



4TH ANNUAL

MIX, MINGLE  
& SHARE

WITH YOUR

DOWNTOWN  
NEIGHBORS





# *FORWARD*

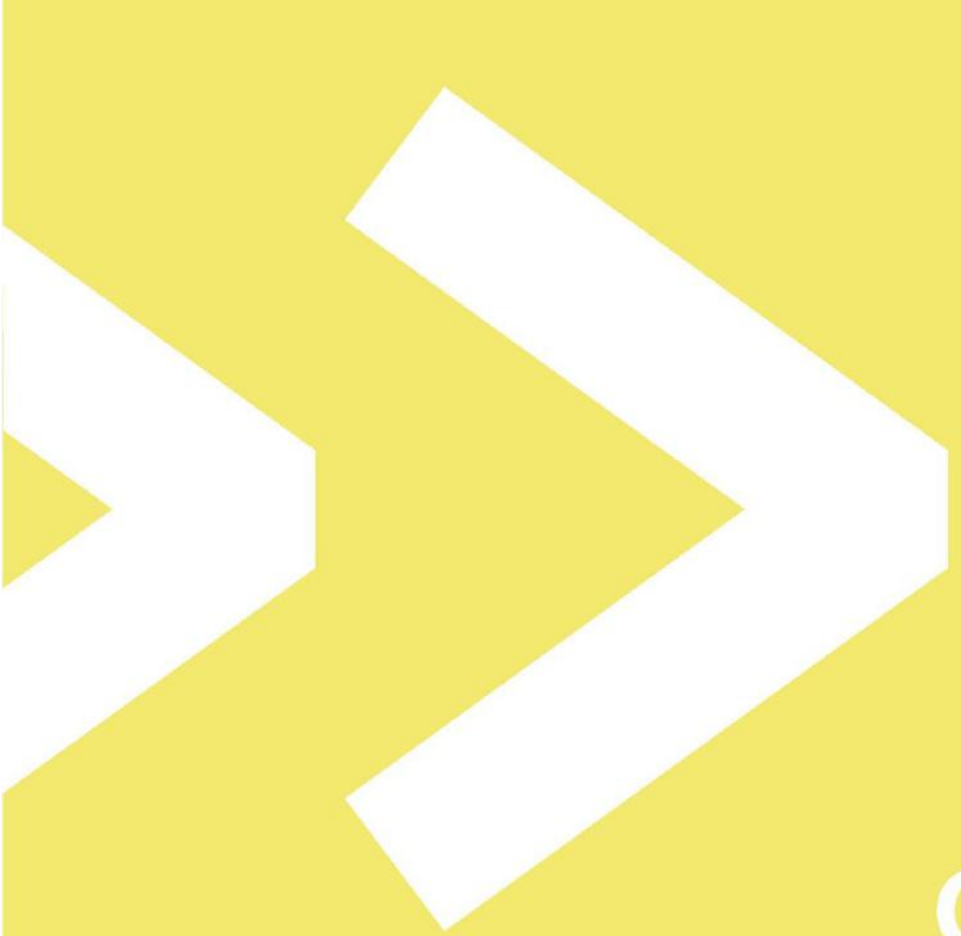
DOWNTOWN & RIVER ACTION PLAN >>



WHAT'S NEXT

FOR DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS?

AND THE RIVER CORRIDOR?



GOAL 2  
**CREATE A TRUE  
DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD  
THAT IS HOME TO A DIVERSE  
POPULATION**



## 2.2 SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT IMPROVE DOWNTOWN LIVING FOR EXISTING RESIDENTS & ATTRACT NEW DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS

Downtown Grand Rapids's most valuable asset is its people. As the Downtown population grows steadily and residents are turning districts and areas into neighborhoods, local leadership is tasked with ensuring that civic infrastructure, programs, and services are improving in step with this evolution. The following strategies should be considered to continue cultivating growth and encourage Downtown residents to put down roots.

### FOSTER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY TIES DOWNTOWN

The numbers of people who participated in the GR Forward process in various ways speak for themselves: Grand Rapidians are eager for opportunities to be a part of the future of Downtown Grand Rapids. Community members who participated in the process also spoke for themselves: at the public open house, public forums, and other engagement events, the planning team regularly heard individuals voice the need for continued community engagement and input beyond the horizon of the planning process itself. City leaders are encouraged to create regular and structural opportunities for the community to be a part of shaping the future of Downtown and the Grand River.





### >> Support efforts to establish a Downtown residents council

Many Grand Rapids neighborhoods have formalized civic groups to establish formal representation within city-level dialogues and leadership structure among neighborhood residents. Efforts recently begun to assemble a Downtown residents council should be supported in order to create more opportunities for community building and social interaction among Downtown residents, many of whom are living in disconnected pockets of the Downtown area; and establish a venue for community dialogue about change Downtown. Among the roles the council may decide to take on, it may consider ways of welcoming new residents, creating a communications infrastructure to facilitate information sharing specific to Downtown among residents, and ensuring that the views of Downtown residents are being represented in major decisions by Downtown leadership.

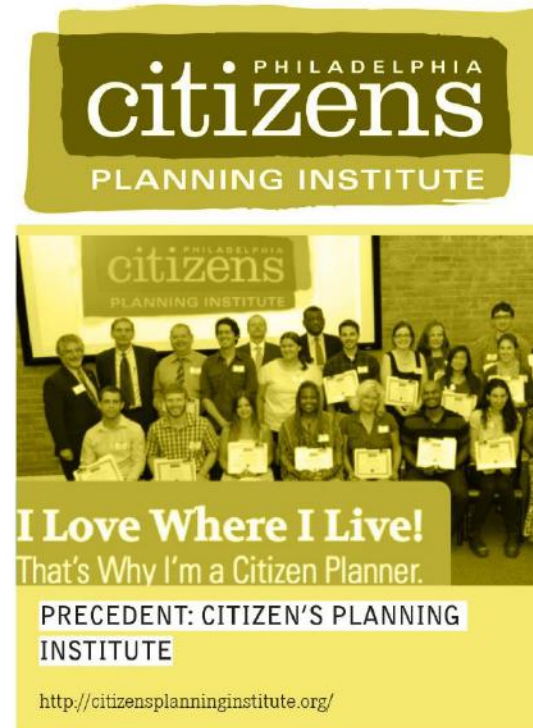
*“Having lived in Heritage Hill for 27 years and loving the “neighborhood.” I would love to see the same “community” environment shared with Downtown residents.”*

*- Public forum participant*


### >> Educate residents about ways to be engaged in discussions around change Downtown

Outside of a comprehensive planning process, how will Downtown residents be able to continue taking part in guiding change Downtown?

