



DESIGN DOWNTOWN DENTON

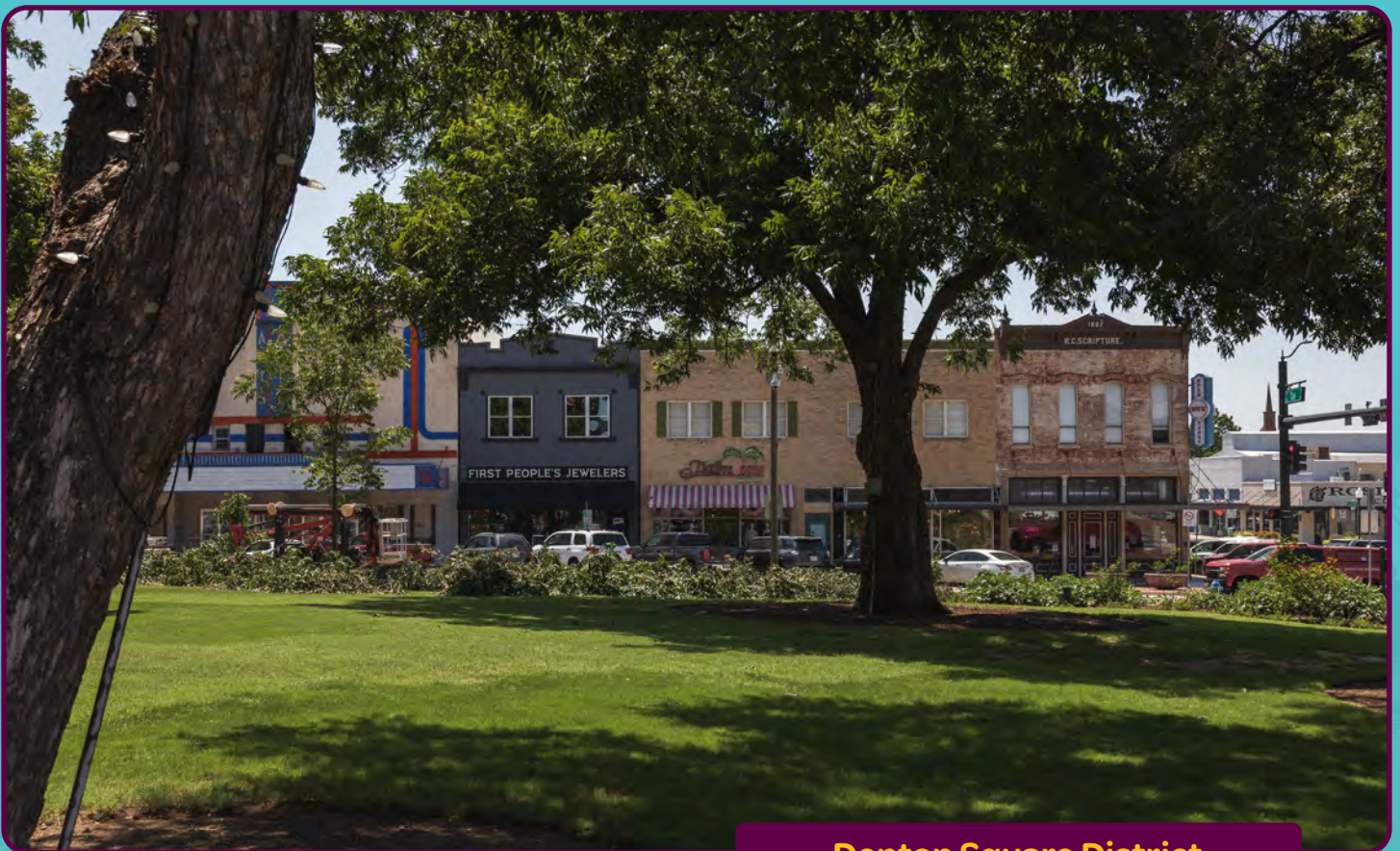
Executive Summary

Adopted on September 17, 2024



mend collaborative

Executive Summary



Denton Square District

Overview

Design Downtown Denton is a strategic blueprint for the next decade aimed at enhancing the vitality and character of Downtown Denton. This plan addresses key areas such as parks, housing, mobility, and historic preservation. Developed over a year with extensive community input, it provides a comprehensive guide for decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring that Denton's downtown remains vibrant, resilient, and responsive to the needs of its residents and businesses.

Why Plan?

