





DESIGN DOWNTOWN DENTON

Visioning Workshop
December 4, 2023



INTRODUCTIONS



Mend Collaborative

Lead Consultant



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The Catalyst Group

Market Research/TOD
Strategy

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Market/TOD Strategy Lead



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PROJECT OVERVIEW



Study Area

Downtown Denton Legend

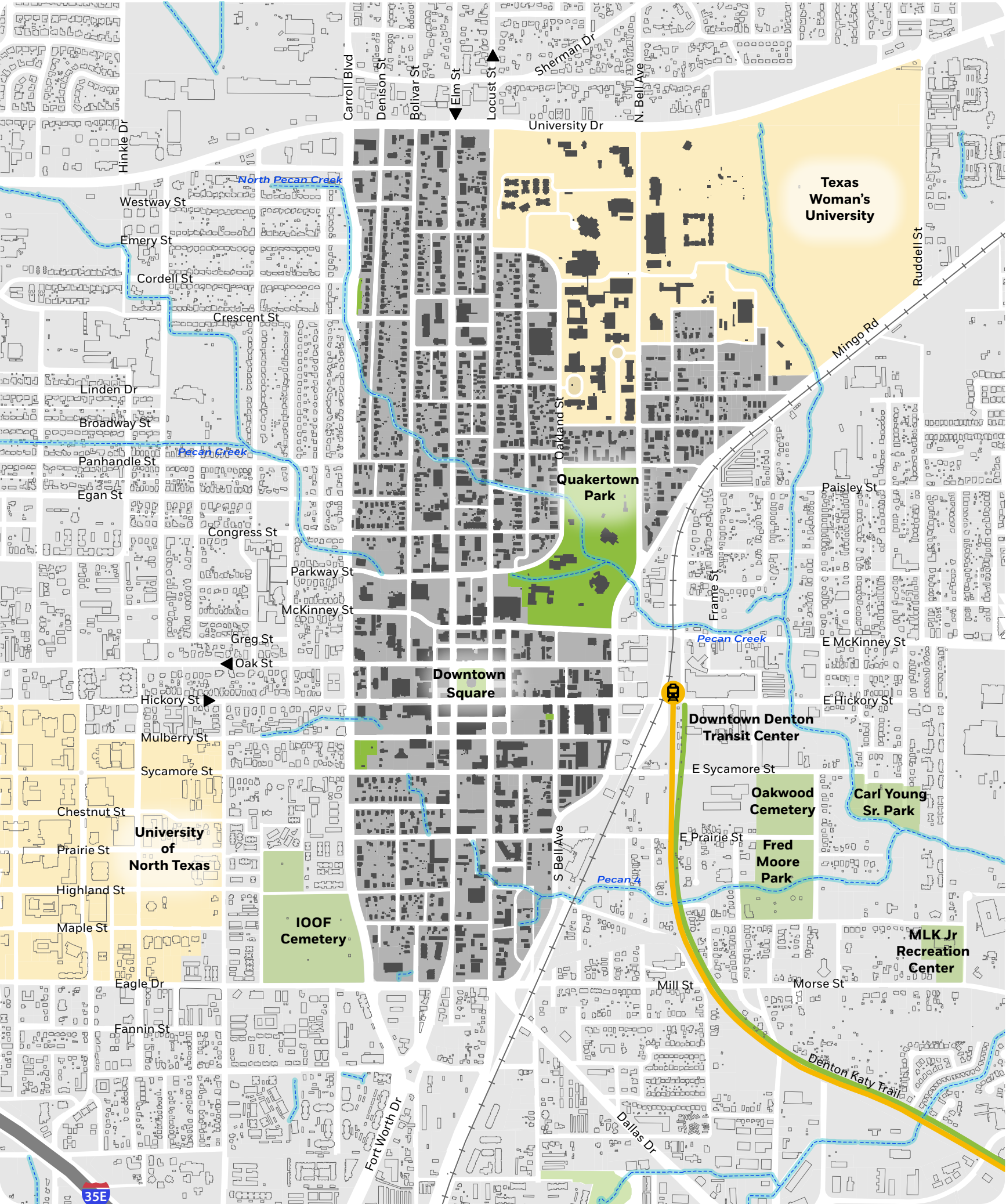
 Downtown

 City and County Parks

 Universities

 Railroad

 Waterways



Project Approach and Schedule



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Topics



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Historic Preservation



Arts & Culture



Development and
Small Businesses



Mobility



Parks

Artist: Jude Landry
www.judelandry.com



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CASE FOR ACTION



How well do you know Denton?



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**How much has Denton's population
grown in the past 20 years?**



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Telling the Layered Story of Downtown Denton and Quakertown Park

1905

The City purchased an electric and water plant.

1908

The City built a sewer system.
First streetcars.

1920

Population: 7,600
Hickory Street at Courthouse Square is the first paved street.

1921

City Commission approved petition brought by J.L. Hooper with 150 voters. Petition called for a general election to approve bonds to purchase the land occupied by Quakertown and turn it into a park. The bond passed, 367 for and 240 against.

1927



City Hall designed by Van Slyke and Woodruff opens.

1928

Denton City Federation of Women's Club building on Oakland opens.

1967



O'Neil Ford Denton City Hall & Denton Civic Center open.

1968



O'Neil Ford addition to Emily Fowler Public Library opens.

2000

Population: 80,500

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District listed in the National Register.

2008

West Oak Area Historic District designated.

2010



Quakertown Park revised plan.

1900s



1912

Denton City Federation of Women's Club formed.

1922-23

The Quakertown neighborhood is razed, and City Park is created in its place. Many displaced Quakertown residents moved to the area known as Solomon Hill; others leave Denton altogether.

1923

Building permits reached \$1 M.

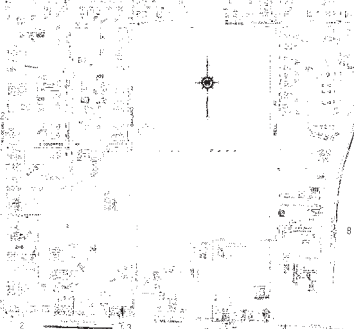
1925

Building permits reached \$1.5 M.

1928

Population: 9,600

1949



Emily Fowler Public Library opens.

1965

O'Neil Ford Municipal Swimming Pool opens.

1977

Denton County Courthouse listed in the National Historic Register.

1979

Golden Triangle Mall opens.

1980

Population: 48,000

1985

Oak-Hickory Local Historic District designated.

