



<https://www.fwb.org/550/Downtown-Design-Guidelines-Project>



June 10, 2025

City Council Workshop

Fort Walton Beach Downtown Design Guidelines

Kimley » Horn



AGENDA

- Project Overview
- Design Guidelines
- Next Steps

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Principles that create a distinct identity and **sense of place** for a defined area to proactively support current property owners and future development.



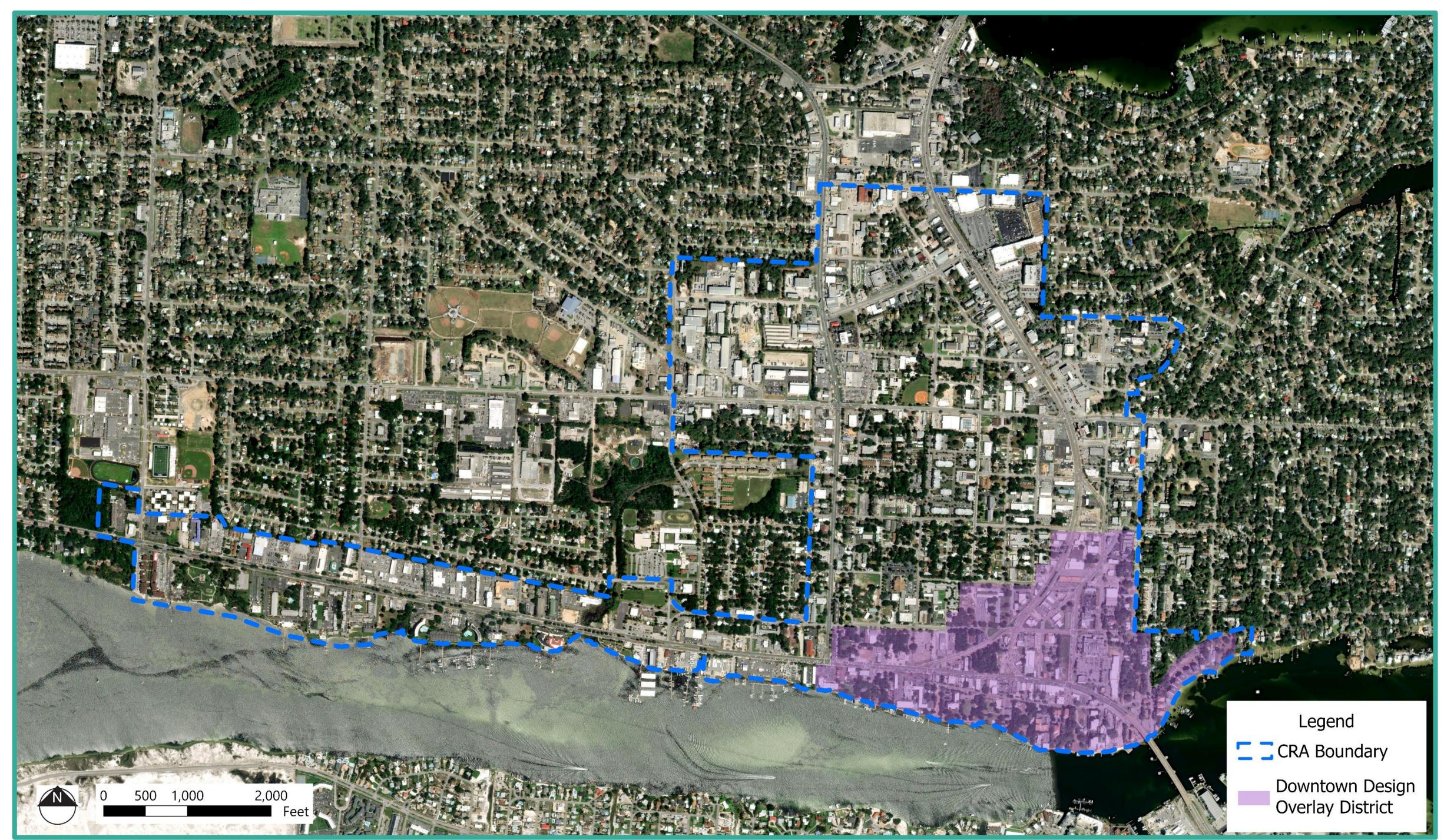
- Improve the visitor experience
- Maintain existing successful businesses
- Attract new businesses and sectors
- Better connect residents to Downtown
- Emphasize and preserve the history of FWB

