



APEX DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN & PARKING STUDY

ADOPTED 12.17.19



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This planning effort would not have been possible without the commitment of many individuals who are enthusiastic about the vision presented within this document. Dedicated town staff and elected officials, passionate Steering Committee members, involved citizens and stakeholders, along with a team of skilled consultants made for a dynamic combination.



Elected Officials

Mayor Lance Olive
Mayor Pro Tem Nicole Dozier
Council Member Bill Jensen
Council Member Wesley Moyer
Council Member Audra Killingsworth
Council Member Brett Gantt
Mayor-elect Jacques Gilbert
Council Member-elect Terry Mahaffey
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Erin Thompson, Apex Historical Society
Joe Foresta, Downtown Developer
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Kyle Denis, Downtown Business Owner
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Meredith Kromenhoek, Downtown Business Owner
Nick Bryant, Apex Transit Committee, Town of Apex
Reggie Skinner, Planning Board, Town of Apex
Shane Reese, Apex Downtown Business Association
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**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study sets a course in Apex for transformational resilience. The success of great downtowns today depends on the experiences available for both residents and visitors. Being competitive in the marketplace means setting those experiences apart from other communities. Downtown Apex has a unique history and physical bones to rely on, but this plan's recommendations push the creation of really great places. Most importantly, the creation of really great PEOPLE places!

The plan is the result of a community-driven process that promotes vibrancy. Meaningful outreach and engagement of the citizens that live, work, and play in Apex was the key ingredient to producing a plan with public buy-in and political will. The community input was distilled to create three guiding principles which would influence every key goal and recommendation of the plan. Those principles ultimately informed the Top 10 projects for implementation.

1

Put People First

2

Celebrate Salem Street

3

Embrace Authentic Apex

Why this Plan? Why Now?

Community planning is about preparation. In the case of the Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study, the Town of Apex is preparing for a future of its own making. One built on beautiful historic bones and rich stories of generations past while looking forward to a future full of vibrancy and new memories. With an increasing population placing demand on what downtown needs to be and a national shift in people seeking urban living, the plan's timing could not be more perfect. The clear actions set forth must be methodically and diligently pursued as each step brings downtown Apex one step closer to the vision of prosperous vibrancy.

The Process & Key Findings

The planning process was less than a year in length in order to create short feedback loops between the design team and the community. The energy and momentum a process like this creates is palpable and yields quicker implementation of key recommendations. With decision makers and the general public at the table together along with a team of design experts, the resulting vision is truly insightful, boldly realistic, and fully backed by a bevy of champions.

The plan is built on principles and goals, but it is also built on data. Extensive research and analysis was conducted related to housing, retail, and parking with resulting development programs grounded in market reality. Quality, well-placed mixed-use development with appropriate amounts of well-managed parking begin to shift an often missed historic downtown into a vibrant downtown district no one wants to miss out on! Pushing the amount and types of housing within walking distance to that excitement is another vital component of forecasting success.

Guiding Principles

Put People First

For the vision of downtown Apex to be realized, people must be put first.

Celebrate Salem Street

The "Main Street" environment of Salem is the center of social interaction and community activities and all energy should emanate from this core.

Embrace Authentic Apex

The changes recommended in this plan are not meant to turn downtown into something different; rather to ensure the unique authenticity of Apex is enduring, embraced, and enhanced for residents and visitors to experience and enjoy.



Without change there is no innovation, CREATIVITY, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.

-William Pollard

Key Goals

The Guiding Principles influence the nine Key Goals established for the plan. These goals are intended to push the possibilities for downtown toward a more vibrant future.

Manage Parking Efficiently & Effectively

Parking strategies will involve a "new" parking supply in combination with placemaking, enforcement, programs, and alternate mobility options to yield an efficient and effective system.

Make Salem Street the Best Public Space in the Region

This is a bold goal that will be achieved through incremental investments to not just the streetscape and public spaces, but also the way the ground floor tenant mix is curated and the types and variety of activities that are programmed.

Create Vibrant Spaces for People to Gather

This goal will be realized through a variety of opportunities in and around downtown in spaces both expected and that might come as a surprise!

Expand Housing Options that Promote Equity

Providing quality housing options that mix income levels and generations should be provided within a walkable and bikable distance to the downtown core.

Create Connections to Downtown

Multi-modal connectivity to downtown is a critical element of bringing more people downtown safely.

Encourage a Diversity of Activities and Programming

This goal requires the creation of public spaces suitable for a diversity of activities.

Roll Out the Welcome Mat with Small Town Charm

Visual cues, such as quality development and signage at the gateways to downtown, will invite people into the community and set the pace for their experience.

Honor the History of Downtown

This goal is not about trying to recreate times gone by, but it is about celebrating the unique history of Apex in a prominent way through signage, art, and public space design in downtown.

Re-imagine Spaces through Art, Innovation, and Creativity!

The plan looks at forgotten spaces with creativity and strives to re-imagine those areas as vibrant, sustainable places for PEOPLE!

TOP 10 PROJECTS (IN PUBLIC PRIORITY ORDER)

1 Transform the Salem streetscape



2 Energize the alleys... Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station



3 Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown



4 Add a net gain of 200 parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, and 100 within a 3-minute walk



5 Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries and a boutique hotel to Salem Street

6 Re- envision the fire station site as a civic + mixed use development



7 Install wayfinding signage in and around Downtown



8 Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center



9 Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multi-modal and iconic gateway



10 Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of Downtown



Matrix of Guiding Principles, Key Goals, and Top 10 Projects

Guiding Principles Met	Top 10 Projects	Key Goals								
		Manage Parking Efficiently & Effectively	Make Salem Street the Best Public Space in the Region	Create Vibrant Spaces for People to Gather	Expand Housing Options that Promote Equity	Create Connections to Downtown	Encourage a Diversity of Activities and Programming	Roll Out the Welcome Mat with Small Town Charm	Honor the History of Downtown	Re-imagine Spaces through Art, Innovation, and Creativity!
1,2,3	1-Transform the Salem streetscape									
1,2,3	2-Energize the alleys...Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station									
1,2,3	3-Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown									
1,2,3	4-Add a net gain of 200 parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, and 100 within a 3-minute walk.									
1,2,3	5-Attract five new restaurants/ bars/ breweries and a boutique hotel									
1,2,3	6-Re-envision the fire station site as a civic + mixed use development									
1,2,3	7-Install wayfinding signage in and around Downtown									
1,2,3	8-Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center									
1,2,3	9-Make the transit station at 55 and Salem an iconic civic building and gateway feature									
1,2,3	10-Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of Downtown									

- Guiding Principles**
- 1-Put People First
 - 2-Celebrate Salem Street
 - 3-Embrace Authentic Apex

How We Know We Succeeded (also found in Chapter 9)

- Salem Street will be full of people – day and night.
- Retail and restaurant rents will outperform office.
- We’ve added 100 more housing units to the downtown area.
- We’ve created a REAL parking problem.
- People of all ages, ethnicities, and economic levels will be downtown.
- Entrepreneurs will have opened 10 more businesses.
- Children will be playing and making memories in downtown.
- Residents and visitors will know the story of downtown Apex.
- People will reach downtown Apex by biking, walking, bus, and car.
- Partnerships and old-fashioned hard work will have made it happen.



Implementation Matrix (also found in Chapter 9)

Order of Magnitude	Estimated Cost Range
\$	\$1 - \$50,000
\$\$	\$50,000 - \$250,000
\$\$\$	\$250,000 - \$1 million
\$\$\$\$	\$1 million - \$2 million
\$\$\$\$\$	\$2 million - \$5 million
\$\$\$\$\$\$	\$5 million+

Reference Number	Project/Task	Page Number	Level of Public Funding Required	Operating or Capital Expenditure	Private or Non-City Expenditure	On-going	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20	Year 20+	Code/Policy	Program/Study
4 Retail Market Conditions & Strategies													
4A	Improve the public realm for retail by adding interim parklets along Salem Street to allow for more spillover retail/dining experiences.	72	\$	O+C	Public/Private		X						
4B	Strengthen downtown Apex as a "theme/festival" destination district by adding 60-70,000 square feet of space to create 150,000 square feet total, which will increase the capture rate and grow the trade area by connecting the disconnected micro-climates with new offerings.	72	\$\$\$\$\$\$	O+C	Public/Private		X	X					
4C	Ensure the appropriate tenant mix by aligning retail recruitment efforts with demographics/demand and leakage opportunities.	72	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
4D	Develop communication materials based on a new downtown brand to share market information and the overall downtown investment strategy with potential investors and tenants.	72	\$	O			X						
4E	Program spaces with ambient entertainment to encourage greater visitation to downtown on non-event days.	72	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
4F	Promote and program events that drive retail sales and are done in collaboration with merchants and drive people into stores rather than keep them outside of stores.	72	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X

Reference Number	Project/Task	Page Number	Level of Public Funding Required	Operating or Capital Expenditure	Private or Non-City Expenditure	Ongoing	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20	Year 20+	Code/Policy	Program/Study
6 Parking Conditions & Strategies													
6A	Prioritize and invest in consistency and character of the Apex streetscapes.	101	\$\$\$\$\$	C			X	X					
6B	Improve sidewalk and crosswalk conditions within the core of downtown.	101	\$\$\$	C			X						
6C	Improve consistency of parking signage and wayfinding in and around downtown.	101	\$	C			X						
6D	Review current parking enforcement program including current time-limited locations and compare with high-demand parking utilization counts.	102	\$	O			X						X
6E	Conduct data collection for a parking turnover analysis (length of stay) for high-demand parking areas.	102	\$	O		X							X
6F	Allow overnight parking in the downtown core to make downtown residential viable and support safe travel of patrons who choose to ride-share home.	102	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
6G	Work with the new Downtown Development Coordinator and Downtown Business Association on a strategy to increase turnover for on-street locations.	102	\$	O			X						X
6H	Create a Downtown Ambassador's program for (polite) enforcement efforts.	102	\$	O			X						X
6I	Initiate a no cost warning ticket for first-time 'violators'.	102	\$	O			X						X
6J	Add a net gain of 200 public parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, with a minimum of 100 within a 3-minute walk.	102	\$\$\$	C			X						
6K	Establish leased parking agreements with private parking owners.	103	\$	O	Public/Private	X							
6L	Create a valet program for evenings and weekends.	103	\$	O	Public/Private			X					X
6M	Conduct a preliminary engineering feasibility study for a potential parking deck.	103	\$	C			X						X
6N	Consider establishing hourly paid parking along Salem Street.	103	\$	O				X					X

Reference Number	Project/Task	Page Number	Level of Public Funding Required	Operating or Capital Expenditure	Private or Non-City Expenditure	Ongoing	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20	Year 20+	Code/Policy	Program/Study
6O	Incorporate a bike-share program with stations around key destinations in downtown.	103	\$	C			X						X
6P	Balance demand more evenly by (a) encouraging turnover in lots that reach 85% occupancy, and (b) allowing longer-term parking in lots that were below 60% occupied.	105	\$	O			X						X
6Q	Prepare for national smart mobility trends by reaching out to peer communities, attending national or regional conference sessions, planning studies aimed at feasibility-level analysis, and continually reaching out to the citizens of Apex for involvement and guidance.	106	\$	O			X						X
6R	Evaluate all emerging technology packages and select an app-based parking occupancy system for the Town of Apex's public parking areas.	106	\$\$\$	C			X						X
7 Development Conditions & Strategies													
7A	Work with developers to create neighborhoods that mix housing typologies in a range of price points and also provide common open space.	115	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
7B	Adopt an affordable housing action plan and seek guidance from peer communities in North Carolina, such as Davidson, to understand their approach to affordable/workforce housing.	115	\$\$	O			X						X X
7C	Encourage the active reuse of historic structures with businesses that add vibrancy to Salem Street.	117	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
7D	Attract a boutique hotel to downtown Apex to provide an alternative hospitality option within walking distance of the core.	117	\$	O	Public/Private			X					
7E	Promote sensitive infill of housing and commercial in the Justice Heights neighborhood.	117	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
7F	Direct incremental infill within the downtown core of both mixed use and all forms of urban housing.	118	\$	O	Public/Private		X	X					

Reference Number	Project/Task	Page Number	Level of Public Funding Required	Operating or Capital Expenditure	Private or Non-City Expenditure	Ongoing	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20	Year 20+	Code/Policy	Program/Study
7G	Require new development to build quality street network connections based on an overall connectivity vision.	120	\$	O	Public/Private	X						X	
7H	Discourage outparcel development that functions independently and encourage phased infill that shares parking and access while addressing the streets.	120	\$	O	Public/Private	X						X	
8 Key Goals													
8A	Transform the Salem streetscape.	126	\$\$\$\$	O+C			X						
8B	Energize the alleys...Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station.	137	\$\$\$		Private		X						
8C	Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries and a boutique hotel to Salem Street.	139	\$	O	Public/Private		X						
8D	Recruit and form relationships with developers familiar with towns like Apex to implement urban housing in downtown.	142	\$	O	Public/Private	X							
8E	Work to meet demand for downtown housing and improve the housing stock through institutional partnerships.	142	\$\$	O+C	Public/Private	X							X
8F	Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of downtown	142	\$	O	Public/Private		X	X					
8G	Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown.	146	\$\$\$\$	C	Public/Private		X	X					
8H	Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multi-modal, iconic, gateway feature.	148	\$\$\$\$\$	C				X					
8I	Install wayfinding and gateway signage in and around downtown based on a new branding campaign.	149	\$	C			X						
8J	Attract local breweries downtown and encourage co-location.	150	\$	O	Public/Private		X						
8K	Work with local and regional artists to implement public art projects along Salem Street that honor its history and vision for the future.	154	\$	C	Public/Private		X						
8L	Host a mural competition to generate excitement for public art downtown.	154	\$	O	Public/Private		X						X
8M	Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center	157	\$\$\$	O+C	Public/Private	X							

Reference Number	Project/Task	Page Number	Level of Public Funding Required	Operating or Capital Expenditure	Private or Non-City Expenditure	Ongoing	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20	Year 20+	Code/Policy	Program/Study
8N	Re-envision the fire station site as a civic and mixed-use development.	158	\$\$\$\$\$	C	Public/Private		X						X
8O	Seek out and create a list of spaces around downtown that could use a little love; create a committee dedicated to tactical interventions in those spaces.	160	\$	O+C	Private	X							X
8P	Utilize available resources to ensure the community develops and operates in a way that protects the environment and promotes sustainability for future generations.	162	\$	O+C	Public/Private	X						X	X
9 Implementation													
9A	Modify front and side setbacks, building heights, parking, and the location of certain zoning districts to ensure the Unified Development Ordinance allows for the desired character of downtown.	167	\$	O			X						X
9B	Audit local businesses to ensure they are taking ownership of their online presence and monitoring patron reviews.	170	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
9C	Expand the toolbox of local grants, programs and incentives available through city budget appropriations.	170	\$\$\$	O+C		X							X
9D	Schedule a commercial broker tour of downtown with representation from the entire Raleigh region.	170	\$	O	Public/Private		X						
9E	Initiate a retail attraction committee whose responsibilities include developing a prospect database.	170	\$	O	Public/Private		X						X
9F	Create a full marketing package for the downtown district that includes a "Call for Business" web page as a retail attraction tool.	170	\$\$	O			X						
9G	In addition to state and federal tax credits, expand the local development and investment program to include local tax incentives for housing projects.	171	\$\$\$	O+C		X							X
9H	Utilize the streets and alleys as key people spaces for programming.	173	\$	O	Public/Private	X							
9I	Offer event grant funding to support downtown vitality by non-city organizations.	173	\$\$	O+C	Public/Private	X							X
9J	Perform annual reviews to assess progress related to the items in the plan's implementation matrix with staff, council, and ADDBA representatives.	184	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X



01 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

01 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

Creating a plan that promotes transformative change is about understanding the overall principles and goals while also considering the current successes to build upon. Downtown Apex is already a success in so many ways; probably most importantly, downtown is a success in the hearts and minds of its citizens. The community exudes a true feeling of local pride and an authenticity which cannot be replicated in the region.

Stantec, a multi-disciplinary team of professionals specializing in building great places, was hired by the town to lead the process. With great care and attention, the team set out to understand downtown Apex—from economics to parking to public space. Through an intense public outreach process, Apex citizens crafted ideas that will improve their quality of life today and for future generations. Detailed design studies to promote vibrancy were created with a continuous feedback loop of public input during a week-long design charrette.

The recommendations offer high-quality solutions intended to spur additional investments in downtown housing, retail and commercial development, the arts and history, and the multi-modal transportation system including parking. Development decisions based on sound market realities and national best practices will propel downtown Apex into the future.

7

number of restaurants currently in downtown Apex

12

number of retail shops currently in downtown Apex

7

number of AirBnBs within the Apex Peakway

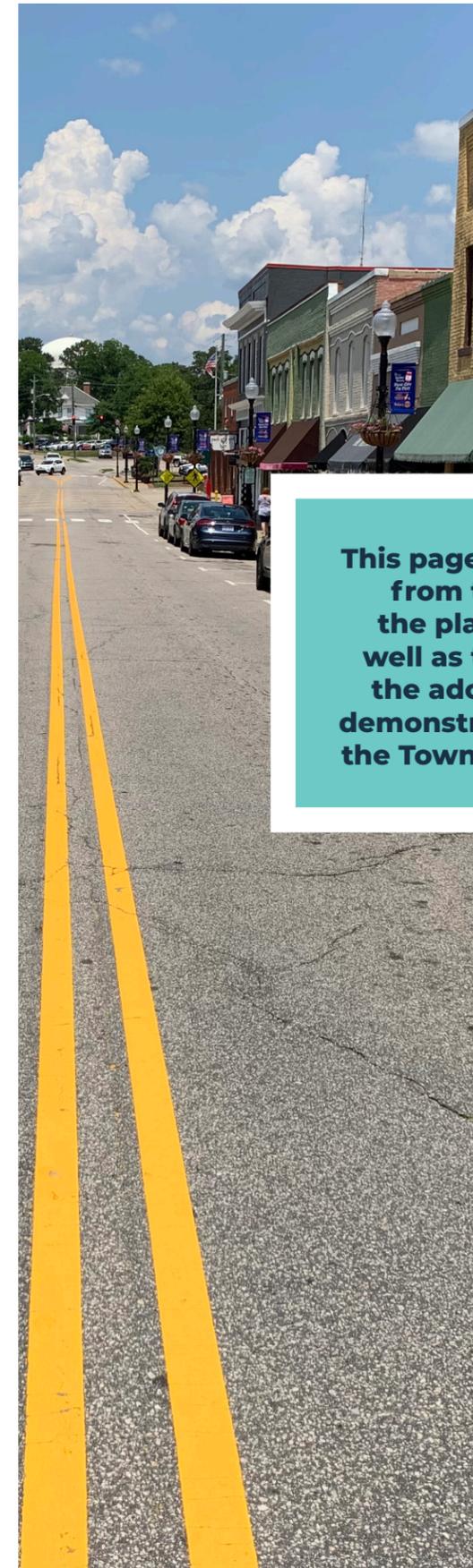
1.1 Purpose

This planning process sets strategy and key recommendations to serve as a roadmap towards making downtown Apex a more livable, walkable, and thriving urban place. The plan is intended to be the primary vision-setting and policy-directing strategy to lead the on-going revitalization of downtown for the next 20 years. In addition to establishing priorities for downtown's future land use and development, transportation network, parks and open spaces, and major development projects, the plan is expected to guide real estate and infrastructure investments and planning and economic development activities going forward.

The resulting plan places special emphasis on the importance of good urban design and the role it plays in creating places of lasting value. The plan is cognizant of changes in technology and the potential impacts on real estate and urban redevelopment best practices. Moreover, understanding and accounting for potential technological disruptions and market shifts, such as autonomous vehicles and the changing landscape for brick-and-mortar retail, are important considerations as well.

1.2 State of Downtown Apex

Downtown Apex exudes a quaint hometown feel with charming architecture and friendly people. Historic homes and churches portray a feeling of community and generational traditions, while newer investments, such as free downtown wi-fi, the Tobacco & Mule Exchange renovation, and even the town's civic campus, tell visitors that Apex is evolving. The current restaurant offerings on Salem Street alone create a destination district for the region with the power to attract residents and visitors alike. Retail shops are well positioned to take advantage of these patrons, but strides are still possible in creating the right tenant mix for the area. Downtown is dominated visually by cars—mostly because single-occupant vehicles are the predominant mode of access to the district. Aspects of the pedestrian experience need attention including the lack of shade trees once parked and walking around the area. Despite any current criticism of design details, there is something special about downtown Apex...something impalpable.



This page includes a letter from the mayor during the planning process as well as the mayor during the adoption process—a demonstration of unity for the Town of Apex's future.

A Note from Town Leadership

Founded in 1873, the downtown area of Apex, NC is the historic wonder that brings people back again and again. Just as gold is refined by fire, our downtown structures were made more precious and enduring after fire destroyed many of the wooden buildings over a century ago, and were then rebuilt with brick. From the union depot and the former town hall to the M&F Bank and the century-old homes, a walk through downtown Apex provides a real glimpse of the past. Yet, it is clearly up-to-date, with unique indoor and outdoor eating and drinking options, and shops offering all things old and new.

Many of the town staff, council, business owners and citizens have invested hours researching and proposing ideas to make the future vision a reality in developing this Downtown Master Plan. Stantec and their team of professionals have guided the process and helped us formalize this document to provide us with a “north star” as we weigh ideas over the next 10 to 20 years. This will ensure that we spend your money wisely and only on the things that fit within the big picture.

As we move forward to the town's sesquicentennial anniversary, we fondly hold Apex's past in our minds while we anticipate the vitality of its future. We remain a friendly town that enjoys a leisurely lunch and a relaxing night out with friends. We are truly a “Millennial Mayberry”.

On behalf of the Apex Town Council, I thank you for your commitment to Apex and hope you will take advantage of all the offerings and enjoy downtown Apex, as I have done for the past 40 years of my own life. Here's hoping you have the peak of a good life here!

-Mayor Lance Olive

When I think of my hometown Apex, my vision of where we have come from and what is yet to come continues to excite me as a citizen and incoming mayor. Throughout the history of our great town we have been able to maintain an authentic small town character that continues to attract many to relocate and call Apex home.

Our downtown has remained a staple in our community as it speaks of the rich history and foundation of our existence. Moreover, it serves as a gathering place for citizens and visitors to enjoy while fueling economic vitality for our town through our business community.

Through this vision, I see the spectrum of diversity illuminating our town even brighter. Our new Downtown Plan will energize the community and create a pathway for the advancement of our vision throughout the entire town.

I commend our town staff, citizens, business owners, and stakeholders who worked collaboratively to create this plan. I'm excited! Please join me and fellow citizens in celebrating the genesis of yet another victory for Apex. There is nothing we can't accomplish, when we work together.

-Mayor Jacques K Gilbert

1.3 The Study Area

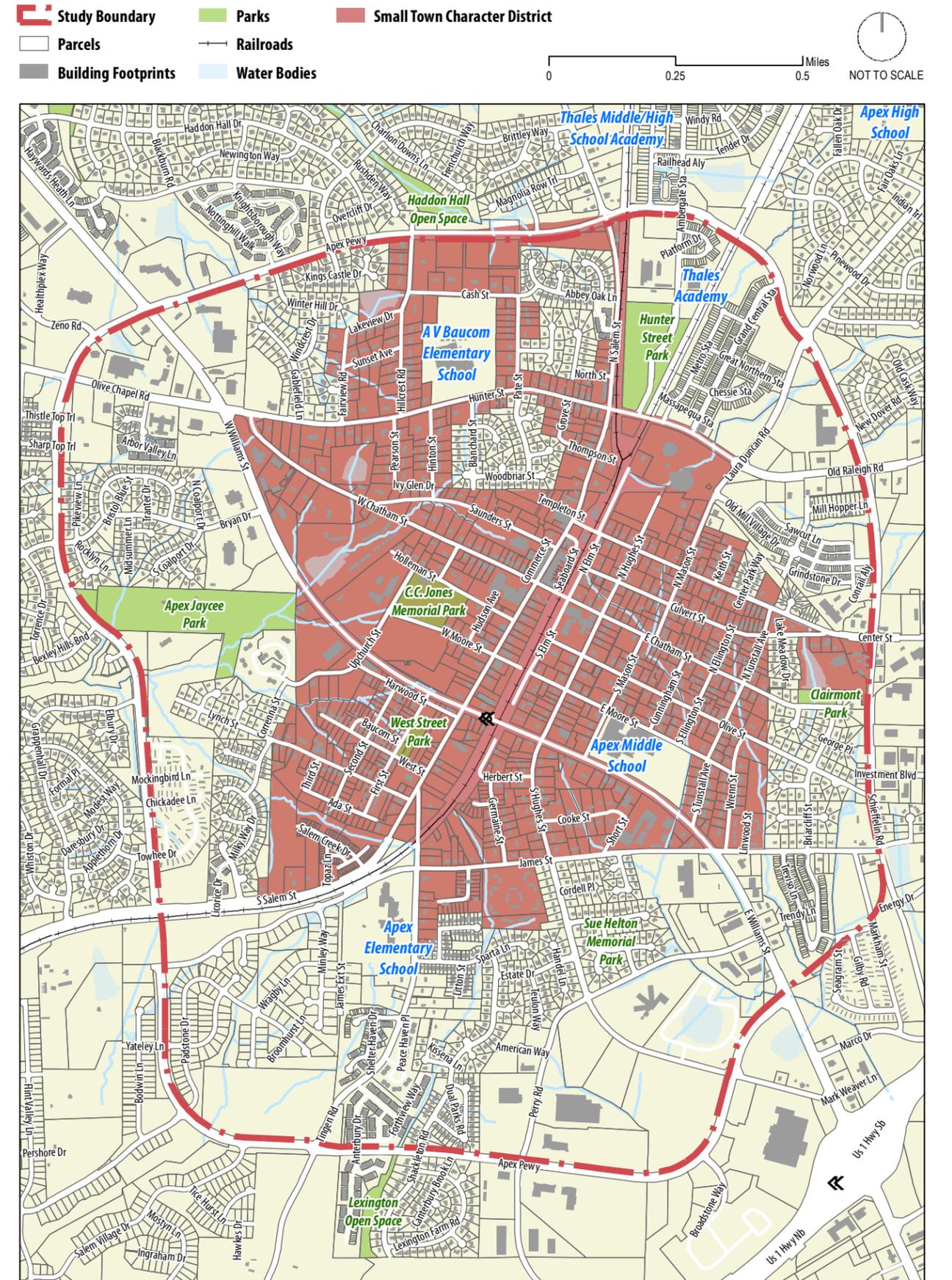
Downtown Apex is located southwest of Raleigh, and its origins date back to 1869. The area was the highest point on this portion of the Chatham Railroad which ran from Virginia to Florida. The study area for the Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study is defined as the 2.5 square mile area generally bounded by the Apex Peakway with an emphasis on the core blocks around Salem Street between Hunter Street to the north, E. Williams Street to the south, Upchurch Street to the west, and Tunstall Avenue to the east.

Salem Street is the “Main Street” environment of downtown Apex and serves as the north-south spine of the town. North Carolina Highway 55 (NC 55) is the east-west arterial within the study area. The CSX Railroad owns and operates a rail line and freight switch yard that parallels Salem Street for its entire length.

The historic blocks of downtown Apex along Salem Street looking north



The blocks between Chatham and Center streets represent the heart of downtown Apex



Study area defined as area within the Apex Peakway

1.4 Metrics of Great Downtowns

Great downtowns are places where people come together. This includes:



Places to Relax



Places to Eat



Places to Play



Places for Art & Culture



Places to Shop



Great downtowns are complex, organic, and sometimes messy!

1.4.1 Ten Core Elements for Successful Downtowns

Successful downtowns find resilience by tapping into what makes all places great...people! Through the creation of dynamic, enjoyable, and accessible spaces, downtowns provide the ultimate economic engine for communities.



2 Understand the market and trends related to where people want to live.



3 Rightsize the mobility and parking for people, bikes, cars, and transit.



4 Connect the community with comfortable journeys and lively destinations.



5 Engage with art by investing in public beauty.



6 Interweave multi-functional public space of all sizes.



7 Design for women (and children) because they are the influential spenders.



8 Preserve the authentic by keeping the character while creating new memories.



9 Fill in the gaps to provide a continuous pedestrian realm.



10 Design for walkable urbanism by insisting ground floors yield vibrancy.

1.5 Guiding Principles

The cornerstone of any great plan is the principles it stands on. These principles will be passionately pursued in every detail of plan implementation.

Put People First

Planning places for people is the first underlying principle upon which every decision should be based. Pedestrians and cyclists, residents and visitors, and business owners and their patrons should be prioritized over moving vehicles. For the vision of downtown Apex to be realized, people must be put first.

Celebrate Salem Street

The emotional and physical heart of downtown Apex is Salem Street. The blocks of contiguous shops and restaurants between Center Street and Chatham Street are envisioned as so much more—stretching their success spatially in all directions. This “Main Street” environment is the center of social interaction and community activities and all energy should emanate from Salem Street.



▲ Designing downtown with spaces for people to enjoy is important even to the youngest residents

Embrace Authentic Apex

As one of the only historic downtown districts in the Triangle Region, Apex has something special. Yet, it isn't just the historic buildings that contribute to its authenticity. It's the familiar stories that are still known and told by lifetime residents, the sounds of trains passing through as they have for 150 years, moments that let parents feel good about giving their kids a wholesome childhood in a fast-paced world, passersby who stop and greet each other, and the imperfections that make the overall place feel pretty perfect. This guiding principle is a reminder that the changes recommended in this plan are not meant to turn downtown into something different; rather to ensure the unique authenticity of Apex is enduring, embraced, and enhanced for residents and visitors to experience and enjoy.



▲ Unique shops like Apex Outfitters embrace what is authentic about the community while offering hip merchandise

1.6 Key Goals

The Guiding Principles influence the nine Key Goals established for the plan. These goals are intended to push the possibilities for downtown toward a more vibrant future.

Manage Parking Efficiently & Effectively

Lack of parking should not discourage people from coming to or investing in downtown Apex. Yet providing parking, on its own, does not address any of the guiding principles for this plan. Effective and efficient strategies to address parking needs are critical so that those projects that do put people first, celebrate Salem Street, and embrace authentic Apex can move forward. Parking strategies will involve a “new” parking supply in combination with placemaking, enforcement, programs, and alternate mobility options to yield an efficient and effective system.

Make Salem Street the Best Public Space in the Region

To thrive, downtown Apex must be known throughout the Triangle area as a place for people to gather, shop, dine, and enjoy small-town life. This is a bold goal that will be achieved through incremental investments to not just the streetscape and public spaces, but also the way the ground floor tenant mix is curated and the types and variety of activities that are programmed.

Create Vibrant Spaces for People to Gather

Vibrant spaces are comfortable, beautiful, accessible, and used by **PEOPLE!** This goal will be realized through a variety of opportunities in and around downtown in spaces both expected and that might come as a surprise!

Expand Housing Options that Promote Equity

With an understanding of the potential housing market around downtown Apex, this goal promotes the construction of various housing typologies in a range of price points. Providing quality housing options that mix income levels and generations should be provided within a walkable and bikable distance to the downtown core.

Create Connections to Downtown

Multi-modal connectivity to downtown is a critical element of bringing more people downtown safely. Prioritizing critical sidewalk connections, and installing traffic calming elements such as on-street parking on neighborhood streets will create a more walkable and bikable community. Local and regional transit will also play a key role in connecting people to downtown Apex.

Encourage a Diversity of Activities and Programming

Downtown is known for its large-scale festivals, but the community also needs smaller, more frequent programming to promote vibrancy. This goal requires the creation of public spaces suitable for a diversity of activities.

Roll Out the Welcome Mat with Small Town Charm

Visitors come to downtown Apex for a unique, local, and quaint experience. Visual cues, such as quality development and signage at the gateways to downtown, will invite people into the community and set the pace for their experience.

Honor the History of Downtown

This goal is not about trying to recreate times gone by, but it is about celebrating the unique history of Apex in a prominent way through signage, art, and public space design in downtown.

Re-imagine Spaces through Art, Innovation, and Creativity!

The plan looks at forgotten spaces with creativity and strives to re-imagine those areas as vibrant, sustainable places for **PEOPLE!**

Steering Committee member played a vital role throughout the process and will continue to be plan ambassadors now that the document is complete



DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS

58

Key Recommendations

10

Projects to Tackle First

10

Measures of Success

1.7 The Document

The Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study document strives to convey data, input, and recommendations in a way that is clearly understood by the reader. The intent is for this to be a living document that creates action and accountability during the evolution of downtown.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary conveys key plan highlights related to process, key findings, and subsequent principles, goals, and projects.

Chapter One Introduction to the Plan

Chapter One introduces the plan and study area while also sharing best practices for successful downtowns.

Chapter Two Understanding the Study Area

Chapter Two shares an overview of the study area's geography and infrastructure along with relevant past planning efforts.

Chapter Three Summary of Public Input

Chapter Three summarizes the public process and offers highlights from the input received. Outreach activities are described and key findings that would later inform the recommendations are shared.

Chapter Four Retail Market Conditions & Strategies

Chapter Four distills the retail market analysis for the downtown core along with recommended strategies related to both the physical and business environments to improve retail success of the area.

Chapter Five Housing Market Conditions & Strategies

Chapter Five conveys the housing analysis which explored current housing stock available and what typologies may be missing based on demographic trends for the study area. Ultimately, the chapter recommends a potential capture rate for new units in downtown Apex.

Chapter Six Parking Conditions & Strategies

Chapter Six presents the current parking situation as a clear data set and merges those findings with anecdotal evidence from the community to provide active parking management techniques for the downtown area.

Chapter Seven Development Conditions & Strategies

Chapter Seven presents the overall master plan for the study area by illustrating the various catalyst sites investigated during the process and includes a summary of development data.

Chapter Eight Key Goals

Chapter Eight tells the story of the Apex vision and how each key goal paints part of the picture of vibrancy. Tangible design examples are provided for each of the nine key goals.

Chapter Nine Implementation

Chapter Nine focuses on moving the plan from vision to reality with policy, financing, and programming strategies. Detailed strategies related to the Top 10 projects are provided along with a complete implementation matrix, which includes every key recommendation found throughout the document. The document wraps up with a few thoughts on how we can measure if the plan has succeeded.

Key Recommendations are called out in this manner throughout the document. These recommendations tie directly to the Implementation Matrix in Chapter 9.

1.8 How Will the Town Ensure Progress?



Plan participants looking ahead to a vibrant future in Apex



02
UNDERSTANDING
THE STUDY AREA

02 UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY AREA

Prior to public engagement and design, the team desired to have a deep understanding of the area's existing conditions. The town's geographical location within the Triangle Region is vitally important when studying circulation patterns, the potential trade area, and future development opportunities. The physical conditions of the land, including topography and hydrology, set definitive parameters for design within the study area.

The team also explored all relevant past planning efforts to garner salient data and findings which might inform this process. Analyzing the area's current regulations, land uses, multi-modal facilities, public art locations, and key gateways began to reveal areas of potential design and policy interventions.

11

Miles to Research Triangle Park

12

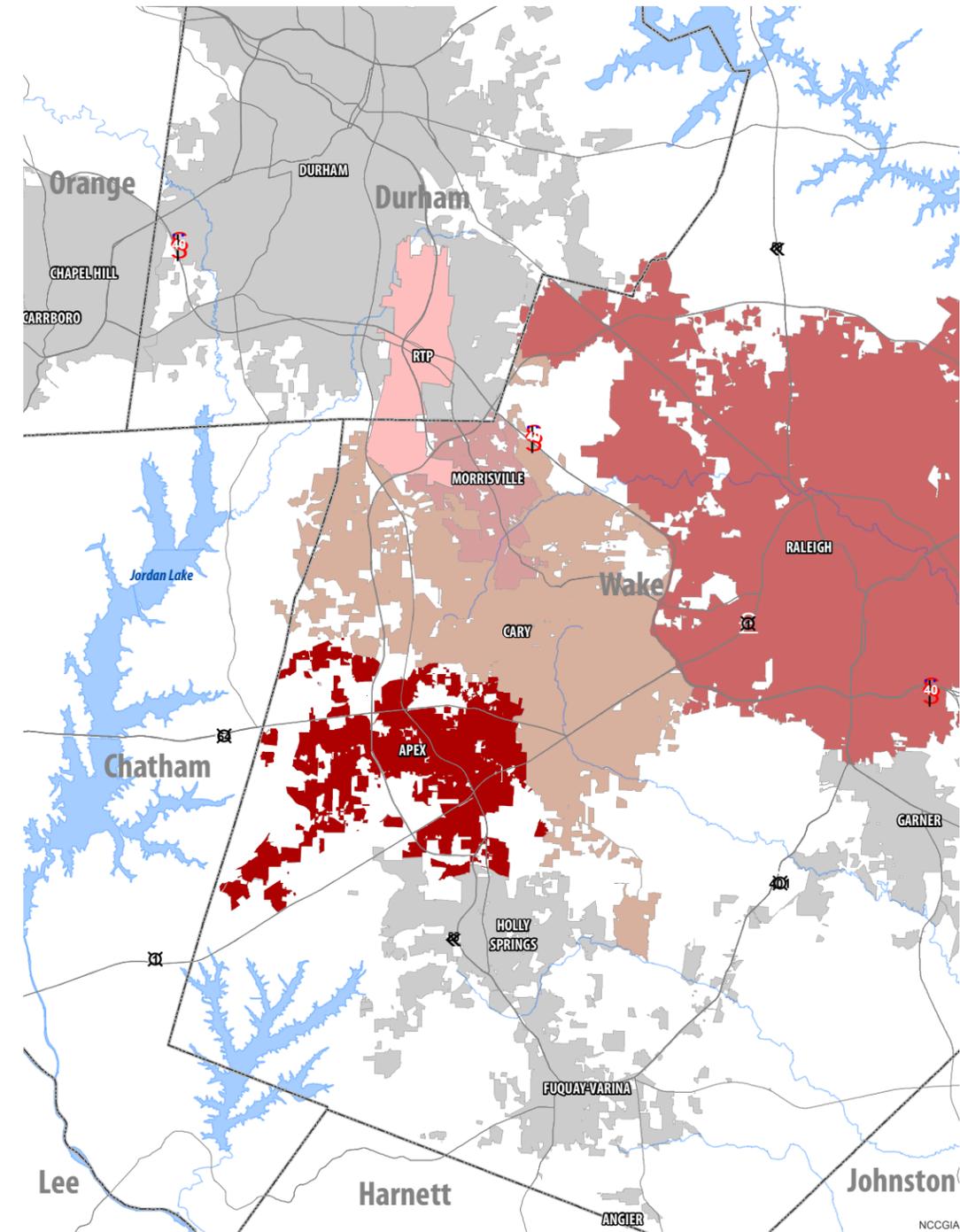
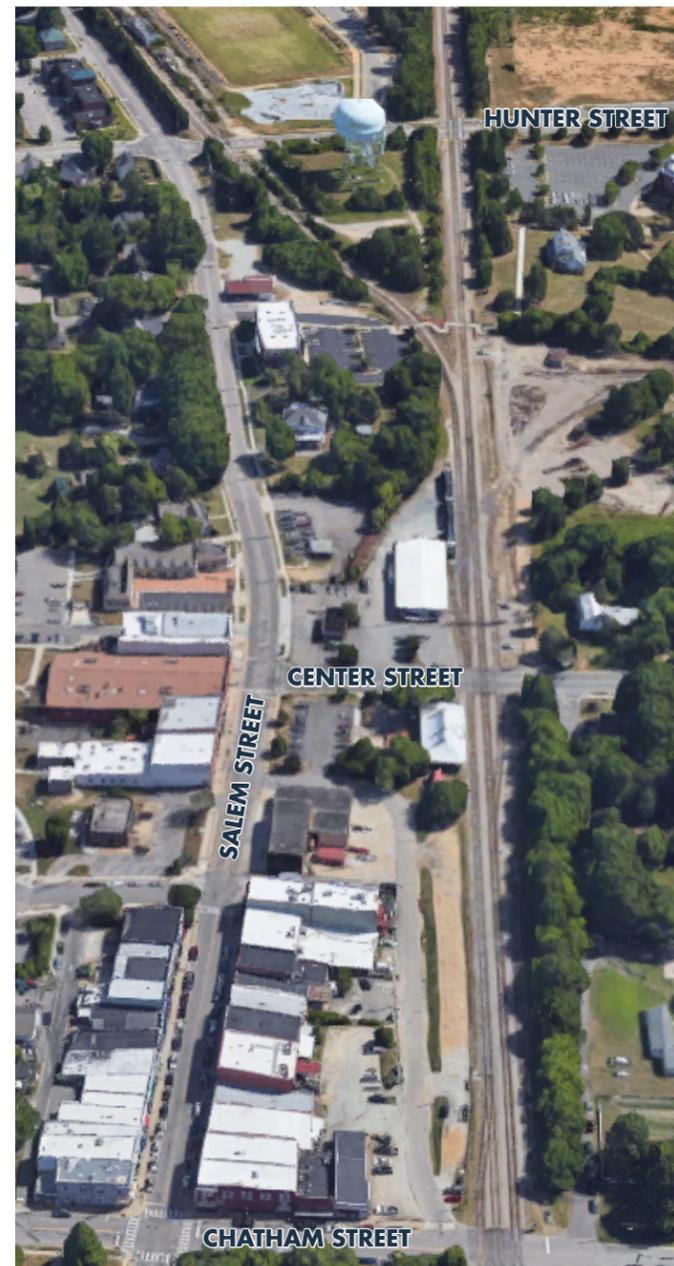
Miles to Raleigh

2.5

Square miles within study area

2.1 Study Area Location

Within Apex, the study area is located in the area created by NC 540 to the west, US 64 to the north, and US 1 to the south. Substantial growth in Apex is occurring largely west and, to some extent, south of the study area. The Town of Apex is located within Wake County in what is known as the Triangle Region of Piedmont North Carolina. Research Triangle Park, an employment area anchored by three major research universities, is located eleven miles to its north, and the capital city of Raleigh is located twelve miles to the northeast. The nearly 14,000 acre Jordan Lake and its associated state recreation facilities are just eight miles to the west of Apex. Cary and Holly Springs are neighboring communities located to the north and south respectively. The overall town's area includes approximately 19 square miles, while the study area encompasses the 2.5 square miles within the Apex Peakway.



The "Peak City" of Apex is the highest point between the capital city of Raleigh and the Deep River, a key tributary of the Cape Fear River as noted in a 1905 USGS survey.

Town of Apex in Wake County, North Carolina

2.2 Land Use – Existing and Planned

Within the study area, non-residential land uses are concentrated most heavily along the Williams Street and Salem Street corridors, as well as along the eastern side of the Apex Peakway from North Salem Street to Perry Road. The unique shops, restaurants and businesses along Salem Street within the National Register Historic District comprise the “main street” of the downtown area and were of special focus in the Downtown Plan.

There are three public schools within the study area – AV Baucom Elementary School on Hunter Street, Apex Middle School on East Williams Street, and Apex Elementary School along Tingen Road.

The two largest public parks are Hunter Street Park, best known for the Trackside Skate Plaza but also featuring a dog park, fields and a shelter; and Apex Jaycee Park, also featuring playing fields as well as a playground. Smaller, neighborhood, public parks include Clairmont Park, at the terminus of East Chatham Street; West Street Park, on West and First streets; and Sue Helton Memorial Park within the Perry Farms subdivision. CC Jones Memorial Park is a private park located between Holleman and West Moore Streets. The Town’s Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department also operates the Halle Cultural Arts Center on North Salem Street at Templeton Street.

Local government has a strong presence within the study area. The Town’s main municipal campus is at the intersection of Hunter Street and North Mason Street and includes the Town Hall and Community Center. The Community Center will soon undergo an

expansion project to include a senior center. There are two fire stations within the study area. Fire Station No. 1 is located on North Salem Street at Seaboard Street. Fire Station No. 3 is located on Hunter Street near West Chatham Street. The Apex Police Department is also located in the heart of the study area, along Saunders Street just west of North Salem Street. The historic train depot on North Salem Street at Center Street is owned by the Town. It is currently occupied by the Chamber of Commerce and is the office of the Town’s new Downtown and Small Business Coordinator. The Town’s main Public Works offices are located on West Williams Street at Upchurch Street.