- > Once established, the regular meetings of a Downtown residents council would act as appropriate venues for the City and Downtown leadership to engage the community in opportunities for input in decisions and priorities when appropriate.
- > Though some long-time residents may be familiar with channels of civic engagement, Downtown’s growing base of new residents will need some orientation. Grand Rapidians care deeply about the future of their City and form online discussion boards around development, transportation and green space among other topics. The opportunity is to spread this knowledge further and empower others across the City to better understand, and engage in, local planning and design issues. One example of this kind of initiative is Philadelphia’s Citizen’s Planning Institute [CPI], the education and outreach arm of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. CPI offers courses and events designed to inform civic-minded community members about planning principles and municipal procedures around development and City decision making, including how to engage in opportunities for public input. Other cities pursue this idea outside of City government relying instead



on local non-profits and development agencies. The City, DGRI and their partners should consider tapping into local expertise to develop a program focused on citizenship education. More informed and engaged citizens would benefit Downtown and communities across the City as well. As with the Citizen's Planning Institute, accommodations must be made to ensure the broadest participation possible across incomes and neighborhoods. CPI tracks participation in their programs in order to identify and address gaps in their services.



A conversation about:  
New grocer, residences,  
restaurants, hotels &  
other construction

Downtown Residents Network presents:

# An Evening with Downtown Developers



DOWNTOWN  
GRAY'S BAY, INC.



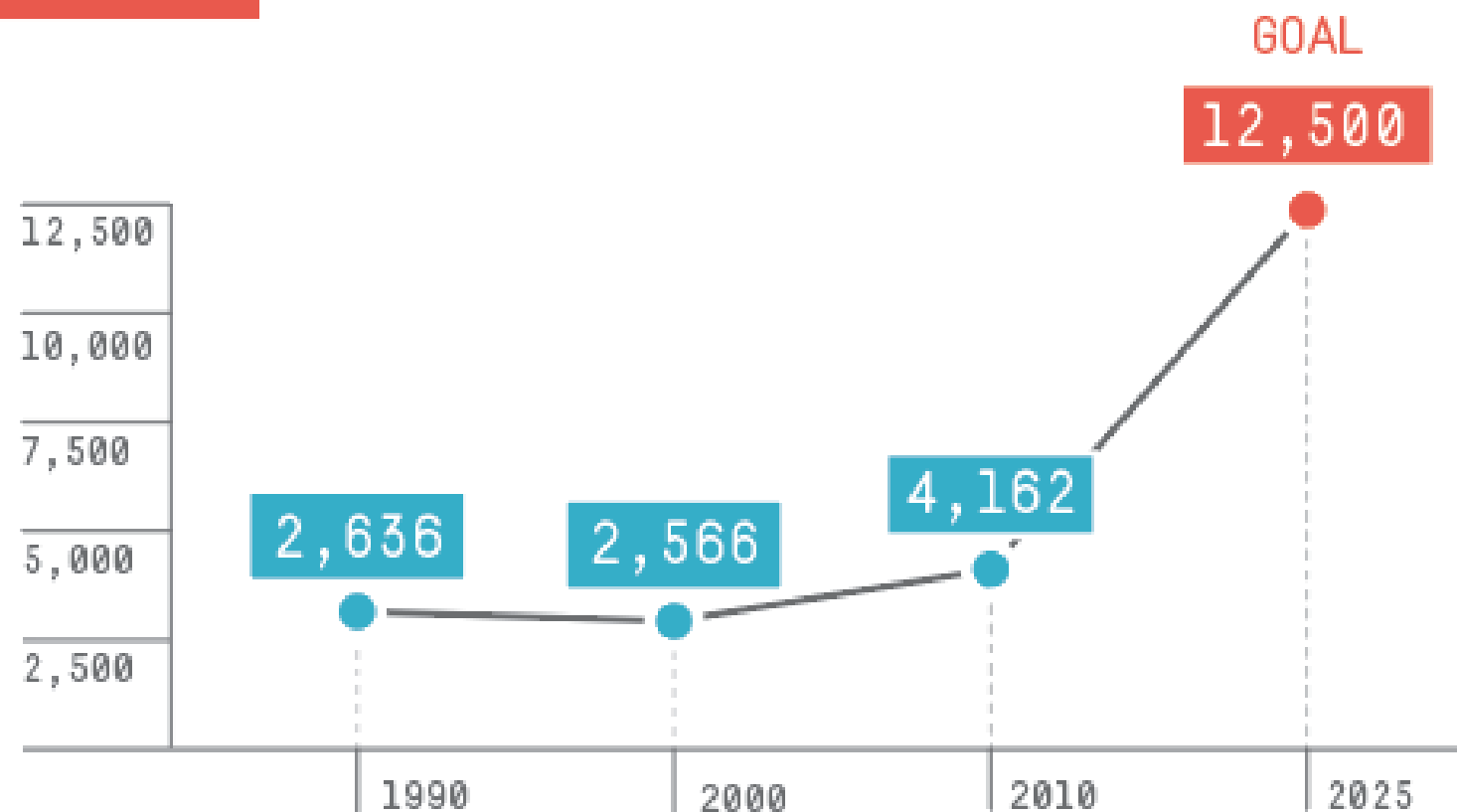
Downtown  
Residents  
Network



# RESIDENTS

(2010)

## POPULATION



The number of Downtown residents has nearly doubled during the past 20 years.



