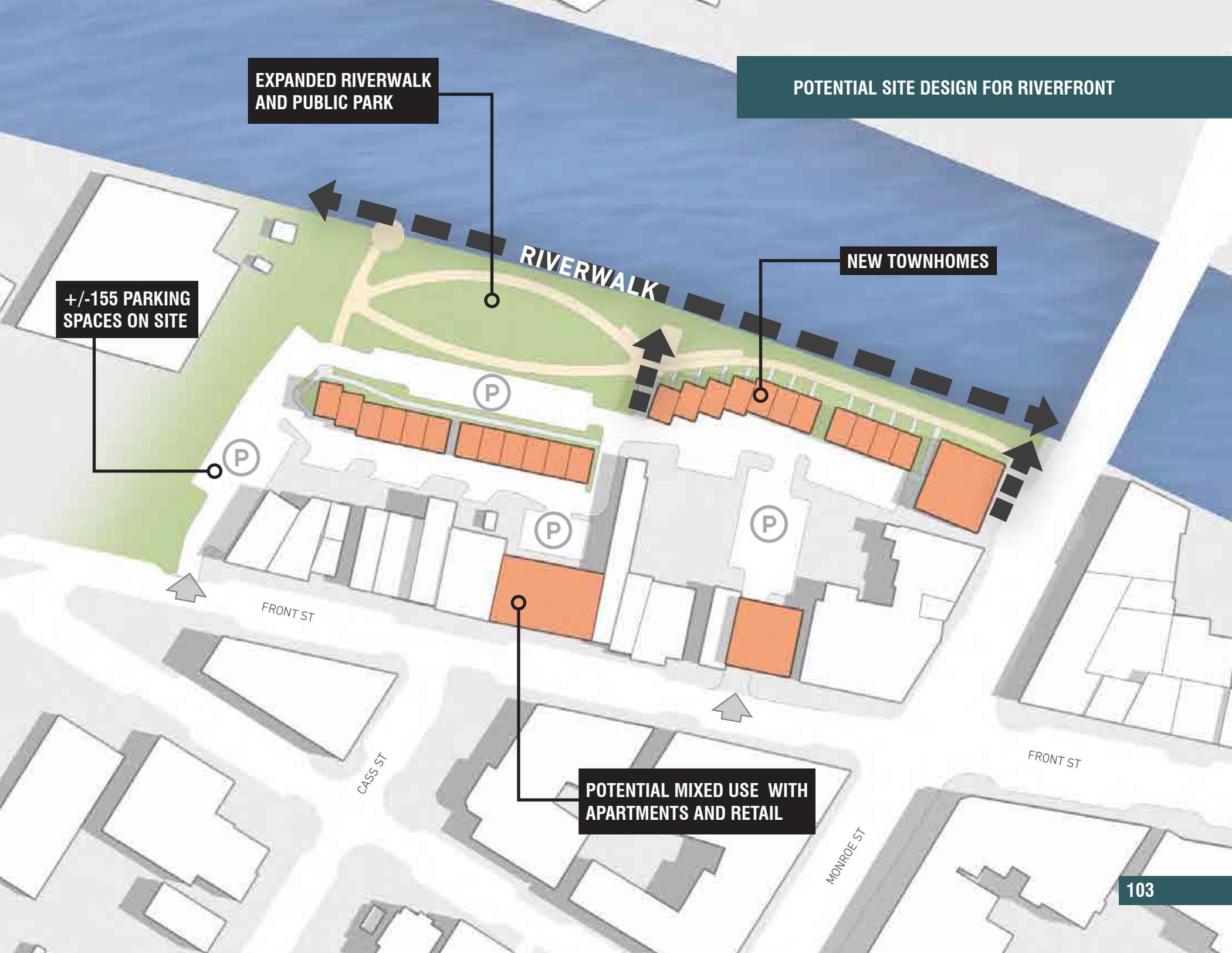
EXPANDED RIVERWALK
AND PUBLIC PARK

NEW TOWNHOMES

+/-155 PARKING
SPACES ON SITE

RIVERWALK

POTENTIAL MIXED USE WITH
APARTMENTS AND RETAIL



SITE 3: CONCEPT NARRATIVE

There are two primary components to the site design option illustrated in this plan:

- » Riverfront Public Space
- » Infill Development

The images on this page represent the type of development and public space improvements recommended for the site.

RIVERFRONT TOWNHOUSES



RESIDENTIAL OVER RETAIL STOREFRONTS



REAR-LOADED GARAGES ON FIRST FLOOR OF TOWNHOUSES



RIVERFRONT PROMENADE



RIVERFRONT PUBLIC SPACE



Riverfront Public Space

The existing parking area adjacent to the riverfront should be converted into a public green space, framed by pathways and, where possible, by new buildings. This green space will be open for public use and not restricted to residents of the new development. The space should include lighting, seating, plantings, and other amenities to allow for daily passive use of the space and to provide the infrastructure necessary to support public events.

Infill Development

Multi-floor townhouses provide relatively high development densities while minimizing the need for surface parking. The addition of townhouses along newly created green space and pathways will strengthen the quality of the space and will provide passive security and park patrons.

There are three vacant sites along Front and Monroe Streets. The two sites along Front Street should be developed with mixed use buildings consistent with the adjacent buildings. The site on Monroe Street has a significant grade change that can be used to create potential walk-out units along the bottom floor, with second floor units at street level on Monroe Street.



SITE 3: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Residential Apartments	+/-16	Floors 2 & 3; all residential units are above base flood elevation
Townhomes	+/-23	3 floor structures, first floor includes garage; Occupied residential space above base flood elevation
Parking Spaces	+/-155	Parking in first floor garages of townhouses or on surface lot



SITE 4: MONROE & FIRST PARKING LOT

The existing parking lot at the southwest corner of Monroe and 1st Street is a prominent and highly visible site in downtown. The site currently exists as a gap in the building fabric of downtown, particularly along Monroe Street. There is significant potential to create a small infill development in this location to fill in that gap and activate a prime empty space.

The site also sits along the alley that was the focus of the Heart of Monroe PlacePlan, which emphasized the site as a potential opportunity for activation and redevelopment. This alley connection provides direct access to the Riverfront site, and also offers an opportunity for integration with neighboring Agua Dulce. The site is also bordered to the south by the River Raisin Center for the Arts.

A potential site design is illustrated on the following page, and details about the design are described on the following pages.



POTENTIAL SITE DESIGN FOR MONROE & FIRST

FRONT ST

1ST ST

CASS ST

2ND ST

MONROE ST

1ST ST

ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS

UPPER STORY APARTMENTS
WITH FIRST FLOOR RETAIL

P

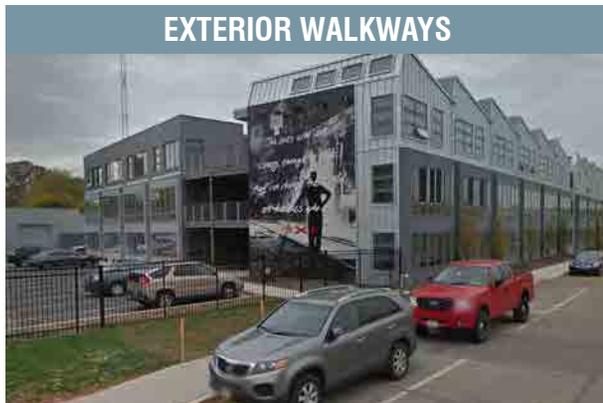
PARKING FOR RESIDENTS
AND RETAIL VISITORS

SITE 4: CONCEPT NARRATIVE

There are two primary components to the site design option illustrated in this plan:

- » Residential (Upper Stories)
- » Commercial Street Frontage

The images on this page represent the type of development recommended for the site. A key aspect to any development on this site will be ensuring a style that complements adjacent historic buildings.



