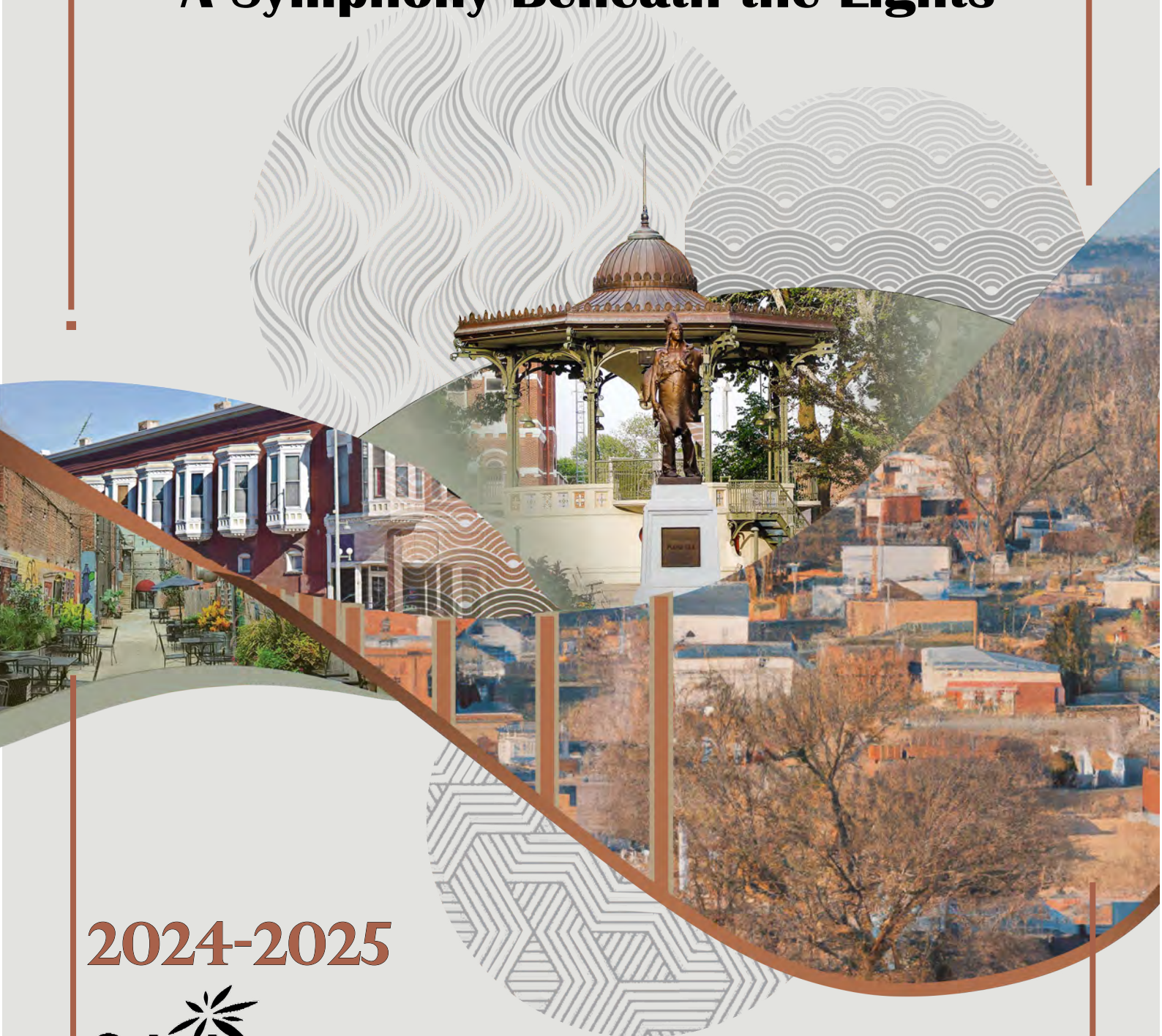


Downtown Master Plan

Oskaloosa

“A Symphony Beneath the Lights”



2024-2025

Oskaloosa
IOWA

IOWA



Acknowledgements

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Penn Central Mall

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“We are proud of our downtown
and we believe we can make it
better.”

Purpose of the Plan:

A Downtown Master Plan seeks to harness the strength of a community’s downtown assets while providing direction on ways to grow and improve the area for all. This plan will focus on building upon Oskaloosa’s economic diversity, historic architecture and design, transportation systems, and culture within its core to elevate its vitality and strengthen its future functionality. The primary objective of this plan is to light the way forward to a strong and shared community culture within the city’s downtown area. The composition of strategic placemaking, active mobility promotions, historical guideline updates, and consistent downtown identity for the downtown district will spotlight the goals and objectives of this plan. This plan will inform Oskaloosa’s city officials, key stakeholder groups, and local businesses on methods and recommendations to make their downtown a regional attraction that builds upon the community’s spirit. The area already serves as the city’s heart by offering cultural, economic, and recreational activities. Still, it can continue to grow and improve upon these traits by considering the following:

- Economic and social trends within the community
- Physical obstacles within the project area
- Current policies
- Future transportation projects
- Community assets

Every plan needs an established purpose that achieves a community’s established goals. Through examination of different sections, this plan aims to achieve the following:

The Oskaloosa Downtown Master Plan aims to harmonize the city’s historic charm with forward-looking development that encourages a thriving and vibrant core accessible to all. By spotlighting updated historical guidelines, active community mobility options, and bridging public spaces through place-making, this plan intends to compose an attractive location for everyone to enjoy and thrive . It also looks to illuminate the diversity of the local economy while shining a light toward new ventures to ensure long-term community resilience.

Executive Summary

The City of Oskaloosa partnered with Pathfinders Resource Conservation and Development, Inc., and the University of Iowa’s Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) to create a Downtown Master Plan. This plan creates a comprehensive vision for reshaping downtown Oskaloosa into a vibrant, accessible, and resilient urban center. It draws upon the historic preservation initiatives of the town to expand its active mobility, placemaking, and economic strategies. The community has provided several inputs through interviews, an open house event, and key stakeholder meetings. The information gained from the community was backed by data examination and the inclusion of comparable cities’ best practices. The downtown area possesses key aspects like the City Square Park, Penn Central Mall, and active civic engagement to help promote the city as a regional destination and a true beacon for the community. This plan offers a comprehensive approach to overcome barriers, strengthen urban connectivity, and enrich public life.

Plan Objectives

- 1. Enhancing public spaces and downtown identity through strategic placemaking.
- 2. Support infill and new use opportunities for community spaces.
- 3. Improve walkability and bike accessibility within the downtown core.
- 4. Honor historic tradition and architectural styles with a new historic preservation standard
- 5. Reinforce Oskaloosa’s true character and unique identity.

Strategic Goals and Recommendations

Improve Pedestrian-Friendly Atmosphere

Downtown Oskaloosa’s walkability is limited by major highway, heavy truck traffic, and incomplete infrastructure. Focusing on improving safety and providing a welcoming pedestrian environment is central to downtown resiliency.

- Develop a comprehensive plan for bike facilities
- Redevelop streetscapes after bypass and connector completion to enhance design, safety, and year-round function.
- Enhance pedestrian infrastructure to safely connect the western portion of high Avenue with the East side of Penn Central Mall.
- Re-adjust crosswalk and signal timers to better reflect traffic patterns.
- Improve sidewalk connectivity.

Foster Future Economic Development

To sustain long-term growth, downtown must support commercial opportunities, housing, and tourism. Policies to help promote upper-story development are noted to increase downtown businesses. Residents would gain improved access to goods and services, while existing businesses would be better positioned to sell their products.

- Accelerate high-impact redevelopment of ground-floor businesses and upper-story redevelopment.
- Map the upper story residence and future opportunities.
- Encourage infill development to create a compact and vibrant downtown environment.
- Highlight and advertise new uses for old spaces.
- Encourage commercial areas to allow small-scale business endeavors.

Implement Cohesive Placemaking

Downtown Oskaloosa lacks comprehensive signage, consistent imaging, and equally distributed public art. Creating an inviting space supports higher foot traffic and provides people of all ages with various activities to participate. This requires reimagining spaces and taking advantage of the city’s vibrant atmosphere.

- Create a seasonal destination and a new design for the food truck park.
- Expand efforts to engage the community in creative placemaking throughout downtown.
- Establish unified downtown branding through documents, signage, and streetscape.
- Create information boards, wayfinding signage, and online resources
- Ensure compliance with Historic Preservation Guidelines

Grow Community Partnerships

Oskaloosa benefits from active community organizations and a strong planning culture. Momentum needs to continue to further the strength of the downtown area. Each stakeholder has unique views, hopes, and opinions of the downtown, and oftentimes, those opinions overlap. The community needs a unified outlet in which to present ideas and make decisions in the best interest of the community.

- Encourage interagency and community work on downtown issues
- Incentivize start-ups that increase indoor and outdoor attractions, experiences, and retail destination

Implementation

0-3 Years	3-5 Years	5-10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the comprehensive bike facilities plan.• Re-adjust crosswalk & signal time• Identify locations for wayfinding & information boards• Place initial rounds of urban seating and “tactical” plazas to test ideas.• Promote walk-and-shop events that draw people through the mall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Finalize engineering & funding for post-bypass streetscapes.•Begin phased construction of high-priority bike lanes•Roll out unified downtown branding•Commission permanent public-art pieces•Convert at least one under-utilized lot into a pocket park.•Launch an incentive fund or contest that helps start-ups add new attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finish of the dedicated bike-lane network and remaining streetscape.• Conduct post-implementation safety & economic-impact studies• Evolve the parking-permit program into a smart/dynamic-pricing system.• Expand pocket-park network• Formalize a self-funded downtown management entity

Conclusion

This Downtown Master Plan builds upon the strengths of Oskaloosa and charts a path forward toward inclusive growth through a shared community identity and strategic investment. With a deep appreciation for its forward-thinking tradition, Oskaloosa is primed for reimagining a vibrant and welcoming downtown. The legacy partnerships and civic pride will be the foundation for this transformation. Moving forward with this purpose and vision, this plan creates the roadmap for Oskaloosa’s continuance to thrive into future generations.

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Setting the Stage

01

This chapter presents a detailed picture of Oskaloosa and the framework guiding the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities' planning efforts. The team investigated the downtown community to focus the study on Oskaloosa's future downtown plan. This plan will start with the project background, which contextualizes the need for revitalization and begins to create the goals behind this initiative. The community profile offers insights into Oskaloosa's demographics, economic composition, and social character, while the location and history sections highlight the city's unique heritage and growth. The planning process outlines the collaborative approach to incorporate the city documents and guiding principles into this downtown plan. This includes emphasizing the significance of historic preservation, reviewing the design guidelines that ensure Oskaloosa's architectural legacy. Additionally, this plan dives into infrastructure developments, such as the bypass and connector proposals, which impact the downtown's access, safety, and connectivity. The chapter closes by defining the project's geographical study area, vision statement, and strategic goals to chart a path toward a vibrant, sustainable future for Oskaloosa's downtown.

1.1 Oskaloosa in History



Historic Commercial 1957 [1]

Oskaloosa was established in 1844 as the county seat of Mahaska County. At that time, notable features in the downtown area included the Mahaska County Courthouse, the Mahaska Communication Group building, and the City Square Park [2]. The park became home to the city’s bandstand in 1882, a double-deck structure located at the park’s center. In 1891, Charles L. Barnhouse, a notable music publisher, moved to town and fostered a strong music culture by forming a municipal band that quickly became a source of local civic pride. By 1911, residents voted to enhance the park through beautification efforts, including improving the bandstand [3].

The downtown area continued to experience significant changes during the 1900s. The first major change occurred in 1920 when JCPenney Company signed a lease to occupy the McGregor Building [4]. The upper floor of the building housed doctors, attorneys, and financial offices, and JCPenny’s addition transformed the building into a hub of economic activity. The second significant change occurred decades later with the construction of Penn Central Mall. Between the 1950s and 1970s, fires and poor building conditions along Oskaloosa’s High

Avenue led to declining rental and property values in the central business district. Through the implementation of a Renewal Plan and the efforts of a mall planning team, the city constructed Penn Central Mall in 1985, replacing many of the dilapidated buildings and rerouting High Avenue traffic. Since the Penn Central Mall construction, Oskaloosa has experienced little significant development.

In 1986, the city furthered its beautification efforts by becoming a Main Street Community. Main Street aims to improve the social and economic well-being of Iowa’s communities by helping cities capitalize on their historic commercial district’s unique identity, assets, and character. Oskaloosa Main Street plays a significant role in promoting the development of the downtown area in four ways. First, Oskaloosa Main Street acts as a conduit of information between businesses to help build consensus and facilitate cooperation. The program then assists in helping attract people to the area through marketing community assets. Additionally, Oskaloosa Main Street improves the appearance of the downtown through several historic preservation and sustainable strategies. Finally, the Main Street Program promotes economic vitality through market-driven retention and development strategies [6].

Oskaloosa undertook numerous initiatives to enrich the town’s character. One standout project was the creation of the Alley in 2016. This community-led project transformed a previously overlooked alleyway between Smokey Row Coffee and Bridal Dreams into a vibrant gathering space featuring lights, greenery,

and various murals. This area provided residents and visitors with an inviting space to gather and socialize [7]. Concurrently, this project and others strengthened citywide events and Oskaloosa’s character by celebrating its

unique traditions. Events like the City Band Summer Concert Series highlight Oskaloosa’s unique connection with music. These events have transformed Oskaloosa into a distinct destination place [8].



- City Square Park
- Mahaska Communication Group
- Mahaska County Courthouse
- Mall
- The Alley

Comparison of Oskaloosa’s Urban Landscape: The first map, dated October 1885, sourced from the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division [9], depicts the city’s early layout, highlighting significant transformations.

1.2 Community Profile

At the beginning of the 20th century, Oskaloosa was home to 9,212 people. Oskaloosa continued to experience an average growth rate of 1.9 percent to reach a population size of 11,803 individuals by the 2020 census. While the city’s population growth rate trailed behind Iowa’s average of 3.0 percent, it exceeded Mahaska County’s declining growth rate of -3.6 percent over the same period, as seen in the poplation percentage change by decade. Oskaloosa’s 2020 population pyramid indicates that the community maintains a consistent demographic between the ages of 10 to 29 years old. The community’s continued growth relies on maintaining a portion of this demographic to avoid challenges such as economic stagnation, reduced workforce, and limited resources for future development.

Oskaloosa, the county seat of Mahaska County, is a dynamic community that balances its small-town charm with its role as a regional hub for commerce, education, and cultural events. Strategically located at the intersection of US Highway 63 and Iowa Highway 92, Oskaloosa provides convenient access to nearby urban centers, including Des Moines 60 miles to the northwest.

The agricultural fields surround the city and blend the rural and urban influences to create an inviting atmosphere for families, businesses, and outdoor enthusiasts.

1.2.1 Population [10]

At the turn of the century, Oskaloosa’s population experienced modest growth that outpaced the state’s (see Table 1.1). Many rural communities experienced population losses during the same period as individuals migrated to larger urban areas. An examination of Mahaska County’s population over the last 120 years depicts this trend, as Oskaloosa outperformed the county in only two decades. The city’s resilience to regional population trends lends to its importance for the rural population within its vicinity.

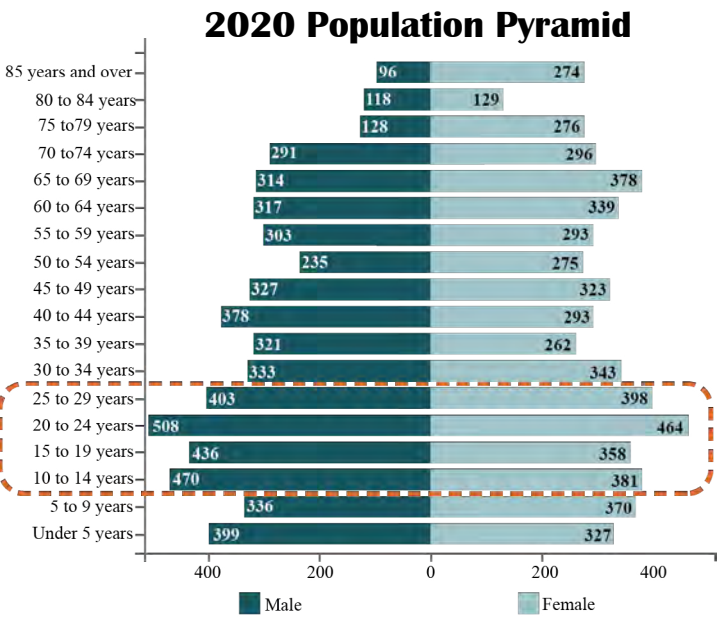
Beyond population statistics, Oskaloosa’s population age distribution remained young, with the largest age brackets of individuals between 10 and 29 years old. The higher values indicate a greater possibility of the city retaining its population for the next several decades. The student population of William Penn University provides the city with a constant flow of young individuals as they attend college.

Population Percent Change by Decade			
Year	Oskaloosa	Mahaska County	State
1900-1910	2.76%	-12.88%	-0.32%
1910-1920	-0.41%	-12.02%	8.06%
1920-1930	7.38%	-1.77%	2.78%
1930-1940	8.90%	2.64%	2.72%
1940-1950	0.91%	-6.85%	3.26%
1950-1960	-0.64%	-4.34%	5.21%
1960-1970	1.55%	-6.04%	2.46%
1970-1980	-2.09%	3.11%	3.13%
1980-1990	-3.25%	-5.88%	-4.70%
1990-2000	2.88%	3.78%	5.39%
2000-2010	4.80%	0.21%	4.10%
2010-2020	0.83%	-0.85%	4.73%

1.2.1 Employment Characteristics

The diverse employment landscape in downtown Oskaloosa provides its population with numerous opportunities. The study area contains over 1,700 employees in various sectors [11]. Figure 1.4 indicates that the retail and industrial sectors provide the largest areas of employment, with 43 percent and 29 percent of total employment, respectively. The downtown area contains a higher concentration of retail-oriented businesses clustered together. Over the years, the city implemented various initiatives to make the downtown area more attractive for employers, such as adopting the 2019 Placemaking Action Plan [12]. Trends have shown that retail trade and construction businesses have experienced instability in employment. Utilities, manufacturing,

transportation, and warehousing are the only industries that experienced sustained growth within 20 years. Implementing initiatives promoting the expansion of subindustries would bring new employment opportunities to Oskaloosa.



1.3 Exploring Downtown Oskaloosa

Downtown Oskaloosa stands out as the city’s heart, rich with historic character and vibrant community spaces. The major pedestrian network of thoughtfully designed alleys connects various parts of the district, offering aesthetically pleasing and functional pathways that enhance pedestrian movement and serve as a unique feature within the downtown. At the end of the main alley sits the Penn Central Mall, which anchors the downtown area and serves as a place for commerce and community gatherings. Nearby, the Osky Food Park contributes to the city’s culinary scene, bringing together local food vendors to create a lively space for dining and socializing. Lastly, Musco Lighting, a global leader in innovative lighting solutions headquartered in Oskaloosa, builds upon the city’s identity and its reputation for excellence.

Cultural and artistic expression thrive in Oskaloosa. The city hosts a variety of live performances, public art installations, and historical exhibits. Events like “Painting with Lights,” a dazzling annual holiday display, reflect the community’s dedication to celebrating its heritage while fostering creativity. The historic downtown bandstand offers visitors year-round music and weekly live concerts for the community to enjoy.

Education is another community cornerstone, with William Penn University playing a significant role in Oskaloosa’s vibrancy. Located over a mile north of downtown, the university is home to more than 1,000 students, many of whom visit downtown to engage with the city’s cultural and commercial offerings [13]. However,

limited transportation options present challenges to frequent trips, highlighting the need for improved connectivity to better integrate student life with downtown activities.

Despite its many assets, downtown Oskaloosa faces challenges that impact its accessibility and appeal. Two major highways running through the district create barriers for pedestrians due to the wide lanes, heavy traffic, and semi-truck noise, contributing to an environment that can feel unsafe for walking. Addressing these issues is critical to enhancing the downtown experience and fostering a more welcoming environment for residents, students, and visitors

At the heart of Oskaloosa lies its historic downtown, a centerpiece of the community’s identity and vibrancy. This area is home to City Square Park and its famous bandstand, a beautifully designed green space that acts as a focal point for events, gatherings, and recreational activities. Surrounding the park are historic buildings that showcase the city’s rich heritage and character.

Historic Preservation Boundary

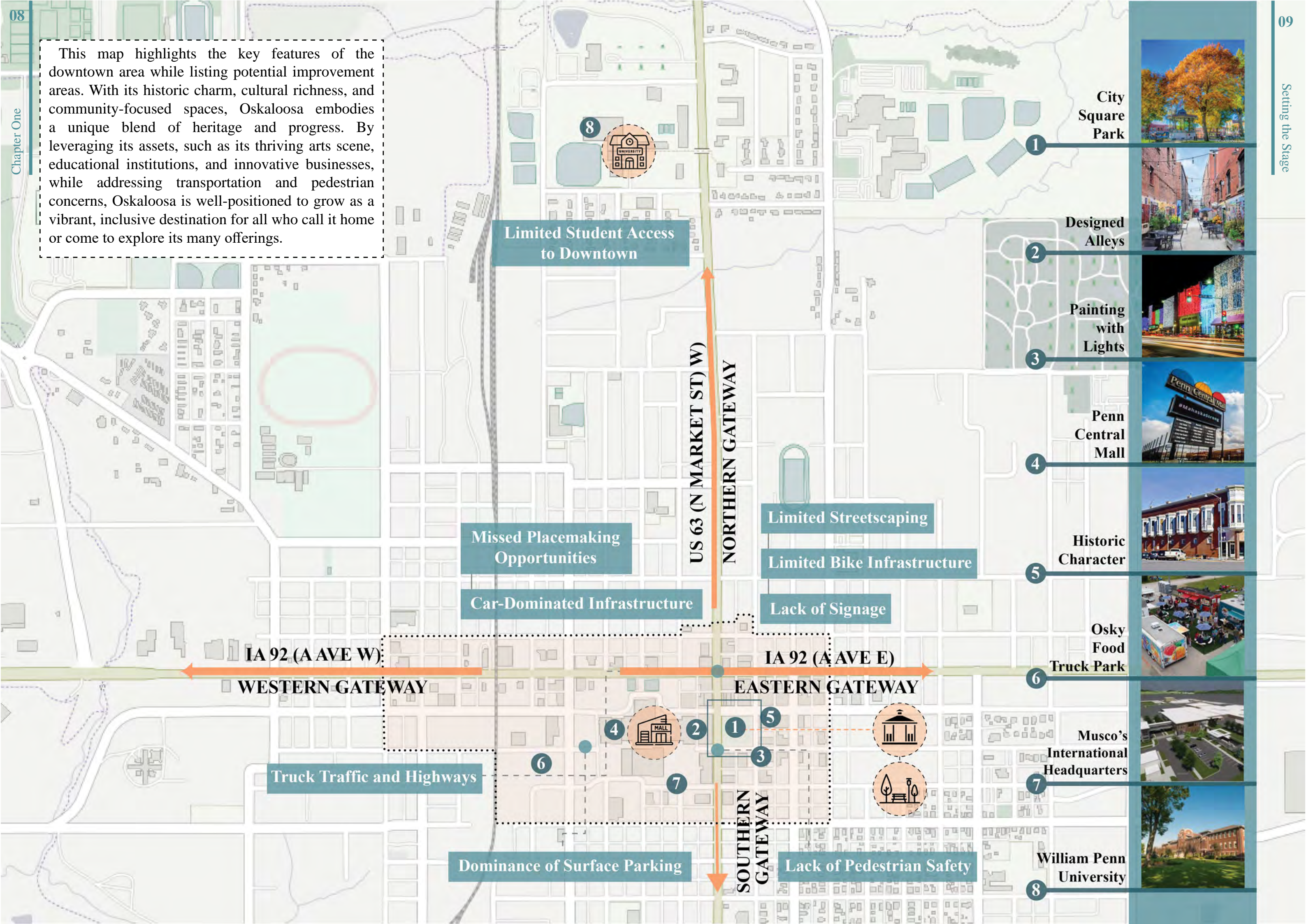
The downtown commercial district boasts many unique attractions that enrich the cultural and economic landscape. The Penn Central Mall provides a mixture of shopping and dining options, while Musco Lighting’s international headquarters highlights Oskaloosa’s role as a hub for innovative industries.

Downtown Commercial Zone

This plan covers an expanded area that includes the entire developed downtown.

Master Plan Study Area

This map highlights the key features of the downtown area while listing potential improvement areas. With its historic charm, cultural richness, and community-focused spaces, Oskaloosa embodies a unique blend of heritage and progress. By leveraging its assets, such as its thriving arts scene, educational institutions, and innovative businesses, while addressing transportation and pedestrian concerns, Oskaloosa is well-positioned to grow as a vibrant, inclusive destination for all who call it home or come to explore its many offerings.



1.4 Previous and Current City Planning Efforts

From 2000 to 2015, the City of Oskaloosa adopted several community plans. Since then, Oskaloosa has made a significant and sustained planning effort by introducing essential plans and strategies for shaping and developing the city. The 2019 Placemaking Plan made a notable difference by focusing on creating a more cohesive and connected downtown environment.