The primary purpose of updating the plan for Downtown Denton is to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs and challenges of the community. This update, conducted every ten to fifteen years, allows the city to adapt to growth, incorporate new demographic, economic, and environmental data, and engage the community in shaping the future of their city. Denton has experienced significant growth, and the updated plan reflects current and future demands. Regular updates provide an opportunity to integrate new data and address emerging challenges, ensuring that Downtown Denton continues to thrive.

How will the plan be used?

The Design Downtown Denton plan is used by city officials, developers, businesses, and residents as a comprehensive guide for decision-making and development. It provides a policy and regulatory framework to support desired growth and development, outlines actionable strategies to achieve the goals of the plan, and engages the community in ongoing and future projects. The plan also helps prioritize investments and allocate resources effectively to maximize impact and benefits for the community. By updating the plan every ten years, Denton ensures that its downtown remains vibrant, resilient, and responsive to the needs of its residents and businesses.

Project Schedule

The plan was developed over a year in four phases: Understand, Envision, Act, and Adopt. Each phase built upon the previous one, starting with understanding the current conditions and community needs, envisioning strategies for improvement, acting on refining these strategies, and finally, seeking official adoption by government bodies. This structured approach ensured that the plan was comprehensive, data-driven, and reflective of community input.





DESIGN DOWNTOWN DENTON

The City of Denton is updating its Downtown Plan and creating a new design for Quakertown Park, and we want to hear from you!

(La ciudad de Denton está actualizando su plan para el centro de Denton y creando un nuevo diseño para Quakertown Park y queremos saber de usted)

Tell us about your downtown!
¿Cuéntanos sobre tu centro!

QR code and City of Denton logo

DESIGN DOWNTOWN DENTON

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

TOPICS

- Development and Street Mainstays
- History
- Arts & Culture
- Historic Preservation
- Parks and Public Space

TELL US

City of Denton logo

TWU

PARKS & RECREATION
0743

Community Engagement

The primary goal of our community engagement was to create a collaborative environment where residents, business owners, and city officials could share their vision for Downtown Denton's future. Our inclusive and iterative process ensured every voice was heard. We used a variety of online and in person activities to:

- **Understand the Community:** Gather insights through surveys, workshops, and direct conversations to grasp the unique needs and desires of Dentonites.
- **Envision Together:** Develop and refine strategies that align with the community's aspirations for a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous downtown.
- **Act Collaboratively:** Prioritize and detail actionable steps, working closely with stakeholders to ensure the feasibility and community support for each initiative.
- **Adopt and Implement:** Present the plan to governing bodies, revising as needed to reflect the community's feedback, leading to official adoption and execution.



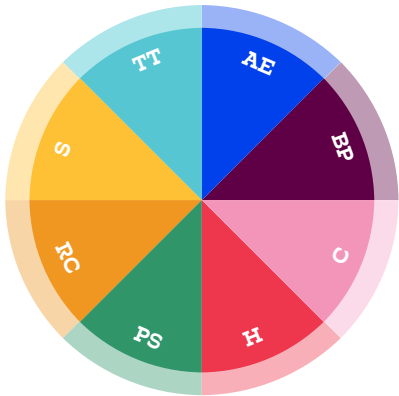
Our period of dialoguing with the public included fun and engaging pop-up events that allowed us to hear from a wider variety of people.



Design Downtown Denton to be a more walkable, beautiful, and fun destination for shopping, working, learning, and recreation that also serves as a hub of opportunity, welcoming all Dentonites. Cultivate a vibrant and diverse residential community. Preserve and expand the distinctive local businesses, foster a strong sense of community, and safeguard the historic and artistic character while promoting growth and development.

Community Priorities

Based on analysis of conversations with community members a vision statement and community priorities were developed. Throughout the plan, these priorities are represented by a pie. Each recommendation fulfils at least one of these priorities:



- **Arts, Entertainment, and Events:** Enhance public art, music initiatives, and festivals to enrich the downtown area’s cultural scene.
- **Bike and Pedestrian Mobility:** Improve walkability and bike safety through better streetscapes and connected routes.
- **Culture:** Promote diversity and inclusion by acknowledging history, celebrating local culture, and connecting Downtown to Denton’s colleges and universities.
- **Housing Development:** Address rising rents and housing affordability by increasing housing supply, mixed-use developments, and various residential options to foster a vibrant community.
- **Parks and Public Spaces:** Create a network of green spaces with amenities like gardens and play areas, and add more trees and landscaping.
- **Retail and Commercial Development:** Invest in local businesses, increase housing options, and preserve historic landmarks to boost economic growth.
- **Safety:** Improve the perception of safety by addressing homelessness concerns, designing streets to support outdoor events, defining key pedestrian corridors, and enhancing sidewalk maintenance
- **Traffic and Transit:** Improve roadway safety, enhance parking availability and management, and expand bus and bike routes to reduce parking demand and improve downtown accessibility.