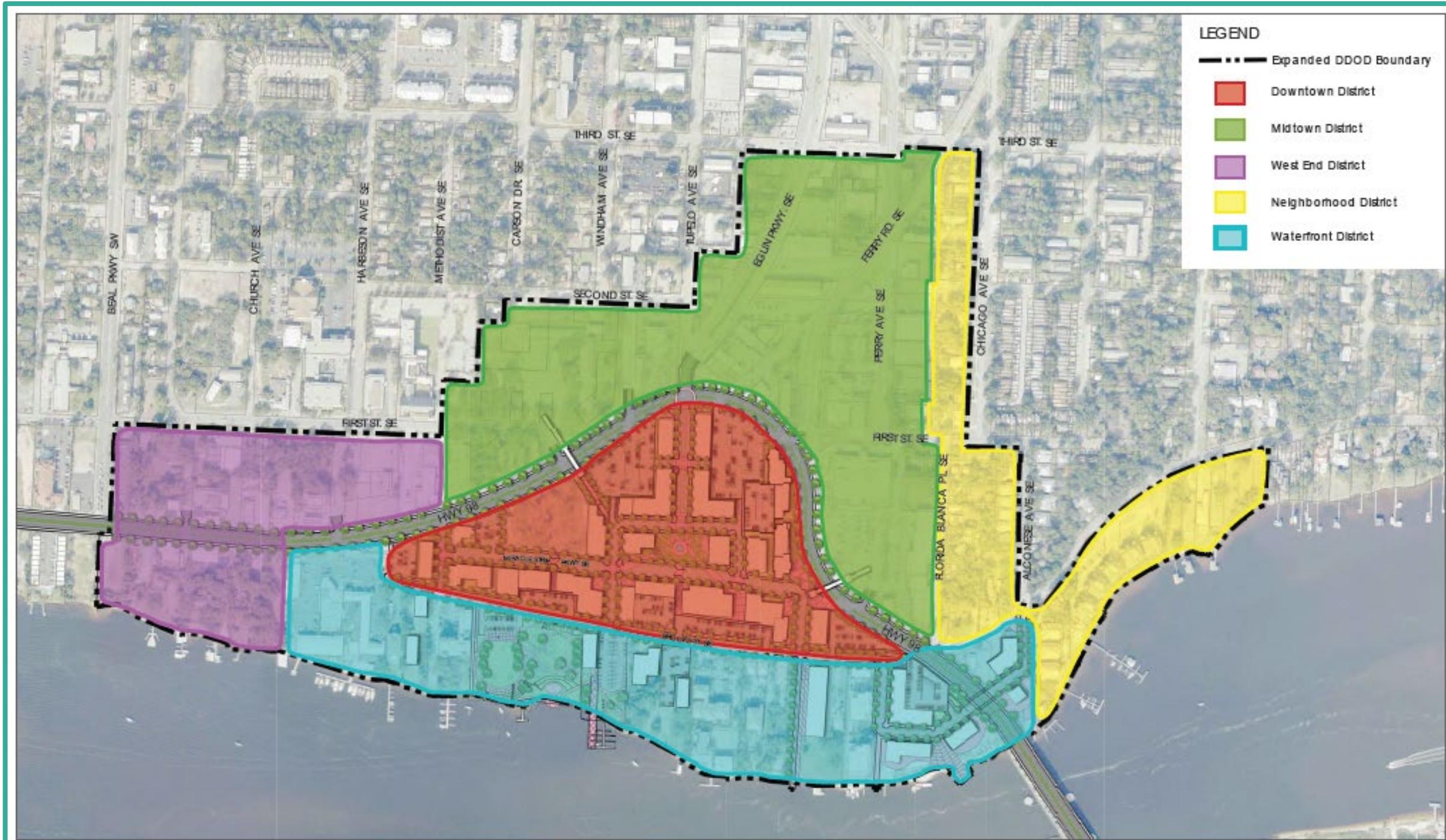


DESIGN GUIDELINES INCLUDE

- Street cross-sections and materials
- Streetscape and public space amenities
- Open space and Public Art
- Pedestrian and non-vehicle connectivity
- Architectural style options and inspiration
- Building orientation, massing and scale
- Location of parking
- Active use designations

Findings + Discovery





FINDINGS AND DISCOVERY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Multiple small parcels under different ownership
2. Historic assets
3. Built form addresses the street
4. High volumes of traffic
5. Existing grid network
6. Secondary main street
7. Pedestrian connectivity
8. Waterfront access
9. Eclectic architectural style
10. Diverse collection of retail and service operators





PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY CHARETTE

June 20th, 2024, at 5:30pm

- 70+ attendees
- Community Values Survey
- Charette Station
- Visioning



INC overpass

- Keep historic character
- Develop vacant lots, don't tear down existing buildings
- Slow down traffic
- Acquire Red Lobster, make part of LF Park

Improve landing

- Water features
- Landscaping
- Splash pad
- Palm trees

- Improve gazebo

- ↳ Amphitheater

~~- Native Plants~~

- Interpretive signage + displays to share area's history/culture/character

- Don't become 30A or Destin
- Not matchy or fancy
- Keep charm and funkiness
- No "stucco"



IF AROUND THE MOUND IS NOT ELEVATED THIS PROJECT WILL NOT WORK!