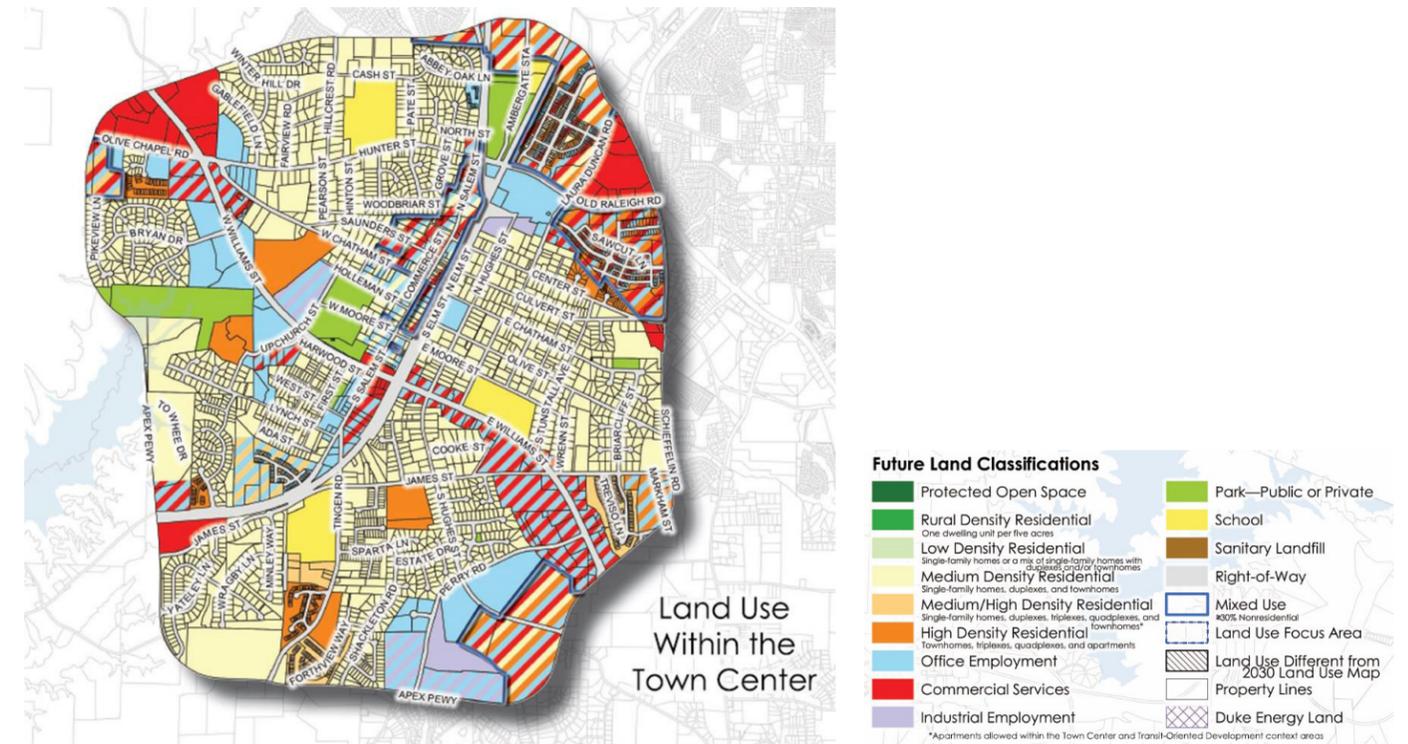
There are numerous churches within the study area, with two of the largest in the heart of the study area along Chatham Street - Apex Baptist Church and Apex United Methodist Church. There are three churches along Center Street in the vicinity of the Apex Peakway, including the Apex Masjid. There are also several churches near South Salem Street south of NC 55, including St Mary’s AME Church and True Way Church, both along Lynch Street. Notably, the regionally-important Raleigh North Carolina Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is located along West Williams Street at Bryan Drive.

Multi-family residential uses are generally in close proximity to the NC 55 corridor, with some apartments also concentrated in the vicinity of James Street, Tingen Road and the Apex Peakway. There are two mobile home parks within or close to the study area. Shangri-La Mobile Home Park is located at the Apex Peakway and South Salem Street intersection. Apex Mobile Estates is located along Schieffelin Road near the future corridor of the Apex Peakway. The balance of the land use within the study area is mostly medium-density residential, with a few duplexes, but mostly single-family homes of a variety of ages on lots of varying sizes.

In February 2019, the Town Council adopted Advance Apex: The 2045 Land Use Map Update. A land use screening was conducted as part of that planning effort to identify areas susceptible to change. Most of the area within the Apex Peakway was depicted as developed, with parcels identified as under- or undeveloped mostly small and scattered. The land use vision within the study area is consistent with current development patterns. A change in the 2045 update was to identify the study area as the Town Center context area. Within this context area, the “High Density Multi-Family Residential” (HDMF) zoning district is allowed in areas envisioned as Medium/High Density Residential land use.

During the planning process for the Downtown Plan, several development projects, in addition to the community center expansion, were in various stages

of planning or construction. At the intersection of Apex Peakway and Laura Duncan Road there is non-residential development activity including a grocery store with outparcels, a new gas station and convenience center, and a daycare (just outside of the study area). Plans for a tap station are under review at the corner of NC 55 and South Salem Street. There are also approved plans for a vet hospital along S Salem Street and office employment/commercial uses along Upchurch Street. Residential development activity includes continued build-out of Villages of Apex and Old Mill Village, new single-family townhomes along South Salem Street, and a proposed project for apartments with a potential affordable housing component at Apex Peakway and South Hughes Street.



▲ New land use classifications for the 2045 Future Land Use Plan

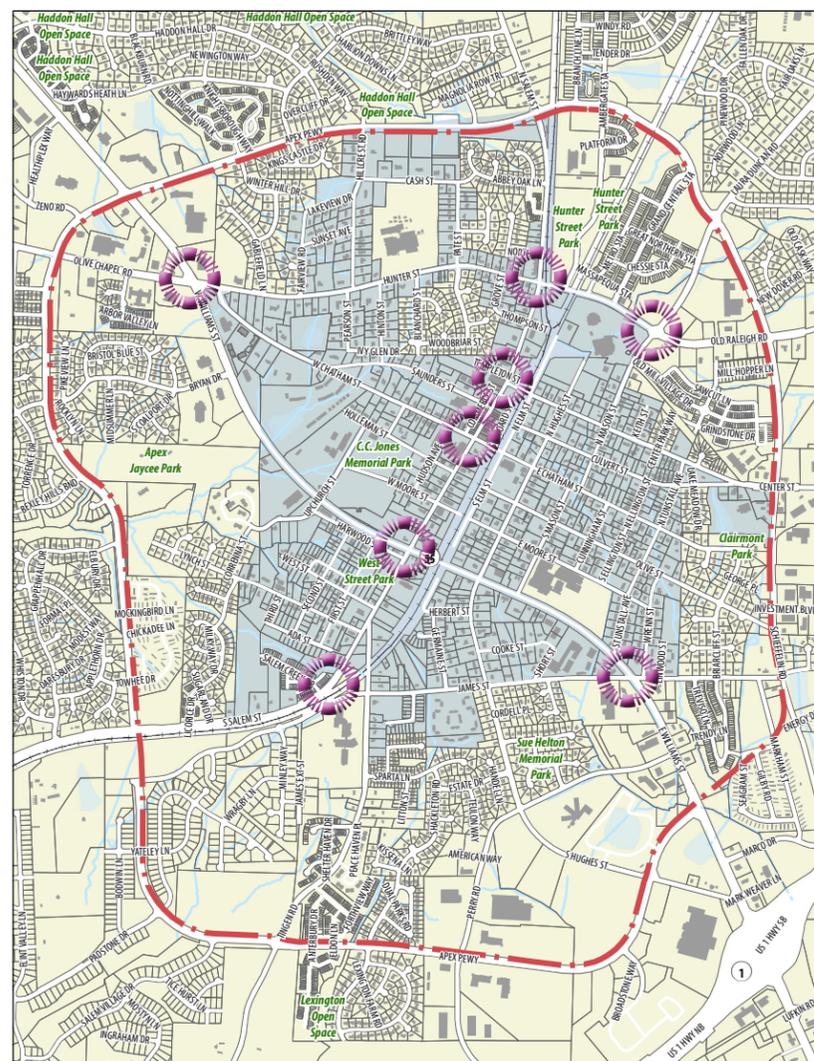
2.3 Transportation – Existing and Planned

2.3.1 Roadways

The Apex Peakway bounds the study area and is planned as a four-lane, median-divided thoroughfare. There are two remaining gaps in this loop road – one on the southwest side of the study area between South Salem Street and James Street, and another on the southeast side of the study area where Schieffelin Road and Marco Drive currently provide connectivity. The design is nearly final for a project that would complete the gap between South Salem Street and James Street and includes a bridge over the railroad and quadrant loop between the Apex Peakway and South Salem Street. Once this new roadway is open, the at-grade railroad crossing at Tingen Road is required to close.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has a funded project to widen NC 55 through the study area to a four-lane, median-divided, facility. The project will include completing pedestrian facilities on both sides of the road through the study area and replacement of the railroad bridge parallel to and just east of Salem Street. Other major roads within the study area include Salem Street, Olive Chapel Road/Hunter Street/Old Raleigh Road, Laura Duncan Road, and Center Street. Each of these thoroughfares connect to highways outside of the study area (US 64 or US 1). West Chatham Street and Hughes Street serve as urban, two-lane thoroughfares, serving relatively heavy volumes of mostly local traffic. Within the heart of downtown, the street network is a tight, urban, grid; however, this pattern disintegrates in the southeast and western parts of the study area.

2.3.2 Key Gateways within the Peakway



 Key Gateway

2.3.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

There is substantial demand for non-motorized travel within the study area. The Town adopted its first Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, Bike Apex, in January 2019 and an updated transportation plan, Advance Apex: The 2045 Transportation Plan in February 2019. Bike Apex recommends and prioritizes bicycle lanes along Old US 1 Highway, with shared lane markings on Salem Street within the study area. Bike Apex also recommends and prioritizes bicycle lanes on Olive Chapel Road west of NC 55, with shared lane markings on Hunter Street and Old Raleigh Road within the study area. Shared lane markings are also recommended for Center Street, within the study area, transitioning to bicycle lanes and a sidepath on Ten Ten Road outside of the study area. Side path is proposed along the Apex Peakway loop, James Street, South Hughes Street, and Tingen Road. A future grade-separated bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the railroad at Tingen Road is envisioned to provide bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to downtown once the vehicular connection in this location is closed. An extension of Beaver Creek Greenway through Jaycee Park and connecting to NC 55 is also planned. Advance Apex recommends a policy of prioritizing pedestrian projects within the Town Center context area.

Pedestrian facilities are incorporated in all planned roadway projects (Apex Peakway, NC 55) as well as the waterline replacement project along West Chatham Street. The Town has a funded project to improve pedestrian facilities between Apex Middle School and Salem Street including filling sidewalk gaps and improving pedestrian crossings. Completing the sidewalk connection at three railroad crossings – Center Street, Chatham Street, and Hunter Street has been prioritized in Capital Improvement Planning but has not yet been funded.

2.3.4 Rail and Transit

Rail is a substantial part of the history of downtown Apex and is still part of the Town's fabric today. Within the study area there is a rail line paralleling Salem Street, branching into two lines just south of Hunter Street. One branch continues north parallel to North Salem Street and the other continues parallel to Ambergate Station. These lines are owned by CSX railroad and serve freight traffic. CSX also operates a rail maintenance yard in the area between Town Campus, North Salem Street and Center Street. Amtrak service has two daily trains running through downtown Apex, but the closest stop to the study area is in downtown Cary. Commuter rail service to downtown Apex is envisioned in local and regional long-range transportation plans but is not funded.

Plans are underway to increase bus service to the study area. The adopted Wake Transit Plan recommends a new bus route with peak-hour service from Holly Springs to downtown Cary through Apex. This route will be operated by GoCary with service anticipated to start in January 2020. In the study area, stops are anticipated in the vicinity of Apex Peakway and South Hughes Street near Cambridge Village, NC 55 and South Hughes Street near Compare Foods, South Salem Street and East Moore Street, and South Salem Street and Hunter Street. Existing bus route 311 is operated by GoTriangle between Apex and RTP. This route uses NC 55 through the study area. Existing bus route 305 is operated by GoTriangle between Apex and Raleigh. Plans for this route include extending service to NC 55, increasing the span to all day, and increasing the frequency to 30 minutes during peak hours and 60 minutes off-peak.

The Town has also been working on plans for the first local bus route, GoApex Route 1. The route is planned to serve downtown Apex. While capital and operating costs are not yet funded for GoApex Route 1, service could start as early as 2021 if anticipated grant funding is secured. Ultimately a transfer center serving each of these routes is envisioned at the intersection of NC 55 and South Salem Street. Since this center is not likely to move forward prior to the NC 55 road widening project, the intersection of South Salem Street and Moore Street has been identified as a possible interim location.

2.4 Zoning and the Unified Development Ordinance

The Town maintains a zoning map and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that dictate allowable uses and set specific requirements for development and redevelopment on each parcel within the study area. It is especially important to note that there is both a Small Town Character Overlay District (Overlay District) and a Central Business District (CBD) that encompass the heart of downtown. The Overlay District surrounds Apex's Historic District. The overlay identifies the architectural qualities that define the downtown character and includes design standards to maintain that character. In addition to establishing architectural and use standards, within the Overlay District buffers, Resource Conservation Area, and community amenities are not required. The CBD is within the Overlay District and includes the blocks along North Salem Street from north of Center Street to Chatham Street. Within the CBD, there are no minimum parking requirements, and only active uses are allowed in storefront locations (meaning the first floor of all spaces abutting North Salem Street, East Chatham Street, West Chatham Street, Saunders Street, and

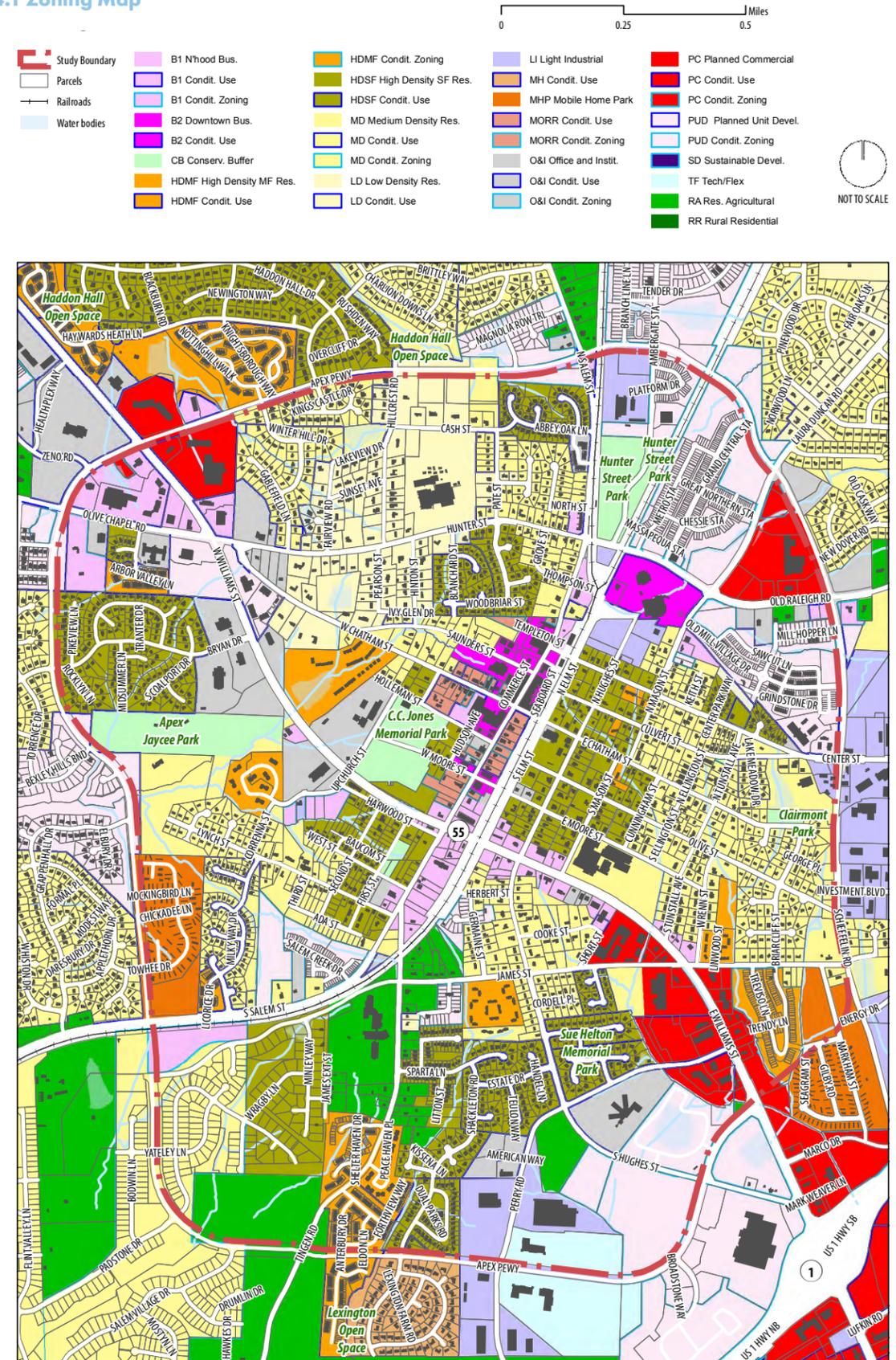
Templeton Street, as well as along all public parking lots and garages). In addition, within the CBD, setbacks are reduced to none on the front and sides and 10 ft on the rear.

While the UDO should be referenced for a complete list of allowable uses within the CBD and Overlay District, during the conversations that occurred during this planning process it was especially important to note that in the area zoned as B2 (Downtown Business), which includes all of the parcels within the CBD, microbreweries and microdistilleries are a permitted use. It is also important to note that accessory apartments are also permitted uses in areas designated as B1 (Neighborhood Business District) and B2 and that accessory apartments, single-family, townhomes, and multi-family or apartments are permitted uses in areas within the Overlay District zoned as MORR (Mixed Office-Residential-Retail District) which includes most of the residential parcels along South Salem Street. Duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes are not currently permitted anywhere within the Overlay District.

The Unified Development Ordinance can be found here:

<https://www.apexnc.org/233/Unified-Development-Ordinance>

2.4.1 Zoning Map





03 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

03 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

The Town of Apex desired to have a vision for downtown created by its citizens, and the community definitely showed up! The public engagement process was robust and comprehensive in nature. Both high tech and high touch tools were utilized, and approximately 6,000 people participated in the dialogue process!

Champions and critics alike came to the table to have their voices heard, but also, to listen to one another's perspectives and ideas. The public input received pointed the design team toward key public and private investments necessary for transformative change.

This process did more than just create a planning document with key recommendations and beautiful drawings; this process helped build community. The citizens of Apex are on fire for the vibrancy they desperately want in downtown, and their participation in this vision gave them the opportunity to begin planting the seeds of change.

135

Citizens attended the Public Open House

1,768

Citizens responded to the online survey

3,700

Views of the final presentation on Facebook

3.1 How We Got the Word Out

Public outreach in the community of Apex needed to cross both print, digital, and social media platforms to ensure all sectors of the population were hearing about the engagement events. Beyond the written word, face-to-face interactions and personal encouragement were keys to the success of this public engagement strategy.

3.1.1 Print Outreach

Town staff tapped into the use of utility bill mailers to ensure every citizen would know about the Public Open House where their early input would be vital to the creation of the vision. Paper fliers were also posted around town and in local businesses for both the open house and the charrette event. Save the Date cards were given to open house participants to keep on their refrigerators as a reminder of the June design charrette.

Local business owners took it upon themselves to help spread printed material business-to-business and to their patrons. The Town of Apex Planning Department also hosted a booth at Peak Fest prior to the first public workshop to spread the word, encourage participation, and gather initial input.

3.1.2 Digital & Social Outreach

A robust email and social media campaign followed the planning process online reaching thousands of Apex citizens via Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

The Steering Committee were outreach **CHAMPIONS** and shared the process on podcasts, at the farmers market, on social forums, and by literally going door-to-door to invite residents to the various events.



3.2 Steering Committee

Eighteen of Apex's most energetic, passionate, and knowledgeable citizens joined the design team from the first day of the process as the Project Steering Committee. Their importance to the success of this vision cannot be overstated.

3.2.1 Meetings

The Steering Committee held regular meetings throughout the process and served as a guiding compass for the designers. Meetings included interactive brainstorming, listening sessions, studies of best practices, project updates, and mapping exercises.

The committee clearly stated during these meetings that they wanted to make downtown Apex a vibrant destination while still honoring the area's small town history. The members identified key locations for the team to investigate and always provided thoughtful feedback and direction to the designers.

3.2.2 Parklet Challenge/Parklet Survey Results

During the May 9th meeting of the Steering Committee, the design team shared a concept called Tactical Urbanism with the members. Tactical urbanism is a form of creative implementation that encourages low-cost, high-impact solutions. The idea is to illustrate to the community how short-term action yields long-term change by intervening in the public realm with enhancements that help build community. Tactical urbanism works most effectively when there is a perceived shortcoming, and in Apex, that shortcoming is narrow urban sidewalks with limited outdoor dining opportunities.

The design team laid down a Steering Committee Challenge to design and install a temporary parklet for the week of the charrette. Members were encouraged to think outside of the box and given the "Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Designs" created by the Street Plans Collaborative. The other caveat was that the parklet's budget was \$0, and all materials were to be donated, sponsored, or borrowed.

The committee took the challenge and completely knocked it out of the park! Members used their local networking skills and gathered enough materials to create a dreamy oasis on Salem Street in front of FRESH. Local Ice Cream. The parklet was decked out with painted pallets, high top tables and stools, trees and greenery, and even string lights!

A survey was given to all parklet visitors in order to gauge public reaction to the tactical intervention on Salem Street. Overwhelming positive responses inspired the Steering Committee to begin looking for their next tactical project!

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

-Mother Teresa

> 85% Agree

The Parklet...

- Improves the character of Salem Street
- Makes them more likely to visit Salem Street
- Makes them more likely to visit local businesses
- Is a place where it is easy to meet and talk to others
- Is a good use of parking spaces
(389 participants surveyed)

The parklet added additional seating space for patrons outside of FRESH. Local Ice Cream

Town staff and Steering Committee members gather plant material and install safety measures for the parklet



Town staff and Steering Committee members (plus their families) all pitched in to create the parklet on Salem Street



Steering Committee members kept the parklet looking fresh by watering the plants and changing up the space every now and then with new materials



3.2.3 Walking Tour/Place Game Results

The Steering Committee braved the summer heat and joined the design team on the first day of the charrette for a walking tour of Salem Street's core blocks. The team distributed an audit tool created by the Project for Public Spaces known as "The Place Game". Once the tour and conversations concluded, each participant rated Salem Street based on four criteria on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 4 (Good). As shown at the right, their responses placed Salem Street in the **FAIR** range of sociability, comfort/image, access/linkages, and uses/activities.

The overriding takeaway from comments and conversations was the **need for additional shade in the downtown walking experience**. The group agreed that shade trees and wider sidewalks along Salem Street were two key recommendations for the plan development.



▲ Walking tour participants trek across the Apex Baptist Church parking lot as they investigate the quality of spaces in and around Salem Street



▲ Steering Committee members fill out their Place Game audit forms after the walking tour of Salem Street



**If you plan cities for cars and traffic,
you get cars and traffic.
If you plan for people and places,
you get people and places.**
-Fred Kent, Founder of Project for Public Spaces

3.3 Focus Group Meetings

On April 8th and 9th, 2019, the design team and town staff led a two-day event that included nine meetings of varying topic areas. Town staff and leaders identified and invited key stakeholders to these meetings, and attendance was extremely high with approximately 65 unique individuals attending. Steering Committee members also participated in at least one, if not more, of the meetings. All input provided during the event can be found in the appendix of this document, but a few key findings from each session are found below.

3.3.1 Summary of Input

Transportation

- Enhanced transfer point at Salem and 55 will be a key pivot point for four regional bus routes in the future.
- Salem Street has potential for high multi-modal transportation demand.
- Downtown circulator is envisioned to connect to regional commuter services and serve higher density residential areas.

Infrastructure

- Electric system can handle triple the current capacity.
- Town is currently converting high pressure sodium lighting to LED (5,000 fixtures).
- Water/sewer infrastructure downtown is aging.

Public Safety & Accessibility

- Perception exists of significant parking problem with citizens, particularly during events/festivals.
- The fire station on Salem Street is a true civic building allowing a wide variety of events/activities.
- Perception of pedestrian safety on Salem Street is an issue.

Institutional

- Small percentage of middle/high school students are walking/biking to school currently.
- Event based shared parking does occur.
- Programming at schools and churches does bring people to downtown.

Retail

- Downtown was vacant twenty years ago, but the streetscape in the late 90s changed the game.
- Town is most proud of UDO amendment to restrict uses in bottom floors between Chatham and Center Streets.
- Retailers feel there is a need for additional outdoor dining space and safety measures for pedestrians.
- Retailers shared many locals are not aware of downtown.
- Downtown retail doesn't seem to be keeping pace with the tremendous growth of the town.

Restaurants

- Restaurants are the anchors of downtown with seven choices in a two block area.
- Outdoor dining is a challenge because of sidewalk width and liquor license issues.
- Restaurants generate large percentage of tax dollars, and feel they need more support.

Housing

- Realtors see a desire for duplex/triplex/quad options for affordable housing.
- Larger lots within the core need to have the ability to subdivide and add accessory dwelling units.
- Market demand exists for all price ranges of housing opportunities.

Art/History

- Public Art Committee intends to develop a public art trail enhancing connectivity between downtown, the Town Campus and Hunter Street park.
- Tunstall House was donated to the town and is a potential link from civic campus to downtown.
- Public art committee has several planned projects in and around downtown.

Tourism/Programming/Public Space

- Apex is known for its larger festivals including Peakfest and Pigfest.
- Alleys can have a funky vibe in the future.
- Downtown lacks a brewery scene and public spaces.

Apex Legacy Lunch Focus Group Meeting

Citizens who grew up in Apex during the mid-20th century were invited to speak to the design team and town staff about times gone by. Participants shared memories of riding their bicycles downtown and working to make purchases in the many shops located on Salem Street. The event and stories shared were captured on video as a way to preserve the oral history of Apex for future generations.

Legacy Lunch participants reminisced and shared their love for downtown and the memories it holds



The online survey reached more people than any other single outreach tool early in the process



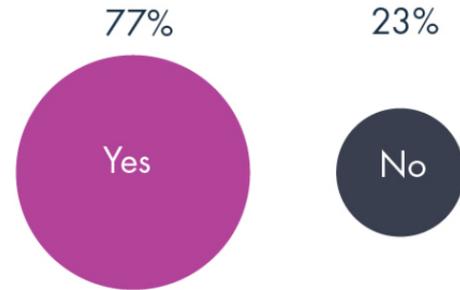
3.5 Online Survey

One extremely powerful digital input tool during this process was the online survey that reached a staggering 1,768 responses! The twenty question survey was designed to take less than five minutes to complete. All survey results can be found in the appendix of this document, but a few of the most relevant findings are found below and to the right.

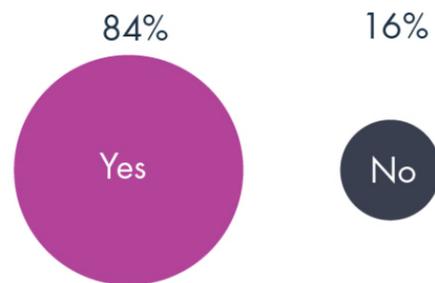
How far are you willing to walk from a parking space to your destination?



Do you think more people would like to live in Downtown Apex?

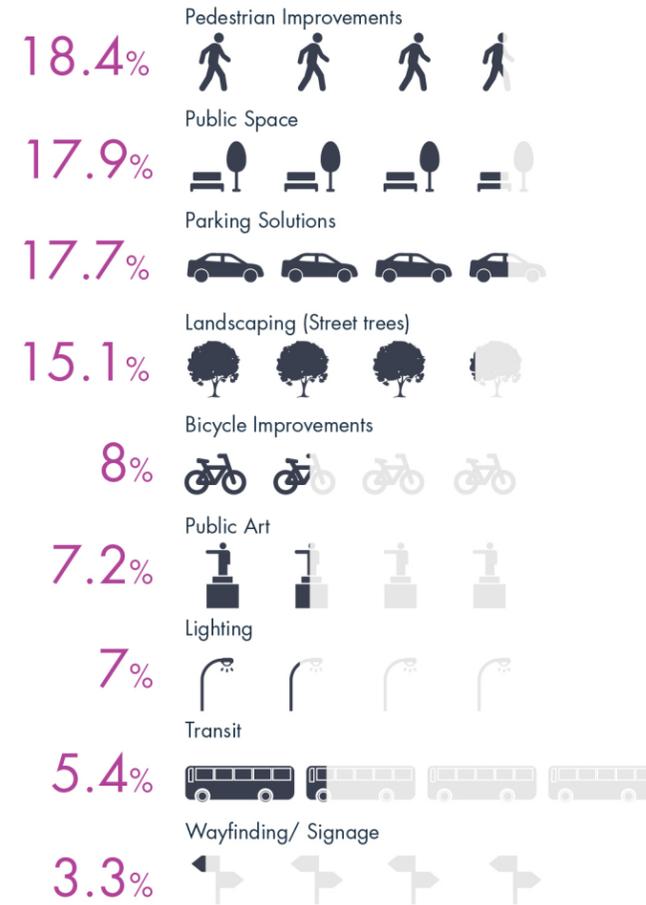


Would you be willing to give up a few parking spaces on Salem Street to enhance outdoor dining space?



1,768
responses
to the online
survey

When spending PUBLIC DOLLARS, the Town would like to know how to prioritize improvements. Of the options listed below, what would be your top five public investments?



Which streetscape elements are most IMPORTANT to you? (choose up to 3)



3.6 The Charrette

The charrette was the cornerstone event of the public engagement process. The four-day intense workshop brought a design team with transportation planners, parking experts, traffic engineers, urban designers, policy planners, and landscape architects together who set up an open public design studio. Topic area discussions were held over the course of the week for anyone who wanted to provide input. A constant feedback loop of information was created between the designers and the community. Each afternoon, the drawings were pinned up on the wall for discussion and public reaction. The process allowed for an efficient work flow and a community-driven vision with political will necessary for implementation.

3.6.1 Interest Group Meetings

The topic areas discussed during the week included:

- Neighborhoods and Housing Interest Group Meeting
- Mobility and Street Design Interest Group Meeting
- Public Art Interest Group Meeting
- History Interest Group Meeting
- Youth Interest Group Meeting
- Meeting of the Millennials
 - An evening event upstairs at The Provincial targeting input from the millennial generation of Apex.
- Brewery, Restaurant, and Retail Interest Group Meeting
- Parking Interest Group Meeting
- Public Space Interest Group Meeting

Key takeaways from the week of meetings included the following input:

- Public art surveys reveal the majority of Apex citizens would like to see murals in downtown.
- NC 55 and Salem Street is a key intersection where potential visitors can be enticed toward downtown.
- Fire Station alley has potential for unique treatment including artwork and lighting.

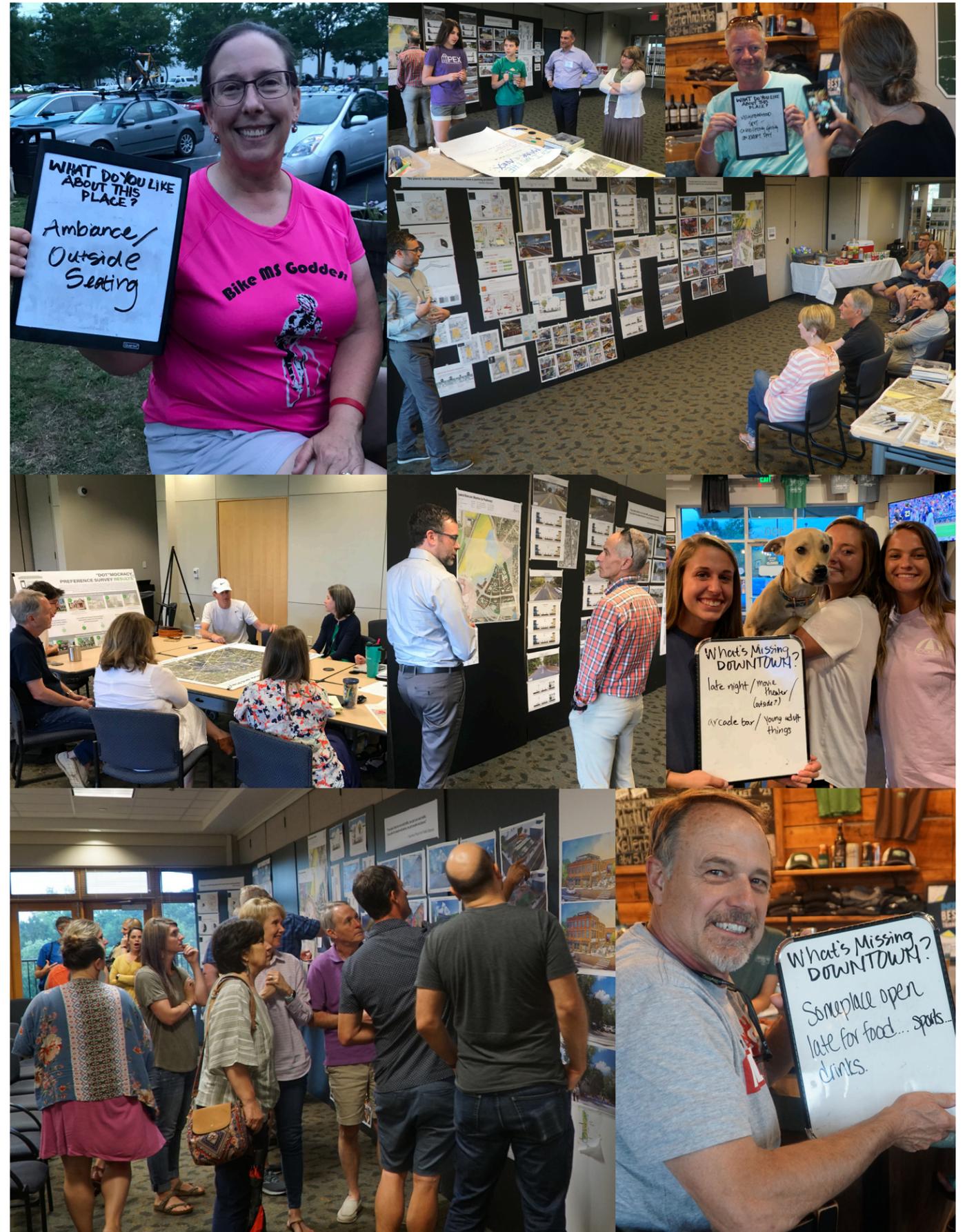
- Alleys need to be transformed and the atmosphere improved.
- Capital projects are in the works for pedestrian improvements around downtown.
- Citizens desire to promote active lifestyles including walking and biking for all ages.
- Citizens want to see the exploration of potential higher density housing in downtown that includes affordable housing typologies.
- The design needs to enhance safety for pedestrians and address speeding cars.
- Citizens desire to expand downtown in various directions.
- A plethora of interesting historic features and facts need highlighting.
- Rooftop dining is a missing amenity downtown.

3.6.2 Brewery Visits

On two evenings during the charrette, the design team visited the local breweries currently located outside of downtown—Brueprint Brewing Company & Southern Peak Brewery. The intent of these visits was to “tap” into a group of Apex residents that patronize these spots and try to understand what about the environment draws them in. The design team found willing participants to have casual conversations with and posed a few simple questions to them. Everyone seemed to be in agreement that finding a spot for a brewery (or a few!) would be a big draw for downtown.

3.6.3 Youth Survey

During the youth interest group meeting, members of the design team and town staff went to open gym hours at the Community Center to engage directly with Apex’s younger generation. Post card surveys were distributed and collected at both the community center and the Hunter Street Skate Park. Around half of the youth answered “maybe” when asked if they are thinking of moving back to Apex after college. So, the evolution of downtown over the next ten years will be critical to their decision making process.



▲ Imagery from the week-long design charrette

3.7 Polling at Public Presentations

On the evening of September 12th, 2019, the team returned to the community to present a compilation of work completed during the design charrette along with the Guiding Principles, Key Goals, and a Top 10 Projects List. Prior to developing the final document, the team wanted feedback on a few key issues related to the plan. Those issues are described at the right, and polling results can be found on the next page.

Issue 1

Which solution do you prefer for Salem Street of the four provided?

Issue 2

Rank the Top 10 projects in the order YOU believe they should be prioritized.

Issue 2 Results

Ranking of the Top 10 Projects (1 being the top priority for respondents)

1. Transform the Salem streetscape
2. Energize the alleys...Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station
3. Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space Downtown
4. Add a net gain of 200 public parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, with a minimum of 100 within a 3-minute walk
5. Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries AND a boutique hotel
6. Re-envision the fire station as a civic and mixed use development
7. Install wayfinding signage in and around Downtown
8. Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center
9. Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multimodal, iconic, gateway feature
10. Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of Downtown

Issue 1 Results

71%

of participants at the final public presentation prefer the Salem Street solution that removes 30 on-street parking in order to expand the urban sidewalks on both sides and plant street trees

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



Salem Street Options (clockwise from top left): On-street parking one side; No on-street parking; Alternating on-street parking (short); Alternating on-street parking (long)

143 people attended the final public presentation at Town Hall while another 3,700 people viewed the live stream on Facebook!





04
RETAIL MARKET
CONDITIONS &
STRATEGIES

04 RETAIL MARKET CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES

The retail market analysis was led by Streetsense's Larisa Ortiz. Her comprehensive approach recognizes that having sufficient customer demand is only one component of a wide variety of issues and challenges that may be affecting the success of downtown merchants. Her retail diagnostic methodology is comprised of four key elements:

MARKET ANALYSIS: Is there sufficient demand for retail goods and services?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT: Can customers easily patronize businesses and how do they get around to cross shop once they are there?

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT: What other options are there for customers, and how does downtown fit into the competitive landscape? Is there room for more retail given the options that consumers already have in the marketplace?

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY: Is the downtown well managed, and are you in a position to execute on the recommendations of the plan?

The resulting retail program recommendations served as a guidepost for the urban designers when exploring how and where downtown Apex should grow. The full retail analysis can be found in the appendix of this document.

43

Total number of current storefronts

24%

Increase in residential population within a 5-mile radius of downtown since 2010

875

Linear feet of Salem Street that is the current home of three distinct retail micro-climates

4.1 Classifications & Definitions

4.1.1 District Classification

The current retail square footage (95,000 square feet) in downtown Apex marks it as a "Neighborhood Center." (according to the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) classification of retail districts) "Neighborhood Centers" have, on average, 30,000-125,000 square feet of retail, focus on convenience goods and services, and have a small, local trade area of approximately three miles (Primary and Secondary). They attract nearby residents, but they do not have the amount of retail necessary to draw in visitors from a wider area. The 95,000 sf of existing retail is located in three distinct microclimates which fails to create a cohesive feeling in the overall district. Combining these areas so they functionally act as a single environment, the town has the opportunity to improve market penetration and even grow the size of the current trade area. People will travel further if they know they have more things to experience and do.

By contrast, "Theme/Festival" districts (according to ICSC) have, on average, 80,000-250,000 square feet of retail. Apex is on the lower end of that range and does have some features of a "Theme/Festival" district, but it is not quite large enough to draw in significant visitor traffic from the wider region, which was confirmed in stakeholder interviews. While several events are well-attended, Apex remains unknown to many in the surrounding area. Additional square footage (60,000-70,000 square feet) would solidify Apex as a "Theme/Festival" district. These types of districts have a much larger trade area (as large as 25-75 miles), drawing people in for events, day trips, weekend trips, etc.

Neighborhood Center

What Downtown Apex is Today

Concept: Convenience-oriented offerings



Theme/Festival District

What Downtown Apex could be in the Future

Concept: Leisure, tourist, retail and service-oriented offerings with entertainment as a unifying theme. Often in urban areas, they may be adapted from older—sometimes historic—buildings, and part of a mixed-use project.

▲ Based on the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) classification of retail districts



People do not buy goods and services. They buy relations, stories, and magic.

-Seth Godin, American author

4.1.2 Terminology

"Trade Area" refers to the geographic area from which most shoppers hail and is affected by many factors. Physical impediments, such as lakes, pose hard barriers, while highways and good access can have the opposite effect, increasing the area customers will travel from. In practice, trade area is further informed by the quantity and type of retail offerings.

Primary Trade Area is designed to capture consumers in the nearby vicinity of downtown that visit regularly.

Secondary Trade Area is designed to capture occasional or weekend consumers that visit downtown, but not regularly.



▲ An award winning retail analysis methodology known as Commercial DNA developed by Larisa Ortiz of Streetsense

4.2 Market Data & Demographics

4.2.1 Defining the Trade Area

The “trade area” for Downtown Apex as a retail location depends largely on a few key factors: the total retail square footage, existing tenant mix and anchors, visibility, access, and nearby competition. Downtown Apex is a highly accessible commercial district by car with access provided through many regional connectors including NC 540, US 64, US 1, and NC 55. This makes downtown easy to get to for regional residents and also easy to find for out-of-town visitors. As a result, trade areas were determined by drive times—10-15-minute drive (5-mile radius) and 20-30-minute drive (12-mile radius).

Unfortunately, downtown currently lacks high-quality directional signage at key perimeter locations that could capture the attention of potential driving customers and point them to the core retail of Salem Street.

4.2.2 Understanding Retail Demand

Downtown customers are made up of three market segments: Residents, Daytime Workers, and Visitors. The retail leakage data in this study (4.2.3) is only a reflection of the residential customer.

Residents

The residential population within a 5-mile radius of downtown Apex has grown 24% since 2010 and is expected to continue growing 13% over the next five years creating greater demand for retail and restaurants (i.e. more square footage). Within a 10-minute drive, nearly a third of residents are aged 40-60 (Gen X) and a quarter of residents are children <15. Downtown Apex has a strong base of young families as its local customers. Young families suggest a tenant mix that is rooted in family friendly restaurants, activities, and entertainment.

The population in Downtown Apex has been diversifying and will continue to see a large increase in the Asian population, with growth of over 23% in the next five years alone. The Hispanic population

and Black/African American populations will also continue to grow by 12% and 5% respectively by 2023. Growing diversity might suggest opportunities for new food concepts and a greater diversity in retail offerings.

The residential population within a 5-mile radius of downtown Apex has higher educational attainments, compared with Wake County. More than 87% of residents have at least some college education. Retailers consider higher educational attainment as a positive predictor of spending. More than half of households within a 5-mile radius earn in excess of \$100,000 annually, raising potential spending by local residents. This exceeds rates of high earning households in Wake County (35%). *(All demographic and market data presented from year 2010 are based on the Decennial Census while 2018 and 2023 figures have been projected by proprietary data provider, ESRI Business Analyst Online.)*

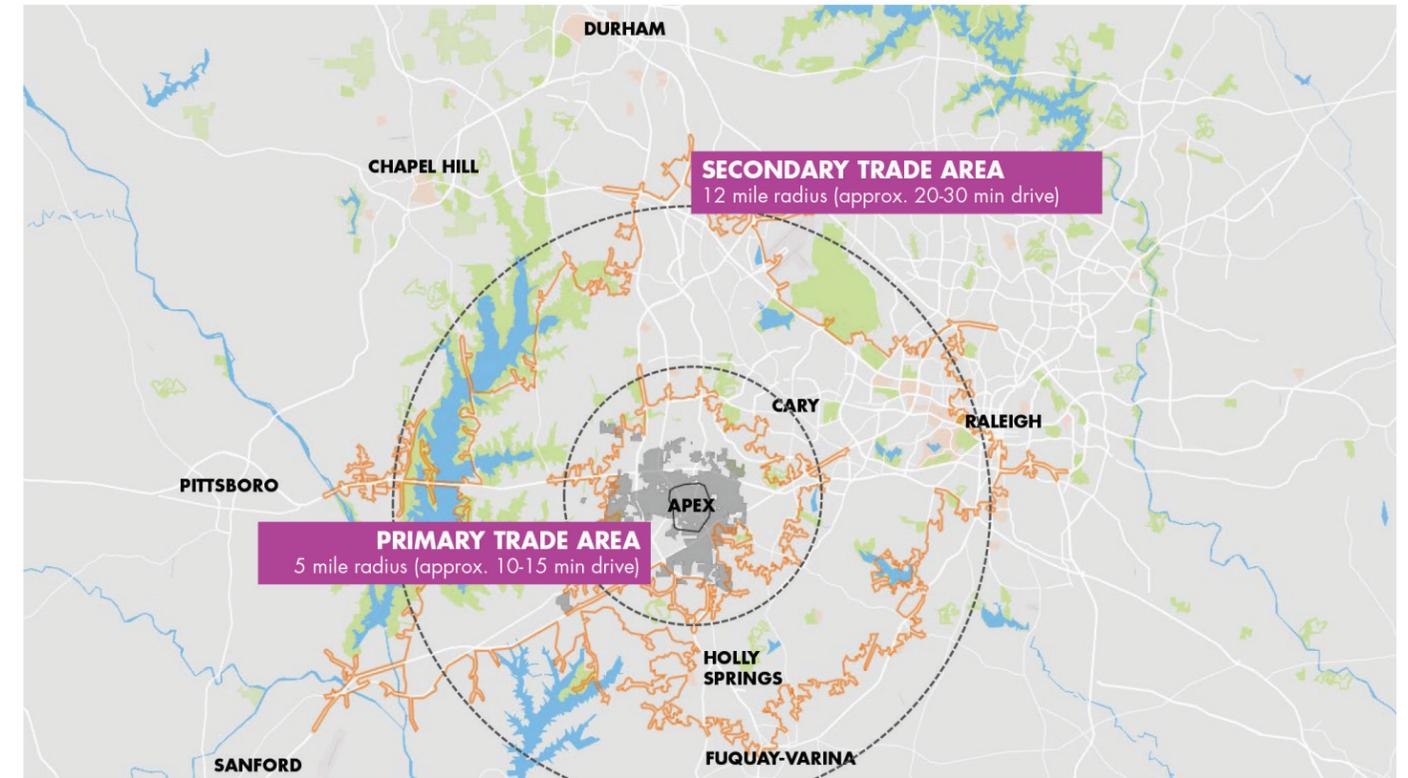
Daytime Workers

Workers form another key base for downtown spending. Although there are over 35,000 daytime workers within a 5-mile radius of downtown Apex, a majority are employed close to surrounding competitive malls with cheap, fast-service restaurants.

