



**DOWNTOWN**

**AKRON**

**VISION + REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

>> PHASE 1

# 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

# PROJECT TEAM

## CONSULTANTS

**MKSK**

### 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

[ **PLACEHOLDER** ]



**STUDIO GRAPHIQUE**  
*designwithdirection.com*

### 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





# DOWNTOWN GROWTH

## NATIONAL TRENDS

“The millennial generation ... continue to express a preference for walkable neighborhoods with bike lanes, public transit and a mix of recreational amenities.”

The New York Times <http://nyti.ms/3JFAUFI>

### The Upshot URBAN RENEWAL

#### More New Jobs Are in City Centers, While Employment Growth Shrinks in the Suburbs

Chaire Cain Miller @chairemiller FEB. 21, 2015

For decades, most Americans working in metropolitan areas have gone to work

“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”

## GOVERNING

THE STATES AND LOCALITIES

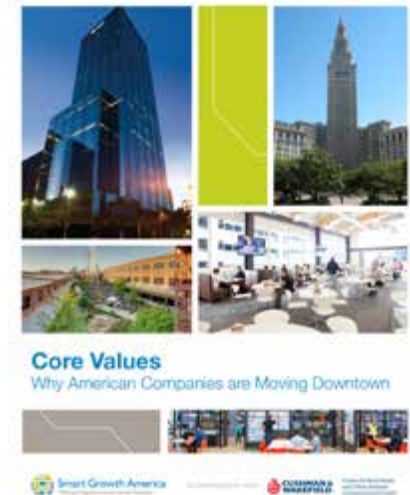
FINANCE | HEALTH | INFRASTRUCTURE | MANAGEMENT | ELECTIONS | POLITICS | PUBLIC SAFETY | URBAN | EDUCATION

### URBAN

#### Why Companies Are Moving Back Downtown

Tax incentives aren't always the best way to lure businesses. Many are simply going where the talent is.

BY J.B. WOGAN | AUGUST 2016

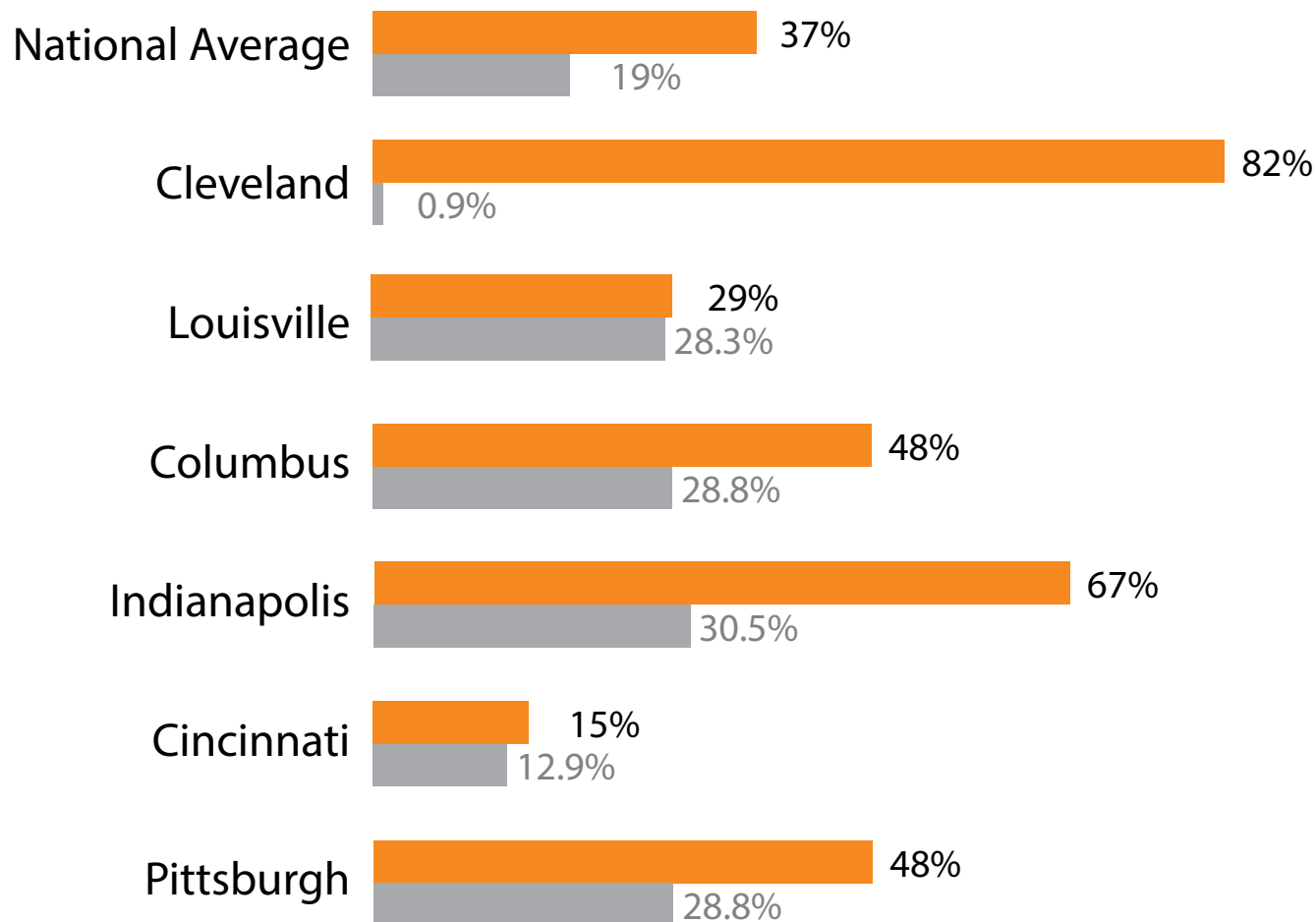


# DOWNTOWN GROWTH

## NATIONAL TRENDS

### GROWTH OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN CLOSE-IN NEIGHBORHOODS

25-34 YEAR OLDS WITH A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE, 2000 - 2012 (SOURCE: CITY OBSERVATORY)



