GR FORWARD

DOWNTOWN & RIVER ACTION PLAN >>



WHAT'S NEXT

FOR DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS?

AND THE RIVER CORRIDOR?

GRABB – October 2015

Funders and Partners









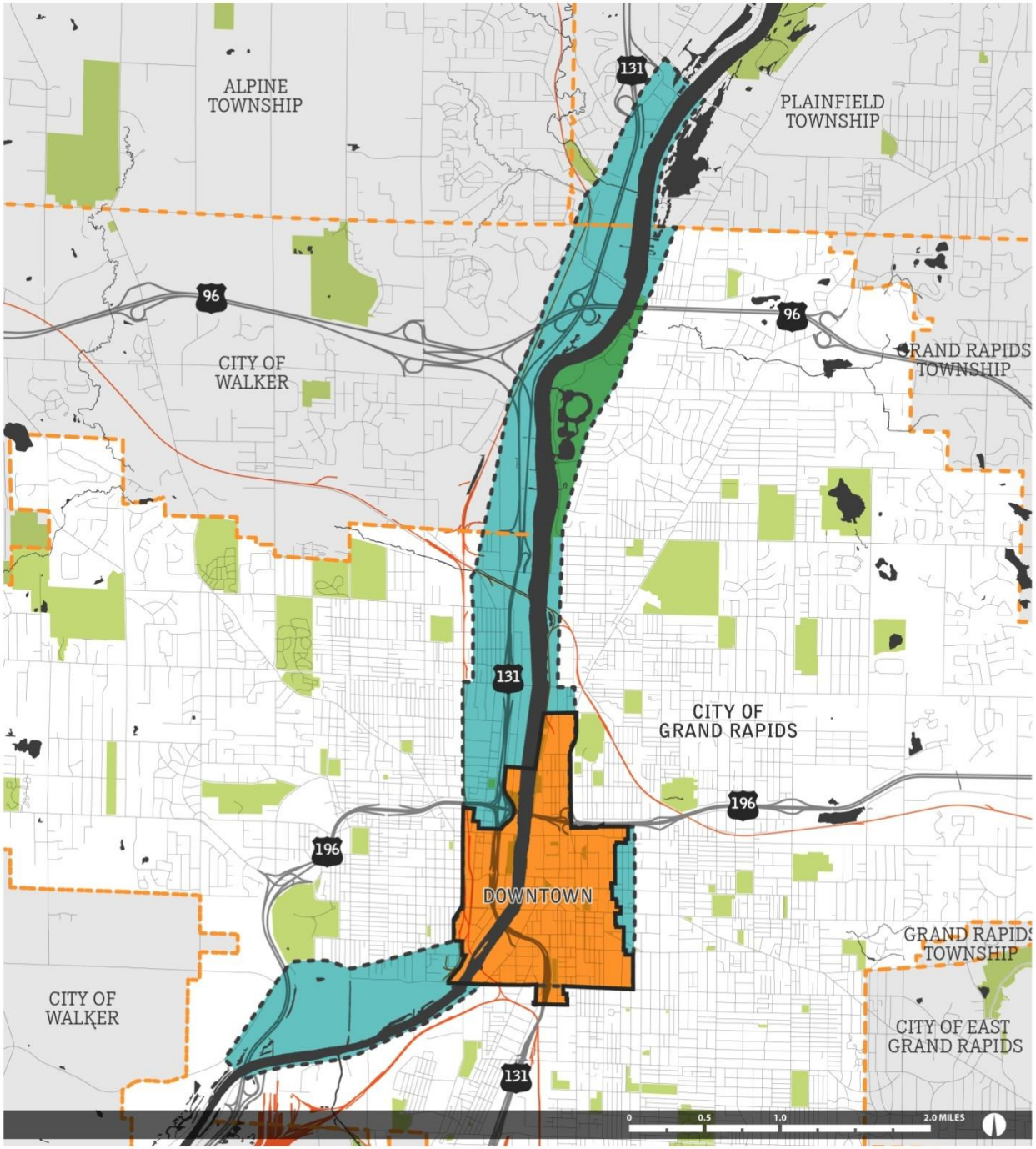








STUDY AREA



RAIL

HIGHWAY

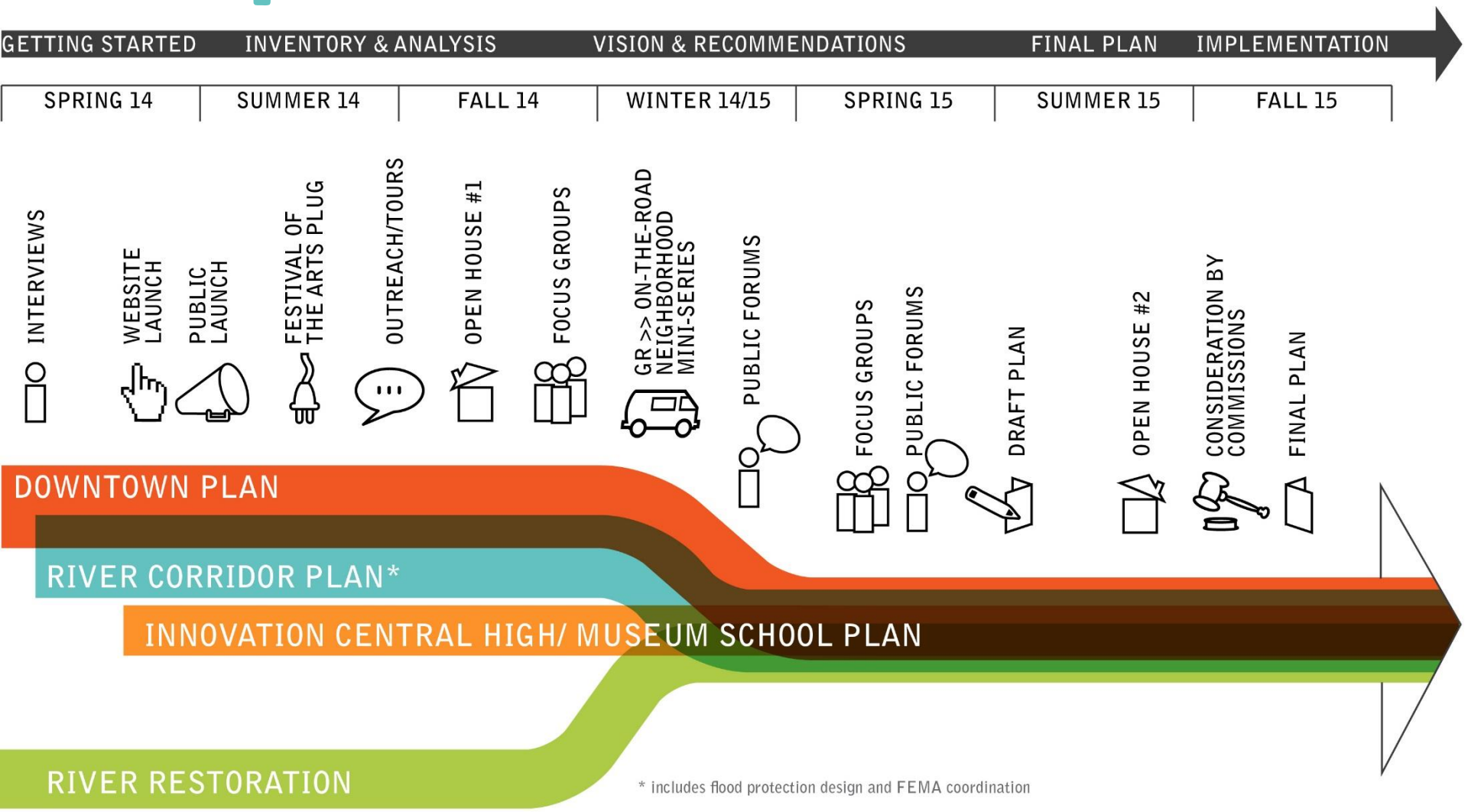
STREETS

CITY / TOWN BORDER

RIVER STUDY AREA

DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA

the process



Over 4,000 people engaged






GR FORWARD



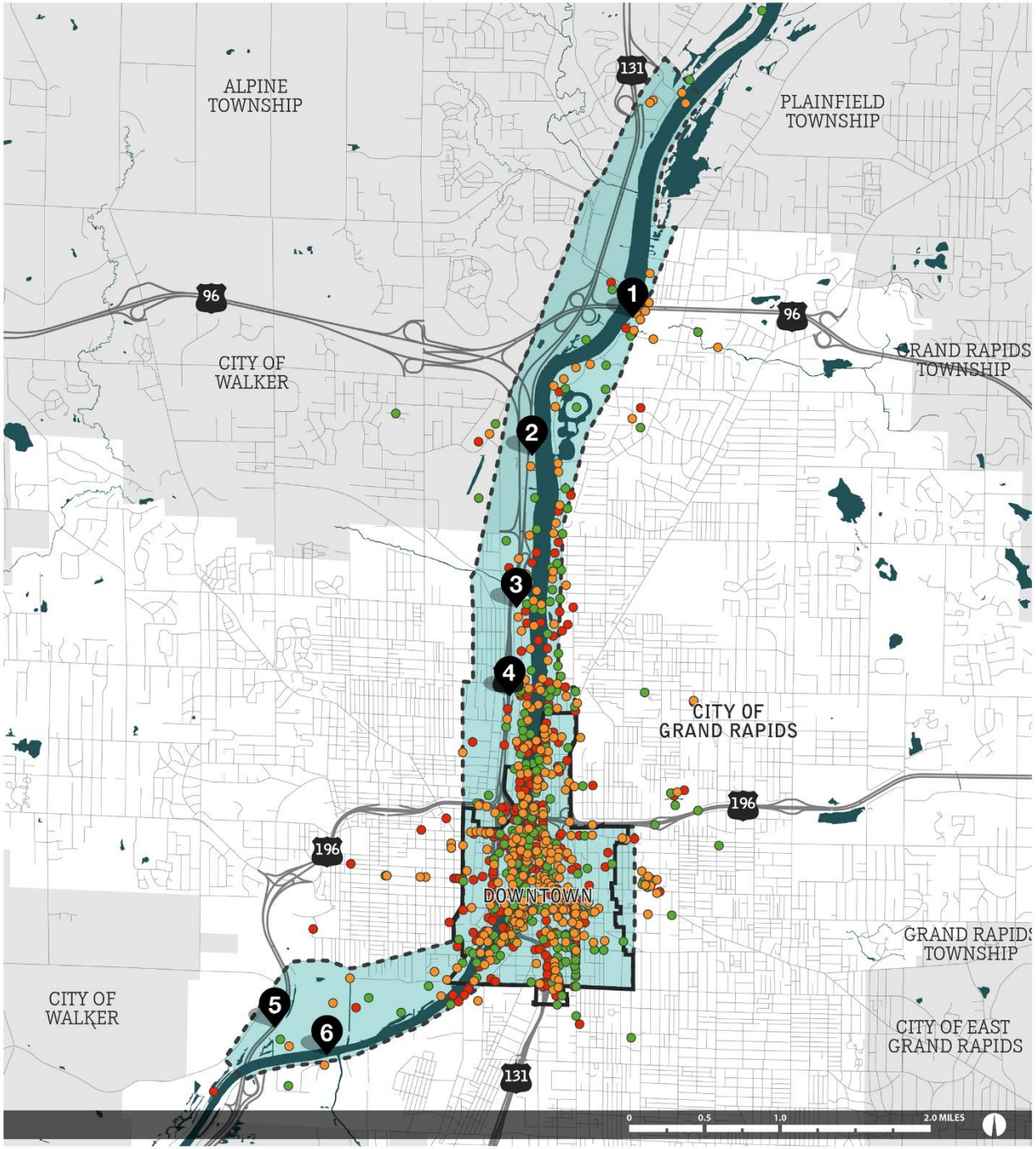

RIVER
BOARDWALK


>> MAP OUR FUTURE


GR FORWARD




IF YOU HAD ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE DOWNTOWN
TODAY
WHAT WOULD IT BE?
IF YOU HAD ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE DOWNTOWN
TOMORROW
WHAT WOULD IT BE?



IDEA. INSIGHT. BARRIER

1

"Boathouse for rowing, kayaking, and canoing, accessible to White Pine Trail and Veterans Home."

2

"The Grand near Riverside Park is a top 5 location for boating in the country. Grand Rapids is on shortlist for National Masters Championships. City could easily host an event."

3

"The west edge of the river must be public space - should connect to West Side neighborhoods."

4

"Extend river promenade on west bank up to Leonard. Develop a mixed-use urban village of destination retail, restaurants, and entertainment that faces the river."

5

"Combine Millennium Park with Butterworth Landfill to create a huge urban nature preserve."

6

"This part of Market connects to the Kent Trails but is currently dangerous for bikes and pedestrians."

THUMBS UP

TOP 5 - PICTURES or CATEGORIES you like best?



PROTECTED BIKE LANES



UNDERPASS LIGHTING



COMMUNITY GARDENS



FOOD TRUCK RALLY



POP-UP BEER GARDEN

TODAY - TOMORROW

OPEN HOUSE



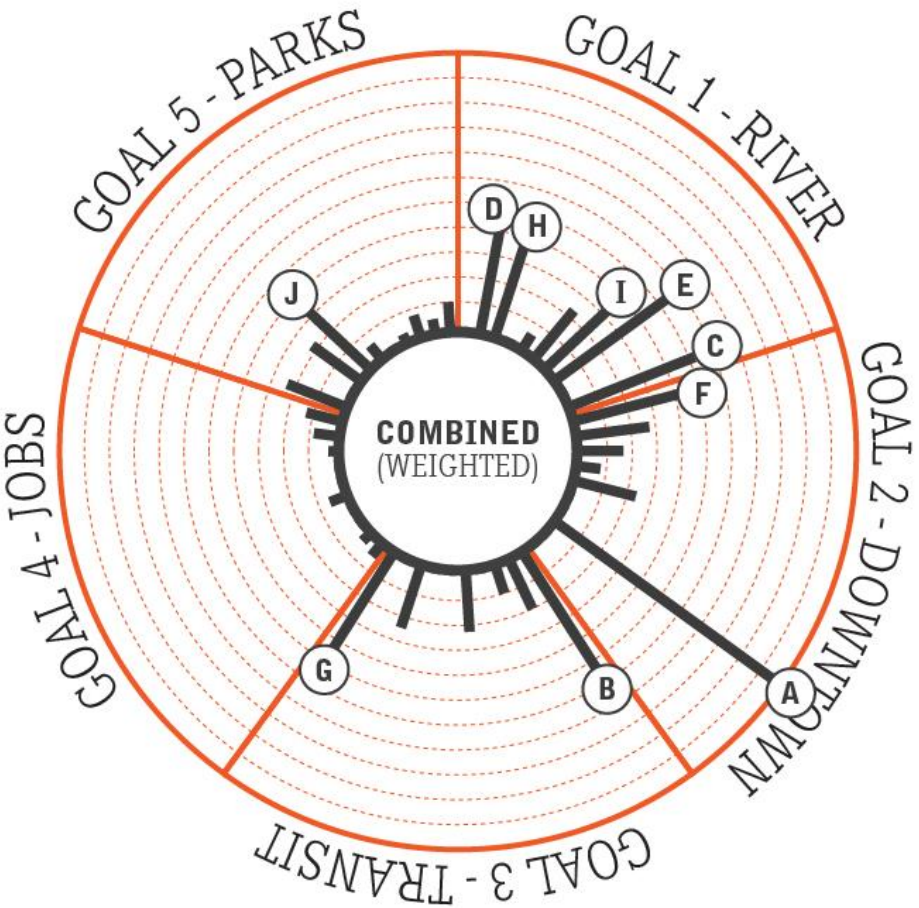
DOWNTOWN TOMORROW

OPEN HOUSE



TOP PRIORITIES

- **A** Concentrate retail and close the retail services gap
- **B** Provide more transportation choices
- **C** Enhance the ecology and expand the habitat of the River
- **D** Provide access to the river to allow activities within the river
- **E** Create a continuous river trail on both sides of the River
- **F** Support initiatives that bring new residents Downtown
- **G** Improve regional connections to Downtown
- **H** Balance open space with new mixed use development on the River corridor
- **I** Improve east-west streets as boulevards that connect neighborhoods to the River
- **J** Expand arts and cultural events and temporary programming



Diversity and Inclusion– What we heard

RIVER [GOAL 1]

- Riverfront programming must be accessible and welcoming to all.
- Let's make Grand Rapids more welcoming by putting more park like space by the River.

