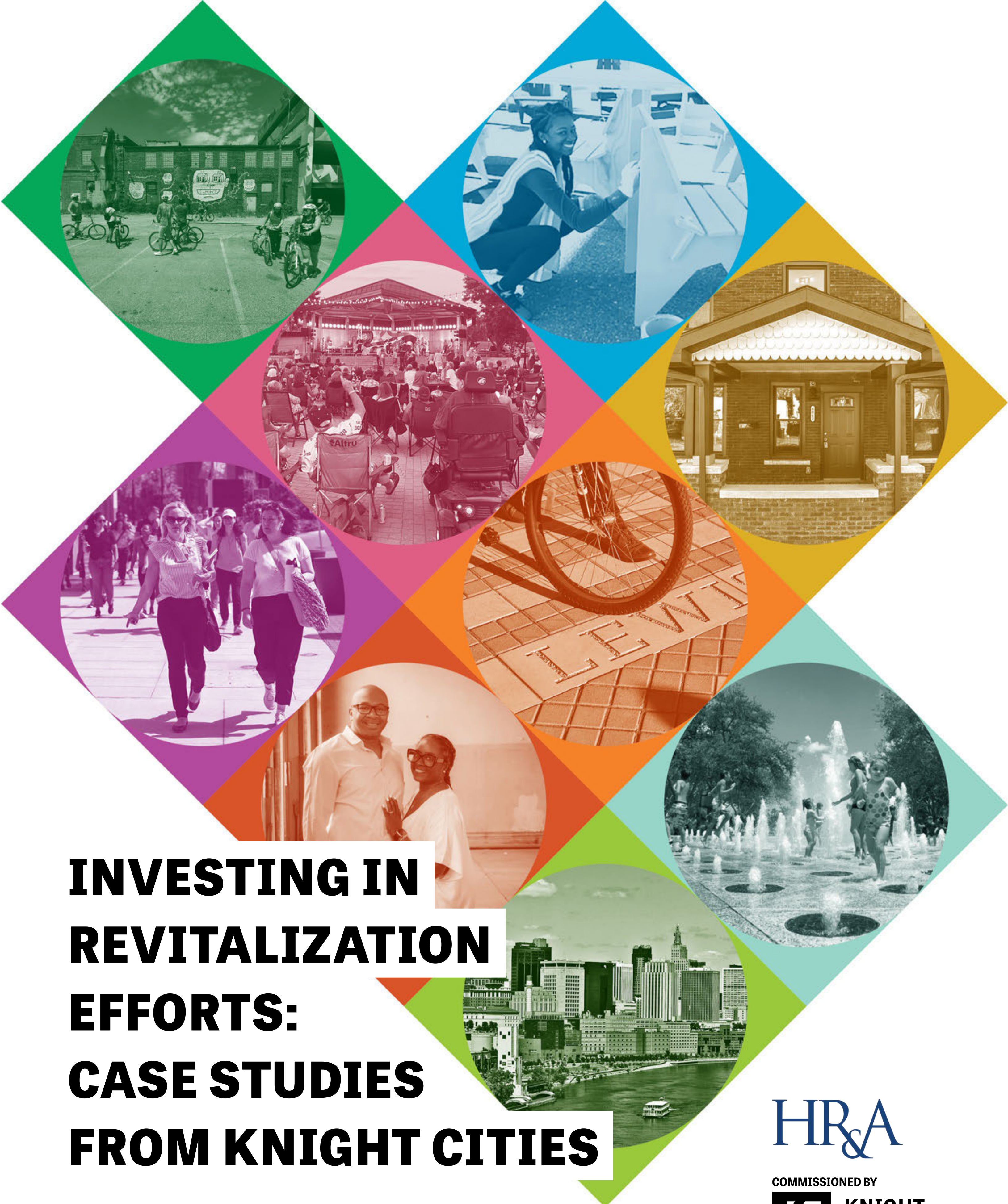

INVESTING IN REVITALIZATION EFFORTS: CASE STUDIES FROM KNIGHT CITIES

HR&A

COMMISSIONED BY

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knight Foundation engaged HR&A Advisors, Inc. (HR&A) to evaluate the impact of its philanthropic grantmaking in supporting revitalization efforts in select downtowns and neighborhoods. This report is composed of three main sections: (1) an introduction to revitalization and markers of successful revitalization; (2) an overview of specific cities that have received revitalization-focused investments; and (3) a concluding summary of best practices and implications for future investment strategy. The city-specific overviews are particularly in-depth for five locations that have received greater levels of revitalization-focused philanthropic investments over time: Akron, OH; Charlotte, NC; Detroit, MI; Macon, GA; and Saint Paul, MN. Higher-level observations are noted for four additional cities where Knight makes investments through local community foundations: Gary, IN; Grand Forks, ND; Lexington, KY; and West Palm Beach, FL.

Implications for Future Investment

Each community's path to revitalization is distinct, the result of unique characteristics and dynamics on the ground. In addition, each community is at a different point on its revitalization trajectory. That said, three overarching themes emerged as key factors in these cities' revitalization trajectories: (1) local context: factors relating to the local environment, including physical and political context; (2) accelerators of impact: factors relating to where and to whom social investors direct funds in order to drive impact; and (3) concentration of investment: factors related to how and where investment activity is focused. These themes are explored in the third section of the report and are summarized below.

Local Context[1]

- **Think beyond the central business district**: While downtowns may no longer serve as employment hubs due to permanent changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, they continue to hold clear value as mixed-use districts that anchor a region. Traditional downtowns that centered on employment, like Akron and Saint Paul, faced greater impacts from the pandemic when compared with downtowns that offer a mix of uses (e.g., Macon), as well as neighborhoods that are oriented to residents as opposed to employees (e.g., Charlotte's West End, Detroit's North End). This contrast highlights the success of "Main Street" downtowns over corporate downtowns. Moreover, sustainable downtowns are marked by their ability to be inclusive, welcoming and vibrant to all residents.
- **Build broad coalitions to ensure longevity**: Broad and authentic coalitions that bring together a mix of dedicated stakeholders both inside and outside city hall help investments stay the course even during times of political administration turnover.
- **Proactively mitigate displacement risk**: Organizations committed to advancing revitalization must contend with the pressing risk of displacement that arises with new investment. Responses must be proactive and community-specific—the displacement risk in a city with rising rental prices and an influx of new residents is much higher than in a city where there is overall population loss.

1 It is important to note that while there are generalized facts and lessons learned that apply to multiple cities, Knight Foundation does not endorse or prescribe one-size-fits-all approaches. Instead, the intention is to encourage the identification of community-specific factors that can contribute to project success and facilitate their implementation. Each community has unique characteristics and requirements, and understanding these specific factors is essential for tailoring solutions to their needs.

Accelerators of Impact

- **Cluster investments**: Revitalization efforts are more likely to have a transformational impact when they are geographically concentrated and sustained over a longer period, so that successes can build upon one another and create broader momentum. Sustained investments in the creation of dedicated downtown organizations are particularly beneficial.
- **Support multiple organizations working toward shared goals**: In communities with an array of fiscally healthy and high-capacity organizations, investors should consider distributing funds across multiple organizations that fill different niches and reflect the community's diversity but whose activities are ultimately in service of shared goals. In these cases, a first step in coalition building should be the collaborative development of a guiding strategy. In communities without a density of high-capacity organizations, it is more effective to invest in capacity building by concentrating investments with a few select organizations.
- **Cultivate relationships with educational anchors**: Fostering relationships and strengthening university connections can yield significant and sustained improvements in downtown vibrancy and growth.

Concentration of Investment

- **Embrace flexibility and innovation**: Flexible funding mechanisms such as seed funding, small grants, learning opportunities and pilot funding for new ideas are ways that social investors can support innovation and deliver wins for the community.
- **Achieve long-term impacts by investing in programming, arts, the public realm and infrastructure**: The strategy of focusing on public realm improvements to existing urban assets such as parks, open spaces and arts institutions has proven to be an effective path to building vibrancy. Financial support for the planning and construction of major public realm and infrastructure improvements has been transformational.
- **Investing in multiple avenues to revitalization**: Social investors should prioritize investments that align with a community's priorities and respond directly to inclusivity and sustainability challenges. Support for economic innovation and inclusive entrepreneurial activity have been particularly successful.

City-Specific Findings

The communities included in this study encompass an array of different densities, demographic mixes and economic trajectories, much of which are driven by citywide or even regional trends. These communities were chosen not because they are a representative sample of cities across the U.S. but because they are communities where Knight has invested. Though each community faces its own challenges and opportunities, shared learnings are particularly evident when the case studies are grouped into three typologies: downtown cores (Akron, Macon, Saint Paul); historically Black neighborhoods that do not encompass their city's traditional central business district (Charlotte's West End, Detroit's North End); and cities in which Knight's investments are made through a local community foundation (Gary, Grand Forks, Lexington, West Palm Beach). To gauge the extent of revitalization, the study relied on quantitative demographic and real estate data, qualitative grantee interviews and, in five instances, in-person site visits and a survey. Findings are summarized below:

Downtowns

- **Akron**: Akron faces a steep path to revitalization. Both the city overall and downtown are losing population, a trend projected to continue, and the central business district is still recovering from the pandemic. While placemaking efforts are underway and show promising trends, downtown revitalization is still in its early stages and its future trajectory is uncertain.
- **Macon**: Over the past two decades, Macon has taken tremendous steps to reimagine and transform its urban core. A clear guiding vision and strong partnerships have helped increase vibrancy and deliver many markers of successful revitalization. Looking to the future, diverse, representative leadership and participation from residents of all backgrounds will be essential.

- **Saint Paul**: Downtown Saint Paul has begun to revitalize, with some limited signs of improvements to the public realm. But overall, downtown has been severely impacted by a slow return to office following the pandemic. Growth in downtown's residential base is a positive trend in Saint Paul's revitalization trajectory. However, a vision is needed for downtown to guide future growth, which will require support and a significant scale of investment from public, private and philanthropic sectors.

Neighborhoods

- **Charlotte**: The West End is undergoing clear signs of revitalization, with population growth and market activity indicating forward momentum. The community's focus on increasing Black and Brown business ownership has advanced with the opening of several new commercial ventures, including Rita's Ice Cream, Jet's Pizza and ArchivesCLT coffee shop, each of which has benefited from philanthropic support. That said, the ongoing loss of the neighborhood's Black population highlights the importance of mitigating against displacement to preserve the West End's historic and cultural role as a Black neighborhood.
- **Detroit**: Philanthropic funding in the North End is in its nascent stages and, for many grants, it is too early to see impact. Demographic data shows that while Detroit is losing residents, the North End is contracting even more rapidly than the city overall. In particular, the North End is losing its Black population, and those who remain are increasingly low-income. Early efforts to revitalize the North End signal that there is much work to be done to transform the neighborhood. It will be important to monitor the outcomes of new developments in the area, and the subsequent impacts on demographics, most especially the economic conditions for Black residents and business owners.

Other Cities

- **Gary**: Downtown is facing serious population decline, mirroring trends in the broader city of Gary. Ongoing issues of blight and lack of development have stalled attempts at revitalization, and downtown Gary has seen little new development (the single new downtown development in the past ten years is a mixed-income project that received state and local incentives and abatements) and has not been able to attract new residents. Community stakeholders stressed that funders could play a valuable role in building the capacity of nonprofits working in Gary across a variety of focus areas, including public art, downtown beautification, job training and food access.
- **Grand Forks**: Despite signs of nascent revitalization in downtown Grand Forks, the area is still contending with a shrinking population, job losses, and a slow multifamily market. Over the past ten years, there has been little new development in this area. However, recent news reports and the number of development projects approved by the planning department[2] indicate that the market is beginning to gain momentum and to overcome impacts of the devastating 1997 flooding and of the pandemic. Looking to the future, there should be a focus on strengthening ties between the University of North Dakota and downtown, including continued support for physical improvements to make the corridor more walkable.
- **Lexington**: Downtown Lexington has experienced transformative change via public realm improvements and major placemaking investments. Its successful revitalization is highlighted by a population that has grown rapidly over the past decade. The central business district is becoming increasingly expensive, and the scarcity of affordable housing developments is leading to growing displacement risks, spotlighting the importance for future investments to center inclusivity and ensure downtown remains a place for all.
- **West Palm Beach**: Downtown's current growth trajectory is fueling revitalization. In response to population growth, the real estate market has been very active in the past decade. Leaders in West Palm Beach have made significant investments in the public realm to help attract residents, businesses and visitors. However, such rapid development has also led to rising prices and deepening affordability concerns, posing a significant risk of displacement for lower-income residents and people of color, who are already underrepresented in both business ownership and homeownership.

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2 Grand Forks, Planning and Community Development Office. Statistics of Development Projects, https://www.grandforksgov.com/government/city-departments/planning-zoning/planning-projects.

INTRODUCTION

Knight's Community and National Initiatives Portfolio

Through its Community and National Initiatives (CNI) portfolio, Knight Foundation works to support equitable, inclusive engagement in 26 communities where the Knight brothers owned and operated newspapers. Funding is primarily focused in eight cities where the foundation has program offices. Knight's investments to support informed and engaged communities include funding to support public spaces, build pathways to economic opportunity and create "smart cities"[3] with new digital technologies to promote connection.

In each of the downtowns and neighborhoods where it works, Knight develops a community-specific vision and strategy to guide grantmaking decisions and direct investment. As a social impact investor, Knight seeks to use its finite funds to spark transformation by investing in catalytic projects; opportunity for impact, not basic need, drives grantmaking. In cities where grantees receive high concentrations of Knight's investments, on-the-ground staff work to identify momentum within their communities and make grants to leverage and accelerate these identified trends. In other cities, Knight makes investments through local community foundations, advised by a dedicated senior Knight staff member.

As cities continue to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and as the way residents, workers and visitors interact with downtowns continues to evolve, this is an opportune moment to evaluate place-based grantmaking and analyze the extent to which Knight's approaches to revitalization—including investments to fund public realm improvements, community engagement and entrepreneurship—have impacted revitalization trends and led to concrete outcomes.

Scope of Work

Knight Foundation engaged HR&A Advisors, Inc. (HR&A) to evaluate the impact of Knight's grantmaking in supporting revitalization. Our scope of work included a variety of analytic work streams designed to: (1) characterize the overall revitalization trends within a specific geography; (2) assess the impact of specific grants on revitalization; and (3) identify best practices and implications to inform future grantmaking.

This report is composed of three main sections: (1) an introduction to revitalization and markers of successful revitalization; (2) an overview of specific cities that have received revitalization-focused grants; and (3) a concluding summary of best practices and implications for future investment strategy. An in-depth analysis is focused primarily on five cities where greater levels of investment occurred: Akron, OH; Charlotte, NC; Detroit, MI; Macon, GA; and Saint Paul, MN. Higher-level observations are recorded for four additional cities: Gary, IN; Grand Forks, ND; Lexington, KY; and West Palm Beach, FL. City-specific findings include overall revitalization trends as well as an evaluation of specific grants and their impact.

Markers of Revitalization

Knight's CNI portfolio is focused on building engaged communities "where people are attached to the place where they live and are invested in the community's future."[4] Investments are therefore oriented to shepherd community vision for the future and to support projects that contribute to revitalization. Knight has been investing in the cities covered in this report for different amounts of time, and these communities are at

3 Knight's Smart Cities program looks at the ways technology can shape and benefit communities, such as infrastructure like sensors and cameras to help city leaders make data-informed decisions (e.g., which buildings to cool, where to increase bus service), https://knightfoundation.org/smart-cities-2/.

4 Knight Foundation Communities – What We Fund, https://knightfoundation.org/programs/communities/.

different points in their revitalization trajectory—some are experiencing a recent downturn, while others have been struggling for decades. In all cases, Knight recognizes downtowns as key to building engaged communities. Knight's investment strategies reflect the unique needs and opportunities of each community, and revitalization thus means different things and will look different in each area. While each community is different, there are still common features and markers of revitalization shared by successful, walkable, mixed-use, urbanized downtown neighborhoods. These common features and markers of success are listed below.

Features of Successful Downtowns[5]

- Vibrant retail activity that attracts daytime users, generally in the form of **street-oriented shops and small businesses** that generate foot traffic.
- Housing market with a **variety of residential unit types and price points** to support a mix of household types.
- **Variety of activities and uses** on offer, to bring people downtown for different reasons at different times of day.
- **Quality built environment and a sense of place**, including thoughtful urban design, pedestrian and bike-friendly infrastructure, streetscape improvements, wayfinding and public gathering spaces.
- **Active organizational support focused on downtown vibrancy**, such as a business improvement district or a downtown development authority, which helps coordinate public-private partnerships and oversees programming and maintenance within the defined downtown area.
- Multiple traffic generators to bring people downtown, including both **organic assets** (e.g., a waterfront) and **developed amenities** (e.g., event venues, educational institutions, art institutions and public art, public markets)—success as a traffic generator is dependent on **activation and programming of these assets and amenities**.
- **Distinct character** to define downtown, including historic preservation of significant structures and adaptive reuse of buildings.
- **Ability to embrace diversity as well as innovation**, demonstrating a welcoming nature for new people and new ideas, in order to create an environment supportive of people from a diversity of backgrounds and a business climate supportive of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Branding and promotion** to attract people downtown, build foot traffic and bolster attendance at programs and events.

Process to Support Downtown Revitalization[6]

There are multiple pathways by which stakeholders can pursue revitalization. The process laid out here provides an overview of general steps associated with successful revitalization, demonstrating how cumulative success builds and a critical mass is established. While this is not meant as a prescriptive sequence, this process does provide useful parameters for community revitalization.

1	Define a vision for the future to guide revitalization efforts, developed with the support and buy-in of elected officials, the business community, philanthropies and community members.
2	Develop a strategic plan, with active community participation, to manage planning and implementation of initiatives and programs aligned with the established vision, to include equity considerations, development guidelines, public infrastructure needs, economic development strategies, marketing and roles and responsibilities of public, private, institutional and community stakeholders.

5 "Downtown Success Indicators: A Review of the Literature," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (August 2014).
6 Christopher Leinberger, "Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization," The Brookings Institution (March 2005).

3	Create a business improvement district (BID) or similar nonprofit organization focused on downtown improvements and programming.
4	Empower a catalytic organization (e.g., a community development corporation) to prove that downtown development can make financial sense—must be willing to take a longer time horizon and accept below-market rates of return until the downtown market is proven and development reaches a critical mass, at which point "the catalytic developer should be well-positioned to take advantage of the upward spiral of value creation. . . . There should be sufficient land and buildings tied up at favorable prices that will rapidly appreciate in value as the 'spiral' [toward critical mass] takes off."[7]

Displacement as Consequence of Revitalization

Downtown and neighborhood revitalization can lead to displacement—improved amenities and the associated increase in private investment and development often results in rising prices for housing and commercial rents and can contribute to a loss of cultural markers and identity as a downtown or neighborhood's original residents and business owners change. Given the desire to build engaged communities, there is a need and responsibility to proactively think through and mitigate against potential displacement risks associated with community investments. A downtown or neighborhood that serves just a segment of the population is not sustainable and does not build inclusive and effective pathways to economic opportunity.

Although gentrification and displacement are often used interchangeably, they represent distinct phenomena and the terms themselves carry different meanings. These terms are defined as follows:[8]

- **Gentrification**: A process of neighborhood change in which higher-income residents and businesses move into an underinvested community, often resulting in increased taxes and housing costs that place financial strains on existing residents and put the community at risk of cultural displacement. This process often occurs in communities of color that have been historically marginalized by red-lining and other racially discriminatory housing practices, and is accelerated by contemporary government policies, private interests and market demands.
- **Direct displacement**: When residents and business owners can no longer afford to remain in their buildings due to increased housing and leasing costs, or are forced out by lease non-renewals, evictions, eminent domain or poor physical conditions that render buildings uninhabitable, often as investors await redevelopment opportunities. Research has shown that victims of displacement often come from racial and ethnic backgrounds that have been historically disenfranchised.
- **Indirect displacement**: When low-income residents or small businesses vacate buildings, and new low-income residents or small businesses cannot afford to move in. This shift can stem from price increases, policy changes or occupation by middle-income tenants. This is also known as "exclusionary displacement."
- **Cultural displacement**: A trend that occurs as the scale of residential change advances. Shops and services shift to focus on new residents, who may be of a different race or income level than existing residents. The character of the neighborhood is transformed as a result, and remaining residents may experience a loss of belonging or ownership, despite remaining in the neighborhood.

7 Leinberger, "Turning Around Downtown."
8 Definitions based on research and work from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, including its "Equitable Development as a Tool to Advance Racial Equity" report and from the Urban Displacement Project.

Project Approach

HR&A collected qualitative and quantitative data via interviews, surveys and various data. Cities were assessed in terms of visible presence of features of successful downtowns (e.g., new apartments, wayfinding, accessible parks) as well as stakeholder perceptions of progress and improvements, gathered from both interviews and a survey. A more detailed overview of data sources and methodology is included in the Appendix. Primary data collection occurred in September–December 2022 and entailed:

- Design of downtown evaluation metrics and collection of data
- Visits to five cities for interviews with Knight program directors and leadership of grantee organizations
- Design and dissemination of a Local User Perception Survey to gather perspective from residents, employees and visitors (see additional detail in the Appendix)
- Phone interviews with leadership of grantee organizations
- Analysis of financial position of select grantee organizations

Sources for Data Presented in City-Specific Profiles

Cities' demographic, labor and real estate market data come from the following sources:[9]

- **U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census for 2010 and 2020 using ESRI Business Analyst and Custom Geographies**: Used for population by race and household metrics. ESRI's GeoEnrichment service uses variable weighting to allow users to extract data for custom downtown/neighborhood areas. As such, except in Charlotte, the resulting data do not conform exactly to Census tract boundaries.
    - In the case of Macon, the geography of interest is the expanded downtown area, which aligns with the definition provided in the Macon Action Plan (MAP). Metrics pertaining to the historic core are specified in the text.
    - For all other cities, the area of interest is defined in the accompanying maps.
- **U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016–20**: Used for other demographic metrics (such as unemployment rate, household income). This data conforms to Census tracts pulled directly from the U.S. Census Bureau. In an effort to include only tracts with a significant portion of the area's residential population, HR&A carefully chose to include or exclude Census tracts based on whether the areas are densely populated.
- **U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Households Dynamics Survey**: Used for jobs data. This data reflects custom downtown/neighborhood areas.
- **CoStar – Real Estate Market Data, 2010–20**: Used for data on commercial real estate deliveries, vacancies, and rents. For residential uses, CoStar reporting excludes single family homes and condos.
- **Vista by Near, Pedestrian Visitation Counts, 2019–22 Q3**: Used for foot traffic counts. Data corresponds to custom geographies (corridors or open spaces) shown in the different maps for each downtown or neighborhood.

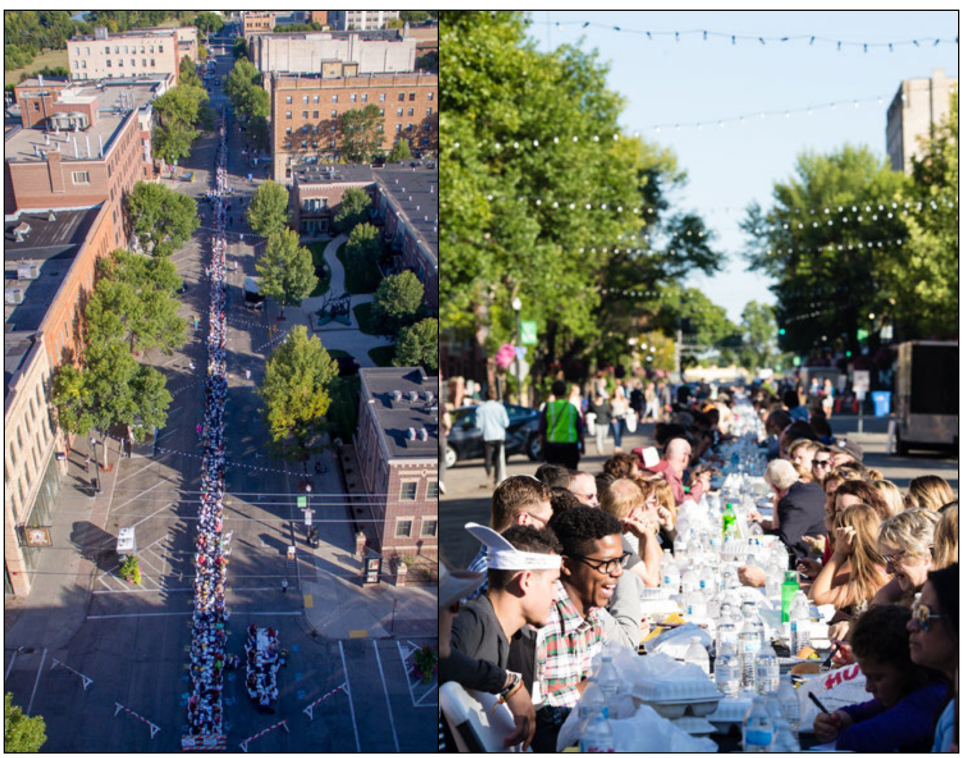
9 Data was extracted either based on select Census tract boundaries that most closely conform to the defined downtown/neighborhood or based on custom geographies developed by HR&A and the Knight team to reflect the core downtown/neighborhood where investment is concentrated.

CITY-SPECIFIC PROFILES

The following section groups the communities analyzed into three typologies, based on the location where Knight has concentrated its grantmaking activities and whether the location received longer-term and higher levels of investment.

- **Downtowns**: Akron, Macon and Saint Paul.
- **Neighborhoods**: Charlotte's West End and Detroit's North End. Both neighborhoods are home to a historically majority Black population and do not encompass their city's traditional central business district.
- **Other Cities**: Gary, Grand Forks, Lexington and West Palm Beach. Knight's investment in these cities is focused within their traditional downtown urban cores.

As detailed below, the challenges and opportunities facing downtowns differ from those facing neighborhoods and are also influenced by macro conditions affecting the city as a whole; different grant typologies therefore have different impacts. In particular, given the overarching goal of supporting inclusive growth and celebrating the Black identity of both Charlotte's West End and Detroit's North End, displacement is becoming the most pressing concern. For Akron, Macon, Saint Paul, Charlotte and Detroit, findings are based on qualitative data from in-person interviews and site visits, as well as quantitative demographic and real estate data and data from a survey distributed to area residents, employees and visitors.[10] For the four other cities, findings are based on qualitative data from phone interviews with at least two grantees per city, as well as quantitative demographic and real estate data.



On September 5, 2018, 717 Grand Forks residents filled a 750-foot table in the middle of downtown's 3rd Street for a free dinner to foster connections, exchange stories and share ideas about their community. Photos (left to right): Kevin Kuntz Aerial Photography, Soulshine Photography/Erin Phillips.

10 No user perception survey was conducted in Detroit. See the Appendix for survey distribution methodology.

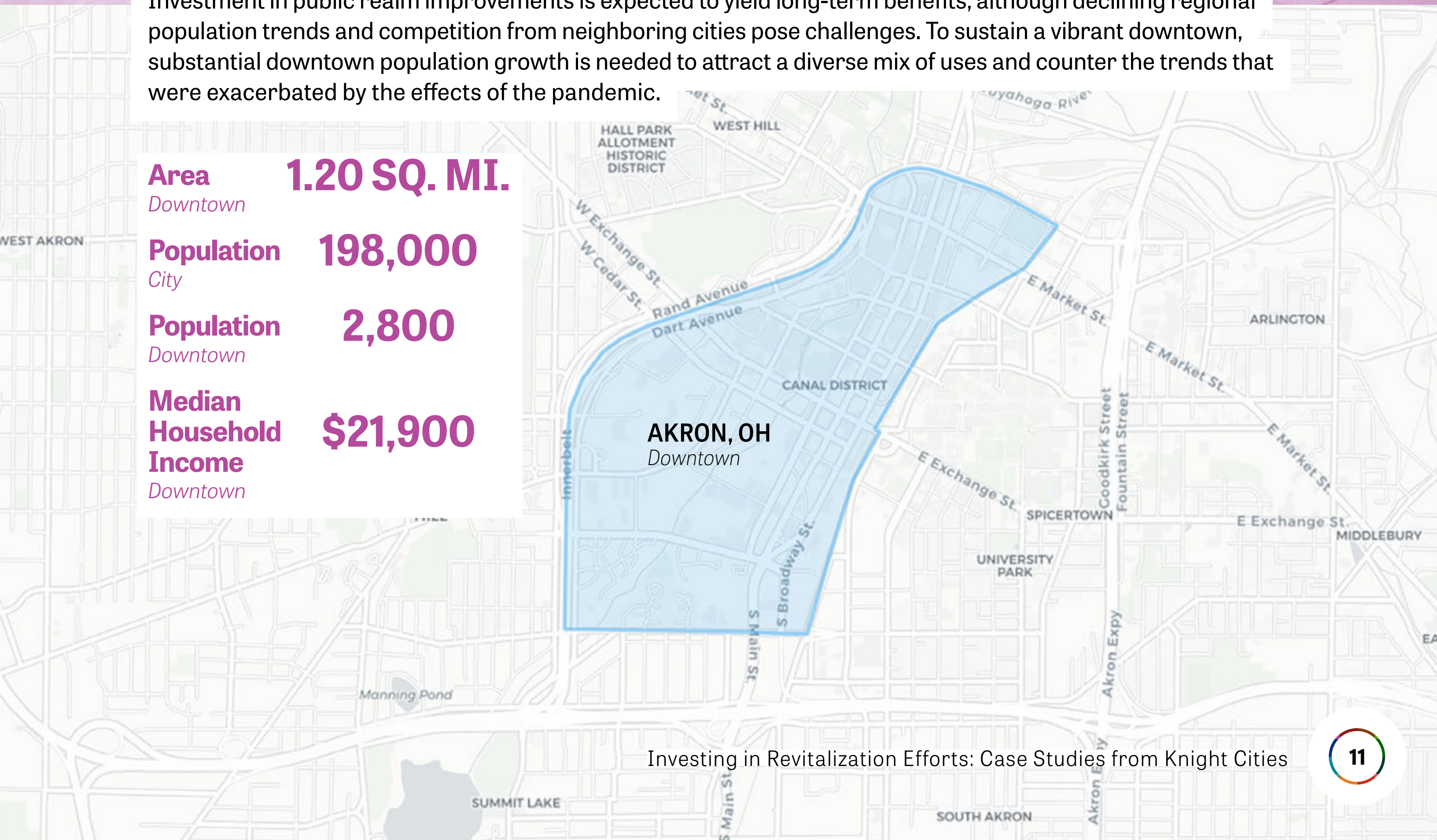
Akron

Introduction

Located in the heart of the Midwest, Akron initially grew as a canal town along the Ohio & Erie Canalway and was home to a burgeoning rubber industry during the railroad era, earning the reputation as "Rubber Capital of the World." Rubber manufacturing's decline, globalization and the recession's impact on Rust Belt cities have all contributed to a loss of vibrancy and economic growth in Akron. Today, Akron is undergoing significant public realm improvements and placemaking to reimagine its downtown beyond its role as a central business district into a vibrant mixed-use hub that welcomes a diversity of residents. However, the area has been grappling with significant demographic shifts that challenge future potential, as the city of Akron loses population (-4.5% change from 2010 to 2020).