CLOSE-IN

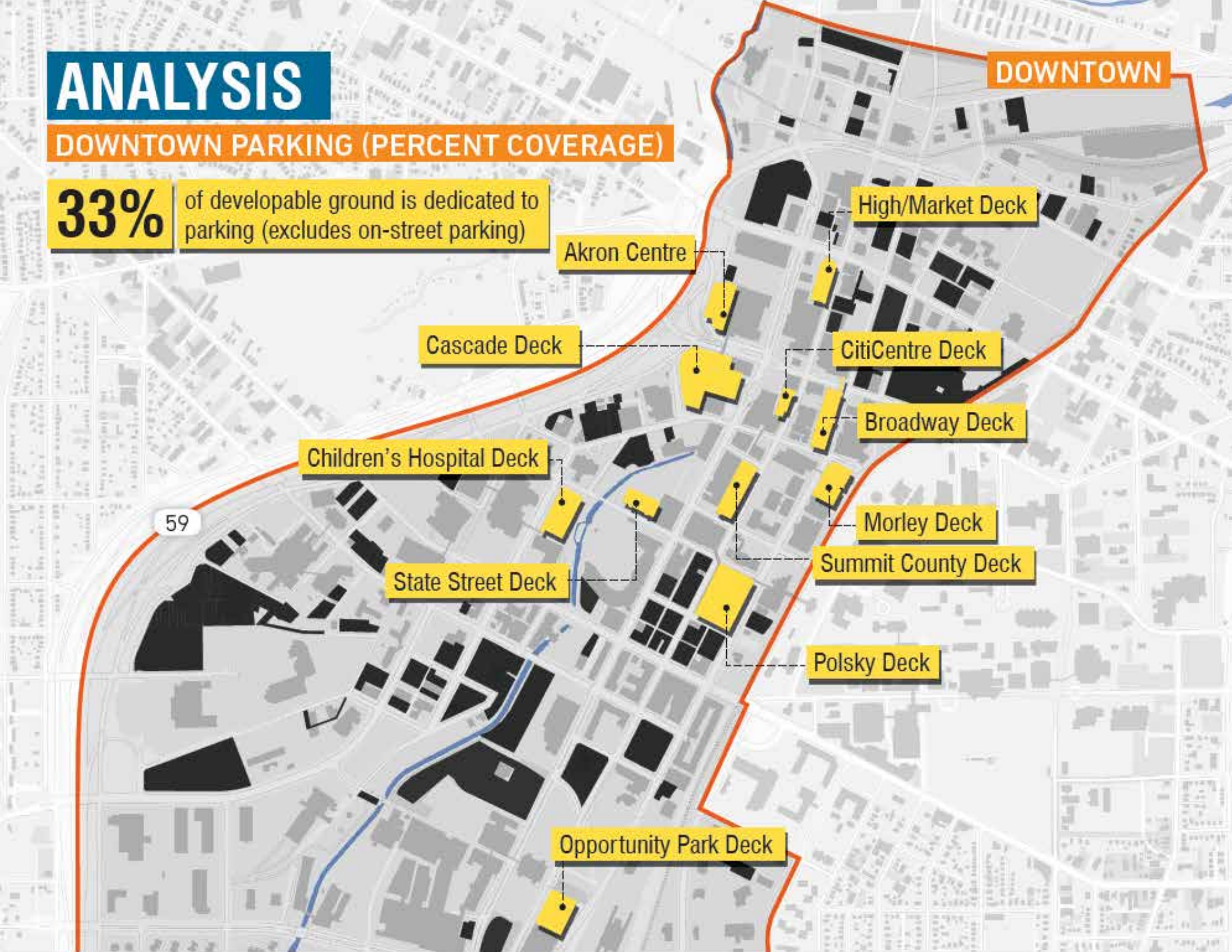
MSA

# ANALYSIS

## DOWNTOWN PARKING (PERCENT COVERAGE)

**33%**

of developable ground is dedicated to parking (excludes on-street parking)



DOWNTOWN

High/Market Deck

Akron Centre

Cascade Deck

CitiCentre Deck

Broadway Deck

Children's Hospital Deck

Morley Deck

Summit County Deck

State Street Deck

Polsky Deck

Opportunity Park Deck



# SECTION 2

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES +RECOMMENDATIONS

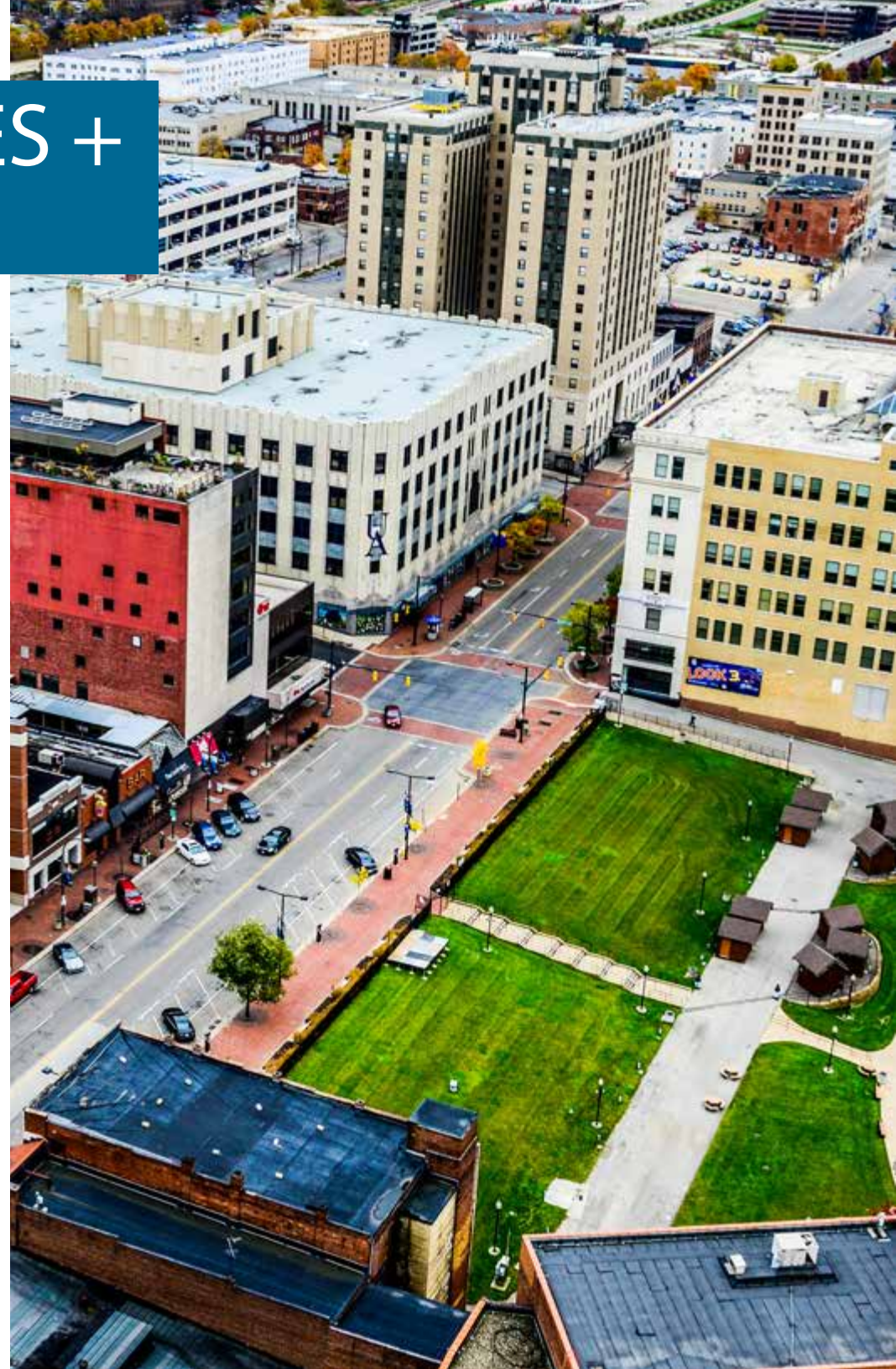




# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 01 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

