

Downtown Orlando ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY
Q4 2024



Downtown Orlando is the heart of our city, a central hub for innovation, culture and community connection.

It's home to world-class venues, dining, amenities and an unmatched quality of life. Together, we have created a thriving downtown.

But, as you might imagine, a thriving downtown isn't static. It must continuously adapt to meet the needs of everyone every day. Ensuring downtown Orlando continues to thrive takes action.

Building on the work we started in 2003, and the input of thousands of Orlando residents, we created the Downtown Orlando Action Plan. This plan will ensure our streets, civic spaces, mobility options and neighborhoods continue to evolve in ways that make downtown Orlando more vibrant, walkable and welcoming to everyone. It's about the actions we will take to further evolve downtown into a place that fosters economic opportunity while creating community in the everyday moments.

The DTO Action Plan will ensure our downtown remains the hub of our city and our region for generations to come.

I'm proud of the care and creativity that went into establishing this plan and I look forward to seeing these big ideas take shape in the coming years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Buddy Dyer".

Buddy Dyer
Mayor
City of Orlando



Thriving downtowns take strong vision, and we are excited to share the Downtown Orlando Action Plan, which aims to shape the future of downtown Orlando. Building on the foundation laid by the DTO Vision Plan and the DTO Outlook Plan, initiated in 2014, this effort encapsulates the aspirations of more than 6,600 Orlandoans who envision a vibrant and connected urban core.

As we move forward with the actionable changes outlined in Project DTO 2.0, our focus is on transforming our streets, civic spaces, mobility options, and neighborhoods. This plan is dedicated to ensuring that downtown remains a thriving, walkable, and vibrant urban core—a true cultural and economic center for generations to come.

We are especially mindful of the visionary leadership of the late Thomas C. Chatmon, Jr., former Executive Director of the DDB/CRA. His dedication to downtown Orlando's transformation has left an enduring legacy, and we continue this vital work in his memory.

We look forward to collaborating with you as we bring this vision to life and create a brighter future for our community.

Sincerely,



David Barilla
Executive Director
Downtown Development Board/
Community Redevelopment Agency
City of Orlando



The DTO Action Plan is a vision-driven, research-based, strategic framework and set of actions for advancing the competitiveness, vibrancy and growth of downtown Orlando.



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The DTO Action Plan focuses on improving mobility, civic spaces, and economic impact within the downtown core.

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Initiated in early 2022, this Action Plan builds on downtown Orlando's earlier visioning work by creating an action-driven plan that focuses on streets, civic spaces, mobility options, and neighborhoods — key systems that contribute to our collective experiences as a downtown community and a downtown's competitiveness in its region — with the ultimate goal of realizing downtown Orlando as both a substantive environment for civic life and as an authentic regional destination.

The DTO Action Plan was preceded by the Downtown Orlando (DTO) Vision Plan and DTO Outlook, all collectively known as Project DTO. Launched in 2014 by the City of Orlando's Downtown Development Board (DDB) and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), these plans charted an aspirational vision for downtown Orlando based on thorough community and stakeholder input. Recommendations from Project DTO identified a wide range of opportunities surrounding converting one-way streets to two-way, improving bicycle and pedestrian amenities, increasing parks and open space, recruiting major corporate anchors and high-wage jobs, expanding neighborhood associations and housing options and encouraging architecture that contributes to a signature downtown.

While some of these opportunities have been realized, the city and CRA want to supercharge the plan's implementation with more specific and directed actions. They conducted a public selection process to procure and collaborate with a visionary planning team. A team co-led by Perkins&Will and Nelson\Nygaard with James Lima Planning + Development (JLPD) and Jeff Speck, global experts in urban planning, transportation, placemaking and community impact, was selected. They led a team of ten other subconsultants, comprised of both national leaders in downtown planning partnered with firms experienced in delivering successful local projects.

In collaboration with the city, the planning team conducted intensive technical analysis, geared towards selecting what strategies had the most viability to realize the DTO Vision Plan and to catalyze a thriving downtown.



The DTO Action Plan was created through a collaborative, four-phase process.

