

# DOWNTOWN SOUTH BEND

## 2045 PLAN

A COMMUNITY-LED VISION

South Bend Common Council - March 2026

MAR 24 2026

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City Clerk, South Bend, IN

# Plan Contents

The background of the page is a detailed architectural rendering of a city street scene. In the foreground, a stone bridge with a decorative railing crosses a river. People are walking on the bridge, and a car is visible on the street below. The street is lined with various buildings, including modern high-rises and older, multi-story structures. Trees and greenery are interspersed throughout the scene, creating a vibrant urban atmosphere. The sky is blue with light clouds.

## Overview

History of Downtown  
Planning Context  
Engagement & Design Process  
Development Principles

## Analysis

Development Pattern  
Market Analysis  
Parking Analysis

## The Vision

The Heart of Downtown  
Arts & Culture  
Innovation & Institutional Catalysts  
Neighborhoods  
Public Realm

## Built Form & Design Standards

Design Guidance  
Focal Points  
Zoning  
Building Types

## Historic Preservation

Preservation Principles  
Historic Property Inventory

## Implementation Matrix

# What is a Plan?

The Downtown Plan is a shared statement, developed through a community engagement process, about the desired long-term future for the planning area and a strategy to reach the goals of the plan.

## It is a guide for:

- Making decisions about future development.
- How resources are allocated.
- How issues residents, business and property owners, and others in the neighborhood could be addressed.

## Who is a plan for?

- Neighborhood Residents
- Developers, Builders
- Public Officials
- Community Leaders
- City Staff

## What does a plan include?

- Strategies to be implemented over the next 20+ years
- Ideas to improve public space & infrastructure (parks, riverfront, streets)
- Housing (types, condition & affordability)
- Zoning & Land Use to guide development
- Other matters important to the community

## **Why Now?** (2024)

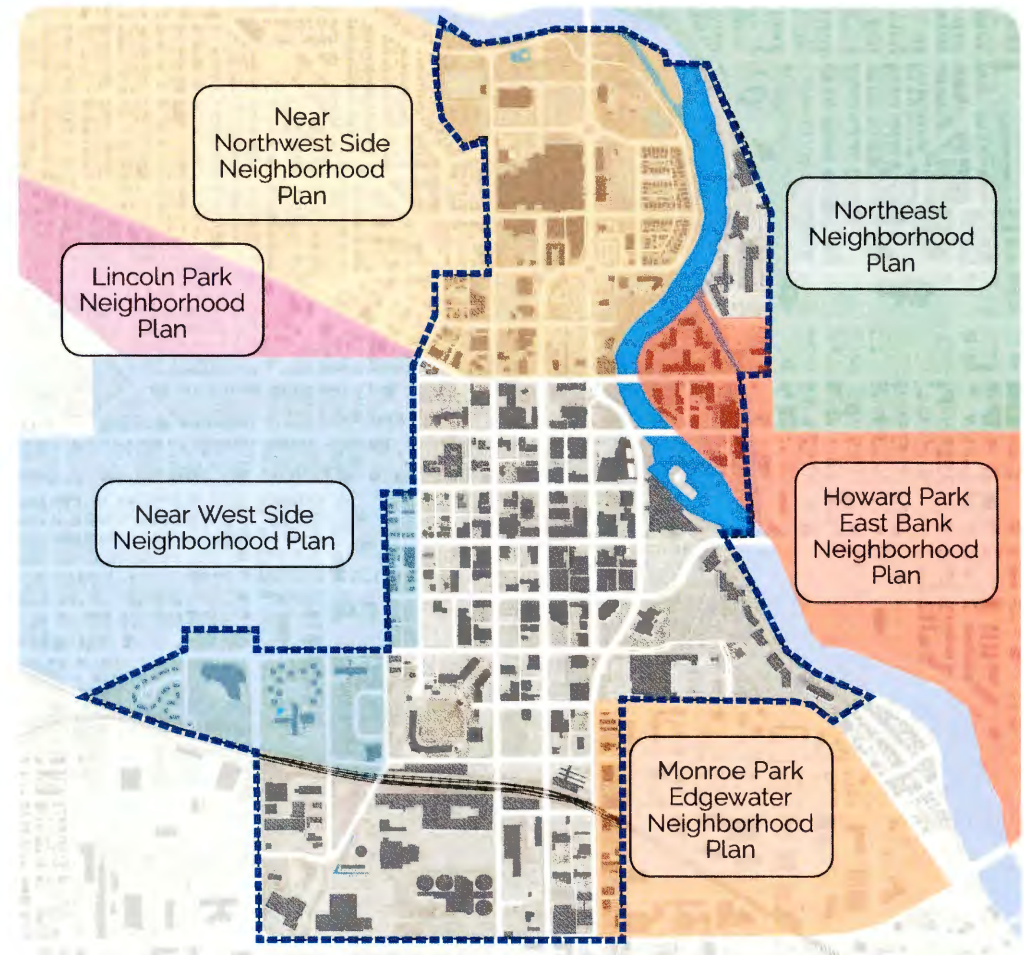
- **New projects and investments coming to downtown, roughly \$1 billion**
- **Guide new investment**
- **13 Neighborhood Plans completed or in progress**
- **New plan would serve as a 20-year vision for what downtown could become**



# Planning Context

## This Vision Plan Considered:

- Work done in the surrounding neighborhood plans.
- Community and stakeholders ideas and input on a vision that centers on the heart of the City.



# \$1 Billion of new investment (2024)

## Upcoming Projects

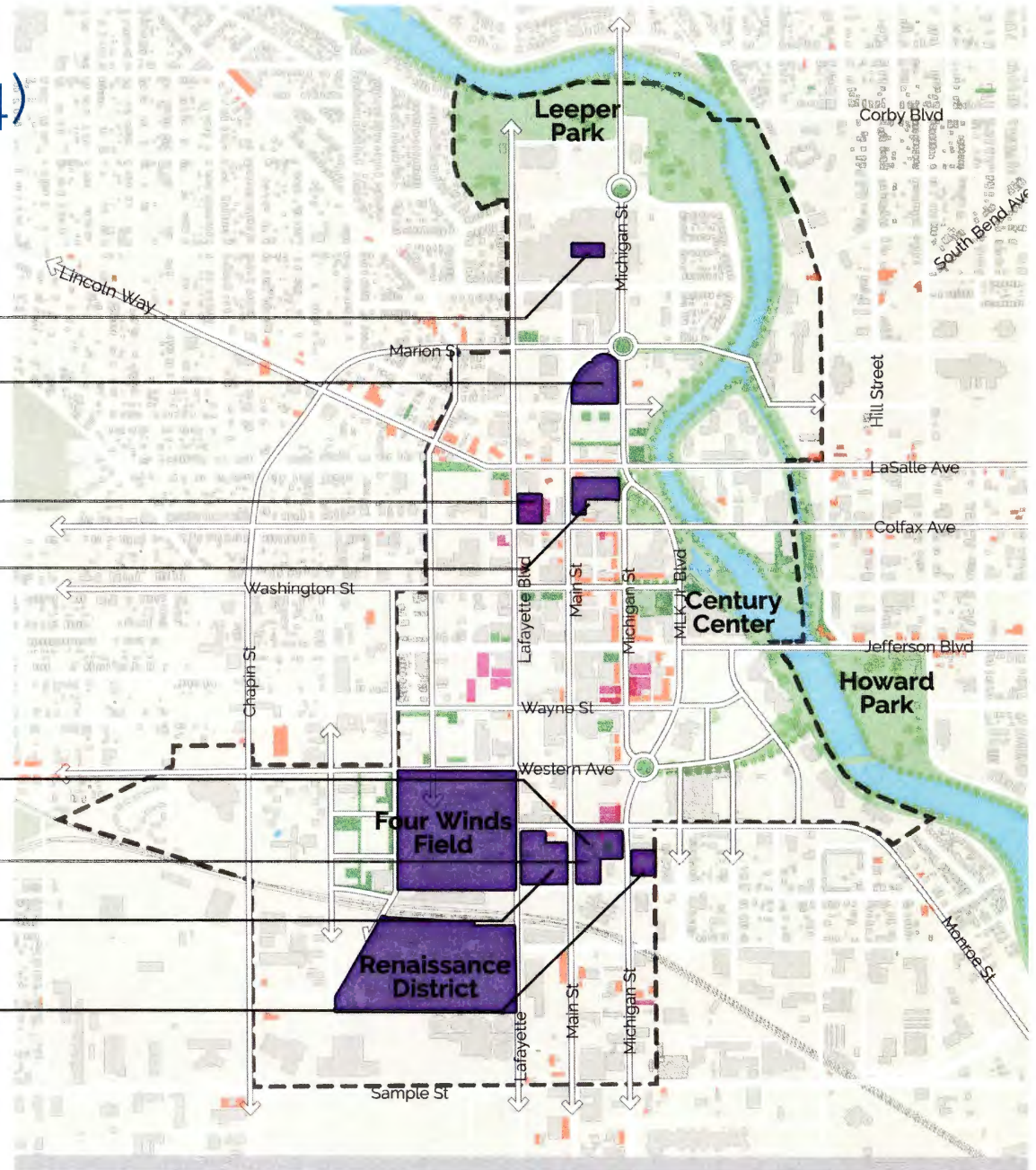
- Four Winds Field
- The Monreaux
- Studebaker Admin Building
- Beacon Hospital Tower
- Morris Performing Arts
- Tribune Building
- Momentum HQ
- Soma Lofts
- Pedestrian Bridge
- New Trail Connections



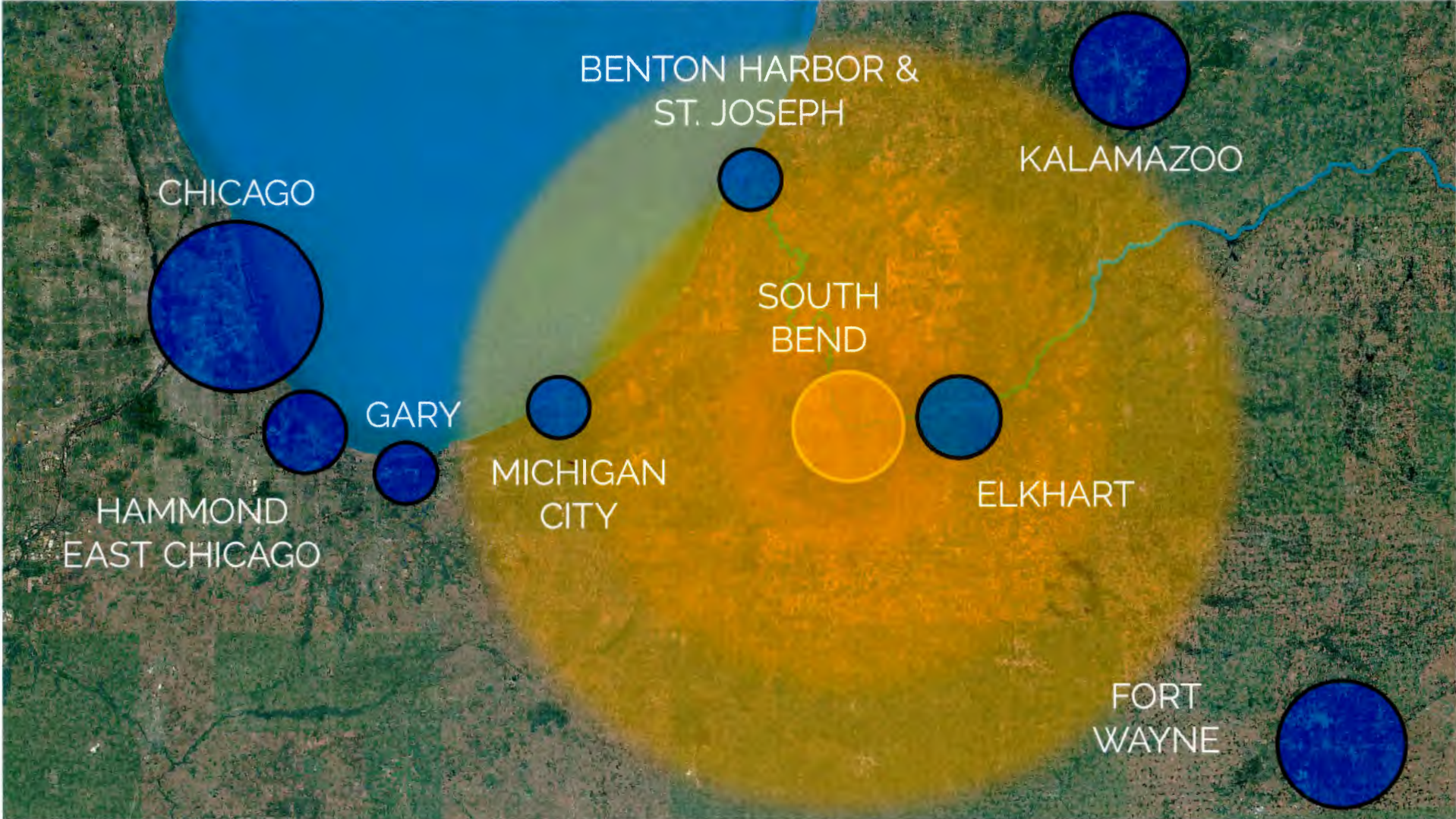
# Planned Projects (2024)

**\$1 BILLION OF INVESTMENT**

- Beacon Tower
- Madison Lifestyle District
- Tribune Building
- Morris Performing Arts Expansion
- Momentum HQ
- Soma Lofts
- Diamond View & Stadium Flats Apartments
- Herstoric Development



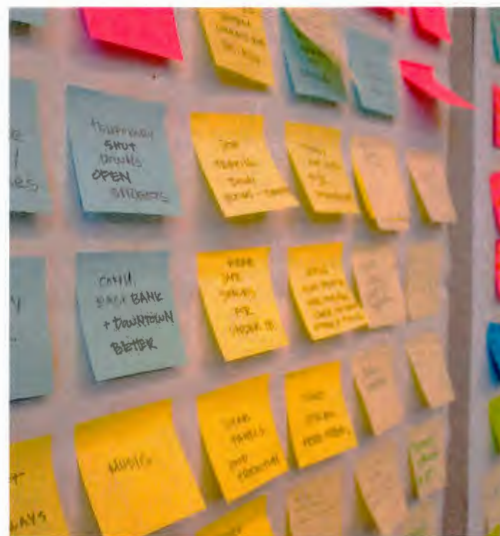
# South Bend's Place in the Region



# **ENGAGEMENT & DESIGN PROCESS**

# Stakeholder Meetings

The best way to create a successful, implementable vision for Downtown is to listen to the community and let their priorities shape the plan.



