Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Preliminary Recommendations May 14, 2019

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downtown in context:

economic engine for a region in transition ...*entering* an era of urban opportunity

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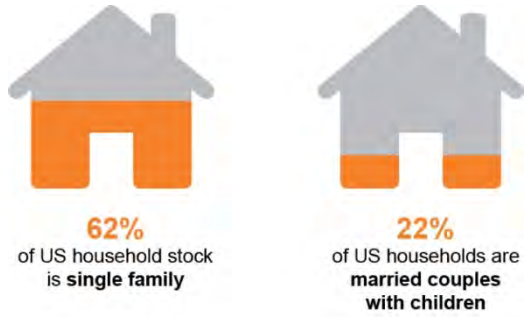
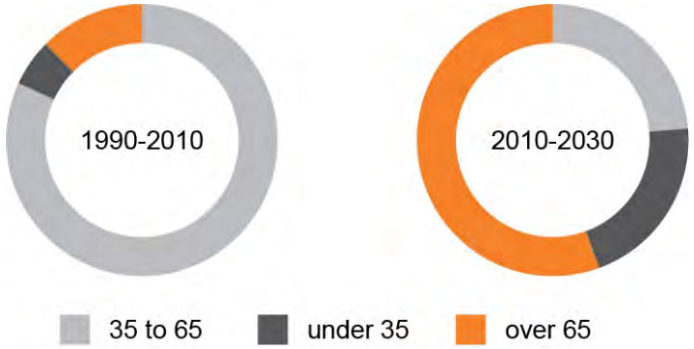
Two decades of unparalleled urban opportunity

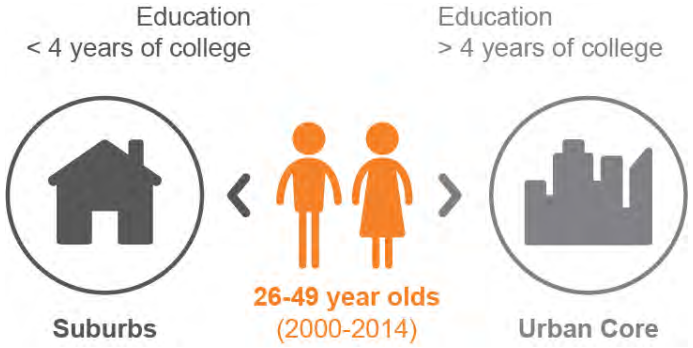
The US is under-supplied with MF housing



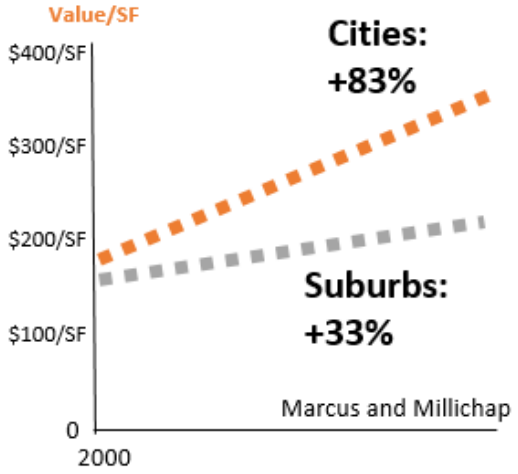
The US is growing older and younger



Affluent, educated households are moving to cities



Urban housing values rising faster



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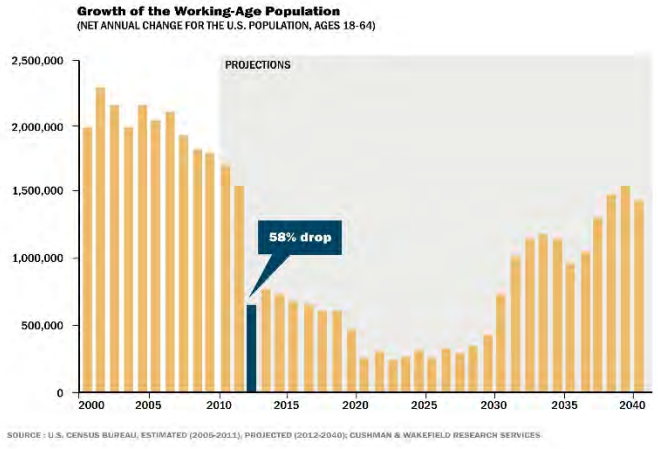
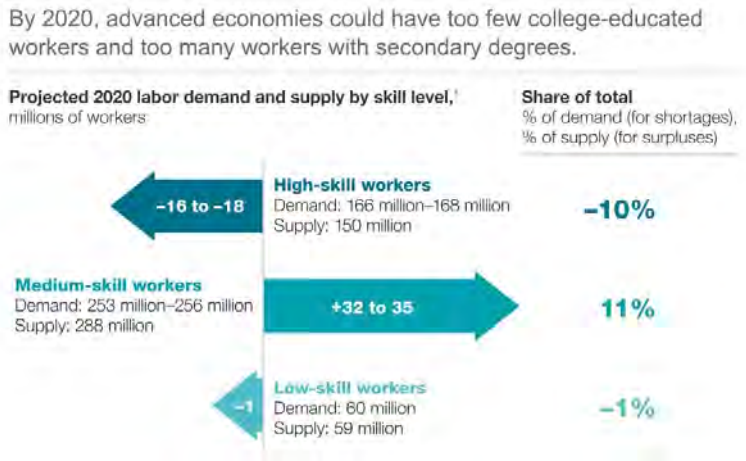
...and an urban imperative driven by the growth of a knowledge economy

The US is adding fewer new workers

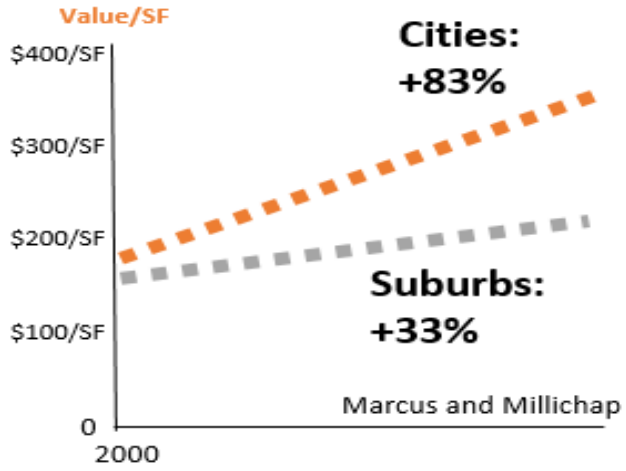


Workforce becoming majority minority

Creating a knowledge worker shortage



Urban office values rising faster



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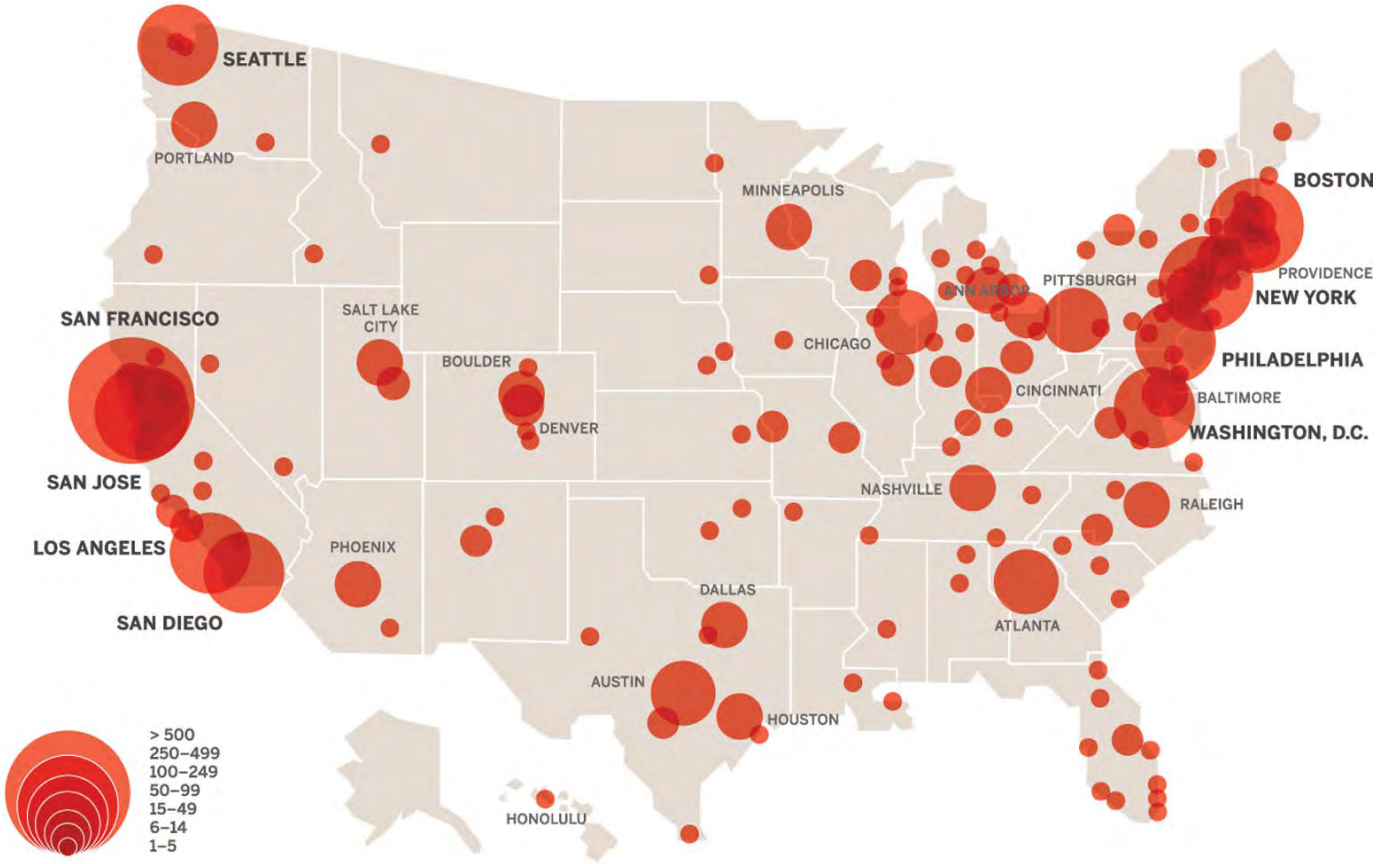
High wage jobs are growing in regions with vibrant downtowns



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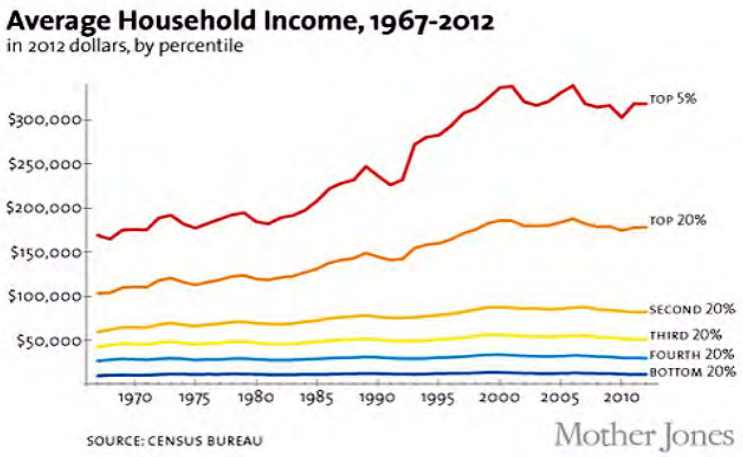
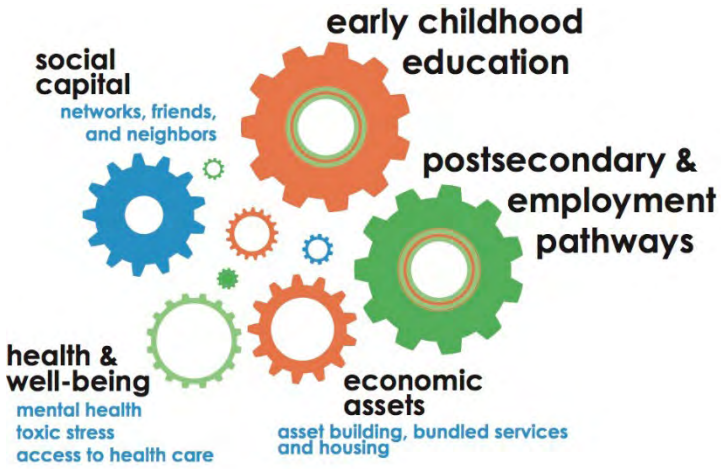
These trends are unfolding during a period of growing economic disparities

