



DOWNTOWN TALLAPOOSA MASTER PLAN





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Tallapoosa is proud to present the *Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan*. This master plan reimagines downtown as an active, vibrant place at the heart of the community. It is a product of collaboration between community members, elected officials, City staff, and the planning team. The master plan was made possible with funding provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

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ABOUT DOWNTOWN TALLAPOOSA

Tallapoosa, Georgia is a vibrant community of just under 3,500 people located in Haralson County in Northwest Georgia. It's a small town, with a big heart. Tallapoosa's downtown could well be the envy of many other cities and towns. The streetscapes of Head Avenue and Alabama Street backdropped by historic buildings with restaurants and other businesses activate downtown daily. The fountain, steam engine, and historic bells along East Atlanta Street add to Downtown Tallapoosa's unique charm. It has historic character, a family-friendly atmosphere, and a mix of offerings for tourists and residents. But high vacancy in downtown's historic buildings and broken connections in its historic street grid are holding it back. This Downtown Master Plan is an opportunity to build on what Downtown Tallapoosa does well to position it for future success. It focuses on improving the connectivity of downtown through focused public space investments as well as creating new tools for supporting property and business owners, strengthening Downtown Tallapoosa as a vibrant and diverse place for all.

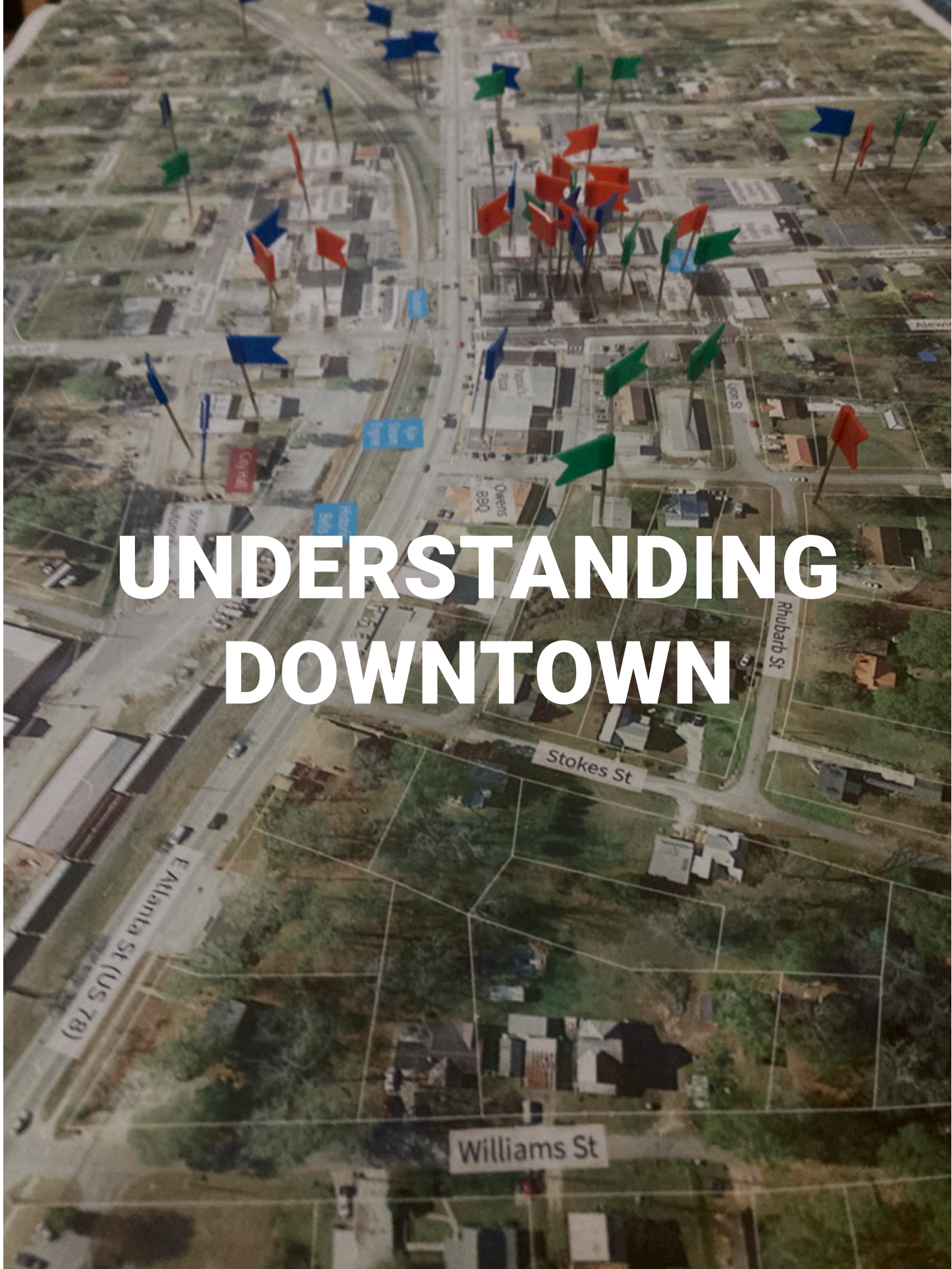


WHY DO WE PLAN?

A plan is a proactive effort to create a vision for a future outcome linked with specific steps to help achieve that outcome. Planning is an important process for making decisions from the smallest of downtowns to the most sprawling regions. They are most impactful when they thoughtfully consider the uniqueness of their physical place and meaningfully engage community members, stakeholders, and agency partners in the process. For a downtown with a history and identity as unique as the one in Tallapoosa, the *Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan* is an invaluable tool for making intentional decisions about policies and projects that, when combined, create a physical place rich in experience and full of options for the way community members, present and future, live their everyday lives.

The Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan will serve as a blueprint to direct future growth, investment, tourism, and development in the downtown area. The plan starts with a future vision for Downtown Tallapoosa that builds on its unique character and identity. The plan then provides recommendations for new public spaces, transportation projects, development patterns and land uses, and economic development opportunities to improve downtown as a physical place for all people. It is a direct result of close collaboration between the City's elected leadership and staff, major stakeholders, community members, and the planning team.





UNDERSTANDING DOWNTOWN

LEARNING FROM THE COMMUNITY

The master plan for Downtown Tallapoosa is built on a thoughtful understanding and analysis of downtown's existing physical conditions, combined with close collaboration between the planning team, public agencies, major stakeholders, and community members. Collaborating with so many partners to envision the future of downtown required a creative engagement process would ensure community voices guided the plan's development. To accomplish this, the majority of the master plan's engagement was focused into a weeklong Design Charrette during the project's design phase. This allowed the planning team to work alongside community members and other partners in downtown to develop the plan's vision and key recommendations in real time.



FEBRUARY 8, 2024 ON THE TABLE EVENT

Prior to officially launching the master planning process, the planning team met with elected officials, downtown stakeholders, and community members at the Union on Odessa to introduce the goals and objectives of the master plan, outline the process for creating the master plan, and facilitate initial discussions about the future vision for Downtown Tallapoosa.



JUNE 14, 2024 PUBLIC KICK-OFF

In early summer, the City of Tallapoosa and planning team hosted a Public Kick-off Meeting at the Tallapoosa Civic and Cultural Arts Center and a series of initial stakeholder interviews at Journey Realty to provide early feedback on the direction of the master plan. Participants at the meetings were invited to engage in a series of tabletop activities to delve into needs and big ideas for Downtown Tallapoosa.



AUGUST 19-22, 2024 DESIGN CHARRETTE

Towards the end of the summer, the planning team hosted a weeklong design charrette in downtown at a vacant storefront next to Santa Fe Mexican Restaurant. A design charrette is a multi-day event where community members and stakeholders work with the planning team to create the master plan in real time. This allowed community members to have a direct role in shaping the main recommendations of the master plan.



MANY GREAT IDEAS

During the engagement activities, the planning team listened to numerous ideas for improving downtown. These covered a wide variety including everything from a new amphitheater, more parking areas, signage and wayfinding, and even a citywide trail system. The most common community feedback revolved around wanting new businesses to fill empty buildings, creating places for children and families to linger and play, protecting the uniqueness of Tallapoosa while welcoming visitors to shop at stores and eat at restaurants, and creating a public space that has the flexibility to incorporate live music, markets, and a space to share the stories of the people of Tallapoosa. All of these are great ideas that can benefit downtown in their own ways.

With finite resources, it's important for Tallapoosa to focus on those ideas that are fundamental to successful downtowns.

Getting the fundamentals of downtown right first, opens the possibility of moving on some of these other big ideas later. Success can build upon success.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT DOWNTOWN?

Great downtowns feature a lot of the great ideas that were discussed during the master plan's engagement activities. But first, there are some fundamental features they get right. Downtowns that thrive are walkable and connected, and they are centered around attractive public spaces and provide a mix of uses and businesses within their main streets. It's important to stay focused on these key elements within the heart of downtown rather than to spread limited resources too thinly across a larger geography of the city.

For Tallapoosa, this means connecting both sides of downtown across the railroad, creating new spaces for people and getting businesses back in downtown's buildings.

WALKABLE & CONNECTED

Great downtowns are well-connected, and Tallapoosa has a great grid of streets. However, Downtown Tallapoosa, is divided by the combination of East Atlanta Street (US 78) and the railroad. The city has two at-grade railroad crossings that have been designed solely for vehicles, making crossing by foot or any other means challenging and potentially unsafe. Many Georgia downtowns have faced this same challenge and found ways to improve access, making their downtowns a more welcoming environment for people and businesses.

ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC SPACES

Active downtowns have public spaces that attract people. While Downtown Tallapoosa has plenty of public space in terms of streets, it's missing the plazas and small parks typically found in similar downtowns. These gathering spaces can be great places for festivals and events as well as everyday activities that all support a vibrant downtown. Downtown Tallapoosa's streets could be transformed to provide the attractive public spaces for people, not just cars, that it needs to be successful.

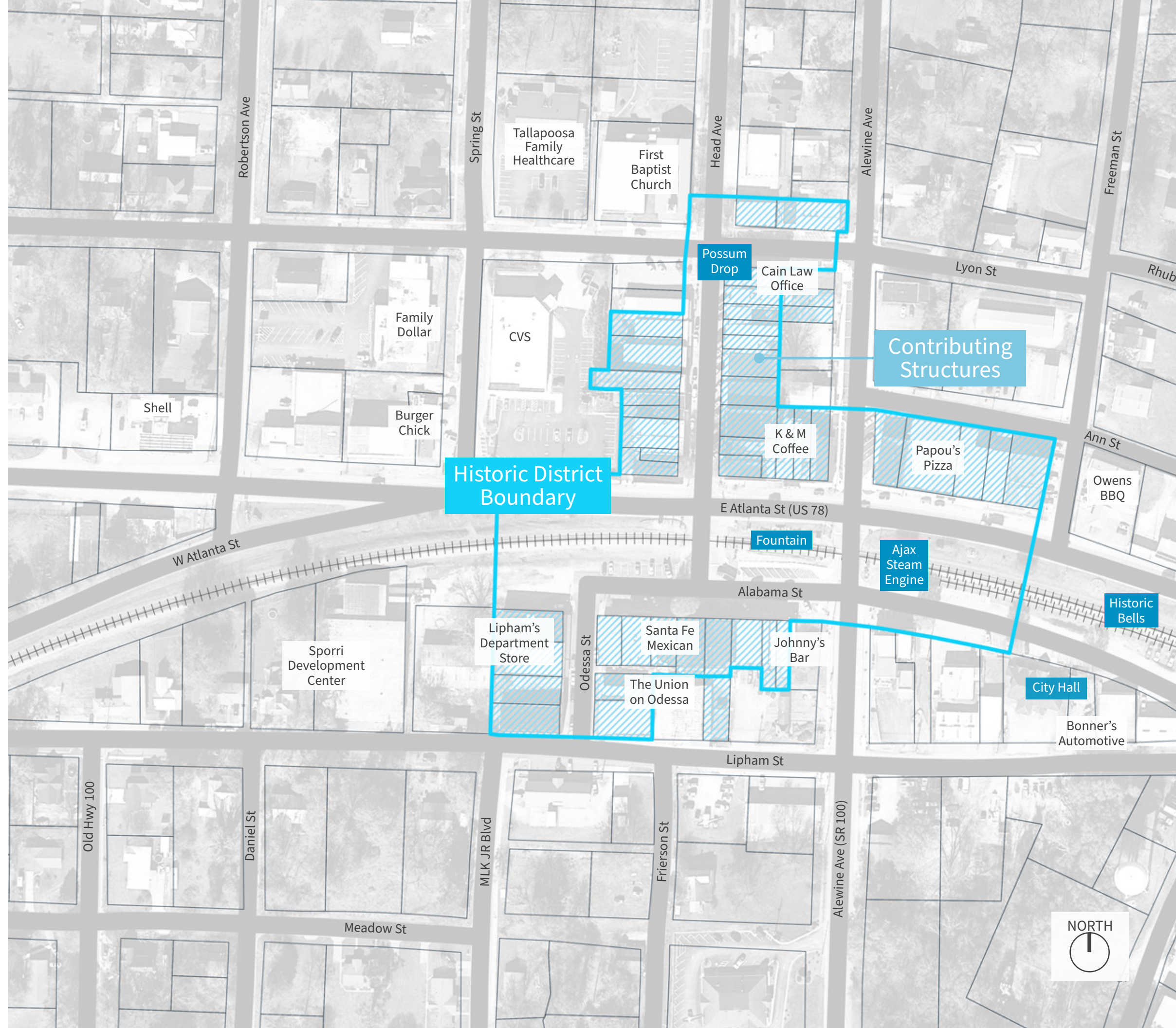
MIX OF USES & BUSINESSES

Successful downtowns have buildings full of businesses with a mix of uses, and they include a variety of businesses that serve the daily needs of city residents and visitors alike. In addition to improving connectivity and creating new public spaces to attract people that businesses will thrive on, Tallapoosa will also need to develop new tools and incentives aimed at supporting a variety of new businesses in downtown as well as the existing businesses that buoy downtown today.

PROJECT GOALS

It only takes a few great blocks to create a vibrant and sustainable downtown. The heart of Downtown Tallapoosa, and the focus of this plan, are the blocks around Head Avenue, Alabama Street, and Odessa Street.

When we create inviting public spaces where people can gather and linger, it sparks private investment and encourages business growth. These improvements will show the City's commitment to revitalizing downtown and inspire property and business owners to join in the effort. By focusing on key streets like Head Avenue, Alabama Street, and Odessa Street, we can make the most impact with the limited resources available. As these streets come to life with vibrant businesses, public spaces, and local events, they'll fuel further growth and eventually extend beyond downtown, connecting all of Tallapoosa.





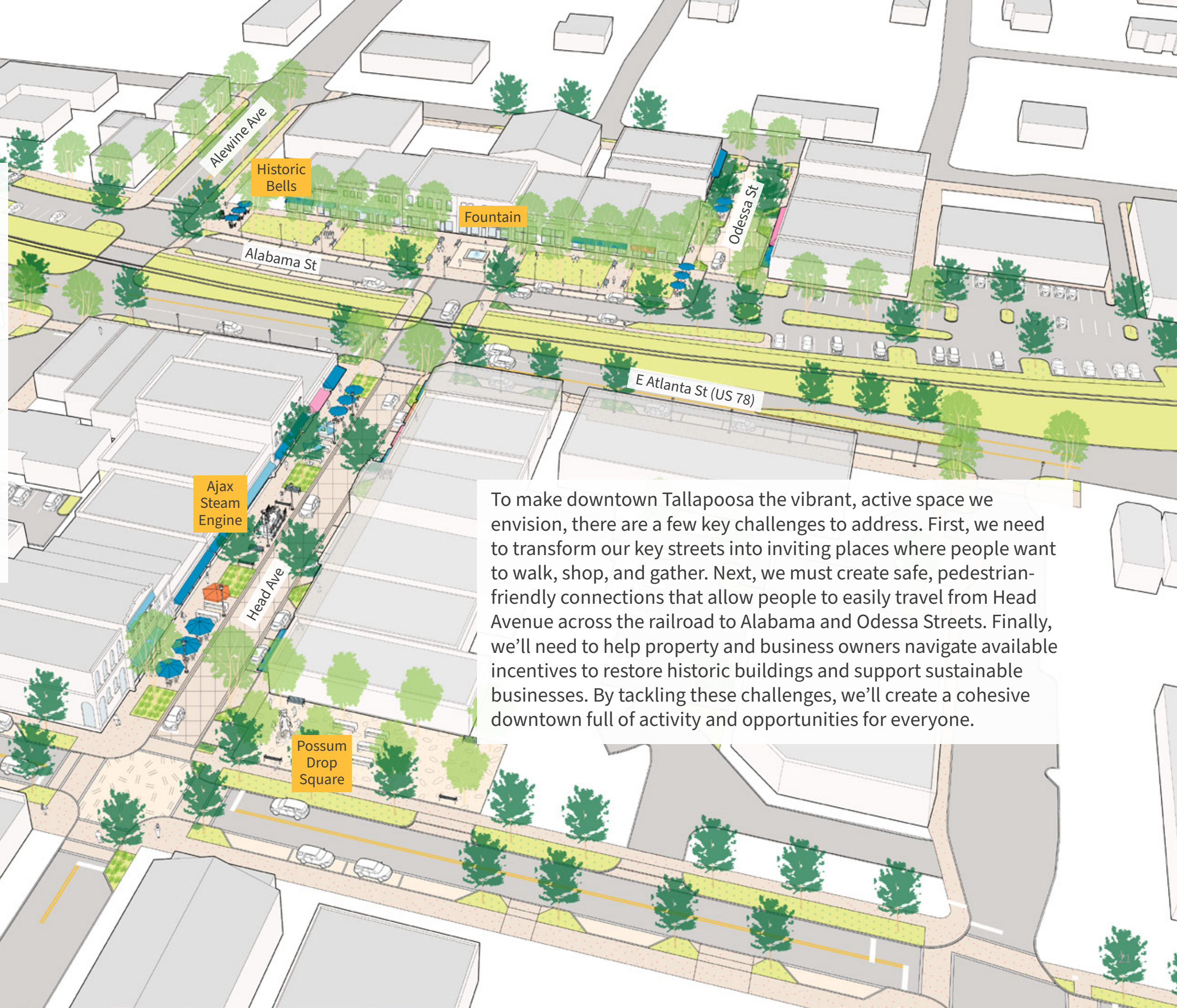
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

THE BIG IDEAS

1 CREATE SPACES FOR PEOPLE

2 CONNECT ACROSS THE RAILROAD

3 ACTIVATE BUILDINGS



To make downtown Tallapoosa the vibrant, active space we envision, there are a few key challenges to address. First, we need to transform our key streets into inviting places where people want to walk, shop, and gather. Next, we must create safe, pedestrian-friendly connections that allow people to easily travel from Head Avenue across the railroad to Alabama and Odessa Streets. Finally, we'll need to help property and business owners navigate available incentives to restore historic buildings and support sustainable businesses. By tackling these challenges, we'll create a cohesive downtown full of activity and opportunities for everyone.



CREATE SPACES FOR PEOPLE

The first step in achieving our vision for a vibrant downtown Tallapoosa is investing in key public infrastructure. For decades, streets have been designed primarily to move vehicular traffic as quickly and efficiently as possible, often at the expense of pedestrian safety and comfort. This imbalance has left many towns, including Tallapoosa, with streets that aren't always inviting or safe for walking, making it more difficult to sustain thriving downtowns. To create the downtown we envision, we must reimagine how our streets are used, moving beyond just accommodating vehicles to prioritizing people and their needs.

