

REIMAGINING DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND



Nearly twenty years ago, our community responded to the post-9/11 recession and Great Recession with a series of strategies designed to reimagine and transform Downtown Cleveland from a 9-to-5 central business district into a diverse, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood.

This collection of strategies reimaged Downtown as a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood. Over a ten year period, this led to **32% population growth, 15.3% private sector job growth**, and the conversion of **over 5 million square feet** of underutilized space in historic buildings to housing, hospitality, and other uses.

Now, with city centers across the nation, including Cleveland, facing grave challenges, our Downtown needs a comprehensive vision and plan to complete the transformation of our central business district into a community business district, a commute-worthy destination that is equally attractive to residents, workers, and visitors.



VISION

Our goal is not simply “getting back to normal,” rather, we must capture the momentum we had before the pandemic to accelerate our evolution into a model 18-hour, 15-minute neighborhood. We envision Downtown Cleveland as the vibrant, welcoming city center that weaves districts and surrounding neighborhoods into a seamless urban fabric, attracts modern economic activity, and provides a world-class experience for people of all backgrounds.

PLAN

Downtown Cleveland needs short-term interventions to accelerate a transformation that is well underway, paired with execution on intermediate - and longer-term planning connected to our shared vision for the future of Downtown. These interventions fall under three focus areas: Economy, Environment, and Experience. Each goal has specific objectives and strategies which Downtown Cleveland, the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and our partners will pursue. These strategies are divided into short-term (1-2 year) and intermediate-term (3-5 year) time horizons.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PRIORITIZING INCLUSION

Downtown is the place where the community comes together. Everyone of all backgrounds must feel welcome. We are committed to applying a racial equity lens as we implement the strategies outlined in this framework.

EMPHASIZING ACTION

This is not merely a visioning document, but a collection of tactics that we are actively developing or implementing. The action items presented are measurable and achievable over the next five years.

LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITY

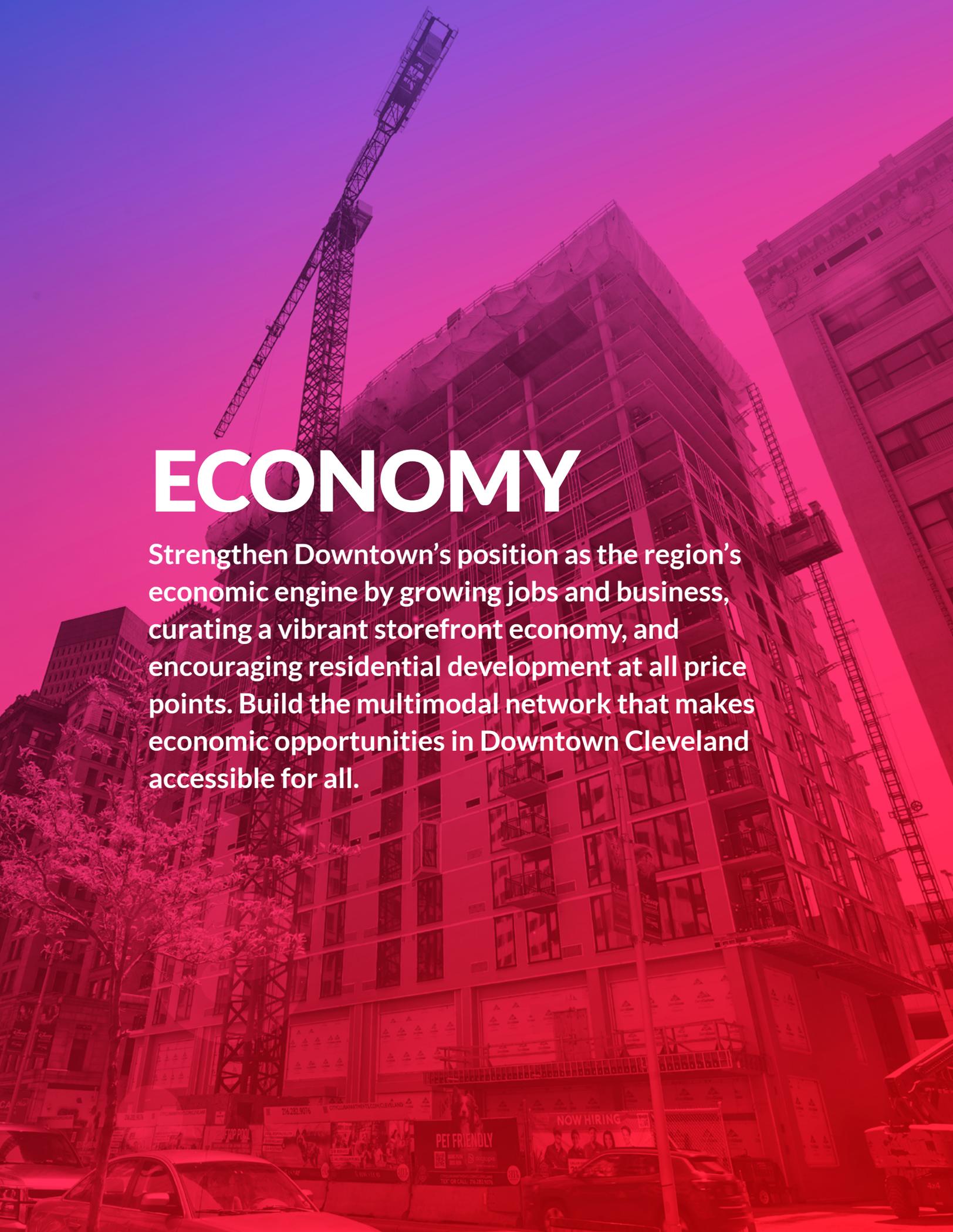
The pandemic changed the way people interact with and experience Downtown. The fresh leadership across the city saw this as a unique opportunity to spur the next evolution of our urban core, and ultimately create more social and economic opportunities for our community.