Knight has been investing in Akron since the foundation's inception, and the community has undertaken several revitalization efforts over the decades. The most recent effort began in 2014 with a focus on reimagining the public realm through placemaking initiatives and infrastructure projects. Along those lines, downtown Akron is showing progress in its revitalization. Community stakeholders continue to unite around a shared vision and major capital projects on Main Street like the transformations of Lock 3 Park and the former Polsky Building. Investment in public realm improvements is expected to yield long-term benefits, although declining regional population trends and competition from neighboring cities pose challenges. To sustain a vibrant downtown, substantial downtown population growth is needed to attract a diverse mix of uses and counter the trends that were exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic.

Area *Downtown*	**1.20 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**198,000**
Population *Downtown*	**2,800**
Median Household Income *Downtown*	**$21,900**



Overview of Knight Foundation Activity

Vision and Desired Outcomes

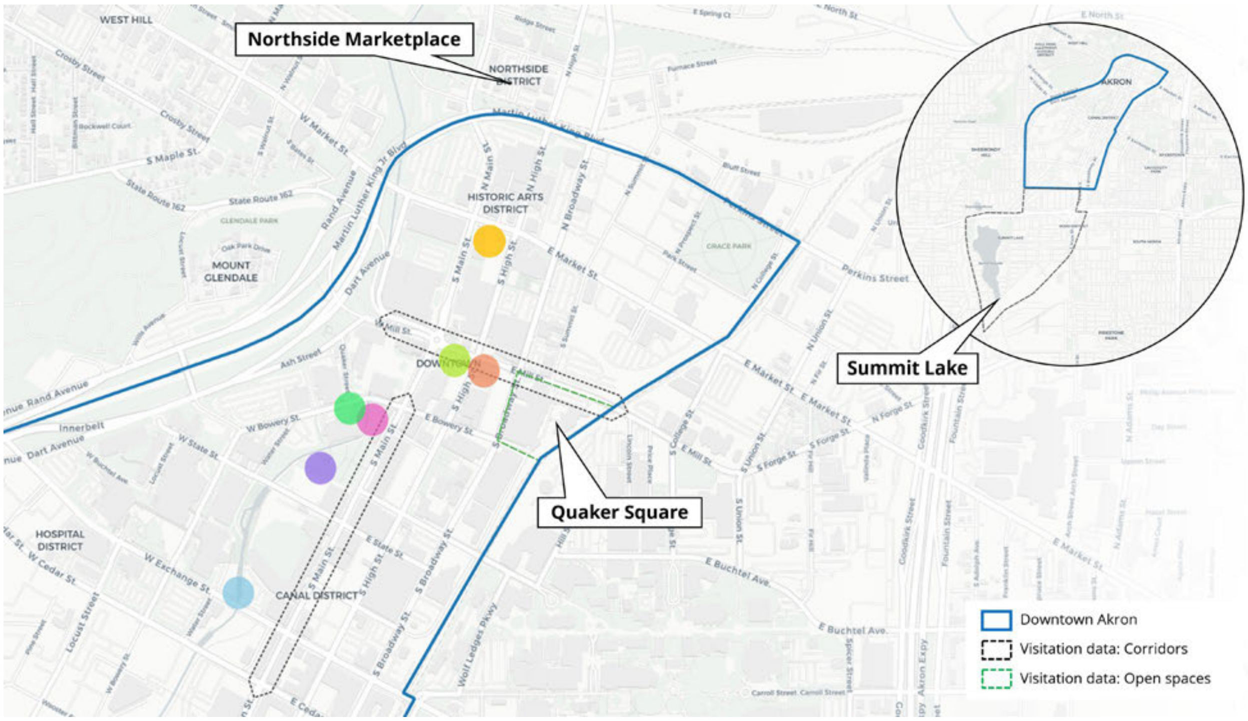
The community vision for downtown Akron is to foster community engagement and reimagine public spaces through partnerships, aiming to create a strong sense of community and attract new and diverse populations. The desired outcomes include achieving a short-term goal of developing 500 new residential units with a healthy occupancy rate of 80%. In the mid-term, the goal is to increase Akron's population to 225,000 residents within five to ten years, bringing it back to its population mark in 1990.

Organizations Funded

During this most recent effort, since 2014, Knight has invested over $12.7 million in downtown Akron's revitalization. Knight also invested $5 million in the Akron Art Museum during that timeframe. Since the start of this research project, Knight has also committed an additional $20 million to the transformation of the former Polsky building downtown. Priority and physical grants are summarized and mapped below.

Priority and Physical Grants Summary and Map

GRANT INFORMATION	GRANT SUMMARY
iTowpath **Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC)** $249,900 (2014), $510,200 (2015)	The 2014 grant funded efforts to increase civic and community engagement around the historic Towpath trail, enhancing the trail as a recreational and transportation space in Akron. The second grant of $510,200 funded construction of Towpath improvements, including lighting and pavement, new signage and a painted bike lane.
Lock 4 Groundswell Bridge **Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC)** $37,000 (2016), $182,000 (2016)	The first grant funded the design and activation of Lock 4's amphitheater and the pedestriage over Route 59 in an effort to increase Downtown's vibrancy. Another grant of $182,000 was awarded to complete the redesign of the public space.
Public Life Improvements **Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP)** $1,516,000 (2017)	Building on a Gehl Studio study on public spaces, the grant funded efforts to improve public life through public space improvement projects and increased organizational capacity to enable DAP to activate downtown.
Akron Civic Theatre Expansion (Bowery Project) **Akron Civic Theatre** $4,000,000 (2018)	This grant funded efforts to expand the historic Akron Civic Theatre and renovate the Whitelaw Building, working alongside the $40 million Bowery transformation project on the same block. In addition to the physical transformation of Akron Civic Theatre, an endowment fund was created (Akron Civic Theatre Legacy Fund) for artists.
Developing Public Spaces **Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP)** $1,350,000 (2020)	The grant increased the capacity of DAP to develop new, engaging public spaces in partnership with Biederman Redevelopment Ventures (BRV), a consulting firm.
Lock 3 Park **Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC)** $2,000,000 (2020), $3,500,000 (2021)	This grant is supporting Lock 3 Park's transformation and redesign as a programming and performing space for downtown residents. An additional $3.5 million grant was given to OECC to progress redesign efforts for Lock 3. In addition, the funds supported the redesign of Lock 2 and 4 as open event spaces in future years.
Digital Integration **Akron Art Museum** $5,000,000 (2022)	This grant supported digital integration throughout the art museum. Specifically, the funds helped implement the Digital Integration Plan, upgraded the facility's technical infrastructure and created the Knight Center for Digital Discovery.



Status of Revitalization

Akron faces a steep path to revitalization: Downtown's population is dropping at a greater rate than the city overall (–19.7% vs. –4.5%, respectively, between 2010 and 2020). Population decline is projected to continue. The central business district is still recovering from the pandemic. While important placemaking efforts are underway and show promising trends, downtown is still early in its revitalization trajectory.

The Akron Civic Commons Initiative has been instrumental in driving major infrastructure and public realm projects. A significant milestone has been the strategic investments in engagement and programming to support these efforts, including the restoration of the historic Akron Civic Theatre, in connection with the Bowery residential project. Downtown visitation has been boosted by visitors attending arts and entertainment events hosted by the "Knight Stage" program and by the array of recreational events and inclusive sports leagues hosted by Summit Sports & Social in collaboration with the Akron Civic Commons. The newly launched Northside Marketplace, a vibrant destination created by Testa Companies, connects consumers to local retailers and restaurants.

Prior to the pandemic, downtown Akron experienced a surge in private development, including the completion of Akron Children's Hospital's 230,000-square-foot addition to the Considine Professional Building, the renovation of the historic United Building into a modern office space with retail use, the ongoing conversion of the former City Center Hotel into 146 market-rate apartment units and the renovation of the Law Building into a mixed-use space. These projects delivered over 520 multifamily units, valued at approximately $54 million, and showcased significant investment in downtown Akron. However, as a primarily corporate office–focused downtown, the pandemic and work from home trends had a significant impact in Akron, including a decline in foot traffic, high vacancy rates and challenges for commercial and office spaces. Fortunately, starting in mid-2021, there has been a positive shift with an increase in job creation (41% increase in the past five years) and rising office space occupancy rates (currently at 86%). These trends suggest that downtown recovery is underway. These changes are consistent with those called for in the 2018 Downtown Akron Vision and Redevelopment Plan. An update to that plan began as this research was getting started.

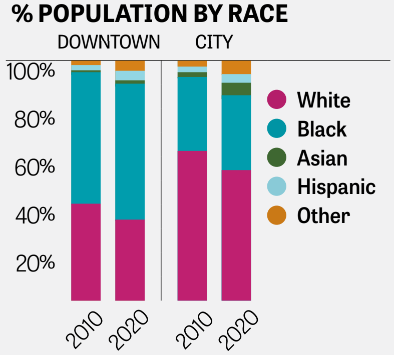
Downtown Akron's revitalization depends on the growth of its residential base as it transitions into a mixed-use district. While the existing multifamily market shows demand, both downtown and the city are grappling with declining population. Over the next 30 years, the population in Summit County, where downtown Akron is located, is predicted to decline by 16.3%,[11] highlighting the challenge of reversing local population decline and attracting residents to Akron's downtown core in the face of unsupportive macro forces.

Demographics

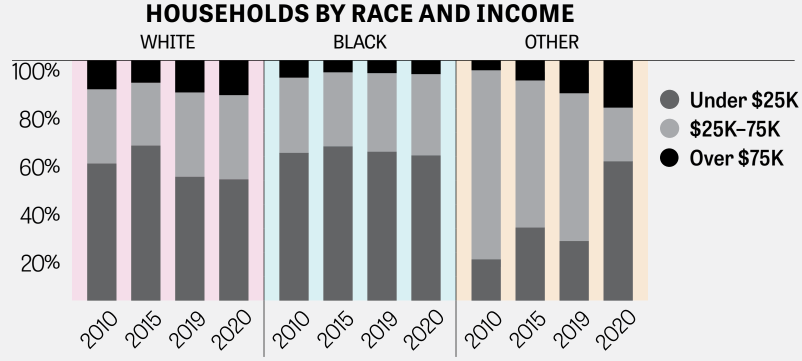
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

Downtown Akron's residential community is small, and it experienced a considerable population decline compared to the rest of the city. Over the past ten years, downtown has seen new multifamily development, with significant growth starting to pick up in 2021, a trend that aligns with the increase in the number of renter-occupied units. The rise in downtown households by 9% contrasts with the overall population decline, which is mainly due to the significant decrease in the group quarters population, resulting from reduced enrollment at the University of Akron. Jobs have increased since 2010, but not all have been able to benefit from this growth. Black workers have been disproportionately impacted by job loss, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Black unemployment rate remaining unchanged since 2010. However, an increase in educational attainment for Black residents suggests that income trends might shift in a positive direction in the years to come.

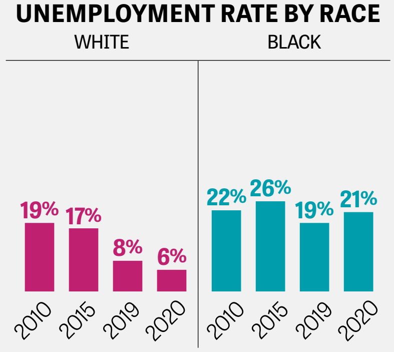
% POPULATION BY RACE



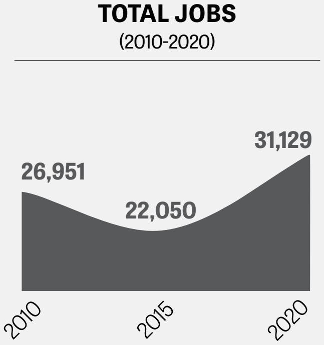
HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND INCOME



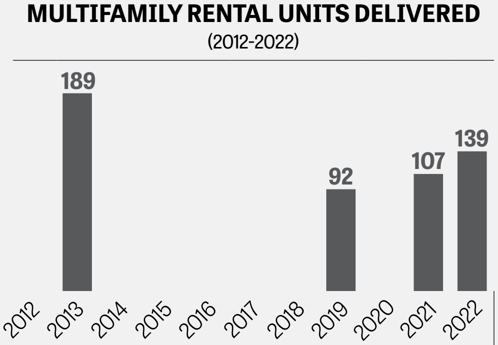
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE



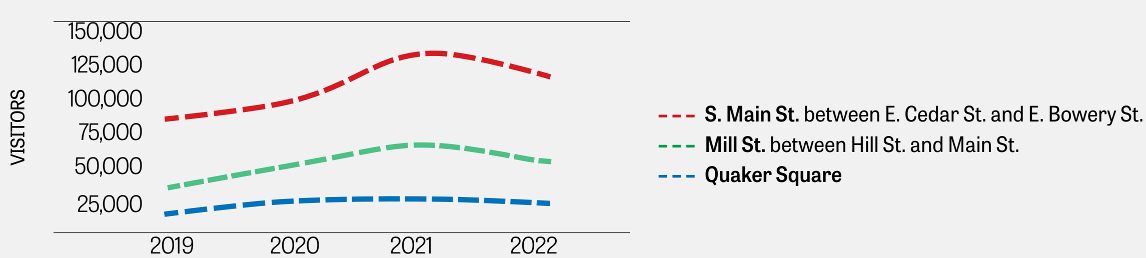
TOTAL JOBS
(2010-2020)



MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNITS DELIVERED
(2012-2022)



Visitation Patterns



Note: See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.

11 Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research, https://devresearch.ohio.gov/files/research/P6095.pdf.

Impacts of Revitalization

Visitation to key areas like Main Street, where the Akron Civic Theatre and Bowery Project are located, has increased since 2019, indicating the positive impact of revitalization investments on downtown activity. However, downtown continues to lose residents, highlighting the challenges of revitalization and achieving a sustainable population. Additionally, in the survey sent to Downtown Akron Partnership's email list, approximately 50% and 30% of Black and white respondents, respectively, report spending less time downtown since the pandemic. This highlights the need for tailored strategies to attract people and create an inclusive environment. The Downtown Akron Partnership is developing a new strategy to focus on inclusivity and engagement with marginalized communities. Summit Lake, a neighborhood located southwest of downtown, demonstrates effective programming and engagement in diverse and underserved neighborhoods, fostering community trust and increasing usage of green spaces. Summit Lake is a notable success story that can serve as a model for future programming and strategy development as downtown stakeholders pursue approaches to equitable revitalization. In Summit Lake, funding supported thoughtful engagement and programming, focusing on the area's diverse and underserved neighborhoods, which helped build community trust and supported increased usage of the green space.

It should be noted that Akron's population is declining, which lessens the urgency of displacement concerns compared with other cities. Yet there are still racial inequities and need for inclusive growth that should be addressed to achieve genuine revitalization. Despite downtown's recent job growth, Black residents continue to face significant challenges, with an unemployment rate of 21%. This figure has decreased by only one percentage point since 2010, in stark contrast to the 6% unemployment rate experienced by white residents. The high unemployment rate among Black residents highlights an opportunity to focus on community outreach, entrepreneurial programming, small-business support and targeted workforce development to promote equity and drive new economic activity.

Challenges

Ongoing population loss is one of the greatest challenges facing Downtown Akron, a trend made more concerning because the downtown is losing residents at a significantly faster rate than the city overall. The data on downtown activity is mixed. Visitation patterns have risen but survey results indicate that people are not spending more time downtown. Social investors should prioritize interventions designed to entice a diversity of residents and visitors, such as the attraction of anchor employers, the development of mixed-use properties, the delivery of additional housing units, and programming that fosters authentic engagement and public activation.

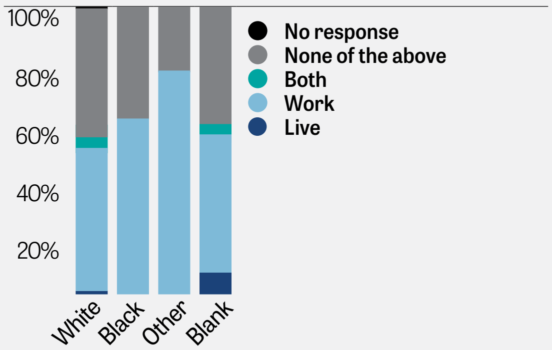
There are also sustainability concerns with big infrastructure projects like Lock 3, which have faced delays and increased costs, potentially stalling revitalization efforts. The full impact of major developments has yet to be seen, so judgments on associated return on investment should not be premature. These developments have the potential to generate value and move Akron along in its revitalization trajectory, yet it is uncertain that this will be enough to grow downtown's residential base. Given ongoing and projected future population loss, stakeholders, community organizers and municipal leaders should come together to think through the sustainability of continued investment in major infrastructure amenities for a shrinking population.

Local Perception Survey Responses

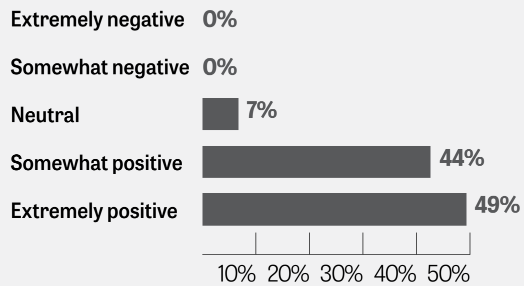
Total Survey Respondents: 170*

The majority of survey respondents were workers who believe that downtown Akron has improved as a place to live, work and visit. Despite a small percentage of responses from residents, both Black and white respondents had positive views on the city's progress. However, approximately 50% and 30% of Black and white respondents, respectively, report spending less time downtown since the start of the pandemic.

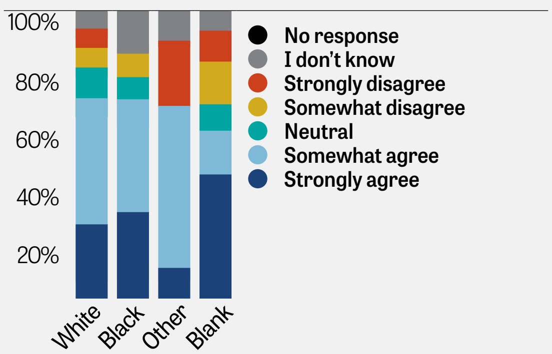
Do you work or live in downtown Akron?



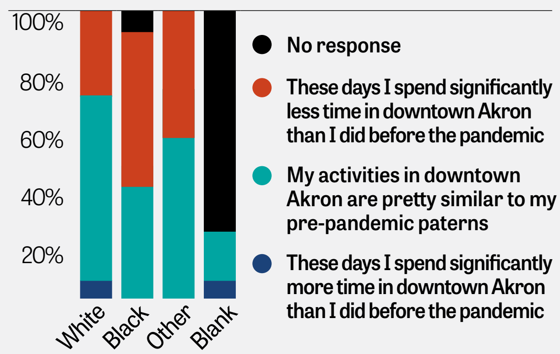
How do you feel about the Towpath?



Compared to ten years ago, has downtown Akron become a better place to live, work or visit?



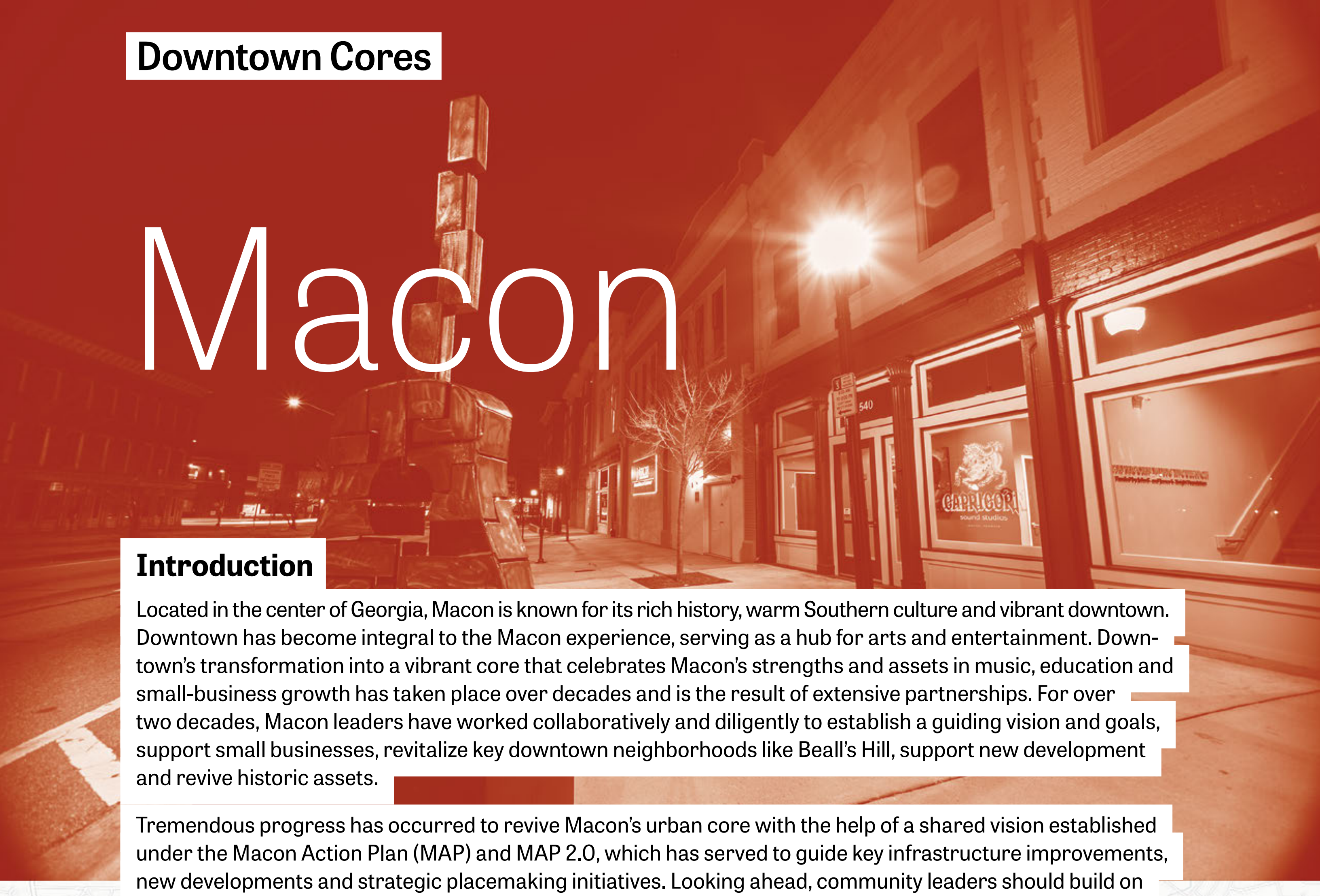
Do you interact with downtown Akron today in roughly the same ways that you did prior to the Covid-19 pandemic?



**See the Appendix for methodology. The survey findings are not statistically representative of all local attitudes but are an indicator of local perception.*

Downtown Cores

Macon

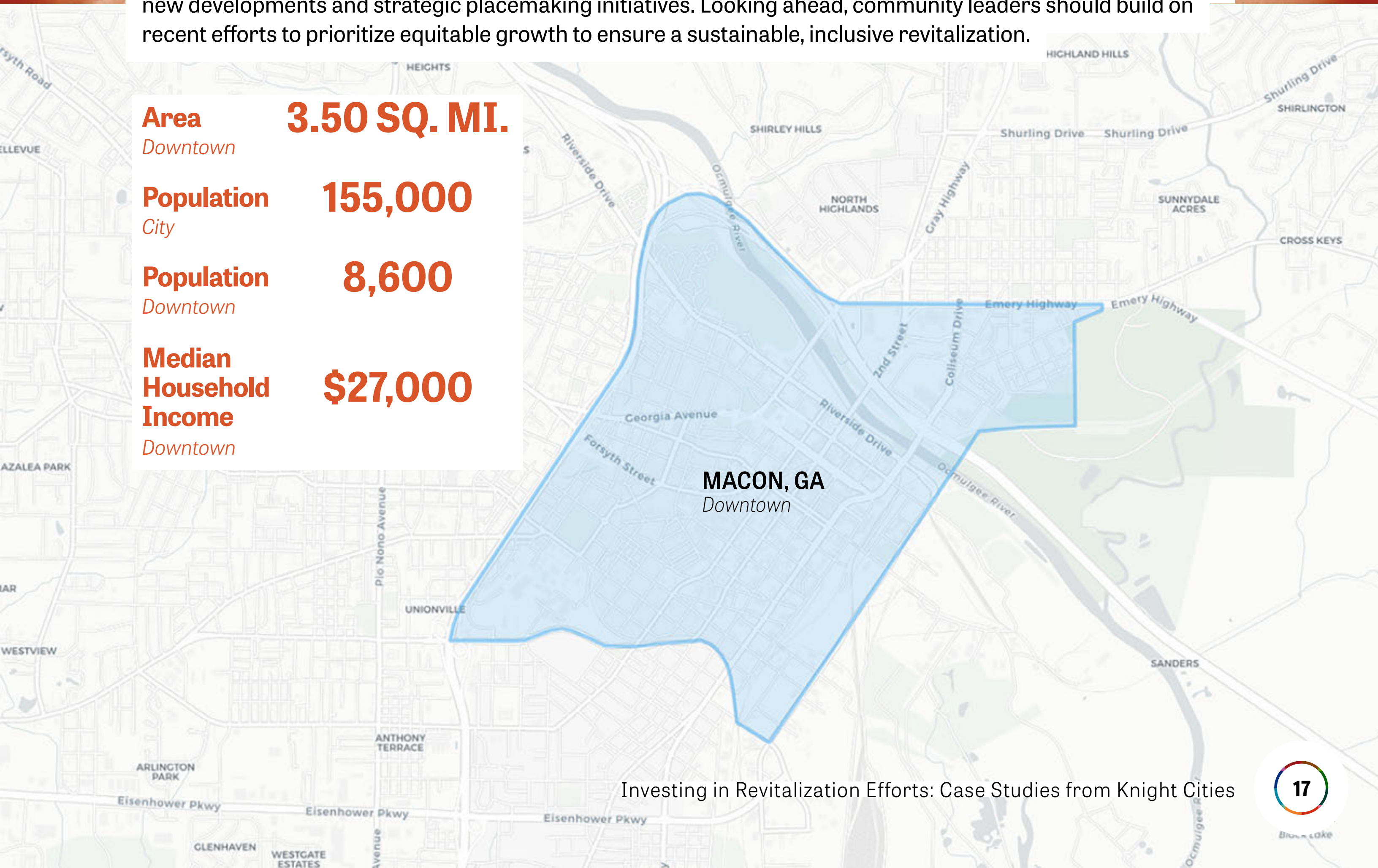


Introduction

Located in the center of Georgia, Macon is known for its rich history, warm Southern culture and vibrant downtown. Downtown has become integral to the Macon experience, serving as a hub for arts and entertainment. Downtown's transformation into a vibrant core that celebrates Macon's strengths and assets in music, education and small-business growth has taken place over decades and is the result of extensive partnerships. For over two decades, Macon leaders have worked collaboratively and diligently to establish a guiding vision and goals, support small businesses, revitalize key downtown neighborhoods like Beall's Hill, support new development and revive historic assets.

