



# **DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN**

## **SPRINGFIELD, OHIO**

JUNE 2020

spring**FORWARD**

**MKSK**

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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

## Background

This plan is part of a long-term effort to envision the vibrant future of Downtown Springfield. It builds on projects commissioned in 2002, 2005, and 2016. This report has been updated in May 2020 to reflect recent progress in Downtown revitalization. It should be stressed that this is a plan that is designed to look beyond near-term economic cycles to a shared long-term vision for Downtown Springfield.

## Organization

This document is organized into five additional sections:

- *Previous Plans:* Provides an overview of past important planning efforts for Downtown Springfield.
- *Change & Investment:* Includes a pair of maps that depict physical change in Downtown Springfield from 2005 to 2020.
- *Goals & Conceptual Plan:* Provides a series of eight overall project goals and an overall conceptual plan for Downtown. Each goal is detailed with a description, implementation strategies, and photographic examples to illustrate concepts.
- *Phasing:* Recommends a three-phased approach to accomplish the goals of the vision plan.
- *Illustrative Plan & Renderings:* Provides a bird's-eye view of the long-term vision for Downtown Springfield as well as a series of three bird's-eye and eye-level graphic illustrations.

# 2 | PREVIOUS PLANS

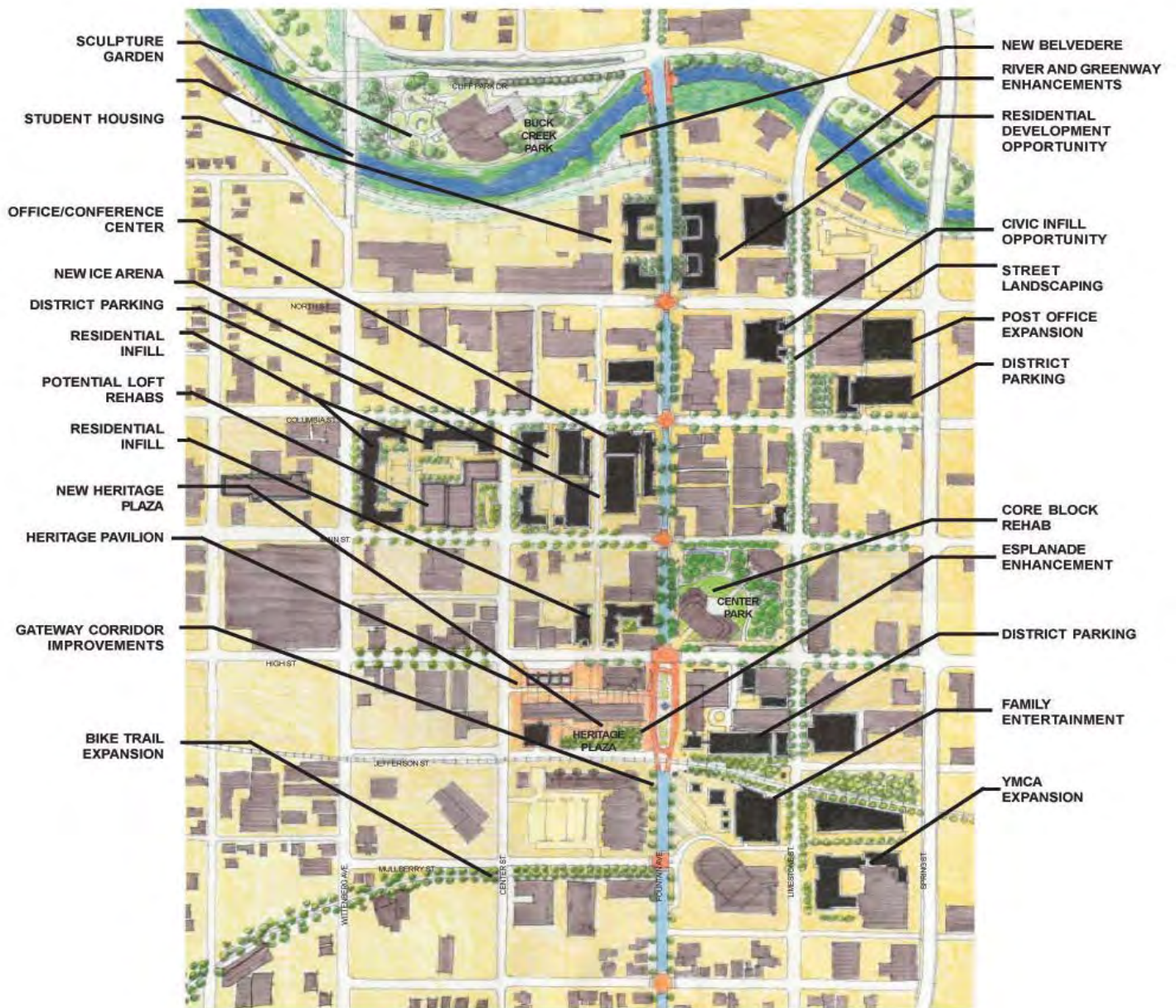
## 2002 RUDAT Plan

This planning effort established three primary goals for the future of Downtown Springfield:

1. Implement a coherent infill and development strategy for specific Downtown districts.
2. Create active streets and public spaces.
3. Enhance the corridors and gateways of Downtown.

## 2005 Vision Plan

Building on the work of the 2002 plan, this plan established the idea of a central spine to connect the heart of Downtown to Buck Creek Park and points north and also create development and revitalization opportunities along it to add to the vitality, attractiveness, livability, and walkability of Downtown.



## 2005 Vision Plan Renderings



Eye-level view looking north on N. Fountain Ave. from W. Main St.



Bird's-eye view looking north from the Heritage Center.



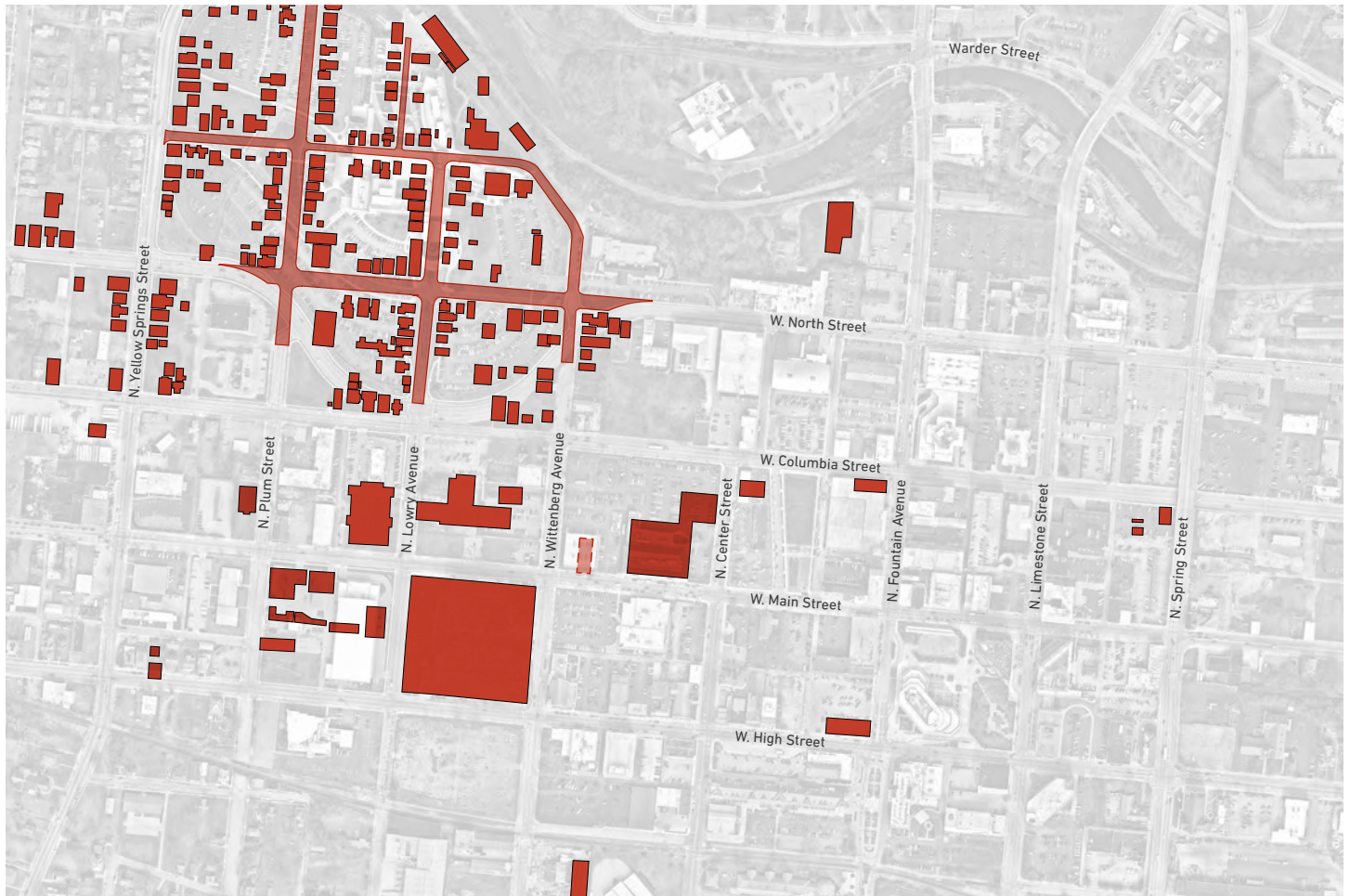
Eye-level view looking south from W. Columbia St. across the proposed public park.