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD [GOAL 2]

- Education to real estate agents about the merits of living in city limits.
- Downtown is not for everyone.
- There is a lack of truly affordable housing.
- There is a perception that certain areas, like Heartside, are unsafe – people are still getting used to "urban" environment.
- Access to healthy food – right now the only place to buy affordable fruit is the gas station.
- Explore programs to bring students and youth Downtown that would not typically visit.
- Spur upwardly mobile youth to buy into downtown lifestyle – they are still more inclined to prefer suburban living.
- Right now its impossible to mix the LIHTC with market rate development. MSHDA's policies need to adapt to reflect local desires.
- Students are not welcomed into Downtown over the bridge.

Diversity and Inclusion– What we heard

MOBILITY [GOAL 3]

> One of the biggest needs is to create affordable transportation for all.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT [GOAL 4]

> Explore an inclusion module as part of the business license application.
> We need a Downtown marketing campaign focused on minority communities.
> There needs to be intentional efforts to attract and support minority owned businesses, and provide the context for success.

PUBLIC SPACE [GOAL 5]

> Need a range of programming and events to attract diverse audiences.
> Keep dialogues open, especially around Heartside Park.

SCHOOLS [GOAL 6]

>Continue to work with GRPS to market and promote the quality of existing public schools to attract families to the City and Downtown.

Diversity and Inclusion – What we heard

GENERAL

- There is a lack of diversity and inclusion despite large population.
- There are many avenues to accomplish our diversity goals– we just have to try things and if they're not working, we need to change it.
- Identify partners for implementation.
- Foster connections with those who are most affected in order to measure success.
- When I hear Grand Rapids is not inclusive, I hear it from people who have lived here most of their lives. Newcomers think it is inclusive. Entertainment options that already exist have the potential to appeal to a very diverse range of people.
- There are two drivers: economic and events.
- Sometimes it's a matter of people not knowing what is going on downtown.
- Two main topics: the welcoming issue and inclusion issue.
- Google passed over Grand Rapids because there was a lack of diversity here; people don't realize all facets of the value that diversity brings from an economic standpoint.

GR FORWARD >>
RIVER CITY ACTION PLAN

WORKING VISION / GOALS:

Downtown Grand Rapids is the region's downtown and the civic heart of West Michigan. It will reflect an attainable and inclusive urbanism welcoming to downtown residents, nearby neighbors and visitors. Together, the Downtown and the River will provide an experience that can't be found in Western Michigan and strengthen the City's brand as progressive, healthy and vibrant. To accomplish this, we need to:

GOAL 1

Create a true downtown neighborhood.

GOAL 2

Restore the River as *the* Draw.

GOAL 3

Strengthen connections between places and across barriers.

GOAL 4

Ensure continued vitality of the local economy.

GOAL 5

Re-orient your view.

GOAL 6

Reinvest in public space.

GR FORWARD

DOWNTOWN & RIVER ACTION PLAN >>

WORKING VISION / GOALS:

Downtown Grand Rapids is the region's downtown and the civic heart of West Michigan. Together with the Grand River, these assets will provide a singular experience and strengthen the City's identity as progressive, healthy and vibrant. GR Forward envisions a future where strategic action will promote job growth, stimulate private investment and provide a city center welcoming to *all* downtown residents, nearby neighbors and visitors. A reinvigorated Downtown and Grand River must be authentic to Grand Rapids and attainable by developing strategies unique to the needs of Grand Rapidians. To accomplish this, we will:

GOAL 1

Restore the River as *the* Draw & Create a Connected and Equitable River Corridor.

GOAL 2

Create a True Downtown Neighborhood as Home to a Diverse Population.

GOAL 3

Implement a 21st Century Mobility Strategy.

GOAL 4

Expand Job Opportunities & Ensure Continued Vitality of the Local Economy.

GOAL 5

Reinvest in Public Space, Culture & Inclusive Programming.

GOAL 6

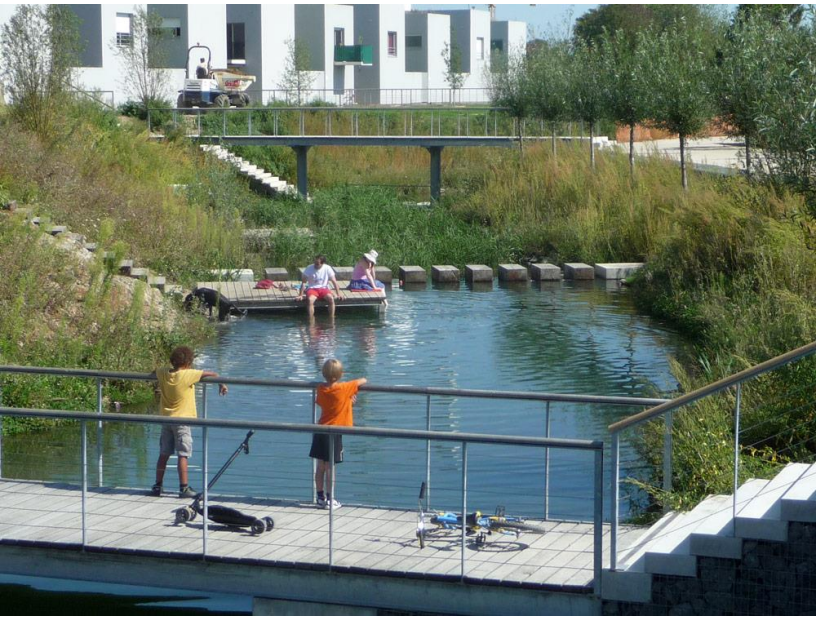
Retain and Attract Families, Talent, and Job Providers with High Quality Public Schools

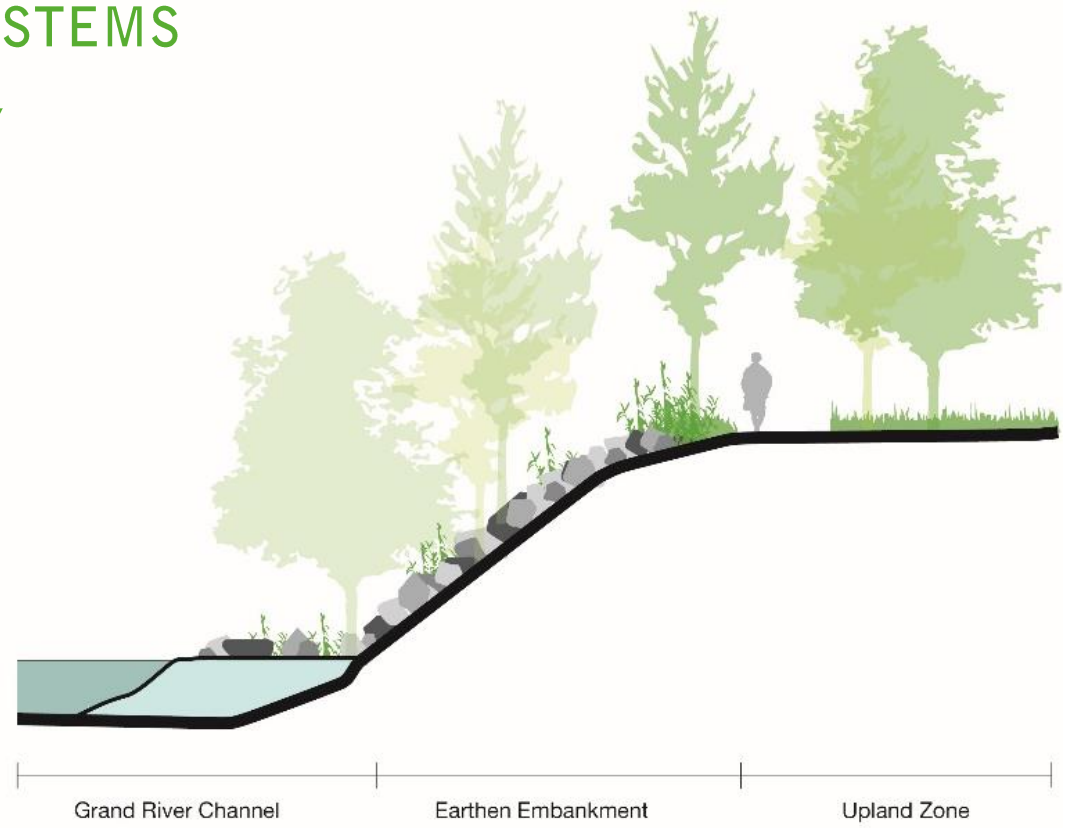
GOAL 1

RESTORE THE RIVER AS THE DRAW & CREATE A CONNECTED AND EQUITABLE RIVER CORRIDOR

INTEGRATE ART, EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ECOLOGY

- CREATE VARIED INFRASTRUCTURE TO NOT ONLY PROTECT, BUT ENHANCE AND AMENITIZE THE RIVER
- ENHANCE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS
- IMPROVE WATER QUALITY



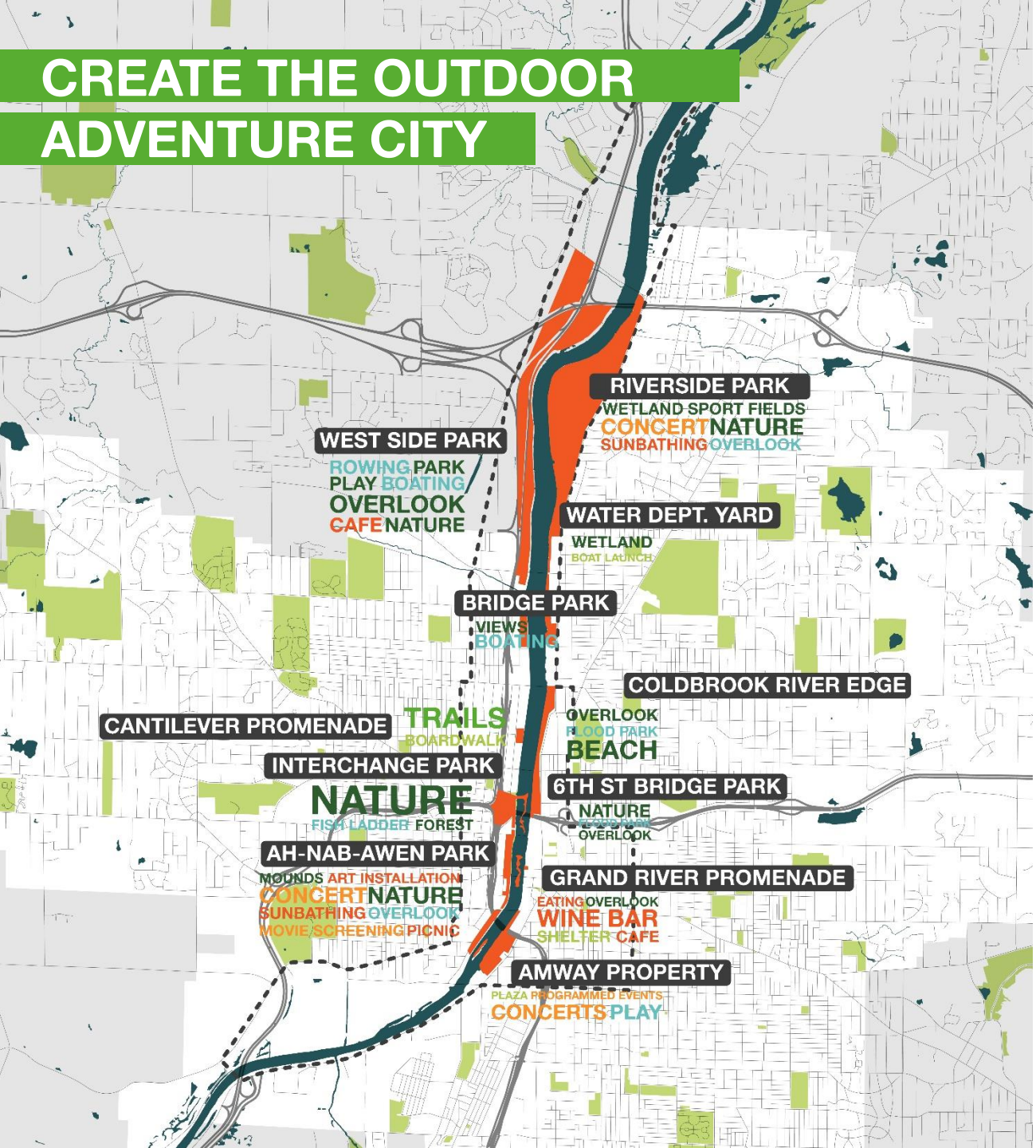


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RHONE RIVER BANKS – LYON, FRANCE