Tremendous progress has occurred to revive Macon's urban core with the help of a shared vision established under the Macon Action Plan (MAP) and MAP 2.0, which has served to guide key infrastructure improvements, new developments and strategic placemaking initiatives. Looking ahead, community leaders should build on recent efforts to prioritize equitable growth to ensure a sustainable, inclusive revitalization.

Area *Downtown*	**3.50 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**155,000**
Population *Downtown*	**8,600**
Median Household Income *Downtown*	**$27,000**



Overview of Knight Foundation Activity

Vision and Desired Outcomes

The shared vision for downtown Macon is to reimagine the city's urban core into a thriving downtown where all can live, work and engage, with efforts focused on building community, supporting innovation and creating vibrancy through improved public spaces. As revitalization efforts progress, community leaders hope to see visible signs of reactivation in Macon's urban core, with a growing population and an increase in jobs to foster a thriving commercial and cultural hub.

Organizations Funded

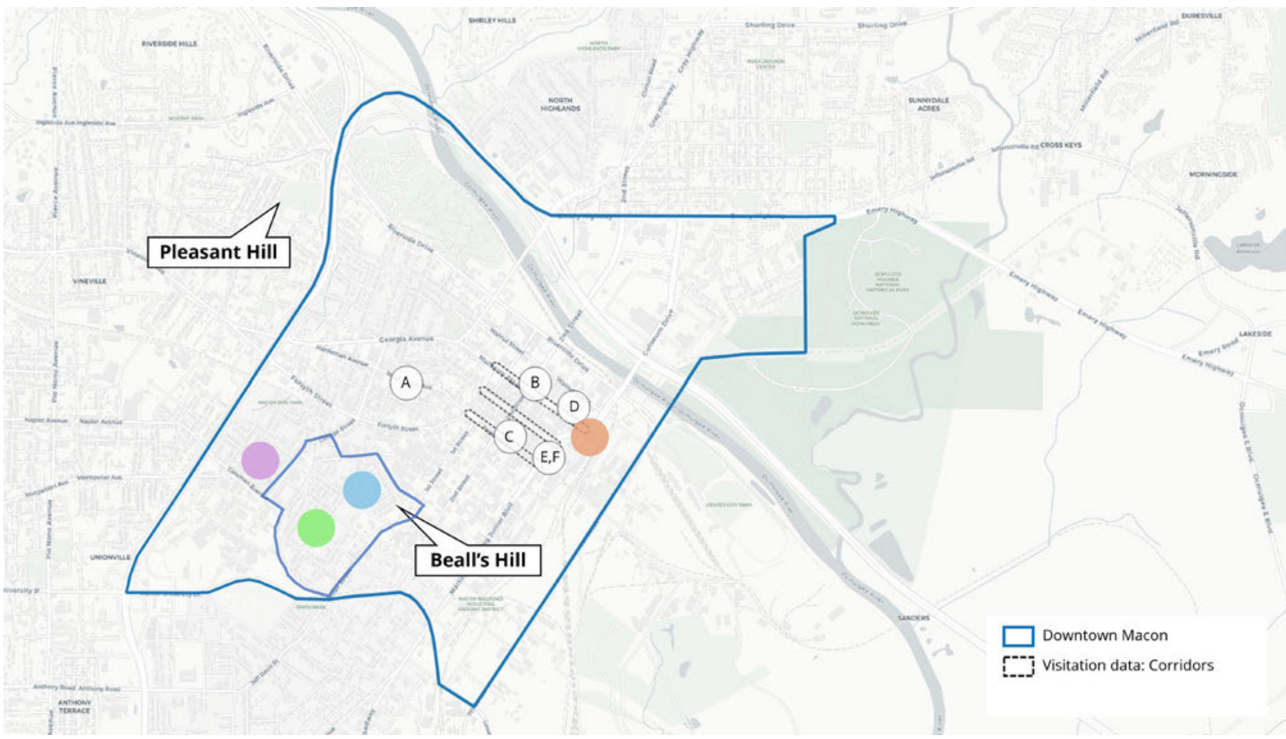
Since 1999, Knight Foundation has invested over $33.8 million to support revitalization efforts in Macon. Priority and physical grants are summarized and mapped below.

Priority and Physical Grants Summary and Map

GRANT INFORMATION[12]		GRANT SUMMARY
Beall's Hill Revitalization **Historic Macon** $700,000 (2007), $1,778,500 (2014), $1,215,000 (2014)		These grants supported revitalization of a key downtown corridor, the Beall's Hill neighborhood, through a revolving loan fund and development incentives. Knight granted the project an additional $1.78 million and a $1.22 million PRI/ low-interest loan in 2014 to complete the neighborhood revitalization, helping fund the restoration of homes and the construction of new properties.
Mercer Music @ Capricorn **Mercer University** $1,000,000 (2018)		This grant helped Mercer to continue their support for downtown Macon's revitalization through funding their transformation and reactivation project for Capricorn Studios.
ARPA Match Historic Macon Beall's Hill/ Oglethorpe Street Quality Affordable Multifamily Rental Housing Development **Historic Macon** $600,000 (2021)		This grant provided a 1:1 funding match of Macon-Bibb County's $600,000 allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to be used to construct the organization's affordable housing development on Beall's Hill/Oglethorpe Street.
ARPA Match NewTown Neighborhood Investment Revolving Fund **NewTown Macon** $1,000,000 (2021)		This grant represents Knight's 1:1 match of Macon-Bibb County's $1 million allocation of ARPA funds, which was used to support the creation of NewTown Macon's Neighborhood Investment Revolving Fund. Funds were and are being used to support residents who purchase or renovate blighted residential properties in the urban core, with the intent of increasing the inventory of affordable housing.
College Hill Alliance **Mercer University** $250,000 (2008), $2,000,000 (2009), $3,000,000 (2009), $2,260,000 (2012)	**A**	The initial grant of $250,000 in 2008 helped underwrite the five-year master plan for the new College Hill Alliance, which supported the Beall's Hill neighborhood and College Hill Corridor programs. Shortly after, $2 million was granted in 2009 to support the establishment of College Hill Alliance and its work to revitalize Macon's historic neighborhoods and business districts. Along with the $2 million grant, an additional $3 million was awarded for Knight Neighborhood Challenge, a five-year grant program administered by the Community Foundation to underwrite projects/ideas that respond to College Hill's needs, which were identified in their Master Plan. In 2012, Knight continued its support by awarding an additional $2.26 million, for the continued implementation of the Master Plan.
Macon Action Plan Challenge **Community Foundation of Central Georgia** $1,500,000 (2016), $750,000 (2022)	**B**	Matched 1:1 by Peyton Anderson Foundation, the initial grant funded the launch of the Downtown Challenge, a program that supported MAP by calling on applicants to submit new ideas for funding. The program was designed to help attract and retain talent, expand economic opportunity and encourage civic engagement. Knight and the Peyton Anderson Foundation each made an additional grant of $750,000 in 2022 to fund the second round of Downtown Challenge grants.

12 Non-physical grants are labeled as letters and mapped onto the grantee's physical address.

GRANT INFORMATION[12]		GRANT SUMMARY
Godsey Initiatives Fund and CDFI **NewTown Macon** $508,000 (2017), $1,500,000 (2021)	**C**	The initial grant helped expand the Godsey Initiatives Fund, which assists entrepreneurs and small businesses by providing a revolving loan program supplemented by robust, expert coaching. The additional grant further supported NewTown Macon's initiative to increase Black business ownership in downtown Macon by improving access to capital and providing technical assistance for Black entrepreneurs.
Downtown Master Plan **Urban Development Authority (UDA)** $225,000 (2013)	**D**	The grant funded UDA's efforts to create a new strategic plan, the Macon Action Plan (MAP), and new strategy for downtown Macon's revitalization, which convened various stakeholders, business owners and community members around a common vision.
Downtown Hotel Market Assessment **Visit Macon** $38,480 (2019)	**E**	This grant funded Visit Macon's market assessment study on downtown Macon. This study allowed Visit Macon and their partners to assess the number of potential hotel rooms needed in downtown Macon.
Geofencing and Data Collection **Visit Macon** $18,720 (2020)	**F**	This grant supported the collection of data on attendance and demographics for Macon events, helping to inform how to market these events. Specifically, the data measured event attendance and the geographic origin of attendants.



Status of Revitalization

Over the past two decades, Macon has taken tremendous steps to reimagine and transform its urban core. A clear guiding vision and strong partnerships have helped increase vibrancy and deliver many markers of successful revitalization. Much of downtown Macon's successful revitalization can be attributed to the MAP process, a collaborative effort by stakeholders, business owners and residents to create a five-year vision and implementation plan for reimagining Macon's urban core. Success from MAP led to the release and implementation of MAP Refresh, or MAP 2.0. As a result of this strategic planning and investment, downtown added nearly 6,000 new jobs in the past decade, an increase of 34% between 2010 and 2022. Today, downtown is home to more than 400 active businesses, and total downtown employment[13] represents over a quarter of total Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) employment, highlighting downtown Macon's growing importance as a regional destination with a density of amenities. On the residential side, the number of total housing units grew (today, more than 600 market-rate rental units exist[14]), with a corresponding increase in households—downtown grew from 2,600 households in 2010 to 3,100 households in 2020. Moreover, Macon Housing Authority has invested approximately $80 million toward replacing or renovating public housing stock in and immediately around Macon's urban core, with 270 units of brand-new replacement housing recently constructed and 294 renovated units to be completed by the end of the year.

Given downtown Macon's versatile role as a commercial and cultural hub with a growing residential base, it was not significantly affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. This can partly be attributed to Georgia's limited COVID-19 regulations, which did not require businesses to remain closed for extensive periods, helping the small, independent businesses that drive downtown Macon's economy. Moreover, organizations, including several Knight grantees, provided outreach and training services for downtown's small-business community, helping connect businesses with recovery opportunities. For example, NewTown Macon offered business coaching to entrepreneurs and small-business owners on accessing funding resources related to COVID-19. As a result, downtown Macon experienced net business growth during and post-pandemic. In addition, improvement efforts to downtown's signage, social events and tourism increased visitation by 112%[15] since 2019. Three-quarters of survey respondents (74%) reported having the same pre-pandemic patterns downtown, confirming that Macon's focus on downtown amenities helped its post-COVID-19 recovery.

Inclusive economic opportunities and an explicit focus on fostering equity have improved in the past few years, with continued room for growth. The Godsey Initiative Fund and NewTown Macon's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) helped provide technical assistance and loans to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) small businesses. Furthermore, Historic Macon, the College Hill Alliance and NewTown Macon have targeted corridor revitalizations through housing preservation efforts. Many of these organizations continue to work on delivering new residential properties, with recent funding focused on addressing the need for affordable housing. While these actions are relatively new, they represent significant steps to address prior shortcomings in not adequately addressing racial equity and proactively mitigating displacement. These new efforts are vital to ensuring the sustainability of downtown Macon's revitalization and will help push inclusive growth forward.

Broad coalitions and community engagement can lead to transformational change in downtown revitalization. Collaborative partnerships between various local foundations, such as the Peyton Anderson Foundation and the Community Foundation of Central Georgia, as well as Mercer University, Macon-Bibb consolidated government and other stakeholders, have come together with a shared vision for revitalizing the area. These partnerships have demonstrated a relatively high risk tolerance, providing seed money for new initiatives and ideas. For instance, successful collaborations with the Peyton Anderson Foundation resulted in funding for the Downtown Challenge program, supporting trial-run grants and subsequent rounds of funding. Furthermore, the willingness of these organizations to fund projects from strategy to implementation has been pivotal in the successful revitalization of key corridors like Beall's Hill and College Hill. Additionally, these coalitions have acted as conveners, connectors and collaborators, facilitating partnerships between different entities and promoting best practices through exposure to successful placemaking efforts in various cities. Private developers also play a vital role in the ongoing revitalization of downtown Macon, as evidenced by various projects in the pipeline. One such project is being spearheaded by local developer Robbo Hatcher, who plans to construct a new mixed-use development in the heart of downtown. The development will replace the former Neel's department store and Blair's Furniture buildings on Cherry Street and Third Street with a new four-story structure of 107,000+ square feet that will house 95 luxury loft apartments, three retail storefronts and nine "executive offices." NewTown Macon is an equity partner, and the Urban Development Authority is supporting the project through its PILOT program.

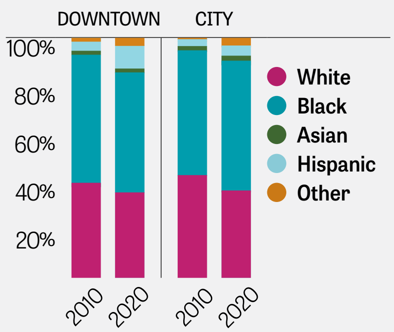
13 NewTown Macon Market Research, https://newtownmacon.com/developing-spaces/market-research/.
14 NewTown Macon Market Research, https://newtownmacon.com/developing-spaces/market-research/.
15 Near by Vista, Pedestrian Visitation Counts, 2019–2022 Q3.

Demographics

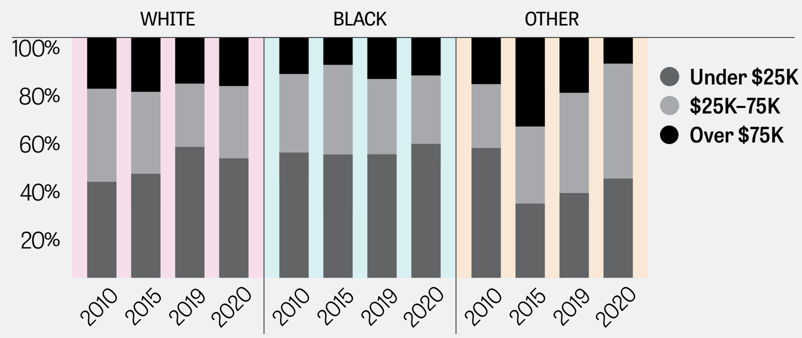
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

While the expanded downtown area, shown in the map above, saw a slight population decrease of 69 residents (from 8,660 to 8,591) between 2010 and 2020, Macon's Historic Core, defined as the area bounded by New Street to Fifth Street and Pine Street to Riverside Drive, experienced significant population growth, rising from around 560 residents in 2010 to over 1,000 in 2020. Overall in downtown, the majority of residents identified as Black and white (50% and 36% in 2020, respectively), with a growing number identifying as Asian (2%) and Hispanic (9%). Between 2012 and 2022, 286 new housing units were delivered, contributing to an increase in households (totaling 3,151). The average household size decreased from 2.3 persons per home in 2010 to 1.9 in 2020. Employment in downtown Macon grew by approximately 30% from 2010 to 2020, reflecting successful revitalization efforts. However, Black workers were three times more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts, with the unemployment rate for Black workers increasing by nine percentage points since 2010. Despite unemployment disparities, the income inequality between white and Black households in downtown Macon is less pronounced compared to other Knight cities.

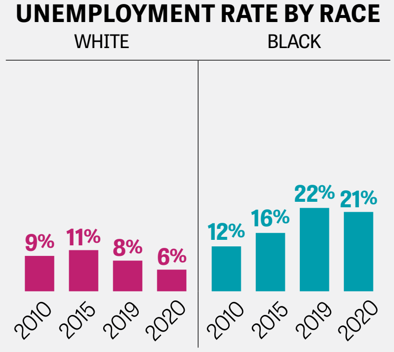
% POPULATION BY RACE



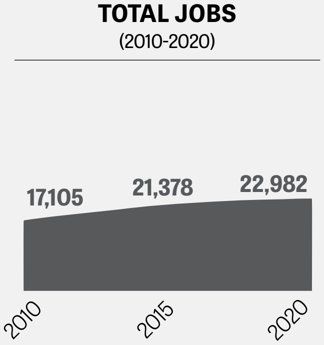
HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND INCOME



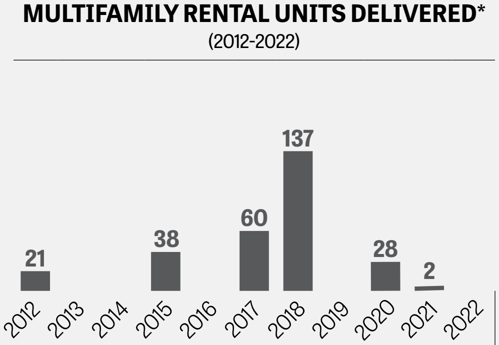
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE



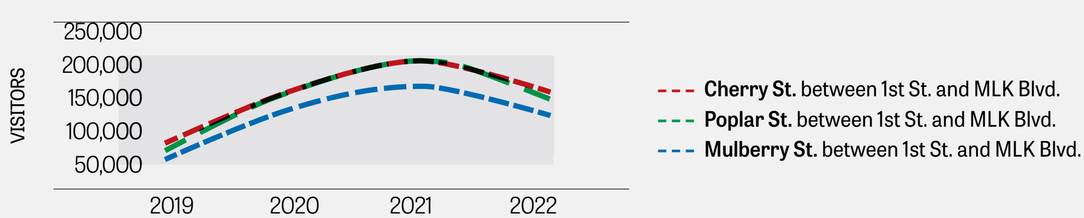
TOTAL JOBS
(2010-2020)



MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNITS DELIVERED*
(2012-2022)



Visitation Patterns



Note: See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.

** The Multifamily Rental Units Delivered chart does not reflect the recent investments by Macon Housing Authority in replacing an renovating housing stock noted in the Status of Revitalization section.*

Impacts of Revitalization

While Macon's overarching goal for its revitalization is to create a downtown for all, inclusive growth has not always been at the forefront of projects. According to stakeholders interviewed, a lack of Black leadership involved in revitalization efforts has contributed to perceptions that downtown has not been inclusive. As mentioned, the Black population decreased by 7.4% between 2010 and 2020, and Black unemployment was at 21% in 2020, significantly higher than white unemployment (6%). Similarly, data on housing points to initial signs of direct displacement: from 2010 to 2020, the number of Black owner-occupied housing units fell by 30% (decreasing from 915 to 637, a net loss of 278 Black owner-occupied units), while the number of Black residents in renter-occupied units grew by 5% (increasing from 2,318 to 2,428, a net gain of 110 Black renter-occupied units).

Despite Macon's population being 50% Black, downtown business ownership and organizations fall short of reflecting this demographic split. Black-owned businesses in the area face significant hurdles in accessing capital, leading to slower growth and highlighting persistent systemic challenges. Recent efforts, including steps outlined in MAP 2.0, the new Downtown Challenge 2.0 and efforts by NewTown Macon and Historic Macon, are working to address previous shortcomings and incorporate diversity and equity into their strategy. Specifically, the Downtown Challenge 2.0 program increased the diversity of their grantee pool in the second round of funding, with 46% of grants going to Black applicants. Similarly, NewTown Macon's initiative to increase Black business ownership through the Godsey Initiatives Fund has focused on providing technical assistance and increasing funds available to Black entrepreneurs. With the help of the Fund and NewTown Macon's CDFI, the organization's loan programs are exceeding its performance goals. Black-owned businesses downtown have increased by 26%, the loan portfolio has grown to $28 million and the target increase in jobs from the grantee's borrowers program for businesses has reached 136 since 2021. There is still a lot of progress to be made in including Black voices and leadership in key developments in downtown Macon, and future efforts need to prioritize authentic engagement and partnerships with the Black community.

Challenges

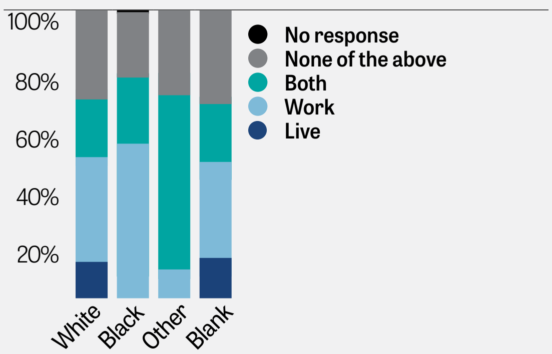
One of the biggest challenges that stakeholders must tackle is the lack of inclusive growth in downtown's success. Positive trends in jobs, businesses and housing are not fully translating to gains for Black residents, and there are growing concerns about displacement. Few Black-owned businesses remain in the historically diverse areas of downtown like Cotton Avenue, which was once referred to as the "Black business mecca." The absence of engagement with Black residents, the lack of Black leadership in organizations, and shortcomings in providing diverse programming further underscore the need for Macon's next phase of revitalization to explicitly and intentionally center racial equity. Organizations must be cognizant of growing displacement risks when advancing revitalization efforts.

Local Perception Survey Responses

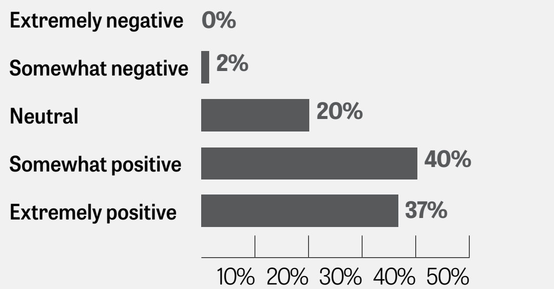
Total Survey Respondents: 211*

The local perception survey conducted in Macon received responses from a diverse group of people, though white respondents were overrepresented (50% of survey respondents were white, compared to 37% of the population; 30% of survey respondents were Black, compared to 50% of the population). Survey results suggest that respondents generally have positive attitudes toward recent developments, particularly new retail. Similarly, people of all races strongly believe that downtown has improved over the past ten years and is now a better place to live, work and visit. Respondents reported similar levels of activity compared to pre-pandemic times, foot traffic data revealed an increase in visitation from 2020 to 2021 and a slight decline in visitation during the first half of 2022, in line with 2020 levels.

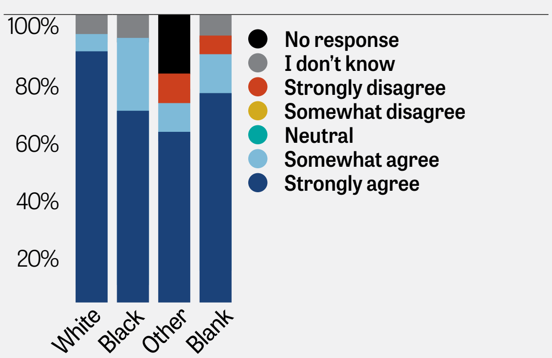
Do you work or live in downtown Macon?



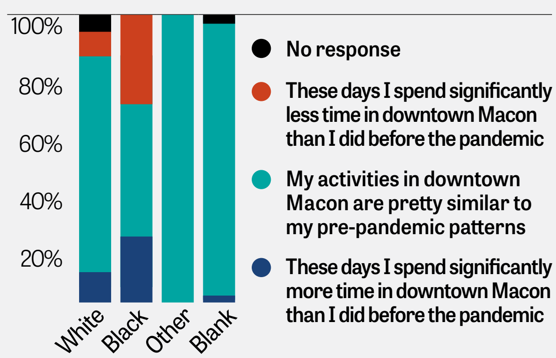
How do you feel about the new retail spaces downtown?



Compared to ten years ago, has downtown Macon become a better place to live, work or visit?



Do you interact with downtown Macon today in roughly the same ways that you did prior to the Covid-19 pandemic?



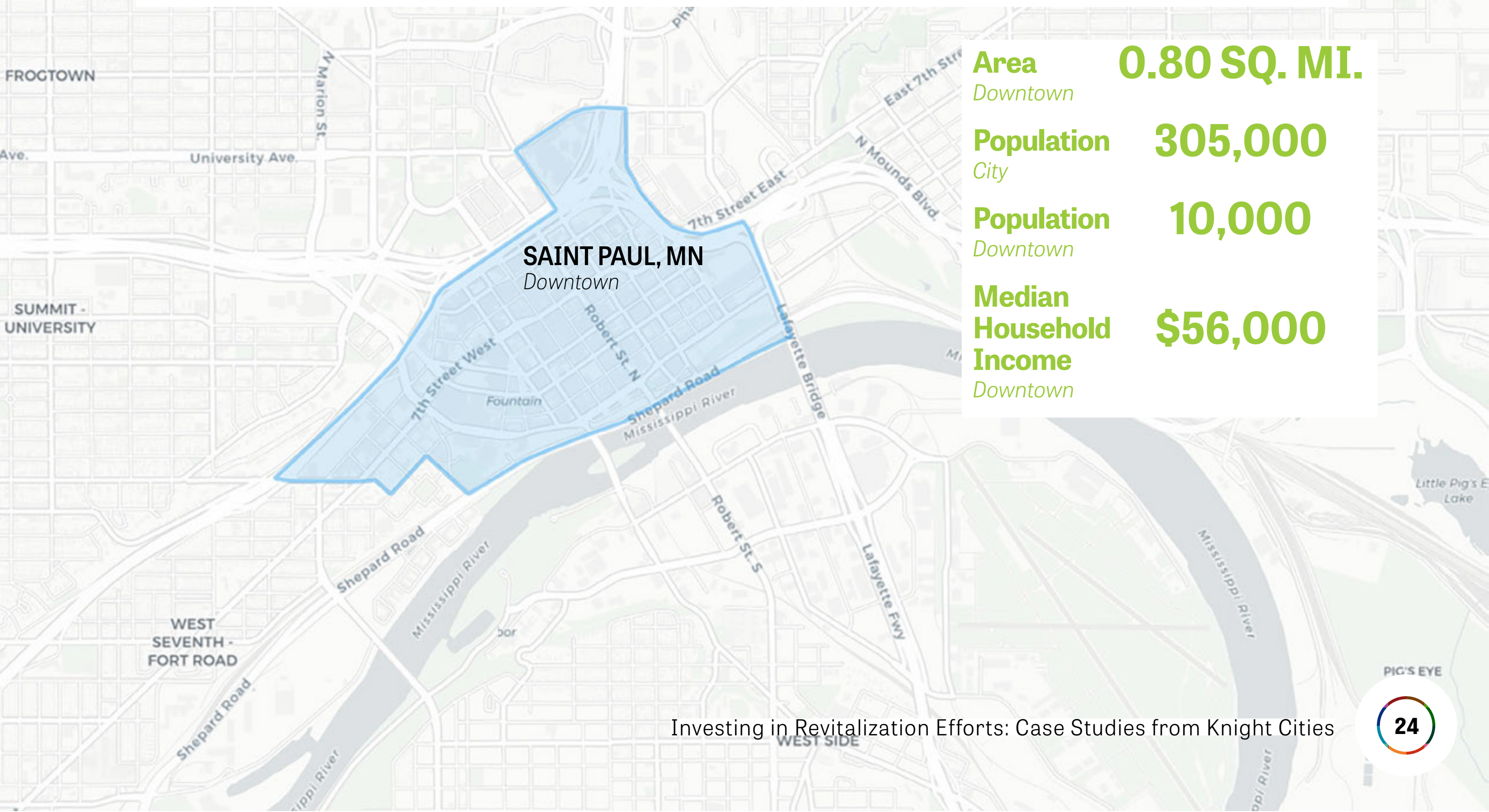
**See the Appendix for methodology. The survey findings are not statistically representative of all local attitudes but are an indicator of local perception.*

Saint Paul

Introduction

Saint Paul, located along the Mississippi River, is Minnesota's state capital, and together with neighboring Minneapolis, forms the Twin Cities. Downtown has historically served as a dynamic commercial center, home to several Fortune 500 companies. Saint Paul greatly benefits from its shoreline frontage along the Mississippi River. Planned major investments along the riverfront will leverage this natural asset and help further activate downtown. Saint Paul leaders are beginning to focus on revitalizing downtown Saint Paul into a more activated and thriving economic hub for all residents, yet there is no guiding strategy to unite efforts, which hampers impact.

Given the nascency of revitalization efforts and investments in Saint Paul, much of the progress being made is ongoing, with major investments like the River Balcony project having yet to be delivered. Going forward, leaders need to establish a unified and guided vision and strategy, focusing on the growing residential base and delivering needed amenities to help downtown transition from its historic role as a central business district into a true mixed-use downtown.



Area *Downtown*	**0.80 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**305,000**
Population *Downtown*	**10,000**
Median Household Income *Downtown*	**$56,000**

Overview of Knight Foundation Activity

Vision and Desired Outcomes

The community vision for Saint Paul is to create a downtown for all, establishing the downtown core as a vibrant hub for innovation, community and inclusive economic growth. Investments have supported efforts to encourage inclusive entrepreneurial activity, engage residents in the downtown area and brand downtown as a hub for creativity. Downtown Saint Paul stakeholders are hoping that this investment strategy will lead to an increased number of downtown residents and workers, a more active street life with increased foot traffic and a growth in public/private investments for new development.

Organizations Funded

Since 2017, Knight Foundation has invested over $4.3 million toward downtown Saint Paul's transformation. Priority grants and physical investments are summarized and mapped below.