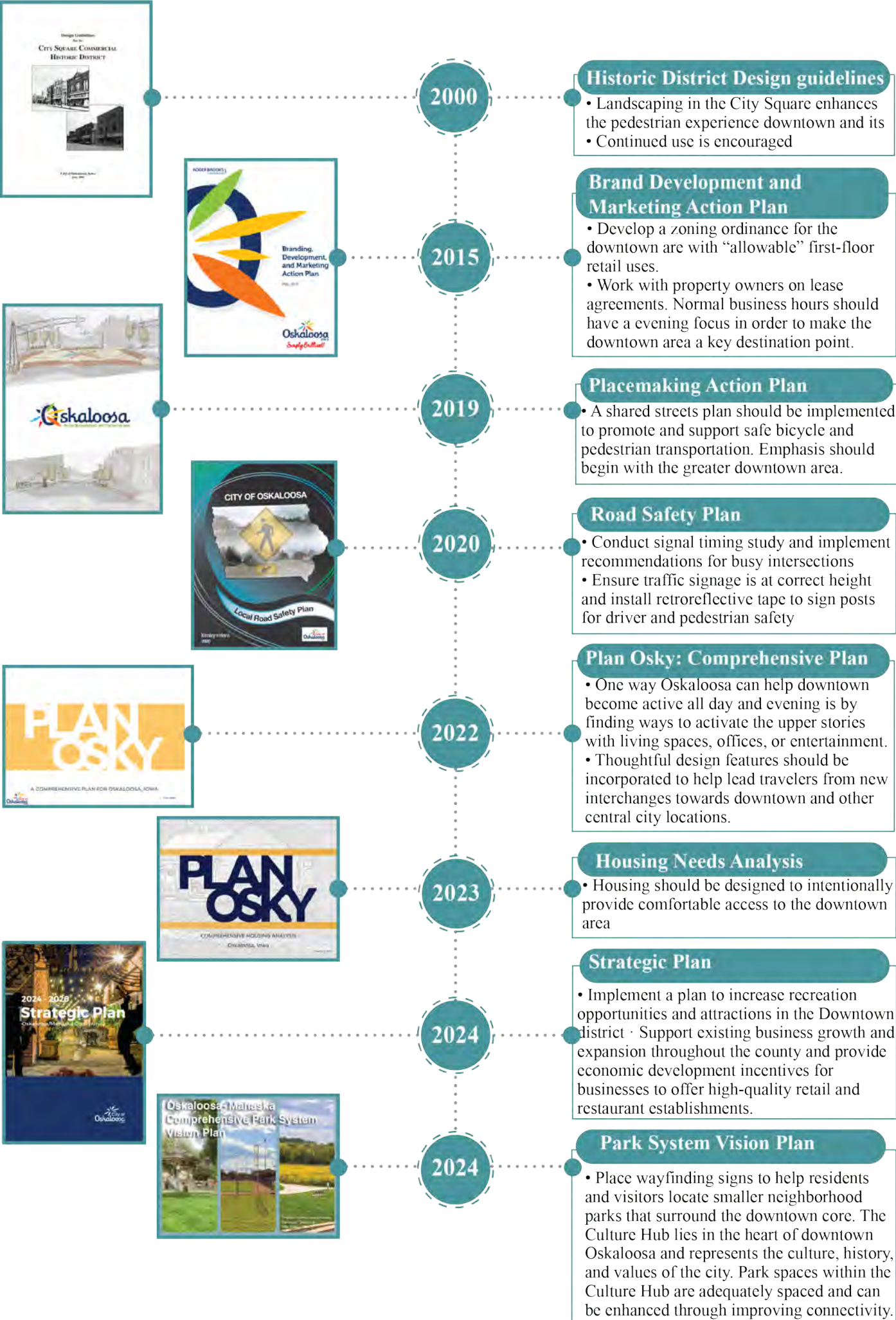
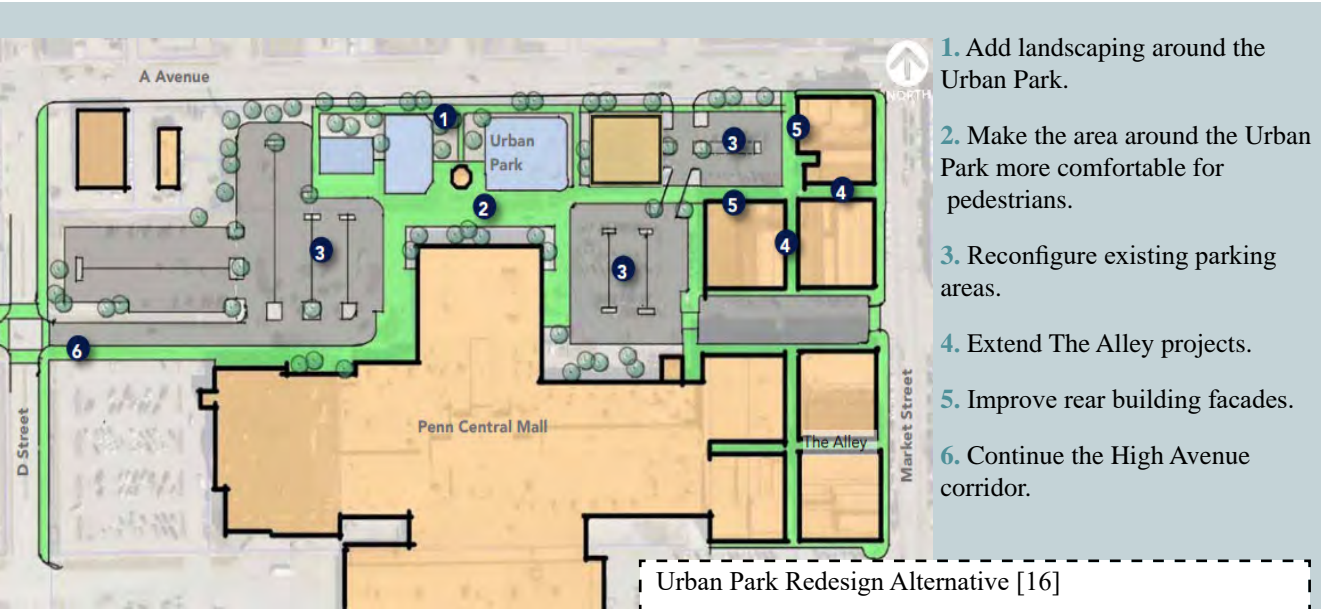
In an effort to enhance downtown traffic flow and public safety, the Local Road Safety Plan examines the relocation of the two highways from the downtown [14]. Additionally, Plan Osky: Comprehensive Plan provides downtown initiatives to activate upper stories for living spaces, offices, and entertainment in the downtown area. This Downtown Master Plan will integrate the strategies, initiatives, and objectives of each of Oskaloosa’s current plans to create a cohesive downtown strategy with a focused, actionable plan to guide the downtown area’s development effectively.

1.4.1 Plan Osky [15]

Plan Osky, Oskaloosa’s comprehensive plan, serves as a strategic roadmap for the city’s growth and development in land use

planning, housing, transportation, economic development, and community facilities. The plan establishes a shared vision for the city’s future by balancing the preservation of its small-town charm with its ambitions for modernization and expansion. It identifies significant investment possibilities, infrastructure upgrades, and policies that would improve the inhabitants’ quality of life while promoting sustainable growth over the next 15 years.

Plan Osky identifies the need to improve Oskaloosa’s downtown district as the community’s cultural and economic hub. The plan focuses on preserving the downtown’s historic character by encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings to accommodate new companies, housing, and community activities. It emphasizes the importance of streetscape improvements such as better pedestrian paths, lighting, planting, and signs to create a more inviting and livelier environment. Plan Osky highlights downtown Oskaloosa as a destination representing the city’s distinct identity and legacy by integrating economic development initiatives with historic preservation and placemaking methods.



1.4.2 Historic Preservation Design Guidelines [17]

Oskaloosa remains committed to its rich history and unique architectural heritage, as reflected in the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. These guidelines serve as a roadmap for property owners, developers, and planners to preserve the character and integrity of the city’s historic districts. They recommended different material selections, architectural styles, and design approaches to ensure renovations, restorations, and new constructions respect the historical context. The guidelines emphasized retaining original features such as facades, windows, and ornamental details to keep historic properties vibrant and functional while improving modern functionality. The guidelines sought to enhance the built environment’s cultural and economic vitality by maintaining the balance between preservation and contemporary needs.

Published in 2000, the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines have not been updated in over two decades. Oskaloosa’s Historic Preservation Committee and city leaders expressed the need for a comprehensive update to reflect current trends and practices. Proposed revisions included incorporating modern design elements, integrating green and sustainable building practices, ensuring compliance with updated state laws, and adopting Main Street Design Guidelines principles to bolster downtown revitalization efforts. This updated position allowed Oskaloosa to preserve its historic identity better while adapting to modern development demands. This ensured the city’s heritage remains a cornerstone of its future growth.

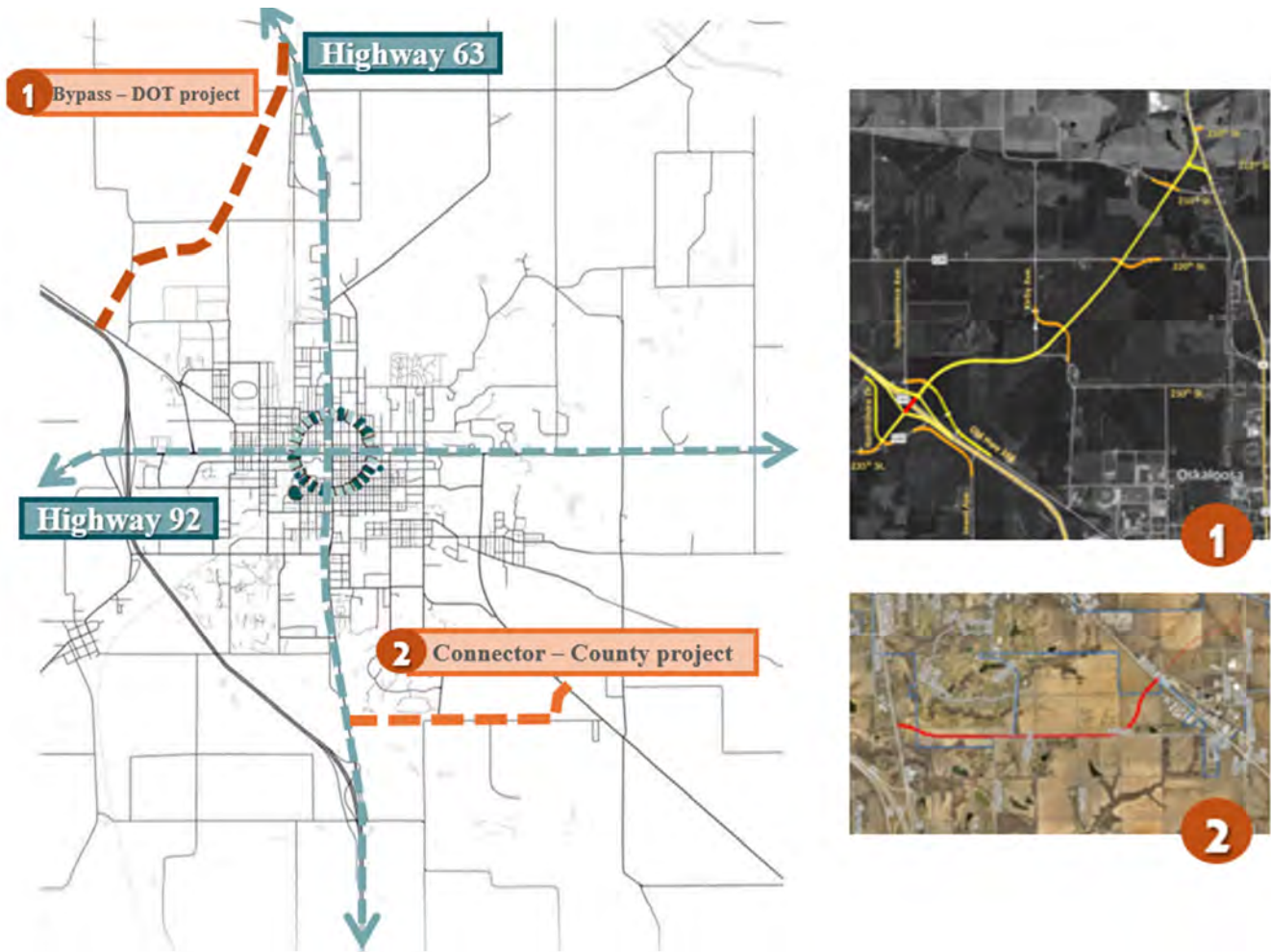


The historic character of Oskaloosa, a vital asset to the city’s identity, is significantly impacted by heavy truck traffic

1.4.3 Bypass & Connector Design Guidelines

Two main highways, US Highway 63 and Iowa Highway 92, run directly through downtown Oskaloosa. While this infrastructure attracts area visitors and provides economic benefits, it also has substantial drawbacks. Highway traffic contributes to heavy truck congestion, noise and odor pollution, and pedestrian safety hazards. These factors damage

downtown Oskaloosa’s sense of place by making it harder for residents and tourists to enjoy its unique vibe. Oskaloosa undertook two major transportation projects designed to improve regional mobility and enhance the sense of place in its downtown area. The Iowa Department of Transportation



(IDOT) began the Northwest Bypass as an initiative to reduce congestion in downtown Oskaloosa by rerouting through traffic, particularly heavy trucks, around the city’s northwest edge. The bypass intends to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety within the downtown area and potentially increase local economic development. The city is using this project as part of a broader strategy to protect the historic character of downtown by diverting traffic away from congested areas. Designs for the Northwest Bypass began in 2019, and construction is scheduled to start in 2025, with an expected completion date in 2027 [18].

Mahaska County leads the second major project, the Southeast Connector, as an initiative to improve connectivity between US 63, IA 23, and IA 92. This new connector road, located southeast of the city, will create a more direct route for travelers moving

between these key highways, facilitating better traffic circulation around the city and reducing pressure on local streets [19]. The Southeast Connector is especially critical for improving access to commercial and industrial areas, enhancing the flow of goods and services throughout the region. Design work for this project began in 2022, with construction slated to start in 2026 and completion anticipated in 2028.

These projects aim to improve Oskaloosa’s long-term urban and economic development goals by reducing traffic congestion in the downtown core while improving regional access. The infrastructure improvements aligned with these projects to revitalize downtown Oskaloosa directly affect the goals and implementations in this plan.



Voices of the Community

02

This chapter describes the project team's multiple lines of effort to engage the public, local city staff, and key stakeholders. Each group presented the perceived problems differently, which proved instrumental in framing the issues that required further analysis. The team conducted a site visit, several stakeholder interviews, and a public survey. The results from these interactions identified transportation, economic development, and downtown cohesiveness as factors for further analysis.

2.1 Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the community engagement process for the Downtown Master Plan, the team conducted site visits and stakeholder meetings to gather critical insights and foster collaboration. The visits included the following focused activities:

-  **Attended Initial Meeting with City Staff**
-  **Participated in Walking Tour Guided by City Staff**
-  **Attended Historic Preservation Commission Meeting**
-  **Met separately with Key Stakeholders:** Musco Lighting, Penn Central Mall, Experience, Oskaloosa, William Penn University

Each event provided information and feedback to shape the vision for the Downtown Master Plan.



2.1.1 City Staff

Discussions with city officials highlighted significant issues and ongoing projects influencing the community, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the downtown area. The walking tour covered key locations identified for potential improvement and redevelopment, offering firsthand insights into areas with the most potential for transformation.

1. Desire to push the importance of downtown planning beyond City Square Park
2. Continue strong relationship with Mainstreet Group and other stakeholders
3. Manage funding and future budgeting issues
4. Interest in drawing people into downtown for increased vibrancy
5. Foster a large variety of community events within the project area
6. Opportunity to expand the past Three Phase Façade program (2016-2023), which created a unified and updated sightline for city square buildings, with another three phases implemented in the future (2023-2029) to address the city’s façades further

7. Musco’s realignment of 2nd Ave and the restoration of a traditional grid pattern allowing for increased pedestrian connectivity
8. Future transfer of jurisdiction of Highways 63 and 92 allowing for redevelopment of infrastructure
9. Address existing parking and infrastructure challenges that limit pedestrian activates
10. High truck traffic volume on state highways
11. Cross-walk signals not sequencing properly
12. Uncomfortable walking paths due to lack of shade
13. No comfortable pedestrian access exists around the mall to connect western portions of the area to the city square

2.1.2 Historic Preservation Commission

The commission shared their aspirations for updated guidelines, emphasizing the balance between preserving heritage and fostering growth.

1. Clear request for updated guidelines to include new pictures, colored format, and



- addition of building colors and energy-efficient incorporation
2. Address concerns of public vs private land, alleys, and rear portions of buildings not covered by the Façade program

2.1.3 Musco Lighting

This meeting explored potential partnership opportunities to support local development initiatives and emphasized the importance of collaboration with the city’s major stakeholders. Musco acts as a key developer in the downtown area for historic preservation, which ensures storefront opportunities.

1. Currently the largest employer in the city with their international headquarters downtown
2. Wants a lively downtown to attract new talent and entertain prospective clients
3. Interested in more student activity and entertainment opportunities in the downtown

2.1.4 Penn Central Mall

As a major stakeholder, the mall provides the city with various services beyond traditional retail-focused services and acts as a hub for community-based activities.

- 1. Maintains a high occupancy rate
- 2. Developed their plan to shift from retail services to office space and experience-type activities
- 3. Large interior space allows for flexibility – serves as a backup to community events and provides the ability to rearrange the layout to fit future needs
- 4. Searching for partnerships to increase events for those 12 and under
- 5. Observes generational gap issues –how the shared space can cater to varying generations at once

2.1.5 Experience Oskaloosa

Conversations with this nonprofit organization highlighted their role in creating unique shopping experiences through local business collaboration. This engagement provided a platform for incorporating business owners’ voices and concerns as central elements in the plan.

- 1. Information & communication key within the community – wants “information stations” containing centralized community information locations placed within the downtown area
- 2. The organization fosters & mentors other local businesses in the area
- 3. Placemaking and consistent branding needed for the downtown area
- 4. Current inconsistent parking enforcement
- 5. The Façade program helped to build exteriors, but interior renovations create

cost barriers within vacant storefronts

- 6. Event promotion must focus on the goal of the event: community gathering vs retail promotion



2.1.6 William Penn Faculty

This meeting established an introduction and relationship with Assistant Professor Michael Johnston. This led to the discussion of key research and project scope overlapping with his work, as well as the university’s willingness to assist in promoting the inclusion of the student body’s views in shaping the downtown plan.

- 1. Emphasized the University’s excitement and backing of student engagement within the creation of a downtown master plan
- 2. Highlighted vibrant student culture and participation levels through various beneficial downtown activities
- 3. Explained the various transportation options available to students to include a bike share program
- 4. Provided diverse examples of housing options available to William Penn students with various needs, such as on-campus family accommodations

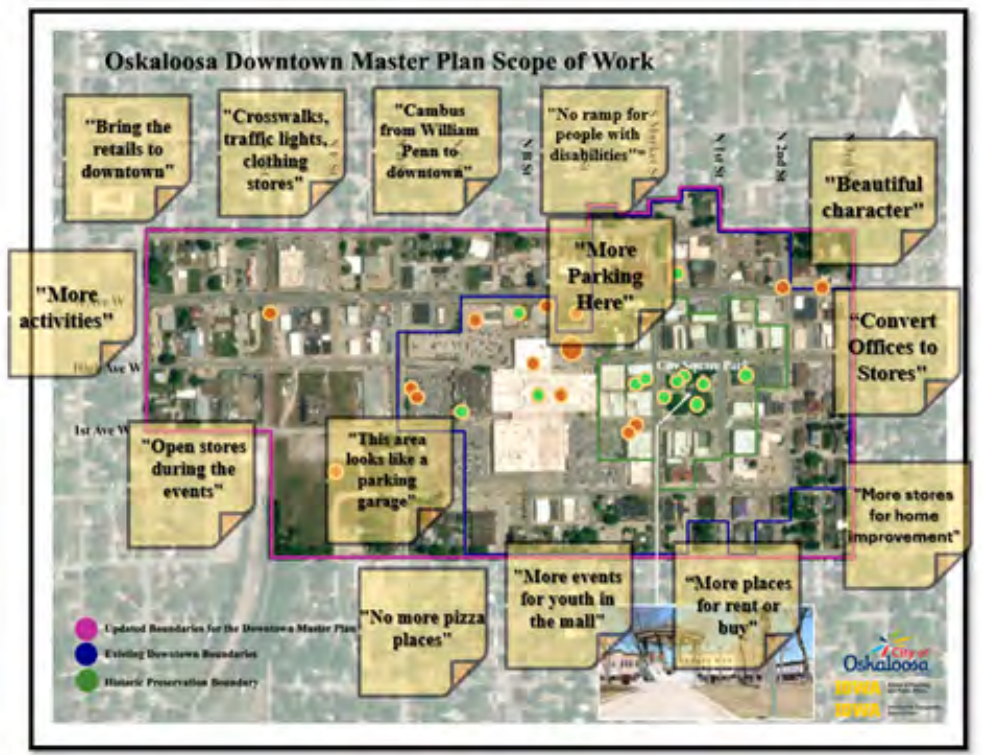
These invaluable engagements increased the understanding of the community’s needs, concerns, and aspirations. The input gathered played a crucial role in shaping a master plan that reflects the community’s vision and ensures alignment with both current challenges and long-term goals.

2.2 Public Engagement

As part of the planning process, the project team conducted community engagement at three key locations in Oskaloosa: City Square, Penn Central Mall, and an Oskaloosa High School football game. Community members participated in interview-style surveys asking questions about the key features of downtown Oskaloosa, how often they visited, and how they hoped the downtown would change in the future. The team collected nearly 100 responses, providing valuable insights to inform goal setting and guide the next steps in the Downtown Master Plan. An interactive map activity, shown below, allowed participants to identify their favorite and least favorite places within the study area. Green dots on the map represented favorable locations, while red dots indicated areas residents wished to see improved. Additionally, the interactive map encouraged participants to comment on the downtown area and offer specific input on enhancing the space to meet community needs better.

Out of the nearly 100 respondents, 29 percent were under the age of 20, 41 percent were between the ages of 20 and 49, and 26 percent were over 50. The primary mode of transportation of respondents when visiting downtown was driving, with 68 percent, and walking, which made up another 24 percent. Biking contributed 7 percent of the transportation used downtown.

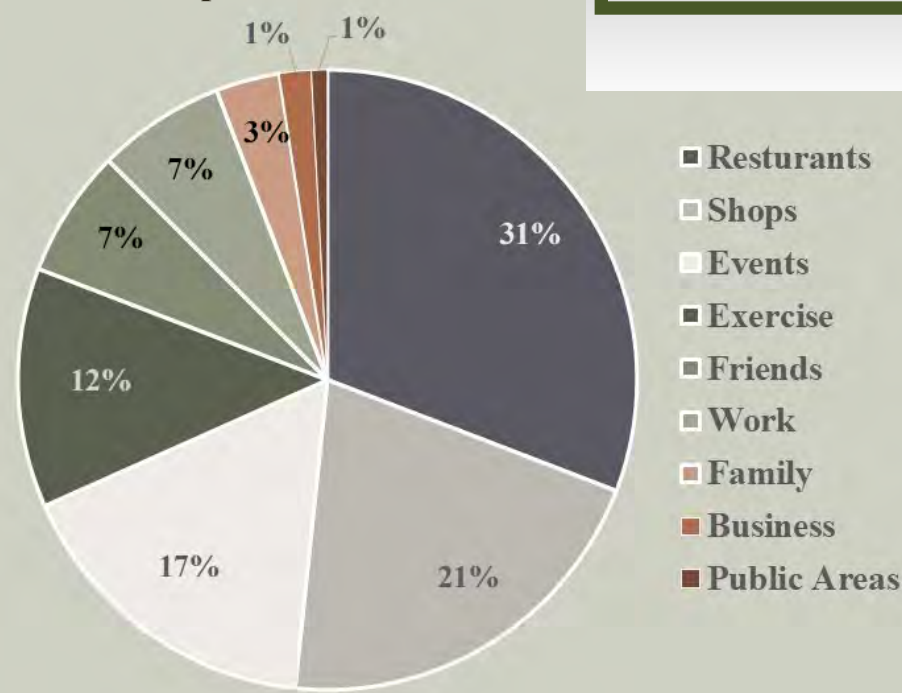
The survey revealed that the restaurants, shops, and community events were the three reasons individuals visited downtown. The pie chart below shows that these three responses demonstrated the community's interest in downtown economic development and public events. Additionally, the local businesses were a point of pride for many residents, and many wished for even more options to support.



