

DOWNTOWN HAMMOND MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Adopted December 2019



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Downtown Development District wishes to recognize and express its gratitude to the many individuals and organizations who generously contributed their time and expertise to the development of the Master Plan Update.

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Thank you to the over 300 individuals who participated in the planning process through the Stakeholder Focus Groups, Hammond Community Priorities Survey, and Community Workshops.



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A photograph of a street in downtown Hammond, Louisiana. The street is paved and has a white arrow pointing forward. On the right side, there are several parked cars, including a white SUV, a red SUV, a silver sedan, and a black sedan. The buildings are multi-story brick structures with windows and awnings. A utility pole with power lines is visible in the foreground. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The text "DOWNTOWN HAMMOND MASTER PLAN 2019 UPDATE" is overlaid on the left side of the image in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**DOWNTOWN
HAMMOND
MASTER PLAN
2019 UPDATE**

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INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Hammond Master Plan 2019 Update is the third iteration of the community’s vision for the future of the area within the Downtown Development District boundaries (the District, shown at right).

The Downtown Development District organization (DDD) together with the City of Hammond (City) have implemented many strategies of the 1990 and 2002 plans, including restoration of the Columbia Theater, establishment of the Hammond Farmers Market, tree plantings, sidewalk improvements, and the rehabilitation of numerous buildings and facades.

The 2019 Update offers 15 strategies and many more recommended actions to achieve the vision of “a vibrant destination for locals, travelers and culturists.”

The intent of the Master Plan is to serve as a policy document to guide decision-making regarding Downtown Hammond’s physical development and its functions as a historic commercial and residential district.

The Master Plan is not a regulatory document that carries the force of law. Nevertheless, public officials should reference the Master Plan’s strategies and recommendations in decisions, including, but not limited, to approval of:

1. Funding for capital projects,
2. Proposed changes to land use regulations, such as zoning classifications,
3. Proposed design of new construction and renovations,
4. Proposed design of right-of-way improvements.

Public entities responsible for such decisions include the DDD Board of Directors, its committees, the Hammond City Council, and Hammond Historic District.

“The Hammond Downtown Development District is devoted to progressing and stimulating business development and diversity. We protect, unite and rejuvenate the district in order to benefit residents and local commerce; making Downtown a promising place to socialize, do business and call home.”

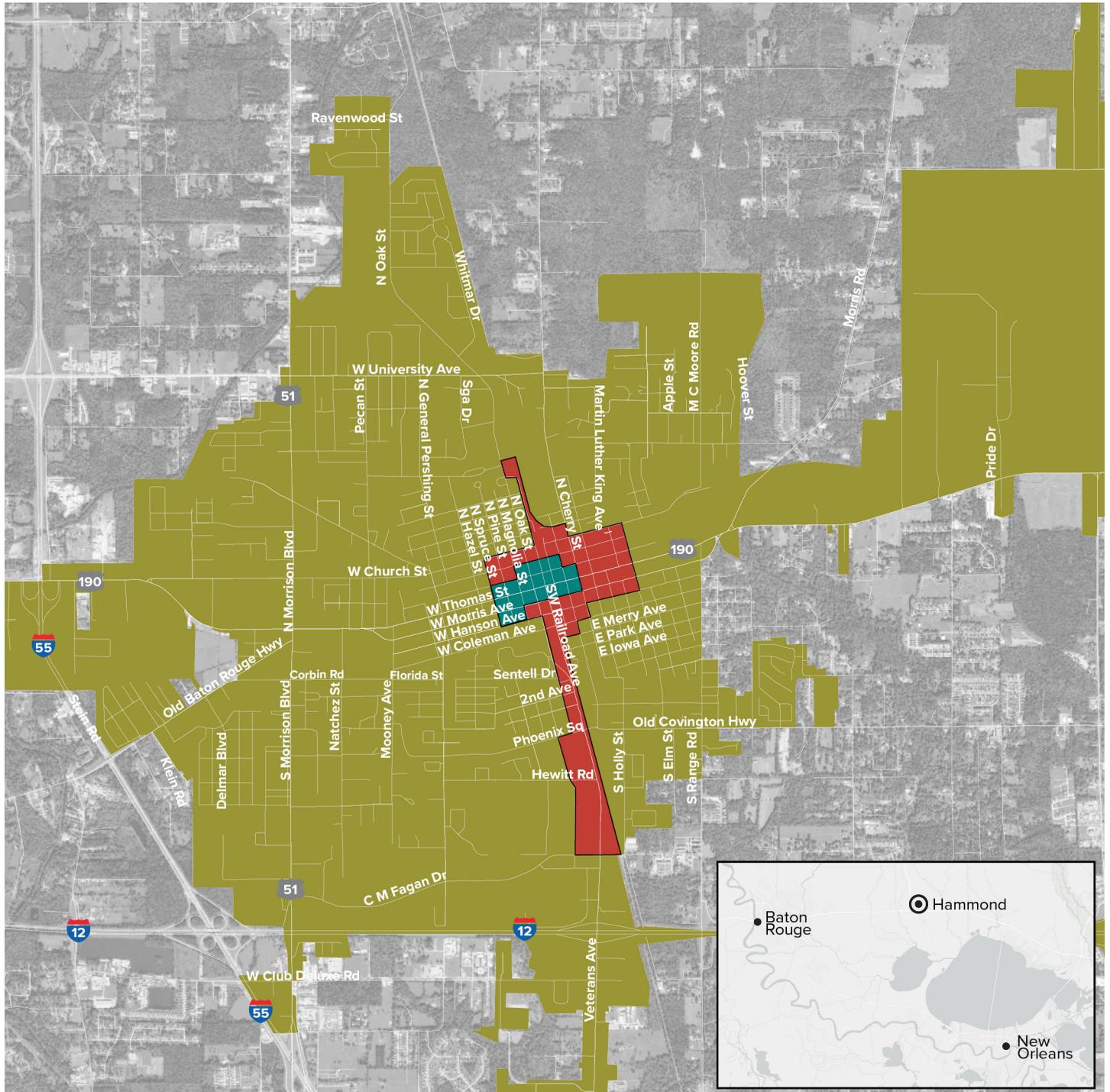
Downtown Development District Mission Statement

Abbreviation key

DDD = the organization

District = the area of the city within the legislative-designated boundaries

Hammond Downtown Development District



- City of Hammond
- Hammond Downtown Development District
- Hammond Historic District

1 Miles

Source: Census Bureau and Hammond Downtown Development District

Hammond History

1854

The New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad arrived, making the city a commercial and transport center, sparked growth



1830

Peter Hammond founded the City of Hammond, Louisiana

1890s

Local farmers shipped strawberries all over the country from Downtown Hammond

Later, strawberries were grown and sent to all parts of the country by rail

Early 1900s

Hammond was known as the "Strawberry Capital of America"

1800s
Industrial Town

1900s
Prosperity and Growth

1818

Colonial settlers first arrived to harvest timber for shipbuilding

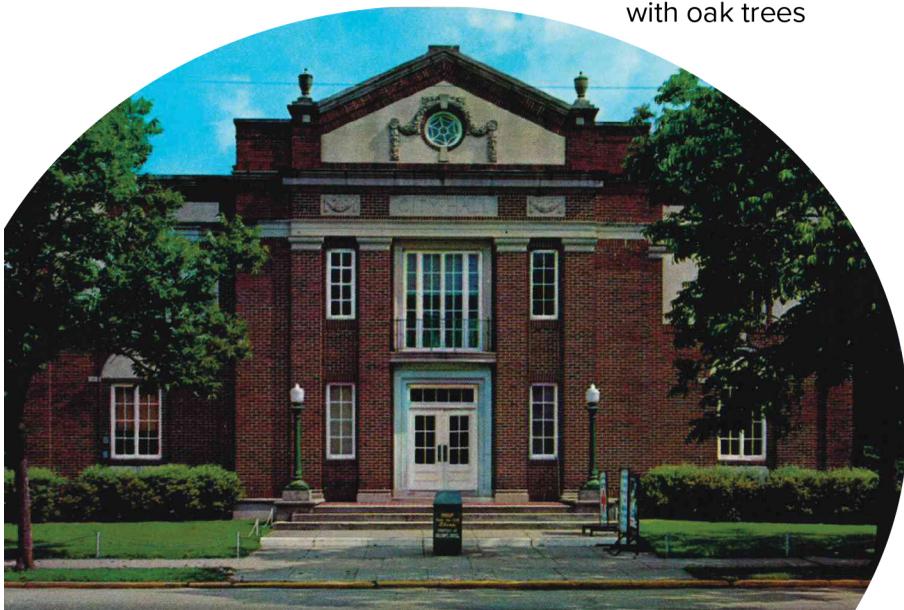
Businessman Charles Emery Cate established the grid of city streets as we know it today

The downtown streets were laid out and lined with oak trees

As the town became more prosperous, most of the wooden structures were replaced with the brick two-story buildings that characterize modern-day downtown Hammond

1889

City of Hammond, Louisiana was chartered



CASA DE FRESA HOTEL, HAMMOND, LA.



1979
Hotel Casa de Fresa burns down



1932
The U.S. Army establishes Hammond Northshore Regional Airport

1978
The Hammond Historic District was founded

1987
The dedicated tax passes and the DDD is formed

1990
The first DDD Master Plan was completed

2011
The City of Hammond adopted its Comprehensive Plan

1980s-Present Planning the Future of Hammond

1925
Voters approved creation of Hammond Junior College (today known as Southeastern Louisiana University)

1960s-1970s
Interstates 55 and 12 constructed

1986
The Downtown Development District was created by Louisiana state legislature

2002
The first update to the DDD Master Plan was completed

2019
The DDD Master Plan was updated for a second time

1984
Hammond was established as one of the first four Louisiana Main Street communities



Community Vision + Priorities

Community Engagement At-a-Glance:

- **April 2019:** Master Plan Update Kickoff
- **June-July 2019:** Community Priorities Survey
- **May 2019:** Stakeholder Focus Groups
- **July 2019:** Downtown Community Workshop
- **September 2019:** Master Plan Open House

As part of the Master Plan Update process, Downtown Hammond stakeholders participated in multiple rounds of community engagement meetings. Stakeholders included long-established property owners, new renter households, business owners, college students, service industry workers, and residents of the District and its surrounding neighborhoods. Appendix A contains detailed outcomes of the engagement process.

Master Plan Update Kickoff

April 25, 2019 | 17 Participants

The planning team, DDD staff, and members of the DDD Design Committee met and discussed the planning process and timeline. Attendees also took a walking tour of the District, followed by a goal-setting exercise. Participants pointed to specific goals, including an expansion of the Downtown Development District, a hotel, and a grocery store.

“We believe The Downtown District is the heart of Hammond, and we strive to protect and preserve its foundation. We aspire to establish Downtown Hammond as a vibrant destination for locals, travelers and culturists. We seek to unify the district’s businesses, patrons and residents in order to maintain our successful economy.”

Downtown Development District Vision Statement

Stakeholder Focus Groups

May 22, 2019 | 67 Participants

Business owners, City and Parish officials, and board members and staff of the DDD and Historic District, and other stakeholders attended the focus groups to provide input on the topic of their expertise.

Community Priorities Survey*

June-July 2019 | 297 Participants

The DDD distributed a survey asking participants for their feelings towards the present and future conditions of Downtown Hammond. The survey also asked people to prioritize issues to tackle in the process of improving the District.

Community Visioning Workshop

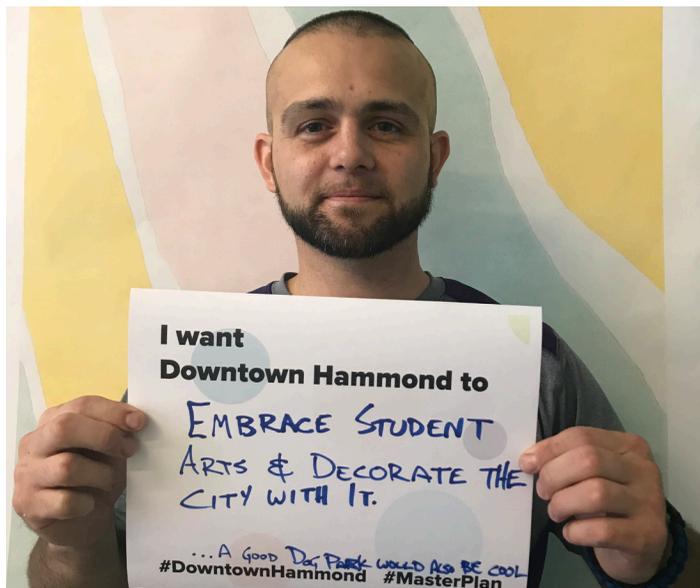
July 13, 2019 | 23 Participants

Visitors to the farmers market and Downtown Hammond shared their vision through a “Vision Photo Booth,” and they also expressed their preferences for potential amenities within the District, marked their preferred routes for commuting to and from Downtown, created a collage of their Downtown, and indicated areas in need of planning through an interactive map.

Implementation Workshop

September 26, 2019 | 31 Participants

Draft strategies were presented to the public. Attendees filled out a Strategy Prioritization Ballot and ranked the strategies based on their preferences. The planning team answered questions from the public and discussed the implications of the various strategies.



85%

of survey respondents said it was “essential” or “very important” to “build on vacant or underused land and rehabilitate vacant buildings.”



*See Appendix for full survey results

Themes

Five themes characterize the Downtown Hammond community’s vision for the District’s future. Each of the strategies detailed in the Master Plan 2019 Update fits into one or more of these five themes. They are:

Downtown Hammond is Unique

The District’s history, architecture, institutions, and businesses make Downtown Hammond special, instill civic pride, and create a sense of place.

Downtown Hammond is Alive

The District is full of life. Residents, overnight visitors, commuters, and customers fill public spaces for culture, shopping, events and recreation.



Downtown Hammond is Prosperous

Diverse businesses meet the needs of residents, visitors, students and daytime workers. Businesses thrive with access to good foot traffic and a large customer market.

Downtown Hammond is Accessible

People can safely get to, from, and around the District on foot, by bike, by transit, and by car.

Downtown Hammond is Beautiful

District streets, buildings, artwork, and landscaping are attractive and well-maintained.



Courtesy of the Hammond DDD



Existing Assets and Needs

The Master Plan update process assessed the latest challenges and opportunities facing the District. Detailed findings can be found in Appendix B: Needs Assessment, and below are some of the key findings.

At-a-Glance:

- A high number of children and adults age 20-34 live in the District, indicating the need to balance family-friendly goods and services with those for non-family residents and visitors.
- Restaurants and bars, government, and health care and social assistance are the predominant employers in Downtown Hammond.
- Bars and restaurants are a major attractor to the area.
- The small number of residents relative to commuter workers means streets that are active with shoppers, diners and workers during rush periods are quiet at other times of the week.
- The maximum capacity for public parking in the Downtown Development District is 1,052 spaces, and the public parking lots rarely reach capacity, with the exception of special events that reduce access to the lots.
- Downtown Hammond has many characteristics of a livable area, including cultural and artistic amenities, restaurants, and shops within walking distance.
- Downtown is developing its identity as a destination through unique events and historic and cultural branding.



Courtesy of the Hammond DDD

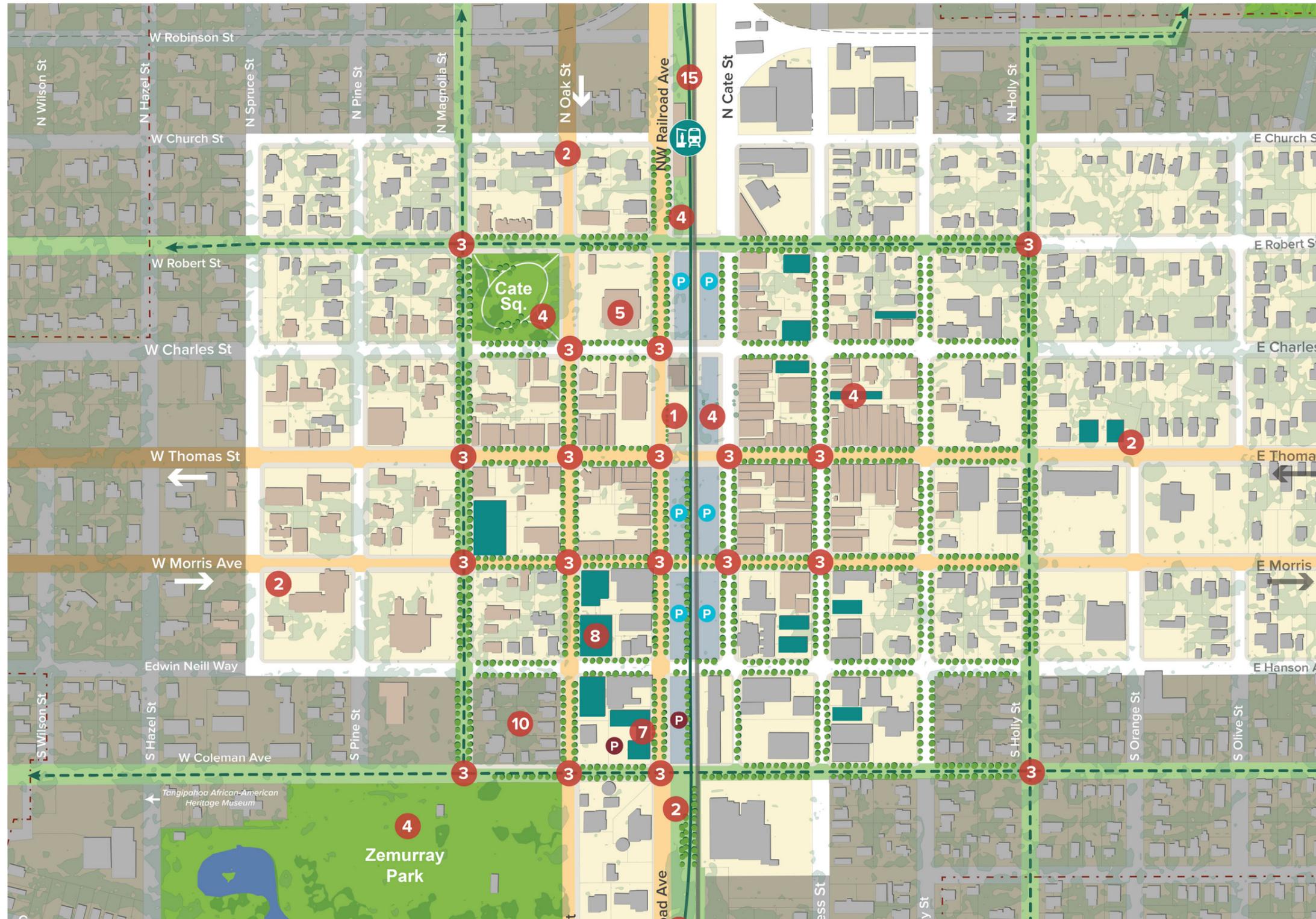
STRATEGIES AND CONCEPTS

The following section explains the 15 strategies in detail. The map at right labels locations for the strategies that have a specific geographic component. Strategies with more nuanced geographic details contain their own maps. The fifteen strategies and concepts are:

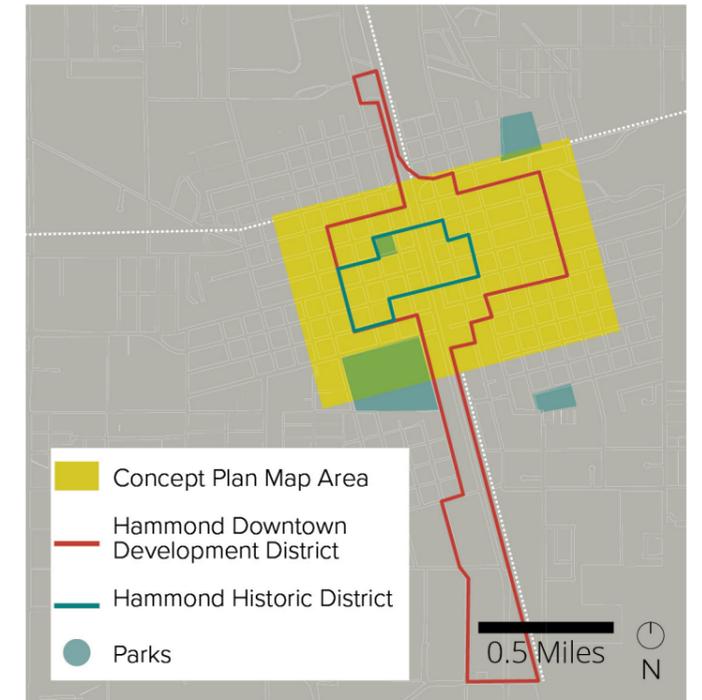
1. Construct a Community Pavilion
2. Build Gateway Entrances & Wayfinding Signs
3. Build Complete Streets & Safe Intersections
4. Activate Third Places & Enhance Options for Recreation
5. Encourage Construction of a Boutique Hotel
6. Actively Manage Parking & Develop a Parking Implementation Plan
7. Encourage a Signature Development with a Grocery Store
8. Promote Infill Mixed Use Development
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Concept Plan Map



Map Context



- Concept Plan Map Area
- Hammond Downtown Development District
- Hammond Historic District
- Parks



1. Construct a Community Pavilion

Establishing a permanent shade structure has been a community priority since the 2002 Master Plan first proposed the amenity. This structure will serve as a centralized gathering space for community members and visitors to enjoy. It will also serve as home to the Hammond Farmers Market. Public sentiment was widely supportive for the Farmers Market, and for sustaining its growth by establishing a pavilion to house it and other events.

To fully capitalize on its investment, the pavilion should be centrally located, adjacent to ample parking, the core of downtown businesses, and among the District's busiest street intersections. We recommend utilizing the space that the Farmers Market currently occupies on Saturday mornings. This location, between the Hammond Downtown Development District office and La Carreta restaurant, has been approved by the DDD Board of Directors, DDD Design Committee, and Hammond Historic District Commission to house a community pavilion. The space offers immediate access to the previously described amenities, and is currently underutilized as a central public gathering place.

Courtesy of the Hammond DDD



From Parking Lot to Park

Constructing the pavilion at this site will not only preserve the market’s central location, but create the opportunity to catalyze further enhancement of underutilized public space - namely, the adjacent surface parking lots.

The Kidder parking lot, located across the railroad track from Hammond Plaza, can transform from an asphalt lot into an attractive plaza that expands upon the dedicated purpose of Hammond Plaza as a place for people to spend time recreating among Hammond’s most vibrant public place.



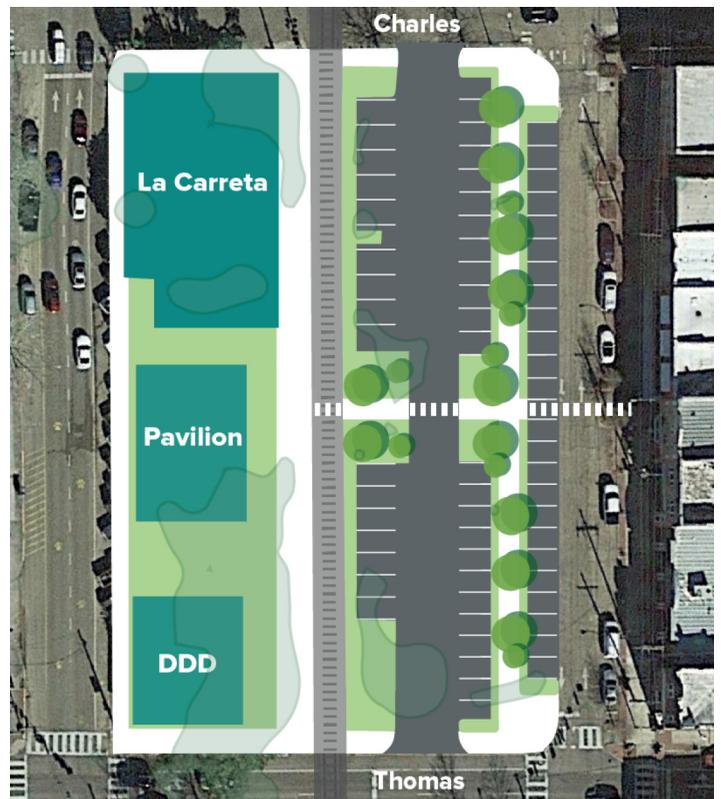
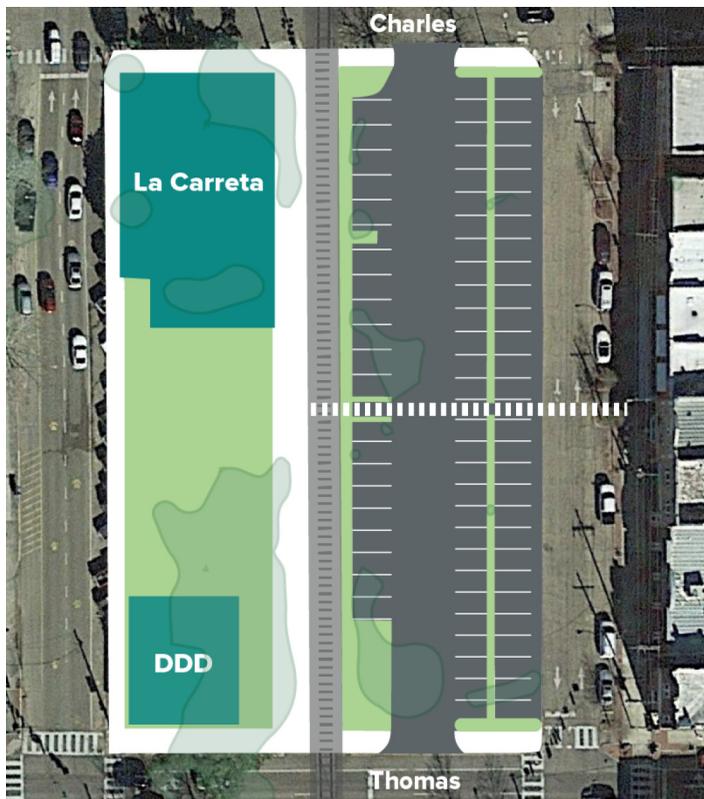
In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, artists worked with community members to transform a downtown parking lot to a temporary park space with seating, activities, and landscaping. Credit: Project for Public Spaces

Current Configuration

Today, the Kidder Parking Lot offers a mid-block crossing of N. Cate Street and the CN Railroad track, connecting Hammond Plaza to the eastern side of Downtown. It provides 70 parking spaces.

Proposed Configuration

Gradual conversion of parking spaces to quality public space could begin by building off of the pedestrian connection, constructing a new sidewalk, and planting new trees, leaving 58 parking spaces.



