

December 2014

downtown allentown

development and urban design plan



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Funding for this project has been provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, through the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation and the Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone Development Authority.

Preface

The Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) policy has unleashed an historic wave of reinvestment in downtown Allentown. The first NIZ-supported development projects have demonstrated downtown's growing appeal as an inviting place to live, work, learn and play that delivers strong economic and community value to Allentown and the Lehigh Valley region. But how should future downtown investment, in and out of the NIZ, be guided to leverage most effectively the NIZ and other downtown assets? To answer this question, city leaders commissioned this study. The **Downtown Allentown Development and Urban Design Plan** translates study findings into recommended

actions, identifying those initiatives in the areas of land use, urban design, transportation and infrastructure that will do the most to build upon downtown's momentum. The plan is provided as a set of recommendations to city boards, commissions, and other key stakeholders and leadership for their full consideration, to inspire and guide further implementation actions. Three companion studies provide more detailed analysis of some of downtown's most important areas for initiative, explaining its strong housing market potential, opportunities to minimize the land and funding needed for parking, and clear, effective ways to refine zoning and design guidelines for buildings.

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1 executive summary

Setting the stage: A new era of opportunity in Downtown

Downtown Allentown is at a pivotal moment in its history. After enduring several decades of disinvestment—like most American downtowns during the parallel boom in suburban development—**downtown is receiving a surge of reinvestment** that is destined to continue, offering a host of economic and community benefits to Allentown and the Lehigh Valley region. **The Downtown Allentown Development and Urban Design Plan provides guidance on how to most effectively build upon the momentum visible downtown.**

Allentown is experiencing **one of the most rapid turnarounds** of any downtown in America

Several factors lay the groundwork for this impressive growth:

- A national **resurgence of interest in living, working, learning and playing in walkable settings**—driven especially by the preferences of the Millennial generation, but evident across a broad range of ages, lifestyles and incomes. Downtowns like Allentown’s excel at providing

such a setting, which not only attracts and retains vital workforce, but also supports a highly collaborative work environment supporting business growth and innovation

- The enduring presence of a **significant number of employers, retail businesses, cultural and religious institutions and government entities in downtown**, despite



The PPL Center arena and new outdoor dining at Center Square anchors the new development transforming downtown.

the area’s generally diminished role in regional employment and retail. Locally based employers like PPL and Alvin H. Butz have maintained a critical mass of downtown jobs and invested in quality buildings and public spaces; the City and private donors created the attractive Arts Park and Arts Walk, and sustain strong arts institutions.

- **Population growth in neighborhoods around downtown.** While Allentown’s Center City area faces real challenges in areas including unemployment and education (which Allentown’s Center City Initiative is addressing through new strategies and resources), its population intensity is generating new business

activity, cultural life and workforce availability that benefit downtown.

- **Allentown’s compact, connected grid of streets and blocks.** The city’s remarkably intact network of pedestrian-scaled streets, and rich mixture of commercial, residential and institutional buildings along them, perfectly support the walkable live/work/learn/play environment again favored. Past investments in Hamilton Street’s sidewalks and in parking structures still offer underutilized value. The downtown area is well positioned to leverage the synergies among activities, efficient use of infrastructure and services, and variety of consumer choices possible in this environment.

- The powerful Neighborhood Improvement Zone (**NIZ**) **incentive program** that has dramatically jumpstarted commercial reinvestment. Thanks to this program, **Allentown is experiencing one of the most rapid turn-arounds of any downtown in America**, and regaining a market position that will help it capture more market-driven investment on an ongoing basis.

While initial NIZ-supported redevelopment has been well located and conceived in its program and design, future rounds of redevelopment must continue to strengthen downtown’s growing prominence in the city and the region.



Three City Center (left) and Four City Center (right) are part of the next wave of new development that will continue to bring more people and activity downtown and strengthen the area’s market position.

Future development must address important questions:

- **Where can new development be located to most effectively catalyze further reinvestment** in downtown and adjacent neighborhoods?
- **How much and what types of housing**—which benefits much less from NIZ incentives than commercial development—belong in and around downtown?
- **What investments in streets, public spaces, parking or other infrastructure** are most needed to fully capture downtown’s potential?

The vision, framework and action items outlined in this plan answer important questions for the city, property and business owners, residents and other key stakeholders ready to invest in downtown. The guidance is important, as a poorly located or designed development can bring as many problems as benefits, such as undesirable traffic or parking impacts on neighborhoods, blank facades that detract from downtown safety and

retail vibrancy, or tenanting challenges that discourage other developers from investing. On the other hand, **a vibrant downtown will provide a wide range of important benefits:**

- Increasing Allentown’s property tax revenue through the growing value of new and existing real estate—while efficiently using existing infrastructure and other city services

- Expanding employment and education opportunities for residents of nearby neighborhoods as well as the broader city and region
- Creating a more competitive local workforce—in an era in which businesses typically follow their workforce—by attracting skilled workers and retaining the region’s many residents and graduating college students
- Expanding housing choices to better meet the needs of today’s diverse households, representing a wide spectrum of ages, incomes and sizes
- Expanding shopping and dining choices supporting neighborhoods and businesses
- Providing a variety of convenient, affordable transportation options—including walking, transit, and biking as well as driving—connecting people to jobs, education, services and neighbors
- Growing the region’s cultural life through greater participation in the downtown area’s cultural and religious institutions, as well as more programming in downtown public spaces and entertainment destinations
- Bringing new economic life to preserve downtown’s historic architectural landmarks
- Minimizing Allentown’s environmental impacts by restoring underutilized urban sites for new uses, avoiding impacts on undeveloped land, and making more economical use of energy in transportation and buildings



The plan focuses on a specific downtown study area that incorporates the downtown NIZ area as well as adjoining neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood Improvement Zone's crucial role

The Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) is a driving force behind downtown Allentown's recent flurry of development. This economic development tool was created by the state to encourage development and revitalization by allowing developers to use certain state and local tax dollars toward debt service on the construction and rehabilitation of buildings within the district. This reduces costs for the developer who can then offer lower rents to attract new tenants. Twenty percent of the NIZ tax revenue goes to the Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone Development Authority (ANIZDA) which can use those funds to finance other improvements or projects in the district.

There has been more than **\$1 billion** in projects built or proposed in the downtown NIZ in the last several years and more than **1.5 million square feet** is already built or under construction.

Source: "Allentown arena zone reaches \$1 billion in proposed development" Assad and Kraus, The Morning Call. 5/17/2014.

The Two City Center office building and the PPL Center arena, office, and hotel project were the first two projects completed with NIZ funding. The Trifecta office building (formerly Schoen's furniture), Three City Center office building, and the Four City Center residential building with ground floor retail, are demonstrating the power of the NIZ incentive to transform downtown via multiple sites and markets.

The essential role of housing downtown

NIZ policy heavily favors office, retail and hotel development over housing, because it taps many state and local taxes generated by the businesses that locate there to assist in the financing of the project. While new workspace is a critical component of downtown's continued success, it should not be the only piece. **Housing offers many benefits to increasing downtown's vitality** by bringing more activity to the sidewalks in the evenings and on weekends, providing convenient housing choices for downtown's growing workforce, supporting additional retail establishments and operating hours downtown, and diversifying and expanding the downtown property tax base.

There is healthy demand for living downtown. The housing market offers potential for **at least 1,000 additional housing units** over the coming five years. This magnitude of housing de-



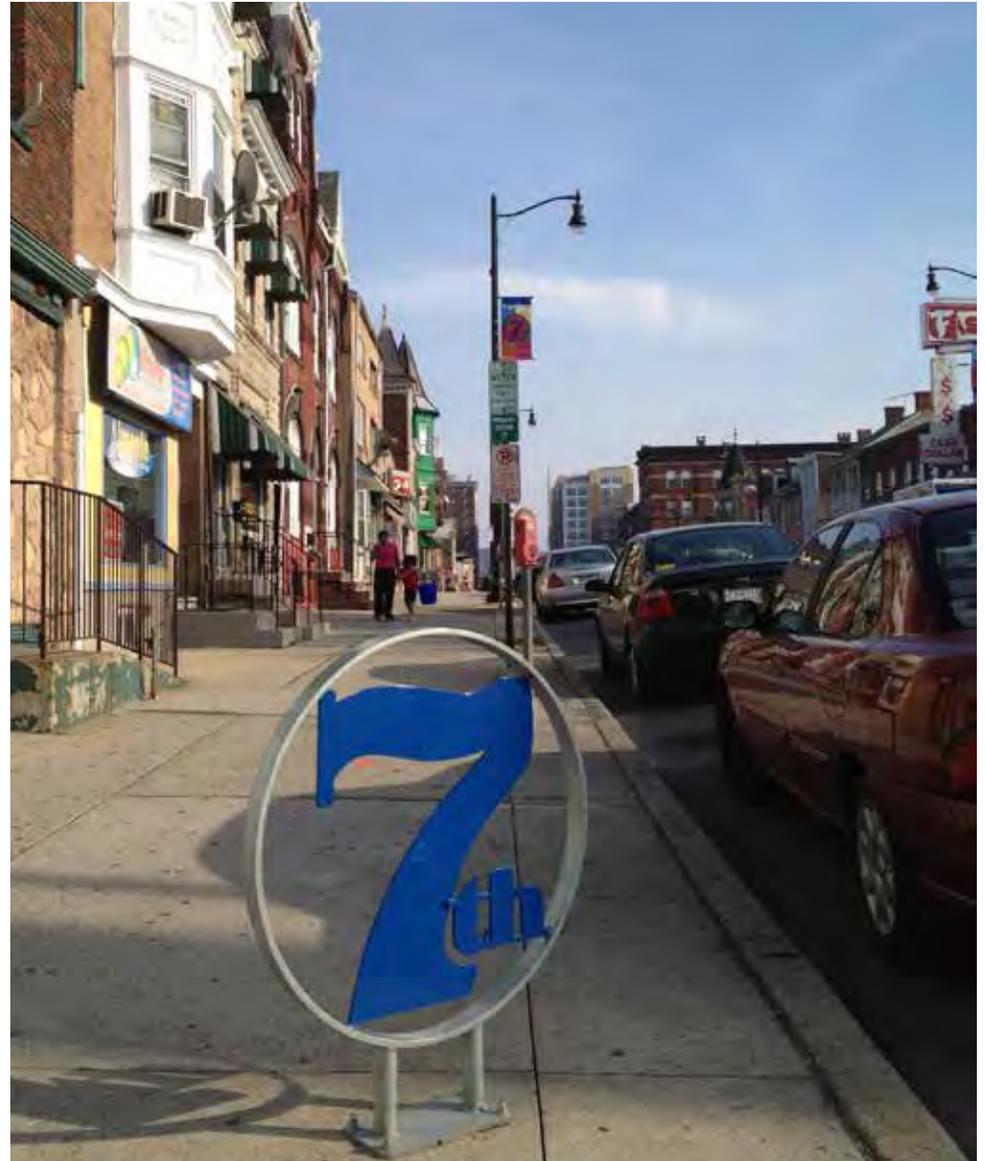
Some residential areas already exist downtown, but more housing is needed to meet the projected demand.

velopment would have a dramatic positive impact on the liveliness and attractiveness of downtown as a place to live, work, and visit. Sites adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods on the edges of downtown are especially appropriate locations for some of this new housing, but other sites within the NIZ that are too small for office or in a key location should also be considered.

The neighborhood context

Center City is a diverse and growing area in Allentown but also one that suffers from high poverty rates and pockets of disinvestment. The Center City population (which includes downtown and surrounding neighborhoods) grew by more than 14% from 2000 to 2010, faster than the city as a whole, and has almost half of the city's non-white population. In the downtown study area, over half the roughly 1,000 households reported income below the poverty level in the five year period from 2008-2012 (American Community Survey).

The City Center Initiative is an ongoing effort to improve the quality of life for these residents by implementing strategies to increase job training and employment opportunities, upgrade the existing housing stock, and promote the rich arts and culture heritage of residents. Downtown has an important role to play as a source of jobs, education, affordable housing, and neighborhood-serving retail choices.



The 7th Street corridor north of downtown is a neighborhood commercial center.



The two City Center office buildings, completed in spring 2014, brought outdoor dining to Center Square.



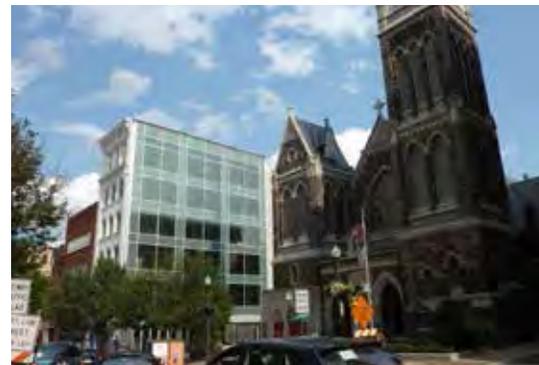
Residential areas are typically two to four stories and have a rich architectural character.



Some areas present redevelopment opportunities to further enhance downtown.



Hamilton Street west of 10th Street lacks the tree canopy and broad sidewalks that enhance blocks between 10th and 6th Streets.



The renovated Trifecta building provides a successful combination of historic and contemporary design next to the Liberty Bell church on Hamilton Street.



Older buildings like this one at Hamilton Street and 6th Street could be well suited for conversion to residential lofts.

The Downtown Vision

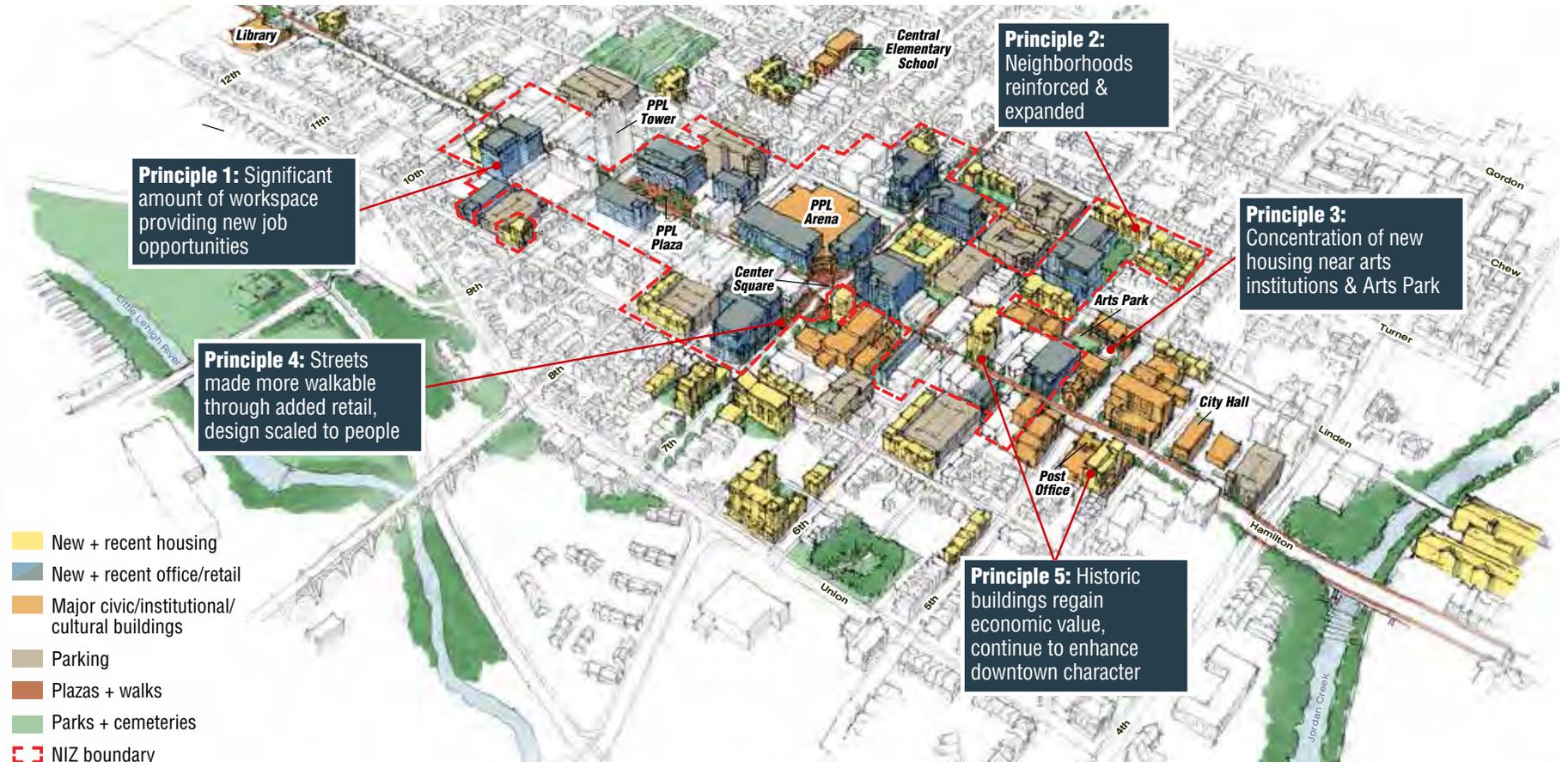
Vision Statement:

Downtown Allentown is the Lehigh Valley's foremost place to live, work, learn and play—a vibrant hub of activity, community and economic growth enhancing adjacent neighborhoods, the city and the region.

Vision Principles:

- An economically competitive engine supporting a prosperous city and region
- Supporting great quality of life in neighborhoods in and around downtown
- An outstanding destination for culture and entertainment
- A place designed for people
- Expressing Allentown's unique identity, creativity and geography through a mix of historic and contemporary design

A variety of new development projects and improved public places can achieve vision goals



Potential development sites would replace underused sites with new office, housing, and retail space supporting more activity downtown, expanded retail choices, and enlivened public spaces. The sketch is not intended to prescribe use—it shows potential locations where indicated land uses may best succeed if redevelopment were to occur.

Land use framework

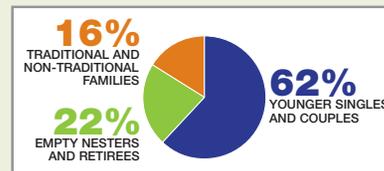
Downtown Allentown should grow with a diverse mix of uses to increase activity throughout the day, evenings, and on weekends. Office development should be concentrated in the NIZ to take advantage of the available incentives. Housing, retail, and open space are important complements to future office development and should occur both within and outside the NIZ. In particular, there is a strong need for more downtown housing to diversify the existing land use mix and create more activity on the sidewalks. **Housing should make up about half of new developed floor area downtown** to help achieve this goal. Potential development sites adjacent to or across the street from existing housing are priority locations for new housing, as they expand established neighborhoods and therefore reinforce community and market position better than more isolated sites.

Sample development program scenario providing a strong synergy of new jobs, housing, and services:

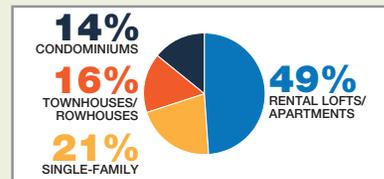
- **Office:** 800,000–1,000,000 square feet (100% in NIZ)
- **New Housing:** 1,000–1,500 units (33% in NIZ)
- **Rehab Housing:** 200–300 units (75% in NIZ)
- **Retail:** 60,000–90,000 square feet (75% in NIZ)

Housing market analysis found potential as follows in the overall Center City area:

- Center City annual market potential by household life stage:



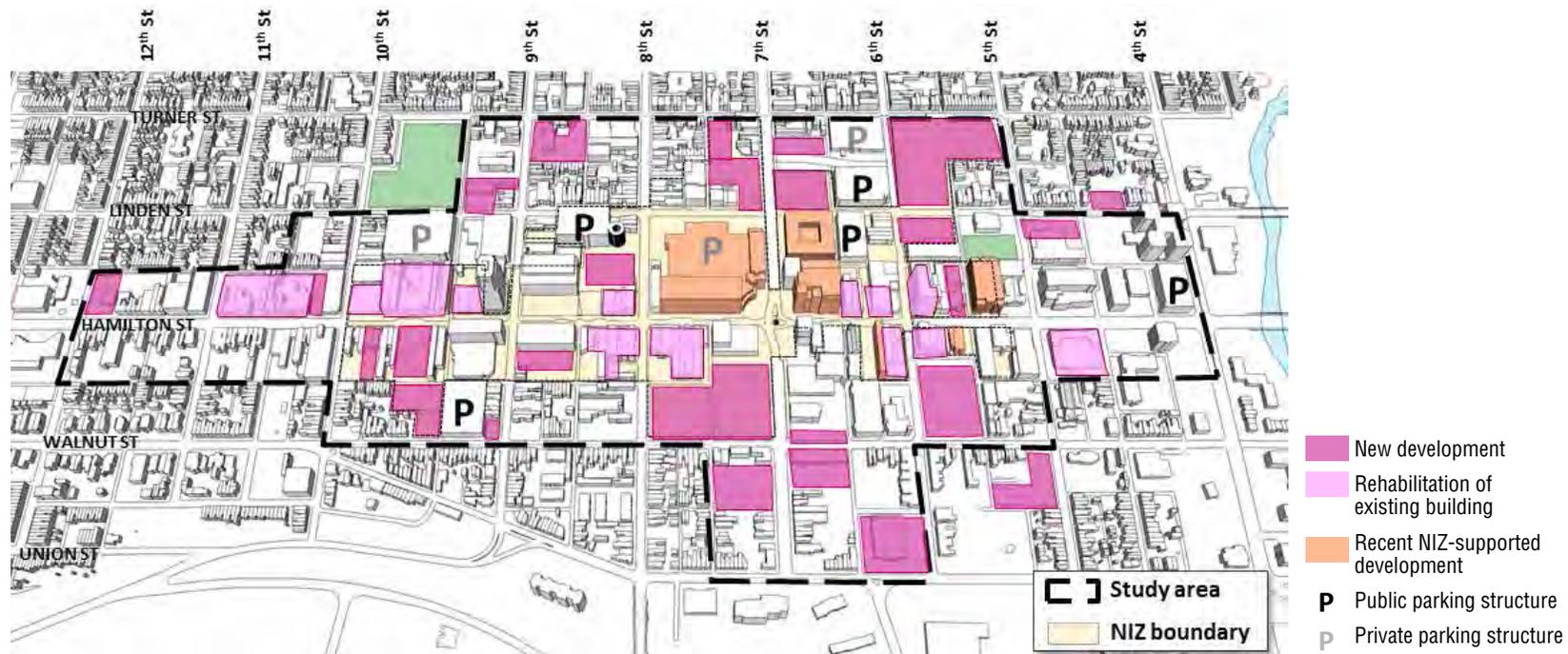
- Housing unit type and tenure preferences (households at 50% AMI and above):



- Combined forecast absorption:
 - > **204 to 249 units per year**
 - > The Center City Study Area can support **approximately 1,000 to 1,200 new housing units over the next five years** (both market-rate and affordable/workforce)

Source: Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

Principal opportunity sites for real estate reinvestment



These sites, including surface parking lots, underutilized buildings that can be rehabilitated, and auto-oriented development, have a relatively strong potential for redevelopment over a ten to twenty year planning horizon. These sites are identified for planning purposes only and their inclusion does not imply that redevelopment will occur in the near future or that the property owner has interest in doing so.

Urban design framework

Building form guidelines help ensure future development contributes to a **vibrant, attractive, high-value downtown environment**. Four distinct portions of downtown have specific guidelines tailored to their unique character: primary mixed use corridors, secondary mixed use corridors, the Turner Street neighborhood transition, and the Walnut Street neighborhood transition. Building heights are generally not restricted along mixed use corridors but in all areas should transition to lower heights near the neighborhoods. “Step-backs” that pull back the upper stories of taller buildings from the street edge help create walkable, well-scaled streets while allowing ample height and development flexibility and maintaining good sunlight access. Tall buildings visible on the skyline should be designed to add variety and interest to the downtown profile.

Downtown’s network of public spaces includes parks, plazas and squares, the Arts Walk, and smaller spaces along sidewalks. Many of these already contribute activity and identity to the surrounding area but a variety of low-cost improvements can greatly enhance their impact. Major public spaces could benefit from adding diverse

programming throughout the week and weekends to attract more people and further activate these spaces. Simple design improvements such as lighting, moveable seating, and public art could create a more welcoming environment. Encouraging sidewalk dining and outdoor retail displays in areas like the 7th Street corridor (as sites along it redevelop) will bring more life to the streets, while finding opportunities for small “parklets” or open spaces adjacent to the sidewalk will expand the network of public space.