EXTERIOR WALKWAYS



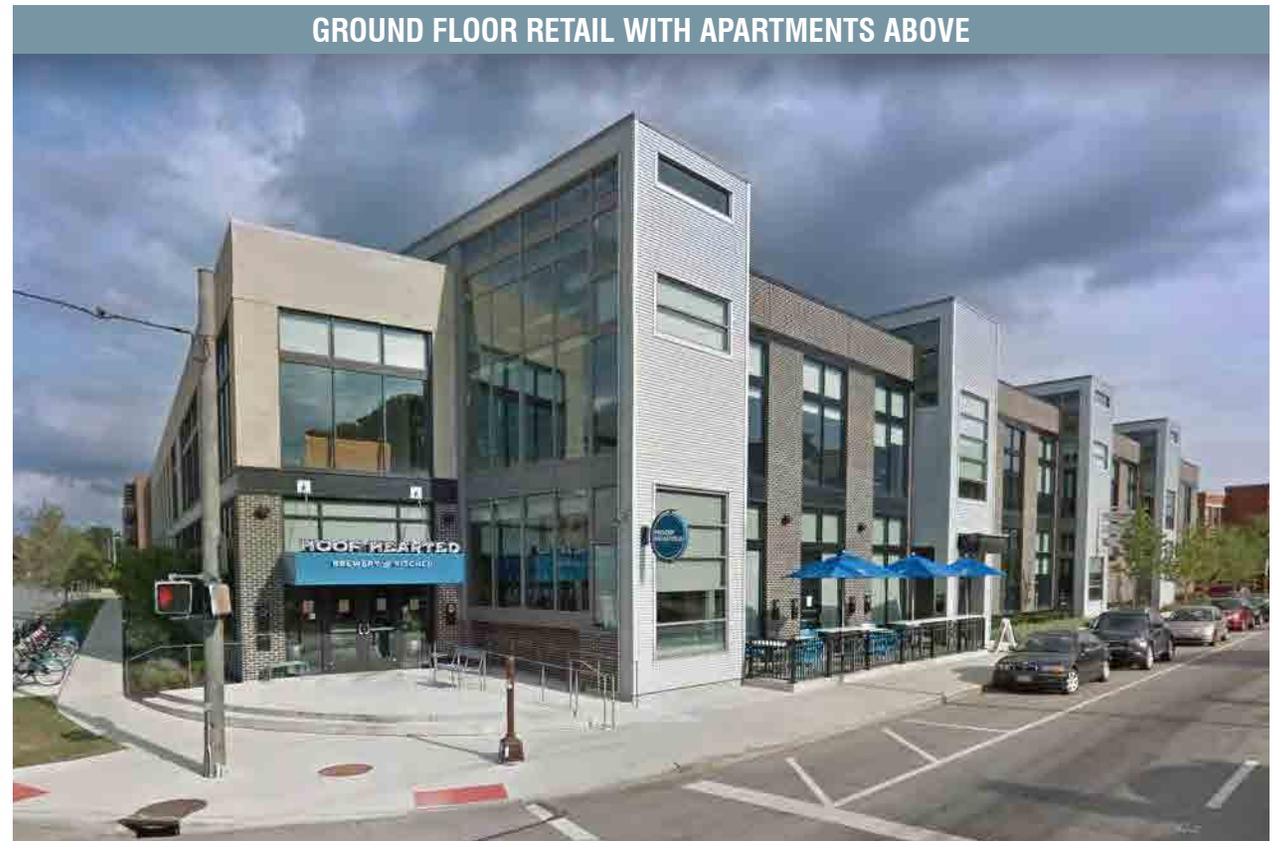
WALK-UP UNITS WITH EXTERIOR ACCESS

Upper Story Apartments

There is demand for 1-2 bedroom apartments in the study area and this site provides an excellent opportunity to meet some of this demand. These apartments would be roughly 600-1000 square feet in size. The proximity to existing active uses, such as Agua Dulce and the Center for the Arts, as well as potential new ground floor uses provides a strong marketing angle for prospective tenants.

Access to these apartments could be provided through exterior, elevated walkways, which would be on the rear of the building. This would preclude the need for elevators and temperature-controlled interior hallways, thereby reducing overall construction and operational costs.

Parking for residential tenants could be constructed on the ground floor along 1st Street.



GROUND FLOOR RETAIL WITH APARTMENTS ABOVE

This parking frontage would require special design to disguise the parking along the street edge. Approximately 1 space per unit could be provided on the site for residents. Visitor parking could be accommodated through the use of permits for overnight, on-street parking or existing surface lots in other parts of the downtown area.

First Floor Commercial

The site can also support a small retail storefront on the ground floor. This will create a consistent street wall along Monroe Street. A few parking spots for employees and/or shop patrons could be provided on the site, and any additional parking demand would be accommodated through on-street parking.

Integration of Public Art

Public art can be creatively incorporated into new development on proposed facades, in new public spaces, or on other visible spaces of the development. This may include parking screens, murals, specialty lighting, etc.



SITE 4: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

Item	Quantity	Notes
Residential Apartments	+/-14	Floors 2 & 3, accessed from rear, exterior walkways
Retail/ Office	+/-4,000 SF	Floor 1, accessed from Monroe and/or 1st Street
Parking Spaces	+/-18	Parking on ground floor of structure and surface lot





SITE 5: LORANGER SQUARE

Loranger Square is the traditional center of downtown Monroe. Existing buildings frame a relatively well-preserved historic public space on almost all sides, and the site is occasionally utilized for community events and other civic activities.

There are several design elements that could be added to the site to strengthen its role as a primary community space and emphasize the historic form of the Square.

A potential site design for the Square and surrounding properties is illustrated on the following page, and details about the design are described on the following pages.