2. Build Gateway Signs & Wayfinding Signage

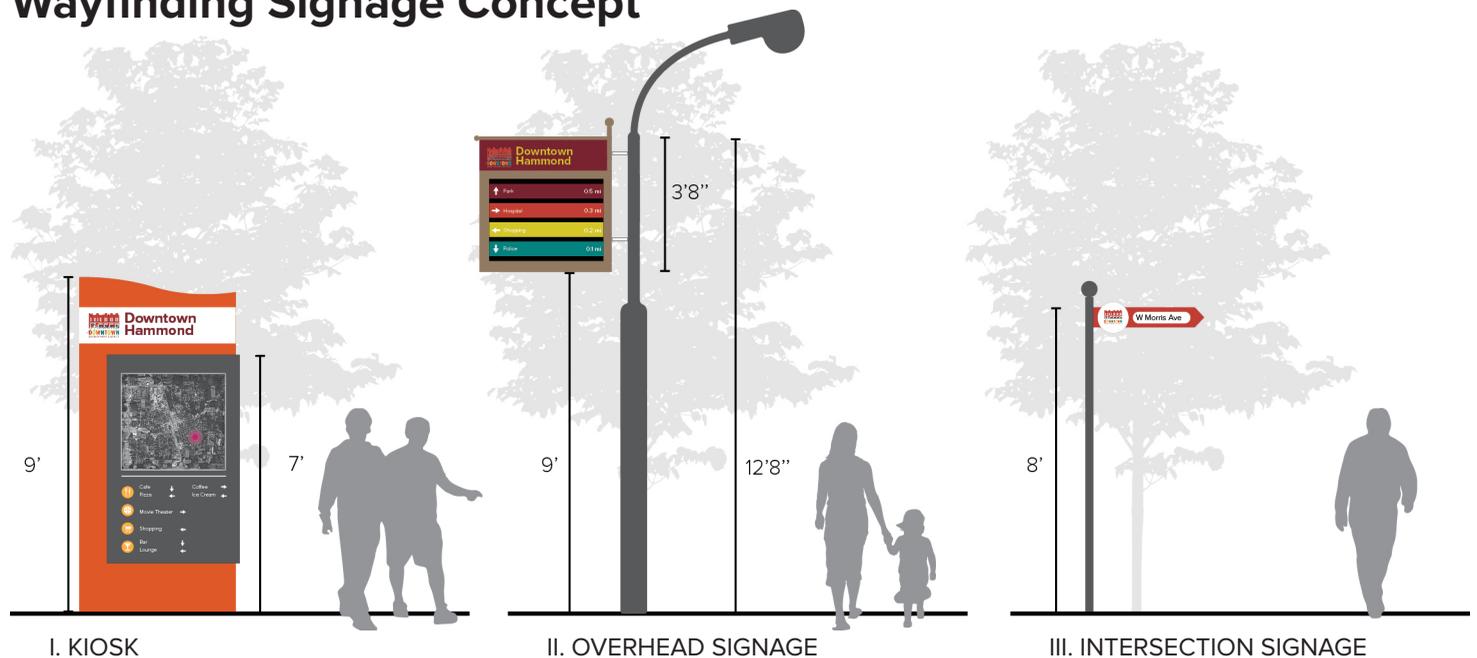
Gateways facilitate and announce arrival to a place or destination. When combined with public art, gateways reward visitors and residents with a positive image of the community by making destinations more welcoming. Wayfinding signage helps to guide visitors and residents through downtown areas, pointing them to historic landmarks, municipal buildings, and key amenities.

Wayfinding signs can also act as marketing tools for downtown districts. Visitors are more likely to return to areas that can be found and remembered easily. Wayfinding signs also have a large impact on the walkability of a neighborhood, which can be a major factor in attracting and retaining residents and visitors.

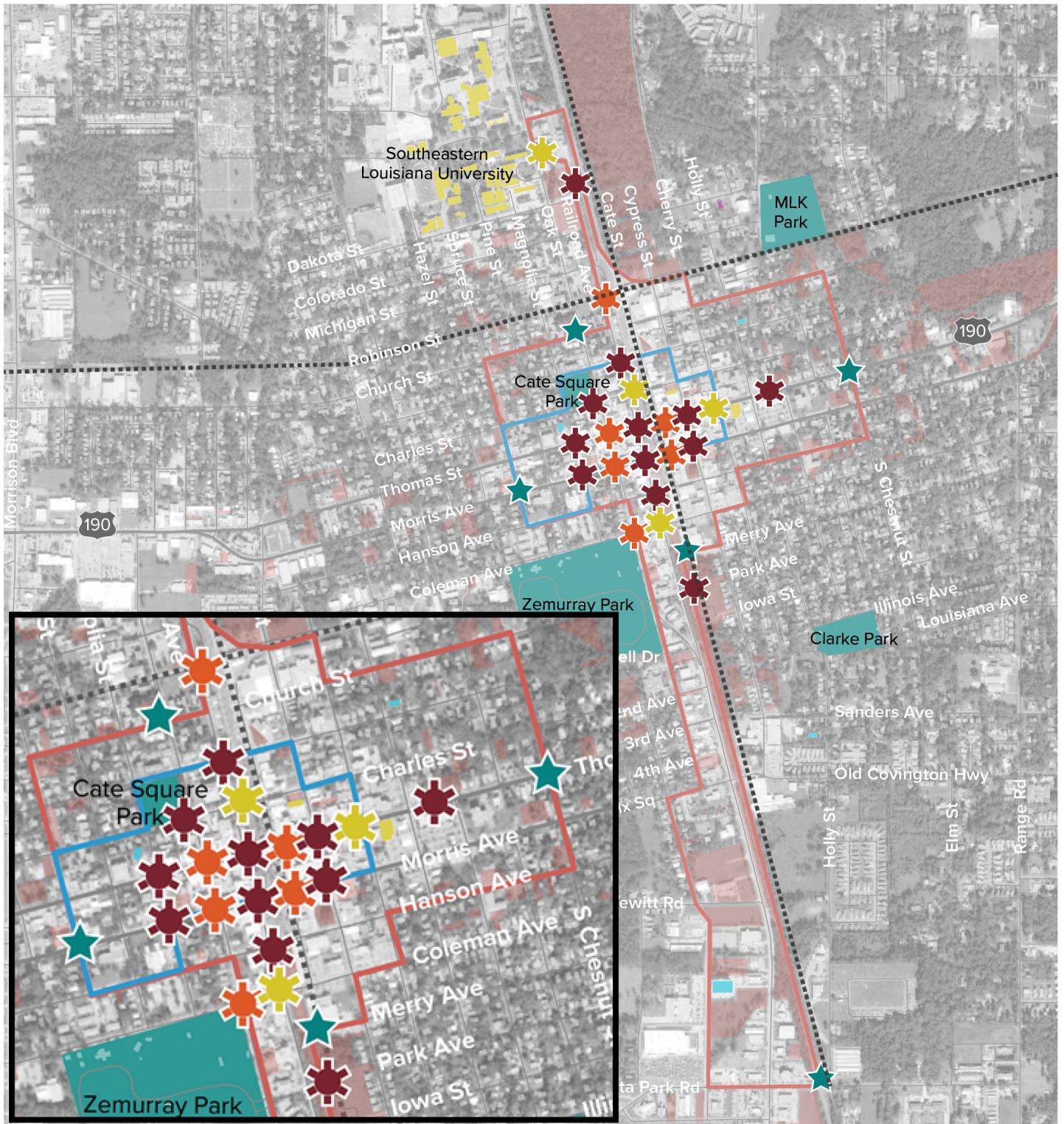
Conceptual renderings of potential wayfinding signage prototypes are shown below, and the map at right suggests locations for wayfinding and gateway signage.

The DDD should place gateway markers at primary entry locations for the Downtown District and Historic District, including the intersections of Railroad Avenue & Minnesota Park Road; Railroad Avenue & Thomas Street; and Oak Street & Ned McGehee Drive.

Wayfinding Signage Concept



Sites for Gateways and Wayfinding Signage



- Hammond Downtown Development District
- Hammond Historic District
- Railroad
- Parks
- ★ Gateway Marker
- ★ Potential Wayfinding - Kiosk
- ★ Potential Wayfinding - Intersection signage
- ★ Potential Wayfinding - Overhead signage

0.2 Miles

3. Build Complete Streets and Safe Intersections

The 3,700 people that live within a quarter mile of the District have numerous routes to choose to drive, walk or bike downtown. However, speeding vehicles and high rates of crashes at busy intersections deter this activity. The DDD will therefore prioritize a handful of streets and intersections for pedestrian and cycling safety and convenience. This will reduce the impact of parking demand downtown, improve adjacent property values, and encourage visitors to walk further from the downtown core, spending more time (and more dollars) in blocks immediately outside the core.

The City and DDD should consider the following treatments to “complete” these neighborhood streets:

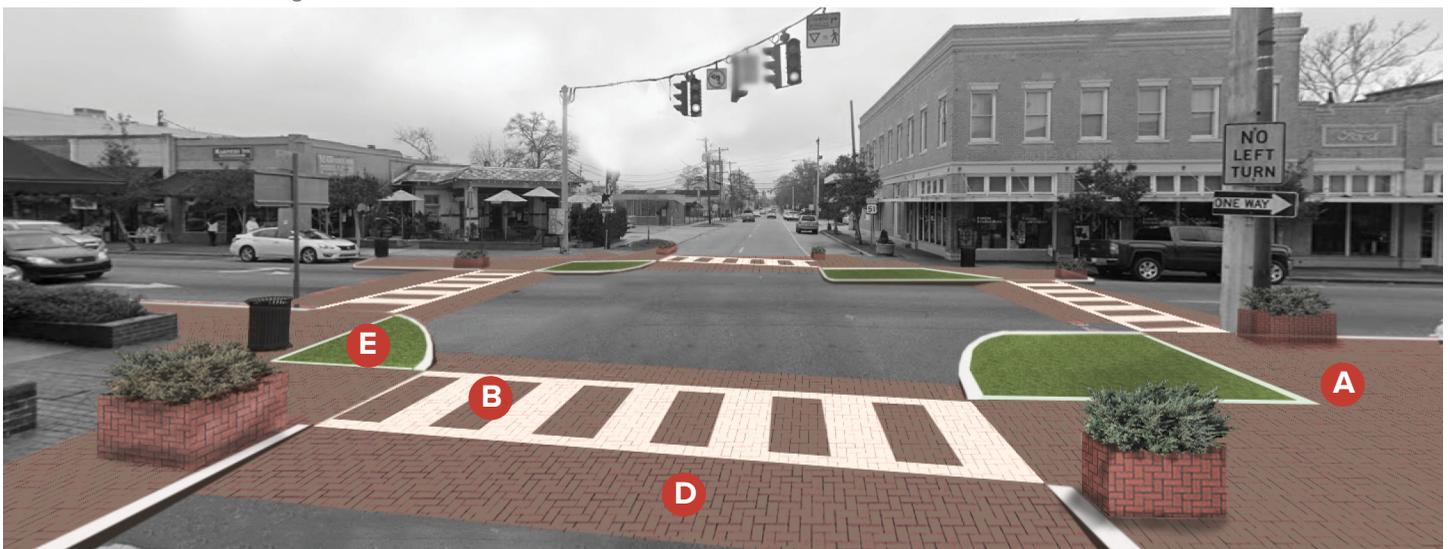
- A** Building and replacing sidewalks at a minimum of 6’ wide, separated by a minimum 2’ planting strip from the roadway, for trees and utilities
- B** Marking and replacing high-visibility crosswalks at all intersections. Build vertical curbs to define a clear edge between the sidewalk and the roadway
- C** Install clear signage and pavement markings identifying streets as dedicated bicycling routes
- D** Install vertical speed controls, such as speed humps, speed cushions, speed tables, or raised crosswalks and intersections
- E** Install horizontal speed controls, including curb extensions or neighborhood traffic circles

Priority intersections for pedestrian enhancements:

- **First priority:** Thomas at Oak, Railroad, and Cate; Morris at Oak, Railroad, and Cate
- **Second priority:** Thomas at Magnolia and Cypress; Morris at Magnolia and Cypress
- **Third priority:** Oak at Charles and Coleman; Railroad at Charles and Coleman

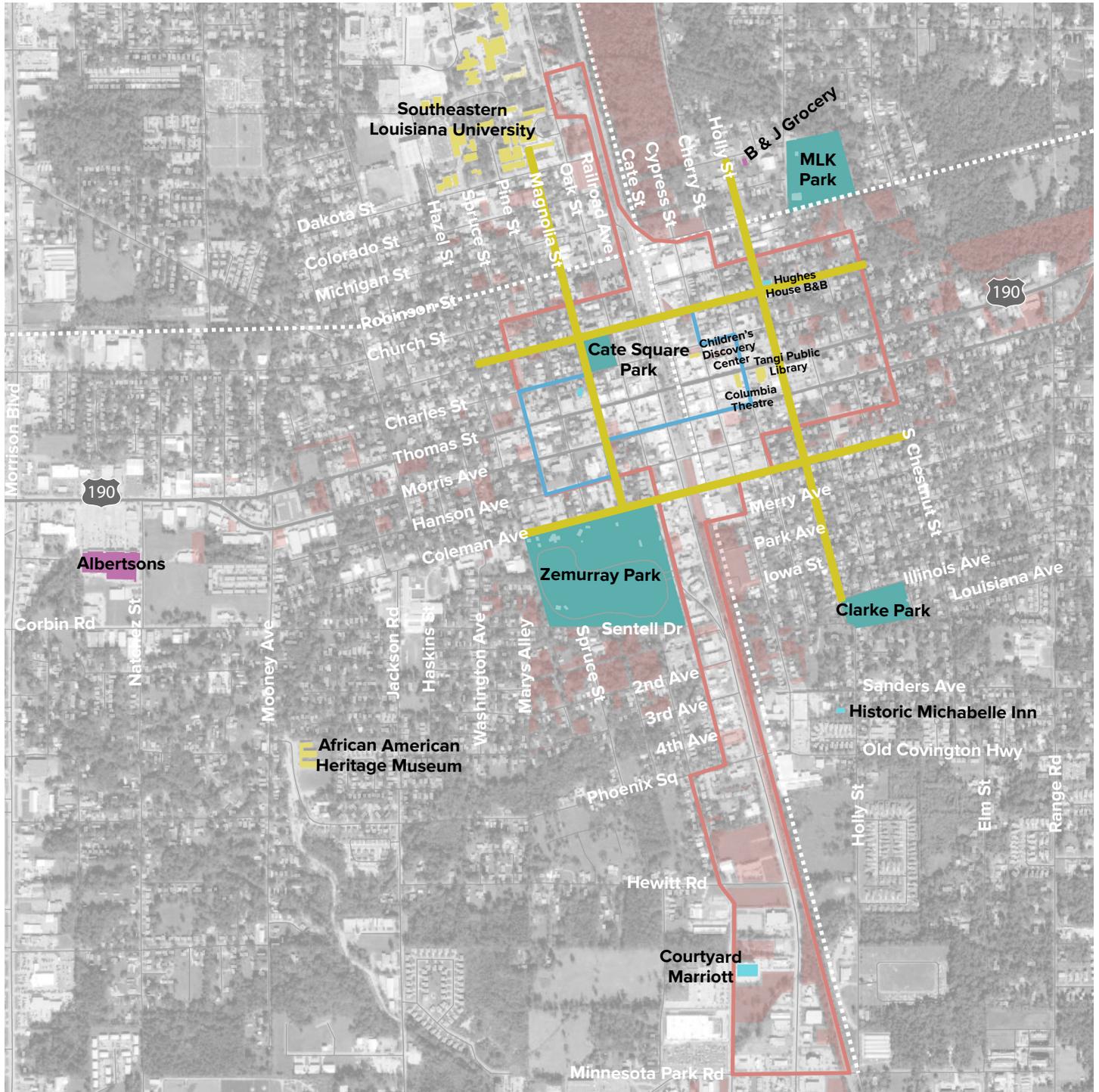
- F** Pedestrian countdown signals, at signalized intersections, with leading pedestrian intervals
- G** Prohibition of right-turn-on-red at signalized intersections

The City’s 2016 Bicycle Plan Feasibility Study identifies four streets within the District to make “complete” by investing in bicycling and pedestrian enhancements: Robert, Coleman, Magnolia, and Holly. These two-way streets are each within a few blocks parallel to the city’s main automobile thoroughfares - Thomas, Morris, Railroad, and Oak - and connect downtown to surrounding neighborhoods in four directions. This network would connect all nearby parks (Zemurray, Cate Square, MLK Park, and Clarke Park).



Above: Conceptual illustration of raised crosswalks and curb extensions at Oak and Thomas Streets.

Sites for Complete Streets



4. Activate Third places & Enhance Options for Recreation

Downtown Hammond needs places where people can meet, socialize, and build connections – so called “third places.” A third place is a place separate from your home (first place) or workplace (second place) that is key to a community’s civic engagement, social wellbeing, and sense of place. Third places include both public and private-owned places that are publicly accessible.

What is a Third Place?

First Place

Your home, where you live, sleep, and relate to family



Second Place

Your workplace, where you earn a living and interact with coworkers



Third Place

Your third place, where you interact with your community and engage in civic activities. Examples include coffee shops, civic spaces, parks, bars, and places of worship.



A central entity such as the DDD can incorporate programming in private third places into their calendar and help advertise upcoming events through social media.

The Louisiana Small Business Development Center, in partnership with the Merchant Committee, can host workshops on how to create experiential spaces within private third places that attract shoppers and diners and encourages them to linger and mingle. For example, local coffee shops can host community-oriented events like talks, book clubs, and shows. Boutiques can host arts and crafts seminars.

Public spaces like plazas, parks, and even parking lots can bring people into contact with others in the community with whom they would otherwise not see, hear, or meet. They are vital to ensuring that Hammond has a vibrant and strong sense of community.

Potential Third Places



-  Potential Third Place
-  Potential Parklet Site
-  Existing Park

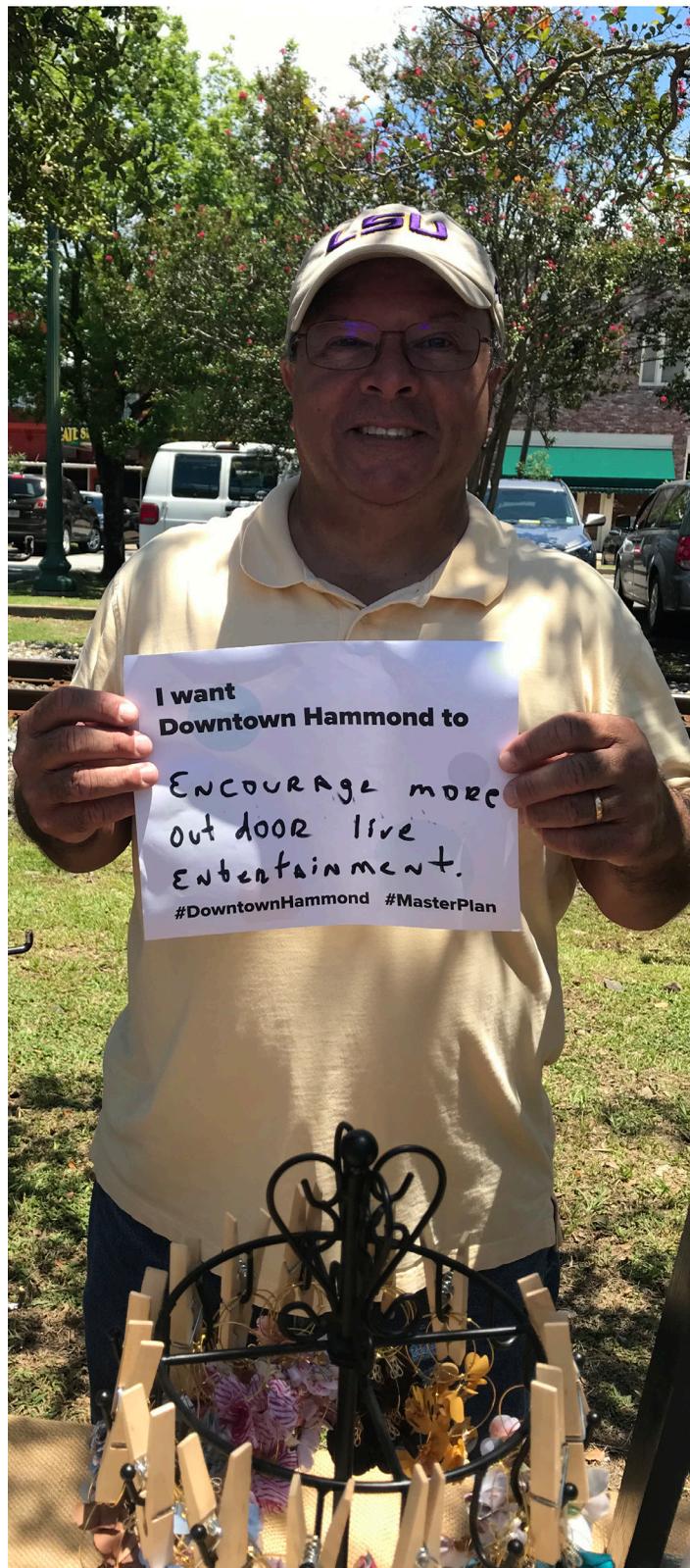
 0.1 Miles 
 N
 Source: City of Hammond

To further strengthen these “connective tissues” the DDD and the City will enhance third places identified in the map, which include City-owned or City-managed and/or vacant properties.

The DDD will work with Tangipahoa Tourism, the Greater Hammond Chamber of Commerce, the City of Hammond, and the Hammond Historic District to create a strategic plan towards making Downtown Hammond a regional destination that draws visitors from nearby towns and larger cities. The strategic plan will make specific recommendations around a marketing campaign and events geared towards the goal of attracting visitors to Downtown Hammond.

The DDD will also review its existing events and marketing efforts and examine the target age range and cost of attendance, and add free or low-cost events for all ages, including families, young adults and college students, and older adults.

Given the amount of vacant lots in the area, the DDD will leverage events and placemaking to activate those empty lots with the cooperation of the proprietors of the lots. This can take the form of organizing a night market, a temporary art exhibit, or some other event that can attract foot traffic and create a temporary third place.



5. Encourage Construction of a Boutique Hotel

Providing space for overnight visitors, whether families of SLU students, people seeking a convenient location between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, or visitors seeking a small-town atmosphere, is an opportunity to increase 24-hour activity in the District, as well as provide facilities for weddings, conferences, and other special events.

One of the earliest hotels serving Downtown Hammond was the Oaks Hotel, completed in 1893, and rebuilt after fires in 1905 and 1929. The hotel ceased operation in 1968 and burned again in 1979. The site of this hotel was recently occupied by a bank. Its central location near the Amtrak train station remains an attractive site for out-of-town visitors. Replacing this use with a hotel would therefore both honor the site's history and bring more life to Downtown streets, at all hours of the day.

The DDD will coordinate with the Regions Bank property owner and the Tangipahoa Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau to identify and recruit an operator for a boutique hotel that caters to visitors seeking lodging that reflects the unique characteristics of Downtown Hammond.

Below: Regions Bank recently vacated this structure, constructed on the site of one of Hammond's earliest hotels. The potential exists to convert the structure to a conference center and expand it to a hotel.



6. Actively Manage Parking and Develop a Parking Implementation Plan

Managing the supply of parking is an important tool for maintaining easy access to District businesses and attractions. The Downtown Development District should collaborate with the City of Hammond to apply parking management strategies.

Abundant free parking is currently provided. The free, public parking lots between Cate Street, Railroad Avenue, Robert Street and Hanson Avenue provide 351 spaces, while District streets offer 701 unrestricted curbside spaces.

The high utilization of free on-street parking is testament to the demand for convenient parking downtown. Such spaces serve the first customer of the day, who are not incentivized to move their vehicle and provide space for the next customer. In many instances, first parkers are in fact not business patrons but employees.

Convenient on-street parking is a limited commodity, and it is the responsibility of public authorities to allocate supply to meet demand. By managing the availability of parking spaces, supply can be more efficiently distributed. As people who need long-term parking are encouraged to park their vehicles in the off-street lots, valuable on-street spaces will become more readily available for short-term customers and for loading.

To develop specific time intervals for short-term, on-street parking enforcement (such as, 10am-5pm), the DDD will conduct a comprehensive parking demand study, measuring utilization for 24-hour periods during multiple times of year and special events. As Downtown continues to develop and attract more visitors, it may be necessary to provide more off-street parking. The parking demand study will quantify the number of needed spaces to accommodate future demand. The map at right proposes new sites to the south, west, and east of the existing lots, for future parking facilities. The Zemurray Park Master Plan recommends additional new parking lots inside the park and adjacent to the water tower on SW Railroad Avenue, outside the District boundary.

Managed Parking

Managed parking encourages parking turnover, meaning more customers can conveniently access businesses.

Non-Managed Parking

Users can park as long as they like with no limits or ticketing. Often these spaces are used by people going to work or parking for long periods of time.

8 hours



Managed Parking

Users can park for limited amounts of time, such as 2 or 3 hours, encouraging those parking for longer times to park elsewhere, increasing turnover in commercial areas.

8 hours



Sites for Short-Term On-Street Parking



 Potential Short-term On-street Parking

 Existing Public Parking Lot

 Proposed Public Parking Lot Site

 0.1 Miles N

Source: City of Hammond

7. Encourage a Signature Development with a Grocery Store

The vacant property located at W. Coleman and SW Railroad Avenues property is the most important redevelopment opportunity in the District. It is highly visible at a prominent intersection, with high-volume regional traffic traveling from Interstate 12 to the Downtown core and SLU campus. It is large (approximately 0.6 acres) with permissive zoning (Mixed-Use-Central Business District). Moreover, it is conveniently located within easy walking distance of core Downtown attractions.

The site's size and access make it a viable opportunity to locate one of the most popular response to the question "What kind of businesses and attractions would you like to see open downtown?" a small grocery store. Market data shows that residents spend over \$0.5 million each year at grocery stores outside the District. This figure does not include demand from the District's significant daytime population and university community.¹

¹ Source: Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.



The MX-CBD zoning classification permits a grocery use as well as upper story residential or commercial uses, up to three stories, and 45' in height. Structured off-street parking is also permitted as a conditional use, and could provide the opportunity for leased parking arrangements with the City or DDD during special events, when overflow parking is in demand.

Other sites within the District could also accommodate a small grocery. Regardless of the use at this site, the development's design should emphasize a sense of arrival for people entering the District via Railroad Avenue from the south.

