

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Project Process

The Downtown Toledo Master Plan has four major tasks, shown in the graphic below:



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Stakeholder Engagement

The planning team conducted a series of stakeholder interview meetings over the course of two days in December 2015. Working with the 22nd Century Committee, involved and passionate downtown stakeholders were identified and asked for interviews, with many taking part. Stakeholders were engaged in the form of roundtable discussions, grouped in the categories shown in the table to the right. This allowed for a more complete picture of both obstacles and opportunities in downtown and its surrounding area. General findings from these discussions are as follows:

- > Downtown needs **consistent leadership** and a **common vision** in order to succeed.
- > Incentives and permitting need to be streamlined to **encourage development**
- > The **Riverfront** is an asset that needs to be fully utilized from Middlegrounds to the Lake.
- > Downtown needs viable hotels and an improved **Convention Center**.
- > Need to overcome **safety and parking** problem perceptions.
- > There is a growing interest in **residential** being downtown
- > Need better **gateways and connections** to Art Museum and surrounding neighborhoods.
- > The community mindset needs to change...a **positive attitude** is needed.

Other findings that emerged from stakeholder roundtable discussions are summarized in the following pages.

List of Stakeholders Interviewed by Planning Team



Elected Officials

Mayor Paula Hicks-Hudson
Council Member Sandy Spang
County Commissioner Carol Contrada
County Commissioner Pete Gerken
County Commissioner Tina Skeldon
Wozniak

City/County/Transport

Megan Vahey Casiere - Lucas County
Bill Brennan - Lucas County
Jim Gee - TARTA
Joe Cappel - Port Authority
David Dysard - City of Toledo

Arts/ Entertainment

Brian Kennedy - TMA
Jeff Sailer - Toledo Zoo
Steve Miller - SeaGate Centre
Lori Hauser - Imagination Station
Joe Napoli - Mud Hens/Walleye
Steve Madwell - Metro Parks
Jennifer Jarrett - Arts Commission
Marc Folk - Arts Commission
Toledo Repertoire Theatre
Valentine Theatre

Businesses/Organizations

Bob Laclair - Fifth Third Bank
Wendy Gramza - Chamber
Jeannie Hylant - Hylant Group
Richard Hylant - Hylant Group
Steve Cavanaugh - HCR Manor Care
Don Rettig - Owens Corning
Bill McDonnell - PNC
Kim Cutcher - LISC
Katen Mathison - United Way
Randy Oostra - ProMedica Health System
Jay Black - Toledo African American Chamber of Commerce
Steve Schwartz - First Hospitality Group
W. Gene Powell - Seed Cowork
Don Miller - Seed Cowork
Molly Thompson - LaunchPad Incubation
Dan Rogers - Cherry Street Mission
Allan Block - Block Communications
Toledo Blade - Editorial Board
Brian Lorenzen - WTOL
Pete Veto - 13ABC
Brian Trauring - 13ABC

Young Professionals

EPIC Toledo
United Way Emerging Leaders

Education

Dr. Sharon Gaber - University of Toledo
Dr. Neil Reid - University of Toledo
Dr. Patrick Lawrence - University of Toledo
Clyde Scoles - Toledo/Lucas County Library
Geoffrey Rose - St. Francis de Sales
Doug Mead - Toledo School for the Arts
David Livingston - Lourdes University
Mike Bower - Owens Community College

Real Estate/Construction

Bob Howell - SSOE
Tom Manahan - Lathrop
Bill Rudolph - Rudolph Libbe

Small Business

Ed Beczynski - The Blarney
Peter Brown - Paula Brown Shop
Jerry Parker - Toledo Club
Cindy Kerr - DTID
Ken Wood - Martin & Wood Appraisal
Jeff Upton - American Property Analysts
Jim Lindsay - Louisville Title
Marcos Pizza
Brooks Insurance

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Public Meeting 1

More than 350 Toledo area residents attended the First Public Meeting at the McMaster Family Center, located in the Toledo Main Library. Hosted by the 22nd Century Committee, the meeting took place on January 19, 2016 between 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The planning team started the meeting with a presentation highlighting the process along with initial existing conditions and analysis.