Downtown’s public spaces already benefit from the dedicated efforts of a variety of private- and public-sector partners, including the Hamilton Street and Seventh Street management districts, cultural institutions, major property owners and the City. Visible results of these efforts include arts and entertainment programming in public spaces, retail promotion, and new outdoor seating. Steps to more closely coordinate these actions, and to increase resources through potential re-establishment of a downtown business improvement district, allocation of ANIZDA funds and/or other sources, will further improve the vibrancy of downtown’s public spaces.

Building form and public space concept: 7th Street corridor from Linden to Turner



An illustration of potential future redevelopment along the 7th Street corridor shows how new buildings should embody the building form guidelines and improve the public space network downtown.

Transportation framework

Convenient, affordable transportation choices are critical to downtown Allentown's success. To continue creating a sustainable, viable downtown, the City and its private partners cannot solely rely on building more parking to satisfy every new employee, resident, and visitor, but instead should invest in transportation options that new workers, residents and visitors are seeking: transit, walking, biking, and driving. In many locations, today's street network favors vehicle throughput over pedestrian safety. Converting selected one-way streets to two-way travel, removing excess vehicular travel lanes in favor of dedicated bike facilities or wider sidewalks, and creating a downtown environment that encourages walking will expand market potential for development and result in safer, more inviting public streets and parks. Improved lighting, street trees, and development along selected blocks can substantially improve actual and perceived safety of walking. A walkable environment also supports efficient parking policies: instead of continuing to build parking supply, existing parking facilities can be better utilized, as people are able to walk to more destinations from a single parking spot or transit stop.

Instead of downtown serving as a place to travel *through*, these types of strategies will substantially support downtown as a place that people *go to*.



Previous streetscape investments along Hamilton Street create an attractive pedestrian environment



Bicycle 'sharrow' markings exist downtown but places like Linden Street are not comfortable biking streets today



New parking at the arena; additional parking supply should be carefully considered and evaluated with other improvements



LANTA has frequent downtown service; continued improvements will help attract new riders

Infrastructure framework

Lehigh County Authority assumed control of the City's water and sanitary sewer system through a 50 year lease beginning in August of 2013. Both systems have sufficient capacity to handle existing and future loads from new development. Continual monitoring and maintenance as needed is required to keep the system functioning properly.

The storm sewer system in the study area has been built over time and many of the trunk lines do not have adequate capacity for the ten-year design storm. The City will be undertaking a system-wide study, primarily looking at major drainage areas including the study area, to determine where specific deficiencies are occurring and potential improvements for the trunk lines affected. Future projects should be required to help upgrade storm sewer facilities in their immediate area to mitigate localized deficiencies.

Natural gas, electricity, and communications utility are all meeting current demand and have capacity for future growth. Any needed upgrades to the natural gas and communications infrastructure should occur on an individual project basis as specific needs are determined.

Implementation actions

Downtowns are complex places. The overlap of activities, owners, cultures and investors is central to a downtown's great power to drive economic and community opportunity. This complexity also demands collaborative efforts by a variety of stakeholder partners to optimize results. To focus these efforts, this plan outlines six basic themes:

- **Living Downtown**—Proactively encourage downtown housing development
- **Growing Jobs**—Connect residents with employers and educational opportunities
- **Walkable Connections**—Connect downtown and neighborhoods with walkable streets and development
- **Community Places**—Keep major streets and activity centers safe, inviting and fun centers for community activity and services
- **Efficient Parking**—Use parking efficiently and strategically to encourage high quality development and public spaces
- **Focused Management**—Expand downtown activity and investment through efficient, coordinated management

These themes capture those efforts that will be most effective in manifesting the downtown vision, while optimizing use of available and potential resources. The more specific action steps detailed in Chapter 4 coordinate with these themes. The action steps are organized by priority and reference the framework topic areas of land use, urban design, transportation, and infrastructure for consultation reference by the many city staff, officials and downtown partners executing them. The plan identifies responsible agents and partners as well as existing and new resources to help enable these actions.

The high priority implementation themes and action steps below enable broad participation by the many businesses, residents, organizations and other entities important to downtown’s life and future. More information on the responsible parties and potential funding for each item are provided in Chapter 4, as well as second priority action items and ongoing initiatives. Together, these open the door to many more initiatives, large and small, that will make downtown an ever stronger center of economic and community life for Allentown and the entire Lehigh Valley.

HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS	THEMES
L1. Require replacement of any affordable housing displaced by redevelopment	Living Downtown, Walkable Connections
L2. Require NIZ development facing residential zones to include housing along >50% of street edge	Living Downtown, Walkable Connections
L3. Require NIZ projects over 50,000sf to create housing in tandem with commercial space, via direct development on- or off-site, development partnership, or cash contribution to City (verify feasible amount via third-party analysis)	Living Downtown, Walkable Connections
L4. Require retail space in new development along 7th St (Turner to Walnut) and other selected locations	Living Downtown, Growing Jobs, Community Places
L5. Support pop-up retail with flexible code approvals to temporarily fill vacant storefronts	Walkable Connections, Community Places
L6. Require NIZ projects to preserve/ restore historic architectural features in historic building overlay	Walkable Connections, Community Places
L7. Conduct proforma analysis of sample NIZ projects to determine potential to increase ANIZDA incentive share over twenty percent	Living Downtown, Community Places, Walkable Connections
L8. Publicize and leverage non-city incentives for housing production such as LIHTC, Historic tax credits, KOZ, or NMTC. Advocate for expanded state funding for Historic and LIHTC.	Walkable Connections, Community Places
U1. Update zoning and design standards for development projects per the urban design framework in Chapter 3.	Walkable Connections, Community Places
U2. Convene regular programming meetings among public/private/institutional partners to plan and execute events	Community Places, Living Downtown, Focused Management, Walkable Connections
U3. Enhance southeast and southwest corners of Center Square with permanent facilities and increased programming for music, arts and/or other events	Community Places, Living Downtown, Focused Management
T1. Add pedestrian-scaled lighting, pedestrian signals, and crosswalks where missing	Walkable Connections
T2. Require NIZ project contributions to streetscape within one block of project	Walkable Connections





2 setting the stage

a new era of opportunity in Downtown

Key issues shaping downtown today and in the future

Downtown Allentown has experienced an unprecedented amount of development in just two years as a result of the recent Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) incentive. In 2014, the first large projects opened on the north side of Center Square: PPL Arena, a 10,000-seat sports and event venue with the Lehigh Valley Health Network Sports Medicine and Fitness Center attached; and Two City Center, an office building with ground floor restaurant and retail space. Other projects are nearing completion, including a new hotel attached to the arena; the Three City Center office building near Arts Park; Strata Flats at Four City Center, a mixed-use residential building with ground floor retail; and the Trifecta Building, a rehabilitation of the former Schoen's furniture building for office use. These projects and others are transforming the face of downtown. Office workers, nearby residents, and people who haven't visited in years are experiencing a new

side of downtown by attending a hockey game or trying a new restaurant and leave impressed by the positive change and activity occurring.

To further enhance the character and function of downtown as it continues to grow, the City decided to establish and apply updated strategies guiding downtown development. The Downtown Allentown Development and Urban Design Plan defines a community-based vision and framework that set parameters for new development, infrastructure improvements and management that will enhance the character, vitality, and attractiveness of downtown as a center of economic and community activity for the surrounding neighborhoods, the city, and the entire Lehigh Valley. By providing some simple, clear rules that retain broad flexibility accommodating a variety of market-driven development, these guidelines enhance the quality of real estate development and the public environment around it, thus increasing value for property owners and tenants.

Related recent and ongoing plans:

The Downtown Allentown Development and Urban Design Plan builds on previous planning efforts and initiatives undertaken by the City and others. Some of the most relevant are listed below to highlight the many ways in which this plan is a continuation and elaboration of themes that have been discussed in recent years:

- **Allentown 2020 Comprehensive Plan (adopted January 2009):** This plan identifies downtown and the cultural arts and entertainment district as one of eight strategic planning areas. Relevant points for downtown from the framework include:
 - > Continue to make downtown the focal point as a multi-functional city
 - > Pursue a comprehensive economic development strategy
 - > Ensure a high livability quotient for our neighborhoods
 - > Protect, maintain, and restore the housing stock
 - > Protect and enhance the built environment (infill design, attractive commercial corridors, protecting historic resources)
 - > Enhance and promote the great asset that is our parks system (including providing additional parks and open space in Center City and downtown)

> Promote a transportation system that ensures regional mobility and provides access to jobs

- **The Center City Initiative:** This ongoing effort has included many public meetings to gather input and build support in the neighborhoods around downtown. Strategy elements include physical improvements/design, housing, economic development and employment, public safety, marketing/branding/engagement, arts and culture, and organization and management. A report was finalized in June 2014. The City recently secured funding from eight partners for a new six year, \$3.3 million initiative to improve residents' quality of life through a variety of efforts including increasing economic and education opportunity. The Center City neighborhoods have a mutually beneficial relationship with downtown: improvements in these areas will benefit downtown and a strong downtown will support interest and reinvestment in these neighborhoods.
- **NIZ and resulting development plans:** The downtown NIZ received \$48.2 million in 2013 state tax revenue, an increase from \$30.9 million in 2012 (first full year), all resulting from recent downtown development initiatives. This revenue has been used to make payments on the arena bond debt and to help finance additional projects. Master developer City Center Lehigh Valley has built or proposed four separate proj-

ects so far totaling over 1.5 million square feet of new development and several thousand jobs, enabled by NIZ financing.

- **Hamilton and Seventh Street District organizations:** The Seventh Street District is an established organization that has guided the revitalization of much of the 7th Street corridor north of Linden Street through the use of historic façade restoration program and other initiatives. The Hamilton District Main Street Program has a five-prong strategy focusing on design, business development, community marketing, safe/clean/green, and organizational development. The façade grant program has helped restore several architecturally significant buildings to ensure their continued contribution to the character and economy of downtown.
- **Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT Study, 2010):** This study of the downtown area sponsored by the American Institute of Architects identified four focus areas critical to the success of downtown:
 - > Improving transportation options.
 - > Creating a more visually appealing streetscape.
 - > Improving the use of downtown buildings.
 - > Increasing market rate housing in center city.
 The Downtown Allentown Development and Urban Design Plan advances the SDAT study

by making detailed recommendation in each of those areas to advance the common goal of a successful, attractive, walkable downtown environment.

- **Cultural Arts and Entertainment District Master Plan (2004):** This study identified redevelopment sites and potential program, streetscape and transportation improvements, design guidelines, and district management structure and activities in the area along Hamilton from 4th to 7th Streets generally. While implementation of some plan elements was delayed by leadership changes at its sponsoring institutions, recent leadership has renewed collaborative implementation of the plan as well as new initiatives. This plan identifies further opportunities to leverage Allentown's strong cultural institutions and assets for the Arts Park District and throughout the downtown study area.
- **Lehigh Riverfront Master Plan (2012):** This master plan for the redevelopment of a former brewery site and other industrial land along the Lehigh River provides a vision for Allentown's other NIZ area outside of downtown. The plan's market analysis for the City and the Riverfront area found ten-year market potential for 1.1 million square feet of Class A office space, 310,000 square feet of office/lab/flex space for growing industries, and approximate-

ly 180,000 square feet of new retail, including restaurants and entertainment. The Riverfront and Downtown offer distinct characteristics of location, amenity and access, making them generally complementary and not competitive for NIZ-supported redevelopment.

- **Re-Industrialization Strategy:** Phase I of this study was completed in April 2014 and found that there are many manufacturing sub-sectors that have grown or are highly concentrated in Allentown. The Bridgeworks Enterprise Center located just south of the Little Lehigh River could be the center of a revitalized

manufacturing community in Allentown. While the downtown study area does not include industrially zoned land, small scale artisan studios and boutique manufacturing are allowed and could become an important contribution to the continued growth and diversification of the area.



The neighborhoods around the 7th Street corridor are the focus of the Center City Initiative to improve the quality of life for these residents.



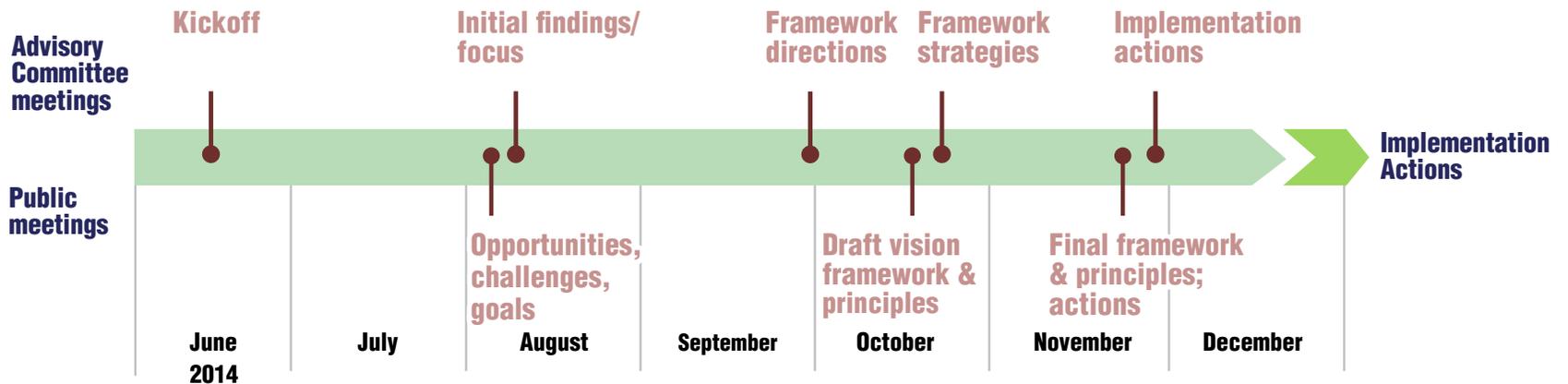
Arts Park is the anchor public space in the Cultural Arts and Entertainment District study area.

Community engagement

The downtown planning process included presentations and dialogue with an advisory committee of core stakeholders, as well as with the general public, to ensure the plan fully reflects the ideas and priorities of the community in and around downtown. Early meetings in the process gathered

input on opportunities, challenges and aspirations. Later meetings included planning team presentation of study findings and draft concepts and implementation recommendations for review and comment. Thanks to this community conversation, the plan reflects the shared goals of down-

town business and property owners, residents, neighbors, institutions, elected officials and other key stakeholders, and broad consensus on how to achieve those goals.



- August 6-7:**
- Outreach at Center Square, lunchtime
 - Open house at Holiday Inn, evening
 - Outreach at PPL Plaza, lunchtime

- October 21**
- Outreach at Center Square, lunchtime
 - Presentation and discussion, Lehigh County Government Center, evening

- November 24**
- Presentation and discussion, Lehigh County Government Center, evening



Summary of issues identified through community engagement:

The community engagement process occurred over four months and involved lunchtime outdoor events on Center Square and PPL Plaza, and after-work meetings at the Holiday Inn and County Commissioners' Hearing Room in Center Square to reach as many people as possible. Priorities that community members identified during these discussions include:

- Connecting downtown with adjacent neighborhoods physically, economically, culturally
- Maintaining and creating affordable housing choices for all members of the community
- Making streets inviting and safe (and improving their perception as safe)
- Filling vacant sites, buildings and storefronts
- Making better use of existing public spaces; adding new public spaces and programming to address unmet needs
- Becoming the Lehigh Valley's downtown
- Defining appropriate building height and form guidelines, especially near existing neighborhoods
- Determining when existing/historic buildings deserve to be restored and retained, and when not



The Downtown Vision

VISION STATEMENT

Downtown Allentown is the Lehigh Valley's foremost place to live, work, learn and play—a vibrant hub of activity, community and economic growth enhancing adjacent neighborhoods, the city and the region.



VISION PRINCIPLES

1. An economically competitive engine supporting a prosperous city and region

- Generating a **broad range of good jobs** and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Connecting people with the **education** needed for the careers of today and tomorrow
- Attracting and retaining the **skilled workforce** Allentown's employers need

2. Supporting great quality of life in neighborhoods in and around downtown

- Expanded range of **housing choices** for current and future residents
- Expanded range of **retail choices** serving residents, workers and visitors
- Convenient, safe **transportation choices** including walking, transit, biking and driving
- Welcoming a **diverse community** including students, singles & couples, families, seniors from broad racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds

3. An outstanding destination for culture and entertainment

- Prominent **Arts district** featuring a variety of top-quality cultural experiences
- Exciting **Arena events** attracting audiences from the region and beyond
- Reflecting and engaging the **people of Allentown's neighborhoods**
- Hosting diverse **religious communities**
- Welcoming **spontaneous cultural programming** and entrepreneurship

4. A place designed for people

- Public parks, streets and buildings designed for **human scale and activity**
- An **inviting and safe place** to walk and bike
- Leveraging the **power of compact, walkable, connected places** to support collaborative, productive business and innovation—and strong community and cultural life

5. Expressing Allentown's unique creativity and sense of place through a mix of historic and contemporary design

- **Keeping historic buildings valuable and beautiful** with contemporary uses where feasible
- **Embracing new buildings** that boldly respond to current needs and ideas and respect traditional design contexts
- Shaping great streets and public spaces with a **compatible range of building sizes** from small to tall





3 framework

shaping change to enhance quality of life

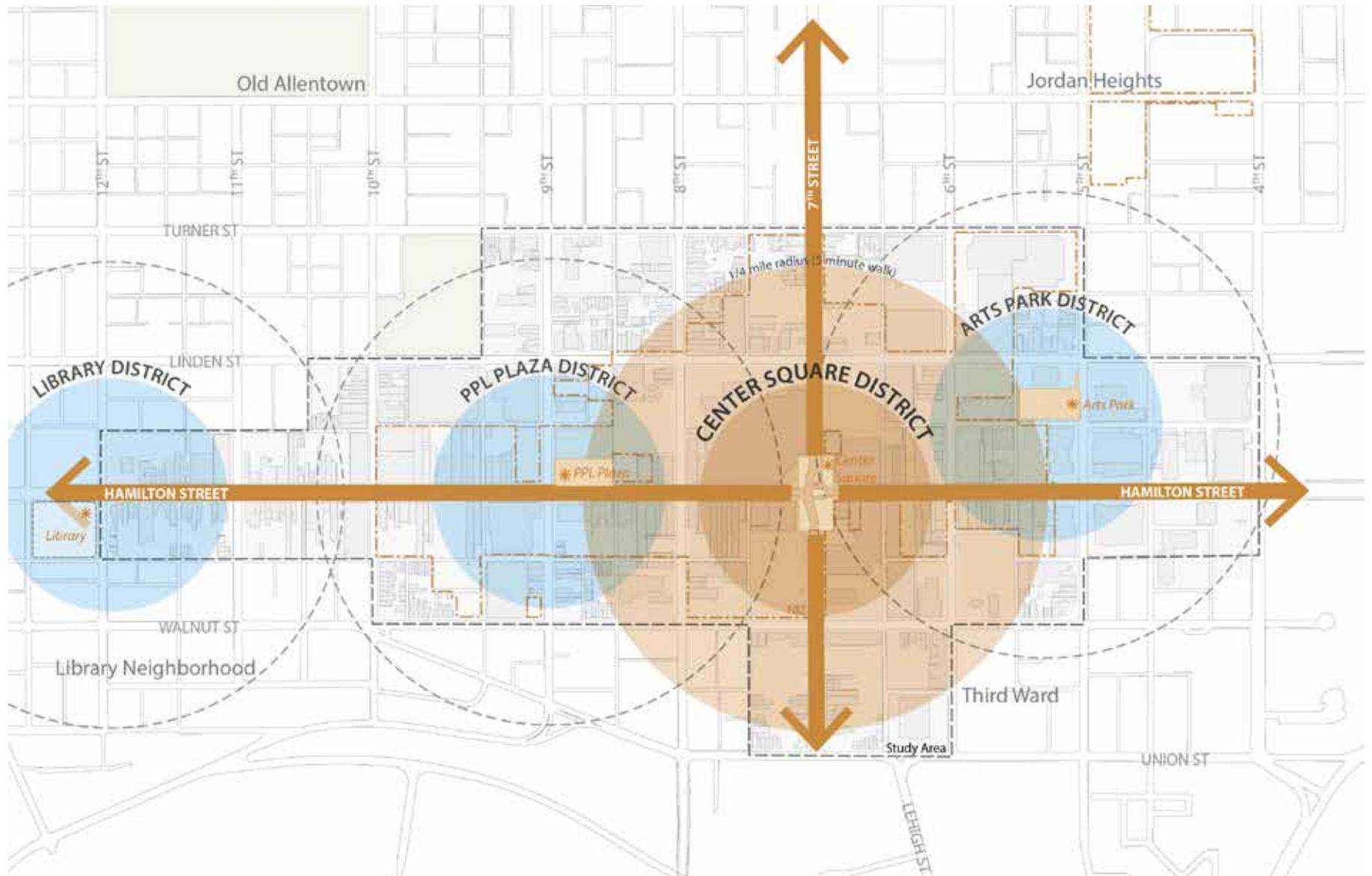
Introduction

The framework section provides a predictable but also flexible approach to ensuring new development benefits downtown and all of its users. It does so by analyzing and making a series of recommendations in three key areas: land use, urban design, and transportation.

Downtown Places

Four primary centers of activity help provide identity for the surrounding areas of downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The Library District, PPL Plaza District, Center Square and the Arts Park District, are within about five minutes' walking distance of one another, spaced two to three blocks apart from west to east along Hamilton Avenue. Land use mix and potential for change vary among these four areas.

- **Library District:** This area outside the Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) boundary on the western edge of downtown has a lower scale and more neighborhood character than districts to the east. Opportunities for change are mostly smaller, more oriented toward adaptive reuse and potentially more constrained by parking supply than in other districts.
- **PPL Plaza District:** This area around the dancing fountains and performance space at PPL Plaza offers a mix of well-established office, hotel and retail uses with some housing to the north and south. Several sites offer potential for change that would create new office and residential space.
- **Center Square District:** Downtown's traditional, iconic center is an active place where multiple activities overlap throughout the day, evening and weekend. Significant recent arena, hotel, office, retail and housing development, combined with established office, housing and government uses and significant future development opportunities, make this a rapidly transforming area gaining new populations during and beyond typical workday hours.
- **Arts Park District:** The Arts Park, Arts Walk and a host of surrounding cultural institutions distinguish this center of cultural activity on the eastern edge of the downtown NIZ. In addition to the cultural institutions, land uses include government, office, retail, and housing. Adaptive reuse of the prominent Americus Building and Post Office, together with significant new development and redevelopment opportunity on other sites, and recent development of the City Center 3 office building adjacent to the Arts Park, could dramatically enhance opportunity to leverage arts-themed programming in the area. Primary Arts Park District institutions include the Allentown Art Museum, Allentown Symphony, Community Music School, Baum School of Art, Lehigh County Historical Society, and Liberty Bell Shrine.



Four primary centers of activity downtown provide identity to the surrounding areas

Land use

ANALYSIS

Critical Issues

- *Designing new buildings to support walkable streets*
- *Creating comfortable scale transitions between new buildings, streets, and neighborhood context*
- *Enhancing the downtown skyline*
- *Making streets more walkable*
- *Improving park and sidewalk space to support enhanced programming*
- *Adding neighborhood park space*

Why is a diverse downtown land use mix important?

The existing land use mix downtown is approximately 35% office space and only 12% housing. Diversifying the future land use mix will strengthen downtown's role within the city and as a regional center. The presence of diverse employment, residential, service and destination land uses helps keep a downtown active throughout the day and week, leverages its walkable connections among uses, heightens retail and parks as major amenities, strengthens community identity, and makes more efficient use of infrastructure and management resources. Recent NIZ policy and ensuing development has already dramatically expanded

office, retail and hotel development downtown. It has also indirectly spurred new construction of housing on one site, even though NIZ incentives primarily promote commercial development.

How can more housing reinforce downtown's momentum?

- Residents add evening and weekend activity that enhances perception and reality of safety and fun downtown
- More housing options can attract and retain a regionally important workforce
- Downtown housing can significantly expand the range and operating hours of downtown retail
- New housing will fill vacant and underutilized properties, strengthen gateways, and improve connections between downtown and the neighborhoods
- Added housing will likely have positive fiscal impacts on the city, by adding property tax revenue, making efficient use of existing transportation and utility infrastructure, and imposing minimal additional burden on Allentown's schools and fire and police services
- Adding downtown housing will help preserve affordable housing options in existing neighborhoods by reducing market-driven price increases
- The housing market already views downtown as a promising place to live and invest



Recent townhome development on Walnut Street diversifies the existing mix of housing for potential residents



Farr Lofts leverages the appeal of historic buildings as loft housing

What is the downtown housing market potential?