- New Retail/Mixed-Use
- New Residential
- New Civic/Mixed-Use
- New Parking Structure

# 3 | CHANGE & INVESTMENT

## Demolition, 2005-2020

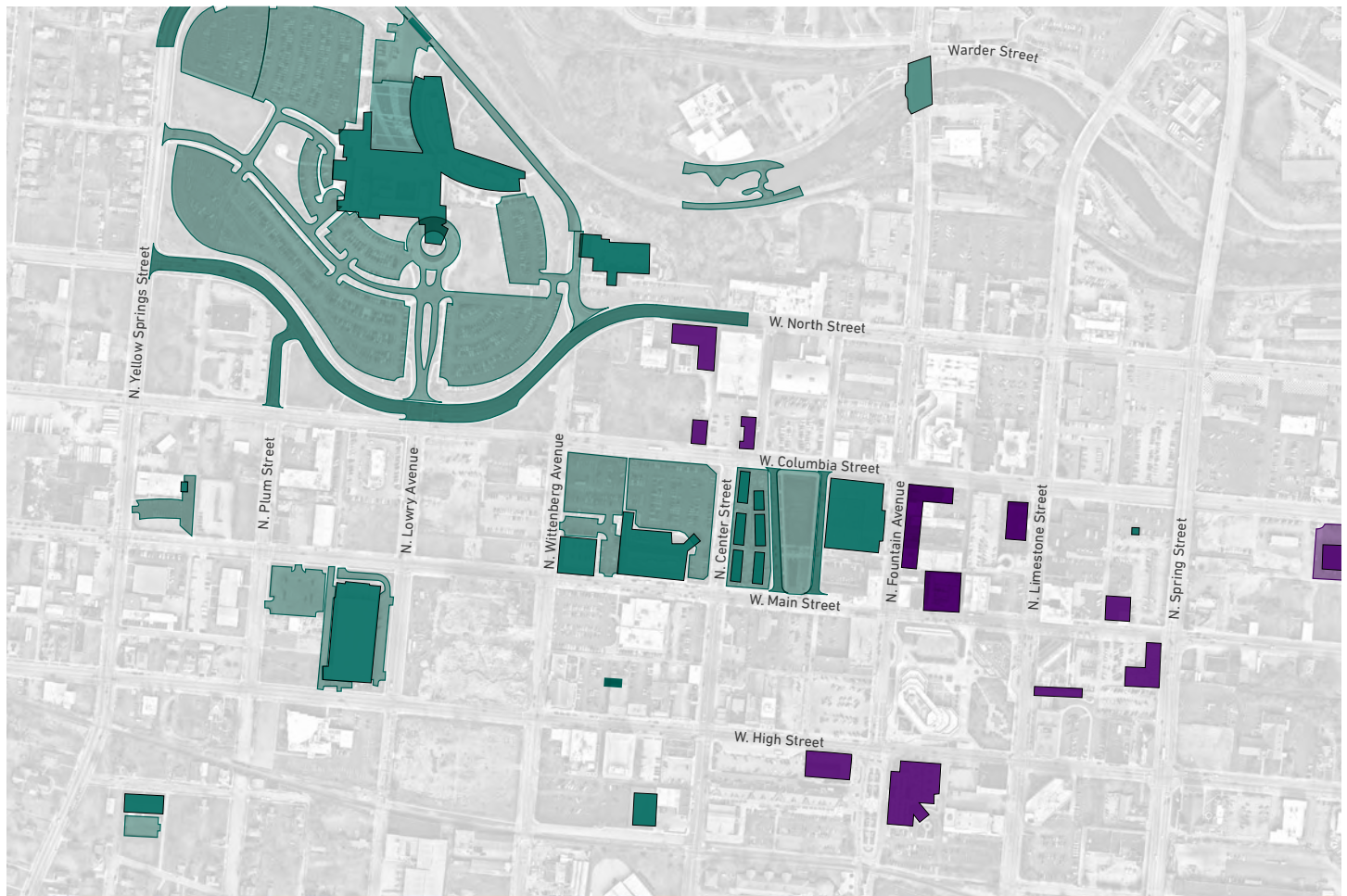


■ Demolition

Since 2005, Downtown Springfield has experienced the demolition of the following properties:

- **Demolition for Springfield Regional Medical Center (2009)**  
190 Residential and Commercial Properties
- **Robertson building demolition for future Ohio Valley expansion**
- **Demolition of former Greenawalt-Trenor facility**
- **Demolition of Crowell-Collier building**

## Public & Private Investment, 2005-2020



Since 2005, Downtown Springfield has experienced new construction or renovation for the following projects:

- New Construction
- Renovation

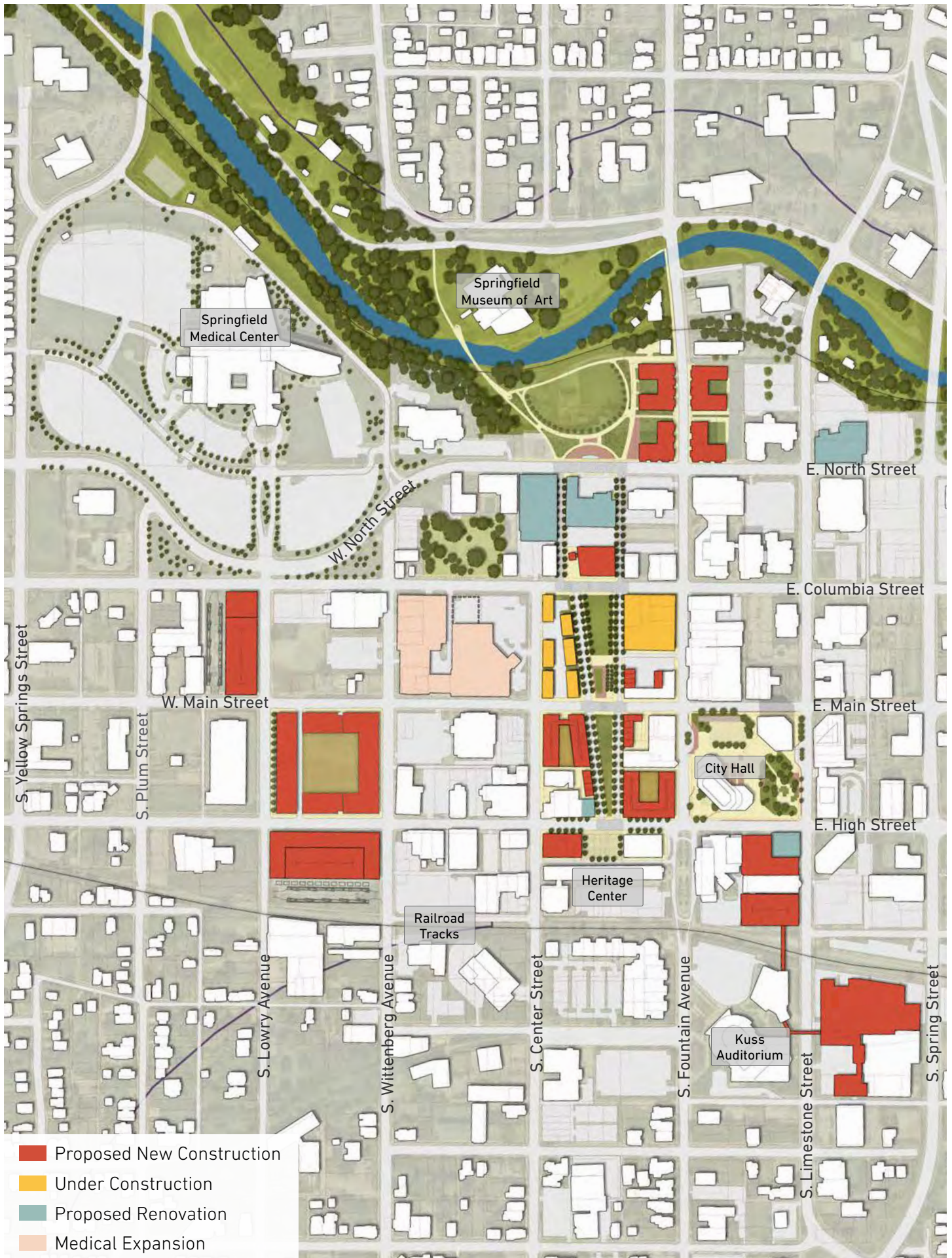
- **Springfield Regional Medical Center**  
\$275 Million, 475,000 SF, 1,800 Jobs
- **Ohio Valley Surgical Hospital**  
\$15 Million, 50,000 SF, 250 Jobs
- **Buck Creek Whitewater Project Phase I**  
Dam Removal - \$750,000
- **National Road Commons**  
\$3.5 Million
- **Ohio Valley Office Building**  
\$5 Million
- **Clark State Performing Arts Center Addition**  
\$4.6 Million, 27,600 SF
- **NTPRD Chiller**  
\$5 Million, 41,000 SF
- **Fountain Avenue/Veteran's Bridge Streetscape**  
\$1.5 Million
- **Bushnell Building Renovation (Job Ready Site)**  
\$10 Million, 300 Jobs
- **Marriott Hotel Renovation**
- **COhatch**  
\$2.5 Million
- **Fratelli's Restaurant**
- **Fountain Avenue Shops & Restaurants**
- **Center Street Townhomes**  
\$8 Million, 34 residential units
- **Parking Garage at Columbia St and Fountain Ave**  
\$6.8 Million, 307 parking spaces

# 4 | GOALS & CONCEPTUAL PLAN

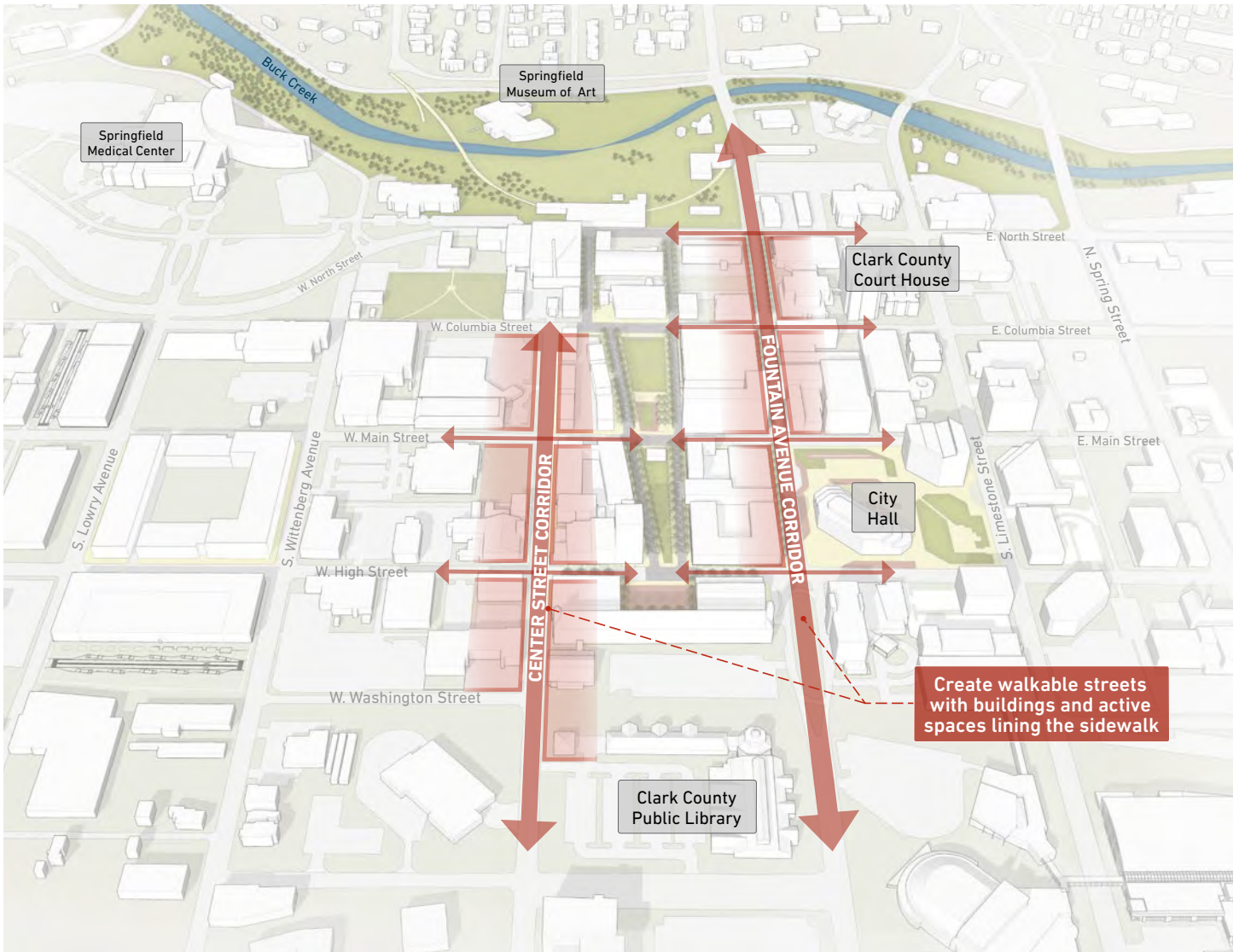
Recommendations for the *Downtown Vision Plan* are organized around the following eight goals:

- 1** Focus development efforts on the Fountain Avenue and Center Street corridors.
- 2** Develop attractive, affordable Downtown housing.
- 3** Address parking needs, but don't overbuild.
- 4** Convert one-way streets to two-way streets to the extent feasible.
- 5** Continue the creation and expansion of National Road Commons.
- 6** Acquire land for future Buck Creek park space and pedestrian and bicycle trail connections to the north.
- 7** Preserve historic buildings for reuse, even if they are vacant today.
- 8** Invest in low-cost, high-impact public art and streetscape amenities.





**Goal 1: Focus development efforts on the Fountain Avenue and Center Street corridors.**



Historically, Limestone Street served as the heart of Downtown Springfield, a place where people strolled for their retail, entertainment, and civic needs. We need to continue to build upon the recent efforts and investments made along this corridor to once again become the active spine of Downtown and the City. Pedestrian-focused streetscape improvements should be of the highest quality for this critical street.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Encourage the continued redevelopment and activation of storefronts.
2. Implement high-quality pedestrian-focused streetscape improvements.
3. Develop a facade improvement program.
4. Infill buildings with active first floors.

## Character Examples



Active street-side uses, such as outdoor dining, are critical for the long-term success of the corridor. First floors should consist largely of transparent windows and doors for engaging the pedestrian.



Facade improvements are an important element in revitalizing a street. However, the cost of repairing historic architecture can slow implementation of enhancements. A new facade improvement program could speed up this process.

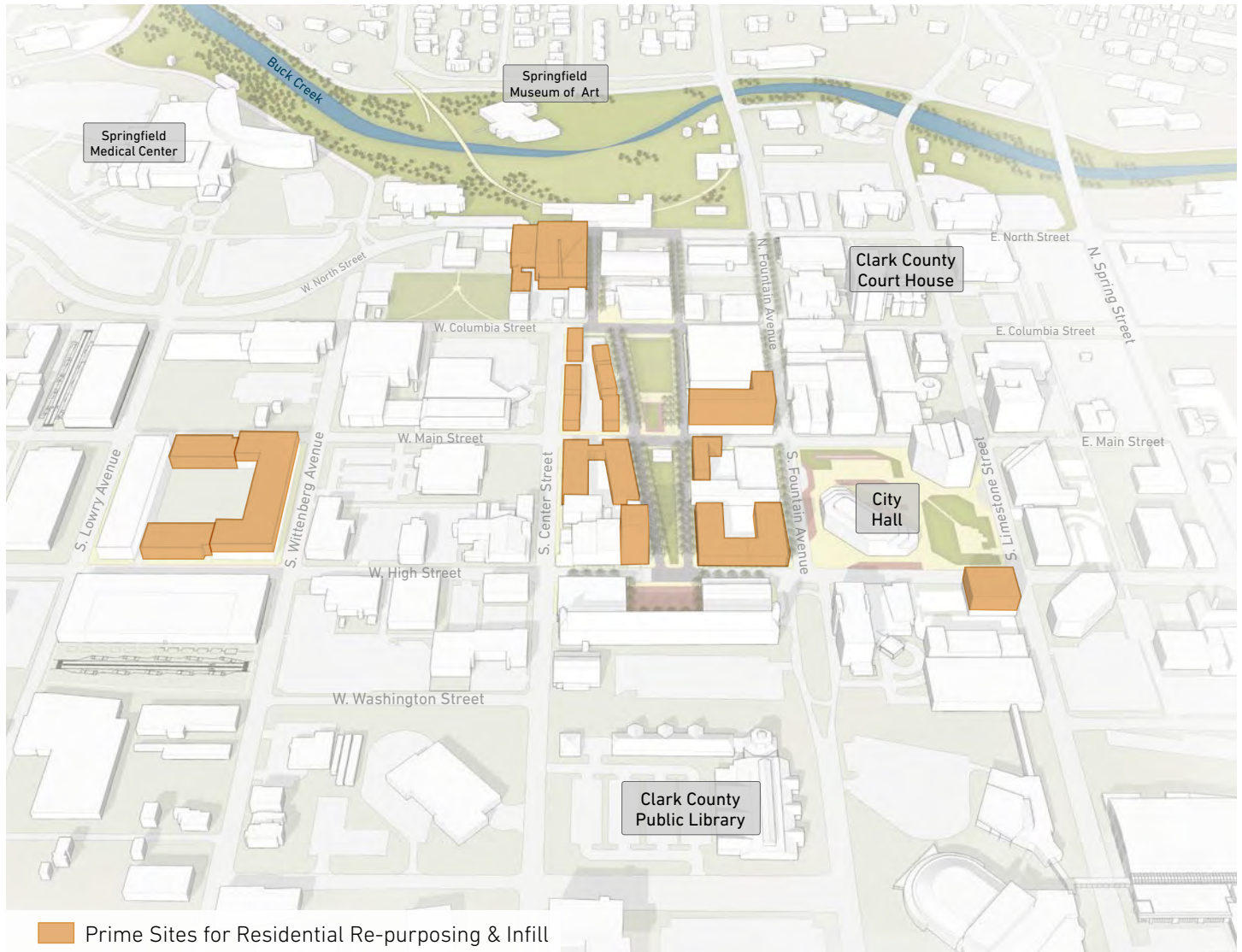


A high-quality, pedestrian-focused streetscape is appropriate for the Limestone Street corridor.



Curb extensions at intersections expand the pedestrian realm and shorten the distance for street crossings.

## Goal 2: Develop attractive, affordable Downtown housing.



Housing is critical to the success of a revitalizing downtown. At the moment, Downtown Springfield has just a handful of residential units. Introducing additional housing, whether as a standalone product or part of a mixed-use project, will serve as a catalyst for Downtown. Downtown housing could be introduced in several ways: one, by utilizing the vacant upper floors of existing buildings; two, by re-purposing existing vacant warehouses; and three, by building new multi-story residential structures.

It is important to note that the catalytic impact of new residential units can be diluted by spreading it all over a large district. Downtown residential projects should be focused for the greatest impact in the area adjacent

to the National Road Commons. Any parking for residential developments must be internal to or under residential developments screened from active street fronts by buildings.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Provide policies and incentives to significantly increase the number of downtown residential units.
2. Focus infill housing efforts in the National Road Commons area.
3. Encourage the redevelopment and reuse of existing historic structures as residential projects.
4. Consider requiring a percentage of a project's units to be affordable as part of incentive packages.

## Character Examples



*Re-purposing existing vacant warehouse/manufacturing buildings into loft apartments is a common and effective way to add housing in downtown districts.*



*New-build housing in Downtown could be encouraged through the use of property tax abatements.*