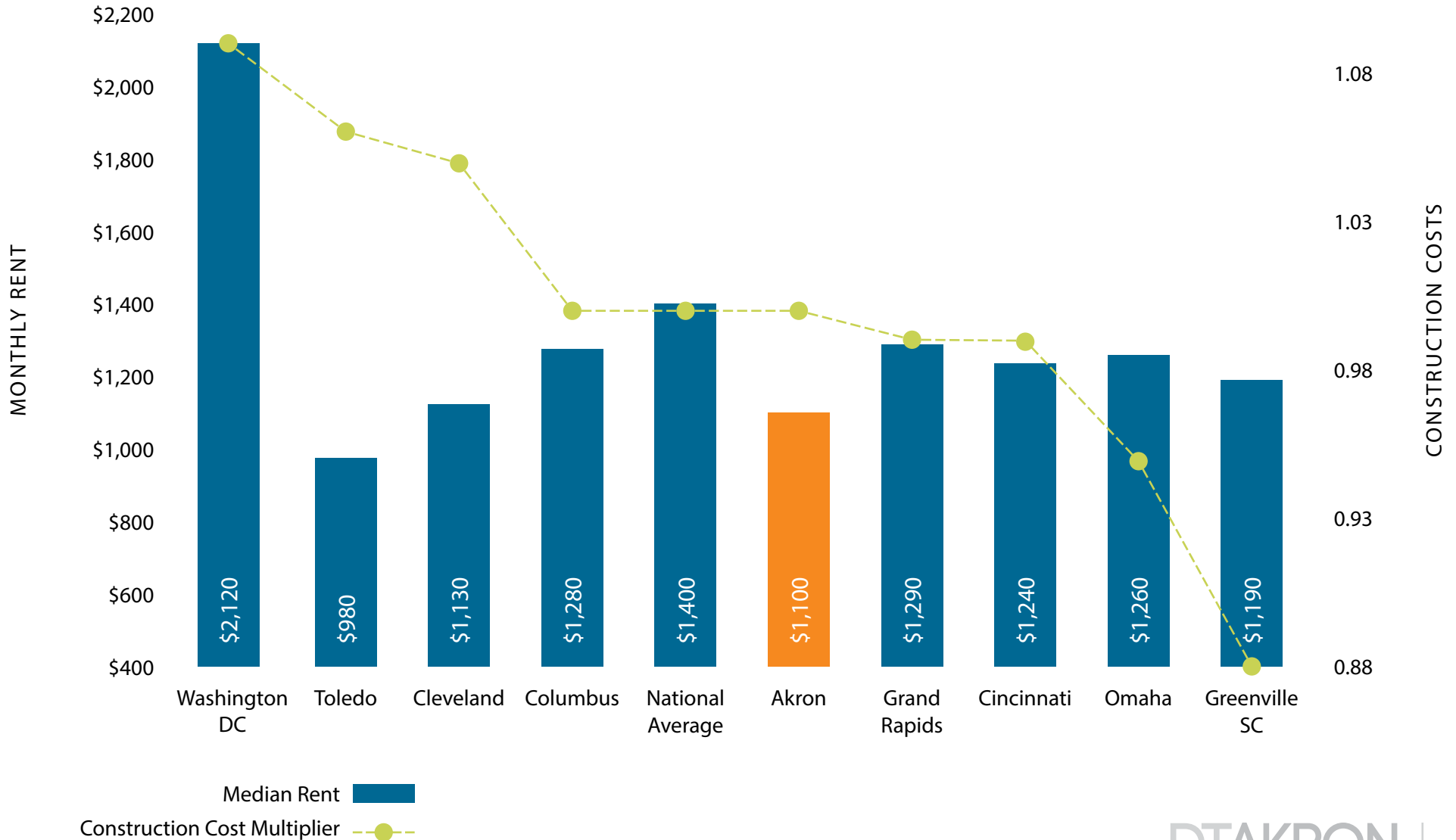
- + Conduct a housing market study to validate demand, housing typologies, price points and to make the case for incentives
- + Improve incentives for additive residential development downtown
- + Repurpose/renovate older buildings for residential as an appropriate early strategy
- + Encourage mixed use development and preserve first floor/corners for retail uses



# ANALYSIS

## HOUSING: MEDIAN RENT VS. CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Source: Zillow, Marshall & Swift, Development Strategies





# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 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)

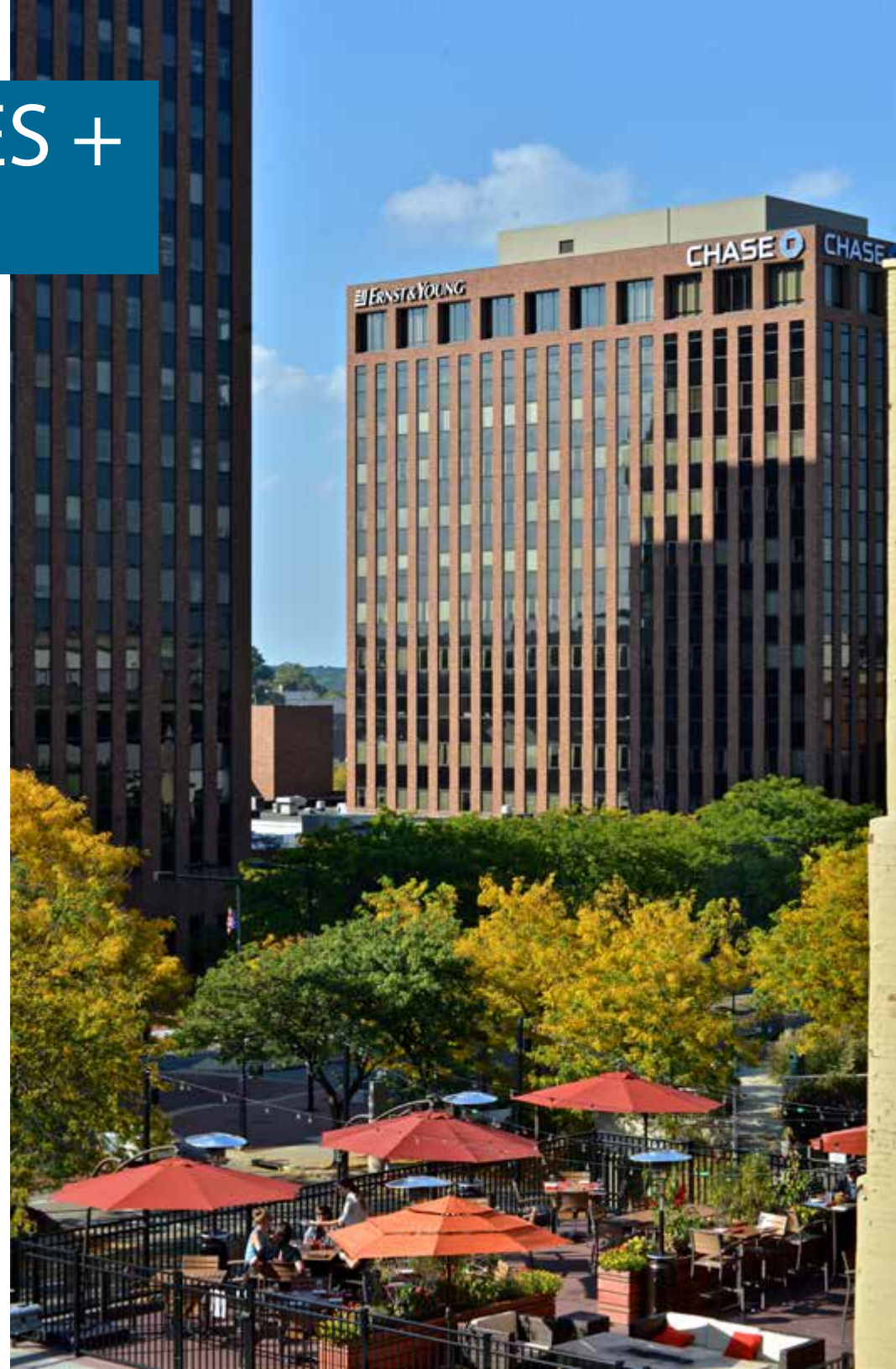




# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 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





# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 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





# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 06

### 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

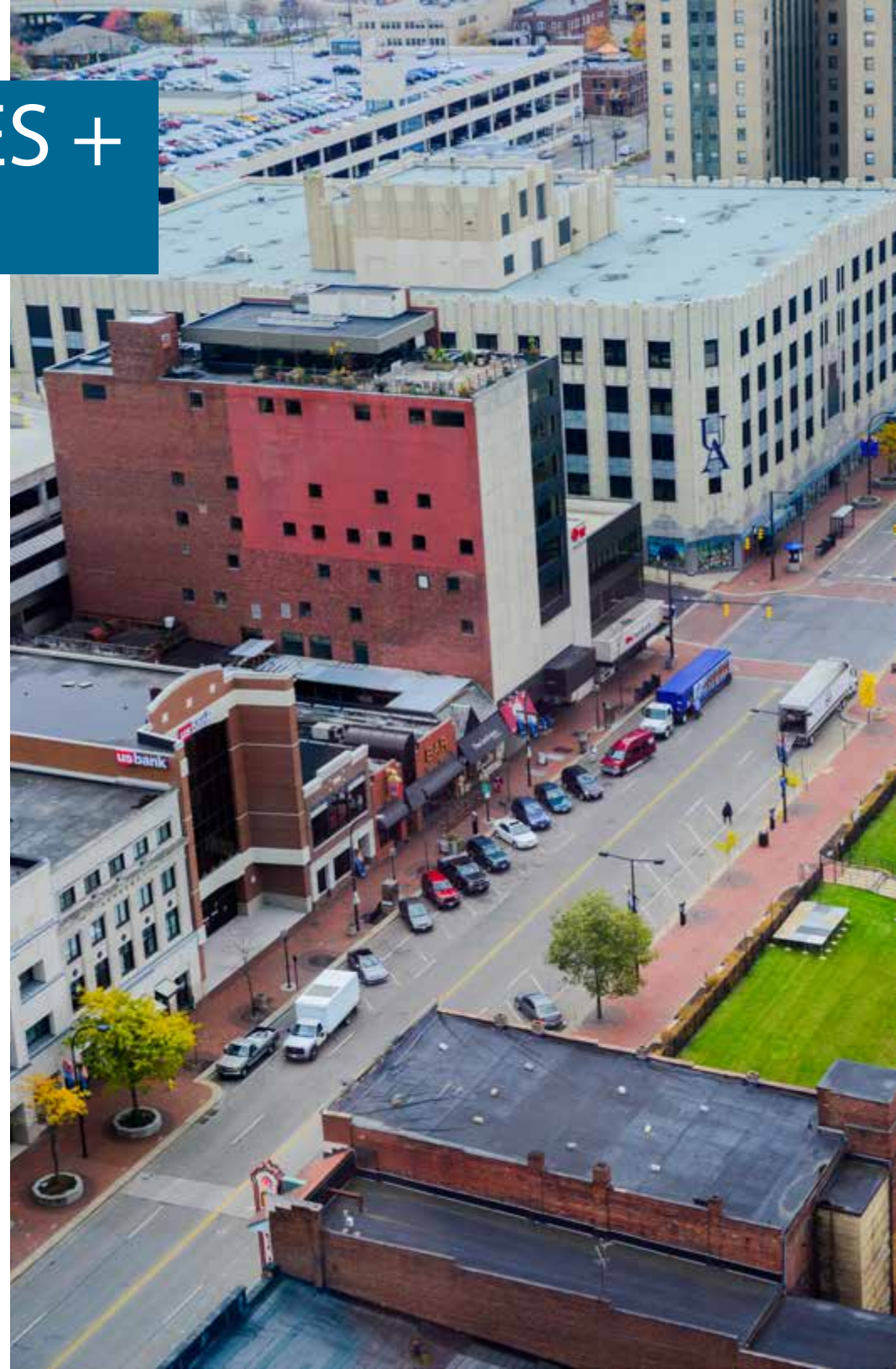




# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 07 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