Priority and Physical Grants Summary and Map

GRANT INFORMATION[16]		GRANT SUMMARY
Lunar Startups (Osborne370) **Minnesota Public Radio** $1,000,000 (2017)	●	This grant funded efforts to build a coworking space and incubator in downtown Saint Paul's Osborn370 building, mainly focusing on supporting BIPOC entrepreneurs.
River Balcony Project **Great River Passage Conservancy** $50,000 (2020), $100,000 (2021)	●	The initial grant funded one of the key steps in the organization's River Balcony project: beginning the planning process and creating a governance structure for the future park. After completing the design of a governance structure, an additional $100,000 was provided to assist in capacity building and continuing the project's planning process.
The "M" Capital Campaign[17] **Minnesota Museum of American Art** $600,000 (2019)	●	The grant supported the opening of the Minnesota Museum of American Art (the "M") in downtown Saint Paul. Because the requirements needed for full grant payout were not met, Knight funded only $600,000 of its $1.5 million pledge to the "M."
Saint Paul Downtown Alliance Business Improvement District (BID) Organizing **Saint Paul Downtown Alliance** $200,000 (2019), $1,000,000 (2021)	A	The initial grant in 2019 funded efforts to create a permanent BID, a privately led effort that brings together commercial property owners to provide services to increase the safety, vibrancy and cleanliness of downtown. The initial grant focused on planning and community engagement efforts to inform BID design. The subsequent $1 million grant in 2021 leveraged money from the American Rescue Plan Act to help expand the newly established BID and support the BID's street team on safety and cleaning programs. The organization is currently hoping to use remaining ARPA funds to expand the BID's border to the western and northern edges of downtown.
Saint Paul Entrepreneurial Activity Data **2043** $104,000 (2020)	B	Knight's grant to 2043, an economic development firm, funded their work to expand entrepreneurial activity in Saint Paul, helping them create a data exchange platform for businesses to share data/information and network with other business leaders and potential partners on business ventures.
The Ordway Center for the Performing Arts[18] **The Ordway's Musical Theater Training Program** $97,000 (2020)	●	This grant supported the pilot year of the Ordway's musical theater training program for artists of color. Funding for the program allowed mentors and teachers to create lessons and plans to recruit a new class of artists.

16 Non-physical grants are labeled as letters and mapped onto the grantee's physical address.
17 This CNI grant was not one of the priority grants studied for impact. Only $600,000 of the grant was dispersed.
18 Because this grant was issued by from Knight's Arts portfolio, it is in addition to the $4.3 million that Knight has invested in downtown Saint Paul's revitalization.

Status of Revitalization

Downtown Saint Paul is experiencing early signs of revitalization, with noticeable improvements in the public realm. However, stakeholders involved in the revitalization efforts concur that there is a need for a clearer leadership presence and a cohesive guiding strategy to fully harness the energy and support for downtown's revitalization. Saint Paul Downtown Alliance, with funding support, has implemented streetscape and placemaking enhancements that are starting to improve the vibrancy of the area. According to cellphone data to track visitor patterns, these projects have contributed to an increase of roughly 20% in foot traffic and visitation in key downtown areas since 2019 primarily on weeknights and weekends. Establishing the Downtown Alliance has helped bring in a more sustainable revenue stream for ongoing efforts to program. The Ordway, a performing arts center, has become an important downtown anchor, offering regular programming to bring people downtown. Further positive signs of revitalization are seen in downtown's growing residential base, including an increase in the Black population from roughly 1,200 residents to 1,700, a 43% change between 2010 and 2020, and similar trends for other non-white population groups, such as Asian (from roughly 350 residents to 580, a 65% change) and Hispanic population (from roughly 350 residents to 650, an 83% change). In addition, unemployment rates have decreased for both white and Black residents, to 3% and 9% in 2020, respectively.

Downtown Saint Paul's revitalization has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of work from home policies. Downtown's office vacancy rate has been growing, from 21% in 2019 to 25% as of 2022,[19] and the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance estimates that just 35–40% of downtown workers returned to the office in 2021,[20] leaving downtown with a fraction of its daytime population relative to pre-pandemic levels and pointing to significant challenges for downtown Saint Paul's role as an employment hub. Like downtown Akron, Saint Paul is home to major employers, with its downtown serving as a commercial hub for Fortune 500 companies and independent businesses. Downtown stakeholders have struggled to engage downtown's high concentration of Fortune 500 companies as potential entrepreneurial partners.

19 2022 Market Report, Greater Saint Paul, Saint Paul Association of Building Owners (2022).
20 2021 Annual Report, Saint Paul Downtown Alliance (2021).

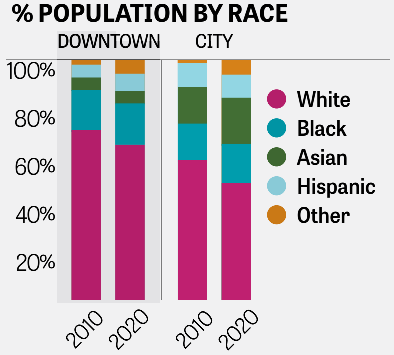
Despite post-pandemic challenges, public-private partnerships have also been driving new developments and attracting investments to the downtown area. One of the most prominent initiatives is the RiversEdge project for which the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has allocated $26 million. This project is a mixed-use development that includes a nine-acre public park that would be built over Shepard Road and adjacent railroad tracks and provide direct access to the Mississippi River. The park would be adjacent to the planned $800 million mixed-use RiversEdge development on the former site of the county jail and West Publishing properties along Kellogg Boulevard. This development includes the phased construction of Class A office and residential spaces and street-level retail, entertainment and hospitality offerings that contribute to the growing revitalization of this area. The Park at RiversEdge will be part of the city's proposed River Balcony project. As one of the key investments for downtown Saint Paul, the River Balcony project promises to transform the existing riverfront, which is largely inaccessible to pedestrians, into a green space with a 1.5-mile promenade. While this investment is ongoing, it is a major part of the city's and the Great River Passage Conservancy's goal to reconnect residents to the riverfront and establish the city as the "River Capital."

Demographics

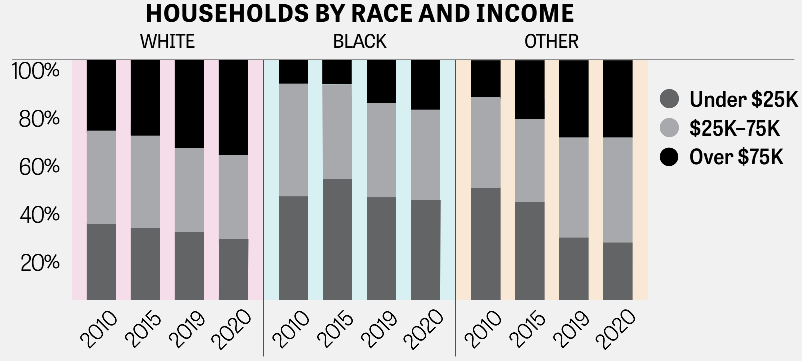
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

Downtown Saint Paul's population has grown significantly in the past decade, from 7,000 to 10,000 habitants, a growth rate of roughly 40%, which is more than four times faster than the city's overall growth (9.3%). While resident unemployment has been decreasing, overall employment in downtown contracted. It is also worth noting that unemployment rates were three times higher for Black workers in 2020 relative to their white counterparts, and they faced more significant job loss during the pandemic. Asian and other workers have faced unemployment rates four times higher than their white counterparts. The most significant shift in population has been an increasing share of higher-income households across all races, though this is most pronounced for the white population. This is likely due in part to the additional multifamily developments across the last decade, which led to a 24% increase in renter-occupied units since 2010.

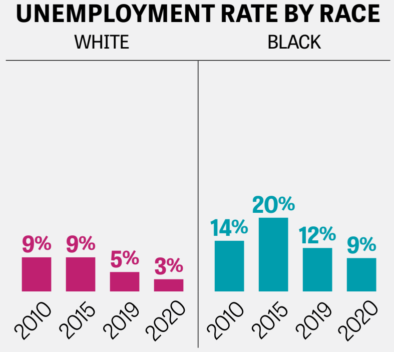
% POPULATION BY RACE



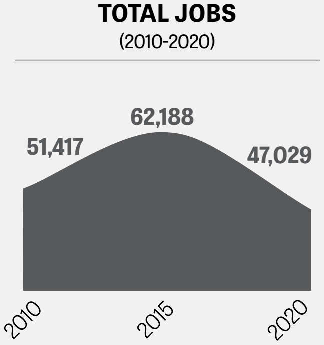
HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND INCOME



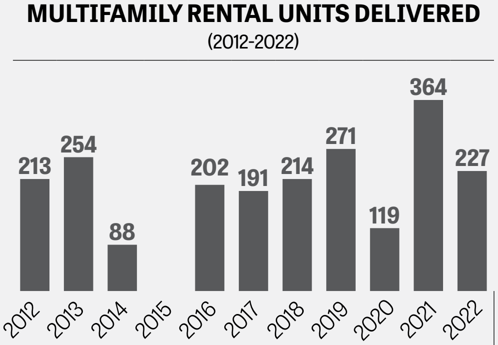
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE



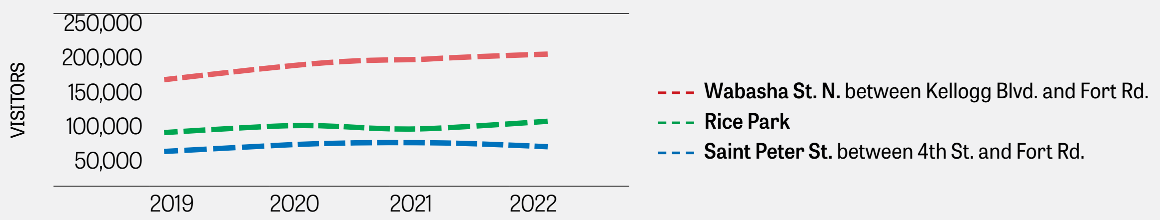
TOTAL JOBS
(2010-2020)



MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNITS DELIVERED
(2012-2022)



Visitation Patterns



Note: See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.

Impacts of Revitalization

While downtown revitalization efforts are focused on supporting inclusive growth and building an urban core for all residents to live, work, and visit some of the current trends and developments suggest that transformation has not been equitable. It is important to highlight that almost 30% of Black survey respondents who participated (workers and residents) did not have an opinion on whether downtown Saint Paul had improved, compared to just over 10% of white respondents who also did not have an opinion. This discrepancy suggests downtown Saint Paul's Black population is less engaged with the revitalization process, highlighting the need for future engagement and programming to cater to this important segment of the community.

While Black residents make up an increasing part of downtown's residential base, growth is solely occurring in renter households. From 2010 to 2020, the number of Black homeowners decreased by 41%, while the number of Black renter-occupied units increased by 30%. Data shows that the loss in units occupied by Black and white residents is being offset by the 320% and 91% increase in Asian and Hispanic owner occupants, respectively, suggesting a type of displacement that has affected both Black and white residents.

Challenges

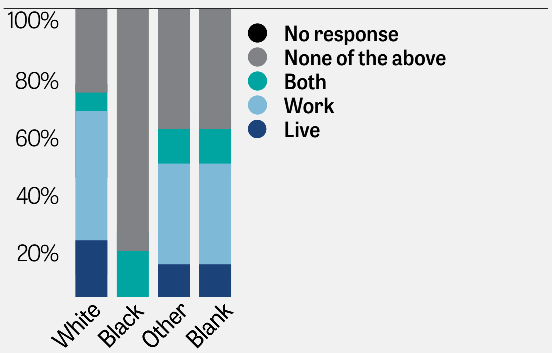
Downtown has been hit hard by remote work trends in the post-COVID-19 world and is working to grow into a mixed-use district for residents and visitors. A major challenge is the lack of a guiding strategy and plan to promote downtown Saint Paul and give it a distinguishable identity. While the Downtown Alliance is currently working on a new strategic plan for downtown, the current lack of a marketable brand has contributed to diminished downtown activity and poor perceptions of amenities. These challenges are compounded further by perceptions, indicated by survey results, that existing amenities are not attractive to residents and visitors. Many residents report feeling unsafe using existing open spaces and amenities due to perceptions of inactivated streetscapes. The area's growing homeless population is a contributing factor to these perceptions.

Local Perception Survey Responses

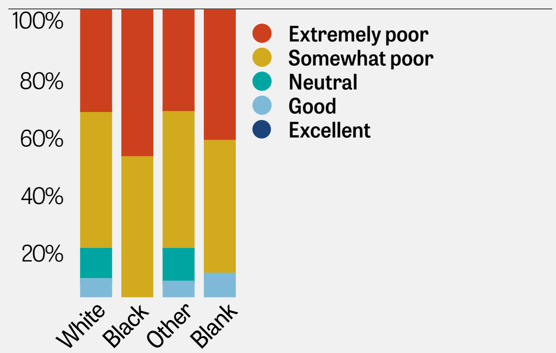
Total Survey Respondents: 173*

Only 20% of survey respondents identified as downtown residents. Despite this, at least half of the respondents expressed positive views about the Osborn370 project, though around 35% of them were neutral. There were contrasting opinions about the desirability of downtown as a place to live, work and visit, with white residents being the most optimistic. Conversely, 50% of Black survey respondents did not have any opinion on the matter, warranting further analysis to understand potential detachment. Finally, while half of the respondents believed they spent less time in downtown, data revealed a 21% increase in visitation since 2019, highlighting a positive trend overall.

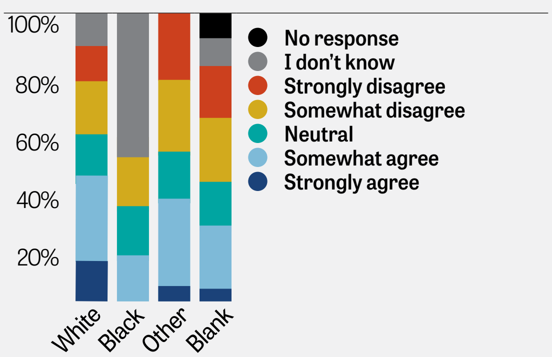
Do you work or live in downtown Saint Paul?



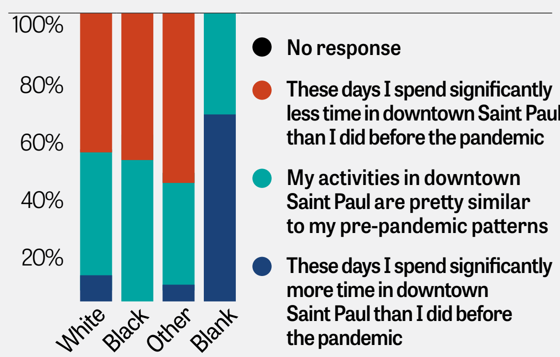
How would you rate the availability of quality amenities?



Compared to ten years ago, has downtown Saint Paul become a better place to live, work or visit?



Do you interact with downtown Saint Paul today in roughly the same ways that you did prior to the Covid-19 pandemic?



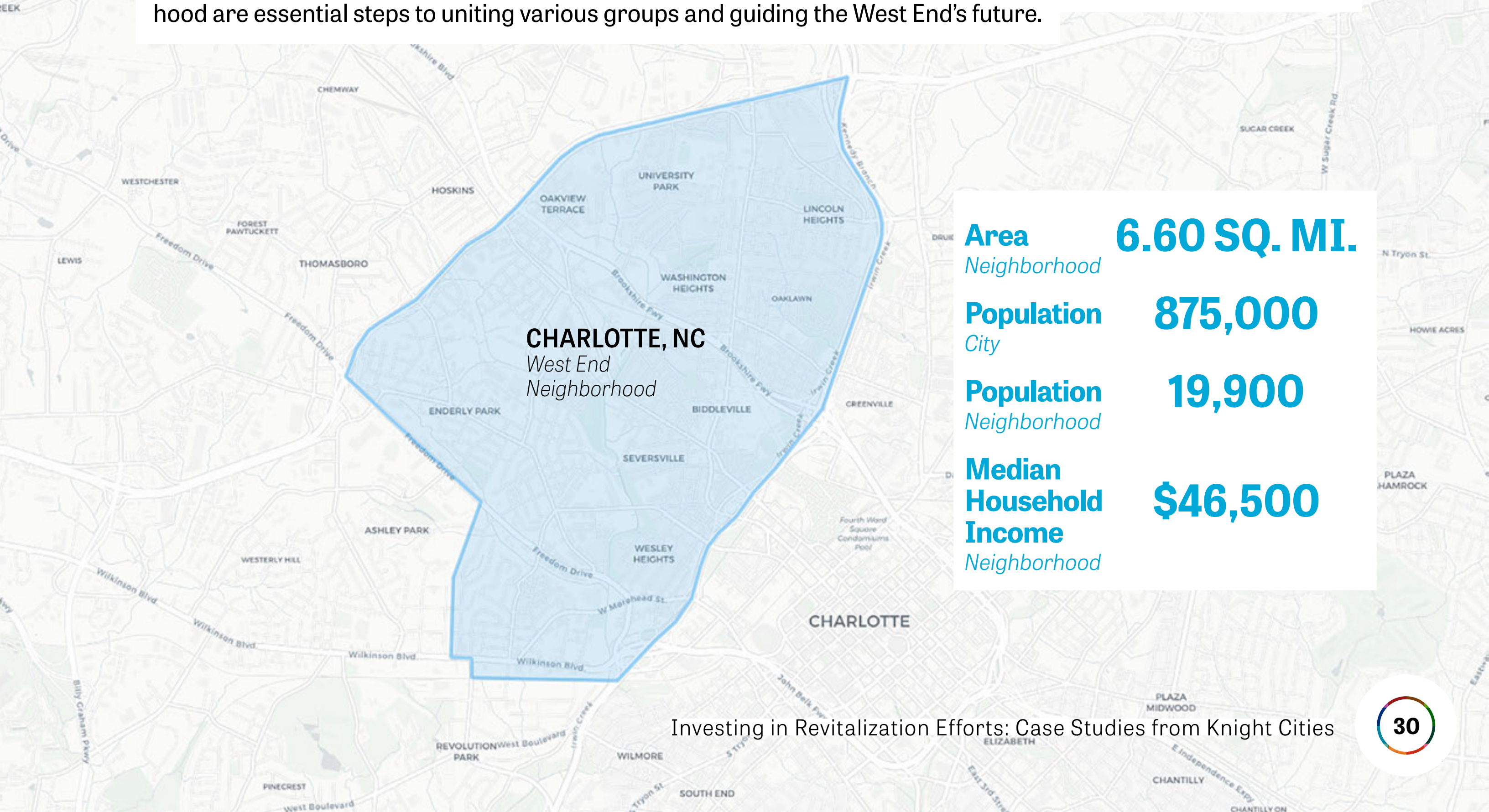
See the Appendix for methodology. The survey findings are not statistically representative of all local attitudes but are an indicator of local perception.

Neighborhoods

Charlotte

Introduction

The West End is a historically Black neighborhood located on the edge of uptown Charlotte. It houses Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), a prominent historically Black university, and numerous long-standing Black-owned businesses and communities. With a legacy of civil rights activism and civic engagement, the West End has long been a center for political involvement in Charlotte. However, its history is intertwined with systemic redlining and urban renewal efforts that displaced Black communities, including Brooklyn Village. Despite these challenges, Black-led organizations and individuals are working to revitalize and empower the community, aiming for a vibrant and inclusive future. Yet, the West End faces significant pressures of displacement and affordability. To prevent further loss of Black residents and businesses, concerted efforts are required to address residential and cultural displacement, including funding and support for residents and small businesses. The West End is also facing challenges in terms strengthening ties to its community anchor, JCSU. Strengthening organizational capacity, community trust-building and creating a cohesive vision for the neighborhood are essential steps to uniting various groups and guiding the West End's future.



Area *Neighborhood*	**6.60 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**875,000**
Population *Neighborhood*	**19,900**
Median Household Income *Neighborhood*	**$46,500**

Overview of Knight Foundation Activity

Vision and Desired Outcomes

The shared vision for the West End is to support a "walkable, livable and equitable West End," with economic mobility for all. By leveraging growing investments in residential and commercial developments, stakeholders can foster a thriving and equitable neighborhood that serves its historic Black population. West End stakeholders hope that their revitalization strategy can support coalition building among community leaders, in order to effectively retain existing residents and small businesses, provide new amenities and deliver needed infrastructure developments.

Organizations Funded

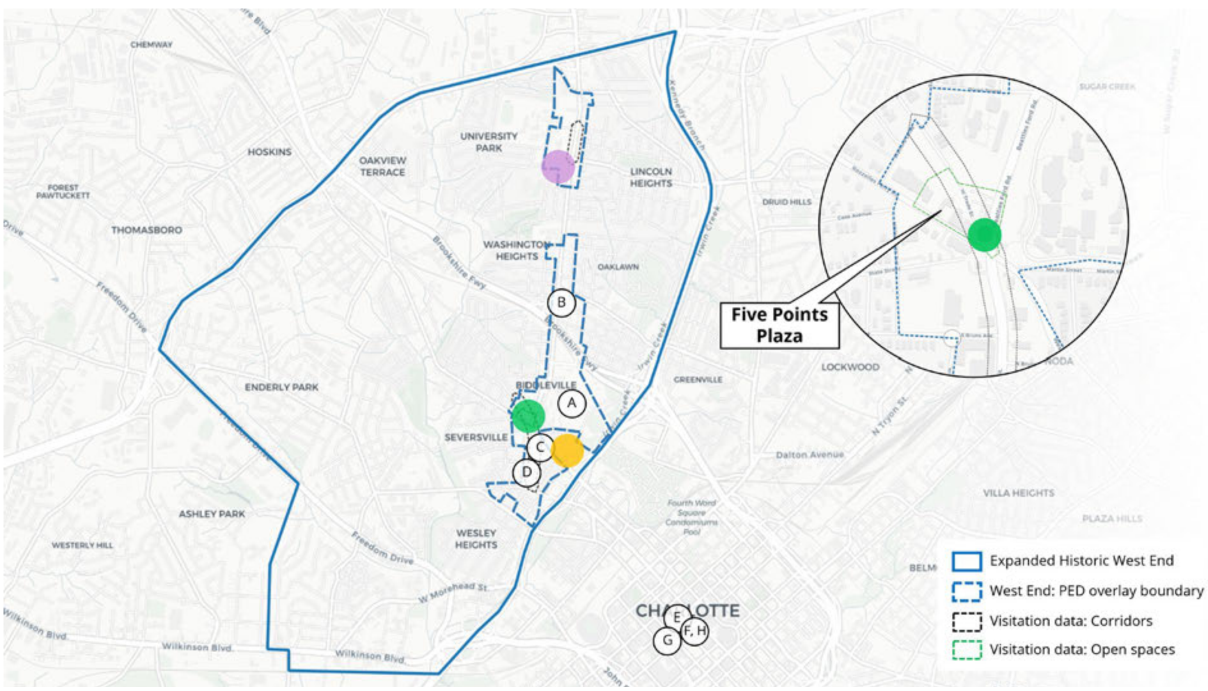
Since 2015, Knight Foundation has invested over $7.6 million toward revitalization in Charlotte's West End. Priority grants and physical investments are summarized and mapped below.

Priority and Physical Grants Summary and Map

GRANT INFORMATION[21]		GRANT SUMMARY
Five Points Plaza Programming Pilot **City of Charlotte** $394,200 (2020)	●	The grant funded efforts to facilitate neighborhood engagement, placemaking and programming for the Five Points Plaza urban park development by establishing a pilot program. The grant supported a resident-led process that creates a formal community engagement staff, a resident-led programming committee and a roster of weekly events/programs.
Project LIFT – Civic and Technology Engagement Hub[22] **Foundation for the Carolinas** $1,008,000 (2017)	●	This grant supported Project LIFT's mission to create a civic and technology engagement hub for concerned West End parents and residents near West Charlotte High School.
Old A&P Site Redevelopment[23] **Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU)** $1,000,000 (2018)	●	This grant commitment to support the redevelopment of the old A&P site through the creation of a business plan and a community engagement process. However, the grant was canceled before any payments were made.
Indaba 2020 **Northwest Council of Elders** $36,600 (2019)	**A**	The grant allowed the group to hire a consultant to help facilitate the development of the organization and assist the council in hosting its four Indaba community gatherings. The funds were used to facilitate town halls in the community, supporting resident engagement.
Asset Based Community Development **Historic West End Neighborhood Association (HWENA)** $31,500 (2020)	**B**	This grant supported the organization's partnership with the City of Charlotte to launch the Asset Based Community Development engagement process, which intended to advance resident engagement by connecting assets and efforts across the corridor.
Organizational Capacity Building **West Side Community Land Trust (West Side CLT)** $30,000 (2017), $125,000 (2019), $150,000 (2021), $600,000 (2022)	**C**	The initial grant supported efforts to build West Side CLT's capacity through the hiring of a part-time executive director. In 2019, an additional grant of $125,000 was awarded to further increase capacity, enabling them to hire full-time staff and to acquire and develop five properties in the West End. The third grant of $150,000 supported the completion of their first permanently affordable home and allowed them to develop eight additional units and negotiate a ground lease for a prospective 120-unit LIHTC development. In 2022, West Side CLT received an additional $600,000 grant to expand their organizational capacity, helping them acquire land and develop affordable housing.
Five Points Forward **Historic West End Partners (HWEP)** $104,000 (2019)	**D**	Knight's grant funded the community planning process and official plan for the Five Points/Streetcar Corridor of the Historic West End.
Organizational Capacity Building **Historic West End Partners (HWEP)** $160,000 (2019), $450,000 (2021)	**E**	Knight provided two grants to HWEP to help build the organization's capacity and ability to drive impact.

21 Non-physical grants are labeled as letters and mapped onto the grantee's physical address.
22 This grant was not one of the priority grants studied for impacts on revitalization.
23 The A&P project is described on pg. 34.

GRANT INFORMATION[21]		GRANT SUMMARY
Small Business Innovation Fund **Charlotte City Center Partners (CCCP)** $250,000 (2020), $200,000 (2021)	**F**	Knight's initial grant of $250,000 supported the fund's grantmaking to Charlotte businesses and entrepreneurs to help them adapt during the pandemic. The Small Business Innovation Fund serves businesses in the uptown area, including the West End. Knight provided an additional $200,000 to support the fund's fourth round of grants.
2018–2022 West End Community Development **LISC Charlotte** $750,000 (2018), $450,000 (2020), $1,250,000 (2021)	**G**	The first grant supported the opening of LISC's Charlotte office, helping increase their organizational capacity and allowing them to focus their work on the development of the West End. In 2020, Knight's grant supported LISC financing and enabling commercial development of adjacent to Five Points Plaza bringing four new businesses (three Black-owned and one Latino-owned) into the district. Knight's most recent grant renewed funding for LISC and provided matching funds to seed a Historic West End Commercial Development fund for minority developers.
West Side Business Development **Charlotte City Center Partners (CCCP)** $1,508,000 (2015)	**H**	This three-year grant supported economic opportunity in the West End by hiring a West End director to lead community engagement and the implementation of a resident co-created action plan. The grant enabled CCCP to gather data to develop the Historic West End Initiative Tactical Plan, which included approaches to building community strategies, supporting small businesses and opening a village center based on community vision for the Five Points area.



Status of Revitalization

The West End has begun the revitalization process and is seeing positive signs, including new commercial developments like the opening of Rita's Ice Cream, Jet's Pizza, ArchiveCLT, Chase Bank and TD Bank. Businesses in the West End were not highly impacted by COVID-19, as indicated by 55% of all survey respondents revealing that their activities in the area are similar to pre-pandemic levels. The West End's businesses are focused on serving residents, who perhaps spend more time at home, and not office workers, helping to blunt the pandemic's economic impacts. These changes are reflected in public perceptions, where 80% of Black survey respondents agree that the neighborhood is a better place to live, work and visit than it was ten years ago. Along these lines, visitation to the West End increased by 90% between 2019 and 2022 despite the impact of the pandemic, highlighting that new developments are succeeding in attracting audiences. In tandem with new businesses and development, placemaking projects like the reactivation of the old A&P grocery store and the opening of Five Points Plaza are intended to make the neighborhood more vibrant and welcoming, though both projects faced challenges that have limited impacts on revitalization.

In terms of market-driven revitalization, public-private partnerships are beginning to drive new developments and attract investments into the neighborhood. Nonprofit organizations like LISC are teaming up with major private and public actors. For example, in 2021, Fifth Third Bank and Enterprise Community Partners announced a major investment of $20 million into the Neighborhood Investment Program in collaboration with LISC, and this investment will go toward resident-led revitalization efforts and philanthropy in the community. Additionally, a significant number of market-rate residential units are planned and underway in the West End.

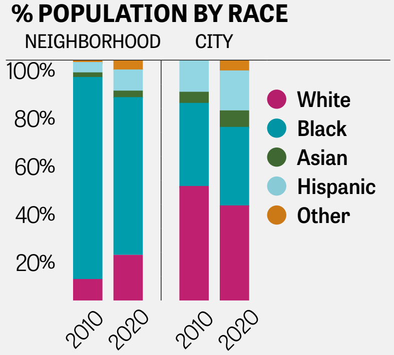
Given changing racial dynamics and pricing pressures, organizations like LISC Charlotte and West Side CLT are focused on supporting affordable housing (both rental and ownership), particularly for long-term Black residents, and they are seeing real progress. Even though Black homeownership in the neighborhood declined by 4% in the past decade, it has recently increased, with 214 new Black owner-occupied housing units delivered between 2015 and 2020.[24] New multifamily housing development is also occurring, with 96 new units delivered in 2022, pointing to positive signs of revitalization. At the same time, overall affordability pressures and neighborhood Black population loss highlight the need for continued efforts to preserve affordability and ownership for Black residents and businesses.