Project designers should give special attention to the articulation, massing and materials of the structure at the site's corner. To ensure the building contributes to Downtown Hammond's existing walkable urban fabric, the building's main entrance should be oriented toward Railroad Avenue or the corner. Transparent windows or doors should comprise at least 50% of the building facade between two and ten feet in height. Off-street parking should be located behind or to the side of the structure, and not separate the building from the street.



8. Promote Infill Mixed Use Development

Despite the successes of the DDD, a challenge to the future vitality of the District is vacant and underutilized land within and around Downtown. When asked how important it is for Downtown Hammond to build on vacant or underused land and rehabilitate vacant buildings, 85% of respondents to the Community Priorities Survey said that it was very important or essential.

Potential sites for redevelopment:

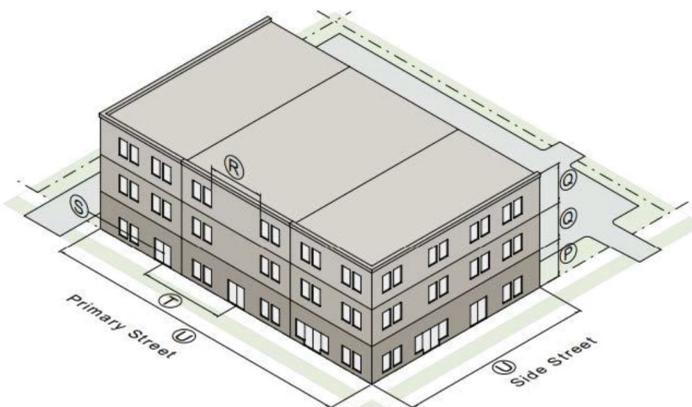
- The two blocks bounded by Morris Avenue on the north, Coleman Avenue on the south, and Cypress Street and Cate Street are zoned for mixed use, have vacant lots and lots with low building-to-land value ratios, are close to the core of Downtown and its parking lots, and are within the boundaries of the DDD.
- The lot on the northwest corner of Coleman Avenue and Railroad Avenue, the site of the recently demolished tire shop, is ripe for redevelopment. The site is zoned for mixed use, is within walking distance to the parking lots in the Downtown core, and is within the DDD's jurisdiction. The site has the added advantage of being adjacent to Zemurray Park, creating a potential enhanced connection between the DDD and the park.

Strategies:

1. Provide incentives for owners of vacant properties to make them available for public benefit. Property owners in Hammond could receive an incentive by making land available for use as gathering spaces, or for local organizations or artists to use for a specific purpose.
2. Connect property owners to financial resources for redevelopment. Louisiana has programs such as the Restoration Tax Abatement to incentivize expand, restore, improve, or develop existing structure in Downtown Development Districts.

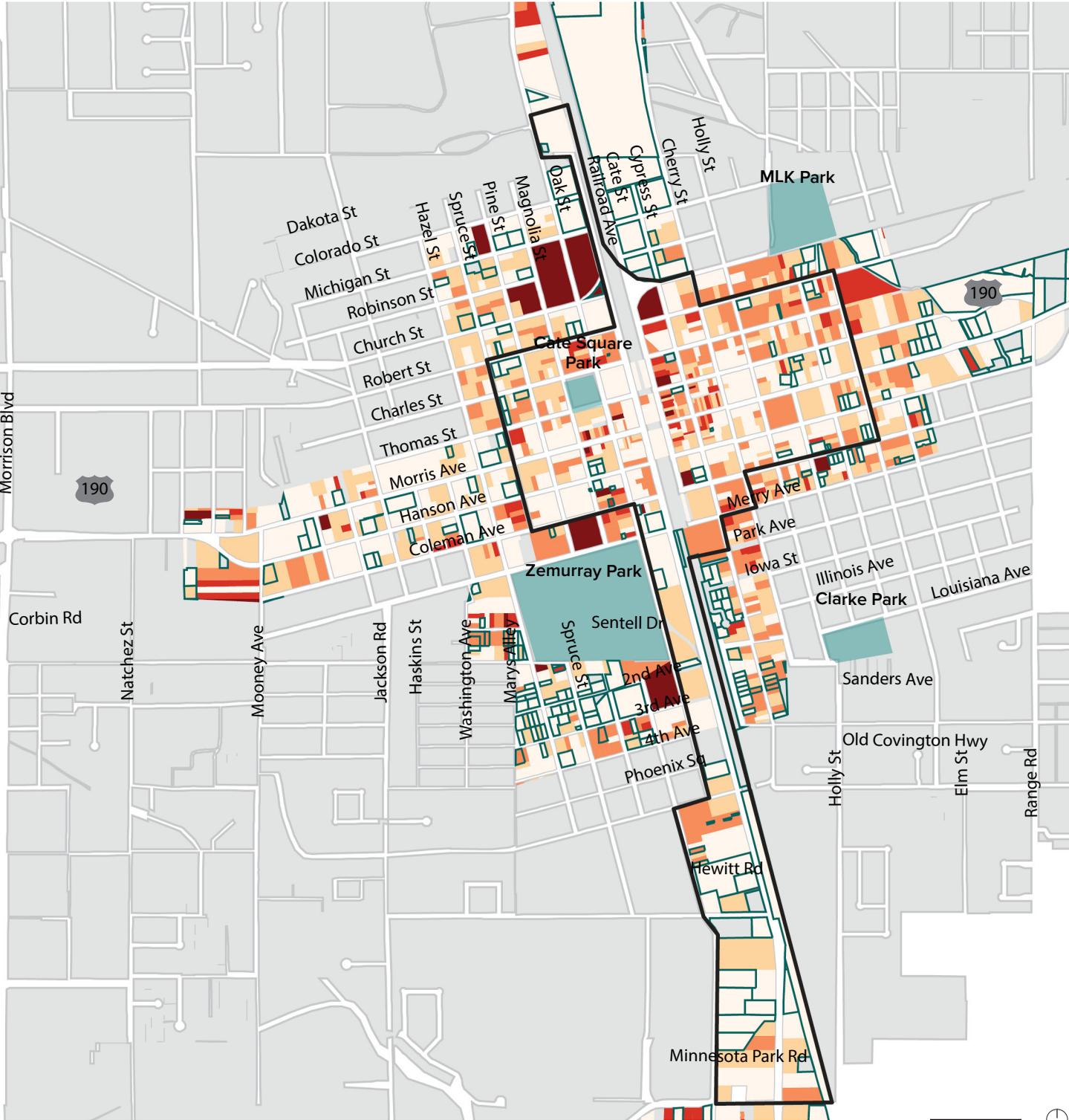
Development Potential

Building-to-land value ratios compare the value of a building to the value of the land upon which it sits. A low ratio means the building has a low value relative to the land value, indicating high possibility for redevelopment. The map at right illustrates these value ratios based on tax assessment data provided by the Tangipahoa Parish Assessor's Office. Low building-to-land values are found where non-profits, churches, or government buildings are currently housed, and these should not be targeted for redevelopment.



A Mixed Use Building as specified by the City of Hammond, Louisiana Unified Development Code, Amended on 1/22/2019.

DDD Development Potential



— Hammond Downtown Development District

● Parks

Building-to-Land Value Ratio

- 0 - 2
- 8 - 15
- 2 - 4
- 15 - 48
- 4 - 8

— .2 Miles N

Source: Tangipahoa Parish Assessor's Office.

Regardless of the methods used to incentivize enhanced utilization of the sites, the DDD and its Design Review Committee will ensure that whatever is developed within the district is of quality design.

The DDD will implement policies to incentivize the use and/or development of existing vacant lots while also connecting both businesses and property owners to resources that can spur growth and development in the District.

Below: Square 71, Railroad Avenue at W. Morris Avenue, incorporates several aspects of quality infill design:

1. On-street parking provides convenient automobile access to visitors and buffers pedestrians from vehicular traffic
2. Transparent glass, patios and galleries invite attention from potential customers and encourage more “eyes on the street,” supporting a sense of safety
3. Signage is scaled and oriented toward pedestrians
4. Off street parking and loading are located behind the building at the interior of the block
5. Building facades front the sidewalk
6. Clearly defined and visible entrances oriented toward the sidewalk
7. Brick material complies with the historic context
8. Awnings and canopies protect pedestrians and building users from weather elements, and add character to building facades



Increase the residential population

The small number of residents relative to commuting workers in the area means that streets which are active with shoppers, diners and workers during rush periods are quiet at other times of the week. Current residents desire a place to buy groceries and a broader array of retail options, and more residents are needed to generate sufficient demand to justify these amenities.

Increasing housing options downtown will:

- Increase density in order to have a customer base that can support amenities like a grocery store and create a vibrant Downtown at all hours.
- Allow the District to respond to the growing segment of older adults by supporting residential development for all ages. The proportion of older adults aged 65 and up is projected to increase between 2019 to 2024.²
- Respond to increasing student demand for housing. The large student housing developments such as the Grande and the Heights constructed at the edge of the City are evidence of the growing demand for quality rental housing within easy commuting distance of Southeastern Louisiana University.

Strategies to Increase the Number of Downtown Residents

1. The DDD will incentivize downtown living by providing or connecting future homeowners with grants that assist with closing costs or down payments.
2. The DDD will review the zoning codes and work with the City to amend the zoning code to permit and encourage a variety of housing types, from single-family homes to multifamily apartments. There are eight lots that are zoned for multi-family housing in the entire District, making it difficult to develop housing options that could increase the residential population.

² Business Analyst, "Demographic and Income Profile report," Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024 based on 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data.

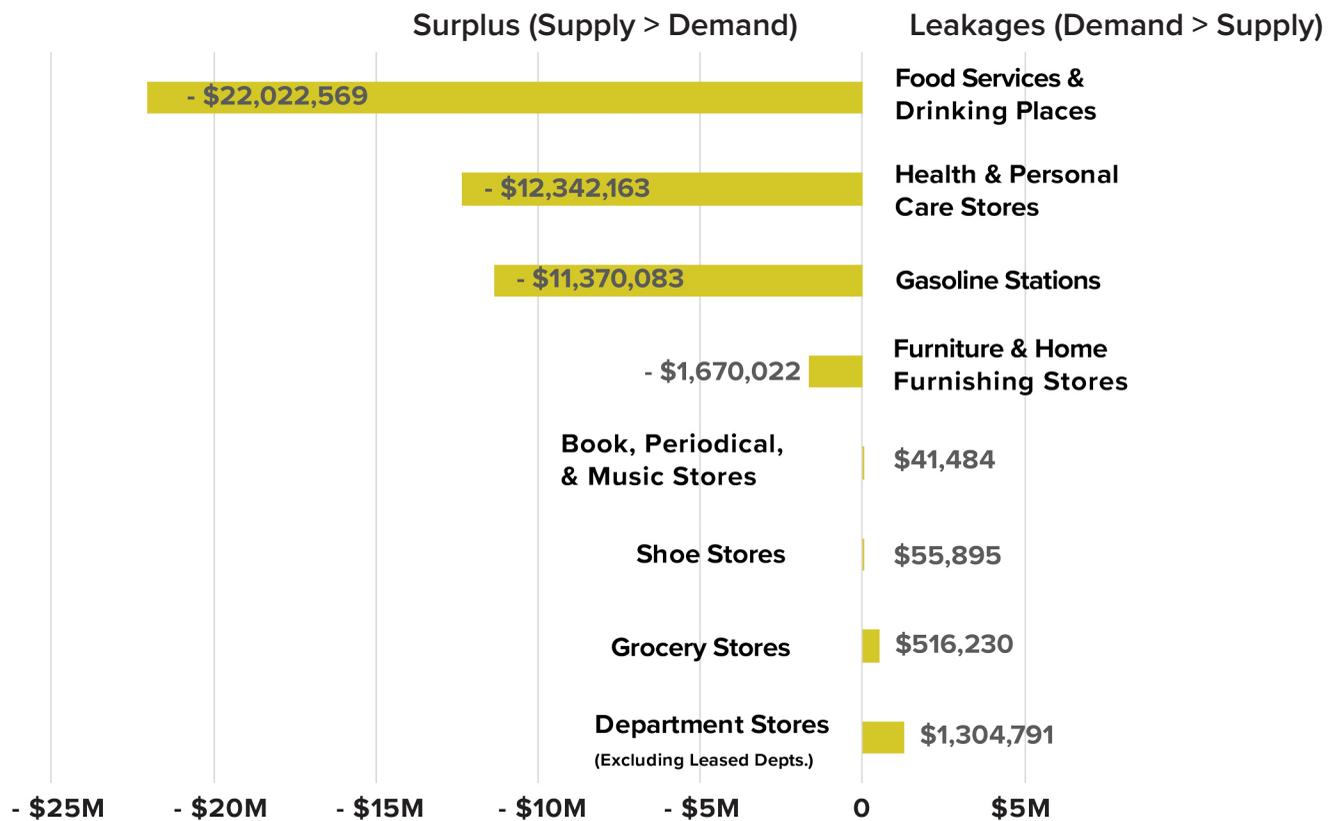
9. Attract Diverse Businesses

Hammond’s DDD has resources to help both new and existing business and property owners, some of which can be seen in the chart to the right.

Results from the Downtown Hammond Master Plan - Community Priorities Survey (see Appendix A: Community Input) reveal that about 85% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that Downtown Hammond has a great variety of appealing retailers, services and dining options. However, respondents also shared that they would like to see more businesses like a grocery store, an arcade/ gaming store, an art studio, and live music venues open downtown.

Commercial affordability is important because commercial spaces can attract a diverse small business network, which in turn will attract and retain consumers to Hammond’s District. Towards this end, the DDD will partner with the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) of Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) to offer workshops and consulting services to help business owners attract customers, improve operations, increase sales, and successfully access capital.

Demand for Retail Goods and Services, by Sector



Source: Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2018 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

Business Attraction and Support Incentives

Façade Grant - gives business and property owners an incentive (up to \$2,000) to renovate and upgrade the outside/façade of their building. Grant must be matched dollar for dollar by the recipient and can be used to renovate the exterior of their building, including awnings (without signage), painting, and lighting.

Revolving Loan - offered to property owners and business owners in the District for up to \$75,000 with an interest rate of 2 below prime. Funds can be used for renovations to building façade, acquisition of land, acquisition of properties, start-up and/or expansion of businesses, rehabilitation/renovation of vacant buildings for industrial or commercial use.

Federal Tax Credits for Historic Buildings - provides a 20% federal tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenses to historic, income-producing buildings. This program is run through the National Park Service

State Tax Credits for Historic Buildings - offers another 20% tax credit for rehabilitation to historic, income-producing buildings. This program is run through the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism in the division of Cultural Preservation.

Louisiana Main Street Redevelopment Incentive Grants - provide matching funds to encourage the revitalization of historic downtown commercial properties in designated Main Street districts. The Incentive Grants serve efforts to promote community revitalization and stimulate economic growth and vitality- in addition to enriching cultural tourism.

The chart to the left shows goods and services with various levels of demand. A negative demand indicates a “surplus,” where excess supply is being consumed by visitors to the DDD. Drinking and dining establishments are therefore attracting visitors. A positive demand indicates a “leakage,” whereby there is more demand within the District than there is supply. Grocery

stores are in demand: residents within the District are spending over \$500,000 outside of the DDD boundaries.

10. Expand the District

This Plan has documented many of the benefits of inclusion of property within the District, from direct financial assistance for property rehabilitation to public space improvements, which bolster land and property values. The 2002 Update to the Master Plan proposed expanding District boundaries to triple its size, shown at right. This expansion would offer assistance and investment to a broader population of property owners and stakeholders. Expanded boundaries would also generate additional revenue to fund capital projects identified in the Master Plan.

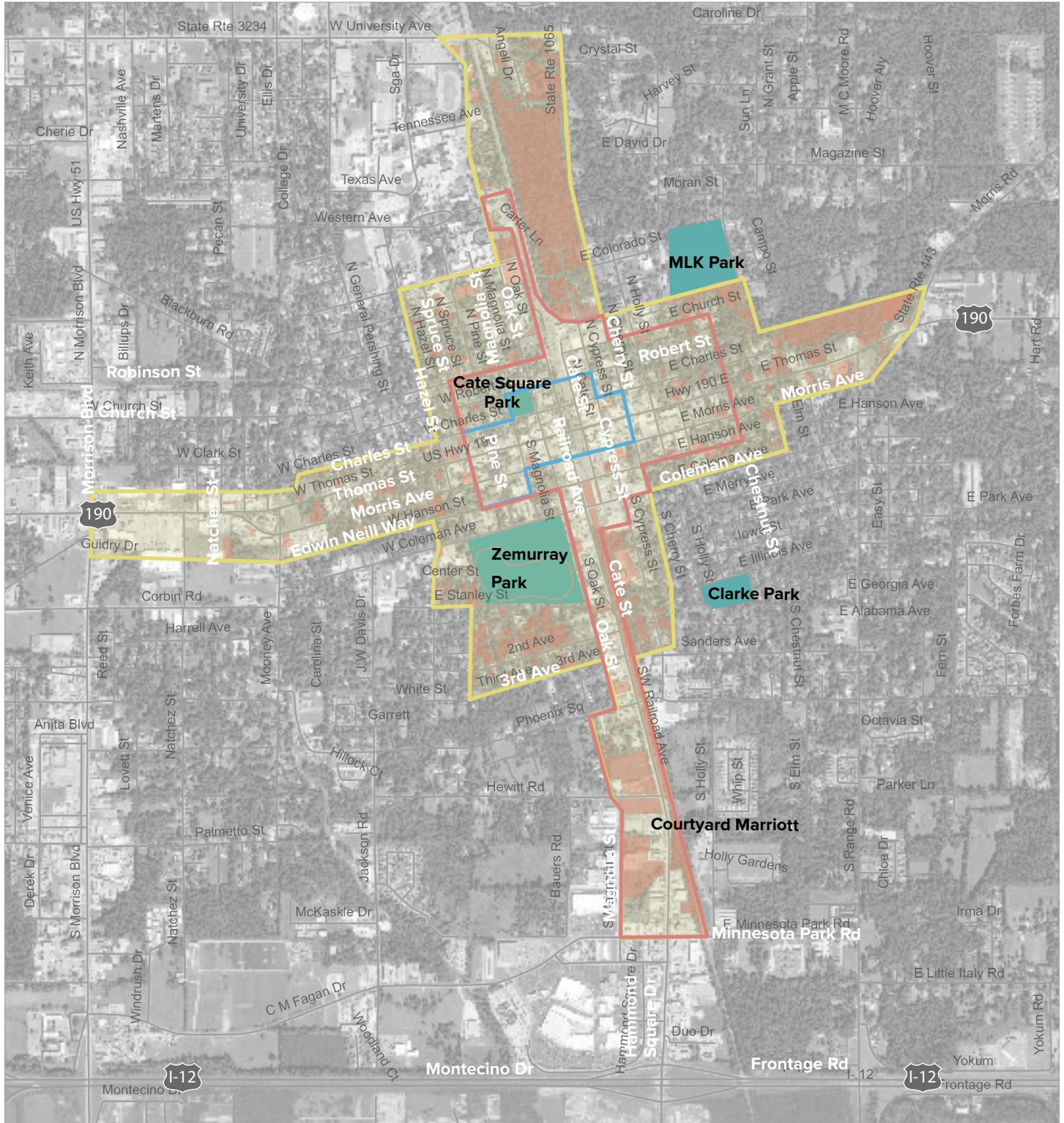
An expansion of any size would require State legislative action and approval by a majority of voters, however, and neither of these tasks have been pursued since the adoption of the 2002 Update.

Because of the politically sensitive nature of expanding taxing districts, and the varying needs and opportunities to make an impact on adjacent neighborhoods, the DDD will work to strategically and incrementally expand its boundaries in close consultation with property owners. Consultation may occur through direct mailings to property owners, invitations to information sessions, and through collaboration with the offices of Council Districts 1 and 2.

The DDD will consider the following areas as priorities for District expansion:

- The blocks bounded by Edwin Neil Way, S. Magnolia Street, W. Coleman Avenue and S. Hazel Street. These blocks separate Zemurray Park from the District's current boundary along Edwin Neill Way. Expanding the boundary to include these blocks would enable the DDD to invest in complete streets improvements to the segments of Edwin Neil Way and W. Coleman Avenue connecting the existing District to the park - an expressed community priority.
- The blocks bounded by S. Holly Street, E. Hanson Avenue, SW Railroad Avenue, and E. Park Avenue, which include a handful of historic properties in dilapidated condition, and which would be served by a complete street treatment proposed for S. Holly Street.
- The neighborhood bounded by NW Railroad Avenue, W. Dakota Street, N. Spruce Street, and W. Church Street. The neighborhood separates the existing District from the SLU campus, and includes the proposed Magnolia Street complete street enhancement.
- Numerous stakeholders expressed interest in expanding District boundaries farther than these priority areas, such as to include all of Zemurray Park and the neighborhood to its south and west. Including Zemurray Park within District boundaries would empower the DDD to contribute to the park's redevelopment.

Proposed Expansion of District Boundaries



 Hammond Downtown Development District	 Parks	
 Hammond Historic District	 Vacant Land	
 Proposed Boundary Expansion		

11. Enhance Connectivity to SLU

One of the largest assets with the potential to make Downtown Hammond a regional destination is Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), to the north of the District.

A campus with approximately 15,000 enrolled students and 2,000 students living on campus, the students and their visiting family members are a large consumer base that can enliven Downtown Hammond.

The DDD should strengthen ties with the Southeastern campus, both physically and institutionally. By creating an atmosphere that celebrates the university and its students, families are more likely to visit Downtown Hammond with a student and create repeated trips on weekends and for special events.

Enhancing the Physical Connection

Traveling from the DDD to campus is about a 5-minute bike ride or a 15-minute walk (less than one mile). To facilitate more pedestrian and bike traffic between the two, the DDD should facilitate the creation of a walking and bike path along Railroad Avenue with a path that goes by the train tracks.

Creating a bike and pedestrian path through the north-south core of Downtown will compliment street enhancements on Railroad Avenue, and the separate bike path, which will run by the Hammond Railroad Station will provide safety from the one-way traffic on Railroad and Oak Street.

In order to encourage residents to use the pathway, bike and pedestrian crossings should be installed on Railroad Avenue so those living west of Railroad may cross the road and venture up to Southeastern. Additionally, the Lion Traxx Shuttle Service operated by Southeastern could potentially place a stop closer to Downtown near the train station to provide a more convenient access for students.

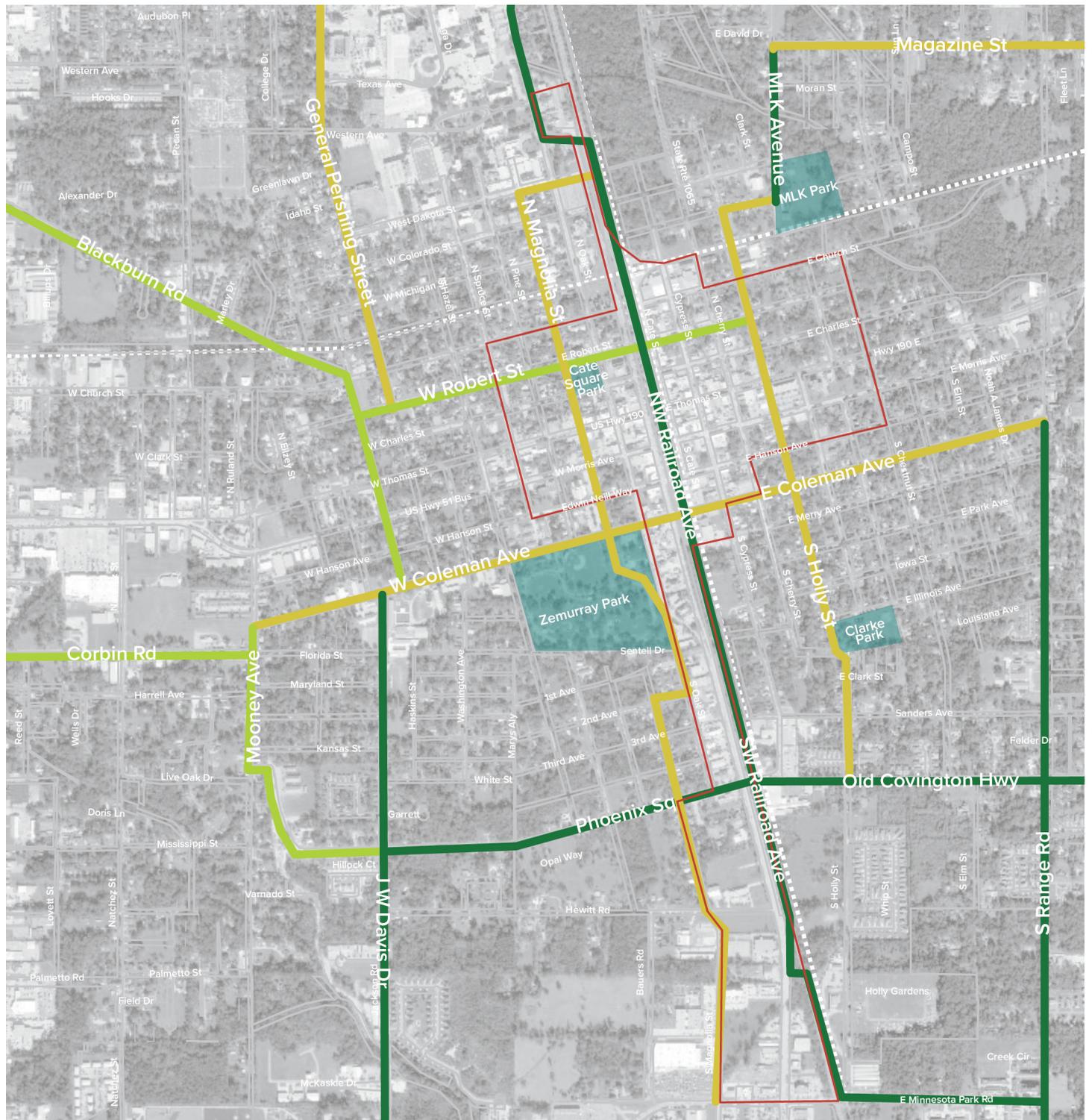
Strategies for enhancing connections between the District and Southeastern:

- Route the Homecoming parade through Downtown Hammond
- Increase SLU branding throughout the District
- Enhance the physical connection between Downtown Hammond and SLU



Existing Southeastern branding in the DDD on Railroad Avenue

Proposed Bike Network



— Hammond Downtown Development District

Hammond Bicycle Plan, Concept 3: Long Term Strategy

— .2 Miles 

— Shared Use Trail

— Bike Lane

— Shared Lane

● Parks

12. Foster the Arts through Cultural Activities

Downtown Hammond—which administers the Hammond Cultural District—will take advantage of the rich cultural resources in the city to become a destination for arts and cultural heritage for the region. The historic buildings and the locally-owned businesses in the District create an ideal backdrop for an intentional strategy to enhance Hammond’s identity as the hub for arts and culture.

