



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

The Apex Downtown Master Plan and Parking Study (Downtown Plan) establishes a vision for the area inside of the Apex Peakway loop, addresses commercial and residential markets, identifies projects for place-making and public spaces, and recommends parking strategies. The Downtown Plan, as unanimously adopted by Town Council on December 17, 2019, is available at <https://www.apexnc.org/1318/Downtown-Plan>.

The Downtown Plan has been actively used to guide capital improvement projects, operations, private development, outreach, and strategies. While substantial work is underway, there is much more to be done. This brief document is intended to serve as a snapshot of progress made to date. The Executive Summary (page 13) and Chapter 9 (page 184) of the Downtown Plan include an implementation matrix summarizing all recommendations included in the document and recommending priorities for implementation. The table below is the first progress report on the status of implementation and corresponds with this matrix.

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
4A	Improve the public realm for retail by adding interim parklets along Salem Street to allow for more spillover retail/dining experiences.	72	Underway	Near	A parklet/streatory program was implemented and feedback was collected through surveys two times. A formal parklet/streatory program has been drafted but has been put on pause at this time. Parklets/streateries will be evaluated again at the end of Summer 2022. The design for the Salem Streetscape will incorporate space for outdoor gathering and dining as a permanent feature of the streetscape.
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	72	Underway	Near & Mid	The Highline Building is under construction and is consistent with Downtown Plan recommendations. The Tap Station has also opened since Downtown Plan adoption. Future efforts will address Fire Station No. 301 as an opportunity to continue the retail/restaurant experience. Funding is included in the adopted FY2023 budget for a Feasibility Study for this site. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) anticipates construction in fiscal year 2026 (subject to change).



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
	microclimates with new offerings.				
4C	Ensure the appropriate tenant mix by aligning retail recruitment efforts with demographics/demand and leakage opportunities.	72	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	As inquiries are received, staff vet requests for consistency with downtown goals, appropriate locations for their needs, and consistency with the Unified Development Ordinance. Local brokers are contacted on a regular basis to review portfolios for possible client placement downtown. The Economic Development Department is starting a Strategic Plan for the department. It is anticipated the plan will include further business strategies for downtown Apex.
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	No Action	Near	Progress on this task has not yet begun. It is anticipated that the Strategic Plan for the Economic Development Department will recommend future downtown economic development communications.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
4E	Program spaces with ambient entertainment to encourage greater visitation to downtown on non-event days.	72	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	The Public Art Committee has successfully begun a Sculpture Walk in downtown with the support of multiple Town departments. The Salem Streetscape design includes space for passive entertainment including corn hole and checkers. The Depot Plaza will create an additional space for future programming. Future alignment with staff roles in Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources will be needed to continue to move this forward. There is also a substantial private role in programming ambient entertainment downtown.
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	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	The Town has partnered to bring a variety of events to downtown to attract customers, such as: Small Business Saturday, Seasons on Salem, Bingo, and Scavenger Hunt in partnership with the Apex Chamber of Commerce and Whole Brain Escape. Economic Development is also partnering with individual businesses to leverage opportunities associated with larger events. This is an activity that will continue to remain in the department's work plan.
6A	Prioritize and invest in consistency and character of the Apex streetscapes.	101	Underway	Near & Mid	Concepts for the Salem Streetscape redesign have been approved and construction plan development is underway. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024-2025, but is subject to change.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
6B	Improve sidewalk and crosswalk conditions within the core of downtown.	101	Underway	Near	<p>New pedestrian facilities have been completed along Tingen Road and along a route from James Street to North Salem Street. Design is underway for additional pedestrian facilities along Hinton Street, Saunders Street, West Chatham Street, Ambergate Station, Hunter Street, Pate Street, Cash Street, Hillcrest Road, and Apex Peakway. The Rapid Flashing Beacon at Saunders Street was upgraded to add flashing on both sides. More information about projects completed and underway is available at: https://www.apexnc.org/371/Transportation-Projects. The 2020 Streets and Sidewalks Bond will fund pedestrian improvements across the railroad at Center Street and Chatham Street. These projects are anticipated in 2026. More information is available at: https://www.apexnc.org/1586/2021-Streets-and-Sidewalks-Bond.</p>
6C	Improve consistency of parking signage and wayfinding in and around downtown.	101	Underway	Near	<p>A town-wide Wayfinding Signage Program was completed in 2021-2022. The program includes designs, messages, locations, and specifications for wayfinding signs downtown. Phase I installation is anticipated in FY2023. Pedestrian kiosks with maps to parking and wayfinding signage to parking in downtown church lots will not be included in Phase I due to ongoing conversations with Apex Baptist Church and Apex Methodist Church regarding shared parking agreements. At this time, the Town does not have an agreement to support displaying these as public parking locations.</p>