PHASE 1 focused on analysis to create a common understanding of the current conditions of the study area, auditing its challenges and opportunities. This phase included a Walkable City Audit, which charted and documented over one square mile of downtown Orlando, from streets and public spaces to benches and trees. Small blocks, omnipresent sidewalks, aesthetic natural vistas and active venue spaces offer a strong downtown foundation, but overall civic prosperity, comfort and mobility is hindered by the existing infrastructure.

Informed by Phase 1, **PHASE 2** focused on strategic planning that would offer an actionable direction for cultivating and advancing competitiveness, civic function and culture in downtown Orlando. The project team worked with the city, the City of Orlando Downtown Development Board and Community Redevelopment Agency (DDB and CRA) to capture the Project DTO vision while developing an overarching approach and frameworks that would guide decision-making.

PHASE 3 moved quickly into visualizing new ideas; the project team dug into the details and developed concepts for projects, policies and programs that would form an actionable implementable plan.

Finally, **PHASE 4** curated recommendations and documented a plan of actions. This DTO Action Plan is both a visionary roadmap and a practical toolkit for transforming downtown Orlando into a thriving, walkable and dynamic downtown that meets the needs of all who live, work, play and visit here.

**“We find ourselves
with both the
opportunity and
the imperative to be
a city that leads.”**

– Mayor Buddy Dyer

Community Redevelopment Agency

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District 3 Commissioner
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District 4 Commissioner
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District 6 Commissioner
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**This is a vision
for a thriving,
walkable
downtown.**



The vision for Church Street is create a place for residents and tourists, for people of all ages – by day, it will be just as busy as by night.

Downtown Orlando must be **a sustainable, highly connected, one-of-a-kind downtown that is brimming with opportunity for all.**

Downtown should celebrate its people, respect its past and create an economic future that is empowered by the cultivation of its creative, cultural identity. These ideas were brought together in the DTO Vision Plan and DTO Outlook, which set the vision and early plans for downtown. This plan – the DTO Action Plan – builds on these ideas and sets the stage for implementation.

In summary, the vision is for downtown Orlando to be a thriving downtown. A place that nurtures community by connecting people to innovation, creativity and cultural enrichment. A place that is a premier social hub. A place that brings us together as

communities, fostering shared joy and pride in place. A place curated by blending history with a sense of what's new, exciting and eclectic. A place that enables different people to interact, share ideas and achieve dreams. An immensely livable place with great green spaces, cultural amenities and diverse retail and restaurant options.

Combined, these factors should create self-sustaining cycles of vitality. Simply, a downtown's quality of life should drive increased market demand for more downtown experiences, which in turn enhances real estate values and economic vitality – lifting all.

The physical characteristics of a downtown are essential to this success and **no quality is more important than a walkable environment.** Walkable environments are places where people safely and joyously engage in the civic life of the city. For the DTO Action Plan, we are focused on two intersecting threads - impact and action:

The Impact on People

The positive impact downtown can make on people's lives.

The Actions on Place

The place-based actions we will take to make a stronger downtown.



The vision for 30 South Orange (the empty lot at Orange Avenue and Pine Street) embodies a pure form of civic space – a pocket park, a small sliver of the city that serves multiple users through its flexible design.



Downtown's Impact on People



Becoming a Magnetic Regional Social Hub

Downtown should be an essential hub for the region that provides **cultural and social activities for all while building off the region's creative ecosystem.**

Cultivating Vibrant Neighborhoods

Downtown should cultivate many vibrant neighborhoods with unique characteristics that **offer many different things to people living many different lives.**

Helping People Thrive

Downtown should help people thrive by **nurturing basic needs and opportunities to live, work and connect.**



Downtown's Actions on Place

A Place for Everyone

Downtown should be for everyone, establishing **the region's Central Social District** with cultural activities, diverse businesses and opportunities for all.

A Public Realm for People

Downtown itself should be like a great park, establishing **a dense network of active, memorable civic spaces** that align the best downtown-experiences with the lush natural environment of Central Florida.