Recommendations

In response to the extensive community input and collaboration among local stakeholders, Design Downtown Denton proposes a forward-thinking vision for revitalizing Downtown Denton. The plan emphasizes enhanced walkability, improved public spaces, and sustainable development that preserves the area's unique character. The following recommendations were informed by thorough stakeholder engagement, feasibility assessments, and best practices research, aimed at maximizing Downtown's potential while addressing current challenges. The recommendations are grouped into four categories.

1. Better Utilize Downtown's Streetscape

Improving the use of Downtown Denton's streets is essential for fostering a safer, more inclusive, and lively city core. The plan emphasizes the transformation of street space to prioritize pedestrian experiences. The introduction of 'Denton Chill Streets' is a

novel approach aimed at improving comfort and environmental resilience by optimizing shade and walkability. The plan advocates for improving links to vital destinations, thereby bolstering economic growth and encouraging eco-friendly transport options. Collectively, these initiatives are designed to cultivate a welcoming atmosphere for all modes of travel, thereby elevating the livability of Downtown Denton.

1A Rightsizing and 4/3 Conversions

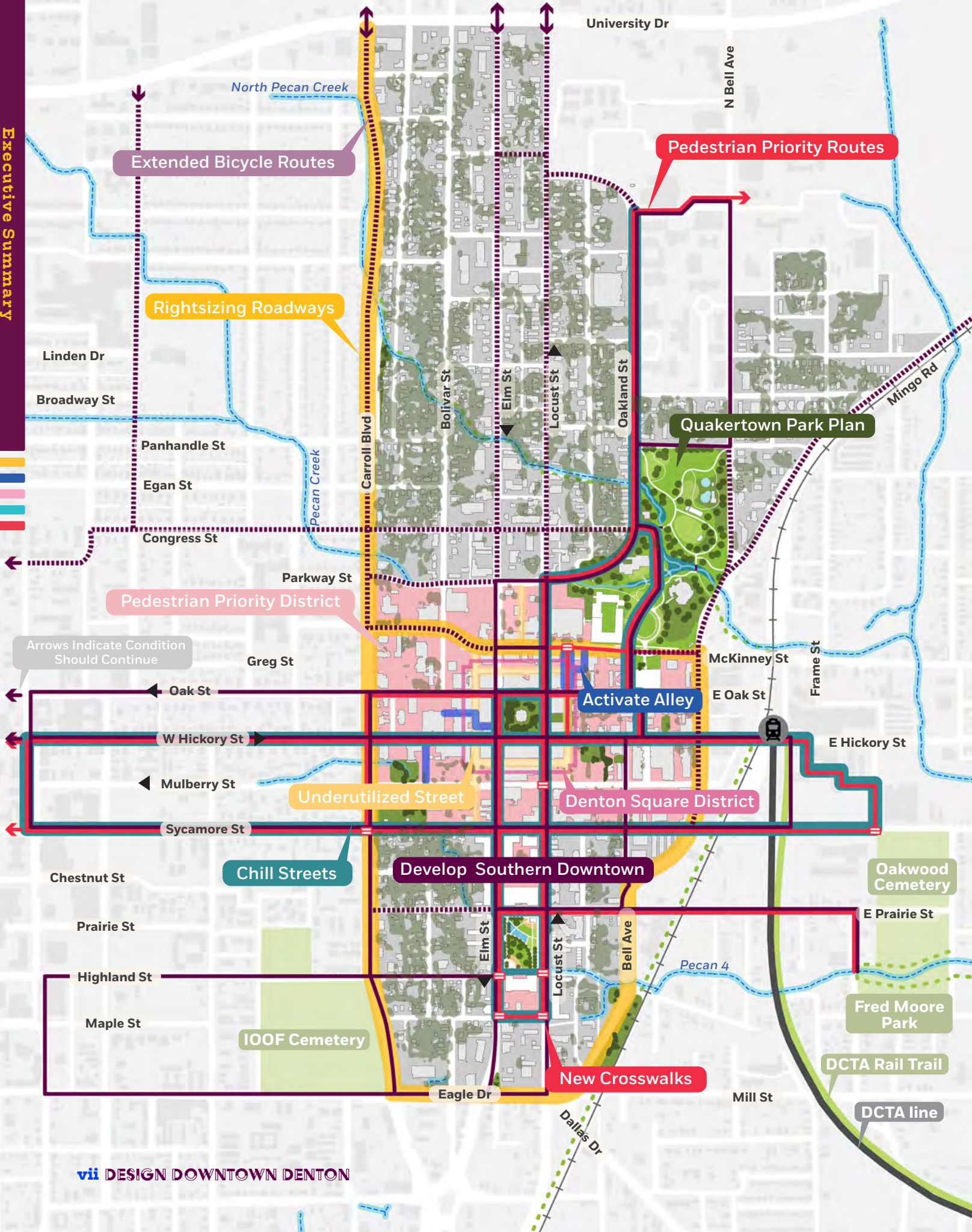
1B Pedestrian Priority Routes and Denton Chill Streets

