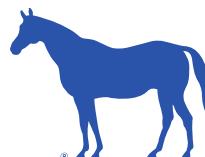


RECONNECTING TO OUR DOWNTOWN

Lexington's Downtown Area Master Plan

Boyd O. Sewe | LRP - Principal Planner
Council General Government and Planning (GGP) Committee | 01.20.2026

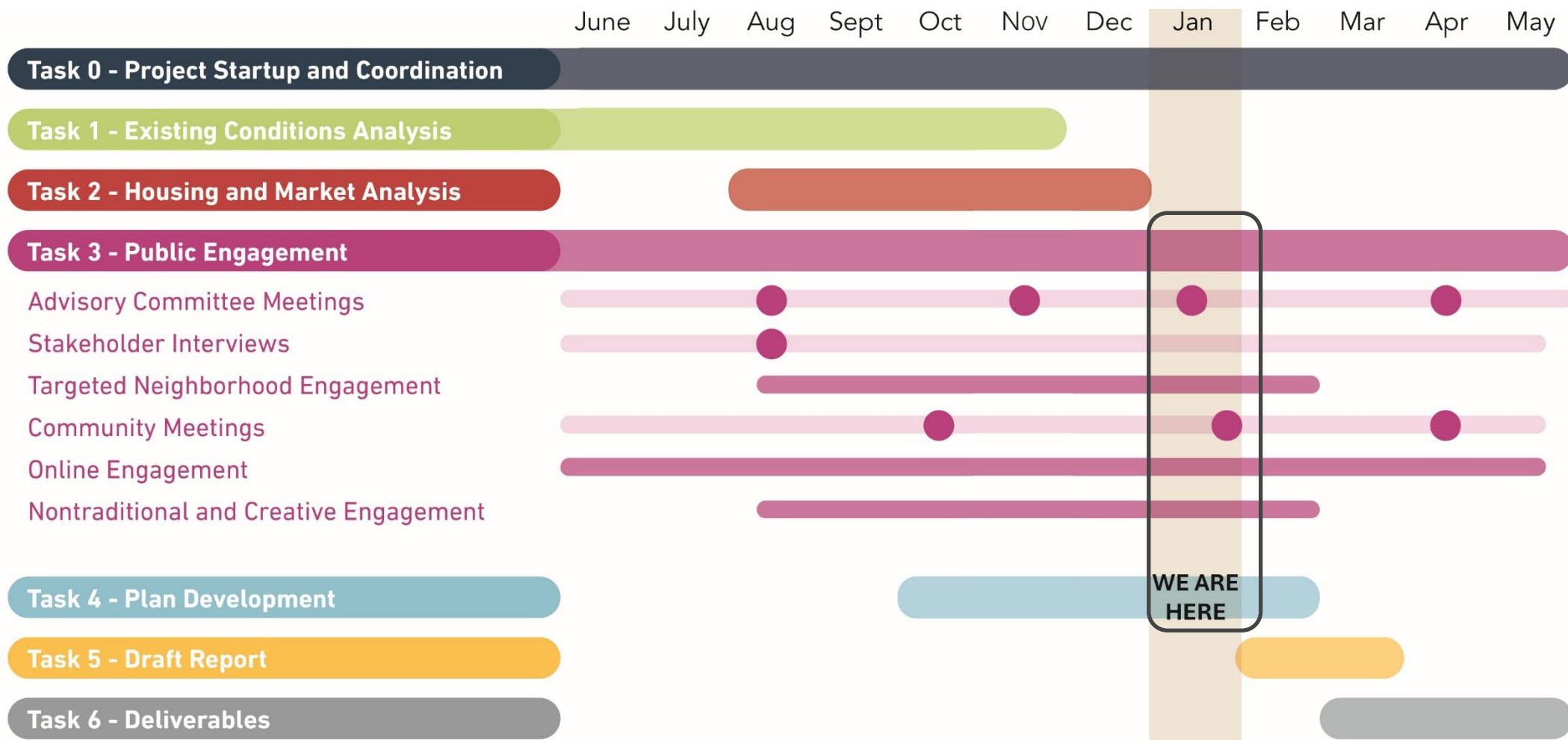


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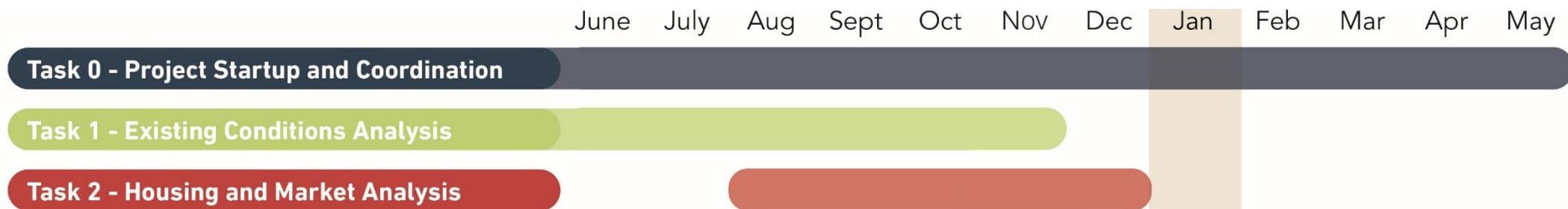
Project Schedule

The Lexington Downtown Area Master Plan's yearlong process will take place through six (6) task phases.



Housing and Market Analysis

Project Team are developing the draft report



Early plan elements include:

- Housing and Affordability
- Storefront Retail & Dining
- Visitor Experience
- Office Space