A truly successful downtown goes beyond ensuring safety and comfort; it provides spaces that are beautiful, functional, and well-programmed — places where people can linger, interact, and enjoy the surroundings. Downtown Tallapoosa is fortunate to have great bones, with its collection of beautiful historic buildings framing the main streets. This is an important asset that we can leverage when paired with thoughtfully designed streets. Well-designed streets balance the needs of all users—vehicular, service, and

pedestrian—ensuring that everyone can move safely and comfortably.

To create a safe pedestrian experience, we need to minimize crossing distances, provide ample sidewalk widths, and reduce corner radii at intersections for better visibility. Properly scaled lighting should also be a priority to ensure safety after dark. Beyond just safety, however, we must also consider comfort. Inviting streets incorporate elements like street trees to separate pedestrians from vehicles, providing shade on hot summer days. Street furnishings such as benches and creative seating encourage people to linger, socialize, and engage with storefronts. Materials like pavers help create a pedestrian-scale environment, enhancing the sense of place. These best practices offer a strong foundation for transforming Head Avenue, Alabama Street, and Odessa Street into vibrant spaces. Each of these streets has unique strengths that we can build upon, as well as challenges that must be addressed. This section details design proposals for each of Downtown Tallapoosa's main streets.



HEAD AVENUE

Head Avenue, the historic heart of Tallapoosa, serves as a beloved gathering space for residents and visitors, hosting key events like the annual New Year’s Eve Possum Drop. To honor its role as both a daily commercial street and a venue for town events, the design for Head Avenue focuses on flexibility and functionality.

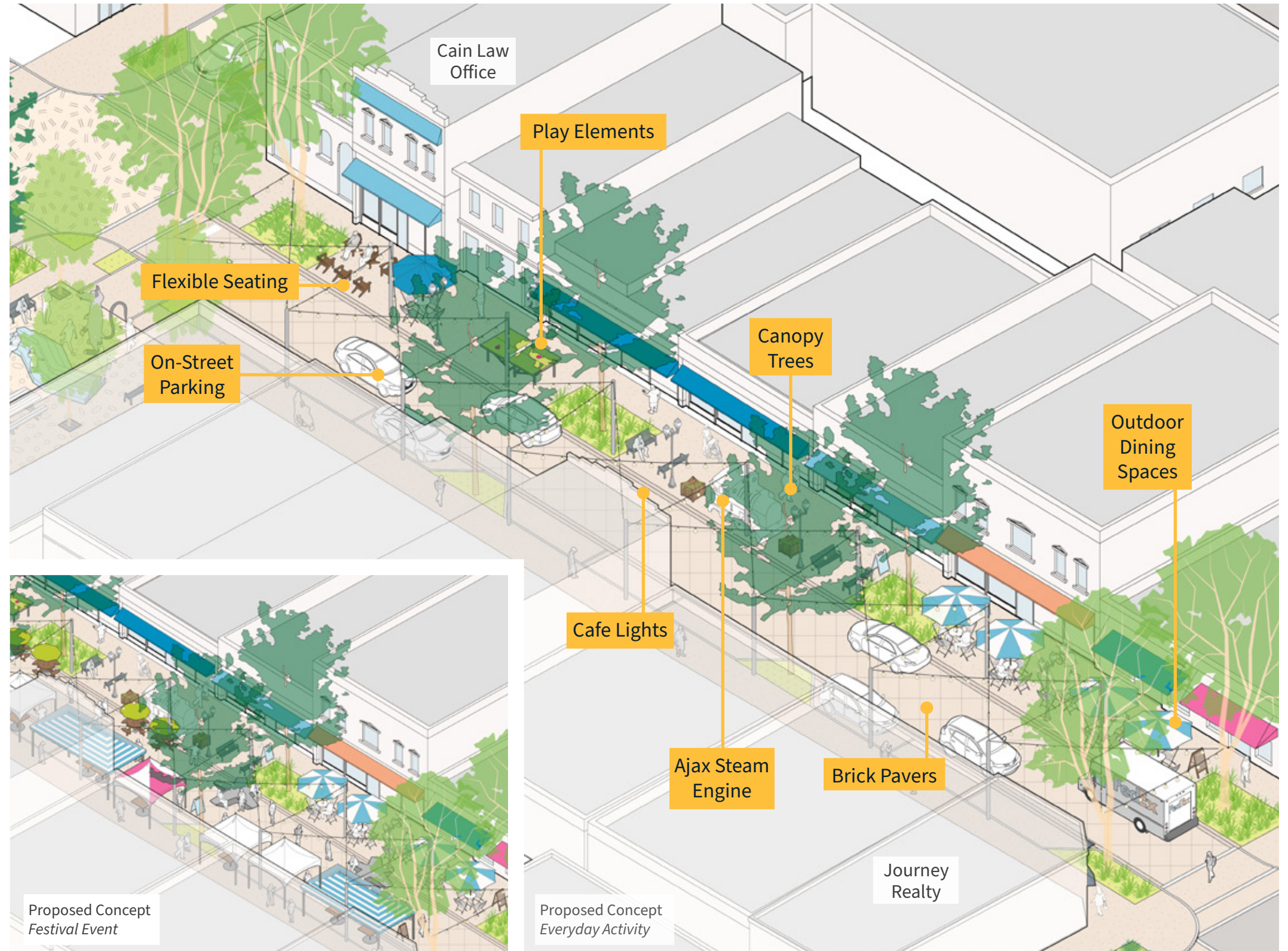
The goal is to create a space that supports everyday activities like shopping and dining while also accommodating larger town events and festivals.

By incorporating a flush street design, where the road, curb, and sidewalk are at the same level, Head Avenue can seamlessly transition from a bustling pedestrian-friendly space to a pedestrian-only plaza during special events. To transform Head Avenue into a flexible festival street, we envision several key design elements that will enhance both its daily use and event capacity.

Café lights strung across the street, creative seating arrangements, and outdoor dining areas will create a lively atmosphere that invites people to linger and enjoy the space.



Head Avenue



Proposed Concept Festival Event

Proposed Concept Everyday Activity

Cain Law Office

Play Elements

Flexible Seating

On-Street Parking

Canopy Trees

Outdoor Dining Spaces

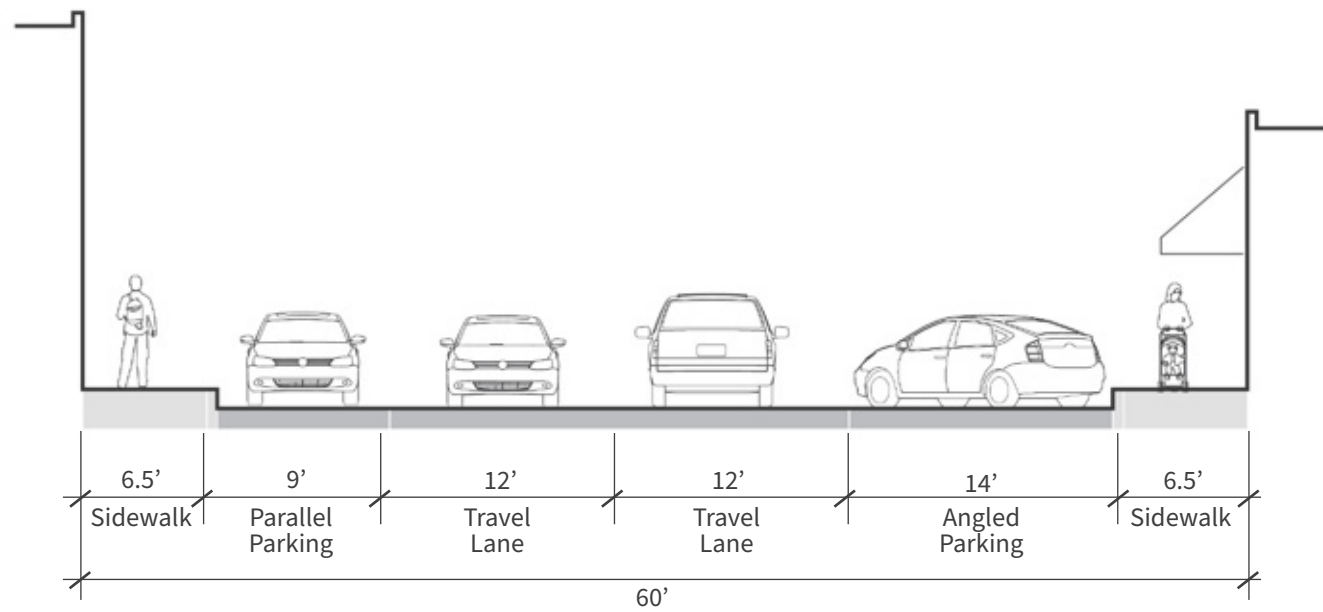
Cafe Lights

Ajax Steam Engine

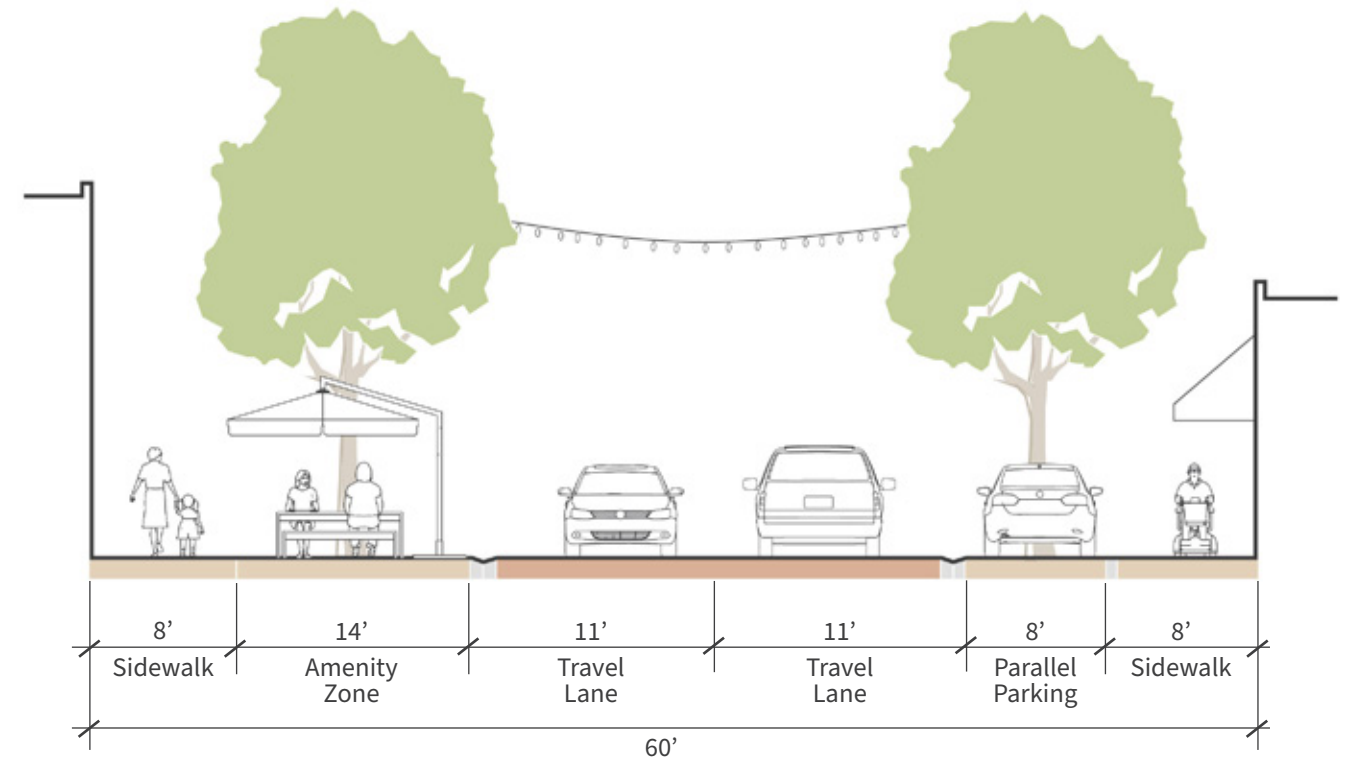
Brick Pavers

Journey Realty

DEVELOPING THE PLAN



Existing Street Section



Proposed Street Section



Trade Street Greer, SC

Trade Street is a great case study for the design of Head Avenue due to its flexible festival street design. With a similar right-of-way width, it uses brick pavers, a flush street condition, café lights, and canopy trees, making it a functional, vibrant space that can host special events while serving as a typical street on regular days.

The design also puts Tallapoosa’s rich history on display by incorporating historic items, such as the Ajax Steam Engine currently located along the rail line, into the streetscape. The materials should be carefully chosen to elevate the street’s character, using brick and stone pavers along both the sidewalk and roadway to distinguish it from typical streets.

Canopy trees will provide much-needed shade during the hot summer months, carefully selected for their suitability to the street’s environment and coordinated with well-engineered infrastructure to minimize future maintenance concerns. Another key element will be the transformation of the parking lot at the west corner of Lyon Street and Head Avenue into a flexible plaza. This space will serve as parking during everyday business

hours but can easily be converted into a pedestrian plaza for special events like the Possum Drop.

Currently, Head Avenue features moderately sized sidewalks, on-street parking, and two wide vehicular travel lanes, with nearly 80% of the right-of-way dedicated to vehicles. The proposed design reallocates space to prioritize pedestrians and create a more balanced, inviting environment. The sidewalks will be widened, on-street parking will remain on the west side to support local businesses, and the vehicular lanes will be narrowed to encourage lower driving speeds. A generous amenity zone will be included to accommodate daily programming, while the addition of canopy trees and café lights will further enhance the ambiance, making Head Avenue a vibrant space for both daily use and town events.



Head Avenue
Present & Future

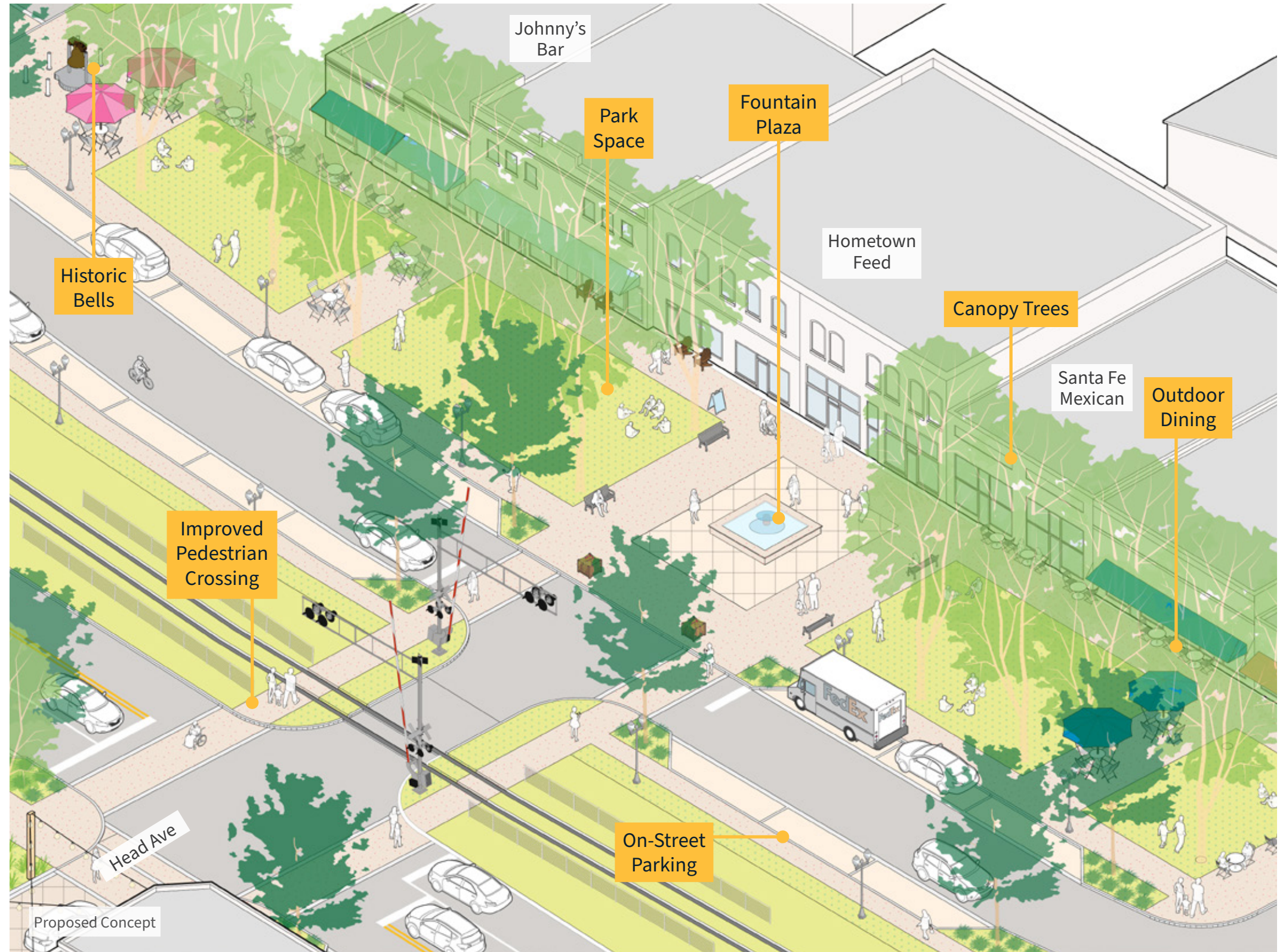
The master plan's proposed concept for Head Avenue reimagines the street as a place for people that restores it as the heart of Downtown Tallapoosa.



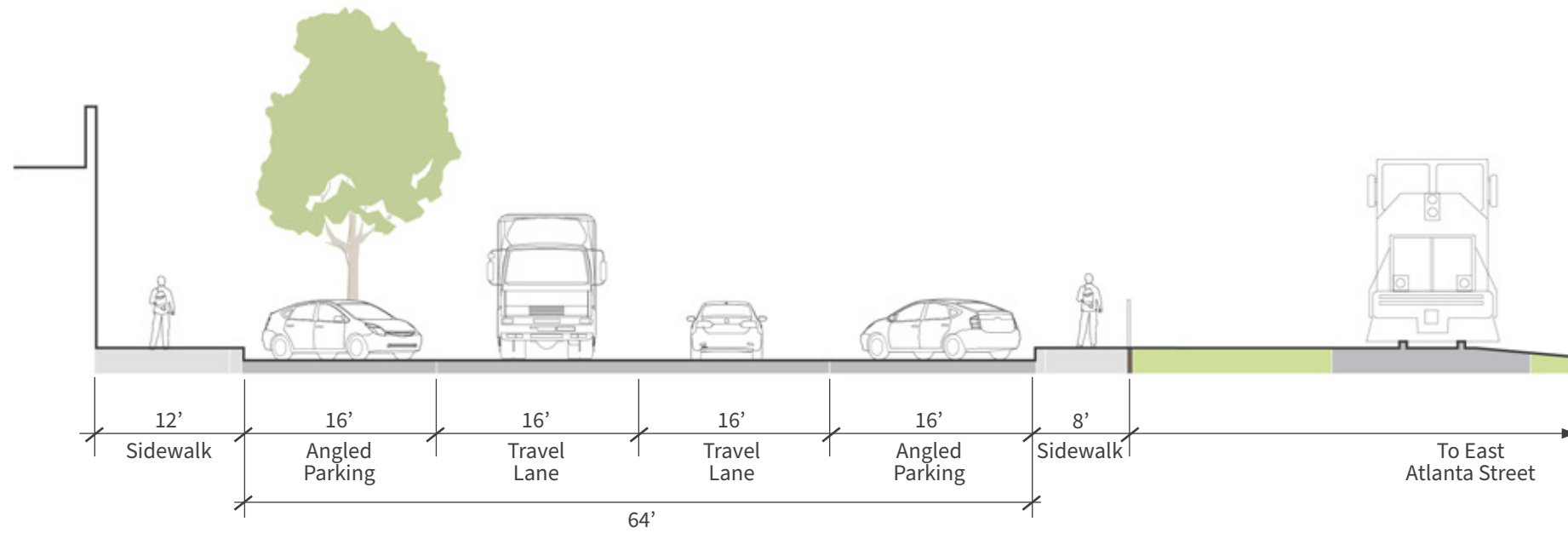
ALABAMA STREET

Alabama Street, the widest of the three main streets in Downtown Tallapoosa, offers a key advantage: many of its storefronts are already active and serve as a central part of the community. It also presents the greatest safety concerns for pedestrians, particularly when it comes to crossing the railroad tracks towards Head Avenue. The community has consistently emphasized the need for a safe, accessible space where families and children can gather and play. With this in mind, the primary goal of the design for Alabama Street is to address these safety concerns while also creating a welcoming gathering space for residents. A critical part of this plan hinges on the potential relocation of vehicular freight traffic to the intersection of East Atlanta Street (US 78) and Alewine Avenue (GA 100), which would allow significant pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Alabama Street and Head Avenue. The next chapter of this report will delve into the specifics of this potential change.