The DDD should implement a two-pronged approach to strengthen the District through the arts: People-centered strategies to develop and recruit artistic and creative talent and place-based strategies to cultivate creative placemaking.

Strategies to develop artists and collaborative ventures:

- Encourage businesses to incorporate local art into marketing and branding through workshops that showcase portfolios of local artists and highlight successful collaborations
- Commission work for marketing materials from student artists and local creatives
- Explore the creation of live-work units. This will require changes to the zoning ordinance, and the coordination of multiple partners to gather financing sources, but will be crucial component of creating an environment that fosters the arts.

Strategies to enhancing creative placemaking in the District:

- Create a public art grant program for public art in third places, such as plazas and parks and to install public murals
- Work with property owners to obtain permission to use vacant lots and empty storefronts to showcase artwork and museum displays
- Work with the Hammond Regional Arts Council and the City to install artistic streetscape elements, including benches, signage, crosswalks, and electrical boxes



1. Tangipahoa Parish Library, a potential site for a mural



2. Thomas-Railroad crosswalks, a potential site for artistic painted crosswalks



3. Cate Square Park, a potential site for public art such as a sculpture



4. Main Street Dance, a potential site for a mural



5. Hammond Station, a potential site for public art

Sites for Public Art



- Potential public art
- City Owned or Managed Parcel
- Potential mural
- Potential art corridor

0.1 Miles N
 Source: City of Hammond

13. Commemorate and Celebrate Hammond's History

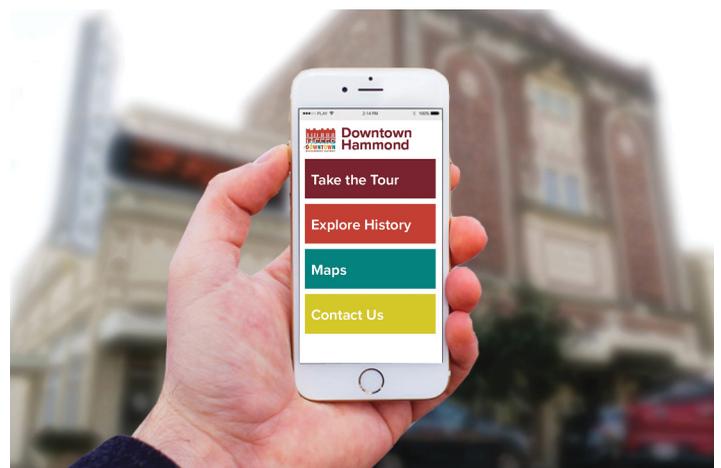
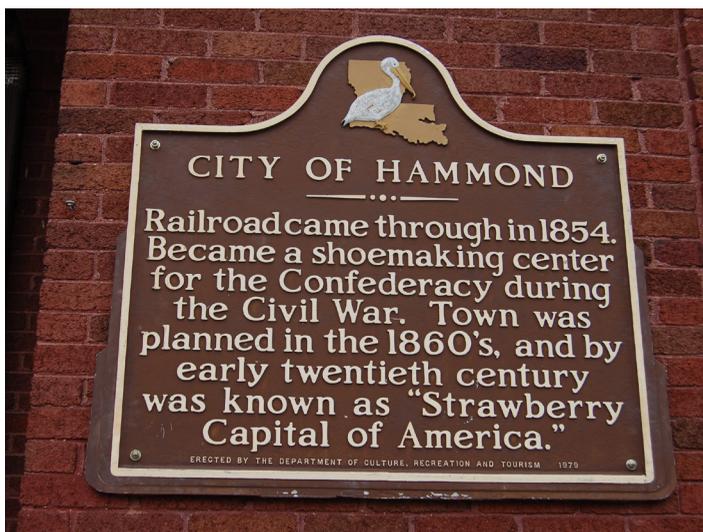
Downtown Hammond's long history and its widely-preserved, historic architecture are among the District's greatest assets. Recognizing this history and making it accessible to visitors distinguishes Downtown Hammond as an attraction.

Currently, markers identify historically significant buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. They provide the public with easy access to historical education and regarding the city's heritage. Historical markers can spark further interest in local history and can call attention to historic preservation programs and opportunities to support them.

New historic markers in Downtown Hammond will tell the story of Hammond, the significance of the railroad and train depot, and should identify significant buildings, including the Columbia Theater and Johnny's Conoco.

The Hammond Historic District already hosts Downtown Walking Tours for the District's historic buildings. The DDD can enhance these walking tours by including historic markers on historic buildings and by connecting walking tours to public art and parks. A custom-designed and interactive smart phone application will offer self-guided tours to independent visitors and curious locals.

A museum remains one of the unrealized anchor projects proposed in the 2002 Master Plan at the northwest corner of East Church and North Cypress. This site remains privately owned and operated. A Museum will require identification of a governing institution, and could be a partnership of the DDD, Historic District, and Southeastern Louisiana University. The DDD will investigate viable operators and facilities for the establishment of this new institution.



14. Improve and Maintain Streetscape

Street furnishing and landscaping enhance Downtown's most prevalent public spaces: its streets. Shade trees provide shade on hot days, create a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic, beautify streets, improve air quality, absorb stormwater, improve retail sales, boost public health, and raise property values.

While the City of Hammond is rich with an extensive canopy of old-growth trees, Downtown Hammond streets lack consistent coverage. The DDD and City have successfully introduced dozens of young new streets trees, and should continue to enhance streetscape with additional plantings. Permissible shade tree species include: Long-leaf Pine, Loblolly Pine, Live Oak, Nuttall Oak, Red Oak, and Magnolia.

Stakeholders indicated challenges with new trees - namely, that some overgrown tree branches conflict with parked passenger vehicles. To avoid such conflicts, trees should be spaced at 20-22 foot intervals and aligned between parking spaces as practical.

Elements of a Quality Streetscape

1. Shade trees provide relief from heat
2. Street furniture add functionality and vitality
3. Striped crosswalks and pedestrian signals and provide clarity for pedestrians and automobiles
4. Curb bumpout shortens crossing distances
5. Kiosks and other human-scale signage provide a sense of place and a welcoming pedestrian realm
6. Ample lighting for pedestrian comfort at all hours
7. Parking garages are screened mask unattractive surfaces
8. Ground-floor retail with street-facing widows keep eyes on the streets
9. Wide sidewalks allow for a variety of activities in the public realm



Street furnishings provide important amenities for pedestrians by adding functionality and vitality to the pedestrian realm. They announce that people walking, bicycling, and driving are all welcome and that the street is a comfortable place to be. Street furnishings also provide an opportunity for districts to show unique branding and can make downtown areas more visually appealing. The DDD should incorporate local public art into the design of street furnishings.

Examples of street furniture include:

- Bollards
- Traffic lights and signs
- Street lights
- Benches
- Bike racks
- Trash cans and recycle bins
- Sculptures

Bicycle parking is most effective when it is located close to trip destinations, is easy to find and is accessible. The DDD should place bike racks near significant downtown institutions and amenities, like SELU, Hammond Station, and Cate Square Park, as well as along commercial corridors and in residential areas.

Public seating provides a space where people can rest, socialize, read, or people-watch. Benches and seating can create a sense of place and entice people to linger and interact in public spaces and surrounding amenities.

The Historic District's Design Guidelines document and the DDD's 2002 Master Plan provides additional guidance on landscaping and street furnishings.

Street furnishing placement should be prioritized on

- Streets, corners, and blocks with a large amount of pedestrian activity
- Streets where pedestrians may linger and enjoy the public realm, such as downtown, commercial, mixed-use, or special streets
- Streets with a recreational role such as parkways, park edge streets, and boulevards
- Transit stops.

Sites for Shade Trees and Street Furniture



Streets with Street Furniture

Tree-lined Streets

0.1 Miles N

Source: City of Hammond

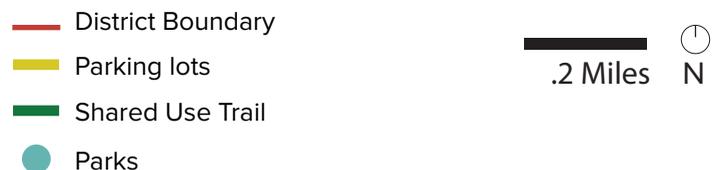
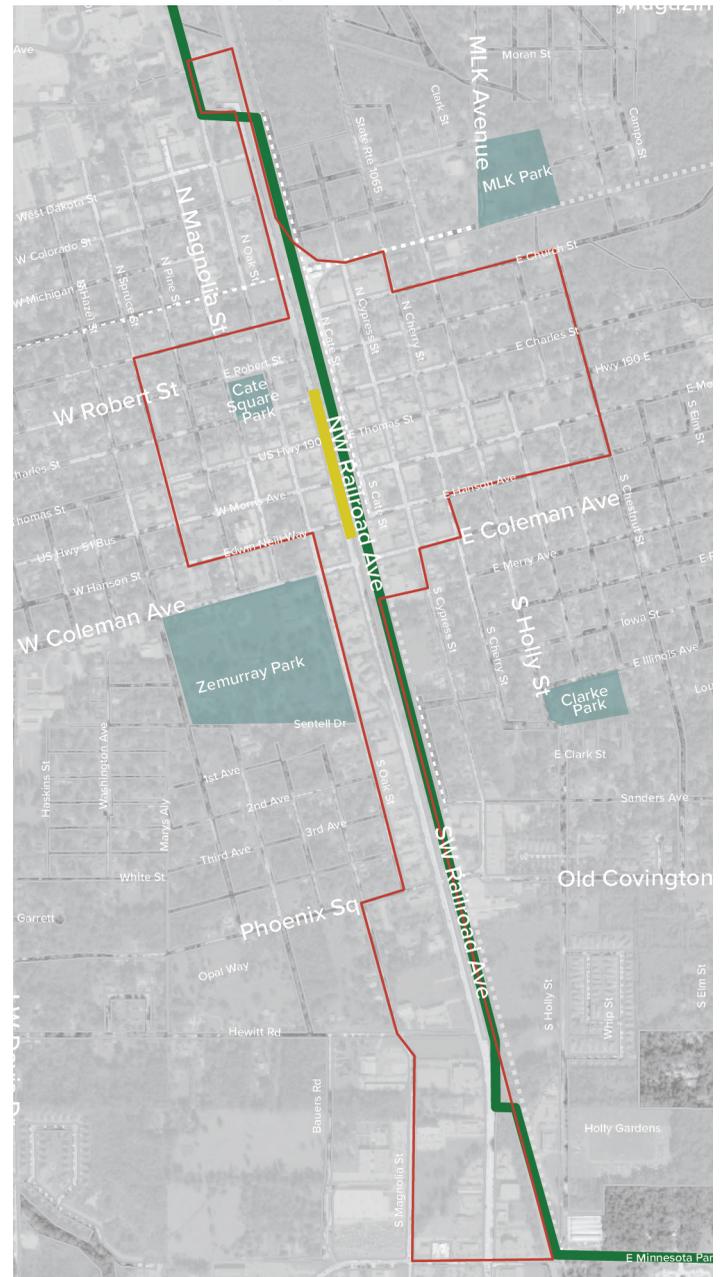
15. Build the Tangipahoa Rail-Trail

The CN Railroad corridor that bisects Downtown Hammond is the city's spine, providing access to all downtown east-west cross-streets. It therefore holds significant potential to improve bicycle and pedestrian access between the northern and southern boundaries of the District, from Southeastern University's campus to Zemurray Park and Hammond Square. The City's 2016 Bicycle Plan Feasibility Study recommends installation of a separated bicycle and pedestrian path through this corridor.

This trail could directly connect people on foot and on bike between Downtown and Southeast Louisiana University to the north, and Zemurray Park and neighborhoods to the south. Beyond a transportation facility, the rail-with-trail could serve a number of other public space functions, such as dedicating spaces for public art, shaded seating and tables, interpretive signage and displays, bike racks, and other street furniture.

While ample space is available parallel to the west side of the railroad track through most of the corridor, fitting the trail among the parking lots located between Robert Street and Edwin Neill Way/Hanson Avenue will require further analysis (shown on the map in yellow). Potential treatments for a projected pathway and their pros and cons are shown at right. In all cases, designers must carefully consider conflicts with motorized traffic at street crossings.

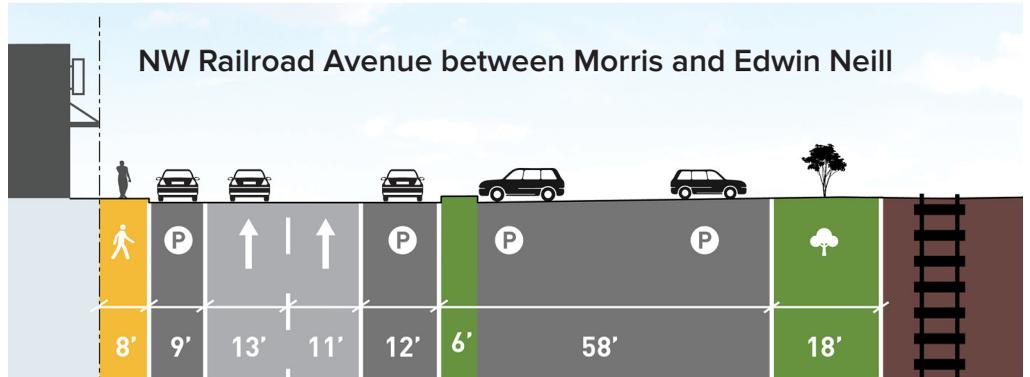
Rail-Trail Alignment



Alignment options among parking lots

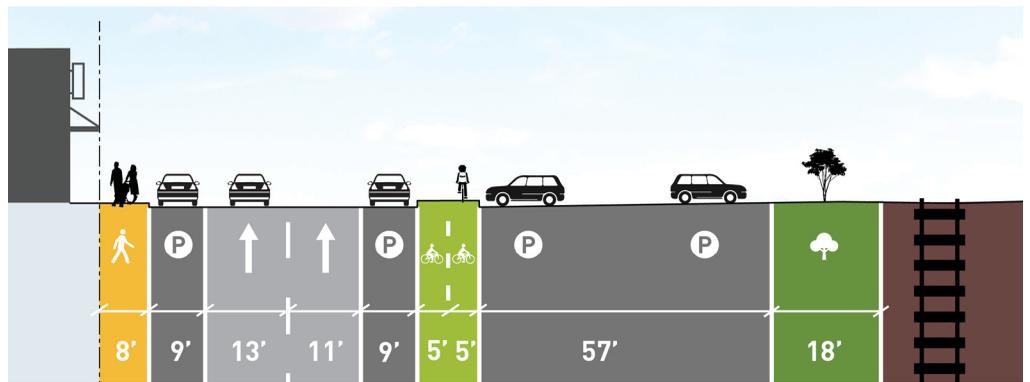
Existing

Underutilized space exists in the wide, right-side parking lane, its adjacent planting strip, and the buffer between the parking lot and railroad.



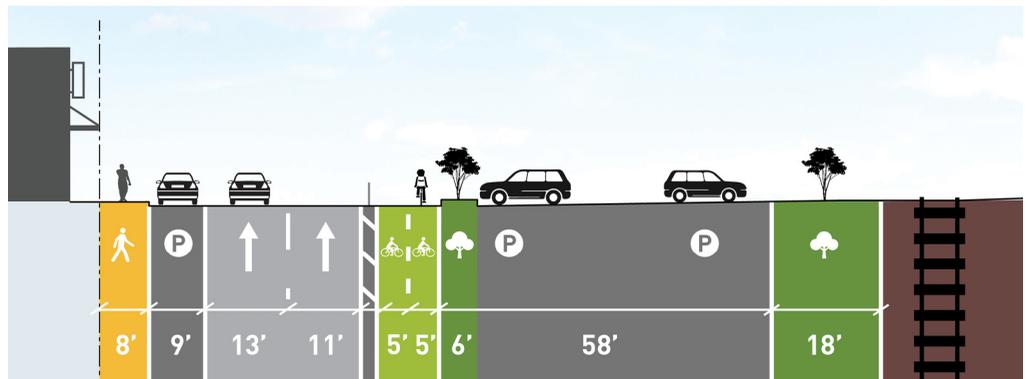
1) Widen planting strip

A bi-directional bikeway is possible by narrowing the right-side parking lane by three feet and the parking lot by one foot. This would maintain all existing parking, yet not provide adequate space for shared use (people biking **and** walking). This design would also require mitigating conflicts with utilities at street intersections.



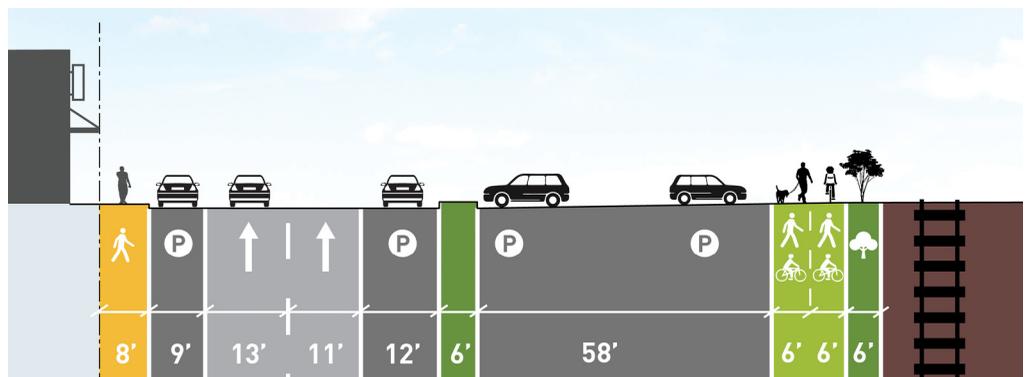
2) Replace parking lane

Bi-directional bicycle lanes replace the right-side parking lane, leaving room for a two-foot buffer from motor vehicle traffic. This design would not require moving curbs and would not conflict with utilities, making it more cost-effective than other options, yet would displace approximately 40-50 on-street parking spaces.



3) Build rail-adjacent trail

The 18' buffer between the parking lots and railroad provides adequate room for a shared-use trail. This option would require close coordination with CN Railroad and replanting of several existing trees, yet maintain all existing parking.



IMPLEMENTATION

The DDD is committed to bringing project ideas to life. If implemented successfully, the strategies detailed in this report will contribute significantly to sustaining the success of Downtown Hammond.

Each strategy includes recommended actions and responsible actors, supportive partners, and phasing.

This responsibility rests not just on the DDD, but also its government, nonprofit and business partners who participated in the planning process. The Implementation Matrix that follows organizes all of the Plan’s recommended strategies in one place.

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
1. Construct a community pavilion	Execute cooperative endeavor/ownership and leasing agreement with City to construct on “Hammond Plaza” site;	2020	No cost	High	N/A	DDD	City of Hammond; Hammond Historic District
	Procure A/E and/or design/build contractor to construct pavilion	2020	\$800,000 - \$1 million	High	DDD bond financing backed by ad valorem tax revenue		City of Hammond; Hammond Historic District
2. Build gateway entrances & wayfinding signs	Procure graphic design/signage consultant to develop signage design and specific plan	2020	Less than \$100,000	High	DDD general fund	DDD	City of Hammond; Hammond Historic District
	Fabricate and install wayfinding signage	2021	Less than \$200,000	Moderate	DDD bond financing backed by ad valorem tax revenue, Revenue from Hotel Occupancy Tax	DDD	City of Hammond; Hammond Historic District

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
3. Build complete streets and protect pedestrians at intersections.	Conduct Stage 0 feasibility studies compliant with DOTD procedures for identified intersections and streets	2020	Less than \$150,000	Moderate	FHWA funds allocated through the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission; Local match provided by local tax revenue	City of Hammond Streets Department	DDD; RPC; DOTD
	Obtain state and federal grant funds to support improvements for pedestrian safety	2021	No cost	Moderate	N/A	City of Hammond Streets Department	DDD; RPC; DOTD; FHWA
	Procure contractors to perform environmental impact assessments; schematic designs; construction documentation; and construction	2023	\$1 million to \$5 million	Moderate	FHWA funds allocated through the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission; Local match provided by local tax revenue	City of Hammond Streets Department	DDD; RPC; DOTD; FHWA

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
4. Activate third places & enhance options for recreation	Provide training on how to create experiential retail in the form of third places	2020	\$1,000	Moderate	DDD general fund	DDD	Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC)
	Invest in underutilized or vacant spaces that can be converted into third places	2020-2030	\$5,000-\$15,000 per lot	Moderate	Grants for public space activation	City of Hammond	DDD
	Create a strategic plan towards making Downtown Hammond a regional destination	2021	Variable; dependent on extent of coordination and formality	High	DDD general fund	DDD	Tangipahoa Tourism; Greater Hammond Chamber of Commerce; City of Hammond; Hammond Historic District
5. Encourage construction of a boutique hotel	Aid property owner and developer in recruitment of high quality hotel operator; Provide developer guidance on design of new construction and public space enhancements	2020	No cost	High	N/A	DDD	Tangipahoa Tourism; Greater Hammond Chamber of Commerce; City of Hammond; Hammond Historic District

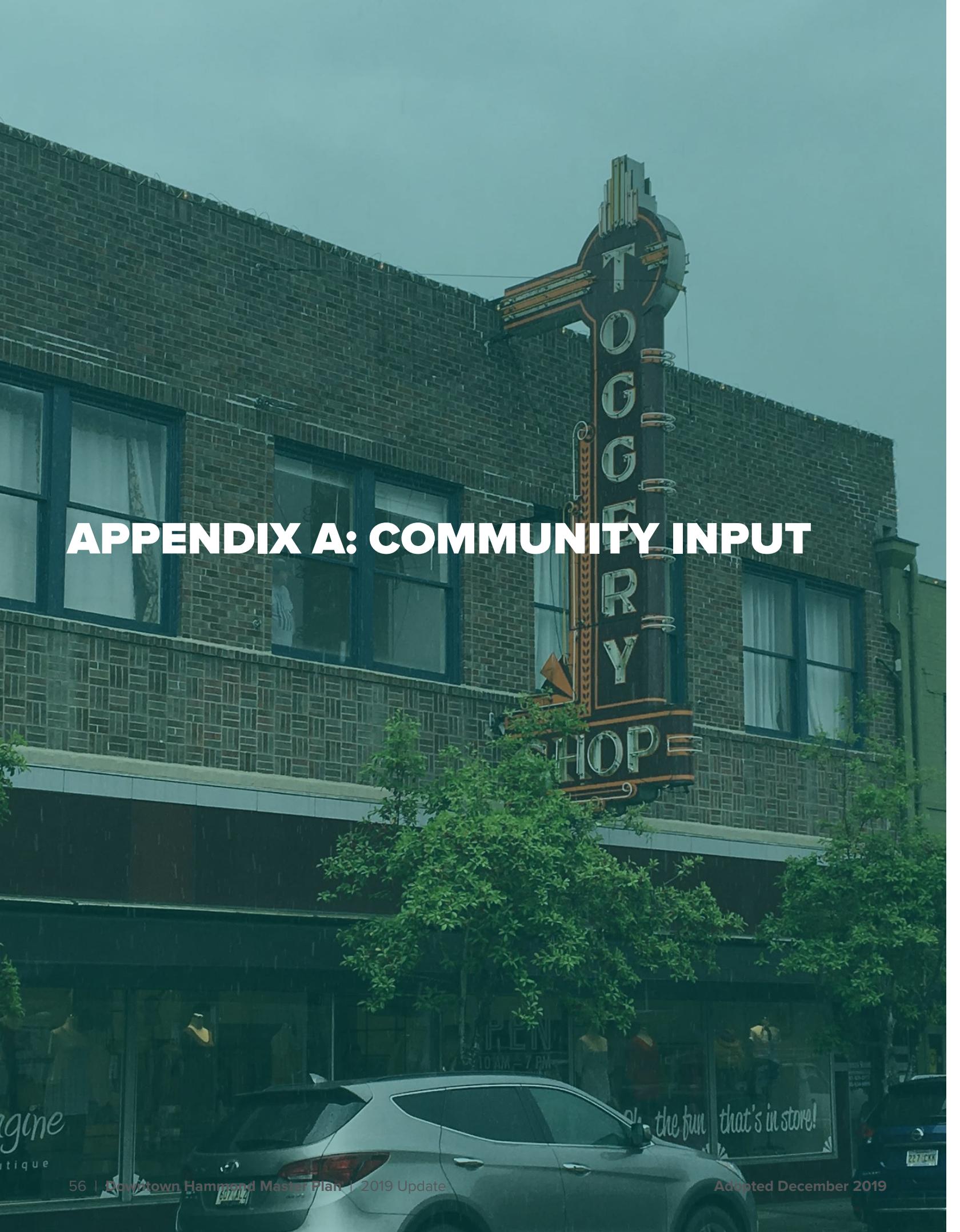
Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
6. Actively manage parking and develop a parking implementation plan	Procure study of: All public parking utilization for 24 hour periods during multiple times of year and special events; Recommendation of specific time intervals for on-street short-term parking; Quantify number of needed spaces to accommodate future demand	2020	Less than \$100,000	Moderate	DDD general fund	DDD	Streets Department
	Procure design and construction of additional surface parking lots at target sites	As recommended by parking study	Up to \$150,000	Moderate	DDD bond financing backed by ad valorem tax revenue; City capital funds	City of Hammond	DDD
	Amend municipal code to permit City enforcement of short-term, curbside parking on select streets and establishing violation fees	2021	No cost	Moderate	N/A	Hammond City Council and Mayor	DDD; Streets Department
	Install short-term parking signage; deploy enforcement staff; and provide 30-day education period in which warnings are issued instead of fees for violations	2022	Enforcement: \$50,000 per year	Moderate	City operating funds; Dedication of revenue from violations	City of Hammond	DDD
	Conduct regular utilization observations biannually to assess changes in demand of parking	2022-2030	\$10,000 per year	Moderate	DDD general fund	DDD	Streets Department
	Encourage construction of structured parking garage at Coleman/ Railroad site as part of a mixed-use development (See Strategy 7) and form partnership to permit public parking access	2020	\$20,000-\$30,000 per parking space	Moderate	Private financing	DDD	

