

# DOWNTOWN AMES: A GUIDING VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*CREATING THE PREMIER CITY CENTER EXPERIENCE*



**DRAFT**



13 FEBRUARY 2025



# LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

## TO THE RESIDENTS OF AMES,

It is with great enthusiasm that we present ***Downtown Ames: A Guiding Vision for the Future***. This document represents a significant milestone in our collective effort to build upon the foundation of what we have now and help guide the future of Downtown Ames, ensuring it continues to thrive as the heart of our community.

### THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN AMES

For many years, Ames has lacked a clear vision for the future of our downtown. While a handful of individual attempts have been made, a collective and unified effort representing downtown stakeholders and the greater Ames community that warranted public and private investment and attention never rose to the surface. With the creation of this guiding document, an aspiring and achievable vision for Downtown has arrived. This document represents an initial step of a vision for Downtown with aspirations of extending into the central core area of Ames; the geographic and cultural heart of the city functioning as a hub for commerce, community, entertainment, and activity.

This vision, offered herein, has been led by Ames Main Street and championed by the City of Ames, with full support and input from downtown and communitywide private businesses both large and small, non-profit organizations, members of the general public, downtown property owners, city leaders and staff, county leadership, local and regional economic development organizations, and state organizations and institutions including the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Main Street Iowa and Iowa State University. All stakeholders have united around a shared goal: to promote economic development, improve livability, and enhance the overall appeal of our community.

### GUIDING OUR DIRECTION

This document IS NOT a rigid blueprint, master plan, or already decided path forward. Rather it is a starting point—a guide with ideas and general concepts to continue the conversation started by this process, suggest ways to enhance downtown, and propose some next step(s). The vision is anchored by:

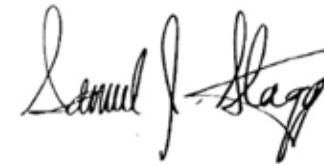
- A strong and vibrant downtown,
- Accessible civic services and destinations such as Ames City Hall, Gymnasium and Auditorium, multiple parks and public transit stops,
- Great placemaking opportunities like Bandshell Park, Schainker Plaza and Tom Evans Plaza,
- Active and in proximity civic resources like the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center and the 60Forward Center,
- Events at the Iowa State Center, and exciting entertainment and mixed-use venues on the horizon such as The LINC and CyTown,
- Playful connectivity to city parks and “green ways” like Brookside Park, Stuart Smith Park, and Ioway Creek,
- And vibrant diverse residential opportunities along Lincoln Way and within Downtown.

This Guiding Vision aligns with, and is complementary to, long range planning documents developed by city staff and adopted by the Ames City Council. These include the Ames 2040 Plan, Lincoln Way Corridor Development Plan, Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program, Ames Complete Streets and Walk, Bike, Roll Ames Plans.

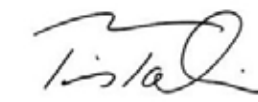
This guiding vision would not have been possible without the generosity and dedication of many sponsors, supporters, and stakeholders who contributed their resources, time, and expertise to see it through to completion. To each of them, we extend our heartfelt gratitude. Their commitment to Downtown Ames and its future underscores the strong sense of community that makes this place so special.

Thank you for being a part of this initial visioning process. As we consider our next steps, may we continue to work together and start bringing this vision into reality to ensure Downtown Ames remains vibrant, and a welcoming destination for all.

With Appreciation and Optimism,



Sam Stagg, AIA  
2023 Board Chair and Project Leader, Ames Main Street



Travis Toliver, IOM  
Vice President of Downtown Development,  
Ames Regional Economic Alliance  
Executive Director, Ames Main Street



John A. Haila  
Mayor, City of Ames



*“The Downtown Ames Guiding Vision represents a transformative opportunity for the Ames region, driving economic growth and revitalization. By fostering an inviting and vibrant downtown, the vision will attract new businesses, enhance tourism, and create a dynamic space where residents and visitors can connect. The increased foot traffic and investment in local infrastructure will generate significant economic activity, supporting job creation and strengthening the overall fabric of our community. This vision underscores Ames as a destination of choice for businesses, residents, and workforce talent.”*



Dan Culhane,  
President & CEO, Ames Regional Economic Alliance



*“Poised to redefine the city as a premier destination, the Downtown Ames Guiding Vision elevates its appeal to visitors from across the state and beyond. By creating a dynamic, walkable downtown with unique attractions, cultural experiences, and welcoming spaces, this vision will position Ames as a one-of-a-kind destination. It will enhance our ability to host events, draw tourists, and support local businesses, making downtown Ames a must-visit hub that stands out in Iowa’s tourism landscape.”*



Kevin Bourke  
President & CEO, Discover Ames



**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS GUIDING VISION POSSIBLE**



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IN ADDITION TO THE SPONSORS LISTED ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE, THIS EFFORT IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:

### CORE COMMITTEE:

Nicole Rasmussen	Senior Vice President of Retail Banking, First National Bank
Sam Stagg	Principal, 10Fold Architecture + Engineering
Travis Toliver	Vice President of Downtown Development, Ames Regional Economic Alliance, Executive Director, Ames Main Street

### STEERING COMMITTEE:

Scott Bauer	President & CEO, First National Bank
Mindy Bergstrom	Owner, Shops at Clark & Main and Cooks Emporium
Patrick Bergstrom	Owner, The Recipe
Kevin Bourke	President & CEO, Discover Ames
Dr. Susan Bradbury	Professor of Community and Regional Planning, Iowa State University
Dan Culhane	President & CEO, Ames Regional Economic Alliance
Carla Danielson	Vice President of Finance, Greater Iowa Credit Union
Kelly Diekmann	Planning & Housing Director, City of Ames
Brian Dieter	President & CEO, Mary Greeley Medical Center
Stacy Dreyer	Associate Director of Corporate Engagement, Iowa State University Research Park
Eliz Erbes	Architect & Partner, Avec Design + Build (retired)
Kurt Friedrich	Broker-Owner, Friedrich Iowa Realty
Steve Goodhue	President & Owner, Assured Partners/Knapp Tedesco Insurance Agency
Scott Grimes	Superintendent, Ames Community School District
Ellyn Grimm	Co-Owner, Dog-Eared Books
John Haila	Mayor, City of Ames
Jason Jennings	Realtor, Friedrich Iowa Realty
Heather Johnson	Executive Director, Octagon Center for the Arts
Joni Kellen	Wealth Advisor, Northwest Bank
Dustin Lucht	Grocery Manager, Fareway Stores - Downtown Ames
Salman Maqsood	President, Saltech Systems
Abigail Miller	Manager of Corporate & Business Services, OEI
Melissa Muschick	Director of Partner & Community Engagement, Discover Ames
Chris Nelson	President, Nelson Electric
Daniel J. Oh	President & CEO, AgCertain
Brian Phillips	Assistant City Manager, City of Ames
Steve Schainker	City Manager, City of Ames
Jan Williams	Vice President of Investor Relations, Ames Regional Economic Alliance
Chuck Winkleblack	Broker, Hunziker Companies

### CONSULTANT TEAM:

Allen Davis	Bolton & Menk
Andrew Dresdner	Bolton & Menk
Jim Harbaugh	Bolton & Menk
Britton Jones	Bolton & Menk
Josh Shields	Bolton & Menk



# PREFACE

## PURPOSE

Why is Ames Main Street undertaking a Vision for Downtown with support of the City of Ames?

- » To create a long term, holistic, and cohesive vision that city and downtown leadership can use towards current and future planning and investment in the Downtown area. Supporting common goals allows different entities to strategize on successive steps to complete the vision's objectives.
- » To provide “certainty” in phased investments and projects undertaken by all parties and avoid “undoing previous projects or investments” due to changes in direction or vision.
- » To be a place to **LIVE**. With the advent and growth of remote employment, and the nation's workforce being able to choose anywhere to live, it is critical to be forward thinking and grow the housing market offered in Downtown Ames to support the infrastructure of businesses and retailers already established, and soon to be located here.
- » To be a place to **WORK**. To fulfill frequent requests from businesses in Ames, and businesses looking to locate to Ames, wanting more commercial development opportunities, retail opportunities, cultural attractions, and entertainment activities that are critical to retaining and attracting workforce.
- » To be a center of **CULTURE**. Ames enjoys being home to over 100 nationalities and there are endless opportunities to create new and innovative events, festivals, and activities that celebrate resident diversity and help them feel more “at home” in Downtown Ames and throughout the community.

## COOPERATION FOR THIS MOMENT

Providing a vibrant and welcoming city center is one of the keys to having a healthy community. Since its inception in 1864, Downtown Ames is fortunate to have had businesses and retailers who had invested and continue to reinvest into the heart of the Ames community. Success begets success and today our downtown still enjoys strong growth and a sense of commitment from its current businesses and property owners. It is vital that we continue to work together and support their ongoing efforts to strengthen and enhance an already attractive business and retail district.

With the pending Lincoln Way development, completion of Schainker Plaza, and the nearby Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center, Downtown Ames is poised to become a more significant destination and community hub than ever in its 160-year history. Therefore, it is critical to have a vision in place to grow strategically and capitalize on the momentum these exciting projects bring to the Ames community!

## DOWNTOWN AMES MASTER PLAN VISION:

“To create a vibrant, welcoming, and thriving center of Ames blending our historic downtown ambiance with modern amenities, fostering economic vitality, and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Through community collaboration, thoughtful innovative design, and strategic investments, we aim to establish a walkable, accessible, and diverse city-center that celebrates our unique identity, supports local businesses, affords various residential opportunities and offers engaging cultural, recreational, and social experiences for all ages and generations to come.”



# 1

## CHAPTER EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## THE VISION:

*“To create a vibrant, welcoming, and thriving center of Ames blending our historic downtown ambiance with modern amenities, fostering economic vitality, and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.*”

*Through community collaboration, thoughtful innovative design, and strategic investments, we aim to establish a walkable, accessible, and diverse city-center that celebrates our unique identity, supports local businesses, affords various residential opportunities and offers engaging cultural, recreational, and social experiences for all ages and generations to come.”*

*Though geographically small, Downtown Ames plays an outsized role in the quality of life, economy, identity and social fabric of Ames. The entire Ames community and Iowa State University stand to gain from the growth and development of Downtown Ames into the community’s primary hub of activity. New housing opportunities, hotels, venues, businesses, and public spaces will enable Downtown to fulfill its mission as the heart of the community - ensuring the City moves towards its aspirations of being the best mid-sized city in Iowa and the Midwest.*



## FOUR BIG IDEAS

### A ROBUST AND COMPLETE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

*Encourage efficient infill and mixed-use development to create a vibrant downtown for living, entertainment, unique retail, and civic activities.*

### STREETS AS SPACES

*Redesign existing public spaces to provide a wider variety of spaces for people to enjoy.*

### CONNECTIONS TO IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

*Strengthen the relationship with Iowa State University through partnerships, development, transportation, and programming.*

### AN ENTREPRENEURIAL DOWNTOWN

*Nurture local pride, economy and identity by creating a fertile environment for local businesses, restaurants, artists and venues to succeed.*

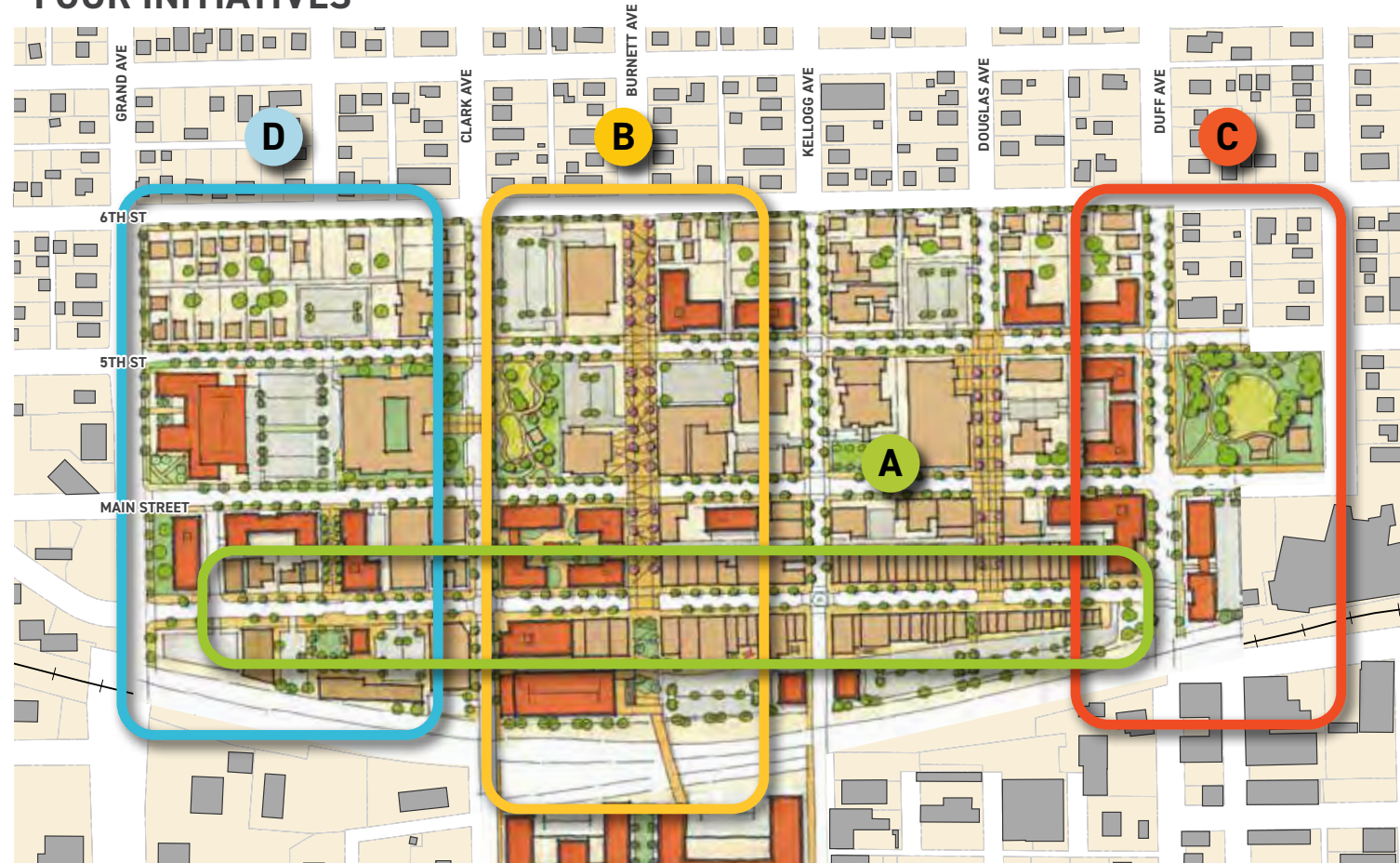
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 MAIN STREET         | 6 CITY HALL                             |
| 2 THE LINC (PROPOSED) | 7 BANDSHELL PARK                        |
| 3 SCHANKER PLAZA      | 8 TOM EVANS PLAZA                       |
| 4 POWER PLANT         | 9 FAREWAY AND WHEATSFIELD GROCERY STORE |
| 5 FORMER DEPOT        | 10 PUBLIC LIBRARY                       |



## The Vision for Downtown Ames:

- 1 *Transitions Downtown Ames into a full mixed-use neighborhood while also growing it into a regional destination for entertainment, food, and gathering.*
- 2 *Provides a wider variety of ways to get to Downtown and experiences to have while Downtown.*
- 3 *Enhances the edges of Downtown and fills in the voids surrounding the Downtown core.*
- 4 *Expands the role of public space to be:*
  - *More welcoming to people*
  - *To facilitate more events and programming*
  - *To support business activity*
  - *To connect across the tracks and beyond*

### FOUR INITIATIVES



DOUGLAS AVE CIVIC FESTIVAL STREET



BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET ACTIVATION

#### A. MAIN STREET ACTIVATION

- A1: REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET
- A2: DOUGLAS "CIVIC FESTIVAL" STREET
- A3: ACTIVATION OF THE BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET
- A4: GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT

#### B. SCHALKER TO FUTURE LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

- B1: IMPROVEMENTS TO TOM EVANS PLAZA
- B2: MULTI-MODAL PARKING RAMP AND WELCOME CENTER
- B3: BURNETT AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS
- B4: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BANK BLOCK

#### C. EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVE

- C1: HIGHLIGHTING THE POWER PLANT
- C2: IMPROVED MAIN STREET GATEWAY
- C3: IMPROVED CONNECTIONS TO BANDSHELL PARK
- C4: REDEVELOPMENTS ALONG DUFF AVENUE

#### D. CITY HALL / GRAND AVE

- D1: GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ON CITY LAND
- D2: MID-BLOCK CONNECTION FROM DEPOT TO CITY HALL
- D3: WESTERN EXTENSION OF MAIN STREET BUILDINGS
- D4: REDEVELOPMENT AROUND THE DEPOT



## Examples of Enhanced Public Spaces in the Vision

*New and improved public spaces in Downtown will bring people together while delivering a broader range of experiences for residents, employees, and visitors alike.*



*Tom Evans Plaza and Burnett Avenue can emerge as a key public space in Downtown Ames. Tom Evans Plaza will become both Center Stage and the Front Porch while the west side of Burnett Avenue can extend north as a linear park - connecting Schainker Plaza to areas north of Downtown*



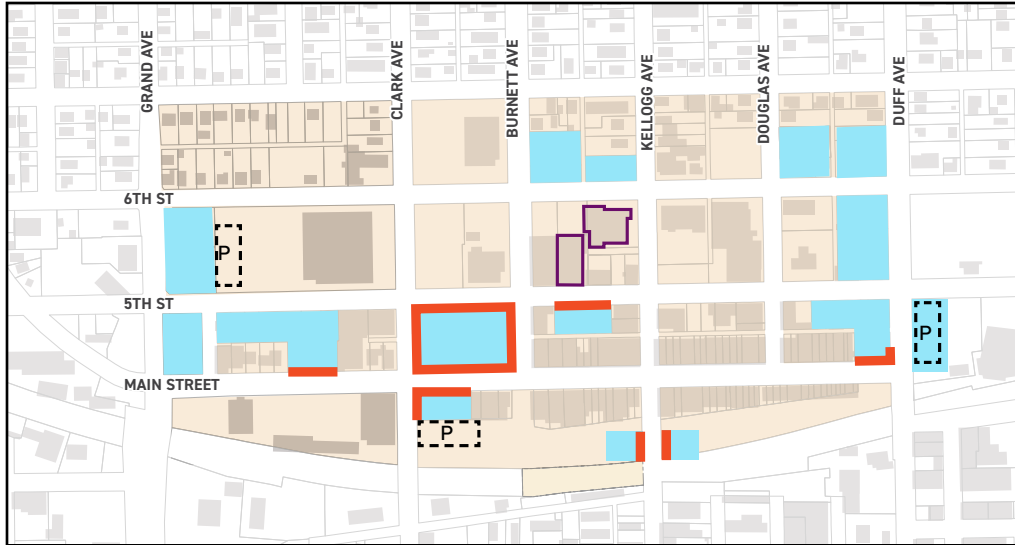
*Main Street is the most important street in Downtown. Its redevelopment has led to Downtown's resurgence in recent years by providing retail and dining experiences that cannot be found anywhere else in Ames.*

*This Vision suggests boosting the activity on Main Street by increasing sidewalk width, encouraging more outdoor dining, and extending the vibrancy of Main Street west to Grand Avenue.*



# IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS

## DEVELOPMENT



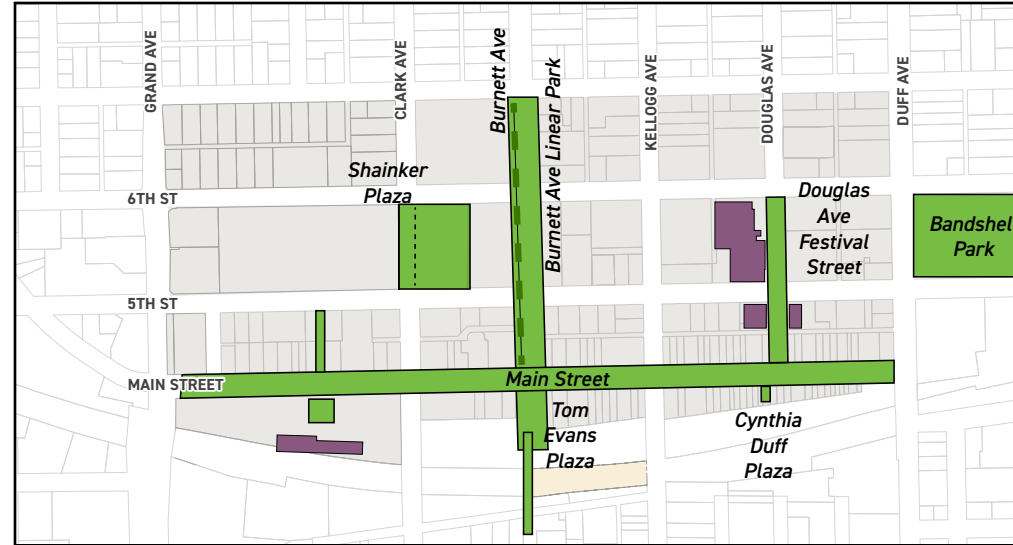
### DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITES
- RETAIL ON GROUND FLOOR
- ADAPTIVE REUSE
- P POTENTIAL PARKING RAMP

### MAIN POINTS

- » Redevelopment occurs primarily on existing parking lots and underutilized parcels.
- » Redevelopment occurs on a variety of scales - between 3 to 7 stories.
- » Frontage types reinforce important pedestrian corridors.