# Downtown Steering Committee

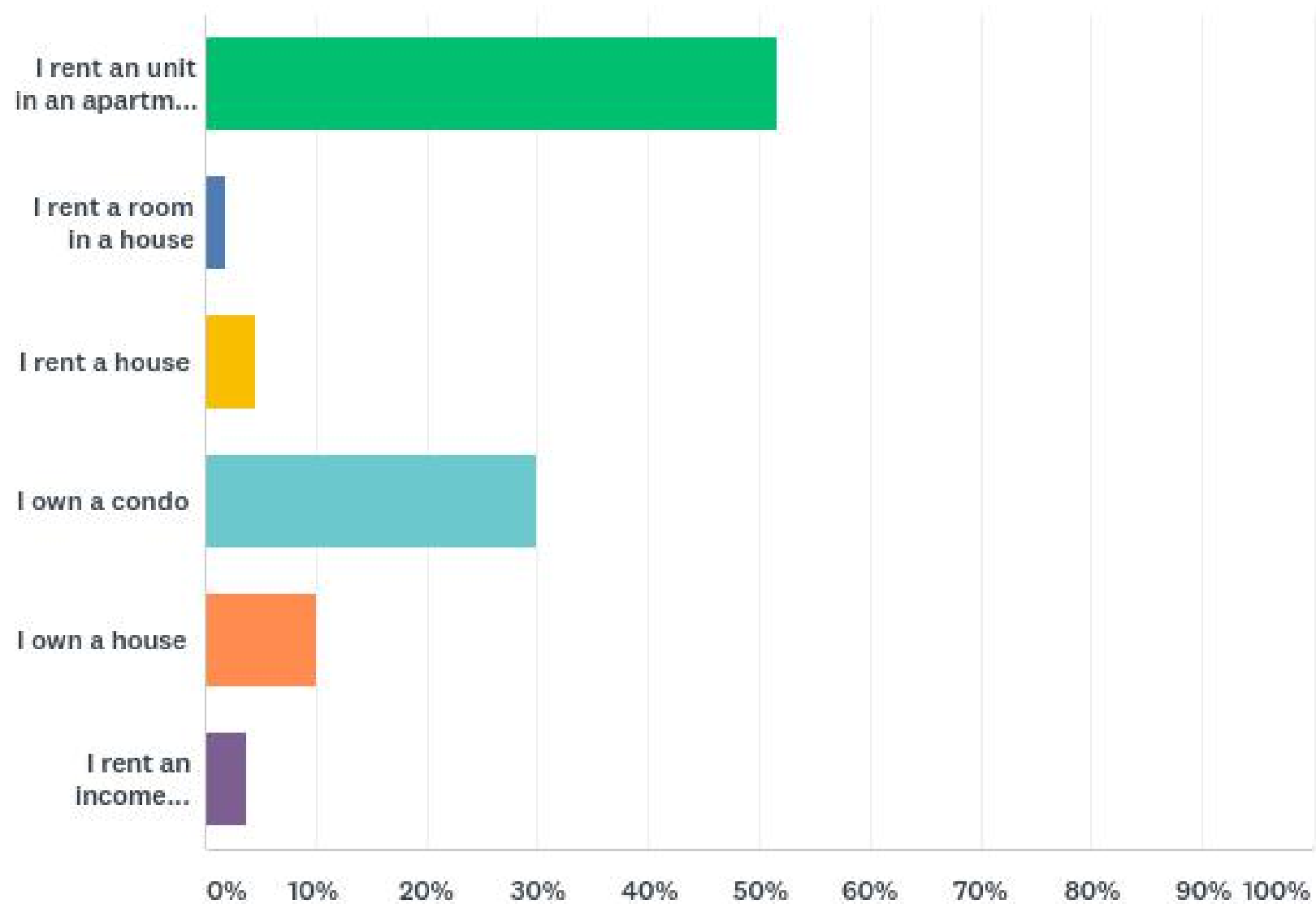
- **Angela Johnson**, Riverhouse
- **Sharon Porchia**, Weston
- **Carl Kelly**, Boardwalk
- **Chadd Dowding**, Prospect and Lafayette
- **Dave Hill**, Front Row
- **Ada Mbonu**, Hopson Flats
- **Eddie Tadlock**, Fitzgerald
- **Mark Tagen**, The Lofts
- **Michael Hoogeboom**, Tapestry Square
- **Erica Curry Van Ee**, Union Square
- **Kelli Jo Peltier**, Plaza Towers
- **Latesha Lipscomb**, Divison Park Avenue
- **Eugene Wilborn**, Weston
- **Laurie Craft**, Riverhouse
- **Maria Zache-Starkey**, Peck Building
- **Meegan Joyce**, River House



# Downtown Resident Survey

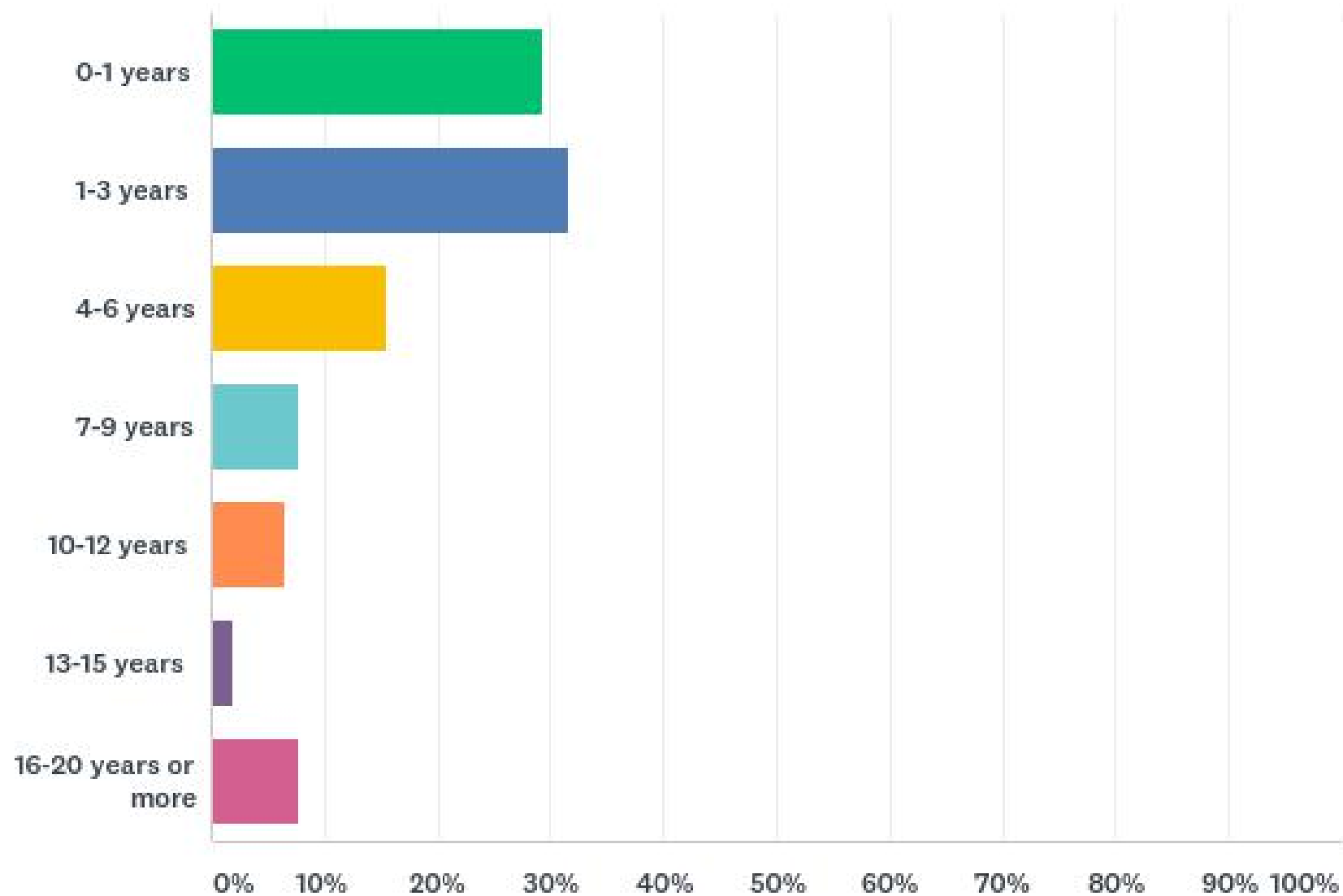
- Survey open January 20- March 12, 2018.
- 312 residents completed from Downtown and the near neighborhoods.
- Survey monkey sent out to 480 email list and some paper copies completed at Heartside Neighborhood Association Meetings and the Neighbor Knowledge Exchange (1/30).

