



HARRISONBURG
DOWNTOWN
TOWN
2040

BRIEFING BOOK ON ANALYSIS & ENGAGEMENT

DECEMBER 14, 2021

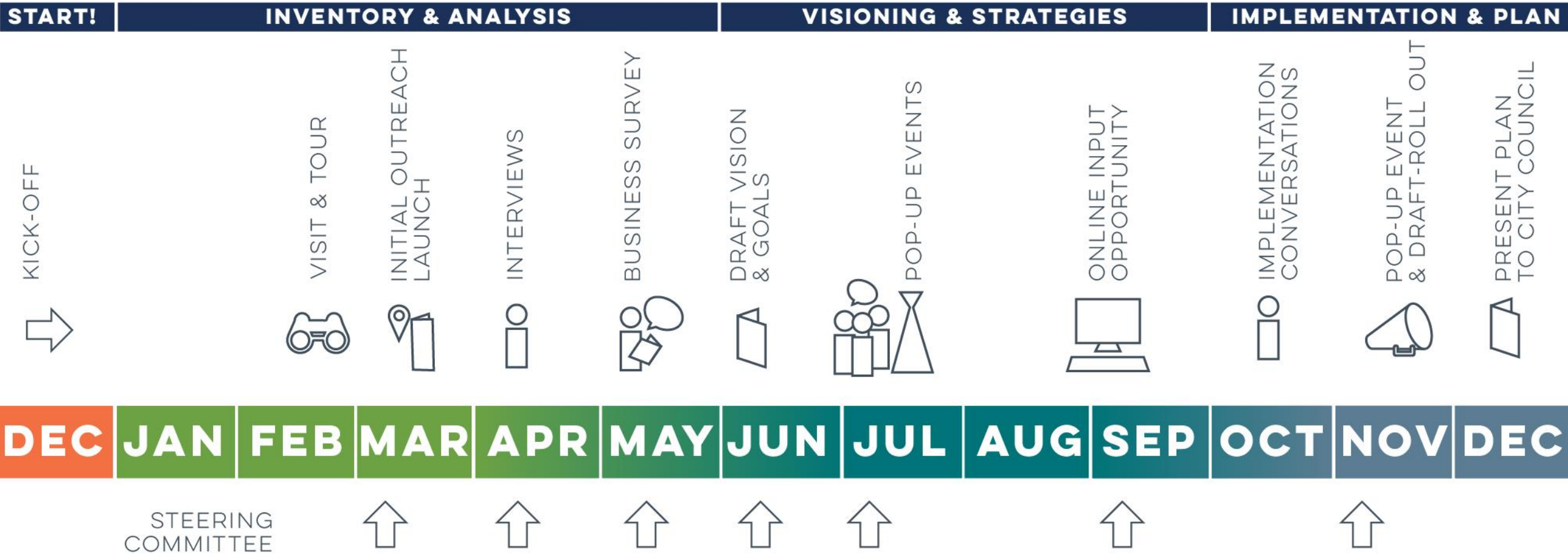
INTERFACE STUDIO

MONTEVERDE

MERRITT CHASE

NINIGRET PARTNERS

THIS PLAN HAS BEEN A YEAR IN THE MAKING



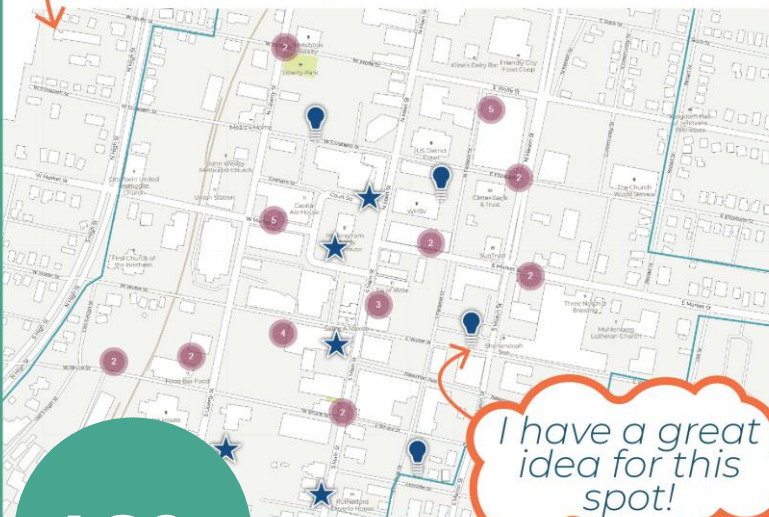
THIS PLAN HAS BEEN A YEAR IN THE MAKING

AT THE OUTSET, WE ASKED WHAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO SEE FOR DOWNTOWN

Visit the **COLLABORATIVE MAP**

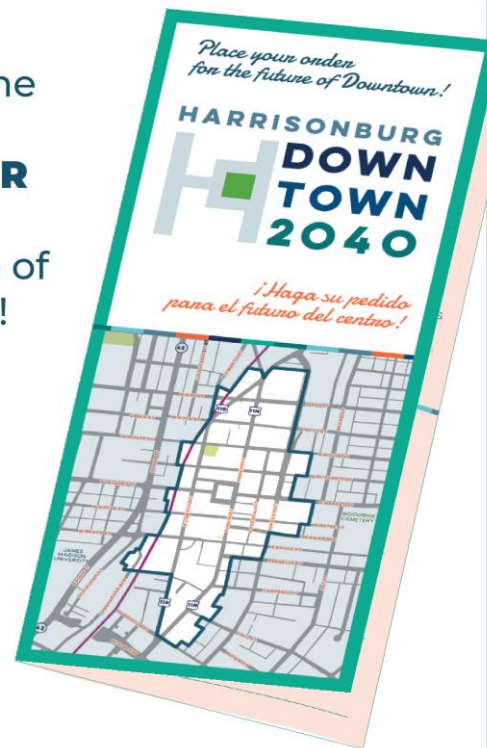
[HTTPS://HARRISONBURG.LANDAU.DESIGN](https://harrisonburg.landau.design)

to identify
Special Places, Ideas, and Concerns



460+

Don't miss the chance to **PLACE YOUR ORDER** for the future of Downtown!



170+

*Dream With Us,
Will You?*



+9 SMALL BUSINESS SURVEYS
& 34 INTERVIEWS

COLLABORATIVE MAP

- STUDY AREA
- ART & BEAUTIFICATION
- HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT
- LOCAL RETAIL
- NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITY/ICON
- OPEN SPACE
- OTHER
- PARKING
- PRESERVATION
- PROGRAMMING
- STREET IMPROVEMENTS

PEOPLE HAD
A LOT OF
IDEAS!

How about
an art installation
on downtown's largest
concrete wall?!

One of the sites of
Urban Renewal in the 1950s,
which disproportionately impacted
the Black community.
Any changes here must take
into account the impact of this.

So close to campus...
could be better used
for student or
young professional housing.

WE HOSTED POP-UP MEETINGS IN JULY IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS

140 people signed in, and more passed through to talk and learn...

JOIN US FOR *Happy Hour*

to help shape the Downtown 2040 plan
for Downtown Harrisonburg



Friday, July 23 from 3:30 pm to 8:00 pm

at Pale Fire Brewing



PARTICIPATE WHILE YOU WAIT AT *Magpie Diner*

to help shape the Downtown 2040 plan
for Downtown Harrisonburg



Saturday, July 24 from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm

outside Magpie Diner



JOIN US AT *Community coffee hour*

to help shape the Downtown 2040 plan
for Downtown Harrisonburg



Sunday, July 25 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

on the east side of Court Square



...and another 130 participated online

IT WAS HOT, BUT THE WEATHER COOPERATED

Downtown for All

BRAINSTORM!

What **programs, events, or services** are needed to make sure everyone feels welcome and part of the Downtown community?



Fill in the blank

Downtown Harrison is a place where everyone belongs. _____ in Downtown to re

- park space (green space)
- attention to sidewalks on grass
- parking for new downtown residential units
- Condos
- Day-life strip
- Green Space
- Pedestrian Mall
- Central Plaza

Parks and Play

LET'S TALK ABOUT PARKS AND PLACES TO PLAY

Where are your favorite outdoor spaces?

What is a green dot on a map that you currently use or would like to improve? (Add website comments)



Do you have ideas for new outdoor spaces?

What green space opportunities have you noticed? Check on locations for development



Park

HOW... LET'S TALK ABOUT PARKS AND PLACES TO PLAY

Where are your favorite outdoor spaces?