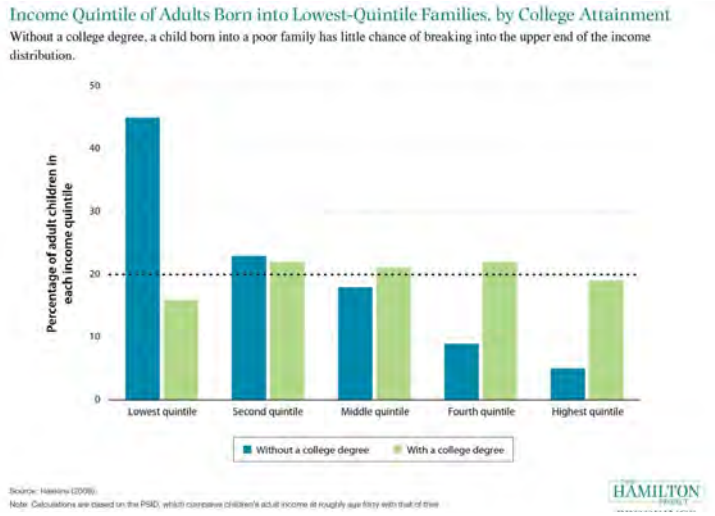
Income disparities are growing



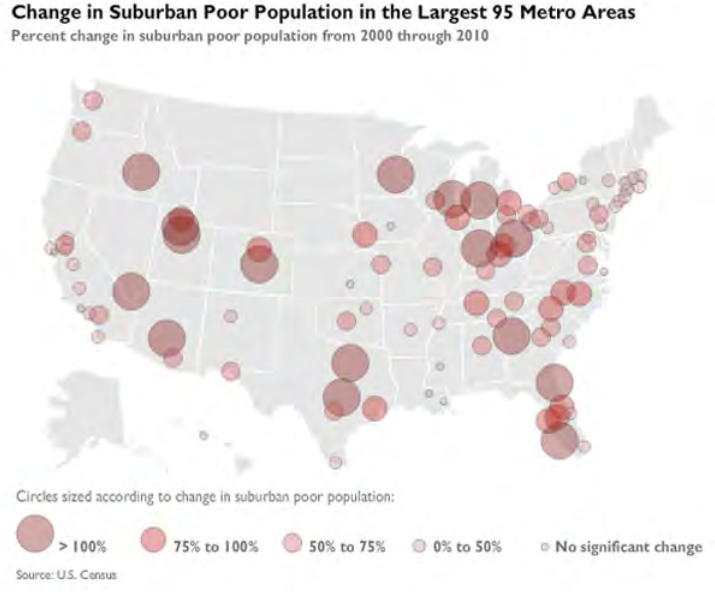
Growth alone does not cure poverty



Generational poverty persists



Poverty is moving to suburbs



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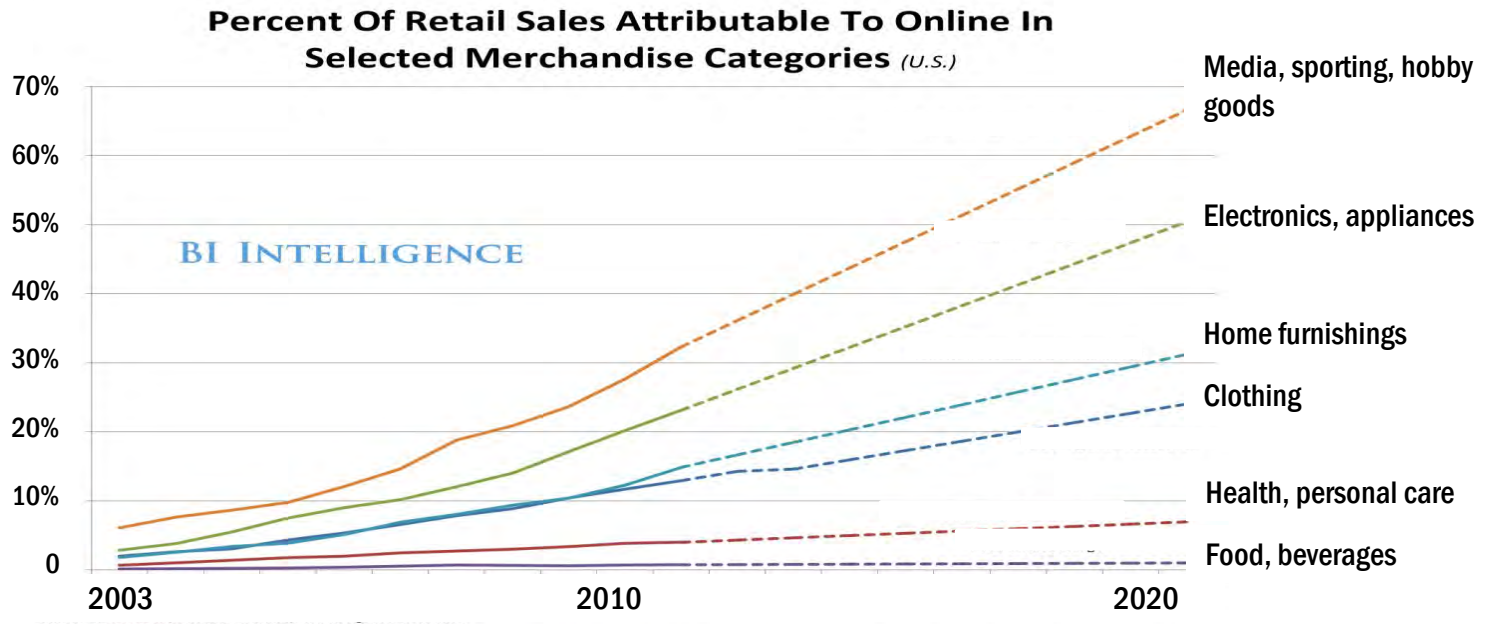
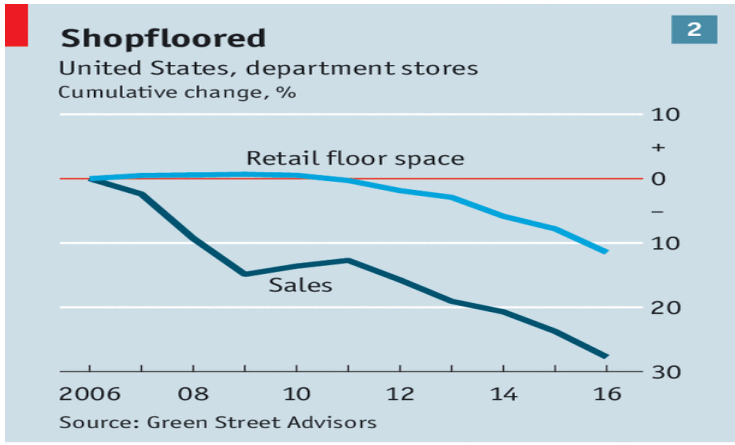
...with dramatic changes to retail markets: food and fun are replacing shopping to animate streets

Online share of retail sales



Retail anchors hit are shrinking



Retail rents dropping

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Retail Rents Decline in Big U.S. Cities as Landlords Succumb to the Retail Storm

Landlords...once considered immune from downturns are having to adjust their lease pricing

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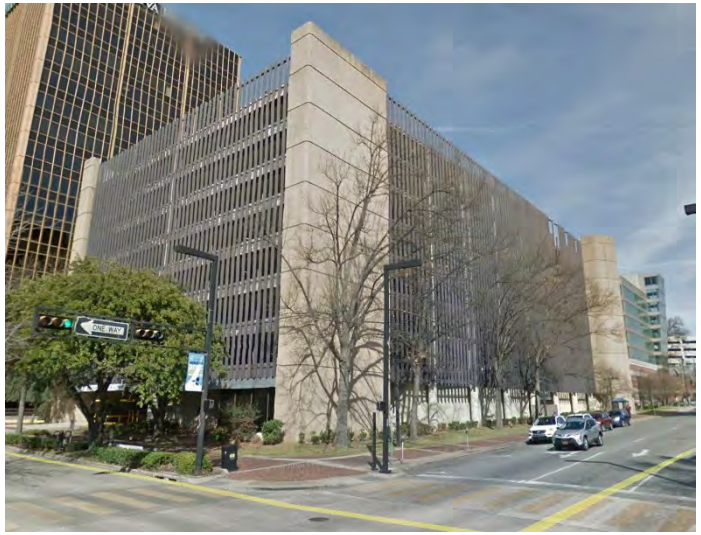
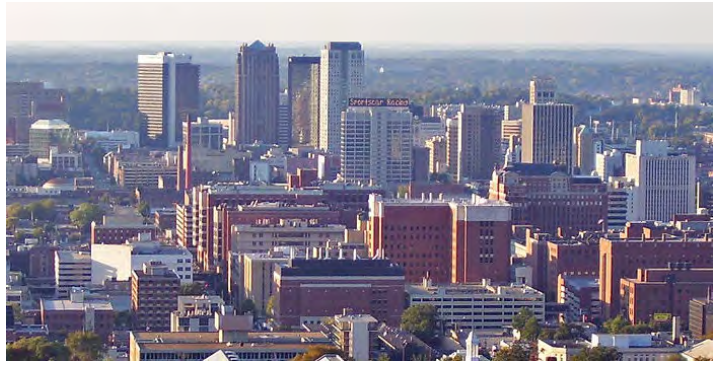
...and dramatic technological changes including the advent of autonomous mobility

We are at peak parking...



...and our world is only getting more connected...

...Giving us the opportunity to unlock a new era of downtown density



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principles for community-building:

walkability, connectivity, *multi-layered* public realm, *diverse* choices...and authenticity

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AIKIN & LIGHTON
CITY FOUNDRY MACHINE WORKS.
BIRMINGHAM ROLLING MILL.
E.G. STEVENS.
F.L. FENTON.
BIRMINGHAM FIRE BRICK WORKS.
WALLIS BROS.
26 CAMP STREET
NEW ORLEANS.
WALLIS BROS.
TOBACCONISTS
NEW ORLEANS
JEFFERSON COUNTY SAVINGS BANK.
MARY PRATT
FURNACE
SLOSS FURNACE CO'S PLANT.
AVENUE A
AVENUE B
AVENUE C
AVENUE D
AVENUE E
AVENUE F
AVENUE G
AVENUE H
1885

SKYLINE TAKEN FROM 25TH FLOOR OF COMER BUILDING, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

41840

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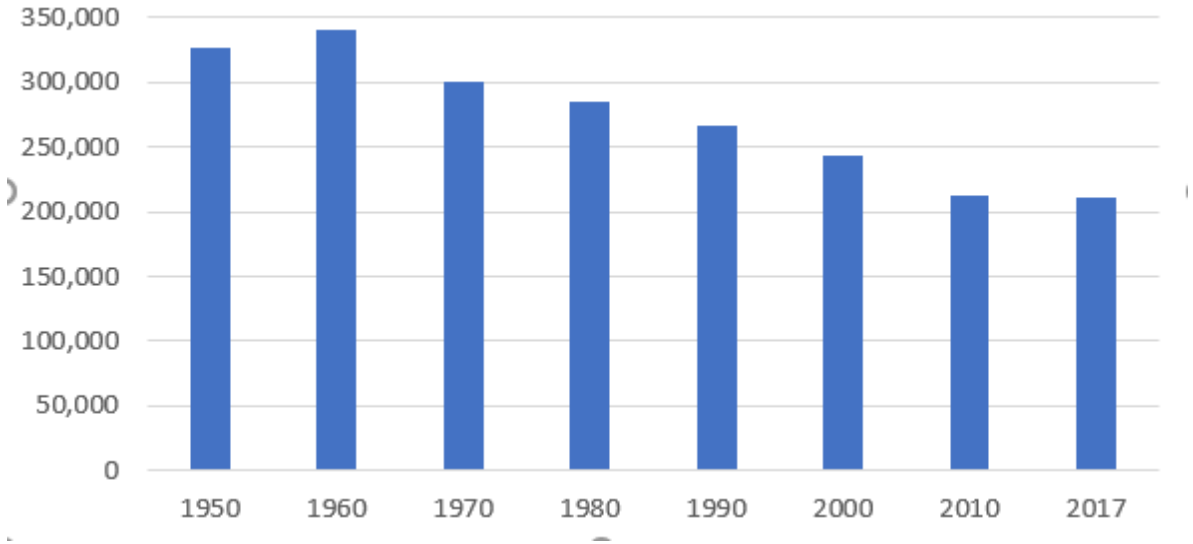
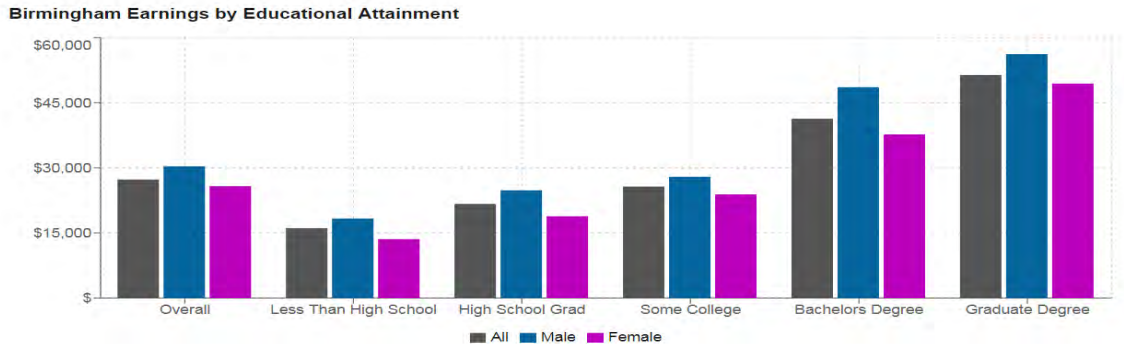
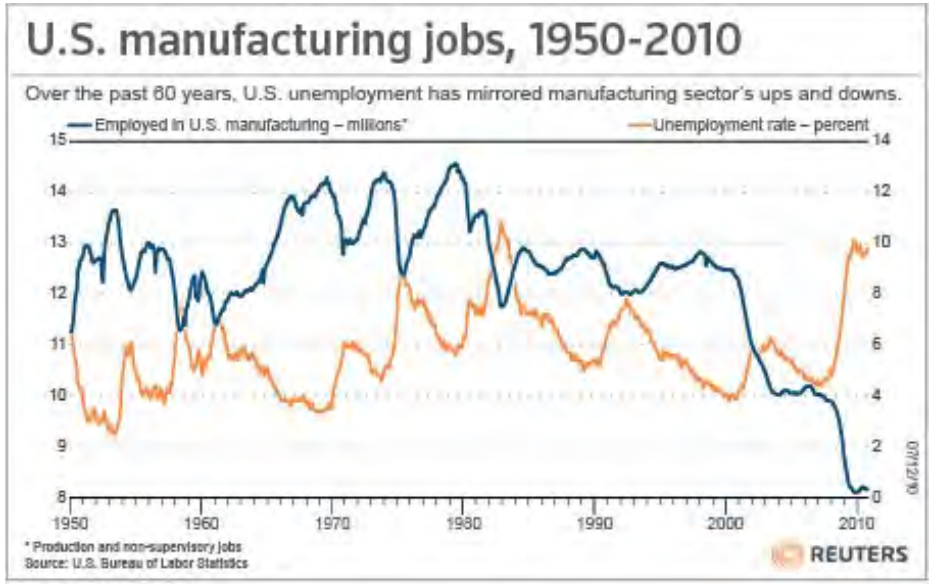
Five decades of difficult economic transition

Population decline has stopped…





…along with US manufacturing jobs



Reuters graphic/Stephen Culp

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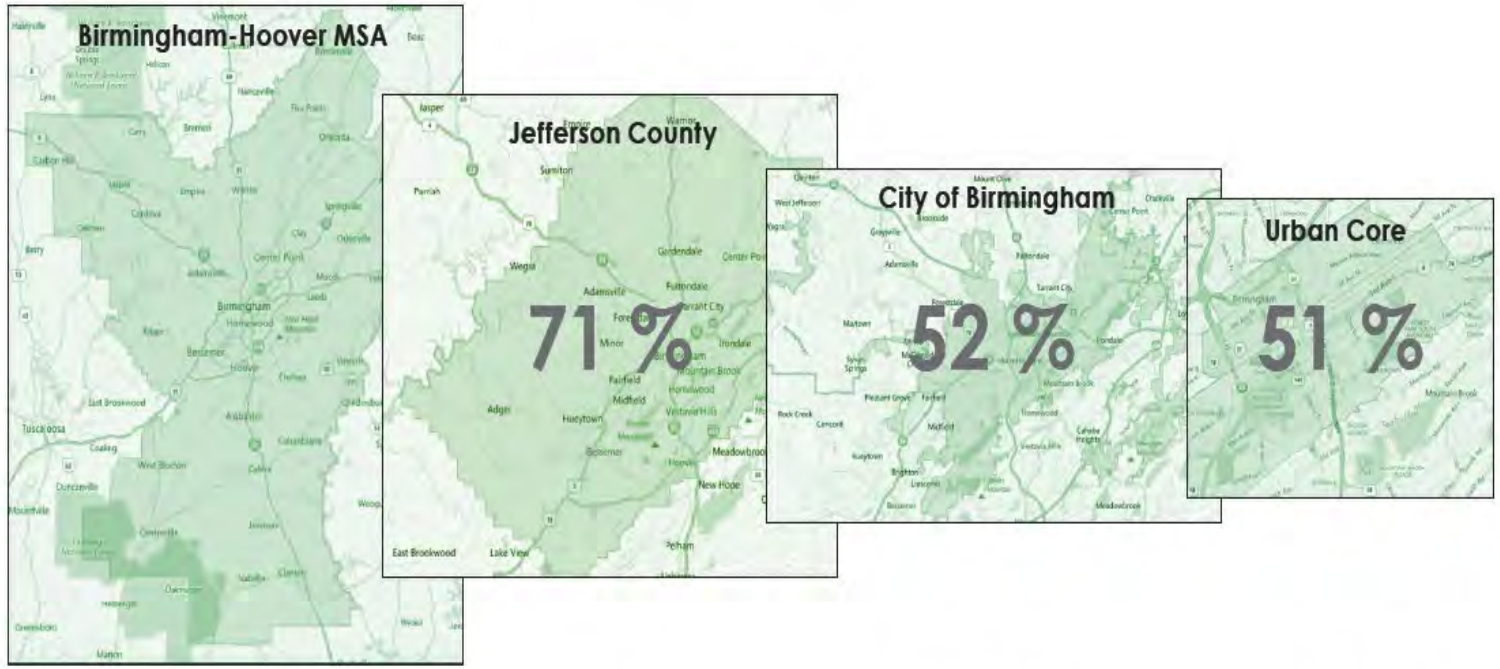
Jobs remain concentrated in the core

METRO :: JOBS + LOCATION

The maps below demonstrate where jobs are located within municipal boundaries in the greater Birmingham region. The Birmingham-Hoover MSA encompasses seven counties, but the majority of the jobs (71%) in the MSA are located in a single county (Jefferson). Within Jefferson County, the City of Birmingham accounts for about half of all jobs in the County, and within the City, the Urban Core accounts for approximately half of all City jobs. This data shows how deeply concentrated employment is in the region's core.