FOCUSING ON ASSETS

With the combination of momentum from the last decade and strong existing assets, our strategies are focused on building on our successes and doubling down on what makes Downtown a great, growing neighborhood.

INSPIRING JOY

If we are going to be successful in building a stronger Downtown Cleveland, it must be a place that people truly love. We are motivated to create places that inspire joy for all those living, working, and visiting Downtown.



ECONOMY

Strengthen Downtown's position as the region's economic engine by growing jobs and business, curating a vibrant storefront economy, and encouraging residential development at all price points. Build the multimodal network that makes economic opportunities in Downtown Cleveland accessible for all.

ECONOMY

RETAIL

Strengthen Downtown's retail base by adding vibrant, unique, and diverse retailers which fill gaps in the Downtown marketplace and serve existing Downtown residents and businesses while helping to attract more.

- Complete the Downtown Cleveland Retail Strategic Plan with Streetsense to analyze Downtown's current retail inventory, define the local trade area, determine future retail business capacity, identify barriers to attracting retailers, and implement a targeted tenant attraction strategy. (1-2 yr)
 - Prioritize attracting retailers that are local, minority-owned, or woman-owned with the goal of creating a business environment that matches the diversity of the city. (1-2 yr)
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BICYCLE NETWORK, PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE, MULTIMODAL MOBILITY

Make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to get to and through Downtown by foot, bike, scooter, wheelchair and mobility device, and transit.

- Build the Memorial Bridges Loop and begin Superior Avenue Midway construction. (1-2 yr)
- Install digital on-street parking meters, beginning in concentrated nodes of activity Downtown. (1-2 yr)
- Accelerate Public Square Connectivity and Public Realm Plan to enhance connectivity, improve the Downtown transit waiting environments, and ensure smooth public realm operations. (1-2 yr)
- Build a comprehensive network of protected bike infrastructure connecting Downtown districts and surrounding neighborhoods. (3-5 years)

OFFICE MARKET

Adapt to flexible work trends by being nimble in business attraction and creating the types of office environments demanded by today's businesses and workers.