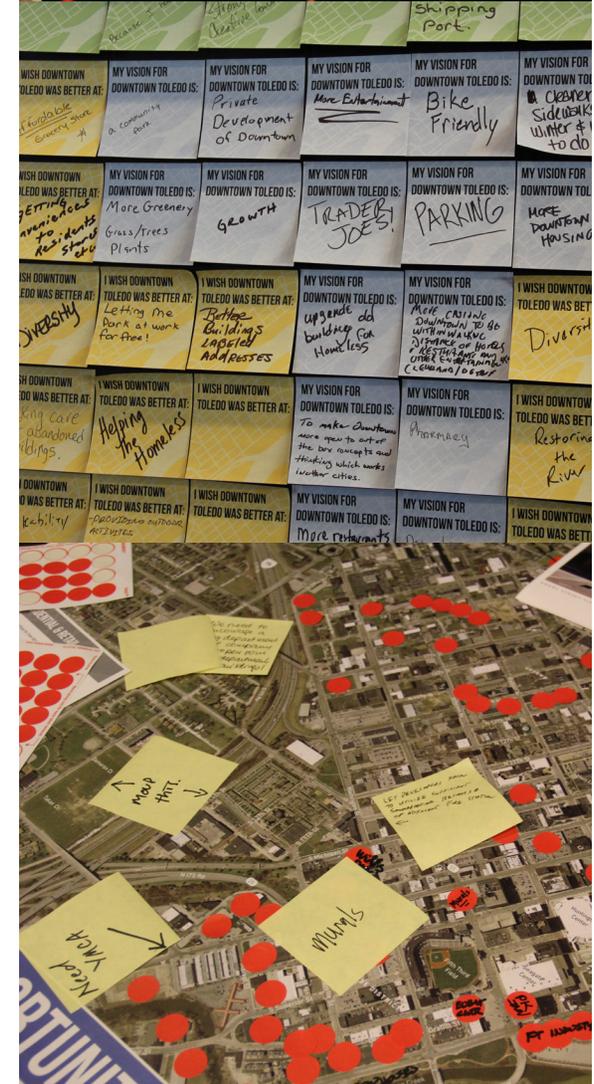
After the presentation, participants were invited to interact with exhibits and the planning team for one-on-one conversations at eight themed stations, including:

- > Riverfront
- > Residential & Retail Opportunities
- > Streets/Connectivity
- > Transportation & Parking
- > Greenspace/Recreation/Bike Network
- > Business, Talent and Innovation
- > General Comments/Ideas
- > Downtown Visioning (Interactive Display)

It was an enthusiastic and highly engaged crowd. Participants expressed their vision and ideas for the future of Downtown Toledo through both conversations at the stations, and by participating in the hands-on activities. The interactive post-it and map display was transported from the Project Storefront to the Public Meeting, so meeting attendants were able to engage with the storefront activities.

A Public Meeting announcement flyer was emailed to the Toledo community and posted in various downtown locations

Meeting attendants provided over 600 comments in the form of answers to questions on comment cards, notes added to the interactive displays/map exercises, and comments left on station materials. Comments focused on revitalizing the riverfront, attracting talent and young people to the city, and building a vibrant downtown retail and residential district. Public comments have been sorted and are summarized on page 28.



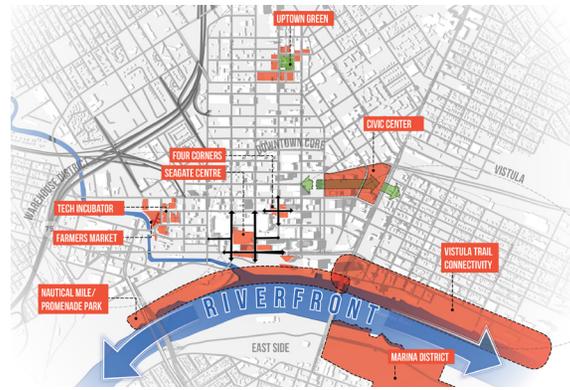
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Public Meeting 2

Also held at the McMaster Family Center, the Second Public Meeting took place on May 4, 2016 between 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the “what” stage of this process - **what is the vision for downtown?** More than 300 people attended the meeting.

