

Sanford

Typology: Downtown



VISION

Continue the growth and revitalization of downtown Sanford with strategic development that commemorates its past and enhances neighborhood connections while keeping a steady eye towards its future.



Today

South Steele Street

MARKET READINESS

5 = Strongest; 1 = Weakest

Current Market Strength



Development activity in Sanford has been fueled by the growing life sciences industry since the start of the pandemic. Though this influx of development has primarily occurred outside of the study area, regional passenger rail service could attract residents and visitors to downtown Sanford while continuing to accelerate Sanford's economic growth and help employers access a larger workforce.

Existing Development Demand Projection (20 years)



The development demand projections are estimates of the development activity that may occur by 2042 if a passenger rail station is built in this study area. The demand projections are based on historic development patterns, pipeline development projects, and a qualitative assessment of the future real estate market dynamics for each study area. The projections are not calibrated to the actual development capacity of the study area as determined by current land availability, current local zoning regulations, etc.

TOD Vision Plan

Legend

-  Retail/commercial or office building
-  High-density office/commercial mixed-use building
-  Low-density multi-family residential building
-  Residential-based mixed-use building
-  Townhomes
-  Single-family residential
-  Existing building
-  Trail/greenway
-  Parks/open space

Multi-family based mixed use development

Encourage targeted infill of neighborhood-serving commercial and retail uses

Incorporate new community open spaces and parks as part of redevelopment

Introduce appropriately scaled new residential uses (townhomes, duplexes) to increase housing stock while limiting impacts to adjacent to established single-family neighborhoods.

BIG IDEA: Redevelopment of historic Singer Mill and adjacent park space can anchor development north of downtown.

BIG IDEA: Develop linear park and greenway along Little Buffalo Creek to help catalyze and connect new development.

BIG IDEA: Focus highest intensity transit-oriented development closest to the future station. Larger parcels allow for potential residential based-mixed use development.

Create new streets along linear park and as part of new development and to provide multi-modal access to the future transit station.

BIG IDEA: Incentivize redevelopment of older industrial buildings on the east side of downtown.

Introduce a range of housing types (apartments, townhomes, duplexes, etc.) with densities and intensities stepping down as development gets closer to the existing residential neighborhoods.

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* This plan illustrates one potential development scenario that demonstrates principles of transit-oriented development. This concept does not demonstrate planned or programmed land development or infrastructure projects, unless otherwise indicated.

Built Form & Development Recommendations - Sanford

The below table summarizes the key elements of the built form that are best practices applicable to this typology. The table summarizes which of these elements are already in place within the current regulatory tools and zoning, what is not in place and which elements are in progress. For applicable elements, a policy recommendation or action item is recommended.