## OPEN SPACE



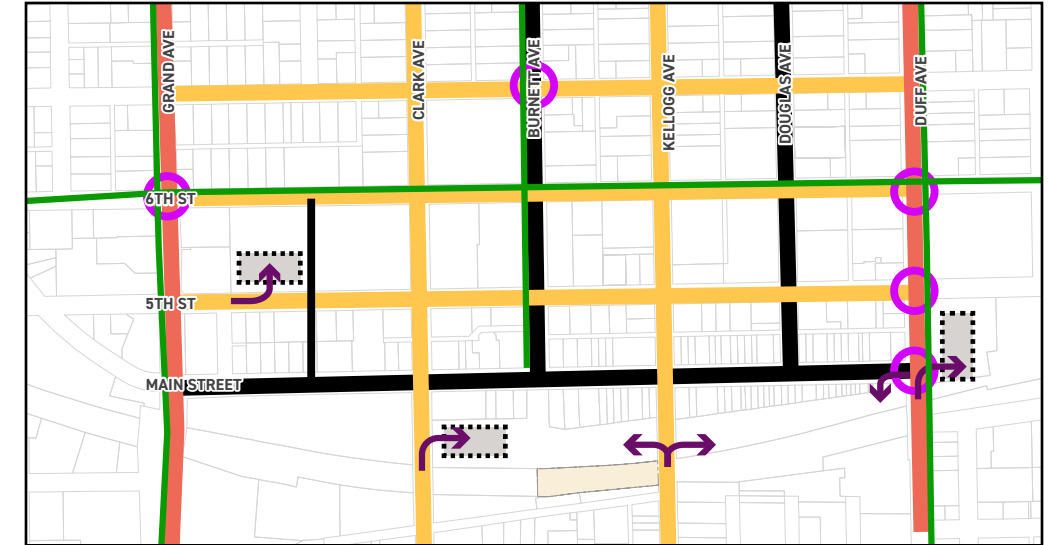
### OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

- LANDMARKS
- PUBLIC SPACES

### MAIN POINTS

- » Main Street, Burnett Avenue, and parts of Douglas Avenue, are improved as public spaces and designed for flexibility: they are open for vehicles and parking, however also designed to be closed for events and gathering.
- » Improved connections across Duff Avenue allow Bandshell Park to link with and become a part of Downtown.

## STREETS



### TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK

- STREETS WEIGHTED TOWARDS MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES
- STREETS BALANCED BETWEEN VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS
- STREETS WEIGHTED TOWARDS PEDESTRIANS
- BIKE LANES / TRAILS / PATHS
- KEY INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
- POTENTIAL PARKING RAMP LOCATIONS

### MAIN POINTS

- » A hierarchy of streets guides how they are re-designed and re-programmed over time.
- » 6th Street becomes an important East/West bike connection; while Grand Avenue and Duff Avenue support North/South bike connections.
- » A strategically located multi-modal parking ramp behind Main Street supports development while also serving as a mobility hub, and welcome center to Downtown.





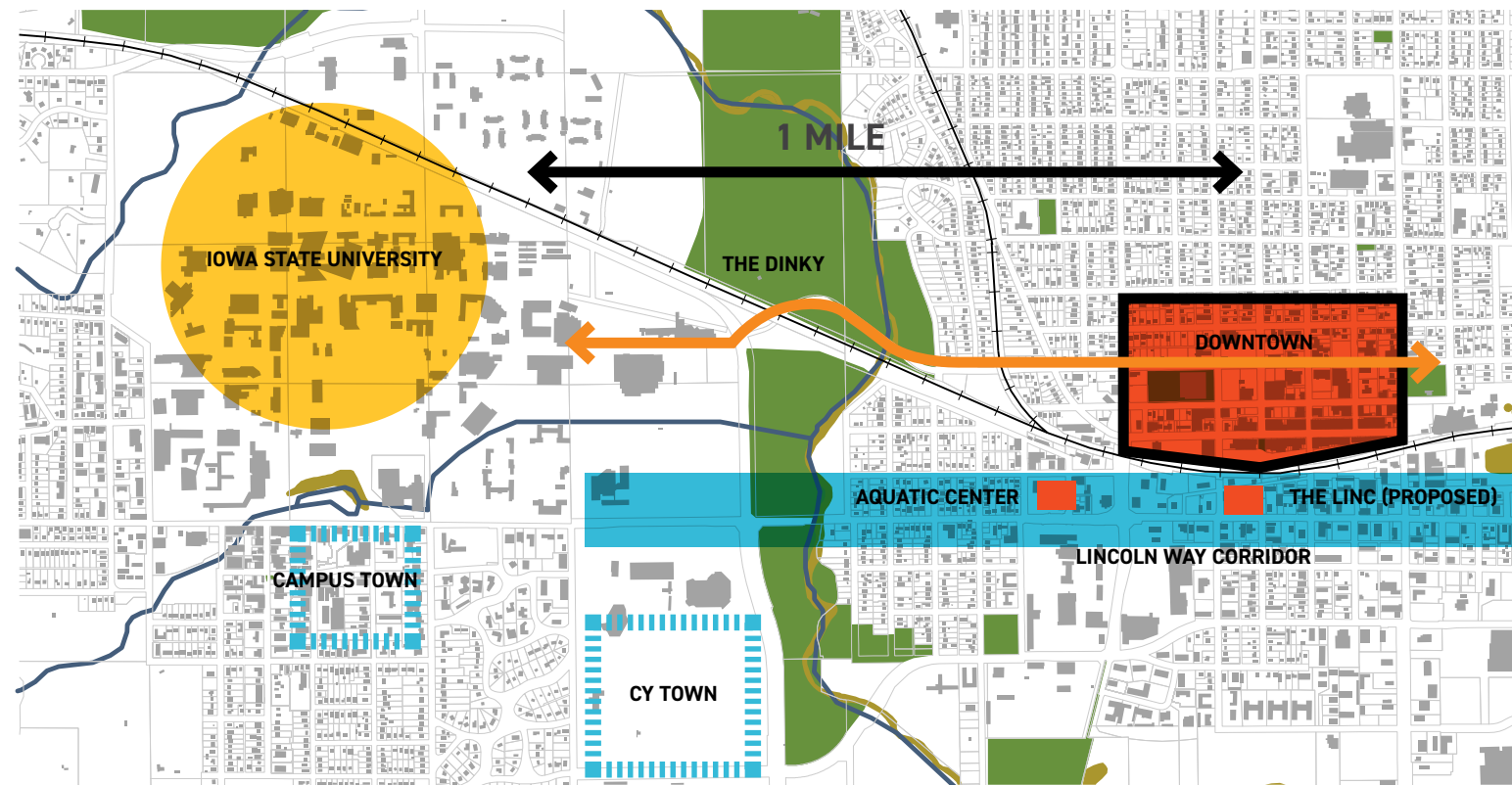
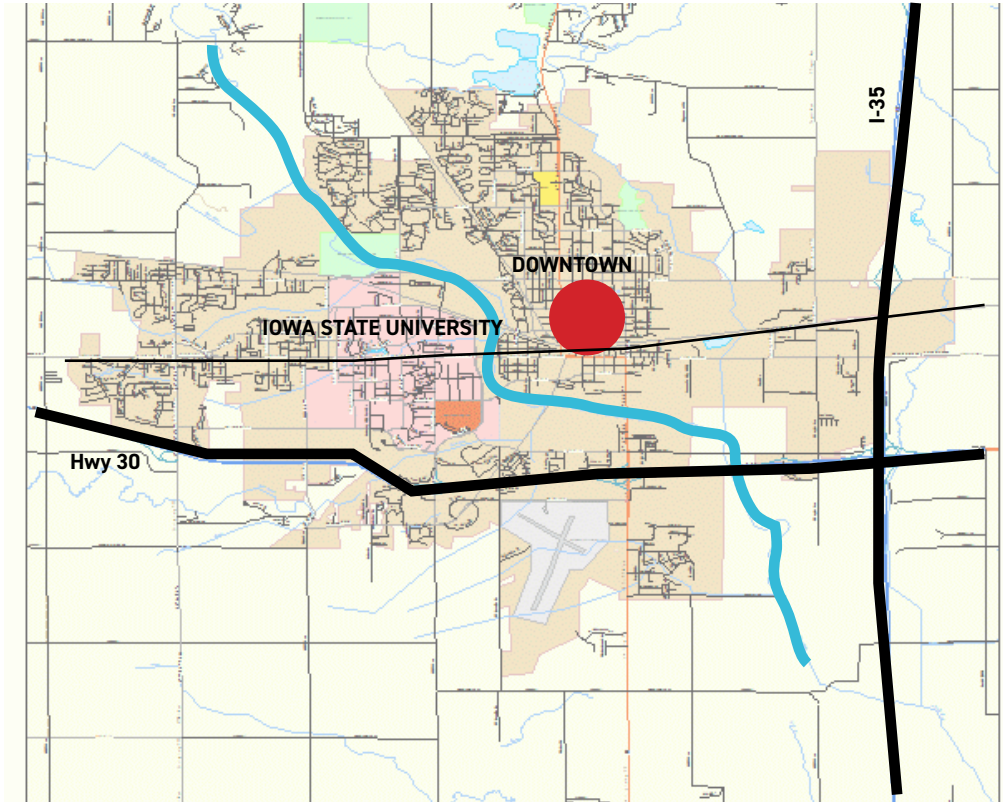
# 2

## CHAPTER

## EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ANALYSIS

# SITE LOCATION

## DOWNTOWN AMES IN THE REGION



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

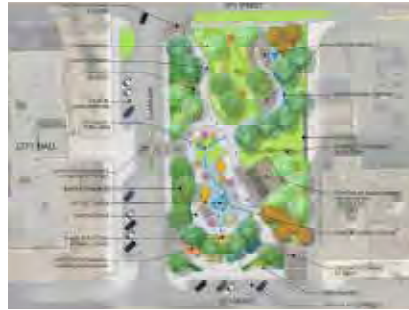
- » Ames' total census population is 66,427 (2020 census). The Downtown and University are only a mile apart, yet there is very little relationship between the two.
- » Downtown has a solid core and strong relationship to the older neighborhoods to the north, but Downtown's east and south edges have seen little reinvestment over the years.
- » Recent planning and development plans are beginning to take shape - signaling a new era for Downtown development.





# PLANNING CONTEXT

## ACTIVE PROJECTS



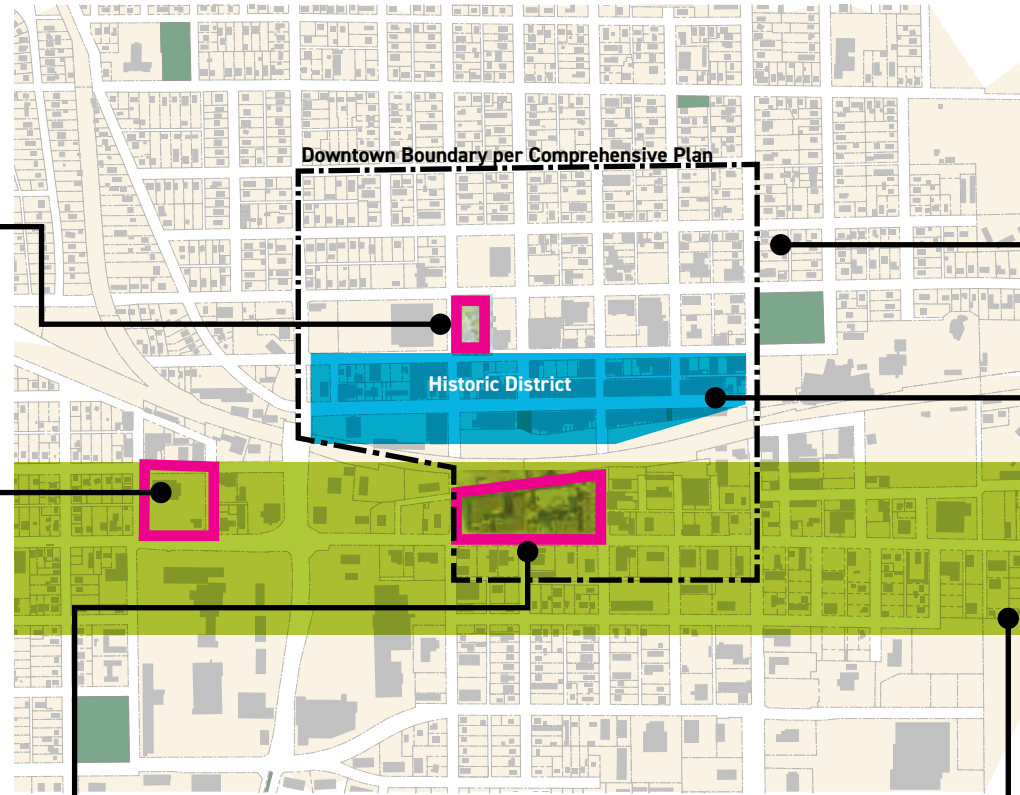
SCHAINKER PLAZA



AQUATIC CENTER



THE LINC (PROPOSED)



## POLICY GUIDANCE



AMES 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN



HISTORIC DISTRICT AND CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES



LINCOLN WAY CORRIDOR PLAN



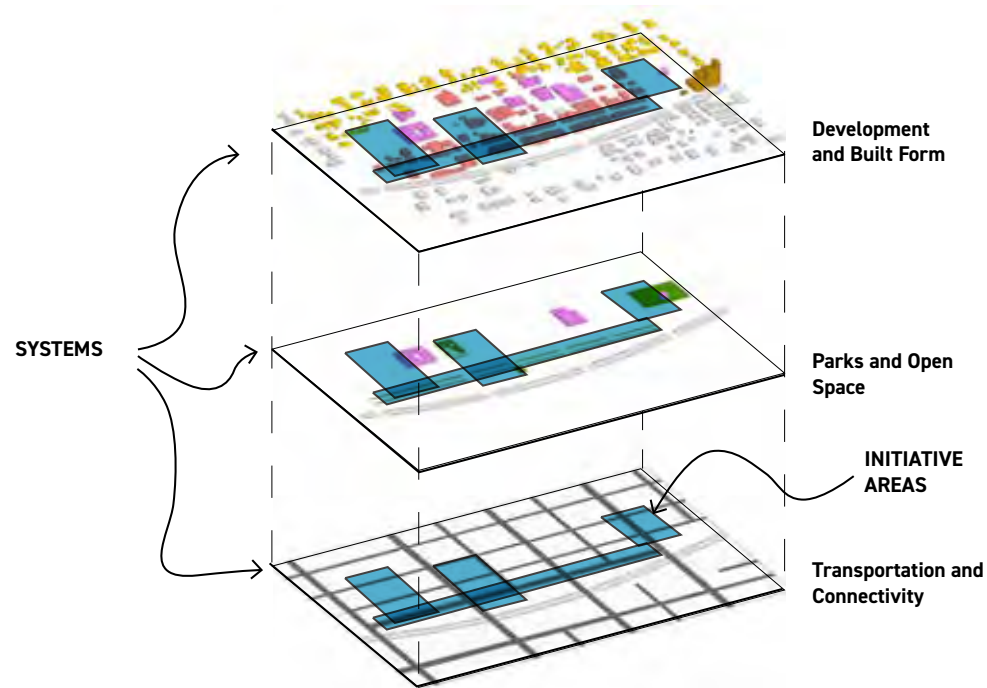
WALKER PARKING STUDY

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » The City has adopted several plans and policies that guide growth in the Downtown
  - » The Ames 2040 Comprehensive Plan expanded the definition of Downtown.
  - » The Lincoln Way Corridor Plan promotes investment to improve the southern entrances to Downtown while also serving as a major growth area between Grand and Duff Avenues.
  - » The Historic District encourages preservation of irreplaceable assets and the identity of Main Street.
  - » The Pedestrian and Bike Plan promotes multi-modal access to Downtown.
- » Several projects are currently underway in and around Downtown that will help shape the future of the area.

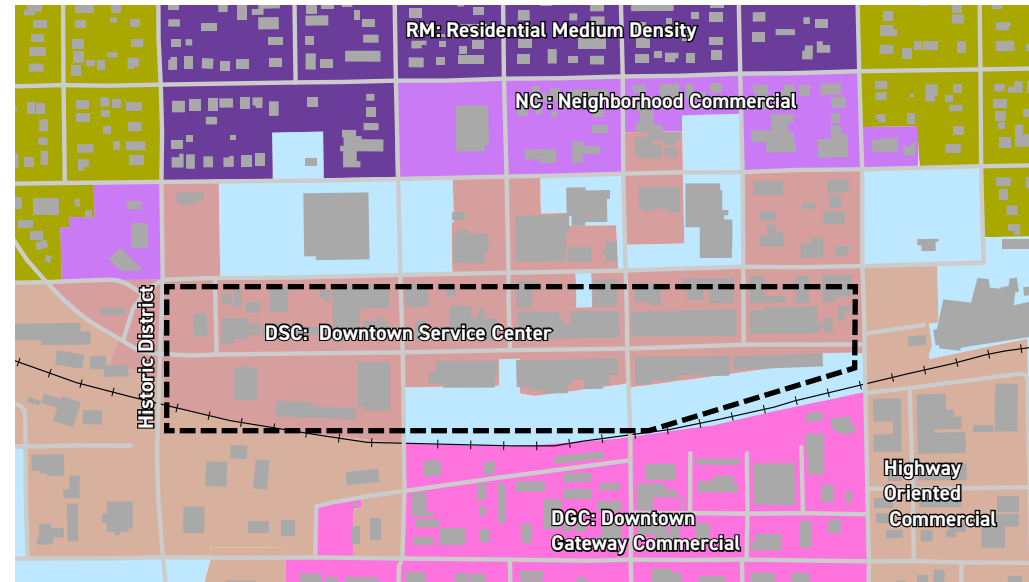
# SITE ANALYSIS

## APPROACH

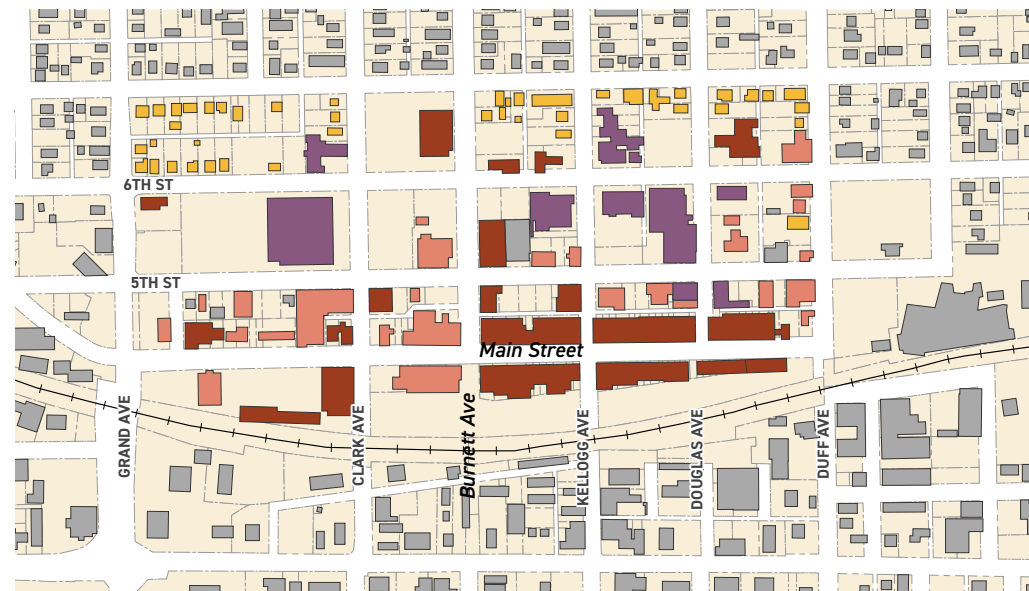


- The Downtown is comprised of several interrelated systems: Development, Open Space and Transportation. In a well-functioning Downtown the strength of each system (shown above) is amplified if they are coordinated with each other.
- This Vision examines each of the systems independently, offering recommendations for how they can be improved and more closely related.
- Then the Vision identifies several initiative areas, or Focus Areas where transformative impacts could occur.