The planning team provided a summary of the public feedback collected to date, including online engagement through the project website. Feedback was synthesized into a list of general comments, organized by how often these were mentioned or expressed. These were then reinterpreted as 12 Goals and Objectives to guide the remainder of the planning process. The presentation also shared the results from the Market Analysis in the form of development potential numbers for residential, retail, office, and hospitality development.

The planning team then introduced seven emerging opportunities and a draft downtown vision that set the stage for a long-term re-imagining of downtown’s potential. After the presentation, participants discussed the draft vision and emerging opportunities with the planning team in the McMaster Lobby. Participants were asked to prioritize these emerging opportunities, and provided more than 140 comments through the meeting’s seven themed stations. The stations included an interactive physical model of downtown illustrating various potential phases and intensities of the planning vision.



The emerging opportunities, as illustrated in the map above were:

- > Rediscover The Riverfront
- > Rethink The Seagate Centre
- > Revitalize Four Corners
- > Recapitalize The Warehouse District
- > Restore The Civic Center
- > Re-Energize Uptown
- > Reconnect Downtown



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Public Meeting 3

The Third Public Meeting took place on July 13, 2016 between 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Attended by over 250 area residents, this meeting introduced the “how” stage of this process - **how will the planning vision for downtown happen?**

The meeting was introduced with an updated summary of the public feedback collected so far. The Planning team shared results from questions asked at the Second Public Meeting and through an online survey that was emailed out to the community.

The planning team then presented a preferred planning vision that emerged from the feedback gathered at the Second Public Meeting. This planning vision focused on creating a network of open space, continuous development, and complete streets through downtown and its districts. The results from the Market Strategy were then shared with the public, offering insight as to what types of development could happen downtown, and where in the downtown area are these most likely to succeed.

The meeting concluded with 12 Priority Action Items along with a downtown riverfront vision. After the presentation, the public was invited to share their thoughts on whether the planning team had accurately captured their vision for downtown through open-house style displays in the McMaster Center Lobby.

The one-on-one conversations with the planning team reflected a positive and energized group of Toledoans. An additional 25 comments were gathered by the Planning Team, in the form of comment cards and notes on exhibits.



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www.downtown**toledo**plan.com

In addition to Public Meetings, the process included a stand-alone website to engage a wider audience. Launched in tandem with the First Public Meeting, **www.downtowntoledoplan.com** included a wide array of project updates, meeting materials, team and process information, and interactive public engagement opportunities.

Since its launch date, the website has been accessed by over 5,735 users, most of whom have IP addresses associated with the Greater Toledo Region. Web visitors spend an average of over three and a half minutes within the site, and have interacted both by downloading posted materials and commenting on questions posed by the planning team. Other than the Home Page, the most popular pages on the site are the First, Second and Third Public Meeting Presentations.

The Planning Team also used the online website for an public survey that was emailed out to the community. The Planning Team gathered responses from over 40 people, most of which specified that they had not been in attendance for the First and Second Public Meetings. The results from this survey are summarized in the What We Heard Section of this chapter.



2,795 VISITORS

The three **Public Meeting Presentations** have been viewed 3,366 times by 2,795 visitors.

“ At the mouth of Swan Creek there should be a bike / pedestrian bridge connecting the walkways along the river.”
- Michael Lawrence

“ I commute into downtown for work everyday. I would support a dog daycare... and I disagree that parking needs to be free all the time”
- Alissa

“ Give people multiple reasons to come to the waterfront. The malls in town are successful because there are multiple reasons to be there--shopping, food, exercise...”
- Jeff

Website Traffic (as of August 9, 2016)

9,156
SESSIONS

Total number of Sessions within the date range. A session is the period of time a user is actively engaged with the website.

Users that have had at least one session within the selected date range. Includes both new and returning users.

5,735
USERS

29,233
PAGE VIEWS

Pageviews is the total number of pages viewed. Repeated views of a single page are counted.

The average length of a Session.