630,000 jobs	450,000 jobs	235,000 jobs	120,000 jobs

Sources: Nielsen, LEHD, Re:Posit Strategies

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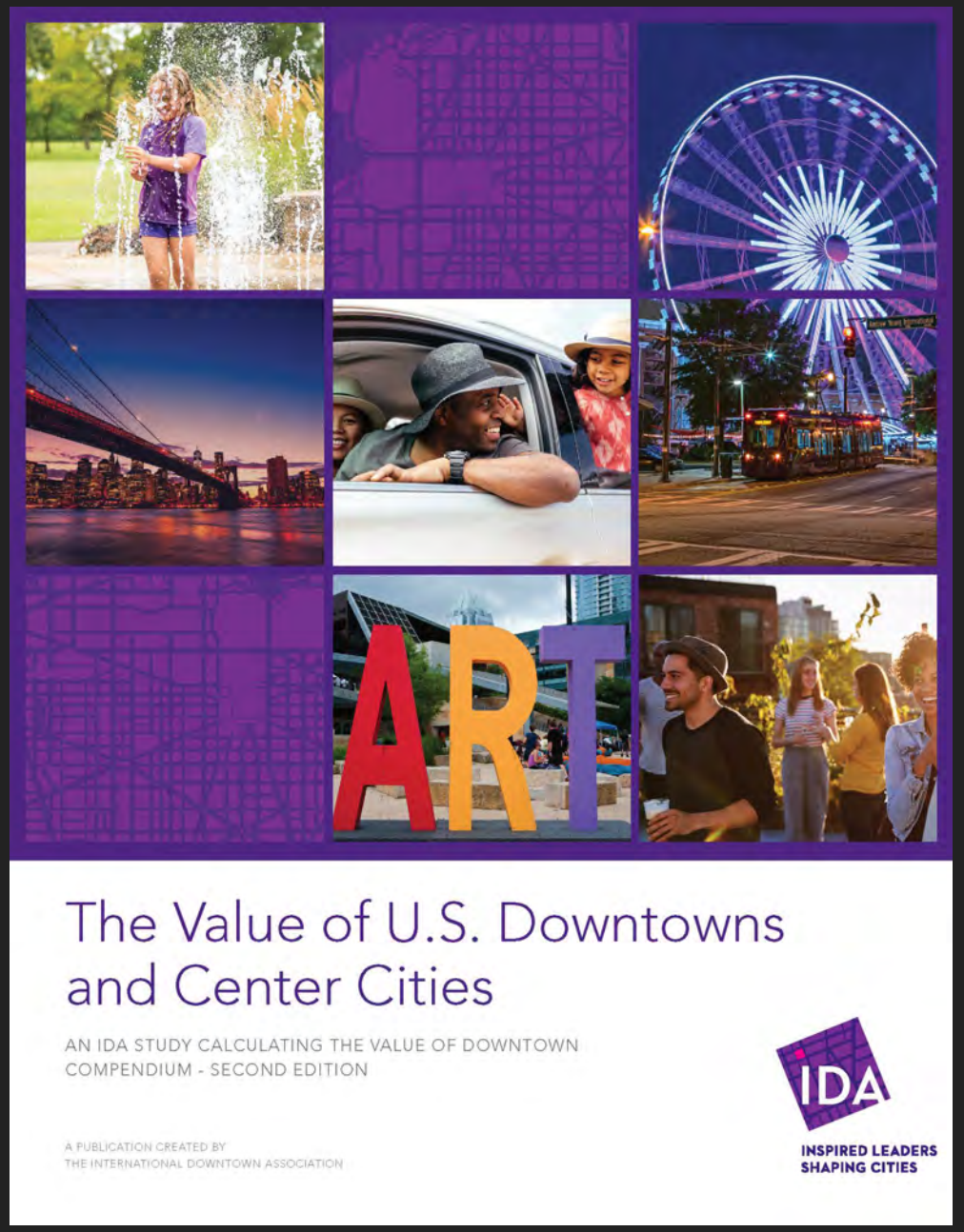
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

The Value of Birmingham's Downtown

- **Economy:** Downtown returns much more revenue per acre than anywhere else
- **Inclusion:** Downtown is a place that everyone shares
- **Vibrancy:** Downtown is a place that attracts fun and success
- **Identity:** Downtown preserves the heritage of the city and serves as its welcome center
- **Resilience**: Downtown helps the city weather good times and bad



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thresholds for success:

leadership, engagement, partnership, *transformative* planning

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Birmingham City Center Master Plan

The Comprehensive Plan (2014)

GOALS	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS
Downtown is a thriving, mixed use center of business, employment, institutions, and government.	• Build on downtown's economic strengths as a center of health care, higher education, finance, and professional and technical services.
Downtown is also a neighborhood that people in the city and the region experience as a safe, fun, and exciting place to live.	• Continue to strengthen downtown as a lively residential neighborhood. • Support a residential marketing plan to attract, young professionals, downtown employees, and new hires with targeted messages.
Downtown has a diverse and contemporary mix of cultural, arts and entertainment venues that make Birmingham a center of urban southern culture and lifestyle.	• Continue to strengthen downtown as the region's center of culture, the arts, and entertainment.
Downtown is made up of connected and mutually reinforcing districts.	• Continue to strengthen the pedestrian-friendly character of downtown. • Ensure strengthened connections for transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorist between north and south, and linking downtown and adjacent districts. • Advocate for state support for the rerouting of I-20/I-59 north of the BJCC area. • Support a two-way street system for downtown. • Support new zoning for downtown districts to streamline approvals for desired development.
Downtown has a strong leadership organization active in planning, promotion, recruitment, development, and public realm improvements.	• Support a consistent financing plan for REV Birmingham (REV). • Continue to work on implementation of the 2004 Center City Master Plan, with updating and adjustments as appropriate. • Review downtown neighborhood organization boundaries in light of the growing number of downtown residents.

Chapter 11

Sustaining Downtown

"Diverse City Center with living/ working/entertainment, easy public transportation, retail restaurants, arts."

"A downtown city center that provides jobs, taxes, and is the center of business and cultural facilities for the whole region."

11.1

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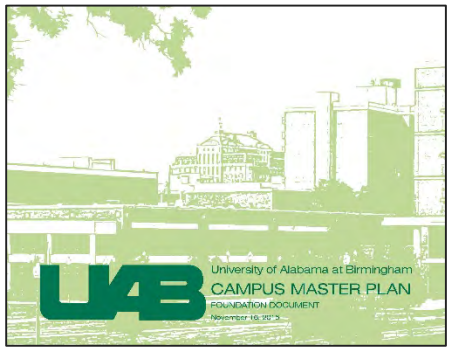
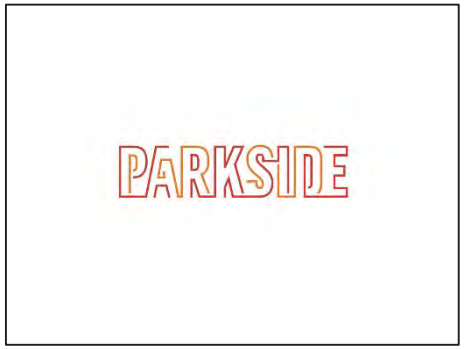
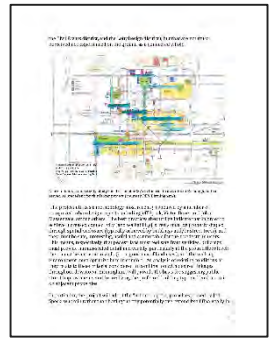
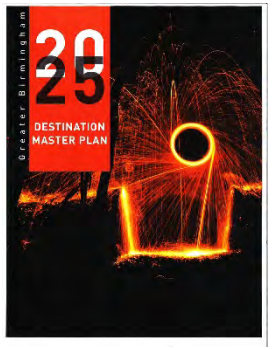
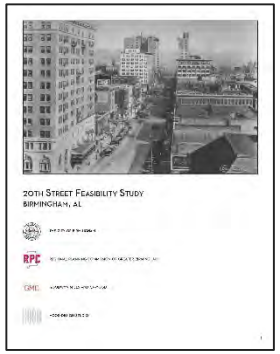
Lots and lots and lots of plans…











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REGIONS FIELD

REGIONS
WELLS FARGO

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

The City Center today

- 11,700 residents
- Daytime population 120,000+

ESRI 2018 Estimate

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Market Strategies | Housing

Share of Households in the City Center by Market Group

- 43% Empty Nesters & Retirees
- 20% Traditional & Non-Traditional Families
- 37% Young Singles & Couples

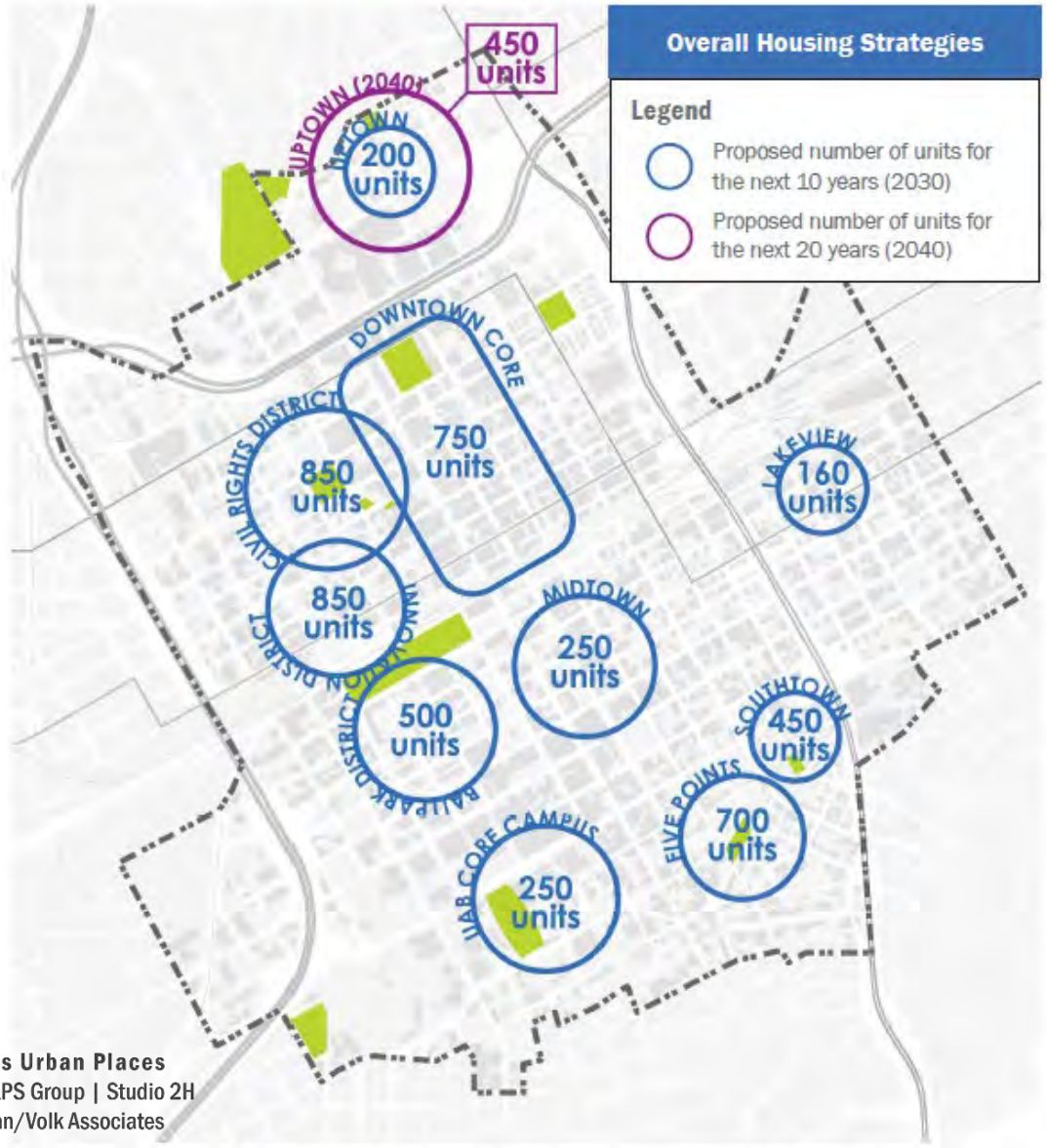
Who is Most Likely to Move to the City Center Over the Next Five Years

- 16% Empty Nesters & Retirees
- 8% Traditional & Non-Traditional Families
- 76% Young Singles & Couples

Annual Housing Growth Forecast for the City Center Over the Next Five Years

- 323-372 (units per year) Multi-Family (for rent)
- 20-24 (units per year) Multi-Family (for sale)
- 20-24 (units per year) Single-Family Attached (for sale)

Overall Housing Strategies



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Market Strategies | Housing

- Rental Lofts/Apartments: 3,230 – 3,720
- For-sale Condominiums: 200 – 240
- For-sale Townhomes: 200 - 240

3,630 – 4,200* units over 10 years

* Market-rate unit projections only – Absorption for workforce housing is as deep as the financing will permit

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Market Strategies | Office & Hotel

The Projected US Workforce in 2022

- **55%** Millenials & Generation 2020
- **19%** Generation X
- **26%** Baby Boomers and Traditionalists