## DEVELOPMENT AND BUILT FORM



ZONING



PRIMARY BUILDING USE

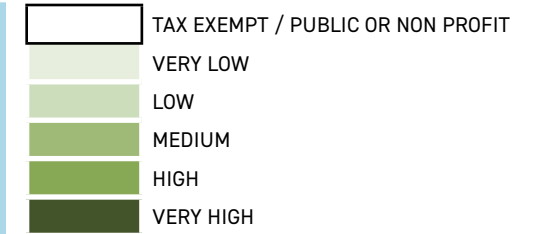
- RETAIL/DINING
- SERVICE/OFFICE
- CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL/WORSHIP
- RESIDENTIAL



TAX CAPACITY PER ACRE

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- » Downtown has a notable and well loved mix of retailers and restaurants that do well despite the lack of hospitality and limited number of residential units in the Downtown.
- » Most of Downtown is zoned DSC, which encourages mixed use development up to 7 stories - currently the tallest building in downtown is only 5 stories.
- » Downtown has several valuable community attractions and destinations, (such as the library and museum), that draw people from across the City.

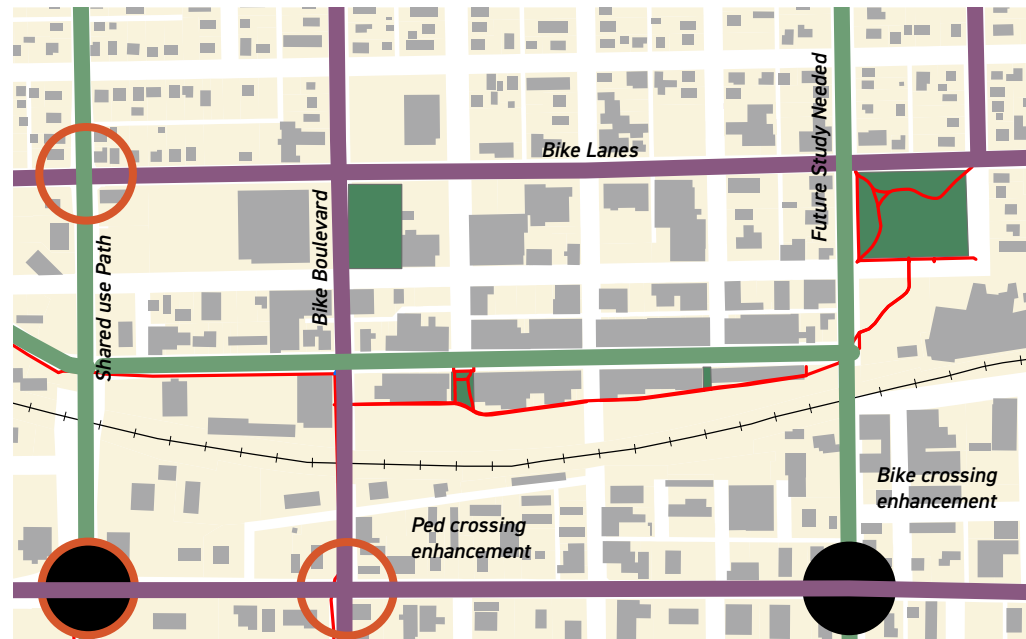


Summary	
Downtown Net Acres	53 acres
Public or Non Profit	17 acres
Private Paying Property	36 acres
Private Property Within Historic District	17 acres
Private Property Outside Historic District	19 acres



# SITE ANALYSIS

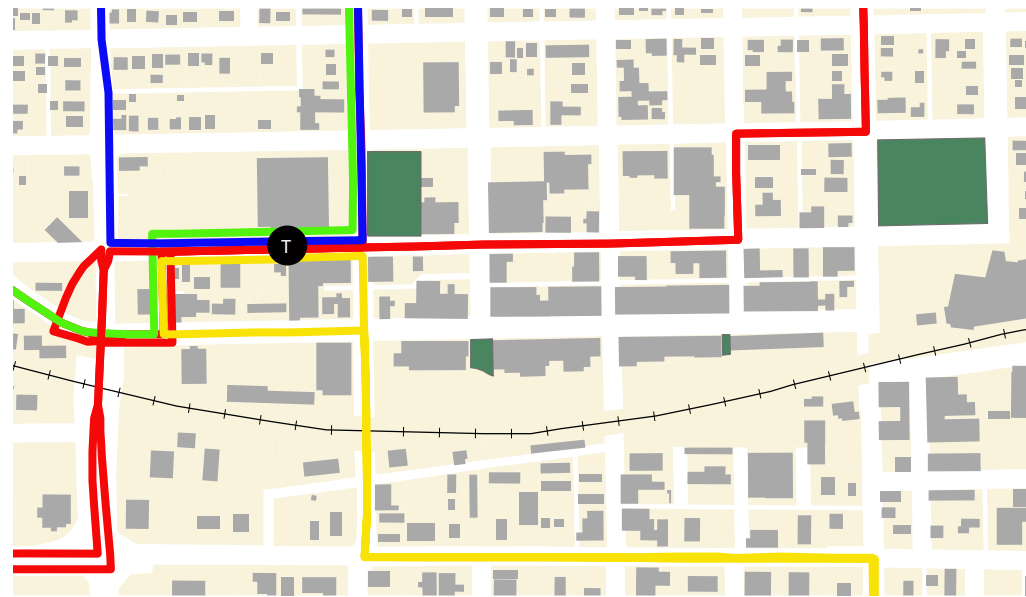
## TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY



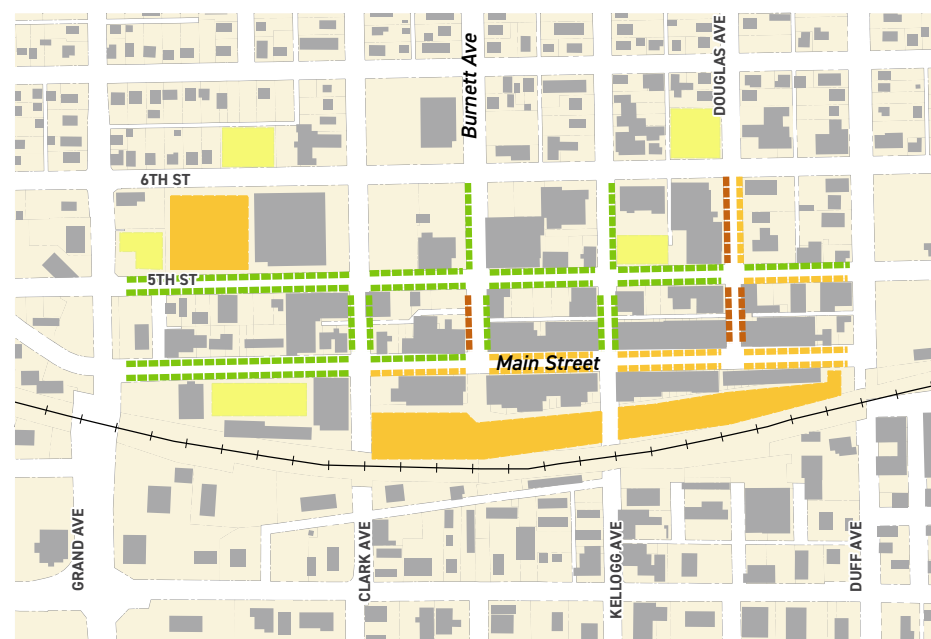
BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

source: Walk Bike Roll Ames

- Existing and Planned Shared Use Path
- Existing and Planned On Street Bike ways



CY RIDE ROUTES



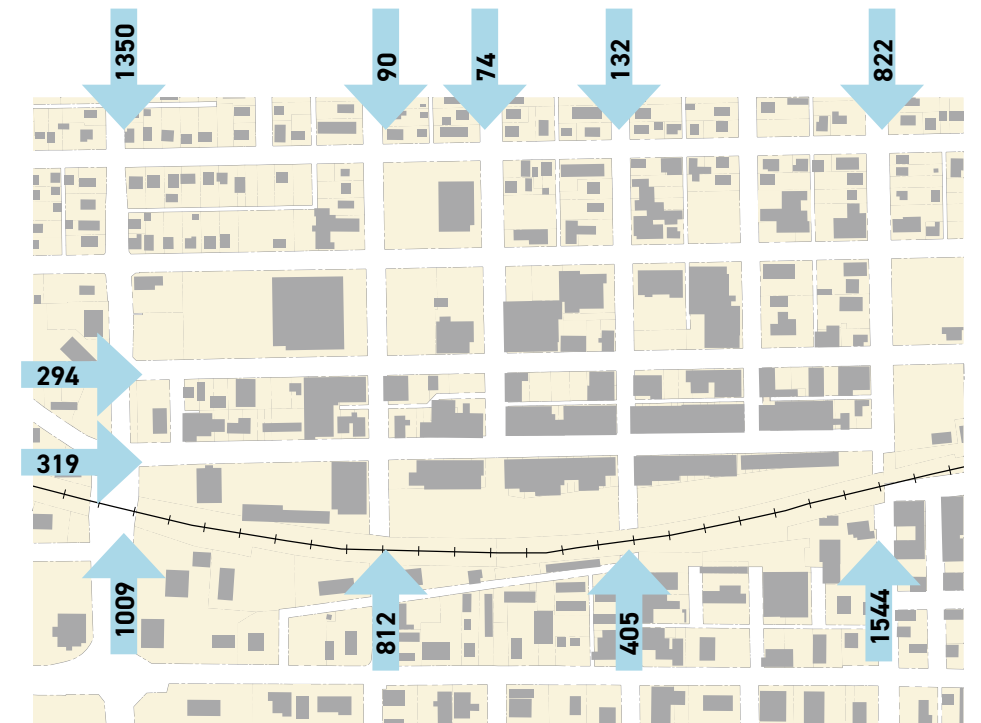
PARKING OCCUPANCY AT PEAK TIME (1PM WEEKDAY)

source: Walker Parking Study

- High (83% to fully occupied)
- Medium High (67%-82% occupied)
- Medium Low (51% to 60% occupied)
- Low (less than 50% occupied)

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Transit lines converge at City Hall where driver layover facilities exist, however passenger waiting areas and amenities are minimal.
- » The planned bike network will connect Downtown to adjacent areas, however future study is needed on several key connections, per the Walk Bike Roll Plan.
- » Current parking demand is well served by current supply, however future development will likely stress this existing supply.
- » One quarter (25%) of visitors to Downtown Ames come from outside Ames. (source Streetlight and City Planning)
- » In general, the majority of people arrive on Grand (via north and south) and Duff (from the south)



ARRIVAL TO DOWNTOWN (TYPICAL DAY)

### ORIGIN OF AVERAGE WEEKDAY VISITORS TO DOWNTOWN AMES

ORIGIN	# OF TRIPS TO DOWNTOWN AMES	% OF TRIPS TO DOWNTOWN AMES
AMES	4950	75%
OUTSIDE AMES	1639	25%
TOTAL	6589	100%

Note: aggregated data from June 2022 to may 2023  
source: Streetlight and City Planning

# SITE ANALYSIS

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



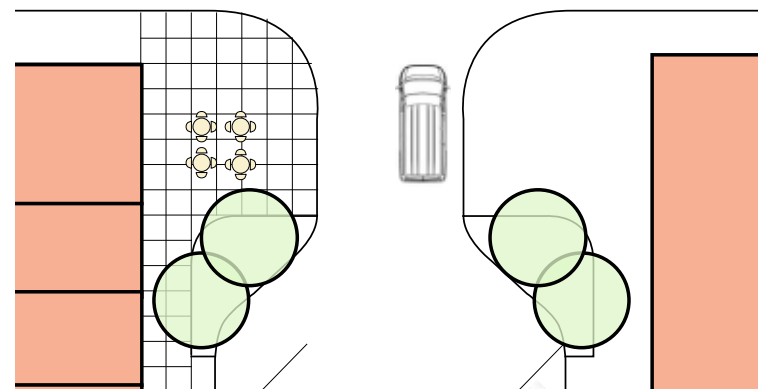
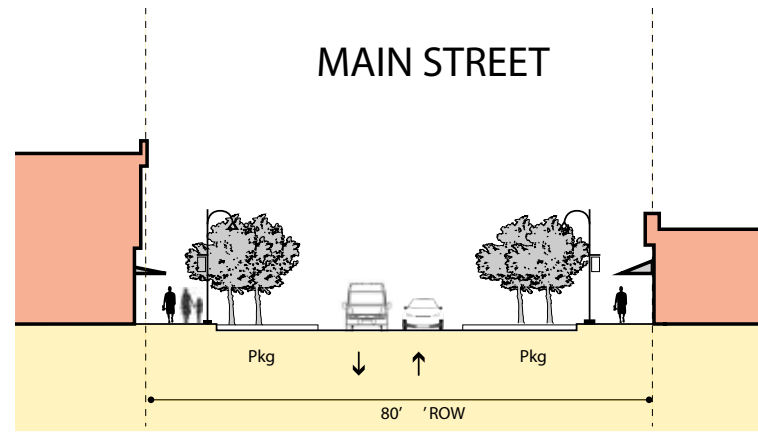
## PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- » Shainker Plaza will be an important addition to the Downtown park system.
- » Bandshell Park is well used by the neighborhoods, but not as a primary Downtown resource.
- » Tom Evans Plaza has the potential to serve as a focal point in the Downtown while also being an important connection between public parking and Main Street.

## MAIN STREET TODAY



**MAIN STREET DIMENSIONS AND USE**  
Main Street's sidewalks, are used predominately for walking. At 12' wide they do not have generous space for outdoor dining.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- » The design of Main Street encourages vehicular use and discourages outdoor business use. Diagonal parking creates an uncomfortable experience for pedestrians.
- » The sidewalk width (12') is too narrow to allow outdoor dining or display of goods.
- » The Railroad motif is not well understood.
- » Tom Evans Plaza and Cynthia Duff Plaza do not function well as inviting entrances to Main Street.



**PRECEDENT EXAMPLE OF FUTURE USE OF PUBLIC SPACE**  
Wider sidewalks and more generous furnishing zones set away from the storefronts, de-clutter the sidewalk, allow better visibility and access to stores and allow restaurants to create generous dining patios.



# PHOTO SURVEY

## PUBLIC SPACES



## CELEBRATION & ACTIVITY



## BUILDING VARIETY



## COMMUNITY ANCHORS & LANDMARKS



## PLACE MAKING



» Downtown Ames has a wide range of buildings, spaces, and activities - added together they establish a strong and lasting identity for the Downtown. And importantly they create a sense of place and a that allows the Downtown to differentiate itself from other parts of Ames





# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DOWNTOWN

## MANY SPACES, MANY EXPERIENCES, MANY PEOPLE

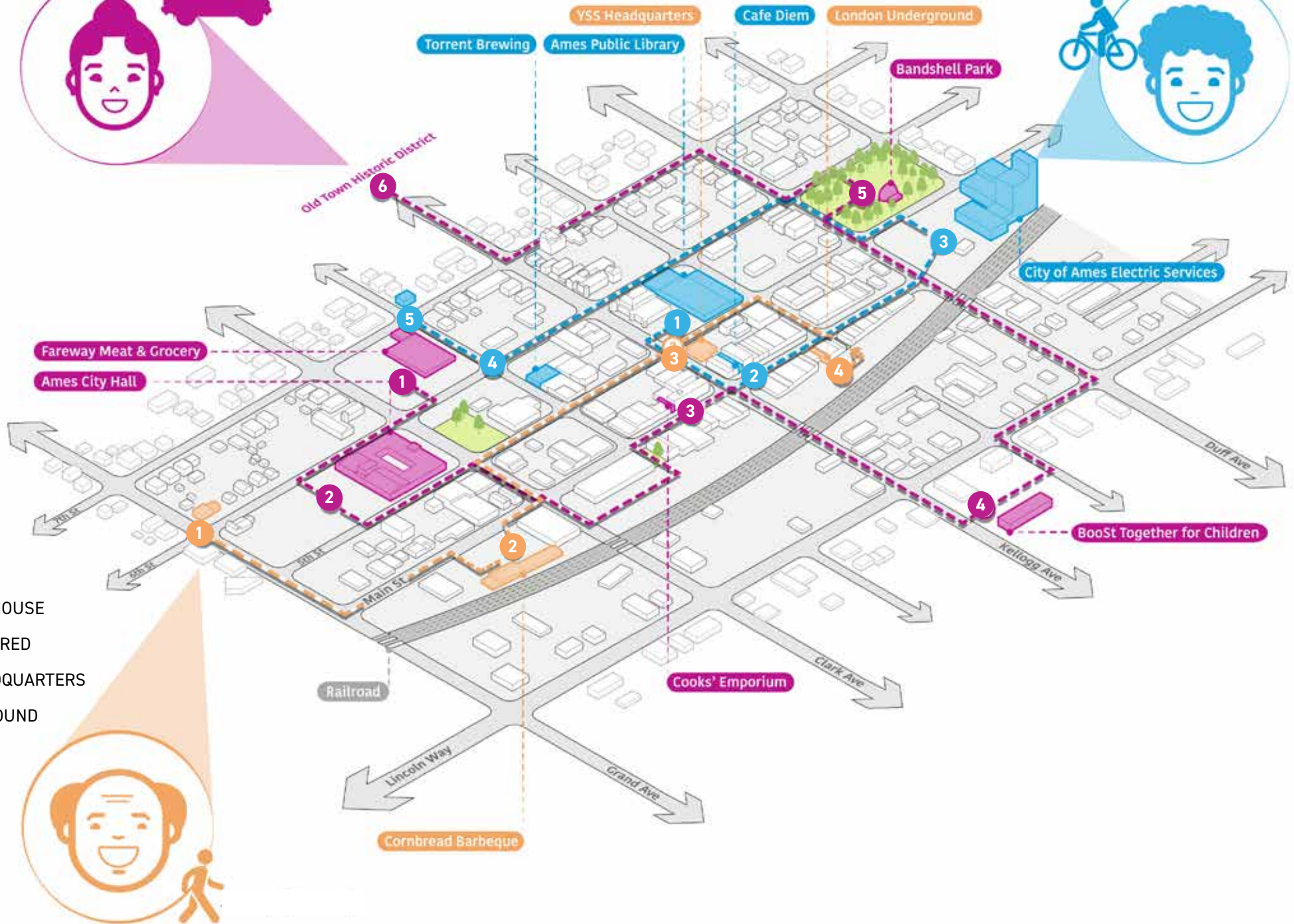
Great downtowns are many things for many people. They provide a range of activities and a variety of spaces for a broad cross section of the population. On any given day, Downtown should be alive with activities from early morning into the evening. Downtown is a stage for the daily activities of life to unfold: coffee shops are buzzing, people are working, families are visiting the library and park, lunch spots are serving and delivering, residents are strolling, shopkeepers are engaging, friends are meeting, bands are playing, and visitors are exploring.