1991

The Historic Bridge received a Historic Landmark designation, Ordinance no. 91-006

1997



Civic Center Park Master Plan (small pond, lake, underground schemes).

1997

The Denton Women's Club received a Historic Landmark designation, Ordinance no. 99-314.

2017

The O'Neil Ford Civic Complex designated a local historic landmark.

2018

Bell Avenue Local Historic District designated.

2020

Population: 140,000

West Denton Residential Historic District listed in the National Register.

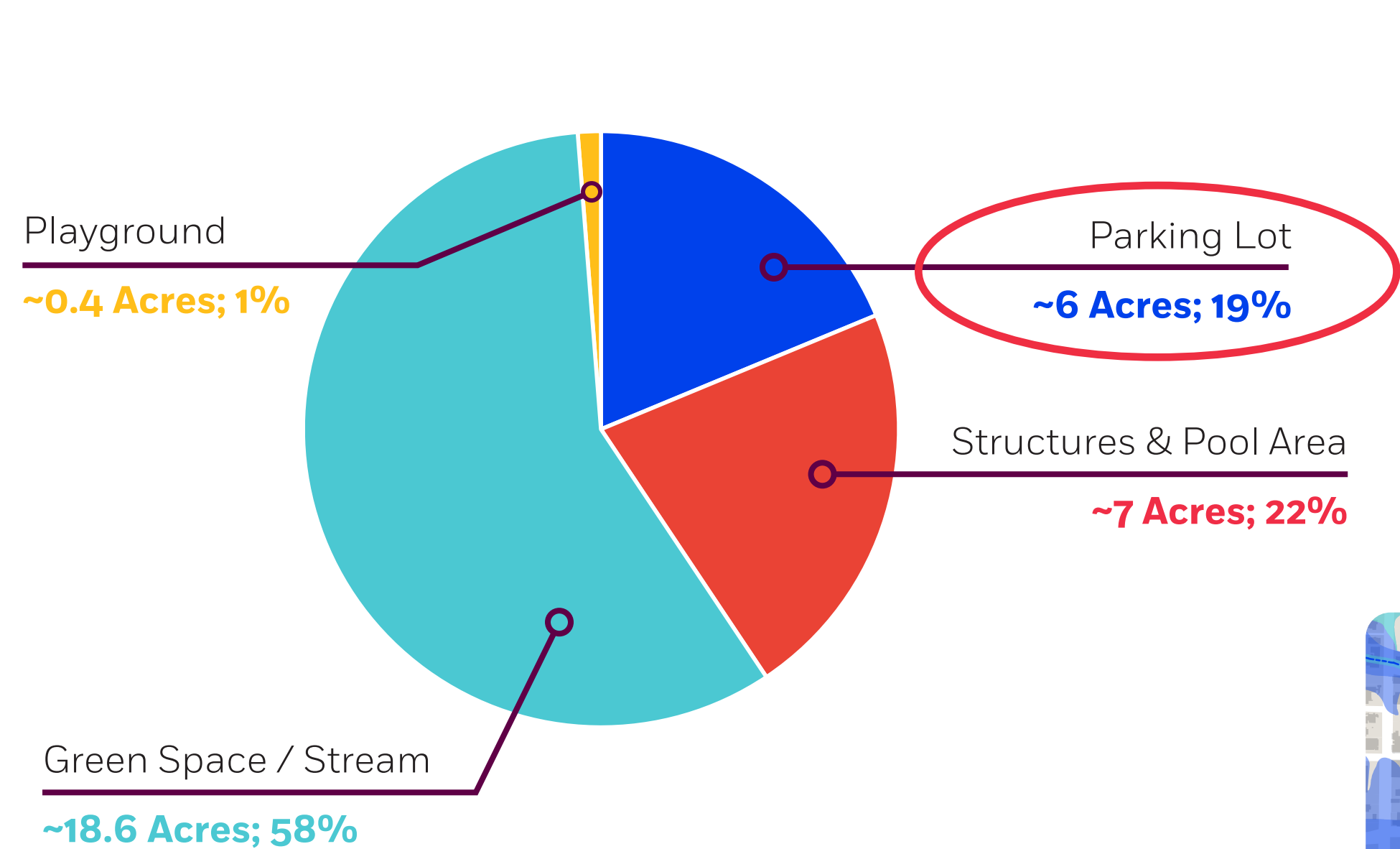
74%
Growth!

How much of Quakertown Park is taken up by parking?

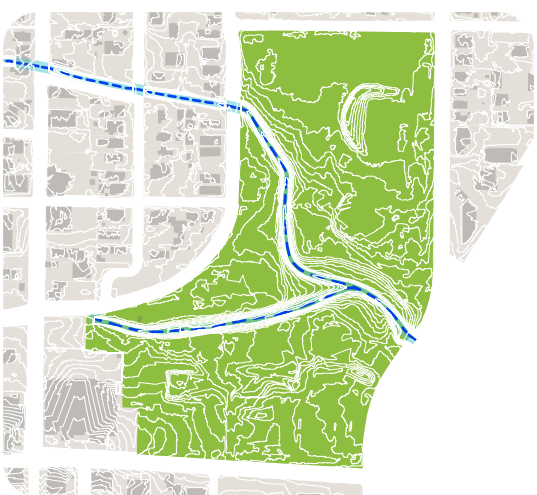


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Quakertown Park Approximate Land Cover