Draft details are available online at Downtownlexplan.com





Downtown Dreaming: Interactive Workshop

The planning team hosted the first of three community meetings on October 8. Attended by more than 200 people, this event included various interactive activities addressing downtown opportunities.



200+ Lexington
residents, visitors, and
students!



Downtown Dreaming: Online Survey

Following the interactive workshop, the planning team hosted an online survey with similar questions and activities as the Downtown Dreaming event.

Lexington Downtown Area Master Plan Survey

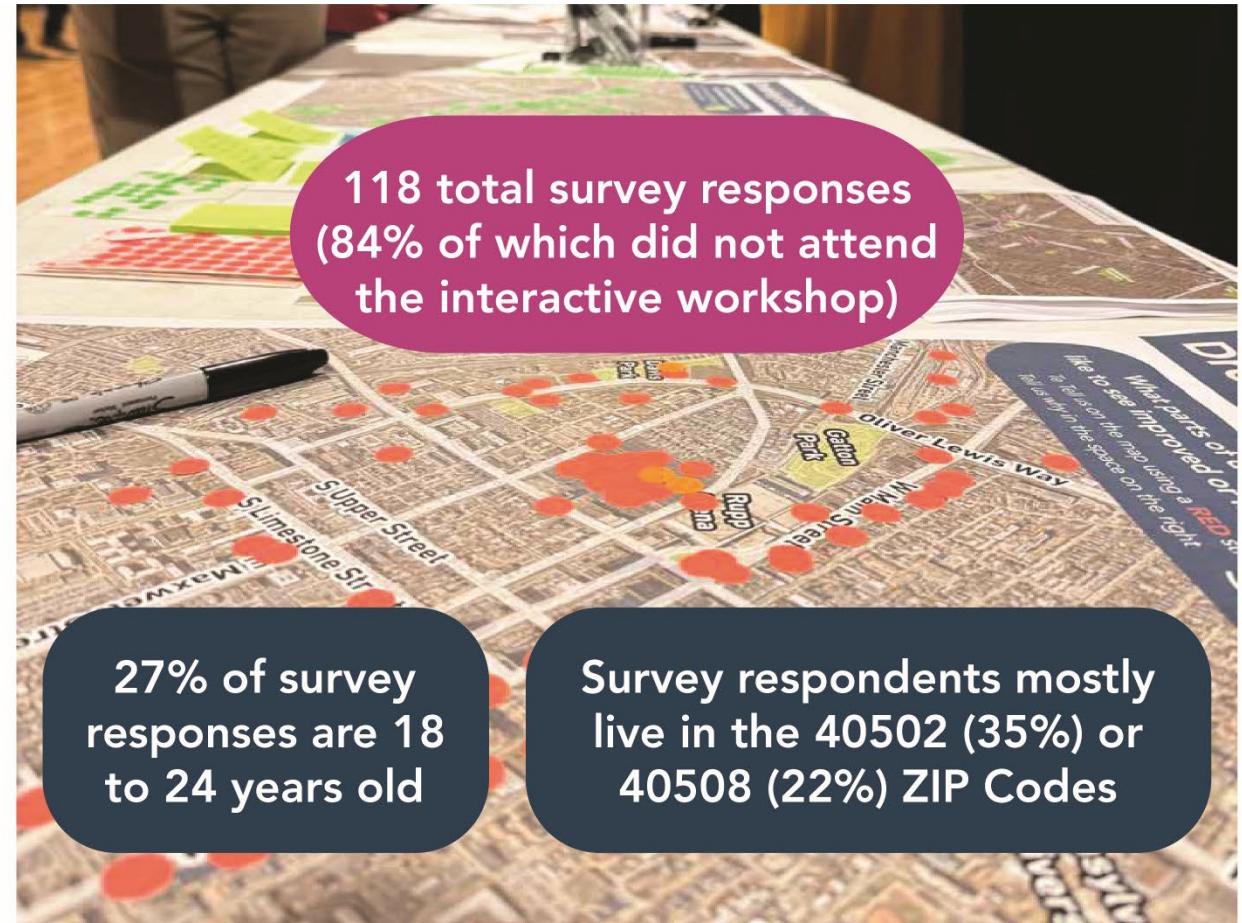
Section 1: Your Connection to Downtown Lexington