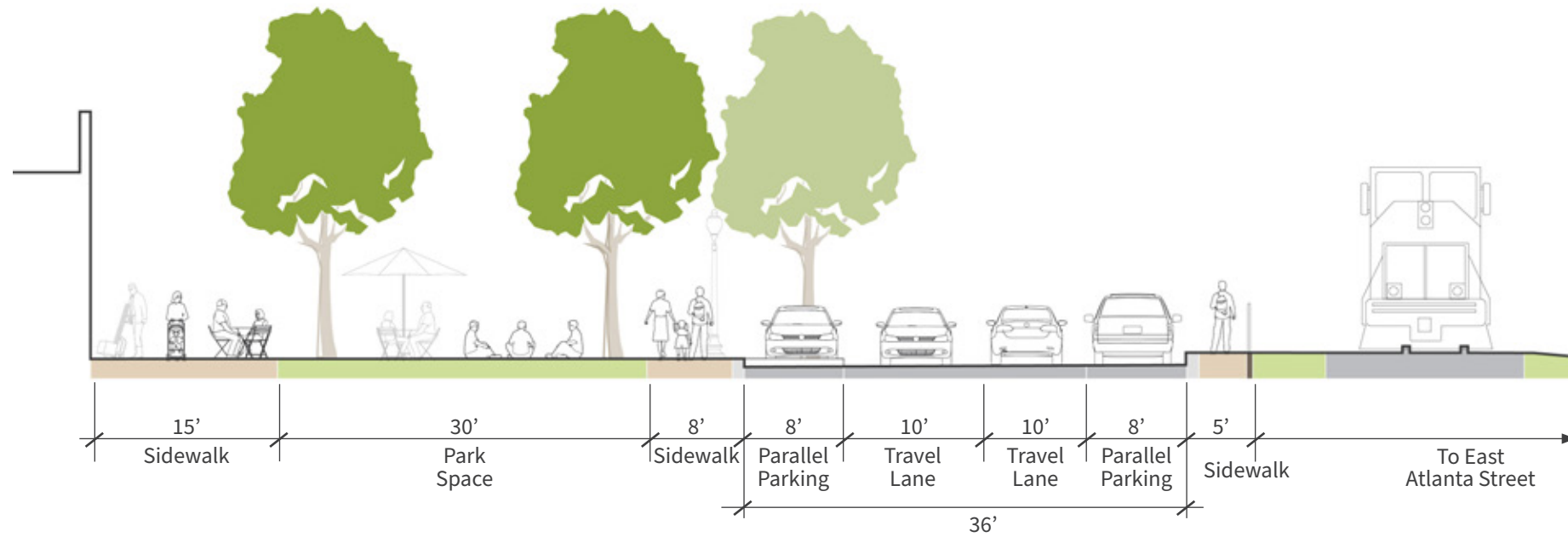
The proposed design for Alabama Street focuses on improving pedestrian safety and creating a parklike plaza that encourages community interaction.



DEVELOPING THE PLAN



Existing Street Section



Proposed Street Section

One of the main features is shortening the crossing distance from the railroad tracks to the sidewalk, making it safer and easier for pedestrians to move through the area. The parklike plaza will be located in front of the storefronts encouraging users to patronize local businesses and accommodating a variety of public activities, from children’s play areas to social gatherings. Like Head Avenue, this plaza will highlight important town monuments, like the historic bells and fountain, which are currently on East Atlanta Street but inaccessible due to their proximity to the train tracks. On-street parking will remain, but it is reconfigured as parallel parking, rather than the existing angled parking, to better accommodate the plaza.

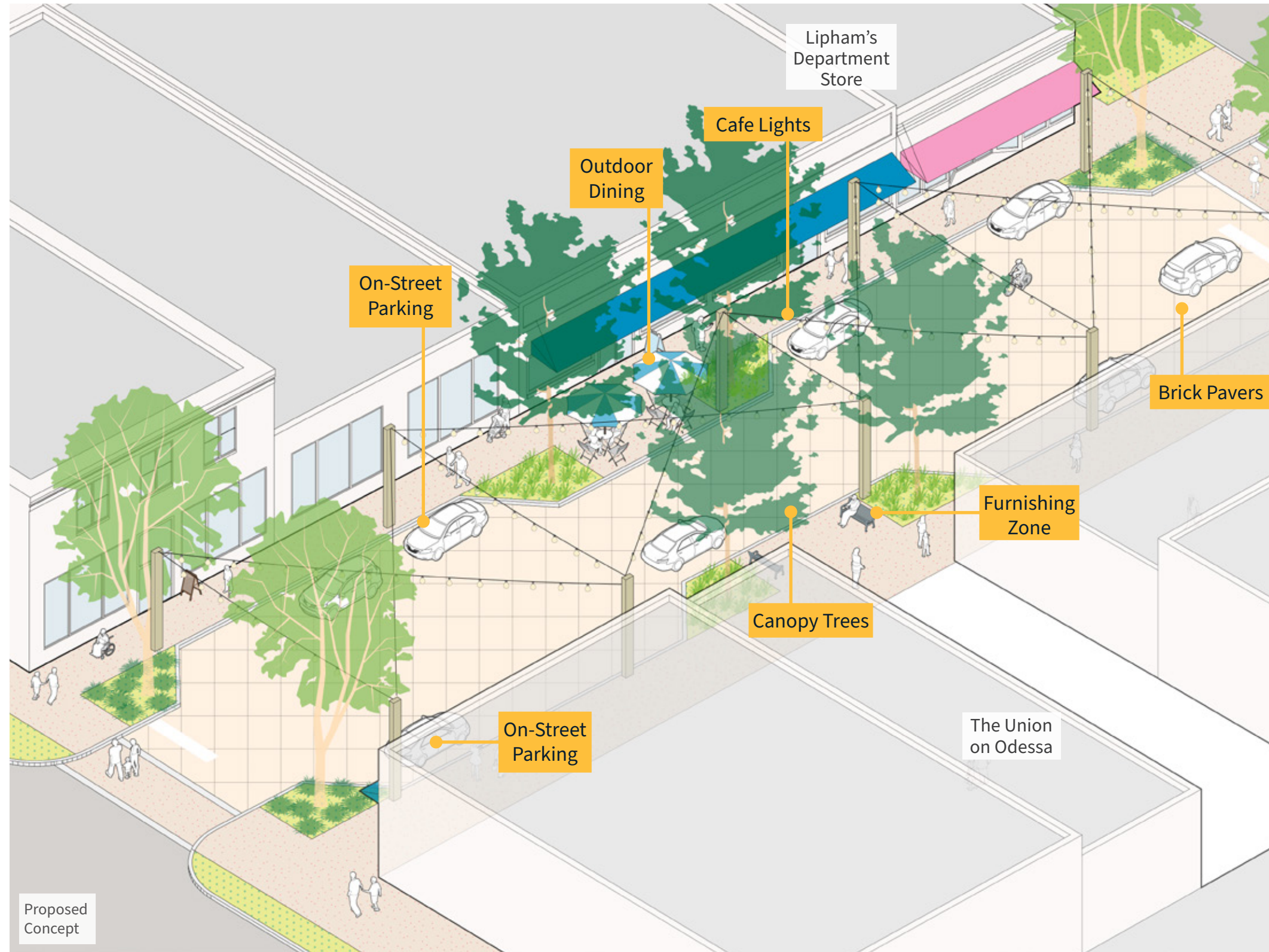
Currently, over 80% of the right-of-way on Alabama Street is dedicated to vehicular traffic, with angled parking on both sides of the street and pedestrian facilities only along the south side. The proposed design aims to narrow the vehicular travel lanes, making it safer for pedestrians, and to reconfigure the on-street parking as parallel spaces. Sidewalks will be added along both sides of the street to ensure safe pedestrian access, while the roadway will be realigned to create a buffer along the railroad tracks. This will allow for the development of a generous parklike plaza, lined with canopy trees and lawn spaces, providing a comfortable, safe environment for residents and visitors to gather, relax, and enjoy the heart of Downtown Tallapoosa.



Passeig De Sant Joan Spain

This corridor integrates a parklike space into the street with a wide pedestrian zone, natural elements like trees and landscaping, varied furnishings, and creative playscapes. Although the overall corridor is larger, the pedestrian zone is comparable to Alabama Street making it an excellent case study.

ODESSA STREET

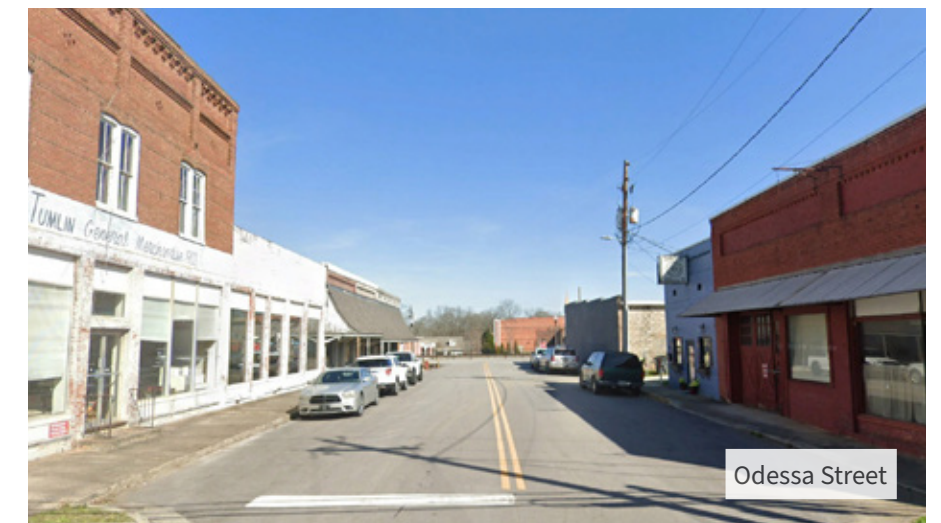


Odessa Street, while more tucked away from the downtown core, offers a unique opportunity for revitalization with a relatively low level of effort. Its smaller scale and existing configuration make it an ideal candidate for transformation into a pedestrian-friendly space without changing the curb-to-curb dimensions reducing costs.

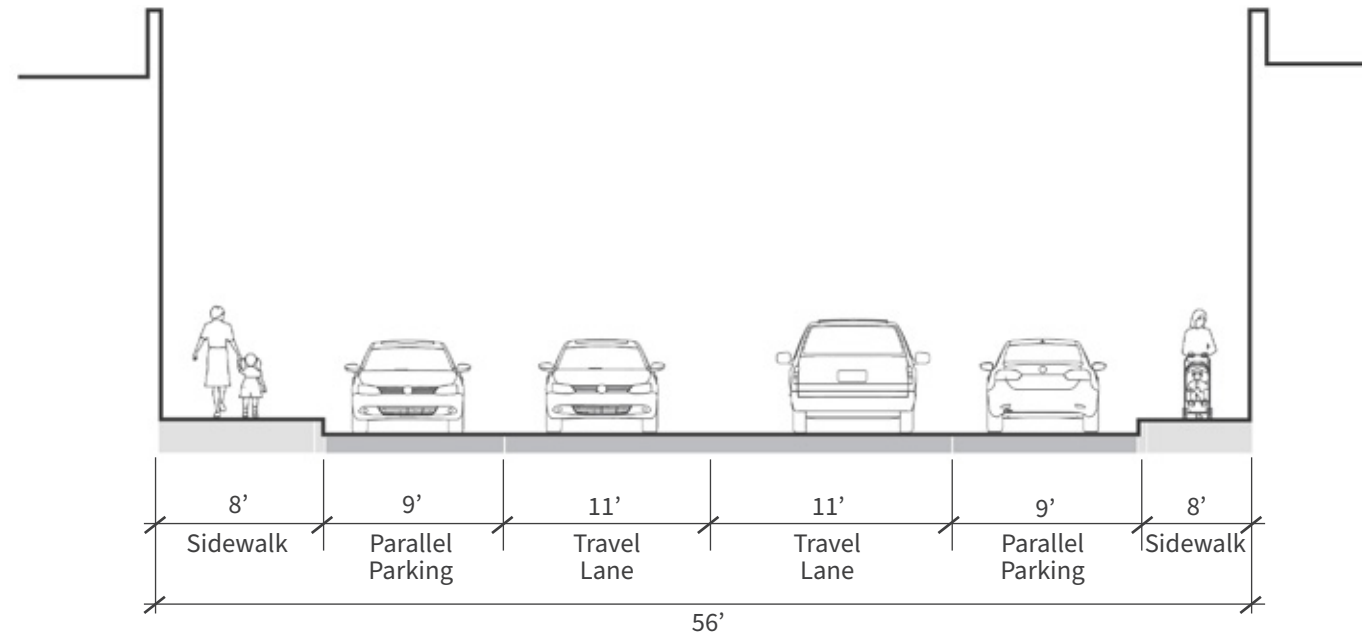
With just one block in length, Odessa Street naturally lends itself to slow vehicle speeds and low vehicular traffic, creating a perfect environment for active storefronts and pedestrians to thrive.

The proposed design builds on these characteristics, incorporating elements like canopy trees, café lighting, and street furnishings to create a calm, comfortable atmosphere that invites shopping, socializing, and lingering.

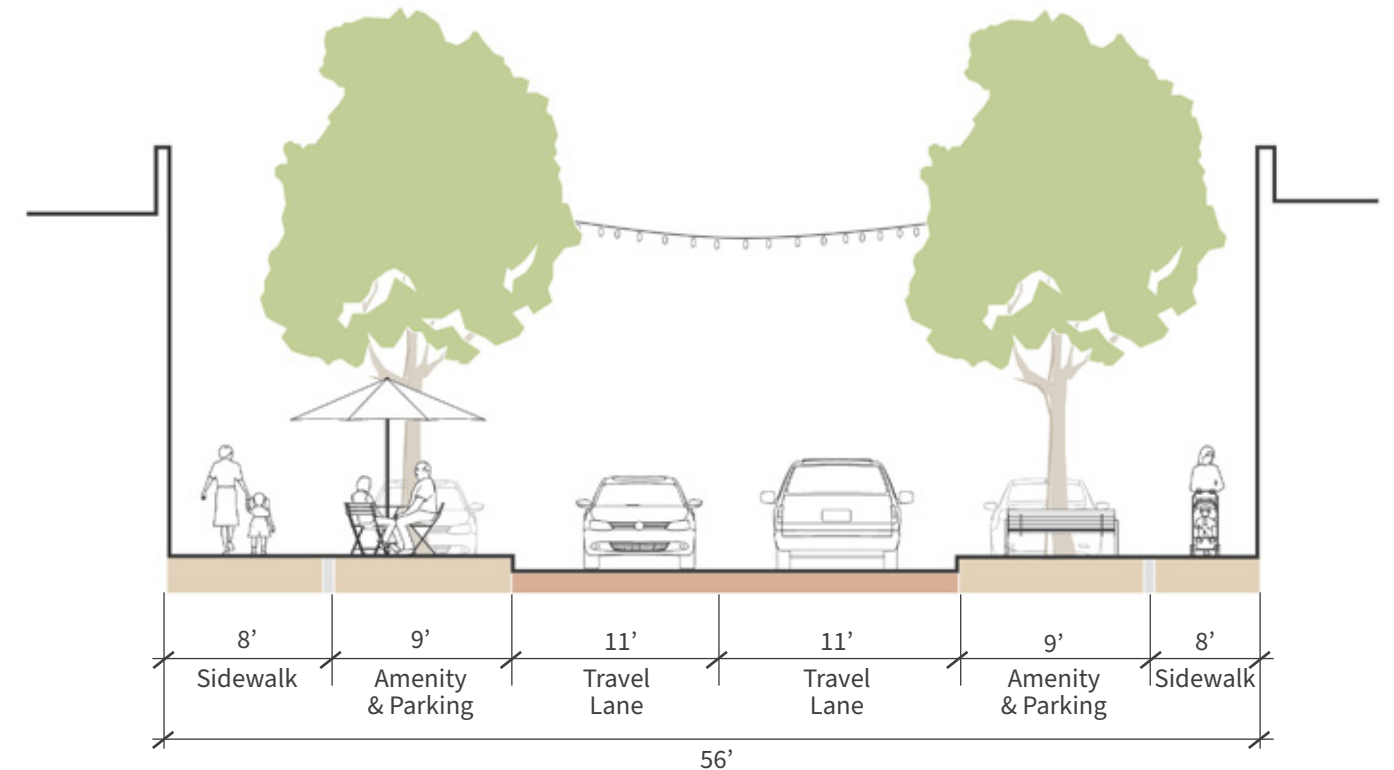
Currently, Odessa Street dedicates 75% of its right-of-way to vehicles, which creates an imbalance between pedestrian and vehicular needs. The proposed design aims to better balance



DEVELOPING THE PLAN



Existing Street Section



Proposed Street Section

this by reimagining the street to prioritize people. On-street parking will remain on both sides of the street, but with thoughtful placement of canopy trees and furnishing zones in between parking spaces, we can create a more pedestrian-friendly experience without sacrificing vehicular needs.

These improvements will contribute to the creation of a safe, welcoming environment where people feel comfortable spending time. The addition of street trees, café lighting, and street furnishings will further enhance the appeal, making Odessa Street an inviting destination for locals and visitors alike. Parking is a key consideration in the redesign

of Odessa Street, as well as the other main streets in downtown. To accommodate short-term needs like pick-ups, deliveries, and quick shopping errands, on-street parking spaces should be designated as 15- or 30-minute spaces. For longer visits, such as dining out, a new parking lot is shown just west of Alabama Street and Odessa Street. This new parking lot will help accommodate more residents and visitors driving into downtown, ensuring convenient access to the area. Together, these changes will help downtown become a more balanced, pedestrian-friendly space while still serving the practical needs of those who drive into the heart of Tallapoosa.