Bruce Blackwelder

Address: 952 3rd St
338-6877

→ Please spend time downtown at night after the most business day place

→ Update Beach Street to align come to Long Avenue in the design

- Plan to close Main Street to go over bridge is the best idea!

- Half Round the mound will help!

CRA STAKEHOLDER MEETING

July 16th, 2024, at 4:30pm

- 25+ attendees



Parks and Open Space

- Native Planting
- Places to rest
- Connect with water

Street and Roadways

- Shade
- Lighting
- Temporary activation

Main Street

- Local character
- Outdoor space for businesses

Buildings and Architecture

- Preserve historic buildings
- Encourage active uses on ground floor

ONLINE SURVEY

Open June 14th – August 9th

80+ respondents



Parks and Open Space

- Connect to existing trails, greenways, and waterways
- Desire for green space and places to enjoy nature
- Preservation of "small town charm" and community character

Street and Roadways

- Buildings close to the street
- Comfortable places to walk
- Wide sidewalks, shade (trees and awnings), and street furniture
- Nearly 50% of respondents would like to see structured parking

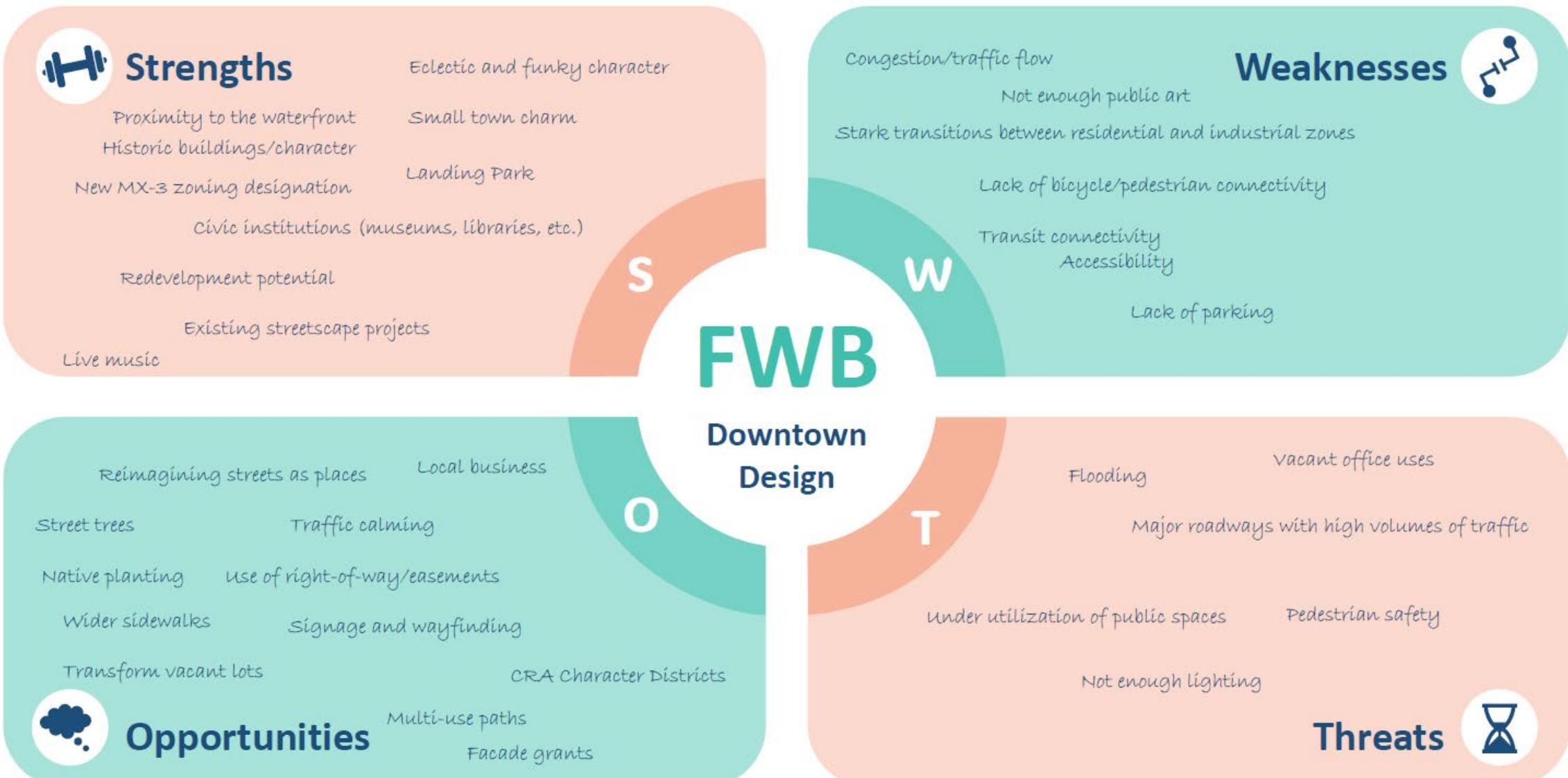
Main Street

- Most respondents recognize the potential of Downtown
- Support for preserving unique character
- Outdoor activation and vibrancy are valued