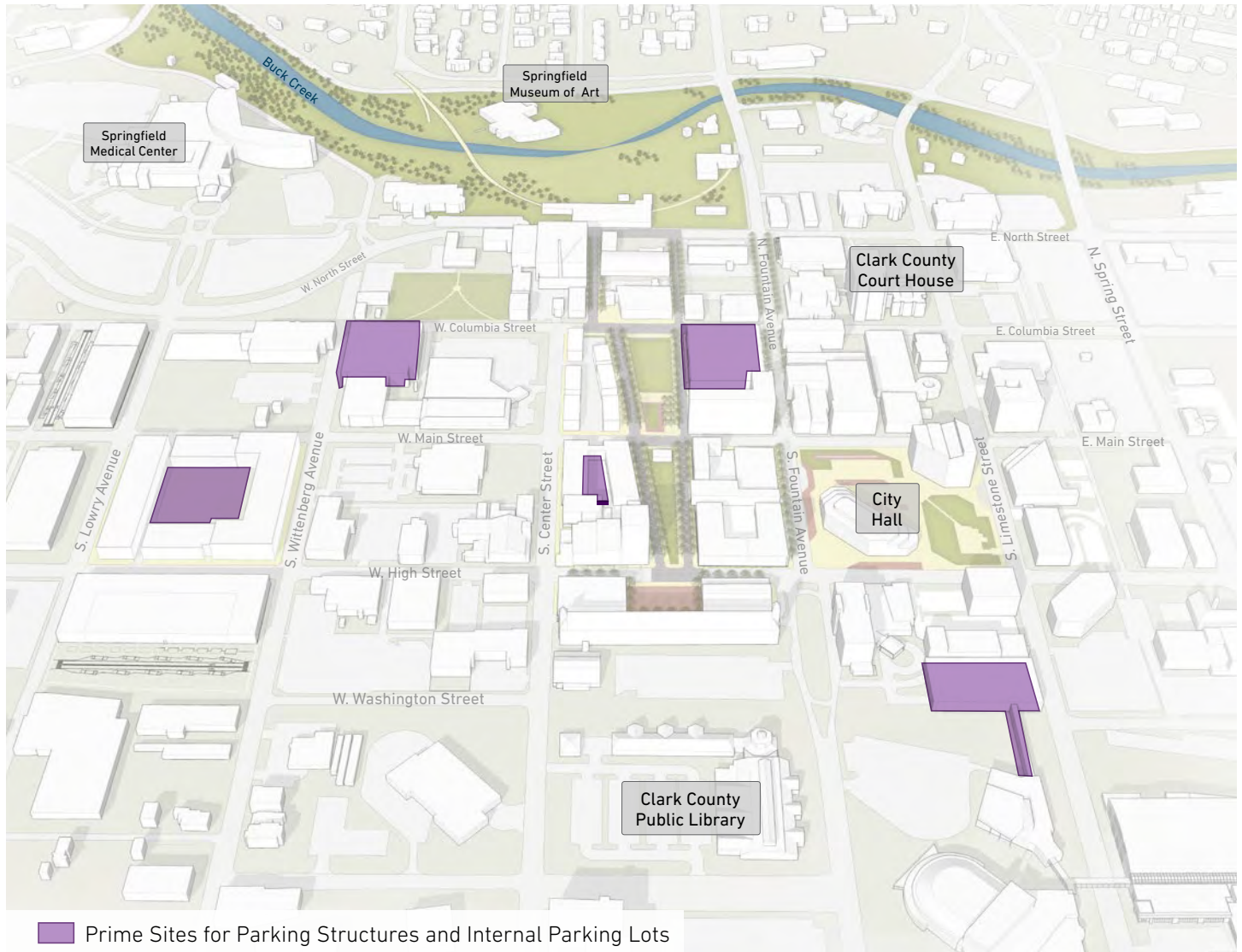


*Renovating and reusing existing historic structures can introduce additional housing while preserving the downtown's important history, character, and urban fabric.*



*New residential products can add significant density to a downtown, driving demand for goods and services within the district and bringing more activity to downtown.*

### Goal 3: Address parking needs, but don't overbuild.



Although adequate parking is critical to the success of Downtown Springfield, it is important to strategically locate parking structures to meet demand and avoid adding new surface parking lots. It is critical to understand that parking lots located along streets with pedestrian sidewalks kills street activation and strolling, sapping energy away from downtown activity and desired rejuvenation. All new parking structures should be built with bright LED lighting for comfort and safety, and higher floor heights so they can be retrofitted to other uses (office or residential) in the future if parking demands lessen.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Locate parking structures strategically to maximize public and private investment.
2. Don't overbuild parking facilities and avoid new surface parking lots fronting along public streets.
3. Build parking garages with higher floor heights that allow for re-purposing in the future.
4. Locate parking in rear or internal to blocks to allow frontage to be preserved for redevelopment opportunities.

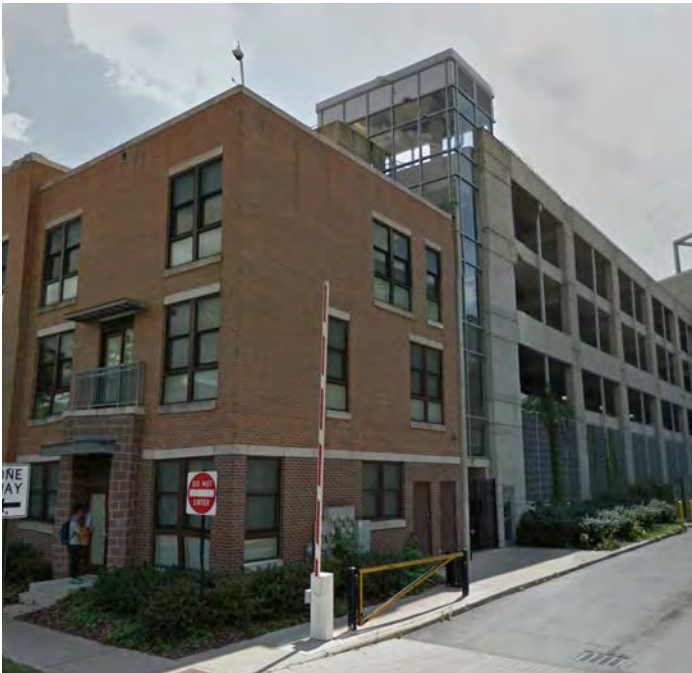
## Character Examples



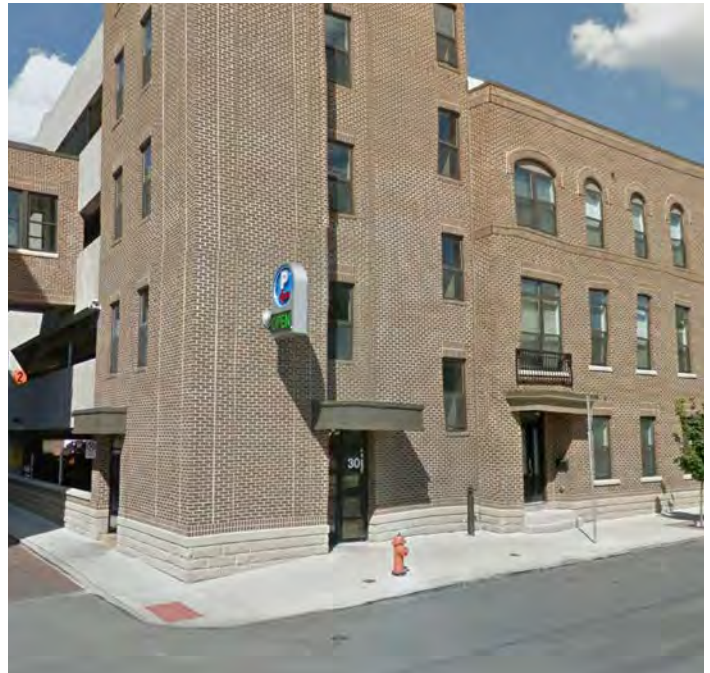
*Parking decks offer an affordable way to double surface parking yields while avoiding the creation of new surface parking lots.*



*Example of parking garage that provides street-level detailing and interest, including windows and architectural lighting. The first floor can be active storefront uses.*

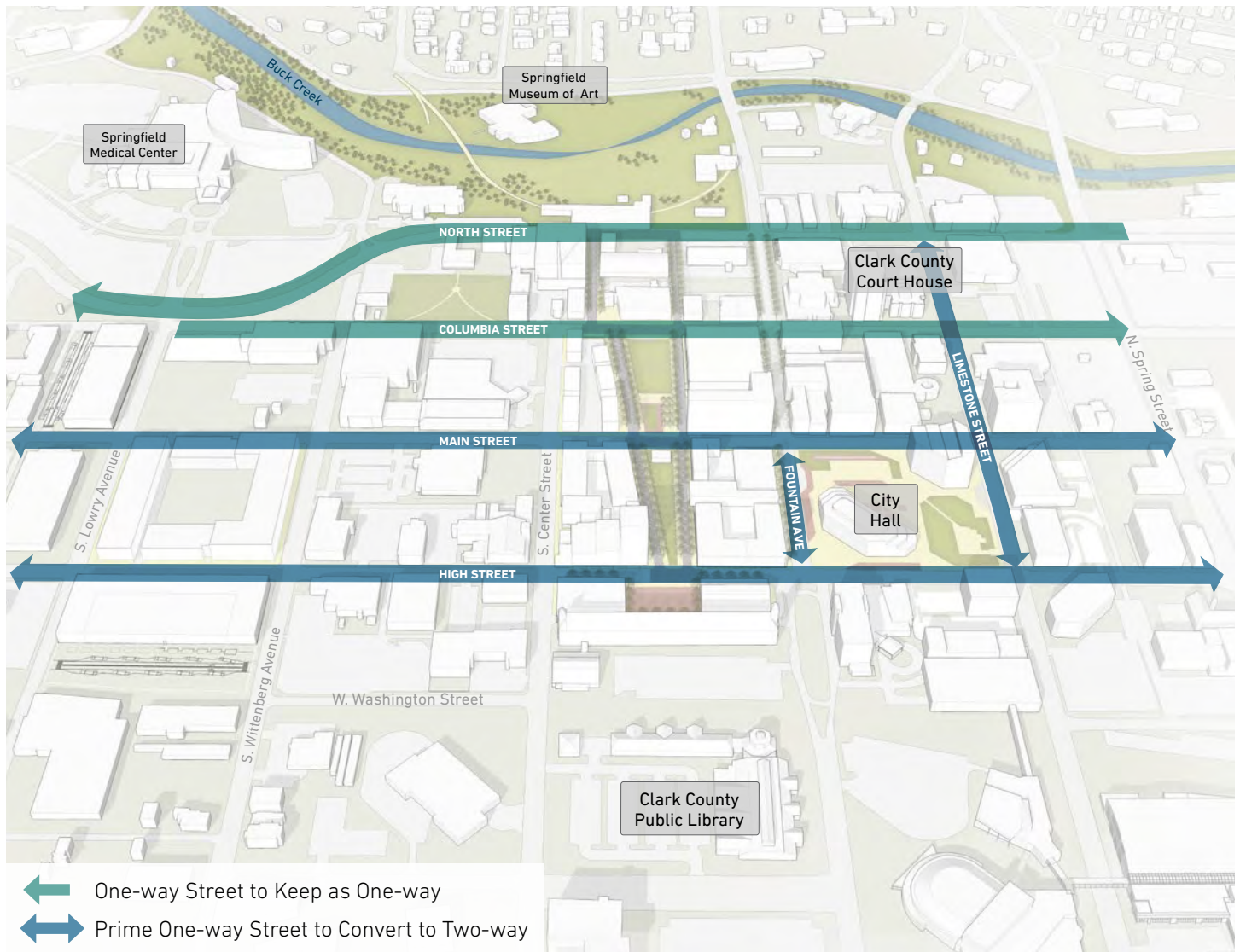


*Example of a parking garage located behind residential frontage. Here a residential "liner" building keeps the street active and screens the parking garage while an alley provides access to the garage.*



*Another example of a parking garage located behind mixed-use street frontage.*

**Goal 4: Convert one-way streets to two-way streets to the extent feasible.**



Downtowns across the country are converting their one-way streets back to two-way streets. Two-way streets are more conducive to retail uses, tend to promote slower traffic, make wayfinding and downtowns more approachable, and tend to be more pedestrian-friendly. A study should be conducted to examine the conversion of High Street, Main Street, Limestone Street, and Fountain Avenue to two-way streets. Additionally, if significant improvements are made to these streets, they should be enhanced to make them more pedestrian-friendly and inviting as these are Springfield's signature streets.