JANUARY 2024



## City staff conducted 23 virtual and in-person meetings with:

- Neighborhood associations
- Community and nonprofit organizations
- Faith-based institutions
- Businesses
- City departments, and City Council representatives.

# Speaker event - Casey Steinbacher

Hey downtown... are you surviving or thriving?

“Plan for Success”

“Successful Downtowns  
Implement Vision Plans”

“Downtown is the  
City’s Living Room”



FEBRUARY 2024



# Visioning Workshops

Workshop exercises presented a series of questions to help guide constructive dialogue among residents.



Characteristics of Your Favorite Cities or Towns



Describe Downtown's Unique Vibe

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2024

151  
Workshop Participants

1,250+  
Ideas Generated



What Would Make Downtown Successful



Amenities Needed in Downtown

# Development Principles

**Nine key priorities emerged from the community input and feedback.**



**Activate the Riverfront**



**Expand Housing Options**



**Anchor Downtown with Jobs & People**



**Create a Safe & Inclusive Place for Everyone**



**Create Vibrant Public Places**



**Build Comfortable & Accessible Connections**



**Grow & Support Local Businesses**



**Embrace Sustainable Practices**



**Support & Leverage Arts & Culture**

# Design Week

Provided another opportunity for the community to weigh in on the direction of the Vision plan.



JUNE 2024



Recap Presentation

76  
participants



Midweek Pinup

73  
participants



Final Presentation

131  
participants

# Design Week

Three high priority themes emerged from the workshops.



SUMMER 2024



**ACTIVATE THE RIVERFRONT**



**EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS**



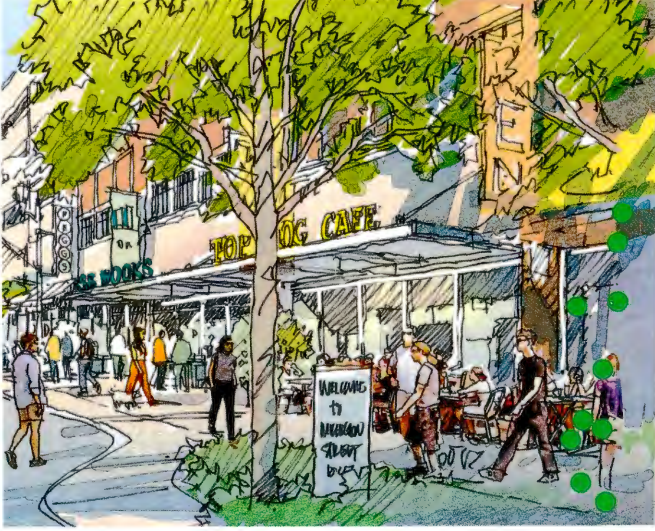
**CREATE VIBRANT PUBLIC PLACES**



# Open Houses & Additional Stakeholder Engagement



SUMMER 2025



# Project Timeline



**STUDIES**

# Market Analysis

## Key Takeaways

- There is a moderate/strong demand for rental apartments & for-sale townhomes in Downtown
- There is a moderate/strong demand for a grocer and restaurants Downtown
- There is a moderate/strong demand for a new hotel

USE	CUMULATIVE DEMAND FOR NEW PRODUCT			LOCATION APPEAL	BASELINE OPPORTUNITY		
	BY 2030	BY 2038	BY 2045		LIKELY LAND ECONOMICS	SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE	OVERALL OPPORTUNITY
<b>Rental Apartments</b>	680 Units (+60 in Upside Scenario)	1,550 Units (+260 in Upside Scenario)	2,450 Units (+510 in Upside Scenario)	<b>STRONG</b> Pent-up demand for housing options adjacent to key anchors and retail nodes	<b>MODERATE</b> Robust pipeline provides evidence of feasibility, with some public support likely needed to unlock denser development	<b>STRONG</b> Long-run undersupply is buoying market fundamentals, new deliveries have stabilized quickly	<b>MODERATE / STRONG</b> <i>(Moderate / Strong in Upside)</i>

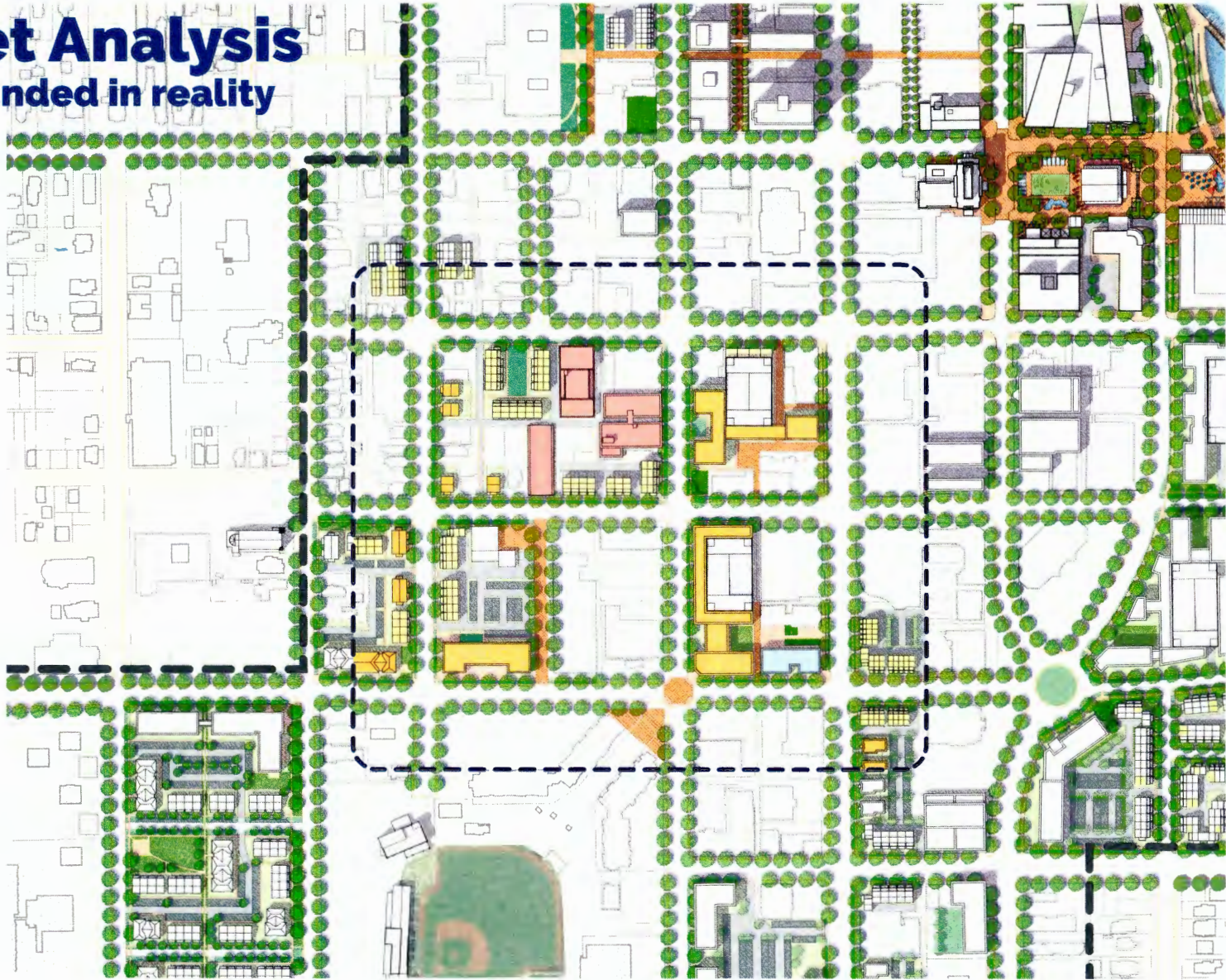
USE	CUMULATIVE DEMAND FOR NEW PRODUCT			LOCATION APPEAL	BASELINE OPPORTUNITY		
	BY 2030	BY 2038	BY 2045		LIKELY LAND ECONOMICS	SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE	OVERALL OPPORTUNITY
<b>Townhomes</b>	110 Units (+10 in Upside Scenario)	260 Units (+30 in Upside Scenario)	400 Units (+70 in Upside Scenario)	<b>STRONG</b> Likely to be attractive for buyers who want proximity to urban amenities without paying Eddy Street Commons price points	<b>MODERATE</b> Following recent zoning reforms, smaller-scale infill development has accelerated; may not be highest and best use for some Downtown sites	<b>STRONG</b> Modestly sized tranches of townhomes should achieve healthy sales velocity	<b>MODERATE / STRONG</b> <i>(Strong in Upside)</i>

USE	CUMULATIVE UNMET DEMAND			LOCATION APPEAL	BASELINE OPPORTUNITY		
	BY 2030	BY 2038	BY 2045		LIKELY LAND ECONOMICS	SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE	OVERALL OPPORTUNITY
<b>Grocery &amp; Drug</b>	33,000 SF (+0 SF in Upside Scenario)	39,000 SF (+2,000 SF in Upside Scenario)	45,000 SF (+3,000 SF in Upside Scenario)	<b>MODERATE</b> Untested location but household growth will expand appeal	<b>STRONG</b> Potential to help attract other retailers and drive premiums	<b>STRONG</b> Long-term opportunity for typically sized grocery anchor	<b>MODERATE / STRONG</b> <i>(Moderate / Strong in Upside)</i>
<b>Restaurant</b>	9,000 SF (+6,000 SF in Upside Scenario)	16,000 SF (+13,000 SF in Upside Scenario)	22,000 SF (+20,000 SF in Upside Scenario)	<b>STRONG</b> Diverse scene of existing F&B with room to grow as daytime activity ticks up	<b>STRONG</b> Land economics likely favorable for smaller spaces, more efficient configurations	<b>STRONG</b> Market is well-balanced; significant undersupply of suitable, smaller spaces	<b>STRONG</b> <i>(Strong in Upside)</i>

USE	CUMULATIVE DEMAND FOR NEW PRODUCT			LOCATION APPEAL	BASELINE OPPORTUNITY		
	BY 2030	BY 2038	BY 2045		LIKELY LAND ECONOMICS	SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE	OVERALL OPPORTUNITY
<b>Limited-Service Hotel</b>	160 Keys (+110 Keys in Upside Scenario)	310 Keys (+200 Keys in Upside Scenario)	400 Keys (+270 Keys in Upside Scenario)	<b>STRONG</b>	<b>STRONG</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>MODERATE / STRONG</b> <i>(Strong in Upside)</i>
<b>Full-Service Hotel</b>				<b>WEAK</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>MODERATE / WEAK</b> <i>(Moderate / Weak in Upside)</i>

# Market Analysis

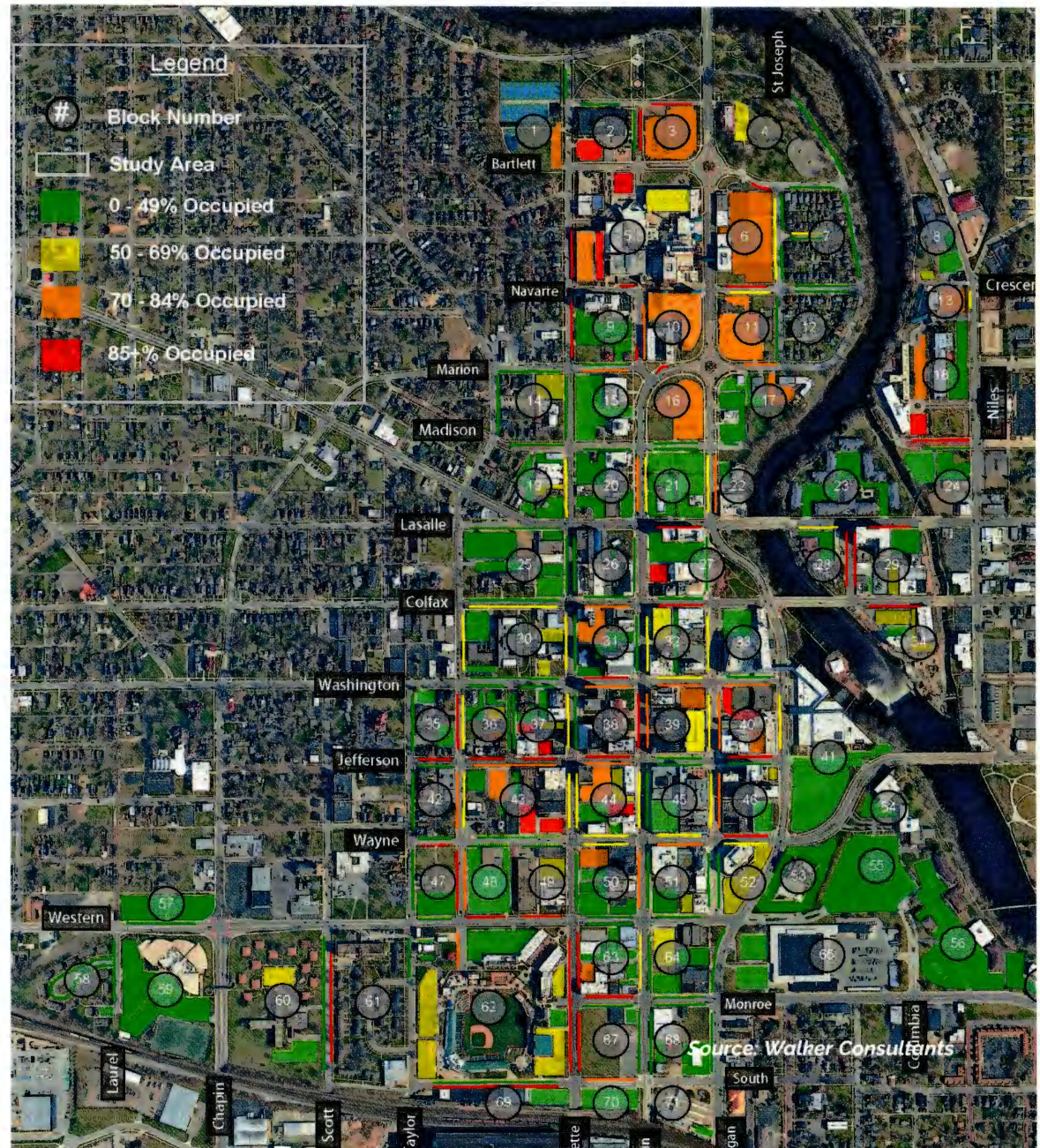
Plan grounded in reality



# Parking Analysis

## Key Takeaways

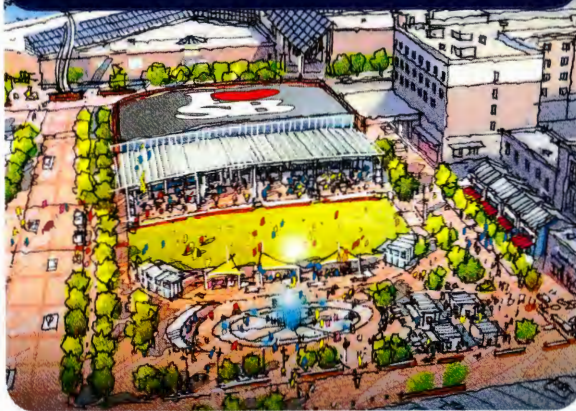
- At the peak at 10 am, downtown parking is only 46% occupied on average
- Downtown has an asset of unused parking that can help drive development