POTENTIAL SITE DESIGN FOR LORANGER SQUARE

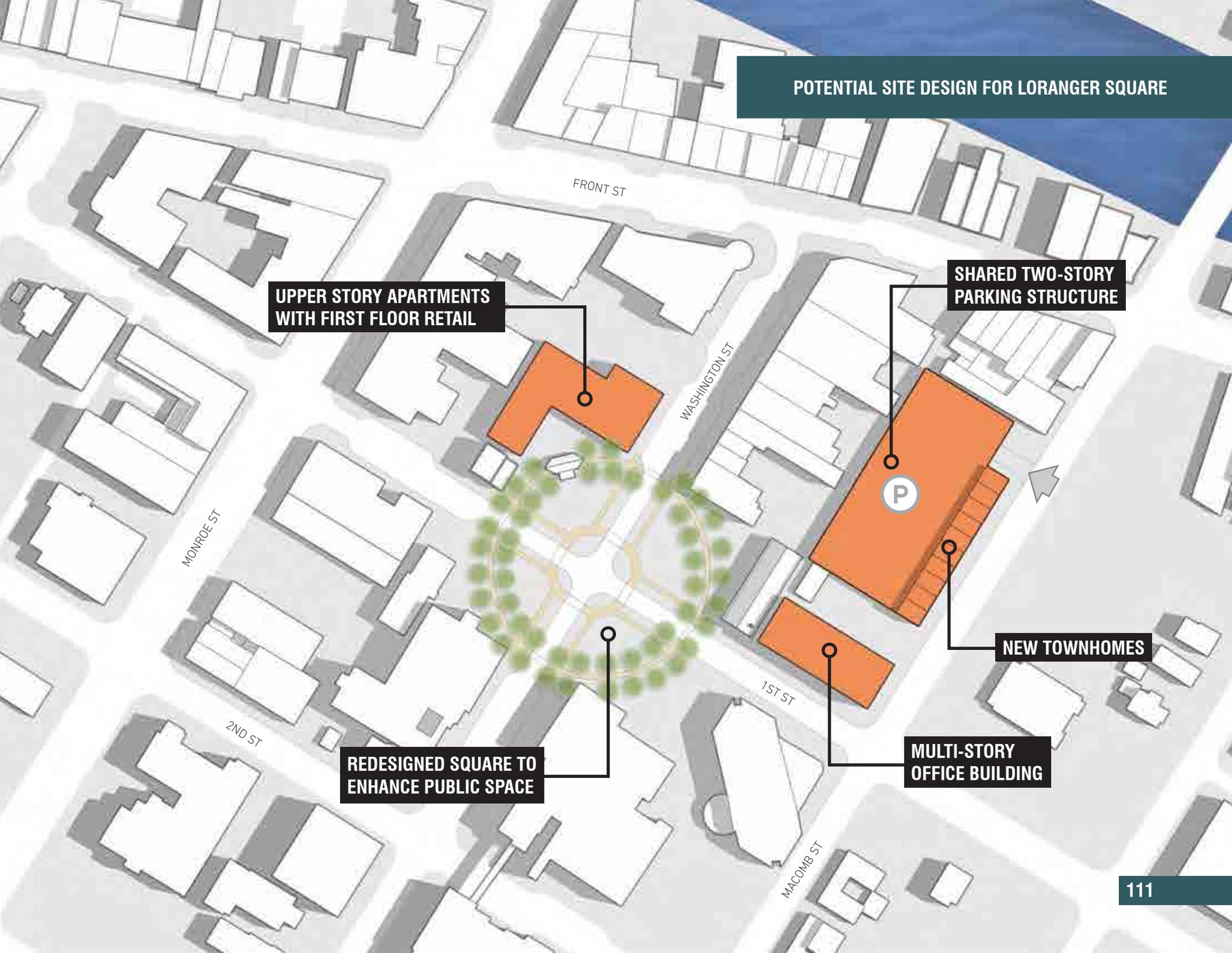
UPPER STORY APARTMENTS
WITH FIRST FLOOR RETAIL

SHARED TWO-STORY
PARKING STRUCTURE

NEW TOWNHOMES

REDESIGNED SQUARE TO
ENHANCE PUBLIC SPACE

MULTI-STORY
OFFICE BUILDING



PARKING GARAGE SCREEN



SITE 5: DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

There are five primary components to the site design option illustrated in this plan:

- » Traffic Calming
- » Unified Square Design
- » Infill Development
- » Municipal Office Space
- » Parking Garage

The images on this page represent the type of development and public space enhancements recommended for the site.

Traffic Calming

The streets intersecting the Square are wider than necessary for current traffic and the curb radii dimensions are overly large. The streets could be narrowed and curb radii reduced to encourage slower traffic movement through the Square.

INTEGRAL SEATING AND PUBLIC ART



URBAN INFILL DEVELOPMENT



DESIGN ELEMENTS THAT FRAME THE SPACE AND ESTABLISH A FORM



Unified Square Design

Narrowing the street will also narrow the gap between the corner green spaces, creating a stronger link between them and the appearance of a “square”. The creation of a circular walk around the edge of the park will further unify the space visually. This could be strengthened through the use of trees, lights, and other vertical design elements.

Infill Development

Completing the architectural frame of the Square is critical for the space to meet its full potential. Constructing a new building on the surface parking lot adjacent to the square will accomplish this. Retail or restaurant space should face the Square on the first floor, providing the opportunity for outdoor dining on the Square. The remainder of the space on the first floor could be utilized for parking, supporting both first floor as well as upper story residential.

Municipal Office Space

The surface parking lot on 1st Street east of the square could provide a key opportunity for additional municipal office space. This building could be as deep as necessary to provide the square footage necessary to meet municipal demand.

