



# DOWNTOWN KILLEEN UPDATE

DS-24-058

September 17, 2024

# Background

- In 2007 the City of Killeen Adopted the Killeen Downtown Action Agenda
- In November of 2010, the City of Killeen Adopted the Killeen Downtown Plan as a supplement to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. This plan expired in 2020 largely not implemented.
  - ▣ This plan said at that time “ without prudent and strategic public interventions to turn things around troubled downtowns tend to continue to spiral downward acting as a further drag on community image and economic vitality”

# Background

- The Killeen 2040 plan identified the following barriers to success for Downtown Killeen:
  - ▣ History and Trajectory of Development in Killeen
  - ▣ Economic Abandonment of Downtown
  - ▣ Lack of Leadership
  - ▣ Lack of Activity Downtown
  - ▣ Undesirable Activity
  - ▣ Physical Impediments

# History and Trajectory of Development in Killeen

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- For the last several decades, growth in Killeen has generally shifted away from both downtown and north Killeen
- A major factor shifting development away from North Killeen - the larger local development community indicated a lack of interest in putting revenues into downtown and redevelopment

# Economic Abandonment of Downtown

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- Large vacant and deteriorating buildings were a daily reminder of the lack of economic activity in the area, amplified by absentee property owners. Downtown at its worst saw 63% vacancy with 5 buildings in extreme disrepair or “demolition by neglect”

# Economic Abandonment of Downtown

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- ▣ The direction of development in Killeen has resulted in real - and perceived -economic abandonment of downtown and north Killeen.

# Lack of Leadership

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- A common response from business owners and community leaders has been the lack of consistent leadership in downtown. At different points in the past, this area was not a priority for either elected officials or local business owners.
- The lack of leadership provoked pervasive community apathy and cynicism made worse by lack of coordination between the downtown businesses and the police and code enforcement.

# Lack of Activity Downtown

- Many community members responded that the main reason they do not spend more time downtown is that there is simply no reason to go. The lack of family-friendly activities is a primary source of this perception.
- Popular reoccurring events, like the Farmer's Market were relocated away from downtown because of lack of participation.
- Business and property owners shared that one key barrier to more restaurant and entertainment uses in downtown was the restrictive and unclear process on obtaining an alcohol sales permit.



# Undesirable Activity in Downtown

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(Google Streetview June 2022)

- The lack of positive image was reinforced by limited activity and undesirable experiences and sights.
- “Perception is Reality” perpetuated the idea that downtown was “dangerous” online and social media

# Physical Impediments

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- The physically dilapidated buildings required significant investment to make the buildings occupiable. The city's existing façade grants were not enough to address the remediation needed in the buildings that sat vacant for decades.

# Background

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- Downtown Killeen with the adoption of the Killeen 2040 plan set out to dissolve these barriers:
  - ▣ Shifting the Trajectory
  - ▣ Nurturing and Fostering Growth
  - ▣ Assembling the Team
  - ▣ Increasing Foot Traffic
  - ▣ Positive Image/Positive Activity
  - ▣ Investing in our Future

# Shifting the Trajectory

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- We focused less on attracting the “big developer” and more on helping the small businesses who already saw the opportunity to grow their business in downtown through grants and incentives.

# Shifting the Trajectory

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- Since the adoption of the Killeen 2040 plan 62 businesses have opened in the greater downtown; adding 162 jobs to the area

# Nurturing and Fostering Growth

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As a downtown we starting investing in bringing vibrancy back to the area in incremental but immediately tangible improvements (public art, placemaking, and tactical urbanism)

# Nurturing and Fostering Growth

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We didn't do it alone! In the 2023 we saw over 1,000 hours of volunteer hours from community members.

# Nurturing and Fostering Growth

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# Nurturing and Fostering Growth