A well formed public realm and a mix of uses will enable the paths of people (both strangers and friends) to cross in unplanned ways. In doing so, social and civic bonds are subtly formed, trust is built and the social contract remains intact.

On weekends and evenings, new waves of people come into the Downtown - for planned events, concerts, weddings, and special dinners; but also to simply “hang out” and meet with friends.

Downtown offers that range of experiences for all in Ames to enjoy.

- 1 GRAB GROCERIES AT FAREWAY
- 2 PICK UP PERMIT AT CITY HALL
- 3 GET GIFT AT COOKS EMPORIUM
- 4 PICK UP CHILD AT DAY CARE
- 5 PICNIC AT BANDSHELL PARK
- 6 HEAD HOME



- 1 BREAKFAST AT UNCLES HOUSE
- 2 MEET FRIENDS AT CORNBRED
- 3 VOLUNTEER AT YSS HEADQUARTERS
- 4 VISIT LONDON UNDERGROUND



- 1 DROP OFF BOOK AT LIBRARY
- 2 LUNCH AT CAFE DIEM
- 3 GOES TO WORK AT POWER PLANT
- 4 MEET FRIEND AT TORRENT BREWING
- 5 BIKE HOME TO OLD TOWN



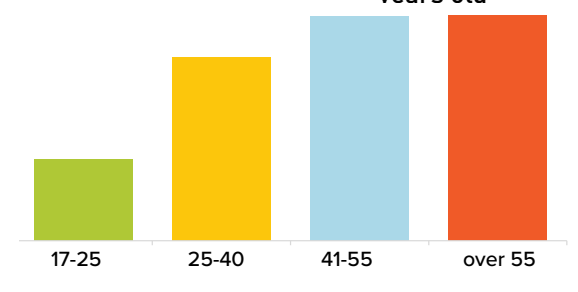


# COMMUNITY INPUT

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

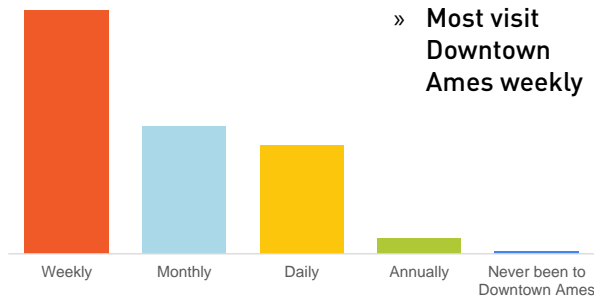
### AGE OF RESPONDENT

» Most are over 40 years old



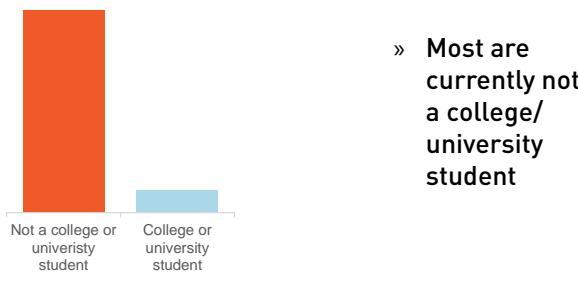
### DOWNTOWN VISITS

» Most visit Downtown Ames weekly



### COLLEGE STUDENTS

» Most are currently not a college/university student

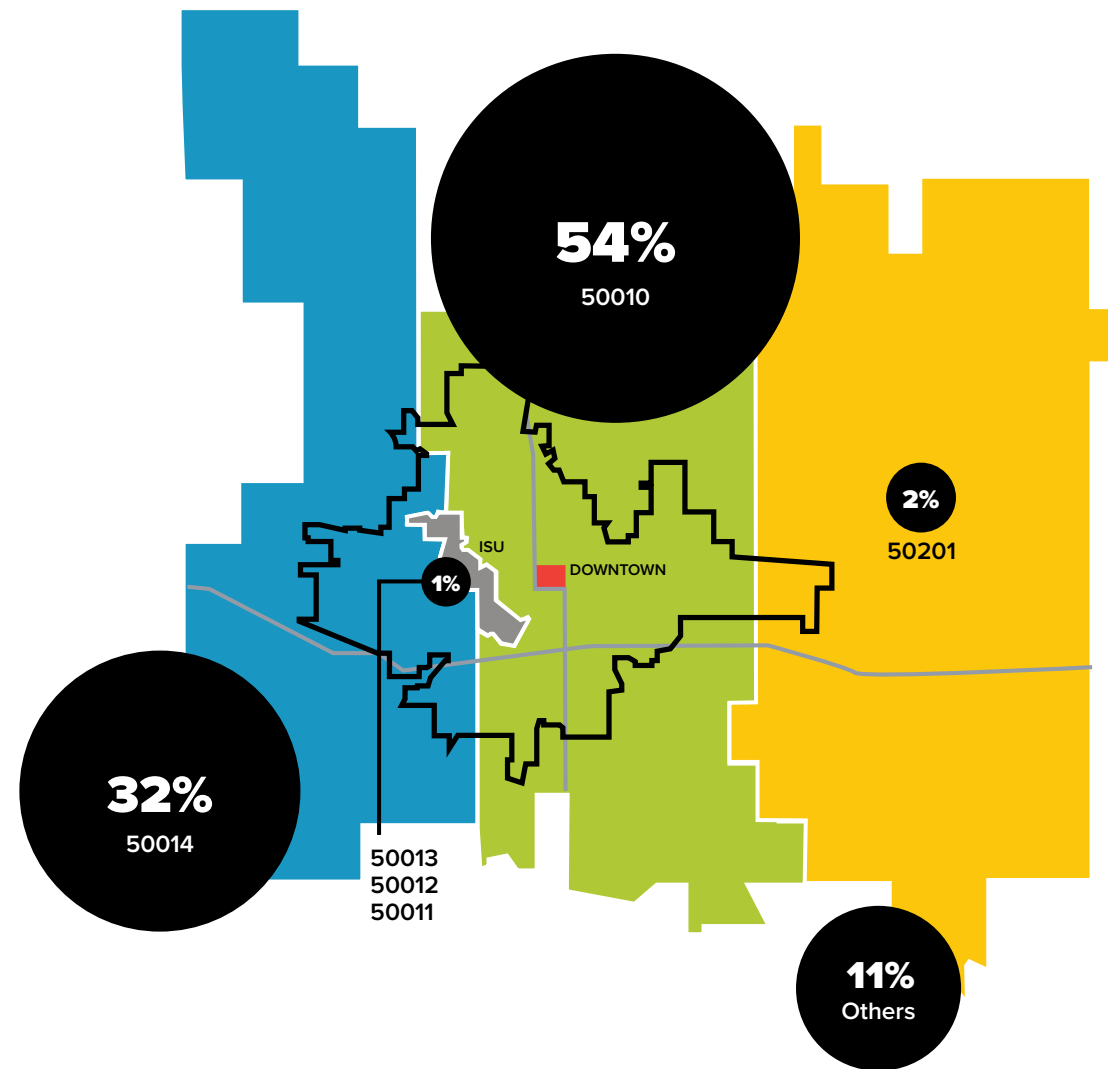


### WHERE RESPONDENTS WORK

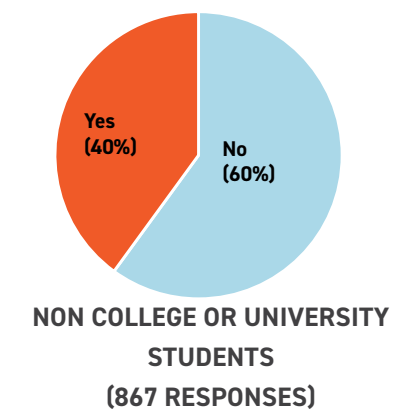
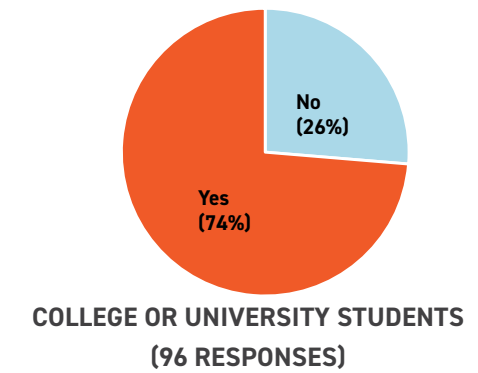
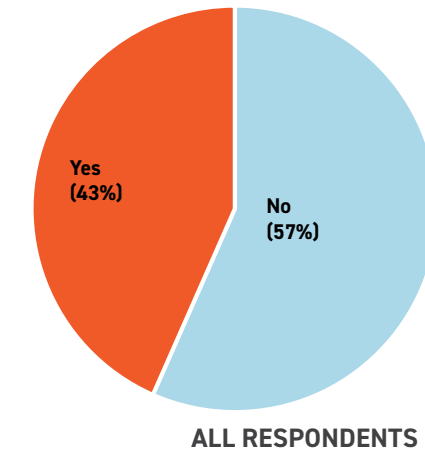
» Most do not work Downtown



## LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS



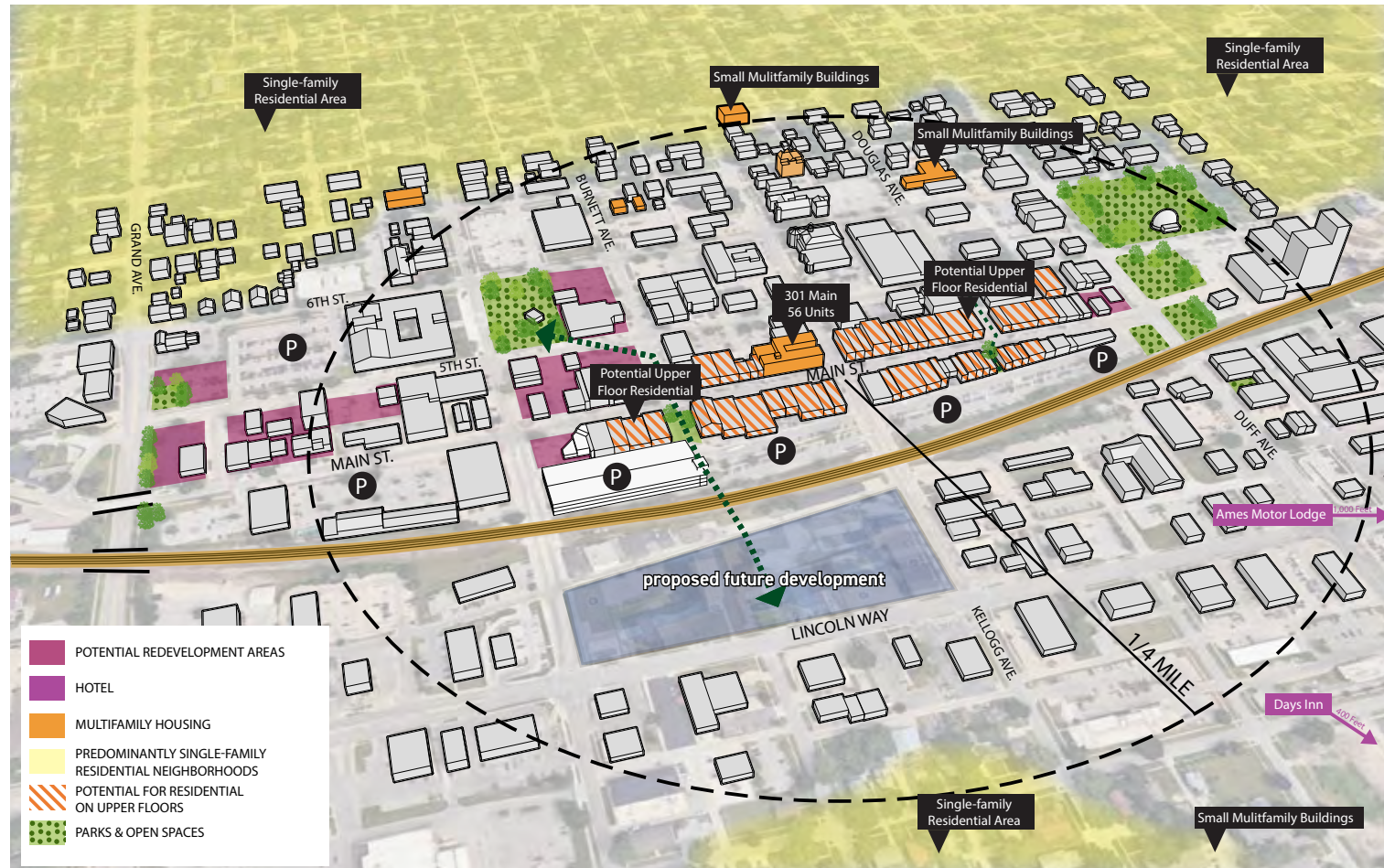
## WOULD YOU LIVE IN DOWNTOWN AMES IF HOUSING WERE AFFORDABLE?



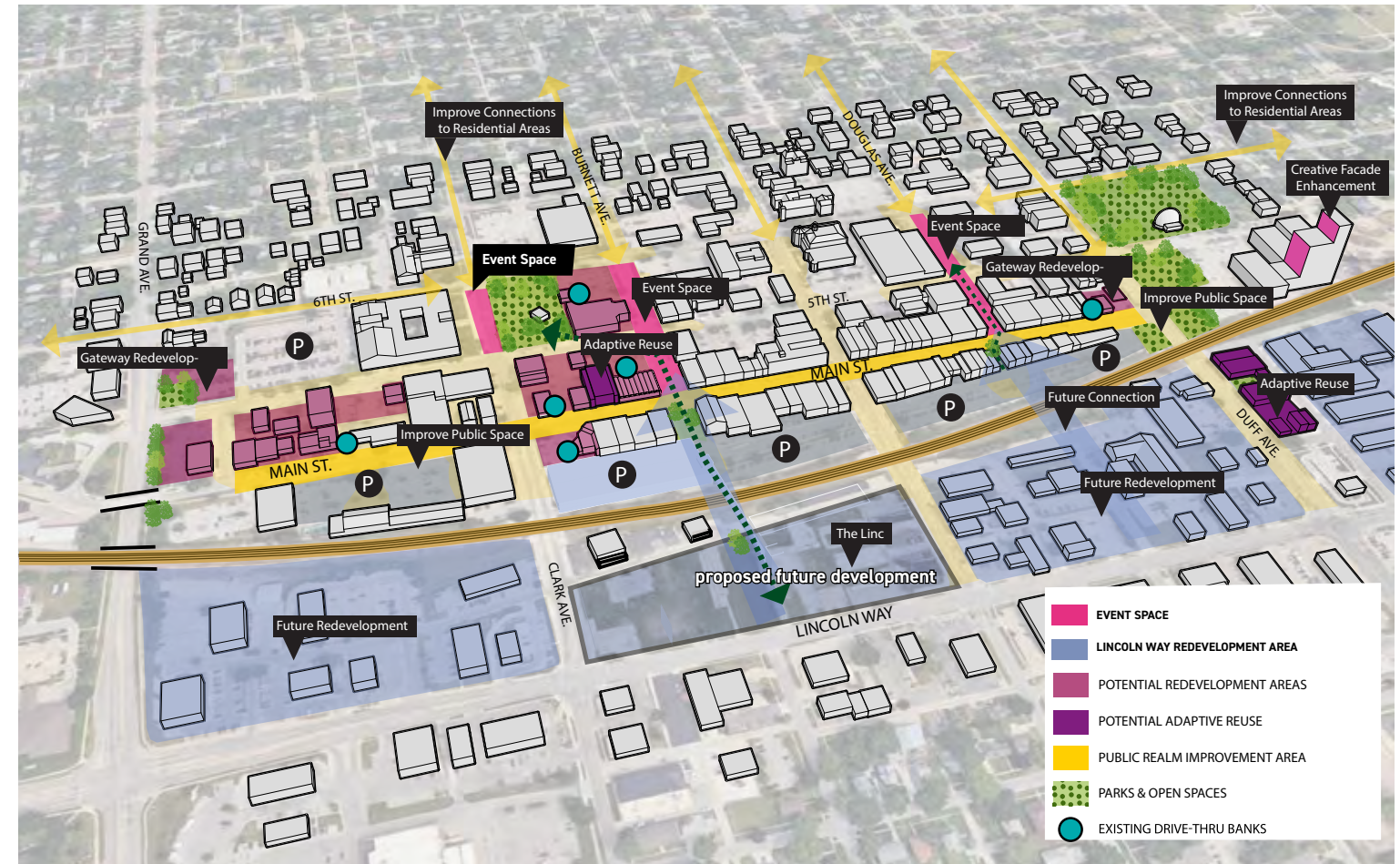




## EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES



## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES



### A WALKABLE PLACE MISSING RESIDENTIAL AND HOTELS

Downtown Ames needs, and can support, a great deal of new residents and visitors. New residential development would complement existing, successful downtown commercial activity, put more “eyes on the street” to enhance safety, and make Downtown a more complete neighborhood. Downtown is surrounded by beautiful tree-lined residential neighborhoods, but these are located about 1/4 mile from its center (Main and Kellogg).

301 Main offers newly remodeled one-bedroom, one-bathroom unit apartments in the center of Main Street. The currently planned LINC will provide over 100 units of residential, 40,000 sf of ground floor commercial, and a hotel. There are currently no hotels in Downtown Ames. The nearest overnight accommodations are two motels south of Lincoln Way. Most hotels in Ames are located in highway commercial areas, such as those along US Highway 30.

While potential new development sites identified as part of this plan should be prioritized for mixed-use development with residential uses above, existing multi-story buildings should be explored for their capacity to provide residential units above their commercial ground floors.

### POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT, ADAPTIVE REUSE, AND SPECIAL FEATURES

This diagram combines potential development sites with key public realm improvement and adaptive reuse opportunities. Examining these together can lead to a mutually-reinforcing infill development framework.

The LINC is a proposed large scale redevelopment south of the railroad tracks, where a mid-block north-south pedestrian bridge associated with the LINC is planned to connect back to Main Street. As the area south of the tracks

develops, it should complement and support the core of Downtown. The east end of Main Street (except for the very edge along Duff Avenue) is considered to be stable urban fabric, but west of Burnett Avenue there are numerous sites ripe for infill development that can extend the vitality of Main Street.

Most potential redevelopment sites are drive-through. While drive-throughs are great for automobile-based service, these are not compatible with a walkable

downtown Main Street because they adversely affect pedestrian use due to frequent curb cuts and high volumes of traffic.

Potential adaptive reuse sites to be explored include: the Depot (a use that should be continued), the theater (restored to its original condition), and the small collection of warehouses southeast of Duff and Main (create an arts-based warehouse district).



# 3

## CHAPTER

## THE GUIDING VISION: BIG IDEAS AND FRAMEWORKS



1

## FOUR BIG IDEAS

### A ROBUST AND COMPLETE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

- MORE RESIDENTS AND OVERNIGHT VISITORS
- AN 18 HOUR DOWNTOWN

### STREETS AS SPACES

- REBALANCE , REPROGRAM AND RECLAIM STREETS
- IMPROVE EDGES AND ENTRANCES TO DOWNTOWN

### CONNECTIONS TO IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

- IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY BY OFFERING MORE OFF-CAMPUS EXPERIENCES FOR THE ISU COMMUNITY.
- PROMOTE THE DOWNTOWN AS A CLASSROOM AND LABORATORY FOR THE UNIVERSITY

### AN ENTREPRENEURIAL DOWNTOWN

- CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS
- FOSTER ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND INNOVATION

2

## FRAMEWORKS

### DEVELOPMENT

- IDENTIFIES REDEVELOPMENT SITES
- IDENTIFIES PREFERRED ACTIVE BUILDING FRONTAGES

### TRANSPORTATION

- IDENTIFIES STREET HIERARCHY
- IDENTIFIES PRIMARY ACCESS AND PARKING AREAS

### OPEN SPACE

- IDENTIFIES NEW PUBLIC SPACES
- IDENTIFIES KEY IMPROVEMENTS

3

## INITIATIVE FOCUS AREAS

### A: MAIN STREET REDESIGN & ACTIVATION

- A1: REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET
- A2: DOUGLAS "CIVIC FESTIVAL" STREET
- A3: ACTIVATION OF THE BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET
- A4: GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT

### B. SCHAIKER TO FUTURE LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

- B1: IMPROVEMENTS TO TOM EVANS PLAZA
- B2: MULTI-MODAL PARKING RAMP AND WELCOME CENTER
- B3: BURNETT AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS
- B4: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BANK BLOCK

### C. EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVE

- C1: HIGHLIGHTING THE POWER PLANT
- C2: IMPROVED MAIN STREET GATEWAY
- C3: IMPROVED CONNECTIONS TO BANDSHELL PARK
- C4: REDEVELOPMENTS ALONG DUFF AVENUE

### D. EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVE

- D1: GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ON CITY PROPERTY
- D2: MID-BLOCK CONNECTION (DEPOT TO CITY HALL)
- D3: WESTERN EXTENSION OF MAIN STREET BUILDINGS
- D4: REDEVELOPMENT AROUND THE DEPOT

CONCEPTS

SYSTEMS

PLACES



BROAD IDEAS  
AREA-WIDE

FINE GRAINED  
PLACE SPECIFIC

# FOUR BIG IDEAS FOR DOWNTOWN AMES

## A ROBUST AND COMPLETE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

*Encourage efficient infill and mixed use development to create a vibrant downtown for living, entertainment, unique retail and civic activities*

### GOALS:

#### MORE RESIDENTS AND OVERNIGHT VISITORS

Adding a substantial amount of residents to the Downtown is essential to creating a vibrant environment. Residents provide an “around the clock” presence and support local businesses. New housing downtown would also provide a new set of housing choices for people living in, and aspiring to live in Ames.