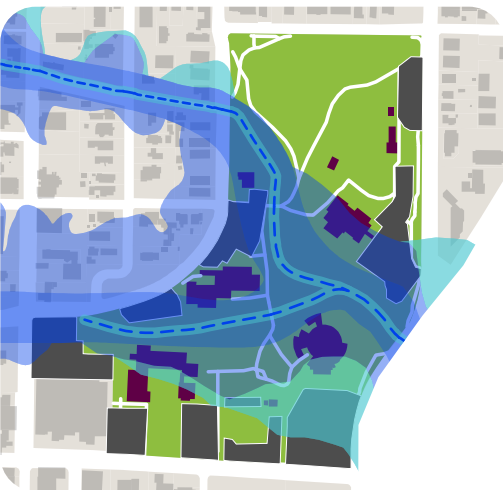
 Floodplain Coverage
~19 Acres; 59%



Topography



100 Year and 500 Year Floodplains



Floodplains and Park Features

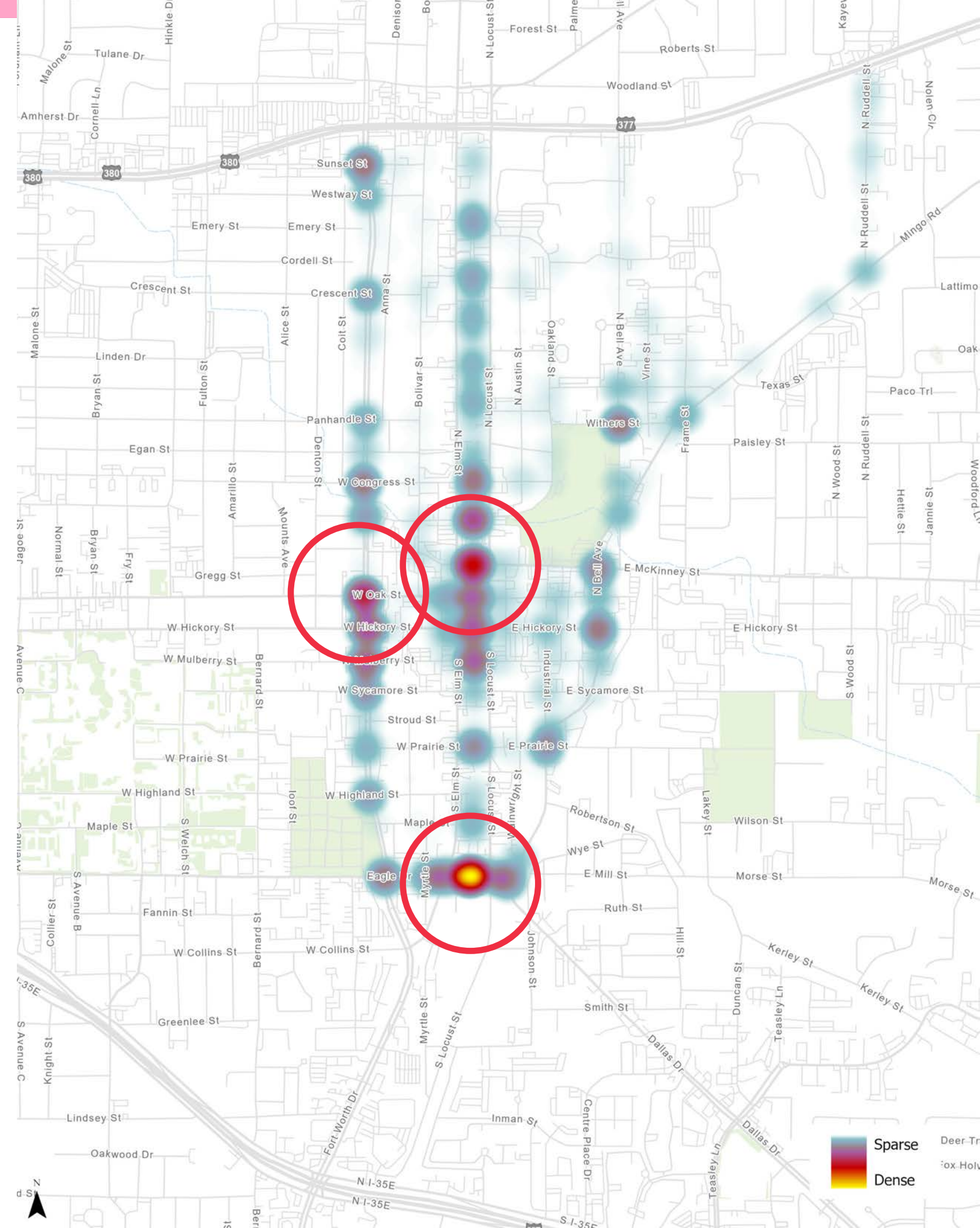
Can you name one of the three most dangerous intersections Downtown?



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Walkability: Crash Analysis Map

- Crashes are most common at Locust/Elm and Eagle Drive, Locust/Elm and McKinney just north of the square, and at the intersection of Oak and Carroll
- High crash rates in the vicinity of the square, a high-volume pedestrian destination, underscores the need for infrastructure that makes pedestrians feel safe



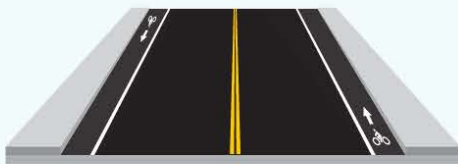
Which of the following streets carries less traffic than its design would suggest?



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Roadway Classifications

- Volume capacity was derived from the 2022 Mobility Plan
- **Wider streets incentivize speeding** – the design of streets can impact drivers’ speed more than the posted speed limit
- **Wider streets means longer crosswalks** and more time that pedestrians must spend crossing the street – a narrower street improves safety conditions

Type	Illustration	Volume Capacity	Land Use
Local		< 5,000	 Neighborhood Residential
Collector		11,500	 Neighborhood Residential
Minor Arterial		29,000	 Commercial or Residential
Major Arterial		45,000	 Mixed Use Residential, Retail, & Commercial

Roadway Classifications

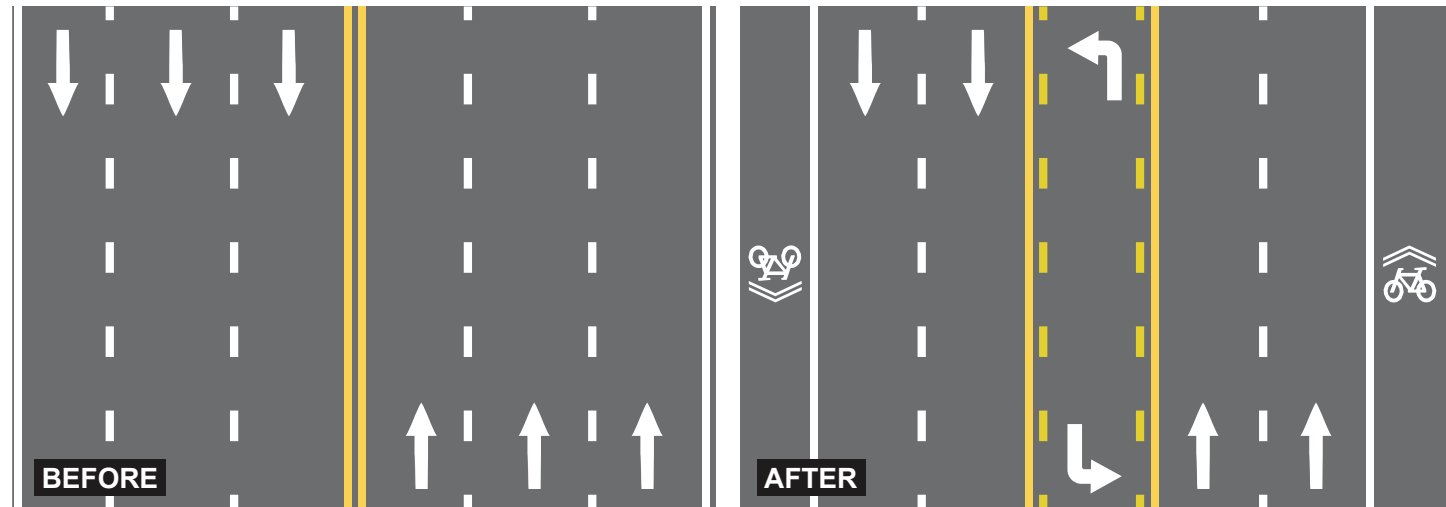
- Streets in Denton don't all fit neatly into street type categories. Streets that are **Oversized** have more lanes than are needed to carry their typical daily traffic. **Rightsized** streets have enough lanes to carry their typical traffic
- **Carroll Boulevard, Elm Street, and Locust Street** are some examples of oversized streets in downtown Denton
- Some streets, like **Elm and Locust, are owned by TXDOT**, which limits the City's ability to make changes.