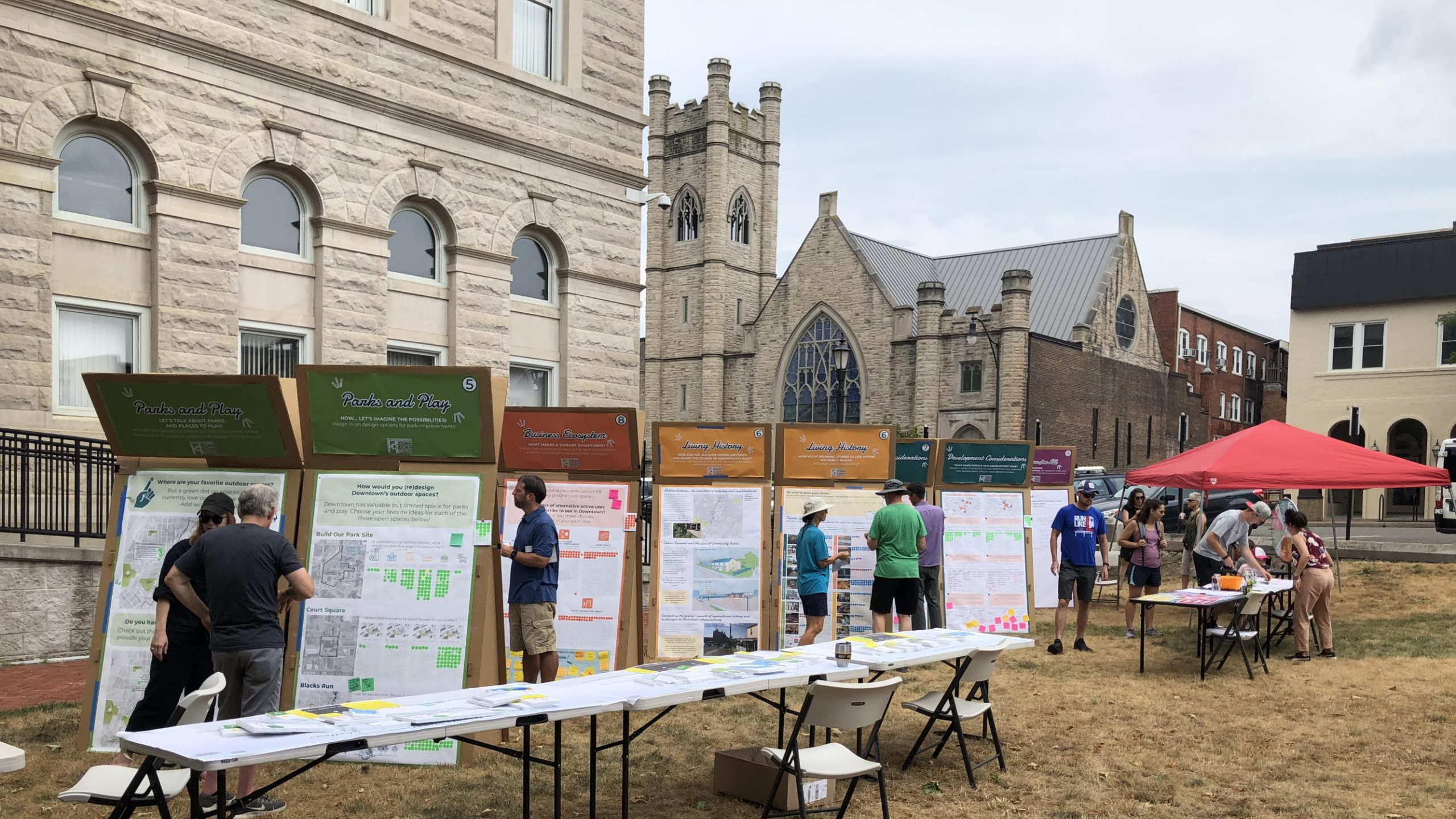
What is a green dot on a map that you currently use or would like to improve? (Add website comments)



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What green space opportunities have you noticed? Check on locations for development





Parks and Play

LET'S TALK ABOUT PARKS AND PLACES TO PLAY

5
NOW... LET'S IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES
Weigh in on design options for park improvements.

Where are your favorite outdoor spaces?
Put a green dot on spaces you currently love or would like to see.
Add your own idea.

Do you have any other ideas?
Check out the board and provide your input.

How would you (re)design Downtown's outdoor spaces?
Downtown has valuable but limited space for parks and play. Choose your favorite ideas for each of the three open spaces below!

Build Our Park Site
In addition to the Partners Market, what other park site would you like to see in Downtown?
Choose your favorite idea for each of the three open spaces below!

Court Square
When improvements to Court Square do you envision?
Choose your favorite idea for each of the three open spaces below!

Blacks Run
How do you envision Blacks Run?
Choose your favorite idea for each of the three open spaces below!

Business Ecosystem

WHAT MAKES A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN?

Restaurants cannot fill ground floor space.
What alternative active uses do you like to see in Downtown?
Add three choices to your own idea.

Living History

HOW CAN WE PRESERVE THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN'S PAST AND SHAPEN THE COURSE OF DOWNTOWN'S FUTURE?

Historic buildings are important to our identity and neighborhood.
How can we preserve the history and character of downtown's past and shape the course of downtown's future?
Add three choices to your own idea.

Living History

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Add three choices to your own idea.

Development Considerations

WHAT KINDS OF DEVELOPMENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN DOWNTOWN?

What kinds of development would you like to see in downtown?
Add three choices to your own idea.

Community Art

WHAT KINDS OF COMMUNITY ART WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN DOWNTOWN?

What kinds of community art would you like to see in downtown?
Add three choices to your own idea.

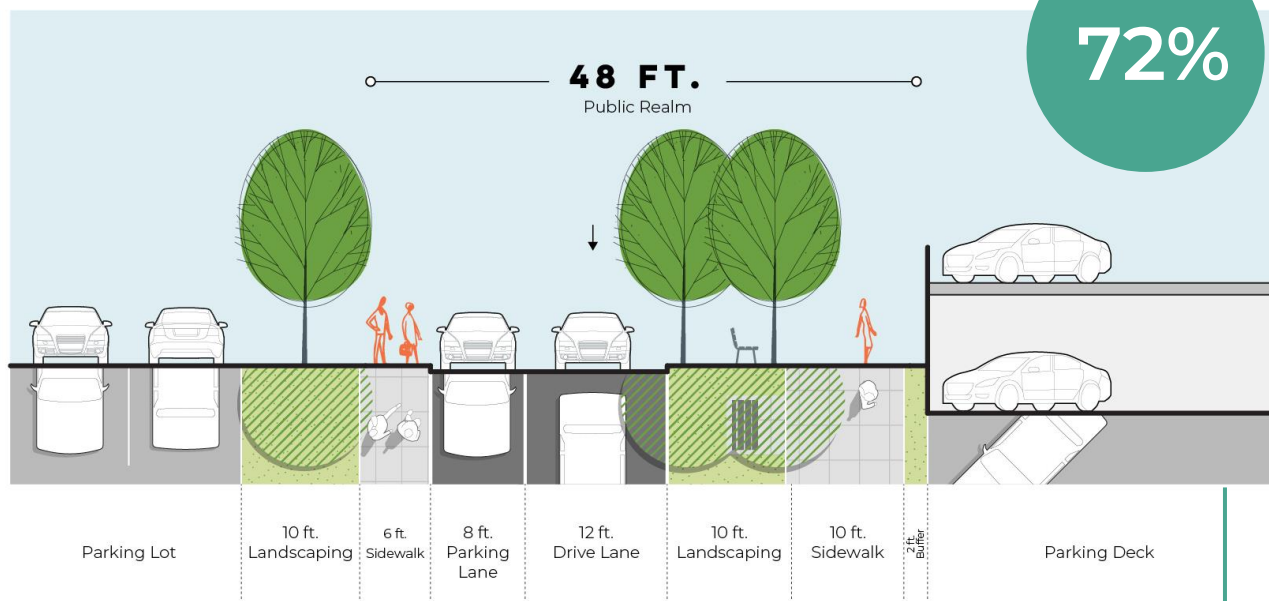




THE COMMUNITY'S INPUT PROVIDED SPECIFIC DIRECTION FOR REFINING DRAFT CONCEPTS

LIBERTY STREET

(SOUTH OF WATER STREET)



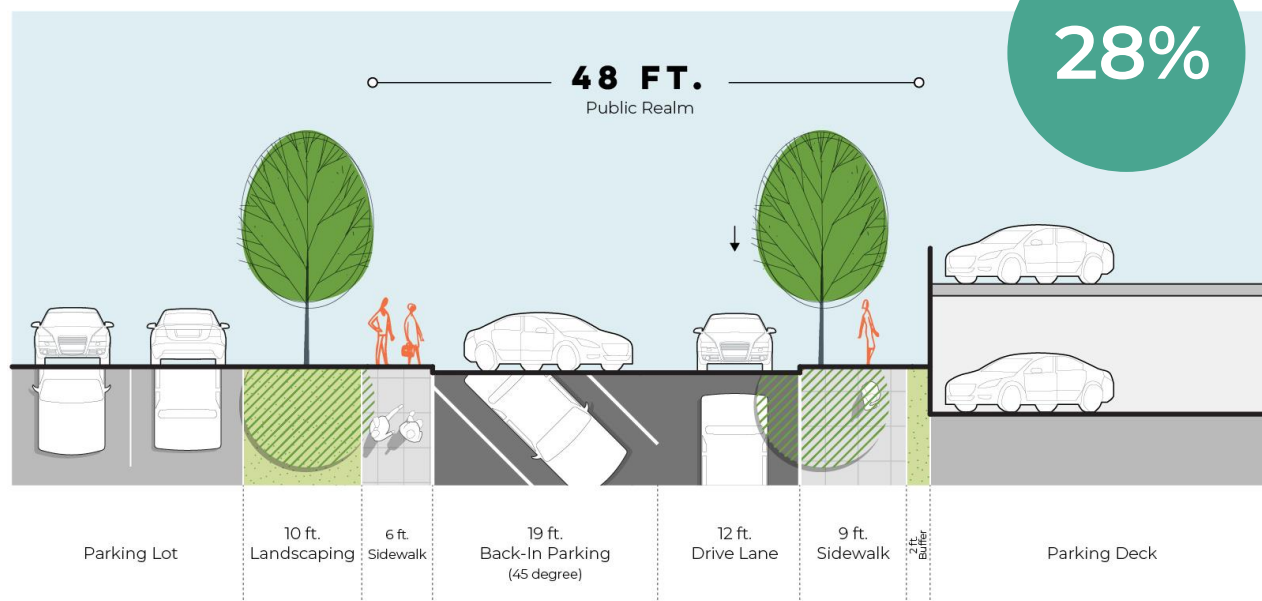
LINEAR LANDSCAPE

“Yes to more trees, but let's make room for bikes too!

