



Rocky Mount, NC
Downtown Northeast Quadrant

Implementation Strategies Plan



2016
Great Main Street In-the-Making

Award Recipient

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AUGUST 2017



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DOUGLAS BUILDING



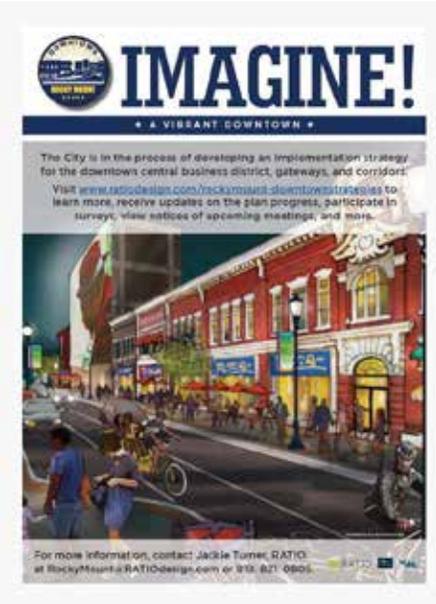
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Executive Summary

The section articulates the strategic actions the city, property owners and private sector will take to implement specific projects in this plan. These projects, primarily located in the NE Quadrant, align with the vision stated on the previous pages.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The community also provided input at stakeholder group interviews, a December 2016 public workshop, and a City Council meeting.

In 2016, the City of Rocky Mount moved forward with the preparation of a Downtown Plan spurred on by the anticipation of development following the announcement of the Rocky Mount Event Center (RMEC) and the area's high development potential. As the effort began, the City realized that the most effective tool to guide and incentivize future development would be specific implementation strategies. The strategies contained on the following pages primarily focus on the vicinity of the RMEC or what the plan calls the Northeast Quadrant illustrated on page 39.

Not all the strategies are new. The Plan combines the best recommendations from existing downtown documents with new concepts to chart the City's future success. A priority of the city's was to show some immediate successes to gain momentum and community support, therefore there is a chapter on "Quick Wins," -- projects that can be implemented in less than a year. This is in addition to the chapter titled Implementation Strategies -- projects with short, to medium to long range time frames, but none longer than 5-8 years. Other chapters that will contribute to successful implementation are Chapter 5: Relevant Private Development and Chapter 6: Governmental Excellence.

Select Key Strategies

Creating New Districts

When you don't have enough places with a special identity to draw visitors you can create them. Among the targeted redevelopment projects in this Plan are four new districts downtown with a goal to create brand identity and to market new things to do. This placemaking effort will strengthen revitalization and get people downtown and when there, stay longer!



Event & Entertainment District

The goal of this strategy is to create a vibrant, walkable, and pedestrian-friendly district that serves as a hub for entertainment, culture, and community events. This district will be located in the area bounded by the intersection of the North Main Street and the intersection of the East Side Street and the intersection of the West Side Street.

Local

- City of Rocky Mount
- Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce
- Rocky Mount Economic Development Corporation
- Rocky Mount Police Department
- Rocky Mount Fire Department
- Rocky Mount Public Schools
- Rocky Mount Senior Center
- Rocky Mount YMCA
- Rocky Mount Youth Center
- Rocky Mount Zoo

State & National

- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Department of Workforce Development
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Department of Workforce Development

PPP

- Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce
- Rocky Mount Economic Development Corporation
- Rocky Mount Police Department
- Rocky Mount Fire Department
- Rocky Mount Public Schools
- Rocky Mount Senior Center
- Rocky Mount YMCA
- Rocky Mount Youth Center
- Rocky Mount Zoo

Action Steps

1. Conduct a comprehensive market analysis to identify opportunities for development and investment in the district.
2. Develop a comprehensive master plan for the district, including land use, transportation, and public safety.
3. Implement a comprehensive marketing and promotion strategy to attract investment and visitors to the district.
4. Establish a comprehensive regulatory framework to support development and investment in the district.
5. Implement a comprehensive public safety and security plan for the district.
6. Establish a comprehensive public art and cultural programming plan for the district.
7. Implement a comprehensive public space and park plan for the district.
8. Establish a comprehensive public utility and infrastructure plan for the district.
9. Implement a comprehensive public housing and affordable housing plan for the district.
10. Establish a comprehensive public transportation plan for the district.

This page layout is representative of the graphic quality and layout we have proposed for the Downtown Overlay District.

Regulatory Updates

The City expects a faster rate of development with the advent of the RMEC and other city enhancements and recognized that the regulatory tools to achieve desired development outcomes were not in alignment with the vision. In a proactive manner, the City commissioned updates to the Land Development Code (LDC) in the form of a Downtown Overlay District (DOD). The DOD is divided into two subdistricts (Core and Transitional) based on the character of the existing development.

These subdistricts are modeled after standards and guidelines in both the existing Historic District and the Douglas Block Overlay District which address new and infill mixed-use development in downtown or urban areas. As part of the process, city staff and the consultant team assessed the LDC and gathered input from city departments on suggested changes. The Downtown Overlay District is organized in Sections as illustrated to the right and provide standards that address:

- Form-based character
- Development standards (parking landscaping) tailored to the urban context
- Comprehensive screening standards for parking, mechanical units, receptacles, etc.
- Exterior lighting standards
- Site and architectural design standards
- Procedural efficiency

How to Use This Plan

The Plan is a tool to be used by City staff, the Planning Board, City Council, and Redevelopment Commission to guide decisions about future development, transportation, and infrastructure as discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The proposed strategies work in conjunction with other adopted plans and policies as shown below. The Plan should also be shared with the development community and those investing in the community to convey the City's expectations of quality, character, and commitment.



Downtown Overlay District Sections

Section 1: Introduction/
Subdistricts

Section 2: Development Review
Procedures

Section 3: Use Standards Use
Matrix

Section 4: Development and
Design Standards

Section 5: The Public Realm

Section 6: Additional Design
Considerations

Section 7: Definitions





Chapter 1

Introduction

The downtown implementation strategies plan is organized into six chapters and an appendix.

- » Chapter 1: Introduction
- » Chapter 2: Analysis
- » Chapter 3: Quick Wins
- » Chapter 4: Implementation Strategies
- » Chapter 5: Relevant Private Development
- » Chapter 6: Governmental Excellence
- » Appendix

How to Use this Plan

The City of Rocky Mount produced several plans of visions, goals and recommendations relevant to its downtown in the last 15 years. Plans were implemented, including an award-winning streetscape project for Main Street. In preparing another planning document, the city decided to focus on implementation with an emphasis on follow-through, measurement of performance, and identification of entities with primary responsibilities for the work. Therefore, this document is titled Rocky Mount Downtown Implementation Strategies.

The catalyst for an action-oriented plan at this time is the proposed/planned construction of the Rocky Mount Event Center, a multipurpose arena for athletics and performances located on NE Main Street north of Thomas Street. The City broke ground on this public facility in March of 2017. Prior to this, developers, residents, and downtown property owners began to take a new look at opportunities in downtown, especially the Northeast (NE) Quadrant (refer to map on page 39).

This plan contains some goals but the focus is on strategies to implement specific projects for districts, sites, and infrastructure. Early on, city leadership also requested that the strategy identify “Quick Wins,” projects with readily available resources, that are visible, and can be accomplished in six to twelve months. Other initiatives are intended to be implemented in short, medium and long-range time frames of 1-3, 3-5, and 5-8 years, respectively. The plan does not look beyond an eight-year horizon because of the belief that the city should ride the wave of development that will occur before and for a few years after the completion of the Rocky Mount Event Center.

In addition, this document contains “Profiles” (topical features) intended to educate the reader about certain concepts, ideas, and best practices. Each year, possibly during an annual retreat, the Planning Board, Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP), City Council, and Redevelopment Commission should review the work of the year and reprioritize the tasks. This exercise should be used to inform the 5-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), establishing budgets and time frames to ensure the plan and its individual elements remain relevant.

Also addressed in this document are ideas for restructuring or reviving governmental entities, revising operational procedures for development, and promoting optimal interrelationships among city staff to leverage and maximize city resources and investment in the community.

Relevant Plans and Studies

Plans prepared in the last 15 years address streetscape design, corridors and gateways, housing, economic development, and more. This Downtown Implementation Strategies Plan works in tandem with the other plans, studies, and documents listed below including the Land Development Code (LDC).

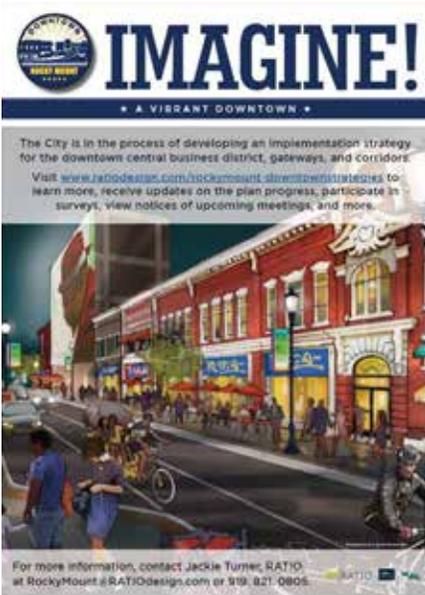
- Together Tomorrow - The Comprehensive Plan (2003)
- Downtown Action Plan (2005)
- Downtown Circulation Study (2006)
- Urban Streetscape Plan (2008)
- Twin Counties Competitive Assessment (2010)
- Gateway Corridor Plan (2012)
- Neighborhood Study (2014)
- Crossroads to Prosperity Housing Study (2015)
- Here's to Success (2015)
- Rocky Mount Event Center (2015)
- Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2015)
- Monk-to-Mill Greenway (2016)

One of the strategies that is part this plan is a new text and map amendment to the LDC which creates a Downtown Overlay District (DOD) to be adopted in Fall 2017. New development or large expansions of existing development, excluding single family, would be subject to the development, design, and use standards in this downtown character-influenced update.



Community Engagement Overview

The community engagement strategy developed for this plan was diverse and multi-faceted, relying on both traditional and web-based methods to actively engage as much of the public as possible. Ongoing community engagement produced feedback that focused the strategic implementation process on the NE Quadrant of the city and on those projects, that would be catalytic and create synergy.



Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP) (Steering Committee)

The existing Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP) composed of City residents, leaders of community organizations, and members of the business community, served as a steering committee for the Plan. The consultant team met bi-monthly with the group providing project updates, sharing ideas and concepts, and gathering input on key issues.

Core Committee

In addition, the project team met regularly with a core committee of department leadership and staff who provided guidance and direction for the consultant team and were responsible for some of the behind-the-scenes work on the document.

Stakeholder Groups

Early in the process, city staff identified community stakeholders and the consultant team conducted several interviews with the key stakeholder groups or made contact with a number of other individuals to obtain input. These groups included members of the development and real estate community, business owners, leaders of faith-based groups and higher education, as well as numerous interested citizens and residents. The stakeholder groups tended to have like interests and were encouraged to speak freely during the hour-long interviews. Summaries of these meetings were shared with the CCRP and the Core Committee.



Public Open House

On December 2, 2016, the City hosted an open house format public meeting at the Imperial Centre. It overlapped the city's "First Friday" event and more than 100 people stopped by to participate in a with a variety of activities. The informal open house format allowed attendees to participate at their own pace, ask questions of the facilitators, and to express their thoughts, supports or concerns. This resulted in a wide range of comments and recommendations which informed and helped prioritize the strategies in this plan.



Online Presence

The City provided a link on the Rocky Mount Downtown website home page and Facebook page. Workshop and meeting notices, the survey and results, draft and final documents were posted there. While not interactive, it provided an opportunity for convenient 24/7 participation.

Community Survey

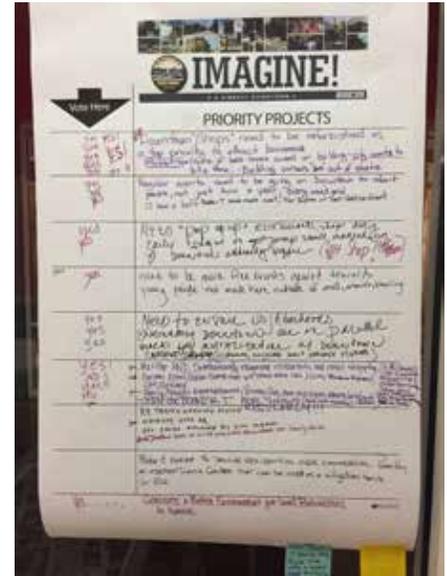
The general public was encouraged to take a survey accessible both online and in a traditional paper format for a two-month period from late October to the end of 2016. The survey was designed to establish community priorities regarding downtown development and revitalization. Paper survey responses were consolidated with the online responses, and the resulting data is summarized in Appendix A.

Plan Reveal

There was a public open house **August __, 2017**, to review and provide comment on the draft of the Implementation Strategies Plan. Prior to the open house, the city made a draft available on the project website and the City's Facebook page **for __ weeks**.

Council Approval

After the planning process, the City Council approved the Rocky Mount Downtown Implementation Strategies Plan at the **October _____, 2017** meeting.





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Chapter 2

Community Profile

This chapter provides significant demographic information about the community.

- » Regional Context
- » Demographic Analysis
- » Market Opportunities

Regional Context

It is important to understand Rocky Mount's current demographic and market conditions as a basis for future plan recommendations. The following information highlights important indicators of Rocky Mount's local economy and puts them in a regional and national context. For purposes of this analysis, Rocky Mount was compared to peer cities Wilson, Goldsboro, and Burlington. For reference, Rocky Mount was also compared to Raleigh, the State of North Carolina, and the U.S.

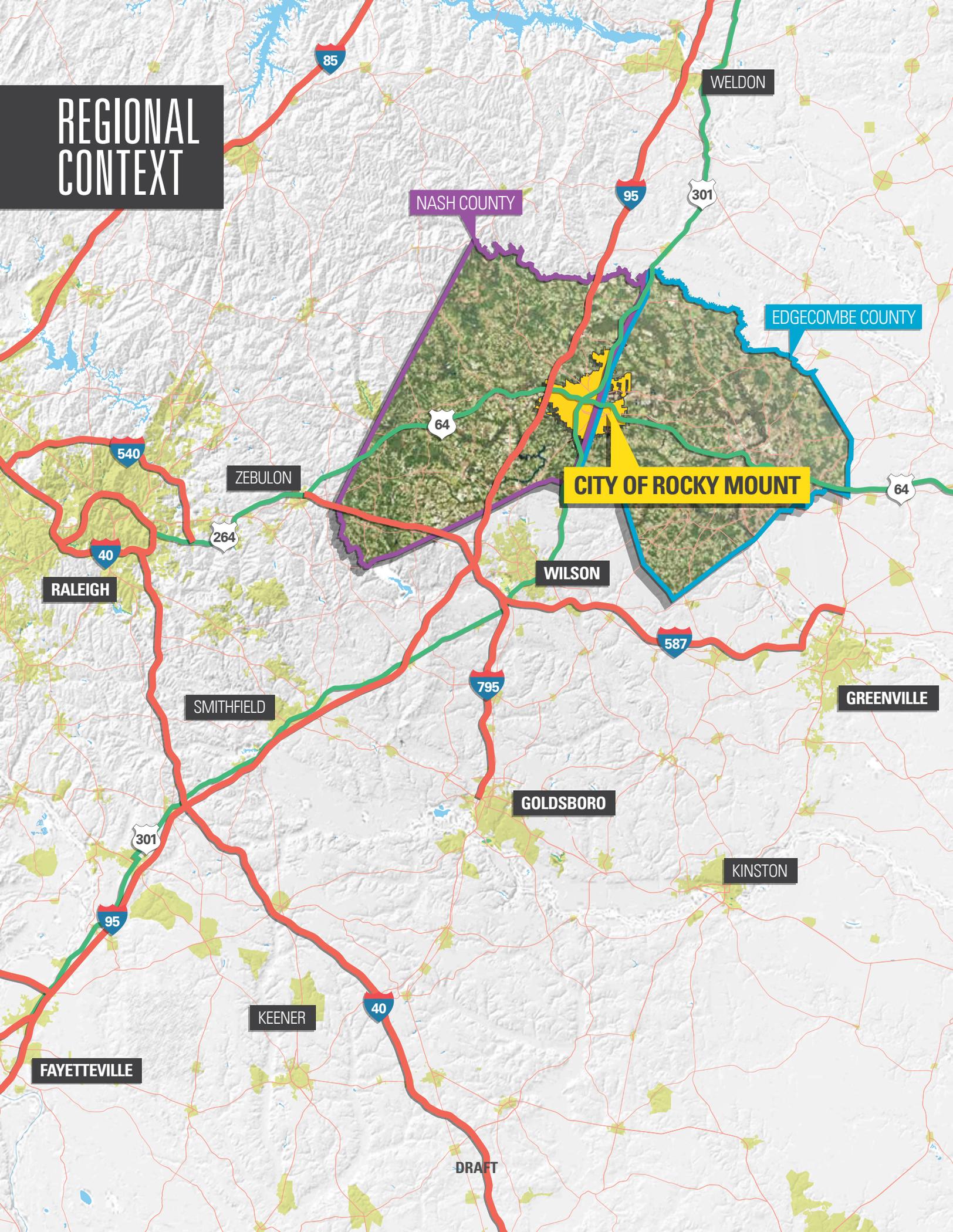
Placemaking Economic Development

In the 20th Century, economic development concerned providing industries with locational advantages along railroads and interstates, in essence proximity to market with low operating costs. Workers followed industry sometimes to remote locations, and most labor skill sets were similar. As we proceed through the 21st Century, it is clear that often, workers are selecting where they want to live, and then finding employment. The key drivers in that process revolve around quality of life and quality of place. Workers want to live in great places, and industries will now follow them. Therefore, 21st Century economic development must first and foremost be about improving the quality of life and the quality of the public realm, neighborhoods, and schools to maintain and attract a workforce, in turn attracting corporate investment and economic growth.

If communities can become great places to live, workforces and investment will follow. Placemaking addresses the physical spaces of a community and how they connect to one another. It concerns the physical linkages of people and how people move through space, whether in a downtown setting, an adjacent urban neighborhood, or a nearby park and trail system. The unique historic buildings and neighborhoods that speak to a community's heritage and authenticity are significant contributors.

Besides the physical connectivity of a place, placemaking asks, "What are the underlying key economic aspects to achieving successful and sustainable economic growth?" There are three key market segments that will be analyzed to determine how market forces may influence placemaking development and how those segments may be influenced by placemaking projects: residential, employment, and visitor. The residential and employment markets tend to exist within a 30 minute drive time of a place.

REGIONAL CONTEXT



NASH COUNTY

WELDON

EDGECOMBE COUNTY

CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT

ZEBULON

WILSON

GREENVILLE

GOLDSBORO

KINSTON

KEENER

FAYETTEVILLE

DRAFT

RALEIGH

SMITHFIELD

Demographic Analysis

Previous plans have provided analysis of Rocky Mount's Downtown, streetscape, corridors, vehicular and pedestrian ways, wayfinding signage, economic potential, and more.

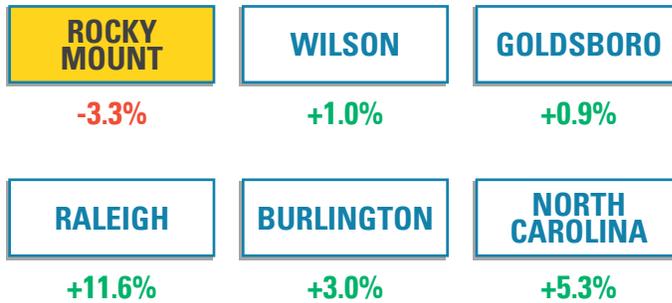
Elements that are ever changing are the population and current market demographics. The strategies in this plan rely on a solid, consistent market and an influx of visitors and residents. This chapter presents a snapshot of updated market demographics comparing Rocky Mount to its peers and the state of North Carolina as a whole. These statistics can be used to project changes over the next three to five years, especially as the catalyst project, the Rocky Mount Event Center, comes on line.

The site of the Rocky Mount Event Center is not the only one undergoing changes creating synergy and a walkable district in downtown. In the NE Quadrant, several potential properties are poised for redevelopment by private entities. These properties, May-Gorham Building, the former Post Office, and the Carleton House Motor Lodge and Restaurant are addressed in Chapter 5.

Population

Rocky Mount is the largest city amongst peer cities in east central North Carolina, however, it is the only city to have experienced population loss (Figure A). It should be noted that all the communities experienced less growth than the nation, state, and Raleigh in recent years. It will be shown that economic factors likely caused this fairly significant decrease in population.

Figure A
% Population Change (2010-2014)

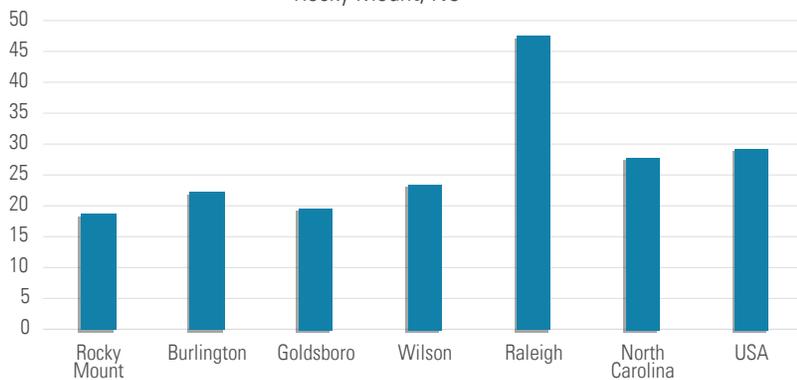


Source: US Census; RATIO

Education

All of the peer communities' populations have a lower level of attainment of higher education than the nation and state, but Rocky Mount has the lowest level which makes it less resilient to changing economic conditions (Figure B). The recent expansion of the Edgecombe County Community College in downtown Rocky Mount is a good start to reversing this trend. North Carolina Wesleyan, Shaw University and Nash Community college also have a presence in the city.

Figure B
College Degree or Higher (Population Aged 25+)
 Rocky Mount, NC

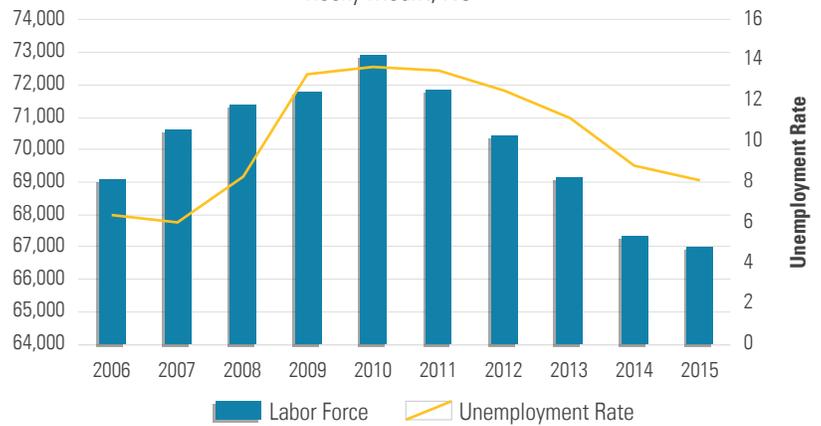


Source: US Census; RATIO

LOCAL ECONOMY

Rocky Mount lost a significant portion of its workforce in recent years. At the same time the unemployment rate fell from 13.5% in 2010 to 8% in 2015 (over a five year period). This is contrary to what should be going on in an economy that is growing – the labor force should grow as the unemployment rate falls. In contrast, over the same period Raleigh’s labor force continues to grow while the unemployment rate has fallen. Data for 2016 is still being seasonally adjusted and may be available in second quarter of 2017. (Figure C) What would account for this change in Rocky Mount, where the labor force is falling in parallel with the unemployment rate? This likely means that people have left Rocky Mount for other labor markets such as Raleigh. This would also explain why the population growth rate in Rocky Mount fell 3.3% from 2010-2014.

Figure C
Labor Force (2006-2015)
 Rocky Mount, NC

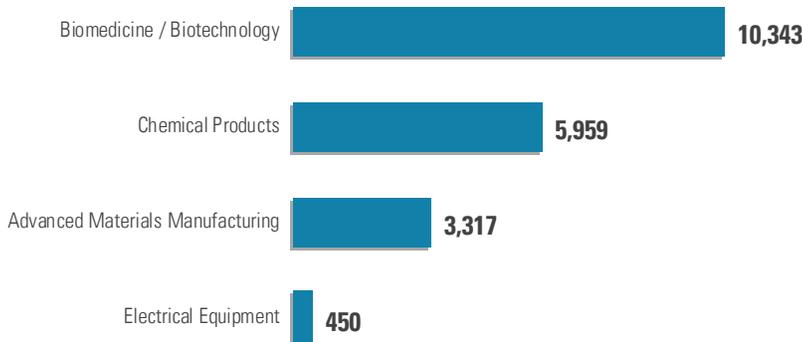


Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

The challenge for Rocky Mount’s local economy is how to recharge itself as the nation and other metro areas have done post-Great Recession. The recent announcement of the CSX Carolina Connector is a timely development for Rocky Mount’s economy, bringing \$272 million of investment and 149 jobs with an average annual salary of \$64,000. This is a major project for Rocky Mount and indeed for the state of North Carolina, linking ports, railroads, and the interstate system together for logistics efficiencies. While this announcement and the future economic benefits are real to Rocky Mount, it will be critical for the community to build on this success. This is why it is so important to build a placemaking economic development strategy that will not only attract future workers to the CSX project and related spinoff businesses, but also encourage those workers to reside in Rocky Mount. To achieve this, it will be increasingly important for Rocky Mount to offer a high quality of life. It must become a great place to be!

Furthermore, industrial sectors within Rocky Mount that did grow employment over the past decade (Figure D) correspond to the same industrial sectors that are concentrated in Raleigh and provide significant growth for that metro area: electrical equipment, chemical products, biomedicine/biotechnology, and advanced materials manufacturing.

Figure D
Industrial Employment Growth (2001-2012)
 Rocky Mount, NC



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Bottom Line:

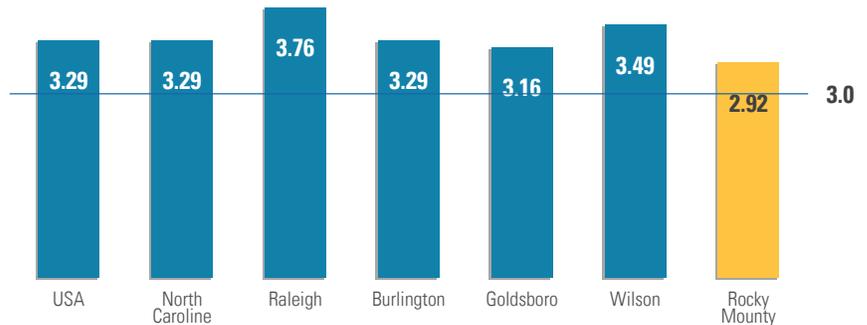
If Rocky Mount is going to take advantage of its relationship to Raleigh’s growing industries, then it must build the kind of place that will attract future workers as a place to not only work, but also live and play.

Housing

As has been shown, Rocky Mount has experienced a significant amount of economic readjustment in recent years, causing a loss of population. This had an impact on the local housing market, which declined but is beginning to see signs of growth once again. While the percentage of owner-occupied housing is below the nation and the state, it is higher than three of the four peer communities and is on par with Raleigh.

Rocky Mount’s median home value is the lowest of the peer communities, and its median household income is about the same level as other peer communities. Due to lower home values yet steady household income levels, Rocky Mount has an affordability advantage relative to other peer communities, the nation, and the state. As a rule of thumb, a community is considered affordable if the affordability ratio is less than 3; Rocky Mount’s is 2.92. The rest of the peer communities, the nation and the state are above 3, meaning it is more difficult to buy homes in these locations. Also, based on a declining population and current vacancy rates the housing demand for Rocky Mount is expected to hover around 200 units in the next 3-5 years. (Figure F) Once several of the larger scale regional employment projects reach full employment such as CSX, then the annual housing demand may likely increase above 200 units per year.

Figure E
Affordability Ratio (2014)
 Rocky Mount, NC

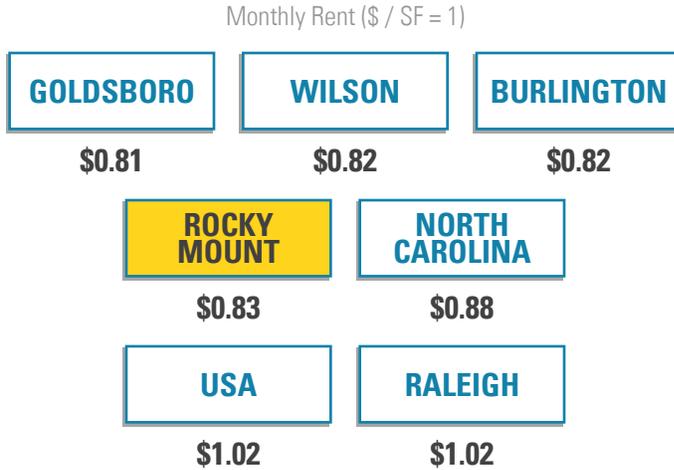


*A community is considered affordable if the affordability ratio is less than 3

Source: US Census; RATIO

Regarding rental housing, Rocky Mount appears to be consistent with its peer communities in rent levels and rent per square foot (SF) as shown in Figure G. Note that rents below \$1/SF tend to require subsidies for construction, as they will not support construction costs at existing market levels. This is evident in Rocky Mount, as planned Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects such as Beal Street Square and Ravenwood Crossing, will be the first multifamily residences constructed in nearly a decade.

Figure G
Median Gross Rent Per Sq. Ft. (2014)

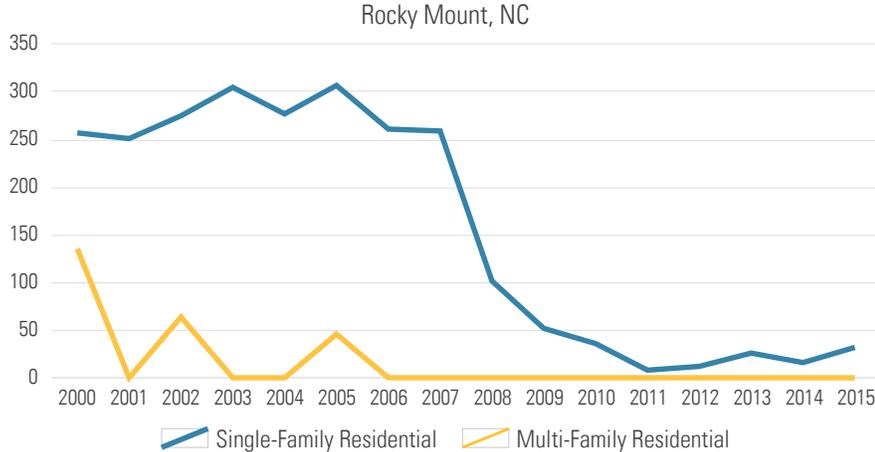


Source: US Census; RATIO

The housing demand model estimates the absorption rate of new housing units in a market. If Rocky Mount’s population continues to decrease through 2020 and its vacancy rate remains around 14.5%, the housing market would only absorb about 39-40 new units per year.