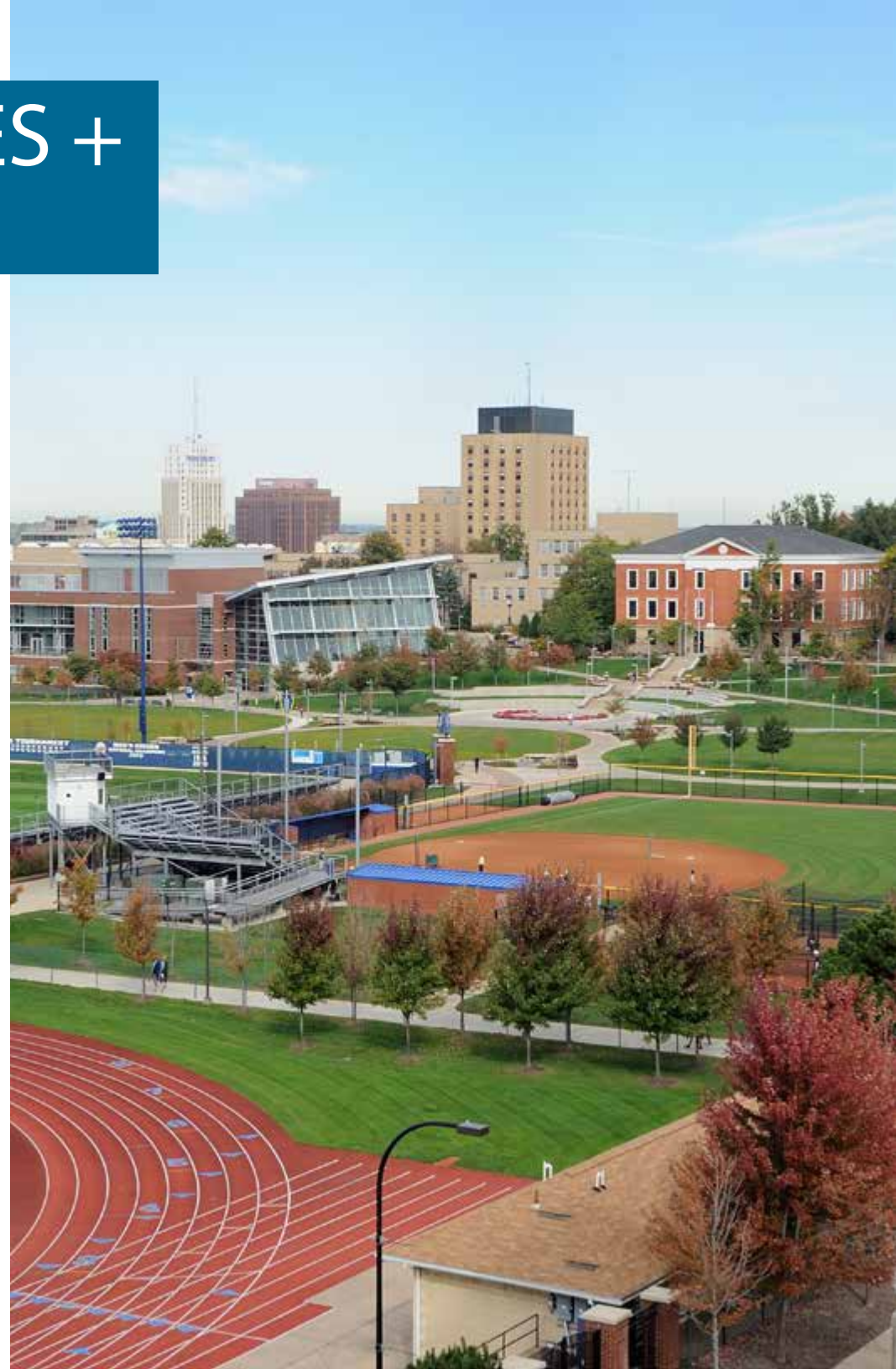




# PLANNING PRINCIPLES + RECOMMENDATIONS

## 10 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





# SECTION 3

## OPPORTUNITIES





# NODES OF ACTIVITY



RESIDENTIAL



EMPLOYMENT



RETAIL/ENTERTAINMENT

Northside

Maiden Lane

Shoppes at Akron Centre

Cleveland Clinic/  
Akron General

Akron Children's Hospital

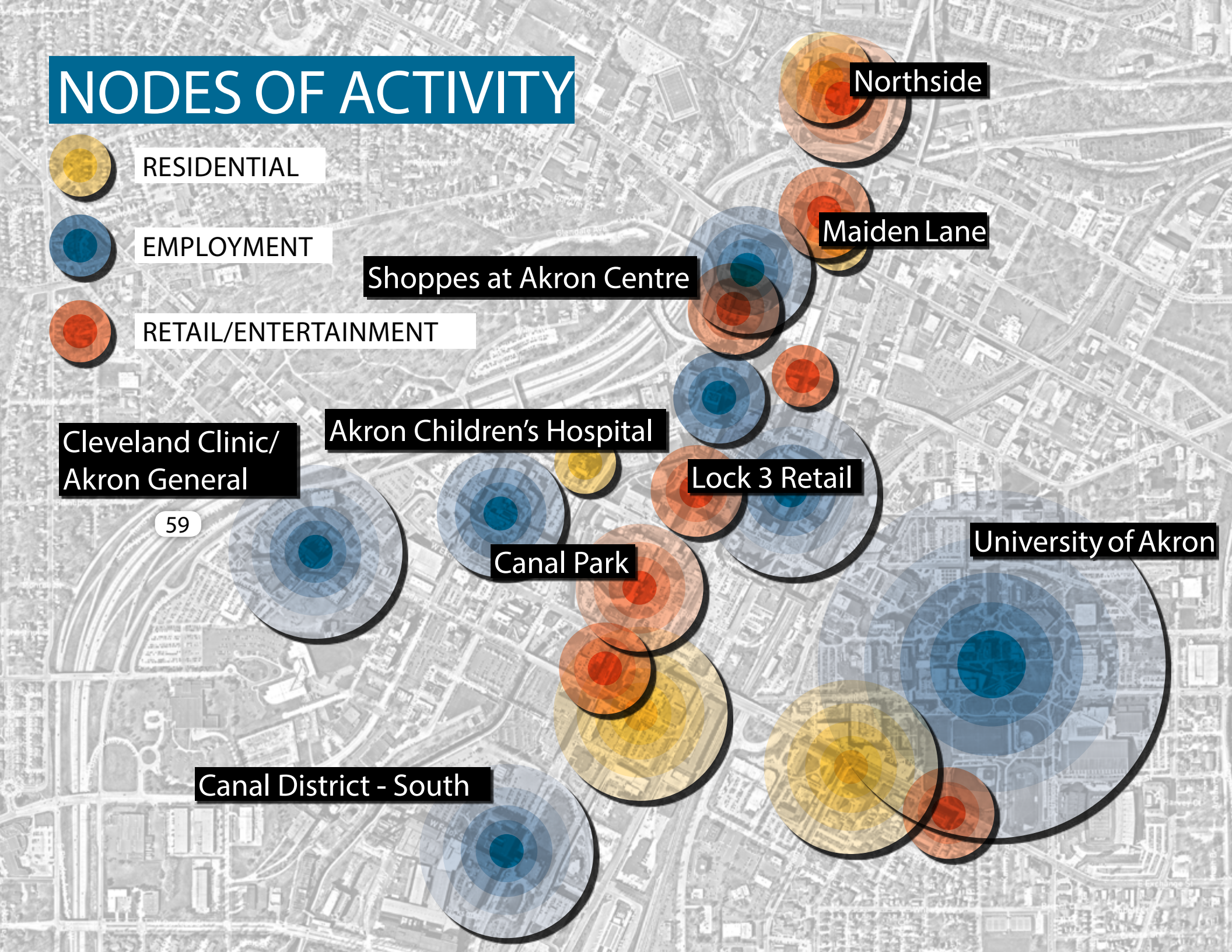
Lock 3 Retail

University of Akron

Canal Park

Canal District - South

59





# GAPS IN URBAN FABRIC

1.5 MILES BETWEEN NORTHSIDE & GOJO  
