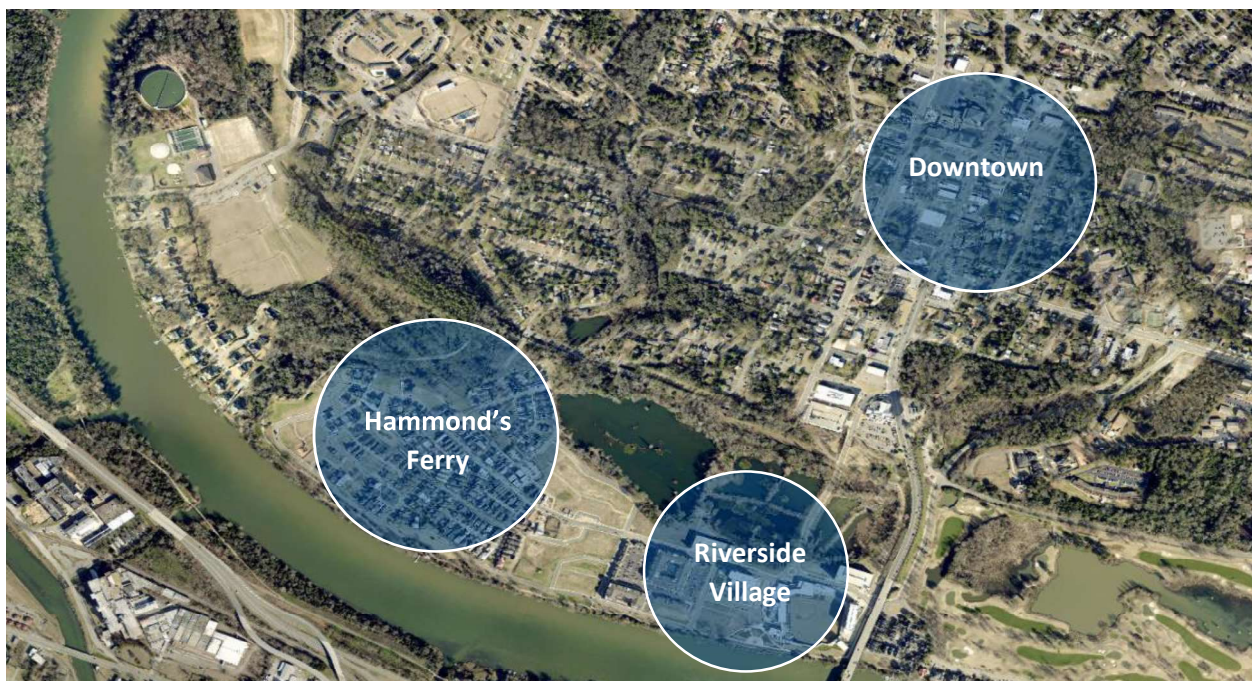


DOWNTOWN & THE RIVERFRONT

Overview

Since its incorporation in 1906, Downtown and the Riverfront have been a significant part of North Augusta. What is now Downtown, was, at one point, mostly residential and still features several churches today. Many industries and businesses were organized along the Riverfront. Today, Downtown consists primarily of businesses including restaurants, retail, and other services. North Augusta's Riverfront features various types of development, which are primarily mixed use. Hammond's Ferry is a mixed-use neighborhood located along the Riverfront and is named after the ferry service, which operated across the Savannah River.

Riverside Village is another mixed-use development located along the Savannah River. Formerly known as project Jackson, Riverside Village features multifamily housing, commercial development, and public recreation. The most prominent feature of Riverside Village is SRP Park, which hosts the Augusta GreenJackets, a minor league baseball team, which formerly played at Lake Olmstead Stadium in Augusta, Georgia. Adjacent to SRP Park is the Sharon Jones Amphitheater, named after the Soul and Funk singer, who grew up in the area. Aspects of the Riverfront are connected by the Greenway, which runs south of Hammond's Ferry through Boeckh Park, connecting to the Sharon Jones Amphitheater and SRP Park. Soon, the Greenway will connect the Riverfront to Downtown, making these amenities more accessible to the community.



RIVERSIDE VILLAGE

Riverside Village, formerly Project Jackson, consists of mixed-use development featuring the Crowne Plaza Hotel, multifamily housing, restaurants, and public recreation. The overall estimated cost of this project is over \$160 million, which includes contributions from the City of North Augusta to help fund the construction of SRP Park.