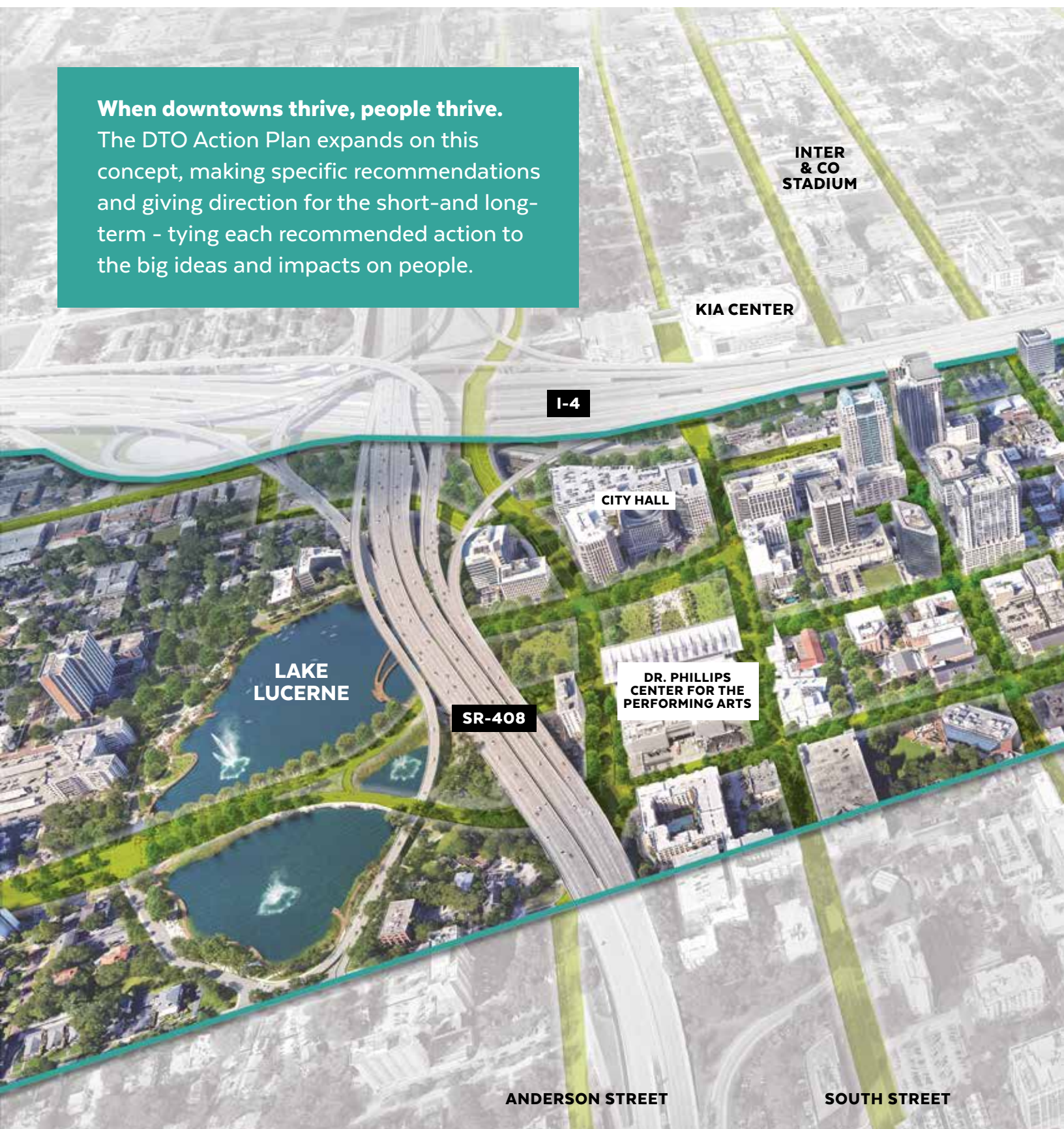
A Network of Easy Movement

Downtown should be rewarding to get around, establishing a mobility network built around **people-oriented streets for all the ways people move** within and around downtown, prioritizing walkability and legibility for local movement.



When downtowns thrive, people thrive.

The DTO Action Plan expands on this concept, making specific recommendations and giving direction for the short-and long-term - tying each recommended action to the big ideas and impacts on people.





