



DOWNTOWN ROADMAPS

**Creating an Implementable
Framework for Revitalization**



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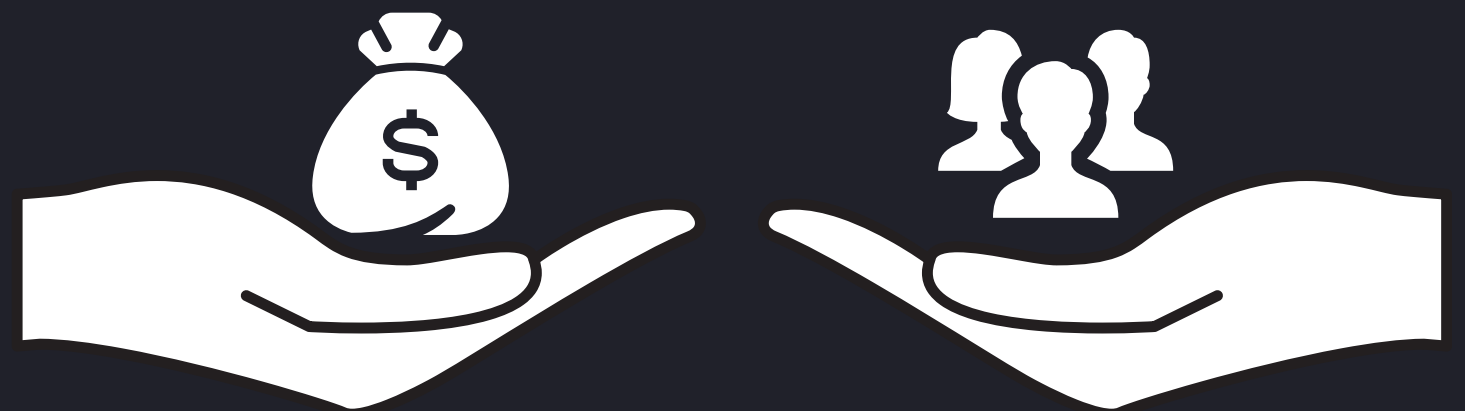
What is Roadmapping?



What is

Downtown Roadmapping?

Downtown roadmapping is a charrette-based planning exercise targeting and activating the community's available human and fiscal assets.



How Did It

Come about?

Downtown roadmapping came about after working with communities and downtown organizations and regularly hearing:

We've got that information on a shelf in the planning department.

We did this plan 20 years ago; it's still relevant, right?

Our community doesn't know what to do or when to do it.

The city has excellent plans but still lacks direction.

Or our favorite - "We have plenty of ideas, but no money or staff to implement them."

After hearing about waiting for Silver Bullet development....

What Was Learned from The Process

Downtown planning is often a very long process, and there are no “catalyst projects” that will fix your problems.

While incremental change will build capacity and create a true community catalyst, it requires programming and utilizing local resources in the short and medium term.



02

Framework of Roadmapping



A Successful Framework

Downtown programming is about fact-finding and programming, defining your process, and outlining your needs. This often comes from an easy-to-follow process, including:

01
Destination
Discovery



02
Downtown
Assessment



03
Engaging Your
Community



04
Reviewing &
Programming
your assets



05
Making the
Map



Discovering Who “YOU” are

Creating a vision for who your community is and how the downtown supports the residents is critical for solidifying your downtown as the heart of the community. To complete this step, it is essential to:

- ✓ Conduct some introspective research about the history of your community.
- ✓ Identify critical character elements for your downtown.
- ✓ Identify intrinsic or emotional values that connect residents to downtown, such as nostalgia
- ✓ Outline cornerstone architectural elements that are distinct for your community.
- ✓ Review the socio-economic and market analysis of the community.

This process is about setting core “community values.” While there may be many, there must be at least one for each of the following, as they will be an undertone through the entire process:

**Community
Character
Element**

**Residential
Quality of
Life Value**

Asset

Programming

Downtown assets fit into a variety of categories, yet for roadmapping and Main Street planning, they are commonly lumped into two categories:



Human Assets

Volunteers, businesses, community members, etc.



Fiscal Assets

Donors, grants, funding, or other financial elements

One of the primary goals of this asset programming process is to determine how each set can be leveraged or maximized, so some questions to answer in this process are:



How can we use the asset?