Demographics

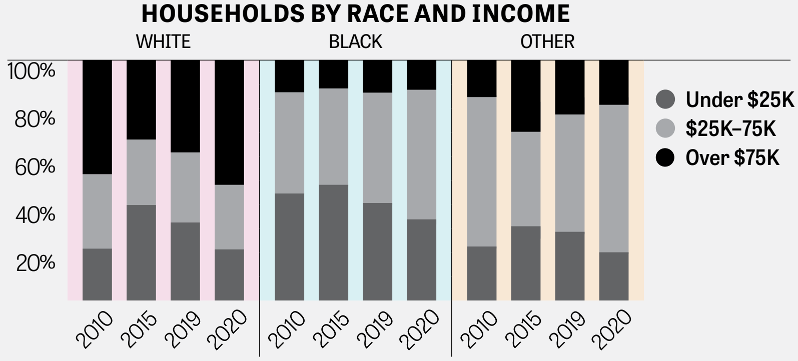
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

In the last ten years, the West End neighborhood has undergone significant changes. While the area has seen some growth in its residential community, the pace of expansion has been slower than the rest of the city. The increase in population has been fueled by an influx of white residents, which has come at a cost, as the Black population in the West End has experienced significant displacement. Further, there has been an increase in educational attainment among Black residents with a corresponding shift from low- to moderate-income brackets, which could indicate a replacement of traditional residents. Black workers in the area continue to face high levels of unemployment, which has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. The West End has seen multifamily development pick up in the past decade, which is evidenced by a 19% increase in both owner- and renter-occupied units, suggesting the area is becoming more attractive for investors and households.

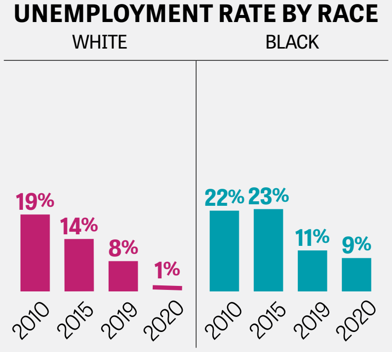
% POPULATION BY RACE



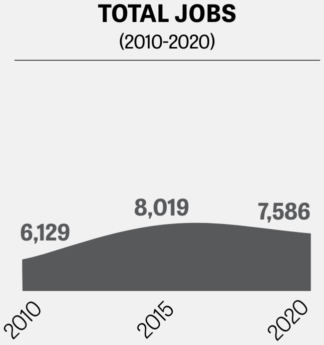
HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND INCOME



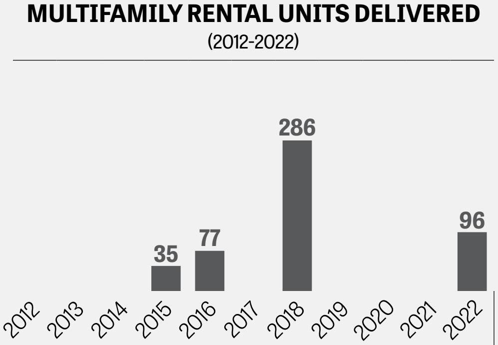
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE



TOTAL JOBS

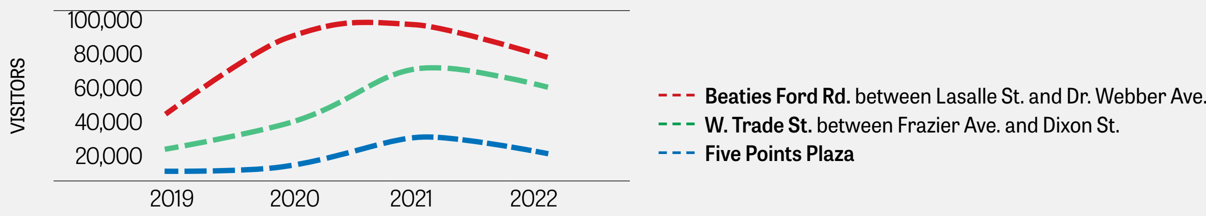


MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNITS DELIVERED



24 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2016–2020).

Visitation Patterns



Note: See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.

Impacts of Revitalization

Despite efforts to combat displacement through targeted grantmaking and through recent completion of several new development projects, the Black population in the West End continues to decrease. Although there has been a remarkable recovery in Black homeownership, with a 20% increase in Black-occupied homes between 2019 and 2020, the overall share of the Black population continues to decrease. In 2010, Black residents made up 84% of the population, but this figure has decreased to 65% in 2020.

Challenges

As understood from interviews with resident leaders and Knight grantees, one of the biggest barriers to revitalization in the West End is the lack of collaboration among stakeholders. Further organizational capacity building is needed to help build a stronger ecosystem and empower community groups to create an actionable, unified vision for the neighborhood's future. While social investors have made financial investments as one way to build organizational capacity, there are other means (such as coalition building efforts) to help community organizations work together to effectively mobilize, advocate for, and deliver community wins.

Some organizations have struggled to build authentic engagement among residents and stakeholders, leading to lackluster placemaking. Others have prioritized community engagement but have not produced outcomes beyond their engagement, signaling a disconnect between engagement and action. There is an overarching need to ensure that authentic community engagement is paired with action, so that the community is able to see tangible signs of revitalization.

The abandoned A&P lot—and the complications that have affected the site's activation and delayed development—is a lesson in the challenges associated with site-specific revitalization work. Redevelopment setbacks can be traced to challenges building a comprehensive development plan early on, gaps in development expertise and the absence of market incentives to quickly redevelop the property.

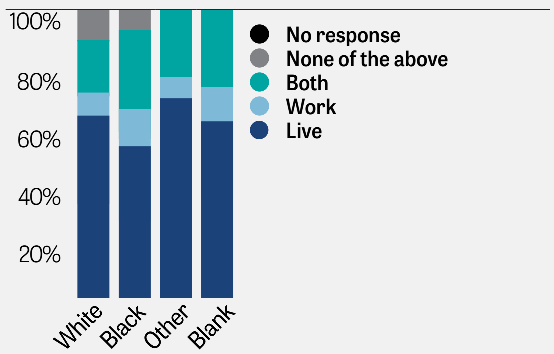
Since 2021, programming has occurred on the site. However, residents didn't feel engaged in the co-creation of that programming and felt there has been insufficient neighborhood communication around programming. According to some interviewees, the programming has not resonated with residents. The lot remains an example of how challenging it can be to cultivate a sense of community ownership around underdeveloped spaces.

Local Perception Survey Responses

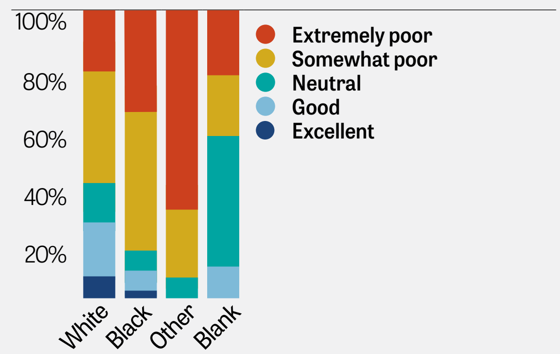
Total Survey Respondents: 114*

The majority of survey respondents were residents, providing valuable insights into daily life. Unfortunately, most residents view amenities as lacking in quality, with 60% of white and 80% of Black residents expressing dissatisfaction. Despite this, 20% of respondents from all races agree that the West End has improved as a place to live, work and play, with white residents reporting higher positive views. The pandemic did not lead to significant changes in activity patterns to main visitation points in the area.

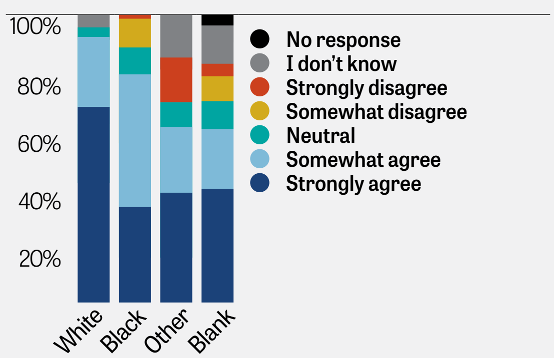
Do you work or live in the Historic West End?



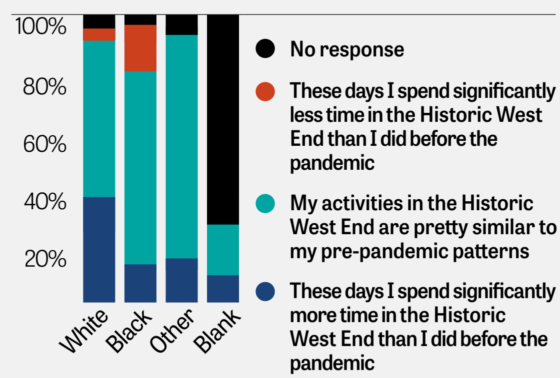
How would you rate the availability of quality amenities?



Compared to ten years ago, has the Historic West End become a better place to live, work or visit?



Do you interact with the Historic West End today in roughly the same ways that you did prior to the Covid-19 pandemic?



**See the Appendix for methodology. The survey findings are not statistically representative of all local attitudes but are an indicator of local perception.*

Neighborhoods

Detroit

Introduction

Detroit's North End neighborhood, located along Woodward Avenue, was once a thriving area during the boom of the auto industry in the 1920s and 1930s. It derived its name from being situated at the northern end of Paradise Valley, a historic Black business and entertainment district that served the Black Bottom residential neighborhood The North End was a vibrant cultural hub, boasting renowned musicians like Smokey Robinson, Diana Ross and Aretha Franklin, who called it home. However, the neighborhood faced significant setbacks in the 1950s when the construction of I-75 separated it from downtown, resulting in the destruction of Paradise Valley and Black Bottom. Despite such urban transformations that have similarly affected Black populations in other cities in the United States, the North End continues to be a predominantly Black neighborhood, distinguished by its churches, independent businesses, community groups and cultural institutions. The district's business area provides a diverse range of arts and cultural opportunities, drawing artists and musicians with venues such as the Electric Studio and Tangent Gallery.

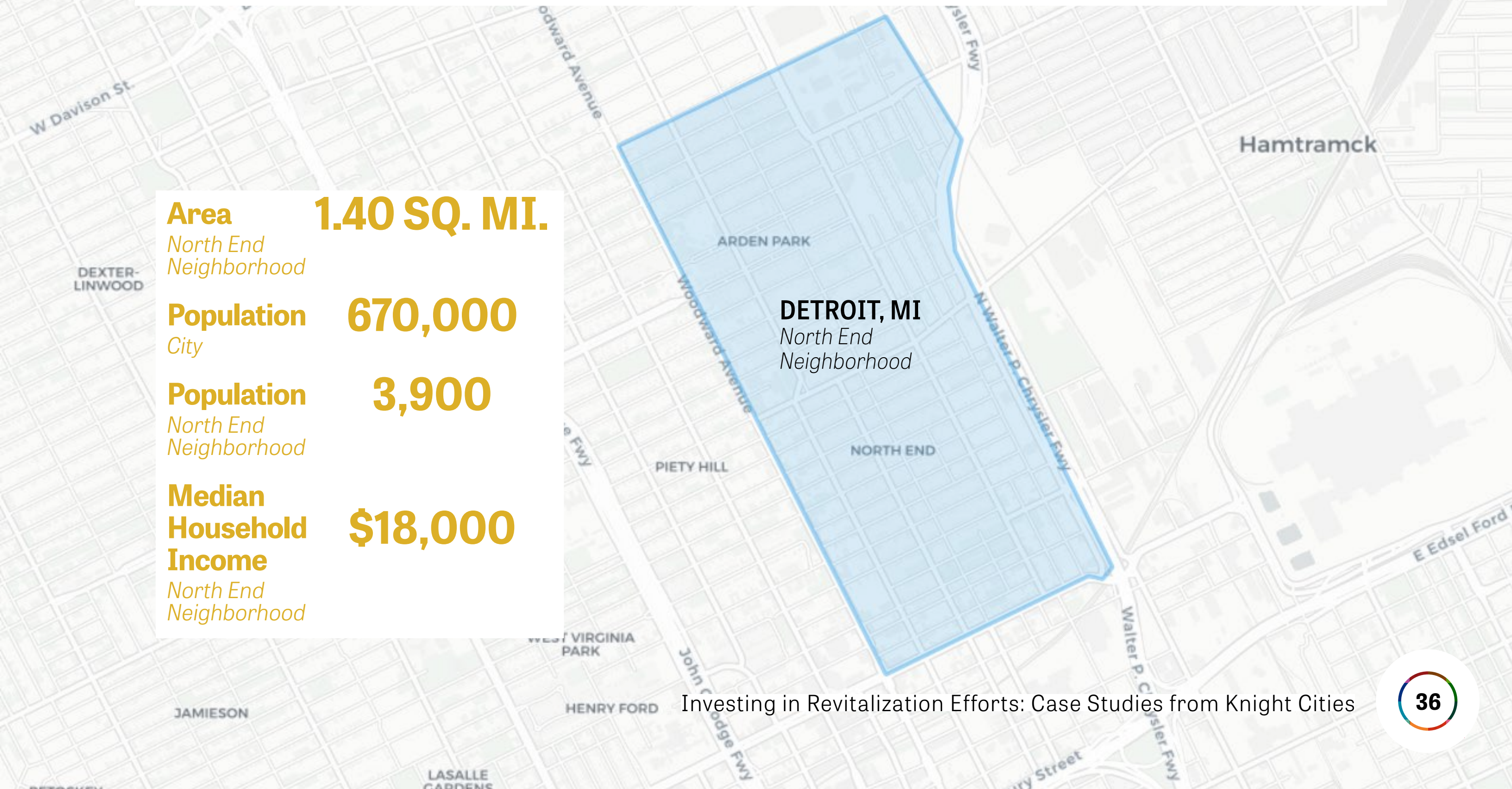
North End leaders are working to revive their community and preserve its legacy as a historically Black neighborhood. Part of this mission includes supporting economic mobility for Black residents, increasing Black homeownership to retain traditional residents and supporting the vibrancy of the existing community. Recent efforts to support public realm and business are underway, but the North End has much to do before seeing real signs of revitalization. Through new partnerships, local organizations have received support from Knight, including public realm and infrastructure investments for projects like transformation of East Grand Boulevard, which intends to reshape the streetscape and spur economic growth in the area but is currently struggling with project delays. Moreover, new developments to uplift Black businesses like the Detroit Food Commons arein the pipeline, which is spurring excitement in the community that sustainable and equitable economic growth is on the horizon. Future efforts should consider prioritizing programming, activation and collaboration to build on the momentum that does exist.

Area *North End Neighborhood* — **1.40 SQ. MI.**

Population *City* — **670,000**

Population *North End Neighborhood* — **3,900**

Median Household Income *North End Neighborhood* — **$18,000**



Overview of Knight Foundation Activity

Vision and Desired Outcomes

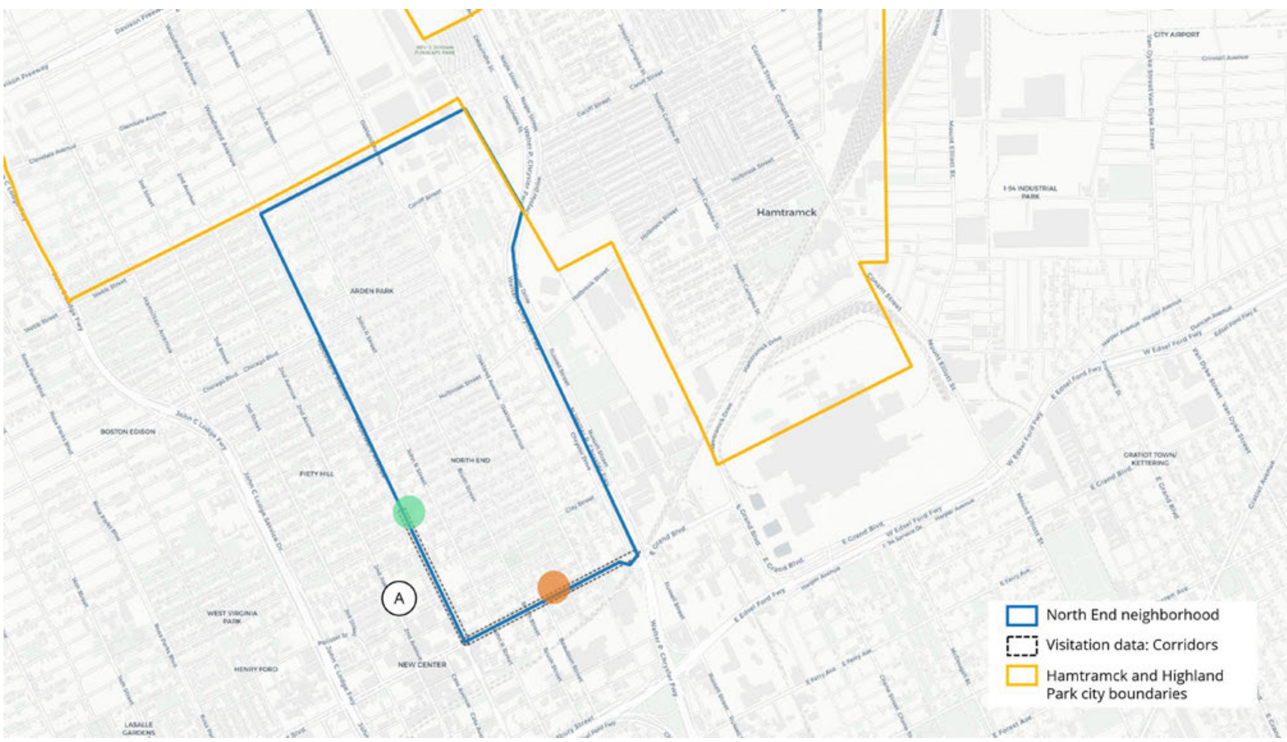
The community vision for the North End is to "return a Black middle class in the North End." By leveraging growing commercial and residential developments, stakeholders can foster a thriving, equitable and inclusive North End. The community and Knight are aligned in reimagining the North End to generate inclusive public spaces, a more engaged community and more Black-owned businesses and Black homeowners. This shared vision is intended to lead to redevelopments and transformations of key areas in the North End, such as East Grand Boulevard, Bradby Park and Woodward Avenue, changing the landscape of the neighborhood.

Organizations Funded

Since revitalization efforts began in 2021, Knight Foundation has invested over $4.9 million toward the transformation of the North End neighborhood. Priority grants and physical investments are summarized and mapped below.

Priority and Physical Grants Summary and Map

GRANT INFORMATION	GRANT SUMMARY
East Grand Boulevard Transformation Project **Vanguard CDC** $1,500,000 (2020)	This ongoing grant supports the economic development of the North End through efforts to transform and redevelop the East Grand Boulevard streetscape into a pedestrian-friendly and vibrant corridor.
Detroit Food Commons **Develop Detroit** $1,500,000 (2021)	This ongoing grant will support Black residents and Black-owned businesses in the North End through the development of a community-owned grocery store, helping spur economic development in the area.
Equitable Internet Initiative **North End Woodward Community Coalition (NEWCC)** $750,000 (2021)	**A** This ongoing grant supports the expansion of high-speed internet to North End residents, which is intended to advance digital equity. The Community Coalition is committed to combating digital redlining by expanding broadband and internet access.



Status of Revitalization

Revitalization efforts in the North End are still in the early stages, and the impact of ongoing projects is yet to be seen. However, demographic data indicates a concerning trend. While the entire city of Detroit is experiencing a decline in population, the North End is contracting at a much faster rate, with a decrease of 36% between 2010 and 2020, which is three times the citywide rate. Additionally, income inequality has worsened in recent years, with 62% of Black residents earning less than $25,000, while only 20% of white households earn the same. Only 8% of Black households earn more than $75,000, compared to 42% of white families. These numbers highlight the impacts of displacement and reinforce the importance of supporting Black residents and businesses to advance the community's vision for a more equitable and thriving North End.

There are promising new developments that have major potential to transform the neighborhood—in particular, the Food Commons project will address resident need around food access and community ownership, supporting the community vision for a thriving and equitable neighborhood. Furthermore, the transformation of East Grand Boulevard is intended to reshape the streetscape and spur economic growth in the area, but the project has struggled with delays and has not yet demonstrated a return on investment. These issues reflect larger concerns around how organizations are falling short in their ability to effectively form partnerships and deliver programming to build ongoing momentum.

There are additional signs of some initial market activity, though still with an emphasis on public sector involvement to attract private investment. CADS III Management, a private developer, announced plans to construct a new residential project in the North End—the Beauton will include 29 residential units (a portion of units will be restricted to those earning 50–80% of the Area Median Income), plus office space, along with public infrastructure improvements to the surrounding area. The city and the state are providing incentives and abatements to support the development, which is expected to generate a total capital investment of $7.1 million.

Outside of development, the North End Woodward Community Coalition's (NEWCC) Equitable Internet Initiative has successfully contributed to revitalization by expanding broadband access, providing amenities for residents and working to advance digital equity. The city's Connect313 is another initiative in the digital equity space, which is working to help small businesses with resources and networking events. This digital advocacy work is forward-thinking and innovative and creates opportunities to support businesses. Many of the major investments in the North End have focused on cultivating an active and civic-minded community. In the past, residents have been wary of philanthropy and city intervention due to concerns around displacement, so this continued effort of community trust building is important to ensure grants are positioned for success. Existing grassroots organizations have begun partnering with major funders on key philanthropic initiatives, which has helped push developments and revitalization efforts forward. As an illustration, the East Grand Boulevard transformation project by Vanguard CDC has undergone development since 2007. It saw significant progress with strategic investments in placemaking and streetscape planning, which played a crucial role in advancing the implementation of the project. Additionally, partnerships with various organizations, including Knight, helped foster connections and attract more funding for initiatives like the Food Commons project, demonstrating how collaborative efforts can lead to successful project financing and development.

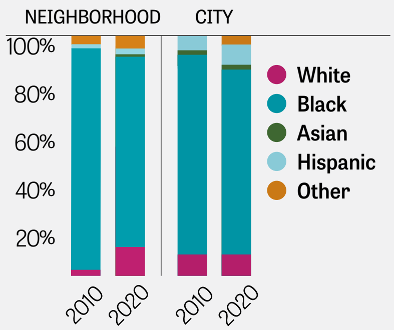
Overall, early efforts to revitalize the North End signal that there is much work to be done to transform the neighborhood. It will be important to monitor the outcomes of new developments in the area, and the subsequent impacts on demographics, most notably the economic conditions for Black residents and business owners.

Demographics

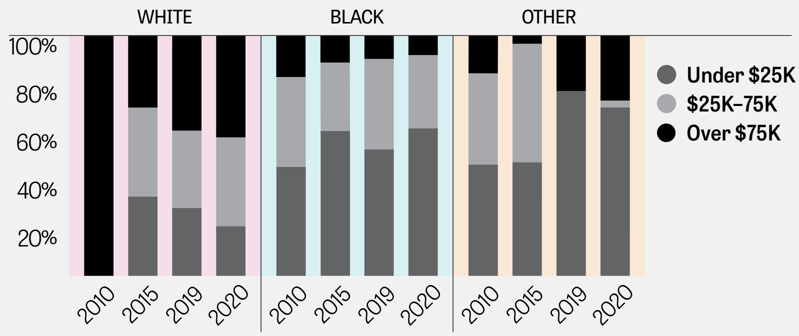
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

The North End of Detroit currently has a population of 3,900 residents and experienced a significant decline of 22% between 2010 and 2020. In 2010, the Black population made up more than 90% of the neighborhood's population (4,700 residents), but today represents 80% of the neighborhood's total population (3,100 residents). Inequality is a defining issue, with a majority of Black households earning less than $25,000. Jobs fell significantly between 2010 and 2015, though there has been improvement since 2020. Despite this uptick in jobs, unemployment remains unequal, with the current unemployment rate for Black workers three and a half times higher than that for white workers. In an additional indication of displacement, white homeownership has grown exponentially in the past decade, from five white owner-occupied units in 2010 to 183 in 2020, while Black owner-occupied units fell by nearly half during this same period, from 1,074 units in 2010 to 559 in 2020.

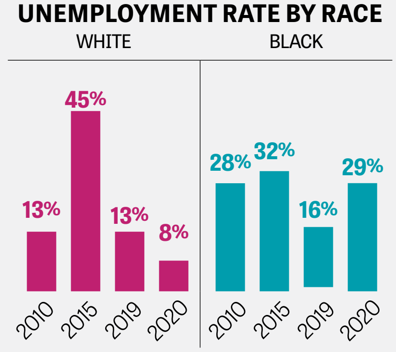
% POPULATION BY RACE



HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND INCOME

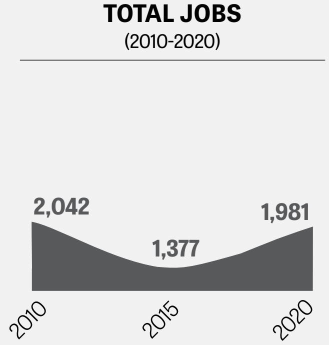


UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE



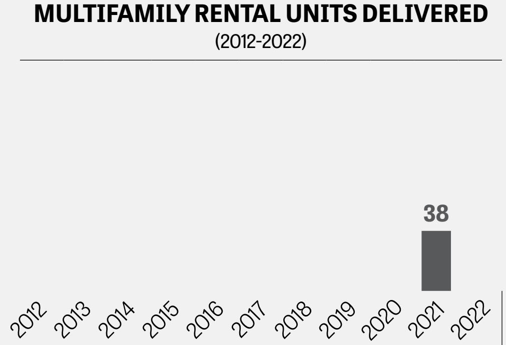
TOTAL JOBS

(2010-2020)

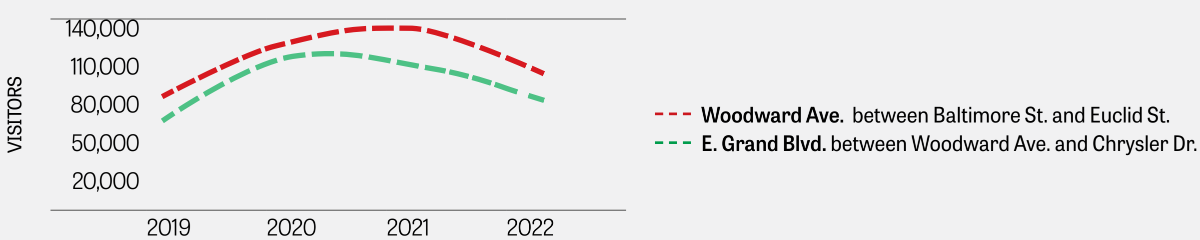


MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNITS DELIVERED

(2012-2022)



Visitation Patterns



** See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.*

Impacts of Revitalization

With ongoing gentrification and displacement concerns, there are growing fears that new developments and the North End's transformation will price out residents. Only 38 new multifamily units have been built in the last decade, and 70% of existing units are occupied by renters. Any increases in rents will disproportionately affect Black residents. Black unemployment rates remain high, at 29%, while white unemployment dropped to 8% in 2020. Income inequality is also a significant issue, with an increasing number of Black families living in poverty. Population trends confirm that significant displacement is happening in the area. There are also growing concerns about the efficacy of investing in public works projects when the North End's population declines, and job loss directly points to displacement. Data and current developments reveal a major obstacle standing in the way of the North End becoming a thriving Black neighborhood: affordability and housing. The North End would greatly benefit from targeted and long-term investments toward restoring and renewing its housing stock, similar to Historic Macon's neighborhood development projects.

Challenges

North End leaders are struggling to preserve the neighborhood's history, culture and legacy as the area continues to lose Black residents. The lack of trust between North End residents and public and private stakeholders impedes much-needed collaboration and progress. Revitalization often contributes to displacement among the most vulnerable, so residents have been wary of changes to their community. Interviews reveal that public sentiments around placemaking projects are not positive due to the perception that project leaders are not prioritizing displacement concerns. In addition, residents have felt unheard and marginalized by city and neighborhood leadership.