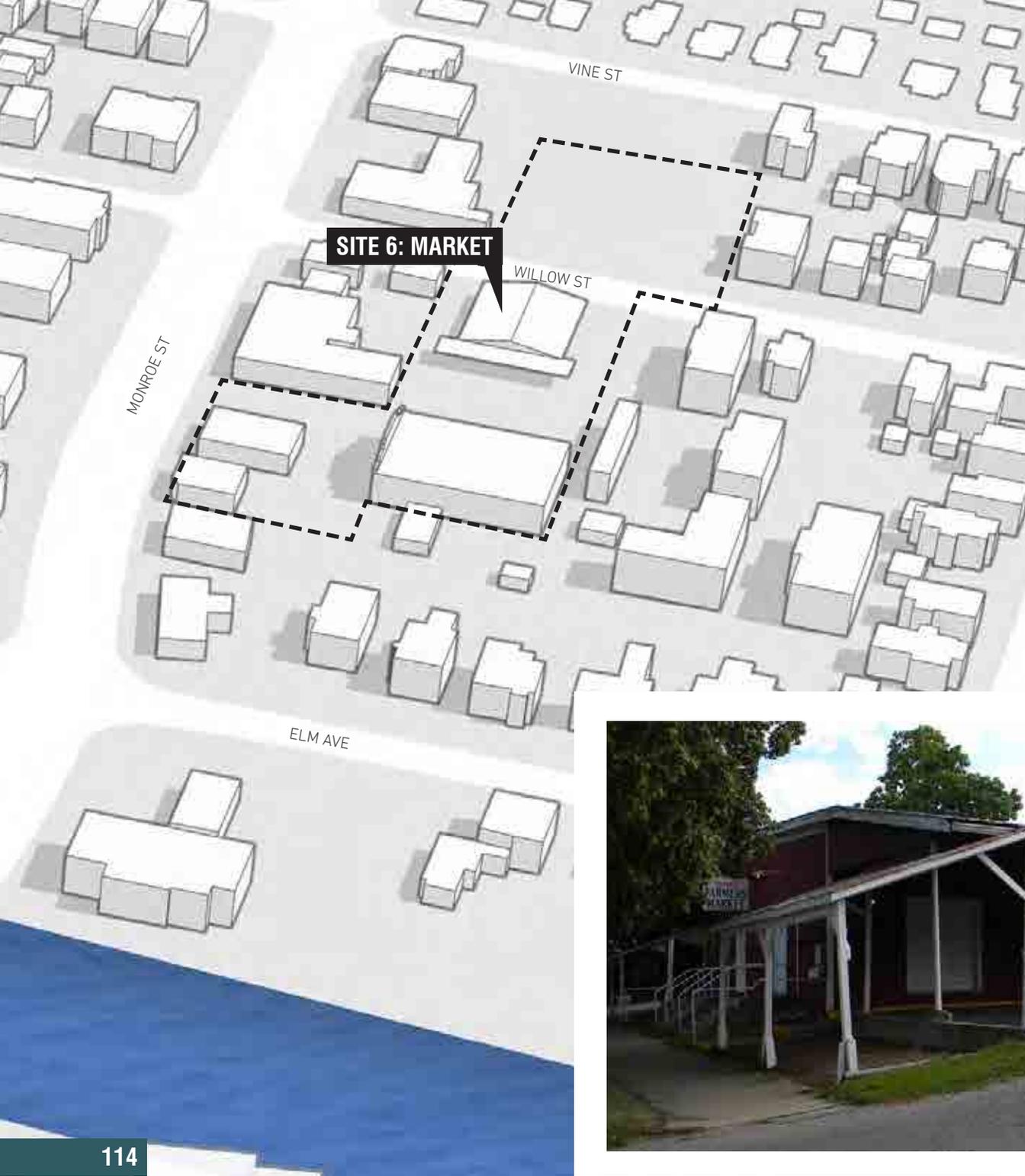
Parking Garage

A two-story parking deck would provide an economical approach to add parking downtown and support the development around the Square. The garage should be lined by residential townhouses on Macomb Street in order to disguise the garage from the street. This residential unit type with attached covered parking will provide desirable downtown living for a variety of potential residents.



SITE 3: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Residential Apartments	+/-18	Floors 2 & 3 of building on northwest corner of square
Residential Townhomes	+/-9	3-story townhouses located in front of garage
Office	+/- 25,000	3-story structure on 1st Street
Retail	+/- 4,000	Ground floor retail on northwest corner of square
Parking Spaces	+/- 200	+/-180 spaces in garage (90 spaces per floor); +/-20 spaces on first floor of northwest square building



SITE 6: MONROE FARMER'S MARKET

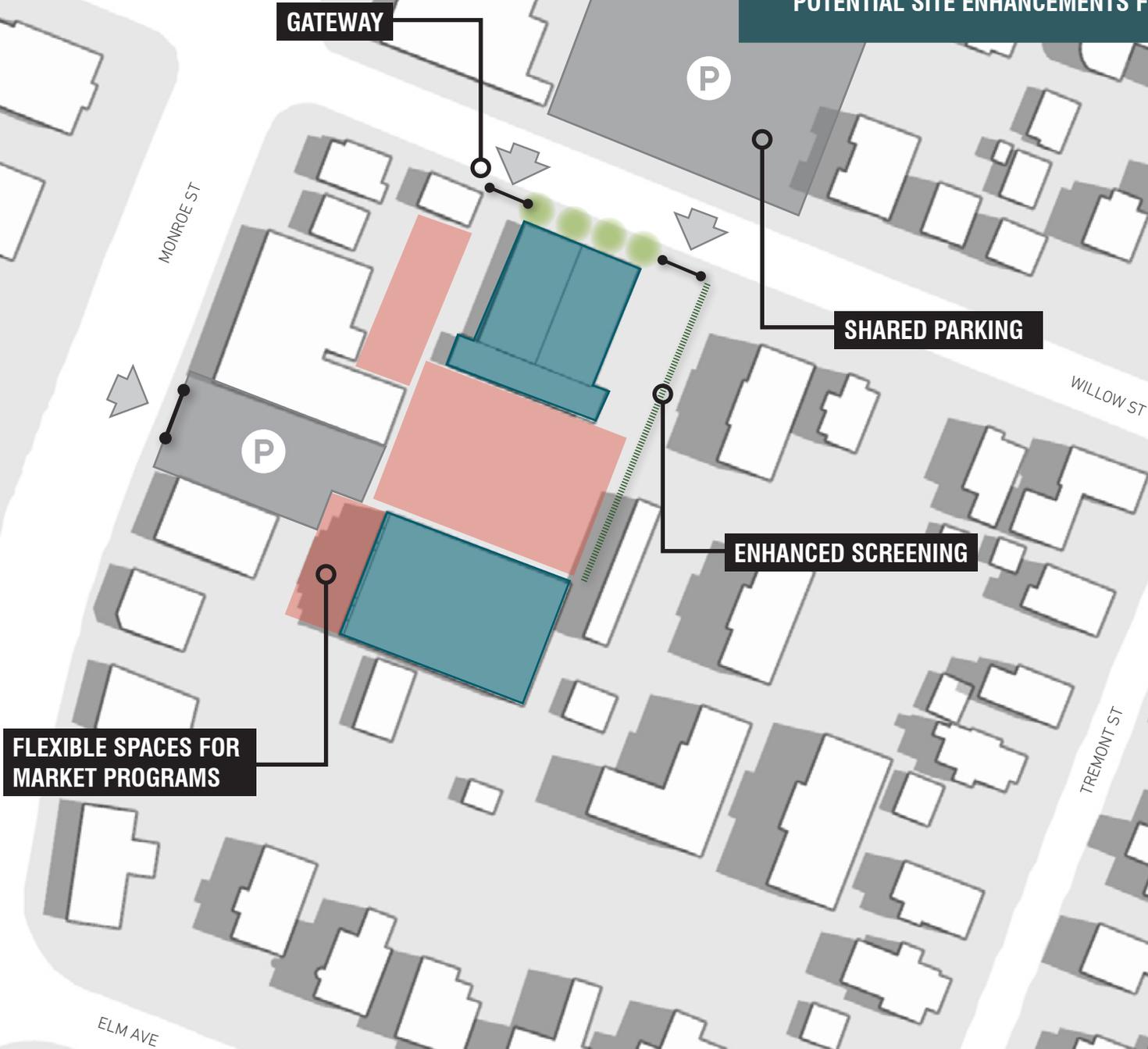
The Monroe Farmer's Market site includes the Farmer's Market property, as well as adjacent properties and parking lots that could be integrated through a site design that creates synergies between current uses. Any changes or improvements to adjacent private properties will require coordination with the relevant property owners.

While the Farmer's Market has been highly successful, it is currently limited by the space provided by the existing structure. The Market has significant potential for additional growth and expansion, but needs more space and the appropriate partnerships to make it happen.

A potential site design for the Market area and surrounding properties is illustrated on the following page, and details about the design are described on the following pages.