Larimer Square Denver, CO

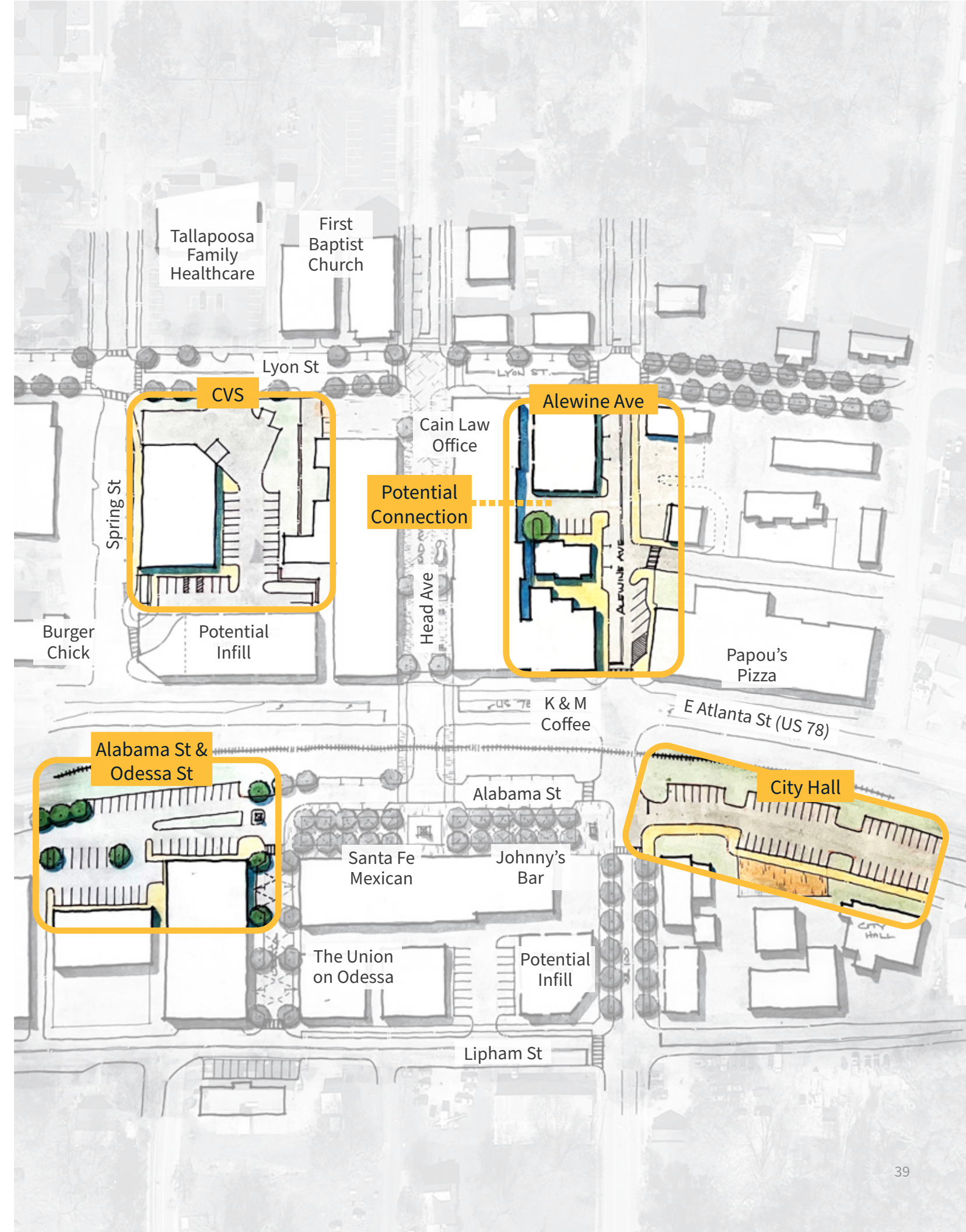
Larimer Square is a strong precedent for Odessa Street, featuring similarly-scaled historic buildings along its main street. We admire its creative overhead art, including flags and lighting, a simple material palette that highlights sidewalks, and the inclusion of on-street parking for accessibility.

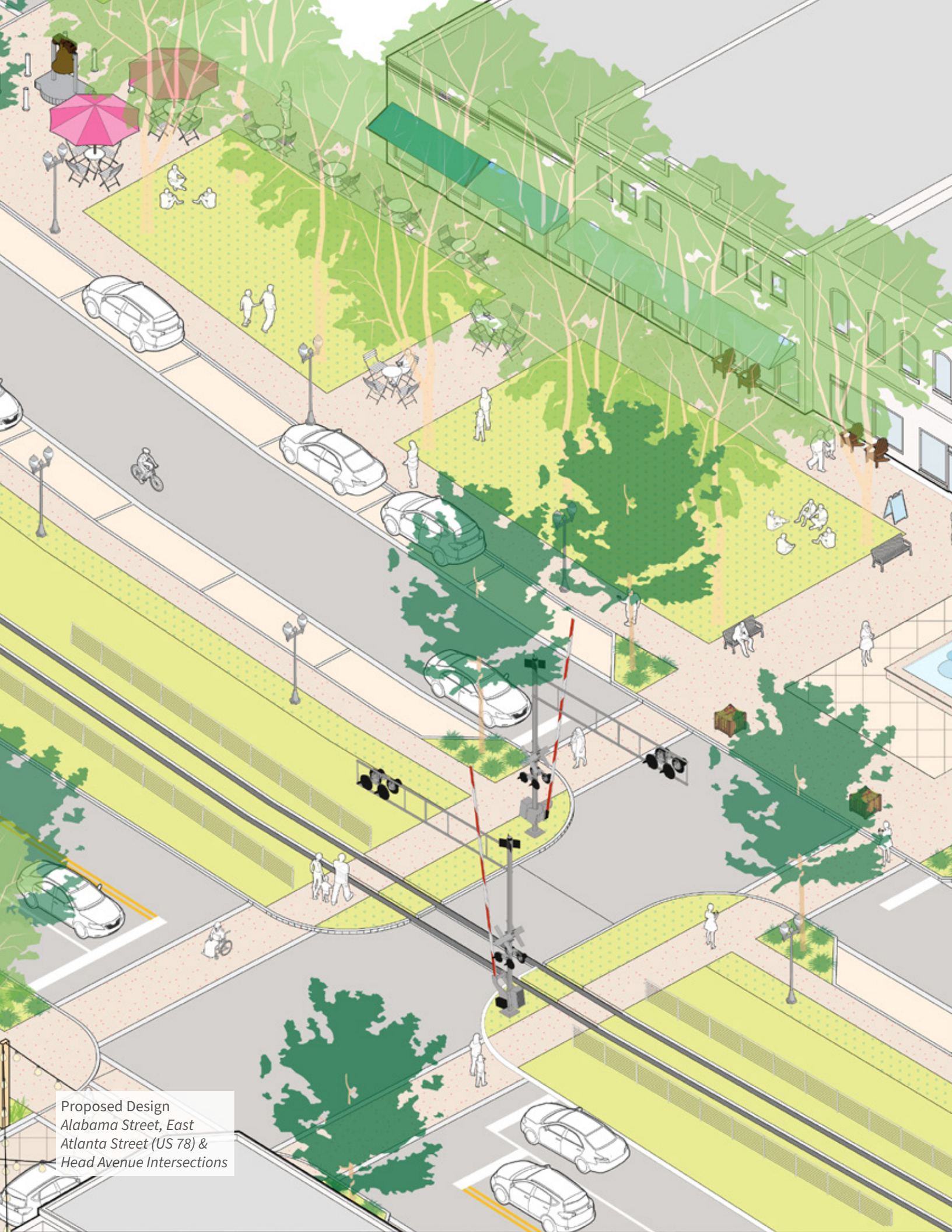
PARKING DOWNTOWN

The proposed designs for Tallapoosa’s main streets, particularly Head Avenue and Alabama Street, reallocate some of the space on these streets currently used for on-street parking for wider sidewalks, planting areas, on-street dining, and many other uses. This is crucial to turning these streets into useful, attractive public spaces for people which incentivizes businesses to invest in downtown. It will also mean changing expectations for parking supply and management. While the master plan street designs do still include some amount of on-street parking, providing a “front door” parking space for everyone will not be a possibility nor should it be a goal.

Great downtowns provide just the right amount of parking in exactly the right areas: areas that don’t occupy valuable street space or land that could be used for much more beneficial uses and invite people to walk and linger in downtown. To the greatest degree possible, the amount of parking needed is minimized and consolidated into surface lots or garages on the periphery of downtown. This has the added benefit of putting fewer vehicles on downtown streets making downtown an even more walkable environment.

The *Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan* identifies areas at the intersection of Odessa Street and Alabama Street, around City Hall, and along Alewine Avenue that could serve downtown’s parking needs. Additionally, the large surface parking lot for the CVS Pharmacy on Spring Street has a large parking lot that is often underutilized. Many towns and cities have successfully negotiated parking rights in lots like these to make them publicly accessible. This would be an option for Tallapoosa to provide additional parking spaces for downtown.





Proposed Design
Alabama Street, East
Atlanta Street (US 78) &
Head Avenue Intersections

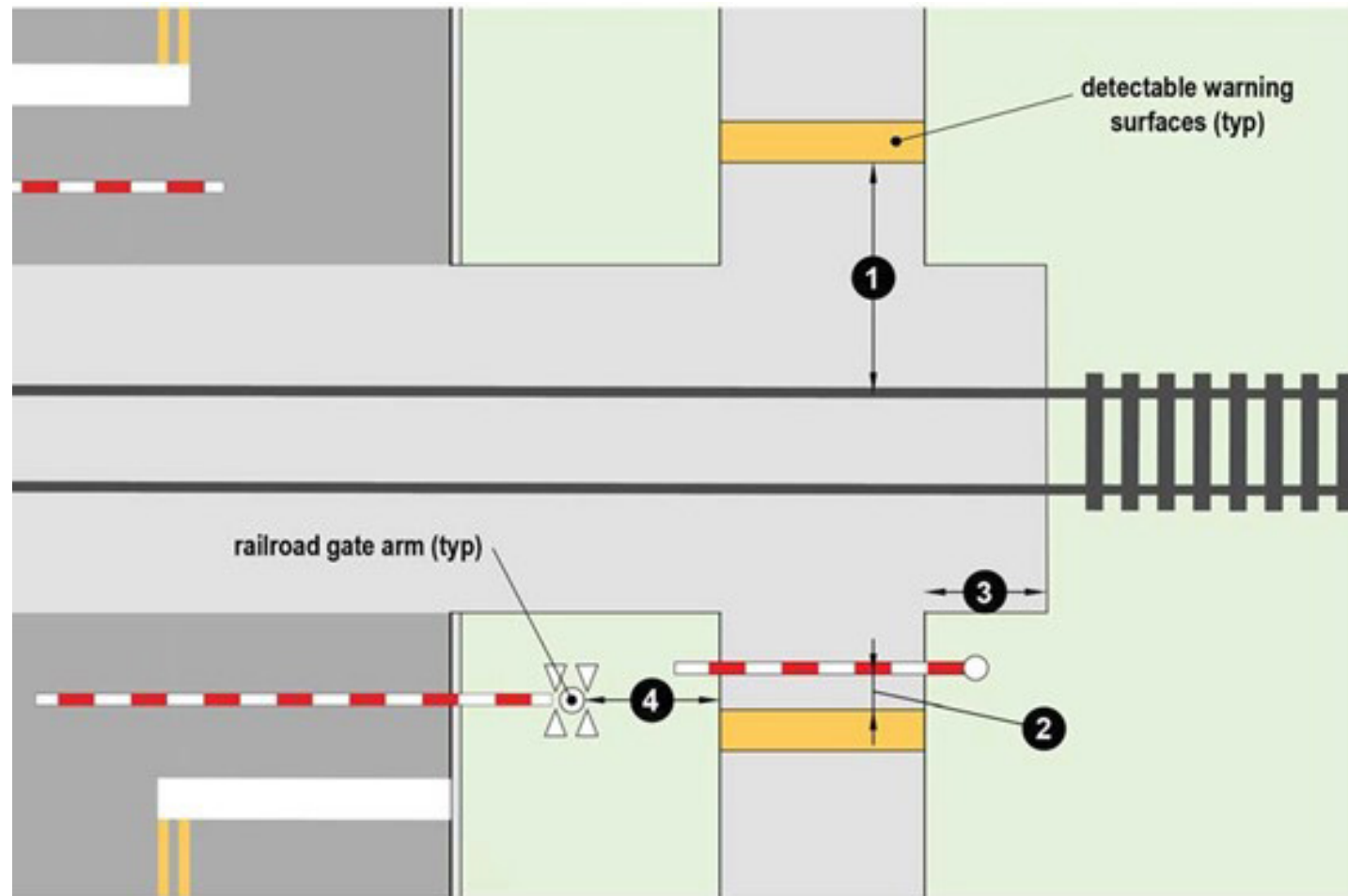
DEVELOPING THE PLAN

CONNECT ACROSS THE RAILROAD

Great downtowns are ones that make it easy for people to get around by means other than driving. The streets, and other public spaces, are well-designed and well-connected for people on foot. Downtown Tallapoosa's historic grid of streets makes it easy to navigate. It's almost perfect except that its connectivity is interrupted by the railroad which limits connections between "north" and "south" downtown to Head Avenue and Alewine Avenue. The good news is that downtown has two at-grade crossings that many other railroad downtowns do not. The challenge is that these crossings have been designed first and foremost for vehicles, especially Head Avenue which has been designed for freight truck traffic. There is no clear, safe path for pedestrians at either crossing which discourages downtown visitors from parking once and experiencing downtown by foot. The current design reinforces that every trip in downtown should be made by car.

The *Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan* provides guidance on how to improve these crossings for all users, maximizing safety for pedestrians to encourage more people to get out and about downtown. It proposes some big ideas on making some changes on where truck traffic should be focused to gain the maximum benefit in connecting pedestrian spaces downtown. Ultimately, more study will be needed to confirm the master plan's proposals. Alternative design ideas are included in case the city must shift course for any reason. These designs all show different ways of ensuring that downtown is a well-connected place for people.

CROSSINGS FOR PEOPLE



- 1** Nearest edge of detectable warning surfaces shall be placed 6 ft. minimum to 15 ft. maximum from the nearest rail. For skewed railways, in no instance shall the detectable warning be closer than 6 ft. measured perpendicular to the nearest rail.
- 2** When pedestrian gates are provided, detectable warning surfaces shall be placed on the side of the gates opposite the rail, 2 ft. from the approaching side of the gate arm. This criteria governs over Note **1**.
- 3** Crossing surface should extend 2' minimum past the outside edge of walk or shared use path.
- 4** Ensure that gate arm counterweight does not overlap with sidewalk when gate arm is extended.

Design Standards for Pedestrian Railroad Crossings
 Source: Ohio Department of Transportation

Downtown Tallapoosa’s two at-grade rail crossings aren’t currently designed to safely accommodate people walking between both sides of downtown. This is typically done to keep people out of the railway where safety is a valid concern. But the reality is that people do and will need to cross the railroad by means other than personal vehicle. Not providing these creates a drag on the experience and economics of downtown, and not providing a safe point of crossing invites people to cross uncontrolled at any point along the railroad. Safe, at-grade crossings are vital for the safety of pedestrians and thriving downtowns. National standards and best practices have enabled safe crossings for pedestrians across the country. This typically includes providing accessible sidewalks with detectable warning strips and signal arms at the point of crossing. Outside of the railway this involves creating a great experience on the approach streets to ensure pedestrians are properly guided to the controlled, safe point of crossing deterring impromptu crossings anywhere else.



Alabama St Rail Crossing

CROSSINGS FOR TRUCKS

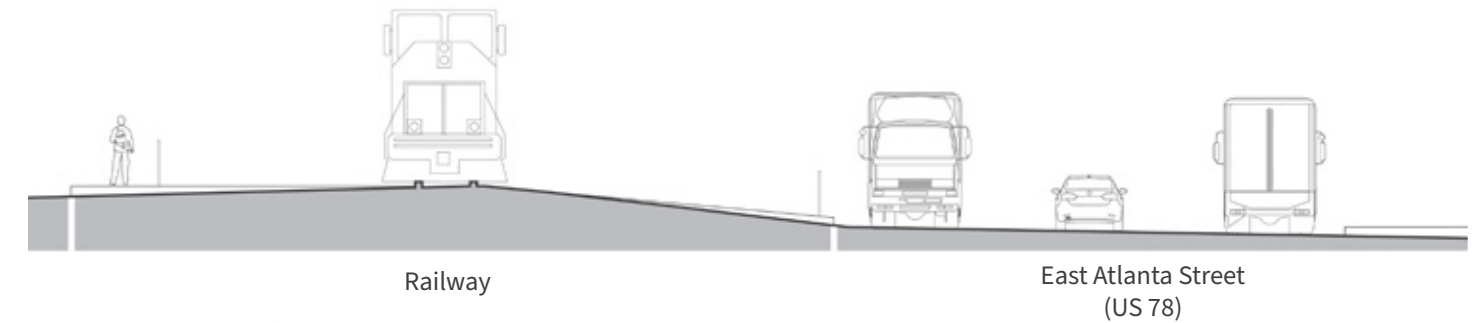
One challenge to improving downtown’s connections and overall experience is living with truck traffic. And while this is a challenge to connectivity and experience, clear, safe routes for freight traffic are important for active downtowns and the cities they serve. They’re a sign of a healthy economy in the surrounding area. The goal is to identify routes for freight traffic that balance the many needs of downtown with the safe and efficient movement of these vehicles. If rerouting isn’t possible, it’s important to design these routes in downtown, especially at railroad crossings, to accommodate all users from trucks to pedestrians: not one at the expense of the other.

Currently, truck traffic is routed between East Atlanta Street (US 78) and Alewine Ave via Head Avenue through Alabama Street. This crossing is the easiest at-grade crossing in downtown for trucks to make this connection. It’s gentler approach slopes provide more generous ground clearances for all types of trucks especially trucks with lowboy trailers (or other trucks with low ground clearances due to landing gear or aerodynamic skirts mounted under the trailer). Lowboy trailers

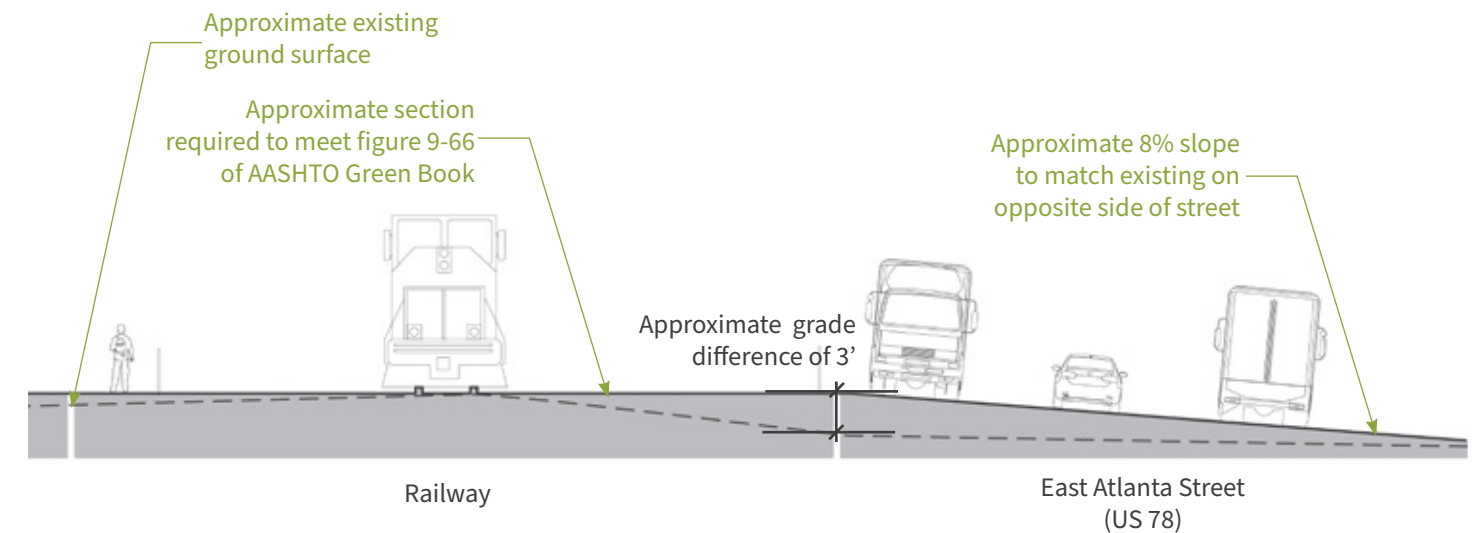
have a lower bed that allows for the towing of loads or equipment that might otherwise be too tall to fit under bridges, overpasses, or other vertical objects elsewhere along the truck route. Trucks with lowboy trailers or other low clearances can safely cross Head Avenue but not at Alewine Avenue.