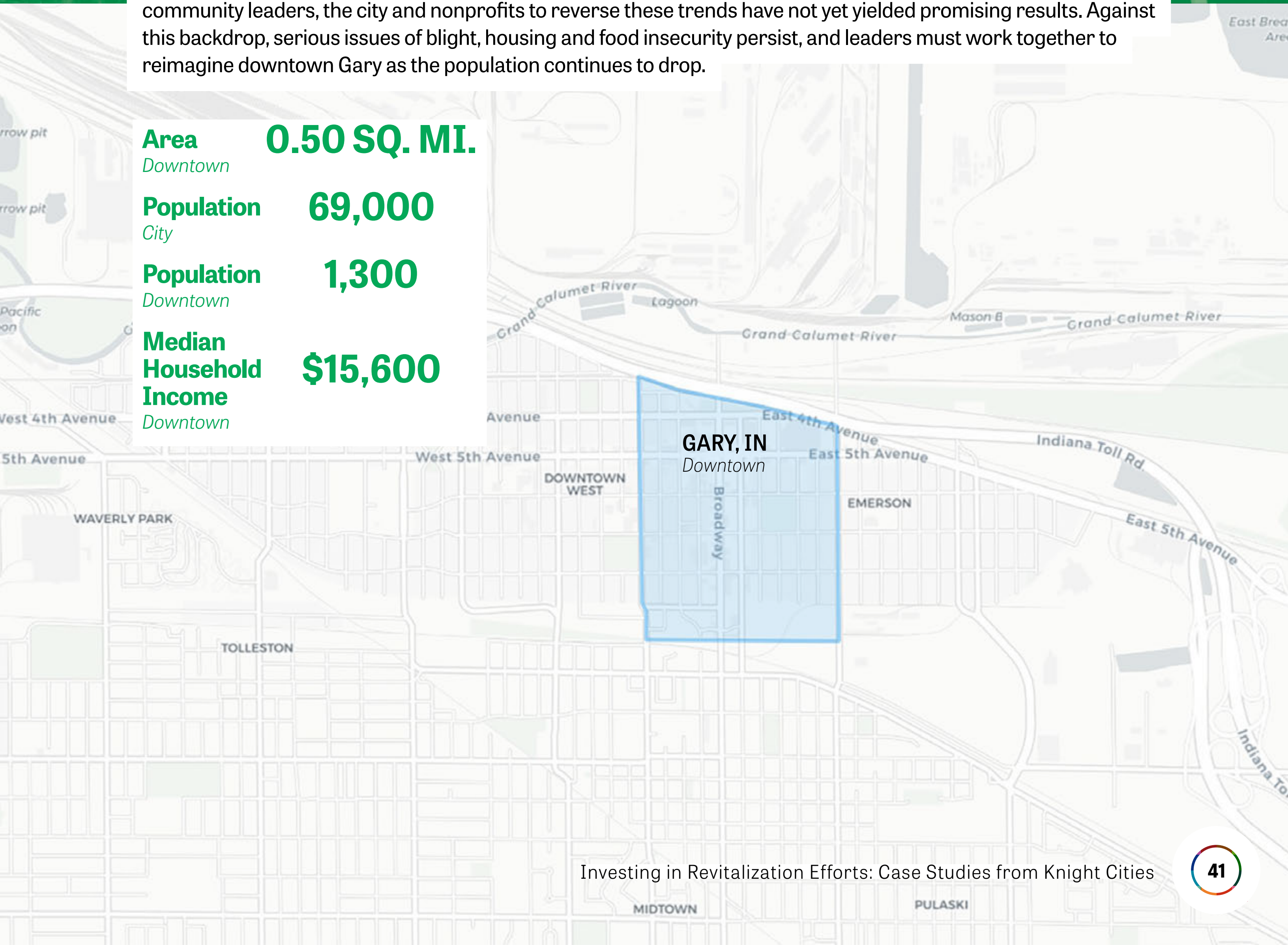
Further, there is a lack of organizational capacity among many community organizations, and many of the small-scale organizations need more resources and capital for their initiatives and projects. In the North End, historical limitations on resources in Black communities have resulted in many organizations lacking the necessary staff and financial capital to effectively advocate for long-term developments. Providing increased funding and support to community groups and leaders who show potential but currently lack the capacity and resources to operate as high-functioning nonprofits is essential. Outside of internal capacity needs, growing construction costs can jeopardize grantees' ability to deliver on key projects like the East Grand Boulevard transformation and the Food Commons project.

Gary

Introduction

The city of Gary was once a prosperous steel town but is now grappling with the effects of job loss, population decline, blight and crime. As the steel industry that drove the town began its decline in the 1970s, Gary experienced a drastic population loss, shrinking by more than half since its peak of nearly 200,000. Economic pressures from the decline of U.S. Steel, which has continued to shed jobs, have contributed to growing unemployment, decaying infrastructure and a dire property tax death spiral. Downtown has been hit particularly hard, and efforts by community leaders, the city and nonprofits to reverse these trends have not yet yielded promising results. Against this backdrop, serious issues of blight, housing and food insecurity persist, and leaders must work together to reimagine downtown Gary as the population continues to drop.

Area *Downtown*	**0.50 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**69,000**
Population *Downtown*	**1,300**
Median Household Income *Downtown*	**$15,600**



Status of Revitalization

Downtown Gary's community vision is to reduce blight and encourage population growth. By transforming blighted properties into community assets, downtown leaders hope to attract new residents and development, create economic opportunity and foster a more inclusive public life. To support this vision, Knight has made investments in projects like the Art House and the Church Ruins Garden Project, which aim to restore vacant properties and activate them for the community. However, both projects faced challenges associated with a lack of organizational capacity and political association. Art House, a major priority project of the city of Gary, lost funding through mayoral transitions. The organization has also faced further struggles around operations and main-tenancy difficulties, with the space underused. Another historically significant, vacant property is the Union Train Station in the heart of downtown. Knight funded Decay Devils, a grassroots historic preservation organization, to clean up and beautify the station. The Decay Devils then purchased the property and successfully led a capital campaign to renovate, with the City of Gary and Digital Equity LLC investing $8 million in 2023 to transform the station into a digital tech hub.

Partnerships between major donors and Gary-based philanthropies, like the Legacy Foundation, have helped to support what progress is occurring, and these investments have filled in budget gaps in city funding. For example, the City of Gary, with support from Knight and the Legacy Foundation, launched a platform around blight reduction, helping the city survey thousands of parcels and successfully demolish over 300 vacant/blighted properties. Gary Public Transportation Corporation also received private funding for the Gary Mobility Hub program to build connections (rail, bike, bus) downtown. Outside investments have also provided valuable learning opportunities and resources to grantees, exposing them to successful models of placemaking from elsewhere and elevating the grassroots efforts of grantees like Decay Devils, helping them access additional funding opportunities. While there is general alignment across municipal, community and philanthropic leaders on the need to tackle blight, there is no current guiding strategy to facilitate a coordinated approach toward revitalization.

Many groups working in Gary are focused on meeting basic needs, which is not the primary focus of Knight's social impact investment model. Moving forward, conversations with community organizations suggest a focus area should be on building the capacity of nonprofits working in Gary, particularly in terms of how to organize fundraising opportunities, how to identify grant opportunities and structure grant applications, and how to access resources and mature as an organization. As one grantee reported, there is a need for "tools to train nonprofits on how to think innovatively in tackling challenges . . . our nonprofits are responding to basic needs, not thinking creatively. Major investors can help brings tools to nonprofits and show them what is possible." There is also a focus on serving residents in neighborhoods outside of downtown Gary (e.g., Horace Mann, Miller Beach, Aetna), where the Legacy Foundation reports seeing more neighborhood energy and momentum when compared to downtown.

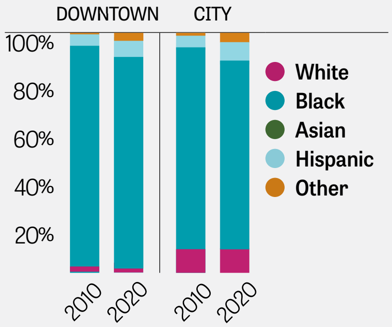
The lack of restaurants and retail in the downtown area remains a significant challenge to generating momentum, as downtown in its current state remains unattractive to residents, visitors and developers, leading to underdevelopment. The little activation that is occurring struggles in the face of chronic blight and vacancy, including the 11% multifamily vacancy rate that continues to plague downtown. Ongoing issues of blight, population loss and lack of development have stalled attempts at revitalization. Downtown Gary has seen minimal new development in the past ten years—the residential Broadway Lofts project is the sole development that opened recently. Broadway Lofts is a mixed-income development that received significant public subsidy, given the complete lack of private market activity and private investment in Gary. Given the number of challenges and the dire economic state facing Gary, long-term dedication and significant investment is needed to begin solving downtown's problems.

Demographics

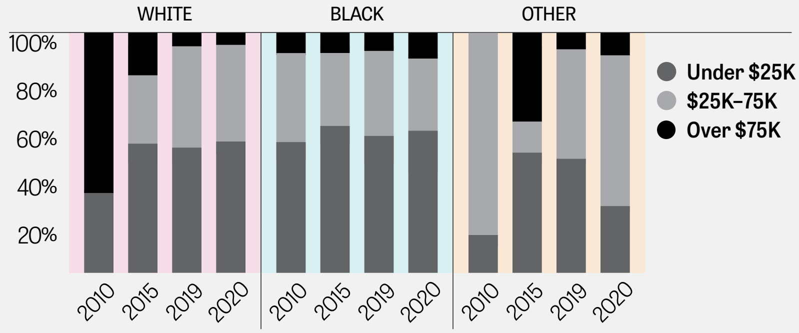
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

Downtown Gary is a struggling area, part of a larger city facing similarly deep-rooted issues. Downtown's population fell from approximately 1,600 to 1,300 residents between 2010 and 2020 (a 17.5% decrease), with both Black and white residents leaving at similar rates. This exodus has been accompanied by an increase in the number of households in the lowest income bracket, while the middle class has shrunk and higher-income families have grown. The area also faces significant challenges related to unemployment. Despite making up 90% of the population, Black workers experience an unemployment rate five times higher than their white counterparts. Job losses have been sustained since 2010, and the delivery of new housing units has been limited, with only 38 multifamily units built in the last five years.

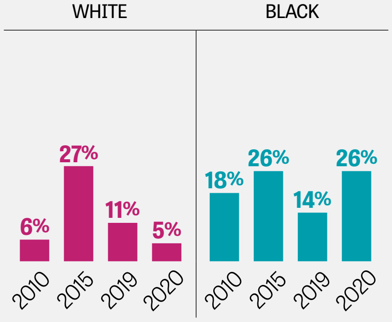
% POPULATION BY RACE



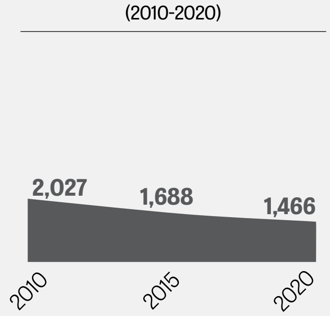
HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND INCOME



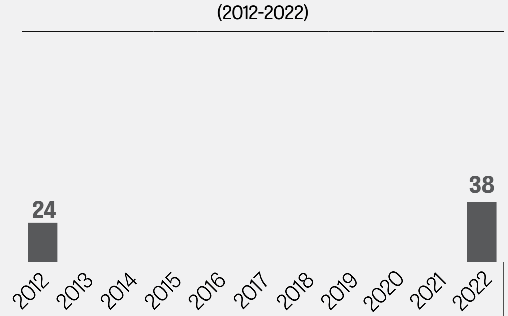
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE



TOTAL JOBS
(2010-2020)



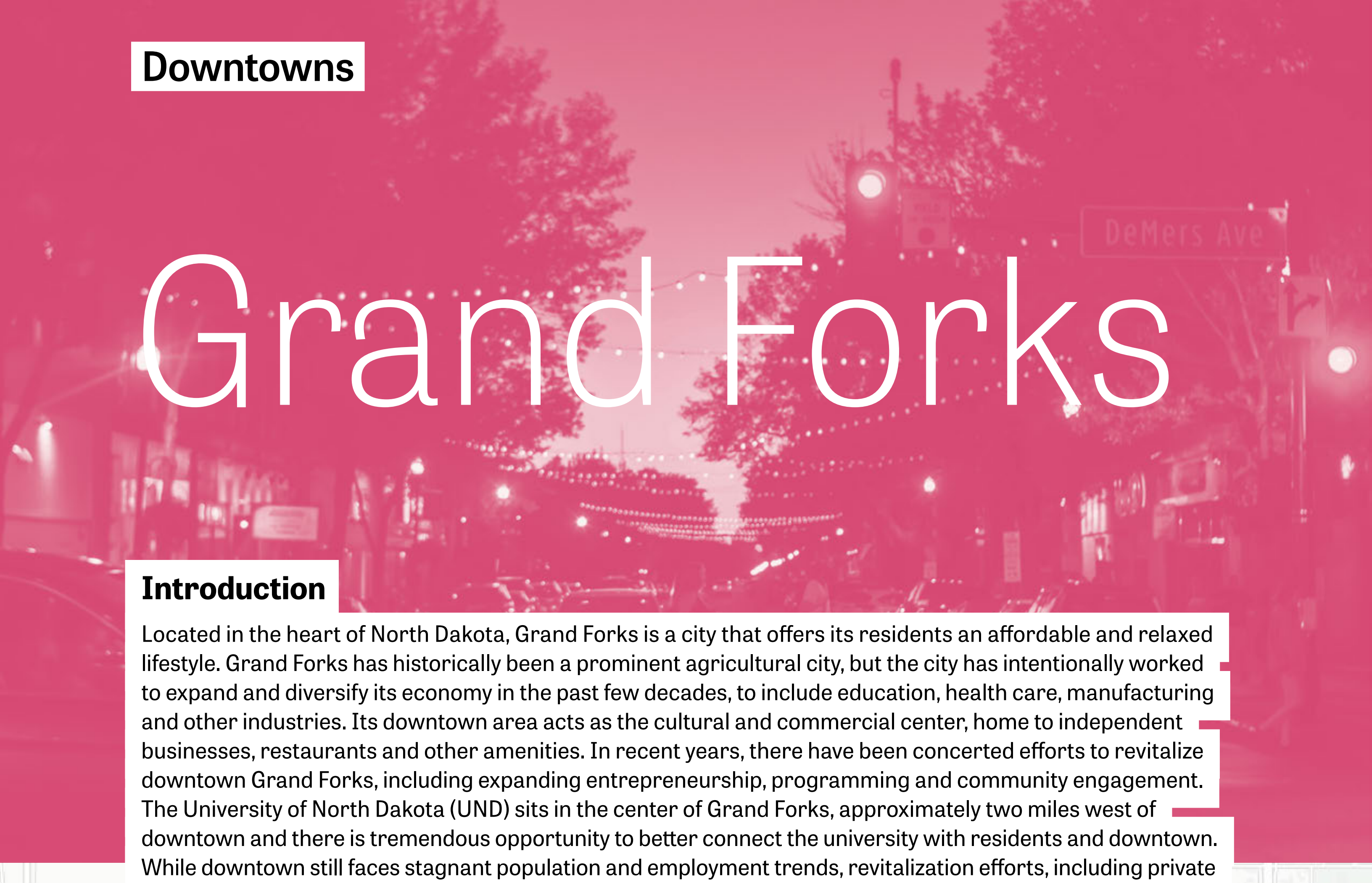
MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNITS DELIVERED
(2012-2022)



See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.

Downtowns

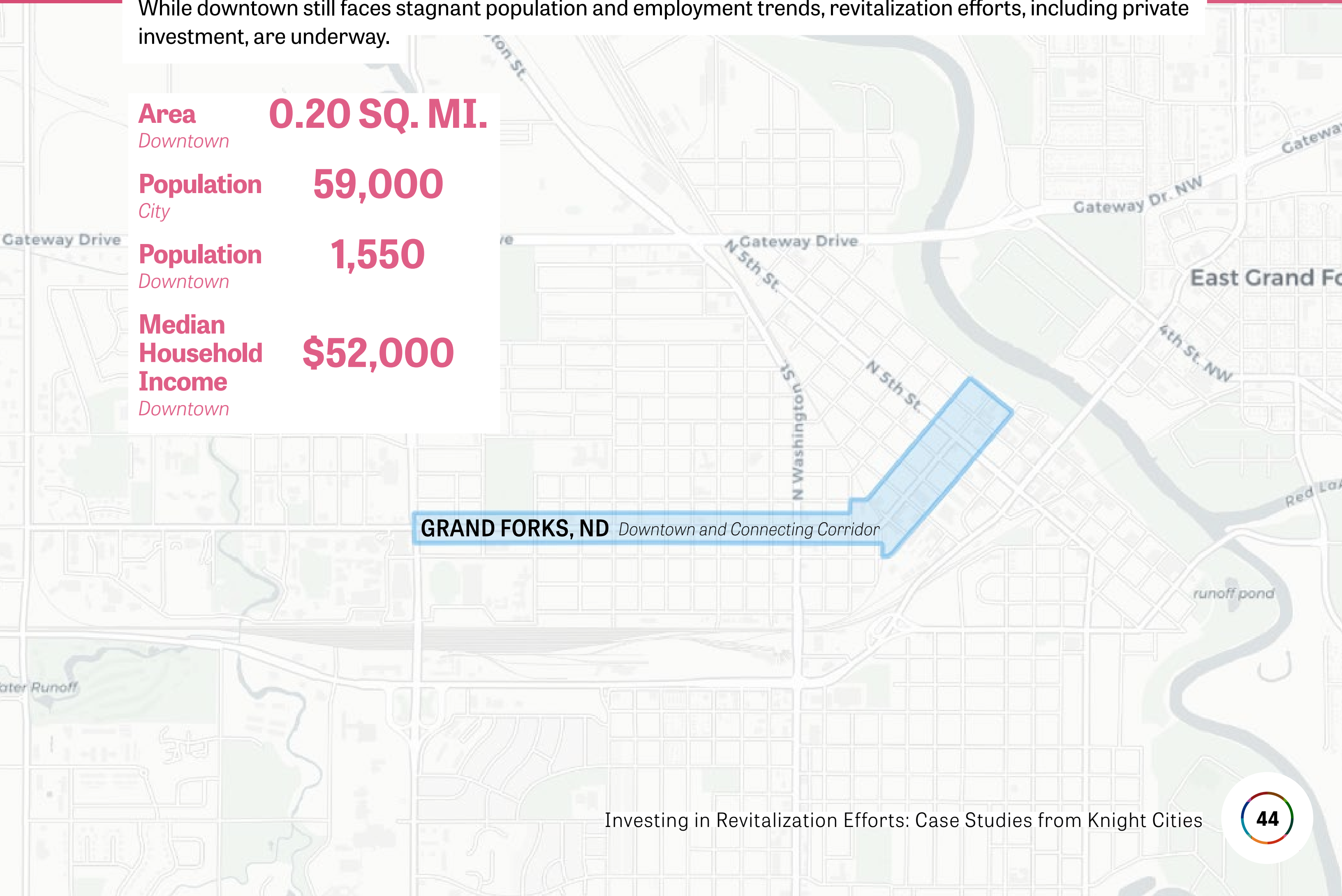
Grand Forks



Introduction

Located in the heart of North Dakota, Grand Forks is a city that offers its residents an affordable and relaxed lifestyle. Grand Forks has historically been a prominent agricultural city, but the city has intentionally worked to expand and diversify its economy in the past few decades, to include education, health care, manufacturing and other industries. Its downtown area acts as the cultural and commercial center, home to independent businesses, restaurants and other amenities. In recent years, there have been concerted efforts to revitalize downtown Grand Forks, including expanding entrepreneurship, programming and community engagement. The University of North Dakota (UND) sits in the center of Grand Forks, approximately two miles west of downtown and there is tremendous opportunity to better connect the university with residents and downtown. While downtown still faces stagnant population and employment trends, revitalization efforts, including private investment, are underway.

Area *Downtown*	**0.20 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**59,000**
Population *Downtown*	**1,550**
Median Household Income *Downtown*	**$52,000**



Status of Revitalization

The community's shared vision for downtown Grand Forks is to create a more connected downtown that has deep ties to the university. By building relationships between UND, city leaders and local businesses, stakeholders can foster more inclusive public life, community engagement and entrepreneurship. Leaders are hoping that revitalization efforts increase private investment, the use of public spaces and overall population and diversity. While there are positive signs of nascent revitalization, downtown is also facing a shrinking population (2% decrease), job loss (14% since 2015) and a slow multifamily market between 2010 and 2020. However, the area is expecting upcoming multifamily and commercial deliveries and a growing overall pipeline of development projects, according to news reports and the number of projects that have been approved by the planning department.[25] These planned development projects signal growing private market interest in the downtown area and a self-sustaining private real estate market is a clear sign of revitalization.

Recent and planned developments include downtown's Tech Accelerator, housed in a historic building, a project that received funding from the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the City of Grand Forks. The Tech Accelerator is intended to serve as a central hub for autonomous tech startups, offering programming and support services. Pipeline commercial development projects include the Olive Ann Boutique Hotel and Event Center, expected to be delivered in September 2023. This $20 million project includes renovating the current Edgewood Corporate Plaza and building a new aviation-themed hotel intended to increase visitation downtown.

Further signs of revitalization include programming at arts destinations like Empire Arts Center, which hosts hundreds of events a year, bringing residents and visitors downtown. Downtown's identity as a college town also brings students in on the weekends to visit restaurants and bars. Positive signs of revitalization have been tied to successful investments like the Flavors Food Truck project, a Knight-supported initiative, which provided a ghost kitchen for food entrepreneurs, helping expose residents to new cuisines. The project ultimately supported the development of new local restaurants and gave visibility to existing businesses, enhancing downtown's vibrancy. Similarly, a coworking space for entrepreneurs and students is helping foster innovation downtown and providing a new location to connect, which has been integral in fostering UND's connection to downtown. However, existing ties remain weak, partly due to UND's lack of physical presence in the downtown area. Moreover, the corridor that connects the university to downtown is not pedestrian-friendly and the university's shuttle system does not transport students downtown, making it difficult to support connections. UND and the city, with support from major donors, are currently coming together to develop a plan that addresses these challenges and improves conditions along the corridor. Additionally, downtown businesses and community leaders are coming together to push revitalization efforts and provide new programming and small pilot projects. The creation of the Downtown Development Association (DDA) in 2013, which built on grassroots organizing to form an official entity and is supported, in part, by major donors including Knight Foundation, focused on revitalization efforts. DDA provides programming and sponsors events and activations to bring people downtown and has played an important role in supporting small businesses during the pandemic. In partnership with the local community foundation, Knight funds were used to make loans and grants to businesses suffering during lockdown with an emphasis on the arts.

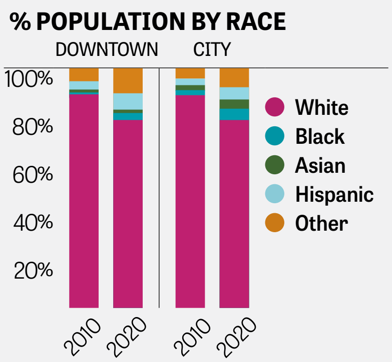
Future efforts to strengthen ties between UND and downtown should continue, particularly emphasizing ways to celebrate the UND's diverse student population and bring that diversity downtown, as well as physical improvements to make the corridor more walkable. A focus on talent retention would also be helpful, to help deepen university-community ties, keeping graduates in town and building downtown's overall population.

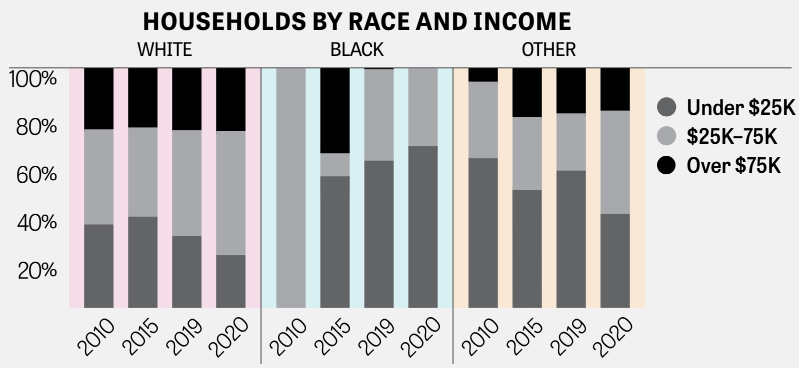
25 Grand Forks, Planning and Community Development Office, Statistics of Development Projects, https://www.grandforksgov.com/government/city-departments/planning-zoning/planning-projects.

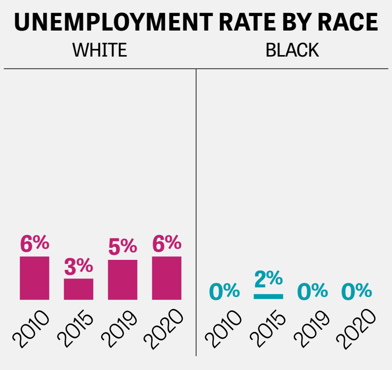
Demographics

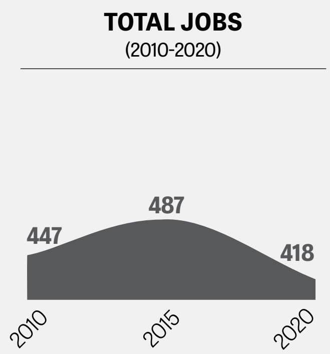
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

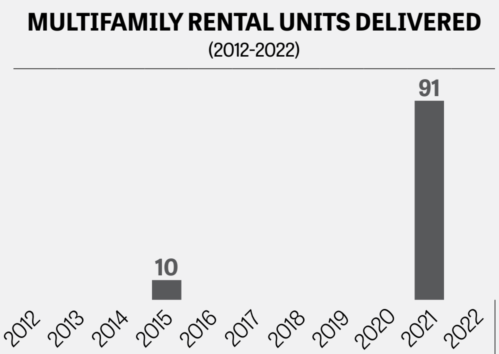
Downtown Grand Forks, which is primarily inhabited by white residents, saw a slight decline of 2% in its total population between 2010 and 2020. Despite the predominance of white residents in the area, the Black population grew by 35 residents in the past decade (a 260% increase since 2010). In addition, the number of non-Hispanic residents who identify as having two or more races has more than doubled, making "other races" the second largest racial group in the community, after white residents (a total of 151 residents in 2020).











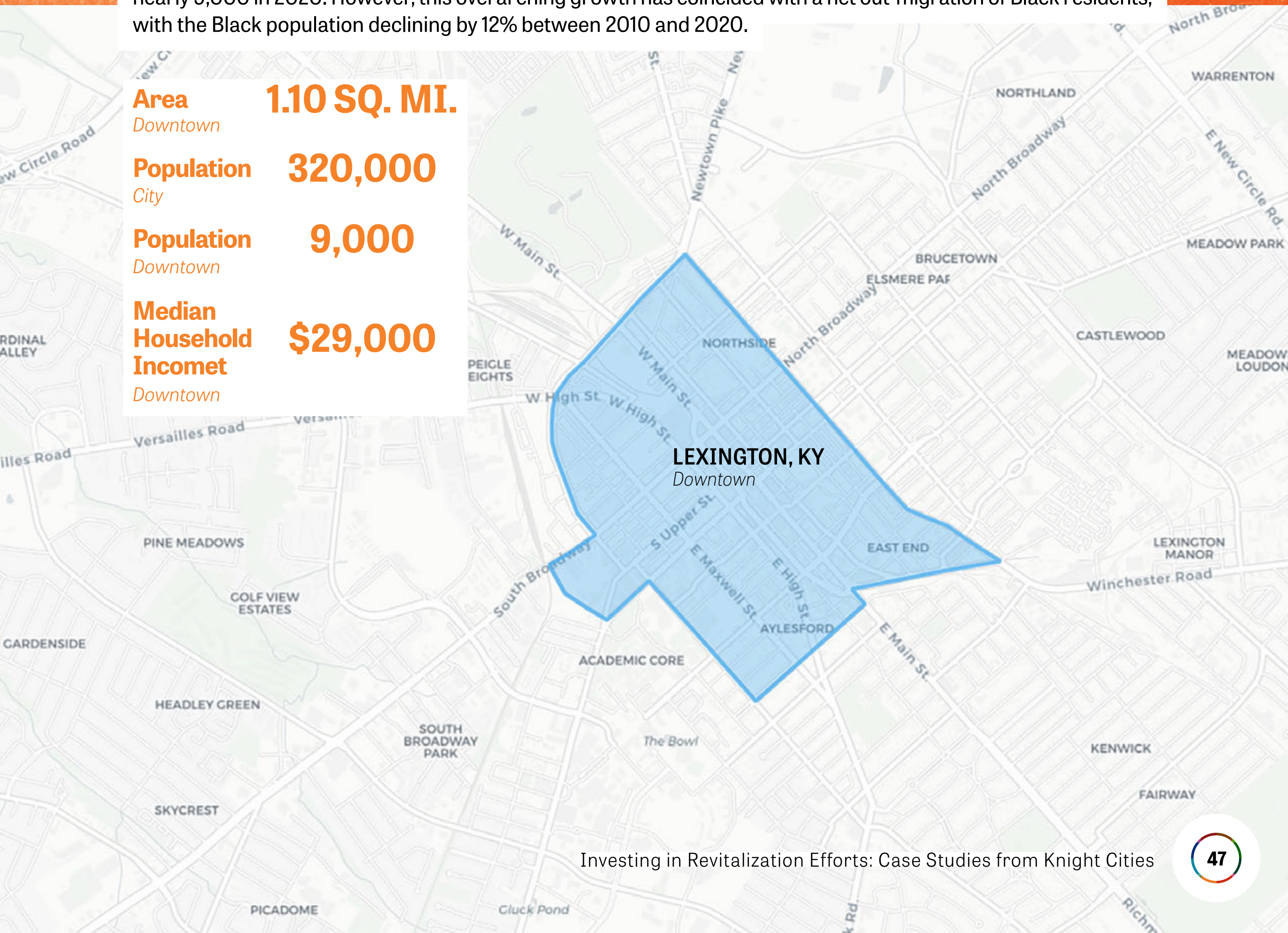
**See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.*

Lexington

Introduction

Nestled in the picturesque bluegrass region of Kentucky, Lexington is a bustling city with a small-town vibe, known for its many horse farms and its thoroughbred racetracks. The downtown area serves as the lively heart of the city, home to local businesses, restaurants, cultural attractions and public spaces. The city has made significant efforts to revitalize its central area, focusing primarily on placemaking and enhancing public spaces. As a result, downtown has been able to attract new residents, growing by 10% from 8,000 residents in 2010 to nearly 9,000 in 2020. However, this overarching growth has coincided with a net out-migration of Black residents, with the Black population declining by 12% between 2010 and 2020.