The Ironwood Apartments are located west of SRP Park and offer several floorplans ranging from 612 to 1,445 square feet. The Clubhouse at Riverside Village is an apartment complex overlooking left field at SRP Park. SRP Park is home to the Augusta GreenJackets, a minor league baseball team and Atlanta Braves affiliate. SRP Park also hosts special events and has space available for rent including a conference room, private suites, and the WOW! Club, which can be utilized for events featuring up to 250 guests.

Named after the soul and funk singer, the Sharon Jones Amphitheater is located next to SRP Park and hosts concerts and performances throughout the year. Riverside village is also connected to the Greenway, making it more accessible to the community.

Strategic Opportunities for Downtown

Public and private spaces downtown can benefit greatly from City investments to assist with revitalization along Georgia Avenue. The City should focus on creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape and directing new private investment downtown. The map on the following page shows key projects designed to revitalize downtown into a unique regional destination that combines the City's history with restaurants and retail, with opportunities for multimodal transportation.



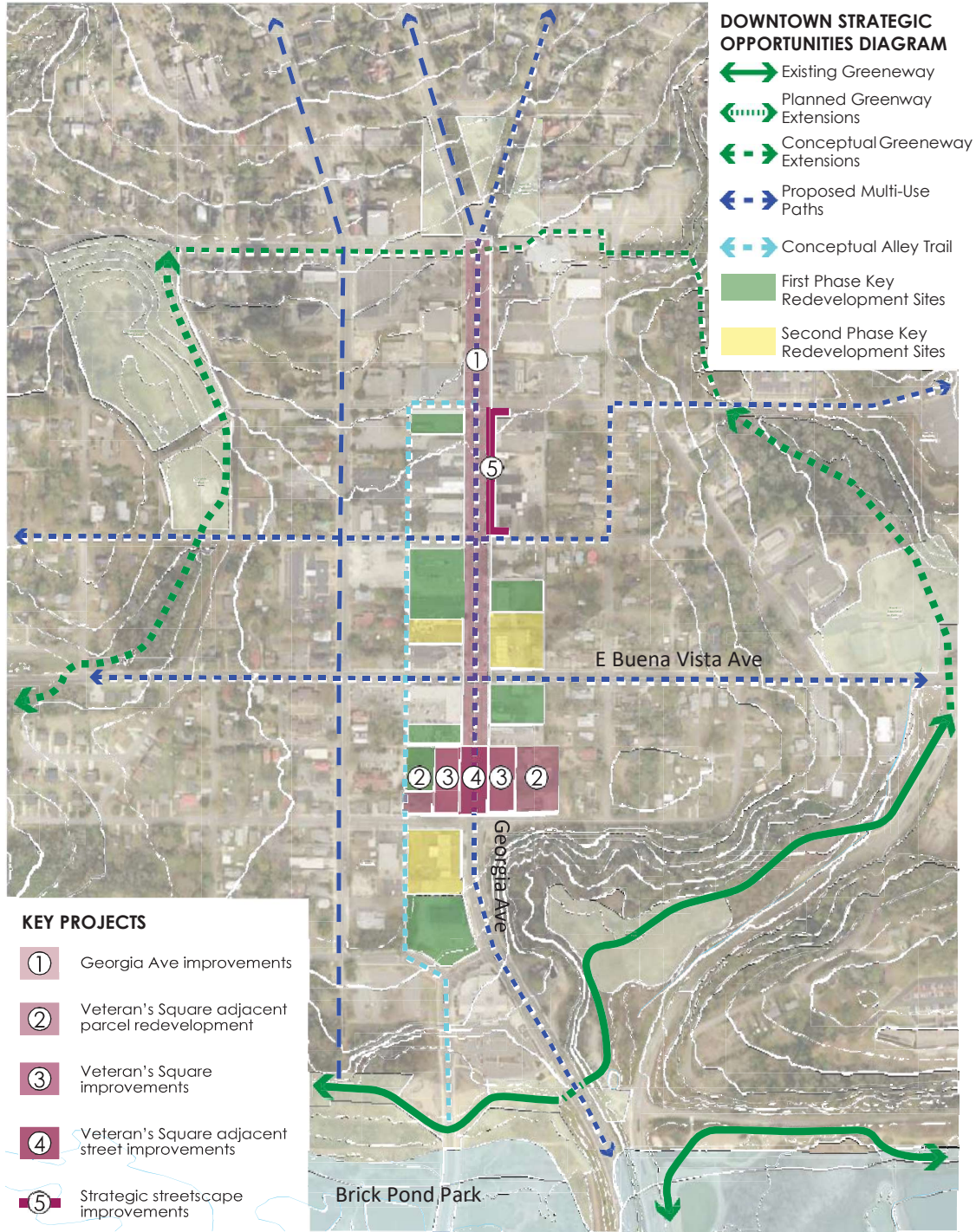
▲ SRP Park



▲ Sharon Jones Amphitheater

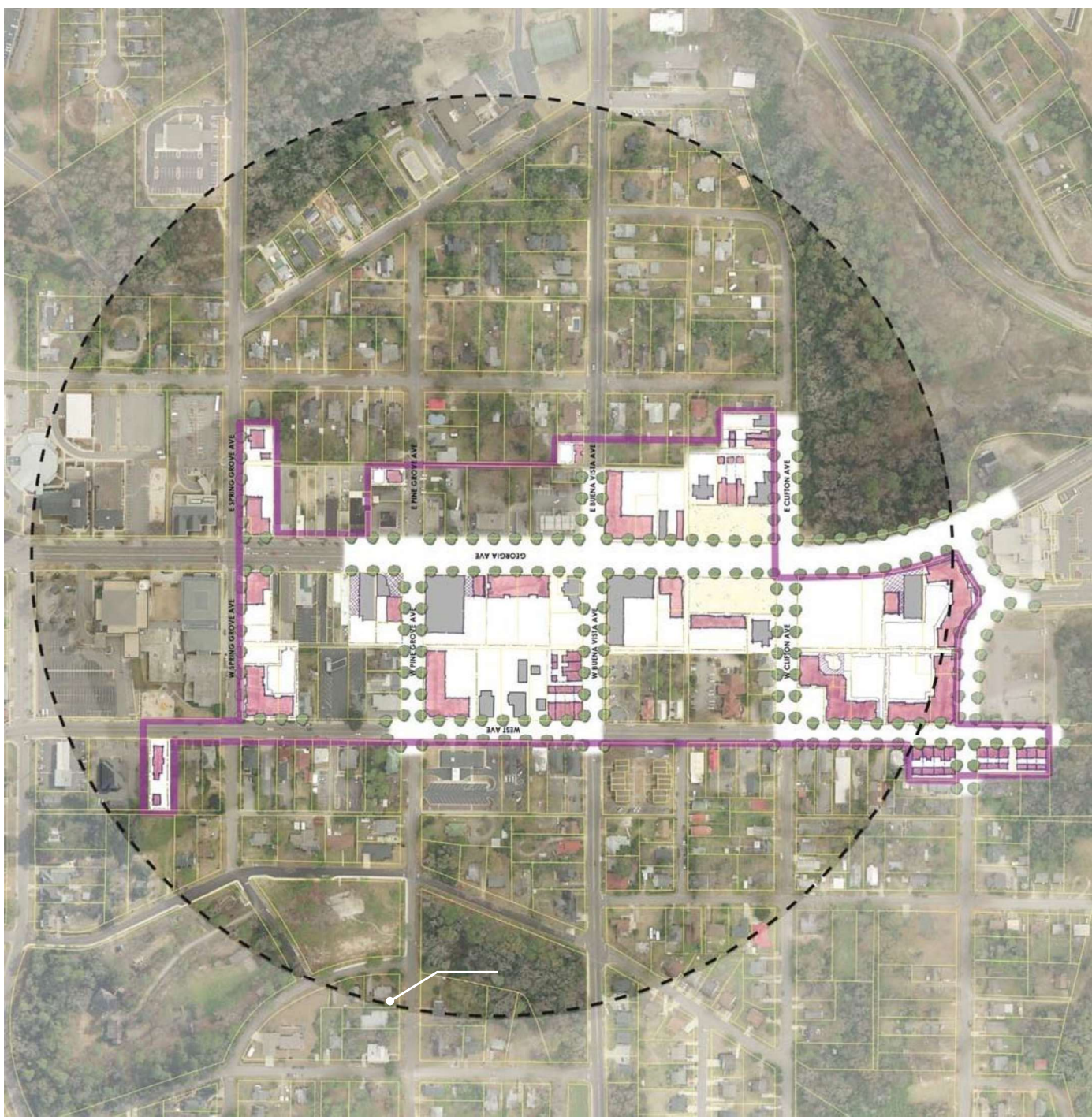


▲ The Ironwood Apartments



A Future for Downtown

A short-term vision for the development of Downtown North Augusta could include a variety of incremental changes including façade improvements, renovated buildings, mixed-use development, and improvements to make downtown more pedestrian friendly.