# **TRANSFORMING DOWNTOWN**

# The four Key Priorities for Downtown

1. Reinvigorate the heart of Downtown



2. Draw jobs & people to Downtown



3. Add housing diversity and infill neighborhoods within and around Downtown



4. Create a world-class connected riverfront open space system



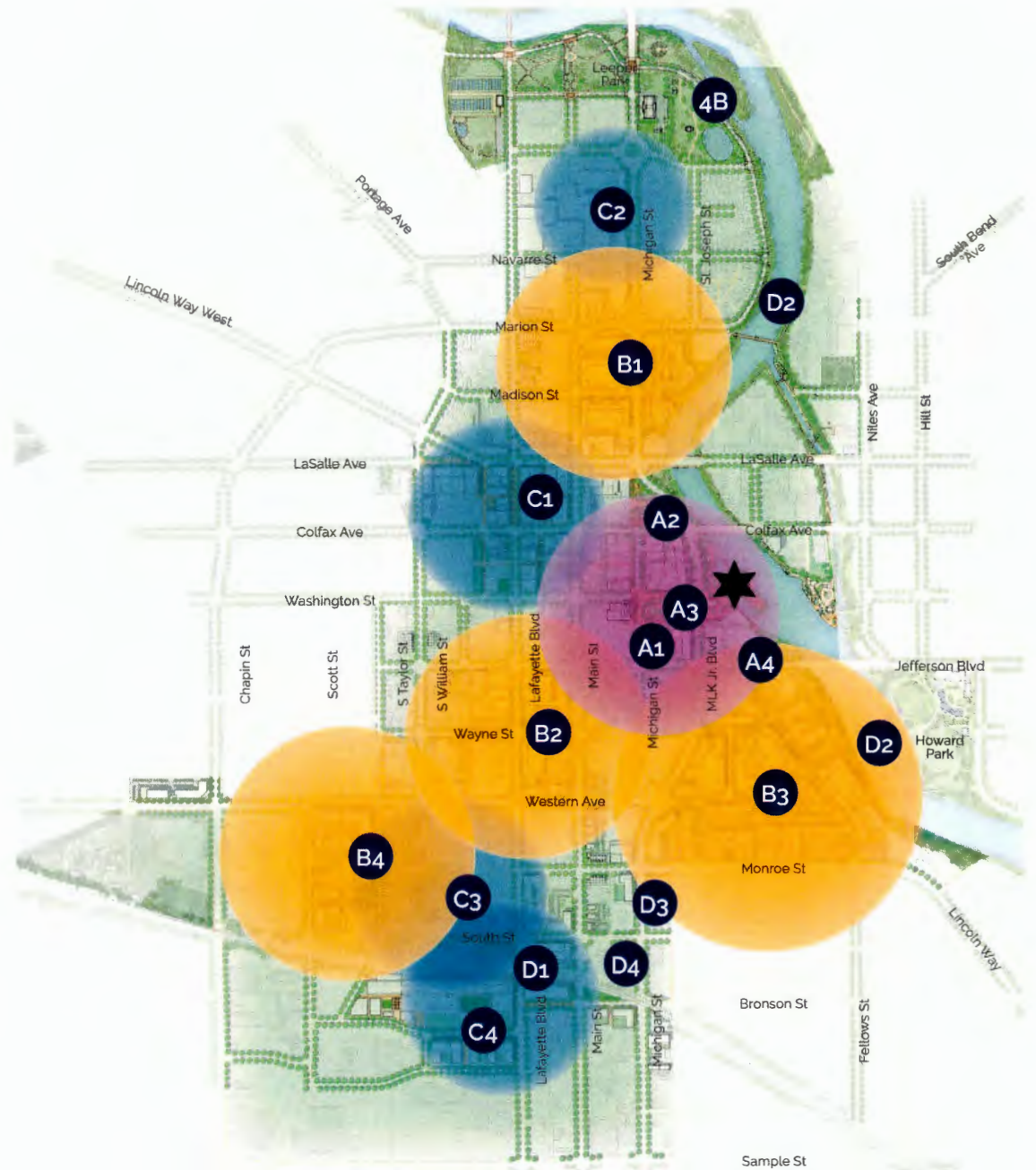
# Vision Projects

The Heart of  
Downtown

Neighborhood Nodes

Innovation &  
Institutional Catalysts

Public Realm  
Enhancements



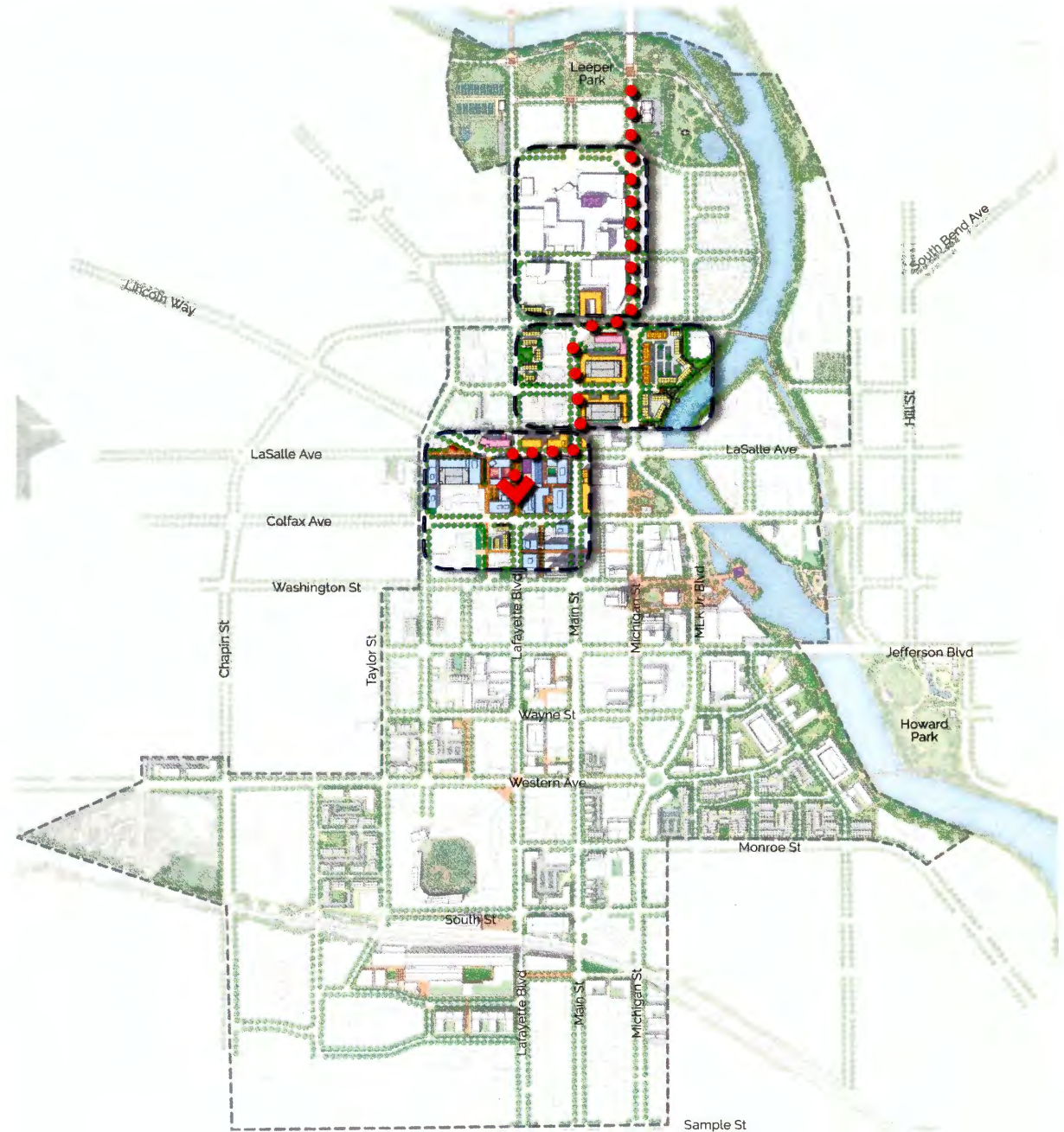
# Taking A Walk through the community vision for Downtown



# **DOWNTOWN NORTH**

# Downtown North

- Beacon Health District
- Downtown North Neighborhoods
- Tech & Talent Innovation District





**Anchor Downtown with Jobs and People**

# Downtown North Neighborhoods

- Health Districts bring jobs & people downtown



# Downtown North Neighborhoods

- Bring a variety of housing types adjacent to hospital & tech jobs





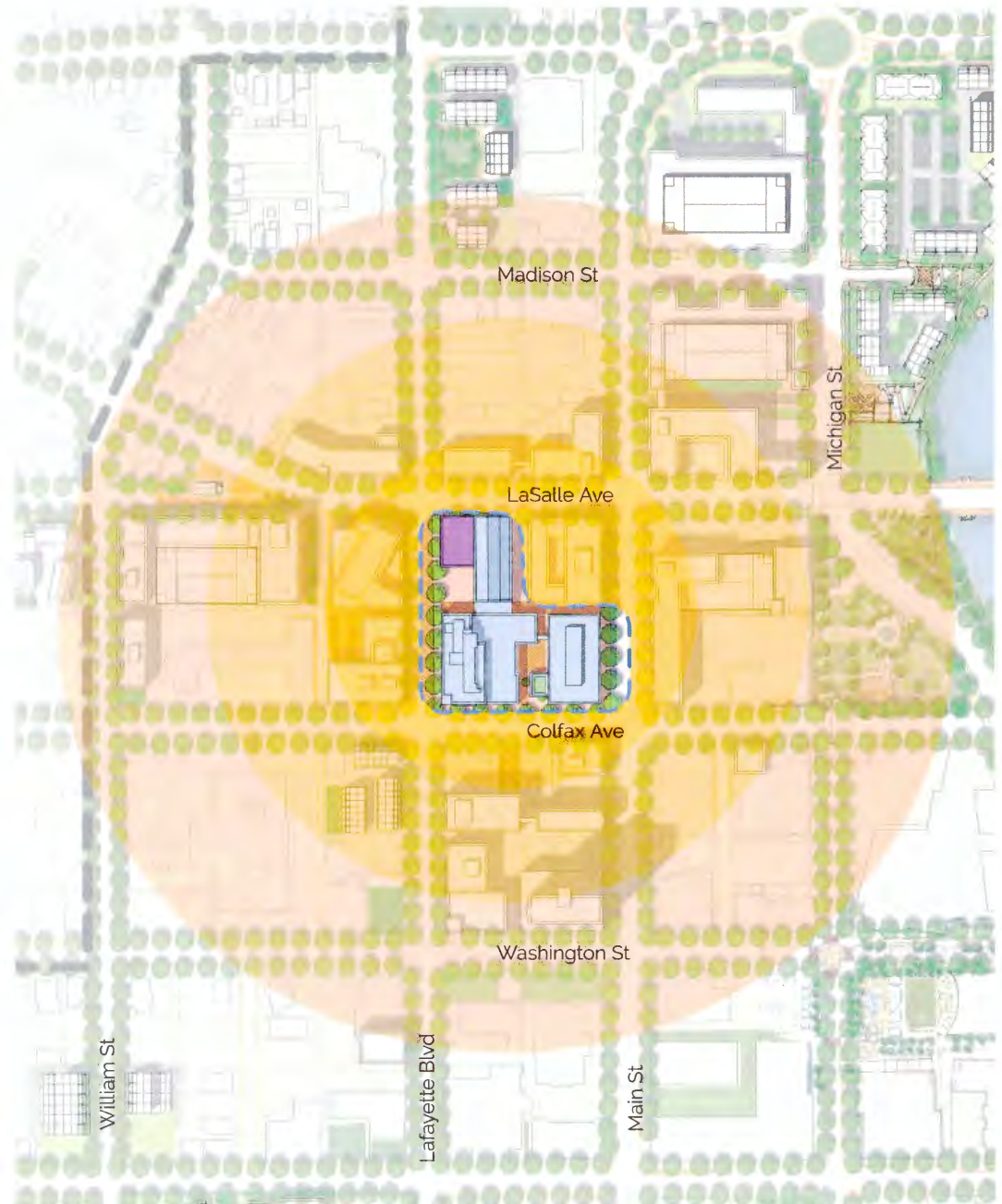
LaSalle Ave. & Main Street — Today



LaSalle Ave. & Main Street — Future

# Tech & Talent Innovation District

- A university anchor will bring jobs & people Downtown
- Act as a catalyst



# Colfax Corner



# THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN

# Downtown Central

- Jon Hunt Plaza
- Michigan Street
- The Town Square
- Century Center & Jefferson Blvd. Realignment
- A Big Idea for the Future - Signature Riverfront Park



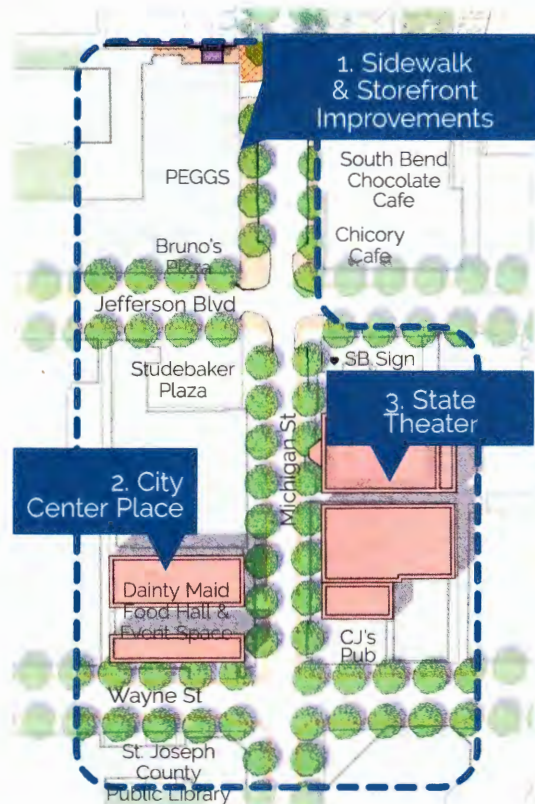
# Jon Hunt Plaza

- Activate the park as a cultural gateway into Downtown



# Michigan Street

- Focus on reactivating & improving the retail environment on South Bend's historic retail street