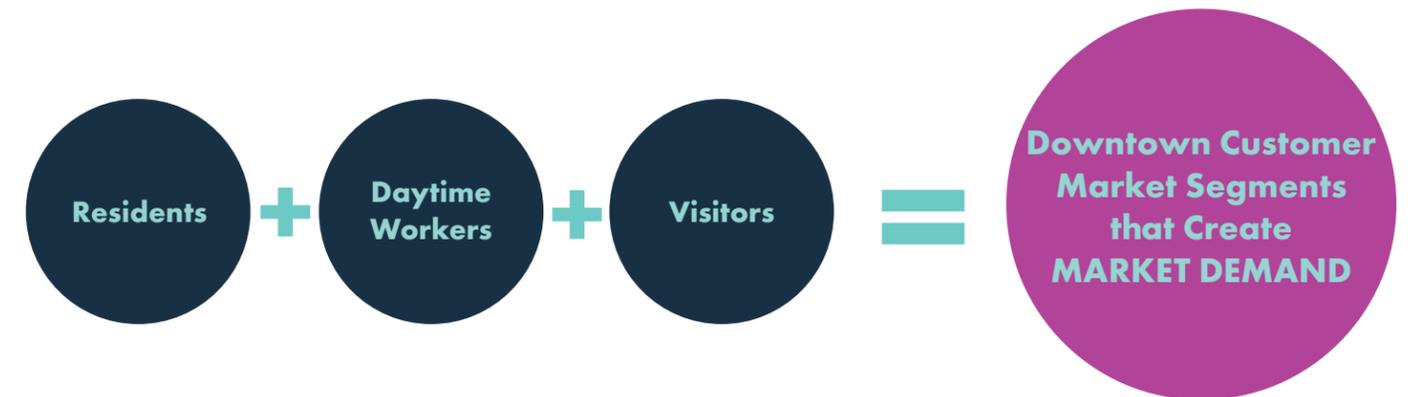
In order to effectively capture worker spending, downtown restaurants need affordable and fast-service lunch and after-work options. Over 40% of daytime workers have high potential spending power with earnings of more than \$3,333 per month. *(All daytime population figures are based on 2002-2015 LEHD Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) provided by the Census Bureau.)*

Visitors

Events drive significant visitation. Currently, there are mixed responses from business owners on sales impact. Care should be taken to think about events that drive retail sales and are done in collaboration with merchants. Events that drive people into stores rather than keep them outside of stores need to be added to this roster. *(Visitor data is drawn from pedestrian counts installed downtown (provided by City))*



▲ Map of the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas for Downtown Apex



4.2.3 Understanding Retail Gap

If retail sales are greater than resident demand, businesses are selling more than residents are buying. This typically means shoppers are coming from outside the trade area to shop. Typically, it is a best practice to not add additional business types with a large surplus.

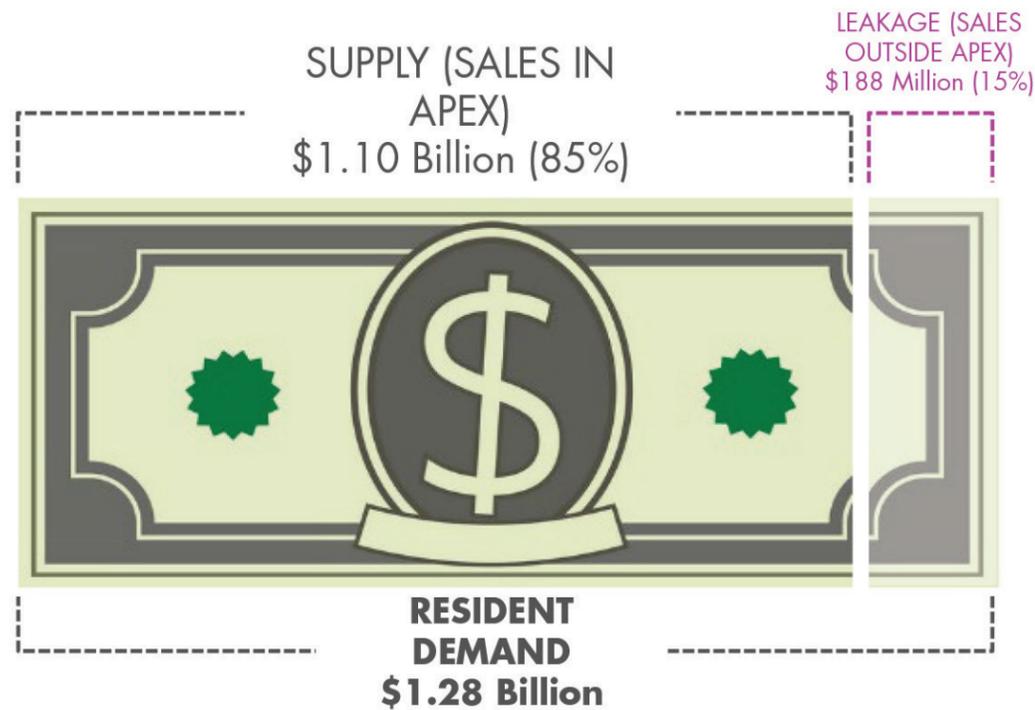
If resident demand is greater than business sales, resident spending may be “leaking” out of the trade area. In other words, they are going elsewhere to shop. Opportunities may exist to add business types to serve those needs. For every \$1 of demand by residents within 5 miles/10-minute drive of Apex, \$0.15 is being spent outside that same area (10-minute drive).

When total demand for all retail trade and food and drink categories are combined against total supply of all retail trade and food and drink categories*, there is an overall leakage of 15% that is being spent outside the trade area of 5 miles/10-min-drive.

**Note: Categories that were included in this calculation only included traditional brick-and-mortar retail suited to Salem St such as Furniture & Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance, Building materials, Garden Equipment and Supply, Food and Beverage, Health and Personal Care, Clothing and Accessories, Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books & Music, Miscellaneous Goods, and Food Services and Drinking Places.*

Despite an overall leakage, this does not mean that each individual retail category included in this calculation has leakage. In this case, Grocery Stores and General Merchandise as individual categories have a surplus that was negated by larger leakage in other categories.

Only when other retail trade categories that are not suited to the fabric of Salem Street such as motor vehicle and parts dealers, gasoline stations, and non-store retailers (e.g. direct selling establishments) are included in the overall leakage calculations, Apex has a surplus of \$277 million.



▲ Supply & Demand which reveals leakage of sales at 15%

Therefore, the largest surplus categories include the following: Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers, Gasoline Stations, Non-Store Retailers, Grocery Stores, and General Merchandise Stores.

The town should be conservative about capture rates for a niche offering, but even at 15%, and taking into account the fact that some categories (furniture, building materials, etc.) are not the focus of this effort, there is the opportunity to add more retail to downtown in the categories that will further reinforce the “Theme/Festival” ICSC category. While adding more retail/food & beverage is an option—this new retail must be focused on areas where there are gaps in the retail environment. The goal of this new retail is to create a cohesive downtown that functions as one, rather than as three distinct districts.

“Theme/Festival” districts are also in keeping with how retail is changing. Nationally, a decline is being seen in some categories (apparel, electronics) owing to online shopping, so rooting this effort in an area of retail where there remains strength is an opportunity. A 15% capture rate (or less) reflects current conditions, and there is demand to add approximately 60-70,000 square feet of additional retail. There is also an opportunity to increase capture rate and grow trade area by connecting disconnected micro-climates. Resilient retail categories include food (specialty food, restaurants), entertainment (sporting, hobby, etc.) and services (personal care).

The two categories that are shown below with strikethroughs indicate categories that were not included in potential retail SF expansion calculations. These categories have been excluded from supportable SF calculations due to their mismatch in merchandise and offerings from the Theme/Festival district of Apex, as well as, due to overall decline of these categories in brick-and-mortar stores as they face increasing competition from online sales.

RETAIL CATEGORY	TOTAL LEAKAGE	SUPPORTABLE SF (100% CAPTURE RATE)	30% CAPTURE RATE	15% CAPTURE RATE
Clothing & Accessories	\$66,340,407	246,527	73,958	36,979
Furniture & Home Furnishings	\$45,791,993	116,667	35,000	17,500
Restaurants/ Other Eating Places	\$43,879,863	113,531	34,059	17,030
Building Materials, Garden Equipment & Supply	\$43,779,366	230,523	69,157	34,578
Health and Personal Care	\$24,128,820	25,404	7,621	3,811
Miscellaneous Goods	\$21,073,241	52,447	15,734	7,867
Specialty Food	\$7,869,393	17,374	5,212	2,606
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books & Music	\$2,137,536	5,717	1,715	858
TOTAL POTENTIAL NEW RETAIL SF:		461,000	138,299	69,151

◀ Capture rate is independent of the 15% leakage from the previous page. Capture rates are applied to each retail category experiencing leakage to realistically measure the supportable expansion of offerings in these categories given that it is unlikely for any location to capture 100% of demand leaking out of the area. In this case, a lower 15-30% capture rate is likely for downtown Apex given strong competitive offerings in surrounding malls and towns. A multitude of other factors also impact the capture rate, including store operators, quality and price point of new merchandise, accessibility/visibility of downtown to customers, etc.

Supportable SF (or 100% Capture) = Total Leakage/ Sales per SF*
*Industry-standard sales per SF figures were applied for each retail leakage category in the table

4.3 Physical Environment

The public realm and the private realm are examined separately because the funding sources and type of partnerships necessary to advance investments differ so significantly. The town itself will have more control and influence over the public realm improvements and investments but can work with the private sector to provide guidance and leadership.

4.3.1 Access & Visibility

The majority of Apex residents and workers own cars; therefore, they drive to downtown and demand parking. Car ownership is driving the current need to ensure that downtown Apex is easily accessible to people arriving by car. Workers whose jobs are within a quarter mile are also likely to drive. To encourage workers in the area to walk downtown at lunch time, ensure sidewalks connecting major employment centers/ buildings to downtown are well-maintained, wide and accessible, well-shaded (street trees), and offer ambient entertainment. This may include public artwork along sidewalks or murals along blank passive walls. However, note that there are only 692 workers within ¼ of a mile of downtown. Workers within close vicinity of downtown are employed in accommodation and food service (26.6%), finance and insurance (14.5%), professional/scientific and technical services (8.2%), and administration & support, waste management and remediation (7.5%). Lunchtime price points therefore need to be reflective of wages of many workers in lower-paying sectors.

99%

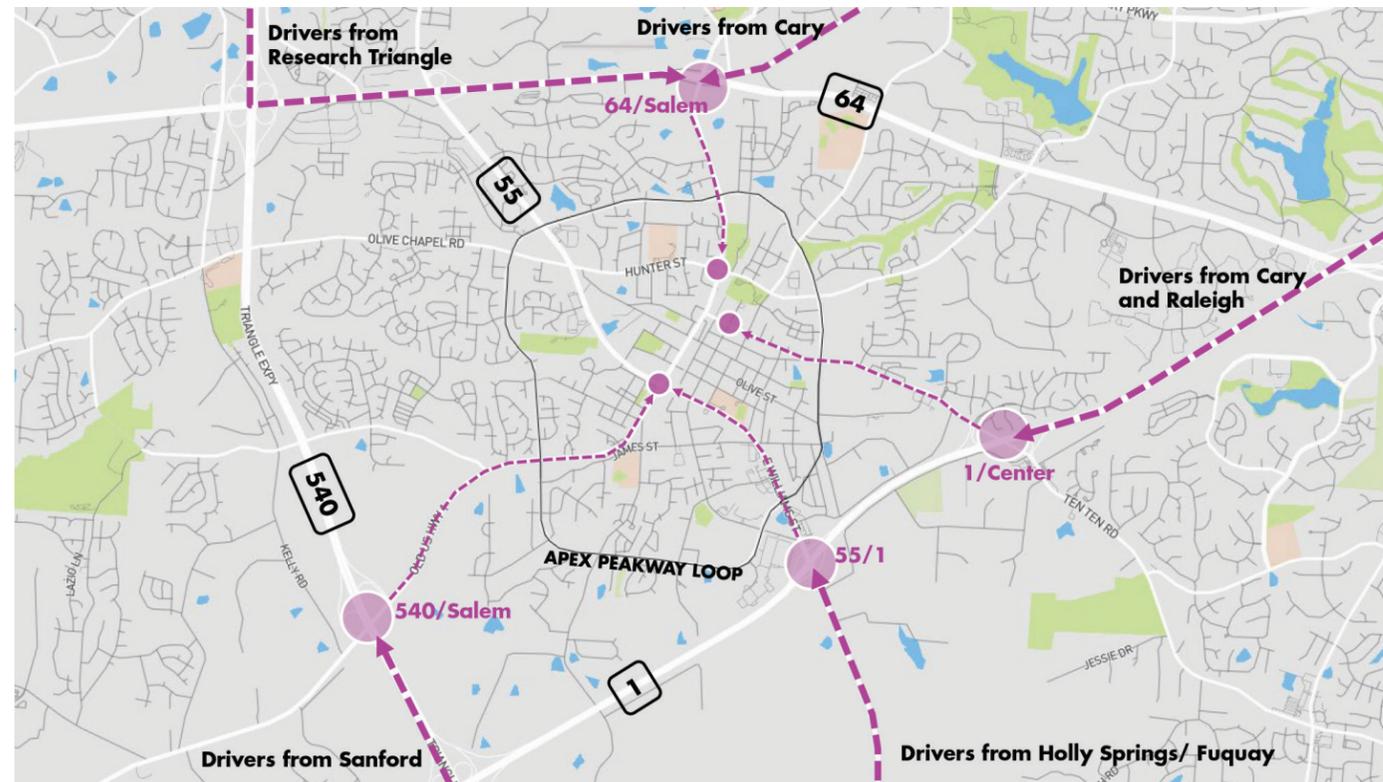
Of owner households within a 10-min drive of downtown own at least one vehicle.

27%

Of owner households within a 10-min drive of downtown own 3 or more vehicles.

493

Workers are employed within a quarter mile of downtown Apex



▲ Prioritizing improvements in signage and wayfinding at points of entry for visitors from other major towns and cities such as Cary/ Raleigh/ Research Triangle/ Holly Springs, etc. is key to capturing a new untapped customer base. The entry points indicated on the diagram indicate priority points of entry rather than routes that are likely being used by more local customer segments from areas just outside of Apex such as Walden Creek.

As mentioned earlier, the main entryways to Apex are the routes that see some of the highest vehicular counts. These gateways are opportunities to raise the awareness of downtown Apex and its offerings. With over 90% of downtown diners and shoppers arriving by private vehicle, wayfinding at critical junctures should be larger and more visible to capture the attention of visitors and new passersby. The lower average daily traffic (ADT) count and reduced speed limits in the downtown core creates a generally safe and comfortable environment for pedestrian shoppers. Downtown Apex has the potential to capture larger amounts of daily traffic from surrounding highways with the right signage.

Pedestrian counts tell us that the downtown is most active on weekends and during lunch and dinner. High pedestrian activity is also seasonal; this information is helpful for soft goods retailers who might be interested in capturing additional customers during these times. While many stores are closed on Mondays, the pedestrian data suggests that Monday is as favorable a day from a pedestrian count perspective as any other day.

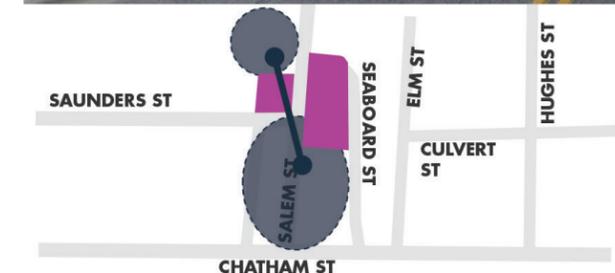
4.3.2 Public Realm

Salem Street has clean sidewalks and existing lighting that create a comfortable and attractive environment for pedestrian shoppers. Although sidewalks are well maintained, businesses are constrained by the overall width and the brick paver strip along the curb makes

that experience feel even more narrow. Merchants are often unable to display furniture and merchandise that would otherwise activate the public realm. The tight row of parallel parking spaces also creates a visual wall, limiting cross-shopping opportunities. The downtown core also lacks well-programmed open space that drives visitation by accommodating activities, community events, and entertainment. All of these extend “dwell time”. Increasingly, activated open space is helping to drive visitation in downtown environments. In this case, the current open space is underutilized and underwhelming. Opportunities need to be explored to further enhance a comprehensive set of downtown experiential offerings (which are critical to competing with on-line).

4.3.3 Private Realm

Downtown businesses in ground floor spaces have creatively taken on a myriad of storefront marketing tactics, including branded signage and awnings, transparent windows, painted facades, and outdoor merchandise displays. Businesses are poised to take advantage of opportunities for more outdoor space (e.g. sidewalks, open space, parklets). Passive and vacant ground floor uses create a 200 foot gap between Salem Street retail offerings and those located in the Promenade/Tobacco Exchange, separating the two nodes from each other and reducing the likelihood for cross-shopping opportunities.

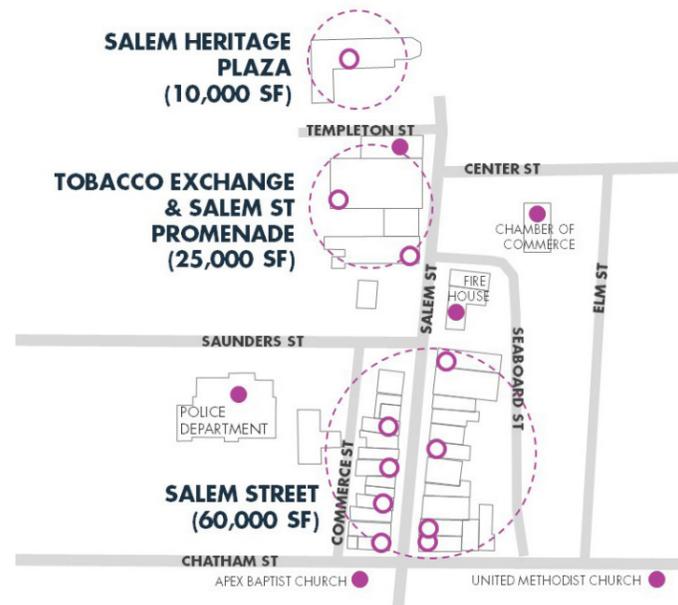


▲ Gaps in the retail experience discourage cross-shopping north of Saunders Street

4.4 Business Environment

4.4.1 Downtown Anchors

Downtown Apex is characterized by a variety of local and unique retail and restaurants as well as civic anchors. Salem Street between Chatham and Saunders, the Tobacco Exchange and Salem Street Promenade, and Salem Heritage Plaza comprise the three retail microclimates. The Halle Cultural Arts Center, Chamber of Commerce (located in the historic depot), the fire station, and the Baptist and Methodist churches all serve as civic anchors in the core downtown district. While Downtown Apex has a dense set of offerings, including unique, small-town specialty goods and family-friendly eating and drinking places, stakeholders indicated there is a lack of awareness of these offerings.



- Civic Anchor
- Local Eating/Drinking Places

4.4.2 Doing Business in Apex

Restaurants are actively marketing their businesses through social media and online review platforms. These efforts have been funded and initiated by individual businesses.

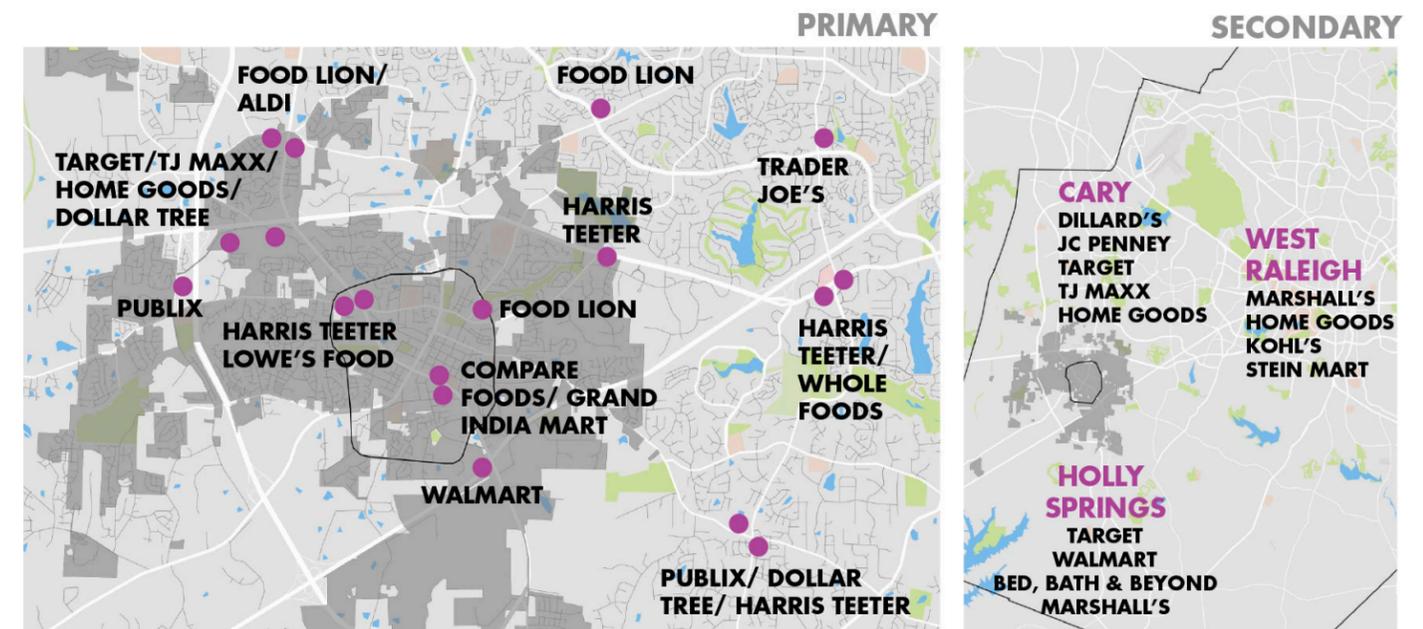
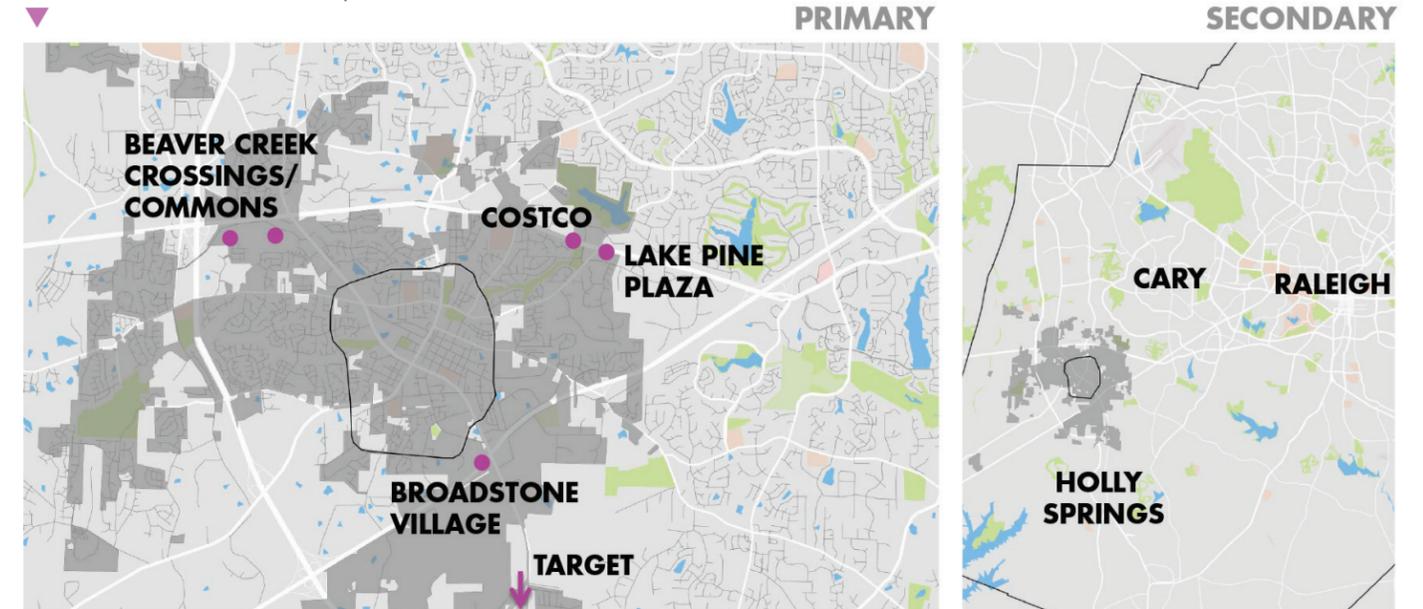
However, there is currently no overarching downtown brand and no robust, collective marketing platform for retail and restaurant businesses. Without a strong downtown brand, each individual business must fend for themselves. A downtown brand can help communicate a set of offerings that will help to draw visitors. Visitors typically spend 4 minutes for every 1 minute of travel. So a traveler who travels 15 minutes wants at least an hour of things to do. By marketing a 2-3 hour experience, or having people think of a visit as lasting 2-3 hours, the town is strengthening opportunities to draw from a trade area that is 30-45 minutes.

There is also a mismatch in store operating hours between retailers and restaurants. While restaurants are open until 9PM on most nights, retail is completely closed by 6PM most nights.

4.4.3 Competitive Districts

A number of general merchandise and malls exist in the surrounding area which contributes to the retail leakage the study discovered. On busy event days and weekends, downtown Apex retailers and restaurants compete for demand with nearby competitive districts. Local residents are shopping for convenience and neighborhood goods and services in a variety of nearby shopping centers as the maps to the right illustrate. Economies of scale and the sheer diversity of offerings at these big box stores make it unlikely that downtown can compete directly against these businesses. Hence, the push to make the experience of downtown Apex unique and vibrant in a way these competitors cannot be.

Primary and Secondary Trade Area Competitive Districts around Downtown Apex



Primary and Secondary Trade Area Competitive Shopping Centers around Downtown Apex

4.5 Administrative Capacity

Successful downtown retail strategies rely on vital economic development partners from all sectors. A few of those key partners are listed in the table below and include public sector, non-profits, and civic organizations.

The hiring process for a new “Downtown and Small Business Coordinator” was happening concurrently with the development of this plan. Their role as an advocate and liaison for downtown will be a key tool for the advancement of this plan. The position fills the gap in resources and staff capacity which don’t currently fully cover the management and promotion of downtown.

The other piece of the administrative puzzle is good downtown zoning and signage regulations that support vibrant environments. The specific policy recommendations related to this item can be found in Chapter 9.



PUBLIC SECTOR/ TOWN

TOWN OF APEX COMMUNICATIONS
- Branding study (rebranding not targeted specifically towards downtown Apex/businesses)

POTENTIAL FOR DOWNTOWN COORDINATOR
-Dedication to downtown improvement, growth, and maintenance

APEX PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE
-Volunteer-based, no guaranteed stream of funding

NON-PROFIT/ ECON DEVELOPMENT

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
- Volunteer based group of business owners supporting each other and promoting downtown Apex and its businesses. The ADDBA does not have any employees or guaranteed funding.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- Over 500 members (However, only 1% are downtown Apex business owners)
- Marketing collateral/town map (draw attention to surrounding shopping centers; doesn't feature downtown Apex businesses)

CIVIC/VOLUNTEER GROUPS

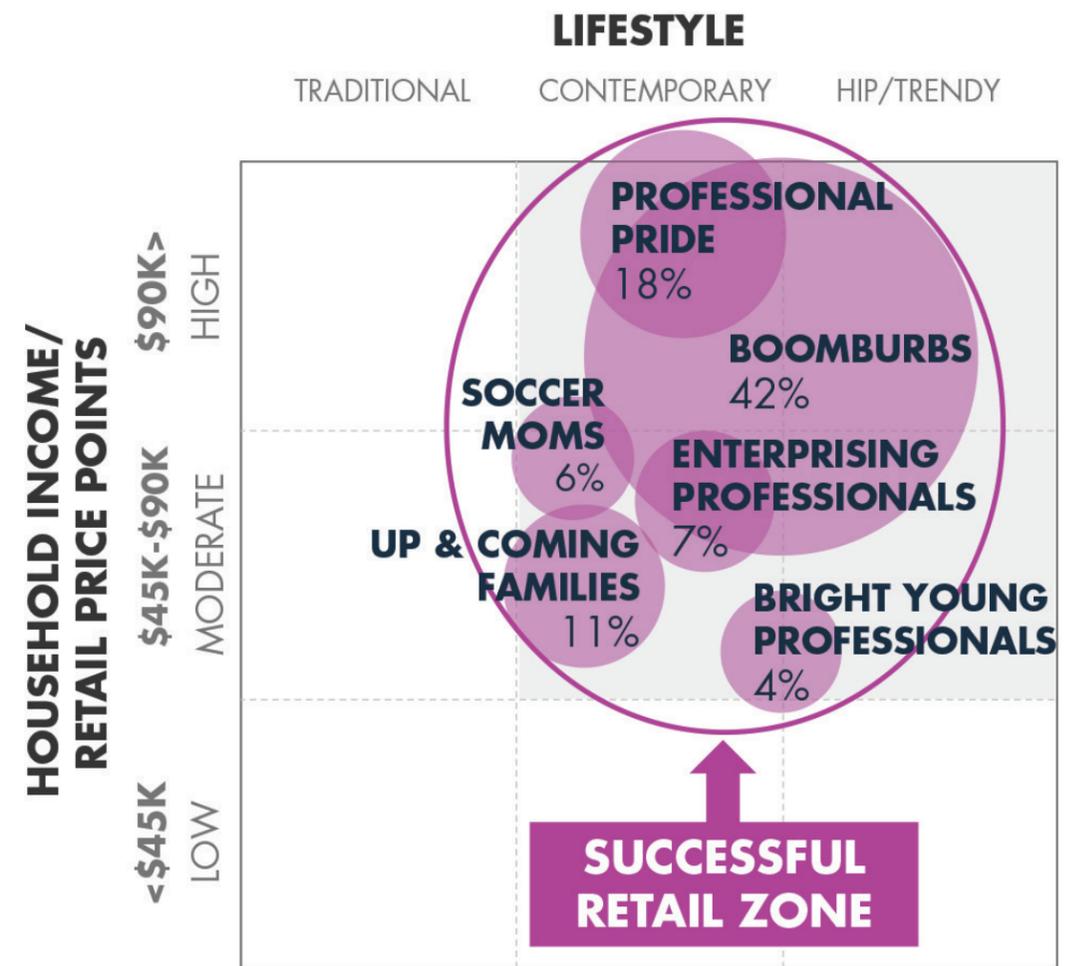
CHURCHES, MOSQUE, AND SCHOOLS
- Baptist and Methodist Church provide additional parking spaces
- School children early release results in large influx of kids. May present opportunity for tailored retail, dining, and public space

▲ Matrix of economic development partners working together toward a successful retail strategy

4.6 Strategic Positioning

Psychographic analysis was conducted with ESRI Tapestry Segmentation to identify customer groups in the 5-mile radius in order to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of these residents. ESRI Tapestry Segmentation provides an accurate, detailed geodemographic segmentation system that integrates consumer’s spending habits, concerns, and values with residential characteristics to explain why they buy, to identify markets, and to classify U.S. neighborhoods. For complete ESRI segment descriptions, please refer to the appendix of this document.

By utilizing psychographic data, laid on a matrix that looks at household income (from resident provided data), successful retail will meet the needs of customers who fall in the moderate to high and contemporary to hip/trendy quadrants. This is not to say that other businesses will not do well, but that the likely successful business will serve this dominant customer base. In order to effectively capture additional spending by local residents and workers in the primary trade area, downtown Apex needs to offer more contemporary and trendy comparative retail and eating/drinking places.



4.7 Retail Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to improve the success of retail in downtown Apex. They can also be found in the implementation matrix of Chapter 9.

4.7.1 Physical Environment

Key Recommendations

- 4A-Improve the public realm for retail by adding interim parklets along Salem Street to allow for more spillover retail/dining experiences.
- 4B-Strengthen downtown Apex as a “theme/festival” destination district by adding 60-70,000 square feet of space to create 150,000 square feet total, which will increase the capture rate and grow the trade area by connecting the disconnected microclimates with new offerings. Any new retail supply should be clustered at existing nodes and/or serve to connect the microclimates.
- 4C-Enhance signage and wayfinding at critical entry points to downtown Apex by using large, visible historic signs and unique public art elements.
- 4D-Encourage workers in the area to walk downtown at lunch time by ensuring sidewalks connecting major employment centers/buildings to downtown are well-maintained, wide and accessible, well-shaded (street trees), and offer ambient entertainment. This may include public artwork along sidewalks or murals along blank passive walls. The price point for lunch options must also be reflective of the lower-paying sector wages.
- 4E-Program spaces with ambient entertainment to encourage greater visitation to downtown on non-event days.

4.7.2 Business Environment

Key Recommendations

- 4F-Ensure the appropriate tenant mix by aligning retail recruitment efforts with demographics/demand and leakage opportunities (including, but not limited to, affordable, quick lunch and after-work options to capture worker spending, new food and retail concepts to cater to a growing diversity in residents, and family-friendly restaurants, activities, and entertainment to meet the demand of the young family customer base).
- 4G-Encourage existing restaurants or other new full-service restaurants to extend service on weekend mornings to meet breakfast demand from local residents.
- 4H-Work with local retailers and restaurateurs to create a downtown district with consistent and complimentary hours of operation.
- 4I-Develop communication materials based on a new downtown brand to share market information and the overall downtown investment strategy with potential investors and tenants.
- 4J-Promote and program events that drive retail sales and are done in collaboration with merchants during slower business hours to drive foot traffic in stores.
- 4K-Expand downtown offerings for the youth population. This may include offering lower after-school price points on certain menu items merchandise (particularly for casual take-out snacks/food and miscellaneous goods). In addition, support local social service/education providers who are able to offer non-retail options such as free after-school activities and programs in public spaces.
- 4L-Increase resources for the newly hired Downtown and Small Business Coordinator in order to effectively implement the above programs and strategies that will enhance the downtown business environment.



Aligning the tenant mix with current demographic demand will be vital to the future of retail on Salem Street.



Enhancing the public realm of Salem Street by allowing temporary parklets can greatly increase retail/restaurant sales. Parklets should be piloted to reduce cost and time of implementation and to test favorability with customers and business owners before sinking large investments. In the long term, parklets may be installed permanently once the right locations have been identified through pilots.

Top 3 Public Choices for New Businesses in Downtown Apex



Brewery & Beer Garden

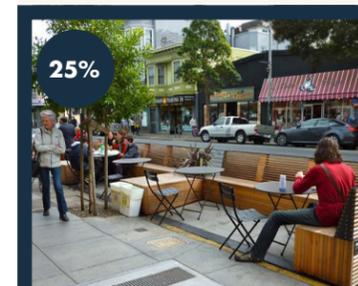


Restaurants



Experiential Retail (i.e. kitchen store with cooking classes)

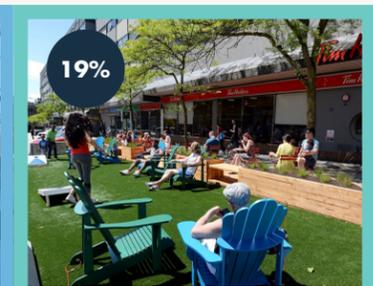
Top 3 Public Choices for Ideas to Spice up the Retail Environment



Parklet for Outdoor Dining



Active Entertainment



Parklet for Relaxation

Public input gathered reflects a desire for breweries, restaurants, and experiential retail which is all on trend nationally along with parklets and ambient entertainment to enhance the retail environment.



05
HOUSING MARKET
CONDITIONS &
STRATEGIES

05 HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES

Housing experts Zimmerman/Volk Associates (ZVA) led the investigation into the potential market for new dwelling units within the study area. The team needed to determine the target households, appropriate residential mix, and the optimum market position for new units.

Housing preferences and socio-economic characteristics of households were a key determinant in defining housing potential. Demographics are important, but so are lifestyle and lifestyle patterns. As in all real estate, location is critical to housing success. Creating the right mix of for-rent and for-sale housing units within a walkable distance of downtown is how a twenty-four hour population emerges. Varied price points and unit sizes help foster a mixed-income, mixed generation community.

No matter how desirable the downtown commercial environment becomes, without housing options (including affordable units) in walking and biking distance to the core, people will be forced to live in surrounding zipcodes. The absence of people living downtown stunts the potential for the area in a real way. The plan strives to illustrate the market potential shown in this chapter in subsequent design scenarios.

The entire housing study can be found in the appendix of this document.

2,380

households have the potential to move within and to the town each year

1,080

households have the potential to move within and to the study area each year

103-144

households represent the annual potential capture rate for the study area

In brief, the housing study determined:

- **Where** the potential renters and buyers of new and existing housing units in the Town of Apex and the study area are likely to move from (the draw areas);
- **How** many households have the potential to move within and to the town and the study area each year if appropriate housing units were to be made available (depth and breadth of the market);
- **Who** the households are that represent the potential market for new units in the study area (the target markets);
- **What** their housing preferences are in aggregate (rental or ownership, multi-family or single-family);
- **What** their range of affordability is by housing type (income qualifications);
- **What** their current housing alternatives are (rental and for-sale residential development in the Apex market area);
- **What** the target households are currently able to pay to rent or purchase new dwelling units in the study area (base rents and prices); and
- **How** quickly the new units will lease or sell (absorption forecasts).

5.1 The Current Housing Context

In May 2019, ZVA compiled data from a variety of sources, including telephone interviews, individual property, and rental websites on eight selected rental properties built since 2007 representing more than 2,000 rental apartments in Apex. Most of these properties are purpose-built investment-grade assets with property sizes ranging from 165 units (at the seniors' apartment project, Cambridge Village of Apex) to 316 units (Colonial Village at Beaver Creek). All are at functional full occupancy, 95 percent or more occupied, in initial lease-up, or under construction.

Walk Score, a number between 0 and 100 denoting the walkability of a specific address or neighborhood, has grown in importance as a value criterion. Walk Scores between 70 and 90 are considered to be very walkable, where most errands can be accomplished on foot. Walk Scores below 50 indicate that most or almost all errands require an automobile. The Walk Scores of the eight surveyed rental properties range between 9 and 34, well below the Walk Scores at which walkability adds rental premiums, typically 70 and above.



This is a very clear trend everywhere in the U.S. The properties that have the highest walkability scores are achieving the highest rents and occupancy.

-Jonathan Holtzman, Chairman & CEO, City Club Apartments

The following information includes, by unit type, the number of properties surveyed, the approximate number of units, the general unit sizes and rent ranges, and the rents per square foot.

5.1.1 Multi-Family Rental Properties

Detailed information on the eight surveyed rental properties is summarized below.

Studios (one property)

- Only Cambridge Village of Apex, the seniors rental property, leases studio apartments. These range in size between 433 and 506 square feet, and rent for \$2,845 per month (between \$5.62 and \$6.57, the highest per-square-foot rents in the area). The wide range of services provided here account for the significantly higher rents.

One-Bedroom Units (8 properties)

- Excluding Cambridge Village of Apex, rents for one-bedroom apartments range from \$998 per month at Colonial Village at Beaver Creek on Creekside Drive to \$1,878 per month, also at Colonial Village. One-bedroom units at Cambridge Village rent for more than \$3,500 per month.
- One-bedroom units range in size from 572 square feet at Cambridge Village to 965 square feet at Meridian at Ten Ten on Brynmar Oaks Drive.
- Again excluding Cambridge Village, one-bedroom rents per square foot range between \$1.30 at Village at Broadstone Station on Broadstone Way to \$2.50 at Colonial Village. Rents per square foot at Cambridge Village range between \$5.49 and \$6.21.

Two-Bedroom Units (8 properties)

- Rents for two-bedroom flats range from \$1,155 per month for a two-bedroom/one-bath apartment at Village at Broadstone Station, to \$2,248 per month at Colonial Village. Rents for two-bedroom apartments range between \$4,695 and \$5,495 per month at the Cambridge Village seniors property.
- Two-bedroom units range in size from 1,027 square feet at Colonial Village, to 1,441 square feet at Flats at 540 on Reedybrook Crossing. Two-bedroom seniors units at Cambridge Village are as small as 818 square feet.
- Two-bedroom rents per square foot fall between \$0.97 at Village at Broadstone Station and \$2.06 at Colonial Village. At Cambridge Village, two-bedroom rents per square foot fall between \$4.29 and \$5.74.

Three-Bedroom Units (7 properties)

- Three-bedroom apartments are offered at all but Cambridge Village, with rental rates ranging between \$1,302 at Village at Broadstone Station and \$2,808 per month at Colonial Village.
- Three-bedroom apartments contain between 1,203 square feet at Colonial Village and 1,461 square feet at Village at Broadstone Station.
- Three-bedroom apartment rents per square foot range between \$0.89 at Village at Broadstone Station and \$2.33 at Colonial Village.

Nearly all of the properties provide a range of community amenities, typically pools, fitness centers, clubhouses or residents' lounges, business centers, and dog parks; less typical amenities include a movie theater, cabanas, and sports courts.

5.1.2 Single-Family Attached For-Sale Properties

The information below details resale listings, new construction, and proposed new construction townhouses being sold at 20 properties located in the Town of Apex. The units have been built post-2005, and most have been built within the past two years.

The Walk Scores of the surveyed for-sale properties range between 0 and 47. The following information includes, per area, the number of properties surveyed, the general unit sizes and price ranges, and the prices per square foot from the least- to the most-expensive units:

Central Apex

- 10 Properties (new/resales)
- 1,340 to 2,406 square feet
- \$249,990 to \$359,990
- \$125 to \$187 per square foot

Western Apex

- 6 Properties; 11 individual listings (new)
- 1,736 to 3,157 square feet
- \$255,900 to \$419,231
- \$125 to \$164 per square foot

Northern Apex

- 1 Property (new)
- 1,984 to 2,479 square feet
- \$283,900 to \$349,900
- \$139 to \$151 per square foot

Southern Apex

- 3 Properties (resales)
- 1,655 to 2,004 square feet
- \$247,900 to \$279,900
- \$125 to \$154 per square foot

Note: Central, western, northern, and southern boundaries were delineated by MLS database and no map was provided.

5.1.3 Single-Family Detached For-Sale Properties

The information below details resale listings, new construction, and proposed new construction single-family detached houses being sold at 20 subdivisions located in the Town of Apex. All of the new construction has been built in 2018 or 2019; most of the resales are less than five years old.

As with the townhouses, the following information includes, per area, the number of subdivisions surveyed, the general unit sizes and price ranges, and the prices per square foot from the least- to the most-expensive units:

Central Apex

- 5 Subdivisions; 4 individual listings (new/resales)
- 1,800 to 5,333 square feet
- \$324,000 to \$725,000
- \$136 to \$205 per square foot

Western Apex

- 12 Subdivisions (new/resales)
- 1,938 to 6,458 square feet
- \$317,535 to \$949,900
- \$115 to \$229 per square foot

Northern Apex

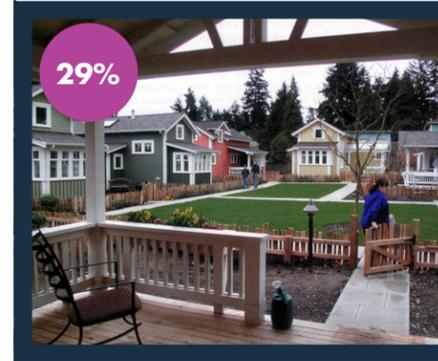
- 2 Subdivisions (new)
- 2,824 to 3,663 square feet
- \$414,990 to \$529,467
- \$119 to \$160 per square foot

Southern Apex

- 1 Subdivision (new/resales)
- 3,045 to 4,410 square feet
- \$469,900 to \$642,463
- \$125 to \$161 per square foot

Current housing context reflects what is available in terms of residential properties along with rents and prices (available alternatives for a household who might be moving to Apex). This reflects the context in which new development will occur and is what most developers look to when deciding whether to take on a project in a given area.

Top 3 Public Choices for Infill Single Family Housing



Cottage Courts



Small Home-Narrow Lot



Accessory Dwelling Unit-Granny Flat/Carriage House

Top 3 Choices for Multifamily Housing



Upper Lofts in Mixed Use



Live-Work Units



Duplex

▲ Public input gathered reflects a desire for smaller, more affordable units in the study area

5.2 Market Potential

Analysis of migration, mobility, socio-economic and lifestyle characteristics of households currently living within defined draw areas was integral to the determination of the potential market for new and existing housing units within the Town of Apex and the study area.