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
7. Encourage construction of a grocery store	Aid property owner in recruitment of developer experienced with mixed-use development, including design and financing	2020	No cost	High	N/A	DDD	Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation, Louisiana Economic Development
8. Promote infill mixed use development	Provide incentives for owners of vacant properties to make them available for public benefit	2020-2030	Not calculated; depends on the City's determination of appropriate levels of incentives to encourage the use of vacant land	Moderate		City of Hammond	DDD
	Connect property owners to financial resources for redevelopment	2020-2030	No cost	Moderate	New Market Tax Credits USDA Rural Business Development Grants USDA Business & Industry Loan Guarantees Restoration Tax Abatement Historic Tax Credits	DDD	
	Incentivize downtown living by providing or connecting future homeowners with grants that assist with closing costs or down payments	2020-2030	Up to \$10,000 per recipient, depending on percentage covered by the assistance	Moderate	CDBG grants	DDD	
	Work with the City to amend the zoning code to permit and encourage a variety of housing types, from single-family homes to multifamily apartments	2022	No cost - policy change	Moderate		City of Hammond	DDD

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
9. Attract diverse businesses	Connect new and existing business owners to the District's funding opportunities	2020-2030	DDD revolving loan fund	High	DDD established incentives	DDD	City of Hammond, Louisiana Economic Development, SELU, Louisiana Small Business Development Center
10. Expand the district	Consult with property owners in expansion area through hosted information sessions, direct mailings, and collaboration with offices of Council District 1 and 2	2021	No cost	High	N/A	DDD	City of Hammond
	Pursue state legislation to codify expansion of the District boundaries	2022	No cost	Moderate	N/A	DDD	State legislators
	Hold public referendum among property owners within the District boundaries	2023	No cost	Low	N/A	DDD	City of Hammond, Secretary of State
11. Enhance connectivity to SLU	Enhance the physical connection between Downtown Hammond and SLU through a bike and pedestrian path	2022	\$150,000 - \$250,000	Moderate	Transportation Alternatives Program	City of Hammond	DDD, SLU, Chamber of Commerce
	Route the Homecoming parade through Downtown Hammond	Short	No cost	Moderate	N/A	SLU	DDD; City of Hammond
	Increase SLU branding throughout the District	Short	Variable	Moderate	N/A	DDD, SLU	City of Hammond

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
12. Foster the arts through cultural activities	Encourage businesses to incorporate local art into marketing and branding through workshops that showcase portfolios of local artists and highlight successful collaborations	2020-2030	\$300 per workshop	Moderate	Grants	DDD	HRAC
	Commission work for marketing materials from student artists	2020-2030	Variable	Moderate	Grants, operating expenses	DDD	Department of Visual Art + Design at Southeastern Louisiana University
	Explore the creation of live-work units	2020-2030	No cost	Moderate	Philanthropic grants LIHTC Historic Preservation Tax Credits Arts-related state and federal grants	DDD	City of Hammond; HRAC
	Create a public art grant program for public art in third places, such as plazas and parks and to install public murals	2020-2030	Variable	High	Grants	DDD	HRAC; City of Hammond
	Work with property owners to obtain permission to use vacant lots and empty storefronts to showcase art and museum displays	2020-2030	No cost	High	N/A	DDD	HRAC
	Install artistic streetscape elements, including benches, signage, crosswalks, and electrical boxes	2020-2030	Variable	Moderate	Grants	City of Hammond	DDD; HRAC

Strategy	Actions	Time-frame	Cost	Priority	Potential funding sources	Responsible Entity	Partner Entities
13. Commemorate and celebrate Hammond's history.	Procure a software design firm to develop an interactive walking tour smart phone application	2021	Less than \$40,000	Low	DDD general fund	DDD	Hammond Historic District, Southeastern Louisiana University
	Establish a museum of Hammond's history	2025	unknown	Moderate	Louisiana Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism	DDD	Hammond Historic District; Southeastern Louisiana University
14. Improve and maintain streetscape	Plant street trees at regular intervals along street segments designated on page 43	2021	\$100,000-\$200,000	Moderate	DDD general fund	DDD	City of Hammond, Historic District
15. Build the Tangipahoa rail-trail	Conduct Stage 0 feasibility study compliant with DOTD procedures to evaluate trail design alternatives	2021	Less than \$100,000	Moderate	FHWA funds allocated through the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission; Local match provided by local tax revenue	City of Hammond Streets Department	DDD; RPC; DOTD; CN Railroad
	Obtain state and federal grant funds	2022	No cost	Moderate	N/A	City of Hammond Streets Department	DDD; RPC; DOTD; FHWA
	Procure contractors to perform environmental impact assessments; schematic designs; construction documentation; and construction	2024	\$1 million to \$5 million	Moderate	FHWA funds allocated through the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission; Local match provided by local tax revenue; Recreational Trail grant program	City of Hammond Streets Department	DDD; RPC; DOTD; FHWA



APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY INPUT

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY INPUT

An extensive and comprehensive engagement strategy was completed for this project. It included traditional public meetings and targeted outreach to reach business owners. These activities are detailed on the following pages. Engagement was designed to build off previous planning efforts and look towards implementation.

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
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Task 1: Project Management

4.25

Master Plan
Update Kickoff

Task 2: Public Engagement

5.22

Stakeholder
Focus Groups

June-July

Community
Priorities
Survey

7.13

Downtown
Community
Workshop

9.26

Master Plan
Open House

Task 3: Needs Assessment

Task 4: Master Plan Development

9.19

DDD Design
Committee
Presentation

Stakeholder Focus Groups

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Group 1: Business Retention and District Development

Increasing Foot Traffic through Effective Marketing

Attendees discussed strategies to increase foot traffic to Downtown businesses:

- Marketing to Southeastern students and parents
- Targeted billboard campaigns -- both for the region and locally
- Organize businesses to refer customers to one another
- Conduct online marketing and training for businesses on Yelp, Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms
- Connect more businesses to SLU's Louisiana Small Business Development Center for trainings and classes

Preserving and Highlighting Historic Aspects of Downtown Hammond

Participants of the meeting underscored the importance of highlighting the historic aspects of Downtown and brought up potential strategies to showcase them:

- Plaques to demarcate historic buildings
- Tours of historic homes in the area
- An app that scans buildings in the DDD to retrieve historical information on the building

Signature Destinations

Downtown as a destination may require it to have a signature attractor, which was discussed by those at the meeting:

- Stakeholders in attendance acknowledged that Downtown Hammond does not have a single signature destination, but also pointed to the numerous dining options in the area
- Columbia Theater is an attractor, but programming is sparse during the day
- The Pavilion will be a place where people can gather
- A downtown Gnarly Barley taproom would likely be a popular draw
- Not enough retail shopping, museums, or entertainment; need to recruit more diverse businesses

Events as Attractors to Downtown Hammond

Participants of the meeting discussed the need to have a lineup of interesting events to make Hammond a destination for both local and regional visitors:

- Hot August Night is one of the biggest events and attractors to Hammond
 - » Many businesses want growth for the whole Downtown through Hot August Night, even if the event isn't beneficial for personal business
 - » Need more volunteers: the City/Lacy has a huge list of volunteers she can share; the Chamber would be happy to pitch in as well; can incentivize Greek organizations and high school organizations to volunteer
- Potential for Hammond Heritage Festival with a poster contest
- More events at the Pavilion, Cate Square, and Columbia Theater
- Should have a First Friday or music/art walk

Getting to, from, and around Downtown Hammond

- Attendees discussed several ways to enhance access to and within Downtown:
- Complete streets concept is key to enhance walkability
 - » DDD funds and City capital needs to be used to address the pedestrian experience
 - » 3 or 4 dangerous intersections that need to be addressed
 - » There are intersections where pedestrians are the problem; they jump out
- Lion Tracks, the SLU shuttle, can be used to bring more people to Downtown
- Use of the Hammond Train Depot/Chamber Offices to connect Downtown Hammond and Southeastern Louisiana University
 - » The Chamber is open to revitalize the plots of land to the north and south of the Depot and provide space for bike sharing
- Increasing the presence of transportation network (ride-hailing) companies
 - » Uber has entered the market by emphasizing Uber Eats, but right now they don't have a lot of drivers for Uber rides
 - » Potentially attract Uber drivers by giving them a discount

Group 2: Downtown Design

Public Art

The group discussed enhancing the area's character through art in communal areas:

- Public art says a lot about community and perception of community
- Potential locations for public art:
 - » Roundabouts at interstate
 - » Railroad and pedestrian crossings with public art
 - » Art alleys
 - » Zemurray Park water tower
 - » Children's Discovery Center
 - » Parking lots
 - » Wayfinding signs
- Potential programs and sources of public art:
 - » Students could do it as a project
 - » Community college also does welding
 - » Applying for NEA grant
 - » Partnership with chamber of commerce
- Murals in Downtown Hammond
 - » Could showcase Hammond history
 - » Young people want a mural they can take a picture in front of to post on Instagram

Wayfinding

Wayfinding was discussed as a way to guide visitors to and around the DDD while also giving it a unique visual identity:

- Special street signs and banners in the DDD
- Signs and banners can cause visual clutter
 - » People can't find stop signs or other signs
- Maintenance of signs is a challenge
 - » Damage, theft, vandalism, cleaning

Building design and maintenance

The group discussed the need for property owners to take part in achieving and maintaining a visually attractive downtown:

- Unmaintained buildings are a problem
- Enforce the code
- Have property owners register with realtor or with DDD so they know when and how to market it

Trash pickup

Attendees discussed the growing problem of trash management in an active and growing downtown:

- Trash pickup is 7 days a week (regardless of holidays)
- Standard trash cans aren't adequate to handle residents' trash
 - » No dumpster for residents in downtown core
- Should businesses pay for trash collection? Or should DDD pay a third party to pick up trash?
 - » If there's a separate trash system: potential for trash cans to become art pieces because they don't need to hold so much trash
 - » Certain businesses are going to generate more trash and those businesses who don't generate trash might oppose increasing trash pickup
- Instead of businesses having trash cans they roll out, they can use street trash cans if there's more pickup
- Some residents leave trash bins out in the streets; need enforcement
- No rear, no alley for businesses to keep trash for a lot of businesses
- What have other downtown associations done to solve the trash problem?
 - » What are key locations for dumpsters?
 - » Accessible and shielded (landscaping or gate)
 - » Who will maintain the dumpster location if multiple businesses are using one?

Sidewalk cafes

Stakeholders agreed that sidewalk cafes can create a vibrant public realm, but there were concerns regarding ADA accessibility and education of businesses around regulations:

- Planning and Zoning: want to promote people being on sidewalks
- DDD needs to educate business owners on the rules of having sidewalk cafes
 - » Need to educate business owners on regulation (especially ADA regulations) on what's allowable and that it's not that the City is picking on them
- Parklet as cafe seating can allow businesses with narrow sidewalks to have sidewalk cafes
 - » But would require the loss of some parking space

Biking & Scooters

There was a general appetite for greater amounts of biking in Downtown Hammond, but participants agreed that bike infrastructure needs to be improved:

- Bike pedestrian plan is being implemented
 - » Doesn't address core of Downtown
- Spaces north and south of Depot could be place for bikes to be parked
- Downtown needs bike racks
- Are scooters feasible in Hammond?

Coordination

Attendees expressed a desire for increased cooperation and communication among stakeholders:

- Increased communication between the DDD, HHDC, and Planning & Zoning
- Readily available contact information of property owners

Group 3: Downtown as a Destination

Hotel

The group discussed the need for a hotel to accommodate and attract visitors to Downtown:

- The Southern in Covington could be a model
- Potential for a wedding venue that does not exist now
- Bed and breakfasts are losing business to Airbnbs; there are currently no ordinances on short-term rentals

Signature Destinations

Stakeholders felt that Hammond has some signature destinations that could be better utilized and connected to the core of Downtown Hammond:

- Downtown is so close to SLU it should market the SLU Lions the way Baton Rouge is associated with the LSU Tigers and use more green and gold
- People come for the dining, but there isn't a diversity of businesses to make people stay after their meal
- The railroad depot could be better marketed as a signature landmark
 - » It is one of two railroad stops in the state
 - » The DDD and the Chamber could host a train-themed art competition to promote both the depot and local art
 - » People come to Hammond to ride the train, but they skip Downtown for the most part
- Downtown Hammond could host a convention space along with the hotel, maybe along Cypress Street

Culture and lifestyle

Attendees pointed to the need for Downtown Hammond to establish an identity the way New Orleans is associated with music and Lafayette is associated with Cajun culture. Many pointed to arts and food as a potential catalyst:

- Hammond Regional Arts Center has seen increased foot traffic and membership in the last two years
 - » Featuring local emerging artists
- Brews Arts Festival pairs local breweries with local restaurants using local ingredients and has a regional appeal
- Walkability and bikeability can be a selling point for the lifestyle in Hammond
 - » Need to enhance safety, lighting, and sidewalks
 - » Bikeshare will help

Group 4: Downtown Culture and Living

Walkability

Residents and other stakeholders highlighted the walkability of Downtown but also noted points for improvement:

- The neighborhoods surrounding Downtown is easily walkable to and from the core of Downtown
- Sidewalks in Downtown are mostly fine, but surrounding residential areas have problematic sidewalks
- Some sidewalk cafes are blocking strollers and wheelchairs

Branding and culture

Attendees generally agreed that living in Downtown Hammond has appeal, especially given its programming:

- Downtown living should be branded as something to aspire to
- Playing the Staircase is building towards becoming a signature event
- Hammond could have a stronger music culture
- HRAC has a mezzanine that displays artwork from emerging artists and students

Livability

Stakeholders discussed existing destinations and the need to provide more amenities for residents:

- Residents in the area can walk to most things they need or want: dinner, ice cream, civic involvement, farmers market
- Downtown is missing a grocery store and a walk-in clinic
 - » Property owners are not interested in a grocery store
 - » Rouses and Albertsons deliver, and Target and Walmart have grocery pickup
- DDD is working on a new ordinance for loading by businesses to prevent traffic
 - » This will be important with a grocery store, which might cause traffic
- Some of the college-aged visitors leave trash in the streets
 - » The City has done a good job of addressing litter
 - » Some trash cans are overflowing

Quality of existing housing

Attendees focused on rental housing and the opportunities for student housing:

- Some rental housing is not as well maintained
- DDD and the City should enforce code to address homes that are not well maintained
- More and more students are beginning to live around Downtown due to its proximity to SLU
- Many homeowners don't know about DDD benefits for residents, like tax credits they can use

Housing development

Stakeholders noted the mix of housing types that are or could be developed in the area:

- Lenders are open to financing
- Mixed use housing with retail would be attractive
 - » People want to be in condo living, walk to everything
 - » Aging households also want to be able to walk and downsize
- Don't have condos for sale
 - » Potentially developing behind steakhouse
- There's a demand for it, there's the zoning for it, lenders are open to it
 - » Need developers and investors who want to do this
 - » Maybe bring in outside investors because the local ones are sitting on their property

Community Priorities Survey

Administered June - July, 2019

The DDD administered a survey to capture key concerns and priorities for change in Downtown from a broad cross-section of community members. Survey questions will be designed to gain a greater understanding of the needs of various Hammond Downtown stakeholders.

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements about Downtown Hammond.

Results based on weighted average; higher weighted average indicates higher level of agreement.



Going forward, how important is it for Downtown Hammond to focus on the following priorities?

Results based on weighted average; higher weighted average indicates higher priority.

1. Build on vacant or underused land and rehabilitate vacant buildings (2.29)
2. Reduce crime and improve public safety, such as through police foot patrols or improved lighting (2.22)
3. Make it easier and safer to bike to or around downtown (2.14)
4. Attract a greater variety of retailers, services and dining options (2.10)
5. Improve walking conditions, such as by enhancing sidewalks, street furniture, trees and landscaping (2.06)
6. Host more interesting events (1.99)
7. Make it easier to find convenient parking (1.86)
8. Improve sanitation and litter clean-up (1.73)
9. Make it easier to get to and from surrounding destinations, like Zemurray Park and Southeastern(1.68)
10. Expand the Downtown Development District to invest in improvements in neighborhoods just outside downtown (1.62)
11. Install more public art, like murals, sculptures and light installations (1.57)
12. Add more amenities and enhancements to Cate Square Park (1.55)
13. Provide more information, like branded wayfinding signs and maps (1.44)
14. Expand housing options by building more condos, apartments and townhomes (0.90)

What is your favorite thing about Downtown Hammond?

Theme: Walkability and close proximity to activities, businesses, and events

- “The lively entertainment scene. I enjoy being able to go out to dinner, engage in artwork, listen to live music, or see a play all within walking distance.”
- “That things are so easy to get [to] and in [close] proximity”
- “The convenience of walking from restaurants to clubs and shops. Always something going on downtown.”
- “The ability to walk from place to place in a short period of time.”
- “I live in the Iowa Addition and I love being within walking distance to downtown and [all] that it has to offer: coffee shops, good restaurants, farmers market, post office, and parks.”
- “Beautiful place to walk and dine.”

Theme: Variety of downtown amenities, activities, and events

- “It has a decent variety of establishments and they have their own “flavor” and personality. I’d like to see that continue as new things come in. Avoid chains, and keep owners local.”
- “Variety of food options and ability to walk”
- “density of things to do; easy to bike around; parks; skatepark;”
- “Love the shops, restaurants, and activities such as Hot August Night, etc..”
- “I am a weekly vendor at the Farmers Market. It’s the highlight of my week.”
- “I love the charm of downtown and appreciate that almost all businesses are locally owned.”

Theme: Architecture and historic, small, old town feel

- “The aesthetic charm of the old buildings and Downtown’s cohesive appearance (aka not a lot of modern-looking buildings).”
- “Ambiance of the historic aspects and the ease of access”
- “It’s uniqueness. I’m not originally from the area...so maybe I appreciate the history and architecture of Downtown Hammond...”
- “Historic charm and vibrancy! There is so much to do!”
- “The buildings from the early 1900’s and every business’s enthusiasm for keeping the memories alive.”
- “The restaurants and shopping. Also, the old architecture is so beautiful and interesting.”

What kind of businesses and attractions would you like to see open downtown?

Theme: Grocery store and health food store

- “More variety in restaurants with more vegetarian options”
- “An upscale grocery store in the old Guy’s Food Market that sells local meats, produce, dairy, every day essentials, etc. An upscale grocery store that would be family friendly and clean.”
- “A fresh market, commercial kitchen rental, office share co-ops, things that make it easy for young people on a budget to start and run businesses”
- “...This wouldn’t be able to be in actual central downtown but a Costco, Whole Foods, or Trader Joe’s would be amazing and save me from driving to Baton Rouge or Mandeville.”
- “Any type of business offering organic goods.”
- “GROCERY STORE!!!!!! And a boutique hotel in the core.”

Theme: Variety in retail shops

- “More variety of retail shops such as bookstores and men’s clothing. Also, businesses that offer higher paying jobs.”
- “Independent (non-chain): coffee houses, book stores, men’s clothing retailers, bakeries and specialty food stores.”
- “More variety in stores--there are a lot of women’s boutiques”
- “Local art gallery spaces”
- “Art studio, I loved the yarn shop that was there at one time.”
- “More retail / grocery store easy to get to / entertainment other than bars and restaurants / a music & food venue like we used to have (Blues & Bar-B-Que) / crafts & art sales and displays”

Theme: Music event space/venue

- “Live original music venues. The Staircase series is a great start, but we need a dedicated venue for original acts.”
- “A place that has live music. we have NO venues for that. no place for dancing either...”
- “More music. More community event. Week day farmers market”
- “A TV station, concert hall, live bands, open preaching, open forum, and hotels.”
- “A bookstore and more live music venues.”
- “An indoor space large enough to host live bands and concerts.”

Theme: Sports/Outdoor activities venue

- “Gaming such as arcades or board game shops, something to attract young adults.”
- “Makerspace, arcade or some physical type gaming, art house cinema, markets”
- “...A “Tchoup Yard” type bar, which would be a bar that is mostly outdoor and offers outdoor yard games i.e. giant jenga, corn hole. An upscale bowling alley. One that is clean and offers live music. Similar to the Rock-N-Bowl establishments. I could see this being successful at a place like the old Crossfit building across from Cate Street Seafood Station...”
- “Date night activities like mini golf, axe throwing, a small old fashioned movie theater.”
- “...Sports/activity based businesses (like boxing, skating, something like Artigues’ thing); a REAL arcade or gaming center...”
- “More activity based businesses. Not just bars and restaurants. Places where you can actually go do something fun besides drink or eat”

Theme: Bike trails and community spaces

- “I think that a bike trail from Ponchatoula to Hammond along the tracks would be a great attraction”
- “I would like to see the following downtown...bike trails/ paths throughout downtown connecting neighborhoods to downtown and each other, and more community spaces like community gardens”.
- “Rock climbing/ outdoor gear/ similar to the Backpacker in BR.Juvenile outreach/ community garden/ music and dance studio.”
- “Bike paths, increased tech presence, more regional HQ to compliment the logistics hubs we have in the surrounding region along the interstates and highways”

What do you think could be improved in Downtown Hammond?

Theme: Infrastructure (sidewalks, parking, street furniture)

- “Shade on sidewalks. It gets really hot walking around downtown. Would love to see the feel and energy on W Thomas spread to surrounding streets. The only one you really want to walk is W Thomas and it would be nice to have more!”
- “Definitely sidewalks to and from downtown. Too many lawyers offices taking up good real estate.”
- “Sewage, drainage, lighting, and maintenance in back alley’s.”
- “Require businesses to keep their property clean and in good repair. Well maintained housing for apartments or condos”
- “Signage and maps - the exiting maps are horrible and should be replaced immediately”
- “Lots and vacant buildings remodeled, blighted decaying structures torn down. Grants for improvement. More fundraisers, more wine walks, niche collective get-togethers.”

Theme: Connectivity (biking, SLU)

- “Connectivity. Some places seem less “important” than others and that inconsistency makes certain properties/areas less appealing. Can’t get into core easily except by car.”
- “We need bike paths and sidewalks to connect surrounding communities with downtown.”
- “Sidewalks, walking paths and designated biking paths. Also, easier walking access to downtown from nearby neighborhoods.”
- “The skatepark and Zemurray Park could be renovated and reinvigorated and tied to the rest of the DDD.”
- “It’s so incredible, it’s hard to envision what would improve it. I could see it being a bit more bike-friendly. Also, a pet-friendly area of the park - a dog park specifically. One of the many things about other downtowns is the pet-friendly nature of the community. I’d love to see more pet-encouraging places to eat & experience. But a dog park is so critical!
- “Safety, street conditions, signage, lighting, expanding the walkable core into a bikeable core with dedicated bike paths.”

Theme: Events/community involvement

- “More social events, i.e., First Friday music in Cate Square, etc.”
- “A multi-use pavilion for the Farmer’s Market and other downtown events. Also, sprucing up the facades of existing buildings to look newer.”
- “Help with funding to bring better performances to the Columbia”
- “Better marketing of downtown events, improvements to the farmers’ market, improvements to the skate park”
- “More events at Cate Square Park. Live after 5 in Cate Square Park in the fall (Sept & Oct) and the spring (March & April) live music from 5-7pm.Three annual tournaments hosted by the city of Hammond hosted at Cate Square Park. September - Kickball January - Spikeball June - Volleyball.”
- “...Create more opportunities for community to come together - community events, smaller low-cost block parties, community gardens, etc. Reach out to surrounding neighborhoods Iowa Addition, north of E Church Street, and behind Zemurray Park. Iowa Addition has improved over the years, but other neighborhoods have been largely neglected. They are part of the Downtown community too and we will only benefit as a city by including them!”

Please share any additional thoughts you have regarding the future of Downtown Hammond.

Theme: Improvement and variety of types of businesses and events

- “I would love for Guy’s to reopen as a local grocery store again.”
- “I grew up in New Orleans. There was always “music in the square” on Thursdays or Fridays. Kid friendly with vendors setting up booths where you could get food, drink (including alcohol). Always well attended and could be after work... would bring people downtown with the right bands. Also suggest looking at the quaint towns in Europe with regards to the fountains, benches, flowers/plants, outdoor dining, etc. These towns provide a place for people to gather. May be unrealistic, but would be incredible to move parking and create the square atmosphere in the parking lot in the center of town by the DDD building. My vision is something like the square in Innsbruck, Austria (Golden Roof).”
- “There needs to be a big draw for people, but with that comes the need for more parking. Personally, I’d like to see the art crowd/scene thrive more. Real art, not just landscapes and boat scenery. I’d like the Columbia to have more than just kids shows. Actually operate it as a movie theater when there aren’t shows going on. Family friendly is fine, but there needs to be more for adults to do besides eat. Excited for the proposed additions to the Farmer’s Market.”
- “I hope someone invests in the old Guy’s building. It would be nice to have a communal area where anyone can come eat their lunch and not be exposed to the elements.”
- “I love downtown Hammond. Great place to walk through but would love to see either mini golf, bowling, or something to that nature that is kid friendly and makes downtown that much more family friendly and an attractive place to spend lots of time.”
- “More focus on and promotion of businesses. Special events like Hot August and Art Wine Stroll do NOT help most business’s sales. Surrounding neighborhoods like Adams Lily should be incorporated into the Historic district because people in surrounding neighborhoods are more likely to support and utilize downtown and ensure the historic fabric of the area is protected.”

Theme: Public engagement and safety

- “I loved the bike rack contest, I never saw anything further. I wish there was a ghost of Hammond tour with old cars and old horse drawn buggies. Great job on getting major films here!!!”
- “The city has engaged many professionals to place the future of Hammond in a good place. Implementation and enforcement of the plans that have been established needs to take place. Buy in and education of those who do implementation and enforcement should be improved.”
- “Obviously the original music scene is my biggest priority, but I do think Hammond’s downtown is trending upward. The restaurants have been steadily improving and growing in number/diversity. I lived near Cate Square Park for years and I think the park is beautiful, however it is lacking in amenities. Some type of concert series with an emphasis on original music would be nice to see at the park. Affordable housing near downtown would be a great addition to the area. The Smith properties buildings for students aren’t great and their tactics are borderline predatory. Obviously figuring out a way to get more higher paying jobs would be great and would keep recent SLU grads in the city.”
- “I think the 3/4 of a million dollars the DDD is planning on spending on a pavilion along the railroad tracks could be far, far better spent on promoting downtown Hammond as a destination and supporting downtown businesses (e.g. through televised commercial spots, renovation/improvement grants). Covington, which is actually smaller than Hammond, has successfully hosted the Three Rivers Art Festival for years (and under tents I might add); there is no reason to think Hammond couldn’t do something similar.”
- “I would love to see the downtown area become more artsy, with public art, murals sculpture, etc. More music, yes. More variety of food and shops owned locally. We have some really great things going, and we should continue that. While I’ve always felt safe, I’ve had many friends who’ve experienced violent crime (mugged, beat up) in the downtown area, so the idea of policing on foot is a good one. And again, improving surrounding neighborhoods is fantastic, so long as it doesn’t push people out of affordable housing. They deserve better living, but not to be priced out of their homes.”
- “Parking/lighting and security will need to be addressed if downtown will continue to grow and improve.”