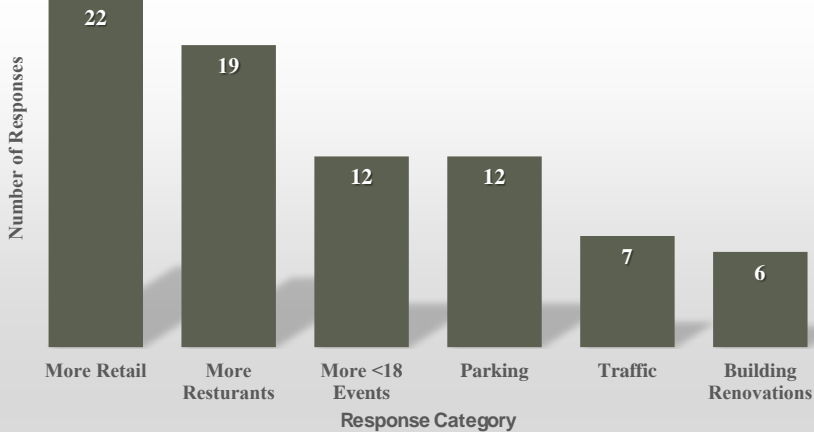
Respondents highlighted key locations on the map as community favorites: City Square Park, Smokey Row Coffee, and The Alley. These locations drew attention from locals and visitors as key locations within Oskaloosa. See the interactive map for other locations.

Overall, those interviewed enjoyed the historic character of downtown and the current community events and shops that brought them to the area. Many were interested in continuing to invest downtown and further diversifying amenities and activities to make the community more vibrant.

Reasons People Come Downtown



What Would You Want to Change?



2.2.1 Community Open House April 3, 2025

On April 3, 2025, a two-hour open house was held at the Penn Central Mall. The central and easily accessible location allowed a wide variety of community members to participate and provide initial feedback on the team’s recommendations.

The open house featured an interactive and informative theme, using visual aids to convey the proposed ideas.



The seven posters focused on the following areas of the revitalization plan:

- 1. Penn Central Mall Recommendations: This poster presented several spatial recommendations for the mall’s future, including possible layouts, kiosk additions, and flexible spaces. It also included ideas for fun activities for kids and different lighting structures that could brighten up the mall.
- 2. Downtown Creative Placemaking Design Options: This poster contained four different design options for the downtown streetscape. These options included different types of benches, creatively painted crosswalks to enhance pedestrian safety and appearance, artistic treatments for curb extensions at intersections to enhance walkability and visual appeal, and ideas for outdoor activities to activate the downtown square.
- 3. Pocket Park Ideas: This poster displayed preliminary ideas for developing a new pocket park in the downtown area. The ideas focused on creating a flexible and inviting space for relaxation, small gatherings, and perhaps community events.
- 4. Unlocking Downtown Development Opportunities: This poster outlined strategies and potential initiatives the city and business owners could pursue to enhance the downtown core and attract further development and investment. The recommendations focused on identifying key opportunities and outlining potential pathways for growth.
- 5. Food Truck Park Enhancement: This poster built on the existing popularity of a food truck gathering and presented the idea of creating a more permanent food truck park location with better infrastructure. Feedback was explicitly sought on the location preferences required amenities, such as seating, utilities, and shade.
- 6. Transportation Connection and Bike Paths: This poster tackled the significant connectivity issue by proposing the construction of bike paths that could connect areas outside the downtown core to the central business district. The team asked attendees to provide feedback on the types of bike lanes they prefer (e.g., protected bike lanes, shared roadway lanes, or an 8-foot-wide off-street path) to ensure that cycling options are safe and accessible.

Team members guided people through the posters to elaborate on the proposed ideas, answer questions, and actively collect feedback from attendees during the open house. Community members were encouraged to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions, bringing local knowledge and perspectives to influence the evolving plan. This direct engagement provided invaluable qualitative data that was instrumental in refining the recommendations and ensuring they are aligned with the community’s vision for the future of Oskaloosa. The feedback collected at this open house was carefully analyzed and incorporated into the following stages of the planning process.

The posters, along with the feedback stickers, can be found in Appendix C.



In-Depth Exploration

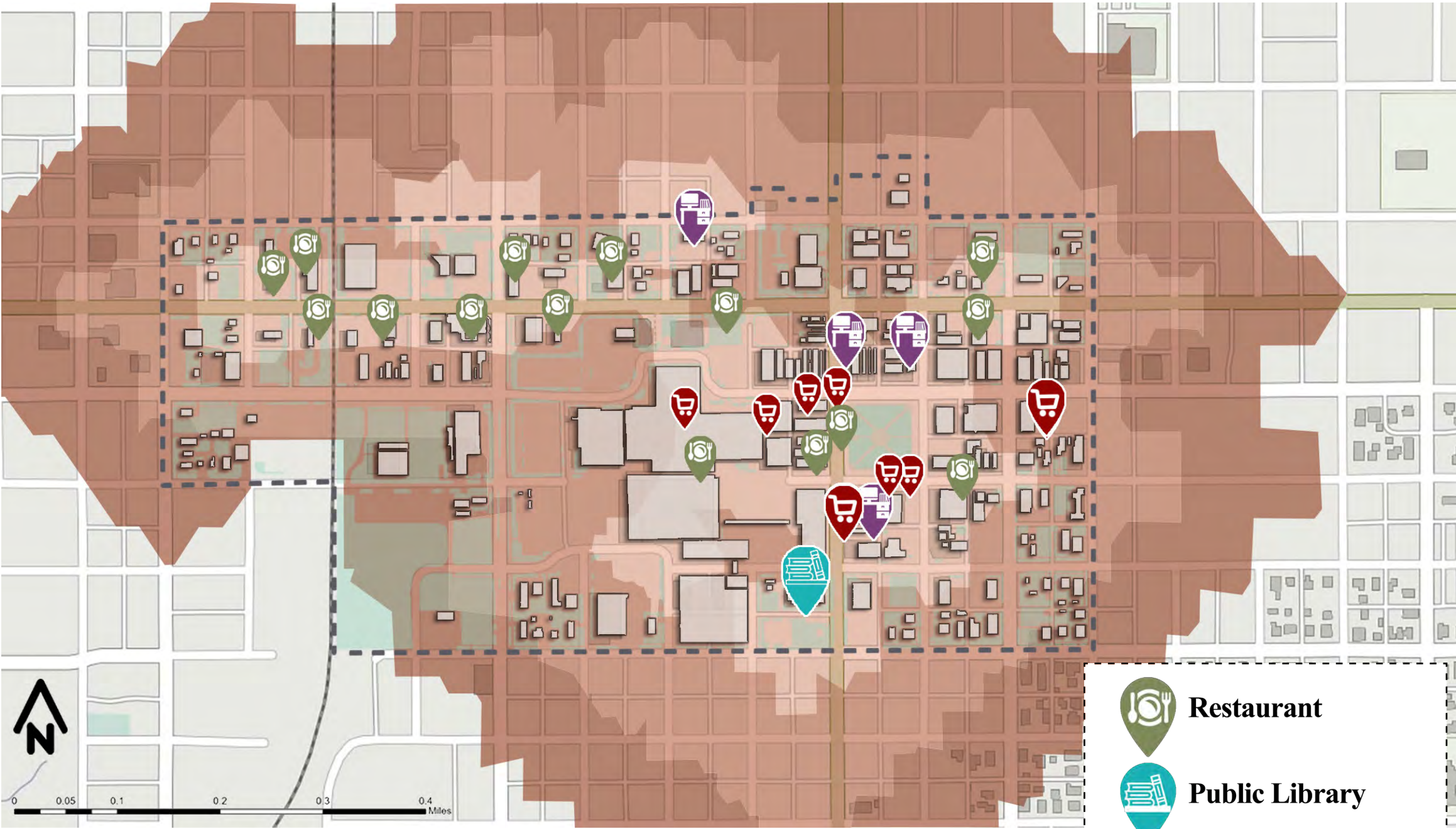
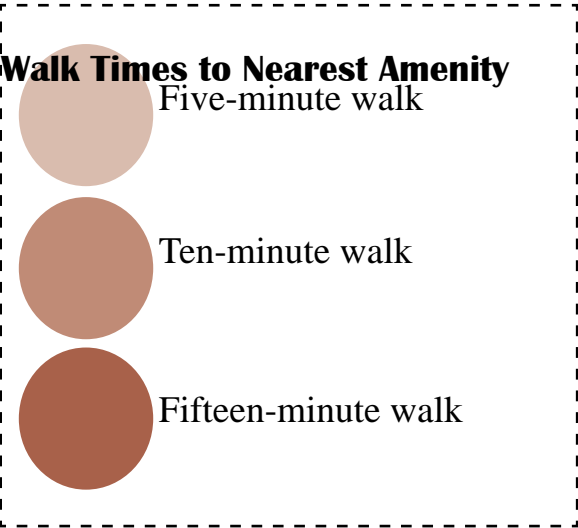
03

This section analyzes various community aspects to develop a picture of the issues that require attention while highlighting positive areas that serve the community well. The voices of the community directed the team in its investigation to find the pros and cons within the study area. These features include downtown economic opportunities, mixed-use land use availability, placemaking initiatives, and a thorough transportation network. The downtown master plan analysis highlights improvements to the effectiveness of these features while maintaining the character and strength of Oskaloosa's downtown. Following this examination, the team used comparable cities to provide examples of best practices from which Oskaloosa could gain inspiration for its community.

3.1 Walking Times from Downtown Amenities

A cohesive downtown environment area requires amenities throughout the area that connect a visually appealing backdrop with needed services. The Downtown Walkability Analysis Map illustrates the locations of restaurants, the public library, and office and retail businesses.

Additionally, this map delineates the walking time to the downtown amenities. Lighter-colored areas indicate locations accessible within a five-minute walk, while the dark areas display a fifteen-minute walk to the various amenities. The corridor along Highway 92 and the City Square Park possesses areas with minimum pedestrian travel times. This map shows the limited cohesion between the different sections of the town and identifies the need to pursue strategies connecting the town around Penn Central Mall. This map also visually represents the strong walkability surrounding the highly developed commercial areas along High Avenue, making it an ideal location for redevelopment projects. Future development should focus on creating comfortable, interesting, and safe pedestrian placemaking efforts to effectively connect the downtown area’s different portions.



3.1.1 Walking Time Comparisons

A common myth in most small and mid-sized towns is that downtowns are not walkable or convenient for short trips. Residents interviewed for this report desired parking to be directly available at their destination; otherwise, it is “too far” to walk. However, this perception does not always ring true when one compares perceived distances to known circumstances, such as shopping at a grocery store. To better understand the walkability of downtown Oskaloosa, this report compared walking times and distances from downtown parking locations to the City Square Park against a common experience: one lap around the local Walmart.

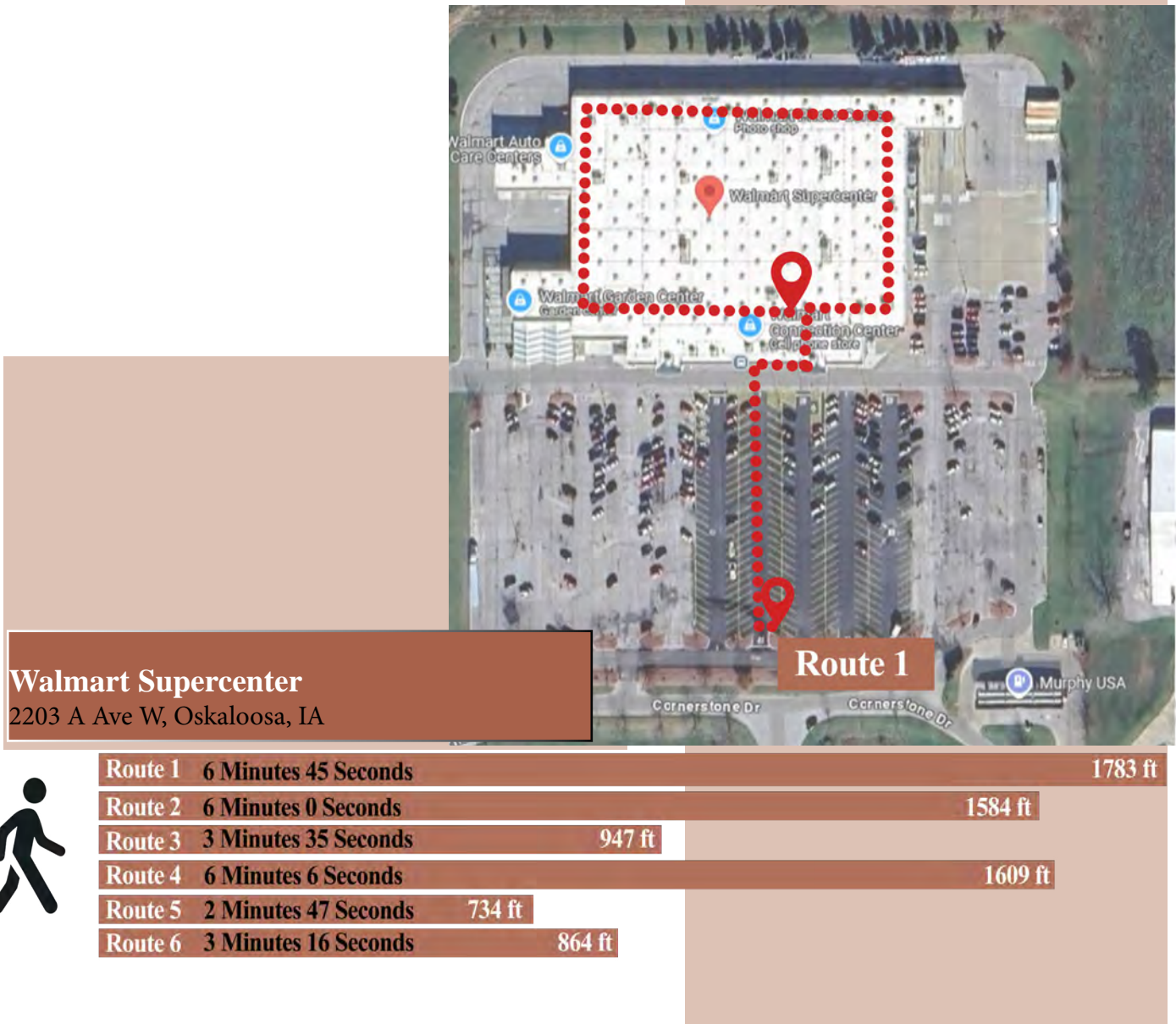
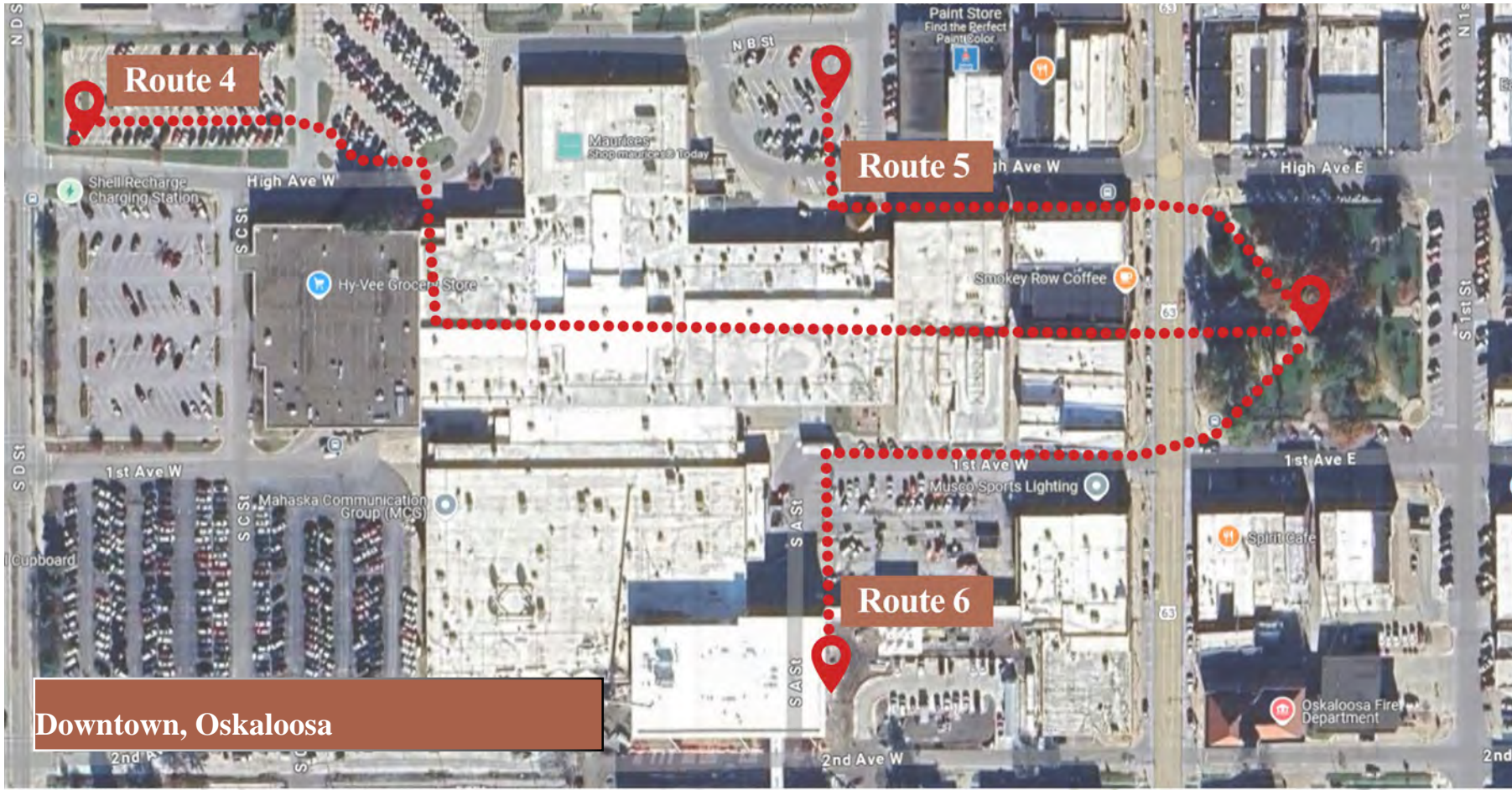
The goal is to challenge the belief that downtown is “inconvenient” by illustrating that people walk similar or even longer distances without hesitation in other parts of town. Walking a few minutes is possible and

better than driving short distances or circling around for closer parking. Short walks create a more vibrant, active public space and engage people more with downtown businesses, public areas, and one another.

The graph on the next page compares six walking routes in Oskaloosa and includes estimates for walking time and distance (in feet). The time was calculated using Google’s walking calculation software built into their map direction feature. This limited the use of different speeds traveled by individuals through the assumption of an averaged traveled speed for all.

This comparison illustrates that an average walk-through downtown Oskaloosa is less than 7 minutes, roughly the same time as a walk from the parking lot and one lap around Walmart. Parking in distant public lots downtown and walking down to the square equates to shorter or equal distances

Walking Times Around Downtown



3.1.2 Current Placemaking Features

The project team examined the current concentrations of placemaking features in the study area to determine the possibility of creating a more cohesive downtown environment. Oskaloosa’s Placemaking Features Map shows the current locations where signage, murals, and physical statues have been used to develop a sense of place downtown. This map also highlights the barren downtown areas that could benefit from additional place-making efforts. Addressing these under-utilized public areas with placemaking will be key in addressing the lack of cohesiveness of downtown. Comprehensive placemaking highlights important and interesting areas within a city, but Oskaloosa’s initiatives have not yet expanded beyond the area surrounding the City Square Park. No wayfinding signage or art exhibits exist west of the Penn Central Mall, creating the feeling of a different downtown section. More placemaking and wayfinding features should be incorporated on the mall’s west side to promote a cohesive environment throughout the downtown area. Additionally, the map highlights the limited number of general features, showing that the downtown area would benefit from additional wayfinding and placemaking projects.

Placemaking Art Features



3.2 Traffic and Motor Vehicle Accidents

Understanding accident patterns helps guide traffic and urban design interventions and creates a safer downtown for residents and visitors. Reducing the number of car crashes in downtown Oskaloosa would significantly enhance the area’s livability by creating a safer and more inviting environment. The red dots in Figure 3.2 indicate car crash locations within the study area of the Downtown Master Plan. Figure 3.3 identified 2024 data clusters where most accidents have occurred along key corridors—particularly A Avenue (Highway 92), Market Street (Highway 63), and their intersection. These two highways contain 32 of the 42 accidents this year or 77 percent of all traffic accidents within the area.

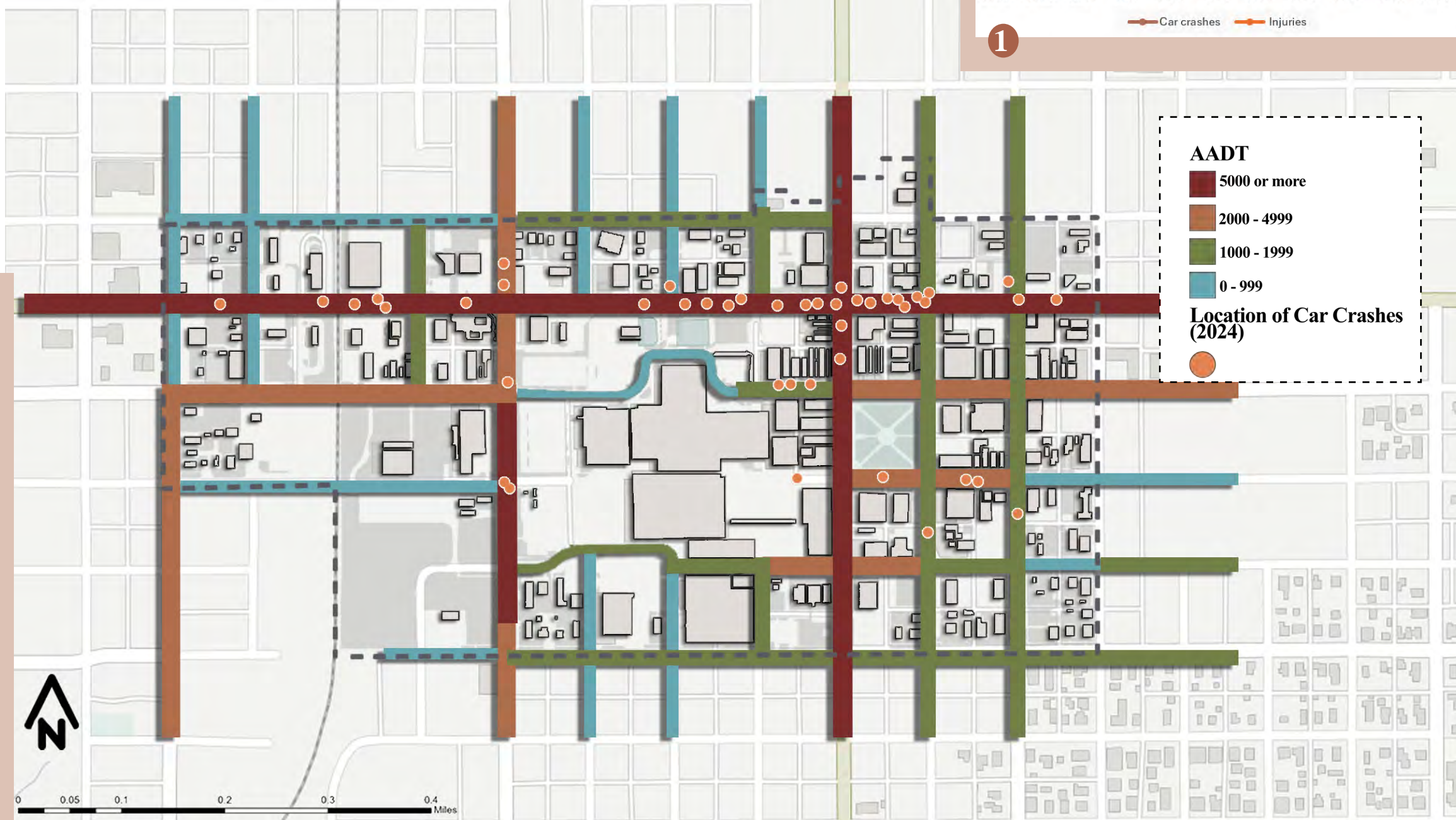
The current traffic flow and accident data indicate significant safety concerns in downtown Oskaloosa, primarily due to the high traffic volume on Highway 92 and Highway 63. These highways carry most of the traffic, accounting for the most car crashes in the downtown area. The proposed

relocation of these two highways through the connector and bypass projects aims to reduce congestion and improve safety. The plan anticipates lower accident rates and a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers by rerouting heavy traffic away from the downtown core, including trucks. This change would help foster a more walkable and bike-friendly downtown, contributing to a more accessible and vibrant urban space. In addition to enhancing safety, this shift will allow for more pedestrian-friendly spaces, attract visitors, and support the development of active transportation infrastructure, improving downtown Oskaloosa’s overall livability and appeal.

Using data from the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) was analyzed to quantify traffic flow and provide insight into the highways’ effects on surrounding streets, see Figure 3.3 [1]. For clarity, the AADT data was divided into four categories to visualize traffic volumes. Category 4 (red) represents the most congested roads—the two state and federal highways. The area surrounding City Square and Penn Central Mall, described by Category 3 (Orange), shows the second-highest level of traffic. Streets on the downtown outskirts primarily fall into Categories 1 and 2, indicating lower traffic volumes and a shift from commercial to residential areas.