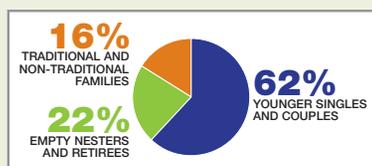
Downtown appeals to a significant number of potential residents and residential developers, and this appeal is growing as the core area gains new housing units to a degree not seen in decades. As part of the downtown planning effort, nationally-recognized housing market experts Zimmerman/Volk Associates analyzed emerging housing market potential in the downtown study area as well as in the larger Center City Initiative area. The analysis methodology specifically focused on emerging demand for living in walkable, urban settings by utilizing government data on migration patterns of demographic groups of all ages and incomes. This unique methodology—distinct from conventional market analysis that focuses on performance of current comparable properties—has demonstrated success in predicting market growth and inducing developer investment in numerous other downtowns like Allentown.

Because downtown is an emerging housing location, market potential will to some extent increase along with the production of new units as it helps establish downtown’s market position more firmly. Absorption will be maximized if housing production targets the full range of households seeking downtown housing with a variety of price and unit type options.

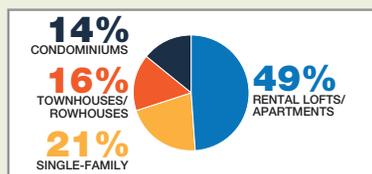
The market analysis found potential as follows in the overall Center City area:

- Annual market potential
 - > Households at 50% AMI and above: 1,995 households)

- Center City annual market potential by household life stage:



- Housing unit type and tenure preferences



(households at 50% AMI and above):

- Annual capture rates for affordable and workforce (50% to 80% AMI) and market-rate (80% AMI and above) units:
 - > Rental: 12% to 15%
 - > For-sale 8.5% to 10%

- Annual absorption of market-rate units based on those capture rates:
 - > Rental—89 to 112 units per year
 - > Condominiums—19 to 22 units per year
 - > Townhouses/rowhouses—20 to 24 units per year
 - > Single-Family Houses—29 to 34 units per year
 - > Total: 157 to 192 total market-rate units per year

- Annual absorption of affordable and workforce units based on those capture rates:
 - > Rental—29 to 36 units per year
 - > Condominiums—5 to 6 units per year
 - > Townhouses/rowhouses—6 to 7 units per year
 - > Single-Family Houses—7 to 9 units per year
 - > Total: 47 to 57 total affordable/workforce units per year

- Combined forecast absorption:
 - > **204 to 249 units per year**
 - > The Center City Study Area can support **approximately 1,000 to 1,200 new housing units over the next five years** (both market-rate and affordable/workforce)

Where might future market-driven development occur?

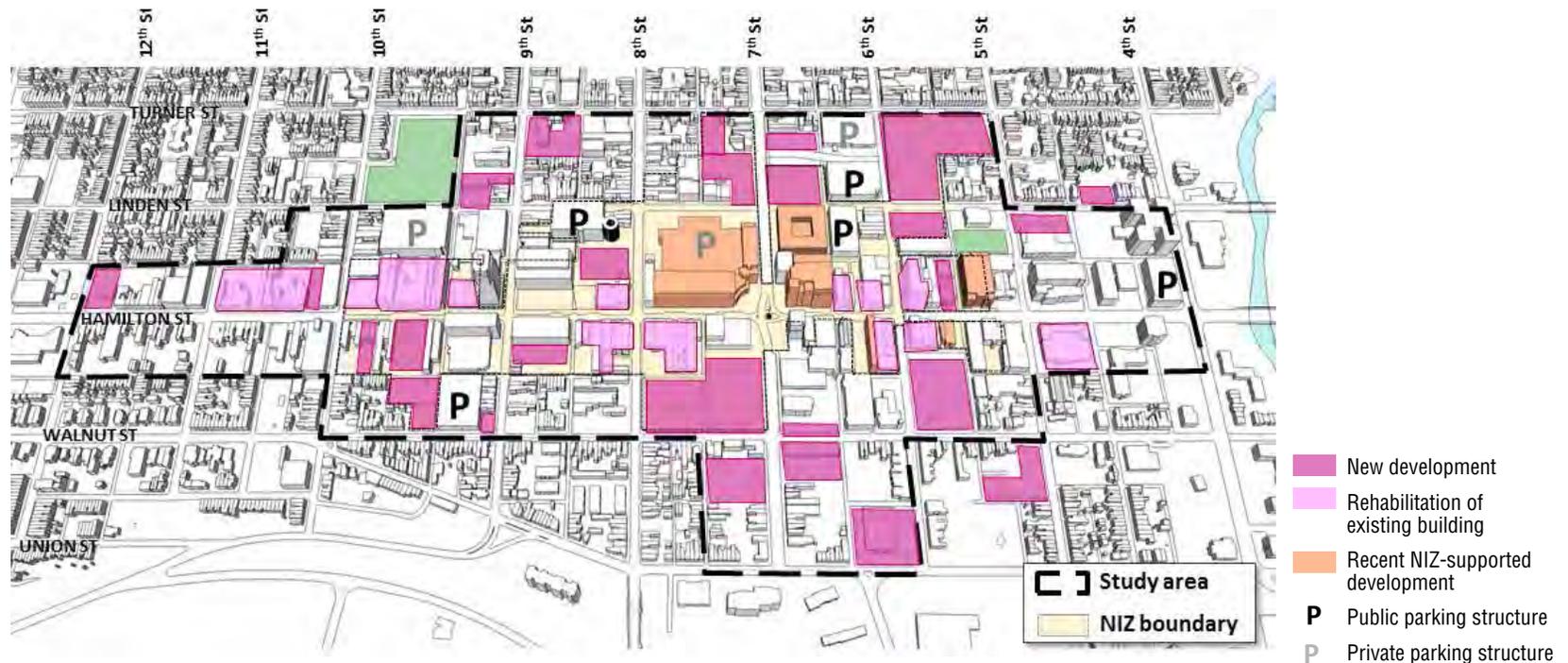
Diagrams on the following pages demonstrate where different land uses are best suited based on site location, size or other characteristics. The diagrams should serve as a guide to where office, retail, and housing are most likely to succeed and contribute to a stronger downtown, but they are

not intended to prescribe land use, which should generally remain flexible within the zoning requirements.

Principal opportunities for real estate development

Surface parking lots, underutilized existing buildings, and auto-oriented development all have

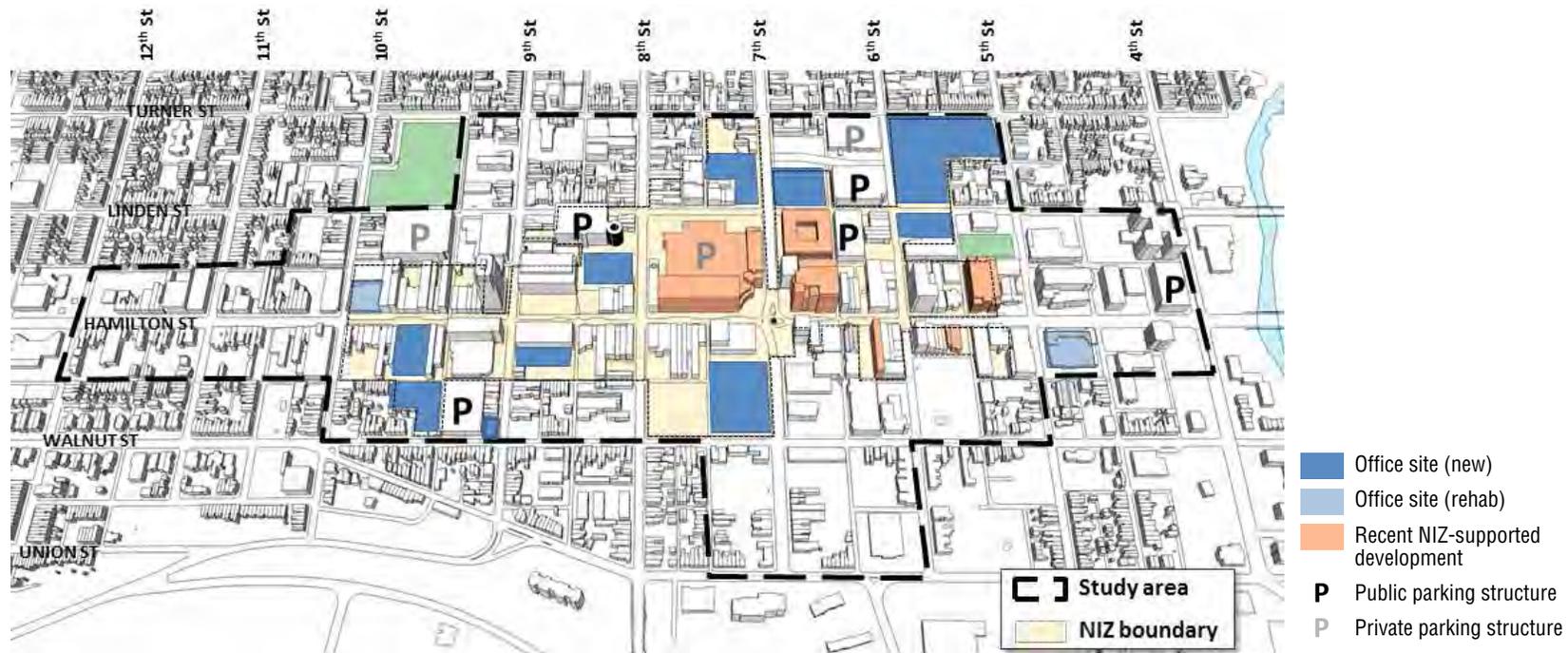
relatively strong potential for redevelopment over a ten to twenty year planning horizon. Rehab opportunities are primarily located along Hamilton Street, reinforcing existing retail and anticipating adaptive reuse of upper floors for office or housing.



These sites are identified for planning purposes only and their inclusion does not imply that redevelopment will occur in the near future or that the property owner has interest in doing so.

Principal opportunities for new office development

Large sites that could accommodate a minimum 20,000 square foot floorplate within the NIZ are strong candidates for office development. Visibility and accessibility from the primary corridors in downtown also contribute to their attractiveness as office sites.

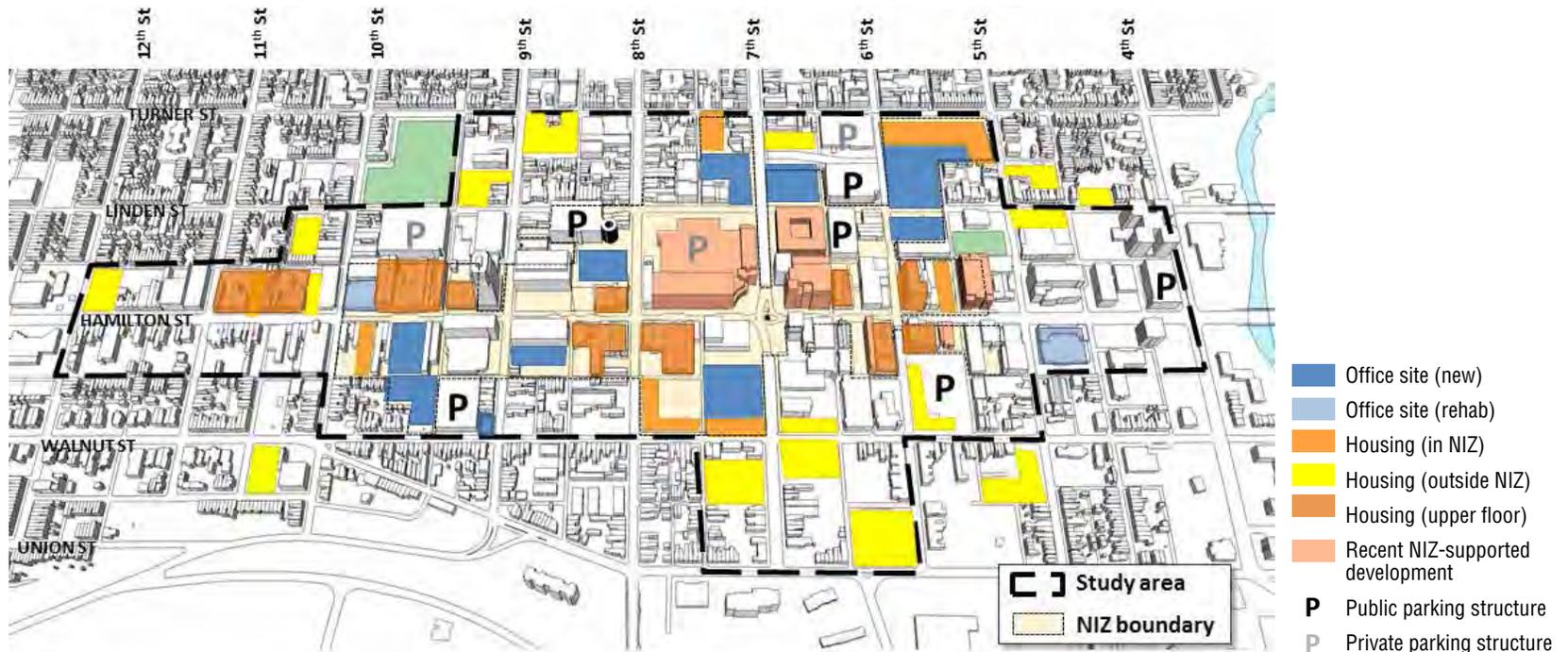


**Not intended to prescribe use—shows potential locations where indicated land uses may best succeed if redevelopment were to occur.*

Principal opportunities for housing development

Housing development is particularly desirable in proximity to existing housing and as a reuse of obsolete buildings along Hamilton Street. New housing sites are mostly outside the NIZ but several are located within the boundary as a way

to diversify the land use mix, provide a transition to adjacent neighborhoods, and take advantage of smaller sites less suited for office development. Housing sites should accommodate a 10,000 square foot minimum floorplate for multifamily or a 40'x100' townhouse module and have parking located within one block.



**Not intended to prescribe use—shows potential locations where indicated land uses may best succeed if redevelopment were to occur.*

Primary and secondary retail priorities

Hamilton and 7th Streets are primary retail priorities to reinforce existing clusters and extend active sidewalk uses toward the neighborhoods. These areas should have continuous retail

storefronts interrupted only by active building entrances. Portions of Linden and 6th Street are secondary retail priority areas where existing gaps and retail vacancies should be reused to the extent practical, especially at street corners, to further support an active pedestrian network and

nearby clusters of retail. Other numbered streets also have pockets of retail along them, particularly 8th and 9th Streets north of Linden. These areas should continue to be supported as important neighborhood-serving retail areas.



What is a potential scenario for future development?

There is potential for approximately 3.2 million square feet of new development in the downtown study area. Based on characteristics of primary opportunity sites, approximately 50% of this could be new housing and 30% new office. This magnitude of development would bring the overall mix of land uses in downtown into better balance than

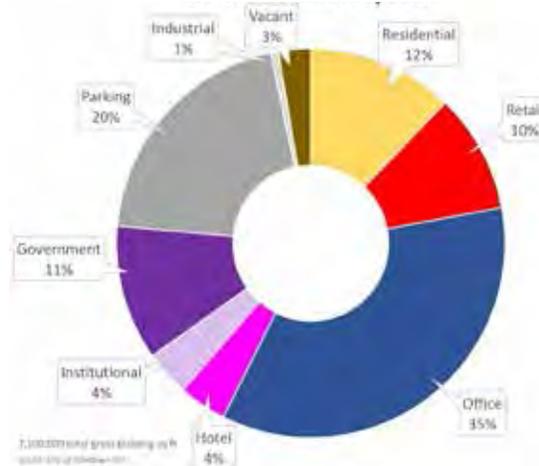
exists today. In this scenario, office would account for 35% of the total gross building area, housing 23%, and retail 7%.

Other sites within walking distance of the downtown study area offer significant additional opportunity for housing or employment-related development. The Phoenix Square property on North Race Street across Jordan Creek (target

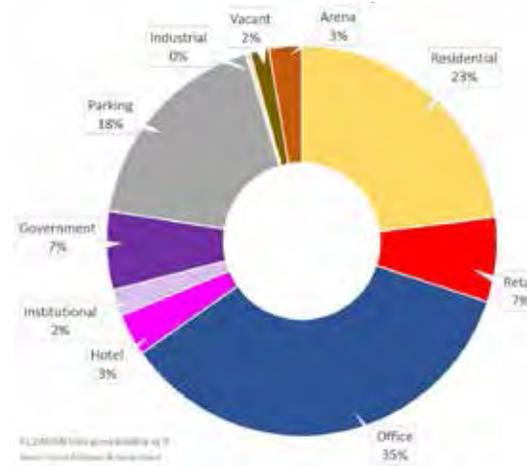
of several as-yet unsuccessful redevelopment efforts) could offer roughly 170,000 square feet or 150 housing units.

Housing development on these sites would offer a valuable supplement to housing development in the downtown core, further enhancing retail choices, walkability, workforce retention and other goals.

Existing Land Use Mix in Downtown Study Area



Potential Land Use Mix in Downtown with Future Redevelopment



How does parking supply affect land use intensity and character?

An adequate parking supply is an important part of the downtown environment but should not be the dominant factor. Parking supply should meet the demonstrated market need, but this can be influenced by providing safe, attractive alternatives to driving such as biking, taking transit, and walking that reduce the demand for parking spaces.

Parking is not required by zoning for new projects downtown, except residential projects with five or more units that must provide .75 spaces per units. Parking needs to meet market expectations but a well-managed shared parking supply can typically meet these needs with a high level of efficiency recognizing that spaces can be shared among uses

and at different times of day. In addition, the presence of convenient transportation options other than driving reduces demand. This can reduce parking cost and increase revenue-producing development opportunity for property owners and tenants.

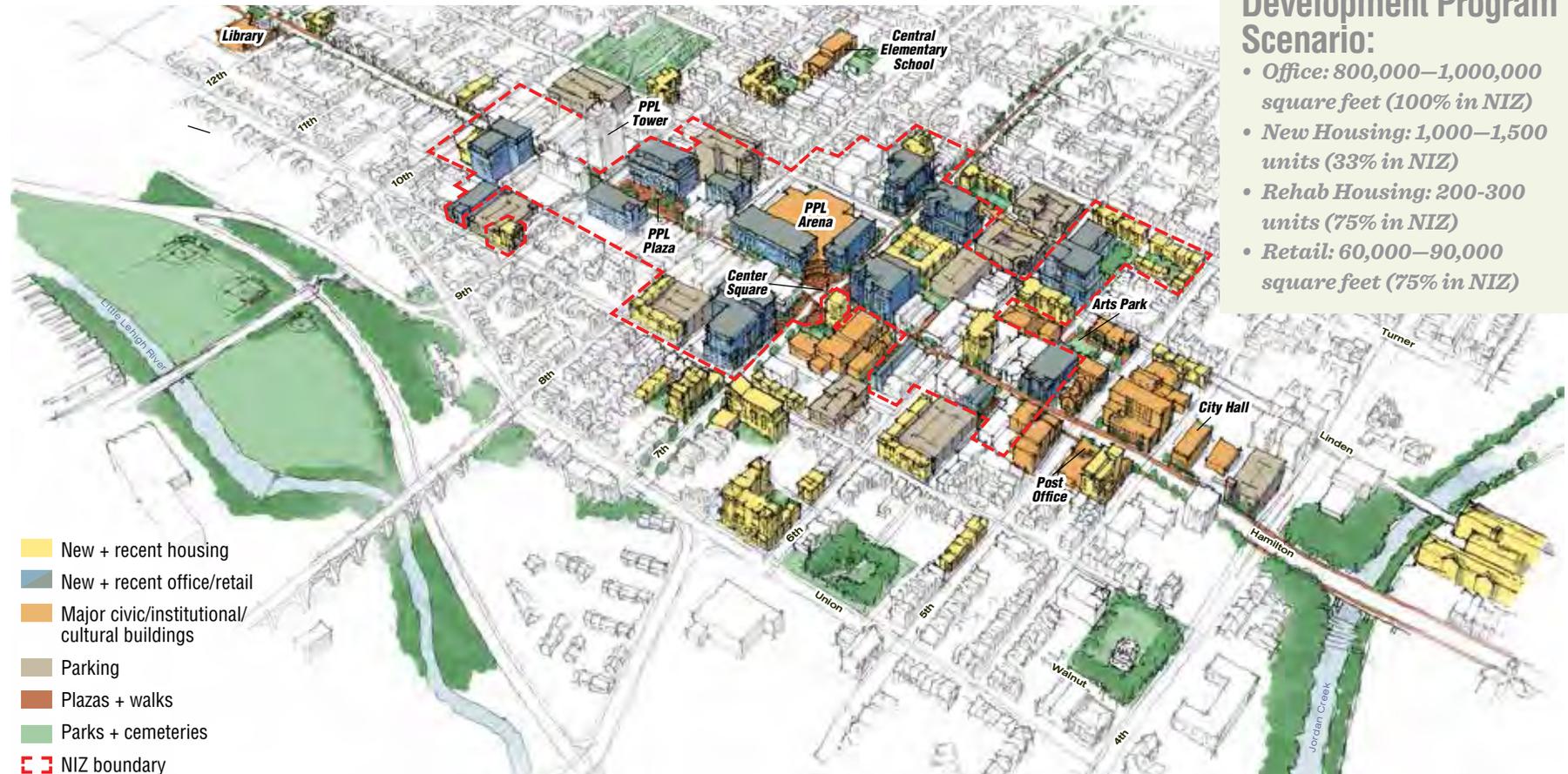
Structured parking is the most efficient way to add supply but is expensive and should be lined with active uses to minimize its impact on street character. Surface parking is less expensive but is an inefficient use of land downtown and detracts from the pedestrian environment.

> Refer to parking management recommendations in the Transportation section for more information

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Large sites within the NIZ boundary are priority areas to create new workplaces. Office space could also be considered as part of an adaptive reuse strategy along Hamilton Street, targeting small companies, start-ups, and others who need affordable office space or who desire the unique design features that older buildings often provide.
- Housing is a priority use for sites adjacent to or opposite existing residential uses and in areas where it would diversify the land use mix. Turner and Walnut Streets are ideal locations for housing, as are smaller sites within the NIZ that improve the mix there.
- Hamilton and 7th Streets are priority areas to encourage retail or other active ground floor uses. Linden and 6th Streets and corner locations throughout downtown are secondary areas to locate retail and active ground floor uses.
- Other uses such as cultural, higher education, and hotel are encouraged throughout downtown. Institutional uses would be appropriate in the Post Office building on Hamilton Street and in rehabbed spaces east of Jordan Creek. Hotel use would be most appropriate along the mixed-use corridors: Hamilton, 7th, Linden, or 6th Streets within the NIZ. Other locations could also be appropriate.

Illustrative development scenario*



Development Program Scenario:

- Office: 800,000–1,000,000 square feet (100% in NIZ)
- New Housing: 1,000–1,500 units (33% in NIZ)
- Rehab Housing: 200-300 units (75% in NIZ)
- Retail: 60,000–90,000 square feet (75% in NIZ)

More than two million square feet of new development over the next five to ten years could be accommodated on sites with potential for redevelopment.