Downtown Community Workshop

Saturday, July 13, 2019

The DDD asked community members to prioritize needs and concepts based on the information presented to them. The workshop gave Downtown Hammond stakeholders the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities to provide input on Downtown’s future vision and solutions, and consider how changes in Downtown can influence larger goals, such as mobility, public health, safety, environment, and economic development.

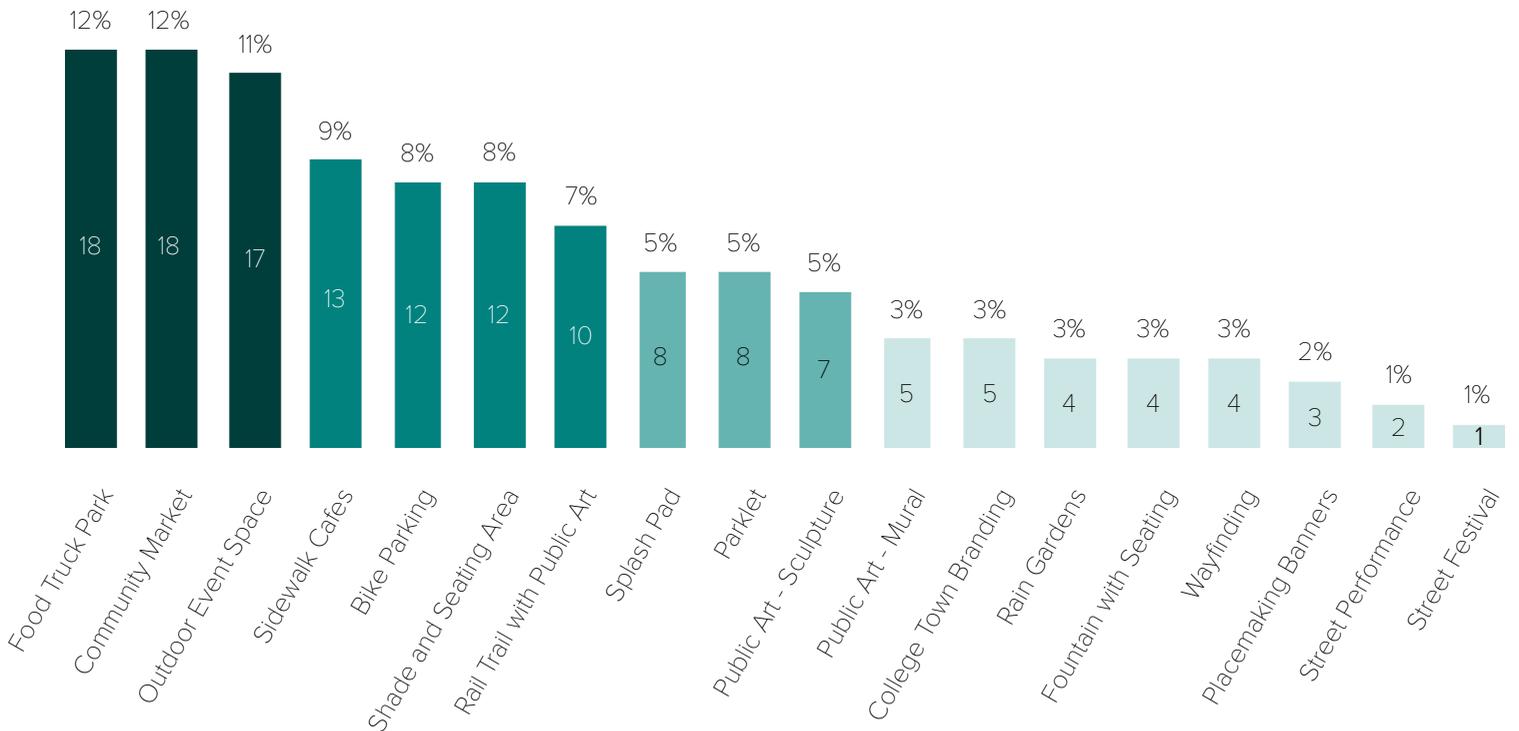
Activity: Precedents Board

For this activity, residents voted on inspiring examples of elements in downtown areas at a similar scale to Hammond. These downtown elements included rain gardens, shade and seating structures, public art, splash pads, and parklets. Residents placed up to six dot stickers on the elements they liked the best and left comments on post it notes to provide additional feedback on things they would like to see downtown.

The downtown elements with the most votes were:

- Food Truck Park
- Community Market
- Outdoor Event Space
- Sidewalk cafes
- Bike parking
- Shade and seating areas
- Rail trail with public art

Tally of Votes:



Residents left general feedback on the vision board related to the following themes:

Walking and Biking:

- Bike rentals (for trails and other uses)
- Improve bike access from south of DDD
- More bike racks
- Traffic calming elements because cars drive too fast

Art/Culture

- Promote and engage with history (education/maps/placemaking)
- encourage appreciation for Hammond
- Local artist program
- Connect to regional arts center for student and community exhibits
- Restore/improve murals
- Blank wall by dog park for art projects
- Give each for schools/students to paint
- Bring back “Downtown Alive” event

Parks/trails:

- Add botanical gardens
- Rail trail
- Possible location: consider adding a rail trail to the Greater Hammond Chamber property that links southeastern to downtown
- Cover playground and Cate Square Park with shade
- Cate Square pavilion: enlarge and add lighting
- Pavilion
- Dog Park

Other:

- Charging stations for cell phones
- Need an actual sports bar
- Permeable paving around tree wells, parking lots, etc
- Food trucks don’t pay property taxes so some restaurant owners might not want them



Activity: Mobility Mapping

The purpose of this activity was to encourage attendees to consider the different ways people get to and from the District and move within it, and how streets should function to accommodate them.

Participants first placed yellow pins on a District map mounted on foam core to indicate their home or usual trip origins; red pins to indicate places they work,; and green pins to indicate where they shop, dine, and seek entertainment.

Project staff then helped attendees map their trips using yarn color-coded by their mode of travel: red for walking; purple for biking; blue for driving a car; and green for driving a motorcycle.

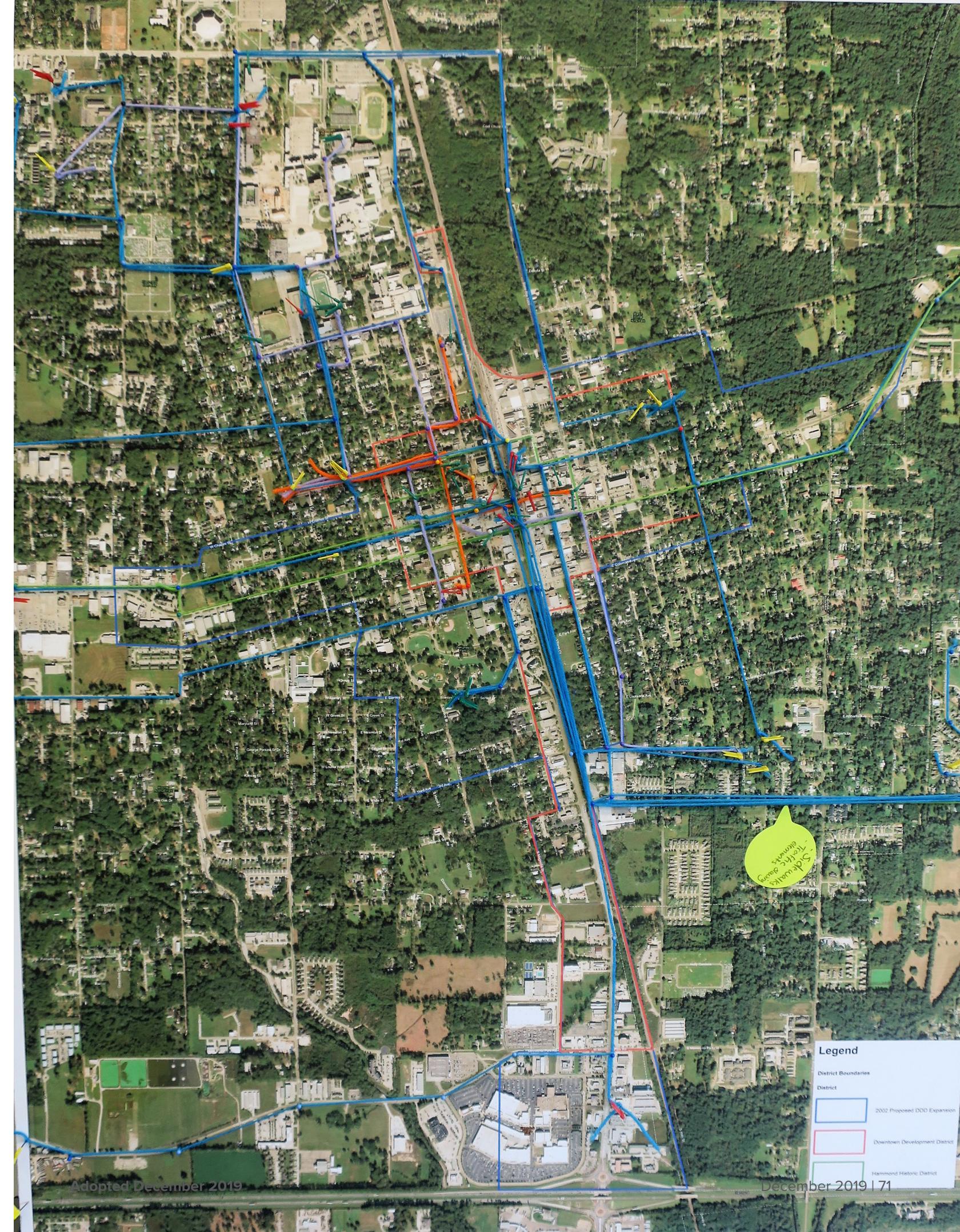
The resulting map (next page) reveals street segments where people's trips overlap, and illustrate the variety of different ways people travel on the same streets.

Railroad Avenue stands out as a central artery for people's movement throughout the District. Nearly all trips traveled along or crossed the avenue. The most frequently used streets to cross Railroad Avenue are Morris, Thomas and Charles Streets.

Areas with concentrations of destinations for work and for entertainment were Southeast Louisiana University - in particular, the football stadium - and the area of downtown bounded by Robert, Pine, Morris and Cherry Streets.



Right: Results of Mobility Mapping activity



Sidewalk
- Traffic design
- Sidewalk

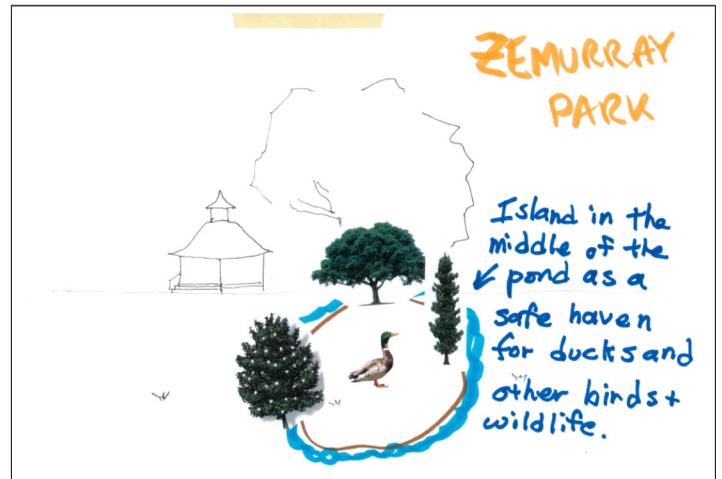
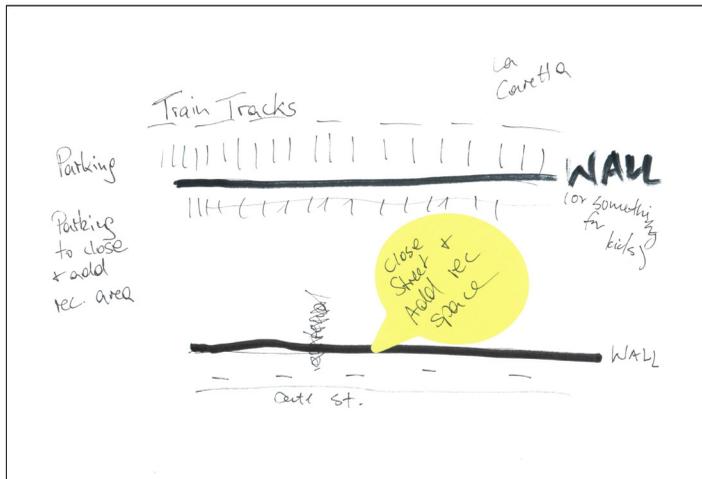
Legend

District Boundaries

- District
- 2002 Proposed DDO Expansion
- Downtown Development District
- Hammond Historic District

Activity: Collaging

This activity prompted attendees to imagine how to bring life to three types of spaces in the District: a prominent vacant lot, a park, and a street. Cutouts of features such as trees, street furniture, and people gathering and moving, were provided to spark ideas and consider how their ideas can fit into the landscape of potential public and private space improvements. A selection of collages are shown on this page.





Activity: I love/I want boards

This activity invited participants to name their favorite things about Downtown Hammond and what changes they would like to see. All responses are shown below, and select examples shown with their authors on the following page.

I love Downtown Hammond because...

- It is thriving and it is alive!
- Of the people and it's a safe city. We have a great mayor!
- Of the Farmers mkt!
- We are family
- Of the community and the ability to walk from place to place. Park + Play
- It has a park!!
- Heritage, architecture, mixed use (residential/ commercial)
- It is my home!
- Of the variety of businesses, events, and market
- The people and the good environment
- Art/music

I want Downtown Hammond to...

- Continue to improve
- Install electric vehicle chargers!!
- Replace lights out atop buildings
- Beautify Ponchatoula Creek with a park and bike trails
- Expand
- Pavilion with restrooms; HD sips and savory
- Improve the dog park and pet areas and events
- Embrace student arts and decorate the city with it...a good dog park would also be cool
- Have more fun family events!
- Encourage more outdoor live entertainment
- Have fewer vacant buildings and eye-sore buildings



Activity: Downtown Core Vision

For this activity, residents expressed their ideas and aspirations for downtown Hammond and changes they would like to see. They used Post-It notes to leave comments on a map of Hammond's downtown core. Residents' comments related to the following themes:

Improve Mobility and Connections between Destinations

- "Add rail trail w/ public art to Greater Hammond Chamber space at Railroad Avenue & Robert Street"
- "Improve connection with Southeastern" (rail trail)
- "Sidewalks at University Avenue and N. Cherry (state route 1065) going towards SLU"
- "Work with greater Hammond Chamber to improve link between Southeastern and Downtown. Great opportunity."
- "Rail trail with public art" (Railroad Avenue/Cate Street and Robert at Chamber location)
- Create dog-walking route between Southeastern and Zemurray Park
- "Pine Street connection between SLU and downtown"
- Sidewalks at University Avenue & N. Cherry Street going towards SLU
- Add rail trail w/ public art to Greater Hammond Chamber space at Railroad Avenue & Robert Street
- "Short term parking spaces"

Enhance the Public Realm

- "Gateways signs/banners" at:
 - » S. Spruce and W Morris
 - » Railroad and Coleman
 - » East Thomas and N. Chestnut
- "Sidewalk benches or rocking chairs"
- "Need rain retention pond here" (W. Roberts and N. General Pershing)
- "Pavilion" at Farmers Market
- "Build farmers market here!" (Farmers Market)

- "Gathering space dining/coffee between Cate Street and Parking lot"
- "Urban space/multi-use/parking+" (public parking lots)
- "Sidewalk benches or rocking chairs"
- "Don't forget about the rest" (southern end of District)

Improve Zemurray Park

- Needed improvements
 - » seating
 - » sanitation services/trashcans
 - » landscape maintenance
 - » security - lock gate at night
 - » water access/fountains
 - » Expand size
- "Move dog park. Bigger, non-sketchy area"
- "Dog park <3"
- "Owl habitat - There is a mated pair that have a nest in a tree behind bench on large dog side" (Zemurray Park)
- "Speed bumps! People fly around the back circle" (Zemurray Park)
- "Snowball stand for skate park kids"

Foster a Mix of New Land Uses and Activities

- "An outdoor arena for music events and other events"
- Drive up movie theatre (Cate and Robert)
- Real sports bar (not Buffalo Wild Wings)
- Features for young kids and teens @ Cate Sq. Park
- "Encourage more mixed-use development"
- "A grocery store downtown would be nice"
- "Hotel and conference center" at Regions Bank site
- "Develop into STEM space" (undeveloped parcel north of Cate Street)

Master Plan Open House

Thursday, September 26, 2019

The Open House concentrated on prioritizing concepts, and how to advance them. At this public event, the planning team and the DDD presented draft concepts and solicited feedback regarding the recommendations and findings, with the aim of reaching consensus on priority projects, policies and programs for the DDD to pursue. Attendees were asked to fill out a Strategy Prioritization Ballot, through which they indicated their top 10 priorities to be addressed by the DDD Master Plan Update.

Below are the results of the Strategy Prioritization Ballot:

1. **Neighborhood complete streets** that make it easier to bike around the surrounding neighborhoods
2. **Infill development** that encourages mixed uses
3. **Rail-trail** along Railroad Avenue from SLU to south of the Downtown Development District
4. **Intersection enhancements** that improve pedestrian crosswalks
5. Create a **Hammond Plaza** in the heart of downtown
6. **Boutique hotel** in downtown
7. Build physical and institutional **connections between SLU and downtown**
8. More **arts and cultural activities, stores, and events**
9. Plant **shade trees**
10. Develop a **signature gateway establishment** on a lot that is currently empty
11. Place more **street furnishings**
12. Place **historic markers** throughout the Downtown Development District
13. Update **wayfinding signage** in the Downtown Development District
14. Short-term on-street **parking**
15. Place **gateway markers** at the entrances of the Downtown Development District
16. **Enhanced transit** like a bus route through downtown
17. More **recreational activities, stores, and events**

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APPENDIX B: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Who Lives Downtown?

According to 2019 estimates, the DDD is home to 4% (about 783) of the city’s 20,389 residents. An additional 3,700 Hammond residents live within a quarter-mile of the District.¹ The population living within the DDD boundaries are largely reflective of the city as a whole, with 55% of residents in the District identifying as White and 40% identifying as Black.

Given the presence of Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) to the north of the District, a large proportion of residents, nearly 13%, are between the ages of 20 and 24.² This proportion is a percentage point lower than in the City of Hammond as a whole, where 14% of residents are in the age range.

The plurality of residents for both the DDD and the City of Hammond are children, many of them school-aged, between 0 and 19 years old.³ This indicates that there may be a high demand for family-oriented goods and services. At the same time, the DDD has a relatively high percentage of those in the 25 to 34 age range, requiring the District to balance the needs of both families and adult residents who are often categorized as Millennials.

17% of residents within a quarter-mile of the District—a typical 5-minute walking distance—are enrolled in college or a graduate or professional school, indicating that many students are choosing to live near and in Downtown.⁴ The

median household income for the DDD study area

1 Business Analyst. (2019). U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024.

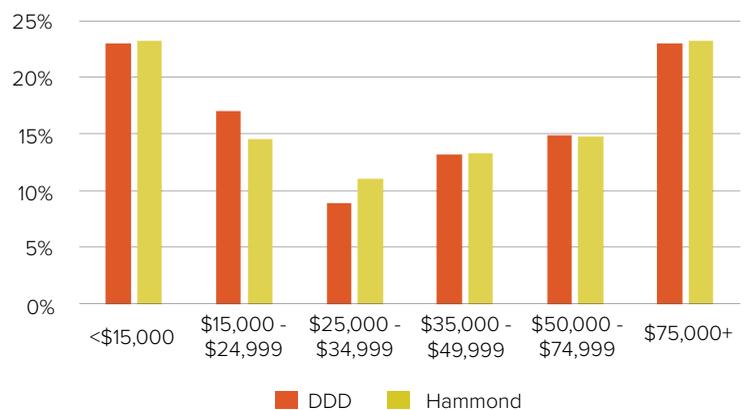
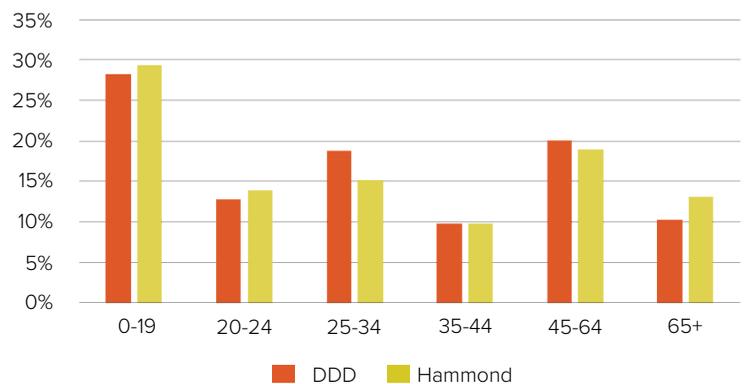
2 Business Analyst. (2019). U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023.

3 Ibid.

4 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 ACS Estimates. Accessed via ESRI Business Analyst on July 1, 2019.

is \$36,068, similar to the citywide median value of \$36,088.⁵

Projections show that the City’s population is expected to grow by about 850 residents and the Parish population to grow by over 8,000 by 2024.⁶



5 Business Analyst. (2019). U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023.

6 Business Analyst. (2019). U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024.

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

What are local economy's strengths?

With 352 businesses and a concentration of over 3,600 employees, the District is an economic hub of the City of Hammond and Tangipahoa Parish.¹

The large number of employees in the DDD compared to the residential population (783) reveals that the District has a large daytime population workers commuting from outside the area.²

Three industry sectors employ nearly half of all workers in the district: **restaurants and bars, government, and health care and social assistance**. As of 2017, Southeastern Louisiana University employed 1,401 people.³ Although located outside the District boundaries, its close proximity makes the university community an accessible market for downtown businesses.

Retailers and professional, science, and technical services comprise the greatest number of businesses within the District.⁴

In contrast, citywide, the health care and social assistance industry employs the highest number of workers - 6,122, or one of every four workers in the city.⁵ North Oaks Medical Center and CARE, Inc. employ 2,700 and 800 workers, respectively.⁶

Retailers make up about 17% of businesses and employs about 19% of all employees in the city.⁷

1 Esri and InfogroupEsri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2018. Esri 2018 Business Summary.

2 Ibid.

3 Southeastern Louisiana University, <http://www.southeastern.edu/about/general/>, accessed July 23, 2019.

4 Esri and InfogroupEsri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2018. Esri 2018 Business Summary.

5 Ibid.

6 Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation, <https://tedf.org/employers>, Accessed July 23, 2019.

7 Esri and InfogroupEsri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2018. Esri 2018 Business Summary..

District Employment and Businesses, by Industry, 2018

Industry	Employees	% of DDD	Businesses	% of DDD
Food Services & Drinking Places	747	20.7	34	9.7
Public Administration	707	19.5	40	11.4
Health Care & Social Assistance	324	9.0	25	7.1
Professional, Scientific and Technology Services	241	6.7	50	14.2
Finance & Insurance	231	6.4	31	8.8
Retail Trade	230	6.4	42	11.9
Educational Services	157	4.3	10	2.8
All other industries	980	27	120	34
Total	3,617		352	

Source: 2018 Infogroup, Inc.

City Employment and Businesses, by Industry, 2018

Industry	Employees	% of City	Businesses	% of City
Health Care & Social Assistance	6,122	24.8	232	14
Retail Trade	4,691	19.0	276	16.7
Professional, Scientific, Tech Services	3,341	13.6	139	8.4
Food Services & Drinking Places	2,801	11.4	132	8
Finance & Insurance	883	3.6	143	8.7
All other industries	6,799	27.6	730	44.2
Total	24,637		1,652	

Source: 2018 Infogroup, Inc.

What goods and services are in demand?

Esri's Retail MarketPlace database reports the total retail sales and resident purchasing demand within a given area, by retail sector.⁸ The chart on the next page demonstrates the sectors where sales exceed the demand of residents (negative values) and vice versa (positive values).

Food Services & Drinking Places (bars and restaurants), Health & Personal Care Stores, Gasoline Stations, and Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores each are attracting people who reside outside of the DDD to the area. Bars and restaurants drew over \$22 million in spending to the District in 2017. The size and strength of this sector bolster the District's identity as a place to dine and socialize.

Department Store and Grocery Store spending is weakest in the District, given the lack of these uses. Estimated annual retail sales of grocery stores within the DDD boundaries is **\$871,551**, while the retail potential is \$1,387,781, indicating DDD residents spend \$516,230 outside of the District on groceries.⁹ This represents untapped spending that existing or new businesses could capture by offering convenient access to fresh and packaged groceries within walking distance of Downtown.