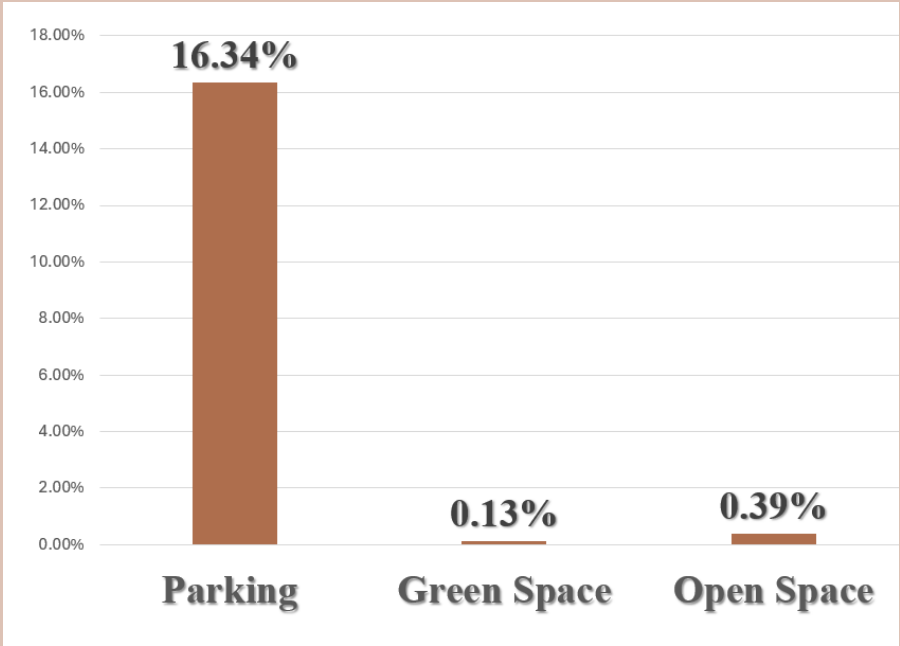
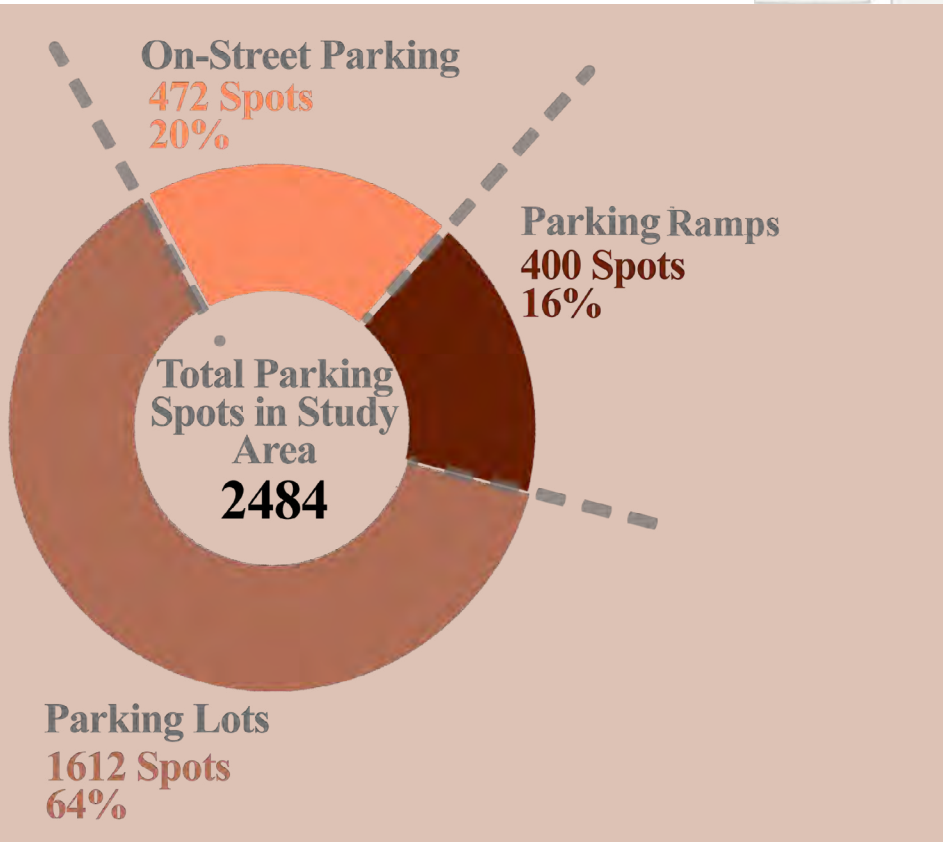
- 1 Total car crashes and Injuries in the City of Oskaloosa (2014 - 2024)
- 2 Location of car crashes in study area (2014 - 2024), two nodes with most crashes in 10 years



3.3 Parking and Open Spaces

The map below highlights a need to prioritize green spaces within the downtown area. An analysis of the downtown area found 1,677 parking spaces for approximately 1,612,963 square feet of land. Comparatively, the downtown area contains 280,983 square feet of open space and 417,115 square feet of green space. 26 parking lots around Penn Central Mall, with 40 additional parking areas located southeast of the intersection of Market Street and A Avenue East, seen in the map below. Conversely, three plots of land serve as green space, and 14 plots of undeveloped

land are classified as open space. Although parking is essential, the significant land allocation for this purpose underscores the need to balance parking with green space. The establishment of more green and open spaces would provide benefits to the community. These spaces enhance the beauty and vibrancy of an area, add natural elements that soften the environment, provide visual appeal, and serve as social gathering spaces. These benefits promote the health and well-being of individuals by offering a place for relaxation, recreation, and physical activity.



“Parking and Green Space Allocation in Study Area”

Parking

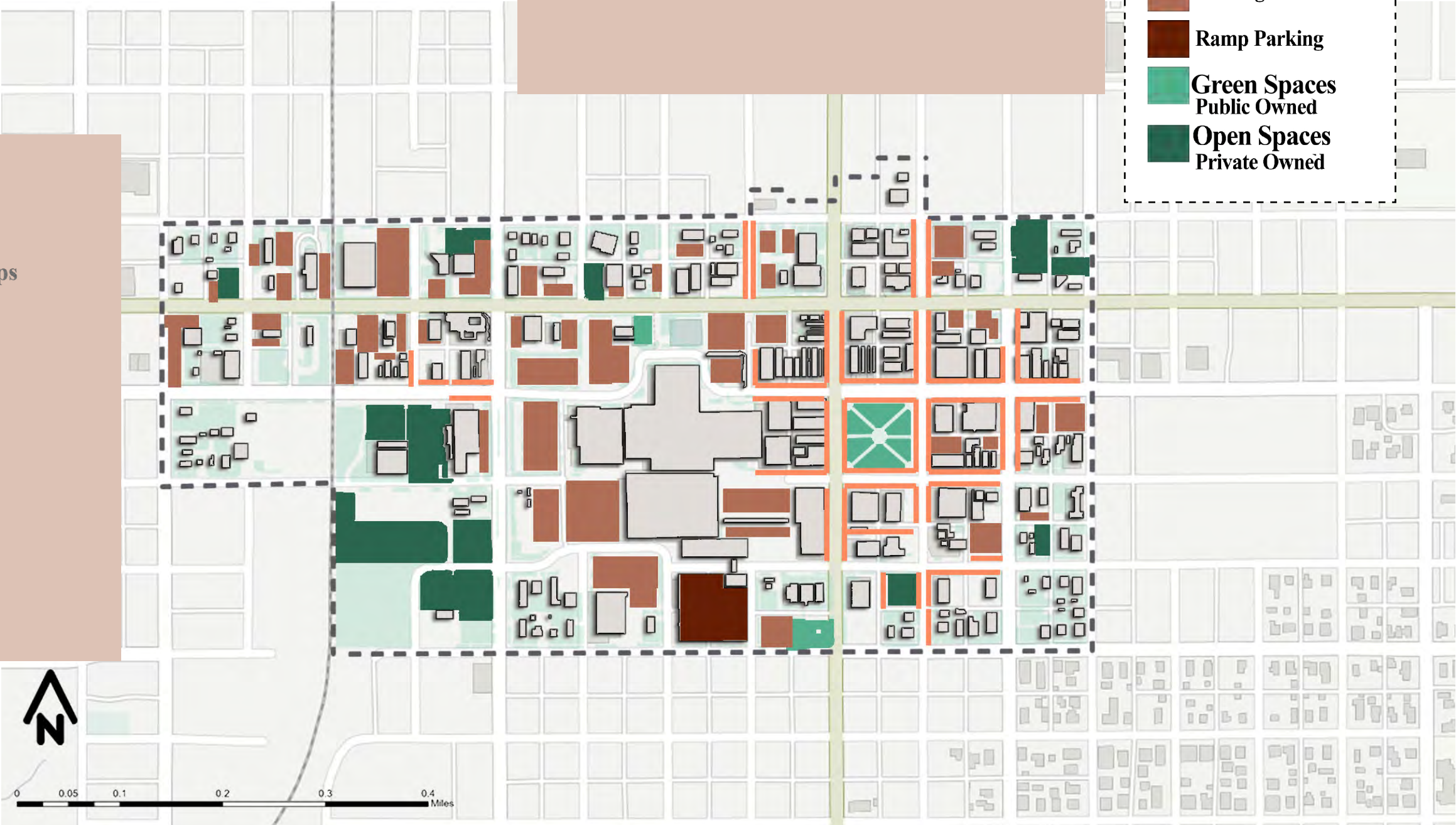
- Off-Street Parking
- Parking Lots
- Ramp Parking

Green Spaces

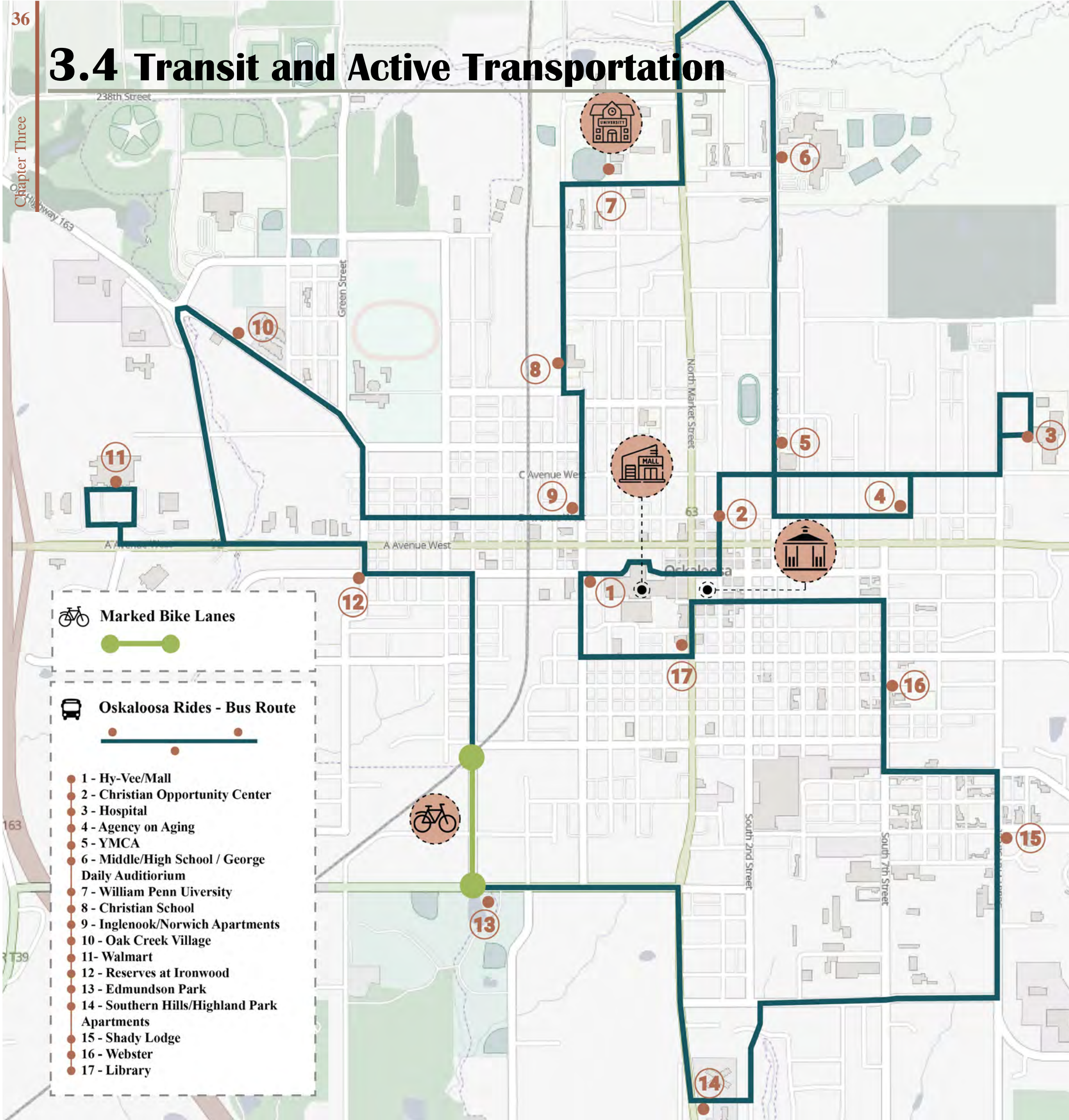
- Public Owned

Open Spaces

- Private Owned



3.4 Transit and Active Transportation



- 1 - Hy-Vee/Mall
- 2 - Christian Opportunity Center
- 3 - Hospital
- 4 - Agency on Aging
- 5 - YMCA
- 6 - Middle/High School / George Daily Auditorium
- 7 - William Penn University
- 8 - Christian School
- 9 - Inglenook/Norwich Apartments
- 10 - Oak Creek Village
- 11 - Walmart
- 12 - Reserves at Ironwood
- 13 - Edmundson Park
- 14 - Southern Hills/Highland Park Apartments
- 15 - Shady Lodge
- 16 - Webster
- 17 - Library

3.4.1 Public Transportation

Oskaloosa maintains a single public transit route that circulates in and around the downtown area, with its primary stop near Penn Central Mall. This route effectively connects key destinations such as the local hospital, middle and high schools, William Penn University, Walmart, local parks, and the library. Oskaloosa also offers “Oskaloosa Rides,” a door-to-door service available 24 hours a day, six days a week. However, this service requires 24-hour advance scheduling. Limitations to the services include limited route coverage and operating hours that do not accommodate residents’ schedules and accessibility requirements.

3.4.2 Current Bicycle Facilities

The city features one designated sharrow in the downtown area, situated on South H Street. This sharrow is part of the Mahaska Community Recreation Center trail, which provides cyclists with a dedicated path on both sides of the street. However, the city’s only shared lane leads to Edmundson Park, leaving much of Oskaloosa’s urban landscape and residential neighborhoods without direct access to a cohesive cycling network. This lack of connectivity underscores the need for additional bike lanes and trails connecting downtown to other parts of the city.

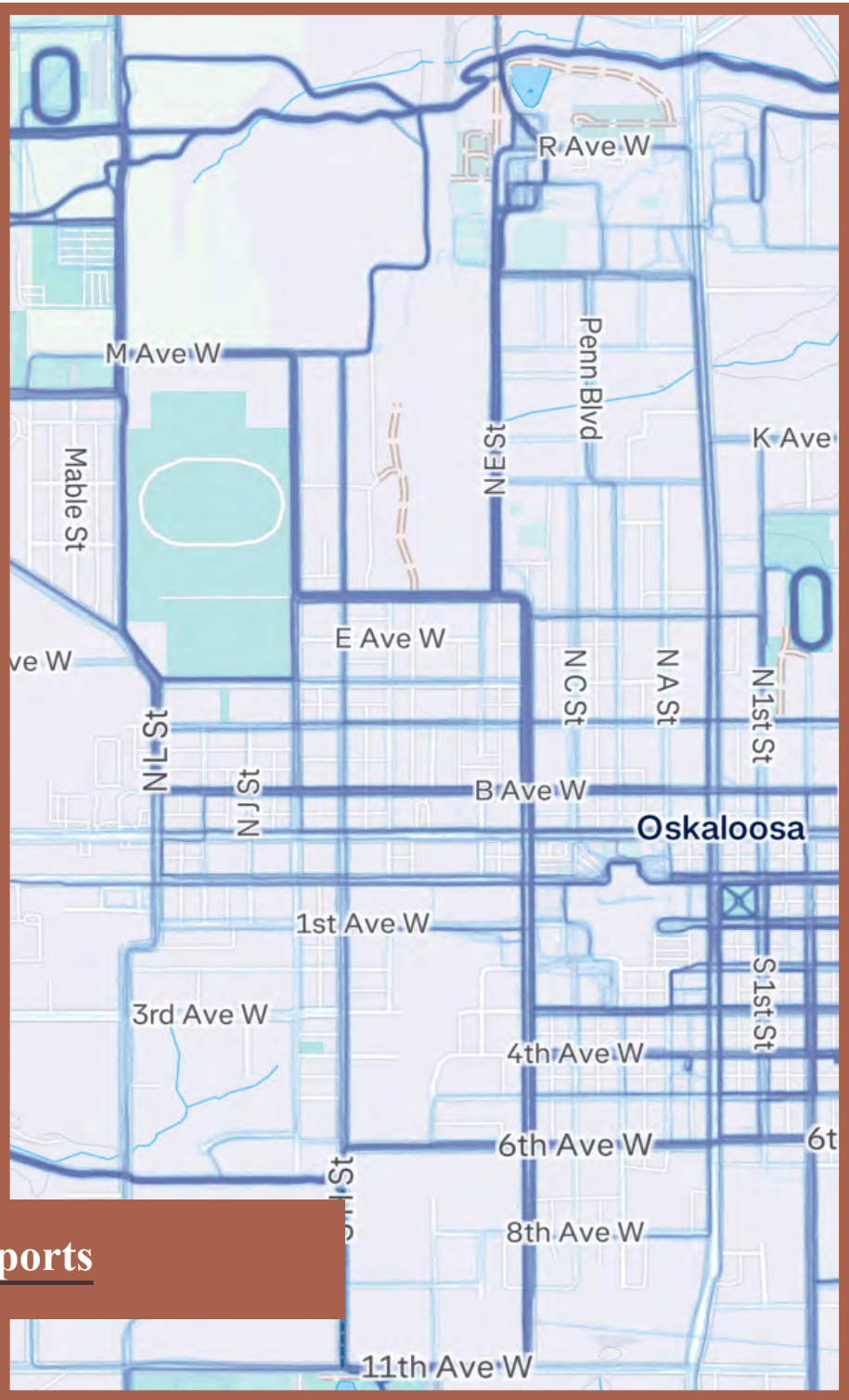
Expanding the cycling infrastructure would address several critical needs. First, it would bridge gaps between the existing trail and other areas in Oskaloosa, such as residential neighborhoods, commercial hubs, and recreational spaces. Second, improved connectivity would promote active transportation across the city, encouraging more residents to opt for walking or biking over driving. This shift could reduce traffic and parking issues, enhance public health, and create a friendlier urban environment.

One notable strength of the current system is the public transit route’s proximity to the existing bike lane. This overlap provides a foundation for integrating cycling and public transit, allowing seamless multimodal transportation. By leveraging this connection and building a comprehensive network of bike lanes and trails, Oskaloosa could unlock the full potential of active transportation. Future investments in this area would enhance mobility and make the city more livable and attractive to residents and visitors.

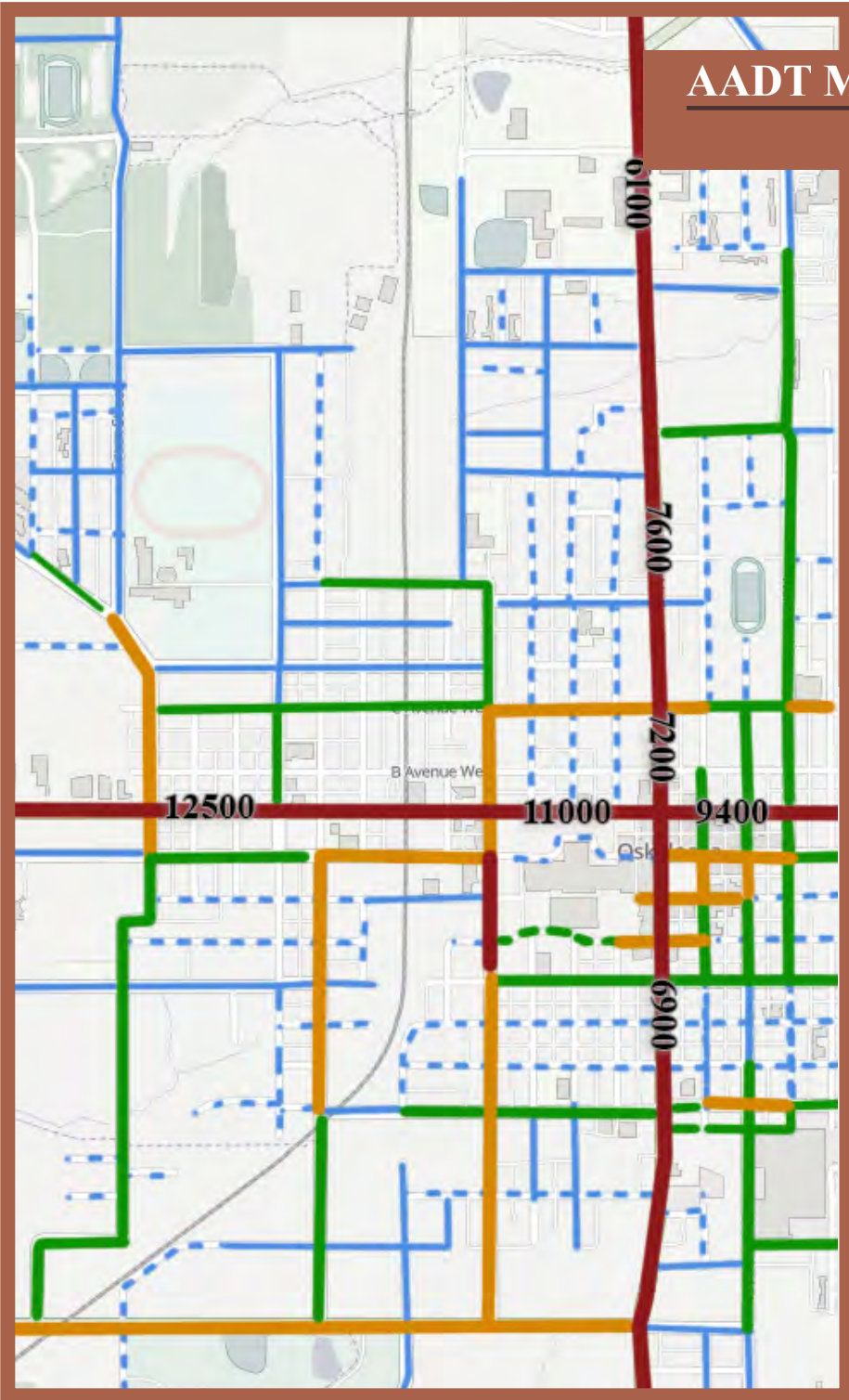
3.4.3 Active Mobility and Road Traffic Volumes

In the absence of bike trails throughout the downtown, local cyclists and individuals identify routes within the community. Strava, an application people use to track physical activity, provides public data on the frequency of active transportation roadway usage through their Global Heatmaps. The Heatmap displays historical data on members’ usage over the past year, and higher-density routes appear darker. Oskaloosa’s Heatmap for all sports (mostly

bicycling, running, and walking) identifies several popular routes that could serve as possible bike or activity trails for the community. This data, paired with Iowa’s DOT AADT for motor vehicle traffic volume, for road usage, highlights several safe and direct routes across the downtown area that connect to key community amenities such as William Penn University, Oskaloosa High School, and Edmundson Park.