The master plan proposes that the Alewine Avenue crossing be redesigned to accommodate lower clearance trucks so the crossing of the truck route can be moved away from downtown’s main streets of Alabama Street and Head Avenue. This would allow the crossing at Head Avenue to be narrowed and redesigned to ensure the safe crossing of pedestrian and light vehicle traffic only. A limited, preliminary analysis performed during the planning process showed this may be possible, but re-grading the Alewine Avenue crossing in a manner that protects the viability of businesses and overall experience along East Atlanta Street will be challenging. An engineering feasibility study should be conducted next to confirm this assumption. The next steps for this study are outlined in more detail in the implementation strategy.

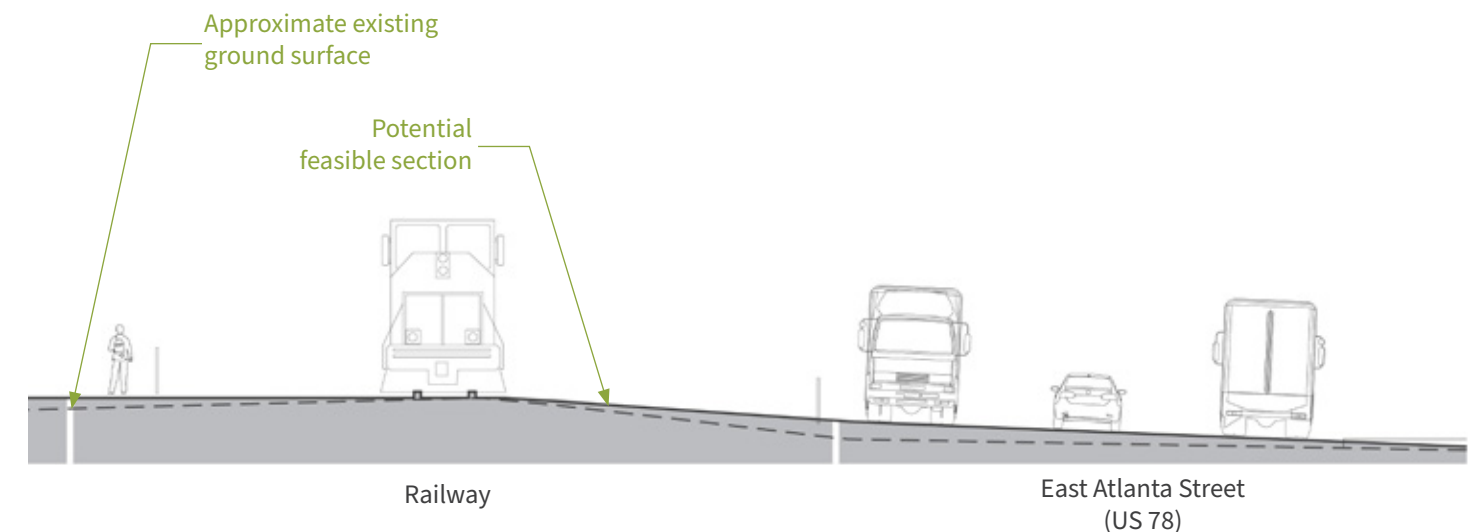
ALEWINE AVE RAILWAY CROSSING STUDY



Existing Crossing



AASHTO Standards

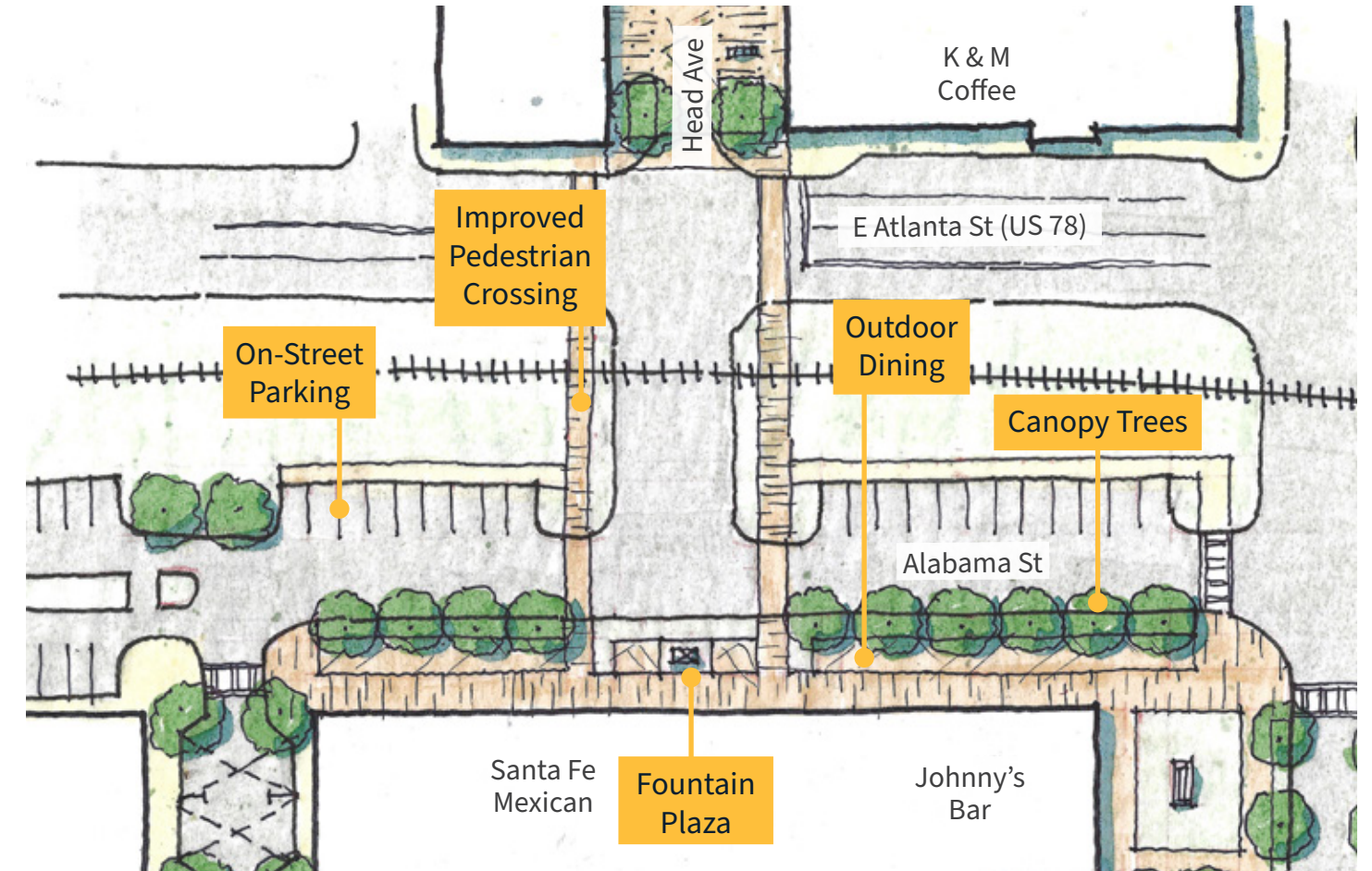


Potential Solution

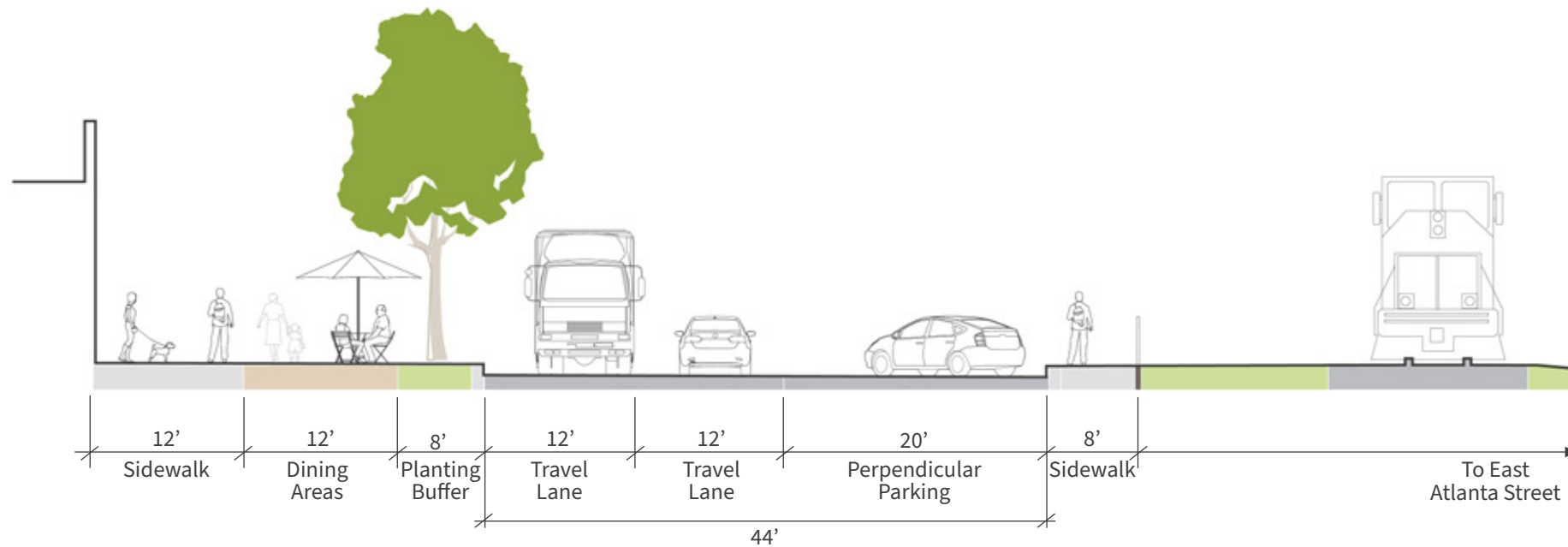
DESIGN ALTERNATIVE

The planning process attempted to confirm the ability to redesign the Alewine Avenue railroad crossing to accommodate low clearance vehicles. An existing topographic survey over a limited area of the crossing and inconsistent standards or guidance on ground clearances prevented the plan from reaching an absolute conclusion on this matter. Better data and additional study beyond the scope of the master plan is needed to confirm the feasibility of redesigning and reconstructing the Alewine Avenue crossing.

If such a study proves that rebuilding the crossing is not a feasible course of action, the master plan includes an alternate design for Alabama Street and Head Avenue. These alternate concepts show an Alabama Street and Head Avenue that are still redesigned for people but limits the space and scope of these improvements to maintain minimum lane sizes and turning radii to also accommodate freight traffic through the Head Avenue crossing. The streetscape along Alabama Street features wide sidewalks that can accommodate outdoor dining for adjacent restaurants protected from the roadway by a generous tree planting and amenity zone. Though it still protects space for Tallapoosa’s fountain on axis with Head Avenue, it no longer features the wider park spaces along the street. The crossing at Head Avenue would still be designed to ensure safe crossing for pedestrians; the design for the festival street on Head Avenue would remain unchanged.



Alternate Concept
Alabama Street at Head Avenue



Alternate Concept
Alabama Street

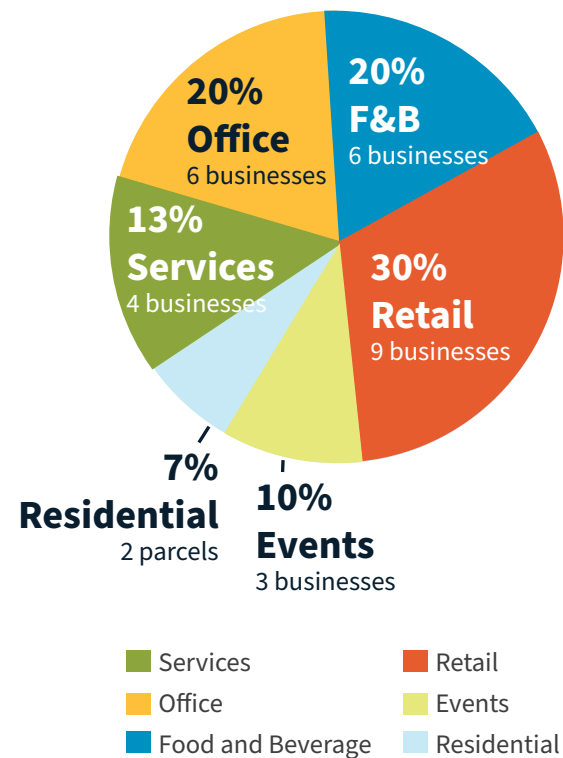
ACTIVATE BUILDINGS

Businesses are attracted to places where people congregate, and people are attracted to places that offer a variety of activity.

Vibrant downtowns have buildings full of stores, restaurants, services, and even places to live. While a big reason for undertaking this master plan was to find a way to get more of this activity in downtown's buildings, there is already a lot in Downtown Tallapoosa from which to build. Out of 50 properties that make up the core of downtown's commercial area, just over half of these contain buildings with an active use. These active buildings can be found on both sides of the railroad and include a good mix of uses ranging from popular restaurants like Santa Fe Mexican Restaurant and K&M Coffee, stores like Lipham's Department Store and Brooks Boutique, and important services like the Law Offices of Julie Williams Cain and Journey Realty Group. The building located at the corner of East Atlanta Street and Freeman Street even adds some residential uses to the mix in addition to those residences around downtown's edges.

This section of the master plan explores the vacancy issues surrounding downtown and provides recommendations to support existing and potential property and business owners to boost activity in downtown's buildings. However, the goal shouldn't just be to get more activity in downtown buildings but to also get the right mix of activity. For

example, The Union on Odessa offers a great, flexible space to host any number of special events and activities. Places such as the Union are an asset to downtown. But special events aren't necessarily a regular occurrence and dedicating too many of downtown's buildings for this type of use takes away space for other uses that could potentially serve everyday needs of residents and visitors, more frequently activating downtown. A diverse mix of uses is crucial for a downtown that is consistently an active place full of people.



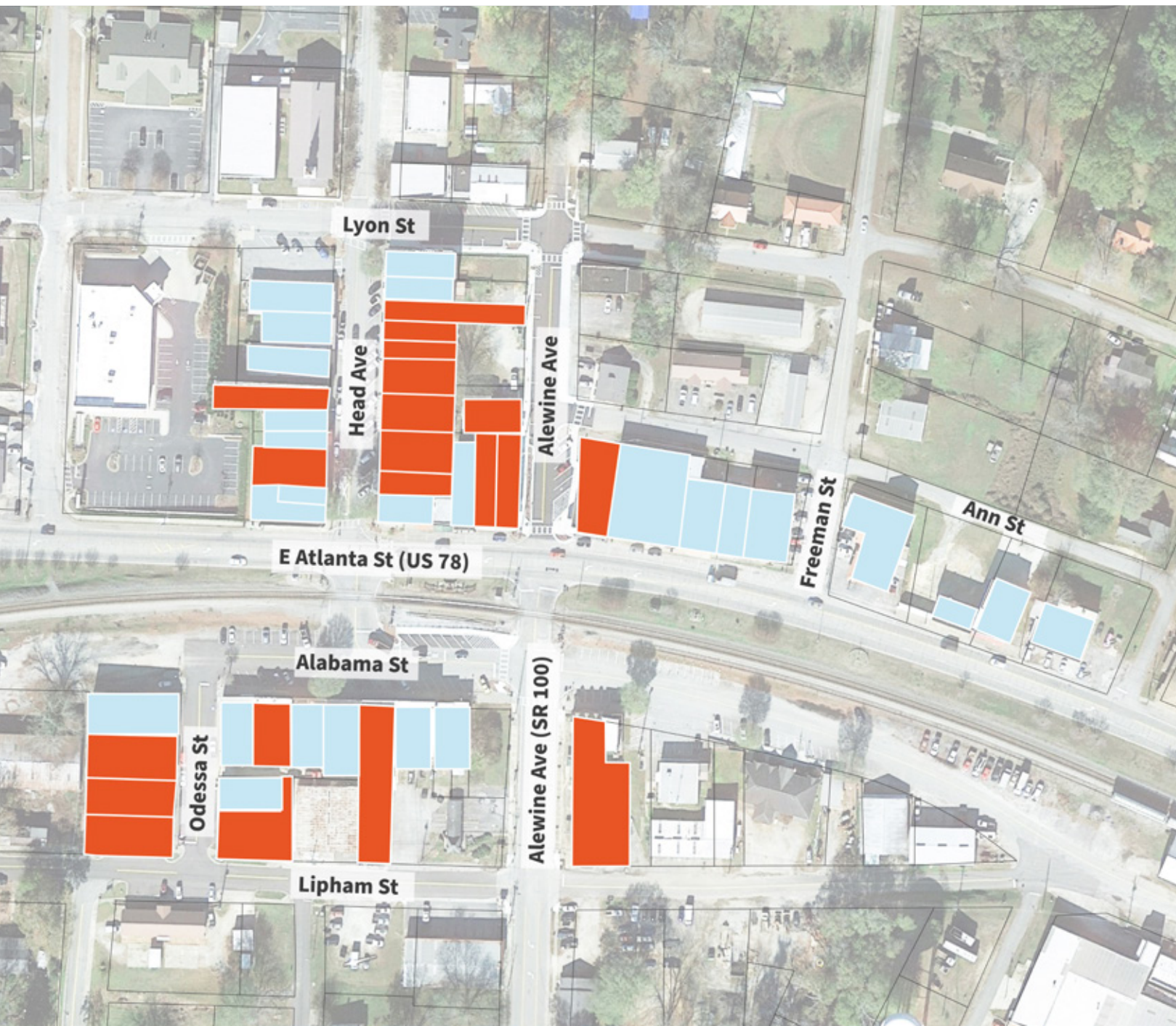


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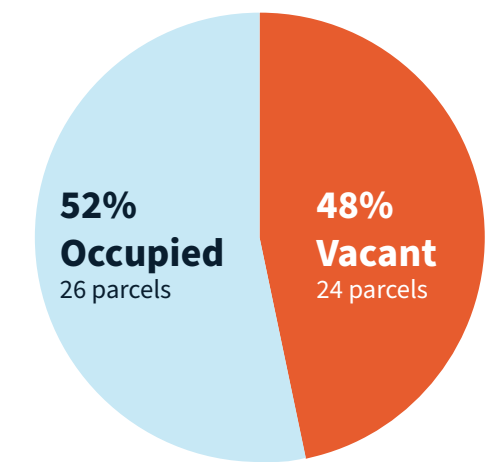
VACANT BUILDINGS

When it comes to Tallapoosa’s buildings, the glass is half full and half empty. Almost half of downtown’s buildings are vacant. The vacancies can be found on both the north and south sides of the railroad though more are clustered along Head Avenue which adds to the perception of a “vacant downtown” when compared to Alabama Street where active buildings, especially food and beverage spots, are clustered together with the vacant buildings being more dispersed and located on side streets. Filling these vacant buildings is top priority for Tallapoosa but shouldn’t overlook maintaining and supporting the needs of existing buildings.

collaboration with building owners and may require outside funding sources to make this possible. Downtown Tallapoosa’s historic district has the potential to be a gateway to such resources in that buildings located within the district would be eligible for federal and state tax credits and grants created to support the rehabilitation of historic buildings. More detail on this resource is provided in the plan’s implementation section “How We Get There.”



