INTRODUCTION

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dan Horrigan
Mayor, City of Akron

Christine Mayer
President, GAR Foundation

Kyle Kutuchief
Akron Program Director, The John S. & James L. Knight Foundation

Suzie Graham
President & CEO, Downtown Akron Partnership

Margo Sommerville
Vice President, City Council, City of Akron

Annie McFadden
Deputy Chief of Staff, City of Akron

Jason Segedy
Director of Planning & Urban Development, City of Akron

Jason Dodson
Chief of Staff, County Executive, County of Summit

Gregory Mencer
Development Manager, Development Finance Authority of Summit County

Dan Rice
President & CEO, Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Nicole Mullet
Executive Director, ArtsNow

Gregg Mervis
President & CEO, Akron-Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau

Srini Venkatesh
Chief Science Officer, VP of Science & Technology GOJO Industries

Jennifer Fox
VP, Director of Client & Community Relations, PNC Bank

Gary Rickel
Vice President, C.B. Richard Ellis

Joel Testa
President, Testa Companies

Tony Troppe
Principal, The Everett Group

Halle Jones Capers
Sr. VP of Operations and Manager of Transportation, G. Stephens, INC.

Dave Lieberth
Principal, Lieberth Consulting Group

Julie Wesel
CEO, Chemstress Consultant Company

Ryan Pritt
Co-Founder, President, Pritt Entertainment Group

Tim Ziga
Associate General Counsel, Akron Children's Hospital

Steve Abdenour
Vice President, Operations, Cleveland Clinic/Akron General

Benjamin Sutton
Sr. VP, Strategy & Performance, Summa Health System

David James
Superintendent, Akron Public Schools

Tobin Buckner
Akron Entrepreneur Community Manager, JumpStart

Richard Enty
Executive Director, METRO RTA

Tony O'Leary
Executive Director, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Cory Kendrick
Director of Population Health, Summit County Public Health

Katie Wright
Co-Founder, Metis Construction

Sarah Benn
Performing Artist, Shivering Timbers

Frank Williams
President, Akron Fraternal Order of Police

Brian Moore
Partner, Roetzel & Andress

Dan Colantone
President & CEO, Greater Akron Chamber

Howard Parr
Executive Director, Akron Civic Theatre

John Garafalo
Vice President, Community Investment, Akron Community Foundation

Patrick Kelly
Director of Economic Development, FirstEnergy Utilities

FirstEnergy
MKS

Planning, Visioning & Urban Design Lead
Chris Hermann, AICP, Principal – Principal-in-Charge
Andrew Overbeck, AICP, Principal - Lead Planner & Project Manager
Jeffrey Pongonis, PLA, ASLA, Principal – Urban Design Principal
Luis Huber-Calvo – Urban Designer/Project Planner

Strategic Visioning & Brand Strategy
Rachel Downey, President
Bryan Evans, Studio Graphique
**PHASE 1 PROCESS**

**ESTABLISH CONSENSUS**

**TASK 1**
UNDERSTANDING + VISIONING

MONTHS 1+2

- Site tour
- Existing conditions analysis and plan review
- Stakeholder interviews

**TASK 2**
OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION

MONTHS 2+3

- Catalog existing planned improvements and future opportunities
- Identify near and long-term opportunities

**TASK 3**
PLANNING FRAMEWORK

MONTH 4+5

- Downtown Akron planning framework
- Priorities and demonstration projects
- Next step recommendations
- Internalize/prioritize recommendations and position next steps
SECTION 1
DOWNTOWN TRENDS
The millennial generation ... continue to express a preference for walkable neighborhoods with bike lanes, public transit and a mix of recreational amenities.

"Probably for the first time in history, instead of moving where jobs are, jobs are moving where the talent is."

– Tom Murphy, senior fellow, ULI

As people increasingly choose to live in cities instead of outside them, employers are following.

As companies compete for new hires and the best talent, being located in a vibrant neighborhood is considered a crucial selling point.
GROWTH OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN CLOSE-IN NEIGHBORHOODS
25-34 YEAR OLDS WITH A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE, 2000 - 2012 (SOURCE: CITY OBSERVATORY)
33% of developable ground is dedicated to parking (excludes on-street parking)
The focus is Main Street

+ Concentrate resources, incentives, and attention on Main Street
+ Focus efforts to establish the Lock 3 area as the epicenter of the city, serving as a catalyst for spurring development
+ Activate the spaces and buildings along Main Street through both temporary and long-term interventions
+ Improve lighting on Main Street
PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

02 Vitality starts with residential

+ Conduct a housing market study to validate demand, housing typologies, price points and to make the case for incentives

+ Improve incentives for additive residential development downtown

+ Repurpose/renovate older buildings for residential as an appropriate early strategy

+ Encourage mixed use development and preserve first floor/corners for retail uses
ANALYSIS

HOUSING: MEDIAN RENT VS. CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Source: Zillow, Marshall & Swift, Development Strategies

