



CITY OF VICTORIA **DOWNTOWN PLAN**

Adopted October 2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the City of Victoria’s elected and appointed officials, the City Staff, citizens, and stakeholders who provided knowledge, assistance, and insight throughout the process of developing this Downtown Plan

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**Resolution No.
2021-228**

Thomas A. Gwosdz,
City Attorney

April Hilbrich



April Hilbrich,
City Secretary

A resolution adopting the 2021 Downtown Master Plan.

Whereas in September of 2020 City Council approved and hired Freese & Nichols to assist Victoria Main Street Program with developing a Downtown Master Plan; and

Whereas Freese & Nichols has prepared the 2021 Victoria Downtown Master Plan, which includes 10 years of action items and an incentive package to assist Victoria Main Street Program with activating and incentivizing the downtown area so that it will continue to grow with new retail, entertainment and the residential population while preserving our historic Downtown;

Now therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Victoria:

1. That the City Council hereby approves the 2021 Victoria Downtown Master Plan attached hereto as the "City of Victoria Downtown Plan".
2. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

Passed, this the 19th day of October, 2021

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

Approved and adopted, this the 19th day of October, 2021

Jeff Bauknight

Jeff Bauknight
Mayor of the City of Victoria

Thomas A. Gwosdz

#Resolution No. 2021-228

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1 SNAPSHOT



S MAIN ST
E. JUAN LINN ST. 100
ORIGINAL TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT

GEORGE A. FLETCHER
ATTORNEY AT LAW
GEO. F. ILLI
1917

ABOUT THE PLAN

The Victoria Downtown Plan is intended to provide an overall strategy and guidelines for what future development could look like in the area. This includes addressing the design of building form, streets, public spaces, and branding strategies. The ultimate goal of this document is to present an innovative, yet realistic vision and strategy for strengthening Downtown Victoria as an economic driver for the community.



PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Previous local and regional planning efforts should be considered when developing a downtown plan to ensure coordinated recommendations for the study area. This section provides an overview of relevant plans and their applicability to this master plan.

2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The 2035 Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City on April 5, 2016. It serves as a guiding visionary document to shape the growth and development of Victoria. The plan was based on a collective vision of the community. This vision looks at where the City wants to go and how they want to get there. The plan examined the historical significance of Victoria as well as the potential of Downtown as an asset. There are several goals and objectives that seek to revitalize Downtown and strengthen the mix of uses. These goals include diversifying the land use base, addressing parking issues, creating a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and improving infrastructure.

The following vision and goals pertain to this study area:

- Downtown Vision
 - » Downtown is a vibrant, attractive, well preserved, historic, cultural, and entertainment center.
- Downtown Goals
 - » Revitalize Downtown Victoria as a balanced work, housing, cultural, and entertainment center – a place where there is a variety of day-to-day activity.
 - » Promote Victoria’s rich history and its Downtown as one of the foundations for building the local economy.
 - » Preserve and enhance Victoria’s historic buildings and resources.



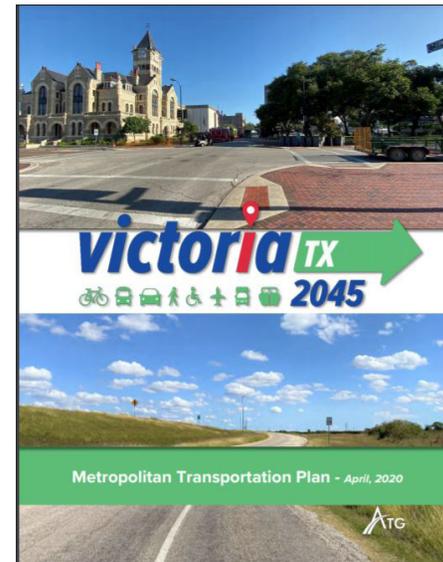
PARKS 2025 MASTER PLAN

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP) was adopted in 2012 and is being updated concurrently with this Downtown Master Plan. The parks and trails network is a central element of this plan, and is expected to connect the Downtown area with the city-wide trail network. Downtown parks are an important component of Downtown and should be considered in this plan. Memorial Square and De Leon Plaza are two parks that are in the study area. De Leon Plaza is a popular destination for visitors and residents. There are a few relevant goals from the PROSMP that impact the Downtown Plan. Those include preserving and enhancing scenic and historic areas and connecting the community with a city-wide trail network. With two parks located within the study area, and Riverside Park being located nearby to the west, there are opportunities for a complementary relationship between Downtown and the parks system.



VICTORIA TX 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In 2020, the Victoria MPO adopted the Victoria TX 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as the City's new Transportation Master Plan. This plan is being further built upon with the development of the Victoria Thoroughfare Master Plan (TMP) proceeding concurrently with this Downtown Master Plan. The implementation of these plans will help improve transportation options and efficiency in the region. The MTP was based on a variety of alternative scenarios of a fully built-out city, which led to a future congestion analysis. Navarro Street was identified as a corridor with future congestion. US 59 in Downtown was identified as a one of the corridors with the highest level of truck traffic. It was recommended that any proposed transportation improvements that impact the downtown area should be coordinated with the Victoria Main Street Program so that efforts and resources can be aligned.



STUDY AREA

The study area includes two parts: a core area and the overall study area boundary. The Original Townsite Historic District (see Map 2 on next page) is generally considered to be the Downtown area. This Downtown Plan will be focusing on a study area bounded by Rio Grande Street to the north, Vine Street to the west, South Street to the south, and Navarro Street to the east. A Downtown core was identified in order to concentrate efforts and make the biggest impact in Downtown Victoria. The Downtown core boundary roughly includes Rio Grande Street to the north, Convent Street to the south, Moody Street to the west, and De Leon Street to the east. The Downtown core and overall study area boundaries are illustrated to the right.

While recommendations will concentrate within the core, a revitalized core must acknowledge and support the surrounding areas. Because of this, some recommendations will extend beyond the core and into the rest of the study area to address transitions and gateways. It is important that the core support the surrounding neighborhoods, and the surrounding areas support the core.

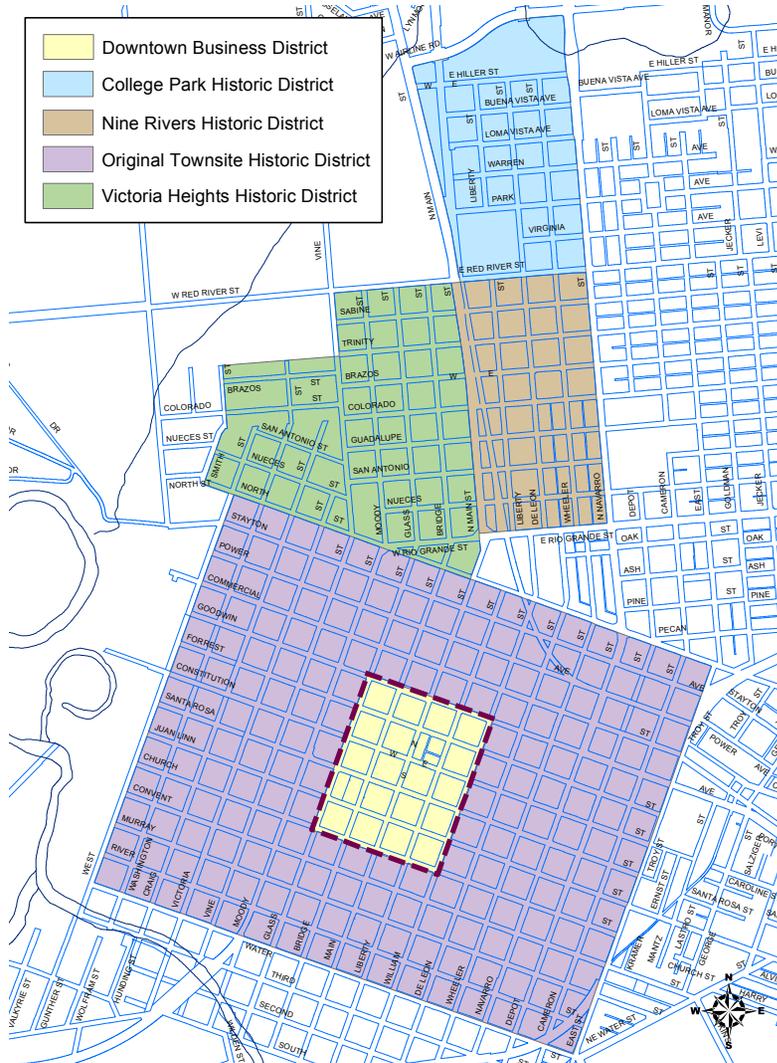
While outside of the study area, the City is promoting an asset-based approach to revitalization in the neighborhoods to the south and east of the study area, such as the areas near F.W. Gross Elementary School site and in the Silver City neighborhood near Dudley Elementary. Strengthening surrounding neighborhoods and schools can support the Downtown, improve the viability of downtown living, and increase business diversity.

Map 1. Downtown Study Area



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN VICTORIA

Map 2. Downtown Historic Districts Map



Source: City of Victoria

The bountiful Guadalupe River and other creeks and streams provided the environment many Native American tribes needed to survive. Early inhabitants of Victoria were the hunter-gatherer Karankawa tribe, a nomadic people that traveled throughout the Coastal Bend. They were most likely drawn to this area in the warm weather to hunt deer. European settlers eradicated the Karankawa as they colonized the area. Victoria was first settled by the French and then shortly after by the Spanish. Under Spanish rule, leaders built missions and presidios to reinforce their presence in the area. (A presidio is a fortified military settlement established by the Spanish in areas under their control). Victoria is situated on the Camino Real, which gave it access to other nearby cities.

In 1824, Mexican aristocrat, Martín De León, founded Victoria. He laid out the town according to Mexican colonization laws, making Victoria the only predominantly Mexican colony in Texas. Following the Republic of Texas founding after its revolution, Victoria was chartered in 1839. The first newspaper, the Victoria Advocate, was founded in 1846, becoming the second oldest newspaper in Texas. The town grew in the 1800s and saw an influx of immigrants. Due to its location, Victoria has benefited from multiple industries. It was first settled with ranching and agriculture as the main industries, followed by the oil and gas boom in the 1930s. Victoria began a multi-decade population and economic boom, generally doubling in population each decade through the 1980s. This era drastically reshaped the urban form of Downtown, with O'Connor Plaza being one of the most prominent changes. While this era resulted in the loss of several significant historic buildings, many buildings and monuments have endured Victoria's broad history, adding character and context. Some of the buildings and monuments with historical significance are listed on the following pages, with a more extensive list available in the Appendix.

Fannin Battleground

Beginning March 19, 1836, the Battle of Coleto Creek was fought here between Texian forces commanded by Colonel James W. Fannin and Mexican forces led by General Jose de Urrea. The stone obelisk at this site commemorates the soldiers who fought during the Texas Revolution.¹ While outside of the study area, the context of the Texas Revolution is important to Victoria's growth, culture, and position in Texas history. Victoria is a key crossroads for the Texas Independence Trail, with proximity to Goliad as well as several significant sites along the Texas coast in addition to the Fannin Battleground.

¹ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/fannin-battleground>



Fannin Battleground

Source: <https://www.thctexas.gov/historic-sites/fannin-battleground-state-historic-site>

Memorial Square

Located in the northeast portion of the study area, Memorial Square was part of the original town site of Victoria. Martín De León set aside two city blocks to be used as burial grounds. Prior to May 9, 1846, many bodies were buried in home yards, as this was a longstanding custom. In 1846, the city passed an ordinance requiring that the dead could no longer be buried "at home," but must be buried in public burial grounds. The space was soon overflowing with graves and land for a new cemetery was purchased across town. As many remains as could be identified were moved to Evergreen Cemetery; however over 230 individuals are still interred here in unmarked graves.²

² <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/old-victoria-driving-tour>



Memorial Square



Victoria County Courthouse

Victoria County Courthouse

The Victoria County Courthouse was constructed in 1892 and occupies the block to the west of De Leon Plaza. It was designed by noted architect J. Riely Gordon, who is responsible for 18 Texas courthouses. It was spectacularly restored over a period of seven years, culminating in its rededication on March 24, 2001. The Victoria County Courthouse, located on the west side of De Leon Plaza, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Registered Texas Historic Landmark.³

³ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/victoria-county-courthouse>



De Leon Plaza

De Leon Plaza

Originally called Plaza de la Constitución, De Leon Plaza was set aside by colony founder Martín De León. The plaza is centrally located in Downtown and includes several monuments, numerous shady live oak trees, a band stand, and benches. A popular setting for festivals and special events, it's a great place to start a walking tour of historic Downtown Victoria.⁴

⁴ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/de-leon-plaza>

Fossati's Delicatessen

Fossati's Delicatessen is the oldest deli in Texas. It was established in 1882 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This deli is located on Main Street in Downtown Victoria and is still owned and operated by the same family.⁵

⁵ www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/fossatis-delicatessen



Fossati's Delicatessen

Nave Museum

Nave Museum is located in the northwest portion of the study area. This museum is named after Royston Nave. He was a successful painter born in La Grange, Texas. This building stands out with Greek revival temple design. It was designed by San Antonio architect Atlee Ayers and opened in 1932 to house Nave's paintings and contain the library of the Bronte Study Club. When the Victoria Library on Main Street was built in 1976, Mrs. Nave's heirs, the McCan family, deeded the building to the City to be used as a fine arts museum for the region.⁶

⁶ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/the-nave-museum>



Nave Museum



Old Nazareth Academy

Old Nazareth Academy

The Old Nazareth Academy is located along the southern edge of the Downtown core area. Designed by Jules C. Leffland and constructed in 1904, this fanciful Alsatian structure is one of the City’s most important architectural landmarks. It was built to house the convent school of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, a French order. Sisters from the Lyons order came to Texas in 1852 and to Victoria in 1866.⁷ The Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament have relocated elsewhere in Victoria and the building was recently purchased by the adjacent St. Mary’s Catholic Church.

⁷ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/old-victoria-driving-tour>



Leibold Building

Leibold Building

This Jules C. Leffland-designed building was built for Louis P. Leibold in 1910 as a drug, book, and stationery store. This is considered to be the oldest “drug store corner” in the state, as there had been a drug store on the site from 1847 to 1998. This attractive brick building replaced an earlier structure owned by Leibold.⁸ The Leibold Building is located at the southeast corner of De Leon Plaza.

⁸ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/old-victoria-driving-tour>

O'Connor-Proctor Building

Located on the northeast corner of De Leon Plaza, this striking, red brick, Romanesque Revival building was designed by architect Paul Helwig and constructed in 1895 as office space for prominent local rancher Thomas M. O'Connor and attorney David C. Proctor. Following T. M. O'Connor's death in 1910, the building entered decades of use by numerous businesses. Carved limestone accentuates the red brick structure. The Junior League of Victoria currently owns the building and it was stunningly restored in 2009.⁹

⁹ <https://www.explorevictoriatexas.com/business/old-victoria-driving-tour>



O'Connor-Proctor Building

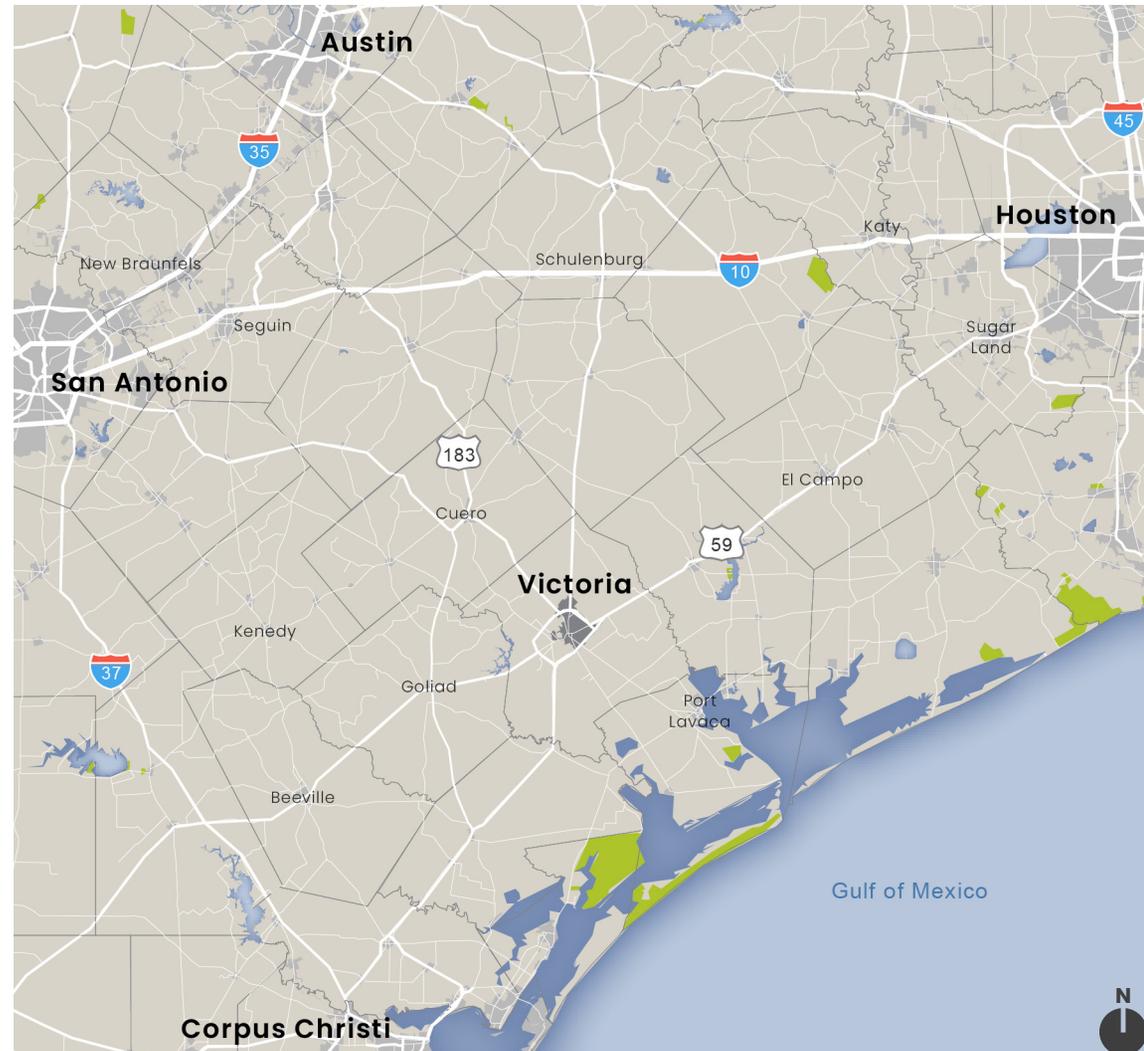
EXISTING CONDITIONS

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Victoria is located approximately 30 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico and is within a two-hour drive of Corpus Christi, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin. The City of Victoria is the largest community within the Victoria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is comprised of Goliad and Victoria Counties. Victoria serves as the regional commercial, medical, and transportation hub for the surrounding multi-county area.

Downtown Victoria is in the southwest portion of the city. Home to the county courthouse, cultural institutions, and De Leon Plaza, Downtown was the traditional economic and cultural hub of the community. Over the years, however, Victoria began to grow to the north and east. The Guadalupe River largely served as a barrier to the city expanding to the south and west. Unlike many communities, Downtown is no longer the geographic center of the community and has had its historic role as the center of commerce displaced by emerging centers to the north. The intersection of North Navarro Street and Zac Lentz Parkway now functions as a major commercial center.

Map 3. Regional Context Map



PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

When examining a place, it is important to look at it through a variety of frameworks. By doing so, recommendations will be contextually appropriate. The physical framework looks at Downtown buildings, points of interest, utility infrastructure, and how people and automobiles move around the space.

Urban Building Form

This map shows the footprint of buildings within the study area. An ideal urban building form would cover the majority of a block along the street with pockets of non-developed land set aside for open space. This scenario is ideal because the buildings frame the street and create a walkable environment, and maximizes fiscal productivity. This ideal building form is primarily met along Main Street and east-west streets in the central core of Downtown, though historic mapping indicates this ideal form was far more pervasive in Downtown's past.

In contrast, most of the study area has limited urban building form. The present forms are predominantly single-use sites and the overall format of the existing development is structured around the car rather than the pedestrian. Parking lots and vacant land fill in the gaps between the built environment, resulting in a discontinuous development pattern in the core of Downtown Victoria. The suburban auto-oriented development that has characterized much of the Downtown development post-World War II conflicts with the historic urban development pattern.

Map 4. Urban Building Form Map



Historic Properties

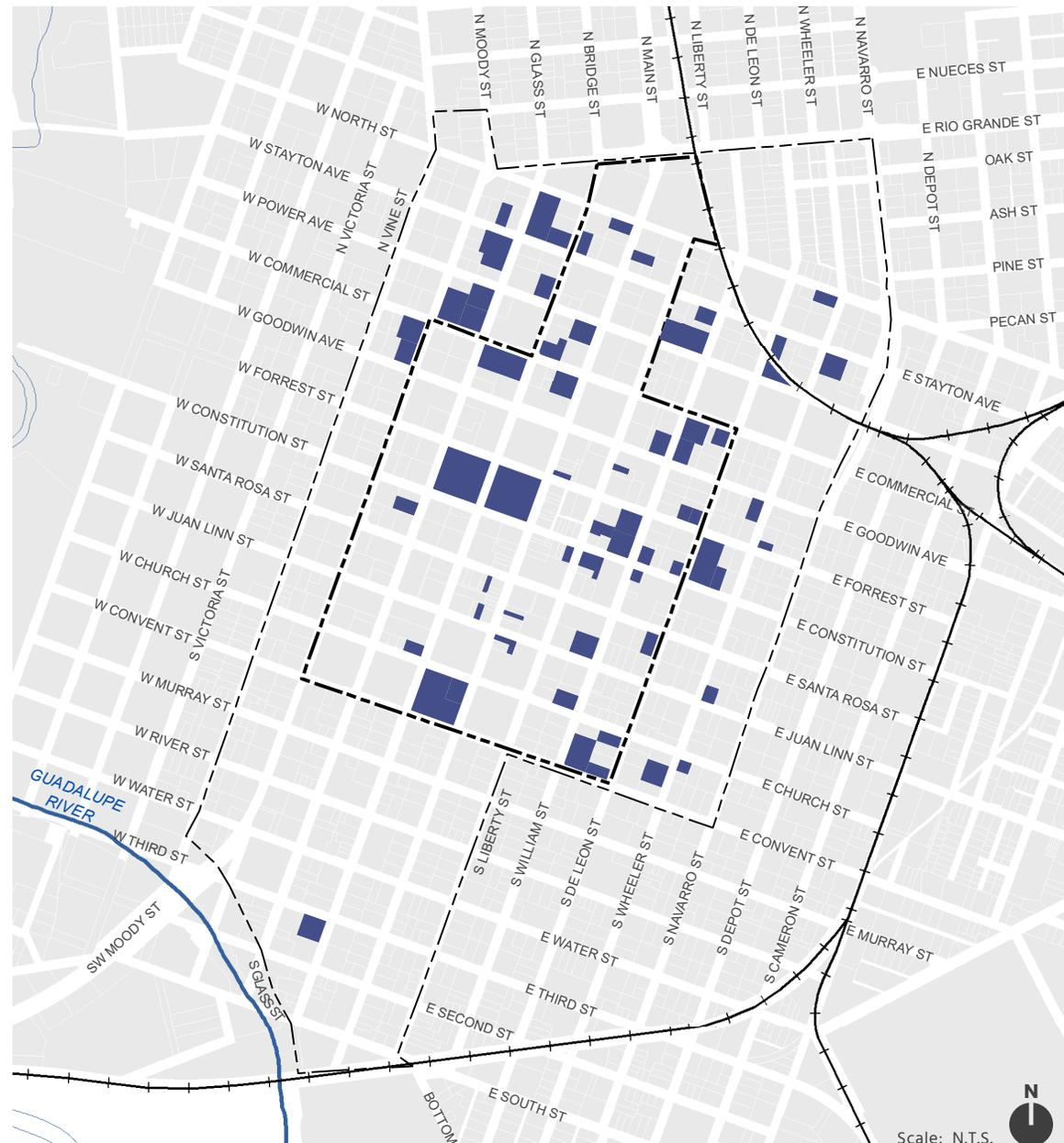
There are 62 historic properties within the study area, including publicly and privately owned buildings, such as the courthouse, churches, schools, commercial buildings, and private residences. 60 properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 17 properties are designated as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, and two properties are State Antiquities Landmarks. Many of the properties are listed on multiple registries. These properties have been recognized as historic places worthy of preservation. Benefits of historic property designation include recognition that a property is of local, regional, or state significance and, often, eligibility for preservation grant funds.

These historic properties contribute to the rich cultural heritage of Victoria and should continue to be celebrated as such.

While this map depicts properties with historic buildings, a number of other properties contain history beyond buildings. For example, City Hall occupies the original Market Square of Victoria. Likewise, Memorial Square contains many historic graves dating to before the Civil War.

Map 5. Historic Properties Map

- Study Area Boundary - - - - -
- Downtown Core - - - - -
- Historic Property ●



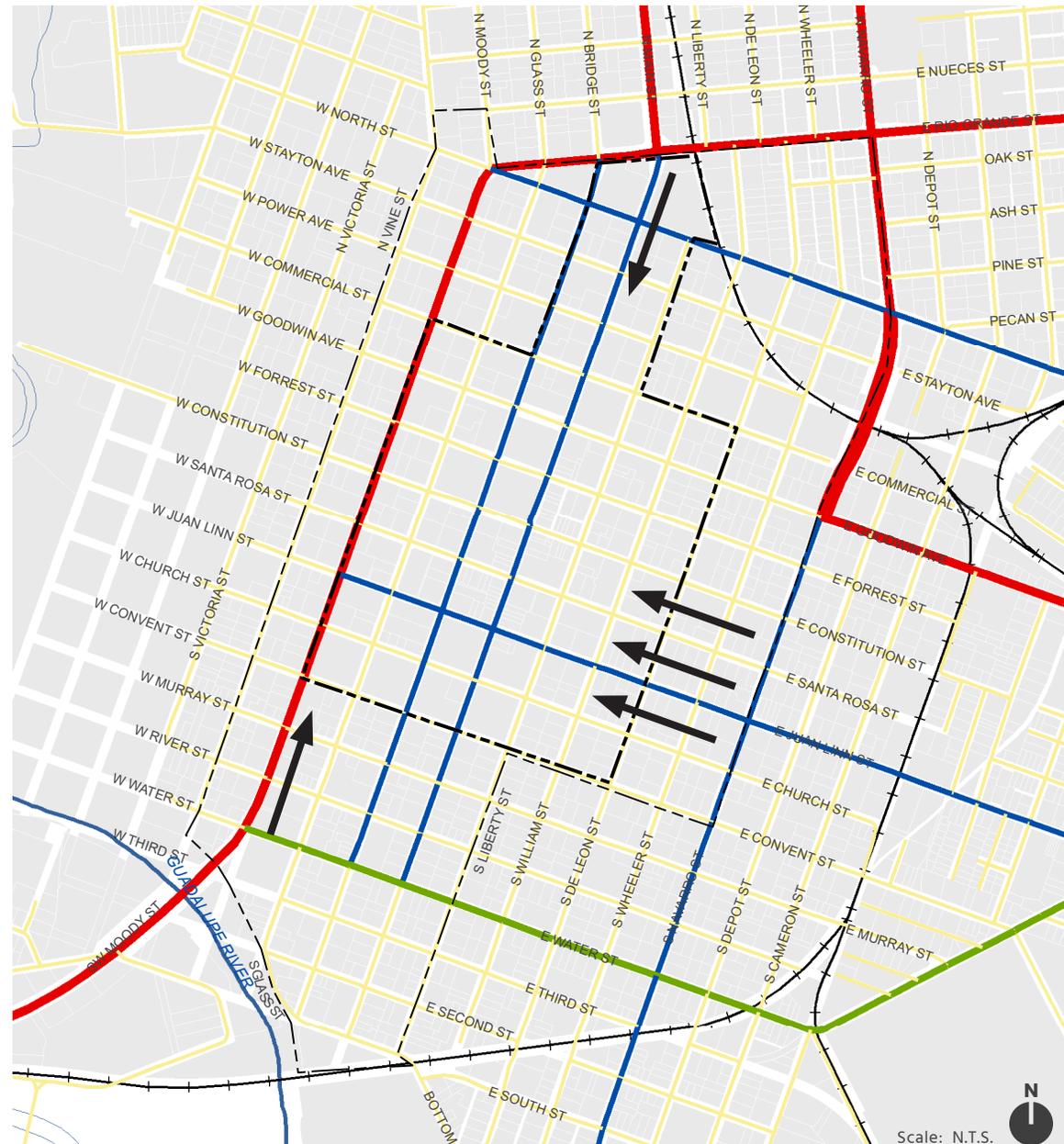
Roadway Network

The roadway network frames how automobiles use and move around Downtown Victoria. While Downtown should focus primarily on pedestrian needs, the role of the automobile must be acknowledged in order to mitigate negative impacts while also supporting visitors from outside of the study area. This map depicts the hierarchy of road types in the study area.

As technology advances and the day of the autonomous vehicle nears, the space needs dedicated to the vehicle will shift. Hints of the changing relationship with cars is already apparent with the rise of transportation network companies, like Uber and Lyft. Curbside management has further risen in prominence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with businesses, like restaurants, looking to the City for agile responses that recognize their shifting business needs. As the heart of the community, downtowns across the country will need to be at the forefront of this shift. It is important to start investigating how these changes will impact Victoria and what facilities need to be in place when autonomous vehicles are mainstream.

- Study Area Boundary (dashed black line)
- Downtown Core (dashed black line)
- Primary Arterial (thick red line)
- Secondary Arterial (thick green line)
- Collector Street (thick blue line)
- Local Street (thin yellow line)
- Primary Downtown Access (black arrow)

Map 6. Roadway Network Map



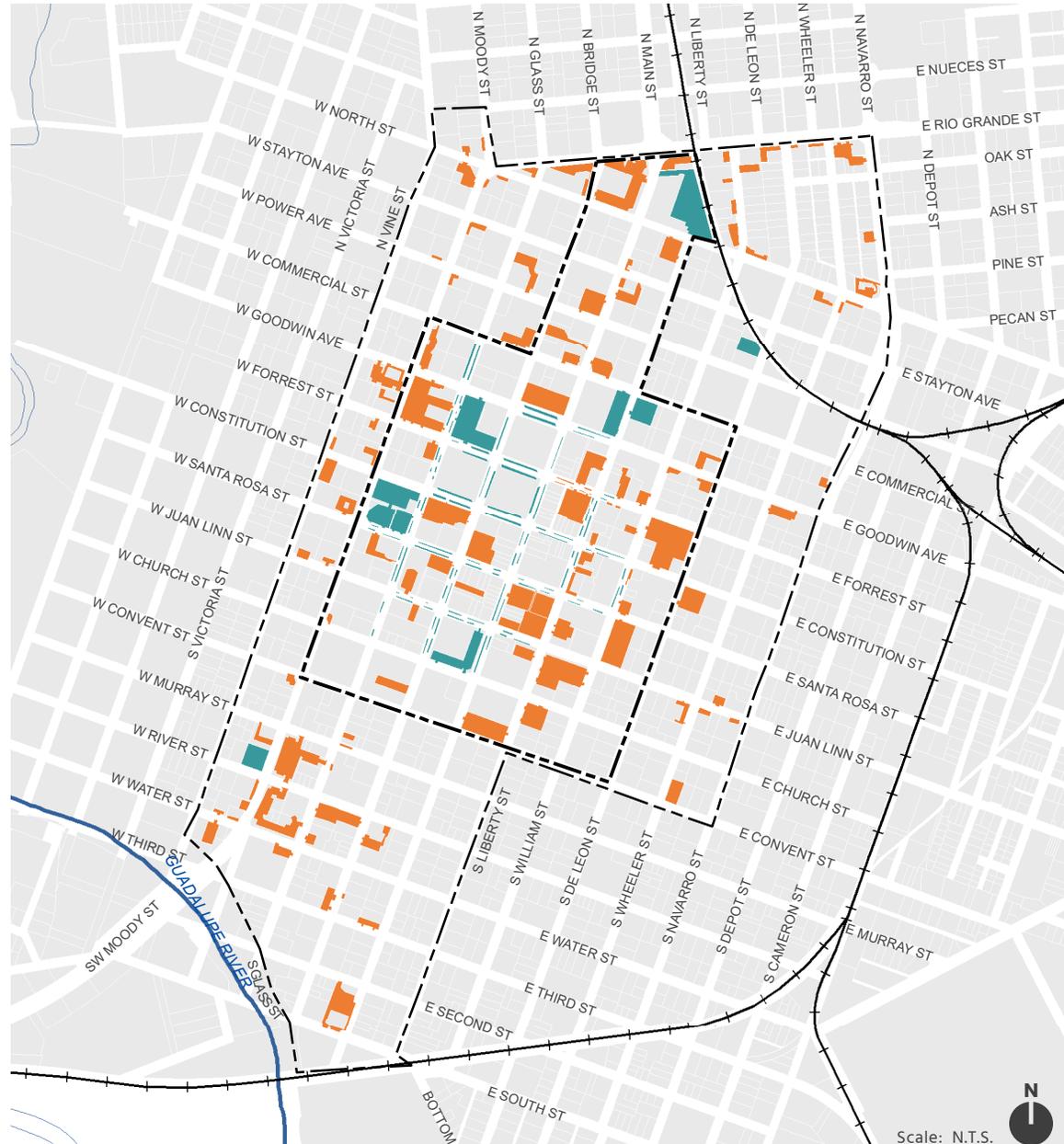
Parking

Parking is an important piece of any place. With downtowns in particular, there is often a perception that there is never enough parking. A more accurate statement is “there is never enough parking right in front of where I want to go, but there is usually parking within a few blocks.” Often this is an issue of people feeling safe walking from parking to their destination, or whether the walk is interesting. Likewise, restricted use of private parking reduces overall parking efficiency and reduces the financial performance of Downtown. If there is truly not enough parking, Downtown has reached maximum capacity and is a bustling environment with people patronizing shops, restaurants, and businesses from morning to evening.

The parking map depicts the amount of land dedicated to private and public parking in the core of Downtown. In a downtown setting, good urban form tends to locate parking on-street or towards the fringe of the core in communal lots/structures, emphasizing pedestrian space and activity. There is potential to add more on-street parking to encourage visitors to walk around Downtown. Likewise, there is tremendous potential to address perceived parking shortages through agreements with private parking facilities and thoughtful wayfinding.