Strava Heat Map All Sports



AADT Map

3.5 Land Use

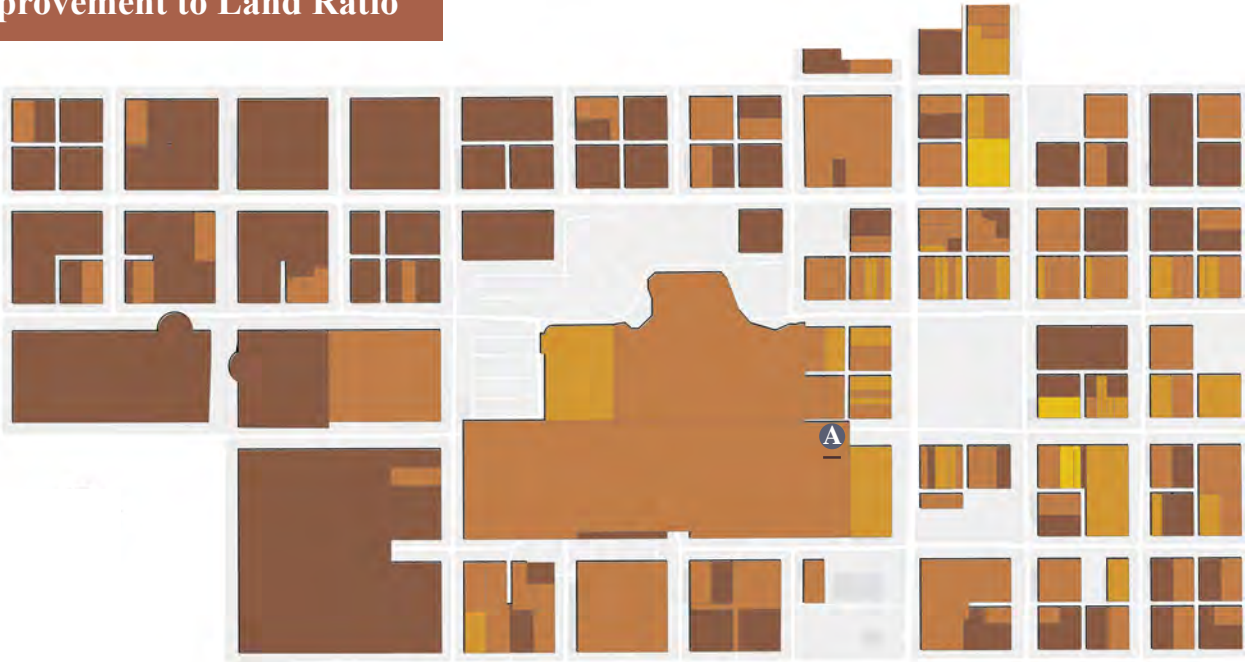
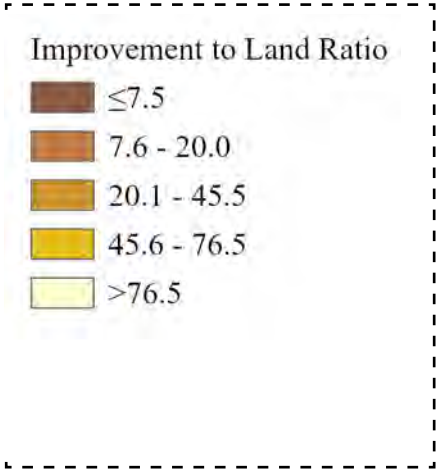
The study area for this project contains five different zoning types. Most of that zoning (176 of 320 parcels consists of the Downtown Commercial (DC district, which directs a cohesive development regulation for the zone. The DC encourages mixed-use and permits multi-unit, townhomes, and retirement residences within the district. The city zoned the parcels along Highway 92 (90 of 320 parcels as the Community Commercial (CC district. This district mainly attracts commercial and office uses along major corridors and intersections. The CC district permits mixed-use, multi-dwelling residential and allows several other housing options with a conditional use permit. The last commercial district within the project area is the General Commercial (30 of 320 parcels. This district attracts service-oriented commercial uses that are not usually compatible with neighboring residential zoning. The remaining 23 parcels in the study area were zoned as various residential districts.

The figure below examines assessed property values and highlights mixed-use upper-story residential units. Upper-story residences were found on 35 of the 320 parcels within the study area. These mixed-use properties provide centralized housing and rental investment opportunities for property owners. Mixed-use properties downtown are mostly centralized around the town square and possess higher assessed values. The Penn Central Mall, Musco, Central United Methodist Church, and other commercial entity parcels had the highest assessed values.

Assessed Property Value



Improvement to Land Ratio



The lower assessed properties may indicate potential development and growth areas. Due to age and previous usage, these parcels may struggle with location, historic renovations, or environmental issues. While several parcels around the City Square Park underwent façade updates over the past few years, many aged buildings within the study area appear to need further renovations.

Improvement in Land Value Ratios (I/L) allowed for comparing building improvements on a parcel to the value of the physical land. This ratio indicates the potential investment opportunity of a parcel by providing a standard variable. Lower I/L's may indicate the potential for more impactful property value increases than higher I/Ls. Parcels may have a lower I/L due to location, environmental concerns, or zoning restrictions. All factors need to be considered when using an I/L. For example, Parcel A, seen in the map above, has an I/L of 1.9 compared to the 17.99 mean I/L of the parcels adjacent to the town square. The development of Parcel A could provide a greater return on investment than

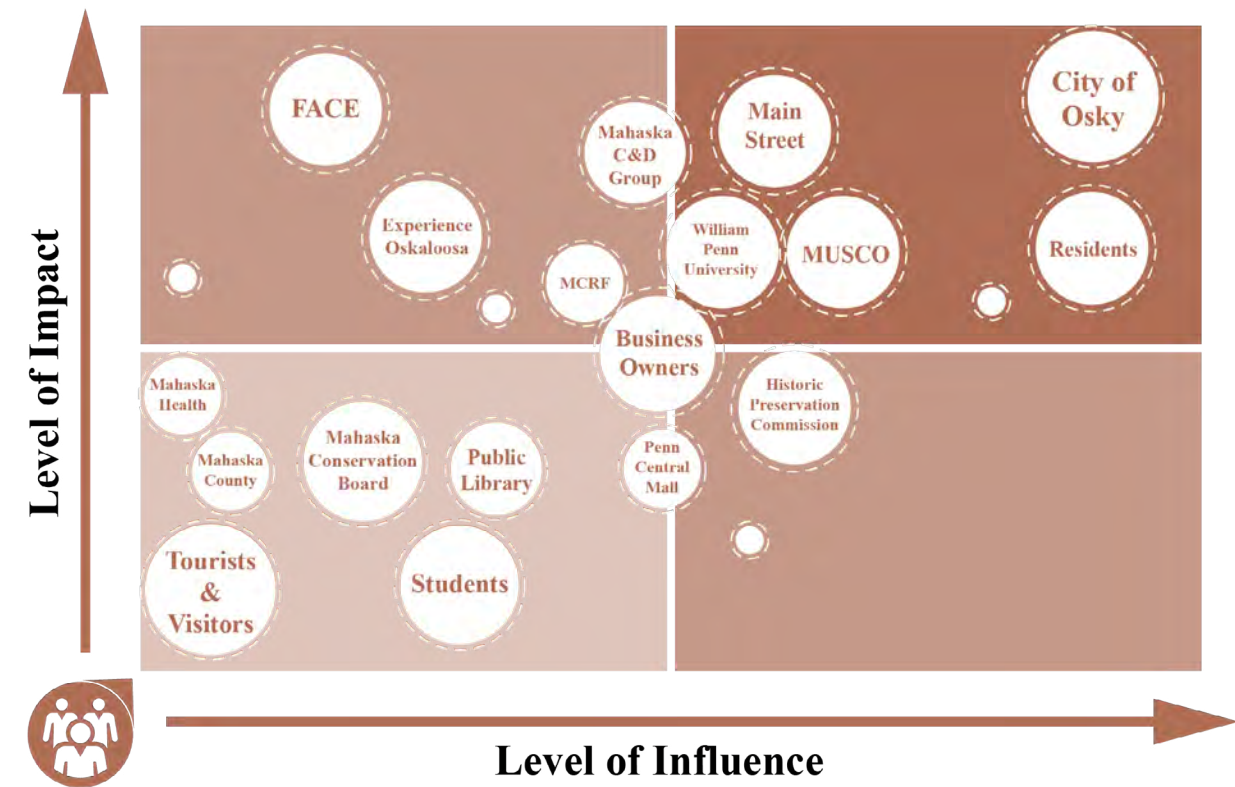
the same amount applied to another city square property. Parcel A currently contains a drive-through ATM and a small parking area, compared to the other parcels around the square. While multiple factors affect development potential, Parcel A's prime location on City Square Park and low I/L suggest it is underutilized and may support more intensive development.

Additionally, an examination of the area indicates lower I/L values west of Penn Central Mall. Most of the land is underdeveloped, underutilized, and previously used for industrial purposes. While the land may have low I/L values, it may suffer from potential environmental issues that require investigation, as well as lower foot traffic due to limited attractions. If environmental conditions are favorable, land investment in this area could offer long-term gains due to its underutilized status and potential for revitalization, though risks remain. The assessed property values of this area are among the lowest in the study area, and the parcels would increase in value if development occurred.

3.6 Stakeholder Analysis

The stakeholder analysis for the Downtown Master Plan in Oskaloosa highlighted the varying levels of influence and impact among the different groups involved in or affected by the project. Key stakeholders such as the City of Oskaloosa, residents, Main Streets, and MUSCO hold high levels of influence and impact, suggesting their crucial roles in decision-making and implementation processes. Organizations like FACE, William Penn University, and business owners are also significant due to their influence on economic and community dynamics. Meanwhile, entities such as Mahaska Health, the Public Library, and tourists are recognized for their lower levels of direct influence but are still impacted by the plan’s outcomes. This mapping ensures a comprehensive understanding of how different groups contribute to or are affected by the downtown area’s development, enabling a balanced approach to engaging stakeholders and addressing their concerns effectively.

“ Stakeholders play a pivotal role in the planning process, serving as essential collaborators whose diverse perspectives, expertise, and vested interests help shape inclusive, innovative, and sustainable outcomes that reflect the collective vision of the community. ”

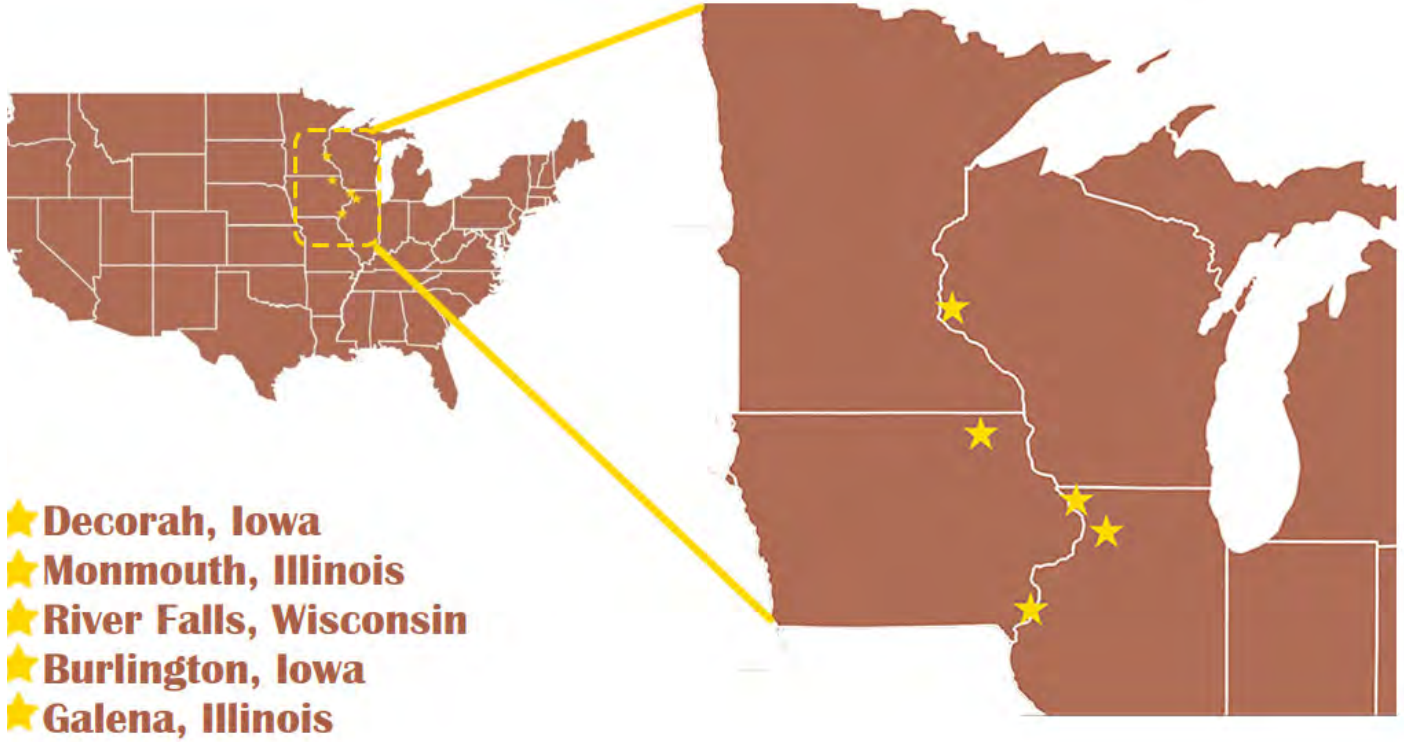


3.7 Comparable Cities

The Comparable Cities section is a crucial component of Oskaloosa’s Downtown Revitalization Plan. By analyzing successful downtown revitalization efforts in similar communities, the city can learn from other community successes, avoid mistakes, and tailor strategies to Oskaloosa’s needs. This comparative analysis helps the city to:

- Set Realistic Goals**
The plan can establish attainable and ambitious goals for downtown Oskaloosa by understanding the achievements of other towns of similar size and demographics.
- Learn from Successes**
Studying successful projects will allow the plan to identify effective strategies for attracting new businesses, improving public spaces, and enhancing the overall quality of life in the downtown area.
- Leverage Resources**
Learning from the experiences of other towns can help the plan identify potential funding sources, partnerships, and technical assistance opportunities.

The planning team looked at 5 Midwest cities for comparison; the stars in the map below show the location of the cities. They all had one thing in common: a focus on preserving downtown historic buildings and character while meeting modern needs. This often included recognizing the value of historic buildings and districts to implement preservation and restoration strategies. This included façade improvements, adaptive reuse of historic structures, and the creation of historic districts. These programs helped attract new businesses, support existing businesses, and create new jobs. This involved offering incentives like tax breaks or low-interest loans, developing business incubators, and promoting local entrepreneurship. These initiatives attracted visitors and residents by creating vibrant public spaces and amenities like parks, plazas, murals, and outdoor events.



3.7.1 Decorah, Iowa [2]



A college town with a unique arts and culture scene, Decorah created several public art installations, contributing to the downtown’s distinctive character and attracting visitors. Examples of key projects and initiatives that contributed to Decorah’s downtown revitalization include the creation of a new public square, renovating historic buildings, and implementing a bike-sharing program, which encourages people to explore the downtown area, which connects to nearby trails.

Oskaloosa adopted a similar strategy to Decorah’s by updating its historic guidelines, a crucial step towards preserving its unique architectural heritage. This initiative aligned with this plan’s efforts to revitalize the downtown area. Furthermore, Oskaloosa actively began implementing its Main Street façade standards, demonstrating a commitment to enhancing its downtown district’s visual appeal and character.



Decorah Trail

Decorah Sculpture



3.7.2 Monmouth, Illinois [3]



Monmouth offers a compelling comparative case study for Oskaloosa’s downtown revitalization. Monmouth shared many similarities with Oskaloosa as a small, historic town with a strong community focus. Monmouth successfully implemented strategies to revitalize its downtown area. To foster local entrepreneurship, they organized business competitions, encouraged student-run businesses, and conducted gap analyses to identify retail opportunities. They also recruited niche retailers and partnered with a retail coach to refine their offerings. In terms of arts and culture, Monmouth hosted an annual outdoor arts festival and a sculpture competition to enhance the downtown’s aesthetic appeal.

To revitalize the downtown physically, Monmouth focused on building renovations, residential development, traffic calming, streetscaping, and parking improvements. The project cost roughly \$3 million and included widening sidewalks for outdoor seating and beautifying the streetscape. Monmouth incentivized building renovations and created mixed-use developments using federal historic tax credits, rent-backstop agreements, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars. Monmouth’s well-executed streetscaping

projects, such as the Pattee Plaza, significantly improved the downtown’s pedestrian experience and overall ambiance.

Similar to Monmouth’s initiatives in fostering local entrepreneurship, Oskaloosa enlists the aid of Experience Oskaloosa, a local organization, to provide information meetings and mentorship for small business owners. In terms of arts and culture, Monmouth’s success in enhancing downtown aesthetics through arts festivals and competitions aligns with this plan’s focus on bringing Oskaloosa’s heritage to light through creative placemaking initiatives.

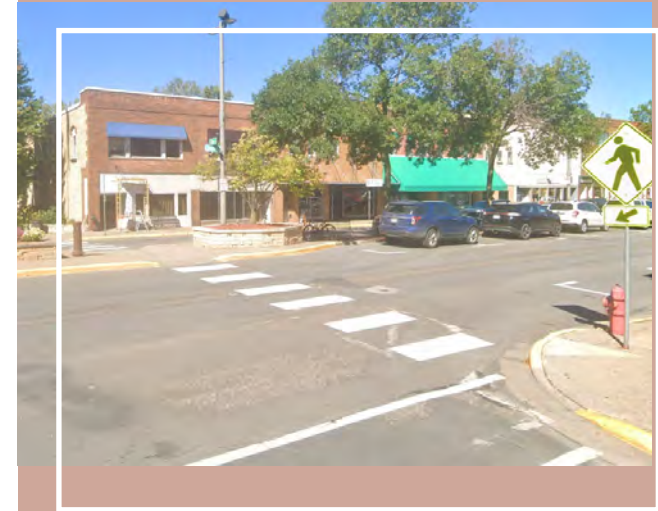
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3.7.3 River Falls, Wisconsin [4]

River Falls provides valuable insights for Oskaloosa’s downtown revitalization. As a small college town with a robust arts and culture scene, River Falls shares many similarities with Oskaloosa. River Falls maintains the Main Street America program focused on historic preservation and economic development. The town also possesses a vibrant Arts Center that hosts exhibitions and performances. The Arts Center and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls’ presence nearby contributes to the downtown, with students and faculty supporting local businesses and events. The National Trust for Historic Preservation recognized River Falls for its successful downtown revitalization efforts.

River Falls’ success in leveraging its local assets, the vibrant arts scene, and the strong university presence provides a valuable model for Oskaloosa’s downtown revitalization. Integrating the Arts Center and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls into the downtown ecosystem demonstrated the power of collaboration and the importance of supporting local institutions. This aligns with this plan’s initiative to foster community-university partnerships and enhance the economic impact of cultural assets.



3.7.4 Burlington, Iowa [5]

Burlington offers an Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption (Abatement) Program to incentivize development and business growth within designated revitalization zones, likely including its historic downtown. By providing tax relief, Burlington aims to attract new businesses, encourage existing ones to invest in historic building renovations, and ultimately boost economic activity and vibrancy in the downtown area. Since 1986, Downtown Burlington has seen 335 business startups, and the city has attracted 702 building renovation projects.



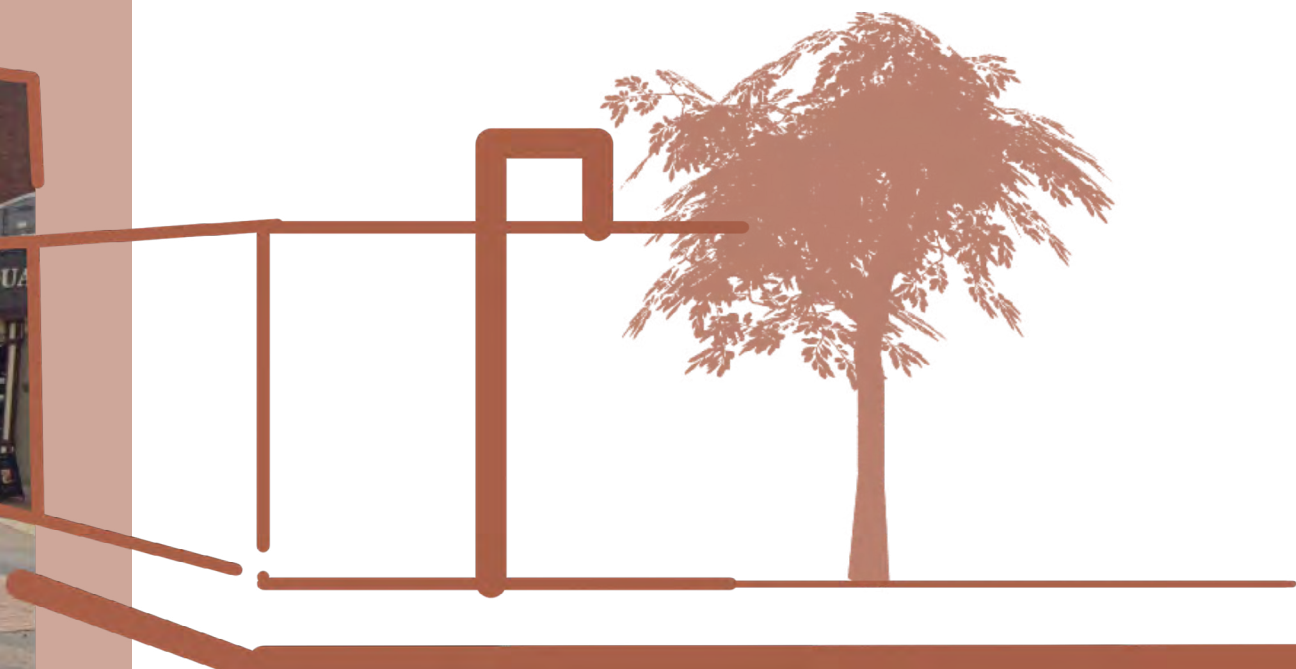
Tax Abatements

3.7.5 Galena, Illinois [6]

Galena, Illinois, a historic town prioritizing tourism and preservation, offered various financial resources to support business development, including revolving loan funds. The City of Galena and the Community Development Fund of Galena, Inc. administered low-interest loans for projects within a 1.5-mile radius, funding building renovations, equipment purchases, and working capital. Additionally, the Jo Daviess County Revolving Gap Loan Fund provided low-interest loans to fill financing gaps for expanding or starting businesses, subject to specific eligibility criteria and loan limits.



Revolving Loan Funds



3.8 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis of Oskaloosa highlighted its rich cultural heritage, vibrant community events, and iconic attractions like Smokey Row and City Square Park as key strengths. The team identified weaknesses in limited public transportation options, underutilized spaces, and the lack of continuity between downtown and the mall. Opportunities exist to secure funding for renovation programs, enhance partnerships with MUSCO, develop upper-story development, and create new tourist attractions to draw more visitors. However, the plan must address threats such as safety, low motivation for active transportation, and the political feasibility of proposed changes to ensure sustainable growth and development.



“

With these insights in hand, we now turn vision into action.



Bright Ideas and Bold Moves

04

This section outlines the Downtown Master Plan strategy by identifying the steps taken and analyzing information to formulate the desired outcomes. These outcomes include historic guideline updates, infrastructure design improvements, and funding options. They will focus on the key areas of unifying a fragmented downtown district and improving active transportation options. Furthermore, this chapter aims to provide options for a cohesive, vibrant downtown that fosters economic growth and community engagement.

4.1 The Perceived Improvement Areas

After analyzing the history, inputs from key stakeholders, and several public engagement activities, this plan identified the following improvement areas and will seek to address each in turn.

Oskaloosa's established planning department created detailed planning documents that addressed a range of issues throughout the town; however, no plan focused solely on the needs of the downtown area.


Oskaloosa's two main highways traverse the downtown area, bringing in large trucks and heavy traffic. Plans exist to create by-passes to divert this traffic in the next 1-5 years. Improved streetscaping and an active mobility vision are needed to keep the downtown area vibrant.


Past development decisions divided the perceived downtown into the historic city square, the Penn Central Mall, and the area west of the D Street sections. A cohesive branding campaign, community understanding, and upper story development would improve the image and create a more cohesive district.


The town has taken several steps to maintain and preserve its historic downtown district. However, these steps rely on guidelines that were last updated in 2000. They require updates to improve graphics, revise complementary state and Main Street guidelines, and include built environment sustainability initiatives.


The community hosts many family-friendly activities that attract outside visitors, but to provide year-round reasons to go downtown consistently, attractions for residents and visitors under 18 and 18-29 need to be diversified.

4.2 Goals and Objectives

- 
 - ## Create a Pedestrian-Friendly Atmosphere

 - Develop a comprehensive plan for on-street bicycle facilities and parking
 - Redevelop streetscapes after bypass and connector completion to enhance design, safety, and year-round function.
 - Enhance pedestrian infrastructure to safely connect the western portion of High Avenue with the East side of Penn Central Mall.
 - Re-adjust crosswalk and signal timers to better reflect traffic patterns.
 - Complete accessible and connected sidewalks for the entire downtown area.
- 
 - ## Foster Future Economic Development

 - Catalog upper-story residences and other future opportunities
 - Encourage infill development to create a compact and vibrant downtown environment.
 - Implement funding mechanisms to incentivize investment in upper-story development.
 - Enact a parking permit system for upper-story residences with an associated fee.
 - Promote and showcase completed upper-story projects.
 - Highlight and advertise new uses for old spaces.
 - Engage Penn Central Mall or vacant storefronts to allow small-scale business endeavors.
- 
 - ## Implement Cohesive Placemaking and Branding

 - Promote walkability between the west and east sides of downtown through the mall.
 - Integrate public art installations throughout the mall to enhance its aesthetic appeal.
 - Create a seasonal destination and design for the Osky Food Park.
 - Identify key locations for signage to direct people to points of interest.
 - Create information boards and wayfinding signage.
 - Implement unified downtown branding through signage.
 - Provide urban seating to create additional engagement between people and the city.
 - Use the underutilized spaces to create a gathering space for the community.
- 
 - ## Grow Community Partnerships

 - Encourage interagency and community work on downtown issues
 - Incentivize start-ups that increase indoor and outdoor attractions, experiences, and retail destinations

4.3 Goal 1: Pedestrian-Friendly Atmosphere



Action Steps

- Develop a comprehensive plan for on-street bicycle facilities and parking
- Redevelop streetscapes after bypass and connector completion to enhance design, safety, and year-round function.
- Enhance pedestrian infrastructure to safely connect the western portion of High Avenue with the East side of Penn Central Mall.
- Re-adjust crosswalk and signal timers to better reflect traffic patterns.
- Complete accessible and connected sidewalks for the entire downtown area.