Street Name	Street Type	Cars per Day	Status	
Hickory Street	Minor Arterial	5,041	✓	Rightsized
Carroll Boulevard	Minor Arterial	28,428	↓	Oversized
Oak Street	Minor Arterial	8,595	✓	Rightsized
Denton Street	Local	258	✓	Rightsized
Sycamore Street	Local	881	✓	Rightsized

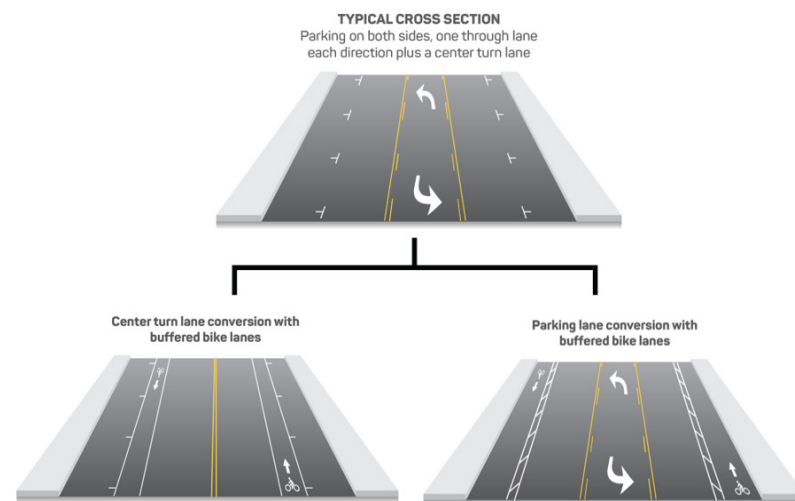
Roadway Configuration Strategies

- A 4-3 conversion, or transforming a low-traffic street with 4 car lanes into one with 3 car lanes and bike lanes is a common approach that adds bicycle capacity without impacting vehicle throughput
- There are many ways to reconfigure an oversized street, but what matters most is considering community and capacity needs for all modes