- Study Area Boundary (dashed line)
- Downtown Core (thick dashed line)
- Public Parking ● (teal circle)
- Private Parking ● (orange circle)

Map 7. Parking Map



Destinations & Walkability

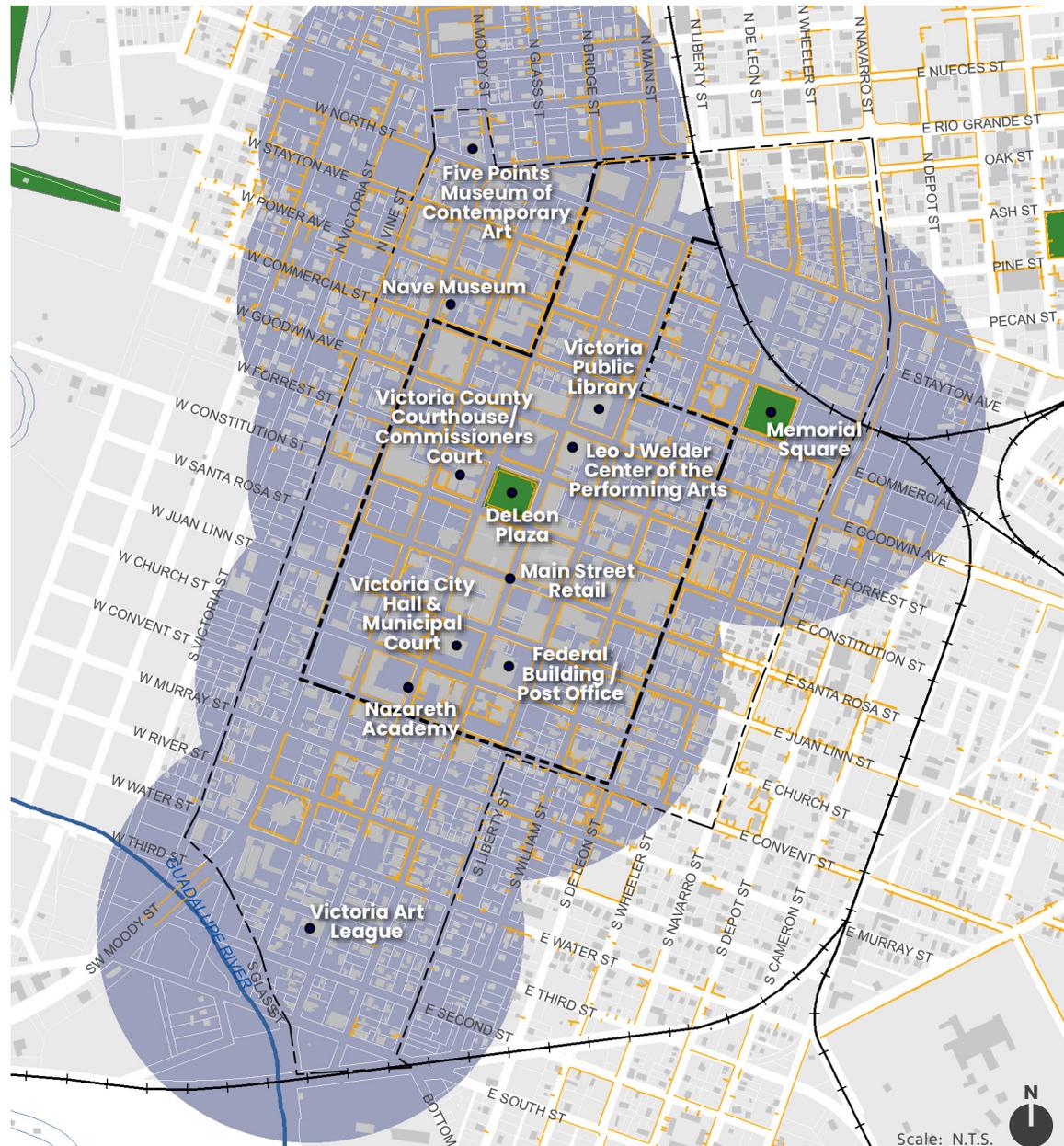
This map highlights the destinations that draw residents and visitors to Downtown. Those destinations include, but are not limited to schools, museums, parks, court, and City Hall. All of the destinations are close together and within walking distance from one another.

In addition, this map shows the sidewalk network and a quarter-mile buffer around key destinations. The quarter-mile buffer represents approximately a 5-minute walk. The sidewalk network in the Downtown core area is nearly complete, contributing to walkability. The quality of the sidewalks vary, as does the level of pedestrian comfort and perceived safety. Accessibility for populations with disabilities also varies, creating unique challenges to their experience in Downtown. Special consideration should be made for accessible parking for those with disabilities, including clear wayfinding so they can visit Downtown with confidence.

The sidewalk network is not complete outside of the study area. There are opportunities to improve this area so pedestrians will feel safe and can travel from destination to destination without needing to get in a car.

- Study Area Boundary - - - - -
- Downtown Core - - - - -
- Destinations ●
- 1/4 Mile Walking Radius ●
- Sidewalks —

Map 8. Destinations and Walkability Map



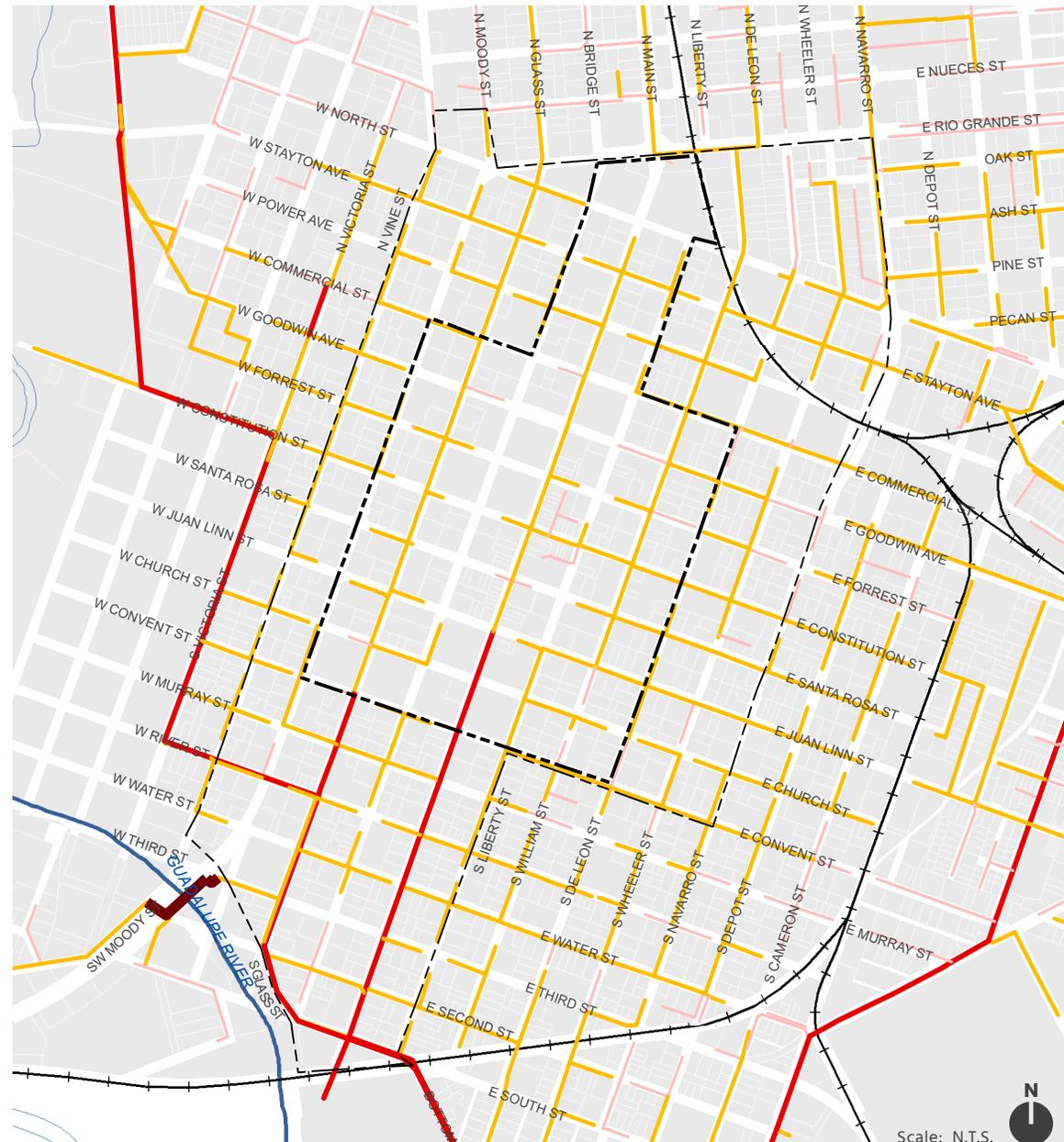
Utility Infrastructure: Sanitary Sewer

Although utility infrastructure is not visible on the surface, it is vital to the function of the City. Sanitary sewer lines carry sewage away from homes and businesses, and ultimately ends up at the wastewater treatment plant. This map depicts the sanitary sewer lines in the study area.

Most sanitary sewer facilities are of sufficient size to support most contemplated Downtown redevelopment and infill development. Future wastewater master planning should consider condition of such infrastructure in Downtown. Likewise, condition of lines should be evaluated prior to making surface improvements such as streetscapes in order to avoid ill-timed improvements.

- Study Area Boundary (dashed black line)
- Downtown Core (dashed black line)
- 7" or Less Diameter (pink line)
- 8" - 12" Diameter (yellow line)
- 13"+ Diameter (red line)
- Force Main (dark red line)

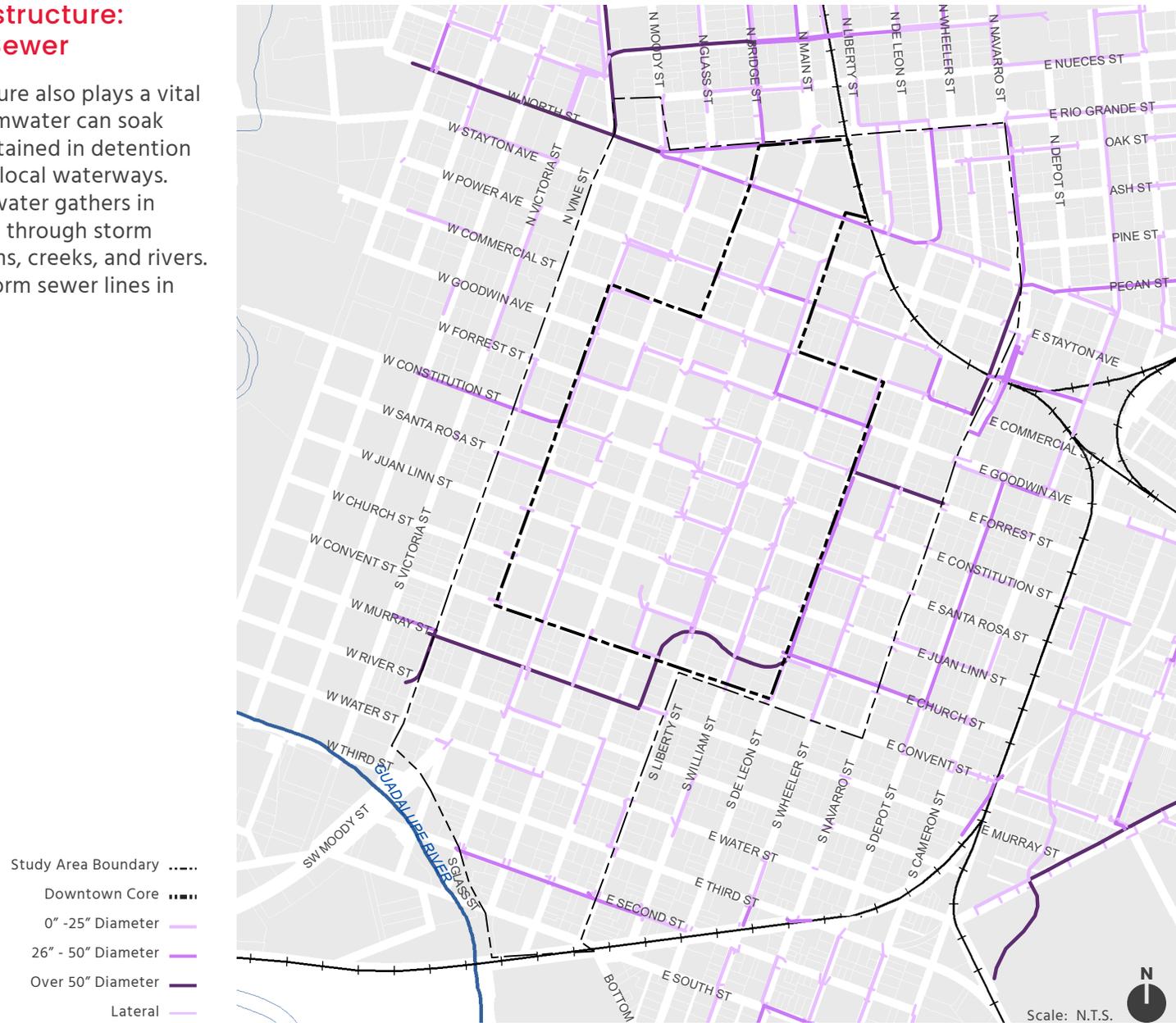
Map 9. Sanitary Sewer Map



Utility Infrastructure: Storm Sewer

Storm sewer infrastructure also plays a vital role in Downtown. Stormwater can soak into the ground, be contained in detention ponds, or discharged in local waterways. After heavy rain, stormwater gathers in storm drains and travels through storm sewers to nearby streams, creeks, and rivers. This map depicts the storm sewer lines in the study area.

Map 10. Storm Sewer Map



Utility Infrastructure: Water Distribution

This map depicts pipes that supply water to the study area. As one of the oldest parts of the City, the water lines in Downtown are well established and follow a grid network.

Most water facilities are of sufficient size to support most contemplated Downtown redevelopment and infill development. Generally speaking, 12-inch and larger lines are encouraged in future retrofitting to better support water pressure that is sufficient to meet fire codes should development intensity increase substantially. Future water master planning should consider condition and capacity of such infrastructure in Downtown. Likewise, condition and placement of lines, valves, and hydrants should be evaluated prior to making surface improvements such as streetscapes in order to avoid ill-timed improvements.

Map 11. Water Distribution Map



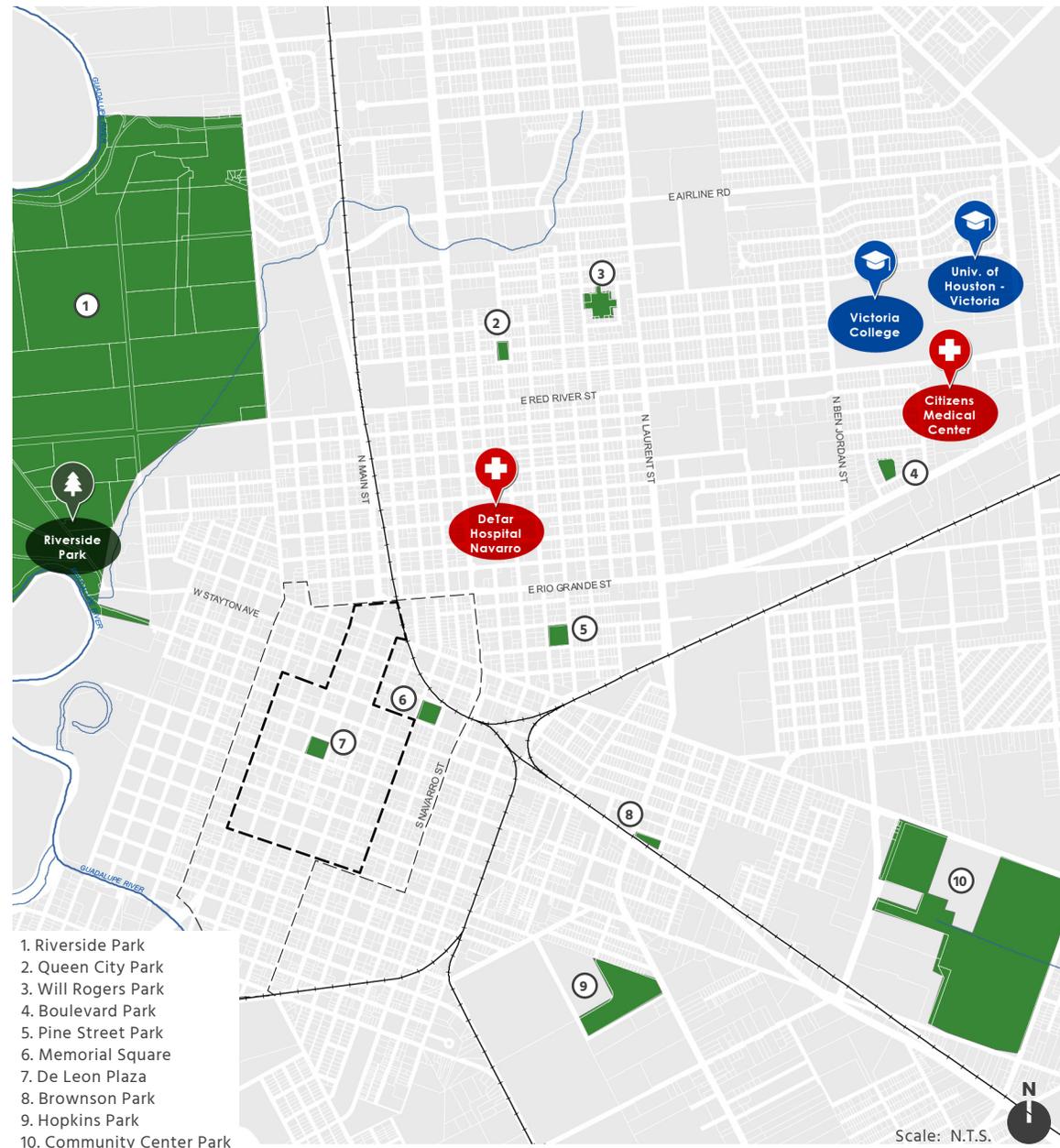
Potential Linkages

There are potential opportunities to connect to various points of interest just outside of the study area. Riverside Park, Victoria College, The University of Houston-Victoria, DeTar Hospital, and Citizens Medical Center are all located north of Downtown. In the future, there may be an opportunity to connect these destinations to Downtown. There are also opportunities to connect Downtown to the rest of the City through trails.

Riverside Park represents an opportunity to leverage nature tourism, especially in conjunction with other outdoor experiences in the region. Likewise, it provides an appealing respite that creates greater potential for people to spend an entire day or weekend in Downtown. Perhaps equally important, making a thoughtful physical connection to Riverside Park would support the quality of life of the surrounding neighborhoods.

DeTar Hospital Navarro and Citizens Medical Center represent major nearby employers, as well as centers of activity for the entire region seeking a variety of medical treatments. There is an opportunity to capture interest as it relates to healthy outdoor recreation. Likewise, thoughtful improvements in Downtown and connections to Riverside Park can make Downtown a part of community health solutions and physical therapy.

Map 12. Potential Linkages Map



Victoria College and the University of Houston-Victoria represent major employers and activity hubs for the region. They also provide institutional backing for local entrepreneurship and innovation. In this way, the relationship between these entities and Downtown is perhaps more important than the physical connection. This can already be seen with the Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts in Downtown, which is operated by Victoria College and serves as a major cultural activity center.



University of Houston-Victoria



Victoria College



Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts

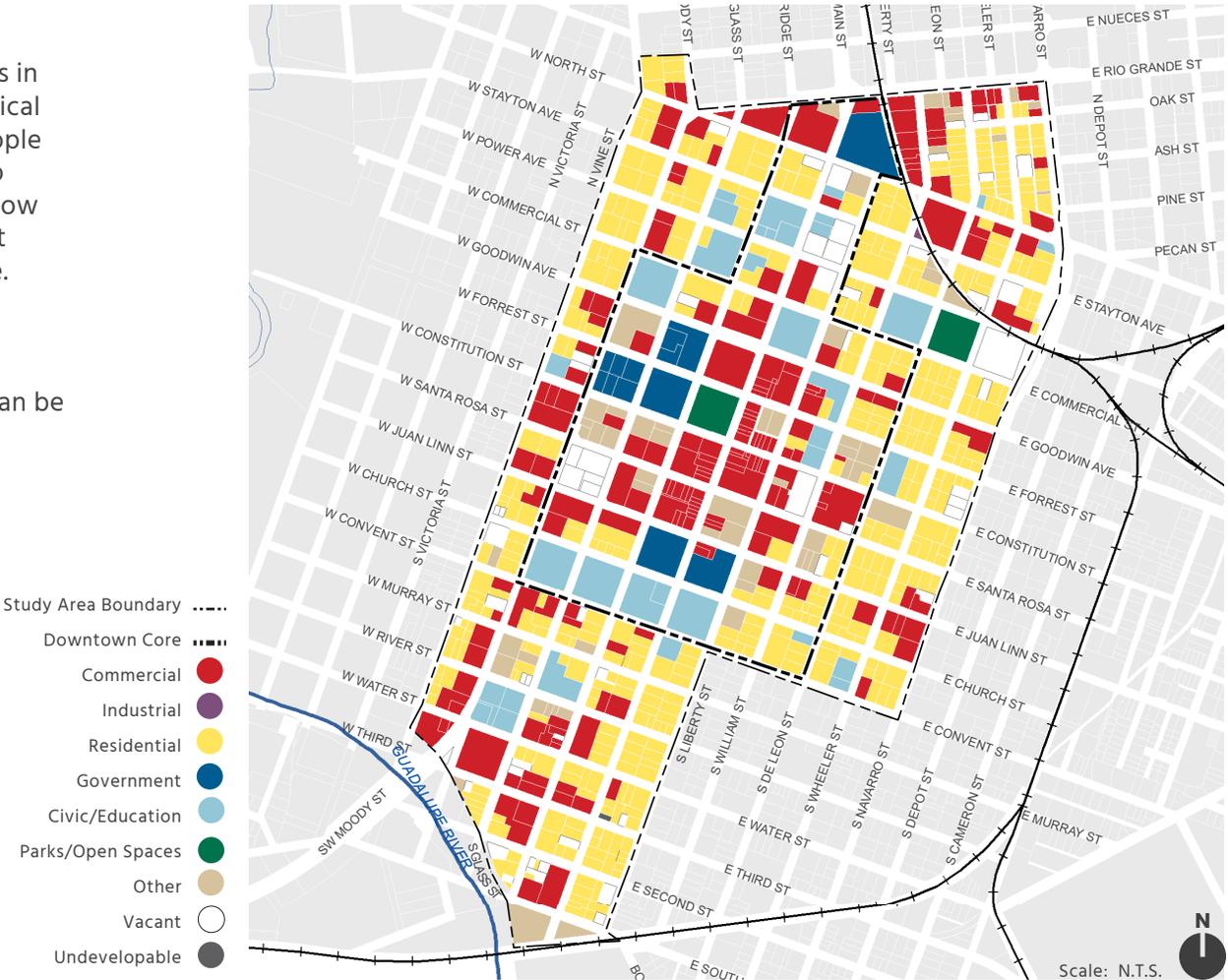
PLANNING & OWNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

The planning framework looks at the Downtown study area’s existing land use, ground floor uses, publicly owned land, and vacant land. The ownership framework also examines the land values, ease of assembly, and strongest identity blocks. This analysis highlights areas that may be available for development/redevelopment and could build off the synergy of existing activity.

Existing Land Use

This map depicts the existing land uses in the study area. The use of land is a critical ingredient in determining the way people live and work. There are two factors to consider when designating land use: how land is currently being used and how it could potentially be used in the future. In many cases, the existing active land use on property remains unchanged. For undeveloped property, there are opportunities to shape the way land can be developed in the future.

Map 13. Existing Land Use Map

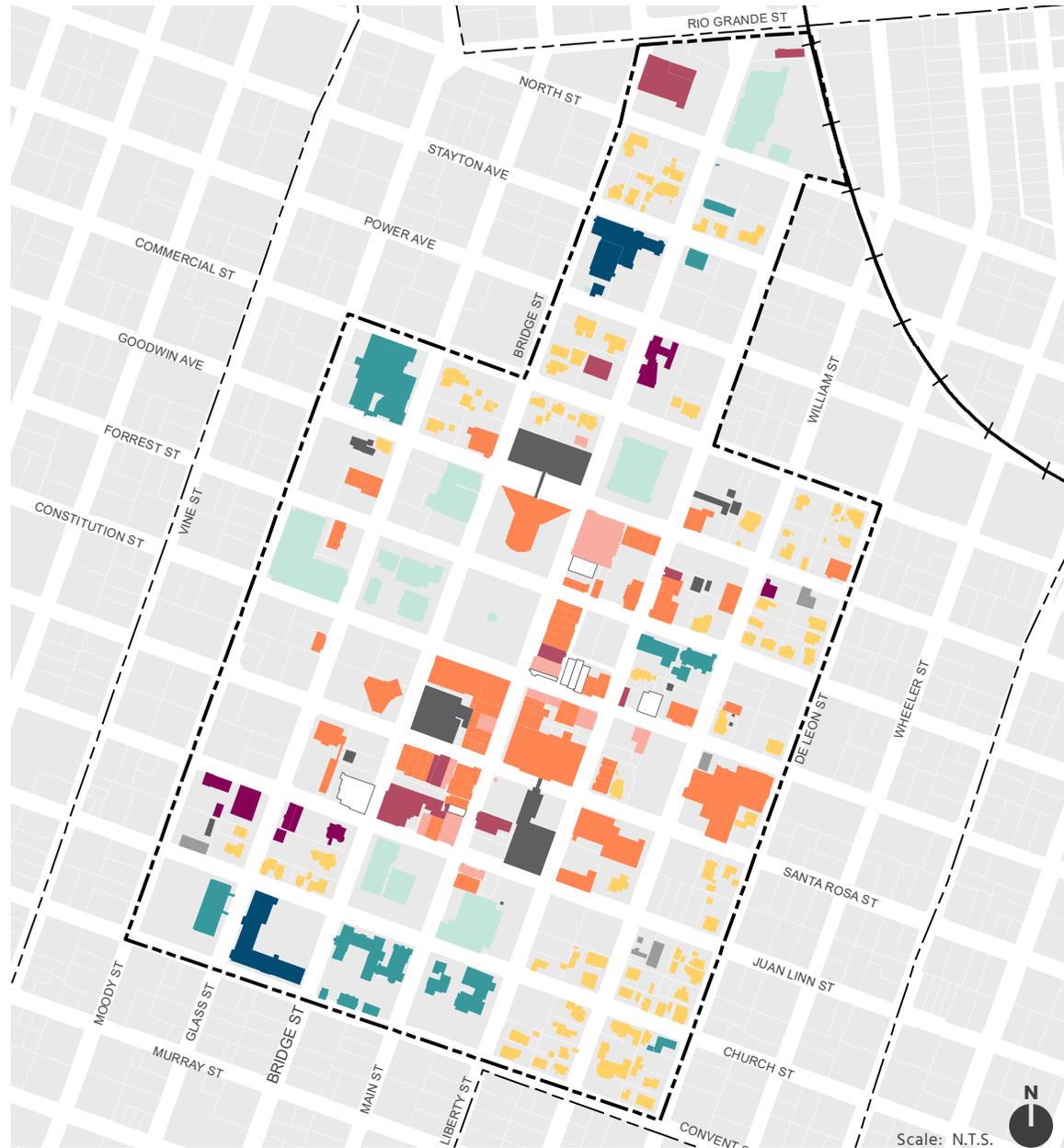


Ground Floor Uses

This map provides insight into what a person experiences when spending time in the core of Downtown. Main Street is the heart of Downtown. This street sets the stage for the success of the rest of the Downtown area. The current uses are made up of professional and governmental offices, retail and restaurants, and a mix of other uses and vacant storefronts. While professional offices are appropriate to have in Downtown, they don't draw a lot of people to the area and aren't ideal to have as the ground floor use in the heart of Downtown. These professional offices would be better suited on the second floor of businesses on Main Street or nearby, but away from the heart of Downtown. The real estate for ground floor uses in the heart of Downtown should be reserved for stronger activity generators such as restaurants, cafés, breweries, entertainment venues, boutique fitness studios, and retail that stays open during the evenings and on weekends.

- Study Area Boundary - - - - -
- Downtown Core - - - - -
- Residential - - - - -
- Personal Service (Bank, Salon, etc.) - - - - -
- Retail/Shopping - - - - -
- Dining/Entertainment/Lodging - - - - -
- Professional Office - - - - -
- City/County/Federal - - - - -
- Religious Institution - - - - -
- School - - - - -
- Automotive Service - - - - -
- Storage/Parking Garage - - - - -
- Vacant - - - - -

Map 14. Ground Floor Use Map



Public/Institutional Owned Land

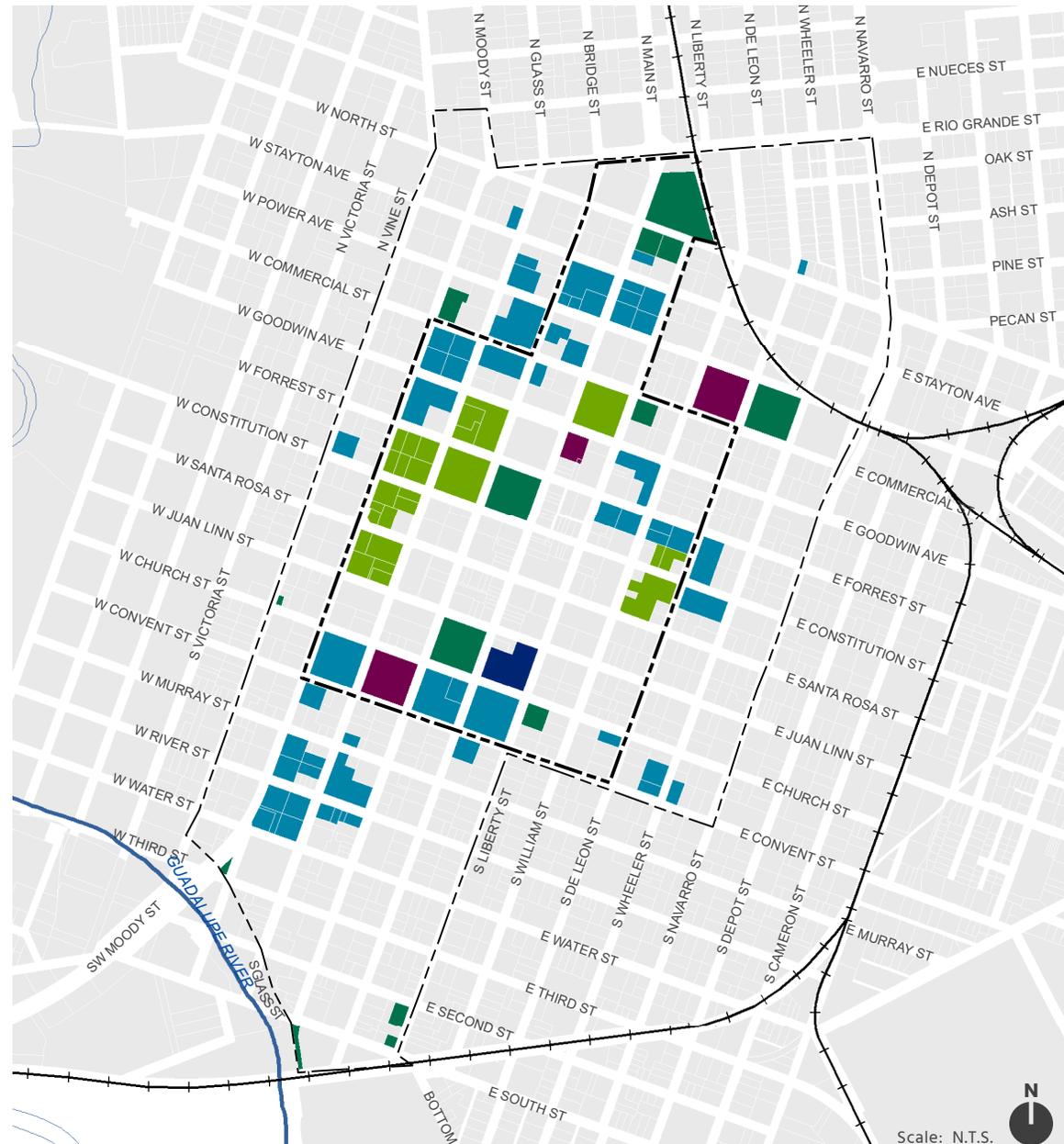
Public facilities in downtowns are often activity generators. People visit City Hall and 700 Main Center to take care of permits, pay water bills, and get birth certificates. Libraries become a hub of activity for all ages. As the County seat, courts are full of people all day long, and police and fire stations interact with the public through safety preparedness in addition to fighting fires and crime. Schools and churches are often filled at certain hours. If a partnership was created between the City, school, or church, the parking lots at these facilities could serve the Downtown in other respects during non-peak times, such as a location for a farmers and artisans market or overflow parking for Downtown.

While these public spaces present opportunities, the large amount of land that is tax-exempt results in lower fiscal performance and challenges for the use of some types of financing tools to fund improvements.

There are several parcels in the core of Downtown Victoria that are owned by the City or the County. These can be great

- Study Area Boundary (dashed line)
- Downtown Core (dotted line)
- City-Owned Land (dark green square)
- Religious Institution-Owned Land (light blue square)
- County-Owned Land (light green square)
- School-Owned Land (purple square)
- Federal-Owned Land (dark blue square)

Map 15. Public/Institutional Owned Land Map



assets for the development of Downtown. The City or County could use this land to build new municipal facilities or potentially build a public-private project that can act as a catalyst for additional growth and development in the Downtown.



City Hall



St. Mary's Catholic Church



Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Building



Victoria Public Library

Vacant Land

Examining the vacant land in Downtown is two-fold. First, it identifies voids within the urban fabric and second, it presents potential locations for future development.

Within the core of Downtown, there is limited vacant land. There are a few pockets of consolidated vacant land that may allow for a more substantial development. Other scattered individual vacant parcels could provide infill opportunities over time.

Map 16. Vacant Land Map



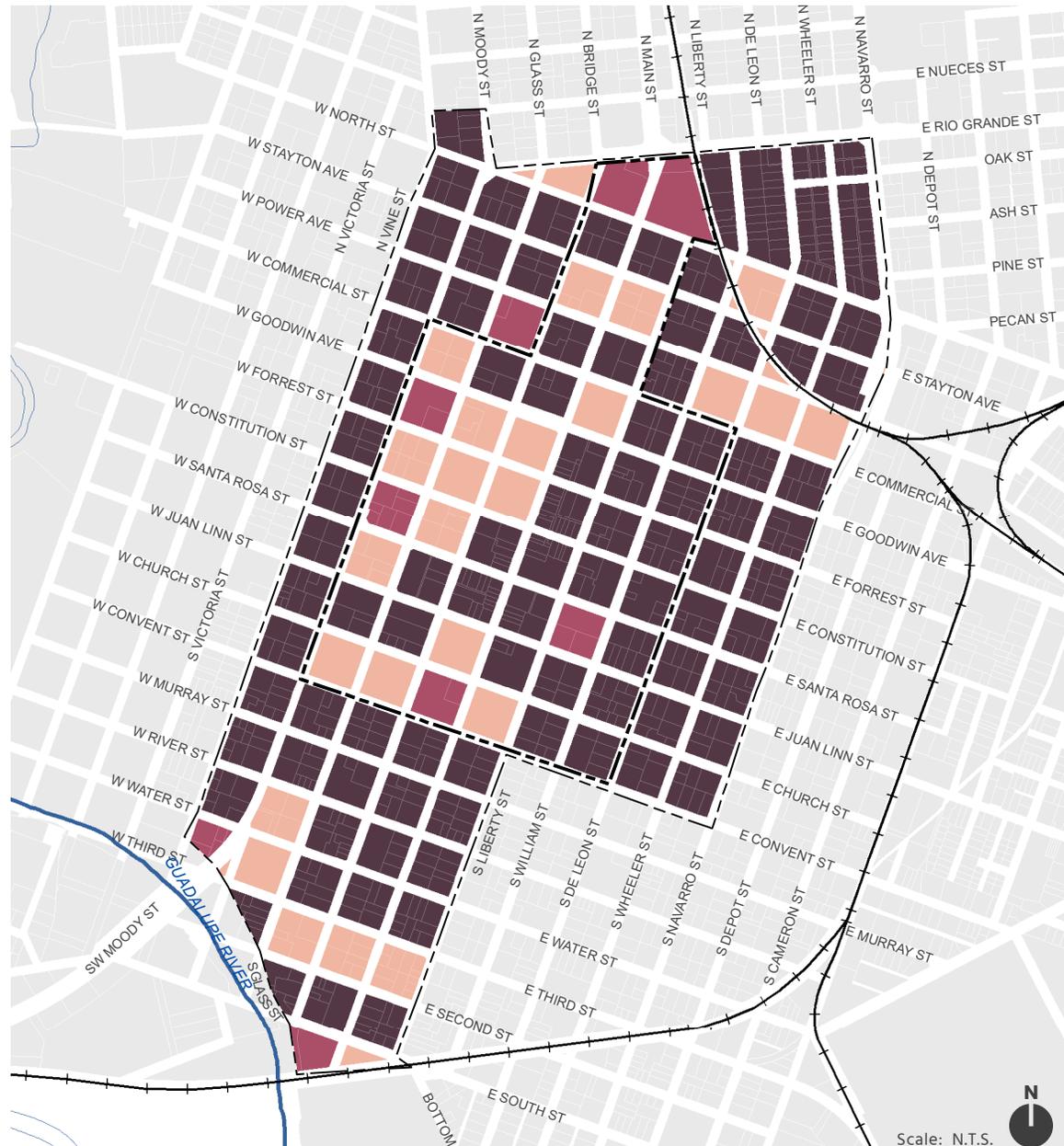
Ease of Assembly

The ease of assembly assessment looks at how many property owners are within one area. For this investigation, a block is considered a continuous area of land, typically separated from the next block by a road, alley, or railroad tracks. Generally speaking, blocks with one or two property owners are more ideal for future development, as minimal land assembly is required in order to make the site large enough for future development and provide a sufficient return on investment. Blocks with three or more owners can be assembled into one ownership, but these areas are more prone to encounter owners who aren't willing to sell, thus reducing future development feasibility. At the same time, these fragmented parcels are ideal for smaller, incremental development opportunities suited for small and creative developers.