Rocky Mount may have a small pent-up demand for new housing units: if about 40 units had come on line each year from 2011-2015, then about 200 new units should have been permitted. Instead, the community experienced a significant drop in housing construction permits since 2007 and a total lack of multifamily permits since 2005 (Figure H). Only 97 new housing units were permitted, which leaves roughly another 100 to be absorbed by new construction. This would leave an additional 200 new units to be built between 2015 -2020.

Figure H
Residential Construction Permits (2000-2015)



Source: US Census Bureau & RATIO

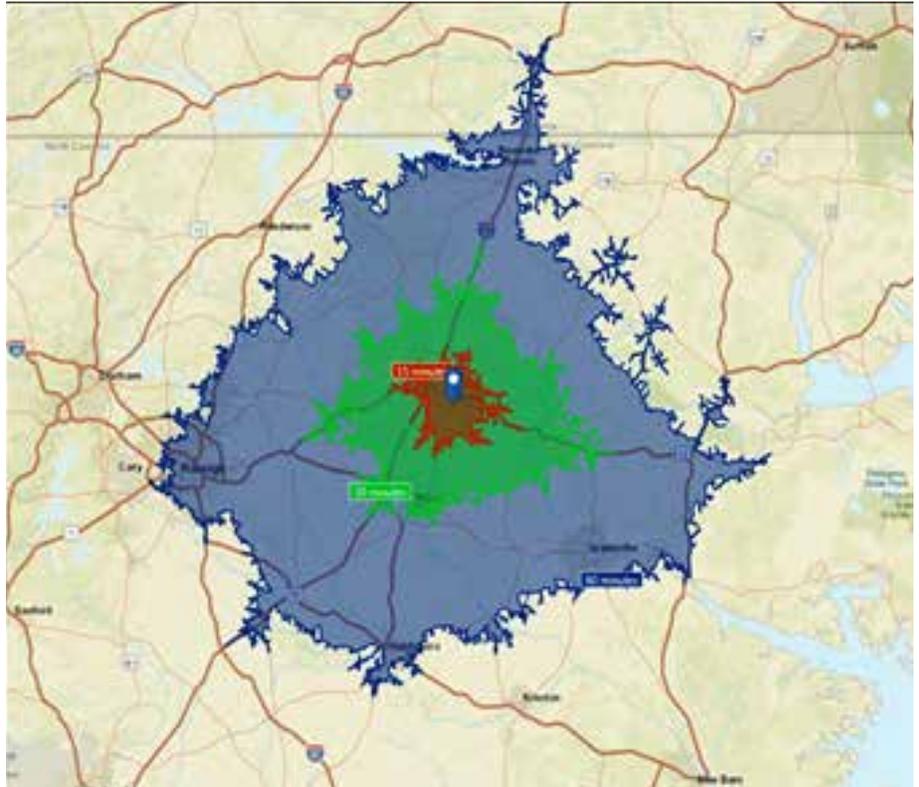
Housing Model
 Rocky Mount, NC

	2000	2010	Projected 2020
Population	55,893	57,720	54,851
Percentage of Population in Households	97.90%	96.81%	96.81%
Household Population	54,719	55,880	53,101
Average Household Size	2.56	2.44	2.47
Number of Households	21,435	23,097	23,097
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	94.62%	85.70%	85.70%
Number of Housing Units	21,375	22,902	21,498
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	2,732	3,856	3,117
- Percentage		14.50%	14.50%
Estimated New Units 2000–2100 (Construction Permits)		2,340	266
Demolitions/Deconversions 2000-2010; (projected 2020)		419	394
Net Gain in Housing Units		1,921	-128
Demand for New Units Based on Household Growth		1,424	0
Total new units needed		1,844	394
Annualized demand		184	39

Sources: U.S. Decennial Census 2000 and 2010; RATIO

Retail Gap Analysis

A retail gap analysis can be prepared on a variety of market levels and geographies; in this case, a 30 minute drive time geography (represented by the green area in the figure below) will be used to calculate potential retail gaps in the marketplace around Rocky Mount as this captures both convenience and more selective shopping experiences. This includes most of Nash and Edgecombe Counties.



Source: ESRI Business Analysis

Figure I
30-Minute Drive Time Retail Gap Analysis & Potential Demand (S.F.) Analysis
 Rocky Mount, NC

	# Stores	Jobs	S.F.
Sporting Goods, Books, Hobby	2-4	12	10-20k
Restaurant & Drinking Establishments	3-4	15	4.5-7.5k
Clothing, Shoes & Accessories	4-5	15	4-5k
Specialty Food Stores	4-5	15	6-7.5k
Building, Electronics & Home Supplies	3-5	12	9-12k
Total Retail Opportunity	16-23	69	33.5-52k

Sources: ESRI Business Analyst; RATIO

The retail gap analysis for the 30 minute drive time market indicates that there is an existing demand for sports, hobby stores, restaurant and drinking establishments, clothing and accessories, specialty foods and for smaller, high service oriented building, electronics, and home supplies stores. The total demand for these retail sectors is an estimated \$45 million, which could support 15-23 small businesses employing around 70 employees. At an average income of around \$15 per hour, the total annual payroll would reach about \$2.1 million. Therefore, it appears that Rocky Mount's downtown and the NE Quadrant specifically have a number of small retail business opportunities to develop.

As Figure I demonstrates the potential square footage demand for these stores would be approximately between 33,500 SF and 52,000 SF. A rough inventory of ground floor retail has been calculated for occupied and vacant retail space in the NE Quadrant.

Within the NE Quadrant, the occupied ground floor space is approximately 368,000 SF and the vacant ground floor retail space is about 225,000 SF. While this appears to be a significant level of vacancy, if the retail gap analysis represents about 50,000 SF of potential demand, then Rocky Mount may be able to support several infill retail opportunities in the NE Quadrant. Using a \$75 per SF cost of construction renovation for retail, there is currently the potential to redevelop ground floor space with an estimated investment of \$3.8 million. The next step in the use of this market analysis is to identify potential blocks for retail clustering and potential buildings for renovation and reuse.

While this analysis focuses on retail opportunities, the residential potential for the NE Quadrant is also significant. As was discussed in the housing section, Rocky Mount is estimated to have an annual demand of about 40 new housing units. The building inventory estimated 231,000 SF of upper floor space was vacant, so the opportunity for renovating the upper floors for apartments is significant. If a residential renovation combined the apartment unit and common space to be about 1500 SF per unit, then there is potential for creating 154 apartment units in the vacant upper floor space in the NE Quadrant.

Using \$85/SF for residential renovation construction, this could create 154 units that would generate about \$19.5 million in new investment. Like the retail opportunities, the next step for residential opportunities presented through this market analysis will be to identify potential buildings and blocks for upper floor residential renovation and reuse.

Market Opportunities

Summary

While Rocky Mount’s local economy has experienced some readjustment since the Great Recession, causing a small labor force and population decline that has shrunk demand for existing housing, with recent economic development successes such as the CSX hub it appears that the community is headed in a positive economic direction.

The housing demand is about 40 new units per year, which is actually slightly higher than recent residential building permits. Therefore, residential demand is rebounding, and there are prospects for multifamily workforce housing using tax credit programs to encourage development that current market rate rents may not support.

The retail gap analysis estimates that between 16 and 23 new stores could be located in the NE Quadrant in vacant ground floor spaces, generating about 70 jobs and \$3.8 million in new investment.

While the residential market is rebounding, the opportunity exists to create up to 154 units residential units in vacant upper floor spaces in the NE Quadrant. This would generate about \$19.5 million in new investment.

The destination market is strong and growing, which will allow Rocky Mount’s downtown to transition into a destination place for a broader market of visitors coming from Raleigh to enjoy an evening or a weekend of entertainment, music, theatre, arts, restaurants, and sporting events. The Rocky Mount Event Center will be positioned to capture portions of this growing destination marketplace as illustrated in Figures J and K, while the Monk-to-Mill Trail which runs from the former neighborhood of jazz musician Thelonious Monk to the Rocky Mount Mill Village, will be the connective link between venues of downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

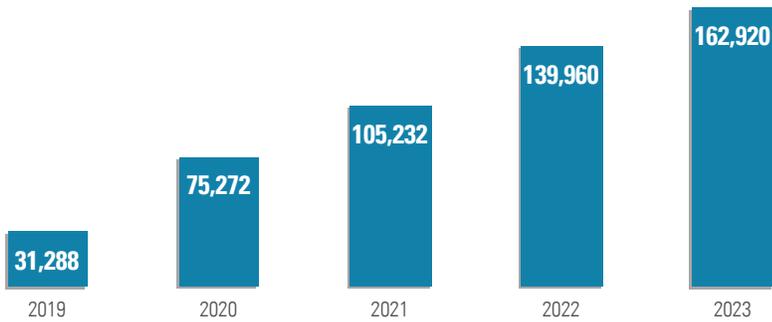


Monk-to-Mill Trail

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Figure J
RMEC Annual Number of Non-Local Visitors

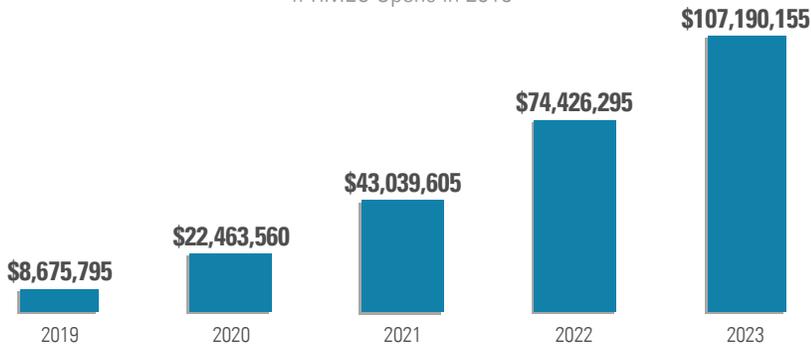
if RMEC Opens in 2019



Source: SFA

Figure K
RMEC Non-Local Visitors' Total Annual Spending

if RMEC Opens in 2019



Source: SFA; RATIO

The Rocky Mount Event Center, formerly the Downtown Community Facility (DCF), is a planned indoor sports destination located in the heart of Downtown Rocky Mount that is unlike any sporting event center in eastern North Carolina. The RMEC is unique in that it not only caters to sporting tournaments, but also has the capacity to accommodate a multitude of other occasions. This space is ideal for use by both locals and visitors alike, and will set Downtown Rocky Mount apart as the perfect destination location of experience for people of all ages and interests.

Source: City of Rocky Mount. <http://www.rockymountnc.gov/experience/recreation/rmec>



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Chapter 3

Quick Wins

This chapter provides immediate to very short-term project ideas that can be implemented without abundant staff or financial resources. Some projects are in progress prior to plan completion.

“Quick Wins” are projects that do not require abundant resources and can be undertaken immediately or within a 6-month to 1-year time frame.

Many of the ideas suggested at stakeholder meetings or public workshops or by staff are currently in progress. These are represented by the symbol below.



Denotes a recommendation the City is currently pursuing

Quick Wins

This NE Quadrant Implementation Strategies Plan is intended to be implemented over several years (up to eight) during which the make up of city leadership, boards and commissions may change, but the guidance to complete projects should continue. The significant investment of resources for longer term projects, including staff, funding, design, and implementation is a deliberative process which may occur over several budget cycles.

Enter “Quick Wins” which are projects or tasks that do not require abundant resources and can be undertaken immediately or within a 6-month to 1-year time frame. These are also known as “low-hanging fruit”. The general public, key stakeholders, and staff contributed to a list of potential quick wins. In a process that involved the CCRP and the core committee, the list was whittled down to include the list below. Some items were moved from the list because they were determined to be longer term and added to strategies in Chapter 4, while others were noted as completed or underway though their progress or recent completion was not generally known. As a result, one goal is to do a better job of communicating and celebrating successes and positive results.

Potential Quick Win Projects

- Protect Core Downtown Historic District Designation; consider extending boundaries a little to the southwest, north to Memorial Hospital (224 Rose Street), east to Tarboro, and west ½ block to alley
- Conduct a traffic management plan for Rocky Mount Event Center - in progress
- Enhance awareness of incentive packages for downtown developers
 - » Downtown Building Assistance Program- up to \$20,000 matching grant
 - » Federal, state and local tax credits
 - » Any additional incentives currently available
 - » Assistance of a dedicated downtown development point-person on the City’s staff
- The City should partner with local small business advocacy organizations to focus on small commercial retail / business revitalization and recruitment
- Ensure duties of new downtown staff devises a communication strategy to disseminate positive and accurate information regarding downtown activities and public safety issues including:
 - » Use subscription mobile messaging system to blast significant downtown updates/openings
 - » Create social media posts
 - » Enhance visibility and awareness of existing community policing downtown
- Start up a downtown small business mentor program with the Rocky Mount Area Chamber/Downtown Main Street Program Partnership

- Prepare a business/developer interest form that can be filled out on-line or in person and a simple flow diagram on how to work a new business through the city to assist the Downtown staff of the applicants' interests, financial, and regulatory issues. This will help the city to guide developers towards more detail on grants, loans, the Municipal Services District (MSD), and tax credit applications or other assistance. The City will roll out "Start Up in a Day" in Fall 2017.
- Enhance the role of the Rocky Mount Redevelopment Commission to fully function as permitted by state statute which would include the ability to foreclose on and convey property to viable developers for commercial and residential development. Using these abilities to buy and sell property provides a more expedient transfer of ownership for interested investors.
- Identify historic district and contributing buildings on property advertisements and note credits they may be eligible to receive
- Create a strategy for maintenance (debris, weed removal from sidewalks) within the right-of-way on all streets, but especially primary corridors downtown. This can be done in conjunction with neighborhood work days and stronger code enforcement.
- Enliven the existing Main Street appearance by:
 - » Provide incentives to property owners to turn on electricity in abandoned buildings to light up the street-level windows of buildings. If no electricity, windows could have a battery operated solar cell light that would go on at dusk and off at dawn.
 - » Allow a committee of citizens to prepare and implement a window beautification plan that would include debris/dirt removal, window washing, and setting up a display. The display could be from a high school art class or poster advertising an upcoming festival. Offer to advertise their property for sale if the owner participates.
 - » Seek and assist local entrepreneurs to set up a "pop-up" businesses for a week or a month that generates foot traffic.
- Develop a strategy of policies and regulations for portable food (food trucks or carts) downtown, especially in the vicinity of Edgecombe Community College and the train station or other venues where people gather.
- Increase awareness of local commercial property owners to provide a screen of opaque materials or to strategically place trash, recycling, grease dumpsters and containers out of view from public streets.



A quick win would be to clean, light, and provide displays in downtown street level windows such as this neglected window above, and the history display below.



The "About this Window" sign interprets what is in this vacant store window. The displays are sponsored by the local Main Street and historic preservation groups.





Chapter 4

Implementation Strategies

This chapter provides implementation strategies through targeted redevelopment projects.

- » Redevelopment in the NE Quadrant
- » Targeted Redevelopment Projects
- » Governmental Responsibilities

Overview

Redevelopment of dilapidated, vacant or abandoned real estate is a critical issue for many communities. Downtown Rocky Mount has struggled with aged infrastructure, and neglected and underutilized properties which influence surrounding real estate in a negative way and discourages new investment. The associated costs to redevelop or rehabilitate these pieces of real estate often exceed the return on investment (ROI) due to the need for compliance with modern building codes, aging mechanical systems, the property constraints of urban real estate, and the costs of possible environmental remediation for brownfields.

Generally, redevelopment requires a city to proactively intervene to assist potential developers and assume a portion of the risk. This is where organizations such as a Redevelopment Commission, a Community Development Corporation (CDC) with experience in commercial redevelopment, and a City Council come into play. These entities have varying levels of power to incentivize development, acquire, assemble, and convey land, and amend processes. They can work independently of one another, but frequently combine resources with each other and the private sector for successful development.

Simply put, if communities can become great places to live, the workforce and investment will follow.

Redevelopment Projects

The successes in the NE Quadrant of downtown Rocky Mount -- Douglas Block and the Imperial Centre -- are both City projects. This plan section proposes strategies in this NE Quadrant (see map at right) due to the aforementioned successes, but also due to the 5000-seat Rocky Mount Event Center conceived by the city and currently under-construction. The facility on NE Main Street just south of E. Goldleaf Street is a multiuse space that can easily be converted from a performance venue to athletic courts.

In an effort to focus energies, the City chose to address 16 projects with the best chance of “making it” based on an assessment of readiness and ability to ride the wave of investment following the groundbreaking of the Rocky Mount Event Center. Some of the projects are location specific as denoted on the map on page 41. Others are applicable throughout the NE Quadrant, and in many cases, also throughout the downtown. The action plans anticipate these projects being completed or well underway within an eight-year horizon. Each project is formatted with project-based site analysis, design precedents, and an action plan. The projects are classified as either short-term opportunities (1-3 years), mid-term opportunities (3-5 years), long term opportunities (5-8 years), or ongoing opportunities.

Non-Project Strategies

Of primary importance and critical to successful implementation of the city's vision are regulatory tools and efficient governmental practices and organizational capacity. The end of this chapter addresses the principles of the Downtown Overlay District which is a proposed update to the Land Development Code (LDC). A draft of the district text amendment may be found in the Appendix B. This chapter also emphasizes the need for collaboration, expertise, education, and understanding between city departments, boards and commissions, and between all these entities and the public.



Placemaking

Placemaking is the concept to further that goal and can be defined as leveraging or creating unique places in a community to enhance quality of life. Placemaking economic development takes the idea one step further by using a community's unique places to achieve larger economic goals. When you don't have enough places with a special identity to draw attention, you can create some. This chapter proposes four districts beginning on page 56 to strengthen the revitalization of downtown. The intent is to create brand identity and market the new and cool things to do in each district. This in turn will get people to come to downtown or to stay longer when they are there. Uses that are consistent with the district theme are encouraged but not exclusive. For instance, having a cluster of restaurants in a couple of blocks can provide synergy for the proprietors, but eating establishments may also locate in other districts.

Promotions

Strengthening and possibly rebranding Rocky Mount may be a necessary step to garner excitement and get residents and visitors to take a new or second look. This is an effort larger than just downtown. Work with Nash County Tourism, Edgecombe County Tourism Development Authority, and Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce to create marketing and promotional materials. Promote Rocky Mount as having a quality of life worth commuting to -- marketed as a bedroom community for the Raleigh and Greenville metropolitan areas. The map on page 39 provides a good foundation for downtown marketing collateral.

Infill Development

One of the greatest challenges for developers is infill and redevelopment in existing downtowns due to higher costs and lower profit margins. The city can provide less restrictive development standards in the ordinances or offer to streamline the approvals and permitting process, but to be successful, infill and redevelopment must be seen as being as equally attractive as greenfield development to gain interest from private investors.

The specific projects described in the following section may require initial studies to determine their feasibility or may depend on other work prior to implementation. Such projects may also be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving local, regional, and state agencies as well as public-private partnerships (PPPs).

Profile: Infill Development

Effectively utilizing existing resources rather than expanding outward into “undeveloped” areas is commonly referred to as “redevelopment” or “infill development.” This is an effective tool as it utilizes existing infrastructure and revitalizes vacant or underutilized lots and structures within an urban/developed area. In Rocky Mount, this strategy would best be applied to the existing commercial areas to create vibrant districts with a mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses and a goal to preserve or at least respect the compact, pedestrian-friendly historic development pattern. Infill development would also be applicable to vacant lots within residential neighborhoods. Redevelopment would only occur on properties primarily adjacent to main thoroughfares and where owners want to participate. Proposed development should subject to review to ensure that it fits in with the existing residential and commercial properties.



Partnerships in Infrastructure Provision

Rocky Mount will need to partner with the private sector to upgrade necessary infrastructure. Many North Carolina cities facing these challenges provide assistance through the general fund, bonds, synthetic tax increment financing, or other methods that are not part of the greenfield development process. This kind of approach can send the signal to the development community that Rocky Mount is open for business.

The City set a precedent for this type of infrastructure investment by undertaking the streetscape improvements in the downtown core. Other examples of infrastructure retrofits that could be financed in part or in whole include water and sewer upgrades (distribution lines, not service lines), extended street and sidewalk retrofits, construction and maintenance of regional stormwater management infrastructure such as Braswell Park Stream, and public parking facilities (like that planned near the Rocky Mount Event Center). These kinds of infrastructure improvements need to occur on a block-by-block basis.

Another infrastructure related incentives for downtown development which would require further study, is the reduction of water and sewer system tap fees. The City may also work with developers to offer cost and time savings in the form of reduced permit and petition fees, escorted and personalized development review, and subsidized utility hookups in exchange for development in desired areas.

Profile: Public Private Partnerships

The term “public-private partnership” (PPP) traditionally refers to projects that involve the use of public resources or financing capabilities to promote local private economic development. In those arrangements, the public entity typically provides some combination of tax incentives, public land or other assets, infrastructure investments or financing methods. The private entity makes capital investments, commits to providing jobs, contributes development expertise and assumes financial risk.

These “partnerships” (which typically are not partnerships legally) can have short life spans covering only the construction period for the project, or longer life spans covering debt repayment or long-term operating agreements. The governing body needs to take an active role in educating the public about the costs and benefits of a proposed project.

PPPs Ideal for Local Government

There are several examples of smaller project types that are ripe for public-private partnerships. These include:

- **Unlocking the value of land:** Local and state governments have significant real estate holdings that are often underutilized. Particularly in areas with increasing density, these real estate holdings can be leveraged to replace aging public facilities and provide parking while at the same time generating increased tax revenues from multi-use projects. Developers are also often willing to donate private land if it speeds up the delivery of needed infrastructure.
- **Outsourced maintenance and operations:** Often seen as the pioneer of public-private partnerships, state and local public works agencies can use PPPs to enhance performance, improve reliability and reduce costs (e.g. toll roads leases).
- **Regulatory compliance:** Some infrastructure projects are driven not just by need, but by mandate. Either development is occurring, or more commonly, new rules and regulations require system upgrades that need to be accomplished quickly to avoid stiff penalties. The public-private partnership approach can meet these challenges without the need for a permanent staff augmentation by the owner.

Downtown Overlay District Boundaries

The Downtown Implementation Strategies Plan focuses on the NE Quadrant but the strategies are generally applicable to the whole downtown. Because the downtown framework varies in terms of character and density, and based on observations, zoning, and existing land uses, the City decided to develop a Downtown Overlay District (DOD), an update to the Land Development Code. The DOD is one of the tools used to facilitate development.

Rocky Mount currently has five Overlay Districts (Conditional Use, Floodplain Protection, Historic, Douglas Block, Community Enterprise) outlined in Section 408 of the City's Land Development Code. The Douglas Block District Overlay District (DBOD) was developed with a focus on form and character instead of uses. The DOD is divided into two subdistricts: Downtown Core Subdistrict and Downtown Transitional Subdistrict (see map at right). The best of the proposed Douglas Block Overlay District is incorporated into the Downtown Core Subdistrict. The following is an overview of the subdistricts, followed by policy directives that are applicable to both. The full draft DOD may be found in the Appendices.

Downtown Core Subdistrict

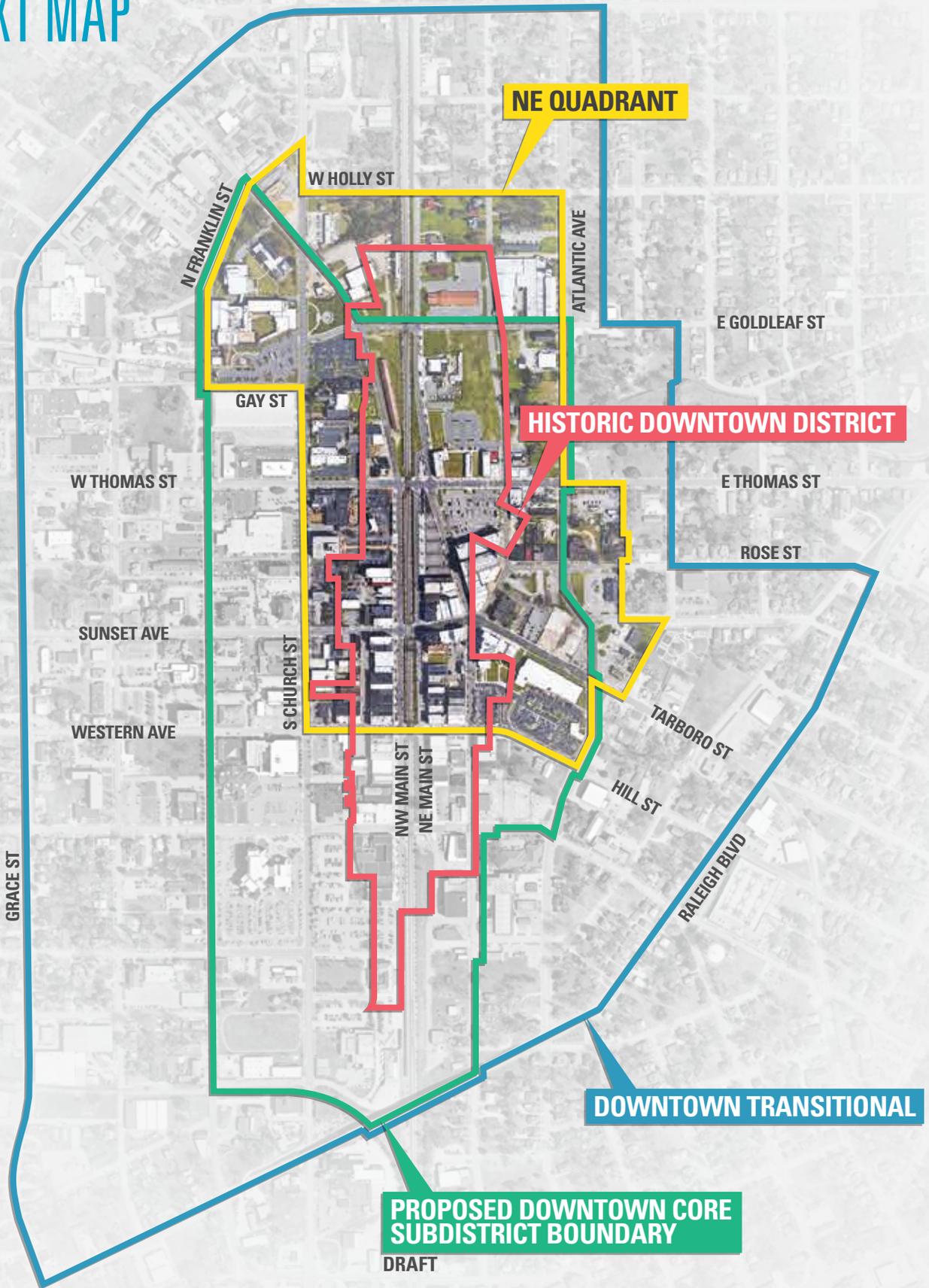
This subdistrict includes historic commercial buildings, warehouses, and the train station. It also includes more contemporary institutional buildings, banks and churches all situated on a traditional street grid on either side of the CSX Rail Line. There are issues with commercial and residential vacancies in much of the downtown. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic is low. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Douglas Block Overlay District is wholly incorporated into this Subdistrict, which extends beyond the original DBOD boundaries and also provides the standards that will contribute to a vital mixed-use downtown.

Downtown Transitional Subdistrict

This subdistrict includes older, but not historic homes, new multifamily housing development, neighborhood commercial retail and office businesses, some converted from homes. These are also on the traditional street grid and served by transit. The homes are typically on small lots. Sidewalks are present throughout the area but they are generally in poor condition. Property maintenance and structural and parcel vacancies are issues for this area as well.

CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT NORTHEAST QUADRANT

NE QUADRANT CONTEXT MAP



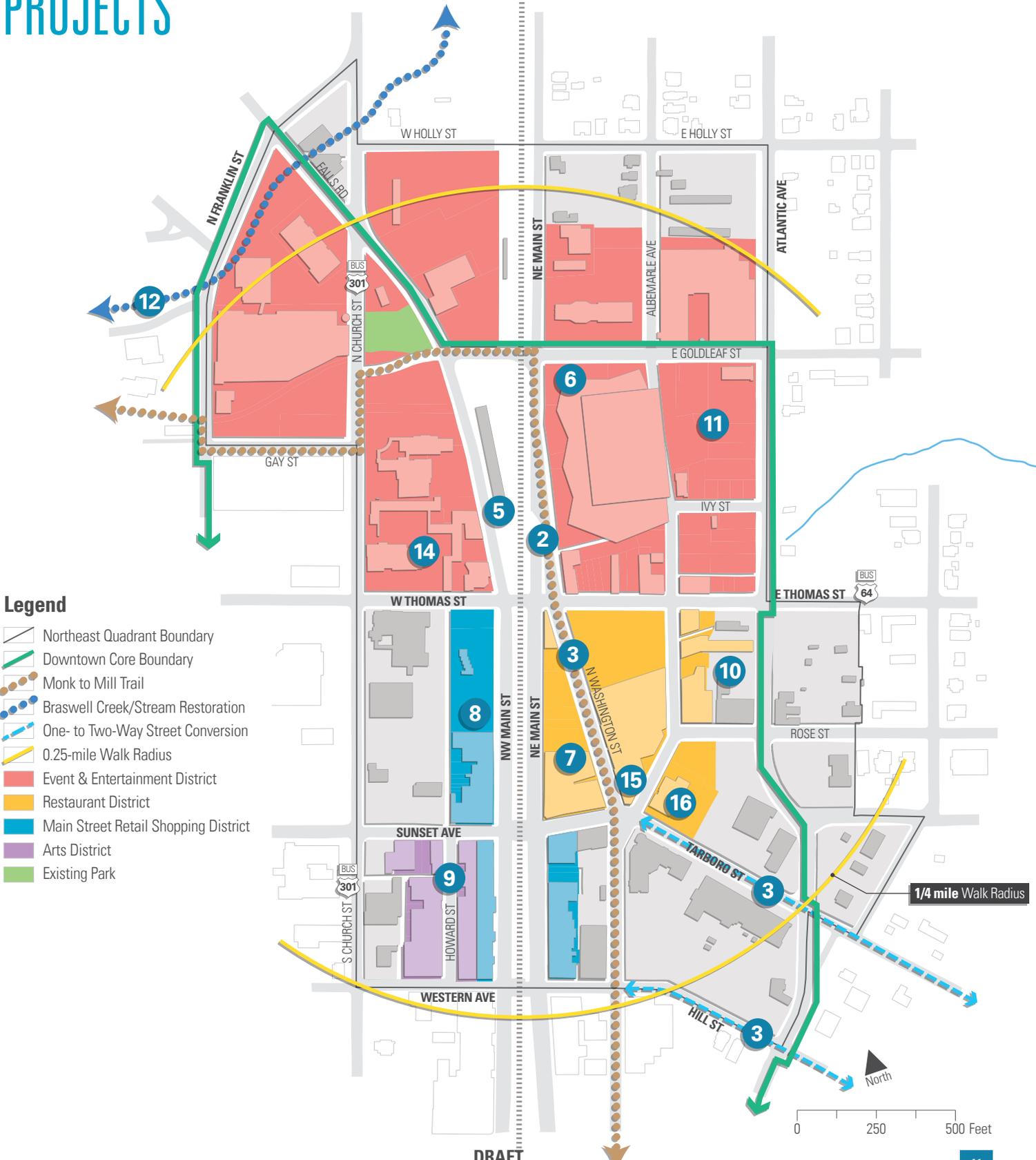
NE Quadrant Targeted Redevelopment Projects

- 1 Streetscape Future Phases
- 2 Vehicular, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Mobility
- 3 One- to Two-Way Street Conversion
- 4 Downtown Gateway & Wayfinding Signage
- 5 Farmer's Market
- 6 Event & Entertainment District
- 7 Restaurant District
- 8 Main Street Retail Shopping District
- 9 Howard Street Arts District & Art Trail
- 10 Potential Downtown Hotel Site
- 11 Downtown Parking
- 12 Braswell Creek/Stream Restoration
- 13 Downtown Multi-Family Housing
- 14 Carleton House Motel Redevelopment
- 15 May & Gorham Building Redevelopment
- 16 Old Post Office Redevelopment

*Projects 14, 15, and 16 represent private investment in downtown and are discussed in Chapter 5.

CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DOWNTOWN NORTHEAST QUADRANT

TARGETED REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



Legend

- Northeast Quadrant Boundary
- Downtown Core Boundary
- Monk to Mill Trail
- Braswell Creek/Stream Restoration
- One- to Two-Way Street Conversion
- 0.25-mile Walk Radius
- Event & Entertainment District
- Restaurant District
- Main Street Retail Shopping District
- Arts District
- Existing Park

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1 Streetscape Strategy Future Phases

Downtown has its own street typology, reflecting the historical development pattern grid of blocks scaled for pedestrians rather than the automobile. The railroad is a travelway and bisects Main Street. Adjacent streets are both local and state-controlled. The 2008 Urban Streetscape Plan established a design palette to include the travelway, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and other materials. On-street parking is a key component of the streetscape that calms traffic, increases safety and enhances economic development in service to adjacent businesses. A calmer street is also good for bicycle access.

'Phase One' improvements along Main Street and within the Douglas Block area have since been implemented per the recommendations of the Plan. The city's goal is to implement the remainder of the streetscape plan on other blocks beyond Main Street. This should be coordinated with the development and design of the Monk to Mill Trail. This will connect the various downtown districts using a common theme but multi-tier approach. Potential streetscape enhancements are categorized in tiers (see pages 43 and 44).

- All street corridors throughout downtown should be assigned a tier or level of streetscape improvement based on their prominence, existing conditions, and future development.
- A hierarchy of improvements should diminish in intensity and expense at the edges of the core and transitional districts so as to blend into the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Developers would be required to implement or invest in implementation of streetscape enhancements for site development as recommended in the Urban Streetscape Plan and Downtown Overlay District.

It is recommended that phases 2-4 of the Urban Streetscape plan be designed utilizing this tiered approach based on their location, surrounding use, existing condition and potential future development. Main Street's Phase One implementation consists of what would be considered a 'Tier 1' level of enhancements; new curb and gutter throughout, walkways with decorative pavers, close spacing of new canopy trees set in tree grates, and ornamental street lighting with banners.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 families of enhancements should have strong compatibility (color, materials, durability) with the elements of Tier 1 but can be used more sparingly resulting in less cost.

Strategy

Continue Main Street streetscape improvements to other blocks of downtown. This should be coordinated with the continuation and improvements to the Monk to Mill Trail. This will connect the various downtown districts into a common theme, and improve pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular experience in and through downtown. This effort is long term, but should be phased as funding becomes available.

Timeframe:

5+ Years / Long Term

Local

- Public Works Department
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Engineering Department
- Downtown Merchants Association

State & Federal

- NCDOT Enhancement Grant
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) TIGER Grant

PPP

- N/A

Action Steps

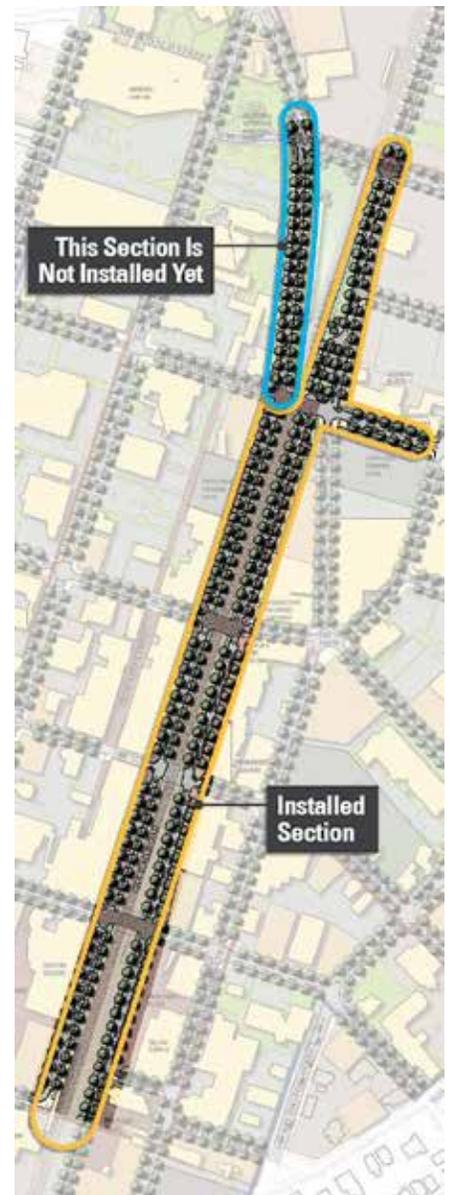
- Prepare a streetscape plan to extend the features of the Main Street improvements to other streets in downtown linking to the Monk to Mill Trail. The plan needs to prioritize which section or streets should be completed first to benefit the downtown merchants and property owners.
- Plan should provide design guidance consistent with Main Street and Monk to Mill Trail
- This effort is long term and should be phased as funding becomes available.
- A maintenance plan needs to be implemented for all new improvements and highest traffic areas of Downtown.



Phase 2 of the Urban Streetscape Plan.



Phase 3 of the Urban Streetscape Plan.



Phase 1 of the Urban Streetscape Plan.



Current Tier 1 streetscape enhancements along Main Street



Example of Tier 2 treatment with concrete paving and brick accents



Example of Tier 3 improvements - width can vary

Creating a Hierarchy of Phased Improvement

The map on page 45 illustrates the proposed locations of the tiers of landscaping proposed in the NE Quadrant and eventually extending south to Raleigh Boulevard and west to Grace Street. The implementation of the streetscape treatments is intended to be a partnership between the city and other semi-public entities and private developers. The City, lead by the Engineering Department, will include the standards and specifications for each tier of streetscape improvements in the City's Design Manual where developers find other improvements including curb, gutter, sidewalks, street construction methods. If development has frontage on only a portion of a block designated in the map at right, it may be necessary to pay into a fund and have the city undertake improvements at a later date on a block-by-block basis.

Tier 1

- New Curb and Gutter
- Curb bump-outs at major intersections, curb cuts, seating areas and mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Pedestrian walkways: width varies
- Walkway field: grey pavers
- Walkway accent: 2' band of red pavers at all edges
- Canopy Trees provided at approximately 45' on center (o.c.) spacing, in tree grates along narrow sidewalk corridors
- Pedestrian acorn light post (w/ banners at significant locations) provided at approximately 45' o.c. spacing
- Raised planter curbs provided for shrub planting areas
- Site furniture provided: Benches, trash receptacles, bike racks

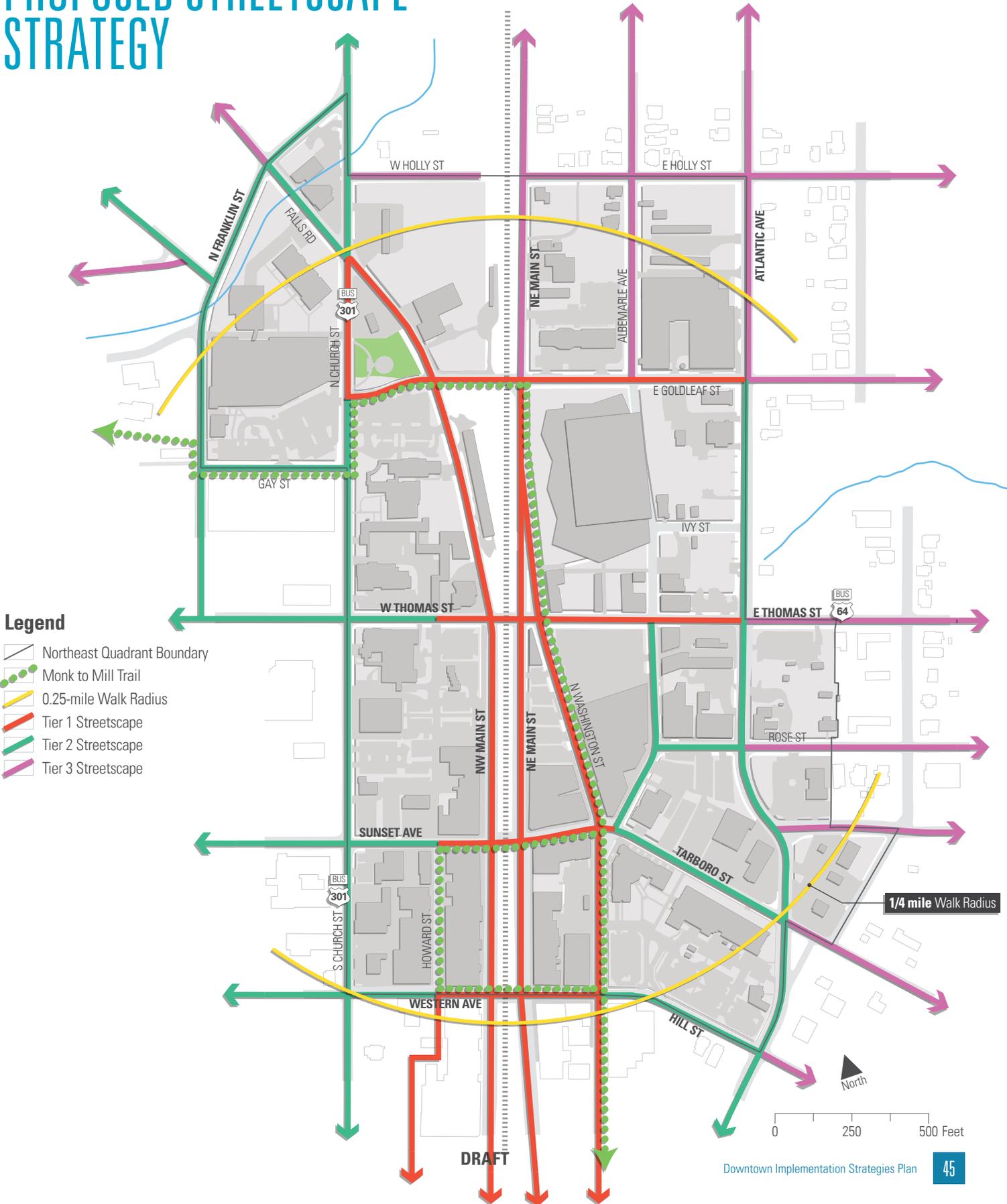
Tier 2

- New Curb and Gutter
- Curb bump-outs at major intersections
- Pedestrian walkways: 6' width, minimum
- Walkway field: Cast-in-place concrete
- Walkway accent: 2' band of red pavers along street edge only
- Canopy Trees provided at approximately 60' o.c. spacing
- Pedestrian acorn light post provided at approximately 60' o.c. spacing
- 6' Landscape zone to be provided where space allows

Tier 3

- New Curb and Gutter
- 4'-6' width Cast-in-place concrete pedestrian walkways
- Canopy Trees provided at approximately 60' o.c. spacing
- At-grade shrub planting areas
- 4'-6' Landscape zone to be provided for tree planting area

CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DOWNTOWN NORTHEAST QUADRANT
PROPOSED STREETSCAPE STRATEGY



Legend

- Northeast Quadrant Boundary
- Monk to Mill Trail
- 0.25-mile Walk Radius
- Tier 1 Streetscape
- Tier 2 Streetscape
- Tier 3 Streetscape

1/4 mile Walk Radius

2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Pedestrian and bicycle networks are a quality of life amenity that contribute to placemaking and serve as a multimodal transportation option. The City's 2012 Pedestrian Plan recommends sidewalk improvements primarily outside of the core of downtown, though the downtown is the focus of this plan. In downtown, with the exception along Main Street, there are opportunities for a sidewalk maintenance program and ensuring they are compliant with the ADA guidelines.

Sidewalks generally fall within the public realm (not on private property) and in older, economically distressed areas, responsibility for compliance or repair falls to the City. This type of public infrastructure can facilitate private investment. Once a sidewalk is provided in good condition, the city should convey the responsibility to the adjacent property owner with a provision added to the Municipal Code. There is a minimal network of bicycle paths, lanes, or trails, but a few years ago, the City proposed the Monk-to-Mill Trail honoring hometown musician, Thelonious Monk. This trail bicycle and pedestrian facility traverses downtown in a north-south direction before heading west to the historic Rocky Mount Mills site. Fortunately, downtown streets do a better job of accommodating cyclists due to the lower speed differential between motorists and cyclists (typically 25 mph) and there is a lot of excitement around this project.

The Pedestrian Plan raised the issue of railroad crossing access. It stated that there is poor access across the railroad tracks that divide Main Street in the Downtown. At-grade crossings are the most common type of crossing throughout the Downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods. However, the majority of them pose trip hazards for pedestrians due to uneven surfaces with the roadway and tracks.

The top three priority projects include:

- The Monk-to-Mill Trail that threads through the NE Quadrant linking several districts and significant cultural facilities. The City is pursuing grants to accelerate implementation of the trail which will ensure the right-of-way is shared by cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles.
- A solution to provide safe pedestrian-friendly rail crossings linking both sides of the railroad tracks and Main Street using at-grade crossing surfaces in accordance with Federal Highway Administration guidelines. The City needs to work with NCDOT and CSX to ensure this project is included on the list of future railroad improvements. High profile intersections needing this treatment are at Thomas Avenue, Sunset Avenue, and Goldleaf Street due to the anticipated volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- As the area is redeveloped, the pedestrian network should fully comply with accessibility regulations, provide areas for through movement, and level access at primary entries into businesses. Each application for new or expanded development should be reviewed for compliance prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit.



Strategy

Create an interconnected system of ADA accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike routes which include the Monk-to-Mill Trail, greenways and multiuse paths incorporating placemaking principles into the design.

Timeframe:

3-5 Years / Medium Term

Local

- Public Works Department
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Engineering Department

State & Federal

- NCDOT
- Federal Highway Administration

PPP

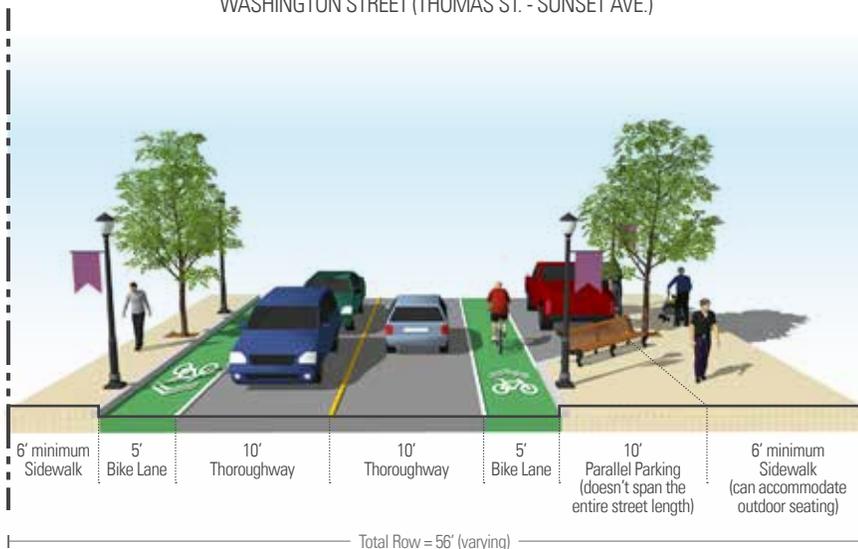
- Local cycling clubs
- Business owners
- CSX

Action Steps

- Convert Washington Street between E Thomas Street and Sunset Avenue / Tarboro Street at Five Points, and Tarboro and Hill Streets from one-way to two-way vehicular traffic. Redesign this segment, critical to the NE Quadrant's success, to provide adequate sidewalks, on-street parking on one side, a bike lane and two lanes of travel as shown in the illustration below.
- The City should work with existing downtown property owners on the sidewalk repair, replacement, and compliance with accessibility. Enforcement procedures, including violation letters and penalties are tools the City can use.
- New development should include plans for compliance with the Urban Streetscape Master Plan along the public right-of-way frontage. Streetscape improvements should be installed prior to new development occupancy or developers could pay into a fund for improvements to be installed by the city as part of a whole block future project.



MONK TO MILL TRAIL
WASHINGTON STREET (THOMAS ST. - SUNSET AVE.)



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3 Transportation Improvements

The existing street grid in the NE Quadrant has served the city well for 150 years. What has been more problematic is the conversion of several streets from two directional travel to one-way. Several plans dating back to at least 2003, addressed transportation enhancements for downtown, each with a goal to create more driver/pedestrian/customer-friendly traffic patterns. Most studies recommended restoring streets that are one-way pairs to two-way, since by the turn of the century much of downtown traffic had been relocated to the bypass or other parallel facility.

Streets previously recommended for conversion in the NE Quadrant include West Thomas Street (westbound), Sunset Avenue (eastbound), US 64 Business Franklin Street (southbound), US 64 Church Street (northbound). Due to the expense, these pairs are not being considered as part of the strategies proposed for this eight-year period. However, Tarboro and Washington Streets are.

Tarboro Street emerged as a potentially good candidate for conversion from one-way to two-way operations between E. Raleigh Boulevard and Washington Street with the advent of the Rocky Mount Event Center (RMEC). Hill Street is also recommended. Tarboro Street is signed US 64 Business and is currently one-way eastbound leaving the downtown area. A two-way conversion could improve access to homes and businesses and downtown events. A traffic impact analysis will need to be completed to determine project extents, impacts, costs, and time line.

Also considered critical to the success of the NE Quadrant revitalization is the conversion of the one block of Washington Street that is one-way southbound between Thomas and Sunset Avenues. The designation of only one block enhances confusion for vehicular travelers (and soon to be bicycles on the Monk-to-Mill trail) on what is an important hub in the circulation around the proposed RMEC which will play a transformational role in this Quadrant.

Conceptual sketch on page 45, illustrate how the multimodal facilities and a lively streetscape can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way and create a significant place.

The City is in the process of creating an event management plan for the RMEC to ensure that visitors are accommodated and to minimize traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. That plan will address parking. Refer to page 70 for more on downtown parking.

All street intersections should include enhanced crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian movement.

Strategy

Follow the recommendation of this and previous plans to convert selected one-way corridors to two-way streets. This investment is important to enhance downtown mobility and to fuel economic development.

Timeframe:

1-3 Years / Short Term

Local	State & Federal	PPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Works Department Downtown Merchant Association Engineering Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCDOT FHWA Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as a TIP project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Action Steps

- Consult with NCDOT and obtain their approval to study the potential conversion of Tarboro Street and implement the recommendations of a study. NCDOT is an important stakeholder because the road is designated US 64 Business.
- Conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis. This study can determine appropriate conversion extents, identify impacts and benefits, and quantify costs. It may be appropriate to only convert portions of Tarboro St. east of downtown Rocky Mount, or a traffic study may determine that a longer section of Tarboro St. / Sunset Avenue or conversion of a parallel one-way street such as Hill Street is needed to realize the benefits of a two-way conversion.
- Engage the public to determine impacts to affected homeowners and businesses and gauge public sentiment as part of a Traffic Impact Analysis for a two-way conversion.
- Apply for funding sources for street conversion as a pedestrian and vehicular safety enhancement.
- The City should complete a traffic study of potential advantages and disadvantages to two-way traffic pattern for Washington Street between E. Thomas Street and Tarboro Street at Five Points. Redesign this segment of the proposed Monk-to-Mill Trail to provide sidewalks, on-street parking on one side, a bike facility and two lanes of travel as shown in the illustration on the previous page.
- Add prominent crosswalks to all intersections in the NE Quadrant, especially those around the RMEC and those where pedestrians cross from parking directly adjacent to the railroad tracks.

4 Gateway & Wayfinding Signage

Enhance Wayfinding

Few physical features have as great an impact on the perception of a city's identity as its gateways. Gateway features can take the form of a signature building, welcome signage, unique street lighting, public art, landscaping and more. The gateways should set the tone for expectations of what is to come and contain imagery that reinforces the City's "brand."

Gateways work in tandem with wayfinding elements. Rocky Mount has a wayfinding program in the downtown. The current wayfinding signs were conceived as part of the 2008 Rocky Mount Downtown Streetscape Plan, however, only five were installed. Now is the time for the city to confirm its brand and downtown identity and use the wayfinding signs to convey and reinforce the message.

Once the design concept is established and confirmed, the city should ensure there is a complete family of gateway, monument, wayfinding, parking, and directional signs installed as the city increases activities downtown and seeks to attract more visitors with the Rocky Mount Event Center, Imperial Centre, Booker T Theater, Station Square, institutions of higher learning, and for festivals and events.

At the December 2, 2016, public workshop, attendees saw examples of gateway signage using the font and character style from the Train Station sign and as illustrated in the Streetscape Plan. Also resident input requested that there be directional signs directed traffic south to the Raleigh Boulevard crossing when trains are stopped on the tracks blocking other at-grade crossing. These items were used for discussion of a family of signs.



Above: Examples of downtown wayfinding and banner signage.

The water tower offers an opportunity for city identification.



Strategy

Provide one gateway and wayfinding system that communicates Rocky Mount’s aspirations and identity that focuses on directing visitors and residents to downtown from the Goldrock exit on I-95, US 301N from Wilson and US 64 from the east and west.

Local

- Engineering Department
- Public Works Department
- RM Downtown Development Office/CCRP

State & Federal

- NC Tourism grants
- NCDOT standards and grants
- Federal Highway Administration

PPP

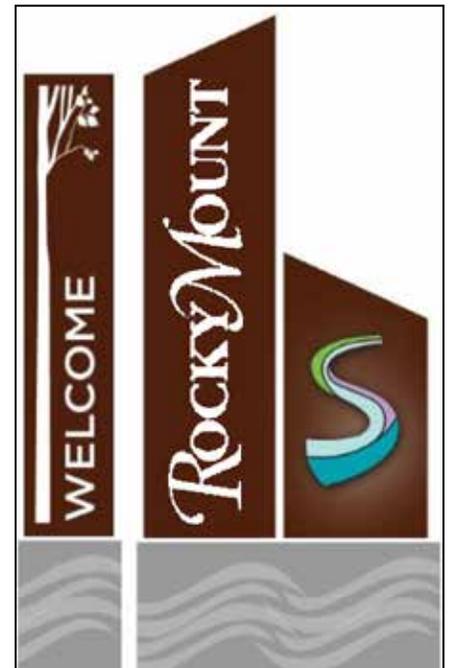
- Rocky Mount Nash Chamber of Commerce
- Corporate
- Rocky Mount CCRP

Action Steps

- Provide an entire family of signs with similar imagery to include gateway and wayfinding. The same concepts can be applied to downtown banners, websites, water towers and other marketing materials. Work with a professional signage consultant to ensure the proposed signs communicate the city’s brand and identity.
- Revisit Chapter 4 of the 2008 Rocky Mount Urban Streetscape Plan to confirm and/or add to the imagery, primary destinations, and key community assets the city wants to highlight for visitors and residents (districts, civic institutions, community, sports, and cultural facilities, parks).
- Provide directional signs for public parking facilities.
- Work with NCDOT to ensure right-of-way encroachment agreements are in place or can be agreed upon so that signs can be placed appropriately to orient drivers and pedestrians.
- Address priority corridors including Sunset Avenue, Raleigh Boulevard, Peachtree Street and N Church Street which are used by both residents and visitors to access downtown.
- Provide a phasing program and include the line item in the city’s 5-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to ensure the project is funded and completed within the 3-year time frame.
- Create fun messaging or kinetic art as a way communicate the frequency of the trains through the city that may also block the street crossings in downtown. Signs should also direct travelers to the Raleigh Blvd elevated crossing.

Timeframe:

1-3 Years / Short Term



Examples of gateway sign renderings for a workshop.





Profile: Gateway & Wayfinding

A gateway / wayfinding system should take into account pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic from the perspective of both visitors and residents. The scale of these elements should relate to the scale and speed of traffic and to the character of the surrounding area or community. The design and location of gateway and wayfinding elements should reflect the unique aspects of Rocky Mount and concisely inform and guide motorists and pedestrians to attractions within the community.

Gateways

Gateway features can delineate and announce one's arrival into a region, town, neighborhood, or unique public place. They may be the first determinant of a community's image - the first impression. Gateway features may vary in scale or function, and can take the form of signage, public art, a signature building, or decorative streetscape enhancements such as lighting and landscaping along the roadside, at intersections, in medians, or in roundabouts. Gateway features may be a singular element, an element repeated at every gateway, or elements that reflect the character of each individual gateway. The Urban Streetscape Plan of 2008 contained more recommendations on how wayfinding should be designed, but targeted project #4 illustrates ideas for potential gateway sign design.

Wayfinding & Signage

Many communities recognize the importance of creating a "user-friendly" environment that directs both residents and visitors to prominent places once they are within the community. A well designed wayfinding system has the potential for economic benefit by providing directional assistance to commercial shopping areas, historic areas of interest, or major employment destinations. A comprehensive wayfinding system should:

- Increase the sense of place by furthering the community's brand or evoking the local character.
- Increase commercial awareness by providing opportunities to represent each significant business node.
- Encourage exploration of a community by including special destinations that can pique a visitor's or resident's interest.



Sources: <https://www.durham-nc.com/listings/Golden-Belt/1811/>; <http://goldenbeltarts.com/about/neighborhood/>; <http://goldenbeltarts.com/about/neighborhood/>



Profile: Mitigating Gentrification

Golden Belt Historic District, Durham, NC

The Golden Belt neighborhood is a racially diverse area with a healthy mix of rents and homeowners. This is also mostly a working-class community, with housing stock being primarily consists of affordable mill houses that were constructed by the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company in the 1900s and 1910s. Within the past few years, the City of Durham has experienced strong gentrification pressure. For example, housing prices in the Downtown area have risen by about 63 percent between 2004 and 2014. Many modest homes are torn down and being replaced with large-scale redevelopment projects. This trend and pressure has significantly altered many of Durham's iconic mill villages. However, Golden Belt still has not fallen prey to the forces that are reshaping Durham.

As Durham's last remaining mill village, Golden Belt had a big push for preservation efforts to retain its neighborhood character, housing stock, and demographics. Another motivating factor is the Durham Rescue Mission, which is a nonprofit organization that assists homeless people, that wanted to construct a large community center in Golden Belt. Residents resisted this idea, because they believed the organization has not been a good neighbor. These factors led Golden Belt residents to petition to the City Council to form the Golden Belt Local Historic District.

The petition resulted in a years-long and a resident-driven process, facilitated by a historic preservation consultant to create a preservation plan and proposed district boundary for the Golden Belt Local Historic District. This designation allows neighbors to delay potential home demolition for 365 days. New construction, including modification to existing homes, must comply to a set of design guidelines.

One of the success stories in Golden Belt Historic District is preserving the former Golden Belt Manufacturing Company. The six-building factory complex was rehabilitated and converted into 37 live/work residential lofts, 35 artist studios, a central gallery space, a live music venue, an event space, retail stores, restaurant, and office space. Instead of replacing the complex with large-scale redevelopment, this rehabilitation project maintains the neighborhood's historic character, contribute to the neighborhood's historic and affordable mill houses, and provides residents close access to amenities and local attractions.

Southside & Willow Oak, Greensboro, NC

Over the last several years since the recession, Greensboro also experienced great change. Downtown redevelopment and expansion of UNC Greensboro has resulted in new student housing, an upscale food coop, and independent and chain restaurants. At the same time, folks that used to rent affordable places in the area have seen rents increase and for some to a level of affordability. But the City Redevelopment Commission stepped in using many tools to redevelop several neighborhoods that were victims of neglect. Working with a master developer, the 10-acre Southside neighborhood was rebuilt with a mix of density (single- and multifamily, townhomes and livework) and a mix of ownership. Existing property owners participated in the process. Though property prices in the surrounding neighborhood have not had significant increases, downtown commercial benefited due to more customers.

Willow Oak, was another project of the Redevelopment Commission and the Greensboro Housing Authority, that was a "Traditional Neighborhood Development-style" mixed-use, mixed density and mixed ownership project. The Hope VI project started from the ground up and included relocation of residents during construction, moving many back to the site when the project was completed. In both instances, the City took the lead to ensure that there was a supply of affordable housing near downtown.

5 Farmers Market

Potential Location

The Farmers Market, located on Peachtree Street in Rocky Mount, is a regional market managed by the Nash County office of the NC Cooperative Extension Service. It operates seasonally from April to November on Saturdays. From June to August, it is also open on Wednesday. Farmers markets showcase local food and are community gathering places.

During the public input process, some suggested that a farmers market or other temporary food venues in the heart of downtown would be desirable. Still other location options exist perhaps in the Five Points area or in a portion of parking lot during times of low demand for food pop-ups, portable food carts, food trucks, and markets. The demand for this venture is unknown, but it is an alternative and a source of fresh food for those without automobiles as it is walkable for those that live and work in downtown, or travelers that seek a snack when the train stops.



Above: Existing farmers market at 1006 Peachtree Street Below: Historic train station site could house additional farmers market



Structures above and below are examples of shelters for a farmers market. The one above shelters cars when the market is not going on.



Strategy

Designate a public space that could be used as the site for the Farmers Market on an additional day. A potential location is the train station, but also Depot Park based on the development potential nearby. The market site would provide a physical bridge connecting the major performance venues (Imperial Centre, RM Event Center and Booker T Theater) along the Monk-to-Mill Trail.

Timeframe:

1-3 Years / Short Term

Local

- RM Downtown Development Office/ CCRP
- Downtown Merchants Association
- City Parks and Recreation Department

State & Federal

- Matching grants-NC Arts Council
- NC Tourism
- US NEA matching grants

PPP

- Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce
- Corporate (Hospital, Bank) sponsorships

Action Steps

- The Rocky Mount Downtown Development Office should work with the Nash County Cooperative Extension Service to open an additional location one-half day a week in downtown to supplement the existing Wednesday market.
- The Rocky Mount Downtown Development Office should work with the Department of Engineering to prepare a concept plan for select sites including lightly-used parking lots for market or pop-up food sites.
- The City should develop a strategy of policies and regulations as well as a planning budget for construction and operation of these facilities.