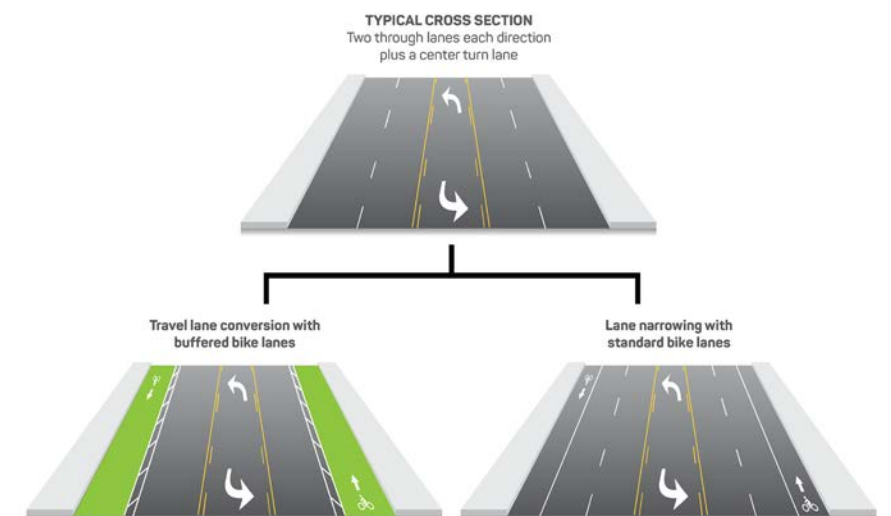
Lane Conversion Example



Parking Lane Repurposing



Roadway Lane Narrowing



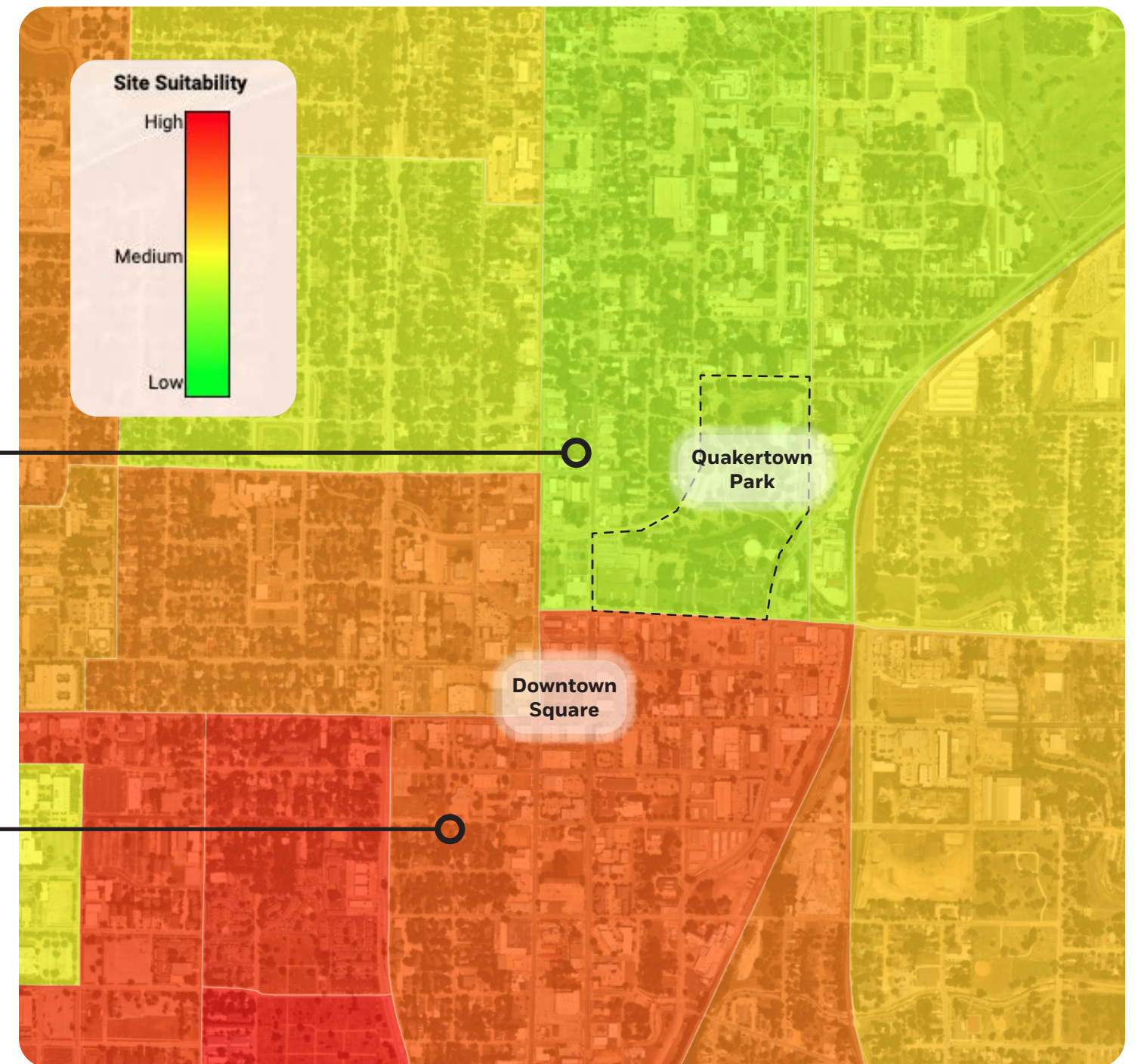
**What percent of tree cover is recommended
to combat urban heat island effects?**



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Urban Heat Island Effect

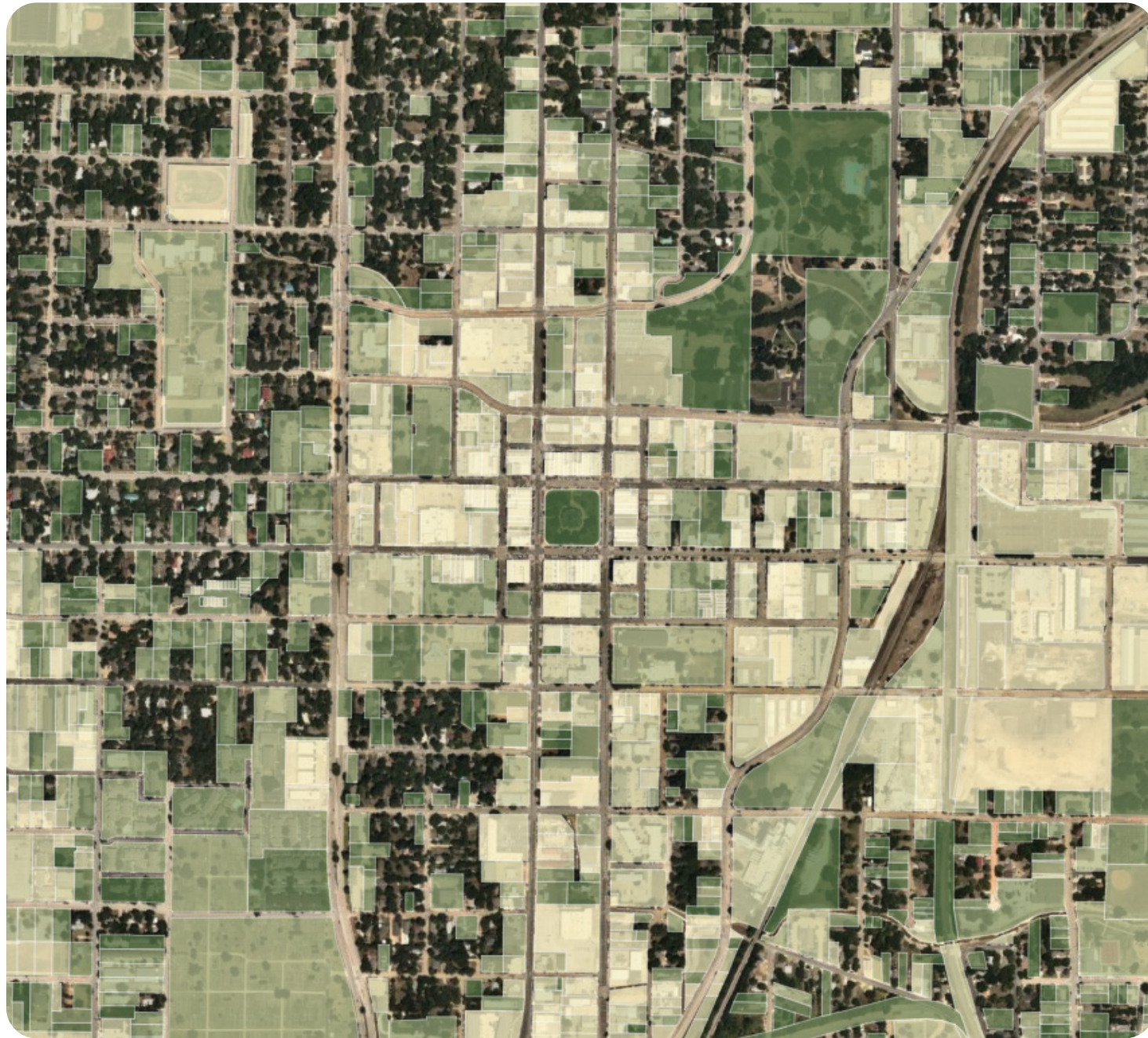
Urban areas can be 10 to 20 degrees hotter than surrounding rural and natural areas. Numerous opportunities, including tree canopy, building heights, and other shade can make a meaningful difference.