1C Improve Bike Connections

1D Improve Transit



A rendering of a Chill Street. Image Source: Mend Collaborative



2. Build a Network of Improved Public Spaces

The revitalization of Downtown Denton's public spaces is pivotal for enriching residents' lives and stimulating economic prosperity. The plan emphasizes transforming new and existing parks and public spaces into dynamic hubs that bolster social engagement, wellness, and cultural activities. The strategy includes leveraging these enhancements to draw visitors, enhancing the local economy and prioritizes environmental stewardship. A key element of this vision is the redesign of Quakertown Park, acknowledging its layered history as a Freedmen's Town and its evolution into a city park. This plan seeks to honor the park's heritage while adapting it for contemporary community use. These enhancements are not just for recreation and aesthetics but are integral to the collective health and prosperity of Denton.

2A Quakertown Park Master Plan

2B Activate Vacant Lots

2C Utilization of Alleys

2D Utilization of Underutilized Streets

2E Create a New Park in Southern Downtown

2F Improvements to the County's Historic Park

2G Develop Public Art Plan



A rendering of the proposed new plaza adjacent to the Square. Image Source: Mend Collaborative

3. Target Development to Build on Downtown's Character and Assets

Emphasizing development is pivotal for ensuring Downtown Denton grows with the City while also preserving its distinctive character and assets. The updated approach focuses on fostering a vibrant community by introducing a mix of housing options that cater to various demographics, thereby promoting Downtown living and economic prosperity. The plan underscores the importance of preserving Denton's historic charm through strategic infill and civic investments, while also expanding open spaces for public enjoyment. Affordability remains a key concern, with actions aimed at ensuring housing accessibility for a diverse population. The preservation of historic sites is strengthened, and design guidelines are refined to ensure new developments complement Denton's architectural heritage. These measures are designed to bolster Downtown Denton's appeal as a place to live, work, and visit, contributing to its sustainable growth and preserving its historical and cultural legacy.