Built Form Needs	Status	Policy Recommendation/Action Item
Building & Architectural Character		
Ensure that building siting, massing, and architectural elements are consistent with and contextually sensitive to surrounding Downtown Sanford architecture and historic character, specifically prevalent within the core Downtown blocks between Horner Boulevard, Moore Street, Gordon Street and Wicker Street.	✓	Follow Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines guidance
Orient buildings close to and fronting streets including the core Downtown blocks as well as along First Street in close proximity to transit station area, primary intersections and open spaces within Downtown, and adjacent transition areas to preserve the integrity of Downtown's character.	✓	Follow Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines guidance
Focus highest intensity transit-oriented development closest to the future station. Target larger parcels for potential residential based-mixed use development.	✗	Amend the Comprehensive Plan and update the UDO to include appropriate zoning districts to ensure transit-oriented development
Design the ground floors of buildings to engage the street with transparent façades (fenestration) and active uses.	✗	Update the UDO to include regulatory language
Outside of Downtown and immediate transition areas, encourage more variable building setbacks to provide space for front yards, open space, and a more expansive streetscape environment.	⚠	Ensure zoning districts (around the transit station area) include appropriate language to facilitate recommendation for transit-oriented development
Where appropriate, encourage building design that is complementary to, or takes design cues from, existing historic or culturally-significant architectural features, including the scale and form of historical development patterns and the prevailing architectural styles of Downtown Sanford (e.g., façade treatments, materials, roof and window treatments, etc.).	✓	Follow Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines guidance
Protect and enhance the existing visual character and integrity of Downtown by maintaining significant viewsheds of significant downtown landmarks, specifically from and towards the core Downtown blocks, and signature buildings along Carthage Street/Charlotte Avenue (such as, Temple Theater, Historic Sanford Town Hall, etc.).	✓	Follow Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines guidance
For buildings located on corners at primary intersections, incorporate distinctive form variations that accentuate the building's prominent and visible location and can serve as a gateway to the station area (e.g., additional building height relative to surrounding buildings, distinctive rooftops and rooflines, distinctive façade treatments, variations in building geometry, locating seating areas and outdoor dining spaces at street corners).	✗	Amend the Comprehensive Plan and update the UDO to include appropriate zoning districts to ensure transit-oriented development
Discourage large-scale, auto-oriented commercial uses and strip center development within the Downtown area.	✓	Follow UDO and Comprehensive Plan guidance
Height, Massing & Development Transitions		
Encourage building heights of up to 3 stories to complement the existing height and intensity of buildings in the Downtown area; consider heights of up to 5 stories on a case-by-case basis around transit station and on primary streets, including Carthage Street/Charlotte Avenue.	⚠	Follow UDO guidance (Current UDO allows unlimited height)
Provide transitions in height and massing between higher-intensity development and lower-scale residential neighborhoods, such that buildings "step down" in height and scale in the vicinity of smaller-scale residential neighborhoods.	✗	Ensure zoning districts (around the transit station area) include appropriate language to facilitate recommendation for transit-oriented development
Break up the horizontal and vertical massing of buildings through approaches such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • variations in façade elements, modulation of rooflines; • dividing single building masses into multiple buildings to create a diversity of building facades (similar to façade treatments of "downtown" Sanford buildings) especially on long blocks; • variations in building form and massing, such as step-backs and terracing. 	✗	Ensure zoning districts (around the transit station area) include appropriate language to facilitate recommendation for transit-oriented development
Distinguish the base, middle, and upper floors of building to create a human-scaled environment at street level. Incorporate changes in façade materials, cornice lines, and varied window treatments, as appropriate to the architecture and the Downtown Sanford context.	⚠	Follow Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines guidance. Ensure zoning districts (around the transit station area) include appropriate language to facilitate recommendation for transit-oriented development
Incorporate variations in form and massing into building design—such as step-backs and terracing—to create visual interest and variety, allow for sunlight at street level, and establish usable outdoor terraces.	✗	Ensure zoning districts (around the transit station area) include appropriate language to facilitate recommendation for transit-oriented development
Establish consistent building frontages along streets closest to the station by minimizing the space between buildings closest to the stations; transition to lower intensities on blocks located further from the station.	✓	Follow current Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines and UDO guidance
Infill Development and Adaptive Reuse		
Promote and celebrate the Downtown's history by encouraging the preservation and/or adaptive reuse of historic structures whether they are within the core Downtown blocks in and around Carthage Street/Charlotte Avenue or redevelopment of older industrial buildings along First Street (for example, historic Singer Mill). Encourage commercial and community-based uses within existing ground floor spaces and residential and/or professional office retrofits within upper floors.	✓	Follow Downtown Sanford Historic District Guidelines guidance
Expand the downtown footprint to the east side of the railroad tracks. Allow for appropriately-scaled commercial/mixed-use as well as medium-density infill residential uses (townhomes, garden apartments, duplex, triplex, quadplex, etc.) along First Street and adjoining streets within the expanded Downtown areas to be compatible with existing residential neighborhood character and use.	✗	Amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the expansion of Downtown area to east of the railroad tracks to help implement the vision of transit-oriented development around the station area

[continue >>](#)