Within the study boundary, there are numerous blocks that have multiple owners. However, in the core area of Downtown Victoria, there are several blocks that have a single owner, many of which are public or semi-public entities. There may be opportunities for public-private partnerships to encourage future development that fits the needs of the community.

- Study Area Boundary (dashed line)
- Downtown Core (thick dashed line)
- Blocks with One Property Owner (light orange circle)
- Blocks with Two Property Owners (dark orange circle)
- Blocks with Three or More Property Owners (dark purple circle)

Map 17. Ease of Assembly Map

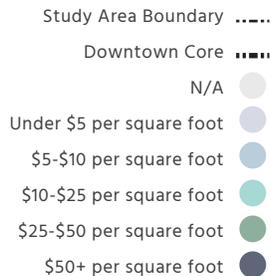


Land Values

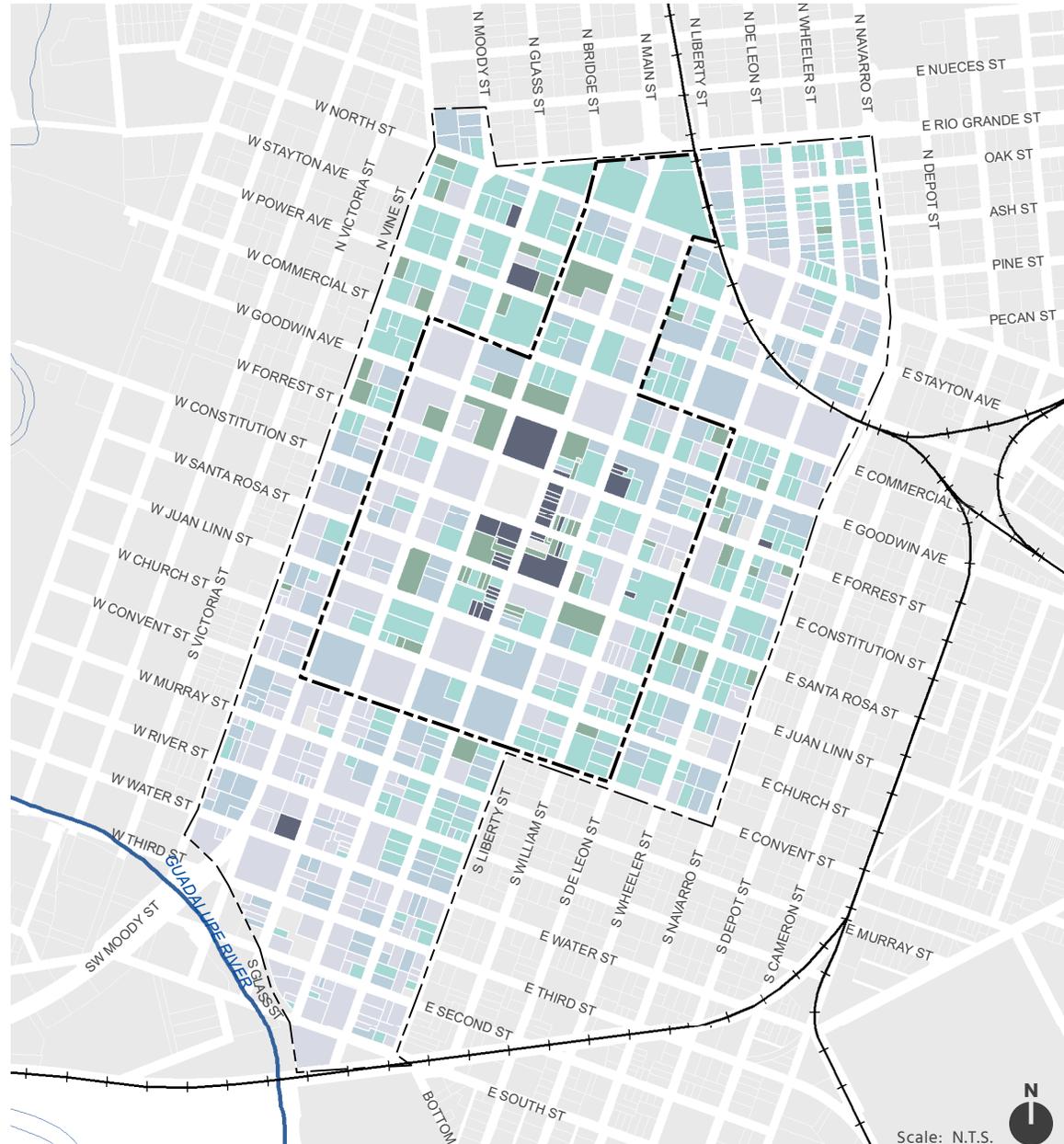
The land values in Map 18 are compiled from Victoria Central Appraisal District 2020 assessed values. The values shown are based on price per square foot and do not represent market values, the owners' expectations, or taxable values. Examining the land values within the study area provides baseline data that sets the stage for future development. It identifies locations where redevelopment is unlikely to occur based on high values, while simultaneously locating nearby areas that don't currently have a high land value but can build off of the current momentum generated by the high land value parcels.

It is important to consider that certain property types, such as those owned by government or religious institutions, are exempt from property tax.

All land value increments are represented in the study area, however, a high concentration of land values of \$50+ are situated along Main Street, between Goodwin Avenue and Juan Linn Street. This doesn't come as a surprise since this block is the heart of Downtown Victoria. However, nearby these high value areas are parcels valued at under \$10 per square foot, making these adjacent areas ideal for reinvestment.



Map 18. Land Values Map



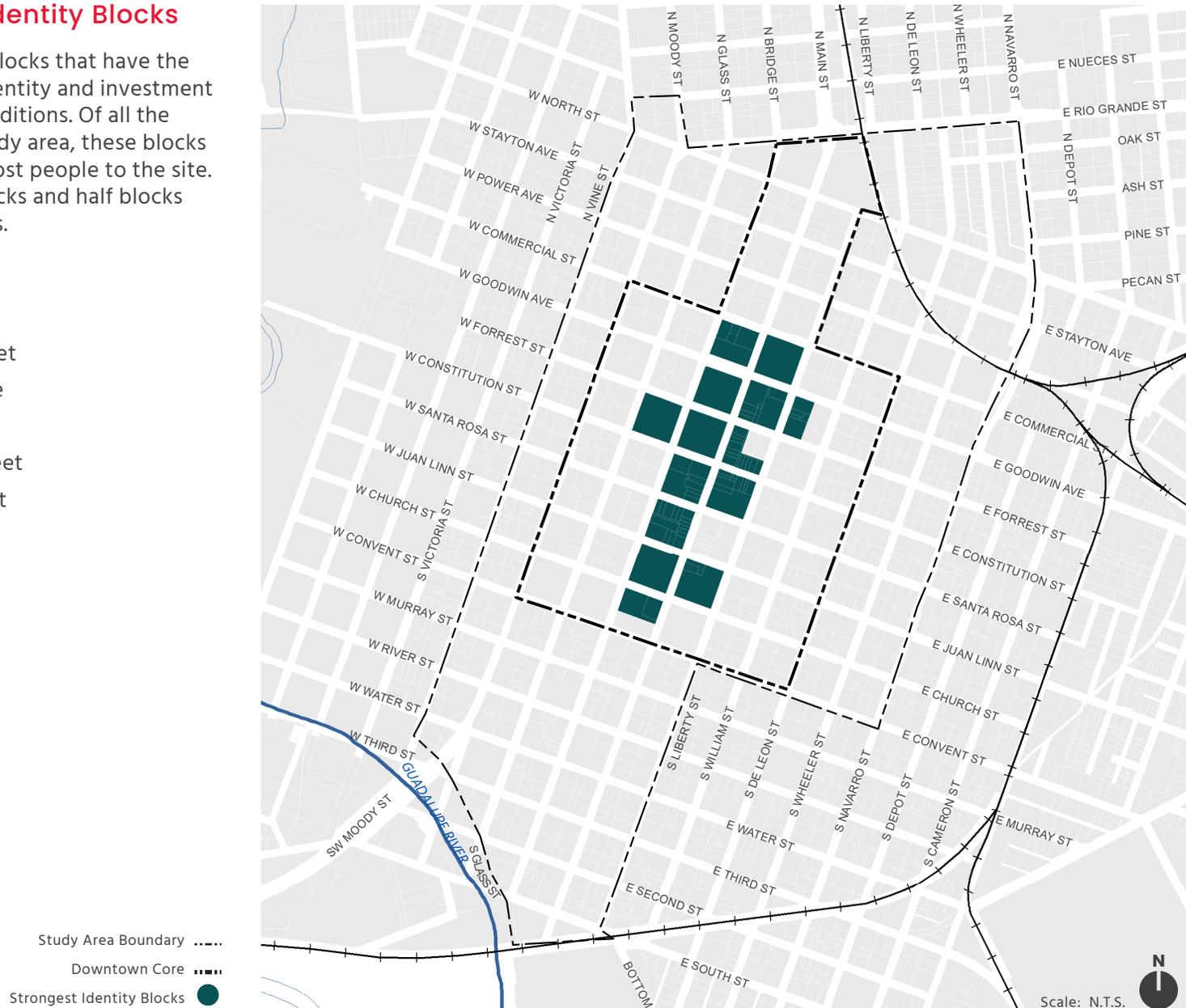
Strongest Identity Blocks

This map illustrates blocks that have the strongest existing identity and investment based on current conditions. Of all the blocks within the study area, these blocks typically draw the most people to the site. There are several blocks and half blocks with strong identities.

These include:

- Main Street
- Commercial Street
- Goodwin Avenue
- Forrest Street
- Constitution Street
- Santa Rosa Street
- Juan Linn Street
- Church Street

Map 19. Strongest Identity Map



POLICY & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The regulations most applicable to Downtown Victoria are organized into seven chapters within the Code of Ordinances and frequently reference one another. Most regulations appear to have been adopted and amended in focused topical efforts rather than comprehensive rewriting, except for building codes. The organization of the various code provisions can hamper navigation. For example, regulations for food truck parks are contained within the code section discussing manufactured homes.

For the purposes of discussing the regulatory environment, this Plan divides the various regulations into the following topics:

- Building codes
- Historic preservation
- Sign regulation
- Street activation
- Land development and development standards

A more detailed diagnostic report and recommendations resulting from this Plan are provided in the Appendix.

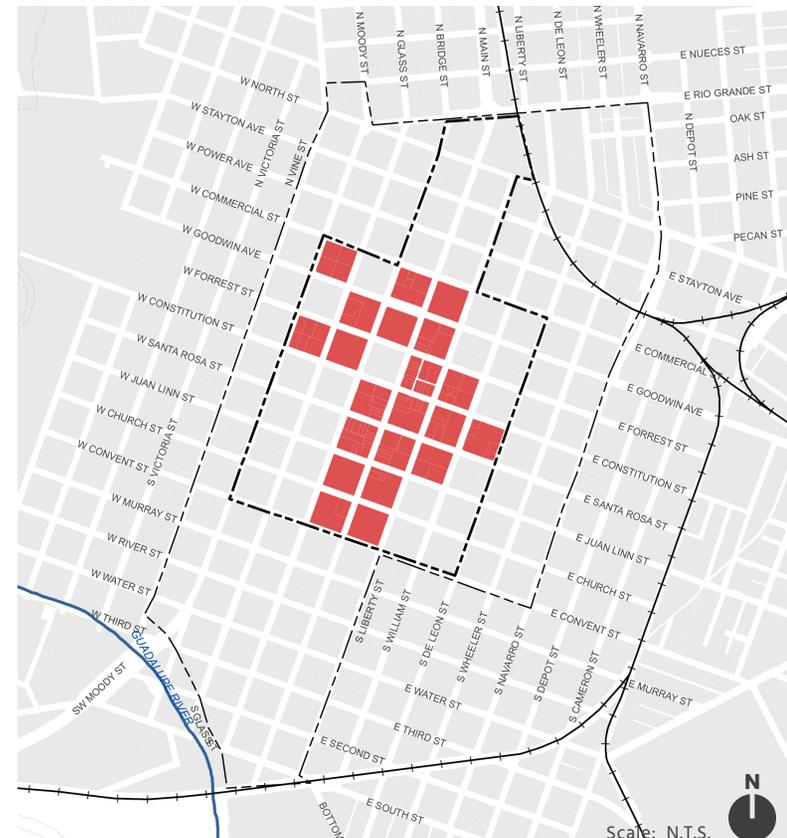
Building Codes

Victoria operates under the 2015 edition of the International Code Council suite of codes and is in the process of adopting the 2021 edition. Within the fire code, Victoria has adopted a fire district under D101.2, including all of the areas shown in Map 20. Fire districts are often designated in more densely developed portions of a city where limiting fire's potential spread is a key consideration. Certain construction types are prohibited, including Type V construction and H occupancies (defined on the following pages).

Interviews with select city staff involved with the application of the above codes indicates a high level of comfort and understanding when working with adaptive reuse of existing buildings. This extends to other

common challenges, like locating grease traps for restaurants in a confined urban setting. Likewise, they are versed in the varied options available when working with historic buildings. City staff has noted the cost of certain retrofits have presented

Map 20. Downtown Fire District



Group H High Hazard Occupancies

A group H occupancy is a use that involves the manufacturing, processing, generation, or storage of materials that can constitute a physical or health hazard. Group H occupancies are classified into five high hazard areas that identify the type of hazard for each group.

- Group H-1: A space, building, or structure that contains materials that would pose a detonation hazard.
- Group H-2: A space, building, or structure that contains materials that would pose a deflagration hazard or a hazard from accelerated burning.
- Group H-3: A space, building, or structure that contains materials that readily support combustion or that pose a physical hazard.
- Group H-4: A space, building, or structure that contains materials that are health hazards.
- Group H-5: Semiconductor fabrication facilities and comparable research and development areas that use hazardous production materials (HPM) and the aggregate quantity of materials used exceeds certain quantities.

challenges, such as appropriate fire-rated separations between uses and retrofitting fire suppression systems.

Victoria has adopted the ICC Existing Building Code, which helps to support retrofitting of existing historic buildings in an economical manner. Application and evaluation of alternative approaches and methods under the Existing Building Code are at the code official's discretion. Victoria has adopted an option to rely on a registered design professional's seal to support alternatives to the strict application of standard code provisions.



Downtown business in a historic building

Figure 1. Table of Construction Types

Building Type	Explanation
Fire-resistive Type I (IA and IB)	With this type of construction, walls, partitions, columns, floors, and roofs are the most non-combustible when it comes to fire-resistant ratings. These structures are usually easy to spot based on their height. Fire-resistive buildings are more than 75-feet tall and made of poured concrete and protective steel. They are designed to withstand the effects of fire for a long period of time to prevent a fire from spreading.
Noncombustible Type II (IIA and IIB)	Non-combustible buildings are similar to the fire-resistive type, where walls, partitions, columns, floors, and roofs are non-combustible. However, they provide less fire resistance and do not withstand the effects or spreading of fire and Type I. This type referred to as “non-combustible” not because of fire resistance but because of the fuel the building contributes. Newer school buildings are typical examples of this construction type, which typically have a metal floor and metal roof with masonry or tilt-slab walls. They are the least stable in terms of collapse when exposed to fire.
Ordinary Type III	These buildings are also called brick-and-joist structures. This construction type has brick or block walls with a wooden roof or floor assembly that is not protected against fire. All or part of the interior structural elements (frame, floors, ceilings, etc.) is combustible/wood. Type III construction is seen in both old and new buildings.
Heavy Timber Type IV	Type IV buildings have non-combustible exterior walls and interior elements made out of solid or laminated wood, meeting dimensional requirements. If these buildings catch fire, they require large volumes of water to extinguish, but they hold up well against fire and don’t collapse easily due to their structural mass.
Wood-framed Type V	Wood-framed buildings are the most combustible out of all the types. They are the only construction type that allows combustible exterior walls. Type V also allows a combustible interior (structural frames, walls, floors, and roofs) made entirely or partly out of wood. This type is commonly found in modern homes. They often have exposed wood, so there is no fire-resistance. It ignites significantly but is reasonably resistant to collapse unless it is a lightweight construction, in which case it is likely to fail within minutes.





Historic Preservation

Victoria has five historic districts in place. The study area includes all or portions of the Downtown Business District, Original Townsite Historic District, and Victoria Heights Historic District. These districts function differently than many others found throughout Texas, which often contain prescriptive language regarding design standards, guidelines, and preservation requirements. Instead, Victoria's approach focuses on voluntary efforts and creating space through procedures to explore preservation alternatives to demolition, though it does take the step of prohibiting manufactured homes. A feature of this is a demolition-delay provision that halts demolition for 60 days to explore demolition alternatives. It can be extended an additional 60 days at the direction of City Council. The demolition-delay applies to any state landmarks, buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and any property within a historic district constructed before 1950.

The use of 1950, as the constraining year, notably excludes a significant portion of the mid-century modern architecture era. Mid-century modern is often regarded as recent history, a term that's often used to detract. This has resulted in a growing national concern regarding risk and loss

of mid-century modern architecture, despite its connections to the space age and post-World War II culture's optimism. At the same time, the use of a year without consideration of the structure's contribution to the historic fabric can lead to unnecessary delays.

Victoria does not have provisions to address demolition by neglect, which appears to be a growing issue in Victoria through field observation. The relevant historic resources survey dates to 1980, meaning a substantial number of properties have likely been altered, demolished or shifted in preservation priority rating. Updating the historic resources survey could provide a path to alleviate challenges with the demolition-delay provision.

In addition, Victoria does not have a staff member designated as its historic preservation officer and instead relies on Victoria Preservation, Inc.

Sign Regulation

Victoria also regulates certain types of signage, with an emphasis on regulating off-premise signage and managing some forms of on-premise signage. The regulations allow for some projecting signs over the street right-of-way and special wall signs within the downtown business district. Several sign types are prohibited, such as sandwich, sidewalk, and curb signs that are

otherwise common in downtowns. Such signs, however, are often used by practice with administrative discretion. Cities must exercise caution with sign regulations to maintain content-neutrality—cities can regulate the time, place, and manner of signs, but not the content.



Demolition by Neglect

“Demolition by neglect” is the term used to describe a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic property to suffer severe deterioration, potentially beyond the point of repair. Some property owners may use this kind of long-term neglect to circumvent historic preservation regulations.

Sometimes demolition by neglect occurs when an owner essentially abandons a historic property. More often, neglect is a strategy used by an owner who wants to redevelop the property but is prohibited from doing so due to the historic status of the existing structure. The context in which the issue is raised depends on what action the city decides to take, if any.

The most common tool for controlling demolition by neglect is a carefully drafted provision in the local preservation ordinance requiring affirmative maintenance and ensuring that the local Historic Preservation Commission is equipped with adequate remedies and enforcement authority. Affirmative maintenance provisions have repeatedly been upheld and enforced by the courts.

Another important tool for controlling demolition by neglect and increasing the effectiveness of affirmative maintenance programs is incentives. Tax incentives, low-cost loans, and grants are always encouraged to help owners fund necessary maintenance. Maintenance expenses can also be defrayed through the use of volunteer maintenance crews.

Adapted from the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Street Activation

Mobile and outdoor sales options provide a low-risk point of entry for new businesses, especially business types without precedent in the area or city. Victoria has various standards and requirements about vendors, solicitors, outdoor sales, and mobile food vendors. Farmers markets are permitted but require special designation by City Council. Mobile food vendors are generally allowed, with common health and safety regulations. However, they are restricted in the downtown business district between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. unless excepted by the city manager or city manager's designee. Food truck parks are allowed and have

typical standards compatible with their implementation.

Downtown environments frequently have various elements that encroach into public rights-of-way, such as canopies, balconies, arcades, signs, and similar features. Encroachments can also take smaller forms, such as sidewalk cafes, decorative planters, storefront displays, and other individual business owners' efforts to increase visual interest along the sidewalk. In reviewing Victoria's regulations, there does not appear to be provisions for license agreements or by-right language for such uses. However,

field observation indicates such activities have been allowed by practice using these types of agreements, though many features of older sites and buildings pre-date common use of these agreements in Victoria (similar to many other cities).

Interviews of city staff indicate that the issuance of license agreements and approval of easements is applied through interpretation of the city manager's authority under the City Charter, and has been used primarily for permanent structures like awning supports, projecting canopies, and grease traps.



Land Development and Development Standards

Victoria is somewhat unique in that it does not have zoning to regulate land use. The lack of zoning can be beneficial in a downtown environment, which predates zoning as an urban planning concept and thrives on organic, incremental change based on shifting market interests. However, this does not imply that land development is without regulation affecting bulk and use or that Victoria lacks development standards explicitly tied to land use.

Subdivision and Use

The act of subdividing land is not typically regarded as a land use-related activity, beyond issues of traffic impact analysis and lot dimensional standards. Rather than lot dimensional standards being tied to a zoning district, Victoria instead links lot dimensional standards to the land's planned use by the person subdividing. In Victoria, the use must be designated on the subdivision plat, effectively restricting the lot to that use in perpetuity. With such a restriction placed on the plat, the alteration would require a replat, or risk creating a "cloud" on the title. A replat requirement in such a circumstance introduces a procedural step not common in most cities for a use change. It is not clear if changes in density or intensity could similarly prompt such a replat process. Likewise, the language of the regulation and applied practice may differ.

Subsequent interviews with city staff indicate this provision is not enforced with change of use, and there are no reports of the plat language resulting in title clouds.

Street Design

Street specifications are wide and suburban, presenting issues of compatibility with the Downtown environment and surrounding neighborhoods. Street design in regulatory code is less of a concern in an established area unless a developer performs substantial land assembly or the city as a matter of practice requires right-of-way dedication at the time of replat to a prescribed right-of-way in Downtown. There does not appear to be language granting the city engineer discretion and professional judgment to allow alternative sections, though subsequent staff interviews indicate the city engineer's authority to consider alternative sections is contained in street design manuals.

References to the Institute of Transportation Engineers documents appear outdated. Victoria references the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), but does not use the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). Cities increasingly use NACTO in downtown settings to more effectively address the context and balanced needs of pedestrians.





Lot Dimensional Standards and Use

Despite the lack of zoning, lot standards are still established based on use.

- Small cottage lots are allowed, but limited to historic districts. Facade setbacks for garages are required, and 50 percent of the front facade of the house must be comprised of a porch.
- Duplexes have increased lot widths as compared to other residential types, potentially interfering with incremental adaptive reuse.
- Townhouses also have slightly increased setbacks as compared to small cottage lots, which is unusual given that townhouses are considered a denser housing product. This lot type introduces a maximum density of 18 units per acre, which is consistent with common densities for townhouses. Townhouses have a 70 percent lot coverage restriction. This is unusual, as the less intense single-family home category lacks such a lot coverage restriction.
- Patio homes are similar to small cottage lots, but with slightly different setbacks. This lot type introduces the potential for zero-lot line projects, which must be grouped as a minimum of four lots.
- Multiple-family has substantially increased lot size and width limits, along with separation standards

between buildings. Some cities rely on building separation language contained in the building codes. The higher lot size and width may interfere with adaptive reuse and infill. Development is allowed a maximum of 27 units per acre. Urban residential, like one might encounter in a typical downtown setting, is typically much higher. In surprising contrast to townhouses, multiple-family does not establish a maximum lot coverage.

- Commercial has significant minimum lot sizes, minimum lot widths, and minimum setbacks that appear written for a suburban, auto-oriented context. These standards appear to conflict with the historic rhythm and form of development in Downtown Victoria. There do not appear to be any exceptions for downtown, meaning that infill development consistent with current form requires variances.

It is not clear how a vertical mixed-use property would be treated under the above lot standards, further indicating the suburban pattern of use separation contemplated by the regulations.

Subsequent interviews of city staff indicate commercial standards are applied to vertical mixed use, and the variance process with City Council is used to rectify. This can cause unnecessary delays and uncertainty.

Parking

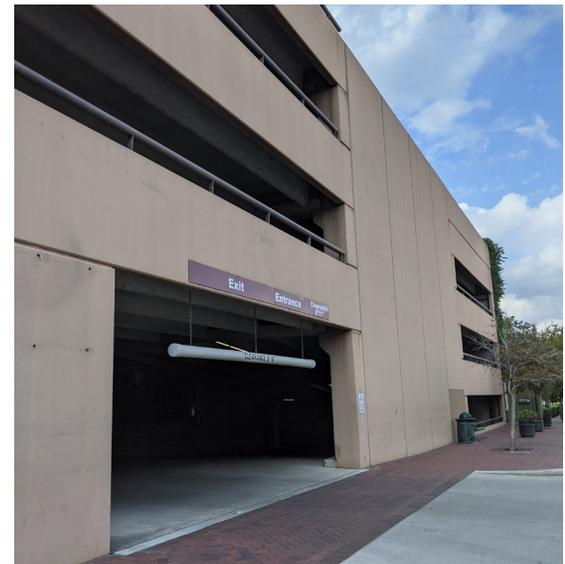
Victoria establishes minimum parking ratios based on land use. Like many cities, these ratios are suburban in nature based on an auto-dependent development pattern and separation of uses. The downtown business district is exempted from these minimum parking ratios, but this district comprises a limited portion of the study area. In addition, the director has discretion to waive parking standards for properties in historic districts. Some cities have determined that the market is the better arbiter of minimum parking need, removing minimum parking ratios in an effort to enable downtown redevelopment and adaptive reuse.

The minimum parking ratios indicate some inconsistencies:

- A townhouse requires 2.5 spaces per unit, but duplexes, tri-plexes, and four-plexes require only 2 spaces per unit. Townhouses and multi-family with three or more bedrooms requires more parking per unit (2.5 or more spaces per unit) than single-family, even though single-family detached homes typically have larger household sizes and a greater proportion of 3+ bedrooms.
- Non-residential uses are separated into an extensive list of parking categories with different ratios, which may result in challenges to change of use despite there being little data indicating such nuance between use parking demands is necessary.

It should be noted that Victoria provides some discretionary flexibility for historic structures. Victoria does not, however, have in place a shared parking incentive, calculation method recognizing mixed use parking efficiency or an established method for an applicant to analyze and propose an alternative.

In addition, Victoria has a 2-hour on-street parking restriction. This restriction is not routinely enforced. Likewise, city staff has indicated the private garages are commonly used for public parking in the evenings and on weekends, despite signage indicating otherwise. Handicap-accessible parking is inconsistent and not always where expected.



Landscaping and Screening

Victoria has a simple landscape requirement, in most cases requiring ten percent of the lot area be landscaped. There is no exemption or modification for the Downtown area, despite its character and building placement being radically different from the rest of the city. There is a provision for alternative compliance

with administrative discretionary approval. This discretion is used routinely in the downtown business district.

Victoria's code requires screening between any multi-family or non-residential land use when adjacent to single-family or duplex homes. Duplexes, tri-plexes and townhomes with less than three units on

a lot are treated as single-family. It is also unclear how such standards might apply to adaptive reuse, particularly a circumstance in which a large home might be divided into multiple apartment units.



Building Design

Victoria is lightly prescriptive on building design, limiting regulation primarily to building height in addition to the setbacks and special standards for small cottage lots described above. Residential building height is limited to 40 feet, and appears applicable to all residential building types. There is no restriction for non-residential buildings except when adjacent to residential. When adjacent to residential, the 40-foot limit applies except that some increase is allowed based on increasing setbacks.

It is not clear how building height standards might apply to a mixed-use building. Likewise, it is not clear how the limits apply in an adaptive reuse scenario in which a commercial building becomes residential. There are no special provisions for the downtown area or for urban residential formats that might exceed 40 feet.

Infill development has not been a common issue, so the city would rely on variance processes in a similar manner to other regulatory issues discussed in this Chapter.



ECONOMIC & MARKET ANALYSIS

CONTEXT

The purpose of this section of the report is to review key economic indicators for Downtown that describe the current situation. The combination of data analysis, market trends, stakeholder input, and successful strategies from other communities helped identify future economic development opportunities for Downtown over the next five to ten years.

Note that much of the data that will be presented in this section is at the census tract level. Downtown Victoria is slightly smaller than Census Tract 1.

Map 21. Census Tract 1 Map



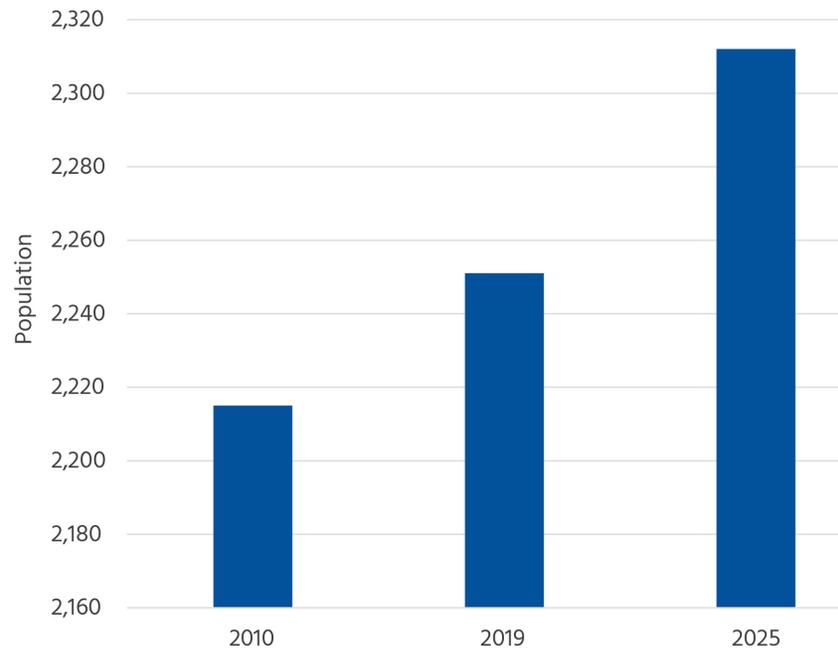
POPULATION

Since 2010, the City of Victoria has grown 6.8 percent while adding nearly 5,000 new residents. The 2019 population estimate for Victoria as a whole is 66,916 residents. Over this same period, Downtown added approximately 100 new residents or a 4.5

percent growth rate. Currently, 2,300 people live in the Downtown area. As a point of reference, the State of Texas' population has expanded 14.9 percent since 2010. Over the next five years, Downtown's population is projected to remain relatively constant

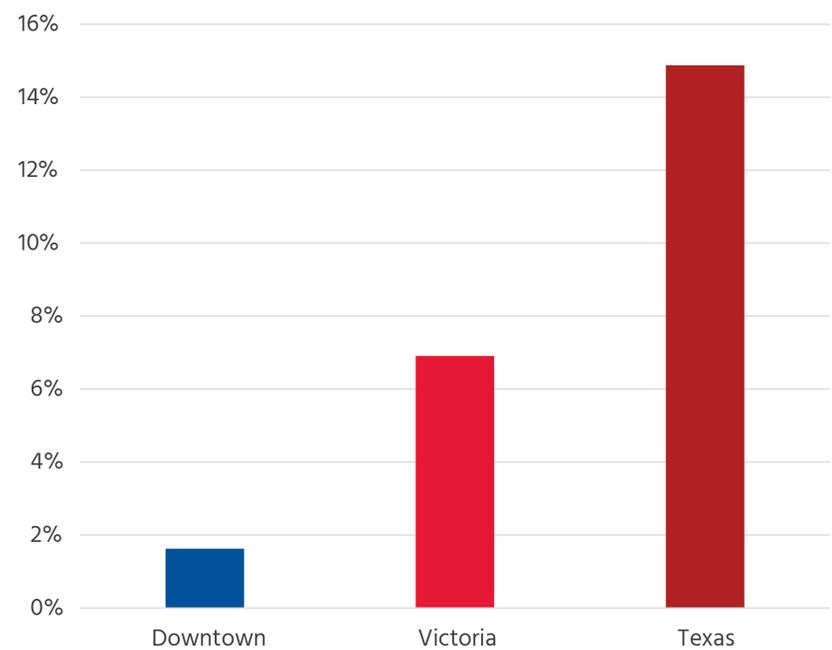
without a significant new residential project that increases the housing supply in Downtown.

Figure 3. Downtown Population



Source: US Census Bureau 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates, ESRI

Figure 4. Percent Change in Population from 2010 to 2019



Source: US Census Bureau 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

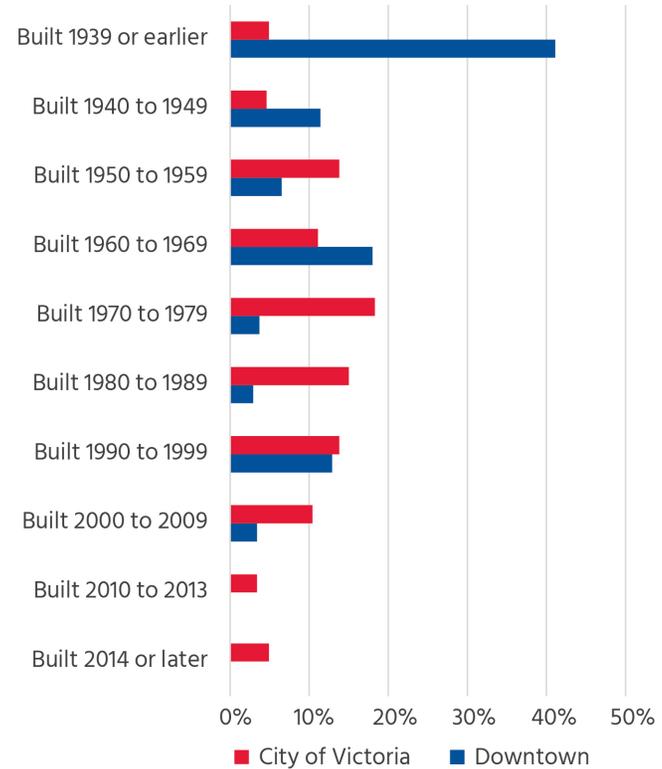
HOUSING TRENDS

Age of Structure

According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, there are currently 734 housing units in Downtown. Similar to the city as a whole, two thirds of the units are owner-occupied and one third are renter-occupied. According to the US Census Bureau, no new housing units have been built in Downtown over the last 10 years.



Figure 5. Year Housing Structures Built as Percentage of Total



Source: US Census Bureau 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Household Income

In 2019, the median household income for the City of Victoria residents was \$56,834 versus \$37,891 for Downtown residents. Ten years ago, the median household income for City of Victoria residents was \$48,767 versus \$48,304 for Downtown residents. The household income statistics do have a direct impact on the types of retail and entertainment options that will be attracted to this area of Victoria.

Figure 6. Household Income 2019

Income Level	Downtown Victoria	City of Victoria
Less than \$10,000	8.2%	6.0%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	13.2%	4.5%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	16.3%	10.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	9.5%	9.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	11.6%	13.6%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	12.6%	16.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	12.8%	13.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	12.4%	14.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1.8%	6.0%
\$200,000+	1.5%	5.0%
Median income	\$37,891	\$56,834

Source: US Census Bureau 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Demand

The limited amount of new Downtown housing built over the past decade combined with a declining median household income indicates there has not been sufficient demand to justify building new housing in this area. In addition, Victoria’s overall slow population growth creates additional uncertainty for residential builders. The historic character of Downtown could be attractive for many buyers and renters looking to live in Victoria. The challenge going forward is to generate demand for new and renovated housing at a price point residents likely can afford while minimizing the financial risk to residential builders.