#### AN 18 HOUR DOWNTOWN

Vibrant downtowns buzz with activity throughout the day and into the evening. When the work day is over, restaurants, bars, breweries, music venues, and theaters come alive. This activity creates a unique identity for the Downtown and additional business for retailers.

## STREETS AS SPACES

*Redesign existing public space assets to provide a wider variety of spaces for people to enjoy.*

### GOALS:

#### REBALANCE , REPROGRAM AND RECLAIM STREETS

Downtown has 3.5 acres of park space and approximately 19 acres of roadway. Over time, select Downtown streets can become more pedestrian friendly; they can be designed to become places to linger and gather, rather than just places to move through.

#### IMPROVE THE PERIMETER AND ENTRANCES

The arrival experience into Downtown Ames can be uncomfortable and confusing to first-time or infrequent visitors - especially if arriving from the south. Investments in wayfinding, public spaces, and parking can help create a more user-friendly and welcoming environment.

## CONNECTIONS TO IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

*Strengthen relationship with Iowa State University through partnerships, development, transportation, and programming*

### GOALS:

#### IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY BY OFFERING MORE OFF CAMPUS EXPERIENCES FOR THE ISU COMMUNITY.

Downtown should be an asset to the University community - serving as a place to live, enjoy, and visit on a regular basis. Downtown should be leveraged as a recruiting tool for the University - offering off-campus experiences that help create a well rounded life in Ames.

#### PROMOTE THE USE OF DOWNTOWN AS A CLASSROOM/ LABORATORY FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

Downtown can provide off campus space for classrooms, studios and other university uses that would benefit from interacting with the broader community.

## AN ENTREPRENEURIAL DOWNTOWN

*Support a spirit of local pride by creating fertile environment for local businesses, restaurants, and entertainment venues to succeed.*

### GOALS:

#### CREATE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS TO FLOURISH IN DOWNTOWN

Downtown should continue to preserve buildings where possible to ensure low cost space is available within the Downtown. Expansion of Downtown south of the tracks introduces additional opportunities for adaptive reuse. Pop up and temporary retail can serve as additional low cost opportunities for small local retailers.

#### FOSTER THE ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND INNOVATION

The arts and entertainment contributes to an entrepreneurial ecology by introducing new ideas and perspectives into the community.



# THE VISION



MAIN STREET



TOM EVANS PLAZA AND BURNETT AVENUE

- 1 MAIN STREET
- 2 THE LINC (PROPOSED)
- 3 SCHAIKER PLAZA
- 4 POWER PLANT
- 5 FORMER DEPOT
- 6 CITY HALL
- 7 BANDSHELL PARK
- 8 TOM EVANS PLAZA
- 9 FAREWAY AND WHEATSFIELD GROCERY STORES
- 10 AMES PUBLIC LIBRARY
- 11 FORMER COLLEGIAN THEATER
- 12 US POST OFFICE

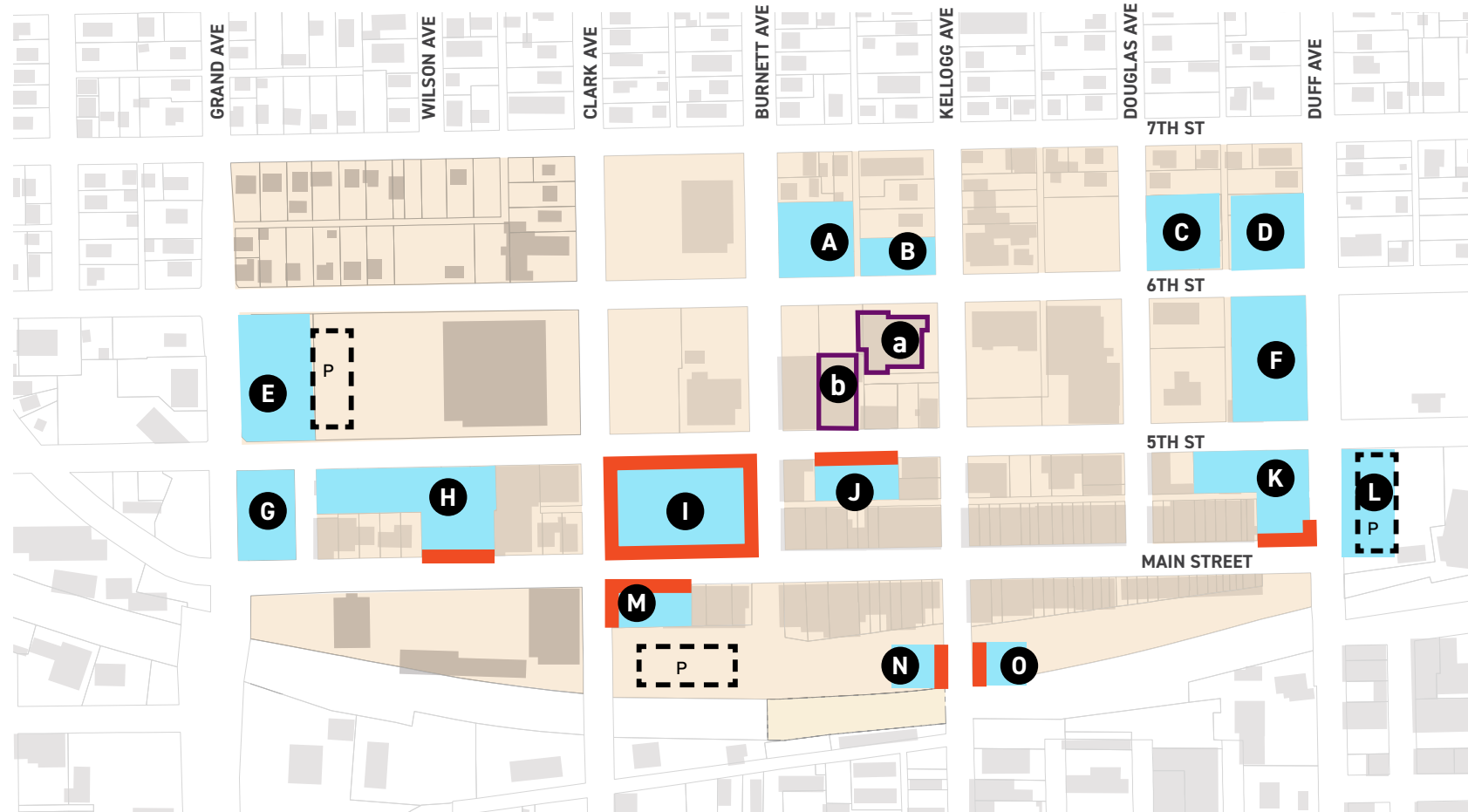
**DOWNTOWN AMES IS THE HEART OF URBAN LIFE IN STORY COUNTY. IT IS A VIBRANT HUB OF ACTIVITY WHERE ONE CAN LIVE AND ENJOY THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES OF LIFE, ALL WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF EACH OTHER.**

**DOWNTOWN IS WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE; IT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY AS IT SERVES AS BOTH THE CENTER STAGE AND THE LIVING ROOM FOR AMES.**



# FRAMEWORKS

## BUILT FORM



Potential Development Summary				
Redevelopment Sites	Size (acres)	Assumed Height	Potential Units (=/-)	Potential Commercial SF
A	.6	3-4 stories	60	
B	.4	3-4 stories	40	
C	.6	3-4 stories	40	
D	.6	3-4 stories	40	
E	.5	3-4 stories	125	
F	1.2	5-6 stories	150	
G	.6	3-4 stories	50	
H	1.4	3-6 stories	150	
I	1.8	3-6 stories	150	30,000
J	.4	5-6 stories	75	10,000
K	.8	5-6 stories	150	7,500
L	.8	3-4 stories	0	40,000
M	.5	3-4 stories	75	7,500
N	.2	3-4 stories	20	10,000
O	.2	3-4 stories	20	10,000
a	Post Office			40,000 sf
b	Tribune Building			30,000 sf

### DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- REDEVELOPMENT SITES
- RETAIL ON GROUND FLOOR
- POTENTIAL SHARED PARKING RAMP

### MAIN POINTS

- » Redevelopment occurs primarily on existing parking lots and other underutilized parcels.
- » Redevelopment occurs on a variety of scales - between 3 to 7 stories.
- » Frontage types reinforce important pedestrian corridors.
- » A few buildings, such as Tribune Building and the Post Office are underutilized and can be used for uses such as co-working space, hotel, or event space.

The table above provides potential development build out for redevelopment sites that are most suitable to change - either because they have low value/acre, are underutilized, or publicly owned. Properties north of 6th Street are included within the Ames Plan 2040 Core land use designation which supports long term change for the area to include additional housing or commercial redevelopment in a manner compatible with the density and urban design features of Downtown.

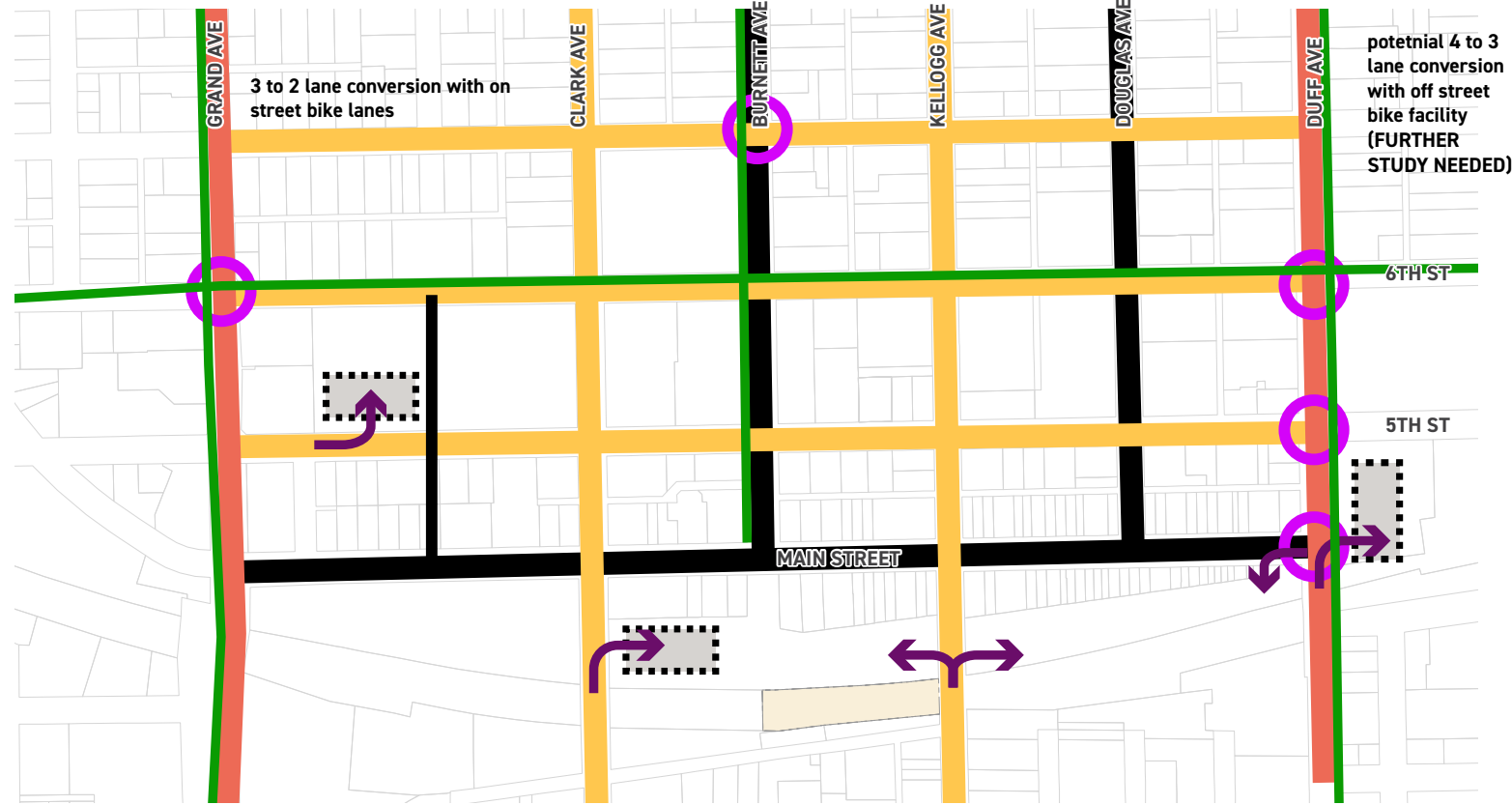
All new buildings are assumed to be primarily residential - with some as mixed use (indicated with red lines) However the Vision recognizes that several buildings may have non-residential (i.e. classroom or offices) on the upper floors.

Building heights are assumed for the purposes of establishing a baseline calculation. Actual building heights and unit counts will vary



# FRAMEWORKS

## CONNECTIVITY



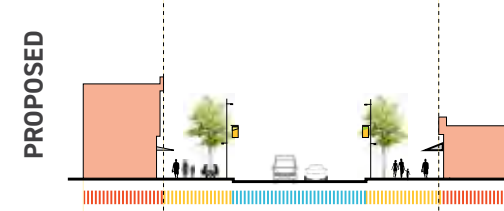
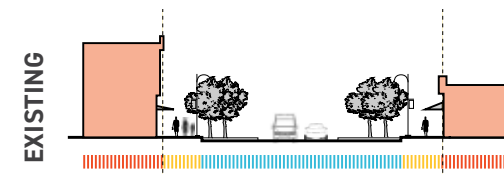
### TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK

- STREETS WEIGHTED TOWARDS MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES
- STREETS BALANCED BETWEEN VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS
- STREETS WEIGHTED TOWARDS PEDESTRIANS
- BIKE LANES / TRAILS / PATHS
- KEY INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
- POTENTIAL PARKING RAMP LOCATIONS

### MAIN POINTS

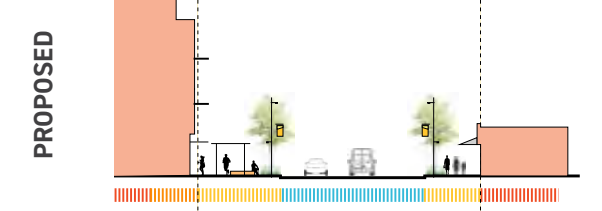
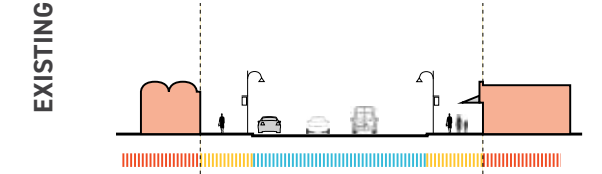
- » A hierarchy of streets guides how they may be re-designed and re-programmed over time.
- » 6th Street becomes an important east west bike connection; while Grand and Duff Avenues are north south bike connections per the City's Bike Plan.
- » Strategically located multi modal ramp behind Main Street supports development while also serving as a mobility hub, and welcome center to Downtown.

### MAIN STREET



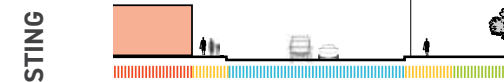
**PROPOSED CHANGE:**  
Conversion from diagonal to parallel parking to create wider sidewalks and dining patios

### BURNETT AVENUE



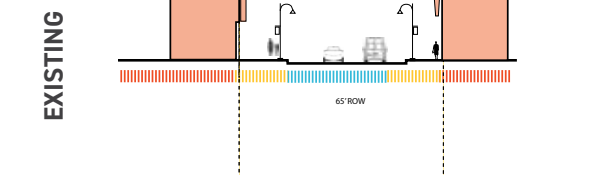
**PROPOSED CHANGE:**  
Replace parallel parking on west side to create linear park connecting Main Street and Tom Evans Plaza to areas north of Downtown. Use pop-up bollards on segments to close for events.

### DUFF AVENUE



**PROPOSED CHANGE:**  
Reduce the roadway from four to three lanes while adding an off-street bike trail. (further study needed)

### DOUGLAS AVENUE



**PROPOSED CHANGE:**  
Between the Library and Main Street create a "Festival Street" with pop-up bollards that can be used for festivals and events.

- DEVELOPMENT
- SIDEWALK
- ROADWAY
- PARK

# FRAMEWORKS

## PUBLIC SPACE



OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

### MAIN POINTS

- » Main Street remains a street, however sidewalks are widened (by converting diagonal parking to parallel) to create better public spaces for people and businesses
- » Burnett Avenue and parts of Douglas Avenue become multi-use streets. They serve cars, however with retractable bollards and pedestrian amenities they also function as linear parks and spaces for gathering during events or weekends.
- » Improved connections across Duff Avenue allow Bandsshell Park to become a part of Downtown.