## Q4 Please describe your current home:

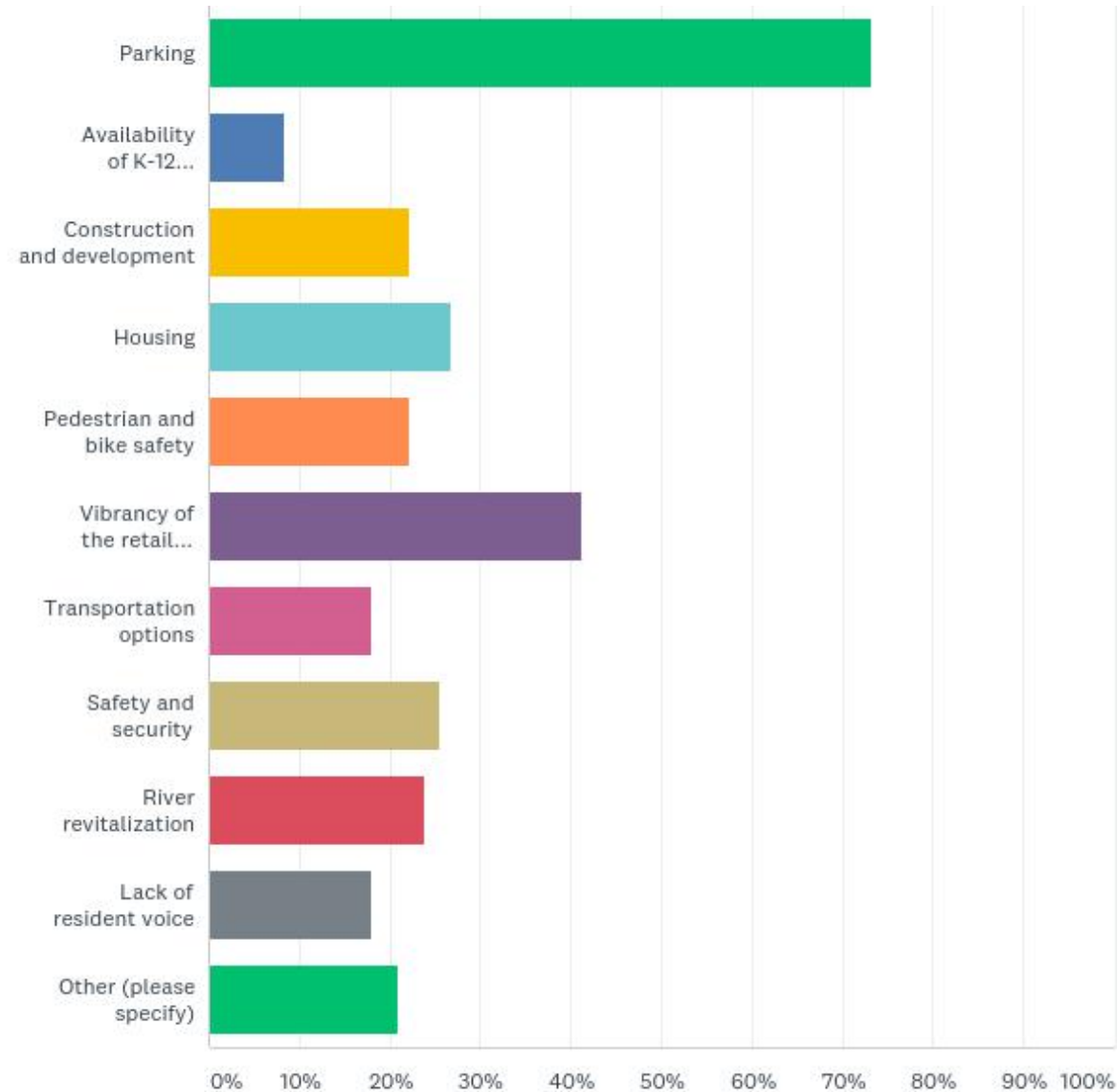




## Q6 How long have you lived Downtown?

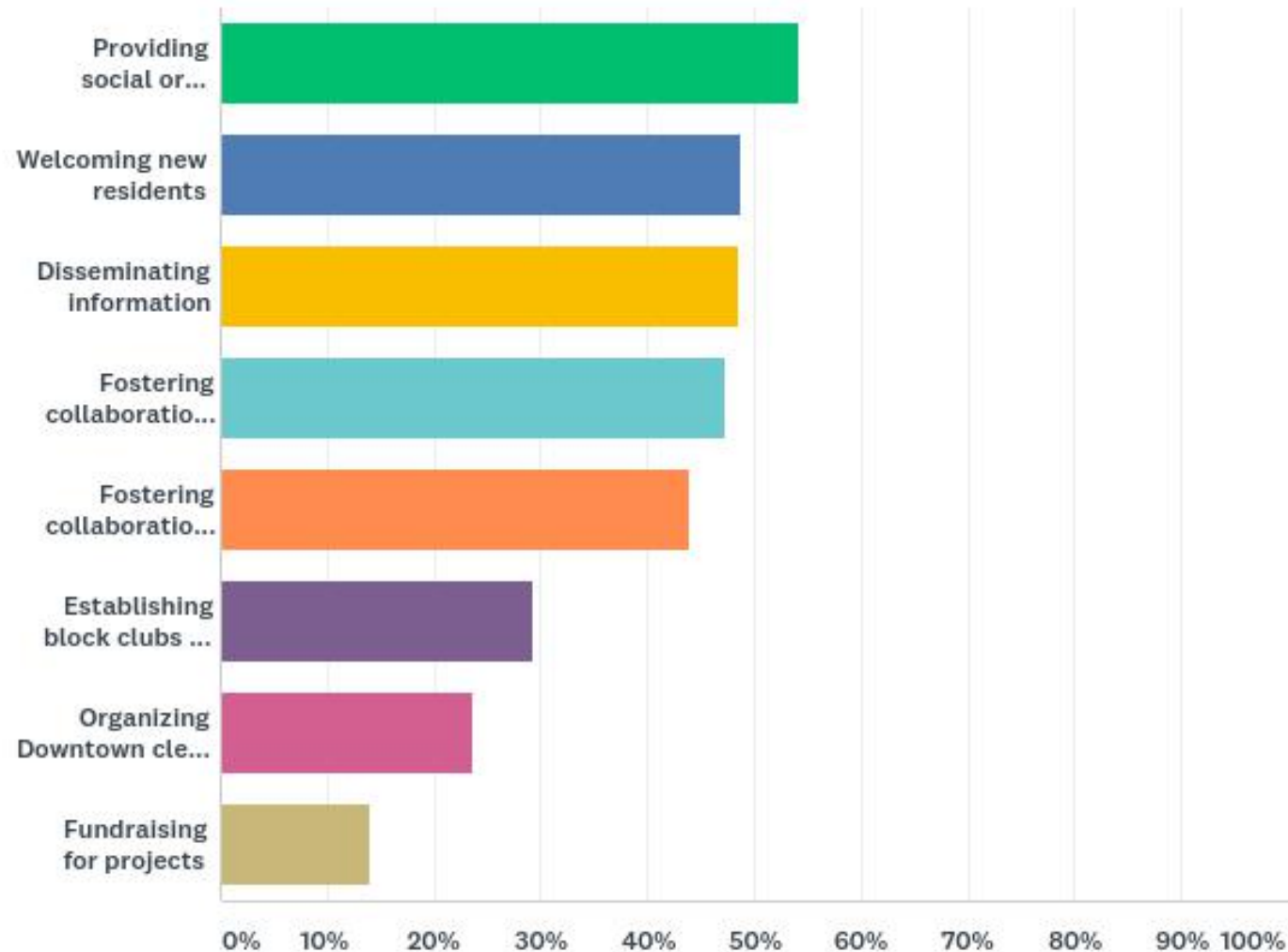


## Q15: What do you see as the main issues impacting Downtown residents in 2018?





## Q16 If there were an organization or association for Downtown Residents, what activities or outcomes should it work to accomplish?