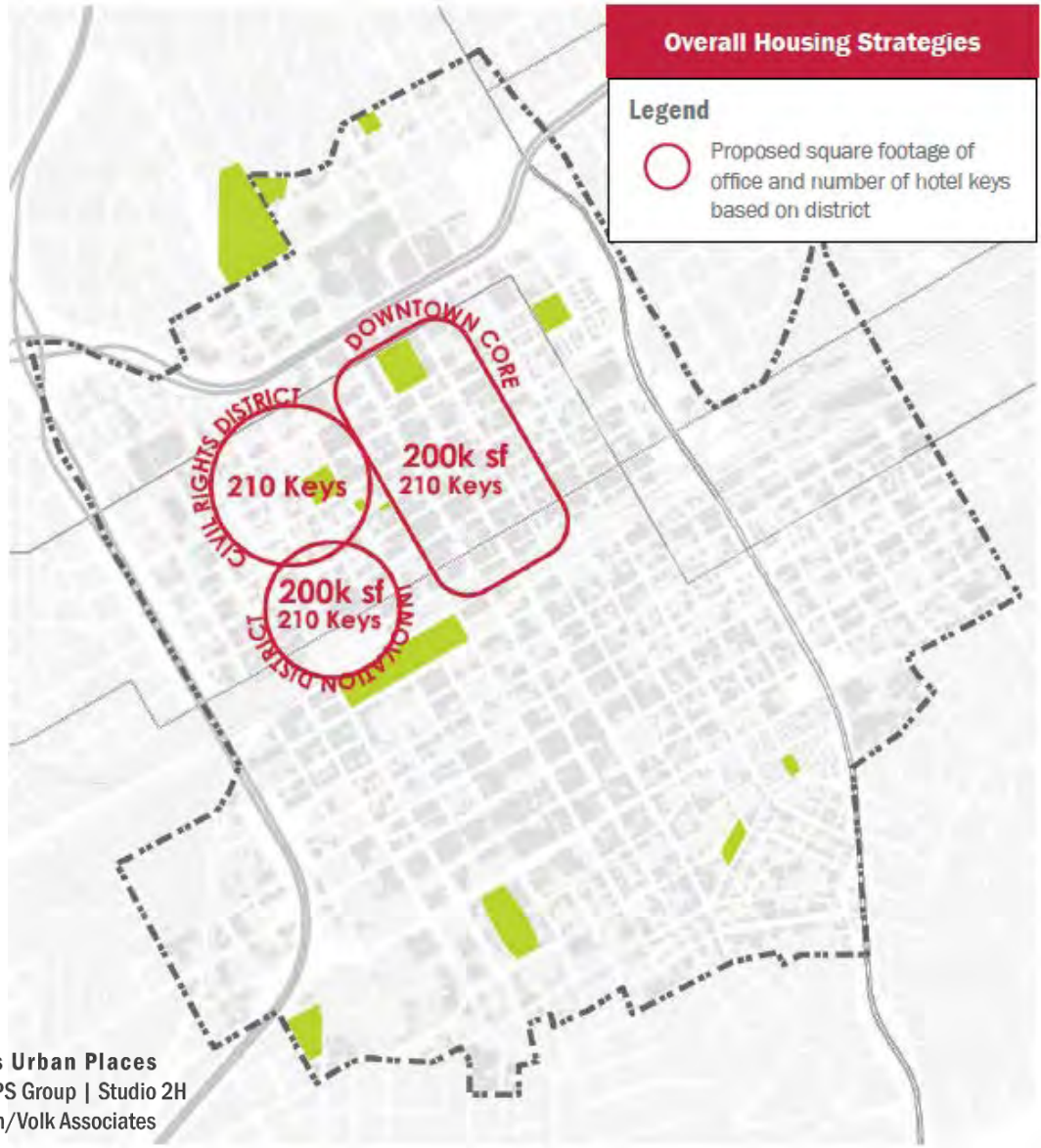
The Birmingham Metro's Dominant Private Industries for Jobs

- **14.7%** Professional & Business Services
- **13.2%** Heath Care & Social Assistance
- **11.3%** Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities

Birmingham Hotel Projection

- **42%** Increase in available City Center hotel rooms (2012-2018)
- **216** Hotel rooms under construction in City Center
- **420** Additional rooms in City Center over the next 10 years

Overall Housing Strategies



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Market Strategies | Office & Hotel

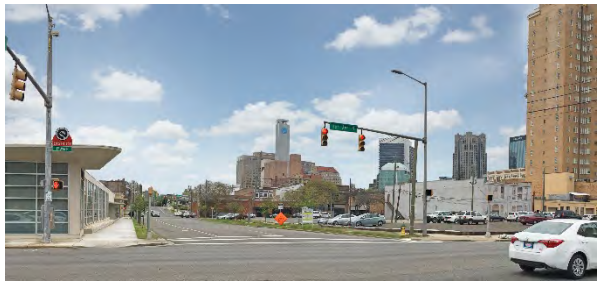
- City Center is a competitive office location for growing white collar and Technology, Advertising, Media, and Information (TAMI) industries.
- TAMI companies will likely be a growing presence in the Downtown alongside the traditional Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) industries.
- Smaller scale absorption will likely continue in “Coolspace” office, which will enhance City Center’s urban vibe.
- Large-scale occupancies in City Center towers may be more challenging to lease.

700k – 1M sf office over 10 years

420 additional hotel room over 10 years

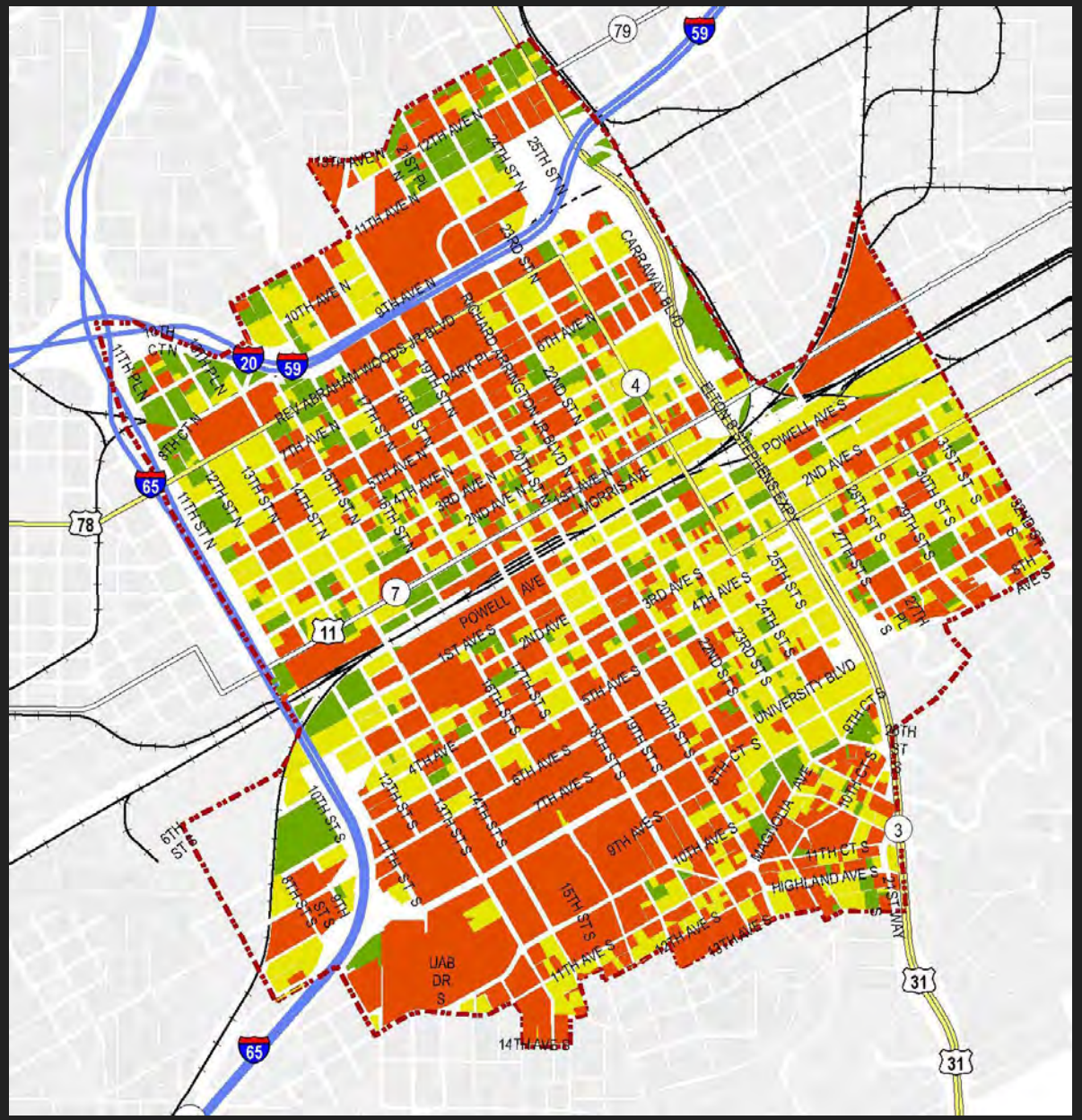
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Where are the opportunities?



Ripe/Firm

- Firm
- Opportunity
- Ripe



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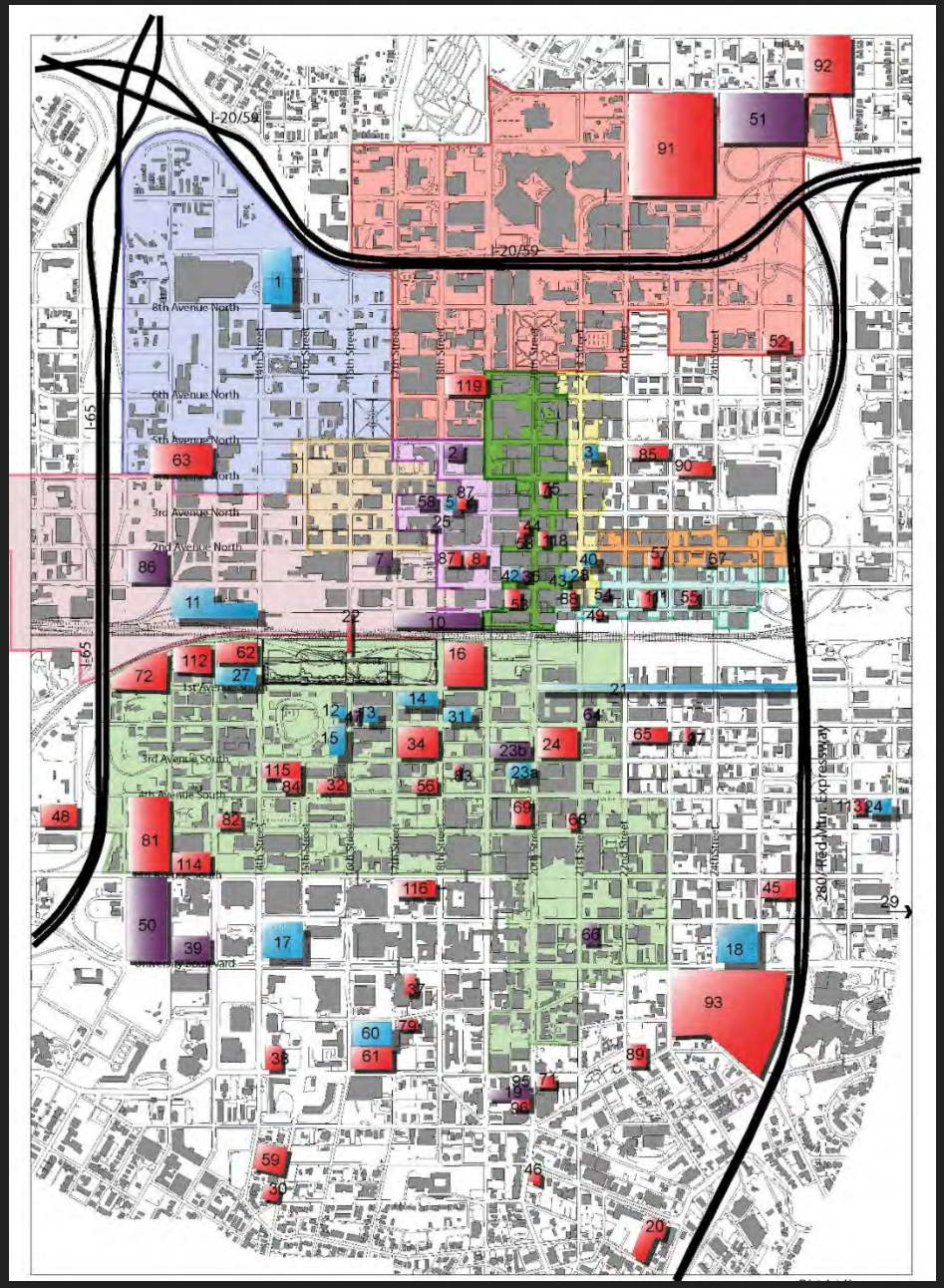
What's cooking?

Projects under construction or in the pipeline & recently completed projects



Projects under Construction/ Announced

Projects Completed 2015-2016

Projects Completed 2016-Current

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Your opinions matter!

- 100+ Stakeholder Interviewees
- 300+ Public Event Participants
- 1100+ Online Survey Participants

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Great public feedback

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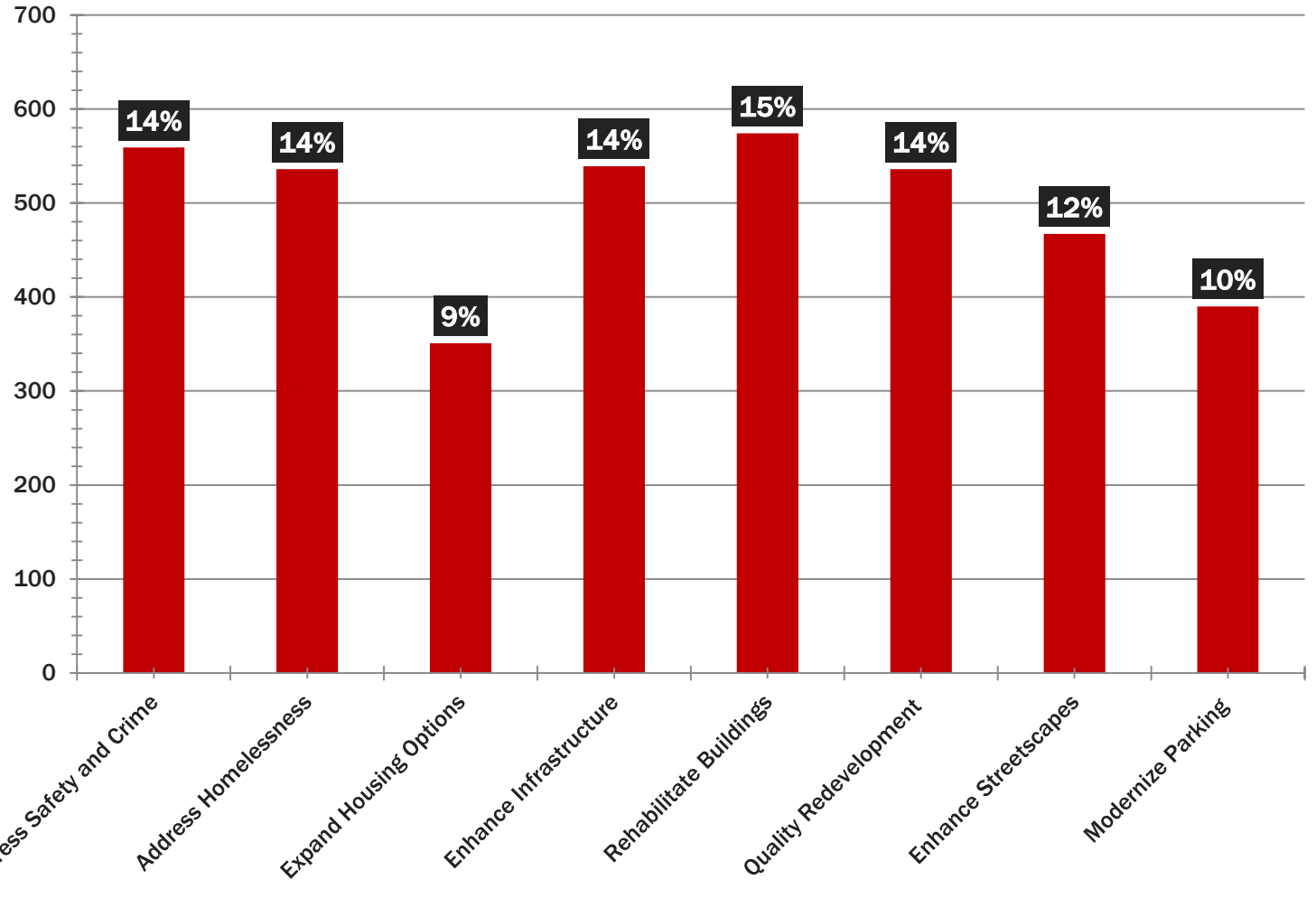
What are the most important issues facing Downtown?