Repair and rehabilitation of these vacant buildings is also an important consideration when trying to attract new businesses. Many of these buildings have been vacant for long periods of time. Though comprehensive architectural and structural assessments of these buildings was not a part of the planning process, it’s safe to assume and many structures will likely have deferred maintenance issues or be in need of extensive, costly renovations. These can be barriers to returning these buildings to an active, productive use in downtown as it’s often difficult for new business owners to incur these costs on their own. These will require



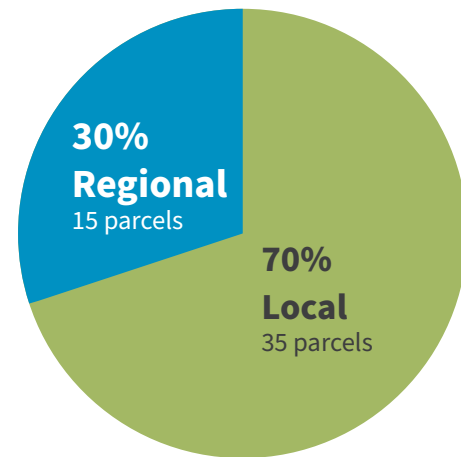
■ Occupied
■ Vacant

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Buildings may be vacant for any number of reasons. When buildings have been vacant for long periods of time, it's tempting to assume that owners may be distant or detached from their properties and the importance of investing in downtown. The reality is that there can be any number of reasons buildings may have prolonged vacancies. Lack of funding or access to other resources can be just as big of a factor as lack of motivation. Potential business owners, especially for new, small businesses, may also lack the experience of taking on some of the repairs or tenant buildout where a building isn't completely move-in ready. It's important to know and understand the uniqueness of these situations so the proper tools can be created and wielded to get businesses back in these buildings.

The creation of the master plan included gaining a better understanding of the needs and concerns of property owners and existing and potential businesses owners. The review of ownership records for downtown properties revealed that most of these properties (70%) are owned by people living right here in Tallapoosa. The remaining properties (30%) have owners that live outside of Tallapoosa but in nearby cities in Georgia and Alabama. In no cases was there a property owner that lives outside one of these two groups. This is good news for downtown in the sense that local and regional ownership usually implies

that detachment or distance from downtown is an unlikely a main reason for a lack of investment. This assessment is reinforced by comments and key themes that came out of the individual owner interviews. The key themes centered around concerns of being the first to take a risk in making an investment in downtown properties and the need for support and resources when deciding to take that risk. In other words, more carrots instead of sticks – support and incentives instead of penalties – are needed to push real downtown building projects from planning to action.



- Local (Tallapoosa)
- Regional (GA & AL)
- National/International



OWNERSHIP PROFILES

Five different owner profiles highlight the different ownership-need scenarios to better understand what tools are needed and who they apply to:



**Here,
Working On It**

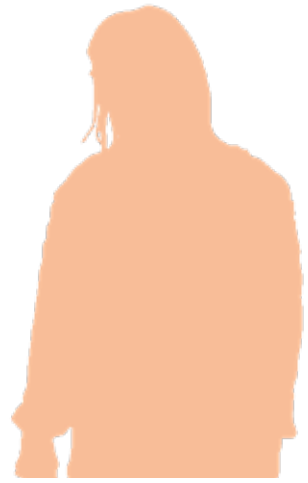
These property owners live in Tallapoosa or nearby and have already begun the process of setting up a new business either themselves or attracting a tenant to do so. They have the abilities and resources needed to complete any necessary building improvements, either major rehabilitation or simple tenant buildouts, and maintain the property/building afterwards. This is the best-case scenario where the need is for clear and simple building and business permitting services and guidance to ensure that the new business (or businesses) help support a healthy mix of activity in downtown. Future businesses, especially those by first-time business owners, may also benefit from training and support programs to help ensure the long-term success of these businesses in downtown.



**Here, Motivated,
Needs Resources**

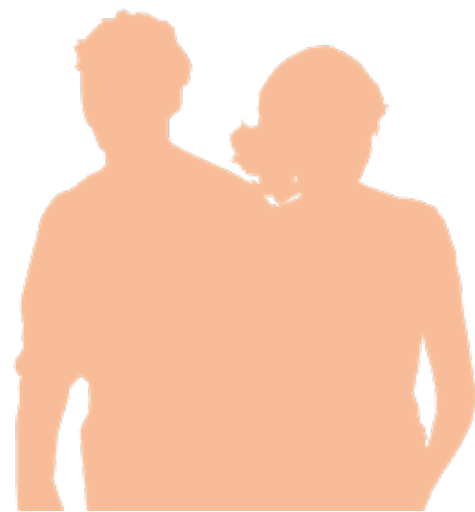
These property owners are also present and active in the Tallapoosa community. Like the first scenario, they are eager to make an investment in downtown but may lack some or all of the resources needed to turn motivation into action. These needs may range from support in recruiting the right kind and mix of businesses, funding support to help with any needed major building improvements and/or tenant buildouts, and possibly even architectural design support services where adapting the layout of downtown's older buildings to the modern needs of new tenants or efficiently configuring a space for multiple tenants is an obstacle.





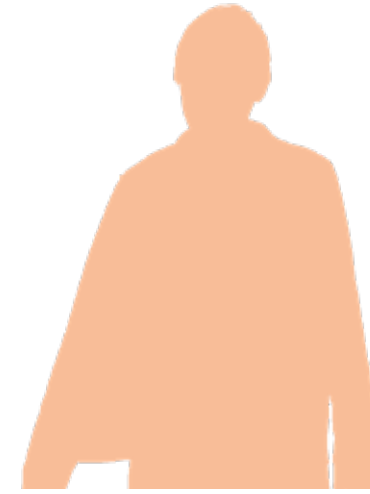
**Here, Resourced,
Needs A Nudge**

These property owners are in a similar situation to the first scenario where they are physically present within the city (or nearby) and already have access to resources needed to attract and support a new business or businesses into a downtown building that they are capable of physically repairing, restoring, or preparing on their own. The difference in this scenario is the property owner's own motivation. In this scenario the property owner is hesitant to make an investment in downtown. Success usually attracts more success, but often potential owners, as investors, are hesitant to be the first to make an investment in an uncertain market. They believe in downtown but need to be reassured their investment will be reciprocated. In this case, tools, programs, and other activities will need to be created and well communicated to give these owners the confidence and nudge they need to get going. While these can include more complex tasks like organizing a downtown or main street program or making physical improvements in downtown's streets and other public spaces, even activities like creating and adopting a downtown master plan can provide the needed signals that people are getting serious about improving downtown.



**Here, Resourced,
Needs A Push**

Some property owners are harder to motivate. They may have access to all the resources and information they need but need to see success before they decide to make an investment. They'll need to see other property owners and businesses be the first to take action and be successful. In this case it will be crucial to constantly demonstrate and communicate downtown's early success stories and initiate physical projects that improve downtown's public spaces. In cases of an extreme lack of motivation, encouraging or incentivizing these owners to market their properties for sale to a potentially motivated owner is another course of action. Patience and persistence will be critical. Blight taxes or other, similar penalties should only be considered as a last resort as these equate to more of a "shove" than a helpful "push."



**Not Here,
Not Selling**

This is the worst-case scenario and thankfully one that was not encountered during the owner interviews. This scenario is included here to acknowledge that it is a potential situation that could arise in the future. These property owners are physically removed from Tallapoosa and have little personal interest in the future of downtown. They are highly unlikely to make an investment in their property and are likely waiting until downtown has otherwise been successful (through the investments of others) to "sell high" in a better real estate market. The tools for these owners are similar to the extreme cases of the fourth scenario in that tools built to help broker a sale of the property or impose a penalty will be needed to compel action.



AVAILABLE TOOLS

The ownership scenarios mention a number of different tools for directly supporting property and business ownership to bringing downtown's buildings back to life, creating incentives to help motivate owners to action, and potential penalties to use when all else fails. When sparking downtown development, incentives and support programs rather than penalties, or carrots rather than sticks, are the best approaches. These are listed and summarized and below.

Funding Assistance

This is the most common type of support requested. Funding can be needed for a variety of reasons and made available in a variety of different methods. The most obvious need and use for funding is for the direct repair and rehabilitation of downtown's buildings ranging from simple cosmetic repairs to more extensive renovations and even include assistance to prospective tenants for interior buildouts needed to open a new business. Full or matching grants, tax credits, and low or no-interest loans are widely used funding assistance tools and many already exist through state, federal, and non-profit programs. The City of Tallapoosa even has experience in creating a Storefront Grant Program aimed at supporting downtown property owners in simple storefront repairs through funding provided by the Community Foundation of West Georgia. Many of these existing programs are designed to protect historic buildings and are accessible to Downtown Tallapoosa's property owners as a result of downtown's designated

historic district status. The master plan's implementation strategy in the next section "How We Get There" goes into more detail on a number of existing funding tools available to support downtown's buildings.

Historic Preservation Regulation & Guidance

Tools in this category can be viewed as both a prerequisite and supplement to many of the funding opportunities available to downtown as a result of its historic district status. Many of these funding programs require that rehabilitation and repairs to historic buildings be done in conformance with certain federal or state standards for preservation. This is often coupled with the local city or town establishing a special historic zoning district to reinforce these standards and a special commission, comprised of local community members and experts, to serve as a reviewing and recommending body to ensure that downtown building preservation projects are designed and completed per the established standards and guidelines as well as the best interest in downtown overall. Beyond establishing the regulations of historic preservation, many municipalities often find it beneficial to develop and implement programs designed to education property owners, especially those unfamiliar with historic preservation, on the City's vision for historic preservation in downtown, the established regulations and review process, and available funding resources.

Architectural Design Support

Many of downtown's historic buildings may require design and construction services that go beyond what the average property or business owner may be familiar with. This can range from navigating the nuances of building design and rehabilitation techniques in accordance with historic preservation standards, guidelines, and best practices to the creativity that may be required to design the interior of older buildings to accommodate the needs of today's businesses or efficiently designing these interior spaces to accommodate multiple businesses. Not all architectural or design firms are created equal, and many exclusively focus on this type of work. It can be beneficial for cities and towns where this work is expected to be commonplace to have identified and even built relationships with these types of design firms in an effort to help broker relationships with property owners embarking on this type of work. This is especially helpful in cities and towns where these types of design firms are not immediately present and must be found in other cities and towns nearby or regionally.



Permitting & Licensing Assistance

This can be an overlooked tool. Complex pathways or inordinate fees associated with permitting or licensing property and building improvements or the startup of a new business can potentially be barriers to undertaking building projects. The master plan process did not conduct an exhaustive review of the City's existing permitting programs and makes no opinion on their status in this regard. However, it would be beneficial as a next step for the City to work with downtown property owners to review these programs to ensure that they balance the jobs of eliminating any potential barriers to undertaking projects with protecting the quality of completed building projects in Downtown Tallapoosa.

Small Business Support

Rehabilitating and repairing downtown's historic buildings is only a productive exercise if it results in new businesses downtown. Part of Tallapoosa's work, especially in downtown, is attracting and recruiting the right mix of businesses and making sure that once the businesses are open, they have the support needed to be successful. Early support for businesses can include assistance in identification of prospective buildings or spaces in downtown, accessing funding or financing that may be needed to buildout and prepare the location for the businesses, and navigating the City's permitting and licensing requirements. As a business is getting ready to open or becoming established, first-time

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businesses owners may benefit from the support of training programs designed to help better manage staff, resources, or financial aspects. Similar to architectural design support, it's not necessarily incumbent on the City to provide these resources itself but rather know where these resources are already available (community or technical colleges or partnering financial institutions, for example) to promote their availability.

Activities & Events

Tallapoosa is famous for the New Year's Even "Possum Drop" that takes place every year in downtown at the intersection of Head Avenue and West Lyon Street. Events and activities like these are a great opportunity to put downtown under a spotlight and attract people to the everyday businesses, services, and other attractions that exist in downtown. Hosting more events and activities



in downtown, especially as new businesses are starting to open, can be a great way to keep drawing people downtown on a more regular basis. The Possum Drop is a huge undertaking requiring considerable time and resources to plan and host. But not all events and activities have to be to this same level of effort and draw. Many cities and towns have had similar success with offering smaller scale events that potentially have a bigger draw on city residents as opposed to visitors. Open streets events, pop-up outside musical performances with local artists, game nights, and even scavenger hunts are just a few such examples. During the master plan's public workshop week, the City and downtown businesses partnered to offer a "Meet me in Downtown" activity in which local businesses offered discounts on certain items or services and allowed visitors to enter a lottery for each business visited. This helped boost activity downtown during the week of the charrette and informed the development of the master plan.

Marketing & Communications

When it comes to supporting businesses downtown, especially new ones, communication is key. It's important to make sure that the City uses all of the tools at its disposal to keep lines of communications open with downtown property and business owners to ensure that they are constantly made aware of the different tools and services the City is developing to support them. Similar, two-way communication is important for activities and events to ensure

that downtown businesses are able to fully participate and engage residents and visitors during their occurrence and, at worst, are able to adjust their operations to minimize any potential short-term impacts. This same forum for communication will also be important when the City is ready to undertake major public space projects that will offer a long-term benefit to all businesses downtown, but can be highly disruptive during construction. It's important to have constant feedback to understand what tools are helping downtown businesses so these can be prioritized and expanded while others that may have less benefit or are not working as intended can be improved. Don't forget to package these tools and stories of downtown's success into marketing collateral that can be shared with prospective property and business owners!

Penalties

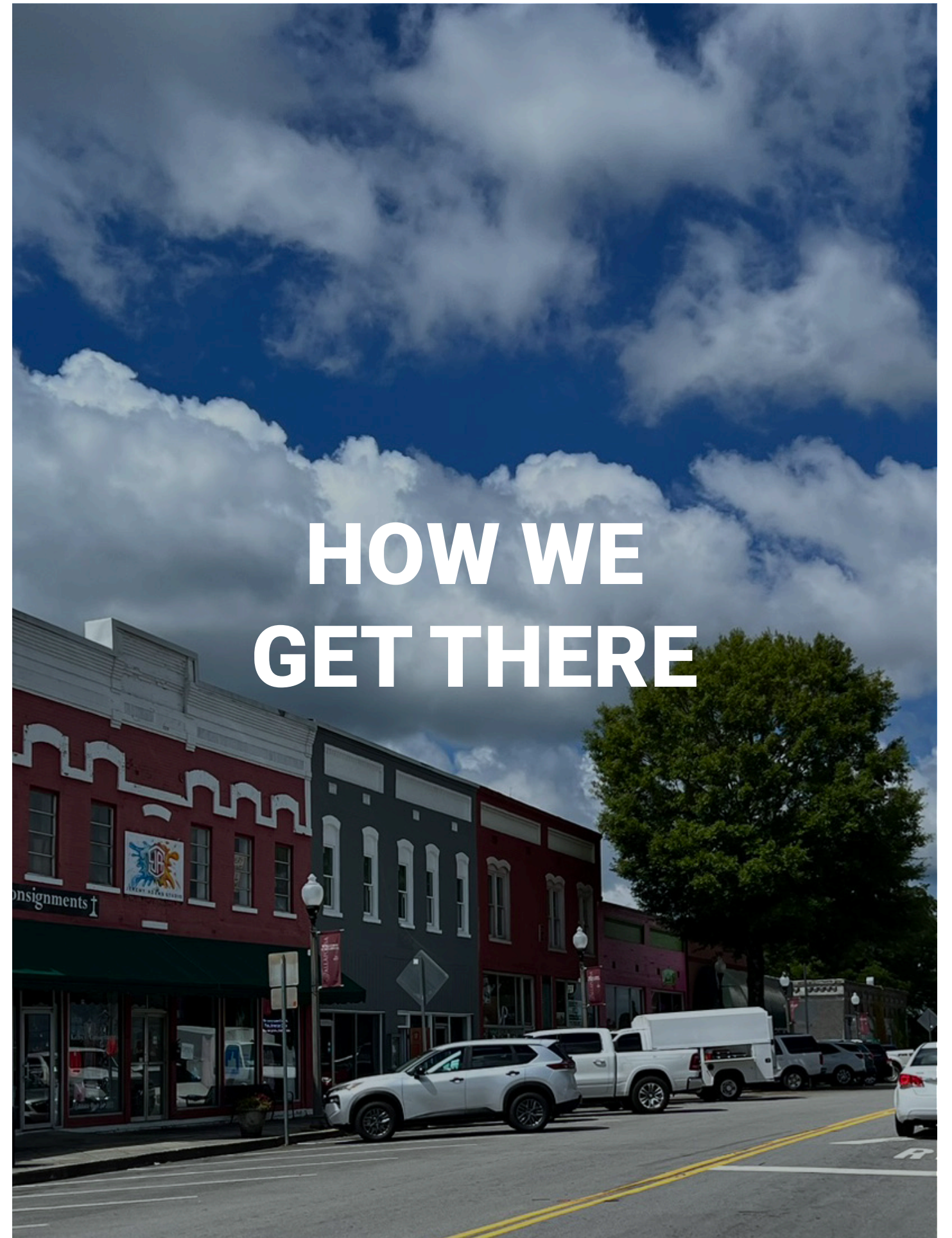
Incentives, programs, activities, and other tools designed to recruit, support, and sustain new businesses in downtown should be the City's primary focus for activating downtown's buildings. These can all have a greater, long-term positive impact for an active, vibrant downtown. But where "carrots" may simply not be enough to motivate owners, the City may turn to "sticks" or penalties. In places where building vacancy has been a persistent issue, cities and towns have turned to vacancy or "blight" taxes which impose financial penalties such as increased property taxes, fees, or fines, until certain property improvement issues have been addressed



or a building has been at least marketed for lease to prospective new tenants. The use of any such tools should be carefully considered. Financial penalties can create undue hardship on owners who are motivated but struggling to secure enough funding or other resources to improve buildings or establish new tenants. Use these tools carefully and sparingly when all else has failed.

Some of these tools are already found in Tallapoosa's toolbox but many are new ones to be explored and created. This will require the City of Tallapoosa to potentially add staff and work with local partners to be able to commit focused time and effort to develop these resources. All of these resources don't necessarily need to be created at the same time. The next section is the master plan's implementation strategy that outlines a series of steps that prioritizes the right tools for the right times understanding the city's existing assets, resources, and limitations.

HOW WE GET THERE



IMPLEMENTATION

The Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan is a long-term vision for restoring downtown as a vibrant place with fully occupied buildings and an inviting space full of people of all ages. Though the footprint of Downtown Tallapoosa is smaller compared to many places, the investment and effort required to create safe connections across the railroad and the highway, successfully restore dozens of buildings and recruit businesses to go in them, and finalize and construct new designs for key downtown streets – Head Avenue, Alabama Street, and Odessa Avenue – will unfold over many years, likely decades.