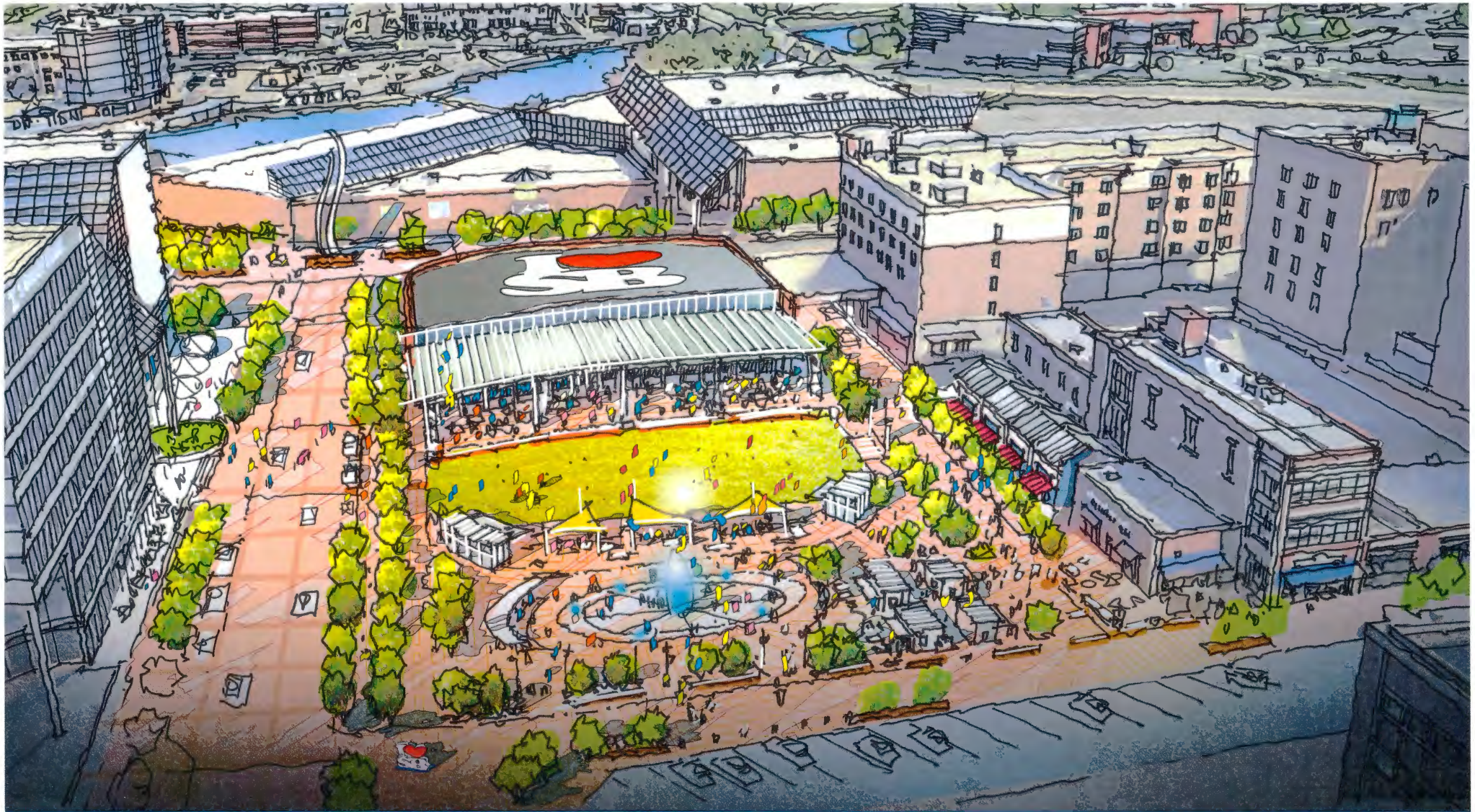
# The Town Square

- Utilize the Gridiron to create an active public square that can become the living room for Downtown

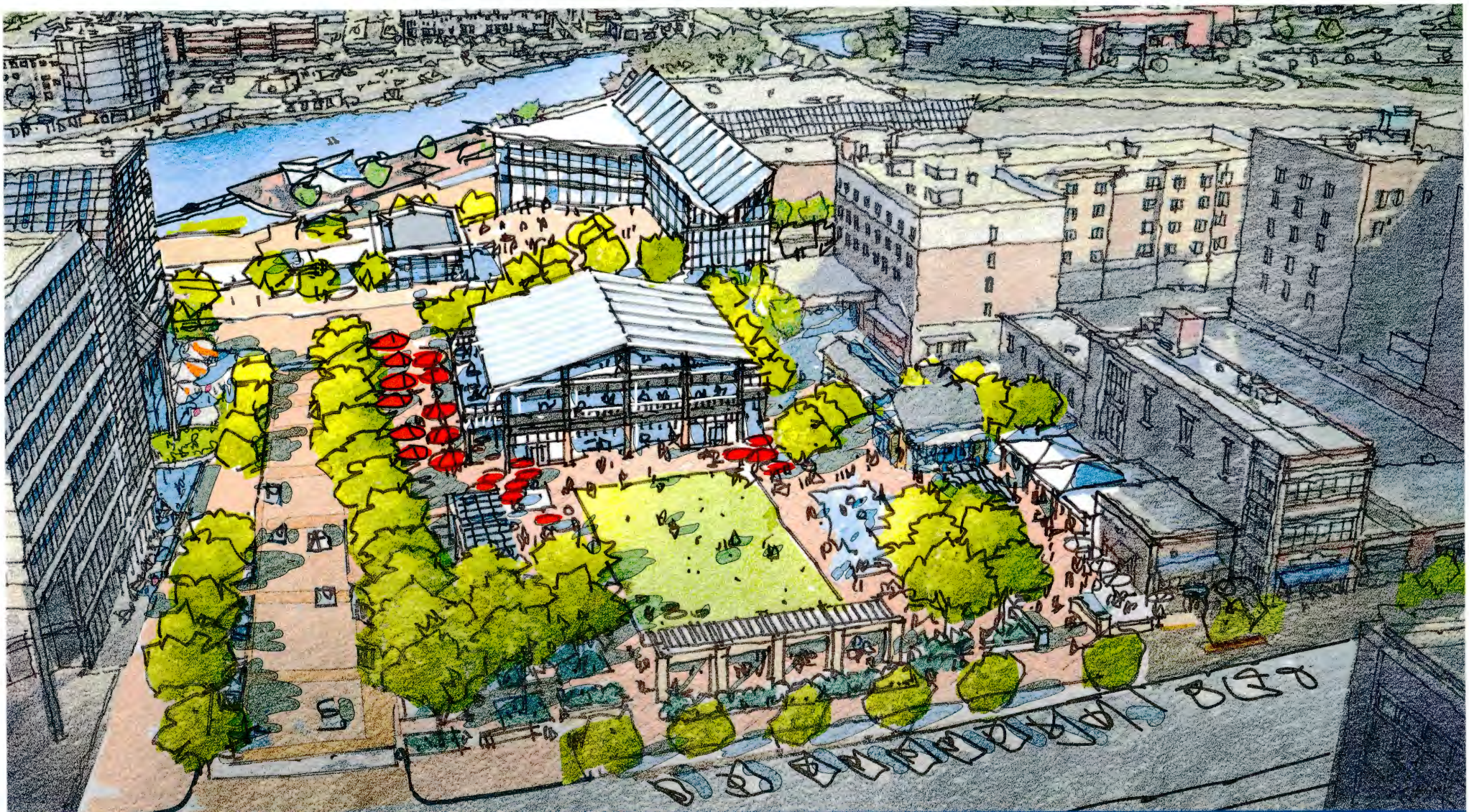




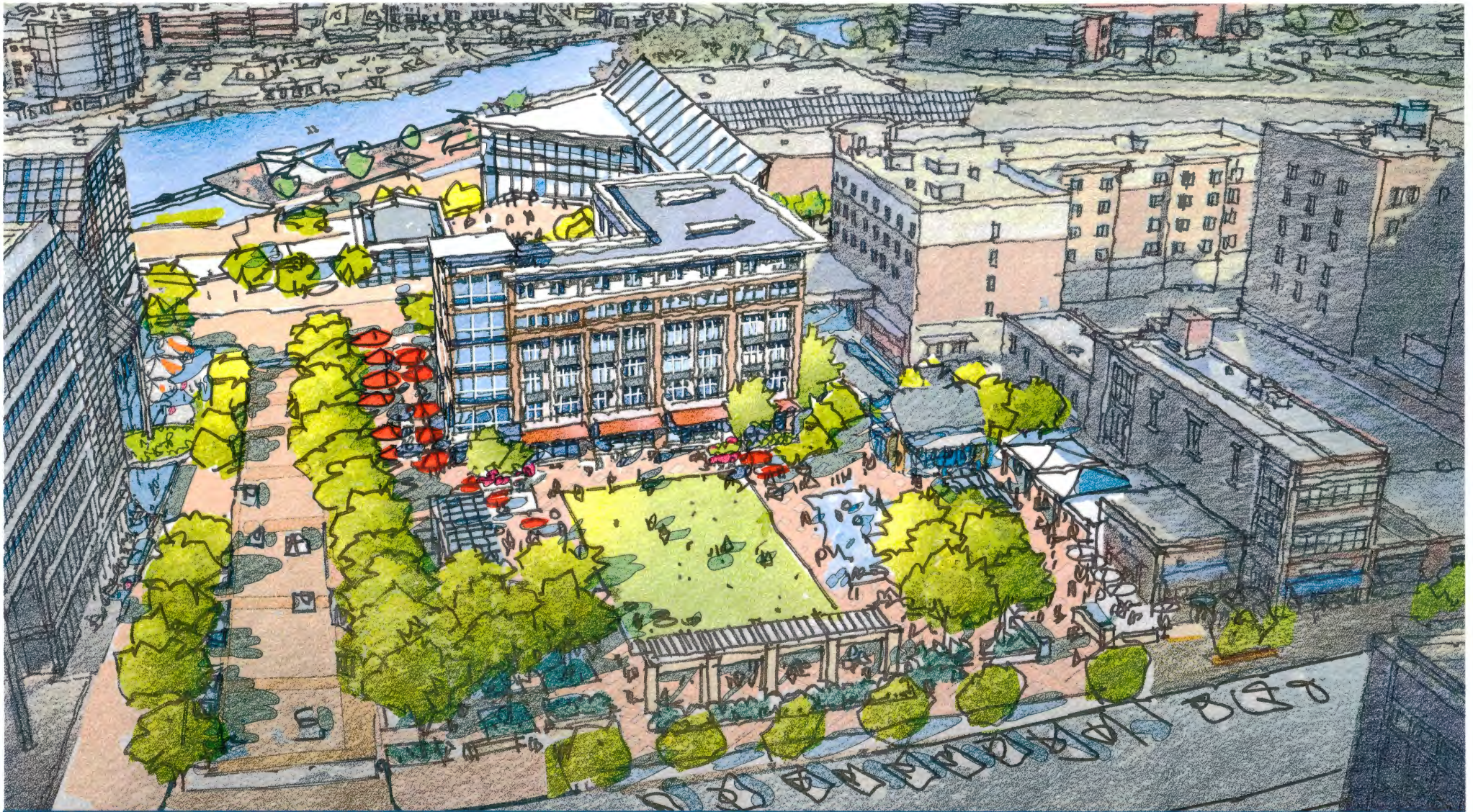
Hall of Fame and Gridiron — Today



# Heart of South Bend — Future



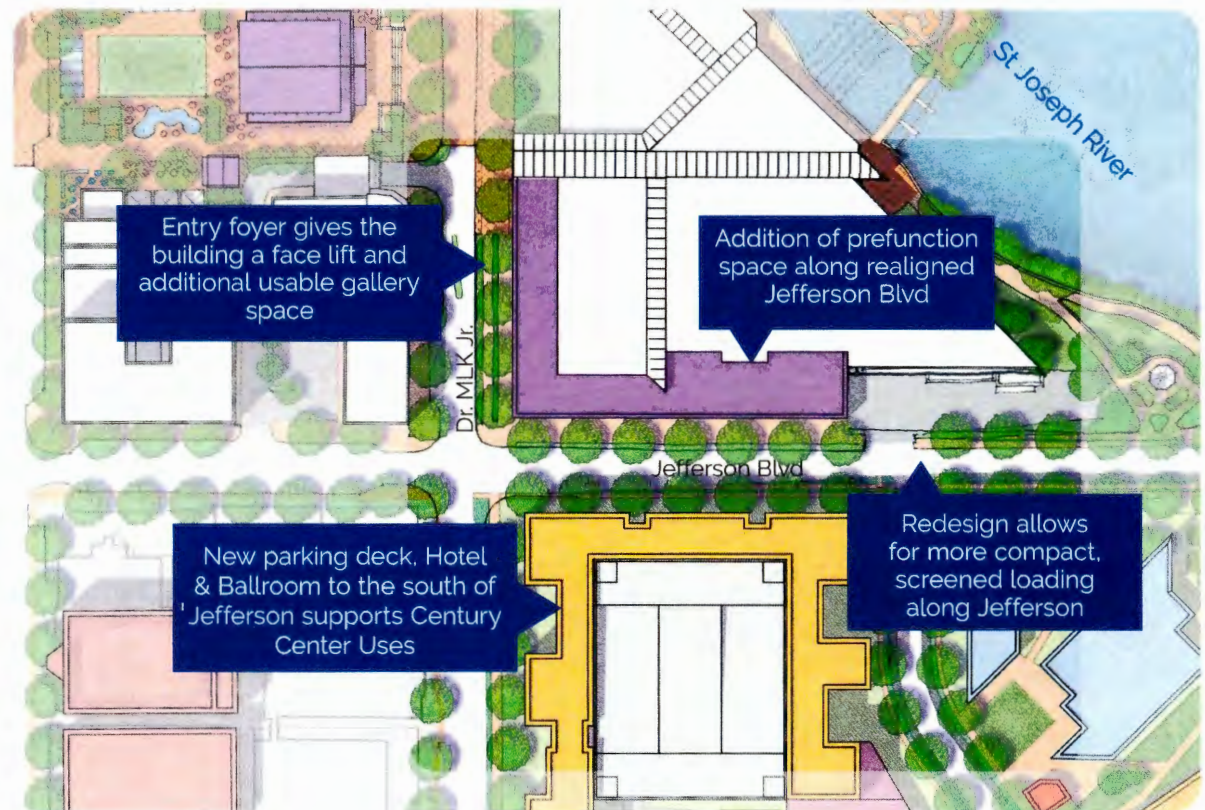
# Heart of South Bend — Future



# Heart of South Bend — Future

# Century Center & Jefferson Blvd.

- Realign Jefferson Blvd.
- Addition of prefunction space along Jefferson & MLK Blvd.
- Entry foyer to transform look & add programmable space
- New Parking deck, Hotel & Ballroom to support Century Center events