1. Rehabilitate Buildings
2. Address Safety and Crime
3. Enhance Infrastructure
4. Quality Redevelopment
5. Address Homelessness

6. Enhance Streetscapes
7. Modernize Parking
8. Expand Housing Options



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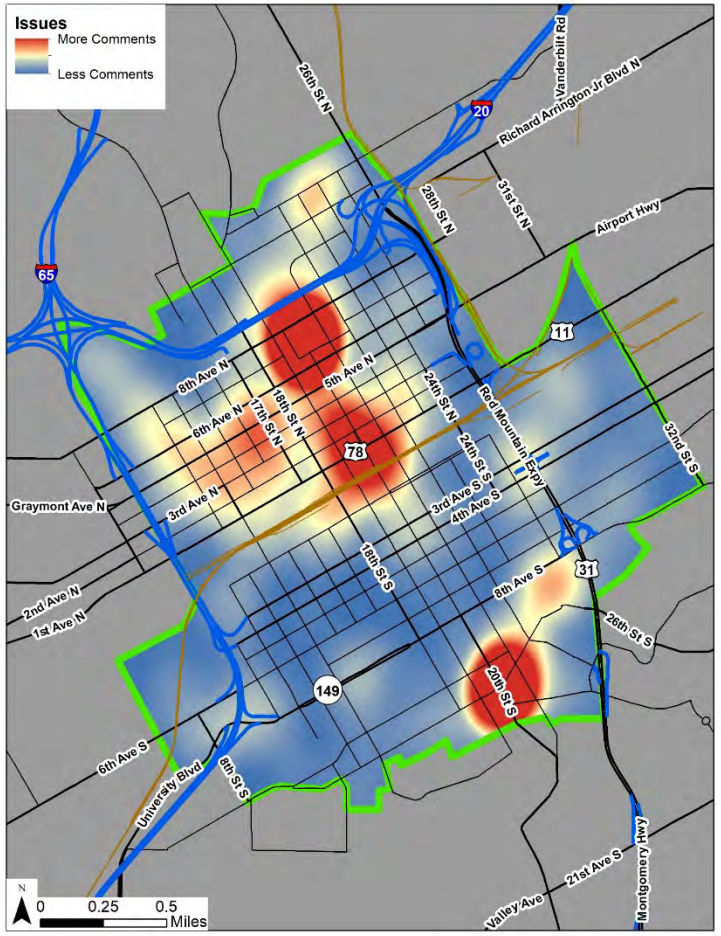
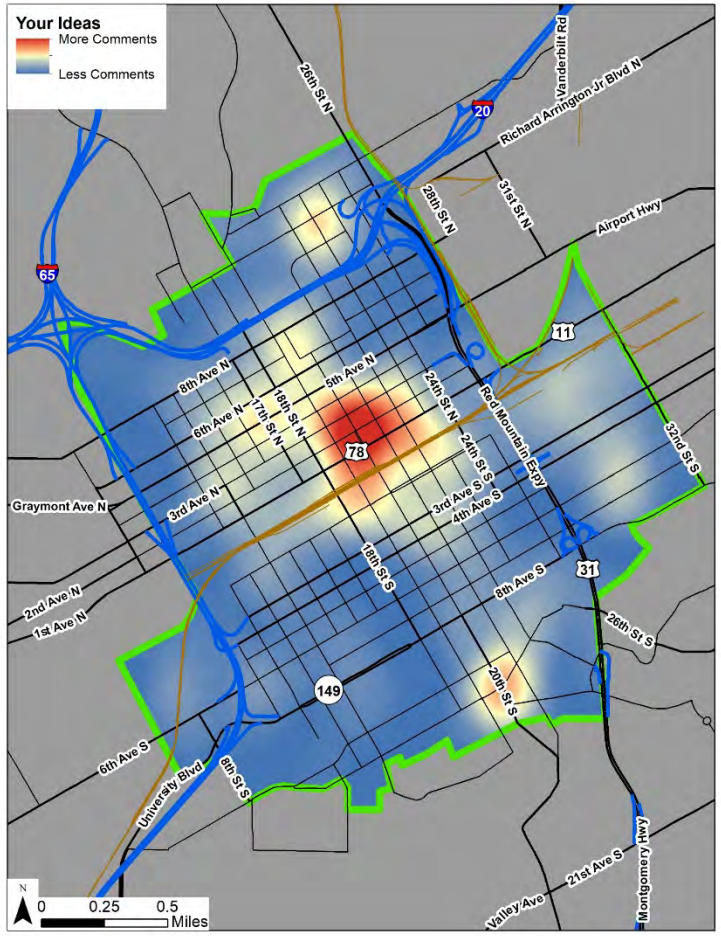
Assets...Issues...Ideas for Change





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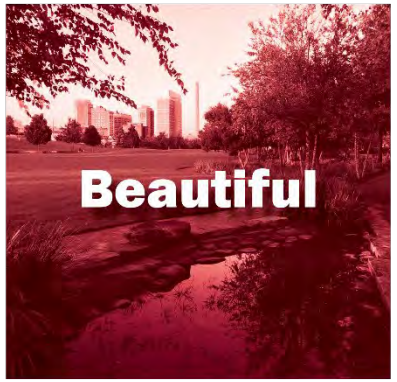
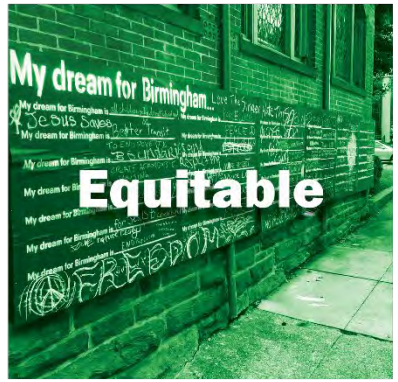
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

What we heard

VALUES





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Principle #1

Focus investments and energy into key nodes...

...to create compact critical mass

Principle #2

Equity is essential...

...the City Center presents opportunities for everyone to explore, to experience, to reside, and to seek economic mobility

Principle #3

Build for people...

...City Center Birmingham is best experienced as a pedestrian

Principle #4

We are Birmingham...

...respect, maintain, and celebrate our living history and the spaces that bring our community together

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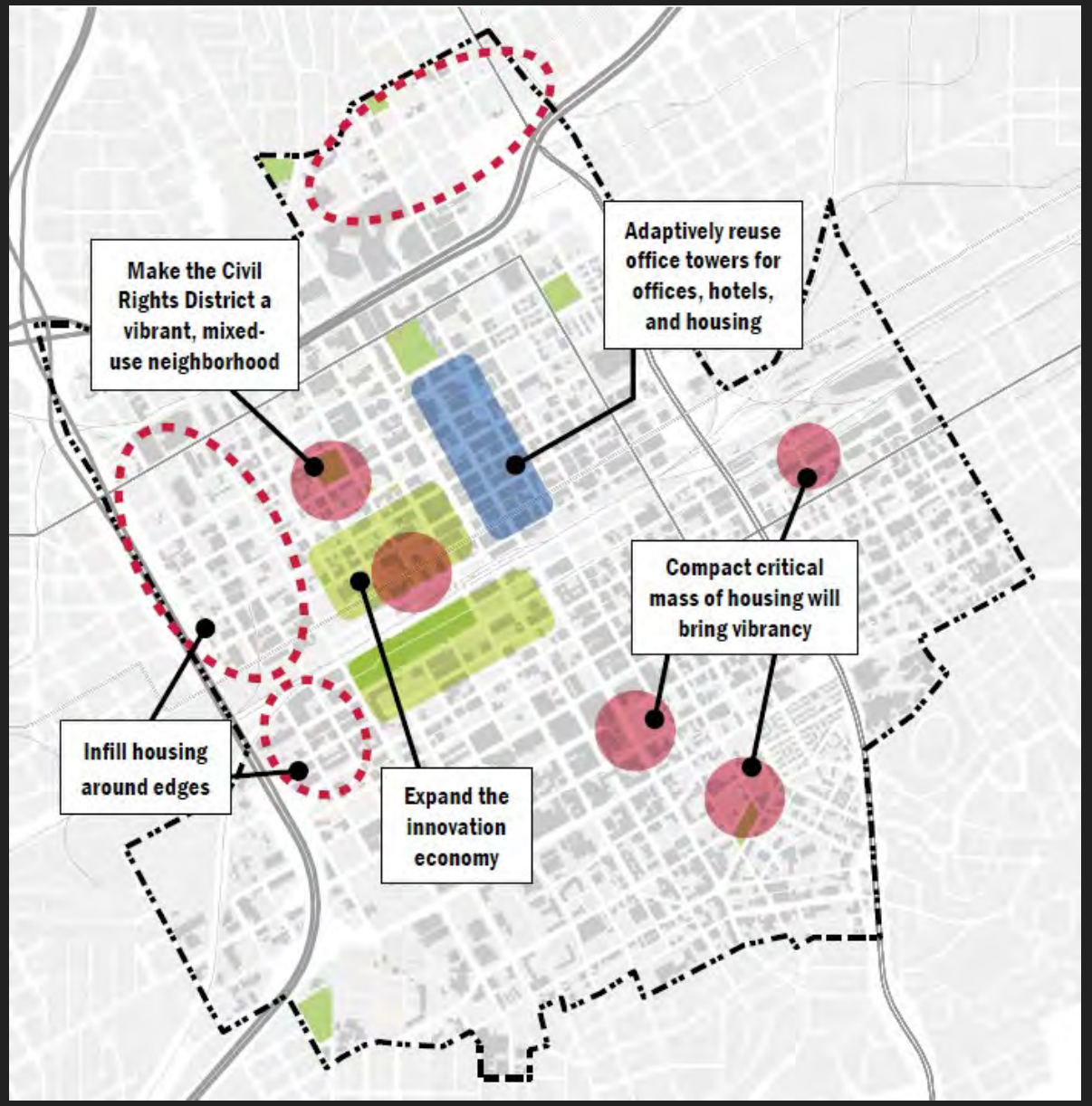
Principle #5

Jobs drive growth and housing drives vibrancy

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Overall Strategies

- Fill up the office space with a new mix (office, housing, hotels)
- Expand the innovation economy
- Bringing Civil Rights district into its own (vitality; reinforcing its message)
- Redevelop with compact critical mass (i.e., focus 4,000 units) so we produce the synergies and benefits it can deliver
- Expand affordability
- Reintegrate downtown and surrounding neighborhoods with mid-density infill around edges
- Preserve historic resources



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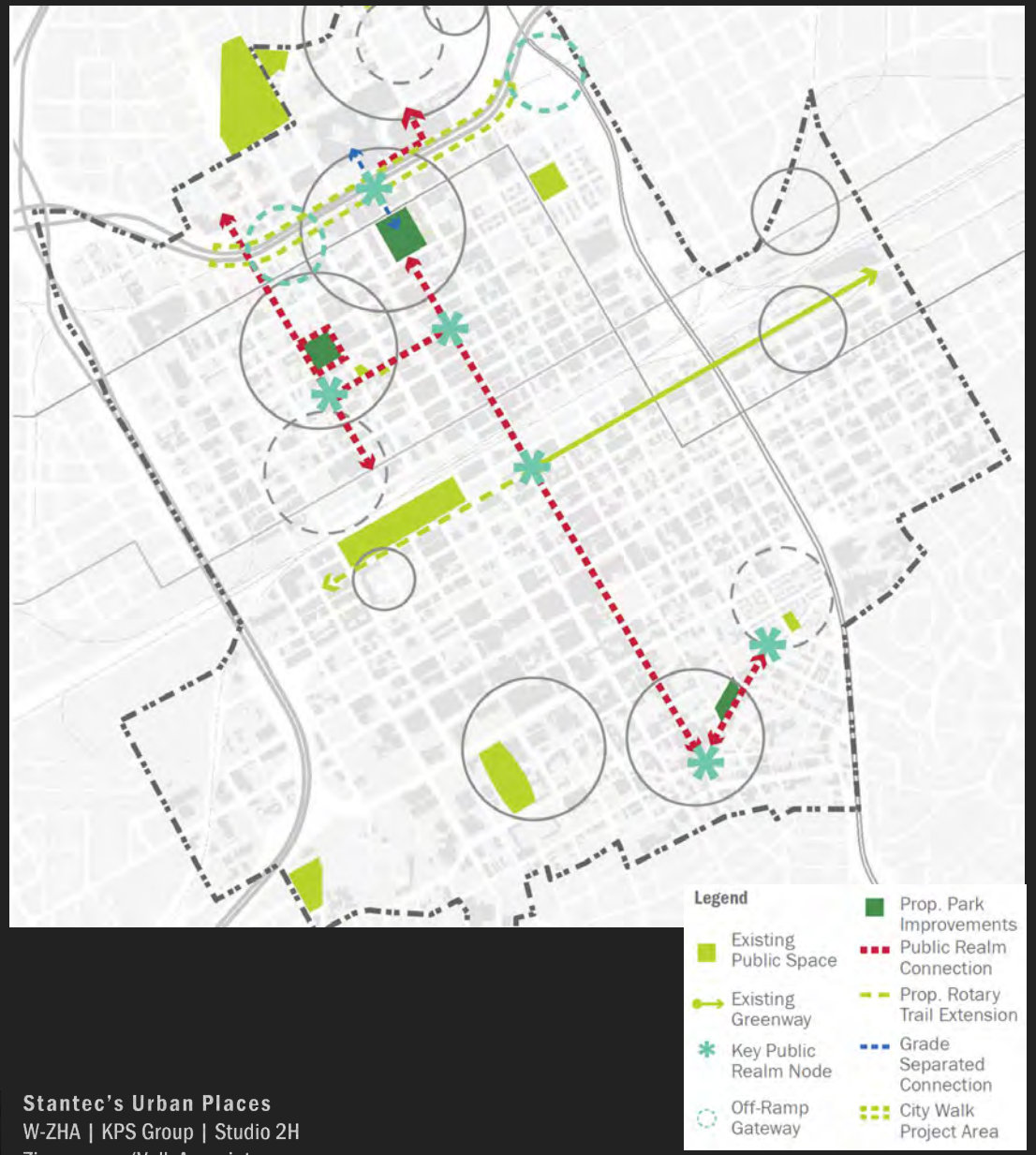
Open Space and Trails

- Improving existing parks with programming efforts and/or infrastructure improvements
- Improving key nodes (intersections and other public realm “meeting points”) with public art, paving, lighting, seating, etc.
- Extending the Rotary Trail to Railroad Park
- Improving streetscapes along corridors that will be heavily used by pedestrians
- Creating pedestrian connections, particularly at areas with grade separated crossings
- Each Catalyst Area has additional strategies



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Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Streetscape Priorities

Priority Streets for Improvements:

- 16th Street
- 20th Street
- 5th Ave N/6th Ave N/17th Street (around
- Kelly Ingram Park)
- 4th Ave North
- Magnolia Ave
- 9th Ave/22nd Street/Richard Arrington (connection to stadium)

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Districts and Destinations

- Existing parks and destinations within Birmingham's Downtown Core represent activity hubs
- Future landmarks, like the South Town Development and the future Football Stadium, indicate where activity will be in the coming years
- Catalyst areas coincide with some existing parks and other destinations, but also serve as destinations on their own
- Creating a network between these elements is critical to allow users to access areas of Downtown in a safe and enjoyable way

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Street Network Constraints

- Most one-way pairs have no ‘hard break’ when connecting back to the street network outside downtown: designed simply for freeway access
- Only two ramp systems (three ramps total) are designed to require one-way flow (i.e. traffic merging to or from the left side of the street)
- Other one-way street systems terminate at railroad or other physical features (13th/14th; 17th/18th)