Creating Districts

When you don't have enough places with a special identity to draw visitors you can create them. The next few pages propose four districts to strengthen the revitalization with a goal to create brand identity and to market the new and cool things to do. This effort will get people to come to downtown and when there, stay longer!

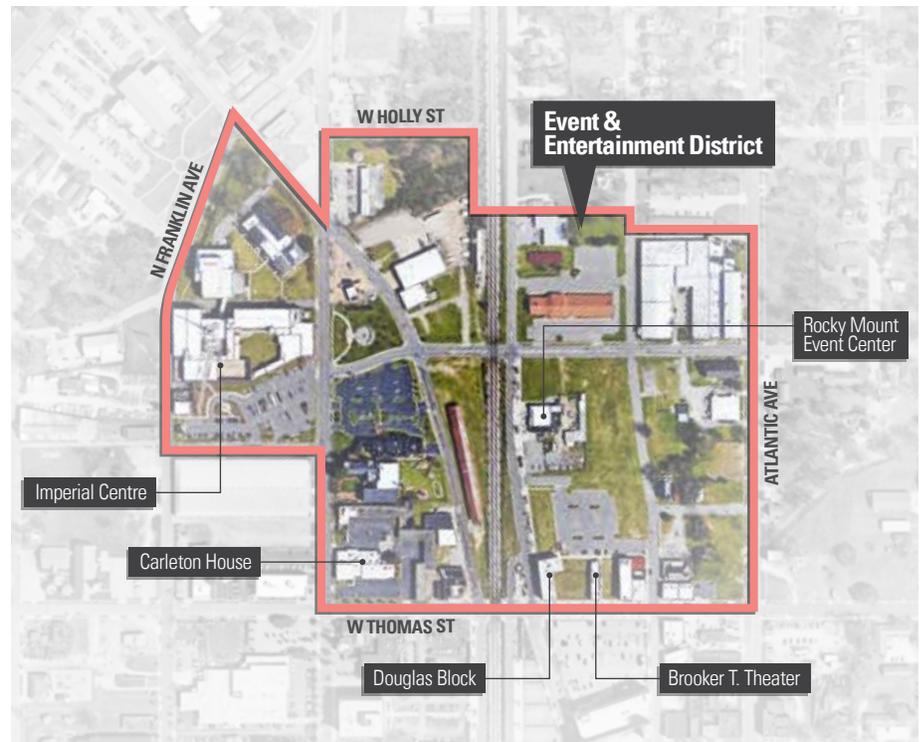


6 Event & Entertainment District

The event and entertainment district represents a concept for how the northern part of the core of downtown could develop based on existing venues and the anticipated opening of the Rocky Mount Event Center (RMEC). Now more than ever, there is the opportunity to create a visitor destination market by integrating the events at the RMEC with those at the Imperial Centre and the Booker T. Theatre. By creating cross-promotional marketing, the facilities should be able to expand their individual attendees and support each other's facilities. Major events at the RMEC or other facilities would be cross promoted, and increase the likelihood of additional spending by visitors attending multiple downtown events. This promotional partnership would expand economic development for local restaurant and retail store sales as well. Another positive result is the increase in private employment at local restaurants and retail shops through expanded sales.

The map on page 39 indicates the proximity of the destinations in this district. The width of the district from the Imperial Centre to the RMEC and from the RMEC to the potential Post Office redevelopment is little more than 1/4 mile, the radius of the traditional walk circle. The perception of the length of time it takes to walk between venues will be shorter when there is more consistent infill activity at street level.

Interest in this district and available opportunities will be greatest during construction and shortly after opening of the RMEC. If the market does not become more active in the next three years, the city must do all it can to incentivize and recruit small and medium sized businesses to establish downtown locations while persistently supporting business retention.



Strategy

Coordinate cross-promotional activities and events for shared marketing efforts and costs to expand attendance at future Rocky Mount Event Center, Imperial Centre, and Booker T. Theater events. Increases in retail and restaurant sales should follow.

Local

- RM Downtown Development Office/CCRP
- Rocky Mount Event Center, Imperial Centre, and Booker T. management staff
- Downtown Merchant’s Association
- City Public Information Office
- RM Office of Business Recruitment

State & Federal

- Promotional grant-NC Tourism office, possibly
- US NEA matching grants

PPP

- Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce
- Nash County Travel and Tourism
- Corporate and individual sponsorships for marketing purposes
- Local hotels and restaurants
- Carolina Gateway Partnership

Action Steps

- Create a cross-promotional working group with representatives from Imperial Centre, Rocky Mount Event Center, Booker T. Theater, and City Main Street Program. Establish a budget and method to share costs to reduce overall burden.
- Consider the creation of a fulltime Economic Development Director for the city with expertise in downtown revitalization and redevelopment.
- Continue to create and disseminate the master schedule for downtown events.
- Create metrics for cross-promotional activities. For example, if an event is anticipated to generate more than 100 attendees, then a certain level of marketing should be considered or prepare a “game plan” to capture attendee data that can be kept and shared among all event facilities.
- Determine platforms from social media, to posters, to Google message blasts, features on local radio and television, and in newspaper.
- Reach out to downtown restaurants and retail shops to determine who and when they would be interested in participating in cross-promotional activities directly with their own advertisement and/or with discounts to event attendees with ticket stubs, etc.

Timeframe:

1-3 Years / Short Term



Event readied at the Imperial Centre Courtyard.



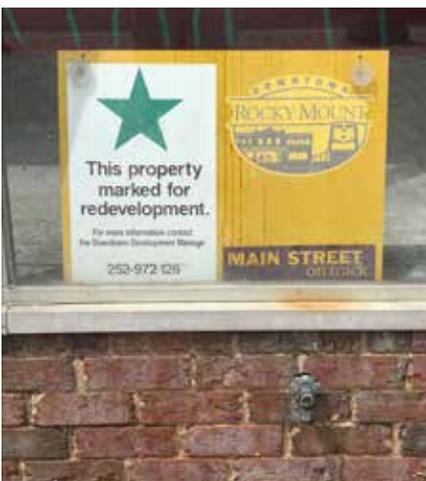
Event at the Booker T.

7 Restaurant District

Continue on-going support of restaurant developers with a focus on the Restaurant District between Tarboro and Thomas Streets east of the railroad tracks to Atlantic Street. This will build off of existing local restaurant successes such as The Prime Smokehouse and the Washington Street Grille. The restaurants would support each other, and also the visitors to the Rocky Mount Event Center (RMEC), Imperial Centre, Booker T. Theater and future lodging guests. A restaurant district would keep visitors and event patrons in downtown longer enjoying their evening and spending more time and money. In addition to visitors and residents, there is the underserved market in terms of food options for faculty, staff and students at Edgecombe Community College. The public input process garnered the following suggestions:

- Sandwich
- Greek
- Italian
- Indian
- Thai
- Turkish
- Ice cream parlor at 5-Points
- Coffee, tea shop, bakery, specialty shops, wine, tea, tropical smoothies
- Outdoor dining, rooftop dining, classy cocktail lounge

When fully developed, the restaurant district could be a regional destination and when teamed with the food and entertainment at the Rocky Mount Mills, could rival the national chain restaurants on the highway west of town. There is the potential to increase the number of visitors and patrons with a definite symbiotic relationship between the restaurant and entertainment districts. Overall employment and investment also would increase with growth in the visitor market. A restaurant district has the potential to attract other visitors who may not seek out the events initially without a great place to dine.



Strategy

Create a dining destination district between Tarboro and Thomas Streets east of the railroad to Atlantic Street to supplement existing local restaurants and keep visitors, event patrons and restaurants in downtown longer, ultimately spending more time and money.

Timeframe:

1-3 Years / Short Term

Local	State	PPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RM Downtown Development Office/CCRP • Downtown Merchants Association • RM Office of Business Recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC Tourism promotional grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant developers and restaurant entrepreneurs in other parts of Rocky Mount or the region • Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce

Action Steps

- Working with local and regional restaurant developers, continue efforts to identify targeted buildings and/or properties that can be renovated as restaurants. Provide or assist with “gap financing” that will allow the developer to renovate the property with private resources. Also encourage private underwriters/banks and others to commit financial resources to downtown renovations. Gap financing should be provided normally at no more than 20% of the total project renovation costs.
- Consider marketing this district in conjunction with microbrewery scene at the Rocky Mount Mills -- “just a bike ride away.”
- Become part of the cross-promotional work group suggested for the Event and Entertainment District.
- Seek assistance from the Downtown Merchant’s association to recruit food establishment entrepreneurs options in the NE Quadrant.
- Continue on-going support of existing restaurateurs.
- Open an additional 4-5 restaurants by Rocky Mount Event Center opening.
- Consider State and Federal Historic Tax Credits for significant historic structures. This will allow developers to close the financial gap more easily by raising more equity for the project.

Helping Entrepreneurs

Rocky Mount Mills has an incubator program for microbrewing. Essentially, the hurdle for start-up brewers is the high cost of initial equipment. The Mills has purchased the equipment and leases it to microbreweries. Also, they have the local community college’s brewing lab on site. A similar model could work for restaurant start-ups.



8 Main Street Retail Shopping District

The Main Street Retail Shopping District is centered around Main Street between W Thomas Street and Western Avenue. Activation of the ground-level spaces on both sides of Main Street with neighborhood retail, personal care services, and other businesses that serve downtown workers and current and future residents is goal #1 for this plan.

Office, food, and personal care services coupled with upper-floor residential uses can supplement the retail but only up to a certain percentage. Retail brings life and there are many shoppers seeking an authentic shopping environment like that available at the Bath Shop, Virginia's Dress Shop, or Towel Town. Offices that should locate downtown, setting an example, are the City's Downtown Development Department and Rocky Mount Main Street Organization.

Retailers can increase shared patron sales by coordinating joint sales and discounts with other retail businesses, the Restaurant District and the Event and Entertainment District. A Main Street Retail Shopping District would serve to sustain the visitor market drawn from the other two districts, and it has the potential to attract other visitors who may not seek out the events or restaurant venues immediately. Each retail shop considers its sales and costs as unique from the other stores, but, if the retail stores coordinate sales periods and hours, they have a greater chance to increase revenues together than by themselves. This works even better when sales and hours are coordinated with other downtown events.

Throughout the public input process, the desire for retail development in the downtown never waned. There was a myriad of suggestions for ventures including:

- Downtown farmers market
- Cultural/ethnic hubs
- Book shop
- Refresh the appearance of long-time shops (Virginia, Bullock's, Towel Town)
- Home stores
- Clothing Accessories
- Coffee and tea shop
- Bakery
- Wine shop
- Specialty shop
- Hobby shop with classes

The historic buildings are part of a Local Historic District and contribute to the character that makes this place distinctly Rocky Mount. Preservation of the character and the compatibility of new development is ensured with the design and development standards contained in the proposed Downtown Overlay District.

There is a desire for downtown housing. One approach to redevelopment and revitalization is to court downtown housing developers that would use tax credits to invest in renovations, rent or sell the renovated units to pay debt service while recruiting a retailer for the ground floor space.

The public investment in the streetscape has not yet catalyzed redevelopment downtown but the RMEC should result in positive change within the next two to three years. Should the scale of change not be as expected from market forces, the city will need to proactively seek a developer/partner (Community Development Corporation or other non-profit) interested in redevelopment opportunities in a historic district or become its own developer and financier using the Rocky Mount Redevelopment Commission.





Sources: <http://www.gsoholidayparade.com/>; <http://www.festivaloflightsgso.org/>; <http://www.careysound.com/oldsite/news/files/category-production-report.html>

Profile: Placemaking in Downtown Greensboro, NC

Downtown Greensboro, also known as Center City, is a vibrant and the city's economic center. This area used to experience decline in the 1950s, due to businesses and households moving in to the suburbs. To reverse the trend, the Downtown Greensboro Incorporated (DGI) was formed in the 1990s as an economic development organization with the intent of stimulating economic activity and investment into the City's Downtown area. Through the action of the DGI and its partners, Downtown Greensboro began to go through a period of revitalization. Currently, new and existing businesses, investment, and local events and attractions tend to concentrate within and around Downtown Greensboro.

Funding Source

DGI mainly receives its funding from the business improvement district that the City Council approved in 2005. BID establishes a defined area where businesses and property owners within the area are charged with a special levy/assessment in return for enhanced services. Additionally, the City and Guilford County contribute to the DGI through awarding annual contracts for economic developments and other services in the area with targeted outcomes for improving the City's tax base. DGI also receives contribution from its annual fundraising event, the Guilford Merchants Association, local foundation, and individuals.

DGI's Success

There are several factors that contributed to the success of DGI in facilitating the revitalization of Downtown Greensboro. DGI has a BIG partnership between businesses leaders and city officials. Also, DGI has a full-time staff that report to a Board of Director. This allows DGI to promptly respond to local community needs while maintaining a sense of accountability.

Additionally, DGI commission studies and track data that can aid the decision-making process for investment and updated with local ordinances that could impact development. DGI also offers a series of development programs that are designed to improve the quality of life for businesses, residents, workers, and visitors. For example, DGI offers a Catalyst Grant Program, which awards up to \$25,000 in matching funds for retail stores opening or expanding in Downtown. This grant can be used for permanent improvements, such as plumbing and wiring. The Façade Improvement Program awards up to \$5,000 to property owners to improve their building's exterior. Furthermore, DGI partnered with Action Greensboro to facilitate the Spark Fund. This is a micro-grant program where Action Greensboro award grants quarterly to individuals, businesses, or non-profits looking to create projects that can improve downtown as a place to live, work, and play.

Furthermore, DGI host and maintain annual events that have become local attractions in the City. It is responsible for hosting the Fun Fourth, Festival of Lights, and the annual holiday parade. These events bring the community together, target the community's focus to the revitalizing downtown, and they have been consistently well-attended.

Strategy

Create a cluster of small retail shops on both sides of Main Street between Thomas and Nash/ Western Avenues. Concentrating like businesses i.e. shoes stores together, clothing stores together to generate more foot traffic. Create common customer hours and cross-promote with the Events and Entertainment and Restaurant Districts.

Timeframe:

3-5 Years / Medium Term

Local

- RM Downtown Development Office/ CCRP
- Downtown Merchants Association
- RM Redevelopment Commission
- RM Office of Business Recruitment

State & Federal

- NC Main Street
- NC State Historic Preservation Office
- National Park Service Certified Local Government Program

PPP

- Rocky Mount Area Chamber

Action Steps

- Enhance the grant matching fund and work through the CCRP sub-group to write grants, review and make recommendations on funding.
- Provide a business incentive grant for real property improvements that would for example reduce month-to-month rent of retail lessee.
- Identify and monitor at-risk properties. Enforce zoning and building codes for properties that are vacant or otherwise chronically challenged, issue violations, and institute proceedings to acquire properties from non-responsive owners.
- Support the historic rehabilitation efforts of private property owners by providing incentives such as reduced permit fees, a façade grant program, coordinating infrastructure improvements with planned rehabilitations, and coordinating with local agencies and organization’s to maximize the positive effect of rehabilitation and reinvestment.
- Cluster retail shops with like stores, i.e. shoe stores near other shoe stores. This makes the retail customer experience more efficient, and it tends to increase sales among all clustered stores.
- For historic structures, consider state and federal historic tax credits to leverage more equity in the project financing to lower developer/property owner risk, and will make the project more financially feasible t.
- Continually check with local businesses to identify any potential business needs (retention, innovation, job creation, and expansion) that could be supported by the programs and incentives provided by the Chamber, RM Main Street, or the City.
- Continue to support the Shop Local Campaign of the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Provide Small Business Mentorship that connects entrepreneurs with established business leaders for assistance and guidance.
- Establish two to three locations that can serve as “pop-up” short term retail spaces on a rotating basis.

9 Howard Street Arts District & Art Trail

Art can be a strong economic driver, indicator of the overall health of the local economy, and tourism draw. One solution to increase visitation to Downtown Rocky Mount outside of office hours, is to develop a new market for downtown Rocky Mount, a district focused on the visual arts. Howard Street is a two-block long street (former alley) between NW Main Street and N Church Street at Sunset Avenue. The location is tucked away off of more traveled streets, making it a “strollable” street in the central city where live/work spaces for artists and their galleries could be developed which is perfect for businesses that are a destination and do not require high visibility.

Establishing and marketing an arts district will encourage and attract artists and arts-related businesses, creating a strong art-centric community in which creative businesses and people thrive. Often these are the same people who lead the way living and working in an area in the earliest stages of revitalization.

In addition to the District, this strategy also proposes an Arts Trail as shown on the map. The art trail would weave throughout the core of downtown and connect to the proposed Monk-to-Mill Trail which celebrates the life of famed musician, Thelonious Monk.

The Arts District and Trail present a new destination market that would attract new and different visitors from those coming to Rocky Mount for business or who will be coming for the new Rocky Mount Event Center. Exhibits and shows could be timed to coincide with major retail sales and /or major events in the Retail and Event and Entertainment Districts. The district has the potential to create a “cool” vibe

Rocky Mount has promoted local artists and the results are visible around town in the form of sculpture and murals. The city developed an arts ordinance primarily to regulate the placement and maintenance of art on private property. In 2017, the city will embark on a public art master plan. The Arts, coupled with the city’s strong cultural diversity and architectural heritage all help to stimulate long-term economic development and livability.



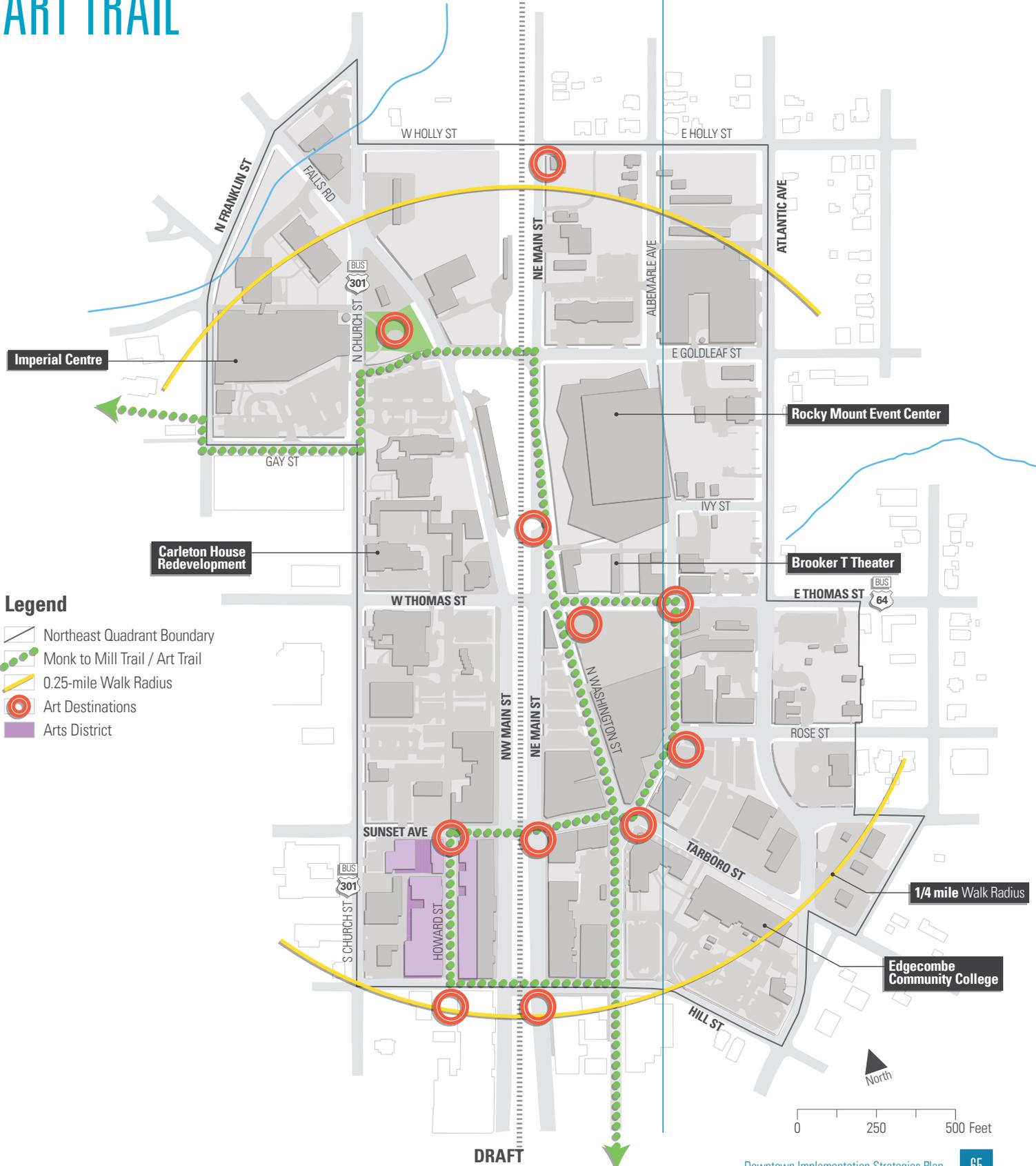
Howard Street possesses an intimacy that is perfect to create a special district for living and working.



DRAFT

CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DOWNTOWN NORTHEAST QUADRANT

HOWARD STREET ARTS DISTRICT & ART TRAIL



Legend

- Northeast Quadrant Boundary
- Monk to Mill Trail / Art Trail
- 0.25-mile Walk Radius
- Art Destinations
- Arts District



Profile: Live-Work Units

The live-work unit is actually an old idea that has been modernized to meet the needs of entrepreneurs, small businesses and professionals. A live-work unit is a space that combines workspace with living quarters. Modern live-work units range from minimalist to luxurious, have advantages and disadvantages, and present challenges for some city regulators. In Rocky Mount, live-work units would be most appropriate in the Downtown, specifically in the proposed Howard Street Arts District. There is usually a synergy that occurs with other pioneering spirits like business incubation and entrepreneurs.

Types of Live-Work Units

In live-work housing units, the business is typically on ground level and faces the street. In most cases, the living quarters are above the business but living space may also be incorporated into the commercial space either above or behind it. A live-work unit might be a three- or four-story townhouse, with commercial space on the first floor and the family residing in a spacious home on the remaining floors or a one-bedroom studio apartment with access to the adjacent workspace. The proposed Downtown Overlay District permits these types and arrangement of live-work units.

Advantages

A live-work unit cuts commute times thereby reducing the cost of gasoline for commuting to work. Transportation is the second highest living cost after rent or mortgage for most households. Reducing the transportation burden allows more flexibility for households to consider or invest in business opportunities. A live-work unit offers similar advantages to a home office, and can potentially have a tax benefit.

Challenges

In the 19th and early 20th century, zoning restrictions were unknown in many American cities. As the 1900s progressed, however, municipalities began restricting where people could live and conduct their business. Areas zoned for residential use could not be used for commerce, and areas zoned for commercial use could not be residential. Such arrangements helped to ensure that citizens did not have their lives disrupted by the noises or traffic often associated with commercial endeavors. However, zoning laws also made life easier for city officials. Commercial property was normally taxed at a higher rate than residential, and grouping similar properties together made it easier to monitor the tax rolls. Safety regulations vary by whether a property is commercial or residential, and the restrictions made it easier to conduct inspections and ensure compliance. In recent decades, it has become more desirable to mix uses, live in a more dense environment, and shorten travel time between working, shopping and living. In addition, intense commercial or industrial uses do not pose many of the same hazards as were prevalent 100 years ago.

Strategy

Energize the southwestern edge of the NE Quadrant by establishing a downtown arts district with galleries, studios and live/work spaces organized around the visual arts that is also connected to other districts with an art-oriented trail.

Timeframe:

3-5 Years / Medium Term

Local

- RM Downtown Development Office/CCRP
- RM Redevelopment Commission
- RM Community Development Department
- RM Office of Business Recruitment

State & Federal

- NC Tourism
- NC State Historic Preservation Office
- New Market Tax Credits
- Housing Tax Credits (HTC)

PPP

- Howard Street property owners
- Local art patrons and benefactors.
- Financial Institutions (CDFI's)

Action Steps

- Develop a detailed Howard Street Redevelopment Plan that inventories all buildings to determine structural integrity and historic preservation tax credit potential.
- Calculate National and State historic tax credit eligibility and potential eligible preservation estimates to determine amount of potential equity that a developer could raise on a building by building basis.
- Attract developers with financial scenarios to illustrate building development feasibility.
- Support developer use of New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) and Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in addition to Historic Tax Credits (HTC) to leverage private equity to reduce project developer debt for each site.
- Unite the business and the arts communities. Involve the arts community in discussions about community and economic development.
- Support diverse housing development such as live-work units to attract and retain new residents.
- Require that new development provide for or incorporate art that is accessible or visible to the public in new projects or contribute to an established fund to ensure art reaches the community.



Potential site



Above: Potential Hotel Site in the NE Quadrant.
Right is an image of a small city downtown hotel in a historic district.

10 Potential Downtown Hotel Site

Rocky Mount has experienced recent growth in the development of mid-priced hotels. Most of this growth has been clustered near the hospital campus on the west side of the City. Since hotel construction has continued, it is an indication that there may still be growth in the overall hospitality market. Downtown Rocky Mount could serve this market by attracting business travelers during the week and weekend visitors attending events at the future Rocky Mount Event Center.

A new downtown hotel would ideally serve both business and visitors markets. It would capture the increase in weekend visitors from the future Rocky Mount Event Center while serving the business traveler during the week. The hotel would be a critical piece for expanding the downtown visitor market by allowing visitors to stay over multiple nights and spending additional time and money within the Events and Entertainment District and the Restaurant District. The hotel represents a catalytic project for downtown Rocky Mount as it would actively serve both the Event and Entertainment District and the Restaurant District. It would also have positive economic impact for the Main Street Retail District and Howard Street Art District and Trail as well.



Strategy

Provide lodging in the NE Quadrant close to and to coincide with the opening of the Rocky Mount Event Center with offerings unlike those available at the hotels off of US 301 and I-95. Capture visitor and business travelers in the downtown market. This would expand the downtown market base to support restaurants and retail shops.

Timeframe:

3-5 Years / Medium Term

Local

- RM Downtown Development Office/CCRP
- RM Redevelopment Commission
- RM Office of Business Recruitment

State

- New Market Tax Credits
- CDBG funds

PPP

- Private hotel developer
- Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce
- Carolinas Gateway Partnership

Action Steps

- Identify key property location that would be easily walkable to both the Rocky Mount Event Center and the Restaurant District.
- Determine willingness of property owner(s) to participate in the project to sell the real estate or use it as an equity position in the project. If the latter, be sure the hotel developer is comfortable with others having an equity position in their project using the real estate.
- Calculate the estimated number of parking spaces needed for the hotel development as 1:1 (one car per room). Parking spaces must be accommodated on site and it may be necessary to assemble nearby properties for a hotel development to have enough space for the footprint and the required parking.
- Hotel development would be eligible as a commercial use to raise equity through the federal New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) as the likely property location would be within a qualified census tract representing severely distressed areas eligible to use the NMTC to the fullest.
- The City and hotel developer should work out what other public realm improvements would be provided for the hotel’s success including but not limited to off-site parking, lighting, sidewalks, Monk-to-Mill trail improvements, and stormwater management.

11 Downtown Parking

Create a Parking and Event Management Plan for Downtown

The City of Rocky Mount inventoried the parking in the downtown including both public and private off-street parking and on-street parking. Revitalization of businesses downtown catalyzed by the Rocky Mount Event Center will bring more people seeking available parking. The map below illustrates public parking available within a 1/4 mile walk of the intersection of Thomas and Main Streets. Parking on private lots is not shown because a formal agreement required by the Land Development Code has not been executed by the property owners, but in the future, those spaces will increase the inventory.

For parking and vehicular travel, the city should create a parking and event management plan for the Rocky Mount Event Center to ensure that visitors and residents are accommodated and to minimize traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

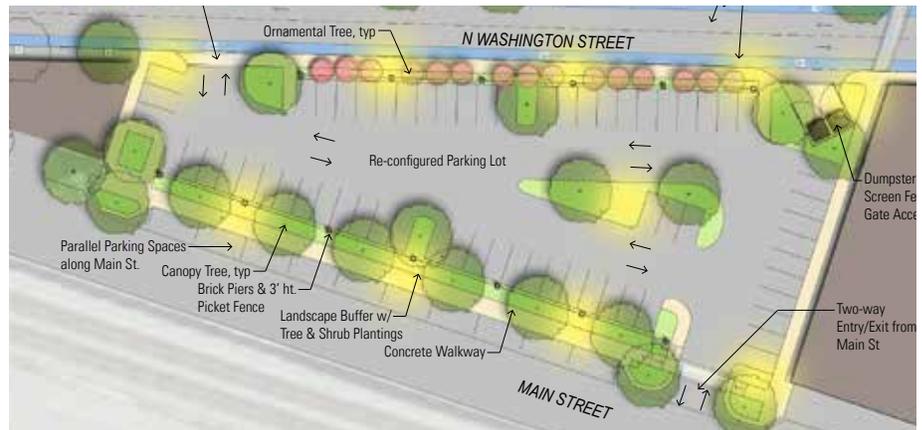
Surface parking is not a desirable principal use in the urban environment when continuity of form presented by building facades is key to the enjoyment of pedestrian-friendly spaces. With this in mind, both public and private lots should be well designed, landscaped, and screened to the standards of the Downtown Overlay District. Public parking lots may present an opportunity to showcase art or sustainability measures.



City owned lot on NE Main Street



Example of surface parking screening



Example of surface parking concept

Strategy

Create a Parking Management Plan to include anticipated new surface lots to primarily serve the Rocky Mount Event Center. The Management Plan should review how best to use public and private lots and spaces to optimize parking needs of downtown employees, residents, and visitors. This is especially critical during festivals and major events at the Imperial Centre, Rocky Mount Event Center, and Booker T Theater.

Timeframe:

1-3 Years / Short Term

Local

- Department of Engineering
- RM Downtown Development Office/ CCRP

State & Federal

- N/A

PPP

- Downtown property owners
- Rocky Mount Area Chamber
- Downtown employers
- Edgecombe Community College

Action Steps

- Complete the web application begun by the city that will identify parking lots to accommodate the anticipated Rocky Mount Event Center, Booker T Theater and other events.
- As part of the wayfinding signage program, include signs for public parking to direct visitors to drop-off points, shuttle locations, and between entertainment and event locations.
- Convene a working meeting with downtown merchants, banks, major employers, property owners, churches regarding the best approach to manage major event parking demand for surface and on-street parking.
- Approach identified private parking lot owners to ensure spaces are available to event attendees and facilitate the required use agreements per the Land Development Code (LDC).
- Identify worker and volunteer parking spaces to ensure visitor spaces are available for event attendees.
- Determine whether the estimated attendance at major events at the Rocky Mount Event Center will require any assistance from volunteers or law enforcement to direct attendees to the venue and associated parking.
- Adjust parking regulations throughout the LDC to be more consistent with current trends in urban areas.