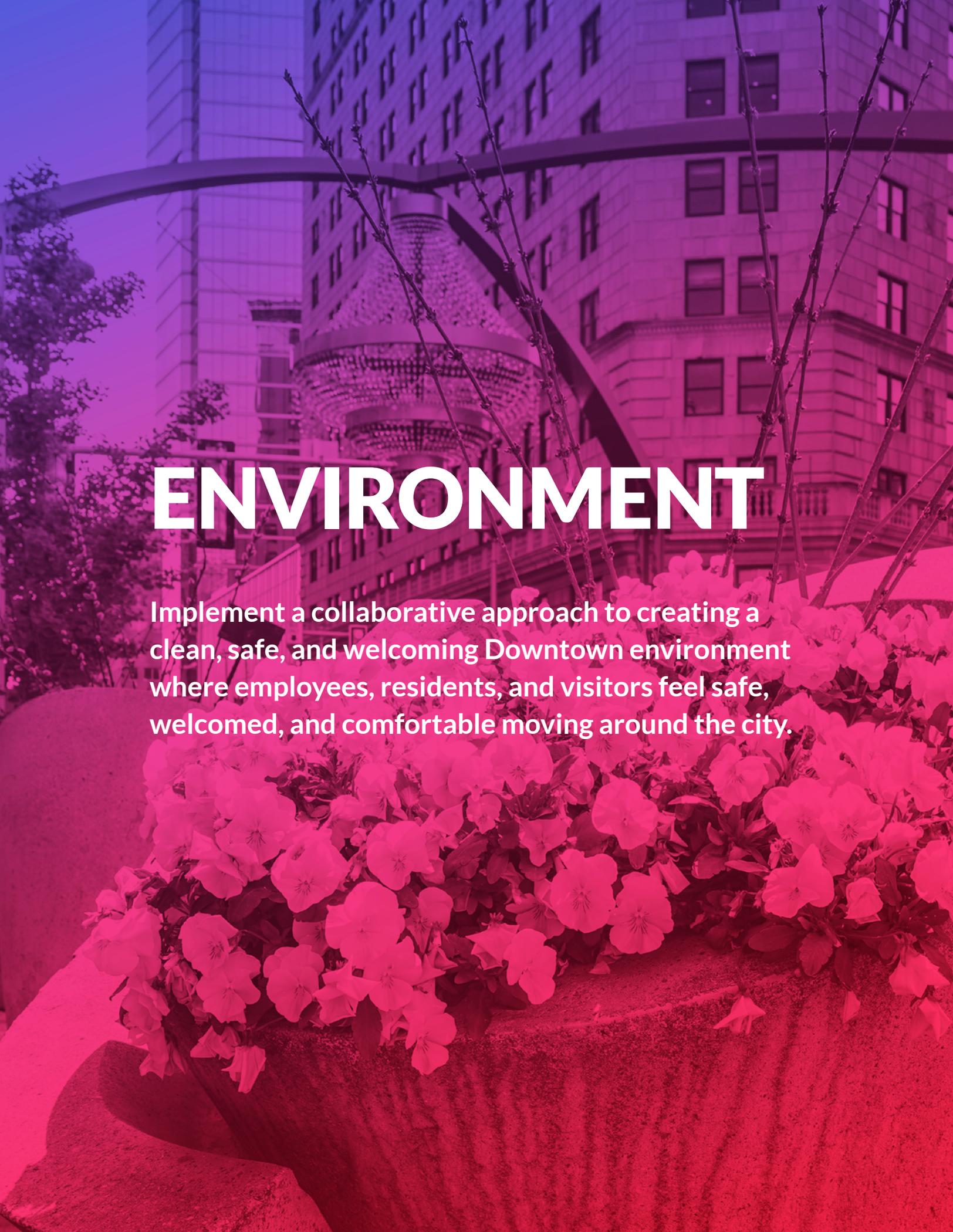
- Create a collaborative business attraction plan to make Cleveland competitive in securing innovative, place-based companies. (1-2 yr)
 - Craft an ecosystem of third places, where employees, residents, and remote workers can gather, including parks, coffee shops, community spaces, and other diverse commercial assets. (1-2 yr)
 - Align state and local policy efforts to encourage the modernization of office spaces to meet the changing needs of office tenants. (1-2 yr)
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REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

Align future development plans to market trends and ensure alignment of large-scale catalytic development.