**Not intended to prescribe use—shows potential locations where indicated land uses may best succeed if redevelopment were to occur.*

Strategic catalyst sites

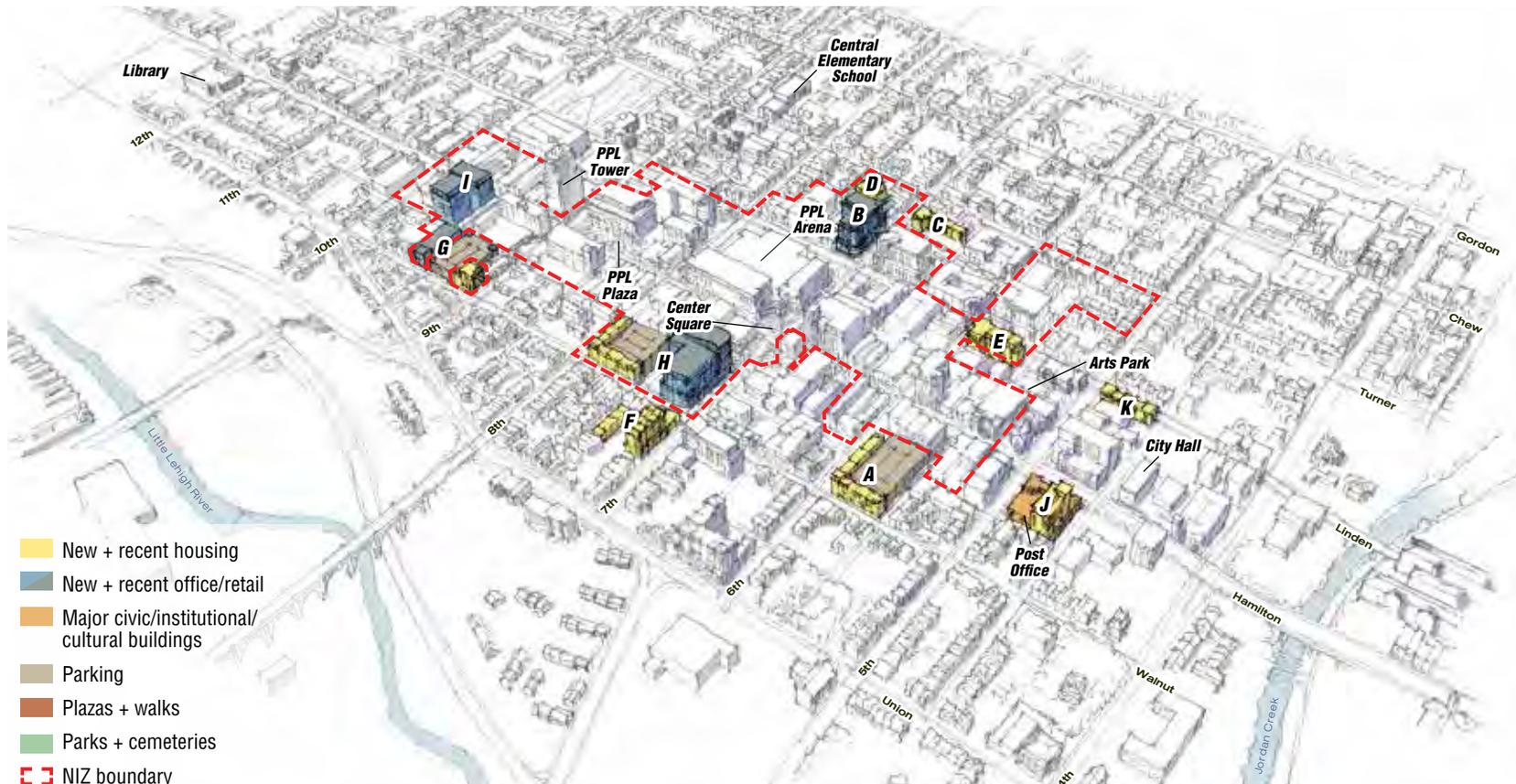
Several key sites offer real opportunities to jump-start further development downtown and set the tone for high-quality design. They fall into two categories:

- Publicly owned sites, where the City or other public entity such as the Allentown Parking Authority controls the land and can set the terms of development through a land lease, public-private partnership or outright sale;
- Privately owned sites, where the City must respond to the developer’s proposal and work collaboratively to attain the best possible outcome within any economic constraints.

The following pages illustrate in more detail one scenario for recommended future development, site-specific design priorities, and implementation mechanisms to help these potential catalysts become reality. The urban design and building form recommendations later in this document provide additional guidance to ensure individual projects reflect the overall downtown framework.

SITE	OWNERSHIP	TYPE OF CITY ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL
A. 6th and Walnut Streets	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Proceed with planned housing/parking development	Ongoing
B. APA North Lot	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Seek developer partner for site	First
C. APA Northeast Lot	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Seek developer partner for site	Second
D. APA Cata Lot	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Seek developer partner for site	Second
E. State Lot	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Seek developer partner for site	Second
F. Germania Lot	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Seek developer partner for site	Second
G. Fountain Lot/Walnut Deck	City (Allentown Parking Authority)	Seek developer partner for site	Second
H. City Center 5	Private (Center City Lehigh Valley)	Review development plans when submitted and ensure compatibility with guidelines	Prompt response to development proposal
I. City Center 6	Private (Center City Lehigh Valley)	Review development plans when submitted and ensure compatibility with guidelines	Prompt response to development proposal
J. Post Office	Private (United States Postal Service)	Discuss opportunities with Postal Service, issue RFI to gauge developer interest	Second
K. Museum Lot	Private (Allentown Art Museum)	Discuss acceptable parking alternatives with owner	Prompt response to development proposal

Potential catalyst sites downtown*



Several key sites, both publicly and privately owned, offer real opportunities to jump-start further growth downtown.

**Not intended to prescribe use—shows potential locations where indicated land uses may best succeed if redevelopment were to occur.*

A. 6th and Walnut Streets (APA site)

<p>RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM</p>	<p>Public parking deck wrapped by housing with ground level retail: > 65 to 135 housing units > 5,000 to 25,000 square feet retail > 1,000 parking spaces for office, residential, and general public use</p>
<p>DESIGN PRIORITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facade setbacks per building massing guidelines with material changes or other elements to diminish presence of floors above the height of context buildings > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes > Vertical facade breaks at regular intervals to mitigate long horizontal building scale > Ground level retail space where marketable > Landscaped setback of at least three feet for ground floor housing units > Direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual ground floor housing units > Windows, landscaping, green walls, or murals to minimize presence of any blank walls along 6th Street where grade prevents floors from aligning with sidewalk level
<p>POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS</p>	<p>Issue Request for Proposals to developers (done). Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria. Share public parking supply with residents on nights/weekends to reduce housing development cost and increase parking revenue.</p>

This site provides a critical opportunity to enhance Walnut Street’s character as a residential street connected seamlessly with downtown development. By including housing along its Walnut and South 6th Street edges, the development improves Walnut Street’s current condition from fragmented blocks of housing amidst parking lots and office space, to one where housing has a dominant presence on both sides of the street. This will not only enhance the Third Ward neighborhood but also help establish downtown’s market position as a great place to live.



Not intended to prescribe use or design



B. APA North Lot (112 N. 7th Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Office or hotel with ground level retail (housing possible alternative) > 400,000 to 500,000 square feet office > 20,000 to 30,000 square feet retail
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Front and side facade stepbacks per building massing guidelines > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes > Vertical facade breaks at regular intervals to mitigate long horizontal building scale > Distinctive architectural contribution to Allentown’s skyline > Ground floor retail/active uses (shops, cafe seating, lobby, info displays) > Minimize blank walls > Service and parking access in rear from Hall Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Verify opportunity to accommodate existing the parking in another appropriate APA or private parking facility (or replace on-site). Issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.

The North Lot can complement other redevelopment sites along the 7th Street corridor to help create a continuous edge of ground floor retail space and high-value upper-floor development linking established retail areas further north with Hamilton Street to the south. The site, located within the NIZ, is large enough to support a substantial office or hotel building on its own or if combined with one or more adjacent properties. Redevelopment of this site would substantially help connect downtown and neighborhoods to the north.



Not intended to prescribe use or design



C. APA Northeast Lot (121 N. 7th Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Housing with ground level retail > 25 to 35 housing units > 2,000 to 5,000 square feet retail
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Front and side facade setbacks per building massing guidelines > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes > Vertical facade breaks at regular intervals to mitigate long horizontal building scale > Ground floor retail/active uses (shops, cafe seating, lobby, info displays) > Minimize blank walls > Landscape buffer between building site and LANTA bus facility to the south > Service and parking access in rear from Church Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Verify opportunity to accommodate the existing parking in another appropriate APA or private parking facility (or replace on-site). Issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.

The Northeast Lot can complement other larger redevelopment sites along the 7th Street corridor to help create a continuous edge of ground floor retail space and high-value upper-floor development linking established retail areas further north with Hamilton Street to the south. The site, being small for office use and outside of the NIZ, is likely best suited for housing or a small hotel with ground floor retail. Redevelopment of this site would substantially help connect downtown and neighborhoods to the north.



Not intended to prescribe use or design



D. APA Cata Lot (716-720 Turner Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Housing (alternatively hotel or office) > 25 to 35 housing units
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes > Landscaped setback matching typical context on the block for ground floor housing units > Direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual ground floor housing units > Service and parking access in rear from Hall Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Verify opportunity to accommodate existing parking use on the site to another appropriate APA or private parking facility (or replace on-site). Issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.

The Cata Lot can complement other redevelopment sites along Turner Street to reinforce it as a residential street integrated with larger-scale mixed-use downtown development nearby. The site, being small for office use though inside the NIZ, is best suited for housing. A small hotel or office space designed to be highly consistent with the design of traditional residences on the block may be an appropriate alternative.

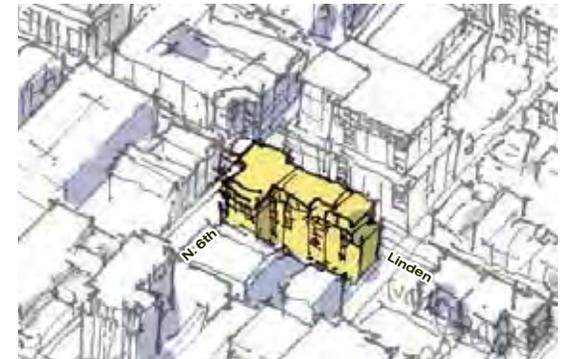


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E. APA State parking lot (Linden Street and 6th Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Office, hotel, or housing > 60,000 to 100,000 square feet office, OR > 75 to 100 hotel rooms or housing units
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facade setbacks per building massing guidelines > Architectural design that complements adjacent historic Symphony Hall in material and composition. Design is encouraged to follow a distinct contemporary approach but include elements of scale, material, and/or composition that echo elements of the historic building. > Distinctive architectural contribution to Allentown's skyline > Ground level retail space where marketable > Landscaped setback of at least three feet for ground floor housing units with direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual units > Service and parking access preferably in rear from Law Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Verify opportunity to accommodate existing parking in another appropriate APA or private parking facility (or replace on-site) through discussions with adjacent cultural institutions and any other major parking users. Issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.



Not intended to prescribe use or design



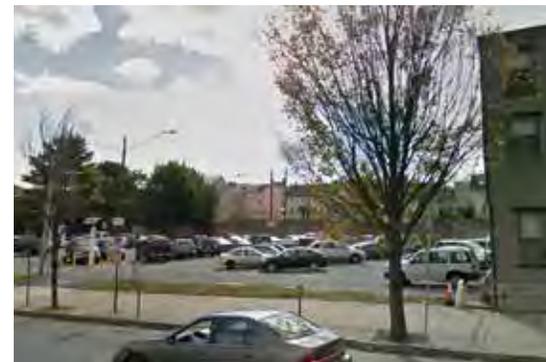
This prominent site located adjacent to Symphony Hall in the NIZ offers a major opportunity to add activity to Linden Street, 6th Street and the Arts Park with additional workers or residents and ground floor retail. The site currently provides convenient parking (including a significant amount of accessible spaces) serving Symphony Hall and other nearby cultural destinations. Thus any redevelopment must first accommodate this parking in a convenient, safe location nearby, potentially on-site (screened from Linden and 6th Street by occupied space) and/or in the APA's Transportation Center garage, with improved pedestrian connections as needed. Redevelopment that includes ground floor retail at the corner of 6th and Linden Streets could itself help enhance these pedestrian connections. Primary site uses could include office (for which potential floor areas are relatively small but conceivable), hotel or housing.

F. APA Germania Lot (108-126 S. 7th Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Housing (alternatively hotel or office) > 110 to 130 housing units > 7,000 to 10,000 square feet retail
DESIGN PRIORITIES	> Front and side facade stepbacks per building massing guidelines > Landscaped setback matching typical context on the block for ground floor housing units with direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual units > Service and parking access preferably in rear from Hall Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Verify opportunity to accommodate existing parking in another appropriate APA or private parking facility (or replace on-site). Issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.



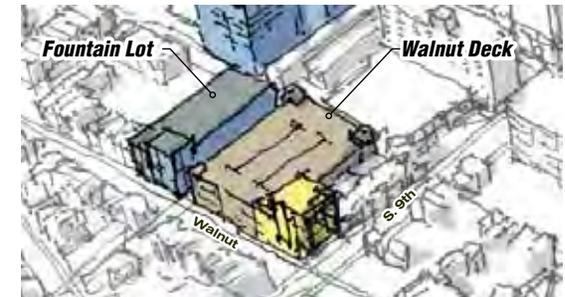
Not intended to prescribe use or design



Potential redevelopment of the Germania Lot would add a substantial number of downtown housing units and transform a large interruption in the Third Ward’s residential development pattern into an important continuation of the neighborhood. Existing parking demand for the lot must first be relocated to structured parking on the site and/or other appropriate APA locations such as the 9th & Walnut Deck or planned parking structure at 6th and Walnut Streets. Given the site’s location outside of the NIZ but near the downtown core, high-density housing deserves priority on this site.

G. APA Fountain Lot/Walnut Deck (923-933 Walnut Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Housing and/or office > 50,000 to 70,000 square feet office > 50 to 100 housing units > 0 to 5,000 square feet retail
DESIGN PRIORITIES	> Facade setbacks per building massing guidelines with material changes or other elements to diminish presence of floors above the height of context buildings > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes > Landscaped setback of at least three feet for ground floor housing units > Direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual ground floor housing units > Service and parking access preferably in rear from Maple or Fountain Streets
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Verify opportunity to accommodate existing parking in another appropriate APA or private parking facility (or replace on-site). Issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.



Not intended to prescribe use or design



Potential redevelopment of these sites and/or the adjacent small parcel at Walnut and 9th Street would transform an interruption in the Third Ward’s residential development pattern into an important continuation of the neighborhood. These sites could play a supporting role providing parking for the City Center 6 site to the northwest, either in the existing Walnut Deck (with or without additional levels) or in a new 2-bay structure at the corner of Maple and Fountain Streets. Housing, office, or other active uses along Walnut should continue the existing pattern of development. Current parking demand for the lot must also be relocated to structured parking on the site and/or another appropriate APA location such as the Walnut Deck. Because the Fountain Lot is inside the NIZ, a small office designed to be highly consistent with the design of traditional residences on the block would be appropriate, but housing could better reflect the existing neighborhood context. The corner parcel at Walnut and 9th Streets, also within the NIZ, would be appropriate for office, hotel, and/or housing use. The Walnut Deck is outside the boundaries; if it is rebuilt to add parking supply then housing or other active uses should face Walnut Street.

H. City Center 5 site (7th Street and Walnut Street)

<p>RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM</p>	<p>Office with ground floor retail or other active use, parking (as needed) wrapped by housing along major streets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 150,000 to 275,000+ square feet office > 5,000 to 10,000 square feet retail > 90 to 110 housing units
<p>DESIGN PRIORITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facade stepbacks per building massing guidelines with material changes or other elements to diminish presence of floors above the height of context buildings > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes > Vertical facade breaks at regular intervals to mitigate long horizontal building scale > Distinctive architectural contribution to Allentown’s skyline > Ground level retail along 7th Street (also acceptable elsewhere as market allows) > Landscaped setback of at least three feet for ground floor housing units with direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual units > Windows, landscaping, green walls, or murals to minimize presence of blank walls where the grade along streets may prevent floors from aligning with sidewalk level > Service and parking access preferably in rear from Maple or Hall Streets
<p>POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS</p>	<p>Apply these design standards as part of ANIZDA and City review of development proposals for the site</p>



Not intended to prescribe use or design



City Center 5 site (7th Street and Walnut Street) con't

City Center Lehigh Valley's anticipated City Center 5 development, spanning parts of two blocks in the NIZ along Walnut Street between South 8th and South 7th Streets, has a valuable role to play in continuing downtown's resurgence as an employment center while also making significant connections with adjacent neighborhoods. The site's South 7th Street edge includes an important corner of Center Square and offers a natural location for a significant office or hotel building oriented to the Square. Office or hotel use would also be appropriate at the corner of South 7th and Walnut Streets as a southern termination of downtown's primary commercial area. Retail or other active uses should line South 7th Street's ground floor. The site's Walnut Street edge deserves a distinctly different approach, with a strong housing presence reinforcing existing housing across Walnut and on nearby cross streets. As on the APA's South 6th and Walnut Street site, this housing presence will significantly enhance Walnut as a residential street tied directly with downtown's core. Any parking needs should be located toward the interior of the site and screened from South 7th, South 8th and Walnut Streets with occupied spaces like housing, office or retail.



I. City Center 6 site (Hamilton Street near Fountain Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 60,000 to 100,000 square feet office (or alternative uses) > 10,000 to 15,000 square feet retail
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facade setbacks per building massing guidelines with material changes or other elements to diminish presence of floors above the height of context buildings > Distinctive architectural contribution to Allentown’s skyline > Ground level retail along Hamilton Street > Landscaped setback of at least three feet for ground floor housing units with direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual units > Service and parking access preferably in rear from Maple Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Apply these design standards as part of ANIZDA and City review of development proposals for the site



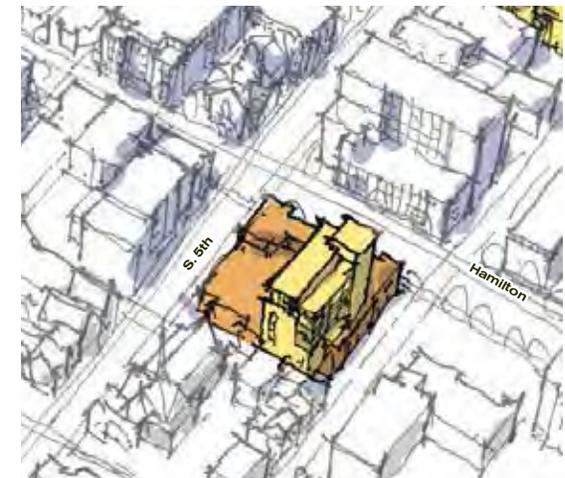
Not intended to prescribe use or design



City Center Lehigh Valley’s anticipated City Center 6 site, located in the NIZ, should play a pivotal role catalyzing renewed investment and activity to Hamilton Street’s 900 block between 10th and 9th Streets. Redevelopment should emphasize retail or other highly active, publicly accessible ground floor use reinforcing the pattern of retail storefronts on the block. Other uses may be flexible, with priority for NIZ-related office, hotel and/or retail, but also potentially including housing or institutional program. Any development program should bring a significant number of workers, visitors and/or residents to the block to help support retail and activity in the broader area including PPL Plaza. Portions of the site south of West Maple Street may include parking or other uses; frontage along Walnut should include housing, retail or other occupied use.

J. Post Office

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	<p>Maintain small Post Office presence on ground floor; reuse remainder of space in main building for arts or educational use; potentially add new floor area to rear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 5,000 square feet Post Office/retail (or as needed for postal operations) > 20,000 to 25,000 square feet office/institutional rehabilitation > 50 to 100 housing units
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Preserve existing facade of main building along Hamilton, 5th, and Penn Streets (rear service addition can be demolished as needed) > Set back new development at least 50 feet from existing Hamilton Street facade > Incorporate side step-back along south edge of site to respect existing church and residential uses
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	<p>Discuss potential additional/intensified uses of the site with USPS and develop more specific program and development approach consistent with USPS goals and needs. Work with USPS to issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Work with USPS to review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.</p>



Not intended to prescribe use or design

The Art Deco style main post office graces Hamilton Street with an elegant exterior and historic interior murals. The reduced amount of space required for post office operations today provides opportunity for other uses to occupy this landmark and bring more activity to the area near Arts Park and downtown’s eastern gateway. The following uses may be particularly appropriate given the site’s location outside of the NIZ and its proximity to other arts, residential, educational and institutional uses:

- 1) Institutional or office space;
- 2) Studio and/or gallery space for artists;
- 3) Housing (potentially in new, taller structure set back toward the rear of the site to be distinct from the Hamilton Street façade).



K. Allentown Art Museum lot (Linden Street and 5th Street)

RECOMMENDED LAND USE PROGRAM	Housing, possibly with artist space > 35 to 50 housing units
DESIGN PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Opportunity for artist living, studio, and/or gallery space, possibly including ground-level studio or gallery space visible from sidewalk > Facade components with a variety of scales such as bay windows, balconies, and areas of distinct material changes, consistent with scale of context buildings > Landscaped setback matching typical context on the block for ground floor housing units with direct entrances from the sidewalk to individual units > Service and parking access in rear from Penn Street
POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Allentown Art Museum and APA discuss approaches to accommodating parking in alternate locations. If appropriate parking solution is possible, city work with Museum to issue RFP to developers, referencing these guidelines and the downtown plan as a whole. Work with Museum to review responses and select a developer if one adequately meets criteria.



Not intended to prescribe use or design



The museum’s parking lot and adjacent landscaped area along Linden Street offers redevelopment potential for 35 to 50 housing units that would be especially well-located to bring activity to the Arts Park area and help connect downtown with neighborhood areas to the north along North 5th Street. The parking lot receives significant use for events at the Art Museum and other area arts destinations, so any redevelopment would first require relocation of that parking to other suitably convenient locations, possibly on-site and/or at the Government or Transportation center decks. New housing could potentially include living and/or studio space dedicated to artists, or other program specifically supporting Allentown’s arts culture and community.

Policy approaches to incenting housing

- Strategic redevelopment of city-owned land
- Targeting historic tax credits and potential supplementary incentives (NIZ, KOZ - Keystone Opportunity Zone) to enable more conversion of historic buildings into housing
- Low-income housing tax credits, for certain sites (maintaining additional opportunity for market-rate development on other/mixed sites)
- District parking management approaches providing low-cost residential parking (with potential to also support parking needs in adjacent blocks of neighborhoods outside downtown study area)

Goal - Market-rate housing

Increase production of downtown housing serving the spectrum of market demand

MAKING IT HAPPEN

- Sell public land for housing development in or near downtown, preferably outside NIZ
- Require NIZ projects over 50,000sf to create housing in tandem with commercial space (verify feasible amount via third-party analysis)
- Require NIZ development facing residential zones to include housing along >50% of street edge
- Expand 24/7/365 public access to shared-use parking
- Publicize housing market analysis and state/Federal incentives

Goal - Market-rate housing

Maintain/expand affordable/ mixed-income housing choices

MAKING IT HAPPEN

- Use housing market analysis as guide to affordable housing needs
- Require replacement of any affordable housing displaced by redevelopment
- Continue enlisting major employers, property owners and NIZ participants to contribute to Center City Initiative programs creating and improving area housing
- Apply ANIZDA funds to support share of affordable housing in NIZ

Management approaches to enhancing retail choices

- Actively manage downtown retail to develop an appropriately complementary mix of store types.
- Proactively recruit desired types of tenants when vacancies occur to enhance the retail environment and shorten vacancy periods.
- Preserve and expand neighborhood-serving retail options to help meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Goal - Market-rate housing

Reinforce and expand retail options serving residents, businesses and visitors

MAKING IT HAPPEN

- Continue NIZ incentives for commercial development
- Require retail space in new development along 7thSt (Turner to Walnut), other selected blocks
- Expand Hamilton District resources to support/recruit retail by re-establishing BID
- Use ANIZDA funds for expanded façade grants and retail fit-out assistance
- Incent housing production to grow customer base

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Urban design

ANALYSIS

Critical Issues

- *Designing new buildings to support walkable streets*
- *Creating comfortable scale transitions between new buildings, streets, and neighborhood context*
- *Making streets more walkable*
- *Improving park and sidewalk space to support enhanced programming*
- *Adding neighborhood park space*
- *Enhancing the downtown skyline*

What new and existing building forms are best suited to current and future market potential?

Contemporary office tenants typically look for new buildings with a floorplate of 20,000 square feet or larger, a width between 100 and 120 feet, and a floor-to-floor height of 13 feet. New multi-family residential buildings are typically 60 to 65 feet wide with a minimum floorplate of 10,000 square feet. Townhouses are typically 16 to 22 feet wide and 35 to 50 feet deep.

Adaptive reuse of existing buildings requires more flexibility with these dimensions depending on the current structure. For example, obsolete office buildings less than 90 feet wide are good candidates for residential conversion.

What existing underutilized buildings are more or less suitable for re-tenanting/rehab/adaptive reuse based on floorplate, design, historic, parking, or other factors?