2:26
AVG. SESSION

204
COMMENTS

Comments users posted to Questions on the site, and respondents to online survey

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Task 1 Comments: 138 Comments

Task 2 Comments: 16 Comments

Task 3 Comments: 9 Comments

Online Survey: 41 Respondents

Total Email Subscribers: 463 Subscribers

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What We Heard

Task 1 Feedback

The Riverfront

Participants largely discussed an activated and connected Riverfront with a bike/pedestrian facility from Lake Erie to the Toledo Zoo. Though open space and trail opportunities were the focus of the comments, a truly mixed-use riverfront with retail, restaurants, and residential was envisioned by several meeting attendants. Revitalizing Dockside and revitalizing the Marina District were also topics of discussion.

Streets/Connectivity

Thoughts to potentially enhance streets centered on improving safety for everyone, not just drivers. Better lighting, adding bicycle infrastructure, clear and distinctive wayfinding, and more transit options were listed as potential improvements that could increase downtown's connectivity to nearby neighborhoods and incentivize more retail activity. Other attendants suggested converting more one-way streets to two-way, and making better street connections to the river.

Business, Talent and Innovation

The overwhelming majority of respondents expressed a desire to work downtown, and envisioned a more vibrant and mixed-use CBD that would attract growing industries. Many comments mentioned that a strong downtown office market would require amenities for employees, such as walkable streets and plentiful retail. Start-ups and small-businesses were addressed as equally important to growth as larger employers.

Engagement Prioritization Summary

1	Access to the River	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Create a Continuous Riverwalk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Events and Entertainment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	More Parks and Recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Need more things to do Downtown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	More Housing Opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	More and Improved Bike Lanes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Attractions, Cultural Events and Uses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Better Public Transportation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Improve Promenade Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	More Lighting and Safer Pedestrian Streets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Access to Boats (Water Taxi/Ferry/Marina/Transient Boats)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Grocery, Sundries, Shopping, Neighborhood Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Jobs, Density, More People	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Better Market Downtown, Change Perception, City Commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Q: What is missing from the Riverfront downtown?

“ Everything! We don't use the river at all. Parks, bike/running trail, restaurants with patios, shopping, residential.”

Q: What would make businesses more successful downtown?

“ Small business owners, entrepreneurs, investors and prominent community figures coming together and pooling their resources...”

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Q: Parking downtown is:



Transportation & Parking

Improving public transportation options was the most prevalent message in participant comments, in addition to building a more robust bicycle network. Meeting attendants also do not see parking as a problem in downtown.

Residential & Retail Opportunities

Continuing to build on the momentum in the Warehouse and Uptown Districts was a common thread in discussions regarding housing opportunities. Others expressed a desire for more Riverfront residential located near Fort Industry Square as well as the east side of the river. Many participants stressed the importance of independently-owned retail as an amenity that would attract visitors and downtown residents.

Greenspace/Recreation/Bike Network

A connected bike network consisting of on-street facilities, such as bike lanes, and off-street paths were of high priority and importance to attendants. Comments focused on increasing connectivity to nearby neighborhoods, as well as focusing on a bike path along both sides of the river.

Task 2 Feedback: Emerging Opportunities & Planning Vision

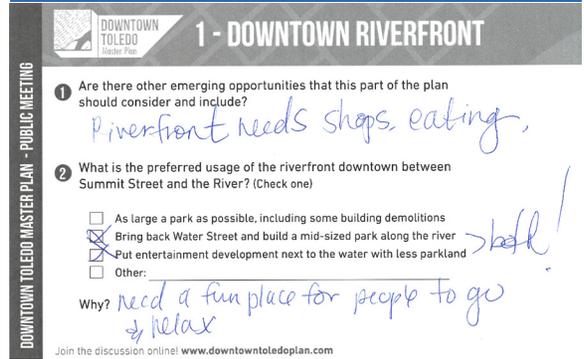
The Riverfront

Following the First Public Meeting, the downtown riverfront continued to be a critical focus for the public. Participants at the Second Public Meeting emphasized the need for a continuous and interconnected network of open spaces along both sides of the river. Other comments included:

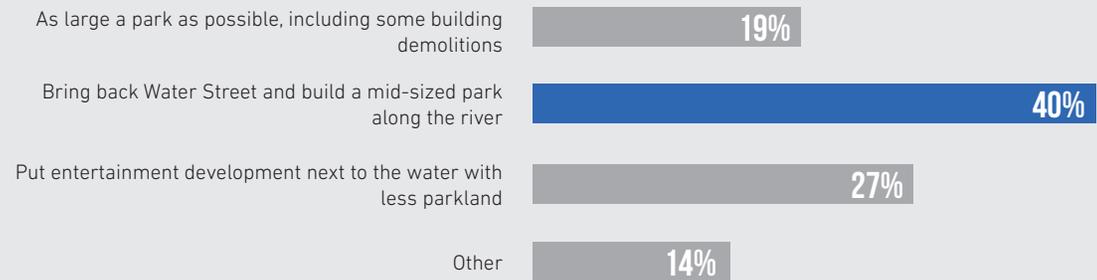
- > More riverfront activity (Entertainment, Arts, Cultural Destinations)
- > Improved connections (to Middlegrounds Metro Park and Lake)
- > Bike and pedestrian connections to both sides of the river
- > Better boating and physical access to the river
- > Clean water

“If it looked like Savannah or Jacksonville I’d be there every weekend!”

“...it would be nice to have some entertainment along with a mid-sized park and Water St.”



Q: What is the preferred usage of the riverfront downtown between Summit Street and the River?



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What We Heard

Downtown Core

Participants prioritized rethinking the SeaGate Centre and revitalizing the Four Corners (Intersection of Huron Street and Madison Avenue) as the two most important catalytic projects in the Downtown Core. Improving downtown connectivity through reconnected streets were also mentioned as potential solutions to the pedestrian experience. Other comments included:

- > Reconnect St. Clair Street
- > Connect Warehouse District to Civic Center
- > Build on existing momentum
- > More/better hotels
- > Improve perception of downtown
- > Reuse existing buildings first

“ St. Clair Street needs to be continuous”



Warehouse District

Building on the momentum and activity of the Warehouse District, members of the public expressed a desire for increased open space along Swan Creek and additional retail and entertainment opportunities, especially along St. Clair Street. Additional comments included:

- > Build on momentum of Hensville
- > Build on momentum of existing/new start up and incubator space
- > Connect to the Amtrak Station

“ Continuous walk from Maumee River all along Swan Creek”

Vistula Historic District

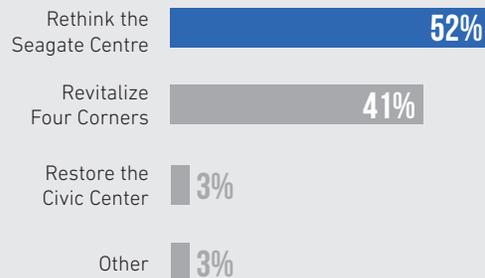
Public comments regarding Vistula focused on celebrating Toledo’s First Neighborhood. Meeting attendants suggested a concentrated revitalization effort that reclaimed and cleaned up industrial spaces along the riverfront and replaced these with new green space and trails connecting to the Nautical Mile. Other comments included:

- > Neighborhood needs to river access, parks and redevelopment to succeed
- > Bridge the Cherry Street divide
- > Provide boating access

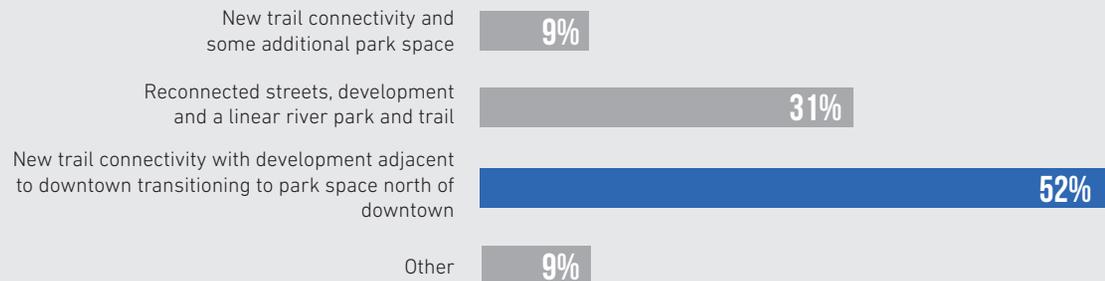
“ Need Riverside Trail connection, additional parkland near residential areas”

Q: How would you prioritize these efforts?