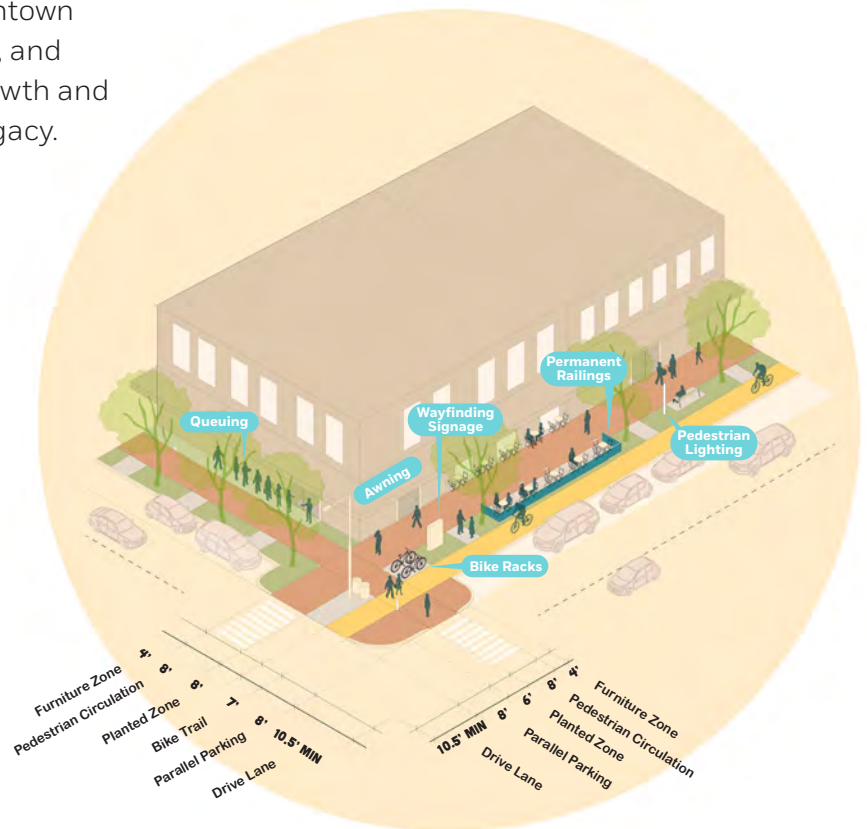
3A Develop Southern Downtown

3B Encourage Downtown Living

3C Strengthen Historic Preservation Opportunities

3D Public Realm Design Guidelines and Zoning

3E Explore Opportunities for Transformative Projects



Historic Square District and Chill Street on the Square.
Image Source: Mend Collaborative

4. Promote Downtown's Nightlife, Music, Events, History, and Art

Promoting Downtown Denton's unique nightlife, music, events, history, and art assets is essential for the City's cultural and economic vitality. The updated plan emphasizes the importance of supportive policies and regulations to foster a vibrant entertainment environment that attracts talent, investment, and visitors. The City's music and nightlife are key to its allure, drawing patrons and bolstering local commerce. Establishing music venues, bars, and events enrich the cultural fabric, making Downtown an appealing hub for both locals and tourists. By leveraging economic development tools, the city can encourage entrepreneurship and economic stability. Additionally, celebrating Denton's historical and artistic heritage through various initiatives can strengthen community bonds and pride. These efforts will maintain Downtown Denton's reputation for cultural offerings and energetic ambiance. Concentrating on these elements, the City aims to craft an unparalleled and unforgettable experience for all.



Many Denton businesses foster community with unique and fun outdoor spaces. Offering support to these businesses can help them continue to flourish. Image Source: Mend Collaborative



A school dance group performs on the Courthouse Square as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. Image Source: Mend Collaborative

4A Support Music and Nightlife

4B Develop a Performing Arts Center

4C Expand Programs to Support Small Businesses

4D Expand on Downtown Events

4E Expand on Economic Development Tools

4F Establish a Downtown Brand

4G Establish a Public Improvement District

Implementation



New development in southern Downtown. Image Source: Mend Collaborative

Overview of Implementation Approach

The successful realization of the Downtown Denton plan hinges on a well-coordinated implementation strategy. This phase is critical for translating the vision and recommendations into tangible outcomes. Strategic execution ensures that the initiatives are carried out effectively, fostering a more vibrant and sustainable downtown.

Key Implementation Steps

To ensure systematic progress, the recommendations have been prioritized based on their potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with the community's needs. A phased rollout will be adopted, starting with high-priority projects that can deliver immediate benefits. This phased approach allows for careful monitoring and adjustments as needed, ensuring that each step builds on the success of previous efforts.

Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation requires collaboration among various stakeholders:

- **City Government** - Will lead the effort by providing regulatory support, funding, and oversight.
- **Private Sector and Developers** - Will be key partners in executing development projects, contributing to public realm improvements, and adhering to updated guidelines.
- **Community Involvement** - Continuous community engagement is vital for maintaining public support and ensuring that the projects meet residents' needs and expectations.

Next Steps

The immediate actions involve initiating high-priority projects that can quickly demonstrate the plan's benefits. This includes starting with key infrastructure improvements, updating zoning regulations, and launching incentive programs for developers. Long-term goals will be achieved through continued investment in public spaces, fostering cultural activities, and ensuring ongoing community engagement. Milestones will be set to track progress and make necessary adjustments along the way.

Conclusion

The Downtown Denton plan represents a comprehensive vision for a thriving, inclusive, and dynamic urban center. By focusing on better utilizing street space, improving public spaces, targeting development, and promoting cultural activities, the plan aims to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. The commitment to this vision reflects the community's aspirations and the city's dedication to sustainable growth and development.



We invite all stakeholders to join us in this transformative journey. Your participation, whether through feedback, investment, or active involvement, is crucial to the success of this plan. Together, we can create a downtown Denton that not only meets the needs of today but also paves the way for a brighter, more sustainable future. Let's work together to turn this vision into reality, ensuring that downtown Denton thrives for generations to come.