Streetscape improvements such as street trees, planters, outdoor seating, decorative lighting, and intersection curb extensions should be added to these streets.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Develop a plan to convert one-way streets to two-way streets.
2. Add streetscape and pedestrian improvements to Downtown's signature streets.



## Character Examples



*Existing High Street: Potential one-way to two-way conversion opportunity. Also an opportunity for signature streetscape improvements.*



*Existing Main Street: Potential one-way to two-way conversion opportunity. Also an opportunity for signature streetscape improvements.*

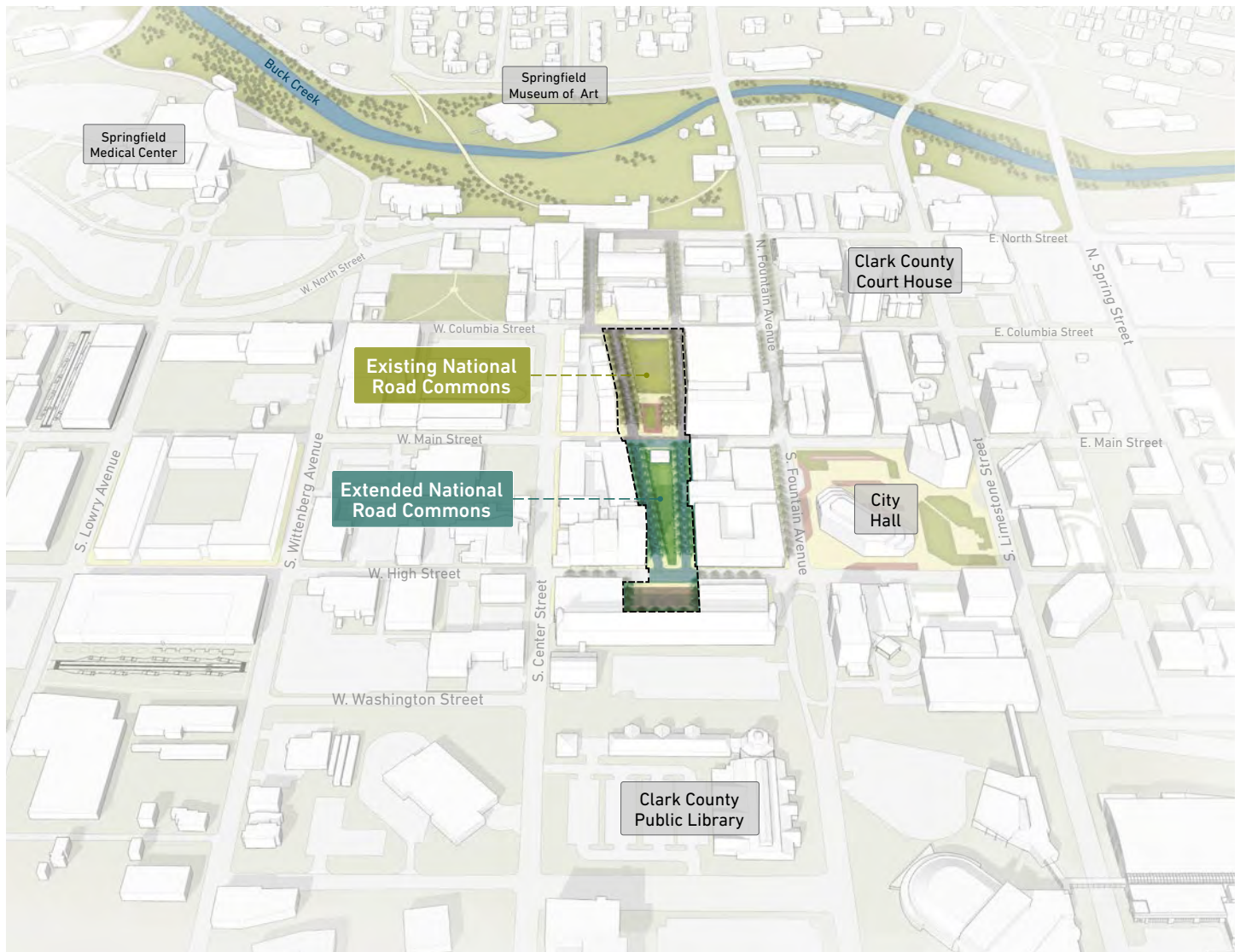


*Example of curb extension at pedestrian crossings.*



*Example of a successful pedestrian environment.*

## Goal 5: Continue the creation and expansion of National Road Commons.



In 2011, the first phase of the National Road Commons park was completed. This plan envisions the extension and completion of the Commons another block to the south. The majority of the infill buildings surrounding the Commons should be residential, but ground floor retail should be encouraged as well, particularly at the street corners. Activating and maintaining the central park is critical, so partners should program events during the summer and throughout the year. A new all-season park or event structure would add additional activity and utility to the park space.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Continue the development of National Road Commons.
2. Use the National Road Commons as an organizing element for new residential development and other activating uses.
3. Develop programming for the park.
4. Consider a new event venue located within the park.

## Character Examples



*The National Road Commons master plan called for an all-seasons park/event structure. Adding such a structure could add activity to the park and contribute rental revenue to the City.*



*Infill development around the Commons should face the park and engage the sidewalk and street across from it.*

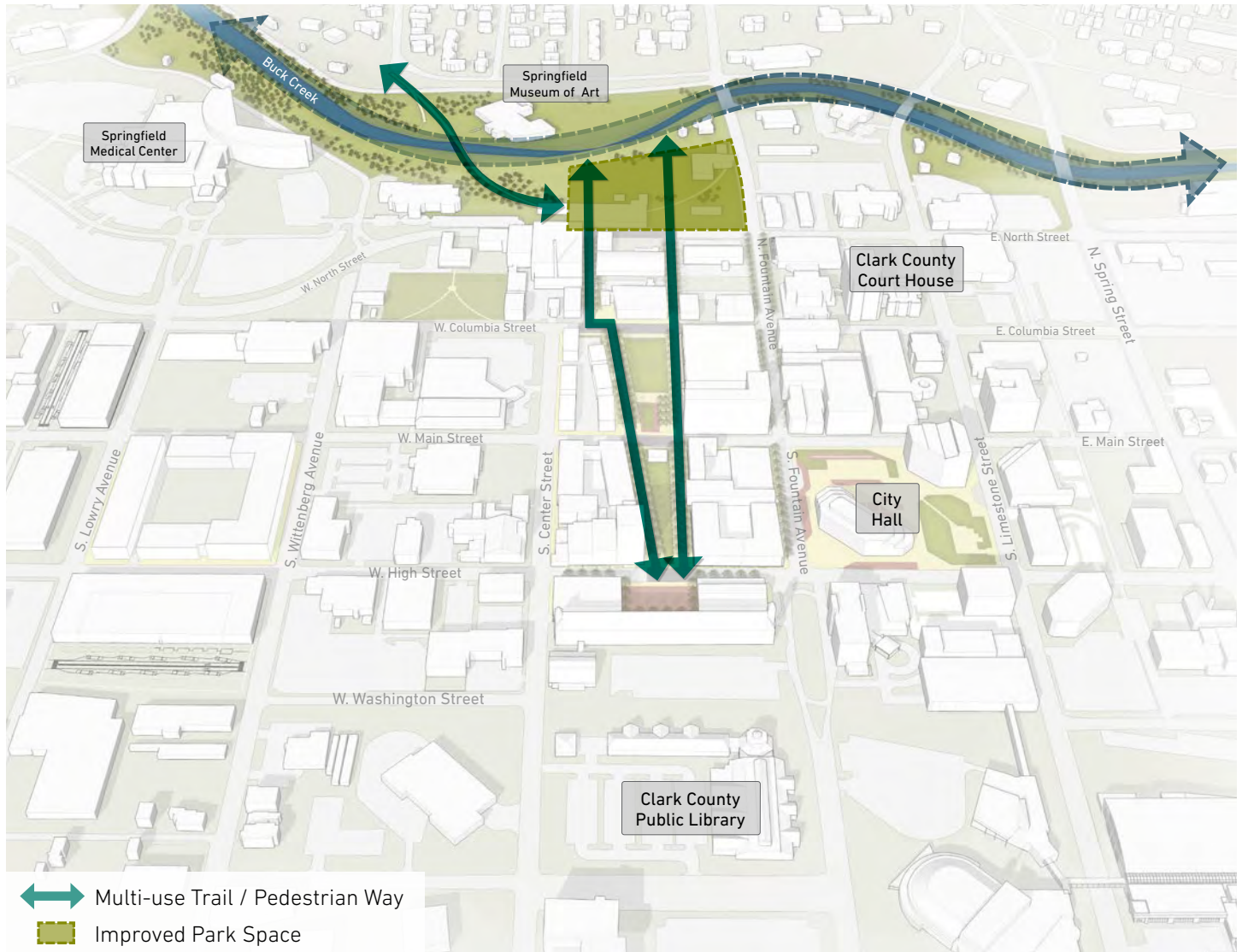


*While most of National Road Commons is lawn, the southern end in front of the Heritage Center is envisioned as an inviting hardscape plaza.*



*Programmed events are an important way to activate an urban green space and make downtown a desirable destination.*

**Goal 6: Acquire land for future Buck Creek park space and trail connections to the north.**



For decades, cities turned their backs to their downtown riverfronts. Today, cities across Ohio and the country are working to reclaim their riverfronts as valuable places. Springfield has started this transformation with improvements to Buck Creek. It is critical to capitalize on this momentum by creating high-quality connections from Buck Creek to National Road Commons to increase the park system connectivity with Downtown.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Capitalize and connect to the investment of the Buck Creek corridor and regional park system.
2. Acquire property and non-contributing buildings between Buck Creek and North Street.