Integrating bike facilities into Downtown Oskaloosa’s transportation network will require a phased and strategic implementation process. Oskaloosa should adopt temporary changes in the short term to prepare for long-term changes. Completing the bypass and connector routes for Highways 92 and 63 is a prerequisite to efforts within the downtown core. Those projects will help reduce heavy truck traffic through the downtown. These improvements will enhance street safety and create a more welcoming pedestrian environment. Including new crosswalk designs and better sequenced crosswalk signals would improve High Avenue as a prominent east-west pedestrian corridor.

4.3.1 Proposed Bike Routes

After analyzing traffic data and community input, three north-south routes are proposed to serve the community’s needs in connecting downtown. Alternative 1 follows H Street from Edmundson Park to M Avenue W and into the Mahaska County trail system. This route utilizes the established Sharrow between 6th Avenue

E and 11th Avenue E. Alternative 2 begins at 6th Avenue E and proceeds north on S D Street through downtown, then shifts to N E Street until it reaches William Penn University. This would serve as a primary means for the William Penn Community to travel safely to and from campus.

Additionally, Oskaloosa previously constructed 10-foot sidewalks on portions of S D Street. The city could continue the wider sidewalk in phases as time and funding permit. Community members preferred Alternatives 1 and 2 over Alternative 3, which utilizes 3rd Street from 6th Avenue East to Oskaloosa High School, with a nearly 200-foot elevation change over 0.7 miles from C Avenue East to the high school. [1]

Sharing the Road



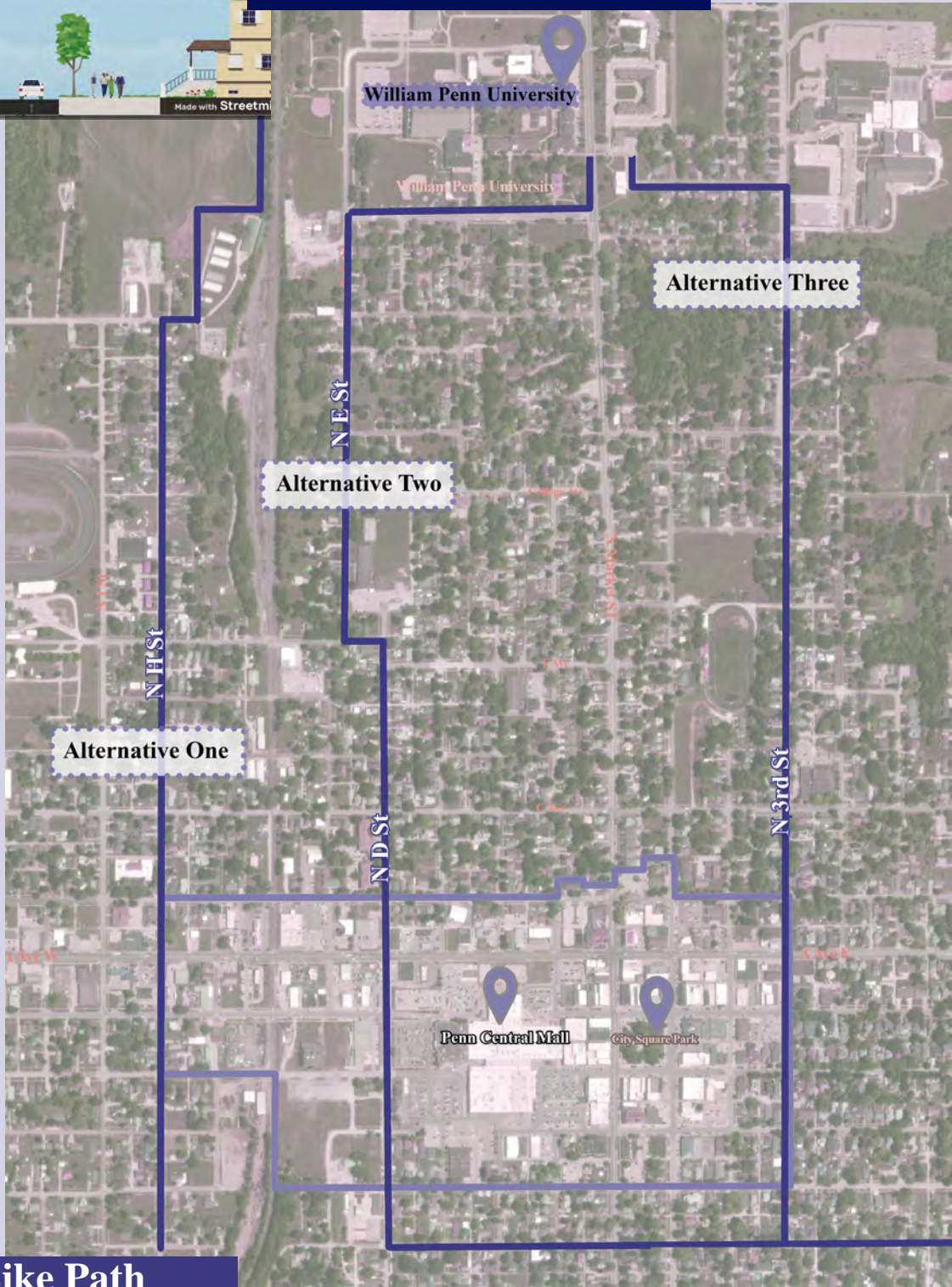
Dedicated Bike Lane



8-Foot-Wide Active Trail



Proposed Bike Path



Implementation of these routes requires short-term, temporary changes to be adopted on these roads to maximize effectiveness and community buy-in. Temporary improvements will allow residents to adjust to changes in the traffic environment. Later, long-term efforts should follow to implement permanent changes. Potential efforts may include applying for funding opportunities. This strategy allows testing and community feedback while incrementally transitioning toward a safer, more multimodal transportation system.



Short-Term

Temporary bike lanes and sharrows allow the city to experiment with potential routes and support safer streets during events. Temporarily structured structures and accompanying signage are installed to create a bike lane. Plastic bollards, traffic cones, barriers, and even hay bales can be used to delineate lanes, as can traffic paint or temporary marking tape.

The city should explore the installation of covered bike parking and repair stations at regular intervals as part of its infrastructure plan.



Long-Term

Adopting permanent and safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities is the ultimate infrastructure goal for active mobility,. During the open house event, community members voted on three design ideas related to bike infrastructure. The community provided positive feedback for individually dedicated bike paths and an 8-foot-wide activity trail. The team took overhead measurements in several locations along the routes and created a streetscape from the averages of street widths, distances between structures, and open yard space. This streetscape served as an example street to provide a visual depiction of the community and show the possibility of implementing the design within the established neighborhoods. While these were merely examples, all work should adhere to the standards outlined in the following manuals:

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) – 11th Edition: Establishes national standards for all traffic control devices, including pavement markings and signage
- Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications- Provides Iowa-specific design guidance on bicycle lane widths, pavement markings, and intersection treatments.

After creating the bike infrastructure plan, it should be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and approval. The Public Works Department or an authorized contractor will implement the project and signage on designated streets.

After creating the on- and off-street active transportation infrastructure plan, it should be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and approval. The Public Works Department or an authorized contractor will implement the project and signage on designated streets.

4.3.2 Crosswalk designs

Crosswalk designs will incorporate artistic curb painting to enhance pedestrian safety and create a more visually engaging walkable downtown area, giving the illusion of narrower streets. These designs should capture the vibe of the city and should

include musical or light-centric themes to honor MUSCO’s headquarters. Ensuring community engagement, FACE could seek local artist bids to create these functional displays. The colorful and creative designs from crosswalk markings will extend towards the curb, creating an illusion of narrower roadways for drivers. The combination of high-visibility crosswalk designs alerts drivers to pedestrian crossings and encourages them to slow down. The implementation of vibrant colors together with artistic designs will improve street appearance while strengthening community identity.




Vibrant crosswalk design aimed at bringing color and pedestrian activity back to downtown after highway relocation.



Another addition to a more vibrant downtown, painted sidewalks as a placemaking initiative to foster visual identity and a more inviting pedestrian experience.

4.4 Goal 2: Development Opportunities



Action Steps

- Catalog upper-story residences and other future opportunities
- Encourage infill development to create a compact and vibrant downtown environment.
- Implement funding mechanisms to incentivize investment in upper-story development.
- Enact a parking permit system for upper-story residences with an associated fee.
- Promote and showcase completed upper-story projects.
- Highlight and advertise new uses for old spaces.
- Engage Penn Central Mall or vacant storefronts to allow small-scale business endeavors.

4.4.1 Upper-Story Development

Upper story development presents a valuable opportunity to enhance the vitality and economic sustainability of Downtown Oskaloosa. Many historic buildings along the square and throughout the downtown core feature underutilized upper floors, representing untapped potential for housing, office space, and other community-serving uses. By encouraging the redevelopment of these upper stories—while preserving active, pedestrian-oriented storefronts at street level—Oskaloosa can strengthen its local economy, increase downtown residency, and support a vibrant environment that benefits residents and businesses. With a strong architectural foundation and a walkable, historic downtown, Oskaloosa is well-positioned to capitalize on this type of vertical mixed-use development. Rehabilitating upper floors aligns with preservation goals and addresses the

growing demand for diverse housing options, particularly for young professionals and those seeking to live near amenities and services. Strategic investment and local incentive programs like Oskaloosa’s Upper Story Housing Life Safety Program can help overcome common barriers such as outdated infrastructure or code compliance issues. Integrating upper-story development into Oskaloosa’s Downtown Master Plan supports efficient land use, enhances the area’s character, and builds on the community’s vision for a dynamic, resilient, and welcoming downtown district.

Other opportunities for upper story development include, but are not limited to, creative workspaces, boutique hotels, spas, or small event spaces. Downtown Oskaloosa is zoned appropriately, but developers must be incentivized to convert vacant spaces or

allocate more space for public use. Density bonuses should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They encourage investment in vacant or underused buildings, increase housing supply while preventing sprawl, preserve local character and history, and

4.4.2 Upper Story Housing Parking

From engaging with the community, residents would like to see more upper-story housing in the downtown area. Increasing the downtown upper-story housing supply creates induced demand for additional parking. The city should institute a permit system with a structured payment fee to address this. Upper-story housing residents should be allowed to park near their residence, but they must be cognizant of storefronts and retail parking requirements.

4.4.3 Boutique Hotel

An alternative option for the historic Elks Lodge involves developing a boutique hotel. A boutique hotel would deliver an individualized experience by preserving historic aspects of the building while establishing an authentic and memorable environment. The proposed development would serve visitors and tourists who want to experience hotels beyond the standard hotel chains. The establishment would feature an event space and guest accommodations, combining original building elements with contemporary amenities. The guest services could be designed to showcase both local attractions and historic aspects.

4.4.4 Mall Kiosk Opportunities

In the past, the Penn Central Mall fostered the growth of smaller businesses by providing incubator opportunities through mall kiosks. The mall could build upon this concept through a partnership with Experience Oskaloosa or William Penn University to support the founding of new enterprises and provide space within the mall for selling a scaled version of their products. This

make projects financially viable. Additional measures to improve cost-effectiveness would be to provide enhanced funding support.

Local officials should establish the price of the fee and use the additional funds to address local needs and program maintenance. Concerning enforcement, digital systems can link permits to license plates through license plate recognition (LPR) technology. Applications such as Vert ALPR, ParkingSnap Mobile LPR, or EnforcePlus allow law enforcement to use their mobile devices to increase parking enforcement efficiency.

The second proposal, outlined in the Creative Placemaking 2019 plan, recommends transforming the building into a market-rate apartment complex. The Elks Lodge conversion would address the lack of housing options in the downtown area. The complex would provide living opportunities for different population groups, including studio through two-bedroom units. Residents would have access to on-site and nearby parking and shared community spaces featuring a fitness center and lounge.

would offer additional retail opportunities and a more effective use of the mall and activity within the hallway space in a mall occupied by office space. The kiosks could be prioritized during higher traffic times in the mall, and do not have to be occupied at all times. This will provide a low-cost storefront to test a business’s product before committing to a larger, longer-term space.

4.5 Goal 3: Placemaking

Action Steps

- Promote walkability between the west and east sides of downtown through the mall.
- Integrate public art installations throughout the mall to enhance its aesthetic appeal.
- Create a seasonal destination and design for the Osky Food Park.
- Identify key locations for signage to direct people to points of interest.
- Create Information boards and wayfinding signage.
- Implement unified downtown branding through signage.
- Provide urban seating to create additional engagement between people and the city.
- Use the underutilized spaces to create a gathering space for the community.

4.5.1 Penn Central Mall

The Penn Central Mall provides an excellent opportunity to expand public space and areas of interest for the community and act as a second focal point after the city square park for the downtown and the city. The space, while at or near 100 percent occupancy, could be further developed into a shared community space with additional areas of interest and design to draw people into the space. The central court is already regularly used as an event space and a backup location for outside events in the case of inclement weather. Branding the space with a specific name helps distinguish it and encourages groups to use it more often.

Visual interest within the mall can be achieved through films placed over skylights or by investigating technological options to install lights that can be turned off and on and changed color for seasons or specific events. Varied lighting would add vibrancy and color to an otherwise lacking space.

Community murals on the large blank walls will add visual interest while navigating the mall. It would also allow local community members to get engaged in designing or painting the murals. Ideas for potential partnerships would be through Fine Arts and Cultural Events (FACE) or with art students at Oskaloosa High School and William Penn University. Either option could allow motivated artists to contribute to a creative public space.

Lastly, as previously mentioned, adding kiosks within the middle of some corridors could increase the amount of space utilized. They would increase the number of reasons to visit the mall and add more life and activity to the shared space.

All of these adjustments to the mall would create a livelier and engaging space, encouraging more people to visit. The added benefit of being indoors is that this casual gathering space can be utilized regardless of weather or season.

Before



After



All Season Event Center

The mall's central court is designed as a vibrant gathering space, offering ample capacity to host community events, cultural celebrations, and other public activities that unite people.

Before



After



Lights, Colors, Decoration

Replacing the windows with colored ones adds visual variety and creates striking reflections at certain times of day, becoming a key attraction.

Before



After



Community Murals & Public Art

Replacing the windows with colored glass. The mall's many empty walls offer an opportunity to showcase rich artwork and create a visually engaging atmosphere.

Before



After



Pop-Up Kiosks & Local Retail

The mall's wide hallways provide space for pop-up kiosks and local shops, offering more reasons for people to visit, as the community has mentioned a lack of retail in the mall multiple times.

4.5.2 Osky Food Park

4.5.2.1 Improving Sidewalk Accessibility Around the Osky Food Park

The poor sidewalk infrastructure surrounding the food truck location makes it difficult for individuals who use wheelchairs, stroller-transporting parents, and people with mobility challenges to navigate. This plan proposes to build a safe, accessible, and friendly environment for all by improving the sidewalks. This

location could be a true community center that elevates the surrounding area by becoming a temporary event center that encourages walking and social interaction. Accessibility enhancements would allow for greater ease of use and promote healthier, more environmentally friendly modes of transportation.



A flexible performance space appropriate for public events like movie nights, concerts, and performances, with food trucks stationed around the area to create a lively, festival-type atmosphere.



Interactive circular seating with soft lighting designed to facilitate gathering, conversation, and community connection.



4.5.2.2 Installing Temporary Restrooms at the Osky Food Park

The open house event received overwhelming support for converting the current site into an on-demand food truck park. To further this vision and improve the overall user experience, the project team recommends the installation of temporary restroom facilities. Temporary restrooms

offer a reliable and sanitary option to encourage visitors to stay awhile and feel at ease. Due to the Osky Food Park being located on private land, investing in permanent infrastructure requires further cooperation and agreement between the owners of the parcel and the city.

4.5.2.3 Food Truck Parking

The food truck zone would occupy a portion of the existing parking lot, with the bordering lawn serving as the main seating area. The dual-purpose design allows food trucks to occupy parking spaces, provide consumers with service during business hours, and still offer general parking spaces without trucks. The space is designed to be both a quick pick-up friendly option

and a welcoming area for those who wish to sit, stay awhile, and enjoy a meal. More than a place to grab a bite, this space is envisioned as a community builder, linking people together through food and celebrating cultural diversity. Food can unite a community, and this space will help to provide a warm, collective experience for all.

4.5.2.4 Seating Area with Stage and Amenities

In the heart of the Osky Food Park lies a large grassy seating area for comfort, connection, and community. The area will create a peaceful place for guests to sit, dine, and unwind. The space will be equipped with tables and seating areas shaded by trees. Adding a small stage to the property

will allow hosting events such as concerts, movie screenings, and local population gatherings. During events, food trucks may open extended hours to provide access to food and drinks, which can also be used to energize the space and further thrill users.

The site could serve as a community learning environment for sustainability through its amenities. Properly chosen amenities and informational signs could serve as an educational opportunity to teach the public about the importance of everyday activities on their impact on the environment. These amenities include installing new energy efficient lighting to offer a warm and safe environment during the evening to enhance the space. Recycling centers with clear trash streams would serve as a learning opportunity to instruct children about the significance of segregating waste, protecting the environment, and reducing litter. Solar-powered charging stations could be installed to make the area even more student- and family-friendly, where people can charge their cell phones, laptops, or other devices, while using a renewable energy source. These features will suit those who like to study or work outside in the vibrant environment of the park.

4.5.3 Informative Wayfinding Signs

Today’s technology provides vast amounts of information at an individual’s fingertips. This ability to quickly gather and comprehend technology creates a separation between people and their environment. Stakeholder discussions and the open house event highlighted the need for traditional signage and wayfinding tools to be used within the community. Additionally, further analysis, see paragraph 3.1, identified areas of the study area that may not receive as much foot traffic due to an uninformed public. Strategic placement of wayfinding signage, seen on the Placemaking Map, includes community information and creates a user and location interface to promote a sense of place within the community. A traditional

sign including Quick Response (QR) codes balances customary visual cues with twenty-first-century updates. The QR code should be linked to a community calendar or post board to allow locals and visitors access to ever-changing information.

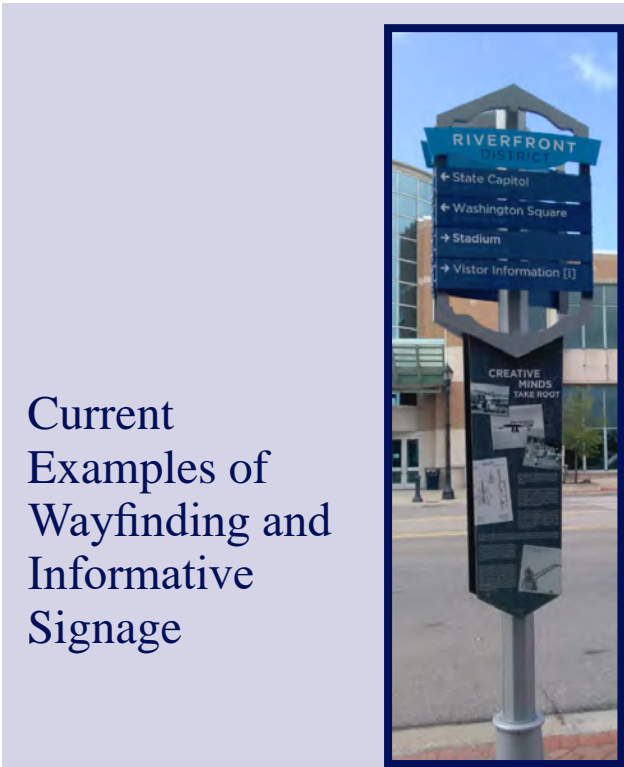
Additionally, wayfinding signage offers an opportunity to highlight the community’s history. The Alley has several informative signs about the history of Oskaloosa in a centralized location. Individual signs around the city could provide additional information and an interactive experience for pedestrians.



Historical Signs within the Alley



Historical Signs on specific buildings



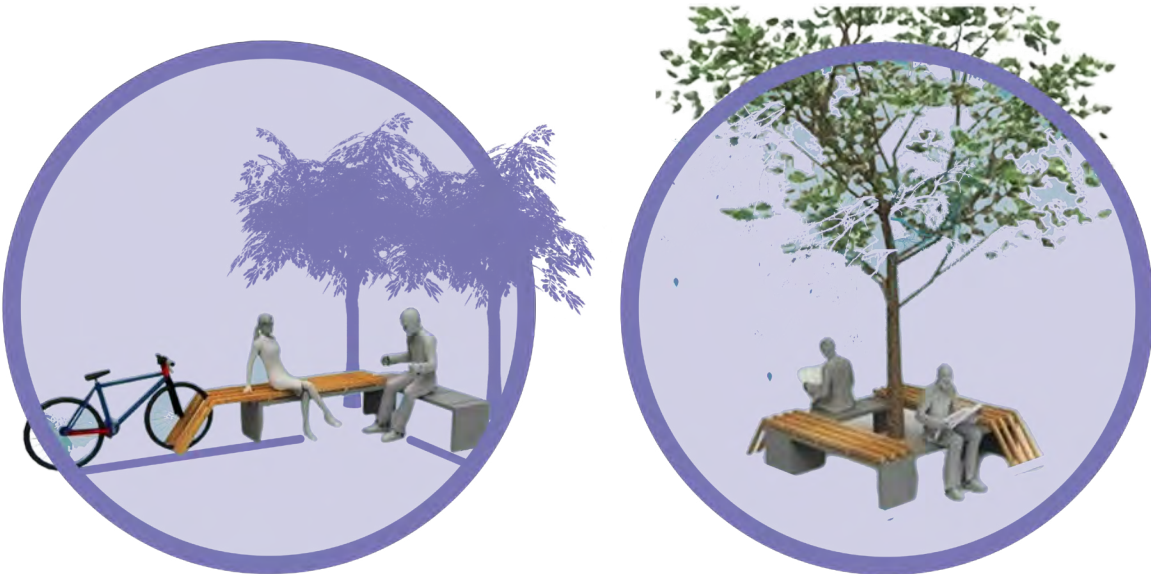
Current Examples of Wayfinding and Informative Signage



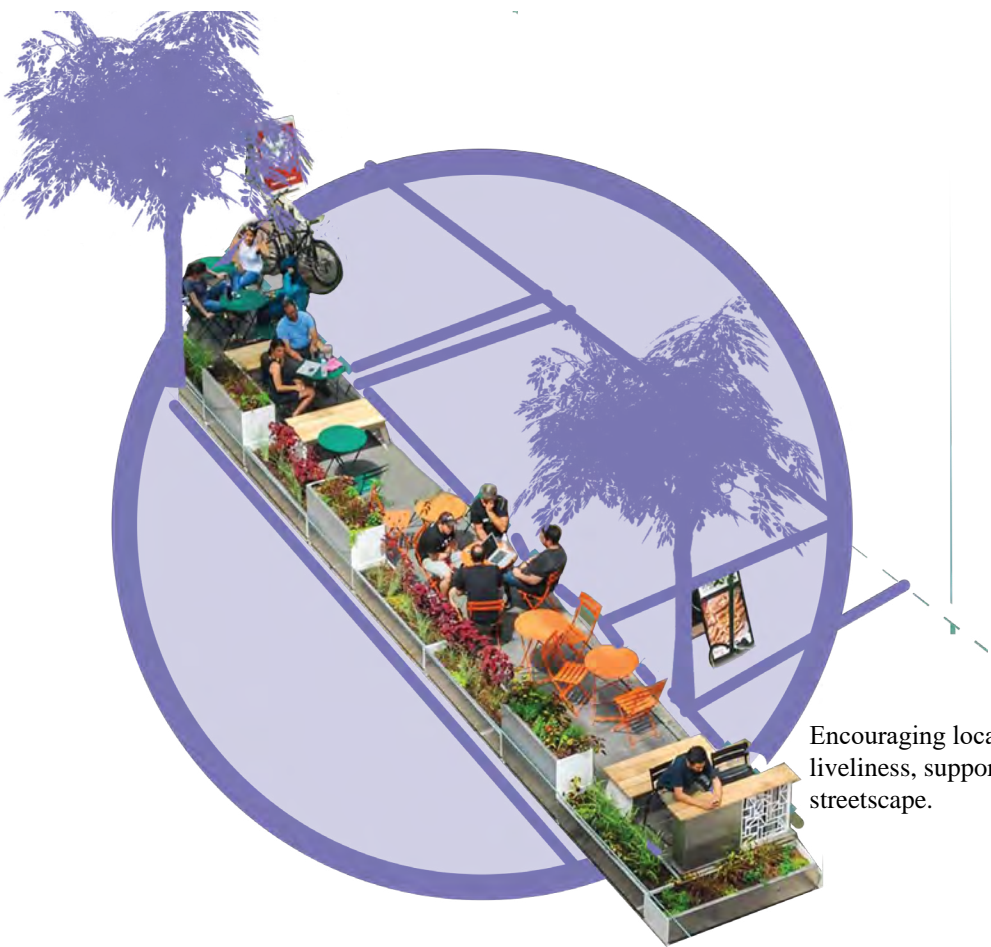
4.5.4 Urban Seating Areas

A well-planned seating arrangement creates spaces that draw people into connecting with the environment around them. Strategically placed benches and other seating options activate areas with little use to create an inviting space. The essential element of comfort requires user-friendly design, suitable materials, and

protection from weather conditions. The seating arrangement must serve users of all ages and abilities. Urban seating areas play a vital role in enhancing the quality of an urban atmosphere. These essential areas can serve as places where people can rest and socialize, fostering community connection.