Are there any strings attached?



Do they open any doors to other assets?



What are our requirements to use them?



Is there a timing or pre-use requirement?



One of the best ways we have seen to undertake this process is the serial killer method, which ensures you turn over every asset in your community and program accordingly, like a true-crime podcast.



Big ideas

Planning and Prep

Main Street is naturally aspirational, thinking of how to improve and revitalize downtown. These goals are important milestones, offering long-term goals or community improvement suggestions. We call them “BIG IDEAS”:

Clearly stating them as goals to work towards.

Defining them as elements for which actionable workflows are required.

Demonstrating the often unified goals and desires for “what downtown would ideally look like given current needs.”

Write these down and host an exercise to help prioritize everyone's “BIG IDEAS” into a cohesive and logical set of recommendations.



Short- and long-term Planning

When programming assets, getting lost in the big, shiny ideas is easy. Don't feel bad. Everyone loves a new splash pad, community park, or renovated building. However, these items take time and careful planning.

This is where "Short and Long" need to be considered together to create logical flow or processes:

It's important to remember that elephants are eaten one bite at a time. So, use your short-term tasks to complete progress steps for your long-term.



SHORT-TERM

This timing phase is about creating immediately available items that are "SHOWY" because nothing sells Main Street like visible improvements, no matter how small.



LONG-TERM

These goals are for the 3-5 year horizon and focus on capitalizing on the early wins into more substantial efforts.

Engaging the public where they are

Comfortable

The public can be fickle at the best of times and angry at the worst. Nonetheless, they play a critical role in the downtown programming process. So frequent and meaningful feedback is recommended for all aspects of the downtown road mapping exercise, including:

- ✓ Meeting the residents and business owners where they are through walking tours
- ✓ Integrating this process into a community event for the open house
- ✓ Asking the public for participation frequently and at critical milestones
- ✓ Utilizing Thick & Thin input to gather meaningful data



Making the map and Celebrating

Now comes the time to use all the information, asset programming, and big ideas to prepare a brief document highlighting actionable goals for the next 3-5 years.

Some common chapters or sections in the document include:

- Community History
- Socio-economic analysis
- Results from the self-discovery
- Results from the public engagement
- Detailed analysis of the downtown
 - Community Character
 - Real Estate Development
 - Urban Design
 - Community Capacity
 - Built Environment
- Roles and responsibilities matrix



Pro Tip

Prepare this document in an editable format like Microsoft PowerPoint so you can scratch items off the list when you are done. This is an influential action people often enjoy undertaking.

03

Timing & Participation in Roadmapping



Public Participation

A plan is completed with public participation, and downtown roadmapping is the same. Typically, the charrette-based downtown planning process includes:



Online/in-person Surveys

In the modern era, these are critical tools for younger and busier individuals.



Business District Walking Tours

Business owners are busy people. Visit them and talk with them in their shops.



Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meetings are a way to gather diverse information from small groups, allowing their answers to be fed into each other and performing guided exploration.



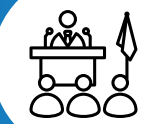
Open House Meetings

These meetings are where the community can put pen to paper and tell the Main Street program what they don't like and how the downtown should adapt to their needs.



One-on-one Meetings

One-on-one meetings are great for the 'louder voices' individuals in the community. Don't worry; everyone has them.



Elected Officials/Municipal Meetings

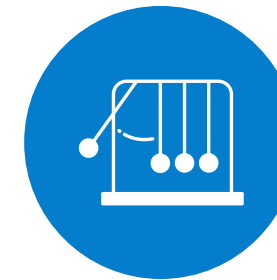
This meeting is critical to outline recent efforts and discuss fiscal or legislative limitations.

Timing and Phasing

Timing is one of the most essential elements of this charrette-based process.



Identifying and programming available assets



Building momentum



Creating a purpose



'Demystifying' the planning process



Speeding up the planning effort and relocating the remaining to action

Asking Everyone

As the saying goes,

“You can lead a horse to water,
but you can't make it drink it.”

This is also true in public engagement. No matter how often you tell people about an event or ask them to participate, some will not.