A long-term vision for North Augusta includes mixed-use development that makes use of vacant or underutilized lots. This concept focuses on creating a Downtown environment, which consists of mixed-use residential and commercial development, which puts residents within walking distance to retail, restaurants, and entertainment establishments.



Georgia Avenue Opportunities

Improvements along Georgia Avenue can increase opportunities for attracting new private investment to Downtown. Various improvements could include landscaping and streetscape improvements, façade improvements to provide attractive storefronts, additional seating opportunities along sidewalks, and increased accessibility for cyclists.

Georgia Avenue features high volumes of traffic. In 2019, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) was approximately 18,300 vehicles per day. North Augusta is also a growing community, and traffic volumes will likely increase in the future. High traffic volume has led to increased collisions. Between 2016 and 2020, there have been approximately 154 collisions on Georgia Avenue; approximately 50% of which have been due to drivers failing to yield right of way and following too closely to other vehicles.

Various improvements have been made in recent years to renovate existing buildings. The building at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Pine Grove Avenue has been renovated and includes outdoor seating for diners. Georgia Avenue has potential for other renovations and façade improvements to buildings downtown.



▲ Before photo of vacant building

▼ After photo of renovated building



▼ An architecturally interesting building on Georgia Avenue currently contains a gardening supply business. This building could be revitalized as a new café utilizing the large windows facing Georgia Avenue and the outdoor space for patio seating.



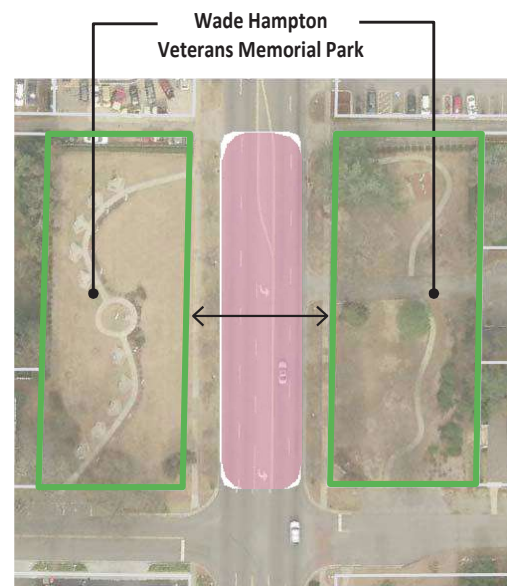
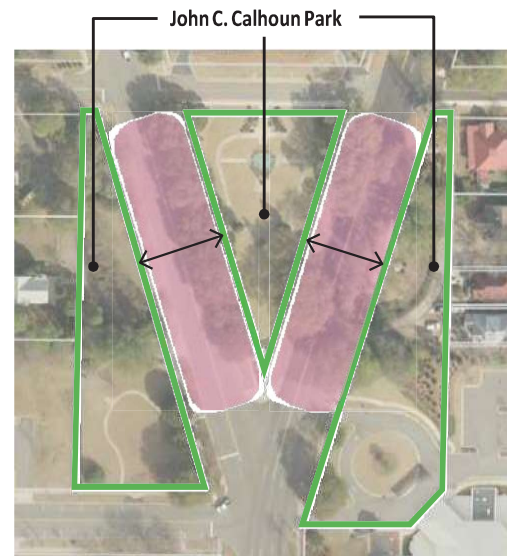
Downtown Parks and Connectivity

The City of North Augusta's Downtown is bookended by two of the City's parks. John C. Calhoun Park is on the north end of Downtown and is situated between and adjacent to Georgia Avenue and Carolina Avenue. Wade Hampton Veterans Memorial Park is located at the southern end of Downtown, at the corner of Georgia Avenue and E Clifton Avenue. Each of these parks have something in common. They are both split by roadways, reducing their potential for utilization.