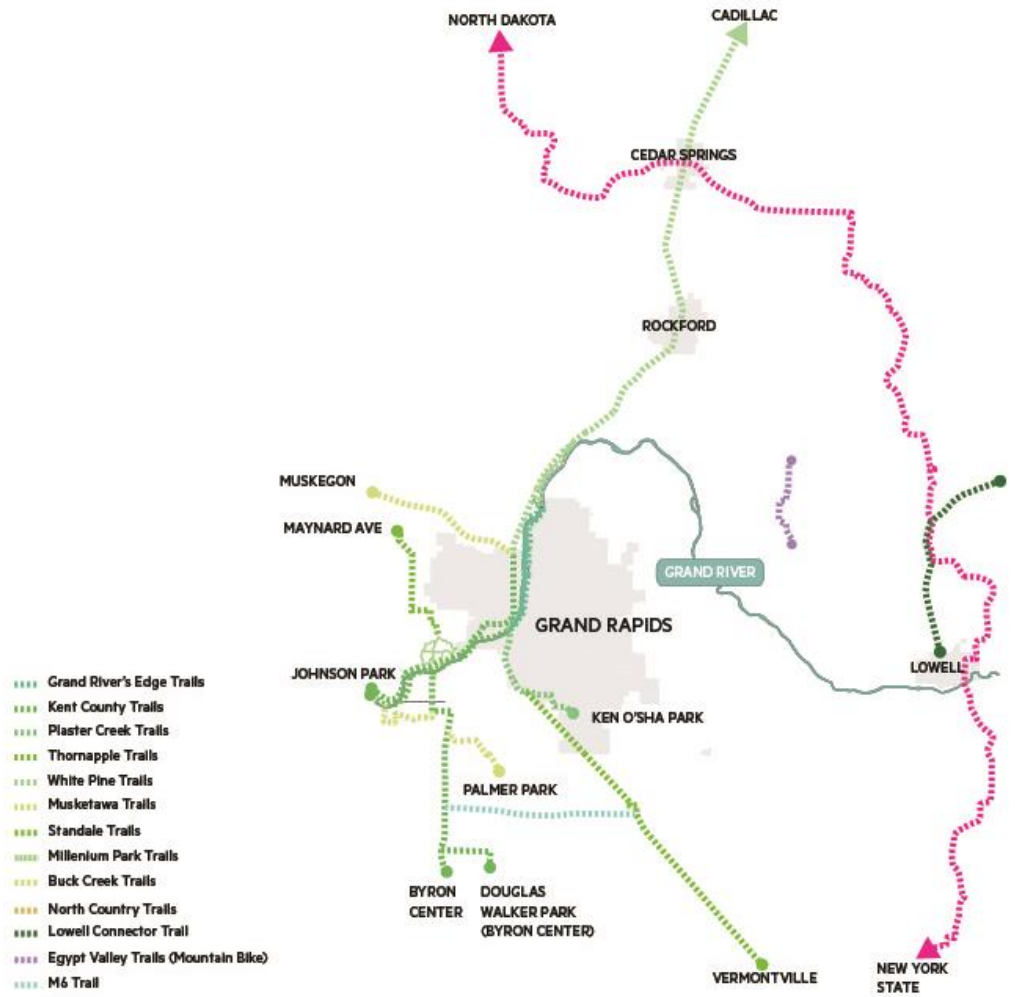
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OPPORTUNITY SITES ALONG THE RIVER

EACH WITH A DIFFERENT PROGRAM

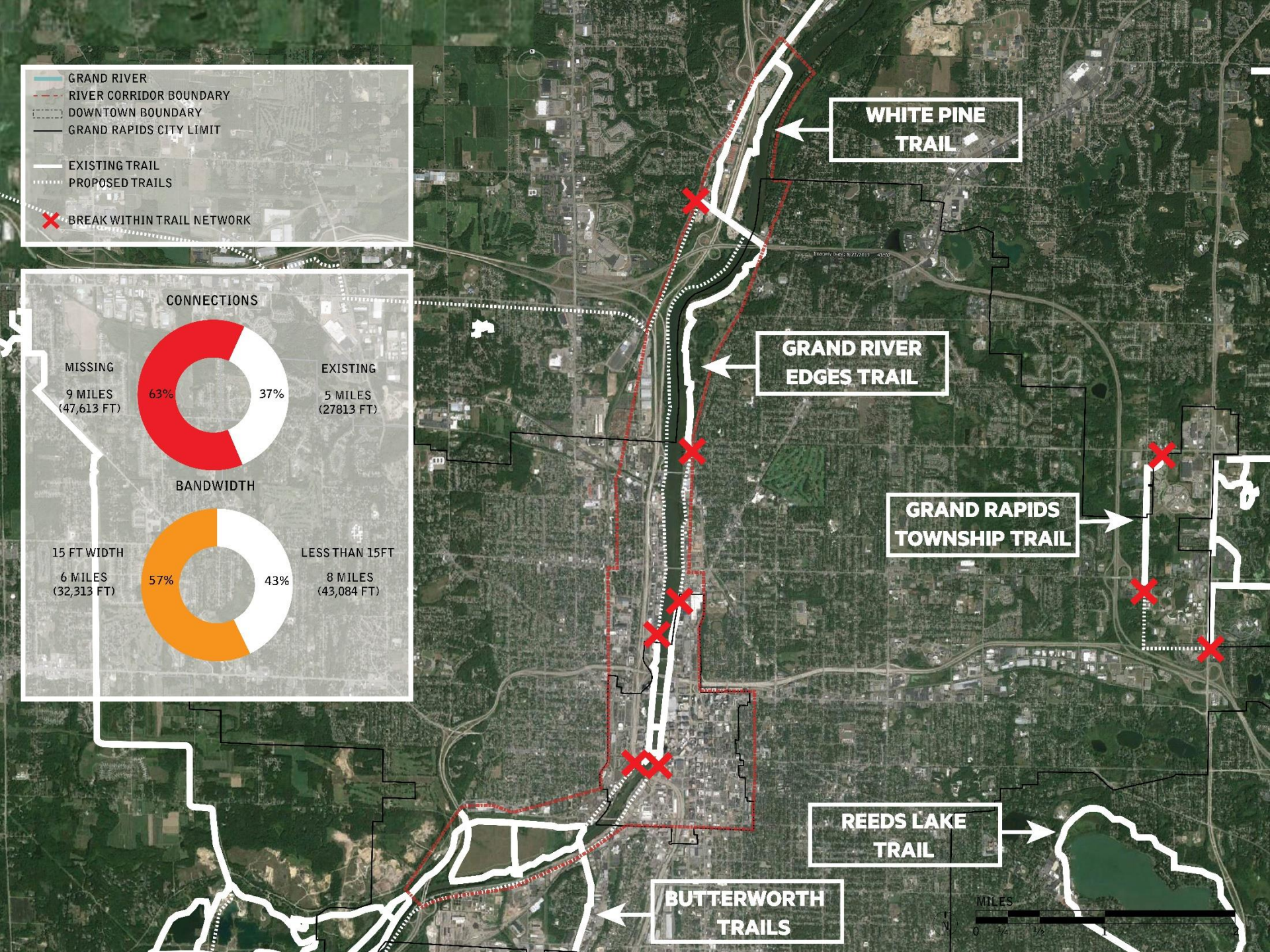
ESTABLISH GRAND RAPIDS AS THE HUB IN A REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

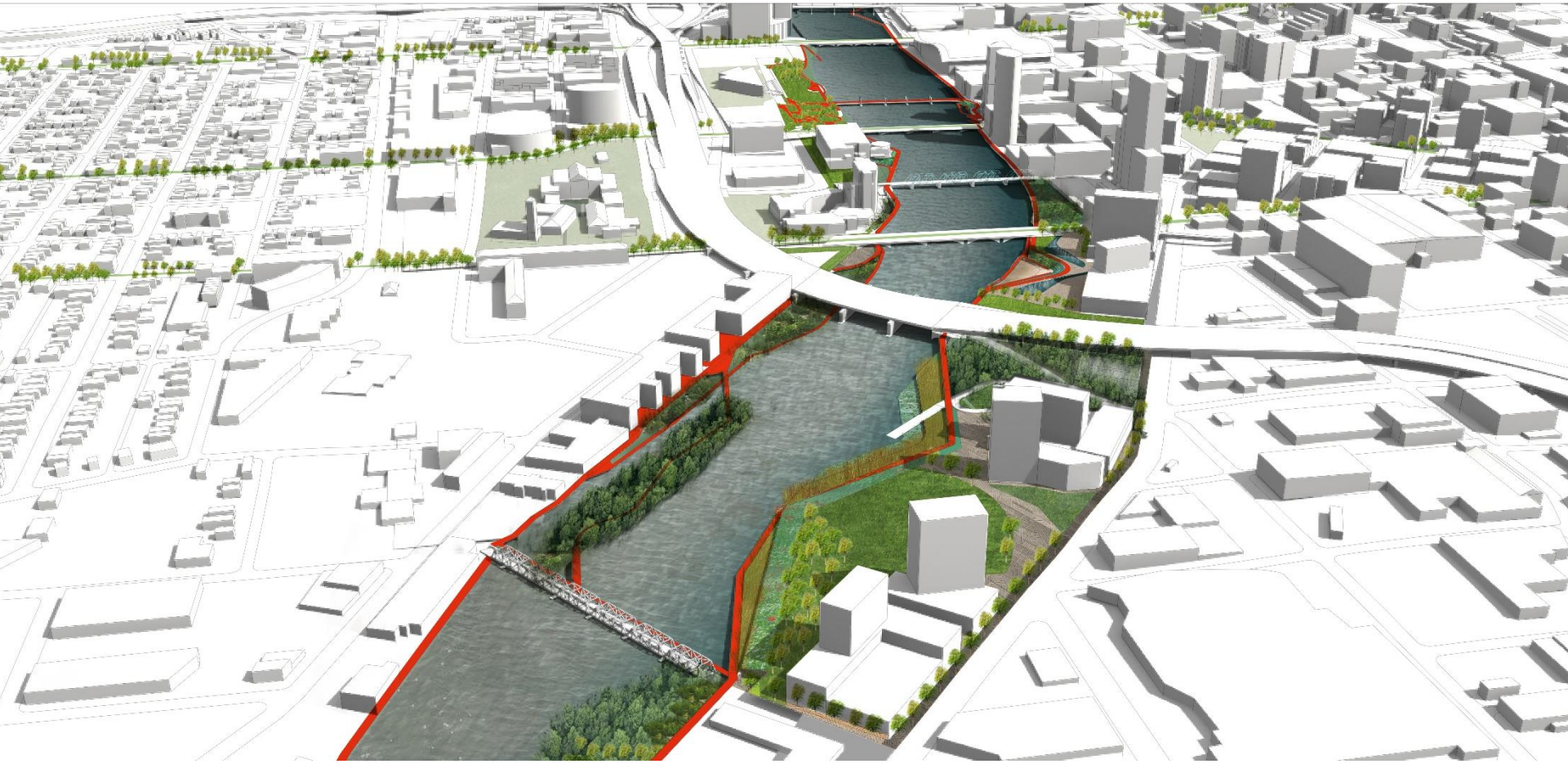
» CREATE A ROBUST TRAIL SYSTEM ON BOTH THE EAST AND WEST SIDES OF THE RIVER







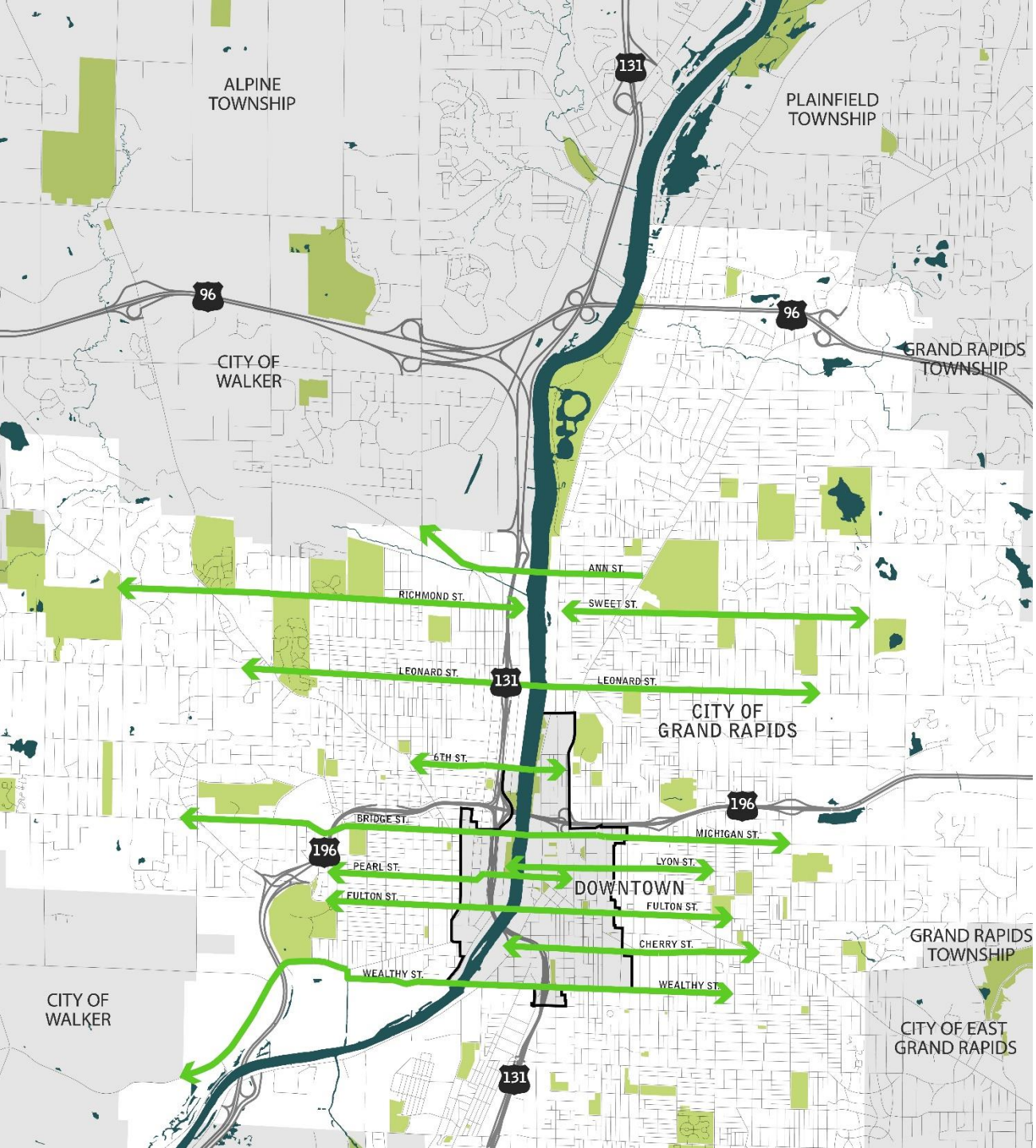

GRAND RIVER
RIVER CORRIDOR BOUNDARY
DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY
GRAND RAPIDS CITY LIMIT
EXISTING TRAIL
PROPOSED TRAILS
BREAK WITHIN TRAIL NETWORK
CONNECTIONS
MISSING
9 MILES
(47,613 FT)
63%
37%
EXISTING
5 MILES
(27813 FT)
BANDWIDTH
15 FT WIDTH
6 MILES
(32,313 FT)
57%
43%
LESS THAN 15FT
8 MILES
(43,084 FT)
WHITE PINE TRAIL
GRAND RIVER EDGES TRAIL
GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP TRAIL
REEDS LAKE TRAIL
BUTTERWORTH TRAILS
MILES
0
1/4
1/2





ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO THE RIVER

» CREATE A SERIES OF EAST/WEST GREEN CORRIDORS TO CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS TO THE RIVER



STRATEGY

POTENTIAL GREEN CORRIDORS

- MAIN EAST-WEST CONNECTIONS
- EXISTING PARKS
- GRAND RIVER

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #1

RIVER [GOAL 1]

> Riverfront programming must be accessible and welcoming to all.