TOM EVANS PLAZA



DOUGLAS AVENUE



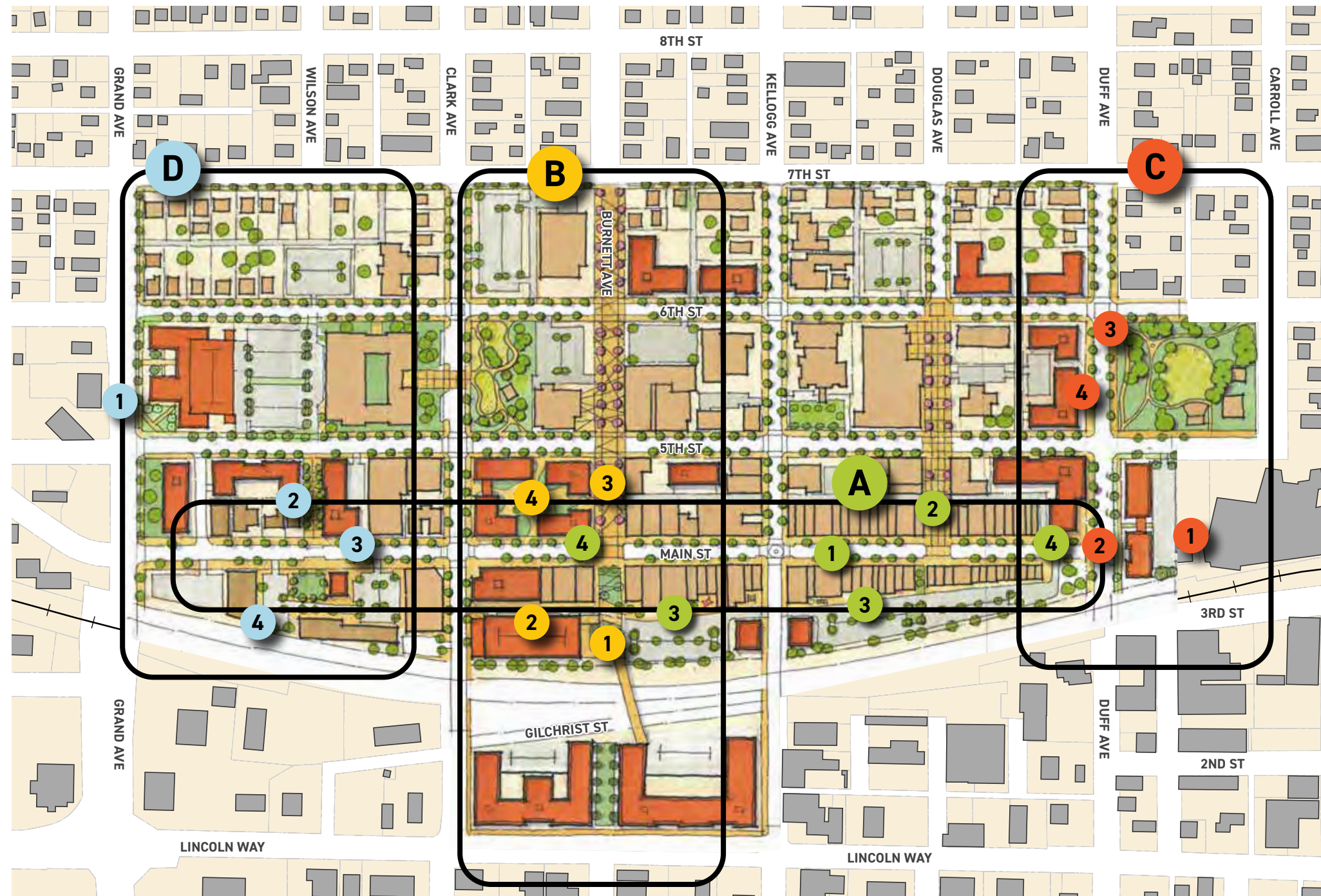
MAIN STREET





**CHAPTER**  
**GUIDING VISION & FOCUS AREAS**

# ILLUSTRATIVE GUIDING VISION FOR DOWNTOWN AMES



## A. MAIN STREET ACTIVATION

- A1: REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET
- A2: DOUGLAS "CIVIC FESTIVAL" STREET
- A3: ACTIVATION OF THE BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET
- A4: GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT

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## C. EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVENUE

- C1: HIGHLIGHTING THE POWER PLANT
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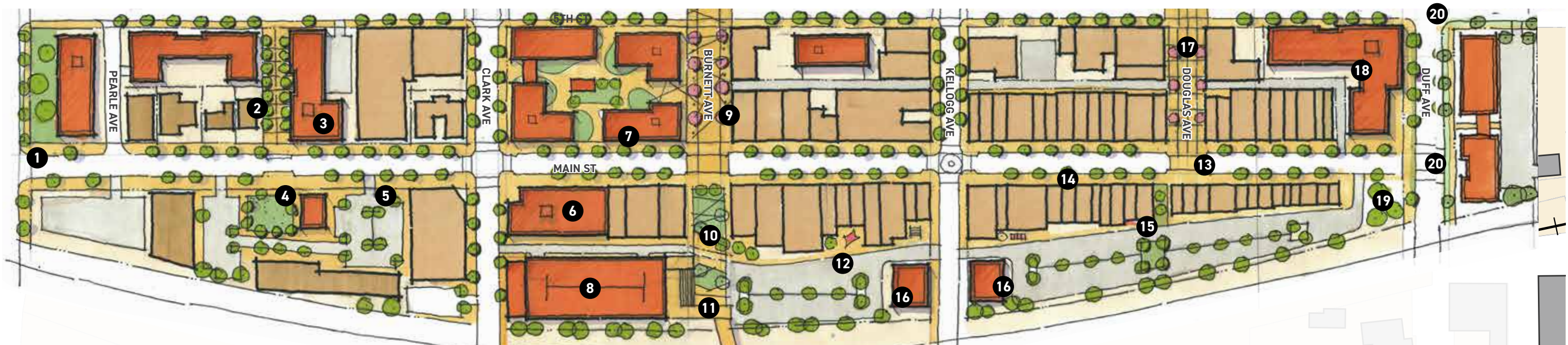
## D. CITY HALL / GRAND AVENUE

- D1: GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ON CITY LAND
- D2: MID-BLOCK CONNECTION FROM DEPOT TO CITY HALL
- D3: WESTERN EXTENSION OF MAIN STREET BUILDINGS
- D4: REDEVELOPMENT AROUND THE DEPOT



# A MAIN STREET ACTIVATION

## OVERVIEW



- A1: REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET
- A2: DOUGLAS “CIVIC FESTIVAL” STREET
- A3: ACTIVATION OF THE BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET
- A4: GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining and growing the health and vitality of businesses on Main Street is a priority for all stakeholders. The Vision supports the social, business, and civic life on Main Street and envisions providing Main Street with wider sidewalks that are flexible, and supportive of year round activity. As Main Street attracts more dining, drinking, and entertainment establishments it will generate more foot traffic and increased demand for outdoor dining. A new Main Street with wider sidewalks will enable this activity to flourish.

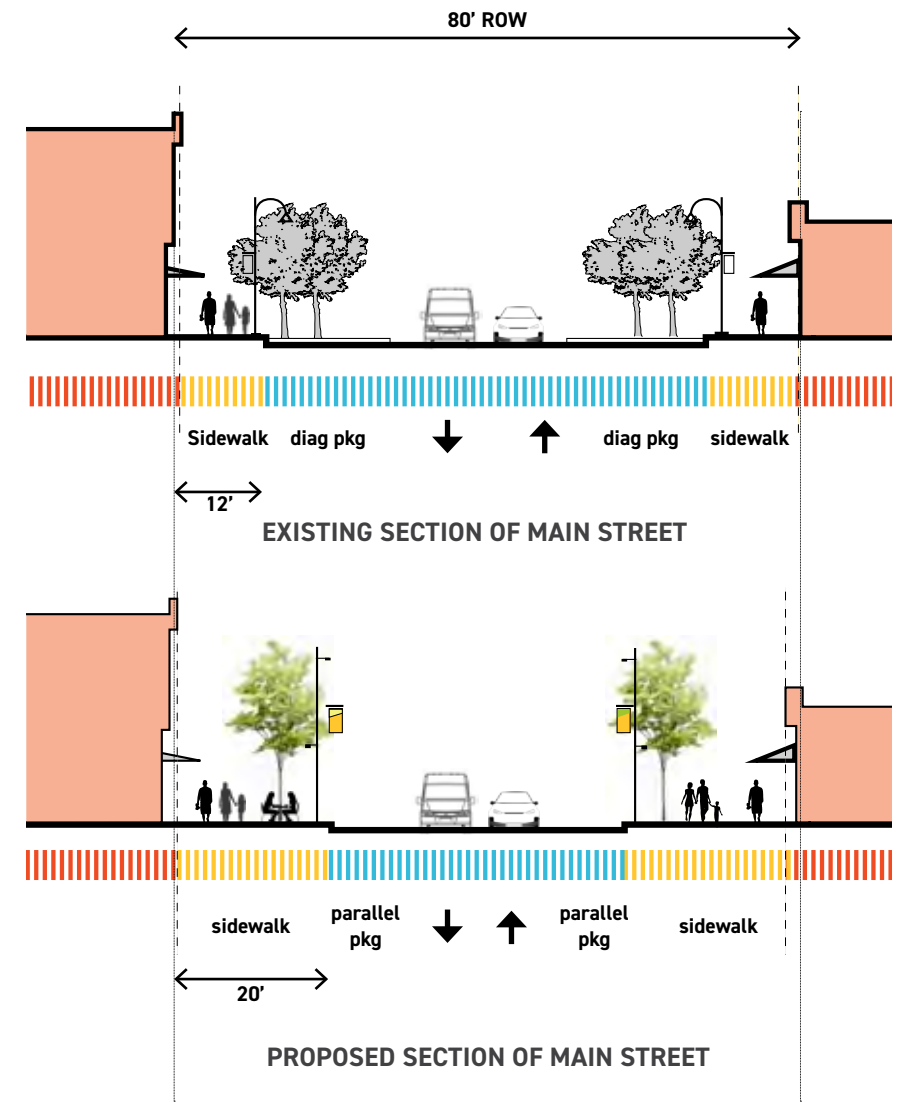
Main Street will also be enhanced with improvements to its backside - the south face of buildings along the parking lot. This is important because it is the first impression of the Downtown for many who arrive by car. Improvements include converting spaces to dining patios, rehabilitating facades and adding murals.

- 1 ENHANCE STREETScape AT WEST GATEWAY
- 2 NEW MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN WAY - CITY HALL TO MAIN STREET MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS
- 3 NEW MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT (COMMERCIAL GROUND FLOOR)
- 4 RECONFIGURE PARKING - ADD SMALL SINGLE TENANT RETAIL PODS (AKA “JEWEL BOX RETAIL”)
- 5 LANDSCAPE BUFFER BETWEEN PARKING AND STREET
- 6 NEW MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT ON KEY CORNER SITE
- 7 NEW MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT BLOCK - COMMERCIAL FRONTAGE ALONG MAIN STREET
- 8 PARKING RAMP ALONG RAIL LINE WITH MOBILITY HUB ON GROUND LEVEL AT TOM EVANS PLAZA
- 9 BURNETT AVENUE AS NORTH-SOUTH LINEAR PARK
- 10 IMPROVEMENT OF TOM EVANS PLAZA
- 11 EXTENSION OF TOM EVANS PLAZA
- 12 ACTIVATION OF BACKS OF BUILDINGS - CREATE A ONE-SIDED STREET-LIKE ENVIRONMENT
- 13 UPDATE MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS ON MAIN STREET
- 14 EXPAND SIDEWALKS ON MAIN STREET
- 15 IMPROVE REAR PARKING; ADD STREETScape AND CORRESPONDING LANDSCAPE ISLAND INTO PARKING LOT
- 16 ADD NEW BUILDINGS ALONG KELLOGG AVENUE IN PLACE OF SOME SURFACE PARKING
- 17 DOUGLAS FESTIVAL STREET (FLEXIBLE: CLOSED FOR EVENTS)
- 18 NEW MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT (ALLEY BELOW)
- 19 STREETScape AND GATEWAY PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS
- 20 BETTER CONNECTIONS ACROSS DUFF AVENUE TO BANDSHELL PARK



# MAIN STREET ACTIVATION

## REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET



EXISTING CONDITION



EXAMPLES FROM OTHER CITIES OF SIMILAR IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC SPACES

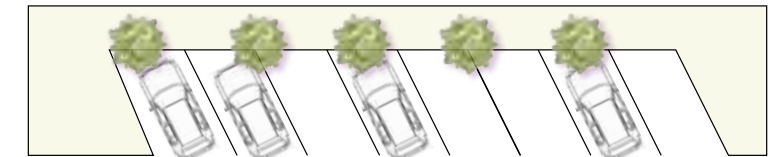
- MAIN POINTS**
- » Redesign Main Street to maintain assets such as mature trees and public art while expanding the sidewalk zone to increase pedestrian amenities.
  - » Convert diagonal parking to parallel parking in order to expand sidewalk space.
  - » Move dining and furnishing zone away from storefront to maintain clear access and allow expansive dining zones.



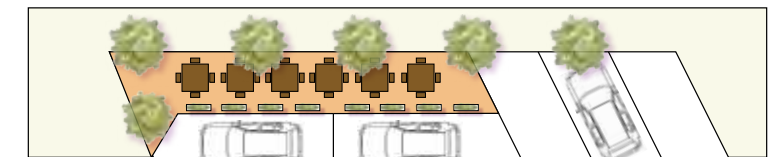
## REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET: INTERIM IMPROVEMENTS

Redesign and rebuild of Main Street is an eventual goal of this Vision to permanently improve the overall pedestrian quality of Main Street. However it recognizes the recent investments (full replacement of pavers) as well as the relative success of Main Street. Therefore, while improving Main Street is important, this Vision offers ideas for how small improvements can be completed in the interim. Ideas include:

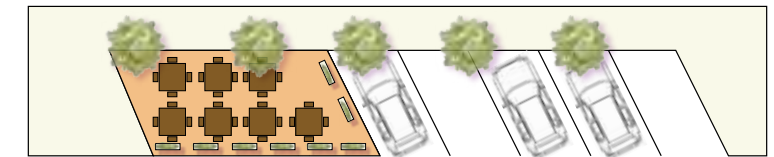
- Converting street parking spots to temporary/seasonal dining patios.
- Encouraging businesses to turn “inside out” by using sidewalk space for selling product, transactions, and dining.
- Establishing a “social district” or “sip and stroll zone” that allows businesses to sell alcohol to walk up customers and allows adults to walk downtown with alcoholic beverages during events
- Permit street performance and other forms of outdoor entertainment.
- Consider “Main Street Acupuncture” program by investing in temporary installments that enable more people to use public spaces in downtown - such as a game cart, mobile library, or outdoor piano.



existing



potential dining patios



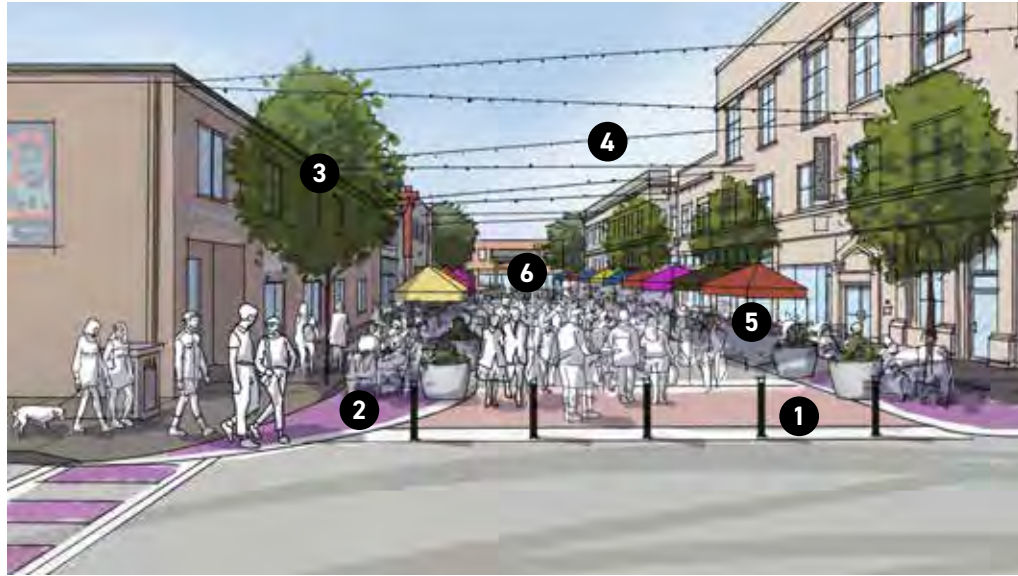
potential dining patios

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER CITIES OF SIMILAR IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC SPACES



# MAIN STREET ACTIVATION

## DOUGLAS "FESTIVAL STREET"



## ACTIVATION OF THE BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET



## GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT



EXISTING CONDITION



PRECEDENT



EXISTING CONDITION



PRECEDENT



EXISTING CONDITION



PRECEDENT

### MAIN POINTS

- » Consider converting Douglas Avenue into a "Festival Street" that can be programmed by Octagon, Ames History Museum, the Ames Public Library or Ames Main Street.
- » A street with flush curbs and special features such as centenary lights and special paving enables it to function as a street most of the time, but as a plaza on weekends or during events.

- 1 REMOVABLE OR POP UP BOLLARDS
- 2 CURB EXTENSIONS
- 3 STREET TREES
- 4 OVERHEAD STRING LIGHTING
- 5 TENTS IN PLACE OF PARKING
- 6 LIVE MUSIC

### MAIN POINTS

- » Dining patios and murals on the backside of Main Street will create a more welcoming and appealing entrance to the Downtown for those who park in the public lots.
- » Ganged and shared dumpsters will free up space and clean up these unsightly and unappealing, yet necessary elements.

- 1 EXTEND CURB; ADD LANDSCAPE
- 2 MURALS AND FACADE UPLIFTS
- 3 SEATING AND PEOPLE SPACE
- 4 NEW WINDOWS AND ENTRANCES
- 5 ROOFTOP ACCESS & ACTIVATION
- 6 PARKING

### MAIN POINTS

- » New buildings should follow simple guidelines that ensure continuity of a high quality public realm.
- » Overlay district (or similar tools) with stronger design controls can provide greater predictability and better outcomes.

- 1 HIGH QUALITY MATERIALS
- 2 VERTICAL ARTICULATION
- 3 BASE, MIDDLE, AND TOP
- 4 ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR USE
- 5 GROUND FLOOR TRANSPARENCY
- 6 PARKING IN BACK



# B SCHAIKNER PLAZA TO LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

## OVERVIEW

Located in the middle of Downtown this focus area will tie together important investments with new public spaces while providing infrastructure that makes it easier for people to get Downtown. Schainker Plaza will be a significant new park that will attract people from around the city year round. Lincoln Way will be home to several projects consisting of several hundred new residential units, a hotel and retail/commercial space along Kellogg Avenue. This focus area redesigns and extends Tom Evans Plaza both north towards Schainker Plaza and South towards Lincoln Way. The Plan recommends Burnett Avenue become a linear park with features such as public art, shade structures, plantings and benches along one side.

The focus area also includes recommendations for a multi-modal ramp behind Main Street. The ramp should include a mobility hub, transit center (relocated from City Hall), welcome center, bike share, public restroom, and other features and amenities for Downtown patrons and visitors.

- B1: IMPROVEMENTS TO TOM EVANS PLAZA
- B2: MULTI-MODAL PARKING RAMP AND WELCOME CENTER
- B3: BURNETT AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS
- B4: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BANK BLOCK



- 1 SCHAIKNER PLAZA
- 2 BURNETT AVENUE AS NORTH-SOUTH LINEAR PARK
- 3 ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COLLEGIAN THEATER
- 4 "BANK BLOCK" MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT SITE
- 5 5TH STREET REDEVELOPMENT SITE - CONSOLIDATE PARKING INTO A VERTICAL MIXED-USE BUILDING
- 6 IMPROVEMENT OF TOM EVANS PLAZA
- 7 LANDING AREA OF PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE FROM THE LINC / EXTENSION OF TOM EVANS PLAZA
- 8 PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OVER RAIL LINE TO THE LINC (PROPOSED)
- 9 PARKING RAMP ALONG RAIL LINE
- 10 MOBILITY HUB AND AMPHITHEATER STAIRS ALONGSIDE PARKING RAMP
- 11 MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT LINING PARKING RAMP ALONG CLARKE AVENUE
- 12 BANK SITE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- 13 ACTIVATION OF BACKS OF BUILDINGS - CREATE A ONE-SIDED STREET-LIKE ENVIRONMENT
- 14 ADD NEW BUILDINGS ALONG KELLOGG AVENUE IN PLACE OF SOME SURFACE PARKING
- 15 THE LINC - BUILDING 1 (PROPOSED)
- 16 THE LINC - BUILDING 2 (PROPOSED)



# SCHAINKER PLAZA TO LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

## TOM EVANS PLAZA



TERRACED SEATING ALLOWS PEOPLE TO USE THE SPACE A VARIETY OF WAYS.



**BURNETT AVENUE**  
Linear Park / roadway that creates a north south public space, connecting to areas north of Downtown.

**MAIN STREET**  
small stage, kiosk and wayfinding at the top of Tom Evans Plaza.

**TOM EVANS PLAZA**  
Terraced space with sculptural objects that facilitate a variety of postures and uses.

**TOM EVANS EXTENSION: THE PORCH**  
Performance space and entrance to Downtown. Combined with vertical circulation for the Linc and intermodal ramp.

**LINK TO THE LINC**  
Skyway/pedestrian bridge connection across the tracks to connect the LINC to downtown.



## SCHAINKER PLAZA TO LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT



### MAIN POINTS

- » Tom Evans Plaza is extended north as part of a Burnett Avenue linear park and south to connect to the developments on Lincoln Way.
- » The plaza will become the first impression for many who come to Downtown as they park in public lots or ramp and walk through it to get to Main Street.
- » The plaza should be both the “Front Porch” and the “Community Living Room” with terraces and benches that encourage flexibility and a range of small scale programming.
- » Mobile attractions such as a game cart, library cart, small food vendors, and micro kiosks will inject activity into the plaza.