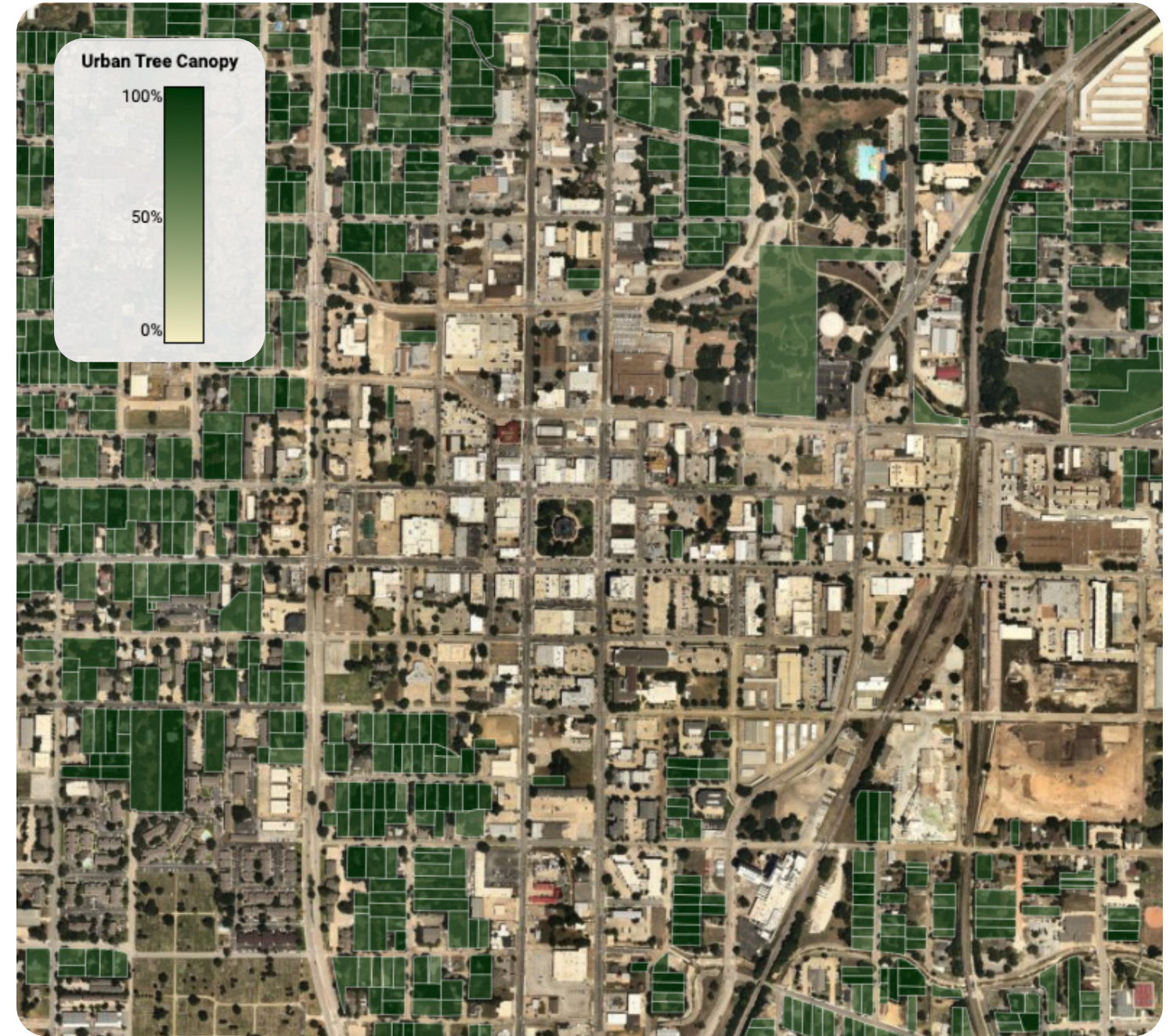
Average surface temperature by block group USGS thermal imagery and survey data

Source: City of Denton Tree Plotter™ Tool

Existing Tree Canopy



Tree Canopy <40% by parcel
Source: City of Denton Tree Plotter™ Tool



Tree Canopy $\geq 40\%$ by parcel



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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Engagement Activities

September

9/9 Arts and Autos
9/15 Parking Day
9/15-17 Denton Blues Fest
9/28 National Night Out

October

10/6-8 Denton Arts and Jazz Festival
10/12 Twilight Tunes
10/19 Twilight Tunes



Social Map

Dentonites were able to provide location specific feedback on a large map brought to events or on the engagement website. Comments could be categorized as ideas for a location, ideas specifically for parks or mobility, what they like about Downtown, or what they have concerns about.



Visioning Activity

Residents and visitors commented on what they love about Denton today and what they believe Denton needs to be even better in the future. They added their notes to the board at tabled events. This activity was also available on the engagement website.