Additional supporting data was drawn from the 2017 American Community Survey for the study area, for the Town of Apex, and for Wake County. Information obtained from real estate brokers, sales and leasing agents, plus field investigation played into the market potential determination.

Where are the potential renters and buyers of new and existing housing units in the Town of Apex likely to move from?

Average Annual Market Potential by Draw Area

Town of Apex:	19.3%
Balance of Wake County:	34.7%
Regional Draw Area:	6.1%
Balance of the U.S.:	39.9%
Total:	100.0%

The LOCAL draw area, covering all households living within the Apex town limits.

The COUNTY draw area, covering all households living in the balance of Wake County.

The REGIONAL draw area, covering households with the potential to move to the Town of Apex from Durham and Johnston Counties, North Carolina.

The NATIONAL draw area, covering all households with the potential to move to the Town of Apex from all other U.S. counties.

How many households have the potential to move within and to the town each year?

2,380 households

How many households have the potential to move within and to the STUDY AREA each year over the next five years?

1,080 households

What are their housing preferences in aggregate?

HOUSING TYPE	NUMBER OF UNITS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
 Multi-Family For-Rent (Lofts/Apartments, leaseholder)	586	54.3%
 Multi-Family For-Sale (Lofts/Apartments, Condo/co-op ownership)	81	7.5%
 Single-Family Attached For-Sale (Townhouses, ADUs, fee-simple/condominium ownership)	113	10.5%
 Single-Family Detached For-Sale (Houses, ADUs, fee-simple ownership)	300	27.7%
TOTAL	1,080	100.0%

What is their range of affordability by housing type?

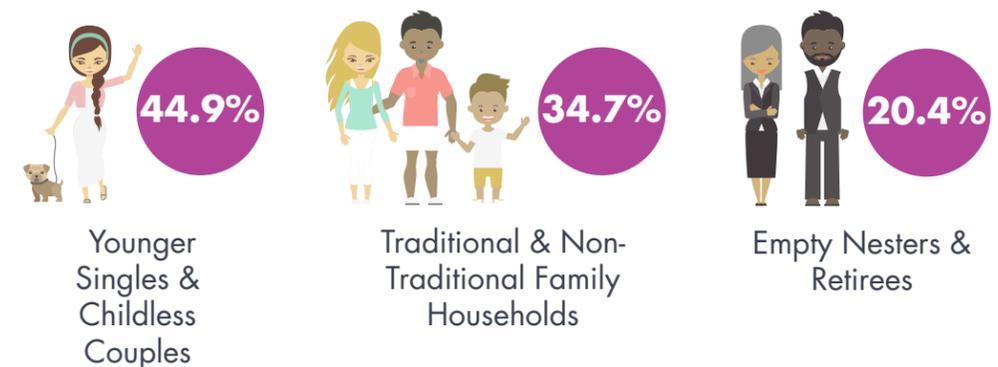
The 1,080 households that represent the annual potential market for new and existing housing units in the study area have also been grouped by income, based on the Raleigh, NC MSA median family income (AMI), which, for fiscal year 2019 has been determined by HUD to be \$93,100 for a family of four. Summarizing the incomes and financial capabilities of the 1,080 target households that represent the annual potential market for new units in the Study Area:

- 12.4% (134 households) have incomes below 30% of the AMI**
- 10.6% (115 households) have incomes between 31 and 60% AMI**
- 15.4% (166 households) have incomes between 61 and 80% AMI**
- 7.9% (85 households) have incomes between 81 and 100% AMI**
- 53.7% (580 households) have incomes above 100% AMI**

This study examines affordability based on the following general income groupings:

- Households with incomes below 30 percent AMI (the majority of these households typically qualify only for public housing or older existing units);
- Households with incomes between 31 and 60 percent of AMI (these households typically qualify for low-income housing tax credit units, existing older affordable rental housing, or heavily subsidized ownership housing);
- Households with incomes between 61 and 80 percent of AMI (these households typically qualify for workforce or affordable rental housing or subsidized ownership housing);
- Households with incomes between 81 and 100 percent AMI (these households typically qualify for existing rentals or new workforce or affordable for-sale housing); and
- Households with incomes above 100 percent AMI (these households generally have sufficient incomes to rent or purchase market-rate housing).

Who are the households that represent the potential market for new units in the Apex Study Area?



5.3 Market Capture

Based on a 15 to 20 percent capture of the annual average market for rental housing units, and a 10 to 15 percent capture of the annual average market for for-sale housing units, the Apex Study Area could potentially absorb an annual average of between 103 and 144 new multi-family and single-family attached and detached housing units with rent and price points that correspond to target household financial capabilities over the next five years.

For a study area of this size and scale, there is a high degree of confidence in a capture rate of up to 20 percent for new multi-family rental development and up to 15 percent for new multi-family for-sale and single-family attached and detached for-sale development.



Annual Market Capture by Housing Type

HOUSING TYPE	NUMBER OF UNITS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
 Multi-Family For-Rent (Lofts/Apartments, leaseholder)	61-82	49.3%
 Multi-Family For-Sale (Lofts/Apartments, Condo/Co-op ownership)	7-11	8.8%
 Single-Family Attached For-Sale (ADUs/Duplexes/Triplexes/Rowhouses/Townhouses, fee-simple)	10-14	11.7%
 Single-Family Detached For-Sale (ADUs/Urban Houses, fee-simple)	25-37	30.2%
Total	103-144	100.0%

5.3.1 Recommended Apex Housing Typologies | Buildings & Units

Building Typologies

Courtyard Apartment Building: An urban-scale, pedestrian-oriented equivalent to conventional garden apartments.

Loft Apartment Building: Either adaptive re-use of older warehouse or manufacturing buildings or a new-construction building type inspired by those buildings.

Mansion Apartment Building: A two- to three-story flexible-use structure with a street façade resembling a large detached or attached house (hence, “mansion”).

Liner Building: An apartment building with apartments and/or lofts lining two to four sides of a multi-story parking structure.

Mixed-Use Building: A pedestrian-oriented building, either attached or free-standing, with apartments and/or offices over flexible ground floor uses that can range from retail to office to residential.

Podium Building: A small-scale apartment building construction type with two or more stories of stick-frame residential units (lofts or apartments) built over a single level of above-grade structured parking, usually constructed with reinforced concrete.

Duplex/Triplex/Rowhouse/Townhouse: Similar in form to the conventional suburban equivalent except that the garage—either attached or detached—is located to the rear of the unit and accessed from an alley or auto court. Unlike the conventional units, urban duplexes/triplexes/rowhouses/townhouses conform to the pattern of streets, typically with shallow front-yard setbacks. Accessory dwelling units can be in the form of attached townhomes as well.

Single-Family Detached Houses: Includes cottages and bungalows, as well as mansions along with accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Multifamily Unit Typologies

Apartment: A conventionally-finished apartment unit.

Hard Loft: Unit interiors typically have high ceilings and commercial windows and are minimally finished (with minimal room delineations such as columns and fin walls), or unfinished (with no interior partitions except those for bathrooms).

Soft Loft: Unit interiors typically have high ceilings, are fully finished and partitioned into individual rooms.

Mezzanine Loft: Lofts with an additional half level, the mezzanine, that typically occur only on the uppermost full floor of a multi-family building.

Microloft: Several cities across the country are changing minimum unit size requirements as part of a strategy to attract young knowledge workers. Millennial knowledge workers have responded positively to efficiency units as small as 220 square feet, often leasing out new microloft projects within a matter of days.

Maisonette Apartment: An apartment that is integral to a multifamily apartment building, but that includes a private, individual entrance at street level. When sited with shallow setbacks, the entrance to the apartment on the first floor is elevated above sidewalk level to provide privacy and a sense of security.

Penthouse: An apartment situated on the top floor of a multifamily apartment building that has exclusive use of a portion of the building’s roof as a private terrace.

5.4 Optimum Market Position

As noted previously, **1,080 households** of all incomes represent the annual market potential for new and existing housing units in the Apex study area. This housing analysis is focusing on the **831 households with incomes at or above 61 percent Average Median Income (AMI)**, which covers the incomes required to rent or purchase new workforce and market-rate housing units. That includes an average of:

- 410 potential renter households
- 73 potential condominium purchaser households
- 97 potential rowhouse/townhouse purchaser households
- 251 potential detached house purchaser households

This total of 831 households with incomes at or above 61 percent of the AMI comprise the annual potential market for new residential development in the Apex study area over the next five years. Therefore, the optimum market position for new housing in the study area has been developed based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to:

- The tenure and housing preferences, financial capabilities, and lifestyles of the target households;
- The assets and amenities located throughout the Apex Study Area; and
- Current market area residential market dynamics.

Based on these factors, the optimum market position for new rental and for-sale housing within the Apex study area is summarized on the next page. Market position includes proposed unit sizes/configurations, unit rents/prices, and rents/prices per square foot. Most housing developers are looking for this bottom line related to the optimum market position.

831

households with incomes at or above 61% AMI comprise the annual potential market for new workforce and market-rate residential development in the study area over the next five years

Case Study: Improve Housing Stock via Institutional Partnerships

In many small towns across the country, institutional partnerships have resulted in improved downtown housing stock via the implementation of home improvement grant programs. For example, the Oswego Renaissance Association (Oswego, NY) is a partnership between the Shineman Foundation, Pathfinder Bank, Novelis, Exelon Generation, State University of New York Oswego and others. This strategic, multi-year program aims to revitalize the City of Oswego's neighborhoods by providing grants to homeowners.

In particular, the annual Renaissance Block Challenge Grant provides matching funds to property owners who apply in clusters of 5 or more properties within a single block. Each property owner receives a matching grant award for up to \$1,000 in expenses towards exterior home improvements, landscaping, and street improvements. In 2015 alone, seventeen separate city blocks participated and to date has led to over \$1.5 million of private investment being leveraged into Oswego's Renaissance Block neighborhoods.

Optimum Market Position: MF Rental Units

Microlofts, Studio, 1 & 2 bedroom lofts
 Monthly rents: \$1,000 to \$1,750
 Unit Sizes: 450 to 1,100 sq. ft.
 (\$1.59 to \$2.22 psf)

1 to 3 bedroom apartments
 Monthly rents: \$1,250 to \$2,200
 Unit Sizes: 750 to 1,350 sq. ft.
 (\$1.63 to \$1.67 psf)

Optimum Market Position: MF For Sale Units

1 to 3 bedroom condominiums
 Base prices: \$175,000 to \$425,000
 Unit Sizes: 1,000 to 2,450 sq. ft.
 (\$173 to \$175 psf)

Optimum Market Position: SF Attached Units

2 bedroom triplexes/rowhouses
 Base prices: \$165,000 to \$210,000
 Unit sizes: 950 to 1,250 sq. ft.
 (\$168 to \$174 psf)

2 and 3 bedroom duplexes/townhouses
 Base prices: \$250,000 to \$375,000
 Unit sizes: 1,400 to 2,150 sq. ft.
 (\$174 to \$179 psf)

Optimum Market Position: SF Detached Units

1 and 2 bedroom cottages/bungalows
 Base prices: \$145,000 to \$225,000
 Unit sizes: 800 to 1,300 sq. ft.
 (\$173 to \$181 psf)

3 to 5 bedroom houses
 Base prices: \$275,000 to \$525,000
 Unit sizes: 1,500 to 2,950 sq. ft.
 (\$178 to \$183 psf)

NOTE

Key recommendations related to housing are incorporated throughout Chapters 7 and 8.



▲ Top to Bottom: Microloft/Studio, Apartments/Condominiums, Duplex, Bungalow/Cottage



06
PARKING
CONDITIONS &
STRATEGIES

06 PARKING CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES

Parking is personal. The availability of parking that is proximate to one's destination is personally valuable. The challenge becomes the number of people in a vibrant downtown that are valuing the same public parking spaces, at the same time of day. Under this condition, a community has the beginnings of a 'parking problem.'

To effectively manage parking, the team needed to have concrete data related to supply and demand along with anecdotal evidence provided by the public. Armed with both these items, the team brought valuable expertise to bear in exploring strategies to more actively manage public parking in downtown.

As in many communities, the perception of a parking issue was far greater than the reality. However, perception is a critical determinant of area patronage, so employing simple strategies to shift negative feelings will improve the situation tremendously.

Promotion of multi-modal transportation enhancements and emerging technologies related to smart mobility give the single-occupant car owner viable alternatives when visiting downtown other than searching for a parking space.

1,148

total parking spaces in the core area of downtown, although there are 1,665 total parking spaces near Downtown

4

sites investigated for a potential parking deck

54%

peak usage occupancy of existing parking observed

6.1 Understanding the Current Parking Situation

6.1.1 Current Parking Supply

For the parking portion of this project, the study area was reduced in size to parking facilities within a 7-min walk of Salem Street, roughly NC-55/Williams Street to the south and Hunter Street (Town Hall) to the north. Town staff performed an audit of current parking supply for each parking facility (on-street or lot), including private parking areas, beginning in February 2019. This tabular parking inventory was joined within a geographic information system (GIS) platform to visualize parking spaces by location, and used to inform discussions and our project design process.

Although the total parking supply in Apex is just over 1,600 parking spaces, public parking spaces near Town Hall and Hunter Street are perceived by many as "too far" from Salem Street to be included in this analysis. As a result, the project team focused on a Downtown Core Area of parking facilities between Moore Street (south) and Templeton Street (north), roughly a 3-minute walk. The Core Area contains nearly 1,200 parking spaces, which are evenly split between public (51%) and private (49%) spaces, though their actual locations are not evenly balanced north or south of Chatham Street.

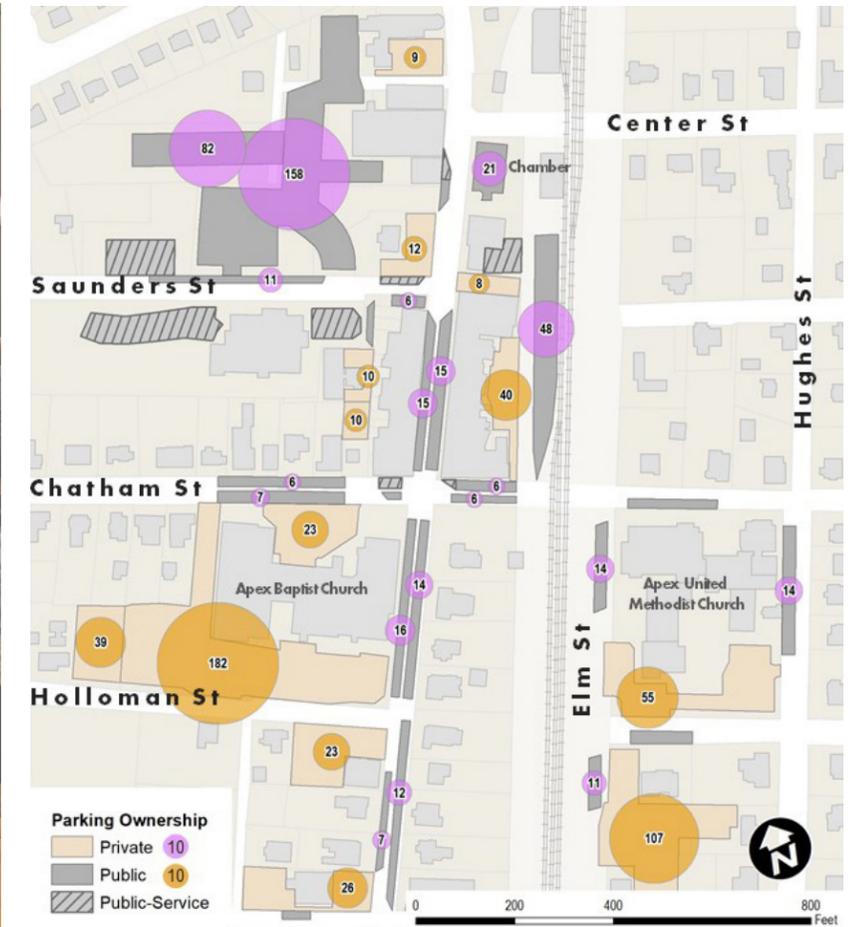


▲ Parking study area map



When it comes to parking, rational people quickly become emotional...

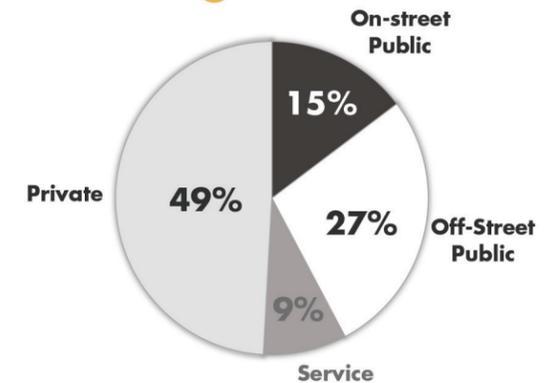
-Donald Shoup, Parking and the City (2018)



Existing parking supply (Note: Excludes more than 500 spaces near Town Hall and on-street parking along Hunter Street.)

Parking supply CORE AREA

- Public 51% ~1,200 spaces
- Private 49%



▲ Percentages of both public and private parking supply in the core

Existing Parking Supply for Downtown and Core Area

Parking by Type	Spaces	% Total	Parking by Type	Spaces	% Total
On-Street	305	18%	On-Street	169	15%
Public lot	648	39%	Public lot	415	36%
Private lot	712	43%	Private lot	564	49%
Downtown Total*	1,665		Core Area Total**	1,148	

*Note: Total parking spaces in Downtown Apex includes parking as far north as Hunter Street.
 **Note: Core Area parking is a smaller area between Moore Street and Templeton Street.

Notable Parking Facilities within Core Area

Parking Location	Type	ADA	Total Spaces	Time Limit	Enforcement Hours
Templeton Street Lot	Lot	6	158	--	No overnight parking
Templeton Street Gravel Lot	Lot	-	82	--	No overnight parking
Seaboard Street Lot	Lot	-	48	--	--
Chamber of Commerce	Lot	1	21	2-hour	8 am to 6 pm
N Salem Street – Chatham-Saunders	On-street	-	30	3-hour	8 am to 6 pm Mon-Sat
S Salem Street – Holleman-Chatham	On-street	4	30	--	--
Elm Street	On-street	2	14+11	--	--
Chatham Street – West of Salem	On-street	-	16	3-hour	8 am to 6 pm Mon-Sat
Chatham Street – East of Salem	On-street	-	13	3-hour	8 am to 6 pm Mon-Sat

The table above reinforces anecdotal information from regular downtown parkers, that the **Templeton Street lot (158+82 spaces) is the first location they look for parking**, as it represents more than half of the most-convenient public parking spaces within the Core Area.

It must be noted that the Apex Baptist Church (private) posts signs in front stating that public parking is allowed, and limited to two hours. Additional public parking is available in the rear lots with no time restrictions. Respectively these parking areas contain 23 and 221 parking spaces that may be shared by the public and are not reflected within parking supply tables or maps as “public”.

6.1.2 Current Utilization Trend

To better understand current parking demand, that is, how parking is used during the day, parking utilization counts (i.e. parked cars) were collected at four periods throughout the day, over three different days. The weather on all days was clear and dry. The first collection occurred in February to provide early



Parking signs at Apex Baptist Church

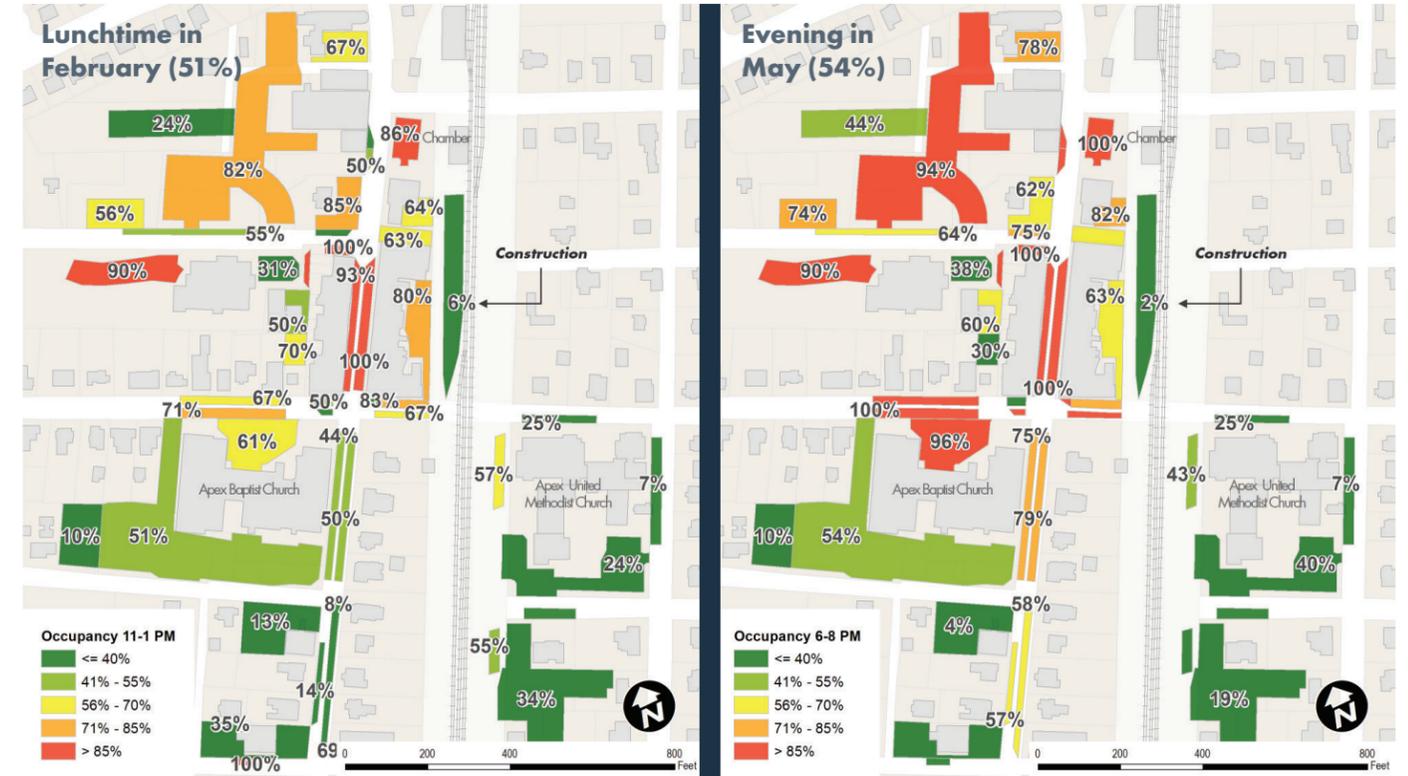
information for the study. A subsequent collection occurred in May to ensure that any seasonal variation was accounted for. A large event was held at a local church during the evening in May, which helps to measure the fluctuation of parking demand when there are activities downtown.

The data suggests that there are **two peak periods (lunch and dinner) within downtown Apex**, and this will vary between different months of the year, undoubtedly influenced by the weather. Tabular data does not tell the entire story of parking demand unfortunately. As expected, the pattern of parking utilization is higher in some areas and lower in others. Demand is therefore not evenly distributed among all public and private parking lots. The maps below illustrate the pattern of utilization for individual parking areas within the Core Area during the two busiest periods identified: lunchtime in February (51%), and dinner time in May (54%).

Note the **pattern of high-demand (orange and red) parking lots** along the northern portion of

Salem Street, and contrast this against the **low-demand (green) parking lots** located further south. These patterns suggest high-demand parking areas may be reaching their capacity (>=85% full) during these peak periods; however, there are still underutilized parking areas further south. Several of these low-demand areas are private lots that allow public use, such as the Baptist and Methodist churches.

It is worth noting that the Seaboard Street lot was under construction during these utilization counts, which explains why this area is shown as <10% utilized. Since re-opening in June 2019, this parking area has been well-utilized and likely has relieved parking pressure from other high demand lots. Future data collection may include a length-of-stay analysis to measure the typical duration of time that vehicles are parked within high-demand areas, such as Salem Street or the Templeton Street lot. This information would be helpful to determine whether changes to 30-min and 3-hour time limited parking may be warranted.



Observed parking utilization maps during peak periods

6.2 Parking Deck Evaluation

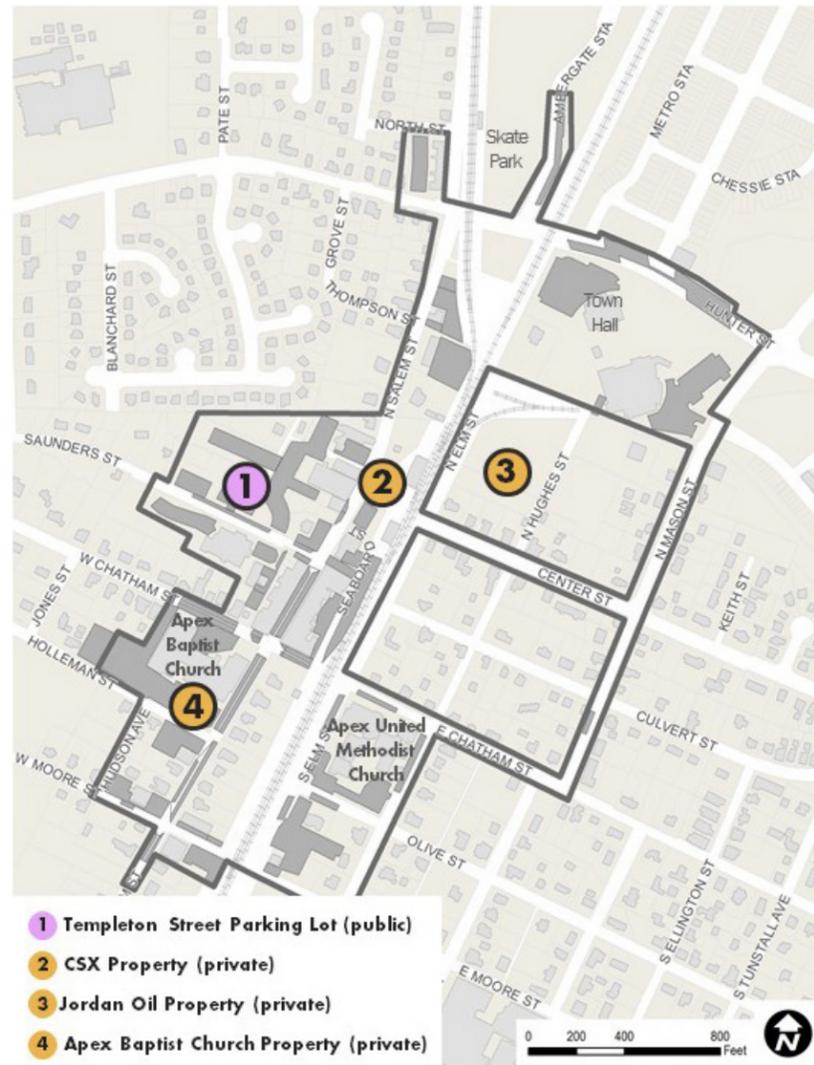
The project team was asked to investigate whether a parking deck is needed for downtown Apex, which has been a hotly debated topic for a number of years. Conversations with users revealed that most are split on this topic, some suggest that a parking deck is necessary while others suggest no/not yet. During the May public workshop event, the community was asked about parking availability, and findings suggested that **half the number of people who are challenged by parking are actually discouraged to visit Downtown because of parking**. Four locations within downtown Apex were identified where the footprint of a potential parking deck could be situated. Three locations are located entirely on private property, (locations #2-4):

Location 2: CSX property is constrained by width between the railroad tracks and N Salem Street, and would only be suitable for a two-bay parking deck. This constraint would limit the total number of spaces that could be constructed. The visibility of this location, however, is its greatest quality, situated on Salem Street at the intersection of the primary north and east gateways into Downtown.

Location 3: Jordan Oil property is less visible from Downtown, requiring visitors to walk along Hughes Street and Center Street before viewing their destination. Although this location could potentially yield the largest number of parking spaces, its location may be the least desirable from the users' perspective.

Location 4: Apex Baptist Church property was evaluated for a two-bay parking deck at the rear of the property, however, the necessary width of 120' feet was not possible without impacting the building. For this reason, this location was dropped from consideration.

Although future property ownership changes may allow the town to revisit these options, the three private property locations were tabled for further discussion at this time. The remaining location, the Templeton Street parking lot, is discussed further as the most viable possibility.



- 1 Templeton Street Parking Lot (public)
- 2 CSX Property (private)
- 3 Jordan Oil Property (private)
- 4 Apex Baptist Church Property (private)

Parking deck potential locations ▲

6.2.1 Templeton Street Parking Lot – Potential Parking Reconfiguration

The current site supports 158 public parking spaces on property owned by the town, and an additional 82 gravel parking spaces on property that is leased by the town. This is a total of 240 parking spaces currently. Options A-B-C are presented below; each yield a different number of net change in parking, as well as different costs to construct.

Option A involves a two-bay parking deck that is three-levels high, and the footprint is intended to fit entirely within the Town-owned property so as to retain access to the leased (gravel) lot. Some existing parking will be permanently disrupted by the construction of this deck, and it is estimated that the final net change would be +180 spaces, at a cost of between \$5.7M to \$6.2M. This analysis suggests that the net parking added would cost an average of \$33,000 per space to construct.

Option B involves a larger three-bay parking deck that is also three-levels high, and the footprint would require the purchase of the leased (gravel) parking lot from private owners. The cost of acquiring land is not included in this estimate. A larger amount of existing parking will be permanently disrupted by the construction of this deck, and it is estimated that the final net change would be +240 spaces, at a cost of between \$8.5 million and \$9.4 million. This analysis suggests that the net parking added would cost an average of \$37,000 per space to construct.

Option C involves no parking deck. Rather, the town should consider acquiring the leased (gravel) parking lot and reconfiguring the entire property (both parcels) into a single parking lot. This effort would require land acquisition, clearing and grading of the site, engineering design, installation of stormwater infrastructure, paving, striping, and lighting. This effort could yield a net change of +126 spaces, at a cost between \$600,000 and \$630,000. This analysis suggests that the net parking added would cost an average of \$4,900 per space to construct.

Templeton Option A Parking Deck

Parking Lot	Existing Spaces	Proposed Spaces	Net Change
Town Lot	158	77	-81
Leased (Gravel)	82	82	-
Structured Deck	-	261	+261
Subtotal	240	420	+180

\$5.7 million to \$6.2 million
(\$33,000 per space)

Templeton Option B Parking Deck

Parking Lot	Existing Spaces	Proposed Spaces	Net Change
Town Lot	158	90	-68
Leased (Gravel)	82	0	-82
Structured Deck	-	390	+390
Subtotal	240	480	+240

\$8.5 million to \$9.4 million
(\$37,000 per space)

Templeton Option C Reconfigure Surface Lots

Parking Lot	Existing Spaces	Proposed Spaces	Net Change
Town Lot	158	175	+17
Leased (Gravel)	82	191	+109
Structured Deck	-	-	-
Subtotal	240	366	+126

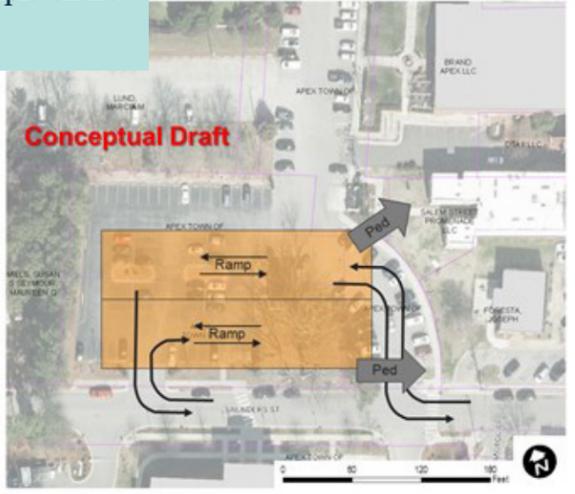
\$600K to \$630K
(\$4,900 per space)

A
Templeton Lot

Considerations:

- Entirely within Town property
- Maintain Templeton St access & parking
- Floorplate: 120'x240' = 87 spaces per level

Est. Cost
\$5.7M to \$6.2M



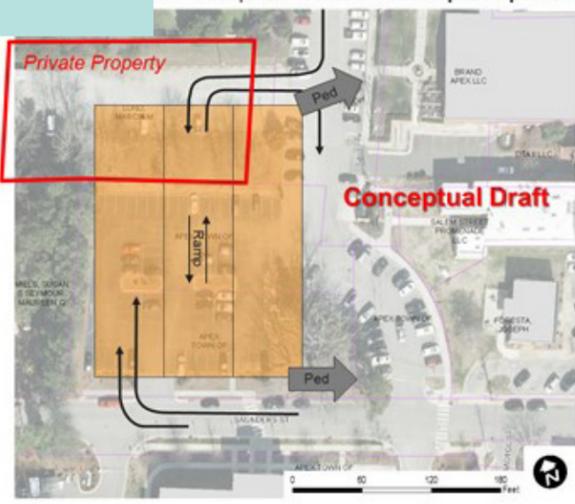
Templeton Lot investigation drawings

B
Templeton Lot

Considerations:

- Requires purchase of private lot
- Maintain Templeton St access & parking
- Floorplate: 180'x240' = 130 spaces per level

Est. Cost
\$8.5M to \$9.4M

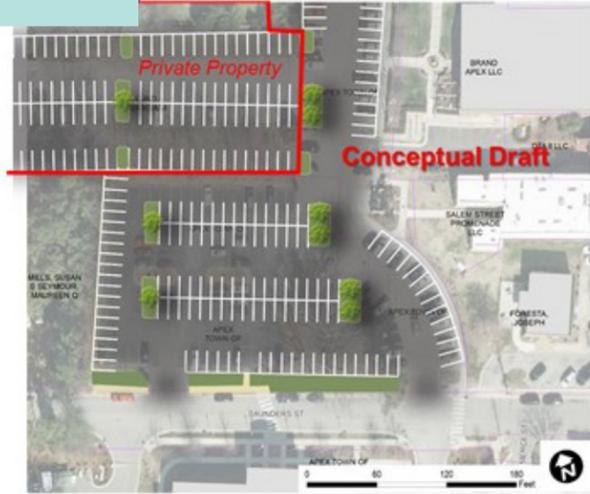


C
Templeton Lot

Considerations:

- Requires purchase of private lot
- Clearing and grading of site
- Potential net gain: +126 spaces

Est. Cost
\$600k to \$630k



6.3 New Parking Locations

Adding new parking without a new parking deck was also investigated by the project team, including potential locations, strategies, and costs.

6.3.1 Walk-Sheds for Downtown

As referenced earlier in this chapter, several public parking spaces near Town Hall and Hunter Street are perceived by many as “too far” from Salem Street to be considered downtown parking. The map below displays the Core Area with approximated walk-times (assuming an average walking speed of <3 mph, or a quarter mile in 5-minutes).



Downtown Apex walk-shed map

6.3.2 Surface Lots

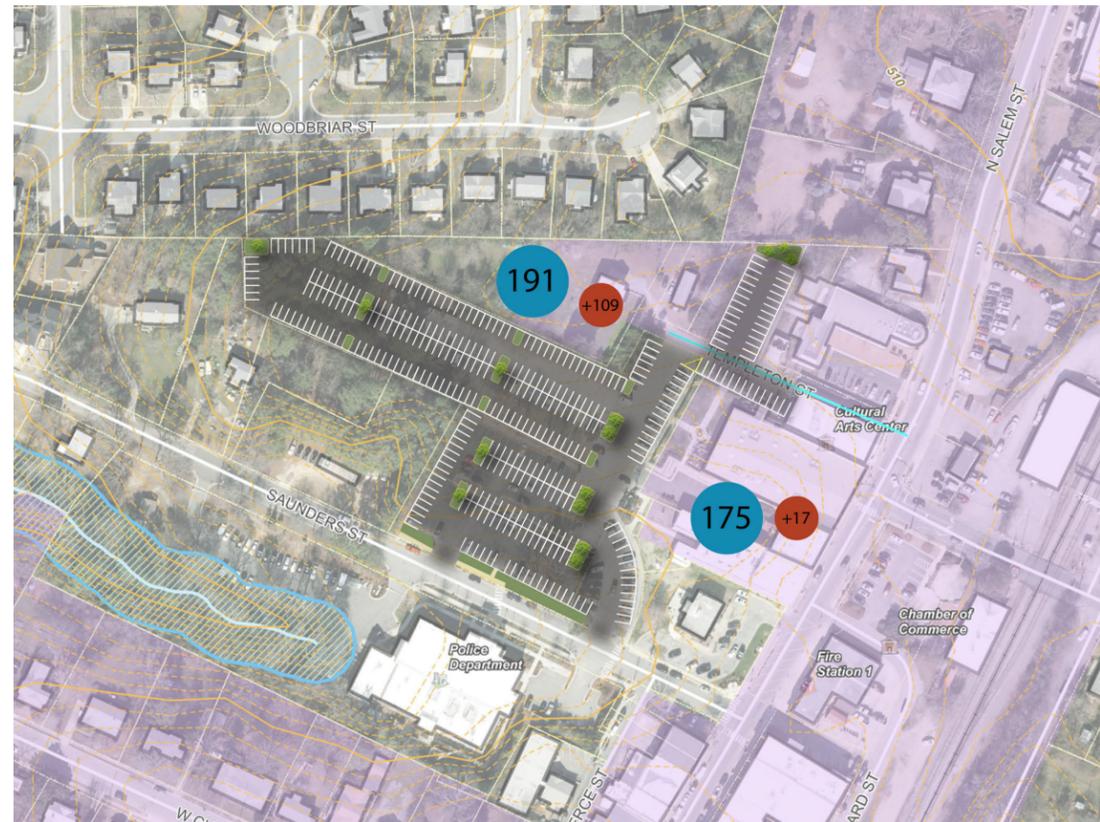
The Templeton Street surface lot (Option C) has been incrementally changed over the years, one section at a time. The result is a **less-than optimal parking layout** with unnecessary ‘dead space’ that could be used for parking. Our designers looked into options for combining the public and private parcels of this area and estimating the number of parking spaces that could be gained by a new layout, while maintaining the town’s engineering standards for size/shape of parking stalls (9’ by 18’) and driveway aisles (24’ wide for two-way traffic).

A conceptual draft suggests that the town-owned portion could gain +17 parking spaces, while the leased (gravel) portion could gain as many as +109 parking spaces by maximizing the entire parcel. It must be noted that the Town of Apex does not currently own this property, and without geotechnical (underground) survey information, it is unknown

whether the furthest portion of this lot would be suitable for parking. A feasibility-level analysis is warranted to advance this concept and confirm the potential parking gain.

6.3.3 On-Street Parking

On-street parking has the added benefit of reducing vehicle speed, which benefits the walkable/bikable character of downtown. Several streets within the Core Area are wider than the typical cross section width of 11’ per travel lane described in the Advance Apex 2045 Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This presents a valuable opportunity to add parking supply that is proximate to downtown, while re-purposing existing pavement at a much lower cost than constructing new parking. Several potential locations where a lane diet could result in new on-street parking include (street sections can be found at <https://www.apexnc.org/197/Engineering-Specifications>):



▲ Concept for Templeton Street parking lot redesign

- N. Salem Street (north of Center Street to Hunter Street): add 14 to 28 spaces [one- or two-sides]
- Center Street (Elm to Hughes): add 12 spaces
- W. Chatham Street (Salem to Jones): add 14 to 28 spaces [one- or two-sides]
- Saunders Street (Templeton Lot to Police Drive): add 12 spaces
- N. Mason Street (Chatham to Center): add 22 spaces

A gain of 102 parking spaces could be attained with on-street parking (see map below). The financial investment would be minimal (averaging less than \$5,000 per net gained space) by comparison with the investment required for a structured parking deck (average nearly \$40,000 per net gained space).

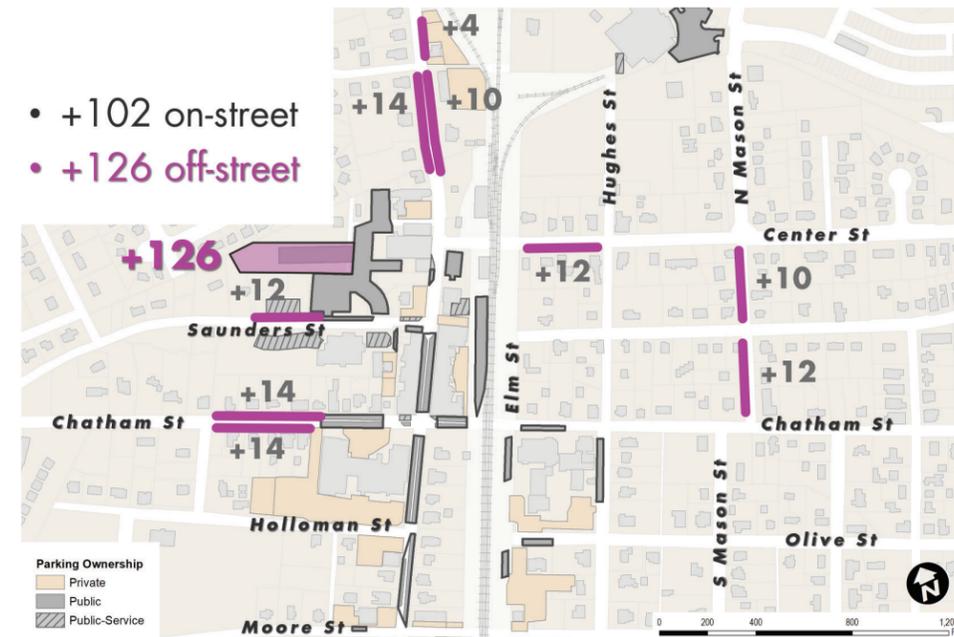
6.3.4 Shared Parking Agreements

Shared parking agreements are legal documents between two or more land owners that specify the days of the week and hours of the day that a parking lot is made available for public use. Typical terms of this agreement include lighting, maintenance, and insurance liability in the event of an injury or personal property claim. The length of the agreement (months or years) and cost, if any, are negotiated and renewed with each agreement. Downtown Apex

features two substantially sized private parking lots that are under-utilized during the busiest time of a typical day (utilization data), and therefore, are potential candidates for a formalized shared parking agreement.

Downtown would benefit from shared parking agreements in a number of ways. First, excess or under-utilized parking lots detract from the walkability and character of downtown, which influences the perception of safety. Second, parking is an inefficient use of land that is valuable for redevelopment, and should be screened or otherwise located behind buildings. Third, the average construction cost of surface parking is between \$4,500 and \$6,000 per parking space, and this capital expense is significant for each and every land owner in downtown.

Consistently signing these leased parking areas and **communicating with the public** that they are available for public parking during the specified hours/days of the week is a necessary final step to executing shared parking agreements. Working through the Downtown Business Association, the town and business owners should develop a strategy to effectively share parking according to an overall Active Parking Management strategy.



- +102 on-street
- +126 off-street

▲ Additional on-street and off-street parking identified



▲ Signage is a critical component to shared parking success

6.4 Recommendations for Active Parking Management

No single approach will adequately “solve” parking challenges, many strategies are necessary. The combination of strategies is referred to as Active Parking Management, with the objective of continually modifying the parking system to be responsive to the changing needs of all users. **The ultimate goal is to achieve a better balance of supply and demand through a continual, iterative approach.** Strategies have been grouped into five categories below, and there is a nominal amount of overlap between each. During the public workshop, more than 130 attendees were presented with examples from each of these categories and asked to vote for their preferred first, second, and third strategies. Categories are presented in order of preference from these votes (indicated with percentages).

6.4.1 Placemaking (27%)

Improvements to the streetscape, wayfinding signage system, and pedestrian network all fall into the category of placemaking strategies. Some of these improvements may be infrastructure related (e.g., sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalks), others may be psychological, such as street trees to provide shade and improve greenery, or benches, lighting, and improved signage to encourage people to park once and wander to downtown. These strategies are not necessarily parking-related; however they invite people to stay a little longer, or walk a little further, even if they park in low-demand parking lots.

6.4.2 Multi-modal (25%)

Strategies to improve multi-modal transportation relate to other ways of reaching downtown without a car. These strategies may include adding more bicycle racks in conspicuous (well-lit) locations, investigating the potential for a bikeshare program, designating an Uber/Lyft loading zone along Salem Street, or working with regional transit providers (GoTriangle and GoCary) to enhance service near/through Salem Street and utilizing the future GoApex Route 1 service along NC-55/Williams Street.

6.4.3 New Parking Locations (22%)

The category receiving the most first place votes was New Parking. Adding supply can be accomplished in many ways: striping additional on-street parking spaces along N. Salem Street, Center Street, Saunders Street, and/or Chatham Street; restriping existing parking lots to gain parking through a more efficient layout; purchasing a private parking lot and converting to public parking; or seeking potential sites for a structured parking deck. Cost will be a significant factor for each of these strategies.