CREATE A ROBUST TRAIL SYSTEM ON BOTH THE EAST AND WEST SIDES OF THE RIVER

Universal access exceeds ADA accessibility requirements, which this plan fully promotes in the creation and expansion of the trail system. It is about equal access for the whole City, which means that a trail on each side of the River should be provided in order to make sure that equity is brought back to the River. This trail system can become an identifiable element and part of a unique brand that makes Grand Rapids a great place to be (pg. 24).


131 North
Cadillac
MARKET AVENUE
AVIS


CAFE
GNC
MARKET AVENUE
AVIS
B 101 MRX

GOAL 2

CREATE A TRUE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS HOME TO A DIVERSE POPULATION

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #2

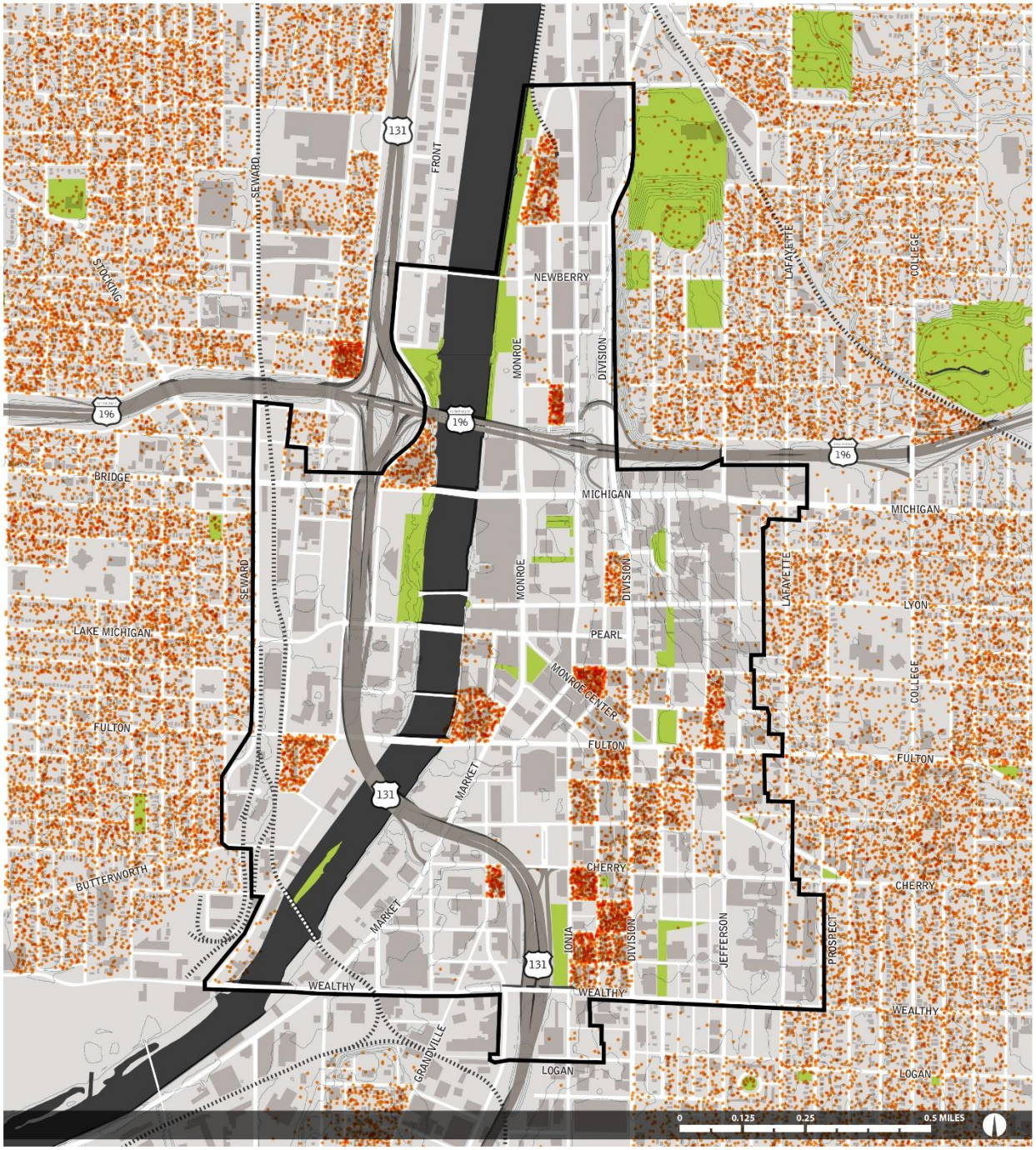
DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD [GOAL 2]

WHY THIS MATTERS

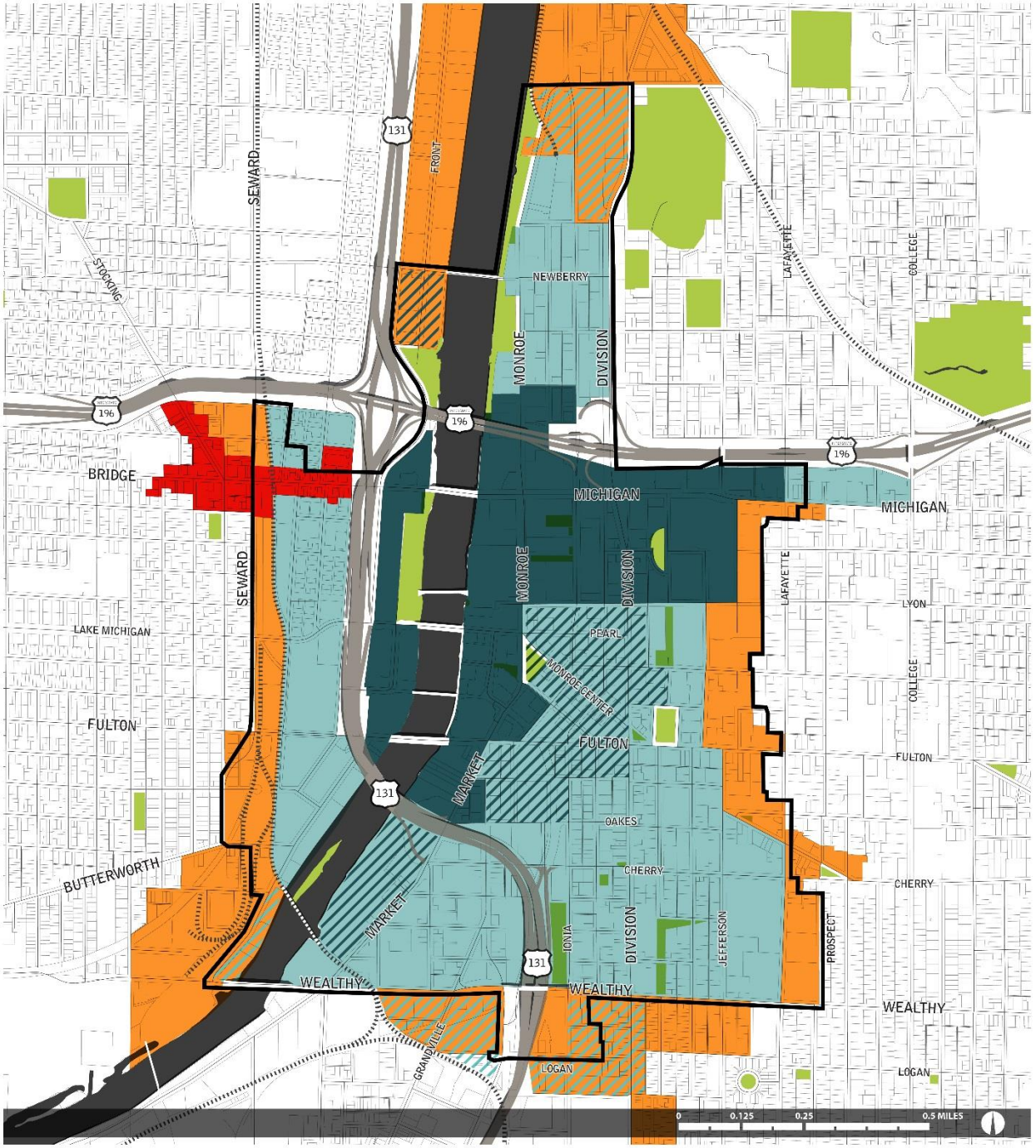
How Downtown Grand Rapids grows is extremely important to ensure that it remains home to a diversity of people. A constant refrain during the GR Forward process was to create a Downtown that is welcoming and inclusive. Indeed, if those seeking to live in Downtown are doing so, in part, because of the diversity, this is an asset worth preserving (Pg. 6).

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS - BLOCK LEVEL



● = 1 PERSON



PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS

DOWNTOWN HEIGHT OVERLAY (B)
MIN: 3 STORIES [PROPOSED: 5 STORIES]
MAX: NONE

PROPOSED INTERMEDIATE OVERLAY
MIN: 5 STORIES
MAX: 12 STORIES
BONUS: 25 STORIES

DOWNTOWN HEIGHT OVERLAY (A)
MIN: 3 STORIES [PROPOSED: 4 STORIES]
MAX: 85' [ROUGHLY 7 STORIES]
BONUS: ADD LESSER OF 7 STORIES
OR 90'

PROPOSED INTERMEDIATE OVERLAY
MIN: 3 STORIES
MAX: 5 STORIES
BONUS: 10 STORIES

TRANSITIONAL CITY CENTER
MIN: 2 STORIES [PROPOSED: 3 STORIES]
MAX: 3 STORIES [PROPOSED: 4 STORIES]
BONUS: 5 STORIES

TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AREA
MIN: 2 STORIES
MAX: 3 STORIES
BONUS: 4 STORIES

PRESERVE AND EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

UNITS TODAY					
MARKET RATE	AFFORDABLE	STUDENT	UNDETERMINED	TOTAL	% AFFORDABLE
1,918	1,179	295	-	**3,392**	**35%**
PROPOSED					
MARKET RATE	AFFORDABLE	STUDENT	UNDETERMINED	TOTAL	% AFFORDABLE
1,037	180	-	34	**1,251**	**14%**
SUBTOTAL					
MARKET RATE	AFFORDABLE	STUDENT	UNDETERMINED	TOTAL	% AFFORDABLE
2,955	1,359	295	34	**4,643**	**29%**
POTENTIAL					
MARKET RATE	AFFORDABLE	STUDENT	UNDETERMINED	TOTAL	% AFFORDABLE
TBD	TBD	TBD	-	**6,250-8,500**	**TBD**

TOTAL:
10,900 - 13,000+

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #2

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD [GOAL 2]

- Lack of truly affordable housing in Downtown

ENSURE THAT DOWNTOWN MAINTAINS ITS SHARE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR A RANGE OF INCOMES

Today, 35% of the 3,400 units of Downtown housing is income-restricted–dedicated for low income individuals. There are currently 1,250 units proposed for development in Downtown, of which 14% are income-restricted. After completion of these developments, 30% of Downtown would be income-restricted. Cities across the country struggle to retain affordability in their Downtowns. Grand Rapids has the benefit of a base of housing protected for low-income individuals and families. With proactive planning and policy, Downtown can grow in population but also retain its diversity and affordability (pg. 52).

Specifically, GR Forward is seeking to address the two key concerns expressed throughout the planning process regarding housing costs and affordability: 1) How will Downtown retain income-restricted housing opportunities for the very low income? And; 2) How will Downtown provide housing opportunities for the "missing middle" – those that are not low-income enough to qualify for subsidy but also not making nearly enough to afford market-rate units Downtown? To ensure there are housing options for a range of incomes in the future, this plan recommends that 25% of Downtown housing units be available for those earning below 120% of the area median income. This target should serve as a guide for regulating and encouraging new development (pg. 52).



>> Different ways to expand housing opportunities

1. BUY / DEVELOP SITES FOR INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING
2. INCENTIVES FOR WORKFORCE HOUSING:
   - Bonuses for percentage of units priced for families with 60%-120% of area median income
3. ENCOURAGE "MICRO" UNITS

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #2

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD [GOAL 2]

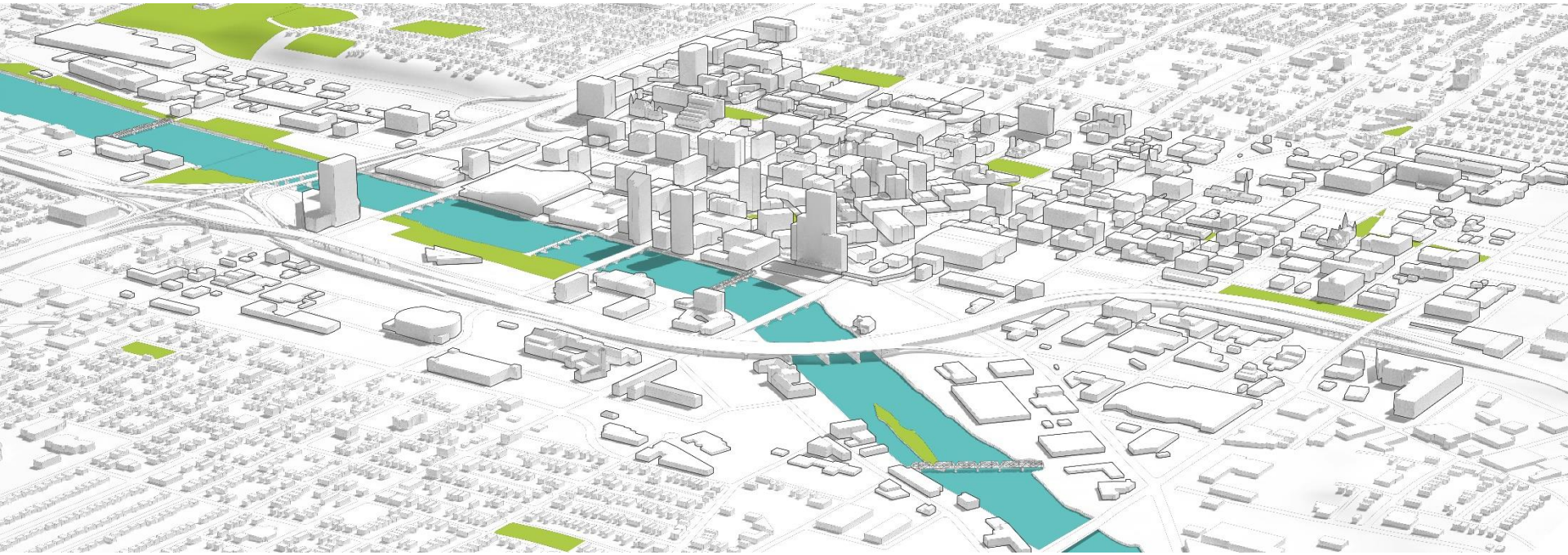
- Lack of truly affordable housing
- Students are not welcomed into Downtown over the bridge

EXPLORE WAYS OF EXPANDING HOMEOWNERSHIP DOWNTOWN

Nevertheless, if 50% of Downtown renters are looking to buy, this is indicative of the well-observed lack of supply of home ownership products due to current conservative lending practices. Waiting lists for condo projects and housing focus- group discussions during the GR Forward process are indicative of the same. Overcoming this barrier and encouraging homeownership through other means would enable Downtown's existing residents to put down roots, making them more likely to stay downtown longer term—not only a valuable community building opportunity, but a way of retaining talent Downtown (pg. 55).