# Century Center — Today



# Century Center — Future?



Jefferson Blvd. — Today



Jefferson Blvd. — Future

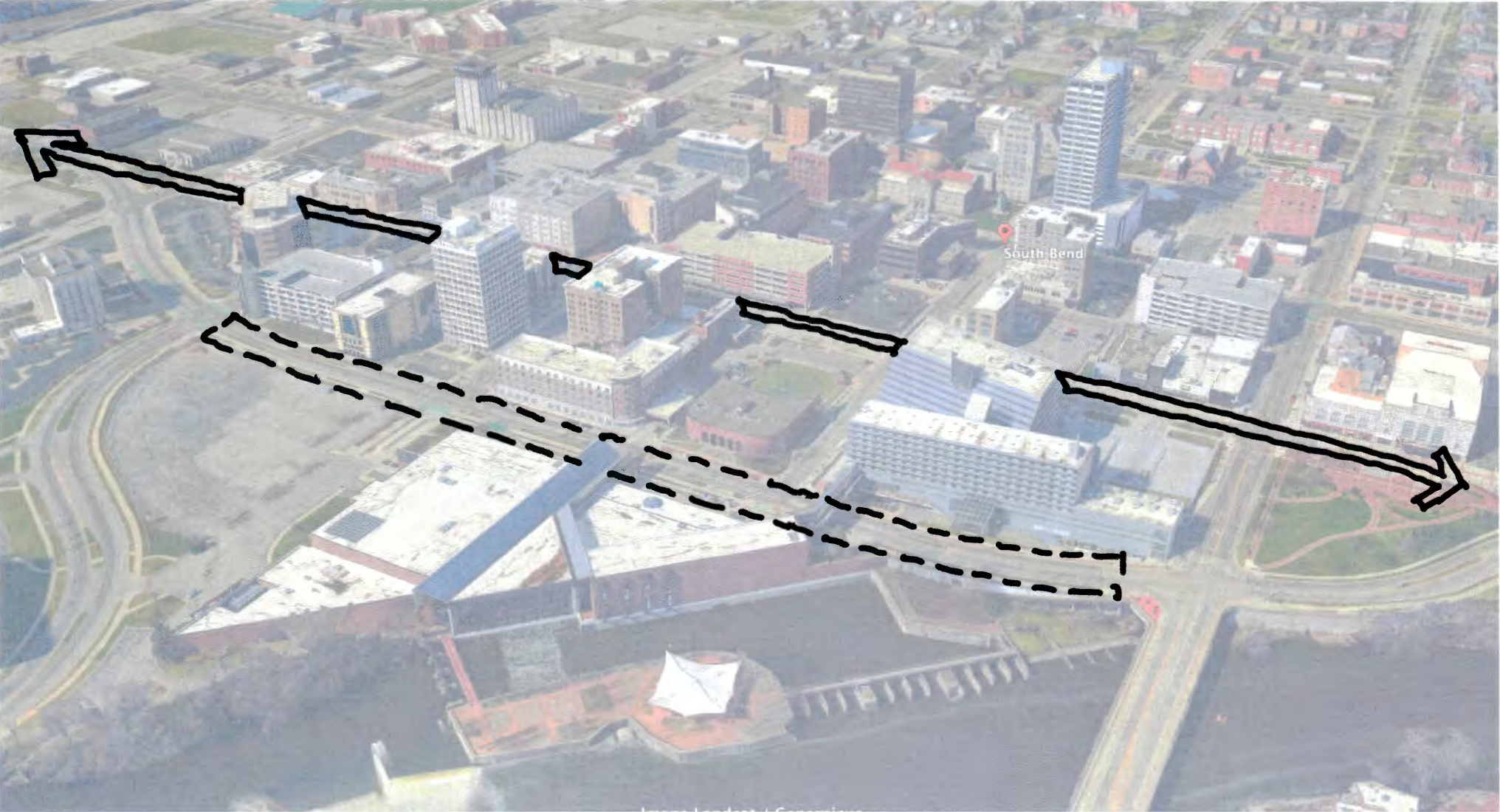
# BIG IDEA FOR THE FUTURE

SIGNATURE RIVERFRONT PARK

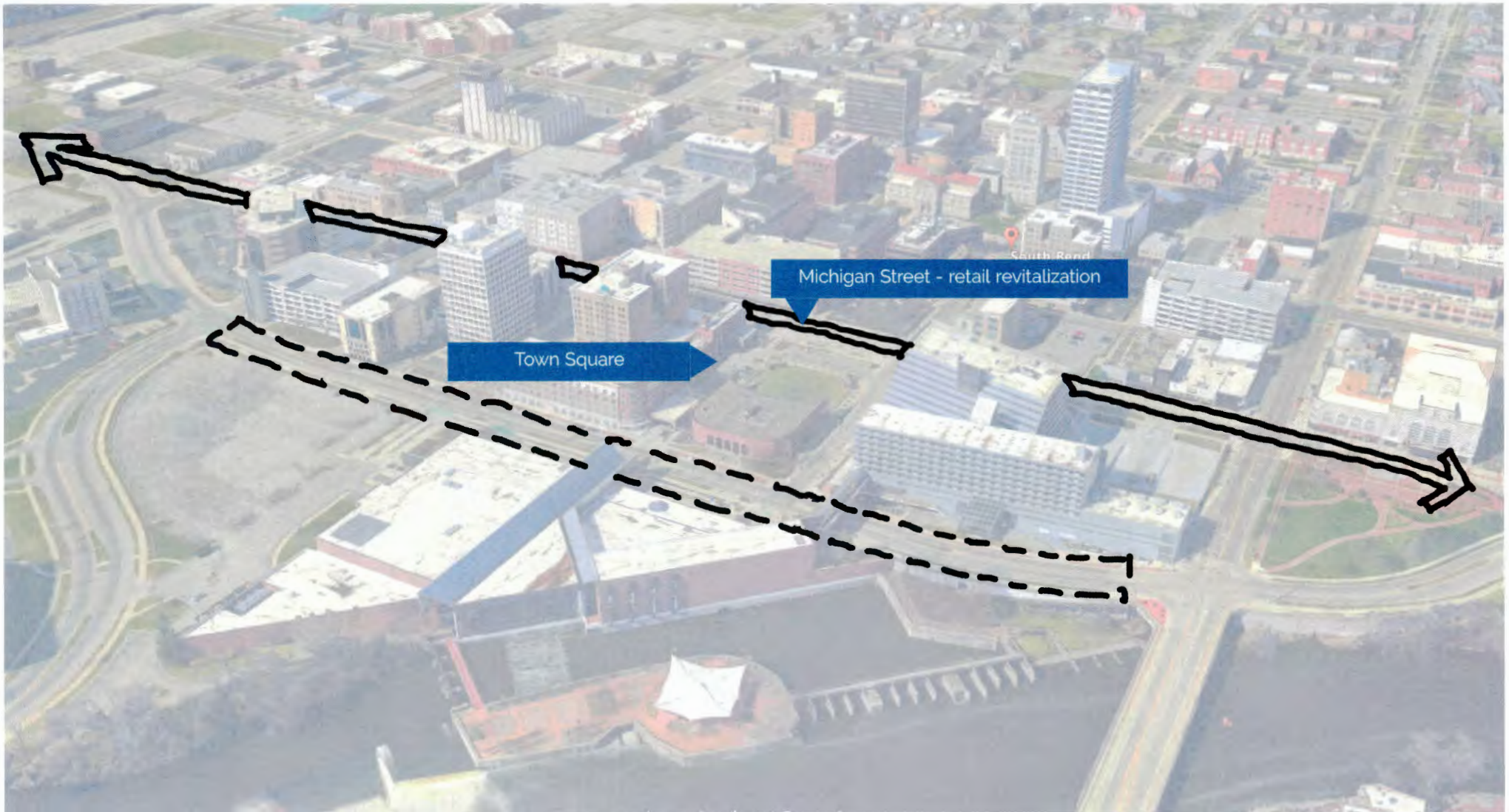


**Activate the Riverfront**

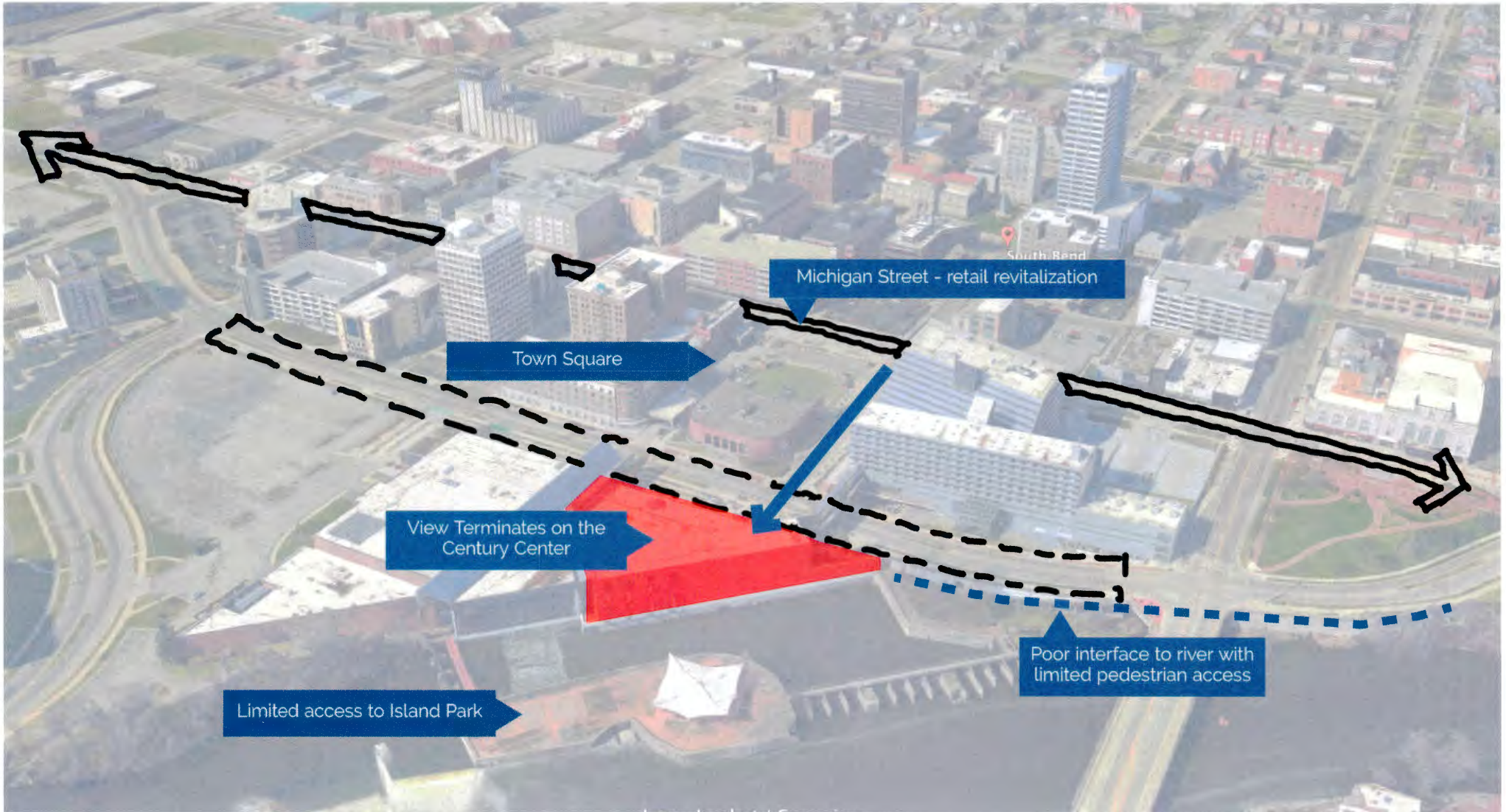
# Signature Riverfront Park



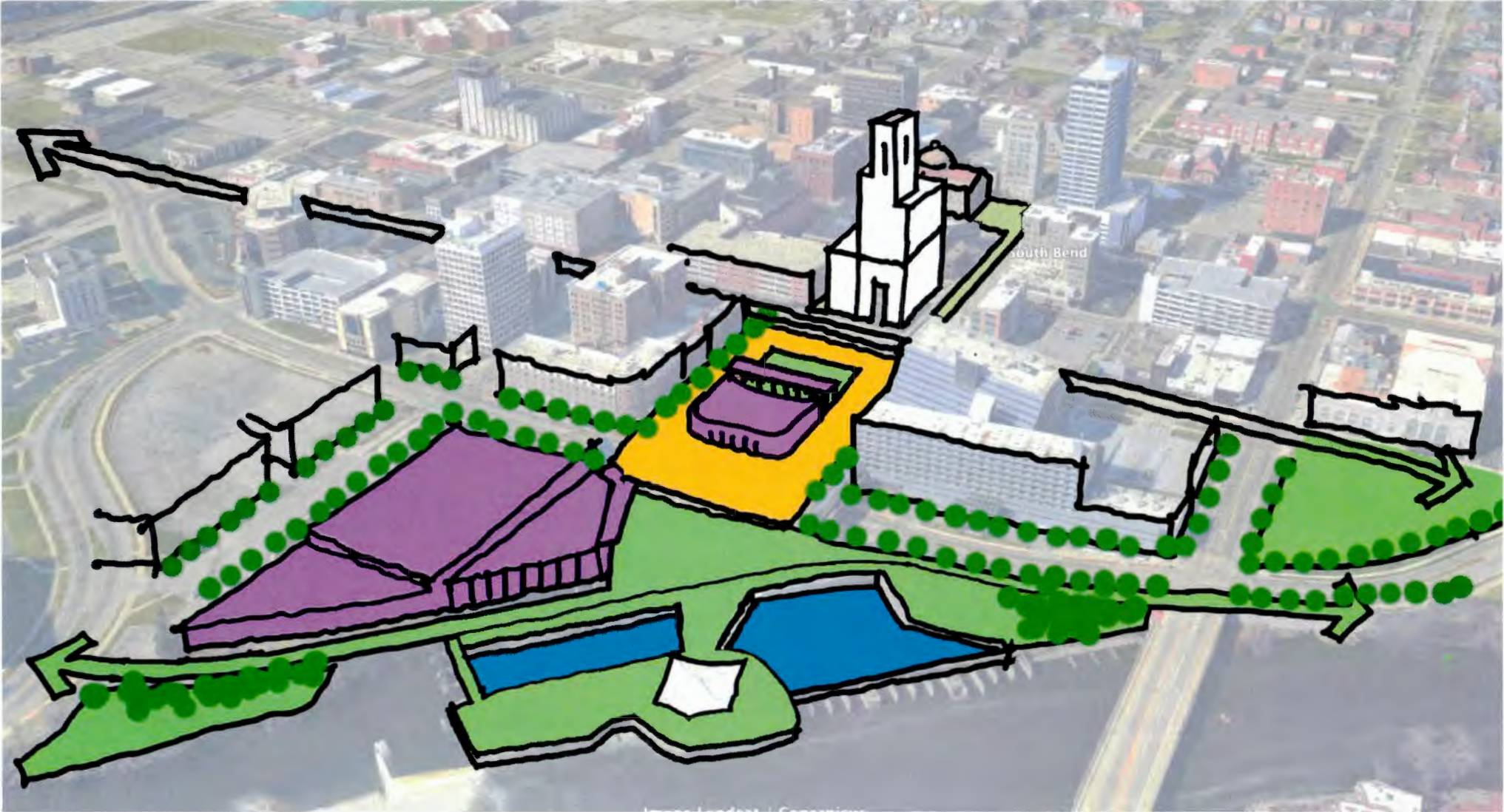
# Signature Riverfront Park



# Signature Riverfront Park



# Signature Riverfront Park





Tim view 1

view #2

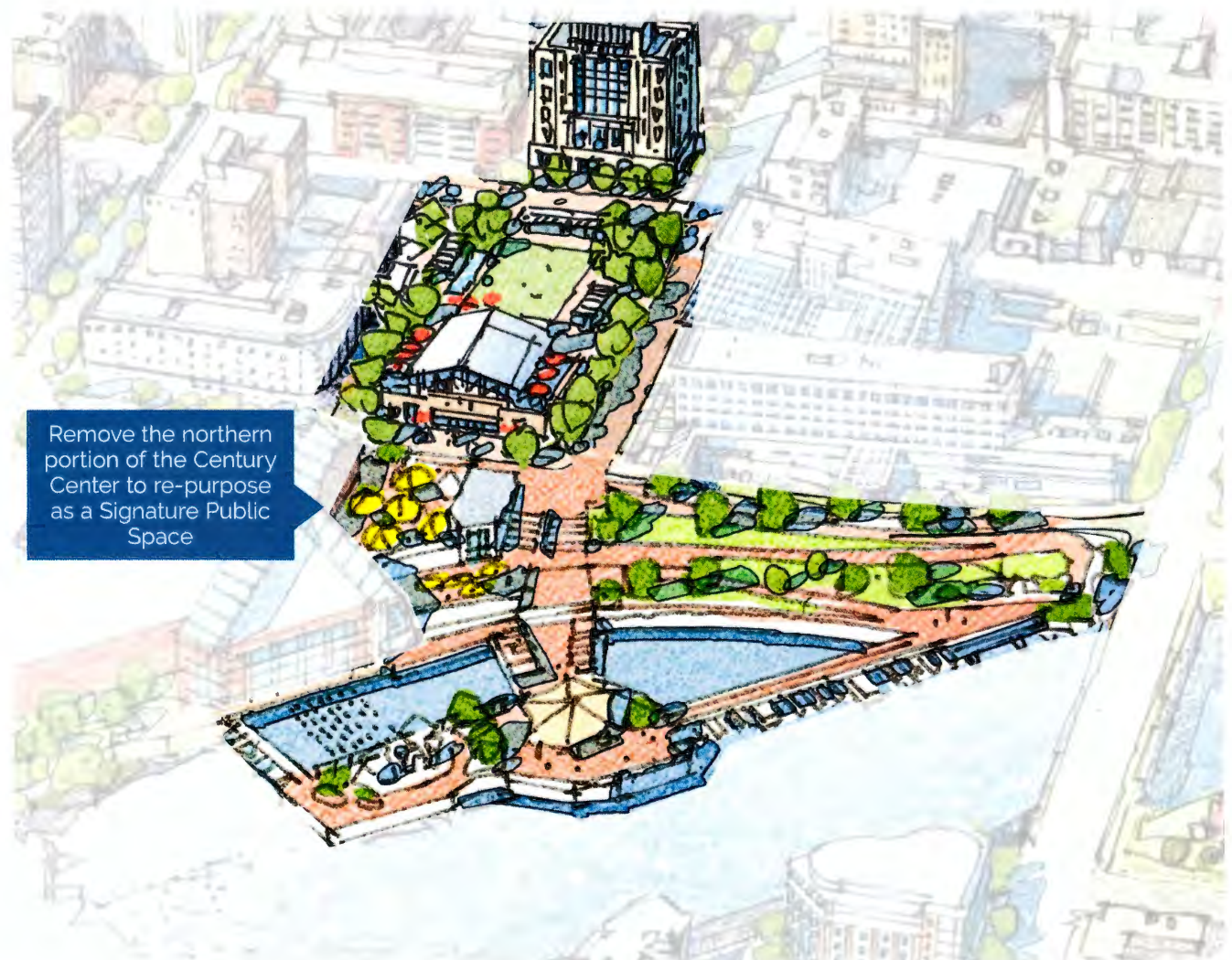