6.4.4 Programs (20%)

Programs to actively manage parking involve non-physical improvements. Formalizing shared parking agreements between the town and private landowners to lease parking for public use is one possible strategy. Another option is a consolidated Downtown Valet Program for lunchtime or dinner peak periods, with a designated pick-up/drop-off location along Salem Street. This program can be managed through the Downtown Business Association as a cost-share among many businesses with similar interests.

No place is worth caring about that doesn't have a parking problem.

-Rollin Stanley



▲ Apex citizens recognize that multi-modal solutions are a vital strategy to parking management

6.4.5 Enforcement (7%)

Naturally a more robust parking enforcement program is not a preferred strategy for most users. This may be due to the limited awareness of the variety of forms that enforcement can resemble. In many vibrant downtowns, there are a team of “Ambassadors” that interact with patrons to welcome them to their wonderful community with a smile! Ambassadors provide information related to shops or restaurant options, directions, upcoming events/programs, and occasionally offer parking-related suggestions. Maintaining the cleanliness of sidewalks and on-street parking is another role that Ambassadors may satisfy.

No cost warning tickets are a common enforcement strategy that balances the need to monitor time-limited parking areas while remaining business-friendly and offering patrons a congenial reminder. If turnover of high-demand on-street parking spaces is a common problem, then reducing the time limit from 2-hours to 1-hour, or the installation of parking meters/pay stations, are strategies that can be considered. Charging an hourly rate to park in the most convenient parking spaces may seem unpopular at first; however, the revenue generated may be used to improve the downtown streetscape and reinforce the efforts made under the placemaking category.

The plan includes a wide range of strategies related to the addition of public space in downtown; some of these areas include existing parking spaces (public and private). Those potential losses are listed below:

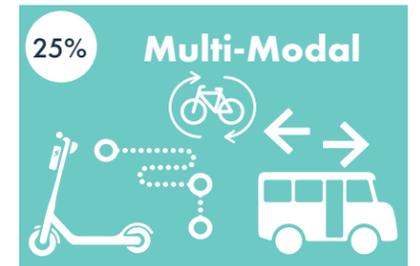
PUBLIC PARKING SPACES

- 30 Salem Street for expanded sidewalks (This is the most you would potentially lose; some options allow a number of parking spaces to remain.)
- 21 spaces at the Chamber/Depot lot for the creation of Depot Plaza
- 6 Saunders Street/Salem Street corner for public space
- 57 spaces—easily absorbed with nearby on-street parking opportunities identified in Section 6.3**

PRIVATE PARKING SPACES (all contingent on private cooperation/development)

- 13 spaces at Cigar Shop
- 8 spaces on fire station alley
- 9 spaces at Salem Heritage Plaza
- 40 spaces behind Salem buildings on Seaboard Street
- 70 private spaces—easily absorbed with reconfiguration of Templeton Street lot identified in Section 6.3**

Note: The newly constructed public parking on Seaboard is 48 spaces which lessens the impact of the 40 “private” spaces lost if the Seaboard alley design found in Section 8.3.2 is implemented. The town should continually evaluate parking utilization (semi-annually), and strive to provide new parking before removing any spaces. Parking, however, should not dictate development.

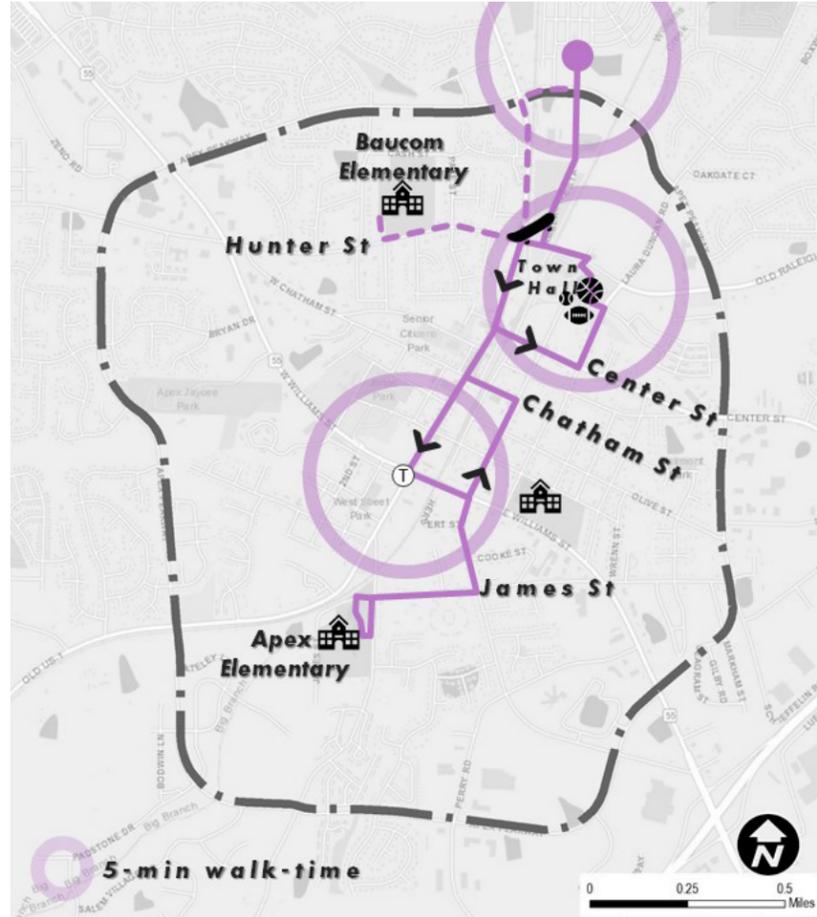


▲ Preference for active parking management strategies from public open house attendees

6.5 Trolley Considerations

The potential for a Downtown Trolley was also discussed by many participants during this planning process. Extremely preliminary discussions were held to flesh out the guiding principles for a potential future trolley, which may include:

- Direct connection with GoTriangle enhanced transfer point along NC-55/Williams Street at Salem Street;
- Service into large residential neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to downtown (north and south);
- Connection with low-demand parking areas along Hunter Street or Town Hall that are perceived as “too far” to park and walk;
- Potential park-&-ride options to downtown from nearby public parking areas, such as schools, Town Hall/Recreation Center, or shopping centers;
- Front-door service along Salem Street, with drop-off locations at or near Saunders Street to the north end, and Chatham Street to the south end.



▲ Logical future trolley route

At this point in time, the potential for a downtown trolley has been tabled in favor of other strategies and priorities for managing parking.

Case Study: Altamonte Springs Subsidized Ride Share

A few towns in the U.S. have begun to look to shared ride service providers like Uber and Lyft to enhance their public transit systems. The city of Altamonte Springs, in central Florida, has a population of 42,000 and is likely the first town in the nation to enter into an agreement with Uber as a public transit provider. The city had issues landing state or federal funding for public transit, so they reached out to the private market. The city had a plan for an on-demand bus service that would cost approximately \$1.5 million for one year, but they’ve budgeted 1/3 of that to subsidize ride sharing in the city through Uber. The city would pay 20% of the cost of the ride if it begins and ends within the city limits and 25% if it begins and ends at the local light rail station.

6.6 Implementation Phasing

Does the Town of Apex need a parking deck? NO, the data does not support the need for a parking deck at this time. Public outreach, as a majority of opinion, also does not support this need.

Should the Town of Apex plan for the possibility of a parking deck? YES, absolutely, planning for current and future needs is an essential role of government. A parking deck feasibility study is the next logical step towards fully understanding the potential constraints toward constructibility, traffic access and circulation, geotechnical (underground), and more refined cost estimates.

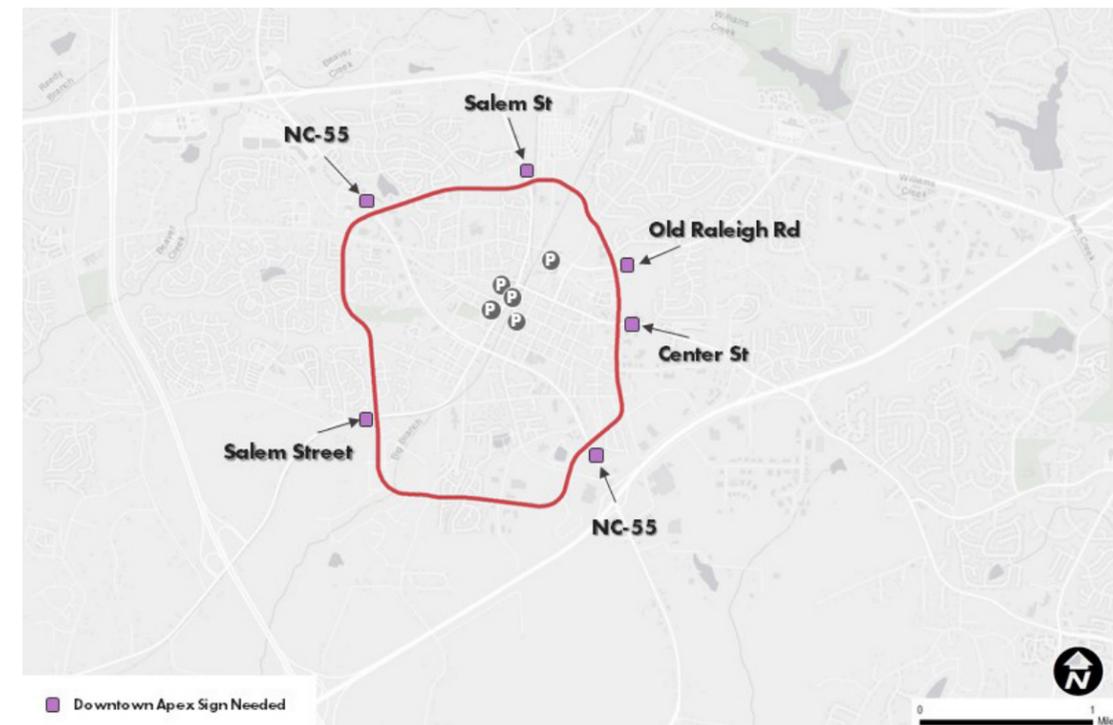
To this end, the potential for a future parking deck is included within the first phase of a five-year implementation plan, discussed below.

6.6.1 Short Term Implementation of Parking Management Strategies (1-3 years)

Salem Street should be the focus of streetscape investments; however, side streets such as Center Street, Saunders Street, Seaboard Street, Commerce Street and Chatham Street should all be improved, particularly if they lead to/from an existing low-demand parking area. The intended goal of this effort is to encourage patrons to park further and enjoy the walk. Additional recommendations related to streetscape conditions include:

Key Recommendations

- 6A-Prioritize and invest in consistency and character of the Apex streetscapes.
- 6B-Improve sidewalk and crosswalk conditions within the core of downtown.
- 6C-Improve consistency of parking signage and wayfinding in and around downtown. (three tiers: Highways, Peakway, Downtown Edges)

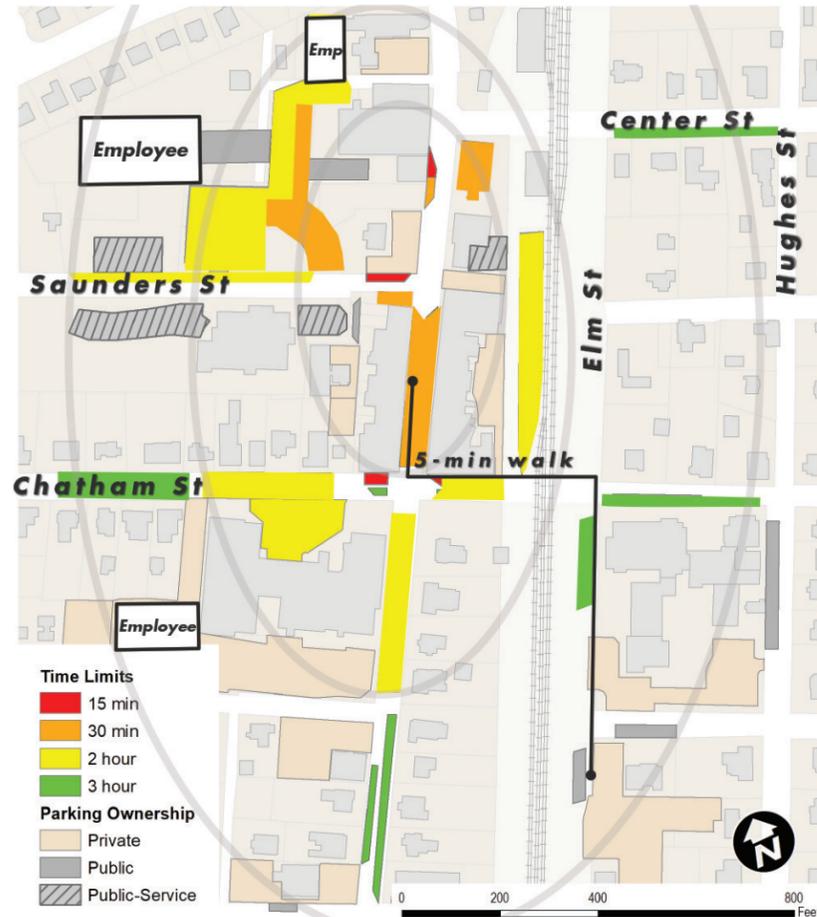


▲ Wayfinding signage locations on Apex Peakway and directional parking signs within the core

The Town should consider the role that it would like to play in enforcing the time-limited parking areas along Salem Street and within public lots. Not all public parking areas have a 30-minute or 3-hour time limit, and perhaps minor adjustments may be necessary to encourage turnover (voluntarily) in high-demand areas, in conjunction with promoting the use of low-demand areas for longer-term parking by employees or downtown visitors who wish to stay for a while. Specific recommendations under this category include:

Key Recommendations

- 6D-Review current parking enforcement program including current time-limited locations and compare with high-demand parking utilization counts.
- 6E-Conduct data collection for a parking turnover analysis (length of stay) for high-demand parking areas.
- 6F-Allow overnight parking in the downtown core to make downtown residential viable and support safe travel of patrons who choose to ride-share home.
- 6G-Work with the new Downtown Development Coordinator and Downtown Business Association on a strategy to increase turnover for on-street locations.
- 6H-Create a Downtown Ambassador's program for (polite) enforcement efforts. (see case study on next page)
- 6I-Initiate a no cost warning ticket for first-time 'violators'.
- 6J-Add a net gain of 200 public parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, with a minimum of 100 within a 3-minute walk.



Turnover Strategy Legend

ENCOURAGE TURNOVER

High Demand

ALLOW LONGER STAY

Low Demand Lots

Employee Parking

▲ On-street turnover strategy with time limits as a phased implementation (i.e. make one change; wait; evaluate; make second change; wait; evaluate; etc.)

Top 10
Recommendation

Case Study: Downtown Ambassador Program in Chapel Hill, NC

Downtown Chapel Hill instituted a new Downtown Ambassador Program in 2018. The program aims to welcome visitors into their community and provide personal assistance that enriches the experience for people exploring downtown. Ambassadors are intensely trained to have knowledge of all downtown stores, restaurants, cultural venues, and special events. They are also encouraged to share advice and directional assistance.

The program launched, in part, because of a new fully-automated parking system that includes new parking meters and a ParkMobile smartphone app. Downtown Ambassadors assist visitors in public parking decks and surface lots. The friendly, approachable ambassadors wear bright blue shirts that say, "Ask me a question!"



▲ Chapel Hill's Downtown Ambassadors assisting visitors with the new automated parking meters (Image Credit: Town of Chapel Hill)

6.6.2 Near Term Implementation of Parking Management Strategies (3-5 years)

Influenced by the success (or lack of success) of short term strategies discussed above, the Town of Apex should also be preparing for the following **Active Parking Management Strategies**, which may require additional time or coordination to execute. Lease agreements with private parking land owners should be the focus, because shared use of an existing parking facility is far more cost-effective than constructing new parking, particularly since the town owns very few properties within downtown that would be sufficiently sized for a new parking lot. **The intended goal of these strategies is to prepare for future conditions while retaining flexibility to adapt to unknown technology of cultural shifts (disruption).** Specific recommendations under this category include:

Key Recommendations

- 6K-Establish leased parking agreements with private parking owners.
- 6L-Create a valet program for evenings and weekends.
- 6M-Conduct a preliminary engineering feasibility study for a potential parking deck.
- 6N-Consider establishing hourly paid parking along Salem Street.
- 6O-Incorporate a bike-share program with stations around key destinations in downtown.

6.6.3 Parking Management Basics

Parking that is “free-for-all” generates conditions that are unregulated, disorganized, and generally “bad-for-all.” Many of us can identify the characteristics of a poorly managed system, one that generates unnecessary traffic circulation, which causes additional delay in a small downtown such as Apex. These are the symptoms that lead people towards discussion of “a parking problem” in their downtown. This is a common and repeated process all across North Carolina.

Why don't they park on _____ Street or behind _____?, there are always empty spaces there.

This is a common sentiment for local residents who are intricately familiar with all parking areas in their town, but visitors (customers) lack this knowledge and rely on common visual cues such as public parking signs (“P”). Fear of being towed can influence drivers to continually search for a safe, convenient, well-signed, and well-lit parking space.

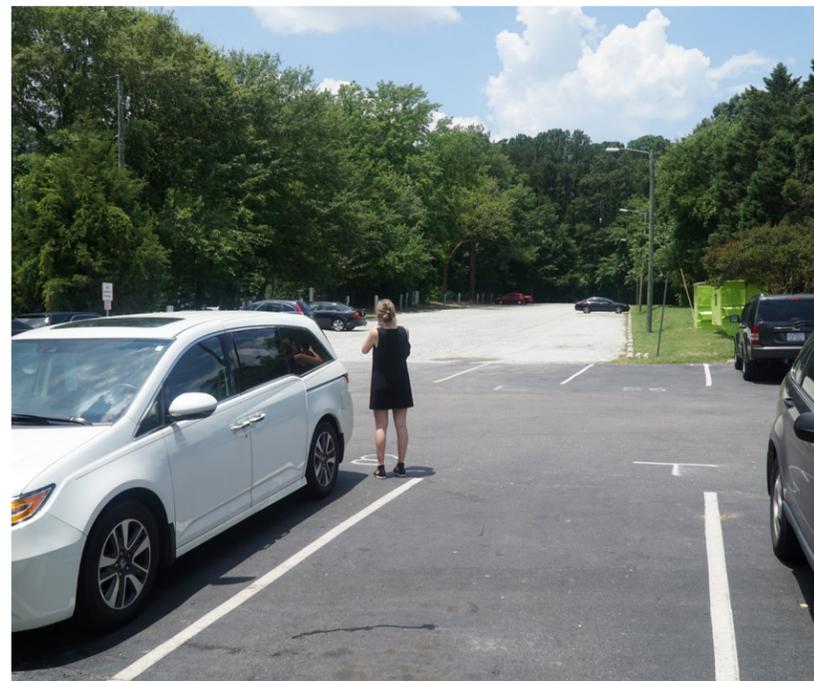
Characteristics of a poorly managed parking system:

- cars parked in the same on-street space for 4+ hours per day;
- cars circling around the block “hunting” for the one ideal parking space in front of their destination;
- cars slowly moving through a full parking lot looking for an empty space; or
- cars slowly moving through a full parking lot looking for visitors returning to their cars on foot, hoping that they can park in that space.

How can we avoid unnecessary ‘hunting’ for parking?

Parking that is more than 85-90% full has reached its effective capacity, and will generate “hunting” behavior. This threshold has been chosen by researchers as the point at which drivers will see one empty space for every seven parking spaces (85%) and be satisfied, where as one empty space for every 10 spaces (90%) is viewed as “too full” and frustration takes over. You may also think of this as a glass of water that is filled all the way to the top. Would you be able to carry this glass of water around without spilling? Probably not, so you typically fill the glass to 85-90% full and its no longer a problem.

Managing parking lots to reach 85-90% occupancy begins with data collection to identify these high-demand areas during the busiest time of a typical day, and this planning process has completed this step already! With this information, the next step is to balance demand more evenly by (a) encouraging turnover in lots that reach 85% occupancy, and (b) allowing longer-term parking in lots that were below 60% occupied.



▲ Templeton parking lot presents opportunities for applying management basics

Strategies to encourage turnover in lots that reach 85% occupancy may include any combination of the following, since some strategies will work for some drivers but not others:

- Reduce time limits (from 2-hours to 1-hour; or 1-hour to 30-minutes)
- Perform more frequent parking enforcement ‘tours’
- Collect license plate data in public parking areas to perform an (hourly) turnover analysis to identify the “length of stay” of a vehicle – share this information with downtown business owners who’s employees may be among those license plates identified
- Issue no-fee warning tickets for a first offense
- Institute escalating parking fines for repeat offenders
- Charge an hourly rate for on-street parking (meters, paystations, or smartphone payments)

Strategies to encourage use of (low-demand) longer-term parking lots that were below 60% occupied may include any combination of the following, since some strategies will work for some drivers but not others:

- Increase time limits (from 3-hours to 8-hours) for low-demand parking lots
- Designate a portion of the lot as employee parking, and issue employee permit decals (if needed)
- Coordinate an employee shuttle/safety service for late night service workers (if needed) or those handling cash deposits
- Coordinate an improved signage and wayfinding program to improve the visibility of these lots
- Improve sidewalk conditions, lighting, and other streetscape amenities

Key Recommendations

- **6P-Balance demand more evenly by (a) encouraging turnover in lots that reach 85% occupancy, and (b) allowing longer-term parking in lots that were below 60% occupied.**

Where can I learn more about parking management strategies?

Research on the management of parking leads to two basic themes, and these two themes work together, not against one another:

- (1) Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies that reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips; and
- (2) Hourly parking rates that promote vehicle turnover in high-demand areas and generate revenue to be reinvested to improve the district.

TDM strategies that reduce vehicle trips through carpooling, riding transit, bicycling, walking or other incentives have the potential to reduce parking demand by 5-30% and are used as future-proofing strategies. Cities that are constrained by land are among the leaders of TDM strategies, and Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (Victoria, British Columbia) is an internationally renowned research expert.

Cities or entertainment districts that seek to capitalize on the free market are gravitating towards the Donald Shoup model, author of *The High Cost of Free Parking*, and professor at UCLA. Hourly parking rates may not reduce parking demand, but rather help to balance demand. Convenient parking is viewed as a commodity and spaces are rented per hour based on the market rate. If parking is regularly above 85% occupied, then the hourly rate for that district should be increased next week or next month. If parking is regularly below 60% occupied, then the hourly rate should be reduced until an equilibrium is reached. This process is continually repeated throughout the year with minor adjustments to price made monthly or annually.

Valuable parking resources:

- (1) Todd Litman, author and researcher, Victoria Transport Policy Institute <https://www.vtpi.org/approach/index.php>
- (2) Donald Shoup, author, researcher and professor of urban planning at UCLA, <https://www.shoupdog.com/parking-links/>

6.7 Smart Mobility of the Future

Parking challenges are not new to American towns and cities, yet the methods used to manage parking demand are continually evolving. Some of the most promising national trends that the Town of Apex should be aware of, while simultaneously retaining flexibility, may include the following:

- Increased use of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber or Lyft
- Bikeshare or Scooter-share companies
- Shared Autonomous Vehicles/Shuttles
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and connected vehicles
- App-based Parking Occupancy Systems
- Charging stations for electric vehicles in public parking areas

Key Recommendation

- ▣ **6Q-Prepare for national smart mobility trends by reaching out to peer communities, attending national or regional conference sessions, planning studies aimed at feasibility-level analysis, and continually reaching out to the citizens of Apex for involvement and guidance.**
- ▣ **6R-Evaluate all emerging technology packages and select an app-based parking occupancy system for the Town of Apex's public parking areas.**

New Mobility Technologies

▶ Access to a wide variety of mobility options provides convenience and choices to make short or long trips without a car. New mobility technologies are rapidly providing us with more choices and communities are taking advantage of these tools to support retail and attract employers and residents. Private companies are rapidly developing new mobility products that are drastically altering how people move around towns and cities.



Dockless Electric Bicycles



Docked Bikeshare Station



Dockless Electric Scooters



Ride-hailing & "MaaS" (Mobility as a Service)

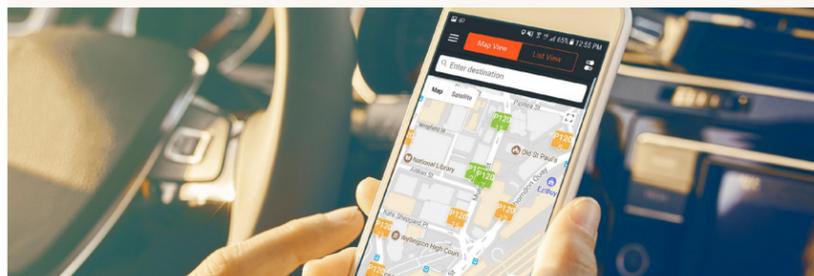


Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)



Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAVs)

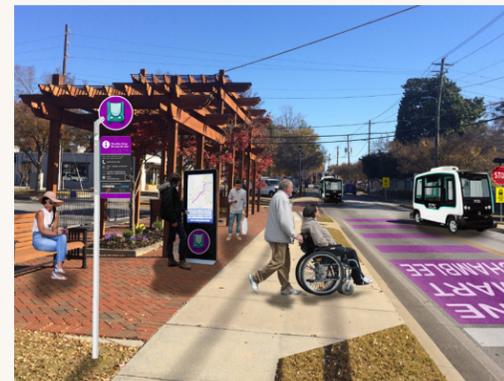
App-Based Parking Occupancy



Case Study: Chamblee, Georgia

Chamblee, GA is a rapidly growing suburb of Atlanta with a population of 30,000. They're currently testing and implementing SAVs as an innovative mobility option.

Proposed Shared Autonomous Vehicle Stop



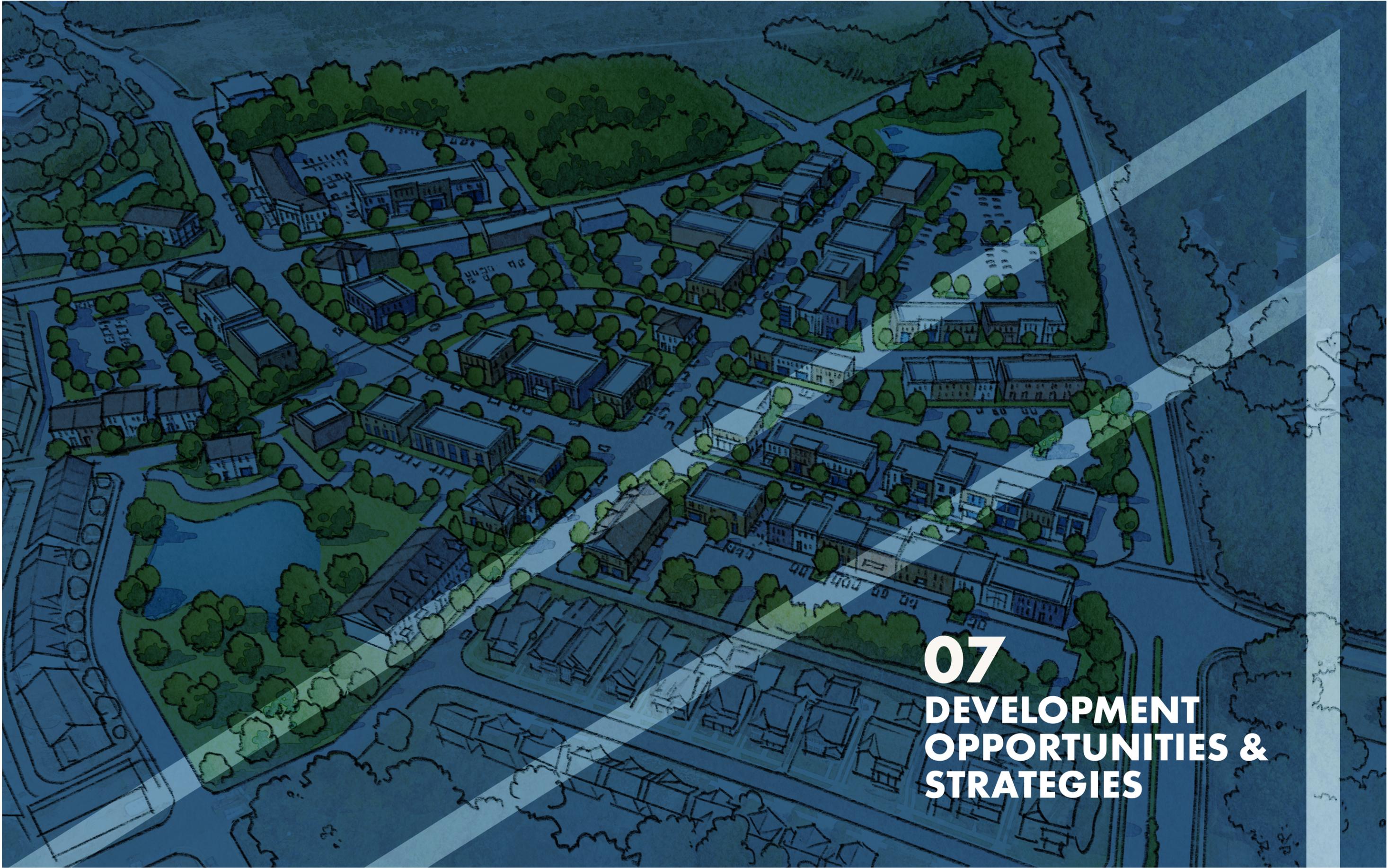
Route And Stops



The route connects downtown with major destinations and MARTA rail stops. Service during rush hour, lunch and after hours caters to a variety of user groups.

SAV Electric Shuttle Details

- Holds 8-16 passengers
- Travels up to 25 mph
- Runs up to 10 hours per charge
- Travels up to 3 miles round trip with a maximum wait time of only 10 minutes



07
DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES &
STRATEGIES

07 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES & STRATEGIES

The plan's focus within the Apex Peakway needed further refinement before detailed design work began. The design team worked with town staff and the Steering Committee to identify key areas where parcel level investigations could occur. The goal was to create plans which would illustrate best practices in various contexts within the Peakway while focusing on Salem Street.

Development typologies considered for illustration included mixed use, housing, employment areas, and civic investments. The overriding goal was for the plans to generate opportunities where people can live, work, and play in and around downtown Apex. Most of the plans drawn in this chapter are located on private property; however, they are provided in concept only as **ONE** possible approach to the highest and best use of the site. Together, they form a vision for the study area that promotes walkability, bikability, and ultimately...livability. Enhancing the quality of life for Apex residents and future residents through sustainable development patterns will be vital to its resiliency and competitiveness moving into the next twenty years.

850

housing units within a 15-20 minute walk of downtown identified

340

housing units within a 5-minute walk of downtown identified

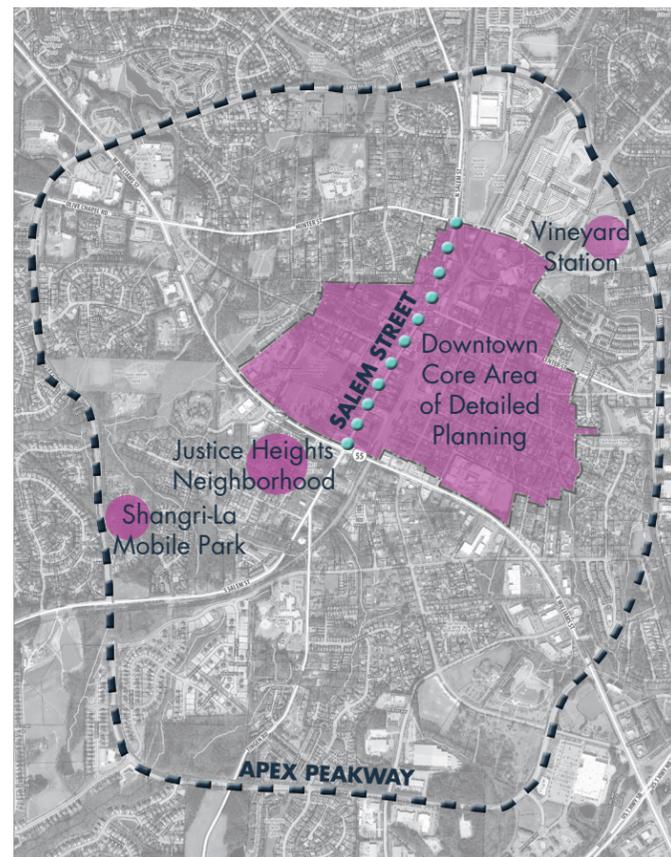
153,500

potential square feet of total active ground floor space in the heart of downtown

7.1 Development Opportunity Analysis

By using regulatory structures in place along with input from both staff and Steering Committee members, the design team formed a development opportunity analysis. This analysis would form the charrette work plan strategy and provide focus for the designers. Through the guiding principles and key goals, the team landed on four key areas of investigation. (see map below)

- **Shangri-La Mobile Park** located near the intersection of S. Salem Street and the Apex Peakway
- **Justice Heights Neighborhood** near the intersection of S. Salem Street and Highway 55
- **Downtown Core Area** located along and around Salem Street from Highway 55 to Hunter Street
- **Vineyard Station Shopping Center** located between Laura Duncan Road, the Apex Peakway, and Hunter Street



▲ Development Opportunity Analysis



7.2 Development Data Overview

Armed with the development opportunity analysis and the market analyses, the designers had a clear program to work towards related to the type and scale of development. As a reminder from Chapter 4, the retail analysis encouraged growing the core blocks of Salem Street by 60,000-70,000 square feet to add to the existing 95,000 square feet. The ultimate goal in the heart of downtown was to grow strategically in current retail gaps to solidify the district as a "Theme/Festival" destination area in the 150,000 square foot range. The information below outlines the overall development data for the study area, and an illustration of the master plan is located on the next spread of the document.

Proposed Ground Floor Space in Downtown Core

- Option 1 With Deck/Liner Buildings:
 - » 66,600 sf proposed + 95,000 sf (existing)=161,600 sf
- Option 2 With Surface Parking Only:
 - » 58,500 sf proposed + 95,000 sf (existing)=153,500 sf

Proposed Ground Floor Space in Justice Heights

- 65,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial

Proposed Ground Floor Space at Vineyard Station Shopping Center

- 165,000 square feet proposed ground floor commercial space

Proposed Housing Units within a 5-Minute Walk of the Core

- 340 units (potential to be absorbed in under 5 years according to ZVA recommendations in Chapter 5)

Total New Housing Units Illustrated on Master Plan (all within a 15-20 minute walk)

- 850 units (6-8 years of projected absorption rate by ZVA recommendations in Chapter 5)

"There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans."

**-Jane Jacobs
American journalist and author**



Vineyard Station

Downtown Core Area of Detailed Planning

Justice Heights Neighborhood & South Salem

Shangri-La Mobile Park

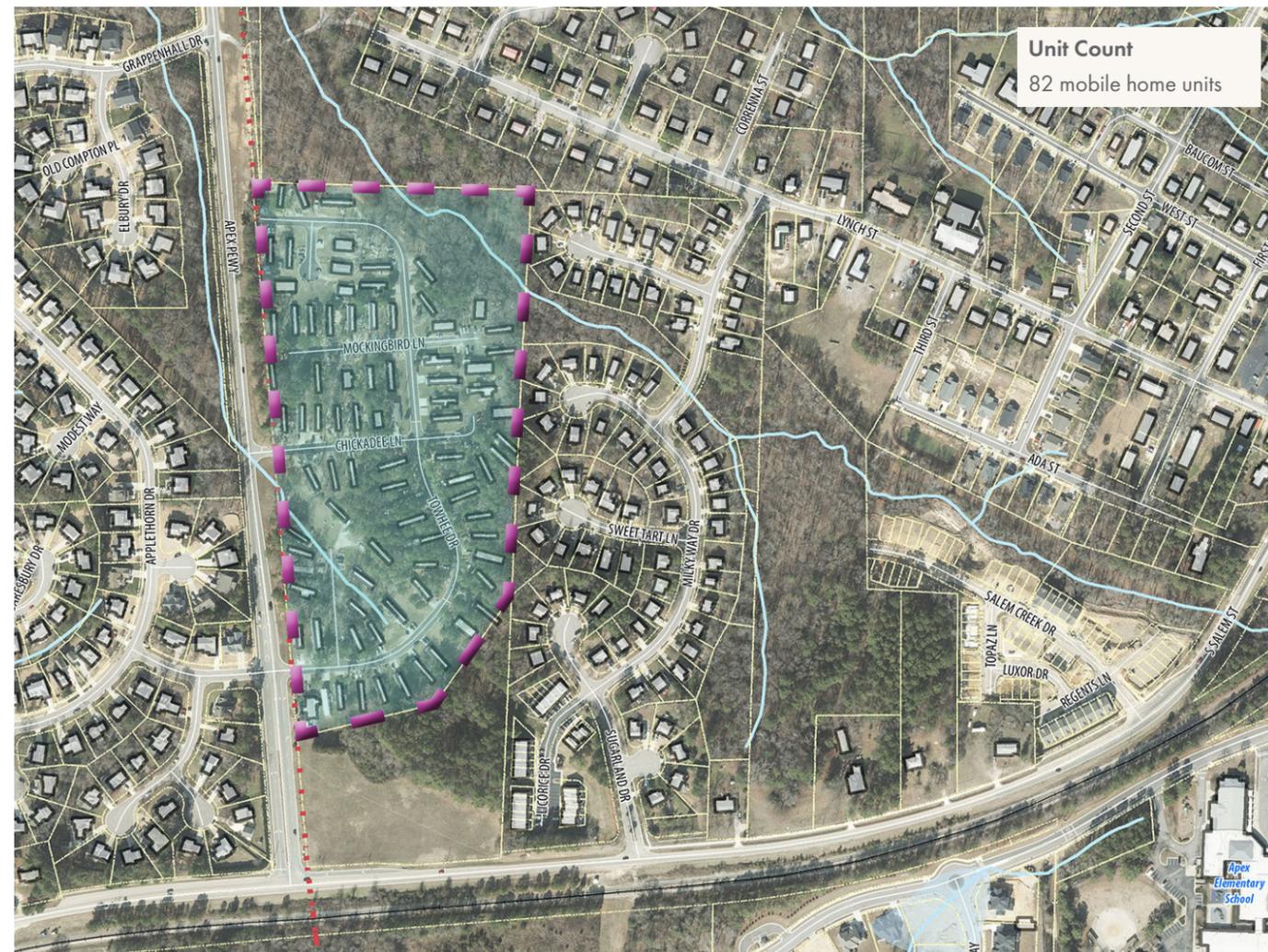
Conceptual Development Master Plan

7.3 Opportunity Areas

The four distinct opportunity areas aim to illustrate national best practices in planning and urban design across a variety of contexts.

7.3.1 Shangri-La Mobile Park | A Mixed Income Neighborhood Study

One of the areas we examined related to housing was the Shangri-La Mobile Home Park at South Salem and the Peakway. The neighborhood is characterized by beautiful shade trees and mobile homes that currently provide an affordable housing option in Apex. Surrounding the site are planned public and private investments including the continuation of the Apex Peakway to the south which includes a community green space. The Shangri-La property is one parcel with one owner, so the team felt it was not unreasonable to imagine that change might occur in the future. The plan proposes a mixed income neighborhood with varying housing typologies of both for sale and rental options with the ultimate goal of not displacing current residents. The development has common open spaces that protect the beautiful trees and greenway connections to the larger community. The unit count has essentially doubled while providing common amenity opportunities.



▲ Existing

The objective of examining this location is to ensure that, if this area is redeveloped, it is done so in a way that not only preserves but adds to affordable housing opportunities within a desirable, walking distance of downtown. The “opportunity” here is not to spur redevelopment, but to take a proactive look at an area likely to change and prepare for the opportunity to provide affordable housing.

Key Recommendations

- 7A-Work with developers to create neighborhoods that mix housing typologies in a range of price points and also provide common open space.
- 7B-Adopt an affordable housing action plan and seek guidance from peer communities in North Carolina, such as Davidson, to understand their approach to affordable/workforce housing.



▲ Conceptual Opportunity

7.3.2 Justice Heights & South Salem | Piecing Back Together the History

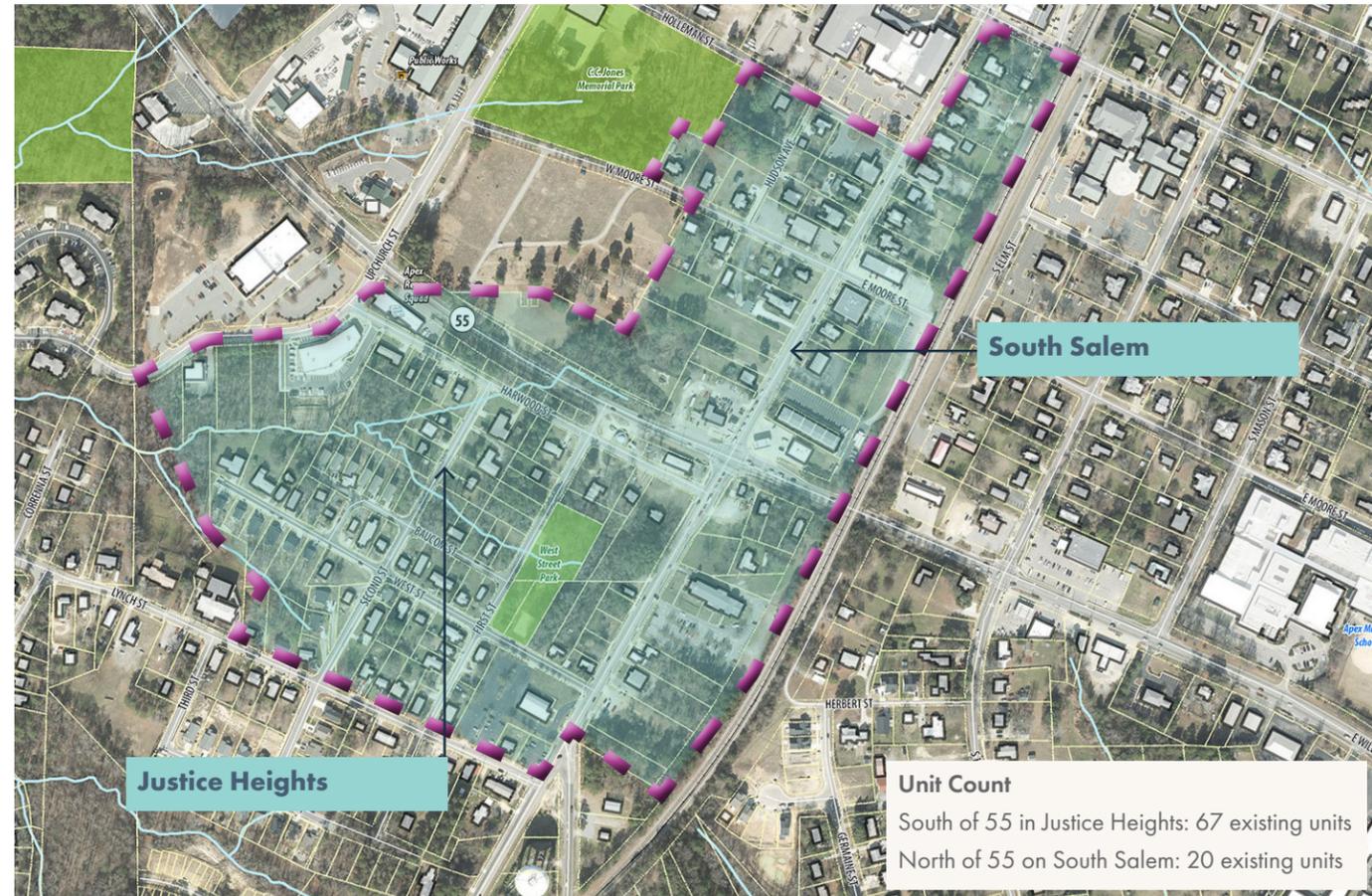
Justice Heights is a historically African American neighborhood of homes and churches that has seen recent public investments in streets and in West Street Park. The team explored sensitive neighborhood infill and the addition of neighborhood commercial/employment opportunities in this area. The intent is not to displace current residents and remove/rebuild homes but to fill the interior of blocks with historically scaled housing as appropriate.

The addition of units in this area is relatively low (15 units), but the key addition is new commercial opportunities along S. Salem in the neighborhood. Highway 55 can feel like a barrier for walking into town, so providing neighborhood convenience commercial space and areas where entrepreneurs can open small businesses or professional offices is key. North of Highway 55 on S. Salem Street, the team explored knitting back together the grand residential

street that leads to the core of downtown. By keeping the scale of infill structures similar to the large historic homes, we can add two-packs, three-packs, and even 4-6 packs while still maintaining the character of the experience. With additional infill housing in the area, the plan creates 60 new units within two blocks of the heart of downtown without displacing current structures.