However, it is essential to:

- ✓ *Ensure that you invite everyone.*
- ✓ *Earnestly solicit their feedback.*
- ✓ *Update the entire community about the results regularly.*



Pro Tip

There will always be naysayers,
but don't let them get you
down. Continue to invite them
and “kill them with kindness.”

04

Benefits of Roadmapping



Identifying localized assets and Individuals

This process is not only about the physical space; it is also about identifying local assets that can be used to help drive change and maximize local efforts.



Creating Roles & Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are critical for setting actionable and achievable recommendations. As part of the downtown roadmapping process, a detailed roles and responsibilities matrix is prepared to outline:

- ✓ Name of the task
- ✓ What individuals or groups are responsible for the task
- ✓ The timeline for task completion
- ✓ Priority order for task completion
- ✓ Required resources or funding for task completion
- ✓ Completion due date

Through this process, the downtown or main street can outline critical pathways and define " success " for the program, including creating metrics and materials.

This sets Main Street up for easily prepared action or annual plans.

Preparing for and acting in the Immediate Future

There will never be more momentum or goodwill for downtown revitalization projects as is available upon completing a plan. This is further realized in the Roadmapping process since the public is part of all steps, and their fingerprints are on the work. To build on this, the roadmap ensures:



Immediately available projects are identified to continue the heightened level of participation



Short-term projects are capacity building for longer-term projects



Aspirational goals are identified as the process's final product, ensuring vertical integration and a typical "result."