Built Form & Development Recommendations - Sanford

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Encourage affordable housing options and a mix of housing types, including senior housing.		Amend the Comprehensive Plan to emphasize affordable housing needs. (the UDO currently provides flexibility in accommodating affordable housing types)
Add neighborhood-serving commercial and community uses to frame the new civic space/park spaces along Moore Street and linear green space along Little Buffalo Creek adjoining First Street.		Amend the Comprehensive Plan and update the UDO to include appropriate zoning districts to encourage transit-oriented development and appropriate land uses along the creek/linear green space.
Extend and connect the street network as new development occurs, including establishing an interconnected street grid within large parcels.		Update the UDO to include regulatory language
Incorporate courtyards, plazas, and other small green spaces as part of new development to serve existing and future residents as well as business needs.		Update the UDO to include regulatory language
Multimodal Transportation & Parking		
Provide on-street, parallel parking on streets in the vicinity of the mobility hub.		Update the UDO to include regulatory language
Locate off-street surface parking area at the rear and side of buildings while meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for accessible parking.		Follow current UDO guidance
Where feasible, incorporate parking structures into new development, specifically within the existing off-street parking lot adjacent to the potential station. Parking structures should be wrapped and concealed by active building frontage, to foster a comfortable and active pedestrian environment. Require design considerations, such as architectural screening and/or landscaping, to conceal garage entrances where visible.		Update the UDO to include regulatory language regarding parking structure design
Screen off-street surface parking and parking structures areas from surrounding land uses, utilizing trees, landscaping, and architectural treatments as visual buffers.		Follow current UDO guidance
Explore opportunities for shared parking arrangements between multiple lots, uses or buildings.		Update the UDO to provide guidance
Consider shared and consolidated driveway access, where possible, for pedestrian safety, shared parking access, and to maintain the integrity of the streetscape.		Update the UDO to provide guidance
Incorporate improved spaces for mobility hub (bus pull-ins, shared mobility infrastructure, bicycle parking, etc.) near the station area.		Update the UDO to provide guidance

Precedent Image Examples of Built Form Recommendations



Open Space

This concept explores a new signature park in Sanford along North First Street. Little Buffalo Creek runs north to south and is located just east of downtown. The creek's floodplain limits development and redevelopment opportunity between North First Street and the historic Singer Mill site. Additionally, the mill offers a unique opportunity to serve as a mobility hub if a northern option is chosen.

Creating an attractive public space here supports downtown Sanford by making it a more attractive place to visit and do business. The park area has ample space to place multiple features to attract and entertain users. This illustration highlights a playground for families, additional green space for community events, and walking trails associated with a greenway system along Little Buffalo Creek.



Plazas and open spaces adjacent to multimodal nodes can be programmed for community events and support adjacent commercial/business uses.



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Catalytic TOD Sites

Opportunity Sites

Five sites within the Sanford mobility hub area have been identified as strong candidates for providing an opportunity for TOD.

A 157 Charlotte Ave/Little Buffalo Creek Park
The 3.4-acre site, near the corner of Charlotte Ave and First St, is located across the street from the Sanford/Lee County Planning & Community Development. Anchored by the soon to be Sanford Agricultural Marketplace, this site provides an opportunity to create a public linear park fronting First Street and the rail corridor, which could connect City Hall to the downtown core, as well as a starting point for the envisioned Buffalo Creek Greenway. Additionally, the site includes a parking lot used for the year round Sanford Market Place and parking for Sanford/Lee County Planning & Community Development and Parks & Recreation, which is slated for capital improvements and a new structure. Its ownership and alignment with Sanford's development goals make it a strong first mover candidate.

Parcel numbers: P9643-70-7596;
P9643-70-7673; P9643-70-6685;
P9643-70-76141

B Singer Mill
This 4.26-acre parcel is located in downtown and is privately owned by Original Investors, Inc. The City is currently working with the owner to possibly convert the existing legacy industrial buildings into a mixed-use joint development opportunity that might include housing, commercial and light industrial maker space.

Parcel number: P9643-70-4938

C 200 Cole St Properties
The 2.91 acre site, consisting of four privately owned parcels, on the south side of Cole Street at its S Steele Street corner, offers redevelopment opportunities to support the potential southern station or mobility hub.

These parcels offer opportunities to develop a parking structure to support the station and a potential mixed-used development. While the site contains an underutilized commercial strip, it is mostly covered by trees and underutilized parking.

Parcel numbers: 9642-78-1895;
9642-68-9866, 9642-79-0094,
9642-78-1978

D 300-318 S Moore St
This site contains 3 parcels totaling 3.5 acres and is located north of Pearl Street between two existing rail-lines. It currently contains three vacant buildings and tree-covered, undeveloped space. Due to its location and underutilization, the site provides redevelopment opportunities to activate the areas between the existing rail lines and connect to the potential station or mobility hub. The site also shares the same owner as 231 Chatham St, which provides a combined redevelopment opportunity.