# The Riverfront — Today



# Signature Riverfront Park — Future

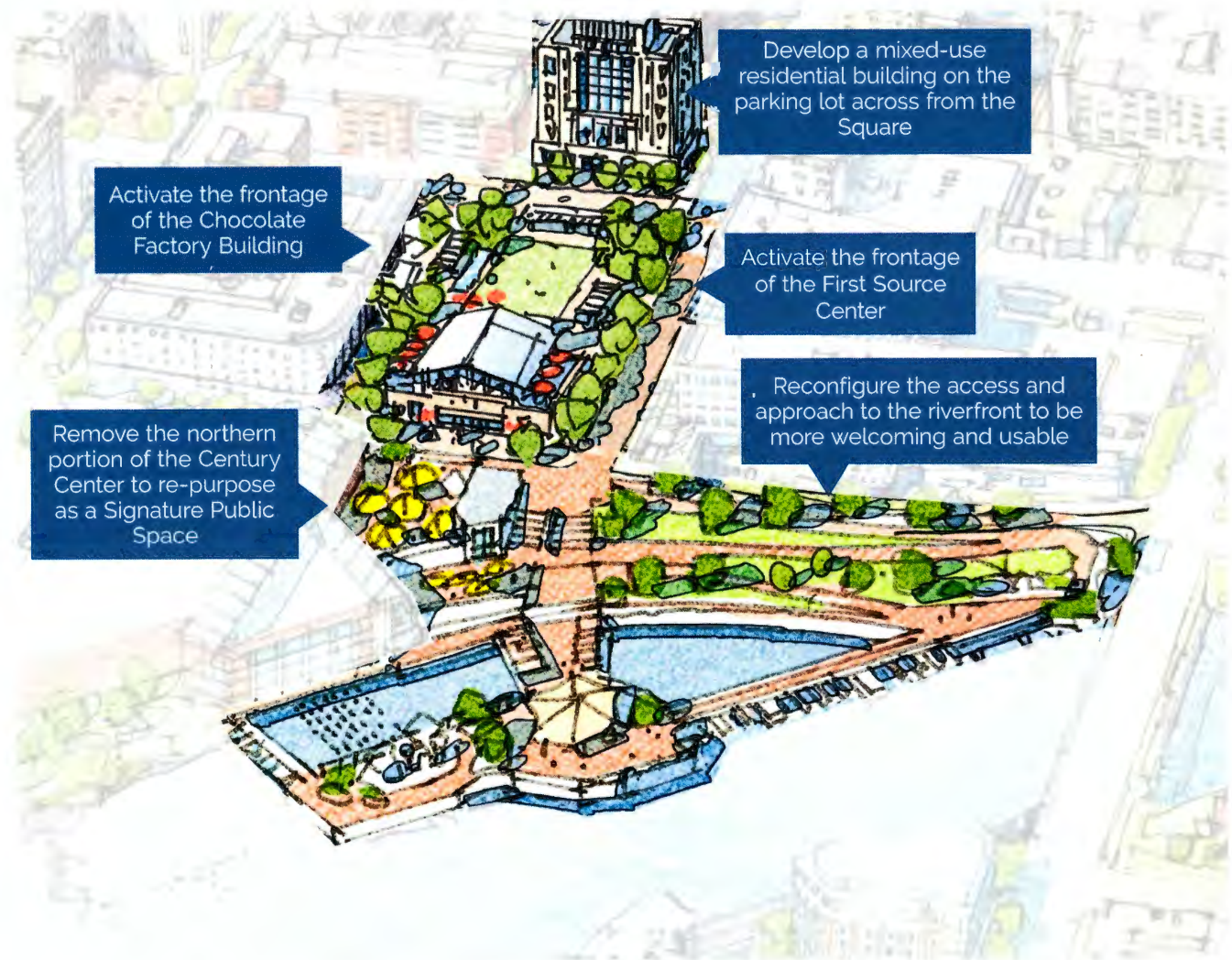
# Signature Riverfront Park

- The South Bend Museum of Art is a valuable part of Downtown
- Partner with the museum to find a new home that suits the needs and programming of our community into the future



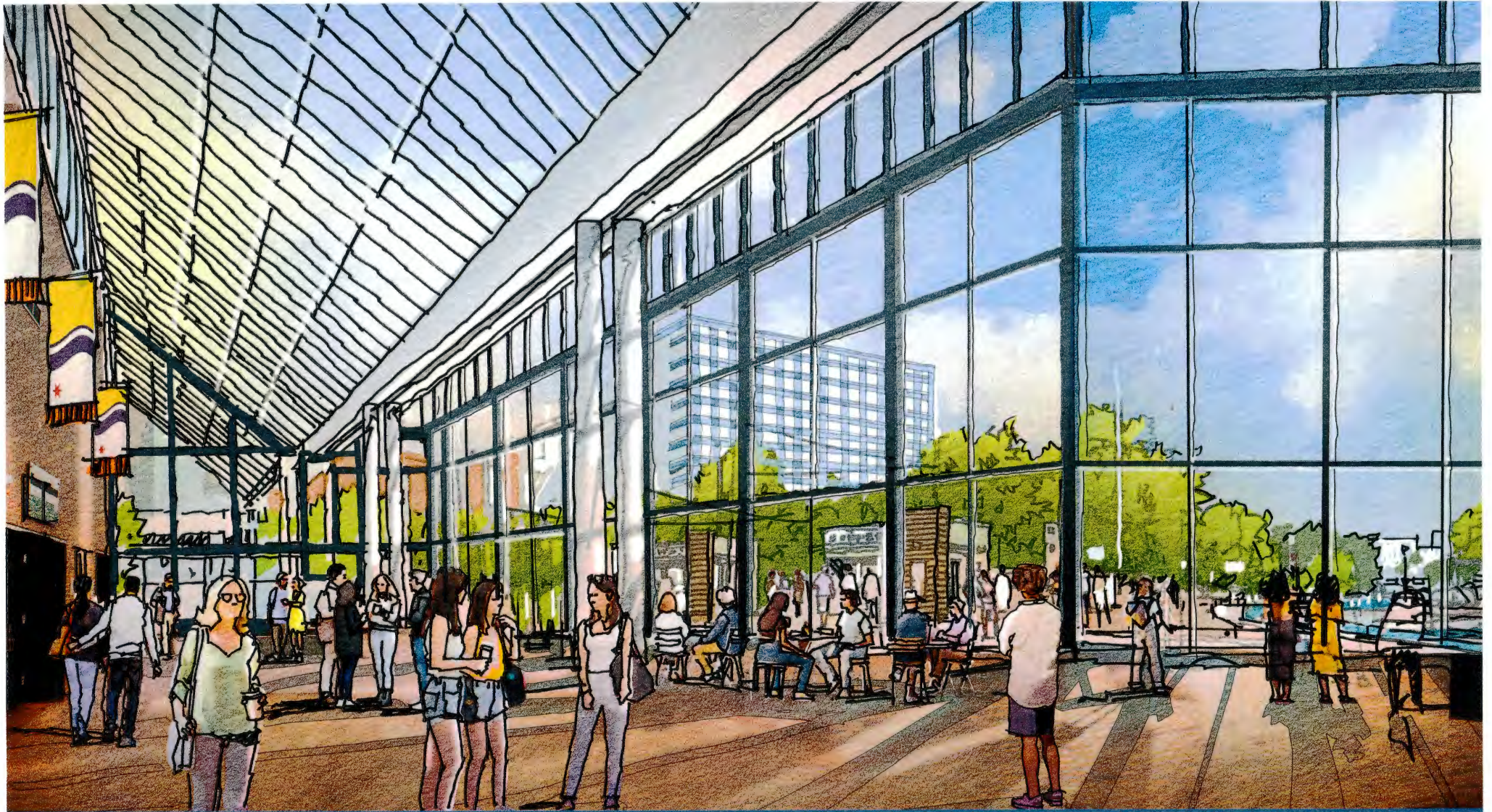
# Signature Riverfront Park

- Connect the active retail heart of downtown directly to the riverfront, through a series of activated public spaces
- Create a local & regional destination in Downtown