On-street parking on Main Street

12 Braswell Creek/Stream Restoration & Stormwater Improvements



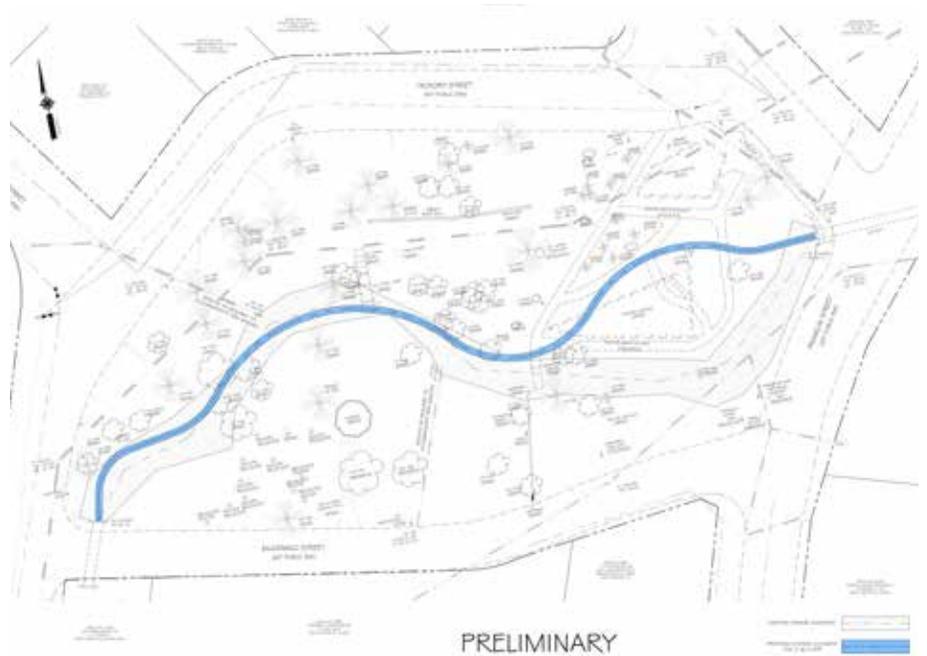
Above: location in relation to the Imperial Centre.
Below: erosion of stream banks in the Park.



Braswell Park, Rocky Mount's oldest, is located just outside the NE Quadrant focus area of this plan. The stream runs adjacent to cultural resources such as Braswell Park, Braswell Library and the Imperial Centre that figure strongly in the redevelopment and revitalization efforts on the north end of the downtown. The proposed Monk-to-Mill Trail which also connects to the Rocky Mount Event Center and the Imperial Centre runs just south of Braswell Park.

The pipes, culverts, and lined channel sections installed along the urbanized stream over time have become undersized and structurally compromised due to the increase in impervious area downtown resulting in poor water quality, erosion of the natural channel and frequent flooding. All of this has combined to threaten the integrity of adjacent streets, structures and utilities.

Taking the right approach to improving the stream by creating a park amenity that can handle the site stormwater needs and improve water quality will enhance the space and increase use of the park. A well designed and used park is a sign of a community that places an emphasis on a high quality of life for its residents and visitors. Read more about Braswell Park here: <http://www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/parks.html>.



The gray hatch and blue line represent the existing and proposed channel alignments

Strategy

Create a stormwater management solution by naturalizing Braswell Park stream to improve water quality, enhance the surrounding area, and promote healthy activities.

Timeframe:

3-5 Years / Medium Term

Local

- Department of Engineering
- Downtown Development Office/CCRP
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Works & Water Resources Department

State & Federal

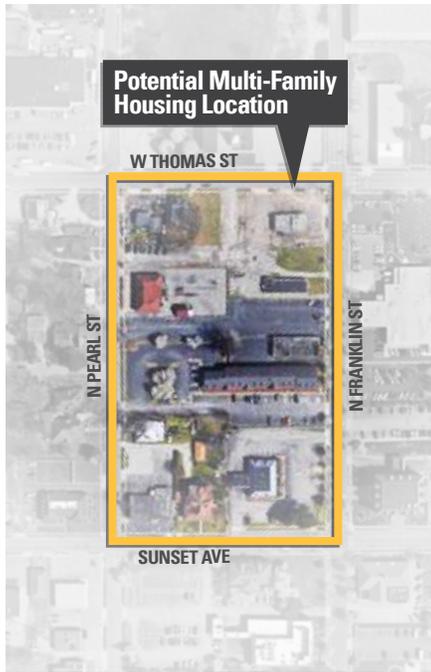
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- NC DEQ 319 Nonpoint Grant
- US EPA Office of Sustainable Communities

PPP

- Private corporation, non-profit, or individuals could assist City with necessary grant match

Action Steps

- Continue to pursue grants for the Monk-to-Mill Trail.
- Incorporate best management practices (BMP) into the redesign of the stream corridor to create a downtown neighborhood and trail-side amenity.
- Prepare a preliminary engineering report (PER).
- PER should outline project budget estimates, schedule, and identify specific funding sources.
- Secure funding via grants as necessary.
- Once funding in place, bid project for construction.
- Consider future option to open the closed section of the stormwater system downstream of the park towards the river to potentially provide flood reduction benefits.



Potential location of the multi-family housing development.

13 Downtown Multi-Family Housing

Successful downtowns have activity throughout the day and that is only achieved by having people living downtown. During this plan process, many expressed the desire for an alternative to the existing single-family housing such as the multifamily housing illustrated below. In one fell swoop, dozens of residential units could be added on a single footprint in the vicinity of the NE Quadrant, just a short walk from venues within the Event and Entertainment, Restaurant, and Main Street Retail Shopping Districts. It will likely require a public/private partnership to close a financial gap between cost to build new mixed-use redevelopment and the amount of revenues that may be generated from leases. This financial gap may be closed with New Market Tax Credits or Low-Income Housing Tax Credits or some other local and state intervention.



Examples of downtown multi-family housing, some built above ground-level retail development.

Strategy

Increase downtown residential units in the vicinity of the Event and Entertainment and Restaurant Districts to expand the downtown population base to support events, shops, and restaurants.

Timeframe:

3-5 Years / Short Term

Local

- RM Downtown Development Dept (CCRP)
- RM Redevelopment Commission
- RM Community Development Department

State & Federal

- New Market Tax Credits
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

PPP

- Local & Regional developers
- Community Development Corporations
- Carolinas Gateway Partnership

Action Steps

- Assist with the preparation of a real estate pro forma for a mixed-use project exploring the use of NMTC or LIHTC to raise equity for building reuse or new building mixed-use redevelopment.
- Begin to coordinate land assembly by City or other entity such as a Community Development Corporation of real estate within the block bounded by Thomas Street on the north, Franklin Street on the east, Sunset Avenue on the south, and Pearl Street on the west. Focus most on the properties along Franklin since there are existing residential uses along Pearl Street and because the east side of the block is closest to downtown amenities.
- Research the environmental status of the former gas station on the southwest corner of Thomas and Franklin intersection. It is important before purchasing to fully understand the risk of any potential existing legacy contamination and if there are any remaining underground fuel storage tanks that may need to be remediated if the property were purchased. Brownfield funds may be available to assist through North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality if remediation is necessary.
- Interview existing property owners and their tenants to determine who may be interested in participating in selling their property and who of the existing tenants may wish to lease space within a new mixed-use building.
- Determine after interviews which properties may be assembled into a contiguous two-acre site. This should provide adequate space to construct a four-story mixed-use building with retail and/or office on first two floors and residential on the 3rd and 4th floors.
- Assist with the preparation of a real estate pro forma for a new mixed-use project exploring the use of NMTC or LIHTC to raise equity for new mixed-use building.



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Chapter 5

NE Quadrant Private Sector Projects

This chapter includes redevelopment projects being considered on sites in the NE Quadrant by private sector developers.

Downtown Revitalization Projects

For more than ten years, the city of Rocky Mount followed many of the recommendations of urban planners, the national main street organization, and generally those charged with revitalization of a community. City leadership and staff planned, designed and constructed projects, both civic and public infrastructure, which have served as catalysts for private sector development. Examples of city led projects include the:

- Renovation of the Rocky Mount Train Station
- Conversion of the Imperial Tobacco Company into the Imperial Centre Cultural facility
- Downtown Streetscape, winner of the 2016 APA-NC Great Streets in the Making award
- Douglas Block
- Redevelopment of the Booker T Theater
- Adoption of a Historic Overlay District which preserved the character of historic Rocky Mount and served to slow demolition of structures
- Construction of the Rocky Mount Event Center

These projects are visible inspiration pieces providing hope for residents and also confidence to those in the development community that Rocky Mount is a city in which to invest.

Three project sites in the NE Quadrant are described on the following pages: Carleton House Motel, May-Gorham Building and the Old Post Office. It was important to include potential private projects in this strategic plan to ensure they are fully integrated into the City's plans. The illustrations for the three projects listed above are graphic representations of one concept and do not imply any sort of approval. Other projects and sites in the vicinity are also being considered including renovation of the Station Square complex and the old bus station. The Beal Street Square housing development is nearing completion.



Downtown streetscape and redevelopment.



The Douglas Block.



The Imperial Centre.



Carleton House Motor Lodge at 209-215 North Church Street



Above: Aerial view of the Carleton House.

14 Carleton House Redevelopment

The Carleton House Motor Lodge and Restaurant consists of a two-story motel wrapping around a one-story restaurant/conference center constructed in 1961. It operated as such until closing in 2003. The buildings then served as student housing for North Carolina Wesleyan College for a brief time, but has remained vacant since. The property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the significance of the Rocky Mount Central City Historic District.

The rehabilitation of the existing historic buildings with the construction of new compatible additions could create a hotel key count of 74 with a variety of room types and sizes. This creates a unique hotel and dining facility adjacent to the new Rocky Mount Event Center, Depot Park, and the Monk-to-Mill Trail.

The National Register listing can provide valuable economic incentives for the rehabilitation of the historic buildings. A federal income tax credit of 20% is available as is a 15% state income tax credit. In addition, rehabilitation projects in Nash County (Tier 2) qualify for an additional 5% Development Tier Bonus credit.



Above: Precedent images from renovated motor lodges.



A rendering of a rehabilitated Carleton House with additional rooms and rooftop pool.



Aerial view of the May & Gorham Building at Five Points.

15 May & Gorham Building

The May & Gorham Building was built in 1904 and enlarged in 1906 by D.J. Rose & Company, (a legacy construction company). The two-story building was constructed for Reading D. Bullock and John D. Bullock and was originally known as the “Five Points Drug Store” due to the configuration of the intersection of Tarboro, Washington and Rose Streets. A mixture of professionals rented the second-floor office space. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the significance of the Rocky Mount Central City Historic District.

An initial study of the building indicates that there is potential to rehabilitate the building. One scenario would be to provide the following:

- **Commercial lease space** – conversion of the former pharmacy space into a soda shop and cocktail bar with kitchen/food service, full bar, and restrooms.
- **Shared office suites (also known as co-working)** – individual offices or suites that utilize shared conference spaces. Other amenities, such as a shared receptionist, answering service, and mailing/copying centers could also be provided. These spaces are attractive to small businesses, startup companies and as a secondary (home) office for executives and retirees.
- **Residential units** – create multiple market-rate residential apartment units. It is assumed that one and two-bedroom units would be most desirable in these locations.

The National Register listing can provide valuable economic incentives for the rehabilitation of the building. A federal income tax credit of 20% is available as is a 15% state income tax credit. In addition, rehabilitation projects in Edgecombe County (Tier 1) qualify for an additional 5% Development Tier Bonus credit. The potential exists to include the former Tripp Furniture building due to its adjacency in future plans for redevelopment.



The May & Gorham Building, 132 Tarboro Street at Five Points, is on the National Register of Historic Places.



A rendering of the May & Gorham building after rehabilitation. The former Post Office is in the background.



Former Post Office on Tarboro Street

16 Old U.S. Post Office

The Classical Revival-style United States Post Office building was designed by Treasury Department architect Oscar Wentworth and built by D.J. Rose & Company in 1914. The building has been vacant since a new post office was constructed in the 1970's. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the significance of the Rocky Mount Central City Historic District.

The historic building and site present an excellent opportunity within the NE Quadrant of downtown Rocky Mount for a variety of rehabilitated uses. Perhaps the most exciting reuse option may be that as a themed destination restaurant/music venue. The restaurant could take advantage of the beautiful open spaces inside for formal dining while being able to host casual outdoor dining along with a musical performance space on a veranda on the east side of the building. The rehabilitated property could become a vibrant regional amenity celebrating Rocky Mount's rich musical heritage.

The National Register listing can provide valuable economic incentives for the rehabilitation of the building. A federal income tax credit of 20% is available as is a 15% state income tax credit. In addition, rehabilitation projects in Edgecombe County (Tier 1) qualify for an additional 5% Development Tier Bonus credit.





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Chapter 6

Governmental Excellence

This chapter addresses the tools and resources the city must have in place to build or increase its capacity for successful implementation.

» Governmental Responsibilities, Collaboration, Policies and Tools

Leadership, Capacity, Tools & Policies

This chapter addresses the roles, skills, and capacity of city entities typically tasked with community revitalization. This is followed by information on effective policies and tools to facilitate redevelopment.

It is the responsibility of Rocky Mount's elected and appointed officials to be good stewards of the City's resources. This Plan is to be used to guide decisions of the members of various Boards and Commissions including City Council, Redevelopment Commission, and Planning Board as they work together to revitalize the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. The plan's success will be measured in part by the persistent and consistent implementation of the strategies contained within.

Many of the City's existing plans including the 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan "Together Tomorrow" contain policies, guidelines and recommendations that are still relevant today and should continue to be followed. Economic Development

Implementation will be a joint effort and require a proactive relationship between multiple city departments (Downtown Development, Engineering, Planning), and any number of partners including the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce, the Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP), the Downtown Merchants' Association, property owners, institutions of higher education, and members of the development community. But leadership remains the City's responsibility.

Organizational Capacity

One method to achieve successful implementation of the projects listed in Chapter 4 is to remove barriers to redevelopment. It is always easier to develop on the fringe of a city in the "greenfield" (undeveloped) areas which is why incentives, programs and extra care are needed to support redevelopment when market forces are not working alone. Challenges which may hamper forward progress are development-related such as financing or building condition, but also include updated tools, policies, skilled staff and board members, and forward-thinking leadership.

Capacity is the ability of the organization, in this case the City, to realize their development goals while enhancing the skills to achieve measurable and sustainable results. Implementation of the projects in this plan do not exceed an 8-year horizon, recognizing the need to capitalize on the RMEC and understanding the difficulty in sustaining momentum. Leadership will have to continually reassess, reexamine and change according to what is most needed during this time frame. Success will require "all hands on deck."

Planning and Community Development

Adjustments and changes can take many forms and be physical or social in nature. To enhance the experience for the development community, changes in procedures, or additional staff to assist with an increased development review workload, or functional software that aids in development processing, permitting, and code enforcement would further the goals. These recommendations are not prioritized, nor funded, but are included to increase awareness.

- Ensure the GIS database provides accurate land use, infrastructure, parcel data for use by property owners, potential out-of-town investors, real estate agents and more. Ensure development applications can be filled out online. This is a convenience offered in many jurisdictions.
- Consider the use of similar nomenclature for processes/ applications as used by other communities for the ease of understanding by developers. Maybe consolidate the number of application types for seven to fewer.
- Add clear procedures supplemented by flow charts and typical time lines, and explain to potential applicants the interrelationships between the procedures and city departments.
- Consider relocating the Planning and Development Department so that is visible from the atrium of the floor on which it is located.
- Locate building, inspections, and code enforcement activities, more typically back-of-house operations with days spent in the field, to a less prominent location.
- Provide training in retail-style customer service for planning administrative staff in having them provide thorough and accurate information, handout brochures, direct applicants to the planning department online portal, receive and determine completeness of submittals based on a checklist, and then distribute to the lead planner.
- Require pre-application meetings for projects prior to submittal. The proposed Downtown Overlay District (DOD) will require an informal pre-application meeting for all new projects within the district as a way for staff and applicant to meet and share information and expectations prior to making significant investments of time and money.
- All site plans, no matter the type and size of the project, should be thoughtfully evaluated for development and design standard compliance in a collaborative fashion. The Planning and Development Department should re-evaluate the existing accelerated review time offered to developers. The volume of projects anticipated in Rocky Mount and current levels of staffing, may not allow the review that downtown infill, site redevelopment, and rehabilitation projects that are so important to the city's sustainable success need. Consider a minimum of 14 days for projects that have complete submittals and that require no planning board or council review to 6 weeks for complex multifaceted projects.
- Continue to review projects in regularly scheduled Development Review Committee meetings attended by planning, community development, engineering, public works, utilities, fire and other public safety, non-city utility and telecommunication providers to ensure a holistic and comprehensive sharing and discussion of project merits and issues with the applicant or his/her representative in attendance. Staff comments should be consolidated and submitted to the applicant in writing.
- Consider adding a mid-level planner to the Planning and Development Department as a response to the development interests in City spurred on by the RMEC, the new CSX hub, continued development at the Rocky Mount Mills and others. Some cities may contract with companies that provide senior level planning services on site for agreed to periods of time - sometimes staffing up for increased development or a specific complex project.
- Include funds for key new positions to facilitate implementation of strategies and actions. Align position descriptions of experience and education with industry standards for each job category.

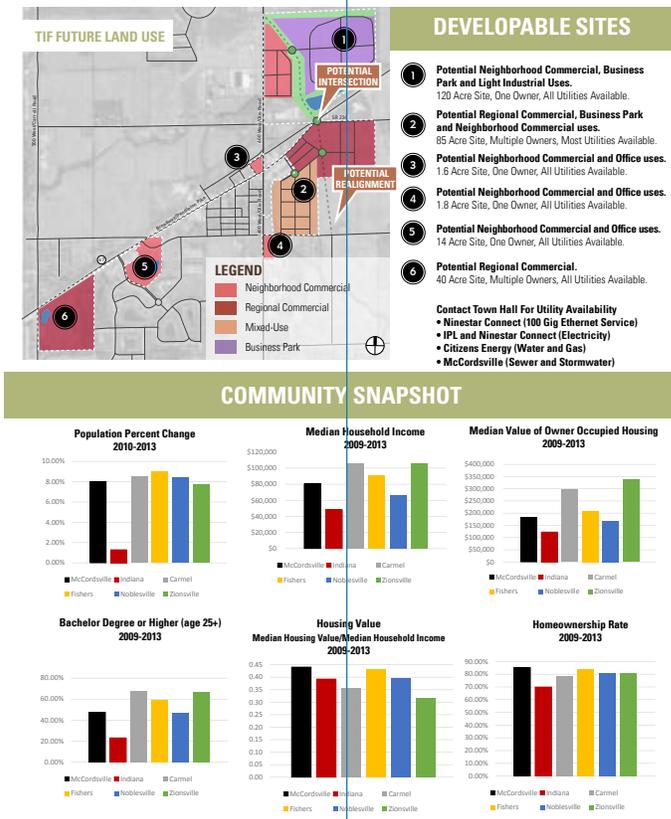


Examples of downtown properties that have experienced long term disinvestment.

Economic Development

This Implementation Strategies Plan is predicated on the anticipation that the time is right in Rocky Mount for downtown revitalization. Past plans, including the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, lay out similar visions, goals, and recommendations echoed by staff, residents and property owners today. Therefore, it is imperative that the city engage an economic development director for the city with special experience in [historic] downtown revitalization. The city should create a fulltime Economic Development Director position charged with fostering a business-supportive environment in the downtown. Because disinvestment has occurred downtown over decades, the focus may have to be stronger there during the next two to five years as the Event Center is brought on line. The window of opportunity created by the RMEC must not be missed. A new economic director should:

- Come armed with incentives and knowledge of how to use redevelopment and rehabilitation tools including as Low Income Housing Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits
- Increase business retention and recruitment efforts, visiting other jurisdictions and providing incentives for successful businesses to expand into Rocky Mount
- Maintain the business/marketing website and use informative graphic tools - example of a brochure prepared for another community to be distributed at conferences and other venues.
- Work in tandem with the Downtown Development Office, the CCRP, the Chamber, and the Downtown Merchant's Association. Provide all with the information they need to share the message of downtown revitalization, business recruitment and support within their social circles, faith-based groups, schools, and neighborhoods and ensure all are assisting with marketing, fundraising, and attendance at downtown events.



Develop marketing materials (centerfold of 4-pg brochure) to promote development opportunities and successes.

Redevelopment Commission

Empowering and educating Boards and Commissions is an important step in implementation. Enthusiasm, active participation, skills and expertise are characteristics that members of boards and commissions must bring to the table, especially in the case of commissions charged with land development decisions such as the Planning Board, the Redevelopment Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission.

The Redevelopment Commission (RDC) is enabled under NC General Statute 160A, Article 22, to address and act on conditions associated with the deterioration and under-utilization of land and/ or barriers to development that are not likely to be improved through the ordinary operations of private enterprise. Typically, a Redevelopment Commission is the best answer to support cities in redevelopment efforts. The commissions have a level of independence allowing them to be at arms length from normal city operations and to use their authority to buy, hold and transfer land, as well as induce development with tax incentives and other finance tools.

In the 1990's, the Rocky Mount RDC was active in compelling downtown development which brought significant changes in the City. Over the last several years, the Commission's focus has been on low income residential development but the need in Rocky Mount is great for a group with the abilities to effect positive change. This selection of new and education of all Commissioners as to new roles and responsibilities is paramount in light of the downtown developer interest. Recommended actions include:

- Continually seek the most suitable people to staff boards, commissions, panels and committees. Widely advertise available seats and encourage candidates with skills to advance the city's goals. Create excitement around these positions to increase the numbers of applicants.
- Enforce term limits and create if they are not already existing. Require members to stay off of a board or commission for a specified period of time prior to reapplying.
- Provide funds for training or conference attendance annually for at least one member of each board and commission to enhance the board's effectiveness, understanding, and resolution of issues.
- When appointing members, ensure that at least one member possesses knowledge related to the mission through training or education. For example, one successful and effective Redevelopment Commission in a North Carolina city has as its members an:
 - » Attorney
 - » Architect
 - » Local Property Developer
 - » Neighborhood Activist
 - » Astrophysicist
- The RDC should work closely with:
 - » the Planning and Development staff which includes the Community Development Administrator
 - » Future Economic Development Director
 - » Downtown Development Office
 - » Business Development Authority
 - » Carolina Gateway Partnership
 - » Edgemcombe Community Development Corporation and other CDC's that may form
 - » Historic Preservation Commission.
- Ensure members know the use of economic development tools including:
 - » HUD-CDBG Entitlement Funds (future availability TBD by US Congress)

Redevelopment Commission

Redevelopment Commissions are enabled under NC General Statute to address and act on conditions associated with the deterioration and under-utilization of land and/ or barriers to development that are not likely to be improved through the ordinary operations of private

- » Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- » New Market Tax Credits
- » Historic rehabilitation tax credit (15%) for qualified rehabilitation of contributing properties in National Register districts

Community Development Corporations (CDC)

Community Development Corporations are not-for-profit entities that provide programs, offer services, and engage in other activities that promote and support community development. As a non-profit, a CDC is eligible for different funding types and can use a variety of funding mechanisms. The Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation focuses on affordable housing but is not involved in commercial or mixed-use development. They are not a governmental body, nor entrenched in the political environment, and usually have a better pulse on the priorities of a community and are more responsive to residents and businesses of the neighborhoods they serve since they serve a specific geographic area. A CDC:

- can buy and sell land without going through a public procurement process making it faster and targeted in how real estate changes hands.
- can hold and “land bank” real estate.
- can be a Small Business Certified Financial Institution (SBCFI) with ability to help small businesses secure funding. CDC’s work with lenders, such as major banks who have Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements to meet by serving “underserved populations and neighborhoods”, and city organizations to get capital to small businesses.
- can act as a development partner with private developers by securing local, state or federal grants/loans/tax credits for projects that private entities would not be able to directly receive.
- can collect donations from individuals and corporations, and because they are not-for-profit, those donors are able to receive federal tax deductions

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) established by the City Council in 2002, consists of community residents which serve designated terms and preferably should have some members with expertise in architecture, historic properties, renovation, construction, planning or landscape architecture. The Commission identifies local structures or districts of historical significance, has the power to review the plans and designs for projects affecting the designated buildings or districts, and reviews requests for demolition permits. The HPC also assists with the implementation of the structure and facade grant and loan program for the downtown.

TOOLS

Land Development Code (LDC)

The LDC is the regulatory tool for zoning and land use within the city. The City recognized that the current LDC might not provide the high level of quality expected of development projects that might come as a result of city downtown projects as the Imperial Centre and RMEC, and so desired an update to the LDC that would provide it. The existing LDC has two overlay districts downtown, the Douglas Block Overlay District (DBOD) which focused on development in a historic downtown urban environment such as mixed-uses, infill development, and parking but only for a block and the Local Historic District governed by

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Guidelines.

The HPC guidelines provided some regulatory standards and some recommendations (encouraged but not legally enforceable) for properties within the designated Local Historic District (LHD). The Downtown Overlay District prepared in 2017 will bring synthesize the best of the DBOD and the HPC Guidelines and provide a framework for the form and character the city desires for the areas designated within its boundaries as shown on the map on page ___. The new chapter of the LDC includes:

- graphic illustrations, sketches and photographs to clarify the city's expectation for development and aid in interpretation
- a variety of uses typical of downtown mixed-use districts
- clarification on application, review, and development procedures for new development or substantial expansions

Providing higher standards for development and design will help change the perception of downtown which is bigger than just Main Street. Downtown includes the residential and commercial areas along the local streets and major corridors that lead to downtown from the highways including but not limited to Church, Sunset, Thomas, Tarboro, Washington, Franklin. Actions to take?

- Adopt the Downtown Overlay District
- When codified (becoming part of Municode), request the planning and zoning add-on which can allow the graphics to transfer, provide interactive GIS, and more (see the example below)
- Allow 30-90 days between adoption and the effective date to share the new Downtown Overlay District with the community so they understand the city's expectations.
- Upload the new DOD to the City's website. It can be provided in the illustrative format as a separate publication and codified into the existing code

MINOR PLAT



Example of a Procedural Flowchart.



Example of Municode's abilities to capture planning and zoning graphics.

LDC, not specifically addressed in Chapter 12, are generally covered under Section 1204(H). Although warning, citing, and ultimately fining property owners is permitted under Section 1205, it can be a sensitive issue and city leadership may not have a willingness to pursue particularly in lower-income areas. Unfortunately, this allows property neglect to adversely impact others and is not fair to the community as a whole.

The city council, city management and city attorneys should establish a process for dealing with abandoned and neglected properties. Attractive cities have strong, consistent enforcement. The next section describes programs that might help properties of owners with low or no resources maintain to a standard that enhances quality of life and does not detract from the city's goals.

- Consider being proactive in enforcing the code in the downtown district, not just complaint driven.
- Determine the need for additional staff to enforce the planning and zoning code. Ensure that new staff is familiar with the content of the city's codes and trained to recognize violations.
- Request funds for additional planning staff that can possibly share development review and zoning enforcement duties.
- Building and zoning inspectors should coordinate with the fire marshal responsible for enforcing building and fire codes for existing commercial buildings, and may from time to time need to get support from the Department of Health or the Police Department.
- Work with the City attorney to establish a process to ensure compliance with maintenance and follow through.

Policies

The following are policies and actions the city has or can undertake to strengthen its the downtown neighborhoods. The City of Rocky Mount can proactively assist to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods through creating a property maintenance code. Having such a document establishes a minimum standard for property upkeep and can leverage clearly stated maintenance standards alongside property inspections to address poor maintenance and to keep property owners of both commercial and residential properties accountable. The code could be applicable to areas within the Downtown Overlay District and apply to building and site maintenance including landscaping, parking, accessory structures and more. The Historic Preservation Guidelines contain several maintenance related recommendations which could made more broadly applicable.

Property Maintenance

Though it is vital for homeowners to maintain their properties, low-income households can be challenged to invest in their residences. A high concentration of poorly maintained rental properties may lead an exodus of property owners away from the area and adversely impact the area's property values. The City has a "demolition by neglect" ordinance to ensure that properties are not neglected by their owners to the point that the only option is demolition. This has had mixed results and many times a property must be removed for safety. The City should proactively work with property owners to ensure properties are compliant to City codes and are well-maintained. The following is information one such program for residential properties taken from the City's website. With mechanisms to aid lower-income households with maintenance, properties and neighborhoods could become more attractive. This would lead to increased property values and higher tax revenues for the City in the long-term.

ROCKY MOUNT'S HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The city of Rocky Mount is now providing assistance to homeowners for improvement of their residential properties. Residents are now eligible to receive assistance through the city's Urgent Repair, Housing Repair or Housing Rehab Matching Rebate programs.

The Urgent Repair Program is applicable for homeowners who are at or below 50 percent of the area median income for their family size. Repairs affecting the safe occupancy of a resident's home are the only eligible repairs.

The Housing Repair Program provides assistance to homeowners with homes that are 50 years of age or older and who earn between 50 and 100 percent of the area median income, which is dependent upon family size. Eligible repairs are for improved energy efficiency or repairs that are needed to ensure safety. Repairs necessary for safe occupancy must be addressed first, and all code violations must be satisfied for both programs. The maximum level of support provided for both the Urgent Repair Program and the Housing Repair Program is at \$12,500 in the form of a forgivable loan over a period of five years.

The Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program is available for any homeowner, without regard to income, whose property was built at least 50 years ago. Repairs may be for system upgrades, energy efficiency or exterior improvements. Rebate assistance will be provided for 50 percent of the total cost of repairs, up to \$12,500.

Applicants for the housing assistance programs will be considered on a first come, first served basis. For more information on all programs, visit www.rockymountnc.gov/cd and select Community Resources. Or, call 252-972-1100.

There is an adage that with property ownership comes responsibility. With that in mind, commercial and residential rental properties can represent a high percentage of ill-maintained sites. Some cities resort to a landlord registry or similar tracking of address, number of units, current and past violations, delinquent taxes. In addition, it is helpful to make tenants aware of their rights. The city could decide to take bold steps to improve property maintenance including:

- Mandate rental inspection and occupancy or tenant permits to ensure spaces are safe and habitable prior to occupancy and that landlords are complying with applicable regulations.
- Create, adopt, and maintain a maintenance standard for properties or vacant lots to ensure that poor property upkeep does not impact the surrounding properties.
- Structure fines for non-compliance to encourage and incentivize property owners to reach a resolution with the City to achieve compliance. If a resolution is established, fines could be refunded to the property owner through refunds or rebates for achieving compliance.
- Investigate alternative methods of compliance. For example, if an existing structure needs new windows but less expensive replacement windows are not consistent with the established character of the downtown district, an alternative is to install storm windows for significantly less and that will enhance energy efficiency.