The goal of every plan is its successful implementation, and this master plan is no different. Though this plan is considered a long-term vision, this section, the plan's implementation strategy, outlines a series of key steps to build on the work begun with this master plan to inform a path forward that is realistic, implementable, and sustainable over the next five years. This will require the City of Tallapoosa and its partners build capacity and access new resources in order to provide the stewardship and involvement necessary to ensure that downtown becomes a place for the community once again.

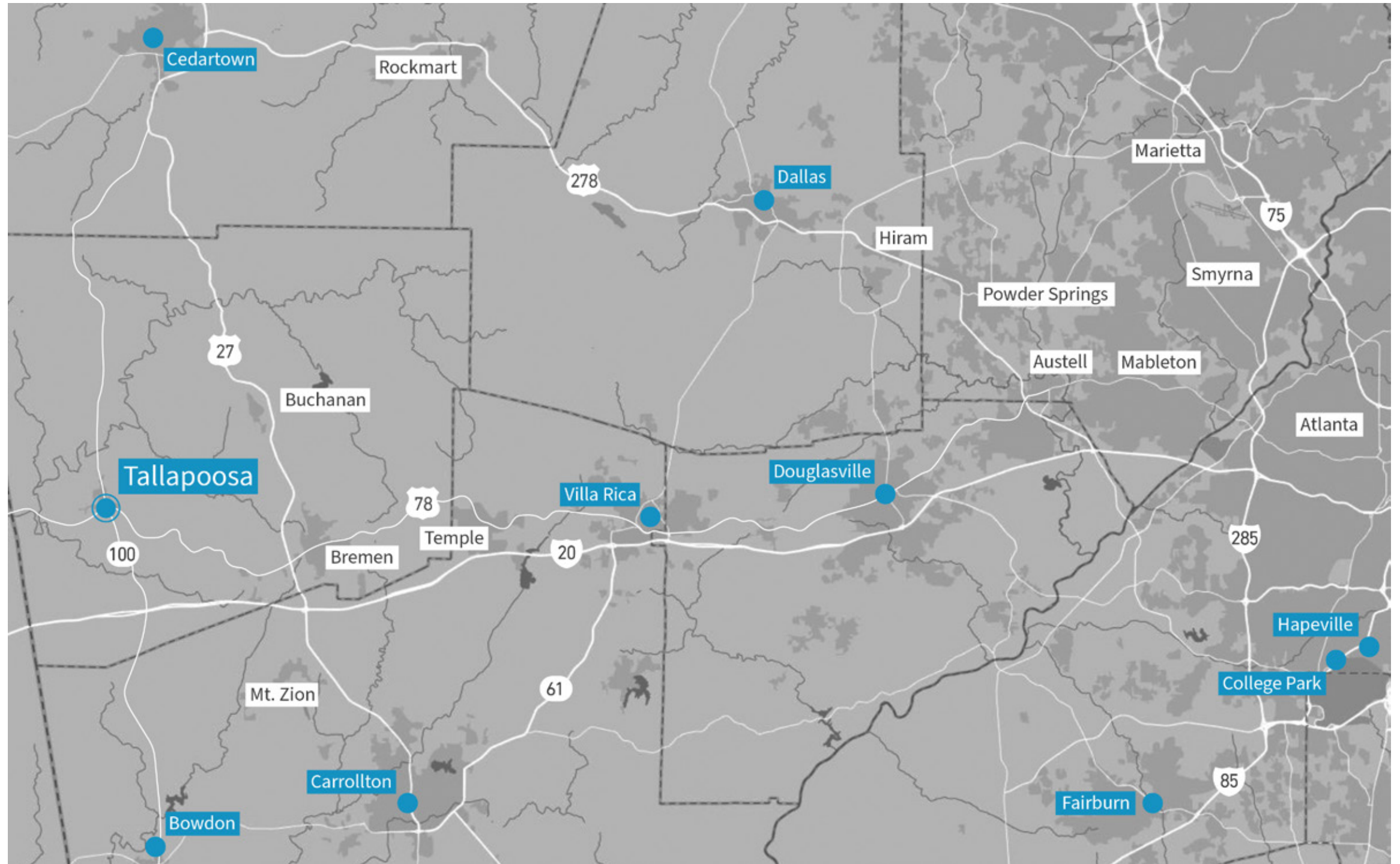


YEAR 1: BUILD CAPACITY

The master plan proposes ambitious projects for downtown and numerous new tools for downtown’s property and business owners. To do that, the City of Tallapoosa will first need to develop staff, skills, and resources beyond what already exists in City Hall and in partner organizations. Many of the grants and other funding sources that are available to help with downtown efforts require time and knowledge to competitively navigate the process. Building the capacity to meet these challenges won’t happen overnight and, with limited resources, will need to be a thoughtful step-by-step approach.

Many of Tallapoosa’s nearby peers have successfully done this by implementing a Main Streets program.

Regional Main Street Programs



CREATE A “MAIN STREETS” ORGANIZATION

Many cities and towns similar in size to Tallapoosa have found success in revitalizing downtown by starting with the creation of a “Main Streets” program. These programs often have dedicated staff and resources that can focus on the many needs of a successful downtown. Based on a national program started by the National Trust for Historic Places, the Georgia Main Streets Program has served over one hundred communities over the last five decades by providing technical assistance, resource materials, job posting support, and training (Source: Georgia Main Streets Program at www.georgiamainstreet.org). The Main Streets approach includes helping promote and showcase downtowns, harnessing local economic opportunities including supporting small business growth, designing and implementing important capital projects, and guiding cities and towns to build the organizational structure and accessing the resources they need to accomplish these things.



Georgia’s Main Street Program is administered by the state’s Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The map on the previous page shows many nearby Georgia communities that are participating in this program. Tallapoosa’s first step in implementing this master plan should be to contact DCA’s Georgia Main Streets Program representatives to begin this process of enrolling in this program and gaining access to guidance and resources that will be vital to achieving everything envisioned in the Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan. This would include identifying an initial champion, potentially an executive director, with the responsibility and agency to begin guiding Tallapoosa through the first steps of both establishing Tallapoosa’s Main Streets program and implementation of the master plan.

START ACCESSING FUNDING SOURCES



Current funding resources in Tallapoosa may be limited, but there are a variety of sources available to support Tallapoosa in implementing different aspects of the Downtown Master Plan. These funding opportunities exist at the federal, state, and regional levels of government as well as non-profit organizations. Some are more complex and time-consuming to apply for than others, but this is often coupled with access to a greater amount of funding. Some of these opportunities are accessible directly by individual property and business owners, but the majority require that the City play some sort of role in applying for and administering the award depending on the specific details of the funding opportunity. That’s why it will be crucial for Tallapoosa to focus on building capacity, specifically staff and grant writing and management capabilities, in the first years of the master plan’s implementation. The tables on the following pages provides numerous funding sources that Tallapoosa may be eligible for. Many of these focus on the

rehabilitation and preservation of downtown’s historic buildings, but others are available to help with the master plan’s public space projects on Head Avenue, Alabama Street, and Odessa Street. The tables indicate a best likely use for each funding source. Additionally, the table helps explain the difference in funding type and the level of effort required to pursue it.



Funding Types

It's important to note that there are different types of funding sources available. While grant opportunities may be the most familiar, there are other ways by which funds can be accessed. For this master plan, these have been defined in three categories:

Grants: Grants award money directly to a municipality or individual property or business owner. Often these require some type of match by the applicant either a dollar-for-dollar match award or a percentage share of the total funding request up to a maximum amount. Also be aware that for many grants, funding is paid on a reimbursement basis meaning that the grantee must expend the funds out-of-pocket and then submit for reimbursement by the grantor.

Tax Credits: These funding opportunities allow an individual to claim personal tax credits typically in the amount of funds spent for a specific purpose during the same tax year. Historic preservation tax credits are a popular tool and great example where property owners can apply for tax credits (usually with a cap on the maximum amount) based on funds spent to rehabilitate and preserve a historic structure when the preservation work is completed to specific standards.

Loans: Many federal, state, and regional entities offer low or no interest loans as

a form of financial assistance to either municipalities or individual property or business owners. These often have terms that can be much more favorable and accessible by applicants compared to conventional loans through established financial institutions. The specific uses for the loans to dependent on the unique purpose of the loan program.

Revenue Capture: Many downtowns find it beneficial to establish itself as a Community Improvement District (CID) or Business Improvement District (BID). While these help build capacity for downtowns similar to the a Main Streets program, they also have the ability to create an additional property tax increment (an additional millage) to the properties located within the district. The revenue from this assessment can be used to fund anything from general maintenances to capital projects back within the same district. This is a tool best reserved for established downtowns with numerous active businesses and low vacancy rates to ensure that the additional tax does hinder emerging businesses and generates enough revenue to accomplish projects planned for downtown. These are not included in the funding sources table but should be considered a potentially useful tool for Downtown Tallapoosa down the road.

Level of Effort

Some funding sources are easier to access than others. The difficulty of accessing a particular funding opportunity over another is often defined by the complexity of the application process, level of competition (national stage vs. state or regional), and the internal capacity needed to manage the funds. The Downtown Funding Opportunities table indicates a general "Level of Effort" to help Tallapoosa understand which opportunities may require additional steps to unlock versus those that are low-hanging fruit and accessible now. They are defined as follows:

Low: Downtown Tallapoosa and its needs perfectly fit the intended purpose of the funding opportunity. Competition is limited to the local or regional level. The application portal and process are very intuitive with minimal supporting documentation required. Current City staff could potentially complete the application process with minimal or no outside assistance. Representatives from the sponsoring organization are easy to reach for assistance in both the application and award process. For grant opportunities, these have no or a very low match requirement.

Medium: The needs of Downtown Tallapoosa have a strong position within the funding opportunity's stated purpose. Competition for these opportunities happen at the state level meaning there

are more applications in the pool to compete against. These application processes may be more complex and require more documentation or a demonstration of commitment. For grant opportunities, these have a standard 1:1 or 20% standard match requirement.

High: These funding opportunities are a fit for downtown but are offered at the national level where the competition and the application requirements are the greatest. The trade-off is that the potential funding amounts at this level are the highest. The application process is extensive and often requires experienced staff or consultant assistance in completing the process. Support from elected representatives may be required to bring attention to and champion the application. For grant opportunities, these also have a standard 1:1 or 20% standard match requirement.

Very High: This category contains all of the details of the "High" category but also includes prerequisite tasks before being in a position to be eligible to pursue these opportunities. For example, certain federal historic preservation grants require that a historic district or structure be classified at a "national level" of significance to be eligible. This would require revisiting and amending downtown's current historic district certification which is classified at a "local level" of significance.

HOW WE GET THERE

Potential Funding Sources for Downtown

This table serves as a preliminary list showing many of the funding opportunities and types that are a fit for Downtown Tallapoosa's needs and the projects recommended in this master plan.

NAME	TYPE	SPONSOR	LEVEL	PURPOSE	USE	AMOUNT	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	CYCLE	APPLICANT	EFFORT	COMMENTS
Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC)	Tax Credit	National Park Service (NPS)	Federal	Provide an incentive to those who own and want to improve their historic properties by completing a rehabilitation project	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	Federal income tax credit equal to 20% of the project's qualified rehabilitation expenses ONLY for income-producing properties	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic District; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	Open Until Annual Credit Amounts Are Met	Property Owners	Medium	Georgia Historic Preservation Division can support the applications for both federal and state tax credits
Historic Preservation Easement	Tax Benefit	National Park Service (NPS)	Federal	Provide an incentive to those who want to permanently protect a historic property	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	Federal income tax deduction, or other benefit, dependent on the specific terms for the history property typically the fair market value of the established easement	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic District	Always Open	Property Owners	Medium	Through the easement, a property owner places restrictions on the development of or changes to the historic property, then transfers these restrictions to a preservation or conservation organization
State Income Tax Credit for Rehabilitated Historic Property	Tax Credit	Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD)	State	Provide an incentive to those who own and want to improve their historic properties by completing a rehabilitation project	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	State income tax credit equal to 25% of the project's qualified rehabilitation expenses up to \$1000,000 for residential properties and 25% of the project's qualified rehabilitation expenses up to \$5 million for non-residential properties	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the Georgia Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a historic district; project work must meet the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Standards for Rehabilitation and completed within 2 years	Open Until Annual Credit Amounts Are Met	Property Owners	Medium	Georgia Historic Preservation Division can support the applications for both federal and state tax credits
State Preferential Property Tax Assessment Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property	Tax Credit	Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD)	State	Provide an incentive to those who own and want to improve their historic properties by completing a rehabilitation project	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	Allows freezing of property tax assessments for up to 9 years for rehabilitation projects that increase the building's fair market value of 50% for residential buildings, 75% for mixed-use buildings, or 100% for commercial/professional buildings	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the Georgia Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a historic district; project work must meet the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Standards for Rehabilitation and completed within 2 years	Always Open	Property Owners	Medium	Would limit the tax revenue generated from rehabilitated properties

HOW WE GET THERE

NAME	TYPE	SPONSOR	LEVEL	PURPOSE	USE	AMOUNT	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	CYCLE	APPLICANT	EFFORT	COMMENTS
Savings America's Treasures	Grant	National Park Service (NPS)	Federal	Celebrate America's premier cultural resources in the new millennium	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	1:1 match for min. \$125,000 / max. \$750,000 for qualified rehabilitation expenses; max. one grant per property (lifetime)	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic District at National Significance Level; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	Summer: Applications Open Fall: Applications Due	State Governments Local Governments Tribal Governments Nonprofit Organizations Educational Institutions	High	Existing downtown historic district would need to be elevated from local to national level significance
History of Equal Rights	Grant	National Park Service (NPS)	Federal	Preserve and protect sites associated with efforts to achieve equal rights; intended to include the broadest possible interpretation of equal rights for any American	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	\$15,000-\$75,000 for pre-preservation projects (planning and design); \$75,000- \$750,000 for preservation projects; match not required but a competitive factor	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic District or National Landmark whose significance is associated with equal rights; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	Fall: Applications Open Winter: Applications Due	State Governments Local Governments Tribal Governments Nonprofit Organizations	High	Historic structures would need to be assessed for association with/ contributions to equal rights
African American Civil Rights (AACR) Preservation	Grant	National Park Service (NPS)	Federal	Preserve and protect sites associated with the struggle for equality from the transatlantic slave trade forward	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	\$15,000-\$75,000 for pre-preservation projects (planning and design); \$75,000- \$750,000 for preservation projects; match not required but a competitive factor	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic District or National Landmark whose significance is associated with African American Civil Rights; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	Summer: Applications Open Fall: Applications Due	States and Territories Local Governments Tribal Governments Nonprofit Organizations	High	Historic structures would need to be assessed for association with/ contributions to African American Civil Rights
Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program	Grant	National Park Service (NPS)	Federal	Foster economic development in rural communities through the rehabilitation of historic buildings in those communities	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	\$200,000-\$750,000 to fund local subgrant programs for qualified rehabilitation expenses; match not required but a competitive factor	Rural communities with populations of less than 50,000; properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic ; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	Fall- Applications Open Winter- Applications Due	State Historic Preservation Offices Certified Local Governments Tribal Historic Preservation Offices Nonprofit Organizations Special District Governments	High	CLG status generally involves creating a local historic preservation ordinance and establishing a commission to administer the ordinance (could be a Main Street's Directors job)
Railroad Crossing Elimination Program	Grant	US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	Federal	Provides a federal funding opportunity to fund highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods	Railroad Crossing Improvements	For capital projects of no less than \$1M except for planning projects; requires a 20% local match	For capital, planning, and/or design/ development projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods such as grade separation or closure, track relocation, improvement/installation of safety measures	July- Notice of Opportunity September- Applications Due	State Governments Local Governments Tribal Governments Metropolitan Planning Organizations Public Port Authority	Very High	Funded for FY23 and FY24 under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA); continuation of this funding opportunity will be contingent upon a continuation of this or creation of a similar act

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NAME	TYPE	SPONSOR	LEVEL	PURPOSE	USE	AMOUNT	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	CYCLE	APPLICANT	EFFORT	COMMENTS
Transportation Alternatives Program	Grant	Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)	State	Create an opportunity for local governments to pursue non-traditional transportation related activities such as pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian streetscaping projects	Street Improvements	Project dependent; requires a 20% local match	Projects must be financially feasible; must demonstrate capacity for matching funds and project management and operations; must be an adequately staffed and equipped Local Public Agency (LPA)	August-Applications Due	Local Governments Regional Transportation Authorities Transit Agencies Natural Resources or Public Lands Agencies School Districts, Local Education Agencies, or Schools Tribal Governments	High	Obtaining LPA status or partnering with an agency that already has this status is a pre-requisite; more information on GDOT's certification process here: www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/Pages/LAP.aspx
Local Access Roads Program	Grant	Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)	Regional	Link the region's communities, businesses, and residents to the Appalachian Development Highway System and other key parts of the region's transportation network	Street Improvements	Project dependent; up to \$5M per state annually; requires a 50% local match for FY25	For preliminary engineering, right-of-way, and/or construction of road projects that serve industrial and commercial areas, residential developments, recreational areas, and educational areas	Contact State Program Manager	Local Governments (in coordination with state DOTs)	High	Federal funding opportunity that will require support and coordination from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and Department of Transportation (DOT)
1772 Foundation Grants for Georgia	Grant	The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation	Nonprofit/State	Assist historic preservation projects in Georgia	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	1:1 match up to \$10,000 for exterior repairs/rehabilitation of historic projects	Buildings can not be privately owned; applicants must have a 501 (c)(3) designation or an approved fiscal agent agreement with the designation; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	December-LOI Due February-Applications Due	501 (c)(3) Organizations	Low	Private property owners and City cannot apply directly
Callahan Incentive Grant	Grant	The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation	Nonprofit/State	Provide funding for historic preservation projects in the state of Georgia	Downtown Buildings (within the designated historic district)	1:1 match up to \$5,000 for "bricks and mortar" improvements to a historic site	Properties must be listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National Register Historic District; project work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	December-LOI Due February-Applications Due	Nonprofit or Governmental Organizations	Low	Must demonstrate significant community impact
Fox Theatre Grant Program	Grant	Fox Theatre	Nonprofit/State	Award funding for historic theatres in the state of Georgia for projects that provide significant economic and cultural impact to the communities they serve	Downtown Buildings (Former Grand Theatre at 114 Head Ave or the Tallapoosa Civic and Cultural Arts Center)	1:1 match (including in-kind matches) for the following project types: \$20,000-\$100,000 for Preservation & Facilities Grant \$20,000-\$50,000 for Historic Structure & Studies & Planning Grant \$20,000-\$25,000 for Technical Assistance Grants \$20,000-\$100,000 for Urgent/Emergency Funds (no match required)	To the greatest extent possible, any project plans for restoration or rehabilitation that result from the grant project must conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties; grant project must begin within 6 months of award	June-Applications Open July-Letter of Intent Due August-Applications Due	Public Agencies 501 (c)(3) Organizations	Medium	Grantee organizations may receive operations expertise and guidance through seminars and other professional development opportunities as available