## The Century Center — Today



# The Century Center — Future

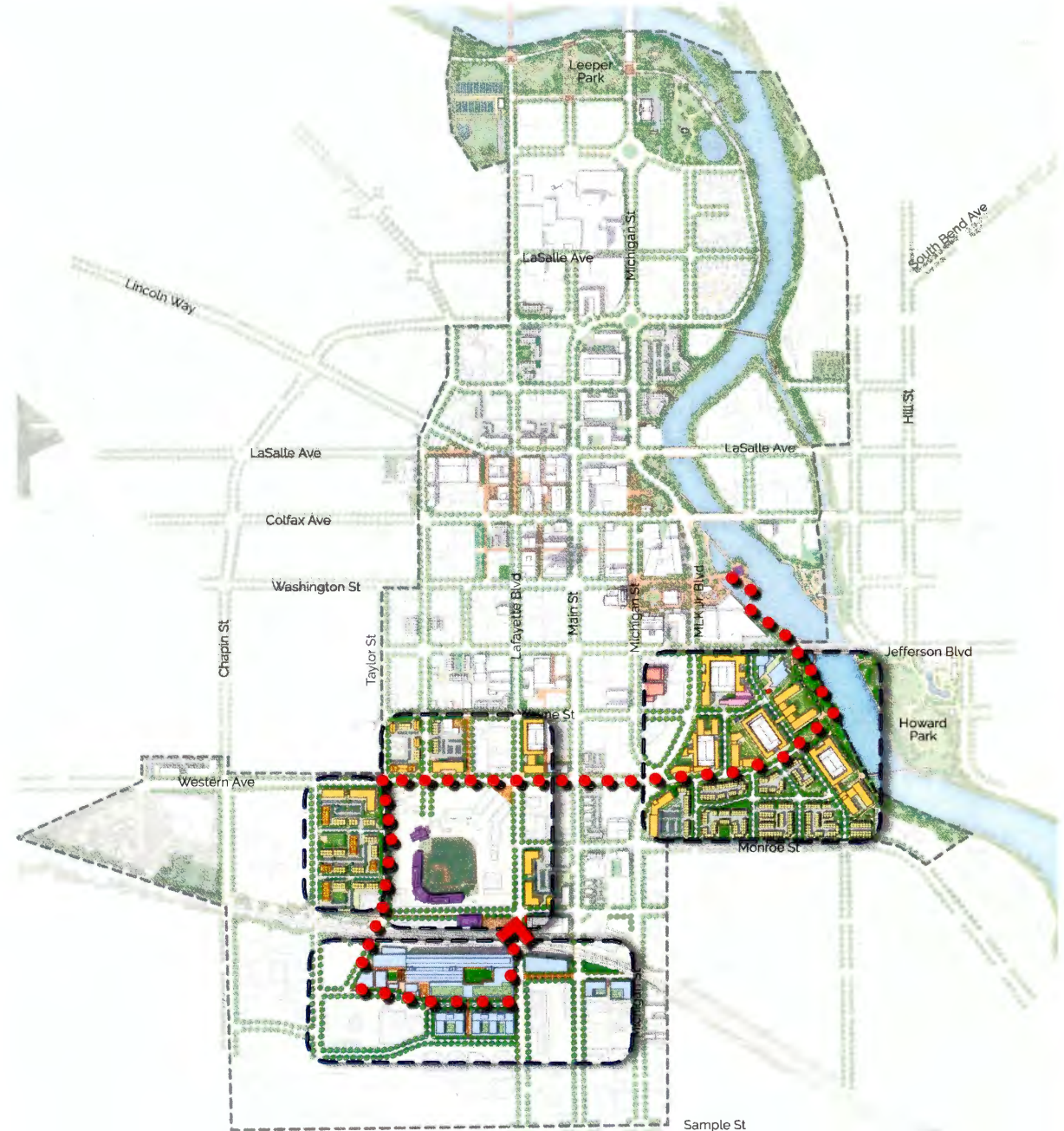


**Signature Riverfront Park — Future**

# **DOWNTOWN SOUTH**

# Downtown South

- Riverfront West
- Sports & Entertainment Hub
- Western Avenue Transformation
- Renaissance District
- Union Station





## Expand Housing Options

# Riverfront West

- Prioritize bringing housing of all income levels to downtown
- Activate the residential riverfront



## TODAY



1,900  
units



## FUTURE



+3,000 units  
by 2045



3,200  
people



+5,000 people  
by 2045



**Riverfront West — Today**



# Riverfront West — Future



breaking ground fall 2026

new streets under construction

# Riverfront West — Future

# Sports & Entertainment District

- Activating & Enhancing a Regional Destination

## Four Winds Field Enhancements

- Home plate improvements
- New seating and F&B
- Improved Pepsi Club
- Party decks & New suites
- New entrance and plaza to new office, event space, and club building
- Relocated splash zone and children's play area
- Restrooms





## Sports & Entertainment District — Today



# Sports & Entertainment District — Future



# Sports & Entertainment District — Future

# Western Ave Transformation

- Preserve housing affordability adjacent to new downtown amenities
- Replace all SBHA units & add additional workforce and market rate units
- Ensure new services & jobs are easily accessible & walkable from housing





**Rabbi Shulman and Monroe Circle — Today**



**Rabbi Shulman and Monroe Circle — Future**



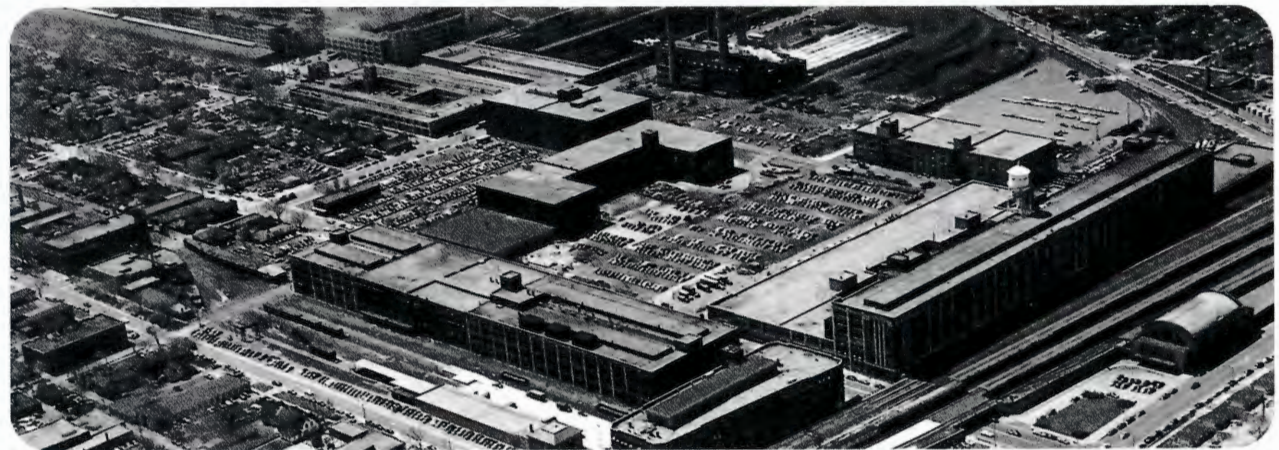
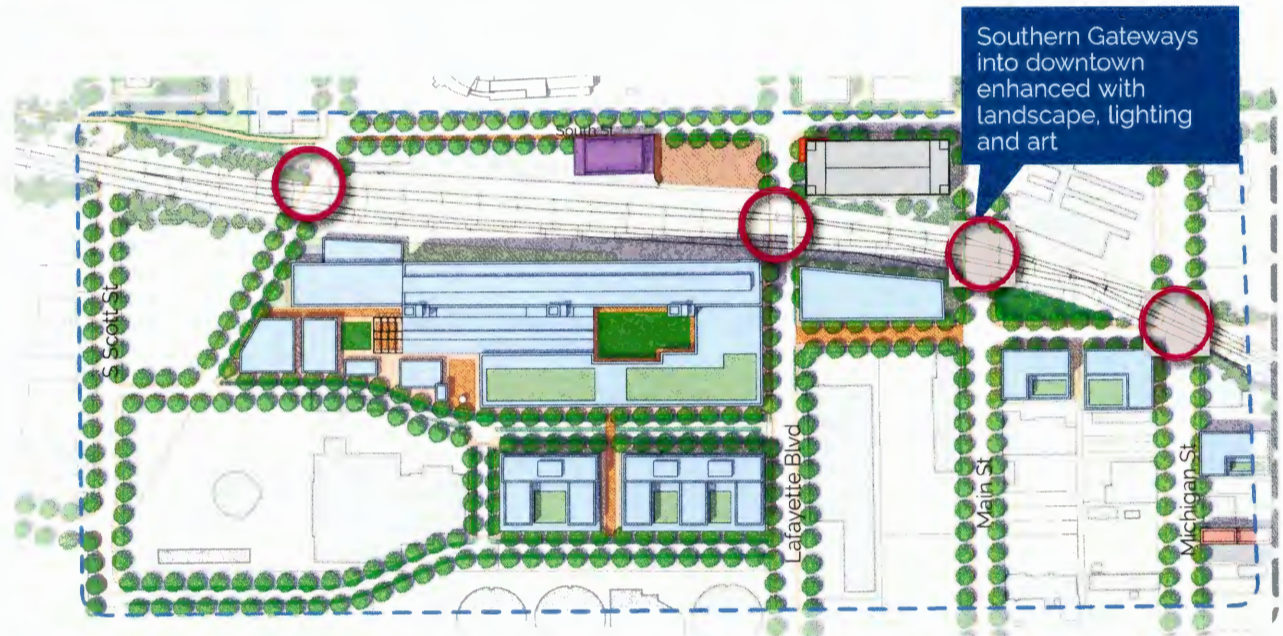
Western Ave. & Taylor St.— Today



Western Ave. & Taylor St.— Future

# Renaissance District

- A mixed-use technology campus that will repurpose 1 million SF of the historic Studebaker plant
- An anchor for the southern end of downtown
- Gateway opportunities



# ARTS & CULTURE

# Arts & Culture

**By embedding arts and culture into public space and life, Downtown South Bend will model how long-term cultural investment strengthens quality of life and sustains a vibrant, inclusive core.**



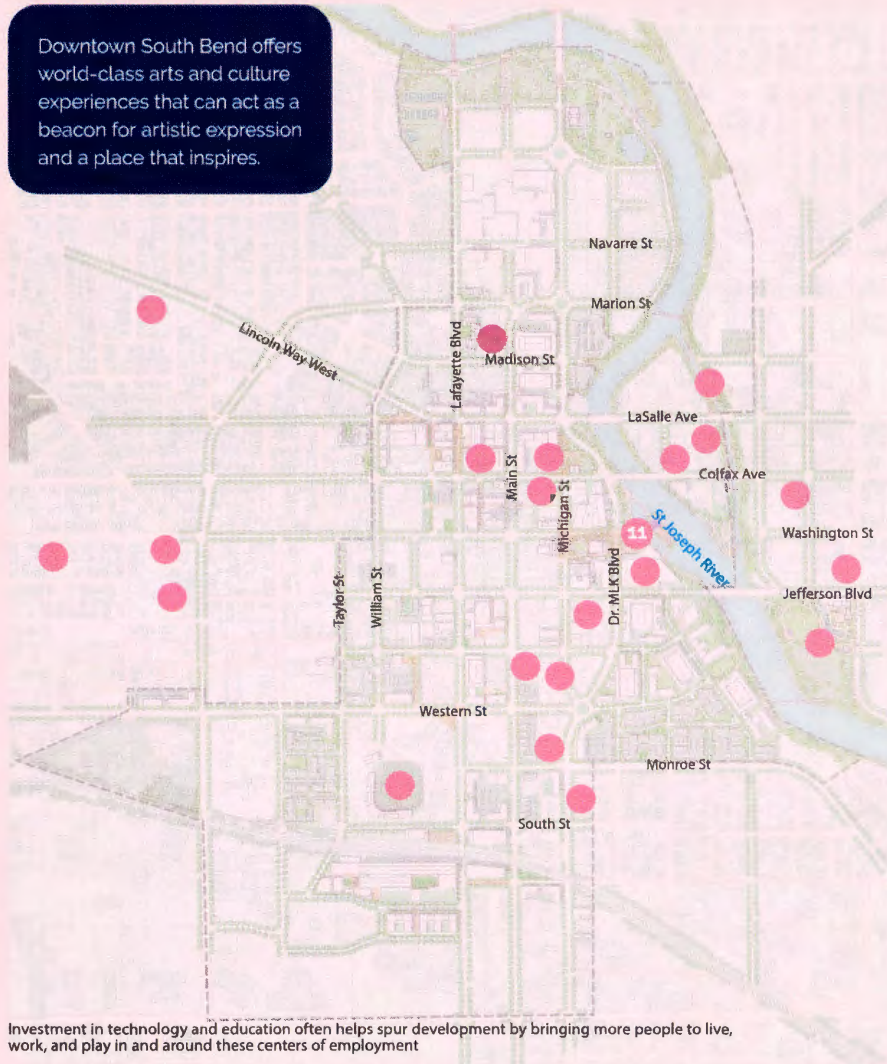
**Vision:** Enhance Downtown as a hub for Arts & Culture

- 1 Establish comprehensive arts hubs and venues
- 2 Cultivate and support local artists and creative spaces
- 3 Support planning for arts and culture at the local level
- 4 Enhance public art integration with a focus on placemaking



# Arts & Culture

Downtown South Bend offers world-class arts and culture experiences that can act as a beacon for artistic expression and a place that inspires.



Investment in technology and education often helps spur development by bringing more people to live, work, and play in and around these centers of employment

## DOWNTOWN SOUTH BEND ARTS & CULTURE ASSETS

### Arts Supporting Organizations

- 1 The Community Foundation of St. Joseph County

### Cultural Amenities

- 2 Civil Rights Heritage Center
- 3 Century Center'
- 4 Colfax Cultural Center'
- 5 East Race Waterway
- 6 Four Winds Field'
- 7 Howard Park and Ice Skating Ribbon
- 8 Michigan & Monroe Arts District
- 9 St. Joseph County Public Library – Main Branch

### Higher Education Institutions

- 10 Colfax Corner - University of Notre Dame

### Museums

- 11 South Bend Museum of Art
- 12 The History Museum
- 13 Studebaker National Museum

### Performing Arts

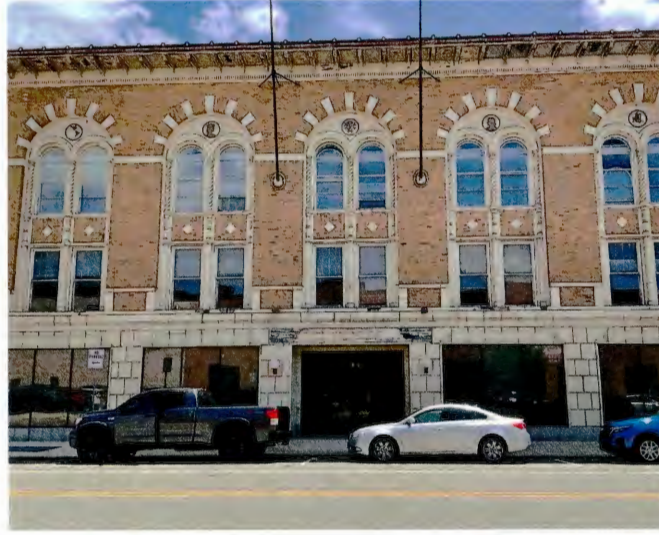
- 14 Merrimans' Playhouse, Inc.
- 15 Morris Performing Arts Center
- 16 South Bend Civic Theater
- 17 South Bend Symphony Orchestra
- 18 State Theater
- 19 Stockroom East
- 20 The Drop Comedy Club

### Visual Arts

- 21 Circa Arts
- 22 Fire Arts

**PRESERVING  
OUR  
HISTORY**





# Preserving the Remaining Historic Buildings

# Historic Resources & Preservation Principles

1. Bring active uses to historic structures



2. Preserve original building materials and repair damaged facades



3. Engage the public realm with active uses, transparent glazing, and improved signage and lighting at the street



4. When adding to historic buildings, be sensitive to the historic structure and mindful of setbacks, massing, architectural character, and materiality



# Union Station

- Bring an active use back to an important downtown historic landmark
- Actively working with AMTRAK to reestablish service
- South Shore station location identified in long term NICTD plans!