Buildings and Architecture

- Nearly 80% of respondents believe historic buildings are a valuable feature
- Strong support for preservation
- Encourage active uses that maintain the feel of Downtown

WHAT WE HEARD



DATA → PUBLIC INPUT → GOALS



DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES GOALS:

- Develop a modern and vibrant urban atmosphere to attract residents and tourists alike to the Downtown area.
- Emphasize the historical charm of Downtown through preservation of historic structures and complementary architectural designs.
- Promote character-rich placemaking with new developments that are human-scaled and context-sensitive.
- Cultivate a network of distinct public spaces to provide for a sense of welcome and belonging.
- Create a distinct identity and unique sense of place downtown.
- Foster a pleasant, engaging, and diverse pedestrian experience.
- Maintain and promote effective multi-modal circulation.

FORT WALTON BEACH DOWNTOWN

DESIGN GUIDELINES

PREPARED FOR:

City of Fort Walton Beach

April 2025

DRAFT



HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES



PUBLIC REALM

- Covers the design of shared spaces within the public right-of-way like sidewalks, streets, and parks.

Public Realm

1. Block Configuration
2. Pedestrian Realm
 - a. Sidewalk Zone
 - b. Street Furnishings & Outdoor Furniture
 - c. Planting Zone
 - d. Building Transition Zone
 - e. Shade Structures
3. Street Cross-Sections
4. Accessibility
5. On-Street Parking & Parklets
6. Active Uses & Flexible Spaces
7. Landscape & Hardscape
8. Lighting
9. Wayfinding & Signage
 - a. Gateway
10. Utilities

PRIVATE REALM

- Details standards for buildings and privately owned outdoor spaces, including architectural styles, materials, and landscaping.

Private Realm

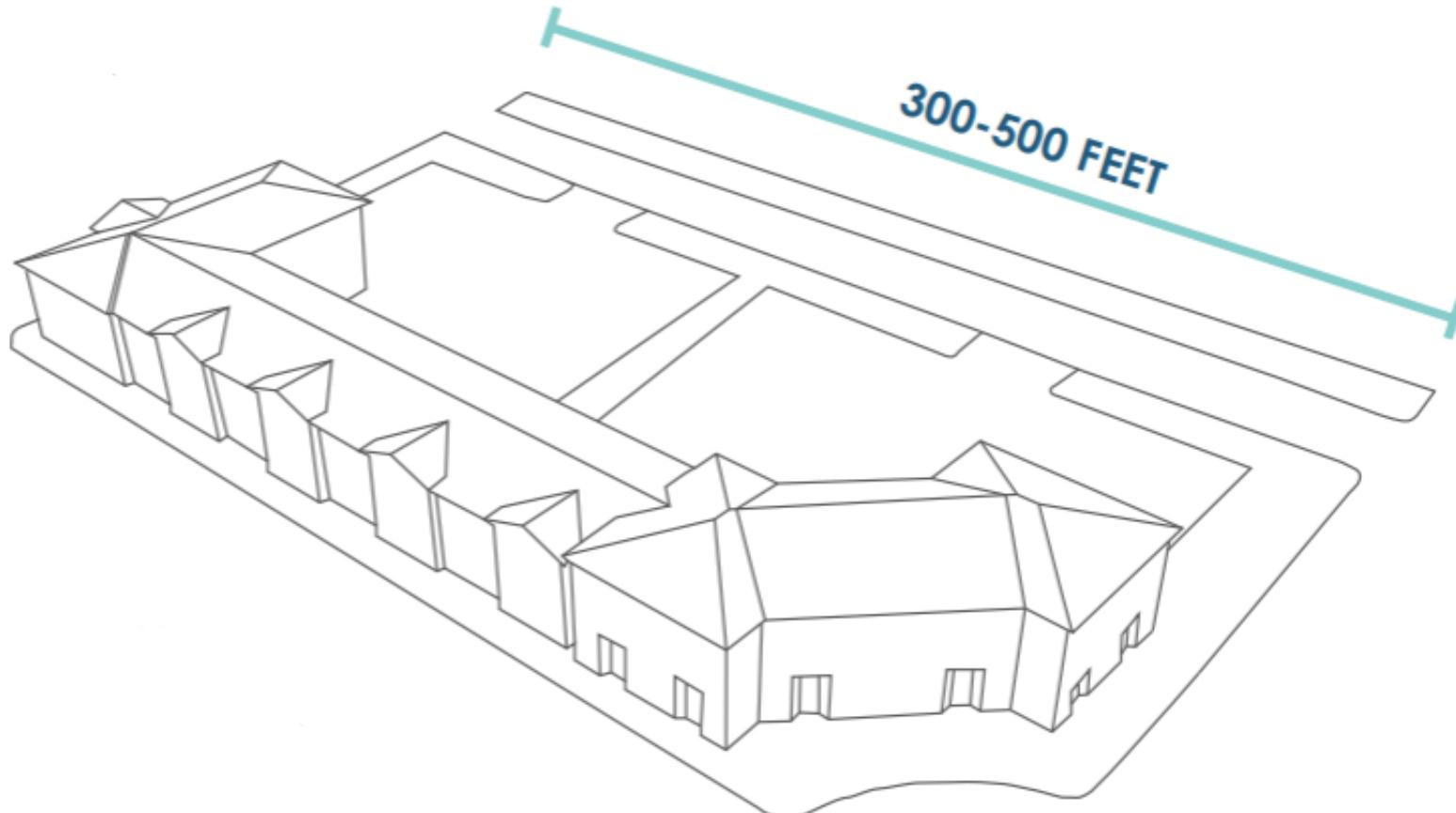
1. Building Placement
2. Architectural Styles for New Development
 - a. Massing
 - b. Articulation
 - c. Design Materials
3. Activated Ground Floor
 - a. Entryway Typologies
 - b. Storefront Facades
4. Private Outdoor Spaces
 - a. Site Furnishings
5. Landscape & Hardscape
6. Accessory Structures
7. Parking Structures and Parking Lots
8. Infill & Reuse