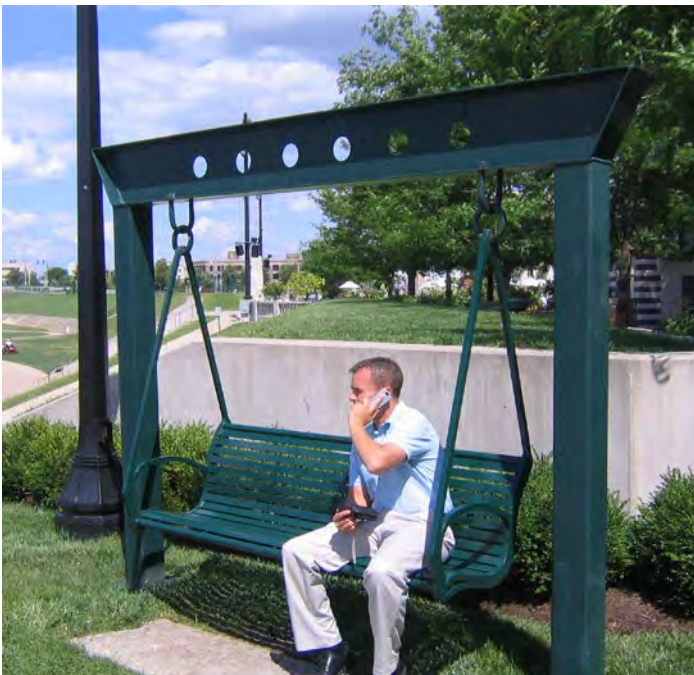
## Character Examples



*One of Downtown Springfield's great assets is Wittenberg University. A signature pedestrian bridge would directly connect the campus, students, and faculty to the heart of Downtown.*



*Connecting Downtown to Buck Creek provides access to the regional trail and park system of Greater Springfield.*

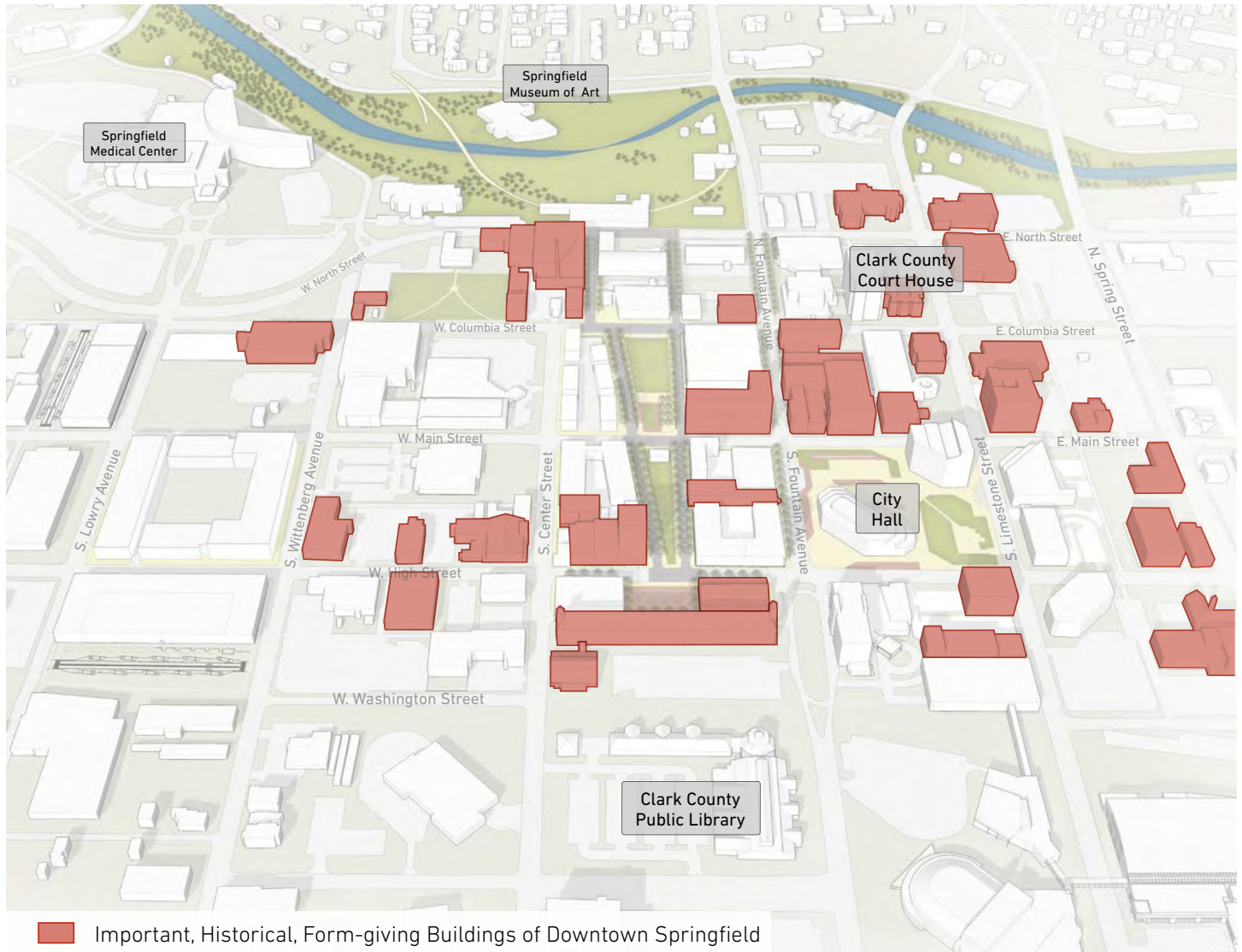


*High-quality seating and swings can be incorporated into the design of the park for residents' and visitors' enjoyment.*



*Covered structures can offer informal spaces for social gatherings gatherings and events, or even warm weather concessions and rentals.*

## Goal 7: Preserve historic buildings for reuse, even if they are vacant today.



Downtown Springfield is blessed with a significant historic building stock. These buildings were constructed with high-quality materials and built at the appropriate scale and density for active street level uses and downtown vitality. They have many of the attributes desired of new Downtown construction. Sadly, over the years, many of these historic structures have been demolished. It is critical to preserve those that remain. Absent market-based demand to justify renovation, historic structures should be stabilized until such demand exists. Historic buildings add character and authenticity to Downtown and are desirable for both residential and office uses.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Preserve historic buildings even if they are vacant, making efforts to stabilize structures until market demand makes redevelopment possible.
2. Develop a historic structure inventory for Downtown.
3. Develop a facade improvement program.
4. Seek federal and state Historic Tax Credits for eligible properties.
5. Identify an entity to purchase and save endangered buildings.

## Character Examples



*This historic building on Main Street could benefit from facade improvements along its storefront.*



*The beautiful Springfield News-Sun building could be preserved through the use of Historic Tax Credits and redeveloped as a mixed-use or residential product.*



*This building on Fountain Avenue could benefit from facade improvements along its storefront.*



*The commercial buildings at the corner of Fountain Avenue and Columbia Street have benefitted from facade improvements along their storefronts, creating a much more dynamic block.*

**Goal 8: Invest in low-cost, high-impact public art and streetscape amenities.**



Art, streetscape, and public realm improvements can make a downtown much more inviting, dynamic, authentic, and memorable. Blank or ugly facades can benefit from murals. Decorative lighting can add a festive mood and improve the sense of safety. Utility boxes and other necessities can be wrapped and decorated. Attractive wayfinding can both help direct people and add to the city's brand.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Continue to install murals and graphic panels on blank walls.
2. Use unique, pedestrian-scale lighting, including string lights and color-changing bulbs.
3. Maintain and expand wayfinding system as needed.



## Character Examples



*Murals and other public art provide an opportunity to express Springfield's unique history and identity.*



*Murals can become a distinctive centerpiece of neighborhood pride and community life.*



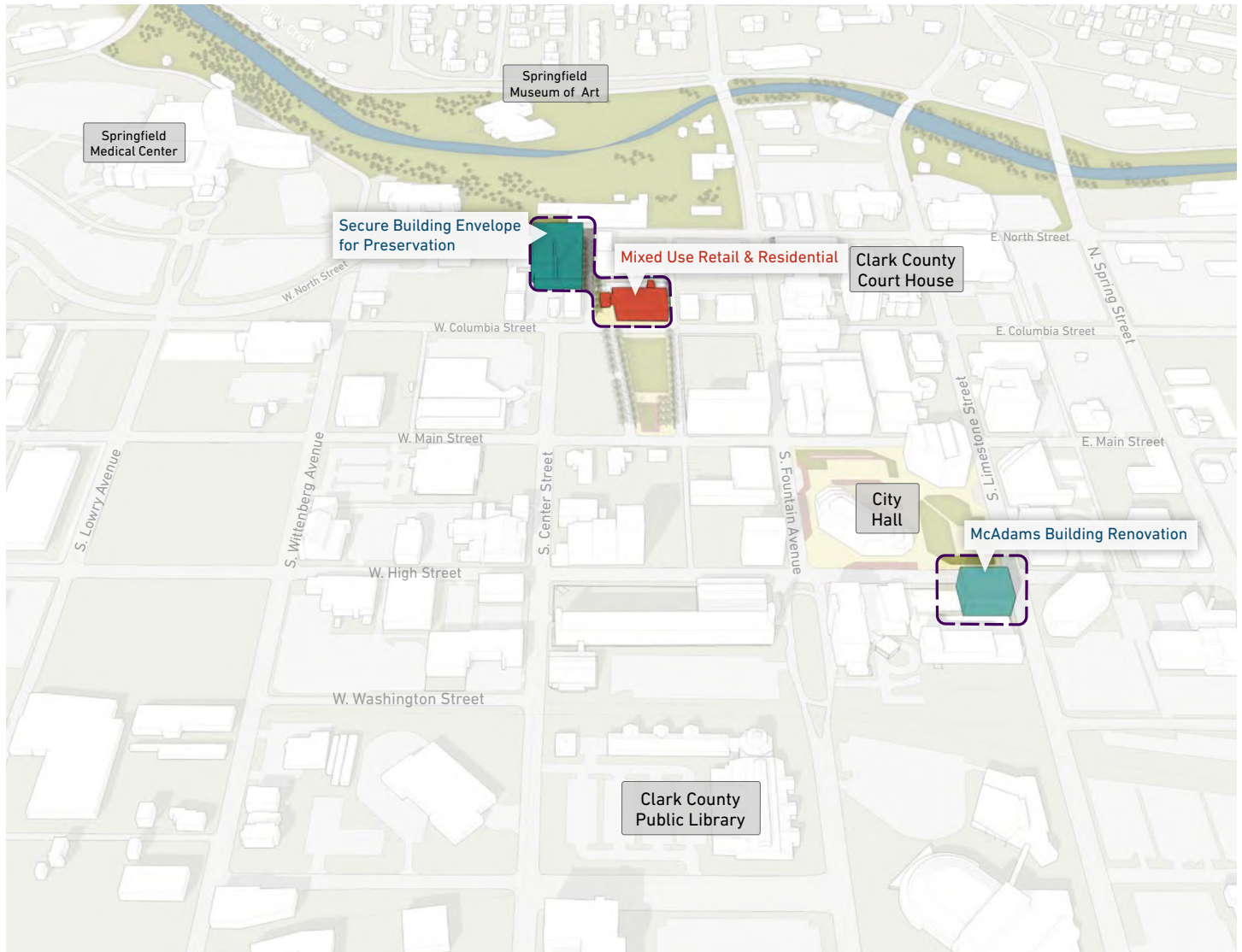
*The use of different lighting elements enhances the pedestrian experience and creates a welcoming atmosphere.*