- Downtown 2040 Plan Commenter

LIBERTY STREET

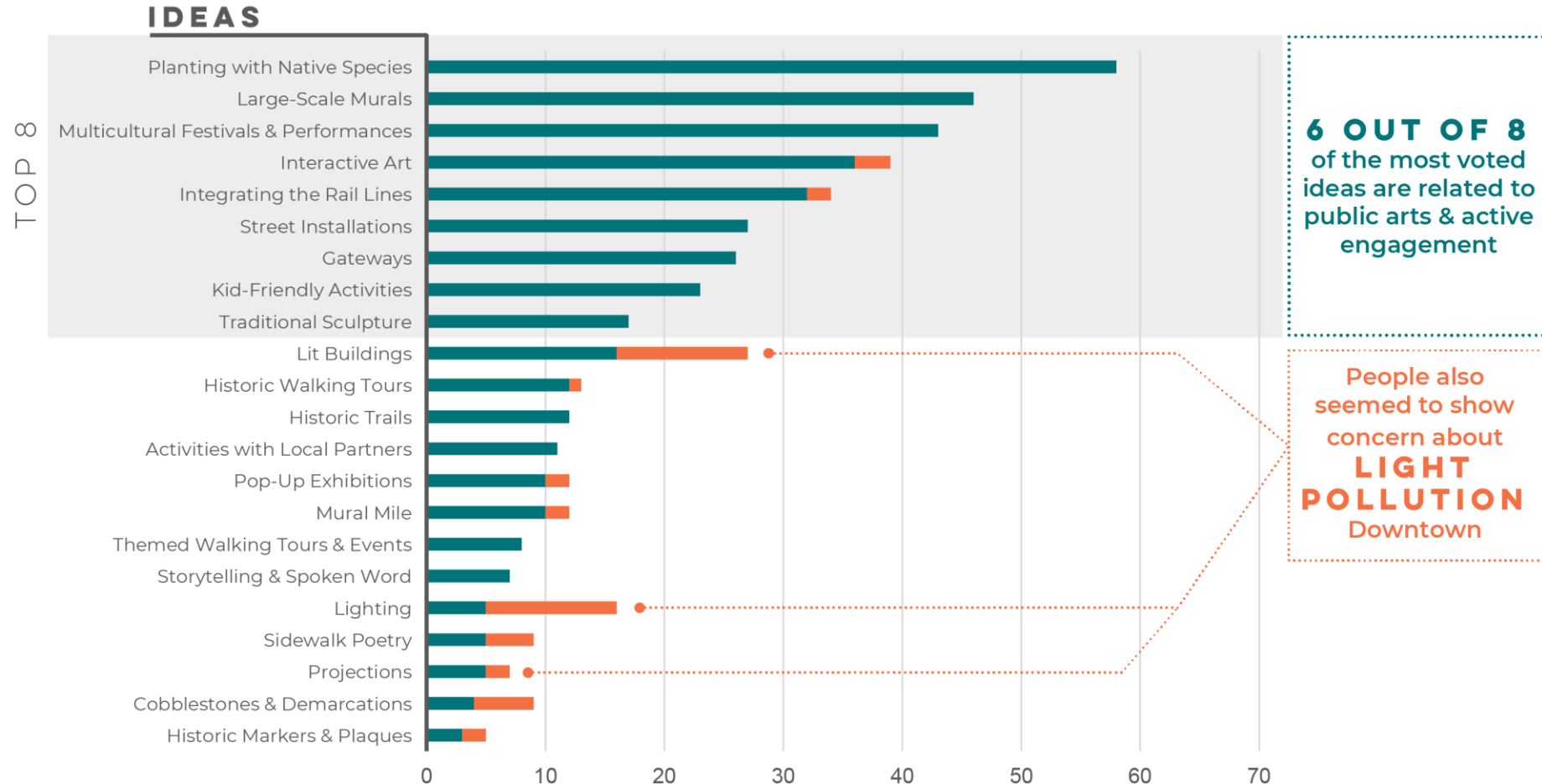
(SOUTH OF WATER STREET)



PRIORITIZE PARKING +
PLANT A STREET WALL

HOW CAN WE INTEGRATE DOWNTOWN HARRISONBURG'S RICH HISTORY INTO PUBLIC SPACE?

👍 THUMBS UP | THUMBS DOWN 👎



6 OUT OF 8
of the most voted
ideas are related to
public arts & active
engagement

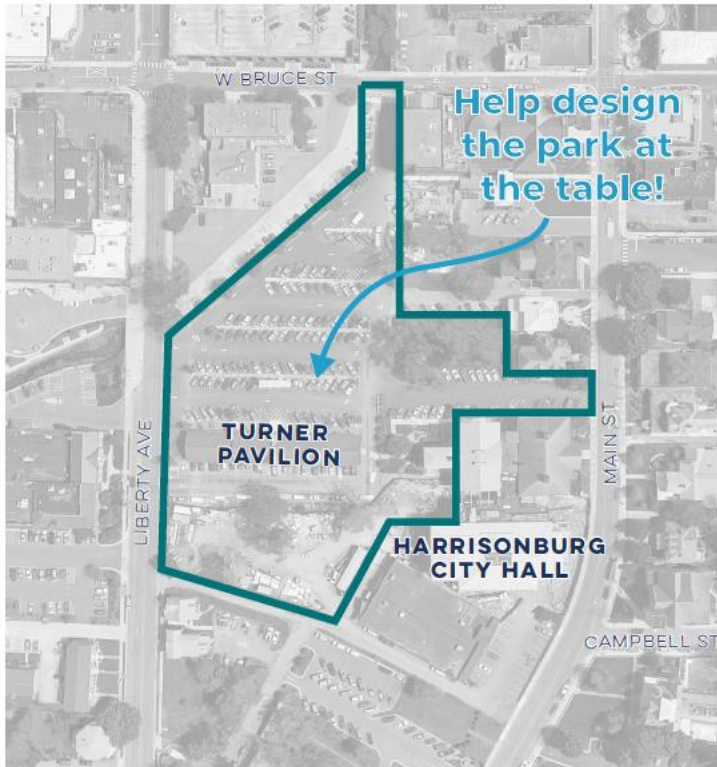
People also
seemed to show
concern about
**LIGHT
POLLUTION**
Downtown

TOTAL RESPONSES: 461

How would you (re)design Downtown's outdoor spaces?

Downtown has valuable but limited space for parks and play. Choose your favorite ideas for each of these open spaces!

Build Our Park Site



In addition to the Farmers Market, what would you add to a large Downtown Park?



SPORTS FIELDS



DESTINATION PLAYGROUND



VENUE FOR LARGE EVENTS



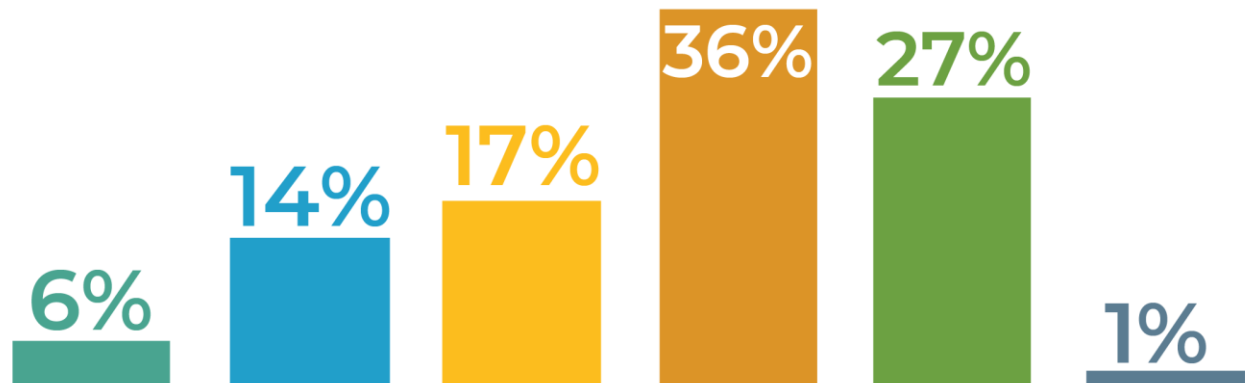
VENUE FOR SMALL EVENTS



GARDEN



SURFACE PARKING



500

All in, at least **different** people participated... many on multiple occasions or via more than one method

shared sense of community



A FEW THINGS WE LEARNED FROM RESEARCH AND DATA:

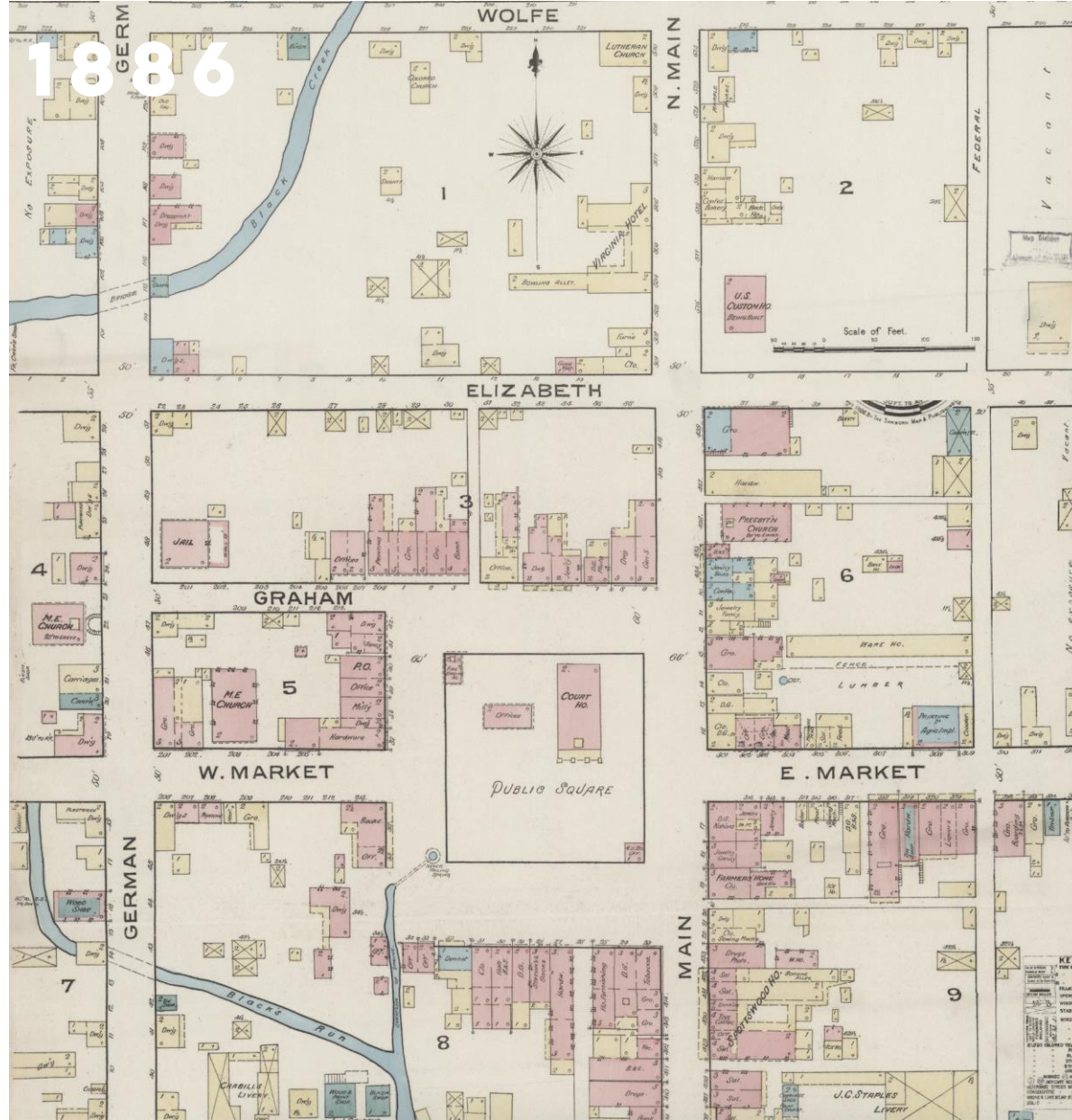


HISTORY IS VISIBLE HERE

1877



1886



1933

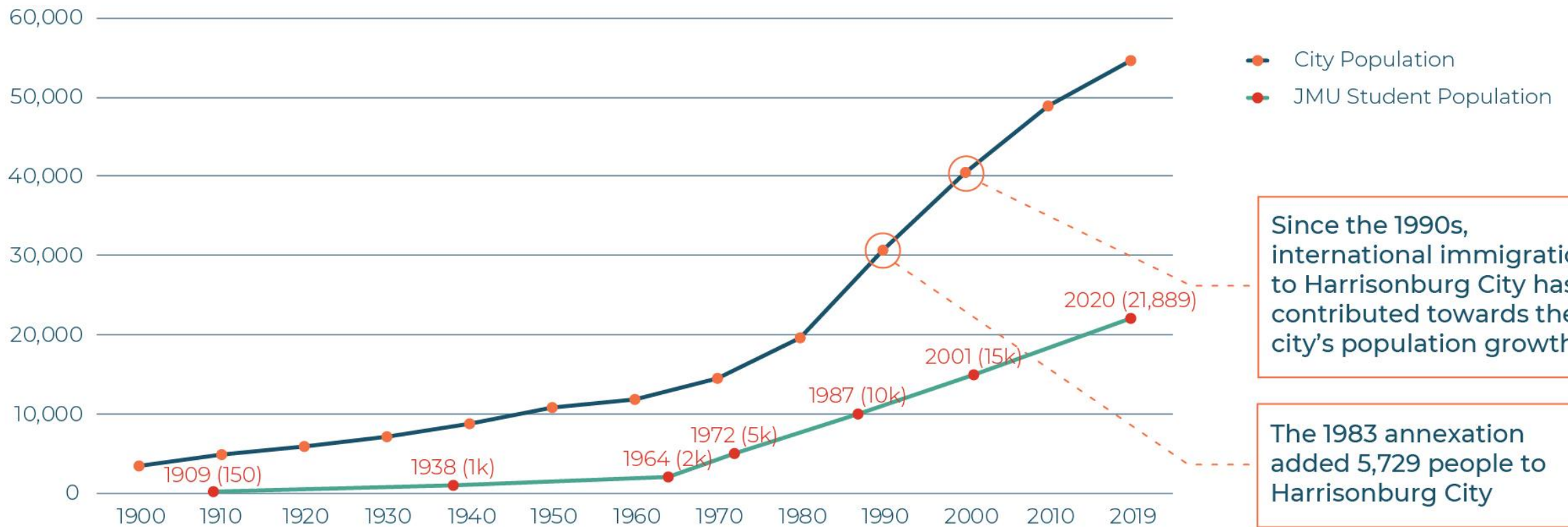


AND DOWNTOWN REMAINS A CRITICAL CENTER FOR THE CITY AND REGION.



WHO'S IN THE EVERYDAY POPULATION?