POTENTIAL SITE ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE MARKET



SITE 6: DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

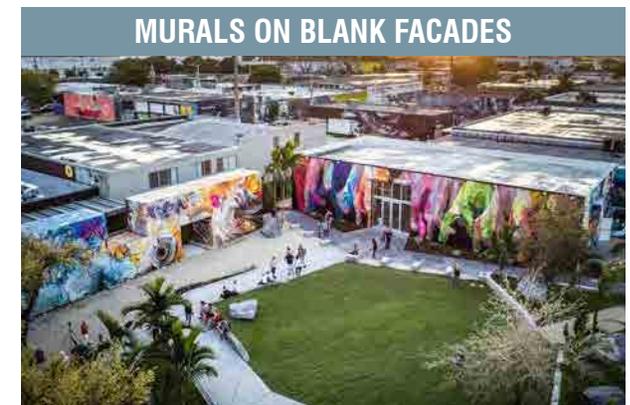
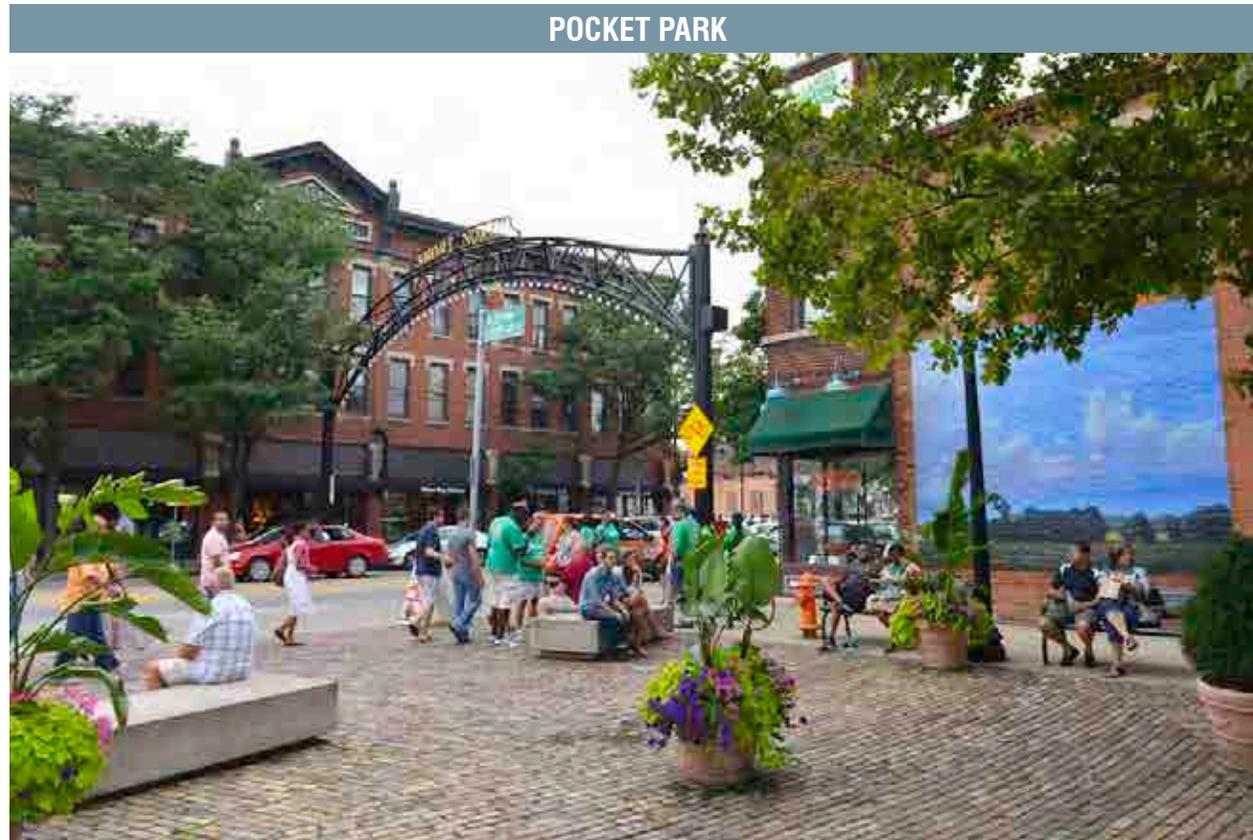
There are two primary components to the site design option illustrated in this plan:

- » Enhanced Site Amenities
- » Integration of Public Art

The images on this page represent potential improvements and programming recommended for the site.

Enhanced Site Amenities

The existing site is composed predominantly of asphalt parking areas. This could be enhanced with higher quality paving materials such as clay brick pavers. This will create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians by reducing glare and enhancing aesthetics. This will also allow for the majority of the site to remain parking when not in use as a farmers market.



SITE 6: POTENTIAL PROGRAMMING

If pavers or other materials are not a viable solution, less permanent solutions could be considered including roadway-grade paint or other graphic pavement marking techniques.

The addition of lighting in the space will create a more comfortable environment for patrons while increasing operational time. Low-cost options such as strand or festoon lighting should be considered.

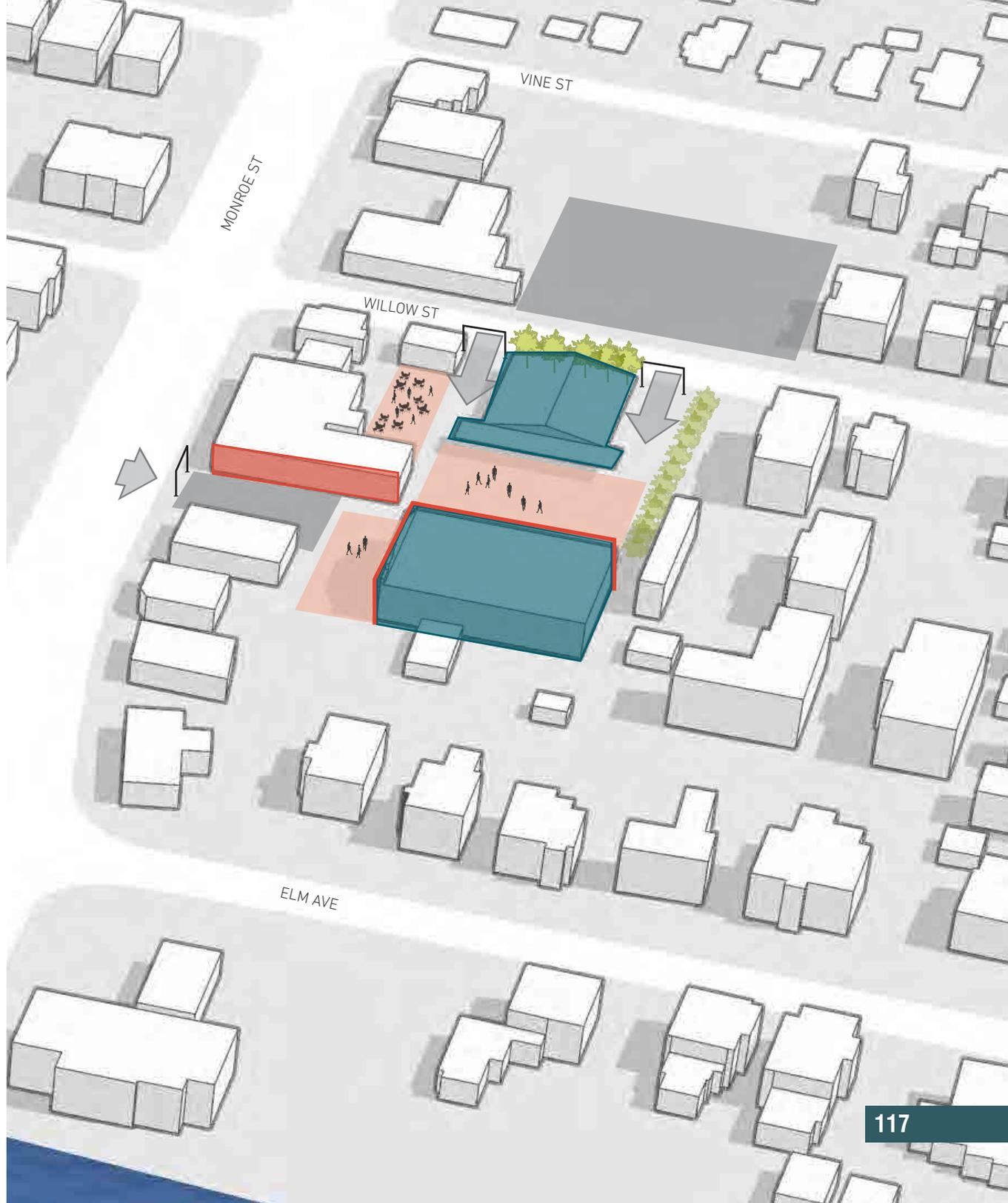
The addition of landscaping in paved areas will break up large expanses of impervious asphalt or other pavement. This could be accomplished by constructing permanent planting beds or through movable, temporary solutions like large planter pots.