Area *Downtown*	**1.10 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**320,000**
Population *Downtown*	**9,000**
Median Household Incomet *Downtown*	**$29,000**



Status of Revitalization

The community's shared vision for downtown Lexington is to build a vibrant public life and a downtown that is more connected, equitable and inclusive. By reviving Lexington's downtown, leaders hope to foster economic growth and a thriving cultural hub for residents. Investments and efforts should lead to a growth in private investment, increased use of public space and an increased, diverse population living downtown.

Downtown Lexington has experienced transformative change with the help of public realm and placemaking investments. One of the most impactful projects was the $40 million transformation of Legacy Trail, creating the Town Branch Commons. This innovative 2.5-mile trail project, funded by a $14.1 million TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant, the city, the state, the federal government and Knight, connects the heart of downtown Lexington to its rolling bluegrass landscapes and to key neighborhoods, providing a transportation network that is incentivizing people to interact and engage with neighborhoods and downtown's commercial district. Support for improvements at Charles Young Park like the successful Splash! pilot and engagement process, a $600,000 2:1 matched Knight investment, have helped create a new open and safe space in the East End, a historically Black community. Supporting innovative ideas, experts and learning opportunities influenced organizations in the development of projects like Town Branch Commons and the Splash! pilot. Private investment has followed. The MET, a mixed-income, mixed-use development also located in the East End, is another example of investment and developments aligned with the vision for a more equitable downtown.

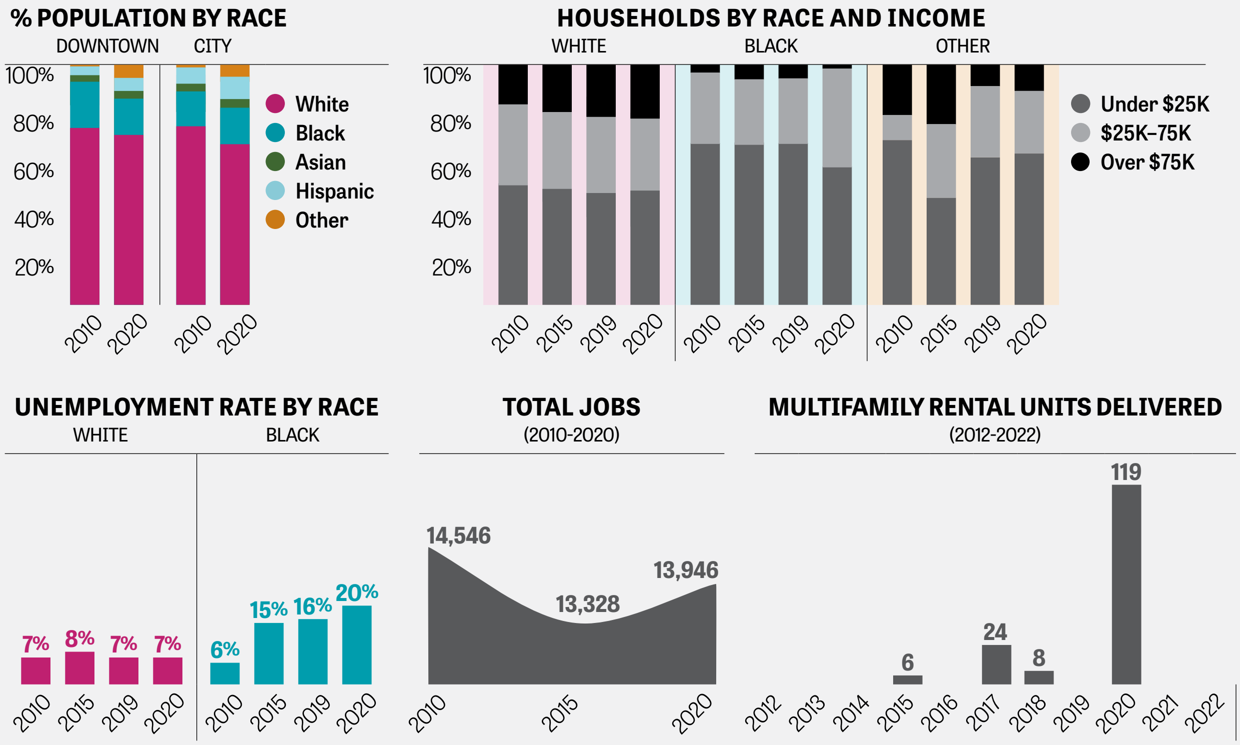
With nearly $2.2 billion of recently constructed and planned development, the private sector is playing a major role in Lexington's revitalization. In 2022, community members celebrated the completion of a $310 million expansion project to downtown's Central Bank Center. The Central Bank Center, home to the city's convention center, an arena and event space, now has expanded facilities and architectural upgrades, all intended to keep downtown Lexington competitive as a visitor and convention destination. Along with the delivery of the long-awaited convention center restoration, downtown welcomed LexLive, a new entertainment complex featuring numerous dining and amenity options for potential visitors. Downtown Lexington's City Center, a $200 million mixed-use development led by Webb Companies, has been a game changer since its completion in 2019. In 2020, the City Center welcomed two new hotels, Lexington Marriott City Center and Residence Inn Center, and several businesses, including Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse, ItalX, Dinsmore law firm and Rubicon. Successful restorations to the historic courthouse and Greyhound bus station, and new developments like the 21c Museum Hotel and the Distillery District are contributing to the creation of a robust and vibrant cultural hub downtown, with a slew of attractions drawing in residents and tourists.

While revitalization has brought positive change, the disproportionate increase in Black unemployment since 2010 is a reminder that revitalization has not benefitted everyone equally. Downtown saw a net decrease in Black residents, while Black unemployment currently stands at 20%, which is three times higher than the rate for white workers. This trend is also reflected in the shrinking share of Black households that earn more than $75,000 (just 2% in 2020, down from 6% in 2015). The central business district is becoming increasingly expensive and few developments in affordable housing are leading to growing displacement risks. Stakeholders in Lexington are working to address these existing spatial injustices and to ensure downtown develops as an inclusive place—recent efforts around Confederate monument removal and early engagement with Black residents in the planning process for public realm improvements like Town Branch Park highlight the types of inclusive work being done. These efforts represent the efficacy of authentic engagement and programming, which will help advance and ensure an inclusive revitalization. Since 2017, Downtown Lexington Partnership has acted as the umbrella organization, heading efforts to manage and revitalize downtown. Community stakeholders have noted the importance of having an existing and capable leader and convener that can drive an impactful revitalization.

Demographics

Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

Downtown Lexington, a predominantly white area, has experienced an 11% increase in its total population, growing from 8,000 residents to just under 9,000 between 2010 and 2020. This growth has been driven by gains in white residents and residents of other races, while downtown has lost Black residents, with a 12% decline against 2010 numbers. Meanwhile, white households earning over $75,000 have increased, exacerbating income disparities. Black unemployment sits at a troubling 20%, which is three times higher than the rate for white workers. While multifamily deliveries have increased, indicating a rise in household creation, the area has seen a net decrease in jobs since 2010.



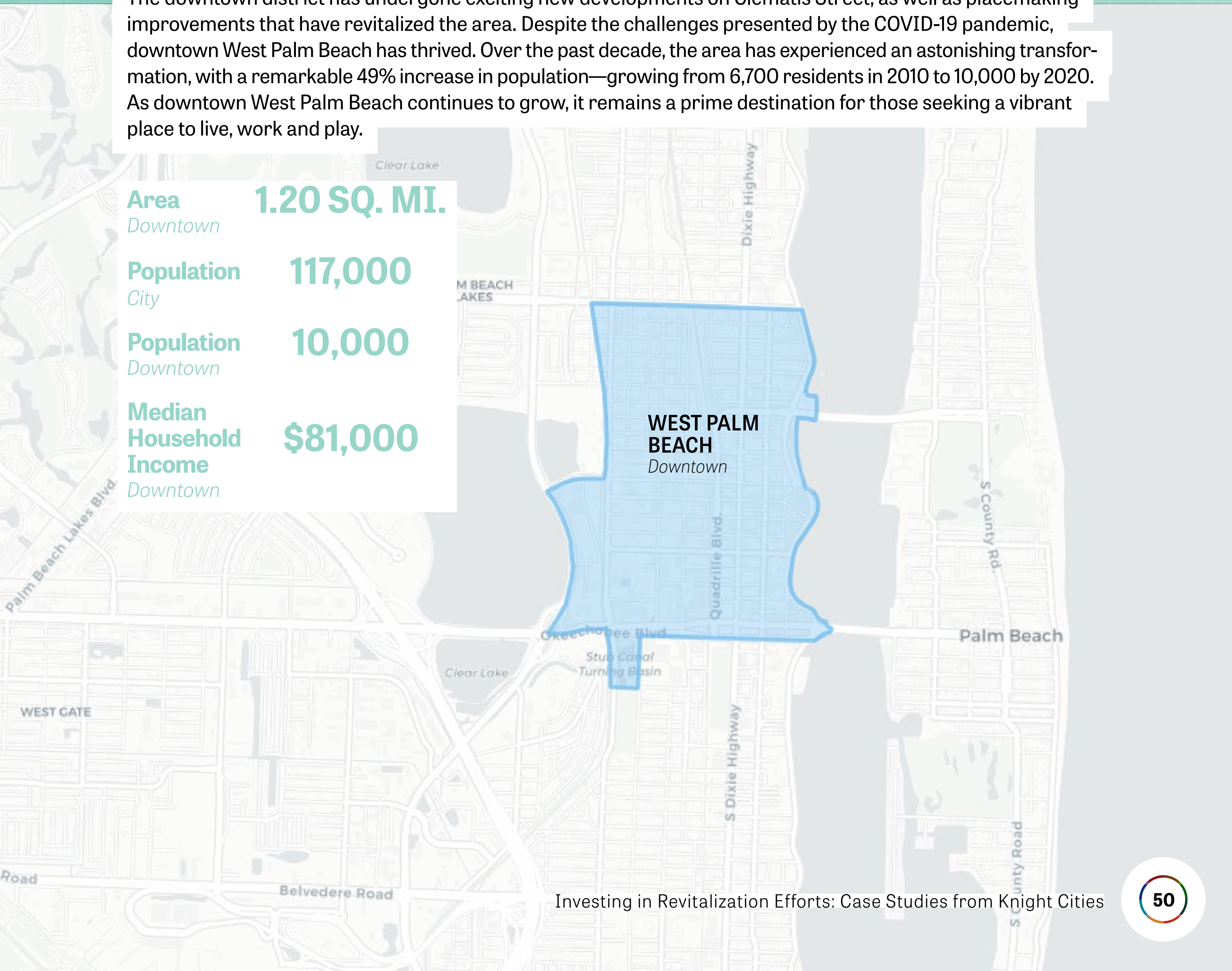
** See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.*

West Palm Beach

Introduction

West Palm Beach is a dynamic waterfront city and the central hub of Palm Beach County. Downtown West Palm Beach is at the forefront of the city's growth, experiencing a surge of new residents, businesses and visitors. The downtown district has undergone exciting new developments on Clematis Street, as well as placemaking improvements that have revitalized the area. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, downtown West Palm Beach has thrived. Over the past decade, the area has experienced an astonishing transformation, with a remarkable 49% increase in population—growing from 6,700 residents in 2010 to 10,000 by 2020. As downtown West Palm Beach continues to grow, it remains a prime destination for those seeking a vibrant place to live, work and play.

Area *Downtown*	**1.20 SQ. MI.**
Population *City*	**117,000**
Population *Downtown*	**10,000**
Median Household Income *Downtown*	**$81,000**



Status of Revitalization

The community vision for West Palm Beach's downtown, supported by Knight, the city and other parties, is to create a more connected and inclusive public life, with efforts focused on retaining talent, creating economic opportunity, and supporting entrepreneurship. A revitalized downtown should lead to a growth in downtown investment, increased use of public space, population growth and expansion in downtown's diversity.

Downtown's current growth trajectory is fueling revitalization, and leaders in West Palm Beach have made significant investments in the public realm to help attract residents, businesses and visitors. Between 2010 and 2020, downtown's population grew by 49%, which underscores the area's strength in attracting new residents and indicates that revitalization is well underway.

The growing population is driving new development and investment, particularly around the revitalized Clematis Street. Brand Atlantic, a private developer, is completing a mixed-use development that will include Class A office, restaurant and retail space, slated for delivery at the end of 2023. Related Companies purchased a development site downtown for $20 million in 2021, and the One Flagler project will include significant office and retail space. This type of private investment signals a revitalizing downtown but also leads to affordability concerns. Affiliated Development, a company known for mixed-income housing development, has partnered with the city to address some of these concerns. They successfully partnered on the Grand, a mixed-income workforce housing development in the Historic Northwest neighborhood and are teaming up again to further expand workforce housing through an $81 million investment in the Spruce, a 270-unit mixed-income apartment building slated to start construction in fall 2023. This is the type of productive public-private partnership that can have real impact in addressing the growing housing and affordability challenges facing downtown.

The transformation of Clematis Street, which emphasized modern infrastructure and vibrant design, created a pedestrian-friendly area that has improved the quality of life of residents and visitors and supported business vitality. This development also attracted investors and developers to buy up vacant property to replicate the success of Clematis Street in other parts of downtown. Placemaking mini grants have helped drive community members' involvement in shaping public spaces. Another major factor in downtown's success has been the growth of businesses and influx of residents post-COVID-19. Downtown's population has grown from about 6,700 to 10,000 between 2010 and 2020. Many businesses and residents from the northeast relocated to West Palm Beach due to less stringent COVID-19 regulations and the area's warmer climate. The pandemic also inspired innovative strategies for businesses to utilize outdoor spaces. For example, Downtown Development Authority's Dining on the Spot program, with funding from Knight, expanded outdoor seating availability by transforming alleyways, sidewalks and parking lots into seating areas, helping keep businesses open and profitable during COVID-19.

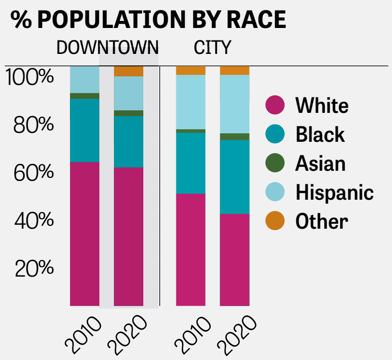
In addition to placemaking, Florida Atlantic University's (FAU's) mobility pilot project, with support from Knight, is helping push the city forward to create a more connected and smarter downtown. Knight's initial $225,000 investment in the Mobility Intelligence Project helped the city and FAU pursue and land a $52 million National Science Foundation grant split across four other university and city teams that will help transform downtown via innovative technologies. A new Engineering Research Center for Smart Streetscapes will develop new streetscape applications designed to enhance livability, safety and inclusivity in downtown West Palm Beach.

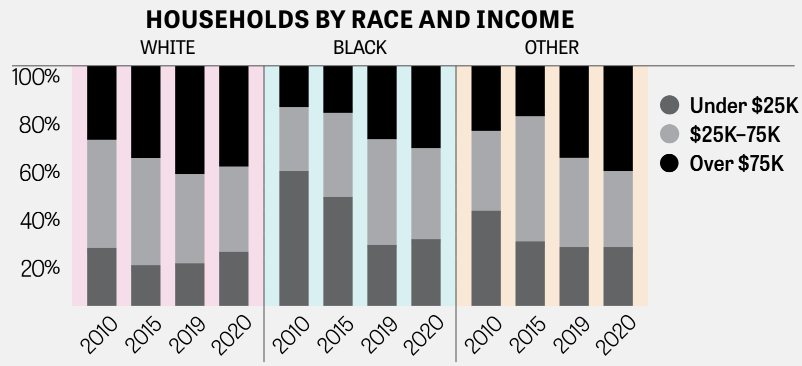
Over the past decade, downtown's real estate market in West Palm Beach has experienced significant activity, witnessing the addition of 1,700 new multifamily units, constituting 19% of the total housing stock. This growth is indicative of a revitalizing downtown. However, such rapid development has also led to rising prices and deepening affordability concerns, posing a significant risk of displacement for lower-income residents and people of color, who are already underrepresented in business ownership and homeownership. In order to ensure that ongoing revitalization is inclusive, it is crucial to prioritize opportunities for entrepreneurship programming, small-business assistance and tailored homeownership support for residents of color.

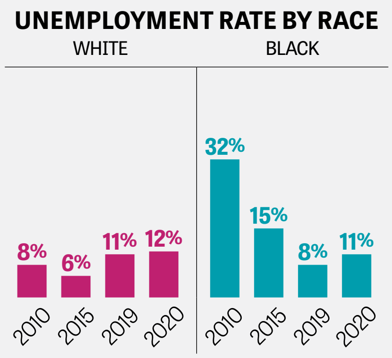
Demographics

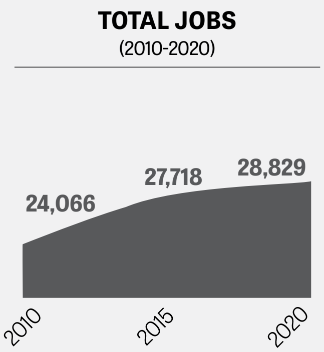
Population, Households and Socioeconomic Conditions

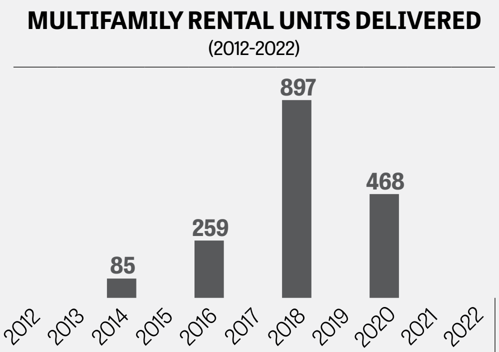
Downtown West Palm Beach is a rapidly growing area, having experienced a 49% increase in population over the past decade, from 6,700 residents in 2010 to 10,000 in 2020. While downtown's population has grown, unemployment rates have also increased, suggesting the need to better link residents and newcomers with available jobs in the region. To accommodate population growth, there has been a significant increase in the number of multifamily units delivered, which is in line with the growing demand for renter-occupied units. Moreover, job creation has been robust since 2010, indicating a healthy and thriving local economy.











Note: *See Project Approach section, page 9, for details on data sources and geographies used.*

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT

The findings of this report's comparison of grantmaking outcomes across nine communities have implications for social investors looking to maximize the impact of their revitalization efforts. Three topics appear to be particularly important: the local geography's unique attributes (including both physical and political context); accelerators of impact (where and to whom social investors direct their funds); and the concentration of investment (how and where social investors focus their activities).

Local Context

Think Beyond the Central Business District

- **Invest in organizations that build a healthy mix of dining, retail and arts/entertainment programming**: The pandemic revealed the economic vulnerability of office-dependent central business districts and underscored our need for vibrant places capable of hosting a broad array of uses. This is particularly true for the office-heavy downtowns in Akron and Saint Paul. While the pandemic may have permanently shifted the role of downtowns as principal employment hubs, these places continue to hold clear value as community centers that anchor a region. To reimagine downtowns as regional centers and social districts where people come together, social investors should prioritize a mix of users and programming. In this reimagining and redefinition, funders can achieve more tangible impact through Main Street activation, small-business support and the creation of spaces for collaboration and convergence rather than by primarily focusing on attracting major employers. Further, to build truly sustainable downtowns that serve as regional anchors, investment strategies must center racial equity as an indicator of success. Thriving downtowns are those that are designed and programmed to be welcoming, accessible and affordable to all residents.

Build Broad Coalitions to Ensure Longevity

- **Develop partnerships and cultivate champions beyond the governing administration**: Investors' ability to forge effective partnerships with city leaders, community stakeholders and other social investors is an essential prerequisite to sustained impact. These collaborations help to garner widespread community buy-in, which in turn advances projects and ensures continuity across municipal budget cycles and mayoral administrations. Partnerships must be authentic and bring together a mix of funders, investors, grassroots groups, community leaders, the business community and/or other economic development and downtown organizations. For example, the widespread acceptance and sustained support of the Macon Action Plan across two mayoral administrations is due in part to stakeholders coalescing around a shared vision and clear goals for downtown. Conversely, local electoral turnover endangers sustainability in cases where projects rely heavily on vocal support from a single leader and/or discretionary annual municipal budget allocations.

Proactively Address and Mitigate Against Displacement Risk

- **Support land banks and land trusts to curb revitalization-induced displacement**: Land banks, land trusts and other forms of community ownership can help downtowns remain inclusive, a key feature of successful and sustainable revitalization. In Charlotte, the West Side Community Land Trust is building its capacity to assemble land for the benefit of existing residents and businesses. Initial seed funding was foundational to the land trust's success, as it enabled the organization to build capacity, acquire its first properties and begin to demonstrate clear impact. In Macon, NewTown Macon and Historic Macon have functioned in a manner similar to a land bank, helping local businesses and residents with the use and ownership of downtown properties. Organizations that can acquire and rehab properties are instrumental when it comes to translating community vision into tangible, inclusive revitalization.

- **Displacement mitigation belongs at the center of any revitalization strategy**: Social investors must continue to center anti-displacement efforts in their work to advance revitalization. Neighborhoods like Charlotte's West End and Detroit's North End require systems-level approaches to counter displacement. Social investors must lead the charge in galvanizing public and private actors to proactively protect existing residents amid new development. Displacement is a complex problem that must be addressed from a variety of angles—including property tax relief programs, home repair services, cooperatives, matching funds from city programs, technical assistance programs, sources of capital and physical spaces dedicated to Black business owners and entrepreneurs. Early efforts to support Black entrepreneurs in Saint Paul and Charlotte are promising but lack capacity to scale. Further innovation and effective solutions are needed to mitigate residential and cultural displacement, a need that aligns well with the role of a social impact investor.

Accelerators of Impact

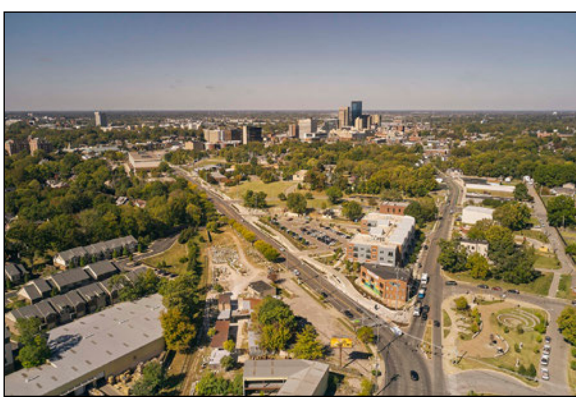
Cluster Investments

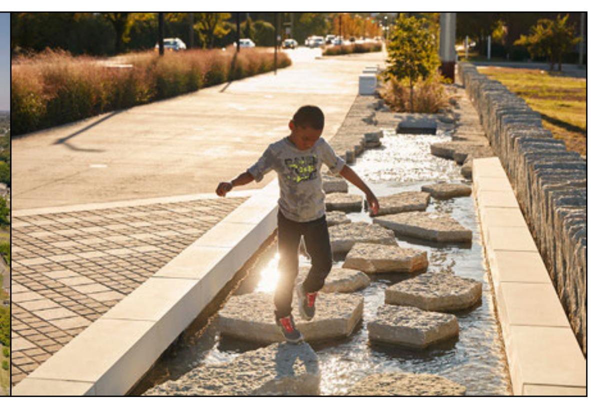
- **Invest in the creation of downtown organizations**: One of the most direct ways to increase visitation is to help create permanent downtown management entities capable of delivering quality programming and activations. Following the launch of their business improvement districts (BIDs), downtown Akron, Saint Paul and Grand Forks all experienced significant increases in both visitation and capital investment. BIDs are highly efficient vehicles for capturing private, governmental and philanthropic funds in ways that support revitalization. When working with local stakeholders to launch BIDs, investors should prioritize the recruitment of boards and staff who can represent the local population.
- **Plan for the long term and cluster investments**: A place-based investment strategy is more likely to yield a transformational impact in places where the strategy has been deployed consistently over a longer period. For example, the successful transformation of downtown Macon can be attributed in part to the commitments that Mercer University, Knight and the Peyton Anderson Foundation have sustained over the past two decades. Other factors include a shared guiding vision and plan and the concentration of investment within the defined downtown area.

NewTown Macon invests in small-scale development and local entrepreneurs, like the owners of Fall Line Brewing Co., Nate and Kaitlynn Kressin. The Kressins used a loan from NewTown to purchase and rehabilitate a 20,000-square-foot building and turn it into a production brewery, event rental space, and downtown Macon's first beer garden. Photos: NewTown Macon.

Support Multiple Organizations Working Toward Shared Goals

- **Fund engagement and coalition building**: There is significant value in building coalitions and facilitating collaboration among high-capacity organizations that can deliver results. Leaders in the public sector, the private sector and the community can coalesce around a shared vision for revitalization. This kind of visioning process has led to successful projects in both Macon and Akron (via the Civic Commons initiative), whereas initiatives have floundered in places where neighborhood groups struggle to work together. In Charlotte, competing visions for change hindered joint city-community efforts like the Five Points Plaza project. In Detroit, the disjointed activities of neighborhood leaders and city government have left North End residents feeling disconnected and marginalized.
- **Start with a guiding strategy**: The collaborative development of a guiding strategy can help build coalitions and fuel action. Revitalization is not an immediate process and must be sustained by realistic acknowledgment of the timeframes, efforts, resources and investment needed for success. The first step, particularly in places without a leader who is clearly capable of managing a strategy development process effectively, is to build community trust and rapport. Communities that have faced decades of disinvestment, segregation and neglect will need time to reach a level of mutual trust before initiating a shared visioning process.
- **Invest in capacity building**: Social investors must grapple with community context before focusing on investment opportunities. In neighborhoods like the West End and the North End, where a history of disinvestment has left activists and community groups without access to the resources they need to do impactful work, organizational capacity and the potential for coalition building are yet in their early stages. A weakened nonprofit ecosystem and a general lack of organizational capacity may leave the prospective funder without a viable partner. In such environments, there is value in funding professional development to help grow grassroots leaders and groups into viable future grantees with the capacity and resources to make impact. Social innovators should support community organizations and leaders who demonstrate potential but lack the capacity and resources to operate as high-functioning nonprofits.
- **Invest in groups that reflect the community's diversity**: In recent years, the communities that show signs of revitalization all engaged in intentional efforts to center equity and engage with BIPOC populations. For example, organizations like NewTown Macon, Historic Macon and the Community Foundation of Central Georgia are making concerted efforts to engage with Black residents and diversify the demographic makeup of program participants and grantee leadership. Akron, Saint Paul and West Palm Beach have all struggled with public space programming not resonating with BIPOC residents, a disconnect that can jeopardize the sustainability of revitalization efforts. Funders must tailor investments to the diverse populations that they serve. In practice, this means promoting inclusivity in new and existing public spaces, programming and developments as well as lifting up organizations whose leadership resonates with and reflects diverse populations.





Town Branch Commons Trail, Midland Avenue, Kentucky (left) and Town Branch Commons Trail fountain (right). Photos: Ty Cole.

Cultivate Relationships with Educational Anchors

- **Foster strong university-town partnerships**: Cities have been able to push revitalization forward by strengthening the physical and professional connections between their downtowns and their universities. Mercer University's mutually beneficial ties to Macon's urban core and its College Hill Alliance are a successful model for other cities to mirror. Downtown Akron and Grand Forks would both benefit if local university staff, faculty and students were to spend more time downtown. Downtown leaders should be proactive about collaborating with university leadership and reaching out to student populations. University leaders should also recognize the benefit to their school of a revitalized local downtown area with amenities for students. Social investors can help by identifying potential areas of overlap between campus and town goals and initiate collaborations during times of leadership transition or the launch of new strategic development processes.