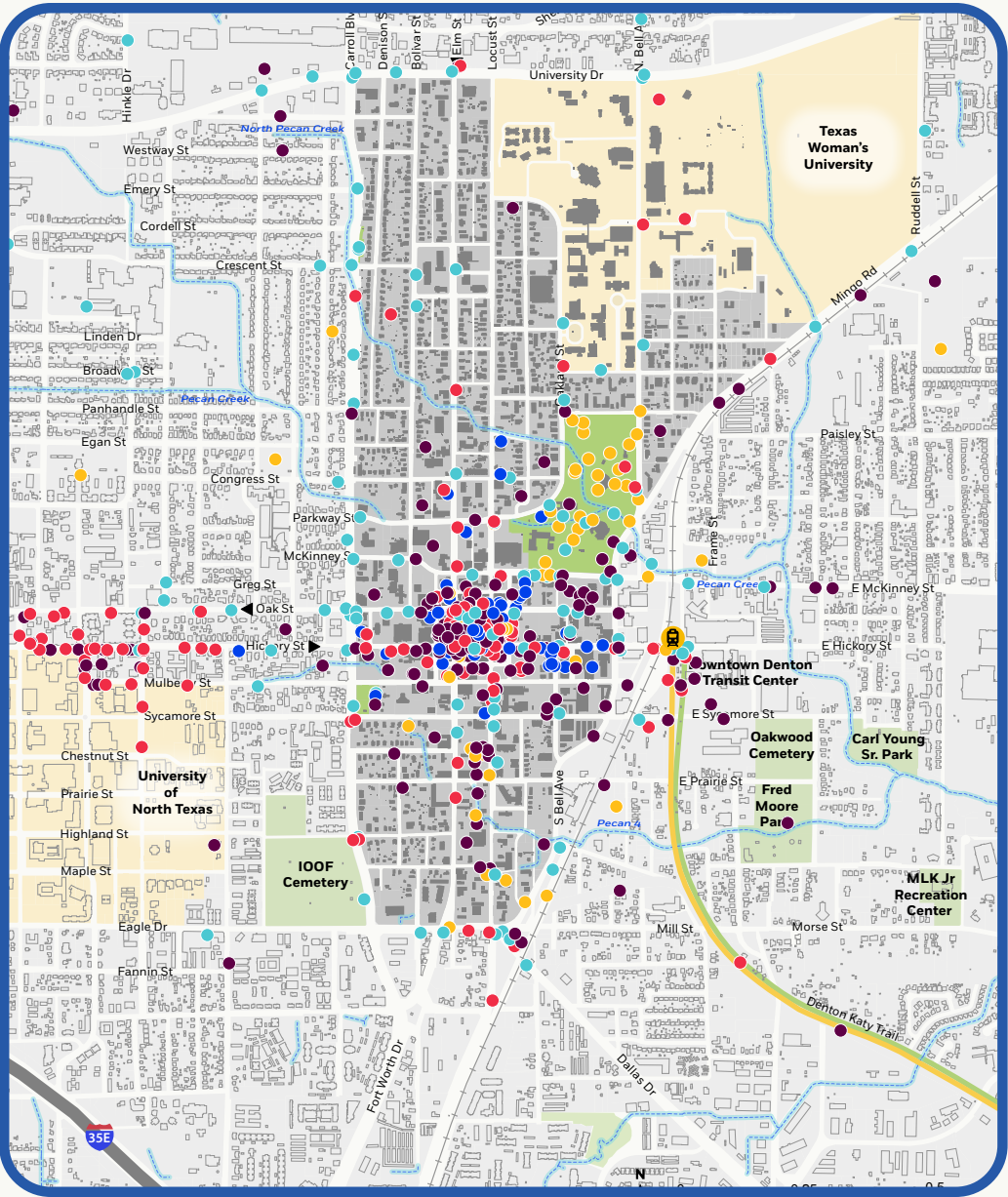
Surveys

A survey was conducted with local businesses for feedback on what has helped them succeed in Downtown and what they need going forward. A survey for Quakertown Park was also done at Arts and Jazz Fest where visitors commented on what their priorities for improvements to the park are.



Engagement Data

907 total comments provided
3,391 total reactions
158 total survey responses
(85 business survey, 73 Quakertown Park)



Online

3,032 visits by 2,054 visitors
462 Social Map Comments
153 Downtown Love/Need Comments

Pop-Ups

102 Map Comments
190 Downtown Love/Need Comments

564 Comments provided on the social map



49 I like this!



199 I have an idea!



121 I have a concern!



135 I have a mobility idea!



60 I have a park idea!

391 comments provided within downtown



Overall Themes

The most prominent themes from over 900 comments provided by residents of and visitors to Downtown Denton:



Bike and Pedestrian Mobility

Enhance walkability, expand protected bike lanes, and close streets to vehicles for events and gatherings.

“Downtown is the best area of Denton because it’s the only place where one can walk around, have a picnic, shop, and drink without a car!”

Retail and Development

Invest in local businesses, increase housing, and protect historic landmarks.

“Work with economic development to help bring businesses in here that would make these West side streets destinations, such as a coffee shop”

Parks and Public Spaces

Expand network of parks and public spaces, add trees and landscaping, program underutilized areas.

“Invest in more trees. Trees are important to cool the area, and also bring wildlife and happiness to people.”

Arts, Entertainment, and Events

Develop visual brand for Downtown area, bring new activities to Downtown, encourage and support artists, public arts, and art venues.

“The large murals on some of the downtown buildings is wonderful. I would love to see more of that. However, it needs to be quality art and maintained.”

Traffic and Transit

Improve traffic safety, parking management, and transit accessibility.

“Better public transportation in the form of buses, better safe parking in the form of garages, improved walkability and bike lanes.”

Vision Activity

Visitors to pop-up booths and the engagement website were asked to briefly write down what they love most about downtown Denton and what they believe Downtown needs to be even better in the future.

I love Downtown because...

307 comments+reactions

“I can park in one place and walk from business to business!”

“Family-friendly festivals!”

“The unique vibe and local shops!”

“The attractive historic structures!”

Downtown needs...

364 comments+reactions

“More street trees and shade.”