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
6D	Review current parking enforcement program including current time-limited locations and compare with high-demand parking utilization counts.	102	Underway	Near	An updated parking inventory with length of stay analysis is underway as of May 2022 and will inform future recommendations regarding parking.
6E	Conduct data collection for a parking turnover analysis (length of stay) for high-demand parking areas.	102	Underway	N/A (Ongoing)	An updated parking inventory with length of stay analysis is underway as of May 2022 and will inform future recommendations regarding parking.
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	No Action	N/A (Ongoing)	No actions are currently planned regarding this recommendation. This may be considered in the future.
6G	Work with the Downtown & Small Business Development Coordinator and Downtown Business Association on a strategy to increase turnover for on-street locations.	102	No Action	Near	An updated parking inventory with length of stay analysis is underway as of May 2022 and will inform future recommendations regarding parking.
6H	Create a Downtown Ambassador's program for (polite) enforcement efforts.	102	No Action	Near	This task will be further considered once the Neighborhood & Community Connections Department is in place.
6I	Initiate a no cost warning ticket for first-time 'violators'.	102	No Action	Near	No actions are currently planned regarding this recommendation. This may be considered in the future.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
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	Underway	Near	Striped additional parking along North Salem Street, Chatham Street, and Saunders Street. Prepared striping plan for Center Street (under review). Completing final design plans for Saunders Lot. Acquisition of private property is required to move this project forward and discussions with property owners are currently underway.
6K	Establish leased parking agreements with private parking owners.	103	Underway	Near	Discussions continue with both Apex Baptist Church and Apex Methodist Church. No agreements are in place at this time.
6L	Create a valet program for evenings and weekends.	103	No Action	Mid	An updated parking inventory with length of stay analysis is underway as of May 2022 and will inform future recommendations regarding parking.
6M	Conduct a preliminary engineering feasibility study for a potential parking deck.	103	No Action	Near	No actions are currently planned regarding this recommendation. This may be considered in the future. Parking inventory data indicates a parking deck is not warranted at this time. Recommendations from the S-Line (railroad) Transit Oriented Development Study and possible future feasibility study for a mobility hub may further inform the need for and possible location of a parking deck.
6N	Consider establishing hourly paid parking along Salem Street.	103	No Action	Mid	No actions are currently planned regarding this recommendation. This may be considered in the future.
6O	Incorporate a bike-share program with stations around key destinations in downtown.	103	Underway	Near	Research has begun on bike and scooter share programs in the region to inform further analysis of this recommendation.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
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	No Action	N/A (Ongoing)	An updated parking inventory with length of stay analysis is underway as of May 2022 and will inform future recommendations regarding parking.
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	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	Smart Parking technologies will be included in the Downtown Design Projects. Wayfinding signage will provide information about parking availability.
6R	Evaluate all emerging technology packages and select an app-based parking occupancy system for the Town of Apex's public parking areas.	106	Underway	Near	Smart Parking technologies will be included in the Downtown Design Projects. Wayfinding signage will provide information about parking availability.
7A	Work with developers to create neighborhoods that mix housing typologies in a range of price points and also provide common open space.	115	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	Housing recommendations from the Downtown Plan are shared with all developers who meet with Planning staff on new development projects in the downtown area. Several projects have been approved that will increase the range of housing typologies in the downtown area, including apartments at the corner of Hunter Street and Laura Duncan Road.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
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	Complete	Near	The Town's first Affordable Housing Plan was adopted in February 2021. Two housing staff have been hired and are actively working on recommendations. The Town is in the process of filling a third new position as of June 2022.
7C	Encourage the active reuse of historic structures with businesses that add vibrancy to Salem Street.	117	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	The Tap Station opened in the second quarter of 2022 in the historic Holt & Sons building at 320. S. Salem Street. Staff continue to advise property owners, tenants, and inquiries of the types of active reuse preferred in Downtown.
7D	Attract a boutique hotel to downtown Apex to provide an alternative hospitality option within walking distance of the core.	117	No Action	Mid	In 2019 Planning and Economic Development attended a hotel developer day organized by Visit Raleigh (GRCVB). At this meeting it was discovered the most viable options for hotels in Apex would be located near major roads (e.g. Ten Ten, US Hwy 64, US 1). An alternate such as a Bed & Breakfast or Inn may be more viable for downtown at this time. Long-term, passenger rail stopping in the downtown area may make a larger hotel more viable.
7E	Promote sensitive infill of housing and commercial in the Justice Heights neighborhood.	117	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	Recommendations from the Downtown Plan are shared with all developers who meet with Planning staff on new development projects in the downtown area. Staff are currently working with a developer who owns two parcels in this area.
7F	Direct incremental infill within the downtown core of both mixed use	118	Ongoing	Near & Mid	Recommendations from the Downtown Plan are shared with all developers who meet with Planning staff on new development projects in the downtown area.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
	and all forms of urban housing.				
7G	Require new development to build quality street network connections based on an overall connectivity vision.	120	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	This is standard practice with plan review and has continued since plan adoption.
7H	Discourage outparcel development that functions independently and encourage phased infill that shares parking and access while addressing the streets.	120	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	
8A	Transform the Salem streetscape.	126	Underway	Near	The Salem Streetscape concept has been approved and final design plans are underway. This project is intended to be phased after the Saunders Lot project is complete and may move forward before or after the Alleys (see 8B). See www.publicinput.com/downtowndesign .
8B	Energize the alleys...Seaboard, Commerce, and Fire Station.	137	Underway	Near	The alleyway concepts have been approved and final design plans are underway. This project is intended to be phased after the Saunders Lot project is complete and may move forward before or after the Salem Streetscape (see 8A). See www.publicinput.com/downtowndesign .
8C	Attract five new restaurants/bars/breweries and a boutique hotel to Salem Street.	139	Underway	Near	A microbrewery/tap room (Tap Station), café (Mission Market), second ice cream shop (Kilwin's), and specialty food shop (Elk Local Foods) have all opened their doors since adoption of the Downtown Plan. The Highline Building is currently under construction and will provide additional ground-floor space for restaurants/bars/microbreweries.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
8D	Recruit and form relationships with developers familiar with towns like Apex to implement urban housing in downtown.	142	No Action	N/A (Ongoing)	Met with a local developer regarding two properties he owns on S. Salem Street and East West Partners (developers of Meadowmont in Chapel Hill).
8E	Work to meet demand for downtown housing and improve the housing stock through institutional partnerships.	142	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	Several new housing projects have moved forward in Apex through the result of institutional projects, although none directly downtown at this time.
8F	Construct 100 new housing units within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of downtown.	142	Ongoing	Near & Mid	Peak City Lofts has 84 apartment units approved by Town Council in the PUD rezoning; minor site plan under review by TRC.
8G	Re-purpose the parking area at the Depot into the premier public space downtown.	146	No Action	Near & Mid	This project is included in the adopted Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is subject to annual review, but currently anticipates design in FY26 and construction in FY27.
8H	Make the transit station at NC 55 and Salem Street a multi-modal, iconic, gateway feature.	148	Underway	Mid	This project is likely to move forward after NCDOT's widening project, which is currently anticipated to begin construction in 2031. The Town has been participating in a rail-related transit oriented development study with NCDOT and has supported a grant for the study of mobility hubs in Apex. These additional studies will inform the future transit station at NC55 and S. Salem Street.
8I	Install wayfinding and gateway signage in and around downtown based on a new branding campaign.	149	Underway	Near	A town-wide Wayfinding Signage Program was completed in 2021-2022. The program includes designs, messages, locations, and specifications for wayfinding signs downtown. Phase I installation is anticipated in 2023. Pedestrian kiosks with maps to parking and wayfinding signage to parking in downtown church lots will