Strategic Focus

- Selective two-way conversions based on light-touch engineering needs
- Streetscape and right-of-way repurposing on other streets remaining one-way

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Street Network Opportunities

- Signature street project for 20th Street
- 4th Avenue as the first two-way conversion, replacing signals and adding intersection markings/striping as needed
- Lane reductions on 2nd/3rd, 5th/6th couplets to control vehicle speeds and repurpose right-of-way for other uses
- 2nd Avenue as parking priority corridor, supporting Innovation District needs
- Coordinate parking management approaches and on-street/off-street policy (City and BPA)

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Parking Management

- Coordinate with BPA for a combined pricing strategy
- Repurpose streets in key focus areas to feature different parking configurations—including to supplement off-street parking
- Set pricing for street parking to encourage availability in on retail streets
- Open more BPA supply to transient use
- Develop revenue-sharing model with BPA to help provide funding for multimodal investments

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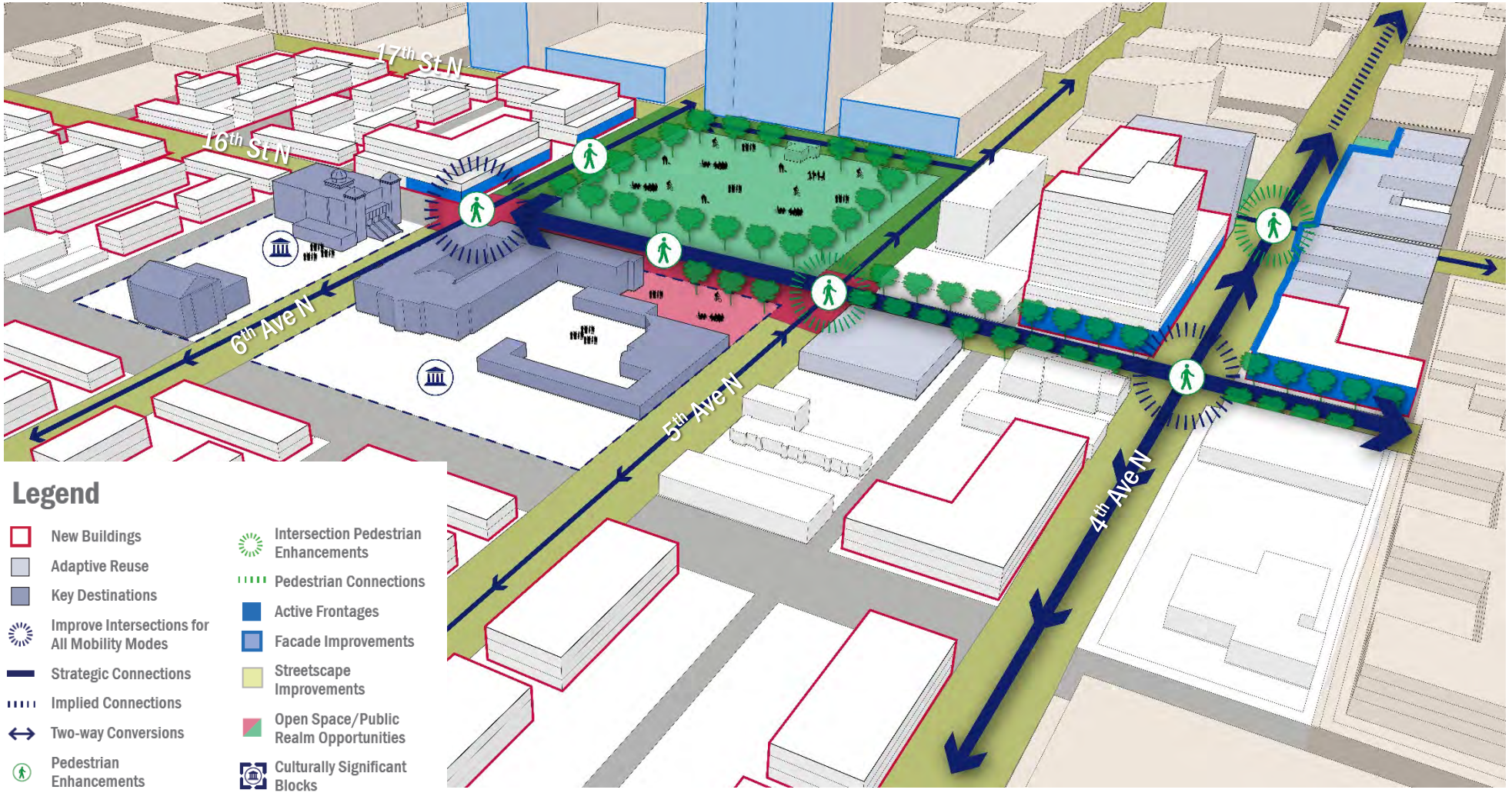
ONE WAY

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Civil Rights District | Key District Strategies



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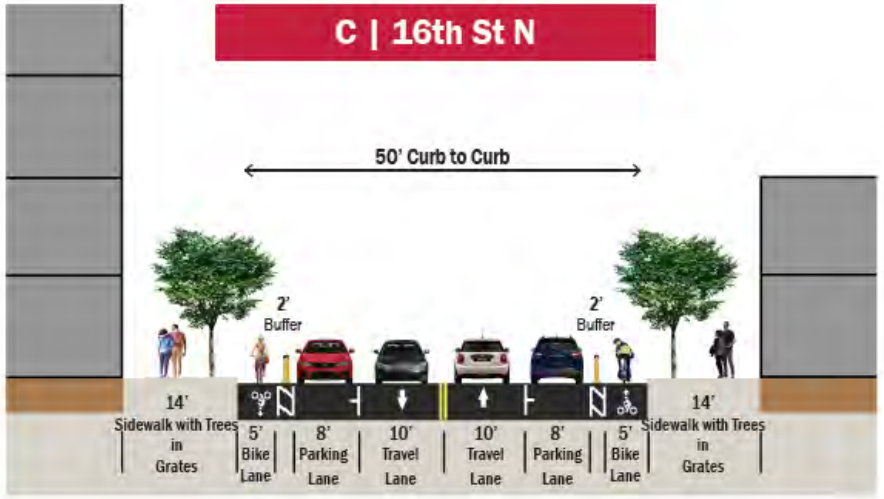
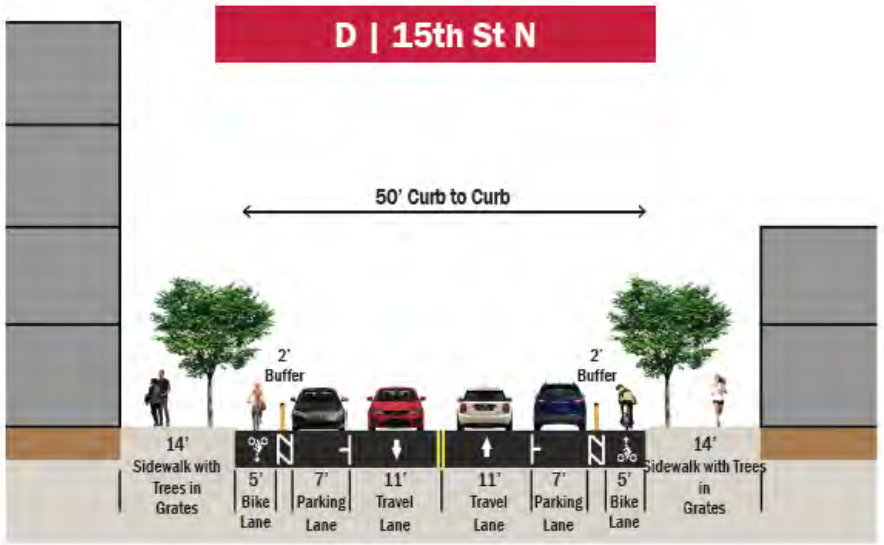
Civil Rights District | Street Improvements

Street Sections





Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Civil Rights District | Street Improvements

16th Street N Toolkit

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Civil Rights District | 16th St N & 6th Ave N

Existing

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Civil Rights District | 16th St N & 6th Ave N

Conceptual Vision

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Civil Rights District | Kelly Ingram Park

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Civil Rights District | Kelly Ingram Park

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Civil Rights District | 4th Ave N

Existing

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

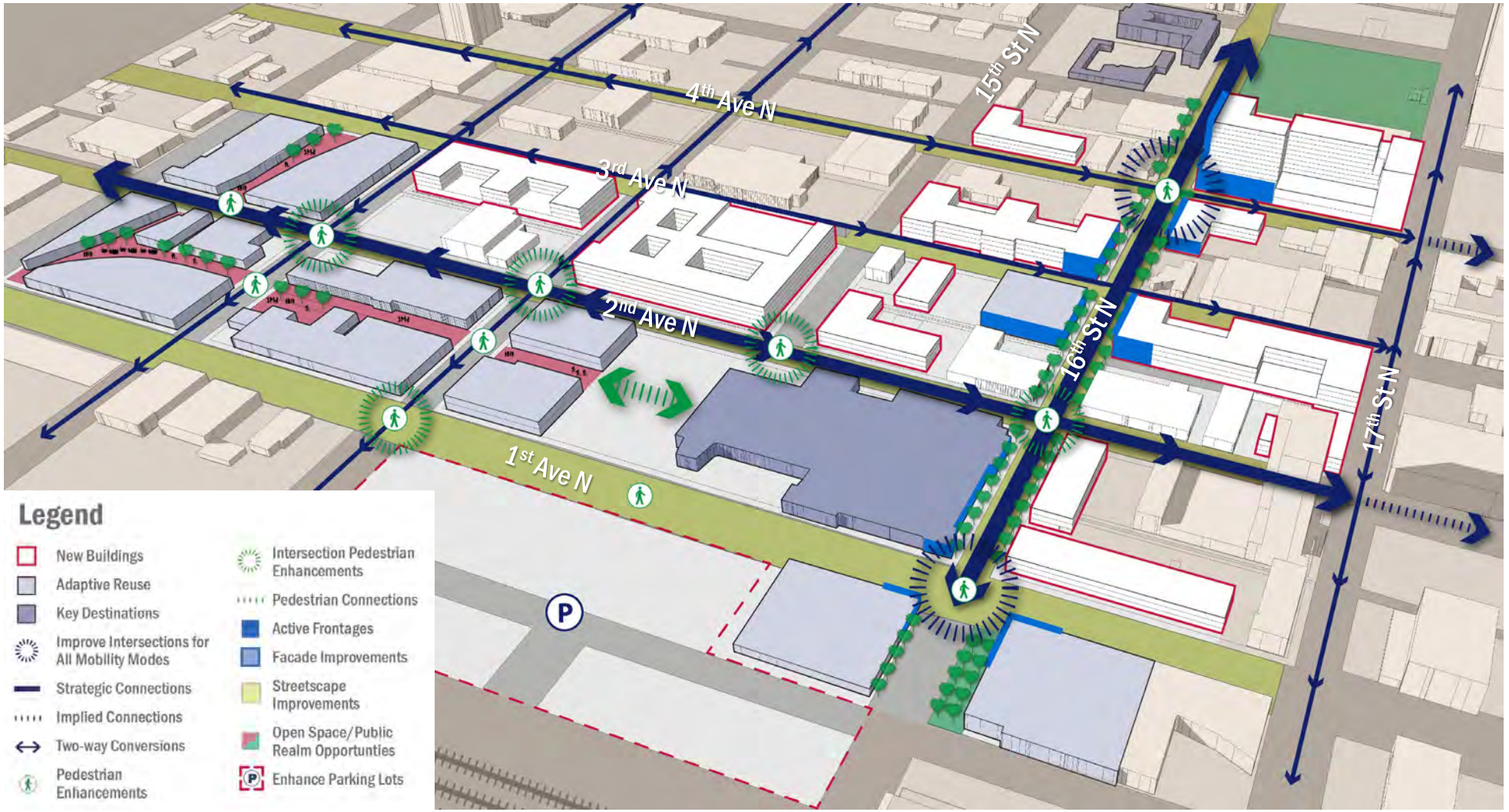
Civil Rights District | 4th Ave N

Conceptual Vision

INNOVATION DEPOT
REGIONS

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Innovation District | Key District Strategies



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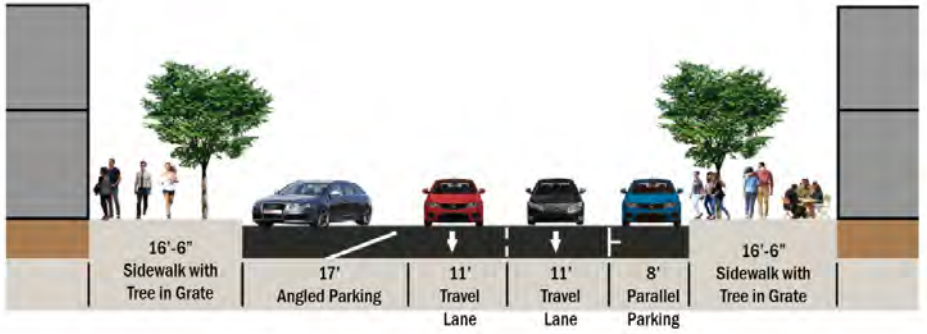
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Innovation District | Street Improvements

Street Sections

A | 13th Street (2nd Ave to 3rd Ave) & 2nd Ave (14th to 17th)

B | 13th Street (1st Ave to 3rd Ave) & 2nd Ave (12th to 14th)



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Innovation District | 16th St N & 1st Ave N

Existing

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Innovation District | 16th St N & 1st Ave N

Conceptual Vision

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Innovation District | Plaza Alley

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Innovation District | Plaza Alley

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Innovation District | 1st Ave N

Existing

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Innovation District | 1st Ave N

Conceptual Vision

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Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Innovation District | 3rd Ave N

Existing

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Innovation District | 3rd Ave N