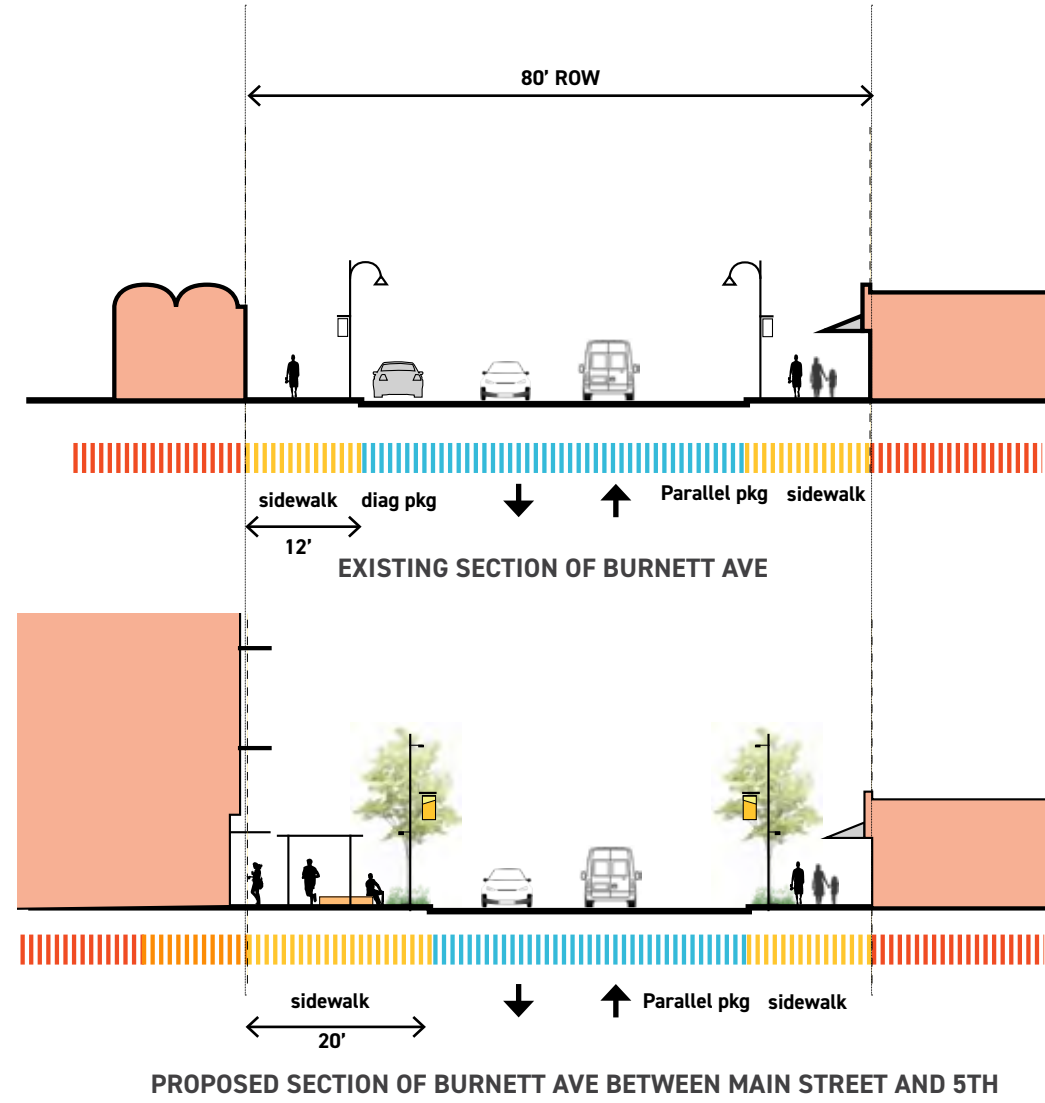
# SCHAINKER PLAZA TO LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

## BURNETT AVENUE



**MAIN POINTS**

- » Burnett Avenue is recognized as an important connection between Schainker Plaza and Main Street. In addition it can be promoted as a primary bike / walk connection to areas north of Downtown.
- » Enhanced setbacks on the west side of Burnett Avenue, between 6th Street and Main Street can create a linear park.
- » The linear park would have features such as public art, pedestrian lighting, seating, and shade trees.



ROCHESTER MN



ROCHESTER MN



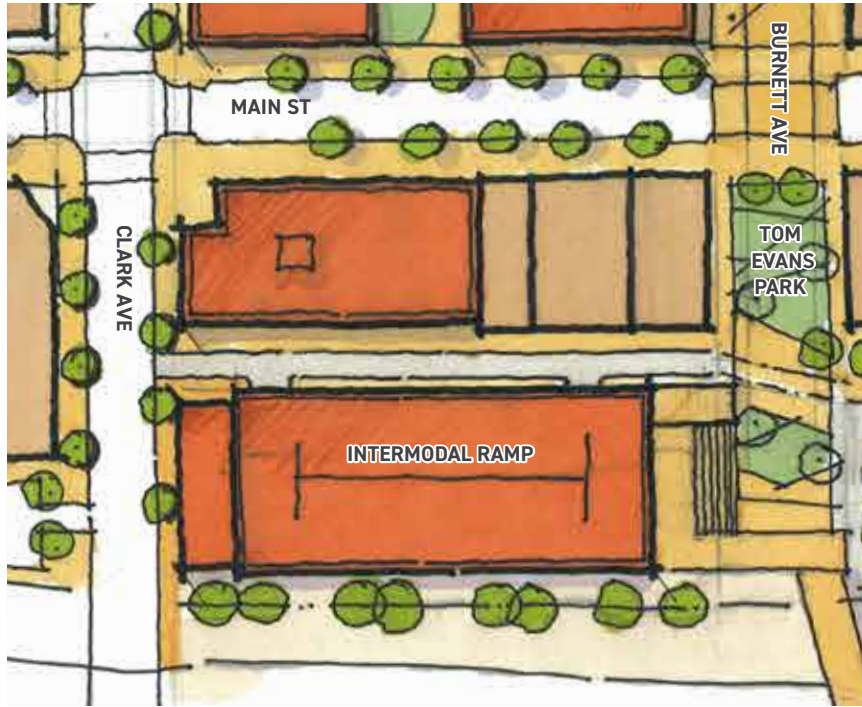
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN





# SCHAIKER PLAZA TO LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

## INTERMODAL RAMP



- MAIN POINTS**
- » A new intermodal parking ramp can also serve as a mobility hub, transit center (relocated from City Hall), a welcome center to provide wayfinding for visitors, public restroom, and daycare.
  - » The ramp can become a landing point for the bridge to the LINC while also serving as a seating pavilion for events in an expanded Tom Evans Plaza.
  - » Consideration should be given to ensuring the Clark Avenue frontage is pedestrian-friendly, possibly occupied by a liner building or retail at the ground floor.



1 RETAIL LINER ON A PARKING RAMP



2 MOBILITY HUB THAT TIES TOGETHER MULTIPLE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

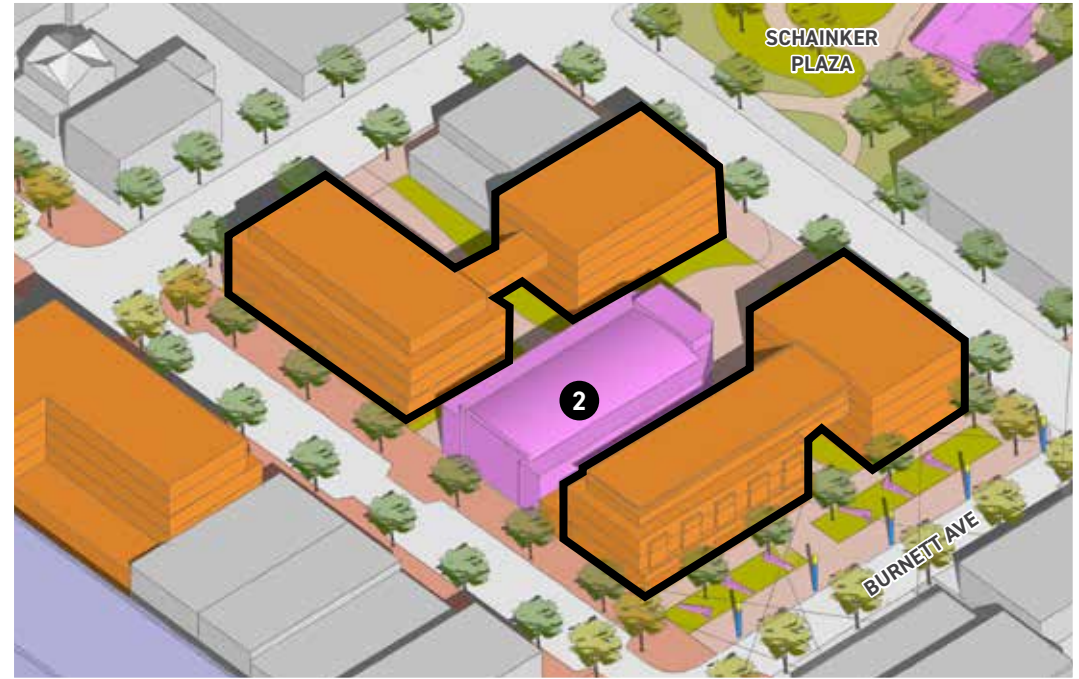


3 DENVER, CO

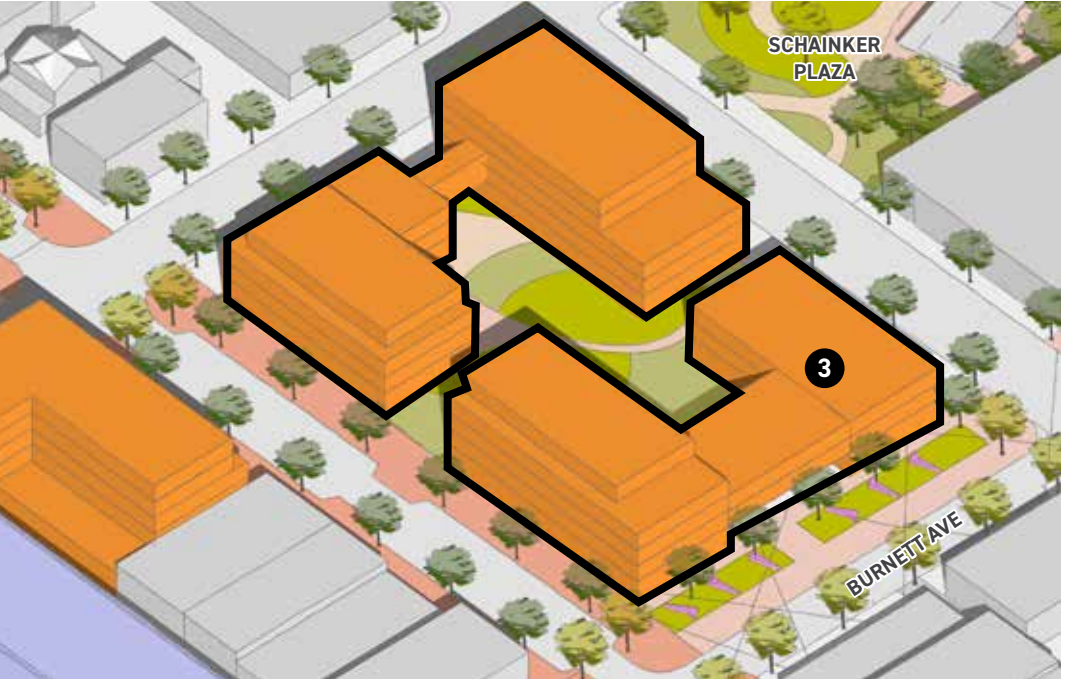


# SCHAINKER PLAZA TO LINCOLN WAY DEVELOPMENT

## REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BANK BLOCK



POROUS BLOCK INCORPORATING THE THEATER WITH PARKING UNDERGROUND



FULL BLOCK DEVELOPMENT, MAXIMIZES DENSITY

**MAIN POINTS**

- » The Bank Block is a key connection between Schainker Plaza and Main Street. It is the largest redevelopment opportunity in the Downtown proper.
- » As a mixed use development, it can reinforce retail on Main Street, provide needed housing and possibly incorporate the historic Collegian Theater building.
- » Parking for the development should either be included underground or nestled to the interior of the block.



FORMER COLLEGIAN THEATER FACADE



PITTSBURGH, PA



ALEXANDRIA, VA



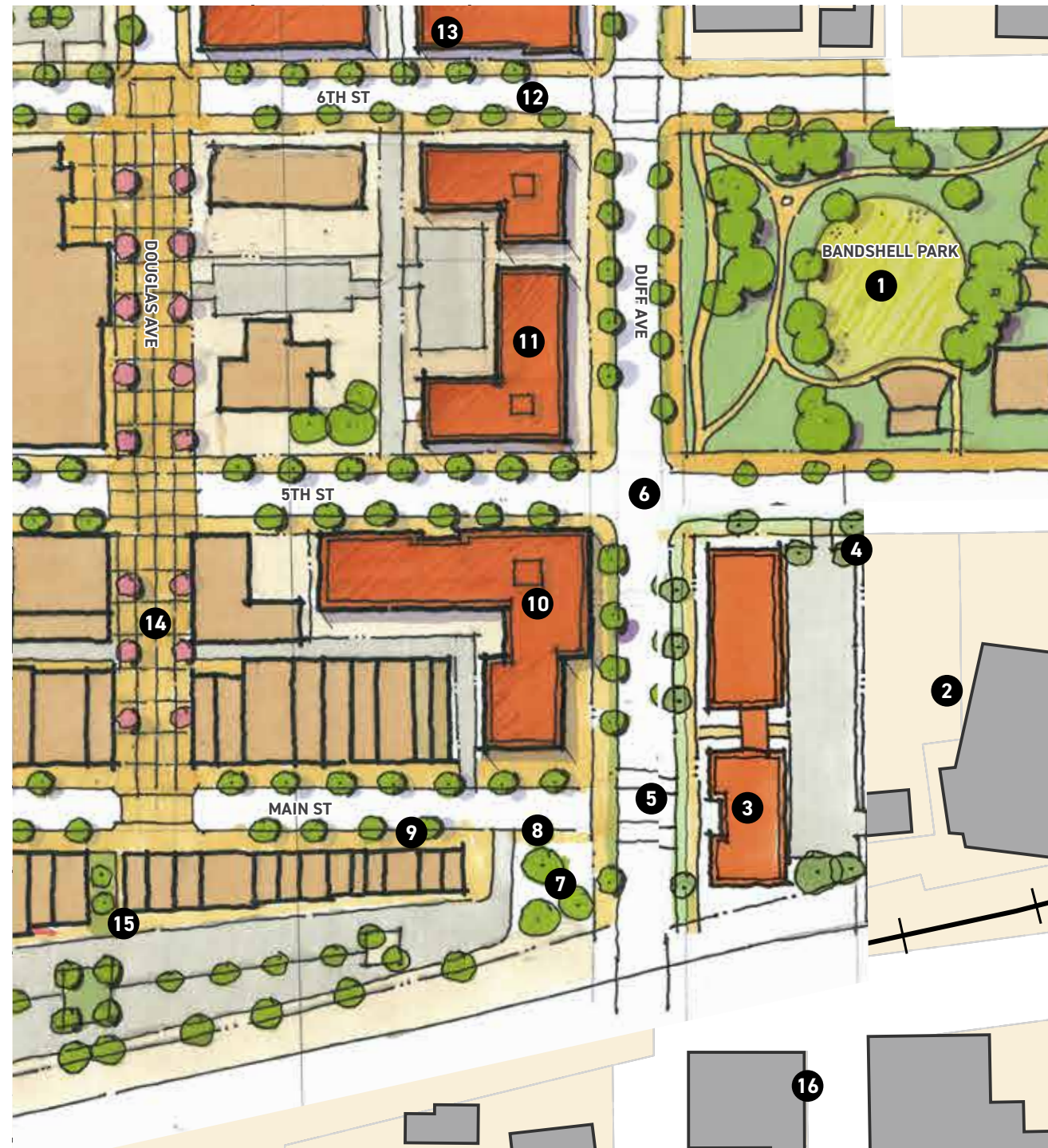


# C EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVENUE

## OVERVIEW

The east edge of Downtown is a key entrance to the district, while also offering opportunity for development, growth and placemaking. It also provides opportunities to expand the reach of Downtown - offering connections to Bandshell Park and heightening the prominence of the Power Plant. The focus area identifies several sites for redevelopment on both sides of Duff Avenue - offering excellent locations for new housing anchoring the east edge of Downtown. The Vision recommends highlighting the Power Plant - (the city's tallest building) by celebrating it as public art (through murals, lighting, etc). The Vision also supports converting Duff Avenue to a three lane section (road diet) in order to create safer crossings and access to Bandshell Park - subject to further study.

- C1: HIGHLIGHTING THE POWER PLANT
- C2: IMPROVED MAIN STREET GATEWAY
- C3: IMPROVED CONNECTIONS TO BANDSHELL PARK
- C4: REDEVELOPMENTS ALONG DUFF AVENUE



- 1 ENHANCE BANDSHELL PARK (LIMB UP TREES, IMPROVE LIGHTING, ETC. (LONG TERM - COMPLETELY REDESIGN AND UPDATE)
- 2 LIGHTING/ART ON POWER PLANT
- 3 POWER PLANT DRIVEWAY REMOVAL - REPLACE WITH IMPROVED OPEN SPACE (LONG TERM - EXPLORE PARKING DECK WRAPPED WITH VERTICAL MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT)
- 4 IMPROVE STREETScape ALONG 5TH STREET AND POWER PLANT; CREATE A WELL-DESIGNED PERIMETER AROUND POWER PLANT
- 5 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS: CROSSWALK REALIGNMENT, CURB RAMPS, LANDSCAPING, AND SAFETY MEASURES
- 6 EXPLORE OPTIONS TO ADD CROSSWALK; CONSIDER A ROAD DIET ON DUFF AVENUE
- 7 STREETScape AND ENTRY POCKET PARK IMPROVEMENTS
- 8 REDUCE EXCESS TRAVEL LANE WIDTHS TO WIDEN SIDEWALKS AND IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
- 9 MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS - WIDEN SIDEWALKS, CHANGE PARKING FROM DIAGONAL TO PARALLEL, ADD STREET TREES AND AREAS OF OUTDOOR DINING
- 10 VERTICAL MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT ALONG MAIN, DUFF, AND 5TH - PARKING IN FOOTPRINT ACCESSED VIA ALLEY
- 11 DEVELOPMENT OF EAST HALF OF BLOCK ALONG DUFF AVENUE (MODERATE DENSITY WITH SURFACE PARKING OR HIGH DENSITY WITH STRUCTURED PARKING); ACCESS PARKING VIA ALLEY
- 12 BIKEWAY ALONG 6TH STREET; SAFE CROSSING OF DUFF AVENUE TO ACCESS BANDSHELL PARK
- 13 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG 6TH STREET
- 14 DOUGLAS FESTIVAL STREET (CLOSED FOR EVENTS)
- 15 IMPROVE ALLEY PARK; ADD STREETScape AND CORRESPONDING LANDSCAPE ISLAND INTO PARKING LOT
- 16 POTENTIAL ARTS-BASED WAREHOUSE DISTRICT WITH ADAPTIVE REUSE BUILDINGS



**HIGHLIGHTING THE POWER PLANT**



**MAIN POINTS**

- » Highlight the tallest structure in the city by using public art to highlight the prominence and stature of the Power Plant.

**IMPROVED MAIN STREET GATEWAY**



**MAIN POINTS**

- » The Main Street/Duff Avenue intersection is a key gateway to Downtown. It also provides opportunity to improve connections to Bandshell Park and the east side of Duff Avenue.