HARRISONBURG CITY & JMU HISTORICAL POPULATION



DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL

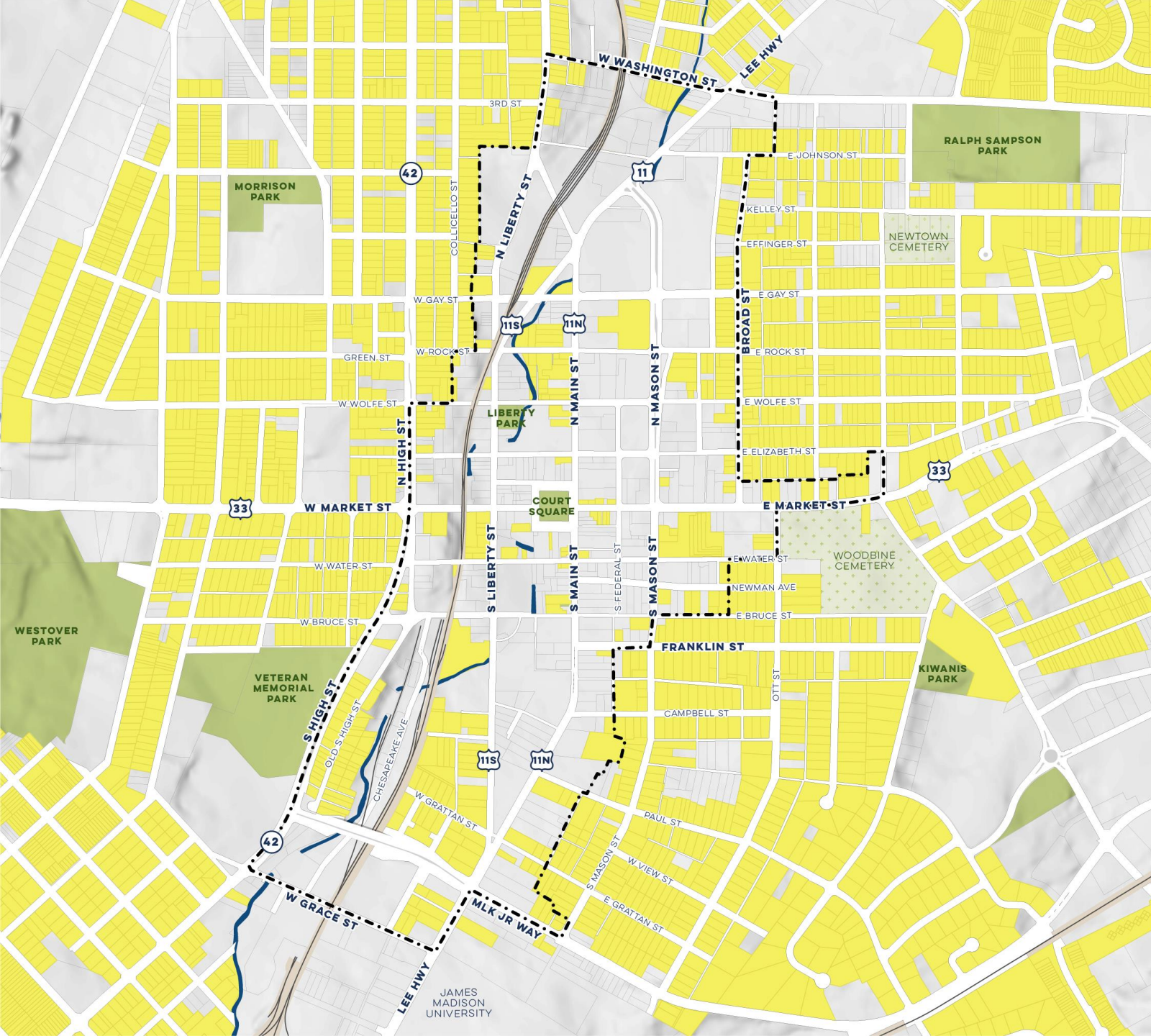
--- STUDY AREA

RESIDENTIAL, MIXED USE, AND GROUP QUARTERS

There's not much **housing** in Downtown...
about 2,600 residents

SOURCE:
CITY OF HARRISONBURG

0 1/8 1/4 Mile

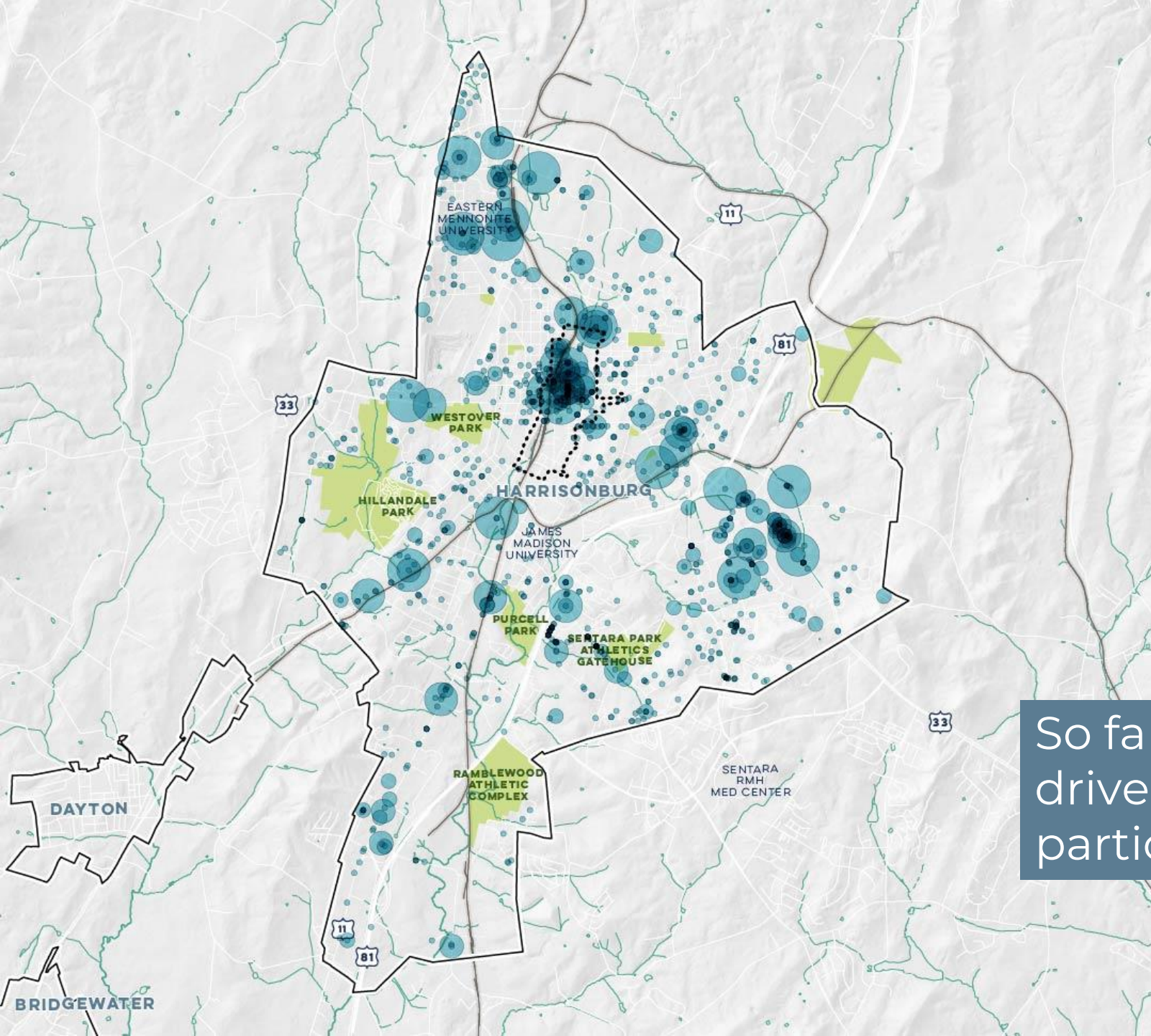


BUILDING PERMITS BY PROJECT VALUE: ALTERATIONS (2015-2020)

- STUDY AREA
- CITY/TOWN BOUNDARY
- RAIL
- PARKS & OPEN SPACE
- WATER

BUILDING ALTERATIONS

- \$0.00 - \$100,000.00
- \$100,000.01 - \$300,000.00
- \$300,000.01 - \$500,000.00
- \$500,000.01 - \$1,000,000.00
- \$1,000,000.01 - \$5,000,000.00



So far, rehab and reuse have driven Downtown's revitalization, particularly in North Downtown

SOURCE:
CITY OF HARRISONBURG

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

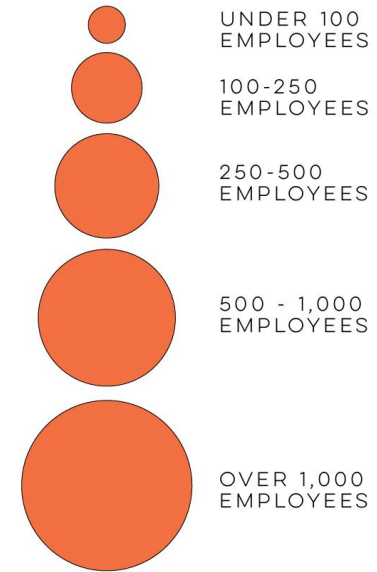




Beautiful adaptive reuse projects, exciting mix of new uses

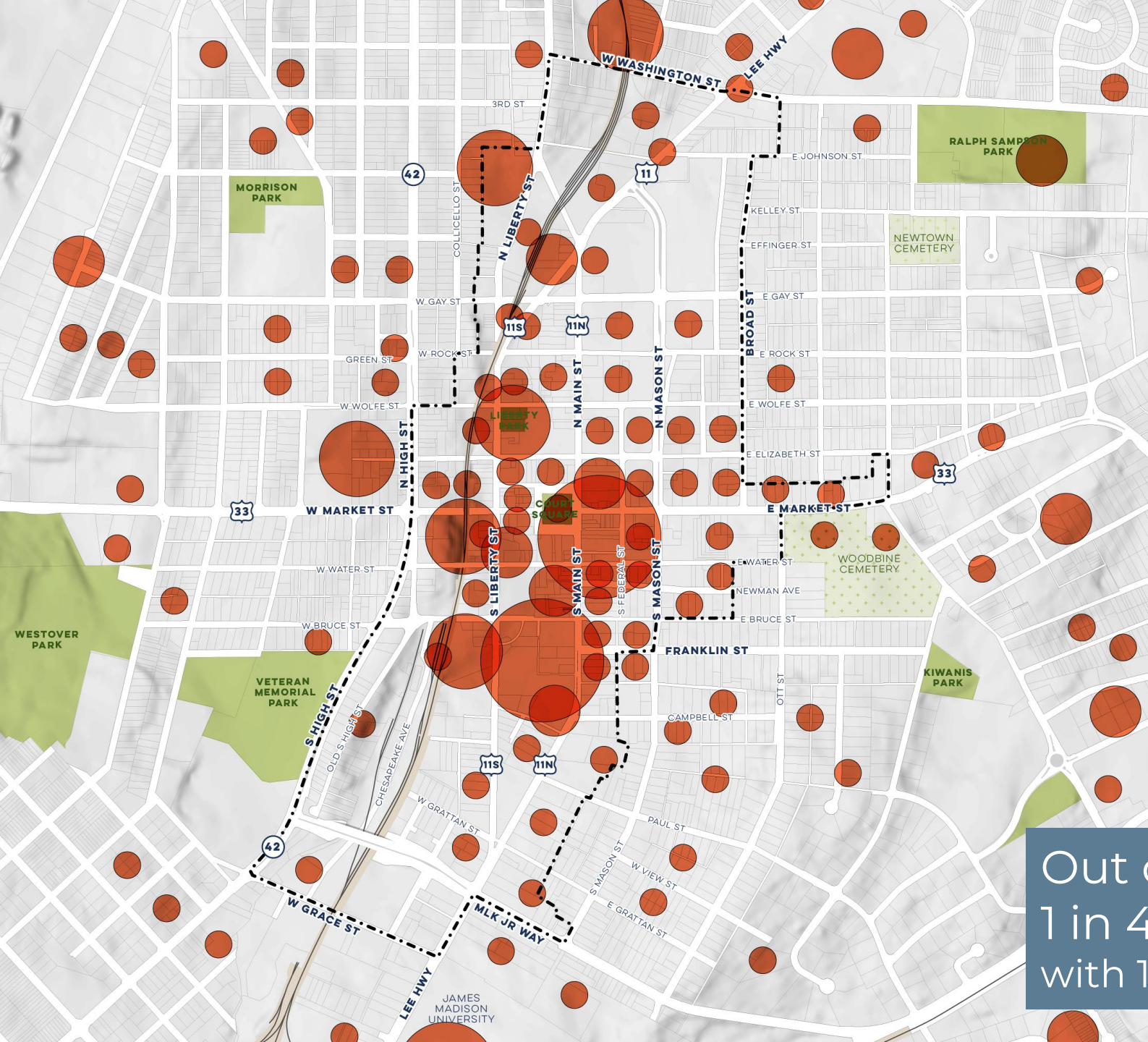
JOBS IN DOWNTOWN

--- STUDY AREA



THERE ARE
7,673
EMPLOYEES
IN THE STUDY AREA.

Out of 62 workplaces, more than 1 in 4 (**27%**) are **small businesses** with 10 employees or fewer

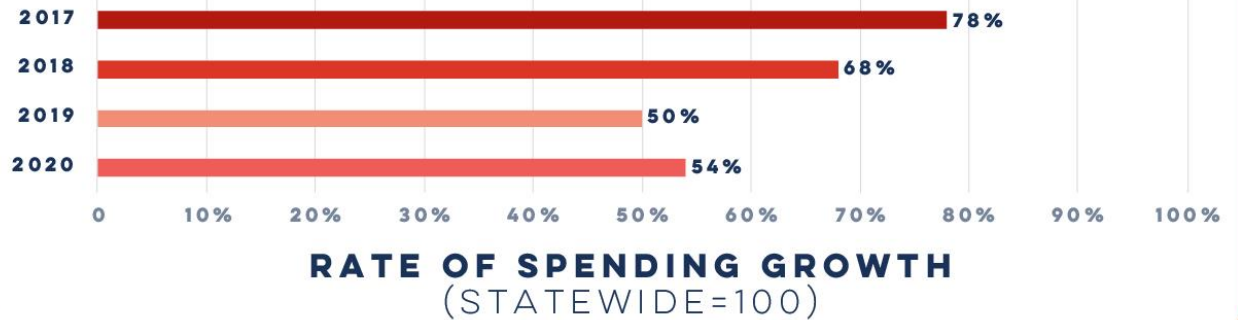


DOWNTOWN HAS BEEN GROWING & CHANGING FOR THE BETTER, BUT DOWNTOWN NEEDS SOME JUICE

Triangulating different data points suggests uneven performance, at best



Mastercard data indicate sales growth has slowed compared to State overall

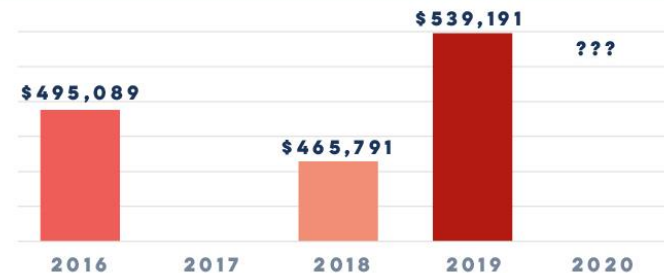


“

Survey and interview participants - particularly restaurateurs - indicate **slowing to flat sales**.
Retail is different, but has a different distribution model.



Sales tax data show a **sales decline**, and then a bounce-back...