The Americus Building and Post Office building on Hamilton Street are two significant adaptive reuse candidates. Smaller buildings along Hamilton should also be reused but the typical narrow, deep floorplate can be difficult to transform for contemporary needs. Combining adjacent buildings is one possible solution, although varying floor heights may be an issue in some cases. Another consideration to maintain historic facades that give character to the street is to demolish and reconstruct the floors behind the façade, with the possibility of adding more floors setback from the main façade.



The Post Office building could be adaptively reused for office or institutional tenants

What ranges of heights are likely under existing regulations? Are additional regulations for building massing desirable to improve transitions to context, improve the public realm, enhance the skyline, or achieve other goals? What are some options for achieving these goals?

Height and massing are unrestricted in the downtown today. Construction methods and costs typically limit new buildings to either less than four or five floors or more than ten to twelve. Scale transitions to existing neighborhoods, building façade setbacks to limit the sense of height at street level, and requiring diverse, attractive building tops are some of the options to consider for enhancing the public realm.



The City Center 3 office building currently under construction on Hamilton Street

What design approaches best advance improved walkability and other qualities desired downtown? Where are they most needed to influence new development and adaptive reuse?

Simple features like visible crosswalk markings at intersections, crosswalk signals with countdown timers, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting support an active, safe, and attractive walking environment. Visually interesting and engaging street edges, whether ground floor retail, other active uses, or frequent residential entries with compact stoops or front gardens, also support walkability. Limiting the length of blank walls and the parts of buildings that overhang the sidewalk are other design approaches to improving the pedestrian environment downtown. These strategies are particularly important along the mixed-use corridors that form the heart of downtown and the north-south streets that connect downtown to the neighborhoods.



Glassy retail storefronts enliven this parking structure which otherwise would present a blank, uninteresting façade along the sidewalk.



Sidewalk dining and attractive streetscaping are important elements of a lively pedestrian environment.



High-visibility crosswalks using paint or special paving support walkability by alerting drivers to pedestrian activity.

How can we bring downtown's public spaces to life? Are additional park investments needed?

Downtown is fortunate to have several prominent, well designed public squares—most notably, Arts Park, Center Square, and PPL Plaza. Recent and anticipated growth in downtown's population of people working, living, and visiting offers important opportunity to increase the extent and intensity of use of these spaces. As the spaces become better occupied during weekdays, evenings and weekends, the added presence of people will tend to make them safer and more enjoyable places to be (and perceived as such). Priority efforts therefore should focus on programming the spaces with activity, through the shared initiative of the City and major downtown organizations. Downtown organizations, as the day-to-day neighbors and stewards of the squares, can be especially effective in encouraging and sponsoring public space programming through their management and communications. For example, the Hamilton Main Street District organizes formal activities like summer concerts in PPL Plaza and promotes informal use by providing tables and chairs. Affiliated cultural institutions around Arts Park are intentionally expanding their programming of the park and connected Arts Walk with arts-themed events and installations. Private businesses are also playing a valuable role by expanding outdoor

dining in Center Square and near PPL Plaza. Allentown can build upon this momentum by expanding regular coordination among these entities and encouraging more such proactive efforts, and encouraging a modest level of targeted capital improvements to help draw full potential from as-yet underutilized spaces like the southeast corner of Center Square.

While these major squares can increasingly serve a variety of public activities, traditional parks serving recreation needs of families and other residents in and around downtown are also needed. Here, too, the downtown area is already generally well served by existing park spaces. This is particularly true on downtown's south side, where Valania Park provides playground space and Fountain Park provides sports facilities and connections to the extensive park greenway along the Little Lehigh River. To the north, Old Fairgrounds Park provides active play space for children, and the historic Allentown and West End cemeteries serve a passive role by providing broad green spaces in the West End and Old Allentown. The growing population in neighborhoods north of downtown and potential for more new residents along the north edge of downtown suggest that this area would benefit from one or more new parks of modest scale, serving targeted needs like children's play, dogs, community gardens or sitting

and gathering. The City should seek opportunity to create such spaces as components of major development projects, or through acquisition or reuse of existing city owned land, and determine optimal park location, programming and design through dialogue with community members.

Finally, smaller public spaces within or adjacent to existing sidewalks offer important opportunities for expanded programming. The re-emerging presence of downtown restaurants in certain locations already takes advantage of Hamilton Street's broad sidewalks and trees as attractive places for outdoor dining; the blocks of Hamilton between 10th and 6th Streets are already well suited to accommodate more of this initiative. Recent expansion of downtown's secondary street and path network as part of adjacent redevelopment projects—such as extension of the Arts Walk to 7th Street, and creation of a landscaped plaza in a former parking lot east of the Zion's Reformed Church—also offer a good model, creating efficient small areas that effectively expand public space in useful ways and add value to adjacent development. Similar small-scale public spaces should be encouraged in other areas currently lacking them—such as the blocks of Hamilton between 12th and 10th Streets, of 7th Street between Turner and Linden Streets, and of Linden between 9th and 6th Streets—in conjunction with nearby

redevelopment opportunities. The greater width of the 7th and Hamilton Street corridors offers other opportunities to accommodate such spaces in the public right of way through several alternate means, including narrowing or removing travel lane segments to widen sidewalks, selectively removing parking spaces to expand sidewalks in certain places, and/or creating “parklets” that temporarily use on-street parking lanes for public programming like seating, seasonal plantings or art installations.



The jumping fountain at PPL Plaza is a major attraction during the summer months.

Parklets add green open space downtown, offer new places to sit, and can create a buffer between the sidewalk and street by adding plants. They are also good for surrounding businesses as they attract people to the location and offer a place to linger.

Source: <http://sfgreatstreets.org/parklets/faqs/>



Parklets can add seating, greenery, or other amenities along the sidewalk.



The renovation of the Trifecta building east of the Zion's Reformed Church includes an outdoor public space on Hamilton Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Building height, bulk and lot standards

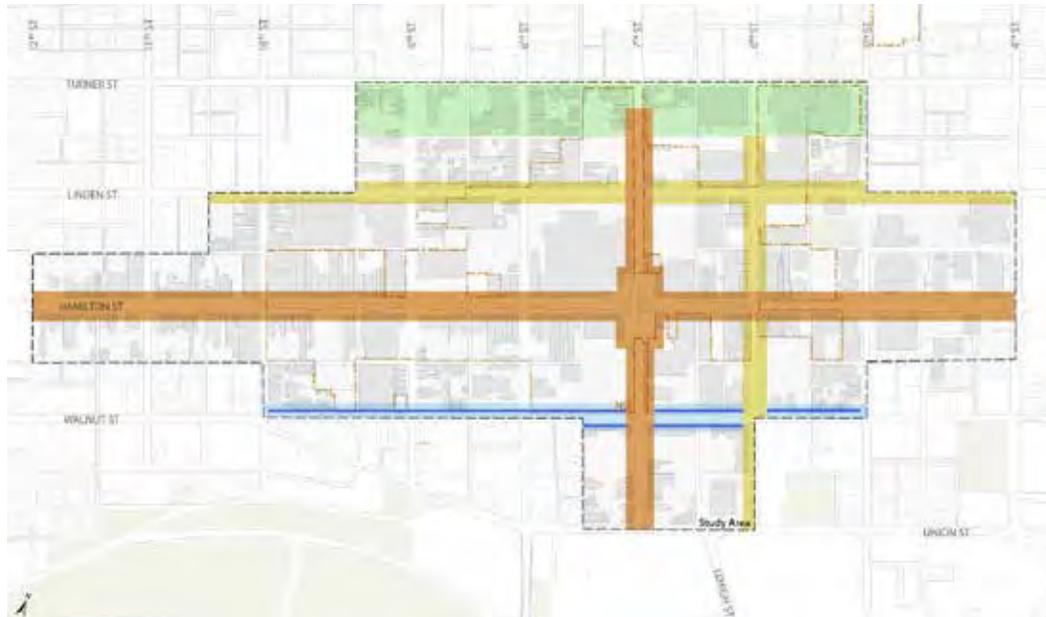
The relationship of building facades to streets and sidewalks impacts the pedestrian experience, shadow and wind patterns, and the character of the corridor. These guidelines enhance the downtown environment by protecting sunlight access to the sidewalks and public spaces, helping new buildings reflect the scale of existing buildings, creating an attractive streetwall, and differenti-

ating corridors. They are designed to maintain developable floorplates for office and residential buildings that do not limit marketability.

Façade setbacks allow buildings that line the sidewalk to also provide adequate sunlight and reduce shadows at ground level. Setbacks that occur at similar heights across different buildings on a street create a unifying element and a defined streetwall that provides a comfortable sense of enclosure. Setbacks can be integrated into building

design as outdoor terraces for residential or office space or as green roofs to provide a visual amenity for building occupants.

Recommendations are organized according to four key areas listed below. Each area has particular characteristics that help distinguish it from other parts of downtown and will strengthen the identity of the individual areas.



- Primary mixed-use streets:** Minimum 15' step-back at or below ~70' above average grade
- Secondary mixed-use streets:** Minimum 15' step-back at or below ~60' above average grade
- Neighborhood transition—Turner St:** ~45' height limit at street edge; greater height permitted within 45 degree plane starting at 45' above average grade, rising to south
- Neighborhood transition—Walnut St:** ~70' height limit at street edge with minimum 5' step-back at 3rd or 4th floor and minimum 15' step-back ~70' above average grade

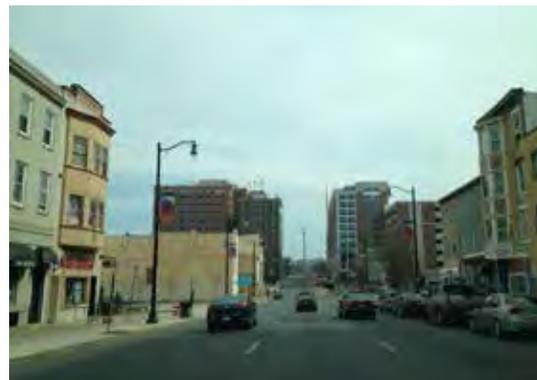
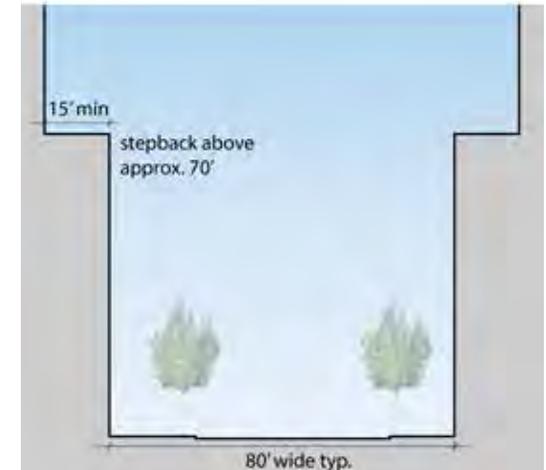
**Primary mixed-use corridors:
Hamilton and 7th Streets**

These two streets have the widest typical distance between buildings downtown, approximately 80'. As a result, they can accommodate the tallest buildings in downtown but will benefit from stepbacks to create a strong edge to the street and to limit the sense of height at street level.

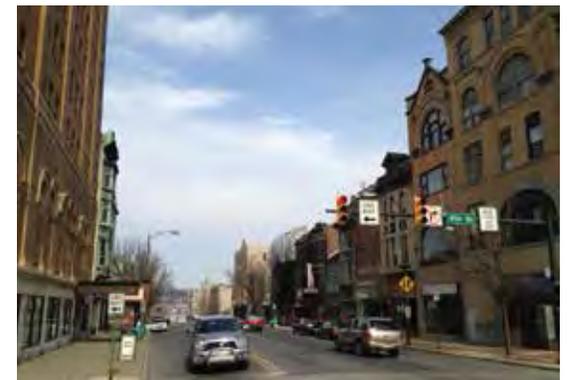
- Building facades should stepback a minimum of 15' at approximately 70' above the sidewalk to provide a strong definition of space.
- Buildings should be a minimum of three floors tall to create the desired downtown mixed-use scale.
- This corridor should have the greatest variation of building height and massing to create a visually interesting place with diverse forms. Building heights should step down as the corridors approach existing neighborhoods.



Tall buildings should step down to a neighborhood scale.



7th Street approaching downtown from the north has several gaps that could be filled in with new development.



Hamilton Street at 6th Street exhibits a variety of building heights in a short distance.

**Secondary mixed-use corridors:
Linden and 6th Streets**

These two streets are more typical of streets downtown with approximately 60' between buildings across the street. As active mixed-use corridors they can also accommodate taller buildings.

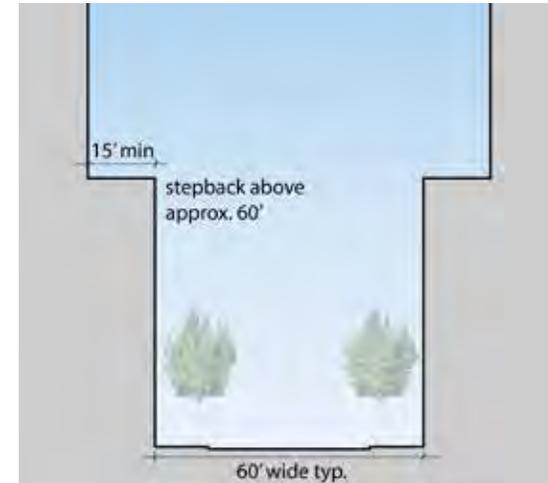
- Building facades should stepback a minimum of 15' at approximately 60' above the sidewalk, creating a 1:1 proportion that defines the space and avoids a canyon effect.
- Buildings should have a minimum of three floors to create the type of downtown mixed-use environment and scale desired.
- This corridor should have a variety of building heights and massing to maintain visual interest and diversity of form. Building heights should step down as the corridors approach existing neighborhoods.



New buildings should respect adjacent buildings by stepping back at a similar height to the existing structures.



Linden Street has a mix of uses including parking; future development could transform it into an attractive downtown street.



6th Street is an important neighborhood connector with several potential development sites.

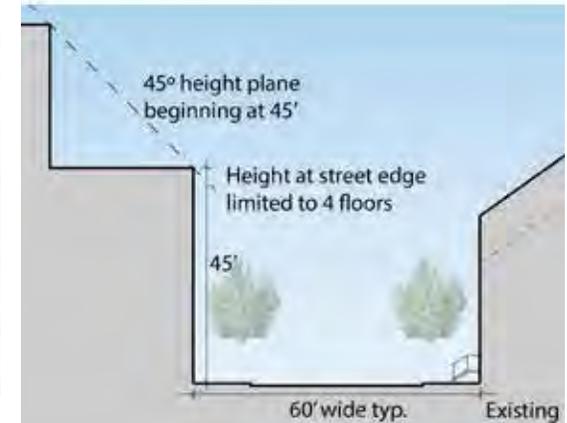
Neighborhood transition: Turner Street

Turner Street is a transition point between downtown and the lower scale residential areas to the north. Buildings on the south side of Turner cast shadows that can encroach on the residential buildings north of Turner so height limits and setbacks are necessary to mitigate this impact.

- Buildings south of Turner should have a maximum height of 45' or four stories at the street edge, one floor taller than the typical building height north of Turner.
- To allow greater height within the block while still minimizing shadow impacts on the street, buildings should remain below an imaginary 45-degree plane that starts at 45' above the sidewalk at the street edge and extends into the block towards the south.



Height should be limited to no more than 45 feet at the street edge to maintain the residential scale.



Turner Street is primarily a neighborhood corridor but select infill redevelopment over time could create a more cohesive residential character.

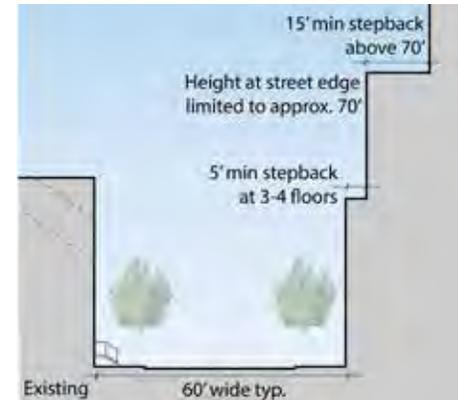
Neighborhood transition: Walnut Street

Walnut Street is another neighborhood transition point but has a wider mix of existing building heights than Turner Street. Residential townhouses co-exist next to taller multifamily buildings and other structures north of Walnut.

- Buildings should have a minimum 5' stepback located above the third or fourth floor and another 15' minimum stepback at approximately 70' above the sidewalk. The lower stepback references the existing building heights while not limiting marketable floorplates. The upper stepback limits the sense of height at street level while accommodating greater height if desired.



Stepbacks and material changes (shown here above the second floor) should be used to mitigate the scale of larger buildings.



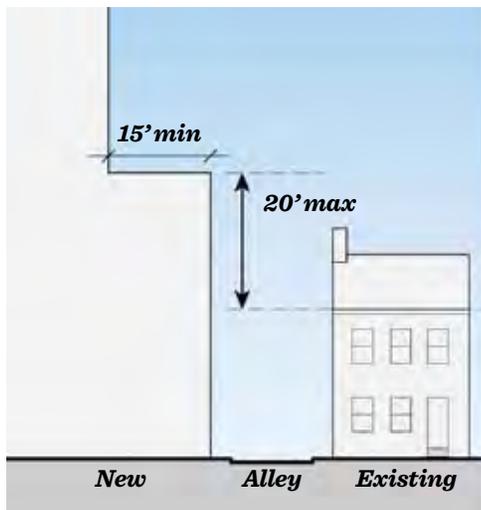
In some areas, Walnut Street has attractive housing on a tree-lined street. Here, that housing faces the Walnut Deck.



In other areas, Walnut Street has a very different character inconsistent with a neighborhood street. Future development should transform these gaps in the Third Ward.

Massing Guidelines

- Buildings adjacent to existing residential uses should have a minimum side stepback of at least 15' at approximately 20' above the height of the existing building at the street edge.



Height limited to 20' above existing building height within 15' of side property line.

- Building facades that overhang the sidewalk should be limited to less than one-third of the façade length and have a maximum depth of three feet to avoid creating a dark, unappealing ground floor.



Building overhangs should be limited to short lengths along the façade to add visual interest without creating a dark, uninviting space underneath.

- The maximum façade length should be no more than 240'. Vertical bays should be used to maintain the visual scale and rhythm of existing blocks. These should be no more than 60' wide at ground level.



A side stepback and vertical bays are effective design strategies to reflect local context.

- A major vertical break for every 100 feet of façade length with a displacement of approximately 8 feet in depth should be used to create distinct massing elements within larger buildings.
- Buildings, especially taller ones visible on the downtown skyline, should have distinctive tops using forms, materials, colors, and/or lighting to differentiate between nearby buildings.



Major vertical breaks provide variety and interest along long facades.



Distinctive building tops create a diverse skyline profile.

Putting it all together

The stepback and massing guidelines embody thoughtful approaches to building design and scale that will help future development make successful connections to existing neighborhoods. The following illustrations depict one scenario of how these guidelines help complete the residential character along Turner Street (below) and Walnut Street (opposite).



The guidelines provide a framework for potential future redevelopment along Turner Street.



Potential future development along Walnut Street illustrates how new buildings should extend the existing neighborhood character.

Building-street relationships

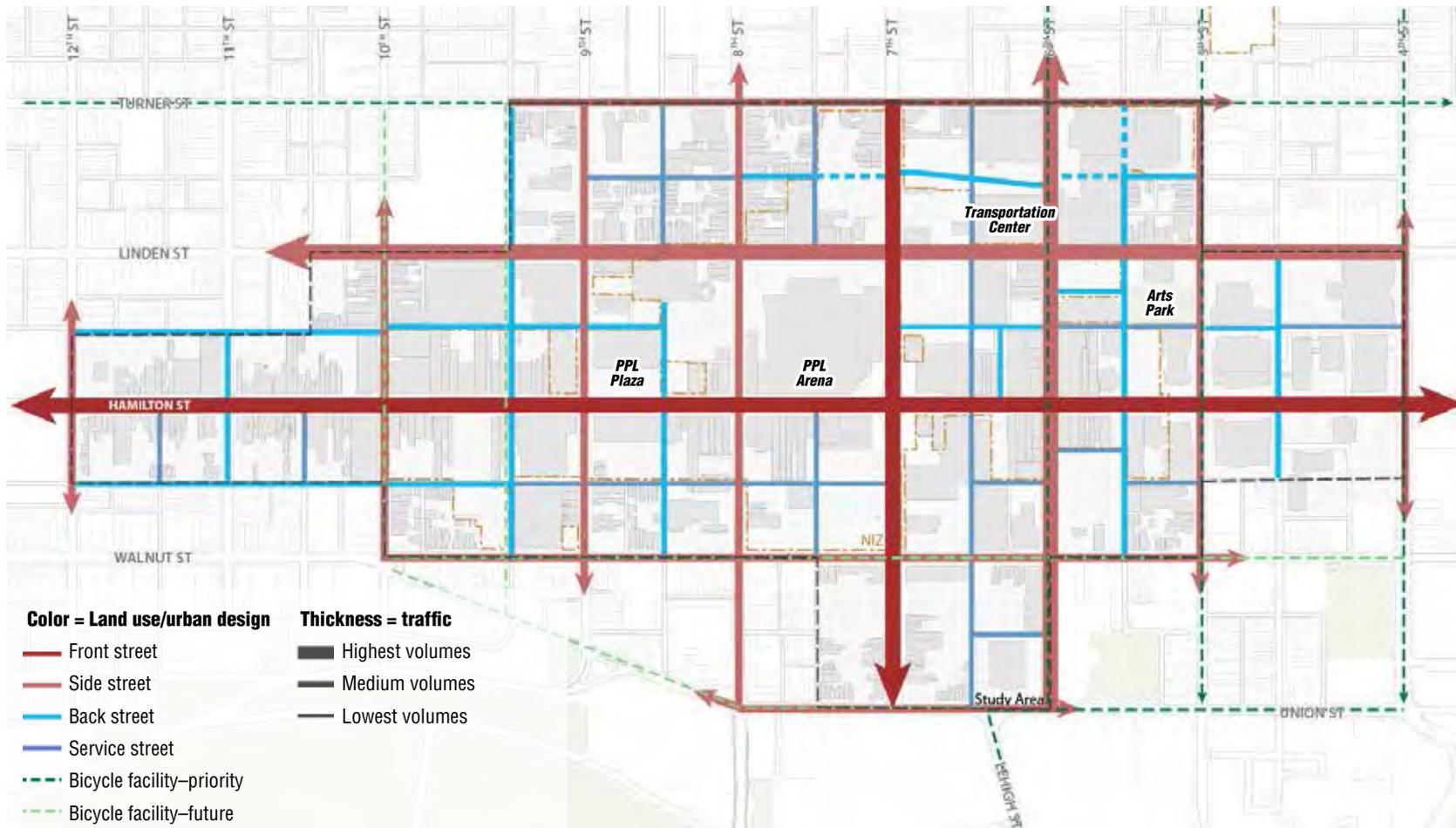
Street types

Downtown streets must serve multiple roles including providing pedestrian and vehicular access, space for bicyclists, appropriate addresses for shops and housing, and parking and service, and all of them must be compatible with one another. To achieve this goal the street network should incorporate the following hierarchy of types. Each street's type should be reflected in its design and function, as well as the design and function of the buildings, open spaces, and parking lining it. Marked bicycle routes provide important supplementary connections and should be considered as part of the street network as well.

- **Front street**—primary location for retail, other active ground floor uses, and a safe and inviting pedestrian environment.
- **Side street**—desirable location for retail and other active ground floor uses, with some flexibility to include limited service functions
- **Back street**—desirable location for occupied commercial and/or residential buildings featuring a regular occurrence of doors and windows, with some flexibility to include service functions
- **Service street**—preferred location for service functions to reduce their presence on front, side, and back streets

While some overlapping of pedestrian-oriented and service-oriented functions is inevitable downtown, a distinct separation is preferred wherever possible. Where physical overlap is unavoidable, the timing of different uses can help reduce conflicts. Back streets and service streets can be managed so that service access mainly occurs in the early morning or other times when few pedestrians are likely to be present. At other times of the day when traffic is light, pedestrians can feel sufficiently safe and welcome to make the back streets an appropriate place for some front door addresses.