(30 MINUTE WALK)

Poor Streetscape

Route 59 Intersection

Market Street Intersection

Lack of Street-Level Activity

Surface Lots & Vacancy

Lack of Street-Level Activity

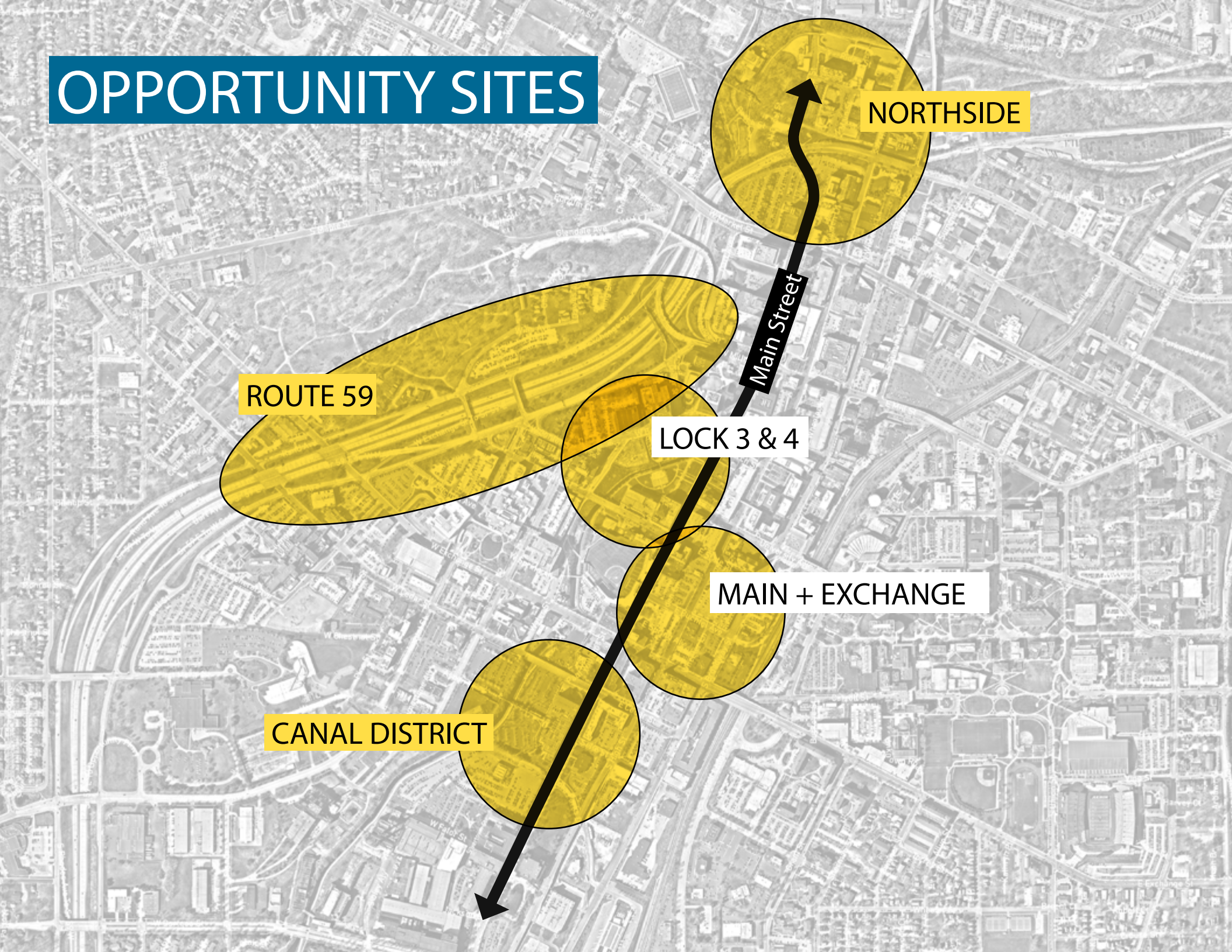
Lack of Street-Level Activity

0.8 MILES OF MAIN STREET  
(53%) HAVE GAPS





# OPPORTUNITY SITES



ROUTE 59

LOCK 3 & 4

MAIN + EXCHANGE

CANAL DISTRICT

NORTHSIDE

Main Street



# OPPORTUNITY SITES

## NORTHSIDE CONNECTION

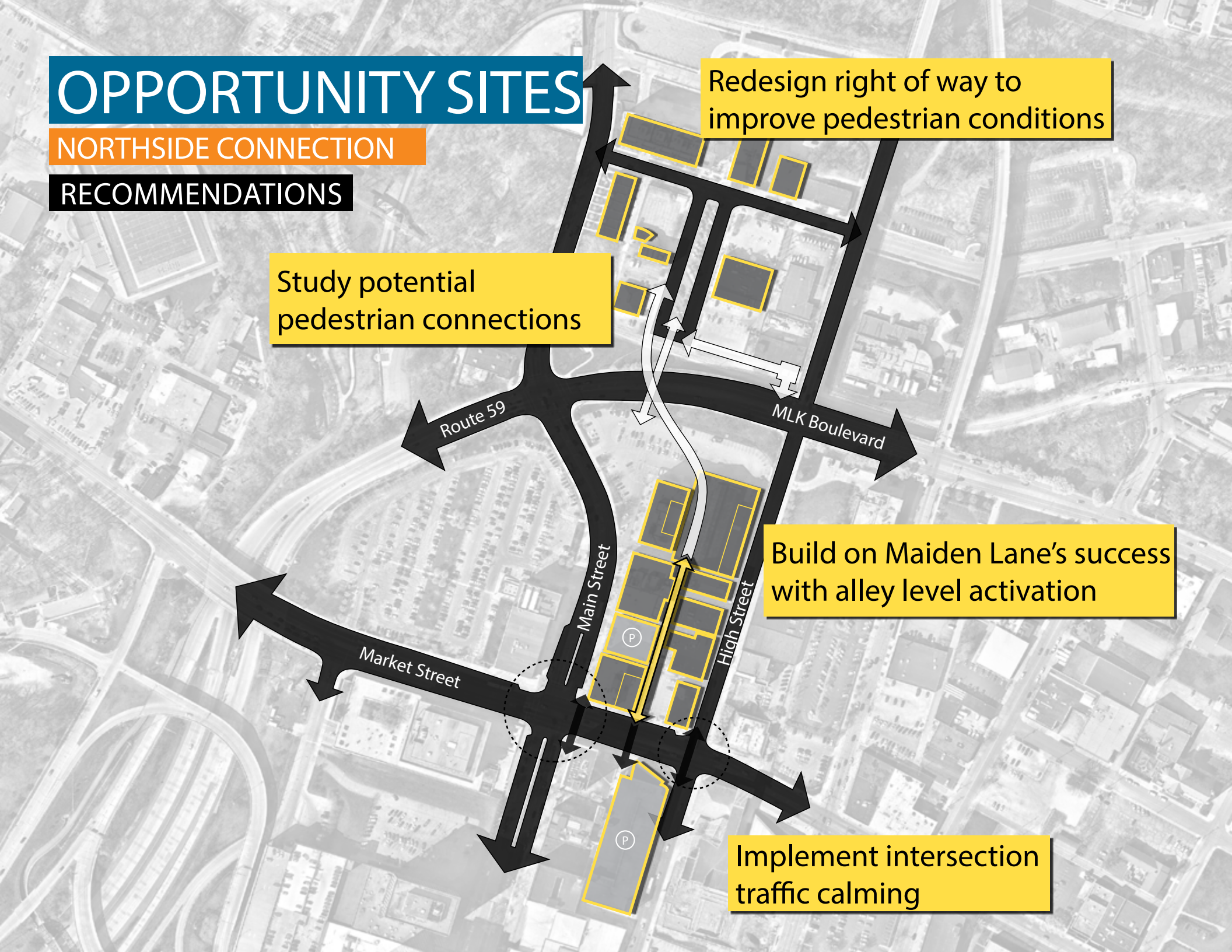
### RECOMMENDATIONS

Redesign right of way to improve pedestrian conditions