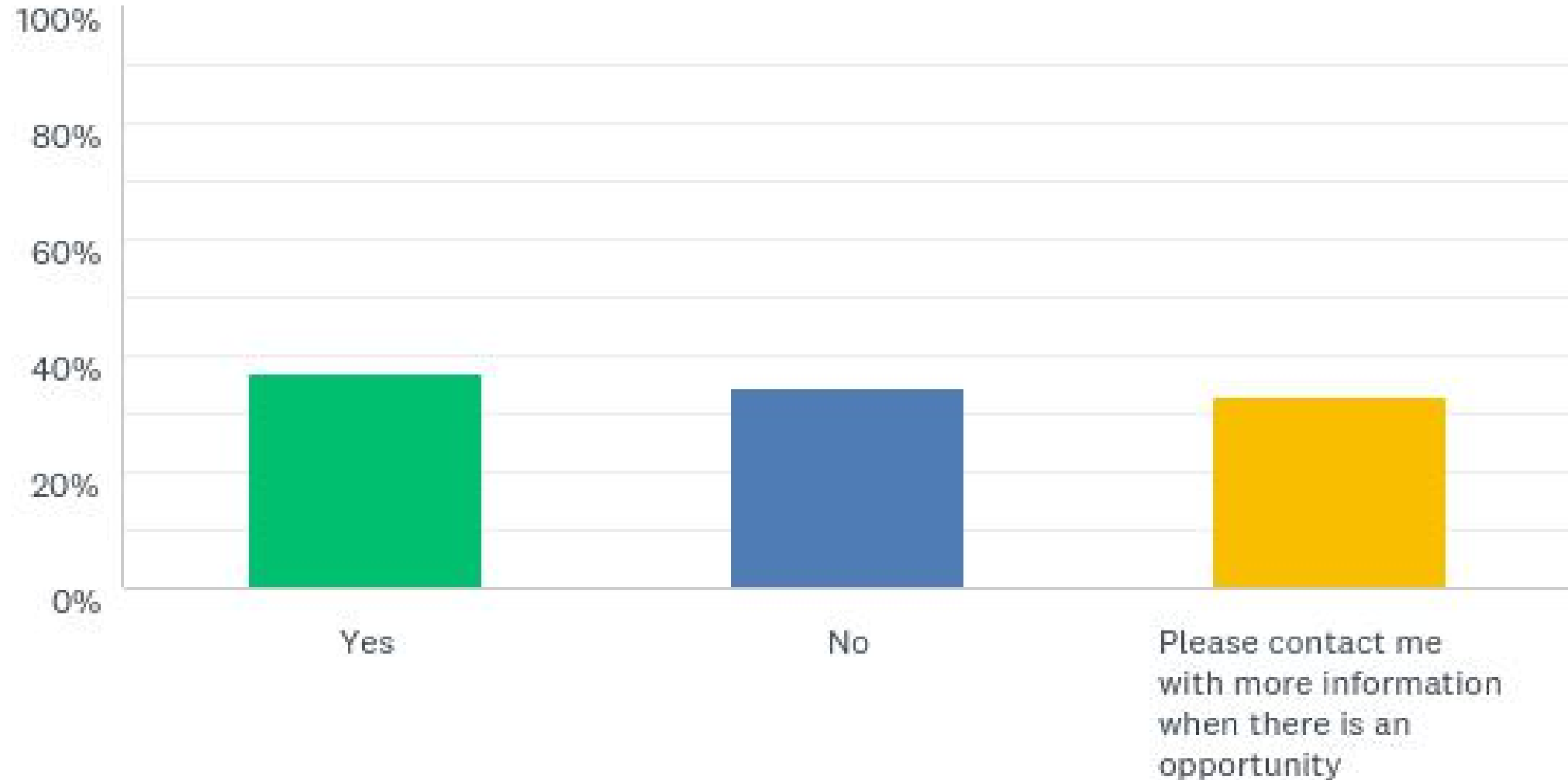


**Q17 In your opinion, what changes would you like to see in Downtown Grand Rapids to improve quality of life for residents?**





## Q22: Are you interested in participating in a resident organization to prioritize and work on Downtown Resident issues?