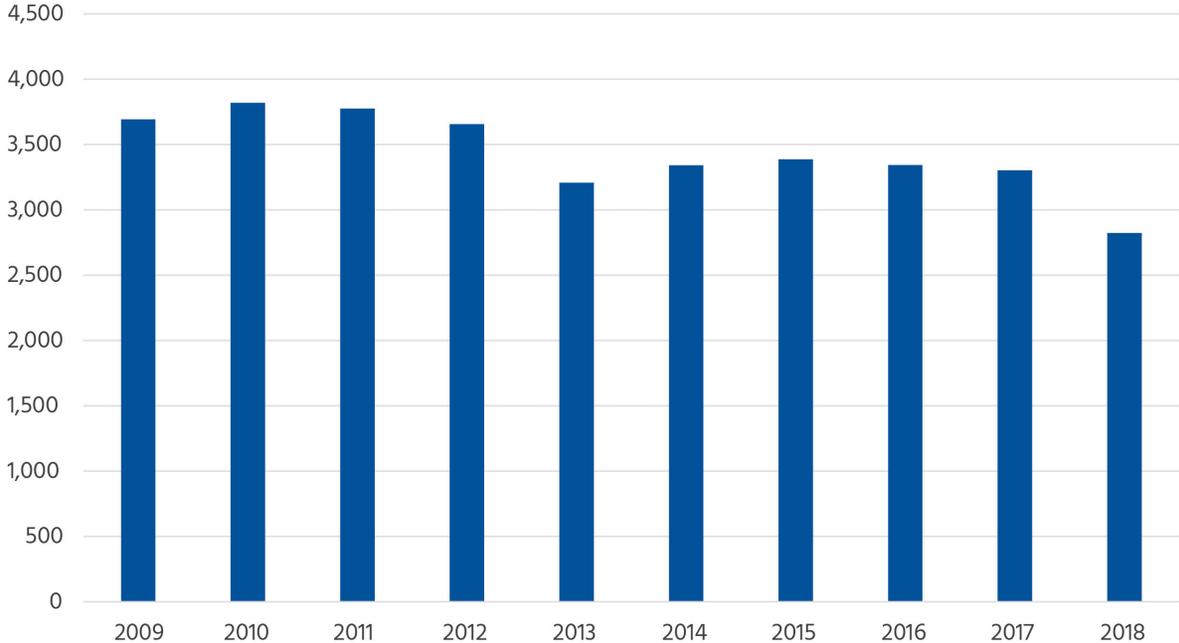
EMPLOYMENT

Consistent with population trends, employment at Downtown businesses has been flat over the past few years. Total employment at businesses located in Downtown is about 3,000 workers. The City of Victoria’s employment trends also follow a similar pattern; however, the percent that Downtown employment contributes to the city’s overall employment has

changed. In 2009, Downtown employment represented 12.4 percent of city-wide jobs. By 2018, this figure had dropped to 9.2 percent. Downtown’s location was not geographically appropriate for many of the business sectors that expanded over the past decade including wholesale trade, transportation, and warehousing. As a result, Downtown has lost about 800 jobs

since 2009. This statistic can be somewhat misleading because a firm located in Downtown might have satellite locations and employees can be spread out within a community, but all employees are counted at the headquarters location (e.g., a school district central office). These trends are consistent with growth of Victoria shifting away from Downtown.

Figure 7. Downtown Victoria Employment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap LEHD

Since Victoria is the county seat, it is not surprising that Downtown has a heavy concentration of public sector jobs and law offices seeking close proximity to the courthouse. Victoria's historic role as a banking and financial center contributes to many financial services and banking firms in Downtown. Relative to the community as a whole, Downtown has far fewer retail trade, accommodation, and food services based jobs. Many of these firms that are located in Downtown close in the early evening as workers return home.

This is a contrast to trends in many other downtowns, which have lost daytime employment while increasing nightlife activity, dining, and boutique retail as a local destination for entertainment. Those downtowns are often seeking ways to increase daytime activity, which is seen by some as more difficult. Victoria is in a position to leverage daytime employment population in Downtown to build evening activity.

Figure 8. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (2018)

Income Level	Downtown Victoria		City of Victoria	
	Jobs	%	Jobs	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	66	2.3%	91	0.3%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	9	0.3%	1,083	3.5%
Utilities	46	1.6%	208	0.7%
Construction	49	1.7%	1,451	4.7%
Manufacturing	29	1.0%	1,194	3.9%
Wholesale Trade	2	0.1%	1,946	6.4%
Retail Trade	95	3.4%	4,310	14.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	52	1.8%	963	3.1%
Information	123	4.4%	363	1.2%
Finance and Insurance	375	13.3%	1,068	3.5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	36	1.3%	380	1.2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	256	9.1%	1,060	3.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	83	2.9%	127	0.4%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	282	10.0%	1,122	3.7%
Educational Services	27	1.0%	3,312	10.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	364	12.9%	5,478	17.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	0.3%	332	1.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	97	3.4%	3,469	11.3%
Other Services	119	4.2%	1,147	3.8%
Public Administration	705	25.0%	1,468	4.8%
Total	2,823	100.0%	30,572	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap LEHD

As a positive for future retail and entertainment opportunities in Downtown, people are willing to commute to the area. In 2018, 97.6 percent of workers commuted to Downtown to work each day (see Figure 9). Over 40 percent of these Downtown workers drive more than 25 miles to get to their places of employment (see Figure 10). As seen in the Job Counts by Distance and Direction graph, the majority of Downtown workers are commuting to Downtown from areas located north and northeast of Downtown.

Based on current commute patterns and the amount of workers commuting to Downtown, it is clear that the commute is not too demanding or challenging. There is, however, a need to create enough appealing retail, entertainment, and dining opportunities that keep workers in Downtown longer or entice families to return on the weekends.

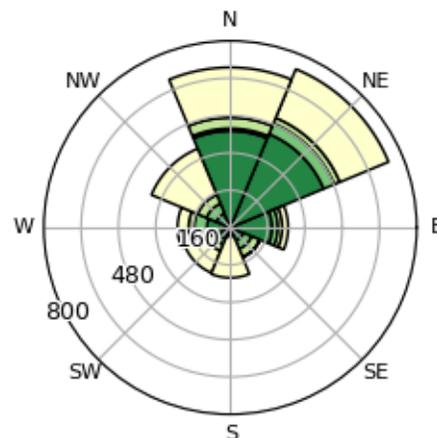
Figure 9. Downtown Victoria Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (2018)

Workers	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	2,823	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	2,756	97.6%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	67	2.4%
Living in the Selection Area	947	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	880	92.9%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	67	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap LEHD

Figure 10. Commuting Distances for Downtown Victoria Workers (2018)

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in
2018 - All Workers



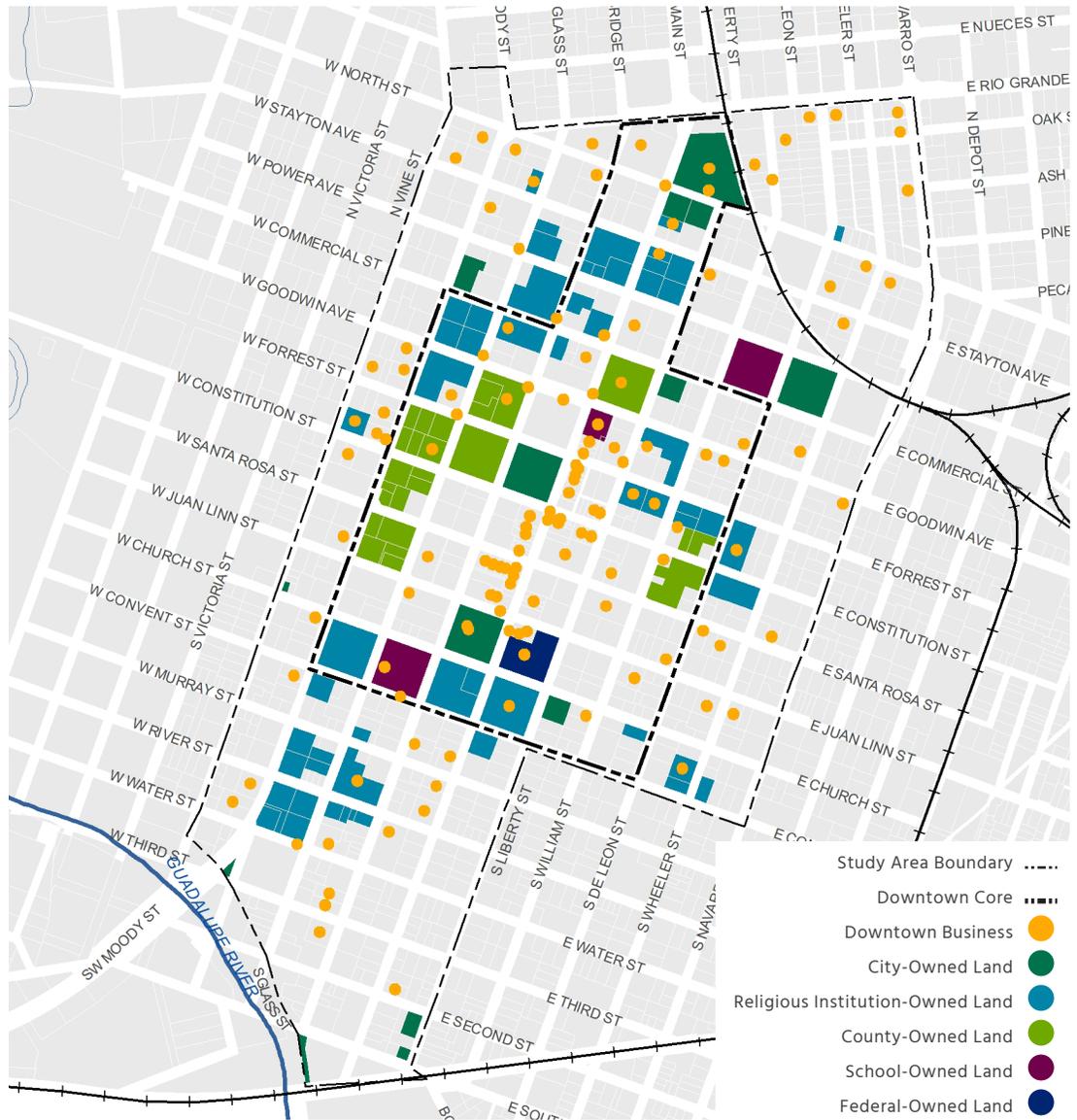
Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap LEHD

Jobs by Distance
Work Census Block to Home Census Block

	2018	
	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	2,823	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	1,341	47.5%
10 to 24 miles	253	9.0%
25 to 50 miles	226	8.0%
Greater than 50 miles	1,003	35.5%

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

Map 22. Downtown Businesses Map



For this assessment, a database of current businesses located in Downtown was acquired from Data Axle – a leading provider of business and consumer data across the United States and Canada. This dataset was used to not only validate the U.S. Census data, but to provide detailed information not found for small areas in public datasets.

According to this dataset, there are about 250 private businesses and organizations located in Downtown. The employment column “Location Employment” (see Figure 11 on next page) is the estimate of actual employees working at this Downtown location. The majority of firms are clustered along the Main Street corridor between West Goodwin Avenue and East Church Street. This is not surprising given that the three larger Downtown buildings are all located within this corridor (O’Connor Plaza, Prosperity Bank Building, and 120 Main Place). Religious institutions along Church Street and Victoria County-owned sites along Bridge and Glass Streets created a barrier to significant business expansion to the west and south. When evaluating future economic development opportunities, Downtown’s east side and portions of the north side have better suited sites for future business recruitment efforts. These parcels can be activated without a resident having to pass through blocks of public sector or religious uses that are typically closed at night with limited weekend activity other than Sundays.



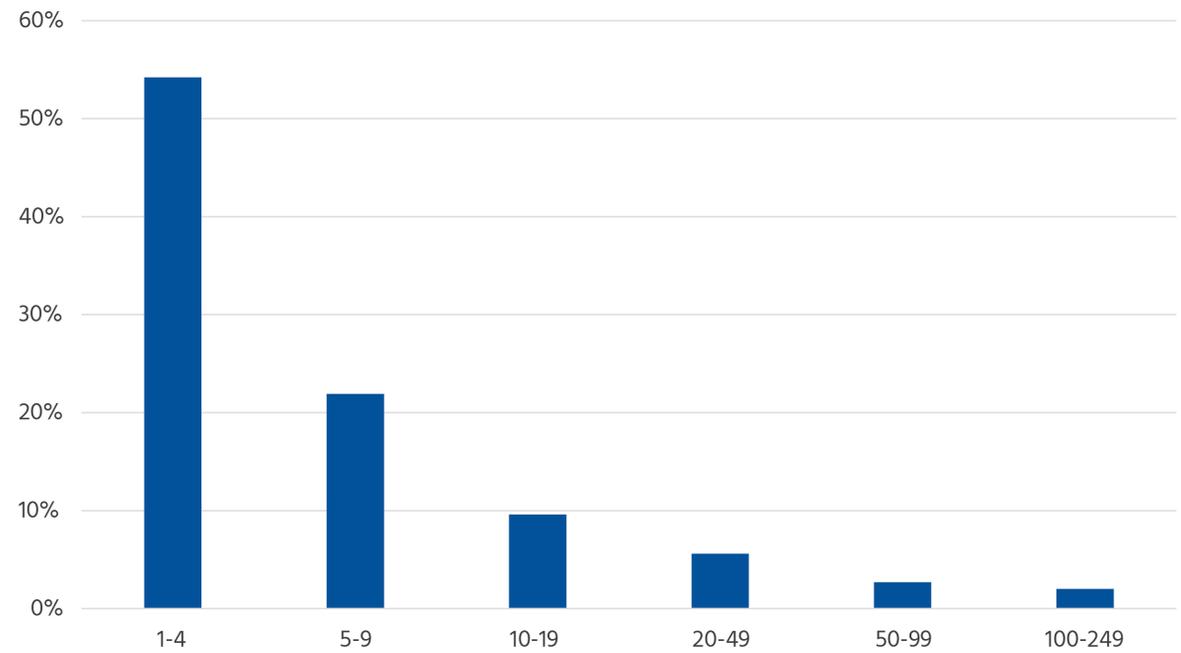
Figure 11. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (2020)

Sector	Number of Firms	Location Employment
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	7	16
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	3	40
Construction	7	50
Manufacturing	1	4
Wholesale Trade	6	71
Retail Trade	12	59
Retail Trade	6	23
Transportation and Warehousing	1	150
Information	3	71
Finance and Insurance	17	148
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3	24
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	75	760
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2	8
Administrative Support and Waste Management Services	7	134
Educational Services	3	78
Health Care and Social Assistance	20	411
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	20
Accommodation and Food Services	12	79
Other Services (except Public Administration)	39	199
Public Administration*	55	744
Non-classified Establishments	14	8
Total	301	3,097

* This includes city and county departments counted separately
 Source: Data Axle

The following figure indicates the size of firms, as measured by number of employees, in Downtown. Over 75 percent of the firms would be classified as small businesses having fewer than 10 employees. Many of these businesses are law firms or other professional services firms that typically locate near courthouses. In addition, the historic buildings in Downtown limit the size employment size of most businesses unless located in one of the larger office buildings.

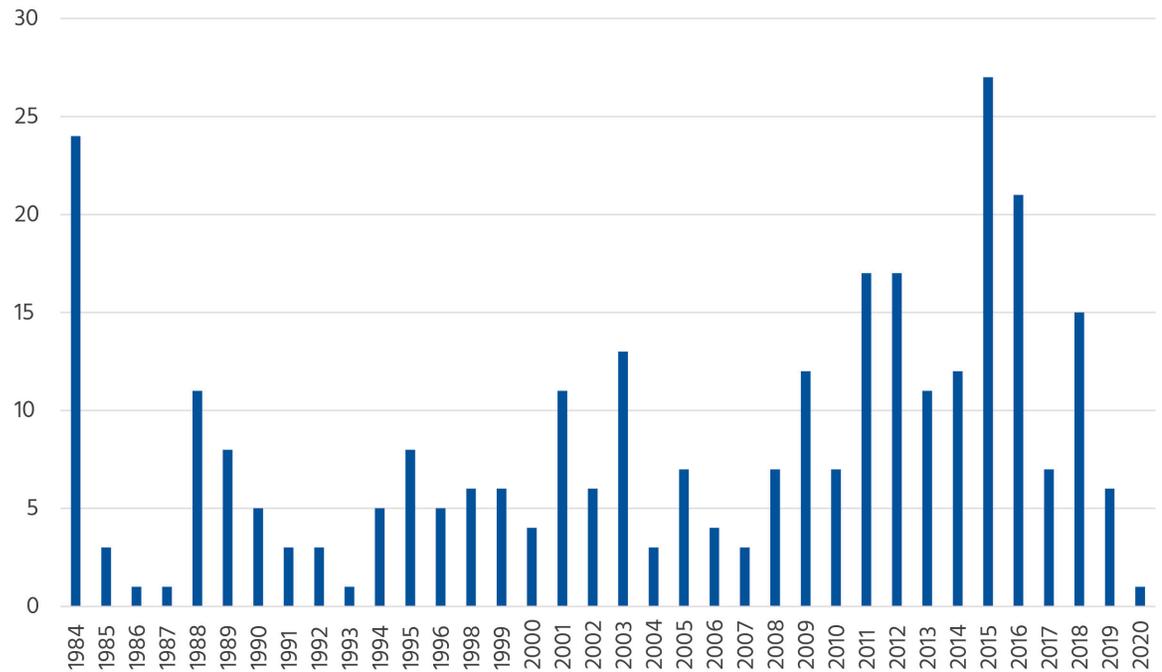
Figure 12. Downtown Businesses by Employment Range (2020)



* This includes city and county departments counted separately
Source: Data Axle

While the businesses in Downtown are smaller, it can be easier to lease the vacant spaces when an establishment closes or moves to another area of the city. As one thinks about supply and demand forces impacting Downtown office space, there appears to be an equilibrium. Each year about five to ten new businesses start in Downtown, likely filling space previously occupied. While older historic downtowns oftentimes have empty buildings that are challenging and costly to rehabilitate, the Downtown employment base remains stable. The challenge for Downtown is the heavy concentration of public sector and law firm-related uses as well as limited entertainment and retail activity.

Figure 13. Downtown Victoria Estimated Year Business Started*



* This includes city and county departments counted separately and older establishments are counted as starting in 1984
 Source: Data Axle

Tourism

Visitor activity has historically played an important role in the overall Victoria economy. Home to the Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, Victoria Public Library, Five Points Museum of Contemporary Art, Nave Museum, and Bootfest, Downtown is especially impacted by arts and culture events and organizations. In 2019, total Victoria direct visitor spending was \$206.5 million and supported over 1,400 local jobs. As important, out-of-town guests generated over \$3.3 million in local tax receipts. Similar to population and employment trends, visitor activity also appears to have leveled off.

Figure 14. Travel Activity in the City of Victoria

Year	Total Direct Travel Spending	Total Direct Earnings	Total Direct Employment	Local Tax Receipts
2006	\$144,151,776	\$28,477,179	1,480	\$2,835,340
2007	\$156,750,774	\$30,795,717	1,550	\$3,052,936
2008	\$160,543,303	\$29,917,165	1,430	\$2,962,996
2009	\$130,752,173	\$27,969,826	1,280	\$2,723,378
2010	\$153,688,107	\$30,644,684	1,340	\$3,189,746
2011	\$186,143,734	\$36,092,690	1,530	\$3,989,772
2012	\$194,035,155	\$38,945,125	1,580	\$4,442,558
2013	\$193,419,655	\$37,597,829	1,500	\$4,247,930
2014	\$212,920,307	\$41,187,186	1,610	\$4,882,037
2015	\$180,179,294	\$41,729,462	1,600	\$4,258,567
2016	\$168,560,982	\$39,723,384	1,530	\$3,918,034
2017	\$193,559,706	\$37,594,646	1,380	\$4,615,029
2018	\$205,910,402	\$37,750,532	1,360	\$4,812,178
2019	\$206,468,446	\$39,699,723	1,410	\$4,829,612

Source: State of Texas, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism

While the sample size is small, information reported by D. K. Shifflet & Associates for the Texas Economic Development & Tourism Division of the Governor’s Office highlights the characteristics of visitors to Victoria. Note that visitors are defined as persons that stay overnight away from home or travel more than 50 miles one-way on a non-routine trip.

- The majority of visitors are from two metro areas: San Antonio (64.7 percent) and Houston (23.4 percent)

- The average distance traveled by 94.9 percent of visitors is less than 250 miles
- Vacations are the reason 63.6 percent of visitors go to Victoria
- The average party size is (adults and children) 2.96 people
- Over 88 percent of trips to Victoria are day trips with no hotel or lodging needed
- The average person spends nearly \$50 per person day on food, shopping, and entertainment

Consistently over 250,000 visitors are drawn annually to local arts and culture organization events, exhibitions, and facilities in Downtown. This creates a unique opportunity to leverage and build a culture district around these institutions since visitors come on nights and weekends. For example, one third of Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts attendees live outside of Victoria.

Austin is conspicuously low as a visitor origin despite its similar proximity to Houston and San Antonio, and growing popularity of historic cities like Victoria as nontraditional destinations.

A challenge for Victoria overall and Downtown is to generate enough activity to get day trip visitors to stay overnight. At this point, the tourism statistics do not indicate there are enough attractions to justify spending the night.

Figure 15. Visitor Statistics to Downtown Victoria Arts and Culture Institutions

Fiscal Year	Victoria Public Library	Center for the Performing Arts	Nave Museum
2017	214,278	16,388	3,286
2018	198,207	18,605	3,340
2019	196,602	18,941	3,162

Source: Victoria Public Library, Center for the Performing Arts, and Nave Museum

Tax Revenue

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts provided aggregate data related to sales tax generated by Downtown businesses. This data was divided into two, non-overlapping areas; Downtown Core and Study Area Boundary. Over the past few years, sales tax revenue has increased faster in Downtown than the overall city. Downtown is responsible for just over one percent of total sales tax collections. Given the minimal amount of retail, restaurant, and entertainment options in Downtown, it is unsurprising the low level of sales tax generation.

Figure 16. City of Victoria Sales Tax Revenue Generated by Location (1.5%)

Year	Downtown Core	Study Area Boundary	City of Victoria
2016	\$75,933	\$175,450	\$23,849,611
2017	\$92,436	\$169,656	\$23,042,016
2018	\$102,632	\$177,122	\$25,386,121
2019	\$92,552	\$183,956	\$25,442,764
2020	\$84,157	\$171,560	\$24,506,431
5-Year Change	10.8%	-2.2%	2.8%

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts





Since 2010, the taxable value of property in Downtown has grown 27.9 percent, which is a slower growth rate compared to the City of Victoria rate of 40.1 percent. Interestingly, over the past five years, Downtown property values have increased more than twice as fast as the overall city. Despite not experiencing significant growth over the past ten years, Downtown’s economic base is stable and is reflected in growing property values.

Property values are another indicator used to measure supply and demand for real estate. It appears that the real estate market in Downtown is still somewhat balanced, driven by demand from small businesses. The residential market is more challenging to evaluate since very little new product has been added in this area in many years.

Figure 17. Property Value Trends in Victoria

Year	Downtown		City of Victoria	
	Appraised Value	Taxable Value	Appraised Value	Taxable Value
2010	\$97,058,513	\$74,152,483	\$3,636,165,609	\$3,196,650,720
2015	\$107,665,233	\$83,534,013	\$4,897,096,431	\$4,293,969,354
2020	\$120,923,248	\$94,853,568	\$5,106,535,226	\$4,477,646,547
5-Year Change	13.7%	15.3%	5.8%	5.7%
10-Year Change	24.6%	27.9%	40.4%	40.1%

Source: TXP, Victoria Central Appraisal District

Appraised vs. Taxable

Appraised value refers to the market value of a property.

Taxable value refers to the assessed property value minus the property tax exemptions. This determines the property owner’s tax liability.

Short-term Economic Development Opportunities

Downtown will continue to be significantly influenced by the overall regional economy. Victoria County is not projected to experience dramatic population or employment growth over the next decade. This creates challenges and opportunities to draw businesses, residents, and tourists back to the Downtown area. Fortunately, Downtown's stable daytime employment base can be leveraged to support new opportunities. Unlike a more rapidly growing community, there is not an immediate or obvious method to forecast new residential growth for Downtown. Since 2000, Victoria County has averaged approximately 100 new single-family residential homes per year. Opportunities for new residential units will likely be smaller in scale such as infill redevelopment spread throughout the north and east sections of Downtown. The community will have to proactively create demand for new economic development projects in the Downtown. The following emerged as key "target markets" or "demand drivers" for the next five to ten years (see next page).





Create a Cultural District to Drive and Focus Tourism Marketing Efforts

Many of the assets are already in place to increase cultural tourism in Downtown. Centered on De Leon Plaza and the Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, proactive efforts should be made to link the activity of these institutions to maximize drawing in residents and tourists. Attracting complementary restaurant, retail, and entertainment to the South Main Street Corridor creates a critical mass needed for businesses to stay open later in the evening and weekends. Downtown does not currently have enough demand to spread these businesses throughout the area. Therefore, it will be important to focus on a small subarea over the next few years. The Palace Theatre in Georgetown, Texas is a good example of using arts and culture programming in the evenings to drive demand at adjacent shops and restaurants.

Focus on Retail, Restaurants, and Entertainment Businesses that also Appeal to Visitors

Victoria is primarily a day trip destination. These are visitors looking to explore unique offerings in a community. Many of the businesses found near the intersection of North Navarro Street and Zac Lentz Parkway are found in most cities throughout Texas. However, the historic buildings within Downtown plus cultural amenities can offer something different. Asking residents to return to Downtown for dinner and entertainment will take time, but out-of-town visitors are an immediate opportunity. This will require the City of Victoria to continue offering grants and incentives to rehabilitate and modernize existing spaces and infrastructure. The upfront costs associated with these upgrades increase the cost and lower the return on investment (ROI) for businesses wanting to be in Downtown. If there is enough to do in Victoria, this will then translate into the need more hotels and lodging in Downtown.

Incentivize Infill Residential Projects and Townhomes

For over a decade there has not been substantial new residential activity in Downtown. While Downtown's location in an Opportunity Zone is helpful, the first few projects will likely need to be incentivized. Like other downtowns in Texas, the public sector will need to help mitigate the risk for developers willing to take a risk on this submarket. The City should use its incentive tools to promote housing in key sections of Downtown that can help create demand for existing and future restaurants. An initial goal of 50 new units is an appropriate starting point.

Opportunity Zones

An Opportunity Zone is an economic development tool that allows cities to encourage investment in low income areas and spur job creation and economic growth.



Offer Publicly Owned Properties to Spur Development

Related to offering incentives to new residential projects, the public sector (City and County) owns a lot of property in Downtown. These entities should collaborate on a facilities study to determine long-term needs for office space and parking. As demand for new projects grows, the City and County should be willing to offer the land as part of an incentive package. Not only does this lower the cost of the project, but the developer might be able to use the land as equity. While it can be controversial to offer public land to developers, competitive incentives will be needed to jump-start activity in Downtown. The City of Burleson, Texas is using this strategy to support the development of 60,000 square feet of commercial space across from City Hall.

High-Speed Broadband Access is Key to Diversifying Downtown Business

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness that professionals can work from anywhere if there is reliable high-speed internet access that is easily accessible. Downtown could be the perfect location for firms looking for less expensive options or employees who prefer to live outside of a major urban center. While a few major buildings in Downtown might have access to quality broadband, being able to market affordable internet speed of up to one gigabit per second could be a differentiator when compared to other parts of Victoria. In addition, these networks could serve tourists who come to the area.

These strategies represent both the opportunities and barriers to new development in Downtown. In sum, Victoria should seek to strategically increase the supply of entertainment, restaurant, and retail opportunities to generate demand for the Downtown area. Without these initiatives, Downtown will continue to maintain but not grow its existing level of economic activity.

CATALYST LOCATIONS

The map on the next page shows the intersection of all of the elements that create catalyst locations in the study area. The catalyst locations are areas that have the highest potential of being redeveloped and ultimately transform Downtown Victoria. These locations also have the highest potential to have a positive impact on Downtown Victoria's economy.

Downtown Victoria is a place full of potential. It is a valuable asset to the City of Victoria, the region, and the State. This master plan will build on the understanding of the study area, the community's input, and Victoria's rich history. Potential development and reinvestment areas are considered in the following three categories:

Redevelopment/Infill Potential

These areas may have a potential for demolition or more significant/larger infill.

Reinvestment Potential

These areas are more appropriate for smaller efforts to improve existing structures/uses.

Unlikely for Redevelopment or Reinvestment in Near Future

While these areas won't likely have a change in use, there may be opportunities for smaller scale improvements such as sidewalks, parking lot landscaping, lighting, and incentives to encourage property owners to improve their homes/buildings.





2 VISION & GOALS



LEO J. WELDER
CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

WELCOME TO
LEO J. WELDER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

NO PARKING
EXCEPT FOR
LOADING AND UNLOADING

COMMUNITY INPUT

Great planning involves the public and community stakeholders from the beginning of the process. This involvement allows the plan to build on local ideas and values and creates a sense of ownership by the community. This Downtown Plan is derived from a variety of public engagement methods that include Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) meetings, stakeholder interviews, public input exercises, and online surveys.

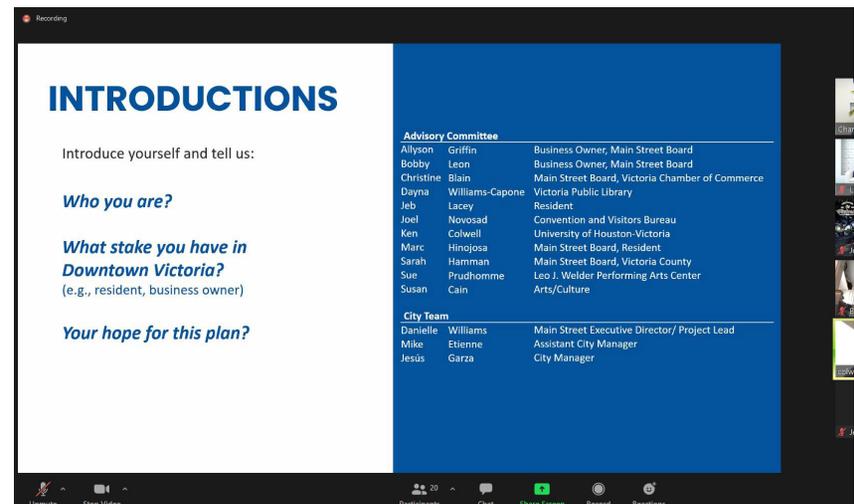
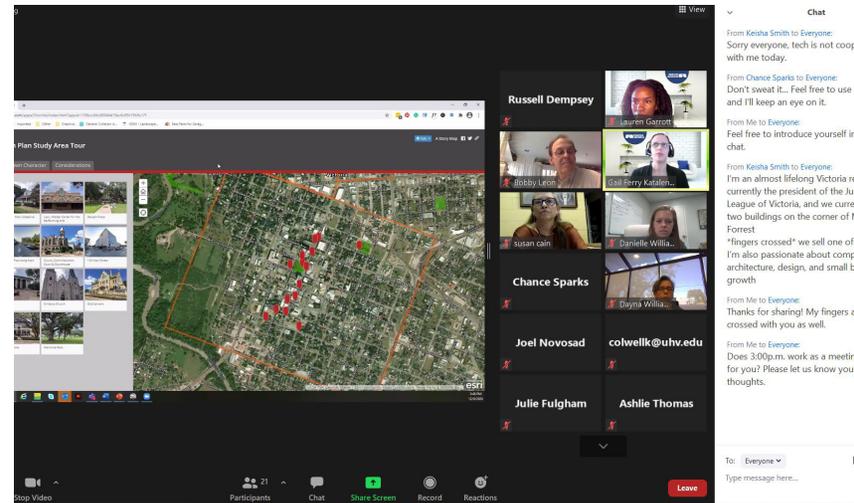


ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Advisory Committee Meeting #1: 12.09.20

The first DAC meeting for the Victoria Downtown Master Plan took place on December 9, 2020. The DAC is made up of stakeholders from various agencies, neighborhoods, and businesses. In addition to the Committee, City staff, Main Street Program staff, and staff from the City Manager’s Office attended the meeting. The consultant team from Freese and Nichols, Inc. facilitated the meeting.

The meeting consisted of a presentation, including introductions, project overview, downtown core discussion, and a virtual study area tour. The DAC participated in exercises to help develop the vision and goals for Downtown. Highlights of an assets, opportunities, challenges, and desired changes conversation are found on the following page.





ASSETS • OPPORTUNITIES • CHALLENGES • CHANGES

1 ASSETS



Library



Local Businesses



Theater



History/Historic Buildings



DeLeon Plaza



Museum and Art

2 OPPORTUNITIES



Downtown support and development



Redevelop historic buildings



More live/work/play mixed use development to attract more users



Creative event spaces



Conversion of vacant lots into productive spaces

3 CHALLENGES



Identity crisis - urban or rural?



Lack of connection of uses in some areas & the southern part of Downtown



Vacant/underutilized buildings



Real estate challenge (high-cost)



Public restroom access

4 WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE



Greater diversity of businesses



Vacant properties should be used or sold



Placement of amenities to create synergy



Affordable real estate



Entertainment



Arts district

Advisory Committee Meeting #2: 01.27.21

The second DAC meeting took place on January 27, 2021. The meeting consisted of a review of community input, and an overview of Downtown's existing conditions and economic and market conditions. Following the presentation, the Committee participated in a discussion to help identify development opportunities in the study area.

BUILDING DESIGN

Opportunity

- Repurpose old theater
- Play House
- St. Mary's renovation
- Old convent could become a hotel / conference center / shopping or gallery area
- Implement architectural standards
- Code enforcement

Problem

- Lack of business signage
- ADA accessibility
- Run down buildings
- Absentee property owners

I Have an Idea

- Relocate library and expand

Map Legend:
Opportunity (Blue dot)
Problem Area (Red dot)
I Have an Idea (Yellow dot)
Unorganized (Green dot)

Advisory Committee Meeting #3: 03.19.21

The next DAC was held on March 19, 2021. This in-person meeting was held before a weekend community event. The consultant team provided an overview of the upcoming community event and discussed the draft vision and goals with the committee.

DRAFT VISION

*Downtown Victoria is a **regional hub for innovation, history, arts and culture**. The community supports the local **businesses** and enjoys the **thriving entertainment district**. Visitors spend time here because the **gathering spaces are safe and comfortable**. Downtown Victoria celebrates its **history** while being **forward thinking, innovative and connected**.*

Advisory Committee Meeting #6: 09.29.21

The final DAC meeting was held in late September 2021. The planning team presented a summary of the planning process and deliverables including an overview of input received, an update on feedback heard during the community event and City Council workshop that took place in September, and a review of recommended projects and potential economic development tools. Plan recommendations were discussed as a whole, as well as the 10 highest impact projects and 10 “easy win” actions. The DAC provided their final feedback on the Plan and proceeded to recommend that the Plan be presented to City Council for consideration of adoption.

ART WALK

- 150+ conversations (all positive in-person)
- 89 survey responses
- General positive comments
- Specific positive comments focused on creating excitement and things to do
- Neutral/Skeptical comments focused on:
 - How to pay
 - Why downtown vs. other parts of the city
 - Needs to address other city issues



ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

BUILT ENVIRONMENT (44)	POLICIES (21)	PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONS (27)
		
		

ONLINE SURVEY

Overview

An online public survey was launched to gather input from the community regarding Downtown priorities, existing conditions in the area, and opportunities for the future of Downtown Victoria. The survey was open from December 21, 2020 to January 15, 2021 and was completed by 747 participants. The survey was promoted through the City's website, email blast, and social media. The results are summarized on the following pages, with detailed results included in the Appendix.

Figure 18. Residency

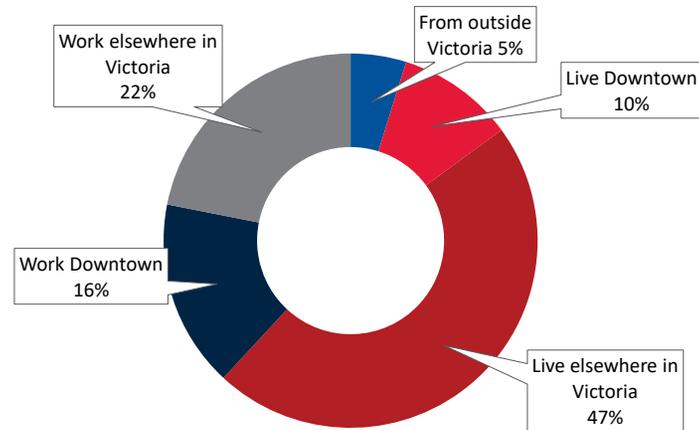


Figure 19. Which days do you visit Downtown?