2. Tell Us: Where do you Live? [Click on the map](#) below to show us.



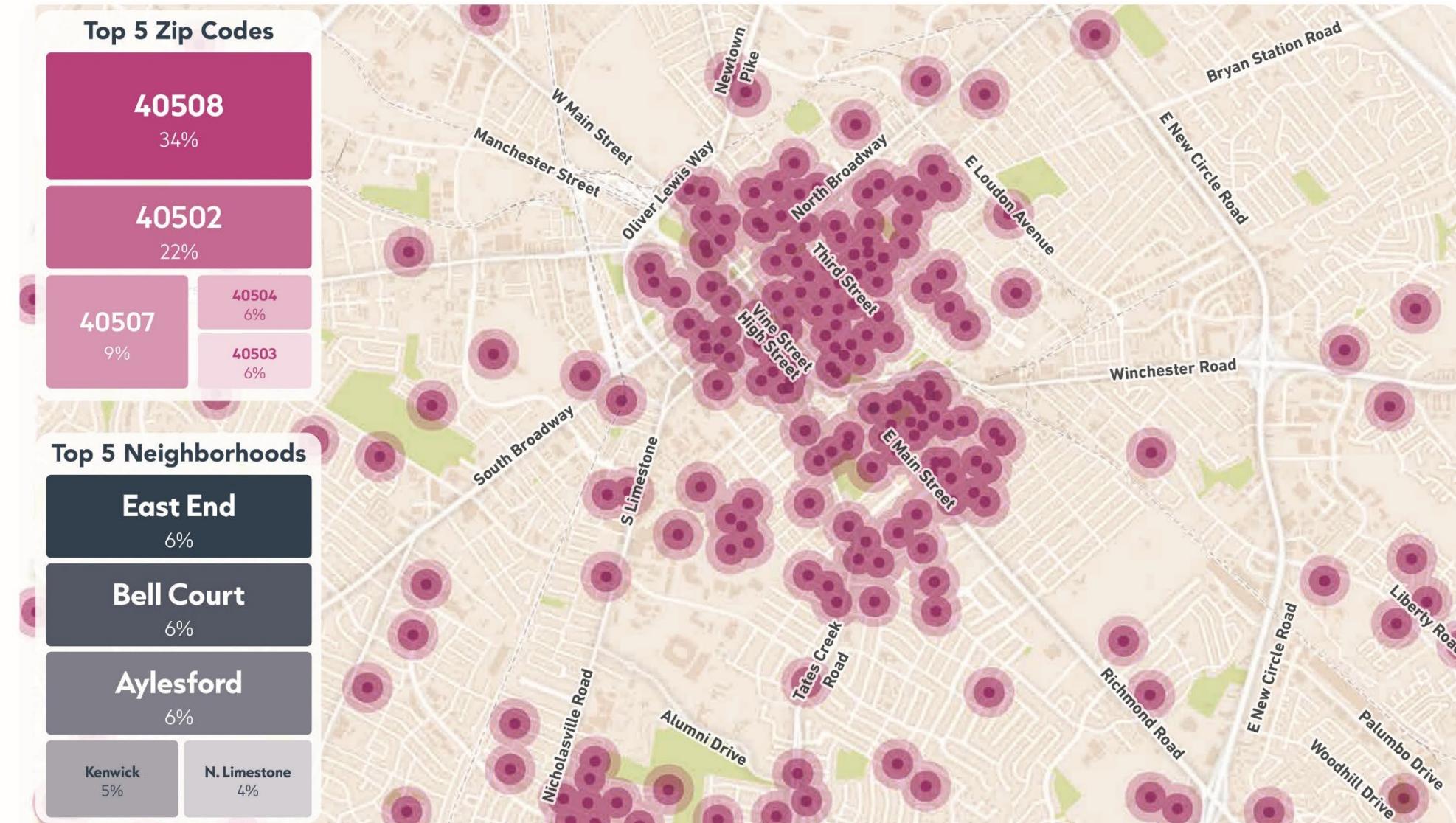
3. Which Lexington neighborhood do you live in?