Street types



Other guidelines

- Buildings along front streets should have a ground floor height of 15 to 20 feet, suitable for retail or other active uses. Ground floor level should be flush with or easily accessible from the sidewalk.
- Large transparent ground floor window areas for retail display or for looking into an actively used space should be integrated into the design of buildings along front streets. At least 65 per-

cent of the ground level façade should be transparent glazing along front streets, and between 40 to 60 percent transparent glazing along side streets where non-residential uses are present (e.g. retail, lobbies, residential common places, etc)

- Retail and office entrances should be frequent along front streets, no more than approximately 60 feet apart, to encourage sidewalk activity as people come and go.

- Building facades should generally be within a build-to zone between zero and ten feet from the edge of the sidewalk, especially along front and side streets. In neighborhood transition areas, this setback should be landscaped and include front stoops or small porches to provide separation of private living space from the sidewalk.
- Residential entrances should be provided by individual entrances to ground floor units where



Wide transparent glass storefronts create a welcoming display along front streets and, where feasible, side streets as well.



A flush ground floor entrance and tall ceiling make ground floor space flexible for retail or other active uses.



Individual townhouse entries bring people to the sidewalk and compact front gardens create visual interest for pedestrians.

possible and a primary lobby entrance along the sidewalk for upper level units. Lobby entrances should be spaced no further than every 60 feet on neighborhood transition streets.

- Back streets should incorporate decorative paving, pedestrian lighting, and, where possible, active uses to make these passages inviting ways to walk to front and side streets.

- Service streets should be designed to minimize conflict with pedestrian routes. Service entrances should be within enclosures in areas with high levels of pedestrian activity.

- Blank walls exceeding 15 feet in length should be avoided and mitigated by murals or green walls when present.

- In areas with sloping sidewalks, ground floors should be designed to maximize active pedestrian-scale frontage and minimize blank walls.



Back streets should incorporate active uses where possible to create attractive pedestrian connections



Service street entrances can incorporate decorative features to enhance their appearance



Murals and other strategies can mitigate blank walls along sidewalks

Public open space framework

The network of public open space downtown includes parks, plazas, tree-lined sidewalks, and connections to nearby green spaces and trails.

- Major public (or publicly accessible) spaces like Arts Park, Center Square, and PPL Plaza are downtown anchors. More development near them, especially housing, will further activate these spaces with regular users. Additional programming of these spaces can also enliven them by attracting people at specific times for specific purposes.
- The broad sidewalks downtown, especially along Hamilton Street, are prime opportunities for further enhancement with outdoor dining, public art installations, or tactical urbanism projects (see inset box). Seventh Street is a

Tactical urbanism—

a city and/or citizen-led approach to neighborhood building using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions intended to catalyze long-term change.

Source: Tactical Urbanism Vol. 4: Short-Term Action, Long-term Change. Street Plans Collaborative, 2014

future priority location as underused sites are redeveloped.

- The Arts Walk and other pedestrian passages provide important links between parking locations and many destinations. New lighting, entrances, and displays along these routes will attract more people and make better use of these places.
- The approaches to downtown along Hamilton Street are opportunities to define gateways that mark the entrances to a lively, active urban area. Landscaped medians with trees and signage just

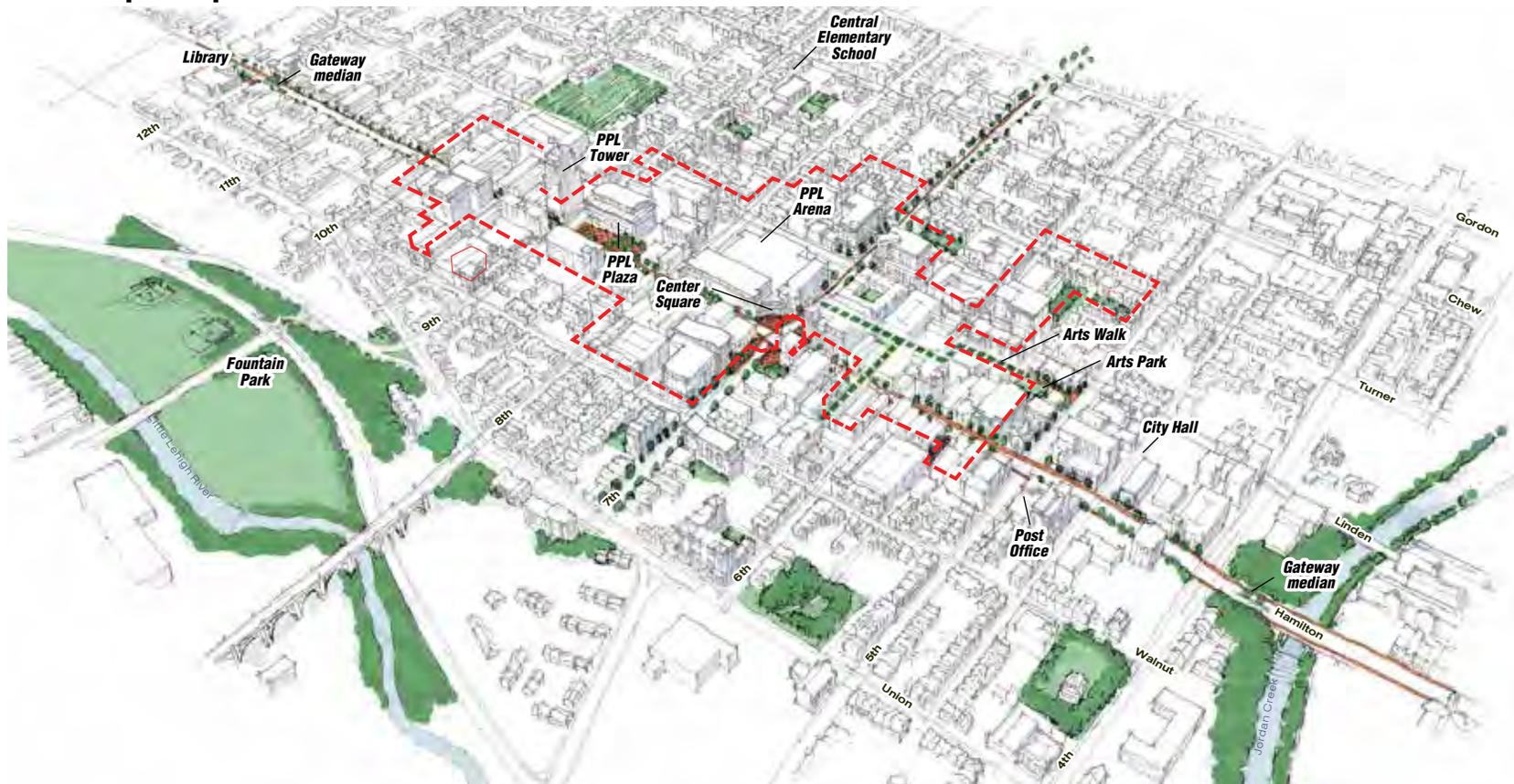
east of 12th Street and just east of 4th Street will provide identity and inform visitors.

- Existing blank walls can be transformed by murals or green walls to better contribute to a visually appealing pedestrian environment. Existing parking structures along Linden and Walnut and the PPL Arena service areas along 8th and Walnut are priority locations for this to occur.



Activating the Arts Walk and other pedestrian passages with displays and entrances can make it a lively space for people to walk through.

Public open space network



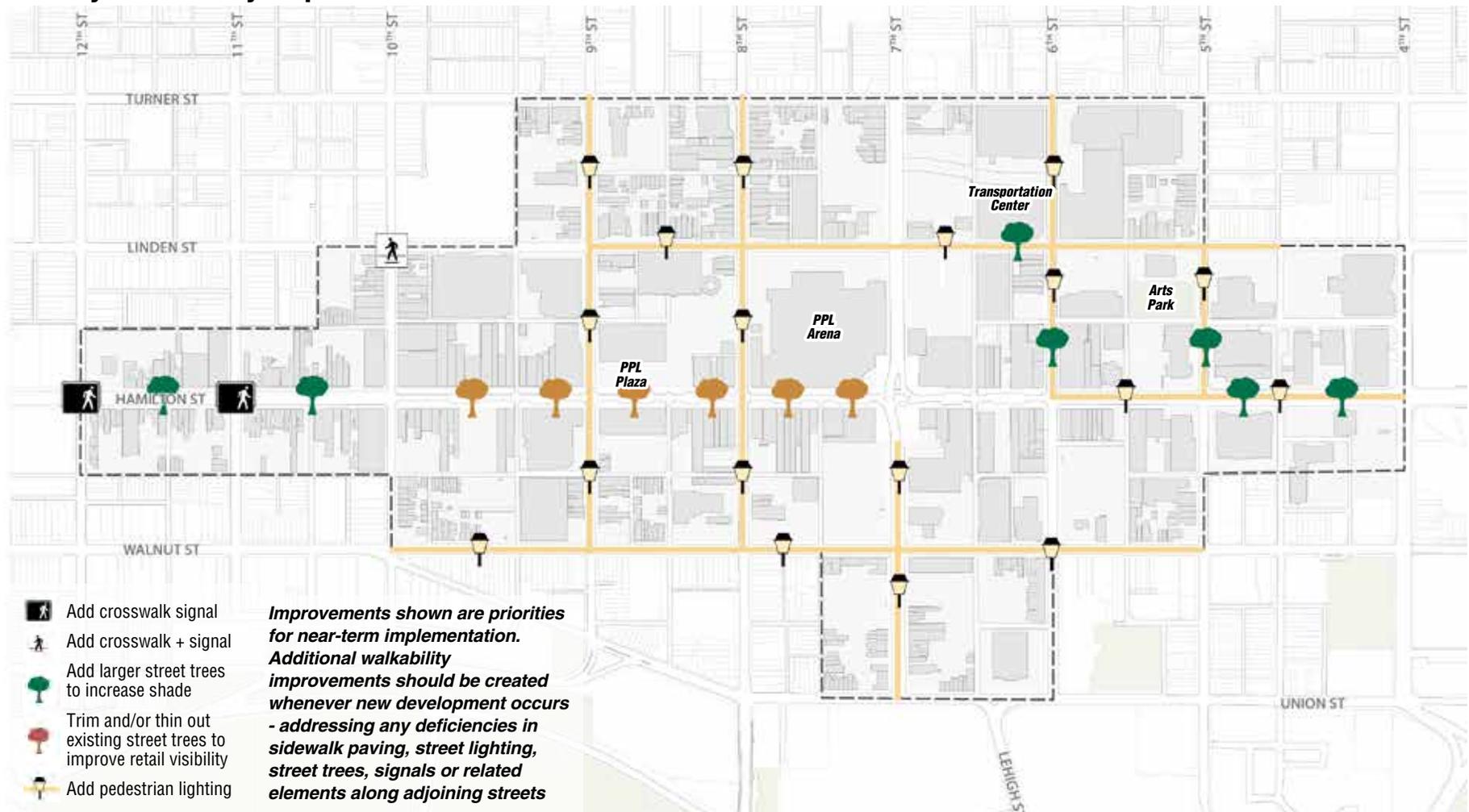
The network of public open space downtown includes parks, plazas, active tree-lined sidewalks, and connections to Fountain Park and across Jordan Creek.

Recommended street improvements

Simple improvements to the pedestrian network would correct the few remaining gaps in the area and improve walkability for all users.

- Pedestrian-scale lighting provides better nighttime sidewalk illumination than standard street lighting and can support a more residential character on north-south streets that are important neighborhood connectors. Better lighting also enhances the sense of safety by improving visibility.
- New trees that are planted downtown should be large enough to provide adequate shade and limbed above pedestrian height to avoid obstructing the clear path.
- Many existing trees on Hamilton Street between 9th and 10th Streets are so dense that their canopy obstructs storefront signage and blocks street lights at night. Appropriate pruning, rather than removal, will reduce these negative impacts while preserving the attractive streetscape.
- Well-maintained crosswalk markings alert drivers to pedestrian activity and crosswalk signals with countdown timers inform pedestrians whether there is enough time to safely cross busy streets downtown.

Priority walkability improvements

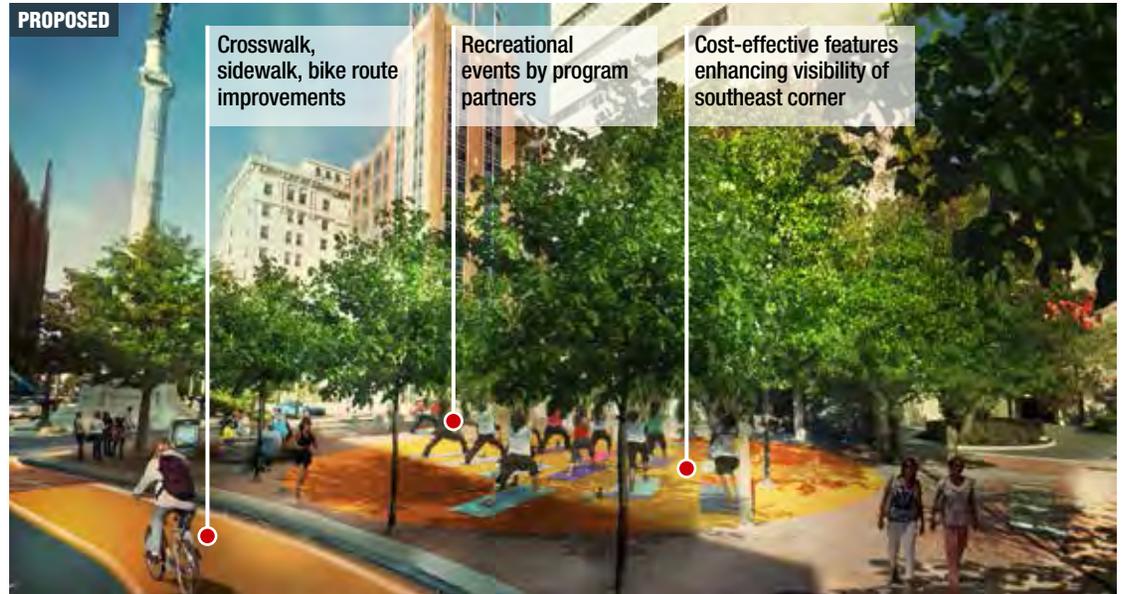
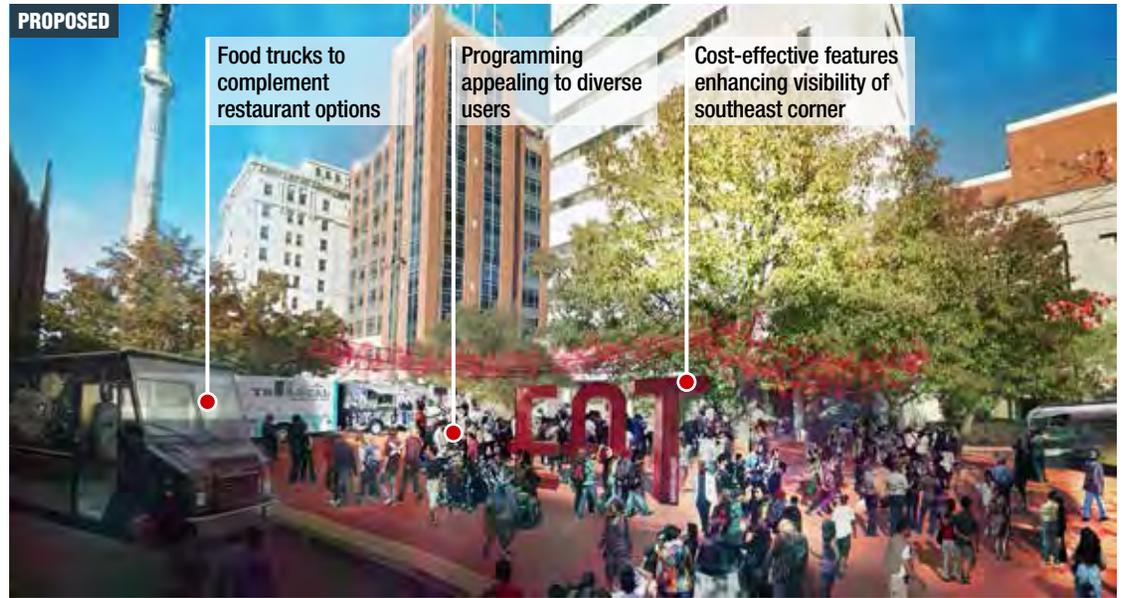


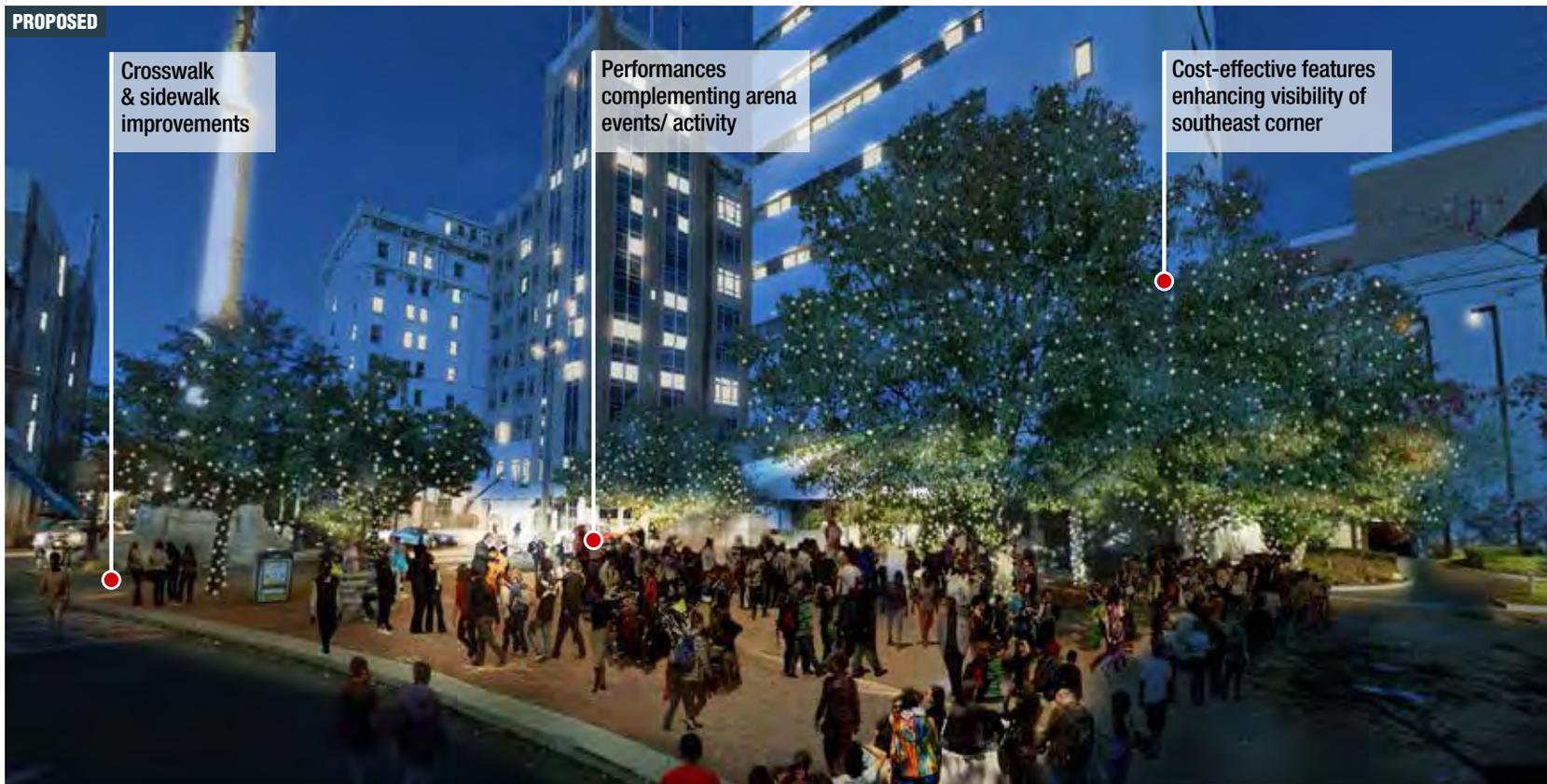
Public space activation

A variety of low to moderate cost improvements should be made to major public spaces and prominent street corridors to significantly increase the level of activity and sense of vitality downtown. These include expanded programming options, simple paving and lighting improvements, and the creation of small spaces along the sidewalk designed to accommodate seating or greenery. The following illustrations depict one scenario for how these improvements could transform the public space network downtown.

Center Square activation

Located in the heart of downtown, Center Square could easily become a more inviting place for people to visit and spend time. Low cost improvements to make the space more visible and functional would greatly enhance the space. Lighting in the trees at night, public art pieces, or pavement treatments are potential approaches to consider. Encouraging programming provided by different organizations to take place could also draw more people to linger in the square.







EXISTING



Arts Park activation

Infill development that brings more people to live and work near Arts Park will naturally provide more visitors. Workers taking lunch, parents bringing their children to run around, and downtown visitors stopping after a visit to one of the nearby cultural institutions will all help activate the park. An expanded programming schedule can create more events that draw people to the park from the neighborhoods, city, and region.



Library District activation

Smaller scale infill development will strengthen existing retail and bring more people to the sidewalk. Streetscape improvements such as pruning large overgrown trees or planting shade trees where they are needed, and installing small parklets for additional seating and greenspace will create an attractive environment for people walking and bicycling between the neighborhoods and downtown.



EXISTING



7th Street connection

Large-scale redevelopment of vacant or underutilized lots will create a continuous active sidewalk from Turner Street to Hamilton Street. Adding trees, widening the sidewalk, and creating small parklets will improve the pedestrian environment along 7th Street, helping to better connect downtown to the neighborhoods.

Transportation network

ANALYSIS

Critical Issues

- *Making streets more walkable*
- *Improving downtown navigation and living*
- *Improving transit and biking convenience and safety*
- *Providing convenient, safe and efficient parking*

Introduction

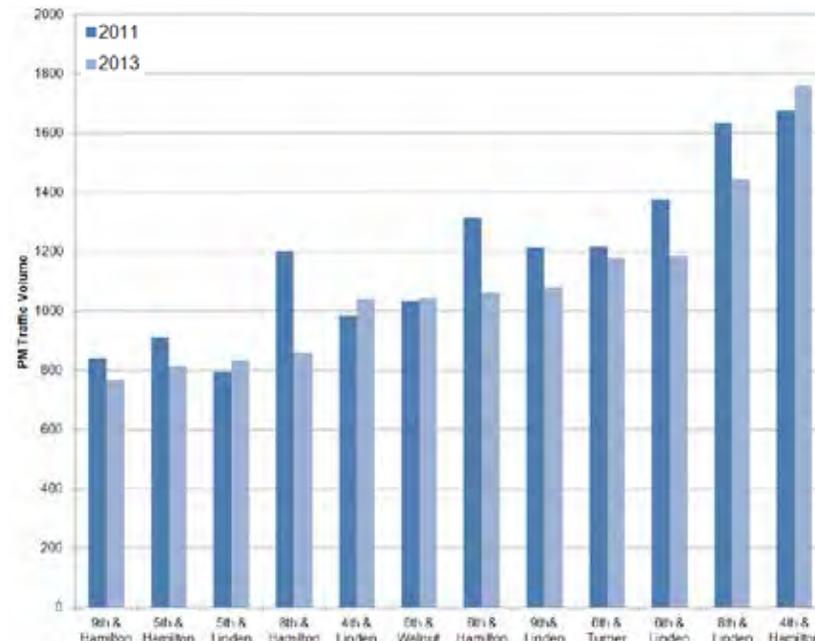
Mobility and access in Allentown is intimately related to its land use, demographics, and travel patterns. As substantial development occurs in and near downtown and travel patterns change, the mobility needs of Allentown will change as well. The existing and planned infrastructure of Allentown’s transportation network sets the stage for opportunity to build off its assets and grow sustainably to accommodate expected demand.

How the City invests in its transportation network is a careful choice: over the last decade patterns have shifted dramatically from the total number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) growing each year to a steady decline.¹ This decline in the need to drive

is likely due to changing demographics, particularly the Millennial generation style of car-free living; already-congested highways; and a preference for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. This trend is not just occurring in the transit-rich, largest urban areas in the country - streets in downtown Allentown saw traffic volumes decreased by 4% from 2011 to 2013.²

As downtown Allentown works to accommodate changing travel demands, findings indicate that urban areas that offer more transportation options, use less surface areas for parking, and provide more amenities are not only able to save money but are more attractive to prospective

employers and residents. Transportation investments that give people attractive choices to walk, bike, take a bus, carpool, or drive prepare downtowns to thrive over the long term.