HDR MAIN STREET SALES TAX ESTIMATES
(NOTE: DIFFERENT BOUNDARY THAN DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA)

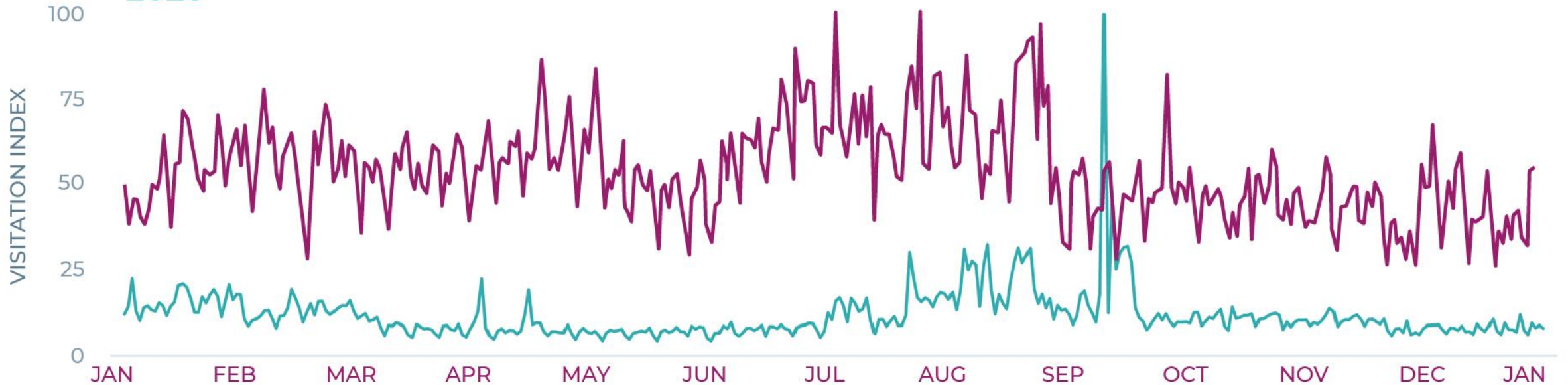
COVID HAS HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON ACTIVITY LEVELS

Source: Ubermedia cell phone location data (and their proprietary algorithms)

VISITATION OVER TIME

2019

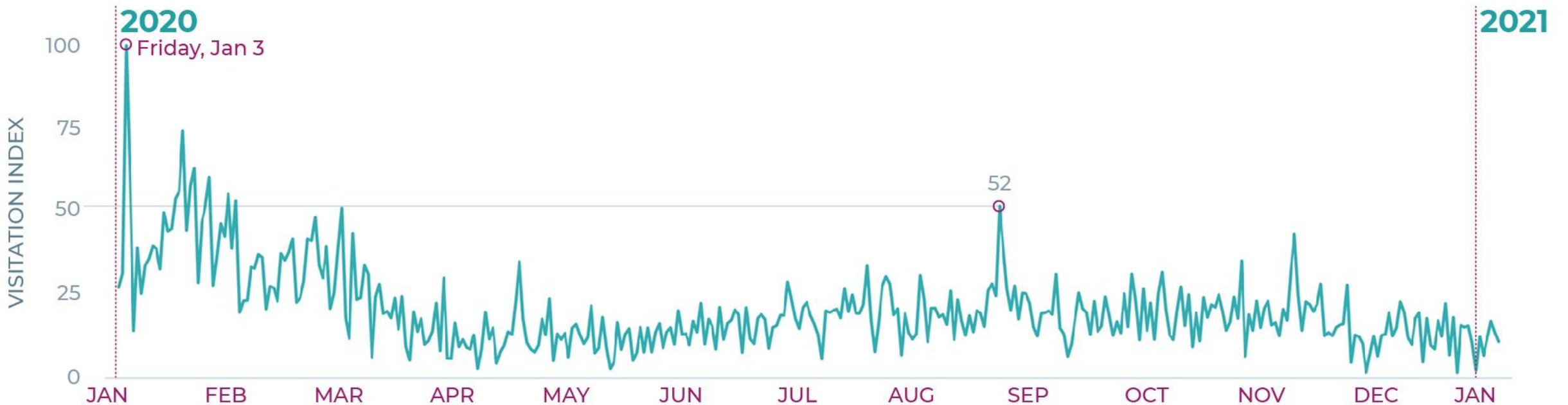
2020



COVID HAS HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON ACTIVITY LEVELS

- In 2020, peak summer visitation was almost 50% lower than January 3, 2020, which was the highest all of 2020
- Overall, Downtown visitation last year was 70%-80% lower than January 2020

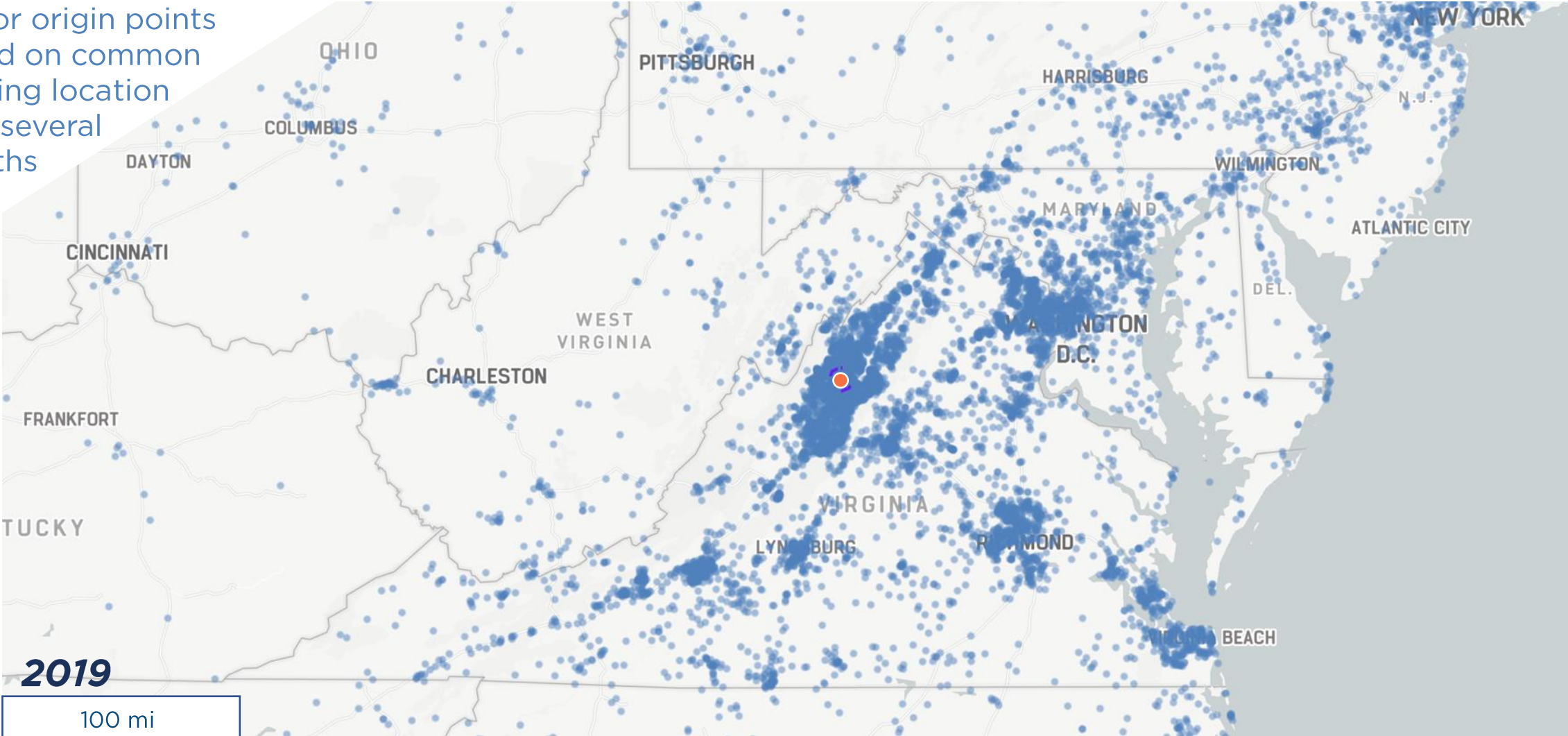
VISITATION OVER TIME



DOWNTOWN'S REACH IN 2019

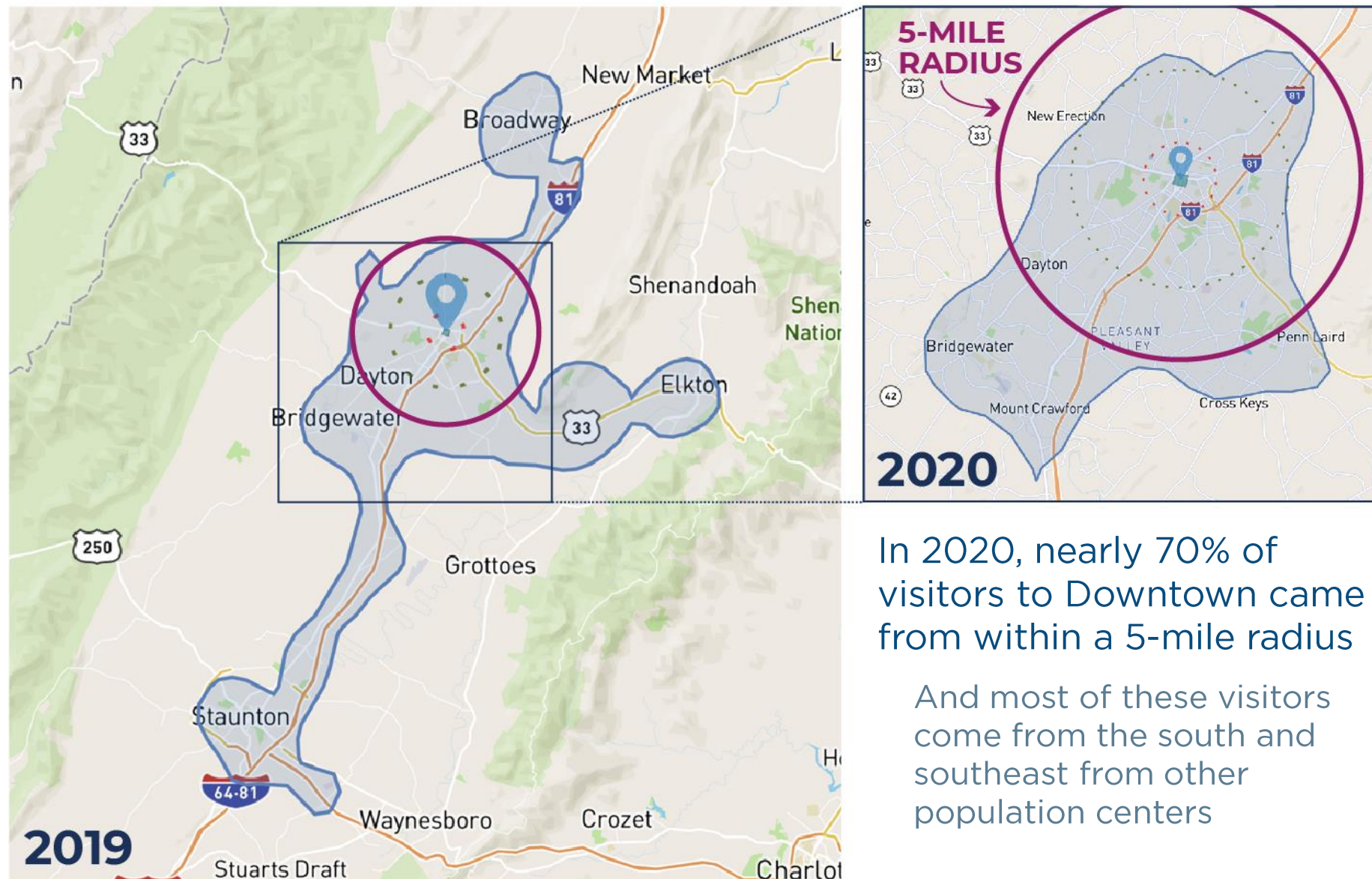
Pre-COVID visitor reach extended up to NYC