A partnership should be established with the owner of the parking lots across Willow Street to provide additional parking and overflow space for the Market during any periods when there is little or no parking demand from the adjacent uses.

Integration of Public Art

Murals or other graphics should be added to the currently blank facades of existing buildings. This approach provides significant aesthetic value at a relatively low cost. The engagement of the arts community in this strategy will also increase the overall cultural value and community attachment to the space.

Gateways to the market spaces should be designated and celebrated with signage, sculptural elements, and overhead structures. Additional public art should be added to the space where appropriate including sculptural elements and unique lighting features.



Development Summary

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

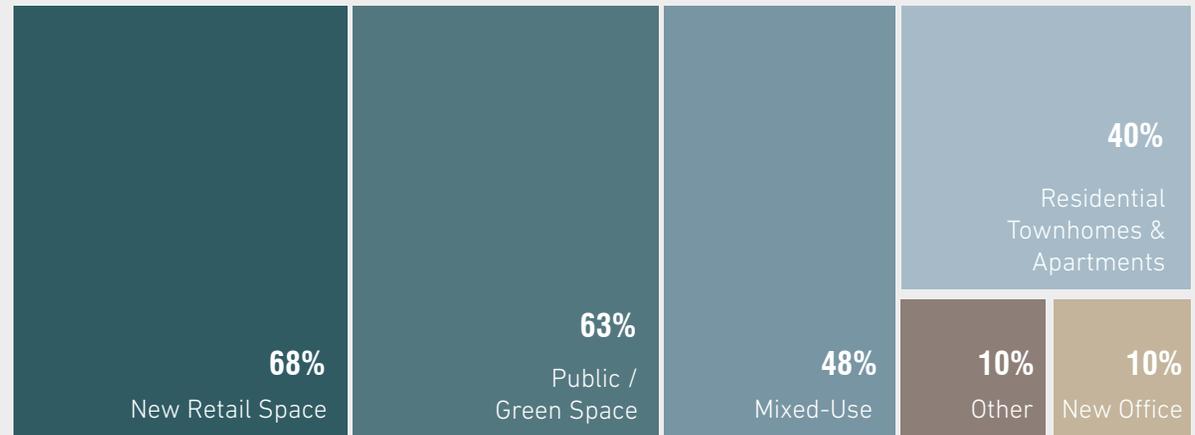
The total development yield represented in these site plans sums up to less than what has been estimated for current market demand. However, a market feasibility study will be required to determine the most appropriate development to tackle first, how soon it might be able to be implemented, and how much of the development shown here might actually be feasible.

The survey that was conducted during and after the Public Open House collected public input regarding what the community sees as the priority for development downtown. The chart to the right illustrates the results of this question, indicating that new retail and green space are the top priorities. Many of the open-ended responses included comments about expanding the park space along the Riverfront, and filling in the vacant storefronts before constructing any new buildings.

The primary desire expressed in the comments was for downtown to become more active and offer the amenities that will attract more residents downtown, such as retail and restaurants open for more hours of the day, a grocery store, and other daily needs.

WHAT TYPE OF INFILL DEVELOPMENT / AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DOWNTOWN?

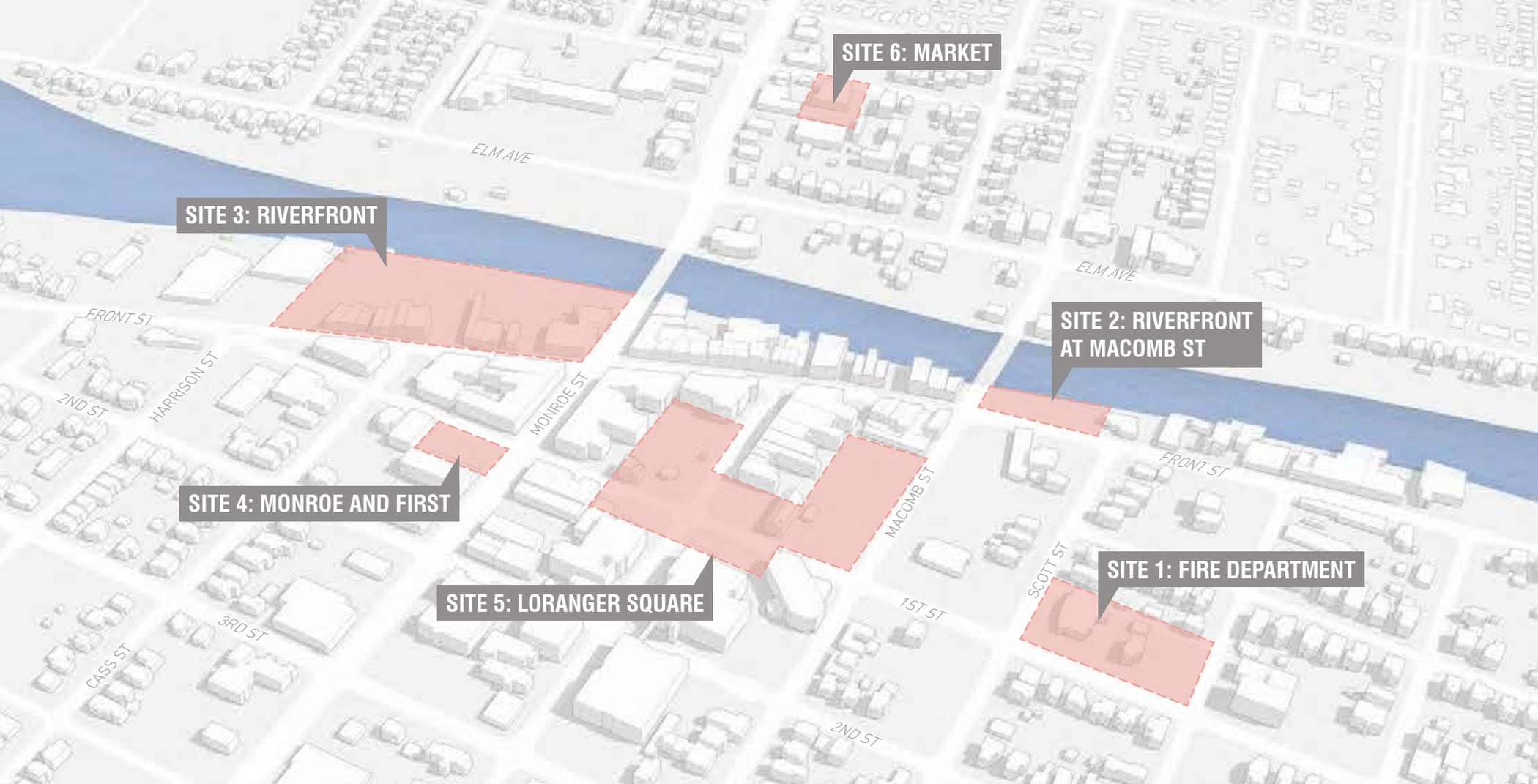
Public Survey Responses



“The greatest need downtown is renovating existing buildings - not building new ones.”