ENCOURAGE MORE STUDENTS TO LIVE DOWNTOWN

Affordable options for the more than 30,000 students attending the Downtown area's multiple institutions of higher education and wanting to live close-by are very limited. Aside from GVSU's two residence halls, the institutions themselves don't offer on-campus student housing and, with limited means of income, students don't compete well with young professionals and empty nesters for market rate housing Downtown. The benefits of providing student housing close to where they attend classes include laying the groundwork for retaining talent locally after graduation, reducing commuter miles, and encouraging more activity through nights and weekend Downtown.



Downtown today



Coming soon: 1,200+ units already in design

ENCOURAGE INFILL DEVELOPMENT TO CLOSE THE GAPS BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS



10,900-13,000 potential units

GOAL 3
IMPLEMENT A 21ST CENTURY MOBILITY STRATEGY

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #3

MOBILITY [GOAL 3]

> WHY THIS MATTERS

Transportation costs are significant for the average family or business in Downtown Grand Rapids and it affects the affordability of Downtown. Future decisions on transportation must be made with cost in mind—both the cost of investment, operations and maintenance to the City and the project's impact on the cost of transportation for a resident or an employee. Utilizing existing assets and providing more choices is critical to keeping costs among all city stakeholders down and maximizing the benefits of the network as a whole.

Mobility needs vary widely for residents in Grand Rapids - from the population attending local colleges, young entrepreneurs, or growing families, to the population aging in place in downtown. Infrastructure and transportation services must meet the needs of all users. Grand Rapids is well positioned to adapt existing infrastructure and land use to future population trends.

Downtown must be part of a transportation network that provides a variety of choices that are safe, convenient and affordable and appeal to a wider population. This can be accomplished by leveraging Downtown's existing transportation assets and investing in additional options for employees, residents, and visitors to get around (pg. 3).

PROVIDE A STRESS FREE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE FOR ALL AGES & ABILITIES

» PRIORITIZE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY AT INTERSECTIONS



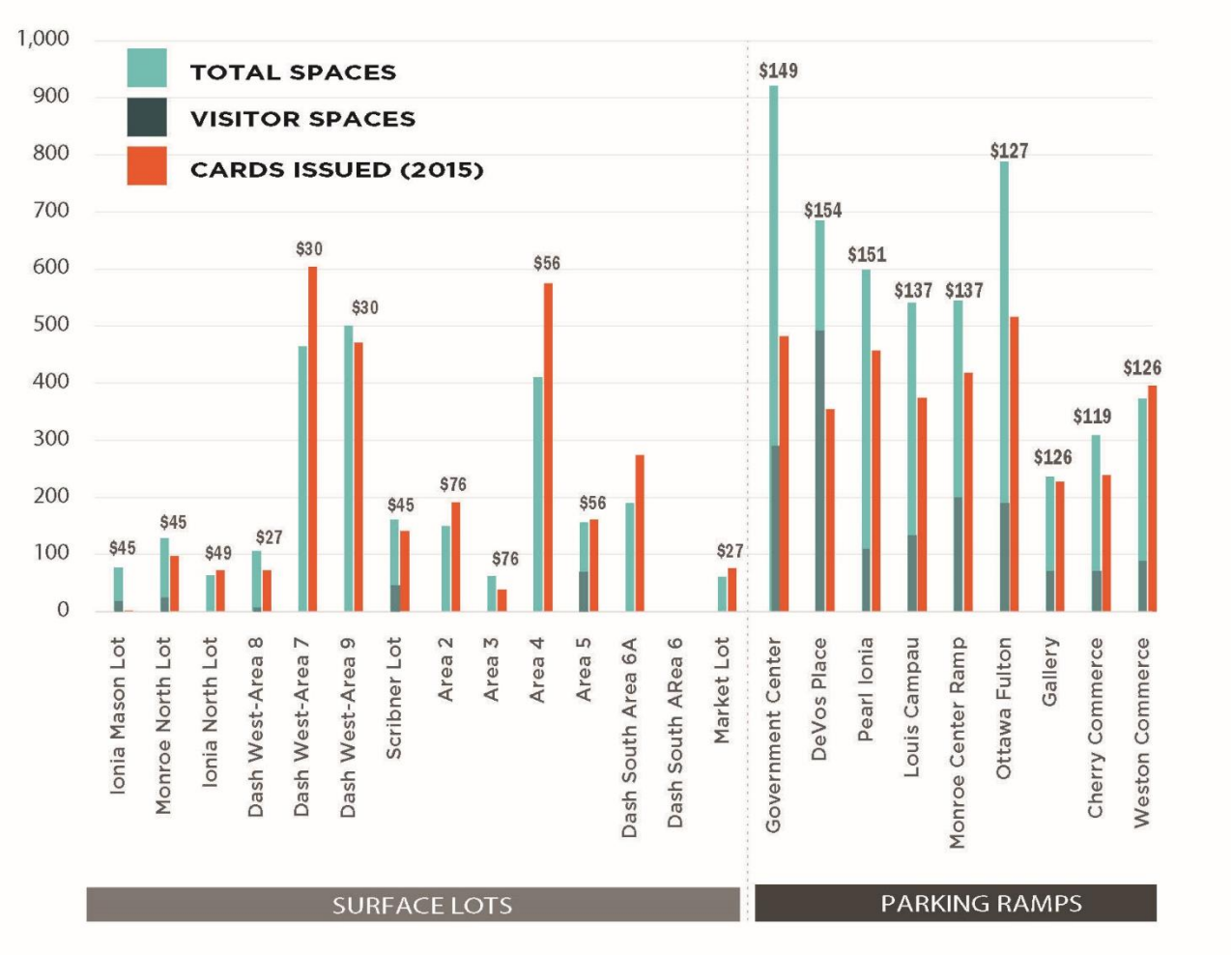




ESTABLISH MOBILE GR

>> MANAGE PARKING ASSETS / ADJUST PRICING

>> CREATE NEW PARKING SUPPLY



>> SPACE COUNT BY FACILITY

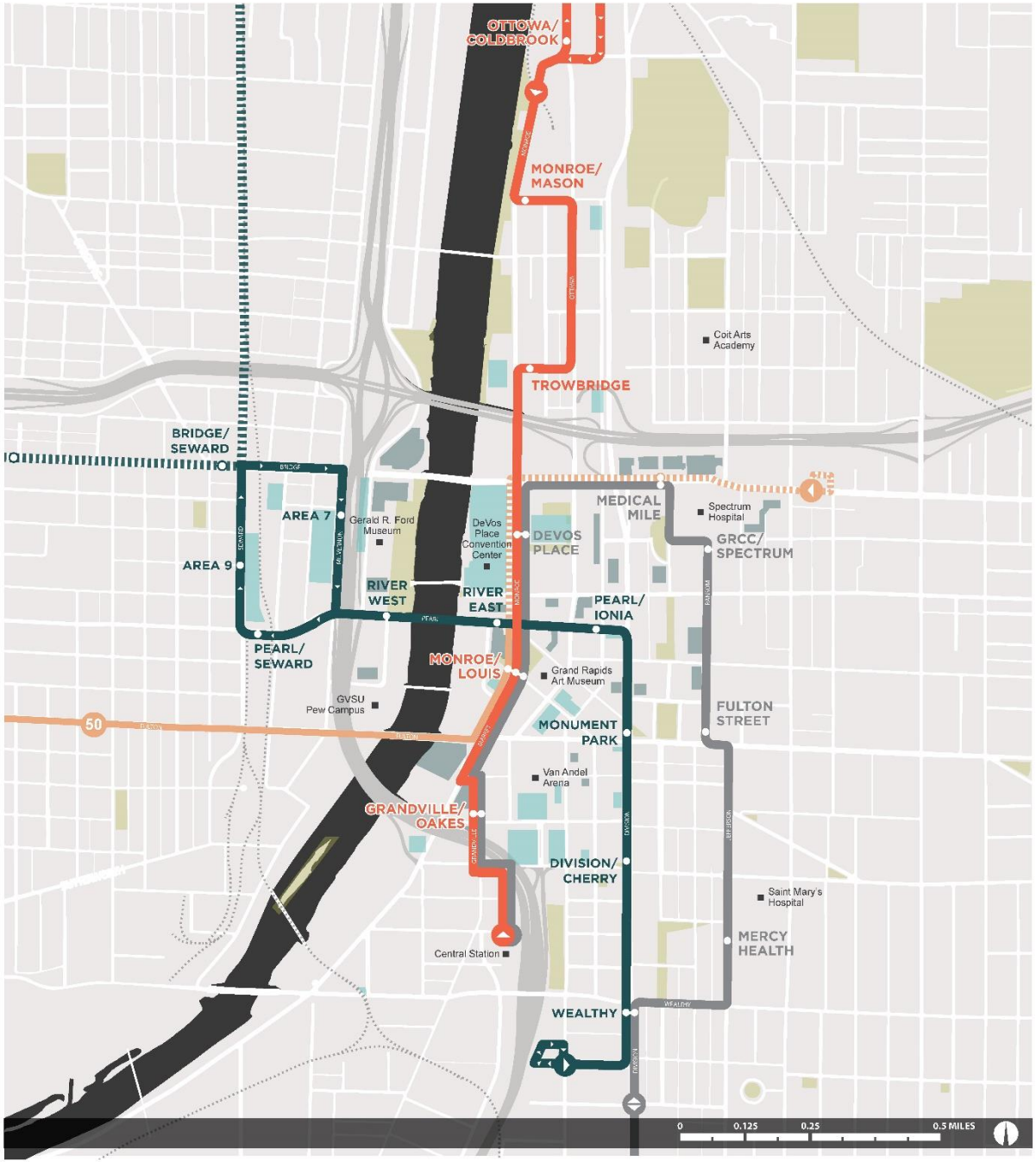
Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #3

MOBILITY [GOAL 3]

> One of the biggest needs is to create affordable transportation for all.

ESTABLISH MOBILE GR

GR, in collaboration with the Rapid and DGRI, should conduct a one year pilot program of offering free transit to up to five businesses of different sizes and one higher education institution. After the one year program is over, an evaluation should be completed that identifies the costs to maintain and expand the program as well as the benefits, including reduction in parking demand. Partnerships should also be explored to provide residents who cannot afford transit with special fares (pg. 26).



DASH ROUTES

PROPOSED

>> RECONFIGURE DASH SERVICE

DASH E-W

DASH N-S

SILVER LINE

LAKER LINE

STATION

City Operated Parking Facilities

Non-City Operated Parking Facilities

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #3

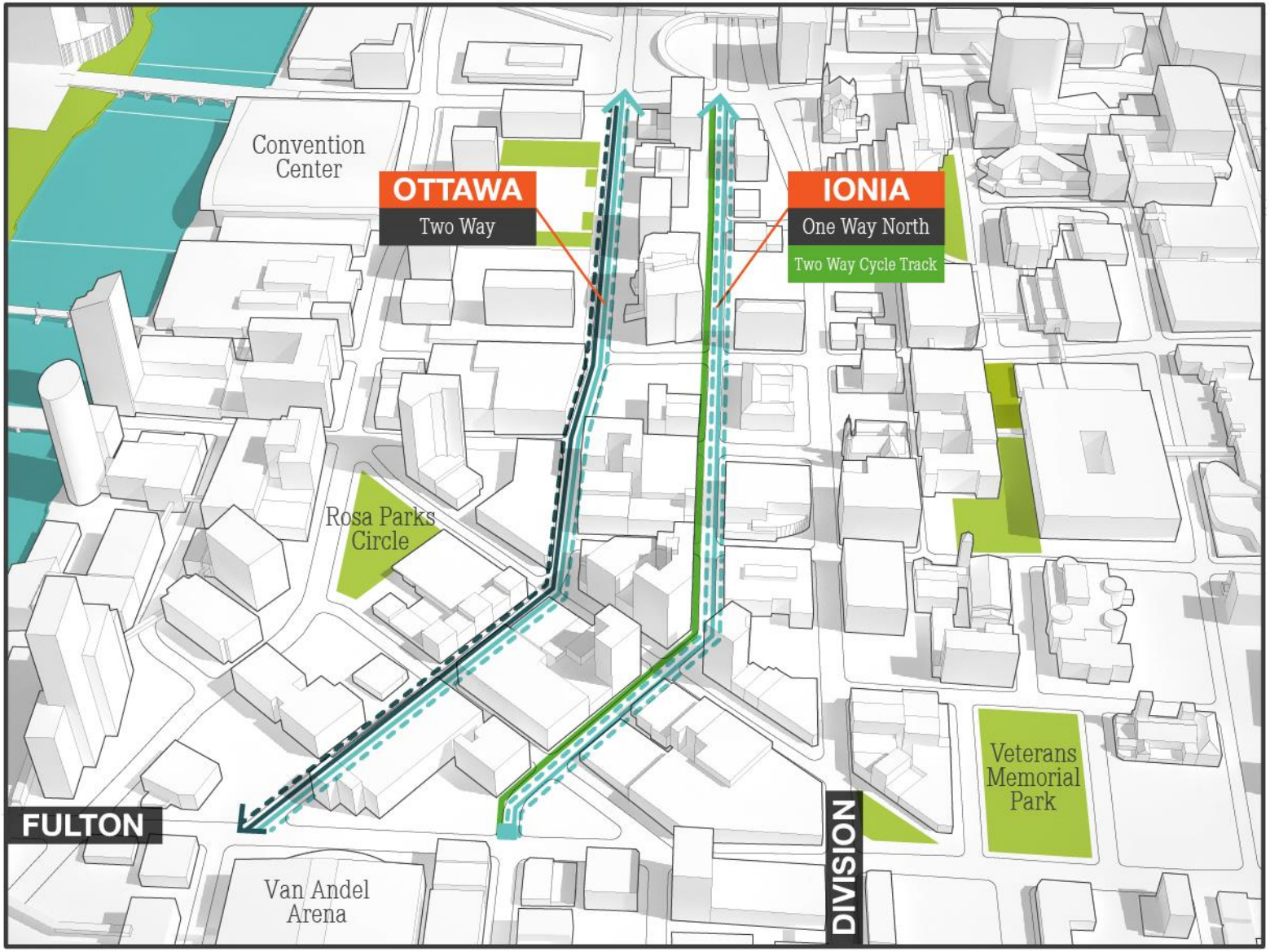
MOBILITY [GOAL 3]

> One of the biggest needs is to create affordable transportation for all.

RECONFIGURE THE EXISTING DASH SERVICE

To best compliment the Rapid's BRT investments and improve mobility in Downtown, in addition to serving existing patrons of city –owned parking lots, a revised DASH service should be implemented. This service should function as a circulator to ensure that resources are used in a pragmatic fashion to complete a high-frequency transit network in Downtown Grand Rapids (pg. 22).