John C. Calhoun Park is split into three sections by Georgia Avenue and Carolina Avenue. Each section is separated by approximately 50 feet of pavement, making it difficult for those visiting the park to enjoy it in its entirety. Traffic counts along this section of Georgia Avenue are approximately 18,000 vehicles per day, which may make crossing for pedestrians difficult and unsafe. Short-term and long-term connectivity improvements should be considered for John C. Calhoun Park.

Wade Hampton Veterans Memorial Park is split in to two sections by Georgia Avenue. This section of Georgia Avenue is wider, approximately 60 feet, making it dangerous to cross, especially considering the high traffic volume. In order for the community to utilize this park more effectively, connectivity improvements should be considered.

These two downtown parks present interesting and difficult scenarios when trying to improve the pedestrian experience and maximize their potential as signature open spaces in North Augusta. Creative, short-term strategies such as decorative street paint could serve as public art as well as a visually connective element of the streetscape until a longer-term (and more expensive) paver treatment can be installed.



▲ Both Calhoun Park and Wade Hampton Veterans Park were originally designed to be public squares with roads entering and leaving. Above are suggestions to use various visual elements like textured paving, gateway arches and other prominent features to unite them once again.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

7.1

CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN THE PUBLIC REALM:

Additional study and investment in various civic infrastructure projects is necessary to leverage future private development opportunities.

7.1.1. Reunite the elements of the two historic parks along Georgia Avenue – Calhoun Park and Wade Hampton Veteran’s Park.

Modern highway engineering has fragmented these two parks. Temporary or permanent infrastructure can be used to improve the connectivity of these parks and increase potential utilization.

7.1.2. Create a fine-grained pedestrian bicycle plan for the downtown area.

This plan will identify areas in need of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to improve the connectivity of the Downtown area.

7.1.3. Evaluate opportunities to widen the sidewalk zone on the east side of Georgia Avenue between Buena Vista Avenue and Spring Grove Avenue.

The present sidewalk zone is too narrow to support the preferred activities and uses in the existing buildings. By considering the relocation of the existing trees in the sidewalk into tree planters between parking spaces or in bulb-outs, an additional four to five feet of sidewalk zone can be reclaimed.

7.2

INVEST IN PLANNING EFFORTS TO ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR DOWNTOWN

Careful planning to coordinate investments is critical to ensuring a predictable development environment.

7.2.1. Finish developing the Downtown Master Plan.

The City has begun developing a Downtown Master Plan. This plan should be completed and used for the City’s short- and long-term planning initiatives.

7.2.2. Enforce existing standards that encourage walkability and vibrancy.

Design standards should focus on street walls, building facades, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and orient parking behind buildings, screened from street view.

7.3

PRIORITIZE INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN:

Focus future growth and development in Downtown to support its economic vitality and bolster its identity as the heart of North Augusta.

7.3.1. Develop a shared parking strategy.

The City should work with property owners to create a strategy that shares parking between compatible uses.

7.3.2. Provide incentives to renovate existing buildings in and around Downtown.

Revitalizing existing buildings and finding new uses for them can give new life and character to Downtown. The City could encourage the rehabilitation of existing buildings by offering tax incentives, reduced permit fees, and expedited permitting.

7.3.3. Attract high-quality multi-family developers.

Market Downtown to multi-family developers to establish a high-quality mixed-use development.

7.3.4. Create a position and hire a new downtown development professional.

This full-time position would involve promoting downtown revitalization and serve as a direct connection from city staff to downtown property owners. They would possess community development, economic development and marketing skills to help make development in downtown more attractive to potential investors as well as making downtown more attractive to new residents and businesses.

7.3.5. Develop an inventory of available properties for sale and rent as well as available development sites.

Collect and maintain an inventory of available development sites and parcel assemblages, as well as individual properties for sale and rent. Market the properties to local and regional developers, investors and business owners.

7.3.6. Engage an individual or group to create a local and regional marketing campaign for downtown investment.

The City can work with a specialist to promote Downtown and the Riverfront to local and regional markets, highlighting the Greenway, Riverside Village, and Hammond's Ferry.

7.3.7. Work with Downtown property owners to assemble parcels.

The City should work to purchase and combine contiguous smaller parcels with separate owners into larger, more developable parcels. This can make Downtown land more attractive to potential developers by allowing them to avoid taking on this process themselves.

7.3.8. Encourage infill development on vacant and underdeveloped lots.

Concentrating development and increasing population density in Downtown can allow for more efficient use of City services and infrastructure and improve walkability and contribute to a more efficient multimodal transportation network.