Study potential pedestrian connections

Build on Maiden Lane's success with alley level activation

Implement intersection traffic calming





# OPPORTUNITY SITES

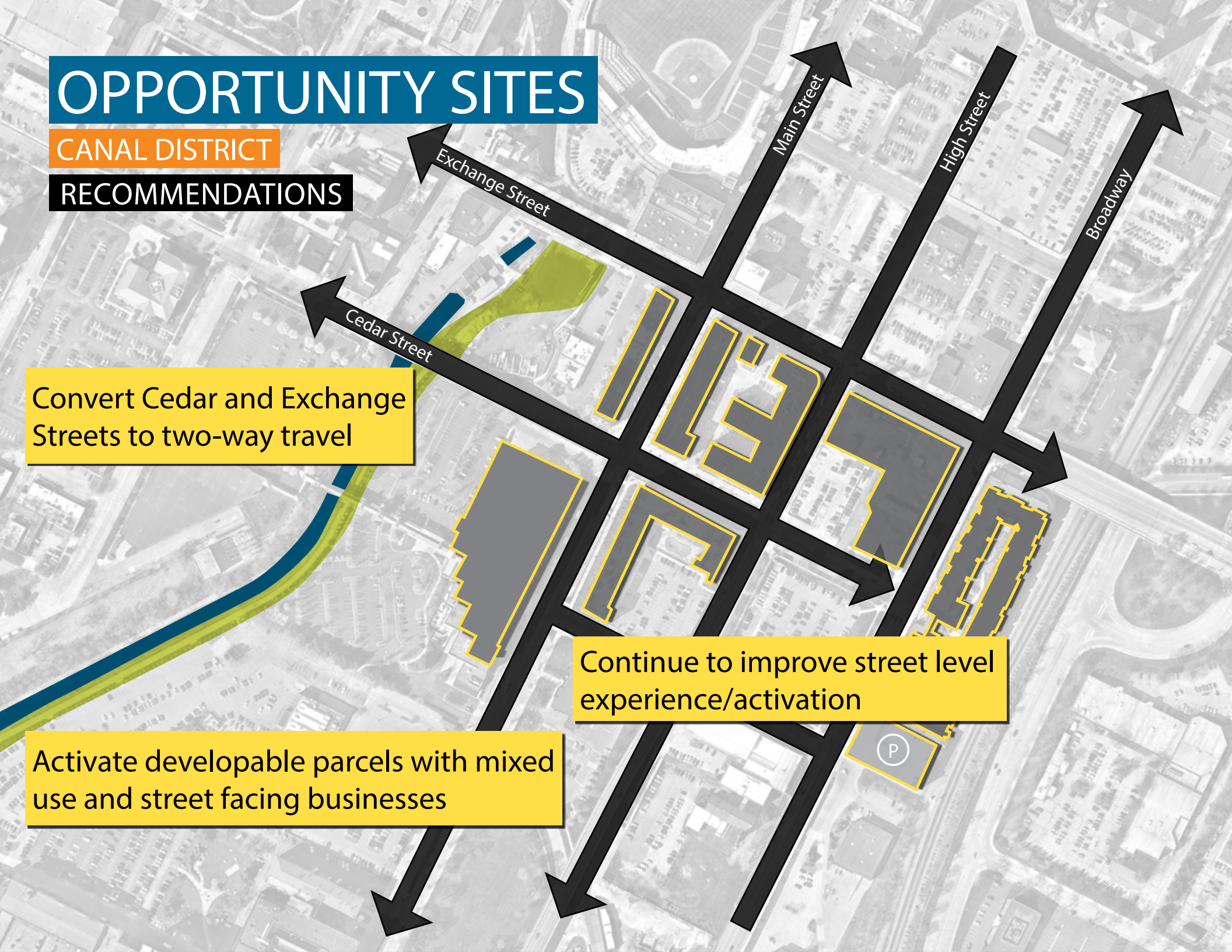
CANAL DISTRICT

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

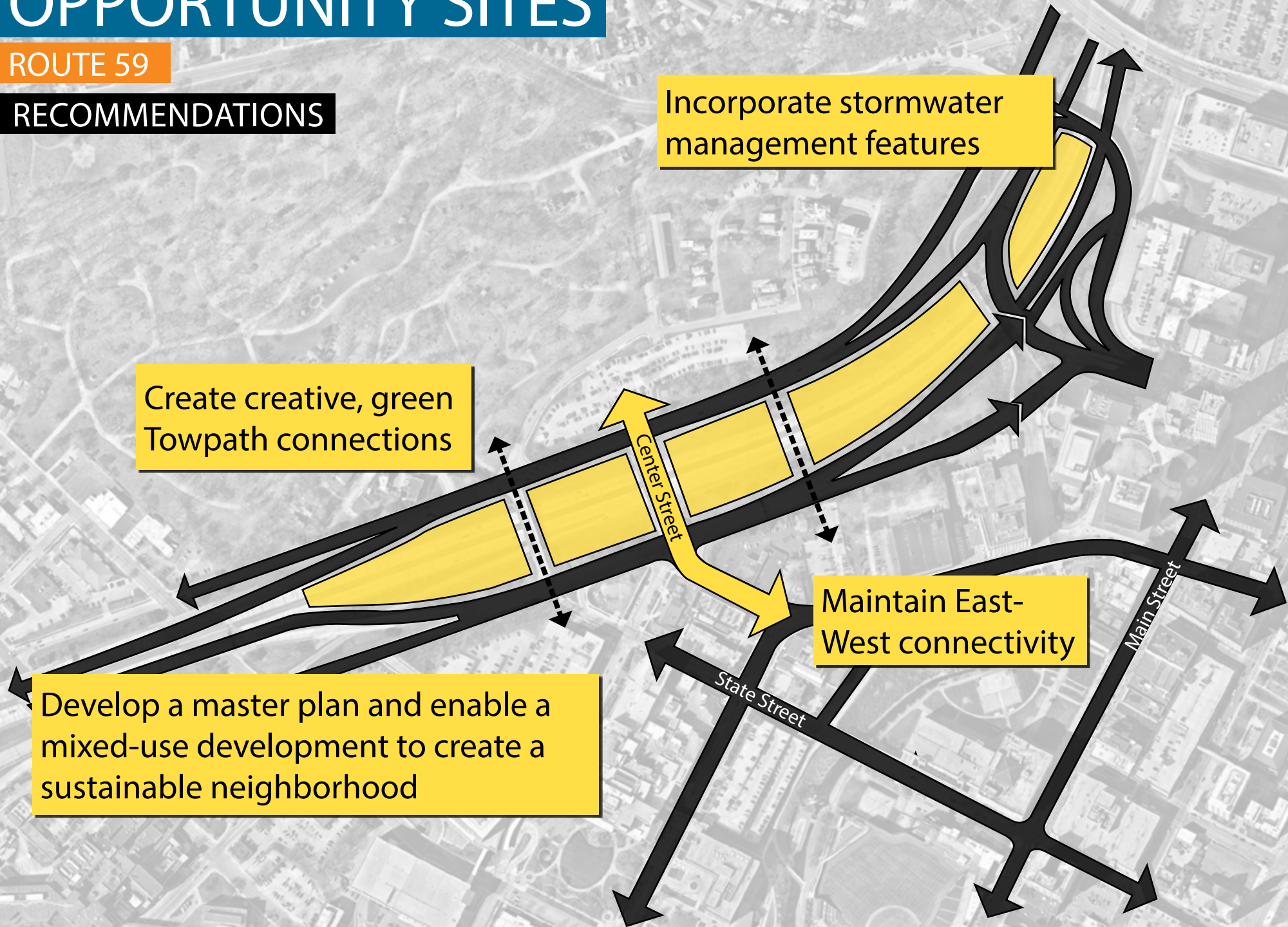




# OPPORTUNITY SITES

ROUTE 59

## RECOMMENDATIONS





# OPPORTUNITY SITES

LOCK 3 & 4

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Activate park space as residential "back yard"