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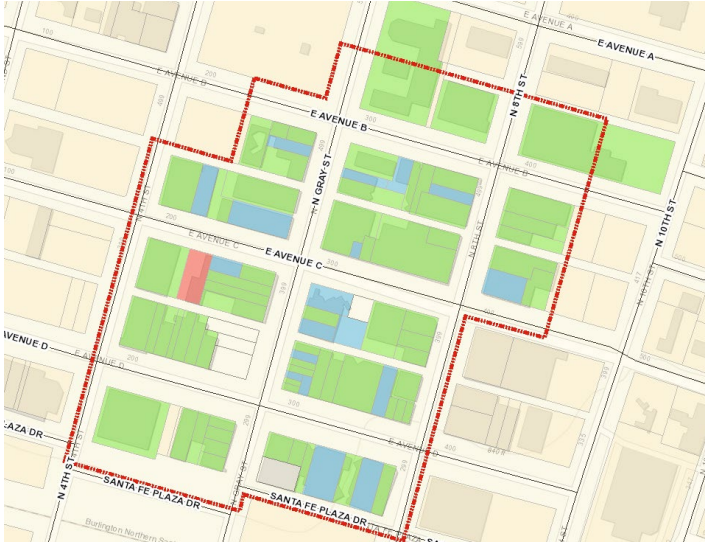
# Nurturing and Fostering Growth

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# Nurturing and Fostering Growth

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- We also revived the Vacant Building Registry and saw record compliance with 22 structures registered in 2024. Moving our downtown from 37% occupied when the ordinance was adopted to 79% in September of 2024.
- All five buildings in demolition by neglect have been resolved. 4 by repair and 1 by demolition.

# Assembling the Team

- The City of Killeen hired and dedicated staff to serve the needs of downtown: Downtown Director, Community Engagement Coordinator, Community Engagement Unit, Downtown Code Enforcement Officer
- An internal Downtown Coordination Team: Communications and Marketing, Killeen Police, Development Services (Building Inspections, Code Enforcement, Planning) Parks and Recreation, Public Works (Streets, Solid Waste, Mowing and Drainage), Community Development (Building Services), Fire (Emergency Management), and the newly created Downtown Division

# Increasing Foot Traffic

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- Ordinance 22-003 allowed alcohol sales in the HOD within 300 feet of a church allowing for more restaurants to open downtown
- In 2024 Killeen was named a Texas Brew City for our efforts to make our city a craft beer destination.

# Increasing Foot Traffic

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- In 2023 the Killeen Farmers Market Returned to Downtown Killeen with an average weekly attendance of 1,500.

# Increasing Foot Traffic

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- Downtown Killeen established 5 signature events, including the return of Celebrate Killeen to downtown.

# Increasing Foot Traffic

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# Increasing Foot Traffic

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# Increasing Foot Traffic

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# Positive Image/ Positive Activity

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12 public art installations were installed in downtown in 2023 and 2024

# Positive Image/ Positive Activity

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Shop Downtown-  
5,000 shop  
downtown cards  
brought residents  
and new soldiers  
to shop downtown  
for the first time in  
2023 and 2024

# Positive Image/ Positive Activity

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Downtown partnered with community partners to bring new programs to downtown, such as volunteer days with Ft Cavazos BOSS program and the Hometown Hero program with the Mounted Warrior Foundation.

# Positive Image/ Positive Activity

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# Positive Image/ Positive Activity

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The Killeen Police Department Community Engagement Unit established in the North Precinct- adding bike and foot patrols to increase visual presence of KPD in the area.

# Investing in our Future

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- In 2022 the City of Killeen allocated \$1 Million of ARPA grants to catalyze downtown investment.
- In 2022 a new Bell County Annex building location was established in downtown
- In 2023 the City of Killeen revived the TIRZ #2 and extended the life and boundary.
- In FY23 and FY24 \$432,876 in 31 façade and expanded improvement grants were awarded. (\$200,000 from the TIRZ#2)



# Investing in our Future

- In 2024 the City of Killeen signed a 380 agreement with Southern Roots Brewing Company to open their headquarters in the Hack's Army Western Wear Building.
- In 2024 the NKRP program was expanded to include sewer rehabilitation (A top priority identified by the Downtown Advisory Committee)

# 2023 Downtown Investment - \$9,763,384

34

Jobs Added



87

Downtown Events



22

New Businesses



37

Historic Building Renovations



15

Public Art Installations



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For every \$1 invested as an incentive, private businesses matched the investment with \$8.41

# Best Economic Game Changer 2023



# 2024 Downtown Investment - \$5,841,883\*



\*52 MORE ON THEIR WAY

\*11 MORE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

For every \$1 invested as an incentive, private businesses matched the investment with \$25.72

\*Mid-Year Update

# Moving Forward

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- ❑ Downtown Killeen is seeking a Texas Main Street Designation in 2025
- ❑ Downtown Expanded Improvement Grants will expand to the greater downtown in 2025
- ❑ New downtown wayfinding will be installed in 2025
- ❑ 6 more new businesses are set to open in downtown before the end of 2024