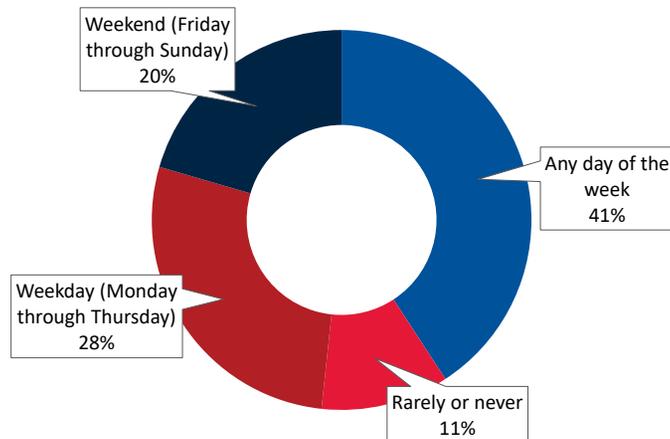
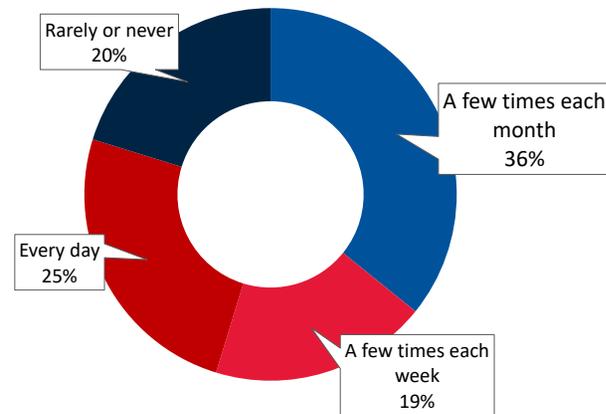


Figure 20. Frequency of visits Downtown



What do you think the priorities should be for Downtown?

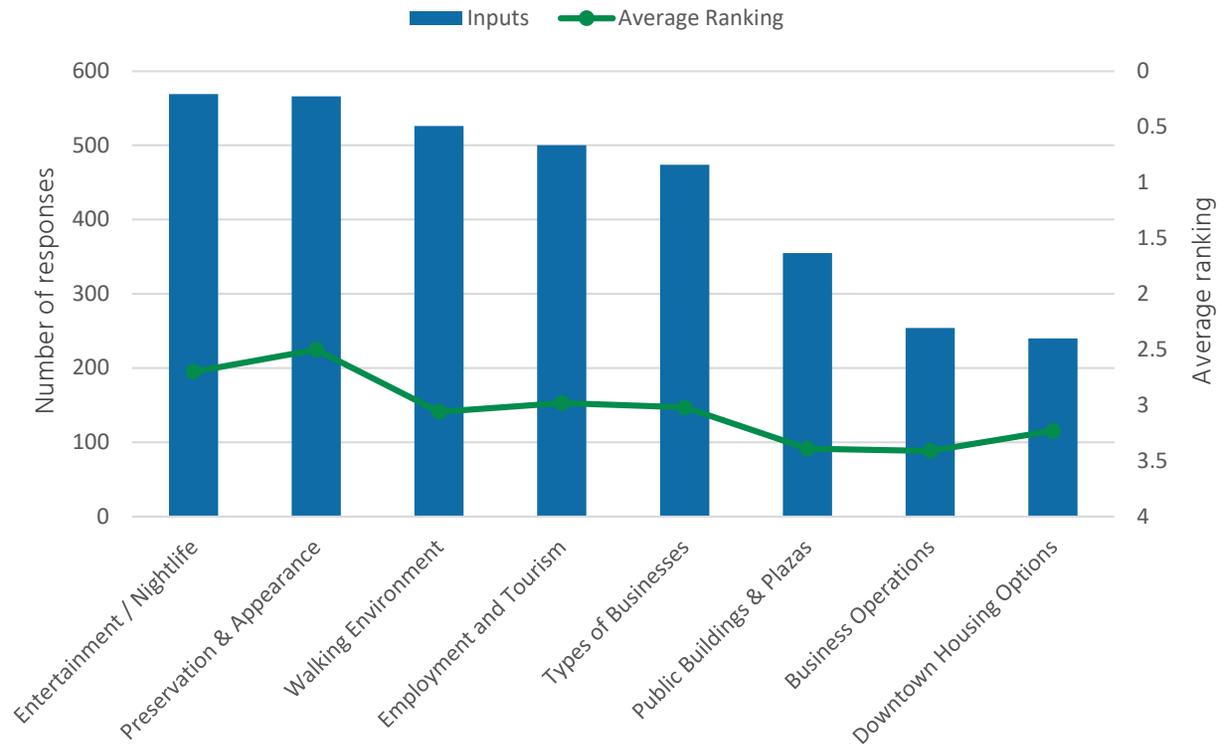
When asked to choose their top five priorities for Downtown Victoria, the majority of survey respondents chose design and appearance, walking environment, and entertainment/nightlife.

This is consistent with the input received during other engagement opportunities.

In addition to choosing their priorities, respondents provided open-ended comments about their answers. Highlights include the following:

- Pedestrian connectivity is important both within Downtown and connecting other areas to it
- Desire for a vibrant Downtown with activities and socializing opportunities that extend into the evening and on weekends
- Desire for greater business variety in Downtown with more food options, retail, bars, creative spaces/galleries, etc.
- Desire to preserve and celebrate the history of Victoria while encouraging complementary infill development
- Interest in additional community events at varying scales

Figure 21. Downtown Priorities



Inputs were the number of times it was selected as a priority, and average ranking is how high it was rated when selected.

- Concern about the amount and location of parking
- Desire for high-quality, family-friendly outdoor spaces

After providing overall rankings, respondents were asked for further input about their top five priorities. The following pages illustrate the responses and key highlights from each.

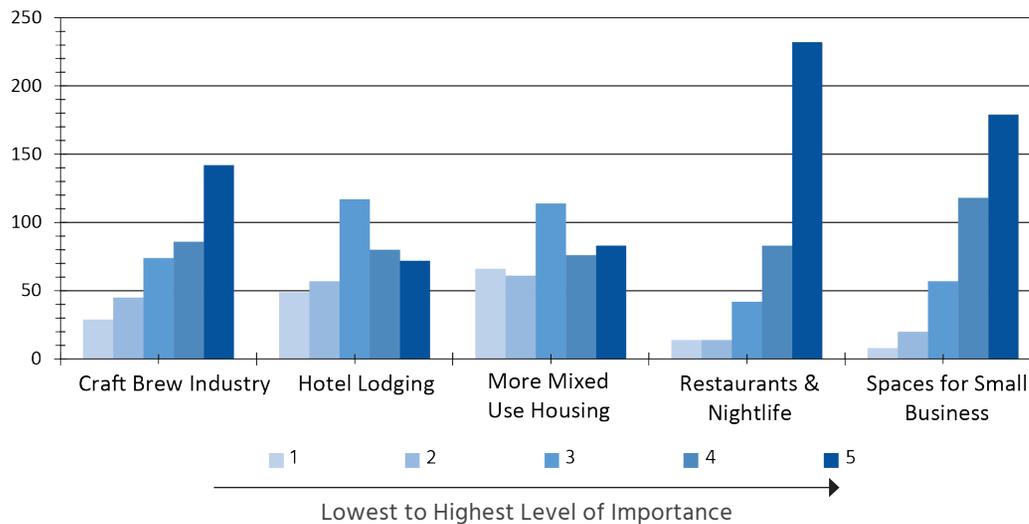
Rate CURRENT SATISFACTION with these business operations issues.



Highlights from comments:

- Extend hours of operation for Downtown businesses to include evenings and weekends
- Increase variety of businesses
- Need for affordable high-speed internet
- Improve signage

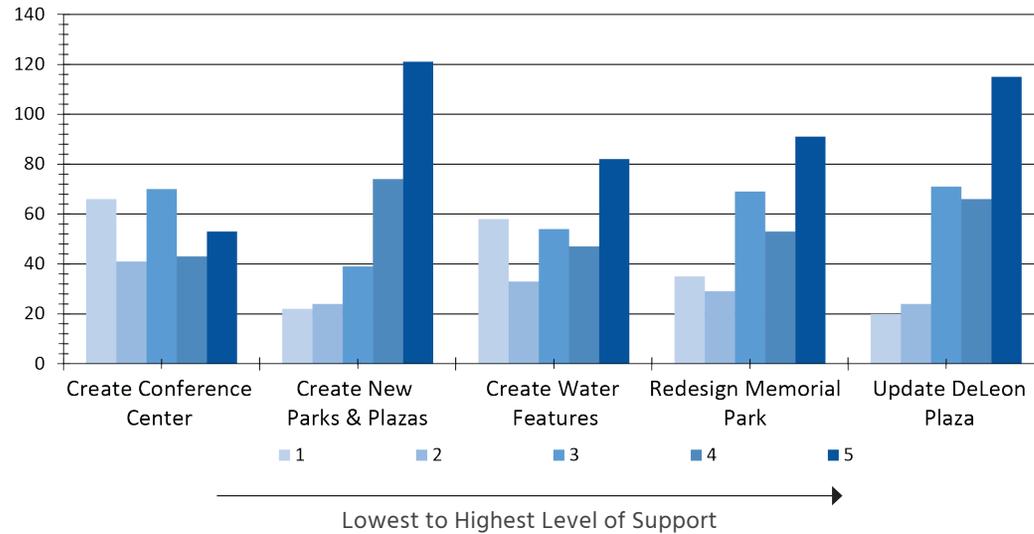
Rate the IMPORTANCE of these development types in Downtown.



Highlights from comments:

- Craft brewing would be a great addition to Downtown
- Reuse historic buildings by converting them to housing
- Improve the streets in the area
- Focus on affordable rent
- Locally owned businesses

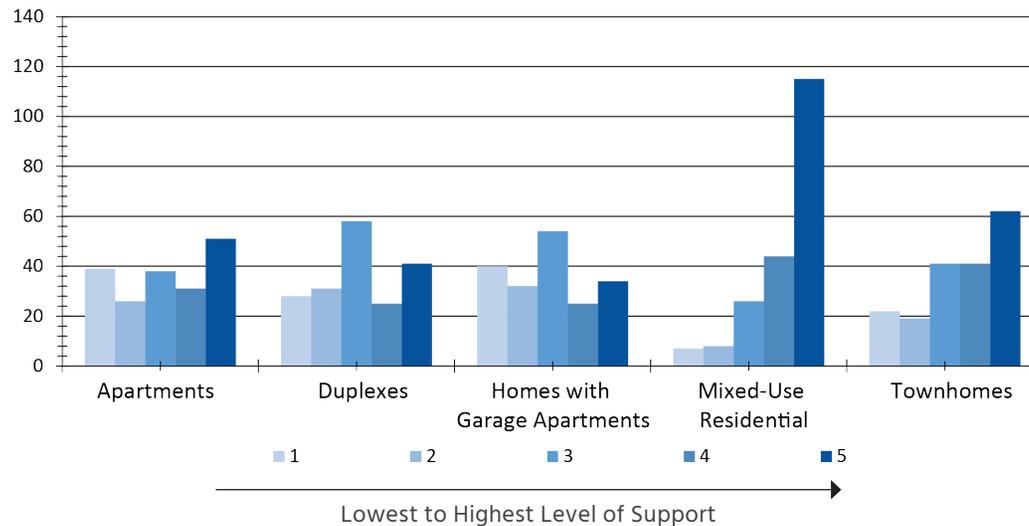
Rate your SUPPORT for these Downtown public space ideas.



Highlights from comments:

- Outdoor dining
- Improve existing parks and plazas
- Close some streets for pedestrians

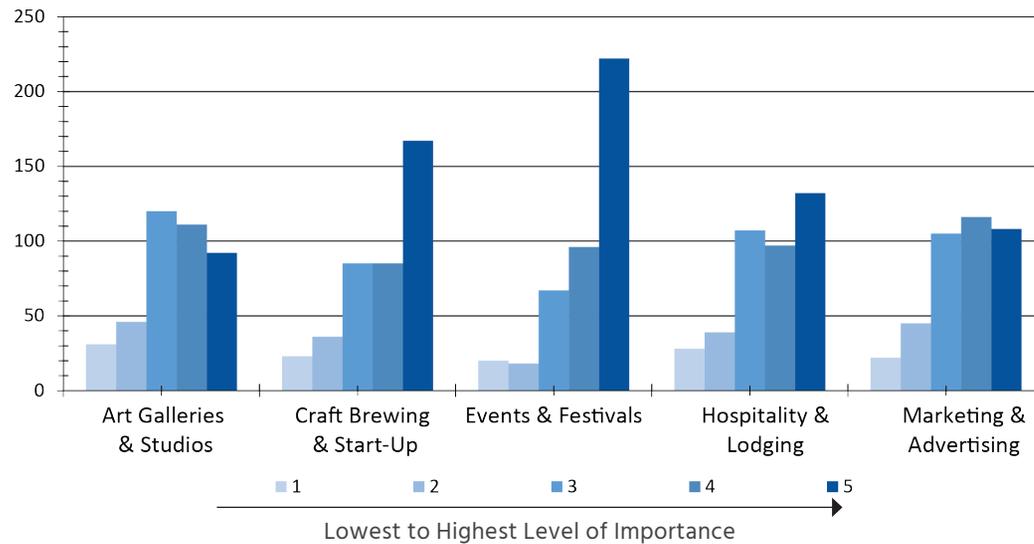
Rate your SUPPORT for the following approaches to increasing Downtown housing.



Highlights from comments:

- Add loft style apartments
- Improve infrastructure and amenities Downtown
- Provide housing for all income levels

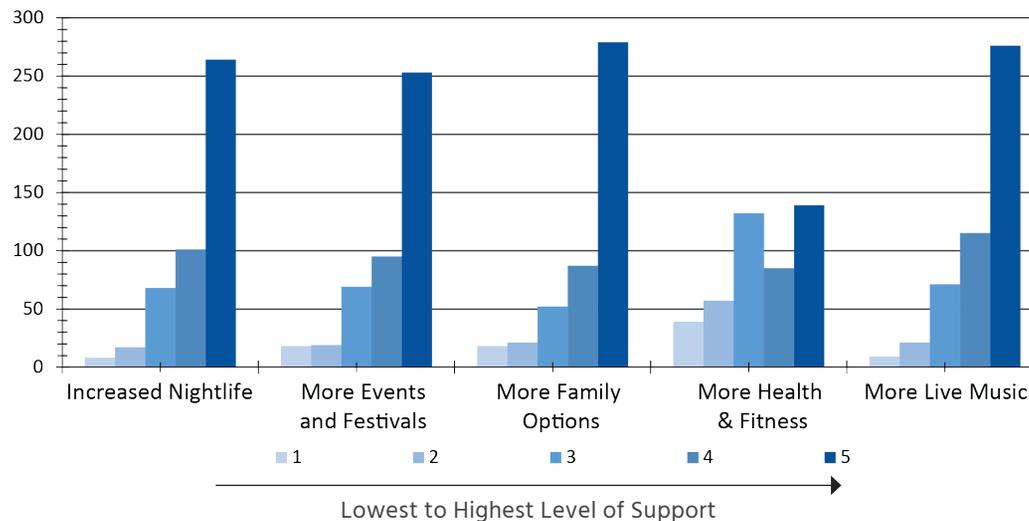
Rate the IMPORTANCE of the following employment and tourism opportunities in Downtown.



Highlights from comments:

- More festivals and events that appeal to everyone
- Live music
- Increase advertisements of events Downtown
- Help beautify Downtown after events
- Address congestion Downtown during events
- Find a way to control drinking and driving
- Incorporate signage throughout the City of Victoria that promotes Downtown

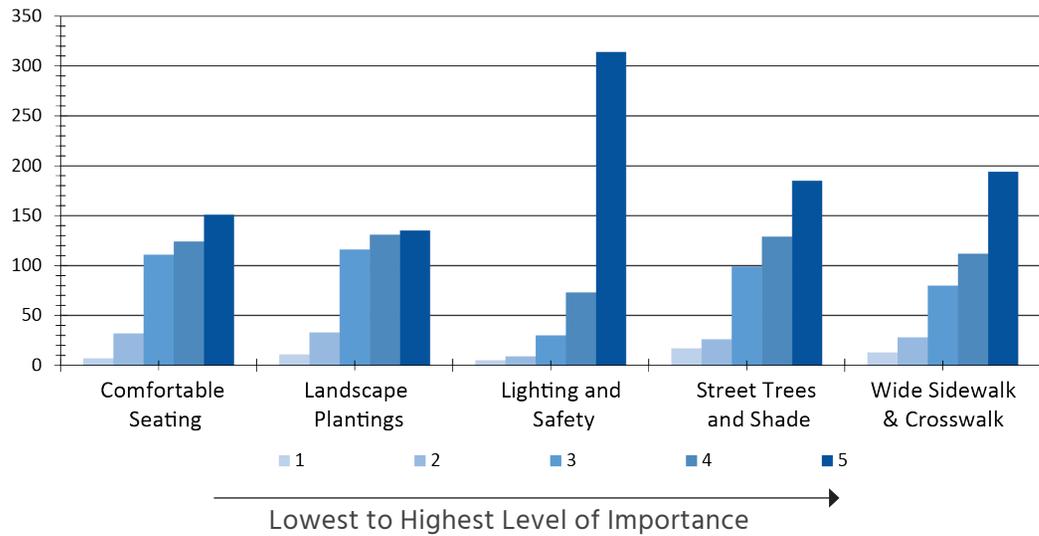
Rate your SUPPORT for the following entertainment and nightlife activities Downtown.



Highlights from comments:

- Add music venues
- Add spaces for outdoor exercise classes
- Add park amenities like bike trails, playgrounds, and splash pads

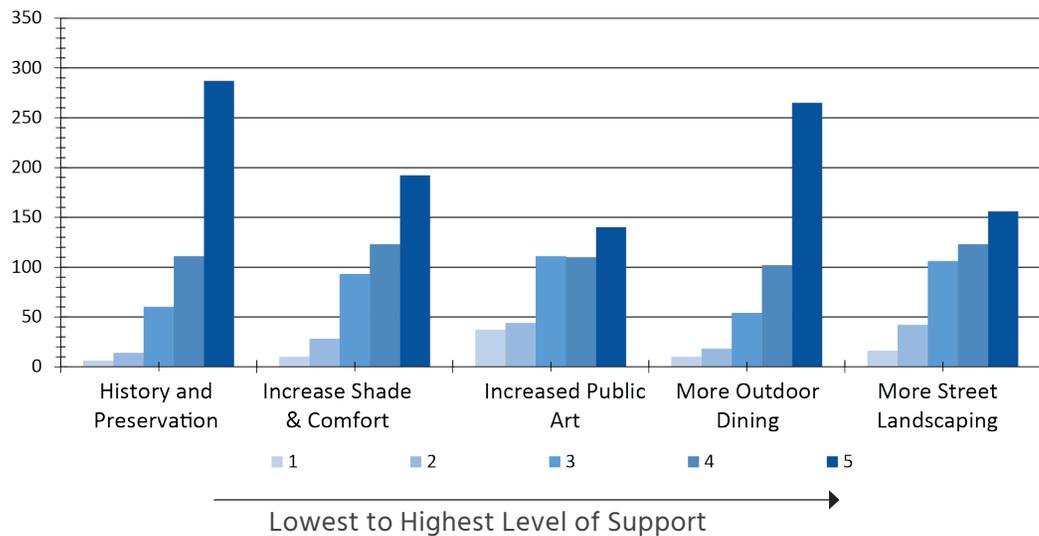
Rate the IMPORTANCE of these walking environment issues.



Highlights from comments:

- More trees and landscaping
- Add public restrooms
- Paint murals along the streets
- Benches and areas to stop and rest
- Add street lighting for pedestrians to feel safe
- Highlight the history of all cultures in Victoria

Rate your SUPPORT for the following design and appearance enhancements.



Highlights from comments:

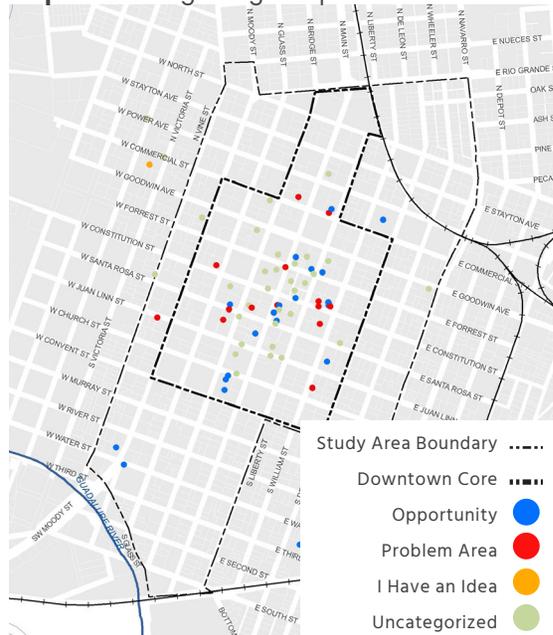
- More preservation is needed
- Repair the streets
- Highlight historic architecture

Location-Based Feedback

Survey respondents placed markers to indicate good and bad examples of building design, business use, and public space. The results are shown on the maps below. Some also included additional ideas that are listed below each map.

Building Design

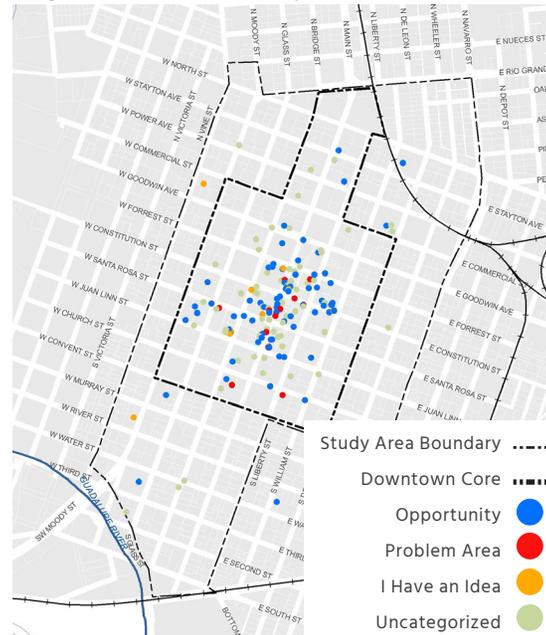
Map 24. Building Design Map



- Updating parking garage
- Improve Downtown facades
- Redesign the Play House
- Build lofts and apartments

Business Use

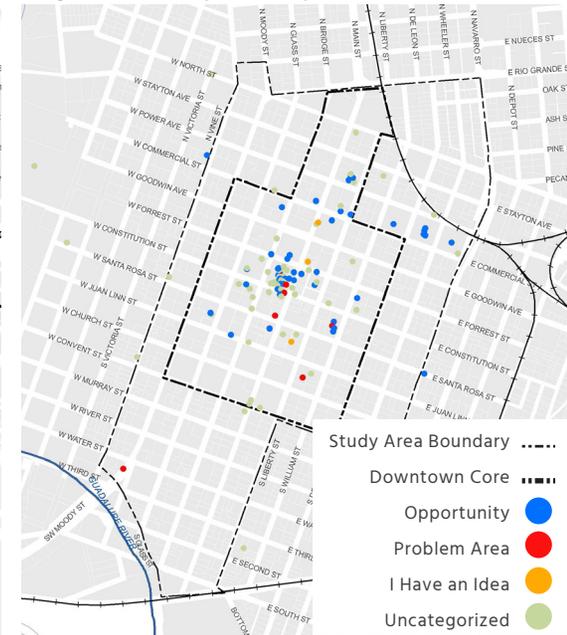
Map 25. Business Use Map



- More restaurants
- Public restrooms
- Longer operating hours
- Rooftop dining
- Small grocery store
- Bakeries

Public Space

Map 26. Public Space Map

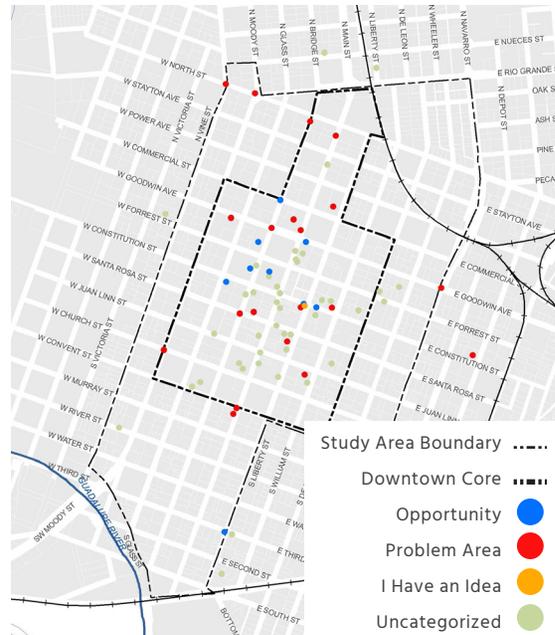


- Food trucks
- Outdoor exercise classes
- A playground
- A water feature

Survey respondents also placed markers to indicate good and bad examples of safety and walking, as well as any other ideas they had. The results are shown on the maps below. Once again, additional ideas are listed below each map.

Safety

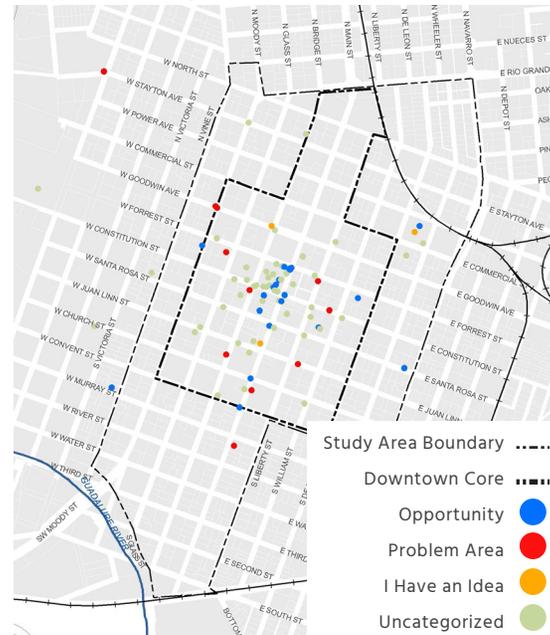
Map 27. Safety Map



- Police presence
- More lighting
- Add security cameras
- Maintain landscaping to increase visibility
- Increase pedestrian safety
- Reduce the speed limit

Walking

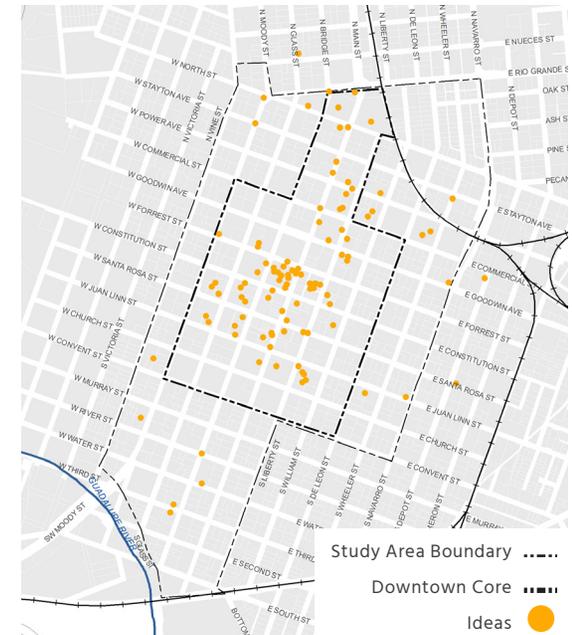
Map 28. Walking Map



- Signage
- Mile markers
- Street improvements like crosswalks and medians
- Repair sidewalks
- Make the sidewalks wider
- Close some streets and open them to pedestrians

Other Ideas

Map 29. Other Ideas Map



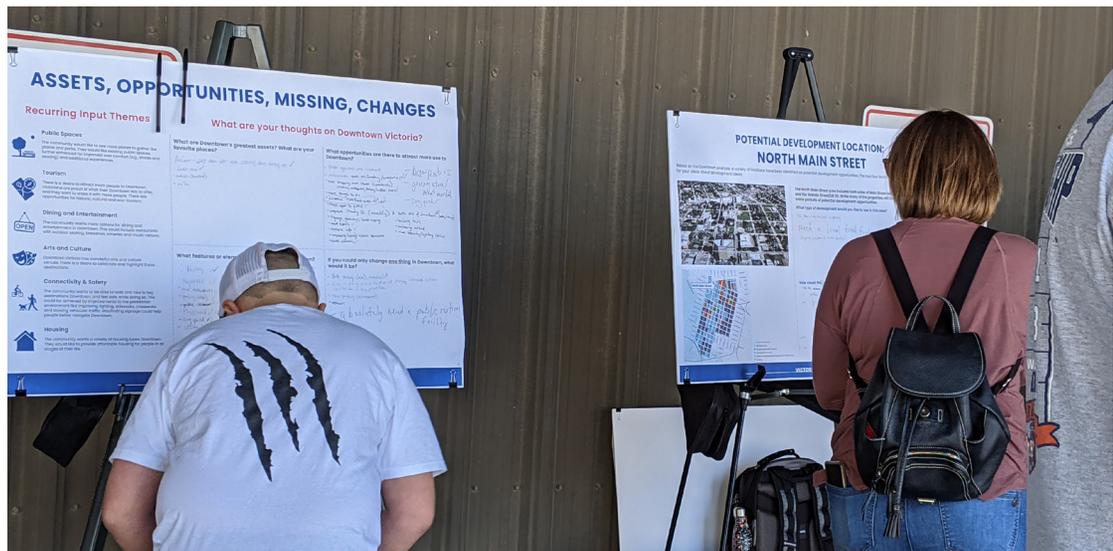
- Focus on connectivity to the river
- Connect the parks with trails
- Create an architecture walking tour
- Provide activities for teens
- Designate the entire Downtown as a TIRZ to incentivize development
- Create multiple districts in the Downtown area

DOWNTOWN FESTIVAL

A large community event took place on March 20, 2021. The event was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Victoria and coordinated by the Main Street Program. Activities throughout the day included a bike race, free youth activities, live music, an Artisans' Market, and a car show. Businesses and restaurants were encouraged to open outside of normal operating hours. This successful event attracted hundreds of attendees into Downtown to enjoy outdoor activities, support local businesses, and celebrate the Victoria community.

The planning team participated in the event with a booth at the Artisans' Market. Educational and interactive boards provided attendees an opportunity to learn about the Downtown Plan, view analysis and public input to date, and provide feedback regarding their vision for Downtown as a whole as well as specific potential development areas. Public input supported feedback heard through other engagement opportunities:

- DeLeon Plaza is one of the greatest assets in Downtown
- Desire for brew pub, dog park, grocery store, and restaurants
- Need for visitor center, playground, picnic areas, and housing
- When asked to identify one thing that would make people come Downtown and stay longer, responses included a public restroom, dog park, and centralized parking







PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The final community event for the Downtown Plan was held in conjunction with a Downtown Art Walk in September 2021. Artists displayed their work throughout the Downtown area and residents and visitors explored the area. The planning team set up a station at City Hall. Informational boards were displayed throughout the City Hall lobby and the planning team educated attendees on the entire Downtown Plan process including the analysis, public input received, vision and goals, character areas, illustrative plan, recommendations, and implementation strategies. The display boards were also posted online with a public survey open for six days to gather overall comments from the community. Highlights from the community response include:

- Support for the activation of Downtown with vibrant spaces and additional programming.
- A desire to make sure that the history in Downtown is preserved.
- Mixed feelings on City priorities; many people loved the ideas for Downtown while others expressed desire for the City to focus on fixing other areas of the City first.
- Concern about the cost of the projects and taking that money away from improvements to other areas.



RECURRING DOWNTOWN THEMES

Through the varying engagement methods, the Victoria community shared their priorities and vision for Downtown. When considered holistically, a series of recurring themes are apparent.

Public Spaces



The community would like to see more places to gather like plazas and parks. They would like existing public spaces further enhanced for improved user comfort (e.g., shade and seating) and additional experiences.

Arts & Culture



Downtown Victoria has wonderful arts and culture venues. There is a desire to celebrate and highlight these destinations.

Tourism



There is a desire to attract more people to Downtown. Victorians are proud of what their Downtown has to offer, and they want to share it with more people. There are opportunities for historic, cultural, and eco-tourism.

Connectivity & Safety



The community wants to be able to walk and bike to key destinations in Downtown, and feel safe while doing so. This could be achieved by improvements to the pedestrian environment like improving lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, and slowing vehicular traffic. Wayfinding signage could help people better navigate Downtown.

Dining & Entertainment



The community wants more options for dining and entertainment in Downtown. This could include restaurants with outdoor seating, breweries, wineries, and music venues.

Housing



The community wants a variety of housing types Downtown. They would like to provide affordable housing for people in all stages of their life.

VISION

Results from the existing conditions analysis and public engagement opportunities have painted a clear picture of the community's hopes and wishes for Downtown Victoria.

The following vision statement embodies that collective aspiration and serves as the foundation for moving forward.

Downtown Victoria is a regional hub for innovation, history, arts, and culture. The community supports the local businesses and enjoys the thriving entertainment district. Visitors spend time here because the gathering spaces are safe and comfortable. Downtown Victoria celebrates its history while being forward thinking, innovative, and connected.



GOALS

The following goals provide overall direction for Downtown Victoria to achieve the community's direction, vision, and aspirations. The goals serve as the ultimate basis for the Plan's recommendations and implementation. They also provide a framework to evaluate changes, challenges, opportunities, and issues that were not anticipated by this Plan, allowing it to function as a living document responsive to future needs.

- » **Victoria will leverage existing points of interest and daily destinations to attract and retain people in Downtown.**
- » **Downtown will have a dedicated and sustainable incentive program to encourage development and redevelopment in the area.**
- » **Downtown will thrive as a hub for regional arts, culture, and eco-tourism for the Coastal Bend.**
- » **Downtown will meet local expectations for an active and interesting destination with a variety of experiences.**
- » **Downtown will have a robust, year-round event and festival calendar to define Downtown as a “go-to” destination.**
- » **Victoria will coordinate all public sector activity and facilitate partnerships to best leverage resources that help Downtown reach its full potential.**
- » **Downtown will attract and support a greater diversity of users and businesses.**
- » **Downtown will be a safe, walkable destination for all users.**
- » **Downtown will maximize its financial potential, supporting fiscal sustainability and quality of life improvements not just within Downtown, but city-wide.**



3 MASTER PLAN



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

As future improvements and development projects are considered in Downtown Victoria, existing conditions in the area will present a variety of opportunities and challenges to development and redevelopment in the area. Some of the key opportunities and challenges are illustrated on Map 30 on the next page. While the map does not present every development consideration, the illustrated elements are those that were considered in greater detail during creation of this Plan's recommendations.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- The variety of destination types in Downtown creates a great start towards developing a dynamic district with diverse opportunities for culture, recreation, dining, and employment. Some of these destinations (e.g., food and drink venues) are already located within a walkable distance of each other. Future development should continue to expand the offerings within a walkable distance of other destinations.
- While there is a relatively small amount of vacant land in Downtown, those areas

do provide the greatest opportunity for infill development locations.