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
					not be included in Phase I due to ongoing conversations with Apex Baptist Church and Apex Methodist Church regarding shared parking agreements.
8J	Attract local breweries downtown and encourage co-location.	150	Underway	Near	A microbrewery/tap room opened at NC 55 and S. Salem Street (TapStation), and a tap room is open on Salem Street (HighCraft Beer Market). The Highline Building is currently under construction and has announced Oaklyn Springs Brewery will open a tap room in that location.
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	Underway	Near	The Public Art Committee has successfully begun a Sculpture Walk in downtown with the support of multiple Town departments. They are further working to install a mural. The Downtown Design Projects will create new "pallets" for additional art installations. It is anticipated these will follow project construction. The Salem Streetscape project is also anticipated to include tabletop design art capturing the history of the street.
8L	Host a mural competition to generate excitement for public art downtown.	154	No Action	Near	
8M	Revitalize the Tunstall House, grounds, and strollway as a pastoral treasure and link between Salem Street and the civic center.	157	Underway	Mid	A structural assessment of the Tunstall House has been completed and determination of the best use of the interior is underway. Exterior construction bidding documents are in progress.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
8N	Re-envision the fire station site as a civic and mixed-use development.	158	No Action	Near	The Capital Improvement Plan includes funds to begin the study of the Fire Station in FY23, design in FY 24 and construction in FY26. A phased approach is required as the fire company will need to be temporarily relocated to another station during construction.
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	No Action	N/A (Ongoing)	
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	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	
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	Ongoing	Near	Amendments to the UDO have already addressed a Downtown Festival District, parking uses, and building heights. Further amendments will be considered over time.
9B	Audit local businesses to ensure they are taking ownership of their online presence	170	No Action	N/A (Ongoing)	