- Visitor origin points based on common evening location over several months



COVID SHRANK THE TRADE AREA AS VISITOR LEVELS FELL

70% of visitors came from these Visitor Trade Areas, comparing 2019 to 2020



In 2020, nearly 70% of visitors to Downtown came from within a 5-mile radius

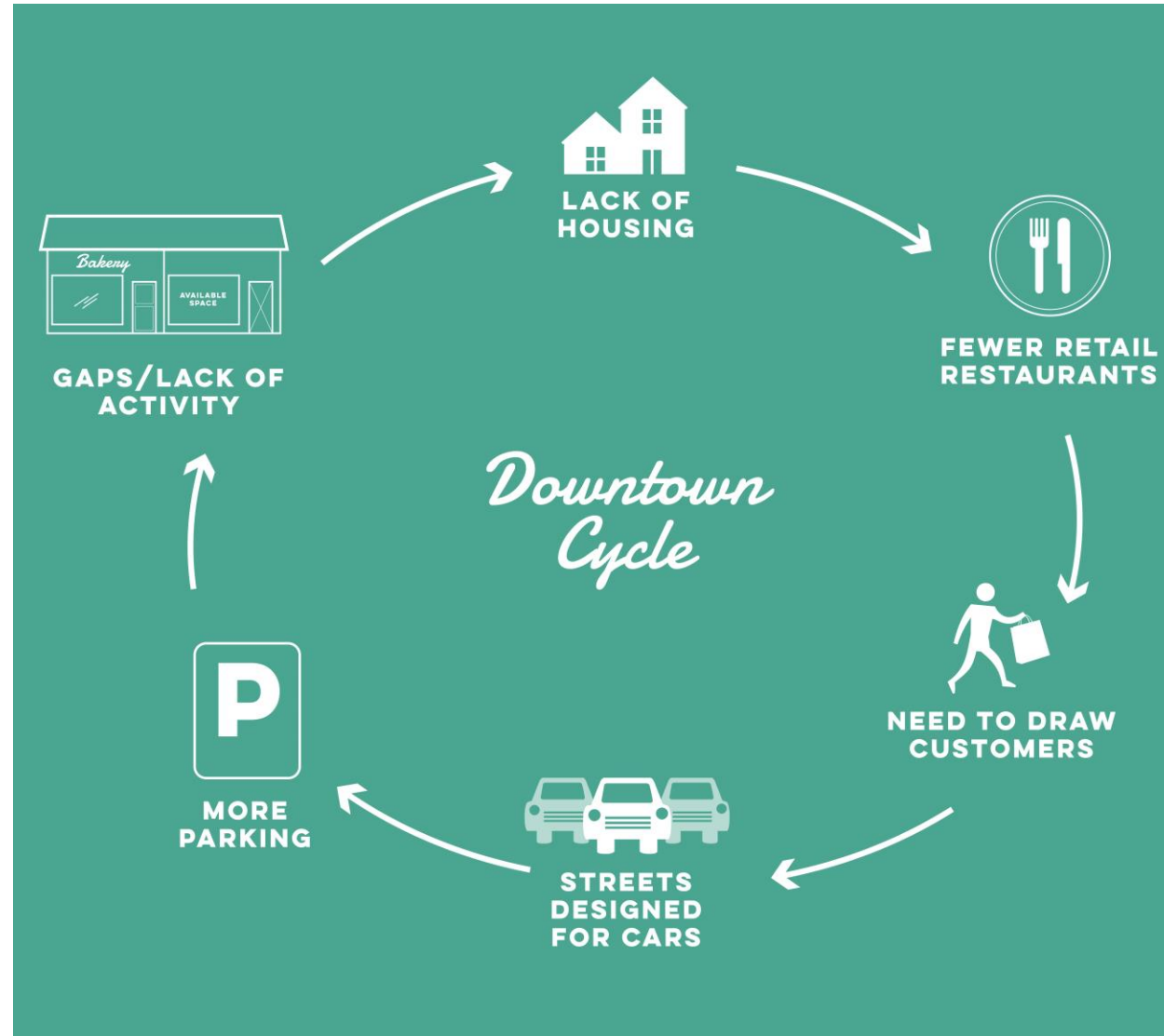
And most of these visitors come from the south and southeast from other population centers

AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION, RELATED TO “GROWTH”

RETAIL

Continue to show signs of growth in part through online sales channels

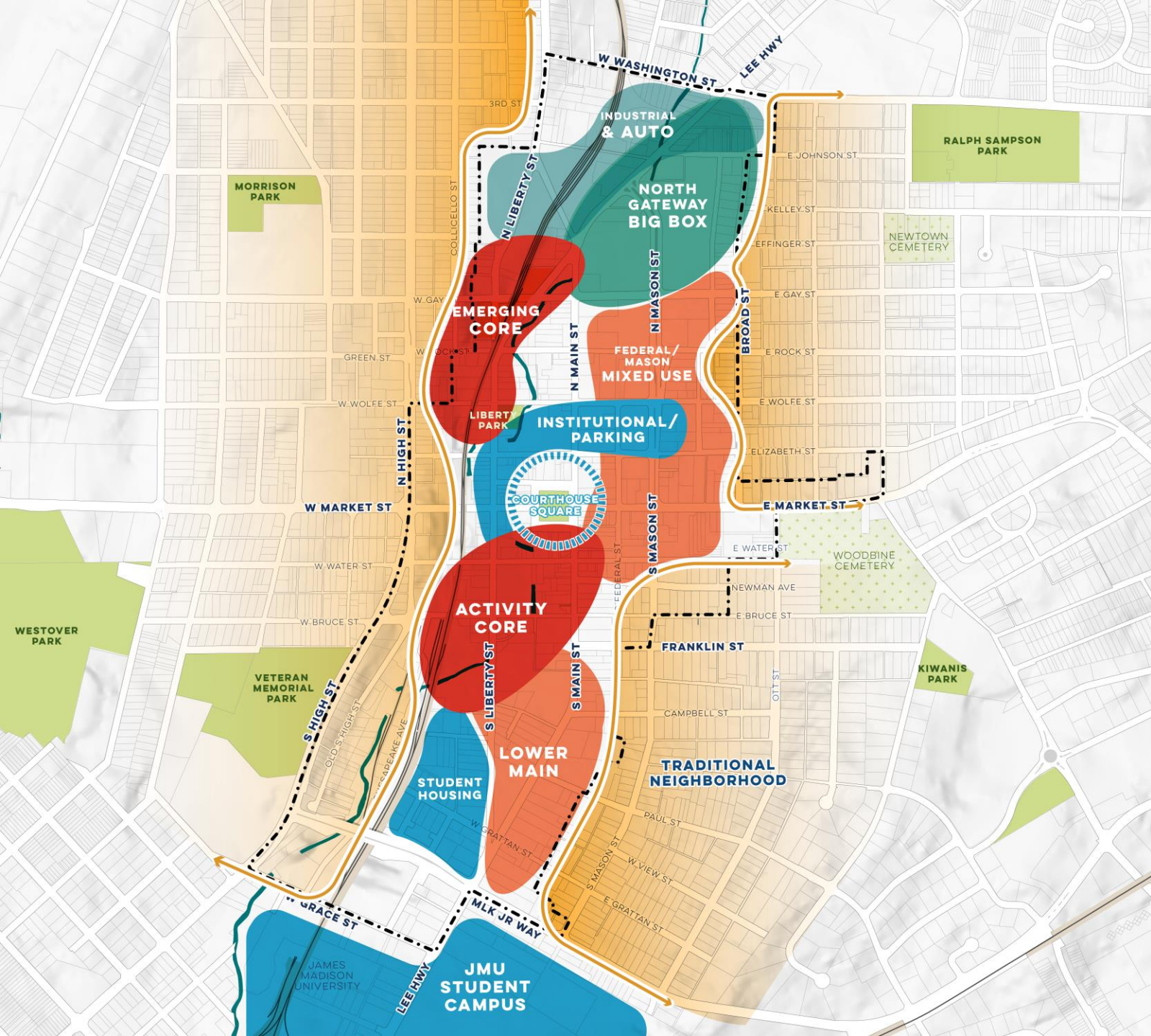
Specialized and specific products translate to less competition



RESTAURANTS

Newer restaurants point to continuing growth while older restaurants describe flattening of sales

More competitive: while there's some specialization, there's overlap in concepts and menus



DOWNTOWN IS FRAGMENTED, WITH SEVERAL DISCONNECTED DISTRICTS

How can we **FOCUS** and **STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS?**



We've got some gaps to address...