The intersection of Highway 55 and Salem Street is one of the major gateways into downtown. The plan illustrates four corners of investment that include:

- Northwest Corner: Active Reuse of Holt & Sons Gas Station as Brewpub
- Southwest Corner: Multi-modal Transit Center as Iconic Building
- Northeast Corner: Boutique Hotel as Downtown Hospitality Opportunity
- Southeast Corner: Mixed Use Building as Justice Heights Commercial Anchor



▲ Existing

Key Recommendations

- 7C-Encourage the active reuse of historic structures with businesses that add vibrancy to Salem Street.
- 7D-Attract a boutique hotel to downtown Apex to provide an alternative hospitality option within walking distance of the core.
- 7E-Promote sensitive infill of housing and commercial in the Justice Heights neighborhood.

Precedent boutique hotel, Salana Boutique Hotel, Vientiane, Laos (Image credit: agoda.com)



▲ Conceptual Opportunity

7.3.3 Downtown Core | Growing Downtown Towards Increased Vibrancy

The blocks between Chatham and the civic campus along Hunter Street were examined in detail to identify new mixed use buildings, downtown housing, parking solutions, public spaces, streetscape improvements, public art locations, and general opportunities for vibrancy.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, extensive studies of potential parking deck locations yielded a preferred option on the Templeton Street lot site. Therefore, the team illustrated the downtown core plan two ways—one plan with a reconfigured surface parking lot and one plan with the proposed deck.

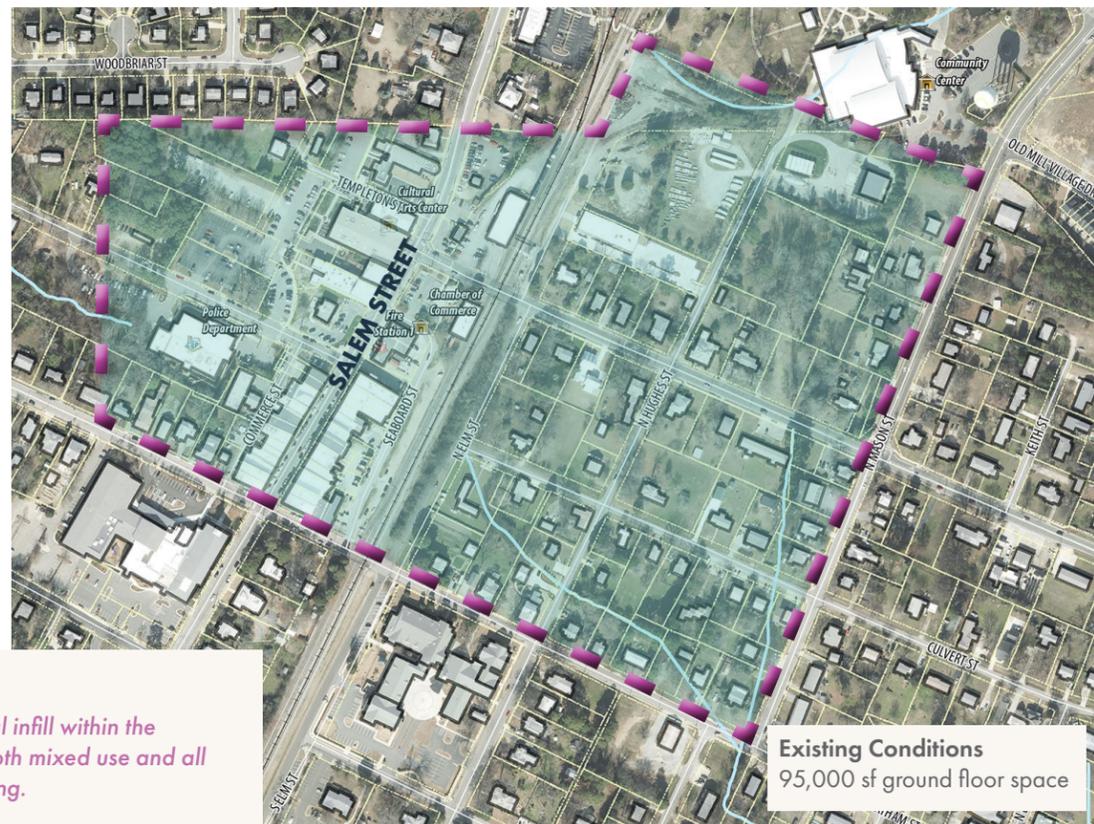
Three opportunities for new mixed use buildings are illustrated within the core:

- Parcels north of Center Street which include a car dealership and CSX facilities envisioned as two to three story mixed use buildings with active ground floors and upper story living

- Parcels (north and south) at the intersection of Saunders and Salem Streets
 - North: two to three story mixed use building with rooftop dining and penthouse apartment
 - South: two story mixed use building with active ground floor and upper story living
- Parcel at Salem and Seaboard Streets and current home of the fire department building envisioned as a public-private partnership mixed use building that would have two bays for the fire department and active ground floors along Salem with upper story office

Note: In the parking deck scenario, the plan does illustrate the deck wrapped in mixed use buildings.

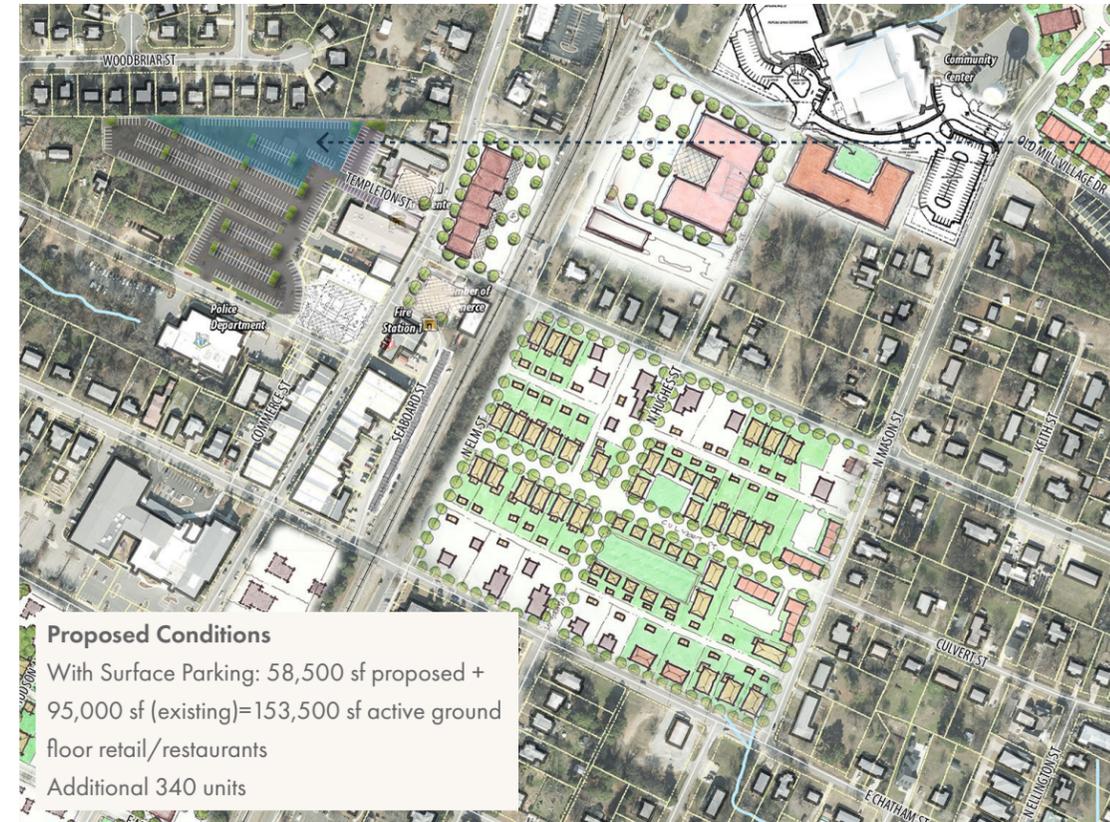
The design team also examined a set of blocks closest to Salem Street's heart within the historic overlay district for infill housing opportunities. Parcels closest to the civic campus were also investigated as higher density housing due to the increased development investment likely required of these brownfield properties which are the current home of Jordan Oil.



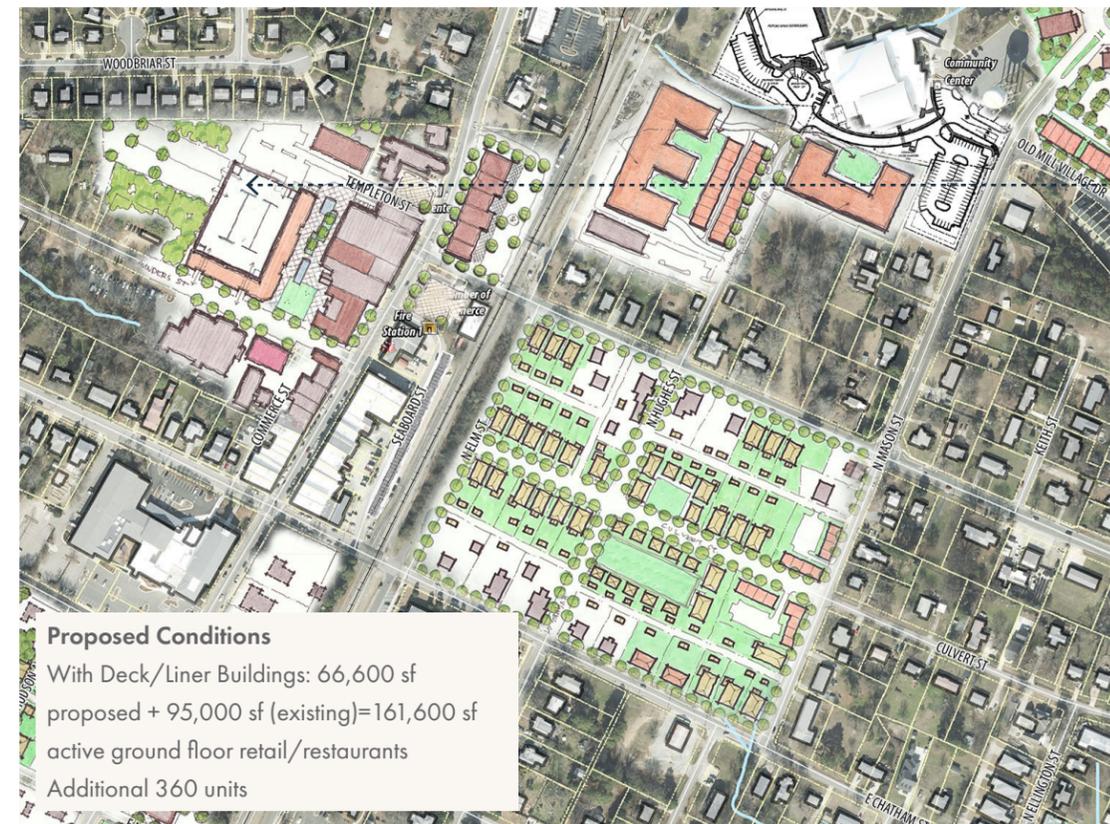
Key Recommendation

- 7F-Direct incremental infill within the downtown core of both mixed use and all forms of urban housing.

▲ Existing



The area highlighted in blue is simply an alternative that explores the potential relocation of the historic structures in this area, which would add 116 parking spaces to the Templeton Street lot. Community feedback indicates that this is not a preferred scenario, and therefore, is not reflected in the overall master plan found in Section 7.2.



This alternative explores the idea of a parking deck in downtown, which is not currently the preferred option. Again, the historic buildings were relocated in this scenario.

▲ Conceptual Opportunity

7.3.4 Vineyard Station Shopping Center | Retrofitting Suburbia into a Walkable Place

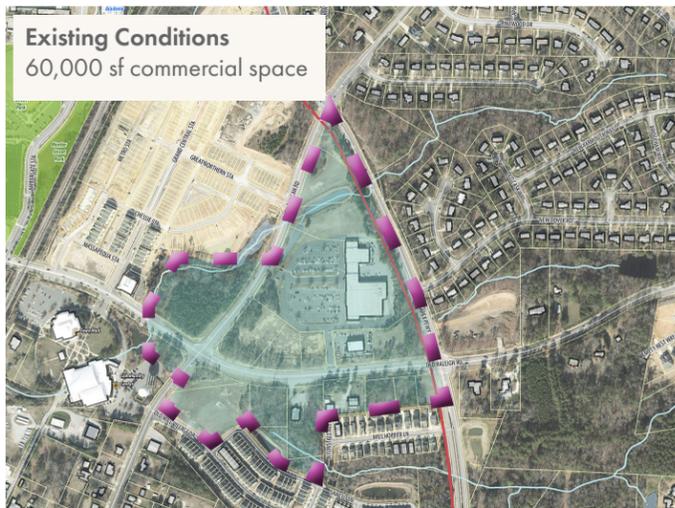
Vineyard Station is the current home of Food Lion and other commercial offerings. The property is characterized by a big box structure with an oversized parking area. The team illustrated how the site could be retrofitted into a walkable environment despite its current sprawling suburban layout completely dependent on automobile access. The vision details a phased implementation using outparcel development and thoughtful street connections to surrounding neighborhoods. These streets would not simply be parking lot lanes, but instead, true town streets with sidewalks and street trees. The final build-out also includes additional infill housing that builds on the existing patterns of the area. As Phase 4 reveals, the big box is the last piece of the puzzle to disappear and fill in as smaller scale mixed use development.

Key Recommendations

- 7G-Require new development to build quality street network connections based on an overall connectivity vision.
- 7H-Discourage outparcel development that functions independently and encourage phased infill that shares parking and access while addressing the streets.



▲ Phased birdseye illustrations



▲ Existing

▲ Conceptual Opportunity

▲ Conceptual Opportunity



08
KEY GOALS

08 KEY GOALS

The nine key goals build on the guiding principles by creating measurable objectives. The design plans illustrate the key goals in action with highly detailed visions for specific areas in and around downtown.

- » Manage Parking Efficiently & Effectively
- » Make Salem Street the Best Public Space in the Region
- » Create Vibrant Spaces for People to Gather
- » Expand Housing Options that Promote Equity
- » Create Connections to Downtown
- » Encourage a Diversity of Activities and Programming
- » Roll Out the Welcome Mat with Small Town Charm
- » Honor the History of Downtown
- » Re-imagine Spaces through Art, Innovation, and Creativity!

Tangible examples on both public and private property are shown as conceptual opportunities. While the details and locations of various improvements may vary slightly from the plan, the overriding point is that downtown vibrancy relies on the accomplishment of these key goals. They serve as a checklist when evaluating the value added through both public and private investment.

3

Guiding Principles

9

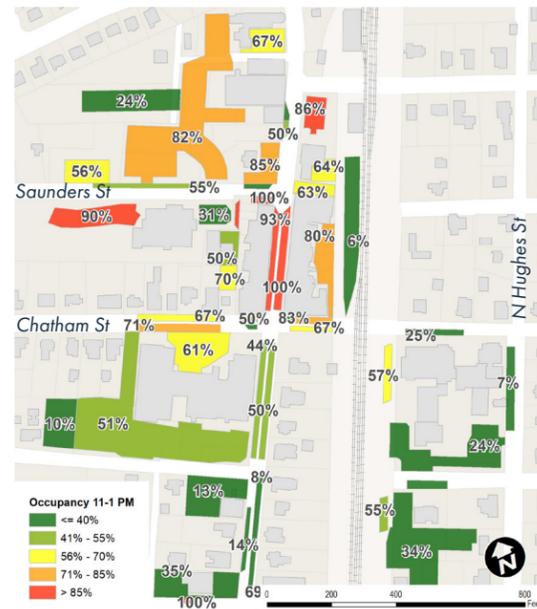
Key Goals

100%

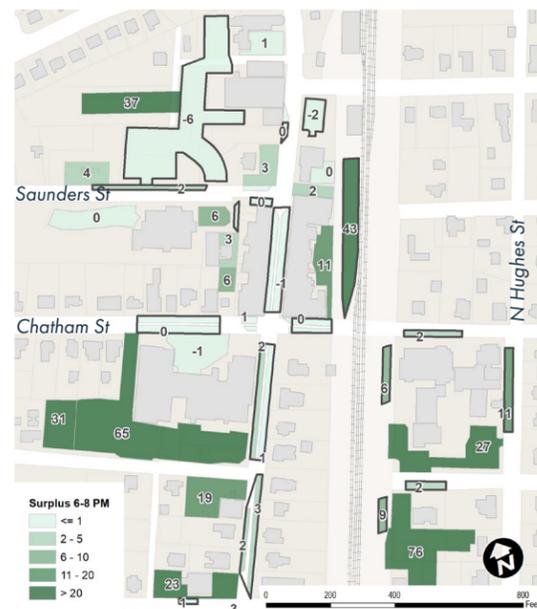
of vision was driven by the community

8.1 Manage Parking Efficiently & Effectively

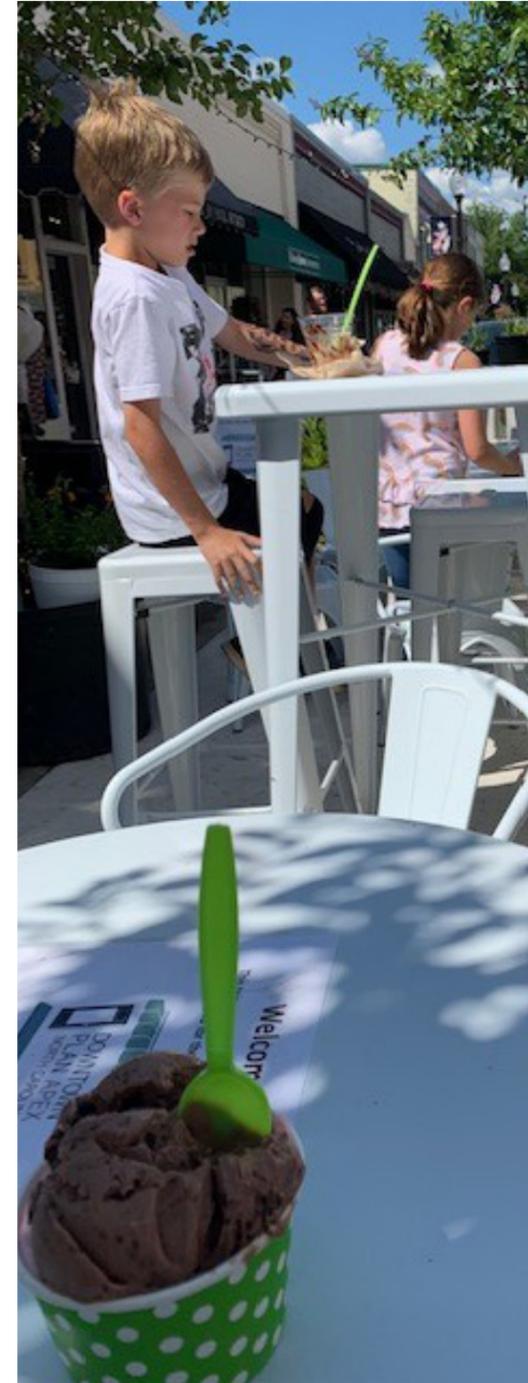
For complete details related to the parking analysis and recommendations, please refer to Chapter 6 which is dedicated entirely to those findings. The goal of **managing parking efficiently and effectively** aims to achieve a better balance of supply and demand through a continual, iterative approach. Public perception and numerous anecdotes indicated that there was a shortage of parking available in downtown Apex. Occupancy data suggested that some areas were over-capacity during peak lunchtime and dinnertime hours; however, surplus spaces were available nearby (<4 min walk). At the busiest time observed (lunchtime in February), 52% of the parking supply was occupied. Ideal occupancy for parking is 85-90%.



Parking Occupancy by Lot, Lunch in February ▲



Surplus Parking Spaces, Evening in May ▲



Be stubborn about your goals, and flexible about your methods.

-Unknown

8.1.1 Additional Parking Identified

Through a variety of on-street and off-street design studies, the team identified nearly 230 additional parking spaces within the immediate core of downtown. As detailed in Chapter 6, the Templeton Street lot and adjacent parcels were consolidated and redesigned in a more optimal configuration. The on-street opportunities include the simple reallocation of existing asphalt on neighborhood streets.



8.1.2 Parking Management Strategies

Strategies for Years 1-3

- Walkability/Streetscape Enhancements
- New Parking Supply
 - On-street locations
 - Off-street lot reconfiguration
 - Preliminary engineering assessment for potential parking deck
- Leased or shared parking agreements
 - Private businesses, evenings
- Enforcement
 - Time limit modification
 - Downtown Ambassador's Program
- Collect occupancy data annually

Strategies for Years 3-5

- Valet Program (evenings)
- Parking deck considerations
 - Templeton Lot
- Evaluation/Assessment
 - Parking occupancy data - annual trends
 - Effectiveness of time limit modification(s)
 - Effectiveness of Ambassador's Program

8.2 Make Salem Street the Best Public Space in the Region

Salem is the **HEART** of downtown, and today, there are spatial and safety issues that this vision needed to address in order to **make Salem Street the best public space in the region**. At a minimum, the 30 current parallel parking spaces should be restriped to 22' in length (standard). However, Apex is not a community that does the minimum when presented with any challenge. Together, the team and the community explored several alternatives focused on the blocks between Saunders and Chatham streets including:

- On-street parking on the east side and a wide sidewalk with street trees on the west side;
- Alternating long sections of wider sidewalk with street trees and parallel parking;
- Alternating short sections of wider sidewalk with street trees and parallel parking; and
- No parallel parking with wide sidewalks and street trees on both sides

The ultimate goal for the solution was to increase usable sidewalk space wherever possible and introduce street trees!! The team wanted to explore the alternatives as a human being would experience them so a 3D model was created. The pros and cons of each option were presented to the public during the September 12th presentation while asking them to imagine themselves on Salem Street in the proposed conditions. A poll was taken and the **no on-street parking option was selected with over 70% of the votes**.

All four options are presented in this section for consideration along with the pros and cons for each.

Key Recommendation

8A-Transform the Salem streetscape.

Top 10
Recommendation

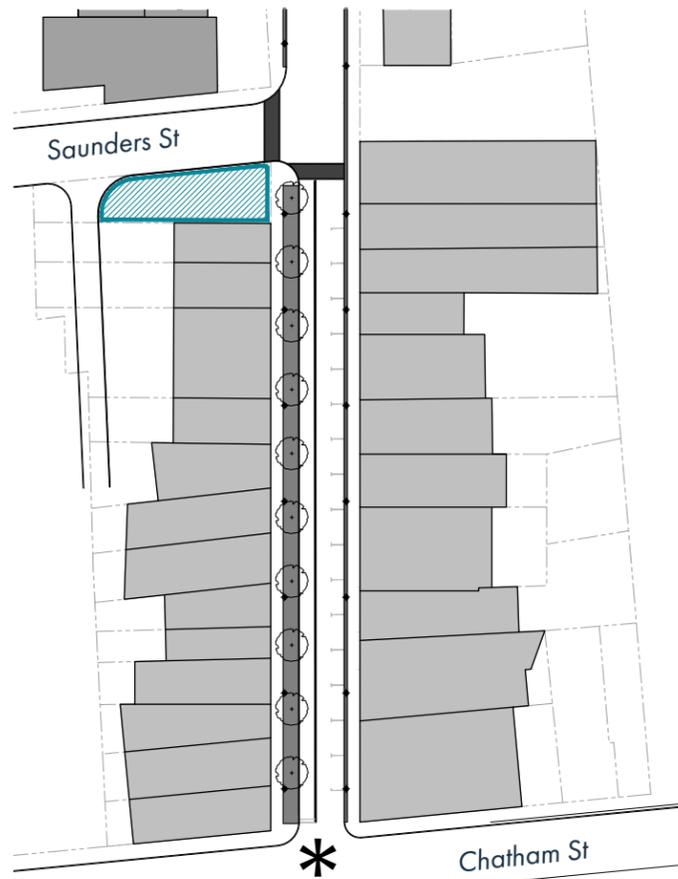


Existing view looking north on Salem Street characterized by narrow sidewalks, no street trees, and relatively tight parking conditions



Existing view looking north along the sidewalk of Salem Street characterized by a wall of cars





8.2.1 On-Street Parking One Side

Pros:

- Creates wider urban sidewalk on west side with street trees
- Restripes parallel parking on east side to code (8'x22')
- Retains convenience parking for shoppers/diners
- Provides the potential to plant a few trees on east side in bulb-out extensions by forfeiting a few parking spaces

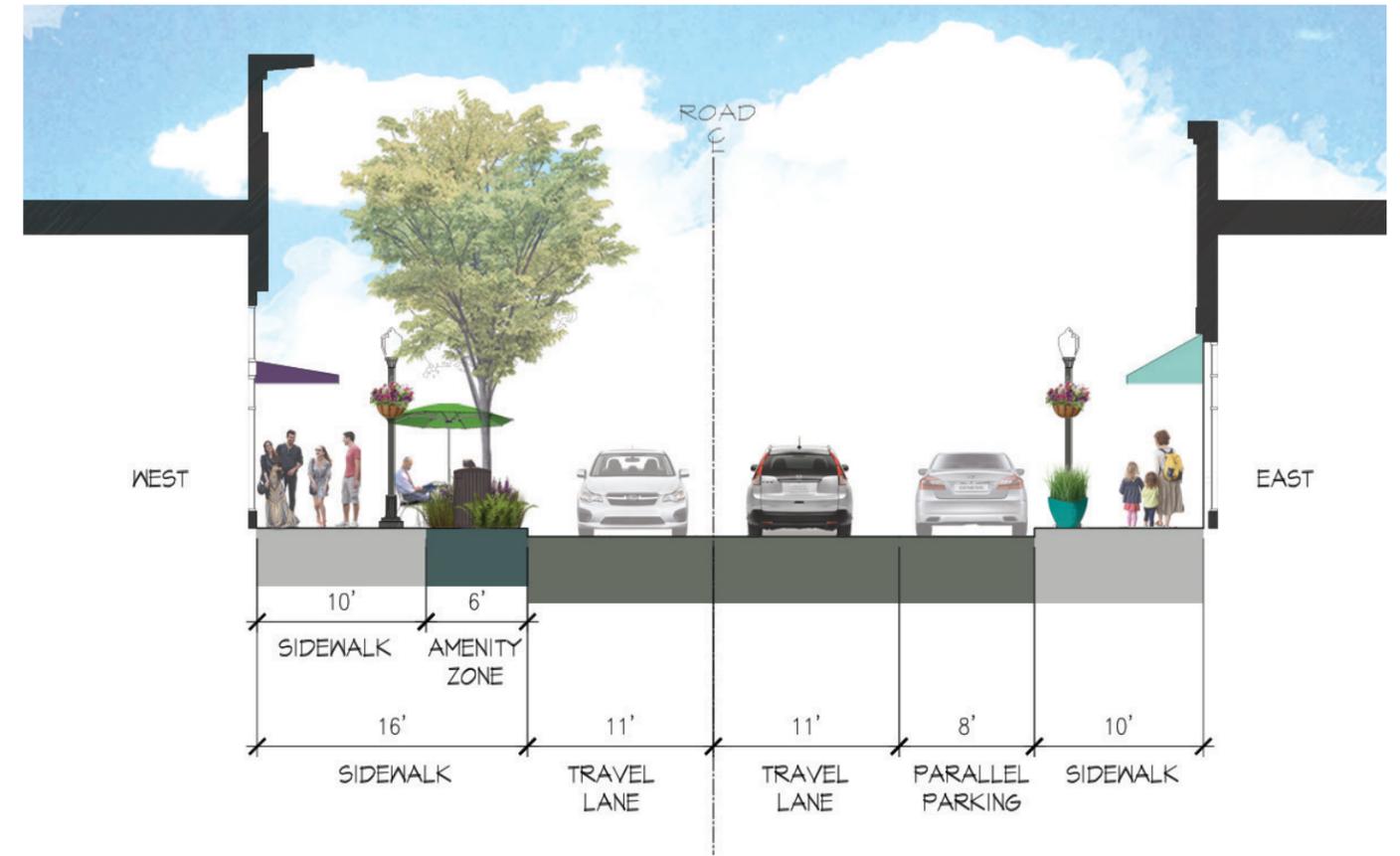
Cons:

- Maintains narrow sidewalk on entire east side with limited street trees
- Creates “winners and losers” for the current businesses depending on the locations of wide sidewalk and parking areas

On-street parking one side plan view



On-street parking one side perspective model view

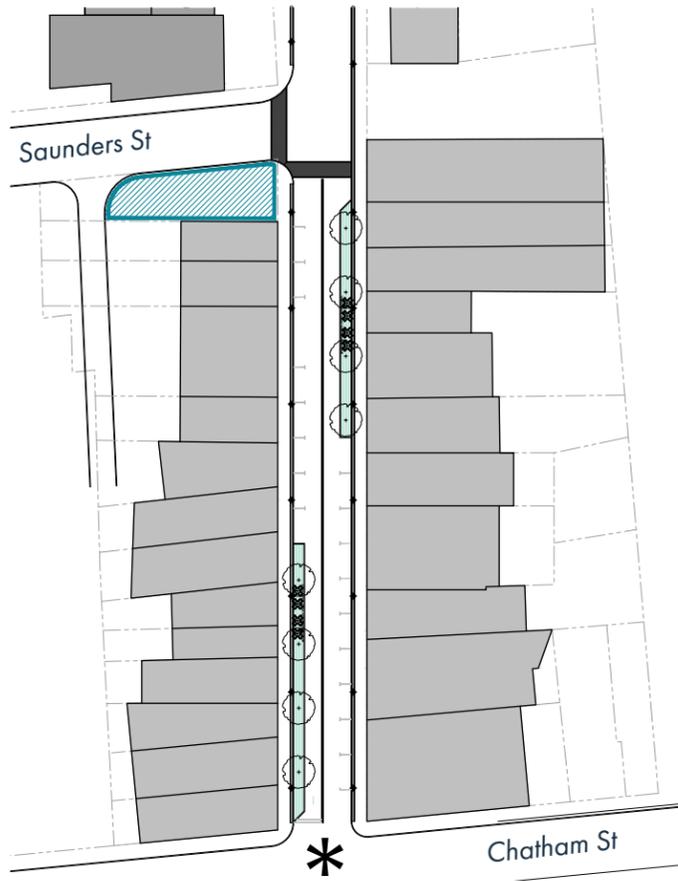


On-street parking one side street section

Salem Streetscape Design Considerations

Regardless of which streetscape solution the town chooses to move forward with, the plan recommends the following design considerations as critical to Salem's success:

- Create wide sidewalks (15' minimum) to enhance pedestrian flow and provide opportunities for outdoor dining and street activation
- Install canopy street trees with a root zone system that yield specimens which provide shade and a sense of enclosure
- Consider pavers (budget permitting) as a potential street surfacing in the heart of downtown
- Install string lighting across Salem Street for increased ambiance
- Enhance pedestrian crosswalks, lighting, and signage which promotes safety and ease of navigation
- Provide bicycle racks to promote cycling as an alternative form of travel to and from downtown
- Incorporate public art in all aspects of the design to tell the unique story of Apex
- Furnish the street with benches, rocking chairs, and movable tables/chairs to enhance the comfort and image of Salem Street
- Provide opportunities for seasonal flower color in the planting strategy to create interest and seasonal indicators
- Facilitate facade grants to improve canopies along the street
- Incorporate green infrastructure elements such as permeable pavement, bioswales, planter boxes, and trees to mitigate stormwater impacts.



8.2.2 Alternating On-Street Parking (Long)

Pros:

- Provides street trees for half the block on each side
- Creates wide sidewalks for half the block on each side
- Retains convenience parking for shoppers/diners

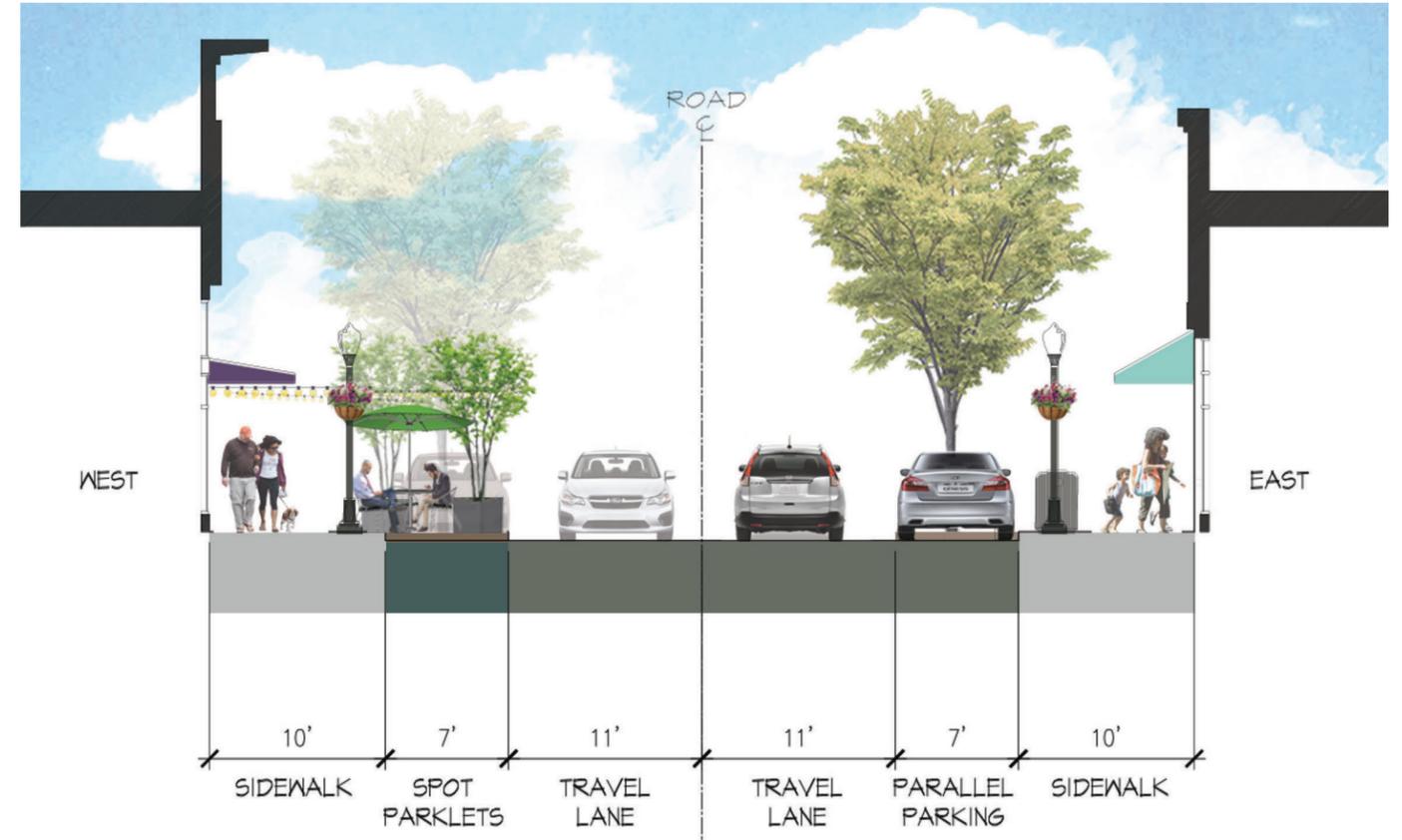
Cons:

- Maintains existing parallel parking width of 7'
- Maintains narrow sidewalk for half the block on each side with no street trees in those areas
- Creates "winners and losers" for the current businesses depending on the locations of wide sidewalk and parking areas

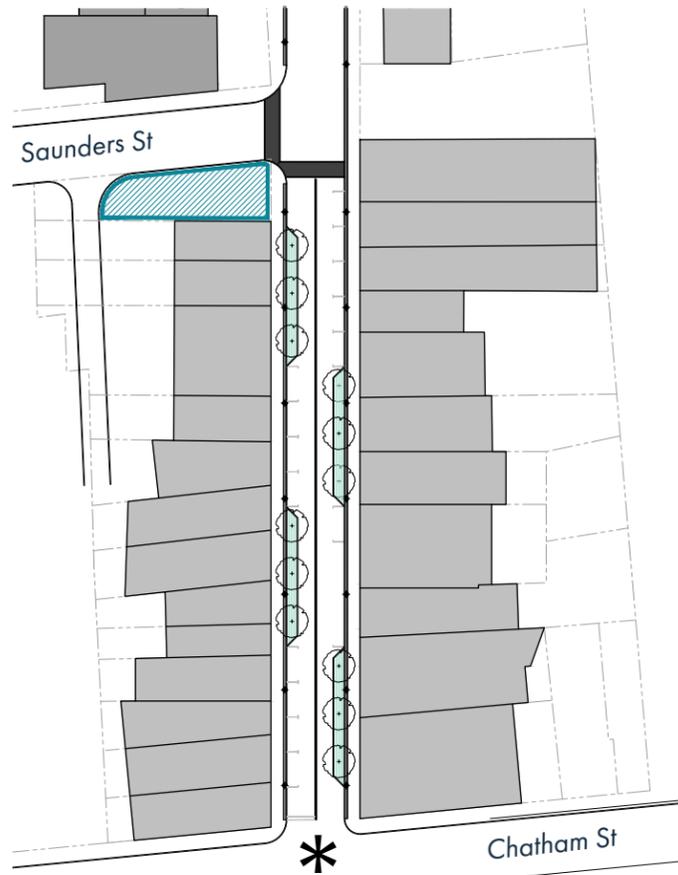
▲ Alternating on-street parking (long) plan view



▲ Alternating on-street parking (long) perspective model view



▲ Alternating on-street parking (long) street section



8.2.3 Alternating On-Street Parking (Short)

Pros:

- Provides street trees for half the block on each side in a pattern that creates the visual appearance of trees along both sides of Salem Street
- Creates wide sidewalks for half the block on each side
- Retains convenience parking for shoppers/diners

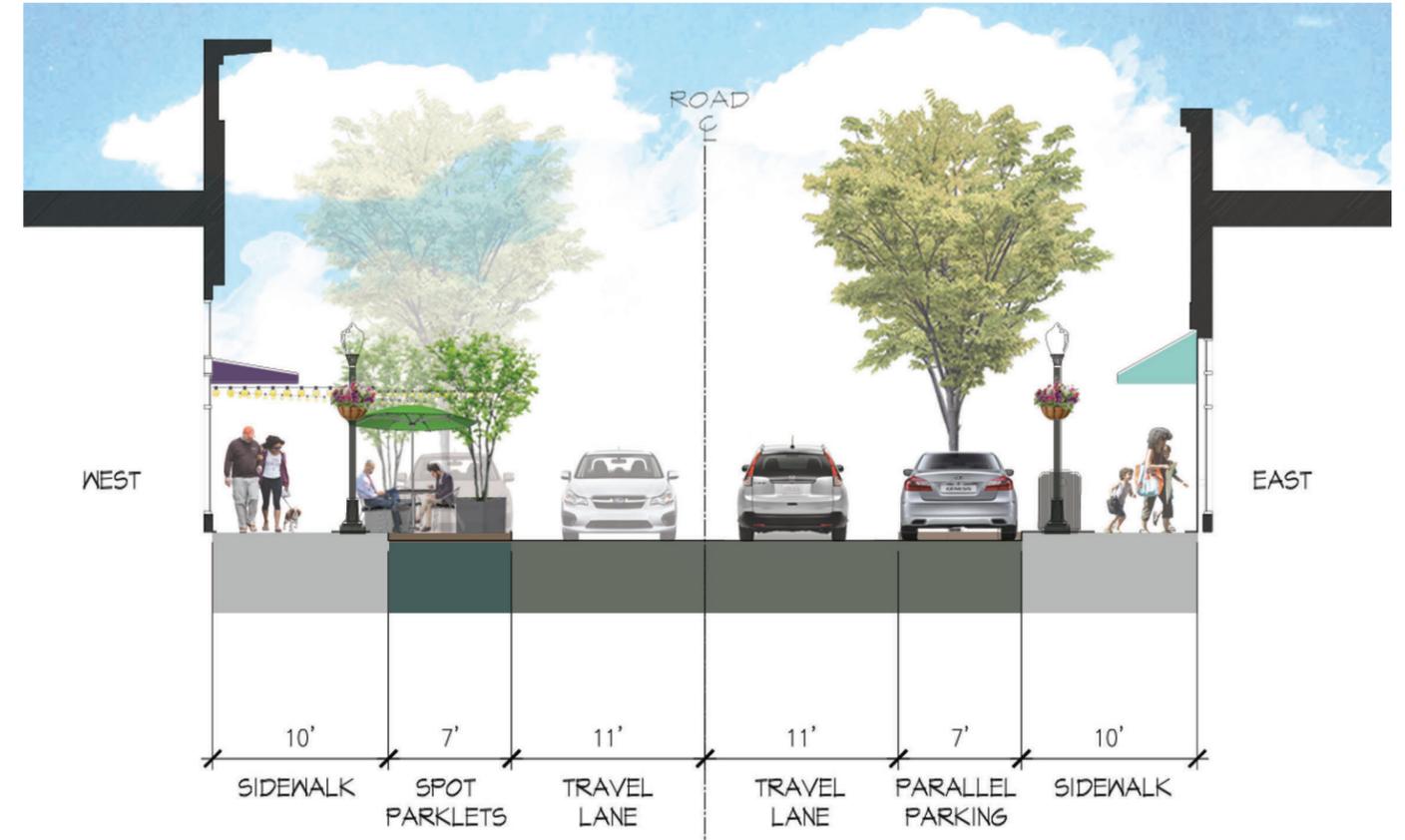
Cons:

- Maintains existing parallel parking width of 7'
- Maintains narrow sidewalk for half the block on each side with no street trees in those areas
- Creates “winners and losers” for the current businesses depending on the locations of wide sidewalk and parking areas

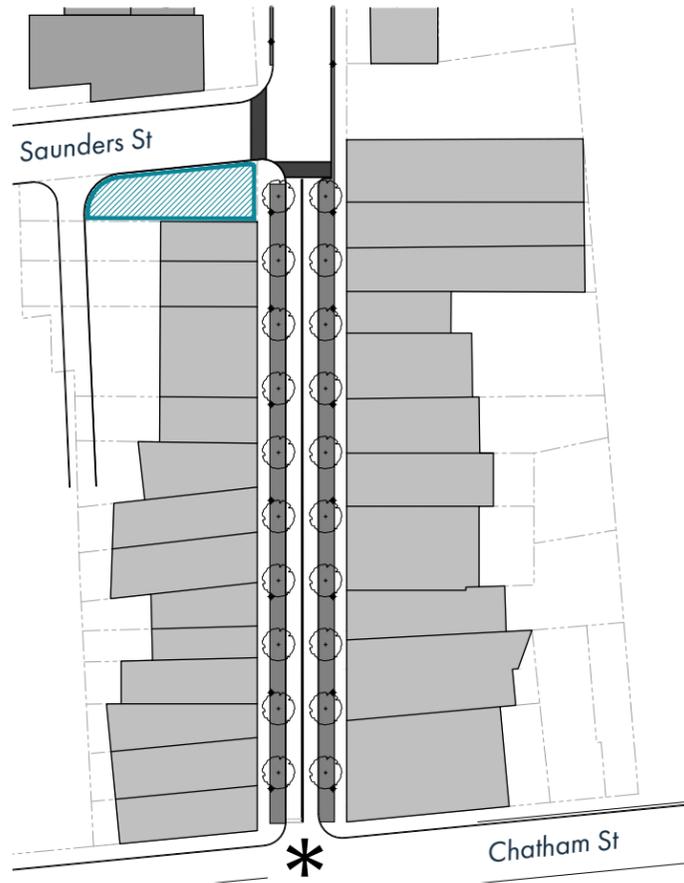
▲ Alternating on-street parking (short) perspective plan view



▲ Alternating on-street parking (short) perspective model view



▲ Alternating on-street parking (short) street section



8.2.4 No On-Street Parking

Pros:

- Provides wide urban sidewalks for the entire length of Salem Street for both sides
- Provides consistent and regular street trees on both sides of Salem Street
- Provides sidewalk room for additional furnishings and amenities

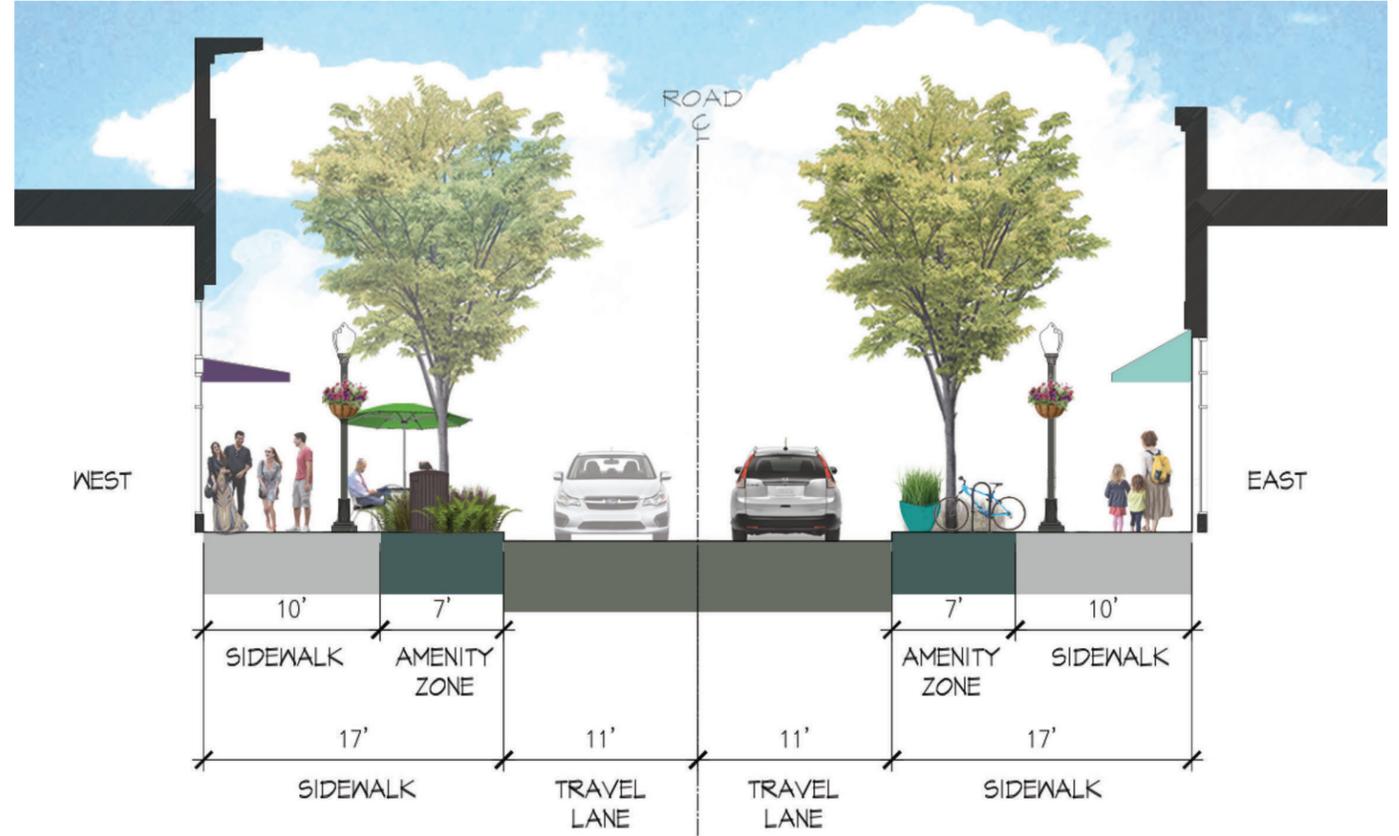
Cons:

- Retains existing width of 7' for pull off areas
- Removes all on-street parking directly outside of businesses

◀ No on-street parking plan view



▲ No on-street parking perspective model view



▲ No on-street parking street section

8.3 Create Vibrant Spaces for People to Gather

We examined several “leftover spaces”—places that needed a little love but were amazing opportunities to create vibrant spaces for people to gather. The team first examined the major alleyways of Commerce and Seaboard.