**COLONIAL
DRIVE**

**CREATIVE
VILLAGE**

**LAKE
CONCORD**

**ORANGE
AVENUE**

**ROSALIND
AVENUE**

**ORANGE
COUNTY
COURTHOUSE**

**ORANGE
COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

LAKE EOLA

**LIVINGSTON
STREET**

CHURCH STREET

CENTRAL BOULEVARD

ROBINSON STREET

BIG IDEA 1

Downtown is for everyone.

Downtown needs to be for everyone, establishing a Central Social District for the region with cultural activities, diverse businesses and opportunities for all. This district approach will strengthen downtown's ability to support people, itself and the region.

The vision is for a new park at the intersection of Livingston Street and Magnolia Avenue that can accommodate a range of activities.



Our Opportunity

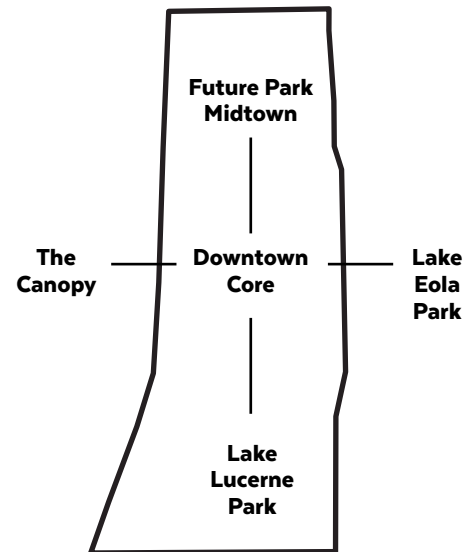
Great downtowns are diverse. They bring people together for activities of daily life to special events. They provide people with urban experiences that are grounded in distinctiveness, delight and the unexpected. They drive economic and social impact for their regions.

We have an opportunity to establish the region's Central Social District - to create a place of diverse activity where people are brought together in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons.

We will expand downtown’s activities big and small, bringing together cultural activities, diverse businesses and opportunities for all through continuing to build a mix of uses and redeveloping critical sites within the core. We will have a downtown that embraces diversity – a place where people want to live, visit and spend their time.

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As part of big idea one, we will create more deliberate and experiential gateways in downtown – providing **signature portals and special regional scale civic spaces.**



The Lake Eola Park Gateway should better connect the park to the downtown core – establishing more pedestrian connections, more programmatic moments and a greater sense of opportunities for all to engage.





The Lake Lucerne Gateway does not require a redesign of the lake's core; instead, it reconnects the water body to people and creates new ways to experience nature. Lake Lucerne should transform into a place where residents can get together, where ecology can thrive and the activity of downtown can transition into the rest of the city.



BIG IDEA 2

Downtown is a park.

We will establish a dense network of active, memorable civic spaces that align the best downtown experiences with the lush natural environment of Central Florida. This type of structure will reinforce Downtown's ability to be humane, welcoming and active long into the future.

Each piece of downtown should be connected in a chain of people-friendly experiences. This is a vision for a foyer that connects Church Street to South Street through an empty pocket - showcasing a third space.



Our Opportunity

Great downtowns have great environments for people. They have structures of streets and open spaces that enhance daily life and special activities - attracting people to live downtown or visit often.

We have an opportunity to create settings for life - to clarify how people can experience the place by developing a legible civic structure of public spaces (streets, plazas, parks and other civic spaces).



Where We're Going

Since downtown has a distributed network of civic spaces, we will build on this distributed network and treat downtown as one great park comprised of many distinct parks.

We will create exceptional every day and night civic spaces that provide anchors to communities within downtown.

Curated city experiences infused with the natural environment of Central Florida will be created, making our downtown unique.

We will leverage every inch of our public realm to create a legible civic structure.

Each small park will have different activities and programs allowing them to act as neighborhood anchors.

The parks will be connected by exceptional walking experiences, connecting the anchors and establishing a people-oriented network. Walking experiences will be legible, safe, comfortable, fun, unexpected, family friendly and memorable.



The intersection of Livingston Street and Magnolia Avenue presents an ideal opportunity for a Livingston Corner Park that can create an activated “front yard” for the Orange County Courthouse. By reclaiming convoluted street space through the conversion from one-way travel to a two-way street, this infrastructural change opens this corner to more human-oriented activities.