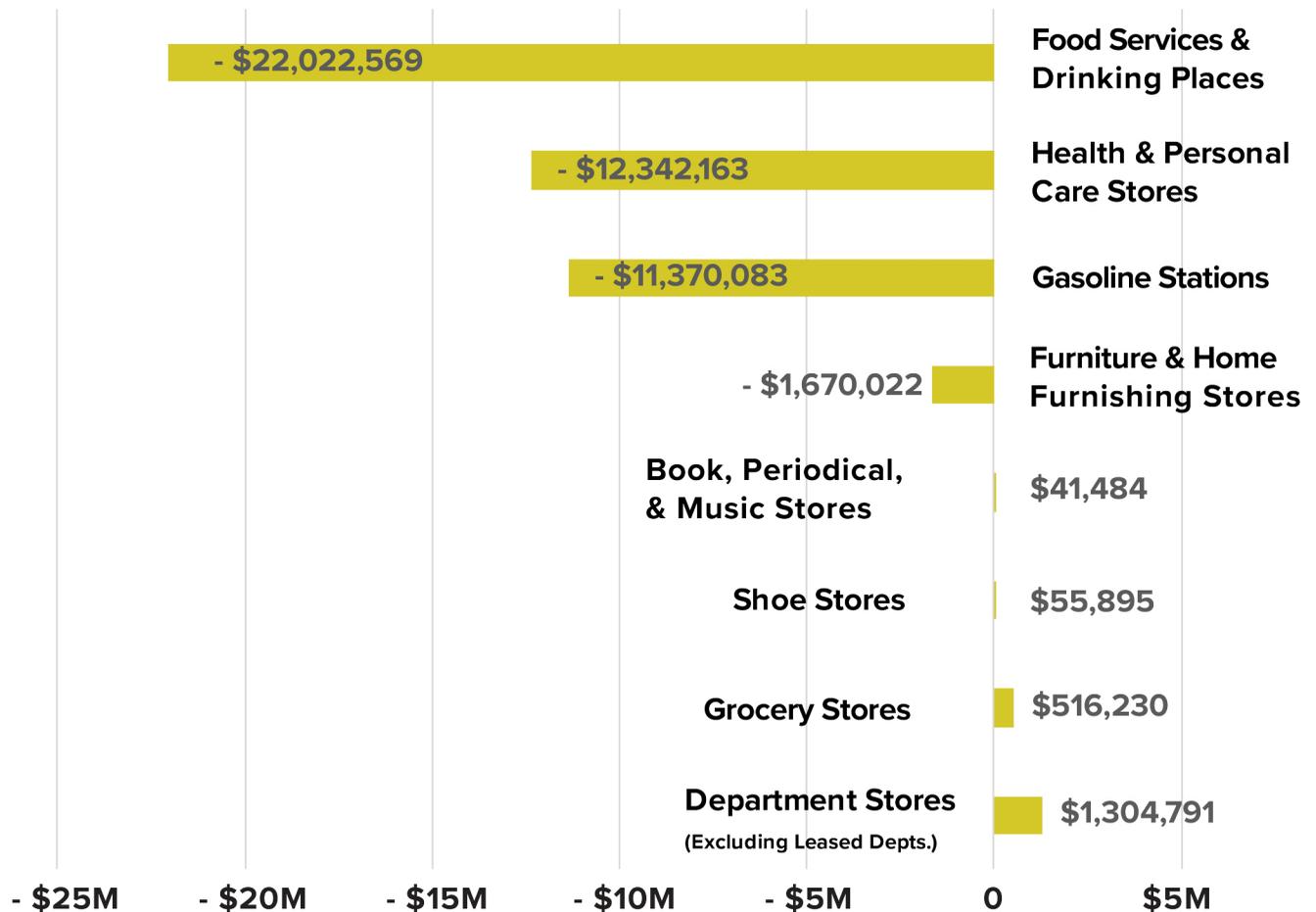
While Department Stores sales represent the greatest leakage of spending, the scale of this land use and typical parking requirements are inconsistent with available land in Downtown Hammond.

⁸ Esri. (n.d). Retail MarketPlace Data Note: Leakage/Surplus Factor. Accessed July 2019 at https://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/LeakageSurplusDataNote2014.pdf.

⁹ Esri and Infogroup. (2017 & 2018). Esri 2018 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

Unmet Demand for Retail Goods and Services, by Sector

Hammond DDD 2017 Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Group



Source: Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2018 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

Source: Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2018 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

Where is new development and redevelopment viable?

Active use of land and properties and minimal vacancy and blight are critical to the health and sustainability of the District. 85% of 160 community survey respondents said it was “essential” or “very important” to “Build on vacant or underused land and rehabilitate vacant buildings.”

In the last several decades, numerous vacant buildings and plots of land have returned to commerce. In recent years, several new mixed-use infill projects that fit the historic, walkable character of the District have developed (right). Attracting new residents and businesses to the district depends greatly on the capacity for the District to continue this pattern of infill development.

Property tax data were analyzed to identify tax parcels with low improvement (structure) assessments and high land values. Such properties hold strong potential for redevelopment. The map on the following page illustrates these parcels in light shades of orange. Darker shades of orange indicate parcels with high-value improvements relative to land value assessments.

Vacant land near the center of the District is particularly suitable for redevelopment. Of the handful of such parcels, large examples include lots at the intersections of South Magnolia and West Morris Streets, NW Railroad Avenue and West Coleman Street, and East Hanson and South Cypress Streets.

Development Potential



Hammond Downtown Development District

Parks

Building-to-Land Value Ratio

- 0 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 8
- 8 - 15
- 15+

.2 Miles N

Source: Tangipahoa Parish Assessor's Office.

What housing options are available?

Thriving mixed-use communities enjoy a balance of commerce and homes. High-quality establishments tend to serve areas with around-the-clock activity. Unlike most commercial centers in Louisiana, Downtown Hammond is also home to nearly 800 residents. However, the small number of residents relative to commuter workers means streets that are active with shoppers, diners and workers during rush periods are quiet at other times of the week.

Approximately 431 housing units are located in the District, including 105 owner-occupied homes and 226 rental units. Of these, 184 are single-family attached or detached or mobile homes, 41 are doubles, and 206 are in structures with three or more units.

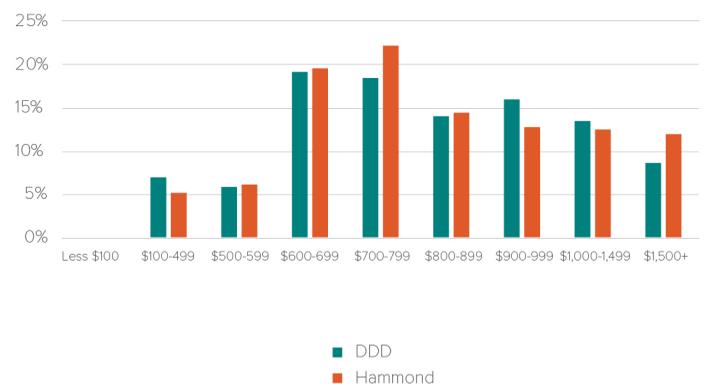
Home sale prices closer to Downtown, particularly in the Hyer-Cate Preservation District between Zemurray Park and South Louisiana University (SLU) are relatively strong, with many properties between \$115 and \$326 per square foot.¹⁰

A broader range of prices characterized home sales in the IOWA Addition neighborhood southeast of Downtown — many between \$5 and \$39 per square foot. Few sales have occurred within the core downtown area.¹¹

Apartment rents in the District generally align with rental properties throughout Hammond, reflecting a range of prices.¹²

Construction of new housing tends to be more expensive in downtown environments, due to higher land values, and so incentives such as tax abatements and expedited permitting are useful tools for spurring construction of new units.

GROSS RENT

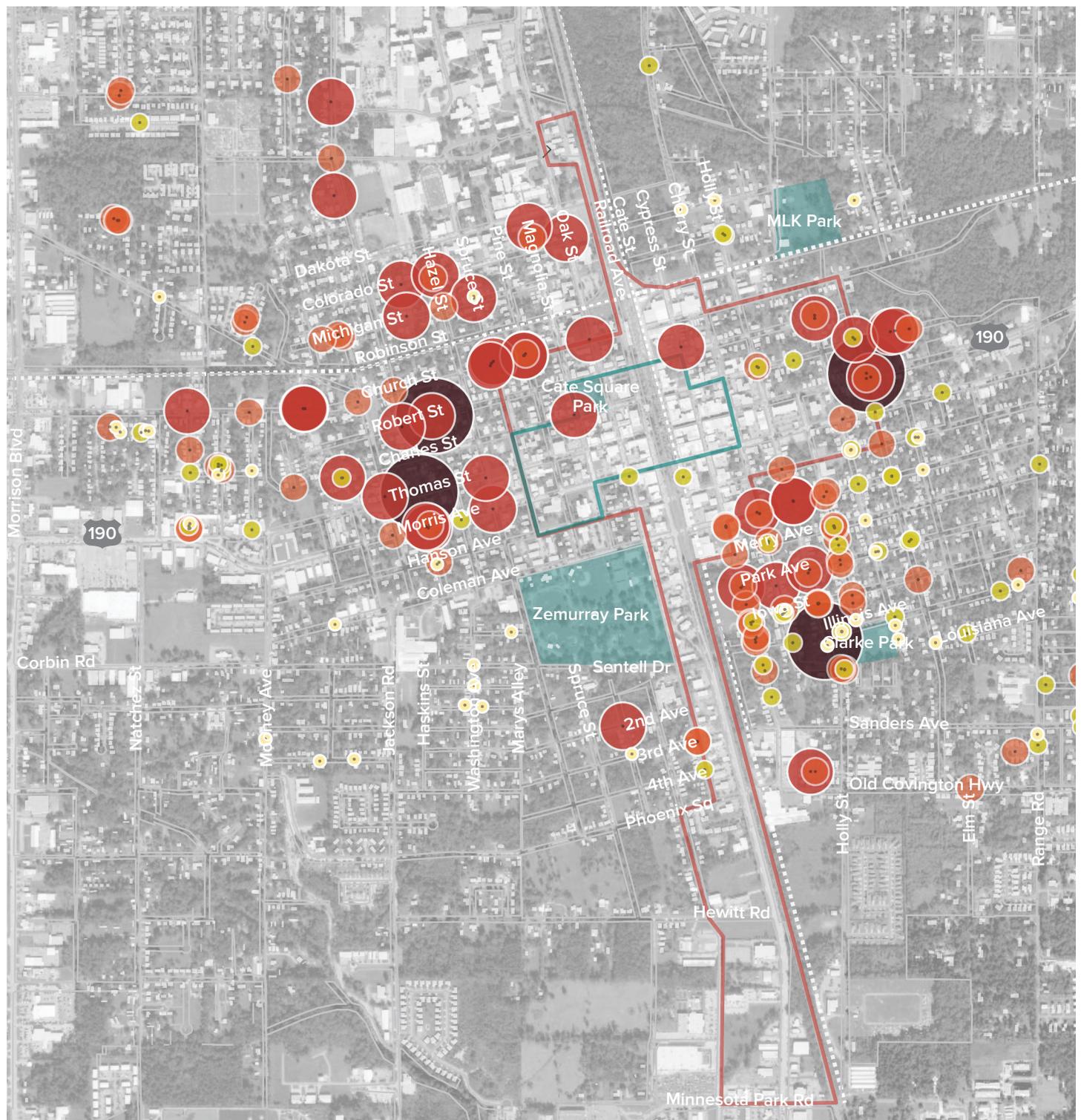


¹⁰ Data from June 2017 through June 2019, Redfin, accessed 06.28.2019.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² U.S. Census, B35063: Gross Rent, 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Residential Price Per Square Foot



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Hammond Downtown Development District — Hammond Historic District ● Parks 	<p>Residential Price Per Square Foot (6/2017 - 6/2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$5 - \$39 ● \$40 - \$73 ● \$74 - \$114 ● \$115 - \$183 ● \$184 - \$326 	<p>— .2 Miles</p> <p>Source: Redfin, accessed 06.28.2019</p>	<p>⌚ N</p>
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What type of development does zoning permit?

The City of Hammond’s Unified Development Ordinance provides all development regulations for Downtown Hammond. The ordinance was recently updated in January 2019. The ordinance uses a building type model for its development standards, meaning certain building types are allowed in each zone, and the dimensions of the building types are prescribed in the ordinance.

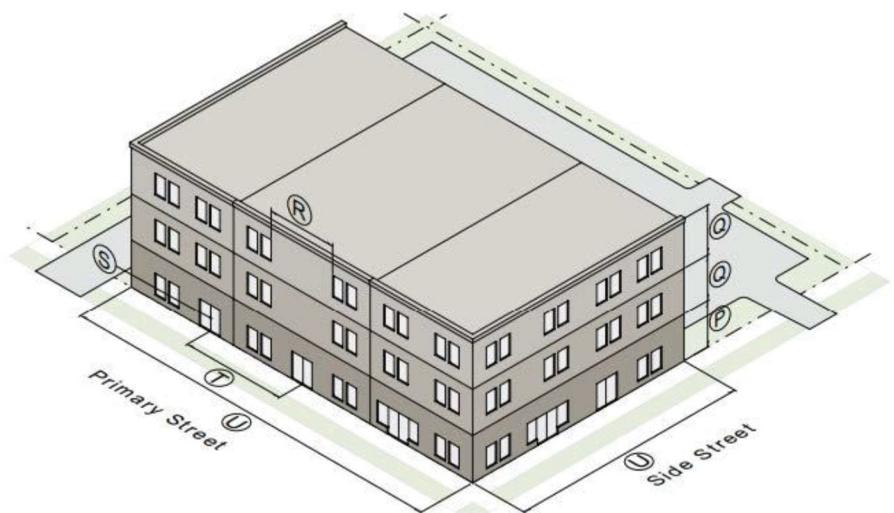
A majority of the study area, using the Downtown Development District boundary, is covered by the Mixed Use-Central Business District (MX-CBD), Mixed Use-Commercial (MX-C), and Commercial Neighborhood (C-N) zoning districts. The study area also contains a small number of parcels using Single-Family Residential (RS-11, RS-5), Multi-Family Residential (RM-3, RM-2), Light Industrial (I-L), and Commercial Highway (C-H). The study area is also covered by the Downtown Development District Overlay (-DDD).

Mixed Use Districts

Two mixed use districts are applied in the study area. The first, the Mixed Use-CBD District (MX-CBD), intends to accommodate a variety of uses including commercial and residential. The regulations for this district acknowledge Downtown’s role as a commercial and governmental center, while supporting residential uses and active ground floor retail uses.

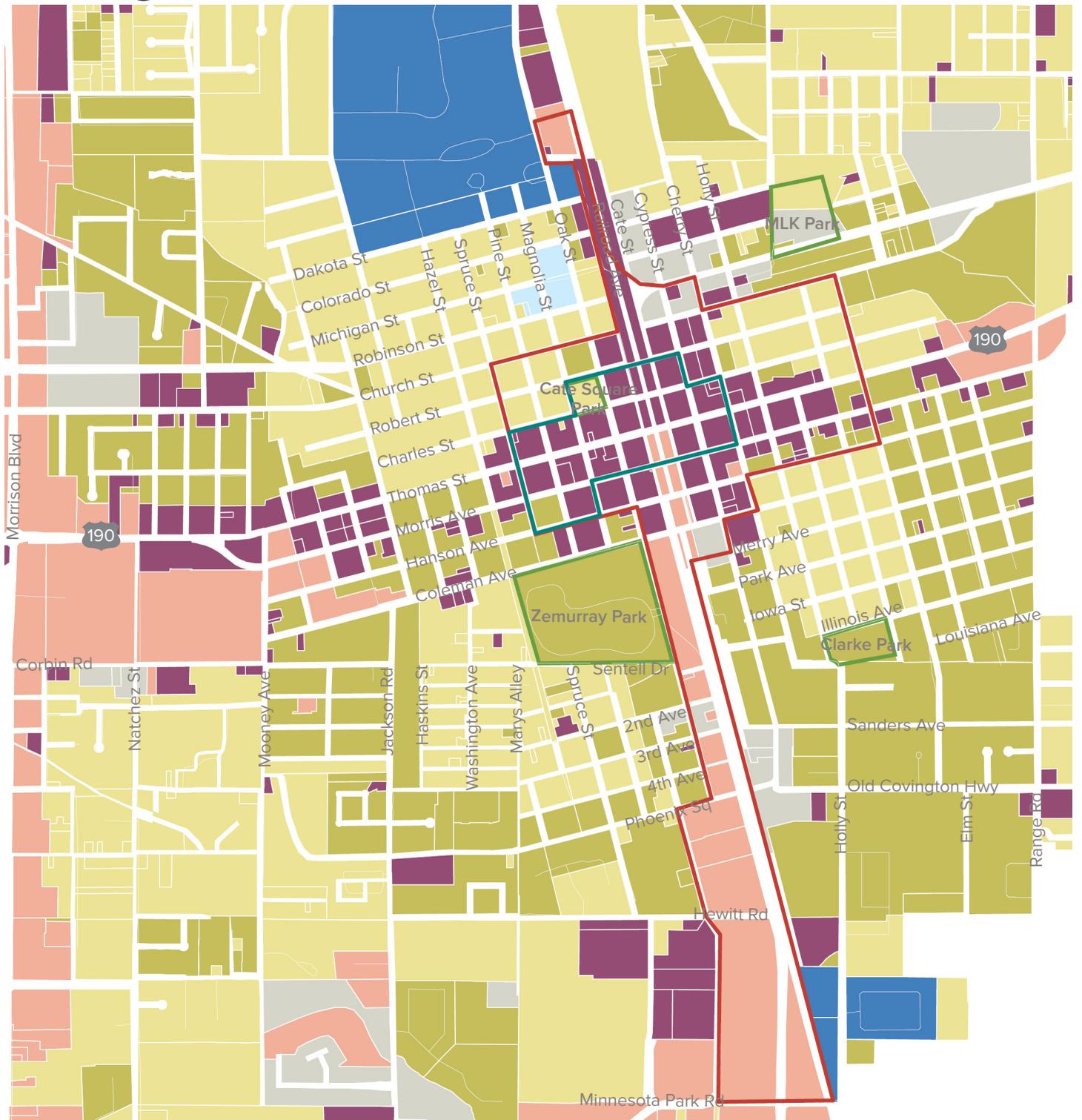
This district is intended to be pedestrian-scaled and provide quality public spaces. Certain auto-oriented uses are allowed conditionally, including off-street parking and vehicle sales. There is one building type allowed in this district, the Mixed Use Building (below). In MX-CBD, this building is allowed to be up to three stories and 45’, with 0’ minimum setbacks. Other street life-supporting provisions include required entrances facing the street and transparency standards.

The Mixed Use-Commercial District (MX-C) also is intended to provide a variety of uses in a pedestrian-oriented environment, with emphasis on residential and live/work uses. The only building type allowed in this zone is also the Mixed Use Building, but with slightly less intense standards than are allowed in MX-CBD. In MX-C, this building type is also allowed to be up to 3 stories and 45’ tall, but has more flexible setback requirements and small lot size standards. In this district, more commercial-supporting provisions are included with this building type, such as higher levels of ground floor transparency.



A Mixed Use Building as specified by the City of Hammond, Louisiana Unified Development Code, Amended on 1/22/2019.

Zoning In and Around the DDD



<p>Zoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hammond Downtown Development District Hammond Historic District Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-Family Residential Multi-Family Residential Commercial Mixed Use Industrial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional Schools 	<p> .2 Miles</p> <p>Source: City of Hammond</p>	<p>⌚</p> <p>N</p>
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Commercial Districts

The predominant commercial district in Downtown Hammond is the Commercial Neighborhood District (C-N). This district is more restrictive than other commercial zones, while allowing a range of housing types. Only one building is allowed in this district, the Single Story Shopfront, though the height is allowed to be up to three stories and 45' in C-N (see right). Like the Mixed Use Building allowed in MX-C, this building as allowed in C-N has commercial- and pedestrian-supporting provisions.

Overlay Districts

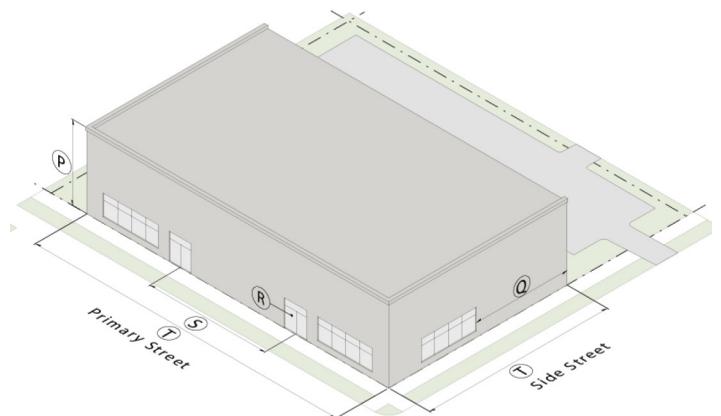
- The Downtown Development District Overlay covers the entire study area and applies a set of design guidelines created in 2002 to preserve the historic and architectural integrity of buildings in the downtown area. The ordinance includes a general set of suggestions as well as specific design guidelines. New development in this area is reviewed by the Downtown Development District Design Review Committee.

The general guidelines outline nine architectural styles that were used to establish the guidelines. These styles are:

- Queen Anne Revival
- Art Deco
- International/Modern
- Mixed Jacobean and Renaissance Revival
- Georgian Revival
- Mission Revival/Spanish Colonial Revival
- Classical Revival
- Commercial Arts and Crafts
- Post-Modern

The design guidelines themselves offer specific guidance on design elements such as:

- Entrances
- Sides and backs of buildings
- Horizontal and vertical planes
- Structural elements
- Appearance
- Building elements, such as awnings and canopies
- Roofs
- Building colors
- Lighting
- Materials



A Single Story Shop front as specified by the City of Hammond, Louisiana Unified Development Code, Amended on 1/22/2019.

Redevelopment and Zoning

Downtown Hammond has a few key redevelopment sites with existing entitlements that support quality redevelopment:

- A variety of sites with MX-CBD zoning located on either side of the railroad tracks. These parcels have the potential to be developed using the Mixed Use Building standards, as described above. These parcels would allow for buildings up to 3 stories and 45' in height.
- To the east of Zemurray Park, land with auto-oriented buildings have the potential to redevelop under the C-N zoning, allowing for commercial and residential uses.
- Along the edges of the study area, large parcels with I-L zoning, if rezoned to MX-C or C-H, could provide mixed use transitions to Downtown Hammond.

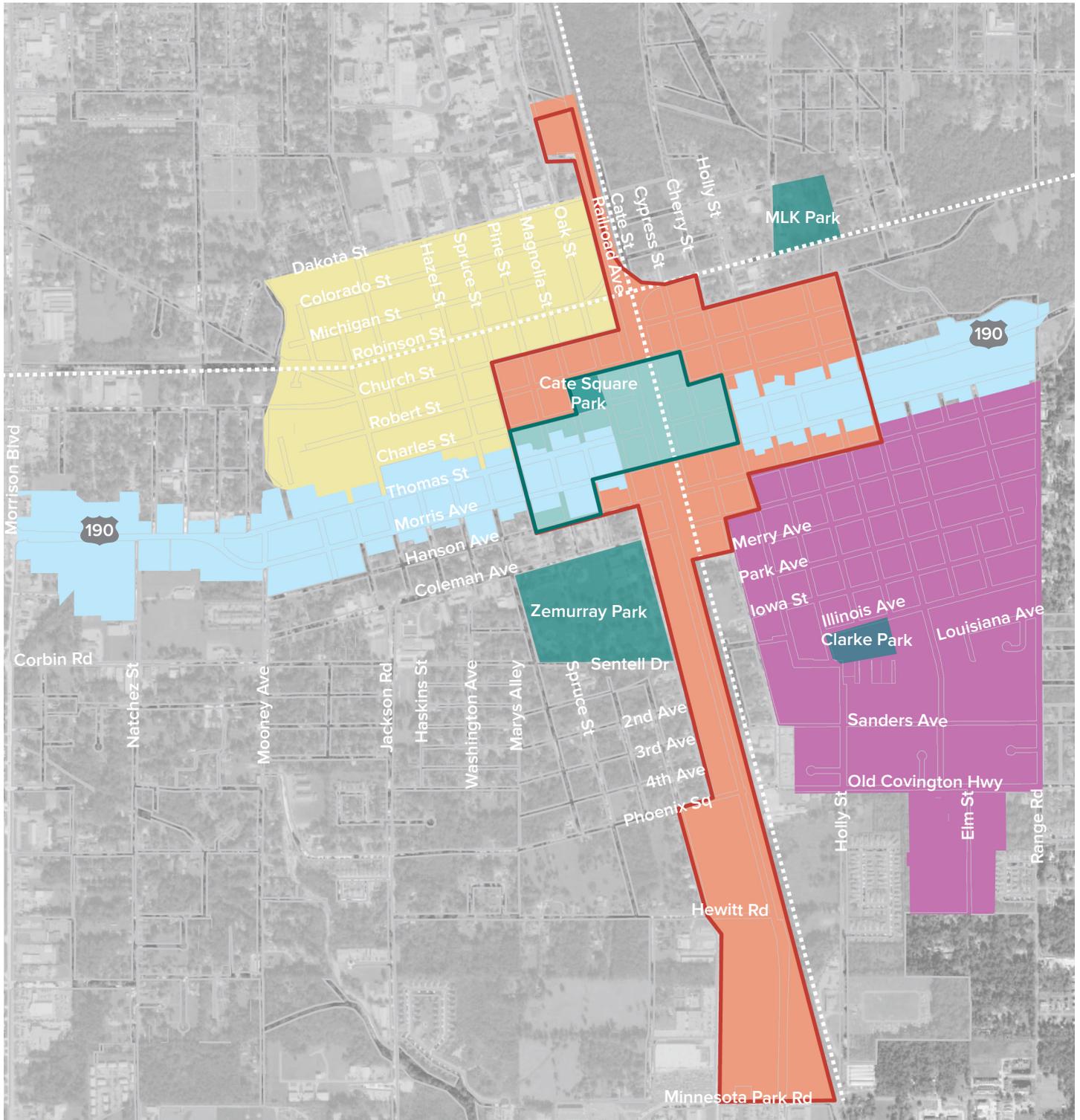


New mixed-use development at W. Morris and SW Railroad Avenues complements the scale and orientation of historic District buildings.



New, infill commercial construction at East Morris Avenue and S. Cypress Street includes curb extensions to improve pedestrian safety and access. (Credit: Google Streetview, 2019)

Overlay Districts



Overlay Districts

- Hammond Downtown Development District
- Hammond Historic District
- Parks
- Downtown Development District
- Historic District
- Thomas/Morris Street Economic Development District (TM)
- Hyer-Cate Preservation Overlay District
- Iowa Addition Overlay District



Source: City of Hammond



Queen Anne Revival style seen at the Hammond Station. Source: "Hammond Amtrak Station" by Loco Steve, taken on 9/25/2010. Accessed via Flickr, 7/8/2019.



Georgian Revival seen at the Regions Bank. Source: Google Earth, accessed 7/8/2019.



International/Modern style seen at one thirteen restaurant.



Classical Revival seen at the Hammond Post Office.



Mixed Jacobean and Renaissance Revival seen at Columbia Theatre. Source: Google Earth, accessed 7/8/2019.



Commercial Arts and Crafts style seen at the Cate Building.

How accessible is Downtown Hammond?

93% of 160 Community Survey respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “it is easy for me to get to and from Downtown Hammond,” suggesting that the District’s streets and parking availability function well to get people to and from their destinations.