SEATTLE, WA



MERCHANDISE MART, CHICAGO, IL



THE ARTERY- HOPKINS, MN (BEFORE)



AFTER



AFTER



# EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVENUE

## REDEVELOPMENT ALONG DUFF AVENUE

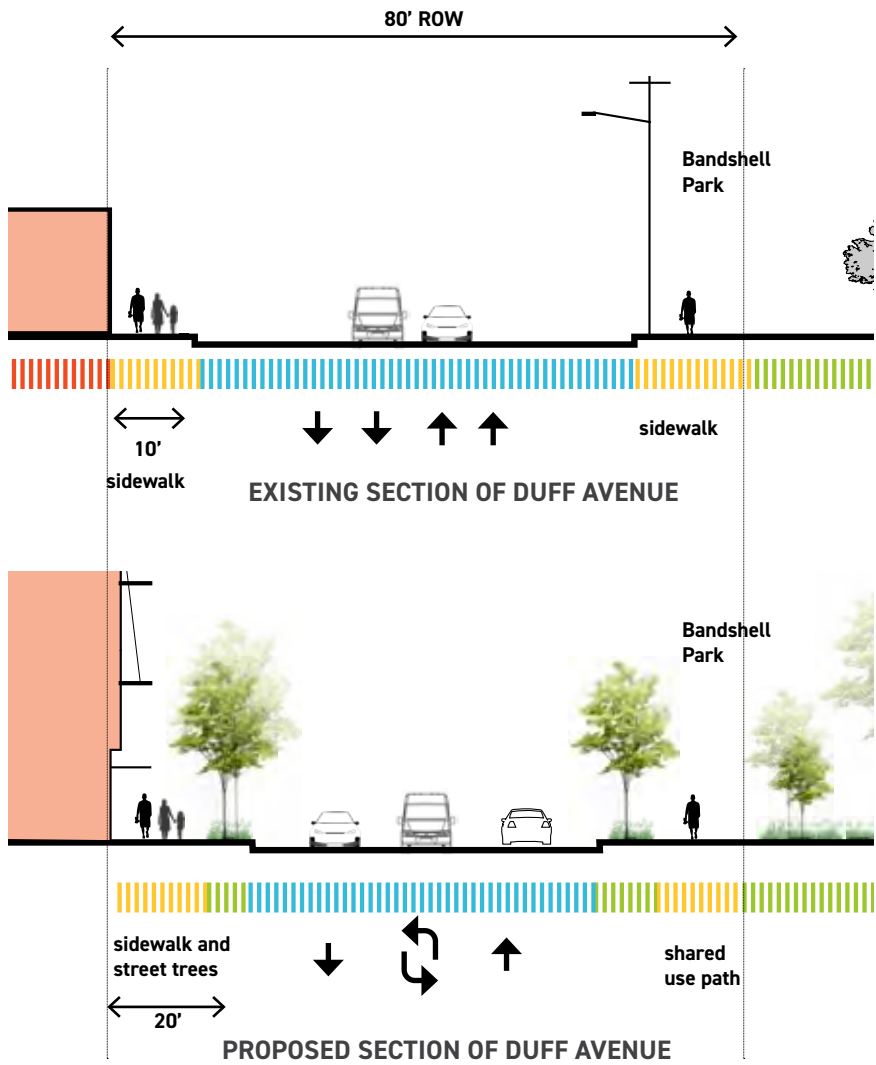


LOWA 46 - MINNEAPOLIS, MN

**MAIN POINTS**

- » Duff Avenue presents some of the only blighted buildings and vacant properties in Downtown, including the city-owned property south of Bandshell Park.
- » Framing a new gateway with buildings will help clarify the sense of entry while also slowing traffic due to spatial enclosure.

## IMPROVED CONNECTIONS TO BANDSHELL PARK



**MAIN POINTS**

- » With average daily traffic between 10,000 and 12,000 Duff Avenue is well within the industry standard for consideration of a road diet from four lanes to a three lane road.
- » A road diet would enable construction of a shared use path or bike lane as planned for in the city's Bike Pedestrian Plan.
- » Improving the pedestrian crossings along Duff Ave. at Main St. and 6th St., together with a road diet, will improve access to Bandshell Park.
- » Improving pedestrian crossings will also provide residents east of Duff Ave. and north of Bandshell Park better access for to businesses and amenities Downtown.



EAST BOULEVARD - CHARLOTTE, NC





# D CITY HALL / GRAND AVENUE

## OVERVIEW

The west side of Downtown is anchored by two landmark buildings - the Depot and City Hall. Many of the properties in between these two buildings are under utilized; specifically several of the buildings between 5th Street and Grand Avenue. The Vision suggests redevelopment of this area with housing and street facing retail on Main Street. A mid block connection between City Hall and the Depot can become a much needed pedestrian way through Downtown. The southern end of the walkway can become a small parklet in front of the depot building and can serve as a setting for new retail. The Vision proposes a private / public partnership to redevelop a portion of the City Hall parking lot into a parking ramp with housing. The ramp can be used to support general development in the area as well as serve as protected parking for fleet vehicles.

- D1: GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ON CITY LAND
- D2: MID-BLOCK CONNECTION FROM DEPOT TO CITY HALL
- D3: WESTERN EXTENSION OF MAIN STREET BUILDINGS
- D4: REDEVELOPMENT AROUND THE DEPOT



- 1 ENHANCE STREETScape AT WEST GATEWAY
- 2 NEW MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN WAY - CITY HALL TO MAIN STREET MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS
- 3 NEW MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT (COMMERCIAL GROUND FLOOR)
- 4 RECONFIGURE PARKING - ADD RETAIL JEWEL BOX AND SMALL OPEN SPACE
- 5 LANDSCAPE BUFFER BETWEEN PARKING AND STREET
- 6 NEW MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT ON CITY-OWNED LAND (CONSIDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SHARED RAMP)
- 7 TRANSIT MALL RELOCATED TO PARKING RAMP EAST OF CLARKE AVENUE ALONG RAILROAD TRACKS
- 8 PRESERVE DEPOT (CONTINUE WITH CURRENT USE)
- 9 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING PARKING, LOBBIES, AND RESIDENTIAL UNITS ON THE GROUND FLOOR)
- 10 SUPPORT EXISTING AND EXPLORE ADDITIONAL RETAIL AND FOOD/BEVERAGE USES IN THESE BUILDINGS
- 11 EXPLORE LONGER-TERM, SUBSTANTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE DEPOT BLOCK (BUT CONTINUE TO PRESERVE AND HIGHLIGHT THE DEPOT)



HISTORIC AMES DEPOT





**MAIN POINTS**

- » A walkway between 6th Street and the Depot can become a new avenue for housing. A public / private partnership on the City's parking lot can provide parking for redevelopment as well as protected parking for fleet vehicles.
- » New housing along Grand Avenue creates a positive gateway into Downtown.
- » A small park in front of the Depot can become an additional gathering place and setting for retail/ restaurants. It can also provide an un-programmed place for patrons to gather and show activity in this area to attract more people.

**GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ON CITY LAND**

**MID-BLOCK CONNECTION FROM DEPOT TO CITY HALL**

**WESTERN EXTENSION OF MAIN STREET BUILDINGS**

**SMALL SCALE REDEVELOPMENT AROUND THE DEPOT**



THE CASCADE - SIOUX FALLS, SD

CITY VIEW - RICHMOND, VA

CLEMATIS STREET - WEST PALM BEACH, FL

NORTH HILLS - RALEIGH, NC





# 5

## CHAPTER SEQUENCING & IMPLEMENTATION



# FOUR BIG IDEAS, GOALS, AND METRICS

## A ROBUST AND COMPLETE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Encourage efficient infill and mixed use development to create a vibrant Downtown for living, entertainment, unique retail and civic activities.

**GOAL** More residents and overnight visitors

**METRIC** Number of new residents living in the Downtown.

**GOAL** An 18 Hour Downtown: a hub of activity throughout the day and into the evening.

**METRIC** Amount of after dinner events in the Downtown, and retail establishments open into the evening.

## STREETS AS SPACES

Redesign existing public spaces to provide a wider variety of experiences for people to enjoy.

**GOAL** To enhance the use of existing public spaces to increase social activity, gathering, and enjoyment

**METRIC** Number of opportunities for use of streets for informal gatherings, events, parklets, etc.

**GOAL** Improve the perimeter and entrances to Downtown.

**METRIC** Exit surveys indicating simplicity and user friendliness of Downtown for visitors

## CONNECTIONS TO IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Strengthen relationship with Iowa State University through partnerships, development, transportation, and programming.

**GOAL** Improve engagement with Iowa State University by offering more off-campus experiences for the ISU community.

**METRIC** Number of visitors and businesses in Downtown with a close relationship to the University.

**GOAL** Promote use of Downtown as a classroom and laboratory for the University.

**METRIC** Number of classes and students using the Downtown for instruction and learning.

## AN ENTREPRENEURIAL DOWNTOWN

Support a spirit of local pride by creating a fertile environment for local businesses, restaurants, and entertainment venues to succeed.

**GOAL** Create many opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to flourish in Downtown.

**METRIC** Number of new businesses and events opening in Downtown.

**GOAL** Foster the arts, entertainment, and innovation throughout the Downtown

**METRIC** Number of art installations and events in Downtown.



## SHORT TERM ACTIONS

### SHORT TERM ACTIONS THAT CAN BE LED BY AMES MAIN STREET AND THE ALLIANCE



- Pursue SSMID (self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District) Designation for the Downtown
- Pursue a Great Places Designation from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Seek additional funding to help businesses take advantage of the parklet program that converts on street parking spaces to dining patios.
- Work with the City to consider establishing a “Social District” or “Sip and Stroll” ordinance that can be deployed during events.
- Continue and expand the Downtown Events and Arts Fund to support public events and arts in the Downtown.
- Seek opportunities for micro-retail in small spaces such as retail pods, vacant storefronts, or kiosks.
- Work with the City and business owners to create shared dumpsters, thereby improving the overall aesthetics of the parking lots.
- Work with Ames Electric Services to commission an artist to re-imagine the power plant towers, a landmark and community anchor in Downtown.
- Encourage creative programming in both Tom Evans Plaza and Schinker Plaza with a wide variety community partners in order to welcome and invite more users into Downtown.
- Install “light” infrastructure (temporary and/or mobile), for community activities in Tom Evans Plaza and Schinker Plaza such as
  - » Dining patios in on-street parking spaces
  - » Game/library cart in Tom Evans Plaza
  - » Sidewalk chess
  - » Micro retail in kiosks or temporary containers.

### SHORT TERM ACTIONS THAT CAN BE LED BY THE CITY



- Revisit and update parking occupancy data / study
- Explore a shared parking and parking benefit district policy that will enable better utilization of existing parking resources and enable infill development.
- Explore state and federal funding opportunities for public private partnerships related to an intermodal ramp.
  - » Initiate conversations with Cy Ride regarding a possible relocation of downtown bus stops to a new intermodal facility.
- Review use of TIF for redevelopment, consider its expansion to support mixed use development.
- Initiate discussions with University to develop strategy for increasing the University presence in and collaborations with Downtown.
- Initiate redesign of Tom Evans Plaza
- Initiate efforts to improve the backside of Main Street by creating a wider walkway, expanding the mural program to enliven the facades.
- As the City identifies Capital Improvement Plans and Projects utilize this Vision to consider opportunities for implementation



# INCREMENTAL CHANGES

## SEQUENCING

- The purpose of this Vision is offer suggestions that create new opportunities/projects that can further enhance Downtown. There are four focus areas and 16 different opportunities/projects - some rely on private development and financing, others that can be undertaken by public agencies, and some require participation from Downtown Stakeholders.
- Many of the opportunities/projects require significant public investments. Rather than initiating large projects immediately the Vision suggests taking incremental steps by implementing pilot projects and smaller investments. The objective of pilot projects is to test and demonstrate - on a small and temporary scale - how streets can become spaces, how parking and public space can be used differently and more effectively by Downtown users.
- This strategic approach of “incremental changes before big investments” is especially crucial for Main Street, the very heart of Downtown and a proven success by many measures. The Vision suggests thoughtful enhancements that prioritize safety, inclusivity, flexibility, and comfort—ensuring Main Street continues to thrive while adapting to evolving community needs. While these changes may occasionally require customers to park on a side street or behind Main Street, they serve as a necessary step toward long-term improvements. Instead of undertaking an immediate, large-scale reconstruction that could cause significant disruption, the Vision advocates for deliberate, small-scale enhancements that will lay the foundation for a comprehensive transformation of Main Street in the future.. This may include:
  - » Improvements to Cynthia Duff Plaza and Tom Evans Plaza that make the short walk from parking to Main Street a pleasant experience; thereby testing the impact of public realm improvements on access to businesses.
  - » Occasional one block closures to Douglas Avenue and/or Burnett Avenue for programmed events to test impacts to circulation and occasional reduction of parking.
  - » Wayfinding and signage that make Downtown easier to navigate.
  - » Enhanced and more frequent use of the parklet program that enables businesses to create dining patios in place of on street parking spaces - thereby testing the tradeoff of reduced parking in favor of improved spaces for businesses.
  - » Investment in small mobile carts or kiosks that can be used to help bring activity to public spaces - such as a game cart, book cart, pop up meeting spaces, or sidewalk chess.



PIANOS ON MAIN STREET



MICRO, MOBILE AND/OR TEMPORARY RETAIL



MOBILE LIBRARY OR BOOK CART



INVITATIONS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS TO USE DOWNTOWN FOR EVENTS AND GATHERINGS



GAME KIOSK

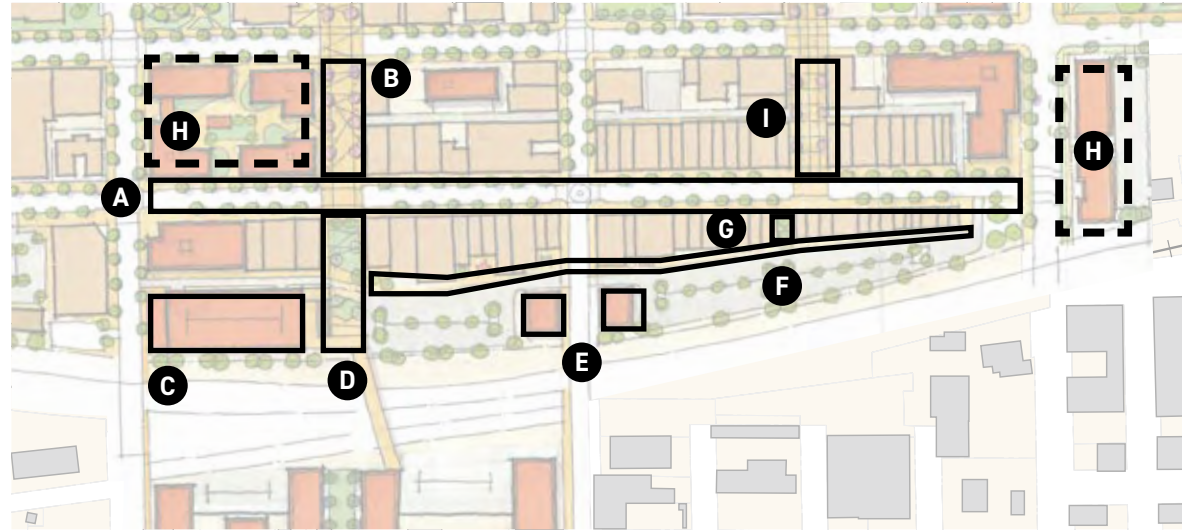


DINING PATIOS REPLACING ON STREET PARKING





# IMPLEMENTATION OF PARKING CHANGES



Currently the City manages the Downtown public parking inventory (both on street and off street spaces). Today, the revenues derived from managing the parking supply are intended to help offset the operations, enforcement, and maintenance of that supply. Currently there is no excess revenue that can be used to maintain, let alone invest significant capital in a parking ramp. Prior parking studies indicate a substantial increase in operational costs for the parking fund are required in order to achieve a break even goal (revenues=operations + maintenance + enforcement) should a parking ramp be built (as suggested in this vision). Therefore the City will have to evaluate a comprehensive parking strategy that would include adjusting parking rates throughout Downtown due to maintenance, enforcement, and operation al expenses of a parking ramp are considerably higher than that of a surface lot or on street parking.

		Parking Impact	Connectivity and Public Space Impact
A	MAIN STREET CONVERSION OF DIAGONAL PARKING TO PARALELL PARKING	-100	ADDITIONAL 10' TO ALL SIDEWALKS
B	BURNETT AVENUE CONVERSION OF PARALLEL PARKING TO LINEAR PARK	.2	LINEAR PARK CONNECTION BETWEEN SHAINCKER PLAZA AND MAIN STREET
C	MULTI MODAL RAMP (SEE NOTE)	-110 + 300 SPACES = +200	MORE CLEAR AND MORE PLEASANT ARRIVAL AND CONNECTION TO MAIN STREET
D	IMPROVEMENT AND EXTENSION OF TOM EVANS PLAZA	-15	IMPROVED SIDEWALK ENVIRONMENT ON KELLOGG - CONNECTION BETWEEN LINC AND MAIN STREET
E	RETAIL ON KELLOGG AVENUE	-40	MORE CLEAR AND MORE PLEASANT ARRIVAL AND CONNECTION TO MAIN STREET
F	IMPROVEMENT OF BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET	0	MORE CLEAR AND MORE PLEASANT ARRIVAL AND CONNECTION TO MAIN STREET
G	IMPROVEMENTS TO CYNTHIA DUFF PLAZA	0	MORE CLEAR AND MORE PLEASANT ARRIVAL AND CONNECTION TO MAIN STREET
H	ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARKING ARRANGEMENTS	TBD	
I	DOUGLAS FESTIVAL STREET	0	EVENT SPACE FOR DOWNTOWN, BETTER CONNECTION BETWEEN LIBRARY AND MAIN STREET

*note 1: further study and design will determine how Main Street can be re-built and the actual resulting parking impact. This line item assumes all diagonal parking converts to parallel. However each block will be evaluated individually to determine appropriate configuration.*

*note 2: assumes a four level ramp with ground floor used primarily for transit*



## POTENTIAL COSTS

	Cost opinion at initial Planning Level (FEBRUARY 2025)	
<b>A. MAIN STREET ACTIVATION</b>		
<b>A1: REDESIGN OF MAIN STREET</b>	\$7,000,000 - \$11,000,000	Public realm improvements Grand to Duff = 2600 lf Will be evaluated on a block by block basis and may not be a single project
<b>A2: DOUGLAS "FESTIVAL" STREET</b>	\$400,000-\$600,000	Public realm improvements Main to 5th = 300 lf
<b>A3: ACTIVATION OF THE BACKSIDE OF MAIN STREET</b>	\$600,000 - \$800,000	Public improvements (move curb, landscaping) + mural program Clark to Duff=1,500 lf
<b>A4: GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT</b>	\$50,000	Consultant work
<b>B. SCHAIKER TO THE LINC</b>		
<b>B1: IMPROVEMENTS TO TOM EVANS PARK</b>	\$900,000 - 1,300,000	Park plus edge of multi modal ramp
<b>B2: MULTI-MODAL RAMP, MOBILITY HUB, WELCOME CENTER</b>	\$12-15M	300 cars at 40K/car public private partnership plus grants if available
<b>B3: BURNETT AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS</b>	\$1,500,000 - \$2,000,000	Public realm improvements Main to 7th = 1,000 lf
<b>B4: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BANK BLOCK</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Private development
<b>C. EAST EDGE AND DUFF AVE</b>		
<b>C1: HIGHLIGHTING THE POWER PLANT</b>	\$150,000 - \$200,000	Public art commission
<b>C2: IMPROVED MAIN STREET GATEWAY</b>	\$150,000 - \$200,000	Public / private
<b>C3: IMPROVED CONNECTIONS TO BANDSHELL PARK</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Extent of work to be determined in Duff Avenue Study
<b>C4: REDEVELOPMENTS ALONG DUFF AVENUE</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Private development
<b>D. CITY HALL / GRAND AVE</b>		
<b>D1: GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ON CITY LAND</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Public private partnership
<b>D2: MID-BLOCK CONNECTION : DEPOT TO CITY HALL</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Private
<b>D3: WESTERN EXTENSION OF MAIN STREET BLDGS</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Private development
<b>D4: REDEVELOPMENT AROUND THE DEPOT</b>	TO BE DETERMINED	Private development

Cost opinions are based on 2025 costs and do not assume escalations over time. Costs also do not include below grade utility infrastructure upgrades that may be necessary.