The Livingston Corner Park will serve as an active anchor to fill a much-needed gap in amenities but also to give residents and daily visitors a place to socialize with their neighbors – a small dog park fits this need precisely.

As part of big idea two, we will **create a series of distributed smaller scale civic spaces** – neighborhood level places with strong cultural connections and where everyday life can function.

Heritage Square Park must transform into a place for residents to mingle with visitors, where crowds can gather during festivals and where families and children can enjoy the city every day. The vision is to create a town square – where the hum of activity in Heritage Square Park is visible from afar and draws people to a central place in the city.







Inside the Plaza



Food Truck Parking on Pine Street

30 South Orange is a simple space that is intended as an invitation – to sit, to engage and to observe the city around them. Here, the plaza hosts people, but it is the people who make the plaza. 30 South Orange should also be malleable enough to cater to an 18-hour city. A place that is cozy by day, offering a room for office workers to eat lunch. In the evening, as the lights go on, people can step into the plaza for an event – catching up over food before a show or after a night with friends.



Water Feature Ledges

Perimeter Bench

Orange Avenue Looking West into the Plaza

BIG IDEA 3

Downtown is easy to get around.

We will establish a mobility network built around people-oriented streets for all the ways people move. These rewards will create a more livable, legible, interesting and animated backbone for the city.

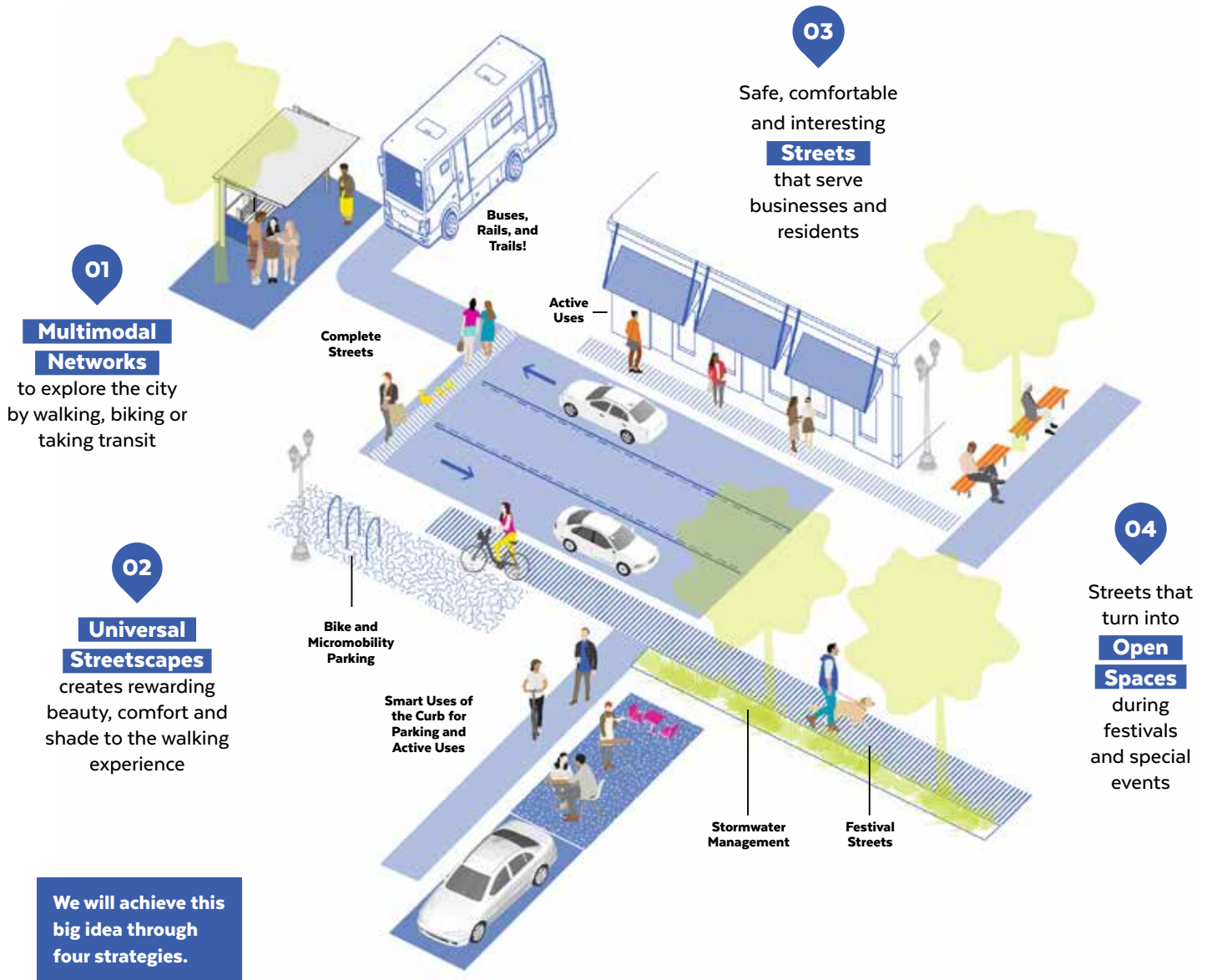
Each street of downtown should serve a purpose and provide a clear experience for people. This vision for Magnolia Avenue transforms the corridor into downtown's main street - creating a place for every day life and special experiences.