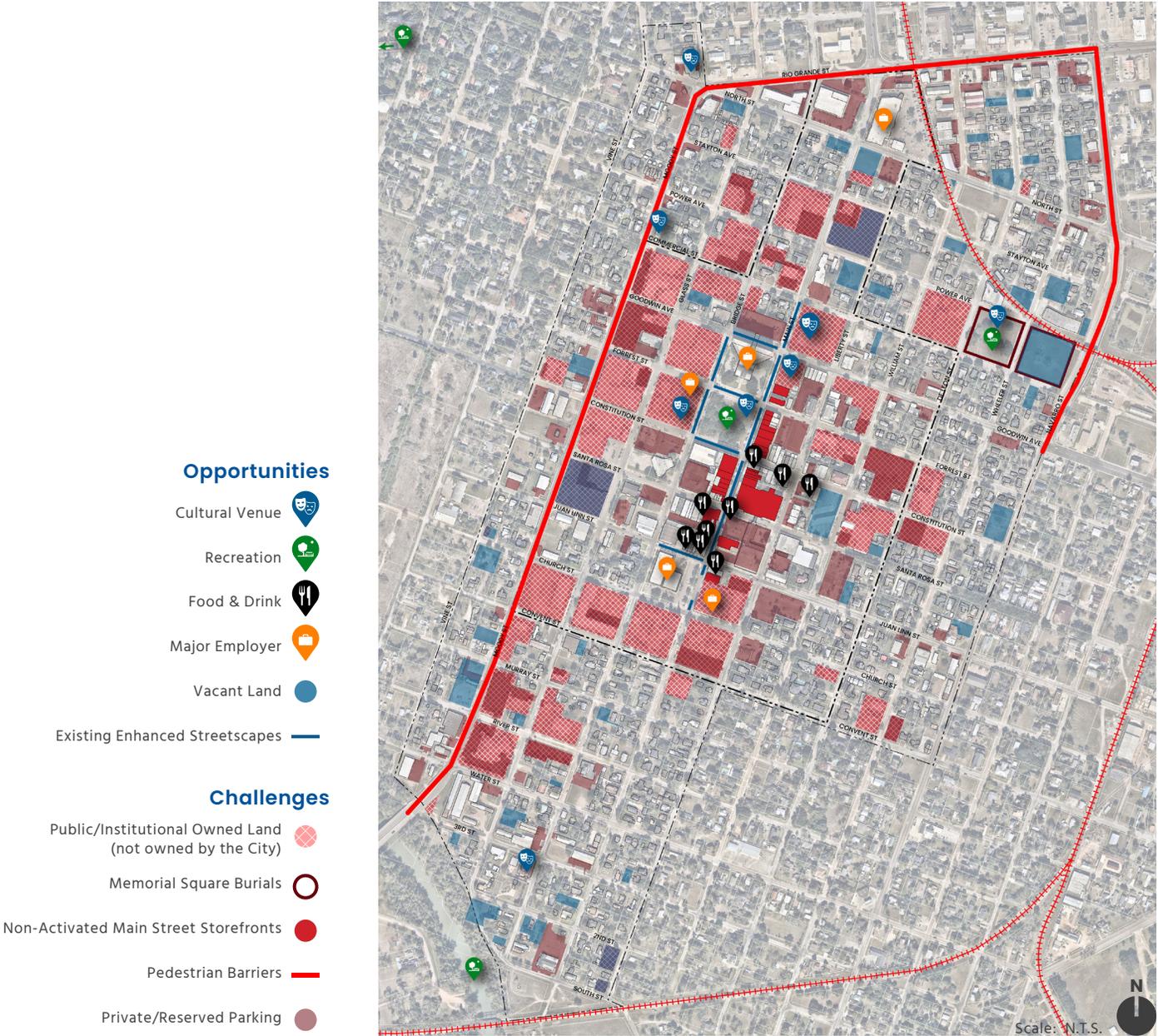
- Existing enhanced streetscapes already exist along parts of Main Street, Bridge Street, and the adjoining streets. Strategic expansion of these enhanced areas will naturally extend the area in Downtown that provides a pleasant and active pedestrian experience.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Downtown Victoria is home to a variety of public and institutional entities (e.g., Victoria County, religious institutions). While City-owned land is easier to consider for redevelopment, other public and institutional entities may have their own issues to resolve that limit reuse or redevelopment potential. For this reason, these areas are highlighted as a potential challenge.
- Memorial Square and the adjacent property are known to have historic burials beneath them. Depending on the location and depth of these burial plots, some types of development may not be viable.

- While the architecture and character of buildings along much of Main Street between DeLeon Plaza and City Hall are interesting, many of the existing uses don't currently interact with a typical downtown user (e.g., office space).
- Moody, Rio Grande, and some of Navarro Streets are wide, highly trafficked roads. Even with enhanced treatments, these roads will present a barrier to pedestrians.
- Easily accessed and well-dispersed public parking is a strong factor in the level of visitation a downtown receives. There are many private or reserved parking areas in Downtown that limit public parking opportunities. While some of these areas may not be policed, these signs will discourage public parking.

Map 30. Opportunities & Challenges



CHARACTER AREAS

Character areas are used to help define the general locations that are appropriate for varying types and scales of development and redevelopment in Downtown. Three character areas have been identified within the study area (see Map 31). The general intent of the areas is to:

- **Strengthen** the Core
- **Grow** the Transition Area
- **Preserve and Protect** the Traditional Neighborhood Area

Public/institutional owned land is hatched on the map since redevelopment potential may be limited in some cases.

See the following pages for representative existing conditions, examples of the scale of future development that is appropriate for each area, and other development considerations.

Map 31. Character Areas



CORE AREA

Existing Conditions

The core area covers the nine blocks including and surrounding DeLeon Plaza. This area is largely developed and includes prominent historic and modern buildings such as O'Connor Plaza, the Victoria County Courthouse, Prosperity Bank, Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, and other architecturally interesting buildings. Buildings range from two to 10+ stories high and include a variety of ground floor uses such as offices, restaurants, entertainment, and government functions.

This area, centered around DeLeon Plaza, acts as the physical “heart” of Downtown and is often what people think of when they describe Downtown Victoria.



Future Vision for the Core Area: Strengthen the historic core of Downtown

There are opportunities to repurpose and rehabilitate the existing building stock in the core area in order to strengthen its character and the variety of experiences. This area should allow for compatible infill and encourage commercial and upper floor residential. Any new development should be urban in character and likely multi-story.

Typical Uses	Mix of retail, commercial, office, and upper floor residential. Retail, restaurants, and entertainment will have the greatest impact when fronting Main Street, Bridge Street, Forrest Street, and Constitution Street.
Building Types	Primarily historic and renovated urban buildings with storefronts, as well as mixed-use buildings.
Building Scale and Placement	Two- to four-story buildings with taller buildings potentially appropriate when using high-quality design. Buildings should be aligned along public streets and sidewalks.
Build-To Lines	0 to 15 feet. May include variations in front setbacks to provide facade interest, areas for entry plazas, site furnishings, and landscape areas.
Parking	On-street parallel and angled parking. Off-street surface parking should be located behind buildings.



TRANSITION AREA

Existing Conditions

The transition area includes the rest of the core study area illustrated on analysis maps earlier in this document. This area includes a combination of well-established businesses, public/institutional owned properties, and residences as well as vacant or underdeveloped sites with potential for redevelopment. Development in this area is highly varied in scale, style, and building placement.

Based on its location and varying levels of development, this area is best suited to expand the existing destinations in Downtown.



Future Vision for the Transition Area:
Grow the opportunities for diverse experiences to expand the draw of Downtown

In order to realize the community’s desire for a thriving Downtown that celebrates Victoria’s culture and provides diverse experiences, this area should include a variety of restaurants, retail, and entertainment venues. Mixed-use developments will help create varied user experiences. Cultural and entertainment districts will create areas with a defined concentration of uses. Small-scale multi-family developments will provide spaces for Downtown living and allow greater daily support for local businesses.

	Typical Uses	Mix of neighborhood-scaled office, retail, restaurant, commercial, and entertainment spaces. Small-scale, medium- to high-density attached or detached residential.
	Building Types	New or renovated urban or suburban building types that fit in the surrounding context. Mixed-use buildings should be encouraged, and accessory dwelling units and garage apartments should be allowed.
	Building Scale and Placement	One- to two-story buildings aligned along public streets and sidewalks. Taller buildings may be appropriate in some instances.
	Build-To Lines	0 to 25 feet. May include variations in front setbacks to provide facade interest, areas for entry plazas, site furnishings, landscape areas, common yards, and stoop frontages.
	Parking	On-street parallel and angled parking. Off-street surface parking greater than two cars should be located behind buildings whenever possible.



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Existing Conditions

The traditional neighborhood area includes the remainder of the Downtown Plan study area. This area has a range of development types and scales, but much of it is predominantly residential or smaller-scale commercial.

Based on distance and types of development currently found in much of the transition area, this area feels disconnected from the core area. With greater development in the transition area and appropriate public realm improvements, this could change over time.



Future Vision for the Traditional Neighborhood Area:
Preserve and protect the existing neighborhood character around Downtown

People who live near a downtown are often strong supporters and users of local businesses and public spaces. It will be important to preserve and protect the character and culture in the neighborhoods around Downtown while also encouraging additional use over time. This includes small-scale infill development and corner commercial developments with a neighborhood character. Property renovations should be encouraged and greater connectivity provided between this area and the core.

Typical Uses	Existing and new neighborhood uses including single-family detached, medium-density attached and detached housing, and small-scale commercial development.
Building Types	New and existing suburban-style dwellings and commercial developments. Accessory dwelling units and garage apartments should be allowed.
Building Scale and Placement	One- to two-story buildings aligned along public streets and sidewalks.
Build-To Lines	10 to 25 feet. Driveway access from the front or rear of the property
Parking	On-street parallel. Off-street driveway or alley parking. Alley access to parking is preferred where possible.



ADAPTIVE REUSE

A fundamental recommendation of this Plan emphasizes adaptive reuse of buildings over demolition for new construction. As discussed in the Snapshot, Victoria’s history is something unique to Victoria and should be celebrated.

Adaptive reuse involves the redesigning of interior spaces in buildings that have outlived their original purpose to better serve the needs of their communities today. This process of reinvention is important to meet the needs of a new community while preserving a piece of history that would otherwise be lost forever. It is not simply about reusing the space inside the building shell. Rather, these projects involve other upgrades as well, such as electrical rewiring, plumbing replacement, upgraded mechanical systems, and retrofitting fire suppression and life-safety equipment.

Adaptive reuse can lead to significant economic growth—prosperity through preservation. The Lincoln Institute describes the negative impacts that dilapidated structures can have on a community:

Vacant and abandoned structures can devastate the neighborhood and block, undermine the neighbors’ quality of life, and diminish the value of nearby properties. They also cause severe fiscal damage to local governments, reducing local tax revenues while costing cities millions for policing, cleaning vacant lots, and demolishing derelict buildings.¹

¹ <https://www.lincolnst.edu/sites/default/files/pubfiles/empty-house-next-door-full.pdf>

When older buildings are renovated, they can help to revitalize a blighted area and spur economic development. In doing so, they add a historic character and charm to communities along with social, environmental, and economic benefits.

On top of possible incentives, the opportunities that adaptive reuse provide can make a difference in a project’s budget. Property owners can see returns on these projects that outweigh the costs thanks to avoiding full demolition and new construction. Additionally, the original materials used in the building are frequently far superior to the quality of wood and other construction materials available today.

Victoria has several opportunities for adaptive reuse with catalytic potential, with some examples on the following pages.



Old Nazareth Academy and Convent

Old Nazareth Academy and Convent

St. Mary's Parish purchased the historic Nazareth Academy and Convent in late 2020, with a goal to bring new life to this stunning architectural treasure. Its revitalization will help bring activation south of City Hall (the original market square) towards the riverfront area, and has significant potential to attract locals and visitors regardless of religious background. The City should work closely with the Parish as it explores opportunities, particularly regarding the street edge along Church Street. Reuse opportunities range from lodging, meeting, and retreat space to museums and even some retail/commercial options.



Conceptual rendering of improvements

Source: St. Mary's Catholic Church

The Fire Station

Historic institutional buildings, such as fire stations, lend themselves to a variety of future uses, often possessing iconic architectural elements, high roofs, and sturdy construction. The Fire Station adjacent to the Victoria County Courthouse is under public ownership by Victoria County, opening up a variety of possibilities. In 2018, the County considered an option to renovate the space to house additional court facilities. While it could play a role in future space needs, the building could also be leased or sold for commercial purposes. Such a building lends itself towards restaurant space, breweries/distilleries, and similar uses. The presence of the nearby historic courthouse results in a need to coordinate design approvals with the Texas Historical Commission.



County Fire Station

The Frel’s Theatre

Opening in 1911 as the Electra Theatre, The Frel’s Theatre has sat vacant with some storage use since 2004. Recent efforts include a restoration of the exterior facade. Even during the pandemic, other spaces in Downtown experienced success with live entertainment, indicating potential for a live entertainment venue. The Frel’s Theatre naturally lends itself toward that adaptive reuse, and would improve activation along the block of Constitution Street.



The Frel’s Theatre

The Old Federal Building

This outstanding Renaissance Revival structure housed the post office and federal governmental offices for almost 50 years, beginning in 1913. Like the fire station, the iconic architectural elements, high ceilings, and robust construction make it ideal for adaptive reuse. Most natural fits are event venue space, restaurant uses, lodging, residential, and offices. Sitting adjacent to the Frel’s Theatre, turning this into an active space could change the dynamic of this block of Constitution.



Old Federal Building

THE FOUR-POINT APPROACH

The Main Street Four-Point Approach[®] was developed by Main Street America, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.¹ The model was designed to be highly transferable at various scales, geographies, and local needs as a tool to support downtown revitalization.

- **Economic Vitality** focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.
- **Design** supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.
- **Promotion** positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.
- **Organization** involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

¹ Main Street America, MainStreet.org

HOUSING IN DOWNTOWNS

While absent from the Main Street four-point approach, the residential component of any downtown is a critical factor in influencing vitality and success.

Residences contribute to the property values in and around a downtown, and are a critical concern for property owners as potential building uses. The greater residential density in and around a downtown contributes significantly to the local customer base for local merchants, as residents within walking distance of retail are significantly more likely to patronize those establishments. Residential real estate is important from a non-economic perspective as well – shaping and defining the character of downtowns, and providing an opportunity to accommodate a wide variety of demographics and residential types which might not fit in newer suburban neighborhoods. Likewise, residential can be an ideal fit for upper floors that may have served as warehouses for businesses below or as offices in the past.

Many of the most in-demand housing types are found in urban centers. Rental and senior housing are the fastest growing sectors of the residential industry, and both

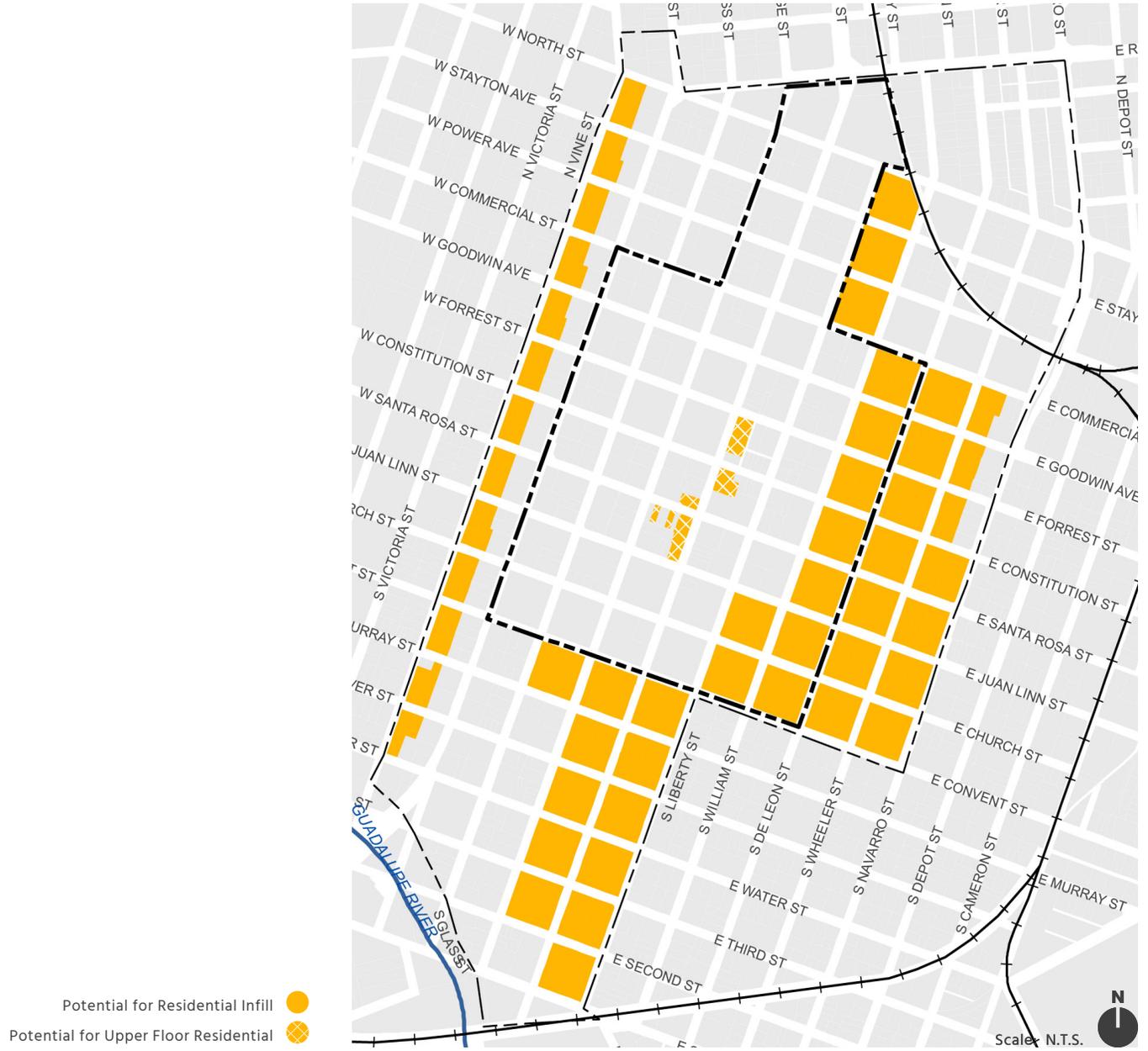
exist and are increasingly being developed in and around downtown areas. Walkability and access to amenities are driving factors, meaning that location-based housing decisions are gaining traction. This is further influenced by:

- Greater household formation in the youngest and oldest segments of the population, which are most likely to rent.
- Limited ability for many households to obtain conventional financing for housing purchases.
- Increased emphasis on economic mobility and not being tied down by a mortgage.
- Shrinking household sizes as birth rates fall, and as people defer marriage and children.

By incorporating a higher density of residents in a downtown mix in a variety of formats, the amount of activity increases. This in turn creates an even more vibrant desirable downtown economy.

See Map 32 on the next page for target residential infill areas within the Victoria Downtown study area.

Map 32. Target Residential Infill Areas



APPROPRIATE HOUSING TYPES

Not Appropriate ○

Somewhat Appropriate ◐

Appropriate ●

The following images are examples of different forms (rather than design and style) of housing that are appropriate in the various character areas.

<p>Accessory Dwelling Unit</p>  <p>Core ○ Transition ◐ Traditional Neighborhood ●</p>	<p>Single-Family Residential</p>  <p>Core ○ Transition ◐ Traditional Neighborhood ●</p>	<p>Single-Family Residential Cottage</p>  <p>Core ○ Transition ◐ Traditional Neighborhood ●</p>
<p>Townhouse</p>  <p>Core ● Transition ● Traditional Neighborhood ◐</p>	<p>Duplex</p>  <p>Core ○ Transition ◐ Traditional Neighborhood ●</p>	<p>Small-Scale Multi-Family</p>  <p>Core ● Transition ● Traditional Neighborhood ◐</p>
<p>Live-Work</p>  <p>Core ● Transition ● Traditional Neighborhood ◐</p>	<p>Large-Scale Multi-Family</p>  <p>Core ● Transition ● Traditional Neighborhood ○</p>	<p>Mixed-Use Multi-Family</p>  <p>Core ● Transition ● Traditional Neighborhood ○</p>

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The Victoria community envisions an engaging, active, and pedestrian-friendly future for Downtown. There is a desire for additional nightlife, arts and culture, and programmed events. The public realm should be comfortable, safe, and welcoming to residents and visitors alike. Housing should include options for people in all stages of their life.

The variety of uses, quality, and styles of development in Downtown provides a great foundation for the community's vision. With additional public and private investment, new and redeveloped sites and public spaces can be incrementally improved to achieve the vision over time.

The Master Plan depicts a long-term development vision for Downtown Victoria (see Map 33 on page 111). There are opportunities to upgrade and creatively reuse existing structures, improve

public spaces and streets, develop new destinations, and encourage additional employment and residences Downtown.

Strategies for Downtown cannot solely rely on capital improvement projects. Rather, the community must recognize market-based opportunities that can be implemented in the short-term. In order to successfully realize the community's vision, it will require both public and private investments, projects, and partnerships. Projects should be implemented incrementally as the market warrants or as funding becomes available.

Part of the overall Master Plan strategy is to recognize market potential and the community's desires, and address both through investments in catalyst projects. Catalyst projects are those that will help to change the perception of Downtown, and will ultimately encourage further

development and investment in the area. These include both public and private development projects. It is understood that as the market embraces such concepts, small modifications will likely occur to their programming and basic site approach. However, the general concepts have been devised to create a stronger identity in Downtown, provide greater draw and connectivity to and within the area, and create opportunities for employment and community interaction in Downtown. The catalyst projects illustrated on the Master Plan are described on the following pages.



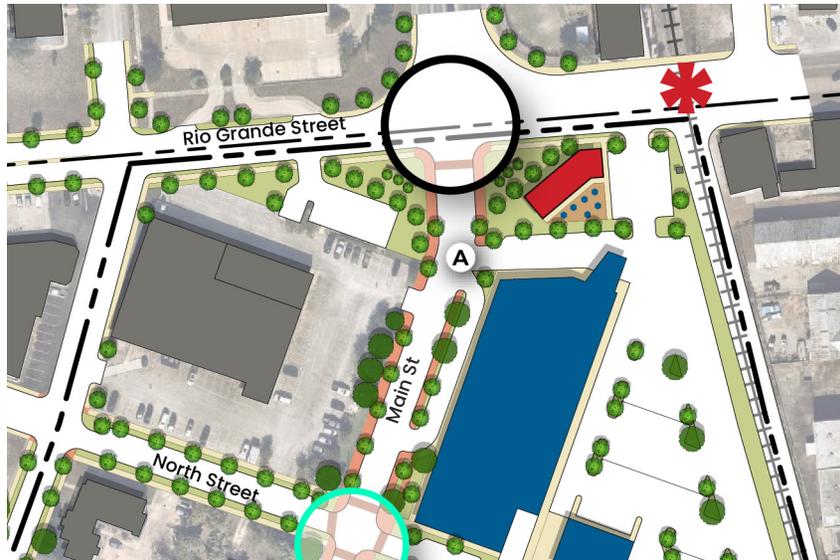
Conceptual rendering of Downtown Victoria

Map 33. Downtown Master Plan

Note: This is a conceptual master plan. Every project will need further evaluation and design development prior to implementation.

- Buildings/
Development Type**
- Commercial Development ●
 - Mixed-Use Development ●
 - Cultural Development ●
 - Residential Development ●
 - Public Parking Structure ●
 - Targeted Upper Floor Activation (e.g., Office, Residential) ●
 - New Government Building ●
 - Existing Government Building ●
 - Existing Building ●
- Public Realm
Improvements**
- Railroad Quiet Zone Improvements *
 - Primary Gateways ○
 - Secondary Gateways ○
 - Street Trees ●
 - Enhanced Pavement ■
 - Improved Sidewalks ■
 - Enhanced Crosswalks ■
 - Pedestrian Connection to Riverside Park ↗





A

North Gateway Area

The intersection of Main Street and Rio Grande Street marks the northern extent of Downtown Victoria. However, in its current condition, there are no elements that alert people that they are entering a special area. There is an opportunity to narrow Main Street and develop a primary gateway to include elements such as ornamental walls, landscaping, and an art installation.

Adjacent developments on the east side of Main Street (left side in adjacent rendering) include a gas station/convenience store and the City's 700 Main Center. There may be opportunities to improve and/or redevelop these areas as follows:

- Commercial/mixed-use redevelopment at Rio Grande Street: Potential for outdoor seating, parking lot with access from 700 Main Center to Rio Grande Street
- 700 Main Center: Near-term building enhancements to maintain functionality as municipal complex; long-term potential for non-municipal use as demand in Downtown grows



Conceptual rendering of the North Gateway Area





Existing Street of Ten Friends sign



B **Mixed-Use Development Opportunity**

The City owns the property where The Street of Ten Friends sign and 700 Main Center overflow parking are located. Since this site remains largely undeveloped, there are opportunities for the City to partner with the private sector to develop this property as a mixed-use development including elements such as commercial and/or retail with offices or residential on the upper floors.



Museum/Event Venue & Neighborhood Park

The old Mitchell School, located adjacent to Memorial Square, is no longer being used by the Victoria Independent School District. Opportunities exist for redevelopment of this site and rehabilitation of the building to function as a heritage museum, event center, or natural science museum, among other possibilities. The site is envisioned with small-scale commercial developments complete with outdoor seating to complement the new use on the property.

The northeast corner of the site could function as a small neighborhood park with picnic area, small dog park, and playground to provide recreation options for nearby residents.



Dog park



Small-scale outdoor seating area



Labyrinth and garden



D

Enhanced Memorial Square

Memorial Square is a historic landmark in the City. It has a war memorial and unmarked graves of soldiers of the Texas War for Independence of 1836 and 1837. A variety of improvements are recommended to enhance the space while respecting its important history. Site improvements could include a labyrinth and meditation garden, walking path, optional shade structures, and additional tree plantings. It is recommended that the City conduct a survey of the property with ground-penetrating radar first, in order determine the locations of the buried remains.



E Potential Commercial Development Along Train Tracks

There are two vacant or underdeveloped properties located along the railroad tracks in the vicinity of Memorial Square. The noise and conditions adjacent to the tracks can create challenges for some types of development. These two properties are conceptualized with small-scale commercial developments that provide spaces with flexible sizing and configuration. Potential tenants could include entities such as small-scale/craft manufacturing with associated retail space, small-scale offices, artist spaces, and culinary classrooms. The site directly east of Memorial Square may also have buried remains and/or environmental impacts from previous uses. It is recommended that the site be surveyed with ground-penetrating radar and an environmental assessment conducted to determine the best steps for moving forward with development.



Craft manufacturing establishment



F

Library Development

The Victoria Public Library is beloved by the community and there is a desire for further activation of the site. It is recommended that the Library be renovated to better interact with the adjacent pedestrian spaces. Recommended site improvements include functioning building entrances along Main Street and Goodwin Avenue, a sculpture garden and shaded seating area along Main Street, and a coffee/beverage retailer with outdoor seating along Goodwin Avenue. The small-scale retail space could provide food and beverage services to library patrons as well as people attending the adjacent Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts in the evenings. There may also be potential for a children’s activity space along Goodwin Avenue.



Conceptual rendering of the Library Development



G

Public Parking Garage

As Downtown Victoria continues to grow, there will be a need for additional public parking. There is an opportunity for a partnership between the City and County to build a public parking garage on the site occupied by the Victoria County Tax Assessor's office. The garage is conceptualized in the area of the County's existing parking lot. This garage could easily accommodate County employees as well Downtown patrons. Other site improvements on the block could include a small outdoor gathering space for County employees between the garage and the County building and reconfigured ADA parking to be situated along the south face of the County building. Depending on its design, the garage could be implemented in phases over time.



High-quality downtown parking garage



High-quality downtown parking garage



H

DeLeon Plaza Expansion

DeLeon Plaza is truly the heart of Downtown Victoria. With incredible heritage trees and a historic bandstand, the site is often used for Downtown programming. In order to increase the potential of this area and the types of programming that can be offered, the plaza is recommended to be expanded to the north through the closure of Forrest Street between Main and Bridge Streets. This area would convert to an exclusive or shared pedestrian space with a stage, game tables, potential water feature(s) geared towards multi-generational enjoyment, shaded seating areas, and food truck hookups for special events. Four small retail kiosks are illustrated in front of One O'Connor Plaza. These spaces could be used as business incubators to allow local start-ups to test their business concept in a small, affordable space. Upon success, they can upsize to another location in Downtown, thus creating space for the next entrepreneur. A playground and public restroom can be added to the existing DeLeon Plaza area. This transformative project can be easily tested prior to full implementation through a temporary road closure, increased programming, and other tactical urbanism strategies.



Conceptual rendering of the DeLeon Plaza Expansion





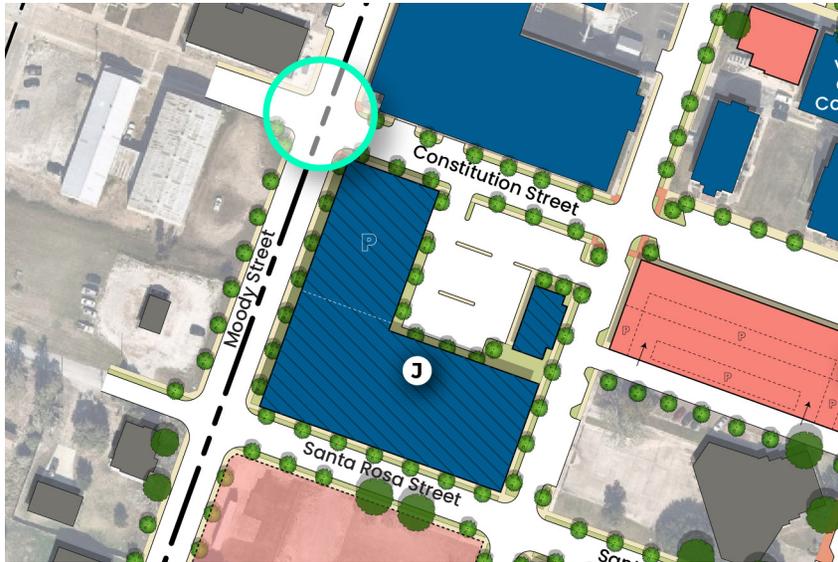
Small-scale downtown gathering space



Small-Scale Gathering Space

A small vacant lot near DeLeon Plaza has the opportunity to be re-imagined as an intimate outdoor space, either on its own or in conjunction with an adjacent development. This lot could be developed with a small stage, shaded seating, and string lights to provide a small-scale alternative to DeLeon Plaza for outdoor events.

If activated as part of an adjacent development, adaptive reuse of an active storefront is ideal, with the plaza concept remaining relevant as a complementary outdoor space. This configuration could add layered storefronts accessed from the gathering space.



J

Potential County Facilities

The County has voiced a need for additional facilities and office space to meet long-term needs. Their property at the intersection of Moody and Constitution Streets provides an opportunity for such a development. This site could include a multi-story office building with secured tuck-under parking for law enforcement vehicles. The historic Continental Hotel on the block could be repurposed as space for County supportive services such as CASA and juvenile interview space.

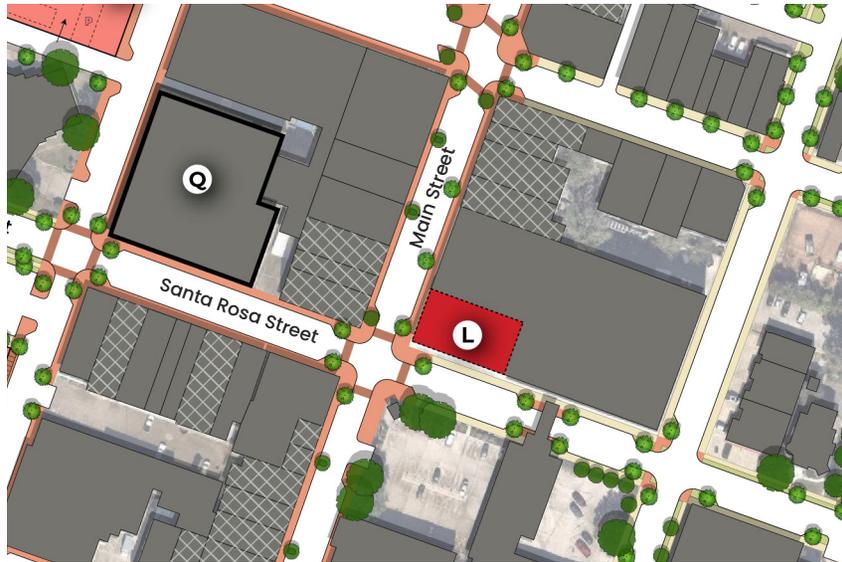
Development of this property may be able to meet the County's space needs, thus potentially freeing other undeveloped County properties for private development that can grow the tax base in Downtown.



K

Boutique Hotel/Mixed-Use Commercial Development

With the addition of a parking garage in the core of Downtown, there may be opportunities to redevelop some of the surface parking lots. The lot at the southwest corner of DeLeon Plaza has potential to be redeveloped as a boutique hotel with ground-floor retail. This type of development could maintain an active street frontage and locate ground-level parking tucked under the rear of the building. Lodging in this area would provide a space for people visiting for work or pleasure and situate them within easy walking distance of many Downtown destinations.



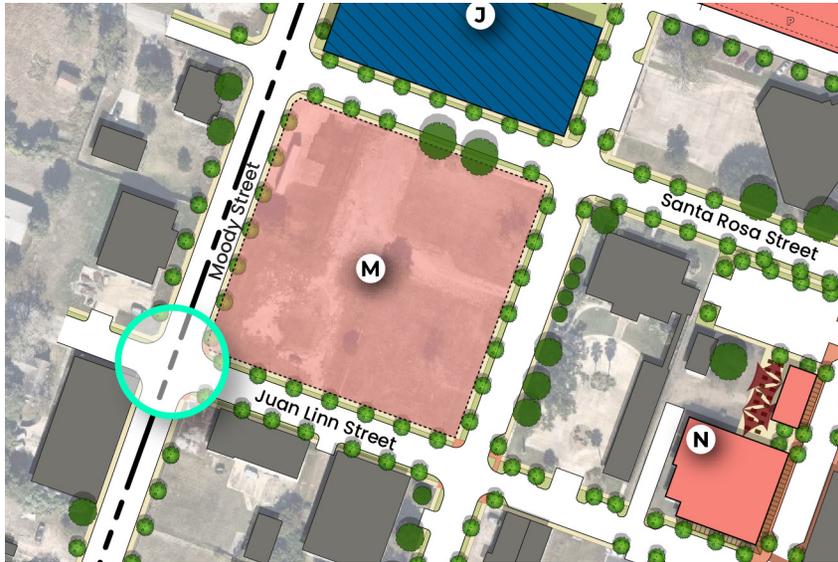
120 Main Activation

The 120 Main building has been an iconic structure along Main Street for many years. It is a very large building with ample space for additional internal programming. Its current configuration and use, however, limit interaction with the general public. There are opportunities to further activate the building with renovations such as adding first floor windows along the sidewalk and eye-catching signage. Additional building programming could include a co-working and innovation center, as well as food court and/or small-scale retail spaces.



Conceptual rendering of the 120 Main Activation





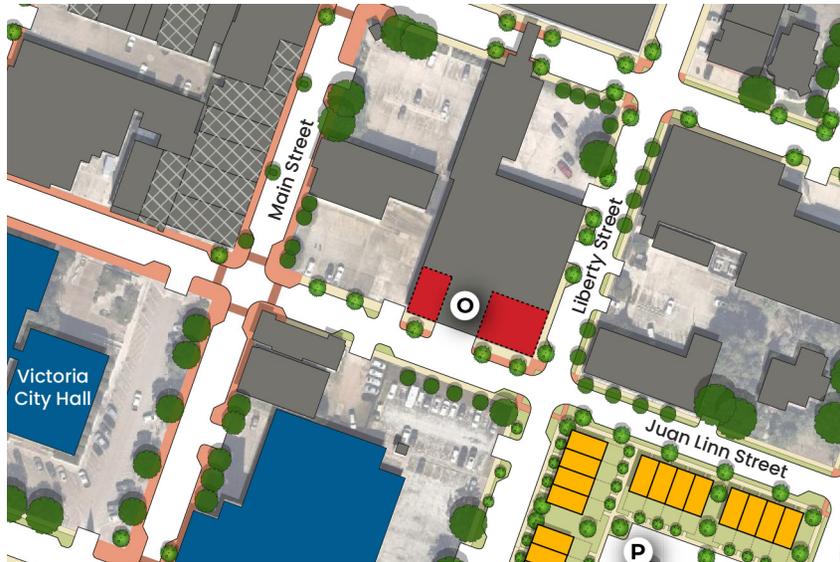
M **Potential Mixed-Use Development Opportunity**

With the development of additional County facilities on their other properties, there is potential for the County-owned lot at Moody and Santa Rosa Streets to be redeveloped as a mixed-use development. This site provides a large footprint that could accommodate a variety of development types.