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
	and monitoring patron reviews.				
9C	Expand the toolbox of local grants, programs and incentives available through city budget appropriations.	170	No Action	N/A (Ongoing)	
9D	Schedule a commercial broker tour of downtown with representation from the entire Raleigh region.	170	No Action	Near	
9E	Initiate a retail attraction committee whose responsibilities include developing a prospect database.	170	No Action	Near	
9F	Create a full marketing package for the downtown district that includes a "Call for Business" web page as a retail attraction tool.	170	No Action	Near	
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	Underway	N/A (Ongoing)	The development of an Incentive Zoning Conditions Policy for affordable housing units is underway; however, this will not include tax incentives.



Apex Downtown Master Plan & Parking Study

Progress Report

June 2022

Plan Reference Number	Recommendation	Plan Page	Status	Priority	Progress Notes 2020-2022
9H	Utilize the streets and alleys as key people spaces for programming.	173	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	
9I	Offer event grant funding to support downtown vitality by non-city organizations.	173	Ongoing	N/A (Ongoing)	The Town continues to host Co-Sponsored events in Downtown. These applications are on a bi-annual basis for 501(C)3 organizations to request in-kind Town services. (e.g., Pig Fest, PeakFest, Christmas Parade).
9J	Perform annual reviews to assess progress related to the items in the plan's implementation matrix with staff, council, and ADBA representatives.	184	Underway	N/A (Ongoing)	Two general downtown stakeholder meetings have been held in addition to extensive outreach for the Downtown Design Projects. In Spring 2022, Town staff reviewed the implementation matrix, added progress notes, and made this information available to the public.