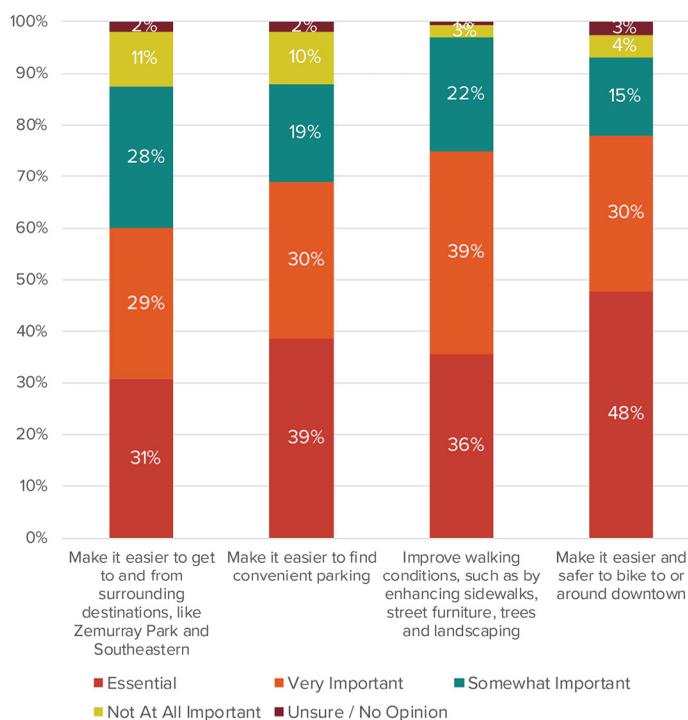
Nevertheless, respondents cited the need to improve access for a variety of modes. 78% of 159 respondents said it was “essential” or “very important” to “make it easier and safer to bike to or around downtown.” 75% said it was just as important to “improve walking conditions, such as by enhancing sidewalks, street furniture, trees and landscaping.” 69% stated as high a priority to “make it easier to find convenient parking.” And 60% of respondents shared this attitude toward “mak(ing) it easier to get to and from surrounding destinations, like Zemurray Park and Southeastern.”

Access by walking and bicycling

Previously adopted plans have expressed desire to become a more bicycle-friendly community. The 2011 Hammond Comprehensive Plan includes a goal to “Provide safe and convenient mobility and support a multi-modal transportation system that provides linkages to neighborhoods, schools and other community facilities and uses.”

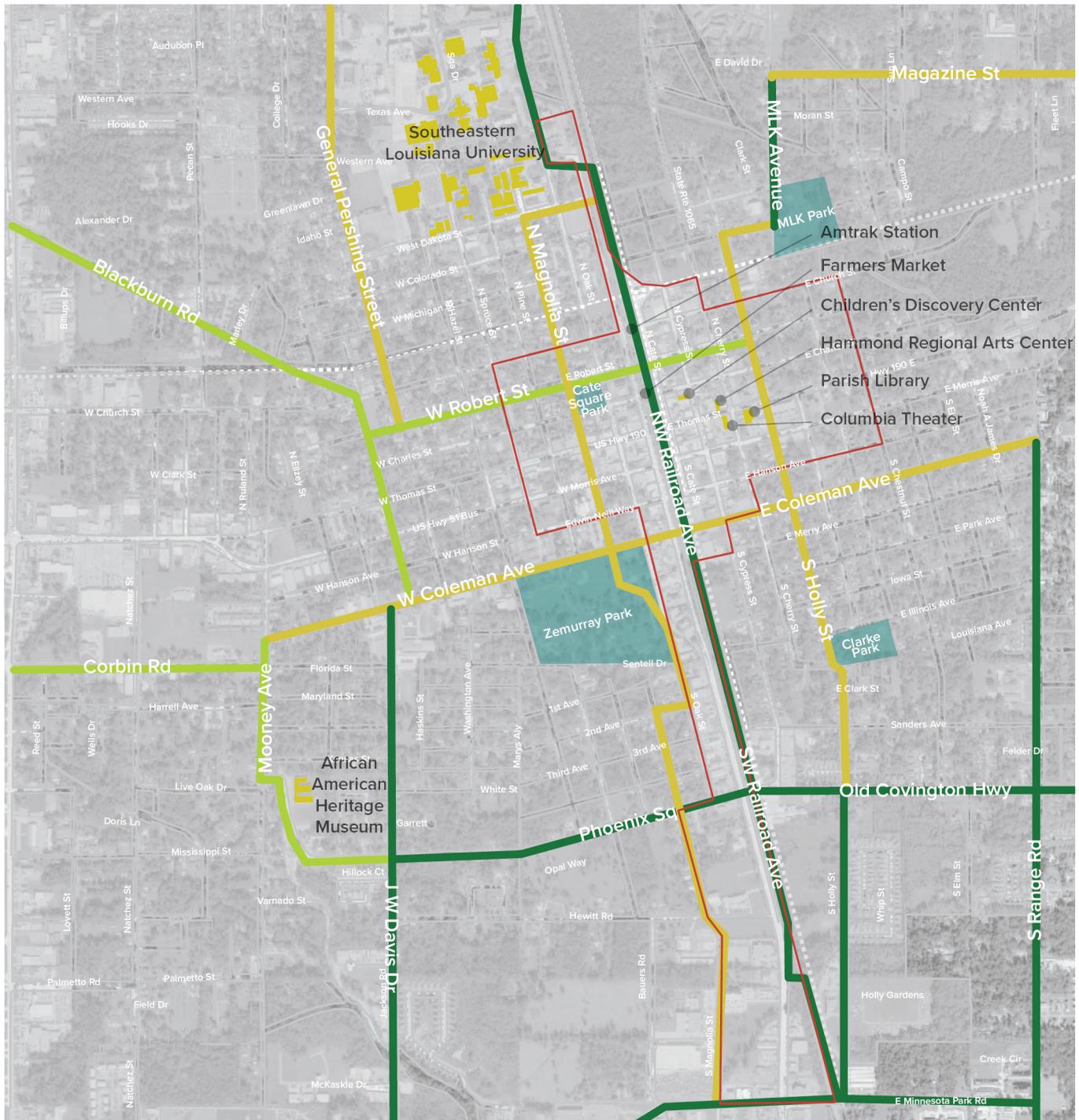
The 2016 Hammond Bicycle Plan Feasibility Study makes short- and long-term recommendations to improve city streets for walking and bicycling. The map on the following page illustrates the long-term strategy for installing bike lanes, shared-lane markings, and off-street, shared-use trails. “Phase 1” facilities for short-term implementation within and adjacent to the District include Railroad Avenue, Michigan Street, Magnolia Street, JW Davis Drive, Holly Street, and Coleman Avenue.

78% of 159 survey respondents said it was “essential” or “very important” to “make it easier and safer to bike to or around downtown.”



Community Priorities Survey - “How important is it for Downtown Hammond to focus on the following priorities” - Mobility.

Hammond Bicycle Plan Feasibility Study



— Hammond Downtown Development District
● Parks
— Shared Use Trail
— Bike Lane
— Shared Lane

Hammond Bicycle Plan, Concept 3: Long Term Strategy

.2 Miles ⊙
N

As the north-south spine of the District, Railroad Avenue connects Southeastern University to the District and points south, including Zemurray Park. Improving bicycling and pedestrian access in this artery would have significant impact on the ability for people to walk and bike to and from Downtown Hammond.

Car access/Parking

Downtown Hammond enjoys close access to two interstate highways. Interstate 55 is located 2.5 miles to the west from Railroad Avenue via Church Street or US 190/Thomas Street. Interstate 12 is located two miles to the south of downtown via Railroad Avenue.

The maximum capacity for public parking in the Downtown Development District is 1,052 spaces. This excludes private off-street parking, such as driveways and parking lots. The free, public parking lots between Cate Street, Railroad Avenue, Robert Street and Hanson Avenue provide 351 spaces, while District streets offer 701 curbside spaces. While utilization was not observed as part of this assessment, staff and stakeholders reported that the public parking lots rarely reach capacity, with the exception of special events that reduce access to the lots.

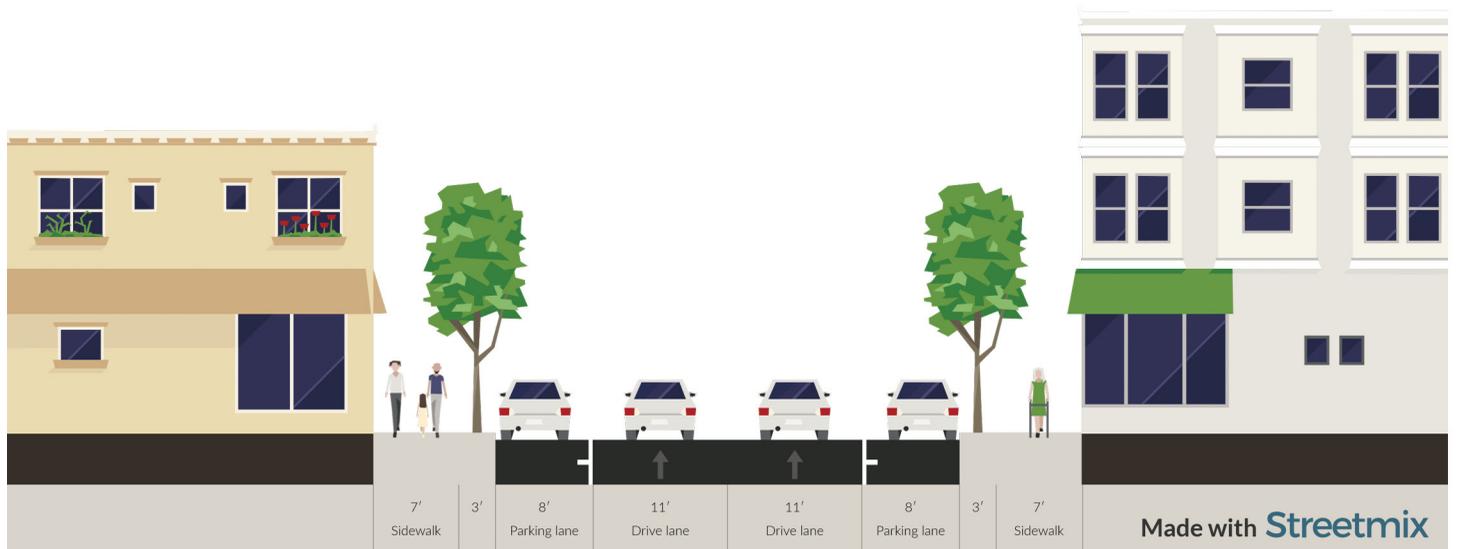
According to stakeholder interviews, finding convenient, curbside parking can be difficult for customers wishing to park for short periods to access specific shops and destinations downtown. Because the City of Hammond does not restrict parking with time limits or by charging a fee, there is no incentive for people who park for more than a couple hours (for example, workers or residents) to park in the public lots. This limits the availability of curbside parking to downtown business customers. By managing parking through enforcement of time limits or charging fees, the most convenient parking may be reserved for drivers who patron downtown businesses.



NW Railroad Avenue at Thomas Street



Public parking lot access from Cate Street.



Typical downtown street section, East Thomas Street, with on-street parking.

What are the District's cultural assets and opportunities?

Downtown Hammond as a Hub

The Hammond Downtown Development District serves Hammond as its commercial and cultural center, with approximately 770 residents in the area and an additional 2,812 residents within a 5-minute walking distance to the District.¹³ With its proximity to Southeastern Louisiana University, which has 14,500 students¹⁴ and touches the northern boundary of the DDD, Downtown Hammond is an attractive option for families, students, and older adults seeking the convenience of downtown living.

What is a “third space”?

A third place is a space where people can mingle and grow a sense of community. Third spaces are separate from the work environment or home. Examples of third spaces include parks, libraries, cafes, churches, and barber and beauty shops.

Downtown Hammond has many characteristics of a livable area, including access within walking distance to cultural and artistic amenities, restaurants, and shops. Downtown is also developing its identity as a destination through unique events and historic and cultural branding.

Amenities in Downtown Hammond

Residents living in and near the District spoke positively regarding the accessibility of downtown living. They are able to access dinner, ice cream, civic involvement, and the farmers market by walking. Additionally, the District is home to the Children's Discovery Center, Tangipahoa Parish Library, Hammond Regional Arts Center, and the Columbia Theater, and is a short drive from the African American Heritage Museum.

Although Downtown does not currently have a central location where locals identify as the main venue for mingling, it is replete with third spaces, such as Cate Square Park, the parish library, a barber shop, and public seating. The Community Pavilion, which was part of the 2002 Master Plan, will provide an additional destination and communal “third space” in which visitors and residents may gather.

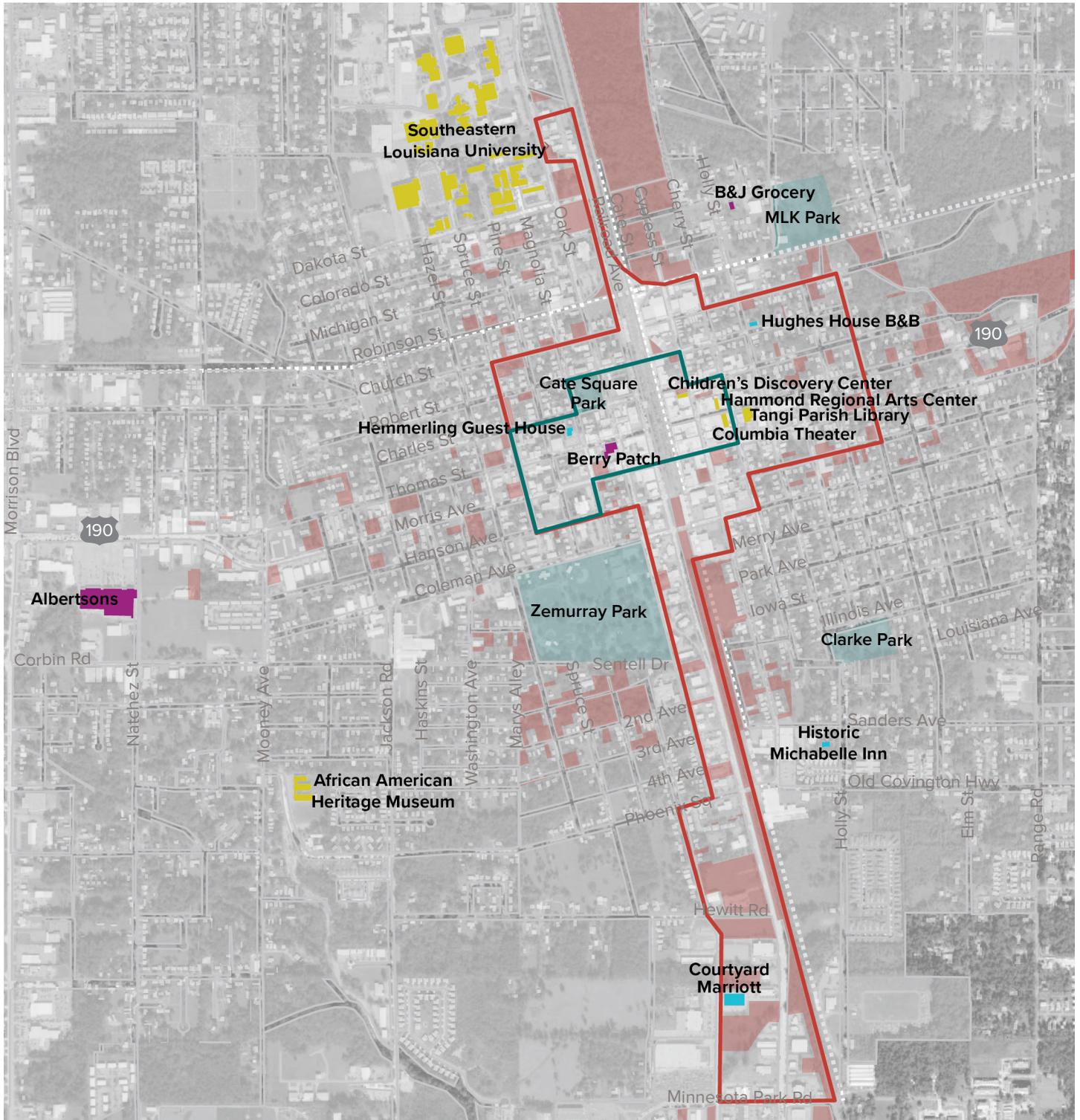
Downtown Hammond is a prominent southeast Louisiana dining destination. People visit from around the city to drink and dine in the District, and some may stop by at one of the many restaurants on their way to an event at the nearby university or on their way to the Amtrak station, which is only one of two in the state and therefore a hub for regional transit.

However, residents and business leaders agree that despite its diverse array of drinking and dining options, Downtown is missing other commercial activities, such as affordable boutiques and a full-service grocery store.

¹³ ACS 2013-2017 Estimate, accessed via Business Analyst on 7/1/2019.

¹⁴ Admissions page, Southeastern Louisiana University, <https://www.southeastern.edu/admin/admissions/>

Assets Near the Hammond DDD



 Hammond Downtown Development District	 Institutions	 .2 Miles	 N
 Hammond Historic District	 Hotels and B&Bs		
 Parks	 Grocery Stores and Markets		
 Vacant Lands			

Downtown Culture: Events, Arts, and Historic Placemaking

Attendees of the focus groups pointed to the need for Downtown Hammond to establish an identity, similar to the way New Orleans is with music and Lafayette with Cajun culture.¹⁵

Downtown Events

Currently, the DDD has leveraged its lineup of events to create a district culture centered on music, art, and its restaurant and bar scene. Hot August Night is one of Hammond’s biggest events and a major attractor of outside visitors.

Proprietors of businesses in the core of Downtown mentioned that, although the event itself is not a financial gain for all businesses, it brings together a large part of the city and creates a “big family reunion” feel that many felt was important to the area.¹⁶

Other events, including the Brews Arts Festival hosted by the Hammond Regional Arts Center (HRAC), and Playing the Staircase and Starry November Night hosted by the DDD attract many within Hammond to the downtown area.

Attendees of the area business focus group suggested additional future events to strengthen the unique culture of Downtown Hammond:

- Hammond Heritage Festival with a poster contest
- More events at the Pavilion, Cate Square Park, and Columbia Theater
- First Friday with a music or art walk
- Train-themed art competition at the Hammond Amtrak Station

¹⁵ From Stakeholder Focus Groups. See Appendix A.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Art in the DDD

Stakeholders at the focus groups pointed to HRAC as a potential key stakeholder to strengthen the arts scene in the area. The Center has a mezzanine where select emerging artists and students display their work, and may serve as a hub for artistic expression in the District.

Public art and monuments in the District is sparse. There is a painted obelisk and the Francis G. Stewart Memorial between E Thomas Street and W Charles Street on the future site of the Pavilion, in addition to a few statues and busts in Cate Square.

Attendees of the focus groups suggested working with local artists, including student artists and welders at Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) and Northshore Technical Community College, to install public artwork that would showcase the history and culture of Hammond. Several attendees pointed to the need for more murals, which are especially popular among those active on social media.



A painted obelisk outside of the DDD office.

Historic Placemaking

Stakeholders pointed to the historic buildings in and around the District as a major asset to the area. Focus group participants repeatedly identified the need to balance both economic growth with the preservation of historic components of the District.

The core of Downtown Hammond has historic brick buildings which range between one and two stories. Some shops have unique signage which adds character to the area.

Focus group participants suggested potential strategies to highlight the historic character of the District, including using plaques to demarcate historic buildings, tours by the DDD of historic homes in the area, and creating an application that scans buildings with the District to retrieve historical information on the building.

One of the concerns identified by residents and business owners in the areas was unmaintained buildings and lots, both in commercial and residential areas. To address this, the DDD may need to raise awareness of code standards among property owners.



Unique signage in the District.



Buildings along North Cate Street.



Unique signage in the District.

District Branding

Branded wayfinding and signage can also showcase the area's history, arts, and culture, and it can guide visitors to and around the District while giving it a unique visual identity.

Attendees of the focus groups discussed the potential for branded street signs and banners in the District, with a note of caution from some that too many signs can create visual clutter and make it difficult to find stop signs and other vital signage.

Additionally, given the District's proximity to Southeastern Louisiana University, the DDD could incorporate more visual cues tying the two communities together, by using the school's colors and branding, similar to the way Baton Rouge identifies with Louisiana State University and the Tigers.

Sanitation in the Downtown Development District

Trash management was identified as a growing problem in the active and growing downtown. Trash is picked up 7 days a week, including on holidays.

However, for residents, there is not a dumpster to collect the trash of apartment complexes, and businesses do not have a rear alley in which to store trash. As a result, rolling trash bins are left out in the streets, leading to cluttered sidewalks.

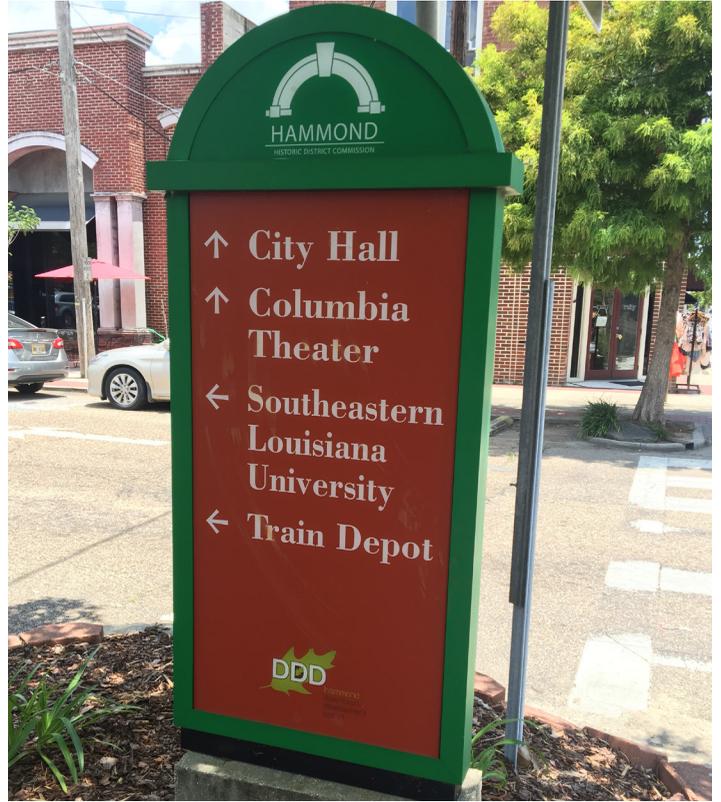
Future strategies will require the identification of key locations for dumpsters, development of design guidelines for those dumpsters, and a discussion of who will maintain and pay for a dumpster used by multiple parties.

Sidewalk Cafes

Downtown Hammond has several sidewalk cafes, and they provide an important third space and a vibrant public realm in the area. However, there are concerns regarding compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which specifies that sidewalks must be at least 3 feet wide. Businesses in the area will need to be educated regarding ADA standards to ensure compliance with regulations. Parklets, or the conversion of on-street parking to third spaces and other amenities, can increase cafe seating, with the caveat that it would require the loss of some parking space.



SLU-branded banners in the DDD.



DDD-branded wayfinding signs.



A rolling trash bin seen in the street.



A sidewalk cafe in the DDD.

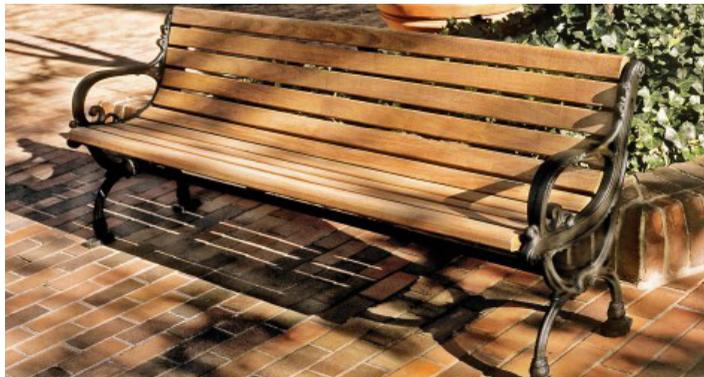
APPENDIX C: STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

Street Furniture and Bike Racks

In order to create a vibrant public realm that can host events, resident interactions, and wandering visitors, the DDD and the City will coordinate on standardized benches, bike racks, and other street furniture.

Prototypes for street furniture/bike racks/sidewalks/public landscaping and lighting are provided as well as recommended criteria.

Victor Stanley Bench Prototypes



Victor Stanley C-10



Victor Stanley RB-28



Victor Stanley C-96



Victor Stanley RBF-28



Victor Stanley CR-10

BRP Bike Rack Prototypes

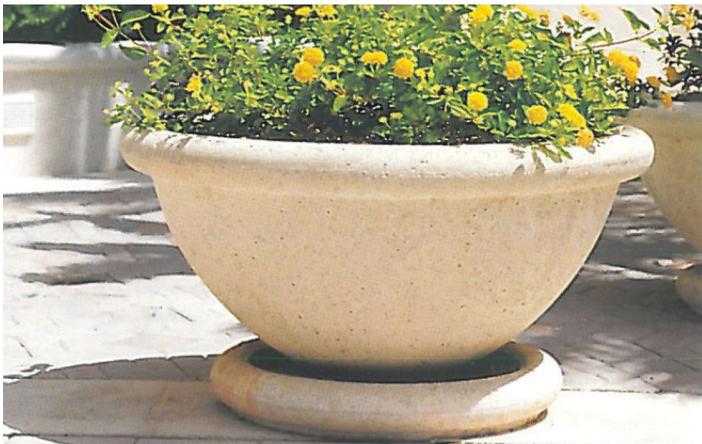


BRP by Bison - BRB4-02 In-Stock Bollard with Bike Loops



BRP by Bison - BFU2-02 Flip Up Bike Security Stations 1

DC Kerckhoff Planter Prototype



DC Kerckhoff - Brighton Planter with Tray

Victor Stanley Trash Receptacle Prototype



Victor Stanley - S-42



Victor Stanley - S-4524



Victor Stanley - SD-42



Victor Stanley - SD-45

Sidewalks

The sidewalk design requirements as set forth in the Morris/Thomas Street Overlay District are excellent for the entire commercial core of the DDD. Sidewalks that have been replaced since this ordinance was enacted to give a new look to downtown demonstrating that downtown is special and historic. From the ordinance, the requirements state:

Sidewalk design. Sidewalks shall be concrete and a minimum of 4 ft. in width and be curbed at street intersections to allow access to the handicapped. Paver bricks shall be used as expansion joints and shall consist of a single row of bricks installed horizontally at each property line and at approximately 10' to 12' centers. Color and style of sidewalks and paver tiles shall conform to the colors and styles being installed by the City within the Hammond Historic District. Repair of existing sidewalks shall follow the same standards. Damage to tree roots shall be minimized in order to preserve as many trees as possible.

Hammond Zoning Ordinance, #01-2769, Section 2.4 (19), page 4