Most of the streets studied saw decreases in afternoon traffic volume from 2011 to 2013

¹ <http://www.ssti.us/2014/02/vmt-drops-ninth-year-dots-taking-notice/>

² Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. Allentown Arena and City Center Development Traffic Analysis. June 6, 2014. Some change may be attributed to downtown construction.

Allentown’s Existing Transportation Network

Allentown already boasts a multi-modal system with frequent LANTA service through downtown and at the Allentown Transit Center (ATC), a near-complete sidewalk network, a multitude of on-street and off-street parking options, and non-motorized facilities such as the Little Lehigh Creek trail.

Allentown and its regional and state partners are making great strides to give residents, employees, customers, and visitors options on how they get to, from, and within downtown:

- Connecting downtown Allentown with the City’s eastside via the new American Parkway Bridge
- Optimization of downtown traffic signals
- Recent LANTA naming convention improvements and the Allentown Transit Center
- Parking shuttle and late night service for events at the PPL Center
- PennDOT’s 7th Street Multimodal Corridor Study
- “Connecting our Communities” bicycle and pedestrian trails plan
- Ongoing downtown mixed use development that promotes a park-ounce environment, where one can park one time and walk to multiple destinations

- Improved parking garage wayfinding signage

Despite these assets, there are also barriers and gaps in the system to address:

- One-ways streets make for circuitous circulation patterns
- High vehicular speeds that are barriers to walking and biking
- Wide streets and long crosswalks that create intimidating pedestrian crossings
- Confusion about directionality of transit system
- Lack of dedicated bicycling infrastructure, including bike parking
- Some City blocks lack sidewalks

Shifting Allentown’s Transportation Network

There is great potential for the ongoing building improvements to have a big impact on Allentown’s viability, livability, and sustainability. With this growth, investing in alternative modes of transportation and providing additional parking supply are inevitable. There are several strategies that will have a substantial impact on the way that downtown Allentown functions:

- Upgrade the street circulation to bring people to, rather than through, downtown
- Expand the Hamilton Street streetscape (curb extensions, street trees, lighting) beyond just the core of Hamilton Street



The new PPL Arena includes a 700+ space parking deck on Linden Street



Linden Street sidewalks during construction

- Offer a choice on parking pricing, based on location, rather than a flat pricing structure (i.e. \$1/hour)
- Work with private landowners to use underutilized parking areas at off-peak hours (and for events)
- Improve alleyways to serve as attractive and convenient walking connections between parking and downtown destinations
- Introduce dedicated bicycle facilities that connect citywide and regionwide
- Retain and attract transit riders by making transit easy to understand and use
- Incentivize or require employers to offer transportation commute choices, which may include transit subsidies, parking cash out, or bicycle storage, to employees

As the Allentown Parking Authority (APA) and private developers continue to add structured parking to the downtown parking supply, careful consideration should be taken to strike the ideal balance between parking supply and demand. A 2013 analysis found that the four public garages (Walnut Deck, Spiral Deck, ATC, and Government Deck) were no more than 58% full at the busiest time of day, meaning that nearly 900 spaces were empty in these four facilities at peak³. If that

ratio of parked cars to number of spaces is applied all off-street parking facilities, more than 3,000 spaces are potentially empty during the busiest time of day. Recent development has likely slightly reduced the number of empty spaces. Therefore, it is in the APA, City, and private operator's best interests to work together to better use existing assets before investing in new ones.

Strategic investment in parking resources should be based on parking demand and land use mix.

Any parking supply expansion should also consider other modes of transportation (carpooling, transit, walking, and biking). The type of land use mix in Allentown and the impact on the parking supply are intricately intertwined. Land uses and activities have different parking needs depending on the time of day and day of week, which can often offer the opportunity to share parking supply between daytime, nighttime, and weekend users. This reduces the total number of spaces which would be required by the same land uses in stand-alone developments. For example, initial APA counts of parking during arena events indicated only 700 to 1,600 additional cars were parked for sold-out events in the 10,000 seat arena.

³ Allentown Parking Authority data, October 2013.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Circulation

Downtown Allentown relies on a one-way street grid to maximize vehicle throughput. This strategy has many shortfalls in a downtown environment that is striving to become more walkable. One-way streets:

- Reduce the rate in which people can quickly reach their destinations, due to circuitous routes between destinations¹
- Hinder pedestrian safety by encouraging higher vehicle speeds, which exponentially increase the likelihood of a fatality upon collision²
- Complicate navigation and traffic circulation, thus increasing confusion for visitors³
- Increase the amount of lanes available in one direction, but also offer drivers the “temptation to jockey from lane to lane”⁴
- Limit the visibility of traffic, locations, and destinations to drivers on cross streets⁵
- Make bicycling “more inconvenient and dangerous” due to higher speeds and circuitous routes⁶

1 <http://www.uctc.net/access/41/access41-2way.pdf>

2 http://www.preservationkentucky.org/tiny_mce/images/One_Way_Two_Way_Breckinridge.pdf, 4.

3 <http://www.lowellplan.org/sites/default/files/forms/EvolPlanVolume2/EvolutionPlanLowResV2.pdf>, 22.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*, 23.

6 http://www.preservationkentucky.org/tiny_mce/images/One_Way_Two_Way_Breckinridge.pdf

Two-way streets are main streets, the places that support the primary downtown land uses plus multiple modes of transportation: cars, buses, bikes, and people on foot. As Allentown transitions from a place where people typically have driven “through” rather than “to”, this is the opportunity to convert one-way streets to two-way. Most of the existing one-way streets eventually become two-way streets once out of the downtown core, so converting to two-way in the downtown helps provide a continuous network.

Most downtowns prefer two-way streets because they are better suited to supporting pedestrian-friendly, attractive areas. Research has found that two-way streets:

- Serve as a traffic calming technique that, when applied, can “encourage motorists to be more cautious” as they simply have to pay more attention⁷
- Simplify traffic circulation and navigation, particularly for visitors⁸
- Increase the efficiency at which people reach their destinations⁹
- Reduce the instances of collisions¹⁰

Breckinridge.pdf

7 NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, p. 142.

8 *Ibid.*

9 <http://www.uctc.net/access/41/access41-2way.pdf>

10 <http://www.planetizen.com/node/69354>

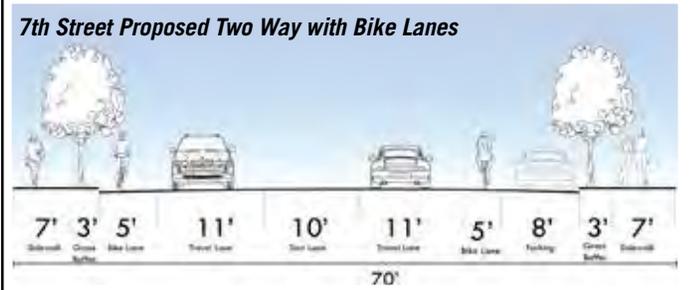
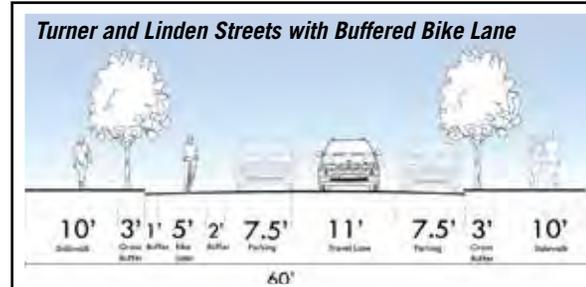
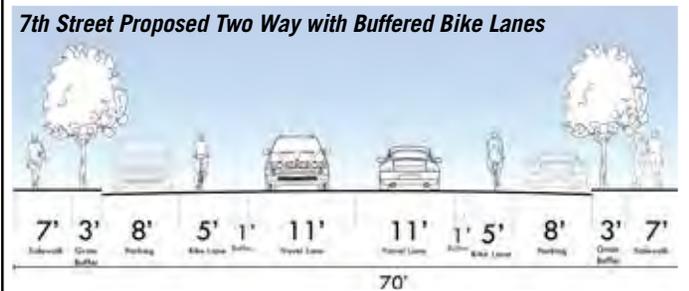
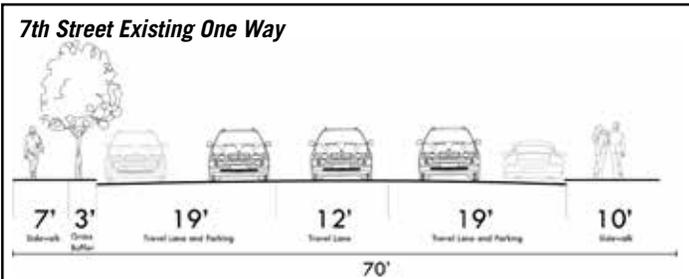
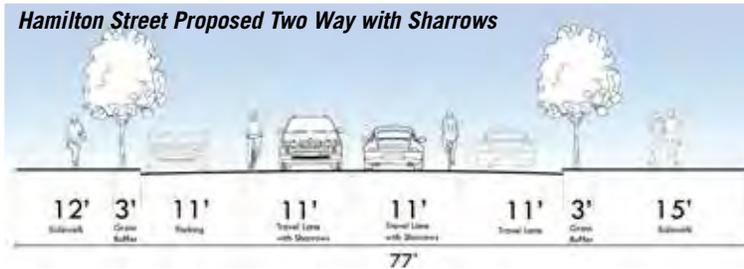
- Improve the pedestrian environment and increase bicycle and pedestrian traffic¹¹

Circulation Strategies

Hamilton Street is currently a two-way street except for a four block stretch of one-way eastbound traffic from 10th to 6th Streets. This is confusing for first-time or infrequent visitors as they are forced to divert and circle around for several blocks to reach their destination. Converting these blocks to two-way would simplify circulation and strengthen Hamilton Street as downtown’s “main street”. The conversion could occur within the existing curb lines by converting one eastbound lane to west-bound. One lane in each direction would be sufficient to accommodate the projected 2019 peak hour traffic volumes.

7th Street is arguably the north-south “main street” in downtown. PennDOT is currently studying the feasibility of converting this state route (Route 145) to two-way traffic. A two-way street would slow speeding traffic, improve access to businesses, and upgrade visibility and safety for pedestrians. With a wider right-of-way than most other downtown streets (about 50 feet curb-to-curb), there are several potential options for

11 <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-news/story-of-the-week/2011/111130/look-both-ways-restoring.html>



Examples of potential re-configuration of several downtown streets to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians as well as cars.

two-way conversion which PennDOT is exploring in more detail.

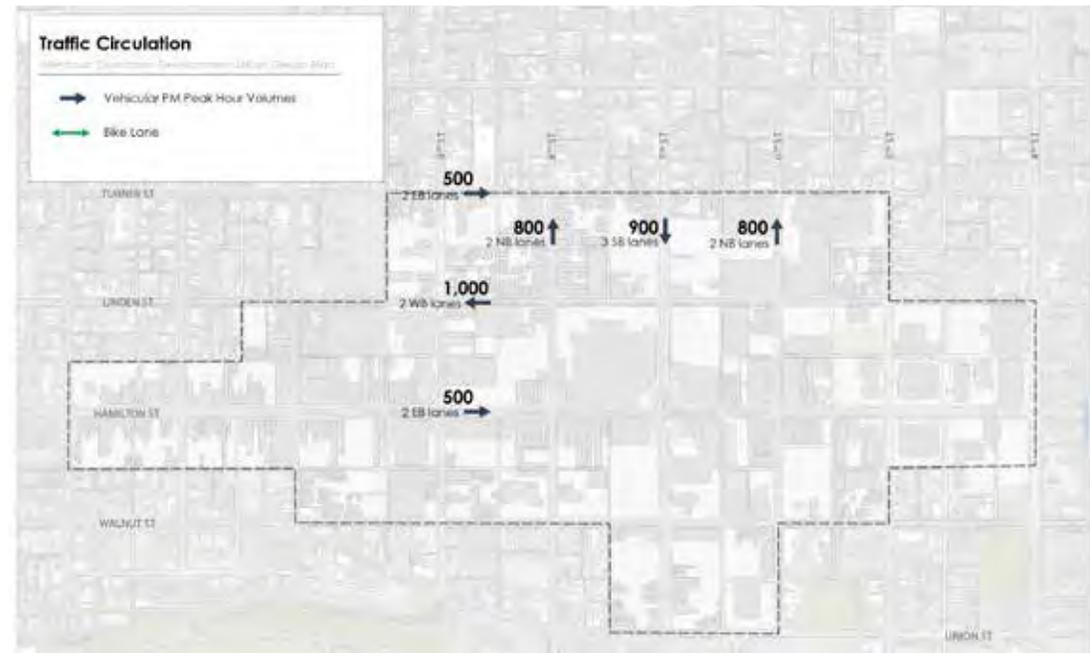
The figure below shows the 2019 projected volumes and directionality for six major downtown corridors. It indicates that the current lane capacity is able to easily accommodate the expected growth in volume caused by City Center 1-4.¹²

¹² Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. Allentown Arena and City Center Development Traffic Analysis. June 6, 2014.

One- to two-way conversion of any street necessitates careful consideration of a variety of criteria. The City should consider the following criteria, at minimum, before converting any streets to two-way:

- Vehicular volume threshold
- Opportunity to dedicate roadway to another mode (dedicated bus/BRT lane, bicycle lane or cycle track, expanded sidewalks)
- Retail threshold
- Pedestrian volume threshold
- Safety standards

The study also found that even after that expected growth, significant excess capacity exists to absorb vehicle trips generated by substantial new development. Lane capacity with future development should be modeled based on actual traffic growth generated by City Center 1-4 and factor in internal capture rates, transit service improvements, non-motorized (bike and pedestrian) facilities, and transportation demand management programs.

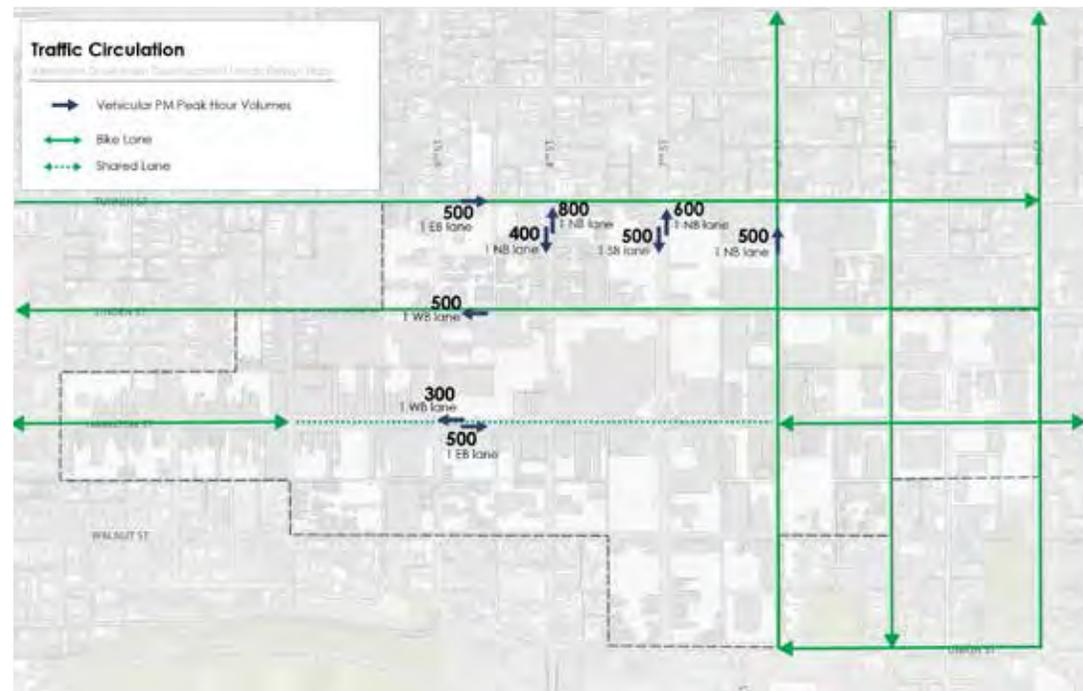


Projected 2019 traffic volumes with current street configurations

For comparison, the same 2019 projected volumes were redistributed through a reconfigured street grid with the following assumptions:

- Hamilton Street converts to two-way between 10th and 6th streets; bike lanes are added west of 10th and east of 6th, using existing right-of-way. Shared markings are provided between 10th and 6th streets.
- 7th Street converts to two-way with one lane in each direction. Assumes excess volume redistribute to 8th Street southbound. A two-way 7th Street will provide some relief to bus entering/existing movements at the ATC.
- Linden and Turner remain a one-way pair. Both Linden and Turner maintain two lanes of on-street parking, have one vehicular travel lane, and have a buffer bike lane, which could eventually convert to a cycle track. Assumes excess volume on Linden redistribute to Hamilton Street and Chew Street.
- 6th Street remains a one-way street with one lane of vehicular traffic and a buffered bike lane (which could be converted to a cycle track). Assumes excess volume redistribute to 7th Street. 6th Street's one-way pair is 9th Street.

- 8th Street converts to a two-way street to complement a two-way 7th Street. On-street parking is maintained and one vehicular travel lane in each direction is provided.
- Walnut Street has excess capacity; it could convert to two-way. An excess travel lane could be removed to add on-street parking where it does not exist today, or add a bike lane.



Projected 2019 traffic volumes redistributed among reconfigured streets

Transit

Like most transit systems, LANTA strives to serve a wide variety of riders with diverse mobility needs and often contradictory service preferences. For example, most riders want fast and frequent service, but many also want to minimize the distances that they have to walk to access the service. Achieving both can be difficult because not every destination is along a single corridor, and every deviation off a primary corridor results in slower, more circuitous service.

Transit service should be easy to use and intuitive to understand to encourage people to use it. In many key ways, LANTA service is both:

- **LANTA Routes Operate at Regular Intervals:** LANTA routes serving downtown Allentown either serve the ATC hourly, or have service frequencies that vary by peak and off-peak periods. Those schedules that vary by period have identifiable patterns within each period (i.e. 30 minute service in the peak / 60 minute service in the off-peak). These regular repeating frequencies are easier for most people to remember.
- **LANTA Service is Well Coordinated:** Many LANTA routes “pulse” at the ATC, meaning that they are scheduled to serve the center at the same time, giving passengers the opportunity

to make efficient transfers. Other routes that do not pulse have arrival and departure times that allow for relatively convenient connections.

- **LANTA Passenger Information is Clear and Consistent with Industry Standards:** Most LANTA bus stops include route number decals, and passenger schedules show time points both on maps and on time tables. These elements allow riders and prospective riders to easily cross-reference information sources and to quickly orient themselves for trip planning. In addition, LANTA participates in the Google Transit Partners Program, making route and schedule information available in a familiar format to anyone with access to a computer or smartphone.

Transit Strategies

Opportunities to improve LANTA service focus primarily on reducing the likelihood of confusion and making taking LANTA attractive to the choice rider:

- **LANTA Routes Should Serve Well Defined Markets:** Each route should have two strong “anchors” that demarcate its service area, and route numbers should “reset” where there is major passenger turnover. Since the ATC is a major hub with significant boarding and alighting activity, it is important that routes depart-

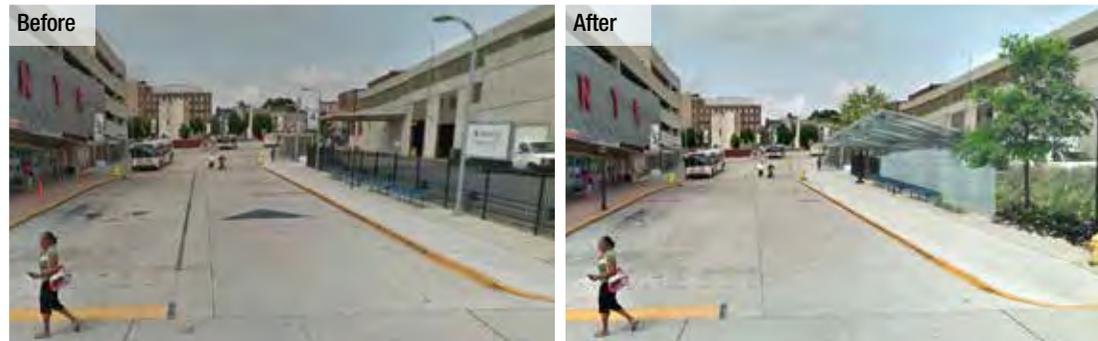
ing the transit center in opposite directions have different route numbers. Otherwise, it is possible for a new or inattentive passenger to accidentally board a bus with the correct route number, but traveling in the wrong direction.



Improved bus stop amenities would benefit existing riders and help attract more users.

- **LANTA Routes Should be Symmetrical:** To the extent possible, routes should operate along the same alignment in both directions to make it easy for riders to know how to get back to where they came from. In downtown Allentown, the prevalence of one-way streets makes it impossible to operate service along a consistent alignment in two directions. If local streets are converted to two-way in the future, the expected benefits would include a simplified, more intuitive transit network.

- **LANTA Service Should be as Fast and Frequent as Possible:** The transit experience from door-to-door must be viewed as reasonably competitive timewise with other modes. Riders can usually control wait time by timing when they leave their home or workplace for the bus stop. Walk times and bus travel times, on the other hand, are a function of bus stop placement. Stops that are spaced too frequently will result in frequent stops and slow operating speeds, while stops that are spaced too far apart will result in long walk times. In pedestrian-friendly environments where blocks lengths are shorter and the walking is generally more pleasant than in more rural and suburban environments, bus stops can be spaced every four or five blocks.



Simple improvements at the Allentown Transit Center such as shaded waiting areas, landscape, and pedestrian-scale lighting could make it a more inviting and safe place for current and future transit users.

In addition, passengers are usually willing to walk longer distances to a stop with passenger amenities such as a shelter and seating. LANTA should consider reducing the number of bus stops downtown to improve travel times while installing and/or improving passenger amenities at the stops that remain.

- **The ATC Should be Inviting and Safe:** The Allentown Transit Center is located within a few blocks of major downtown destinations and nearly every LANTA route that serves downtown stops at the ATC. Because so many passengers need to be at the ATC at some point in their journey, the ATC should be as inviting, safe, and attractive as possible. This will not just be appreciated by current riders but is also a means

to attract new riders. Some improvements to consider would be adding more covered or indoor waiting areas, minimizing driveway width, widening sidewalks and waiting areas, adding trees and other landscaping, and improving signage on route directionality.

The City should also support the Lehigh Valley Enhanced Bus/BRT effort. That plan suggests several best practices, including bi-directional service corridors and greater stop spacing than what there currently is downtown, which would help support better and more attractive service.

Bicycle Network

Bicycle facilities are similar to roads in that they have a more regional scope than pedestrian facilities. Adding a bicycle lane on one block of a street does not improve overall connectivity for cyclists who still need a safe and direct path to and from that block. Thus, the following principles are key to developing bicycle connectivity in Allentown. A bicycle network should:

- **Be a connected network:** Bicycle facilities should link to one another, providing the user with continuous bicycle access.
- **Provide parallel facilities:** Infrastructure should come in pairs, meaning that if there is a dedicated bike lane headed eastbound, there should be a complementary lane heading westbound for the return trip.
- **Connect to destinations:** Bicycle facilities should not just link to provide a continuous

network, but should also bring cyclists to places they want to go, for example:

- > Over the Lehigh River
- > Little Lehigh Creek Trail
- > MLK Trail
- **Add bicycle parking:** Visible and convenient bicycle parking is a necessity for cyclists to come downtown. Parking should be geared to both short-term and long-term stays:
 - > Short-term parking should be single racks, close to front-doors, visible from the street, and easy to access; geared towards customer access
 - > Long-term parking should be covered or indoors, secure with card or key access, and easy to access; geared towards employees and residents

Bicycle facilities should be integrated into a city-wide and regionwide bike network, as outlined in the Connecting Our Community plan. Allentown should prioritize adding dedicated cycle tracks and buffer bike lanes where possible, adhering to the principles outlined above and in the plan.



Secure indoor bicycle parking is good for long-term parking at offices or housing locations



There are few existing bicycle facilities downtown (above left). Best practices to consider integrating into the street network include buffered bicycle lanes, two-way cycle tracks, and sharrows.