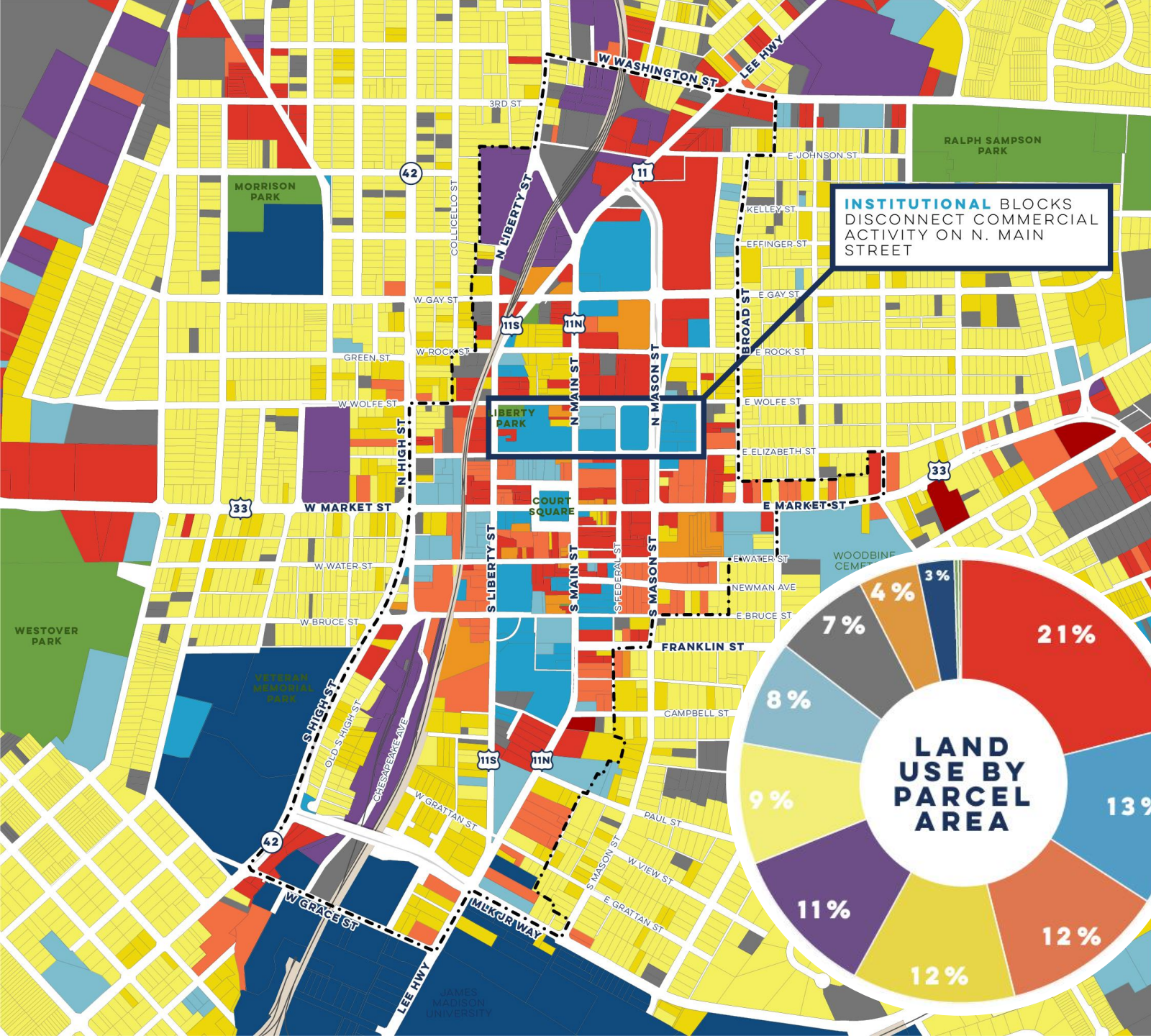


We've got some gaps to address...



“There are gaps in the teeth – it’s always been the issue with Downtown”

CURRENT LAND USE



- STUDY AREA
- RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY
- RESIDENTIAL - MULTI-FAMILY
- MIXED USE
- OFFICE
- RETAIL SERVICE
- COMMERCIAL LODGING
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- PUBLIC FACILITIES
- SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES
- PARKS AND RECREATION
- VACANT

But it's not just frontages – land use contributes to how activity or inactivity block-to-block.

SOURCE:
CITY OF HARRISONBURG



PARKING

- STUDY AREA
- SURFACE PARKING
- PARKING STRUCTURE

ACREAGE

PARKING: **69**
PARCELS: **213**
STUDY AREA: **276**

PARKING ACCOUNTS
FOR **32%** OF ALL THE
PARCEL AREA
DOWNTOWN

Parking makes up **one-third** of the parcel area Downtown and creates an uneven pedestrian experience...

0 1/8 1/4 Mile





“Harrisonburg has a severe lack of active sidewalks”

ACTIVE & INACTIVE FRONTAGES

- STUDY AREA
- ACTIVE
- SOMEWHAT INACTIVE
- INACTIVE

Two-thirds of Downtown is currently inactive

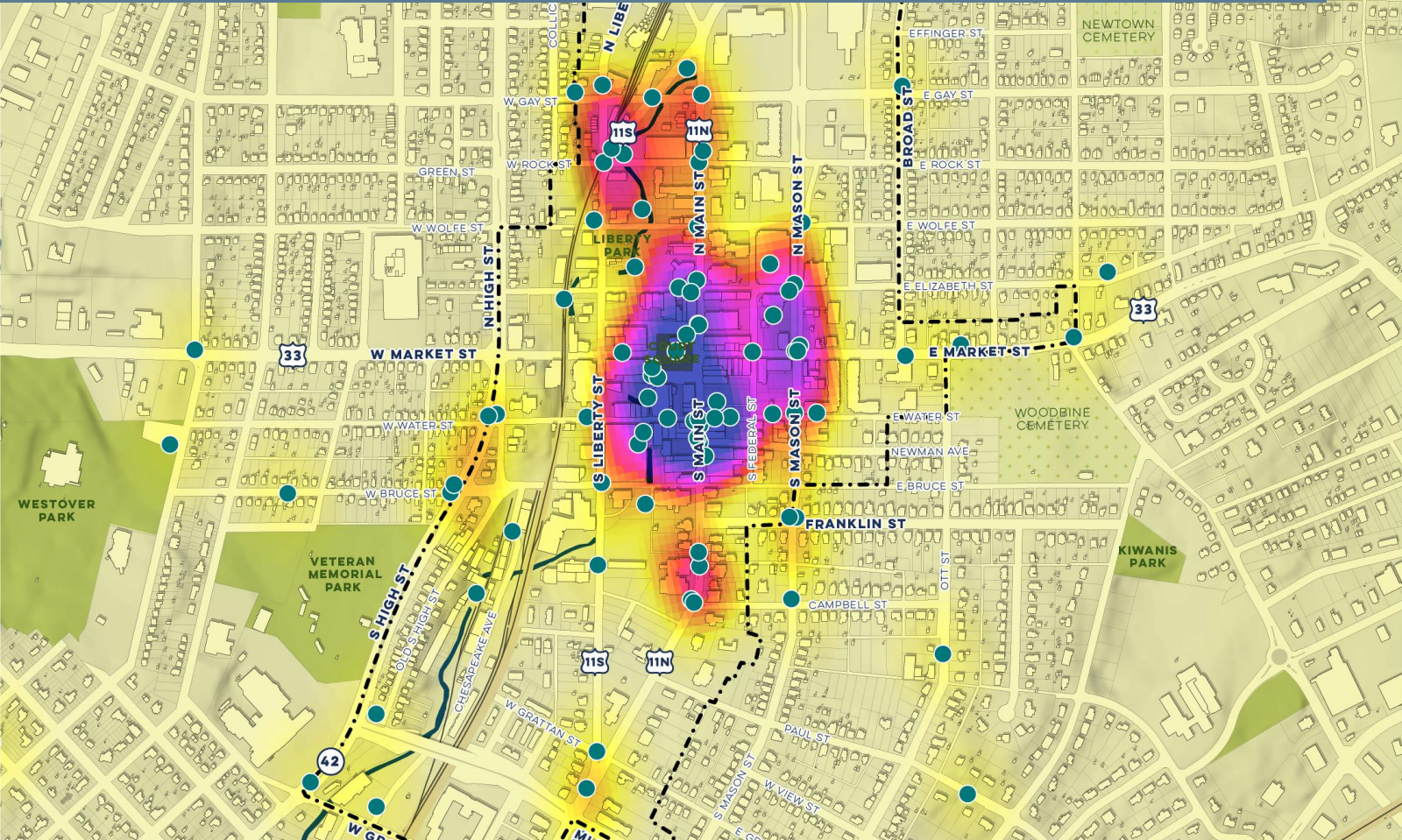
**67% OF FRONTAGES
IN THE STUDY AREA
ARE INACTIVE**

SOURCE: INTERFACE STUDIO STUDY
AREA FIELD SURVEY, 2021.

0 1/8 1/4 Mile



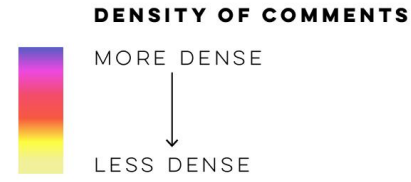
DOWNTOWN IS **WALKABLE**, BUT THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE CAN BE **UNCOMFORTABLE...**



STREET IMPROVEMENTS

AS OF 05.07.21

- STUDY AREA
- STREET IMPROVEMENTS



“I wish there were pedestrian crossings on East Market Street (with lights!) between Sterling and Mason.

Coming from the northeast neighborhood where I live, you must either walk blocks out of your way to a crosswalk or take your life in your hands to run across 33 if you want to get to Ott Street.

Increasing walkability and safety here would make Downtown a better place to live and spend time.”

HOW CAN WE **IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE** AND **AMPLIFY WHAT'S UNIQUE?**





“Harrisonburg sees itself as multicultural, but the two groups of people that have been here the longest are the most segregated”

Downtown is diverse...

But we need to
**ENCOURAGE NEW
RELATIONSHIPS &
OPPORTUNITIES**
across race, class &
culture

DESPITE THE CHALLENGES, THERE IS SO
MUCH TO BUILD ON DOWNTOWN

“Harrisonburg is kind of weird, it’s part of the draw.”

(We’ve never worked somewhere so devoted to ducks!)





HARRISONBURG DOWNTOWN TOWN 2040

LOOKING FORWARD TO PRESENTING THE DRAFT PLAN: DECEMBER 14, 2021

INTERFACE STUDIO | MONTEVERDE | MERRITT CHASE | NINIGRET PARTNERS