# The Process

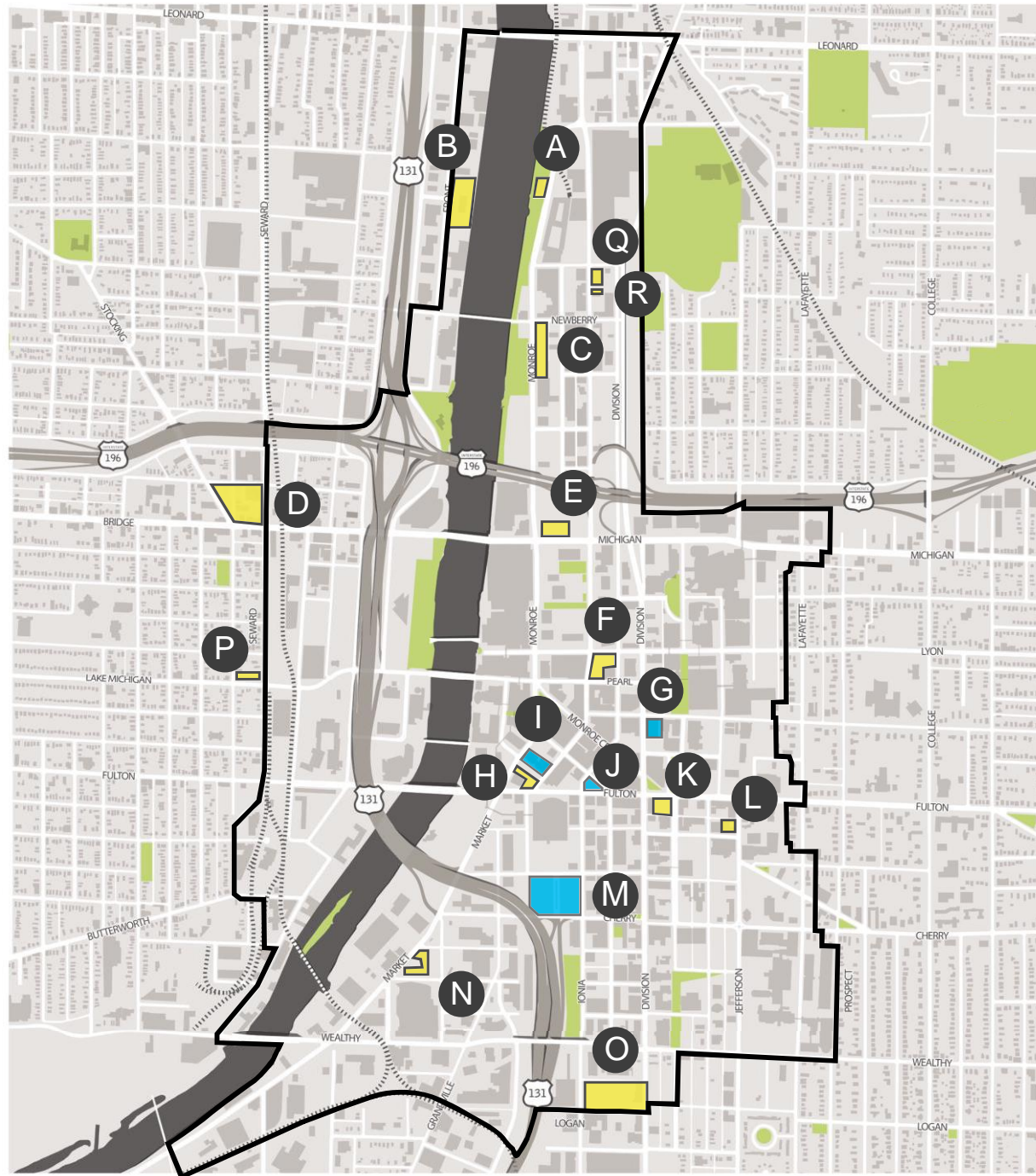
- Research and Data
- Scenario Planning
  - No growth, slow growth, high growth
- Structure
- Mission, Vision, Values

# Research

- Resident survey
- Housing analysis
- Scan of organizations and associations
- Focus group discussion with existing neighborhoods



# Downtown Development

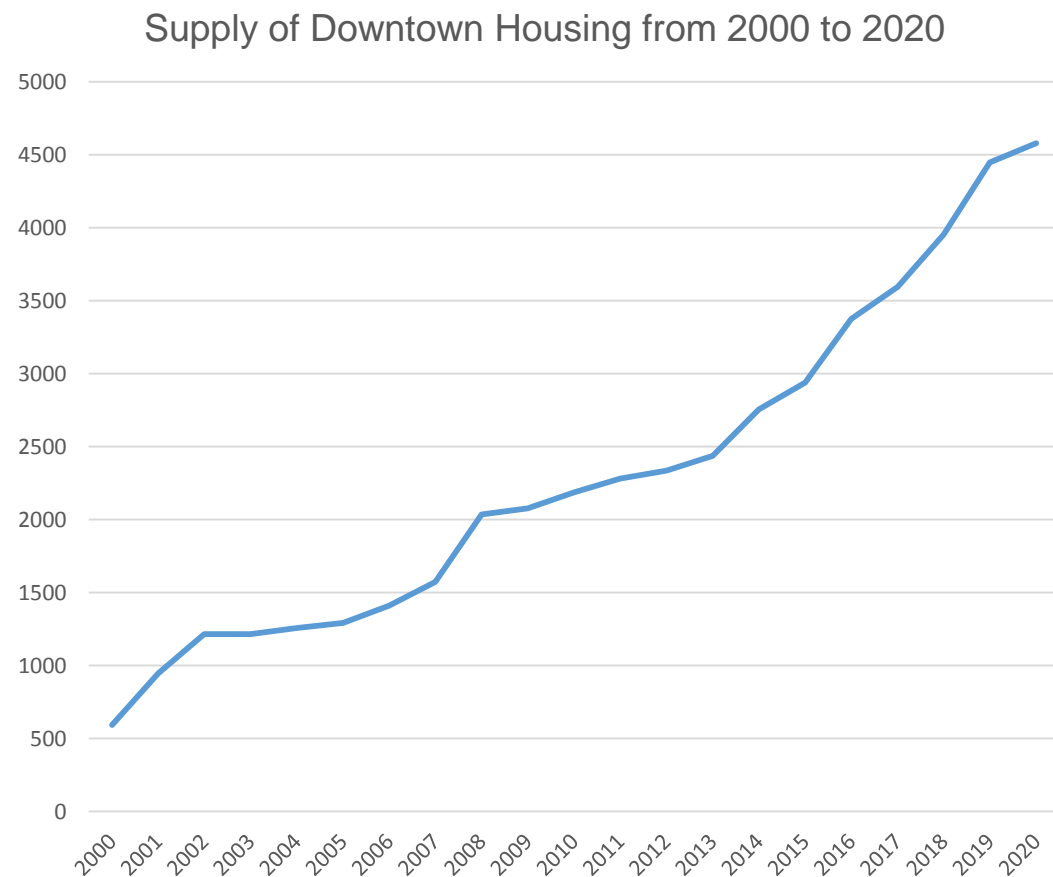


- A. 1001 Monroe NW- completed
- B. 936 Front Ave NW
- C. Embassy Suites
- D. Bridge Street Market
- E. MSU Research Center- completed
- F. WNJ Tower / Hyatt Place
- G. 56 Division Ave
- H. Venue Tower- completed
- I. 50 Monroe / AC Hotel
- J. 10 Ionia NW
- K. 20 E. Fulton- completed
- L. 25 Jefferson Ave- completed
- M. Studio C! Development
- N. 234 Market Ave
- O. Ionia and Logan Surface Lot- completed
- P. 601 Lake Michigan Dr
- Q. 840 Ottawa Ave
- R. 822 Ottawa Ave- completed
- S. 601 Bond