Conceptual Vision

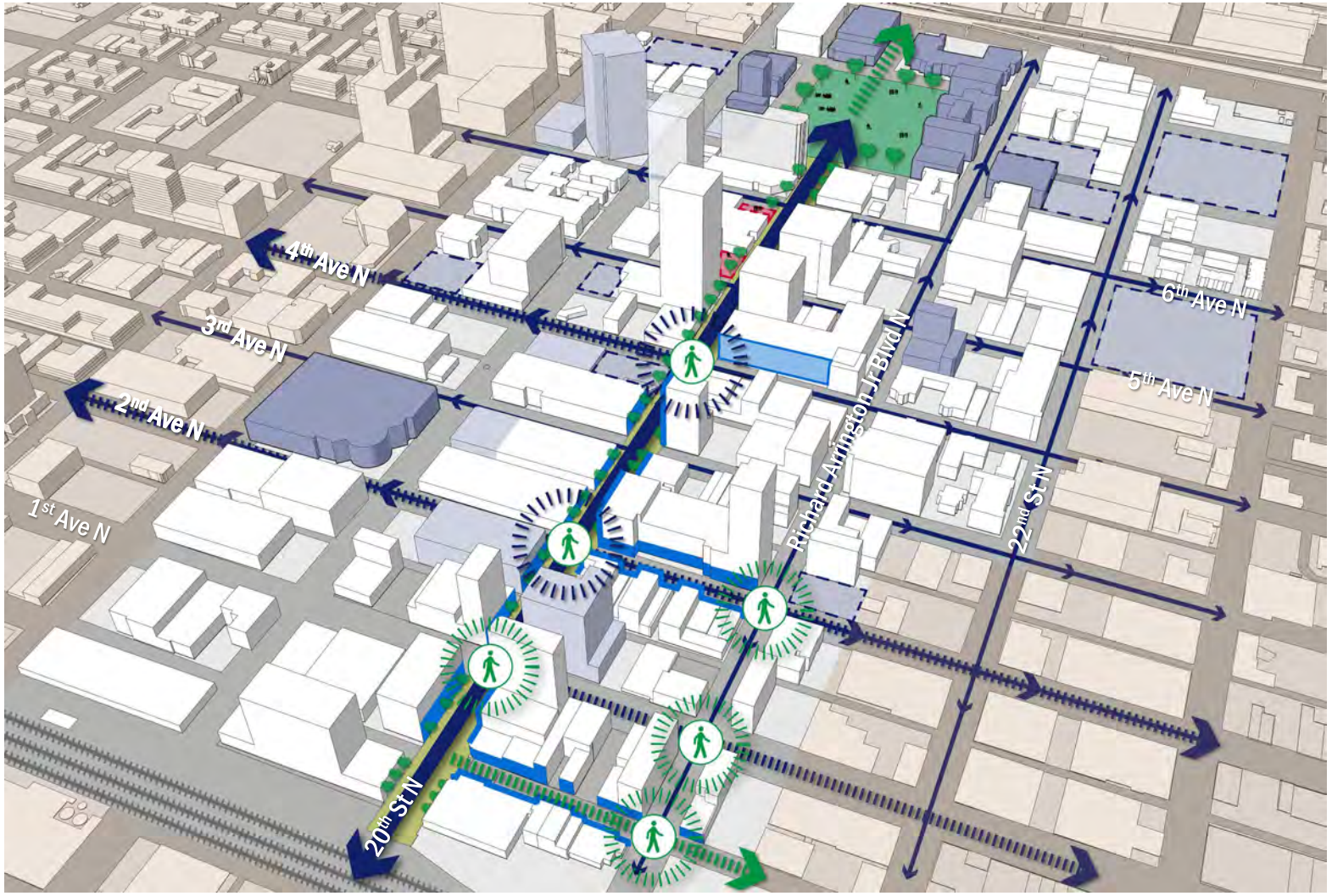
E

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

City Center Core | Key District Strategies

Legend

- Adaptive Reuse
- Development Opportunities
- Key Destinations
- Improve Intersections for All Mobility Modes
- Strategic Connections
- Implied Connections
- Two-way Conversions
- Pedestrian Enhancements
- Intersection Pedestrian Enhancements
- Pedestrian Connections
- Active Frontages
- Facade Improvements
- Streetscape Improvements
- Open Space/Public Realm Opportunities



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City Center Core | 20th Street Toolkit

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City Center Core | 20th Street Sidewalk

Existing

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

City Center Core | 20th Street Sidewalk

Conceptual Vision

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

City Center Core | 20th Street Innovative Mobility Options

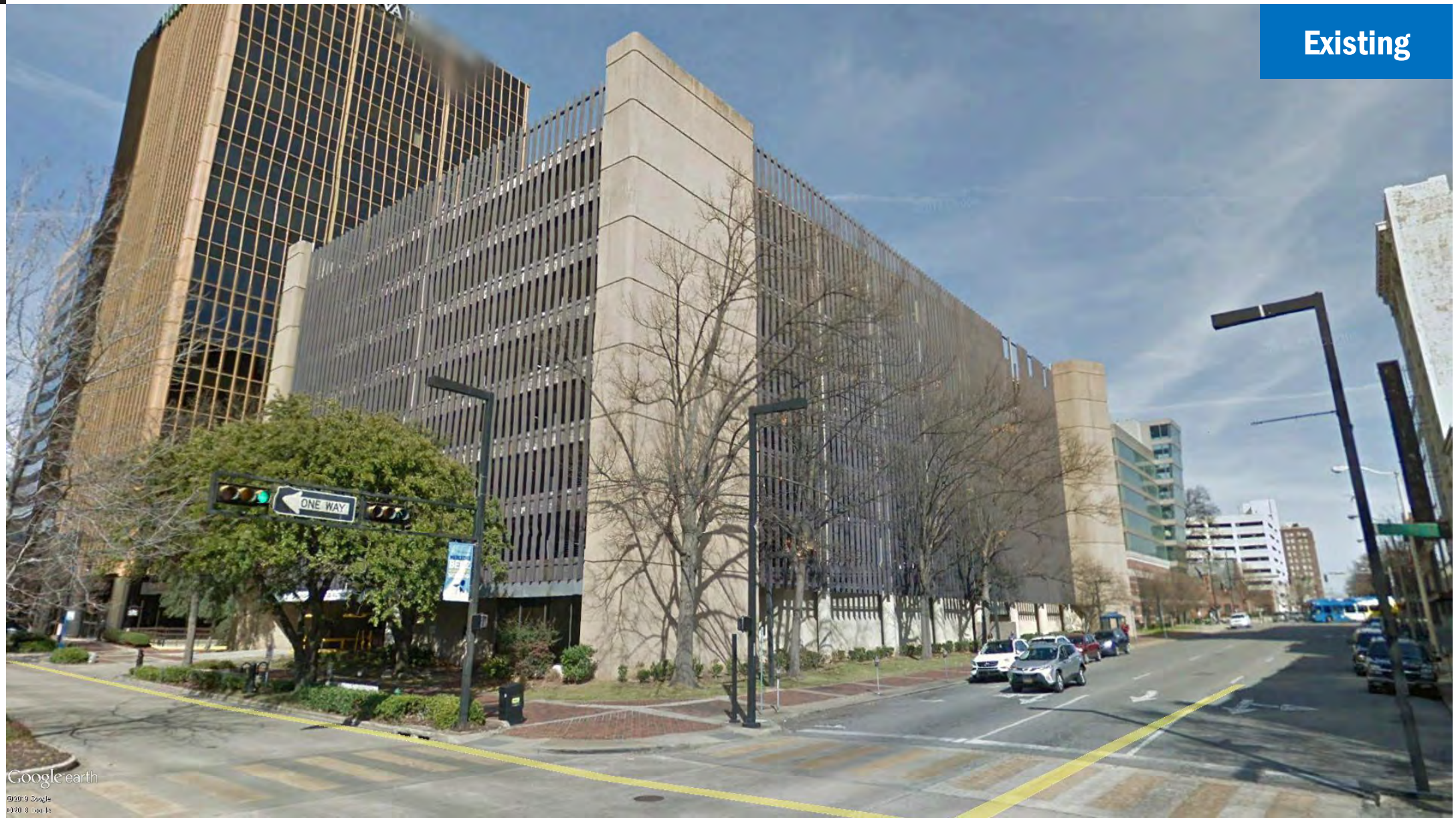
Existing

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

City Center Core | 20th Street Innovative Mobility Options

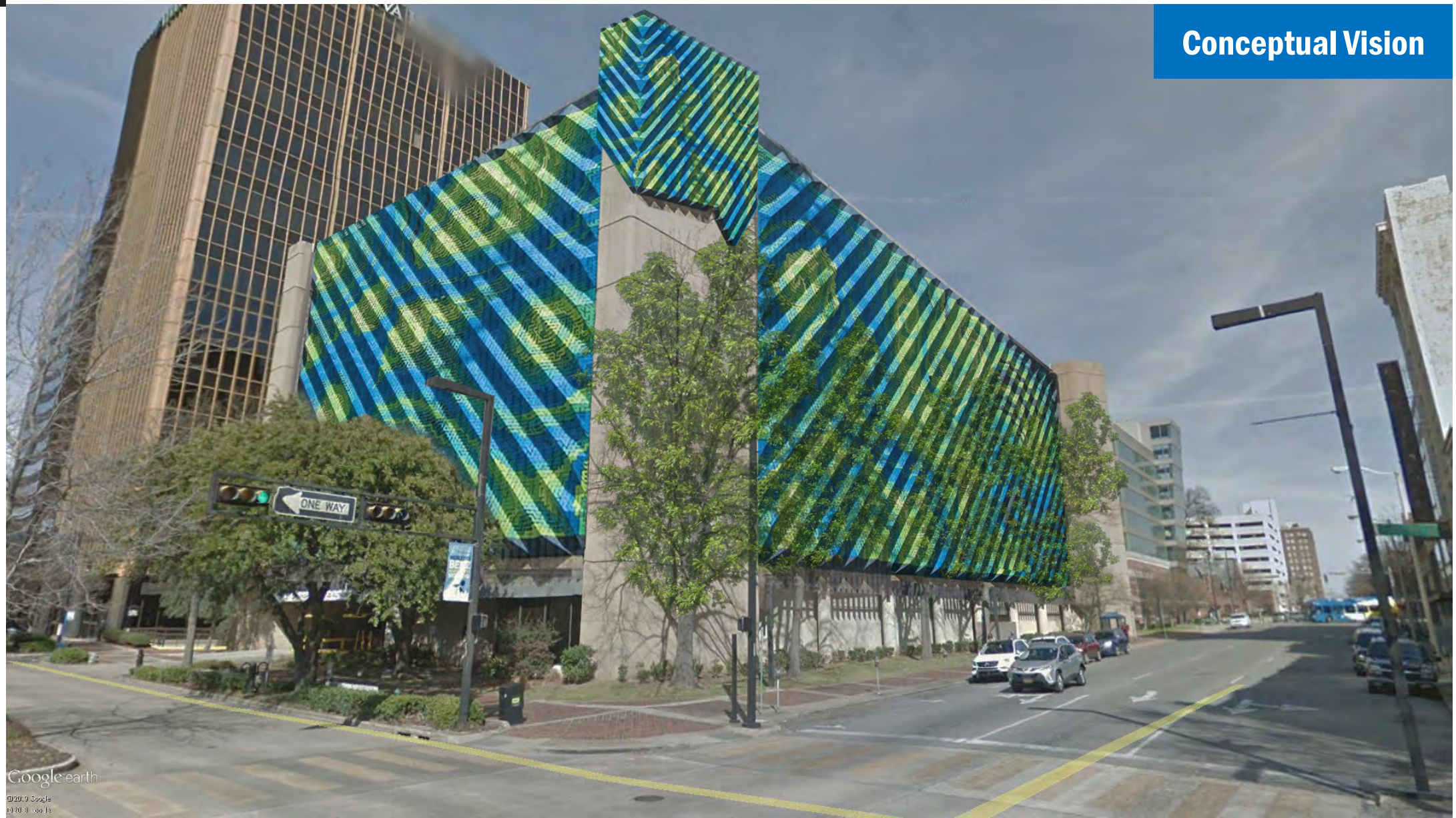
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

City Center Core | 20th Street Façade Activation



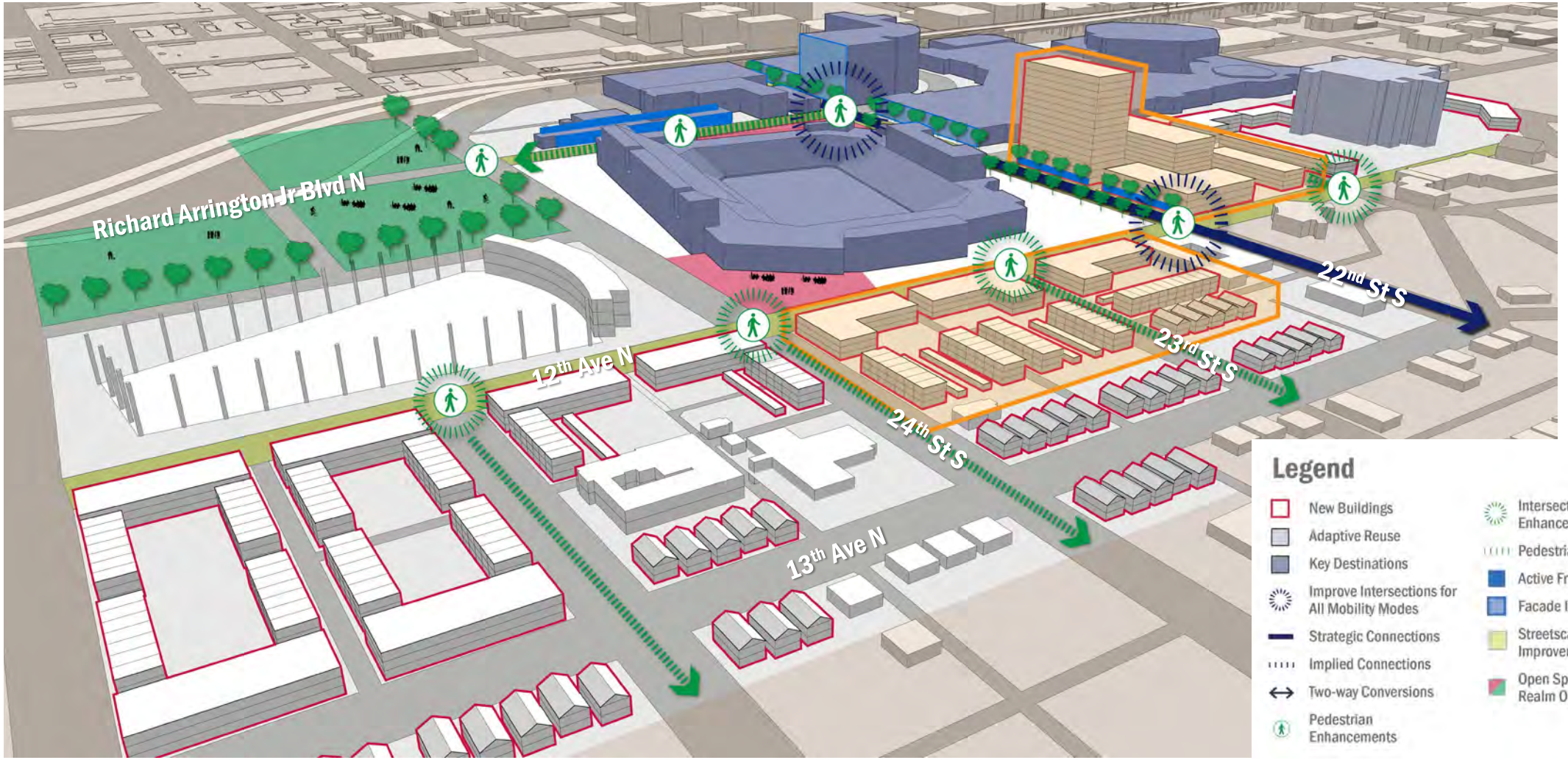
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

City Center Core | 20th Street Façade Activation



Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Uptown | Key District Strategies



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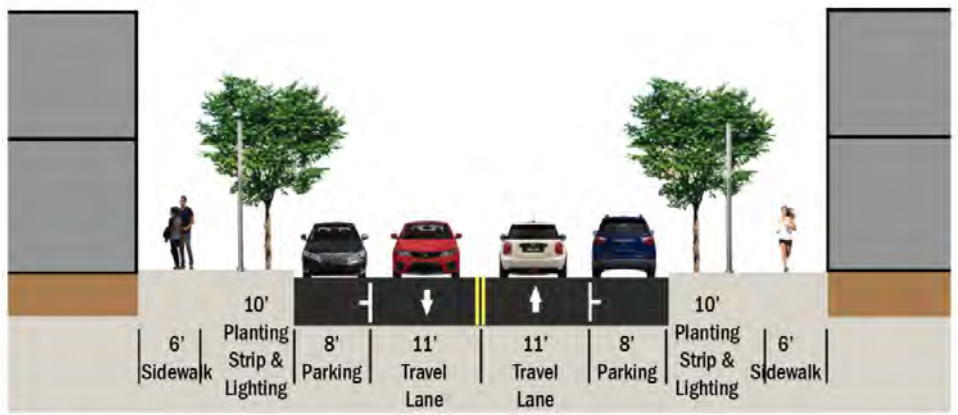
Uptown | Street Improvements