Parking Management

Historically, “solving the parking problem” almost always meant increasing the parking supply. Unfortunately, constantly increasing the supply does not resolve everyone’s desire to park in the most convenient space—it simply encourages more auto use, as people are encouraged to drive to places that offer “plenty of cheap parking.” Meanwhile, demand is still high for the spaces that seem most convenient while others sit unused. Furthermore, perceived need for parking spaces often significantly exceeds actual parking needs when opportunity for shared use of spaces and actual space utilization rates are factored in. Parking demand management “manages” curb space for availability and provides the optimal amount of parking to meet actual market-driven needs, while reducing traffic congestion and accommodating new development and reducing parking costs for property owners and tenants. Actively managing parking is particularly important as Allentown grows during the daytime (new office space), in the evening (more events), and overnight (with new residents).

Allentown should be managing parking as a tool for economic development. Parking should be:

- **Goal oriented:** Parking should be managed to achieve downtown goals and provide available parking for customers, not to raise revenue.

- **Managed to incent behavior:** Parking regulations and pricing should be tailored to shift behavior, meaning that drivers will self-select where they want to park based on cost and convenience.
- **Supportive of downtown residents:** Many downtown systems are structured towards the daytime employee and customer, but systems should also accommodate (and encourage) downtown residential living.
- **Connect with transportation infrastructure:** All drivers interact with the larger transportation network, most commonly via a sidewalk connecting from the parking facility to a destination. Improvements ranging from public transit to lighting and streetscaping have a positive impact on the parking environment and perception.
- **Provide clear information:** Particularly for infrequent visitors, easy-to-understand signage, rate, payment, and online information is critical for providing users with a positive experience in downtown.
- **Customer-friendly parking:** Management should be customer-friendly, which may include extended time limits, up-to-date payment technology, real-time availability information, and fair enforcement practices.

The Allentown Parking Authority maintains and operates more than 30 parking facilities, including five parking garages in downtown. The APA already incorporates some of the best practices in the country to manage its parking supply, including credit card single space meters on-street, pay on foot technology in garages, real-time availability information during events, and pay by cell mobile payment technology.

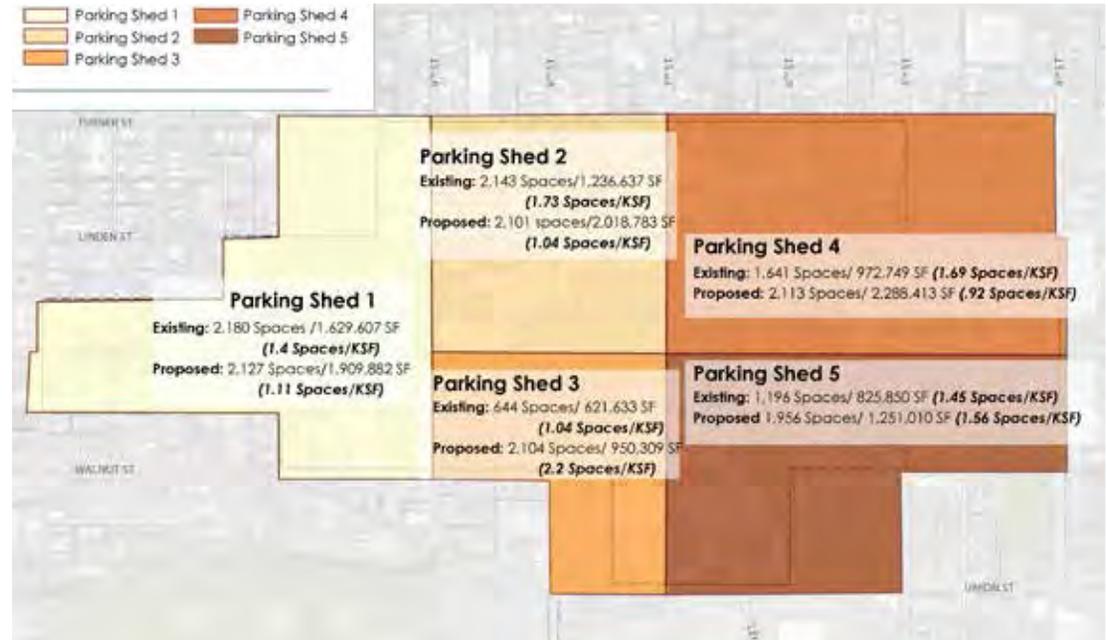
The APA, in coordination with the City and other downtown partners, should consider the following strategies to manage its parking assets to best support downtown economic development:

- **Shared parking:** Before constructing new facilities, the APA should work with private garage and lot operators to broker shared parking agreements to use the parking supply during off-peak hours. Thanks to downtown’s mixed-use environment, there are numerous possibilities for multiple users to use the existing parking supply more efficiently, particularly for events, in the evenings, and on the weekends. A shared parking analysis found that estimated future peak parking demand and supply are fairly well balanced across the downtown.
- **On-street management:** The biggest customer frustration is often one circles for blocks and cannot find a parking space on-street. Creating

more on-street front-door availability can be achieved through the following strategies:

- > Price the most desirable areas the highest, and areas of lower demand the lowest, instead of a flat rate. This will free up some parking spaces on the blocks of highest demand, while offering choice to customers on how much they are willing to pay.
- > Use price, instead of time limits, to manage demand. If prices are adjusted to match demand accordingly, managing parking through arbitrary time limits is not needed. Time limits set a maximum on how long a customer can stay in downtown; extending or eliminating time limits from two-hours is a customer-friendly regulation.
- > The span of hours should match demand; for example, if on-street parking isn't busy until 10:00am, then pricing should not begin until 10:00am. Similarly, pricing should extend through busy evening hours, not just until the end of the typical workday.
- > On-street and off-street parking should be managed in tandem, as customers and employees will make decisions on where to park based on parking restrictions, regulations, and price. For example, if the hourly rate is \$1 per hour both on-street and off-street, there is no incentive for someone to park off-street.

Parking supply and demand analysis



The parking sheds identify subareas in which uses with different peak parking demands can potentially use shared parking spaces. These include public and private parking spaces within a 5-minute or 1-2 block walking radius.

PARKING SHED	EXISTING PEAK DEMAND (EST.)	PARKING SURPLUS OR UNMET NEED	FUTURE PEAK DEMAND (EST.)	PARKING SURPLUS OR UNMET NEED
1	1,535 spaces	650 spaces	1,650 spaces	470 spaces
2*	2,560 spaces	-425 spaces	2,720 spaces	-620 spaces
3	640 spaces	0 spaces	890 spaces	1,220 spaces
4	1,525 spaces	115 spaces	2,950 spaces	-840 spaces
5	980 spaces	220 spaces	925 spaces	1,030 spaces

* Demand estimated during an event night at PPL Center. Peak parking demand was estimated using an adapted shared parking model that reflects downtown's mixed-use environment. Future parking demand and supply reflects the potential land use mix described in the land use framework section.

- **Off-street management:** Most off-street parking facilities have the same hourly and daily rates but varied monthly rates, based on facility type and location. The monthly rates are sharp discounts from the daily rates (monthly rates are \$1 per day to \$3.50 per day, compared to a transient daily rate of \$8), incentivizing regular downtown visitors to buy a permit and drive regularly. To encourage multi-modal travel, and to let users better understand the cost of driving downtown, the APA could:
 - > Price based on demand, including hourly and daily rates. This can help distribute demand among more of the existing supply.
 - > Begin to equalize monthly parking rates and daily rates to encourage drivers to pay daily parking fees, thus understanding the daily costs of driving.
 - > Create zones or tiers of parking pricing and brand them, making it easier to drivers to know what to expect when approaching a facility.
- **Signage and branding:** While parking lots and garages have names (i.e. Transportation Deck), it is not clear which facility is which. There is little or no signage and consistent branding of the APA facilities, making it difficult to discern which lot is what, and whether or not it offers public parking. Besides the new Parking for Events map, there is no map available online or

in print that identifies the locations and regulations information for each facility. If each APA facility is associated with an address, has visible signage, is branded as an APA facility, and is identified on a Downtown Parking Map, it will make the infrequent visitor parking experience painless.

- **Event policies and pricing:** The APA should re-evaluate its event management policies after the first season with the PPL Arena; future event management strategies should price based on demand, consider other evening events and activities, and encourage patrons to visit downtown businesses before or after an event.
- **Parking revenues:** Revenues generated downtown should be reinvested back into downtown through a transparent process. Often, drivers are more willing to pay for parking when they know that their payment will be used to make visible downtown improvements, such as improved sidewalks and alleyways, pedestrian-scale lighting, streetscape enhancements, downtown security personnel, and more.



Clear signage on Hamilton Street indicating the location of downtown parking is important to make it easy to use

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transportation Demand Management, or TDM, is a general term for strategies that optimize all available transportation modes by encouraging alternatives to driving alone (mass transit, bicycling and walking), shifting trips to non-peak hours of the day (flexible schedules), or avoiding vehicular trips altogether by mixing land uses and/or by employing technology (telecommuting). TDM strategies are typically far more cost-effective than capital investments in increased roadway or parking capacity. This is particularly true in urban areas where parking facilities must compete with other land uses for limited, valuable real estate.

An effective, coordinated investment in TDM will be critical to supporting continued growth downtown, particularly for office and residential developments. There is significant opportunity to implement effective TDM at both the institutional level (individual, large downtown employers) and at the downtown level.

The City should encourage or require employers to implement policies that will reduce parking demand downtown. Some cities require developers to submit TDM plans in the building permitting process; others require individual employers over a certain size to commit to a mode share goal.

TDM strategies that are proven successes in other similar cities include:

- **Parking cash out:** A parking cash out program offers employees a cash payment in lieu of providing a parking space. Similarly, charging employees for parking can reveal the “true” cost of providing the space and incentivize employees to commute via transit, shuttle, walking, or biking.
- **Employer-subsidized transit passes:** This includes direct cost-sharing between employers and employees or simply enrolling commuters in the federal program that allows transit fares to be purchased with pre-tax income
- **Rideshare and ridematching:** One of the greatest impediments to carpool and vanpool formation can be finding suitable partners with similar work schedules, origins, and destinations. A facilitated ridematching program through a database is key to a successful program.
- **Information portals:** Creating a single website that serves as a comprehensive source for all transportation information has proven highly effective in raising awareness of alternative mobility and commute options. This could be hosted by the Allentown Parking Authority.
- **Carsharing:** Ready-access car-share services, such as Zipcar or Car2Go, can encourage non-driving commutes among those who may

occasionally need to make car trips during the day, and can reduce the need for downtown residents to own a vehicle, particularly a second or third car.

- **Unbundled parking costs:** A parking space is often included in the price of housing and commercial space for the sake of simplicity, although providing the parking itself is never free. “Unbundling” parking separates these two costs and provides a financial reward to those who do not use a parking space(s). It also helps attract households who wish to live without a car in a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood.
- **Sheltered secure bike parking:** Covered or sheltered bicycle parking helps treat bicycling as a serious alternative to driving. Sheltered parking and bicycle lockers also offer more protection from theft and vandalism, compared to standard bicycle racks.



Car-sharing services reduce parking demand by providing a vehicle when needed for those who choose to commute by bus, bike, or foot.

Infrastructure

In August 2013, Lehigh County Authority assumed control of the City's water and sanitary sewer system through a 50 year lease. Lehigh County Authority is a non-profit, public water and wastewater utility that serves customers in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

Water distribution: The water distribution system in the study area is in excellent condition and provides sufficient fire and domestic flows for most types of development that would occur in the study area. It consists primarily of a grid system of 8" and 12" cast iron and ductile iron pipes, with some smaller pipe sizes in minor streets and alleys. The City has historically updated and upgraded the system by replacing older facilities when major street reconstruction occurs. For instance, all utilities in Hamilton Street between 6th Street and 10th Street were replaced in 1972 when the "Hamilton Mall" was constructed.

Sanitary sewer: The City's sanitary sewer system in the study area was originally constructed in the 1930s. The predominant pipe size is 8" diameter, vitrified clay pipe. The capacity of this type of pipe is more than sufficient to handle the current and future hydraulic loads in the study area. The City is currently doing a system-wide assessment of the condition and hydraulic loads on

the system. No pipe lines in the study area showed up in the City's report (prepared by consulting engineers Whitman, Requardt & Associates, dated January 2013) as being deficient in hydraulic capacity. Therefore, there is adequate capacity in the system to handle existing hydraulic loads as well as future flows from increased development.

Storm sewer: The City's storm sewer system in the study area developed over time and is a mix of brick sewers, vitrified clay pipes, and reinforced concrete. Most of the collector lines adequately handle a 10-year design storm. However, many of the trunk lines, which the collector lines tie into, are undersized and cannot handle the flows. The City will be undertaking a system-wide study, primarily looking at major drainage areas including the study area, to determine where specific deficiencies are occurring. The study will then look at potential improvements for the trunk lines affected.

Natural gas: UGI has a medium pressure main feeder on Hamilton Street at 10th Street coming in from the west. By adding additional residential and commercial loads, UGI should not have problems supporting this area. If a specified project required more pressure or volume, then projects may be developed to bring larger diameter lines to

support specific loads, but this will most likely be on a block-by-block basis and can be assessed with there are more specific plans developed.

Communications: Service Electric, RCN and Verizon believe they have current service conditions adequately satisfied for communication and internet services. As specific projects are developed, they will expand their services with the latest industry technology.

Electricity: PPL has not indicated any deficiencies in its electrical grid in the study area. They are currently investing in upgrading several major transmission lines through the Lehigh Valley which will result in improved service to the project area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Future projects should be required to help upgrade storm sewer facilities in their immediate area to mitigate localized deficiencies
- LCA should continue the City's policy of upgrading water system facilities when appropriate and TV inspecting its sanitary sewer system on an annual basis to identify and make needed repairs.
- Water system upgrades should be considered during all major street reconstructions and completed as necessary





4 implementation actions

how to most effectively advance the vision

Themes

The major actions that will help achieve the downtown vision fall under six themes:

- **Living Downtown**—Proactively encourage downtown housing development
- **Growing Jobs**—Connect residents with employers and educational opportunities
- **Walkable Connections**—Connect downtown and neighborhoods with walkable streets and development
- **Community Places**—Keep major streets and activity centers safe, inviting and fun centers for community activity and services
- **Efficient Parking**—Use parking efficiently and strategically to encourage high quality development and public spaces
- **Focused Management**—Expand downtown activity and investment through efficient, coordinated management

These themes provide a memorable, focused guide to those ways in which the downtown Allentown community can most effectively achieve the downtown vision, utilizing a combination of resources now at hand—for compelling near-term results—and realistically attainable over time, for more expansive results.

The tables on the following pages list specific recommended actions organized by highest and secondary priority level. An additional table with ongoing actions is provided at the end to highlight those that deserve continued support.

For each action, detail is provided on:

- **Responsible agents and partners.** Those listed in bold should take primary responsibility and accountability for making actions happen. In most cases, additional partners are listed who should also play supportive or coordinated roles.
- **Resources.** The financial and organizational resources needed to take action are indicated. Many are available today, others will require proactive effort to attain.
- **Themes.** The most relevant of the six themes listed above are indicated.

Abbreviations and symbols used in the action tables

AGENT ABBREVIATIONS

ACPC	Allentown City Planning Commission
ANIZDA	Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone Development Authority
APA	Allentown Parking Authority
BSS	Bureau of Building Standards and Safety
CED	Allentown Department of Community and Economic Development
DLV	Discover Lehigh Valley
GLVCC	Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
HARB	Historic Architectural Review Board
HD	Hamilton District Main Streets program
LANTA	Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority
PennDOT	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
PR	Parks and Recreation Department
PW	Public Works Department
RACA	Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown
SS	Seventh Street Main Streets program

OTHER ACRONYMS

BID	Business Improvement District
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
KOZ	Keystone Opportunity Zone program (state)
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (federal)
NMTC	New Markets Tax Credit program (federal)

FRAMEWORK CORRESPONDENCE

The action items below are designated with a letter and number code. The letter corresponds to each section of the framework chapter of this report:

L = Land use

U = Urban Design

T = Transportation

I = Infrastructure

The number indicates a general hierarchy within each category.

THEME SYMBOLS

 Living Downtown

 Growing Jobs

 Walkable Connections

 Community Places

 Efficient Parking

 Focused Management

Prioritized action steps

High priority initiatives

The following actions deserve prompt attention within 3 to 12 months because they respond to immediate downtown challenges and opportunities, and are especially cost-effective as they typically do not require significant financial resources.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENTS AND PARTNERS	RESOURCES	THEMES
L1. Require replacement of any affordable housing displaced by redevelopment	CED	Downtown/Center City housing market analysis, established city programs	
L2. Require NIZ development facing residential zones to include housing along > 50% of street edge	ANIZDA, CED	Established ANIZDA authority and zoning/development review programs	
L3. Require NIZ projects over 50,000sf to create housing in tandem with commercial space, via direct development on- or off-site, development partnership, or cash contribution to City (verify feasible amount via third-party analysis)	ANIZDA, CED	Established ANIZDA authority and zoning/development review programs	
L4. Require retail space in new development along 7th St (Turner to Walnut) and other selected locations	CED, LCPC, ANIZDA	Established zoning/development review programs	
L5. Support pop-up retail with flexible code approvals to temporarily fill vacant storefronts	BSS, HD, SS, CED	Established city departments and funding, NIZ	
L6. Require NIZ projects to preserve/ restore historic architectural features in historic building overlay	ANIZDA, CED, HARB	Established ANIZDA authority and zoning/development review programs	
L7. Conduct proforma analysis of sample NIZ projects to determine potential to increase ANIZDA incentive share over 20%	ANIZDA, CED	Established ANIZDA operations and revenue	
L8. Publicize and leverage non-city incentives for housing production such as LIHTC, Historic tax credits, KOZ, or NMTC. Advocate for expanded state funding for Historic and LIHTC.	CED, RACA, ANIZDA, HD, SS, HARB	Established programs, potential increased state funding	

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENTS AND PARTNERS	RESOURCES	THEMES
<p>U1. Update zoning and design standards for development projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Require front and side setbacks for upper stories > Require buildings to fit within 45 degree height plane ascending south from Turner Street > Update design guidelines to include active ground floor use requirements, transparent facades, human scale materials and façade hierarchy, and residential entries for individual ground floor units > Limit placement and width of service/parking access along primary walking streets > Require distinctive building tops 	<p>CED, ACPC, ANIZDA</p>	<p>Established city departments, commissions and funding</p>	
<p>U2. Convene regular programming meetings among public/private/institutional partners to plan and execute events</p>	<p>HD, SS, PR, other programming partners</p>	<p>Established operating funds, potential BID funding</p>	
<p>U3. Enhance southeast and southwest corners of Center Square with permanent facilities and increased programming for music, arts and/or other events</p>	<p>HD, CED, PR, ANIZDA, adjacent property owners, programming partners</p>	<p>HD funding, programming partners, NIZ projects, ANIZDA</p>	
<p>T1. Add pedestrian-scaled lighting, pedestrian signals, and crosswalks where missing</p>	<p>PW, ANIZDA</p>	<p>Established city departments and funding, nearby NIZ projects as appropriate</p>	
<p>T2. Require NIZ project contributions to streetscape within one block of project</p>	<p>ANIZDA, CED, PW, PR, HD, SS</p>	<p>Established ANIZDA funding</p>	

Secondary priority initiatives

The following initiatives build upon the high priority initiatives to further advance plan results in important ways. They respond to new needs and opportunities that will arise over the next one to five years as a result of ongoing development and other investments.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENTS AND PARTNERS	RESOURCES	THEMES
L9. Expand Hamilton District resources to support/recruit retail by re-establishing BID	CED , HD, SS, GLVCC	Established programs and BID legislation	
L10. Expand Hamilton & Seventh St District façade grant program funding (ANIZDA, state funds)	CED , ANIZDA, business partners	Established CDBG and ANIZDA funding, private contributions	
L11. Use ANIZDA funds to support priority investments including projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expanded façade grants and retail fit-out assistance > Affordable housing in NIZ > Adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings 	CED , ACPC, ANIZDA	Established city departments, commissions and funding	
U4. Encourage storefront arts/cultural uses in vacant retail spaces	HD , SS, other programming partners	Established operating funds, potential BID funding	
U5. Enhance sidewalk at Old Allentown cemetery as gathering space	HD , CED, adjacent property owners, programming partners	NIZ projects, ANIZDA	
T4. Consider converting selected one-way streets to two-way travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Hamilton and Seventh Streets (within existing curb width) > Walnut (with on-street parking both sides) > Other streets with intermittent one- and two-way portions (i.e. Union) 	PW , HD, SS, PennDOT, LANTA	City capital funds, ANIZDA and/or NIZ project contributions; state funding of Route 145 study implementation	

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENTS AND PARTNERS	RESOURCES	THEMES
<p>T5. Apply district approach to parking through contracts that make underutilized private parking more available for off-peak parking by public and/or private users (i.e. NIZ project requirement to provide at least 50% of new on-site parking to be made available for public use during off-peak periods)</p>	<p>APA, private parking partners, ANIZDA</p>	<p>APA operations, revenue from parking users/contract tenants</p>	
<p>T6. Enhance convenience of finding and paying for parking with clear, consistent information, lighting</p>	<p>APA, private parking partners, ANIZDA, HD, SS</p>	<p>APA operations, revenue from parking users/contract tenants</p>	
<p>T7. Apply different rates per duration and location of parking</p>	<p>APA, private parking partners, ANIZDA</p>	<p>APA operations, revenue from parking users/contract tenants</p>	
<p>T8. Improve ATC waiting areas and route signage</p>	<p>LANTA</p>	<p>City or LANTA capital funds, Federal or state capital grants, ANIZDA and/or NIZ project contributions</p>	
<p>T9. Designate certain streets for bicycle or transit priority and add dedicated bicycle and transit infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Make Linden a transit priority street with improved/consolidated bus stops, signals > Make Turner an east-west bicycle priority street by converting one lane to two-way cycle track > Make Walnut, Union, 5th, 6th, 9th and 10th bicycle priority streets with sharrows, signage and bike lanes where possible 	<p>PW, LANTA (transit), PR (bike)</p>	<p>City or LANTA capital funds, Federal or state capital grants, ANIZDA and/or NIZ project contributions</p>	

Ongoing initiatives

The following initiatives highlight existing programs and procedures that particularly deserve continued support to advance downtown goals. Where indicated, initiatives should respond to development proposals or other stakeholder initiatives.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENTS AND PARTNERS	RESOURCES	THEMES
L12. Continue NIZ incentives for commercial development	ANIZDA, CED	Established NIZ policy	
L13. Expand 24/7/365 public access to shared-use parking, especially for future new residents	APA, CED, ANIZDA	Established APA operations	
L14. Market downtown as regional destination	CED, DLV, HD, SS, GLVCC, business partners	Established funding sources and partnerships; potential downtown BID	
L15. Continue enlisting major employers, property owners and NIZ participants to contribute to Center City Initiative programs including connecting residents with jobs, and creating/improving area housing	CED, community/business partners	Business and foundation contributors, NIZ	
L16. Use housing market analysis as guide to affordable housing needs	CED	Downtown/Center City housing market analysis, established city programs	
L17. Sell surplus public land for housing development in or near downtown, preferably outside NIZ, with criteria requiring housing and/or affordable housing	CED, APA, RACA, other city departments as applicable	Existing surplus city property, RACA revolving funds for land purchase and resale	
L18. Confirm funding allocation priorities on an annual basis (or other appropriate interval) through joint agreement of ANIZDA board and mayor, as appropriate to evolving needs and opportunities	ANIZDA, city leadership	Established ANIZDA operations	

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENTS AND PARTNERS	RESOURCES	THEMES
U6. Prune trees where obstructing lighting, visibility and retail signage. Plant trees where missing	PR , HD, SS, ANIZDA	Established city departments and funding, nearby NIZ projects as appropriate	
U7. Encourage “parklets” and/or other compact, cost-effective open spaces near retail and in other locations where park/streetscape amenities are lacking	HD , CED, ANIZDA, adjacent property owners, programming partners	HD funding, programming partners, NIZ projects, ANIZDA	
U8. Require NIZ projects or other major redevelopment projects to contribute land or funds to neighborhood-serving park space	ANIZDA , CED, PR, affected property owners/ developers	NIZ projects, other development projects	
U9. Determine priority locations, program and facilities for new park investments (e.g. playground, dog park, community garden, seating, games etc.) through community-based planning process.	ANIZDA , CED, PR	NIZ projects, other development projects	