PUBLIC REALM

PUBLIC. 1 BLOCK CONFIGURATION



- Walkable blocks
- Interior pedestrian cut-throughs
- Mid-block service drives
- Minimize curb cuts

PUBLIC 2. PEDESTRIAN REALM



2A. Sidewalk Zone



2B. Street Furnishings & Outdoor Furniture Zone



2C. Planting Zone



2D. Building Transition Zone

PUBLIC 2A. SIDEWALK ZONE

- **Paved, linear space** where pedestrians travel and gather
- Must provide **clear, continuous circulation** for pedestrians
- Designed to accommodate people of all ages and abilities
 - Free of obstructions
 - Protect pedestrians from vehicle traffic
- Materials should reflect areas character



PUBLIC 2B. STREET FURNISHINGS AND OUTDOOR FURNITURE ZONE



Library of:

- Benches and seating
- Trash receptacles
- Bike racks
- Lighting (CPTED)
- Wayfinding and Signage

PUBLIC 2C. PLANTING ZONE



Components:

- Tree wells
- Garden beds
- Planter pots

Resulting in:

- Buffering
- Aesthetics
- Water quality
- Habitat

PUBLIC 2D. BUILDING TRANSITION ZONE



Components:

- Buffer and refuge
- Active edge
- Connection

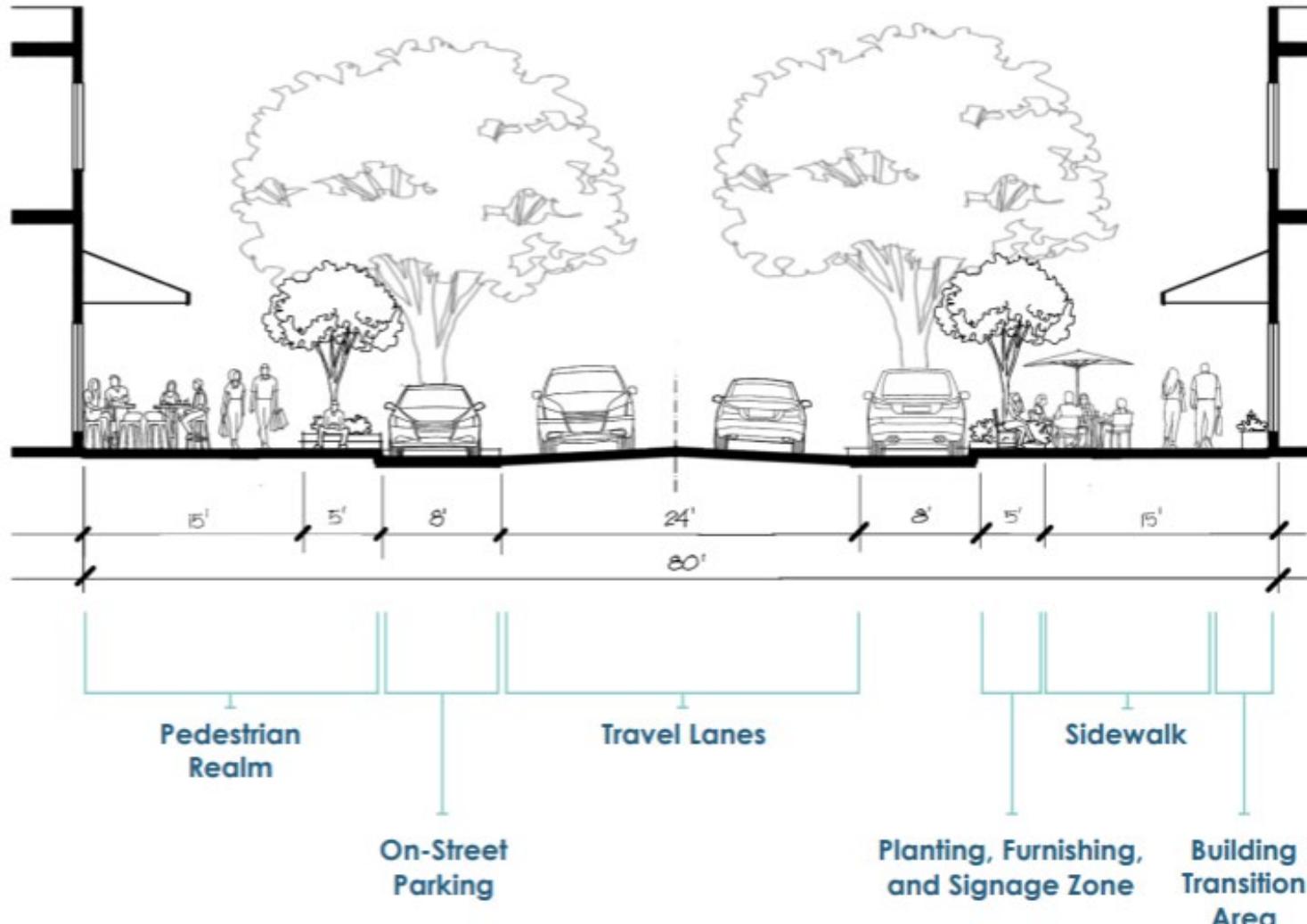
Resulting in:

- Outdoor dining
- Retail displays
- Planter pots
- Shade structures

PUBLIC 3. STREET CROSS-SECTIONS



Main Street (Miracle Strip Parkway) Cross-Section



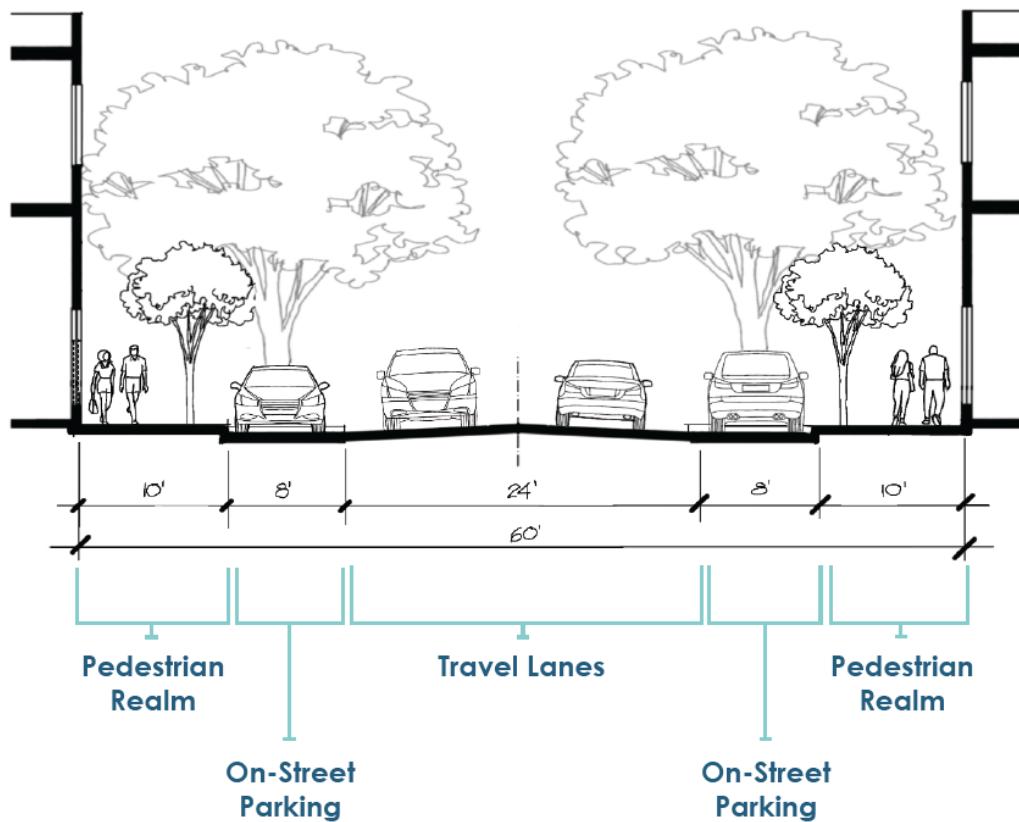
Components:

- 80 Foot Right-of-Way
 - Gateways
 - Crosswalks
- 12 ft travel lanes
 - Pavers
- 8 ft parallel parking
 - Parklets
 - Shade trees
- 20 ft pedestrian realm