4. In what zip code is your home located? Enter your 5-digit zip code below.





Meeting and Survey Responses





Housing Opportunities - What types of **Housing** would you like to see in Downtown?



Affordable Housing

44%



Mixed Use

31%

"Keep the character of Lexington!"



Lofts/ Adaptive Reuse

28%



Missing Middle

22%

"Prioritize vacant lots, abandoned properties, parking lots and expansion of commercial and retail zones"



Townhomes

14%



High Rise Residential

13%

"Greater density/more multi-family over single family homes""

Top things we heard:

01

Support for Diverse and Mixed Housing Types: Residents favor a variety of housing—particularly mixed-use buildings, lofts/adaptive reuse, and missing middle housing.

02

Affordability and Accessibility Matter: There is strong demand for affordable, accessible, and social housing options.

03

Preserve Neighborhood Character and Heritage: Retaining historic character and the charm of existing neighborhoods.

04

Encourage Smaller-Scale, Human-Centered Design: Preference for smaller, community-oriented developments rather than large, dense high-rises.

05

Sustainability and Local Livability: Participants want green, sustainable housing and development that supports walkability, and long-term livability.



Retail Opportunities - What types of **Retail** would you like to see in Downtown?



Everyday Needs

51%



Eclectic/ Unique Shops

36%

"Grocery store close to Downtown!!"



Arts and Craft or Galleries

24%



Clothing and Apparel

15%

"Coffee shops, thrift stores, small local spots that can be rented affordably"



Fitness/ Health oriented

11%



National Brands/ Chains

9%

Top things we heard:

01

Demand for Daily Needs

People want more variety in retail, including grocery stores, bookstores, hardware stores, and specialty shops

02

Focus on Local and Independent Businesses

Preference for locally owned businesses rather than large chains, to create a unique experience.

03

Accessibility and Walkability are Priorities

Demand for pedestrian-friendly retail areas, reducing parking, and improving accessibility.

04

Experiential and Social Spaces

Desire for retail that integrates social and cultural experiences—such as cafes, restaurants, etc

"Pop-up stores, indoor opportunities for local art, markets (temporary/permanent. Specialty/ unique stores"



Dining Opportunities - What types of Dining would you like to see in Downtown?



Casual sit down

47%



Food hall or Market

41%

"A market would be amazing!!"



Coffee shops and Cafe

33%



Fine Dining

11%

"Third spaces for youth to hang and diverse options for all cultures and incomes"



Breweries and Distilleries

9%

"Upscale casual, accessible/affordable food hall"



National brands/Chains

6%

Top things we heard:

01

Desire for Diverse Dining Options

There is strong interest in more variety, cultural diversity and unique local eateries.

02

Preference for Casual and Family-Friendly Spaces

Respondents want casual dining environments, outdoor seating, and places that are welcoming for families and social gatherings.

03

Healthy and Sustainable Choices

There is a desire for healthier food options, farm-to-table concepts, and restaurants that prioritize fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

04

Experiential and Social Dining

Interest for dining experiences beyond just food—spaces that encourage community interaction.

05

Accessibility and Convenience

Affordable pricing, quick-service options, and locations that are easy to access without parking challenges.



Parks and Open Space- What types of Parks and open space would you like to see in Downtown?



Landscape area/ green infrastructure

40%



Pocket Parks

40%



Linear Parks

24%

"Focus on using natives and green infrastructure as a way to keep downtown cool and shaded in the summer as well as manage stormwater."



Events and Programming

23%

"More events and programming and green space where people can sit and stay."



Recreational facilities

14%

"I would love there to be more bike/running trails closer to downtown."



Gathering area/ Event lawn

11%

Top things we heard:

01

Expand Green and Recreational Spaces

More trees, shaded areas, and parks with amenities like seating, trails, and safe pedestrian connections.

02

Create Community-Oriented Spaces

Desire for more public art, cultural events, and interactive activities that bring people together.

03

Improve Accessibility and Safety

Need for better lighting, clear signage, and safe crossings to make open spaces welcoming and secure for all users.