Seating elements integrated into the streetscape to bring ambiance to downtown, offering shaded spots for rest, whether walking, biking, or simply enjoying the day.



Encouraging local restaurants to offer outdoor seating to enhance liveliness, support social interaction, and activate the downtown streetscape.

4.5.5 Pocket Parks

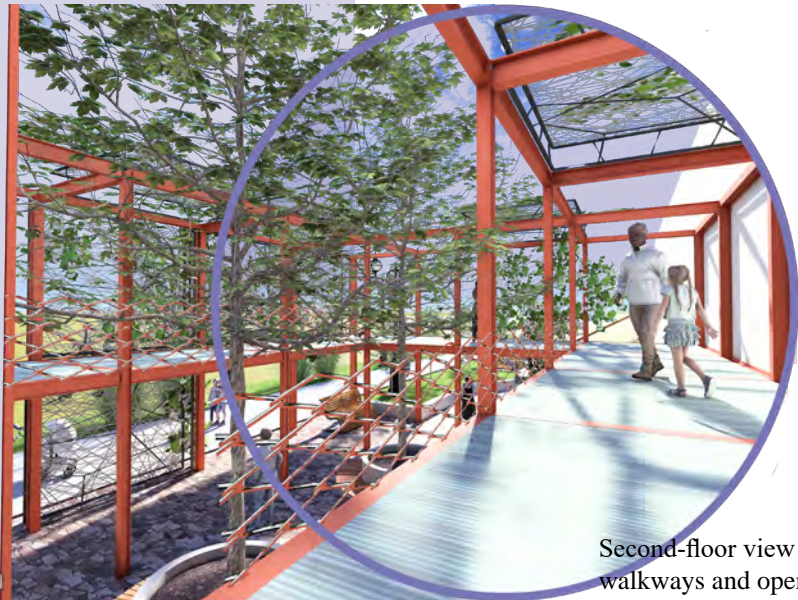
4.5.5.1 The ATM Lot

This lot, located on the corner of S 1st Street and 1st Avenue E, is a part of the primary façade of the downtown square. The lot currently provides drive-through access to an ATM, with the rest designated as parking. To reintegrate the space back to the public, the lot should be reimagined as a pocket park opportunity. The front portion of the lot can be repurposed into a multi-level platform for gathering and community space, extending the façade in a less traditional sense. It could be mainly utilized during community events like the Lighted Christmas Parade and Concert on the Square as an additional viewing space. This design would still allow for the current use of the drive-through ATM to remain while providing public space. If the Midwest Bank chooses to relocate to an ATM, the space could be further redesigned to increase seating utilization by the public.

The proposed platform represents a multi-use space flexible for community use throughout the year. At times, it might be

converted into an open market or farmers’ market, giving small and local businesses the space to display their products while increasing community access to fresh and healthy food options. Flexible use would create an engaging space and assist in developing a vibrant downtown atmosphere.

The design features vertical green walls and buildings covered with vines to enhance the visual and environmental appeal of the space. This brings greenery to a hard-surfaced urban space. Built-in planters in the platform structure will attract various plant species, making the space more inviting and comfortable to sit and socialize. These elements will not only enhance air quality and reduce urban heat but also assist in fulfilling the goal of reinserting nature in the city’s center. The planters will also serve as a protective barrier that separates the public space from the drive-through traffic.



Second-floor view of the pocket park building, emphasizing elevated walkways and open atrium planted with greenery to create a serene and engaging public space.



The full structure is envisioned as a flexible space for local food markets, pop-up shops, or community gallery events supporting small businesses and creative initiatives.



Green seating space at the rear of the building offers further gathering space and shade, extending the pocket park’s calm and community-focused atmosphere.

4.5.5.2 Mini Pitch Park

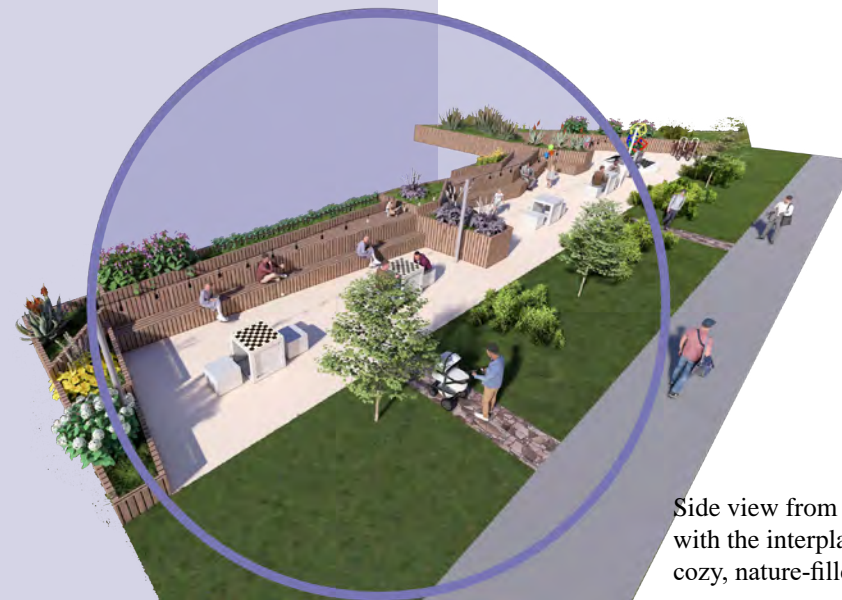
The area surrounding the small lot serves as a lively recreational center. A mini soccer pitch, basketball court, and skate park attract children, adolescents, and families throughout the day. These recreational spaces encourage exercise and socialization, making the neighborhood an active community hub. A small unutilized area adjacent to the mini pitch, approximately 3,600 ft², could benefit as a pocket park.

This unused space can be transformed into an open, multifunctional area. This vision includes adding tables and chairs, some of which will have chessboards placed upon them. Even though these tables

provide the choice of playing chess for individuals interested in a more intellectual activity, they are also perfectly functional for everyday use. People can sit, relax, or socialize however they wish.

This pocket park would offer a nice contrast to the other high-intensity sports areas in the surrounding area. It would also benefit parents or community members waiting nearby. We propose additional lighting fixtures and plantings to complement comfort and aesthetics. A portion of the landscaping will also face Avenue A West, offering a green barrier that promotes the health of the site's relationship to the street.

Bicycle parking and additional seating enhanced with an artwork sculpture, creating visual interest and adding to the inviting atmosphere of space.



Side view from Avenue A of a pocket park designed for short breaks, with the interplay of wood seating areas and dense planting for a cozy, nature-filled experience.



Activity space enhanced with lighting and a public chessboard, fostering interaction, play, and relaxation in a lively but comfortable setting.

4.5.6 Environmental Comfort and Greening Strategies

Including natural features in the downtown area is crucial for maximizing environmental comfort, aesthetic appeal, and public health. The proposed pocket parks, shaded seating areas, and green streetscapes introduce vegetation and enhance tree canopy coverage in the regions that currently lack any green space. These interventions reduce urban heat by mitigating the impact of common downtown surfaces, such as concrete and asphalt. For example, strategically located street trees can lower surrounding air temperatures by 20–40°F through the shading and evaporation effects, which

naturally cool the surrounding environment [5]. This contributes to increased comfort for pedestrians, enhances walkability, and fosters healthier microclimates.

Diverse planting throughout the plan contributes to ecological integrity and enhances the visual appeal of downtown. The canopy of trees provides much-needed shade for seating areas, reduces glare from the pavement, and improves the active and passive public space user experience. Collectively, these natural elements make downtown Oskaloosa a more sustainable, livable, and resilient place.

Mini Pitch Park

Soccer Mini-Pitch

Basketball Court

Oskaloosa Skatepark

Placemaking Features and Locations



Art and Crosswalks



Urban Sitting Areas



Outdoor Musical Instrument Park



Gather & Dine Zone



Wayfinding and Signage

- 01 Food Truck Park
- 02 Mini Pitch Park
- 03 Penn Central Mall
- 04 The ATM Lot Pocket Park
- 05 Elks Lodge



Elks Lodge Current Situation



Elks Lodge Transformation

4.6 Goal 4: Community Partnerships



Action Steps

- Encourage interagency and community work on downtown issues
- Incentivize start-ups that increase indoor and outdoor attractions, experiences, and retail destinations

The primary bodies implementing this plan are the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Staff. To increase the plan’s chances of success, these groups must collaborate with other entities interested in carrying out the recommendations noted in

the Downtown Master Plan. Below is a list of potential partners, but it is not exhaustive. Any group is welcome to partner with the City of Oskaloosa and take the lead on implementing a recommendation.

- Oskaloosa City Council
- Oskaloosa Planning and Zoning Commission
- Oskaloosa Main Street
- Mahaska Chamber & Development Group
- Residents
- Experience Oskaloosa
- MUSCO
- Penn Central Mall
- William Penn University
- Golden Goose Club
- Property Owners

Groups such as these may overlap in membership and experience, but further collaboration could and should be explored to generate strong momentum to complete the abovementioned ideas. Having round table meetings biannually with different community representatives that the public is encouraged to join could facilitate joint

efforts on similar projects or the sharing of resources. If one group struggles to complete an aspect of the comprehensive plan meeting, another group may be interested and willing to help them overcome the hurdles that are being faced. Hearing community efforts may also inspire more ideas amongst members and encourage further collaboration.

4.7 Funding Options

4.7.1 Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Oskaloosa’s Chamber of Commerce produced an excellent document on the city’s usage of TIF funds from previous projects. TIF allows a city to create a specific district and establish a property value to be used for a tax base throughout the program in exchange for public funding. As the property’s value increases, the difference between the original base and the new value becomes the increment, which the city uses to finance other TIF projects. The city created an extensive list of eligibility criteria supporting this plan’s many

initiatives. They include the redevelopment of underutilized or blighted property, supporting infrastructure development, creating or retaining quality jobs, supporting arts, culture, and recreation opportunities, and enhancing the downtown district, to name a few [2]. Previous TIF projects went to restoring buildings in the downtown district, upgrading the facades within the district, and improving wayfinding city-wide wayfinding programs. TIF serves as a possible funding tool to further the goals of this plan.

4.7.2 Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID)

Oskaloosa currently has business owners and volunteers who are actively involved in helping promote the downtown district’s welfare. SSMID is a financing tool that would create a district-wide funding source for maintenance and individual district projects. A SSMID in the downtown area would impose an additional property tax on parcels within the defined district. This extra tax requires a petition with the approval of at least 25 percent of property owners and 25 percent of the total assessed property value within the proposed district to call for establishing a SSMID. The capital generated

could only be used within the defined and participating district. The use of this financing tool has the potential to transform the downtown environment. It gives the district increased agency to implement initiatives addressing general concerns or enhancing the downtown experience. The Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities conducted an implementation study in 2014 that provides an in-depth toolkit for communities to follow[3]. This resource should be referenced to pursue this option in the future.

4.7.3 Mahaska County Revolving Loan Program

Mahaska County administers a revolving loan program that issues low-interest loans to qualified candidates. The loan intends to “assist industries and/or businesses that desire to locate, expand, or diversify” within Mahaska County [4]. The fund focuses on industrial and business endeavors. Still, it may be applied to the acquisition of land or buildings, construction or renovation costs,

and site preparation. If eligible and approved by the county board of supervisors, the county issues funds at a rate 2 percent lower than other major financing options. The rate, however, may be amended if needed to cover the loan’s proportional share of the program’s debt. This program offers a financing tool to private investors interested in Oskaloosa.

4.7.4 Grants

Grants offer the community a funding source to pursue specific projects. The community can find federal, state, and county grants. In addition, private foundations may be considered if the project meets the requirements and intent of the grant. These funding sources can help offset the costs to

the city and help ensure a project reaches the implementation phase. Table below lists possible grants that could be used for the various portions of this plan. The list is not all-inclusive but serves as an example of previous grants that could be applicable.

Type	Name	Level	Dates	Competitiveness	Description
Active Transportation	Iowa DOT-TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM	State	Deadline- April 1; MPO or RPA will announce submittal deadlines	Competitive	smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects
Active Transportation	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)	State	Deadline- April 1; MPO or RPA will announce submittal deadlines	Competitive	pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and transit capital projects
Active Transportation	PeopleForBikes	National-Private	September 1, 2026 - November 29, 2026	Competitive	Industry Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to bike.
Active Transportation	Community Spark Grants	National-Federal	November 12, 2026 - January 21,2027	Moderately Competitive	awards organizations for projects and programs that spark change and catalyze a community's ability to create places where bicycling is safer, easier,
Active Transportation	REVITALIZE IOWA'S SOUND ECONOMY (RISE) PROGRAM	National- Federal	Deadline- February 1st, September 1st	Competitive	value-adding activities that feed new dollars into the economy and provide maximum economic impact to the state on primary or secondary roads, and city streets open for public use.
Upper Story	Community Development Block Grant- Housing	State	N/A	Moderately Competitive	This program assists communities with preserving existing housing stock and creating new housing opportunities.
Upper Story	Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Fund	State	Opens- July 22nd; need to submit a notice of intent to apply	Moderately Competitive	Vertical infrastructure" means land acquisition and construction, major renovation and major repair of buildings

Type	Name	Level	Dates	Competitiveness	Description
Upper Story	Downtown Revitalization Fund	State	Annual	N/A	assists communities with impactful downtown exterior improvement projects that eliminate slum and blight conditions.
Upper Story	Community Catalyst Building Remediation	State	Pre-application: January 30, 2026	N/A	assists communities with the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community.
Streets: Place Making	Community Heart and Soul Grants	National-private	Ongoing	N/A	Resident-driven process that engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it.
Streets: Place Making	Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	Federal	Ongoing	N/A	Program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community
Streets: Place Making	T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program	National-Private	June 30,2025	N/A	100 small towns with a population of 50,000 or less receive placemaking project funding of up to \$50,000 each.
Streets: Place Making	Creative Places Accelerator	State	October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026	N/A	teams from small to midsize Iowa communities develop arts-based projects to serve as catalysts for livability, economic development, and community connectedness.
Pocket Parks	REAP City Parks and Open Spaces Grant	State	Currently undergoing rule changes. Proposed dates (May 15th, November 1)	Competitive	Parkland expansion and multi-purpose recreation developments are typical projects funded under this REAP program. The DNR administers the city grant program.
Pocket Parks	Land & Water Conservation Fund	State	Previously due- March 14, 2025	N/A	a federally funded grant program that provides 50% cost share for outdoor recreation area development and land acquisition.
Place Making/ Upper Story	EPA Brownfields Cooperative Agreement	Federal	'November 2025	Moderately Competitive	This funding will allow the City to continue our efforts to make improvements on sites with perceived hazardous substance issues.

Type	Name	Level	Dates	Competitiveness	Description
General	Yearly Grant Program: Mahaska County Community Foundation (MCCF)	Local	Previously due March 3, 2025	Competitive	Available to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, a governmental body (school, city, county) or a charitable project with a qualified fiscal sponsor s to assist in fulfilling the Foundation’s mission
General	City Challenge Grant: Mahaska County Community Foundation (MCCF)	Local	Previously due March 3, 2025	Competitive	Available to the 10 municipalities in Mahaska County to assist in fulfilling the Foundation’s mission
General	MCCF Revolving Loan Program	Local	Ongoing	Non Competitive	To assist industries and businesses the desire to locate, expand, or diversify their business in Mahaska county
General	Goose Goose Club	Local	3rd Thursday of March, June, September, and December	Non Competitive	Available for community projects that must be voted on and approved by Golden Goose members
General	George Daily Family Trust	Local	Ongoing	Non Competitive	Provide more or less than \$2,000 to develop leadership and create initiate for projects for the benefit of the community of Oskaloosa

4.8 Implementation

The previous chapters and their corresponding maps and figures form the core of the Downtown Master Plan. This section denotes the activities public agencies and private decision-makers must take to implement various plan components.

Focus Areas of Implementation

- Plan Maintenance: Describes the process for maintaining the plan and evaluating the progress toward achieving its goals.
- Development Policies and Actions: Implementation tables note the policies and actions that should be followed in conjunction with other planning documents. These recommendations contain various types of efforts.
 - Policies: Policies require sustained efforts over an extended period. In certain instances, policies may involve specific regulatory or administrative measures.
 - Action Items: These include specific tasks or accomplishments by the community.
 - Capital Investments: These are initiatives that require funding to

Each recommendation is noted with the goal it aims to achieve in the Downtown Master Plan. Some recommendations require ongoing implementation, while others can be implemented in the short-term (1-4 years), medium-term (5-9 years), and long-term (10-15 years)

Type	Partners	Type	Timeline
Improve Pedestrian Enviornment			
Redevelop Streetscapes after bypass and connector completion to enhance design, saftey, and year-round function	Staff, Council	Action/Capital	Short-Term
Enhance pedestrian infrastructure to safely connect the western portion of High Avenue with the East side of Penn Central Mall	Staff, Council, Property Owners	Action/Capital	Medium-Term
Implement temporary pop-up bicycle infrastructure on High Ave and 3rd Ave	Staff, Council	Action/Capital	Short-Term
Paint bike lanes	Staff, Council	Action/Capital	Medium-Term
Re-adjust cross walk and signal timers to better reflect traffic patters	Staff, Council	Action	Short-Term
Create Information boards and wayfinding sinage	Staff, Council, Property Owners, Experience Oskaloosa	Action/Capital	Ongoing
Implement unified downtown branding through signage	Staff	Action	Ongoing

Type	Partners	Type	Timeline
Active Transportation			
Develop a comprehensive plan for a dedicated bike lane network	Staff, Council	Action	Short-Term
Improve sidewalk connectivity	Council, Property Owners	Action	Medium-Term
Economic Growth			
Renovate existing storefronts to allow for new businesses or pop-up retail spaces	Property Owners, Council	Action/Capital	Ongoing
Encourage infill development to create a more compact and vibrant downtown environment	Developers, Council	Policy	Ongoing
Implement funding mechanisms to incentivize developers to invest in upper story development	Council, Staff, Main Street	Action/Capital	Ongoing
Promote and hold upper story tours	Main Street, Staff	Action	Ongoing
Upper Story Housing			
Catalogue upper story residences and other future opportunities	Staff	Action	Short-Term
Enact a parking permit sytem for upper story residence with an associated fee	Staff, Council	Action/Capital	Ongoing
Encourage renovation of Elks Lodge to be utilized for a boutique hotel or an apartment complex	Staff	Action	Ongoing
Placemaking			
Promote walkability between the west and east side of downtown through the mall	Penn Central Mall, MUSCO	Action	Ongoing
Integrate public art installations throughout the mall to enhance its aesthetic appeal	Penn Central Mall, MUSCO	Action	Short-Term
Create a seasonal destination and design for food truck park	MUSCO	Action	Medium-Term
Identify key locations for signage to direct people to points of interest	Experience Oskaloosa, Property Owners, Main Street, City Staff	Action	Short-Term
Create information boards and wayfinding signage	Experience Oskaloosa, Property Owners, Main Street, City Staff	Action	Short-Term
Implement unified downtown branding through signage	City Staff	Action	Short-Term
Provide urban seating to create additional engagement between people and the city	Property Owners, City Staff	Action	Medium-Term
Use the underutilized spaces to create a gathering space for the community	Property Owners, City Staff	Action	Long-Term
Grow Community Partnerships			
Encourage interagency and community work on downtown issues	Staff, Property Owners, Main Street, Experience Oskaloosa	Action	Ongoing
Incentivize start-ups that increase indoor and outdoor attractions, experiences, and retail destinations	STAFF, Main Street, Experience Oskaloosa	Policy/Capital	Ongoing

4.9 Plan Maintenance and Evaluation

The scope of this Downtown Master Plan is multifaceted and long-term. All the listed recommendations contribute to promoting the welfare of Downtown Oskaloosa. These recommendations are not stagnant but rather require revision regularly. The city should conduct yearly goal-setting sessions to monitor the plan’s progress and complete a comprehensive update every five years. Additionally, project-specific evaluations should be performed upon the completion of each project. These evaluations should assess the actual outcomes against the proposed vision outlined in this plan. The review process should, at a minimum, include the following features.

Action Program

- The City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission should use the plan in goal-setting sessions and further identify specific steps, policies, and actions. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each fiscal year and include:
 - Identifies key decisions that have been made during the past year that relate to the Downtown Master Plan
 - Reviews the actions taken by the city to implement recommendations
 - Identifies any future changes to make to the Downtown Master Plan

To track the progress of this plan throughout the reviews, the following Implementation Table should be referenced.

Focus area	Key Indicator	2025 Baseline	5-Year Target (2030)
Improve Pedestrian Environment and Active Transportation	Miles of New/Improved Pedestrian Pathways	0.3 miles	Increase 2.0 miles (Distance of Alternatives 1 & 2)
	Bike Parking and Service Stations	1 New Site	5 New Sites
	Accident rate within downtown	10% Reduction	50% Reduction
	Pedestrian Mode Share	31%	50%
	Sidewalk Accessibility	Need to Map Sidewalk Conditions	Conduct Accessibility Study
	Parking Analysis	Mapped Parking Areas	Conduct Parking Study

Focus area	Key Indicator	2025 Baseline	5-Year Target (2030)
Foster Economic Development	Downtown Business Count	10% Increase	25% Increase
	Upper Story Development	Map Out Current Conditions	20% Increase in Upper Story Usage
	Economic Catalyst Site	Identify Parcels for Economic Development	Develop 2 Properties
	Vacant & Underutilized Lots	Map Vacant and Underutilized Lots	Develop 10%
	New Small/Start-Up Business Events	1 Event/Year	4 Events/Year
Implement Cohesive Placemaking	Square footage of new greenspace/ pocket parks	Approximately 698,098 sq ft total for green and open space	Increase by 10%
	Downtown Events	10 Events	15 Events
	Wayfinding Signage	0 Signs	5 Signs
	Public Art	18 Pieces	25 Pieces
	Pocket Parts Created	1	2+
	Urban Seating Areas	2	6+
	Food Truck Events	3/season	8/season
Grow Community Partnerships	Number of amenities for children/families (e.g. playgrounds)	1 Amenity	+2 Amenities
	Number of cross-sector collaborative projects initiated	1 new project/Year	3-5 new projects/Year
	Downtown Programs targeting Youth and Families	2/Year	6/Year
	New Business Mentorship Support	1	3+
	Representation from youth/ student groups in planning committees	0	1-2/year

The Downtown Master Plan should be viewed as a living document that adjusts to market conditions and any unforeseen changes that may impact the community.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, there are large trees with green and yellowing leaves. A paved sidewalk with a brick pattern runs across the bottom. In the middle ground, there are parked cars and a row of brick buildings. One building has a sign that says "THE OFFICE". The sky is overcast. The image is split into two vertical panels by a thin white line.