COMPLETE THE NETWORKS IN AND OUT OF DOWNTOWN



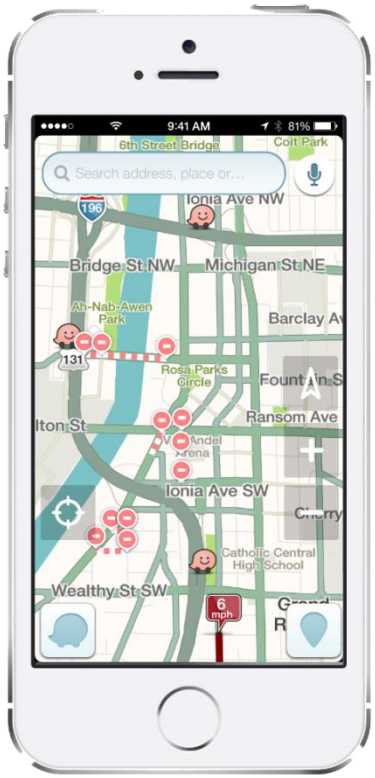




GET CONNECTED: UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE GETTING AROUND EASIER

- UTILIZE APPS / WEB TOOLS
- DIGITAL SIGNAGE
- ENCOURAGE OPEN DATA





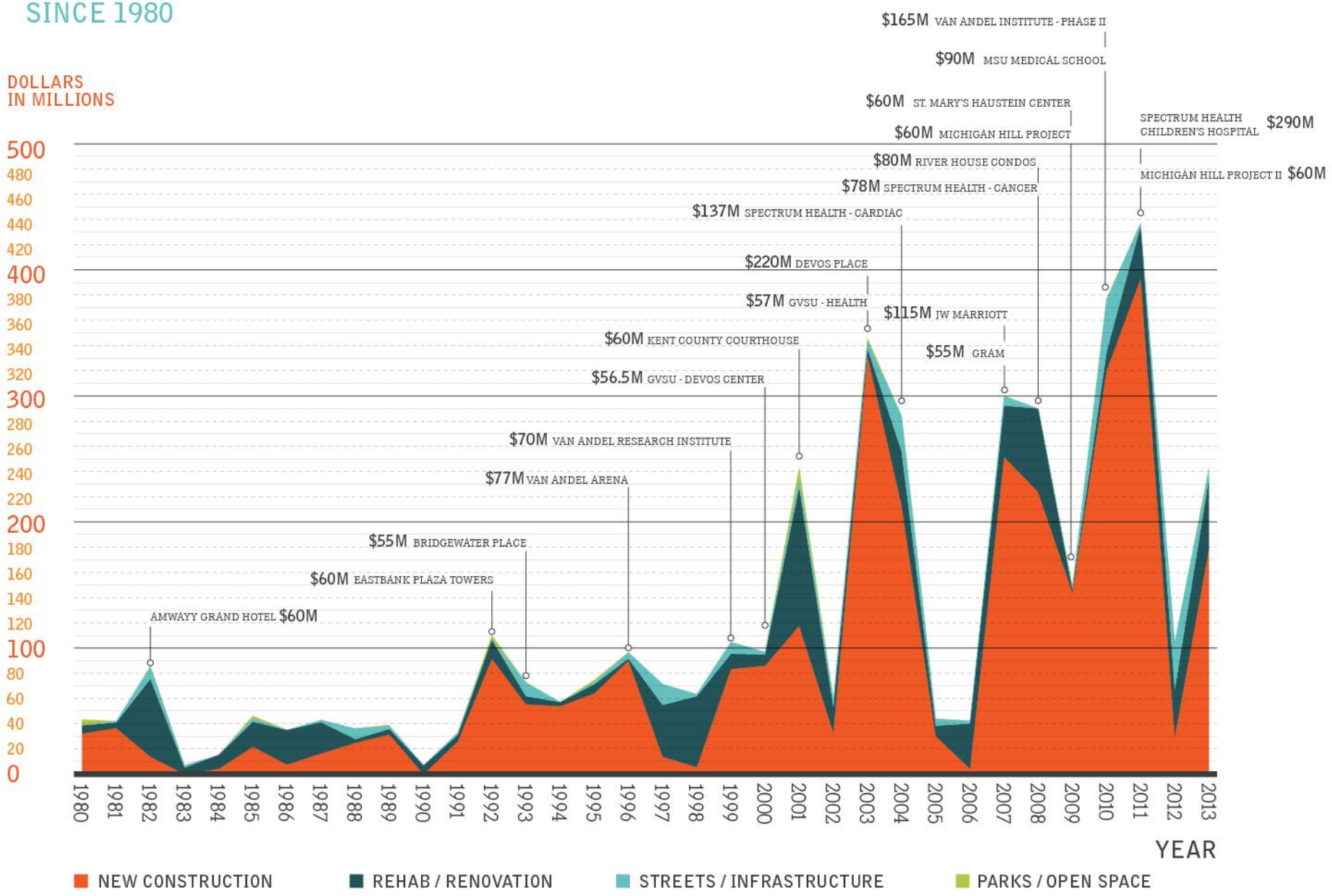


GOAL 4

EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES & ENSURE CONTINUED VITALITY OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

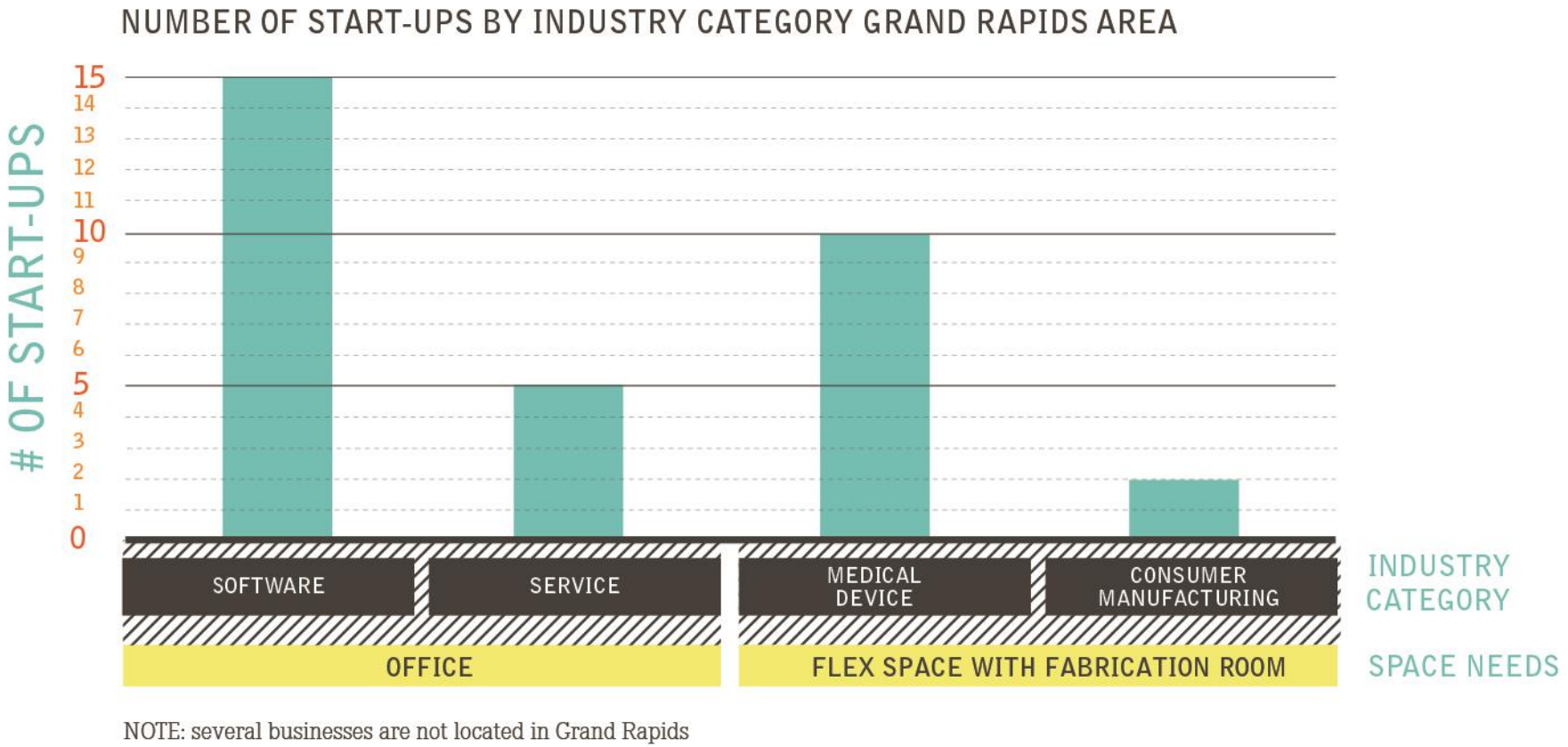
DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT

SINCE 1980



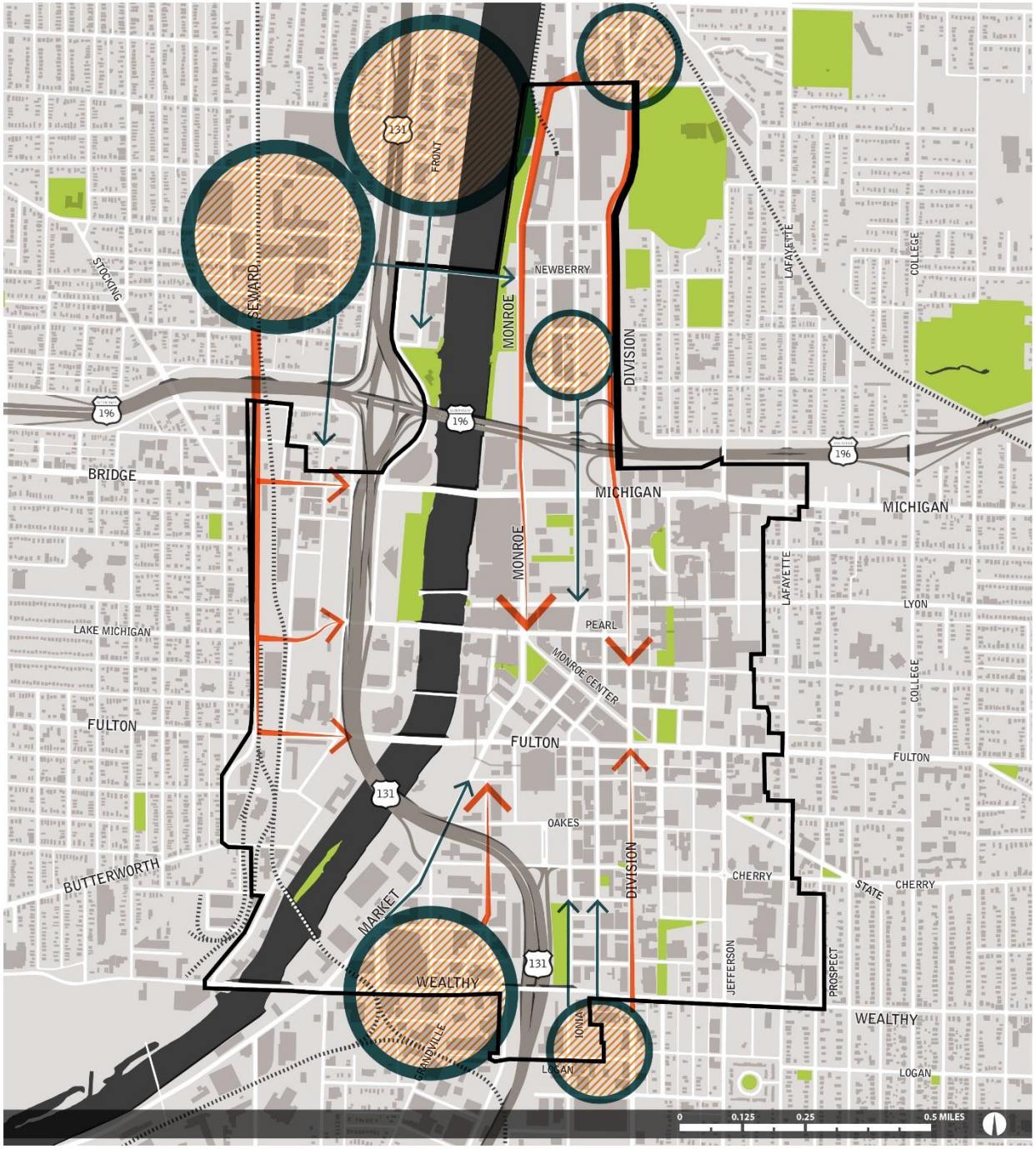
PRESERVE AND CREATE SPACE JOB CREATION & ECONOMIC GROWTH

» PRESERVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FLEXIBLE, INEXPENSIVE WORK SPACE CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN



NOTE: several businesses are not located in Grand Rapids

SOURCE: NP ANALYSIS OF GR CURRENT AND START GARDEN COMPANIES



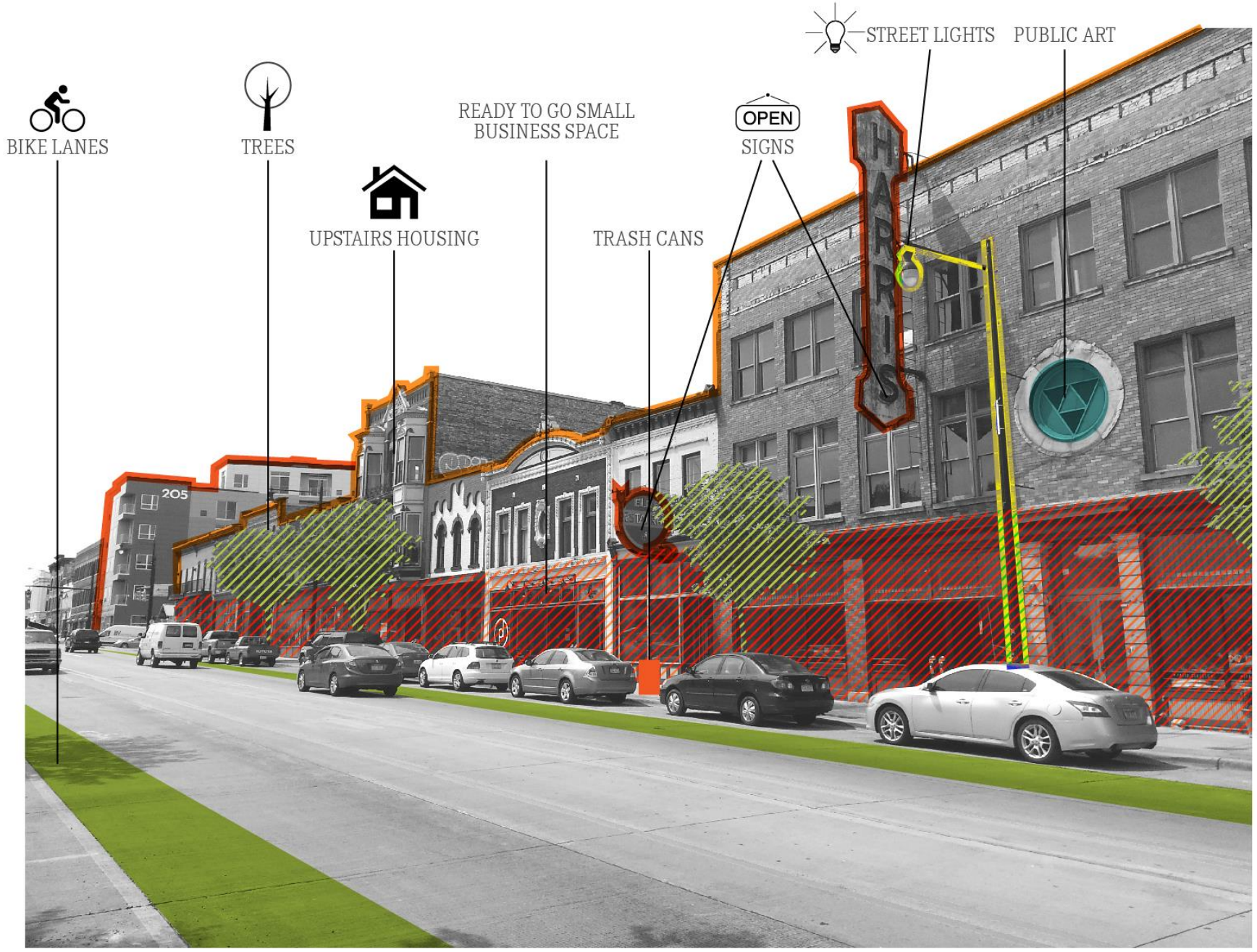
FLEXIBLE WORK SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