DRAFT



Appendix

APPENDIX A: Public Engagement Results

APPENDIX B: Downtown Overlay District



Survey Summary

The consulting team for the Rocky Mount Downtown Implementation Strategies project used several methods to gather public input over a three month period. The team met with stakeholder groups or citizens, staff, faith-based leaders and businesses. There was a public workshop on December 2, 2016 at the Imperial Centre attended by more than 125 people. Beginning in late October and continuing to December 31, 2016, **275** people took an online 17-question survey related to downtown revitalization. A summary of the results follows. The questions (some combined) are in *italic*.

- ***How long have you lived in the Greater Rocky Mount area (Nash County or Edgecombe County)? If you're not a local resident, how long have you been visiting Rocky Mount?*** Sixty percent (60%) of survey respondents have lived in Rocky Mount for more than 15 years. Nine percent (9%) were not residents. The same number have been visiting downtown for a similar amount of time.
- ***What is your household income?*** Almost half of the respondents have a household income of more than \$80,000 dollar a year. For 4%, less than \$25,000 per year is their household income.
- ***How often do you visit downtown? If never, what prevents you from coming downtown?*** Almost half of the individuals visit downtown once or twice a year or never. Over 12% are downtown daily. Reasons given for not coming downtown are **lack of retail and restaurants**. There was little concern regarding disposable income or with lack of parking.
- ***How far do you live from downtown?*** Majority (76.75%) of citizens live 3-5 miles or more from downtown. Only 2% of respondents lived downtown.
- ***What constraints hinder investment in downtown?*** When asked what hinders investment downtown, perceptions of crime followed by lack of traffic were the most common answers. Others figured prominently – the write-ins for other included more about crime, followed by nothing to do, dirty and old ground floors of buildings. A couple of people mentioned that the railroad tracks constantly interrupt flow of traffic.
- ***Where is the best business opportunity?*** In answer to where are the best business opportunities, there were 157 responses with the top answers as:
 - Main Street – downtown – near DCF
 - Hwy 64 and Hwy 301/Winstead Ave Corridor; I-95
 - West of Rocky Mount
 - North and west of downtown
 - Westridge
 - Not Rocky Mount downtown

- Sunset Avenue

A few took the question to mean what types of business opportunities. One response was “Converting some of the older (well built) buildings into high end condos...or to amp up the promotion of what we have to offer to outside interests so that may want to come to our fair city. Fantastic place for a movie shoot location (send videos of our downtown to movie companies). You never know what the response will be unless you put it out there.”

- **How safe do you feel walking alone downtown?** 80% of respondents felt somewhat safe or unsafe in downtown. 20% felt very safe.
- **Is it a good idea to give tax breaks or other incentives to businesses that move to downtown?** Almost 70% of the individuals think it is a good idea to give tax breaks or incentives to those who bring businesses downtown and create jobs, though they feel just not any business should receive incentives. The businesses should have a proven business plan. 17% were not in favor.
- **Name one activity/amenity you want to see downtown:**

Railroad Museum Strip Concerts Walking
 Movie Theater Establishments Park Jazz Club
 Downtown Food Businesses Activities
 Shop Events Restaurants Boutiques
 Stores Gas Station Bars Eatery Center
 Restaurants Live Comedy Rocky Mount Studio Think

Also mentioned were sporting events, residential development, gym, park/playgrounds

- **How affordable is housing downtown?** 75% of survey takers feel housing downtown is affordable. 10% felt it is not at all affordable
- **Does downtown have too many, too few, or about the right number of public parks?** Regarding public parks downtown, about half feel there are enough, while the other half feel there are too few
- **How easy is it for people who are disabled to get around downtown?** Many feel that it is moderately easy for disabled persons to get around downtown, but 20% of respondents answered that it is not at all easy
- **Of all the purchases your household makes, about how many are made downtown?** When asked about household purchase, over 72% make no purchases in downtown and 28% make only a few.
- **How should the city utilize its resources?** Given 5 choices of how the city should utilize resources for downtown, overwhelmingly the answer from 76% of respondents was for rehabilitating/renovating downtown buildings for small businesses. About 10% said for advertising /marketing but there was little interest in further beautification improvements. This was not a write in question, but many people offered comments including deter crime, demolish downtown and start over, and no more investment by the city in downtown.
- **Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?**
 - Many comments on taxes being raised to fund the event center and potentially for other projects

- Need to invest in the adjacent neighborhoods, instead of larger facilities
- Not much faith in the city government boards, council and leadership
- Some hopefulness and excitement for the future



PART II

DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT

Introduction

Rocky Mount has a special downtown that has maintained much of its urban fabric for more than 150 years. The heart of the city is the railroad which allowed the city to remain relevant as an important passenger and freight transportation corridor but has also presented challenges for physical, social and economic connectivity and unity. This document is a response to the need for additional standards, detail, and care for development that will create a “place.” This document contains a Downtown Overlay District (DOD) to create the downtown envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan, *Downtown Action Plan*, *Urban Streetscape Master Plan* and other downtown plans and studies.

The regulatory part of the DOD contains a regulating plan (map of applicable areas), graphic representations of subdistrict standards and other development and design standards. This type of Code is based on form and character, rather than uses. It is intended to maintain or elevate high quality design, while permitting some flexibility that is frequently required in an environment of redevelopment and infill development. The proposed code is not purely form-based, but more of a hybrid between the more traditional Land Development Code and a strict form-based one. This is typical for most jurisdictions. What is significantly different is the relationship of private development to the public realm (area within the right-of-way) for cars and pedestrians.

Projects in the downtown by their nature are high profile and visible and deserve the attention needed to insure a long-lasting positive contribution to the city. Therefore, procedures for review of projects that are located within the DOD will be reviewed for compliance with this document and the Land Development Code by city planning staff and/or other city boards.

Section 1. Downtown Overlay District

- A. INTENT. The intent of the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) is to ensure high quality development in keeping with the traditional Downtown development patterns.
1. The Downtown Overlay District shall:
 - a. Encourage compatibility between existing and new development
 - b. Require a reasonable level of design standards that assure compatible size, scale, and massing of structures for new construction
 - c. Preserve existing historic character by encouraging rehabilitation of existing buildings
 - d. Encourage continuation of pedestrian-oriented development
 - e. Ensure a continued mix of uses including residential, retail, service, office, and entertainment
 - f. Encourage pride and reinvestment in older existing neighborhoods, thus stabilizing and enhancing values
- B. DISTRICT BOUNDARIES. The boundaries of the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) are shown on the regulating plan Figure 1.1, page 28 and on the Official Zoning Map in the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Downtown Overlay District

allows modification of the development standards of the underlying zoning districts and is designed to facilitate development and redevelopment of infill sites. The Overlay District is divided into two subdistricts. The boundaries can be legally described as the following:

1. **Downtown Core Subdistrict.** The Downtown Core Subdistrict (Figure 1.2) is intended to be the city's highest density district consisting of a pedestrian-oriented mix of cultural, entertainment, governmental, institutional, office, recreational, retail, residential, and similar uses. Boundary: Beginning at the intersection of East Raleigh and South Washington Street: Thence along East Raleigh Boulevard in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of East Raleigh Boulevard, Rail Road Tracks, and West Raleigh Boulevard; thence along West Raleigh Boulevard in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of West Raleigh Boulevard and a Rail Spur; thence along the Rail Spur in an Northwesterly direction to the intersection of the Rail Spur and South Franklin Street; thence along South Franklin Street in an Northeasterly direction to the intersection of South Franklin Street, Sunset Avenue, and North Franklin Street; thence along North Franklin Street in an Northeasterly direction to the intersection of North Franklin Street and Falls Road; thence along Falls Road in an Southeasterly direction to the intersection of Falls Road and West Goldleaf Street; thence along West Goldleaf in an Southeasterly direction to the intersection of West Goldleaf Street, the Rail Road Tracks, and East Gold Leaf Street; thence along East Gold Leaf Street in an Southeasterly direction to the intersection of East Goldleaf Street and Atlantic Avenue; thence along Atlantic Avenue in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of Atlantic Avenue, Eastern Avenue, and Arlington Street; thence along Arlington Street in an Southwesterly direction to; the intersection of Arlington Street and Marigold Street; thence along Marigold in an Northwesterly direction to the intersection of Marigold street and South Washington Street; thence along South Washington Street in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of South Washington Street and East Raleigh Boulevard, said intersection is the Point of Beginning.
2. **Downtown Transitional Subdistrict.** The Downtown Transitional Subdistrict (Figure 1.3) surrounds the core subdistrict and contains commercial retail and office uses, as well as civic buildings, places of worship, community centers and lower-density residential development. Boundary: Beginning at the intersection of West Raleigh Road and South Grace Street: Thence running along South Grace Street with an Northeasterly direction to the intersection of South Grace Street, Sunset Avenue, and North Grace Street; thence running along North Grace Street in an Northeasterly direction to the intersection of North Grace Street, North Church Street and West Grand Avenue; thence along West Grand Avenue in an Southeasterly direction the intersection of West Grand, Rail Road Tracks, and East Grand Avenue; thence along East Grand Avenue in an Southeasterly direction to a point, said point being on East Grand Avenue at the extension of the common rear property lines of the properties that front Atlantic Avenue and front Pennsylvania Avenue; thence along said property lines in an Southwesterly direction to a point on East Goldleaf Street, said point being on East Goldleaf Street at the extension of the common rear property lines of the properties that front Atlantic Avenue and front Pennsylvania Avenue; thence along East Goldleaf Street in an Southeasterly direction to the intersection of East Goldleaf and Canal Street, thence along Canal Street in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of Canal Street and Lexington Street; thence along Lexington Street in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of Lexington and Rose Street; thence along Rose Street in an Southeasterly direction to the intersection of Rose Street and East Raleigh

West Goldleaf Street and Falls Road; thence along Falls Road in an Northwesterly direction to the intersection of Falls Road and North Franklin Street; thence along North Franklin Street in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of North Franklin Street, Sunset Avenue, and South Franklin Street; thence along South Franklin Street in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection South Franklin Street and a Rail Spur; thence along the Rail Spur in an Southeasterly direction to a intersection, the intersection of the Rail Spur and West Raleigh Boulevard; thence along West Raleigh Boulevard in an Southwesterly direction to the intersection of West Raleigh Boulevard and South Grace Street, the Point of Beginning.

3. Local Historic District Overlay. The Historic District boundary is denoted by the red line. It lies primarily within the Downtown Core Subdistrict.

C. ZONING MAPS. The Official Zoning Maps for the City of Rocky Mount, NC are officially amended by the adoption of this Ordinance to include the Downtown Overlay District and its Subdistricts as described above and illustrated in Figure 1.1.

D. GENERAL APPLICABILITY.

1. The provisions of this chapter shall be applicable to all new development including both infill and redevelopment, and applicable to expansions of existing buildings or parking areas that exceed fifty percent (50%) or more.
2. This chapter applies to any site or structure being located, erected, constructed, reconstructed, moved, altered, converted, or enlarged, surface parking areas, fences walls or facade renovations. The standards contained herein are not applicable to structures undergoing interior renovation only.
3. New and existing single-family and two-family residential properties are exempt from the provisions of the DOD, except when they are part of a new major subdivision development.

E. RELATION TO UNDERLYING ZONING. This district is created as a special overlay district to be superimposed on base zoning districts by approval of the City Council. Development standards provided herein are intended to supplement those permitted in the underlying zoning districts B-1, Neighborhood Commercial; B-2, Commercial Corridor; B-4, Central Business; B-5, Business Service; and I-1, Light Industrial; and I-2, Heavy Industrial.

1. Where the requirements of the underlying zoning district or a different overlay district appear to be in conflict, the more restrictive shall apply.
2. Where no special regulation is included in the Downtown Overlay District, the regulations of the underlying base district shall apply.
3. The underlying land uses shall apply to parcels zoned O-I and R-6MFA. Parcels zoned B-1, B-2, B-4, B-5, I-1, and I-2 shall comply with the transitional and core land use table.

Section 1.2 Downtown CORE SUBDISTRICT

A. Description

1. The Downtown Core Subdistrict is the heart of the city. This district is intended to be the city's highest density district consisting of multi-story buildings. The district is intended to be a cultural and business center with a pedestrian-oriented mixture of cultural, entertainment, governmental, institutional, office, recreational, retail, residential, restaurant, and similar uses, as well as public gathering spaces.

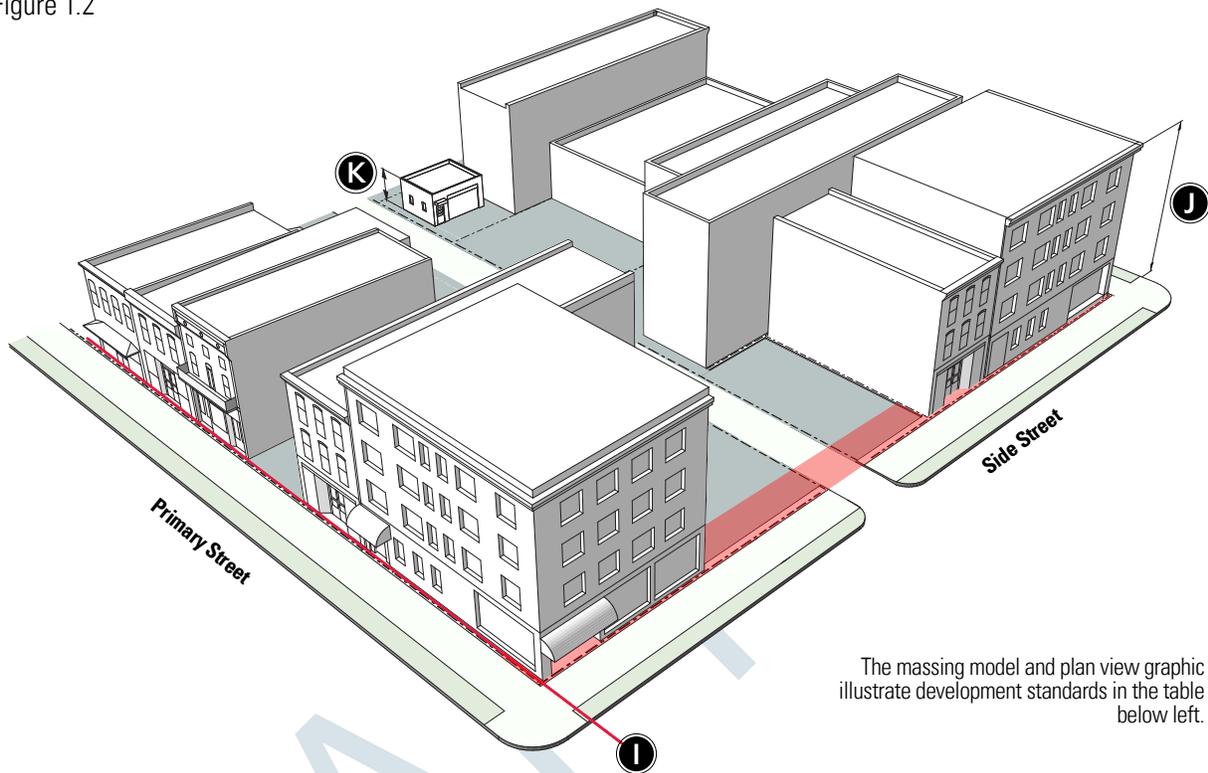
B. Special Requirements

1. New construction should be designed to reflect the character, culture, and climate of the district, respecting human-scaled proportions of historic buildings while offering a compatible contemporary expression. Attempts to copy the design or elements of historic buildings should be discouraged to protect the authenticity of the district.
2. Applications for new construction, expansion or major façade renovation of structures and new or expanded parking facilities, as well as applications for demolition within the boundaries of the existing Local Historic District of the Downtown Core Subdistrict, shall continue to be subject to review by the Rocky Mount Historic Preservation Commission.



Examples of mixed-use commercial, institutional, and residential structures in Rocky Mount's Downtown Core Subdistrict.

Figure 1.2

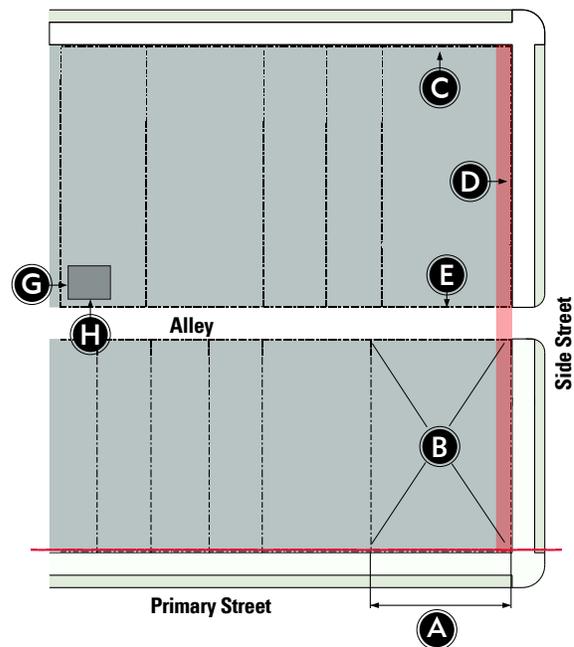


The massing model and plan view graphic illustrate development standards in the table below left.

C. Lot Standards

A	Lot Width	NA
B	Lot Coverage	Max: 100%
C	Principal Setbacks:	Front Min: 0 ft
D	Side	Min: 0 ft Max: 10 ft street, 0 ft Interior
E	Rear	Min: 0 ft Max: NA
F	Accessory Setbacks:	Front NA
G	Side	5 ft
H	Rear	5 ft
I	Build-to-Line	0 ft ¹ The structure shall occupy 75% of lot frontage
J	Building Height:	Principal Min: 20 ft with functional second story Max: 70 ft ²
K	Accessory	Min: NA Max: 20 ft

Figure 1.3



Footnotes

- 1 The build-to-line shall not apply to primary structures on properties which include outdoor dining, assembly, or similar space which conforms to a 0 foot build-to-line
- 2 To reduce the visual impact of tall buildings located near the public right-of-way, buildings may exceed the listed maximum height subject to a required setback of one foot for every increase in height of one foot for each additional story above the maximum. The setback is only required on building faces adjoining the public street.

Section 1.3 Downtown TRANSITIONAL SUBDISTRICT

A. Description

1. This Downtown Transitional Subdistrict is intended to recognize a transition from the higher density mixed-use development in the Downtown Core Subdistrict to the traditional urban residential neighborhoods that surround the downtown. The district has a lower density development pattern and its appearance contributes to success and the ability for the city to thrive. The subdistrict may have multi-story structures (typically between two and four stories). Besides residential, the subdistrict is intended to be a cultural and business center with a pedestrian-oriented mixture of cultural, entertainment, governmental, institutional, office, recreational, retail, restaurant, and similar uses, as well as public open space.

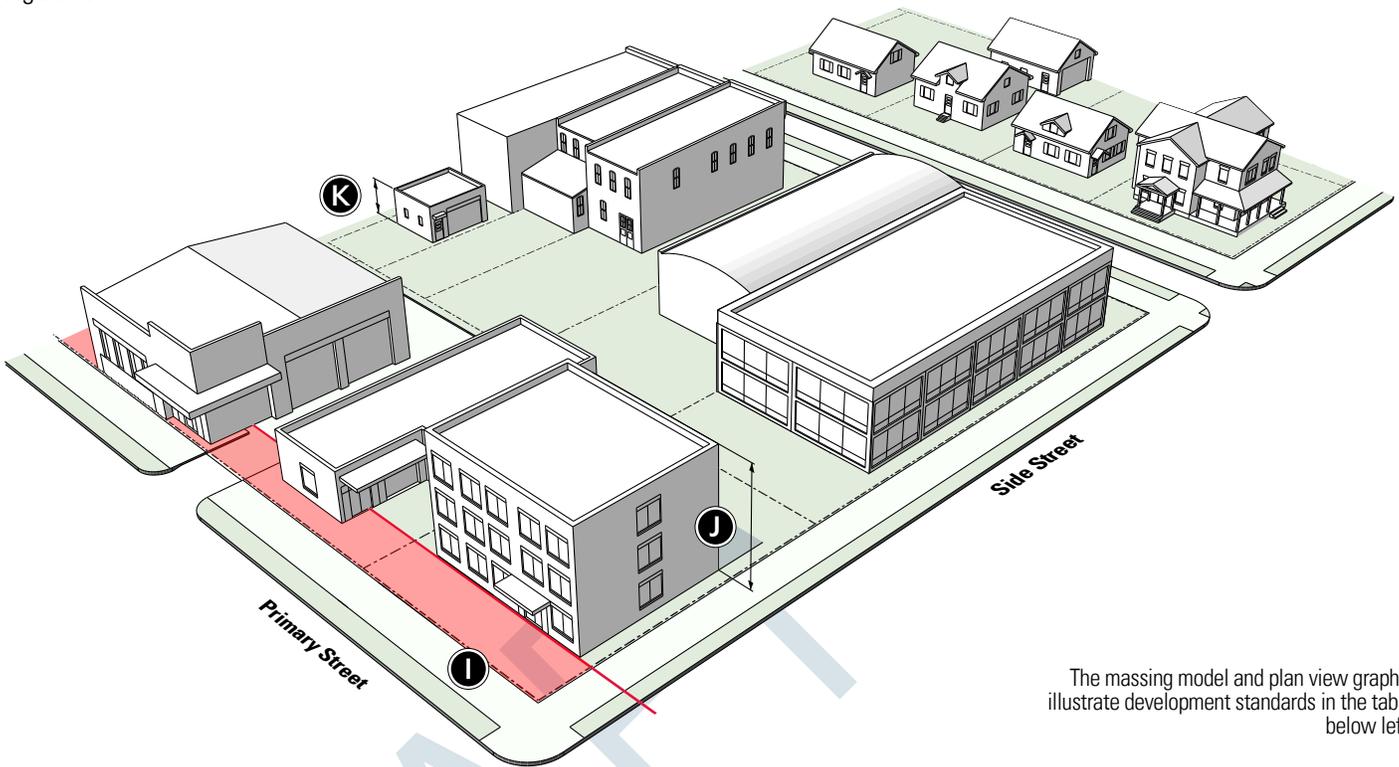
B. Special Requirements

1. There are many opportunities for infill and redevelopment on the primary corridors in this district. These streets serve as the gateways to the heart of downtown and development should be reviewed for sensitivity to and compatibility with the existing.



Examples of the variety of development types in Rocky Mount's Downtown Transitional Subdistrict.

Figure 1.4

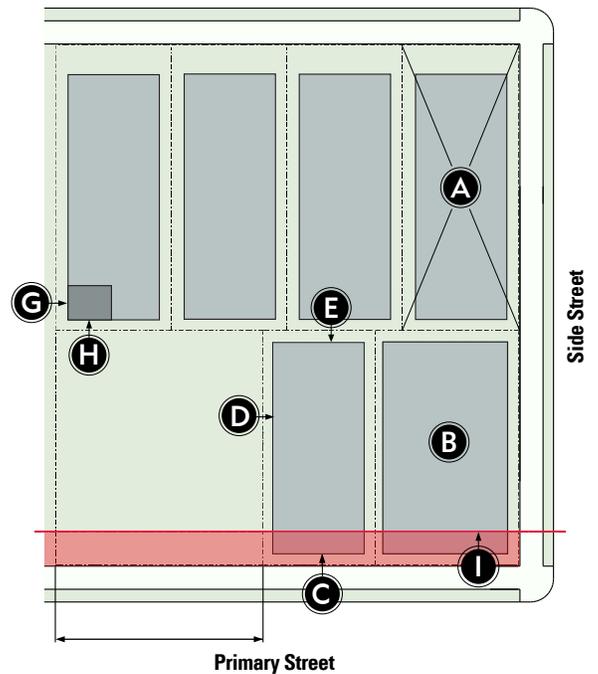


The massing model and plan view graphic illustrate development standards in the table below left.

C. Lot Standards

A	Lot Area	Min: 3000 sf ¹	
B	Lot Coverage	Max: 80%	
C	Principal Setbacks:	Front	Min: 0 ft Max: 25 ft
D		Side	Min: 0 ft Max: 10 ft
E		Rear	Alley: 5 ft No Alley: 20 ft
F	Accessory Setbacks:	Front	N/A
G		Side	Min: 5 ft Max: 5 ft
H		Rear	Alley: 5 ft No Alley: 5 ft
I	Front Facade Zone	Min: 0 ft Max: 25 ft	Structure shall occupy 75% of lot frontage.
J	Building Height:	Principal	Min: 20 ft
		Accessory	Max: 50 ft
K	Accessory	Max: 20 ft	

Figure 1.5



Footnotes

¹ NA for multifamily attached townhomes

Section 2. Development Review Procedures

A. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

1. The standard review procedures apply only to applications for development review or approval in the Downtown Overlay District. These procedures are precursors for obtaining a building permit. Applications for special use permits, variances, and text amendments shall follow the procedures set forth in Section 312 of the LDC. No land shall be used or occupied, no use established, no structures shall be erected modified, moved, extended, or enlarged, nor shall any grading be initiated until permit is released. All nonresidential and multifamily developments are subject to site plan review.
2. An informal pre-application conference with Department of Planning and Development staff is recommended prior to application and plan submittal for projects requiring General Plan Levels II, III and Planned Building Groups and Major Subdivision Plat approval within the Downtown Overlay District.
3. Applicants shall submit the appropriate application for approval as determined in the pre-application conference. Applications, submittal procedures and schedule, checklists and fees are available at the Department of Planning and Development and on the City's website <http://www.rockymountnc.gov/>. The department shall issue a letter outlining deficiencies or determination of completeness. An incomplete application shall be revised and resubmitted by the applicant.
4. Following review by the DRC, the Director of Planning and Development or designee or the Planning Board shall approve, approve subject to conditions, or deny the application. A preliminary major subdivision plat requires approval from the Planning Board.

Section 3. Use Standards

- A. For General information on the City's Zoning Use Regulations, refer to Section 501 and 502 of Appendix A in the Land Development Code. Table 3.1: General Use Matrix designates uses permitted by right, special uses and prohibited uses in the Downtown Core and Downtown Transitional Subdistricts for parcels with an underlying zoning or B-1, B-2, B-4, B-5, I-1, and I-2.
- B. The underlying land uses associated with parcels zoned O-I and R-6MFA shall continue to apply.
- C. The provisions of this chapter shall be applicable to all new development including both infill, redevelopment, and expansions of existing buildings or parking areas that exceed fifty percent (50%), and that are located within the Downtown Overlay District depicted in Figure 1.1. **Infill** refers to development that fills an empty lot between one or more existing adjacent structures, while **redevelopment** in this context refers to lots or parcels representing a portion or all of a city block.
- D. The table symbols from Section 503 of the LDC are identified below and applied here.
 1. By right. Uses permitted by right are indicated by the "X" symbol.
 2. Special use permit. Uses requiring a special use permit are indicated by the "S" symbol. The approving authority will be indicated by a BOA (Board of Adjustment) or CC (City Council).
 3. See Section 503.C titled Notes for the Zoning Use Tables for additional standards that apply to specific uses.

Table 3.1 General Use Matrix

Uses in the following table are from Land Development Code Table 5.2 except where noted by gray tone.

Principal Uses	Downtown Overlay District Subdistricts	
	Core	Transitional
Commercial Retail/Office		
Adult day center in nonresidential district (See LDC Section 503.C.1)	x	x
Adult day home occupation (See LDC Section 503.C.2)	x	x
Adult establishment (See LDC Section 503.C.3)		
Alcoholic beverages, packaged, retail store, including ABC store	s	x
Ambulance service, non governmental		x
Animal medical care, including kennel operation (See LDC Section 503.C.16)		s/BOA
Auction sales, excluding livestock auctioning		x
Automobile truck, trailer rental		x
Auto repair and/or body work excluding commercial wrecking, dismantling, storage of junked vehicle		x
Automobile sales, new and used	x	x
Automobile service station operation (See LDC Section 503.C.5)	x	x
Automobile/vehicle wash (automatic or hand wash) (See LDC Section 503.C.4)		x
Automobile wrecker service (Towing and Storage Only)		
Bakery production and wholesale sales		x
Bakery, on-premises and retail only	x	x
Beauty shop/barber service	x	x
Bed and breakfast (See LDC Section 503C.6)	x	x
Boats and accessories, retail sales, and service		x
Childcare center in nonresidential district (See LDC Section 503.C.8)	x	x
Childcare center in an institutional structure	x	x
Childcare home occupation (See LDC Section 503.C.9)	x	x
Contractor, excluding outside storage of equipment or supplies		x
Contractor, with outside storage of equipment or supplies		x
Convenience store	x	x
Crematory		x
Fabrication, light manufacturing		x
Family care home (See LDC Section 503.C.11)		x
Farmers' market	x	x
Financial institutions (bank, savings and loan companies, and other financial activities)	x	x
Flammable material (distribution/storage/bulk storage)		s
Open market (indoor or outdoor)	x	x
Funeral home	x	x
Grocery/food sales	x	x
Health club/gym spa	x	x
Industrial sales of equipment or repair service		x
Kennel operations (See LDC Section 503.C.16)		x
Laboratory operations, medical or dental		x
Manufactured home sales (but excluding any residential occupancy) (See LDC Section 503.C.17)		
Motel, hotel, or motor court operations (See LDC Section 503.C.16)	x	x

Downtown Overlay District

Table 3.1 General Use Matrix cont.

Principal Uses	Permitted = X Special Use = S Blank = Prohibited	Downtown Overlay District Subdistricts	
		Core	Transitional
Monument sales			X
Museum/art gallery		X	X
Newspaper publishing		X	X
Nightclub, bar, tavern		X	X
Nursery operations - retail/wholesale (See LDC Section 503.C.12)			X
Nursing home (See LDC Section 503C.19)			X
Office use (professional medical)		X	X
Office use (general)		X	X
Parking, surface			
Parking, structured		X	X
Pawn shop		X	X
Personal services establishment		X	X
Private recreation club or swimming club		s/BOA	s/BOA
Radio or television studio activities only		X	X
Recreation or amusement enterprise (conducted outside a building and for profit, and not otherwise listed herein)			X
Recreation or amusement enterprise, racquet facilities (conducted inside a building for profit) (See LDC Section 503.C.20)		X	X
Restaurant or cafe		X	X
Restaurant, drive through/drive in			X
Retailing/office of less than 50,000 gross sq. ft. with operations conducted and merchandise displayed inside and/or outside a building and not otherwise listed herein (See LDC Sections 503.C.12 and 22)		X	X
Retailing/office with operations conducted and merchandise displayed inside and/or outside a building and not otherwise listed herein (See LDC Section 503.C.12 and 22)		S	X
Storage, flammable (See LDC Section 503.C.22)			S
Storage, outside (See LDC Section 503.C.12 & 22)			X
Storage, warehouse			X
Tattoo parlor/studio		X	X
Taxicab/limousine operations		X	X
Theater production, outdoor		s/BOA	s/BOA
Tobacco sales warehouse			X
Tobacco processing			
Truck terminal activities repair and hauling and/or storage			
Wholesale sale (with operations conducted and merchandise stored entirely within a building and not otherwise listed herein)			X
Government/Institutional and Related			
Assembly: armory, assembly hall, coliseum, event center, multiplex movie theater, stadium, etc.		X	X
Cemetery/columbarium		s/BOA	s/BOA
Church/religious institution (See Note 18)		X	X
College or university		X	X
Community center		X	X
Fire station operations		X	X

Table 3.1 General Use Matrix cont.