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05

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5.2 Appendices

5.2.1 Upper Story Residence



[†] Eni Company/Mays Contributors: Iowa DNR, OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Eni Tumforn, Gamma, SafeGraph, GeoTechnology, Inc. METI/NSA, USOS, EPA, RPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

5.2.2 Appendix B: Initial Site Visit Data

The following section provides the raw interview survey totals from the public engagement event held on September 20, 2024. This data helped frame the project by highlighting the need to promote wayfinding, pedestrian transportation, and placemaking initiatives through the project team’s in-depth analysis.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Q1 What is your gender? (Answered: 87 Skipped: 4)		
Male	53	58%
Female	33	36%
Other	1	1%
Declined to answer	4	4%
Q2 What is your age?(Answered: 87 Skipped: 4)		
<20	26	29%
20-29	7	8%
30-39	10	11%
40-49	20	22%
50-59	9	10%
60+	15	16%
Declined to answer	4	4%
Q3 Do you live in the downtown?(Answered: 85 Skipped: 6)		
Yes	20	22%
No	65	71%
Declined to answer	6	7%
Q4 Do you work in the downtown? (Answered: 85 Skipped: 6)		
Yes	20	22%
No	65	71%
Declined to answer	6	7%
Q5 What brings you downtown regularly? (Multiple Responses were allowed for the 91 participants)		
Family	37	31%
Events	30	25%
Business	25	21%
Work	8	7%

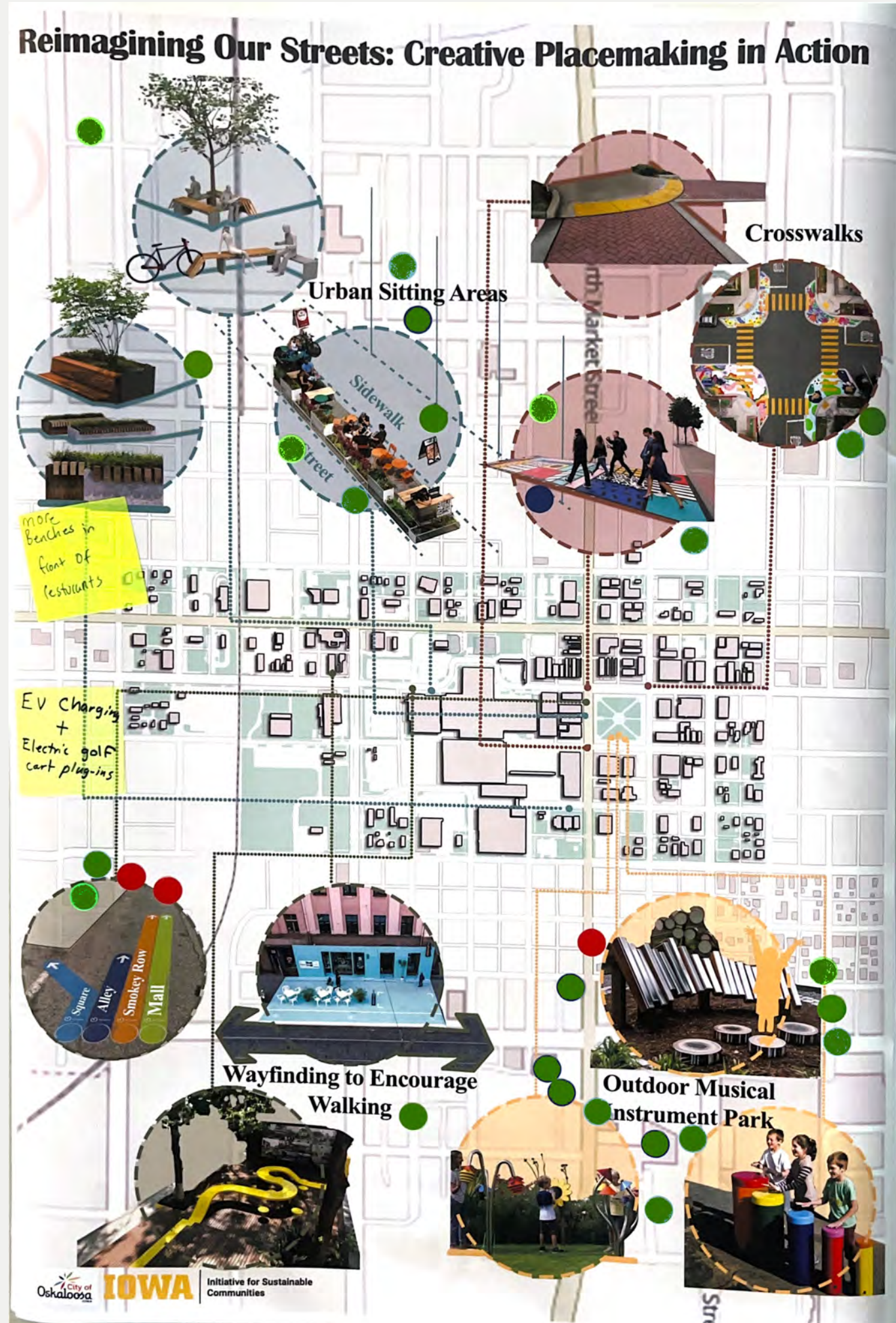
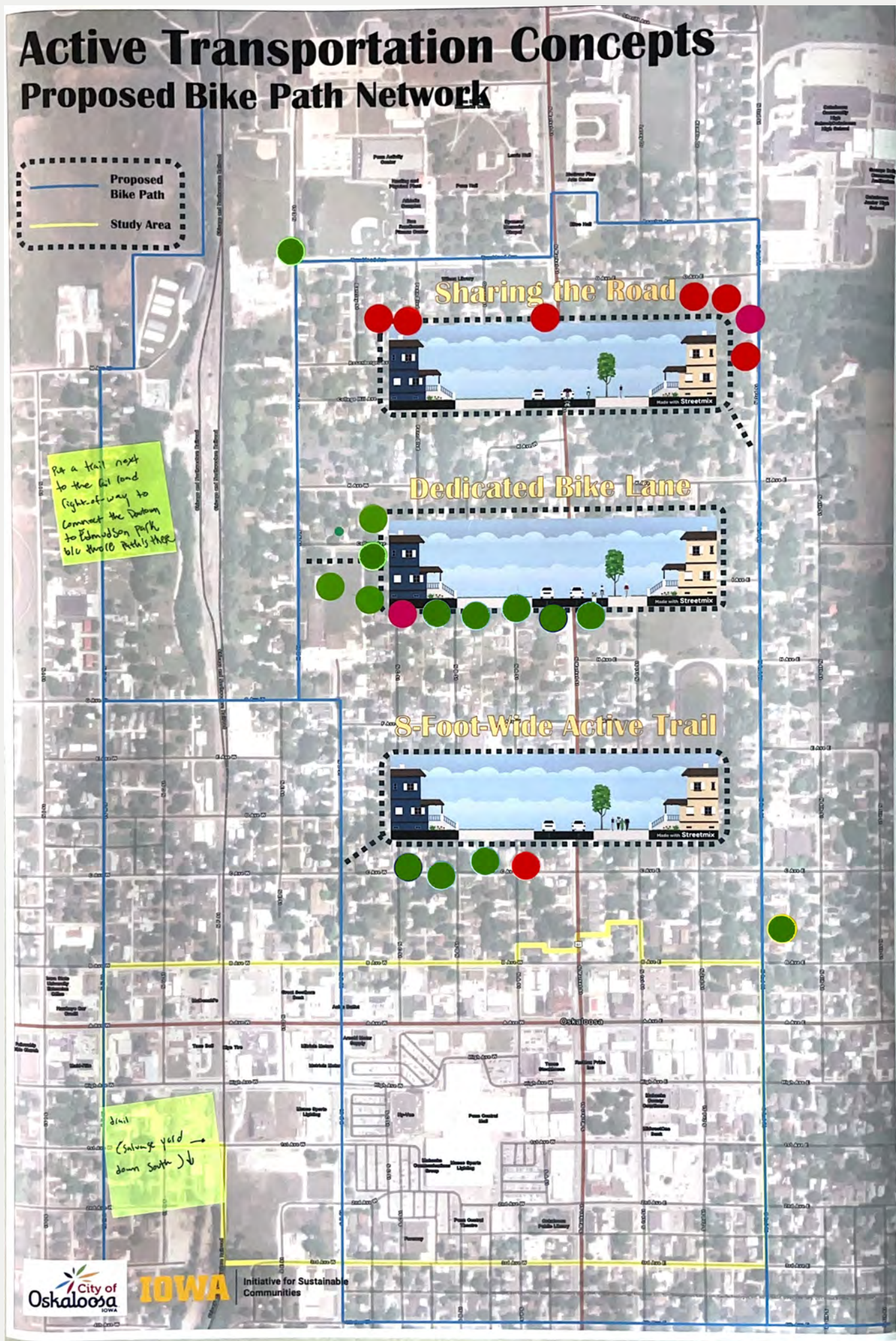
Answer Choices	Responses	
Public Areas	8	7%
Shops	5	4%
Friends	4	3%
Restaurants	2	2%
Exercise	1	1%
Q6 What prevents you from coming downtown? (Multiple Responses were allowed for the 91 participants)		
Nothing	12	14%
Lack of Activities	11	13%
Personal Routine	11	13%
Unknown Activities	10	11%
Parking	9	10%
Lack of Retail	8	9%
Traffic	8	9%
Lack of Public Transportation	6	7%
Construction	4	5%
Safety Concern	4	5%
Lack of Restaurants	3	3%
Q6 How often do you usually spend downtown? (Answered: 72 Skipped: 19) (Due to the wide range of responses, the unedited answers are below.)		
1. 2 hours per week 2. Less than an hour 3. 3-4 hours per week 4. 3-4 times a month 5. Couple times per month 6. 1.5-2 hours 7. Minimal, maybe 1 hour 8. Not often 9. Multiple times per week 10. Every afternoon 11. Less than 30 minutes 12. 30 minutes a couple of days a week 13. Almost everyday 14. 30-40 minutes, 3 times per week 15. 1 hour 16. 1 hour once a week 17. 1 hour, a couple of times per week 18. 1 hour per week 19. Few minutes or whenever 20. 1-2 hours 21. 3 hours 22. 3 hours 23. 1 hour, once a week	24. Up to 2 hours 25. 1-3 hours occasionally 26. 1 hour, otherwise more for events 27. 3-4 hours for events 28. 1-2 hours twice per month 29. 10-30 minutes 30. 2 hours, once a week 31. Couple hours per week 32. 30 minutes – 1 hour 33. 8 hours 34. 4-5 hours per month 35. 5 minutes-usually passing through on a walk 36. 2 hours for events only 37. 1 hour 38. 1-2 hours, 3 times per week 39. 1-3 hours, 2-3 times per week 40. 10 minutes daily 41. 2-3 hours or more 42. 2-3 hours or more 43. 2 to 5 44. Occasionally 45. 3 hours occasionally 46. 2-3 hours occasionally	47. 1 hour 48. Everyday 49. 2-3 times per week 50. 2-3 times 51. Few times a week 52. Couple a week 53. Weekly 54. 1-2 hours per week 55. 1-2 hours per month 56. 1-2 hours, three times per month 57. 1-2, occasionally 58. 10-20 minutes 59. 2-3 hours, 2-3 times per month 60. 1 to 2 61. 1-2 times per week 62. 30 minutes – 1 hour 63. 30 minutes – 1 hour 64. 30 minutes – 1 hour 65. 30 minutes – 1 hour 66. 30 minutes – 1 hour 67. 30 minutes – 1 hour 68. 30 minutes – 1 hour 69. 30 minutes – 1 hour 70. 30 minutes – 1 hour

5.2.2 Appendix B: Initial Site Visit Data

Answer Choices	Responses	
Q8a Do you feel safe walking around and spending time in the downtown area? (Answered: 80 Skipped: 11)		
Yes	69	76%
No	11	12%
Declined to answer	11	12%
Q8b If you do not feel safe, what is your main concern?(Answered: 11 Skipped: 80)		
Pedestrian Safety	4	36%
Skate Park	3	27%
Traffic	2	18%
Crime	1	9%
unknown	1	9%
Q9 What forms of transportation do you use to get downtown? (Multiple Responses were allowed for the 91 participants)		
Drive	66	69%
Walk	22	23%
Bike	7	7%
Shuttle	1	1%
Q10 What do you love about the downtown area? (Multiple Responses were allowed for the 91 participants)		
Town Aesthetics	26	19%
Events	23	17%
City Square	21	16%
Vibes	14	10%
Restaurants	13	10%
Alley	12	9%
Bandstand	11	8%
Retail	6	4%
Mall Options	2	1%
Pedestrian Friendly	2	1%
Accessibility	1	1%
Courthouse	1	1%
Night Life	1	1%

Answer Choices	Responses	
Q11 If you could change one thing about the downtown area, what would it be? (Multiple Responses were allowed for the 91 participants)		
More Retail	22	20%
More Restaurants	19	17%
More <18 Events	14	13%
Parking	12	11%
More Men’s Retail	7	6%
Traffic	7	6%
Building Renovations	6	5%
Improved Walkability	4	4%
Crosswalks	4	4%
Better Roads	3	3%
Skate Park	3	3%
Seasonal Décor	2	2%
More Hangout Locations	1	1%
Business Hours of Operation	1	1%
Construction	1	1%
Homeless Shelter	1	1%
More Public Art	1	1%
No Airport	1	1%
Pest Control	1	1%

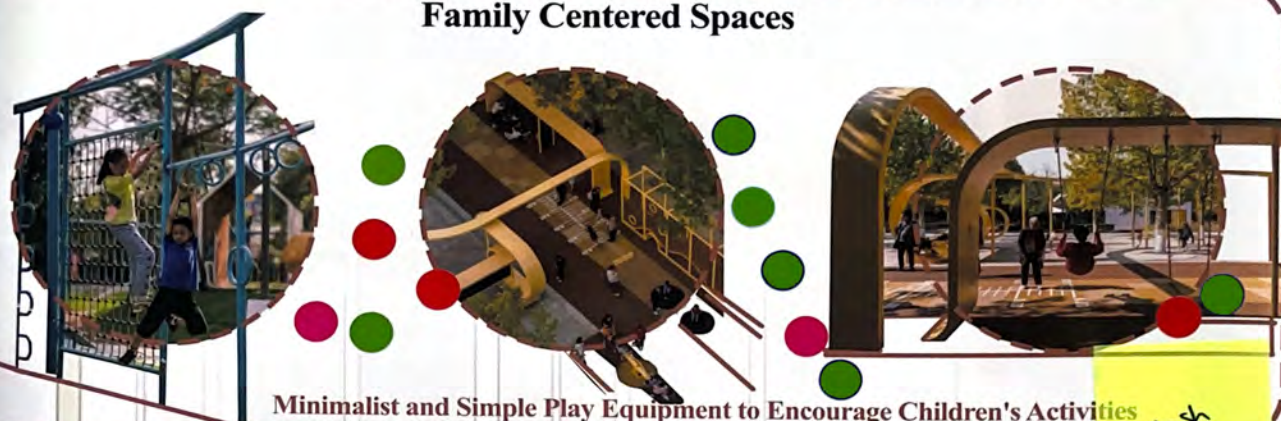
5.2.3 Appendix C: Open House Posters



Pocket Parks

A Public Space to Promotes Community Engagement, Comfort, and Connection to Nature

Family Centered Spaces



Minimalist and Simple Play Equipment to Encourage Children's Activities

splash pad

A Space Designed for Multiple Uses

A Transparent, Multi-Use Space for Seasonal Markets and Public Seating

Two-Level Design: Shaded Lower Level with Event Space Above



roll down screen

Seating Area for Everyday Use and Special Events



Creating a Cozy, Community-Oriented Space with Reusable Materials

Seating Areas Enhanced with Greenery Foster a Connection to Nature



Enhanced Livability with Vibrant & Cozy Seating, Reflecting the City's Culture

Penn Central Mall

The Downtown's Connection of East to West



Community Murals & Public Art

Community-Created Mini Murals



Local Artists' Collaborative Mural



Pop-Up Kiosks & Local Retail

Food & Beverage Kiosk



Retail & Accessories Kiosk



lower the paintball

Placemaking & Public Spaces



Lights, Colors, and Decorations



Creativity in Seating Areas

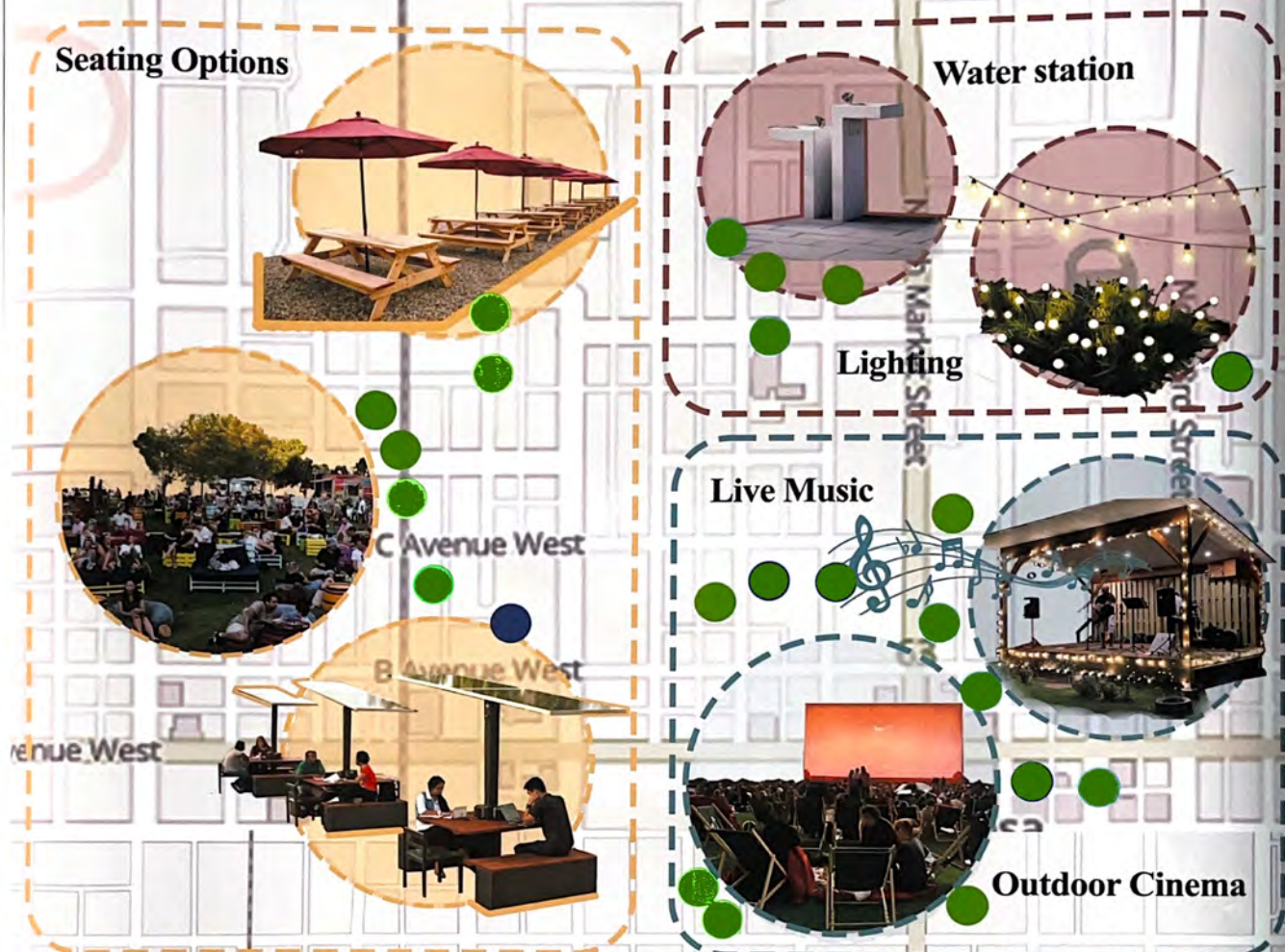


Children's Activities and Engagements



All Seasons Event Center

Food Truck Park: Bringing Our Community Together



Rising Above: Unlocking Development Opportunities



5.2.4 Appendix D: Logic Framework and Planning Tools

01 The purpose...

The Oskaloosa Downtown Master Plan aims to harmonize the city's historic charm with **forward-looking development** that encourages a thriving and vibrant core accessible to all. By spotlighting updated historical guidelines, active community mobility options, and bridging public spaces through placemaking, this plan intends to compose an attractive location for everyone to enjoy and thrive within. It also looks to illuminate the diversity of the local economy while shining a light toward new ventures to ensure long-term community resilience.

02 What we believe...

- Oskaloosa possesses & maintains key amenities that promote a **distinctive culture**.
- The city established a **strong planning framework** to be followed.
- The community takes pride in its **historic preservation**, culture, & future development.
- The **Penn Central Mall** is a **key asset** to the community, but it breaks up connectedness between the historic district and the remaining study area.
- **Community partnerships** are critical to the continuance of the downtown area.
- Thought and care are needed to make the **downtown area an attraction** to bring people in before bypass and connector projects are completed.
- The downtown would benefit from robust **active mobility initiatives**.

03 Our ingredients...

- People we have...**

 - City Officials’ support
 - Third-Party Group insights
 - Key Stakeholder interest
 - Active Community Involvement
- Materials we have...**

 - Robust Planning Culture
 - Established Historic Guidelines
 - Attractive amenities
 - Iowa DOT project information
- People we need...**

 - Upper Story Development Partnerships
 - Parking Study Consultants
- Materials we need...**

 - Pedestrian Crosswalk signal updater
 - WP student involvement
 - FACE Participation
 - Visitor Numbers
 - Current & Historical funding information

04 Changes we expect...

As a result of this downtown master plan, the **local government**...

- ...adopt a **downtown master plan** to achieve Plan Osky and the city’s goals.
- ...establish initiatives to further **active mobility transportation**.
- ...maintain updated **historical and sustainability guidelines**.
- ...seek funding opportunities to **complete implementation** portions of the project.
- ...institute a **community working group** to further initiatives.
- ...promote **physical improvements**.

As a result of this Downtown Master Plan, the **stakeholders**...

- ...find new ways to use their space
- ...promote **community events** with purpose

As a result of this Downtown Master Plan, **residents and visitors**...

- ...participate in **active mobility transportation** & decrease automobile congestion.
- ...promote increased levels of **community engagement**.
- ...enjoy new ways to navigate the downtown district with **improved accessibility**.

05 What we will do...

Project Team will...

- ...**analyze applicable data** around transportation, land usage, wayfinding, historical restoration, and renovation standards.
- ...engage the community & stakeholders to ensure **multiple insights are heard**.
- ...design 3D renderings of **key catalyst projects** within the downtown study area.
- ...update the city’s **historic design guidelines** with color pictures, updated grammar, and new sustainability initiatives.
- ...find **funding sources** to allow implementation of the plan.
- ...create and deliver a **report** to the city council and create a **story map** outlining the project for the city to use for promotion.

The local government will...

- ...help refine the **scope of the project**.
- ...be an active member of the **planning process** and provide requested information
- ...review concepts and **provide feedback** when necessary.

Stakeholders will...

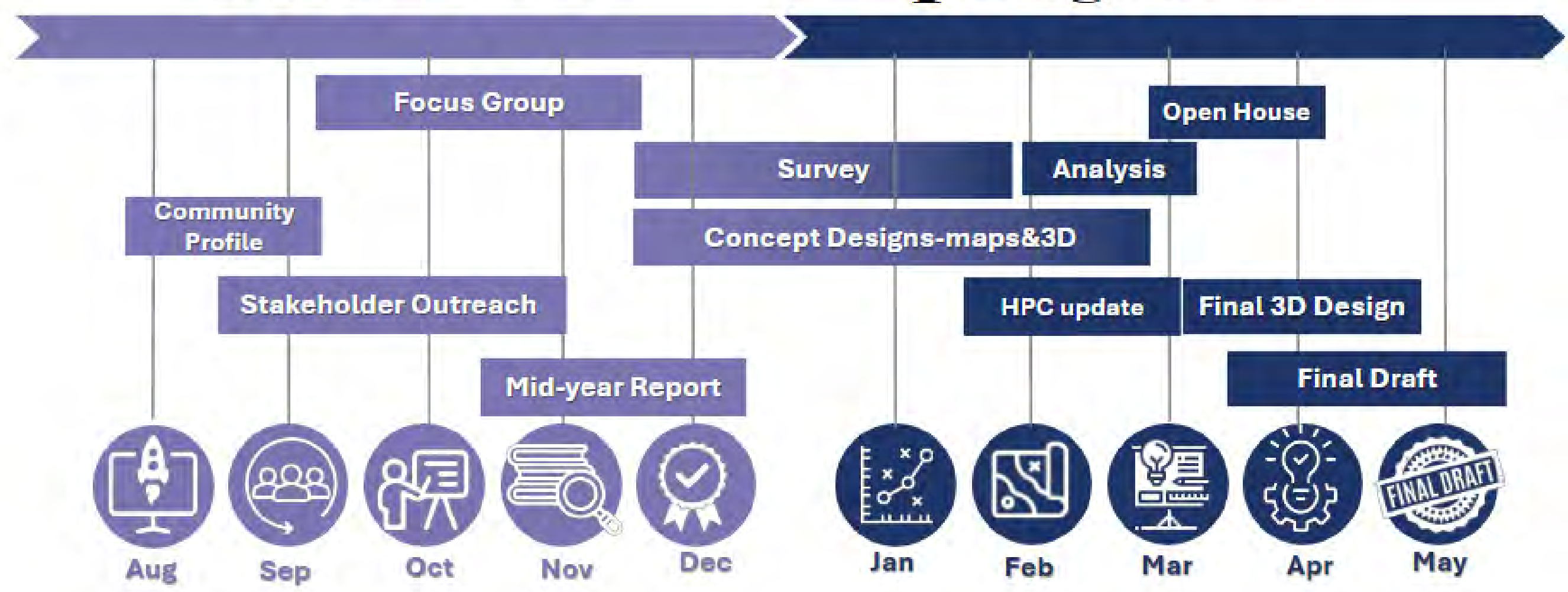
- ...gather and **report foot traffic and sales revenue data** to determine the effectiveness of wayfinding initiatives
- ...report building vacancies to the city to aid in **areawide development strategies**.
- ...outline the **needs and wants of the study area from their perspective**.

Residents and visitors will...

- ...participate in **community engagement events**
- ...provide feedback at **public hearings**

Fall 2024

Spring 2025



Oskaloosa Downtown Master Plan

May 2025