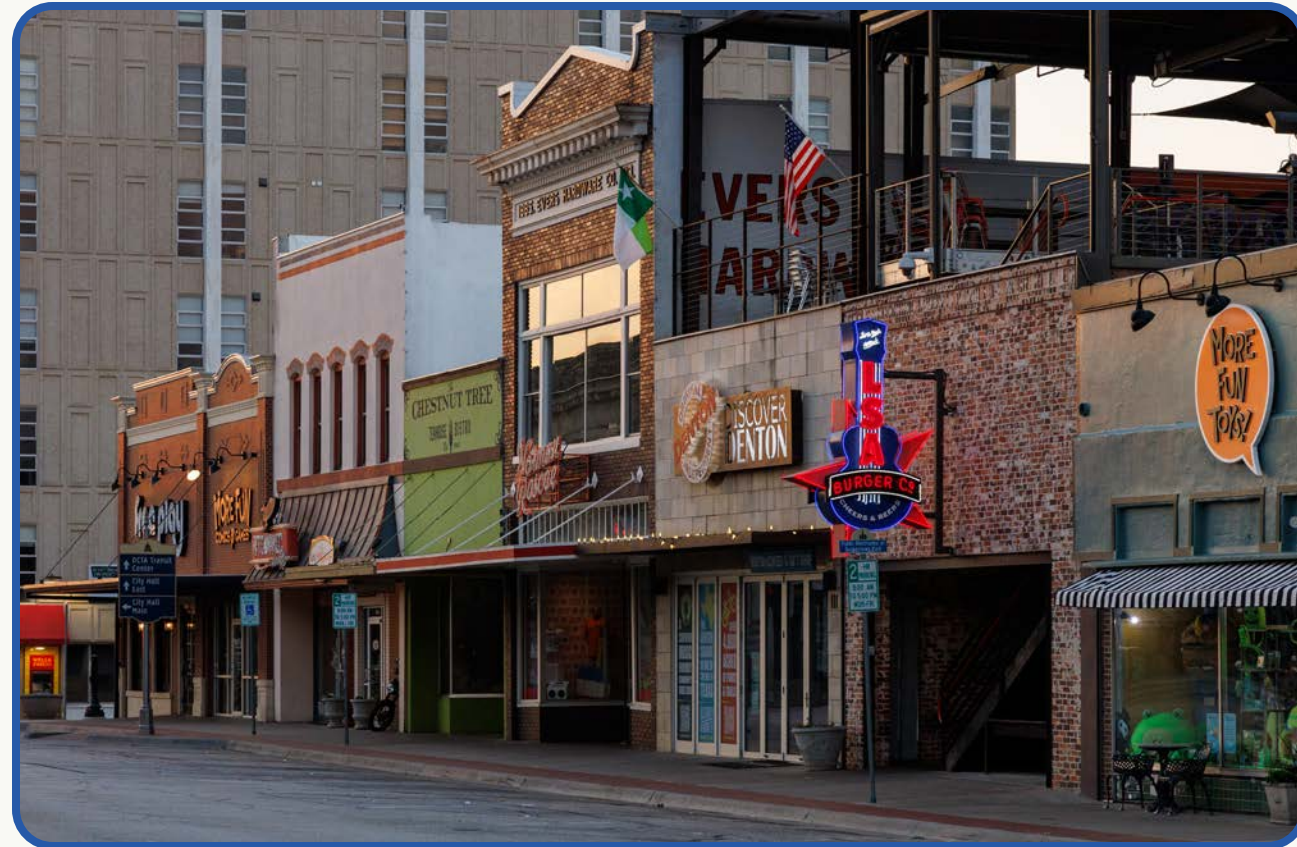
“Less empty retail and an expansion of sidewalks and other pedestrian safety features.

“To expand outdoor patios, dining spaces, and seating.”

“A fully connected, protected bike network that gets to essentials.”



Business Survey

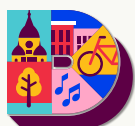


85 surveys completed

16 business types including retail, restaurants, real estate, art studios, consulting, and nonprofits

64 rent spaces

21 own property



What attracted you to downtown?

- Growth potential,
- Vibrant community, and
- Central location around the bustling Square.

What other businesses, attractions, or other development Downtown contribute to your success?

- Bars, restaurants, shopping and events that keep people in the area all day
- Complimentary businesses that attract similar demographics

What Downtown events, if any, contribute most to your success?

- Holiday lighting
- Arts and Autos
- Day of the Dead
- UNT football
- Wine walks
- Jazz Festival

What types of public improvements (for example sidewalks or parks) Downtown would be most beneficial to your business?

- More clean and well-maintained sidewalks
- Easier parking
- More parks and family-oriented activities



VISION AND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Project Approach



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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.



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Community Priorities

1

**Bike/
Pedestrian
Safety and
Mobility**

2

**Retail and
Commercial
Development**

3

**Parks and
Public Space**

4

**Arts,
Entertainment
and Events**

5

**Traffic and
Transit**

6

Safety

7

**Housing
Development**

8

Culture



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Bike/Pedestrian Safety and Mobility

- Enhance walkability by improving our streetscapes, including sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and crosswalks.
- Implementing safety measures at dangerous intersections.
- Connect key areas, including the universities, the square and the transit center both physically through public realm improvements and infill development and through a common Downtown brand.
- Promote a safer environment for cyclists by expanding protected bike lanes, bike parking, and trails.
- Regularly close side streets for public events and community gatherings.

Retail and Commercial Development

- Invest in areas around the square to improve business and housing variety, public safety, and overall aesthetics.
- Improve public space to encourage foot traffic and inspire building upkeep.
- Emphasize the historical significance and preservation of historical assets within the downtown area, including expanding local, state, and national designations.
- Promote and protect the local business community, including those businesses beyond the Square.
- Fill empty storefronts and vacant lots with unique local shops and food and beverage options.

Parks and Public Space

- Create a network of green spaces and public parks with amenities such as community gardens, picnic areas and kids play areas.
- Add more trees and landscaping in public spaces to provide shade, and improve aesthetics.
- Build outdoor amenities like public seating, restrooms, water fountains, and more.
- Find ways to activate underutilized areas, such as alleys, vacant properties, and sidewalks.
- Preserve the view corridors and viewsheds of Downtown including the Courthouse-on-the-Square and the Morrison Milling silos.



Arts, Entertainment and Events

Create a marketing brand for the downtown area, and use that brand to tie downtown to the surrounding community.

Encourage and promote public art and music initiatives and festivals.

Build on current successes by adding new activities and events, especially for children and families.

Support the addition of interactive art, music, sculptures, and lighting to create engaging spaces.

Explore the addition and improvement of a variety of music and art venues, stages, and theaters.

Traffic and Transit

- Improve roadway safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists by implementing traffic closures on certain streets and during events, as well as exploring road rightsizing and traffic calming initiatives.
 - Improve parking availability and management by upgrading lots with trees and landscaping, adding wayfinding signage to and from parking to destinations, and considering the construction of a public parking garage in the downtown area.
- Enhance accessibility by expanding and improving bus routes to the transit center and other key destinations.

Safety

- Improve perception of safety by partnering with service providers to address homelessness concerns and needs.
- Design streets with infrastructure to enable street closures and to support outdoor events.
- Define key pedestrian corridors and improve their streetscapes, shade canopy and lighting.
- Improve maintenance and cleanliness on sidewalks.

Housing Development

- Address rising rents and housing affordability through increased housing supply, mixed-use developments, and more residential options to foster a vibrant local community.
- Provide more housing options downtown, establishing a variety of housing stock that will appeal to many different residents' needs.

Culture

- Foster increased diversity and inclusion through the acknowledgement of history and increased opportunities for all Dentonites
- Protect/continue to embody what people love most about the feel of Denton: community pride, welcoming atmosphere, and historic scale.
- Celebrate and connect downtown to Denton's colleges and universities.
- Highlight the downtown culture with the broader Denton community and county



NEXT STEPS



Next Steps

- Case for Action video
- Engagement Phase Two
 - Additional online engagement
 - Focus groups on key topics
- Development of actions, catalyst projects, and pilot projects

Visit engage.mendcollaborative.com/downtowndenton to stay informed.

[#designdowntowndenton](https://twitter.com/designdowntowndenton)