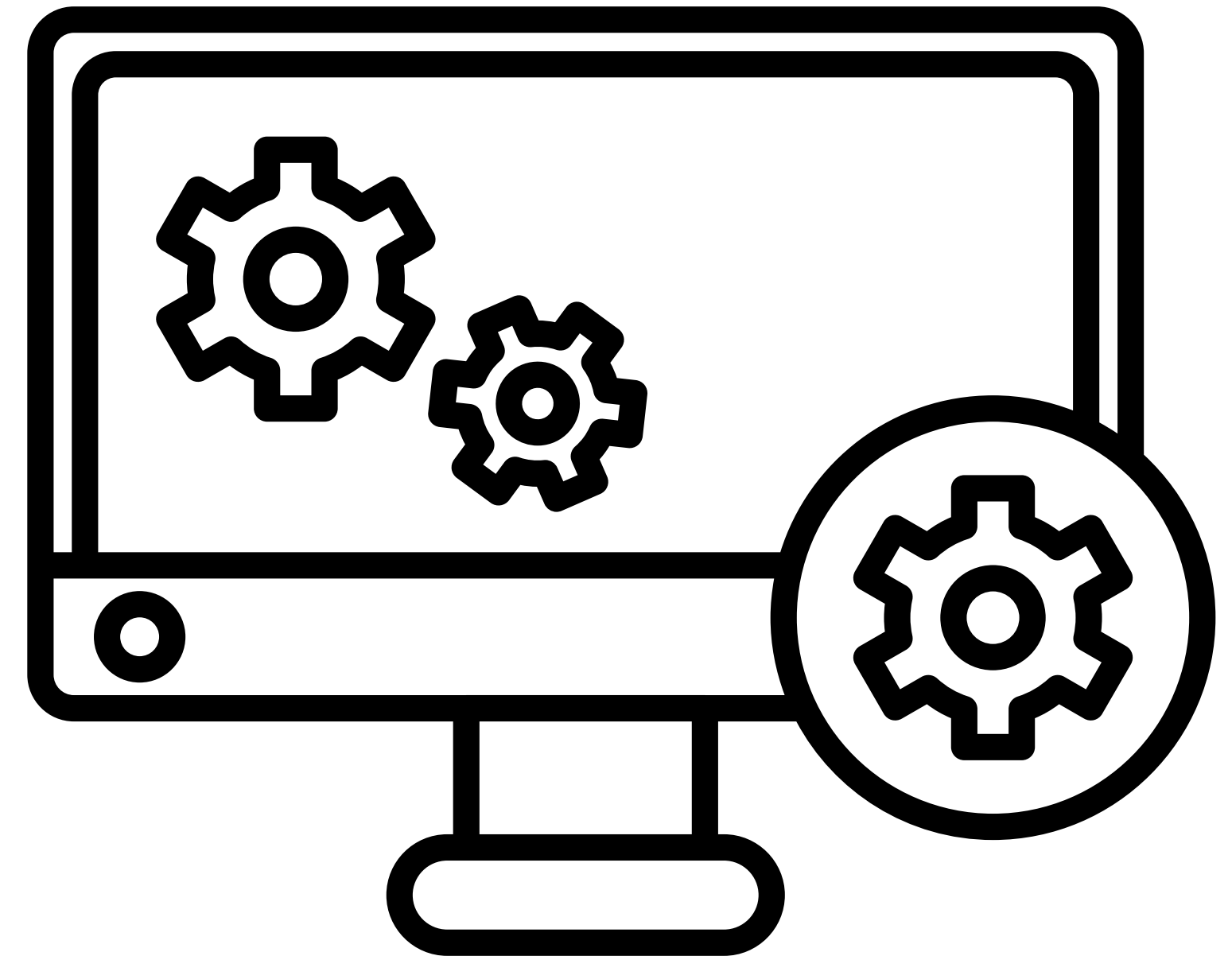
Action Defined

By Programming

Programming of assets allows for BIA's and other organizations to help create actionable strategies that are built on logical work flows. Through these processes the following can be achieved:

- ✓ Maximizing available funding
- ✓ Creating easily identifiable and distinct roles for volunteers
- ✓ Providing community impact statements
- ✓ Promoting effective implementation
- ✓ Securing regular review and visibility for all efforts
- ✓ Meeting demands, while also not burning our resources.

Defining assets helps program and maximize the efforts, while working within the boundaries of available local amenities



05

Downtown Roadmapping Success Stories

While success looks different for each community, let's talk through some samples of successful roadmapping and how they impacted each community.



Harmony, Pennsylvania

This quaint Germanic village was at the beginning of its downtown revitalization process and needed guidance on using its limited funds and high amount of volunteers to retain its historic characteristics.

Highlights of the process include:

- ✓ Open house meeting - 117 of the 962 total residents attended and provided their feedback
- ✓ Citizen-guided preservation of a Germanic square
- ✓ Preparation of a month-by-month calendar of action items for the first five years of revitalization

Where are they today?

This community is five years in and has completed all elements of its plan within the first three. It now has the capacity and funding to move forward with larger projects.



Collingwood, Ontario

Created an actionable plan for implementing the downtown improvements and managing expectations of a growing BIA district



Highlights of the process include:

- ✓ Facilitated in-person and business interviews of local owners
- ✓ Helped set expectations for local owners
- ✓ Cleared the air on local topics people were too afraid to vocalize personally
- ✓ Provided strategies for creating a more productive BIA

Where are they today?