*String lighting is a low-cost way to enhance street life.*

# 5 | PHASING

## Phase 1: Build on current momentum.



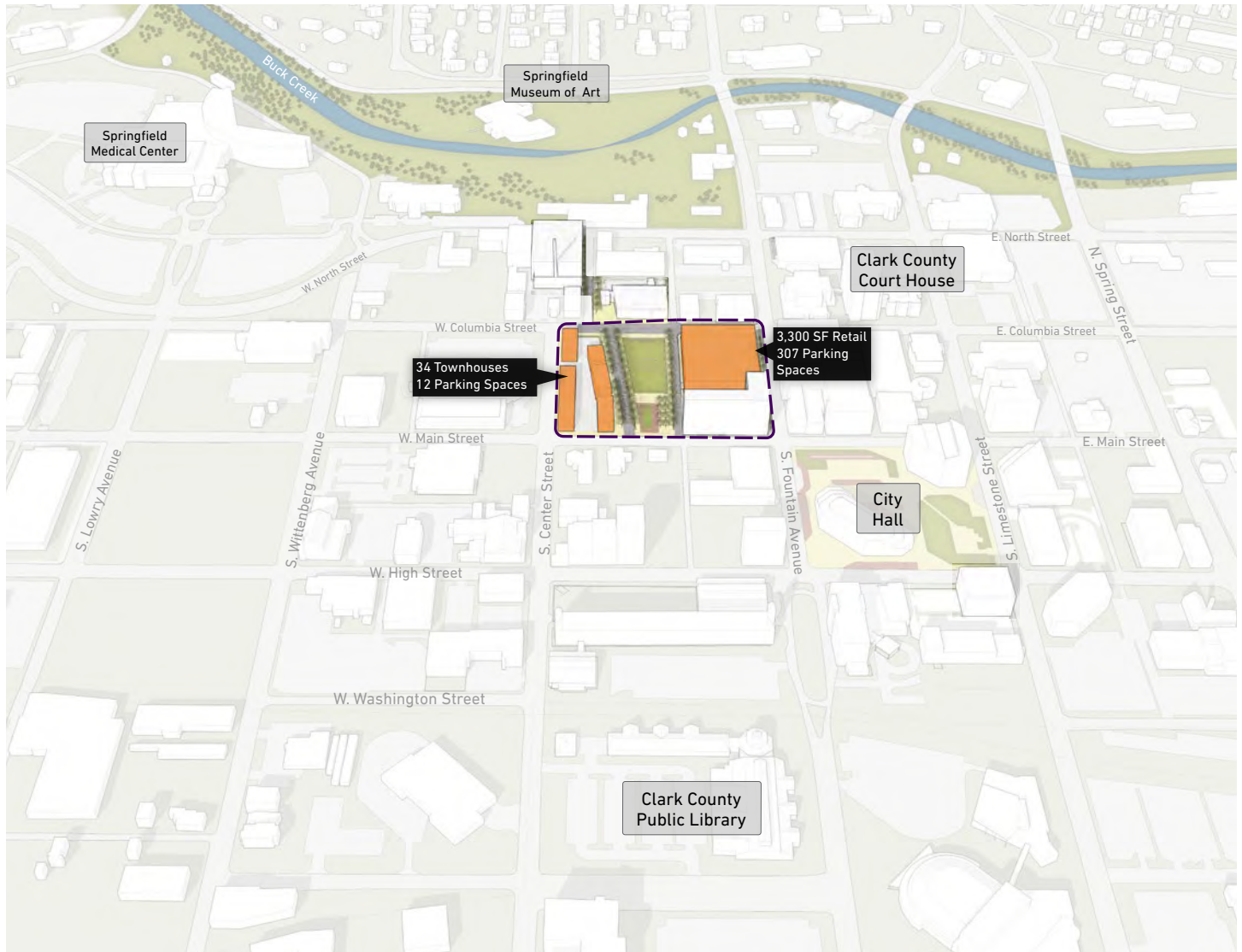
### Phase 1: Near-Term - Immediate

- Secure and stabilize the Metallic Casket warehouse building.
- Renovate the Metallic Casket building for residential or mixed-use development to expand on the success of the adjacent Mother Stewart's Brewing.
- Improve the surface parking lot bounded by Columbia Street, Fisher Street, Center Street, and WR Hackett Fruit & Vegetables. This parking will serve Mother Stewart's as well as future demand for the renovated Casket building. The improved lot would be an ideal location to implement the idea of using recycled shipping containers as additional retail space as well.

### Development Summary

- Metallic Casket Building Renovation
  - 29,000 sq ft per story (up to 5 stories available) residential/mixed-use space
  - 5,280 sq ft attached one-story structure residential/mixed-use space
- Proposed Mixed-Use Development
  - 16,000 sf retail space
  - 16 residential units
  - 40 parking spaces
- McAdams Building Renovation
  - 36 residential units
  - 8,400 sf retail space

## Phase 1: Activate National Road Commons.



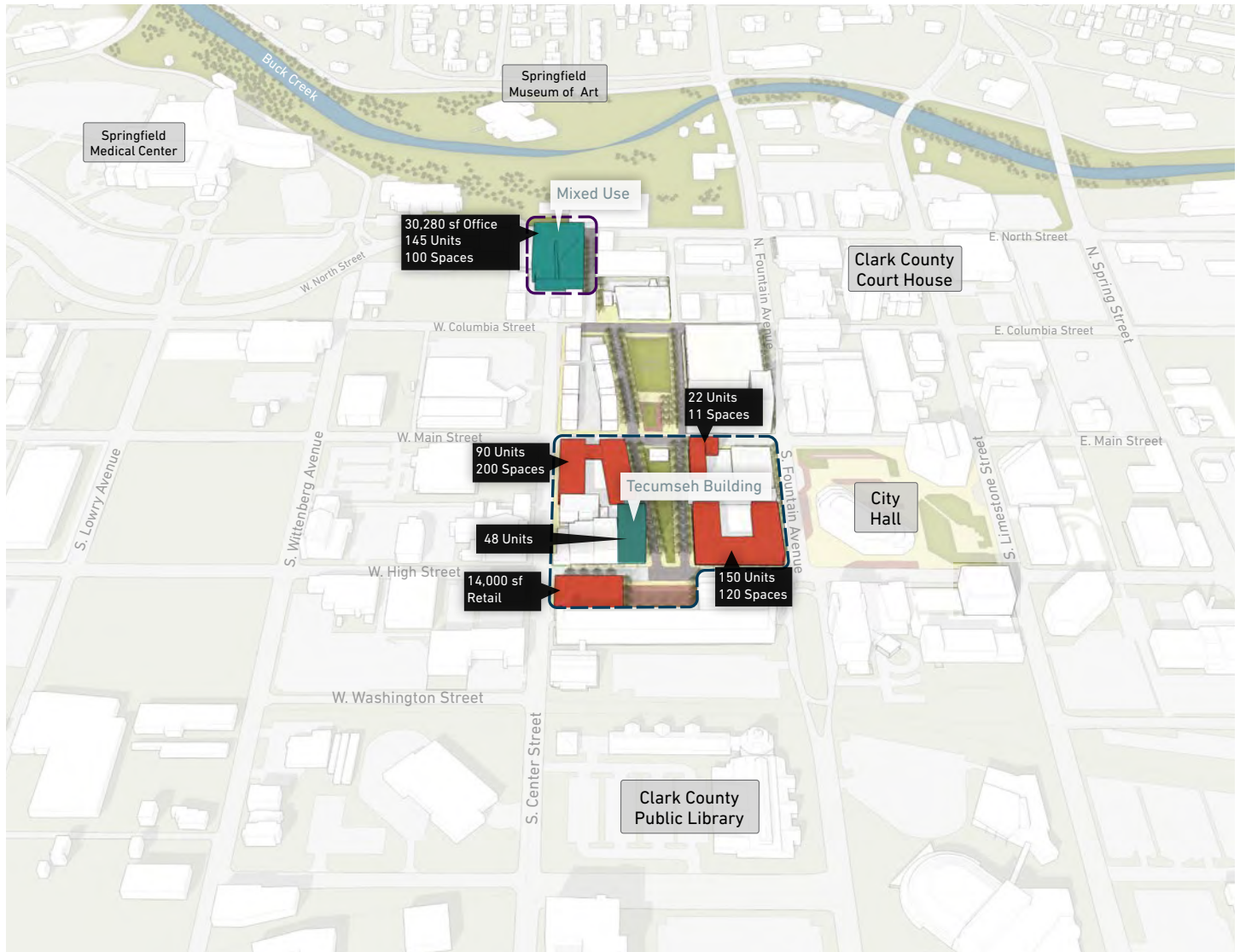
### Phase 1: Near-Term - Next 2 Years

- Activate and program National Road Commons.
- Complete a new parking garage at the Fisher, Columbia, Fountain, and Main block. This facility will free up the current surface parking demand from around the Commons, facilitating infill development.
- Develop all blocks adjacent to National Road Commons with two-to-four-story residential development with the primary facades facing the Commons and Fountain Avenue. All structures should be self-parked. Ground floor retail should be permitted, if not encouraged, particularly at the corners.
- Explore adding a permanent structure for event rentals as originally envisioned in the master plan for the Commons.