>> **Create an inventory of remaining warehouse / industrial / institutional space Downtown and nearby**

WORK SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

MAJOR CONNECTION

SECONDARY CONNECTION


STREET LIGHTS
PUBLIC ART
BIKE LANES
TREES
READY TO GO SMALL BUSINESS SPACE
OPEN
SIGNS
UPSTAIRS HOUSING
TRASH CANS
HARRIS
205

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #4

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD [GOAL 4]

- There is a perception that certain areas, like Heartside, are unsafe – people are still getting used to "urban" environment

CONNECT HEARTSIDE, HERITAGE HILL, AND THE DOWNTOWN CORE

For those familiar with Downtown, Division Avenue represents opportunity: to foster new businesses and encourage a true mixed-income district. To those less familiar with Downtown, Division Avenue is often perceived as unsafe. To reconnect the neighborhoods and range of uses in this southern edge of Downtown, there must be a focus on improving Division Avenue (pg. 40).

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #4

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

- There is a perception that certain areas, like Heartside, are unsafe – people are still getting used to "urban" environment

Promote Division Avenue as a small business corridor

Start a business plan competition with the winner receiving free rent for a specified amount of time on Division. Cleveland used this model in the Shoreway community to stimulate new small businesses.

- Offer matching grants for business expansion on Division Avenue. These grants could help offset the costs for new equipment, space build out and, new product marketing / feasibility analysis (pg. 42).

There are already, of course, new apartments on Division. This idea is focused on reusing the upper floors of existing buildings or creating small units suitable for young professionals or students. More people in the area that appreciate living in the city will also create more street activity and improve the perceptions of safety. Smaller unit sizes should be developed along Division and potential partnerships explored with area colleges and universities (pg. 42).

ATTRACT TALENT AND LINK JOB SEEKERS WITH LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

TALENT CHALLENGES: GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYMENT IN KEY INDUSTRIES COMPARED TO THE US AVERAGE

	Employment Estimate	Compared to US (1.00 = US Average)	
COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYSTS	1,170	0.77	WEAKNESS IN COMPUTER SCIENCES
INFORMATION SECURITY ANALYSTS	110	0.47	
COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS	830	0.89	
SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS, APPLICATIONS	1,350	0.70	
SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS, SYSTEMS SOFTWARE	1,120	1.00	
WEB DEVELOPERS	240	0.72	
COMPUTER NETWORK ARCHITECTS	280	0.65	
CHEMICAL ENGINEERS	40	0.37	ENGINEERING + SCIENCE REFELCTS CURRENT INDUSTRIAL BASE
COMPUTER HARDWARE ENGINEERS	70	0.30	
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS	490	0.97	
ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS, EXCEPT COMPUTER	160	0.39	
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERS	70	0.45	
INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERS	2,340	3.39	
MATERIALS ENGINEERS	60	0.82	
MECHANICAL ENGINEERS	1,260	1.62	
BIOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS, ALL OTHER	50	0.55	
CHEMISTS	90	0.33	
COMMERCIAL + INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS	220	2.59	STRONG PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SKILLS BUT... SMALL NUMBERS
TOOL + DIE MAKERS	2,390	10.15	
MODEL MAKERS, METAL + PLASTICS	50	2.44	
FOUNDRY MOLD + COREMAKERS	180	4.60	

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT [GOAL 4]

>There needs to be intentional efforts to attract and support minority owned businesses, and provide the context for success.

PROMOTE INCLUSION AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

With respect to social justice, diversity, and inclusion, the GR Forward process revealed a lot of common concerns from community leaders to local advocates and representatives from the City's minority communities. The main issues are related to access to and preservation of affordable housing [addressed in Goal 2], cost and shortcomings of public transportation [addressed in Goal 3], and leveling the playing field for minority participation in the local economy and business/employment opportunities. Discussions have highlighted the reality that if these concerns are to be addressed holistically, the City of Grand Rapids Diversity and Inclusion Office, which administers and monitors workforce diversity efforts of the City of Grand Rapids, cannot be alone in these efforts. There remains a need to better coordinate the good work being done by many organizations throughout the community on mutually-agreed upon success metrics (pg. 24).

GROW & RETAIN TALENT

- BUILD THE TALENT POOL TO SUPPORT THE EMERGING TECH ENTREPRENEURS AND THE REGION'S INNOVATION AND CREATIVELY DRIVEN FIRMS
  - **Leverage / expand University co-op programs to help retain college students**
  - **Evaluate local biotechnology curriculums, coding / computer science programs and certificate programs for tech professionals to employ local residents**

- FORMALIZE A LEADERSHIP TEAM AMONG CITY DECISION MAKERS & MAJOR EMPLOYERS TO ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES
  - **Youth workforce and internship programs**
  - **Entrepreneurship & capacity building programs**



MAYOR'S 100

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT [GOAL 4]

- Need intentional efforts to attract and support minority owned businesses, and provide the context for success.

PROMOTE INCLUSION AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Equalizing economic opportunity requires the cooperation of private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Leaders among the Diversity and Inclusion Office, local service providers, local business and industry leaders, and place-based nonprofits should be recruited to work on inclusion and economic participation issues through programmatic and structural means.

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT [GOAL 4]

> Need intentional efforts to attract and support minority owned businesses, and provide the context for success.

PROMOTE INCLUSION AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY (cont'd)

The nature of this collaboration and partnership brings benefits to all participants: local residents secure family wage jobs and employers' participation in building a skilled workforce ensures their own success. Among the specific ideas and initiatives to explore include:

> Mechanisms that promote job growth and better enable minorities to overcome systemic barriers to living wage employment
> Development of industry partnership programs between employers and workforce representatives with targeted recruitment efforts in Downtown Grand Rapids and neighboring communities
> Youth workforce and internship programs akin to the Mayor's 100 Campaign
> Entrepreneurship and capacity building programs to support the growth of minority-and women-owned business enterprises in Downtown Grand Rapids
> Corporate and institutional policies that increase workforce diversity (especially at management levels), and the hiring of ex-offenders (pg. 24).

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT [GOAL 4]

- Explore an inclusion module as part of business license application
- Downtown marketing campaign

IMPLEMENT AN INCLUSION MODULE AS A PART OF THE BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION PROCESS

Implement an inclusion module as a part of the business license application process At the time of the planning process, the Diversity and Inclusion Office was beginning to explore establishing an inclusion module as a part of the process of applying for a business license in Grand Rapids. This type of program could help close an awareness gap and provide the opportunity to educate new business owners about important topics such as the business case for diversity, understanding the roots and destructive impacts of bias, and how to successfully manage differences in the workplace (pg. 25).

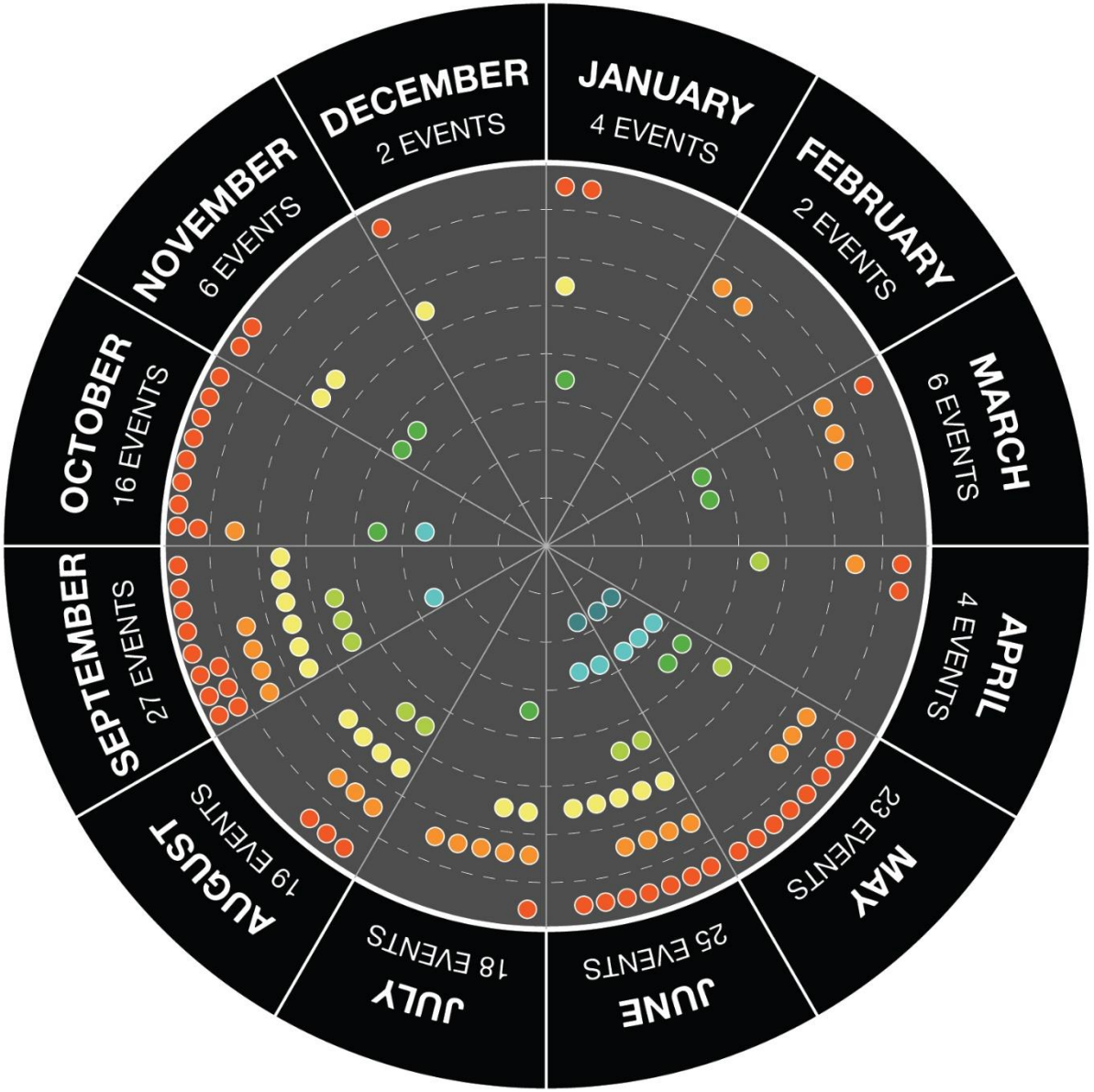
CONTINUE TO MARKET AND BRAND GRAND RAPIDS AS A VISITOR DESTINATION IN THE REGION AND BEYOND

Grand Rapids is Western Michigan's "capital" and primary urban center. It provides a true urban environment at a scale that is not overly intimidating. It is a major convention and business meeting location. While the Downtown builds its residential base, the retail and restaurant business will continue to be dependent on a thriving visitor business to enhance the viability of their establishments. Work with local partners to create and market new experiences in Downtown and along the River (pg. 23).

GOAL 5

REINVEST IN PUBLIC SPACE, CULTURE & INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

EXPAND ARTS & CULTURAL EVENTS AND TEMPORARY PROGRAMMING



DESIGN FOR WINTER

- ACTIVE (47)
- ARTS/PERFORMANCE (26)
- CELEBRATION (23)
- FOOD & DRINK (10)
- MARCH/PARADE (9)
- COMMUNITY/CEREMONY (7)
- TRADE SHOW (4)



Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #5

PUBLIC SPACE [GOAL 5]

>Need a range of programming and events to attract diverse audiences

WHY THIS MATTERS

A near term opportunity is to ramp up Downtown programming. ArtPrize, Laughfest, Movies in the Park and many other programs and events already transform Downtown into a local, regional and national destination at specific times of the year. A full slate of major events, year round, as well as continuous smaller events like parklets and other temporary "pop-up" spaces can provide spaces that people want to use. In fact, participants in the GR Forward Open House prioritized programming such as food truck rallies, pop-up beer gardens, outdoor dining and parklets to help active Downtown streets. In expanding a calendar of events, it is essential that programming be inclusive and seek to attract a full cross section of individuals and families from across the region. As the vision for GR Forward states, Downtown must be welcoming to all Grand Rapidians (pg. 5).