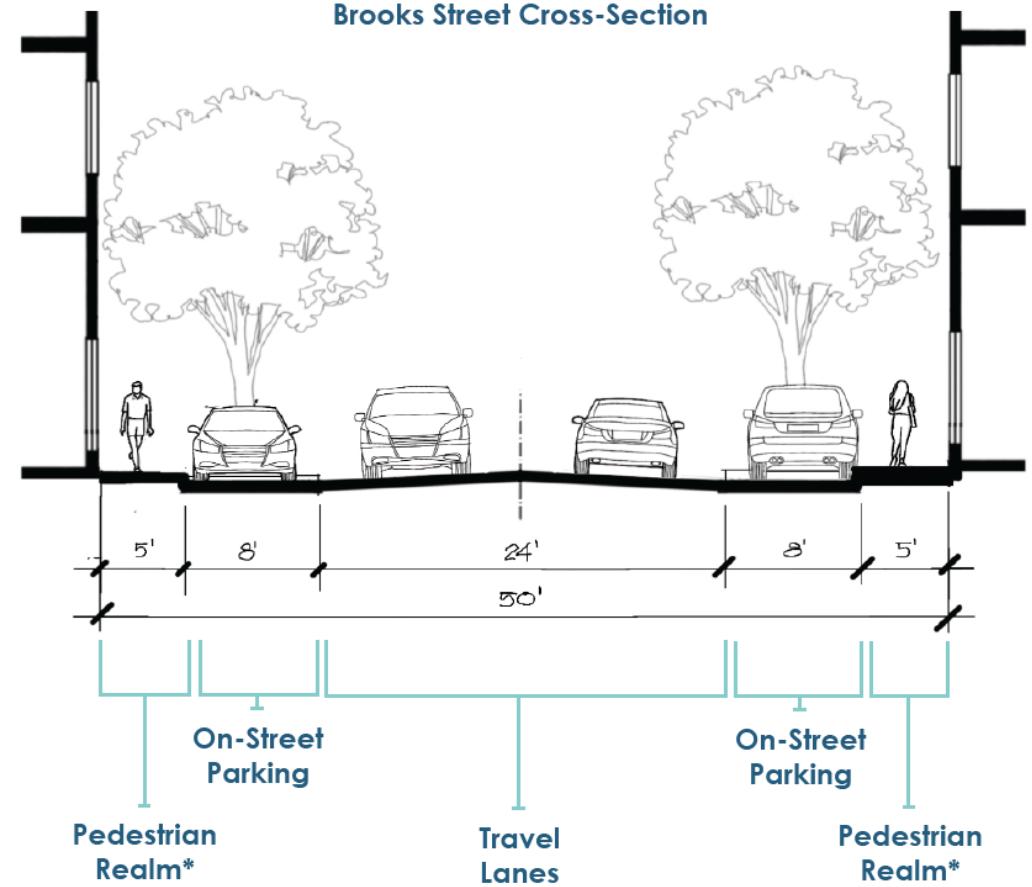
PUBLIC 3. STREET CROSS-SECTIONS



Prototypical Neighborhood Street Cross-Section



Brooks Street Cross-Section



PUBLIC 4. UTILITIES

- Aim to **minimize visual impact** of utilities in public realm
- Utility infrastructure, like overhead powerlines, should be moved underground
- Avoid placing electrical transformers, mechanical equipment, etc. along visible areas along the ground floor
 - **Placed discreetly in locations that do not interfere with pedestrian movement or visual quality of streetscape**



Trash and Recycling Enclosures



Landscaped Water Features



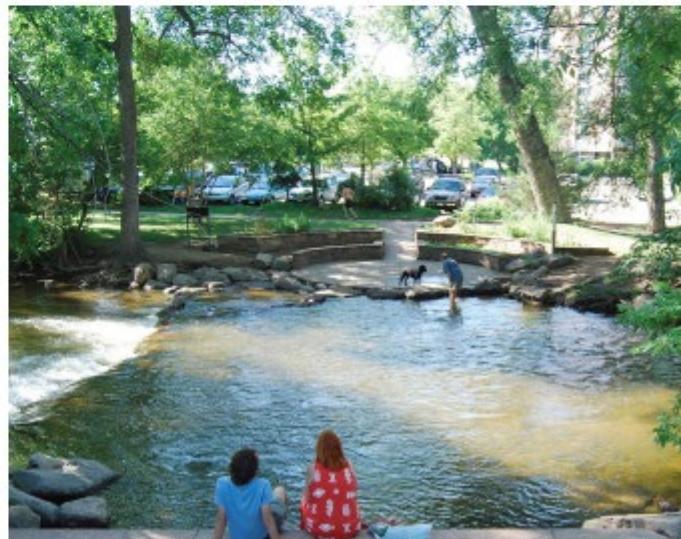
Utility Box Wrap Art



Alleyway Decor



PUBLIC 5. ACTIVE USES AND FLEXIBLE SPACES



- Public parks, plazas and open spaces
- Public art
- Vending opportunities,
- Interactive features and water displays
- Lighting and seating