8.3.1 Commerce Street

The team wanted to create a vibrant people place on Commerce Street. Planners and urban designers discuss mixed use in buildings quite often, but public spaces need to be mixed use as well—a place where cars, cyclists, moms with strollers picking up their kids from preschool, and young entrepreneurs trying to change the world with their ideas all live harmoniously together in a beautiful/dynamic space.



◀ **Existing**
Commerce Street is an auto-dominated alley with no clear space which invites people to stay



◀ **Conceptual Opportunity**
Commerce Street envisioned as a unique alley with art, seating, shade, and PEOPLE!

8.3.2 Seaboard Street

Seaboard Street recently received a critical public investment in the form of new public parking along the rail line. The current conditions behind the downtown buildings in this area can be described as a wasteland of unconsolidated dumpsters, the occasional convenient employee parking space, and overgrown shrubs. The team put forth a vision for vibrancy with lighting, plantings, and most importantly **PEOPLE!!**



◀ **Existing**
Seaboard Street is a gravel area behind the businesses of Salem Street



◀ **Conceptual Opportunity**
Seaboard Street envisioned as a unique alley with planters, shade trees, string lighting, beer garden style seating, and PEOPLE!

Key Recommendation
 8B-Energize the alleys...Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station.

Top 10 Recommendation

8.3.3 Kitchen & Bath Renovations

The team looked at buildings that have perfectly fine businesses in them today, but envisioned a future where they convert into people places. The area of N. Salem in front of the current Kitchen and Bath Renovations store is slated to receive a new public sidewalk as well as a new Holly Springs Express bus stop. The desire is to leverage that public investment to encourage private investment and a vision for vibrancy. The Hang Out is one concept for a local eatery with unique public art and cool outdoor dining spaces under the old gas canopy. The Town of Apex would not force this type of change, but rather, encourage future development to focus on vitality.



▲ Existing
Former gas station building adaptively reused currently as a kitchen and bath renovation business



Conceptual Opportunity Phase 1 ▶
Public investments include new crosswalks, sidewalks, lighting, and on-street parking



▲ Conceptual Opportunity Phase 2
Public investment meets private investment and a vision for vibrancy in the form of a unique eatery and bottle shop designed with great spaces enhanced with plants, lighting, and PEOPLE!

8.3.4 Holland's Jewelers

Holland's Jewelers is a fantastic local business that the town is lucky to have on the tax rolls. The team wanted to illustrate shifting the jeweler to the rear of the existing building which still maintains a side entrance just a short distance from their current main door. The business owner could partner with a local entrepreneur or restaurateur to activate the Salem frontage with a café serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner—even brunch on Saturdays! The intent is to provide an eatery for the S. Salem neighborhoods while also creating synergy with the new development at NC 55 and S. Salem.

▼ Existing
Holland's Jewelers is currently an auto-oriented destination shop.



Top 10 Recommendation

Key Recommendation
8C-Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries to Salem Street through new development and the active reuse of existing buildings.



◀ Conceptual Opportunity
In this vision, the jeweler shifts to the back space and maintains a side facing front door while a cafe occupies the Salem frontage. The outdoor spaces are enhanced with shade, plantings, trees, outdoor dining areas, art, and PEOPLE!

8.3.5 Cigar Shop

The vacant building formerly occupied by the cigar shop is one of the key “gaps” in the retail experience as Chapter 4 highlights. The parking area of the site also fronts onto Salem Street which detracts from the continuous frontage created by the buildings in the heart of downtown. The site is envisioned as a two or three story building with active ground floor uses, a wide urban sidewalk for outdoor dining, and rooftop dining along with a penthouse apartment.



▲ Conceptual Opportunity A

Option A illustrates a two-story mixed use building with active ground floor tenants that wrap the corner of Salem and Saunders Street; upper story living including a third story penthouse apartment; rooftop dining with views of the town; a wide urban sidewalk with movable chairs and tables along with shade trees; the addition of public art on the side of the adjacent coffee shop building



▲ Conceptual Opportunity B

Option B (not currently allowed by existing regulations) illustrates a three-story mixed use building with active ground floor tenants that wrap the corner of Salem and Saunders Street; upper story living including a fourth story penthouse apartment; rooftop dining with views of the town; a wide urban sidewalk with movable chairs and tables along with shade trees; the addition of public art on the side of the adjacent coffee shop building



▲ Existing

The site of the former cigar shop is a clear “gap” in the downtown retail environment with an abnormal urban setback and parking facing the street.

8.3.6 Southern Corner of Saunders and Salem Street

The space at the southern corner of Saunders and Salem Streets is currently a vital public space for downtown; the area is literally the only respite from the hot summer sun. This plan clearly illustrates the addition of key public spaces along Salem Street including the transformation of the streetscape to include canopy trees. The successful implementation of those ideas, paired with parking solutions that make the current six spaces a non-issue, will shift this corner to a new category of opportunity. By developing a building that connects the shopping microclimates and provides the necessary square footage downtown needs to shift to a destination, this corner becomes a critical piece of Salem Street’s evolution. Ground floor retail and restaurant space along with upper story living create vibrancy on this corner and a synergy between the new development previously discussed on the cigar shop site.



▲ Existing

This corner is often occupied by people because it is currently the only area of true shade in the summer months.



▲ Conceptual Opportunity

With the addition of well-designed public spaces along Salem Street, including street trees for shade and parking solutions nearby, this vacant corner could transform into needed square footage of both retail/restaurants and upper story living.

8.4 Expand Housing Options that Promote Equity

A thorough review of the team’s housing analysis can be found in Chapter 5 of this document. The goal is to take the market realities and find opportunities to **expand housing options that promote equity**.

The housing recommendations suggest approximately 100 units per year can be absorbed over the next five years with various housing typologies of multi-family and single-family units—both for-sale and for-rent.

All four of the key focus areas described in the plan explore equitable housing solutions in and around downtown.

- Shangri La Mobile Park illustrated as a mixed income neighborhood of for sale and for rent options
- Justice Heights Neighborhood illustrated with strategic narrow lot single family homes and S. Salem integrating workforce cottage courts along with two-pack and four-pack units in what appear to be large historic style homes
- Vineyard Station illustrated as an extension of the surrounding neighborhoods offering rowhouses, upper story lofts, and live/work units.

One area the team would like to highlight to promote this goal is the fourth area of plan focus—the downtown core’s historic blocks. The blocks bound by Chatham, Center, Elm, and Mason are located

just a stone’s throw away from the heart of Salem Street. Approximately forty units occupy this area today and some are part of the historic overlay district within the town. The historic designation provided an additional layer of information to the designers related to structures being categorized as “contributing” or “non-contributing” to the historic nature of the area.

A sensitive infill approach was taken with the first phase being the simple addition of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on lots that could accommodate them and providing access through the development with alleyways. This added 22 units to the area that would be affordable options for the two demographic groups which make up 65% of the potential buyers in town—young singles and childless couples plus empty nesters and retirees.

The next phase of potential development examined the lots with non-contributing structures as areas for future densification of the block. A staggering 100 units were added to this area which is less than a five minute walk to Salem Street. The intention is for the infill units to fit into the existing character where appropriate while introducing new typologies such as two and four packs, rowhouses, and cottage courts. The illustrations at the right show the progression of development and how these simple adjustments could add appropriate levels of density to this historic neighborhood block and yield more **PEOPLE** living near downtown.

Key Recommendations

- 8D-Recruit developers familiar with towns like Apex to implement urban housing in downtown.
- 8E-Work to meet demand for downtown housing and improve the housing stock through institutional partnerships. (as discussed in case study found in Chapter 5)

Key Recommendation

- 8F-Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of Downtown.

Top 10
Recommendation



40 existing units

Existing conditions of the block



40+22=65 units

Insertion of alleys and accessory dwelling units (ADUs)



40+100=140 units

Sensitive densification of the block over time

8.5 Create Connections to Downtown

Much of the connectivity desired in and around downtown will be addressed through the Advance Apex Transportation Plan's recommendations; however, this plan identifies streets which improve the overall walkability of the community. The streets that impact the five and ten minute walk will be most critical to **create connections to downtown**.

As discussed in both Chapter 6 and in Section 8.1, the identification of on-street parking for various connecting streets creates a two-fold positive impact for Apex. Obviously, the addition of these spaces addresses current parking concerns, but the reallocation of excess pavement also slows vehicles down. Slower neighborhood streets create a less hostile environment for walking and cycling. Streets with the potential for transformation include: Center Street, Chatham Street, Saunders Street, Mason Street, and N. Salem Street. Sharrow markings for downtown streets have also been identified in the Bike Apex plan.

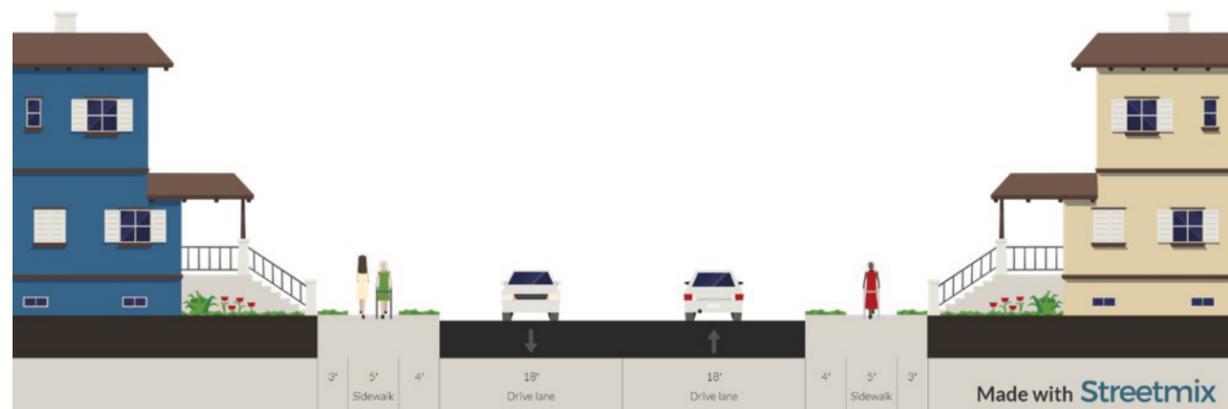
The Town's Capital Improvement Plan includes planned pedestrian investments to complete sidewalk gaps over the railroad at Chatham and Center. This project would continue to make the walk to downtown safer and should be prioritized for funding along with pedestrian scale wayfinding.

N. Salem has presented public safety with speed issues in the past, so again, restriping will go a long way in slowing those cars down and making the area for pedestrians and cyclists much safer. Along N. Salem, a bus stop is anticipated in the vicinity of Hunter Street Park which provides connections to downtown Cary and Holly Springs with service beginning in January. A bus stop along the GoApex Route 1 is also planned at S. Salem Street and Moore Street which coincides nicely with the reimagination of the Holland's Jeweler property found in Section 8.3.4.

Speaking of regional connectivity, the planned "enhanced transfer station" by GoTriangle is coming to the intersection of NC 55 and S. Salem Street. This plan promotes the idea of leveraging that planned investment in regional transit to create a true multi-modal center for Apex. This would be a facility where residents and visitors could pick up not just a regional connector bus, but the local GoApex transit circulator (perhaps an autonomous shuttle one day) or jump on a community bicycle or scooter. Section 8.7 shares the vision for this iconic civic investment.

Existing

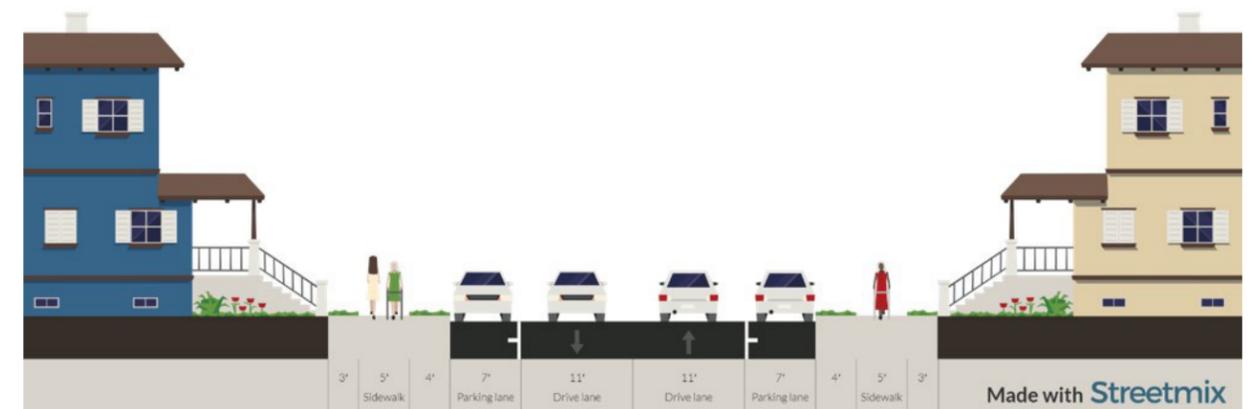
North Salem currently has two 18' travel lanes which encourages speeding and creates a dangerous walking and cycling environment



▲ Bike Apex map showing existing and proposed facilities connecting to downtown

Conceptual Opportunity

Reallocating the existing pavement of N. Salem Street between Hunter & Center streets to two 11' travel lanes and on-street parking yields 28 new spaces within an easy walk of downtown. This is the same roadway cross-section as the existing S. Salem Street through the center of downtown.



8.6 Encourage a Diversity of Activities & Programming

Apex and its citizens have proven their ability to pull off large-scale events—ones that attract thousands of people to downtown on a given day of the year. However, it's the smaller scale, more frequent events that create vibrancy. The plan strives to **encourage a diversity of activities and programming**. The overriding issue related to this goal is the current lack of public space in downtown.

With parking issues mitigated through a number of management strategies, as outlined in Chapter 6, the twenty spaces in front of the beautiful, historic depot building present a major opportunity to create a flexible public space. This would be the “place” in downtown Apex.

Depot Plaza is envisioned as a simply designed, curbless plaza utilizing permeable pavers, majestic shade trees, public art, movable tables/chairs/umbrellas, an interactive splash pad, and even a cascading wall of water on the plaza side of the accessible ramp leading to the depot. The space would have self directed games and fun movable seating on most days, host the Farmer’s Market on Saturdays, and even be an ice rink during the holidays!

Key Recommendation

8G-Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown.

Top 10
Recommendation



▲ The interactive splash pad is a space with fountain nozzles below grade that can be utilized during warm times of the year; the space would simply be a plaza during the colder seasons.



▲ Existing

Parking area in front of the historic depot building



▲ Cascading water adds ambient noise that makes public space inviting



▲ Conceptual Opportunity

Depot Plaza envisioned as a flexible public spaces that changes with the seasons and based on programming needs

8.7 Roll Out the Welcome Mat with Small Town Charm

8.7.1 Front Porches & Hospitality

Great programming is lost if people don't know how to get to it or don't feel welcome, so the plan encourages the community to **roll out the welcome mat with small town charm**. To that point, the gateways into downtown should be treated as the front porches of the community. The existing conditions of the intersection of NC 55 and S. Salem are not necessarily exuding front porch charm. The intersection enhancements, including high visibility crosswalks with pedestrian-scaled lighting and wayfinding signage, are critical to connecting the Justice Heights Neighborhood across Highway 55. The plan illustrates new businesses and developments on all four corners along with new wayfinding signage. At this one gateway, the community has the potential for a new mixed use neighborhood building, a boutique hotel, a multi-modal transit center, and an active reuse of a historic building as a restaurant with a rooftop bar. Now that's a front porch that says come on in and stay a while!

Hospitality should include downtown lodging. At this time, there are no downtown options of any real scale for out-of-town visitors. A few AirBNBs are popping up around downtown including one just a block away from the heart of Salem Street. Apex has the advantage of being close to state parks, including Jordan Lake, outdoor recreation facilities, wineries and historic sites that attract visitors to the region. These attractions and those located in downtown are bringing in visitors in the form of families, millennials and young professionals, and empty nesters. A downtown lodging option would likely attract many of these visitors, thereby, keeping much of their spending during visits in downtown versus in surrounding competing areas. Lodging could take the form of a boutique hotel as this concept illustrates and/or several bed and breakfasts around downtown.

Key Recommendation

8H-Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multi-modal, iconic, gateway feature.

8.7.2 Branding/Marketing

Concurrent with this process, a branding campaign is ongoing for the town. In addition to overall town branding, the package should include marketing themes for sub-areas, including (and most importantly) downtown. Fonts and colors should be reflective of a contemporary community, and any associated logo/graphic should be clean and simple in nature. The community should also play a major role in the final selection based on a series of options.

Key Recommendation

8I-Install wayfinding and gateway signage in and around downtown based on a new branding campaign.

Current conditions of major downtown gateway at NC 55 and S. Salem Street

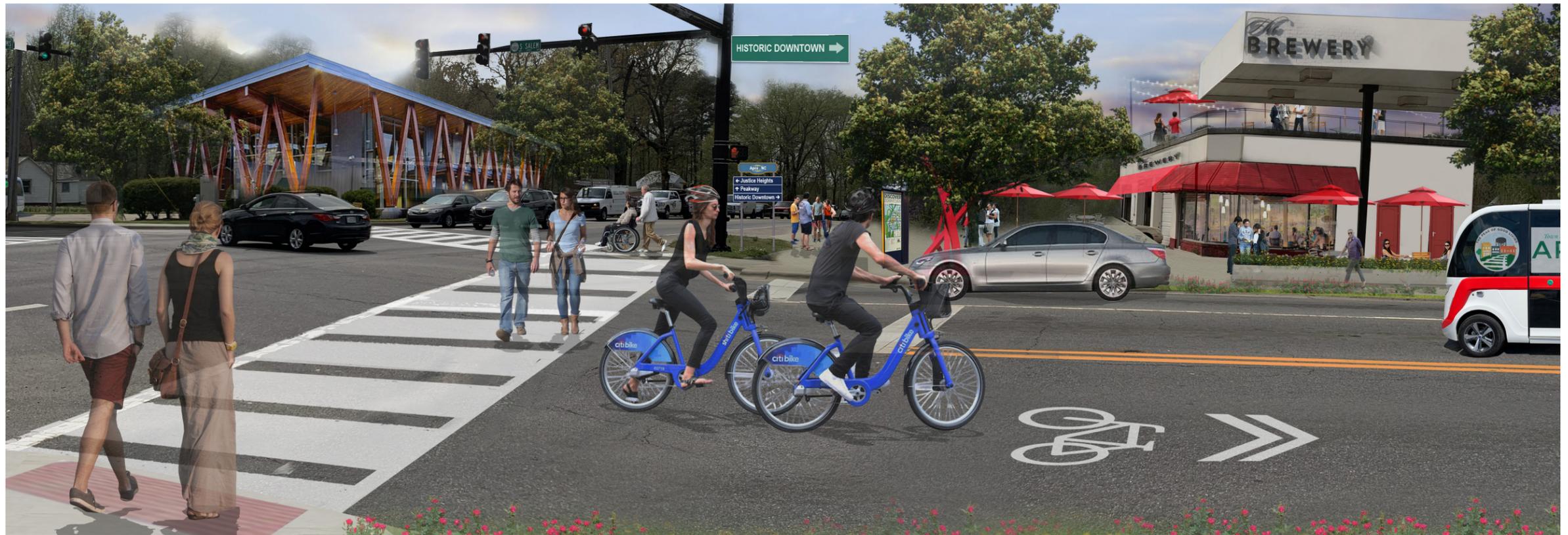


Existing

View looking west across S. Salem Street toward NC 55

Conceptual Opportunity

Concept illustrating active reuse of the historic Holt & Sons structure as a brewpub; enhanced crosswalks, wayfinding signage, a new multimodal transit center, shade trees and seasonal plantings, bike share program and sharrow markings, GoApex shuttle



**8.7.3 Finding a Home for Craft Beer
Downtown**

Small towns mean **unique** offerings—one of a kind shops and restaurants. Salem Heritage Plaza (the current home of Pizza Hut) is envisioned as a local brewery that celebrates the craft beer industry with taps from local breweries like Southern Peak, Blueprint, and Vicious Fishes available. The development's configuration as an L-shaped building would create a unique outdoor experience for patrons if the parking was converted into food truck areas and outdoor dining. The space may even evolve over time to include unique restaurant offerings, or perhaps, the food trucks become so popular they can afford to open brick/mortar establishments!

Key Recommendation

8J-Attract local breweries downtown and encourage co-location.



▲ Locals helping the design team understand what goes well with breweries

Existing ▶
Salem Heritage Plaza



▼ **Conceptual Opportunity** ▶
Concept illustrating the curation of local, craft beer offerings in downtown along with welcoming outdoor spaces



8.7.4 The Place to Be

Part of people feeling welcome in a community goes back to how public spaces are detailed and what activities occur in those spaces. From giant jenga to corn hole, to buying fresh produce and local products, to lighting the town Christmas tree as a community and children lacing up ice skates for the first time—these are memories tied to place and ones that will last a lifetime. As a major capital investment, Depot Plaza would be a fantastic candidate to be **TESTED USING TACTICAL URBANISM** (As discussed in Chapter 3, the Steering Committee’s creation of a parklet on Salem Street was a form of tactical urbanism). This spread outlines ways to begin thinking about the space differently and building community in the process.



◀ **Proposed**
Depot Plaza on Saturday morning during the Farmers Market



◀ **Conceptual Opportunity**
Depot Plaza on a winter evening in December



◀ **Existing**
Parking lot in front of the historic depot building on Salem Street

▲ **Conceptual Opportunity**
Depot Plaza on a typical Friday night

Tactical Approach to Testing the Idea of Depot Plaza in the Interim

- Conduct a vegetation edit by removing the overgrown shrubs. (FYI: Chainsaw required!)
- Indicate public restrooms are available inside the Depot with signage.
- Add movable seating in the space. Place some in the shade and some in the sun, but expect them to move around (but hopefully not walk off)!
- Add small bistro style tables/chairs.
- Add corn hole boards and maybe giant Jenga.
- Put a small galvanized can (with lid) of sidewalk chalk in the space and a sign that says BE CREATIVE!.
- Add additional potted plants for color and life! Greenery that drapes over those brick walls would be fantastic!
- Add string lights in the bigger trees.
- Install a temporary paint design on the concrete areas.
- Program the space with random activities; ask a yoga class or cross-fit group to do a session in the space.
- Encourage daycares and after-school programs to use the space!
- Host a movie on the “porch” with a large screen and let people bring their chairs to occupy the parking lot!
- Ask food trucks to park in the parking lot one night a week or even at lunch time one day a week!
- Allow a pumpkin vendor to occupy an area of the porch during the month of October.
- Encourage busking in the space!
- Put an intriguing temporary sign out on Salem...Check Out Our Front Porch!!
- Allow Grow Preschool to set up a sprinkler one (hot) day for kids.

8.8 Honor the History of Downtown

The plan encourages the Town of Apex to not live in the past but to celebrate and **honor the history of downtown**. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the design team had a meal with many of the community’s wisest generation—people who remember the very best of Apex and graciously shared their memories of a small railroad town enjoyed on front porch rocking chairs. The Wall Street Journal recently coined Apex as the Millennial Mayberry, but it would seem that Apex has long been the Mayberry of the Triangle region according to these residents.

8.8.1 Telling the Story Through Art

The conversation spurred design ideas and a desire to intentionally share the story of downtown. Apex is unique and has a history full of whimsical elements easily portrayed through art and signage. The design team embraced the “Frogs, Logs, and Beavers... OH MY!”. Stories have been written of the original log pond downtown and the sound of frogs echoing all around, and there is even a story about a beaver walking down Salem Street many years after the log pond was removed searching for his old stomping grounds.

One of the most touching moments of the Legacy Lunch was the reading of a letter from Jean Hack. Jean is 90 years old and loves Apex, and her account of days gone by left the team wanting to create a downtown where a new generation of citizens can appreciate its history and build upon it. Excerpts from her letter are found on the following page.

Key Recommendations

- 8K-Work with local and regional artists to implement public art projects along Salem Street that honor its history and vision for the future.
- 8L-Host a mural competition to generate excitement for public art downtown.



◀ Salem Street Then & Now

▼ Excerpts from a letter Jean Hack wrote to the participants of the Legacy Lunch

I was delighted to be asked to talk about growing up in Apex. The first thing you need to know is I love Apex. I feel so blessed to be born in the town I love—the only place on earth I want to be. To grow up here and live here for ninety years, I have loved every minute. Apex had very few paved streets when I was young. There were no sidewalks except for downtown. Growing up here, back then, I knew everybody. I always felt safe and secure. We always had a big meal at noon with cornbread and biscuits and whoever came to eat at our house left with lunch bags to go. When I was about eleven years old, I would skate on roller-skates on Highway 55. We rode our bikes everywhere. Once or twice a month there would be a movie downtown projected onto the side of the building which is now the Peak Restaurant. We would get inside big cardboard boxes and watch the movie outdoors. We would bring our nickels to play the jukebox and dance. Most teenagers learned to dance there! I hope everyone who lives here can enjoy the good life and be as happy as I have been.

—Jean Hack

▼ Public art, educational signage, and furnishings should help honor the history of downtown



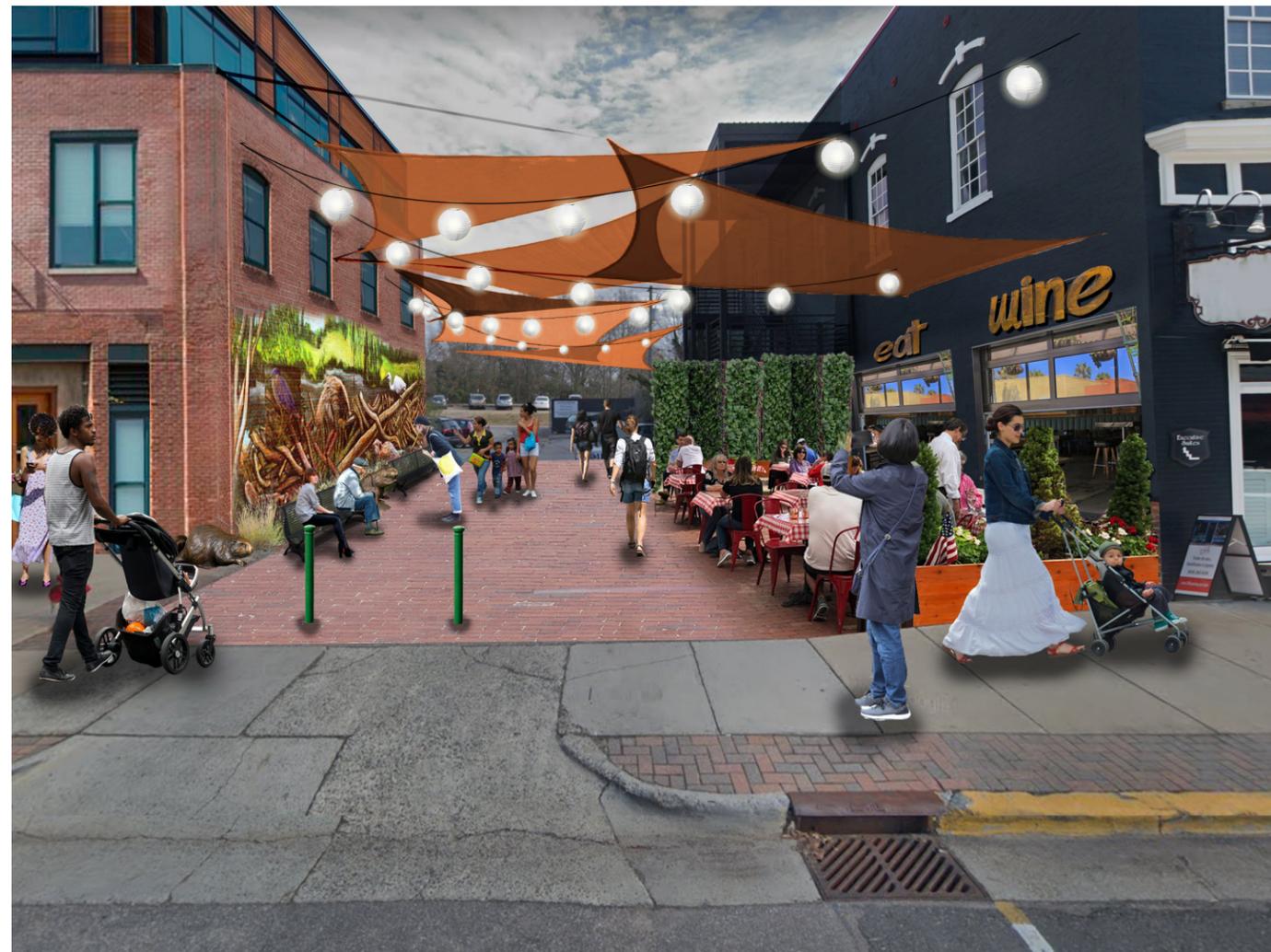
Image credits (left to right): Matt Barrett (train and caboose in Apex), James Simon/PGH Murals (frog in Pittsburgh, PA), Halvorson Design (log play set in Boston, MA), Oregon Translation (beavers in Portland, OR), Stantec design team (rocking chairs in Apex)

8.8.2 Fire Station Alley

Utilizing another “leftover” space, the plan illustrates a renewed sense of place for the fire station alleyway with the story about the fact that the log pond was right here (we think!). Murals depicting the log pond and clever little bronze beavers hidden among the scene tell the story in a whimsical way. The beavers can be part of a walking scavenger hunt for kids! Ambient lighting and tensile shade canopies make the space even more inviting along with opening up the brick walls in the outdoor dining area. Reclaiming this alley as a space for pedestrians not only creates a dynamic **PEOPLE** place, this design move also honors the history of downtown Apex.

Existing ▶

Vehicular alley between the existing fire station and a downtown restaurant



Conceptual Opportunity ▲

Fire Station Alley envisioned as a pedestrian only space with lighting, art, dining, and PEOPLE!

8.8.3 The Tunstall House & Grounds

This plan encourages the town to tell the story of the “Peak of the Peak”—the Tunstall House and grounds. The history of the home and its donation to the town needs to be celebrated and honored by creating a place for the community to enjoy it. The plan even includes the possibility of creating a revenue generating venue that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The grounds should be celebrated as well with community gardens and pergola covered swings along the strollway. The Bee City Committee could even utilize the area for a pollinator garden with educational signage.

Key Recommendation

8M-Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center.

Top 10
Recommendation

Existing

Aerial view of the Tunstall House and strollway connection across the rail-line to downtown



Conceptual Opportunity ▲

Tunstall House and grounds during a wedding; community gardens and pergola covered swings create a pastoral scene

8.8.4 The Fire Station on Salem

The fire station is a long-standing civic feature of Salem Street signifying safety and protection for the citizens of Apex. A recent study conducted by the fire department revealed that a two-bay configuration would be better for Station One on Salem Street which opened up a plethora of new and exciting possibilities. The plan promotes its conversion into a public/private partnership that yields an iconic civic presence while also providing more ground floor activation. The existing apron width and setback is actually perfect for a wide urban sidewalk in the mixed use half of the block.

Upon further study of their property, the fire station may decide logistically they would prefer to exit on Seaboard instead of Salem, but the fire house is still part of the story on Salem. The designs illustrate the historic 1939 engine behind glass and lit up at night as part of a fire museum on Salem. Progress and change keep a community resilient, but this plan wants to also honor the history and the place where children are making their Christmas memories with Santa each and every year.



Existing ▲

The fire station currently has seven bays that open along Salem Street and create a “gap” in the retail environment of downtown.

Key Recommendation

- 8N-Re-envision the fire station site as a civic and mixed-use development.

Conceptual Opportunity ▲

(Top) Fire station reduced to two bays in a modern building with the remainder of the block redeveloped as mixed use

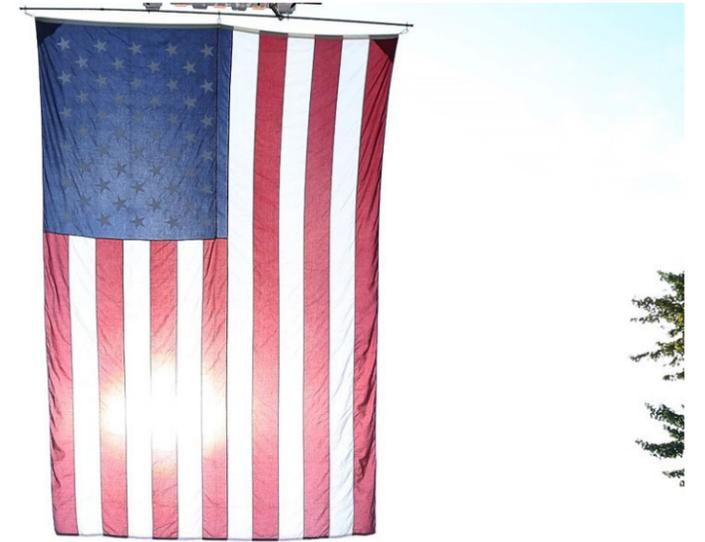
(Middle) Fire station reduced to two bays in a traditional building with the remainder of the block redeveloped as mixed use

(Bottom) Fire station to utilize Seaboard Street for entry/exit and maintain a Firehouse Museum on Salem with the remainder of the block redeveloped as mixed use.

Top 10
Recommendation

There are people that put their lives in harm’s way every day. It’s not something they DO, it’s something they ARE.

-Unknown



▲ 2019 Photograph of a 9/11 Remembrance event at the intersection of Salem and Saunders (Image credit: Bob Karp)

8.9 Re-imagine Spaces through Art, Innovation, and Creativity!

The design team challenged the Steering Committee to re-imagine spaces through art, innovation, and creativity with the parklet challenge on Salem Street. The intent was to illustrate that change doesn't always come about through a large capital public project; sometimes, the most transformative changes come about because someone was willing to have fun and think outside of the box. Spaces around downtown were examined that are perfectly fine places today, but with a little creativity could actually contribute to the vibrancy of downtown.

The plan explored many ideas related to this goal as is evident in the remainder of the document, but three projects have not been highlighted yet. Those include:

- Grow Preschool on Commerce Street (alley-side)
- Intersection of Salem and Saunders (south side)
- Halle Cultural Arts Center (northern facing facade)

Key Recommendation

80-Seek out and create a list of spaces around downtown that could use a little love; create a committee dedicated to tactical interventions in those spaces.



Implementation Award

Julia Beam, a member of the Steering Committee and owner of Grow Preschool, was inspired by the photosimulation created during the design charrette. Within three months time, she had commissioned a NC artist to paint the mural you see at the left and installed the shade structure in the play area. Talk about re-imagining through art, innovation, and creativity!

Mural created by: Michael Brown, Owner of Murals by Michael Brown
www.muralsbymichaelbrown.com



Existing ▶

(Top) Grow Preschool along Commerce Street alleyway includes a play space

(Middle) South corner of Saunders and Salem intersection; currently parking

(Bottom) Halle Cultural Arts Center's blank northern facade



◀ Conceptual Opportunity

(Top) Grow Preschool envisioned with a colorful mural and shade structures in the play space.

(Middle) Southern corner of Saunders and Salem Street intersection envisioned as outdoor dining space with lighting and ground plane artwork.

(Bottom) Halle Cultural Arts Center's northern facade envisioned with a mural that evokes community, art, and culture to make sure it's clear to visitors and residents they need to stop in and take a look!

8.9.1 Sustainability Innovations

A wealth of information related to innovative sustainability trends can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/tools-and-resources-sustainable-communities>

A few highlights from this resource that the Town of Apex should consider utilizing moving forward include the following:

Climate Change

- **Adaptation Resource Center**-This interactive resource known as ARC-X helps local governments deliver services with climate change in mind. Tailored strategies show risks and relevant adaptation strategies along with case studies illustrating success stories along with EPA funding opportunities.
- **Household Carbon Footprint Calculator**-Every citizen of Apex can do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and this calculator allows the public to educate themselves and make positive changes for the environment.

Smart Growth Policies

- **Smart Growth Implementation Toolkit**-Smart growth is synonymous with sustainable development, and this toolkit is designed to help local leaders untangle the policies and procedures that often serve as roadblocks to the desired outcome. Smart Growth America provides seven unique tools which include diagnostics and audits, as well as incentives and scorecards for development projects.

Economic Development

- **Local Food, Local Places Toolkit**-This guide aims to increase the vitality of historic downtowns and neighborhoods by helping attract reinvestment in local food systems. Consumers are more and more interested in local food in their homes and in the restaurants they visit. The toolkit helps a community develop a plan and achieve local food and revitalization goals.

Key Recommendation

- **8P-Utilize available resources to ensure the community develops and operates in a way that protects the environment and promotes sustainability for future generations.**

Environmental Justice

- **EPA Environmental Justice Grants & Resources**-Grants range from technical assistance to training related to empowering communities as they develop and implement solutions related to fair and equitable treatment of all people. The program promotes people of all races enjoying the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and giving them a voice in the process. The EJSCREEN interactive mapping application on EPA's website combines environmental and demographic indicators to assess an area with potential issues.

Green Building

- **U.S. Green Building Council-USGBC** has long been the standard for green development with their LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating systems for both buildings, neighborhoods, and individual sites. Their smart growth principles help guide communities toward excellence in sustainable design.
- **Sustainable Design & Green Building Toolkit for Local Governments**-The EPA designed an assessment toolkit spreadsheet for local municipalities to evaluate their codes and ordinances. The goal is to find and remove barriers to sustainable design in local permitting processes.



▲ LEED certification means safer and greener development and savings over the lifetime of a project

Housing

- **Housing and Transportation Affordability Index**-This online tool helps communities understand the true cost of housing for residents. The tool measures transportation costs associated with particular housing locations in order for communities to obtain a comprehensive view of affordability.
- **Walk Score**-Understanding walkability is vital to downtown success, and this tool aims to promote walkable neighborhoods which are better for the environment, public health, and economic development. Walk Score helps potential buyers determine where to live based on proximity to people and places they love.

Land Reuse

- **Brownfields**-The EPA offers a variety of resources related to brownfields or previously developed sites with environmental hazards. From assessment and planning grants to cleanup and environmental workforce development, the EPA offers a range of tools related to the redevelopment of these areas.

Sustainable Materials

- **Excess Food Opportunities Map**-Understanding the potential magnitude of excess food in our communities can divert food from landfills and toward productive community needs. This national map makes connections between excess food generators and potential recipients.

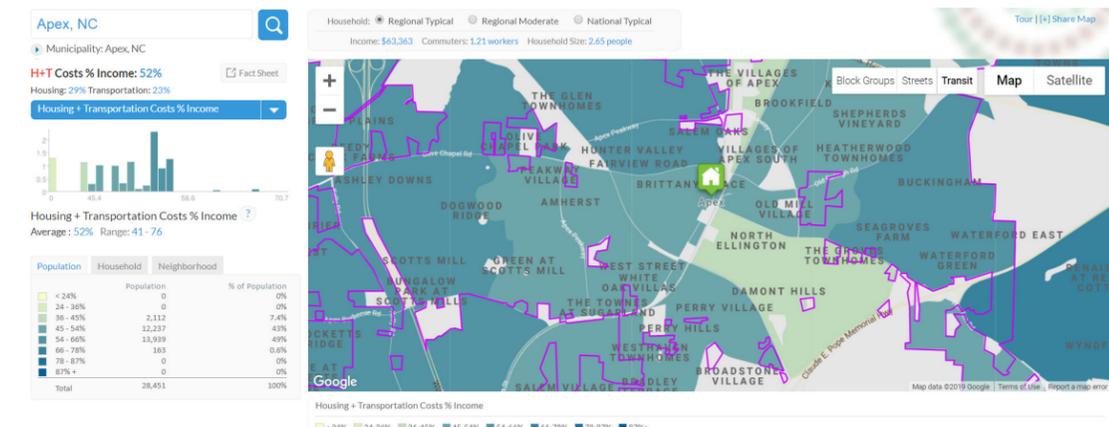
- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**-This initiative educates communities on the basics of this concept along with the benefits. Links to potential resources such as a Waste Reduction Model are available to help the town's solid waste planners report greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Transportation

- **Mixed Use Trip Generation Model**-The EPA has provided a spreadsheet tool communities can use when assessing new mixed-use development. The tool estimates trips generated to more fairly assess these projects in development review processes.
- **Smart Location Mapping**-The U.S. General Services Administration and the EPA have produced a web resource capable of smart mapping related to indicators associated with development and location efficiency. The tool includes assessment of location walkability and access to jobs via transit.

Water

- **Green Infrastructure Wizard**-Green infrastructure provides key environmental benefits through the management of water utilizing natural landscapes that are cost effective and sustainable. The EPA's interactive Green Infrastructure Wizard can produce a customized evaluation of resources related to water management and help communities make subsequent planning decisions.
- **Impervious Surface Growth Model**-While town standards should require pervious surfacing whenever possible, some level of impervious surface results with development. The EPA has provided a simple spreadsheet which estimates net impervious surface growth.



◀ Housing + Transportation Affordability Index to understand the true cost of housing for residents



09 IMPLEMENTATION

09 IMPLEMENTATION

While the beautiful designs and vision are a key piece of downtown's progression into the future, the recommendations and strategies of this chapter will be vital to take those pretty pictures from dream to reality. Implementation is part policy, part partnership, and part hard work. Downtown Apex has quite a story to tell, and once that story is clearly articulated, conveyed, and embedded all over town, the community can begin selling that story—to potential developers, residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs.

An infectious energy and momentum has been created through this planning process, and as the process comes to an end, this spark needs to start a fire. Apex is a community full of passionate and caring people who can fan the flames of implementation and create a place known far and wide. Downtowns, especially authentic ones like Apex, are one of the strongest playing cards any economic development staffer has to play.