HOW WE GET THERE

NAME	TYPE	SPONSOR	LEVEL	PURPOSE	USE	AMOUNT	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	CYCLE	APPLICANT	EFFORT	COMMENTS
Community Impact Grant	Grant	Community Foundation of West Georgia	Nonprofit/State	Enhance the quality of life in West Georgia by supporting a wide range of projects that inspire creativity, advance education, promote environmental stewardship, and uplift social services	Downtown Buildings	Limitation on amount subject to the program's annual funding; in 2024 \$285,000 was awarded to 27 organization (or about \$10,500 per organization)	Contact the sponsor for the most current requirements	May-Applications Open August-Applications Due	Nonprofit or Governmental Organizations	Low	This is the program currently leveraged to create Tallapoosa's Storefront Grant Program. This could be used as "gap" funding when packaged with other funding opportunities.
EDA Revolving Loan Program	Loan	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission	Regional	Provides small business gap financing to achieve economic development goals by leveraging job creation and private investment in the 15-County northwest Georgia region	Small Businesses	Up to \$250,000 of 90% of the total project cost with 10% borrower match; 3-7% interest rate depending on project parameters	For small businesses in the 15-County Northwest Georgia region including Haralson County for business acquisition, conversion, enlargement, repair, or modernation; purchase of land and improvements including existing buildings and facilities; purchase of equipment, machinery, or supplies, start-up costs and working capital	Always Open	Small Businesses	Medium	Cannot be used for passive investment, for relocation which may result in job losses in the original area, to subsidize interest payments on an existing loan, or to refinance existing debt



Restoring Tallapoosa's Civic and Cultural Arts Center

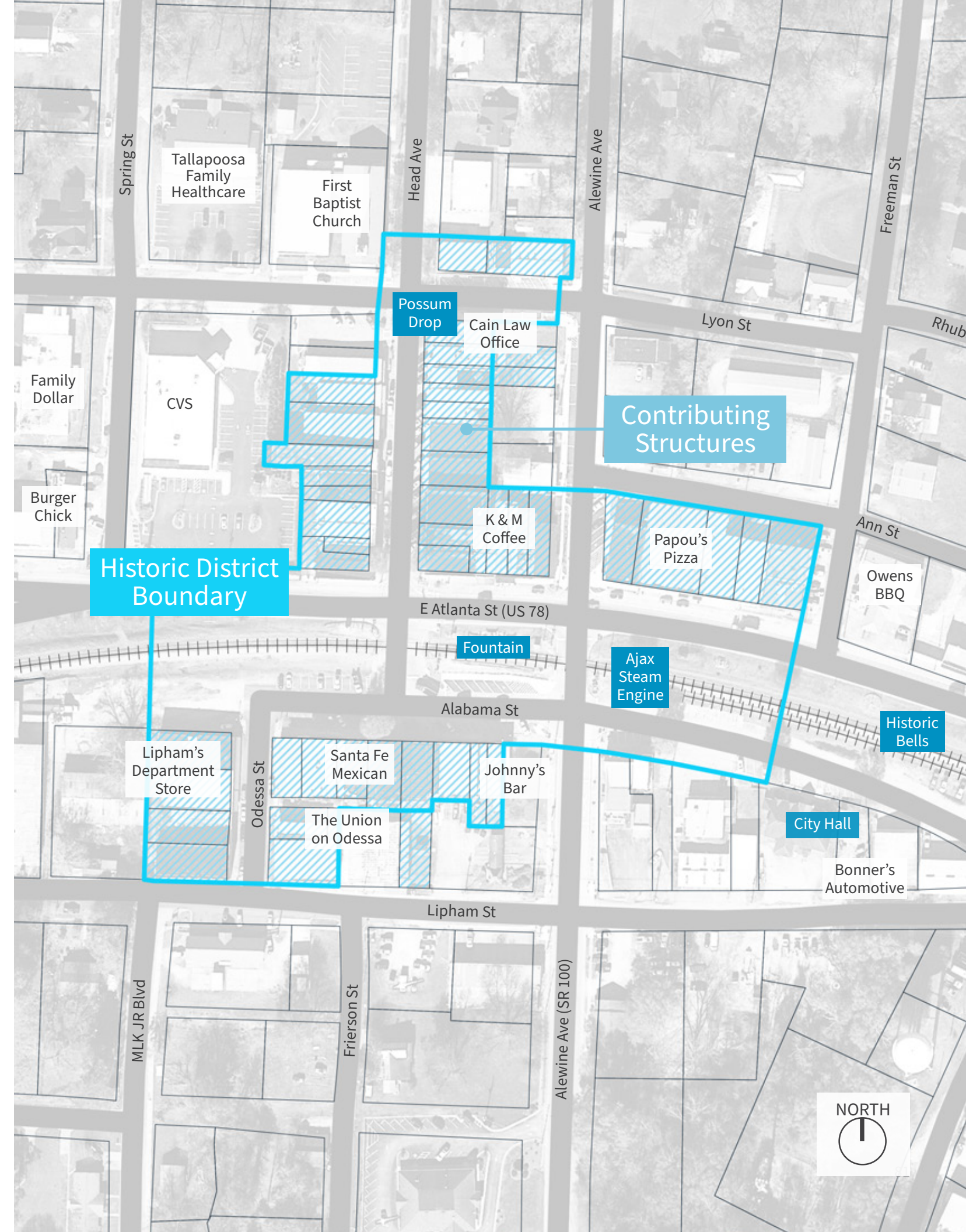
Just a short distance from the heart of downtown lies Tallapoosa's Civic and Cultural Arts Center. The building contains a large auditorium suitable for a variety of uses from large public meetings to music recitals and theater performances. It also features support spaces that can be used for meetings, classrooms, and offices. Though the Civic Center was able to accommodate the master plan's Public Kick-off Meeting, it needs a lot of repairs to return to regular, productive use for the community. Since it's not located within downtown's historic district, it won't qualify for the usual historic preservation funding opportunities. Designating this structure as a standalone historic building or pursuing funding opportunities that serve arts and culture purposes (see Funding Opportunities Table) are ways to potentially secure funding to restore the Civic Center as a cultural asset that serves Downtown Tallapoosa.

YEAR 2: LEVERAGE THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

In 2016, Downtown Tallapoosa was certified as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. Beyond just recognizing the history of downtown, this status unlocks many funding opportunities aimed at rehabilitating and preserving downtown's contributing buildings that are located within the historic district boundary. These funding opportunities are listed on the Downtown Funding Opportunities table. Tallapoosa's next step in implementing the master plan is to start accessing these opportunities and putting them to work in downtown.

Access to many of these opportunities will be at the state and national levels. This will require the City of Tallapoosa to first work with the State of Georgia's Historic Preservation Division (HPD) to establish itself as a Certified Local Government (CLG). This process involves developing a

historic preservation zoning ordinance for downtown properties that will establish minimum standards for preservation and a local review process for the rehabilitation of downtown buildings. It includes establishing a commission of locally appointed representatives to support the review and approval of applications for construction work within the historic district under this new ordinance. HPD plays an active role in guiding Georgia communities through this setup process, and this would be an excellent focus area for an initial Downtown Tallapoosa Main Streets director where the Georgia Main Street program can provide additional resources in this effort. Once Tallapoosa has established itself as a CLG, the focus can shift to working directly with property owners to market these funding opportunities, partnering through the application processes, and upon award, managing the award of funds as needed.



YEAR 3: MOVE ON THE RAILROAD

Giving downtown property owners the tools and resources they need to work on downtown’s buildings is the initial priority for Tallapoosa. The next is getting to work on the public space projects identified for downtown’s streets. These are the “glue” that will ultimately hold downtown’s beautifully rehabilitated buildings together. The first step in implementing those designs is completing the work the master plan started in studying downtown’s two at-grade railroad crossings. Achieving the full vision of the master plan of transforming Alabama Street, including a vastly improved pedestrian crossing to Head Avenue, is contingent upon rerouting freight truck traffic to the crossing at Alewine Avenue so that downtown visitors can move seamlessly between downtown’s main streets. From limited survey data of the Alewine Avenue at-grade crossing, the master plan was able to making the following determinations:



FHWA Compliance

Both the Alewine Avenue and Head Avenue at-grade crossings are not in compliance with the Federal Highway Authority’s design standards for maximum slopes approaching at-grade crossings to accommodate tractor trailers. However, these maximum slopes often have a high safety factor that often makes these slopes difficult to achieve in places with adjacent topographic features like the running grade along East Atlanta Street. In reality, both crossings work for a standard tractor trailer with typical ground clearances.



“Lowboy” Tractor Trailers

Accommodating lowboy tractor trailers is the big challenge. These trucks have minimal ground clearance due to low beds, aprons, or legs. More gradual approach slopes are needed to accommodate these trucks. They can currently pass the crossing at Head Avenue but do not have the clearance necessary for Alewine Avenue. Unfortunately, FHWA provides no guidance or standards on specific minimum clearance for these vehicles. Determining a minimum clearance as a basis for design in Tallapoosa requires additional research and field observations that were not included in the scope of the master plan.



Grading

Any re-grading around the Alewine Avenue crossing, including any potential retaining walls, must be constrained to the existing railway and adjacent road right-of-way. It should not create any new obstructions that block the buildings and the potential for future businesses along East Atlanta Street.

HOW WE GET THERE



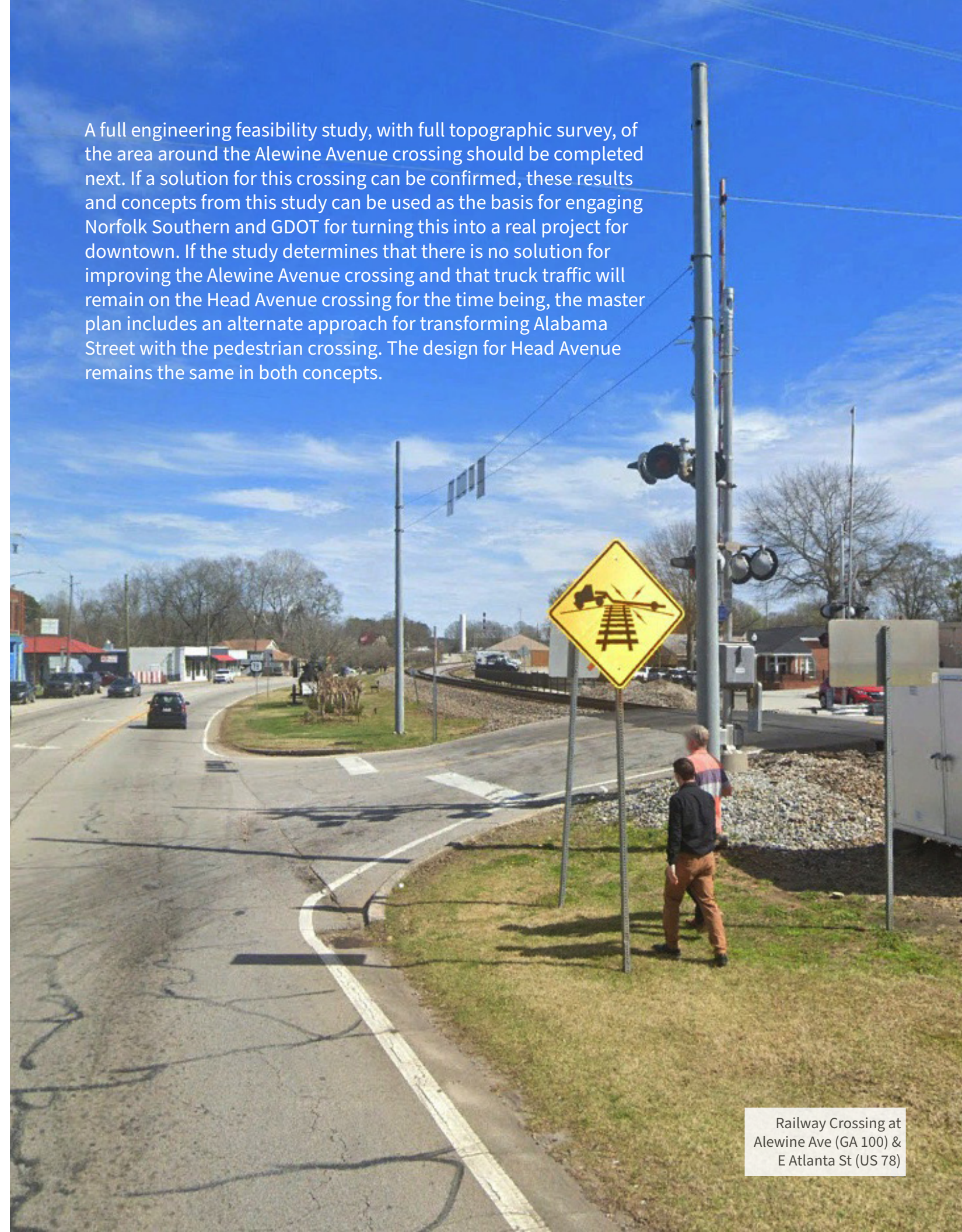
Track Level

Lowering the track level is another way to make the Alewine Avenue crossing more approachable but an unlikely course of action. This would have long-reaching impacts on the rail at great expense to accomplish. It is unlikely that Norfolk Southern would be willing to take on this task.

Freight Bypass

Improving truck routing by using the bypass is an option. The challenge is the existing bypass turns truck traffic to the east. This is convenient for eastbound traffic but for truck traffic headed to north or west of downtown, passing directly through downtown is the shortest, most convenient route. Finding a local crossing alternative to Head Avenue may be the less costly or more preferred course of action compared to building additional bypasses.

A full engineering feasibility study, with full topographic survey, of the area around the Alewine Avenue crossing should be completed next. If a solution for this crossing can be confirmed, these results and concepts from this study can be used as the basis for engaging Norfolk Southern and GDOT for turning this into a real project for downtown. If the study determines that there is no solution for improving the Alewine Avenue crossing and that truck traffic will remain on the Head Avenue crossing for the time being, the master plan includes an alternate approach for transforming Alabama Street with the pedestrian crossing. The design for Head Avenue remains the same in both concepts.



Railway Crossing at Alewine Ave (GA 100) & E Atlanta St (US 78)

YEAR 4: START MAKING GREAT STREETS

Redesigning and rebuilding downtown's streets as exceptional public spaces for people will complete the transformation of downtown that was begun with getting businesses back into its buildings. This is also likely to be the most challenging task, at least initially, as the city builds capacity and understands the complexities of taking on this important work. Transforming streets into public spaces will require staff seasoned at managing large capital works projects from design to construction, engaging in conversations and negotiations with Norfolk Southern and GDOT, collaborating with downtown property and business owners, maintaining and activating the newly completed spaces, and identifying and acquiring the funding needed to accomplish all of this. It's no small challenge, but towns and cities that have successfully completed such transformations to their downtowns have seen incredible results from these investments in terms of businesses attraction and retention and overall improved quality of life in downtown.

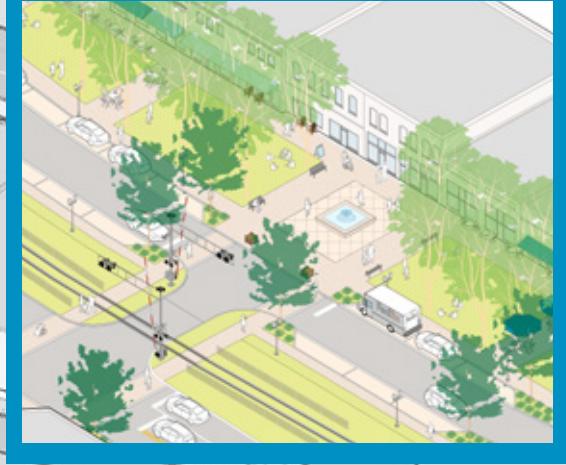
The *Downtown Tallapoosa Master Plan* proposes a number of public spaces project for its streets. These will not, and should not, happen all at one time. This implementation strategy proposes a potential route for implementing these projects in a sequence that would allow the City of Tallapoosa and its partners an opportunity to gain experience on simpler, but equally impactful, projects first before moving onto the more expensive, complex projects. Sequencing projects has the added benefit of not closing too many of downtown's streets at the same time which could inadvertently limit downtown's transportation network and overly burden existing business owners.

INTERIM PROJECTS

Public space projects like these will take many years to unfold, but that doesn't necessarily mean we have to wait years to reap the benefits. When preparing to take on major street transformations, many cities and towns find it beneficial to host open streets events or implement interim improvements to showcase and test what is possible in addition to building public enthusiasm for the work ahead. Though this implementation strategy anticipates that the major design and construction activities for these streets will likely begin in year four, open streets activities and interim projects could happen well ahead of this timeline depending on the city's ability to take these on.



**Project 3:
Alabama Street**



**Project 2:
Head Avenue**



**Project 1:
Odessa Avenue &
Adjacent Parking Area**



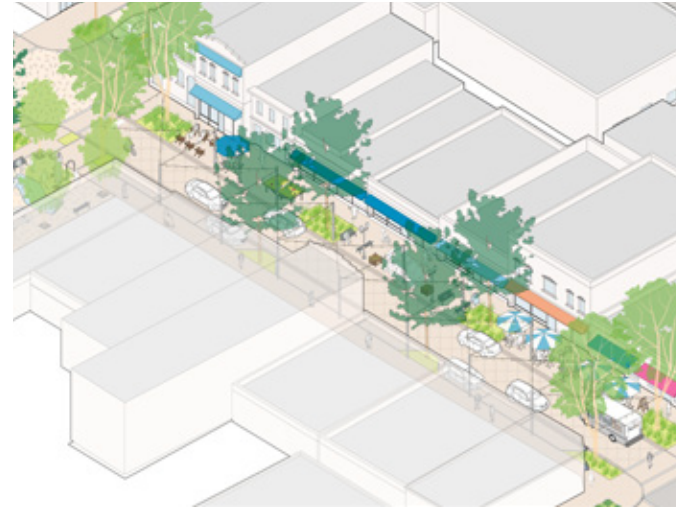
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Project 1: Odessa Avenue & Adjacent Parking Area



This is a great place to start for a lot of reasons. While not as prominently visible as downtown's major main streets of Head Avenue and Alabama Street, Odessa Avenue is a downtown main street featuring existing businesses with plenty of storefronts for future ones which would benefit greatly from the design concepts illustrated in the master plan. The new design would bring greater attention to these businesses that sit just outside of downtown's central streets and make these more pedestrian-friendly and flexible for special events. This is also a short street with a simple design which makes it a great place to experience the learning curve of completing these projects. Odessa Avenue should be completed alongside the proposed new public parking area at the intersection of Odessa and Alabama. Completing and opening this public parking area early on will allow it to serve parking spaces that will be displaced during the construction of improvements on both Alabama Street and Head Avenue in later phases.

Project 2: Head Avenue



Next Tallapoosa should jump over the tracks to take on its marquis street. This investment on the north side of downtown will provide an incentive and serve adjacent properties where the vacancy rates are currently the highest. Completing this project before too many new businesses become established would also limit the number of businesses that will be impacted during the construction period. It can also serve as a showcase space during some of downtown's most important special events such as the Possum Drop on New Year's Eve. This project will likely require some level of coordination with GDOT for its intersection with East Atlanta Street (US 78) which is a state route.

Project 3: Alabama Street



This will be the final street project that connects the previous two, Odessa Avenue and Head Avenue, together. It will also be the most complex as it includes improving the railroad crossings on Head Avenue and Alewine Avenue. This will require close collaboration with both Norfolk Southern for the railroad crossings, as well as GDOT for the intersections with East Atlanta Street (US 78). These conversations should start as soon as possible especially once the feasibility study for the rail crossings has been completed. Additionally, many of downtown's established businesses are located along this street which will need to remain open and healthy throughout the construction process. Completing the public space transformation of Alabama Street will require every new skill and resource developed by the city in the successful completion of the prior street projects.