# THE PUBLIC REALM



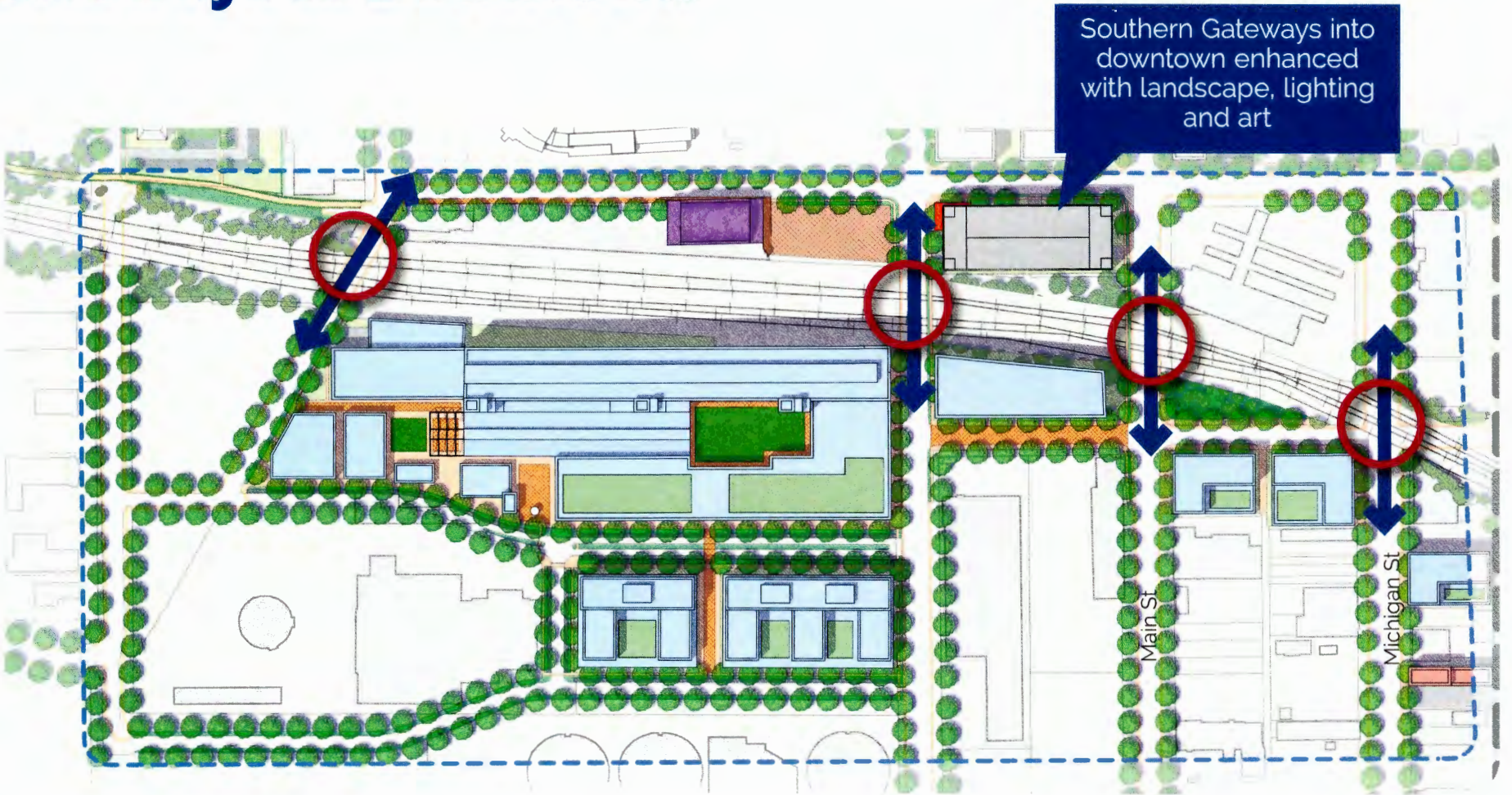
**Build Comfortable and Accessible  
Connections**

# The Public Realm

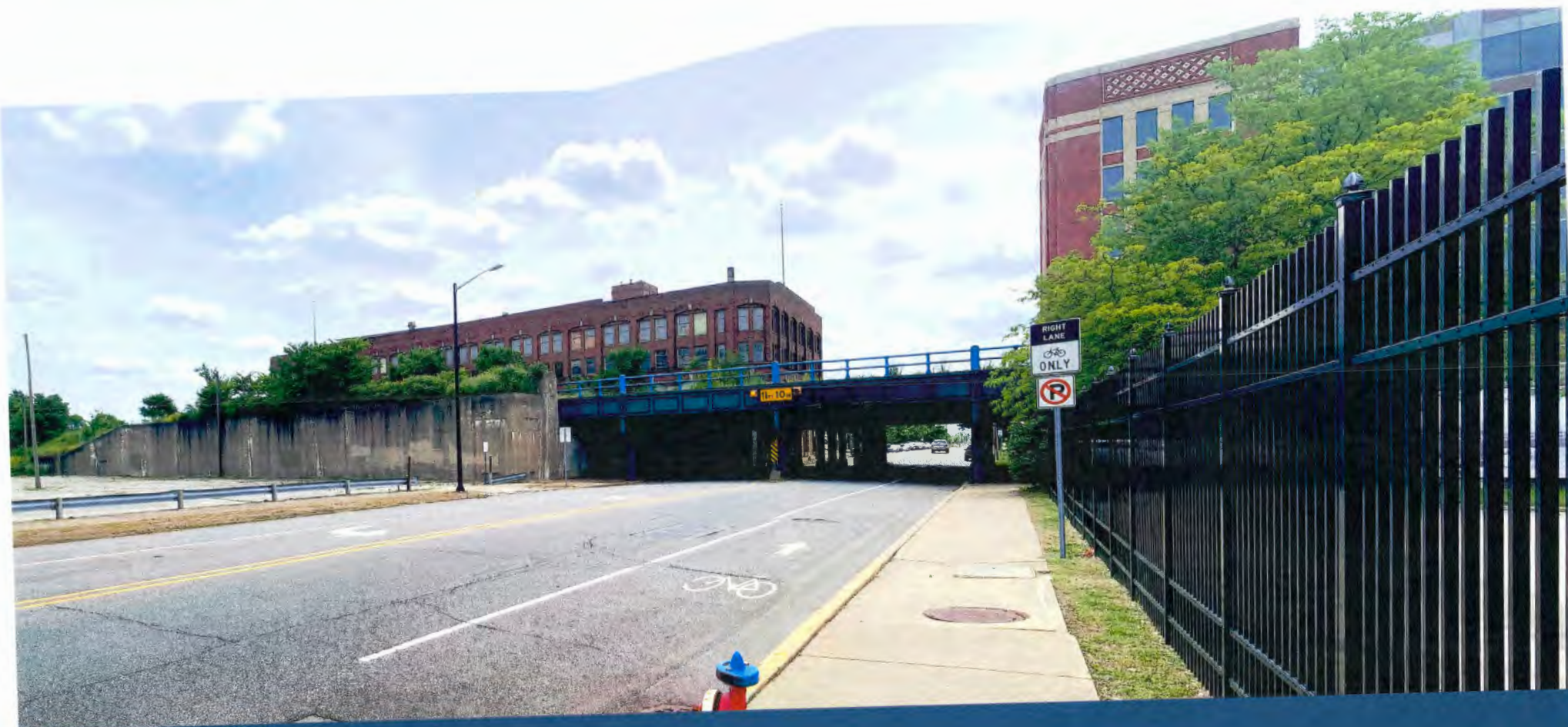
- Gateways to Downtown
- Streetscapes for People
- Riverfront & Open Spaces



# Gateways to Downtown



# Gateways to Downtown



S. Lafayette at the Railroad — Today



**S. Lafayette at the Railroad — Future**

# Streetscapes for People



South Michigan Street — Today



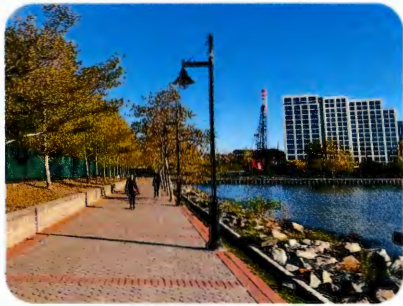
South Michigan Street — Future



# South Michigan Street — Future

# Riverfront Connectivity

- Create an active, connected, pedestrian network along the riverfront



# Continuous Riverfront Experience

- Create an active, connected, pedestrian network along the riverfront
- Blue Loop — 1.83 miles
- Maroon Loop — 0.70 miles



**BUILT FORM  
& DESIGN  
STANDARDS**

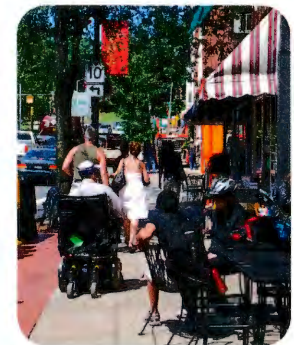
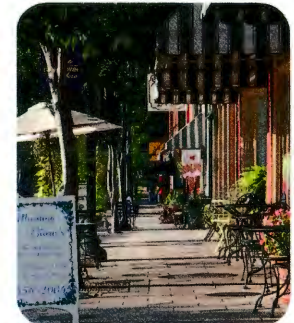
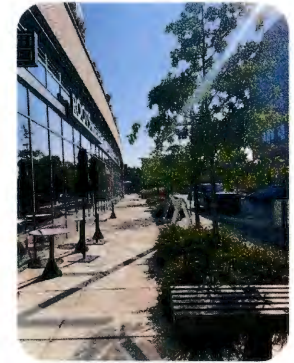
# Built Form & Design Standards

## Retail Frontage

### SIDEWALK ZONES FOR AN ACTIVE RETAIL FRONTAGE

#### Essential elements for a successful retail frontage

- 1 Canopies or awnings to provide shade and protection from the elements
- 2 Transparent glazing to allow visual connection into the ground floor spaces
- 3 Tasteful and appropriately sized signage
- 4 Seating for outdoor dining (Can be located in the Marketing zone or landscape zone)
- 5 Benches for seating
- 6 Street trees (Can be planted in tree pits or planter beds)
- 7 Individual storefront identity to break up the scale of the pedestrian experience
- 8 Movable planters



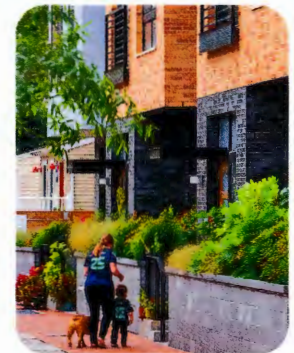
# Built Form & Design Standards

## Residential Frontage • Apartment

### SIDEWALK ZONES WITH NARROW RESIDENTIAL FRONT SETBACK

Essential elements for a successful residential frontage

- 1 Recessed entry to allow for semi-private terrace
- 2 Plantings to screen ground floor units
- 3 Street trees (Can be grated or in planter beds)
- 4 Individual unit entry canopies to provide shade and protection from the elements
- 5 Grade separation to create privacy for the ground floor occupants



# Built Form & Design Standards

## Significant Focal Points

### HOW TO KEEP ICONIC MOMENTS DOWNTOWN AND CREATE NEW ONES

#### Historic & Existing Focal Points:

- Step and angle new buildings back from the street edge to create sight lines to existing historic architectural resources
- Restore and preserve existing buildings at focal point locations

#### Future Focal Points:

- Utilize higher quality building materials, attractive proportions, and creative massing to make character defining public spaces
- Locate front doors at these key locations
- Create an engaging ground floor environment
- Avoid placing loading, parking and other back-of-house uses within direct view of these significant downtown moments
- Plant and landscape appropriately to provide clear sight lines at the most prominent locations



The view-shed map showing the LaSalle Building and Morris Performing Arts Center important facades. The northwestern corner of the intersection of LaSalle Ave and Michigan Street will be an important corner for future development in that location.



The view-shed map of the area of St. Patrick's Church showing the proposed development set back to preserve the view of the church along Wayne Street



Setting development back from the edge of the sidewalk and inserting a new linear green along Wayne Street creates a long view of the historically significant St. Patrick's Church



**WHERE ARE  
WE TWO YEARS  
LATER?**

## Planning for Success

- **Beacon Patient Tower** - nearing completion
- **Madison Lifestyle District** - garage construction to start spring 2026
- **Pedestrian Bridge** - engineering complete
- **Colfax Bridge** - engineering complete / construction 2026
- **Tech & Talent District** - Colfax Corner final design
- **Morris Performing Arts Center Expansion** - complete
- **State Theater** - stabilized
- **City Center Place** - facade restoration in progress
- **Monreaux** - breaking ground spring 2026

# Planning for Success



- **Milkweed Commons & Monroe Arts Building** - renovations underway
- **Riverfront West** - building 1 permitted / new street under construction
- **Western Avenue Transformation** - in design / tax credits awarded
- **Diamond View** - complete
- **Stadium Flats** - breaking ground 2026
- **Four Winds Field** - nearing construction
- **Gateways to Downtown** - workshops complete
- **Union Station & Amtrak** - engineering



A special thanks to all the residents, businesses, and organizations that shared their thoughts and vision for the future of Downtown South Bend.

## Consultant Team

### Urban Design Associates

lead urban design and architecture

### Torti Gallas + Partners

urban design and architecture

### RCLCO

real estate consulting

### Walker Consultants

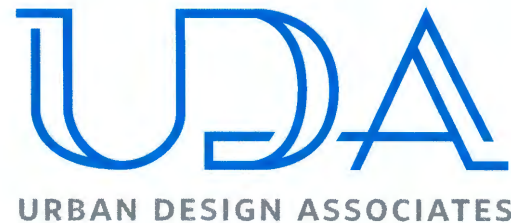
parking study

### Indiana Landmarks

historic preservation

### Downtown South Bend

stakeholder & resident engagement



# Acknowledgments

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An architectural rendering of a vibrant downtown plaza. The scene is dominated by a wide, multi-level wooden staircase that leads up a hill. In the foreground, a paved plaza with a brick-like pattern is populated with several people walking and talking. To the left, a modern building with large glass windows and a balcony with yellow umbrellas is visible. In the background, a tall, multi-story building with a grid-like facade stands against a blue sky with light clouds. The overall style is a detailed architectural sketch with a color palette of blues, greens, and earthy tones.

# DOWNTOWN SOUTH BEND

## 2045 PLAN

A COMMUNITY-LED VISION