“Build affordable housing for seniors! Monroe has very limited choices for residents with somewhat limited means.”





TOTAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

ITEM	TOTAL QUANTITY	ESTIMATED MARKET DEMAND
Townhomes	+/- 39 units	Up to 30 new attached units <i>each year</i>
Residential Apartments	+/- 86 units	Up to 40 new units in low or mid-rise <i>each year</i>
Retail / Office Space	+/- 33,000 SF	Up to 40,000 SF of new retail
Parking Spaces	460	-





IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGIES

This section provides a framework for the implementation of the Master Plan. The strategic recommendations, project phasing, additional organizational capacity and planning partners needed to implement the plan are outlined and explained.

Implementation Plan

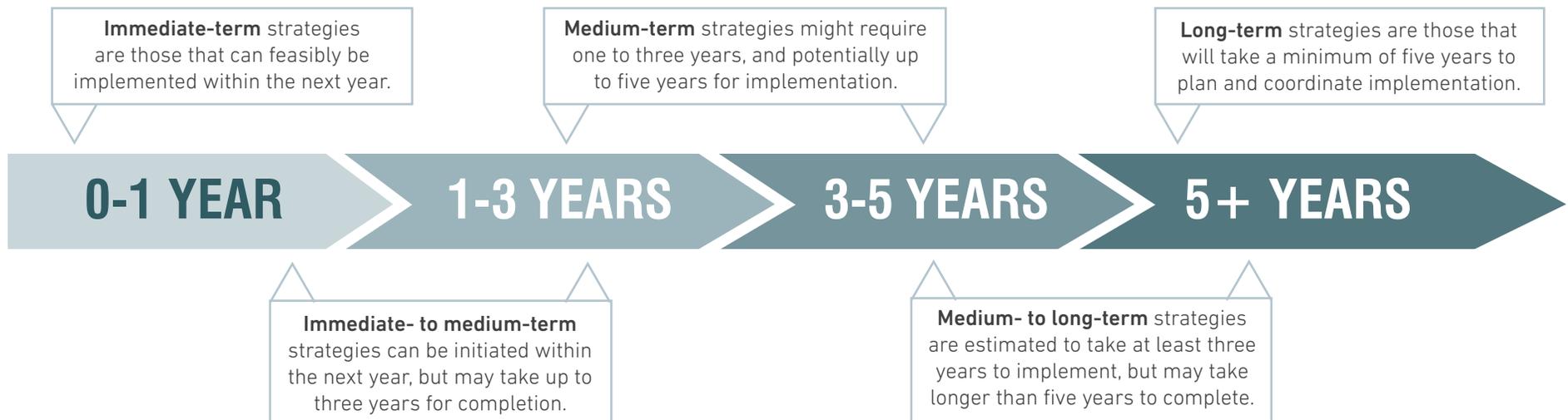
IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

The Planning Vision provides a series of strategies and recommendations for improvements downtown regarding street design and circulation, parking, placemaking, and development. Implementation of these strategies and recommendations will require collaboration and coordination between various public and private entities in Monroe.

The following action matrix was developed to help guide implementation. Location-specific recommendations are illustrated in the map on the following page. Prioritization of each strategy is suggested by the estimated timeframe for completion. However, this matrix is intended as a flexible tool to help monitor success, and should be used as a working document.

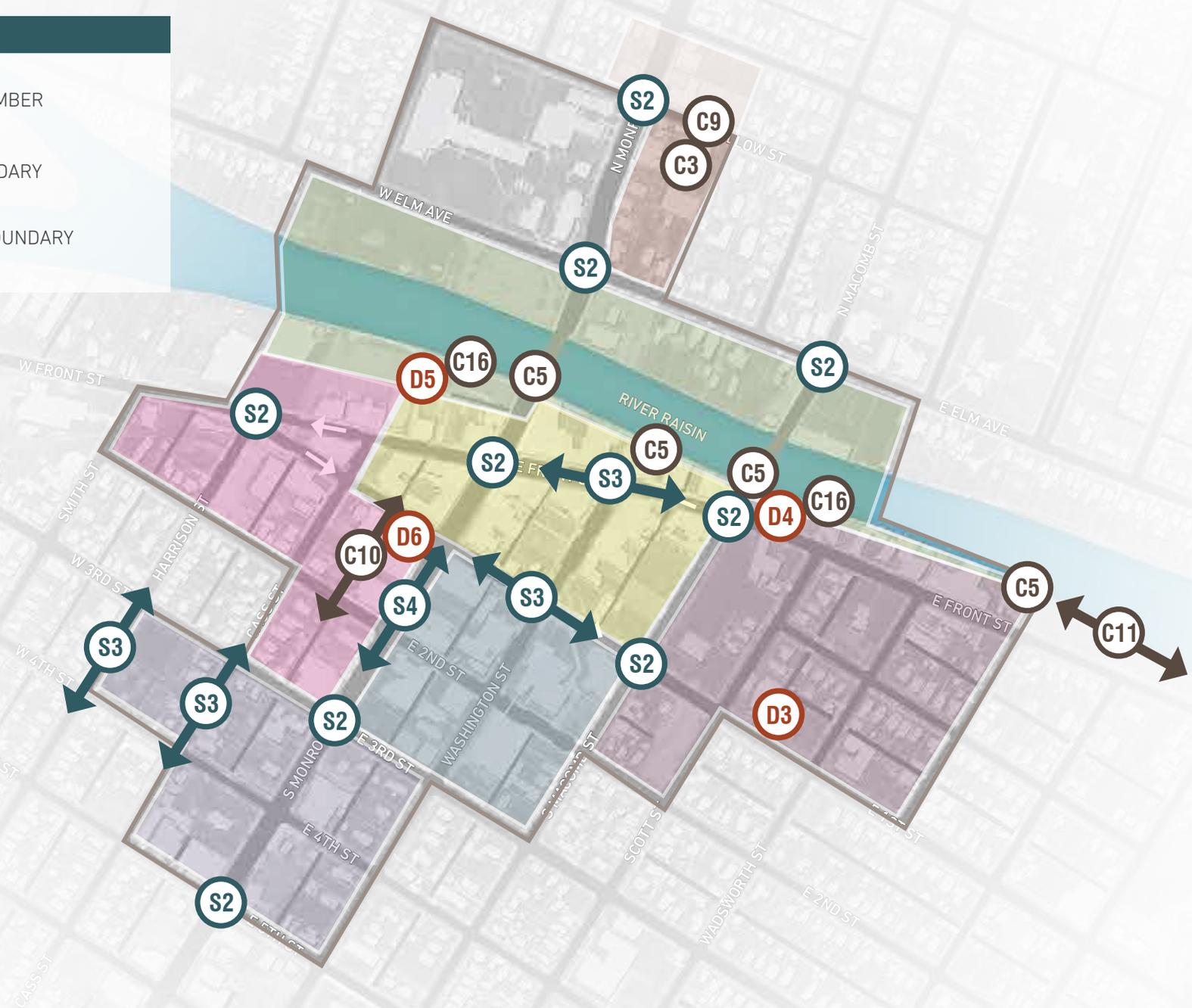
The DDA Board should conduct an annual review of the matrix to track progress, refine the project descriptions, and adjust priorities. Priorities might change as different funding options become available, or as redevelopment occurs. As the City's Annual Capital Improvement Plan is updated, the DDA should work with City staff and Administration to consider relevant recommendations.