04

Add Amenities and Programming

Add features like seating, art installations, dog parks, playgrounds, skate parks and multipurpose areas that can host events and make downtown vibrant.

05

Connect Open Spaces with Mobility Options

Emphasis on integrating bike paths, walking trails, and transit for better accessibility and connectivity to the broader downtown area.



Downtown Dreaming: Mobility Matters - What We Heard

Top things we heard:

**People First Corridors:**

People want wider, smoother, better-connected sidewalks with greenery, shade, and buffers from traffic and more pedestrian-friendly crossings.

**Auto-Oriented Safeguards:**

There's a strong call for slower speeds, better enforcement, safer intersections, and more protection from aggressive drivers.

**Enhanced Cycling Infrastructure:**

Respondents are asking for fully protected, separated bike lanes and trails that feel safe and usable across the city

**More Connected Downtown:**

Many want better links between neighborhoods, trails, and destinations, especially to and from downtown.

**Improved Public Transportation:**

People are asking for more frequent, reliable, and dignified transit service with better stops and broader coverage

**Rethinking Downtown Parking:**

Concerns center around too much surface parking, inconsistent enforcement, and the need for affordable or consolidated options

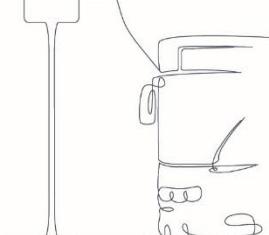
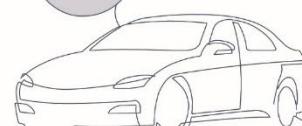
"Too much surface parking, are there laws to keep so many people owning surface parking?"

"Roundabouts will slow traffic a lot, no more racing to make that red light."

"Less one way more bike lanes heart of downtown micromobility."

"I like walking on Town Branch Commons. The distance from the road is a relief, especially while walking with my kids."

"Shuttles across greater downtown/ Chevy Chase/ Distillery district."





Emerging Themes Shared with the Community

A photograph of a downtown street during a daytime event, with a grid of ten circular icons overlaid on the image. Each icon contains a white line-art icon and a corresponding text description. The icons are arranged in two rows of five. The background shows buildings, trees, and a crowd of people.

- Downtown is special.** (Dark Blue Circle, Top Left)
- Safety and connections are concerns for those biking and walking.** (Pink Circle, Top Middle)
- For businesses to thrive, there needs to be more people living downtown to support them.** (Dark Blue Circle, Top Right)
- Downtown needs better transportation infrastructure.** (Pink Circle, Middle Right)
- Lexington's unhoused population is a top concern.** (Dark Blue Circle, Bottom Left)
- Downtown is a gathering place for people in Lexington and surrounding communities.** (Pink Circle, Bottom Middle)
- Lexington needs to build more housing that more people can actually afford.** (Dark Blue Circle, Bottom Right)
- When people visit downtown, they sometimes face challenges.** (Pink Circle, Bottom Middle/Right)
- The plan must be realistic.** (Dark Blue Circle, Bottom Right)



Project Goals

Establishing Project Goals





Project Goals

Eight Project Goals

Are these goals reflective of what we have heard? Are we missing anything?



Have a dynamic retail, restaurant, and business environment



Keep downtown special, unique, and vibrant.



Build more downtown housing at various price points



Work on the downtown visitor experience



Transform downtown streets into people-focused spaces for walking, biking, riding transit, and driving.



Create a connected downtown at the neighborhood, city, and regional scale.



Continue making Downtown green, active, and enjoyable



Support Lexington's unhoused population.



Defining the Downtown Area

One of the key objectives of the plan is to develop a community-supported defined downtown area. This area will be developed by engaging the Lexington Community and will be guided by what we learn from our existing conditions analysis.

Defining the downtown area...

DOES: Guide future decision-making by Council to align with the outcomes from this plan.

DOES: Helps determine what is “downtown” and what is not, with regard to future policy decisions.

DOES: Establish priorities for future public improvements and connectivity enhancements.

DOES: Celebrate areas as part of downtown’s story.

Defining the downtown area...

DOES NOT: Change the current zoning for the parcels in the downtown area.

DOES NOT: Change the character, name, or identity of existing neighborhoods.

DOES NOT: Support the displacement of current and longtime residents.