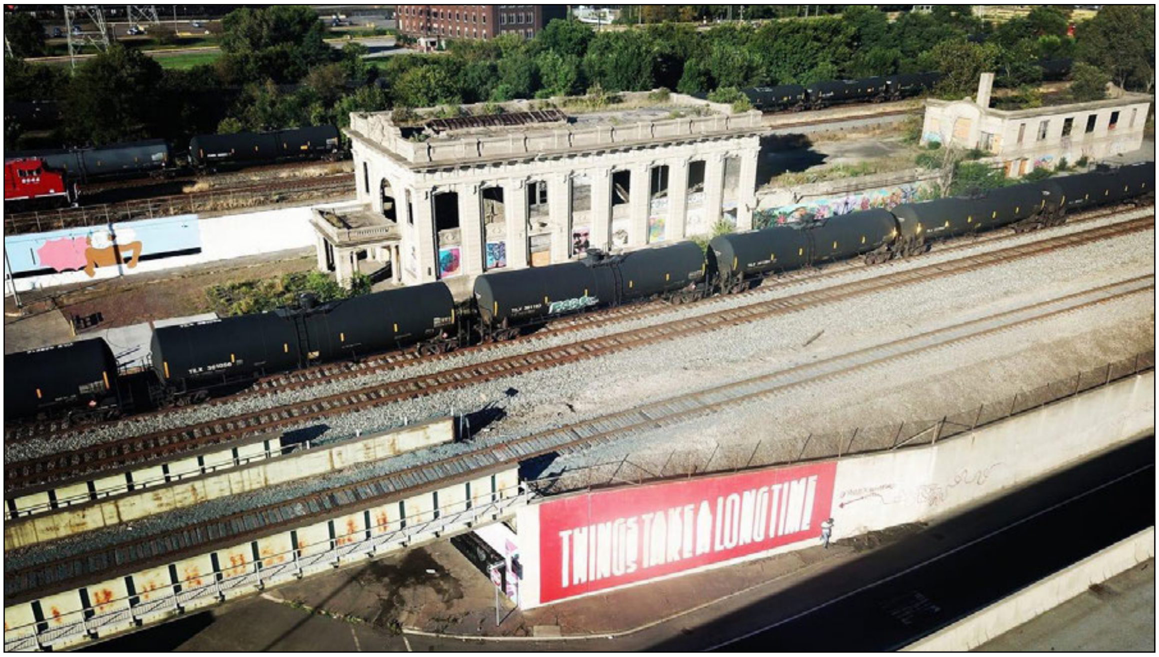
Concentration of Investment

Encourage Flexibility and Innovation

- **Structure funding in flexible and innovative ways**: Seed funding, small proof-of-concept grants and funding for innovative new ideas are three ways that social investors can deliver near-term wins while strengthening their connections to the local community. Macon's Downtown Challenge program, where anyone in the community could receive funding to implement their idea, exemplifies this approach.
- **Support learning opportunities**: Exposure to accessible resources and learning opportunities, particularly the Civic Commons Copenhagen trip, have been tied to new developments in cities across Knight's portfolio and contributed to progress toward revitalization. In downtown Lexington and West Palm Beach, city leaders on the Copenhagen trip adopted what they learned, incorporating it into the Town Branch Commons project design and the Clematis Street project, respectively. External learning trips have allowed grantees and community stakeholders to visualize the value of placemaking, convincing leaders to adopt and implement best practices for new public realm projects in their home cities.

Achieve Long-Term Impacts by Investing in Programming, Arts, the Public Realm and Infrastructure

- **Activate existing urban assets**: Knight's strategy of supporting capital improvements in the public realm has proven to be an effective path to increased vibrancy. Transformational investments include Town Branch Commons in Lexington, Clematis Street in West Palm Beach, Five Points Plaza in Charlotte's West End and the Knight Stage at the Akron Civic Theatre in downtown Akron. These new or significantly improved public spaces have increased foot traffic, fostered community interactions and attracted new retail and residential development—all features of a successful downtown. Future efforts to improve resident access to assets like nearby waterfronts, trails and parks will likely lead to further increases in vibrancy and activity. For example, should downtown Macon's Ocmulgee Mounds become Georgia's first national park, improved connectivity, new outdoor amenities and future development could draw tourists into downtown.
- **Balance long-term approaches with short-term wins**: Public realm improvements, while potentially transformative, cannot generate an immediate uptick in activity or vibrancy. Investment strategies must deliver impacts across a spectrum of timeframes. For example, since major investments in downtown Akron parks and open space will not bear fruit for years, there is a need for ventures that will improve people's experience of downtown immediately and in noticeable ways. The Downtown Akron Partnership is responding to this need by curating events and programs designed to bring visitors downtown, building connections and positive associations now that will ensure strong usage of the new park when it does open.



Gary Union Station, which will be transformed into a digital tech hub. Photo: Decay Devils.

Invest in Multiple Avenues to Revitalization

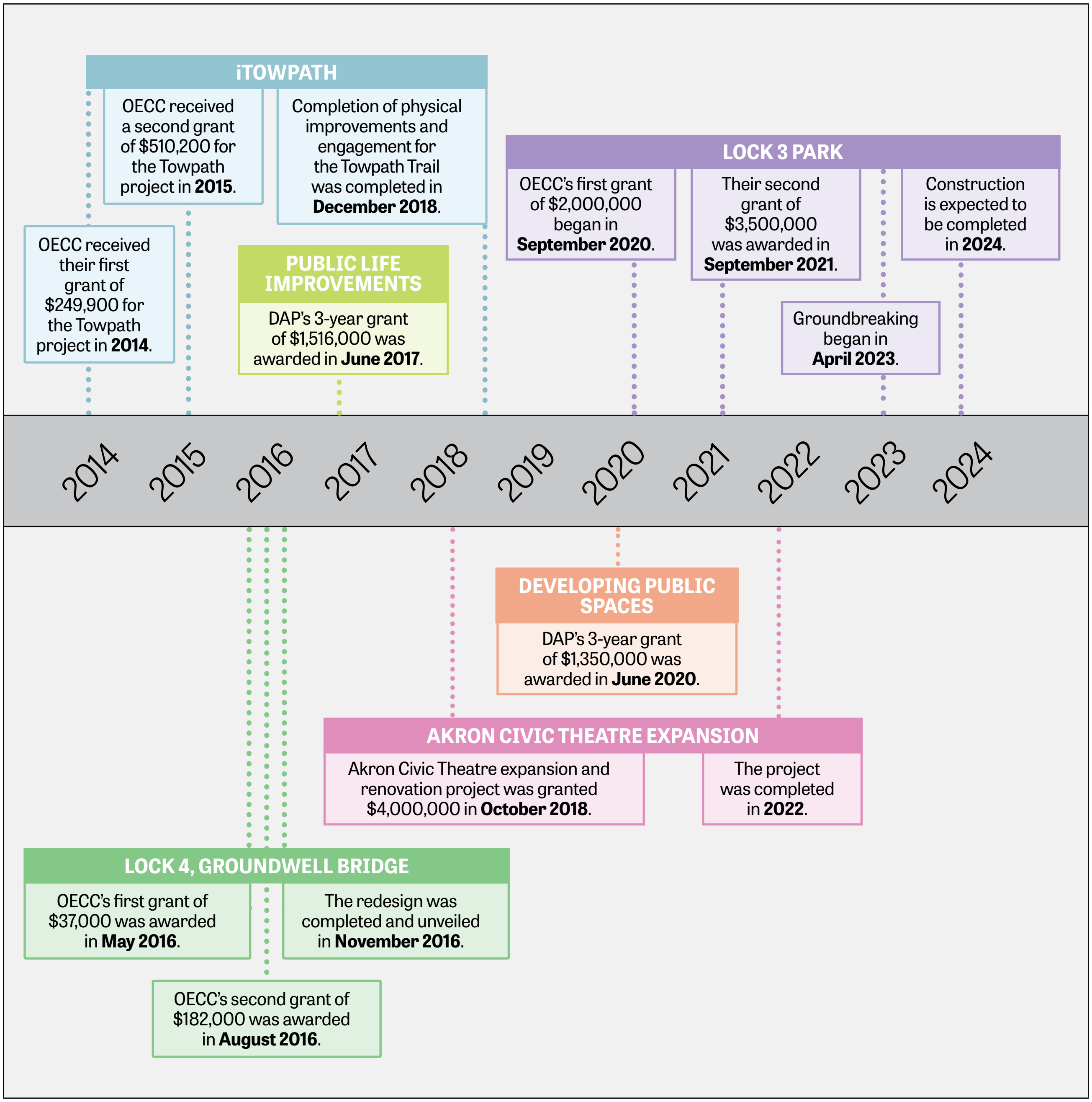
- **Continue to support economic innovation and entrepreneurism as a path to economic mobility**: In many cities, successful investments expanding inclusive entrepreneurial activity have generated business growth, and further investments can build on these initial successes. Downtown Saint Paul, in particular, has an advantageous opportunity to leverage the early successes of Lunar Startups and the Osborn370 redevelopment into a well-defined and permanent innovation district, with a diversity of uses beyond traditional corporate offices. BIPOC entrepreneurs have benefited from the resources provided by Lunar Startups, and building on their successful model can help foster inclusive and equitable growth. Leveraging the early success of Osborn370, an innovation district can help attract midsize businesses to build a broader economic base and provide resources and amenities to keep Fortune 500 companies in Saint Paul.
- **Prioritize investments that align outcomes with core community challenges**: Social investors should continue to focus on innovative approaches to driving resilient revitalization. In places that are struggling, where nonprofits and community groups are primarily focused on meeting basic needs, social investors can support organizations focused on both meeting community needs and driving revitalization—these are not always mutually exclusive. For example, while Art House in Gary was ultimately not successful, funding a food incubator is a good example of this approach, where the grant supported a new business and job creation while also meeting community needs for improved food access. This can also involve working with public sector leaders to develop approaches to incentivize and attract private investment in an area with an otherwise stagnant real estate development market. In places that are further along in their revitalization journey, investment can focus on supporting private market actors already investing in the area, to ensure that development and programming are aligned with visions for inclusive development.

APPENDIX

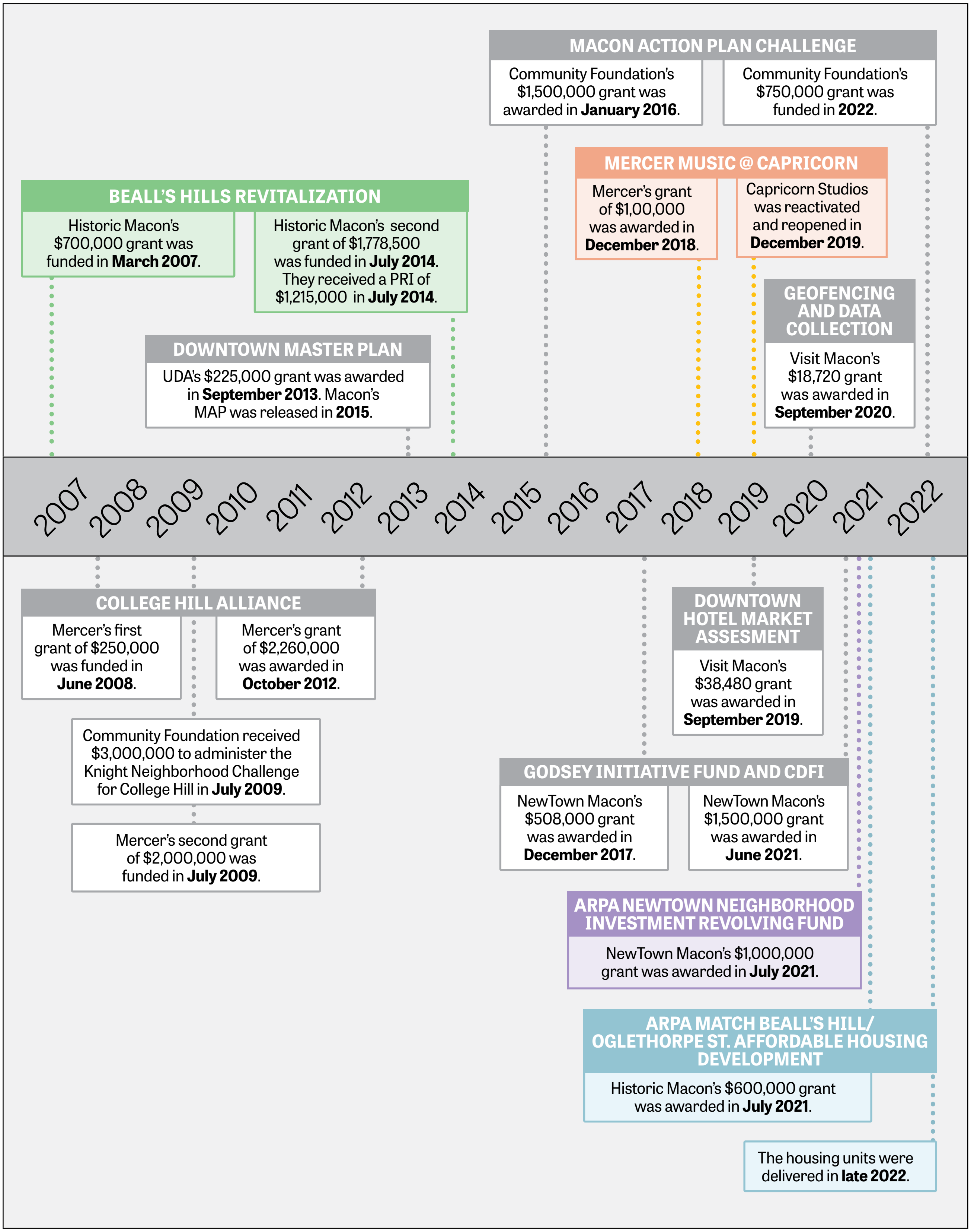
Summary of Knight Activity by City

Beginning of Study Period for Knight Investments	Total Knight Investment Over the Study Period	Knight's Vision and Investment Strategy
Akron, OH		
2014	**$12.7 million**	The main vision for downtown Akron's revitalization is to grow Akron's population and attract new residents through public realm investments that help bring diverse people together and build a sense of community.
Macon, GA		
1999	**$33.8 million**	Knight's investment strategy supports the revitalization of Macon's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods by attracting the entire community through economic development, support for public spaces and unique Macon assets. Knight Foundation has focused on renewing the urban sector, nurturing the community, building an innovative economy and bringing city life downtown through public realm investments.
Saint Paul, MN		
2017	**$4.3 million**	Knight's strategy is supporting efforts to create a vibrant and inclusive downtown hub that fosters economic growth by encouraging an inclusive entrepreneurial and small-business sector, engaging the downtown area to attract residents and raising the profile of the downtown area as a hub for creativity.
Charlotte, NC *West End neighborhood*		
2015	**$7.6 million**	Knight and community stakeholders want to leverage growing commercial and residential investment in the West End to foster a thriving, equitable and inclusive neighborhood that promotes economic mobility for its residents.
Detroit, MI *North End neighborhood*		
2021	**$4.9 million**	Knight's goal is to reimagine public spaces to bring all people together, foster a more engaged community and support Black businesses and homeownership in Detroit's North End.
Gary, IN		
2016	**$2.5 million**	Knight's strategy focuses on investments to transform blighted properties into community assets to attract and retain new residents/talent and create economic opportunities.
Grand Forks, ND		
2016	**$650,000**	The investment strategy for downtown Grand Forks focuses on connecting the University of North Dakota (UND) to downtown Grand Forks through corridors. Knight's strategy also hopes to build relationships between the university and local businesses through civic engagement, entrepreneurship and smart design.
Lexington, KY		
2015	**$2.1 million**	Knight's vision for downtown Lexington looks for ways to reimagine and connect open spaces, helping to create a thriving economic and cultural hub.
West Palm Beach, FL		
2016	**$2.9 million**	Knight's vision for West Palm Beach's revitalization efforts is to retain talent and create economic opportunities by taking advantage of the city's vibrant downtown. Knight's investment strategy supports projects that promote smart design, the arts and entrepreneurship.

Akron
Priority Grants Timeline

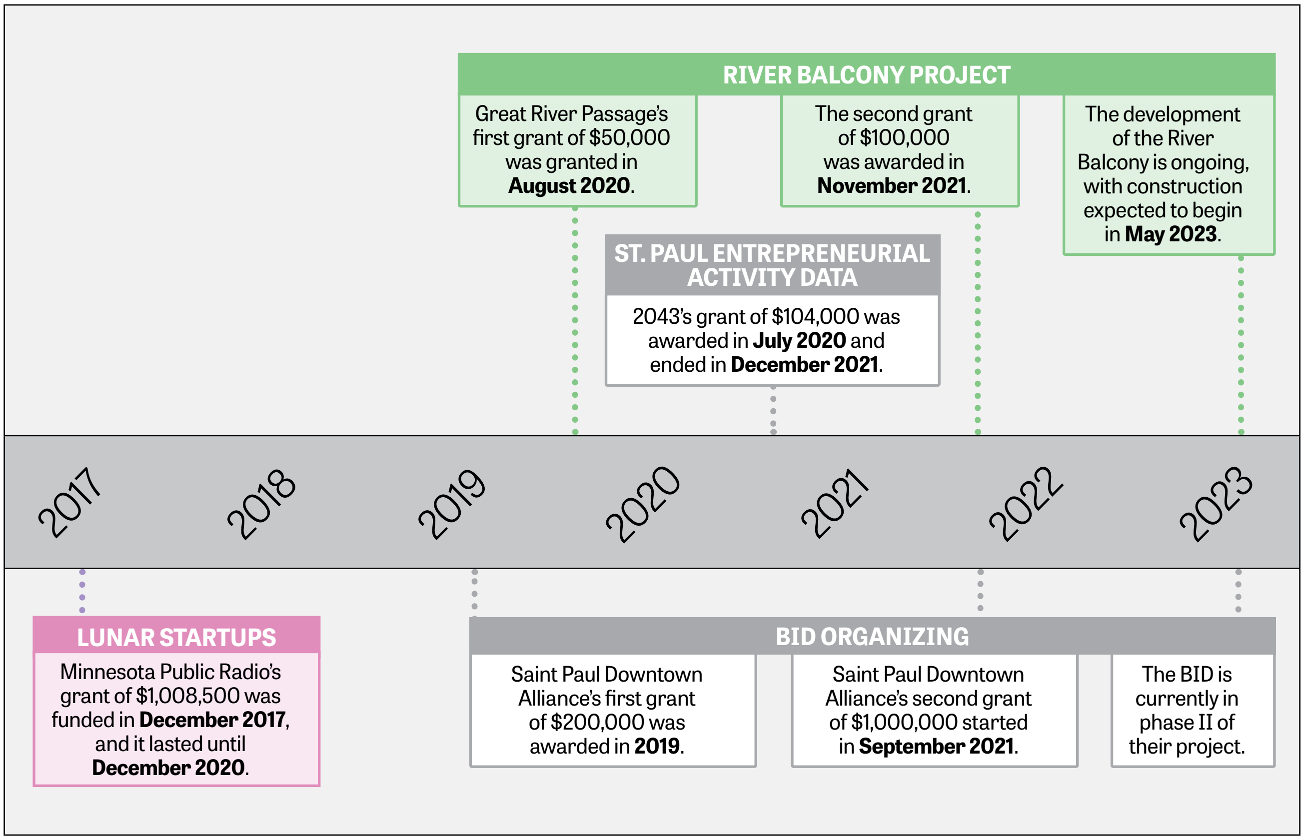


Macon
Priority Grants Timeline



Note: Gray indicates non-physical investment.

Saint Paul
Priority Grants Timeline



Note: Gray indicates non-physical investment.

Charlotte
Priority Grants Timeline

HWEP ORGANIZATION CAPACITY BUILDING

HWEP's first grant was awarded in **2016**.

HWEP's second grant of $160,000 was awarded in **October 2019**.

HWEP's third grant of $450,000 was awarded in **November 2021**.

WEST END COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LISC's grant of $750,000 was awarded in **July 2018**.

LISC's grant of $450,000 was awarded in **2020**.

LISC's grant of $1,250,000 was awarded in **2021**.

FIVE POINTS FORWARD

HWEP's second grant of $104,000 was awarded in **December 2019**.

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

HWENA's grant of $31,500 was awarded in **December 2020**.

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

WEST SIDE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

CCCP's 3-year grant of $1,508,000 was awarded in **July 2015**.

INDABA 2020

The Council of Elders' grant of $36,600 was awarded in **September 2019**.

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION FUND

CCCP's first grant of $250,000 was funded in **June 2020**.

CCCP's second grant of $200,000 was awarded in **June 2021**.

FIVE POINTS PLAZA PROGRAMMING PILOT

The city's grant of $394,200 was awarded in **February 2020**.

Five Points Plaza had its opening in **March 2022**.

WEST SIDE CLT ORGANIZATION CAPACITY BUILDING

West Side CLT's initial grant of $30,000 from the DAF was awarded in **November 2017**.

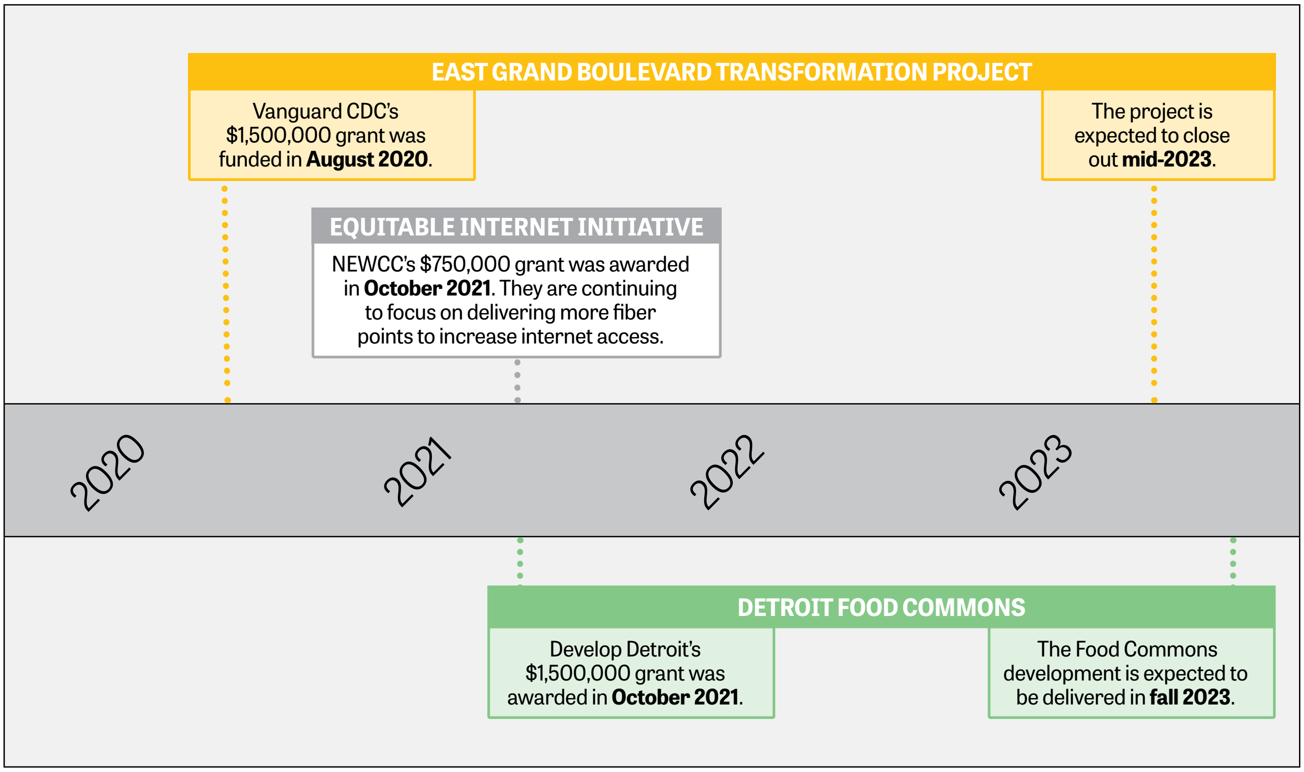
West Side CLT's second grant of $125,000 was awarded in **October 2019**.

West Side CLT's third grant of $150,000 was awarded in **January 2021**.

West Side CLT's fourth grant of $600,000 was awarded in **2022**.

Note: Gray indicates non-physical investment.

Detroit
Priority Grants Timeline



Note: Gray indicates non-physical investment.

Disclaimer on Census Data

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a vital tool for understanding demographic and socioeconomic trends in the United States. However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted ACS data collection and processing for 2020, leading to potential inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the data. As a result, HR&A Advisors made the decision to depend on the more consistent and comprehensive Decennial Census 2020 and 2010 data, gathered through ESRI's Business Analyst for custom geographies of interest. This decision was made to ensure the accuracy and validity of the analysis and to minimize potential errors or biases in the data. It is important to note that while the Census Decennial data provides a more reliable source for demographic analysis, it may not capture more recent changes or trends in the population.

Methodology

Population by Race and Household Dynamics

To obtain population by race and household dynamics for Knight's downtowns and neighborhoods, HR&A Advisors relied on the U.S. Census Decennial data for 2010 and 2020. Since Knight Foundation's polygons of interest do not conform exactly with Census tract boundaries, the consultant team used ESRI's Business Analyst tool to define population parameters.

ESRI employs a spatial statistics method called GeoEnrichment to aggregate data for custom polygons. This method examines where the population is located to determine how much of a block's population overlaps with a custom geography. First, the tool calculates the total population of all Census units contained within the custom polygon. Then, it selects Census geographies that partially intersect the custom polygon and identified settlement points that are inside the custom polygon but not fully contained in a census geography. The settlement likelihood model is then used to determine the ratio of people per unit of settlement score, accounting for the non-uniform distribution of people. Finally, this ratio is multiplied by the total population of those partially intersected polygons to get an estimation of the people and households located in the areas of interest. The settlement likelihood model uses Landsat imagery and road intersections to produce a raster surface that distinguishes between areas where people can or cannot live.

Please note, in the report, review of population by race is typically non-Hispanic race, except for race data for household income, unemployment educational attainment and tenure which includes races of all ethnicities. The ESRI information pulled for our reporting of population by race and ethnicity did not report Hispanic ethnicity by race for 2010. To provide an aggregated race and ethnicity distribution for 2010, we used the 2020 Hispanic population by race as a proxy to estimate the 2010 non-Hispanic race distribution.[26]

Other Demographic Data

Given that the U.S. Census Bureau has not yet released the complete 2020 Decennial Census data for most demographic variables, including household income, unemployment, educational attainment and tenure, among others, HR&A Advisors relied on American Community Survey 2016–2020 tables. The consultant team identified the overlap between Knight's polygons of interest and relevant Census tracts, and only drew data for the tracts that more closely replicated the shape of the downtown or neighborhood of interest. For this reason, these variables do exhibit a margin of error.

26 In a limited number of cases, where the 2020 distribution of Hispanic population by race led to negative population categories, we divided the negative increment across all race categories.

Real Estate Data

HR&A Advisors used CoStar to gather data on vacancy rates, units delivered and rents. CoStar is a commercial real estate database that provides information on properties, markets and transactions in the U.S. and internationally. It includes data on over 50 million properties, including sales and lease transactions, ownership, property details, tenant information and market analytics. CoStar is a valuable resource for real estate professionals, investors and developers who require accurate and current data to make informed decisions about commercial properties. It also assists lenders, appraisers and other industry stakeholders in evaluating property values and market trends. The consultant team obtained data for custom geographies to minimize any margin of error. CoStar only captures commercial units, which means that in the residential segment, single-family homes are not reflected anywhere in the study.

Jobs, Inflow and Outflow

To estimate total job creation or destruction, in addition to inflow-outflow dynamics, HR&A Advisors used the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program. This data source is a collaboration between state data centers and the U.S. Census Bureau that provides detailed information on the U.S. labor market based on administrative records. LEHD data is used to estimate the characteristics of workers and jobs in a particular area, and can be used to analyze local labor markets, identify industry clusters and track changes in the workforce over time. LEHD data is collected and processed by state data centers and then aggregated by the Census Bureau into Census blocks, tracts and other geographic units. The HR&A team pulled and analyzed data specifically for the custom geographies of interest using spatial data analysis (GIS) methodologies.

Visitation Data: Foot Traffic

HR&A Advisors utilized visitor counts data from the provider Vista by Near to understand changes in foot traffic dynamics in specific locations of interest within Knight's downtowns or neighborhoods. Vista by Near collects this data by analyzing signals emitted by mobile devices, which tracks device movement within a particular area. However, it should be noted that visitor counts may be overestimated as the provider uses a minimum dwell time of 5 minutes, making it difficult to differentiate between visitors and commuters in areas with slow roads or traffic jams, or other events that affect normal traffic. The oldest data corresponds to the year 2019.

Local User Perception Survey

In Akron, Macon, Saint Paul and Charlotte, surveys were distributed by email via local community organizations identified by local Knight Foundation staff. In Akron, the Downtown Akron Partnership distributed the survey. In Macon, the survey was distributed by NewTown Macon and Historic Macon Foundation. In Charlotte, the primary survey distribution partner was the City of Charlotte Neighborhood Business Service. In Saint Paul, distribution partners were the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance, Capitol River Council, Visit Saint Paul, and Saint Paul Public Library. In addition, some distribution was done using Knight Foundation community email lists. The survey findings are not statistically representative of all local attitudes but are an indicator of local perception.