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #5

PUBLIC SPACE [GOAL 5]

> Continue to produce and market a diverse range of events

LEVERAGE THE OPPORTUNITY OF DOWNTOWN EVENTS

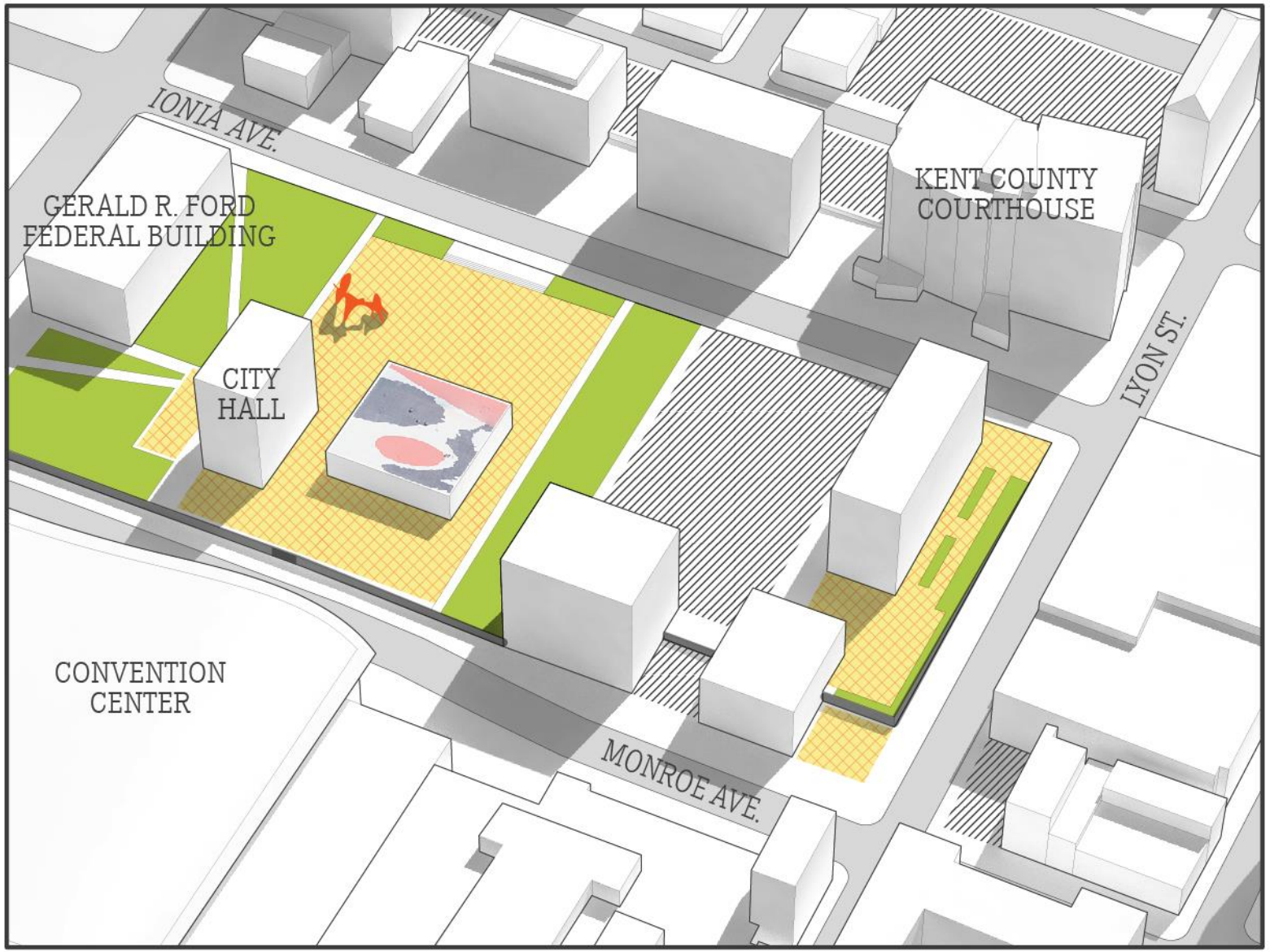
Downtown events are essential in creating a great place and level of activity that compel residents to live and visitors to hang out Downtown. They are also a great opportunity to introduce potential residents to the lifestyle, cultural vibrancy, and entertainment Downtown Grand Rapids has to offer. Part of leveraging the opportunity is maximizing marketing and promotional tools to make the most out of all the hard work that goes into organizing events downtown:

RAISE THE PROFILE OF DOWNTOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



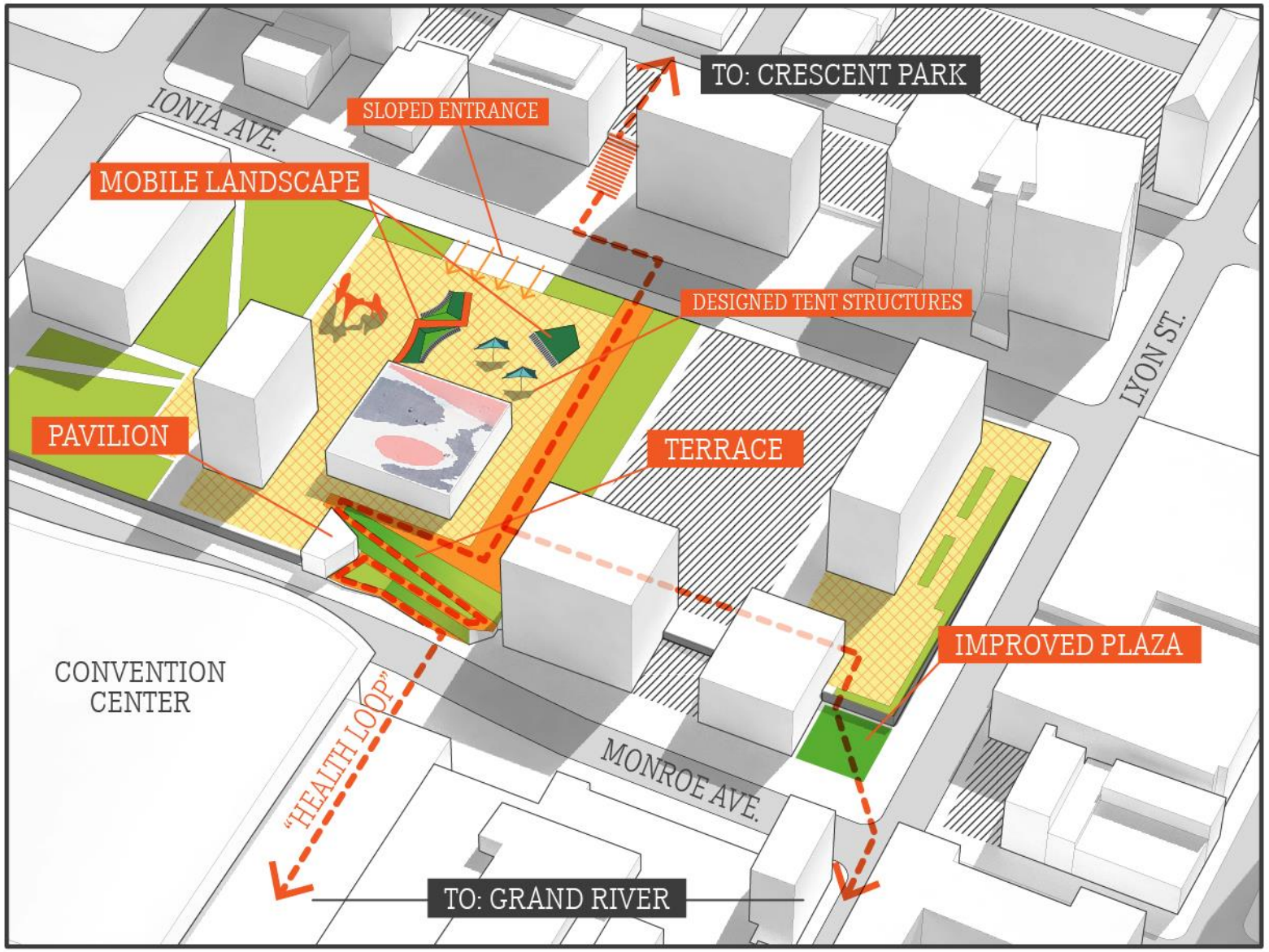
ENHANCE EXISTING DOWNTOWN PARKS

Existing Calder Plaza



XXX

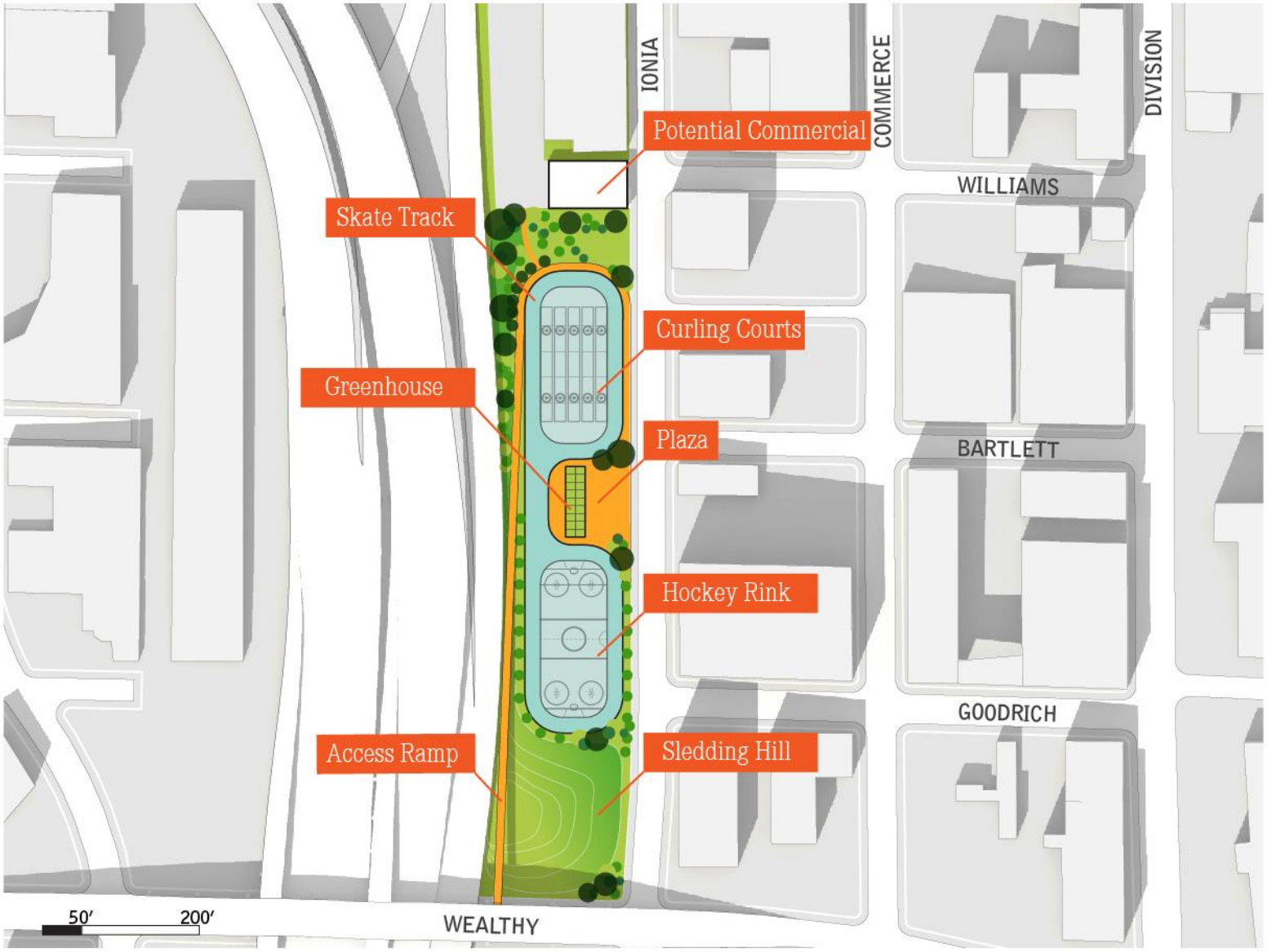
Proposed Calder Plaza



Heartside Park: Summer



Heartside Park: Winter




HEARTSIDE PARK

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #5

PUBLIC SPACE [GOAL 5]

> Improvements to Heartside Park

Raise The Profile of Downtown Parks and Public Spaces

>> Heartside Park

In its current form, Heartside Park has limited landscaping and minimal programming. Many have noted the current use of the park for illegal activities which has fostered negative perceptions about the park and the surrounding area. The local social service agencies, many of which provide necessary services for those that are homeless or in transitional housing, agree with the broader public that Heartside Park needs more programming and people to root out the activities that deter use of the park by local residents and visitors alike. The opportunity is to build upon the grassroots interest and success in creating Heartside Park by taking its design to the next level as a local and regional destination for families of all backgrounds. A lighting plan will play a key role in reversing perception of Heartside Park.

All of the winter activities, most notably hockey, skating and curling, must be coupled with partnerships and programs that encourage their use by families of all incomes. Youth leagues and events open to all Grand Rapidians would further establish Heartside Park as the City's winter playground destination for families (pg. 16 – 17).

CONTINUE TO ENSURE SAFETY & CLEANLINESS OF DOWNTOWN

- TRASH BINS / GRAFITTI REMOVAL
- DGRI AMBASSADORS
- LIGHTING
- SNOW REMOVAL



GOAL 6

RETAIN AND ATTRACT FAMILIES, TALENT, AND JOB PROVIDERS WITH HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Diversity and Inclusion– GOAL #6

SCHOOLS [GOAL 6]

>Continue to work with GRPS to market and promote the quality of existing public schools

> Why This Matters?

Attracting and retaining a diverse population that includes families from all socio-economic backgrounds is vital to achieving a sustained Critical Mass in downtown Grand Rapids. This begins with strategic investment in our city's schools, the expansion of successful K-12 programs, and the implementation of new and dynamic programs that can provide exceptional learning opportunities. (pg.4)

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP A LOCALLY ROOTED WORKFORCE



- ACADEMIC / UNIVERSITY
- CULTURAL
- GRPS SCHOOLS
- GRPS - Innovation + Montessori
- GRPS - Museum School @ Jefferson Ave.
- GRPS - Museum School @ Van Andel Museum

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN THE EXPANSION OF THEME SCHOOLS & SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS



1. MONTESSORI STAFF PARKING
2. VISITORS / EVENT PARKING
3. PLAZA / STAGE
4. PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUND
5. INFILTRATION-SCAPES
6. PLAY-SCAPES
7. OUTDOOR CLASSROOM
8. GREEN / SOLAR ROOF
9. SILVICULTURE
10. FARM
11. GREENHOUSE
12. SOLAR ROOF
13. COMPOST AREA
14. VISITOR PARKING
15. INNOVATION CENTRAL STAFF PARKING



Public Comments – D&I Improvements

>Create a new D&I summary spread for Intro area of GR Forward

>Propose more metrics and targets associated with D&I objectives

>Modify development incentive programs to reward developers that use MWBE contractors

>Develop an outreach program with Downtown employers to diversify the Downtown workforce

>Add strategy that compels local recruiters to seek out minority talent that left GR to attend college out of state, such as at historically back colleges and universities.

Public Comments – D&I Improvements

>Create a coalition of partners that can advance minority business ownership in Downtown

>Identify a source of funds (foundations?) that can be used to support the fostering of minority-owned businesses in Downtown

>Add strategy & implementation item associated with attracting an African-American Cultural Heritage Museum.

>More intentional marketing to diverse audiences and create more inclusive experiences at Downtown events for communities of color.

>Add strategy & implementation item associated with re-establishing and supporting important cultural heritage festivals, such as the African-American festival.

NEXT STEPS:

>> **Public review period ends 10/23**

>> **Additional engagement opportunities to review the plan**

> Open House at DGRI
> Copies of the full plan and executive summary at all nine public library branches
> DGRI (downtowngr.org) and GR Forward Websites (grforward.org)
> Additional meetings and events

>> **Finalize GR FORWARD**

>> **Formal Adoption**




THANK YOU!