Improve connections to Children's Hospital

Activate park-facing sides of buildings

Start with Landmark Building renovation preserving historic nature of buildings

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

Accommodate cyclists and maintain high quality streetscape on Main

Enhance park experience



# OPPORTUNITY SITES

MAIN & EXCHANGE  
RECOMMENDATIONS

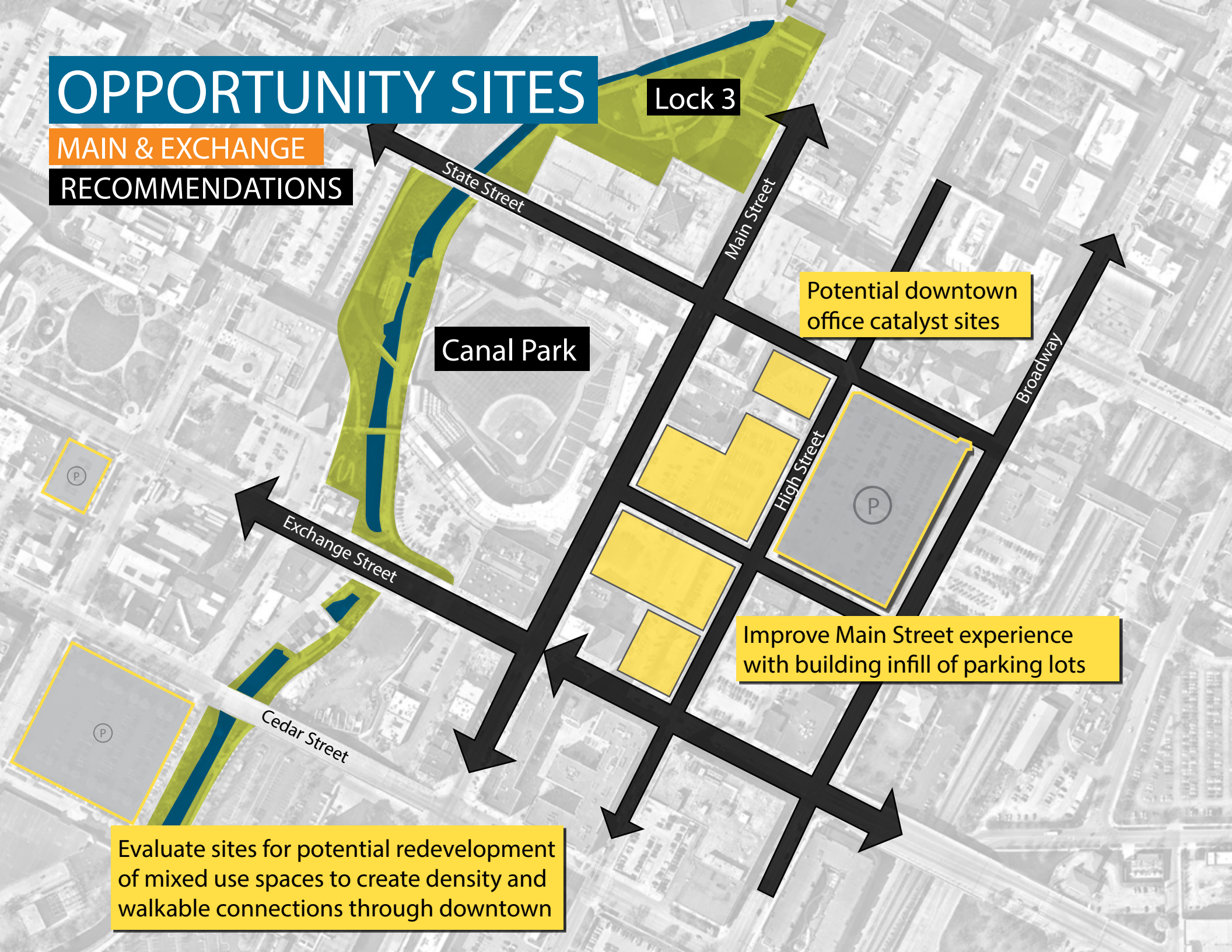
Lock 3

Canal Park

Potential downtown  
office catalyst sites

Improve Main Street experience  
with building infill of parking lots

Evaluate sites for potential redevelopment  
of mixed use spaces to create density and  
walkable connections through downtown





# SECTION 4

## FULL PLANNING PROCESS





# FULL PLANNING PROCESS

## DOWNTOWN PLAN - GENERAL OUTLINE

### 1 - Existing Conditions



### 2 - Market Study



### 3 - Public Process



### 4 - Catalytic Projects



### 5 - Policies



### 6 - Implementation Strategies

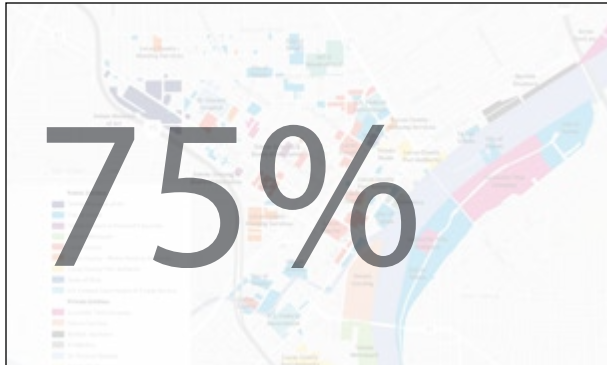
Project Name	Project Description	Location	Project Status	Implementation Strategy	Timeline
Project A	Project A Description	Project A Location	Project A Status	Project A Strategy	Project A Timeline
Project B	Project B Description	Project B Location	Project B Status	Project B Strategy	Project B Timeline
Project C	Project C Description	Project C Location	Project C Status	Project C Strategy	Project C Timeline
Project D	Project D Description	Project D Location	Project D Status	Project D Strategy	Project D Timeline
Project E	Project E Description	Project E Location	Project E Status	Project E Strategy	Project E Timeline
Project F	Project F Description	Project F Location	Project F Status	Project F Strategy	Project F Timeline
Project G	Project G Description	Project G Location	Project G Status	Project G Strategy	Project G Timeline
Project H	Project H Description	Project H Location	Project H Status	Project H Strategy	Project H Timeline
Project I	Project I Description	Project I Location	Project I Status	Project I Strategy	Project I Timeline
Project J	Project J Description	Project J Location	Project J Status	Project J Strategy	Project J Timeline



# FULL PLANNING PROCESS

## DOWNTOWN PLAN - COMPLETED IN PHASE I

### 1 - Existing Conditions



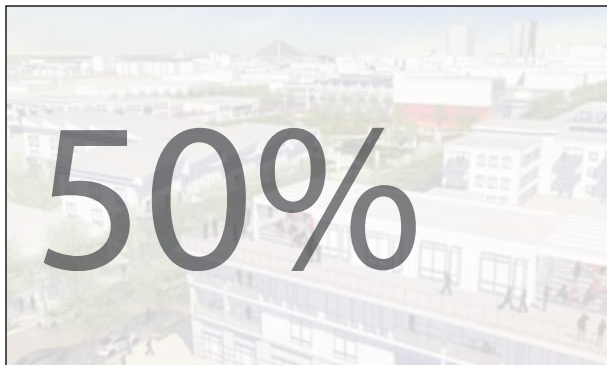
### 2 - Market Study



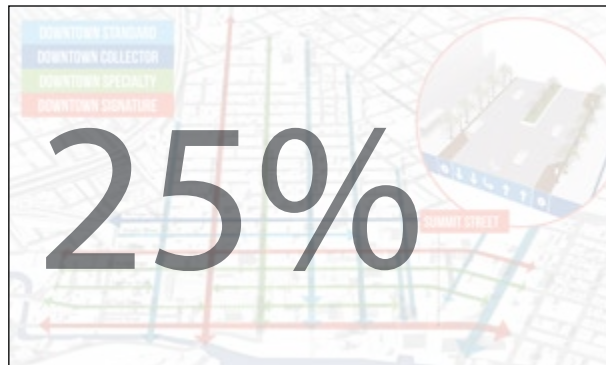
### 3 - Public Process



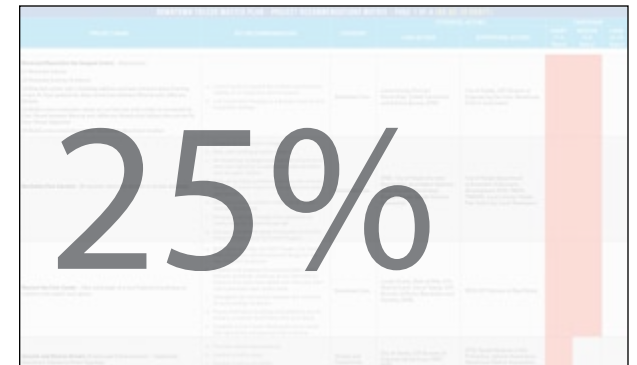
### 4 - Catalytic Projects



### 5 - Policies



### 6 - Implementation Strategies



# DOWNTOWN AKRON VISION + REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

>>PHASE 1

THANKYOU