Parcel number: 9642-78-9613;
9642-79-5187; 9642-79-5216

E 231 Chatham St
The site contains the former Cargo Depot, currently owned by the railroad for storage, providing an opportunity for inclusion in the potential, redevelopment of the area to the south.

Parcel number: N/A,
Rail Road Right-of-Way



Catalytic TOD Sites - ACTION PLAN

In order to capitalize on Sanford and Lee County's current single-family detached housing growth and burgeoning life sciences industry, the City should enhance its downtown core by investing in public realm improvements, such as the Little Buffalo Creek shared use path, and targeting mixed-use development on key infill sites such as Singer Mill.

Near-Term (12-18 months)

- Develop Downtown Sanford Small Area Plan to foster high quality development within the Downtown Municipal Service District and surrounding area.
 - The plan should build off the City's 2011 Downtown Master Plan and the City/County's 2018 PlanSanLee Land Use Plan to provide guidance on private land use decisions such as retail tenancing strategies, diversification of housing stock, and civic uses.
 - The plan should also identify prospective public realm enhancements, such as the Little Buffalo Creek shared use path and linear park, and establish design guidelines for these green civic spaces.
- Review and update the City's Land Use Plan and downtown development guidelines to ensure desired TOD typologies are allowed by-right in the mobility hub area.
- Conduct outreach to property owners of catalytic TOD sites to understand potential for redevelopment and/or land acquisition by the City.
- Identify funding needs bike/ped improvements in downtown Sanford, especially multimodal improvements and shared-use path along Little Buffalo Creek, as well as a realignment of Steele Street.
- Implement Policy Recommendations

Mid-Term (2-5 years)

- Finalize location of potential mobility hub area in the downtown core, either in the northern portion downtown on the Singer Mills property, or with privately-owned properties along South Moore Street near the railway intersection. The City should work with property owners to either acquire properties or facilitate partnerships with private developers for station development.
- Initiate the development of public realm enhancements and capital improvements needed to support TOD and higher-density developments.
 - Leverage state and federal grant sources to fund roadway improvements and public realm enhancements.
 - Construct new structure to support year-round farmers' market operations. Structure could also support small-scale retail and restaurants along the Little Buffalo Creek Park.
- Develop a suite of innovative financing and regulatory tools to incentivize private development in the downtown core.
 - Financing tools, such as bonds, grants, loans, and tax abatements, can offsetting predevelopment costs, as well as establish permanent financing for TOD and affordable housing.
 - Regulatory tools, such as density bonuses, reduction in parking minimums, and expedited permitting, can be leveraged to support affordable and/or workforce housing in downtown Sanford.
- Coordinate with Lee County to identify space needs which could be supported within the Study Area. County offices could serve as anchor tenants for future TOD developments.

Long-Term (5+ years)

- Continue to identify and collaborate with property owners of potential infill development sites to either acquire land or facilitate partnerships with private developers for TOD.
- Support redevelopment of existing retail and commercial spaces to maximize lot development potential in a way that complements the City's desired development pattern.

Priority Infrastructure Projects

1

Moore Street Closure and Realignment of Steele Street

This project will reconstruct the street to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle travel while allowing for vehicular circulation to access businesses and the potential mobility hub. The street design allows for increased space for pedestrians, ample parking for businesses, and creates opportunities to connect Moore Street east of the tracks.