N **Mixed-Use Development**

An old hardware store located at Bridge and Juan Linn Streets has been vacant for a number of years. This site is conveniently located within walking distance of many Downtown destinations. There is an opportunity to renovate and repurpose this building to contribute to the nearby concentration of entertainment/food and beverage businesses. The site could be used as a food venue and/or small grocery store with housing on the upper floor(s). The site's size creates potential to add another small building and an outdoor seating area. An existing adjacent parking area that has become overgrown could be renovated to provide off-street parking for the development.



⊙ Activate Ground Floor of Garage

The parking garage at Juan Linn and Liberty Streets currently serves employees and visitors of 120 Main. There are two separated spaces in the southern corners of the ground floor that were previously used as commercial spaces. There may be potential to re-activate these spaces to provide additional food and entertainment options for Downtown residents and visitors. Tenants could include things such as a beer garden and small-scale grocer (if not incorporated in project letter “N”).

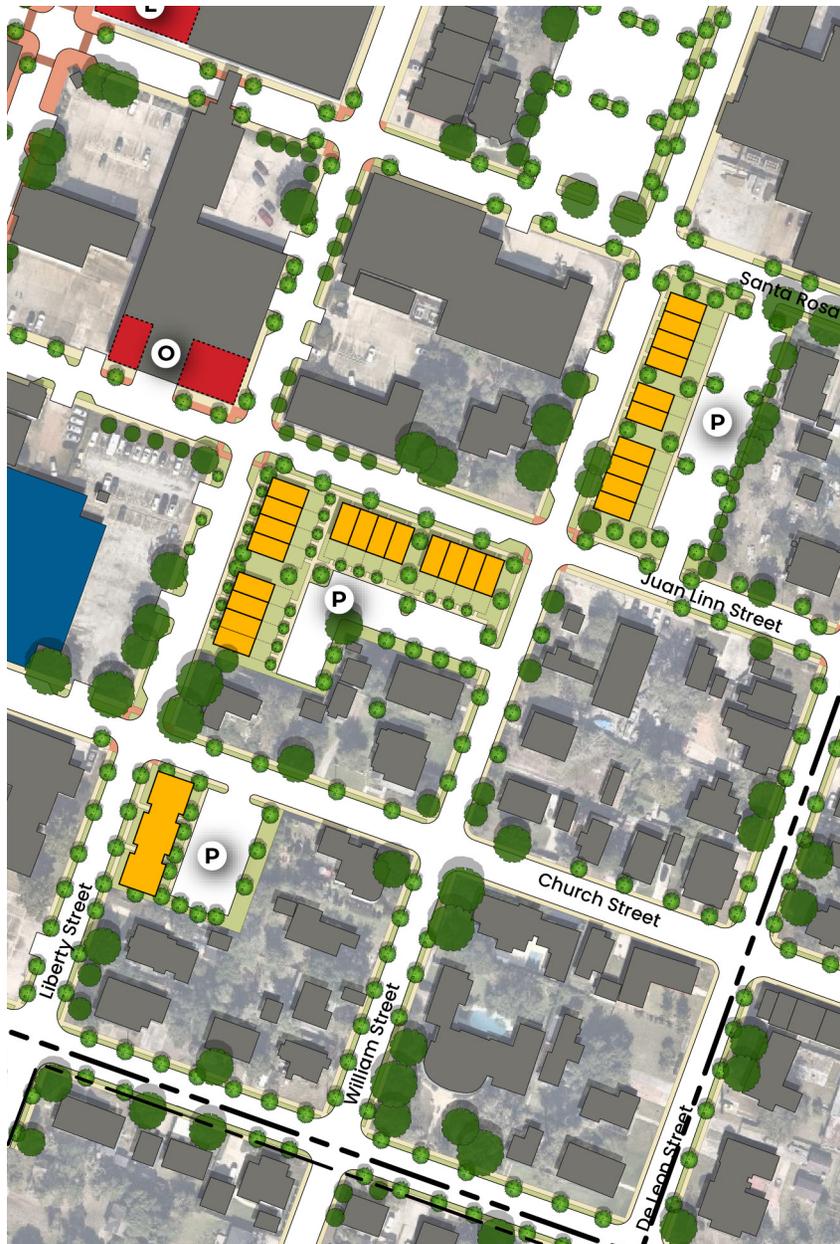


Beer garden

Image source: Liam McKay on Unsplash



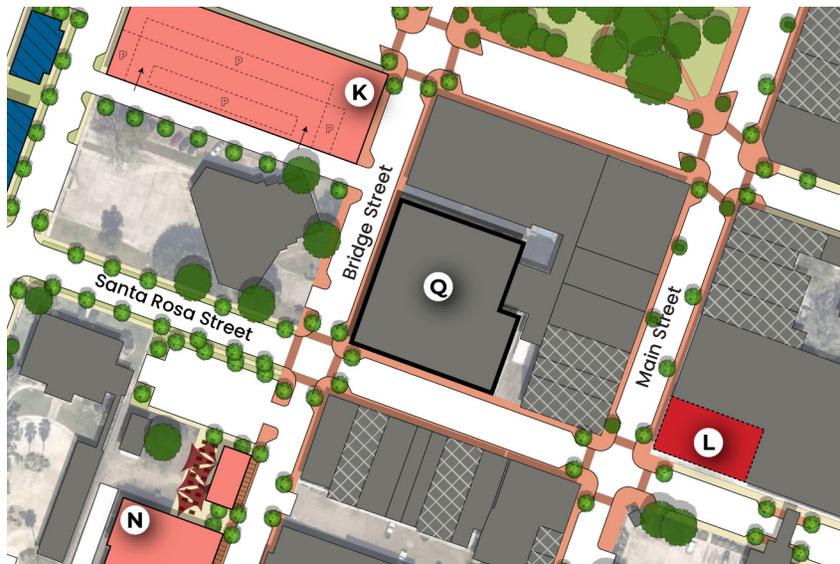
Small-scale grocer



P

Residential Infill

As described earlier in this chapter, residences in Downtown are an important part of the land use mix. Two existing lots reserved for 120 Main have been conceptualized as representative examples of residential infill developments such as townhomes and small-scale multi-family. These sites only represent two of a number of opportunities in the study area for housing in Downtown (see Map 32 on page 107 for other locations).



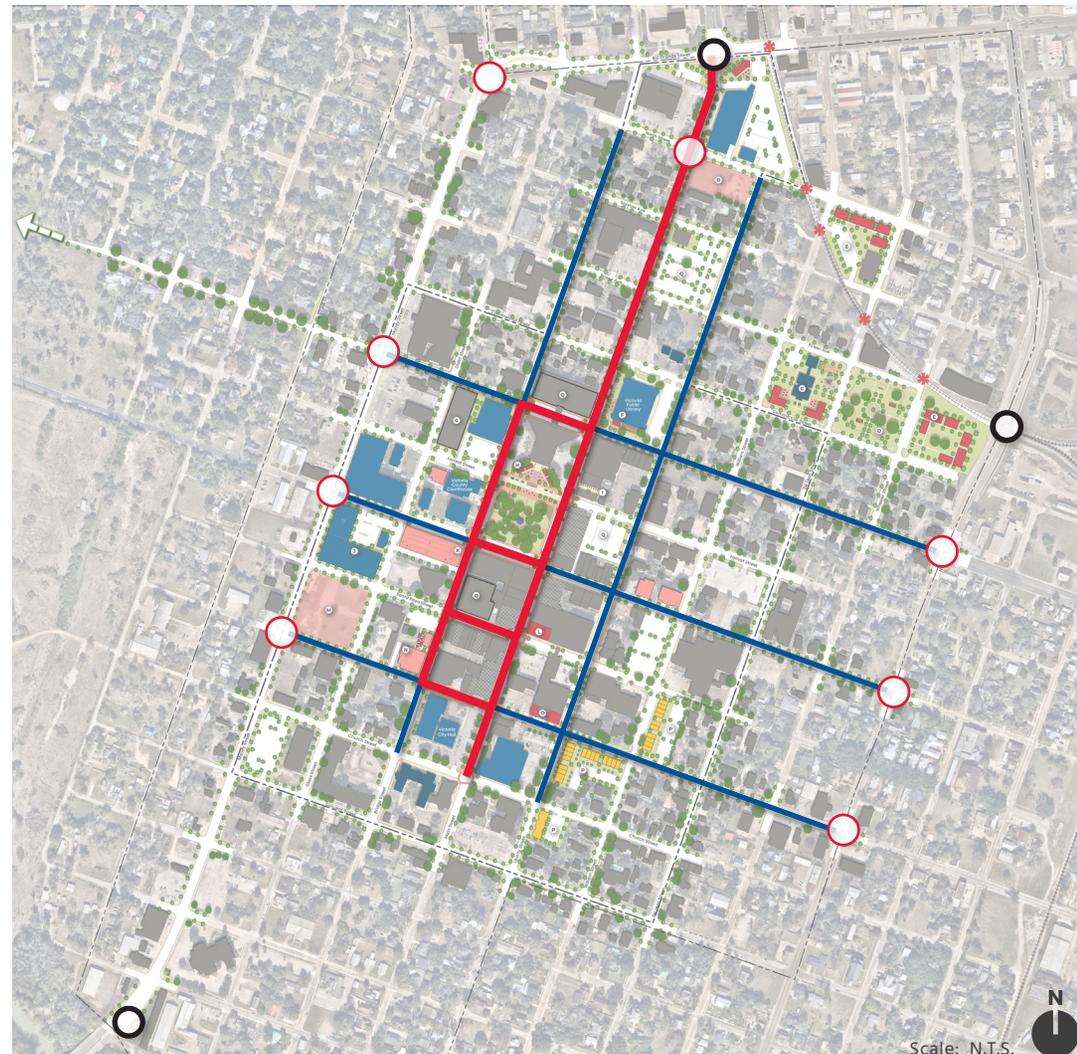
Joint-Use Parking

Joint-use parking areas are those that may be owned by a private entity, but are made available for public use through operating agreements. There are two parking garages at Goodwin Avenue and Main Street and at Santa Rosa and Bridge Streets that have potential to provide additional public parking in Downtown through joint-use agreements. A reserved parking lot at the intersection of Liberty and Forrest Streets may be another potential joint-use parking area. These parking areas are strategically located around the core of Downtown and would help to provide additional public parking, especially prior to development of a public parking garage. Based on the property owners' needs, the joint-use agreements could be restricted to after business hours, thus meeting the needs of the owner while providing public parking opportunities on nights and weekends.

BRANDING & URBAN DESIGN

District branding strategies consist of organized design elements used to create a cohesive pedestrian experience and a positive image to remain in visitors' memories. Branding can include elements such as consistent use of distinctive materials or colors, a cohesive signage program, and a series of special places around the area. The following pages describe strategies and locations for various branding and urban design improvements in Downtown Victoria.

Map 34. Branding & Urban Design Plan



- Primary Streetscape Corridor —
- Secondary Streetscape Corridor —
- Primary Gateway
- Secondary Gateway

STREETSCAPES

Streetscape design has a strong impact on both the first and lasting impression of visitors to an area. Design elements such as decorative pavers, street trees, consistent street furnishings, and planters help to create the character of an area and a comfortable and safe place for people to walk and gather. Streetscape design is especially important in a downtown, where people often go to experience something fun and exciting. While this experience can be based on a specific restaurant or plaza, it is also strongly impacted by the person's experience walking through the area.

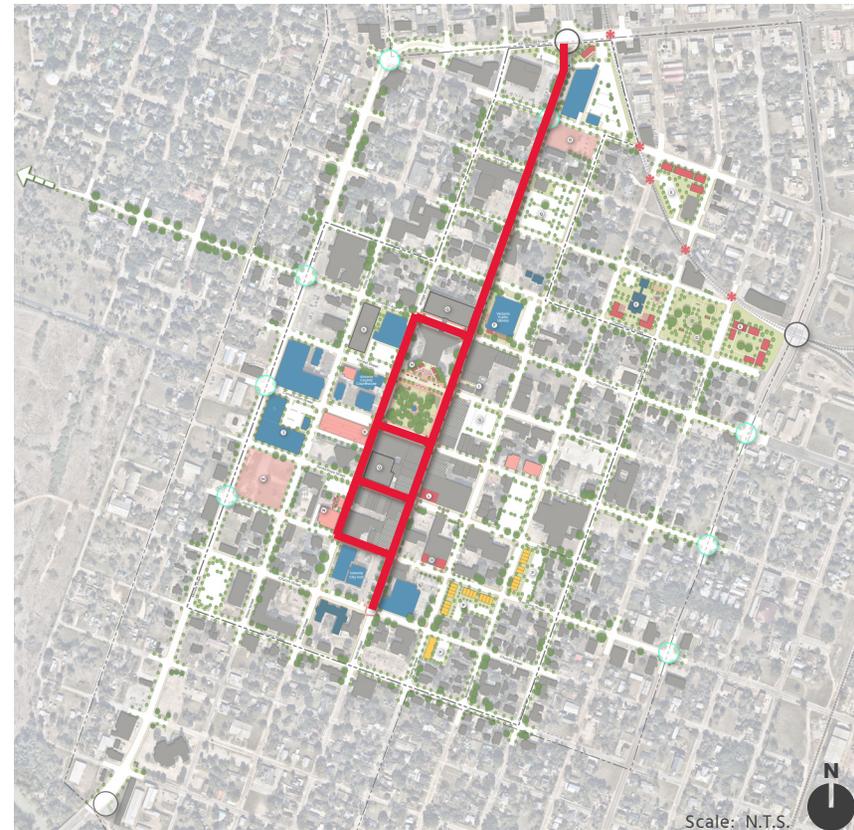
While sidewalk connectivity should be prioritized throughout all of Downtown Victoria, primary and secondary corridors have been identified for increased aesthetic treatment and investment.

Primary Corridors

Primary corridors will have the highest level of aesthetic treatment and investment (see example images below). Potential improvements include:

- Expanded areas with brick pavers
- Enhanced treatment at intersections and crosswalks (e.g., plantings, decorative crosswalks)
- Street trees where possible
- Bulb-outs to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and protect on-street parking

Map 35. Primary Streetscape Corridors

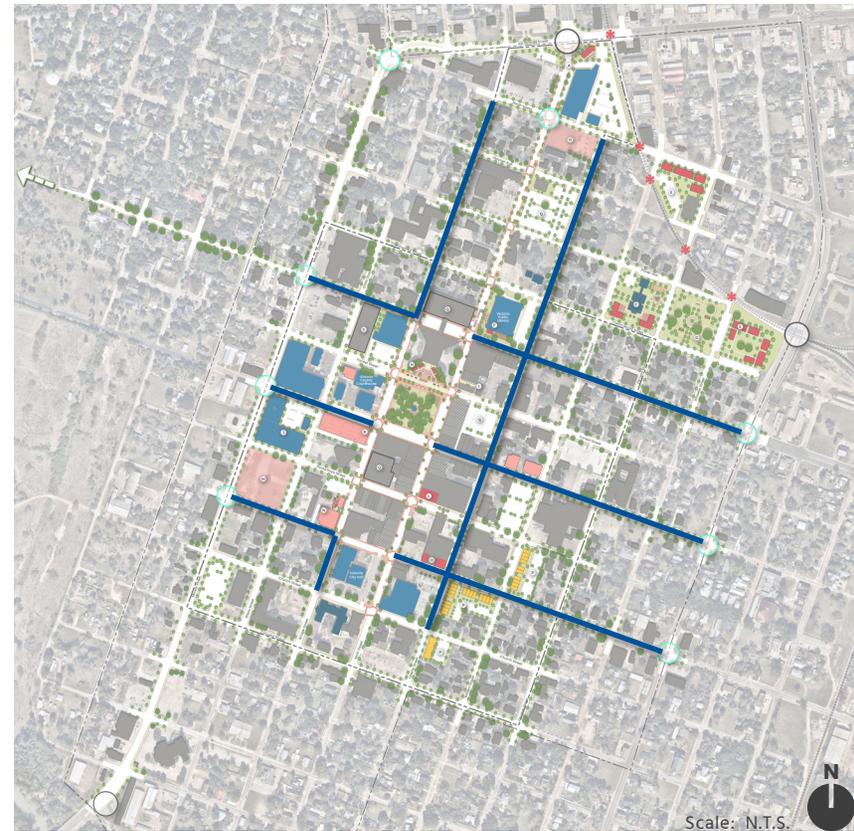


Secondary Corridors

Secondary corridors will have a lower level of aesthetic treatment and investment with special treatments used in select areas (see example images below). Potential improvements include:

- Consistent sidewalk connectivity
- Street trees where possible
- Enhanced treatment at intersections (e.g., brick pavers at corners) or to a lesser extent along the full length of the street

Map 36. Secondary Streetscape Corridors



GATEWAYS

Gateways create an enhanced entrance into an area and help people understand that they are entering a special district. Gateway design elements often include signage, enhanced landscaping, lighting, and/or public art.

A series of primary and secondary gateways are proposed to create improved entrances to Downtown Victoria. Secondary gateways will be smaller in scale, but should use similar branding and design aesthetics as primary gateways.

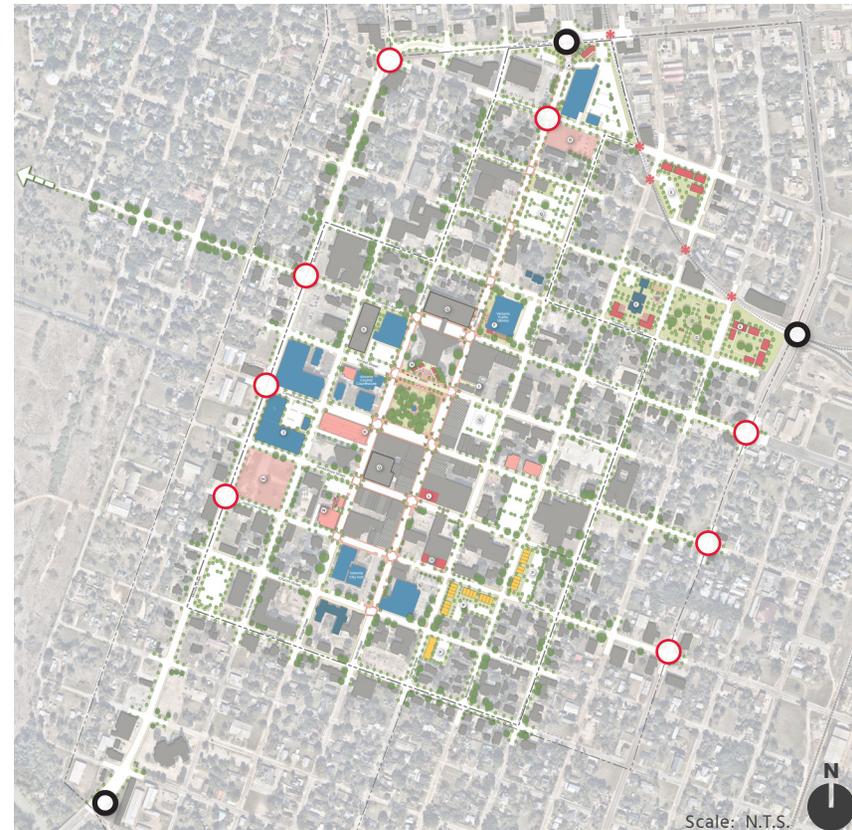
Primary Gateway Locations

- Main Street & Rio Grande Street
- Navarro Street Railroad Underpass
- Moody Street & 3rd Street (enhance existing signage)

Secondary Gateway Locations

- Five Points Intersection
- Street of Ten Friends Sign (existing)
- Moody Street & Goodwin Avenue
- Moody Street & Constitution Street
- Moody Street & Juan Linn Street
- Navarro Street & Goodwin Avenue
- Navarro Street & Constitution Street
- Navarro Street & Juan Linn Street

Map 37. Gateway Locations





4 IMPLEMENTATION

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110 OPEN



ACTION PLAN

The action plan is broken down into four key initiative categories. Recommended actions include pushing forward catalyst projects as well as other actions that will help to propel Downtown towards the community's desired vision for the future. These initiatives are not mutually exclusive and should be viewed as a combined strategy to achieve the desired outcome in Victoria. The four initiative categories include:

- Built environment actions
- Operational and programming actions
- Policy and regulatory actions
- Economic development and finance actions (included in Implementation Strategies section)

The action plan for each initiative category includes the recommended action, the catalyst project(s) it supports, time frame in which the project is recommended to be initiated (with the understanding that some of these projects may take months and even years to be fully implemented), key supporting entities, and a planning level estimated project budget. The City will need to further develop project designs in order to determine more accurate cost estimates to coordinate with funding sources. Many

of the recommended actions will be funded and implemented as a joint effort between the City and private developers.

Actions are not listed in a prioritized order.



Conceptual rendering of an activated 120 Main building and surrounding Main Street

This Plan represents a long-term strategic vision and series of actions supporting Downtown Victoria for the next 10+ years. During that time, Victoria will undoubtedly experience variations in financial resources, staffing, and other community-wide priorities. Investing in Downtown revitalization supports all of these circumstances, as data indicates a 32.56:1 Reinvestment Ratio¹ for all communities nationally participating in the Main Street program.² In short, investing public funds in Downtown improves Victoria’s fiscal position, freeing resources to support other community priorities.

¹ Reinvestment Ratio measures the amount of new investment that occurs, on average, for every dollar a participating community spends to support the operation of its Main Street program, based on median annual program costs reported to the National Main Street Center by its coordinating programs. This number is not cumulative and represents investment and organization budgets from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016.
² Main Street America, MainStreet.org

This Plan contains over 100 actions. While each serves to further the vision and goals established in this Plan, it can seem overwhelming. As a result, 10 of the most impactful changes and 10 “easy wins” have been identified as key to creating momentum. There is not a correlation between cost of a project and its impact—often the lowest cost efforts can make monumental differences. Some of these listed projects serve to make the remaining projects easier. Even for costly projects there are often interim actions that can test concepts or achieve partial goals while preparing for the larger investment.

If only these twenty efforts are completed, implementation should be considered a success and celebrated. That said, it is likely that accomplishing these twenty actions will successfully create the momentum to carry through the majority of the remaining Action Plan.

10 Highest Impact Projects	10 “Easy Wins”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5-Year Funding Program for Downtown (EDF-7) ▪ Increased Downtown Staffing Resources (OP-2) ▪ Extend Hours of Operation in Evenings and on Weekends (OP-18) ▪ Establish Monthly Activation (OP-22) ▪ North Downtown Primary Gateway (BE-11) ▪ DeLeon Plaza Expansion (BE-4) ▪ North Main Street Streetscape (BE-14) ▪ Santa Rosa and Juan Linn Streetscape Package (BE-15) ▪ 5-Points Intersection Improvements Package (BE-21) ▪ Broadband Connectivity (BE-28) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-Street String Lighting (BE-31) ▪ Interim DeLeon Plaza Expansion (BE-3) ▪ Downtown Victoria Brand (OP-6) ▪ Create Standard Main Street “Open” Flags (OP-20) ▪ Downtown Website (OP-5) ▪ Custom Pole Banners (BE-34) ▪ Primary Corridor Decorative Crosswalks (BE-41) ▪ Remove Sidewalk Clutter (BE-44) ▪ Create Public and Mural Arts Program (OP-24) ▪ Establish Series of Walking Tours (OP-25)

BUILT ENVIRONMENT ACTIONS

The built environment will provide the most obvious impact on Downtown users. It is therefore important that the City prioritize public improvements and encourage private investment that enhances the built environment in Downtown. Through the following actions, the City can create a lively Downtown district with improved pedestrian and vehicular experiences and encourage the development of a high-quality mixed-use area.

Figure 22. Built Environment Actions

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-1	<p>Urban Design Guidelines</p> <p>Create urban design guidelines to facilitate consistent streetscape design and incremental enhancements to public spaces. Guidelines should designate design standards for elements such as street furniture, lights, planting palette, and typical sidewalk treatments. Primary and secondary streetscape corridors should include tiered levels of enhancement and investment, with primary corridors having the highest level and secondary corridors having a stepped-down level of improvements. This action can be done standalone or in conjunction with the first streetscape.</p>	ALL	◆				\$25,000	MS, PW, PR, DS
BE-2	<p>Downtown Visitor Center</p> <p>Purchase, design, and create a new hub for the Main Street and Tourism offices near DeLeon Plaza. Relocating these functions into the heart of Downtown helps to create an accessible Visitor Center as well as potential for co-housing space for start-up retailers, an art league cooperative gallery, smaller event space, and other active programming. Depending on site opportunities, this could include activation of a small outdoor event space and potentially a pedestrian mall with small shopfronts.</p>	ALL	◆				To be determined	MS, CMO, PW, DS, CVB

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-3	Interim DeLeon Plaza Expansion Create an interim DeLeon Plaza expansion and Forrest Street closure experience. This could include temporary closure and increased programming to test ideas and allow people to experience the potential improvements prior to any substantial public investment, informing the final design.	H	◆				\$25,000 to \$75,000 depending on approaches used and programming	MS, PW, PR, DS, CA
BE-4	DeLeon Plaza Expansion Design and construct the DeLeon Plaza expansion. This may include closure of Forrest Street, a “splash plaza” and other water features, stage base, food truck and market infrastructure, engaging playground space, unique surface textures, increased landscape areas, and kiosk-like spaces for small businesses to benefit from an active face with the plaza. Alternatives should be explored with stakeholders, such as a shared street design for partial closure based on the day and time.	H	◆				\$1,175,000 - \$1,725,000	MS, PW, PR, DS, CA
BE-5	DeLeon Plaza Public Restroom Design and install public restrooms in or near DeLeon Plaza to encourage people to extend their visits in Downtown, especially families with young children for whom a nearby restroom is essential. The recommended location is the northeast corner of the Plaza behind the Six Flags Over Texas installation.	H	◆				\$150,000 - \$200,000 depending on design and size	MS, PW, PR, DS
BE-6	Railroad Quiet Zones Create railroad quiet zones to eliminate a nuisance affecting residential development in the northern portion of the study area as well as noise-sensitive businesses. This process should build on a study completed in 2015 to identify location-specific recommendations, design, and then construction.	A, B, C, D, E		◆			Costs will vary based on recommendations of 2015 study	MS, PW

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-7	<p>DeLeon Plaza Tree Lighting Update tree lighting in DeLeon Plaza to provide enhanced ambiance and safety while creating an engaging evening space and greater potential for night programming.</p>	H	◆				<\$10,000	MS, PR, PW
BE-8	<p>DeLeon Plaza Seating Install additional seating choices within DeLeon Plaza, such as picnic tables and similar options that include a table surface to broaden its use for varied purposes and attract greater daytime use (e.g., eating lunch) from people working in nearby businesses.</p>	H	◆				<\$25,000	MS, PR, PW
BE-9	<p>Moody Street Gateways Enhance the existing monument sign on Moody Street using a combination of landscape and public art to create a primary gateway that provides greater visual indication to visitors arriving from the south that they are entering a unique district of the City. Also, design and construct secondary gateways on Moody Street to establish greater Downtown visibility and direct vehicles from this key corridor into Downtown. Secondary gateway locations along Moody Street should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Points Intersection • Goodwin Avenue • Constitution Street • Juan Linn Street 	All		◆			\$50,000 - \$100,000 (highly variable based on design)	MS, PW, PR, CVB

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-10	<p>Navarro Street Gateways Commission and install a public art gateway on Navarro Street at the rail underpass, enhancing a key first impression to the Downtown. The art should feature Victoria’s history, arts, and culture, and leverage the strong visual presence of the rail underpass. Design and construct secondary gateways along Navarro Street to establish greater Downtown visibility and direct vehicles from this key corridor into Downtown. Secondary gateway locations along Navarro Street should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodwin Avenue • Constitution Street • Juan Linn Street 	All		◆			\$50,000 - \$100,000 (highly variable based on design)	MS, PW, PR
BE-11	<p>North Downtown Primary Gateway Design and construct a north Downtown gateway at Rio Grande Street and Main Street. This gateway will address a need for an improved pedestrian environment and create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from the north (one of the primary arrival paths for most local residents).</p>	All	◆				\$250,000 - \$550,000	MS, PW, PR
BE-12	<p>700 Main Center Improvements Design and install 700 Main Center aesthetic and branding improvements to support the north gateway transformation. Improving the character of this building and site will convey investment in public facilities and serve as a visual opportunity for arts and culture enhancement in Downtown.</p>	A		◆			\$50,000 to \$250,000 depending on extent of treatments	MS, PW, DS, CMO

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-13	<p>Victoria Public Library Enhancement Design and construct improvements to the exterior spaces at Victoria Public Library to provide more activation and celebrate the library as a high activity generator. Exterior improvements could include functioning entrances along Main Street and Goodwin Avenue; a public art garden; shaded, movable seating; a retail kiosk (e.g., coffee shop); and an additional library sign at Goodwin Avenue, among other things. This development will also engage the adjacent theater, thus connecting Downtown arts and cultural facilities.</p>	F	◆				\$350,000 - \$550,000	MS, PW, DS, CMO, L
BE-14	<p>North Main Street Streetscape Design and construct a streetscape package for the North Main Street area to extend the existing enhanced pedestrian facilities to the north extent of Downtown. This streetscape will improve the first impression of visitors entering Downtown from the north, address a maintenance need, provide formalized on-street parking with bump-outs, and connect Downtown northward to other activity centers. (see Map 38 on page 151 for extents)</p>	A, B, C, D, E	◆				\$1,300,000 - \$1,650,000	MS, PW

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-15	<p>Santa Rosa and Juan Linn Streetscape Package Design and construct a streetscape package for the Santa Rosa and Juan Linn area to address critical safety and accessibility issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and connect eastward to the Main Street corridor with its links to other activity centers within Downtown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa Rosa St. from Moody St. to William St. • Juan Linn St. from Moody St. to Navarro St. • Glass St. from Santa Rosa St. to Juan Linn St. • Bridge St. from Santa Rosa St. to Church St. • Main St. from Juan Linn St. to Church St. • Liberty St. from Santa Rosa St. to Church St. (see Map 38 on page 151 for extents)	J, L, M, N, O, P	◆				\$4,000,000 - \$5,400,000	MS, PW
BE-16	<p>Constitution Streetscape Package Design and construct a streetscape package for the Constitution area to link DeLeon Plaza to Moody and Navarro Streets, enhance the pedestrian experience and aesthetic around high-traffic public buildings, and improve links to Main Street and its connections to other activity centers within Downtown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution St. from Moody St. to Bridge St. • Constitution St. (south side) from Bridge St. to Main St. • Glass St. from Forrest St. to Santa Rosa St. • Bridge St. from Forrest St. to Santa Rosa St. • Liberty St. from Forrest St. to Santa Rosa St. (see Map 38 on page 151 for extents)	H, J, K, L, M		◆			\$2,275,000 - \$3,300,000	MS, PW

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-17	<p>Goodwin Streetscape Package Design and construct a streetscape package for the Goodwin area. This package emphasizes links to arts and cultural facilities, pedestrian access toward Moody Street and Riverside Park beyond (see action BE-23), connections to the Main Street corridor as the spine connecting multiple activity centers, and improvements to the overall pedestrian experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodwin Ave. from Moody St. to Main St. • Goodwin Ave. from Main St. to Navarro St. • Commercial St. from Moody St. to Main St. • Forrest St. from Moody St. to Bridge St. • Forrest St. from Main St. to Liberty St. • Glass St. from Commercial St. to Forrest St. • Bridge St. from Commercial St. to Forrest St. • Liberty St. from Commercial St. to Forrest St. (see Map 38 on page 151 for extents) 	F, G, H, I,		◆			\$3,550,000 - \$4,950,000	MS, PW
BE-18	<p>Bridge and Liberty Streetscape Package Design and construct a streetscape package for the Bridge Street and Liberty Street area between Commercial Street and North Street. This package includes secondary corridor streetscape enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience and aesthetic in the northern part of the study area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge St. from Commercial St. to North St. • Liberty St. from Commercial St. to North St. (see Map 38 on page 151 for extents) 	B, C, D, E			◆		\$1,125,000 - \$1,450,000	MS, PW

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-19	<p>Memorial Square Site Assessment Prepare a preliminary conditions study of Memorial Square and nearby blocks to determine appropriate redevelopment and public space design. This should include an environmental assessment to determine any issues based on ownership history and ground penetrating radar to confirm burial locations.</p>	D, E		◆			<\$10,000	MS, PW, DS
BE-20	<p>Memorial Square and Surrounding Streetscapes Design and construct improvements to Memorial Square and associated streetscapes. This project seeks to activate the Square as a meditative and contemplative environment that respects its history and provides an engaging public space for the nearby neighborhood. The Commercial Street streetscape will provide safe, accessible connectivity between Main Street and this historical asset. (see Map 38 on page 151 for streetscape extents)</p>	C, D, E			◆		\$1,500,000 - \$1,775,000	MS, PW, PR
BE-21	<p>5-Points Intersection Improvements Package Design and construct 5-Points intersection improvements and associated streetscapes to address a challenging intersection configuration. Improvements should complement the Downtown context, create unique pocket public spaces and landscape opportunities, and enhance circulation safety and flow. This project includes Moody Street and Rio Grande Street streetscape improvements from Bridge Street to Constitution Street. (see Map 38 on page 151 for streetscape extents)</p>	F, G, H, I			◆		\$2,575,000 - \$3,225,000 (excludes right-of-way acquisition and preparation)	MS, PW

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-22	South Moody Streetscape Design and construct streetscape enhancements for Moody Street from Constitution Street to the river. This streetscape should improve safety and aesthetics along Moody Street by focusing primarily on lighting improvements, pedestrian/sidewalk enhancements, and landscape where possible given limited right-of-way. (see Map 38 on page 151 for streetscape extents)	J, K, L, M, N, O, P			◆		\$1,125,000 - \$1,325,000	MS, PW
BE-23	Riverside Pedestrian Connection Design and construct sidewalk enhancements for Goodwin Avenue from Moody Street eastward to Riverside Park, with an emphasis on accessibility and pedestrian-oriented wayfinding to connect with the park. These improvements should ultimately connect to a new pedestrian entrance to Riverside Park. (see Map 38 on page 151 for streetscape extents)	ALL	◆				\$150,000	MS, PW, PR
BE-24	Public Parking Garage Partner, design, and construct a parking garage on a County site near the intersection of Forrest and Glass Streets. This garage will support both County and public parking needs in an effort to communalize and expand Downtown parking options. It should integrate current technology such as electric vehicle charging stations.	G		◆			\$22,200 per space or \$66-\$67 per square foot (typical) Excludes design, preparation and land acquisition (if necessary)	MS, PW, DS, CTY, CMO, CA
BE-25	Communal Grease Traps Establish locations and install communal grease traps to remove a potential barrier to restaurant growth in Downtown.	B, E, K, L, M, N, O	◆				<\$10,000 ea.	MS, DS, PW

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-26	Communal Waste Collection Establish locations and install communal waste collection to reduce clutter and provide essential services to Downtown businesses in a cost-effective manner.	B, E, K, L, M, N, O	◆				<\$10,000 ea.	MS, DS, PW, ES
BE-27	Joint-Use Fire Infrastructure Consider options and implement joint-use fire lines and standpipes to support redevelopment, particularly for assembly uses, restaurants, and vertical mixed-use environments with residential above commercial space. This will assist with the removal of redevelopment barriers.	B, E, K, L, M, N, O	◆				<\$10,000 ea.	MS, ED, F, PW, DS
BE-28	Broadband Connectivity Establish a broadband loop within Downtown to provide essential services for technology-dependent businesses and remote workers. Seek appropriate private and non-profit implementation partners.	A, B, C, E, F, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P	◆				\$30,000/mile (aerial) \$175,000/mile (underground)	MS, ED, CMO, PW
BE-29	Public WiFi Create a public WiFi mesh within the Downtown core and public spaces within the study area to allow for daily activation by Downtown workers, remote workers, and equitable technology access.	C, D, F, H, I, J, P	◆				<\$25,000	MS, ED, CMO, PW, PR
BE-30	Accent Lighting at Public Buildings Add accent lighting to public buildings in the study area, including City Hall, Victoria Public Library (update existing), 700 Main Center, and others to increase evening ambiance and highlight unique architectural elements. Support similar efforts for other entities such as religious buildings and cultural institutions.	A, C, F, I, J		◆			<\$25,000 per installation	MS, PW, PR, L, CMO

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-31	<p>Cross-Street String Lighting Install cross-street string lighting to create ambiance, increase safety, and greater evening visual attraction towards activity areas on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa Rosa Street between Bridge and Main Streets • Juan Linn Street between Bridge and Main Streets • Main Street between Juan Linn and Constitution Streets 	Q, L, O, P	◆				<\$10,000 per street block	MS, PW, CMO, CA, F, DS
BE-32	<p>Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Develop and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage, primarily at pedestrian scale, to direct pedestrians to key locations throughout Downtown. Such signage should emphasize walk time. Interim signs, such as Walk [Your City], may serve as temporary/test tools. This should be followed by creation of a permanent strategy and installation of signage.</p>	All	◆				\$50,000	MS, PW
BE-33	<p>Vehicular Wayfinding Signage Design and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage targeting vehicular traffic to direct drivers to key locations throughout Downtown including destinations and public parking. Consider expanding this into a city-wide wayfinding program that includes special efforts directing vehicles into Downtown from the loop. Part of this effort should include the design and installation of public parking signage for public lots and lots with shared-use agreements/partnerships.</p>	All	◆				<\$10,000 for simple wayfinding \$5,000 ea. for garage blade internally lit cabinet signs, potential variable message	MS, PW
BE-34	<p>Custom Pole Banners Commission custom pole banners using local artists/designs that emphasize Victoria’s history, arts, and culture.</p>	ALL	◆				<\$10,000 for multiple sets	MS, PW, PR

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-35	Bus Stop Improvements Design and install unique Downtown bus stop improvements for enhanced user comfort and safety. These areas also provide a great location for public art installations.	ALL	◆				<\$25,000 ea.	MS, PW, VT
BE-36	County Facility Needs Assessment Conduct a facility needs assessment of County facilities in order to determine an ultimate needs program and establish a plan of action, potentially allowing for strategic redevelopment of County-owned sites.	J, M	◆				\$50,000 - \$75,000 (highly variable based on number of facilities)	CTY
BE-37	City Facility Needs Assessment Conduct facility needs assessment of City facilities in order to determine ultimate needs program and establish a plan of action, allowing for strategic redevelopment of City-owned sites.	A, B, I, G	◆				\$50,000 - \$75,000 (highly variable based on number of facilities)	CMO, PW, DS
BE-38	County Facility Improvements Design and construct County facility and other facility improvements based on assessment findings, supporting their ongoing presence in Downtown as an activity center and potentially positioning sites for redevelopment.	J, M		◆			To be determined based on recommendations	CTY
BE-39	City Facility Improvements Design and construct City facilities and other facility improvements based on assessment findings, supporting their ongoing presence in Downtown as an activity center and potentially positioning sites for redevelopment.	A, B, I, G		◆			To be determined based on recommendations	CMO, PW, PR, DS

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Figure 22. Built Environment Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
BE-40	City Hall Plaza Enhancements Design and construct a refresh of the plaza in front of City Hall to improve aesthetics, create a more active and inviting space capable of hosting Downtown programming, as well as a space for informal gathering.	M, N, O		◆			\$100,000	MS, CMO, PW, PR
BE-41	Primary Corridor Decorative Crosswalks Install decorative crosswalks on primary streetscape corridors, including creative crosswalks in select locations, to enhance pedestrian safety and celebrate arts and culture.	F, G, H, I, K, L, N, O	◆				\$25,000	MS, PW, PR, CA
BE-42	Increased Traffic Control Devices in Downtown Establish a program for uniform installation of traffic control devices at most intersections in Downtown to place pedestrians as priority and calm traffic speeds.	ALL	◆				<\$25,000	MS, PW
BE-43	ADA Parking Improvements Consider shifting locations of on-street ADA accessible parking spaces to place them in consistent locations. When possible, locate these spaces at the end of each block so that users know to look on the next block if they can't find one. Install clear signage and pavement markings, especially adjacent to the travel lane to provide visual cues. Based on the results of the Downtown Parking Study (see action OP-1), add additional accessible parking spaces as needed.	ALL		◆			\$100,000 anticipated, depending on study outcome; should be integrated with streetscape projects	MS, DS, PW
BE-44	Remove Sidewalk Clutter Remove unnecessary signage and other elements from the sidewalk. For example, remove the 2-hour parking restriction signs since those are not enforced.	ALL	◆				N/A, but staff resources required	MS, PW, CA

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Package projects include a combination of multiple streetscape segments that work cohesively together to connect key areas and improve the character of the area. These packages also allow the City to achieve economies of scale for bid competitiveness.