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Median Rent

Construction Cost Multiplier
03 Address business vacancy

+ Convert older office buildings into residential, mixed use opportunities
+ Reserve developable areas for future new office development as market demand evolves
+ Focus on partnerships to kick-start projects (on Main Street)
PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

04 Create a coordinated incentive package

+ Explore establishing a property tax abatement program for residential renovation/development in the downtown core

+ Review current TIF revenue/% of income tax strategies to incentivize new office development

+ Create an economic development plan to maximize available financing tools to Akron’s advantage

+ Support the completion of Targeted Loan Fund as a unique financing tool
05 Make great public spaces

+ Design public spaces that embrace the nature of the city and serve all people

+ Implement TIGER Grant to establish streetscape standards, extending on-street parking, improved pedestrian environment, and bike lanes/connection to Towpath

+ Establish high aesthetic standards on Main Street and enhance outdoor seating/dining

+ Ensure that ALL new development (residential, commercial, retail, garages) creates public spaces and ground floor uses that activate streets and make downtown more livable

+ Implement a coordinated wayfinding system to navigate downtown
Continue to program downtown

+ Continue to diversify programming to reach multiple audiences

+ Coordinate marketing from programming organizations to promote brand and experience

+ Identify partnerships to strengthen communication of events to target audiences – workforce, students, residents

+ Encourage participation in the downtown environment
Prioritize street design that enhances health and safety

+ Implement complete streets, creating safer pedestrian, vehicular and cyclist connections
+ Preserve street grid and break down super blocks
+ Maintain State Street connection
+ Right-size the scale of downtown streets
+ Calm traffic on High and Broadway
+ Support conversion of Exchange Street and continue to research conversion of other one-way streets
PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

08 Expand on successful nodes of activity

+ Create/advance plans for improving areas like Lock 3 & 4, Exchange & Main, Maiden Lane and Northside

+ Work to add mix of uses in these nodes to provide more consistent activity on a daily basis
PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

09 Build on Akron’s rich history

+ Incorporate Akron’s history into projects both formally and whimsically
+ Claim the brands and history that are fundamentally Akron and reflect them downtown
Strengthen downtown connections with surrounding neighborhoods and institutions

+ Strengthen two way connections between The University of Akron and downtown

+ Build on previous planning efforts to make corridors inviting to surrounding neighborhoods and share the strengths of each area

+ Conduct full downtown master plan study to identify connections, infill, and catalytic opportunities to expand and connect downtown with its surroundings
GAPS IN URBAN FABRIC

1.5 MILES BETWEEN NORTHSIDE & GOJO
(30 MINUTE WALK)

Route 59 Intersection

Market Street Intersection

Poor Streetscape

Lack of Street-Level Activity

Surface Lots & Vacancy

Lack of Street-Level Activity

Lack of Street-Level Activity

0.8 MILES OF MAIN STREET
(53%) HAVE GAPS

1.5 MILES BETWEEN NORTHSIDE & GOJO
(30 MINUTE WALK)
OPPORTUNITY SITES

- ROUTE 59
- LOCK 3 & 4
- MAIN + EXCHANGE
- CANAL DISTRICT
- NORTHSIDE
OPPORTUNITY SITES

NORTHSIDE CONNECTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Study potential pedestrian connections
- Redesign right of way to improve pedestrian conditions
- Build on Maiden Lane’s success with alley level activation
- Implement intersection traffic calming
OPPORTUNITY SITES

CANAL DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Convert Cedar and Exchange Streets to two-way travel
- Activate developable parcels with mixed use and street facing businesses
- Continue to improve street level experience/activation
OPPORTUNITY SITES

RECOMMENDATIONS

ROUTE 59

State Street
- Maintain East-West connectivity
- Incorporate stormwater management features

Center Street
- Create creative, green Towpath connections

Main Street
- Maintain East-West connectivity

Develop a master plan and enable a mixed-use development to create a sustainable neighborhood.
Start with Landmark Building renovation preserving historic nature of buildings

Activate park-facing sides of buildings

Activate park space as residential “back yard”

Prioritize mixed use development and active retail storefronts with enhanced park access

Accommodate cyclists and maintain high quality streetscape on Main

Improve connections to Children’s Hospital

Enhance park experience

OPPORTUNITY SITES
LOCK 3 & 4
RECOMMENDATIONS
Evaluate sites for potential redevelopment of mixed use spaces to create density and walkable connections through downtown.

Improve Main Street experience with building infill of parking lots.

Potential downtown office catalyst sites.
FULL PLANNING PROCESS
DOWNTOWN PLAN - GENERAL OUTLINE

1 - Existing Conditions

2 - Market Study

3 - Public Process

4 - Catalytic Projects

5 - Policies

6 - Implementation Strategies
FULL PLANNING PROCESS
DOWNTOWN PLAN - COMPLETED IN PHASE I

1 - Existing Conditions

2 - Market Study

3 - Public Process

4 - Catalytic Projects

5 - Policies

6 - Implementation Strategies

75%

0%

10%

50%

25%

25%