### Development Summary

- New Development (Completed)
  - 3-story parking structure with 307 spaces and 3,300 sq ft retail space
  - 34 townhouses with 12 parking spaces

## Phase 2: Complete National Road Commons.



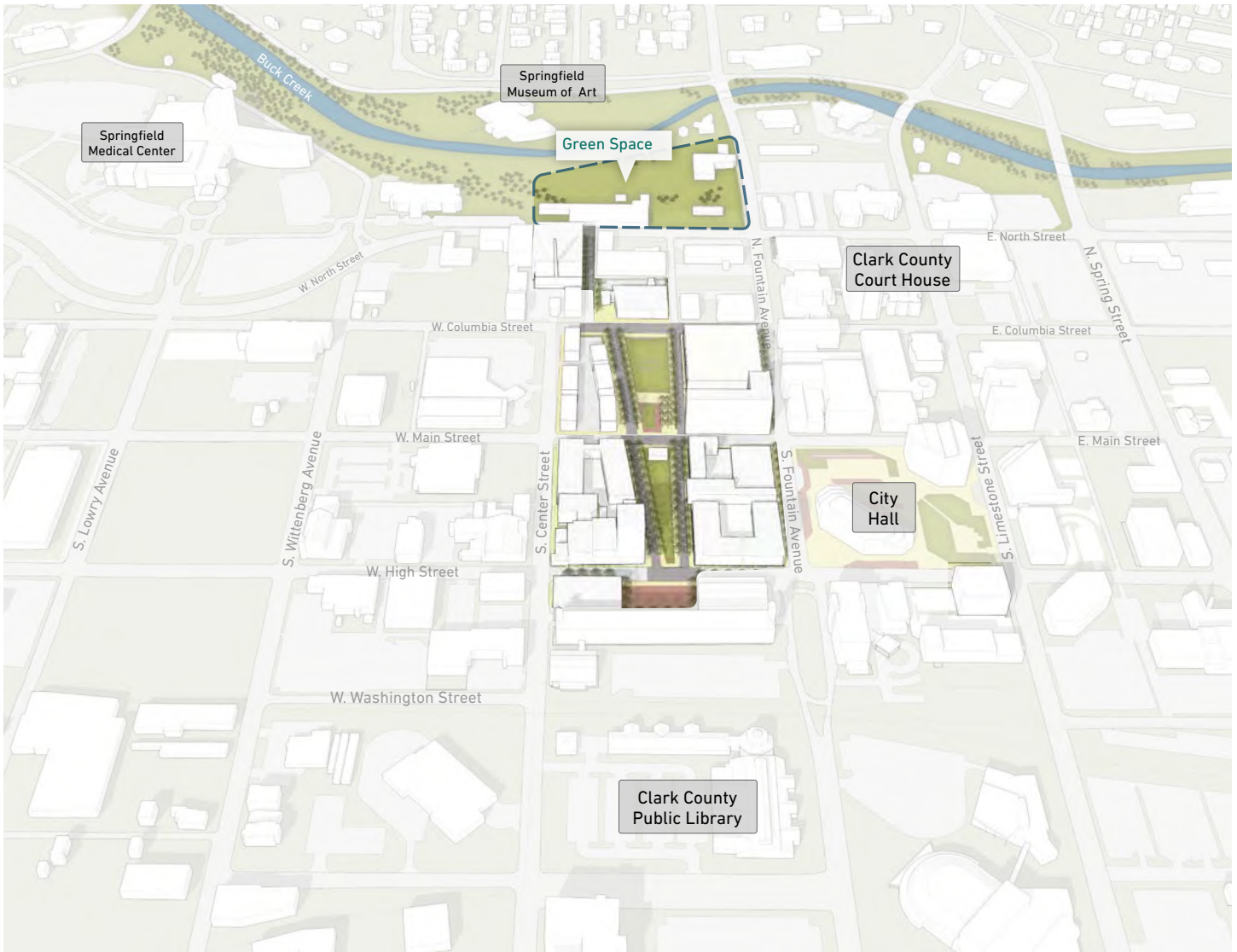
### Phase 2: Mid-Term - Next 5 Years

- Complete National Road Commons to the Heritage Center.
- Build the second phase of National Road Commons from Main to High Street.
- Develop all blocks adjacent to Phase 2 of National Road Commons with two-to-four-story residential development with the primary facades facing the Commons. All structures should be self-parked. First floor retail is permitted.

### Development Summary

- Renovated Warehouse
  - 30,280 sq ft office space
  - 145 residential units
  - 100 parking spaces
- Renovated Tecumseh Building
  - 48 residential units
- Proposed Development
  - 262 residential units across four buildings
  - 14,000 sq ft retail space
  - 431 parking spaces

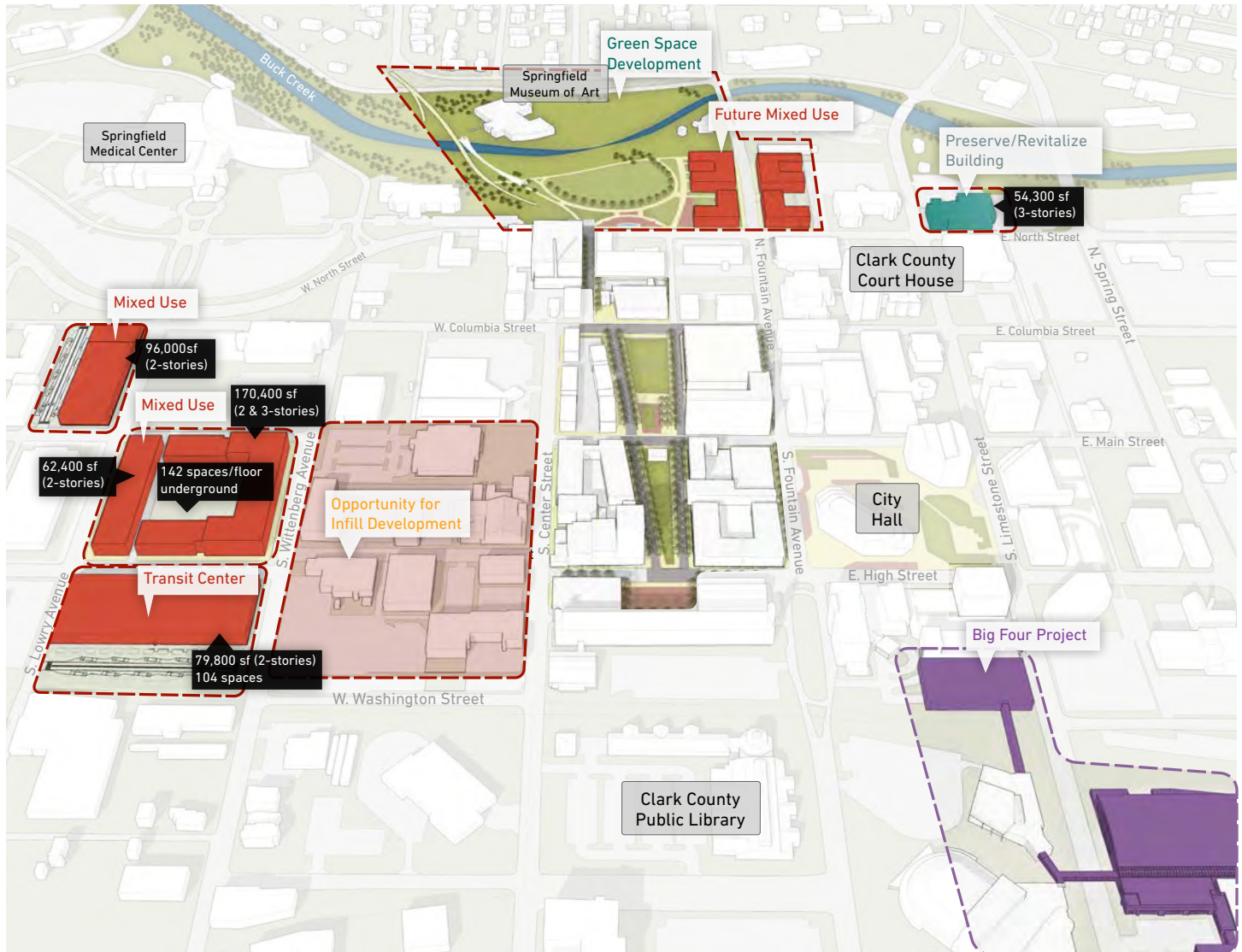
## Phase 2: Connect Downtown to regional park and trail system.



### Phase 2: Mid-Term - Next 10 Years

- Make connections from National Road Commons and Downtown to Buck Creek and the regional park and trail system.
- Purchase any land north of North Street between Wittenberg Avenue and Fountain Street and develop as a park.
- Preserve Fountain Avenue frontage from Downtown to Buck Creek for future two-to-four-story mixed-use infill.

## Phase 3: Focus on major redevelopment sites, catalytic projects, and infill opportunities.



### Phase 3: Long-Term - Next 20 Years

- Explore mixed-use redevelopment opportunities on the old Crowell-Collier site.
- Advance the Big Four Project to create a signature destination and anchor for Downtown.
- Incrementally pursue infill opportunities in selected blocks and throughout the district.
- Consider a future Downtown transit center to anchor the southwest quadrant of Downtown.
- Continue to preserve and restore historic buildings.
- Consider “road diets” for Columbia Street and North Street.

### Development Summary

- Potential Renovation
  - 54,300 sq ft residential/retail/office space
- Proposed Development
  - 408,600 sq ft residential/retail/office space
  - 104 parking spaces plus potential 142 spaces/floor below ground
- Big Four Project
  - 82,500 sq ft recreation space

## Overall Development Summary

This vision for the transformation of Downtown Springfield is achievable and represents substantial private investment in the City. Over the long term, the development potential for new and renovated residential, mixed-use, retail, and office space is significant. The chart below summarizes the square footage represented in Phases 1 and 2. It does not include the nearly half-million square feet of new or renovated space envisioned as part of Phase 3.

It is important to keep in mind that downtowns, by their nature, are adaptable places. As such, these development figures should be regarded as a general guide to future growth. Over the coming years, Downtown Springfield will be able to respond successfully to market-based demand for various products and project types.

Phase	Office Space (SF)	Retail Space (SF)	Residential Units	Parking Spaces
Phase 1: Near-Term	N/A	27,700	86	359
Phase 2: Mid-Term	30,280	14,000	455	431
<b>Phases 1 &amp; 2 Total</b>	<b>± 30,280</b>	<b>± 41,700</b>	<b>± 541</b>	<b>± 790</b>

# 6 | ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN & RENDERINGS







Future Mixed Use / Infill Development

E. North Street

New Parking Garage

National Road Commons

E. Columbia Street

N. Center Street

N. Limestone Street

N. Spring Street

New Townhomes

E. Main Street

City Hall

S. Fountain Avenue

High Street

Proposed Parking Garage

W. Washington Street

E. Washington Street

Hollenbeck Bayley  
Creative Arts Center

Multi-purpose Sports Facility

S. Spring Street

W. Jefferson Street

S. Fountain Avenue

Kuss Auditorium

S. Limestone Street

YMCA Expansion

# PERSPECTIVE RENDERINGS





**1** Eye-level view looking south along Fountain Avenue.



**2** Bird's-eye view looking north from National Road Commons toward Columbia Street.



**3** Eye-level view looking north from High Street toward Market Street along the expanded National Road Commons Plaza.



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