Map 38. Proposed Streetscape Packages



OPERATIONAL & PROGRAMMING ACTIONS

Successful implementation of the vision for Downtown will require coordination with many entities, targeted branding and marketing to promote the area, additional programming, and dedicated staffing. Downtown Victoria will not change overnight; rather, a slow and steady uptick of interest, investment, and activity will gradually transform Downtown into a thriving entertainment district. The following operational and programming actions are recommended to support implementation.

Figure 23. Operational & Programming Actions

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-1	<p>Downtown Parking Study Conduct a comprehensive Downtown parking study to determine the need for additional standard and accessible parking spaces in Downtown and the appropriate locations, as well as approaches to managing curbside and paid parking if/when appropriate.</p>	ALL	◆				\$50,000 - \$75,000	MS, DS, PW
OP-2	<p>Increased Downtown Staffing Resources Increase staffing resources to effectively implement this Plan and the Main Street Four-Point Approach. A city of Victoria’s size with such a diverse program area would typically have three or more employees within the Main Street program. Consistent with other direction in this Plan regarding partnerships, the City can begin with an internship program working with Victoria College and University of Houston – Victoria. Increased staffing should support business management, marketing, communication, communication design, entrepreneurship, and economics.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	<\$15,000 annually for a six-month intern; \$150,000 for 2-3 additional full-time personnel with benefits	MS, CMO, VC, UHV

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Figure 23. Operational & Programming Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-3	<p>Shared Internship Program Consider expansion of the internship program described in action OP-2 (increased downtown staffing resources) to create a joint/shared internship program with individual businesses. This provides beneficial support for businesses and opportunities for emerging professionals to develop practical skills. It also strengthens the relationship between Downtown and Victoria’s educational institutions.</p>	ALL (Capacity Building)	◆				See OP-2	MS, CMO, CA, VC, UHV
OP-4	<p>Subcommittee and Volunteer Networks Build out the subcommittee structure and volunteer networks recommended by the Four-Point Approach. This will allow some tasks to be divided between volunteers rather than relying entirely on staff support to accomplish programs.</p>	ALL (Capacity Building)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, CVB
OP-5	<p>Downtown Website Develop a standalone Downtown website independent of City and tourism websites. This establishes a strong, easily accessible source of information unique to the needs of Downtown. This website should be strongly linked back to appropriate City and tourism websites.</p>	ALL (Messaging)	◆			◆	<\$10,000	MS, CMO, COM
OP-6	<p>Downtown Victoria Brand Develop a unique brand for Downtown Victoria. This should include a district name, logo, and tag line that conveys activity – that Downtown is the place to be. Consider building a product line, including items for sale (e.g., t-shirts, hats), to promote tourism, retail, and employment Downtown.</p>	ALL (Messaging)	◆			◆	<\$25,000	MS, CMO, COM, CVB

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Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-7	Strengthen Communication Outreach Strengthen communications, including frequent presentations to other local organizations, developing private social media groups for Downtown business owners, and supporting diverse interests and perspectives in order to emphasize that Downtown is a place for everyone.	ALL (Messaging)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, COM, CVB
OP-8	Downtown Events and Promotion Calendar Develop a Downtown-specific events and promotions calendar featuring Main Street events, other Downtown events, business events like live music, and special sales/promotions. This should be prominently featured on the Downtown website.	ALL (Messaging)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, COM, CVB
OP-9	Collaboration with Higher Education Collaborate with local higher education facilities (e.g., business support/education, intern programs, entrepreneurship-focused degrees) to identify opportunities to support Downtown, support academic efforts, and support opportunity for students.	ALL (Capacity Building)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, COM, VC, UHV, CVB
OP-10	Increase Promotion of Downtown Develop four new promotion strategies annually, evaluating past strategies to continue successful promotions and discontinuing less successful ones.	ALL (Messaging)	◆			◆	<\$10,000	MS, CVB

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-11	<p>Main Street Sponsorship Program Develop a sponsorship program for Main Street, expanding the base of support beyond Downtown to include other local industries. This could include sponsorship packages for particular events or Downtown improvements, among other things. Doing so helps provide financial resources and emphasizes that a strong Downtown benefits all, even businesses outside of Downtown.</p>	ALL (Capacity Building)	◆			◆	Revenue positive	MS
OP-12	<p>Strengthen and Reward Supporters Strengthen and reward partnerships and sponsors through events and programming such as annual dinners, promotions, and support for other organizations.</p>	ALL (Capacity Building)	◆			◆	<\$10,000	MS
OP-13	<p>Downtown Action Plan Develop and publish an annual Downtown action plan, cross-linking with the Four Points of the Main Street Approach, actions listed in this plan (and steps towards those actions) and outcome metrics. Publish status updates regularly.</p>	ALL (Capacity Building and Messaging)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, CMO

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Figure 23. Operational & Programming Actions (cont.)

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-14	<p>Develop Regular Business Outreach, Enrichment and Networking</p> <p>Establish quarterly Downtown business meetings, surveying for topics, engaging speakers, and seeking feedback. Consider inviting people thinking about opening businesses in Downtown so they can develop relationships and resources. Based on observations, the following are useful topics to begin this effort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical use and application of preservation tax credits with examples • Developing an online marketplace and web presence • Social media strategies and brand management • Storefront design and displays • Approaches to point-of-sale management and equipment • Retail and service trends; emerging opportunities 	ALL (Capacity Building)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS
OP-15	<p>Downtown Small Business Fair</p> <p>Develop and host a small business fair specific to Downtown businesses, both retail and office, and including market vendors not yet in physical storefronts in order to encourage them to take that step. This builds their network, invites new people into the group, and provides a venue to display the opportunity of Downtown Victoria to all residents and area businesses.</p>	ALL (Capacity Building and Messaging)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS

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Figure 23. Operational & Programming Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-16	Downtown Business Product Outreach Explore the viability of Downtown businesses providing products for local school/extracurricular fundraisers, allowing local organizations to support Downtown, make available unique products that are locally-sourced and thus more likely to increase fundraiser purchases, and expose Downtown businesses to a larger population.	ALL (Messaging)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS
OP-17	Develop a Pop-Up Storefront Using a vacant or underutilized building, create a pop-up space to allow entrepreneurs to “test the waters” on a new business concept at reduced risk. This could involve renting an event space Downtown for a set period of time.	ALL (Activation)		◆		◆	<\$25,000	MS, DS
OP-18	Extend Hours of Operation in Evenings and on Weekends Develop an “hours of operation” action plan based on discussions with owners regarding their specific needs coupled with events. For example, consider tying Downtown incentives to hours of operation as a requirement or a threshold to more lucrative incentives.	ALL (Activation)	◆			◆	Depends on incentives	MS, DS, ED

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Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-19	<p>Create a Downtown “Shark Tank” Establish a Downtown business plan competition, judged by local, successful entrepreneurs and lenders, to create opportunities for new ideas in Downtown. Examples of prizes should include a favorable funding package from a local lender, special features in marketing for Downtown, mentoring from the judges, co-housing space with the Main Street Offices, and/or a reduced or rent-free space for a year to develop the business. This creates entrepreneur opportunities for people that may have barriers to market-entry, and engages long-time businesses as part of the solution for new businesses.</p>	ALL (Activation)		◆		◆	Depends on value of award	MS, ED
OP-20	<p>Create Standard Main Street “Open” Flags Create custom-designed 3’ x 5’ flags that boldly state a business is open. This provides an important visual to combat the narrative that “nothing is open” and provides flag-holder infrastructure to create strong visuals for parades and events (American flags on Independence Day, etc.). A local artist should design the flags.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆			◆	<\$10,000 Periodic replacement	MS, COM
OP-21	<p>Regularly Develop, Assess and Update Downtown Events Assess Downtown events, including surveys of stakeholders regarding impact, income, and staff impact; best organizations to lead each event; and purpose/intent of the events. Victoria should especially consider its unique history and multicultural attributes in programming events as opportunities to differentiate itself from other communities.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, PR, CVB

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Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-22	<p>Establish Monthly Activation Develop standing monthly events targeting arts and culture, with extended business hours (1st Friday, etc.). While existing quarterly events are successful, experience indicates monthly events shift Downtown higher in consideration for local residents—a set monthly “date” where they know something will be happening.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆			◆	<\$25,000	MS, PR, CVB
OP-23	<p>Partner to Create a Night Market While the Farmer’s Market currently operates in conjunction with a community health service facility outside of Downtown, there is significant potential for a night market in Downtown. This would serve Downtown residents, create an evening activity to spur activation Downtown, and could increase access for people whose work hours prevent them from accessing the regular market. This could also potentially have more vendors since no one else in the region is conducting a night market.</p>	ALL (Activation)		◆			N/A, but staff resources required	MS, PR, PW, CVB

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Figure 23. Operational & Programming Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-24	<p>Create Public and Mural Arts Program Establish a program and associated arts commission to provide grants and design assistance to artists in an effort to place murals and other forms of art on public and private property throughout the City. Murals and public art can enliven an otherwise drab building, parking lot, or other space thus adding to the character and sense of place in a community. They can also beautify an area by covering and preventing graffiti. This also provides opportunities for artists to showcase talent and establish commissioned work for their portfolio. San Marcos provides an excellent example of a diverse mural arts program with several years of success.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				\$25,000 annually; special allocations for planned major installations	MS, PR, PW, CA, CVB
OP-25	<p>Establish Series of Walking Tours Create a series of walking tours with variable distances, themes from different eras and perspectives of Victoria’s history, interpretive signage, and route designations using sidewalk medallions. These tours should feature key people and events in addition to architectural history, perhaps including tours based on typical citizens of the era. This encourages a pedestrian environment, supports arts and culture, and helps both locals and tourists connect with Victoria’s past. This should include street sign toppers with original Spanish street names from establishment as a Mexican colony.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				<\$10,000	MS, VPI, CVB

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Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
OP-26	<p>Prescribing Downtown for Health Develop Downtown’s pedestrian environment to support its potential to improve public health through the creation of “walking for health” routes in Downtown. These should be paired with strategically placed street furniture and, potentially, even exercise stations. Victoria serves as a major regional medical hub, with multiple hospitals located within a short distance to Downtown. Many medical procedures and general medical advice often involves increasing physical activity as a form of physical therapy and health improvement. Downtown, including future connections with Riverside Park, should be part of improving health outcomes. In addition to community benefits, this approach increases exposure of Downtown businesses and even helps long-time residents rediscover Downtown Victoria.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				<\$10,000	MS, PR, PW
OP-27	<p>Enhance Storefront Appearance Establish storefront programs to create visual interest in vacant or underutilized spaces, through the use of public art, business displays, and similar efforts. For example, a vacant storefront could have a mural on the windows, vinyls applied with unique/quirky aspects of history, or even have a display for another business in Downtown, etc. Existing businesses should develop creative displays that entice customers and change with seasons. They can play towards community holidays and events, such as homecoming (high school pride), etc.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				<\$10,000	MS, DS, PW, VPI

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Placemaking mural



Art in vacant storefront



Pop-up retail



Street festival



Engaging storefront design

POLICY & REGULATORY ACTIONS

Downtown’s success is tied to its appeal to residents and visitors and the ease with which the private development community can invest and build in Downtown. The following regulatory and policy actions are recommended for Victoria.

The City is undergoing a re-write of its Unified Development Ordinance. Actions that are appropriate to address as part of that effort are noted as such in Figure 24.

Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-1	<p>Downtown Activation Guidebook & Implementation Develop an approved activation guidebook illustrating various techniques local stakeholders can implement to support Downtown activation. The City should implement tactical approaches to accelerate activation and build momentum. Activation techniques could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted crosswalks and intersections • Chalked sidewalks • Temporary bulb-outs • Business planters • Parklets and PARKing Day • Movable furniture • Recreation programming 	ALL (Activation)	◆				<\$25,000	MS, DS, PR, PW

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-2	<p>Pattern Book Develop a pattern book of pre-approved plans, including accessory dwellings, accessory commercial units, cottages, duplexes, flex commercial buildings, mixed-use buildings, and small-scale apartment buildings. This will reduce risk and cost of entry for infill development and provide formats that allow existing property owners to actively participate in Downtown revitalization.</p>	A, B, E, M, N, P	◆				<\$50,000 (depends on number of plans developed)	MS, DS, F
PR-3	<p>Interim Pedestrian Improvement Program Develop a program for interim pedestrian improvements throughout Downtown, such as crosswalks enhanced with public art painted on the pavement, painted intersection bulb-outs with planters and delineators to define the space, etc. These improvements will allow near-term enhancement to the pedestrian experience without requiring heavy public investment.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	<\$10,000 annually; potentially \$25,000 if consulting assistance is needed to develop manual	MS, PW, PR, CA

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-4	<p>Community and Designer Education on Codes In conjunction with 2021 ICC Codes update, develop educational materials and guidance for existing buildings, targeting training for building and fire “code equivalencies” and an available log of examples. Many experienced design professionals have not worked heavily with existing historic buildings. This educational effort helps reduce barriers to understanding how codes apply to historic buildings, particularly the application of the International Existing Building Code in concert with codes often cited as challenging in historic buildings like fire code and energy efficiency. Ultimately, this increases the number of design professionals comfortable with the unique issues of Downtown and may increase the number of people interested in investing in Downtown.</p>	A, B, E, K, L, M, N, O, P	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, DS, PW, F
PR-5	<p>Victoria Development University Implement a “Victoria Development University” to help cultivate new small and incremental developers and educate developers and design professionals on options for their properties. While focused on feasibility, this effort should work with local lending institutions to educate on approaches to project funding. The Incremental Development Alliance is a resource.</p>	A, B, E, K, L, M, N, O, P	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, DS, PW, F

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-6	<p>Curb Appeal Idea Books Develop “idea books” to support improvements to curb appeal, such as recommended color palettes based on architectural style, approaches to landscaping, and similar do-it-yourself techniques that encourage resident pride. Garland is an excellent example of this tool.</p>	P		◆			<\$25,000	MS, DS
PR-7	<p>Weekend Warrior Workshops Create Weekend Warrior Workshops to educate homeowners on code-compliant do-it-yourself methods to improve maintenance and repair of historic buildings. This helps to support preservation and encourages homeowners to take more proactive approaches to maintaining structures.</p>	P	◆				N/A, but staff resources required	MS, DS
PR-8	<p>Joint-Use Parking Implement parking management approaches, including designation of currently private lots and garages for joint-use parking, with necessary agreements. Select locations are identified on the illustrative master plan, but do not represent all potential locations. It should integrate current technology such as electric vehicle charging stations where appropriate as part of the agreements.</p>	G, Q	◆				Depends on contract agreements	MS, PW, CA, CMO, CTY

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-9	<p>Non-residential Parking Requirements Geographically expand non-residential parking exemption from minimum ratios, particularly for non-office uses. This will reduce barriers to investment and recognize the historic pattern of Downtown prior to the automobile’s dominance. It also supports a greater geographic envelope for redevelopment. In the case of restaurants and entertainment, peak activity often occurs after Downtown Victoria’s large office-based businesses have closed, freeing their parking to other uses. Consider a market-based approach City-wide, or at least streamline parking ratios.</p>	A, B, C, E, K, L, M, N, O	◆				Address within the Unified Development Ordinance effort underway	MS, DS
PR-10	<p>Residential Parking Requirements Update residential parking minimums for consistency (a four-bedroom house requires less parking than a three-bedroom apartment or a townhouse, despite the house likely having larger household size). Consider significant reductions in required parking within the study area, credit for adjacent on-street parking, and/or possible elimination. This reduces barriers to housing affordability and achieves consistency that supports various types of “missing middle” housing types appropriate in Downtown.</p>	A, B, M, N, P	◆				Address within the Unified Development Ordinance effort underway	MS, DS
PR-11	<p>Flexible Approaches to Parking Establish an accepted approach to shared parking and mixed-use efficiency. Unbundling parking from redevelopment and allowing use of off-site parking supports urban-style development patterns that create engaging, vibrant Downtown environments.</p>	A, B, C, E, K, L, M, N, O, P	◆				Address within the Unified Development Ordinance effort underway	MS, DS

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-12	<p>Pro-active Efforts to Eliminate Vacant Buildings Establish a comprehensive vacant buildings program, including regulations for registration, inspection, and requirements for occupancy and pair this with an incentive program. This supports historic preservation, reduction in the loss of historic resources, and activation of buildings to increase interest. The San Antonio program represents a national best practice that can be scaled. Others include Corpus Christi, Cuero, and Paris.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				Depends on incentives	MS, DS, ED, F, CMO
PR-13	<p>Historic Resources Survey Conduct an update to the Historic Resources Survey for the Downtown study area. This provides content to support historic preservation marketing efforts and tours, and also forms the basis for updating historic preservation ordinances to better protect critical resources and streamline options for the treatment of noncontributing structures.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				<\$50,000	MS, VPI, DS

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-14	<p>Update Historic Preservation Ordinances Update historic preservation ordinances to address identified issues, apply best practices in order to reduce the loss of historic structures, and provide pathways to renovation and redevelopment. Specifically, updates should address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition by neglect • Development rights transfers • Threshold for “stay of demolition” based on resource survey contribution categories • Possible creation of design guidelines coupled with incentives for compliance 	Variable	◆				Address within the Unified Development Ordinance effort underway	MS, VPI, DS, CA
PR-15	<p>National Register Consider, based on data from the historic resources survey, submission of current historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places. This creates minimal regulatory impact, but opens the door for property owners to leverage historic preservation tax credits. An alternative is to seek the National Register on a property-by-property basis, but this often presents a barrier for those lacking expertise and funding. Brownsville provides an excellent model approach.</p>	Variable	◆			◆	Depends on whether consulting assistance is needed to prepare application and level of City involvement	MS, VPI, DS

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-16	Right-of-Way Management Ordinance Update the right-of-way management ordinance to affirmatively establish ability to create parklets, sidewalk cafes, and sidewalk displays. This helps to support activation and creates a predictable environment in which businesses have confidence in approval. San Marcos has an approach that could be adapted and streamlined for Victoria, as do other communities like Brenham.	ALL (Activation)	◆				N/A unless consulting assistance is needed, but staff resources required	MS, PW, DS, CA
PR-17	Right-of-Way Encroachments Historically, Victoria frequently had building elements encroach into the right-of-way, such as balcony and arcade support posts, awnings, etc. While currently allowed by practice, such processes should be affirmed through memorialization within regulations to create confidence and predictability.	ALL (Activation)	◆				N/A unless consulting assistance is needed, but staff resources required	MS, PW, DS, CA
PR-18	Mobile Food and Retail Vendors Update mobile food vendor regulations to reduce arbitrariness of a Downtown exception, support increased activity Downtown, encourage experimentation, and achieve a predictable regulatory environment. Expand its application to mobile retail and personal services.	ALL (Activation)	◆				N/A, but staff resources required	MS, DS, PW, CA
PR-19	Outdoor Sales and Vending Update outdoor sales regulations to address and support performing arts (e.g., busking) as well as sidewalk displays of merchandise for retailers. This helps to create an active Downtown environment that is engaging for locals and visitors and provides flexibility for businesses.	ALL (Activation)	◆				N/A, but staff resources required	MS, DS, PW, CA

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Figure 24. Policy & Regulatory Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
PR-20	<p>Create Entertainment District (Open Container) Establish an entertainment district for outdoor open alcohol containers. This opens potential for uses like galleries to add small alcohol service components to support their business model, and creates an active, exciting atmosphere similar to the Art Walk as part of a normal practice. This is often limited to beer and wine, and in a designated container type. Fredericksburg and Texarkana provide model examples.</p>	ALL (Activation)	◆				N/A, but staff resources required	MS, DS, CA
PR-21	<p>Implement Code Diagnostic Report Recommendations Implement changes to development ordinances based on the Code Diagnostic Report contained the Appendix to create an environment more affirming and predictable for renovation, redevelopment, and infill development, thus increasing Downtown vibrancy and fiscal performance. Such changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot standards internal consistency and consistency with historic patterns • Parking ratios and design • Sign regulations to address common types • Standards for “missing middle” and small/ incremental development types • Alternative for landscape in urban setting • Standards clarification for residential adjacency and applicability in general for mixed use 	ALL (Activation)	◆				Address within the Unified Development Ordinance effort underway	MS, DS, PW, CA

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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are a variety of public policy tools that the City can use to fund the implementation of the Downtown Plan. Depending on the incentive, state law might dictate the parameters under which this incentive can be utilized. Some of these tools, such as the Economic Development Sales Tax and Local Hotel Occupancy Tax, are already in place and have been leveraged for Downtown projects. Other options such as tax increment financing have been discussed, but not implemented. To successfully execute the Downtown Action Plan, the City and other stakeholders will need to expand the funding strategies available, combine resources for larger projects, and formalize a predictable long-term funding stream for Downtown that allows for multi-year projects.

Incentives can take any number of forms typically tied to a level of investment or job creation, including tax abatements, grants, loans, and infrastructure improvements. Most commonly in downtown contexts, these agreements are used to reduce or buy-down risk or hold costs for a project. In Texas, the statutory authority for municipal economic development agreements is provided by Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code (Chapter 381 for county governments). Chapter 380 agreements are flexible with respect to the length of term for the incentives. This flexibility can be crafted to establish future incentives that might bring about future hiring and project investments.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public-private partnerships provide the opportunity to leverage the resources of the City and private sector to more effectively implement the Downtown recommendations. Many of the projects contemplated could include a public-private partnership component, typically defined as part of a formal development agreement or Chapter 380 agreement. Public-private partnerships in Downtown may include infrastructure projects, financial incentive programs, and land assembly programs.

Infrastructure

As development is planned in Downtown Victoria, infrastructure improvements will be needed. Public dollars may be used to upgrade sidewalks and infrastructure related to proposed redevelopment projects. In most cases, existing utilities will likely be sufficient to support individual projects.

Financial Incentive Programs

Providing financial incentives to private investors can help to encourage investment and redevelopment in Downtown.

Land Assembly Program

In certain instances, City acquisitions of land can help to incentivize new development (e.g., allowing the City to issue an RFQ for master developer with special terms). The most likely method of acquiring properties for the purposes of implementing the Downtown Plan will be through purchase of a property in exchange for cash (i.e., fee simple acquisition).

FUNDING OPTIONS & PUBLIC POLICY TOOLS

There are a variety of financing options that can be used to help implement this Downtown Plan. Therefore, each possible tool should be examined to determine when it may be most appropriately used. In most cases, funding could include a combination of private funding, City funds, County funds, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone funds, improvement districts, tax abatements, opportunity zones, and state and federal grants.

There are three types of economic development and incentive mechanisms that the City can implement as the tools to spur private investment in Downtown. These include:

- **Public-born actions** to help prepare a larger development landscape for private investment.
- **Public actions** simultaneous with private investment to induce the desired development form, pattern, and density in this Downtown Plan.
- **Incentives** to reduce the risk of project development.

The following are key financing tools, programs, and potential funding sources.

Economic Development Sales Tax (EDC)

Economic Development Corporations are governed by Chapters 501, 504, and 505 of the Texas Local Government Code. A type 4B can use its sales tax for a variety of business development purposes. Type B corporations may pay for land, buildings, equipment, facilities, targeted infrastructure, and improvements for:

- Professional and amateur sports and athletic facilities, tourism and entertainment facilities, convention facilities, and public parks
- Related store, restaurant, concession, parking, and transportation facilities
- Related street, water, and sewer facilities
- Affordable housing

To promote and develop new and expanded business enterprises that create or retain primary jobs, a Type B EDC may fund:

- Public safety facilities
- Recycling facilities
- Streets, roads, drainage, and related improvements;
- Demolition of existing structures
- General municipally owned improvements
- Maintenance and operating costs associated with projects.

City-Wide Bond Funding

Downtown projects, due to cultural and economic significance, as well as return on investment/fiscal impact of downtowns, often warrant consideration as community-wide benefits. In fact, downtowns typically have the highest tax production per acre, meaning that a strong downtown relieves the tax burden and strengthens the economy for all. As a result, consideration of city-wide bond funding is appropriate. This is especially the case for public gathering spaces, major roadways, and similar downtown improvements frequently used by visitors from outside of Downtown.

Local Hotel Occupancy Tax

Cities have the ability to adopt local hotel occupancy tax assessments, typically up to seven percent of the cost for use of a hotel room. It can be an important source of funding for tourism programs and can support economic growth for the City and unique districts within the City. Hotel occupancy taxes are required to fundamentally support putting “heads in beds,” meaning they should have a goal to increase hotel occupancy through community investments supportive of tourism. Eligible uses include convention center enhancements, administrative expenses to support convention registration, tourism-related promotions,

value is captured and reinvested within the district. Preliminary evaluation suggests creation of a TIRZ will help provide funding for implementation, thus a TIRZ should be considered. Even small amounts of revenue generated can prompt establishment of the cyclical investment pattern and help to finance needed improvements in the area.

Public Improvement District (PID)

PIDs are permitted under Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Government Code as a type of special assessment enabled for cities and counties. The funds generated by the special assessment tax are reinvested in the district for the following eligible activities:

- Water, wastewater, health and sanitation, or drainage improvements
- Street and sidewalk improvements
- Mass transit improvements
- Parking improvements
- Library improvements
- Park, recreation, and cultural improvements
- Landscaping and other aesthetic improvements
- Art installation
- Creation of pedestrian malls
- Supplemental safety services, including public safety and security services
- Supplemental business-related services for the improvement of the district

This differs from a TIRZ in that all properties receive the assessment based on a fixed rate, while a TIRZ reallocates funds from an already established rate into the district. PIDs are often used in combination with TIRZs to “buy down” the PID rate, or to fund capital projects with a TIRZ and operations/ services with a PID. PIDs are most effective when the geographic area is larger; Victoria should work closely with financial advisors to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of a PID in Downtown.

Municipal Management Districts (MMD)

These districts are established for a specific geographic area to fund improvements and services above and beyond the basic services already provided by the city or property owners. Funding systems are flexible, including property taxes, special assessments, and impact fees, or by other charges to property owners similar to a Property Owners Association. The City continues to provide basic services, but the district creates a supplement to those services. MMDs are created by the state legislature and often are implemented in place of a PID.

Special Purpose District

Special purpose districts differ from a TIRZ in that a special purpose district collects an additional tax. In this way, a special purpose district is similar to a PID. Special purpose districts differ, however, in that

they are legally recognized governments that operate independently from other taxing jurisdictions. They are able to issue bonds, establish user fees, create grants, and implement a number of other funding sources. Their capabilities and eligible projects are limited by their enabling authorization.

Matching Funds/Loans

Though they often come with reporting requirements or special qualifications, state and federal matching funds are often available for projects. Examples applicable to Victoria include highway beautification, safety enhancements, and bicycle/ pedestrian infrastructure, typically managed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Community Development Block Grant funds are another example, and in the case of Victoria would be accessed through the state-managed program. Other programs are available through USDA, SBA, and similar agencies.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, commonly known as the Federal Historic Tax Credit program, provides a 20 percent and 10 percent federal tax credit to property owners who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of a historic building in a commercial or other income producing use, while maintaining its historic character.

A 20 percent income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to be certified historic structures. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service review the rehabilitation work to ensure that it complies with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation. Owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit.

A 10 percent tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use. In order to qualify for the tax credit, the rehabilitation must meet three criteria:

- At least 50 percent of the existing external walls must remain in place as external walls,
- At least 75 percent of the existing external walls must remain in place as either external or internal walls, and
- At least 75 percent of the internal structural framework must remain in place.

There is no formal review process for rehabilitations of non-historic buildings under the ten percent program.

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone

Cities can designate Neighborhood Empowerment Zones to promote one or more purposes:

- Support new or rehabilitated affordable housing
- Increase economic development
- Increase social service, education or public safety quality

Cities gain the ability to waive a number of liabilities to property owners and developers, including waivers to impact fees, refunding of municipal sales taxes, and abatement of property taxes if determined to benefit the zone.

Enterprise Zone

Only the State can designate enterprise zones, defined as economically-distressed areas. Cities can nominate an area to participate in the Texas Enterprise Zone Program. Such zones promote job creation and capital investment within a geographic area. In addition, the State Comptroller can refund state sales and use tax.

Opportunity Zone

An Opportunity Zone, created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, is an economically distressed area where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Areas qualify if they have been nominated for

that designation by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury. Downtown Victoria is located in an Opportunity Zone. An investor can defer tax on any prior eligible gain to the extent that a corresponding amount is timely invested in a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF). More information regarding technical aspects of Opportunity Zones is available at <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/businesses/opportunity-zones>.

Other Funding Strategies

A variety of other funding strategies that can be evaluated include:

- General fund sources within the municipal budget
- Impact fee eligible projects within Downtown
- Municipal management rebates
- Sales Tax Sharing
- Tax Exempt Financing
- Facade Maintenance Loan Program
- Community Development Block Grants
- Corporate Donations and Sponsorships
- Texas Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Programs

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE ACTIONS

The following economic development and finance actions are recommended to help spur investment and positive change in Downtown Victoria.

Figure 26. Economic Development & Finance Actions

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
EDF-1	<p>Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)</p> <p>Designate a Downtown TIRZ to capture incremental property tax growth. The City should lead this initiative, but request the County join the TIRZ. The tax increment would be used to help fund the projects in the Downtown Master Plan over the next 20 years.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	To be determined	MS, ED, CMO, CTY

This map illustrates a conceptual TIRZ boundary to support Downtown Victoria. This area should be verified during the implementation of action item EDF-1 to determine the need for any modifications.



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Figure 26. Economic Development & Finance Actions (cont.)

Ref. #	Action Items	Catalysts Supported	Initiation Time Frame (Yrs)				Planning Level Estimated Project Budget	Key Entities
			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
EDF-2	<p>Cultural District Application & Designation Apply for Cultural District designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts. Cultural Districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. These districts can become focal points for generating businesses, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development, and fostering civic pride.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	N/A, but staff resources required	MS, ED, CVB, Cultural Arts Groups
EDF-3	<p>Housing Incentive Program Establish an economic development policy that provides financial incentives to higher density rental and for-sale housing projects within the Downtown area. The City should set a target for housing units over the next decade and adjust the program to reflect market conditions.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	To be determined	MS, ED, CMO, CTY
EDF-4	<p>Extended Hours for Existing & Future Businesses Encourage existing and future Downtown restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues to stay open later at night and on the weekends. As part of any incentive offered or investment in Downtown, consideration should be given to businesses willing to offer extended operating hours.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	To be determined	MS, ED, CMO
EDF-5	<p>Job Grant Program Create an economic development policy that focuses on recruiting professional services firms to Downtown. The program should identify businesses that do not have to locate in Downtown based on the services they provide, but would help diversify the economic base in the area.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	Typically \$500 to \$3,000 per job	MS, ED, CMO

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			1-3	4-6	7-10+	Ongoing		
EDF-6	<p>Future Hotel Site(s) As the Master Plan is implemented, overall economic activity and tourism-related spending in Downtown will increase. In the future, a Downtown hotel would be appropriate. The City should identify appropriate sites and collaborate with landowners in actively recruiting a hotel developer. The City might also issue a request of interest (RFI) for property it owns or controls that would be suitable for this project.</p>	ALL		◆		◆	To be determined	MS, CMO, CTY, DS, CVB, Private Landowners
EDF-7	<p>5-Year Funding Program for Downtown Funding the Master Plan will require dedicated resources from a variety of partners including City, Sales Tax Development Corporation, County, University of Houston-Victoria, existing Downtown businesses, and philanthropy. A coordinated 5-year funding plan, including financial commitments, should be developed to maximize the return on investment.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	To be determined	MS, CMO, CTY, VPI, UHV, VC, Businesses, Philanthropy
EDF-8	<p>Broaden the Facade Grant Program Many of the challenges to renovating existing structures to bring them back into productive use and original appearance exceed facade-related issues. The program should be expanded to include assistance to property owners or business tenants to bring a building or property up to code and address significant interior capital improvements, particularly regarding fire code compliance. This can also be further expanded with specific programs for signage, as well as tenant rental assistance.</p>	ALL	◆			◆	To be determined	MS, CMO, ED

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