Downtown Apex is on the precipice of a transformative evolution rooted in the ideas of the people who know and love this place the most—its **CITIZENS!**

10

projects the plan encourages you to tackle first

100%

chance this community will achieve implementation

10

ways to measure success

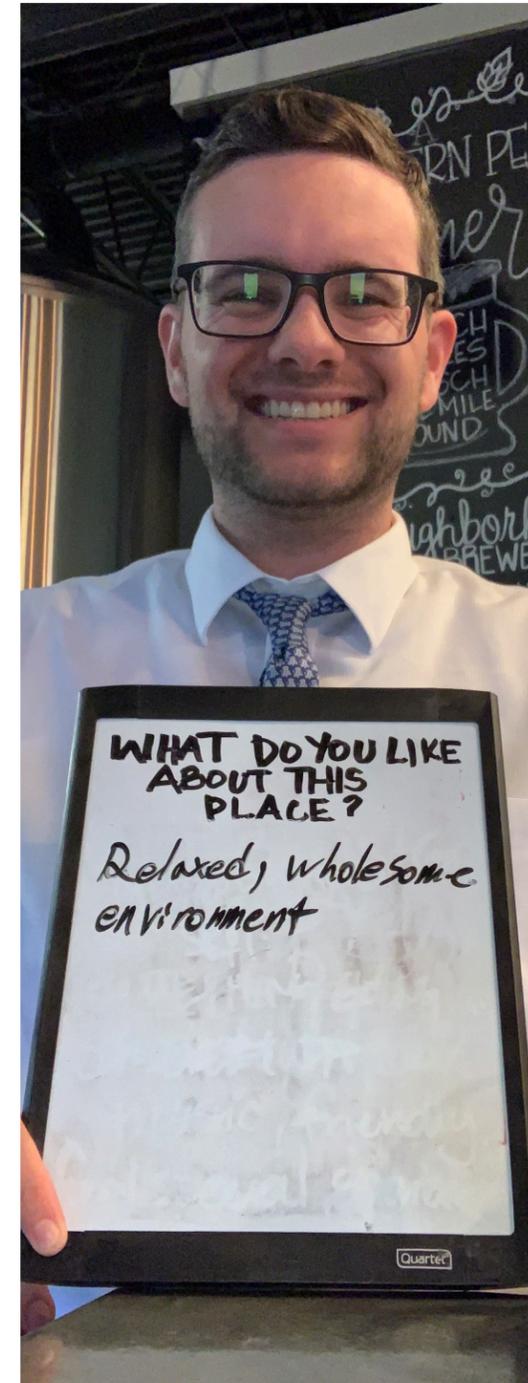
9.1 Code Recommendations

In general, front and side setbacks, building heights, and the location of certain zoning districts should be revisited to ensure that what is codified reflects the existing character that the town is trying to build upon—balanced with the need for economic development and placemaking opportunities. One example to note specifically is the plan's proposed location of a future boutique hotel at the northeast intersection of NC 55 and S. Salem Street. This business type is not currently permitted based on B1 zoning district standards.

In addition, there is an opportunity to unify certain districts based on small areas within the Small Town Character Overlay District.

A few specific considerations related to current code standards as they apply within the study area:

- **Consider increased heights stepped back off of Salem Street.** The addition of 1 – 2 stories of building density in the downtown area will improve its day-long and year-long vibrancy as well as increase the economic return. This however, should not encourage new buildings to overshadow historic ones. The use of an upper story recess on the frontage of 10 to 20 feet not only reduces this visual impact but also provides opportunities for private outdoor space such as patios and rooftop decks.
- **Permit housing and office throughout the downtown as a principal use – just not in the storefront.** Eliminate housing and office as permitted uses along the ground floors of buildings along Salem Street from Center to Chatham.
- **Eliminate or reduce multi-family setbacks along fronting streets (currently 20 ft).** Both townhome and multi-family buildings have a 20 ft minimum setback – equivalent to the length of a standard car. In walkable urban places, the reduction of this space improves development opportunities by increase the potential building envelope. Because street trees are expected between the sidewalk and the curb there would not be a need for tree plantings in the front yard. The reduction or elimination of these setbacks also increases design flexibility. In suburban areas, the focus is on the lushness of the landscaping whereas in urban areas, the focus is on the quality and interest of the architecture.
- **Eliminate Watershed and Flood Damage standards for the central business district.** Requiring full compliance with stormwater regulations in an area that is also generally 100% impervious is very difficult and expensive. Given that



**Ideas are easy.
Implementation is hard.**

**-Guy Kawasaki
American Marketing Specialist**

much of the area is developed today, the development of existing pervious areas would have a very small impact on the greater water quality elements. There are low-impact site-specific mitigation elements that can be helpful, but the sites in downtown should not be held to the same standard as those out in the greenfield suburbs. If anything, we recommend that a regional solution be considered to manage drainage in the basins on both sides of the RR tracks.

- **Ensure that ground level transparency is to a depth of at least 20 ft (to avoid shadowboxes).** The purpose of ground level transparency is not simply to break up a wall façade but to show human activity as an encouragement for walkability. To ensure the implementation of this goal, it is important to be very prescriptive about how to achieve it.
- **Eliminate parking requirements for the central business district.** Parking should be viewed as a public utility in the downtown. By eliminating this arbitrary standard, it will open up spaces for occupation and re-use and maximize the highest return for the community's investment.
- **Permit bed/breakfast and hotel/motel in B1.** Visitors often spend the most in a business district so the more that they can be co-located the greater the benefit.

Peer communities often have experienced similar issues related to the evolution of their downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, so it is fruitful to learn from them as much as possible. A few examples are found below:

Commercial Maintenance Ordinance: Many communities, including Albemarle, NC, have instituted commercial maintenance ordinances in their downtown districts to combat the common problem of derelict buildings detracting from the area's success. While most buildings in Apex are well-maintained, this type of ordinance provides another tool to ensure that all property owners are contributing to the care and quality of the downtown.

Downtown Design Guidelines: Many communities have instituted downtown design guidelines that provide guidance to owners and tenants. Facade treatment, windows, entries, color, rooftop terraces, outdoor dining, furniture, parking, signage, lighting and landscaping are just a few of the items generally found in design guidelines. These are meant to be requirements. Separately adopted design guidelines that address architectural design are generally left to some type of discretionary review – often by an appointed Design Review Board or a well-educated Planning Board.

Key Recommendations

- **9A-Modify front and side setbacks, building heights, parking, and the location of certain zoning districts to ensure the Unified Development Ordinance allows for the desired character of downtown.**

9.2 Financing & Incentives

The Town of Apex will need to tackle the implementation of the plan recommendations as funding allows and by utilizing creative financing and incentive packages. The implementation matrix in this chapter (Section 9.5) outlines whether a key recommendation is a capital or operating expenditure, or will be taken care of with private or non-city funding.

9.2.1 Downtown Development Incentives

The Town of Apex offers incentive options for businesses and entrepreneurs currently that include:

Town of Apex Development & Investment Grant

<https://www.apexnc.org/902/Incentive-Policy>

Facade Improvement Grant Program

<https://www.apexnc.org/DocumentCenter/View/439/Facade-Grant-Application-PDF?bidId=>

The biggest additional incentives the Town of Apex can provide to potential businesses are shared parking and a great public realm. Another incentive utilized by a similar community to consider is:

CDBG Small Business Loan: The City of Morganton, NC, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Business Loan Program (SBLP) is a competitive program offering startup or expansion opportunities within the city limits for loan funds up to \$75,000. All businesses requesting funds between \$5,000 and \$30,000 must create at least one new job that meets the HUD income criteria. Businesses requesting greater than \$30,000 must be able to create a minimum of 10 new full time job positions within 1 year of funding, with 51% for individuals who fall within HUD Low to Moderate Income and Household Income criteria.

9.2.2 Logistical Strategies

The new downtown coordinator position will be a leader for these logistical strategies. Their role as the key intermediary for diplomatic relations between the town and the broker community will be vital.

Online Presence of Local Businesses

Local businesses should take ownership of their online profile and presence. Most visitors to downtown pull out their smart phones to see what the available offerings are. If businesses have not taken ownership of their profile, they may not even show up on the map. By conducting this simple audit of ensuring businesses are online, the area appears as a cohesive district of shops and restaurants. Business owners should also diligently assess online reviews so customer service can be improved whenever possible.

Broker Tours

Coordinate a series of broker awareness lunches to reach out to the commercial and residential brokerage communities of Raleigh. These events should provide lunch and a walking tour of possible spaces for retail and restaurants. The goal is to create a buzz among those that represent possible retailers and restaurateurs that are seeking new or expanded locations. Every participant should be provided with a full marketing package and specific information on available space. These events should be conducted in the spring and the fall to take advantage of the nice temperatures and the full bloom of the landscaping.

Retail Attraction Committee

A Retail Attraction Committee can be tasked with developing and refining top retail categories to prospect and visit 'like districts' such as Chapel Hill, Holly Springs, Cary, and Fuquay-Varina. Regular meetings (monthly or quarterly) can be scheduled for the committee to discuss prospects before engaging in an active pursuit. Prospects should meet the criteria of being able to offer retail that meets local demand (e.g., young professionals, families, and baby boomers) and visitor demand. Committee members should be responsible for reaching out directly to prospective business owners with a marketing package for downtown Apex that describes local customers and market demand, illustrates available spaces within the core, and lists available resources and incentives for new businesses.

The information and responses collected by committee members would then be maintained in a common prospect database with business contact information, broker contact information, lifestyle/price point of business, square footage required by business, desired rent, locations of other businesses and strength of prospect. This will enable the committee to keep track of when to follow-up with prospects and be persistent.

Tenant Mix Resource

As discussed in Chapter 4, curating the tenant mix will be an important piece of the story to get right. Larisa Ortiz, this plan's retail specialist, authored an extremely useful document for doing just that:

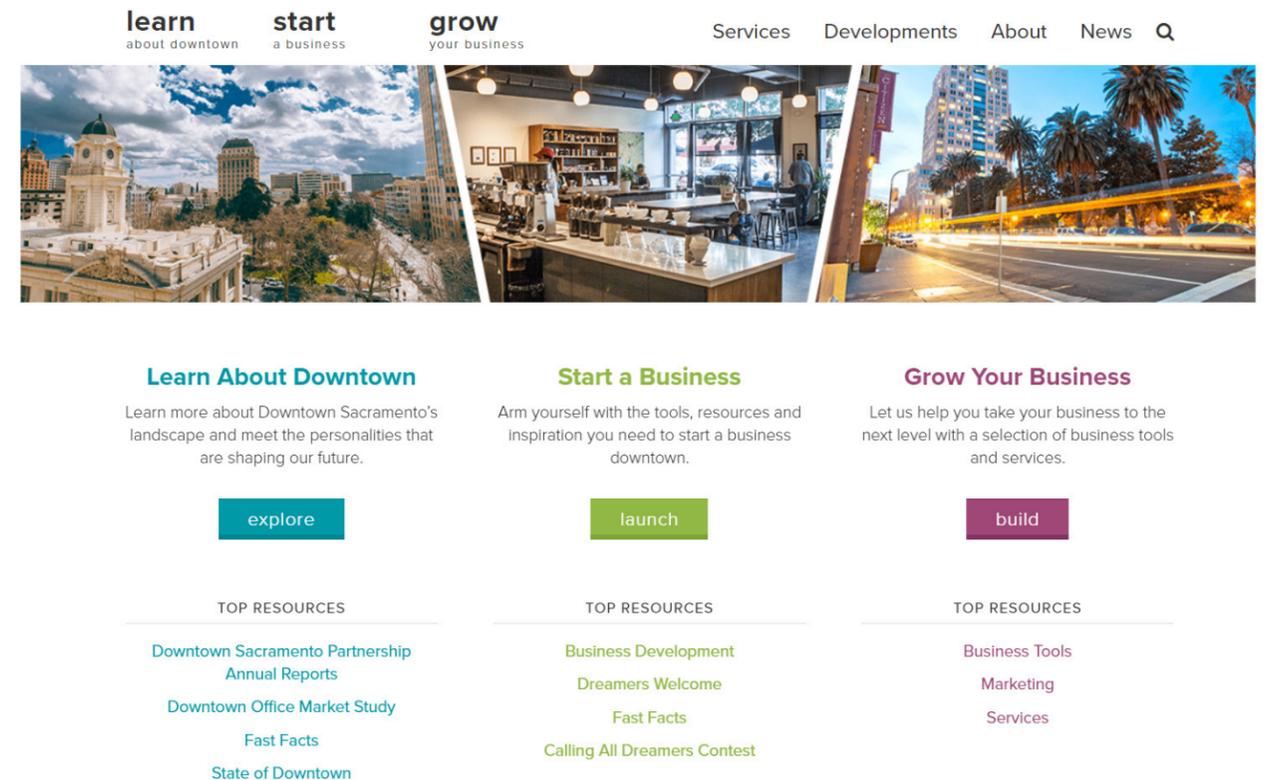
"Improving Tenant Mix", a step-by-step guide for retail attraction by commercial district managers
<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/economicDevelopment/OISI/ICSC-Guide-for-Improving-Tenant-Mix.pdf>

Call for Businesses

While the Town of Apex does have a section on its website dedicated to "How to Start a Business in Apex", the page should be enhanced to include a 'Call for Businesses' tab. This page should include information for retailers and businesses looking to relocate or start a new business in downtown Apex related to market data and demographics from Chapters 4 and 5. The goal is for prospective retailers to be better aware of the market demand and potential customers in the area.

The page should also specify the downtown's strategic position and encourage businesses in key retail categories that support Downtown Apex's character and desire to be the "peak of good living"

Example of a Call for Businesses website (Image Credit: downtownsac.org)



9.2.3 Grants & Programs

Other North Carolina communities have developed grants and programs to promote investment in their downtown areas. The funding for these is often appropriated through the city's budget. The following are incentives that should be explored as additions to the current Apex offerings:

Downtown Business Marketing Grant (Monroe, NC): The ultimate goal of creating downtown as a destination is directly tied to the marketing campaigns potential visitors and residents see. This grant is seen as a co-op marketing and advertising program that provides a 50-50 matching grant to new businesses for up to 50% reimbursement of their marketing budget.

Residential Investment Grant (Monroe, NC):

As noted throughout this document, Apex needs to diversify and add housing in downtown. While often smaller in number, upper story lofts are popular but often complicated by the upgrades related to the building code. This grant assists with the development of residential units in the upper levels of downtown buildings up to \$20 per \$100 (up to 20%) of the assessed tax value.

Public Utility Grant (Benson, NC): Often, setting up new utility services and the energy bills in older, less efficient buildings have higher costs for new business owners. This grant reimburses 25% of each month's utility bill for the period of one year.

Key Recommendations

- 9B-Audit local businesses to ensure they are taking ownership of their online presence and monitoring patron reviews. Support their digital marketing on platforms such as Google Maps, Facebook, Instagram, Yelp, and TripAdvisor by providing technical assistance (as needed) to input accurate and updated business information on these various platforms.
- 9C-Expand the toolbox of local grants, programs and incentives available through city budget appropriations.
- 9D-Schedule a commercial broker tour of downtown with representation from the entire Raleigh region.
- 9E-Initiate a retail attraction committee whose responsibilities include developing a prospect database.
- 9F-Create a full marketing package for the downtown district that includes a "Call for Business" web page as a retail attraction tool.



▲ New downtown businesses often need assistance in marketing themselves; downtown business marketing grants are one way the town can assist these entrepreneurs

9.2.4 Tax Incentives

While state and federal incentives have been available for several decades, many cities are finding that providing local incentives can bridge the gap of market viability for complicated projects.

Existing State & Federal Incentives

Federal Tax Credits: Since 1976, the federal government has offered a federal income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic structures. Today, this credit consists of a 20% credit on income-producing historic properties. Rental housing development also qualifies for several different programs including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Tax-Exempt Bonds, Workforce Housing Loan Program, and Rental Production Program Loans. To learn more, visit <https://www.nchfa.com/rental-housing-partners/rental-developers/find-rental-development-financing-options>.

State Tax Credits: For those rehabilitation projects that qualify for and obtain federal tax credits, North Carolina also provides a 20% state tax credit. This gives a combined 40% credit against eligible project costs for income-producing projects. North Carolina also provides a 30% credit for the rehabilitation of non-income producing historic properties, including private residences.

Suggested Local Incentives

Local Tax Credits: To build on the current Development & Investment program, the town should consider expanding these tax incentives to housing developers in the downtown as well.

Key Recommendation

- 9G-In addition to state and federal tax credits, expand the local development and investment program to include local tax incentives for housing projects.



▲ A combination of incentives, strategies, and grants will promote the advancement of downtown and allow the public and private sectors to work hand-in-hand along the journey.

Case Study: Pop-Up Providence

Article Credit: Greater City Providence, an organization that promotes the growth and development of the Greater Providence, Rhode Island

What is PopUp Providence?

PopUp Providence is an award-winning, urban place-making program that introduces interactive, artistic, and cultural displays and interventions throughout the City's 25 neighborhoods.

The program supports quick, temporary, and inexpensive interventions that engage residents, workers, and visitors of all ages, and enliven the city.

How is PopUp Providence funded?

The Providence Redevelopment Agency dedicated \$150,000 for the program, in October 2013, in the amount of \$50,000/year, for a period three years (2013-2015).

What qualifies as a PopUp?

Installations must fall within one of the following categories:

PopUp PLAYSACE: Indoor or outdoor, recreation or activity-based, projects that promote physical interaction.

PopUp PARKLET: On-street parking spaces that are repurposed for public space.

PopUp ART: A display of any artistic medium that is appropriate for a public setting, and directly responds to the community in which it is located.

PopUp SHOP: Vacant storefronts that are repurposed for community, retail or commercial purposes.

PopUp AMENITY: Enhancements to the public realm, for exclusive use by the public (e.g., seating, landscaping, bicycle parking, lighting).

Who can apply for this program?

Any member of the public, including individuals, arts groups, neighborhood associations, institutions, community groups and non-profits can apply. Applicants must be 18 years of age or older at the time the application is submitted.

What are the general requirements of the program?

- Installations must be created for use and enjoyment by all members of the public, and must remain publicly-accessible at all times.
- Installations must relate to the neighborhood, serve and reflect the community, and activate and enhance the site.
- Applicants must construct and install the project within 3 months of receiving grant award.
- Applicants must maintain the project in a state of good repair.
- Applicants must operate the project, if operation is required.
- Applicant is responsible for at least 20% of total project costs. The PRA will provide up to 80% of project costs, not to exceed \$10,000 per project.
- Applicants must obtain Comprehensive General Liability insurance of \$1,000,000.

9.3 Events & Programming

Smaller, more frequent events are what keep a community engaged. Events like the Farmers Market tap into that engagement and provide a predictability of programming that encourages frequent visitation. As discussed in Chapter 4, downtown retail's success is now built on the experience more so than the products. Working with local retailers and restaurateurs to encourage experiential moments or events is a key programming element of the plan.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, building regular ambient and impulse programming into the newly created public spaces downtown will be a strategy that can emerge as these spaces are being transformed. Depot Plaza, Salem Street, and the alleyways present ideal opportunities to scatter these regular events and incite vibrancy--whether it is a busker or a street artist, the goal is to sometimes have the unexpected show up in downtown spaces.

The design of Depot Plaza includes a clearly defined stage area elevated above the space and offers a variety of programming opportunities. These may include: Drama at the Depot (movie night), Pumpkins on the Plaza (pumpkin carving contest, pumpkin recipe contest, pumpkin patch), and Depot Dog Days (encourage one night a month for residents to bring their dogs downtown on a leash for things like "paint your pet"). Design elements such as the interactive water feature will naturally activate the space on a regular basis. Also, particularly for children, design flexibility will allow the city to provide seasonal programming such as a small ice rink.

To build on those ideas, the plan cites several opportunities to rethink the spaces in between—the alleys, city streets, and even parking spaces. Targeted programming in these often leftover areas will add another layer of energy and expand diversity by appealing to groups that do not always attend the larger town-wide events.

Communities are also exploring the idea of event grant funding to support downtown vitality while alleviating some of the logistical work to other city organizations. Applicants typically apply in annual cycles to enhance or expand events that promote downtown as a destination. The pool of money available for this is often related to accommodations tax funding.

Key Recommendations

- 9H-Utilize the streets and alleys as key people spaces for programming.
- 9I-Offer event grant funding to support downtown vitality by non-city organizations.

Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.

– Vincent Van Gogh



Building upon the successful Chamber event known as Savor Apex, the entirety of Salem Street would present a wonderful opportunity in the future for an outdoor street dinner with multiple restaurants contributing various courses. Outdoor street dinner, Cullman, Alabama (Image Credit: visitcullman.org)

9.4 Top 10 Projects

The Top 10 Projects are shown in the order of priority as set by the public polling during the final presentation. Each project is also a **Key Recommendation** of the plan and can be found in the implementation matrix of this chapter (Section 9.5).

1

Transform the Salem streetscape

The Path Forward

The Salem Street streetscape is **THE** top priority according to the community. The extent of the project should be from Chatham Street to Center Street which is approximately 750 linear feet. A project of this magnitude does take time to execute from detailed concepts/schematics through construction documents/bidding, and of course, the actual implementation of the streetscape. The investment in the public realm of Salem Street is a necessary and fruitful endeavor as the return on investment should be ten-fold. This project will enhance not just the physical walkability of the core but also the economic vitality of the entire town.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Create planning level estimates for all FOUR options and make budget appropriations for the project.
- ☑ Continue to encourage the addition of temporary parklets along Salem Street as an interim form of enhancement to the public realm. The recommended tactical urbanism committee should be given a budget appropriation to work that can be contributed to by local organizations and sponsors. Several of the plans presented would be dramatic changes to the current Salem Street environment; therefore, testing ideas will be a vital step in the public education aspect of the future project. Public engagement does not have to stop with master planning; engaging the community must continue into the implementation phase of the project.
- ☑ Hire a design firm to lead the streetscape plan development and work with the community to create the final preferred concept, schematic, and construction drawings. While public input to date does indicate a desire to remove parking from Salem Street, the streetscape plan project will need to go through conceptual, schematic, and final design phases **BEFORE** a preferred direction can be found and executed. **Again, this plan encourages testing ideas in the interim as elements of the new active parking management plan are executed and relieve the pressure on the Salem Street spaces.**
- ☑ Phase construction strategically to minimally disrupt retail and restaurant owners. Openly communicate early in the process anticipated construction schedules and provide updates throughout the process.



2

Energize the alleys... Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station

The Path Forward

As discussed, several key alleyways are not currently meeting their potential as people places. Shifting the way the community sees these areas will take some time and education. The “back door” nature of these spaces lends itself to taking some risks from a design standpoint. These alleys are just waiting to test the comfort level of quirky and funky within this traditional downtown.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Encourage Public Works to coordinate with businesses and design a consolidated trash/dumpster area in the alleys.
- ☑ Utilize the newly formed tactical urbanism committee to begin creating a plan of action for each alley. This initial plan should include potential community partners/sponsors for the spaces.
- ☑ Conduct a meeting with all property owners, businesses, and the town to discuss logistics of the alleys including design, ownership, purchase of materials, maintenance, and programming. These items should be established early in the process and the public-private partnership needs to be detailed and entered into by all parties.
- ☑ Encourage the public art committee to identify and commission murals in the alleys (including on the ground plane) by working with building owners.



3

Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown

The Path Forward

The conversion of this space from a parking lot into the premier public space downtown will have quite an impact on the community. The project will need to, at a minimum, coincide with an offset solution of the 21 parking spaces within the three-minute walk zone. The details of the final design need to include a durable, simple ground plane that has interesting (non-slip) surfaces and eliminates curbs wherever possible. A balance of sun and shade areas needs careful evaluation along with a simple plant palette that does not include obtrusive or overgrown shrubbery. The design should consider lighting of various levels including ambient lighting, and furnishings should be carefully selected to be movable, and even interactive. The splash pad area should incorporate unique history moments, and the historic depot and caboose need to be carefully utilized as part of the overall plan. Self-directed activities and the materials they require should be factored in to the overall budget along with public art. Access to utilities for vendors must be considered early in the process to ensure they are seamlessly, and beautifully, designed. This includes accommodations for the annual Christmas tree lighting and outdoor concerts.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Parking recommendations will need to coincide with moving this plan forward; therefore, utilize the tactical interventions discussed in Section 8.7.4 to begin a near-term shift in how people utilize and see this space. The plan shares nearly 20 ideas the community could execute tomorrow!
- ☑ Take this time to evaluate the depot structure and caboose to identify any necessary improvements needed for an increased use by the public (including restrooms).
- ☑ Explore the addition of a depot building tenant (whether permanent or pop-up) that activates the use of the area in the interim.
- ☑ Create planning level estimates, and make budget appropriations for the project.
- ☑ Hire a design firm to lead the master plan development and work with the community to create the concept, schematic, and construction drawings.
- ☑ Openly communicate early in the process an anticipated construction schedule and provide updates throughout construction.
- ☑ Construct Depot Plaza and strategically program the new public space.



4

Add a net gain of 200 public parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, with a minimum of 100 within a 3-minute walk

The Path Forward

As outlined in Chapter 6, the solutions to parking in downtown Apex are varied and complex. Parking management is not just about the physical addition of more parking spaces. While all strategies should be implemented over time, the growth illustrated through this master plan will benefit from a net gain of public parking spaces in close proximity to the heart of Salem Street. The plan sets a goal of 200 spaces within a 5-minute walk, with a minimum of 100 new spaces within a 3-minute walk. The team recommends combining both off-street and on-street parking additions to reach this goal.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Establish leased parking agreements with private parking owners in the downtown core to create a shared parking environment.
- ☑ Provide clear wayfinding signage for all public parking areas.
- ☑ Meet with homeowners and property owners along the areas considered for on-street parking in the study area. Discuss the benefits of on-street parking including making their neighborhoods more walkable and bikable.
- ☑ Restripe existing asphalt on Center, Chatham, Mason, Saunders, and N. Salem with on-street parking. (potential net gain of 102 spaces) *(Note: Obviously, the ideal time to restripe these streets would be during planned resurfacing of the roadways. However, in the interim, the town could test the striping with less permanent methods. First, place cones to define the new travel lane areas. After a few weeks, stripe the parking using temporary paint.)*
- ☑ Create planning level cost estimates for the Templeton Street surface lot, and make budget appropriations for the project.
- ☑ Purchase additional property as appropriate to make the area yield the most efficient and logical configuration. (gravel lot could yield a net gain of 109 spaces)
- ☑ Hire a design firm to lead the parking lot plan development and work with the community to create the concept, schematic, and construction drawings.
- ☑ Openly communicate early in the process an anticipated construction schedule and provide updates throughout the process.
- ☑ Phase construction strategically to minimally disrupt parking in downtown.
- ☑ Construct the new Templeton Street surface parking lot, and install appropriate wayfinding signage to guide residents and visitors to its location.
- ☑ Work towards an app-based parking occupancy program that show real-time availability of parking spaces (i.e. Passport app).



5 Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries and a boutique hotel to Salem Street

The Path Forward

Retention and recruitment of new tenants for downtown will have a dedicated champion in the form of a newly hired downtown coordinator. Their role will include building relationships with both small business owners and the broker community which will help curate the appropriate mix in the downtown district. Three local breweries have shown great interest in finding a location downtown, whether independently or co-locating in a tap room space. The overwhelming response related to restaurant offerings was to attract businesses that offer breakfast and brunch options. People often confuse the attraction of similar offerings as a detriment to their business, when in fact, the opposite is true. More options create a synergy and promotes the area as a destination for food and beverage, thus, pulling from a much wider trade area. As mentioned in the goals, small towns should strive for unique, one-of-a-kind offerings.

The lodging equation in downtown should not be solved with simply another large hotel on Highway 55, US 64, or US 1. Smaller, boutique style hotels and bed and breakfasts in walkable settings are highly desirable. A variety of options will help accommodate the wide spectrum of visitors Apex sees on an annual basis—from the retired couple seeking a history lesson to millennials following the craft brew scene. The plan gives one physical option for a potential boutique hotel location, but the overriding point is to locate a site within the five-minute walk zone of downtown and shop it to developers.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Educate the new downtown coordinator in current demographic preferences and public input related to desirable businesses.
- ☑ Tap into the local network of breweries and restaurateurs to begin accommodating their space needs in downtown locations. Relationship building is **KEY!**



Case Study: Hotel Florence, Florence, South Carolina

Opening in 2013, Hotel Florence was the culmination of a two-year journey that began with five local businessmen having a vision to spur revitalization of their derelict downtown. The City of Florence and other partners were able to assist Downtown Hospitality, Inc. to renovate three historic buildings and create a 49 room boutique hotel. This catalyst was the beginning of new investment in downtown living, restaurants and retail.

- ☑ Seek successful restaurateurs looking to open second locations or spin-offs of current restaurants in nearby comparative/competitive districts.
- ☑ Work with building owners to allow experimental pop-up restaurants in vacant locations.
- ☑ Identify and shop potential boutique hotel sites along Salem Street to hotel developers. Ensure high quality building design and ground level retail/restaurant space.
- ☑ Utilize the strategies outlined in 9.2.

6 Re-envision the fire station site as a civic and mixed-use development

The Path Forward

The fire station on Salem Street has been a polarizing issue for the community with some feeling strongly the department should stay downtown, while others adamantly contend they should leave the core. The plan has set the stage for a compromise that is mutually beneficial. The site, at one-third of an acre, would be able to accommodate a two-bay fire station with upper floor living quarters along with a mixed use building. The wide existing apron can be maintained for fire truck use and serves as a generous urban sidewalk for the active ground floor use in the remainder of the building. Office space on the second level would be most appropriate as the twenty-four hour nature of the station would make upper story living not ideal.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Frame the public-private partnership of this arrangement in great detail up front. As a publicly owned property, the town can establish its development criteria/conditions and issue a Request for Information to the development community.
- ☑ Embark on a detailed design study of the fire station site by hiring a consultant team consisting of not only specialists in fire station design but also mixed use building design.
- ☑ Ensure the final design is beneficial for both the fire department and the downtown merchant environment.
- ☑ Incorporate public art into the design of the building.



7 Install wayfinding signage in and around Downtown based on a new branding campaign



The Path Forward

Branding is a calling card for a community conveyed through both digital and physical applications. Wayfinding signage is a critical component to telling the story of Apex—not just the locational information, but also the unique aspects of this place. Wayfinding must address both vehicular level and pedestrian level signage and should not be limited to directional navigation. A vast majority of the population walk around with their smart phones, and finding ways to educate those people on what makes Apex special is a wonderful opportunity. Quick Response (QR) code technology can be incorporated into wayfinding signage, leading people to a website with more information.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Conduct a branding/marketing study for the Town of Apex and ensure sub-areas like downtown have a toolbox of branding graphics similar in style but unique to the core. Utilize this brand in all wayfinding applications.
- ☑ Create a thorough wayfinding identification process in and around downtown with a matrix of signage typologies.
- ☑ Expand wayfinding to include not just directional signage but also educational signage to begin telling the story of downtown's history. Utilize QR code technology where applicable.
- ☑ Commission the signage fabrication and installation.

8 Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center



The Path Forward

The Thompson-Utley-Fletcher-Tunstall House was built in 1872 and currently needs extensive repairs. The town is committed to revitalizing the National Register property that sits at the “Peak of the Peak”. The turn-of-the-century farmhouse and grounds hold a great deal of Apex history that is not understood or appreciated by all today. The plan’s vision includes the creation of a rentable venue capable of hosting a range of event types and sizes. The grounds themselves need to be utilized as a community space even on non-event days. The concept plan illustrates community and pollinator gardens along with the enhancement of the strollway with respites of shade offered in pergola covered swings. The Tunstall House is a treasure which offers a unique pastoral connection between the civic campus and the downtown area. Promoting the strollway as a valuable pedestrian passageway will be critical to this area’s utilization.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Create a planning level cost estimate for the renovation of the home and grounds.
- ☑ Tackle the creation of the community gardens and the enhancement of the strollway experience first. Work with local partners, such as the Apex Garden Club and NC State Extension, to find funding opportunities. A comprehensive list of opportunities can be found here: <https://nccommunitygardens.ces.ncsu.edu/nccommunitygardens-funding/>. Local Eagle Scout candidates could help construct the pergolas and swings for the strollway, and a memorial campaign for planting shade trees along the sidewalk would greatly enhance the experience.
- ☑ Set aside capital funding each year to begin reaching the estimated goal.
- ☑ Establish a sponsorship campaign for the property’s renovation by kicking off the fundraising with a dinner gala on the grounds under a white tent. Money raised through ticket sales will begin the momentum of renovating the home and grounds.
- ☑ Continue the momentum with a social media campaign and GoFund Me page for the renovation.
- ☑ Seek local, regional, and national foundation funding related to historic preservation.

9

Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multi-modal, iconic, gateway feature

The Path Forward

The intersection of NC 55 and S. Salem Street is a major gateway to downtown, and in its current state, the four corners do not provide a positive impression of the area. GoTriangle, the regional transit authority, has a planned “enhanced transfer station” related to future regional bus routes at this intersection’s southwest corner. The station would essentially be a bus shelter as currently planned. This plan illustrates the transfer station as a true multi-modal transit center for the Town of Apex. Shifting trends in how our country is moving around its urban areas have many communities considering multi-modal centers. These locations offer not only regional bus connectivity, but they can also be home to emerging mobility technology such as autonomous shuttles, bike-share programs, and electric scooters.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Bring all the players (local, regional, state) to the table to have a discussion about the shift in vision to a more comprehensive mobility approach. Ensure the Apex Transit Advisory Committee is at the table, and strive to align timeline strategies related to the regional transit coming along with the NC 55 widening project.
- ☑ Ensure the intersection of NC 55 and Salem Street is a high quality intersection with bicycle detection loops, pedestrian-scaled lighting and wayfinding signage, high visibility crosswalks, and mast arms.
- ☑ Host a Lunch & Learn with Smart Mobility experts to understand emerging technology, trends, and even pilot programs related to autonomous shuttles.
- ☑ Engage a team of designers to create a conceptual vision for the multi-modal transit center. Ensure the design incorporates opportunities for pop-up offerings (whether indoor or outdoor) riders may be interested in such as coffee, sandwiches, etc.
- ☑ Consider applying for and deploying a pilot autonomous shuttle for downtown.



10

Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of Downtown

The Path Forward

People are the key ingredient to vibrancy. The importance of quality housing within a walkable and bikable distance to the heart of Salem Street cannot be overstated. Over 65% of the town’s trending demographics are interested in urban living in all of its various formats. From upper story lofts to accessory dwelling units, identifying and working with the development community to bring the housing to the market will help downtown not just survive, but thrive. As previously mentioned, over 300 units were identified within a five-minute walk of downtown, and over 850 units were identified in total within a twenty-minute walk of the core. The plan encourages the construction of 100 units within a ten-minute walk of downtown within the first five years of the plan’s adoption.

Making it Happen

- ☑ Permit accessory dwelling units throughout downtown, and provide public education to encourage their construction.
- ☑ Encourage the creation of upper story living in existing downtown buildings through education of upfit requirements and local tax incentives.
- ☑ Identify opportunities for infill construction and lot consolidation that encourage housing construction.
- ☑ Conduct an Affordable Housing Action Plan and begin securing options or purchasing scattered sites for use as below-market-rate/workforce housing.
- ☑ Consider incentives to facilitate permitting (e.g., streamlined schedules, reduced permit or tap fees).



9.5 Implementation Matrix

In order for the vision and recommendations expressed in this plan to move forward, specific key recommendations will need to be implemented by the Town of Apex and its partners. Many of the recommendations seek to provide the conditions under which the vision can be achieved, by way of providing sensible land use regulation, necessary public investments, the development of appropriate programs and policies, encouraging catalyst projects, and other actions.

The items in the table are prioritized based on the legend noted at the right. The funding is listed as an order of magnitude as way to evaluate the relative costs of one action over another. As a means of attempting to quantify these relative costs over a twenty year period, the table below summarizes an estimated range of cost values that may be used.

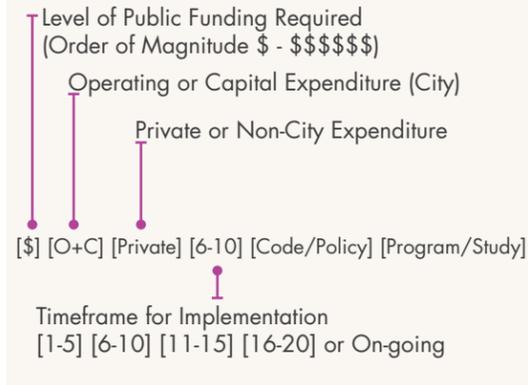
Order of Magnitude	Estimated Cost Range
\$	\$1 - \$50,000
\$\$	\$50,000 - \$250,000
\$\$\$	\$250,000 - \$1 million
\$\$\$\$	\$1 million - \$2 million
\$\$\$\$\$	\$2 million - \$5 million
\$\$\$\$\$\$	\$5 million+

The execution of the implementation steps will likely be phased and is subject to a variety of factors, which determine their timing. These include:

- The availability of personnel and financial resources necessary to implement specific proposals;
- Whether an implementation step is a necessary precursor to or component of the rational evaluation of a new development project;
- The interdependence of the various implementation tasks, in particular, the degree to which implementing one item is dependent upon the successful completion of another item; and,
- The relative severity of the challenge which a particular implementation task is designed to remedy.
- The ability to leverage an opportunity to move a specific project forward that may not otherwise be prioritized.

In view of these factors, it is not possible to put forward a precise timetable for the various implementation items. The priority for implementation will be listed by the period in which items should be completed. Year 1-5 items and certain on-going items are the highest priority while Year 6-20+ projects could be completed as resources allow.

Key Recommendations Table Legend



= Top 10 Project

Key Recommendation

9J-Perform annual reviews to assess progress related to the items in the plan's implementation matrix with staff, council, and ADBA representatives.

Reference Number	Project/Task	Page Number	Level of Public Funding Required	Operating or Capital Expenditure	Private or Non-City Expenditure	On-going	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20	Year 20+	Code/Policy	Program/Study
4 Retail Market Conditions & Strategies													
4A	Improve the public realm for retail by adding interim parklets along Salem Street to allow for more spillover retail/dining experiences.	72	\$	O+C	Public/Private		X						
4B	Strengthen downtown Apex as a "theme/festival" destination district by adding 60-70,000 square feet of space to create 150,000 square feet total, which will increase the capture rate and grow the trade area by connecting the disconnected micro-climates with new offerings.	72	\$\$\$\$\$\$	O+C	Public/Private		X	X					
4C	Ensure the appropriate tenant mix by aligning retail recruitment efforts with demographics/demand and leakage opportunities.	72	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
4D	Develop communication materials based on a new downtown brand to share market information and the overall downtown investment strategy with potential investors and tenants.	72	\$	O			X						
4E	Program spaces with ambient entertainment to encourage greater visitation to downtown on non-event days.	72	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
4F	Promote and program events that drive retail sales and are done in collaboration with merchants and drive people into stores rather than keep them outside of stores.	72	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X



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6 Parking Conditions & Strategies													
6A	Prioritize and invest in consistency and character of the Apex streetscapes.	101	\$\$\$\$\$	C			X	X					
6B	Improve sidewalk and crosswalk conditions within the core of downtown.	101	\$\$\$	C			X						
6C	Improve consistency of parking signage and wayfinding in and around downtown.	101	\$	C			X						
6D	Review current parking enforcement program including current time-limited locations and compare with high-demand parking utilization counts.	102	\$	O			X						X
6E	Conduct data collection for a parking turnover analysis (length of stay) for high-demand parking areas.	102	\$	O		X							X
6F	Allow overnight parking in the downtown core to make downtown residential viable and support safe travel of patrons who choose to ride-share home.	102	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
6G	Work with the new Downtown Development Coordinator and Downtown Business Association on a strategy to increase turnover for on-street locations.	102	\$	O			X						X
6H	Create a Downtown Ambassador's program for (polite) enforcement efforts.	102	\$	O			X						X
6I	Initiate a no cost warning ticket for first-time 'violators'.	102	\$	O			X						X
6J	Add a net gain of 200 public parking spaces within a 5-minute walk, with a minimum of 100 within a 3-minute walk.	102	\$\$\$	C			X						
6K	Establish leased parking agreements with private parking owners.	103	\$	O	Public/Private			X					
6L	Create a valet program for evenings and weekends.	103	\$	O	Public/Private		X						X
6M	Conduct a preliminary engineering feasibility study for a potential parking deck.	103	\$	C			X						X
6N	Consider establishing hourly paid parking along Salem Street.	103	\$	O				X					X

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6O	Incorporate a bike-share program with stations around key destinations in downtown.	103	\$	C			X						X
6P	Balance demand more evenly by (a) encouraging turnover in lots that reach 85% occupancy, and (b) allowing longer-term parking in lots that were below 60% occupied.	105	\$	O			X						X
6Q	Prepare for national smart mobility trends by reaching out to peer communities, attending national or regional conference sessions, planning studies aimed at feasibility-level analysis, and continually reaching out to the citizens of Apex for involvement and guidance.	106	\$	O			X						X
6R	Evaluate all emerging technology packages and select an app-based parking occupancy system for the Town of Apex's public parking areas.	106	\$\$\$	C			X						X
7 Development Conditions & Strategies													
7A	Work with developers to create neighborhoods that mix housing typologies in a range of price points and also provide common open space.	115	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
7B	Adopt an affordable housing action plan and seek guidance from peer communities in North Carolina, such as Davidson, to understand their approach to affordable/workforce housing.	115	\$\$	O			X						X
7C	Encourage the active reuse of historic structures with businesses that add vibrancy to Salem Street.	117	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
7D	Attract a boutique hotel to downtown Apex to provide an alternative hospitality option within walking distance of the core.	117	\$	O	Public/Private			X					
7E	Promote sensitive infill of housing and commercial in the Justice Heights neighborhood.	117	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
7F	Direct incremental infill within the downtown core of both mixed use and all forms of urban housing.	118	\$	O	Public/Private		X	X					

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7G	Require new development to build quality street network connections based on an overall connectivity vision.	120	\$	O	Public/Private	X						X	
7H	Discourage outparcel development that functions independently and encourage phased infill that shares parking and access while addressing the streets.	120	\$	O	Public/Private	X						X	
8 Key Goals													
8A	Transform the Salem streetscape.	126	\$\$\$\$\$	O+C			X						
8B	Energize the alleys...Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station.	137	\$\$\$		Private		X						
8C	Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries and a boutique hotel to Salem Street.	139	\$	O	Public/Private		X						
8D	Recruit and form relationships with developers familiar with towns like Apex to implement urban housing in downtown.	142	\$	O	Public/Private	X							
8E	Work to meet demand for downtown housing and improve the housing stock through institutional partnerships.	142	\$\$	O+C	Public/Private	X							X
8F	Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of downtown	142	\$	O	Public/Private		X	X					
8G	Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown.	146	\$\$\$\$	C	Public/Private		X	X					
8H	Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multi-modal, iconic, gateway feature.	148	\$\$\$\$\$\$	C				X					
8I	Install wayfinding and gateway signage in and around downtown based on a new branding campaign.	149	\$	C			X						X
8J	Attract local breweries downtown and encourage co-location.	150	\$	O	Public/Private		X						
8K	Work with local and regional artists to implement public art projects along Salem Street that honor its history and vision for the future.	154	\$	C	Public/Private		X						
8L	Host a mural competition to generate excitement for public art downtown.	154	\$	O	Public/Private		X						X
8M	Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center	157	\$\$\$	O+C	Public/Private	X							

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8N	Re-envision the fire station site as a civic and mixed-use development.	158	\$\$\$\$\$\$	C	Public/Private		X						X
8O	Seek out and create a list of spaces around downtown that could use a little love; create a committee dedicated to tactical interventions in those spaces.	160	\$	O+C	Private	X							X
8P	Utilize available resources to ensure the community develops and operates in a way that protects the environment and promotes sustainability for future generations.	162	\$	O+C	Public/Private	X						X	X
9 Implementation													
9A	Modify front and side setbacks, building heights, parking, and the location of certain zoning districts to ensure the Unified Development Ordinance allows for the desired character of downtown.	167	\$	O			X						X
9B	Audit local businesses to ensure they are taking ownership of their online presence and monitoring patron reviews.	170	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X
9C	Expand the toolbox of local grants, programs and incentives available through city budget appropriations.	170	\$\$\$	O+C		X							X
9D	Schedule a commercial broker tour of downtown with representation from the entire Raleigh region.	170	\$	O	Public/Private		X						
9E	Initiate a retail attraction committee whose responsibilities include developing a prospect database.	170	\$	O	Public/Private		X						X
9F	Create a full marketing package for the downtown district that includes a "Call for Business" web page as a retail attraction tool.	170	\$\$	O			X						
9G	In addition to state and federal tax credits, expand the local development and investment program to include local tax incentives for housing projects.	171	\$\$\$	O+C		X							X
9H	Utilize the streets and alleys as key people spaces for programming.	173	\$	O	Public/Private	X							
9I	Offer event grant funding to support downtown vitality by non-city organizations.	173	\$\$	O+C	Public/Private	X							X
9J	Perform annual reviews to assess progress related to the items in the plan's implementation matrix with staff, council, and ADDBA representatives.	184	\$	O	Public/Private	X							X

9.6 HOW WE KNOW WE SUCCEEDED

1 Salem Street will be full of people —day and night.



2 Retail and restaurant rents will outperform office.



3 We've added 100 more housing units to the downtown area.



4 We've created a REAL parking problem.



5 People of all ages, ethnicities, and economic levels will be downtown.



6 Entrepreneurs will have opened 10 more businesses.



7 Friends and families will be playing and making memories in downtown.



8 Residents and visitors will know the story of downtown Apex.

9 People will reach downtown Apex by biking, walking, bus, and car.



10 Partnerships and old-fashioned hard work will have made it happen.