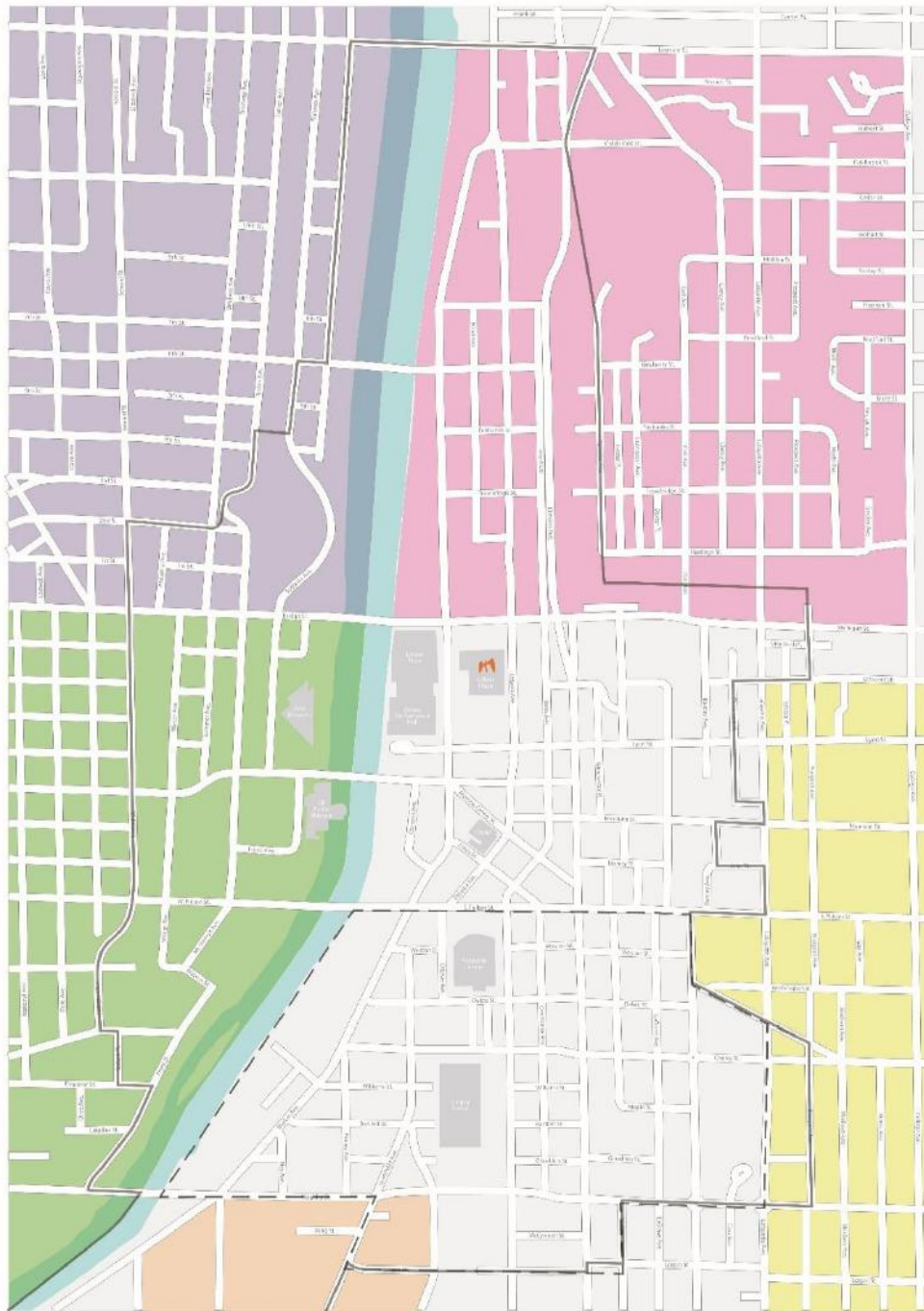
- Under Construction
- Proposed/ Planned

# Downtown Housing Numbers

Year	Total New Units	Total Supply
2000	138	594
2001	351	945
2002	271	1216
2003	0	1216
2004	42	1258
2005	35	1293
2006	118	1411
2007	163	1574
2008	461	2035
2009	42	2077
2010	111	2188
2011	94	2282
2012	55	2337
2013	99	2436
2014	320	2756
2015	183	2939
2016	436	3375
2017	219	3594
2018	360	3954
2019	494	4448
2020	132	4580