Principal Uses	Permitted = X Special Use = S Blank = Prohibited	Downtown Overlay District Subdistricts	
		Core	Transitional
Government/civic		x	x
Hospital, general (See LDC Section 503.C.14)		x	x
Library		x	x
Museum		x	x
Lodge (fraternal organizations)		x	x
School: commercial, trade or vocational		x	x
School: elementary, junior high and high school (See LDC Section 503.C.27)		s/BOA	s/BOA
Infrastructure			
Bus station		x	x
Public utility works, shops or storage yards (minor)			x
Railroad station operations		x	x
Utility station or substation		s/BOA	s/BOA
Wireless telecommunication tower less than 100 feet height (See LDC Section 503.C.23)			x
Wireless telecommunication tower 100 feet or greater height (See LDC Section 503.C.23)		s/BOA	s/BOA
Parks/Open Space			
Park/open space (passive)		x	x
Playground/recreation		x	x
Residential			
Dwelling, accessory		x	x
Dwelling, single-family			x
Dwelling, duplex (two-family)		s	x
Dwelling, multifamily		x	x
Dwelling, upper floor		x	x
Group care facility (See LDC Sections 503.C.11)		s/BOA	s
Group home for developmentally disabled adults (See LDC Section 503.C.11)		s	s
Home for the aged		x	x
Home occupation (See LDC Sections 503.C.2, 9 and 13)		x	x
Live/Work Studio		x	x
Manufactured home			
Residential cluster development - cottage/bungalow court			x
Shelter for women, families, and/or children		s (CC)	s (CC)
Transient/homeless shelter		s (CC)	s (CC)

Section 4. Development and Design Standards

A. INTENT. The central business district of Downtown Rocky Mount reflects common architectural patterns and features. Section 714 of the LDC contains appearance and design standards. The standards that follow supplement the existing standards to ensure that new construction maintains the historic development pattern and is compatible with its character. Where standards conflict, the standards of this **Downtown Overlay District (DOD)** supersede the underlying zoning district. The goal is to not imitate the historic Downtown, but to create structures that are compatible within the context of the area. This section addresses the form, massing and scale, as well as the architectural details of new or expanded non-residential, mixed-use and multifamily buildings.



This relatively new building contains many of the site and architectural elements that allow it to fit in the historic Downtown.



This facade contains architectural elements that anchor the corner, highlight the entry, roof and windows.

B. BUILDING FORM AND LAYOUT

1. Height

- a. The maximum height for new structures in the Downtown Core Subdistrict shall be seventy feet (70'). The minimum height for new structures shall be twenty feet (20') with two (2) occupiable stories (above street level).
- b. The maximum height for new structures in the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict shall be fifty feet (50'). The minimum height for new structures shall be twenty feet (20').

2. Front Setback: Common front setbacks can define a street wall. The following requirements are applicable to new structures and additions to existing structures on all public street frontages.

- a. Downtown Core Subdistrict: The minimum front setback or build-to line shall be 0 feet. A structure may be setback a maximum of 10 feet (10') to accommodate amenities (plaza, outdoor dining) adjacent to the right-of-way.
- b. Downtown Transitional Subdistrict: The minimum front setback shall be 0 feet and the maximum shall be twenty-five feet (25'). This area is known as the front facade zone.
- c. Existing primary structures which are nonconforming with regard to setbacks or use may be added to or enlarged. Any addition to or expansion of a nonconforming structure shall comply with all front, side, and rear setbacks for this district.
- d. A minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the front facade for new and infill development shall occupy the lot frontage at the build-to line or within the front facade zone.

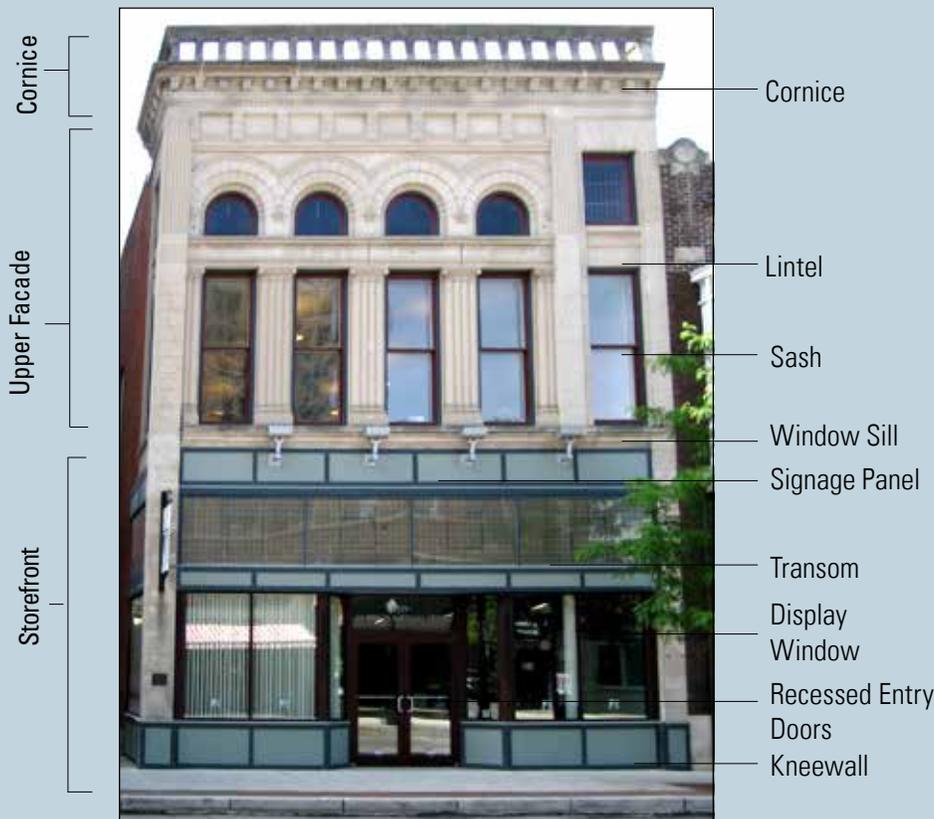
3. Side Setback

- a. Downtown Core Subdistrict: The side setback shall have no minimum and shall be a maximum of ten feet (10') adjacent to a street. The maximum side setback for interior lot lines shall be 0 feet.
- b. Downtown Transitional Subdistrict: The side setback shall be a minimum of five feet (5') in depth for all situations, and a maximum of twenty feet in depth where adjacent to a public street.
- c. Infill situations, if an adjacent building has no side yard setback and no existing windows or doors, it is intended that a new structure be constructed directly adjacent to the existing structure.

FIGURE 4.1 Facade Components

General Facade Components

The following graphic is provided as a general guide to the typical components of a Downtown facade. Not all components shown here appear on every building in Downtown. However, this graphic can be used as a starting point for formulating concepts for new facades.



4. Rear Setback
 - a. Downtown Core Subdistrict: There is no required rear yard setback.
 - b. Downtown Transitional Subdistrict: The minimum rear setback adjacent to an alley shall be five feet (5'). The minimum rear setback shall be twenty feet (20') where no alley exists.
5. Scale And Proportion
 - a. The mass of non-residential and multifamily buildings should be subdivided horizontally and vertically into a hierarchy of volumes.
 - b. First-floor commercial spaces should feature large storefront display windows. Residential-scale windows and doors should not be used in storefronts.
6. Orientation should be to the primary street. The primary entry should face the street. The building should maintain a perpendicular orientation to the street, avoiding unusual angles.

C. BUILDING DESIGN

1. Materials: This section provides guidance on the selection of appropriate materials with an emphasis on encouraging materials that are compatible with the building's context, are durable, do not diminish the existing character of the area, enhance visibility at street level, and do not present ongoing maintenance issues.

- a. Primary Facade: The primary and/or accent materials on structures shall be selected from the following:

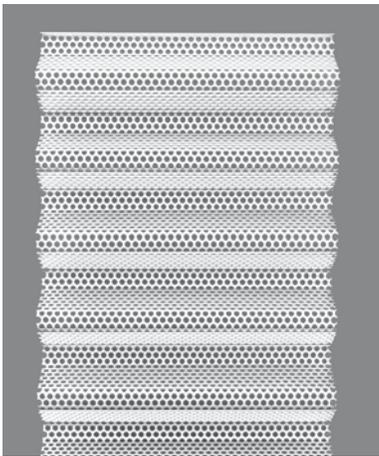
- 1) Clay brick
- 2) Granite
- 3) Limestone
- 4) Marble
- 5) Sandstone
- 6) Stucco
- 7) Terracotta
- 8) Fiber Cement or cementitious siding, precast concrete, steel, cast stone, glass with reflectance of thirty percent (30%) or less, decorative, structural corrugated metal not exceeding twenty-five percent (25 %) are permitted in the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict, but shall only be used in the Downtown Core in a manner compatible with the architectural character of the district. Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems (EIFS) may be used in the Downtown Transitional but not within six feet (6') of the finished grade.



Decorative and structural corrugated metal used as cladding on parking garage.

- b. Roof:

- 1) Historic buildings: Retain and preserve historic roofing materials if possible. If roof material is too deteriorated to repair, use new material that matches the historic material in color, shape, size, composition, and texture. Use original material if available and technically feasible.
- 2) Sloped roofs visible from the public right-of-way shall be:
 - a) Architectural shingles (for residential structures)
 - b) Copper or other Metal Shingles
 - c) Slate
 - d) Standing-seam or flat-seam metal (or other similar material)
 - e) Tile



Sample of corrugated perforated metal that could be used in downtown context as an accent material

- c. The use of a single building material visible from the public right-of-way - especially concrete, stucco, EIFS, or stone - without definition or accent is discouraged. Changes in material and surface can create a play of light and shadow across a facade, creating depth and visual interest.
- d. Tinted glass with a high reflectance (greater than thirty percent (30%)) is not recommended at the pedestrian level of a facade or the bottom two stories.
- e. Prohibited Materials in the Downtown Core Subdistrict.
 - 1) The following material is prohibited on the entire structure:
 - a) Mirrored glass (high reflectance value)
 - b) Aluminum and/or vinyl horizontal lap siding
 - c) Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems (EIFS)
 - d) Wood shake, shingle, rough-sawn panels, or other wood lap siding

- 2) The following materials are prohibited on the bottom -six (6) feet of the primary facade of the structure in the Downtown Transitional District:
 - a) Thin-set brick
 - b) Non-structural grade corrugated metal
 - c) Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems (EIFS) within six feet (6') of finished grade.
 - d) Fiber Cement or Cementitious siding
2. Primary Facade - Horizontal Divisions: Facade divisions provide architectural interest and help large buildings relate to human scale.
 - a. There shall be a clear delineation between the three main horizontal divisions of a structure: street level, upper facade and cornice. Refer to the General Facade Components on page 40.
 - b. Between the street level and upper facade at least one (1) of the following elements shall be included:
 - 1) Awnings
 - 2) Variation in window pattern such as large store-front windows at street level and smaller, separated windows on the upper facade level
 - 3) A flush or projecting horizontal band of a different material, color, or pattern
 - c. On the cornice layer, at least one (1) of the following elements shall be included:
 - 1) A cornice or other three-dimensional element
 - 2) A flush or projecting horizontal band of a different material, color, or pattern to provide a visual termination to the top of the building.
 - d. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the street level facade shall be transparent
3. Primary Facade: Vertical Divisions: Vertical facade divisions, known as building bays, reinforce the pedestrian scale by providing variation in facade depth and projection and changes in material at street level.
 - a. The facade shall consist of building bays that are a maximum of thirty feet (30') in width. Bays shall be established using at least one (1) of the following architectural features:
 - 1) A change in plane (recess or projection)
 - 2) Columns, ribs, pilasters
 - 3) Enhanced entries
 - 4) Changes in texture or materials
 - b. Blank, unarticulated walls shall be avoided on the upper floors of primary facades.
 - c. Multiple facade bays within the same building or adjacent buildings should be visually compatible in terms of scale and materials.
4. Roof: The roof is the uppermost element and one of the most important architectural components of the facade from most architectural periods, including contemporary designs. Roof construction and detailing shall be consistent with the following guidelines.
 - a. Include but are not limited to overhangs with brackets and stepped parapets.



Before and after example restores full height street level, removes shiplap siding, restores original windows and highlights cornice with color and detail.

Downtown Overlay District



An corner entry, arched doorway, awnings and decorative light fixtures are ways to highlight an entry.

- b. Mechanical equipment such as roof vents, metal chimneys, solar panels, television antennae/satellite dishes, or air conditioning units shall be screened so as to not be visible from the public right-of-way.
 - c. On corner sites, the roof design shall emphasize the corner location.
 - d. The form of the roof and building cornice shall be similar or compatible to those on adjacent structures.
 - e. Retain and preserve all rooftop architectural elements such as historic chimneys, towers, cupolas, dormers, cresting and finials.
 - f. Retain and preserve decorative roof patterns and colors typically associated with slate roofs.
 - g. Avoid introducing new roof features such as skylights, dormers, roof ventilators, solar panels, or any other non-character-defining rooftop appurtenances if they would diminish the historic design of the roof or damage historic roofing materials or details.
 - h. Avoid painting or applying coatings to roofing material that was historically not coated. Roof tar is not acceptable as a substitute for properly installed flashing or replacement of roofing materials.
 - i. Generally, it is not appropriate to install light-colored asphalt shingles when replacing roofing material on a historic building.
 - j. Gutters:
 - 1) Install new gutters in a manner that no architectural features are damaged or lost.
 - 2) Replacement gutters and downspouts, unless they are made of copper, shall be painted or coated with a baked-enamel finish in a color appropriate to the color of the historic structure.
 - k. Generally, it is not appropriate to replace concealed or built-in gutters with exposed gutters
5. Entrances: Entrances shall be clearly defined for the pedestrian and the following standards shall be employed:
- a. Retain and preserve all architectural features that are character-defining elements of porches and entrances.
 - b. If a historic porch, entrance, or balcony is completely missing, replace it with either a reconstruction based on accurate documentation or a new design compatible with the historic character of the building.
 - c. There shall be at least one (1) unobstructed pedestrian walkway at least four feet (4') wide connecting the primary facade entrance to an adjacent public sidewalk. If an entrance is at the corner, it satisfies the intent of a primary entrance for the building.
 - d. Architectural features shall be provided at primary entrances and shall include at least one (1) of the following:
 - 1) Recessed entry
 - 2) Awning or canopy of non-combustible canvas fabric that does not conceal architectural features
 - 3) Raised corniced parapet over the door
 - 4) Arches
 - 5) Balconies
 - 6) Piers

- 7) Columns
 - 8) Balustrades
 - 9) Rails
 - 10) Brackets
 - 11) Soffit
 - 12) Architectural elements, projecting from the vertical plane of the main exterior wall and raised above the adjoining parapet wall/roof
 - 13) Pilasters projecting from the plane of the wall a minimum of eight inches (8")
 - 14) Enhanced exterior lighting such as wall sconces, building mounted accent lights, or decorative pedestal lights
 - 15) Architectural details such as tile work and moldings that are integrated into the building design
 - 16) Integrally designed canopies, overhangs, arcades and recessed entries not exceeding ten feet (10') in depth
6. Windows: Windows provide visual definition and reduce the visual mass of larger buildings. In the Downtown Core Subdistrict, there is a rhythm to the windows amongst adjacent buildings which should be preserved by the shape and placement of new windows.
- a. The size and proportion of window openings should be similar to those on surrounding primary facades.
 - b. Avoid filling in existing door or window openings if it would change the character of the historic building.
 - c. Retain and preserve the details of original windows including thresholds, sashes, glass, lintels, sills, trim, shutters, hardware, and molding to the extent possible.
 - d. When replacing original historic windows for the purpose of improving thermal performance, new windows shall closely match the scale, characteristics, and detail of the original window.
 - e. Windows shall have actual and not faux muntins (divisions between panes of glass).
 - f. Transparent windows promote more interaction with pedestrian traffic. The selection of glass should strike a balance between light and heat transmission and transparency. Windows shall be:
 - 1) Transparent/ "clear" with an exterior reflectance of less than thirty percent (30%). Opaque or reflective glass greater than thirty percent (30%) reflectance shall not be used on street level facades in the Downtown Core Subdistrict.
 - 2) The use of low emissivity (low-E) glass is encouraged to maintain transparency. Low-E glass is defined as glass that has a visible light transmission (the amount of light that passes from the outside to the interior) rating of at least seventy percent (70%), and an outdoor visible light reflectance – a mirror would be one hundred (100%) reflective – rating of no greater than thirty percent (30%).
 - g. Transparent or translucent windows shall not be painted.



Building architecture, materials, and age may vary widely in a Downtown but the rhythm created by window size and placement should remain.

Downtown Overlay District



These balconies are flush with the facade and do not project over the right-of-way.



Dumpsters and ground level mechanical equipment when not located on an alley, require an enclosure (3-sided with a gate) that is compatible with the architecture of the area.

7. Balconies

- a. Balconies shall be a minimum of nine feet (9') above sidewalk grade.
- b. Balconies that project over the right-of-way shall require an encroachment permit from the Department of Engineering.

D. DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES

1. Drive-through facilities provide convenience but are also predominantly automobile-oriented uses which can create traffic access and safety issues with negative impacts on pedestrian circulation.
 - a. Drive-through facilities shall not be permitted in the Downtown Core Subdistrict.
 - b. Drive-through facilities shall be permitted in the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict subject to the following standards:
 - 1) The structure shall be located at the minimum front setback line as established in the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict. Structures located on a corner shall be considered to have two (2) front setback lines.
 - 2) The drive-through facility shall not have more than two (2) service lanes.
 - 3) Drive-through service windows and ordering stations shall be located on the interior side or rear of a structure.

E. LOADING/MECHANICAL/SERVICE AREAS

1. Loading docks, ground-mounted mechanical equipment, and refuse and recycling areas shall be screened with an enclosure constructed of materials that are compatible with the primary structure materials so as not to be visible from a public right-of-way in accordance with Section 704(G)(1 and 2) of the LDC.

F. ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

1. The standards in this section apply to lots with new development as well as to accessory structures on existing parcels undergoing expansion or renovation.
 - a. Accessory structures shall be located to the rear of the principal structure and shall be constructed and/or placed in the location of least visibility from the public right-of-way.
 - b. Accessory structures shall not be located in the front or side yard.
 - c. Accessory structures shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the ground floor area of the primary structure.
 - d. A minimum of ten feet (10') shall be maintained between the principal structure and any accessory structure.
 - e. An alley-loaded garage may have a minimum five foot (5') setback in the Downtown Overlay District.

G. MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL

1. The standards in this section are applicable to multi-family dwellings including attached single-family structures with nine (9) or more units, or townhouse complexes in the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict. Additions to, or the expansion of, existing former residential structures now being used for multifamily or commercial uses shall also employ the following standards.

- a. The development and design standards in Sections 4.B and 4.C, and those that follow in this section shall be applied to principal structures.
 - 1) Roof-mounted mechanical units shall be screened from all public right-of-way.
 - 2) Flat-roofed structures should include a flush or projecting horizontal band of a different material, color, or pattern.
 - 3) Where appropriate, projecting roof eaves are encouraged on all elevations.
 - 4) Main entrances shall be highlighted with architectural elements such as porches and pilasters that project from the walls.
 - 5) Building separation shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet per Section 712 of the LDC.
- b. Townhouse Complexes
 - 1) Units may not be connected on more than two (2) sides (each unit shall have a front and rear exterior wall).
 - 2) Buildings shall be separated so that no single building has more than ten (10) ground floor units.
 - 3) Units shall not have garage doors facing the public right-of-way except on local streets.



The Beal Street Square housing development is located just outside the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict.

H. PARKING

1. Off-Street Surface Parking: Parking is a site element that if not treated thoughtfully may detract from the quality of the urban fabric. However, it is an important part of even a pedestrian-friendly downtown. The following standards shall apply to on-street and off-street parking.
 - a. Surface parking as a principal use shall not be permitted in the Downtown Core Subdistrict.
 - b. Per Section 708 H, there is no minimum parking requirement within the Central City Parking area delineated on the official map, as may be amended from time to time. The map is located in the Planning and Development Department office and is included in Appendix B.
 - c. Elsewhere required parking in the Downtown Core Subdistrict, shall not exceed 1/2 the number of spaces required by the LDC for the subject use. This represents a parking maximum.
 - d. Parking ratios for the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict shall be one-half (1/2) those in Table 7.4 Parking and Loading Ratios in Section 708, Appendix A in the LDC.
 - e. Parking areas shall maintain a minimum setback of five feet (5') from all property lines in order to provide adequate area for required parking area buffering. Parking wheel stops may be required to prevent vehicle overhang into required landscape screening.
 - f. Parking areas shall be hard surfaced and internally drained. Gravel shall not be permitted as a parking surface. Pervious pavement and individual pavers may be permitted and may reduce stormwater detention requirements.
 - g. Off-street parking shall not be located in the front yard of any new structure. Where possible, minimize parking fields by locating them to the rear of buildings.
 - h. Pedestrian pathways shall be provided from public sidewalks to surface parking areas.



Parking, as a principal use, should be discouraged in a Downtown. When unavoidable, it should be well-screened and have perimeter or edge treatment that is compatible with the urban context. A low brick wall can be an urban edge.

- i. Parking areas available to the general public should be clearly identified.
 - j. Parking area design should incorporate crime prevention principles such as the provision of evenly distributed lighting.
 - k. Shared parking is permitted with a recorded agreement per Section 708(G), Appendix A of the LDC.
2. Parking Structures.
- a. Parking structures should contain commercial or residential uses along the street frontages, where practical, to encourage pedestrian-oriented uses and activity at the street level.
 - b. If commercial or residential uses are not provided, parking structures shall maintain a minimum ten foot (10') setback along yards with a street frontage. Evergreen trees shall be planted to screen the first two (2) floors. Architectural features may be used in addition to the evergreen screening.
 - c. If a new parking structure is connected to an existing or proposed building, then the parking structure shall be compatible with that building in terms of materials, type, color, pattern, and durability.
 - d. When possible, locate parking structures and exits in the middle of the block or provide alley access.
 - e. Entrance and exit locations should be clearly identified.
 - f. Pedestrian entrances should be clearly visible and architecturally expressed on the exterior of the structure.
3. Bicycle Facilities. In an effort to foster increased use of alternative forms of transportation, standards for the provision of bicycle parking are included as follows.
- a. Multi-family and non-residential development shall provide bicycle parking at a ratio of one bicycle parking space for every twenty-five (25) vehicular parking spaces, with a minimum of four (4) spaces. Each bicycle area shall provide adequate facilities for securing the parked bicycles. This requirement may be waived if bicycle parking exists within the public right-of-way within fifty feet (50') of the primary entrance.
 - b. The location of bicycle parking facilities shall be within fifty feet (50') of the primary entrance of the structure they are associated with. Alternatively, facilities to secure bicycles may be located in adjacent parking lots or structures, or designated interior space.
 - c. High-rise multifamily complexes and townhouse complexes shall provide bicycle parking consisting of facilities to secure at least four (4) bicycles.
 - d. Designated bike parking facilities may be located within the public right-of-way upon approval by the Department of Engineering and obtaining an encroachment permit.



Bike rack.

I. LANDSCAPING

1. Parking Lot (Surface) Landscaping. See also LDC Section 704(F).
 - a. Landscape planting is required for the interior of off-street lots with more than fifteen (15) spaces. The rate shall be calculated based on the gross square footage of the parking areas including aisles but not including access drives to and from the parking area).

- b. Landscaping for the lot interior shall equal at least ten percent (10%) of the parking area square footage.
- c. Surface parking lots shall be screened from public streets by a continuous buffer that:
 - 1) Consists of living plant material and a masonry wall, metal, or wrought iron decorative fencing
 - 2) Is a minimum of three feet (3') in height
 - 3) Is a minimum of five feet (5') in width
 - 4) Contains one (1) deciduous shade tree per forty feet (40') of the perimeter (if shade trees already exist in the right-of-way adjacent to the parking area, such trees may be counted to satisfy this requirement.)
- d. One (1) deciduous canopy tree shall be provided per five thousand (5,000) square feet planted in a minimum area of 180 square feet.
- e. Concrete wheel stops may be required to prevent vehicle overhang into required planting area.
- f. Lava rock and colored mulch shall not be allowed for use in off-street parking planting areas.



Parking lot perimeter screen with a metal fence supplemented by plant material.



Decorative wall used along Main Street in Rocky Mount.

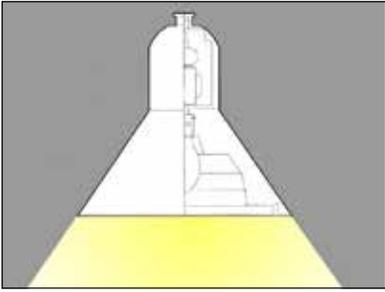
J. SITE LIGHTING

1. Lighting extends the energy of the daytime street life into the evening, contributes to the perception of safety and enhances the appearance of the downtown. The following standards apply to site lighting (parking lots, building exteriors, pathways, signage, and for security,). It does not apply to lighting installed in the right-of-way.
 - a. Lighting in the Downtown Core District shall remain consistent with the established traditional-style light fixtures. Lighting in the Downtown Transitional Subdistrict may reflect some characteristics of the traditional lighting but should be used to establish the personality of that district or particular site developments.
 - b. Site lighting shall be required to illuminate pedestrian areas outside of the public right-of-way including parking areas, service areas, sidewalks and pathways, and plazas.
 - c. Lighting intended for pedestrian pathway illumination shall have a maximum height of fifteen feet (15').
 - d. Light fixtures located within fifty feet (50') of a property line of a single-family residential district shall not exceed fifteen feet (15') in height.
 - e. All parking lot lighting requirements shall also apply to interior drives and other areas on the property used by vehicles.
 - f. The maximum height for all parking lot illuminating light fixtures, including both the pole and the base, shall be twenty-five feet (25') above grade.
 - g. The maximum average maintained illumination level of parking areas, service areas, pathways, and plazas shall be no more than one and one-half (1.5) horizontal footcandles at grade.
 - h. No illumination shall exceed 0.5 footcandle of lighting when measured at the property line adjacent to a residential district based on the photometric plan.
 - i. Cut-off fixtures shall be used for parking lots or building-mounted lighting. Lighting fixtures shall be fully shielded (no direct light emitted past a specified



Rocky Mount's standard street light with banner arm.

Downtown Overlay District



Cut-Off Fixtures reduce or completely eliminate the glare produced by staring directly at a light bulb. The projection of the light is "cut-off" at the edge of the housing and creates a defined pool of light below.

point or property line) or full cut-off (no light emitted above the horizontal plane of the lowest edge of the fixture), cutoff or semi cutoff in accordance with dark sky principles.

- j. No interior light source shall be positioned, aimed, or configured so as to result in the light source being visible from land occupied by existing residential development or a street.
- k. The use of spotlights, floodlights, and searchlights shall be prohibited unless otherwise permitted with a Temporary Use Permit. See also City Ordinance Section 508 regarding temporary uses and special events.

K. FENCES AND WALLS

- a. Chainlink fencing with barbed or concertina wire shall be prohibited in the Downtown Core Subdistrict if visible from a public right-of-way.
- b. Fencing in a front yard or front facade zone shall not exceed 42 inches in height above the adjacent grade and shall be a minimum of fifty percent (50%) open.
- c. Walls shall be split-face or textured finish concrete block faced with stone, brick, or stucco.
- d. Masonry walls may be used to provide required perimeter screening for surface parking lot.

L. SIGNAGE

- 1. Signage standards are located in Section 709 of the LDC, as amended. Additional signage language specific to Downtown follows:
 - a. Building signage should be designed as an integral part of the overall building design and complementary to the streetscape.
 - b. Projecting signs, suspended over the public right-of-way shall be a minimum of nine feet (9') above grade. The applicant shall obtain an encroachment permit.
 - c. Freestanding, monument, and pole signs shall not be permitted in the Downtown Core Subdistrict.
 - d. Historic replica signs shall match the original dimensions, color, & content.

Section 5: The Public Realm

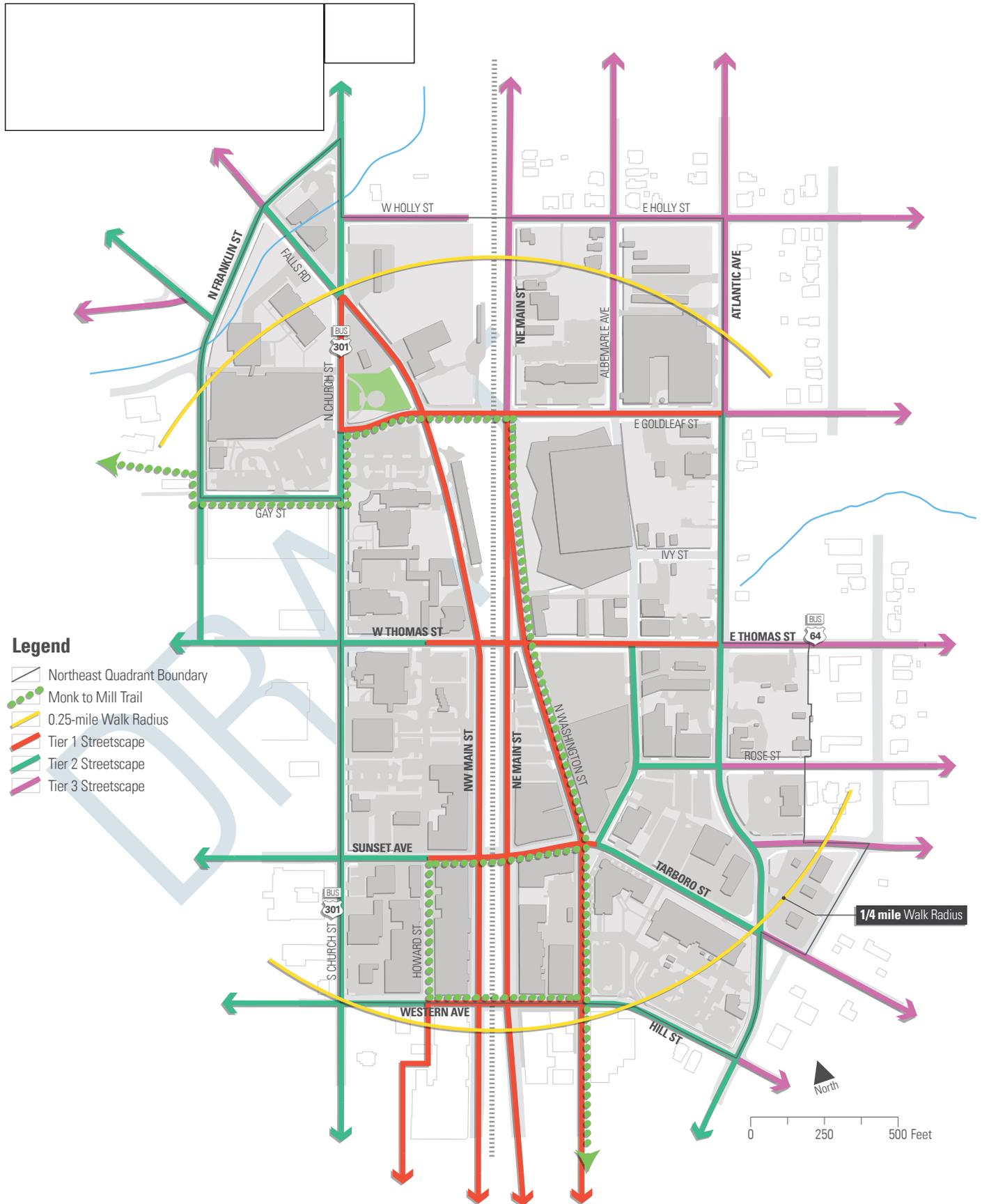
A. INTENT

- 1. The street is the thread of the urban fabric, a public space that connects the buildings and spaces of the downtown. City dwellers, visitors and workers spend a lot of time walking, driving and biking within the public realm and this is where first impressions of the city are formed. In a form-based code, the entire area within the right-of-way or public realm (streets, sidewalks, paving, crosswalks, bike lanes, landscaping, lighting, street furnishings) have the same level of importance as the adjacent buildings and should be thoughtfully designed.