Street Sections

Key Plan

Existing | Typical Local Residential Street

A | Typical Local Residential Street



Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Uptown | 11st Ave N & 21st St N

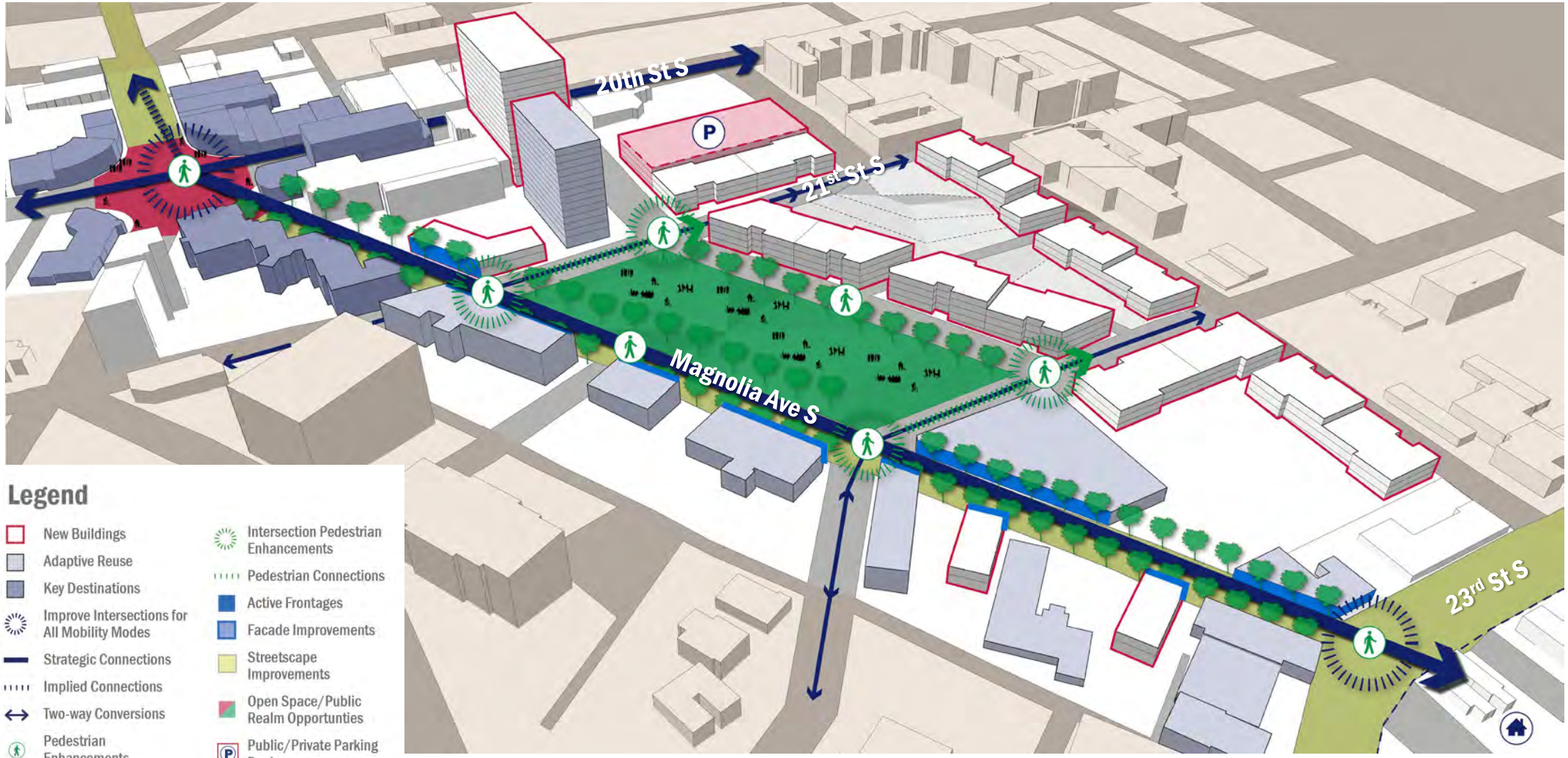
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Uptown | 11st Ave N & 21st St N

Conceptual Vision

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Five Points | Key District Strategies



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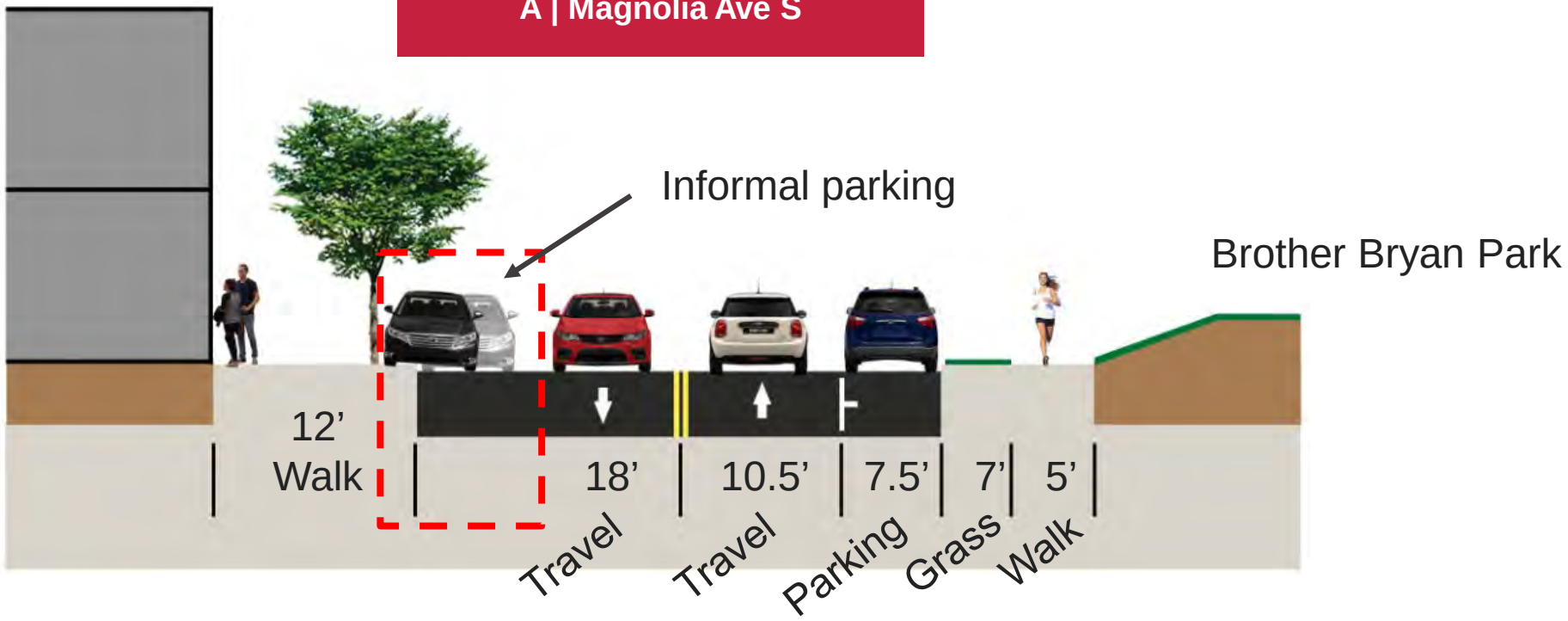
Five Points | Street Improvements

Street Sections

Key Plan

A | Magnolia Ave S



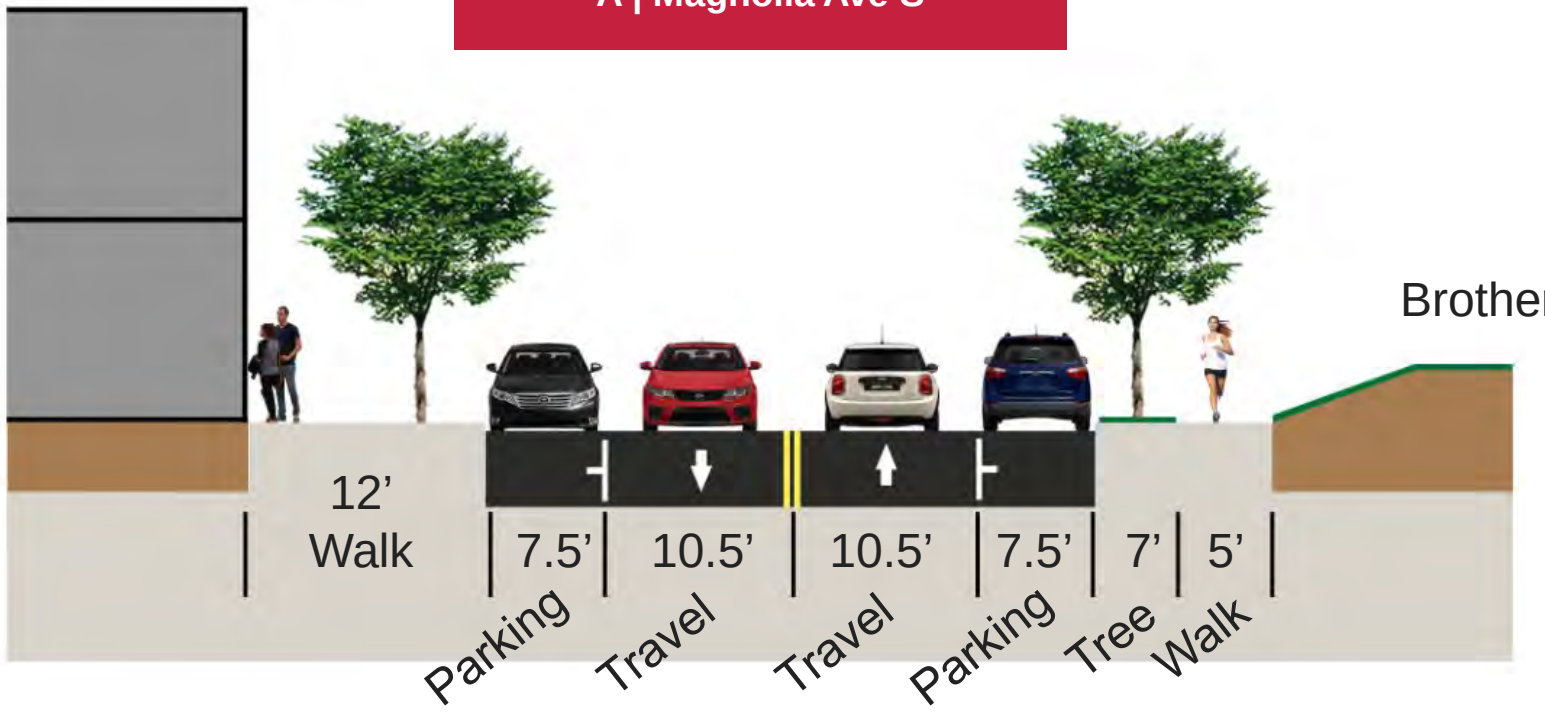
Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Five Points | Street Improvements

Street Sections

Key Plan

A | Magnolia Ave S



Brother Bryan Park

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Five Points | Magnolia Ave S

Existing

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

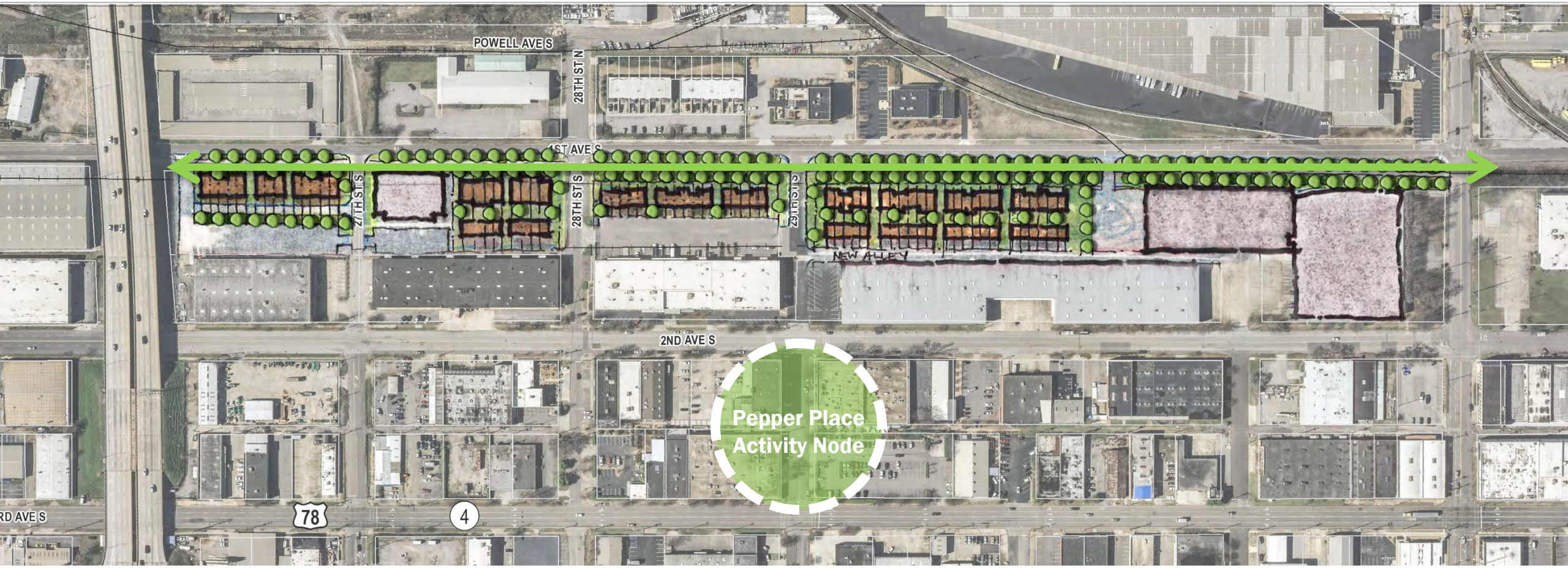
Five Points | Magnolia Ave S

Conceptual Vision

MARTIN BISCUIT CO.
iCANTINA

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Lakeview Neighborhood | 1st Ave S Infill Plan



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Lakeview Neighborhood | 1st Ave S

Birmingham City Center Master Plan

Lakeview Neighborhood | 1st Ave S

Conceptual Vision

Key Initiatives

For the next 10 years

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Key Initiatives

- Create a master public realm plan for the Civil Rights District that includes the renovation of Kelly Ingram Park
- Renovate/modernize the Birmingham Green/20th St N
- Convert streets back to two-way operations – prioritize 2nd/3rd/4th
- Activate empty/under-utilizied storefronts along 20th St N, 4th Ave N (west of 20th St N), and 2nd Ave N (east of 20th St N)

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Key Initiatives

- Build 600 units of workforce housing (80% of AMI and below) over 10 years
- Renovate Brother Bryan Park and install a new streetscape along Magnolia Ave S
- Install 5 miles of protected bike/scooter lanes
- Establish a creative placemaking program to spread temporary and permanent art throughout the City Center

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Key Initiatives

- Begin preparation for autonomous, connected, electric, and shared mobility
- Install a new streetscape along 15th Street N and S to connect the Civil Rights District and the Innovation District to Railroad Park and Regions Field
- Continue investments in Innovation economy jobs

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Key Initiatives

- Renovate Linn Park
- Focus incentives and leadership to encourage new housing and mixed-use development in the Core, the Civil Rights District, the Innovation Districts, and in Five Points South
- Complete the Rotary Trail connection to Railroad Park
- Eliminate aggressive panhandling
- Implement the Character Code to set best practices for new development

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Let’s get started!