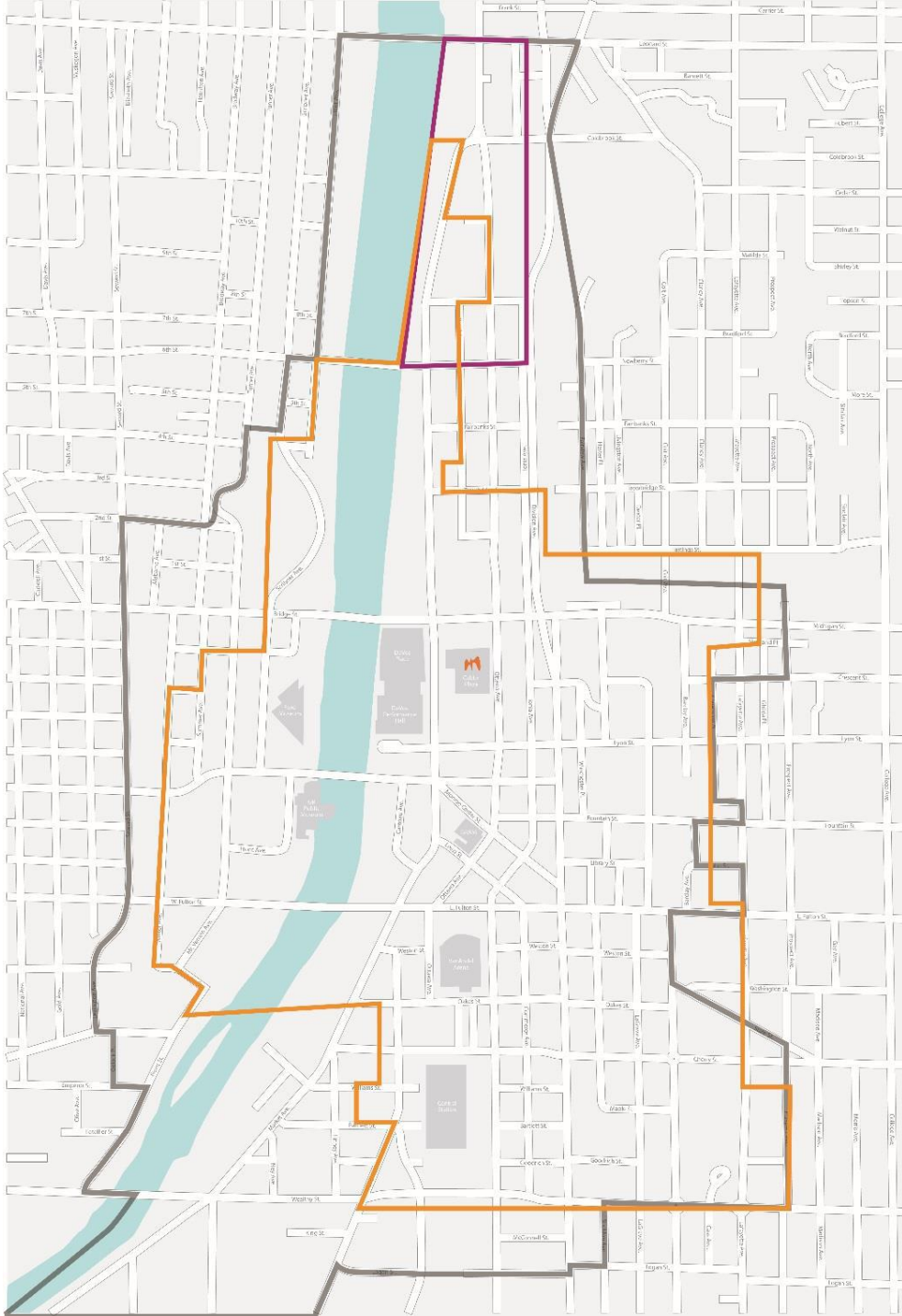


# Neighborhood Organization Map



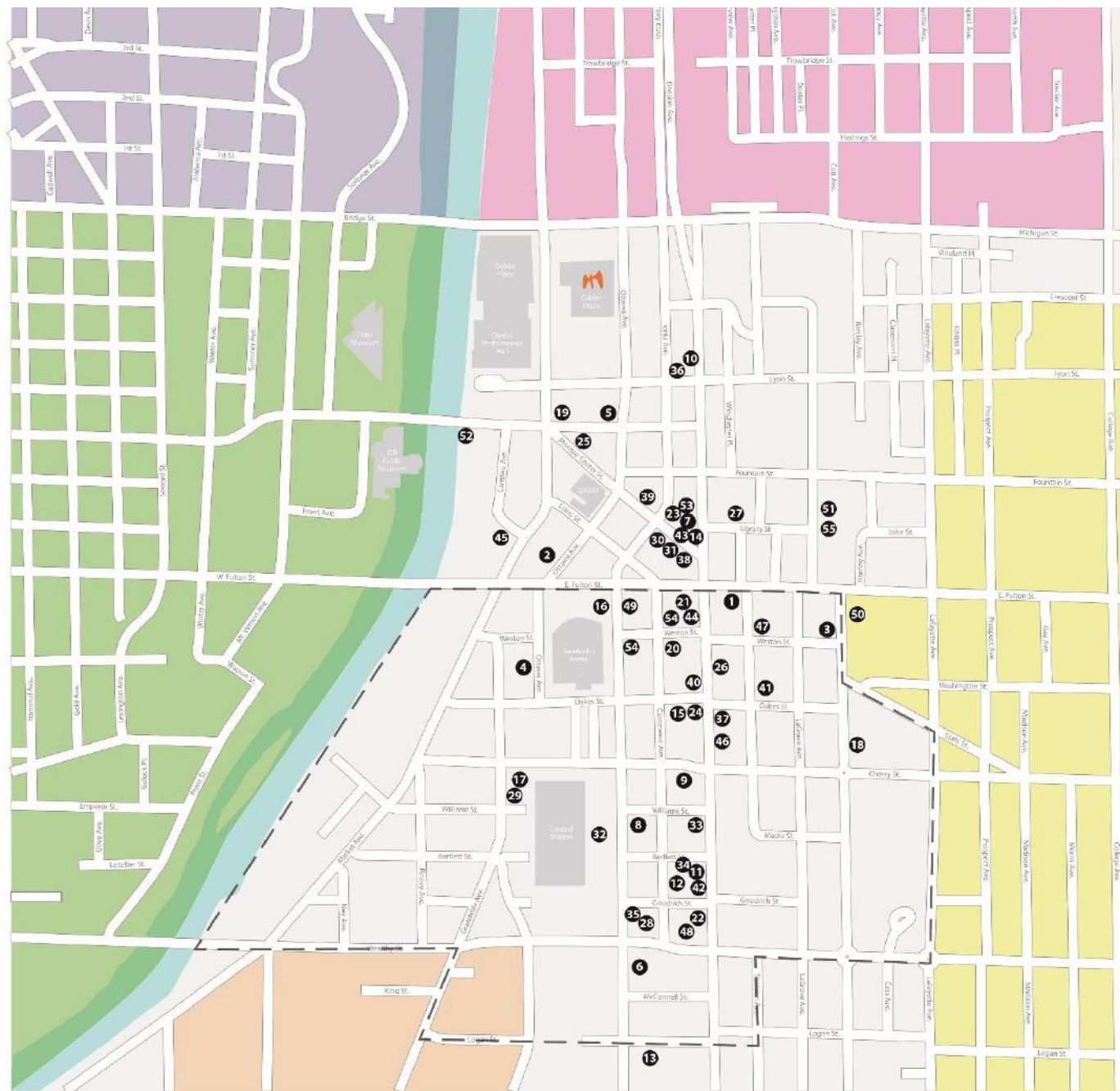
- Heritage Hill
- West Grand
- JBAN/SWAN
- Belknap Lookout
- Roosevelt Park
- Heartside
- Downtown Development Authority





# Economic Development Tool Map

-  Downtown Improvement District
-  Monroe North TIFA
-  Downtown Development Authority



- Heritage Hill
- West Grand
- JBAN/SWAN
- Belknap Lookout
- Roosevelt Park
- Heartside

# Scenario Planning

- Driving Forces and Uncertainties
  - Economics, Political, Technological, Societal
  - Who will call downtown home in 10 years?
  - What type of resident organization will represent people living downtown?
- Developed Three Scenarios
- Key take-aways: nimble/flexible, gateway, partnerships, funding, need



# Where we are now?

- Structure
  - Desire for nonprofit group that represents unrepresented areas (may start as a joint venture)
  - Affinity group or network for people that identify as downtown resident but may already be in a neighborhood
- Mission, Vision & Values

# How can you help?

- Complete a comment card with your ideas for key goals, issues or projects you think a Downtown Resident Organization should take on.
- Share your ideas with Steve, Annamarie or a steering committee member.
- Consider if you have time to lend to help us populate our board when the organization begins later this year.
- Email Annamarie [abuller@downtowngr.org](mailto:abuller@downtowngr.org)



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