B. STREETSCAPE HIERARCHY

- 1. The downtown streetscape extends with three (3) tiers of streetscape treatments as shown on Figure 5.1. The standards and specifications for each element of the streetscape improvements including curb, gutter, sidewalks, and street

Figure 5.1: Streetscape Tiers



Legend

- Northeast Quadrant Boundary
- Monk to Mill Trail
- 0.25-mile Walk Radius
- Tier 1 Streetscape
- Tier 2 Streetscape
- Tier 3 Streetscape

DRAFT

Downtown Overlay District



An example of a Tier 1 streetscape treatment.

construction methods, shall be found in the City's Design Manual. Refer to Section 5(J) below for planting guidelines within the right of way. The Tiers are described as follows:

a. Tier 1

- 1) New Curb and Gutter
- 2) Curb bump-outs at major intersections, curb cuts, seating areas and mid-block pedestrian crossings
- 3) Pedestrian walkways: width varies
- 4) Walkway field: grey pavers
- 5) Walkway accent: 2' band of red pavers at all edges
- 6) Canopy Trees provided at approximately 45' on center (o.c.) spacing, in tree grates along narrow sidewalk corridors
- 7) Pedestrian acorn light post (w/ banners at significant locations) provided at approximately 45' o.c. spacing
- 8) Raised planter curbs provided for shrub planting areas
- 9) Site furniture provided: Benches, trash receptacles, bike racks

b. Tier 2

- 1) New Curb and Gutter
- 2) Curb bump-outs at major intersections
- 3) Pedestrian walkways: 6' width, minimum
- 4) Walkway field: Cast-in-place concrete
- 5) Walkway accent: 2' band of red pavers along street edge only
- 6) Canopy Trees provided at approximately 60' o.c. spacing
- 7) Pedestrian acorn light post provided at approximately 60' o.c. spacing
- 8) 6' Landscape zone to be provided where space allows

c. Tier 3

- 1) New Curb and Gutter
- 2) 4'-6' width Cast-in-place concrete pedestrian walkways
- 3) Canopy Trees provided at approximately 60' o.c. spacing
- 4) At-grade shrub planting areas
- 5) 4'-6' Landscape zone to be provided for tree planting area

C. RESPONSIBILITY

1. Implementation shall be a joint effort between the City, other semi-public entities, and private developers.
 - a. New partial block infill development or expansion of existing structures by more than fifty percent (50%), shall upgrade the streetscape on the adjacent frontage to the designated Tier 1, 2, or 3 level per the Engineering Department.
 - b. New partial block infill development or expansion of existing structures by more than fifty percent (50%) shall have the option to pay in-lieu fees into an established escrow account for streetscape improvements at a rate published in the City of Rocky Mount Fee Schedule. The City will undertake improvements at a later date on a block-by-block basis.
 - c. Development that encompasses a full block frontage shall be required to install streetscape improvements in accordance with the established tier.



Redevelopment on private property is an opportunity for improvements to city infrastructure.

D. THE STREET

- a. Streets. The existing city street grid shall be maintained including provisions for alleys where possible.
- b. Vehicle and Driveway Access:
 - 1) Curb cuts from public streets are not permitted if an alley is present adjacent to the side or rear property line.
 - 2) Shared driveways are encouraged for lots that do not abut alleys.
 - 3) Landscape screens are not required in the Downtown Overlay District unless intensively used non-residential development abuts single-family residential uses.

E. CROSSWALKS

1. Within the Downtown Core Subdistrict, street crossings at intersections or mid-block should be better delineated for the safety of pedestrians. Consider options other than two horizontal white lines to emphasize the pedestrian friendly downtown.
2. Crosswalks in the DC Subdistrict should have consistency in design.
3. Crosswalks may be as simple as ladder striping in a contrasting color, custom-colored, or special paving to distinguish the pedestrian areas from vehicular areas and designed as part of the streetscape strategy.



Example of a crosswalk that denotes a trail crossing for bikes and pedestrians.

F. SIDEWALKS

1. The minimum sidewalk width shall be six feet (6') and maintain a forty-two inch (42") clear zone for new development. In areas where there is an existing sidewalk, the new sidewalk shall match the existing if greater than six feet (6') or shall taper to match sidewalks less than six feet (6').
2. Special paving shall be required in the Downtown Core Subdistrict that is compatible with, but not necessarily the same as, the *Rocky Mount Downtown Urban Streetscape Plan*. Standards for design are divided into tiers and available in the Department of Engineering.
3. The minimum vertical clearance between the established sidewalk grade of the public right-of-way and the underside of the encroaching structure shall be a minimum of nine (9) feet.



Paving pattern typical of Phase 1 implementation of the Urban Streetscape Master Plan.

G. PRIVATE USE OF THE PUBLIC STREETScape

1. To be visible and effective, streetscape elements including furnishings and outdoor dining, often are placed within the public right-of-way. In all instances, a pedestrian clear zone a minimum of forty-two inches (42") shall be maintained so as to not impede accessibility.
2. Businesses shall obtain an Encroachment Permit from the Department of Engineering prior to making improvements or installing street furnishings in the right-of-way (sidewalk and street).

Downtown Overlay District



Example of a required pedestrian clear zone in the middle of an outdoor dining area. See also Municode Article VII, Section 19.

H. SIDEWALK CAFE

1. Outdoor eating and drinking establishments which encourage day and night activity shall be permitted in the public right-of-way. Refer to Rocky Mount Municipal Code Article VII. Section 19.130-138 for additional outdoor dining standards.

I. STREET FURNISHINGS

1. Street furnishings such as benches, planters, and transit shelters which enrich the streetscape are sometimes located in a zone immediately adjacent to the street. The elements within this highly visible area should be part of a consistent palette and theme. These elements also provide a barrier between the travelway or curbside parking and the pedestrian creating a higher level of comfort and safety. Property owners shall obtain an encroachment permit when street furnishings are located within the right-of-way.

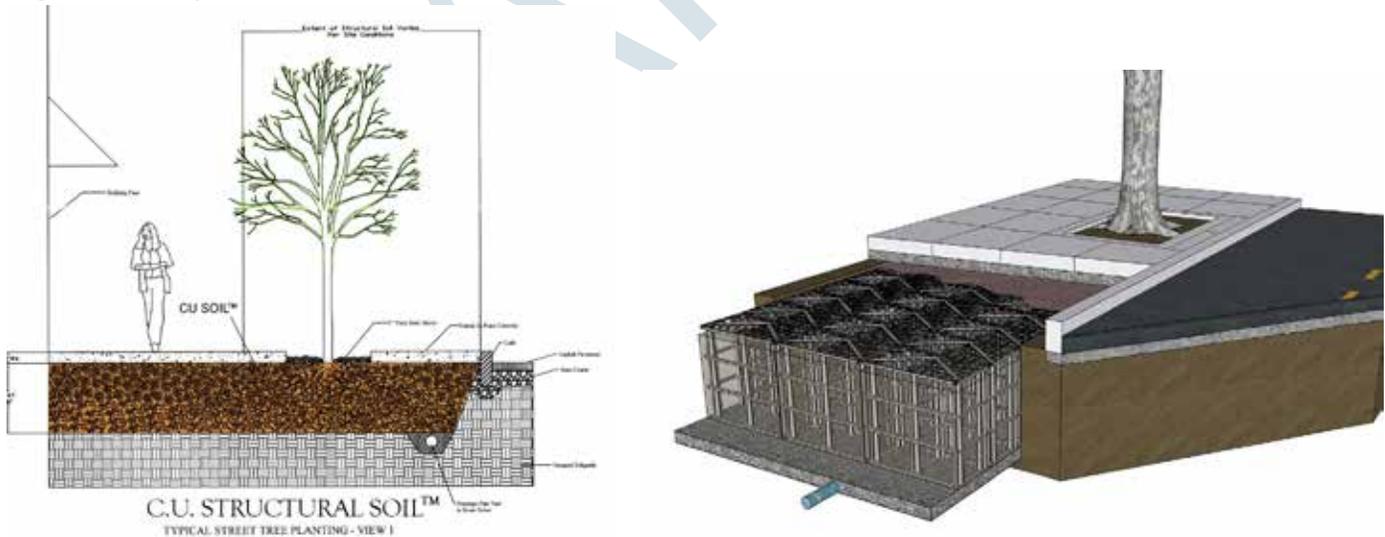
J. LANDSCAPING IN RIGHT-OF-WAY - See also LDC Section 704 Landscaping and Buffering.

1. Any project which requires General Plan Level II or III, Planned Building Group of Major Subdivision approval shall submit a landscape plan as part of the review process. The plan shall be prepared by an individual knowledgeable of plant materials, landscape and site design, construction processes, and growing conditions in this region.
2. Plant material that obstructs views between three feet and ten feet (3-10') from the gutter flow line per Section 19-42 of the LDC with the exception of tree trunks, shall not be placed in the required site clearance triangles.
3. The city will continue to implement the recommendations in the 2008 Streetscape Master Plan, modified in 2017 to create three design levels as illustrated in Figure 5.1 and described in 5(B) above.
 - a. New redevelopment projects located on blocks without a constructed streetscape shall provide the required streetscape elements when the proposed development encompasses the whole block frontage.
 - b. It may not be feasible to provide streetscape for partial block infill development. In these cases, applicants shall be required to pay into a fund administered by the Department of Engineering to be used for future coordinated whole block streetscape improvements within the Downtown Overlay District
4. Avoid monocultures (extensive planting of one species). Refer to the list of suggested tree species in Figure 5.2 for tree selection.
5. Trees should be selected that are appropriate in urban, paved environments and planted in a manner to provide the best chance to achieve desired character and maturity.
6. Street trees shall be planted in a minimum area of twenty-five (25) square feet with a minimum dimension of no less than three feet (3') and with access to greater volume of subsurface soil through structural soil or a soil cell that provides support for pavement with soil for the tree as shown in Figure 5.3.
7. The tree trunk shall be no closer than twenty-four inches (24") from the curb. Use a geo-textile root barrier on the street side or any edge to prevent root penetration.

Figure 5.2 Suggested Tree Plantings

Large Maturing Trees	Medium Maturing Trees	Small Maturing Trees
Not appropriate under power lines Mature in excess of 60' in height	Not appropriate under power lines Mature between 40' and 50' in height	Appropriate under power lines Mature between 15' and 35' in height
**American elm, <i>Ulmus americana</i>	American holly, <i>Ilex opaca</i>	Carolina silverbell, <i>Halesia tetraptera</i> , <i>H. carolina</i>
Bald cypress, <i>Taxodium distichum</i>	**Chinese elm, <i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Chinese pistache, <i>Pistachia chinensis</i>
Black gum, <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	European hornbeam, <i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Crepe myrtle, <i>Lagerstroemia spp.</i> , <i>L. hybrids</i>
*Ginkgo, <i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	**Hackberry, <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	**Dogwood, <i>Cornus spp.</i>
Magnolia, <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Musclewood, <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	**Eastern redbud, <i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Oaks, <i>Quercus spp.</i>	Trident maple, <i>Acer buergerianum</i>	**Flowering cherry, <i>Prunus spp.</i>
**Red maple, <i>Acer rubrum</i>	**Zelkova, <i>Zelkova serrata</i>	Fringetree, <i>Chionanthus spp.</i>
River birch, <i>Betula nigra</i>		Japanese maple, <i>Acer palmatum</i>
Sugar maple, <i>Acer saccharum</i>		**Japanese snowbell, <i>Styrax japonica</i>
Tulip poplar, <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>		***Magnolia, <i>Magnolia spp.</i>
		**Oklahoma redbud, <i>Cercis reniformis</i>
*Male/Fruitless only		Purple blow maple, <i>Acer truncatum</i>
**Cultivars or hybrids must be selected for form and/or disease resistance		Serviceberry, <i>Amelanchier grandiflora</i>
***Small maturing species/cultivars only		
		Approximate spacing between trees: Mature crown spread and rooting area must be considered when spacing between trees and in proximity to infrastructure.
Minimum spacing requirements		
Small maturing trees 15'+		
Medium maturing trees 25'+		
Large maturing trees 30'+		

Figure 5.3 Optimal Soil Volumes



8. Where possible maintain a minimum distance of eight feet (8') between the tree trunk and the building facade for the tree to develop.
9. Street trees shall be planted within the sidewalk right-of-way, provided that a horizontal sidewalk clearance of forty-two inches (42") is maintained. Tree grates may be used to maintain the required clearance.
10. Window boxes, urns and pots are encouraged for seasonal plantings on downtown facades and the streetscape but shall maintain the required sidewalk clearance zone of forty-two inches (42") and may be required to obtain an encroachment permit.

Examples of structural soil detail (left) and soil cell system with pavement support detail (right).



This parking lot at Edgecombe Community College is an example of a best management practice for stormwater runoff.

11. Street trees within the right-of-way shall be owned and maintained by the City following the typical one-year warranty and replacement period.

Section 6. Additional Urban Design Considerations

A. SUSTAINABILITY

1. It is important to promote an ecologically healthy environment which can, in turn, contribute to economic health by reducing long-term energy costs and demands on utilities and infrastructure. The rehabilitation, renovation, and reuse of existing structures is a significant act of sustainability. Sustainable solutions suggested below are those appropriate to site development.
 - a. Innovative drainage techniques and alternative or stormwater best management practices (BMPs) are recommended. These can include rain gardens, which are typically installed to reduce a portion of stormwater through natural filtration, thereby reducing overall stormwater load while freeing up space in the system for new development with minimal improvements to an existing stormwater system.

Using native plants is encouraged to decrease the amount of care and watering needed. Plants used in the downtown landscape should be hardy, and drought-resistant.
3. Street trees and other vegetation can help to combat the Urban Heat Island Effect, provide shelter from rain, and provide shade for pedestrians and buildings helping to reduce cooling costs.
4. The use of pervious pavement is encouraged to allow infiltration of some stormwater runoff, decreasing the load on the stormwater infrastructure system.

Section 7. Definitions

A. The definitions included on the following pages are intended to supplement the definitions in Chapter 1, Appendix A of the LDC. For the purposes of the Downtown Overlay District the following terms shall have the meanings:

ADAPTIVE REUSE: The redevelopment of existing structures to accommodate new uses and tenants.

ADDITION: Any construction that increases the size of a building or structure in terms of site coverage, height, length, width, or gross floor area.

APIARY: A structure designed to contain one colony of honey-bees.

AWNING: A cover that projects from a wall of a building over a window or entrance to provide weather protection and architectural spatial definition. The top surface of an awning is typically sloped. An awning may be fixed in place or retractable. An awning is completely supported by the building.

BALCONY: A platform that projects from the wall of a building and is surrounded by a railing or parapet.

BAY (BUILDING): A division within a building façade, created by vertical elements such as columns, pilasters, or other architectural elements/changes in planes.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP): The utilization of the natural environment, artificial structures, scheduling, and/or prohibition to ensure the long-term operation and maintenance of features that control stormwater filtration, erosion and/or the discharge of polluting elements.

BLOCK: Property abutting on one side of a street and lying between the two (2) nearest intersecting or intercepting streets, intersecting railroad, intersecting waterway, or the end of a dead end street. Block length is measured centerline to centerline.

CANOPY: A fixed cover that projects from a wall of a building over a window or entrance to provide weather protection and architectural spatial definition. A canopy typically projects at a 90-degree (perpendicular) or similar angle. A canopy may be completely supported by the building, or completely or partially supported by columns, poles, posts, or similar supports.

CEMENT FIBER BOARD: Cement fiber board is made from Portland cement mixed with ground sand, cellulose fiber, and other additives; can be textured to resemble stucco, wood clapboard, or cedar shingle; is more durable than wood or stucco; and is fire resistant. HardiPlank is one brand name for cement fiber board.

CHARACTER: A combination of both the visual (physical design/materials/location) and functional (accessibility/level of activity) qualities of a structure or an area that set it apart from its surroundings and contribute to its individuality.

COMMITMENTS: Written statements by an applicant concerning the use or development of the property. May be requested by the Planning Board.

COMPATIBILITY: The characteristics or features of different buildings or site development which allow them to be located adjacent to or near each other in harmonious and congruent relationships. Compatible does not mean "the same as." Elements that may affect a determination of compatibility include: building height, scale, and mass; building materials; façade design, including building divisions, façade rhythms, and window size and arrangement; access and parking locations; landscaping; and building/site lighting. The

size, scale, location, and/or use of a proposed development may also affect determinations of compatibility. It may be appropriate for larger buildings or development proposals, or for certain uses, to establish a unique character for a given area.

CONDITION(S) (OF APPROVAL): Stipulations or provisions set forth as a prerequisite for approval of an application.

CONTEMPORARY: Items or design elements that are not specifically tied to a past time period. Contemporary designs tend to rely, at least in part, on recent material and design innovations.

CONTEXT: The characteristics and elements (including building height, scale, and mass; building materials; façade design, including building divisions, façade rhythms, and window size and arrangement; access and parking locations; landscaping; and building/site lighting) of the existing buildings adjacent to or directly across the street from the block containing the proposed new building, or a building undergoing a major façade renovation.

CORNICE: The sculpted projecting horizontal architectural element that crowns a building.

CROSSWALK: A strip dedicated to public use, which is reserved across a paved street to provide pedestrian access to adjacent areas.

DISCOURAGED: An object, design, material, or practice that is believed to be detrimental to the function of, or will negatively impact the visual quality of the downtown.

DWELLING UNIT: Any structure or portion thereof designed for or used for residential purposes as a self-sufficient or individual unit by one (1) family or other social association of persons and having permanently installed sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities. The term shall not include recreational vehicles.

EAVE: The projecting lower edges of a roof overhanging the wall of a building.

ENCOURAGED: An object, design, material, or practice that will enhance the functions of or contribute to the visual quality of the Downtown.

EXPANSION: Increasing the area or volume occupied by or devoted to a use; increasing the living space or occupant capacity of a structure; or adding uses or structures accessory to a nonresidential use or structure. Excludes the addition of unenclosed porches, patio covers and the like and the addition of detached accessory structures not for human habitation as accessory to a dwelling.

EXTERIOR INSULATION FINISHING SYSTEMS (EIFS): A non-load bearing exterior wall covering which combines materials that have insulating qualities with materials that provide weather protection and completed finish. Behind the EIFS wall components are the typical wall frame/support materials used in construction.

FACADE, PRIMARY: Any face of a building that has frontage on a public street. Buildings on corner lots will have two or more primary facades according to the number of public streets fronted.

Downtown Overlay District

FACADE, SECONDARY: The side and rear facades of a structure. Secondary facades will have no frontage on public streets, but may have frontage on public alleys.

FACADE RENOVATION, MAJOR: Replacement of existing features with new features that are different in terms of material, type, size, or color, excluding painting of typically painted or previously painted materials or surfaces.

FACADE RENOVATION, MINOR: Replacement of existing features in kind or maintenance of features including painting of typically painted or previously painted materials or surfaces.

FIXTURE, LIGHT: The assembly that holds the lamp (bulb) in a lighting system. It includes the elements that provide light output control, such as a reflector (mirror) or refractor (lens), the ballast, housing, and the attachment parts.

FOOT CANDLE: A measure of illumination on a surface that is everywhere (1) one foot from a uniform point source of light of (1) one candle and equal to (1) one lumen per square foot.

FULL-CUTOFF: A light fixture which prevents distribution of light above a horizontal plane through the lowest point of the bulb or lens, diffuser, reflective passing enclosure, or other parts intended to distribute light.

GABLE: The vertical triangular end wall of a building from cornice or eaves to ridge.

GATEWAY: A point at which a motorist or pedestrian gains a sense of having entered the city or a particular part of the city. This impression can be imparted through such things as signs, monuments, landscaping, a change in development character, or a natural feature.

GRANDFATHERED: A description of the a status of certain properties, uses, activities, and conditions that were legally existing prior to the effective date of this Ordinance.

INFILL: Infill construction refers to development that often fills an empty lot between one or more existing adjacent structures in the built environment.

KNEEWALL: A short wall or portion of a wall usually under three feet in height.

LINTEL: A lintel is the horizontal support that sits atop two vertical supports generally referred to as posts or wall segments. A building structural element that is generally used as a wall support above windows, doors, and other openings.

MANSARD: A roof having two (2) slopes on all sides, with the lower slope being more steep than the upper.

MARQUEE: A fixed cover that projects from a wall of a building over an entrance to provide weather protection, architectural spatial definition, and lighting. A marquee typically projects at a 90-degree (perpendicular) or similar angle, and is typically deeper than a canopy. A marquee is completely supported by the building and is typically used in association with a theater or similar use.

MASONRY: Construction material that consists of brick, stone, tile, rock, granite, marble, or other built-up panels of these materials, or molded con-

crete that is held together with mortar, as long as the molded concrete does not make up a continuous wall section.

MICROBREWERY: a facility for the production and packaging of malt beverages of low alcoholic content for distribution, retail, or wholesale on or off premise, with a capacity on not more than 15,000 barrels per year. The development may include other uses such as a standard restaurant, bar or live entertainment as otherwise permitted.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT: An area, parcel of land, or structure developed in a compact urban form for two (2) or more different, principal land uses, at least two (2) of which must be from separate use categories such as but not limited to residential, office, retail, service, public, light manufacturing, or entertainment, and planned as a unified complementary whole, and functionally integrated to the use of shared vehicular and pedestrian access and parking areas.

MIXED-USE STRUCTURE (BUILDING): A building containing more than one type of use, such as governmental, institutional, office, personal service, retail, and residential; including a mix of residential and non-residential uses.

MONOCULTURE: The growing of a single type of plant within an area.

MOUNTING HEIGHT: For the purposes of this section, the mounting height of a light fixture shall be defined as the vertical distance between the adjacent grade and the top of the lighting fixture (luminaire).

PARAPET: The portion of a wall which extends above the roof line.

PARKING, OFF-STREET: A parking space provided in a parking lot, parking structure, or private driveway.

PARKING, ON-STREET: A parking space that is located on a dedicated street right-of-way.

PARKING LANE: A lane generally located on the sides of streets, designed to provide on-street parking for vehicular traffic.

PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY/PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED: Areas that accommodate pedestrians in a manner that is safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing. Pedestrian friendly areas generally separate pedestrian and auto traffic, as well as offer designs that are human-scaled.

PERSONAL SERVICES ESTABLISHMENT: An business which provides services including but not limited to beauty, nail, and barber shops; dry cleaning pick-up stores; photographic studios; and real estate and travel agencies.

PILASTER: An upright architectural member that is rectangular and is structurally a pier but architecturally treated as a column and that usually projects a third of its width or less from the building wall.

PRESERVATION: The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic structure. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the structure, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code required work to make structures functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

PORCH: A roofed-over structure projecting out from the wall or walls of a main structure and commonly open to the weather in part.

QUOIN: Corner stones that visually anchor the edge of the building wall.

RECONSTRUCTION: The rebuilding of a structure in such a manner and to such an extent as to substantially replace the existing structure.

REHABILITATION / RENOVATION: The act or process of improving a structure's condition through repair and alterations while respecting those features significant to its architectural, historic or cultural value.

RHYTHM: The repeated use of a design element, shape, or form, such that the repeating item can be visually recognized.

SCALE: The relationship between two objects or conditions, in terms of physical size.

SIDEWALK CAFE: An outdoor area on or adjacent to a public sidewalk that has seating for patrons of nearby food and drink establishments.

SIDEWALK: A portion of the road right-of-way outside the roadway, which is improved for the use of pedestrian traffic.

SIGN, DIRECTIONAL: A small auxiliary sign typically used to provide information such as: directions on or to a property, parking locations and limitations, traffic information, address identification, and other similar information. Direction signs may include logos or other proprietary symbols.

SIGN, WINDOW: Any sign painted or otherwise affixed onto a glass area or installed behind a window for viewing from outside the building.

STORY: That portion of a building included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor next above it, or if there is no floor above it, then the space between the floor and the ceiling next above it. Any portion of a story exceeding fourteen (14) feet in height shall be considered as an additional story for each fourteen (14) feet or fraction thereof.

STREET WALL: A perceived wall that is created by an aligned row of buildings and structural elements on either side of a right-of-way.

STUCCO: A material made of an aggregate, a binder, and water. Stucco is applied wet and hardens to a very dense solid. It is used as a coating for walls and ceilings and for decoration.

SUSTAINABLE: Relating to, or being a method of development that does not deplete or permanently damage the resources it requires.

TERRACOTTA: A clay-based unglazed ceramic. The term is also used to refer to items made out of this material and to its natural, brownish orange color, which varies considerably.

TRANSOM: The horizontal lintel or beam across a window, dividing it into stages or heights; a fixed window over a door or another window.

TREE, BROADLEAF: Trees having non-needle like leaves.

TREE, CANOPY: A tree with an overall height of 30 feet or more with a branch structure primarily on the upper part of the tree and provides shade to adjacent ground area.

TREE, DECIDUOUS: Trees and shrubs that shed their leaves annually.

TREE, EVERGREEN: Trees and shrubs that do not shed their leaves annually.

TREE, ORNAMENTAL: A deciduous tree possessing qualities such as flowers or fruit, attractive foliage, bark or shape, with a mature height generally under 35 feet.

TREE, SHADE: See Tree, canopy.

URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT: The existence of higher overall temperatures within urban areas due to heat absorption by asphalt, concrete, buildings, and other structures, as compared to surrounding areas where plant material, and therefore reflectivity, shading, and evapotranspiration are more abundant.

WAYFINDING: A sign or system of signs used to direct pedestrians and/or drivers to specific destinations along designated routes.

WINDOW: An opening constructed in a building wall that functions to admit light or air, typically framed and filled with glass.

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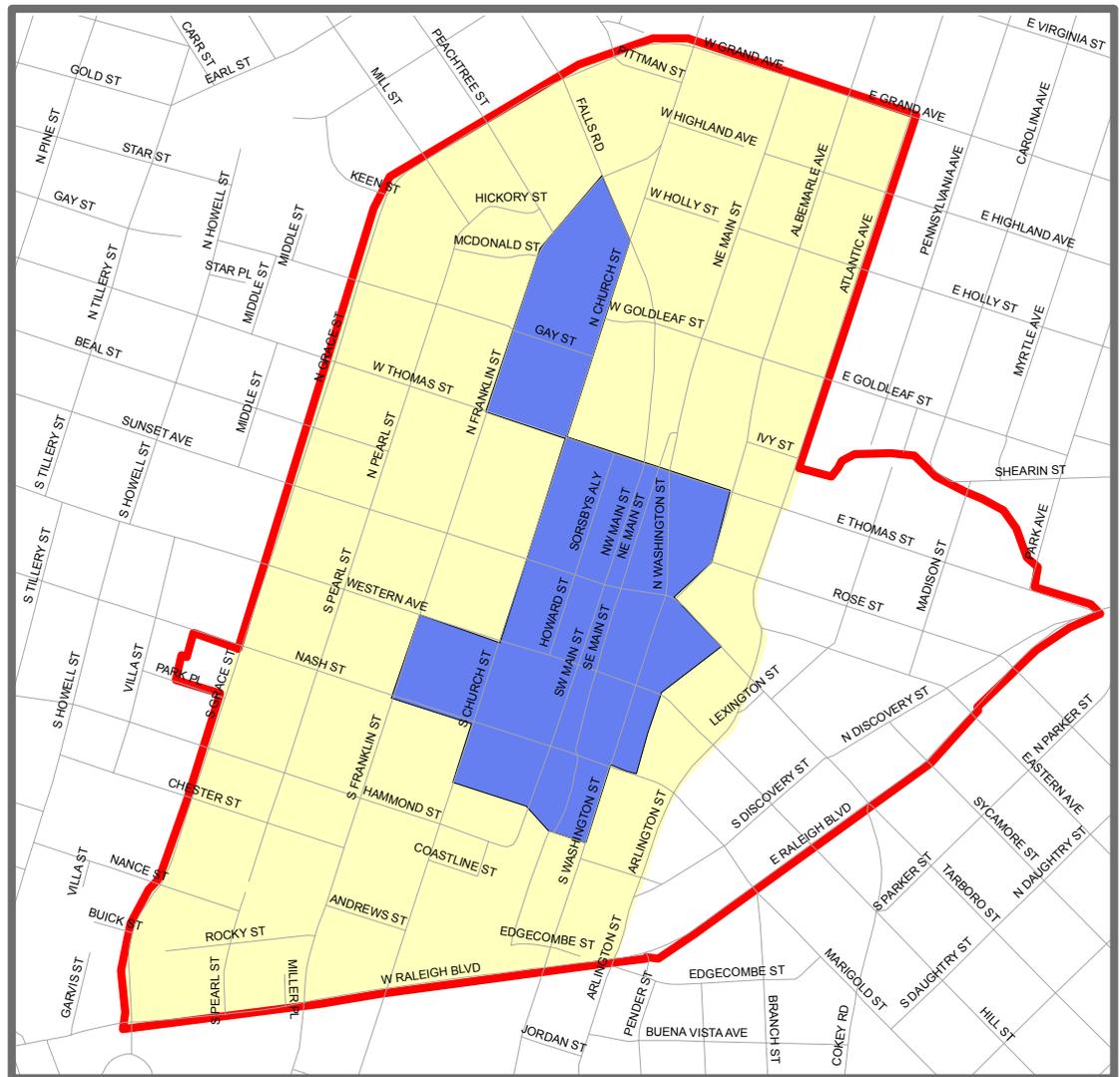
PART III

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Central Business District No Required Parking Zones

There are no minimum off-street parking requirements for uses within the Central City Parking (blue) areas on the map below.

DOWNTOWN ROCKY MOUNT



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Central City Parking
- Central Business District
- Street Names

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