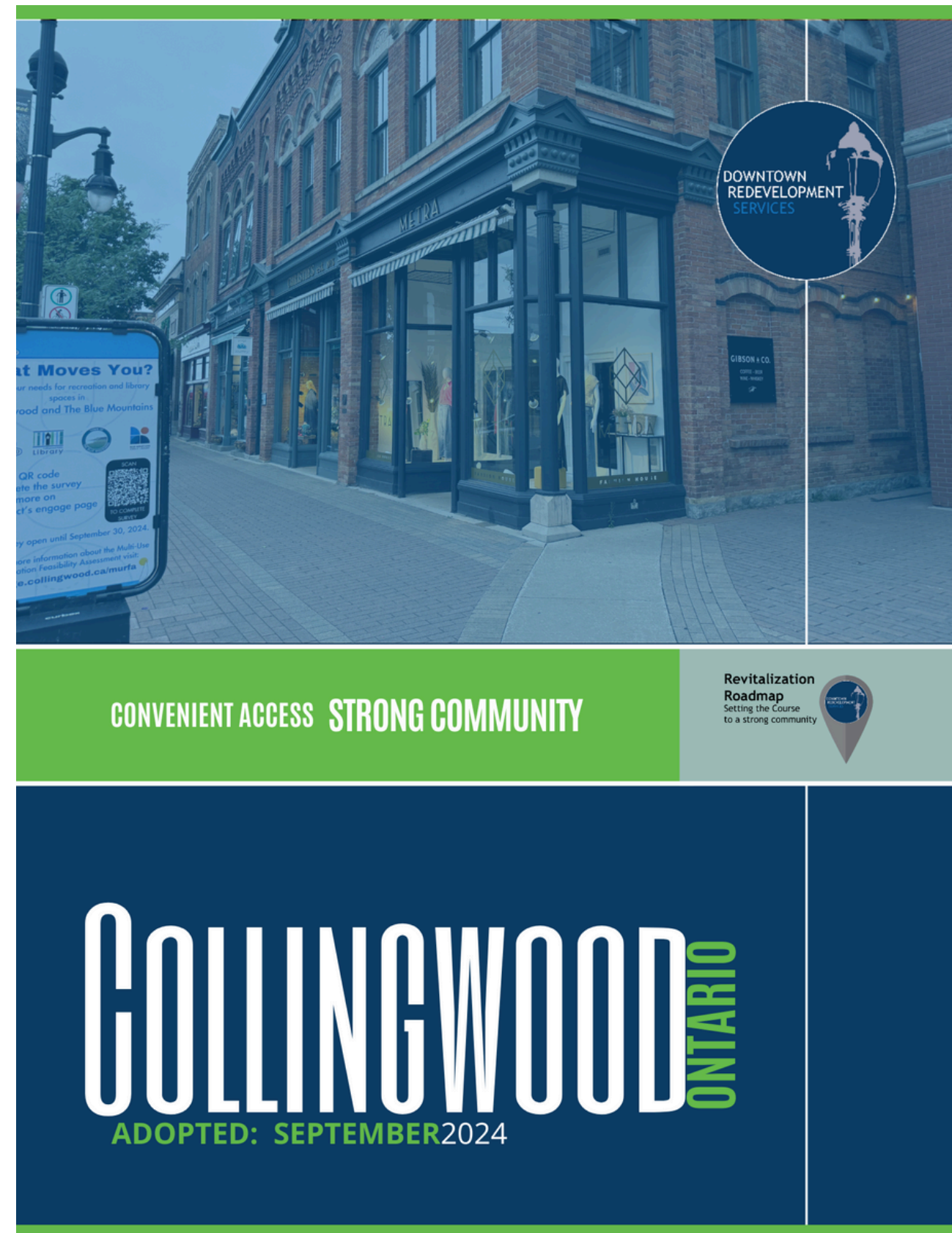
This was completed in August of 2024, and it has been a working document for implementation of community based (BIA) improvements.



DTRedevelopment gives away one of these plans annually in Ontario, so see me after the lecture to be places in the drawing

Collingwood, Ontario

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This Semiquincentennial community had been a Main Street community for seven years before undergoing the process of downtown road mapping. Witnessing a high board turnover and a limited impact, the group needed direction and a purpose.

Highlights included:

- ✓ Over 50 Stakeholder meetings and one-on-one meetings were facilitated.
- ✓ Business walking tours met with everyone in the community
- ✓ Assets were identified and programmed for immediate-term catalyst projects and long-term sustainability

Hallowell, Maine

As a 3-year update on this project, the Main Street board has now completed:

- ✓ Tactical urbanism for three alleyway activations
- ✓ CommunityCenter Feasibility Study & Activation
- ✓ River walkway creation, activating a river to the downtown loop
- ✓ Activation of more than 1,000 volunteer hours annually
- ✓ Creation of centrally located parking lots through cooperation agreements and mutual property owner funding

Sanford is a community with a deep and storied history in Central Florida. Yet, over the past 20 years, the lack of desire for growth or diversification has created a struggling downtown. The roadmap completed in 2023 helped with the following:

- ✓ **Identifying the need for a working board**
- ✓ **Creation of a project prioritization matrix for expenditures of CRA funding**
- ✓ **Activation of a Main Street adjacent African American League baseball stadium once regularly played in by Jackie Robinson**



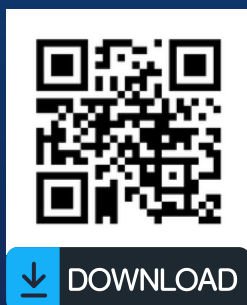
While the community is still in their first year from completion of the roadmapping process, they have:

- Completed all short-term goals
- Created and filled all four of their working boards
- Provided marketing and outreach assistance to help activate the baseball stadium
- Prepared a sustainable funding stream with guaranteed CRA funds



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