2

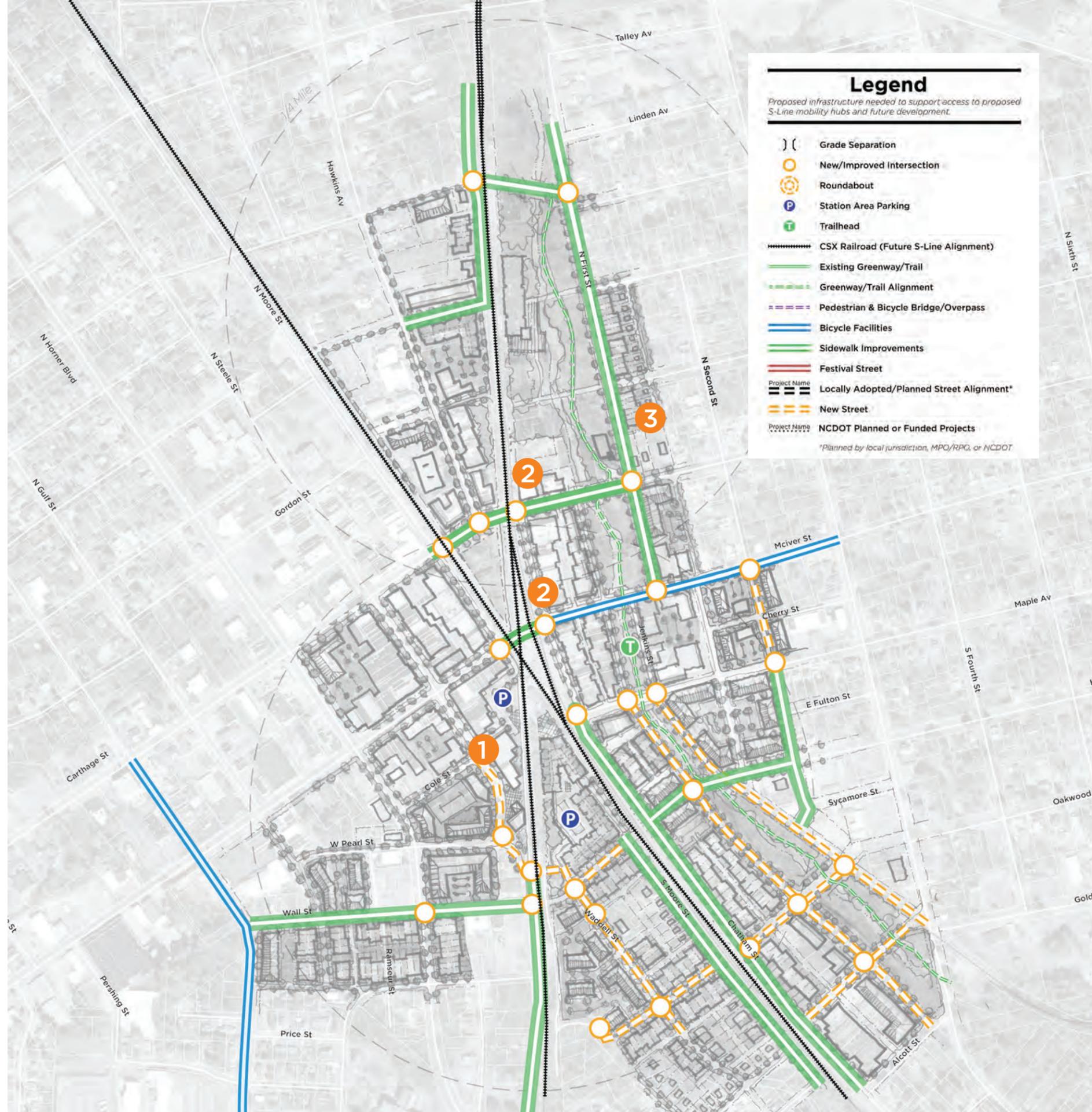
Charlotte Ave/McIver Multimodal Intersection & Safety Improvements

Access points across the railroad tracks are critical to circulation within the community and to connect to the mobility hub. This project will improve safety and comfortable experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers by providing wider sidewalks, ADA ramps, street trees, and bicycle facilities. Key intersection enhancements - notably at Charlotte Ave and Chatham St along with McIver St and Chatham St should be maintained to allow multimodal circulation for residents and businesses east of the railroad tracks.

3

First Street Multimodal Improvement & Shared Use Path

This project will install sidewalks and off-street shared-use path along the Little Buffalo Creek and make intersection improvements at first street to provide access into downtown for pedestrians and cyclists.



Grant Funding Database

Federal

- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program
- Opportunity Zone
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (includes Building Demolition funds)
- INFRA Grants program
- Federal Historic Tax Credits

State

- State Rural Grants - Building Reuse (includes Vacant Building and Existing Building grants)
- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Local

- Obligation Bond
- Capital Reserve
- Powell Bill



View the *Eligible Grant Dashboard* online
<----- (click here)

Sanford Policy Recommendations

1. Amend the Comprehensive Plan to include visionary recommendations that support transit-oriented development and affordable housing near the station area.
2. Update the UDO to include additional standards to facilitate high-quality, denser, transit-oriented development.
3. Continue to enforce existing Historic District Guidelines to ensure that the height and mass of infill development are compatible with the historic fabric of Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.