- Use the recommendations from the Greater Downtown Housing Demand Report as guidance to advocate for tools to address housing development gaps and opportunities and to guide policy and modernize incentives to encourage housing at diverse price points. (1-2 yr)
- Modernize the permitting process for development. (1-2 yr)
- Create an inventory of Downtown development plans—including those of Cleveland State University, Sisters of Charity, Convention Center, Destination Cleveland, Guardians, Bedrock, Sherwin Williams, Haslam Sports Group, GBX, Playhouse Square, Millennia, Kassouf Properties, Flats East Bank, K&D, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, Cuyahoga Community College, and the Lakefront Master Plan--and incorporate into a comprehensive public infrastructure, land use, design, and programming plan. (1-2 yr)





ENVIRONMENT

Implement a collaborative approach to creating a clean, safe, and welcoming Downtown environment where employees, residents, and visitors feel safe, welcomed, and comfortable moving around the city.

ENVIRONMENT

SAFETY

Innovate to ensure everyone feels safe Downtown.

- Increase visible, uniformed presence, with emphasis on unarmed Neighborhood Safety Specialists. This includes hiring 20 additional DCA Ambassadors. (1-2 yr)
- Expand the partnership between DCA and the Cleveland Police Department to increase capacity for co-deployment so that police response is accompanied by the Crisis Intervention Team and followed up with case management where needed. (1-2 yr)
- Increase coordination with social service providers, including providing transportation to area treatment facilities for those in need. (1-2 yr)

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

Align focus and investment on quality of life strategically and at a resident-scale.

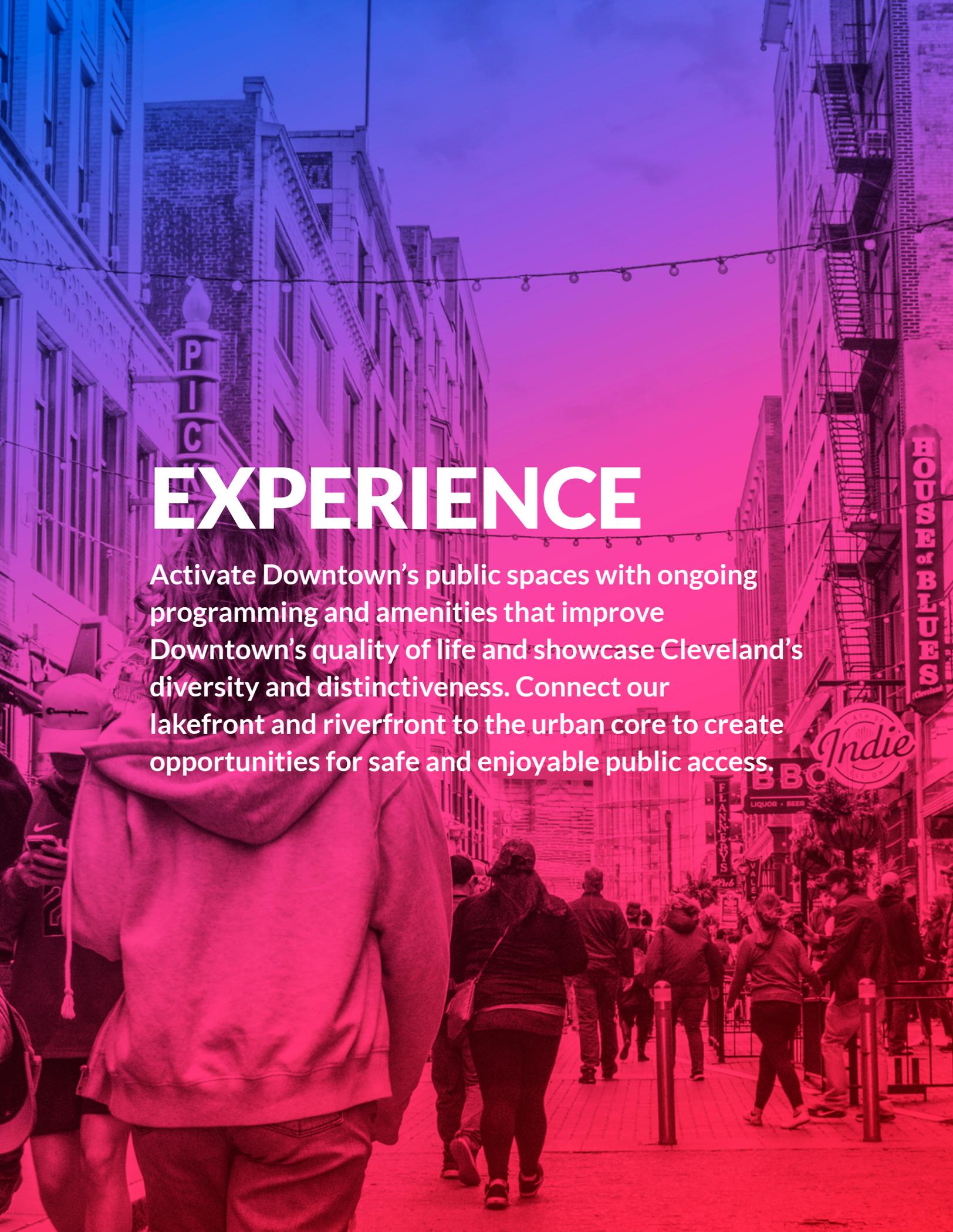
- Launch digital reporting system for DCA Ambassadors to notify City Hall of infrastructure damage, such as broken sidewalk ramps, nonfunctional streetlights, empty tree grates, etc. (1-2 yr)
- Install mini pet relief stations throughout Downtown, prioritizing areas of high residential concentration, to reduce pet waste on sidewalks. (1-2 yr)