(Users Ranked their highest priority as follows)



Q: What is your preferred usage of the riverfront in Vistula?



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“Need retail to support the residential neighborhood”

Uptown District

Comments strongly emphasized the need for future infill development occurring in Uptown to

be consistent with the neighborhood’s authenticity and artistic character. Residents of this community expressed the importance of the Adams Street Corridor as central to existing small businesses and retailers. Other comments included

- > Consider importance of historic architecture
- > Provide more residential/commercial mixed use
- > Make Adams Street corridor a key Uptown connection to Downtown

Reconnect Downtown

Comments focused on enhancing the pedestrian experience through the conversion of one-way streets

into two-way travel, and enhancing the existing streetscape. As well, the majority of comments addressed the lack of on-street bicycle infrastructure, and the potential to implement the city’s 2015 Bike Plan in the downtown area. Other comments included:

- > Change Erie and Michigan to two way
- > Connect St. Clair Street
- > Implement Ontario connector
- > Expand bike infrastructure
- > Implement Jefferson cycle track
- > Remove Bus Loop

“Bike lane on Jefferson Connecting Uptown to the water”



Bike Lane would be a great catalyst! Quick win to get things started and younger - healthy crowd excited!

Task 3 Feedback: Priority Action Items & Planning Vision Draft

Public comments received during Task 3 continued to emphasize the importance of a connected riverfront as vital to Toledo’s Future. Along with the creation of a stronger downtown, participants continued to stress the need for more downtown residents, retail, and employment. The enthusiastic crowd that attended the Third Public Meeting stressed the need for a robust implementation effort to ensure that the vision created by this plan would become a reality.

Q: What is your preferred land usage within Uptown?

Some new parks and neighborhood development and a focus on the Adams Street corridor

18%

All of the above, plus more neighborhood development around new greens and squares

21%

All of the above, maximizing park space, local streets and neighborhood development

48%

Other

13%

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Planning Principles

In addition to focusing on the five districts and connections, the planning team also developed 12 Planning Principles to reflect public input and guide plan development.

The Maumee River is a valuable public good and will be the key to the revitalization of Downtown Toledo. An undervalued asset today, there are early signs of a turnaround ahead. The community needs to leverage planned investments in the ProMedica headquarters, Promenade Park and the Renaissance Hotel and invest in the public realm along and leading to the riverfront.

Investing in the public spaces along the downtown riverfront will help to spur additional mixed-use development directly adjacent to the river and in the districts and neighborhoods that surround it. To enable this redevelopment the development and approval process needs to be streamlined to

make it easier to redevelop historic buildings and activate currently empty or underutilized parts of downtown.

Complete streets that enable all modes of transportation and enable walkability will make downtown a more attractive place to live, work and play. Streets should be reconnected, one-way to two-way street conversions considered, and super blocks broken down. Doing so will help make downtown more usable and it will allow for better connections between community assets.

Throughout all of this, what makes Toledo authentic is key — improvements need to respond to the character of Toledo and its history. Strong public-private partnerships and a commitment to continuing community planning will allow this plan to be flexible and relevant as downtown evolves.

1 **The River** is a Valuable Public Good



2 **Encourage Mixed Use Development**



3 **Focus Redevelopment** to Create Successful Urban Districts



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4 Streamline the **Development and Approval Process**



7 Take Advantage of **Market Momentum**



10 Active and **Complete Streets** are Essential to a Strong Downtown



5 Celebrate what is **Authentic** about Toledo



8 Invest in the **Public Realm**



11 Strategic **Community Planning** Provides the Direction



6 Foster Strong **Public-Private Partnerships**



9 Reinvest in **Historic Buildings**



12 **Connect** Community Assets