POTENTIAL TIMEFRAMES



LEGEND

- PROJECT ID NUMBER
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



Action Matrix

ID	RECOMMENDATIONS	POTENTIAL ACTORS	TIMEFRAME (YEARS)	TIMEFRAME (YEARS)			
				0 - 1	1 - 3	3 - 5	5 +
STREETS AND CIRCULATION							
S1	Study feasibility of one-way conversions and Monroe road diet	DDA, MDOT, City of Monroe	Immediate				
S2	Highlight and improve key intersections as gateways into Downtown	DDA, MDOT, City of Monroe, adjacent property owners	Immediate to Medium				
S3	Convert identified one-ways to two-way	DDA, MDOT, City of Monroe	Medium				
S4	Implement Monroe road diet or feasible alternative	DDA, MDOT, City of Monroe, Monroe County	Medium				
PARKING STRATEGIES							
P1	Create employee permits for downtown employees to use underutilized blocks of on-street parking; create residential permits that allow downtown residents to use underutilized off-street parking <i>overnight</i>	DDA, City of Monroe, Monroe Police Department	Immediate				
P2	Create visitor-priority parking lots that prohibit parking before 10am	DDA, City of Monroe, Monroe Police Department	Immediate				
P3	Cover/remove parking meters on-street and in visitor lots, and make all parking free until demand rises	DDA, City of Monroe, Monroe Police Department	Immediate				
P4	Establish first-time forgiveness program to issue informational warning tickets, and establish an escalating fine beginning with 2nd violation	DDA, City of Monroe, Monroe Police Department	Immediate				
P5	Establish new, simplified regulations for on-street parking downtown	DDA, City of Monroe, Monroe Police Department	Immediate				
P6	Establish loading zones in on-street parking spaces for commercial deliveries in key retail zones during off-peak hours	DDA, City of Monroe, Monroe Police Department	Immediate				
P7	Reconfigure, or phase out parking validation program over time	DDA, City of Monroe, Downtown Monroe Business Network	Medium				
P8	Implement wayfinding downtown that includes parking information	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
P9	Conduct regular parking occupancy counts to track any changes in parking demand over time	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
P10	Install modern parking meters as demand necessitates use (include pay by phone option)	DDA, City of Monroe	Long				

Action Matrix

ID	RECOMMENDATIONS	POTENTIAL ACTORS	TIMEFRAME (YEARS)	0 - 1	1 - 3	3 - 5	5+
DOWNTOWN CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING							
C1	Activate blank facades with arts-focused treatments and installations	DDA, property owners, local artists	Immediate				
C2	Work with existing businesses to activate storefronts; promote sidewalk shopping and outdoor seating with streamlined approval process	DDA, City of Monroe, business owners	Immediate				
C3	Coordinate with Farmer's Market to enhance market experience	DDA, Farmer's Market	Immediate				
C4	Install attractive and effective lighting along the Riverwalk	DDA, City of Monroe	Immediate				
C5	Activate the Riverwalk with artistic bridge lighting and other art installations; enhance access points (like Altrusa Park)	DDA, City of Monroe, local artists	Immediate				
C6	Animate empty spaces through pop-up events, food trucks, and temporary art installations in the short term	DDA, City of Monroe, local artists	Immediate				
C7	Establish streetscape design standards to improve pedestrian realm	DDA, City of Monroe	Immediate to Medium				
C8	Establish storefront design standards to enhance street environment; work with property owners to implement	DDA, City of Monroe, property owners	Immediate to Medium				
C9	Coordinate with adjacent properties to expand Farmer's Market	DDA, City of Monroe, Farmer's Market, property owners	Medium				
C10	Implement alley improvements recommended in Heart of Monroe Plan	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
C11	Extend the Riverwalk through Soldier & Sailor's Park	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
C12	Implement wayfinding downtown that highlights walk times to popular destinations (and parking)	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
C13	Develop a tenanting (incubator) strategy for vacant storefronts	DDA, property owners	Medium to Long				
C14	Experiment with downtown Market location/pop-ups	DDA, City of Monroe, Farmer's Market	Medium to Long				
C15	Animate empty spaces as pocket parks or plazas in the medium-term, or infill development in the long term	DDA, City of Monroe, developers, local artists	Long				
C16	Explore reconstruction of Riverwalk with redevelopment to improve access and appeal of the riverfront	DDA, City of Monroe	Long				

Action Matrix

ID	RECOMMENDATIONS	POTENTIAL ACTORS	TIMEFRAME (YEARS)	0 - 1	1 - 3	3 - 5	5+
DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT							
D1	Establish a Form-Based Code / Design Standards for Downtown Monroe	DDA, City of Monroe	Immediate				
D2	Conduct Economic Feasibility Assessment	DDA, City of Monroe	Immediate				
D3	Release RFP for development on Fire Department site	DDA, City of Monroe	Immediate				
D4	Release RFP for development on Macomb Street Riverfront site	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
D5	Release RFP for development on Monroe Street Riverfront site	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				
D6	Release RFP for development on Monroe and First Street site	DDA, City of Monroe	Medium				

RESOLUTION TO

ADOPT MONROE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN & PARKING STUDY

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to amend the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted the 2017 Master Plan, *Resilient Monroe*, on August 14, 2017; and

WHEREAS, on June 11, 2018, the Citizens Planning Commission reviewed the proposed *Monroe Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study*, and voted unanimously to transmit the proposed plan to City Council for action as an amendment to the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2018, the Monroe City Council authorized distribution of the *Monroe Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study* for comment to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2018, the Monroe City Council authorized the Planning Commission to approve or reject the amendment to the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 10, 2018, to hear and receive public comment on the proposed *Monroe Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study*, as a proposed amendment to the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed *Monroe Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study*, is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the City; and

WHEREAS, the MPEA authorizes the Planning Commission to approve or reject the proposed amendment to the Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission approves the *Monroe Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study* as an amendment to the Master Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the *Monroe Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study* shall be an amendment to the Master Plan effective the date of adoption of this resolution.

This Resolution was offered by Commissioner Reising, and supported by Commissioner Ziegler, with the roll call vote being as follows:

YEAS:	6
NAYS:	0
ABSTAIN:	0
ABSENT:	2

This Resolution declared adopted on the 10 day of September, 2018.



Harry Reising, Secretary
Citizens Planning Commission