LIGHTING

Light up Downtown to make being here feel safer and more joyful.

- Install experiential lighting to illuminate Downtown Cleveland, creating an increased perception of safety, connecting key corridors, and encouraging foot traffic and economic activity throughout the core. Begin lighting implementation on Public Square and extend to Euclid Avenue and Mall B. (1-2 yr)
- Using the first implementation as a pilot, explore the expansion of experiential lighting into surrounding districts including the Convention Center District, Warehouse District, Campus District, Erieview Historic District, and The Flats. (3-5 yr)





EXPERIENCE

Activate Downtown's public spaces with ongoing programming and amenities that improve Downtown's quality of life and showcase Cleveland's diversity and distinctiveness. Connect our lakefront and riverfront to the urban core to create opportunities for safe and enjoyable public access.

EXPERIENCE

PUBLIC SPACES AND THIRD PLACES

Develop and activate a network of dynamic public spaces Downtown.

- Implement Public Space Management Study recommendations to streamline programming, operation, and permitting. (1-2 yr)
 - Increase the frequency of small-scale public space activations, including live music, mini performances, and opportunities for community gatherings in all four seasons. (1-2 yr)
 - Enhance Downtown's public spaces to add elements of interest, such as more trees and plants, water features, seating, tables, and opportunities for children to climb and play. (3-5 yr)
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MURALS AND PUBLIC ART

Use public art to enhance and brighten the Downtown experience for all.

- Develop and implement a program to connect artists with opportunities and funding to create murals. (1-2 yr)
 - Enhance Downtown's alleys with lighting, public art, and wayfinding signage that encourages users to safely share the road. (3-5 yr)
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DOWNTOWN WATERFRONTS

Open up equitable access to our waterfronts for everyone's benefit.

- Complete North Coast Master Plan, preliminary design and engineering of North Coast Connector, and North Coast Harbor improvements. (1-2 yr)
- Secure funding and make progress on building the North Coast Connector and adjacent public spaces. (3-5 yr)
- Accelerate the fulfillment of Vision for the Valley by supporting Bedrock's Cuyahoga Riverfront Master Plan and Tower City investments, the Flats East Bank phase III, Canal Basin Park and bicycle and pedestrian connections among Downtown, the Flats, and the Columbus and Scranton peninsulas. (3-5 yr)
- Secure funding to install new bulkheading infrastructure along the river; incorporate "living bulkheads" along the riverfront where feasible and appropriate to support the ecological health of the Cuyahoga River. (3-5 yr)