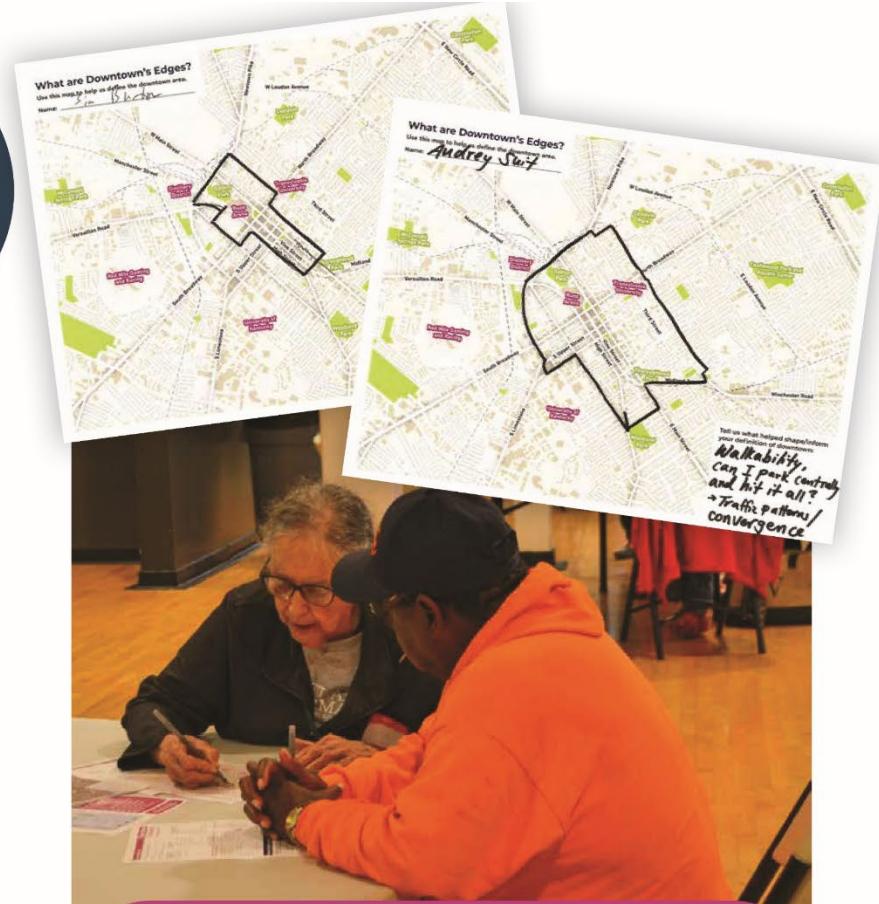
DOES NOT: Mean any immediate changes.



How the Community “Defined Downtown”

**What are the edges of Downtown?
Draw the area for what you consider
“downtown.”**

-  **DO:** Consider how streets, intersections, parks, rail lines, or other landmarks help define downtown.
-  **DO:** Draw a contiguous area that defines downtown and considers its nearby neighborhoods.
-  **DO:** Take your time! Walk around the room and look at the existing conditions exhibits for inspiration.
-  **DO NOT:** Draw a circle around downtown. Use actual edges like streets or physical/perceived barriers.
-  **DO NOT:** Draw a partial area - please define the entire downtown area.



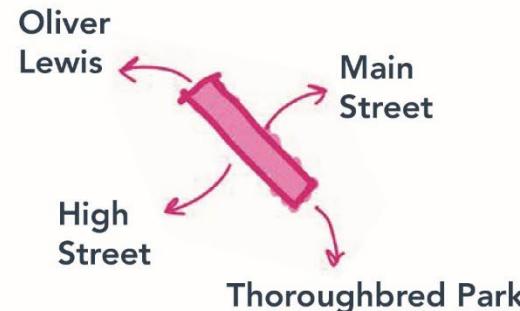
180+ Maps drawn by
stakeholders, meeting attendees,
and the Advisory Committee



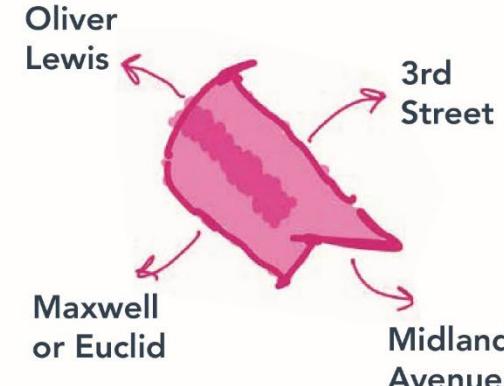
Community Maps: Trends and Observations

In the analysis of the 180 maps drawn, the planning team identified the following common trends:

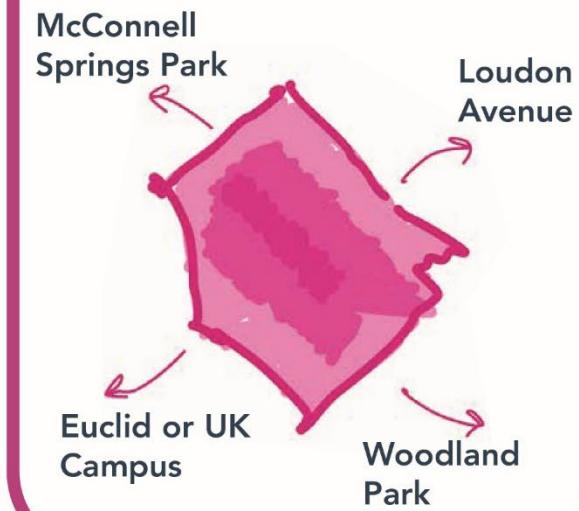
24 maps showing a **Compact CBD**



95 maps showing a **Medium-Sized Downtown**
(Third Street as common edge)

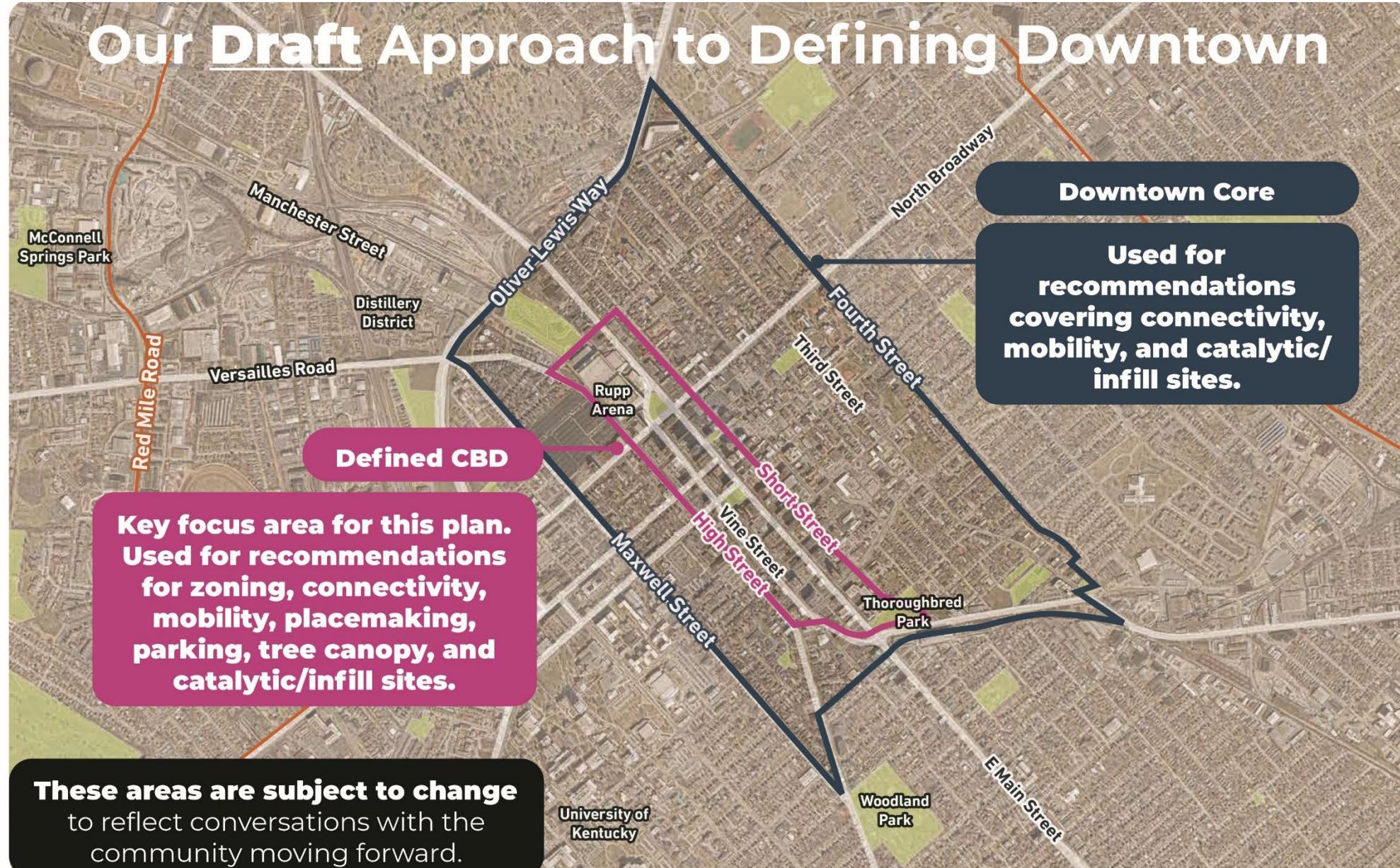


57 maps showing an **Expansive Downtown**
(Loudon Ave as common edge)



Draft Area of Downtown Influence

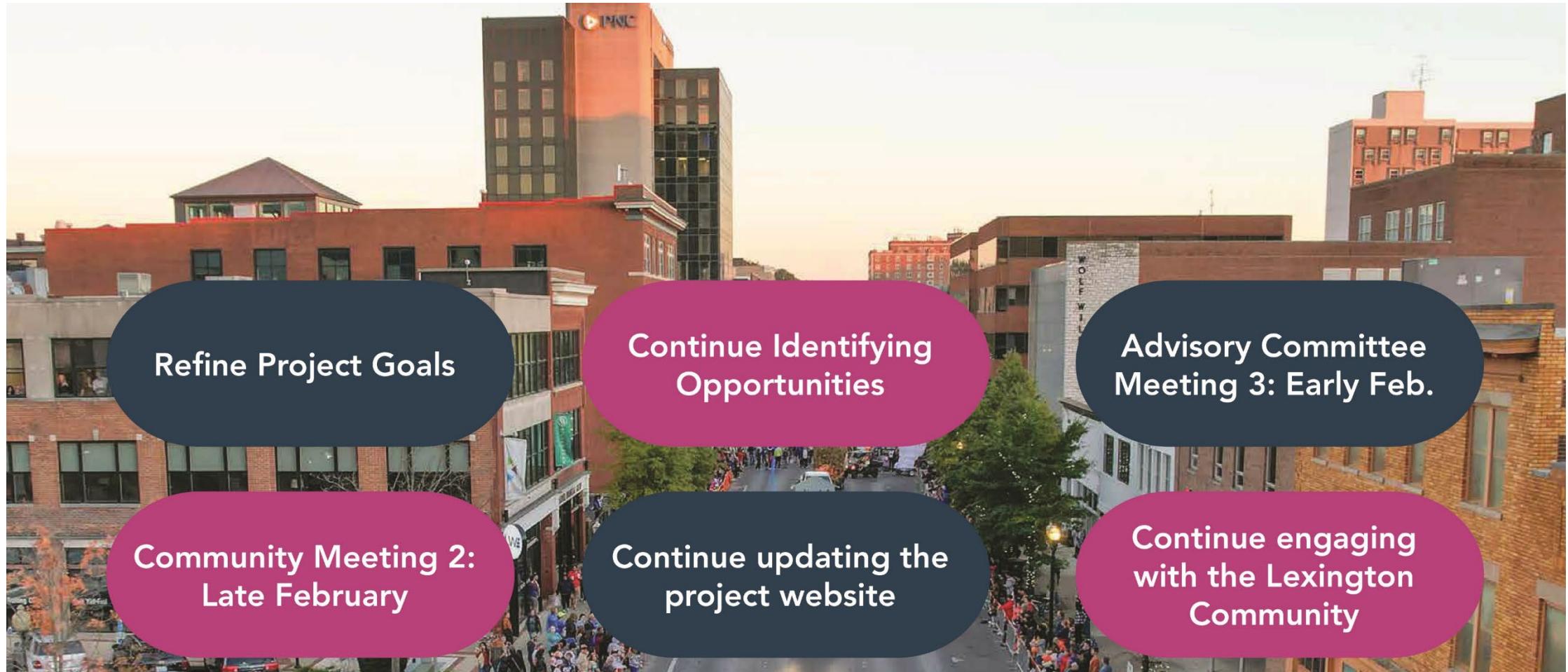
Draft Area of Downtown Influence



These areas are subject to change
to reflect conversations with the
community moving forward.

Next Steps: What's Ahead

The Consultant Team continues to refine Project Goals and advancing the selection of opportunities, to be shared with the Lexington Community at a second Community Meeting in February of 2026.



Questions?



LEXINGTON