PRIVATE REALM



PRIVATE 1. INFILL & REUSE



- Preserve historic and cultural significance
- Celebrate existing style
- Maintain scale and visibility
- Avoid damaging key features
- Remain subordinate
- Provide setbacks for additions
- Harmonious integration

PRIVATE 2. ARCHITECTURE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT



Unique character:

- Integrate local vernacular
- Informal coastal style
 - Massing
 - Articulation
 - Materials



PRIVATE 2A. BUILDING PLACEMENT



- Building height - 2 to 3 stories
- Stepback - 10 feet at 3rd story
- Minimum frontage - 70%

PRIVATE 2B. MASSING



Elements of Massing:

- Overall Composition
- Main volume
- Main entrance

PRIVATE 2C. DESIGN MATERIALS



PRIVATE 2D. ARTICULATION



PRIVATE 3. ACTIVATED GROUND FLOOR



Easy to Read
Signage

Wide Expanses of
Transparent Glazing

Vertically Emphasized
Entryway

Facade Articulation to
Designate Retail Footprint



PRIVATE 4. ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

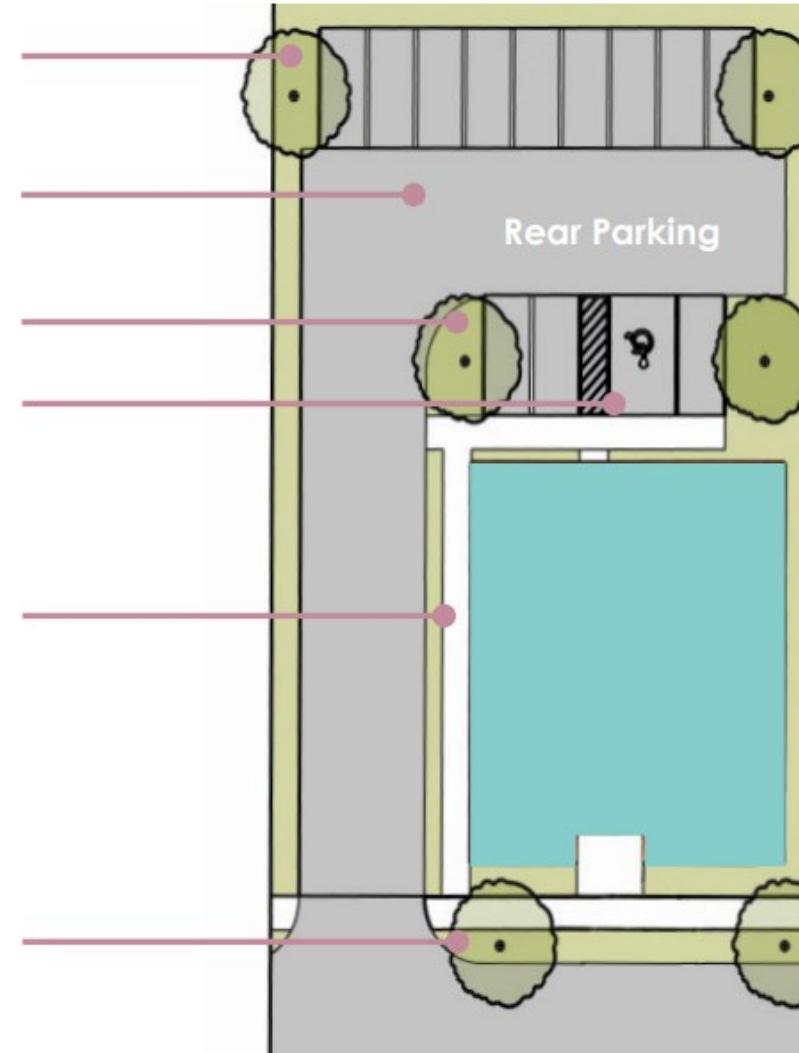


PRIVATE 5. PRIVATE OUTDOOR SPACES



PRIVATE 6. PARKING SURFACE

Parking Vegetation Buffer



Surface Lots Located Off the Street Behind Buildings with Street Frontage

Building Vegetation Buffer

ADA Accessibility

Clear Pedestrian Circulation Around the Building and to Public Right-of-Way Sidewalk

Use of Street Trees and Tree Wells to Enhance Visual Impact

STRUCTURED

Access to Parking Structures off Secondary Street



Parking Structures Situated Behind Buildings with Street Frontage

Minimal Disruption to the Pedestrian Realm



Perforated Screens and Art Installations on Upper Level Facades

Clear Lighting and Distinct Articulation to Identify Parking Structures

Human Scaled Ground-Level Facades

Help Shape the Future of Downtown



We Want to Hear From You!

- What resonates with you?
- What concerns or suggestions do you have?
- Are there elements you'd like to see added or revised?

Next Steps

- Adoption of guidelines
- Identify projects based on public realm

THANK YOU