Our Opportunity

Great downtowns are first and foremost walkable places. Places where pedestrians are given safe, comfortable and interesting experiences, streets and trails are designed with purpose and transit is straightforward and reliable.

We have an opportunity to give people a complete spectrum of ways to move about downtown - to clarify how people travel from place to place with ease, comfort and interest on streets, sidewalks and trails.



Where We're Going

We will rework and enhance our mobility network focusing on people-oriented streets and intuitive predictable networks creating a more livable, legible and animated structure for downtown. We will clearly give streets character and purpose to determine mobility needs: access, movement and place.

We will convert one-way streets to two-way streets to slow speeds, bolster commercial frontage visibility and access, reduce unnecessary traffic and circling and align the street network with a place wired for local access and circulation over high-speed cut-through.

We will optimize and realign transit to match the market for ridership and lay out routes in a logical way that is more obvious for how to best attract the use of transit to connect around downtown.

We will create high-quality, seamless trail connections allowing people can get to, from, and around downtown safely and comfortably with active transportation.

As part of big idea three, we will **convert one-way streets to two-way streets, establish festival streets and realign transit** to better reflect where people are and where people want to go.

One-Way Streets
Converted to
Two-Way Streets
Orange Avenue
Magnolia Avenue
Rosalind Avenue

Festival Streets
Magnolia Avenue
Church Street

Orange Avenue will transition from three lanes southbound to become one northbound lane and one southbound lane with a flanking center turning lane. A reconfiguration of the street layout also allows for more consistent presence of curbside uses including parking, pickup and dropoff zones and introducing features such as parking, outdoor dining areas and parklets. Pocket parks and placemaking amenities strategically placed along the street aim to provide spaces for community gathering.





The Church Street corridor needs to don different hats to embrace the various people who use downtown. It needs to be an everyday street, brimming with life and filled with the sound of residents. Here, the office worker can grab lunch, while passersby can linger under the tree canopies or pause for a moment on the benches. The traffic slowly sneaks around the pedestrians, who wander around indulging in the culture and history.

In the physical epicenter of Church Street, sits the Central Plaza - an unused open space, flanked by a few restaurants and businesses. The Plaza has the potential to be downtown's living room - where the energy from Church Street bubbles over; where people can gather, linger and celebrate together.





Magnolia Avenue should provide a wide-range of urban experiences, from the Livingston Street Gateway to Lake Lucerne's treasured waterfront. The plan organizes Magnolia Avenue into three zones, each with unique street performance measures and a connected design strategy that create distinct parts of a connected journey.





With the DTO Action Plan in place, the journey toward downtown Orlando's future is just beginning. The hard work of bringing this vision to life will require collaboration, investment and dedication from all stakeholders. As downtown Orlando grows, the DTO Action Plan will serve as both a guide and a catalyst, ensuring that this area evolves as a vibrant, authentic and sustainable community at the heart of the Central Florida region.





LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DTO ACTION PLAN HERE:
[**DOWNTOWNORLANDO.COM/PROJECTDTO**](https://downtownorlando.com/projectdto)

